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International Association for Tibetan Studies
held at Columbia University**

Soundings in Tibetan Civilization

editors

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International Research
Institute**



MANOHAR

1985

Dedicated to the memory of our esteemed friend and colleague

Turrell V. Wylie

**Lumbini
International Research
Institute** 3459

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Preface

The present volume continues a trend seen in the proceedings of the 1979 Oxford conference and in the 1976 Mátrafüred and 1981 Velm-Vienna Csoma de Körös symposia, namely, the study of lesser known Tibetan religious and philosophical traditions. Judith and Mervin Hanson's paper on the "concatenating" Buddha in the Shangs-pa Bka'-brgyud-pa tradition, Janet Gyatso's learned discourse on the Gcod, and Mat Kapstein's brilliant piece on the Rgya mtsho mtha' yas cycle of Karma-pakshi are among the best examples of this trend and extend our knowledge of the historical development of Buddhist doctrine and practice in Tibet. The Shangs-pa Bka'-brgyud-pa, the Zhi-byed, and the Gcod schools have all disappeared as discrete and identifiable entities because of their extension and the absorption of their doctrines into the major sectarian schools.

Recently, as a result of an enquiry into the existence of ancient writings of early masters of the Mar-pa Bka'-brgyud-pa, Rnying-ma-pa, Zhi-byed, Gcod, and Jo-nang-pa traditions in the Bhotia borderlands of western Nepal, the mechanism by which ancient traditions are displaced and textual sources rendered obsolete by newer religious movements which enter the area from outside became clear. In just two generations the Bdud-'joms Khros ma teachings which originated at the other end of the Tibetan speaking world in the Mgo-log area of A-mdo have spread to most of the village temples and local lamas of Humla and Dolpo. This is largely a result of the efforts of Bde-ba'i-rgyal-po of Nam-mkha' Khyung Rdzong and his disciple, Sprul-sku Tshe-dbang. Two centuries earlier, the area witnessed an earlier spread of the gter-ma revelations of 'Ja'-mtshon-snying-po, Bdud-'dul-rdo-rje, and Gter-bdag-gling-pa. The older practices fell into disuse. No longer were the lung of the texts transmitted, nor were initiations and oral transmissions passed on. The process ultimately resulted in the ancient manuscripts and blockprints of such great local scholars as Kun-mkhyen Dol-po-pa and Dbon-po Shes-rab-'byung-gnas being interred in stupas.

Occasionally, however, a great lama would come who would, through his new teachings and revelations, would renew and incorporate older traditions which were near extinction. This process has occurred among the Rnying-ma-pa and accounts for the forging of bonds between two or more gter-ston whose revelations are seen as somehow reinforcing each other. This happened in Bhutan where Padma-gling-pa absorbed the teachings of Rdo-rje-gling-pa. This absorption, however, led to a renewal and synthesis of the tradition of Rdo-rje-gling-pa.

As the new availability of rare philosophical and ritual texts leads to an interest and study of long defunct oral transmission lineages, it is just possible that we will observe a revival and restoration of the old traditions through modern day visions and revelations. Both social scientist and historian of religion will have an opportunity to observe how a vital tradition like that of Tibetan Buddhism regenerates and revitalizes itself.

As one might expect, a large number of papers presented at Columbia as well as at its predecessors have been concerned with special aspects of Tibetan religion and ritual. Panglung Rimpoche's interesting study of the tsha-gsur ritual and the controversy surrounding it and Amy Heller's paper on the rkyal-'bud practices are presented with what seems to me the proper mixture of attention to both textual sources and experience derived from contact with the living tradition. This approach, it seems to me, is typical of the work of the younger Tibetologists, both eastern and western.

Samten Karmay's work on Rdzogs-chen in the Tun-huang texts and Eva Dargyay's essay on the Rnying-ma-pa tantra, the Kun byed rgyal po'i mdo, use more traditional mainstream approaches to the study of textual sources. Rdzogs-chen as well as other methods of contemplative practice will more and more become the objects of serious study by scholars, both nang-pa and phyi-pa. What we are likely to see is the growth of a scholarship of the gifted amateur as academic positions for Tibetologists become more rare. Research in the areas of Tibetan religion and philosophy may well

become the preserve of believers and practitioners of the traditions. This trend may well break new ground in widening our understanding of Buddhist philosophy as well as more mundane subjects such as Tibetan linguistic skills. I well remember my early attempts to classify and catalog Tibetan ritual texts and concepts. I suppose I must have made rather a nuisance of myself in quizzing my teacher about such concepts as bsnyen-pa, sgrub-thabs, man-ngag, mngon-rtogs, bskyed-rim, and rjes-gnang. The lama, with whom I was then studying, suggested that I might understand all of these terms by doing rather than asking and he included me in a group of Tibetan laymen upon whom he was conferring the instruction of the smyung-gnas practice of the Eleven-Faced Avalokiteśvara. After the two day observance of fasting, silence, and invoking the particular form of Avalokiteśvara, I must say I did arrive at a much better understanding of the terms mentioned above as well as many more. I had gained a direct and experiential understanding which was applicable to other frameworks. No dictionary can really provide definitions of these concepts. When we talk about Rdzogs-chen methodology, translations like "cutting the hard" or "crossing the crest" for khregs-chod and thod-rgal can even act as barriers to eventual understanding of the tokens that together define a whole system. I feel that in the future a far greater percentage of research on Tibetan religion is likely to have an experiential dimension.

Another recurrent theme is the study of Tibetan history focussing upon developments within a particular period. This type of investigation is represented by the papers by Takeuchi Tsuguhito, Helga Uebach, Janos Szerb, Terry Wylie, and Michael Van Walt. Progress in this area comes about chiefly through the discovery of new sources (or reinterpretation of old ones) or the application of other theoretical constructs to the data. We have in 1985 increased the historical texts available for research by a factor of at least twenty times over what was available in 1965.

A number of the papers presented at the Columbia conference rely heavily on western social science theory for the analytical frameworks. As Tibetan

scholars become interested in the social science disciplines, we are likely to begin to see more of the kind of papers represented by the contributions of Ugyen Gombo and Dawa Norbu. The papers presented by Martin Brauen-Dolma on Tibetan millenarianism and Geoffrey Samuel on early Tibetan Buddhism in Tibet represent other fruitful possibilities for the application of social science methods to classical Tibetan studies. Several of the social scientists specializing in Tibet, Barbara Aziz and Sandy Macdonald are examples, make considerable use of data derived from the greater tradition.

One of the most significant contributions found in this volume is Tashi Tsering's study on the 19th century affair of Mgon-po-rnam-rgyal of Nyag-rong. He demonstrates in this paper an astounding mastery of all available literary and historical sources. He shows how literary documentation can be supplemented by the judicious use of oral history. The Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala and Tashi Tsering himself have done an extraordinary amount of work in undertaking to collect such oral material for the history of Tibet. The combination of approaches, textual and social science interview, is an especially promising avenue to the study of Tibetan history. The blurring of traditional disciplines in the search for truth may well be the dominant theme for the study of Tibet.

The description and diachronic study of the various Tibetan dialects and related Tibeto-Burman languages is certain to be an area for fruitful research over the next several decades. Ronald Beilmeyer's fascinating essay towards elucidating the historical relationships between the western and southwestern Tibetan dialects represents this current trend of scholarly interest. It is an interesting coincident that in 1983 a Chinese team, Ch'ü Ai-t'ang and T'an K'o-jang published a major contribution to the study of the Tibetan dialects of this area (A-li Tsang yü. Peking, Hsin-hua Shu-tien, 1983). This independent study throws new light on the descriptive work and historical reconstruction analysis of Beilmeyer and the Indian scholars.

Such linguistic studies which are urgently required will probably become more and more the special province of Tibetan and Han scholars working in Tibet. Synchronic descriptions of some of the lesser known spoken idioms, particularly in the area of vocabulary, will increasingly be used to support philological studies and textual criticism. Tibetologists who have attempted to puzzle out some of the more colloquial passages in the writings of scholars like the famed 'Brug-pa Dkar-brgyud-pa master, Padma-dkar-po (1527-1592), for example, know how important it is to be able to work with a Tibetan scholar who has an understanding of the author's strange Kong-po dialect.

Gradually, scholars with stronger philological inclinations may begin to investigate the numerous popular instructions and mgur written in various colloquial idiolects. The colloquial A-mdo dialect writings of Gung-thang Dkon-mchog-bstan-pa'i-sgron-me (1762-1823) have already attracted the interest of Tibetologists. Bhutanese scholars interested in the development of their national language, Rdzong-kha, have begun to explore similar dialect writings by scholars such as those by the 13th Rje Mkhan-po Yon-tan-mtha'-yas (1724-1783). These works are far from unique examples of Bhotia colloquial productions. We may begin to see the emergence of various combinations of linguistic, philosophical, and textual approaches to the study of a single text.

Particularly urgent is the work of description of the various dialects of southeastern Tibet spoken in Dwags-po, Kong-po, and Bya-yul as well as the separate languages of Padma-bkod and Mi-nyag Rong. Here the leadership must clearly be that of Chinese and Tibetan scholars who have the linguistic skills to do the task more efficiently and the access to a number of speakers of any one dialect or language.

Specialized investigations on the phonology, morphology, and syntax of standard Central Tibetan and the modern Lhasa dialect are especially popular subjects for research scholars presenting linguistic papers. Zhang Liansheng's paper on the linguistic structure of the quadrisyllabic word in Lhasa speech exemplifies this type of research.

INTRODUCTION

The contributions in the present volume represent the diverse research being undertaken in Tibetan Studies today and reflect the increasing specialization and refinement of contemporary Tibetology overall. Texts once judged by specialists in a given discipline to be without merit are now being reconsidered from fresh perspectives by colleagues trained in other areas. The form and structure of literary works, cultural traditions and ritual practices are receiving careful attention alongside issues of content. Traditions of artistry and craftsmanship, no less than schools of thought, are now distinguished with great precision where formerly they were assimilated one to the other. In short, progress in the analytic and comparative aspects of Tibetology now complements the expansion of basic ethnographic and descriptive research. These developments have their basis in the recent availability of Tibetan oral and written sources, the breadth and richness of which were virtually unknown only some decades ago.

The papers included here are the work of thirty-four scholars who participated in the first seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, held under the Chairmanship of the late Professor Turrell V. Wylie, to whom these proceedings are dedicated. The conference, hosted by the Southern Asian Institute, Columbia University in July 1982, and convened by Barbara Nimri Aziz, was the third in a series of seminars designed to bring together scholars working in different disciplines throughout the world who share a common focus on Tibet. These meetings have provided researchers, often working in isolation, with the opportunity to share and discuss their work with other authorities in their specific fields, and have also encouraged interdisciplinary exchange. With this publication of participants' papers, gleanings from their ongoing research and the fruits of that exchange become available to a larger community of professional scholars and others interested in Tibetan history and civilization.

In arranging the contributions in this volume we have attempted to underscore what thematic unity may be found herein, but without imposing an artificial unity on a body of material representing such variety of subject-matter and methodology. The main areas of research represented are language, the arts and oral traditions of Tibet, historical studies, and religion; and these have provided the basis for our grouping of papers.

The study of the Tibetan language is represented by two papers by linguists. Roland Bielmeier utilizes recent investigations of the Western Tibetan dialects to address problems relating to the historical development of the Tibetan language. He argues that archaic features of these dialects as they are spoken today, when systematically analyzed in relation to data provided by the forms of Written Tibetan, supply us with a key to the historical reconstruction of the Tibetan language. The contribution of Zhang Liansheng, which examines a little studied feature of adjectival formation in the modern Lhasa dialect, is by contrast almost purely descriptive in its orientation.

The second section, treating of the fine arts, literature and oral traditions, is perhaps the most varied in terms of its subject-matter. Mireille Helffer reviews the iconography of the Tibetan bell (*dril-bu*), an omnipresent instrument in Tibetan ritual. Her essay reveals that the ornamental motifs decorating the bell conform to a well defined set of established conventions. A fellow musicologist, Ricardo Canzio, illustrates aspects of Bon-po ceremonial, not with a view to explaining their religious significance in this case, but rather to elucidate the formal structure and discipline of their performance. His paper also provides some indication of the continuity of a monastic tradition in the refugee community at Dolanji, India.

Discussions of the visual arts presented here include a survey of exemplary products of Bhutanese craftsmanship preserved in the rich collections of the Musée d'Ethnologie in Neuchâtel, Switzerland. The author, Marceline de Montmollin, describes the Tibetan characteristics of several of these, but emphasizes the manner in which they bring to our attention the distinctive aspects of the artistic traditions of Bhutan. A comparison between the landmarks of Tibetan religious architecture and their imitations in Jehol (modern Chengde) is the subject of Anne Chayet's paper. The Jehol temples, built with the patronage of the Ch'ing emperors, are here shown to embody typically Chinese architectural features despite their Tibetan inspiration. Their peculiarities as architectural monuments curiously mirror, according to Chayet, the political outlook of their august patrons. The age which produced the temples of Jehol was, significantly, the period during which the West established its first tenuous connections with the Tibetan cultural world. Braham Norwick's historical researches lead us back to those beginnings, in which Tibetology was in its embryonic phase. His subject is the *tsha-tsha*, Tibetan miniature images moulded in clay, illustrations of which oddly found their way to Europe as early as the 17th century. Using a wide range of early printed materials he traces the history of one

such image, and advances conclusions concerning its proper identification.

Dramatic art is represented in our collection by Wang Yao's essay on Tibetan opera and its stories. Besides providing comments on the performance of Tibetan opera, Wang seeks to identify the social and ideological values with which Tibetans today and in the past have imbued this art form. The three papers which follow all contribute to the documentation and analysis of Tibetan and allied oral traditions. Chime Wangmo focuses upon the ritual activity associated with house construction in Bhutan, her data on these rituals, virtually unknown outside of Bhutan, having been collected in the course of field research in the Bhutanese countryside. While some of these rituals require the intercession of a professional priest, others more closely resemble aspects of the folksong traditions of various regions in the Tibetan-speaking world. One such tradition is the subject of Nawang Tsering Shakspo's essay on Ladakhi songs. Not treating any one genre in particular he categorizes and briefly describes eleven types of songs. His discussion also includes comments on contemporary Ladakhi adaptations of Indian music and remarks on the various rural traditions of performance and on the performers themselves. Tibetan wedding songs, with their typical concern with the house, are illustrative of certain of the themes delineated in the accounts of Wangmo and Shakspo. This incidentally relates their researches to Barbara Nimri Aziz's discussion of Dingri marriage songs, though in this contribution we are mainly concerned with these songs as representing a tradition of oratory. Aziz's analysis of the Dingri material calls for more attention to the form of the performance of such songs, and draws conclusions, too, with regard to the social circumstances bearing upon the contemporary preservation of this tradition.

The contributions to the study of oral traditions show a strong anthropological orientation, and so the historical studies in the section which follows represent not only new subject-matter but a methodological difference as well. We may say that in this and the following sections philological discipline plays a dominant role, though a number of our papers are, in fact, exceptions to this.

The imperial period of Tibetan history provides topics for two contributions. The first of these is Tsuguhito Takeuchi's examination of a passage from the ancient *Tun-huang Chronicle*, which reveals a previously unidentified borrowing from the work of China's great historian, Ssu-ma Ch'ien. Takeuchi's discovery suggests that early Tibetan familiarity with Chinese historiography may have been more

extensive than we had previously thought it to be, and that by the age of the *Tun-huang Chronicle's* redaction a sophisticated Tibetan genre of literary history was already coming into being. The next essay, by Helga Uebach, takes for its subject-matter Ne'u Paṇḍita's analysis of the military divisions of ancient Tibet. Basing herself on a comparison of that source with other available documentation she concludes that Tibet was during the 8th century probably subject to a major reorganization of its military districts. It would appear that the division of Tibet as detailed in the better known histories of the imperial period represents, in fact, the scheme which became established only as a result of this event. The far western territories of the Tibetan world are considered in Lozang Jamspal's work on traditional accounts of Mña'-ris and Nawang Tsering's on Buddhism in Ladakh. With the contributions of Bielmeier and Shakspo these represent an increasing emphasis on research in Ladakh and the surrounding areas. It is significant, too, that young Ladakhi scholars are joining with their counterparts from other regions of India and nations abroad to preserve and transmit the knowledge of their culture and history.

In the following two pieces we consider a famed Sa-skyapa hierarch of the Yüan period and his less well known brother. The first of these continues a series of investigations its author, János Szerb, has undertaken into varied aspects of the literary works of Chos-rgyal 'Phags-pa, the renowned religious preceptor of Qubilai Qan. The documents here surveyed reveal several facets of 'Phags-pa's actual religious role in his relationship with the Mongol court. Turrell Wylie's abstract, derived from his detailed presentation to the seminar, summarizes all that is known at present of 'Phags-pa's obscure younger brother, the layman Phyag-na rdo-rje. The precedents established by these figures in their dealings with the Yüan emperors were canonized by tradition as the model for Sino-Tibetan relations; and it is the classical pattern of these relations over the centuries, not restricted to a single dynasty or period, that receives consideration in Dawa Norbu's paper. Norbu seeks therein to develop a new analysis of Tibetan polity, according to which the "non-coercive regime" of the Dalai Lamas is shown to contrast with the Weberian state and its monopolization of coercive force.

The last two historical studies concern relatively recent events. Tashi Tsering's paper shows the promise of combining material derived from the most reliable oral traditions with that gleaned from textual sources in his characterization of Mgon-po rnam-rgyal, a Khams-pa warrior of the mid-19th century. His narrative provides

us with a remarkable example of the unique political situation of Eastern Tibet, where a power vacuum regularly resulted from ineffective leadership in Central Tibet and in China. Tibet's harsh introduction to our own century is Michael van Walt's topic. He describes the events leading up to the Simla Convention of 1912 solely on the basis of the records preserved in the India Office Library, and his paper thus forms a systematic survey of those records without reference to other documents. Hence, to supplement the account found therein, it should properly be read against the background of the many currently available histories of Tibetan political relations during the late Manchu period.

Tibetan Studies are to a large extent devoted to the study of Tibetan religious life and the considerable variety of research in this area is indeed exemplified here. Popular beliefs and practices provide topics for the first four papers in this section, of which the first, by Ugen Gombo, addresses the manner in which ordinary persons who are not religious specialists understand and utilize the fundamental Buddhist notions of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. In the next essay Martin Brauen-Dolma draws on anthropological views of millenarian movements to interpret a number of cults representative of such movements in contemporary Tibetan society. Specific ritual practices which have not previously been considered in detail in the Tibetological literature are investigated in the contributions of Amy Heller and Jampa Panglung. Heller is concerned with a ritual technique of exorcism described in only a small number of available Tibetan texts, while Panglung discusses a widespread form of burnt offering that was a topic of some controversy in Tibet itself.

Continuing the development of subjects relating to Tibetan religion, the six papers which follow are devoted to the predominant traditions of spiritual teaching in Tibet. A Tun-huang fragment representing the Rdzogs-chen doctrine is Samten Karmay's topic, and Eva Dargyay introduces a major text allied in some respects to that treated by Karmay. The Rdzogs-chen teaching is especially prominent among the traditions shared by the Bon-po and the Rñin-ma-pa school of Buddhism. Its literary history is, as yet, virtually unknown and it is hoped that an increasing body of work such as that found here will in time rectify this situation. The famous litany entitled *Mañjuśrī-nāma-saṃgīti* is considered in Alex Wayman's abstract, drawn from a longer work in press. Judith Hanson and Mervin Hanson offer an interpretation of the role of the Buddha Vajradhara, the *Ādi-Buddha* of many of the Tibetan Vajrayāna schools, in the *Saṅs-pa bka'-brgyud* lineage. The notion of lineage,

essential to the Hansons' paper, also plays an important part in the two papers which follow it: Janice Willis reexamines our conception of sacred biography in the course of her study of the lives of Dge-lugs-pa *siddhas*, and Janet Gyatso's contribution focuses on the intriguing tradition of *Gcod*, endeavoring in particular to establish the place of Ma-gcig Lab-sgron in the inception and development of that tradition. Finally, David Komito's work explores the philosophical and religious significance of a fundamental treatise by the Indian master Nāgārjuna as revealed in the interpretations of contemporary Dge-lugs-pa scholars. This last essay is indicative of the close collaboration which has in many cases developed between traditional authorities and a new generation of foreign students of Tibetan religion.

Our last three essays deal with the syncretic and eclectic tendencies that have dynamically shaped the Tibetan spiritual tradition. Matthew Kapstein examines a recently published collection of doctrinal texts whose author he identifies as the second Rgyal-dban Karma-pa, while Robert Thurman is concerned with the integrative aspects of the work of Rje Tson-kha-pa. The former illustrates the use of the various classificatory schemes elaborated in the Rñin-ma-pa school as the basis for a novel synthesis of traditions, while the syncretism revealed in Thurman's discussion of Tson-kha-pa depends on the complementary character of the two great categories of sūtra and tantra. In the last essay contained in this collection Geoffrey Samuel provides us with an overview, from an anthropological perspective, of syncretic themes in the religious history of Tibet. His analysis suggests the possibility of rigorously identifying the deeper structures which manifest in the eclectic and syncretic trends recurring throughout Tibetan religious history.

The diversity of this collection, in terms of content, style and methodology, thus reflects the present state of Tibetological research, and we therefore believe it desirable to have retained considerable individual variation in these areas. Nonetheless, in order to facilitate the use of this material by both specialists and non-Tibetologists we have endeavored to regularize some conventions, e.g., for the transcription of Tibetan and other non-Roman scripts. For Tibetan we use the system of the United States Library of Congress, and for *devanāgarī* we essentially follow Whitney. Most of the papers referring to Chinese materials make use of the Wade-Giles romanization, but two, those of Zhang and Wang, retain references in Pinyin. For the small number of Mongolian names and terms we have allowed the usage of individual contributors to stand, the only

discrepancy in spelling which results from this in the present volume being in the case of the name Qubilai Qar/Khubilai Khagan.

One final point concerns the inclusion here of two abstracts, by Wylie and Wayman respectively. Since both authors had committed the articles they read at the conference to other publications, we decided not to reproduce them in full here. However, we provide these abstracts for the information of readers and in order to reflect the full participation of our colleagues in the conference.

The preparation of a collection such as this one is dependent upon the cooperation and generosity of many persons and institutions. We must first of all extend our gratitude to Columbia University and Brown University. At Columbia the director of the Southern Asian Institute, Theodore Riccardi, and the institute staff provided support throughout the conference and for this publication. The Philosophy Department and Computer Services at Brown University made it possible to utilize Brown's IBM 3081 computer and Xerox 9700 printer in editing this volume and making it ready for the press in a relatively short period of time. We also wish to thank Allen Renear of Brown University, who patiently guided us through the applications of the computer to our particular Tibetological needs, and Bradley Hartfield, who was responsible for the word-processing of much of the manuscript. Sonam Wangdu Tongpon kindly provided the Tibetan calligraphic work for three of the papers. Funding for various stages of this publication was made available by The National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C., which has been an important supporter of this project from the beginning. We are most grateful to the NEH and to several good friends of Tibetan Studies—Lisina Hoch and Frank Hoch, Vajradhatu, The Nalanda Foundation, and Dale Vrabec—for their generosity.

B.N.A.
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Ricardo O. Canzio obtained his Ph.D. from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He has carried out extensive research on ritual and the cults of the Tibetan protective deities with the support of The British Academy. Currently based in Paris, his general interests include the musical aspects of Buddhist and Bon-po liturgy.

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PART ONE
THE TIBETAN LANGUAGE

A SURVEY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF WESTERN AND SOUTHWESTERN TIBETAN DIALECTS

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In the present paper I intend to sketch an approach to the historical reconstruction of the Tibetan language, including the reconstruction of Proto-Tibetan on the basis of modern dialect data. Historical analysis and reconstruction of a language play a decisive role in the investigation of its history, reaching back to the oldest conceivable period of the cultural history of a people.

In my opinion, at the present level of our knowledge of the history of the Tibetan language, only investigations including dialectal data will lay a solid foundation on which a system of the historical grammar of Tibetan, the reconstruction of Proto-Tibetan and the genetic relationship of Tibetan with other languages can be established. Every historical analysis and reconstruction has to take into consideration especially archaic features in the dialects and in Written Tibetan. For the study of the preclassical language J. Terjék (1978) has named the documents of the preclassic period as the first source. To this he has added two more: notes in the native grammars on old features of the Tibetan language and lexicographical works in which the terms of the old language (*brda rñin*) are explained through their classical equivalents (*brda gsar*). I think three more kinds of source have to be added in a general historical approach: (1) The transcriptions of Tibetan words in non-Tibetan scripts. These can give us information on the pronunciation at the time they were fixed. A famous example is the Chinese transcription of Tibetan words in the bilingual treaty inscription of 822 at Lhasa. (2) The archaic dialects. (3) Layers of archaic loanwords in non-Tibetan languages. A good example was already given by Jäschke (1867), who pointed to the extremely archaic layer of Tibetan loanwords in Bunan. Very similar, it seems to me, is the case of extremely and moderately archaic loanwords in Brokskat, an Indo-Shina dialect, taken apparently from a proto-form of a western dialect, to which Purik and some subdialects of Lower Ladakh seem to be closest (cf. Ramaswami 1975).

A crucial point of studies based on material taken from Written Tibetan and from the dialects is the reliability of the data. The objection to using solely the current dictionaries when working with the data of Written Tibetan is not new. I agree that research should be based on texts instead of dictionaries whenever possible. However, because many of the texts, especially from the preclassical period, are not yet critically edited, it is very difficult to do without dictionaries. Among them I cite primarily Jäschke's dictionary owing to the generally accepted high standard of this lexicographical work, for the author did not simply rewrite native dictionaries, but used texts from which he very often cited sample sentences. For my purpose, however, Jäschke's dictionary has a further advantage: Jäschke lived and worked in western Tibet and so compiled quite an amount of data for western Tibetan in his dictionary, i.e. mainly Ladakhi dialectal material. Most scholars have had no direct access to relevant dialects and so, e.g., the works of Uray (1949 & 1954) and Róna-Tas (1962 & 1966), although of a high methodological standard, have had to be based on poor dialectal data often given in a rather unclear representation. (In the case of Róna-Tas, of course, this applies only to the western dialects.) What are necessary at first are reliable and complete descriptions of the dialects on the synchronic level, including phonology, morphology, syntax and vocabulary in clear phonetic and phonemic notation. Some progress has been attained in the last few years. But through these efforts it has also turned out that the linguistic map of west and southwest Tibet is much more complicated than supposed before, as represented, e.g., in the LSI, in which the dialects of Tibet proper are not registered at all.

The shortcomings described so far apply to the data of Written Tibetan as well as to the data of the Tibetan dialects. Besides them, three serious methodological shortcomings in the approach to historical analysis can often be observed: 1) the data of Written Tibetan are treated as homogeneous; 2) no distinction is made between absolute and relative chronology in the historical development of a linguistic phenomenon; and 3) when describing historical sound change, no clear distinction within a sequence of phonemes (e.g. of a word) is made between syllable boundaries and morpheme boundaries, and between sequences with morpheme boundaries and sequences with no boundaries; and no clear distinction is made between morphemes which are still productive means of word formation and morphemes which have lost this productivity. Let us start from a simple model of language as a threefold

heterogeneous diasystem with a diastratic axis, a diachronic axis and a diatopic axis.¹ That means that we distinguish within the historical development of a language between sociocultural strata, chronological periods and major geographical areas. Investigations on different sociocultural strata in Tibetan have been carried out: I am thinking mainly of the peculiarities of the so-called “polite speech” (*ze-sa*),² of *ph(r)al-skad* in contrast to *chos-skad*, of the differences between autochthonous and translated literature (mainly from Sanskrit), of the role of *dbus-skad* as a lingua franca, or of the Lhasa form of speech as the “prestige dialect” (or sociolect?) in contrast to the “vulgar” or “provincial” dialects, etc. As far as the diachronic axis is concerned, Uray distinguishes “Old Tibetan” of the 8th-9th centuries (*brda rñin*) from “Late Old Tibetan” after the 9th century (*brda gsar*), which stage is fixed in the classical written language. Uray covers both periods with the term “Ancient Tibetan” (cf. Uray 1953a: 39ff.). A comparable chronological classification is given by Roerich (Rerikh 1961:25ff.).

Scholars working in the field of historical grammar are, as a rule, conscious of differences due to different sociocultural strata and to different chronological periods, but they are often not aware of the differences of the third kind, inherited also in the material of Ancient Tibetan. These are the influences of different dialects which acted upon the written language. Uray is one of the exceptions. He states: “The penetration of elements of the modern spoken language in different periods and from various dialects into Classical Tibetan had led to a number of inconsistencies and to the formation of unorganic forms alien to the ‘Old Tibetan’ system of the classical language” (Uray 1953a:41). And even beyond this, I think that also in the period of Old Tibetan we have to reckon with traceable dialectal influences, because at that time the orthographic rules were not yet

¹ For such a semiotic model of language based on de Saussure, cf. Ch. Morris, *Signs, language, and behavior* (New York: George Braziller, 1946, 2nd ed. 1955); and J. P. Rona, “A structural view of sociolinguistics,” in P. Garvin (ed.), *Method and theory in linguistics* (The Hague: Mouton, 1970), pp. 199-211.

² It seems interesting to me that this “polite speech” is not very much developed in Balti (cf. Read 1934:47f.) and in Purik, but quite well developed in Ladakhi (cf. A. H. Francke, “Die Respektsprache im Ladaker tibetischen Dialekt,” *ZDMG* 52 (1898), pp. 275-281; Koshal 1979:11ff. and *ibid.* “Subject Index” s.v. “Honorific-”).

fixed so strictly. In this context we have to ask which were the dialect(s) or sociolect(s) upon which the first writings and orthographic rules of Old Tibetan were based. Thus we are lead back to the necessity of studying the dialects; for how can we recognize a dialectal feature, if we do not know the dialects?

Considering the western archaic dialects—Balti, Purik and Ladakhi too to some extent—we see that they are, in terms of historical phonology and relative chronology, on more or less the same level as Ancient Tibetan, although they are in absolute chronology modern dialects. This should not be confused. A striking example of mixing up absolute and relative chronology can be found in Dürr (1954:67). There he criticizes Shafer, who finds Balti phonologically partly more archaic than Old Tibetan, whereas the first usable recordings of Balti are only some fifty years old. (*Damit wäre das vermeintlich höhere Alter dieser Dialekte bereits ernstlich in Frage gestellt.*) This is a complete misunderstanding of the historical development of languages and dialects. All dialects are conservative in certain of their linguistic features. If a dialect is conservative in considerably more features than another we call it “archaic” in relation to the other. In order to recognize what is a conservative feature and what is an innovating feature a *tertium comparationis* is needed, which in our case is usually Ancient Tibetan. So if we find a dialect which coincides in pronunciation largely with what we have to suppose for Ancient Tibetan because of its written usages, we can call this dialect “archaic,” and others which coincide less or not at all, less or not archaic with respect to the compared features. From the western archaic dialects and to some extent also from some archaic dialects in the East we know that there are still forms of Tibetan speech, restricted to certain geographical areas, where only little change in certain features has occurred during more than one thousand years. We also know that the form of the language which is transmitted by the medium of writing since the 8th century really existed in a form relatively close to that which we hear in the archaic dialects mentioned and which we can make accessible through the medium of Ancient Tibetan.

A new hypothesis however is to state that Balti is in certain features more archaic than Old Tibetan. Such a hypothesis is only possible within the linguistic methods of comparative and internal reconstruction. Comparative reconstruction of proto-forms is based on regular correspondences between recorded forms of separate languages or dialects, which can be identified because of their regular similarity in form and their more or less coincident semantic

meaning. So, if we find deviations from this regularity in the recorded data, we should seek to explain them. Such variations in the data of Written Tibetan are often due to its inhomogeneity owing to the influences of different dialects at different times. E.g., the regular correspondences of the initial consonant clusters *rgy-* and *brgy-* of Written Tibetan are in Balti *rgj-* and *bgj-*. In Purik both have merged into *rgj*.³ In Ladakhi they have also merged into *rgj-* and in some less conservative subdialects have developed further into *gj-*. In Zaṅskar the initial stop has become fricative and we find *ɣj-*, cf.:

WT *rgya* "extent, width," *rgya-mtsho* "sea";⁴ B. *rgjalam* "highway," *rgjamtsho* "river"; P. *rgjamtsho* "river" (Rangan 1979:119); Ld. *rgjačan* "(very) extensive," *rgjatsho* and *gjatsho* "sea"; Z. *ɣjamtsho* "sea" (141);

WT *rgyags* "provisions, food"; B. *rgjax* "provisions" (Sprigg 1980a:237; Bielmeier 1984), Ld. *lam-rgjaks* "way-provisions" (Koshal 1979:321);

WT *rgyab* "back"; B. *rgjapla* "backwards"; P. *rgjap* "back" (Rangan 1979:30); Ld. *gjap* "back"; Z. *ɣjap* "back" (269);

WT *rgyal* "victory"; B. *rgjalba* "to conquer, gain (victory)"; P. *rgjal* "victory" (Rangan 1979:26); Ld. *rgjalces* "victory"; Z. *ɣjalpo* "king" (714);

³ Probably also WT *bsgy-* has merged with *brgy-* into Balti *bgj-* and all three into Purik *rgj-*, etc. Cf. the examples below.

⁴ When not otherwise indicated all forms and meanings of Written Tibetan will be cited according to Jäschke's dictionary. Desgodins' dictionary is only cited in case there is significant difference. The Balti forms are given according to Read's English-Balti glossary (Read 1934). Balti forms taken from Sprigg are given with full citation. Balti forms from my own material refer to my Balti-German glossary (Bielmeier 1984). The Purik forms are given either according to Rangan with full citation, or according to Bailey's English-Purik vocabulary (Bailey 1920). The Ladakhi forms without citation are given according to Ramsay (1890). Ladakhi materials taken from Koshal are cited as Koshal 1976, Koshal 1979 or Koshal 1982, respectively. The numbers following the examples from Zaṅskar refer to Hoshi (1978). I wish to thank my informant on Balti and Purik, Mr. Mohammed Iqbal, Islamabad/Skardu, who placed his indispensable help at my disposal when we worked together on Balti and Purik materials in the summer of 1981. Information based solely on his speech is marked "Iqbal."

- WT *rgyu-ma* “entrails, intestines”; B. *rgjuma* “intestines”; Ld. *rgjuma* “intestines”; Z. *γjuma* “intestines” (37);
- WT *brgya* “hundred”; B. *bgja* id.; P. *rgja* id. (Bailey 1920:26); Ld. *rgjə* id. (Koshal 1979:166); Z. *γja* id. (190);
- WT *brgyad* “eight”; B. *bgjat* id.; P. *rgjat* id. (Bailey 1920:26); Ld. *rgjə t* and *gjə t* id. (Koshal 1979:155); Z. *γjat* id. (186);
- WT *brgyad-pa* “to reproach”; B. *bgjatpa bja* “to hate”;
- WT *brgyugs* (pf. of *rgyug-pa*) “to run”; B. *bgjukpa* id.; P. *rgjukčas* id. (Bailey 1920:23); Ld. *rgjukčes* id. (Koshal 1982:451); Z. *γjuk* (pt. *γjuks*) id. (319);

WT *bsgyaṅs* (pf. of *sgyon-ba*) “to fill”; P. *rgjaṅs* “put into (pt.)” (Rangan 1979:153); Ld. *rgjaṅčes* and *gjaṅčes* “to stuff.”

In the light of these regularities let us now compare the equations:

- WT *rgyu* “warp, chain,” etc., *rgyud* “string”; B. *bgju* “warp”; Ld. *lugu rgjut* “chain,” *rgjutčes* “to string”; and
- WT *gyaṅ* and *gyeṅ* “pisé (earth or clay stamped into moulds),” *gyaṅ-skor* “pisé-wall round an estate or village”; *gyaṅ* “an enclosure, fence, hedge” (Csoma 1834); B. *rgyaṅ* “wall” (cf. Jäschke 1881:106 “so pronounced in Balti instead of *gyaṅ* ‘wall,’” also Sprigg 1967:188); P. *rgenskor* “fence” (Rangan 1979:29, probably misprint for *rgen-*); Ld. *kjaṅ* “boundary wall” (Koshal 1979:29); cf. the old loan in Stau *gjn* “wall” (Wang 1970/71:642).

We see that in the first equation the Balti form seems to be more archaic and points to a reconstruction as **brgyu* for Ancient Tibetan. The recorded form of Written Tibetan however has the shape of the Purik and the Ladakhi forms. So we may suppose a loan from a dialect close to Purik and Ladakhi in this respect. In the second equation, however, the Ladakhi form and the loan in Stau support the recorded form in WT *gyaṅ*. WT *rgy-* is in Ladakhi always reflected by *rgj-* or by *gj-*, whereas for WT *gy-* we find both *gj-* and *kj-* in Ladakhi. And in the Tibetan loans in Stau WT *rgy-* is always reflected as *rgj-*. Therefore we have either to suppose old variants with and without prefixed *r-* in Written Tibetan, of which only the second form is attested, or we have to suppose a later and secondary prefixation with *r-* only in Balti and Purik. For the solution to this problem further research is necessary.

For another type of reconstruction of single lexical items I should also like to give an example. The entry for “beard” in Written

Tibetan is *sma-ra*. According to Jäschke's dictionary it is found, e.g., in Milarepa. But in Balti we find *sməy ra*, and for Purik Bailey (1920) renders *smjanra*, whereas Iqbal gives *smjəy ra* for Purik. Rangan notes three different variants for Purik: *sməy ra* (Rangan 1979:30, Rangan 1975:66), *smjanra* (Rangan 1979:36) and *smey ra* (Rangan 1975:37). The last is certainly an allegro form for *smjəy ra*. *Smjanra* and *smjanra* are probably acoustically perceived as nasalized forms because of only very slight friction of the velar fricative in careless speech. Therefore I start from Balti *sməy ra* and Purik *smjəy ra*, or from reconstructed **sməny ra* in the light of the Purik variants and Kagate 'mañre (Hoehlig/Hari 1976:27).⁵ I think that again the Written Tibetan form is a loan from a less archaic dialect, not mainly because the dialectal forms are more complicated, but mainly because I identify the second member of the compound with the etymon for "hair," WT *skra*. The first member could contain WT *dma(n)* "low."⁶

⁵ The ' before the Kagate form signifies non-level tone. In Tamang we find a very similar form *māñgre*. Cf. A. Hale (ed.), *Clause, Sentence, and Discourse Patterns in selected languages of Nepal*, vol. IV, Word Lists (Norman, Oklahoma, 1973), p. 61, where *ā* signifies a low central vowel. For the dialect of Mustang, Kitamura et al. (1977:70) write *smag-ra*, which can be probably be phonemically interpreted as /magra/ with high pitch.

⁶ The independent etymon corresponding to WT *skra* "hair" has undergone a regular metathesis in Balti, and we find B. *rkalo* "curls" (cf. Bielmeier 1984). Further examples are B. *rkañma* "to swell," but P. *skrañpa* "tumour" (Rangan 1979:45) and WT *sbra* id.; B. *rbis* "write," but P. *zbris* (Rangan 1979:73) and WT *bris* id. In the last example both dialectal forms point to WT **sbris*, not to *bris*, because only the cluster *sbr-*, not *br-* of Written Tibetan has undergone metathesis in Balti; cf., e.g., B. *brañ* "chest," P. *brañ* id. (Rangan 1975:77), Kyirong *brañgò* id. (Bielmeier 1982), WT *brañ(-khog)* id.; B. *bruk* "thunder," P. *bruk* id. (Bailey 1920), WT 'brug; B. *brja* "to decrease (vi)," WT 'bri-ba, *bri* id. In the original compound which led to B. *sməy ra* and P. *smjəy ra* we may reckon with conditioned sound change. Cf., e.g., Read's entry *skagar* "white hair," which is very likely related to WT *skra-dkar*. Similarly we have B. *spalba* "forehead," P. *spralba* id. (Bailey 1920), Kyirong *prāla* id. (Bielmeier 1982), WT *dpral-ba* id. The condition, however, remains unclear to me. Whether WT *rgya-mo* "beard" has any etymological connection I do not yet dare to say.

An even more clear case is the word for "sleeve" in Written Tibetan. Jäschke (1881:342) gives the forms *phu-duñ*, *phu-thuñ* and *phu-run*, marking the last one as a citation from Csoma (1834). Desgodins (1899:626) gives *phu-duñ*, *phu-run* and *phu-tuñ*. S. Ch. Das (1902) follows Jäschke and adds *phu-luñ*, a form which seems to be current in Sikkim and Bhutan (cf. Kazi 1919:722). In modern literary Tibetan we usually find *phu-thuñ* beside *phu-duñ*, both of which Goldstein (1978:708) renders phonemically as /phutuun/.⁷ Nishida (1970:115 Nr. 839) has *phu-run*. Provided with these data alone, no statement can be made on the priority of one of these forms in relation to etymology. Consulting old texts, we might hope to find examples of such forms, which might enable us to determine the older form among the cited forms found in the dictionaries. But dialectal data from the western archaic dialects lead us relative-chronologically far back behind all the written forms and make the etymology transparent. For Ladakhi Ramsay gives *phutuñ*, and for Kagate Hari's *Dictionary* gives *phuduñ*, both fairly close to Written Tibetan.⁸ For Khapalu-Balti, which is less conservative in retaining final -s than Skardu-Balti and Purik, Read (1934) gives *phutum*, and Rangan (1979:23,57) for Purik *phutums*. In addition, Rangan (1979:82) gives the verb P. *tumba*, pt. *tums* "to cover," which clearly corresponds to WT *'thum-pa*, *btums*, etc., "to cover, lay over, put over, wrap up, envelop." The basic compound is therefore exactly the Purik form *phu-tums*, "what is put over the upper arm." A relation of WT *phu-thuñ* to the present stem of the verb, or a derivation on it from WT *thum(s)*, *thum-pa*, *thum-po* "cover, covering, wrapper" is not so probable because of the final nasal. The classical forms are closer to Ladakhi and Kagate than to Purik or Balti. For the consonantal final cf., e.g., WT *sgruñ(s)* "fable, legend, tale," P. *zgrums* "(short)story" (Rangan 1979:60, Rangan 1975:28), B. *zdtuñ* "story, fable, legend," Ld. *sruñs* and *run*s "tale" (Francke 1901:5), where the Balti form seems to be "irregular," not only because of the final consonant, but also because of the initial consonant cluster. It does not show the expected metathesis but a secondarily inserted -d.⁹ Such a

⁷ The aberrant form given by Desgodins l.c. as "vulg. *dpuñ-doñ*" seems to be current in eastern Tibet. Cf. this form in S.E. Mgr. Giraudeau et Rév. Père F. Goré, *Dictionnaire Français-Tibétain, Tibet Oriental* (Paris, 1956).

⁸ I have to thank Dr. A.M. Hari for allowing me to make use of his yet unpublished *Dictionary*.

⁹ For metathesis in Balti cf. n.6, and for the secondarily inserted -d-

procedure as shown above in two examples should be applied systematically to the vocabulary of Written Tibetan, and even if one or the other analysis should prove untenable, this would not invalidate the methodology of searching for the basic etyma of Written Tibetan items with the aid of archaic dialectal material.

These findings, however, do not prove that Balti or Purik is more archaic in certain features than Ancient Tibetan. More correct in these cases seems the interpretation that Written Tibetan has here absorbed younger elements. This may be due to the chronological factor, i.e. Written Tibetan may have taken over these elements relatively recently, or to the geographical factor, i.e. the elements may have been taken over from a less archaic dialect. This is also Shafer's interpretation for some Balti words (cf. Shafer 1951:1019). The statement that a certain dialect is more archaic than Ancient Tibetan in certain features can only be justified if this more archaic character shows up in the regular correspondences, but so far I have not been able to find a clear phonological feature in Balti or Purik which is more archaic than the corresponding feature of Ancient Tibetan.¹⁰

cf. Sprigg (1970a: *passim*). The form *phu-run* introduced by Csoma (1834) shows a typical tendency in all western dialects: an occasional shift of intervocalic *-d-* into a voiced fricative and further into a retroflex *-ɽ-*, parallel to Indo-Aryan dialects. My material on Khapalu-Balti includes *meɽa*, the interrogative form of *met* "is not"; Sprigg (1967:192) notes for Skardu-Balti *ɽce khareɽa?* "does (he) stammer?" (*ɽce khaɽ-* "to stammer"; cf. also Bielmeier (1984) s.v. *khaɽ-* "to get stuck"), where the stem final is shifted, but not the present tense marker. For Purik, cf. Rangan (1979:17) and for a free allophonic alternation in Ladakhi, cf. Koshal (1979:295) *diruk* beside *diduk* "write" ("observed present" tense). For Zaskar, Hoshi (1978) gives the comparative of *thetpo* "happy" (923) as *theda* with a sonorant interdental fricative.

¹⁰ Shafer (1941a:19) cites the preservation of original *-ya-* after certain initials for Balti in contrast to Ancient Tibetan *-e-*. It is true that such an oscillation can be observed, but it seems to be quite an unstable phenomenon, and may also be interpreted at least partly as a dialectal feature. Among the three examples Shafer gives, the first is clearly wrong, as Balti *ɽtia* "navel," which is in fact a citation from Purik (cf. Bailey 1920), is a contraction of a nominal derivation by *-ba*, very common in Balti and Purik. We have to start from a form coinciding with Ancient

Tibetan *lte-ba* (theoretically *i* would also be possible), which renders Purik $\rightarrow t\dot{t}i\dot{a}$ (and not $*\rightarrow t\dot{t}j\dot{a}$). Rangan (1979:29) gives $\rightarrow t\dot{t}ija$, and in Ladakhi we find $\rightarrow t\dot{t}eja$, and in Zanskar $\rightarrow t\dot{t}e$ (27). The other two examples given by Shafer are correct, but the whole picture is much more spotty. I will only give a few types to illustrate the instability. Many examples could be added of the same type. The two he quotes are WT *legs-mo*, B. *ljaxmo* (cf. above, n. 14), and WT *theg-pa* "to lift," B. *thjaqpa* "patience," P. *thjaqpa* "endure (suffering)" (Rangan 1979:28). Analogical are WT *then-po* "lame," B. *thjanmo* id.; WT *gden* "trust," B. $\gamma gjanma$ id., $\gamma gjan\check{c}(h)ot$ "grief," P. *rdjan\check{c}ot* "despair" (Rangan 1979:30). The opposite tendency is found in B. *kjelbu* "leather bag" and WT *rkyal-bu*. Because of the simplified initial I consider the Balti form as a loan from a less conservative variant of Ladakhi, cf. Jäschke's spoken form $*kjal-lu^*$, WT *rkyal-bu*, s.v. *rkyal-pa*. Similarly we find B. $\gamma berpa$ "poplar," P. *zbjergpa* id. (Bailey 1920) and WT *dbyar-pa/sbyar-pa* [vs. B. $\gamma bjar/zbjar$ "summer" (Read 1934:80), WT *dbyar*]. The shift from *a* to *e* after *j* is in my opinion a subphonematic combinatory shift at least in Balti and Purik. Phonetically, Iqbal gives for the Purik form taken from Bailey l.c. [zɓjərpá] (ə is a centrally unstressed and therefore reduced vowel). In quite a lot of examples we find coincidences in both respects: cf., e.g., B. *thenma* "to pull," WT *'then-pa* id.; B. *thetam* "doubt," WT *the-tsom* id.; P. *thepo* "thumb" (Rangan 1979:17), Ld. *thepo* id., WT *(m)the-bo* id. In contrast to Shafer's opinion are also examples like B. *rkjalba* "to swim," P. *rkjelčas* "to wash oneself" (Iqbal; cf. Bailey 1920, who gives $\check{s}kjelčas$), WT *rkyal-ba* "to swim"; B. *phjalla tañma* "to hang, suspend," P. *phella* "hanging" (Rangan 1979:31); B. *sməy ra* "beard," P. *smjəy ra* and *smey ra* id., etc. (cf. above and n. 10), WT *sma-ra* id.; B. *rjal* "hair," P. *rjel* id. (Bailey 1920), *rjal* "fibre" (Rangan 1975:41), *spurjal* "hair" (animal & human) (Rangan 1979:37), WT *ral* "goat's hair"; oscillation within one corpus, cf. P. *pheldin tañma* "to swing" (Rangan 1979:54) and *phjaldin* "swing" (Rangan 1979:36,46); B. *djan* "drum," but *dañ* id. in my material (cf. Bielmeier 1984) and also P. *dañšin* "drumstick" (Rangan 1975:48,51); B. *skjerax* "girdle, belt," Ld. *skjeraks* id., Z. *xkerak* "band. belt" (568), WT *ske-rags/ska-rags* id., etc.

As an example on the morphological level I cite the nominal suffix *-po* with allomorphs in Ancient Tibetan. Hahn (1971:31ff., 182) describes its functions for the classical language together with *-mo*, which I think must be historically separated in the light of the dialects. The function of *-po* as a gender indicator is secondary, as male gender was originally indicated by *-pho*. This is supported by the fact that it occurs as a prefix as well. [For Written Tibetan cf. Jäschke (1881) s.v. *pho*, and for the dialects cf., e.g., B. *pho-no* "(younger) brother," *pho-rtisit* "he-goat" (Bielmeier 1984), Ld. *mo-luk* "ewe," Spiti *pho-yak* "male yak" (Sharma 1979:102), *mo-ther* [moθur] "horse (dim., fem.)" (Sharma 1979:97), etc.] In Written Tibetan the main function of *-po* is the nominal derivation of verbs, nouns and numerals. This resembles its function in Purik, where according to Rangan (1979:113ff.) adjectives are derived from substantives by means of *-mo* and *-bo/-po*. Bailey (1920:7) remarks: "The endings *po*, *pho*, *mo*, *bo* have no longer the force of a definite article. In Purik they seem from this point of view without meaning." And in the Ladakhi variety which Francke describes, *bo* has already lost its entire function: "The optional article *bo*, though it is used for all cases is especially found with the nominative and the accusative. If *bo* is used with a case, which has an ending, it takes the ending itself. Example: *i mibos dezug zere*, 'this man said so.'" (Francke 1901:12, n. 1; cf. also the paradigm on p. 11, where he quotes *las* beside *lasbo* and *mi* beside *mibo* synonymously.) In Balti, however, the situation is very different. We have the system of the definite article or determination suffix *-po* with allomorphs in full productivity. (A quite comprehensive description with material of the Skardu subdialect is given by Sprigg 1972:*passim*, and similarly in a more appropriate phonetic rendering in Sprigg 1980.)

In my material pertaining to a Khapalu subdialect there are slight differences in the allomorphic formation with nouns ending in a vowel, but the system is completely the same and has been also described by Read (1934:6). In contrast to B. *smān* "medicine, drug" we have *smānpo* "the medicine," but usually *di smānpo* "this medicine"; cf. *di zdruṅpola* "to this story" (*zdruṅ* "story"), *de thalbo rkose* "digging that earth" (*thalba* "earth, dust") (Bielmeier 1984); *ni atosi nāla mins* "my father gave (it) to me," ...*de nanilimikpo gar jot?* "where is the key of that house...?" (from *ata* "father," *limik* "key"; Read l.c.); etc.

As we see, the suffix *-po* determines a noun, which is preceded by a demonstrative pronoun, a possessive pronoun or a genitive-attribute. In my opinion this subsystem reflects a more archaic stage

in the historical development of Tibetan than its apparent decay in Written Tibetan and in Purik, where *-po* has no determinative function, but is only productive to some extent as a nominal derivational morpheme. This function already emerges in Balti, cf. ...*na ṭaño čan-čan go-stoñ khorphi...* "I, the Lhamo, having gone around naked and bareheaded..." vs. *čan-čanpo ñala gwa dot...* "wherever I want to go as a naked one..." (Bielmeier 1984), etc. And finally in Ladakhi its morphological function is completely lost.

Finally, I will sketch a few characteristic developments of the dialects on the various levels of language. On the suprasegmental level of phonology the Central Tibetan dialects exhibit a phonematically relevant tone system. As an example the Lhasa dialect may be quoted, basically according to the analysis of Chang/Shefts (1964) followed by Goldstein/Nornang (1978), and according to Hari (1979). The phonematic distinctions are high pitch vs. low pitch and level tone vs. non-level tone. On the other side, the western archaic dialects do not show a phonematically distinctive tone system. Stress may play a role in these dialects. As Sprigg (1966c) has observed for Skardu-Balti, the great majority of bi- and trisyllabic nouns show initially lower pitch level. In my investigations on a Khapalu-Balti subdialect (Bielmeier 1984) I observed a similar phenomenon: the majority of bisyllabic nouns show a fixed stress on the second syllable and the rest on the first syllable. But the stress on other words or syllables changes according to rhythmic units in speech, e.g.:

ṭr̄āne gola ñit khurs "the right head fell asleep";

but *ṭr̄āne gola*, (pausa) "the right head...(woke up)."

Similarly, in Purik, e.g.:

tshoskhán "ripe";

but *matshósokhan* "unripe" (Iqbal).

Another interesting phenomenon in the context of rhythmic units is a rhythmic shortening of words by dropping certain unstressed vowels. To find the exact conditions further investigation is necessary. An example from my Khapalu-Balti material:

bjāsenà "when having done";

but the same form with *sañ* "also" following it is:

bjāsna sán.

All this behavior differs considerably from the southwestern dialects in which a phonematic distinctive tone system has developed. As is quite well known, non-level tone has developed in connection with the dropping of certain word-final consonants or even syllable-final consonants. On the other hand the development of

phonematically distinctive pitch levels is closely connected with the phonematic nondistinctiveness of voiced and unvoiced unaspirated initial stops. Ancient Tibetan with its three series of radicals (voiced, unvoiced and unvoiced aspirated) surely did not possess phonematically distinctive pitch levels. The same applies to Balti, Purik and Ladakhi including the dialect of Zaṅskar. According to Francke (1904) the boundary runs between the dialects of Zaṅskar and Upper Ladakh which are without tone systems, and the dialect of Rubhsu, which has a tone system similar to that of the central dialects. All the southwestern transitional dialects, as far as they are known to me, show distinctive pitch levels to a greater or lesser extent, but only some of them distinctive tone levels.

The following statements apply to the western archaic dialects Balti, Purik and Ladakhi, including the dialects of Zaṅskar, and to the southwestern transitional dialects of Lahul (Roerich 1933), of Spiti (Sharma 1979), of the Drokpas of Stod (Kretschmar 1984), of Mustang (Kitamura et al. 1977), of Kyirong (my own material, cf. Bielmeier 1982), Kagate (Hoehlig/Hari 1976 and Hari, *Dictionary*) and Dingri (Hermann 1984).¹¹ On the phonological level, these dialects can roughly be classified into "initial conservative dialects" and "final conservative dialects" in relation to Written Tibetan, because there is no dialect which has initially *and* finally more complicated consonant clusters than Written Tibetan. The dialects show a generally decreasing complexity in these clusters from the western archaic dialects in the extreme northwest, southeastward to the southwestern transitional dialects. The most initial conservative dialect is Balti and especially Khapalu-Balti, as it also preserves velar radicals + *r* as against Skardu-Balti, where they have shifted to dental + *r*. Subdialectally we also find retroflex stops or affricates as, e.g., in my material. We do not yet know to what extent the complex prefix system, manifest in the orthography, was still morphonologically working in Ancient Tibetan. At any rate, its traces are still much more visible in Balti than in Purik or any other western dialect. However, only the "causative" formation, mainly *s*-, is morphonologically productive in all western archaic dialects.

¹¹ I am grateful to my colleagues Dr. M. Kretschmar and Dr. S. Herrmann for providing me with material on the dialect of the Drokpas of Stod (Bawa and Bongba) and the dialect of Dingri respectively (cf. Kretschmar 1984 and Herrman 1984).

Initially Purik is generally more conservative than Balti in that the clusters *skr-*, *sgr-*, *spr-* and *sbr-* are retained, whereas they become *rg*, *rk*, *sp/rp*, and *rb/zb* in Balti. Besides that, Purik has also retained the velar + *r* clusters as has Khapalu-Balti. Balti, however, has retained five "prefixes," that is to say five phonemes, each with a voiced and unvoiced combinatory variant as the initial member of a twofold consonant cluster in initial position, dependent on the voicedness or unvoicedness of the "radical," that is to say the second member of the cluster: [x]/[ɣ], [ϕ]/[β], [s]/[z], [ʃ]/[r], [ʈ]/[l]. But as the variants have partly merged with other phonemes, the phonemic inventory is /x/, /ɣ/, /ph/, /b/, /s/, /z/, /r/, /ʃ/, /l/. In Purik the possible first members are limited to the phonemes /s/, /z/, /r/, /ʃ/, /l/, reflecting three pairs of combinatory variants in this position: [s]/[z] [ʃ]/[r] [ʈ]/[l].^{1 2} In Zaṅskar there is again a reduction of the initial members of the possible initial consonant clusters, which are given by Hoshi (1978:v.) as *-t-ld-*, *-ṭḷj-* and *xk-* (*k* is a palatized velar in Hoshi's notation). Already in Ladakh, with the exception of Lower Ladakh, and Zaṅskar the clusters of Written Tibetan with "subscribed *r*" have merged into retroflex stops. This is also true for the dialects of Lahul, of Spiti, of the Drokpas of Stod, of Mustang (?) and of Dingri, but not for the dialect of Kyirong and for Kagate, where the labial stops + *r* are retained before front vowels and partly before back vowels (for detail cf. Bielmeier 1982). Therefore, among the western archaic dialects Balti is the typical "initial conservative dialect" (with the exception of the metathesis of *skr-*, etc.), in contrast to Purik and Ladakhi, including Zaṅskar. Among the southwestern dialects known to me, the dialect of Kyirong and Kagate are the most "initial conservative dialects" and in this respect

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An exception is the only morphologically still productive "prefix," the "causative" *s-*, which assimilates the following "radical." For Balti cf., e.g., Read (1934:65) *drulba* "to walk (vi)" vs. *strulba* "to cause to walk"; B. *bjarba* "to stick (vi)" vs. *spjarba* "to stick (vt)"; B. *gulba* "to shake (vi)" vs. *skulba* "to shake (vt)" etc.; P. *gulba* "to move (vi)" vs. *skulba* "to move (vt)" (Rangan 1979:83) etc.; Ld. *bə r-* "to burn (vi)" vs. *spə r-* "to burn (vt)" (Koshal 1979:183); but in Ladakhi also *gulčes* "to be moving, shaking" vs. *rgulčes* "to shake" (Francke 1901:35), *jarčes* "to stick to (vi)" [ibid. reflects B. *bjarba* and WT 'byor-ba/'byar-ba] vs. *žarčes* "to stick to (vt)" [reflects B. *spjarba* and WT *sbyor-ba*, *sbyar* (pf.fut.)]. The transitive form is supported by Z. *žar* "to attach" (823).

even more archaic than the Ladakhi of Leh, Upper Ladakh and Zañskar.

In contrast to this, Balti, especially Khapalu-Balti, is less conservative in retaining final clusters, viz. postconsonantal *-s*, than Purik, Ladakhi and Zañskar, where this is regularly kept. An exception is the productive morpheme *-s* for the past tense, which, according to Read (1934:41), is affixed to every verb regardless of its final consonant. For Purik Bailey (1920:19ff.) and Rangan (1979:84ff.) give certain restrictions, and Koshal (1979:200) gives some for Ladakhi as well. In the southwestern dialects no final consonant clusters exist, and there is an increasing tendency from north to south to drop more and more single final consonants. In the dialects of Lahul and Spiti we find basically the same single final consonants which we know from Written Tibetan, but final *-s* is always dropped.¹³ In the Dingri dialect a final dental stop is dropped as well as final *-s*, which influences the tonal structure of the word. In the dialect of the Drokpas of Stod, however, a final dental is replaced by a segmental phoneme, i.e. a glottal stop. It is therefore not surprising that this dialect does not distinguish phonemically distinctive tone levels, and we can call it together with the dialects of Lahul and Spiti "final conservative" among the southwestern dialects. In the dialect of Kyirong and in Kagate a final dental stop is dropped as in the Dingri dialect, but in addition to that the Kyirong dialect has also lost the final velar stop and the Dingri dialect final *-l*. Therefore these last three dialects can be classified as "final non-conservative" among the southwestern dialects, although they are still more conservative in this respect than the Central dialects.

¹³ Roerich (1933:15), however, writes: "In the adjacent Spiti dialect the final *-gs* is pronounced as written [Written Tibetan-R.B.], *rigs*, 'kind'; Spiti *rigs*." This statement cannot be supported by the material given by Sharma (1979), or by Jäschke (1881:XVII). For the Kaksur-Lahul subdialect Roerich l.c. gives the pronunciation "X, unvoiced velar fricative," e.g. WT *nags* "forest," Lahul (Kaksur) *naX*, but in the vocabulary we find, e.g., *čag* "iron" ("*g* is an indistinct voiced, and is usually heard at the end of words" *ibid.* p. 10), and for the Spiti dialect Sharma (1979:85) gives *ča*, etc.

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THE PHONETIC STRUCTURE OF ABCB TYPE WORDS IN MODERN LHASA TIBETAN

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Tibetan (Lhasa dialect) has a rich vocabulary of quadrisyllabic words. This gives the language a lively quality and is one of the distinctive features of modern Tibetan word-formation. I have collected over one thousand such words and, after classifying them, have come up with seven different types. Using the letters A, B, C, and D to represent different syllables, these structures can be described as ABCD, ABCC, AABB, ABAB, ABAC, ABCB, and ABDB. Below are some examples of these seven types of quadrisyllabic words:¹

1) ABCD

<i>gYas</i> je ̄] right “robbing Peter to pay Paul”	<i>lan</i> l̄e ̄] taking	<i>gYon</i> j̄ø ̄] left	<i>'jal</i> t̄ce ̄] returning
<i>thog</i> t'o ̄] start “from beginning to end”	<i>mtha'</i> t'a ̄] finish	<i>bar</i> p'a / middle	<i>gsum</i> sum ̄] three

¹ The Tibetan words in this paper are transcribed using the International Phonetic Alphabet in accordance with the conventions of the Research Institute for Nationalities, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. Beijing. The four tones are (1) 55 ̄, (2) 53 ̄, (3) 13 ̄, (4) 15 ̄. In case of laryngeal-stops they are 53 ̄, 51 ̄, 13 ̄, 132 ̄.

2) ABCC

rgyags
caʔ
fat
“plump”

pa
paʔ
-ty

ril
riʔ
round

ril
riʔ
round

rtsib
tsipʔ
rib
“thin as kindling”

ma
maʔ
bone

hran
ṣāʔ
frail

hran
ṣāʔ
frail

3) AABB

dga'
kaʔ
happy
“happily”

dga'
kaʔ
happy

spro
tṣoʔ
joyous

spro
tṣoʔ
joyous

gus
k'yʔ
respectful
“respectfully”

gus
k'yʔ
respectful

'dud
tyʔ
reverent

'dud
tyʔ
reverent

4) ABAB

ga
k'aʔ
where
“how would I presume?”

nas
neʔ
from

ga
k'aʔ
where

nas
neʔ
from

sna
ṅaʔ
former
“long ago”

ma
maʔ
-ly

sna
ṅaʔ
former

ma
maʔ
-ly

5) ABAC

<i>skyon</i> cø̄] defect “fastidiously”	<i>med</i> meʔ] have not	<i>skyon</i> cø̄] defect	<i>'dzugs</i> tsuʔ] place
<i>gcig</i> tçiʔ] one “exactly alike”	<i>pa</i> pa] type	<i>gcig</i> tçiʔ] one	<i>rkyan</i> cā] completely

6) ABCB

<i>n̄ab</i> nap] (filler) “lethargically”	<i>be</i> pe] (filler)	<i>n̄ob</i> nop] exhausted	<i>be</i> pe] (filler)
<i>tha</i> t'a] (filler) “sparsely”	<i>re</i> re] (filler)	<i>tho [=thor]</i> t'o] scattered	<i>re</i> re] (filler)

7) ABDB

<i>yin</i> jī | is “no matter what”	<i>gcig</i> tçiʔ] one	<i>min</i> mī | is not	<i>gcig</i> tçiʔ] one
<i>gYas</i> jeʔ] right “to stagger”	<i>'khyor</i> c'o] askew	<i>gYon</i> jð] left	<i>'khyor</i> c'o] askew

The present article will analyze only the sixth type, that is, the ABCB structure, which is composed of a single morpheme and three filler syllables to fill out the four-syllable structure. This monomorphemic word is formed from an adjectival or verbal root which undergoes a regular pattern of sound change. It is one of the

most common quadrisyllabic types in Tibetan. Generally the root is found in the third syllable of the construction. The first syllable and the third are alliterative, while the fourth syllable is a repetition of the second. We can further divide this type of word into two types—one with A and C as open syllables and the other with A and C as closed syllables.

(i) *A and C as open syllables (Table 1).*

Here I will give only two examples:

<i>ka re ko re</i>	$ka \rfloor re \rfloor ko \rfloor re \rfloor$	“zigzag”	(<i>kor</i>)
<i>tha bi thi bi</i>	$t'a \rfloor pi \rfloor t'i \rfloor pi \rfloor$	“cloudily”	(<i>thib</i>)

These two words are the products of sound change of the verbal roots $ko \rfloor$, “to circle,” and $t'ip \rfloor$, “to darken.” The final consonants of these two roots are dropped, thus forming the third syllables of the quadrisyllabic words— $ko \rfloor$ and $t'i \rfloor$ —and the vowels [e] and [i] are then added to the final consonant of the two roots respectively to form the fourth syllables— $re \rfloor$ and $pi \rfloor$. In other words, if we take the initial consonant of the fourth syllable and place it in the final position of the third syllable, we can reconstruct the root that was used to form the quadrisyllabic word.

We might offer the following explanation for this phenomenon: with the final consonant of the root being separated from what precedes it in the syllable, a new syllable is created with the separated final consonant acting as the initial consonant of the syllable. The new syllable cannot be a syllabic consonant, but rather is a consonant followed by a vowel. Thus the one syllable of the original root word is changed into two syllables. This is the first stage in the formation of a quadrisyllabic word. If we use C_1 to represent the initial consonant of the root, C_2 for the final consonant of the root, V_1 for the vowel of the root and V_2 for the added vowel, then the two syllables created from the initial root are C_1V_1 and C_2V_2 . This transformation can be represented as:

$$C_1V_1 \rightarrow C_1V_1 \cdot C_2V_2$$

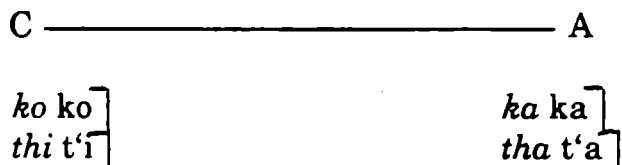
In the case of the above examples we have:

$C_1V_1C_2$	C_1V_1	C_2	V_2	C_2V_2
<i>kor ko \rfloor</i>	<i>ko ko \rfloor</i>	<i>r r</i>	<i>e e</i>	<i>re re \rfloor</i>
<i>thib t'ip \rfloor</i>	<i>thi t'i \rfloor</i>	<i>b p</i>	<i>i i</i>	<i>bi pi \rfloor</i>

On what grounds do we hold that the final consonant of the root can be separated? I make this statement on the basis of the history of the phonetic development of the Tibetan language. The final consonants of Tibetan have been changing over the course of history, a process which has been rather slow. If we assume that the modern Tibetan writing system represents ancient Tibetan pronunciation, then we can see that the direction of this change has been toward the separation and dropping of the final consonants from the preceding portion of the syllable. For example, the root of the word *kha ne kho ne k'a*] *ne*] *k'o*] *ne*], "Jawdling," is *khon k'ö*] "anger." The final of this root, *n n*, is no longer pronounced in the modern Lhasa dialect. Historically, however, it was pronounced [n], so there is the possibility that at some point this final consonant was separated from what preceded it to become the initial consonant of the following syllable. Thus *khon k'ö*] became *kho ne k'o*] *ne*].²

Above we discussed the first stage in the creation of a quadrisyllabic word. The final stage in the formation of the ABCB type involves the repetition of B and the alliteration of C.

The B syllable is repeated as both the second and the fourth syllable of the quadrisyllabic word. The rule for adding the vowel to the B syllable is that when C's vowel is a non-high vowel ([a] or [o]), B's vowel must be [e]. When C's vowel is high ([i], [u] or [e]), B's vowel must be [i]. There are only a small number of cases in which B and C can have the same vowel [e]. In a word, B can have only one of two vowels, [i] or [e], and is always an open syllable. Depending on the speaker's emotions, the vowel of the first B may be drawn out. For example, *t'a*] *re*] *t'o*] *re*], "scattered," can be pronounced as *t'a*] *re:*] *t'o*] *re*].



The relationship between the consonants of this type of quadrisyllabic word can be represented in the following formula: $C_1 \cdot C_2 \cdot C_1 \cdot C_2$. The full formula for this type of quadrisyllabic word,

² A number of examples of this sort of separation of final consonants can still be found in the modern Lhasa dialect, e.g., *yig jik* → *yi ge ji · ke* (word), *yol jol* → *yo la jo · la* (curtain), *skal kal* → *ska la ka · la* (share).

then, is $C_1a \cdot C_2V_2 \cdot C_1V_1 \cdot C_2V_2$.

The root word of this type of quadrisyllabic word is often a verb, but there are also some cases in which an adjective serves as the root word. Some verbs in the past tense act as roots. For example, the root of *smya se smyo se na | se | no | se |*, "crazily," is *smyos nó |*, the past tense of *smyo no |*, "to be crazy." The past form has the final consonant [s], while the present form has no final consonant. Historically, this final [s] in the past tense was pronounced. If the present tense form of the verb had been used, there would have been no way to form a quadrisyllabic word in accordance with the principles we have outlined above. This is probably why the past tense form of this verb was used to form the ABCB type of quadrisyllabic word.

Table 1

ABCB	Root Words		B	Meaning of Quadrisyllabic Word	AC
	Root and Meaning	Final consonant			
ཀ་རེ་ཀོ་རེ ka|re|ko|re|	ཀོར kor to encircle	ར r	རེ re|	zigzag	ཀ་ར་ཀོ་ར ka|ko|
རྒྱེ་རེ་རྒྱེ་རེ ca|re|co|re|	རྒྱེ་ར skyor to support	ར r	རེ re|	supportingly	རྒྱེ་ར་རྒྱེ་ར ca|co|
ར་རེ་ཀོ་རེ ka|ne|ko|ne|	ཀོན kón to hate	ར n	རེ ne|	reluctantly	ཀ་ཀོ་རེ ká|kó|
ར་ལེ་ཀོ་ལེ ka|le|ko|le|	ཀོལ kól to boil	ལ l	ལེ le|	hurriedly	
རྒྱ་གེ་རྒྱ་གེ ca|ke|co|ke|	རྒྱ་ག kyog to be crooked	ག g	གེ ke|	crookedly	རྒྱ་ག་རྒྱ་ག ca|co|
རྒྱེ་རེ་རྒྱེ་རེ ca|re|co|re|	རྒྱེ་ར kyor unstable	ར r	རེ re|	topsy-turvy	རྒྱེ་ར་རྒྱེ་ར ca|co|

Table 1

ཇ་ལེ་ཇ་ལེ	ཇ་ལ	ལ	ལེ		ཇ་ལ་ཇ་ལ
tʃa˩le˩tʃe˩le˩	ɕol to mess up	l	le˩	messily	tʃe˩le˩tʃe˩le˩
ཉ་པེ་ཉ་པེ	ཉོབ	བ	པེ	wearily	ཉོབ་ཉོབ
na˩pe˩no˩pe˩	nyob to weary	b	pe˩	wearily	na˩pe˩no˩pe˩
ཉ་རེ་ཉ་རེ	ཉོར	ར	རེ	slackly	ཉོར་ཉོར
na˩re˩no˩re˩	nyor to be routed	r	re˩	slackly	na˩no˩
ཐ་པི་ཐི་པི	ཐིབ	བ	པི	gloomily	ཐབ་ཐིབ
tʰa˩pi˩ti˩pi˩	tib gloomy	b	pi˩	gloomily	tʰa˩pi˩ti˩pi˩
ཐ་རེ་ཐོ་རེ	ཐོར	ར	རེ	sparsely	ཐོར་ཐོར
tʰa˩re˩to˩re˩	tor sparce	r	re˩	sparsely	tʰa˩to˩
ཅུ་སེ་ཅུ་སེ	ཅུས	ས	སེ	confusedly	
tʃa˩se˩tʃe˩se˩	'dres mixed	s	se˩	confusedly	
ལུ་རི་ལུ་རི	ལུར	ར	རི	tenderly	ལུར་ལུར
ta˩ri˩tu˩ri˩	ldur to become tender	r	ri˩	tenderly	ta˩tu˩
པ་རེ་པོ་རེ	པོར	ར	རེ	thoughtlessly	པོར་པོར
pa˩re˩po˩re˩	bor to lose	r	re˩	thoughtlessly	pa˩po˩
སྐྱེ་སེ་སྐྱེ་སེ	སྐྱེས	ས	སེ	crazily	
na˩se˩no˩se˩	smyos went crazy	s	se˩	crazily	
ཚ་གི་ཚིག་གི	ཚིག	ག	གི	hastily	ཚིག་ཚིག
tʃa˩ki˩tʃsi˩ki˩	tʃig to burn	g	ki˩	hastily	tʃa˩tʃsi˩
རྩ་རེ་རྩ་རེ	རྩོར	ར	རེ	messily	རྩོར་རྩོར
tʃa˩re˩tʃso˩re˩	dzor to be dirty	r	re˩	messily	tʃa˩tʃso˩
ཇ་གི་ཇིག་གི	ཇིག་པོ	ག	གི	raggedly	ཇིག་ཇིག
ʧa˩ki˩ʧi˩ki˩	zig-po ragged	g	ki˩	raggedly	ʧa˩ʧi˩
འུ་རི་འུ་རི	འུར	ར	རི	carelessly	འུར་འུར
'a˩ri˩'u˩ri˩	'ur noisy	r	ri˩	carelessly	'a˩'u˩
ཉ་པེ་ཉོ་པེ	ཉོབ	བ	པེ	hastily	ཉོབ་ཉོབ
ha˩pe˩ho˩pe˩	hob sudden	b	pe˩	hastily	hap hop
ཉ་རི་ཉུ་རི	ཉུར་པོ	ར	རི	carelessly	ཉུར་ཉུར
ha˩ri˩hu˩ri˩	hur-po to work fast	r	ri˩	carelessly	har˩hur˩

(ii) A and C as closed syllables (Table 2).

In the preceding section we discussed the production of the outspread syllable by the separation of the final consonant from the preceding portion of the original syllable, whereas in this section we shall deal with the incomplete separation of the final consonant. In such cases the final consonant of the root word proliferates into the B syllable very much as in the case we described. Nevertheless, the final consonant has not yet completely separated from the root word. It still remains in the original position, while at the same time serving as the first consonant of the B syllable, e.g.:

<i>kyog ge kyog ge</i>	<i>'khyar re 'khyor re</i>
caʔ | ke | coʔ | ke |	c'aʔ | re | c'oʔ | re |
“obliquely”	“shakily”

The two examples above are the result of phonological change of the adjectives *kyog po coʔ | po |*, “oblique,” and *'khyor po c'o | po |*, “shaky,” following the quadrisyllabic pattern ABCB. Their roots are *kyog coʔ |* and *'khyor c'o |*.

Table 2

ABCB	Root Words		B	Meaning of Quadrisyllabic Word	AC
	Root and Meaning	Final consonant			
ཀྱོག་པོ་ཀྱོག་པོ་ caʔ | ke | coʔ | ke |	ཀྱོག་པོ་ kyog-po oblique	ག g	ཀྱི ke |	obliquely	ཀྱོག་པོ་ཀྱོག་པོ་ caʔ | coʔ |
ཀྱང་རྒྱུ་ཀྱང་རྒྱུ་ tʂã | ŋe | tʂõ | ŋe |	ཀྱང་རྒྱུ་ kron-po straight	རྒྱ ŋ	ཀྱིང་ ŋe |	toweringly	ཀྱང་རྒྱུ་ཀྱང་རྒྱུ་ tʂã | tʂõ |
འཇོན་པོ་འཇོན་པོ་ k'ɛ | ne | k'ɛ | ne |	འཇོན་པོ་ 'kon indignant	ན n	འཇོན་པོ་ ne |	indignantly	འཇོན་པོ་འཇོན་པོ་ k'ɛ | k'ɛ |
ཁུ་མི་ཁུ་མི་ kam | mi | kum | mi |	ཁུ་མི་ཁུ་མི་ kum-pa crumple	མ m	ཁུ་མི་ mi |	in a crumpled shape	ཁུ་མི་ཁུ་མི་ kam | kum |
ཐྱུ་མི་ཐྱུ་མི་ dam | mi | com | mi |	ཐྱུ་མི་ཐྱུ་མི་ kyom wobble	མ m	ཐྱུ་མི་ mi |	wobblingly	ཐྱུ་མི་ཐྱུ་མི་ cam | com |
ཐྱུ་མི་ཐྱུ་མི་ tʂãʔ | ki | tʂuʔ | ki |	ཐྱུ་མི་ཐྱུ་མི་ 'krug-pa to disorder	ག g	ཐྱུ་མི་ ki |	disorderly	ཐྱུ་མི་ཐྱུ་མི་ tʂãʔ | tʂuʔ |

Table 2

འཇུག་གེ་འཇུག་གེ	འཇུག་པོ	ག	ཤ		འཇུག་འཇུག་
cá?|ke|cá?|ke|	'kyog-po crooked	g	ke|	crookedly	cá?|cá?|
འཇུར་རེ་འཇུར་རེ	འཇུར་པོ	ར	ར		འཇུར་འཇུར་
cá|re|cá|re|	'kyor-po shaky	r	re|	shakily	cá|cá|
གཤམ་བེ་གཤམ་བེ	གཤམ་པོ	བ	པ		གཤམ་གཤམ་
káp|pe|kóp|pe|	gob-lob to be perfunctory	b	pe|	languidly	káp|kóp|
གུང་རེ་གུང་རེ	གུང་པོ	ང	ང		གུང་གུང་
cā|ne|cā|ne|	gyoṅ-po obstinate	ŋ	ne|	obstinately	cā|cā|
རྒྱལ་པོ་རྒྱལ་པོ	རྒྱལ་པོ	བ	པ		རྒྱལ་རྒྱལ་
tšap|pe|tšop|pe|	sgrob-po to be pompous	b	pe|	full to the brim	tšap|tšop|
ཅལ་ལེ་ཅལ་ལེ	ཅལ་པོ	ལ	ལ		ཅལ་ཅལ་
tɕɛ|le|tɕø|le|	col interesting	l	le|	gibberingly	tɕɛ|tɕø|
ཆར་རི་ཆར་རི	ཆར་བ	ར	འ		ཆར་ཆར་
tɕā|ŋi|tɕū|ŋi|	c'uṅ-ba tiny	ŋ	ni|	minutely	tɕā|tɕū|
ཆར་རི་ཆར་རི	ཆར་བ	ར	འ		ཆར་ཆར་
tɕā|ŋe|tɕū|ŋe|	c'uṅ-ba small	ŋ	ne|	meticulously	tɕā|tɕū|
ཆལ་ལེ་ཆལ་ལེ	ཆལ་པོ	ལ	ལ		ཆལ་ཆལ་
tɕé|li|tɕí|li|	cil-cil to wave	l	li|	wavily	tɕé|tɕí|
ཆལ་ལེ་ཆལ་ལེ	ཆལ་པོ	ལ	ལ		ཆལ་ཆལ་
tɕé|le|tɕø|le|	col-ba chaotic	l	le|	heterogeneously	tɕé|tɕø|
འཇུལ་ལེ་འཇུལ་ལེ	འཇུལ་པོ	ལ	ལ		འཇུལ་འཇུལ་
tɕé|le|tɕø|le|	'cól-ba absent-mindedly	l	le|	absent-mindedly	tɕé|tɕø|
འཇུང་རེ་འཇུང་རེ	འཇུང་པོ	ང	ང		འཇུང་འཇུང་
tɕā|ne|tɕō|ne|	'joṅ-ro slack	ŋ	ne|	muddle-headedly	tɕā|tɕō|
ཉུག་གེ་ཉུག་གེ	ཉུག་པོ	ག	ཤ		ཉུག་ཉུག་
ŋa|ke|ŋi|ke|	nyig-nyig dirty	g	ke|	dirtyly	ŋa|ŋi|
ཉུག་གེ་ཉུག་གེ	ཉུག་པོ	ག	ཤ		ཉུག་ཉུག་
ŋa?|ke|ŋo?|ke|	nyog-po muddy	g	ke|	muddily	ŋa?|ŋo?|
ཉུབ་བེ་ཉུབ་བེ	ཉུབ་པོ	བ	བ		ཉུབ་ཉུབ་
ŋap|pe|ŋop|pe|	nyob muddle-headed	b	pe|	muddle headedly	ŋap|ŋop|

Table 2

ཉལ་ལེ་ཉལ་ལེ nyil/le/nyil/le/	ཉལ་བ nyil-ba	beaten	l	le/	flaccidly nyil/nyil/
ཐག་གི་ཐུག་གི་ ta?/ki?/tu?/ki/	ཐུག tug	to touch	g	ki/	touching here and there ta?/tu?/
ཐང་འི་ཐུང་འི་ tā/ni/|tū/ni/	ཐུང་བ tun-ba	short	ṅ	ni/	bit by bit tā/tū/
ཐབ་འི་ཐོབ་འི་ tap/pi/|tip/pi/	ཐོབ་བྱ tib-bu	obscure	b	pi/	obscurely tap?tip?
ཐམ་མེ་ཐོམ་མེ་ tam/me/|tom/me/	ཐོམ་པ tom-pa	fatuous	m	me/	fatuously tam?tom?
ཐམ་མེ་ཐུམ་མེ་ tam/me/|tum/me/	ཐུམ་པ dun-pa	bit by bit	m	me/	in bits tam?tum?
ཐྱང་འི་ཐྱང་འི་ tā/ṅi/|ti/ṅi/	ཐྱང་བ ldin-ba	to hover	ṅ	ṅi/	soaring tā/ti/
ཐུམ་འི་ཐུམ་འི་ tap/pi/|tip/pi/	ཐུམ་པ ldib-pa	to mumble	b	pi/	with stammer tap?tip?
ཐམ་མེ་ཐོམ་མེ་ tam/me/|tem/me/	ཐོམ་པ ldem-po	to curve	m	me/	quivering tam?tem?
ནག་གི་འོག་གི་ na?/ke/|no?/ke/	འོག་པ nog-pa	to faint	g	ke/	dimly na?/no?/
བག་གི་ཐུག་གི་ pa?/ki/|pu?/ki/	བུག་པ bug-pa	to drill	g	ki/	in a sink pa?/pu?/
འབར་མེ་འབྲུར་མེ་ pa/re/|pu/re/	འབྲུར་བ 'bur-ba	protruding	r	re/	lumpily pa/pu/
ཤལ་ལེ་ཤོལ་ལེ་ pe/le/|pø/le/	ཤོལ་པ 'bol-po	soft	l	le/	softly pe/pø/
ཚབ་འི་ཚུབ་འི་ tsap/pi/|tsub/pi/	ཚུབ་མོ tsub-mo	rude	b	pi/	hurriedly tsap?tsub?

Table 2

འཚུབ་ཤི་འཚུབ་ཤི	འཚུབ་ཤི		བ	བེ།	འཚུབ་འཚུབ
tsap/pe/|tsup/pe/|	'tsub-pa	mischievous	b	pe	carelessly
རྩུབ་ཤི་རྩུབ་ཤི	རྩུབ་ཤི		བ	བི།	རྩུབ་རྩུབ
tsap/pi/|tsup/pi/|	rdzub-pa	fraudulent	b	pi	fraudulently
རྩུབ་ཤི་རྩུབ་ཤི	རྩུབ་ཤི		བ	བེ།	རྩུབ་རྩུབ
tsap/pe/|tsop/pe/|	rdzob-po	hypocritical	b	pe	deceitfully
འཇལ་ལེ་འཇལ་ལེ	འཇལ་ལེ		ལ	ལེ།	འཇལ་འཇལ
ཤེལ་ལེ།ཤེལ་ལེ།	zol-zol	to sag	l	le	trailing
བར་རེ་(རི)བར་རེ་(རི)	བར་རེ		ར	རེ།	བར་བར་(རི)བར་
sā/ŋe/|sī/ŋe/| (i) (i)	ziŋ-ba	to be in a tumult	ŋ	ŋe	tumultuously
བཟ་མི་བཟ་མི	བཟ་མི		མ	མི།	བཟ་བཟ་
sam/mi/|sim/mi/|	zim-zim	1)half-open 2) to drizzle	m	mi	winking drizzling
འན་ལེ་འན་ལེ	འན་ལེ		ན	ལེ།	འན་འན
'É/ŋe/|'ø/ŋe/|	'on-pa	deaf	n	ne	pretending to be deaf
འལ་ལེ་འལ་ལེ	འལ་ལེ		ལ	ལེ།	འལ་འལ
'É/ŋe/|'ø/ŋe/|	'ol-spyi	rough	l	le	obscurely
ཡང་རེ་ཡང་རེ	ཡང་རེ		ར	རེ།	ཡང་ཡང
jā/ŋe/|jō/ŋe/|	yen-ba	to loiter	ŋ	ŋe	loiteringly
ཡམ་མེ་ཡམ་མེ	ཡམ་མེ		མ	མེ།	ཡམ་ཡམ
jam/me/|jom/me/|	yom-pa	to shake	m	me	shakily
ཡར་རེ་ཡར་རེ	ཡར་རེ		ར	རེ།	ཡར་ཡར
ja/re/|jo/re/|	yor-ba	to slant	r	re	staggering
ཡལ་ལེ་ཡལ་ལེ	ཡལ་ལེ		ལ	ལེ།	ཡལ་ཡལ
je/ŋe/|jō/ŋe/|	yol-ba	to lapse	l	le	vainly

Table 2

གམལ་ལེ་གམལ་ལེ	གམལ་བ	ལ	ལེ		
ཉལ་ལེ།ཉལ་ལེ།	gyol-ba to dodge	l	le	dodgily	
རུག་གེ་རུག་གེ	རུག	ག	གེ		རུག་རུག་
raʔ/ke/ruʔ/ke	rug to gather	g	ke	in piles	raʔ/ruʔ/
རུབ་ཤི་རུབ་ཤི	རུབ་ཤིབ	བ	ཤི		རུབ་ཤིབ
rap/ɕi/riɕi/ɕi	rib-rib dim	b	ɕi	dimly	rap/ɕiɕi/
རུབ་ཤེ་རུབ་ཤེ	རུབ་ཚམ	བ	ཤེ		རུབ་ཚམ
rap/ɕe/roɕe/ɕe	rop-tsam rough	b	ɕe	roughly	rap/roɕe/
ལེང་ལེ་ལེང་ལེ	ལེང་ལེང	ང	ལེ		ལེང་ལེང
lã/ne/le/le	liŋ-liŋ to rock	ŋ	ne	rocking	lã/le/le
ལེང་ལེ་ལེང་ལེ	ལོག	ང	ལེ		ལེང་ལོག
lã/ne/lo/lo	loŋ to unheave	ŋ	ne	boiling	lã/lo/lo
ལུམ་ལུ་ལུམ་ལུ	ལུམ་ལུམ	མ	ལུ		ལུམ་ལུམ
lam/lu/lu/lu	lum-lum to undulate	m	lu	tenderly	lam/lu/lu
གཤིག་གི་གཤིག་གི	གཤིག་གིག	ག	གི		གཤིག་གིག
ɕaʔ/ki/ɕiʔ/ki	sig-sig to relax	g	ki	falling apart	ɕaʔ/ɕiʔ/
ཤུབ་ཤི་ཤུབ་ཤི	ཤུབ་ཤུ	བ	ཤི		ཤུབ་ཤུ
ɕap/ɕi/ɕu/ɕi	sub-bu to whisper	b	ɕi	whispering	ɕap/ɕu/ɕi
ཤུབ་ཤེ་ཤུབ་ཤེ	ཤུབ་པ	བ	ཤེ		ཤུབ་ཤུ
ɕap/ɕe/ɕop/ɕe	sob-pa to lie	b	ɕe	talking nonsense	ɕap/ɕop/
སེང་ལེ་སེང་ལེ	སེང་པོ	ང	ལེ		སེང་ལེང
sã/ne/se/ne	sen-po transparent	ŋ	ne	glittering	sã/se/
སུབ་ཤེ་སུབ་ཤེ	སུབ་པོ	བ	ཤེ		སུབ་ཤུ
sap/ɕe/sop/ɕe	sob-po frangible	b	ɕe	frangibly	sap/sop/
སྲིབ་ཤེ་སྲིབ་ཤེ	སྲིབ་པ	བ	ཤེ		སྲིབ་སྲི
sap/ɕe/sip/ɕe	srib-pa to be darken	b	ɕe	in twilight	sap/sip/
ཉེན་ལེ་ཉེན་ལེ	ཉེན་ལེ་ཉེན་ལེ	ན	ལེ		ཉེན་ཉེན
hẽ/ne/hẽ/ne	hon-'thor-ba to be out of wits	n	ne	foolishly	hẽ/hẽ/

Table 2

རྩལ་ལེ་རྩལ་ལེ hɛ|le|hɔ|le|	རྩལ hol	careless	l	le	carelessly
རྩལ་ལེ་རྩལ་ལེ རྩལ་པོ་ ʔɛ|le|ʔy|le|	རྩལ་པོ་ hrul-po	to become old	l	le	raggedly
རྩལ་ལེ་རྩལ་ལེ རྩལ་ལེ་ ʔɛ|te|ʔɔ|te|	རྩལ་ལེ་ lhod-po	to get loose	d	te	loosely
རྩལ་ལེ་རྩལ་ལེ རྩལ་ལེ་ ʔa|ki|ʔu|ki|	རྩལ་ལེ་ lhug-po	abundant	g	ki	loosely

Let us use the symbols introduced above to represent the root morpheme of the root word: $C_1V_1C_2$. Since the root morpheme of the quadrisyllabic word is still the same, the outspread syllable is also the same in form, as seen in the two examples below:

$$C_1V_1C_2$$

$$kyog\ co^? \backslash$$

$$'khyor\ c'o \rfloor$$

$$C_2$$

$$g\ k$$

$$r\ r$$

$$C_2V_2$$

$$ge\ ke \backslash$$

$$re\ re \rfloor$$

So the basic pattern remains the same: the formation of the quadrisyllabic word, the production of the B syllable, and the forming of the A syllable. The only difference is that where A and C are closed syllables, the C syllable retains its final consonant, thus remaining in the form of the root-morpheme of the root word. That is to say, the relation among the consonants in the quadrisyllabic word is $C_1C_2 \cdot C_2 \cdot C_1C_2 \cdot C_2$, and the whole structure of the word can be described as $C_1aC_2 \cdot C_2V_2 \cdot C_1V_1C_2 \cdot C_2V_2$.

Most of the quadrisyllabic words of this type have a synonym with the first and the third syllables (A,C) alliterated. For instance, *kyag ge kyog ge ca[?] ke[?] co[?] ke[?]* has a synonym *kyag kyog ca[?] co[?]*;

and 'khyar re 'khyor re c'a] re] c'o] re] has a synonym 'khyar 'khyor c'a] c'o]. Table 2 gives further examples. The pairs of synonyms can be represented as:

- ABCB

AC

$C_1aC_2 \cdot C_2V_2 \cdot C_1V_1C_2 \cdot C_2V_2$

$C_1aC_2 \cdot C_1V_1C_2$

What is noteworthy is that most of the quadrisyllabic words with A and C as open syllables also have synonyms in the form of $C_1aC_2 \cdot C_1V_1C_2$. Of the quadrisyllabic word and the bisyllabic word, we may ask, if both stem from a root word $C_1V_1C_2$, then which precedes which? The question would be difficult to answer if we only were to analyze the pair of quadrisyllabic and bisyllabic synonyms with A and C as closed syllables, for the final consonant of the root word is not yet completely separated. However, if we take a look at the pair with A and C as open syllables, we can readily arrive at the conclusion that the bisyllabic word could not come into existence after the quadrisyllabic word. For, if the bisyllabic came after the quadrisyllabic word, then we should see the outspread syllable merging back into the root word. This would run completely against the general laws of sound change in Tibetan which invariably point to the dropping of the final consonants. As far as I know, until now this problem has not yet been clearly understood among students of Tibetan phonology. Nevertheless, out of almost one hundred instances there seem to exist some exceptions to my conclusion. I put them down here for further consideration:

ABCB	A	C	
'chal le 'chol le tɕ'ɛ] le] tɕ'ɔ] le]	'chal 'chol tɕ'ɛ] tɕ'ɔ]	talking nonsense	'chal pa to babble
rtab be rtob be tap] pe] top] pe]	rtab rtob tap] top]	hastily	rtab to hasten
tsab be tsub be tsap] pe] tsup] pe]	tsab tsub tsap] tsup]	hurriedly	tsab to hurry
sñad se sñod se ŋɛʔ] se] ŋɔʔ] se]	sñad sñod ŋɛʔ] ŋɔʔ]	gossiping	sñod to talk

In the first three cases the root word takes the position of the first syllable instead of the third. In the fourth, the initial consonant of the second and fourth syllables is not the final consonant of the root word.

It should be pointed out that the question of whether the addition of the vowel V_2 precedes the separation of the final consonant C_2 from the root word or follows it has remained unsolved in this paper and requires further study.

Finally, let us have a look at the tone-patterns of the quadrisyllabic word. Successive tone changes occur in the two halves of the word. That is to say, the first and the second syllables form one unit while the third and the fourth form the other. The tones of the two halves change according to the law of liaison tone change of bisyllabic words.³

To sum up: the quadrisyllabic type ABCB is a morphological structure built up in agreement with the historical evolution of Tibetan speech sounds. I suggest that it be called a morphological structure because it is so tightly built that it allows neither further semantic division nor the insertion of any other element, and it is related to other words in the sentence as a complete unit. The quadrisyllabic words of this type are numerous in modern Tibetan and frequently used. They deserve careful study. If these conclusions are reasonable, the orthography and etymology of these words may be better understood. These words are not very old in Tibetan; their orthography has not yet been completely fixed in some cases. A thorough study of the sources of these words will help to settle their written forms. Through the study of those materials which point to the sources and evolution of quadrisyllabic words, we are able to infer definitely that the final consonants were pronounced in ancient Tibetan, because only if those consonants were pronounced would it have been possible to add vowels to them. As a result the consonants were well preserved during the historical process of sound-change.

³ For the phonological change of final consonants please refer to Hu Tan, "A Study of the Tone-Pattern of Tibetan (Lhasa Dialect)," *Minzu Yuwen* 2, (1980).

PART TWO
FINE ARTS, LITERATURE,
AND ORAL TRADITIONS

A TYPOLOGY OF THE TIBETAN BELL*

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The iconography of Tibetan Buddhism demonstrates abundantly the importance of the pair formed by the ritual scepter (*rdo-rje*, Skt. *vajra*) and the handbell (*dril-bu*, Skt. *ghaṇṭā*.) These two objects appear not only as attributes of the primordial Buddhas Rdo-rje sems-dpa' (Skt. Vajrasattva) and Rdo-rje-'chan (Vajradhāra), but are also found in the hands of protective deities such as Bde-mchog, Gsañ-ba-'dus-pa, Dus-kyi-'khor-lo, Kye-rdo-rje, and are even held by a *mahāsiddha* like Dril-bu-pa. One notices that the *rdo-rje*, held in the right hand, is sometimes replaced in the case of some deities and gurus by a little hour-glass pellet-drum (*damaru*) while the left hand keeps the bell (*dril-bu*). The schematic character of the iconographic representations and the small size of the objects depicted hardly allow us to distinguish the formal characteristics of the *rdo-rje* and the *dril-bu*. Only after consulting Tibetan texts and systematically examining some fifty objects have I been able to abstract the elements to develop a typology of the Tibetan bell.

Textual data concerning the *dril-bu*

At this point in my research five texts of different periods have come to my attention:

1) The 31st chapter of the *Srī-Vajradāka-nāma-Mahātantrarāja*. [*Bka'-gyur, Rgyud*, vol. KHA (Tibetan Tripitaka, Peking ed., vol. 2, No. 18), pp. 121-122.] The Text deals successively with the different types of *rdo-rje*, the decoration of the *dril-bu*, and the different types of *dril-bu*, which are (a) the type with a handle in the shape of a *ye-ses rdo-rje*, (b) "the bell of the heroes" (*dpa'-bo'i dril-bu*), and (c) "the bell of the Tathāgatas" (*bde-bzin gsegs-pa'i dril-bu*).

2) *Vajraghaṇṭa-lakṣaṇa-nāma*. [*Bstan'-gyur, Rgyud-'grel*, vol. LA (Tibetan Tripitaka, Peking ed., vol. 59, no. 2589), pp. 88-89.] This text makes evident the existence of three different sizes of bells

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used according to the category of rite to be performed.

3) A text of the New Bon tradition (*Bon gsar-ma*). [*Gsañ snags thig pa* (sic) *chen po'i bstan par bya ba'i dam rdzas mchog ji ltar 'chan ba'i rnam bśad rnal 'byor rol pa'i dga' ston*, 41 fol.] This manuscript kept at the New Sman-ri monastery in Dolanji (H.P.), India, and photographed in 1979 contains a chapter dealing with the *rdo-rje* and the *dril-bu*. It furnishes information concerning the various types of *rdo-rje* and the characteristics of the *dril-bu*, i.e. (a) the handle in the shape of a five- or nine-pronged half *rdo-rje*, (b) the presence in the central part of the handle of a crowned head representing the Perfection of Wisdom (Prajñāpāramitā), (c) the presence on the upper part of the bell of an eight-petalled lotus, each petal of which bears a seed-syllable (*sa-bon*) corresponding to one of the tantric consorts of the Buddhas of the directions of the compass, and (d) the ornamentation on the skirt of the bell, which is specified according to the functions of the different types of bells. The classification proposed by the author of the text groups the various types of bells in relation to the five Jinas.

4) A Dge-lugs-pa commentary of the 19th century. [*Dpal rdo rje 'jigs byed chen po'i bskyes rdzogs kyi lam zab mo'i rim pa gñis kyi rnam bźag sku gsum nor bu'i bañ mdzod*. (I have no publication data for this text; the relevant passage was copied for me by a resident of Kathmandu.)] In this text the scholar Blo-bzañ lhun-grub (1819-1850) takes the data of the *Bka'*-*gyur* in a concise and at times even more explicit manner and proposes a classification in three classes: (a) the bell of *Rdo-rje sems-dpa'*; (b) the bell of the heroes (*Ḍpa'-bo'i dril-bu*); and (c) the bell of the Tathāgatas.

5) The *brtag-dpyad* of *Snags-'chan Hūm-ka-ra dza-ya*. [British Museum, coll. Charles Bell, Ms. Or. 11374, fol. 27-29a.] A short passage of this metrical text deals with musical instruments made of metal: cymbals (*sil-sñan*), bell (*dril-bu*), and small cymbals (*tiñ-śags*). The text emphasizes the regional varieties of bell-shape, namely bells of the Hor country, Chinese bells, Tibetan bells.

Data furnished by the examination of the bells

The fifty objects I have examined belong to various private and public collections,* and also include photographic material gathered in Ladakh and Bhutan. The elements considered in this typology concern the two parts of the bell which, as is well known, are fabricated separately and later assembled according to the needs of the buyer.

1) The handle (*yu-ba*) of the bell.

The top end of the handle is in the shape of a half *rdo-rje* with five (*rtse lna pa*) or nine prongs (*rtse dgu pa*). In both cases, each of the curved prongs may or may not issue from the head of a sea-monster (*chu-srin*, Skt. *makara*). The middle part is distinguished by the presence of a head adorned with a five-pointed crown, which, according to various written sources and oral data, may represent either the face of Prajñāpāramitā or the face of one of the Buddhas of the Directions. At the base of the handle one finds either a vase (*bum-pa*) or a ring. The combination of the various elements that constitute the handle enables us to envisage eight types of handle (designated by the letters *a, b, c, d, e, f, g, and h*).

Types of handle	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	
five-pronged half <i>rdo-rje</i>	+	+	+	+					
nine-pronged half <i>rdo-rje</i>					+	+	+	+	
<i>chu-srin</i> heads	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	
crowned head	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
vase	+		+		+		+		
ring		+		+		+		+	
number of bells in the sample	36	2	1	0	2	0	2	7	= 50

fig. 1, the different types of bell-handle

* Musée Guimet and Musée de l'Homme (Paris), Musée G. Labit (Toulouse), Leiden Museum, Rotterdam Museum, Munich Museum, Musée de Neufchâtel, Newark Museum, Metropolitan Museum and Musée Jacques Marchais (New York), Yale University Museum, etc.

2) The body of the bell.

The "shoulder" of the bell (*dpun-pa*) is in most cases decorated with an eight-petalled lotus in the petals of which the eight Sanskrit seed-syllables are inscribed in *dbu-can* or in *lan-tsha* characters. The orientation of these syllables is not constant, but they are always:

<i>Tām</i>	<i>Tārā</i>
<i>Pām</i>	<i>Pāṇḍaravāsini</i>
<i>Mām</i>	<i>Māmaki</i>
<i>Lām</i>	<i>Locanā</i>
<i>Bām</i>	<i>Vajradhātviśvari</i>
<i>Tsum</i>	<i>Cundā</i>
<i>Bhrm</i>	<i>Bhrkuṭi</i>
<i>Mām</i> repeated	<i>Māmaki</i> or <i>Mārici?</i>

Except in a few cases (e.g., the bell called *dpa-bo'i dril-bu*, or according to others *mya-nañ las dril-bu*, which is smooth and without ornamentation), the decoration of the skirt of the bell follows specific rules: (a) at the top there must be a waist consisting of a rosary of eight (or twelve, or sixteen) *rdo-rje* placed horizontally; (b) at the base, a barrier of some forty *rdo-rje* placed vertically; and (c) in the middle, eight monster heads (*ci mi 'dra*, Skt. *kīrtimukha*) vomiting garlands of pearls shaped like necklaces and half-necklaces (*dra-ba dra-phyed*, Skt. *hāra-ardhahāra*). These necklaces, in turn, surround eight symbols which may be identical (i.e. eight '*khor-lo*, eight *rdo-rje*, eight lotuses, eight jewels, or eight swords), or different (i.e. a '*khor-lo* + a *rdo-rje* + a lotus... and so on).

By combining the various elements which intervene in the decoration of the body of the bell, we arrive at eleven different types which are designated in the following table by capital letters from A to K. Only one of these has not occurred among the samples I have examined.

Using the two tables proposed here, it is now possible to classify every bell found by means of two letters: a lower case letter for the handle and a capital letter for the body. For instance, a bell of the *a.G.* type (the most common type actually in use) will appear always as a bell whose handle has at the top a five-pronged half *rdo-rje*, of which each of the four curved prongs issues from the mouth of a *chusrin*; in the middle a crowned head; and at the base a vase (*bum-pa*). The shoulder of this bell is covered by an eight-petalled lotus inscribed with the eight seed-syllables already mentioned, and the skirt carries the basic kind of decoration—the waist consisting of a rosary of *rdo-rje*, eight monster heads spilling garlands of pearls which surround eight different symbols, and, at the base near the opening of the bell, a barrier of *rdo-rje*.

Type of body	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
8-petalled lotus inscribed with seed-syllables	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
waist consisting of a rosary of rdo-rje	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
8 monsters vomiting pearl-garlands	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
symbols:	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-
all identical											
different											
rdo-rje barrier	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
number of bells in the sample	2	3	1	0	2	22	5	9	1	1	4

'Khor-10
 8
 rdo-rje
 8
 Jewels
 8
 lotuses
 8
 swords
 8
 Khor-10, no. indefinite

= 50

fig. 2, the different types of decoration on the body of the bell

ASPECTS OF CEREMONIAL BEHAVIOR IN BON-PO MONASTIC LIFE

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I describe here some aspects of the protocol and ceremonial behavior that regulate Bon-po monastic life and which are clearly different from the liturgy itself. These include various conventional ways of calling to assembly the monastic community for the performance of any rite or for monastic disputation, the manner of welcoming important personages, and the accepted forms of behavior during the realization of a ritual, as well as conventions of dress, seating arrangement, and the like.

Of the six hereditary lineages of the Bon-po only *Bru*, *Zu* and *G'sen* had ritual systems proper to them.¹ Rituals originating from the same *tantra* or line of teachings and using even the same texts may vary in their actual realization (i.e. chant, ritual actions, etc.) according to different ritual traditions. Today the bulk of the extant Bon-po liturgy belongs to the *Bru* system and this is still carried on at New Sman-ri Monastery, now in the Simla Hills in India, the sole Bon-po monastic community of any import and the acknowledged center of Bon outside Tibet. It is still possible to find some liturgical texts belonging to the *G'sen* and *Zu* systems but they are few and far between; still rarer are individuals who know the oral transmissions that went with the ritual practices of these systems. In practical terms we can assume that what is left of Bon-po liturgy today, and is likely to persist, belongs to the *Bru* system as continued at New Sman-ri.²

¹ The various hereditary lineages of the Bon-po tradition are dealt with by Samten Karmay in *The Treasury of Good Sayings: A Tibetan History of Bon* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

² The original Sman-ri monastery was located in Tsang, east of Shigatse. Its organization and administration have been discussed by Per Kvaerne in "Remarques sur l'administration d'un monastère Bon-po," *Journal Asiatique*, CCLVIII (Paris, 1970).

Naturally matters of form and ceremonial behavior tend to vary in different monasteries and in different ritual traditions. The original Sman-ri monastery followed the *Bru* system and the practices instituted by its founder Śes-rab rgyal-mtshan.³ Some of these were codified at a later stage, and others are transmitted orally. In this paper I present all of those ceremonial aspects that are not rite, but which nevertheless constitute an important part of monastic activity, and which we are able to distinguish as having a clearly separate identity from the ceremony itself.

My main written source is the *bca'-yig*, the book of rules codified by Bsod-nams blo-gros (died 1835), the twenty-first abbot of Sman-ri. These prescriptions were strictly enforced in old Sman-ri and are to some extent adhered to on the precincts of New Sman-ri, given that the circumstances in India are greatly changed. The text I have used is a modern manuscript in the possession of the present abbot of Sman-ri, Sangye Tenzin.⁴ Other information I have gathered from personal observations at this monastic institution and from discussions with the bearers of the tradition there. The drum-beating in praise of *G'sen-rab* is described in the *rgyab-skyor*, a support-text for the ritual guidelines (*zin-ris*) of the practices according to the *Bru* system.⁵

It appears that discipline was one of the cornerstones of life in the old monastery and something of which its members were proud. An anecdote giving us clues as to the attitude on matters of discipline is told in Bsod-nams blo-gros' biography. Here is a summary:

³ Śes-rab rgyal-mtshan was chief of one of the colleges of gYas-ru Dban-sa-kha monastery (founded in 1072), a very important center of learning of the *Bru* lineage in Tsang province when it was destroyed by a flood at the end of the 14th century. He later founded Sman-ri monastery in 1405 in the upper part of the same valley. He was a great reformer and systematized the teachings and ritual practices of gYas-ru Dban-sa-kha, which he continued at Sman-ri.

⁴ For the place of the present abbot in the lineage, see Per Kvaerne, "A Chronological table of the Bon-po," *Acta Orientalia*, XXXIII (1971).

⁵ *G'sen bstan bkra b'sis sman ri'i zin ris rnams kyi rgyab skyor gser gyi me loñ b'zugs-so*, found in miscellanea entitled *Rnam 'dren rgyal ba'i dbaṅ po mñam med chen po sogs bla ma sgrub pa'i las tshogs kyi gsuñ pod b'zugs-so* (Tibetan Bon-po Monastic Centre, 1973), pp. 113-170.

One day, we are told, Bsod-nams blo-gros, wanting to see how discipline was being enforced, went to the roof of his monastery, where he could be easily seen. He wore a long-sleeved garment which was clearly against the rules. Soon after, he was called to the *thun-ra*, an open place like a verandah where monks gathered to meditate and where, on occasion, someone who had committed a fault was punished. Admonished for his breach of conduct Bsod-nams blo-gros was ready to accept retribution, but people interceded on his behalf. Since his intention was only to test the community's readiness to apply regulations, even to its leader, they suggested that he only be punished symbolically. Consequently, not his body but his shadow was beaten.

The story goes on to relate that on that occasion Bsod-nams blo-gros left the imprints of his hands and feet on the stones that paved the place (since he had bent to receive his beating). These stones were later placed on the walls of the *thun-ra* to remind everyone of that episode.

1. Call to Assembly in the Tradition of Sman-ri

The call to assembly in Sman-ri follows an old tradition that goes back to gYas-ru Dban-sa-kha monastery, where monks were called to the temple by a conch shell (*dun-dkar*). In gYas-ru Dban-sa-kha, because it was a large monastery and the instruments' sounds could not reach every corner, there were two special spots from which the conch-shells were sounded. In most places it is the custom to sound them from the roof of the temple or another elevated point.

First of all, a percussion instrument made of slate (*rdo-tiñ*) is played to warn those monks who will later blow the call from the roof. The performer bows three times and strikes the *rdo-tiñ* once softly and twice more loudly. He then strikes it thirteen times waiting between each stroke until the sound of the previous stroke fades away. Immediately after that he plays a pattern of successive strokes at increasing speed and diminishing loudness called *rol-mo* and ends up by playing a group of three slow strokes (*z'og-rna*).⁶

⁶ *Rol-mo* in the Bon tradition indicates a particular pattern of performance and it is not to be confused with *rol-mo* when used as an alternative name for the *sbug-chal*, the big-bossed cymbals

Then two monks on the roof of the temple place their conch-shells on the floor, put their hats (which they carry on their shoulders) on top of them and bow three times while reciting the Bon-po formula of refuge (*skyabs-'gro*). They put on their hats, which they then wear throughout, and recite once, *recto tono*, the verses "*Bde chen rgyal po...*" etc.⁷ After this they blow the conch-shells once in what is called the 'phar mode: this begins with a series of consecutive short, fast attacks called *duñ-'dab*, is followed by a long, drawn-out note (*duñ-tshig*), and is completed by another group of fast attacks. A single pitch is obtained from the conch-shells. Since they are always played in pairs, this pitch is modulated by introducing the hand in the pavillon of the instrument so that both play in tune. The dynamic pattern of the long note (*tshig* or *duñ-tshig*) consists of a short attack, a fast crescendo that culminates in a quick articulation and ends in a slow diminuendo: it is generally said that a graphic representation of this dynamic pattern should look like the profile of the instrument. Thus a schematic representation of a conch-shell blown in the 'phar

used by the Bon-pos as well as the sects of Tibetan Buddhism. The *żog-ṙna* motif indicates the ending strokes of an instrumental interlude. It can be described as the strokes that mark the putting aside of the instrument.

- 7 "*Bde chen rgyal po...*" are verses of praise to Śes-rab rgyal-mtshan. Unfortunately his full biography is not extant, but tradition tells of his meeting and friendship with Tson-kha-pa, the Buddhist founder of the Dge-lugs-pa sect. At that meeting they exchanged verses of praise and hence, after Śes-rab rgyal-mtshan's death, the "*Bde chen rgyal po...*" prayer came to be adopted at Sman-ri to honor him. There are two versions of this prayer. The original was used at Sman-ri; the alternative version carries modifications introduced by Bsod-nams blo-gros and was used in gYuñ-druñ gliñ monastery, another important center of Bon-po monastic activity in Tsang, where the *Bru* ritual tradition was predominant:

Bde chen rgyal po kun bzan rgyal ba 'dus
Mi brjed gzun̄s ldan śes rab smra ba'i sruñ
'Dzam gliñ bon gyi gtsug rgyan mñam med pa
Ses rab rgyal mtshan żabs la gsol ba 'debs

The alternative version, for the second and third lines, reads:

Kun mkhyen dbaṅ po śes rab smra ba'i sruñ
Mkhas maṅs bon gyi gtsug rgyan mñam med pa

but is otherwise the same.

mode would look like this, though one should note that this is not an accepted form of notation:

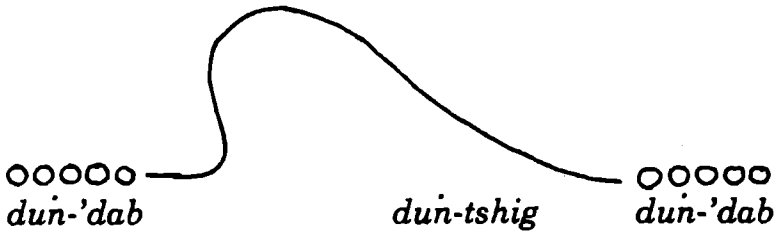


fig. 1

Then the four-verse stanza "*Bde chen rgyal po...*" is intoned ten times in the *tshogs-'don*⁸ tone at a slow pace and after that the conch-shells are blown four times, the *dun-'dab* feature opening and closing the performance of this motive. The stanza is then intoned as before five more times and the conch-shells are again blown four times, also preceded and concluded by the *dun-'dab* feature. After the first three long notes the performers, who until now were looking downhill, for monasteries are rarely placed on flat terrain, turn around and blow the last note looking uphill. The "*Bde chen rgyal po...*" is repeated another five times at a faster pace, since by now the monastic community should have assembled. Finally the conch-shells are blown four more times, looking uphill as before. The instruments are then placed on the floor with the hats on top of them. The monks bow three times while saying the "hundred syllable mantra" (*yig-brgya*) and a prayer (*smoṅ lam sgo gsum dag pa*). The stanza is repeated twenty-one times in all and there are thirteen long notes played on the conch, which corresponds symbolically to the thirteen stages (*sa ḡcu gsum*) of arhatship according to Bon-po teachings.

⁸ Bon-po texts can be delivered during the liturgy in three different forms: using simple recitation *recto tono* with no particular intonation (*śar-'don*), using intonation formulae (*skad*), and using elaborate chanting of the texts (*gyer*). Bon-po ceremonies are classified into three main categories, i.e. ceremonies of the outer, inner and secret classes (*phyi, nañ, gsañ*). The *tshogs-'don* is one of the several score of intonation formulae which are meticulously codified for their use with different texts of the Bon-po liturgical corpus. Its *locus classicus* is to be found in the offerings (*tshogs*) that go with the ceremonies of the outer class.

Bde chen rgyal po... *recto tono* once



Bde chen rgyal po... *tshog-'don tone* ten times



Bde chen rgyal po... as above five times



here the performers
turn around

Bde chen rgyal po... as above five times



fig. 2

The *dun-'dab*, a stylistic feature accompanying the blowing of conch-shells, always begins and ends each group of notes. Each group of *tshig* is called a "blowing" (*dun-brda* or *dun-skad*) and they delimit the recitation of the prayer.

At the sound of the *rdo-tin* the monks should wear all their prescribed garments which include cape, yellow hat, rosary and other accoutrements. At the first sounding of the conch they should start towards the temple; by the second blowing they should be sitting in their correct places; and by the end of the third the master of rites must commence the recitation. It is at this point, when the monastic assembly is gathered, that the monks calling the assembly from the roof of the temple turn around and blow their instruments looking uphill. When the call finishes no one is allowed to join in the assembly, neither is anyone allowed to leave without permission from the proctor. If leave is granted, he is offered water in his hand first. No messages are permitted to pass in or out of the assembly, and if any announcement is to be made it must be made before assembly or otherwise conveyed to the residences of the monks concerned.

There is another manner of calling the monks to assemble to eat or to gather outside the temple for doctrinal disputation. This is done by beating the *'khar rna*, a small hand-held gong made of the metal alloy called *'khar ba*, with a stick that is padded at one end with cloth material, the *the'u*. It can be struck either on the center or on the rim; this latter form of playing is called *zur tshag*, and the sound so produced is referred to as *phram phram*.

The drum is played as follows: first the *rol-mo* pattern, i.e. a series of strokes played at increasing speed and diminishing intensity, is struck three times on the rim. Then thirteen strokes are played on the center, followed by the *rol-mo* pattern once. Finally the *rol-mo* pattern is replayed three times on the rim.

rol-mo 3 times on the rim	1, 2, 3...13, rol-mo on the center	rol-mo 3 times on the rim
------------------------------	---------------------------------------	------------------------------

fig. 3.

2. (a) The Drum-beating in Praise of G'sen-rab (G'sen-rab mchod-rna) and (b) The Bell of the Gods (Iha-yi ghañdi)

These are two ceremonials in which the Prayer of the Precious Stone (*nor bu smon lam*),⁹ consisting of one hundred and eight verses, is recited. In the case of the "Drum-beating in Praise of G'sen-rab" drums, cymbals, long trumpets and other instruments accompany the recitation. "The Bell of the Gods," that is, the *ghañdi*, is a long wooden plank, sometimes carved, which is held across the left shoulder and is beaten with a thickish stick each time a verse of the prayer is said. The origin of this ceremonial goes back to prince Kun-dga'-'od, a former incarnation of Ston-pa G'sen-rab, the founder of Bon. It is said that when he went to the "island of the precious water-gems beyond the ocean" in search of the wish-fulfilling jewel he met G'sen-rab 'dod-pa dgu-'gyur, a god of wealth who granted his request. He then composed the "Prayer of the Precious Stone" (*nor bu smon lam*) in praise of the god and recited for him every one of its one hundred and eight verses accompanied by a drum stroke. Because of this and his other spiritual accomplishments he would attain complete enlightenment as G'sen-rab Mi-bo, founder of the Bon religion, in the age when men lived a hundred years, and so became

⁹ *Nor bu smon lam*, found in the *Rnam-rgyal* cycle of ceremonies (New Delhi, 1972), pp. 97ff.

the "great teacher of beings difficult to tame in the thousand million universes," one of his many epithets.¹⁰ The practice he thus originated was later instituted in Sman-ri by Śes-rab rgyal-mtshan, its founder.

(a) The "Drum-beating in Praise of Gśen-rab" is performed on sundry occasions in the liturgy and during major festivals; it is also a ceremonial welcome to high lamas and other persons of importance. Other circumstances for its performance are the anniversary of Śes-rab rgyal-mtshan on the fifth day of the first Tibetan month, and during ceremonies celebrating the death of Zla-ba rgyal-mtshan, founder of the gYun-drūn-glin monastery, on the eighth day of the eleven Tibetan month. It is then performed at night in the main temple and again in the chapel of the guardians of Bon (*sgrub-khañ*), in the abbot's residence, etc. It is also performed within the context of the *Kloñ-rgyas* ritual, a ceremony associated with death rites and related to the *Rnam rgyal* cycle.¹¹ This is a phenomenon worth remarking. The incorporation into the body of the ritual of this ceremonial welcome, more commonly performed when receiving earthly personages, make the strict demarcation of a line between simple ceremonial behavior and ritual action tenuous indeed. However there is a simple explanation in this case: most rituals contain as one of their important parts the invocation of a deity, who is treated much as is a person. Hence, the inclusion of the formal welcome as part of the ritual.

(b) The beating of the *ghaṇḍi* is usually done from the roof of the temple. It is most commonly used to call gatherings of monks for confession (*'dul ba gso sbyoñ*), the taking of vows (*dam bca'*), doctrinal disputation (*mtshan ñid*) and for gatherings having anything to do with the *Three Learnings* (*bslab pa gsum*). The performer bows three times to the objects of refuge and, in order to avoid disturbing people who are in meditation or other similar pursuits, he first plays the *gśaṅ-rtsa* pattern three times. This is similar to the *rol-mo* pattern mentioned above. In the *rgyab skyor* it is graphically represented as follows:

10 This story is told in the *Rnam-rgyal gsuñ-chen*, a text related to the *Rnam-rgyal* cycle of ceremonies (New Delhi, 1972), pp. 60ff.

11 For a survey of Bon-po ceremonies, see Per Kvaerne, "The Canon of the Tibetan Bon-pos," *Indo-Iranian Journal*, vol. XVI, No. 1-2 (1974).

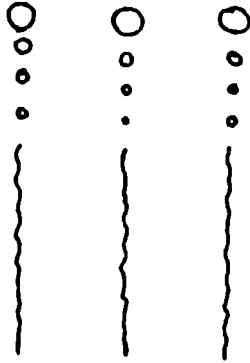


fig. 4

Then he plays in a crescendo-decrescendo mode, striking each count louder than the next from counts one to eighteen; each softer than the next from nineteen to thirty-six; and so on through three cycles up to count one hundred and eight. With every stroke a verse of the "Prayer of the Precious Stone" is recited. Every crescendo is called a *rgyud* and each decrescendo a *rol*. The whole pattern in connection with this structure is referred to as *rgyud gsum rol gsum*. During the performance of the hundred and eight counts the player walks in what is known as the "continuous stride of the *svāstika*" (*gYun drun lu ku brgyud*), which consists of a long step and half-turn towards the left, the movement being repeated towards the right. This results in a winding pattern of motion. He walks in this gait, circling the place counter-clockwise, and remains for eighteen counts in each of the four directions and thirty-six counts in the center, which signifies zenith and nadir. Nearing the end of his counting, he approaches the starting-point and ends the performance with three long, loud, deliberate strokes.

If the *ghaṇḍi* is played before doctrinal disputation the monastic community, already prepared, will commence the debate by making their first clap, which indicates the posture of a debating point, coincide with the third and final stroke of the *ghaṇḍi*.

3. Norms of behavior and general prescriptions for the performance of ceremonies

Seating arrangements of the monastic assembly consist of straight rows perpendicular to the main door of the room, not bending either to the right or left. Monks should sit neither stooping nor bending backwards, in the position of a bodhisattva, i.e. cross-legged, the back of the left hand on the palm of the right one, with a straight spine, the head tilted slightly forward and looking down. The proctor, or master of discipline (*dge-bskos*), watches for any sign of misconduct and ensures good behavior in the assembly.

The following does not apply strictly to New Sman-ri, where the physical configuration of the temple is necessarily different from that of the old monastery in Tibet. In the old monastery there was a high seat for the abbot (*mkhan po*) and to his left a slightly lower one for the chief instructor (*dpon slob*). The main aisle leads from the door to the image of Ston-pa Gsen-rab, and to the left and right every two adjoining rows—the monks sit back to back—there are narrower aisles. The first seats of the two main rows to the left and right (i.e. those nearest to the image) are occupied by the senior and junior masters of rites (*dbu mdzad che*, *dbu mdzad chun*), each one with a drum hanging on a frame in front of him. Today there are no separate seats for the abbot and the chief instructor. They now occupy the places formerly filled by the senior and junior masters of rites. The rest remains the same.

Usually the senior master of rites officiates at the ceremony and only one drum is played, but on the special occasions when antiphonal chanting is employed the assembly is divided into two groups, each under the direction of a master of rites, who alternate in the recitation. Next to the masters of rites sit the recognized incarnations (*sprul sku*) and the lineage lamas, who are members of any one of the six Bon-po hereditary lineages.

It should be noticed that though incarnation and lineage lamas are paid due respect their status does not confer on them any other special privilege in the monastic hierarchy; their careers will be determined by merit rather than status. On occasion, if they pay for suitable offerings to the monastic community, they can sit higher than the monks but not above the chief instructor or the abbot. They are then called *bla-ma khri-pa*, "throne lamas," and are offered scarves and other gifts in an installation ceremony called *khri-pa bzes-pa*. However they must revert to lower seats in normal circumstances.

The rest of the monks sit in order of seniority, which is counted from the day of ordination regardless of age, the grading of ranks being from the image towards the door and from the main aisle towards the sides. Cymbals and other musical instruments are distributed in the first rows; the long trumpets (*duñ chen*) are generally put in the back rows. When assembling in rows in the temple, care should be taken that there is no mistake in the seating. It is said that the assembly gathers from the center (the abbot, etc.) and disperses from the end (the more recently ordained monks). Water in the hand, a prerequisite for leaving the assembly, should also be offered from the end.

The master of rites must see that whatever ceremony is performed, the ritual order is maintained according to the *zin ris* of the pertinent ceremony. These texts, ancillary to the main ritual text, regulate the *odro ritualis*. He should discourage people coming to ceremonies just for food, or thinking themselves experts and making things up instead of following the tradition. He should also discourage complacency in doctrinal matters and prevent people from deciding for themselves on ritual practices and oral tradition. Regarding the performance of rites in the *Bru* tradition of Sman-ri, the master of rites should rehearse the direct transmission of the practices as they came from old masters. He should organize the performance according to the time available and arrange suitable tea and meal breaks.¹² Also he must determine the application of chant, recitation, instrumental formulae, etc., to the various parts of the ceremony and see that the assembly intones together and in unison. The master of rites chooses the tempo and the recitation must spread slowly from the center, just as when a stone is thrown into the water and the ripples expand. The monks must not recite with an unpleasant voice, referred to as "goats' bleat and sheeps' bleat" (*ra skad lug skad*). It is the responsibility of the master of rites to teach monks to chant in the appropriate manner. Though not necessarily required in the *Bru* tradition, the characteristic deep timbre of the

¹² There are six repasts daily (*ja thug drug*)—a morning tea (*zog ja*), a mid-morning small tea (*nun ja*), a midday meal (*gun tshogs*), afternoon tea (*gun yol ja*), an evening tea (*dgon ja*) and evening gruel (*bzes thug*). Ceremonies are interrupted at suitable points so that meals can be served. The whole process of calling the monks to assemble is repeated every time that there are breaks in the often day-long performance of a ceremony; the last meal is sometimes signalled by the use of the *'khar-rna*.

voice, rich in harmonics, used by some Buddhist ritual systems is known among Bon-pos. It is called the "voice of the dragon" (*'brug skad*) and is used at the discretion of the performers. Monks engaged to perform privately sponsored ceremonies should not take any other engagements and therefore put aside the original arrangement or send someone else in their stead.

On the morning of the ceremony the assistant (*mchod dpon* or *mchod gYog*) should sweep the temple well, systematically starting from the back. When the assembly is gathered he goes around with a bundle of incense sticks, waving it thirteen times in front of the abbot, five times in front of the master of rites, and five times in front of the incarnation and lineage lamas. Then coming down the main aisle (i.e. towards the door), he waves the incense sticks once every three monks, proceeding to the rows of the left aisle. He then repeats the procedure, this time starting from the back rows of the right side until he reaches the first row of the same side. Then he goes to the place of the chief instructor and waves the incense sticks seven times in front of him before returning to the center, where he bows three times and retires to his own place near the main entrance of the temple. He cannot come and go as he pleases, but should repeat the operation at suitable intervals until the end of the ceremony.

Concluding Remarks

The issues I have discussed in this paper have been selected from my written and oral sources because they bear upon form and not merely upon discipline in the sense of *tshul-khrims*. I have therefore described aspects of formal ceremonial behavior as prescribed by tradition or set down in written rules, attempting to illuminate differences between ritual and ceremonial behavior which are not always evident to the noninitiate. These practices still survive at New Sman-ri and are largely respected since they are considered an essential part of the tradition and an important factor in monastic life. They in fact contribute to the survival of the ritual tradition since they provide an external support and a behavioral context for the ritual system which otherwise, in the present cultural circumstances, would be difficult to continue meaningfully.

THE BHUTANESE COLLECTION IN NEUCHÂTEL*

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This report, abstracted from an illustrated lecture presented at the 1982 Seminar for Tibetan Studies, deals with selected items in the Bhutanese collection in Neuchâtel. They represent only a few of the more than 180 items from Bhutan now held by the Musée d'ethnographie. The collection was begun in 1968 when H.M. Jigme Dorje Wangchuck, the late king of Bhutan, initiated arrangements for a permanent exhibition in Switzerland with his friends Fritz and Monica de Schulthess. The Musée d'ethnographie was given the core of a collection of Bhutanese art and handicrafts which was to be enriched by further gifts from the present king, H.M. Jigme Singye Wangchuck, members of the royal family and Mr. and Mrs. de Schulthess, among other benefactors. In the course of my own curatorial work at the museum I have also added to the collection, which is now unique in its variety and size, surpassed only by the outstanding collection at the Bhutan National Museum in Paro.

For the purpose of the Seminar paper, the presentation of items from the collection had to be limited, and for inclusion in these proceedings had to be further circumscribed, the slide illustrations being omitted.¹ The items dealt with in the following pages may be called specifically Bhutanese in the sense that they can be somehow distinguished from their known Tibetan counterparts. My intention is to show that notwithstanding its historical and ethnic links with Tibet, Bhutan has to a certain extent developed a culture of its own. At present, however, that culture offers us little access since field studies are seldom permitted by the Bhutanese government and reliable literature is still scarce.

* In connection with this research I am greatly indebted to Dr. M.V. Aris, whose help and advice have been constant since 1969, the first of my four visits to Bhutan, and to several Bhutanese friends, especially the Venerable Mynak Rinpoche, director of the Bhutan National Museum.

¹ For more information and illustrations, one may consult my *Collection du Bhoutan*, hereafter referred to as MM 1962.

Bhutanese items related to the practice of Buddhism are very similar, if not identical, to their Tibetan counterparts. However, it is worth noting the conchshell (*duñ-dkar*) 73.12.4 (fig. 1, and MM 1982: ill. p. 125) whose superb ornamentation is, as far as I know, unrivalled in Tibetan specimens. The conch is entirely wrapped in embossed and engraved gilt silver. Its apron, meant to guide and amplify the sound, has on it the dragon (*'brug*), the national emblem of *'Brug-yul* (Bhutan), standing out from a rich floral background studded with auspicious symbols (*bkra-sis rtags-brgyad*) in turquoise, lapis-lazuli and coral.



fig. 1

Stylistic and thematic differences are particularly noticeable in painting, exemplified in our collection by two thankas. In the background, where the painter enjoys a certain amount of freedom of interpretation, the vegetation looks typically Bhutanese. The theme itself is closely associated with Bhutan, for the series which includes these thankas deals with the *'Brug-pa Bka'-brgyud gser-'phren*, the line of Tibetan hierarchs at the origin of the Bhutanese theocracy founded in 1616 by *Žabs-druñ Nag-dbañ rnam-rgyal* (1594-1651), who established the *'Brug-pa Bka'-brgyud* as the dominant school in the country. Both thankas have the same composition—a central

figure topped by a Buddha (Vajradhara, Amitābha) and surrounded by *mahāsiddhas*, the lower register being occupied by Tibetan 'Brug-pa hierarchs. Among the latter, we find twelve collateral descendants of the founder of the 'Brug-pa school, Gtsaṅ-pa rgya-ras Ye-śes rdo-rje, and the incarnations of Tibet's three protectors: Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī and Vajrapāṇi.² Thangka 68.4.1 (MM 1982: ill. p. 101) is dedicated to Gtsaṅ-pa rgya-ras Ye-śes rdo-rje (1161-1211), while thangka 68.4.2 (MM 1982, ill. p. 105) represents Kun-mkhyen Padma dkar-po (1527-1592), an incarnation of Gtsaṅ-pa rgya-ras held to have later incarnated himself in Ḍabs-druṅ Ṅag-dbaṅ rnam-rgyal.³ A preliminary analysis of these thangkas can be found in MM 1982:98-105. Suffice it here to stress that by some strange good fortune the only thankas of the '*Brug-pa Bka'-brgyud gser-'phreṅ* belonging to our collection are closely connected to the most prominent figure in Bhutan's history, the founder of the theocracy, related by blood to Gtsaṅ-pa rgya-ras and spiritually to Padma dkar-po.

Some thankas, called *gos-sku*, are made in the appliqué technique (*tshem-sgrub*) that used to be known in Central Tibet, but in which Bhutan earned a particularly high reputation based on its own production, which continues to this day. The appliqué technique consists in assembling fragments of cloth in the manner of a stitched mosaic, sometimes augmented with embroidery. In the absence of any appliqué thangka in the collection, we have a remarkable and very rare example of this technique as applied to the old woolen jacket 77.4.4 (fig. 2, and MM 1982: ill. p. 119), part of an *a-tsa-ra* or clown dress (?). In the center of the back is the Wheel of the Law with the three-branch spiral signifying ceaseless change. In the lower corners, framed by the "Great Chinese wall" (*Rgya-nag lcags-ri*) made of interlocked *svāstikas*, two protective monster-masks (fig. 3) spit out clouds of prosperity.

² Cf. Stein 1972, p. 10, and Roerich 1976, pp. 671-2.

³ It was due to a contest raised by a rival, Dpag-bsam dbaṅ-po, who was claimed to be Padma dkar-po's true incarnation, that the Ḍabs-druṅ ultimately left his throne as XVIIIth Prince-abbot of Ralung in Tsang and took refuge in Bhutan. Aris 1979, pp. 205-206.



fig. 2

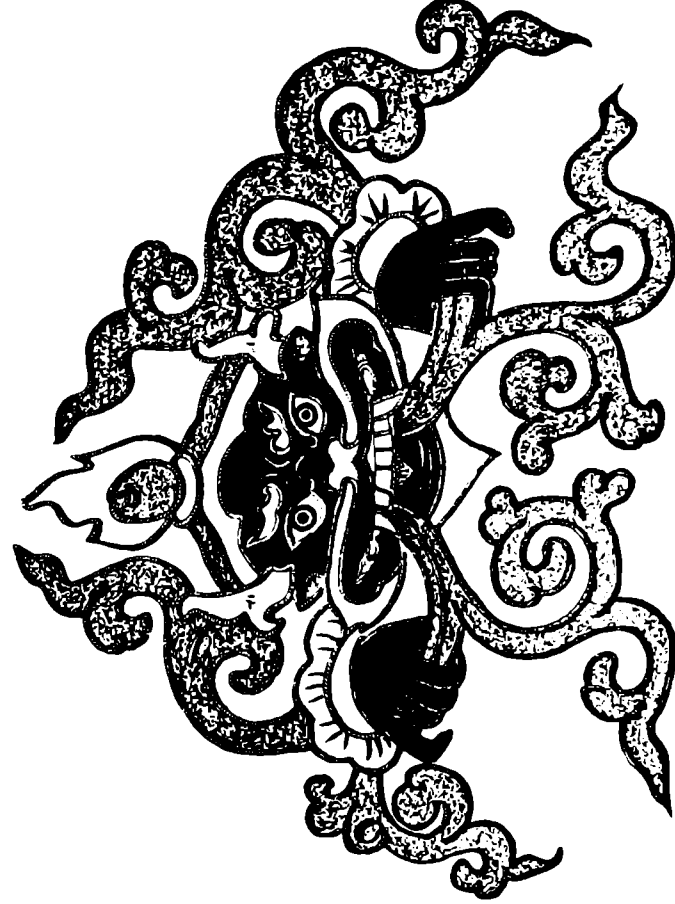


fig. 3

Differences in shape are illustrated by two items. The Bhutanese dagger 68.4.50 (MM 1982: ill. p. 145), called *tseptsha* in *Rdzon-kha* (Bhutan's official language) presents a four-sided blade whereas the Tibetan blade shows a groove. The Bhutanese lute 69.4.4 (MM 1982: ill. p. 151), or *sgra-sñan*, possesses seven strings against a maximum of six for the Tibetan instrument. According to Levy, who recorded temple and lay music in Bhutan, the seven strings are meant to represent the Seven Offering Goddesses.⁴

Differences in material can be partly explained by the different climatic conditions of Bhutan and Tibet, the fauna as well as the flora being much richer on the southern side of the Himalayas. The horn-vessel 68.4.32 (MM 1982: ill. p. 140) originates from a wild buffalo called *mahe*. Again, the extremely fine rhyton 68.4.31 (MM 1982: ill. p. 140) is made of an elephant tusk which has been faceted and partly covered with embossed gilt silver; its cap is surmounted by a fluted lotus bud. An exact replica of that rhyton, said to come from Southern Tibet,⁵ serves as a remarkable illustration of geographical factors. In the latter case, indeed, we find a yak's horn used instead of an elephant tusk. Moreover, besides wooden cups with or without silver lining, which are common to both countries, the ivory cup 73.12.18 (MM 1982: ill. p. 137) is a typically Bhutanese craft requiring much skill since the silver (rarely gold) lining has to fit with living matter likely to split or change in size.

After considering objects which have Tibetan counterparts, let us turn to some items which, if I am not mistaken, are not of Tibetan origin. A pair of embossed gilt silver cases (MM 1982: ill. p. 133) is definitely exclusively Bhutanese. On the lid of the rectangular case 79.10.6 (figs. 4 and 5), called *chaka*, two deer flanking a composite auspicious symbol evoke the Lord Buddha's first sermon in the Deer Park at Sarnath. The same animals, surrounding a lotus flower studded with a turquoise, adorn the lid of the round case 79.10.7 (figs. 6 and 7), called *timi*. The first case is meant to contain areca-nuts (*doma*) and betel leaves (*pan*). Cut into slices, the nut is mixed with some spicy lime kept in the round case and wrapped in a betel leaf for chewing.

⁴ *Tibetan buddhist rites from the monasteries of Bhutan*, recorded by John Levy (New York: Lyricord Discs Inc.).

⁵ *Lamaistic Art* 1975, p. 145.



fig. 4

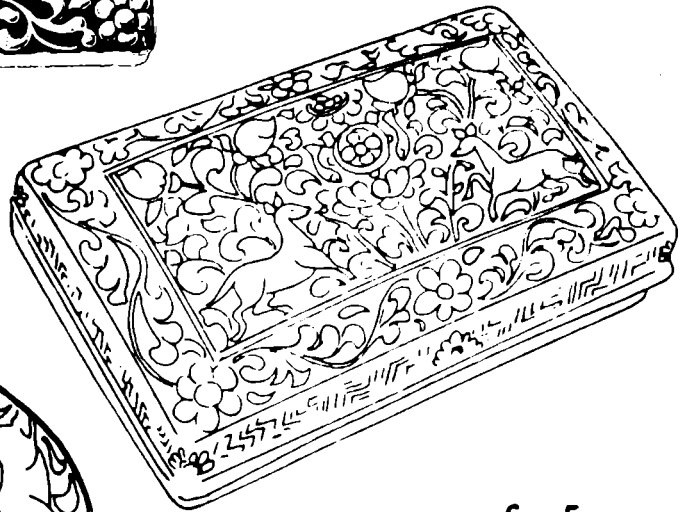


fig. 5



fig. 7

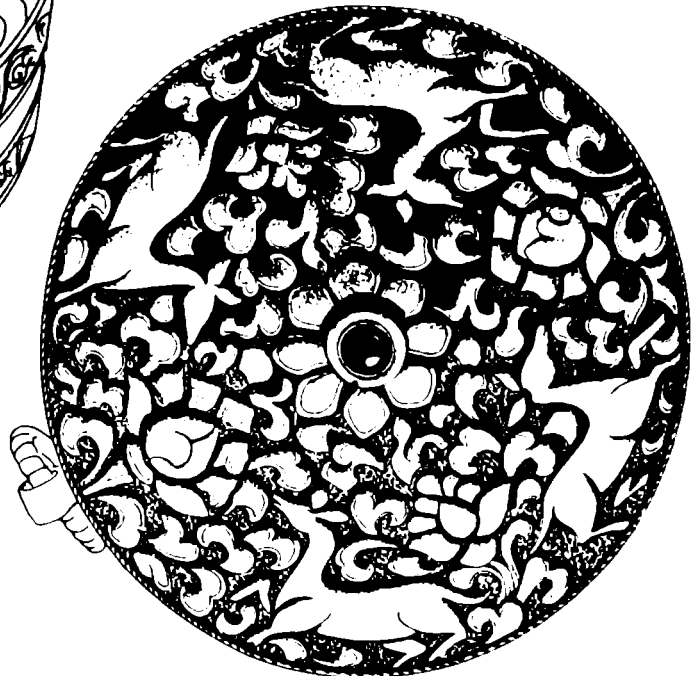


fig. 6

Another item characteristic of Bhutan is the pair of brooches 79.10.8 (fig. 8, and MM 1982: ill. p. 133), called *koma*, with which women clasp their dresses at the shoulders. These ancient gilt silver *koma* are ornamented with crossed *rdo-rjes* (*viśvavajra*) with lotuses in the center (i.e. the basis of the *maṇḍala*).



fig. 8

A bronze vessel 73.12.6 (MM 1982: ill. p. 139), called *trochung* (Tib. *khro-chun*), is used for preparing and serving *chang*. Fermented barley grains placed in a filter are covered with boiling water and pressed with a bamboo pestle which also serves as a ladle for pouring the warm and milky beer. Symbols of auspiciousness and wealth stand out around the neck of the vessel.

Archery bows, which used to be imported into Tibet from China or Bhutan according to Olson (1950 & 1971), are equally distinctive. The Bhutanese bow 68.4.44 (MM 1982: ill. p. 149), called *tapzhu*, is composed of two pieces of bamboo joined in the middle by metal ribs. With it is the basketwork quiver 68.4.43 (*soré*) and six arrows (*dha*), the shafts made of reed (*rema*) and provided with feathers from the

kalij, a kind of pheasant,⁶ and iron heads fixed by means of *lachu* (sealing wax, see below). I have never seen any evidence for the use of whistling arrows in Bhutan, as were used in Tibet. [For further information on archery, Bhutan's most popular sport, see MM 1982:144-9.]

Two types of handicraft deserve special mention for their originality: basketry and weaving. Most typical of Bhutanese basketry is the multicolored round double-basket 68.4.37 (MM 1982: ill. p. 137) called *bangchung*, or "food-basket." They used to be exported to Tibet⁷ and I have even seen one in a Ladakhi house. Such diffusion of a domestic item so common in Bhutan is certainly due to its exceptional quality. The perfect fit of the two convex parts prevents any accidental opening and the two layers of bamboo fibers render the basket almost watertight, a characteristic already noticed at the beginning of this century by J. Claude White, the first British agent stationed in this region.⁸ Among various items in basketwork, I mention only the hat 68.4.42 (MM 1982: ill. p. 135) made of two layers of bamboo fibers. Worn in the summer by men and women, hats vary in shape and color according to locality.

Of still greater interest are the weaving techniques and patterns. The traditional loom belongs to the body-tension type utilizing the weaver's feet to brace the warp beam. Another type of loom, the treadle loom, said to have been introduced to Bhutan by Tibetan refugees (probably in the 1960s), allows quicker, but less tightly woven, work.

The region of Bumthang in Central Bhutan is renowned for its woolen blankets, called *yatha* (*ya-khra*), with linear and floral designs on a usually dark, but sometimes white, background. Local wool produces a thicker fabric than the scoured wool imported from Australia. Both kinds of wool are dyed with the help of natural pigments: madder (probably *Rubia sikkimensis*); lac (obtained from the *Loccus lacca* or some similar tiny insect feeding on Indian trees) for scarlet, the residue of the dying bath being used as sealing wax, or by silversmiths for fixing metal parts; turmeric (ground-up tubers of *Curcuma tinctoria*) for orange-yellow; etc.⁹ Cotton and silk cloths usually have more intricate patterns, all of which are brocaded. Cotton and silk threads, already dyed, are imported from India and

⁶ *Genneaus leucomelanus melanotus*, according to Rosner 1967.

⁷ Cf. Brauen 1974, ill. p. 132.

⁸ White 1909 (1971), p. 299.

⁹ See also Denwood 1975 and Robinson 1969.

Hong Kong respectively. *Endi* silk is a kind of indigenous raw silk produced in Eastern Bhutan; the cocoons are treated only after metamorphosis is completed, so that the larva is not killed. In this way the Buddhist law is maintained.

On a traditional loom, the weaving of a *kira* (woman's dress) takes from three to twelve months according to the complexity of the pattern. The *kira* 80.10.1 (MM 1982: ill. p. 131) belongs to the style called *śno-sams sku-śu tha-ras*, from Kurtö, northeast Bhutan. I consider this the most interesting style because of its exceptionally rich variety of designs such as *pañ-khebs* (multicolored triangles named after the lama's napkin decorated in the same way), *śin-lo* (tree), *skar-ma* (star), *doma śin* (areca), *bya-po źur* (cock's comb), etc. As yet I have not been able to identify all the designs; it is more difficult today because the weavers no longer attach specific meanings to them.

Another type of weaving which was practiced in ancient Egypt as well as in China and was popular in Europe from the time of Charlemagne through the 16th century can be mentioned: cardweaving.¹⁰ Was it also used in Tibet? It is quite likely that it was, though the only evidence I have found is produced by Tibetan refugees who practice cardweaving in Nepal. In this technique flat tablets or cards form the shedding mechanism. The cards have holes near each corner through which the warp threads are passed. Each rotation of the cards brings new warp threads to the upper surface. In the case of the lady's belt (*skad-ra*) 73.12.31 (MM 1982: ill. p. 131), the twists produced by the rotation of the cards result in a tightly compacted fabric whose design looks like embroidery although it is not.

To conclude: in the light of some examples taken from the Bhutanese collection in the Musée d'ethnographie in Neuchâtel, I have tried to suggest two directions in the study of Bhutan's material culture. On the one hand, we can use a "Tibetan approach," as Snellgrove and Richardson have pointed out:

...of the whole enormous area which was once the spiritual domain of Tibetan culture and religion, stretching from Ladakh in the west to the borders of the Chinese provinces of Szechuan and Yunnan in the east, from the Himalayas in the south to the Mongolian steppes and the vast wastes of northern Tibet, now *only Bhutan* seems to survive as the

¹⁰ See, e.g., Emery 1979, p. 28.

one resolute and self-contained representative of a fast disappearing civilization.¹¹

Accordingly, similarities between Bhutan and traditional Tibet are certainly to be sought. But, on the other hand, there is a "Bhutanese approach" which distinguishes what is Bhutanese from what is Tibetan. Both approaches are complementary and have their own interest; the former fosters better knowledge of Tibetan civilization while the latter may provide evidence of a distinctive "bhutaneity." Following the latter approach, we have to interpret our evidence in terms of the ethnic and cultural mosaic spread along the southern side of the Himalayas. For the time being, however, the directions just outlined largely remain in the field of aspiration.

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¹¹ Snellgrove and Richardson 1980, p. 291.

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THE JEHOL TEMPLES AND THEIR TIBETAN MODELS*

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In 1703 the K'ang-hsi emperor built his summer residence in Ch'eng-te (Jehol), halfway between Peking and his Mu-lan hunting grounds,¹ not far from the then disputed frontier of his empire. Russian conquest of the Far East had become a real danger for Chinese dominion in the Amur region.² The Emperor feared also that the pugnacious western Mongols would find increasing power in a Russian alliance. The hunting season in Mu-lan was an opportunity to show his Mongol guests the strength of the Chinese army and the greatness of imperial majesty. The Emperor also thought it necessary to revive annually the national feelings and way of life of the Manchu nobility.³

The Mongols were new devotees of Buddhism. Little was left of the first Buddhist diffusion amongst the Mongols when, towards the end of the sixteenth century, some of their princes encountered the growing influence of the Dge-lugs-pa. They gave their faith to Buddhism and their political support to the Yellow Church, thus establishing links between Tibet and Central Asia that the Emperor considered dangerous for his empire.⁴

* The present paper is an abstract of a longer thesis, in progress.

¹ O. Franke, *Beschreibung des Jehol-Gebietes in der Provinz Chihli* (Leipzig, 1902); *Chengde bishu shanzhuang* (Peking, 1980); *Wenwu* (1956), no. 9, 10, 11, 12 and (1974), no. 12; M. Igarashi, *Nekka-koseki to tibetto-geijutsu* (Tokyo, 1942).

² J.F. Baddeley, *Russia, Mongolia, China* (London, 1919); G. Cahen, *Histoire des relations de la Russie avec la Chine sous Pierre le Grand* (Paris, 1912).

³ Cf. *Mu-lan ts'u* by Emperor Chia-ch'ing, quoted by Hou Chin-lang and M. Pirazzoli, "Les chasses d'automne de l'empereur Qianlong Mulan," *T'oung Pao*, LXV, 1-3 (1979), p. 41.

⁴ Baddeley, op. cit.; M. Courant, *L'Asie centrale aux XVII-XVIIIe siècles* (Lyon, 1912).

The K'ang-hsi and Ch'ien-lung emperors were well informed about Buddhism, at least about Lamaism, though they were concerned mainly with its political implications. Their only purpose was to link the Tibetan and Mongol populations of the northern and western border regions more closely to the heart of Han China. They did their best to succeed, alternately using armed force, diplomacy and seduction. Buddhism was the main concern of their diplomacy. The 1792 inscription of the Yung-ho kung shows how much Ch'ien-lung knew of Lamaism and the consequent nature of his behavior:⁵ "...By patronizing the Yellow Church we maintain peace among the Mongols. ...[in doing so] we do not show any bias, nor do we wish to adulate the Tibetan priests as [was done during] the Yüan dynasty." And the Ch'ien-lung emperor commented: "During the Yüan dynasty the lamas were worshipped in a way that interfered with the government."

The main point is that the Emperor could tolerate Buddhism, even protect it, but he could not let it interfere with the government. He had to place his law between the source of the religious power, the Potala, and the devotees. When he built the Outer Temples of Jehol to please the Mongols he consequently chose Tibetan models: the Potala of Lhasa; the monastery of Bsam-yas; Bkra-sis lhun-po, the residence of the second leader of the Yellow Church; and the destroyed Kulja temple, former pride of the Dzungars where in 1717 valuable relics had been transported from the Potala.⁶ Ch'ien-lung himself wrote most of the dedicatory inscriptions of the temples. These always indicated the model of the temple and the occasion of its building, e.g., the surrender of one of the Mongol Buddhist tribes, and coincided generally with an imperial birthday. There were eleven Outer Temples, of which eight have survived. Among these two are of purely Chinese style: P'u-jen szu built by K'ang-hsi in 1713 and Shu-hsiang szu built by Ch'ien-lung in 1774 to shelter a copy of a statue of Mañjuśrī from the sacred mountain Wu-t'ai shan,⁷ and thus balancing the neighboring Potala.

⁵ Quoted from F. Lessing, *Yung-ho-kung* (Stockholm, 1942); O. Franke, B. Laufer, *Epigraphische Denkmäler aus China* (Berlin, 1914).

⁶ L. Petech, *China and Tibet in the early 18th century* (Leiden, 1950).

⁷ Cf. D. M. Farquhar, "Emperor as Bodhisattva in the Governance of the Ch'ing Empire," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, 38, 1 (1978).

Foreign influence was not something new in Chinese architecture. Monuments such as the Pai-t'a *szu* or the Wu-t'a *szu* in Peking could provide the builders of Jehol with a general idea of the tradition of Buddhist architecture. But temples built in Mongolia in the early Ch'ing period and the temples of Tibet were then well known due to contact with monks from the lamaist monasteries in Peking, with Tibetan and Mongol pilgrims, with Chinese officials, traders and even Jesuit geographers. Tibetan literature is not rich in exclusively architectural works, although there is valuable information in the *dkar-chag*, *gdan-rabs* and *gnas-yig*. But why should the Chinese builders have troubled themselves to read Tibetan texts? There were learned lamas in Peking: the Lcan-skya Khutukhtu, for instance, advised the Emperor when he built the P'u-le *szu* (1766). However, Chinese builders had no need of Tibetan technical information since, as we shall see, they did not adopt a genuine Tibetan style but contented themselves and the Emperor with a "Tibetan look," employing some typical Tibetan elements superimposed on a Chinese structure.

Nevertheless, the builders did need models to obtain that Tibetan look. They undoubtedly found them in paintings which illustrated famous holy places of Tibet and were transported mainly by pilgrims all over Central Asia. There were still some of these paintings in the Jehol temples in the thirties.⁸ Both the paintings and the frescoes, which we know from photographs, sometimes give rather irregular images of the buildings they represent, which can explain some of the distortions noted in Jehol.

Surprisingly, an etching of the Potala made from sketches by the Jesuit Grüber in 1661 and published in *China Illustrata* by Kircher⁹ gives an exact view of the Potala. It shows clearly that the summit of the Dmar-po ri, on the west side of the rock, is now hidden by buildings, that is, it is adjacent to the northwest corner of the central courtyard where Sron-btsan sgam-po's cave is situated. Details of buildings shown in this etching may have been borrowed from the neighboring Lcags-po ri or confused with it. *China Illustrata* was in the Jesuits' library of the Pei-t'ang in Peking soon after 1732—thirty years before construction of the Potala in Jehol (1767). By that time the builders had surely seen paintings showing a more advanced

⁸ B. Henmi, *Chūgoku ramakyō bijutsu taikan* (Tokyo, 1975), pl. 863-869.

⁹ A. Kircher, *China Illustrata* (Amsterdam, 1667). The etching is inverted in the later English translation.

stage of the building, even if the disastrous events of the Dzungar invasion of 1717 required some reconstruction of it. Further distortion stems from the perspective of Tibetan paintings and its Chinese rendering, to which Tibetan visitors do not seem to have objected: it would not have been politic to criticize the Emperor's work. Moreover those Tibetans who knew of Jehol, mostly high-ranking lamas, did not think it more than what it was, a demonstration of imperial power veiled with sumptuous courtesy.

Chinese commentators insist on the unusual depth of perspective in Jehol, especially at the P'u-ning *szu*. There may have been a problem of perspective since the court circle was advised by Jesuits concerning European convergent perspective. The Emperor thought its expression in painting skillful but unartistic, so the Jesuits, official painters of the Court, were compelled to use the Chinese axonometric perspective. Their library contained, however, a great number of books on perspective and architecture,¹⁰ and one has to remember that the office of painting and that of architecture were closely situated in the Imperial Palace, i.e. in the Ch'i-hsiang kung, now T'ai-chi tien. The first real attempt at convergent perspective in Chinese painting, though despised by scholars, was made in the 1696 edition of the *Keng-chih-t'u* which was painted by imperial order. Later, in 1729, the *Shih-hsüeh* was published, a Chinese adaptation of a treatise on perspective by Pozzo. Though Jesuit painters worked in Jehol—and they left lively accounts of it—it would be mere imagination to think that they had much influence, the building of the temples being purely an internal Chinese matter. The Emperor, although he was conscious of the Jesuits' technical abilities, would not have thought of giving them a leading part at Jehol. On the other hand, the Jesuits would not have boasted about building temples for "idol worshippers," if they had been required to do it at a time when they were about to be condemned by Rome for their tolerant behavior towards Buddhism.

But how was this distortion of perspective expressed in Jehol? The Tibetan thangkas displaying architectural views use the axonometric perspective, as most Chinese paintings do; they also use

¹⁰ J. Van der Brandt, "La bibliothèque du Pe-t'ang," *Monumenta Serica*, (1939-1940).

¹¹ H. Bernard, *Le frère Attiret au service de K'ien-long* (Shanghai, 1943); V. Veit, "Die in Deutschland befindlichen Porträts der von Ch'ien-lung 1754-55 unterworfenen Olötenfürsten," *Zentralasiatische Studien*, 4 (1970).

divergent perspective, mainly used in India, but also in China and South-East Asia. The classical convergent European perspective is an exception in China, and so too in Tibet. It is to be found however on some late lamaistic paintings, probably influenced by European theories.¹² In the axonometric perspective, the painter looks from above. The first result is to show one building over another, although the one is really behind the other and should be thus hidden by the first one (as in European painting). The idea of axonometric perspective is to show things as they are, as close to nature as possible, whilst the European purpose is to show only what can be seen by the human eye. Thus the Jesuit etching of the Potala shows nothing of the Źol village, hidden by its wall. Tibetan paintings on the other hand show the houses on a gentle slope, though they are really built on flat ground at the foot of the hill; the optical result of this is to lessen its general height.¹³ One should have thought that the Chinese builders, seeing such painting which more or less followed their own standards of perspective, would render it correctly by placing their Źol on flat ground. But in spite of the fact that Tibetan lamas or Chinese officials who knew Lhasa were in Peking, the Jehol Potala was built as shown in the paintings, i.e. with the little houses of Źol scattered on the moderate slope of the hill that crowns the bulky square mass of the Temple. The Bsam-yas temple is built in the valley of the Gtsan-po, with a plan traditionally explained as a *maṇḍala*,¹⁴ and surrounded by a circular wall. Paintings, such as that held by the Newark Museum,¹⁵ likewise show the different pavillions one over the other, the sloping effect of it being emphasized by the zigzag rendering of the outer wall. The P'u-ning *szu* of Jehol was built accordingly over the slope of a hill, as if the builders had not recognized the axonometric perspective. There is little flat ground around the Summer Residence of Jehol, but at the time of the building of the P'u-ning *szu* (1755) the great flat ground on which the An-yüan *miao* was later built was still free and should have been suitable.

¹² Henmi, op. cit., no. 810, 813, 822, 826, 827.; *Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire*, Bruxelles, Ver. 212.

¹³ *Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire*, Bruxelles, Ver. 349.

¹⁴ R. A. Stein, *La civilisation tibétaine* (Paris, 1981), notes the possible influence of the Ming-t'ang.

¹⁵ Newark Museum, no. 20271.

P'u-ning *szu's* distortions seem to result from a deliberately uncritical look, though some may be due to an attempt to render the divergent perspective of the Tibetan paintings. Considering the Tibetan divergent rendering of basically cubic structures such as stūpas, we can often see that three of the four sides of the base are represented, the fourth one being partly hidden by the superstructure. The builders may have thought of merely doubling the visible part of such structures, thus obtaining hexagonal bases, as can be found in sculpture or painting. Moreover, Tibetan paintings often show polygonal buildings, even polygonal multistory buildings which may have seemed typically Tibetan to the Chinese builders.¹⁶ If we look at the Bsam-yas fresco in the temple of Jo-nañ, reproduced by Tucci, we find the central pavillion and the secondary buildings in geometrical shapes that remind us of the shapes of the towers that Mar-pa ordered Mi-la ras-pa to build.¹⁷ Some of these buildings are of parallelepipedic shape. The south entrance pavillion to the main part of P'u-ning *szu*, a pavillion which is a source of perplexity for Chinese commentators, has a parallelepipedic plan, but is called a triangular pavillion in conformity with the geometrical forms displayed in the *maṅḍala*.

The major differences between the temples of Jehol and their Tibetan models can hardly be interpreted as only mistaken renderings of paintings, or the results of uneasiness caused by the introduction of new theories about perspective. These are surely factors, but for details only. The distortion proves at least that although Tibetans acted as advisers, they were not the actual builders. Jehol was once the showpiece of the subtle diplomatic plot of the Emperor. The builders did what was necessary to see that the décor conformed to the immediate models, the paintings, but there is nothing naïve in their rendering. Even in the most intricate distortions of perspective they proved their technical skill. Following imperial will, to rally the Buddhists of the frontiers to the heart of China, they placed a showpiece, seemingly Tibetan, on a Chinese stage.

¹⁶ Cf. the hexagonal base of the lotus-throne of the Buddha, Victoria and Albert Museum, no. 240-1890, and the polygonal two-story building, Cat. *Dieux at Démons de l'Himalaya* (Paris, 1977), no. 278, Coll. Zimmerman.

¹⁷ G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Rome, 1949), p. 193, fig. 55; T.V. Wylie, "Mar-pa's Tower: Note on local Hegemons in Tibet," *History of Religions*, 3/2 (1964).

There are still greater differences from a technical point of view. Chinese and Tibetan architectures aim at complete conformity to the landscape, but some of the Jehol temples fail to respect that rule: the Potala of Jehol lies on the hill on which it is built; it does not crop out as does the Potala of Lhasa which seems to spring from the rock.

The Tibetan ground plan of the monasteries is still to be studied. Even there Jehol proves to be more Chinese than Tibetan. The lower part of P'u-ning *szu* is of purely Chinese plan,¹⁸ the upper part only pretending to be Tibetan. But the triangular pavillion of the south and the square one of the north indicate the main axis, and the secondary buildings placed on terraces follow the east-west axis, more typical of the classical Chinese structure than of the cardinal disposition of the *maṅḍala*. In the Hsü-mi fu-shou *miao*, the axis runs from Shan-men in the south to the pike ceramic pagoda in the north; these axes are not so easy to find in the model, namely Bkra-śis lhun-po, because most Tibetan temples and monasteries developed from an original central structure whilst most Chinese monasteries had a complete ground plan from the beginning.

The Jehol Potala is built on a huge terrace more than fourteen meters high, covering the top of the hill. Constructed on that terrace is an enormous stone and brick terrace wall 22 meters high, which is technically similar to the Great Wall or to the ancient walls of Peking. Rows of blind windows give to this imposing façade the desired Tibetan look. On the top terrace were placed wood pagoda-covered pavillions. The Potala of Lhasa is built over the rock of Dmar-po ri. Only the lower part of the façade, retaining walls supporting the weight of the structure, is blind. The upper stories have real opening windows, even if the walls are of an unusual thickness. On the top terrace are golden pagoda-roofs, called *rgya-phibs*, "Chinese roofs." They are only extensions of the lower stories, and do not cover independent structures as in Jehol. There is only one gate through the wall to the quadrangular inner court of the Jehol Potala. There, on the ground terrace, stands a square wooden temple sumptuously covered with golden copper tiles, but purely Chinese. In contrast, there are several courts between the buildings of the Potala of Lhasa, of which the one to the west has a central wooden structure which is the only likeness. In the Hsü-mi fu-shou *miao*, there is a similar central court, with bordering two-story wooden galleries and a central temple. But here the galleries are not

¹⁸ J. Prip-Møller, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries* (Copenhagen, 1937).

merely independent buildings leaning back against the blind terrace wall, as were the now destroyed inner galleries of the Jehol Potala, and the façade has real opening windows.

The general Tibetan look thus approximated, ornamental details which are typical of Tibetan architecture have been largely neglected in Jehol. I will not discuss the balconies and verandas over the entrances of temples. The vertical line of ceramic recesses in the middle of the façade of the Jehol Potala, or the decoration of its eastern wing, is a rather poor translation of the superb balconies of the Pho-bran dmar-po. The Jehol builders multiplied Chinese ceramic arched gateways and forgot the sumptuous door-framing inherited from Indian art which was typical of Tibetan architectural decoration, except for the attempted ceramic door-framing of the pavillion on the west side of the Jehol Potala. They respected the shape of the Tibetan windows, but in the Hsü-mi fu-shou *miao* they added pleasant ceramic ornamentation which does not look very Tibetan. They sometimes reproduced the strip of compressed branches at the top of the walls, just under the terrace roof of the Tibetan buildings, with large strips of paint. The line of recesses which runs along the top of the Jehol Potala façade may be a reminder of it. It is said to symbolize the then numerous years of the dowager Empress.

Jehol's builders did not spare metal or ceramic ornaments over the walls and roofs of the temples, though ceramic is seldom used in Tibet. Moreover, they did not frequently reproduce the classical motif of the Wheel of the Law that is found over the door of most Tibetan temples; they mainly used stupas and the eight golden jewels of Buddhism, or the *makaras*, such as those of the golden roof of the Hsü-mi fu-shou *miao*. The bronze dragons of the same temple, with their excessive golden richness, may be considered as symbols of the financial and technical efforts here displayed, which, in spite of distortions and voluntary or involuntary misinterpretations, made of Jehol an extraordinary and paradoxical monument to the unity of China.

Behind the Chinese doors and gateways, behind the more or less Tibetan façades, the interiors of the temples, in spite of some lamaistic statues and paintings, are resolutely Chinese. As the Chinese armies defended the outer frontiers of the empire, the Jehol temples have Chinese gates and archways. As the Outer Temples surround the Imperial Palace, the Tibetan façades of Jehol enclose a Chinese heart. Jehol is the illustration of the emperor's will, unitarian and centralist, but also of his tolerance.

THE FIRST TSHA-TSHA PUBLISHED IN EUROPE

Braham Norwick

New York, U.S.A.

During my presentation at Oxford in 1979 of illustrations of Western illusions about Tibet, one set in particular aroused frequent questions. They involved pictures of a *tsha tsha* with an image and a *mantra*. Who is the deity? What does the *mantra* say? Simple questions with simple answers, certainly, but finding those answers proved difficult. This was especially so since both sides of the *tsha tsha* had been subject to misinterpretation. The answers now offered are not certain and need background for consideration as more than prejudiced conjecture, a source of previous error.

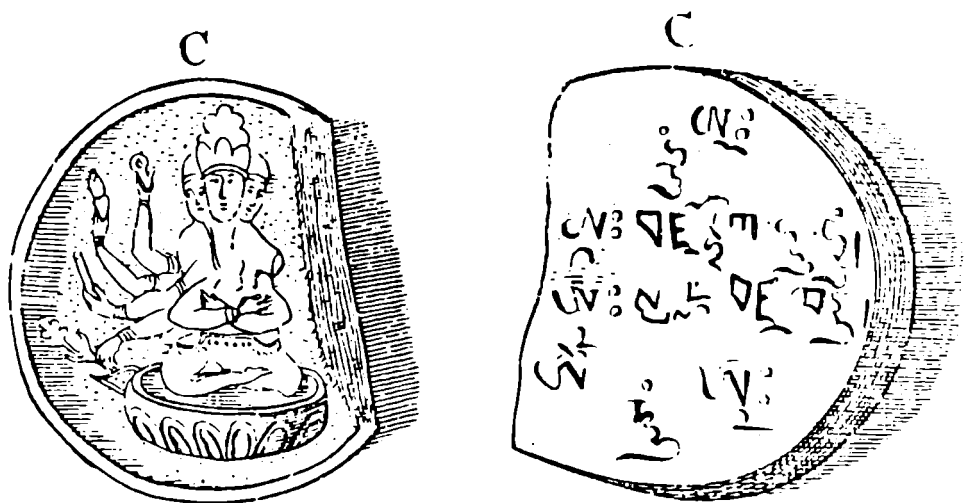


fig. 1

In 1730 Philip Johan Tabbert von Stralenberg, in Stockholm, published the first western pictures of a *tsha tsha* (figure 1).¹ This publication produced more than ripples in the sea of European

¹ Philip Johan Tabbert von Stralenberg, *Das Nord- und Ostliche Theil von Europa und Asia* (Stockholm, 1730). [See, too, n. 14.] The *tsha tsha* is shown in tab. V, c-c.

scholarship, and the book is still studied. John R. Krueger, in a more recent Stockholm publication gave a survey of Stralenberg's life.² He mentions, besides Stralenberg himself, the name Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt, to whose organized research and knowledge much material, including the vocabulary in Stralenberg's book, no doubt owes its origin. Fortunately, the Siberian diary of Messerschmidt has been published in Berlin in recent years;³ for prior to its publication there had only been a cut version published under the editorship of Pallas.⁴ The latter, while praising his predecessor's qualities, manages not to detail his accomplishments. In the fuller version of Messerschmidt's diary one finds dated facts, vocabulary and sketches more than just reminiscent of material found in the publications of Stralenberg and other others. The sketches most immediately demonstrate the congruence: two examples from the headwaters of the Jenisei river show the image of an animal and a mysterious diagram. Oddly, these pictures in Messerschmidt's notes are dated after Stralenberg's departure, though Messerschmidt had seen the originals before that time. In one case Messerschmidt wrote that drawings had been made by Stralenberg's nephew, Karl Schulman, who, being at the time about fourteen, is merely called a Swedish boy by Stralenberg. (That detail may explain, in part, a comment made 100 years later, that drawings for publications of Messerschmidt, Stralenberg and others had been made haphazardly by artless hands. This appears in *Recherches sur les langues Tartares* by Abel Remusat.)⁵ Dated shortly after he had separated from Stralenberg and the nephew, one finds Tibetan scripts accurately reproduced in Messerschmidt's notes. These and other materials are the bases of the still useful plates published by G. S. Bayer in the

² John R. Krueger, *The Kalmyk-Mongolian Vocabulary in Stralenberg's Geography of 1730* (Stockholm, 1975).

³ Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt, *Forschungsreise Durch Siberien 1720-1727* [Berlin, 5 vols: 1962 (=1721-1722); 1964 (Jan. 1723-May 1724); 1966 (May 1724-Feb.1725); 1968 (Feb. 1725-Nov.1725); and 1977 (Nov. 1725-1727)].

⁴ Peter Simon Pallas (ed.), *Neuer Beyträge zur physikalischen und geographischen Erd- und Völkerbeschreibung, Naturgeschichte und Oekonomie*, vol. 3: *Nachricht von D.G. Messerschmidts Siebenjährigen Reise in Siberien* (St. Petersburg, 1782), pp. 97-158.

⁵ Jean Pierre Abel Remusat, *Recherches sur les langues Tartares* (Paris, 1820), pp. 87-88.

third through sixth issues of *Akademiya Nauk*⁶, which include a fine set of *lan-tsha* symbols with Tibetan and Mongolian equivalents. Bayer also published, without acknowledgement, sketches found in Messerschmidt's notes.⁷ The same also appear in Stralenberg's work.

The Jesuits were another contemporary source of Tibetan information. The Tibeto-Italian dictionary of P. Dominique de Fano, used by the Abbé Etienne Fourmont, resulted in a pretended translation of a folio sent by Peter the Great to the French Academy.⁸ In 1730, Bayer quotes this nonsense in full in his *Museum Sinicum*.⁹ A history of the aborted efforts at its translation is found in the work of Abel Remusat cited above. Finally Csoma de Körös successfully translated it in 1832.¹⁰

Stralenberg was born in Pomerania, then part of Sweden. He wrote German like a German of his time. Messerschmidt, however, an Oriental language scholar and medical doctor from Halle, wrote a German sprinkled with French usages. This should not be misunderstood. There was at Halle a contingent of Huguenots who fit well with the pietist activities there, the pietists being ascetic Protestants who deplored the decline of moral standards. Each had a responsibility in the ministry for Christ, so that interest in Oriental languages at Halle was not purely intellectual, but was supported by missionary fervor. The religious atmosphere is important to consider, for, as Donald K. Lach has noted, another Pomeranian orientalist had, a generation earlier, been imprisoned for heresy. This was Andreas Müller, cited often by Stralenberg. The case involved the sin of violating the second commandment in the decalogue, by putting the name of God in Chinese picture writing.¹¹

⁶ Gottlieb Siegfried Bayer, *Akademiya Nauk, Acta Academiae, Memoires, I Commentarii*, vols. III, IV & VI (1728, '29 & '32/'33).

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. II, 1727.

⁸ Etienne Fourmont, *Reflexions sur l'origine, l'histoire et la succession des anciens peuples... Nouvelle Edition, augmentée de la vie de l'auteur...* (Paris, 1747); *Institut de France, Academie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, Histoire*, vol. 5. (1729).

⁹ G.S. Bayer, *Museum Sinicum* (Petersburg, 1730), pp. 108-124.

¹⁰ Alexander Csoma de Körös, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, n.s. vol. 1 (July 1832), pp. 269-277.

¹¹ Donald K. Lach, "The Chinese Studies of Andreas Müller," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 60 (1940). Stralenberg's references to Müller may be found, op. cit., *passim*.

Stralenberg, though of similar religious background to Messerschmidt, had not the same scholarly training. Born Tabbert, given a basic education and entering early into the army, he had been ennobled by Charles XII in 1709. This was just before the Swedish defeat at Poltava, where thousands of captives were taken. By 1711 most had been shipped with their families to Siberia, where Stralenberg, who had never married, worked as a mapmaker. He was at this when he and the boy Schulman, who was just out of school, joined Messerschmidt's staff. From Messerschmidt's notes one can see how intensely he liked Stralenberg, considering him the best friend he would ever have. But, when the Swedish prisoners were liberated, Stralenberg departed and carried with him the material gathered under Messerschmidt's guidance. Some was left in Russia, but evidently Stralenberg kept considerable documentation which he quickly prepared to publish. Shortly after his return to Sweden in 1723 there was an announcement in *Acta Literaria*, an Uppsala periodical, concerning his intentions and suggesting subscriptions to defray costs.¹² Despite this and later announcements,¹³ his major opus did not appear until 1730, when it received wide attention. It came out the same year in Leipzig and in English with copied illustrations in 1736 and 1738. Still later it appeared in French and Spanish. It has been reprinted in recent years in the original German and the English translation.¹⁴ Krueger has summarized modern reviews of it, none of which give prominence to specifically Tibetan material.¹⁵

12 *Acta Literaria Sveciae*, Kungliga Vetenskaps-Societeten (Uppsala, 1723), p. 451.

13 *Acta Literaria Sveciae* (1727), p. 260; and (1728), p. 397. P.J.Ā. von Stralenberg, *Vorbericht eines zum druck gefertigten Werkes von der Grossentartarey...*(Stockholm, 1726).

14 Idem., *An Histori-geographical Description of the North and Eastern Part of Europe & Asia, but more particularly of Russia, Siberia and Great Tartary* (London, 1736 & 1738); *Description de l'Empire Russien*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1757); *Neuva Descricion Geographica del Imperio Ruso* (Valencia, 1780). The reprinted editions are: *Das Nord- und Ostliche...*, *Studia Uralo-Altaica* 8 (Szeged, 1975); and *Russia, Siberia & Great Tartary* (New York: Arno Press, 1970).

15 J.R. Krueger, op. cit., p. 4.

In addition to providing pictures, Stralenberg repeatedly refers to the *tsha tsha*. The original is the size and shape shown, four centimeters in diameter, over half a centimeter thick. It had been colored blue and gold, and was made of a material like terra sigilata, a type of clay. The writing, according to Stralenberg, is similar to that on a medal illustrated by a Monsieur Baudelot. It appears both in a plate and in the German text.¹⁶ The three-headed image, he writes, resembles Kircher's descriptions of the idol Pussae in *China Illustrata* and the Xaca in *Historia Sinensis* of Andreas Müller.¹⁷

Stralenberg indicates that the *tsha tsha*, or medal as he terms it, was found among ancient manuscripts in an old chapel close to the River Kemtschyk which enters the Jenisei near its source. He identifies the writing as Tangut, similar to letters Court Councillor Menke (Johan Burchard Menke) had already shown in *Acta Eruditorum* or *Acta Litteraria*.¹⁸ This second reference, to *Acta Litteraria*, which began publication in Sweden in 1720, is in error.¹⁹ However, in *Acta Eruditorum*, July 1722, one can see the plate of two sides of a Tibetan folio.²⁰ A brief article thanks Johan Daniel Schumacher, the Russian Imperial Librarian. A similar page, simultaneously sent to the French Academy, is the one mistranslated by Abbé Fourmont and redone by Csoma de Körös. The August *Acta Eruditorum* has a letter from Berlin by Maturin Veyssiere de la Croze to J.B.M., evidently Johan Burchard Menke, referring to prior publications of Tibetan material. In its September issue one finds a Tibetan alphabet with phonetic information, also from Veyssiere de la Croze. Many of the early plates, including one published by Stralenberg of a page from an astrologer's handbook and the passport published by Thomas Hyde in 1700, are well made.²¹ The passport

16 Stralenberg, op. cit., pp. 85, 127, 399 & 400. He refers to the Baudelot medal on pp. 397 & 399, and pl. XXIa; and to the script on pp. 397 & 399.

17 Athanasius Kircher, *China Monumentis qua Sacris qua Profanis* [i.e. *China Illustrata*](Amsterdam, 1667), pp. 140-141; Andreas Müller, *Opuscula Nonnulla Orientalia Historia Sinensis* (Frankfurt/Oder, 1695), p. 40.

18 Stralenberg, op. cit., pp. 312 & 400.

19 *Acta Litteraria*, vols. 1-4 (Uppsala, 1720-1739).

20 *Acta Eruditorum*, vol. 41 (Leipzig, 1722).

21 Thomas Hyde, *Historia Religionis Veterum Persarum...* (Oxford, 1700), tab. XVII.

has been translated by Csoma de Körös.^{2 2}

Beginning in March 1755, articles in the Paris *Journal étranger* presented a study of the Stralenberg *tsha tsha*.^{2 3} *Journal étranger* had just been blessed with a new editor, the Abbé Antoine François Prevost, who was more famous for the tale of Manon Lescaut and had just edited a series of Asian travel books.^{2 4} Prevost printed and reviewed a letter addressed to Joseph Nicolas de Lisle, then French Astronomer Royal, who had served Catherine I, widow of Peter the Great, and then Peter II in Russia. The writer of the letter, a Baron, was a Colonel of the Lally regiment of France. (Lally himself is noted as the so-called “Irlandais” beheaded at the Bastille after being blamed for losing France’s empire in India; but in 1755 Lally and his regiment were at the height of their prestige, intellectual as well as military.) The Colonel Grant claimed to have read the Tibetan on the clay medal in the English edition of Stralenberg’s book, the picture being copied again in *Journal étranger*. The caption noted that the medal had been found in a temple of Siberian idolators. The explanation, it claimed, gave an understanding of both their sacred language and their feelings concerning the divinity. Colonel Grant wrote that on seeing the script, he had immediately recognized his ancestral language, and in its purest form! That language was Irish. He explained that “Dalai Lama” was an Irish expression, which he gave as “Invocavit Manus” and that it was the Tibetan equivalent of *brahman*, or as it had been written in Europe, *brachman*. This he equated with the ancient Irish *bearachman*, a “man who brings forth.” The articles ran into the July issue of *Journal étranger*. They explain the appearance, two years later, of the French edition of Stralenberg’s book, condensed, yet in two volumes.

The French periodical plates were, in turn, recopied in England. James Parsons’ *Remains of Japhet* of 1767 and the 1801 edition of *Oriental trinities* both show copied plates (figure 2) with the translation into Latin and the full Irish form as supplied by Colonel Grant (figure 3).^{2 5} Abbé Prevost, however, had doubts about the

22 A. Csoma de Körös, *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, n.s. vol. 2 (April 1833), pp. 269-277.

23 *Journal étranger, Ouvrage Periodique* (Paris, 1755), March, pp. 60-93; July, pp. 59-79.

24 Antoine François Prevost (ed.), *Histoire Generale des Voyages* (multiple vols. based on the so-called Astley Collection edited by Green; Paris, 1746 et. seq.).

25 James Parsons, *Remains of Japhet* (London, 1767 & Menston,



fig. 2

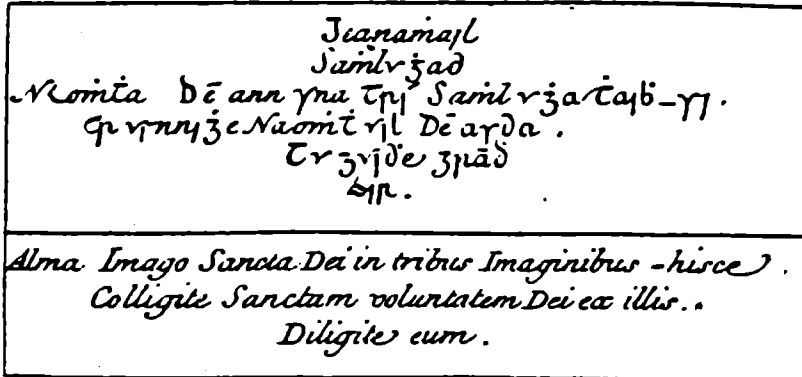
accuracy of Baron Grant's thesis and translations. The Abbé cited the translation for "Dalai Lama" in the notes by Bentinck to a French translation of Abu al-Ghazi's *History*.²⁶ Nicolas Witsen's glossary of 1692 already had both words correctly translated.²⁷ Prevost's problem was to decide which authority to accept. Bentinck, for example, denounced Antonio Andrade as a fraud, never in Tibet, who merely plagiarized William of Rubruck. John R. Krueger, introducing the reprinted German text of Stralenberg, considers that he had engaged in "wild speculation" about look-alike and sound-alike letters and words. But Stralenberg was not alone, and speculation is only wild when it fails.

A problem was that Europe and Asia had for centuries been held to tradition and conformity. Scholars were overtaxed by belief

26 Yorkshire, 1968); Thomas Maurice, *A Dissertation on the Oriental Trinities* (London, 1801).
 Bentinck (trans.), *Histoire Généalogique des Tartars* by Abulgasi-Bayadurchan. It should be mentioned that Stralenberg claims some credit for this translation; his assistance probably consisted of supplying Bentinck with a manuscript of Messerschmidt's translation from Turkish to German, see: D.G. Messerschmidt (trans.), *Abulgasi Bagadur Chan's Geschlechtbuch der Mungalisch-Mogulischen oder Mogorischen Chanen. Aus einer türkischen handschrift ins Teutsche übersetzt von D. Dan. Gottlieb Messerschmidt* (Göttingen, 1780).

27 Nicolas Corneliszoon Witsen, *Nord en Oost Tartarye* (Amsterdam, 1692).

L'inscription ajrime dans toute son étendue en Langue Irlandaise, avec la Traduction Latine par M. le B. de Grant Col. Capitaine au Reg. de Lally.



U. zj' l' u' n' om' t' o' p' l' d' e' d' i' m' γ' γ'. Ap' r' i' e' S' a' n' c' t' a' m' v' o' l' u' n' t' a' t' e' m' D' e' i' e' x' i' l' l' i' s'. E' i' s' d' e' b' r' o.

fig. 3

in the inerrancy of the Bible as then understood and efforts to fit new information into straight and narrow gospel truth. Grant's translation from ancient Irish convinced many because it fit into developing yet traditional views of language and biblical events. One happily convinced was James Parsons, a father of English scientific philology. The theory expounded in his *Remains of Japhet* can be quickly condensed: before the Flood, there was a single protolanguage. After the Flood, mankind began frantic efforts to prepare for the next. On the plains of Shinar they tried to erect the Tower of Babel. According to Parsons, it was only the sons of Ham, cursed by Noah, who suffered confusion of tongues, the children of Japhet having escaped the fate of Nimrod, son of Cush, grandson of Ham. From Ararat in Armenia the sons of Japhet, bearers of the protolanguage, migrated northwards, east and west. They were the Celts and the Scythians, who peopled Ireland a few centuries after the Flood. A confirmation of that theory was Colonel Grant's translation.

The leading French philologist of the period, Antoine Court de Gebelin, cited Grant's translation with only a shade of doubt.²⁸ Going even further than Grant, he illustrated parts of a Tibetan alphabet to show it matched letters from Hebrew and Syriac. By curving straight and straightening curved, enclosing open and opening closed lines, and with rotations, even turning letters upside down, he thought he demonstrated how Tibetan looked like Hebrew

²⁸ Antoine Court de Gebelin, *Monde Primitif*, esp. vol. 3 (Paris, 1775).

(figure 4). Court de Gebelin was not uninformed. He had seen almost all then available in Europe relating to Tibet. In his nine volumes there is the basis for a bibliography of early Tibetan studies, right up to *Alphabetum Tangutanum*, published only a year before in Rome and containing various articles of the faith in Tibetan along with phonetic transcriptions. Court de Gebelin had read the iconoclasts—Bentinck, who believed the Japhet theory, and DePauw, who delighted in pointing out inconsistencies in Jesuit reports of Asia.²⁹ Mere consistency is unfortunately a poor guide to the real world's truths.

Pl. VII.

DE DEXTERA		DE GAUCHE A DROITE			
		Theruetlandow	Theruton	Thibetan	Compare avec la
		Formes de l'Alphabet			
1	A	χ	χ	Α	W Phob. 2
2	B	Α	β	Β	□ Phob. 2
3	C	γ	γ	Γ	◻ le Syr. 4
4	D	Δ	δ	Δ	3 le Syr. 5
5	E	Ϸ	ε	Ε	.....
6	V	ζ	ζ	Ζ	.....
7	I	ι	ι	Ι	.....
8	K	κ	κ	Κ	.....
9	L	λ	λ	Λ	.....
10	M	μ	μ	Μ	.....
11	N	ν	ν	Ν	.....
12	O	ο	ο	Ο	.....
13	P	.....	π	Π	.....
14	R	ρ	ρ	Ρ	.....
15	S	σ	σ	Σ	.....
16	T	τ	τ	Τ	.....
.....	Q	.....	.....	.....	.....

Theruetlandow
Alphabetum Tangutanum à Paris
de l'An 4^e 1730.
Bardet. P. 574.

Theruton
Alphabetum Tangutanum
de l'An 4^e 1730.
L'après un manuscrit
de l'abb. de S. Omer

Thibetan
Alphabet Thibetan de Sr.
Gourzar
4^e L'An 1708.

fig. 4

29 Corneille DePauw, *Recherches Philosophiques sur les Egyptiens et les Chinois* (Berlin, 1773).

Colonel Grant's Latin differs somewhat from the anonymous translation given in French, but then translation does not provide scientific equations. In *Journal étranger* it reads: "Le nom de celui-ci est un dieu qui fais du bien." The Latin translated says, "A beneficent likeness of a holy god in three images. The holy will of god these gather from them. Love him."

The *tsha tsha* was examined in another publication of the period. The *Monthly Review* of London, July 1768, reviews the then new book of James Parsons, the letter of Colonel Grant and the pictures of Stralenberg's *tsha tsha*. They inform the reader, who is not furnished with a picture, that the image has one body, three heads and six arms. For us, though we see only six arms, it is more than just conjecture that before breakage the image had ten or even more. I have shown enlarged pictures of the *tsha tsha* to Tibetans familiar with such images and, in addition, compared them with illustrations and *mantras* found in various collections. These include original publications of the 300 figures compiled by the Hutuktu Lalitavajra; the so-called "500 Gods of Narthang"; as well as Lokesh Chandra's 20 volume *Tibeto-Mongol Pantheon*, Tucci's *Indo-Tibetica* and Walter Eugene Clark's reprint of the *Chu Fo P'u Sa Sheng Hsiang Tsan*.³⁰ An image closely corresponding to the one given by Stralenberg does not exist.

While there may seem at times a random infinitude of forms, Tibetan images actually follow a limited regime. This particular image, with three normal heads and a headdress, seated on a lotus flower in the *vajrāsana* position, with arms crossed at the wrists, with a total of ten arms, clad, bearing armbands and bracelets, holding attributes in four of the six visible hands, is not typical. While the attributes could be clearer, one can at least be sure what they are not. Several things seem to have been left out. Seeing what is not there can be an exercise similar to that of our 18th century predecessors, but one hopes to work more scientifically and with less

³⁰ Lcañ-skyā Hutuktu Lalitavajra, *Byin rlabs dños gter mdzod bla ma dañ*.. (xylograph in the author's collection). [This copy is not exactly the same as the one reproduced only with images by Sergei Fedorovich Oldenbourg, in *Bibliotheca Buddhica* (St. Petersburg, 1903).] *Rin 'byun* (xylograph, author's collection), apparently identical to the one used by Lokesh Chandra, *A New Tibeto-Mongol Pantheon* (New Delhi, 1961-1972); Walter Eugene Clark, *Two Lamaistic Pantheons* (Cambridge, 1937); Giuseppe Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica*, esp. vol. 1 (Rome, 1932).

prejudice.

The hands crossed at the wrists hold nothing visible, but both show only four fingers. The *vajrahūmkara-mudra* is normally shown with *vajra* and *ghaṅṭā*, but these were omitted. The readable symbols in the *mantra* are not sufficiently distinctive for identification in ten cases. They evidently include *om*, *āḥ*, *hūm*, and there is, in two places, the Sanskrit word *vajra* in Tibetan script. In the second case it is preceded, using a little imagination, by what appears to be another Sanskrit word, *sparṣa* (touch). With such clues one may supply what is missing or carelessly drawn. The abbreviated *mantra* originally read:

Om *Āḥ*
 Hūm
Om Āḥ Vajradhṛk Hūm Hūm
Om Āḥ Sparṣa Vajra Kha Hūm
 Om *Āḥ*
 Hūm.

With help from the *mantra* it is clear that our pietists left out the *yum* in a *yab-yum* image: the deity is Gsañ-'dus, Guhyasamāja. There is a good correspondence with the more detailed image and *mantra* given in one of the pantheons, image 62 in that of Hutuktu Lalitavajra (figure 5). A picture without the *mantra* is in Oldenbourg's reprint. A poorer approximation is the 58th image in the 500 Gods of Narthang. Both are, of course, Gsañ-'dus. Tucci illustrates a *tsha tsha*, unbroken, of one of the forms of Gsañ-'dus, but he has trouble seeing what is in the crossed hands.^{3 1}

The second *tsha tsha* to be published in Europe appeared in France in 1768 (figure 6). It is also a form of Gsañ-'dus and is found in a magnificent book by the Abbé Jean Chappe d'Auteroche.^{3 2} The Abbé tries to be accurate. He notes, for example, he made only one change in only a single illustration, that of Gsin-rje. In this case he eliminated the genitalia ("On a supprimé le Priape avec ses accessoires."). In the case of Gsañ-'dus he explains the three-headed *yum* ingeniously by writing that the deity has three children held closely to her breast. The Stralenberg and Chappe d'Auteroche *tsha tsha* possibly still exist somewhere, but inquiries in Leningrad, Stockholm and Paris have not yet met with success.

31 Tucci, op. cit., vol. 1, tab. XXXIII.

32 Jean Chappe d'Auteroche, *Voyage en Sibirie*, esp. vol. 1 (Paris, 1768), plates XVII & XXIII.

In this abbreviated review the effort begun with Stralenberg to connect the three heads in the image with Christian trinity and the three-headed deity of the Germanic tribes, Trigla, has not been covered, since that involved other Buddhist images as well as this *tsha tsha*.³³ What has been attempted is to present a reasonable identification of an incomplete and puzzling image and *mantra*, to indicate a background for the identification, and to point out some still valuable early work which may be helpful for others.



fig. 5

³³ But note that Stralenberg does refer to Trigla: op. cit., pp. 127 & 400.



Tarni Negonizan Bourchan.

fig. 6

TIBETAN OPERATIC THEMES

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In this paper I intend to discuss the origins of Tibetan drama and its sources in Buddhist *sūtras*, folk stories and the social life of Tibet. Added to this are some descriptions of hitherto undocumented aspects of dramatic music and dance. Tibetan drama seems to have been firmly established by the seventeenth century and was widely appreciated. Nonetheless, there has not been sustained attention to its history and form as one might have expected in view of the fine work done in this field by Tibetologists like Bacot, Ekvall and Hoffman. Of course we have also the recent contributions of Kaschewsky and Tsering as well as the portrait of Pemaöbar by Mme. Blondeau.¹

It was as a student of Yu Daoquan (Yu Dawch Yuan) in 1952 that I was first introduced to the Tibetan *lha-mo* drama. When Professor Yu assigned the story for reading, I was so inspired that I decided to translate it into Chinese. Later this same teacher further expanded my repertoire of Tibetan literature with Bacot's collection of Tibetan stories.² Reading these made me decide to undertake the translation into Chinese of as many Tibetan stories and dramas as I could find. My work, which was intended to build on the important contributions of Bacot in this field, resulted in separate publications of eight stories (1958) which were later (1962) collected into one volume and still later supplemented with five additional stories. What follows is a brief account of my observations on this subject which may be useful in stimulating further studies in this field.

¹ See: *Zugñima, drame tibétain*, translated by Bacot (Paris, 1957); *The Younger Brother Don Yod*, translated by Norbu and Ekvall (Bloomington, 1969); *Marchen aus Tibet*, translated by Hoffman (Cologne, 1965); *Die Himmelsfee 'Gro-ba bzan-mo' ein Buddhistisches Theaterstück*, translated by Kaschewsky and P. Tsering (Vienna, 1975); and *La vie de Pemaöbar*, translated by A.-M. Blondeau (Paris, 1973).

² J. Bacot, *Three Tibetan Mysteries*, translated from the French by H.I. Wolf, 1924.

Tibetan opera is a comprehensive performing art which presents stories through the media of song and dance. It is prevalent not only in Tibet but also in Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu and Qinghai provinces, wherever there are large communities of Tibetans.³ In Tibetan the opera is called *a-lce lha-mo*, the actor *lha-mo-ba*, and the script *'khrab-gzün*.

Tibetan opera is one of the older dramatic forms among the peoples of Central Asia. Artists, playwrights and others believe that the opera was introduced by *Thañ-stoñ rgyal-po*,⁴ a Tibetan Buddhist monk whose religious teachings were handed down orally from generation to generation. The text of *Prince Sprin-gzön*⁵ includes an added preface in which the anonymous author wrote:

In the old days, 'Phrin-las-rje-btsun, called *Thañ-stoñ rgyal-po*, owing to his great command of the principles of life was the most accomplished person in our snowland. His Holiness 'Phrin-las-rje-btsun educated people by means of drama. He spread marvelous songs and dances like a canopy over the people of all tribes and influenced their minds with religious teachings and the biographies of great men. Hence the Tibetan opera (*a-lce-lha-mo*), superb in skills, rituals and methods emerged...⁶

³ According to *Zhongguo shaoshu minzu* ("The Minorities of China," Beijing: People's Publishing House, 1981.5) there are approximately 3,450,000 Tibetans living in The Tibet Autonomous Region and the four provinces of Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu and Yunnan.

⁴ *Thañ-stoñ rgyal-po* (1385-1464) is famous throughout Tibet as a saint and builder of iron bridges. He organized the first drama group in Tibet, called *spun-bdun* (seven siblings), in order to collect donations for the construction of one of his iron bridges. He was later chosen king by the Klo-pa and Mon-pa peoples of Tibet. See Tucci's *Lhasa*, p. 36; Waddell's *Lamaism*, p. 385; and Chandra Das' *Journey*, pp. 191-192.

⁵ *Rgyal-po Sprin-gzön* is a Tibetan drama based on the story of the Indian drama *Klu-kun-tu-dga'-ba'i-zlos-gar*, which was translated into Tibetan by *Šoñ-stoñ rdo-rje*, the main disciple of 'Phags-pa Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan (1235-1280) and translated into Chinese (title: *Longxiji*) by Wu Xiaolin (Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1958).

⁶ The manuscript of this text is in the library of the Central

This opinion is rather widespread. According to the chronological tables of the *Vaidūrya dkar-po*, *Thaṅ-stoṅ rgyal-po* was born in the year of the Female Wood Ox in the sixth sexagenary cycle of the Tibetan calendar. Thus Tibetan opera should have originated between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Judging by the records of the earlier period, it was first simply pantomime with an emphasis on dancing. Only after absorbing and building literary content did it focus on acting and singing. Evidence from surviving murals and historical records shows that no later than the period of *Nag-dbañ-blo-bzañ-rgya-mtsho*, the Vth Dalai Lama (1617-1682), Tibetan opera had already developed into what we see today.⁷

The text, dance, melodies, masks and costumes of Tibetan opera all seem to have gradually taken shape by assimilating religious rites for exorcising evil spirits and propitiating gods. The opera also presented episodes from folk tales and Buddhist *sūtras*, arranged on the basis of Tibetan folk dances, songs, ballad-singing and story narration. In the course of its development countless artists, playwrights and others of the lower castes, as well as noblemen and drama-lovers in the upper social strata constantly refined and enriched its form. As a result it evolved into the Tibetan opera of today, richly colored with the style and distinctive features of its own nationality.

Before 1949 Tibetan opera was mostly performed in public squares, as in the area of *Bla-brañ* (Xiahe) in southern Gansu province. Influenced by the drama of the Han culture the performances are now presented on an elevated stage. Actors use simple make-up and masks. A narrator to the side of the stage tells the audience the plot through softly recited ballads. When the actors enter, percussion instruments are played as accompaniment and the actors dance with their rhythm. While an actor sings, others behind the stage sing in chorus. Since traditional performances took place outdoors in public squares, actors developed resonant, powerful voices which vibrated with the robust style of highland people. This tradition continues today even in cities, where performances now take place inside theaters.⁸

7 Institute for National Minorities, Beijing.

8 We have important evidence in an illustration of Tibetan drama which was painted in the Potala in Lhasa. It is a fresco in *Ni'od-pho-brañ*, painted while *Sde-pa Saṅs-rgyas rgya-mtsho* (1653-1705) was ruling Tibet.

8 There is a specialized drama group which developed on the basis

Reading the old Tibetan scripts I have counted at least twenty different melodic modes, each expressing a particular feeling. They express ideas and feelings of joy, sorrow, grief, and ecstasy. Each one also differs in accordance with the age of the singers and whether they are men or women.

melody	mood created
gdañ-rin	joy, ease of mind
skyo-glu	sorrow, grief
gdañ-thun	narration in general
gdañ-log	emotional change, changes of mood

During performances actors often modify the modes varying them with the development of the plot. They subtly express the particular feelings of the characters and portray the thoughts in the depth of their hearts. For instance, in *The Maiden Snañ-sa* the heroine uses several different melodic modes to express environmental changes and diverse moods. In the opera *Prince Nor-bzañ*⁹ the mode sung during the departure for battle differs from that used for the hero's return to the palace.

Dance movements in Tibetan opera correspond to the lyrics and melodies and are linked with the development of the plot. In general they are drawn from movements in everyday life, but are refined and exaggerated to give the audience an aesthetic sense of harmony and vigor. Some movements such as bowing with hands clasped and salutation show traces of religious rites. The movements may be classified into the following six types according to postures and rhythms.

of the former Skyo-mo-luñ-ba group in Lhasa and which performs there at the Cultural Palace for Laboring People.

⁹ The *Nor-bzañ* was influenced by the Indian (Sanskrit) drama *Sakuntalā*. This story has had tremendous influence on people of Thai nationality where the *Zhao-shu-thon* story of the Thai seems to derive from *Nor-bzañ*.

Name of dance	Style	Content presented
don-'dar	from slow to quick tempo; moving up and down	entering the stage
phye-lin	turning half circles, first to the right, then to the left	marching forward
phyag-'bul	raising hands	greeting and salutation; bowing with hands clasped
gar-che	turning whole circles; going in a ring	treading along on a long journey
dal-gton	slow steps	while all musical instruments are at a standstill during intermission
'phar-chen	turning large circles, spinning	martial skills; acrobatics with arms extended at an angle of 60 degrees to the ground

A Tibetan opera is traditionally divided into three parts in performance. The first part, *don* or *rnon-pa don*, serves as prologue to the performance. Revealing its origins in the street or public square, it prepares the ground, clearing the space of all obstructions. It introduces all the actors to the audience with some songs, dances and humorous antics, items to draw in the audience and prepare for the performance of the opera itself. The second part, which is the main body of the opera, is called the *g'zun*. The third and final part is the *bkra-sis*, or epilogue. This is the rite for blessing or good augury at the end of the opera. Traditionally at this time actors also render songs and dances while accepting donations from the audience.

The performances of Tibetan opera in Tibet traditionally began from the Zol-ston Festival in the seventh and eighth months of the

Tibetan calendar.¹⁰ Theatrical troupes gathered in Lhasa to perform and from there they toured the countryside. Amateur theatrical troupes also started their performances in this period. In the past actors belonged to the lower social classes and in addition to their regular service (corvée) they did performance service as well. Even the opera festival of the *Zol-ston* used corvée. Actors supplemented their miserable income from performances with agricultural labor on the land of others, a further tax. The crippling economic conditions of these actors must have restricted artistic development of the opera tradition and there is evidence that it had been declining for many years.

The survival of this precious artistic heritage owes itself to the consistent efforts of a small number of actors who remained faithful to the theatrical art in its precarious days. These artists did not make their painstaking efforts in vain. Since the middle of this century Tibetan opera has bloomed with a new vitality. Owing to the attention given by both the artists and people a state-owned Tibetan opera troupe was formed in Lhasa. The number of professional performers has grown, theaters have been built and orchestras enlarged. Private amateur theatrical troupes have also made vigorous progress. Actors are respected more than ever before. The famous actor and teacher *Bkra-sis-don-grub* attended the Third Congress of Writers and Artists and was elected a standing committee member of the All-China Federation of the Literary and Art Circles in 1960. A number of pieces chosen from the Tibetan opera for the program of national theatrical festivals have been popular among China's different nationalities.

In recent years new revolutionary motifs have been introduced into some of the traditional stories, but the old stories and styles continue to predominate. Similarly, in the presentation of particularly religious stories some elements have been cut, but the old tradition again predominates in the modern revival of Tibetan opera. The future form and content of the opera will depend upon public interest. Coming in closer contact in recent years with Chinese opera we can naturally expect Tibetan opera to show some Chinese influence. Meanwhile Tibetan traditions have already influenced regional

¹⁰ According to tradition the Tibetan opera festival called *Zol-ston* is held in the *Norbu gliñ-ka*, Lhasa, sometime during the seventh and eighth months, so as to coincide with the end of the *dbyar-sa* observance, when Buddhist monks remain in their monasteries for three months so as not to tread on insects outside.

operatic forms and stories in the provinces of Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai. In the same way, in the past Chinese opera influenced the traditions of Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese opera, while it itself borrowed from certain Indian traditions.

To appreciate the legacy and to study the history of the Tibetan opera we must delve into its narrative sources. Tibetan operas are mostly drawn from folk stories, historical legends and stories from Buddhist scriptures, but may also reflect social conditions. The famous opera *Princess Wencheng* is a representative piece with an historical theme.¹¹ Princess Wencheng, Sron-btsan-sgam-po and Blon Ston-btsan were heroic personages of the seventh century who had great historical influence. Wencheng's arrival in Tibet played a great role in the material and cultural development of Tibetan society, and inspired this opera about her marriage with Sron-btsan-sgam-po. Even today we can find verses in praise of Princess Wencheng among folk songs. For example:

On the fifteenth day of the lunar month,
Princess Wencheng promises to come to Tibet.
Be not afraid of the vast Lotus Flatland—
One hundred fine horses will come to welcome you.
Be not afraid of mountain peaks towering into clouds—
One hundred yak-offspring will come to welcome you.
Be not afraid of broad and rapid river currents—
One hundred cattlehide rafts will come to welcome you.¹²

Popular esteem and admiration for Princess Wencheng are mentioned more than once in historical reports. For instance, the history of ancient Tibet as recorded in the Chinese *New History of the Tang Dynasty (Xin Tang Shu)* states:

Sron-btsan-sgam-po, king of Tibet, sent the minister Blon Ston-btsan as an envoy to the capital to pay a tribute of five thousand taels of gold and other highly valued treasures as gifts for betrothal. In 641 the Emperor gave Princess Wencheng of the royal house in marriage to King Sron-

11 The original name of this drama was *Rgya-bza'-bal-bza'* (*Chinese princess, Nepalese princess*), but in performance only the title *Wencheng* is used.

12 From *Folk Rhymes of Tibet (Bod-kyi dman's-gzas)*; Beijing: People's Literature Publishing House, 1959), p. 111.

btsan-sgam-po. He issued an imperial edict to appoint the Prince of Jiangxia, Li Daozong, to escort the Princess to Tibet with an imperial scepter. The Prince built a hostel in the kingdom of the Prince of Heyuan. Sron-btsan-sgam-po led troops to Bohai, the White Lake, to welcome the Princess. He greeted Li Daozong respectfully, observing the proprieties of a son-in-law. He felt timid and bashful at the sight of splendid Chinese costumes and ornaments. When he returned to Tibet, he reflected that no king here had ever married the daughter of an emperor, so he built a citadel and a palace for the princess as a demonstration for later generations....He sent brothers and sons of nobles to the Imperial Academy to study the *Book of Songs* and the *Book of History*. He requested scholars to annotate books and translate them into Tibetan. He also requested silkworm seeds, wine brewers, grain millers and other artisans. An imperial edict confirmed all these requests...

Ston-btsan came to pay tribute at the Chinese court, where he replied with wit and intelligence to the Emperor's questions. Satisfied, the Emperor Taizong promoted him as Right Senior General.

The opera *Princess Wencheng* is mainly drawn from such historical data and folk legend and is enriched with artistic imagination. It is a fine opera, one that has become widely loved. Sron-btsan-sgam-po, Princess Wencheng and Blon Ston-btsan as depicted in the opera encourage kinship and unity between Han and Tibetan peoples. It also shows this ideal as woven into the daily fabric of social life. According to the story, in order to win Princess Wencheng's hand for the Tibetan king, Blon Ston-btsan had to succeed in many contests, hence the interesting episode of the challenges put to the envoy: putting a silk thread through a zigzag pearl; drinking much wine at once without getting drunk; getting a hundred colts to identify their mares; and identifying the Princess among three hundred beautiful ladies on the parade ground. To succeed in these challenges, he had to display down-to-earth wisdom and certain folk talents, which identify him with the common people.

The opera *Prince Nor-bzan* can be considered representative of operas based on folk tales. It is a mythological opera portraying love between a man and a goddess. The story upon which it was based appeared in the ancient collection entitled *Fabulous Tree Granting*

Every Wish.¹³ Under the title *Romance of Nor-bzan* it was recorded as a Tibetan opera in the *History of Kings and Ministers in Tibet*, which appeared in the 17th century.¹⁴

Prince Nor-bzan lived in a northern kingdom called Pañs-ldan-pa. He was wise, handsome and enjoyed great popularity. In his kingdom was a hunter named Pañs-legs-'dzin-pa who, having saved a dragon king from danger, received magic ropes with which he caught the Goddess Yid-'phrog-lha-mo. Guided by a hermit in the mountains, this hunter offered her to Prince Nor-bzan who married her. Nor-bzan and Yid-'phrog got on well and were an affectionate couple, but the prince's concubines were jealous of Yid-'phrog-lha-mo and colluded with the court sorcerer, scheming to make the king force Prince Nor-bzan to flee to a distant place while they planned to murder Yid-'phrog. The goddess escaped, helped by the queen, and flew back to the heavenly palace. When Prince Nor-bzan returned from war to the palace, he saw that his beloved had departed and he was filled with grief and anger. Surmounting every difficulty and undergoing all sorts of hardships, he went to the heavenly palace to find Yid-'phrog. He welcomed the goddess back to the world and they lived happily ever after.

Tibetan opera is strongly flavored by mythological themes and retains the romanticism of folk tales. We can say of Tibetan mythology that it is both the source and foundation of Tibetan opera. Thus the opera *Prince Nor-bzan* depicts not only affairs of everyday life, but also those of dieties, goddesses, princes, hermits, and various supernatural beings. *Prince Nor-bzan* portrays man's pride and confidence in conquering nature: man can obtain a goddess and a goddess herself can join the human world. Praises are sung of man's authority and militancy. Does this not reflect ancient people's yearning to conquer nature? The Chinese operas *Goddess of Marriage* and *Scholar Zhang Boils the Sea at Shamen Island* convey the same tone.

The opera also praises faithful love. In fact, it shows how irrational the old system of marriage was. People admire Prince Nor-bzan for resisting his father's will, ignoring the honorable status of king, scorning the temptations of beautiful women and remaining passionately in love with Yid-'phrog-lha-mo. Its moral is that those

¹³ I.e. the *Dpag-bsam-khri-sin*, 12th century, printed edition published in India by Sarat Chandra Das.

¹⁴ *Deb-ther dpyid-kyi rgyal-mo'i glu-dbyaṅs*, by the Fifth Dalai Lama.

who are truly in love are, in the end, reunited.

A number of folk tales portray the struggle between good and evil, between truth and falsehood, themes which are also adapted to opera. *Gzugs-kyi-ñi-ma* is one such piece. Here the heroine, gentle and beautiful Gzugs-kyi-ñi-ma, stands on the side of truth, but she is persecuted by her enemy who represents evil, ferocity and ugliness. She undergoes suffering and torture like the gentle laboring people who were oppressed and humiliated in the society of that period. But truth prevails in the end. The story expresses in fantasy form the needs and aspirations of people who cannot cope with the difficulties and irrationalities with which they are confronted in everyday life.

It appears that playwrights also searched for their material in social conditions. The opera *Maiden Snañ-sa*, based on a true incident said to have taken place 150 years ago, tells of the misfortunes of a peasant girl in Rgyal-rtse. The protagonists are ordinary people, not the heroes and kings of historical legends, or the goddesses and deities of mythological stories. Here is a synopsis of *Maiden Snañ-sa*: a beautiful and kind peasant girl named Snañ-sa in Myañ-stod in western Tibet (present-day Rgyal-rtse) is spotted at a temple fair by Grags-chen-pa, a local lord. Using his position, he forces her to marry his son. Snañ-sa's parents, intimidated by the lord's power and authority, advise their daughter to acquiesce. As an obedient wife Snañ-sa works all day long but is flogged and humiliated by the lord and his son. Her ribs are broken from the beatings and she dies of grief. After her death her soul comes back to the world and she becomes a nun. Later on Grags-chen-pa, educated by Buddhist teachings, is also converted to Buddhism. Besides promoting religious ideals, the story as a whole exposes the darkness of feudal society and denounces the brutal and despotic behavior of the powerful lord. The opera expresses deep sympathy for the common people, especially for women. In portraying the maiden Snañ-sa it says: "She rises earlier than the cock at dawn, she goes to sleep later than the old dog at night. Roasting highland barley, weaving Tibetan wool, working in the fields, skilled at every job..." Thus it brings out the simplicity of a toiling woman in a few lines. The heroine is a gentle and industrious woman who is doomed to such miserable destiny. The audience responds to the opera not without reason, for it can almost be a mirror of their own lives and hopes.

The assimilation of Buddhist scriptures into opera was due in part to the ties between the Tibetan opera and the art of ballad singing. Among Tibetans was a type of ballad singer called *Bla-ma ma-ni*, who specialized in telling stories based on Buddhist scriptures.

The verses they used gradually developed from narration by a single performer to performances by several actors singing their own parts supplemented by another performer explaining the plot. These became scripts for Tibetan opera. Owing to this historical factor Tibetan opera contains elements drawn from stories told in Buddhist *sūtras*, the best known of which is *Dri-med-kun-ldan*, which describes how a prince sacrificed his own life so as to give alms to others and finally become a Buddha. The story is virtually the same as that of Prince Sudhana. This type of opera provides valuable data for studying the historical development of the dramatic tradition.

The Tibetan opera uses simple, popular language, richly tinged with the witty diction and concise style of the Tibetan literary language. Its metaphorical technique is also characteristic of Tibetan literature. It is my hope that modern Tibetan operas will continue these traditions.

LADAKHI FOLK SONGS

Nawang Tsering Shakspo

Leh, India

The geographical position of Ladakh in the Indian Himalaya must have played an important role in the development of its distinct cultural tradition. Though isolated and remote it was also a great trading center, unique features which contributed to the formation of a specifically Ladakhi culture. In this paper I shall attempt to describe and analyze the Ladakhi tradition of folk songs. This tradition was not closely studied in the past. With the exception of Francke's work in this area most of the Ladakhi songs had neither been published nor recorded.¹ However, in 1968 the Jammu and Kashmir State Cultural Academy commissioned Shri Tashi Rabgias to compile the first volume of a publication series devoted to Ladakhi folk songs.²

The songs are themselves integral parts of everyday life, both at work and at events of social and cultural importance such as births, marriages and festivals of any kind. Their variations are found in different parts of Ladakh: Sham, Stod, Nubra and Zaskar. The tradition, whose creators are unknown, is an oral one handed down from generation to generation. Little is known about the precise origins and chronologies of the songs. Obviously they have been composed in different periods; as such they shed considerable light on prevailing cultural styles, attitudes and personalities of the region. Folk songs were composed in honor of rulers, ministers, head lamas and leaders, and in them monarchs and others were frequently referred to by the names of the well known heroes and heroines of the Ladakhi epics, such as Kesar and Druguma. Only when the real names of native rulers, whether Buddhist or Muslim, were used can we date the songs, e.g., those mentioning Bde-ldan rnam-rgyal (ca. 1640-75), Ni-ma rnam-rgyal (ca. 1705-34), and Hussain Khan.

Leh, the capital of Ladakh, was formerly a trade center with connections throughout Central Asia. Especially in summer, when the town became a focus of cultural exchange, folk songs were sung with

¹ Rev. A.H. Francke, "Ladakhi Songs," *Indian Antiquary* (1901).

² Shri Tashi Rabgias, *Folk Songs of Ladakh* (1971).

lengthy and stirring descriptions of neighboring Tibet, Baltistan, Kashmir, Lahul and Spiti. These songs are resources for understanding the historical and economic ties of the old Ladakhi kingdom and its neighboring states. Descriptions of the hazards of traders' lives as well the country's natural beauty are characteristic of many Ladakhi folk songs. As a frontier state, defence was foremost in the popular Ladakhi consciousness. Consequently more traditional folk songs tended to be about bravery and chivalry than about morality and religion; they praised the virtues of culture heroes, leaders and kings, rather than intellectuals and scholars.³

Every Ladakhi possesses a large repertoire of songs which he or she will sing given the slightest opportunity, formal or informal, alone or in company, with or without musical accompaniment. Music for song and dance at all village ceremonies is provided by the traditional low caste musician, or *mon*, of whom there is at least one family in every village.⁴ By contrast, the musicians known as *beda* are in fact wandering minstrels, who, unlike *mon*, traditionally were not attached to a particular village. In return for their music, which they played from house to house, they earned a meagre living from donations. Today *beda* women, or *bemo*, still go around the villages singing and playing the *daff*, a large drum-like instrument.⁵

³ For this information I am indebted to Shri Tashi Rabgias, Information Officer, Leh.

⁴ Their instruments are the *daman* and *surna* (or *harip*): a pair of kettledrums and a flageolet. At informal gatherings some *mon* play additional instruments such as the *damnyan* (Tib. *sgra sñan*), a string instrument resembling a banjo. The *limbu* (Tib. *glin bu*), or reed pipe, is generally played by shepherds in the mountains. On some occasions the singing is done by the *mon* themselves, on others ritual specialists are employed.

⁵ Francke's assertion that, "Those (Aryans) who are Buddhist in religion are still called Mons, whilst those who are converted into Mohammedanism are called Bhedas" [quoted in Pandit Amar Nath, *A Guide to Ladakh* (1931), p. 17.] would be very difficult to prove in present-day Ladakh since both Buddhist and Muslim communities possess their own *mon* and *beda*. Musicians of both religious persuasions may be found playing together at any one festival. Not so long ago in Leh, according to Mr. Tashi Wangyal, there used to be ten official palace musicians, *kharmon*, five of whom were Buddhist and five Balti.

Each song possesses its own distinctive tune. Some songs, however, can be grouped together in families, *glu-tsangs* (Tib. *glu-tshan*), by virtue of sharing the same rhythm or drumbeat. Thus, for the purposes of dance especially, the musicians might play a sequence of different songs belonging to the same *glu-tsangs*, during which the drumbeat remains the same throughout, whilst the melody on the flageolet or *surna* changes according to the song. When the drumbeat also changes it is a sign that this particular *glu-tsangs* is over. Not all songs belong to such a *glu-tsangs*.⁶

Following is an outline of the eleven main types of songs found in Ladakh.⁷ The first classification, made by Thinlas Dorje, identified eight major types of song, each with eight subtypes, bringing the total to sixty-four.⁸ The following outline is concerned with the cultural context of the songs. I begin with more formal kinds sung on public ceremonial occasions. I then describe various songs both public and private, which form an important part of everyday life in Ladakh and which mark all social and cultural events of any importance in the villages. The last set of song-types can be thought of as a product of influences outside Ladakh proper. These songs all reflect Ladakh's close links with her neighboring states, Baltistan and Tibet.

Chos-glu: religious songs

The religious songs of the folk tradition must be distinguished from those called *gurma* (Tib. *mgur*), i.e. those taken from religious texts, such as the songs of Milarepa, and used exclusively by the religious community. Religious music belongs to an altogether separate classical tradition embodying its own philosophy, literature and religious training. However the songs considered here generally have some religious theme, or honor great lamas or famous gompas (Tib. *dgon-pa*). They are composed and sung by lay people, not monks, at important religious occasions. Contrary to what might be expected lay celebrations on religious occasions were introduced only some thirty years ago. Before that celebrations were purely monastic. An example of this change is the Buddha's birthday festival, during which villagers now participate in the festivities held at their local gumpa, at which time *chos-glu* are sung.

⁶ Thinlas Dorje, *Annual Publication* (Ladakh, 1976), p. 41.

⁷ Other scholars, namely Tashi Rabgias and Phuntsog Tsering, have identified a similar number.

⁸ *Annual Publication* (Ladakh, 1976), p. 39. . . .

A notable example of a very old *chos-glu* is the song about Himis Monastery and its 16th century incarnate lama Stag-tshan ras-pa. Another is the song of Thiksey Gompa. More recently a number of religious songs have been composed by various scholars, the best known of whom is Sas Rinpoche Lobzang Chultim Chosphe. Strictly speaking such songs are not part of the oral folk tradition since they are written compositions. But Lobzang Chultim Chosphe himself has borrowed a great deal from the folk tradition. From his extensive travels in the area he has learned folk songs and tunes which he has incorporated into compositions on religious teachings and personal religious experiences, written according to classical Sanskrit poetic canons. Since a number of these poems have been popularized and are sung by ordinary Ladakhis they may be said to have entered the folk tradition.

The current process of development in Ladakh has led to an increasing popularization of this category of songs and poems. *Chos-glu* are now sung by children in school prayers and are broadcast on All-India Radio.

Gjung-glu: congregational songs

The congregational songs which date back to the time of the Ladakhi dynasty were composed in honor of kings, famous lamas, and other distinguished people. They were also sung in praise of monasteries and other places of significance. In general such songs are not composed nowadays, but they are still very popular. They are sung at marriages, Losar (Tib. *lo gsar*), and a number of village festivals. During the reign of the Ladakhi kings the *gjung-glu* formed a traditional part of the Dosmoche festival, the annual prayer ceremony of the king.

Ladakhi Buddhists, unlike Tibetans, celebrate New Year on the first day of the 11th month of the Tibetan calendar, which often falls in the month of December.⁹ In former times a royal feast marked the occasion. On New Year's day all the participants, including the local gentry, ministers and their relatives, offered *khatags* (Tib. *kha-btags*) to the king at his Leh palace. Later they watched ceremonial dancing at the *thekchen*, a special dance-ground, with the King and his guests looking on from a balcony which was provided for them. The rest of the audience was seated according to social rank and the palace musicians, *kharmon* (Tib. *mkhar mon*), played and sang *gjung-*

⁹ Pandit Amar Nath, *A Guide to Ladakh*, 1931.

glu with the dancers. These dances were performed by specially selected women called *takshosma*, who belonged to families that by royal order traditionally provided dancers for such occasions. After the Ladakhi king transferred his residence to the palace in Stok the tradition was discontinued. The Leh Dosmochey is now a purely religious ceremony sponsored by the four sections of the Leh settlement.¹⁰ The *kharmon* who traditionally sang the *gjung-glu* were given their own land and over the years settled down in the villages, another reason for the decline of this tradition.

Ging-glu: heroic songs

A large number of popular songs recount the lives and brave deeds of culture heroes and heroines. In olden times family elders sang these songs to their children to encourage bravery and fearlessness. The majority of such *ging-glu* were taken from the Kesar epic, others were sung in praise of former Ladakhi kings and queens, and nowadays they might be composed in honor of community leaders. In both of these latter cases the central figure frequently assumes the identity of Kesar. The Kesar story and its associated heroic songs are narrated only during the winter. At that time they are sung in conjunction with Losar, the New Year festival, or with upper-class marriage ceremonies, for weddings are customarily held only in winter, too. Formerly on such occasions the kings or local rulers performed dances themselves, the performance being then initiated by a special dance called *khatok chenmo*. Although extremely popular in Ladakh, ordinary people were not allowed to participate in the dance unless it was led by a member of an upper class family, *skutaks* (Tib. *sku drag*). The heroic songs themselves were sung by the drummers in honor of the respected dancers and the drumming would continue long after the completion of the song itself.

Togs-glu: love songs

Despite the popularity of love songs in Ladakh they are never sung on public or formal occasions. To sing these private songs at a public gathering may cause immense amusement, but would also be considered to be in poor taste. The *togs-glu* are therefore sung mainly by individuals at work in the fields, or on the mountainside while

¹⁰ *Annual Publication* (Ladakh, 1980), p. 45.

herding animals. People believe that the beauty of the melody should actually be beneficial to the lover for whom they are intended. Some heroic songs, such as those relating the story of Kesar and Druguma, are also love songs. One well known song in this category describes the love between Morup Stanzin, originally a minister to the Ladakhi king, and Salam Khatun. Later Stanzin was himself made king by the Dogra rulers.

Tsig-glu: play on words

Songs of sarcasm, like love songs, should not be sung at formal public gatherings, especially when important guests of honor may be present. Their true meaning is often obscured by complex metaphors which play on peoples' weaknesses in a highly satirical fashion. Since such a song may expose a conflict, any public expression may provoke fighting among those concerned and this must be avoided.¹¹ Informally, however, *tsig-glu* (Tib. *tshig glu*) are thoroughly enjoyed by friends indulging in verbal attacks on one another. Indeed, this is often a battle between the sexes.

Bagston-gi glu: marriage songs

Marriage feasts are considered very important in Ladakh and are conducted on a grand scale if that can be afforded. The celebrations last for several days, so that a large repertoire of marriage songs forms an indispensable part of the lengthy proceedings. The songs can be divided into a number of different types related to the various stages of the ceremony. Thus the *dadar* (Tib. *mda' dar*) and *tashispa* songs mark the original departure of the wedding party from the groom's house. The song of the door (*sgo glu*) signifies their arrival at the girl's house and the dowry song, the friends' song and the departure songs are sung inside the bride's house. Finally the bride reaches her new home where she is greeted with a number of reception songs. The songs are sung by the respective parties accompanying the bride or groom, close friends and relatives, and a specially selected group of dancers, *nyopas*, led by the *nierpon* (Tib. *gñer dpon*), a song master, and the *natitpa* (otherwise known as *tashispa*, Tib. *bkra śis pa*), who is the bearer of the ceremonial arrow, *dadar*. The actual content of the songs is closely related to the meaning of the complicated marriage ritual, which is

¹¹ *Annual Publication* (Ladakh, 1976), p. 39.

far too lengthy to describe here. Suffice it to say that a large number of these songs are prayers for long-lasting happiness and peace. The long question-and-answer songs can be seen as dialogues between the various parties involved in the ceremony, in particular the givers and receivers of the bride, elders and young people. The marriage ritual has been described in detail elsewhere and a number of these traditional marriage songs have been already translated into English by Francke.^{1 2}

Tashispa songs

At the end of every social or cultural event of any importance in the Ladakhi villages the *tashispa* is sung. There is a chorus and participants all take part in the dancing. The performers wear brocade robes, golden caps or *serthod* (Tib. *gser thod*), and the ancient Ladakhi cap called *photin*. As opposed to the *nierpon*, the *tashispa*, or *natitpa*, is usually a younger man who must possess auspicious qualities. The *tashispa* song also concludes the marriage ceremony, at which time the expression *tashisok!* (Tib. *bkra śis śog*), "may there be peace," is frequently repeated.

Chang-glu: drinking songs

Ladakh is well known for its *chang* drinkers. People drink in order to keep warm in winter and allegedly to raise their working capacity in summer. No social or working occasion, even a funeral, is considered complete without *chang*, so every house must have large stores of the barley beer for its own consumption and to serve guests. Since villagers, mostly the men, often get drunk and quarrel over petty issues, it is especially at these times that the *chang* songs are sung. In this way many a fight is avoided, so the people say. Most of these songs are in fact descriptions of the beverage and the way in which it is made (cf. the traditional English ballad *John Barleycorn*). In the songs *chang* is referred to as the food of the gods, *dursi* (Tib. *bdud rtsi*), and is highly praised.

¹² See Martin Brauen, *Feste in Ladakh* (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1980); Rev. A.H. Francke, "The Ladakh pre-Buddhist Marriage Ritual," *Indian Antiquary* (April 1901); and idem, "Ladakhi Songs," *IA* (July 1902). [See, in particular, no. xxx, "The Nyopa's Carpet."] For the texts of the songs themselves, see *Ladakhi Folk Songs*, vol. 1, pp. 13-43.

Other remarks

Three other types of Ladakhi songs are particular to certain regions. One is *jabro* (Tib. *zabs bro*), a singing dance popular in Rong and the highland nomadic region of Changthang. It is said to be Tibetan in origin. The second kind is known as *shonglu*, light-hearted songs accompanying the dance *son-rches* which is said to have originated in the Gilgit region.¹³ Performed at the *subla* festival in Shey village on the 10th of the 7th month, it honors Lha Rdo-rje chen-mo whose *lha-to* (Tib. *lha tho*) is in Shey. Lha Rdo-rje chen-mo is the protective deity of the famous translator Rin-chen bzang-po. Finally there are the *Sbal-glu* songs of the Balti people, Moslem Ladakhis. These are sung in mixed Ladakhi and Urdu dialect. Performed at marriages and births, they include Buddhist epic stories and praises of traditional rulers.¹⁴ Although the style of narration varies slightly from that in other parts of Ladakh, all the terms central to Buddhist cosmologies, pantheons, concepts of purification and so forth are also found in these songs.

Conclusion

The importance of folk tradition has only been recently recognized within Ladakh itself. Now the huge task of collecting and translating the songs of Ladakh is well under way: the State Cultural Academy's assignment to Shri Tashi Rabgias has been mentioned above. In 1972, with the establishment of an All-India Radio Station in Leh, the broadcasting of Ladakhi songs created a new demand for local singers and musicians, which itself revitalized the folk tradition. A second volume of 208 songs was produced by the Cultural Academy in 1977. Of five additional volumes released since then, the most recent at the time of this writing (1981) contains 97 songs from the Chigtan region near Kargil, an area with a predominantly Muslim population. During this period the folk songs themselves have not remained static. We can see changes which affect the songs and their content as well as their performance. I would like to conclude this paper with a brief discussion of such change.

I have described in passing a number of ceremonial occasions central to the former Ladakhi royal dynasty, the Dosmochey in particular, on which *ging-glu* and *gjung-glu* were traditionally sung. Obviously this kind of celebration has either died out or been

¹³ Pandit Amar Nath, *op. cit.*

¹⁴ *Sheeraza Ladakh*, Vol. III, No. 2, p. 69.

significantly transformed, so nowadays there are no analogous occasions for either their performance or composition. Similarly, professional musicians, singers and dancers traditionally engaged by the palace for such occasions no longer have any role to play, and the *kharmon* have long since been settled in various villages around Ladakh, in Phyang in particular.¹⁵

As for more recent developments among the village *mon* musicians, on whom the village depends for the performance of music on all ceremonial occasions, it may be said that although these individuals retain their low status many *mon* have improved themselves economically through educational opportunities and have secured salaried employment, thereby abandoning their traditional profession. In Leh, where this process is occurring at a faster rate than in surrounding areas, in many cases *beda* (the wandering beggar-bards) have officially taken over from the *mon* the duties of providing music for the relevant occasion. In fact many Leh inhabitants say that *mon* are carpenters (a former additional attribute of the musician caste), whilst *beda* are musicians.¹⁶ For similar reasons this transformation has also occurred in some villages. However in outlying villages the *mon* continue to perform their traditional duties and the *beda*, if present at all, are still classified as beggars. We may mention here that no *mon* are in Zanskar, a part of Ladakh where the traditional instruments are played by ordinary villagers. This reflects the greater degree of egalitarianism in that region, which we also see expressed in ordinary seating arrangements.¹⁷

¹⁵ I am grateful to Shri Tashi Sonam, Ayu Chongchore and Sabu for supplying this information.

¹⁶ In Leh there are five *mon* families, of whom one traditionally had the prerogative of playing the *dinjang* (a small, two-headed, barrel-shaped drum) at Losar as a form of *lharna* to the gods. This particular *mon* household continues to provide a musician for this purpose nowadays, and he is still considered the head *mon*. However at most festive occasions in the Leh area the musicians nowadays tend to be *beda*.

¹⁷ Whereas in the Indus Valley seating follows a more or less rigid hierarchy dependent on social status, whereby people sit in a line (*tal*, Tib. *gral*) with a beginning and an end (*talgo* & *taljuk*, Tib. *gral sgo* & *gral mjug*), typically the Zanskaris will sit in a circle. Elsewhere it is the *mon* followed by *beda* who sit at the *taljuk*.

Following the establishment of the Radio Station in Leh and the recent proliferation of many new kinds of songs which owe much to cultural influences outside Ladakh, a new category of musicians has emerged employing non-traditional instruments such as the harmonium, *tabla*, *dolak*, as well as guitar and banjo. These instruments are played by ordinary Ladakhis and carry none of the social stigma associated with the traditional *daman* and *harip* of the *mon*. Many of the recent songs are outside the established Ladakhi tradition. Although they are sung in Ladakhi or in a combination of Ladakhi and Urdu, the themes are usually of love, with alien rhythms and tunes based on Indian movie songs or Urdu *qawwālī*. A few of these songs actually tell of the modernization Ladakh is now undergoing. Besides this some song types peripheral to Ladakh proper, especially those associated with Tibetan influence such as the *jabro*, have found themselves in the mainstream of Ladakhi culture. With old songs being collected and new ones composed and broadcast, a process of standardization is probably occurring whereby regional variations are becoming less pronounced. The writing of songs must itself have a considerable effect on what was previously a purely oral tradition. While the folk tradition is thus changing quite rapidly in some respects, it will probably survive for some time. The tradition of song in Ladakh is sufficiently strong for new developments to be accommodated in its already rich cultural heritage.

RITUALS OF BHUTANESE HOUSE CONSTRUCTION

Chime Wongmo

Thimphu, Bhutan

The purpose of this paper is to present some of the important religious rituals performed in the course of house construction in Bhutan. These rituals, their conception and meaning, are an interesting and vast subject, which would be impossible to cover fully in a short paper of this kind. This paper provides the first description of these rituals in any foreign language publication. It is meant to introduce this subject and give some details of a little known tradition which is still in existence. Before examining the religious rituals, let us review some general characteristics of house construction: the selection of the site, materials used for the construction, and manpower involved.

Selection of the site

In former times the site of a new house, temple or monastery was selected only after referring to a special religious text on the subject, namely the *Bai-durya dkar-po* of Sde-srid Sañs-rgyas rgya-mtsho, unless the building was to be in a specific place generally approved by tradition. The book specifies the lay-out of surrounding hills, the direction of rivers, etc., indicating their effects, good or bad, on the occupants of the house. With the development of townships it has become impossible to use this system of selection. Still, many people have rituals for the first cutting of the earth, that is, the digging of the foundation of a house, and in villages of Bhutan people retain as much as possible the most important rituals for the selection of a site.

Generally, house construction in the country is carried out from February to July, since the days are longer then and there is little rain. In the villages, unlike the towns where the workers are paid on a system of daily monetary wages and work fixed hours, workers are given daily provisions of food, and the work continues from early morning until dark, rather than for a predetermined number of hours. The commencement of the work should be fixed by an astrologer who, basing his calculations on the birth year of the owner

of the house to be built, gives a day, date and time for an auspicious beginning. At the correct time construction starts with a ritual called *sa-slon* or *sa-chog*, meaning "digging of the earth" and "ritual of the earth" respectively.

Materials used for construction

Bhutanese houses in general are built on shallow foundations, whereas monasteries and *rdzon* (forts) are higher than the other buildings and therefore need deeper foundations. Most of the monasteries and *rdzon* in the country are built with stone walls and mud mortar. The gaps are filled with small flat stones. The thickness of the walls can be as much as four to six feet. Doors and windows, floors and ceilings, pillars and beams are made out of wood.

To provide information on house construction in general, this paper concentrates on construction in the villages. There, the foundation of the wall of a normal house of two or three stories is about two to two-and-a-half feet thick and about two feet deep. As soon as the thickness of the walls is determined the foundation is dug, then constructed with stone cemented with mud mortar and raised one or two feet above ground level. Such a stone wall-foundation is needed as protection from the moisture of the ground itself and for normal use as the shelter for the family's domestic animals.

Above these stone walls, pounded mud walls are raised. Two thick wooden boards are set parallel above the stone walls at a distance equal to the intended breadth of the walls and the space between them is filled with moistened earth. The boards are held erect by perpendicular supports and leather thongs are passed across from one side to the other to prevent the planks from being forced outwards by the process of stamping and pounding which is to follow. Once the frame is filled with moistened earth several people stand on it, and by constant jumping and stamping with wooden pounders in their hands they compress it to give consistency to the mass. The whole structure is left until the earth is sufficiently dry, at which time the wooden boards are removed and a similar process is repeated a stage higher until the required height is attained. People sing special traditional songs, often quite ribald, while jumping and stamping on the wall.

Roofing of the house is done with fir planks which are laid across timber beams and held down with stones as protection against the wind. Because of the expense of maintenance of the roofing, which has to be changed virtually every two to three years, many houses

are now roofed with corrugated iron. With the development of slate quarries in the country, slate roofing may replace wooden planks and rescue the rightful dignity of the traditional buildings from this assault.

Manpower

Except for certain skilled workers, most unskilled labor is usually provided by relatives and friends who come for a few days; their contribution is in return for the work the present builder did for them on previous occasions, this form of reciprocity being common in many Himalayan societies as well as in other parts of the world. Skilled workers such as the carpenters, the mason, and the supervisor of the pounding of the walls are paid daily wages and food. The master craftsman in charge, that is, the head carpenter (*bzo-dpon*) is the most important person, and he plays a prominent role during all the ceremonies associated with house construction. The carpenter-in-charge and the supervisor of the pounding of the mud walls are given sets of clothes over and above their daily wages by the builder of the house.

Religious rituals

As mentioned above, when the date and time of construction arrives, lamas and an astrologer are invited to conduct the ceremony. In the morning the lamas make offerings of incense and perform invocations to the local deities. Then the astrologer, in the presence of the lamas and friends, performs the ceremony of digging the earth. The lamas recite a rite for begging the site from the mother deity *sa'i lha-mo*, owner of the earth.

In the center of the construction site a place about four feet square with a smooth surface is made to enable the astrologer to draw his lines. Then, helped by the head carpenter, he divides the site into a chessboard of ninety squares. This is done to enable the astrologer to find the exact spot where the first digging of the earth should be done and is called "requesting the blessing of the earth" (*sa'i byin-brlabs źu*). The lines of the chessboard are structural guides, like the iconometry used for all Buddhist images. They form the framework for drawing the earth-owning deity (*sa-bdag*), a figure whose upper half is human and lower half serpentine. His head is ornamented with seven snakes. He rests his right hand, holding a gem, at his waist and covers his left ear with his left hand. The form of the deity is not actually drawn, but by counting the lines the

astrologer locates the place where the figure's left armpit would lie. It is here that the digging should start. It is said that if one digs in the wrong place by mistake this will have a bad effect on the occupants of the house.



fig. 1. The head carpenter and his assistant divide the site into a "chessboard" of 90 squares, while the astrologer sitting to the right of the head carpenter supervises them.

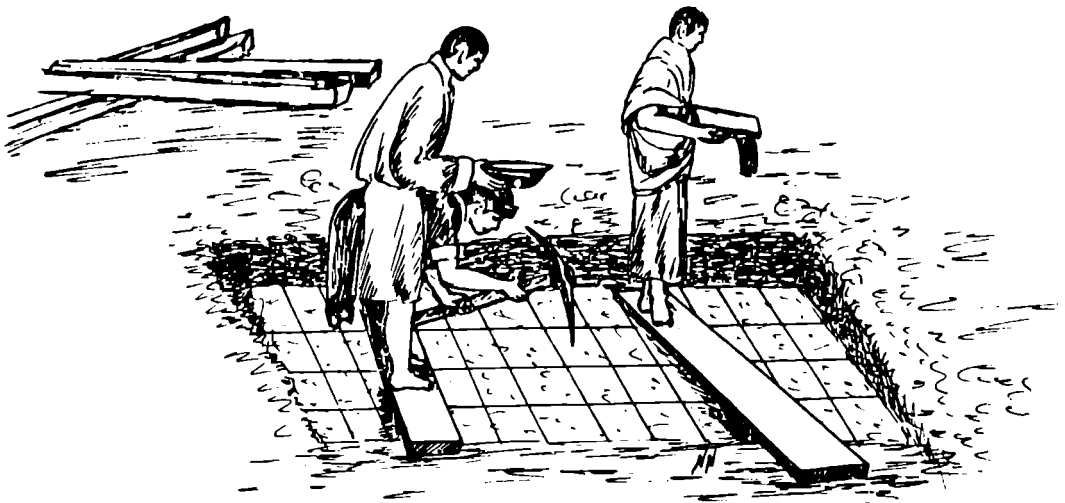
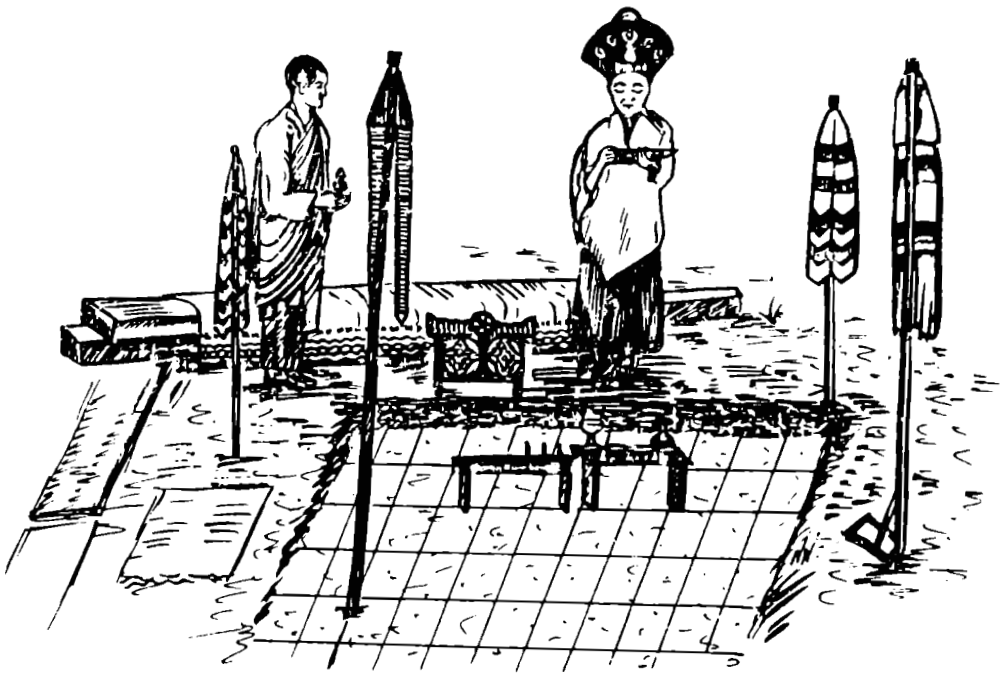
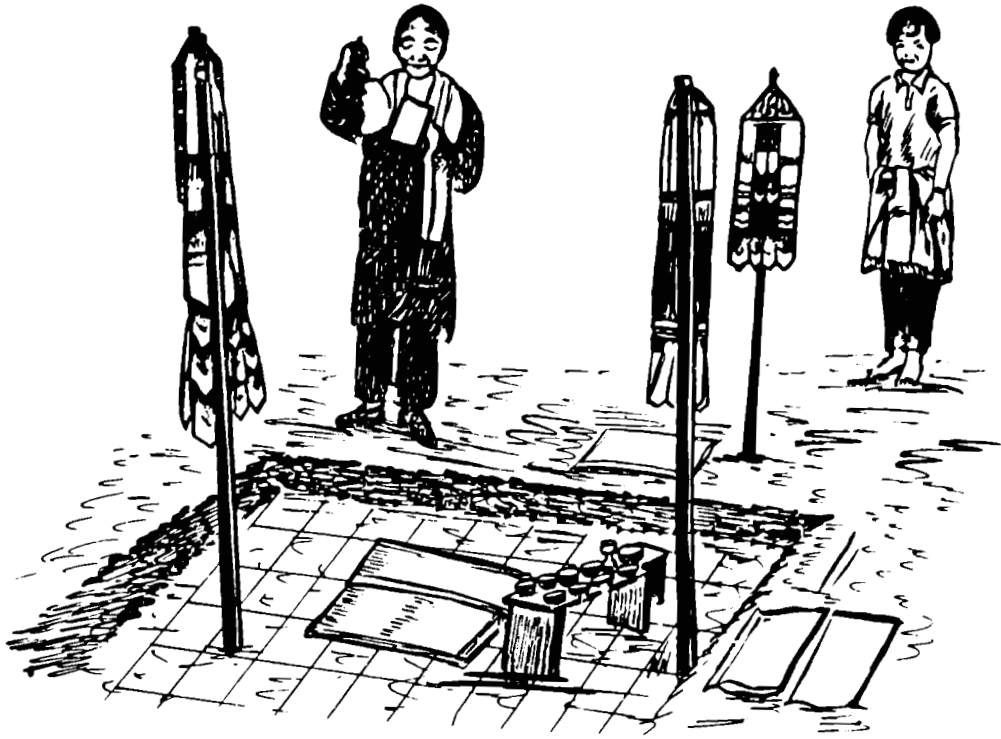


fig. 2. The builder of the house assisted by the head carpenter performs the first cutting of the earth under the lama's supervision.



figs. 3 & 4. The construction-site is decorated with banners and flags after the ceremony of the earth digging and religious rites are performed by the attending lamas.

When the astrologer has completed his calculations, the first digging is done by the builder of the house who follows the astrologer's instructions as to the direction he should face. A hole is carefully dug, about four by four inches and about one and a half feet deep, using a shovel that should be rubbed with some gold—people normally rub their gold rings on the edge. While the digging is in progress the astrologer examines the soil which has been removed and explains the signs he sees, recommending that rites be performed to overcome any bad signs he may observe. The soil from this hole is kept in a container and later sprinkled into the walls under construction. After the hole is dug, it is filled with water. The builder should walk a hundred steps from the hole, and if on his return the water has dried, it is considered a bad sign. However there are religious practices to overcome any threats this poses.

After the digging ceremony, the site is immediately decorated with banners and flags made of cloth in four colors and facing the four directions—white to the east, blue to the south, red to the west, and yellow to the north. These are the colors of the guardian deities of the four directions. The flags demarcate the construction site. Placing offerings and butter lamps to face each direction, the lamas invoke the guardian deities for the protection of the house and to bless its occupants. A tea ceremony follows where the lamas, guests and workers are all served. No ceremony in Bhutan is complete without the ceremony of tea-drinking (*bzugs-gral*, lit. "sitting-line"). Tea, rice and dried fruits are served, and money is distributed among those gathered. The lamas chant prayers before taking tea and locally made *chan* (rice beer) is put in a pot which will be offered to the guardian deities with the invocation of the lamas, this ritual being known as *mar-chan*. Once the invocation is made, the person who offers the *chan* will give drops of it as a blessing to all who are present. He will also bring a flag, the stand of which must be touched by all the important people in attendance, who pray for the successful completion of the house.

There are other ceremonies on the eve of laying the foundation, as well as preceding the raising and fixing of the main door, the assembly and installation of the wooden window frame which forms the front side of the first floor, and, finally, before roofing the house. Each of these stages is celebrated with ceremonies in the morning or at a time appointed by the astrologer, and people do not work on that day. Instead, they feast and dance, or join in an archery competition, archery, the national sport of Bhutan, being one of the most popular village amusements.

One of the unique features of house construction is that no iron nails are used for joining the wood. The carpenter takes the measurement of the walls, makes each individual wooden piece, and prefabricates the wooden parts of the house on the ground outside. On a fixed day, according to tradition, the pieces will be assembled and fixed in their proper places according to the sequence of letters or numbers marked thereon. The structure is held together by appropriate joints.

Consecration of the House

When the construction is complete, and sometimes even while it is still in progress, the family moves into the new house on a day and date again fixed by the astrologer. Bhutanese houses are traditionally painted with bright, beautiful colors, but this will be done only after a period of some months or even years, because the wood should be dry before it is painted. Moving into the newly built house involves a kind of ceremonial transfer from the carpenter to the owner-builder. The builder of the house, while climbing the staircase, places money on each step and window which is collected by the carpenter, who follows him. The carpenter is given two sets of clothes, one to use while working on the house and another set of superior quality, to use during the ceremonies. After the completion of their house some families have a ceremony for removing the boards between which the walls have been pounded (*par-sin phab*). Nowadays the specialist for this ceremony has to be summoned from the Punakha valley, and it takes place normally during the consecration ritual (*rab-gnas*) which must be done for every newly built house.* A board is kept on the top floor of the house, symbolically dressed like a lady. A man, also dressed as a lady, lowers it with a rope. A few people in the courtyard sing to him to lower it, but he, also singing, refuses to do so. The game goes on and on, until the board is finally lowered to the ground floor, The ceremony continuing from morning till lunch time. The songs, all of them obscene in character, are passed down from father to son, or teacher to disciple, and preserved by oral tradition. This particular ceremony is no longer often performed and people who know its associated songs and traditions are few.

* The reader may wish to compare this procedure with the consecration of the Lepcha house, as described by Gorer in *Himalayan Village* (New York: Basic Books, Second Edition, 1967), pp.70-75.

In the afternoon of the same day the lamas who are performing the consecration ceremony go round the house in a procession playing their musical instruments, while the lady or daughter of the house follows carrying a basket containing five wooden phallic symbols on her back. After completing their circuit the lamas continue their prayer as the basket is pulled up with a rope to the roof. This is also accompanied by singing, and the ceremony is complete when four of these wooden carvings are hung, one at each of the corners of the roof. This is done, it is said, to avert *mi-kha* (malicious gossip). The fifth will be kept in the house; it is considered a sign of good luck, a sign that boys will be born here and that the house will be wealthy. In parts of Bhutan we find these symbols hanging on many of the residences, a sign that these houses have all had their consecration rituals properly performed.

The day of the consecration ceremony is marked by inviting relatives and friends who come with presents and are in turn entertained with a feast. In the afternoon, before the completion of the ceremony, there is a rite of benediction, at which time the monks or other religious persons bless the house-builder and carpenter, who sit side by side in the corner of the household chapel while the monks recite the prayers. After this, all the guests give presents to the master of the house and some token of money to the carpenter, wishing the master all good luck in his new house and congratulating the carpenter on the successful completion of his work. Sometimes a man trained in the oral tradition will then give a long speech, reporting all the gifts received by the master and praising the people involved—the head lama who performed the consecration ceremony, the master of the house, the carpenter and all the celebrities present.

As on occasions of marriage and death, in Bhutan religious ceremony plays a very important role in connection with house construction. Limitations of space do not allow me to give the meanings and beliefs behind these rituals or the wording of the songs sung during the ceremonies. Nonetheless, it is hoped that this paper gives a clear introduction to the rites involved in this important feature of Bhutanese social life.

[For additional reading on related subject-matter, the reader may wish to consult Corlin, C., "The symbolism of the house in Rgyal-thang," in *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson* (Warminster:, Aris and Phillips, 1980) pp. 87-92; Gorer, G., *Himalayan Village* (New York, 1967); and Toffin, G. (ed.), *L'Homme et la maison en Himalaya* (Paris: Editions du CNRS, 1981), especially the contribution by C. Jest, "L'Habitat à Dolpo," pp. 223-239.]

ON TRANSLATING ORAL TRADITIONS: CEREMONIAL WEDDING POETRY FROM DINGRI*

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The culture of Tibetan peoples is, like others, a synthesis of form and content. At the distance from which we are usually obliged to deal with Tibetan materials, we are more inclined to limit ourselves to a discussion of their content, which is of course enormously rich. This concentration is appropriate in most cases. However, when we come to work with oral traditions, it is essential that we take account of the form and social context of a song, poem or story since these are inextricable and essential parts of the tradition itself. This has not always been possible, and in the case of Tibetan oral traditions little ethnographic work was undertaken in earlier times when these traditions were widespread. Nonetheless, since Tibetans themselves kept written records of many songs and stories, these have been passed to us in written form and now comprise an important resource for the study of oral traditions. Written texts of oral poetry are the primary material for today's field investigators since they are considered to embody the quintessential part of the tradition. Because a text is the most concrete element in the tradition, this does not mean that it can stand alone as a representation of that tradition. As A. B. Lord pointed out long ago, an oral recitation can often be more extensive than the text, and new examples of this principle are constantly coming to light.¹ It is also widely recognized that the staging, dramatics and social context contribute to the meaning and

* Over the years Lama Karma Tinley has assisted and advised me in my study of oral traditions. I am indebted to him for the painstaking transcription and editing of the *molla* from Dingri, on which this paper is based.

¹ Lord's discussion of the general principles of oral poetry, based on his analysis of Serbo-croatian materials, is found in *The Singer of Tales* (Harvard University Press, 1960). See also Brenda Beck's *The Three Twins* (Indiana University Press, 1982), a thoroughly researched anthropological study of Tamil epic literature.

the impact of the words. Therefore, when we rely exclusively on the text we limit our interpretation, excluding information essential to fuller understanding and more meaningful comparison.

Tibetan ceremonial wedding poetry offers an example through which to consider these problems. I first encountered these songs, referred to as *molla*, as they were recited in Dingri and performed in the context of weddings there.² Similar wedding songs appear throughout the Tibetan-speaking world, but the tradition to which these belong seems to be wider, namely, a speech-making tradition which can be identified in other contexts with sometimes very different texts.

This paper is a discussion of problems inherent in research on Tibetan oral traditions. In the course of reviewing these, using the example of the *molla*, I shall propose some procedures for assembling and presenting our materials. In the first part of this paper, I focus on the *molla* text and the limits we face in relying exclusively on texts. Later I discuss the form and the context of the *molla*, which might lead to more fruitful comparisons. Finally, in view of my interpretation of these traditions, I offer some comments on their survival.

The songs as a text

Tibetan wedding poetry is already well known through the fine translation of, and commentary on, the Gyantse wedding songs by Tucci and Norbu (1966). These can be compared to Ladakhi wedding songs collected much earlier by Francke (1902) and most recently by Tashi Rabgias.³ Although they are not identical, there are enough similarities among them to suggest they are part of a widespread oral poetry tradition in which we may include related material from the other side of Tibet—i.e. the songs of the house from Rgyal-thañ, a

² This is outlined in my book *Tibetan Frontier Families* (Delhi: Vikas Publishers, 1978). Note the discussion of *mo-lha*, pp. 173-76. (This study was based on field research carried out among migrants from Dingri living in Solu, Nepal after 1959.)

³ See G. Tucci and N. Norbu, *Tibetan Wedding Songs* (Ansona, 1968); and A. H. Francke, "Ladakhi Folk Songs," in *The Indian Antiquary*, vol. 31 (Bombay, 1901). There are now several volumes in a series *Folk Songs of Ladakh*, published in Tibetan in Srinagar and Leh, and researched by Tashi Rabgias (1970, 1971, etc.).

Tibetan-speaking area in North Yunnan—and from Mongolia.⁴

The house as a concrete entity and a symbolic force is the central theme in all these examples; this is also the case for the Dingri wedding songs. In the Dingri *molla*, as in the Rgyal-thän courting songs which have been carefully analyzed by Corlin, family values are expounded in terms of the house, which is in turn equated with the entire cosmos. When considered along with sociological evidence, the text of the Dingri *molla* and the songs studied by Tucci and Norbu, Francke, Bawden, Brauen,⁵ and Corlin most convincingly argue for the force of the residence principle in Tibetan society.⁶ However, my own understanding of the *molla* and its features as an oral tradition has continued to evolve. Now, attending to the form and style of this recitation, we can begin to recognize its wider implications.

First, the text itself addresses many social issues. Some verses do eulogize the house in most unambiguous terms. Still, many of the 1,200 lines (with an average of nine syllables each) in our Dingri *molla* address other features of Tibetan culture. For example, the song esteems clan leadership and lineage membership. It exalts class and wealth and it sanctions rank and power. There are references here to a broad range of subjects—religious, social, economic and political. A verse on friendship employs enchanting, intimate metaphors, another explains different kinds of alliance; one section ranks guests, another lists the bride's accompaniments. And there are commentaries on drunkenness, on varieties of *chan*, on gossip and on fashion. Its instructions on a host of activities include how one should prostrate.

⁴ See Claes Corlin, "The symbolism of the house in rGyal-thang," in M. Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi (eds.), *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*, (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1980). There are some very interesting Mongolian "poems for the tent" (benedictions and eulogies) newly translated by C. R. Bawden in R. Finnegan (ed.), *Oral Poetry*, (Penguin Books, 1978), which echo passages in the Dingri *molla* and ought to be compared with it.

⁵ Brauen, *Feste in Ladakh* (Graz: Akademische Druck, 1980), includes a number of the songs collected by Francke.

⁶ For detailed discussion of this principle, see my *Tibetan Frontier Families*, and "Some notions about descent and residence in Tibetan society," in *Contributions to the Anthropology of Nepal*, edited by C. von Fürer-Haimendorf (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1974), pp. 23-39.

So diverse are the subjects addressed in this *molla* that we cannot claim that it has any consistent or sustained theme. Moreover, it seems to be rather eclectic in its message, for it invokes contradictory principles. For example, the *molla* calls for social equality, yet it also sanctions class superiority and applauds the elitism of the aristocracy. Then, in the midst of its ribaldry and down-to-earth concerns, it praises both Buddhist and Bon deities. As a whole, therefore, the content of the song is not at all specific, nor is it confined to only a few issues. This variety accounts for the rich mosaic of the *molla*, but it also makes it more difficult for us to agree on a particular meaning, or on its quintessential message. The scope of the text poses further problems with its many different versions, some of which might be from oral presentations, if we are fortunate enough to find them today.

In the case of the material from Dingri, I obtained a rough manuscript text only after completing a long recording of the same *molla*, sung for me by an expert in this tradition (also from Dingri).⁷ As is usually the case, the oral recitation proved to be richer, but similar enough for Karma Tinley, who edited both versions, to combine the two readily into a single more comprehensive text.⁸ Both versions were different from those recited by yet another Dingri *mopön* (*mo-dpon*).

When we compare passages from any of these Dingri texts with like material from elsewhere, we find striking similarities as well as marked irregularities. Since what we are comparing are usually fragments of texts gathered from disparate areas, which are all that are available, we should not be surprised by the lack of a neat correspondence. We are still uncertain as to what a complete wedding song would include; even our 1,200 line *molla* from Dingri may be incomplete, since we cannot be certain that it actually starts at the beginning and ends at the end. Along with the other portions of this tradition that have been published by scholars these are only

⁷ This was several months after I had been told there was no such document. Because the recitation I heard was so close to this text, I assume the Dingri *mopön* knew of it; indeed, it was presented to me by one of them. As is often the case for such written materials, the copy was in a rough cursive script with many misspellings and in a notebook rather than traditionally bound. I had my duplicate copied from this.

⁸ This we plan to publish shortly in its entirety.

fragments of the whole tradition of wedding and house songs, surely a mere fraction of what has been generated in this tradition across the area where we know it appears. Before a really useful comparison can be made of the texts alone, we have first to accumulate a more representative sample of such songs from adjacent areas of the Tibetan-speaking world, along the lines now being followed by our colleagues in Bonn, Germany and Dharamsala, India.⁹

Of course one can question altogether the validity of comparing oral traditions like the *molla*, since they are by nature subject to ongoing change. This general feature of oral traditions was noted in Tibetan materials by Alexandra David-Neel in her perceptive introduction to the Ling Gesar epic over half a century ago.¹⁰ As David-Neel explained, the events of a story can change order, and the bard himself may supplement the text, or recite part, proceeding as if divinely inspired. The features of Tibetan oral poetry have been elaborated by R.A. Stein in his introduction to the new, extensive edition of the Gesar epic.¹¹ He reiterates the highly flexible nature of these compositions, noting how in their presentation the style can shift through narrative, dialogue, song, theater and story. This seems to apply to the *molla* also.

In both the *molla* and the Gesar epic, the carriers of the tradition are not pedagogues, but imaginative, inspired performers. The text, if it is available, is only a guide and the singer is not bound to it. This license doubtless produces the variation we find within Dingri and, of course, from one region of Central Asia to another. Historical changes over time can also result in variations of text, with new parts added and others deleted to reflect that history. In the case of the Gesar epic, we know that some chapters have been added in this century. And from South India, through carefully researched work on living oral traditions by Brenda Beck¹² we have a new, detailed example of

⁹ Dieter Schuh and Roland Bielmeier are in charge of this project at the Institute of Linguistics, Bonn University; and Tashi Tsering is directing this work at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala, where one volume of Tibetan songs has recently been published.

¹⁰ Alexandra David-Neel and Lama Yongden, *The Superhuman Life of Gesar of Ling* (reprt. Boulder: Prajñā Press, 1981), pp. 13-47.

¹¹ Pp. 1-20 in vols. 1, 2 or 3 of *The Epic of Gesar*, Tibetan text in 29 volumes (Thimphu, Bhutan: Kunsang Tobgyel, 1979-1981).

¹² See note 1, above.

this process. Until Tibetan Studies rids itself of notions of what is higher or lower, of what is more or less refined, we cannot overcome the concern with literary quality and begin to understand differences in terms of style, history, and adaptation. At this time, comparative study solely on the basis of texts, for all these reasons, does not appear to be very promising. What I suggest is that we expand our comprehension of this tradition by looking more closely at its context and form. The next section is therefore a discussion of these, stemming again from my own observations of the *molla* in Dingri society.

The songs in context: a dramatic art

On the basis of the wedding texts reported to date, including material from Dingri, we might suppose the *molla* is performed as other songs are, or that it is narrated. There is little in the texts to convey the emphatic spirit and drama of the performance which I had the advantage of witnessing on three occasions. At the time of a marriage the house becomes a stage and the wedding proceedings transform the dwelling into a kind of living theater. A Tibetan wedding is not a ceremony as people in the West might expect; nor does it in any way resemble a monastic ritual. It is more closely akin to theater and is perhaps best described as dramatic art. On one side of the main room is the bride's party, on the other sits the groom's. The normally austere, large room is brightly decorated for the week, and there is much noise and bustle among the crowd. *Chan*-servers move regularly among the rows of guests urging them to empty their cups. There, in the middle of this stage stands the chief official, the *mopön*, who orchestrates the unfolding drama which can extend over several days.

The performance follows the sequence of the *molla* texts: there are predictable highlights and scenes in the wedding such as the bride's arrival, ranking of guests, displaying the dowry, presentation of the arrow, and praises to the nuptial couple. Even though it follows the same format, the presentation remains flexible and sensitive to interruptions and promptings from the festive audience. Any number of incidents may occur in the course of a wedding, which a skilled *mopön* can incorporate into his song and thereby enliven his performance. This necessary and desirable improvisation is probably responsible for the many variations produced. Watching the *mopön* perform, I was struck by his robust oratorical style. He sings his declarations, ready at the slightest provocation to pursue and defend his claims. It was unlike the staged historical drama, which in any

case is not known to these Dingri agriculturalists, and it was quite different from their work songs or the ballads of nomads. I hesitated to call the *molla* a song because of its declamatory nature.

I was reminded of the wedding performances when I heard about a text, the *Tsarong Molla*, which at first glance seems quite different. The *Tsarong Molla* shares the designation *molla*, but is neither associated with weddings, nor is it an oral tradition. Indeed, its translator, David Jackson, treats the *Tsarong Molla* simply as an historical text important to his compilation of the royal genealogy of Mustang.¹³ In his report Jackson is concerned only with the content of that *molla* and with comparable historical materials from the Mustang region of West Nepal. However, it is he who identified the basic form of this tradition as oratory, the word *molla* being derived from *mol*, "to speak."¹⁴ The *mollas* of the Mustang region, Jackson notes, are described as representing a well established tradition of speech-making similar to speeches found in texts dating from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. These speeches, he explains, often contained a history, whether a history of Buddhism, or a genealogy, or something else. In the presence of a king, he says, they required the recitation of a royal genealogy; and in the presence of a lama, a spiritual lineage. Can we not therefore imagine that, in the presence of a household heir and his bride, a history of the house and its values was required?

A closer look at the social context of the Dingri *molla* and its style of presentation offers convincing justification for linking these traditions. The first clue comes from the name *molla*. Although at the time I collected these songs, my Dingri associates did not define the word *molla*, which they spelled *mo-lha*,¹⁵ as a speech, I am

13 "A genealogy of the kings of Lo Mustang," pp. 133-137, in *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*. Also see Jackson, "The Mollas: Historical Speeches from Lo Mustang," MA Thesis, University of Washington (1979).

14 Jäschke (1881), according to whom it indicates an announcement or presentation, p. 420.

15 My Dingri friends who assisted me with this project expressed their doubts about this spelling, and could give no meaning for the term, nor could they suggest where it may have originated. They knew that in other parts of Tibet similar traditions are called *kwa-bśad* ("praise of the pillar"), *bag-glu* ("bride-song"), *sbas-ka* (see Corlin), and the more general *glu-bśad*. The term *molla* should not be construed as applying only to marriage

confident that they would unhesitatingly agree that their wedding praise-poems are indeed speeches.¹⁶ The clearest evidence of this is to be found in the performance itself, including the form of presentation, and the style of the main performer, the *mopön*, a veritable master-of-ceremonies. Imagine this colorful, imposing figure, dressed in his distinctive robe and hat, directing the various stages of the marriage from his place by the central pillar in the main chamber of the house. If anyone is in charge of the wedding, it is this performer.

However, the *mopön* is not in any respect an entertainer or a priest. None of the three *mopön* I knew from Dingri were actors by profession, and they cannot be compared to the class of wandering bards and musicians who moved across the countryside. These three men were peasant farmers from different parts of Dingri who independently took up this art.¹⁷ One man was taught the tradition by his father. The other two also learned it in Dingri, but all three had travelled to other parts of Tibet and to Nepal where they could have seen similar kinds of performances. It is noteworthy that in their own village, each of them came from a good house (*grön-ba*) and enjoyed the esteem of the whole community, a factor which was important in their work as *mopön*. Their success, however, is not based primarily on their rank, but more on their assertiveness, their flamboyant style, their good sense of humor and their wit. These especially qualify them for this role. When he takes charge of a wedding, the *mopön* is its chief and only functionary—a far cry from the sober cleric or pedant often associated with Tibetan ceremony. Again, he shares much in common with other “singers of tales,” as Albert Lord calls his European counterparts.

As leader of the Tibetan wedding proceedings, this figure becomes a lively, witty master in the art of drama, sensitive to his audience, sonorous and rhetorical. One might consider the *mopön* a

songs, although it may be known in this context in other areas besides Dingri.

16 C. R. Bawden, in the introduction to his Mongolian poems (*Oral Poetry*, p. 40), notes that the commonest form of ceremonial poetry is benediction and eulogy. The Zulu call their poets praise-singers, and Judith Gleason has subtitled *Leaf and Bone*, her collection of African poetry, *African Praise-Poems* (Viking Press, 1980).

17 Padma mtha'-yas is from Zu-rtso smad-stod, Kun-saṅs is from Mdo-mchod, and Phur-bu rdo-rje is from Dgon-phug.

protagonist, issuing a series of exhortations, occasionally pausing when members of the audience, particularly the bride's party, provoke him. Also, when the action shifts or something happens, he readily offers an appropriate comment. Remember that this master is hired as a spokesman by the host, the groom's party, to represent its interests. His speech, the *molla*, advances their claims at the same time that it acts as the axis of a performance which includes counterclaims and challenges from the opposition party. Watching the challenges directed at the *mopön* on this dramatic stage, hearing the assertive delivery, and recognizing the innuendos, we can clearly see how competitive this sometimes lusty and aggressive drama is in performance. The atmosphere, the demands and the purpose of the *mopön* call for oratorical as well as theatrical skills. But these essential qualities are easily overlooked if we have only a taped recording, or more likely, merely a written text to work with. The assertive, strident lustre of Padma mtha'-yas's voice is lost in the written poem, which, however eloquent it may be, cannot convey the fullness of the tradition.

At this point let us look at the text itself. Here is a passage from the Dingri wedding song which eulogizes the central pillar of the house. These stanzas are sung midway in the wedding ceremony after the bride's arrival at her new residence, following praises to the entrance and the stairway. We arrive in the large room on the main floor where guests are now seated and where they have begun feasting. The pillar, freshly painted and highly decorated, becomes the focus of everyone's attention as the *mopön* begins his praise, the symbolic *khatag* held high to signal parts of the pillar as he proceeds through his eulogy.

ཀྱ་བའི་བཤའ་པ་རྒྱུ།

Praise to the pillar

ཀྱ་བ་བློ་དང་འཕྲེང་བ་གསུམ།
གཟུང་ལྷན་གཟུང་ལྷན་གཟུང་གསུམ།
མི་འགྲུལ་ཀྱ་བའི་གཏམ་དུ་བཞུགས།

Here is the pillar with its
three top arms:
A white, a red, and a long
beam
All hold the column firm.

ཀྱ་བའི་ཀྱ་གདན་རྩི་ལ་གྲུམ།
རྩི་འགྲུལ་བ་མེད་པ་གདན་དུ་འབྱུལ།

At the pillar's base, a
stone,
A steadfast stone, set to
grip
The pillar firmly.

ગ્રાંવંરત્તિંઈકંદકંયીકંપ્પ
 દ્વંઈશંદર્શિયા
 દ્વંયંઈકંવિશંદર્શિયાં
 શુદંપ્પદંશુદં॥

The pillar itself is
 sandlewood.
 To make it erect
 We must have a straight
 shaft,
 So we make it this way.

પ્રેંવેંશુરેંવદંમદ્દંયીકંપ્પ
 ઘેંઈશંદર્શિયા
 ઘેંયંઈકંવિશંદર્શિયાં
 શુદંપ્પદંશુદં॥

Praise to the capital,
 Embellished with jewels;
 It's like a round bowl
 Overflowing with riches.
 There should be such
 opulence,
 So decorate it like this.

રણ્ણેંવંસુરેંઈશંયીકંપ્પ
 યેંઈશંદર્શિયા
 યેંઈશંયંઈકંવિશંદર્શિયાં
 શુદંપ્પદંશુદં॥

The topmost beam is
 studded with pearls;
 It must shine in the light,
 So encase it this way.

શદ્દુદંભેંવંસંમેંઈકંયીકંપ્પ
 રદ્દમંવિશંદર્શિયા
 રદ્દમંયંઈકંવિશંદર્શિયાં
 શુદંપ્પદંશુદં॥
 શદ્દુદંમંઈકંયંઈકંયંઈકંવિશંદુ
 વેંઈકંદર્શિયા
 વેંઈકંયંઈકંવિશંદર્શિયાં
 શુદંપ્પદંશુદં॥

Fine silk covers the wood;
 It must be smooth,
 So we cover it like this.

Where crossbeams and
 post join,
 They meet exactly in line.
 We must have such
 balance,
 So lock them like this.

શદ્દુદંશંઈકંમંઈકંયંઈકંવિશંદુ
 યેંઈકંયંઈકંવિશંદર્શિયા
 યેંઈકંયંઈકંવિશંદર્શિયાં
 શુદંપ્પદંશુદં॥

Those upper beams are
 lashed to the
 Capital, as subjects tied to
 their king.
 Union is essential,
 So bind them like that.

ઘુમંઈશંવુરેંઈકંવિશંદુ
 રદ્દમંઈકંવિશંદર્શિયા
 રદ્દમંઈકંયંઈકંવિશંદર્શિયાં
 શુદંપ્પદંશુદં॥

There, overhead, ceiling
 boards
 Are clinched like a
 prosperous family.
 We want such fitting,
 So make it that way.

མཐོང་ཡངས་རྒྱལ་མཐའ་བཞིན་དུ་
 ཡངས་ཤིག་དགོས།
 ཡངས་པོ་འདྲ་ཞིག་དགོས་ལ་
 བྱང་ཡང་བྱང་།།
 ལྷན་ཅུ་ཅུ་ཅུང་མེད་པའི་
 ལྷན་པོ་འདྲ་ཞིག་དགོས།
 ལྷན་པོ་འདྲ་ཞིག་དགོས་ལ་
 བྱང་ཡང་བྱང་།།
 ལྷ་བླ་མེད་ཅི་བཞིན་དུ་
 ལྷགས་ཤིག་དགོས།
 ལྷགས་པོ་འདྲ་ཞིག་དགོས་ལ་
 བྱང་ཡང་བྱང་།།
 དུར་ལྷོ་ག་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་བཞིན་དུ་
 ཐོབ་ཅིག་དགོས།
 ཐོབ་པོ་འདྲ་ཞིག་དགོས་ལ་
 བྱང་ཡང་བྱང་།།

The skylight brings air through the roof;
 It must have opportunity,
 So open it that way.

The windows are alike,
 each the same size;
 We seek equality,
 So divide them that way.

Hanging above,
 A fine silk canopy covering
 all guests;
 Excellence is for everyone,
 So spread it that way.

Outside, prayer flags
 billow
 Like the southern clouds.
 We need protection,
 So flood the whole sky like
 that.

I selected this segment for two reasons. First, it illustrates the vitality and strength of the traditional literature. And, second, it has striking similarities with a passage in the Gyantse wedding songs with which, because of Tucci and Norbu's translation, it can be closely compared. Here is the relevant section from the latter work:

In this palace, which in every side is modelled upon the divine palace of dGa'ldan above (the sky), I will describe the pillars which are made of the best sandalwood (gośīrṣa) as their material;

Outside there are the four pavillions of the gods in the four corners of the house, inside there is the abode of the male god (god of the family of the bridegroom) protecting and defending.

Below there is a stone which is the steadfast pedestal of the pillars.

It is round and it is made of self-originated hard material. Bushel, garland and gems are its three ornaments.

There is the "long bow" adorned with a glory of good luck, the "short bow" and the cloth, the "cover of the bow".

Then, there is the beam adorned with designs of dragons, the "seat" of the beam and the cover of the beam.

Then there are the lotuses and the "accumulation of the law", with the sgo rog, moon and sun.

If there is such a pillar composed of these thirteen parts, in this time, in which an excellent festival takes place, offer to this pillar made of red sandal one white piece of silk (as k'a btags).¹⁸

Both passages can be compared again to the following section of the courting song from Rgyal-thañ which praises the house. The latter does not correspond closely with the two passages quoted above, but there is sufficient evidence to suggest a link among these traditions, and their rather wide dispersion over Central Asia. These are only two of several stanzas quoted by Corlin in his short 1980 article which evokes still other passages in the Dingri wedding songs.

This *Beka* pillar is a world-wide support,
 These rafters like four raised swords,
 This *Yoskhang* is a golden cabinet,
 Up there a little altar, butter-lamp and small white bell.
 This place of honour is a golden cabinet,
 In there a golden throne with a silken cloth,
 On the golden throne sits the father of the family,
 And the father looks like *Rigyal Lhumpo*.¹⁹

The passage taken from a Dingri wedding song is relatively straightforward. I have included the original Tibetan for those who wish to refer to that for their own translation and comparative use. This permits me also to take liberties in the translation so as to imbue it with the tempo of a speech. I want it to convey the insistence and declamatory quality I saw and heard in Padma mtha'-yas's performance in 1971 when I recorded this passage. This is a part of that recitation which seems to need little additional comment if the translation carries the vigor and the rhythm of its performance. While Tucci and Norbu's rendition is a fine translation which conveys the full richness of the text, it does not embody the drama of the competition within the tradition. And it should be kept

¹⁸ Tucci and Norbu, p. 54.

¹⁹ Corlin, "The symbolism of the house in rGyal-thang," op.cit., p. 91.

in mind that, according to Tucci himself, his work is based on a written document only; it seems that he never saw a performance.

There are places in the Dingri recitation which call for certain stage directions or interjections concerning actions. These are points on the social context and the action which are embedded in the performance, such as, for example, who the speaker is. Some texts, like the Gyantse songs, indicate which statements are made by the boy's side and which by the girl's. But the Dingri texts, and perhaps others, seem to be confined to statements by the *mopön*, i.e. the boy's side.²⁰ Later, when transcribing the text, my experienced colleague Karma Tinley noted several points where one would expect comments to be interjected from the bride's side. He and others familiar with this tradition can see that the text makes complete sense only with these additions.²¹ Recording the side of the bride's party, the antagonists, is therefore a methodological problem. Furthermore, those are the sections which may be more improvisational and less stylized, allowing for some of the most entertaining and creative moments in the whole presentation, which are of additional interest to us. This calls for new recording methods and the inclusion of certain contextual information along with the literary text: inclusions such as stage directions and other notes inserted into any scenario. Rather than simply indicate which side is speaking, these comments can open and close scenes, describe costumes, and underscore major events. They can indicate the pace of the often interrupted singing and suggest where the style of recitation shifts, which in turn may show us just how the balance between text and improvisation is effected.

Abrupt shifts sometimes appear in a text, such as in the passage from the Dingri wedding poem set out below in which the enumeration of lineages is suddenly interrupted. Instead of naming the last two clans, the *mopön* moves to a discussion about the very nature of his speech. He seems to be talking much more directly with his audience. Not only this, his subject is now the nature of the speech itself and the spokesman's relationship with his audience. It seems that he is now invoking the very ideals of speech-making.

²⁰ This is the case both in the written version and in the oral material I collected.

²¹ The *mopön* of course does not need to know passages which are not his part, so they are unlikely to appear in his recorded recitation or in the text he may have used.

གཞན་ཡང་བོད་ཀྱི་རུབ་ཆེན་བརྒྱད་ཀྱི
 གང་ལྟར་མེ་དང་རྩ་འདྲེན་གཞིལ།
 མདོ་དང་མེ་ལྷན་གཞིལ། ལུམ་
 དང་དག་རྩལ་གཞིལ།.....

འདི་རྣམས་བོད་ཀྱི་རུབ་ཆེན་
 བརྒྱད་ལགས་ལོ། གཞན་ཡང་
 རྩ་འདྲེན་ལྷན་བརྒྱད་བརྒྱད་
 རྩ་འདྲེན་ལགས་ཀྱི། བརྒྱུ་པར་
 རྩ་ལྟར་གཞིག་དང་གཞིལ་སྤྱོད་ལ།

ཡང་ན་གཞེན་རྒྱུ་ལྷན་དོན་
 ཀྱི་འདུལ། དམི་བཟུང་ན་དོན་
 ལྷན་ཟེར་བ་ལགས་ཡིན། ཡང་
 རྩ་ལྟར་བཟུང་ན་དགའ་པོའི་
 རྩ་ལྟར། སོ་ལ་སོ་ལ་ལྷན་མེད་
 རྩ་ལྟར་གཞི་རྩུ་འབྲུང་ཡིན།

And more, there are eight major clans.
 Which, you ask?
 The first two are Se and Ha-saŋ.
 Next are Mdo and Me-nag;
 The third pair is Sum and Ge-rigs.
 (final 2 missing)
 These are the eight great clans.
 If I named all the rest,
 They would be a hundred and eight;
 In this brief list
 We named a few.

Here the mopön may interrupt his recitation to tease and prompt his audience with challenging witticisms. Suggesting they are too calm, he calls on them to join his performance. The text continues:

Without friends I am alone.
 The meaning of my proverbs is lost,
 Like stale chan which becomes
 Just water.
 Mute to my exhortations,
 You are like oxen, silently drinking.

This evokes some objections from the

guests who shout back. The mopön continues:

ཚོག་གསུམ་མ་ལབ་ན་ཡང་དང་
 བུ་གཉིས་ཀྱི་འཛུ་མི་ཚོད། བོམ་
 གསུམ་ལ་མ་སྤྱོད་ན་ལུང་པའི་
 ལུ་མདའ་བར་གསུམ་དཔྱེར་མི་
 ཚོད་པའི་དཔེ་བཞིན་ཡིན་ཡང་
 གང་ལ་ཚོགས་པ་དོན་གྱི་གཞི་རྒྱུ།
 དགོས་པའི་དོན་དང་སྤྱུར་མས་ལུ་
 བ་ཡིན་པས། ལྷོ་ཕྱི་ག་གསེར་གྱི་
 སྤྱུར་མ་བཞུགས་ལགས་སོ།

How can we introduce
 Even a man and his son
 Without saying something?
 How can we know the
 three directions
 Unless we take a step?

On such an occasion
 We have to raise our
 voices!

A server offers the mopön chan. Voices from the audience ask, "What use are words? What should they say?"

The mopön then recites a verse on the virtues and different styles of speaking. This is followed by his invocation of the spiritual supports (*rten*) to which people must attend, which leads on to his enumeration of the benefits that would accrue to them.

Inserting the notes as I have above may seem to interfere with the poetry of the speech. But remember that the poetry is itself interrupted during the wedding. Working with the text alone is like having the lyrics of a song without its music. The social context of our recitation is its melody; but it provides for social meaning as well as rhythm. These inclusions remind us that the tradition with which we are dealing here is not only a wedding song or a history of the Dingri house; this is an oral tradition of speech-making with all the drama and refrain and poetry which the art form encompasses. By including the contextual information we provide a truer representation of the event which in turn serves two purposes: it enhances the meaning of the words, also giving essential clues to certain obscure words or phrases; and it provides a wider base for comparison with other oral traditions which may, for example, share a similar form but have a very different text.

To sum up: first, it is not sufficient to compare texts. Even to limit ourselves to examining only wedding poems here, for example,

may presuppose a definition of this tradition which is possibly inappropriate and does not necessarily facilitate a useful comparison. This *molla* from Dingri may not be specifically for weddings; it might be more like an initiation ceremony or a reception which, in the past, marked the succession of a leader—priest or prince—to his estate, but which today celebrates the arrival of a new house member. In recent times, in this part of Tibet, recitation of the *molla* unquestionably applied to marriage and to family values. It could have been adopted from something like the *Tsarong Molla*, the recitation of a royal genealogy, to suit the needs of this class and community of agriculturalists (the *gron-ba* or *khral-ba*). The text would have to be flexible to accommodate such historical shifts, with the variation we see from one presentation to another and from the parallels in samples from different areas. It may well be that elements which sustain and maintain this tradition are to be found in its form. That is, the form of speech-making may remain relatively constant, thus dispersing the common tradition, while the text changes. This interpretation would allow us to include the *Tsarong Molla* and the *molla* from Dingri within the same tradition and even consider them as historically linked. When we know more about the context of the former, that is, the style of presentation and the work of the performers, we may affirm those possibilities.

In conclusion, I would like to offer some comments on the fate of Dingri wedding poems, particularly because their recent speedy decline may be associated with the oratorical qualities of the *molla* discussed above. The *molla* is hardly ever performed now, even though other songs are sung and various marriage rules and observances persist, albeit in reduced form. One would have expected it to be recited for some years longer, but it has been abandoned so suddenly that this requires some explanation. First, there are some obvious reasons for the *molla*'s survival: performers who know the tradition are still available; marriage is an important affair, marked by feasting and singing; a family usually has some funds to finance a wedding; and Tibetans seem to take great delight in the *molla* when they do hear it today. Yet, in only a decade, immediately after 1959, the wedding poem almost disappeared, not only in communist Tibet, but also among the refugees wherever they migrated. Why? It is not from lack of funds or from loss of memory. Nor is the *mopön* like a shepherd without his sheep. The performer and his audience remain.

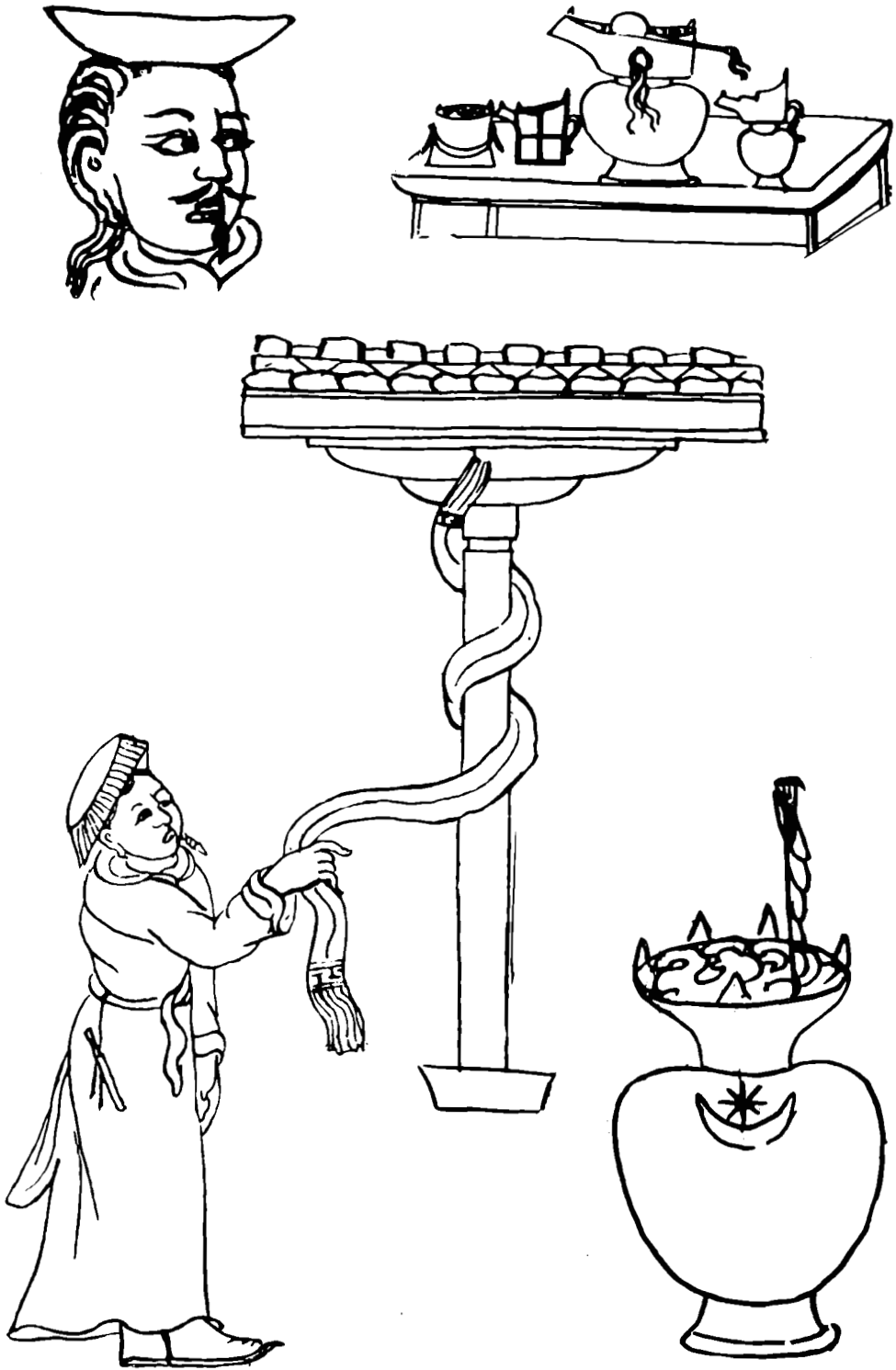
An explanation is to be found, I think, in the speech-making nature of this tradition. As a eulogy, the *molla* is a rather haughty, boastful performance. It conveys pride and confidence in one's

culture. If the severe political and economic changes in Tibet did not destroy peoples' hope, they may have nevertheless eroded their confidence. The *molla* needs a great deal of confidence and honesty, since it is imbued with that competitive spirit and challenge we spoke about. To sustain the inherent opposition of parties as expressed in the *molla*, a community would have to be both stable and willing to reveal its discord publicly. Today that is not the case. New Tibetan communities are highly unstable and, besides, they are understandably sensitive to outside judgement. So it is natural that they are reluctant and unlikely to perform anything that gives others an impression of internal disharmony, however playful it may be. Among Tibetan migrant communities in India and Nepal, the pressure to avoid any suggestion of internal competition has been strong enough to make people abandon this tradition, despite the many pleasures it held for them.

There is little in the text which suggests this problem of vulnerability. Its survival is associated with its deeper social meanings which are brought into relief only when we recognize the oratorical character of the *molla* and its competitive, dramatic qualities. We therefore see how a custom which on the surface seems to be festive poetry, embodies a larger meaning which in turn has political implications.

In general what I have sought to show here is how ethnographic information added to a text expands our capacity to interpret a tradition and thereby to convey all these levels of meaning. With this we can more adequately address problems of cultural survival. And we expand the base from which more useful comparisons with other traditions can proceed.





Artist Dargya's images from the molla.

PART THREE
HISTORICAL STUDIES

A PASSAGE FROM THE *SHIH CHI* IN THE *OLD TIBETAN CHRONICLE*

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1. Introduction

The fourth chapter of the so-called *Old Tibetan Chronicle* (Pelliot tibétain 1287:173-246) has attracted the attention of Tibetologists owing to its importance as a source for the history of pre-Imperial Tibet.¹ In the middle of the chapter there is a description of a controversy between Khyun-po Spun-sad Zu-tse and Sen-go Myi-chen over who was to become the general in charge of subjugating Dags-po Lha-de, who had revolted against the Btsan-po. Unfortunately, this passage has been partly misunderstood by scholars who have previously studied it, including J. Bacot, A. Macdonald and C. Beckwith.² Z. Yamaguchi, in his review of Mme Macdonald's article, has given a translation of this passage which is the best to appear thus far, though he does not give detailed comments on it.³ I have found that this passage can be identified with an anecdote found in the *Shih chi, lieh-chuan* 16. The comparison of the Tibetan version with the Chinese allows us to clarify the meaning of the Tibetan passage.

In the study which follows, I first give a translation of the Chinese version (in section 2), which is followed by a transliteration and translation of the Tibetan version (section 3). Problematic phrases in the translation of the Tibetan version, which are italicized

¹ For example, J. Bacot et al. (1940) pp.136-143; and A. Macdonald (1971), pp. 236-248. Z. Yamaguchi (1968, 1971 and 1972) gives partial translations of the chapter. C. Beckwith (1977) is so far the best study, and includes a translation of the whole chapter. [Complete references to the works here cited will be found in the bibliography on pp. 143-145.]

² J. Bacot et al. (1940), p. 139; A. Macdonald (1971), p. 239; and C. Beckwith (1977), p. 209.

³ Z. Yamaguchi (1972), p. 84.

and assigned numerical subscripts, are discussed in the fourth section. The fifth section treats the problem of transmission, and the sixth the implications of the anecdote's incorporation in the Tibetan text. The original Chinese text will be found in the appendix.

2. The Chinese Text

The anecdote with which we are concerned is found in the *Shih chi, lieh-chuan* 16.⁴ It occurs in a section of the biography of P'ing-yüan-chün, who was a prince of Chao well known for sponsoring wandering politicians and scholars. A conversation takes place between P'ing-yüan-chün and one of his protégés, Mao Sui, under the following circumstances: Ch'in troops have attacked and encircled Han-tan, the capital of Chao. P'ing-yüan-chün, having been asked to go to Ch'u for help, attempts to choose twenty among his protégés to accompany him. Deciding upon nineteen, he cannot find the last one, whereupon Mao Sui, hearing of the predicament, recommends himself. P'ing-yüan-chün asks Mao how long he has been in his following, to which Mao responds, "for three years." The translated portion of the text begins here.⁵

P'ing-yüan-chün said, "As for a clever man in the world, he is like an awl which has been put into a bag: the point comes out immediately. Now Sir [*hsien-sheng*], you have been in my following for three years, (but) no one around has ever praised you, neither have I heard of you; (so) you have nothing about you. {You are incapable; you should stay.}"

Mao Sui said, "That is why I am requesting today to be put into the bag. If I had been put into the bag previously, not only the point, but even the shaft would have come out."

(Then), P'ing-yüan-chün finally accompanied Mao Sui.

⁴ *Shih chi*, vol. 76 (Peking, 1959), vol. 5, pp. 2365-2376.

⁵ *Shih chi* (1959), p. 2366.

3. The Tibetan Text

The Tibetan version describes a conversation between Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad Zu-tse and Señ-go Myi-chen, which takes place in the following situation: Btsan-po Sloñ-mtshan and his sworn companions among the Myañ, Dba's, Mnon, and Tshes-poñ clans have succeeded in overthrowing Dgu-gri Ziñ-po-rje, after which Zu-tse joins them. Having killed the lord of Rtsañ-Bod, Zu-tse gives twenty thousand families of that region to the Btsan-po and thus shows him his loyalty. Afterwards, however, Dags-po Lha-de revolts against the Btsan-po, who, gathering with his ministers, holds a conference concerning who should be the general to subjugate Dags-po. Señ-go Myi-chen proposes himself.

Transliterated text:

'uñ nas Khyuñ-po Spuñ-sad na re// *khyo 'da's*₁/ dmag-pon
 'oñ-nam// *myi 'dzañs-pa go*₂// sgye-'u nañ-du smyuñ-bu
 bcug-pa dañ mtshuñs śes bya na// *khyo 'da'* btsan-po'i
*snam-pyi-par*₃ bka'-stsal-nas/ lo du-ma-žig lon ra// 'dzañs
 rño-thog-go žes// *myi-chig-gis/ bstod-pa kho-bos ma thos na*//
*khyo 'da's myi oñ-ba la bsgre-bsgre-ste*₄// {*bañs chab 'tshal-*
bar mchi-'o}₅/ žes byas-so// Myi-chen na re// *myi yoñs-kyis*
kho-bo la snan-du myi brjod-pa-yañ bden-no// *kho-bo sñon*
sgye-'u nañ-du žugs-kyañ ma žugs/ rtse-mo phyir ma byuñ-
ba-yañ bden-no// *kho-bo sñon sgye-'u nañ-du žugs-su zin na*//
rtse-mo bas yu-ba phan-chad pyuñ-ste soñ zin-no// 'uñ-gis
deñ kho-bos gsol-ba-yañ// *sñon ji'i nañ-du-yañ ma žugs-pas*//
gdod 'jug-par gsol-ba yin-no žes byas-so// 'uñ nas// btsan-
 pos-kyañ/ Myi-chen gsol-ba gžin gnañ nas// Dags-po 'bañsu
 dgug-pa'i dmag-pon-du bka'-stsal-to/ (Pelliot tibétain 1287:
 205-214.)

Translation:

Then Khyun-po Spun-sad said, "You Sir,¹ are you fit to be a general? As for a clever man,² he is said to be like an awl which has been put into the bag. You Sir, since you were appointed as a retainer³ of the Btsan-po many years have passed, (but) I have never heard anyone praise you, saying, '(He) is clever and capable'; (so) you sir *will continue to be unsuitable*⁴ and *will waste the people*⁵ [i.e. soldiers]." Myi-chen said, "It is true that no one has ever praised me. (But) it is also true that (because) I have never stayed inside a bag before, the point has not come out. If I had stayed inside a bag, (more) than (just) the point, even the shaft would have come out. Therefore, today I am requesting (this); I am requesting to be put (into the bag) for the first time, since I have never stayed in anything previously." Then, the Btsan-po granted just what Myi-chen had requested, and appointed him to be the general to subjugate the Dags-po.

4. Commentary

(1) *You Sir* (*khyo 'da's*): This extremely rare expression does not make good sense in Tibetan.⁶ It must be a calque translation of the Chinese *hsien-sheng* with the word order reversed: *khyo*, "man," for *sheng*, and *'da's*, "surpassed," for *hsien*. Hence, I translate it "Sir." As for the different forms *khyo 'da's* (ll. 1, 6) and *khyo 'da'* (l. 3), it would be preferable grammatically to consider the former form to be in the instrumental case and the latter to be in the nominative.⁷

⁶ Bacot (1940), p. 139, translates "*grand héros*"; Beckwith (1977), p. 209, gives, "(You) super-heman."

⁷ *Khyo 'da'* (l. 3), an object of the transitive verb *bka'-stsal-ba*, "to appoint, give an order to," must be in the nominative case. *Khyo 'da's* (l. 6), a subject of the transitive verb *sgre-ba*, "to repeat," is in the instrumental. *Khyo 'da's* (l. 1), as a subject of the intransitive verb *'on-ba*, "to be fit, to come," is usually in the nominative case, but could stand in the instrumental; for the subject of an intransitive verb of change of place, such as *'gro-ba*, *yon-ba*, or *'on-ba* takes the instrumental case when it is emphasized, or gives new information, and this seems to be the case here. Cf. T. Takeuchi (1978).

However, 'da', a verbal present stem, does not make sense here. Therefore, I interpret 'da' to be a variant, or erroneous, for 'da's.

(2) *As for a clever man (Myi 'dzans-pa go)*: This clause has not been correctly understood by previous scholars, who have understood *go* to be the stem of the verb *go-ba*, "to understand." In the present context that is impossible both from the point of view of grammar and from that of content. Here *go* must be a variant of the grammatical particle *ko*, a topic marker similar to *ni*.⁸ The entire clause thus means "as for a clever man," which corresponds well to the expression found in the Chinese version. One problem which remains is the phonetic identification of *go* and *ko*. In old Tibetan texts the mixing up of the aspirated and unaspirated voiceless stops and affricates is very common.⁹ While the interchange of voiced and voiceless stops is much less common, some instances do exist. The use of *d-* in place of *th-* is well known.¹⁰ The interchange of *g-* and *k-* appears in several Old Tibetan texts: e.g., *gyan* for *kyan*, "even," in the Bsam-yas inscription,¹¹ and in M. Tāgh. 0510;¹² *gun* for *kun*, "all," in the Bsam-yas inscription; and *klu* for *glu*, "song," in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*, chapter 4.¹³ Therefore, it is possible that in the present instant *go* and *ko* have been interchanged.

(3) *a retainer (Snam-pyi-pa)*: This title is found frequently in official documents,¹⁴ but its function is not well attested. Bacot (1940, p. 139) renders it "corvée aux latrines de roi," but, as Richardson (1967) and Sato (1977) have pointed out, this is doubtful. Yamaguchi (1972, p. 480) has, "Jijyū: a chamberlain of the Btsan-po," without giving any reason. Sato (1977, p.905) translates, "Chōdōkan: an official in charge of Btsan-po's clothes," considering *snam-pyi* to be the combination of *snam-bu*, "woolen cloth," and *phyis*, "a piece of cloth." According to Desgodins (p. 580) *snam* is an old word for *rgyab*,

⁸ See Goldstein (1975), p. 36; Chos-grags (1972), p. 12; and Bacot (1981), p. 13.

⁹ See Beckwith (1977), p. 181.

¹⁰ See Jäschke (1881), p. 228; and Fang-kuei Li (1933), p. 143.

¹¹ Tucci (1950), p. 94, line 13.

¹² See F.W. Thomas (1951), p. 62.

¹³ Pelliot tibétain 1287, ll. 220, 229, 232 & 233.

¹⁴ E.g., in the Sino-Tibetan Treaty inscription of 821-822, and in the Karchung inscription. Cf. Richardson (1967), Sato (1977) and Tucci (1950).

“back, side.” *Pyi* (= *phyi*) is a common word meaning “behind.” Furthermore, from the expression “the Btsan-po’s *snam-pyi-pa*,” I assume that the *snam-pyi-pa* was an official who stayed always behind, or at the side of, the Btsan-po. Thus, I translate it as “a retainer,” which is not identical, but parallel, to the corresponding expression in the Chinese text, *men-hsia*. This anecdote also suggests that although the *snam-pyi-pa* was one of the ordinary ministers (*phal-blon*), he probably did not have an active function in the government. For this reason Myi-chen, being a *snam-pyi-pa*, said, “I have never stayed inside of anything previously [i.e. I have not been given a chance].” This is also probably the reason why there were as many as fifteen *snam-pyi-pas* (cf. the Karchung inscription). Hence, I assume that *snam-pyi-pas* were officials, probably young men, who stayed close to the Btsan-po and were in charge of protecting and taking care on the Btsan-po’s personal belongings, but who had no particular active role in the government.

(4) *will continue to be unsuitable* (*myi on-ba la bsgre-bsgre-ste*): *Bsgre* is the future form of the verb *sgre-ba*, the meanings of which fall into two main classes: 1) “to enroll, to multiply, to repeat” (Jäschke, Das); and 2) “to infer, to get to know something unknown through comparison to the known” (Dag-yig, Chos-grags). These correspond to the meanings of its intransitive counterpart, *'gre-ba*: 1) “to roll oneself” (Jäschke, Das); and 2) “to be inferred” (Dag-yig, Chos-grags). In my translation, I have adopted an interpretation which accords with the first group of meanings. However, there is another possibility which may seem attractive, but which has not been grammatically verified; namely, to take the second class of meanings and to assume that the future stem *bsgre* has the passive adjectival meaning “inferred, known, evident.” This finds support in Inaba’s hypothesis (Inaba, 1955), though not widely accepted, that the future form of a transitive verb originally has a passive meaning.¹⁵ Then, the phrase would be translated, “It is evident that you sir are unsuitable.” In either case, however, the first part of this passage does not correspond to the Chinese expression.

15 An adjectival meaning given for *sgre* by Jäschke (“naked”) and Chos-grags (“bald, cleared”), for which the dictionaries give no etymological explanation, might have been derived in this way.

(5) *will waste the people* ('*bañs chab 'tshal-bar mchi-'o*): *Chab 'tshal-ba* is found in *Chos-grags* (p. 251) and *Nag-dbañ* (p. 52), where it is equated with *chud-zo-ba*, "to waste, to ruin." There is no phrase corresponding to this in the Chinese text, and so it seems to be an interpolation in the Tibetan.

5. The Process of Transmission

From the comparison of the Chinese and Tibetan passages, it is evident that the Tibetan version is a translation of the Chinese one. However the Tibetan version contains an interpolation [section 4.(5)] and therefore is not a completely literal translation of the original. In this respect our text is similar to other Tibetan translations of non-Buddhist Chinese texts, such as Pelliot tibétain 986 and 1291,¹⁶ and is unlike Tibetan translations of Buddhist texts whose literal fidelity to the original is well known. However, our text differs from Pelliot 986 and 1291 in one respect: in the latter texts the Chinese names are retained unchanged, while in the Tibetan version of the anecdote here considered all of the proper names are Tibetan ones. In other words, it is not really a translation per se, but an adaptation of the Chinese anecdote in order to describe the Tibetan event.

Now, the process of the transmission of this anecdote to the Tibetans poses a problem. So far we have no other evidence to show that the Tibetans had direct access to the *Shih chi*. In the *Wen-hsüan*, to which the Tibetans are known to have had access,¹⁷ this anecdote is mentioned twice,¹⁸ but it is only quoted *in extenso* in the commentary. In other texts, such as the *Shu ching*, *Chan-kuo ts'e*, *Mao shih*, *Li chi*, and *Tso ch'uan*, to which the Tibetans are known to have had access, this anecdote is not mentioned. Therefore, there is almost no doubt that the Tibetans knew this anecdote through one of the commentaries to the *Wen-hsüan*, but it is not certain which one. The two orthodox commentaries during the T'ang dynasty, namely,

¹⁶ The translation from the *Shu ching*, Pelliot tibétain 986, is discussed in Imaeda (1979), and the translation from the *Chan-kuo ts'e*, Pelliot tibétain 1291, is discussed in Imaeda (1980).

¹⁷ The *Chiu T'ang shu* relates that the *Mao shih*, *Li chi*, *Tso ch'uan* and *Wen-hsüan* were given to the Tibetan court at the request of Princess Chin-ch'eng (*Chiu T'ang Shu*, 196a: 5232).

¹⁸ *Wen-hsüan*, vol. 37 (Ts'ao Tzu-chien, *Ch'iu tzu shih piao i-shou*) 520; and vol. 42 (Wu Chi-ch'ung, *Ta-tung-a wang-shu i-shou*) 595-596.

those by Li Shan and Wu Ch'en respectively, lack one part of the original text.¹⁹ Thus the Tibetans seem to have translated this anecdote from another commentary which quotes the anecdote in full. We know that there existed several different commentaries during the T'ang dynasty which have not been preserved.²⁰ Probably one of these commentaries was given to the Tibetans together with the *Wen-hsüan*, and so became the source from which the Tibetans translated our anecdote.

6. Implications of the anecdote's incorporation in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*

Since there is no possibility that, knowing the original Chinese anecdote, Zu-tse and Sen-go Myi-chen actually spoke in the manner described, this conversation must be a fiction invented by the author or compiler of the *Old Tibetan Chronicle*. However, it does not follow that the controversy described here is a mere fiction without any historical basis. The revolt and subjugation of Dags-po Lha-de must have been a real event; and the controversy which took place along with it may have been a historical one also. The intentions of the author in incorporating this otherwise minor controversy into the text, with literary modifications, are obvious: first, he has the purpose of revealing Sen-go Myi-chen's cleverness, but this is of only minor import, for Myi-chen was not, and was not to become, an important figure in the Tibetan court. The main intention is to demonstrate the challenging and insolent attitude of Zu-tse towards the Lho-Rñegs ministers and the increasingly intense conflict between them, which in fact becomes the topic in the second half of the chapter. Thus the significance of this adapted anecdote is that it shows the conflict between Khyun-po Zu-tse and the Lho-Rñegs ministers, represented here by Sen-go Myi-chen, from the standpoint of the latter party. This conflict is symbolically described by the poems which constitute the climax of the chapter, for which the anecdote is the preparation.

¹⁹ Besides some minor differences one sentence of the original text, which is here bracketed, both in the translation in section 2 and in the Chinese original in the appendix, is missing. The first part of this sentence is however translated in the Tibetan version.

²⁰ See Shiba (1957).

²¹ One interesting thing is that the author intends to describe the

The use of these literary modifications^{2 1} clearly shows that the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* is not merely a simple annalistic description of historical events, but is a well constructed literary history, written with a certain intention and from a certain point of view.

Abbreviations and bibliography

Dictionaries

- Bsod-nams Bsod-nams rgyal-mtshan. *Tshig-mdzod brda-dag kun-gsal me-loñ*. Lhasa, 1980.
- Chos-grags Dge-bśes Chos-kyi-grags-pa. *Brda-dag miñ-tshig gsal-ba*. Peking, 1957.
- Dag-yig *Dag-yig gsar-bsgrigs*. Ch'ing-hai, 1979.
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- Desgodins Desgodins, A. *Dictionnaire thibétain-latin-français par les missionnaires Catholiques du Thibet*. Hong Kong, 1899.

people of four clans in a parallel manner. For example, the following people are listed as sworn companions:

- (1) Myañ: Tseñ-sku; Tseñ-cuñ, Mu-gseñ
- (2) Dba's: Dbyi-tshab; Myes-snañ, Pu-tshab
- (3) Mnon: 'Droñ-po
- (4) Tshes-poñ: Nag-señ; Na-gu

They are divided into two groups; namely, those who took the first oath, and those who joined the oath later. One finds among those listed as having taken the first oath the chief of each clan (i.e. Tseñ-sku, Dbyi-tshab, 'Droñ-po, Nag-señ), and two other members of Dba's (i.e. Myes-snañ and Pu-tshab). These two, however, are listed again among those who joined the oath later, together with those of the other clans, who are not chiefs. This can be understood only if we assume the author's intention to maintain parallelism in the description. Throughout the text these clan chiefs are treated as parallel, and following a particular order. This parallelism may be derived from political considerations, or elaborated for literary purposes, but it is evident that not only a description of events but also an intentional construction figures in the passage.

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Appendix

(1) 平原君曰

「夫賢士之處世也、譬若錐之處囊中、其末立見。

今先生處勝之門下三年於此矣、

左右未有所稱誦、勝未有所聞、

是先生無所有也。先生不能、先生留。」

毛遂曰、「臣乃今日請處囊中耳。」

使遂蚤得處囊中、乃穎脫而出、非特其末見而已。

平原君竟與毛遂偕。

(史記卷七十六平原君虞卿列傳第十六)

AN 8TH CENTURY LIST OF THOUSAND-DISTRICTS IN NE'U PANDITA'S HISTORY

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The military division of Tibet in the times of the Tibetan kings into horns (*ru*) is known from contemporary sources. Geza Uray's studies in this field have shown the following facts:¹ at first Tibet proper was divided into three horns. Then, in the course of a reorganization in 731, Rtsan-chen was united to these as a horn-supplement (*ru-lag*), so that from 733 onwards Tibet is reported to have been divided into four horns: *dbu-ru*, *gYo-ru*, *gYas-ru* and *ru-lag*. The *ru-sum* or *sum-pa'i ru*, first mentioned in the *Royal Annals* in 702, may be disregarded here because it is situated outside the territory of Tibet proper and administered separately.

The subdivision of the horns was into thousand-districts (*ston-sde*) or military thousand-districts (*rgod-kyi ston-sde*). Although in the old Tibetan texts many details about the military and territorial division of Tibet as well as its administration are contained, lists of the thousand-districts of the four horns are only supplied by comparatively late texts of the historical and religious-historical type, e.g., *Blon po'i bka' than* and *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*.²

¹ Géza Uray, "The four Horns of Tibet according to the Royal Annals," in *AOH*, vol. X, No. 1 (1960), pp. 31-57; and "The offices of the brun-pas and great mnans and the territorial division of Central Tibet in the early 8th century," in *AOH*, vol. XV, Nos. 1-3 (1962), pp. 353-360. I am also greatly indebted to the author for many suggestions and for kindly sending me the proofs of his latest article "Notes on the thousand-districts of the Tibetan empire in the first half of the 9th century," *AOH*, vol. XXXVI (1982), pp. 445-448 (in press).

² *Blon po'i bka' than*, in *Bka' than sde lna* (Paro: Ngodup, 1976), vol. C, 12b5-12a5. See also F.W. Thomas, *Tibetan Literary Texts and Documents (TLTD)*, vol. I (London, 1935), pp. 276-281; and G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, vol. II (Rome, 1949) p. 737-738. As for *Dpa'-bo gtsug-lag*, see *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, ed. Lokesh

In the *Blon po'i bka' than*, compiled by O-rgyan gliñ-pa in the middle of the 14th century, a list of thousand-districts dating from the second half of the 8th century is preserved. According to it, Tibet was divided into four horns which were each subdivided into eight thousand-districts plus one small thousand-district (*ston-bu chuñ*). This gives a total of 34 thousand-districts, because the small ones are counted as half.

Dpa'-bo gtsug-lag had incorporated into his *Mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston*, completed in 1564, a list of thousand-districts dating from the time of Khri Sron-lde-btsan (742-797). It enumerates the four horns plus *Žuñ-žuñ*, upper and lower, and the *sum-pa'i ru*. Each horn is subdivided into eight thousand-districts plus a small thousand-district and one bodyguard thousand-district (*sku sruñ gi ston sde*); an exception being *Žuñ-žuñ* which had a small thousand-district for the upper and lower part. Thus Dpa'-bo gtsug-lag, counting all districts as a full one, arrived at a total of 61 thousand-districts.

As far as the organization of the army is concerned, in the *Blon po'i bka' than* the eight thousand-districts of a horn are divided into upper and lower parts. The same division can be observed in Dpa'-bo gtsug-lag's work, where it is reported in a separate list.

Besides these two lists of thousand-districts there is another hitherto unknown list dating from the 8th century which is transmitted in the *Chos-'byuñ* of Ne'u Pañdita, written in 1283.³ Ne'u Pañdita's list is quoted in the context of the description of the world and the origin of the Tibetan kings. Unfortunately there is a gap in the text immediately before the list starts and one cannot judge from the manuscript copy how much of the text is missing. The list of the thousand-districts, however, is complete and deserves a closer examination because of its differences from the lists already known.

Chandra, *Śatapiṭaka Series*, vol. 9, pt. 4 (1962) 19b6-20a4; and G. Tucci, *Preliminary report on two scientific expeditions in Nepal*, SOR X (Rome, 1956), pp. 81-84.

³ Ne'u Pañdita, *Me tog phreñ ba* [i.e. the *Chos-'byuñ*], in *Rare Tibetan Historical and Literary Texts from the Library of Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa*, Series I (New Delhi, 1974), pp. 160-165. See also H. Uebach, "Zur Identifizierung des Nel-pa'i čos-'byuñ," in *Tibetan Studies presented at the Seminar of Young Tibetologists* (Zürich, 1978), pp. 219-230.

According to Ne'u Paṇḍita the military division of Tibet was into the horns *dbu-ru*, *gYo-ru*, *gYas-ru*, *ru-lag* and the *sum-pa'i yul*. The horns are subdivided in the following way:

dbu-ru = 12 thousand-districts;

gYo-ru = 8 thousand-districts;

gYas-ru = 6 thousand-districts;

ru-lag = 8 thousand-districts;

sum-pa'i yul = 8 thousand-districts; and, in addition,
one small thousand-district for each of the above.

Counting the small thousand-districts fully, Ne'u Paṇḍita thus comes to a total of 47 thousand-districts. The most striking difference between Ne'u Paṇḍita's list and those of the *Blon po'i bka' than* and Dpa'-bo gtsug-lag is the irregularity in the number of the thousand-districts in a horn. The imbalance in the number of thousand-districts is certainly not a question of the reliability of Ne'u Paṇḍita, in whose *Chos 'byun* are incorporated many correct quotations from the inscriptions, as well as the complete *Bod kyi rgyal rabs* of Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan, although the source is not named. Therefore, it may be assumed that Ne'u Paṇḍita quotes from an earlier source than does either the *Blon po'i bka' than* or Dpa'-bo gtsug-lag, if not directly from the original of an old Tibetan list of thousand-districts.

The comparison of the names of the thousand-districts, arranged and numbered according to their occurrence in context, leads to the following observations (see table): disregarding the different spellings of the names, Ne'u Paṇḍita's list corresponds for the most part with the other lists. The main differences of his list are to be found in the names given under *dbu-ru* and *gYas-ru*. It can be observed however that three out of the four supernumerary names of thousand-districts in Ne'u Paṇḍita's list of *dbu-ru*, namely *'grams-tsha*, *ñer-kar* and *phod-dkar* are to found under *gYas-ru* in the other lists. Moreover, if we take into consideration that the *Blon po'i bka' than* lists the thousand districts of *zom-stein* twice, in *dbu-ru* and in *gYas-ru*, and that Dpa'-bo gtsug-lag does the same with *'bran-mtshams*, it may be assumed that originally *nam-ru'i-phag* of Ne'u Paṇḍita's list had been joined to *gYas-ru* unless we are confronted with the duplication of place names.

These observations point to a reorganization of the thousand-districts of the horns. The hypothesis is corroborated by the fact that at least three thousand-districts of Ne'u Paṇḍita's list have been transferred from *dbu-ru* to *gYas-ru*. It is their numerical positions as 5 and 6, 11 and perhaps 12, which shows that the intention of the reorganization was to come to a balance of eight thousand-districts

within a horn and a four-to-four subdivision, the upper and lower parts of the horns known from other lists to have been commanded separately. It implies also that *gYas-ru* underwent a total reorganization in the course of which some of the thousand-districts must have been united to new ones with new names or even abolished. Furthermore, the thousand-districts which had been transferred must have been bordering *dbu-ru* and *gYas-ru*. At the present state of research many of the names cannot be identified,⁴ but from the names under consideration, *ñer-kar* and *ñam-ru'i-phag* certainly are bordering thousand-districts.

The question of the date of Ne'u Paṇḍita's list is as complicated as the identification of the place names. The irregularity in the numbers of the thousand-districts in his list seems to reflect an earlier state of the territorial and military division of Tibet than that represented in the other two lists. A state grown in the course of time had become overweight in thousand-districts in *dbu-ru* and underweight in *gYas-ru*, and this had to be balanced according to military rules into a strict eight-to-eight subdivision within the horns. Although among the old Tibetan sources which have come down to us there is no text especially concerned with the military division of Tibet, it is mentioned that a census of the army carried out in 744 was preceded by a number of administrative measures pointing to a large-scale reorganization. It is most probable that Ne'u Paṇḍita's list reflects the situation of the territorial and military division of Central Tibet after the coming into existence of the fourth horn in 731 and prior to the census in 744.

⁴ Many of the thousand-districts have been erroneously located by F.W. Thomas, *TLTD*, vol. II, p. 417-470, in the NE of Tibet. For the identification of place names, see L. Petech, "Glosse agli Annali di Tun-huang," *Rivista degli Studi Orientali*, vol. XLII (Rome, 1967), p. 241-254.

Chart

	Ne'u Paṅḡita	Bon-po' t bka'-than	Dpa'-bo gtsug-lag
nu-ru	1. dor te 2. chugs 'tshams 3. ston 'jim 4. 'brin 'tshams 5. 'grams taha 6. ñer kar 7. bcom pa 8. gzo sten 9. skyid stod 10. skyid smad 11. phod dkar 12. ñam ru' t phag	5. dor te 2. phyug mtshams 6. ste 'jam 1. 'brin mtshams 3. bcom pa 4. zom sten 7. skyid stod 8. skyid smad	1. dor sde 3. phyugs mtshams 2. sde mtshams 6. 'bri mtshams 4. 'bran mtshams 5. bcom pa 7. skyid stod 8. skyid smad
gyas-ru	1. sde po 2. 'o chab 3. śans stens 4. bzans po 5. 'brog mi 6. 'o mi	1. stod yons 3. lad mi 2. śans stens 4. phod dkar 6. gñen dkar 5. dran mtshams 7. yel rab 8. zom sten	1. ston chen 3. lan mi 2. śans chen 4. phod dkar 5. ñen dkar 6. 'bran mtshams 7. spo rab 8. gzoñ sde
gyo-ru	1. śar po 2. spyi bo 3. lho brag 4. yar rkyans 5. dmyal khri 6. yum 'bans 7. ñag ñi 8. dags po	1. yar kluns 2. phyi klun 3. lho brag 6. ljan kyan 5. gñal 4. lun pa 7. ñan po 8. dags po	1. yar lun 2. 'phyin lun 8. lho brag 3. yar mtshams 7. dmyal 4. gyu 'bans 6. ñag ñi 5. dags po
ba-lag	1. grom pa 2. lha mtsho 3. khri dan 4. ñan ro 5. man dkar 6. khri gon 7. khab so 8. gad gsum	3. grom pa 4. lha rtse 6. khri tha 5. ñan ro 1. man gar 2. khri dgons 8. mkhar pa 7. gad bkram	3. grom pa 4. lha rtse 6. khri 'than 5. myan ro 1. man kar 2. khri som 7. khar gsar 8. gad bram

THE THREE PROVINCES OF MNA'-RIS: TRADITIONAL ACCOUNTS OF ANCIENT WESTERN TIBET

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Dpa'-bo Gtsug-lag 'phren-ba tells us that in ancient times greater Tibet was composed of the three provinces of Mna'-ris, the four provinces of Dbus-Gtsaṅ and the six provinces of Mdo-Khams, geographically resembling a reservoir, water canal, and field.¹ It is said that during the seventh and eighth centuries the Tibetan kings Sron-btsan Sgam-po and Khri Sron-lde-btsan ruled all these provinces efficiently and exerted considerable influence on the neighboring countries of India, China and Nepal. Unfortunately the unity of greater Tibet was lost when the land became divided into small provincial kingdoms. Even as late as the tenth and eleventh centuries the Land of Snows was divided into the two regions of Bod (Tibet) and Bod-chen-po (greater Tibet). Nonetheless, scholars differ as to which regions exactly constituted Bod and Bod-chen-po.

Sarat Chandra Das explains Bod or Bod-yul to refer to "Tibet, which comprises *Bod-chuṅ* little Tibet including U and Tsang, and *Bod-chen* greater Tibet including *Mdo-smad* (Amdo) and *Mdo-stod* (Kham)."² In contrast the Fifth Dalai Lama Nag-dbaṅ blo-bzaṅ rgya-mtsho considered Bod-chen-po to include *all* the provinces of Mna'-ris, Dbus-Gtsaṅ, and Mdo-Khams.³ And Dge-'dun chos-'phel, the twentieth century Tibetan scholar and poet, states in his *Deb-ther dkar-po* (*White Annals*) that Bod and Bod-chen-po may be defined thus:

The word *Mna'-ris* refers to the subjects of a king; for instance, the king is *Mna'-bdag*, or "lord," and his subjects are known as *Mna'-ris*. Later on, when the provinces were

¹ Dpa'-bo Gtsug-lag 'phren-ba, *Mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston: stod kyi mna' ris skor gsum rdziṅ gi tshul/ bar du dbus gtsaṅ ru b'zi yur ba 'dra/ smad du mdo khams sgaṅ gsum 'ziṅ lta bu//*

² Ś C. Das, *Tibetan-English Dictionary*, p. 878.

³ Dalai Lama V, *Rgyal-rabs*.

ruled by the three Mgon, sons of the Tibetan king Skyid-lde Ni-ma-mgon, only the subjects of those three provinces were called *Mña'-ris*. So Bod and Bod-chen-po indicate that only the provinces of the king's subjects were called Bod, and the rest of the country was called Bod-chen-po. Some say that Bod means Dbus-Gtsañ and that Bod-chen-po refers only to Mdo-Khams. That is not correct, for 'Brom had requested Jo-bo-rje Atiśa thus: "Please visit Bod-chen-po, where the Bsam-yas temple and an innumerable saṃgha exists," as it is stated in the biography of Jo-bo-rje Atiśa.⁴

Thus during the reign of the three Mgon kings in western Tibet only the provinces of Mña'-ris skor-gsum were known as Bod, while the rest of the country was named Bod-chen-po. Similarly, before the recent Chinese occupation of Tibet, chiefly Dbus and Gtsañ provinces were known as Bod; Mña'-ris skor-gsum and Mdo-Khams were excluded by that denomination. This had unfortunate consequences for the unity of the people of greater Tibet, for it seems that the name Bod was applied differently according to changes in the location of the Tibetan government.

To grasp the geography of Mña'-ris skor-gsum, it is important to realize that in ancient western Tibet Mar-yul and Mañ-yul were two separate provinces. The name *Mar-yul* applies to present Ladakh, Sbal-ti, and possibly Gilgit. The name *Mañ-yul* applies to the provinces of Skyid-groñ and others bordering Nepal.⁵ However due to political shifts, changes in the names of provinces, and the lack of communication in medieval times, the exact location in ancient times of such regions as Žañ-žun, Mar-yul, Mañ-yul, Gar-log and others among the provinces of Mña'-ris skor-gsum became a matter of controversy. Hence the clear identification of the various provinces of Mña'-ris skor-gsum is critical to the study of ancient greater Tibet. To clarify the position of the provinces of Mña'-ris skor-gsum as the kingdoms of the three princes (Mgon-gsum), I anthologize the relevant passages from historical sources in the appendix to this paper.

In the Tibetan alphabet, the two letters *ra* and *na* may easily be confused, and this is a possible source of error with respect to the names of Mañ-yul and Mar-yul. In Bu-ston's *History of Buddhism*

⁴ Dge-'dun Chos-'phel, *Deb-ther-dkar-po [White Annals]* (Leh: T.S. Tashigang, 1979).

⁵ Cf., e.g., Das, *Tibetan-English Dictionary*, pp. 952 & 955.

the final *na* in the word Mañ-yul has apparently been mistaken for *ra* on a number of occasions. Thus the English translation of Bu-ston by E. Obermiller reads "the country of Mar,"⁶ and Mar-yul is the form given in other citations from Bu-ston by Bsod-nams Tshe-brtan Yoseb,⁷ who in his history of Ladakh identifies Mar-yul as the country inhabited by the subjects of the prince Dpal-gyi-lde-mgon. Yoseb also holds Mar-yul to be derived from *Rma-yul*, stating that a people called Rma migrated from Khams to Ladakh and so perhaps originated the name Mar-yul.⁸ As the majority of historical sources do use the term Mar-yul here, the kingdom of Dpal-gyi-lde rig-pa-mgon should be properly called Mar-yul and never Mañ-yul.

The following is a passage from a certificate given by a Dalai Lama to the prince Nag-dbañ phun-tshogs rnam-rgyal in 1694.⁹ The prince became a Dge-lugs-pa monk after a war in Ladakh with a Mongolian army. This passage classifies the provinces of Mña'-ris skor-gsum and includes Li-yul among them: *Pu rañs mañ yul zañs dkar skor gcig/ li 'bru za sbal ti skor gcig/ zañ zuñ khri sde stod smad gsum skor gcig.*¹⁰ Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa's division of the three is substantially similar.¹¹

Yoseb, however, claims that the definition of Mña'-ris skor-gsum in the Dalai Lama's letter is mistaken. His main objection is the inclusion of Li-yul in the region. Yoseb, following the great scholar Blo-bzañ chos-kyi-ñi-ma, holds that it is really in Sinkiang, i.e. Chinese Turkestan.¹² Yoseb's statement, which accords with the contemporary identification of Li-yul with Khotan, is supported by a passage from an Abhidharma commentary by Chos-smra-ba'i-btsun-pa Sañs-rgyas rgya-mtsho, who is not to be confused with Sde-srid Sañs-rgyas rgya-mtsho.

⁶ Dr. E. Obermiller, trans., *Bu-ston-chos-'byuñ [History of Buddhism]* (Heidelberg, 1931), p. 200.

⁷ Yoseb, *La-dwags-rgyal-rabs*, p. 183.

⁸ Yoseb, *La-dwags-rgyal-rabs*, p. 628.

⁹ The source does not specify the Dalai Lama to whom it is attributed.

¹⁰ Yoseb, *La-dwags rgyal-rabs*, p. 628.

¹¹ W.D. Shakabpa, *Bod-kyi srid-don rgyal-rabs*, p. 27: *stod mña' ris skor gsum ni/ spu hreñ/ mañ yul/ zañs dkar gsum la skor gcig/ li/ bru sa/ sbal ti gsum la skor gcig/ zañ zuñ/ khri sde/ stod smad gsum la skor gcig.*

¹² Yoseb, *La-dwags-rgyal-rabs*, p. 188.

Returning to the question of Mañ-yul, I am not sure that it can be included among the provinces of Mña'-ris skor-gsum, for it was not mentioned as one of the three kings' domains. Mañ-yul was annexed to Pu-rañs, though in medieval times Mar-yul may well have been confused with the similarly named region of Mañ-yul, also in western Tibet, thus originating the idea that Mañ-yul was itself one of the three provinces of Mña'-ris.

Appendix

(a) *Bu-ston chos-'byuñ*, ed. Lhasa, p. 894:

che ba dpal gyi lde mgon gyis mañ yul bzun/ bar pa bkra śis
lde mgon gyis pu rañs bzun/ chuñ ba lde gtsug mgon gyis
zañ zuñ bzun/

(b) *Rgyal rabs 'phrul gyi lde mig or Deb ther dmar po'i deb gsar ma*, ed. Lokesh Chandra (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1968), folio 30b:

de la sras rig pa mgon/ bkra śis mgon/ lde gtsug mgon te
gsum byuñ ba la stod kyi mgon gsum zer/ dan pos mar yul/
gñis pas spu hrañs/ gsum pas zañ zuñ bzun/

(c) *Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*, ed. 'Bras-spuñs Blo-gsal-gliñ, folio 185:

cog ro bza' la sras stod kyi mgon gsum du grags pa las/ che
ba dpal gyi lde rig pa mgon gyis mar yul bzun/ bar pa bkra
śis lde mgon gyis spu rañs bzun/ chuñ ba lde gtsug mgon
gyis zañ zuñ bzun/

(d) *La dwags rgyal rabs 'chi med gter*, by Bsod-nams Tshe-brtan Yoseb (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1976), p. 626:

de'i tshe dge bśes btsan gyis pu hrans su zus te/ 'bro za
 'khor skyoñ btsun mor bśes pa la sras gsum/ dpal gyi lde rig
 pa mgon/ bar pa bkra śis mgon dañ/ chuñ ba lde gtsug mgon
 byuñ źiñ/ che bas mña' ris mar yul 'bañs gzu nag can/ bar
 pas gu ge pu hrans rtse dañ/ chuñ bas źañ ųuñ zañs dkar
 spyi ti la mña' mdzad.

(e) *Bod kyi srid don rgyal rabs*, by Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa (Kalimpong: Shakabpa House, 1976), pp. 238-9:

dpal gyi lde rig pa mgon sogs kyis mañ yul (rdzoñ dga')
 bzuñ/ bkra śis lde mgon gyis spu hreñ bzuñs/ lde gtsug mgon
 gyis źañ źuñ bzuñ...

A SURVEY OF THE SPREAD OF BUDDHADHARMA IN LADAKH

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“Indian Tibet” was the term applied to Ladakh by the nineteenth century Moravian missionary and scholar Rev. A.H. Francke. Undoubtedly this is an appropriate appellation, since in every respect Ladakh bears Tibetan characteristics: geographic, religious and cultural. Even today Ladakh is a living repository of Tibetan religious and cultural life. For this legacy Ladakhis owe much to a succession of religious kings who patronized Buddhism and took great pains to propagate the Dharma by sending novices to neighboring countries to study it. In fact the poverty, inaccessibility and hostile climate of this region became in this context boons in disguise, since foreign missionaries and invaders could not entrench themselves here and thereby significantly influence its Buddhist way of life. Up to the present, therefore, the four major sects and various subsects have continued to flourish in Ladakh. This paper will trace their development since their introduction from Tibet.

According to traditional accounts the people of the Western Himalayas, like the Tibetans, practiced the Bon religion before the introduction of Buddhism in Ladakh. Ston-pa gsen-rab is held to have founded this religion in the extreme southwestern border regions of Tibet in *Zaṅ-zuṅ*.¹ From there, it is said, Bon gradually spread to Central Tibet, West China, Gandhāra and Mongolia. Although many salient points of Bon-po faith are now forgotten, a few Bon-po rites and rituals are still practiced in the Tibetan-speaking areas of India, Bhutan and Nepal. Scholars are of the opinion that the prevailing practices of raising prayer-flags on the tops of tents and of the performances of rituals connected with *nāga-pūjā* and the cults of local dieties are remnants of Bon-po cults. There are a few

¹ Purang, Guge, Spiti, Karja, Zanskar, Purik and Ladakh are collectively known as the area of *Zaṅ-zuṅ*. See *La dwags rgyal rabs 'chi med gter: The History of Ladakh*, edited by Y. Gergan (Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1976), p. 185.

professional Bon-po families in present-day Ladakh who still perform rituals of magic and for the expulsion of evil, and, especially for Buddhist funerals in Ladakh, their services are often required. The Ladakhi scholar Yöns-'dzin Dkon-mchog bsod-nams cites the existence of yet another faith in Ladakh and the Western Himalayas before the introduction of Buddhism.² This religion, which he maintains is known locally as *Bābāsvāmī*, advocated animal sacrifice as did the Vedic rituals. It was popular in these areas until recently and is said still to survive in some remote and isolated areas of Buddhist Ladakh. The practices of ancestor worship on New Year's Day are also attributed to this *Bābāsvāmī* faith. Further research is required before these assertions can be fully appraised.

Before Buddhism had arrived Aryans came to Ladakh and settled. We know that the Dardi tribe at Daras and Da-hanu in lower Ladakh are descended from pure Indo-Iranian peoples. Around the fifteenth century, although the Dardis were converted to Islam, the Dogpa of Da-hanu remained Buddhist and stubbornly vegetarian; not only do they abstain from eating meat, they also consider it sacrilegious to drink cow's milk. Some also believe that a uniform civilization might have flourished from Ladakh all the way to Siberia during the prehistoric period. In support of this they have cited as evidence the ibex images carved on hard granite found in Ladakh, Central Asia and Siberia. Regarded as an auspicious animal by people in the Western Himalayas, the ibex has been a popular emblem among Ladakhis since ancient times and remains so in certain ritual contexts; for example, rows of ibex images made of flour are decoratively arranged in every house in Ladakh on New Year's day.

In view of all this, we may conclude that possibly the Bon, the *Bābāsvāmī* faith, the ibex cult, and the Aryan settlement existed and left certain influences in Ladakh as well as other Himalayan regions. Being a religion of tolerance, Buddhism has harmonized itself with these cultures with which it continues to coexist.

Buddhism was introduced into the Upper Indus Valley sometime before the seventh century C.E. According to Buddhist histories Dgra-bcom-pa Ņi-ma-dguñ (Arhat Madhyāntika) was the first missionary to visit Kashmir to propagate the Dharma. It is also affirmed that Madhyāntika visited the Gandhamādana Mountains near Mount Kailash and that possibly he crossed the Dzjula pass into Ladakh

² See his *La dwags dgon pa rnam kyī lo rgyus*, three vols. (Bir, India: 1978-1980).

from there.³ He is said to have spent the summer retreat (*varṣavasana*) in the Zanskar area of Kargil district.

Other suggestions of the early introduction of Buddhism in this area come from various historical sources. In his Rock Edict no. XIII, Aśoka states that he achieved *dharmavijaya* not only in his vast empire, but also in the bordering lands, though it is not certain that Ladakh is here intended.⁴ According to L.M. Joshi the *Himavantapadeśa* (Himalayan counties) referred to in Pālī texts may possibly have comprised the modern regions of Himachal Pradesh, Kashmir, and Ladakh.⁵ King Kaṇiṣka reputedly built a stūpa in Zanskar which is still called the Kaṇiṣka Stūpa,⁶ a most important monument since it is evidence that by the second and third centuries Buddhism had spread to lower Ladakh. Luciano Petech mentions the discovery of a Kharoṣṭhi inscription at the Kha-la-rtse Bridge, ninety kilometers from Leh on the Indus, a record which defines lower Ladakh to have been within the Kuṣāṇa Empire during the first or second centuries C.E.⁷ The Gandhāra-styled Maitreya Buddha carved at Mulbeg and other smaller Buddhist images at Dkar-rtse, Sod and Dras show the powerful influence of Gandhāran and Buddhist art in Ladakh.⁸ In the eleventh century the great *lo-tṣā-ba* Rin-chen bzan-po is said to have built 108 Buddhist temples and monasteries in the whole of Mṅa'-ris skor-gsum, among which the frescos at Alci, Gsum-mda' and Mañ-rgyu in Ladakh, and Tabo in Spiti, are fine specimens of Kāshmiri Buddhist art. We note that according to the biography of Rin-chen bzan-po thirty-three Kāshmiri artists were engaged for the construction and decoration of these *vihāras*. Based on this evidence we can conclude that Ladakh had

³ Cf. Bu-ston's *Chos-'byuñ* (*History of Buddhism*), English translation by Obermiller (reprinted, Tokyo: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1964), p. 86; É. Lamotte, *Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien* (Louvain, 1976), pp. 331-333.

⁴ Cf. Nawang Tsering, *Buddhism in Ladakh* (Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1979), p. 8.

⁵ L.M. Joshi, *History of the Punjab*, vol. I (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1977), pp. 198-200.

⁶ A.H. Francke, *A History of Western Tibet*, with a critical introduction and annotations by S.S. Gergan and F.M. Hassain (Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1977), p. 2.

⁷ Luciano Petech, *The Kingdom of Ladakh* (Rome: Instituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1977), pp. 6-7.

⁸ *Buddhism in Ladakh*, p. 3.

close contact with Buddhist Kashmir in cultural and religious matters up until the twelfth century. Then, when Kashmir was swept by Islam, Ladakhi Buddhists began to look for spiritual and cultural inspiration to Tibet. They disassociated themselves from Kashmir except for small-scale commercial activity and, more recently, assistance on behalf of India's freedom.

In Tibet, around 840, Ral-pa-can was assassinated by followers of the Bon religion who placed Glan-dar-ma on the throne. He is said to have persecuted those who resisted his strongly anti-Buddhist policies. Proponents of the Buddhist religion were forced to flee, some escaping to Mña'-ris or to Central Asia. Because Mña'-ris became an independent state the reactionary activities in Tibet did not affect religion there. It was during this time that Mtho-glin monastery became a center of learning where religious kings of the Western Himalayas like Ye-sés-'od and Byan-chub-'od patronized Buddhism. These monarchs invited the great paṇḍita of Vikramaśīla, Jo-bo-rje Atiśa, to Mtho-glin in 1042 and it was there that the Bka'-gdams-pa sect, which spread to Central Tibet, was introduced. In fact the second spread of Buddhism (*bstan-pa phyi-dar*) originated in Mña'-ris.

When Buddhism took hold for the second time King Dños-grub (late-12th—early-13th centuries) of Lakadh compelled the Ladakhi monasteries to send their novices to Central Tibet for training and advanced studies at the monastic universities there, a practice which continued until 1959. When there were too few monks being sent to Tibet the religious leaders appealed to pious Ladakhi parents to offer their sons for religious training. Because of the joint efforts of Ladakh's kings and lamas Ladakh today holds a unique position in regards to the maintenance of the major Tibetan Buddhist orders introduced into this region at different times. Perhaps it is the only region in the Western Himalayas where the four major sects all continue to flourish. In earlier times, enjoying the patronage of the kings, monasteries were given land and other support. Except for those of the Dge-lugs-pa centers of Ri-rdzoñ and Bsam-gtan-glin, the founders of the major monasteries came from Tibet, but since 1834, after which date Ladakh was no longer an independent kingdom, no noteworthy monasteries were built. The tradition was protected and remained well organized under the care of monastic leaders despite temporary setbacks by the Dogra invasion and Muslim conversions in the region.

A Review of the Major Religious Orders in Ladakh

Throughout the ages Ladakhis have been free from Buddhist sectarian biases and have always supported renowned Tibetan saints who visited Ladakh to propagate their teachings. Although Mahāyāna Buddhism still flourishes in Bhutan and other Himalayan border regions, Ladakh is probably the only area where all four Tibetan Buddhist orders and their subjects have developed seats of learning. In the past a few clashes between some of these different orders took place in Tibet and other regions as they competed for power. However such incidents are unknown in Ladakh. The following brief account of the major Tibetan religious schools there places their development in the context of the foregoing historical review.

Bka'-gdams-pa

Jo-bo-rje Dīpaṅkara Atiśa preached the Bka'-gdams-pa doctrine at Mtho-glin monastery in Western Tibet and it is certain that lamas went from Ladakh to Mtho-glin to hear his discourses. They probably brought his teachings back to Ladakh to establish them as the first of the Tibetan doctrines to take root there. The ancient Ladakhi monasteries of Lamayuru and Likir were initially of the Bka'-gdams-pa tradition but were later converted to the Dge-lugs-pa or the Bka'-brgyud-pa orders. There are presently no Bka'-gdams-pa monasteries in Ladakh.

Rñin'-ma-pa

Of the four major Tibetan Buddhist schools which currently exist in Ladakh, the Rñin'-ma-pa is the oldest. It was introduced in Tibet in the eighth century by the *mahāsiddha* Padmasambhava, a famous scholar-saint of Nālanda Mahāvihāra. Gtsaṅ province became the stronghold of this order while it spread into the whole of Western Tibet and the Western Himalayas. However in Ladakh as in Tibet this tradition suffered a setback due to the Mongol invasion of 1679 led by Sog-po Dga'-ldan Tshe-dbañ.⁹ Perhaps another reason for its decline was its weak monastic system, the *vinaya* discipline not being much maintained among its adherents. In spite of this, Rñin'-ma rituals remain a feature of Ladakhi daily religious practice, for the great Rñin'-ma teacher Padmasambhava is worshipped as ever

⁹ See Petech, *Kingdom of Ladakh*, pp. 71ff.

before. Throughout Ladakh *tshes-bcu* (the feast-offering of the tenth day of the month) is observed and the *Padma bka'-than*, the biography of the teacher, is read. Adherents of all the orders worship him.

The seat of the Rñin-ma school in Ladakh is Brag-stag dgon-pa where about 50 monks reside. It was built by a monk from Kaḥ-thog monastery in Khams who visited Ladakh during the reign of Tshedbañ rnam-rgyal (r. 1753-1782). Today it is the only Rñin-ma monastery in Ladakh proper, although the influence of this school, exhibited by the widespread worship of Padmasambhava, is extensive.

Bka'-brgyud-pa

The originators of the Bka'-brgyud-pa school were Nāropa and his master Tilopa. It was Mar-pa (1012-1096) who first introduced these teachings to Tibet. He orally transmitted the "pith instruction" of Nāropa's esoteric teachings to his spiritual son Mila-ras-pa (1042-1123), who in turn handed it down to Sgam-po-pa. Among Sgam-po-pa's successors the Bka'-brgyud-pa order divided into several sects and subsects. Though some of the lesser ones seem to have disappeared, Ladakhis have kept alive the Lho-'brug and 'Brigun Bka'-brgyud traditions. The 'Brug-pa sect has been dominant among them, as it has been in Bhutan. Rgod-tshañ-pa Mgon-po-dpal (1189-1258) of Lho-brag was one of the prominent 'Brug-pa saints who visited Lho-stod, the old kingdom of the Western Himalayas.¹⁰ At Rgod-tshañ sgrub-phug, deep in the mountains about three kilometers southwest of Hemis, more than a dozen monks follow the tradition of the great Rgod-tshañ-pa even today. The position of the 'Brug-pa order was further strengthened by the visit to Ladakh in 1616 of another major teacher, Stag-tshañ ras-pa. Invited first by the Ladakhi king 'Jam-dbyaṅs rnam-rgyal (r. ca. 1595-1616), through the help of king Sen-ge rnam-rgyal he was later able to build Hemis, Wam-le and Lce-'bre monasteries. It was lama Stag-tshañ who organized a powerful saṅgha at Hemis and Lce-'bre, where at present about 500 monks live. That was the golden period of Ladakhi history when the "Tiger Lama" (Stag-tshañ) and the "Lion King" (Sen-ge rnam-rgyal), as they were known, provided leadership for

¹⁰ A. Ferrari, *mK'yen Brtse's Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet* (Rome: Is.M.E.O., 1958), p. 150.

both spiritual and material development.¹¹ The 'Bri-guñ Bka'-brgyud also has a sizable following in Ladakh, counting Lamayuru, Sgañ-sñon and Shachukul monasteries in its system.

Sa-skyapa

This order has the smallest following in Ladakh. Its founder in Tibet, 'Khon Dkon-mchog rgyal-po (1034-1102), established Sa-skyapa Monastery in Gtsañ province which became the order's center of learning. Besides the well known visits by Sa-skyapa scholars to Mongolia and China, some of these scholars also travelled to Ladakh, notably Druñ-pa Rdo-rje who came to teach the Dharma in the 16th century and founded Ma-spro Monastery. King 'Jam-dbyaṅ rnam-rgyal patronized the Sa-skyapa sect during the early part of his reign but later came to favor the Bka'-brgyud-pa. Without royal patronage the Sa-skyapa order never grew and its presence in Ladakh remains confined to Ma-spro village and monastery.

Dge-lugs-pa

The last order to develop in Tibet itself was the Dge-lugs-pa, the reformed sect established by Rje Tsoñ-kha-pa who founded Dga'-ldan Monastery. Having studied with renowned scholar-saints of the Bka'-brgyud, Sa-skyapa, Rñiñ-ma and other schools, this leader originally had no intention of forming a separate sect. His purpose was to purify and reform the Tibetan saṃgha which at that time was considered adversely influenced by immoral and lax members. Rje Tsoñ-kha-pa's teaching stressed a fusion of the asceticism of the Śrāvakayāna, the morality of Bodhisattvayāna and the yogic technique of Vajrayāna. The great reformer revitalized the *vinaya* code of conduct transmitted by the Sarvāstivādin School, emphasizing Prātimokṣa vows and the three-month *varṣavasana* retreat. Subsequently his great disciples Mkhas-grub-rje, Rgyal-tshab-rje and Dge-'dun-grub propagated his reforms and the Dge-lugs-pa became a separate school in Tibet.

The *La dwags rgyal rabs 'chi med gter* states that Rje Tsoñ-kha-pa himself sent two monks to Ladakh with gifts for King Grags-'bum-lde who received the visitors warmly and immediately ordered the renovation of the old Dpe-thub (Spituk) Monastery. The king

¹¹ See *Hemis Fair, Rig-pa'i bdud-rtsi*, by Tashi Rabgyas (Leh: SBP, 1981).

reformed the saṅgha in strict accordance with the Prātimokṣa vows. Another disciple of Rje Tson-kha-pa, Stod Ses-rab bzañ-po, founded Stag-mo Monastery in Ladakh and organized the saṅgha there, arranging for Prātimokṣa recitations and the study of Rje Tson-kha-pa's main work, the *Lam-rim chen-mo*. A successful teacher, Bzañ-po attracted a large following throughout Ladakh. One of his chief disciples was Lama Byañ-sems who founded Bde-skyid Monastery in Nubra, Dkyil Monastery in Spiti and several others in Zanskar.

Because of the excellent discipline and monastic organization of the Dge-lugs-pa school, it flourished in Ladakh as in Tibet. But it was also bolstered by the Mongol invasion whose leader Sog-po Dga'-ldan Tshe-dbañ supported its monks. The last monasteries built in Ladakh were Ri-rdzon and Bsam-gtan-glin, both Dge-lugs-pa. As far as *vinaya* is concerned, they both adhere to the ideal of a saṅgha whose members have no private property, handle no money and have no private food arrangements. Their monks are vegetarian, do not heat their cells in winter, and only take medication that is available to everyone else. The main features of the daily monastic routine are as prescribed in the code: study, meditation, and other Dharma-related activities.

Conclusion

Buddhism was suppressed in Tibet during the ninth century and disappeared from Kashmir some three centuries later. However, despite Glan-dar-ma's persecutions and the Islamic policies of conversion, it survived in Himalayan border regions. Again in the 1960s when Chinese Red Guards destroyed Tibetan culture and religion in Tibet itself, Tibetan religion survived in Ladakh and other Himalayan regions where, in addition, the migration of Tibetan teachers has been locally beneficial. Having held onto the religious tradition through two periods when it was uprooted in Tibet, Ladakh realizes its special responsibility in regards to preserving and strengthening the religion and the culture of Tibet. It occupies a unique position in this respect. The course of history may again change, in which case a third spread of Dharma may occur in Tibet via Ladakh, repeating the pattern of the second propagation from the western Himalayas into Tibet nine centuries ago.

[Note: Readers interested in pursuing further the study of Buddhism in Ladakh should consult, in addition to the works cited herein, D.L. Snellgrove and T. Skorupski, *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh* (Boulder: Prajñā, 1977-80), two volumes.]

GLOSSES ON THE OEUVRE OF BLA-MA 'PHAGS-PA: III. THE "PATRON-PATRONIZED" RELATIONSHIP

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It is well known that 'Phags-pa lama and the Mongol Emperor Qubilai were linked in the so-called *yon-mchod* or "patron-patronized" relationship, in which, using Wylie's definition, "the patron (*yon* or *yon-bdag*) provides the military power to enforce the temporal prerogatives of the lama, who in turn devotes himself to the religious needs (*mchod* or *mchod-gnas*) of the patron."¹

This relationship is much glorified, especially in the case of later chronicles, which is mainly to be explained by the fact that when Altan qan and Bsod-nams rgya-mtsho, the third Dalai Lama, formed their alliance, they followed an pattern similar to that which had existed between 'Phags-pa and Qubilai. Naturally there was some similarity between the association of 'Phags-pa with Qubilai and that of Altan qan with the third Dalai Lama; nevertheless the actual politico-historical conditions of the sixteenth century were totally different. Although these later chronicles depict the great Mongol Emperor and his lama as persons of equal authority, their association was no doubt that of lord and subject, a fact acknowledged even by 'Phags-pa himself.²

¹ T.V. Wylie, "The First Mongol Conquest of Tibet Reinterpreted," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 37 (1977), p. 119.

² See his letter written to the "Bodhisattva Prince" (probably Qubilai), entitled *Rgyal bu byañ chub sems dpa' la gnañ ba'i bka' yig*: No. 257 Ba, 263a-264a: (p. 263b)... *rgyal bu byañ chub sems dpa' sku khams bzañ śin phrin las rgya che bar b'zugs pa thos pas yid dga' / ned yon mchod thams cad kyañ bde bar mchis / khyed kyis thugs brtse ba chen pos dgoñs nas spyir rgyal khams dan / sañs rgyas kyi bstan pa la phan par dgoñs pa'i mdzad du rgya chen po dan / bye brag tu bdag cag lta bu'i dman pa'an thugs kyi dkyil 'khor gyi khoñs su chud par mdzad nas / ...etc.* Throughout the article I refer to 'Phags-pa's texts as found in vols. Pa-Ba of the *Sa-skya-pa'i bka'-'bum*, VI-VII (Tokyo, 1968). The numbers before Pa or

In the present article I am going to survey briefly those works of 'Phags-pa that are explicitly said to have been written to or for Qubilai qan. All of these writings may be considered a manifestation of 'Phags-pa's efforts to fulfil the religious needs of his patron, i.e. they are going to be discussed within the frame of the *yon-mchod* association. In order to form a clear picture of these works I have classified them into three major groups. The religious (sometimes only pseudo-religious) needs of Qubilai are interpreted as having consisted of the spheres of mental, verbal and bodily necessities. At the same time these categories reflect the duties of 'Phags-pa and of the clergy in general.³

Works relating to purely religious needs

Group one includes those works of 'Phags-pa that were prepared to fulfil the religious needs and demands of Qubilai *par excellence*. On the part of 'Phags-pa, or of the clergy in general, this group reflects the duty to teach Buddhism. As for the tantric aspect, there is a short eulogy dedicated to goddesses of the *Hevajra maṇḍala* headed here by Vajranairātmyā. [See the *Bstod pa rnam dag gi phreñ ba*: No. 57 Pa, pp. 287a-289a (date: *chu mo glañ* 1253).] The colophon of this text states *expressis verbis* that it was written on the occasion of Qubilai's initiation. There are still two other texts of a somewhat similar genre; they seem to be closely related both to each other and to the one above. One of them deals with the "three purities"⁴ and the other is a short description of the three kinds of initiation (*dbañ* or *dbañ bskur*).⁵ The *Dag pa gsum gyi khrid yig* [No. 58 Pa, pp. 289a-296a (no date)] was written for "the great emperor and his wife" (i.e. Qubilai and Čabui qatun)⁶ and the other for the "great

Ba refer to the numbers assigned to the texts texts in the above volumes. As for titles, I indicate the abridged ones; the date of a given text, if any, is also indicated, but place-names are usually disregarded. [For other abbreviations found in the notes to this paper, please refer to pp. 173.]

³ Note however the qualification in the final statement of this article.

⁴ Viz. 1. *de b'zin ñid kyi dag pa* (pp. 290a-291 a), 2. *lha so so'i dag pa* (pp. 291a-292a), and 3. *rañ rig pa'i dag pa* (pp. 292a-296b).

⁵ I.e. *rgyas*, *'brin* and *bsdus*, but only the first and the last ones are discussed.

⁶ It is of utmost interest that we have other examples of the

emperor" (*rgyal po* in either case). [See *Dbañ gsum pa'i lam*: No.59 Pa, pp. 296a-298b (no date).] As for the cycle of Cakrasaṃvara, we find two small hymns dedicated to the sixteen *Vidyā* goddesses. [See the *Rig ma bcu drug gi mchod pa'i tshig tshan gñis*: No. 163 Ba, pp. 18a-19a (*chu mo glañ* 1253 and *chu phag* 1263).]⁷

It is interesting to note that there are no more tantric texts written for Qubilai, and it is all the more surprising since, for example, 'Phags-pa wrote several more detailed expositions on various tantric subjects for persons of secondary importance.⁸ Also 'Phags-pa is credited, according to Chinese sources, with the introduction of the cult of Mahākāla into the Chinese court.⁹ He did in fact write some texts on Mahākāla. Nevertheless there is only one

simultaneous initiation of husbands and wives. For instance in the case of Qubilai's heir-apparent Jim-gyim (Chin. Chên-chin) and his wife Go-go-can (Kököcin), see Nos. 85-86, 92-93, etc. The same phenomenon can be observed in the case of Köden's son, called Ji-big de-mur, and his wife Du-gal dur-mis, etc.

⁷ The text of No. 163 includes, in fact, two short eulogies of the same genre.

⁸ For instance for Jim-gyim, Ji-big de-mur, their wives, etc.

⁹ H. Franke, "Tibetans in Yüan China," in J.D. Langlois Jr. (ed.), *China Under Mongol Rule*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 308. Franke's statement is of interest here, viz.: "It seems that rites connected with Hevajra and Mahākāla became customary for every enthronement of a Yüan emperor, a fact which is also mentioned in Chinese sources..." In his note (No. 44) to this passage, Franke cites some Chinese sources dealing with Dam-pa (or Tan-pa), where he also quotes some Tibetan sources in connection with Qubilai's initiation. Unfortunately none of the references are correct in the latter case. Actually Franke refers to Nos. 316, 317 and 321 of 'Phags-pa works. No. 316 is a letter written by 'Phags-pa to Bsod-nams señ-ge. The letter in question refers, however, to the initiation of 'Phags-pa himself and not even the name of Qubilai is mentioned. For some details of this letter, see *Szerb I* and *Szerb II* (*passim*). No. 317 deals with the various vows (*sdom-pa* or *saṃvara*); it is a reply to a certain Grags-pa rin-chen. Qubilai is again not referred to in the text. As for No. 321, it is a collection of the biographies of the first five Sa-skyā abbots and it contains also the *dkar-chag* of the complete works of these masters.

instance where the recipient of the text is one of the Mongol court.¹⁰

As for the non-tantric aspect of Buddhism, there are two epistles prepared for Qubilai. The first is the *Rgyal po la gdams pa'i rab byed* [No. 210 Ba, pp. 147a-151a (*lcags-mo-lug* 1271)]. It is a short introduction to Buddhism in which the six *pāramitās*, the ten virtuous and non-virtuous actions, etc., are briefly discussed. At the same time it is also an exhortation to Qubilai to rule according to the standards of Buddhism. Therefore its literary genre can be best defined as that of a "mirror for princes" (*fürstenspiegel*).

Another work of similar genre, written in a mixture of prose and verse, is the *Rgyal po la gdams pa'i rab tu byed pa'i rnam par bśad pa gsun rab gsal ba'i rgyan* [No. 154 Ba, pp. 394a-430a (*śin mo phag* 1275)]. The text was in fact compiled by one Śes-rab g'zon-nu, probably a disciple of 'Phags-pa. At any rate, the colophon (p. 426b) makes it evident that this Śes-rab g'zon-nu based himself on the oral instructions of 'Phags-pa, and after its initial completion the work was supervised by 'Phags-pa. Actually this treatise is a very detailed commentary on the *Rgyal po la gdams pa'i rab byed* of 1271.

According to Tucci¹¹ this longer text is a summary of the doctrine considered in its essential points, hence a sort of duplicate of the *Ses bya rab gsal*.¹² Tucci's statement is, however, not quite

¹⁰ It is the *Lcam dral gyi gtor chog* (in full: *Dpal Nag po chen po lcam dral gyi gtor ma'i cho ga*): No. 181 Ba, pp. 72b-75b (n.d.) and was written for Jim-gyim, son of Qubilai.

¹¹ G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls I-III* (Rome, 1949), p. 103.

¹² No. 1 Pa, pp. 1a-35a (date: *sa-pho-stag* 1278), compiled by 'Phags-pa for Jim-gyim. It was also translated into Chinese (*Taishō* XXXII, no. 1645) and Mongolian. For the Mongolian translation, see W. Heissig, *Die Familien- und Kirchengeschichtsschreibung der Mongolen I* (Wiesbaden, 1959), pp. 26-34; and, for the facsimile of the text (*Čiqula kereglegči tegüs udqatu śastir*), *ibid.* plates 27-83. The Mongol version was extensively used by O.M. Kovalewskij in his *Buddijskaja Kosmologija* (Kazan, 1837), and the Chinese one by P.C. Bagchi, *Chang-so-chih-lun (Jñeya-prakāśa-śāstra), An Abhidharmawork of Śāskyā-Paṇḍita (sic) of Tibet*, in *Sino-Indian Studies II* (1947), pp. 136-156; and *idem*, *Le canon bouddique en Chine II* (Paris, 1938), p. 612. The *Ses bya* is frequently cited in both Tibetan and Mongol historical sources. For the latter, for instance, see Ch. Bawden, *The Mongol Chronicle Altan Tobči* (Wiesbaden, 1955), p. 153. For a partial translation of the Tibetan original

precise. The *Ses bya rab gsal* of 'Phags-pa is a systematic, clear-cut exposition of the Dharma, while work No. 154 (1275) is an extremely complicated, refined and sophisticated discourse concerning the characteristic features of an ideal religious (i.e. Buddhist) king (*cakravartī-rāja* or *dharmarāja*).¹³ That is to say, this work is an introduction to Buddhism for a ruler, while the *Ses bya rab gsal* is a "manual of Buddhism."

The genre of "mirrors for princes" is traced back to the Indian tradition.¹⁴ Nevertheless the *idea* of writing in the style of "mirrors for princes" might have been borrowed from current Tibetan and Chinese practices. Indigenous Tibetan *nītiśāstras* are relatively well known in the literature,¹⁵ but, for example, it is less well known that Yin-chien (better known by his honorific title Hai-yün Fa-shih), who first introduced Qubilai to Buddhism in 1242, actually explained the fundamental teachings of Buddhism in a similar literary genre to the Mongol prince: that is to say, he stated why Buddhism was necessary from the point of view of a ruler.¹⁶

Works relating to language

Group two concerns itself with the sphere of speech or, more properly, with its written form. In terms of literary genre, most of these works of 'Phags-pa can be defined as pieces of occasional poetry. Though here we have mainly eulogies, etc., as examples, it is nevertheless evident that the function of the clergy could not have been solely restricted to poetry. Actually the presence of the clergy

and its impact on Tibetan historiography, see D. Schuh, *Erlasse und Sendschreiben mongolischer Herrscher für tibetische Geistliche* (St. Augustin, 1977), pp. 58-62; and, for a more theoretical discussion, H. Franke, *op. cit.*, pp. 307ff.

13 No. 154 is outlined in the *De'i bsdus don* [No. 211 Ba, pp. 151a-153a (*śin mo phag* 1275)].

14 For the Indian sources of No. 154, see G. Tucci, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

15 See S.K. Pathak, *The Indian Nītiśāstras in Tibet* (Delhi, 1974), pp. 77-81. For the contribution of Sa-skya paṇḍita, see J.E. Bosson, *A Treasury of Aphoristic Jewels: The Subhāṣitaratnanidhi of Sa-skya Paṇḍita* (Bloomington, 1969).

16 See Sechin Jagchid, "Why the Mongolian Khans Adopted Tibetan Buddhism as Their Faith?" (sic), in *Proceedings of the Third East Asian Altaistic Conference*, edited by Ch'en Chieh-hsien and Sechin Jagchid (Taipei, 1970), esp. pp. 112-114.

was a matter of course in all kinds of literary activity. It is enough to mention here that it is 'Phags-pa who is supposed to have been the inventor of a new alphabet for the Mongols. All in all, this group of texts reflects the duty of literary activity.

Some of these eulogies, epistles in verse, etc., were written without apparent outward motivation, but there are some pieces that were composed for certain interesting occasions. There are a number of works of 'Phags-pa in which he reports the preparation of certain religious texts by order of various members of the Yüan court.¹⁷ Of this series of 'Phags-pa's reports, we should mention the *Go pe las rgyas 'brin bsdus gsum bzeṅs pa'i mtshon byed* [No. 301 Ba, pp. 315b-317a (*śin mo phag* 1275)]. This title is somewhat perplexing, since it was in fact a Uighur called Esen-ay (E-se-na), formerly a disciple of Sa-skya paṇḍita, who ordered the three *Prajñāpāramitā* texts to be copied in gold.¹⁸ Nevertheless Esen-ay was assigned by Qubilai as assistant or co-administrator (*grog*) to Ston-tshul, chief of Zal-mo-sgañ, and was granted various emblems of legality of bureaucratic power.¹⁹ That is to say, both Esen-ay's power and his sphere of activity were completely dependent on and determined by Qubilai, which may explain why the name of the emperor instead of that of Esen-ay can be found in the book's title.²⁰

Another interesting text is the *Rgyal po yab sras kyis mchod rten bzeṅs pa la bsnags pa'i sdeb sbyor danḍa ka* [No. 311 Ba, pp. 356a-358b (*śin glañ* 1265)]. It is a poem composed in the *danḍaka* metre and written in honor of the order issued by Qubilai for

17 Viz. Nos. 295-303 among 'Phags-pa's texts.

18 Here *rgyas* stands for the *Śatasāhasrikā*, *'brin* for the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā* and *bsdus* for the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*.

19 On Esen-ay's genealogy, see Szerb I, pp. 290-291. Ston-tshul is also mentioned by 'Phags-pa in Nos. 296, 303. In connection with the production of books, *Yig II* also refers to him (*ñe gnas chen po Ston tshul*), p. 34; the name recurs as *Mdo stod kyil hor che Ston tshul*, p. 142. The latter passage is translated in full by G. Tucci, *ibid.*, p. 683, n. 67. His name appears in a different context in *Dpa'-bo*, p. 450; cf. here D. Schuh, "Wie ist die Einladung des fünften Karma-pa an den chinesischen Kaiserhof als Fortführung der Tibetpolitik der Mongolen-Khans zu verstehen?" in *Altaica Collecta*, ed. W. Heissig (Wiesbaden, 1976), p. 236, n. 35.

20 A variant title of the same text is *E se nas chos bzeṅs pa'i tshigs bcad*, see *Gdun*, p. 137b.

a *stūpa* to be erected. Due to 'Phags-pa's lofty style some parts of the verse are quite obscure to me; nevertheless we can make out that the architect of the *stūpa* was one Mu-ga, of Nepalese origin (p. 358a).²¹ Though we have no further data either on Mu-ga or on the *stūpa* itself, 'Phags-pa's account here provides rather early Tibetological evidence for the bustling artistic life of the Yüan court.²²

The next work was written on quite a different occasion. It is a congratulatory epistle, entitled *Bsnags 'os pa la bsnags pa'i rab byed* [No.312 Ba, pp. 358b-360a (*sin-mo-phag* 1275)], which was sent by 'Phags-pa to Qubilai from Sa-skya on the occasion of the first really successful campaign against the Sung empire (Man-tse) in 1275. Unfortunately there is no further data of historical value in this poem whatsoever.

We know that at one time or other Qubilai came to be thought of as the manifestation of Mañjuśrī.²³ One may be inclined to ascribe this identification to 'Phags-pa. However it is not possible, because his only eulogy of Qubilai equates the emperor with Śākyamuni and not with Mañjuśrī. See the *Thub pa'i bstod pa* [No. 191 Ba, pp. 107b-110a (*sin pho stag* 1254)], pp. 107b and 109b (where Mōngke is also mentioned).²⁴

21 G. Tucci, *ibid.*, read mGu.

22 For a general reading, see H. Karmay, *Early Sino-Tibetan Art* (Warminster, 1975); R. Ram, *A History of Buddhism in Nepal A.D. 704-1398* (Delhi, 1978); etc.

23 The first reference to the sacralization dates from ca. 1345; see the *Great Chü-yung-kuan Inscription*, published and translated by N. Poppe in *The Mongolian Monuments in hP'ags-pa Script* (Wiesbaden, 1957), p. 65. For further details of the inscription itself, see L. Ligeti, "Le mérite d'ériger un stūpa et l'histoire de l'éléphant d'or," in *Proceedings of the Csoma de Kőrös Memorial Symposium*, edited by L. Ligeti (Budapest, 1978), pp. 223-284. For an interpretation of the process of sacralization and for the identification of Qubilai with Mañjuśrī, see K. Sagaster, *Die weisse Geschichte* (Weisbaden, 1976), pp. 262-264 and *passim*; H. Franke, *ibid.*, esp. pp. 306-307.

24 It must be mentioned that 'Phags-pa composed some eulogies dedicated to Mañjuśrī in 1257 (see Nos. 192-194). Each one was written at the famous mountain Wu-t'ai-shan, a place connected for centuries with the cult of Mañjuśrī. So doubtlessly his inspiration for writing these poems is to be explained by his visit to that sacred place. Still, the style of these eulogies exhibits

Works relating to body

In the last group the third component, body, dominates. Prayers for the *qan* and various daily ritual performances belong here. This group can be defined in terms of the duty of ritual.

Altogether 'Phags-pa wrote 25 poems for the New Year to Qubilai between 1255-1279. [See the *Rgyal po Go pe la sras dan btsun mor bcas la śin mo yos la sogs la gnañ ba'i bkra śis kyi tshigs bcad rnams*: No. 320 Ba, pp. 389a-409a.] Though the rationale for writing the poems was the approaching New Year, the underlying motif in these verses is worship for the bodily health, long-life, etc., of the Emperor and his family. For the Mongols, to pray for the *qans*, for their good health, etc., was one of the most important duties of the clergy throughout the huge empire. If we read the edicts of the Mongol Emperors, in whatever languages they are found, this duty of praying for the emperor is a stipulated rule.²⁵ Let me add that in a couple of letters written to various Tibetan lamas 'Phags-pa never forgets to urge them to fulfill their duty to pray with utmost diligence.²⁶

Finally, let me mention that throughout this paper I have used the Buddhist triple concept of mind, speech and body as a kind of classificatory tool. No doubt these categories are somewhat artificial and cannot be mechanically distinguished.²⁷ Also I have relied exclusively on 'Phags-pa's own works in discussing the *yon-mchod* relationship and most of the data from other complementary sources have been purposely omitted from this review.

much similarity with that of the *Thub pa'i bstod pa*. Nevertheless the name of Qubilai does not appear, and, as in the case of No. 257 (see note 2), one cannot be sure that these pieces are connected with Qubilai.

²⁵ See N. Poppe, *ibid.*, *passim*; D. Schuh, *Erlasse, passim*; etc.

²⁶ See, for instance, Szerb I, p. 192.

²⁷ In other words, they represent *together* (and not independently) the *mchod* element of the *yon-mchod* association.

Abbreviations

- Gduñ* 'Dzam gliñ phyogs kyi thub pa'i rgyal tshab chen po dpal ldan sa skya pa'i gduñ rabs rin po che ji ltar byon pa'i tshul gyi rnam par thar pa no mtshar rin po che'i bañ mdzod dgos 'dod kun 'byuñ: A history of the 'Khon lineage of prince-abbots of Sa-skya by 'Jam-mgon A-myes-ñabs Nag-dbañ-kun-dga'-bsod-nams. Reproduced from a rare print by Tashi Dorji. Dolanji, 1975.
- Dpa'-bo* *Mkhas-pa'i dga'-ston of Dpa'-bo-gtsug-lag*. Ed. Lokesh Chandra. New Delhi, 1959-1961.
- Szerb I* J. Szerb, "Glosses on the Oeuvre of Bla-ma 'Phags-pa: I. On the activity of Sa-sKya pañdita." In: *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*. Edited by M. Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi. Warminster, 1979, pp. 290-300.
- Szerb II* "Glosses...(etc.): II. Some notes on the events of the years 1251-1254." *AOH XXXIV* (1980), pp. 263-285.
- Yig II* *Rgya Bod yig tshañ mkhas pa dga' byed* [by] Stag-tshañ-pa Sri-bhu-ti-bhadra, Vol. II. Thimpu, 1979.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ON PHYAG-NA RDO-RJE
(1239-1267)*

abstract

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Phyag-na rdo-rje was the younger brother of the famous Sa-skya Lama 'Phags-pa, the Imperial Teacher (*Ti-shih*) of Khubilai Khagan himself. Phyag-na rdo-rje, a layman, was born in 1239 in the village of Sa-skya and he died there 29 years later; yet, all but eight years of his life was spent among the Mongols, particularly at Khubilai's court. According to Tibetan sources, Phyag-na rdo-rje married a Mongol princess and was appointed to rule over Tibet by Khubilai Khagan, who also gave him the title *Pai-lan Wang* (= Prince of Tibet). In spite of his political importance, the Tibetan sources offer little biographical data on Phyag-na rdo-rje. By definition Tibetan "historiography" (*chos-'byun*) deals primarily with the history of Buddhism, and "biography" (*rnam-thar*) is, in fact, "hagiography"; consequently such sources offer little information on the life of a layman. For example, the *Sa-skya gduñ-rabs chen-mo* ("Great Genealogy of the Sa-skya Lineage") devotes some 110 pages to the hagiography of 'Phags-pa Lama, but only a mere eight lines to the life of Phyag-na rdo-rje.

Considering the dearth of data in Tibetan sources, it was hoped the *Yüan Shih*, the official history of the Yüan Dynasty, would offer additional information on Phyag-na rdo-rje. The *Yüan Shih* contains a biography of 'Phags-pa Lama, but not one of Phyag-na rdo-rje. A younger brother of 'Phags-pa Lama is mentioned twice in the *Yüan Shih*, but each time it refers to his younger half-brother, Rin-chen rgyal-mtshan, who succeeded him as Imperial Teacher in the court of Khubilai Khagan. The title *Pai-lan Wang* (= Prince of Tibet), said to

* This is an abstract of my paper, first presented at the Tibetan Studies Seminar, Columbia University, 1982. It will be published in full under the title "Khubilai Khaghan's First Victory of Tibet," in the forthcoming *Csoma de Körös Memorial Volume*.

have been given to Phyag-na rdo-rje, is attested by one entry in the *Yüan Shih*; but the recipient is clearly identifiable as Bsod-nams bzai-po, another scion of Sa-skya who lived in the 14th century. Enigmatically, Phyag-na rdo-rje, regardless of his eminence in Mongol-Tibetan relations in the 13th century, is not mentioned in the official history of the Yüan Dynasty.

In conclusion it is suggested that due to the limited data so far found any attempt to construct even a skeletal chronology for Phyag-na rdo-rje's life may well have to depend on inference, namely an inference that wherever the famous 'Phags-pa Lama was in any given year between 1239 and 1267, there too was his all but ignored younger brother, the layman Phyag-na rdo-rje.

AN ANALYSIS OF SINO-TIBETAN RELATIONSHIPS,
1245-1911:
IMPERIAL POWER, NON-COERCIVE REGIME AND
MILITARY DEPENDENCY*

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I

Since its introduction in the 7th century and especially after 842 Buddhism brought about both ideological and structural transformations in inner Asia that could truly be called revolutionary. It created, among other things, new conceptions of the state unfamiliar to modern political science: *Bla-ma-dpon-po* and *Chos-srid gñis-ldan*.¹ This kind of state differed from Western conceptions in that it was not based on military force as a principle.² This was a

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¹ For a discussion of these concepts and their evolution, see Dawa Norbu, "Btsan, Blama-Dponpo and Sprul-Sku; Changing notions of authority and shifting basis of power, and their combined impact on political development in Tibet, 600-1950." This paper was delivered at the 9th Wisconsin Conference on South Asia, University of Wisconsin, Madison (1980), pp. 1-36.

² Political realities, however, did slowly compel the lama rulers to realize the necessity of some kind of force: the Third Dalai Lama's government raised a 500 man bodyguard; the Fifth Dalai Lama's government raised 3000 men; during the Seventh Dalai Lama's reign Pho-lha-nas raised a 1000 man army from Gtsaṅ. Thus at the turn of the century Ekai Kawaguchi observed: "The standing army of Tibet is said to consist of five thousand men, but from my

clear case of how Buddhist ideology (viz. non-violence) influenced political structure. Only in Tibet was a sector of the saṃgha able to capture state power and shape the political system accordingly. This makes Tibet unique among all Buddhist countries, for everywhere else the saṃgha was politically subservient to royal authority, though not spiritually so. Non-coercive regime, however, seems a contradiction in terms.³ The very history of *chos-srid gñis-ldan* demonstrates that even if force is renounced in principle, it is still a necessary part of the state's existence. If it does not possess its own armed forces, a state must depend on others for military support. In what sense then do we mean that the lamaist regime was essentially non-coercive? It was not conceptually based on organized forces sufficient to maintain the *status quo*. This does not mean no force was used in Buddhist Tibet; one can recall three incidents of monastic participation in warfare in this century alone.⁴ However, it must be conceded that such incidents were exceptions rather than the rule

own observation I think this number somewhat exaggerated. In any case, it is hardly sufficient to protect a country containing six millions of inhabitants against foreign invasion and civil commotion. However, in Tibet social order is not kept by soldiers nor by the despotic power of the ruler. Religion is the force that keeps the country in good order." *Three Years in Tibet* (Benares and London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1909), p. 549. In the early 1920s the Thirteenth Dalai Lama introduced with British help a small police force in the capital. But as David Macdonald noted, it "proved so unpopular that only a remnant is now left in Lhasa." *The Land of the Lama* (London: Sieley, Service and Co., 1926), p. 59. For further details, see Rgyal-rtse Rnam-rgyal dbaṅ-'dus, *Bod ljongs rgyal khab chen po'i srid lugs dan 'brel ba'i drag po dmag gi lo rgyus rags bsdus* (Dharamsala: Tibetan Cultural Printing Press, 1976).

³ For the purposes of this paper a *regime* may be defined as "a manner, method or system of rule of government" (*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*).

⁴ In 1930 the monks of Dhargay Gonpa (Dar-rgyas dgon-pa) in Kanze fought along with Tibetan troops against Chinese forces to regain Kanze and Nyarong. In 1947 monks of Sera Byes Monastery took up arms in support of Reting Rinpoche to fight against Tibetan government troops. And in 1959 thousands of monks in Lhasa joined Khampa guerillas to fight against the Chinese People's Liberation Army during the the Tibetan uprising.

when we recall how Buddhism converted an entire warrior race into a peaceful Buddhist community. What I am saying is that, as a matter of principle, lama rulers neither possessed sufficient forces nor believed in direct deployment of force. That is, just as lamas in general do not mind eating meat as long as someone else does the butchering, so lama rulers did not mind others using force on their behalf. This essentially non-coercive character of the lamaist regime created two structural contradictions. Internally, it created a highly decentralized polity as characterized by the existence of several autonomous centers of local power, such as Derge, Nyarong, Sa-skyä and Shigatse. Externally, its lack of armed forces compelled the lamaist regime to depend on external powers for military support. It is the last point we are concerned with in this paper; we will see how this fundamentally shaped the nature of Sino-Tibetan relationships during the period 1245-1911.⁵ This entails a discussion of two relationships during perhaps the most controversial periods of Sino-Tibetan history, these being pertinent to the present analysis. I treat them in their historical sequence, and not in any political order.⁶

⁵ It should also be noted from the outset that we have left out the two periods of disunification, 842-1247 and 1358-1642, because there was no sustained official record of Sino-Tibetan relations between the governments of China and Tibet during these periods, though various chieftains particularly near the Sino-Tibetan borders vied for imperial patronage as Li T'ieh-tseung painstakingly records in *Tibet: Today and Yesterday* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1960), pp. 25-28. Moreover, although Hisashi Sato's recent study of Ming-Tibet relations copiously documents the intensity and immense volume of intercourse between the two countries during the Ming period, those relations were predominantly cultural and commercial in nature. They lack the political pattern so characteristic of the Yüan-Sa-skyä or Ch'ing-Dalai Lama relationship.

⁶ Another relationship during the period involved the Karmapa lamas. This is omitted for purely analytical reasons. Because the Karmapas never really became rulers of Tibet in the manner of the Sa-skyä or Dalai Lamas, their relations with China were of a different nature. However, their influence, spiritual or otherwise, in the lamaist world and especially in the cis-Himalaya cannot be underestimated. Cf. Nik Douglas and Meryle White, *Karmapa, The Black Hat Lama of Tibet* (London: Luzac, 1976), pp. 42-43, 49-50, 55, 61 and 76; and also Karma Thinley, *The History of the Sixteen*

II

By the time Chinggis Khan conquered Inner Asia around 1207, the Buddhist transformation of Tibet was almost complete: political authority had shifted from lay rulers to lamas entrenched in big monasteries. Godan Khan, successor to Chinggis, invited the most famous lama of the day, Sa-skya Paṅḍita (1182-1251) to his court in 1245 and two years later "offered" (*'phul*) him the greater part of Tibet, i.e. the "thirteen myriarchies" (*khri-skor bcu-gsum*) and the *chol-kha gsum*.⁷ The *Sa-skya gduñ-rabs chen-mo* speaks of wondrous

Karmapas of Tibet (Boulder, Colorado: Prajñā Press, 1980), pp. 41-127. The Karmapas' missions to the emperors, however, had little influence on political developments in Tibet or China. The VIth Karmapa (1416-1453) sent eight missions to the Ming emperor between 1436 and 1450. Although the *Ming Shih* describes such missions as "tributes," H.E. Richardson concludes: "Representatives of a Lama who made no claim to exercise temporal dominion over Tibet cannot have brought tribute in the strict sense of the word." "The Karma-pa Sect: A Historical Note," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (October 1958), p. 149.

7 The questions surrounding the etymology of *chol-kha* and the political boundaries of the regions termed *chol-kha gsum* in the 13th century have not yet been clarified. Petech suggests that *chol-kha* is derived from a Mongol term, *cölge*, corresponding to the Chinese *lu*, circuit. See his remarks in Michael Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi (eds.), *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1980), p. 234. Since the Yüan period, however, the phrase *chol-kha gsum phul-lo* became fixed as a literary expression: cf. Sarat Chandra Das, *Tibetan-English Dictionary*, p. 428. Petech specifies the *chol-kha gsum* to be Dbus, Gtsañ and Mña'-ris, excluding Khams and Amdo. This contradicts not only Tibetan claims but also the views of most other experts. Richardson writes that the domain offered by Khubilai to the Sa-skya lama 'Phags-pa included "all Tibet from the far west to the Koko Nor." [*Tibet and Its History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 34.] Li, op. cit., p. 20, lists the regions of the domain as follows: "1. Tibet proper comprising the thirteen districts of U and Tsang, 2. Kham and 3. Amdo." This list accords with Shakabpa's division of the *chol-kha gsum*, the boundaries being roughly indicated by well known traditional landmarks in Tibet. [Zwa-sgab-pa Dbañ-phyug bde-ldan, *Bod-kyi srid-don rgyal-*

miracles that the lama performed which, along with his "all-knowing" wisdom, converted the Mongol warrior chief to the Sa-skya tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. This dramatic conversion may be partly explained by what sociologists call "elective affinity": the warrior could at once identify himself with the chief wrathful deity of the Sa-skya tradition, Hevajra, whose empowerment (*dbaṅ*) he was given as an initiation into Buddhism. A more mundane reason may be that "the illiterate Mongol prince wished primarily to get a learned Tibetan lama for his court, who would invent a writing-system for the Mongols and thereby initiate them into the higher culture of the Tibetans."⁸

With the Mongol conquest of China, the warrior-priest alliance was automatically transferred and elevated to the respectable if somewhat more ambiguous Yüan Emperor-Sa-skya lama relationship (1247-1358), thereby giving rise to a new pattern of Sino-Tibetan relations. While commanding his conquering troops in Honan, Khubilai invited the Sa-skya lama Chos-rgyal 'Phags-pa to his court/camp and appointed him Imperial Preceptor (*ti-shih/dbu-bla*); when he was proclaimed Khan at Karakorum in 1260, he promoted his guru to "State Preceptor" (*Kuo-shih*) and at the same time made Tibetan Buddhism the official religion of the whole eastern part of the Mongol empire in China. Thus for more than eighty years one of the senior Sa-skya lamas had to attend the imperial court in

rabs (Kalimpong, India: Shakabpa House, 1976), Vol. I, p. 283.] According to Tibetan sources, 'Phags-pa gave the Khan and his family circle the Hevajra initiation peculiar to the Sa-skya sect on three occasions, and Khubilai accordingly made three offerings to his guru for each (*dbaṅ-yon*): 1. *Bod khri-skor bcu-gsum*; 2. *Bod chol-kha gsum*; and 3. *Rgya mi-yul chen-mo*, i.e. a large Chinese province, along with other gifts. (Ibid., pp. 282-83.) This process of centralization, consolidation and transfer of power has been variously interpreted as having conferred upon the lama the status of "Viceregent" (Richardson), "ruler" (Li), etc. Tibetan writers, however, are unanimous in their interpretation: the whole process was an act of offering (*'bul-ba*) in the religious sense, conferring "ownership rights," and therefore the right to rule over Tibet. My own view should be evident throughout this paper, especially in the concluding section, and in my earlier paper (Wisconsin, 1980).

⁸ Joseph Kolmaš, *Tibet and Imperial China* (Canberra: The Australian National University, 1967), p. 20.

the capacity of *ti-shih*.

At Peking an autonomous office was set up in 1264 whose political functions might have been analogous to the India Office in London during the British Raj. It was called the Bureau of Buddhist and Tibetan Affairs (Hsüan-cheng Yüan). A second ranking monk-official was put in charge, but its formal head was the *dbu-bla*. The main function of this office was to select an executive to head the administration in Tibet. Such an executive was called *dpon-chen* (literally, "great authority"), usually appointed by the lama and approved by the Emperor. Shakabpa names seventeen *dpon-chens* who ruled Tibet from Sa-skya.⁹

Throughout the Sa-skya rule the loci of military power and political authority remained separate from each other. As long as there was no showdown, this caused no disruption in the political process. The Mongol dominance was most indirect: Sa-skya lamas remained the sources of authority and legitimacy, while the *dpon-chens* carried on the administration at Sa-skya. However there was no doubt as to who had the political clout. When a dispute developed between *dpon-chen* Kun-dga' bzan-po and one of 'Phags-pa's relatives at Sa-skya, the Chinese troops were dispatched to execute the *dpon-chen*.¹⁰

This was probably the first case of external armed intervention in Tibet since the fall of the Btsans, the next being the military aid given by Khubilai's son in suppressing the rebellion of the 'Bri-gun-pa against the Sa-skya regime (1285-1290). This conspicuous lack of external intervention during the Sa-skya period sharply contrasts with the age of the Dalai Lamas. The Tibetan-Mongolian diarchic structure which regulated the relations between Yüan China and Sa-skya Tibet may partly explain the relatively stable situation in Inner Asia. The kind of power or control exercised by the Yüan dynasty over Tibet was neither purely political nor military; it was fundamentally *structural*. I use this term in two senses, institutionally and organizationally. The institutional aspect has already been referred to (i.e. Hsüan-cheng yüan); in what follows we shall briefly discuss the organizational control and the context in which both of these were introduced in Tibet.

⁹ Zwa-sgab-pa Dban-phyug bde-ldan, *Bod-kyi srid-don rgyal-rabs*, Vol. I, p. 311.

¹⁰ Norbu, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

When Godan summoned Sa-skyia Paṅdita in 1245, Tibet was still in the state Tibetan historians call *sil-bu'i dus*, "the period of fragmentation" (842-1247), which appears to have actually been a period of transformation.¹¹ The country was without centralized administration or central power. It consisted of four main principalities centered around Mña'-ris Gtsaṅ, Lhasa and Lho-kha, in addition to numerous chiefdoms in Khams. It was in this context that the Mongols grafted their semi-military organization—and, later, Chinese bureaucratic elements—on to a fragmented Tibet, obviously to make it possible for the lamas to rule, and for the Yüan dynasty to control developments in Central Asia as a whole indirectly but effectively.

However, the reorganization of the country probably did not begin until 1268 when the Mongol census of Tibet was conducted. Perhaps "census" is not the right word here: it was really a count of households (*them-tho*), assuming six persons per household (*hor-dud*). The whole country was organized as follows: 50 *hor-dud* = 1 *rta-mgo* (horse head); 2 *rta-mgo* = 1 *brgya-skor* (100 households); 10 *brgya-skor* = 1 *ston-skor* (chiliarchy); 10 *ston-skor* = 1 *khri-skor* (myriarchy); 10 *khri-skor* = 1 *klu* (circuit); 10 *klu* = 1 *zin* (province). It was roughly figured that Tibet had just enough population for three *klu* (Ch. *lu*), or *chol-kha*.¹²

On top of this nation-wide administrative structure, another complex organization of communication networks operated. Twenty-seven postal stages (*jam*) were set up, each of which functioned as a postal district with an appointed *jam-dpon* in charge. Thus Tibet was first reorganized along Mongol military lines into neat decimal administrative units ranging from one *rta-mgo* to a *khri-skor* (i.e. 50-10,000 households). Central control over these various administrative units was probably exercised through the twenty-seven communication posts which were spread throughout Tibet. The *jam* organization, it appears, functioned as a command-cum-control system. Thus the Mongols provided the Sa-skyia lamas with an administrative infrastructure which Tibet then lacked. But the Tibetans enjoyed considerable freedom and autonomy. A Bengali Tibetologist characterized the Yüan power in Tibet during the Sa-skyia period as "suzerainty,"¹³ and a German Sinologist has recently

¹¹ This idea is more fully developed in Norbu, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

¹² Petech, in Aris and Aung, op. cit., p. 234.

¹³ Sarat Chandra Das, "Tibet under the Tartar Emperors of China," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Extra

(1982) written that "Tibet was *terra incognita*, a foreign country for the Chinese and Mongols,"¹⁴ during the same period.

As if to drive home the point that it rested primarily on the Mongol-Tibetan diarchy, the Sa-skya government in Tibet fell in 1358, anticipating the fall of the Yüan dynasty in 1368. In Peking the ministry for Tibetan affairs "discontinued its activities" and the *dpon-chens* "ceased to be nominated" by the Yüan emperors.¹⁵

If the Ming emperors were not "suzerain" over Tibet, as had been the Mongols, they did not however misunderstand the logic of politics in Inner Asia. From the Yüan dynasty onwards it was the constant policy of every dynasty to favor and, if necessary, to support the most popular sect and the most famous lama, who was invariably the head of that sect.¹⁶ The Ming dynasty (1368-1644) unmistakably singled out for imperial patronage the Karmapa sect, which had become the most popular and therefore the most powerful sect after the fall of Sa-skya. But it did not help to set up a national regime.¹⁷ Rival lamas belonging to lesser sects also vied in gaining local power and wealth through imperial patronage, eagerly bringing

No. 1-1904), p. 97.

14 Herbert Franke, "Tibetans in Yüan China," in John D. Langlois Jr. (ed.), *China under Mongol Rule* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 302.

15 Kolmaš, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

16 The Dge-lugs-pa founder Rje Tson-kha-pa (1357-1419) was invited to China on two occasions (1416 and 1419), but he declined the invitations.

17 However the Bka'-brgyud-pa sect as such was heavily involved with the regional politics of the times. The Tibetan ruler Ta'i Si-tu Byañ-chub rgyal-mtshan greatly honored the IIIrd Karma-pa in 1327, the ruler of Central Tibet invited the Vth Karma-pa to Lhasa in 1412, and Sde-srid Karma Bstan-skyon dbañ-po, who was a devout follower of the Xth Karma-pa, carried out an intensive crusade against the Dge-lugs-pa order in Tibet. Cf. Douglas and White, *op. cit.*, pp. 55, 64, 85, and 70. The only Bka'-brgyud-pa lama to become a ruler of Tibet (1498-1512?) was the IVth Źwa-dmar sprul-sku, who was elected to the office of *mgon-skyabs* in 1498 by the ministers of the Rin-spun regime. See Si-tu Pañ-chen Chos-kyi-'byun-gnas and Be-lo Tshedbañ kun-khyab, *Sgrub brgyud Karma kam tshan brgyud pa rin po che'i rnam par thar pa rabs kyi 'byun gnas nor bu zla ba chu sal gyi phren ba* (New Delhi, 1972), vol. 1, p. 611.

tribute to the Chinese emperor. However, since Tibet had then no single centralized government and since the lay regional rulers did not have official relations with China, Tibet was not "in any real sense tributary to China during the Ming period."¹⁸

III

The next phase of Sino-Tibetan relations followed a pattern strikingly similar to that of Yüan–Sa-skyia relations. Almost every significant historical detail was repeated. Like that of the Sa-skyia lamas, the rise of the Dalai Lamas, who maintained the longest relations with China (1642-1911), has to be traced to the rise of a new sect in Tibetan Buddhism, in this case the Dge-lugs-pa. Again, as when the first Sa-skyia lama achieved temporal power, the Mongols put the "first" Dalai Lama in power at Lhasa.¹⁹ But it was not until the age of the Great Fifth, some four centuries after the Yüan–Sa-skyia connection was formed, that the second wave of really controversial Sino-Tibetan relations began.

It is well known that in 1577 the chief of the Ordos tribe, Altan Khan, invited the Third Dalai Lama to his country. Again, as in the case of Sa-skyia Paṇḍita's conversion of Godan, Tibetan texts (e.g., the *Dnos grub rgya mtsho śin rta*) record how the Dalai Lama converted Altan to the Dge-lugs-pa order. The sectarian distinction here is important. If Altan's ambition was conquest, the Dalai Lama's was to fight his rival the Karmapa and settle their sectarian scores. In any case the Mongol troops continued sporadically to fight Gtsaṅ forces for almost 30 years in order to enable the nascent Dge-lugs-pa regime to establish itself firmly. After that Bka'-brgyud forces were compelled to search for greener pastures in the cis-Himalayan regions.

¹⁸ H.E. Richardson, *Tibet and Its History*, p. 38. The Chinese have, of course, refuted this view, but Richardson has recently defended it based on "a summary of the evidence from Chinese, Tibetan and Western sources." See Hugh E. Richardson, "Regurgitating an Imperial Political Myth," *Tibetan Review* XVII:9 (September 1982), pp. 13-14.

¹⁹ Bsod-nams rgya-mtsho (1543-1588) was at the time the actual head of the Dge-lugs-pa order. He was posthumously recognized as the *third* in the line of Dalai Lamas.

As a symbol of mutual agreement, they exchanged honorary titles with each other: the Lama became *dalai* ("ocean," viz. of virtue) and Altan, *chos-rgyal* (*dharmarāja*). Once again the vital link between Mongol chieftains and charismatic Tibetan lamas was revived. However this time, although they put their lama in power, the Mongols would not conquer China as Khubilai had; their cultural cousins, the Manchus, would. The lamaist influence over the Manchus, even before their conquest of China, was considerable even if indirect, via the Mongols. It began as early as the thirteenth century when the Sa-skya lama-Khubilai Khan contact was established. Historically, the Manchus were the descendents of the Jurchen tribes conquered by the Mongols in 1234, and so along with Mongol rule came lamaist influence in Manchuria. Etymologically, "Manchuria" is derived from Mañjuśrī, given as a title by the Fourth Dalai Lama to the Manchu ruler in a 1615 New Year's greeting.²⁰ There is also good evidence that Nurhachi was himself a Buddhist.²¹ Therefore it is not surprising that as early as 1640, even before the conquest of China, the Manchu Emperor T'ai-tsung (1627-1643) extended an invitation to the great Fifth Dalai Lama and the *Chos-rgyal* of Tibet, Gushi Khan:

The aim of the Manchus was to win Mongol co-operation in the conquest of China through friendly treatment of lamas and lamaism, since it had become the universal religion of the Mongols. This situation remained unchanged after the Manchu entrance into Peking.²²

In 1652 the Ch'ing Emperor Shun-chih reissued the invitation to the Fifth Dalai Lama. The Lama's state visit was an unprecedented event in the history of Ch'ing-Tibetan relations. "He had been treated with all the ceremony which could have been accorded any independent sovereign, and nothing can be found in the Chinese works to indicate that he was looked upon in any other light; at this period of China's relations with Tibet, the temporal power of the lama, backed by the arms of Gushi Khan and the devotion of all

²⁰ Stag-lha Phun-tshogs bkra-śis, *Rgya'i yig tshan nan gsal ba bod kyi rgyal rabs gsal ba'i me lon* (Dharamsala: Tibetan Cultural Printing Press, 1973), pp. 631-632.

²¹ John K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Chinese World Order* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1974), p. 202.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Mongolia, was not a thing for the Emperor of China to question."²³ The Great Fifth was received as "an independent sovereign, because the Emperor wished to secure his alliance with a view to establish the rule of Manchus over the peoples of Mongolia."²⁴

However Ch'ing-Tibetan relations were not to remain on this delicate footing of apparent equality for long. As far as China was concerned, the Fifth Dalai Lama's visit to Peking signified the revival of Sino-Tibetan relations that had existed during the Yüan dynasty. This, from the Tibetan point of view, meant the priest-patron relationship (*dānapati/chos-yon-sbyin-bdag/shih-chu*),²⁵ perhaps differentiated from its predecessor by the increasing role of the ruling dynasty in China as military protector of the non-coercive regime in Tibet.

Both the Sa-skyia and Dalai Lamas' rule may be broadly conceived as theocratic systems, but they differed in their degree of dependency on external powers and their crisis-management capabilities. In the case of Sa-skyia, internal contradictions were resolved or prevented by the *jam* organization. Externally Tibet faced no invasion during Sa-skyia rule. The Dalai Lamas, on the other hand, gained a far greater quantum of autonomy from China or Mongolia, but, precisely because their essentially non-coercive regime lacked a permanent military support system, they faced more national crises which necessitated external military support. What therefore caused a fundamental change in Sino-Tibetan relations during the Ch'ing period was Tibet's military dependency on China in the event of any major national crisis, external aggression or internal rebellion. As crises with which the state was unable to cope because of inherent contradictions multiplied in Tibet, lama rulers had to depend more and more on Chinese or Mongol military support.

²³ W.W. Rockhill, "The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa and Their Relations With the Manchu Emperors of China, 1644-1908," *T'oung Pao* XI (1910), p. 18.

²⁴ Sir Charles Bell, *Tibet Past and Present* (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 36.

²⁵ For a presentation of this view, see Ta-la'i Bla-ma (XIV), *Nos kyi yul dan nos kyi mi mañ* (Darjeeling: Tibetan Freedom Press, 1963), pp. 67-78; and also Žwa-sgab-pa, op. cit., pp. 263-313.

Patterns of Chinese Intervention in Tibet

Date	Crisis Situation in Tibet	External Intervention	Consequences
1708	Political struggle between Lhasang and Tibetans. Regent killed.	La-tu-hun's investigation and recommendations to the emperor.	First imperial "envoy" to assist in Lhasa.
1717	Dsungars beseige Lhasa and Lhasang.	Two successive Chinese military expeditions.	New Dalai Lama enthroned. Rule by Chinese "junta."
1728	Clash of pro- and anti-Manchu ministers.	Two imperial envoys attempt mediation in vain. 15,000 troops sent to Tibet.	Office of Amban established. Chinese military presence.
1747	Anti-Manchu uprising in Lhasa.	800-man expedition dispatched.	New Amban appointed. Anti-Manchu elements punished.
1788	First Gurkha invasion. Tibetans defeated.		Heavy war indemnity to Nepal.
1791	Second Gurkha invasion.	10,000 Chinese troops drive out Gurkhas.	Ambans take power in Lhasa government.
1834	Dogras invade Tibet.	Opium War. No troops available for duty in Tibet.	
1904	Younghusband expedition.	Boxer rebellion, etc. No troops available.	Anglo-Tibetan convention signed at Lhasa.

As the table above shows, between 1708 and 1904 there were at least eight serious and violent crises which invited external military intervention in Tibet. This fundamentally changed the nature of Sino-Tibetan relations and resulted in the eventual establishment of what Petech calls Chinese "protectorate"²⁶ and Li calls Chinese "sovereignty"²⁷ in Tibet. Since we have no space for the details of their respective arguments we shall confine ourselves to analysis of Ch'ing responses to those crises and of the concrete consequences of Chinese interventions. Looking at that history we can make a few generalizations about the changing nature of Sino-Tibetan relations surrounding the eight major crises under consideration. Five were invasions, of which China was able to intervene militarily in two, namely against the Dsungars (who were actually invited by Tibetan lamas in their fight against Lhasang Khan), and during the second Gurkha invasion. China was unable to intervene on three occasions largely because of its own domestic troubles, e.g., the Opium War and Boxer Rebellion. Tibet was able to meet successfully one aggression, namely the Dogra invasion. The rest of the crises were internal power struggles involving pro-Manchu or pro-Mongol factions and Tibetan nationalist elements. China intervened promptly in all of them: diplomatically in two and militarily in one.

We can now make a few tentative conclusions about the pattern of Chinese intervention and its consequences. First, there is a direct relationship between a crisis in Tibet and external intervention. Second, there is also a direct relationship between the frequency of external intervention and the decrease of Tibetan independence: more intervention corresponds to greater reduction of Tibetan independence.²⁸ It should be noted that all the interventions under

²⁶ Luciano Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1950). See also Zahiruddin Ahmad, *Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1970).

²⁷ Li, op. cit., pp. 33-65.

²⁸ For example, the ability of the Ch'ing to drive the Gurkha invaders out of Tibet in 1791 strengthened their position in Lhasa. Further measures of imperial control included: (1) authorization of Ambans to participate in the Tibetan administration and to discuss matters with the Dalai and Panchen Lamas; (2) requirements that the Tibetans submit certain vital questions for the Ambans' decision; (3) responsibility of the Amban for defense and foreign trade, as

discussion were requested by one ruling group or another. When and if the ruling dynasty in China could not intervene, as in the case of the Dogra Invasion or the Younghusband Expedition, the Ambans in Lhasa always appeared on the scene after the fighting was over pretending to offer guidance in the negotiations. Following expulsion of the Dsungars, a Manchu military command ruled Tibet for a year during which a new Dalai Lama was enthroned and Lhasang's puppet lama executed. The office of Regent (*Sde-srid*) was abolished, and in its place a four-man ministerial council called *Kashak* (*Bka'-sag*) functioned under the supervision of the Manchu military command. Thus, by the time of the Ch'ien-lung reign which witnessed Ch'ing expansion into Central Asia, there was no further exciting military adventure in Tibet for the Manchu generals except to institute stricter control. Their measures were designed to "preclude an occurrence of any unwanted change of internal conditions in the future, and at the same time to protect the country against any foreign intervention."²⁹

After placing the Seventh Dalai Lama in power in 1720, the Ch'ing army remained in Lhasa. From then onwards, until the fall of the dynasty in 1911, Manchu emperors maintained Ambans and some military presence in Lhasa.³⁰ But after the 1840s, as the central authority in Peking weakened, Ch'ing power in Tibet also declined. The practice of forwarding important decisions to the Amban ceased; the "Golden Seal of the Rainbow and the Earth" was no longer used to stamp Tibetan edicts; the golden urn presented by the Ch'ien-lung emperor for selecting Dalai Lama candidates was not used in the cases of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Dalai Lamas.³¹ After the 1911 revolution the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was able to expel remaining Ch'ing forces from Lhasa and in 1912 declare Tibet's independence.³²

well as local levies and finances; and (4) withdrawal of the Dalai and Panchen Lamas' right to memorialize the throne directly—they now had to act through the Amban. Cf. Li, op. cit., pp. 53-54.

²⁹ Rockhill, op. cit., p. 46.

³⁰ Ram Rahul, *The Government and Politics of Tibet* (Delhi: Vikas Publications, 1969), p. 17.

³¹ Raghu Vira, *Tibet: A Souvenir* (New Delhi: Afro-Asian Convention on Tibet and Against Colonialism in Asia and Africa, 1960), p. 59.

³² Cited by H.H. the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in his address to the

We note that the establishment of a Manchu-Chinese protectorate or sovereignty in Tibet was a gradual process; it was not the case that a single act completed the process of imperialism.³³ Rather, each crisis led the non-coercive regime to turn to external powers for military support, which in turn led to increasing foreign influence and power within the country. What the whole process might demonstrate is a political truism: a state is by definition based on force, and any state which does not meet this definition, especially in the modern era, jeopardizes its independence. Buddhist Tibet, being an *ideological state*,³⁴ tolerated external interference in the political sphere as long as external powers did not threaten its belief system.

Why did such a strange relationship develop? In order to answer this question, we should discuss it within the context of the lamaist polity as it evolved in Tibet from 1247 on. First we must begin with a naive proposition: when the high priest of a religion that supposedly renounces any attachment to the material world decides to become ruler, he not only has to find a convincing theological justification for his secular indulgence but he must act, especially in the initial stages, in such a way as to maintain a degree of credibility for his rule to be legitimate and acceptable to the subjects. If the definition of a modern state is one claiming "ultimate monopoly over the legitimate use of force within a given territory" (Max Weber) a lama ruler cannot by definition discharge one of the vital functions of the state, namely the

Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi, "The International Status of Tibet" (September 7, 1959), in which he reiterated Tibet's independence. Cf. Rahul, *op. cit.*, Appendix 2, pp. 129 and 132.

33 This is where I depart from those writers who have adopted a rather legalistic approach to the subject, including the Chinese who date their claims to sovereignty in Tibet from 1720. Professor Zahiruddin Ahmad thus examines the imperial edict of 1719 as the central point of his "The Historical Status of China in Tibet," *Journal of the Oriental Society of Australia* IX:1-2 (1972-73), pp. 99-108. See also G. Tucci, "La Regalita sacra nell' antico Tibet," in *Studies in the History of Religions*, IV (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1950), pp. 189-203.

34 This definition differs slightly from Prof. Stein's conception of an "ecclesiastical state," implying mostly monastic domination of the state. This is not inappropriate, but is a corollary of my argument. Cf. R.A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), p. 138.

use of force. He has to rely on someone else to do the sinful job and must relegate military authority to a non-lama. Why that was usually a non-Tibetan is explained by indecisive sectarian struggles which could not be resolved without powerful, external military support.³⁵ If, however, that military supporter were a non-Buddhist, assignment of political and military authority to him would be tantamount to surrender of sovereignty. This problem was theoretically and practically solved by the priest-patron relationship.

IV

Using Weber's definition of state, I concluded (1976, 1980) that "Tibet had ceased to be a state in the Weberian sense."³⁶ It may have been this which led an anthropologist to entitle a 1982 article on Tibetan political structure "Tibet as a stateless society."³⁷ However,

35 "Towards Sectarian Harmony and National Unity," *Tibetan Review* XI:9 (September 1976), special issue on the Tibetan religious sects, p. 4. Duñ-dkar Blo-bzañ phrin-las has followed up the thesis established in the above editorial, albeit casting the inter-sectarian struggles in the Marxist mould of class struggle. Cf. *Bod kyi chos srid zuñ 'brel skor bsad pa* (Beijing: Nationalities Press, 1981), pp. 62-110.

36 Norbu, "Btsan, Blama-Dponpo and Sprul-sku," p. 55.

37 Geoffrey Samuel, "Tibet as a Stateless Society and some Islamic Parallels," *Journal of Asian Studies* XLI:2 (February 1982) pp. 215-229. We have no space here for empirical details but I must question Professor Samuel's very conception of comparative studies. His method leads either to finding static "parallels" to prove that A is like B or it leads to ecological determinism, a disease that has already infected so-called Himalayan Studies. Classical comparativists analyze how a single problem or a set of such problems is handled differently or similarly under different historical situations. For example, Geertz, whom Samuel quotes profusely, shows how Islam in Indonesia (*Peddlers and Princes*, 1963) differs from Islam in Morocco (*Islam Observed*, 1968). In our case we might demonstrate how problems arising from lack of coercive means were tackled in Tibet, post-war Japan and the Byzantine Empire. The way of scientific knowledge is in *differentiating*, not in creating parallels which may be applied in diplomacy or

the limits of such a concept become clear when we attempt to apply it more broadly. Japan from 1945 to 1979, for example, may be thought of as analogous to Tibet in terms of its lack of armed forces. But who would say that Japan was a stateless society during that period? Degree of decentralization alone is not a proper criterion for judging whether a given political community constitutes a state. Most traditional polities were decentralized due to lack of nationwide organizational and coercive means, which are primarily modern phenomena. In fact, as I have argued elsewhere,³⁸ the state, particularly the compound nation-state, is an unprecedented *modern*, political entity, prior to which only ill-organized *anciens regimes* existed at the center. Above all, we must remember that Weber's is one of *four* major theories of the state. The other three appear more applicable to the Tibetan case, for according to them Tibet did indeed have a state, especially in the Lockean sense.³⁹

38 propaganda, but not to scholarship.

38 Dawa T. Norbu, "Marxism, Nationalism and Revolution: The Rise of Neo-nationalism in Communist countries" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, May 1982). pp. 507-508.

39 The other three theories are Divine Rule, Social Contract and Sociological theories of the State. Cf. Harasankar Bhattacharya and Utpal Roy, *An Introduction to Political Science* (Calcutta: Calcutta Book House, 1979), pp. 31-84. The following books and articles provide the necessary empirical as well as theoretical bases for the argument I am here developing: Prince Peter, *The Aristocracy of Central Tibet* (Kalimpong: Tibet Mirror Press, 1956); Melvyn C. Goldstein, "An Anthropological Study of the Tibetan Political System" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Washington, Seattle, 1968); Ram Rahul, op. cit.; C.W. Cassinelli and Robert B. Ekvall, *A Tibetan Principality* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1969); Nirmal Chandra Sinha, *Prolegomena to Lamaist Polity* (Calcutta: Firma Mukhopadhyay, 1969); Luciano Petech, *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet* (Rome: Is.M.E.O., 1973); Phuntsog Wangyal, "The Influence of Religion on Tibetan Politics," *The Tibet Journal*, 1:1 (July-September 1975), pp. 78-86; Bina Roy Burman, *Religion and Politics in Tibet* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1979); Norbu, op. cit. (1980); Dun-dkar, op. cit.; Franz Michael, *Rule by Incarnation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1982). It should be noted that, apart from Goldstein and Rahul, Samuel has ignored this literature, which is relevant to his

I end my analysis with a methodological point. Many of our scholarly concepts derive from Western historical experience; some may be universally applicable, others simply are not. One of the major tasks of social scientists dealing with complex non-Western societies is to determine to what degree our concepts or theories are appropriate. If they are not, then we must not superimpose our theories on recalcitrant realities. It is from this perspective that I have approached the controversial subject of Sino-Tibetan relations.

V

My interpretation departs from the conventional sovereignty-suzerainty dichotomy, because that is essentially a superimposition of Western legal conceptions on a non-Western phenomenon.⁴⁰ I also shifted my emphasis from the simple patron-priest paradigm because it presupposes a degree of religiosity on the part of Chinese emperors which may be incorrect. Instead I concentrate on a concrete analysis of historical forces and ideological influences shaping traditional Sino-Tibetan relations. This approach suggests that the Buddhist revolution in Tibet (842-1245) not only fundamentally altered the balance of power between Imperial China and Inner Asia, but also revolutionized the concept and content of post-842 Sino-Tibetan relationships. Buddhist Tibet's subordinate relation to Imperial China was a function of the non-coercive nature of the lamaist regime.

I recapitulate the major dynamics of Sino-Tibetan relations as follows. Generally speaking, pre-Buddhist Sino-Tibetan relations were characterized by frequent conflicts between the two countries: Btsan Tibet (ca. 600-842 C.E.) was one of the major "barbarian" powers menacing China, which attempted to resolve this security problem by forming matrimonial alliances with Tibetan kings. But neither matrimonial alliances nor friendly treaties secured a durable peace; only the Buddhist revolution in Inner Asia solved China's pre-modern security problem. It not only tamed the Tibetan martial spirit but also created a non-coercive regime necessitating military dependency. Post-1245, and even post-842, Sino-Tibetan relations were therefore characterized by Tibet's progressive military dependency on external

subject.

40 Cf. N.C. Sinha, "Asian Law and Usage in European Expression," *Man in India*, 46:1 (January-March 1966), pp. 66-73.

powers.

This relationship of military dependency with its accompanying political influence may be variously interpreted according to Chinese, Tibetan or Western conceptions of international law, as was done in the 1950s and '60s. In the context of our analysis we may note the following cardinal points which seem unambiguous and irreducible:

(a) Chinese emperors promoted imperial interest and influence in Central Asia through charismatic lamas by patronizing the latter's sects.^{4 1} Tibetan lamas, on the other hand, viewed this imperial patronage as exemplifying the guru-disciple relationship.

(b) This policy, coupled with Tibet's increasing military dependency, led to increasing external influence and power in Lhasa, but there is no evidence in Chinese history that pre-1911 China ever considered Tibet one of her provinces.^{4 2}

(c) There is plenty of evidence, on the other hand, to indicate that Tibet was treated as a tributary state, as indeed were all the peripheral states in East, Southeast and Central Asia. Even within that system, however, Buddhist Tibet occupied a special place because of the charismatic lamas' dominant influence in Buddhist Central Asia, and also because some Chinese emperors were indeed Buddhists who venerated high lamas as living Buddhas (*huo fo*).^{4 3}

41 Some emperors carried this policy to an extreme by aiming to confer ideological hegemony upon the dominant sect, while excluding or even persecuting the others. In 1270 the Yüan emperor attempted to issue a decree banning all sects but the Sa-skyapa in Tibet, and was only dissuaded by the intercession of 'Phags-pa. Cf. Duñ-dkar, op. cit., p. 70. Similar happenings characterize the Ming relation with the Karma-pas, and that of the Ch'ing and Dge-lugs-pas. Cf. Petech, op. cit. (1950), p. 94.

42 The ancient Tibetans defined China as *Rgya-nag-zin-chen bco-brgyad*, China with her eighteen provinces. That this refers to only the territories inhabited by Han Chinese people is confirmed by the Tibetan word for China, *Rgya-nag*: *rgya* means "space" or "territory," and *nag* means "black." China is thus that space or territory inhabited by the "black-gowned ones," i.e. the Confucian scholars who were for Tibetans the foremost symbol of traditional China.

43 However it should be noted that apart from the T'ang the dynasties which embraced or patronized Buddhism were of non-Chinese descent, e.g., Wei (385-550), Yüan (1270-1368) and Ch'ing (1644-1911).

A certain pattern is discernable in the evolution of this strange relationship. The founding of a new sect in Tibet and the subsequent attention given it by a Central Asian warrior, who would support a charismatic lama of that sect to obtain power at the epicenter of the lamaist world, resulted in ideological direction being given by empowered lamas to Inner Asian conquests which had hitherto been seemingly objectless imperialism. Most important, the lamas provided the necessary sacralization and legitimation of "barbarian" rule in Imperial China.⁴⁴ With the Mongol/Manchu conquests of China, the lama-warrior relationship became institutionalized into a permanent structure of dominance and dependency. There was, however, a mutuality of interests: Mongol and Manchu warriors provided military and political support necessary for lamas to remain in power, and the latter reciprocated with moral support and initial legitimation of barbarian rule. Even after the sinification of barbarian rulers, charismatic lamas continued to be useful instruments of imperial influence in the Buddhist world.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ It appears that legitimation by high lamas was particularly a feature of imperial succession crises, e.g., the XIIIth Dalai Lama's legitimation of Pu-i in 1908. Cf. Douglas and White, *op. cit.*, p. 49; and Christian Klieger, "The Nature of the Patron-Priest Relationship in Tibetan Culture," *Tibet Society Bulletin*, V:12 (1978), p. 3.

⁴⁵ The Communists continued the traditional policy of using eminent lamas to achieve Chinese foreign policy objectives. Almost immediately after the "liberation" of Tibet, in 1952 the Communists set up a Chinese Buddhist Association (CBA). Out of its 93 members, 29 were Tibetans, and three of the four honorary presidents, the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama; and Sherab Gyatso (Śes-rab rgya-mtsho) were Tibetans. The CBA was an instrument of the so-called Chinese Buddhist diplomacy, especially directed against South and Southeast Asian countries from 1952 to 1966. Cf. Holmes Welch, *Buddhism under Mao* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972). pp. 169-229.

NAG-RON MGON-PO RNAM-RGYAL: A 19TH CENTURY KHAMS-PA WARRIOR*

Tashi Tsering

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Introduction

In the mid-19th century the chief of a tiny tribe of about sixty families in the Nag-ron province of Khams fought for about thirty years and subdued the whole of Khams up to Dar-rtse-mdo, except certain outer districts such as Chab-mdo. Some parts he subdued by force, while others surrendered to him. Even the Szechuan governors could not stop him and the Tibetan Government was also forced to keep an alert vigil on this man. He was Lcags-mdud Nag-sked Mgon-po rnam-rgyal of Nag-ron, popularly known by his nickname Nag-sked bu-loṅ-ma (Nag-sked the Blind), or just Nag-sked A-mgon. In different parts of Khams he was also known by such names as Nag-ron the Enemy (Dgra-ñag-ron), Nag-ron the Eastern Enemy (Sar-dgra ñag-ron), Nag-ron the Horde of Robbers, the Nag-ron Demon and Nag-sked the Enemy of the Faith. While alive he was both hated and feared; when dead his life became a legend of epic proportions narrated by one generation to the next. The common people of Khams even swore in his name.

Although he was a great conqueror Mgon-po rnam-rgyal could not enjoy the fruits of his military success for long. Whether it was due to the conspiracy of the Ambans or to the instigations of the tribal chiefs he had driven into exile in Lhasa, or whether it was because the Tibetan Government itself wanted to make a clear and explicit borderline with China, the government eventually intervened

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with a strong military force and cut short his violent military life by exterminating him through deceit and treachery. With his death Tibet lost the last wall that might have stopped expansionist Chinese designs.

Family Background and Youth

The earliest known ancestor of Mgon-po rnam-rgyal was his great-grandfather Ri-nan dpal-mgon. His son was one Mgon-po tshe-brtan whose son was Nor-bu tshe-rin.¹ The latter married a daughter from the Zi-ba-tshan family of upper Nag-roñ.² Mgon-po rnam-rgyal was born to this Nor-bu tshe-rin and his wife, theirs being a petty chieftain's family in the small Ni-thag village, consisting of about sixty families.³

It is said that when A-mgon was only seven years of age, he killed a wild sheep (*rna-ba*) at which his father became extremely happy and proud. He approached a hermit and showed him the carcass of the animal. The hermit cried and said that starting with this one wild sheep the boy would kill countless men and horses.⁴ When he grew up he married a daughter of the Rda-sked-tshan family of upper Nag-roñ.⁵ Apart from these, there are no further details of his youth available to me.

¹ *Siñ stag rgya gar 'phags pa'i yul du dbyin bod rgya gsum chins mol mdzad lugs kun gsal me loñ*, compiled but left incomplete by Blonchen Bsad-sgra Dpal-'byor rdo-rje (ca. 1861-1919) and subsequently brought up to date by Bka'-blon Khri-smon Nor-bu dbaṅ-rgyal (1874-1945?), p. 29. (In subsequent references this will be referred to as *Kun gsal me loñ*. The manuscript of this rare official document is now in the possession of the Private Office of H.H. the Dalai Lama.)

² Oral communication by Rgya-ri Ni-ma rgyal-mtshan, *ston-dpon* of Upper Nag-roñ, on 16 May 1982. (Note that he will be referred to only as Rgya-ri subsequently.)

³ Oral communication by Wu-li Mda'-dpon, Rdo-rgya-tshan Rabs-brtan rdo-rje, better known as A-brtan of Upper Nag-roñ. (Referred to as A-brtan in later notes.)

⁴ Oral communication by Mkhan-po Mkhas-grub Rin-po-che.

⁵ Rgya-ri.

Campaigns in Khams

From 1837 onwards⁶ fighting broke out between Upper Nag-roñ and Lower Nag-roñ during which Mgon-po rnam-rgyal subdued six chieftains including Rda-dked and Than-skya.⁷ He fought for six or seven years within Nag-roñ itself and subdued its upper, lower and the middle districts.⁸ Because of a conflict over the proposed marriage of one of his sons to a daughter of Hor-pa Khañ-gsar-tshañ, another fight started. Phu-yul-dgra'dul of Mar-zu defected to A-mgon's side from the Khañ-gsar and Mar-zu families, and fought wholeheartedly against the tribe of Khañ-gsar. Spyi-gñer A-rdo-za-ra, a member of the Khañ-gsar family originally from Nag-roñ, put up a very brave resistance for almost two years. He was later ambushed and killed, and gradually the Khañ-gsar fell into the hands of Nag-roñ.⁹ As a result of this, Dnos-grub phun-tshogs of Khañ-gsar and the Ma-zur *gñer-pa* (steward) Khu-gu bkra-sis with three hundred subjects, as well as the Brag-go chief Dbañ-chen dgra'dul with his wife Dpon-mo nor-bu, and Ja'i-bzañ Bla-kho with five hundred subjects abandoned their tribes in 1862 and journeyed to Lhasa to plead for intervention.¹⁰

Meanwhile, the tribes of Tre-hor, Be-ri and Rta'u, after witnessing the defeat and destruction of the Mar-zu and Khañ-gsar tribes, were unable to do anything and surrendered. Bre'o Blo-gsal of the Be-ri tribe defected to Nag-roñ and fought very gallantly for Nag-sked A-mgon, later becoming one of his foremost commanders.¹¹

After subduing the entire Hor-khog region A-mgon appointed Phu-yul dgra'dul, the defector from the Ma-zur tribe, as its chief.¹² Having occupied Hor-khog, the Nag-roñ army was at the peak of its strength and proceeded to conquer Sde-dge in 1862. The latter offered almost no resistance; least of all did the tribes of the eastern 'Bri-chu area such as the Sog-mo, Yid-lhuñ and Wa-sul khrom-thar, which

⁶ Nag-roñ-pa Ye-ses rdo-rje, *Biography of Nag-bla Padma bdud'dul, with a selection of songs*. (Clement Town: Nyingmapa Lama's College, 1975), p. 96. (*Nag-bla* in later references.)

⁷ *Kun gsal me lon*.

⁸ Rgya-ri, A-brtan.

⁹ Rgya-ri.

¹⁰ *Kun gsal me lon*, p. 29; W.D. Shakabpa, *Political History of Tibet*, (Kalimpong, 1976), vol. II, pp. 42 & 43. (Referred to as Shakabpa hereafter.)

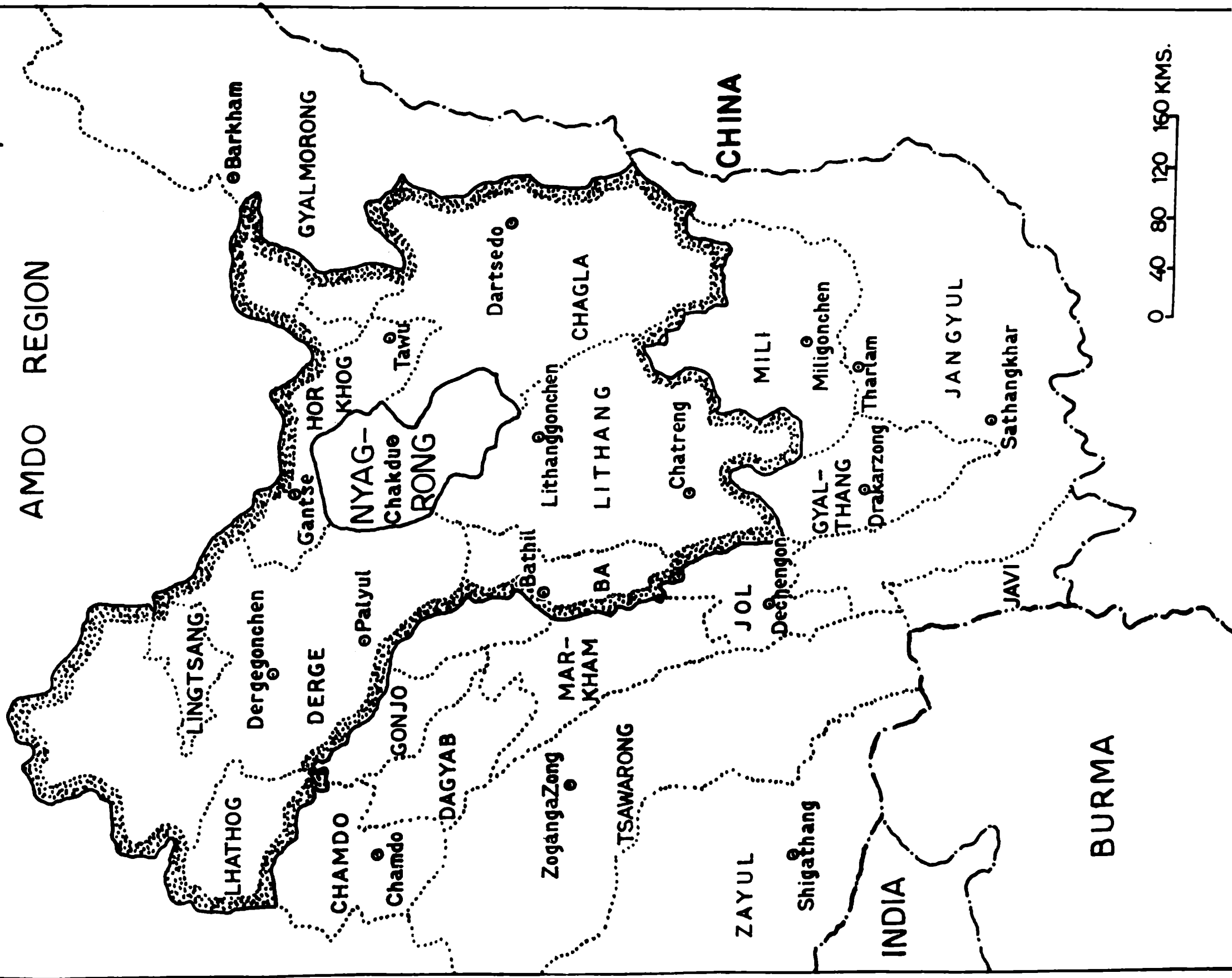
¹¹ Rgya-ri.

¹² Rgya-ri.

AREAS DOMINATED BY ÑAG-RON MĠON-PO N



RNAM-RGYAL c 1835 - 1865



maintained good political terms and geographical proximity with Nag-roñ. It was said that the only area in Sde-dge which actually put up resistance was the western 'Bri-chu area, which was thoroughly defeated.¹³ Because of this, a nomadic group of Rdza-chu-kha-pa in Sde-dge migrated temporarily to Mgo-log.¹⁴ The queen of Sde-dge, Chos-dbyiñs bzañ-mo (d. 1892),¹⁵ and the prince 'Chi-med rtag-pa'i-rdo-rje were taken hostages and their capital seized by Nag-roñ.¹⁶ By the first month (?) of 1863, the whole of Sde-dge was conquered.¹⁷ A-mchod-lu-gu-ma, one of A-mgon's favorites, was appointed the chief, but some ministers of Sde-dge, resenting the rule of Nag-roñ, fled to Lhasa.¹⁸ A-mgon, suspecting that the whole of Sde-dge would rise in revolt, took many high incarnate lamas and important officials of Sde-dge as hostages.¹⁹ After that he fought the Li-thañ sde-pa and 'Ba'-pa. When Nag-roñ's advancing force was heading towards Glin-dkar-gśis, the immediate chief of that place, Rag-rdo rgya-dpon-tshañ, approached the governor of 'Ba' ('Ba'-sde-pa), whose jurisdiction included Glin-dkar-gśis, to ask for his advice;

13 Rgya-ri.

14 *Collected writings of Mi-pham*, Vol. 7 (Gangtok, 1976), p. 630.

15 'Jam-mgon Koñ-sprul, *Collected Works*, vol. 15. (Paro, 1976), p. 443. There, in the biography of 'Jam-dbyañs mkhyen-brtse'i-'od-zer entitled *Rnam thar u dum wa ra'i dga' tshal*, Koñ-sprul quotes Sde-dge ma-yum Chos-dbyiñs bzañ-mo (the widowed queen of Dam-tshig rdo-rje?).

16 *The Collected Works* (Gsuñ-'bum) of Rdo-grub-chen 'Jigs-med bstan-pa'i-ñi-ma (Gangtok, 1975), vol. IV, p. 72. (Here, in the biography of Rdza Dpal-sprul entitled *Bdud brts'i zil thig* by the IIIrd Rdo-grub-chen, it says: *Sde dge lha sras 'Chi med rtag pa'i rdo rje'i sku mched ñag sked pa'i 'og nas thar te rgyal sar 'khod dus.*)

17 'Jam-mgon Koñ-sprul Blo-gros mtha'-yas, *Autobiography* (Bir: Kandro, 1973), p. 287.

18 *Kun gsal me loñ*; Rgya-ri and A-brtan. As for A-mchod lu-gu-ma or Gñer lu-gu-ma, the Rdza Dpal-sprul biography by the IIIrd Rdo-grub-chen (cited above, n.16) mentions Nag-blon Lu-gu Tshe-rin. In any case, Mkhan-po Mkhas-grub Rin-po-che states that that is a nickname, for he had white hairs like those of a white sheep (*lu-gu*).

19 Koñ-sprul, *Autobiography*, p. 293: *'di skor (1864) ñag dpon ño tshab kyis sde dge dgon chen du mña' 'og gi dpon sde'i bla ma mi ser miñ yod thams cad bu gtel [sic] bsdu skabs.*

but the latter told Rag-rdo to look after himself and do what was good.²⁰ Fortunately the Nag-roñ force did not actually cause any serious trouble in Glin-dkar-gśis, and though Yon-tan rgya-dpon-tshan, a relative of the chief of Glin-dkar-gśis, was taken hostage, he escaped before the Tibetan Government's intervention force arrived.

Nag-sked A-mgon's force also proceeded to Sa-nan or Re-khe. Seeing that attack from the Nag-roñ force was imminent, Sa-nan sent a resistance army to the base of the hill at Sa-ser-la-kha which caused the enemy's army to suffer considerable casualties. Losses suffered on Sa-nan's side included three important commanders: Chos-tho sgom-chen, Kun-dga' Khu-lu and Sdig-lu A-saṅs. Three heaps of *maṇi* slates (*maṇi rdo bum*) were erected in their honor at Sa-ser-la-kha on the spot where they were killed. These memorial cairns could be seen even in later days.²¹ After this A-mgon could not carry out any further attack against Sa-nan and retreated. It is generally held that at that time A-mgon said, "This place is the knot of earth and is a relative of ours. Therefore it should not be antagonized."

Altogether, according to A-brtan, the places conquered by A-mgon included Lha-thog,²² 'Dan-khog,²³ Glin-tshan,²⁴ and Sga-pa

20 O-rgyan blo-gros of Glin-dkar-gśis, oral communication, 1 May 1982.

21 Rdo-rje mkha'-'gro and Bkra-sis tshe-riñ of Sa-nan, oral communication, 17 May 1982.

22 No reliable living informant could be found concerning the attack on Lha-thog, but A-gro Sgra-rams-pa 'Gyur-med rnam-rgyal, *Lha thog rgyal rabs* (written in 1852; Tashi Jong, 1971), p. 75:15, says: *Gnam bskos rdwao koñ khri'i* [Tao kuang 1821-1850] *guñ blon chen po chis krin than śar dgra ñag roñ 'dul bar byon dus/ rgya bod kyi dpon po thus bsi* [T'u ssu] *ze brgyad 'dzoms pa'i gral mgor mi bdag* [unnamed, but was the son of Lha-thog king Mgon-po bdud-'dul and his wife Phyag-tsha dpon-mo Don-grub sgrol-ma] *bkod nas mñon par bsñags pa thob ciñ legs skeyes gtos cher stsal ba sogs lo rgyus bsam gyis mi khyab bo/*
23 So far I have not found anyone able to relate the story of the war with 'Dan-khog.

24 If this is Tre-Hor Glin-tshan, then, because the entire Hor-khog province was subdued, this should have been subdued with the rest of the states of Hor; but if it was the Glin-tshan kingdom, then, because they were related only by matrimonial alliance, there would have been no case here of the Nag-sked forces causing any trouble.

including Dem-chi Ner-lña,²⁵ all to the west of Nag-roñ; Lcags-la,²⁶

25 According to an oral communication from Be-hu lha-dge of 'Bron-pa stod-ma, just before Nag-sked A-mgon was overrun by Tibetan government forces he sent several messages to all the chieftains of the Dem-chi Ner-lña (i.e. the 25 tribes which were on the outer part of Nan-chen) asking for their submission to him, at which there was much rumor of his arrival, with the result that a resistance force was prepared in Dem-chi Ner-lña. Since Sga-khog was near 'Dan-khog, it was suspected that the Nag-sked force would arrive there first; so one Gra-'ur be-hu prepared to defend it. At that time Hor spyi-khyab Bkra-śis rgyal-mtshan (? or Bkra-śis rnam-rgyal) dispatched a supporting military force to Gra-'ur be-hu. Though his and Gra-'ur be-hu's forces stayed a long time guarding the border in Sga-khog, Nag-sked never turned up. Gra-'ur be-hu, in turn, gave to the Hor spyi-khyab as an award for his brave help the grazing and camping rights to a place called A-skyid-la-sgañ, a distance of one day's horse journey from Skye-rgu-mdo (Jyekundo). Even in later years the people of Hor spyi-khyab (the 39 tribes, *tsho ba sum cu so dgu*) were availed of this right. As regards the Nag-sked force reaching Nan-chen proper, refer to Gdon-btsun Padma ran-grol 'od-gsal gzi-brjid-rtsal (b. 1843), *Grub dbañ tshogs gñis sprul sku pad ma dri med 'od zer* [b. 1828] *gyi phyi nañ gsañ ba'i rtogs brjod kun bzañ thugs rje'i zlos gar* (composed in 1911; Bir: Kandro, 1973), p. 335:2: *di skor sna phyir gñar pa se than nag pos kheñs log brstoms pa bdud sprul ña skad* [sic] *mgon po rnam rgyal gyis me 'brug* [1856] *skor nas bod khams mi bde ba'i gzi btin/ Siñ glañ* [1865] *rdzogs pa'i bar 'khrugs pa'i yo lañ chu ltar khol ba la/ Rje 'dis dmag zlog dañ srin skyob rtag tu mdzad pas ran re sgom sde'i* [nan chen] *rgyal khab kyi mña' ris 'dir gnod 'tshe gañ yañ ma byuñ ba'añ gañ 'di'i thugs rje yin pa gor ma chag go/*

26 Rgya-ri. Prof. Luciano Petech, *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet* (Rome, 1973), p. 78, mentions that the Ming Ch'eng (Lcags-la) Chief Rgyal-mtshan rin-chen was the strongest enemy of Mgon-po rnam-rgyal. *Mu-tsung shih-lu*, Ch. 163, pp. 8b-9b, January 30, 1866: "The chieftain of Ming Ch'eng (Chinese: *Chia mu-ts'an ling-ch'in*) Rgyal-mtshan rin-chen also sent troops to take part in the extermination." Cf. also the *Autobiography of Mdo-mkhyen-brtse Ye-śes rdo-rje* (Gangtok, 1974), p. 302.2: *re*

Mgo-thon, Dge-bśes, Khro-skyabs, Dam-pa, Nag-bran Śog-gsum,²⁷ and the five states of Hor²⁸ in the east; Khañ-gsar, Ma-zur, Brag-mgo, Rta'u, Tre-hor, Stoñ-'khor, Be-ri and Mgo-log²⁹ in the north;

zig gi tshe phyogs bzi'i dmag gis glags ma rñed cin/ bya lo [sa mo bya 1849] gsar tshes la kruñ thañ gtsos rgya dmag dan/ Lcags la sa dbañ [the Ming Ch'eng chief] gtsos rgyal po rnams kyañ byon nas 'joms par rlom kyañ re zig ñag sked pa'i bsod nams ma zad cin/ khoñ rañ la 'khor ba'i 'byuñ po mthu che ba dan/ tshur phyogs la sdoñ grogs kyi lha rnams gzu bor gnas pa'i don gyis/ rgya mi yañ snañ ba 'gyur zin btañ sñoms su bźag nas mar log/ phyogs bzi'i dmag mi rnams kyañ rañ gnas su gyes/

27 I have not found anyone able to relate the situation in these five places at that time.

28 See above for the takeover of Hor-khog.

29 Though Mgo-log was besieged, the fact that a certain nomadic tribe (*rdza chu kha pa*) of Sde-dge moved there (see note 14), suggests that it was not actually subdued.

30 Up to now I have not met anyone who could relate anything about the fight between 'Ba' and Ñag-sked and it cannot be confirmed that 'Ba' was subdued. But from Shakabpa, p. 45, *Kun gsal me loñ*, and the oral communication of A-brtan, it is evident that 'Ba' was harrassed very often.

31 According to an oral communication from the IVth Sga-rje khams-sprul 'Jam-dbyañs don-grub, *alias* Thub-btsan bśad-sgrub mdo-sñags bstan-pa'i-rgyal-msthan phyogs-las-rnam-par-rgyal-ba'i-sde (7 July 1982), Ñag-sked Mgon-po rnam-rgyal and a force of about 5000-6000 men came straight to Mthil-ra (the capital market place of Li-thañ) and Ñag-sked himself put up in the residence of the Li-thañ druñ-sde-pa. The rest of his force camped in Li-thañ groñ-'dabs, Ga'u-chu-mgo, Mgo-dkar-thañ and concentrated at Sa-ser-la-khug. Even in later days one could easily spot these places for there were still traces of their campsites. At the arrival of the Ñag-roñ force Li-thañ offered no resistance. Ñag-sked declared that unless a *sprul sku* performed a convincing miracle before him within seven days he would not only destroy the famous Li-thañ dgon-chen and overrun the territory of Li-thañ proper, but also take over the whole Li-thañ dominion (*li thañ mña' ris zin chen*), which included Mo-la, Tsho-gsum, 'Dabs, Cha-'phreñ, Ra-rgyal, Śog-drug, Sga-bźag-gYañ-gsum, gYon-ru, O-tog, Sde-gzuñ-ma and De'u-mgo-ñag-gsum (?).

and 'Ba'-pa,³⁰ Li-thañ,³¹ Cha-'phren,³² and Rgyal-thañ³³ in the

But if anyone could perform a miracle within the said time he would leave right away with his men without causing any trouble. In response, the Tsha-btags sprul-sku performed miracles in the Gesar *lha-khañ* of Li-thañ. Nag-sked was satisfied and retreated as he promised. Also, the Li-thañ people launched a kind of bacterial attack causing a serious plague among the Nag-roñ force by shooting arrows with small bags full of snuff mixed with dried skins of small pox victims and epidemic diarrhea. Many of the Nag-sked's men were infected with cholera and diarrhea and died after they inhaled the snuff. So, satisfied by the performance of a miracle and compelled by plague, Nag-sked retreated.

32

A-brtan. In his forthcoming book, *Mdo stod cha phren gi lo rgyus* (to be published by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala), Kar-rgyal don-grub says: "Nag-roñ Mgon-po rnam-rgyal, alias Nag-stod Bu-loñ za-ra, was known to have created a lot of trouble in the Mdo-smad area and there was a popular rumor in Cha-'phren that he was coming with a force of eight-thousand four-hundred men. The Cha-'phren resistance force waited for about two months at different strategic points and passes. When a force of only thirteen Nag-roñ horsemen finally came, they killed two men and the rest fled. Men were also sent to find out if Nag-sked was planning any attack. The Cha-'phren resistance force became relieved when it found out that there was not a single man attacking them, leave alone a force of eight-thousand four-hundred." But Shakabpa, p. 47, mentions that the Kham provinces of 'Ba', Li-thañ and Cha-'phren were plundered and only the womenfolk, the aged and the children were left behind, while the young monks and laymen were scattered and so supported themselves by looting other areas. From this it appears that much damage was done there, but this needs more research.

33

A-brtan told me that Rgyal-thañ and Nag-sked fought with each other. Also Shakabpa, p. 43, clearly mentions that Rgyal-thañ was plundered. Byañ-dmar Chos-mdzad Nag-dbañ chos-'byor related similarly that the Nag-sked force came right up to Mthil-ra (the capital market place of Rgyal-thañ) and caused immense trouble by looting and killing. Finally, the five districts of Rgyal-thañ swore total unity as never before, and were able to drive away the Nag-sked force. Among the five districts, the Roñ-pa

south.

Shakabpa records that A-mgon subdued the six parts of Nag-roñ, and then Hor Ma-zur, Brag-mgo, Khañ-gsar, Tre-hor, Ston-'khor, Be-ri and Glin-tshañ one after another, besides attacking and plundering the areas of Sde-dge, Lcags-la, Dge-śes-tsa-za, Gro-skyabs, Li-thañ, 'Ba' and Mgar-thar. In addition 'Ba', Li-thañ, Cha-'phren, Rdza-khog, Mi-ñag and Rgyal-thañ were also brutally plundered. Beyond that, he blocked the trade-route between Tibet and China and robbed the best qualities of tea, called *rtse-ja* and *mdzod-ja*, that had been in the custody of Tibetan Government trade representative, Mdo-sgar-dpon.^{3 4}

According to a popular saying of the Nag-roñ district, they subjugated "the eight districts of ten-thousand" (*Nag-khri-sde-brgyad*). The peace treaty that was made during the reign of Khri Ral-pa-can was thus revived forcefully and the Manchu dynasty was not allowed to expand into Tibet beyond Dar-rtse-mdo.^{3 5} Whether out of design or simply coincidence, Mgon-po rnam-rgyal's incursions and his subjugation of almost the entire Khams province of Tibet coincided with a period of great tumult and disorder not only in Tibet but also in China. From 1828 to 1830 Nag-roñ itself experienced a critical period of severe crop failures and imminent famine.^{3 6} Perhaps compelled by these dire circumstances, Mgon-po rnam-rgyal started his campaign of subjugating the adjoining chieftains and their tribes. In China, too, conditions were unsettled. By 1839 the Opium War had broken out. This lasted until 1842 and it was closely followed by the Taiping Rebellion, which ended in 1856. In Tibet there was the Tibet-Dogra War (1841) and the Tibet-Gorkha War (1850-1856). While both the Manchu Emperor of China and the Tibetan Government in Lhasa were busy attending to their respective areas of tension and turmoil, Mgon-po rnam-rgyal had succeeded in becoming a parallel power in Khams and was on the verge of changing the political shape of Khams and thus, ultimately, of the whole of Tibet.

Throughout his campaigns, his motto was: "Kill everybody in sight so that all that have ears hear of it," thereby creating an image

fought the most, and even in later days they boasted of their bravery in that fight.

34 Shakabpa, Vol. II, pp. 42-43.

35 A-brtan.

36 *Nag-bla*.

of might and terror.³⁷ A foremost tactic of his was to take as hostages all the important people of a region so that the people would not rise in revolt. He also punished his enemy without any mercy so that nobody would dare to oppose him in the future: a favorite punishment was to have the victim dragged by a wild horse.³⁸ One of A-mgon's peculiar tactics was mass marriage. He arranged marriages between families of opposing status or tribe to avoid any organized revolt from them.³⁹ Strange as it sounds, he levied no tax on any of the conquered regions or tribes. The only compulsory levy was of a hundred yaks provided by him for slaughter during the annual prayer festival of the *Mgon-po dus-gto* which he organized. In his army there were many outstanding and brave volunteers called "Nag-sked Stag-zan," who were respected in the army even when there was no war. Some of the important commanders in this force were Phu-yul Dgra-'dul, Bre'o Blo-gsal, A-mchod lu-gu-ma, Rgya-ri Bla-ma tshe-rin⁴⁰ and Sa-stod-sras-po.⁴¹ During some thirty years of his campaigns he built about thirteen fortresses in Khams including *Sog-mo pho-bran* in Sde-dge, *gYul-rgyal pho-bran* in Dkar-mdzes, his own residence *Span-ri pho-bran*,⁴² *Rdo-rdzon*, *Bya-rgod dgra-rdzon* and *Nag-chu-kha'i dgra-rdzon*.⁴³

The Character of Mgon-po rnam-rgyal

Mgon-po rnam-rgyal was fond of hunting, and would recruit a force of about two hundred men for a single hunting session. No matter how many animals were slain everybody exclaimed that A-mgon killed them, whereupon he would burst out in loud, approving laughter.⁴⁴ He was very fond of horses, especially black ones, and would pay any price to obtain them. He made it a law that all horsemen coming within sight of his palace had to dismount from

37 Rgya-ri.

38 A-brtan.

39 A-brtan.

40 Rgya-ri.

41 Cf. the Tibetan Government decree issued all over Tibet to celebrate the successful defeat of Nag-sked, which was sent on 23rd day of the 9th lunar month, 1865 (now in the possession of LTWA).

42 A-brtan, Rgya-ri.

43 Shakabpa, Vol. II, p. 44.

44 Rgya-ri, A-brtan.

their horses and walk the rest of the distance. He was also a womanizer, and habitually smoked a long pipe (*gan-zag*).^{4 5}

At the peak of A-mgon's power the Tibetan Government and the Sde-dge rulers invoked the gods and prayed for an end to his power. Because of this it was believed that he was affected by a sort of curse (*byad-kha*) that disturbed his mental balance, so that he often did strange things. For instance, when he asked his cook the reason for the taste in food, the cook replied that it was because of salt. He then made the cook put an excessive amount of salt in his food. Waking up the next day with a bloated face, A-mgon ousted the cook in a great rage and hired a second one, asking him to make tasty food without salt. When the cook prepared unsalted food which was tasteless, he asked the cook the reason for its tastelessness. The cook replied that taste comes with salt and that it should be applied in moderation, whereupon A-mgon realized the truth and rehired the old cook.^{4 6} Such examples of his silly behaviour abound. His unsettled mind sometimes led to acts of outrageous cruelty. One of his cruelest pastimes was to feed small children with milk and curd and then drop them from the top of his fort. When the child hit the ground and its stomach burst, he would break into loud laughter.^{4 7} On hunting or military expeditions this warrior ate and drank with the rest of his men and slept in the open on his saddle.^{4 8}

By nature he was too proud to confess ignorance. Once he was instructed to recite the *Bsam-pa lhun-grub* prayer and *Vajraguru* mantra. He told the monks and his men that those fools who knew the *Bsam-pa lhun-grub* should stay outside the monastery while the clever ones who could recite the *Vajraguru* should come inside, for he himself could only recite the *Vajraguru* mantra. His favorite recitations were the *Mgon-po tshogs-bdag* prayers (i.e. prayers to the wrathful protector Gaṇapati) which his men also learned and recited before commencing on military expeditions.^{4 9} Every year he invited over three thousand monks from all over Nag-roñ and the adjacent states to the huge *Mgon-po dus-gto* prayer session, when over a hundred yaks were killed.^{5 0}

45 Rgya-ri.

46 Mkhan-po Mkhas-grub Rin-po-che.

47 A-brtan.

48 Rgya-ri.

49 Mkhan-po Mkhas-grub Rin-po-che.

50 Rgya-ri, A-brtan.

Though A-mgon believed in the Buddhist doctrines of karma and rebirth, he had no faith in incarnate lamas generally—only in those who could perform convincing miracles before his very eyes. Even after such performances he would never verbally express his faith. In general people considered him to be a non-believer, but that was not true, for he quite often invited important lamas to Nag-ron: Mdo-mkhyen-brtse Ye-śes rdo-rje;⁵¹ the reincarnation of Dge-man sku-mdun Rin-po-che, Rnam-rgyal mdo-snags bstan-'dzin;⁵² the XIVth Karma-pa, Theg-mchog rdo-rje;⁵³ the Xth Si-tu Rin-po-che Padma kun-bzan;⁵⁴ Koñ-sprul Yon-tan rgya-mtsho;⁵⁵ the IIIrd Kañ-thog Žin-skyoñ, Rig-'dzin mi-'gyur bstan-pa'i-rgyal-mtshan;⁵⁶ and Dpal-dan phyogs-kyi-glañ-po, the younger brother of Khri-chen Nag-dbañ kun-dga' bsod-nams (d. 1887) of the Phun-tshogs pho-brañ of Sa-skya.⁵⁷ Among such, he was most devoted to Nag-bla Padma bdud-'dul and the IVth Rdzog-chen Mi-'gyur nam-mkha'i-rdo-rje.

Because of the immense sins he had committed in the course of his military adventures A-mgon felt that he was sure to go to hell after his death. Therefore following the subjugation of a place he would search out the most reverend and pious lamas of that district and ask them where he would be reborn. In most of these cases the terrified lama would at once tell him that he would be reborn in the highest of heavens. But conscious of his sins, he kept asking the same question wherever his campaigns took him. Once when he approached the IVth Rdzogs-chen Rin-po-che and inquired about his next life, the Rin-po-che replied that if he spoke the truth A-mgon would be unhappy and punish him. When A-mgon promised that he would not, the Rin-po-che said that he would go straight to the deepest hell. At once A-mgon took hold of him and said that he was the only lama who uttered the truth. Taking off the strings of *gzi* stones from his neck—some say the gift was a wild yak's horn filled with gold dust—and offering them to the Rin-po-che, A-mgon adamantly requested that he be prevented from descending to hell when he died. Reluctantly the Rin-po-che promised to save him for

51 *Nag-bla*, p. 97.

52 *Nag-bla*, p. 113.

53 *Nag-bla*, p. 151.

54 *Ibid.*

55 *Ibid.*

56 *Nag-bla*, p. 170.

57 *Nag-bla*, p. 174.

only one lifetime, and A-mgon went away satisfied,^{5 8}

It is said that Mgon-po rnam-rgyal was tall, but the fact seems to be that he was of medium height with broad shoulders and fiery eyes.^{5 9} He was blind in one eye because, some say, during the fighting in Nag-roñ a bullet hit a window-sill and a splinter flew into it.^{6 0} Others believe that he was blinded by a thorn, or they claim that it was a side effect of his visit to A-bse tsha-chu, a hot spring in upper Nan-roñ.^{6 1} He hated anyone talking of blindness and never tolerated anybody persecuting blind men or animals.^{6 2}

A-mgon's Descendants

It is rather difficult to say how many sons Mgon-po rnam-rgyal had, but according to A-brtan he had four. Their names were Ston-sde mgon-po, Chug-med mgon-po, Bdud-'dul mgon-po and Srog-bdag mgon-po. Actually he seems to have had more, for he is said to have also had a son named Bsod-nams señ-ge.^{6 3} According to an oral communication from Be hu lha dge of 'Bron-pa stod-ma, Ston-sde mgon-po was born on an occasion when A-mgon conquered a thousand (*ston*) subjects; likewise, another son born when he had conquered ten thousand (*khri*) subjects was named Khri-sde mgon-po. Some say that he also had a son who was an incarnate lama.^{6 4} Of all his sons the two who were the most efficient and who assisted him in all his military campaigns were Bdud-'dul mgon-po and Srog-bdag mgon-po. His son Chug-med mgon-po was believed to be mentally retarded. Ston-sde mgon-po was the only religiously-minded son and was spared when the rest of the family was killed by the Tibetan Government.^{6 5}

It is also common knowledge that A-mgon had three daughters. The eldest daughter married A-dkar señ-ge-'bum of Rgya-ri-tshan of upper Nag-roñ, one was given in marriage to Rme-khog Nor-blo of

58 A-brtan, Rgya-ri.

59 Rgya-ri.

60 Mkhan-po Mkhas-grub Rin-po-che.

61 Rgya-ri.

62 Rgya-ri, A-brtan and Mkhan-po Mkhas-grub Rin-po-che.

63 See n. 41.

64 Oral communication from H.H. Sa-skya Khri-'dzin on 26 June 1982.

65 A-brtan.

Rña-ba, Amdo,⁶⁶ and the youngest, named 'Jam-dbyaṅs tshul-khrims bzañ-mo,⁶⁷ was taken in marriage by the 48th Glin-tshañ king, Dbañ-chen rta-mgrin chos-skyoñ.⁶⁸ Some also believe that there was a fourth daughter who married Zi-ba-tshañ of upper Nag-roñ.⁶⁹

His Decline

After Mgon-po rnam-rgyal completed his campaigns and conquered the whole of Nag-khri-sde-brgyad the Tibetan Government intervened. The Nag-roñ people believe that it finally did so because of the instigations of the Ambans, since the Chinese themselves had already failed to subdue A-mgon. The Government feared that one day he might reach even Lhasa and tie the rein of his horse at the ancient stone pillar (*rdo-rin*) there. Rumor had it that he even planned to seize the *Jo-bo* statue of the Cathedral of Lhasa.⁷⁰ In any case Bśad-sgra gladly took this opportunity to extend the influence of the Lhasa Government in Eastern Tibet.⁷¹ According to Shakabpa the General Assembly of the Tibetan Government passed the resolution to intervene and subdue Nag-roñ Mgon-po rnam-rgyal.⁷² Therefore, on 9 February 1863 troops were dispatched under the command of Bka'-blon Phu-lun-ba Tshe-dbañ rdo-rje, assisted by Dbus mda'-dpon Khri-smon-pa 'Chi-med rdo-rje, Dbus mda'-dpon Mdo-mkhar-ba Tshe-dbañ nor-bu and Phogs-dpon Phun-rab-pa Tshe-rin dpal-ldan. On their way they recruited a substantial number of men from Ri-bo-che, Brag-gYab, and Chab-mdo.⁷³ At

66 Rgya-ri.

67 'Jam-mgon Koñ-sprul Blo-gros mtha'-yas, *Autobiography* (Bir: Kandro, 1973), p. 416.

68 Oral communication from the present prince of Glin-tshañ, 'Jigs-med dbaṅ-'dus chos-rgyal (b. 1938), on 27 March 1982.

69 Rgya-ri.

70 Rgya-ri.

71 L. Petech, *Aristocracy and Government of Tibet*, p. 179.

72 Shakabpa, p. 43.

73 About the intervention by the Tibetan Expedition and final takeover of Nag-roñ, according to the Tibetan and Chinese official versions, see the following: L. Petech, *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet*, pp. 96, 120, 121, 178, and 179; Shakabpa, Vol. II (1976), pp. 43-45; *Hsi k'ang chien-sheng chi*, by Fu Sung-mu (Chengtu, 1912), pp. 38a-b; *Mu-tsung shih-lu*, Ch. 163,

Sde-dge the Tibetan and Nag-roñ forces fought for about two years. The people of Khams were not especially happy at the arrival of the Tibetan government force because it looted and inflicted much violence upon the local population. Nor did they fight wholeheartedly on Nag-roñ's side, since many of them resented having to spend their whole lives fighting for Nag-sked.

After this period of fighting Nag-sked A-mgon finally retreated to Nag-roñ and took up a strongly defended position in his eight-storied fort, *Span-ri pho-bran*. The Tibetan government force followed him but dared not proceed nearer than his outposts. There was a stalemate for two months. Finally, both sides agreed to talk through Bya-rgod Padma legs-grub, until one day Nag-sked himself came to meet Khri-smon-pa. He agreed to a truce provided that Khri-smon-pa took an oath that neither he himself nor any of his family would be killed or betrayed. As a part of the oath he asked if the Tibetan government was willing to bear the weight of all the sins he had committed by killing so many men and horses. Furthermore, he asked whether it was willing to give him in exchange all the merits of the Tibetan Government, even the merit of a single butter lamp, if this oath were broken. Khri-smon-pa agreed to this and A-mgon said that he would send his son to talk things over. He then returned and instructed his son Bḍud-'dul mgon-po to proceed and enter into a suitable agreement with the Tibetan Government commander.^{7 4} The

pp. 8b-10b, January 30, 1866; *Ch'ing-shih*, Vol. I, Ch. 21, p. 249; Vol. 7, Ch. 524, pp. 5718 & 5719; Ch. 512, p. 5584; and Rgyal-rtsi-ba Rnam-rgyal dbaṅ-'dud, *Bod ljongs rgyal khab chen po'i srid lugs dan 'brel ba'i drag po dmag gi lo rgyus* (Dharamsala: Tibetan Cultural Printing Press, 1976), pp. 106-107. For oral sources on the fighting between the Tibetan force and Nag-roñ, refer to Kaschewski & P. Tsering, "Die Niederschlagung des Empörers von Nyag-roñ und andere Reminiszenzen des dpal-sprul Rinpoche," *Zentral-Asiatische Studien*, Vol. 7 (1973), pp. 443-474; Nag-roñ A-brtan, *Na'i mi tshe'i lo rgyus*, (Dharamsala: Information Office, 1979), pp. 25-30, and its English translation by Jamyang Norbu, *Horseman in the snow: The story of A ten, an old Khampa warrior*, (Dharamsala: Information Office, 1979), pp. 17-19; C.W. Cassinelli and Robert B. Ekvall, *A Tibetan Principality: The Political System of Sa skya* (1969), p. 23.

74

A-brtan told me it was Bḍud-'dul mgon-po, but actually this should have been Srog-bdag mgon-po.

son said that nothing would be suitable and begged his father not to offer a truce. Nevertheless he was forced to go. When A-mgon heard that Bdud-'dul mgon-po was betrayed and caught he felt it better to commit suicide, whereupon he and his sons set fire to the fort and died. A popular belief in Nag-roñ is that Nag-sked and one or two of his sons escaped to Mgo-log, but there is no proof of this nor any trace of their descendants in Mgo-log.^{7 5}

According to Shakabpa the eight-storied fort was surrounded in July 1865 and was set afire by the Tibetan Government force on the first day of the next month. In the fire Nag-sked himself, his wife, relatives and servants, totalling about thirty persons, and his ministers and commanders numbering about forty were burnt. The rest surrendered. In reality, however, the Tibetan force neither set the fort on fire, nor was there even a single bullet mark on its walls.^{7 6} The truth is that previously, while Nag-sked himself was retreating to his own territory, some of his commanders including Phu-yul dgra-'dul, Lu-gu-ma, Mgon-po rnam-rgyal's own sons Ston-sde mgon-po, Bsod-nams sen-ge, and the warriors under their command had already surrendered to the Tibetan Government. In the fire about thirty people died including Nag-sked, his sons Chug-med mgon-po and Bdud-'dul mgon-po, and their wives, children and relatives. His son Srog-dbag mgon-po, Bre'o Blo-gsal, and Sa-stod sras-po were captured and executed, their heads and hands taken to Lhasa for public display.^{7 7} It was said that because of their betrayal by the Tibetan Government the angry and fiery expression on Srog-dbag mgon-po's face remained even during the entire one-and-a-half month journey from Nag-roñ to Lhasa, looking more alive in its expression of anger.^{7 8}

The betrayal and death of Mgon-po rnam-rgyal was seen by some to be an evil omen. It was common belief in and around Khams that there were four "knots of the earth" in Khams (some say in all of Tibet). They are: Mgo-log, the "knot of wind"; Sa-nan, the "knot of earth";^{7 9} Spo-bo, the "knot of snow"; and Nag-roñ, the "knot of

75 A-brtan.

76 Rgya-ri.

77 See note 41.

78 Oral communication by Dpal-spuñ phyag-mdzod Tshe-dban nor-bu.

79 Dil-mgo mkhyen-brtse Rin-po-che, *Biography of Mkhen-brtse Chos-kyi-blo-gros: No mtshar yoñs 'dus dga' tshal*. (Lithograph), p. 52: *Mdo smad zal mo sgañ gi char sa yi mdud b'zir grags pa'i*

iron". According to the same belief, in order to avoid misfortunes and calamity to the country these four knots should not be broken. But with the death of Nag-sked A-mgon, one of the knots, the knot of iron, was considered to have been broken.⁸⁰

In the autobiography of Mdo-mkhyen-brtse Ye-śes rdo-rje there appears in 1848 an intriguing prophecy of Ge-sar of Glin concerning Nag-roñ Mgon-po rnam-rgyal, which says:

When there is a war between devils—
 The weasel-headed Chinese destroyer
 And the red-faced Nag-roñ devil—
 They will win or lose in accord with their karma.
 Devas, nāgas and local spirits of virtue,
 Perform your own duties,
 Since there is no reason to help or harm them.
 When there is a war in the future.
 Should the Chinese devil win the war,
 The Buddha's doctrine will be harmed.
 And should the Nag-roñ devil win the war,
 Innocent sentient beings will face evil consequences.
 Hence, be neutral towards them.⁸¹

Seventeen years after this prophecy was delivered Nag-roñ Mgon-po rnam-rgyal was killed.

When Nag-sked's fort was going up in flames his favorite lama Nag-bla Padma bdud-'dul remarked to his chief disciple, Bla-ma Mtha'-yas, that it was inauspicious to see Nag-sked's fort in flames as his descendants would have been the opponents of harmful

80 *bye brag re khe (Sa nan) sa yi mdud pa ste.*

A-brtan, Rgya-ri.

81 Mdo-mkhyen-brtse Ye-śes rdo-rje, *Autobiography*, (Gangtok, 1974), p. 300. The original lines run like this: *Rgya yi phun byed sre moñ mgo/ Na yi bdud po no dmar 'di/ Bdud dan bdud gñis 'thab pa la/ Rgyal pham ran ran snon las yin/ Dkar phyogs skyon ba'i lha klu gñan/ Ran ran las kyi bya ba skyon/ 'Di la phan gnod byed don med/ Phyi 'byun dus kyi khug so la/ Rgya yi phun byed rgyal gyur na/ Sans rgyas bstan la gnod pa 'byun/ Na yi bdud po rgyal gyur na/ Sems can nes med sdig la sbyor/ De gñis mñam pa nid du zog.* Mdo-mkhyen-brtse received this prediction from Glin-rje Ge-sar during a dream vision in 1848. The autobiography was written in 1859.

Chinese spirits (*rgya-'dre-'gon-po*).⁸² The lama told his disciple that he wanted to turn himself into a tiger and leap upon the Tibetan government soldiers surrounding the fort to scatter them away. But the disciple pulled the lama away and told him that a single bullet of the government force would be enough to kill him. It is said that the disciple's objection to his lama's attempt to save Nag-ron Mgon-po rnam-rgyal's fort was also a bad omen for Tibet.⁸³ Many people of Khams thus believed that Nag-ron Mgon-po rnam-rgyal should not have been put to death. He represented one of the four "knots of the earth" that in the popular Khams-pa belief protected the whole of Tibet. Moreover, even Glin Ge-sar had prophesied that the Nag-ron devil should be left alone in his war with the Chinese devil. Finally, his lama Nag-bla Padma bdud-'dul considered it extremely inauspicious that Nag-sked's fort was set afire, and thought of saving it from the Tibetan Government soldiers. Mythical as it may sound, beliefs still persist that with the death and destruction of Nag-ron Mgon-po rnam-rgyal and his descendants Tibet lost a bulwark against Chinese invaders.

Nag-ron Mgon-po rnam-rgyal's history does not end there. Before Mgon-po rnam-rgyal's death, the IVth Rdzogs-chen Rin-po-che declared that as soon as Nag-sked died the Sa-skyia gon-ma must be notified and offerings must be made in his name in Sa-skyia itself. The Rdzogs-chen Rin-po-che had foreseen a relationship between Nag-ron Mgon-po rnam-rgyal and Sa-skyia. It was a popular belief in and around Nag-ron that soon after Nag-sked A-mgon died Rdzogs-chen Rin-po-che also died a natural death.⁸⁴ Still later His Holiness Drag-sul 'phrin-las rin-chen (1871-1936) of Sa-skyia Sgrol-ma pho-bran had frequent visions that Nag-sked's spirit was to be included among the guardian deities of Sa-skyia. Subsequently his spirit was included among the assistant deities of Gnod-sbyin tsi-dmar and was named Rdo-rje drag-btsan. From the second month of 1888 masks of this spirit were made and included in the 'chams dances of *Tsi-dmar gtor-bzlog zab-gsol*.⁸⁵ Likewise, at the behest of Spom-mda' Ni-ma rgyal-

82 Compare John C. Huntington, "Iconography of evil deities from Tibet," in *Studies in Indo-Asian Art and Culture*, vol. III (1974), p. 55.

83 Mkhan-po Mkhas-grub Rin-po-che.

84 Oral communication by H.H. Sa-skyia Khri-'dzin on 27 June 1982; A-brtan and Rgya-ri.

85 About Rdo-rje drag-btsan see the *Autobiography of H.H. Drag-sul-'phrin-las-rin-chen*, (Rajpur: Sakya Center, 1974), Vol.

mtshan (d. 1922) Drag-sul 'phrin-las rin-chen even wrote a short prayer in Mgon-po-rnam-rgyal's name, which is still invoked in prayer, particularly by the Sgrol-ma pho-bran.⁸⁶

The impact of Mgon-po rnam-rgyal's rule

With the arrival of Nag-sked Mgon-po rnam-rgyal an age of violence began in Khams, whose people had to spend the greater part of their lives at war. Their ideas and values were also dominated by warlike ideals of strength and valor. In Nag-ron, for instance, all males from sixteen or eighteen years of age up to the age of sixty spent much of their lives fighting, their martial spirit living on even after the battles ended. Because of Nag-ron's incessant expeditions in such provinces of Khams as Li-than and Cha-'phren, people were driven out of their original dwelling places and were left without permanent residence. They migrated from one place to another engaging in looting and killing. A lasting legacy to the people of Khams was a change in hair style. A particular Nag-ron style, called *btags-skra*, came into fashion: it is a sort of wig made of yak-hair plaited with thin wires and adorned with rings, ivory thumb rings and big red tassles. It was believed that this would prevent injury to the head from sword blows. In some parts of Khams the style of wearing the *phyu-pa* (*chu-pa*) girdle also changed and most copied the Nag-ron style.⁸⁷

After the betrayal of Nag-sked by the Tibetan Government and his subsequent death, the people of Khams lost faith in the Central Tibetans. Nag-ron Mgon-po rnam-rgyal's rule had had the positive effect of uniting many provinces of Khams, including Rgyal-than, to resist any invader. Unfortunately that unity was lost after his death, leaving Tibet open to the last incursions of the dying Manchu dynasty which ultimately reached even Lhasa.

86 I, pp. 141, 421, 609, 629, 755, and Vol. II, pp. 447, 793.
Written communication from H.H. Sa-skya Khri-'dzin, 15 May 1982.

87 Oral communication from Dpal-spuñ phyag-mdzod Tshe-dbañ nor-bu.

**WHOSE GAME?
RECORDS OF THE INDIA OFFICE CONCERNING
EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE SIMLA CONFERENCE**

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I. Introduction

When the plenipotentiaries from Tibet, Great Britain and the Republic of China gathered in Simla in October of 1913 to present their proposals and counter-proposals for a tripartite agreement, they did so as a result of a series of events and negotiations that took place during the three years preceding the conference. This paper covers this period, from 1911, immediately before the establishment of the Republic of China, to the Simla Convention in 1913. The most complete set of available documents about this period are kept at the India Office Library in London; this paper restricts its scope to a survey of these records, contained in the Political and Secret files of the India Office.

II. Emergence of new British and Chinese policies

A direct consequence of the Chinese Revolution of 1911 was the loss of control over Tibet, which under the Manchus had been established by General Chao Erh-feng. The latter's troops had marched into Lhasa in February of 1910 and Tibet had for the first time in history been subjected to an occupation by Chinese armies.¹

¹ An interesting survey of the limits of Chao Erh-feng's effective administration in the Marches of Eastern Tibet between 1906 and 1911 is found in a memorandum drawn up by H.B.M.'s Consul General in Ch'eng-tu, Harold Porter (enclosed in letter from H. Porter to Sir John Jordan, British Minister in Peking, dd. 26.11.1912, in L/P&S/10/340). See also extracts from a book by ex-Warden of the Marches Gen. Fu Shung-mu, *History of the*

The Dalai Lama had fled to India and was in fact "deposed" by the Emperor, a measure wholly ignored by the Tibetans and thus to them of little consequence.² Backed by the Emperor, Chao managed to invade Tibet and establish full control over the affairs of Tibet.³

The Dalai Lama and his Ministers, in exile in India, appealed numerous times to the British for political and diplomatic support.⁴ The British attitude was surprisingly passive and somewhat ambiguous. On the surface the British were neutral, claiming to recognize only the de facto authority in Tibet.⁵ On the other hand the

Creation of Hsi Kang Province, which are enclosed in a letter from J. Jordan to Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary, dd. 2.4.1913, in L/P&S/10/149. [For the abbreviations used in this paper, see p. 230.]

² In a letter to the Viceroy of India the Tibetan Ministers and the National Assembly reviewed the origin of the Imperial title given to the Dalai Lama by the Shun-chih Emperor. At that time the Dalai Lama also awarded the Emperor the title "Celestial Emperor Manjushri Incarnate." Both titles were complimentary acts expressing high regard for one another, and neither leader's position depended on the award of a title from the other. "Deposing the Dalai Lama," the letter says, "is as if the Dalai Lama would depose the Emperor by withdrawing the usual title of 'Celestial Emperor Incarnate'" (L/P&S/10/147). It is enclosed in a letter from C. Bell to the Sec. of Gov't of India in the Foreign Dep't. dd. 10.5.1910.

³ See, for example, Tel. from Viceroy to Sec. of State, dd. 12.3.1910, L/P&S/10/38; and letters from Capt. J.L.R. Weir (Brit. Trade Agent in Gyantse) dd. 3.6.1910, and from D. McDonald (British Trade Agent in Yatung) dd. 8.6.1910, in L/P&S/10/147. See also letter from the Under Sec. of State, F.O. (W. Langley), to the Under Sec. of State, I.O., dd. 13.1.1912, in L/P&S/10/265.

⁴ See the letters of H.H. the Dalai Lama to the King Emperor (whom he proposed to visit personally), and to Sir Edward Grey and Lord Morley, enclosed in letters from Viceroy and others to the Earl of Crewe (Sec. of State for India), dd. 15.12.1910, in L/P&S/10/147. See also Tel. from Bell to For. Dep't, Simla, dd. 17.6.1910, in L/P&S/10/147.

⁵ Tel. from Sec. of State for India to Viceroy, dd. 4.5.1910, "...Dalai Lama should now be definitely informed that His Majesty's Government cannot interfere between them and the Chinese

Government of India was deeply concerned about the developments in Tibet, which endangered the safety of India's northern borders.⁶ In the words of the Foreign Office, the Government of India

...attached particular importance to the maintenance of an effective Tibetan Government, since they considered that the disappearance of such a government would be likely to complicate relations between China and British India, and between China and Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim...

where they had a special interest.⁷ Moreover the British considered the interference of China in Tibet's internal affairs a breach of the 1904, 1906, and 1908 treaties they had concluded with both powers.⁸ Thus the British Minister in Peking was ordered on several occasions to deliver strong protests at the Imperial Court.⁹ The replies always contained denials of any intention to alter the status quo, to interfere in Tibet's internal affairs, or to convert Tibet into a

Government..." L/P&S/10/147. Using this principle, the Foreign Secretary had even sent instructions to stop the Dalai Lama from returning to Tibet, should he attempt to do so against the wishes of the Chinese: Tel. from C. Bell to For. Sec. of Gov't. of India, dd. 23.7.1910, in L/P&S/10/147. In fact the Chinese were asking the Dalai Lama to return on condition that he relinquish the leadership. See draft letter from R. Ritchie to Viceroy, dd. 14.7.1910, and from Viceroy, 8.8.1910, in L/P&S/10/147; Letter from M. Muller (Brit. Chargé d'Affaires in Peking) to E. Grey, dd. 11.8.1910, in L/P&S/10/149. The Dalai Lama declined to return unless he would be in a position to exercise his spiritual and temporal powers. Tel. from Viceroy, dd. 22.8.1910, in L/P&S/10/147.

⁶ Letter from Under Sec. of State F.O. to Under Sec. of State I.O., *supra* Note 3.

⁷ *Idem*.

⁸ Tel. from Viceroy to Sec. of State, dd. 12.3.1910, L/P&S/10/138. The Convention of 1904 recognized the Tibetan Government, and Art. 1 of the 1906 Convention (Brit. & China) binds the Chinese Government thereto. One of the most significant violations, therefore, was China's replacement of the Tibetan Government by its own administration.

⁹ *Supra* note 6.

province of China.¹⁰

With the fall of the Manchu Empire and the establishment of the Chinese Republic, the situation changed. The Chinese troops stationed in Tibet mutinied, were attacked by Tibetans, and surrendered.¹¹ Tibetans once again took control of their country. Despite the total loss of Chinese authority in Tibet, one of the first decisions taken by the Conference of Imperialist and Revolutionary Representatives sitting in Shanghai was that China's National Assembly should include delegates from Tibet, Manchuria, Mongolia, and Turkestan.¹² It was clear from the beginning that China's Tibet policy was expansionistic. It was also complicated, however, because it was being made at two distinct levels: the Central Government and the provincial Szechuan Government. The Szechuan governors were prepared to make every sacrifice in the Province's power to regain the western "dependency." In a telegram to President Yuan Shih-k'ai, the two military governors, Yin Ch'ang-heng and Chang P'ei-chüeh, emphasized the urgency of recovering control of Tibet and establishing a military presence there.¹³

Tibet is a buttress on our national frontiers—the hand, as it were, which protects the face—and its prosperity or otherwise is of the most vital importance to China.¹⁴

Referring to the British, the governors then wrote:

Tibet has a powerful neighbor and the foreign peril draws rapidly closer and becomes more urgent.¹⁵

At the Central Government level the Tibet policy emerged as part of a grand design, expressed by the President on 21 April 1912:

¹⁰ Idem. Significantly, the written replies were not as explicit.

¹¹ See Tel. from Viceroy, dd. 21.3.1912; Tel. from Yin Ch'ang-heng and Chang P'ei-chüeh to Yuan Shih-k'ai, dd. 5.4.1912, enclosed in letter from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 27.4.1912; also F.O. Memorandum to Count Beckendorff (Russian Minister), dd. 25.6.1912, in L/P&S/10/265.

¹² *Supra* note 6. Held on 30th December 1911.

¹³ Tel. from Yin Ch'ang-heng and Chang Pe'i-chüeh, *supra* note 11.

¹⁴ Idem.

¹⁵ Idem.

Now that the five races [Chinese, Manchus, Mongols, Turks, and Tibetans—author] are joined in democratic union, the lands comprized within the confines of Mongolia, Tibet, and Turkestan all become part of the territory of the Republic of China, and the races inhabiting these lands are equally citizens of the Republic of China... Mongolia, Tibet, and Turkestan are regarded as on equal footing with provinces of China proper. For the future all administrative matters in connection with these territories will come within the sphere of internal administration.¹⁶

By this order all the old machinery for the government of the “dependencies” was therefore also abolished, and its tasks taken over by the Ministry of the Interior.¹⁷ This and similar policy declarations triggered strong reactions from the Government of India and the British Government, who also feared a “foreign peril,” but in the form of a strong Chinese presence on their borders. On May 24th the British Minister, Sir John Jordan, formally protested the Presidential order. Pointing out that Tibet had never been directly administered by China, he accused the Republic of having

...arrogated to itself a position in Tibet which conflicted with the international obligations it had inherited from the Manchus and with the autonomy which the country had always enjoyed.¹⁸

The British point of view was best expressed by the Viceroy of India, Lord Hardinge of Penhurst:

Tibet has always been regarded as an autonomous state under the suzerainty of China, and our treaties and trade regulations provide for a Tibetan administration, which would certainly disappear if [the] country was converted into a Chinese province. We have always held that Tibet was not part of China proper, a view which has been taken by the

¹⁶ Translation of Presidential Order of 21 April 1912, enclosed in letter from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 27.4.1912, in L/P&S/10/265.

¹⁷ Idem.

¹⁸ Letter from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 6.6.1912, in L/P&S/10/265.

Chinese themselves... and is supported by the fact that Chinese treaties with foreign powers are not valid in Tibet.¹⁹

The Viceroy also describes the policy objectives of the Government of India:

British interests (including special rights and privileges in Tibet of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, which we are pledged to defend), would best be served by opposing inclusion of Tibet in China proper. The effect in Tibet would, we believe, be wholly good, especially if [the] Dalai Lama, who is very grateful for our hospitality and much impressed with British power and justice, manages to return and re-establish himself. In any case [the] geographical position of Tibet renders it absolutely necessary [that the] country should continue [to be] kept in the state of political isolation.²⁰

British fears were heightened when, in June of 1912, the vanguard of an expeditionary force left Ch'eng-tu for the Tibetan border, with the declared intent to subdue Tibet and safeguard Szechuan's western borders.²¹ The President explained to Sir John Jordan that this campaign was a purely local affair, not to be taken seriously.²² But even while he was assuring the British that he would do his best to check the enthusiasm in Szechuan, it became clear that the expedition was operating under his own orders.²³

In Tibet itself, all the Chinese authority having ceased,²⁴ the Dalai Lama returned,²⁵ ordered the expulsion of remaining Chinese

¹⁹ Tel. from Viceroy, dd. 23.3.1912, L/P&S/10/265.

²⁰ Idem.

²¹ Tels. from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 8.6.1912 and 18.6.1912, in L/P&S/10/265. The Russian interest in Mongolia made the situation seem all the more pressing to the British. See the Minute of the I.O., prepared in response to letter from the F.O. to the I.O., dd. 13.1.1912, in L/P&S/10/365.

²² Tel. from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 26.6.1912, in L/P&S/10/265.

²³ Idem. See also Tel. from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 19.6.1912, in L/P&S/10/265.

²⁴ Tel. from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 24.5.1912, in L/P&S/10/265.

²⁵ Memorandum communicated to Count Beckendorff by the F.O., dd. 25.6.1912, in L/P&S/10/265. Upon the Dalai Lama's

troops and officials, and suspended all ties with China.²⁶ The soldiers were eventually sent back to China via India.²⁷ Tibet's resolve not to permit any Chinese to enter the country until their differences were resolved was made more effective by the British refusal to allow any communication and travel from China to Tibet via India.²⁸

Thus it was that British and Chinese fears clashed over Tibet. British protest at China's Tibet policy continued, and so did the formal denials on the part of the Chinese of having any intention of interfering in Tibet's affairs or of using force against that country. The apparent contradictions between these reassuring statements and the actions of the Chinese prompted the British both to define their position on the Tibetan question more clearly and to demand written assurances in the form of a bilateral agreement from China. That this was of the greatest importance to the British Government is evidenced by the fact that they made China's compliance a condition for the recognition of the new Republic by Britain.²⁹ One incident which was typical of British-Chinese communications concerning Tibet and which accentuated the urgency of reaching an agreement is worth mentioning.

On 23 June 1912 Yuan Shih-k'ai explained to the British Minister in Peking, Sir John Jordan, that an expedition was being sent to the western border of Szechuan for the sole purpose of investigating some frontier problems.³⁰ On August 14 the Vice-

departure from India the British expressed to him the desire of the Government to see the internal autonomy of Tibet under Chinese Suzerainty maintained without Chinese interference, so long as treaty obligations were duly performed and cordial relations preserved between Tibet and India. The Dalai Lama arrived in Lhasa in January of 1913.

26 See Sir Charles Bell, *Tibet Past and Present* (Oxford, 1968 repr.), p. 148.

27 See H.E. Richardson, *A Short History of Tibet* (New York, 1962), p. 102. The soldiers were eventually repatriated through the good services of the Nepalese Vakil in Lhasa and the British authorities.

28 Tel. from E. Grey to J. Jordan, 20.6.1912, in L/P&S/10/265.

29 Tel. from E. Grey to J. Jordan, dd. 10.4.1912, and from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 12.4.1912, in L/P&S/10/265.

30 Minutes of the meeting between Sir J. Jordan and the President of the Republic of China, 23 June 1912; enclosed in a letter from

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. W.W. Yen, informed Sir John under presidential instruction that the President sanctioned an immediate advance into Tibet in view of the perilous position of the Chinese garrison still in Tibet.^{3 1} Three days later, the President himself dismissed Dr. Yen's statements as a misunderstanding. He hastened to add, however, that had such an advance been ordered it could not have been regarded as a violation of existing obligations.^{3 2}

Finally on August 17 the British Minister handed the *Wai-chiao pu* (the Foreign Ministry) a carefully worded memorandum which was to become the basis for all subsequent discussion.^{3 3} The first clause stipulated:

1. His Majesty's Government, while they have formally recognized the "suzerain rights" of China in Tibet, have never recognised and are not prepared to recognise the right of China to intervene actively in the internal administration of Tibet....^{3 4}

The second clause rejected the presidential decree of April 21 whereby Tibet was declared to be on equal footing with China's provinces. The third recognized China's right to station a representative with escort in Lhasa. The conclusion of a written agreement on these lines was then declared to be a condition precedent to extending Britain's recognition to the Chinese Republic. Also all communications with Tibet via India were declared absolutely

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- 31 J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 26.6.1912, in L/P&S/10/265.
Tel. and letter from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 14 and 17.8.1912 respectively, in L/P&S/10/265.
- 32 Letter from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 17.8.1912, in L/P&S/10/265.
- 33 This memorandum is hereinafter referred to as the "17 August memorandum." The full text is contained as enclosure I, in the letter from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 17.8.1912.
- 34 The original draft (I.O., 11.7.1912), was slightly modified by Sir Edward Grey. The first clause had originally ended with: "...and are not prepared to recognise Chinese sovereignty over that country." Sir Edward wanted to avoid controversy as to the difference between sovereignty and suzerainty at this stage (letter from the F.O. to the I.O., dd. 15.8.1912, in L/P&S/10/265).

closed pending the conclusion of the agreement.³⁵

III. From bilateral to trilateral participation

Following the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet Yuan Shih-k'ai issued an order restoring to the Dalai Lama the title which the Emperor had withdrawn in 1910.³⁶ Presumably in an effort to save face, he claimed that he had restored the title in response to a petition and declaration of loyalty sent by the Dalai Lama.³⁷ According to Tibetan sources the Dalai Lama not only never sent such a petition, but also refused to accept this "restoration of title."³⁸

Despite the suspension of communications between China and Tibet via India, the Chinese authorities repeatedly tried to send special missions to Tibet via this route in the hope of initiating some direct negotiations with the Tibetans and gaining a foothold there. The official purpose of one such attempted mission was to invest the Dalai Lama with his newly restored title.³⁹ An earlier mission was sent to "announce and explain the Republic and ask Tibet to accept it."⁴⁰ Later a "commissioner for investigation" was appointed to conduct investigations in Tibet in a conciliatory spirit.⁴¹ Similar

³⁵ *Supra* note 33.

³⁶ See the Order from the President in the *Government Gazette* of 28 October 1912, and enclosed in letter from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 4.11.1912, in L/P&S/10/147. See also tel. from the President to the Dalai Lama, dd. 26.10.1912, published in *Kuo min pao* on the same day. Translation enclosed in letter from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 14.12.1912. Also tel. from Bureau of Tibetan and Mongolian Affairs to the Dalai Lama, dd. 27.11.1912, enclosed in a letter from B.J. Gould to Sec. of the Gov't of India, dd. 30.11.1912, in L/P&S/10/147.

³⁷ *Idem.* The Order published in the *Gazette* referred to the "former Dalai Lama" being moved with a feeling of deep attachment to the mother country.

³⁸ Sir Charles Bell, *Portrait of the Dalai Lama* (London, 1946), p. 135; H.E. Richardson, *A Short History*, p. 105.

³⁹ Tel. from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 28.11.1912, in L/P&S/10/147.

⁴⁰ Minute paper, Secret Dep't, dd. 28.11.1912 (Reg. 4561), in L/P&S/10/147.

⁴¹ *Government Gazette*, 27 October 1912 and 15 November 1912,

attempts at entering Tibet under various pretenses were made by Yang Fen, a Chinese official left in India, presumably by the first, unsuccessful mission. The patience of the Chinese running low, the attempts to enter the country were soon accompanied by threats of further invasion in the east.^{4 2} Already by October Chinese forces had advanced at least as far as Litang and were consolidating positions in the Zayul district of Tibet.^{4 3} In December 1912, when the Chinese had not yet replied to the British memorandum of August 17, Sir Edward Grey instructed Sir John Jordan to press for an immediate reply. Should it not be forthcoming, he was then to issue a stern warning that:

His Majesty's Government will regard the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 as no longer holding good, and will hold themselves free to enter into direct negotiations with Tibet. Moreover, should Chinese troops enter Tibet, they would be prepared to give active assistance to the Tibetans in resisting their advance and in establishing and maintaining Tibetan independence.^{4 4}

The warning was never issued however. Precisely at the time Sir John received his instructions, the *Wai-chiao pu* voluntarily invited a discussion of the subject and handed him a written reply.^{4 5} Basically the Chinese took the view that the 1906 Anglo-Chinese Convention, Article 2, recognized China's exclusive right to intervene in the internal affairs of Tibet. Also they felt no need for a new agreement, as the existing treaties were satisfactory.^{4 6} In January, when the

in L/P&S/10/147. (The former is enclosed in a letter from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 30.10.1912.)

42 Tel. from B.J. Gould to Foreign Dep't, Simla, dd. 8.11.1912; Telegram from Yang Fen to the Dalai Lama (from Kalimpong), dd. 29.11.1912, enclosed in letter from B.J. Gould to Foreign Dep't, Gov't of India, dd. 30.11.1912, in L/P&S/10/147.

43 Letter from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 28.10.1912; Idem, dd. 4.11.1912, in L/P&S/10/147.

44 Tel. from E. Grey to J. Jordan, dd. 12.12.1912, L/P&S/10/147.

45 Letter from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 16.12.1912, L/P&S/10/340.

46 Memorandum from the *Wai-chiao pu* to His Majesty's Minister, 23.12.1912, enclosed in a letter from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 26.12.1912; see also the letter from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd.

discussion was resumed, Sir John told the Chinese that

His Majesty's Government were willing to see China in her old position [in Tibet] living as a peaceful neighbor to [the] Indian Empire, but it must be clearly understood that there would be no interference with the administration of the country.⁴⁷

Sir John stressed the

...extremely advantageous nature of the terms now being offered China. His Majesty's Government were contemplating the reestablishment of China's former position in Tibet at a moment when both position and authority had been completely effaced.⁴⁸

While Tibet's future was thus being bartered, the Dalai Lama, upon his return to Lhasa, issued a proclamation declaring Tibet's independence.⁴⁹ Soon after, a Tibetan-Mongolian treaty was concluded in Urga (January 1913). The contracting parties thereby recognized one another's independence from China and pledged mutual assistance.⁵⁰ The Dalai Lama urged the withdrawal of Chinese troops in East Tibet, where they had occupied Chamdo and were threatening the rest of Khams.⁵¹ He also informed the Chinese

47 16.12.1912, in L/P&S/10/340.

48 Letter from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 4.2.1913; see also tel. from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 31.1.1913, in L/P&S/10/340.

49 Idem.

50 The full text can be found translated in T.W.D. Shakabpa, *Tibet, a Political History* (New Haven, 1967), p. 246. This declaration is also referred to in the *China Handbook*, China Ministry of Information. See, e.g., the 1937-47 issue, p. 30, the 1950 issue, p. 66, or the 1952-53 issue, p. 600.

51 Tel. from Sir G. Buchanan to Sir E. Grey (from St. Petersburg), dd. 17.1.1913, in L/P&S/10/149. The treaty was signed by Dorjeeff in the name of the Dalai Lama, although there remains doubt as to the authenticity of his authority to do so. For a text of this treaty, see Sir Ch. Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, pp. 304 & 305.

51 Letter from the Dalai Lama to the Political Officer in Sikkim, quoted in Tel. from Viceroy, dd. 9.3.1913, in L/P&S/10/149.

President that, although Chinese delegates would not be allowed to enter Tibet, he was willing to send a representative to Darjeeling, India, to discuss matters there with a Chinese delegate; for this he would invoke the assistance of the British.^{5 2} Thus it was that the seed for the tripartite conference was planted. It was soon taken up by Sir Edward Grey, who came to realize that the Tibetans might resent the conclusion, without previous reference to them, of an agreement on the lines of the British proposal "as curtailing the independence which they have already gained by their own efforts."^{5 3}

Sir John Jordan was concerned that the British might be excluded from an agreement and favored the conclusion of a tripartite agreement. This should include a guarantee against encroachment by China on Tibet's eastern border on the one hand and allow the stationing of a Chinese Amban in Lhasa on the other.^{5 4} The Chinese Government predictably disliked the suggested Tibetan participation in the Sino-British talks. Their strategy had been, and still was, to settle the issue of Tibet separately with Tibet and with Britain, playing the one against the other.^{5 5}

52 Idem. Also telegrams from Viceroy, dd. 28.2.1913 and 1.5.1913, in L/P&S/10/340.

53 Tel. from E. Grey to J. Jordan, dd. 3.3.1913, in L/P&S/10/340.

54 Tel. from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 6.3.1913; see also tels. from E. Grey to J. Jordan, dd. 5.4.1913, and from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 10.4.1913, L/P&S/10/340. (Initially the Government of India favored British participation in the negotiations, but not as signatory, fearing added responsibilities. See letter from W. Langley to I.O., dd. 17.3.1913, in L/P&S/10/340.) The decision to invite China and Tibet to a tripartite conference in India was finally taken by the F.O. See tel. from E. Grey to J. Jordan, dd. 23.5.1913, in L/P&S/10/340.

55 Tel. from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 26.5.1913, in L/P&S/10/340; letter from J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 29.5.1913, in L/P&S/10/341. Later the question of equal status of the Tibetan representative was resisted by China. See letter from B. Alston to E. Grey, dd. 2.6.1913, and tel. from E. Grey to B. Alston (Chargé d'Affaires in Peking), dd. 11.7.1913, in L/P&S/10/341. The Chinese did finally accept the equal status of all plenipotentiaries as well as the fact that the Tibetan delegate represented the whole of Tibet, not just Anterior Tibet. See intercepted Tel. from Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Lu

Incidentally, the very same day that this proposal was handed to the Chinese (May 26) the *Government Gazette* had published a Presidential Order advancing the most extravagant pretensions in regard to the Tibet-China border yet made, amounting to an official inclusion of the greater portion of Tibet within China's boundaries.^{5 6}

IV. Persistent Chinese attempts to avoid tripartite conference

While the British and Chinese had been arguing and negotiating the terms for a future agreement concerning Tibet and while plans were being made for a conference, the Chinese were actively and secretly doing their utmost to conclude a separate agreement with Tibet. Various Chinese officials, including the President, repeatedly urged the Tibetan government to accept a Chinese negotiator at Lhasa, to send a Tibetan delegate to China, or to negotiate at Chamdo.^{5 7} The Tibetans however insisted on the negotiations taking place in India, as they feared intimidation unless there was a British presence.^{5 8} In April 1913 the Chinese adopted a strategy that combined an openly conciliatory attitude towards Tibet with subversive activities there, including advances in Eastern Tibet.^{5 9}

Hsien-chi, dd. 29.10.1913, in L/P&S/10/393.

56 Letter of J. Jordan to E. Grey, dd. 29.5.1913, and enclosure 2 in No. I (Presidential Order issued on 25 May), in L/P&S/10/341. Basically the order extended the border China claimed to Chiangta, about 275 miles west of Chamdo and 125 miles east of Lhasa.

57 General Chung Ying, who had been secretly instructed to delay his departure from Tibet when all troops were being expelled, attempted to convince the Tibetans. Tel. from Viceroy, dd. 23.2.1913, and letter from T.W. Holderness, I.O. to the F.O., dd. 26.2.1913, in L/P&S/10/340. The President proposed a meeting in Chamdo. See tel. from Viceroy to London, 9.3.1913, in L/P&S/10/149.

58 Letter from T.W. Holderness to F.O., *supra* note 57.

59 The strategy was originally proposed by Lu Hsien-chi, a Chinese agent in Calcutta, who, it turned out, had much influence on China's Tibet policy. Tel. from Viceroy, dd. 30.4.1913, in L/P&S/10/340. See also intercepted tel. from Lu Hsien-chi to President and Cabinet, dd. 6.6.1913, in L/P&S/10/393. For the bribery and other costs incurred for his activities Lu had asked for and received 500,000 dollars from the President. See

This strategy envisaged separate settlements with the British and the Tibetans.

Initially the Chinese had hoped the Dalai Lama could be induced to cooperate actively in establishing Chinese authority in Tibet.⁶⁰ This hope must have been based on the assumption that it was not the Dalai Lama but only the Kashag (Cabinet) members who were opposed to a Chinese presence in Tibet.⁶¹ However the strategy was also based on an arrogant refusal to recognize the total loss of Chinese control and even influence in Tibet. This attitude is evident from Lu Hsien-chi's correspondence with the President regarding the latter's appointment of Lu to the post of "Administrator of Tibet";⁶² in particular Lu's request to the President to direct the Dalai Lama to send officials to escort him to Lhasa (on which see the subsequent telegram from the President to the Dalai Lama).⁶³ Lu writes:

If the Dalai Lama disobeys the order, we can settle the question by force of arms.⁶⁴

The Tibetans consistently refused to consider any Chinese proposals before their demands for a withdrawal from East Tibet and negotiations in India were met.⁶⁵

Typical of the Chinese politics during the last months before the Convention were Yuan Shih-k'ai's simultaneous communications to the British and the Tibetans on June 4. To the British Minister the

intercepted tel. from Lu Hsien-chi to President and Cabinet, dd. 13.5.1913, in L/P&S/10/393. Regarding the military exploits, see intercepted tel. from Lu Hsien-chi to the President and Cabinet, dd. 9.6.1913, in L/P&S/10/393.

60 Tel. from Viceroy to London, dd. 30.4.1913, in L/P&S/10/340.

61 See intercepted tels. from Lu Hsien-chi to the President and Cabinet, dd. 13.5.1913 and 23.6.1913, and to Liang Yen-sun, dd. 28.5.1913, in L/P&S/10/393.

62 Intercepted tel. from Lu Hsien-chi to the President and Cabinet, dd. 13.5.1913, in L/P&S/10/393.

63 Intercepted tel. from President to Lu Hsien-chi, dd. 18.5.1913, for transmission to the Dalai Lama, in L/P&S/10/393.

64 *Supra* note 62.

65 Tel. from the Ministry of the Interior and the Heads of the Administration in Tibet to Lu Hsien-chi, dd. 19.5.1913, and tel. from the Dalai Lama to same, dd. 2.6.1913, in L/P&S/10/393. See also tel. from Viceroy, dd. 18.6.1913, in L/P&S/10/341.

President formally agreed that China would take part in the tripartite convention in India. He sent a telegram on the same day to the Dalai Lama, urging him not to send representatives to take part in the Convention.⁶⁶ In another such incident Ivan Chen (Chen I-fan) was appointed "Commissioner for the Pacification of Tibet," a term classed among those used for appointments to provinces of China, after he had been selected to be the Chinese plenipotentiary to the Conference.⁶⁷ The British reacted strongly, threatening to withdraw their invitation to the conference unless the appointment of Ivan Chen was reversed.⁶⁸ The Peking Government also kept the British confused about their military ventures against Tibet: the British Minister was shown conflicting secret presidential orders to the Szechuan and Yunnan troops. Where the orders were clearly to advance further into Tibetan territory the President dismissed them as a mistake at the hand of the drafters.⁶⁹

At the end of May ten Tibetans were "elected" to the Chinese National Assembly by the Bureau of Tibetan and Mongolian Affairs.⁷⁰ Lu Hsien-chi also asked Lochen Shatra, the Tibetan plenipotentiary, to accept an appointment to this Assembly, a request the latter refused.⁷¹ As Lochen Shatra was already on his way to India, Lu once again tried to persuade him to deal directly with him and accept China's demands or else return to Tibet.⁷² In a last

66 India Office Minute Paper, dd. 13.6.1913 (reg. 2331), in L/P&S/10/341.

67 Tel. from B. Alston to E. Grey, dd. 15.6.1913, in L/P&S/10/149.

68 Tel. from E. Grey to Alston, dd. 19 June 1913, in L/P&S/10/149. See also letter from B. Alston to E. Grey dd. 30.6.1913, and tel. from E. Grey to B. Alston, dd. 11.7.1913, in L/P&S/10/341; and the memorandum from the *Wai-chiao pu* to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, dd. 5.7.1913, in L/P&S/10/149.

69 Presidential Order, issued on 2.6.1913, to Yin Tutu at Litang, enclosed in a letter from B. Alston to E. Grey, dd. 30.6.1913, and this letter, in L/P&S/10/341.

70 Letter from B. Alston to E. Grey, dd. 2.7.1913, in L/P&S/10/341.

71 Tel. from Viceroy (quoting tel. from Ch. Bell, dd. 10.8.1913) dd. 13.8.1913, in L/P&S/10/341.

72 Intercepted tel. from Lu Hsien-chi to President and Cabinet, dd. 23.6.1913; Lu also secretly bought over some of Lochen's retinue, hoping they would persuade him to comply with this wishes. Intercepted tel. from Lu Hsien-chi to Cabinet, dd.

attempt at securing direct negotiations with only the Tibetans at Chamdo, the Chinese threatened the Dalai Lama with invasion.^{7 3}

V. Conclusion

All attempts at boycotting the tripartite conference having failed, the Chinese finally sent Ivan Chen to join Sir Henry McMahon and Lochen Shatra in Simla, for fear that the latter might conclude a treaty without the Chinese. It seemed that a tripartite agreement on the status and boundaries of Tibet might after all be in sight. Yet to this day the Chinese have refused to accept the Simla Convention. From the above survey it seems that the Chinese in fact never intended to be party to the tripartite agreement; therefore it is not surprising that they should not accept its outcome. What strikes the researcher most about this brief period of history is the uncompromisingly imperialistic attitude of both China and Great Britain in their deliberations over the fate of a third country, Tibet.

Abbreviations

Brit.	British
dd.	Dated
Dep't	Department
F.O.	Foreign Office
Gov't	Government
I.O.	India Office
L/P&S	Political and Secret files, India Office Library, London
Repr.	Reprint
Tel.	Telegram

⁷³ 14.9.1913, in L/P&S/10/393.
See intercepted tel. from Lu Hsien-chi to President and Cabinet and others, dd. 12.8.1913, L/P&S/10/393; Tels. from Viceroy, dd. 25.8.1913, in L/P&S/10/341, and 30.8.1913, in L/P&S/10/342.

PART FOUR
RELIGIOUS LIFE AND THOUGHT

BELIEF IN KARMA AND ITS SOCIAL RAMIFICATIONS IN SĀMSĀRA

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I

The purpose of this paper is to present some preliminary socio-anthropological observations on the nature of the relationship between belief in the Buddhist theory of karma-and-rebirth and samsāra (i.e. life as it is lived ordinarily) in the traditional Tibetan context, whether in pre-1959 Tibet or in exile. The study of the role of religious beliefs and ethical values in human social behavior, both at the individual and societal levels, has been an important topic in the social sciences. However, although some important theoretical work has been done on the role here of Buddhism in general, very little has been done in the traditional Tibetan context, particularly with a sociological approach.¹

The scope of the present paper is limited: I delineate one major Buddhist concept, the belief in karma and the rationale behind it, attempting to identify and assess (1) some of its direct ramifications in socio-cultural and psychological spheres of traditional Tibetan life, and (2) its possible indirect role in social action in other non-religious spheres of traditional Tibetan life.

This paper is not a philosophical or religious discussion of the nature of karma-and-rebirth theory, but concerns its social and psychological ramifications in the lives of ordinary Tibetan Buddhists. A general distinction no doubt exists between formal Buddhist

¹ Two major works on the anthropology of Tibetan Buddhism are Ortner (1978) and Sierksma (1966). Although Ortner's *Sherpa's through their Rituals* deals only with Buddhism in Sherpa society, much of her work is applicable to Buddhism in traditional Tibetan society; her book is no doubt an important theoretical work. Also, Sierksma's book, although mainly a psychological perspective, has theoretical implications for the study of Tibetan Buddhism and traditional Tibetan society.

philosophy and what might be termed “popular Buddhism,” which Redfield defines as “great tradition” and “little tradition” respectively.² In the traditional context, the complex doctrine of formal Buddhist philosophy was³ inaccessible to ordinary believers. Aside from its complexity, several other factors added to this inaccessibility. First, literacy was almost entirely confined to members of the clergy and the nobility. Second, there was the formal tradition among Buddhist teachers to make teachings inaccessible to the “uninitiated.”⁴ And third, the average person, as everywhere else in the world, was more preoccupied with daily livelihood and so did not have the necessary leisure to grapple with matters of formal religious philosophy in depth.

Yet even ordinary Tibetan Buddhists were familiar with and had some understanding of major Buddhist tenets in their orthodox forms, e.g., the importance of the Buddhist refuge (*skyabs-'gro*), the theory of and belief in karma (*las*) and rebirth (*skye-ba*), and those of nirvāṇa (*myan-'das*) and Buddhahood (*sans-rgyas-kyi-go-'phans*), the ultimate Buddhistic goals which are generally defined as perfect enlightenment and “the extinction of desire, hate and illusion of selfhood.”⁵ Nevertheless, my point is that there is a radical

² See Redfield (1973), pp. 41-42. Two similar terms used by anthropologists are text and context. See Bharati (1981) on this and his brief study of belief in karma and human behavior in the Indian Hindu context. These distinctions roughly correspond to what I delineate as formal Buddhism and popular Buddhism. Further, as detailed in n. 5 below, it is important to recognize that there are many versions of formal Buddhism. We have to determine which are the most commonly understood in popular Buddhism.

³ This paper is largely written in the past tense to accommodate material from pre-1959 traditional Tibet and my 1974 observations in Bodh Gaya, India.

⁴ See Stein (1972), pp. 72, 172, 179.

⁵ Harris (1973), p. 116. The definition of nirvāṇa in this introductory handbook seems to be that most commonly understood by non-Buddhologist Western scholars. There are, however, many definitions used in formal Buddhist philosophy. Perhaps the most radically different view from the one I use is the Mahāyāna/Mādhyamika view. For discussions of these various interpretations, see Sogen (1979:201-203; 279-280), Stcherbatsky (1927:48) and Thurman (1981:15, 18, Appendix). What is most

difference between how Tibetan Buddhists perceived these beliefs and how they practiced them. For example, whereas the formal Buddhist goal is to seek spiritual liberation, the goal of the great majority of Tibetan Buddhists in carrying on religious activities is the attainment of what might be termed saṃsāric goals rather than spiritual liberation. By saṃsāric goals I mean wealth, health, socio-political power and status, and so on. Further, within the saṃsāric goal-oriented motivational framework there are two quite different forces at work, which might be operating side by side or alone in any given social context. One aspect can be seen arising primarily from religious motivation although the end results sought are clearly saṃsāric gains; the other can be seen arising purely out of social motivation, far removed from the original religious motivational basis, although actions might take place within the framework of the religious model. In the section below I attempt to make these points clearer and illustrate how they work.

II

The essence of the theory of karma-and-rebirth is that one's position (i.e. economic, social, etc.) is determined by one's actions in previous lives and that one's actions in this life determine one's position in the next life or lives. This of course implies that there be an ethical code of conduct and this is found in Buddhist definitions of human action in terms of merit (*dge-ba*) or sin (*sdig-pa*). Of all acts considered meritorious in popular Buddhism, the making of gifts is considered to be the most effective and taking life is considered to be the most detrimental. Thus, in general, in order to improve their karma Tibetan Buddhists attempt to pile up merits (*dge-ba bsags-pa*) by

pertinent here is my suggestion that the majority of Tibetan Buddhists adhered to the ideal orthodox view reflected in the quotation here given (i.e. negation of ordinary existence as a path to liberation/salvation). Ortner (1978) and Samuel (1982) both attribute the prevalence of orthodoxy to structural factors. While some points favor such an interpretation (especially in Sherpa society) I believe it is basically incorrect. Space does not allow for detailed discussion here; however, I raise this point because it bears directly on my discussion and analysis of dialectical process entirely in non-social structural terms.

making gifts to monasteries or lamas and to the poor, by lighting lamps before the images of deities, by making pilgrimages or walking around sacred objects and by asking lamas for blessings or charms.⁶

And as Fürer-Haimendorf points out,

The highest expression of this spirit (i.e. "piling up merits") is the giving away of wealth for religious purposes. In the history of Tibet there is ample evidence for the vastness of the gifts and endowments devoted to the establishment or maintenance of temples and monasteries, and the givers range from kings and tribal chieftains to the poorest peasant bringing his measure of grain or lump of butter to the local monastery.⁷

It takes little close scrutiny to see that there was much concern in traditional Tibet with the quest for merits.⁸ This clearly seems to be the outcome of a dialectical process. On the one hand, orthodox Buddhist tenets required that a person be compassionate, non-violent, etc. For example, as briefly mentioned, according to Buddhist values as understood by ordinary Tibetan Buddhists, taking any life is said to be a most demeritorious act. Fürer-Haimendorf (p. 195) points out that "a feeling of guilt accompanies all killing..." but even this is an understatement. Even for the agrarian peasant religion teaches compassion towards all sentient beings; taking a worm's life is considered no less demeritorious than taking the life of a yak. On the other hand, samsāric existence demands that one plough the fields to grow crops for one's survival if nothing else, even if it means killing countless lives beneath the earth, subjecting beasts of burden to untold hardships, etc., as pious Buddhists say. For the average Tibetan Buddhist, therefore, orthodox Buddhist ethical values pose an irreconcilable conflict between life as it is ordinarily lived (the thesis) and a non-indigenous religious ideology (the antithesis) which contradicted samsāric existence. The intense preoccupation with a quest for merit can consequently be seen as one important part of the synthesis which negotiates this contradiction.

⁶ Stein (1972), p. 172.

⁷ Fürer-Haimendorf (1967), p. 196.

⁸ See Ortner, pp. 36-7, for a discussion of merit, demerit, and merit-saving activities in the Sherpa context.

While this dialectical process was originally the outcome of the conflict between a thesis and an antithesis in the traditional Tibetan meta-social realm, it in turn had various and significant sociological implications in traditional life. Although detailed discussion is not within the scope of this paper, two important sociological implications can be seen. First, as noted already, although initial motivation for merit may be religious, the fruits (*'bras-bu*) anticipated from merit-saving are saṃsāric gains rather than spiritual ends. Ortner's study (pp. 110-113) provides some examples of this in Sherpa society; since such detailed ethnographic data is not available from traditional Tibetan society, some examples from personal observations are provided here.⁹

As I look back now, it seems clear that ordinary Tibetan Buddhists sought tangible saṃsāric gains such as health, wealth, social recognition, socio-political status and power, harmonious relationships, etc., in this life or in later lives. If one has these in this life, one may nevertheless engage in merit-saving activities so that one might be fortunate later on. The following are case examples of this.

A. People, both lay and clergy, make remarks like the following about someone who has suffered unusual hardships due to lack of wealth, ill-health, etc.:

Poor thing, what bad karma (*las-ñan*, here referring to the person)! No doubt he must be one who saved no merits in past lives (*tshe-sñon-ma*). Now he is "hit by karmic backlash"! (This is my free translation of the common colloquial expressions *la-gYogs rgyab-pa* and *las-'bras 'phog-pa*.)

B. A person who may be considered very fortunate in terms of wealth, good health, high social position, etc., may be spoken of by the general public as follows:

⁹ In addition to evidence from published sources I incorporate relevant data from field observations I made in Nepal while undertaking research for my doctoral dissertation, and observations from my experience as a native (what I call memory ethnography).

No doubt he is one who has saved much merit (*tshogs-bsags* or *bsod-nams bsags-pa*). How happy he has been in this life! (Happy, *skyid-po*, in the Tibetan context implies both metaphysical and material comfort.)

C. People who felt they had good fortune in this life often give reasons like the following for their merit-saving activities:

This life has been happy for me. I engage in merit-saving activities as much as I can so that I may also have happy lives in the future.

Or their prayers may run as follows:

I have had a happy life in this life. May I meet the Dharma in future lives! May I also be happy in my future lives!

Many such examples can be given but these are sufficient to illustrate that improving one's saṃsāric conditions rather than obtaining spiritual liberation is one primary motive (or incentive) for engaging in the quest for merit-saving activities, particularly the activity of gift-giving.

There is another aspect of merit-saving with yet further sociological implications: even though the purported motive may be the wish to improve one's karma, one's real motive may be the achievement of socio-political status and power, social recognition, etc., not in the next life but right here and now. Here motivation for merit is social oriented and is furthest from religious ideals.¹⁰ In respect to this, since there is so little ethnographic detail available from Tibet, I again present an example from my personal observations.

¹⁰ I think this aspect of religious phenomena lacks in interpretation and is not even considered by Ortner. Although a brief discussion is not within the scope of this paper, I may point out that social and psychological functions of merit-saving activities are not simply due to motivation by an orthodox religious pull or to social-structural pull, but to social recognition, for example. The social benefits of religious observances usually cross-cut or transcend structural, sectarian, and other differences.

In 1974 I was at a gathering of nearly 100,000 Buddhists (mainly Tibetan-speaking) in Bodh Gaya, India, attending the Kālacakra initiation and teachings by the Dalai Lama. Aside from attending the religious sermons, most people were there for merit-saving activities¹¹ such as visiting all the important pilgrimage sites in the area, making offerings to lamas and temples, and giving alms to the poor. The two most apparent and regular merit-saving activities were those of circumambulating the main temple and lighting lamps (some were butter and oil, most were candles). Every morning and evening and late into the night thousands of pilgrims crowded the road ringing the main temple, hurriedly circumambulating. Countless lamps were lighted which flickered like so many stars along the ring road and on the side of the main temple every day and especially at night. During the gathering these two activities aroused great fervor among the devotees. It culminated on an especially auspicious day when from early dawn till late into the night everyone tried his or her best to make as many circumambulations and light as many lamps as possible. The demand for candles was so brisk that all the stores in the area sold out their supplies which had been restocked from Gaya city several times over. After the scarcity of candles began the boxes of them which did turn up always caused a frantic *su-thob* (literally, "who-win") competition among the many devotees who tried to outbuy each other, sometimes even resorting to verbal skirmishes as to who had priority. This was expressed in statements such as, "He arrived (here) before me; I arrived after him and you arrived after me, so let me buy this, please," or simply, "This is mine," countered by comments like, "No, no, he arrived after you, and I arrived before... Please don't talk like that...This should be mine."

The same kind of fervor also prevailed in the circumambulations going on throughout the day. People shortened their lunch and dinner breaks, rushing to the road to circumambulate; they tried to overcome leg-pain and tiredness; they compared and recounted how many candles each lighted or how many circumambulations each had accomplished. At the end of the day one of the most popular topics of conversation among devotees was the number of lamps lighted and circumambulations made by each person. Many expressed quiet satisfaction but others playfully or even seriously boasted about their

¹¹ See Ekvall (1964) for a general discussion concerning some common religious observances for merit-saving by Tibetans; see, for example, pp. 226-250 on circumambulation.

accomplishments and compared themselves with others who did not circumambulate, implying they were lazy, miserly, even irreligious or faithless (*chos-la dad-pa med-pa*), etc. Further, even after devotees returned home to different parts of India, etc., the merit-saving activities of those Bodh Gaya pilgrims was a popular topic of conversation for quite sometime. Comments concerned what feats an individual or family performed (gift-giving, buying and lighting lamps, circumambulating), how lucky or meritorious someone was. What fame (*skad-grags*) a family left behind, having lighted 100 lamps or 1000 lamps (*brgya-mchod* or *ston-mchod*)!

Thus even from my brief personal recollections above, it seems obvious that *social* considerations are important, if not primary, motivations behind the quest for merit-saving. The more one can engage in any kind of merit-saving, the more one's social status is enhanced, not to mention the importance for political alliances and social control. (These are topics which I cannot discuss here because of limited space.)

III

The second problem I consider briefly in this paper is the role of karma-and-rebirth theory in other spheres of life where social action is in fact seen to be indirectly influenced by religious beliefs. Specifically I address the effect of belief in the theory of karma on the drive to improve one's socio-economic position, particularly among the poor. Although no work on this has been done in the context of Tibetan Buddhist society some prominent social scientists, including Max Weber and Gunnar Myrdal, have suggested that the Indic (Hindu or Buddhist) theory of karma-and-rebirth plays an indirect negative role in socio-economic activities. For Weber this (and his thesis on the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism) explains why modern industrialization began in Europe and not elsewhere.^{1 2} Gunnar Myrdal uses it to explain why the great multitude of people in modern India lack motivation to improve their lot.^{1 3} The purpose

¹² A good summary of Weber's interpretation of Indic concepts in regards to social action is found in Hammond (1969), pp. 49-50.

¹³ In his assessment of cultural causal factors in socio-economic underdevelopment in modern India, Myrdal identifies attitudes towards life, work and social institutions as the primary obstacles to motivation and acceptance of change. (Myrdal, 1968: Appendix 2.)

of what follows is to show how these apparently plausible theoretical premises are not valid in the Tibetan setting. I illustrate my point using my own field observations in Nepal of attitudes towards work and life among Tibetan refugees there.

Among Tibetan refugees in Nepal and India today there is a great deal of entrepreneurial activity which crosscuts age, sex, regional or sectarian affiliations, and this is increasing. Although this cannot be discussed at length here, there is available abundant evidence to explain why certain refugees are entrepreneurs while others are not. Some important factors are history, environment, region, economics (e.g., capital accumulation) and occupational history. With the emergence of entrepreneurial activities today there is a definite change in the Tibetan work ethic. This is clear among Tibetan refugees in the oldest and most successful large-scale Tibetan carpet factory in the Kathmandu Valley.

When carpet production began in the early 1960s, hundreds of refugee wage workers were employed there as weavers, spinners, etc. The piece-rate system no doubt gave some incentive for factory-workers to work longer and harder, and from 1961 till around 1970 there was still little or no private weaving at home during non-factory hours. By 1980, however, the story had changed radically. Beginning around 1970 a new burst of economic activities began among Tibetan refugees in the Kathmandu Valley who were engaged in the carpet industry, resulting in more intense entrepreneurial activity (in terms of both production and marketing), particularly independent private production (domestic as well as factory). There are, of course, many different reasons for this; one of the most important incentives for marketing carpets was a dramatic rise in the number of tourists visiting Nepal during the 1970s.

Keeping in mind this general background, let us turn to attitudes towards work and life among Tibetan refugees as expressed by respondents in the field, specifically among those in the oldest carpet factory mentioned above.¹⁴ This includes periods *before* and *after* the emergence of large-scale independent entrepreneurial activities in the carpet business and the associated intensification of private carpet

¹⁴ The development of the carpet industry, entrepreneurial activities, related sociocultural changes, etc., which are touched on here will be presented as part of my doctoral dissertation (1984). Although full acknowledgment will be made there, I wish to take this opportunity to thank those who helped me in my fieldwork.

production, beginning around 1970. Most of the comments I collected were along the same lines as those which I paraphrase here:

[...before the 1970s] most people in the factory used to be so lazy (*sgyid-lug ñes-po*) and life was relaxed (*dal-po*). There was no work in the evenings, mornings, weekends and holidays. Most of the time they would come from their houses and hang out a lot doing nothing much except horseplay (*bstan-bśigs*), gossiping or picking lice from each other's heads. These days it is completely (*sbad-de*) different. Everyone is busy. People do wool-work (i.e. weaving, spinning, etc.) day and night, all the time. People won't even stop to talk to you when they pass you on the roads. And all this started just a few years ago. Yes, these days people are busy and work hard. They are so "I-achievement-conscious" (*na-rgyal*, freely translated according to context).

Then the man added:

In a real sense, people were happier before. These days people need to be busy and the work (carpet production) is hard. Before, life (*mi-tshe*) was so relaxed (*dal-po*, here implying happiness). Such is the nature of *samsāra*!

Even though this afterthought reflects some resentment about having to work so hard, generally people openly praise those who work hard and are capable. In households where children are not always hardworking, parents playfully or seriously make remarks like: "Our children are lazy. Other people's children work hard day and night. They will be happy (*skyid-po*). If they do not behave, our children will meet hardships when we pass away." etc. Many such examples can be presented here but I believe these brief quotes illustrate my point.

Thus changes in attitudes towards work in the Tibetan refugee context came about as a result of transformations in economic activities; these in turn were determined by a host of other factors. Yet at the ideological level the majority of refugees generally remain believers in basic Buddhist tenets such as the theory of karma-and-rebirth. Hence it is questionable whether the original lack of motivation for activity among refugees can be attributed to Buddhist values, as Weber's and Myrdal's theses suggest.

IV

Let me now briefly summarize my observations. In the first two parts of the paper I discussed and tried to illustrate the following: (i) A contradiction existed between the orthodox Buddhist theory of karma-and-rebirth and life as it is lived ordinarily; this resulted in intense preoccupation with merit-saving activities. (ii) The contents of karma-and-rebirth theories in Buddhist doctrine and as understood and practiced in popular Buddhism are quite different in nature. (iii) Popular religious activities such as merit-saving, although they take place within a religious framework, may have largely social implications which are far removed from religious motivations. (iv) I conclude that the dialectical process analysed and discussed in this paper was a significant factor in the development of popular Tibetan Buddhism as it is generally practiced. I suggest that this largely explains why intense religious pursuits became so pervasive a feature of traditional Tibetan life.

In the third part, I argued that the theoretical suppositions of sociologist Weber and economist Myrdal concerning the indirect role of Indic values in other spheres of social life are not valid in the traditional Tibetan context because their observations were first of all based on theoretical models of formal Buddhism (and Hinduism). I argue that the indirect social effect of believing in karma depends on social and economic conditions. When these conditions call for it, belief in karma indirectly plays a positive role in social action; if there is no need for social action then belief in karma indirectly plays a negative role resulting in inaction. Consequently, in the final analysis, socio-economic factors (along with political factors, though no examples are given in this paper) determine the nature of action in non-religious spheres of traditional Tibetan life; any indirect social role played by the belief in karma-and-rebirth is secondary and generally minimal.

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MILLENARIANISM IN TIBETAN RELIGION*

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People in crises sometimes tend to develop millennial dreams and to strive for their realization. There can be no doubt that refugees are people in crisis. We may therefore ask if there are any millennial notions, or movements, among Tibetan refugees.

Using two typical beliefs and practices as illustrations I want to show that millennial ideas are, indeed, not unknown to Tibetans. These are: a) the notion of there being some hidden regions in the Himalayas to which one can escape in dangerous times; and b) a trance-like ceremony which enables the practitioner to attain the paradise of Buddha Amitābha. These ideas are not completely new. but it seems that, during the critical time of Tibetan exile since 1959, they have taken on a new form so that we can speak of some sort of collective revitalization of traditional myths or dreams taking place today.

That Buddhists, especially Mahāyāna Buddhists, believe in the existence of paradises is attested in numerous writings, works of art, and in the oral accounts of believers. These paradises, states akin to nirvāṇa, are points from which the ultimate goal, the final liberation from the cycle of suffering, can more easily be attained. The most famous of these paradises is that of Buddha Amitābha, called Sukhāvati.¹

Mahāyāna Buddhist conceptions of paradise are reminiscent of those of other millennial movements. Many terms exist for the special socio-religious movements which in this paper I call millennial movements: they are referred to, for instance, as "chiliasm," "cult

* I am grateful to Kathleen Shore for translating my German text into English.

¹ For a Tibetan description of Sukhāvati see, for instance, Schwieger (1978), which contains further references. The paradise is described in extremely ornate florid language in the *Sukhāvati-vyūha* (Tib. *Bde ba can gyi zin bkod pa*), in Müller (1894). [Bibliographical data for this and other works cited will be found on pp. 255-6.]

movements," "eschatological movements," *Heilserwartungsbewegung*, "revitalization movements," "crisis cults," or "millenarianism," etc.² I prefer the latter term with the understanding that millenarianism is not confined to movements which have been influenced by Christianity and so stem from the idea of the 1000-year reign upon which the Christian concept is based. Besides those movements which aspire to a 1000-year or perhaps eternal stay in a state of bliss, I include as millennial collective endeavors to attain a paradise-like state even temporarily. To enlarge the terminology yet further, I extend the term to "paradise movements."

One difference between millenarianism and Buddhistic conceptions of paradise is, nevertheless, that most millennial movements claim that salvation lies in this world, in this life, whereas Buddhists believe that paradise can only be attained in the hereafter, that is after death. However, at least in Tibetan religion, conceptions of terrestrial paradises or paradise-like states, which I would like to illustrate using the following examples, are not unknown.

The attainment of Amitābha's paradise through the 'Pho-ba ceremony

References can occasionally be found in Western literature about Tibet to the ceremony called *'pho-ba*. It is conducted shortly after death for the welfare of the deceased, and is concerned with the transference of consciousness through the "aperture of Brahma, situated on the crown of the head at the sagittal suture where the two parietal bones articulate, opened by means of the yogic practice of *pho-wa*."³ The consciousness travels immediately into the pure land called *Bde-ba-can*, the paradise of Buddha Amitābha. Almost completely unknown is the fact that the *'pho-ba* ceremony is conducted not only for the welfare of the deceased in a manner similar to the *Bar do thos grol* rite, for example, but by the living for their own benefit as well. This is mainly done by specialized monks.⁴

² See also La Barre (1971), p. 11.

³ Evans-Wentz (1967), p. 170.

⁴ According to what I am told by Tibetan informants traditional *'pho-ba* texts for lay people also exist, though *'pho-ba* ceremonies for larger groups of lay persons were very seldom performed; so, for instance, every sixth year at 'Bri-khuñ monastery.

As far as I am able to tell, a kind of revitalization or popularization of this *'pho-ba* rite took place among Tibetans in Swiss exile after their migration there in 1980. Some of the Tibetans living in Switzerland have formed a group with a view to practicing *'pho-ba* on a regular basis. Thus Amitābha's paradise has become the focus of a salvation-practice for lay persons, with attainment actively being pursued by these people.

It is not the concern of this paper to describe *'pho-ba* meditation in detail.⁵ It is a highly complex practice which, when it is correctly executed, places great demands on the person meditating. This rite is nonetheless mentioned here inasmuch as *'pho-ba* represents a technique whereby a paradise, in this case that of Amitābha, can be attained immediately. To this extent, at least, its goal resembles that of a millennial movement. Secondary manifestations of this ritual are also reminiscent of characteristics of millennial movements: some participants in this rite—most are women—fall into trance-like states which are accompanied by rhythmic hyperventilation, moaning, whimpering, or loud sobbing, and less often by movements of the arms. For anyone accustomed to the quiet atmosphere of Buddhist meditation these seances are alien and extraordinary.⁶ The fact that this cult gains importance during the critical time of exile leads me to see yet another connection to the movements referred to by some authors as “crisis cults.” I shall return to this point later.

It must not be forgotten that the *'pho-ba* rite as practiced by the living for their own sake is not concerned with a final attainment of paradise during *this* lifetime; it is only a rehearsal of the entrance into paradise, which becomes realized at the time of death. It can be

⁵ See, for instance, Evans-Wentz (1967), pp. 261ff. I have also received oral and written information from Ayang Rinpoche, etc.

⁶ The extraordinary effect that the *'pho-ba* exercise can have on the practitioner is indicated in a text translated by Dawa Samdup for Evans-Wentz (1967), p. 266: “Manifest thy humble fervent faith till the very hairs of thy body stand on end and tears course down thy cheeks...” A Rñin-ma-pa monk reported that he had never been able to observe any of the aforementioned phenomena among monks who practiced *'pho-ba* in Tibet. Occasionally, though, a monk fainted, he said. Michael Aris told me that he observed an outbreak of religious hysteria in the village of Uchu, Paro valley, Bhutan, while the Rñin-ma-pa bla-ma Pad-rgyal glin-pa bestowed the *'pho-ba luñ* on the villagers, mostly blacksmiths. About three-quarters of the villagers present were affected.

called a “limited” entry into Amitābha’s paradise, being limited to the time during which the *’pho-ba* ritual is taking place.

The search for paradisaic hidden countries

During talks with Rñiñ-ma-pas, I first heard about regions in the south of ethnic Tibet which appear to be kinds of earthly paradises. I could find little information about these hidden countries (*sbas gnas* or *sbas yul*) in Western literature on Tibet.⁷ By questioning Tibetans and partly by consulting a Tibetan text, I tried to accumulate additional information about these paradisaic hidden countries.⁸ The following, certainly very incomplete, picture emerged: there are different kinds of hidden countries; in some, a visitor can remain for an indefinite period, whereas in others the time is limited to several years. Moreover, the hidden countries are divided into three categories: external, internal and secret. The best known *sbas yul* are Padma-bkod, Sikkim and Mkhan-pa-luñ, in Nepal.⁹

To be able to see and enter a hidden country, certain conditions must be met. Profound faith is essential. Only believers who are convinced of the existence of the *sbas yul* and who set out without reservations can expect to be successful in their search for the hidden country. Further, people who want to reach a hidden country must also have acquired great merit and have freed themselves from attachment to food, wealth and family. They must overcome ignorance and accept the help of a guidebook, otherwise the *sbas yul* cannot be reached. Another important stipulation is that until the time is ripe, no attempt should be made to enter the *sbas yul*. The time to enter is given in secret oral instructions and passed on by a spiritual leader. Care must be taken, however, that instructions not fall into the hands of unscrupulous teachers who deceive people. Also any empty talk about the hidden countries must be avoided.

A hidden country should be approached from one of the four cardinal points, depending on the time of the year:¹⁰ in autumn from

⁷ See Bacot (1912), Aris (1975 and 1979), Reinhard (1978), and Bernbaum (1980).

⁸ Namely, *sbas yul ’bras mo ljoñs kyi gnas yig phan yon dañ bcas pa no mtshar gter mdzod*, translated with the help of Lama Lodroe, Dahortsang, Rikon.

⁹ There seem to be two Mkhan-pa-luñ (or Mkhan-pa-ljoñs), one in Bhutan and one in Nepal. See Aris (1979), p. 80.

¹⁰ This and the following descriptions refer to the *sbas yul* of Sikkim.

the east; in winter from the south; in spring from the west; and in summer from the north. Even when these conditions and rules are observed, the path to the hidden country is arduous and resembles a test. There is, for example, at each cardinal point a gate with so-called curtains, obstructions that must be overcome before the *sbas yul* can be entered. Additional hindrances are snow, disease, wild animals, thirst, and malicious local deities and spirits. These obstacles can be overcome, however, with the help of numerous rituals, or by burning certain substances, taking pills, reciting prayers, making offerings and piling up stones, etc.

The descriptions I was given of these hidden countries do not constitute a completely uniform picture. In any case they are paradise-like regions where aging is halted and life is pleasant. According to one tradition there are caves in the *sbas yul* which are supposed to be full of *rtsam pa* and grain, and there are also caves with springs from which milk flows inexhaustibly. We are told that fruits such as apples and peaches in the *sbas yul* are at least twice normal size and that different crops are not planted, but grow of their own accord. In the hidden countries there are many different treasures (*gter*) of material goods, including salt, turquoise, dharma and wealth, weapons, seeds and medicines. One place stores agricultural instruments, at another frying pans, grinders and many earthen pots are hidden. There is abundant meat so long as no injury is done to the animals living in the hidden countries.

Other characteristics of these realms are as follows: in the center of a forest there is a blue stone with the footprints of Guru Rinpoche. Just to see that stone is enough to cure diseases caused by the *nāgas*—madness, paralysis, etc. These diseases, once cured, never recur. In a huge cave there are several objects which bestow superhuman powers: a skull wrapped up in a blue cloth contains materials for attaining greater speed, and by putting a little of that material under the sole of the foot, one becomes fleet-footed and can go wherever one wishes. There is also a whip made of *ba*-wood to which the hand of a *Rākṣasa* is tied. By holding this whip one becomes invisible to gods, spirits, or human beings. Finally, there is a mirror wrapped in red cloth. After washing it with the milk of a red cow and gazing into it all major and minor continents of the universe, etc., can be seen. Whoever succeeds in reaching a hidden country is freed from the suffering of hunger and thirst. Everything good increases: one's life-span, happiness, good fortune, and wealth. In the

sbas yul not only worldly, but also spiritual, needs of believers are satisfied. For example, the hidden country of Sikkim, which is compared with holy places like Bodh Gaya, Potala, Ri-bo-rtse-lña, Lcan-lo-can, Uḍḍiyāna, Indra's palace and Sukhāvati, has lakes which bestow clarity of the mind and caves in which enlightenment is attained. In this hidden country *bodhicitta* increases, clarity of mind is developed and ignorance and the power of the five poisons diminishes. It is even said of the *sbas yul* of Sikkim that it is the "seed of Sukhāvati." Happiness comes spontaneously there and spiritual attainment occurs automatically. Even the bugs on the bodies of those striving to get into this hidden country will be reborn in Sukhāvati. The power of this hidden country is so great that just by hearing its name great merit during countless lives is accumulated, and just by seeing the place freedom from passage into one of the three unfortunate realms is gained.¹¹

A person may leave a hidden country, but afterwards, having done so, reentry is impossible, as the following story illustrates:

One day after stalking and shooting at an animal, a hunter, not finding his prey, set out in search of it. He happened upon a cave and, penetrating into the deeper recesses, finally came upon a kind of paradise. The hunter became very peaceful and without realizing it he stayed in this hidden country for twelve years. Upon remembering his family, however, he left. At the entrance to the cave he found his bow and arrows, which in the meantime had rusted. He himself, however, was no older than he had been on the day on which he had entered the cave. When the hunter reached the village, he saw how the inhabitants had aged and learned that some had even died during the time

¹¹ Similar descriptions can be found in Reinhard (1978), pp. 19-20, and Bernbaum (1980), pp. 63ff. Another paradise no less wonderful is that of Śambhala, which will not be discussed here, but which is supposed to lie to the northwest of Tibet. Both the description of the complicated path to and the structure of Śambhala reveal certain similarities with reports on the hidden countries. See Grünwedel (1915), Oppitz (1974), Damdinsüren (1977), Bernbaum (1980). The Bon-pos believe in the existence of a similar mythological country, called Ol-mo-lun-riñ. According to a personal communication from Samten Karmay, several groups of Bon-pos have gone in search of this country.

he had been away. The hunter told the people about his experience and they, upon hearing this, demanded that he lead them to the hidden country. In spite of the most concentrated efforts to find it, however, the paradise remained hidden.^{1 2}

**Similarities with millennial movements:
the importance of the "crisis" and of the leader**

Reference is made at various points in anthropological literature to the fact that the millennial movements originate from crises, prompting some authors to refer to them as "crisis cults."^{1 3} To what extent does this apply to the Tibetan hidden countries? Or, to put it another way: is there any evidence to suggest that crises, to which large groups of Tibetans have been exposed, might lead them to search together for one of the "promised lands"?

It is interesting to note that the *sbas yul* are first mentioned in Tibetan texts at the beginning of the 14th century. This was the time of the Mongol patronage of Tibet, a time of political, and to some extent of religious, deprivation. Further, it seems that during the Dzungar war in the early 18th century, another critical event in Tibetan history, there were, as a Tibetan informant told me, serious attempts to reach one of the hidden countries.^{1 4} Bacot, too, tells of a concrete, historical crisis-event which led to a collective search for a hidden country. According to him a thousand families are said to have set out in search of the holy land of Padma-bkod in the first years of the Sino-Tibetan conflicts of the beginning of the present century.^{1 5} Also following the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1959 and during the critical time thereafter, according to what Tibetan refugees told me, the idea of the *sbas yul* once again gained currency. This seems verified, for example, by the fact that refugees consciously chose an escape route which passed through the region in which the most important *sbas yul* lie. Refugees belonging to the Rñin-ma-pa school also report that before and during the flight they paid particular attention to whether their leader, Bdud-'joms Rin-po-

¹² Oral communication. See also Bernbaum (1980), p. 72.

¹³ See Weston La Barre (1971); and Peter Gerber (1980), pp. 61ff.

¹⁴ For this information I am indebted to Tashi Tsering, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala, India (1982).

¹⁵ Bacot (1912), p. 11.

che, would declare that the time had come to look for one of the hidden countries. When the refugees finally reached India and the crises abated, interest in the *sbas yul* correspondingly declined. Bdud-'joms Rin-po-che is said to have declared after this flight to safety that India was also a sort of hidden country.¹⁶

Even in exile, however, Tibetan thought of the *sbas yul* never completely disappeared. Above all, during the first difficult years of exile when the idea was still so vital, a large group of the faithful followed a *bla ma* to Sikkim in order to enter a hidden country on at least one occasion.¹⁷ At the spot designated by their spiritual leader they waited in the hope that boulders would open, admitting them to the *sbas yul*. Due to adverse climatic conditions and an avalanche, however, many people died and the disillusioned survivors retreated. Later they argued that they had been led astray by a false *bla ma*.¹⁸

Still, the idea of the *sbas yul* has not completely vanished. Even today the Rñin-ma-pas continue to think it is possible that their leader will one day declare that the time has come to go in search of the hidden country. I am convinced that should the call come, many Rñin-ma-pas and perhaps even adherents of other schools would join him. The dream of the hidden countries remains very much alive and could still be activated, possibly by an existential crisis.

The millennial dream has not only been passed down orally, but is preserved in written form in prophecies attributed to Padmasambhava, as the following example shows:

O great master! When the age of the five degenerations comes benevolent ways cease, harmful ways increase, bad omens occur in all the lands, great changes occur, and fighting breaks out in China, Mongolia and Tibet instigated by the Lalos [irreligious people]. What possibilities are there to find suitable places, both big and small, for the practice of Dharma, in order to attain the full enlightenment of Buddhahood? And by what methods can one get to these

16 According to Bernbaum (1980), p.70: "When Tibetans were fleeing from the Chinese takeover of Tibet in the 1950s, a lama tried to lead a band of refugees to the safety of this valley [Padma-bkod] ..."

17 According to Tashi Tsering from Dharamsala, this *bla ma* was Brtul-zugs gliñ-pa.

18 Oral communication. See also Bernbaum (1980), p. 68.

places?

Guru Rinpoche replied: Listen, faithful Lord, with your father, mother, sons, and whole entourage. I shall explain the methods for getting to the holy places..."¹⁹

Another passage in the same text about the *sbas yul* of Sikkim names the so-called visible signs, whose appearance is a signal for the faithful to go in search of the *sbas yul*:

When Tibet is overrun by the Lalos, when the main holy places of Gtsan̄ are destroyed... when the golden roof of the Bsam-yas monastery falls down, when the great stūpa Tsan̄-trañ in Khams collapses, when the tip of the stūpa in Yer-pa bends, when the great centers of Dbus burn down, etc.

All of the incidents listed here represent crisis situations (wars, fires, floods, etc.) or are, as is the case of the destruction of the holy buildings described above, considered by the Tibetans as clear indications that critical times are approaching.²⁰ This is all indicative of the fact that the Tibetans themselves regard the paradise myths of the *sbas yul*, hidden countries, as particularly vital in times of crisis and danger, when the faithful are more likely to try to realize these myths.²¹

Tibetans have told me that current practice and popularization of the *'pho-ba* ritual mentioned earlier is also connected with a state of crisis, namely with the world political situation. To justify extending the *'pho-ba* ritual to lay persons it is said that we are going through bad times with still worse ones to follow. They refer to the enormous, rapid changes in the world: nothing is like it used to be, there are great suffering, numerous wars, famines, etc. Amitābha's paradise, once a remote goal only attainable through clerical intercession, has, as a result of the feeling of deprivation, become a very urgent goal. Under the supervision of a *bla ma* it still requires great personal

¹⁹ See n. 8 above.

²⁰ The same text also mentions the "four external signs"—earthquakes, floods, fires and strong winds—and the "four internal signs"—fighting among beings, fighting between brothers, destruction of temples and monks not abiding by the rules.

²¹ See also Reinhard (1978), pp. 16,17 and 23; and Bernbaum (1980), p. 66.

effort to attain it, but it is now placed well within the reach of a faithful lay person. Although the Tibetan texts leave no doubt as to the difficulty and danger of attaining consciousness transference when not practiced by someone "who has been long on probation and been found worthy,"²² lay persons are nonetheless now allowed to conduct the *'pho-ba* exercise in view of these very critical times, thus gaining a clerical privilege.

A great many, if not all, millennial movements are led by personalities said to be charismatic, who command the absolute trust of the members of the movement, who are prepared to follow him or her unconditionally, if he or she so request. The cult-movements mentioned here are not conceivable without strong leadership: in the case of the *'pho-ba* rituals the *bla ma* has the function of a traditional Tibetan spiritual leader, that of an instructor and spiritual guide during the ritual. In the case of the *sbas yul* the *bla ma* is more than a spiritual leader. He also functions as Padmasambhava's envoy, or at least as his spiritual successor; he is both a prophet and a leader who actually, not just figuratively, leads the faithful to the paradisaic land.

Summary

These two examples show some of the characteristics of millennial movements or at least their beginnings among Tibetan refugees. The phenomena we see here are based on traditional millennial dreams or myths which are the indispensable bases for millennial movements, and are apparently activated whenever the faithful feel threatened; i.e. when they experience deprivation, and when there is a leader who recognizes the acute need for a millennial life and tries to canalize these wishes and to realize them through collective actions. These millennial dreams and actions among Tibetans have hardly been noticed until now because they have been neither very spectacular, nor very disruptive. This may be because of the secrecy of certain of these ideas, although I think it is also because of the quite common, but incorrect, notion that Buddhism and Hinduism do not give rise to millennial ideas and movements.²³ Finally it should be noted that

²² Evans-Wentz (1967), pp. 254 and 257.

²³ How the notion of a hidden country came to provide a mythic formula accounting for the origin of Bhutan is shown by M. Aris (1978), p. 82. This indicates that millennial myths and movements developing out of them can, under certain

millennial actions and the myths on which they are founded are particularly pronounced among the Rñin-ma-pas, who within Tibetan society and religion rather remain on the periphery. This would support the thesis that millennial ideas are likely to exist among people who are in some way politically, ideologically, religiously or economically deprived, or who at least feel that they are.

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circumstances, acquire a political meaning. See, for instance, Talmon (1962) and Mühlmann (1961).

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AN EARLY TIBETAN RITUAL:
*RKYAL 'BUD**

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As Buddhism prohibits animal and human sacrifice, which the ancient Tibetans had practiced, the use of modeled dough or paper effigies (*linga*) was substituted at an undetermined date. I would like to present here another object used in rituals of exorcism (elimination of evil) and sacrifice which, I think, has not been previously described: the *rkyal*. In this presentation I would also like to attempt to clarify how such rituals, which might seem contrary to basic Buddhist ideals, could be incorporated into its practice. Finally, I will try to propose possible origins of the *rkyal*, and to discuss the incorporation into Buddhism of folk practice and of concepts derived from the organized Tibetan religion of the dynastic period.

Rkyal is found in the dictionaries under the entry *rkyal ba* as a noun meaning "leather bag." Its diminutive form is *rkyal bu*, "a small bag, or pouch," and subheadings explain the *ra rkyal* to be a bag of goatskin and the *phyé rkyal* a bag for flour.¹ The *ma mo* deities carry

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¹ Jäschke, p. 17; Das, p. 79. [For full bibliographical data on works here cited, see pp. 266-7.] Both list *rkyal pa* as the leather bag, or sack, and list *rkyal bu* as its diminutive; *rkyal ba* is the listing used for the verb "to swim." The *Dag yig gsar bsgrigs*, p. 32, has two entries: *RKYAL*. 1) *chu la rkyal ba ste/ 'bri chu la rkyal rgyu yin/ rma chu la rkyal mkhan/ rma chu la rkyal nas phar 'gram du phyin pa lta bu//* 2) "*rkyal ba*" *yi tshig bsdud pa//*

RKYAL BA. *phyugs kyi pags pas bzos pa'i khug ma'i miñ ste/ ra lpags kyi rkyal ba zes pa lta bu/ tshig bsdud na "rkyal" zes 'bri chog ste/ ra rkyal/ sman rkyal/ nor rkyal zes pa lta bu//*

In addition, Khenpo Tsewang and Yonten Gyatso both cited the

a small bag, textually termed the *nad rkyal*,² the sack of diseases, while the *btsan* deity Tsi'u dmar-po carries the *dbugs rkyal*,³ the sack of breath (stolen from enemies). The dictionaries do not mention a ritual use for the *rkyal*, but it is encountered textually in the *Beg tse be'u bum*, compiled from much earlier *gter ma* and *bka' ma* sources by Tshar-chen Blo-gsal rgya-mtsho during the first half of the 16th century. Here, in a series of *gter ma* teachings attributed to Padmasambhava and recovered by Myaṅ-ral Ni-ma 'od-zer (1136-1204) in the 12th century, we have four texts:

- (1) *Instructions for blowing the rkyal of the fierce btsan;*
- (2) *Further instructions for blowing the rkyal of the fierce btsan;*
- (3) *Annotations on the further instructions for blowing the rkyal of the fierce btsan;* and
- (4) *Further annotations on the profound instructions for blowing the rkyal of the fierce btsan.*⁴

signification of “bellows” in personal communication. In connection with the term *rkyal mkhan*, as used in the Rma chu region of Amdo, a raft composed of inflated skins and photographed in Amdo (photo: Migot, Institut des Études Tibétaines, Paris, no. C.BIII.244) was identified as a *rkyal gru* by Yonten Gyatso. The inflated skins of which it was made he termed *rkyal ba*. (Personal communication, March 1979.) Is the relation of the verb “to swim” with the noun “inflated bag” perhaps in reference to the act of filling one’s lungs with air in order to stay afloat? It would seem that the verbal usage is derived from the nominal usage. The term *rkyal* is also encountered in the expression *gan rkyal du*, signifying “in a supine position” (Jäschke, p. 67).

² Examples abound. See, e.g., *Beg tse be'u bum*, p. 154: “*ma mo lag na nad rkyal thogs pas...*” See, too, Nebesky-Wojkowitz, p. 18: “Illness bringing deities, especially the *ma mo*, carry the *nad rkyal*, a sack filled with the seeds of diseases, e.g. a sack full of the germs of leprosy (*mdze nad kyi rkyal pa*). Other goddesses hold a sack full of blood, a water sack (*chu'i rkyal pa*), or a sack full of lightning and hail.”

³ Personal communication from Lcog-rten Da Bla-ma to Mme Ariane Macdonald, cited by the latter in class, November 1975. Textual sources according to the Bla-ma would be found in vol. *Ti* of the *Rin chen gter mdzod*.

⁴ *Beg tse be'u bum*, compiled and reworked by Tshar-chen Blo-gsal rgya-mtsho (1502-1566). Texts *Ba* through *Tsha* (pp. 78-86) form the *rkyal 'bud* cycle attributed in the colophon to Mṅa'-bdag Myaṅ-

From these titles it appears that one blows ('bud-pa) into the *rkyal* according to detailed instructions, and that this *rkyal* is specific to the *btsan*. The texts state that the *rkyal* is used as a support (*gsob*) empowered to retain the *bla* and *srog* of an enemy for purposes of its subjugation by illness or death (*dgra bo 'di dños su bsad do/ dgra bo de'i mod ñid du 'chi'o*).⁵ Its function is thus analogous to that

ral Ni-ma 'od-zer. These will be discussed in the present paper along with the ancillary text *Dza* (pp. 86-88), the *Lha dbye sbyor ba*, attributed in the colophon to the *gter ston* Zas-ston Lhun-bzan, whom I have been unable to identify. The titles of Myan-ral's texts are: *Ba. Drag po btsan gyi rkyal 'bud kyī man ñag*; *Ma. Drag po btsan gyi rkyal 'bud kyī źal śes*; *Tsa. Drag po btsan gyi rkyal 'bud kyī źal śes kyī yig chuñ*; and *Tsha. Drag po btsan gyi rkyal 'bud kyī źal śes kyī yig chuñ gi yañ yig*. Earlier in the *Beg tse be'u bum*, in text *Na*, which along with *Ca* is attributed in the colophon to Snubs Sañs-rgyas Rin-po-che, one finds three alternative titles for that text, assembled from the *srog las kyī rkyal bu*, without any detailed explanation of a *rkyal bu* ritual (p. 45). Several Tibetan scholars (Prof. Thubten Norbu, Yonten Gyatso, and Khenpo Tsewang) have assured me that *rkyal* rituals were quite common, despite the fact that none have been hitherto described by Tibetologists. In addition to the *Beg tse be'u bum*, I have thus far found only three other references to these rituals in Tibetan literature: 1) in the *Rñiñ ma rgyud 'bum*, vol. 33, pp. 70-98. The *tantra* concerned is initially entitled *Dpal lha mo ñag mo'i thugs kyī srog sgrub gsañ ba'i rgyud*, but the term *rkyal ba* appears in the title given internally before each chapter title, viz. *Dpal lha mo tsi tta gsañ ba'i srog rkyal ba'i rgyud*. There is no *rkyal 'bud* ritual included. In the colophon (vol. 36, p. 535) this *tantra* is attributed to Vairocana. 2) The second is found in Stag-śam Nus-ldan rdo-rje's (fl. 17th century) *Rtsa gsum yi dam dgañs 'dus*, vol. 10, pp. 509-516: *Yi dam dgoñs 'dus rta mchog rol pa las: Mkha' 'gro'i sñan rgyud gsañ ba sum sgril gyi: Drag po'i las kyī pho ña mu stegs rkyal 'bud dmar ñag las kyī spu gri*. This is another *rkyal 'bud* ritual, quite similar to Myan-ral's first text in the *Beg tse be'u bum*. 3) *Gter-ston* Gnam-lcags me-'bar (i.e. 'Bri-guñ Rin-chen phun-tshogs, 1509-1557), *Dam chos dgoñs pa yañ zab kyī chos skor*, vol. 4, pp. 399-428. These *rkyal-'bud* texts came to my attention too late to be analyzed in the present study.

⁵ *gsob*: literally, the remains of an animal which is to be stuffed, as is the *spyan gzigs* of a *Mgon khañ*, or filled, as in the case of the

of the *liṅga*, a term which literally means “sign,” but which designates in general a figurine in human or animal form, either modeled in dough or drawn on poisonous paper, and used to eliminate evil by serving as a support (*bsgral rten*) into which the “soul” (*rnam śes*) of an enemy is forced to enter.⁶ The *liṅga*, however, is fashioned from inert matter, while the *rkyal* has as its basis the remains of a living being, which itself had possessed *bla* and *srog*. There are other similarities and distinctions to which I will return once the description of the *rkyal* rituals has been presented.

The basic instructions are given in the first text, which begins with salutations to the deity Sgrol-giñ dmar-po. The ritual may be performed anytime, anywhere it is needed, using any form of ritual preamble, so long as its peculiar *mantra* is used. Having consecrated a small area on the ground, the officiant draws a nine-sided *maṅḍala* inside of which he traces a circle colored red with the blood of a red goat. On top of this a large receptacle (*'brub khuñ*) is placed, its top ends coated with red liquid, while the exterior is washed down with

rkyal, which must be filled with breath (*dbugs*), symbolic of life. Here, the *gsob* functions as the support (*rten*) to which the evil will be transferred. It is beyond the scope of the present paper to define *bla* and *rnam śes*, which are both often and, in my opinion, incompletely translated as “soul.” The two terms are not synonymous. The *Mahāvīyutpatti* (ca. 814) gives *rnam par śes pa*, of which *rnam śes* is the *bsdus yig*, as the standard translation for *viññāna* (cf. Stein 1957). But the definition of *bla* is more problematic: Ariane Macdonald (1971), pp. 298-300, has discussed the honorific term *sku bla*, the deified vital principle of the Btsan-po in the pre-Buddhist *Gtsug* religion, as attested in Pelliot Tibétain 1047. *Bla* is also found in compounds, such as *bla gYu*, a “life-supporting turquoise,” or *bla śin*, a “life-supporting tree,” as well as in *bla ma*. In *bla srog* it appears to reinforce the meaning of *srog*. [Cf. Stein (1957), p. 221, where a *Tshogs bśad* by 'Jigs-bral chos-kyi-señ-ge is cited; and also the citation in Das, p. 901, from the 'Brom-ston *Rgyal-ba'i 'byuñ-gnas-kyi rnam thar*.] However, as Khenpo Tsewang explained, “If you don't have *srog*, as evidenced by the possession of *dbugs*, breath, then you die, but even if you lose *bla*, then you still live.” The *rkyal 'bud* rituals discuss the successive stealing, first of *bla*, then of *srog*, with this result: *dgra bo 'di dños su bśad pa*, “this enemy is actually killed.” (*Beg tse be'u bum*, p. 86.)

6 R.A. Stein (1957), p. 201.

pure water.⁷ The skin of a small red goat is taken as a support (*gsob*), tied at the extremities of its members and at the neck, thus forming a small sack, the *rkyal*. The receptacle, a copper cauldron, is then firmly sealed, although it will be opened periodically to throw in mustard seeds. At this point the text of the ritual has a lacuna, omitting the instructions for the next ingredient mentioned, the shoulderblade of a red goat. The *rkyal* (here termed *liṅga*) is now coated with red blood obtained from a red dog. More mustard grains and copper filings must be placed on the outside of the 'brub *khuñ*. The ritual acts continue for nine days while the officiant wears a red turban, perhaps similar to those worn by the Tibetan kings as depicted in the murals of cave 158 at Tun-huang.⁸ The appropriate *mantra* must be recited while facing in a northeasterly direction. If the title of the ritual is taken literally, the *rkyal* is blown like a trumpet for the recitation of the *mantra*, which is followed in the text by the imperative of the verb 'bud *pa* (i.e. 'bus "blow!") rather than that of the verb *zla ba* (i.e. *bzlas*), the most common command to recite a *mantra*, and which refers to its silent pronunciation.⁹ If the *rkyal* then moves independently, it is the portentous sign that the *btsan* is acting, having been summoned and given instructions as to how he must act, once he has appeared as a red man brandishing a sword in the midst of a red light coming from the 'brub *khuñ*. Terrifying signs will appear, and once the *rkyal* has moved the practitioner is warned not even to look at it again.

⁷ 'Brub *khuñ* is defined by Daggyab as being a particular type of *hom khuñ*: "'brub *khuñ* ni/ *hom khuñ ste/ steñ du gu dog ciñ 'og tu rgya che ba//*" This was confirmed by Khenpo Tsewang, who further explained that it is bigger than a *hom khuñ* and is placed on the ground.

⁸ The description of the ritual acts is taken from the *Beg tse be'u bum*, pp. 78-80. On the characteristic turban of the Btsan po, cf. Karmay, p. 74.

⁹ I am indebted to Mireille Helffer for the information that 'bud *pa* is the verb commonly used for the sounding of a wind instrument. At this time I cannot state whether the *rkyal* is merely inflated, or whether it is also blown like a trumpet, as Myaṅ-ral's text implies. In Stag-sam's *rkyal 'bud* ritual, the instruction is to blow into the hole of the bellows while reciting the *mantra* (p. 512: ...*ces smras bcad la bzlas śiñ skabs skabs su sbud bu'i thun du nañ bsbud do*). In this case *sbud bu* refers to the *rkyal*.

The next three texts of the *rkyal 'bud* cycle further develop the use of the *rkyal* to summon the *btsan* deities to subjugate the three kinds of enemies: the enemy of religion in general; some specific person who seeks to harm the *chos 'khor*, i.e. the religious community; or the psychological obstacles which hinder the devotee's religious practice. It is clearly stated that if these teachings are used to avenge personal animosity, then the *btsan* will spread the very heart blood of the practitioner on the ground. The methods of subjugation mentioned are affliction with diverse diseases leading to death (internal hemorrhage, painful swelling, or insanity), or the murder of the victim by knife, or by the swelling of his body until it bursts. Each method is explained in a slightly different way, varying the *mantras*, although each begins with the syllable *tri*, probably related to the *liṅga* spells, which also have this phoneme near the beginning.¹⁰

At this point in the *rkyal 'bud* cycle it is stated that whichever malefic method is chosen, the enemy will be "freed" (*sgrol*), i.e. killed. Next, indications are given as to the duration of the ritual, established on the basis of the officiant's role and extending from nine to twenty-one days. The fourth *rkyal 'bud* text gives the means for stealing (*rku-ba*) the *bla* and *srog* of the enemy, as well as the signs that these forces have been duly summoned from his body, which had contained them. Although the text which follows this one, entitled the *Practice of separating the lha* (i.e. the deities), seems at first not to fall into the *rkyal 'bud* cycle, it is, in fact, an essential part of the *rkyal 'bud* practice; for it explains how to divest the enemy of his own inherent protective deities, the *'go ba'i lha lha*, in order to coerce the enemy into the *rkyal*.¹¹ These deities are already well documented, but as their roles vary, we include this version of the list:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| (1) <i>yul lha</i> ; | (4) <i>mo lha</i> ; and |
| (2) <i>pho lha</i> ; | (5) <i>zan lha</i> . ¹² |
| (3) <i>dgra lha</i> ; | |

¹⁰ Cf. R.A. Stein (1957), p. 202, on the expression *nṛ tri* that is found in the *mantra* pronounced when the *liṅga* is cut. *Nṛ* in Sanskrit means "man"; and perhaps *tri* represents the root *tṛ*, derivatives of which signify, e.g., "freedom, release."

¹¹ The four basic texts discuss the ritual and describe the phases of *bla rku ba*, *srog rku ba*, and *bla khugs pa*.

¹² Cf. Tucci (1980), p. 187; Stein (1981), p. 187; and Macdonald (1971), p. 301.

The extent to which the *rkyal* ritual resembles the *liṅga* rituals is perhaps to be expected, given that both seek to eliminate evil. Yet certain elements in the vocabulary of the *rkyal* ritual are non-Buddhist. An analysis of the text reveals evidence of this.

Strikingly absent from the *rkyal* ritual is the term *rnam śes*, the Tibetan term for *viñāna*, the conscious element in the composition of the personality according to Buddhist metaphysics. In *liṅga* rituals the enemy's *rnam śes* is separated from a demonic element (*'byuñ po*) when the *rnam śes* is divested of the *'go ba'i lha lña*, its five protective deities.¹³ It is the *rnam śes* that is sublimated, freed, delivered into a better, i.e. non-malevolent, realm. By means of this process, the practitioner is thus performing a meritorious action and simultaneously accruing "good karma" for himself. In one instance, it is stated that what is separated from the *rnam śes* is the *bla srog*, which is absorbed by the officiant in order to augment his own life.¹⁴ Thus it is quite significant that the *rkyal* ritual omits all reference to the *rnam śes*. It is unclear what happens to the evil once annihilated, and what, if anything, remains. Although at one point in the *rkyal* cycle the term *sgrol* is used, as is customary in the *liṅga* rituals, this may be an instance of the common use of *sgrol* as a euphemism for *gsod*, "to kill," rather than an example of its ordinary meaning, i.e. "to free." Many variant verbs are used in the *rkyal 'bud* cycle to express the ideas of killing and death.¹⁵ Is it possible that here the enemy is really just killed, without being transferred to a paradise, perhaps because the concept of such deliverance was not yet fully assimilated, or useful to the people for whom the teaching was destined?

Other curious lexical items are the names of the three chapter divisions given in the initial instructions, termed: *rgod*, *gYuñ*, and *gyer bskul can*. *Gyer bskul can* indicates, in a Bon-po context, the exhortation of a deity to act.¹⁶ But the terms *rgod* and *gYuñ* as sociological divisions are attested in the *Old Tibetan Chronicle* and

13 Stein (1957), pp. 205-206.

14 Stein (1957), pp. 220-222.

15 E.g.: *dgra gsod 'di las* (p. 81, l. 2); *dgra bo de'i mod ñid du 'chi'o* (81.6); *dgra bo myur ba ñid du sgrol* (83.4); *srog la bla srog rku ba'i man ñag* (85.3); *srog chags...bzun ba* (86.1); *srog chags gsad pa* (86.2); *srog 'phrogs* (86.2); *srog chod ༥༡* (86.3).

16 I am indebted to Samten Karmay for this oral information on *gyer bskul can*.

have been discussed in detail by R.A. Stein and G. Uray.¹⁷ In the present context of a division established between *rgod* and *gYun* (*rgod gYun gñis*) the original meanings, “wild” and “meek” respectively, must be understood, as in the later classification of subjugation rites and pacification rites, which are literally termed “fierce and tranquil acts” (*drag po las, zi ba las*). In content the *Beg tse be'u bum* only includes the *rgod* chapter, although it is mentioned that in the *gYun* chapter two times as many recitations of the *mantra* are required.¹⁸

A further consideration is the deity to whom the rituals are directed: *Sgrol-gin dmar-po*. In other rituals found in the *Beg tse be'u bum* and elsewhere, this is one of many alternative names used to address the deity *Beg-tse*, considered here to be a *gin* deity. The *gin*, or *gyin*, are native deities with no precise counterpart in Indian Buddhist thought. Their characteristic emblem is the sword which they hold.¹⁹ In the so-called “scapegoat” ceremony of the Tibetan State festival, where most of the evil accumulated during the year is transferred into the “support” of two live men, eight masked priests representing the *gin* deities goad the two scapegoats forward and prevent their return to Lhasa, whence they are expelled.²⁰ If the function of the *gin* is to expel evil, then clearly the *sgrol gin* expels evil while liberating or exterminating it, whether it be transferred to the support of the scapegoats (i.e. the *glud 'gon rgyal po*) or to the *rkyal*.

A local custom of the *Snañ-ra* region of central Amdo is a ritual involving use of a *rkyal*. One of two Tibetan authorities I consulted in connection with this research is a native of this region.²¹ He described this ritual as *lugs srol*, common practice. In the event of untimely death, the deceased may become a *gdon 'dre*, a demon

17 Bacot et al. (1940), pp. 13 and 31; Stein (1962), p. 85; Uray (1971), pp. 553-556.

18 *Beg tse be'u bum*, p. 81.

19 See Heller, “Preliminary Remarks to a study of *Beg tse*”; and Nebesky-Wojkowitz, pp. 278-280. According to M. Kapstein, perhaps they are related to the Indian *hinkara*, although Nebesky-Wojkowitz states that they are Tibetan. Françoise Pommaret-Imaeda has recently informed me that Bhutanese *gin* do not necessarily hold swords, but are always associated with the expulsion of evil in the *tshes-bcu 'chams*, and in folk rituals performed by individuals.

20 Nebesky-Wojkowitz, p. 509.

21 Personal communication from Yonten Gyatso.

which inflicts evil on a family or village. The householder so afflicted may then request a tantrist (*snags-pa*) or a monk to come to exorcise the demon. First, the demon must be trapped. This must be accomplished in the following way: one takes an animal skin (usually that of a goat, but sometimes a sheepskin) and makes it into a *rkyal* by removing the feet, leaving the neck and the extremities, and then blowing it up and attaching strings to the ends of the members. The strings tying the members are then used to drag the *rkyal* through the street, at which time the inhabitants of the village must refrain from looking at it. Then the officiant performs a ritual in order to subdue the demon by trapping it inside the *rkyal*.^{2 2}

While the lay ritual as described by Mr. Gyatso is for exorcism in the basic sense of elimination of evil, the textual rituals are a combination of destructive magic, ritual sacrifice, and exorcism in the sense in which the latter is a transfer of evil forces, or of an enemy previously divested of his protective deities, into a support, be it *liṅga*, *glud 'goñ rgyal po*, or *rkyal*. Live sacrifice offered in honor of the protective deities is attested in a Bon-po ritual from the 11th century: specifically, among the five protective deities (*'go ba'i lha lña*), the *srog lha* (the god of vital forces) receives the sacrifice of a goat, and the *dgra lha* (the warrior deity) is offered a sheep.^{2 3} In neither the textual ritual nor the popular ritual for the *rkyal* is there a question of live sacrifice per se, although it is never precisely stated how one must go about obtaining the skin of the goat or sheep, or the blood. In the light of the fact that these animal substances are required for the manufacture of the *rkyal*, the ritual appeasement of the aforementioned deities by animal sacrifice appears to be significant, given the intrinsic connection of the *'go ba'i lha lña* with

22 Hans Stübel (1958), p. 38, has described another account of an Amdo *rkyal* ritual, although he has not named it as such: "As an exorcist, the sorcerer's duty is to drive out evil spirits and, if possible, to destroy them. He has the power to catch evil spirits by reading the sacred writings aloud and using a whip made of yak leather. A man stands in front of the sorcerer and holds a *yak leather bag into which the sorcerer charms the evil spirit* [*italics mine*]. A great many people stand behind the bag, threatening the evil spirit with all kinds of weapons... and driving the spirit into the bag. When the spirit is captured, the bag is carried outside, opened up over a fire of yak dung and symbolically emptied."

23 Stein (1981), pp. 209.

the separation of the *bla* by the deity in exterminating the enemy. Perhaps the ultimate analogy to be suggested derives from the highly anthropomorphic shape of the *rkyal* in its final form. As such it is possibly a forerunner of the *liṅga* in humanoid shape. It would be premature to conclude that the *rkyal 'bud* ritual as such is pre-Buddhist, but clearly these rituals have aspects related to non-Buddhist concepts prevalent in Tibet during the dynastic period.

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ON THE ORIGIN OF THE TSHA-GSUR CEREMONY

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The *tsha-gsur*¹ ceremony has been popular and widespread throughout the sphere of Tibetan Buddhist influence. Monks as well as laymen used to perform the ceremony daily in the evening, when ghosts are believed to be around. *Tsha-gsur* belongs, like *chu-gtor* (libation) or *bsaṅs* (offering of incense), to the category of ceremonies which are dedicated to local dieties, demons and low-ranking spirits. Although the ceremonies are modelled to accord with tantric Buddhist characteristics it may be doubted if their origin is really Buddhist. In particular, the *tsha-gsur* ceremony under consideration here is the object of a controversy concerning its Buddhist origin.

The ceremony itself is performed according to the *tsha-gsur gyi cho-ga* texts which were written by Jo-naṅ-pa Tāranātha and the first Panchen Lama Blo-bzaṅ chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan, who composed two *cho-ga*.² The shorter one is the most popular and will be summarized here. It consists of six parts:

1. the formula for taking refuge (*skyabs-'gro*) and cultivating *bodhicitta* (*sems-bskyed*);
2. invitation of the guests by means of the visualization of Avalokiteśvara;
3. blessing of the offering (*byin gyi rlabs pa*);
4. dedication of the offering to the guests together with the recitation of the *mantra* (*bsṅo-ba*);
5. offering (*phul-ba*) of the *tsha-gsur* to the *bla-ma*, *yi-dam*, etc., and “especially to those *bar-do-ba* who lost their bodies yesterday and today by murder or suicide and did not yet find a new body”;³ and

¹ Also written *bsur*.

² The *cho-ga* text of Tāranātha is mentioned in *Materials for a history of Tibetan literature*, ed. Lokesh Chandra (New Delhi, 1963), vol. I, p. 27, no. 534; for the Panchen Lama's *cho-ga*, see *Collected works of Blo-bzaṅ chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan* (New Delhi, 1973), vol. IV, pp. 945-947 and 957-962.

³ First Panchen Lama, p. 946, l. 6.

6. dedication of the merit acquired by the performance (of the ceremony, *bsno ba'i smon lam*).

This prayer is accompanied by the offering of *tsha-gsur*: in a special pot of clay (*gsur-phor*), the bottom of which is placed on glowing coals, small quantities of cereals and butter⁴ are slowly burnt outside the door in the open air while the prayer is performed inside. The idea is to provide the *bar-do-ba* with nourishment by the smell of food, for they are not able to eat owing to their bodiless state. This idea is reflected in the very popular '*das-log* accounts, the reports of dead persons who returned to life and related their experiences in the *bar-do* state. As an example which concerns the *gsur*-offering, the report of the woman Glin-bza' chos-skyid may be adduced: "The *sgom-chen* performed the *mani*-prayer and uttered some *mantras* while burning my share of meal piece by piece in the fire. I felt like having eaten and drunk, and my hunger and thirst were satisfied."⁵

It is likely that the Buddhist origin of this very popular ceremony has often been questioned. The most prominent person to reject it, however, was the Vth Dalai Lama, who opposed these popular beliefs for two main reasons: 1) no reference to *gsur* is to be found in Buddhist canonical writings; and 2) offerings are of no use to the *bar-do-ba*, because they cannot enjoy them.⁶

In response to the opinion of the Vth Dalai Lama, Bstan-dar lha-ram-pa, a famous Dge-lugs-pa scholar of the 18th century, composed the *tsha gsur la dogs pa gcod pa'i 'khrul spon dgon's pa rab gsal'* in order to remove all doubts which had arisen in connection with the origin and usefulness of the *tsha-gsur* ceremony. Bstan-dar lha-ram-pa discusses in detail all the arguments of the Vth Dalai Lama according to Tibetan scholarly methods, but here only his refutations of the two aforementioned objections will be summarized.

⁴ This refers to *dkar gsur*, whereas the offering of meat, fat and blood is called *dmar-gsur*.

⁵ *Two visionary accounts of returns from death ('das-log)* (Dolanji, 1974), p. 314; on '*das log* generally see G. Tucci, *Die Religionen Tibets* (Stuttgart, 1970), p. 219.

⁶ I had no access to the collected writings of the Vth Dalai Lama, and so follow here Bstan-dar lha-ram-pa, pp. 713 and 719 (see below).

⁷ *Collected gsung 'bum of Bstan-dar lha-ram of A-lag-sha* (New Delhi, 1971), vol. *Kha*, pp. 710-729.

Concerning the first point, Bstan-dar lha-ram-pa admits that the Vth Dalai Lama is right in stating that there is no reference to *gsur* in canonical literature; but there are many references to *bdug-spos*, *dri* and *bsaṅs* in the *Guhyasamājamūlatantra*, *Bodhicāryāvātāra*, etc., which may serve as proofs for *gsur* in canonical writings. Indeed in principle there is no difference among the ideas of offering *bdug-spos*, *bsaṅs* or *gsur*, except the material which is burnt and the object to whom it is dedicated. Therefore Bstan-dar lha-ram-pa's argument from analogy can hardly be contradicted. As for the second point Bstan-dar lha-ram-pa agrees with the Vth Dalai Lama that it is useless to dedicate food to the *bar-do-ba*, because they cannot enjoy it if it is simply offered. He quotes from the *Abhidharmakośakārikam*, where the *bar-do-ba* are said to possess all the organs of sense; and therefore he insists that they are able to perceive and enjoy the *gsur* offering performed with the help of the *mantra*. He emphasizes the importance of the *mantra*, which is most effective in many ways. Further on he comments that if anyone says that it is useless to perform such a ceremony because there is no benefit for the dead ones, this implies a denial of karma, for it implies also that the thought of compassion is useless because it saves nobody from suffering and, similarly, that mental anger is not sinful because it offends nobody. Thus Bstan-dar lha-ram-pa tries to demonstrate in a scholarly way, but for the most part with arguments from analogy, that the *tsha-gsur* ceremony is Buddhist. Little thought, however, is given by him to the real origin of the *tsha-gsur* ceremony and its historical development.

Any such attempt faces serious problems. One of the main difficulties is encountered when we consider the meaning of *gsur* and the few entries for it in the dictionaries, which do not provide references to their sources. As translations of *gsur* we find:

1. *gsur* = "smell."
Tshe-riñ dbaṅ-rgyal: *gsur* = *gandha*; Bon: *gsur* = *dri*.⁸
2. *gsur* = "smell of something slightly burnt."
Sumatiratna: *gsur* = *kingśigün* = "smell of roasted food, smell of something burnt." He paraphrases: *quyiqala sun ya un-a yin ünür* = "the smell of something which is burnt (singed)."⁹

⁸ J. Bacot, *Dictionnaire Tibétain-Sanscrit par Tse-ring-ouang-gyal* (Paris, 1930), p. 189b3; *Gaṅs can bod kyi brda skad miñ gzi gsal bar ston pa'i bstan bcos* (Dolanji, 1966), p. 143.

⁹ Sumatiratna, *Bod hor kyi brda yig miñ tshig don gsum gsal bar byed pa mun sel sgron me* (1959), p. 1248.

3. *gsur (ma)* = "singed, something slightly burnt."
 The current dictionaries have an entry for *gsur-ma* = "singed, a thing slightly burnt"; *gsur-'dri* = "smell of a thing slightly burnt."

Tsha-gsur so far is only known from the respective *cho-ga* texts. Sumatiratna paraphrases: *tsha-gsur* = *qala un kengs'iküi* = "burnt or roasted by heat."¹⁰ One might, however, think of *tsha*, *tsha-ba*, the elegant expression for "food," which would lead to a translation of *tsha-gsur* as "burnt food" or "smell of burnt food."

The earliest reference to *gsur* is to be found in the quotation of a Bon liturgy included in a funeral ritual revised according to Buddhist rules, known from a Tun-huang text. It has been published and translated by R.A. Stein.¹¹ The passage reads: "dans les récits (généalogiques, *rabs*) des démons qui sont avides d'[offrandes] brûlées (*gsur*)" [*'dre gsur 'dod kyi rabs las*].¹² In a footnote Stein explains that the offering of *gsur* for the demons is the smell of malodorous objects slightly burnt in opposition to the agreeable smell of perfumes which are burnt to please the gods. This early source from Tun-huang does not supply further information, but it is well known that the *gsur* forms an essential part in the funeral ritual of the Bon-pos today.

Although we are still ignorant of the origin of the *tsha-gsur* ceremony, it can be said that it must be sought in pre-Buddhist religious beliefs. On the other hand, it must be emphasized that it appears to be fully integrated into Buddhist thought.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 566.

¹¹ R. A. Stein, "Un document ancien relatif aux rites funéraires des Bon-po tibétains," *Journal Asiatique* (1970), p. 155-185.

¹² Ibid., p. 162.

THE RDZOGS-CHEN IN ITS EARLIEST TEXT: A MANUSCRIPT FROM TUN-HUANG

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It is well known that the Tibetan Buddhist doctrine of Rdzogs-chen is the counterpart to early Ch'an in China and to Zen in Japan, both the latter names being ultimately derived from the Sanskrit term *dhyāna* (Tib. *bsam gtan*). In Tibet itself Rdzogs-chen was the most important of the teachings adhered to by both Buddhists, particularly the Rñin-ma-pa and later certain other schools, as well as by the non-Buddhist Bon-po. It has been a controversial doctrine ever since the 10th century, not merely because of the obscurity surrounding its origin, but also because of doubts as to whether it is an authentic Buddhist teaching at all. Nonetheless, its adherents consider it to be very special: whether they live as monks or as laymen, they always consider themselves as adherents of this philosophical doctrine. It is, however, incorrect to assume that it is a subsect of the Rñin-ma-pa that is being referred to whenever the expression *Rdzogs-chen-pa* crops up. That term in fact is hardly ever used to designate the adherents of the Rdzogs-chen doctrine per se, but is most often used to speak of the monks coming from the Rdzogs-chen monastery in Khams, founded only in 1685.¹

From the latter half of the 9th century onwards we know of texts specially devoted to the doctrine of Rdzogs-chen, and the activity of writing treatises on the teaching continued throughout the centuries. By the age of Ratna gliñ-pa (1403-1478) the number of such works, usually designated as *rgyud*, ran into the hundreds. Most of these are excluded from the *Kanjur* and *Tanjur*. As a consequence we have instead the independent and imposing collection known as the *Rñin ma rgyud 'bum*, of which the first ten volumes contain works on Rdzogs-chen. Yet this collection, in turn, does not include numerous works by the great masters of the tradition which are devoted to that teaching, for example those of Gnubs Sans-rgyas

¹ The full name is *Ru dam rdzogs chen o rgyan bsam gtan chos gliñ*, founded by Padma rig-'dzin (1625-1697).

ye-śes (late 10th century),² Roñ-zom Paṇḍita Chos-kyi-bzan-po (mid-11th century), and Klön-chen rab-'byams (1308-1363). The Bon-po, likewise, have produced no less work on the same teaching.

If one aspect of Tibetan civilization is better known than all the others it is Tibetan Buddhism, but even within this domain the Rdzogs-chen is still a vast unmapped territory which only a few have begun to explore, Prof. Tucci having been the first to touch upon it.³ Certain orthodox Buddhist schools like the Sa-skyapa and some sub-schools of the Bka'-brgyud-pa, e.g., the 'Bri-guñ Bka'-brgyud-pa, took the view that Rdzogs-chen was simply a resurrection of the Ch'an doctrine, which was banned from Tibet in the 8th century. Even some Rñin-ma-pa authors, for example O-rgyan gliñ-pa (1329-1367), literally accepted this view. The latter went to the extent of making *Ho-shang* Mahāyāna a tantrist in his *Blon-po bka'-than*.⁴ We now know that this Chinese monk was summoned to Tibet in 787 from Tun-huang, which was then under Tibetan rule, by King Khri Sṅon-lde-btsan (742-797). In Tibet he preached the form of Chinese Buddhism known as Ch'an, which was strongly influenced by Taoism.⁵ Later he was expelled from Tibet and returned to Tun-

² The dates of this master are very uncertain. However he is in all probability the author of the *Sgom gyi gnad gsal bar phye ba bsam gtan mig sgron* (*Bsam gtan mig sgron*), Smanrtsis Shesrig spendzod series, vol. 74 (Leh, 1974). In this work a clear reference is made to King Glañ Dar-ma (803-842). Also one gets the impression that the text was composed a long time after the death of the King. In his *Deb ther sñon po* (G.N. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*, Calcutta 1949), p. 108, 'Gos Lo-tśā-ba G'zon-nu-dpal (1392-1481) states that Gnubs Sañs-rgyas ye-śes was active during the reign of King Bkra-śis brtsegs-pa-dpal (ca. early 10th century). This seems to accord with the tradition that Mi-la-ras-pa (1040-1123) learned magic spells from Lha-rje hñm-chuñ, who appears to have been the great-grandson of Gnubs Sañs-rgyas ye-śes. 'Gos Lo-tśā-ba further states that there was only one generation between Gnubs and Zur-po-che Śākya 'byuñ-gnas (ca. early 11th century). See *The Blue Annals*, p. 109.

³ G. Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts (MBT)*, Serie orientale Roma IX, vol. II (Rome 1958), p. 60 et seq.

⁴ *hva śaṅ ma hā spyod thabs bcu gñis yod/ theg pa chen po gsañ śnags pa la ni/ dbaṅ gi rim pa mañ po nod pa dan/ ...gsaṅ śnags pa yi spyod thabs bcu gñis so/ (MBT, pp. 69 & 83).*

⁵ P. Demiéville, *Annuaire du Collège de France*, LVI (1956), p. 285.

huang. In the light of the available Tun-huang manuscripts on the subject of *Dhyāna* teaching, there is hardly any evidence that this Chinese monk was in any way practicing "tantrism." It was thought that O-rgyan gliñ-pa had access to old documents comparable to those of Tun-huang, which he utilized in composing his *Blon-po bka'-than*,⁶ but a close examination shows that the section of that work concerning *Dhyāna*⁷ is simply a summary of the section on the same subject in the *Bsam gtan mig sgron* of Gñubs Sañs-rgyas ye-śes.⁸ In summarizing the section in question O-rgyan gliñ-pa has misinterpreted his source. Moreover, it is known that he has taken a similar approach to his sources in some of the other sections of the *Bka' than sde lña*.⁹ The reliability of his writings as historical source materials is therefore very questionable indeed. I have made a fairly detailed comparative analysis of the two works in a thesis to be completed shortly¹⁰ and have found that O-rgyan gliñ-pa's twisted representation of *Ho-shang* Mahāyāna as a "tantrist," as well as the criticism of the Rdzogs-chen by the Sa-skyapa and other schools, seems to have misled scholars who have dealt with the Rdzogs-chen, causing them to conclude that a certain number of Rñin-ma-pa *tantras*, particularly those of the Rdzogs-chen, embody the essential elements of Ch'an teaching.¹¹

There are two traditional accounts concerning the origin of Rdzogs-chen in Tibet. While one tradition ascribes it to Padmasambhava, the other attributes it to Vairocana, who is considered to have become one of the first Tibetan monks in the 8th century. The fundamental text of the tradition which goes back to Padmasambhava is the famous text known as the *Man nag lta ba'i phren-ba*.¹² It is attributed to Padmasambhava himself, who is said

⁶ *MBT*, p. 69 (translated on p. 83).

⁷ *MBT*, pp. 68-81.

⁸ *Bsam gtan mig sgron*, pp. 118-186.

⁹ Cf. A-M. Blondeau, "Le lHa-'dre bka'-than," in *Études tibétaines dédiées à la mémoire de Marcelle Lalou* (Paris 1971), pp. 33-48; and *Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études*, 5th section (1975-76), pp. 112-118.

¹⁰ This thesis is provisionally entitled "Origin and early development of the Tibetan religious traditions of the Great Perfection (Rdzogs-chen)."

¹¹ G. Tucci and W. Heissig, *Les religions du tibet et de la mongolie* (Paris 1973), p. 35.

¹² *Bstan 'gyur* (Peking edition: reproduced, Suzuki Research

to have composed it just before his departure from Tibet.¹³ Although it cannot be proved that it is in fact a work of this semi-legendary figure, there is little doubt as to its antiquity. In my opinion it goes back at least to the late 9th century. In its formal structure it resembles the *grub mtha'* (Skt. *siddhānta*) type of Indo-Tibetan literary work, but doctrinally its predominant theme is tantric, having particular associations with the *Gsañ ba sñiñ po'i rgyud* (*Guhyagarbhatantra*).¹⁴ Like many of the works on Rdzogs-chen, this text has also been the object of much controversy¹⁵; but in later centuries certain Dge-lugs-pa masters, for example Pañ-chen Blo-bzañ chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan (1567-1662), came to accept it as a genuine work on Rdzogs-chen.¹⁶

The second traditional account of the origin of Rdzogs-chen in Tibet is connected with Vairocana. He is believed to have been a disciple of Padmasambhava and has been as much an object of mystery as Padmasambhava himself in Rñiñ-ma-pa and Bon-po literature. According to this account, King Khri Sron-lde-btsan sent Vairocana to India with a companion in order to search for advanced Buddhist teachings. He is said to have met several masters of the doctrine and brought back to Tibet five texts on Rdzogs-chen amongst many other Buddhist texts. On his return he is believed to have made translations of these texts, which we shall discuss later on. Owing to strained circumstances, King Khri Sron-lde-btsan is thought to have expelled him from Central Tibet to Tsha-ba-roñ. Vairocana was therefore unable to establish himself and preach his newly imported doctrine.¹⁷

Institute), vol. 83, no. 4726. I am preparing a translation of this text.

13 R.A. Stein, *Une chronique ancienne de bSam-yas: sBa-bžed* (Paris, 1961), pp. 25-26.

14 *Bka' 'gyur* (Peking edition), vol. 10, no. 455; *Rñiñ ma rgyud 'bum* (NG), (Thimphu, ca. 1975), vol. *Pha*.

15 Sog-bzlog-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan (b.1552), *Gsañ snags sna 'gyur la bod du rtsod pa sna phyir byuñ ba rnam kyī lan tu brjod pa nes pa don gyi 'brug sgra*, in *Collected Writings* (New Delhi, 1975), vol. I, no. 5, pp. 265-266, 277-279, 314, and 385-386.

16 *Dge ldan bka' brgyud rin po che'i bka' srol phyag rgya chen po'i rtsa ba rgyas par bsad pa yañ gsal sgron me* (ed. Bkra śis lhun po), fol. 12b.3.

17 *Rje btsun thams cad mkhyen pa Bai ro tsa na'i rnam thar 'dra 'bag chen mo* (ed. Lhasa), fol. 45b-71a. For a discussion of this

Now both these accounts, while asserting the Indic origin of Rdzogs-chen, make the point that neither of the masters was actually able to implant the new doctrine in Tibet. This does not mean, however, that the doctrine of Rdzogs-chen was not known at all in Tibet prior to the 10th century. Buddhism in Tibet went through a radical change after the monastic persecution of King Glan Dar-ma (803-842), which took place around 839. I say "monastic" because the persecution was not simply anti-Buddhist. It was, rather, directed against the monastic establishments. We know that ecclesiastic interference in the affairs of state was already very much resented during the reign of King Ral-pa-can (b. 805).¹⁸ The establishment of the monastic system became too great a financial and social burden for the state, for it involved the maintenance of no small number of Buddhist monks in Bsam-yas and in other religious establishments, such as the Jo-khan in Lhasa. The kingdom was badly in need of recruits for military service and the royal government was trying to continue to run the country and look after the few territorial possessions which were still left to it. In my opinion, based on certain of the Tun-huang documents,¹⁹ the persecution was therefore not simply anti-Buddhist, as later Tibetan Buddhist historians would like us to believe. The persecution however did pave the way for new religious developments. As the system of monastic establishments was dismantled, tantric teaching became more popular and widespread than before, since it did not require the communal setup dependant on lay support. This was in contrast to the previous situation in the 8th century, when the two practices were kept strictly separate.

Translations of *tantras* had been controlled by strict royal order and their practice was kept to a minimum in the monastic establishments. The later syncretic development of the two practices which characterizes Tibetan Buddhism from the 11th century onwards was not yet in sight, though after the persecution a strong leaning towards tantrism became manifest. During the period preceding Glan Dar-ma's reign not only Buddhism but other trends of

work, see S.G. Karmay, "Le problème historique et doctrinale de la philosophie du rJogs chen," *Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études*, 5th section (1973-74), vol. 82.

18 *sBa bžed*, pp. 75-76.

19 See S.G. Karmay, "King Tsa/Dza and Vajrayāna," *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein*, vol. I, *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques*, vol. XX (Brussels, 1981), pp. 196 and 207-210.

thought were known to the Tibetans, particularly Manicheism and Taoism.²⁰ However we know very little indeed about the period between the year 842, that is, the year of Glan Dar-ma's assassination by a Buddhist monk, and approximately 950. These hundred years are usually described as the most obscure period of Tibetan history. Judging from the few Tun-huang documents relating to that century all kinds of religious practices were in vogue and, further, due to political anarchy no central authority existed to check religious speculation which was productive of new ideas, such as the conception of "Primordial Purity" (*ka dag*). These speculations were important elements contributing to the development of Tibetan Buddhism in the 11th century, among which the Rdzogs-chen doctrine stands out as one of the most important developments of the period.

Although the element which predominantly constitutes the Rdzogs-chen is tantric, it seems to be the product of purely Tibetan speculation, formed out of various Buddhist and non-Buddhist elements when monastic discipline had totally broken down, while other religious practices had become wide-spread and the country itself was in a state of political chaos. Another source which inspired the Rdzogs-chen is thought to be the Indian "School of the Mahāsiddhas,"²¹ but we find no evidence of any texts containing the teaching of this "school" being translated during the reigns of the kings preceding Glan Dar-ma. None are mentioned in the early catalogues like the *Ldan kar dkar chag* and we know that the cycle of *Dohās* was translated only in the 11th century.²² However this does not contradict the fact that there are parallel ideas in these songs and Rdzogs-chen. On the other hand, the Ch'an school was fairly well known in Tibet in the 8th century and its teaching persisted in

20 See R.A. Stein, *L'Annuaire du Collège de France* (1978-79), pp. 551-552; "Une mention du manichéisme dans le choix du Bouddhisme comme religion d'état par le roi tibétain Khri-sron lde-bcan," in *Indianisme et Bouddhisme, Mélanges offerts à Mgr Étienne Lamotte* (Louvain, 1980), p. 334.

21 *MBT*, pp. 102-110. For a discussion of the possibility of the existence of Rdzogs-chen in Tibet before the official introduction of Buddhism, see Per Kvaerne, "Aspects of the origin of the Buddhist tradition in Tibet," *Numen* 19 (1972), pp. 36-40; cf. also Namkai Norbu, *The necklace of gZi, a Cultural History of Tibet* (Dharamsala, 1981), pp. 17-19.

22 See H.V. Guenther, *The Royal Song of Saraha* (Seattle and London 1969), p. 15.

certain areas right up to the time of the persecution. It is therefore likely that it made some contribution to the development of Rdzogs-chen thought during the period in question.

That Rdzogs-chen is one Tibetan Buddhist doctrine that steps out of the mainstream of orthodox teachings is certainly the case, for its central theory of "Primordial Purity" presupposes the existence of a positive entity within oneself.²³ The element that makes it even more unorthodox is the concept of the material body dissolving totally into light as the supreme attainment. It is this element that gives rise to the suspicion of Bon-po influence in the Rdzogs-chen doctrine.²⁴ Little is known concerning the state of this teaching in the 8th century, since we cannot totally exclude the existence of texts containing similar ideas. We know with certainty, however, that Rdzogs-chen emerges as a distinctive doctrine during the 10th century, still feeble but having the force to become controversial.

I now will return to the question of the five texts of Vairocana. One of these seems to be a good example of the type of work that may have been composed in the latter half of the 9th century. It is entitled *Rig pa'i khu byug*, *The Cuckoo of the Intellect*, and is the first of the five texts which are traditionally called *sna 'gyur lna*, the "five early translations." These are included in the group of eighteen texts known as *Sems sde bco brgyad*,²⁵ which are presented in the *Rñin ma rgyud 'bum* as translated works. The *Rig pa'i khu byug* begins with what seems to be a fake Sanskrit title which reads: *san ti dar pa*, the equivalent of which is given as *Rdzogs pa chen po sa gcig pa*. Now the word *santi*, often preceded by *mahā*, is usually given as the equivalent of the Tibetan expression *rdzogs pa chen po*, but the term

²³ See Sog-bzlog-pa Blo-gros rgyal-mtshan, *Rgyal ba'i dbaṅ po Karma pa mi bskyod rdo rjes gsaṅ snags rñin ma pa rnam la dri ba'i chab śog gnaṅ ba'i dris lan lun daṅ rigs pa'i 'brug sgra*, Ngagyur Nyingmay Sungrab Series, vol. 2 (Gangtok, 1971) pp. 79-80.

²⁴ See Dbal-man Dkon-mchog rgyal-mtshan (1764-1853), *Bden gtam sñin rje'i rol mtsho las zur du phyuṅ ba sa rñin bka' brgyud sogs kyi khyad par mgo smos tsam mu to'i rgyaṅ 'bod kyi tshul du bya gtoṅ sñan sgron bdud rtsi'i bsaṅ gtor*, in *The Collected Works of Dbal-man-dkon-mchog-rgyal-mtshan*, vol. 6 (Delhi 1974), no. II, pp. 283-284.

²⁵ For a list of the texts and their references, see S.G. Karmay, "An Open letter by Pho-brang Zhi-ba-'od to the Buddhists in Tibet," *The Tibet Journal*, vol. 5, no. 3 (1980), p. 25, n. 101.

santi itself remains as obscure in its origin as it does in meaning. So, too, the word *dar pa*,²⁶ which hardly corresponds to its supposed Tibetan translation, *sa gcig pa*, the "single stage." While the expression *sa gcig pa* occurs in Rdzogs-chen texts, the *Rig pa'i khu byug* is itself never referred to by this title. The title *Rig pa'i khu byug* itself is given at the end of the text suggesting that it has no equivalent Sanskrit title. The text is very short and is composed in verse. There are only six lines and the sense remains suggestive and cryptic.

I have undertaken elsewhere to discuss the place of the *Rig pa'i khu byug* in relation to contemporary texts and other works which may have preceded it, as well as its important and positive role in the development of the Rdzogs-chen thought and literature of later centuries.²⁷ Here an attempt is made to render the verses into English along with the Tibetan text. This is not the place to provide a long list of all the later Rdzogs-chen *tantras* in which these verses form a kind of nucleus. It will suffice to give just one example: the same verses are inserted in the *Kun byed rgyal po*²⁸ as the 31st chapter of that work, under the title *Rdo rje tshig drug*.²⁹ The *Kun byed rgyal po* is one of the major works on Rdzogs-chen dating back beyond the 11th century, but, again, it is very controversial. It also pretends to be of Indic origin.

The antiquity of the *Rig pa'i khu byug* is proved by the fact that there exists a manuscript version of it among the Tun-huang documents. It is No. 746 of the Sir Aurel Stein collection of Tun-huang manuscripts preserved in the India Office Library in London.³⁰ In this manuscript there is neither the Sanskrit title, nor any sign that it is a translated work. In fact no title at all is given. However the text is followed in the manuscript by what seems to be a short commentary which is extremely important for understanding the text. This is anonymous as are the verses themselves. It appears

26 Perhaps this is derived from the Sanskrit *dharā*, "earth": *dharā* > *dhar* > *dar pa*.

27 See my thesis referred to in n. 10, above.

28 *Bka' 'gyur*, vol. 9, no. 451; *NG Ka*. For further discussion of this work, see S.G. Karmay, "A discussion on the doctrinal position of rDzogs chen from the 10th to the 13th centuries," *Journal Asiatique* (1975), pp. 147-151 & 154.

29 *NG Ka*, fol. 96-97.

30 Louis de la Vallée Poussin, *Catalogue of the Tibetan Manuscripts from Tun-huang in the India Office Library* (London, 1962).

from the commentary that the text in fact has three titles: 1) *Rig pa'i khu byug*, 2) *Rig byed snañ ba'i rgyan*, 3) *Rdo rje tshig drug*. The commentary explains the first title as being a simile (*dpe*), whereas the second title is said to accord with the subject-matter (*don*), and the third with the number of verses.³¹ As we have seen, the second and third titles are not given in the version contained in the *Rñiñ ma rgyud 'bum*, but the text is often known in later works on Rdzogs-chen, i.e. those of the 11th century and later, under the title *Rdo rje tshig drug*.³² The commentary, too, gives no indication whatsoever that the text might be a work translated from another language. The fact that a commentary is joined to the text in the Tun-huang manuscript proves that its composition goes back in time to a very early period, but it does not give the impression that it was written by the author of the basic text.

The manuscript is in the traditional format, with six lines on each side of the folia, and it is written in the 'bru ma script, i.e. a mixture of *dbu can* and *dbu med*. Like all the Tun-huang documents our manuscript no doubt goes back beyond the 11th century, but just how far back it goes is at present a matter of conjecture. In my opinion it does not date so far back as the 8th century. Neither of the libraries in London and Paris, where most of the Tun-huang manuscripts are preserved, as yet has the kind of service required for examining the materials which might enable us to determine the age of the manuscript.

In the Rdzogs-chen tradition of the Bon-po the cuckoo plays an important role in the legendary account of the transmission of the precepts. One sage is called Bar-snañ khu-byug, the "Cuckoo of Space."³³ In this connection there certainly exists a Bon-po work also entitled *Rig pa'i khu byug*.³⁴ It is not available at present and

³¹ fol. 4b, l. 6: *rig pa'i khu byug ni dpe/ rig byed snañ ba'i rgyan ni don/ rdo rje tshig drug ni grañs/*

³² Roñ-zom Chos-kyi-bzañ-po, *Theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa*, in *Roñ zom bka' 'bum* (*po-ti*, n.p., n.d.), fol. 210. A short analysis of this work will be included in my thesis.

³³ Spa Bstan-rgyal bzañ-po (early 16th century), *Rdzogs pa chen po źañ źuñ sñan rgyud kyi brgyud pa'i bla ma'i rnam thar: History and doctrine of the Bonpo Nişpanna-yoga*, Śatapiṭaka Series, vol. 73 (Delhi, 1968), text Ka, pp. 10-11.

³⁴ Śar-rdza Bkra-śis rgyal-mtshan (1859-1935), *Dbyiñs rig rin po che'i mdzod gsañ ba nes pa'i rgyan* (lithographic edition, Delhi, ca. 1956), vol. Ka, fol. 26a, l. 3.

does not seem to be the same as our text, to judge from the few lines quoted in other Bon-po works. It will be certainly interesting to make comparisons if and when it turns up.

In conclusion, the five texts which the Rñin-ma-pa tradition presents as translations made by Vairocana in the 8th century are most probably Tibetan works. In any case the *Rig pa'i khu byug* was almost certainly written by a Tibetan author in the latter half of the 9th century. All the five texts contain a teaching which is a syncretism of the doctrine of "Primordial Purity" and tantric practice, developed during the period that has been under consideration.

Translation of the Tun-huang manuscript version of the Tibetan text.

(fol.1a) *Svasti*. Homage to the great bliss of the indestructible body, speech and mind of the most perfect, All Good, most glorious among the glorious:

- (1) The nature of phenomenal existence is not dual.
- (2) The parts themselves are devoid of conceptualization.
- (3) They are as they are, not to be thought of.
- (4) All Good shines forth in all forms.
- (5) Having grasped it, abandon the ill of striving.
- (6) Dwelling in spontaneity, leave things as they are.

The Tun-huang manuscript version of the Tibetan text (Stein 647).

(fol.1a, l.1) svasti dpal gyi dpal/ bcom ldan 'das/ kun tu¹ bzañ po/ sku
gsuñ thugs rdo rje bde ba chen po la phyag 'tshal lo/ (l.2)

- (1) sna tsogs rañ bzin myi gñis kyañ/
- (2) cha śas ñid du spros dañ bral/
- (3) ji bzin pa² zes myi rtogs kyañ/
- (4) rnam par snañ mdzad kun tu³ (l.3) bzañ/
- (5) zin pas rtsol ba'i nad spañs te/
- (6) lhun gyis⁴ gnas pa bzag⁵ pa yin// //

**The Tibetan text contained in the *Rñin ma rgyud 'bum*
(Vol. Ka, fol. 419).**

(1.1) rgya gar skad du/ san ti dar pa/ bod skad du/ rdzogs pa chen po
sa gcig pa/ svasti/ (1.2) dpal gyi dpal/ bcom ldan 'das kun tu bzan po
sku gsun thugs rdo rje bde ba chen po lhun gyis rdzogs pa la phyag
'tshal lo/

(1) sna tshogs rañ bzin mi gñis kyañ/

(2) cha śas ñid du spros (1.3) dañ brañ/

(3) ji bñin pa źes myi rtog kyañ/

(4) rnam par snañ mdzad kun tu bzañ/

(5) zin pas rtsol ba'i nad spañs te/

(6) lhun gyis gnas pas bźa⁶ pa yin//

byañ chub kyi sems rig pa khu byug (1.4) rdzogs so//

¹ du. ² ba. ³ du. ⁴ kyis. ⁵ gzag. ⁶ gzag.

**A RÑIN-MA TEXT:
THE KUN BYED RGYAL PO'I MDO**

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The present article reflects the first phase of my studies of the *Kun byed rgyal po'i mdo*, a Buddhist text which evoked my interest some years ago when the collection of ancient *tantras* (*Rñin ma rgyud 'bum*), in the form of a modern reprint, became accessible to scholars in the West in 1973. The language and imagery of this text are distinctly different from what we find in the majority of tantric Buddhist texts, since it addresses the ultimate in a personal form using words usually reserved for approaching the supreme God (*īśvara*) in Hinduism. Questions about the text may be raised. For example, is it a genuine Buddhist text? What is its history? Who are the masters who commented upon it? To which stream of the tradition does the text belong? In my quest for answers I studied some of the sources relevant to the discussion of the authenticity of the ancient *tantras* in general and I tried to locate this particular text within the Buddhist tradition of Tibet. Finally I chose to translate several paragraphs from the original to illustrate its unusual character.

Because of its unusual content one might be inclined to see in the *Kun byed rgyal po'i mdo* (KBG) an inauthentic work. For this reason a brief discussion of some aspects regarding the Rñin-ma *tantras*' authenticity will be helpful. Sum-pa-mkhan-po Ye-śes-dpal-'byor (1704-1788), who is considered a key witness against the authenticity of Rñin-ma scriptures, states:

At this time some lay tantrics were hiding themselves when practicing the *tantras*; [therefore] they [remained] undisclosed to the kings and their ministers [who could] not punish [them for this reason]. Later, when they briefly instructed their own sons and disciples according to their opinion and in an inadequate way, [the secret teachings] gradually were disclosed and spread. Their religious practice got mixed up with Bon [elements], and they

performed [Buddhist] meditation in the way of a Bon chant. Not understanding what their own intellectual capacity and the meaning of the *tantras* were they apprehended all [the tantric texts] word for word. They cultivated various disgusting performances, e.g., such coarse cults as “unifying” [i.e. ritual intercourse] and “liberating” [i.e. killing for sacrificial purpose], thereby ruining the original pure tantric doctrine. I think that what is known by the Rñin-ma-pas as *bka'-ma*, *gter-ma*, and other arbitrary teachings came into existence due to this situation.¹

This passage occurs in a chapter dealing with the start of the *phyi dar*, the later propagation of Buddhism in Tibet. G. Tucci used this paragraph to comment on the nature of the collected ancient *tantras*, although they are not so named by Sum-pa-mkhan-po therein:

The Rñin-ma-pa founded their doctrine on a vast collection of Tantric texts whose character is prevalently magical, revealed, according to tradition, by the *mKha'-'gro-ma*. But the other schools refuse to accept them as authentic and consider them to have been concocted in the course of time by lay exorcists (*khyim snags*) on the basis of an unorthodox tradition and with the insertion of many *bon* elements. They form a collection called *rGyud 'bum*, which enjoys great authority with the “Ancients.”²

Later in his work, when discussing the Rñin-ma tradition Sum-pa-mkhan-po states:

Although [the Rñin-ma-pas] say that the Eighteen Tantras of King Rdza were proclaimed by Indrabodhi, Simharāja, the princess Gomadevi and others, is it not the case that after Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, etc., had instructed only a few intelligent disciples in the oral tradition of the secret doctrine in full concordance with the [reliable] sources, that in later time some words were added [to the original texts],

¹ Sum-pa-mkhan-po, *Pag Sam Jon Zang* [i.e., *Dpag bsam ljon bzai*], ed. by Sarat Chandra Das (Calcutta: Presidency Jail Press, 1908), pt. II, p. 176, 1-6.

² G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Rome: La Libreria dello Stato, 1949), vol. I, p. 88.

thus falsifying them through obstinacy and individual fabrication? As they publicized [the altered versions], does that not imply Kun-tu-bzañ-po, Padmasambhava, and Vimalamitra to be promoters of lies?³

In a carefully worded sentence Sum-pa-mkhan-po thus questions whether the later Rñin-ma-pas might not have altered some parts of the original *tantras* whose authenticity he fully accepts. While not doubting the genuine nature of the original texts, he opens the door to a critical analysis of the development of the texts. Sum-pa-mkhan-po's contemporary Thu'u-bkwan Chos-kyi-ñi-ma (1737-1802) replies to the former's allegations:

With regard to the [alleged] falsifications, an intelligent person willing to investigate the situation thoroughly will recognize [some faults] not only and exclusively in the Rñin-ma tradition but in all traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.⁴

Four centuries earlier Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub (1290-1364) had excluded the so-called Rñin-ma *tantras* from the *Kanjur* when he arranged the translated Buddhist scriptures in the Tibetan *Tripitaka*. In his *Chos 'byun chen mo* he provides some interesting details:

The Rñin-ma *tantras* from the period of the earlier translations: the great *lo-tśā-ba* Rin-chen-bzañ-po, Lha-bla-ma Ye-śes-'od, Pho-bran Ži-ba-'od, 'Gos-khug-pa Lhas-btsas and others said that [these *tantras*] are not authentic. Yet according to the statement of two of my lamas, Smra-ba-ñi-ma'i-mtshan-can and Rig-ral, the Sanskrit originals do exist in Bsam-yas, while the Sanskrit original of the *Phur pa rtsa ba'i dum bu'i rgyud* was discovered in Nepal. Therefore [these texts] ought to be authentic *tantras*. Thus I, being not only apparently ignorant but also actually so, should be forced through a mischievous evil fate to have doubts about the Dharma! For this reason I prefer to remain impartial

³ Sum-pa-mkhan-po, op. cit., p. 386, 24-28.

⁴ Thu'u-bkwan Chos-kyi-ñi-ma, *Grub mtha' thams cad kyi khuns dan 'dod tshul ston pa legs bśad śel gyi me lon las bod yul du btsan pa sna phyi dan gsañ snags rñin ma'i grub mtha' byun tshul bžugs so* (New Delhi: Ngawang Gelek Demo, n.d.), fol. 14a.8-14b.1.

and to cause no harm.⁵

According to Bu-ston, although the Rñin-ma *tantras* should not be included in the *Kanjur*, they should not be repudiated. Two of Bu-ston's teachers had seen Sanskrit originals of the Rñin-ma *tantras* in Bsam-yas, the place where the translating committee under king Khri Sron-lde-btsan (8th century) worked. This is a remark of striking significance for all our endeavours in tracing the history of Buddhist traditions in Tibet. Buddhist masters who were not members of the Rñin-ma school testify to the existence of Sanskrit originals of those Buddhist *tantras* which later Tibetan scholars considered to have been forged. If we accept this remark, then we may expect that one day some of the originals of the *Rñin ma rgyud 'bum* will be discovered.

Kun-dga' rdo-rje (alias Si-tu Dge-ba'i-blo-gros), like Bu-ston a prominent Tibetan scholar of the 14th century, composed a catalogue describing the *Kanjur* edited at the monastery of Tshal-guñ-than, situated on the banks of the Skyid-chu about twenty miles east of Lhasa. Unfortunately this catalogue has not yet been found.⁶ However we do know Kun-dga'-rdo-rje's famous *Deb-ther-dmar-po*, a historical work composed in 1346. A modern Rñin-ma author, 'Jigs-med-gling-pa (1729-1798), makes a very informative statement with regard to Kun-dga'-rdo-rje's *Kanjur* edition:

Further, the all-knowing Si-tu, who was said to be of sharp intelligence and who possessed unlimited self-confidence, included [the Rñin-ma *tantras*] in the *Tshal-pa Kanjur* and said that Bu-ston should indeed be reproved. In this *Kanjur* edition the entire *Mdo-sgyu-sems-gsum* [i.e. the basic scripture of the Rñin-ma School] is included.⁷

⁵ Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub, *Chos 'byun chen mo*, in *Collected Works*, pt. 24, vol. Ya, ed. by Lokesh Chandra (New Delhi, 1971), p. 990.2.

⁶ A.I. Vostrikov, *Tibetan Historical Literature* (Calcutta, 1970), pp. 81 and 207.

⁷ 'Jigs-med gliñ-pa, *Sna 'gyur rgyud 'bum rin po che'i rtogs pa brjod pa 'dzam gliñ tha grur khyab pa'i rgyan*, NGB, vol. 34, p. 175.5.

Apparently Kun-dga'-rdo-rje, according to 'Jigs-med-glin'-pa, saw no problem in including the much debated Rñin-ma *tantras* in the Tshal-pa *Kanjur*, while Bu-ston hesitated to include them in his edition. The fact that all contemporary *Kanjur* editions contain some of the Rñin-ma *tantras* contributes to the complexity of the problem. In general, Tibetan scholars have accepted Rñin-ma *tantras* as a genuine part of their Buddhist heritage, although some have doubted the meticulousness of the transmission.

The text of the Kun byed rgyal po and its place in the Buddhist tradition of Tibet

The KBG is a *tantra* found in the Tibetan *Kanjur* and in two collections of *tantras* which were not universally accepted, the *Rñin-ma rgyud 'bum* and *Vairocana rgyud 'bum*.⁸ The KBG has the full Tibetan title *Chos thams cad rdzogs pa chen po byañ chub kyī sems kun byed rgyal po*, which might be translated: *The All-Creating King, Bodhicitta as the great perfection of all phenomena*. The Tibetan text also has a Sanskrit title: *Sarvadharmā-mahāśānti bodhicitta kulayarāja*. This might be translated in a slightly different way: *The Kulayarāja, Bodhicitta as the great silence of all phenomena*. The Sanskrit title poses some problems. Wherever the Tibetan text gives the Sanskrit title the form *kulayarāja* is used, but the word *kulaya* cannot be traced in the Sanskrit vocabulary. The apparently related word *kularāja* is well documented within the context of Kashmirian Śaivism,⁹ and corresponds to the Tibetan term *Kun rigs rgyal po* which is frequently used in the KBG to identify Vajrasattva (e.g., KBG 97ff).

Although the text is well preserved and not an obscure *tantra*, it attracted the attention of only a few Tibetan masters and has been almost totally neglected by Western scholars. Consequently, although my account of its literary history includes all relevant data gathered in several years of research, it is spotty and far from sufficient.

⁸ Cone vol. Dza, 1b.1-92a.1; Snar-thañ vol. Dza, 1b.1-120b.1; Lhasa vol. Dza 1b-123a; TTP vol. Dza (9), p. 93, 1.1-126.5.2; Sde-dge vol. 97, 1b-86a; NGB vol. 1, 1-220, ed. by Jamyang Khyentse; VGB vol. 1, no.4, chapters 58-84, p. 384.1.1-435.5.

⁹ André Padoux, *Récherches sur la symbolique et l'énergie de la parole dans certains textes tantriques*, Publications de l'Institut de Civilisation Indienne, fasc. 21 (Paris: Editions E. de Boccard, 1963), 195ff.

Samten Karmay points out that in 1032 a member of the royal house of Guge, Pho-bran Zi-ba-'od, a nephew of the famous Lha-bla-ma Ye-ses-'od, issued an edict wherein he stated that a text with the title *Kun byed* was a heretical work composed by a man named Draṅ-na Śag-tshul.¹⁰ The authenticity of the Rñin-ma *tantras* in general and of the KBG in particular appears to have been questioned mainly by some of the Tibetan scholars living in Ladakh and Guge during the start of the later period of propagation (*phyi dar*). In the voluminous *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sñon po*) of Tibetan Buddhism the text is mentioned just twice: first when talking about the Rñin-ma master Žig-po-bdud-rtsi; and second with reference to 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba. Žig-po-bdud-rtsi was born in 1149 and died at Gsañ-phu in 1199. He specialized in the study of the *sems sde tantras*. Among the twenty-four great *tantras* of the *sems sde* class were ten texts on *Kun byed*.¹¹ Later he initiated his disciple Rta-ston Jo-yes into some aspects of the *Kun byed rgyal po*. It is significant, too, that despite the relative scarcity of information available on this text 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba G'zon-nu-dpal (1392-1481), the author of the *Blue Annals* who is unanimously acclaimed as an outstanding Tibetan scholar, was introduced to it.¹²

'Jam-mgon Koñ-sprul, a Rñin-ma master of the 19th century, provides a lineage for the *Kun byed rgyal po* that starts with Gda'-rab-rdo-rje, a semi-historical figure who stands at the beginning of the entire Rñin-ma tradition. According to Koñ-sprul, Gda'-rab-rdo-rje handed the doctrine down to Śrīsimha, and he in turn instructed Vairocana who brought the doctrine to Tibet. The thirteenth master in that lineage is the prominent Rñin-ma thinker Kloñ-chen Rab-'byams-pa (1308-1363).¹³ However, as the KBG is thought to be an inherent part of the *sems sde* literature, Tibetans see it as having been uninterruptedly transmitted within the general *sems sde* tradition.

¹⁰ S. Karmay, "The Doctrinal Position of rDzogs chen," *Journal Asiatique* (1975), p. 152.

¹¹ G. Roerich (trans.), *Blue Annals* by 'Gos Lo-tsā-ba G'zon-nu-dpal (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976), pp. 133 and 137.

¹² *Blue Annals*, p. 172.

¹³ 'Jam-mgon Koñ-sprul (ed.), *Gdams ñag mdzod*, vol. 1 (Delhi, 1971), p. 165.

The colophon of the Kun byed rgyal po

In the *Kanjur* version and in the *Vairocana Rgyud 'bum* we find the following colophon:

The Indian master Dpal-gyi-señ-ge-mgon-po (Śrīsimhanātha) and the Bhikṣu Vairocana translated, revised and established (this text). [*rgya gar gyi mkhan po Dpal gyi señ ge mgon po dañ dge sloñ Be ro tsa nas bsgyur ciñ źus te gtan la phab pa'o/*]¹⁴

In the version preserved in the *Rñiñ ma rgyud 'bum* the colophon is very similar:

The Indian master Dpal-gyi-señ-ge-mgon-po and the Tibetan Bhikṣu Vairocana translated, revised and established (this text). [*rgya gar gyi mkhan po Dpal gyi señ ge mgon po dañ/ bod kyī dge sloñ Bai ro tsa nas bsgyur ciñ źus te gtan-la phab pa'o/*]¹⁵

The wording of all three colophons is identical, except that the NGB colophon calls the Bhikṣu Vairocana a Tibetan. The person under discussion is clearly Vairocana of Pa-gor, a prominent figure in the early spread of Buddhism in Tibet.

However Kaḥ-thog 'Gyur-med-tshe-dbañ-mchog-grub, an 18th century hierarch of Kaḥ-thog monastery,¹⁶ makes a remarkable statement in his catalogue of the NGB.¹⁷ He reports that Śrīsimha

¹⁴ TTP, vol. 9, p. 126.5.2; VGB, vol. 1, p. 126.5.2.

¹⁵ NGB, vol. 1, p. 220.3.

¹⁶ So far I have been unable to find a biography of Kaḥ-thog 'Gyur-med-tshe-dbañ-mchog-grub, however a disciple's biography has been published by Khetsun Sangpo, *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1973), vol. IV (2), p. 469-473. According to this source, the disciple, 'Gyur-med-mthu-stobs-rnam-rgyal, was born in 1787. He is said to have studied under the guidance of his teacher for five years (op. cit., p. 470). So we have good reason to place Kaḥ-thog 'Gyur-med-tshe-dbañ-mchog-grub in the late 18th century.

¹⁷ Kaḥ-thog 'Gyur-med-tshe-dbañ-mchog-grub, *Rgyud 'bum rin po che'i rtogs pa brjod pa lha'i rna bo che lta bu'i gtam*. NGB, vol. 36. 498.5-499.1

and Pa-gor Vairocana translated the first 57 chapters of the KBG, while the Indian master Dpal-gyi-señ-ge-mgon-po (Śrīsimhanātha) and the Bhikṣu Vairocana translated the remaining 37 chapters (nos. 58-84) of this text. In other words, he thinks there were two committees of translators working on the KBG, the first consisting of Śrīsimha and Pa-gor Vairocana and the second of Śrīsimhanātha and Bhikṣu Vairocana. Examining the text itself, I was surprised to find that chapter 58 is called an introductory one (*glen gzi le'u*), regardless of the consecutive numbering of the chapters. As the translators' names in both committees are so similar one might doubt whether such a coincidence is even possible. Perhaps, one might guess, Kaḥ-thog 'Gyur-med-tshe-dbañ-mchog-grub became confused owing to various versions of the translators' names. In the Tōhoku Catalogue of the Sde-dge *Kanjur* the translators' names are given as Śrīsimhaprabha and Vairocana.¹⁸

Pa-gor Vairocana, who all Tibetan sources agree was one of the first seven Tibetans ordained as a Buddhist monk,¹⁹ is a well known historical figure from the era of king Khri Sroñ-lde-btsan.²⁰ The Rñin-ma tradition sees him as Śrīsimha's disciple and accepts him as the main proponent of the Rdzogs-chen theory in Tibet. Further, Śrīsimha is said to have introduced Pa-gor Vairocana into the *sems sde* teachings. However it remains uncertain whether Śrīsimhanātha or Śrīsimhaprabhanātha, the master mentioned in the colophon of the KBG, and Śrīsimha, the Rdzogs chen master, are identical.

¹⁸ Hakaju Ui et al (eds.), *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canons* (Sendai: Tōhoku Imperial University, 1934), p. 138.

¹⁹ G. Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts*, Serie Orientale Roma No. IX (2) (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1958), p. 16.

²⁰ D.L. Snellgrove (trans.), *The Hevajra Tantra, A Critical Study*, London Oriental Series, vol. 6 (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), vol. 2, p. vii; S. Karmay, op. cit., p. 149; Tun-huang Ms. Pelliot Tibétain No. 44.

The Kun byed rgyal po: a unique document of Buddhist spirituality

The *tantra* itself is divided into three books, the first of which consists of 57 chapters which explain the dharma that is “similar to the sky,” a metaphor indicating that the ultimate in its limitless entirety is revealed therein. It is mainly concerned with the All-Creating King’s nature, his entourage, and the relationship between them, i.e. the discussion focuses on the problem of the immanence and transcendence of the ultimate. This first book exists in the versions preserved in the NGB and in the *Kanjur*, but it is missing in the VGB. Apart from minor differences in the actual wording, the chapters in both versions are identical.

The central figure of the *tantra* is Kun-byed-rgyal-po, the All-Creating King; he is the One who is at the beginning and end of the universe. He is immanent in all existent phenomena, but at the same time transcends all phenomena. He exists prior to all Buddhas and all impermanent phenomena. His entourage are reflections of his own nature and constitute the entire created world. One of the most distinctive statements asserting the ultimate reality of the All-Creating King is found in the sixth chapter:

Because with regard to me, the All-Creating One, everything is perfect, the meaningfulness of the pure perfect mind (*byañ chub sems*, Skt. *bodhicitta*) is this greatness. As this is so, the root of all phenomena is pure perfect mind, the All-Creator. Whatever appears [as phenomenon], that is my nature. Whatever originates does so due to my miraculous activity. Whatever originates as word and sound emanates from the meaningfulness of my person, being word and sound. The Buddhas’ appearances, their wisdom and qualities, as well as creatures’ bodies and mental tendencies, etc., and whatever appears or exists as a [physical] receptacle (*snod*) or [mental] essence (*bcud*), condensed to the entirety of everything, is the nature of pure perfect mind since eternal time. Phenomena [having existed] independently from mind [i.e. *bodhicitta*]-[such a doctrine] was never proclaimed by me, the All-Creating King from whom all Buddhas of past and future emanate. And I, Bodhicitta, the All-Creating King, do not proclaim that such [a phenomenon] exists now or will ever appear.^{2 1}

21 NGB, vol. 1, p. 21.2-6.

The KBG *tantra* explicitly denies any theory of casuality. In the ninth chapter we are told:

Then Bodhicitta, the All-Creating King, proclaimed that outside of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs pa chen po*) is sheer error and defilement, as the Vehicle of Causality is wrong in its soteriology. Hey, Mahāsattva, mind's nature is such: it is the essence of all phenemona. It is taintless, as it is unborn and perfectly pure; being detached from soteriology it is without error. As [mind] is perfect since eternal time there is nothing to seek. Pure perfect mind (*byaṅ chub sems*) is the essence of all phenomena. Error and defilement arise from multitude. As there is nothing to attain, error originates from attainment.^{2 2}

The second book consists of twelve chapters (nos. 58-69) which present the viewpoint that nothing in the field of the Dharma can ever be developed or attained, as the real nature of all phenomena is the All-Creating King, signifying ultimate perfection. This theme is explained in its various aspects. The third book consists of fifteen chapters (nos. 70-84), most of them elaborating the theory of non-activity (*bya rtsol dan bral ba*). The Buddhist yogin should reside in the heart or essence of all phenomena, where there is no defilement, nothing to be abandoned, nothing to be sought. The last three chapters praise the excellence of the doctrine revealed in the KBG Tantra. These last two books are also found in all three versions of the text that I have consulted.

These few sentences which are quoted above from the first book of the KBG demonstrate how unique this text is in the Buddhist world. The study of the KBG might result in modifying our present understanding of the ultimate as given in the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna context. So far most scholars might agree that those traditions never developed a philosophical concept of God nor adopted theistic jargon in their canonical texts. The KBG however makes it very clear that at least at a certain point the Vajrayāna tradition formulated a philosophically defined concept of the absolute in theistic language, which portrayed the absolute as a person. Examining the KBG will also show that this image of the absolute is in accordance with the fundamental thought of Yogācāra, where mind is the hub of the entire universe. The KBG identifies this Mind with the absolute

²² Ibid., pp. 30.5-31.1.

and addresses it as “king.” It is my impression that we would be utterly wrong to see here a deviation from the main path of Buddhist philosophy, although the study of this text may eventually alter the hitherto approved interpretation of the absolute.

Abbreviations

KBG	<i>Kun byed rgyal po'i mdo</i>
NGB	<i>Rñin ma rgyud 'bum</i> , ed. by Jamyang Khyentse. Thimphu, 1973.
TTP	<i>Tibetan Tripitaka: Peking Edition</i> , ed. by D.T. Suzuki.
VGB	<i>Vairocana Rgyud 'bum</i>

THE TIBETAN TRANSLATION OF THE MANJUSŪRĪ-NĀMA-SAMGĪTĪ

abstract

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The *Mañjuśrī-nāma-samgīti* is probably the most popular of the tantric texts among the various Tibetan sects. It has numerous commentaries in the Tibetan *Tanjur*, both in the *Anuttaratantra* section and the *Yogatantra* section of the translation canon. I have translated this work from Sanskrit and Tibetan, using the Peking parallel text which includes *Lan-tsha* script, transcription of the Sanskrit into Tibetan script, and the Tibetan translation. This is used in addition to the Sanskrit edition by I.P. Minaeff published in 1885, and with the help of, and notes from, three *Tanjur* commentaries consulted throughout—those by *Smṛtijñānakīrti*, *Candrabhadrakīrti* and *Narendrakīrti*—along with samples from several other *Tanjur* commentaries. A few corrections were necessary, both in Minaeff's edition and in the Peking blockprint edition. For the Tibetan text I found helpful a very carefully edited Dharamsala, H.P., edition of the Tibetan version.

This annotated translation is the basis for a book scheduled for publication by Shambhala Publications in 1984 under the title *Chanting the Names of Mañjuśrī*. My paper on the Tibetan translation of this text is included as a chapter in this work, along with other chapters on the basic ideas, citations in Nāropa's commentary on the *Hevajratantra*, and the seven *maṇḍalas*, as well as indices of the Sanskrit first *pādas*, Tibetan first lines, and a general index to the translation and annotations by chapter and verse numbers.

The Tibetan translation is called '*Phags pa 'jam dpal gyi mtshan yañ dag par brjod pa*. Rin-chen-bzan-po's translation into Tibetan was assisted by the Indian paṇḍita Kamalagupta. Later the text was revised by Śoṅ Blo-gros brtan-pa, whose possible contribution is discussed in the paper as restricted to the normalizing of writing, since the great translator wrote, e.g., *bstan chos* for *bstan bcos* and the numeral *gñis bcu* for *ñi śu*.

The *Saṃgīti* is basically not divided into chapters for recitation purposes or for citations as by Nāropa. The Peking blockprint of the Sanskrit-Tibetan divides it into thirteen chapters, as does the Sde-dge *Kanjur* edition; and the commentators divide it into chapters. My translation also respects the chapter divisions.

It is well known that translators must use the established Sanskrit-Tibetan equivalences, and are normally permitted a certain leeway in moving about the contents within the Tibetan verses, which are here in the most common form, four lines of seven syllables each. However the six chapters five through ten, treating the Vajradhātu (Diamond Realm) and the five Wisdoms (*jñāna*, *yeśes*), had to be translated in a special way because they contain what the name of the work refers to, the “names” of Mañjuśrī. These names intend, as the commentator *Smṛti* explains, “You, Mañjuśrī, are”; and they go mainly by metrical feet, of which there are four in each verse. Hence, for these six chapters the translator is not permitted a spill-over from one line to the next among the four lines. The most simple case can be illustrated by Chap. VIII, verse 10:

ñon moṅs dri ma kun las 'das //
dus gsum dus med rtogs pa po //
sems can kun gyi gtso bo che //
yon tan thod can rnam kyī thod //

Translation: “Having transcended all defilement and dirt, comprehends the three times and the timeless; the great leader of all sentient beings, who is the crest of meritorious crests.”

There are more subtle patterns, still requiring the translation of the four Sanskrit metrical feet by individual seven-syllable lines.

I noted some striking variants, using the versions available to me and the Nāropa citations. Especially to be mentioned in Chap. V, 2a, Peking and Dharamsala texts, is the line *khon nas byun ba skye ba med* where other versions correctly have *srog chen po ste*, which I believe was Rin-chen-bzan-po's rendition, instead of *khon nas byun ba*.

THE MEDIATING BUDDHA

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Introduction

The following is a discussion of Rdo-rje-'chañ (Vajradhara) as the first member of the Śaṅs-pa lineage. It is based on Judith Hanson's preliminary translation of the *Hagiography of Buddha Vajradhara*,¹ the first in the set of Śaṅs-pa Bka'-brgyud-pa hagiographies (*rnam-thar*) known as the *Golden Rosary of the Śaṅs-pa Bka'-brgyud*. The set commences with the *rnam-thar* of Vajradhara, continues through those of the *jñānaḍākinī*s Niguma (Nāropa's sister) and Sukhasiddhi, through that of Khyuñ-po rnal-'byor and those of the other members of the lineage up to Tāranātha.

While studying the first few of these *rnam-thars* we became aware of Vajradhara's importance in them and of the inadequacy of our understanding of this figure. That is, with such *rnam-thars* as those of Nāropa and Mi-la-ras-pa as models, we had been regarding a *rnam-thar* as (1) an account of the realization of a normative *dharma* within a specific historical situation and (2) an account of the transmission of doctrine from the subject's predecessor to his successor. We had regarded Vajradhara as a symbol for the source of the doctrine, as some sort of primordial Buddha.

In the case of the early volumes of the *Golden Rosary*, especially the Vajradhara *rnam-thar*, these assumptions cannot both be true. If Vajradhara is a source, how could his *rnam-thar* show either transmission or realization? Our assumptions either about Vajradhara or about the nature of *rnam-thar* had to be incorrect. We now believe that it was the notion of Vajradhara as "source" that

¹ Rmogs-lcogs-pa, *Śaṅs-rgyas rdo-rje 'chañ-gi rnam-par thar-pa*, in *Śaṅs-pa gser-'phreñ: A Golden Rosary of Lives of Masters of the Śaṅs-pa dKar-brgyud-pa* (sic) *School*, reproduced from the Dpal-spuñs tsa-'dra hermitage edition by Tashi Yangphel Tashigangpa (Leh, 1970). All page references given in the body of this paper are to this text.

was incorrect. In this paper we will outline an alternate understanding and suggest ways in which this may clarify the other texts in the *Golden Rosary*.

Nature and structure of the Vajradhara *rnam-thar*

At first glance Vajradhara's *rnam-thar* is puzzling. It is neither a life story nor simply a description of Vajradhara. Rather it is a complex treatise analyzing Buddhahood within a series of frameworks. By examining how the Vajradhara aspect of Buddhahood functions in each framework we can appreciate the general function of the symbol Vajradhara. It is this general function which we will attempt to formulate here. We will begin by noting that the author treats Vajradhara through three basic frameworks or descriptions of Buddhahood:

- (1) *The outer-inner-secret typology.* The outer aspect of Buddhahood is identified with Śākyamuni while the inner is identified with Vajradhara. The secret is implicitly regarded as the *dharmakāya* (see page 4, lines 4-5).
- (2) *The ten stages of the Bodhisattva path.* Our author also uses the notion of progress through ten spiritual stages, with the Buddha appearing somewhat differently to those on each stage. In this text the pattern is as follows:
 - (a) To those aspirants in *samāhita* meditation on any stage whatsoever the Buddha is present as pure *dharmakāya*, devoid of characteristics or activity.
 - (b) For those who have emerged from *samāhita* meditation and are on the first seven stages and above the path of accumulation the Buddha appears as *nirmāṇakāya*, e.g., Śākyamuni.
 - (c) For those who have emerged from *samāhita* meditation and are on the final three pure stages the Buddha appears as *sambhogakāya*, which is identified with Vajradhara.

The three kāyas ("bodies") of the Buddha. This is the central framework. While it is too complex to develop in detail here, we must note that it divides the Buddha into three aspects: *dharmakāya* and two *rūpakayas*, i.e. *nirmāṇakāya* and *sambhogakāya*.

Dharmakāya is perfectly open, spontaneous and, especially to our author, pure. It is not localized either spatially or temporally and is beyond *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*.

Nirmāṇakāyas are the Buddhas active in the world, e.g., Buddha Śākyamuni. Their number and form depend on the expectations of the observer.

Sambhogakāya is the glorified Buddha complete with the 32 and 80 marks, immersed in pleasure and visible only to aspirants on the highest Bodhisattva stages.

In this text the *sambhogakāya* is identified with Vajradhara. This identification is explicit on page 9.5-6:

Sambhogakāya: the teacher Vajradhara who, delighting in all *dharmas* of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa and having perfected all the Buddha-qualities, is the support for the *maṇḍala* of saṃsāra.

It is, however, indirect in the meditational definition of pages 11.6-121.1:

When a living being... becomes a meditator and rests in equality, I call him a *sambhogakāya*.

The identification is implicit in several other instances.

Note that the *trikāya* theory never posits a transcendent, ontologically real Buddha called a *dharmakāya* who enters the world through *avatāras* such as Śākyamuni or who reveals himself in glory as the great bodhisattvas. This frequent misunderstanding renders unintelligible any discussion based on the *trikāya*.

Vajradhara as mediating symbol

As our author proceeds through an analysis of Buddhahood in developing these theories a fairly consistent role for Vajradhara begins to emerge. Very simply it is one of mediation, transmission or linkage. A Buddha is an individual who, having attained an utterly peaceful, open perceptual ability (chiefly through meditation), is able to act in the world for the sake of others. Such a being embodies the polar opposites of quiescence and worldly activity. In this text the gulf between these is bridged by the aspirant's identification with Vajradhara, a symbol which integrates the essential elements of each pole. We will now provide some illustrations of this mediating function.

A. Vajradhara in meditation

(1) In Vajrayāna meditation involving both developing and fulfillment stages the meditator enters a symbolic arena where he manipulates the symbols of himself and others to establish the ideal situation: he himself is utterly pure, i.e. free from driving emotional entanglements, while at the same time assisting others. The pure self is visualized as a state of utterly open characteristiclessness, formless mind-itself, while the action for others is visualized as light flowing out to them. But this light must start from someplace or something. The dilemma is resolved by the development from mind-itself of the *sambhogakāya* or Vajradhara, an anthropomorphic figure whose translucency reveals its origins in the purity and freedom of mind-itself, and whose form provides a locus from which the light can proceed:

Dharmakāya is present as mind-itself, the state as pure as space. *Sambhogakāya* rises from the circle of the *maṇḍala* of mind. *Nirmāṇakāya* is the ebb and flow of light [to and] from [*sambhogakāya*] (p. 11.4-5).

(2) A related mediating function is indicated by the description of the *sambhogakāya* as reorientation of the *manovijñāna*:

In the reorientation of the *manovijñāna*, with the gathering of the Merit-Accumulation as the cause, the result, *sambhogakāya*, is achieved through the practice of Developing Stage meditation (p. 14.4-5).

In the Vijñānavāda theory underlying this text ordinary man's experience (the five active *viññānas*) is related to the ego and its interpretive propensities (the *kliṣṭamanas* and *ālayaviññāna*) by the concept-forming *manovijñāna*. The statement that for the Buddha the *manovijñāna* is reoriented to yield the *sambhogakāya*, places the *sambhogakāya*-Vajradhara in the same position, though now it relates the purity of the *dharmakāya* to the worldly activity of the *nirmāṇakāya*.

(3) Finally several passages (e.g., pp. 4.2 & 16.6-17.1) are based upon the model of the threefold nonconceptual awareness (*nirvikalpajñāna*): the novice meditator's preparatory awareness, the fundamental awareness which supports no concepts whatsoever, and the subsequent awareness by which the meditator functions in the world without being ensnared by concepts. *Sambhogakāya*-

Vajradhara is identified with the latter mediating type of *nirvikalpajñāna*.

B. Vajradhara as cosmic mediator

(1) *Sambhogakāya*-Vajradhara mediates not only between aspects of the enlightened personality, but at its broadest takes on cosmic dimensions: "...death is *dharmakāya*, life is *sambhogakāya*, and birth is *nirmāṇakāya*" (pp. 10.6-11.1). That is, the *sambhogakāya*-Vajradhara, identified with existence (*gnas-pa*) and hence with all living beings, mediates between the irreconcilable promise of birth and negation of death. It is here that we can most clearly perceive the correlation between man as ambiguous creature and Vajradhara as his symbol.

(2) A parallel analysis is applied to the cosmos as container, the physical world: "...space is *dharmakāya*, the four elements are *sambhogakāya*, and the various things which arise from them are *nirmāṇakāya*" (p. 11.2-3). Here, in sound *abhidharmic* fashion, space and the concrete objects of this world are related via the theory of the four great elements. By correlating this with the *kāya* theory the *sambhogakāya*-Vajradhara is again identified with the mediating factor.

C. Freedom and contingency

By far the most important polarity mediated by *sambhogakāya*-Vajradhara is that of freedom-contingency. The Buddha as *dharmakāya* is utterly open, completely free from external constraints. The Buddha as *nirmāṇakāya* is utterly bound by the needs of others, by the contingencies of the situation. The mediating communicative term which makes it possible for the Buddha to act in the world and for the worldly Buddha to remain above worldly pressures is the *sambhogakāya*-Vajradhara. It translates the *dharmakāya*'s freedom from constraint into freedom to act within the contingent world of the *nirmāṇakāya*. This is illustrated at length in the text by comparison of the *sambhogakāya* with the *nirmāṇakāya* under five headings. In each case, the *sambhogakāya*-Vajradhara's characteristic is termed a "certainty" or "autonomous mode" (*nes-pa*) while the corresponding characteristic of the *nirmāṇakāya* is termed a "non-certainty" or "contingent mode" (*ma-nes-pa*). Each "certainty" can be fixed because it carries the freedom to become the "non-certainty" in some concrete situations. A brief survey of the five certainties and five non-certainties will clarify this.

(1) *Realm*: While the *nirmāṇakāya* acts wherever it is needed, the *sambhogakāya*-Vajradhara operates in "...[the realm] called the home of Vajrayoṣit, which springs from the world-transcending roots of wholesome action and possesses the complete array of all Buddhas' attributes" (p. 19.1-2). The home of Vajrayoṣit is primarily a meditational symbol indicating the *dharmakāya*'s pure mind-itself. Thus the *sambhogakāya*-Vajradhara which springs from it is primarily the visualized figure (discussed previously) which here mediates between the non-spatial state of openness and the needs of others who exist in specific places.

(2) *Teacher*: Similarly the *nirmāṇakāya* as teacher takes a form totally determined by the expectations and needs of those to whom it appears. It may be a human Buddha such as Śākyamuni, another type of being (as in the *Jātakas*), or even a skill. The inner nature of these is *sambhogakāya*-Vajradhara, defined as "...the possessor of all Buddhas' awareness and enlightened attitude..." (20/1-2). That is, while the teacher's form is contingent, his intention, symbolized by Vajradhara, is fixed by realization of openness and by the bodhisattva vow.

(3) *Followers*: While the *nirmāṇakāya* appears to all sentient beings, the *sambhogakāya* appears "...[only] to male and female wrathful and other such deities, to Tathāgatas, Bodhisattvas on the three pure stages and to the Lords of the Three Families [Mañjuśrī, Vajrapāṇi and Avalokiteśvara]. The teacher and his followers are of one nature" (p. 21.5). That is, the inner aspect of Śākyamuni is directly accessible only as a basic meditative experience which the aspirant may share when he reaches the highest stages. Note that this also overcomes the gulf between self and other.

(4) *Dharma*: While the *nirmāṇakāya* preaches 84,000 different types of messages depending on the auditor's concerns, all of them are contained in the Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna. Thus the Mahāyāna mediates between the *dharma* as experienced on the higher stages and the message which is comprehensible to ordinary beings.

(5) *Time*: While the lifespan of the *nirmāṇakāya* depends upon the requests of his followers, the *sambhogakāya* is always present: "The countless *sambhogakāyas* which continually remain are saṃsāra in its pure manifestation" (p. 23.3-4). That is, the atemporal *dharmakāya* is related to the time-bound *nirmāṇakāya* via the *sambhogakāya*. The key to this concept of "saṃsāra in its pure manifestation," is the previously noted psychological idea of a "reorientation of the *manovijñāna*" and the cosmological idea of the *sambhogakāya* as existence and as the four great elements.

D. Application

We can now affirm that the Vajradhara *rnam-thar* does not invalidate our initial understanding of that type of literature. It is clearly an account, albeit an abstract one, of the existential appearance of the *dharma*, and it is also an account of the transmission of the *dharma* to the historical lineage. We have indicated how the view of Vajradhara as mediating symbol can clarify the text. In conclusion we will outline one possible application of this view to the broader study of the Sañs-pa lineage.

The historical Tibetan lineage commences with Khyuñ-po, a meditator who supplemented his early Bon-po and Rñin-ma-pa training with doctrines obtained while visiting India. However he did not simply receive the Indian teachings and go home. His *rnam-thar* shows him still dissatisfied until he encounters the *jñāna-dākinī*s Niguma and Sukhasiddhi. It is difficult to discern the reason for this dissatisfaction, since the *jñāna-dākinī*s' *rnam-thars*, as well as their appearances in Khyuñ-po's, are complex mythological statements. On the basis of the above considerations we suggest that the figure of Vajradhara is the key to understanding these statements. Niguma and Sukhasiddhi were taught by Vajradhara and both maintain close contact, almost identity, with him. In Khyung-po's *rnam-thar* we read,

...he wandered all over India...inquiring, "Who is a *siddhaguru* who has actually met the Buddha?" *Pañditas* and *siddhas* agreed that the *pañdita* Nāropa's sister, the *jñāna-dākinī* Niguma who abides in the three pure stages, was one who had the ability to actually request religious instruction from the great Vajradhara. [Khyuñ-po] asked them where she presently resided. They replied, "With pure perception you may see her anywhere. Without pure perception you will not find her...."²

And again,

...he arrived in western India and inquired, "Who is a *guru* who has actually met the Buddha?" ..."She is the root-*guru* of we thirteen. In particular she who taught the inner

² Sañs-sgom chos-señ, Rme'u ston-pa, Rmög-lcogs-pa, Rin-chen rdo-rje, *Bla-ma khyuñ-po rnal-'byor-gyi rnam-thar zur-tsam*. Dpal-spuñ edition, as above, n. 1, p. 15.b.

instructions of Nairātmyā to *paṇḍita* Āryadeva and placed him in the realization of the eighth stage in seven months is the *jñāna-dākinī* named Sukhasiddhi. She is one who actually heard the *dharma* from Vajradhara and Nairātmyā....”³

If Vajradhara were regarded as a doctrinal source, these stories would show Khyuṅ-po receiving teachings from two different directions, i.e. from the Indian lineage going back to Śākyamuni and from Vajradhara. That is, the story would exhibit the common tension between institutionalized dogma and direct mystical experience. If we understand Vajradhara as a mediating symbol, a very different story emerges. It becomes an account of how Khyuṅ-po’s meditative experience has served to adapt the dogma to his personal situation. This understanding is again the key to many issues. One of the most important is the Tibetans’ concern with bridging the gap between their culture and those of their Indian and Chinese neighbors. In these stories Khyuṅ-po the Tibetan searches for a way to internalize the Indian ideas and finds it through his contact with Vajradhara’s representatives Niguma and Sukhasiddhi. We believe that a further analysis of the first volumes of the *Golden Rosary* along these lines would reveal a great deal about the mechanism by which the Tibetans were able to assimilate the alien and complex Indian traditions.

ON THE NATURE OF *RNAM-THAR*: EARLY DGE-LUGS-PA *SIDDHA* BIOGRAPHIES

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In this paper I attempt to do two things. First, I seek to give a general definition of *rnam-thar* and to indicate how, as a genre of religious literature, it both compares and contrasts with Western hagiography. Second, I offer an example, taken from the biography of the Dge-lugs *grub-chen* Chos-kyi-rdo-rje, of how some *rnam-thar* go beyond Western hagiography to present actual descriptions of practice and instructions. As can be seen, both these points are related and address basic hermeneutical concerns.

I

In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition written accounts of the lives of accomplished practitioners form a separate genre of literature. The genre is referred to as *rnam-thar*, an abbreviation for *rnam-par thar-pa* which literally means “complete liberation.” Such liberative life stories¹ are meticulously recorded, narrated, and studied not simply as biographical accounts chronicling the details of the lives of highly regarded persons, but as accounts serving to make manifest that liberation by describing its process. Thus *rnam-thar* serve both as inspirational and as instructional models for practitioners of the Path. Because they are revered as having actually accomplished Enlightenment using tantric means, “in one lifetime, in one body, even in these degenerate times,” as the traditional tantric phrase goes, the subjects of such biographies are called *siddhas*, i.e. “accomplished” or “perfected ones,” “those who have succeeded”

This useful translation is borrowed from Robert A. F. Thurman’s rendering of *rnam-thar*. See his *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti: A Mahāyāna Scripture* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1976).

(from the Skt. root *sidh*, “to succeed,” “to be successful”). *Rnam-thar*, as the lives of Buddhist *siddhas*, may appropriately, if with some qualification, be characterized as sacred biography.

As Buddhism developed and reached into Tibet the *siddhas* (*grub-thob* or *grub-chen*) provided the concrete links between Indian and Tibetan Buddhism since they were living examples of the veracity of the Vajrayāna. Thus in Tibet the genre of *rnam-thar* became an invaluable means of establishing a demonstrable lineage of successful ones for each new school established, and this resulted in the rapid proliferation of such sacred biographies there.²

While it has been suggested above that the term *rnam-thar* may be characterized as sacred biography—and it is to be noted that many Western translators use this term or the term hagiography itself when working with the Tibetan genre³—it must be pointed out that *rnam-thar* present a rather unique kind of sacred life history, one not altogether parallel with other examples of sacred biography which may be familiar in the West. There are similarities and dissimilarities and these need to be taken into account when we work with *rnam-thar* material.

² Tucci has given an excellent summary of the development of Tibetan historical literature in his *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, vol. I, pp. 139-150. In brief, Tucci argues that at an early date Tibetans, following the Chinese rather than the Indian tradition, showed “a particular interest, if not precisely a great accuracy, in recording facts...” Accordingly, the first historical writings produced by Tibetans were *yig tshan* or chronicles, i.e. books in which events affecting national life were recorded along with their dates. In its second phase Tibetan historical writing took on a different character and broadened to include Tibet’s growing national and religious consciousness, and the first expansive histories, known *chos’byun*, were produced. *Chos’byun* literally means “growth and expansion of the Dharma”; and thus it is within *chos’byun* that we find the first real attempts at biographical writing. Tucci writes (p. 140): “With this [i.e., *chos’byun*] a new historiography appears: the bare facts are not listed year by year according to the simple system of the chronicles; they assume decorous literary draperies in which reminiscences of Buddhist hagiography recur.”

³ For example, see Eva Dargyay’s *The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet*; Giuseppe Tucci’s *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*; and James Robinson’s *Buddha’s Lions: The Lives of the Eighty-Four Siddhas*.

What is in the West generally termed sacred biography, or hagiography, refers primarily to that genre of literature developed by the early Christian tradition which focuses on the lives of the saints. As the early Church grew, and especially as it later expanded into pagan Europe, it developed a large corpus of hagiographical material chronicling the lives of its hero-saints.⁴ Following the end of the intermittent and violent persecutions of Christians in the early centuries, the Church extended and further refined its definitions of the terms "saint" and "martyr" so that hagiography came to encompass many differing types of saints. In time the early Western Church actually developed a three-fold definition of the term "martyr." For example, Clinton Albertson notes that "...the seventh-century *Cambrai Homily* lists three kinds of martyrdom—white, green, and red. The first two refer to ascetical mortification, the third to shedding of blood."⁵ Later the Church developed the new category of confessor and applied this term to all those whose "pious living and persevering lives bore witness to Christ as effectively as did the early martyrs' deaths."⁶ Through special courts of canonization hundreds of new confessor-saints were added to Church calendars. Confessors became the living lineage of followers who exemplified the fruits of lives devoted to Christ in much the same way as the *siddhas* evidenced for Buddhists the effectiveness of the Vajrayāna. Moreover, in terms of narrative content, much of the hagiographical material dealing with the later confessors is quite similar to Tibetan *nam-thar* and, one might argue, owing to similar reasons.

The early hagiographies of the confessors portray rugged and heroic individuals whose utter commitment to their faith was meant to uplift and inspire others. They are men and women who, having felt the "call to Christ," enter His service. Usually after having publicly advanced the faith by founding monasteries or stewarding large numbers of disciples, they bravely and willingly choose the hard, solitary life of the contemplative; and to a few devoted followers

⁴ This rendering is used by Clinton Albertson in his *Anglo-Saxon Saints and Heroes* (Fordham University Press, 1967). Throughout the accounts of confessor lives, one finds epithets like "Christ's soldier," "warriors of the spirit," and "God's hero." (One is reminded that a common Tibetan rendering for the Sanskrit *bodhisattva* is *dpa'-bo byañ-chub-sems-dpa'*, i.e. "brave-" or "courageous bodhisattva.")

⁵ Ibid., p. 75.

⁶ See Donald Attwater, *A Dictionary of Saints* (Penguin, 1979), p. 4.

they reveal their holiness through the performance of miracles.

The Western scholarly tradition has generally taken a dim view of hagiography. Indeed in the West hagiography has come to be defined as “any idealizing or worshipful biography,”⁷ the implication being that such texts are naively exaggerated accounts written to edify a devoted, though gullible, popular audience, and as a consequence are of little historical worth. The two most common accusations levelled against hagiography are that 1) there are numerous duplications of descriptions of holiness in them, and 2) there is a preponderance of miracles. Similar negative assessments are often lodged against Buddhist *rnam-thar* by Buddhist scholars who claim that they too are “of no direct historical worth.”⁸ While most of the miracles recorded in Western hagiography are of the nature of curing illnesses, there are examples of other types which bear close resemblance to the so-called worldly or mundane (*laukika*) *siddhis* (“powers”) possessed by *siddhas*, viz. reading others’ thoughts, travelling in unconventional ways, etc.⁹ Moreover a

⁷ This is the entry given under “hagiography” in *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language: New College Edition* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1978 edition), p. 592. Albertson, op. cit., pp. 25-26, duly notes and responds to the negative assessments usually made with regard to hagiographic materials.

⁸ This specific assessment was voiced by David Snellgrove in his *Buddhist Himālaya*, p. 85, with particular reference to the eighty-four *siddhas* of the Śaivite and Buddhist traditions. However, Snellgrove finds *rnam-thar* of value for depicting the general religious climate of the times. The relevant passage reads: “Both Buddhist and Shaivite tradition preserve the memory of eighty-four great yogins or perfected ones (*siddha*). Their biographies are to be found in the Tibetan canon, and although the tales related of them are of no direct historical worth, they portray well enough the general religious setting, in which the actual tantric texts originated.”

⁹ Perhaps the best known enumeration of the *laukika-siddhis* is that found at *Dīgha-Nikāya*, I. 78. There, when the Buddha enumerates for king Ajātasattu the fruits of the life of a monk (in the *Sāmañña-phala Sutta*), he describes them as follows: “Being one he becomes many, or having become many, he becomes one again; he becomes visible or invisible; without obstruction he passes through walls, through fences, through mountains, as if they were but air; he penetrates up and down through solid earth,

confessor's birth is usually accompanied by wondrous signs, just as is the *siddha*'s. There are also other similarities.

There are also, however, important differences, and we as Buddhist scholars have to keep these in mind as we work with this material. Aside from the fact that Buddhism has no canonization courts to determine saint- or, here, *siddha*-hood, it would seem that Buddhist *rnam-thar* differ from Western hagiography in at least one important way: unlike most hagiographies, *rnam-thar* do more than just inspire and edify, they *instruct* as well, setting forth, albeit in veiled language, detailed descriptions of practice and instructions for future practitioners of the Path.

II

In Nepal in early 1980 I began translation work on a group of six *rnam-thar* portraying the lives of some of the earliest Dge-lugs-pa *phyag-rgya chen-po* (Skt. *mahāmudrā*) practitioners.¹⁰ These six practitioners, along with thirty other such lineage-holders, are found enumerated in the short Dge-lugs liturgical text called *Dga' ldan bka' srol phyag rgya chen po'i 'khrid kyi bla brgyud gsol 'debs /kha skon*

as if it were but water; he walks on water without parting it, as if it were solid ground; cross-legged he travels through the air, as a bird on the wing; he touches and handles the moon and the sun, though they be so potent and mighty; even in this body of his, he scales the heights of the world up to the heaven of Brahma; just as a clever potter could succeed in making out of clay any shape of vessel he wanted to have." Translated by H.G.A. van Zeyst in his "Abhiññā" article, *Encyclopaedia of Buddhism*, Vol. I, Part I, p. 99. [I have substituted "obstruction" for van Zeyst's "let."] For more on the worldly *siddhis*, see Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, pp. 104-116, and the article cited above, pp. 97-102. The superior (*lokottara*) *siddhi* is the realization of Mahāmudrā.

¹⁰ The tantric meditative system of practice known as *phyag-rgya chen-po* (Skt. *mahāmudrā*) is sometimes thought to be associated only with the Bka'-brgyud-pa school of Tibetan Buddhism. This is especially true in Western accounts of the system. However, as the prayer and related *rnam-thar* presently under discussion attest, this practice lineage was incorporated into the Dge-lugs-pa tradition as well.

bcas b'zugs/, i.e. "The Prayer (with Supplement) to the Lineage-lamas of the Dga'-ldan Mahāmudrā Tradition."¹¹ The prayer's colophon declares that it was originally composed by the 18th century *yons-'dzin* Ye-śes-rgyal-mtshan (1713-1792) and that the later, supplementary additions were made by the first Pha-boñ-kha Rinpoche, Bde-chen-sñin-po (1878-1941).

With regard to the lineage-holders enumerated, the vanguard is a three-membered group consisting of 1. the great Lord Vajradhara, patron Buddha of all Mahāmudrā adepts; 2. Ārya Mañjuśrī [*'Phags-pa 'Jam-dpal(-dbyaṅs)*]; and 3. Blo-bzañ-grags-pa, the great Rje Rinpoche Tsoñ-kha-pa. Immediately following in succession from Tsoñ-kha-pa come the six Dge-lugs *siddhas* (Tib. *grub-thob* or *grub-chen*) upon whom my current studies primarily focus.¹² These are:

4. Rtogs-ldan 'Jam-dpal-rgya-mtsho (1356-1428);
5. Ba-so Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan (1402-1473);
6. Grub-mchog Chos-kyi-rdo-rje (Dharmavajra, dates?);
7. (Rgyal-ba Dben-sa-pa) Blo-bzañ-don-yod-grub-pa (1505-1566);
8. Mkhas-grub Saṅs-rgyas-ye-śes (1525-1591); and
9. Rje-btsun Blo-bzañ chos-rgyan (i.e. First Panchen Blo-bzañ-chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan, 1570-1662).

11 The text is written in verse-form. After offering salutations to the Mahāmudrā, or Great Seal, meditative system, it proceeds by presenting thirty-six verses, each comprised of two eight-syllable descriptive lines, with a third line bearing the name of the respective lineage-holder. This is followed in each case by a refrain of four eight-syllable lines: *rgyud bdag 'dzin 'khri ba chod pa dan/ byams sñin rje byaṅ sems 'byoṅs ba dan/ lam zuñ 'jug phyag rgya chen po yi/ mchog myur du thob par byin gyis rlob/* ["By generating a mind of compassion and loving kindness,/ And by completely severing the continuity which clings to holding a self,/ May I be blessed to attain quickly the Highest (state)/ Of Mahāmudrā, (by means of) the path of total integration."]

12 I am presently preparing a booklength manuscript which treats the shared lineage of Bka'-brgyud/Dge-lugs Mahāmudrā and which presents complete translations of the biographies of these six Dge-lugs *siddhas*. The manuscript is entitled, "Enlightenment Beings; the Dge-lugs Mahāmudrā Tradition."

Following these six *siddhas*, twenty-seven other lineage-holders are named, coming down to Pha-boñ-kha Rinpoche, H.H. Trijang Rinpoche, H.H. Ling Rinpoche, and ending with the mention of one's own kind root-guru (Tib. *drin can rtsa ba'i bla ma*). The third *siddha* of the group, Grub-mchog Chos-kyi-rdo-rje, will be considered in some detail below, to exemplify the nature of these *rnam-thar* in general.

As sources for the complete written accounts of the lives of the six *siddhas* I had recourse to two versions of the great compendium of Bka'-gdams/Dge-lugs-pa biographies compiled in the late 18th century (circa 1787) by Ye-śes-rgyal-mtshan and known under the title, *Byañ chub lam gyi rim pa'i bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam par thar pa rgyal bstan mdzes pa'i rgyan mchog phul byuñ nor bu'i phren ba*: one version is a block-printed copy kept in the library of the Nepalese Mahāyāna Gompa of my own guru, Lama Thubten Yeshe, at Koppan, Nepal; and the second is an edited and abbreviated version found in Vol. V of Khetsun Sangpo's *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet*.¹³

As can be seen from their dates, their six contiguous lives span some three hundred years of Tibetan religious history covering the most crucial period of the rise to power of the Yellow Hat school.¹⁴

¹³ See Khetsun Sangpo (ed.), *Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism*, nine volumes (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Vol. V published 1973). In each case, for the Dge-lugs lives, Khetsun Sangpo's version omits the verse which in the standard *Byañ chub lam gyi rim pa'i bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar* immediately precedes the narration of the life. These verses, together with the refrain given above (note no. 2), constitute the Dge-lugs liturgical prayer. The Khetsun Sangpo version also abbreviates by summarizing certain sections of the lengthier standard *rnam-thar*.

¹⁴ The school founded by Tson-kha-pa was known by various names, viz., Ri-bo-dga'-ldan-pa, Bka'-gdams-gsar-ma-pa, and Dge-lugs-pa. The Dge-lugs-pa became known as the Yellow Hats presumably because of Tson-kha-pa's innovation, in Tibet, of having the monks of his school wear yellow or saffron apparel as did the original Buddhist monks in India. This innovation signalled the great reform he instituted in Tibet, which is set forth doctrinally in his mammoth work, *The Great Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (abbreviated in Tibetan as the *Lam rim chen mo*). Snellgrove tells us, in *A Cultural History of Tibet*, p. 181, that "Westerners have borrowed from the Chinese the

Through them one learns who knew whom, what places were frequented, where certain monasteries were founded, and why. Moreover, especially through this particular set of lives, one can observe fairly directly the intricate interweaving of politics and religion in Tibet during this period.¹⁵ Lastly, these accounts help to clarify the distinctive ways in which the Dge-lugs-pa conceived of and actually practiced the Mahāmudrā meditative tradition.

A *rnam-thar*, by presenting the significant experiences of a tantric adept in his or her quest for enlightenment is first and foremost a piece of tantric literature. That is, in terms of content sacred biographies of *siddhas* are comparable to and complement the *tantras* and their commentaries.¹⁶ As such one of the main functions of *rnam-thar* is the imparting of actual descriptions of tantric practices. Viewed in this way *rnam-thar* are not simply vehicles for providing inspirational models, but vehicles for providing detailed practical instructions to persons seeking to put the particular teachings of a given *siddha* into practice.

term 'Yellow Hat' for the dGe-lugs-pa..." Whatever the actual origin of the term, it has come to be an unambiguous and readily identifiable feature of the School. The six lives cover the three hundred years from the mid-14th to the mid-17th centuries, during which the Dge-lugs-pa successfully appropriated more and more power and firmly established itself in Tibet.

15 For example, of the six Dge-lugs-pa *siddhas* immediately succeeding Tson-kha-pa, four were personally connected with the first five Dalai Lamas. Ba-so-rje became abbot of Dga'-ldan Monastery on the order of the first Dalai Lama Dge-'dun-grub. One of Ba-so's Mahāmudrā disciples, Dpal-ldan-rdo-rje, studied with and taught the second Dalai Lama Dge-'dun-rgya-mtsho. Following the death of Rgyal-ba Dben-sa-pa, Sañs-rgyas-ye-śes accompanied and served the third Dalai Lama Bsod-nams-rgya-mtsho, until the latter went to Mongolia. Finally, the Panchen Lama Blo-bzañ-chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan was the direct tutor of both the fourth Dalai Lama Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho and the Great Fifth Dalai Lama Nag-dbañ-blo-bzañ-rgya-mtsho.

16 This point was forcefully made by Reginald Ray in a paper delivered to the American Academy of Religion meetings in San Francisco (Dec. 1977) entitled, "The Vajrayāna Mahāsiddhas: Some Principles of Interpretation" (unpublished).

. All Tibetan *rnam-thar* contain elements of what are actually three distinct levels of life story: viz. 1) *phyi'i rnam-thar*, the so-called outer biography which most resembles our western notions of biography, presenting details of birth, schooling, education, specific teachers and texts consulted; 2) *nan-gi rnam-thar* or inner biography, which chronicles the specific meditative cycles, initiations, etc., imparted to the future *siddha*; and 3) the *gsaṅ-ba'i rnam-thar* or secret biography.¹⁷ This last level or element of the narrative is said to describe the meditative or mystical visions and other experiences of the accomplished one. The first two levels of *rnam-thar* are not problematic. It is from the third, the so-called secret biography, that most scholars have shied away, dubbing it "magical" or "phantastic," "folkloric" or "obscure."¹⁸ My suggestion is to view this third level of

17 This is well known to those within the tradition. Most *rnam-thar* contain all three levels, though one or the other is most emphasized. Some few *rnam-thar* treat specifically of only one level. For example, there are separate secret biographies (i.e. *gsaṅ-ba'i rnam-thar*) of such great masters as Padmasambhava, Tsoṅ-kha-pa, and Sa-skya Paṅḍita. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Vol. I, p. 161, for example, cites Tsoṅ-kha-pa's secret biography, entitled *rJe rin po c'ei gsaṅ bai rnam t'ar rgya mts'o lta bu las c'a śas ṅuṅ du žig yoṅs su brjod pai gtam rin po c'ei sṅe ma* (*Complete Works*, Potala edition, Vol. Ka, pp. 1-16), and says it "...contains a narrative of his visions, of his mystical realizations, of the revelations he received from divine masters in dreams or ecstasy.... The author of this work is Dge legs dpal bzaṅ po" (i.e. Mkhas-grub-rje). Mkhas-grub-rje also authored another *rnam-thar* of Tsoṅ-kha-pa which treats primarily the first and second levels. Luciano Petech, in his introduction to Alfonsa Ferrari's *mK'yen brtse's Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet*, p. xix, takes note of this traditional three-fold pattern of Tibetan *rnam-thar*, setting out the specific shifts from one to the other in the life of Mkhyen-brtse Kun-dga' bstan-pa'i-rgyal-mtshan, the author of the *Guide*. David Ruegg, in *The Life of Bu-ston Rinpoche* [Rome: Is.M.E.O. (No, 34), 1966], pp. 44-45, also notes the three-fold structure of *rnam-thar*.

18 Many scholars working with this material have tended to confine it to the province of popular literature, viewing *siddha* biographies as the products of popular spirituality and as folkloric. For example, Mircea Eliade notes in his *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom*, p.305: "...a number of the Nāthas and

rnam-thar as actually providing detailed descriptions of practice and instructions.

As an example of this I cite here one episode from the *rnam-thar* of Grub-mchog Chos-kyi-rdo-rje. Chos-kyi-rdo-rje is known in the Dge-lugs tradition as a *vidyādhara*, i.e. as one who not only attained enlightenment but who successfully won the *siddhi* of immortality as well. There are therefore no dates associated with him.¹⁹ His

Siddhas put more emphasis than their predecessors had done upon the value of magic and Yoga as inestimable means for the conquest of freedom and immortality. It was especially this aspect of their message that struck the popular imagination; we still find it echoed today in folklore and vernacular literatures." For Eliade this feature of *rnam-thar* was valuable, and he followed the above remark with the statement: "It is for this reason that the latter seem to us of great value for our inquiry." David Snellgrove, too, agrees with this assessment of *rnam-thar*. In *Buddhist Himālaya*, p. 86, he calls *rnam-thar* "popular accounts (in which) the goal of perfection seems to be immortality." Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, vol. I, p. 151, admits that "an historian cannot ignore the *rnam t'ar*"; and indeed Tucci makes good use of them. However his own general definition of *rnam-thar* appears to me to be more obscuring of their true nature than clarifying. He writes (Vol. I, pp. 150-151): "*rnam t'ar* much resemble the lives of saints widely circulated during our Middle Ages; they must be considered neither histories nor chronicles. The events they relate with a particular satisfaction are spiritual conquests, visions and ecstasies; they follow the long apprenticeship through which man becomes divine, they give lists of the texts upon which saints trained and disciplined their minds, for each lama they record the masters who opened up his spirit to serene visions, or caused the ambrosia of supreme revelations to rain down upon him. Human events have nothing to do with these works, and how could they, being a vain flow of appearances in the motionless gleam of that void, never to be grasped, into which the experience of truth dissolves and annuls us?... All the rest is shadows." Albert Grünwedel, in *Die Geschichten der vier und achtzig Zauberers aus dem Tibetischen uberstez* (1916), refers to *rnam-thar* as both "phantastic" and "obscure."

19

The *Byan chub lam gyi rim pa'i bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar*...(block-printed edition), p. 930, wherein Chos-kyi-rdo-rje's

parents were wandering ascetics (*bya-bral*). After the boy was born, near Rta-nag Monastery in Gtσαn, the parents carried him along with them as they continued their sacred pilgrimages. When the three arrived at Dga'-ldan, the abbot Ba-so Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan gave the parents money and other goods in exchange for the boy. He was given over willingly and with devotion, and going close to Ba-so, the young boy forgot everything of this life. Ba-so-rje gave him the complete teachings, especially those of the special Oral Tradition stemming from Tson-kha-pa, the *sñan-rgyud* which shows the way to enlightenment in one life, together with initiations into the three chief Dge-lugs-pa deities, Guhyasamāja, Cakrasamvara-Heruka, and Vajrabhairava. His time with his Mahāmudrā teacher lasted five years and then, with a vow to secrecy, Chos-kyi-rdo-rje took leave of Ba-so, went to study philosophy at 'Bras-spun, and became known as a greatly learned one, and as a great "holder of the *vinaya*." The account goes on to present a long song composed by Chos-kyi-rdo-rje out of devotion to his teacher; it shows him as continually meditating and doing extended retreats in numerous isolated places. There follows the description of his actual attainment of the ultimate *siddhi* of Mahāmudrā, followed by his choosing to remain in a "physical body" (Tib. *za-ma-tog*) until he is able to impart the complete instructions to the future *siddha*, Rgyal-ba Dben-sa-pa. Until Dben-sa-pa reaches the age of seventeen Chos-kyi-rdo-rje gives instructions to countless *dākas* and *dākinīs* as well as to human disciples. After meeting Dben-sa-pa and imparting the teachings to him, Chos-kyi-rdo-rje dissolves his own physical body into the clear light and enters

biography is recorded, gives no dates for this great *siddha*. Indeed, there his life is preceded by the following verse: *rgyal ba kun gyis gsuñs pa'i chos rñams kyi/ bcud rñams bsdus ñas ñams su blañs pa'i mthus/ tshē geig ñid la rdo rje'i sku brñes pa/ 'chi med rnal 'byor mchog la gsol ba 'debs/ zes bsñags pa/ grub chen chos-kyi-rdo-rje ni/* ("To you, O best of immortal yogis I bow,/ who, after abridging into one the essences of all the dharmas expounded by all the Buddhas,/ Put those into practice,/ And attained the Diamond-body in this very life.") However in the *Catalogue of the Toyo Bunko Collection of Tibetan Works on History* (1970), Vol. I, p. 129, the editor, Zuiho Yamaguchi assigns to him the dates "1457-1541?". Chos-kyi-rdo-rje's own *rnam-thar* attests to the fact that he lived far beyond 100 years of age before he met his eminent disciple Rgyal-ba Dben-sa-pa, and carried him through his training.

into what is called the diamond-rainbow body whence, until this very day according to the Dge-lugs-pa tradition, he continues to manifest whenever there is a sincere request for aid from any being living a pure and virtuous life.

Now let us look more closely at the description of the consummation of Chos-kyi-rdo-rje's practice. The text reads:

In accordance with the words of advice of [Ba-so] Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan, he [that is, Chos-kyi-rdo-rje] wandered to many solitary places—to lonely forests and ravines, as well as to snow [covered-mountains]. Then at one time during this period [as he meditated] near the sacred water of Padma-can, all the surrounding areas were suddenly transformed, becoming in an instant like the actual twenty-four places [in India], while the earth surrounding the water itself turned into *sindhura*. Thereupon at that famous spot he performed the contemplations on *guru-yoga* related to the Completion Stage, and he beheld the countenance of the King of Dharma, the great Tson-kha-pa. It was then that Rje Rinpoche himself gave to this holy one the complete instructions of the ordinary and extraordinary oral tradition.²⁰

Several features of this passage are intriguing. To begin with, the name of the supposed place²¹ where this event occurred is of

20 The Tibetan reads as follows: *de nas pañ chen chos kyi rgyal mtshan gyi bka' bzin/ gañs/ ri sul/ nags khrod sogs du ma 'grims/ de'i tshe padma can gyi sgrub chu'i ñe 'khor gyi sa rnams skad cig de la sin dhu rar 'gyur ba zig yod pas yul ñer bzi dnos dan mtshuñs pa zig yod ces grags pa der rdzogs rim dan 'brel ba'i bla ma lha'i rnal 'byor bsgoms par mdzad pas chos gyi rgyal po tson kha pa chen pos zal gzigs/ de'i tshe rje rin po ches dam pa 'di la thun moñ dan thun moñ ma yin pa'i sñan brgyud kyi gdams nag yoñs su rdzogs par gnañ//*

21 Sarat Chandra Das, in his *Contributions on the Religion and History of Tibet* (first published in 1881; reprinted New Delhi: Manjusri Publishing House, 1970), pp. 109-110, summarizes the life of "Gyal-wa Ton-Dub." Towards the end of his summary he writes, "At the age of seventeen he became a pupil of the sage Chhokyi Dorje and fully mastered the volume of precepts called Gahdan-Nen-gyud. Afterwards returning to Tsan he resided at

interest because *padma-can*, or, literally, “having a lotus,” is often an esoteric way of referring to a woman. (“Lotus” in such a context may mean the vagina.) Padma-can, in particular, is used to refer to a female sexual partner in certain tantric practices, particularly those of the *mahānuttarayoga* tantric category. While I am not prepared here to suggest that the Padma-can of the Chos-kyi-rdo-rje account is a flesh and blood being (i.e., a *karmamudrā*), I do think that, reading this passage as a tantric text, there is the strong implication that the place-name of Padma-can is indicative of the Completion Stage practice of using sexual union (whether actual or imaginary) as a means to higher insight.^{2 2}

Next, the “twenty-four places”: here I think there can be little doubt that the twenty-four places refer at once to the so-called outer pilgrimage places (cited in not a few *tantras*, where they are usually called *pīṭhas* or *upapīṭhas*, and are said to be the dwelling places for various groups of yoginīs or *ḍākinīs*, i.e. female beings who give assistance to a tantric practitioner), and also to the inner places yogically generated and located throughout an adept’s body. The body-*maṇḍala* of the long “Heruka (Cakrasaṃvara) *sādhana*” mentions these twenty-four places, and the theory of the twenty-four places is also found in the *Hevajra Tantra*.

the temple of Pamachen near the Panam-Chomolha-ri. Here his teacher the sage showed him the volumes of illusive mysticism.” Of course, what is of interest here is Das’ treatment of Padma-can (which he writes as “Pamachen”) as a geographical location. In fact, in a note directly connected with his mention of Pamachen, he attempts to give even more precise details of the whereabouts of this “temple,” though, in reality, the note only speaks of the Chomolhari mountain range.

22

It should be noted, however, that Padma-can occurs also as the proper name of the twelfth stage (*bhūmi*) of the path approaching enlightenment in some Vajrayāna works. See, for example, ‘Jam-mgon Koṅ-sprul Blo-gros mtha’-yas, *Ses-bya kun-khyab mdzod* (Paro: Lama Ngodup, 1976), vol. 4, pp. 337.

Shin'ichi Tsuda has given a detailed analysis based on the *Hevajra Tantra* of the various correspondences among these external and internal *pīṭhas* in his *A Critical Tantrism*.²³ As with tantric literature and practices in general, the whole of ultimate reality, external and internal, is made manifest through an intricate and delicately balanced ordering of correspondences. These correspondences are expressed symbolically. As there are external *pīṭhas*, so there are internal *pīṭhas*. The external *pīṭhas* have corresponding points on the *vajra* body once this is successfully generated by a tantric adept, such that the twenty-four sacred external places are matched with corresponding places on the body, viz. head, fingernails, teeth, ear, backbone, liver, shoulders, eyes, nose, penis, thighs, thumbs, knees, etc. Successfully generating the *vajra* body adorned with these twenty-four spots, the tantric practitioner is said to be able to coerce the *ḍākinīs* of the external *pīṭhas* to approach and enter the corresponding spots on his or her body. This again is symbolic, or intentional, language. To quote from Tsuda:

'Internal *pīṭhas*' are abodes of veins (*nāḍīsthāna*, VII.3) as 'external *pīṭhas*' are abodes of *ḍākinīs*. There are twenty-four parts of a body such as "the head" corresponding to the external *pīṭha* *Pullīramalya* (VII.4.) etc. There are twenty-four veins (*nāḍī*) which rely on these internal *pīṭhas* such as "(a vein) flowing through fingernails and teeth" (*nakhadantavahā*, VII.4.) etc. These veins (*nāḍī*) are regarded as deities (*devatā*, IX. 21.), that is, *ḍākinīs*. A *nāḍī* is nothing other than a *ḍākinī*...

A human body is composed of these twenty-four 'internal *pīṭhas*' such as "the head" (VII.4.) etc., as the world, that is, the *Jambudvīpa* in this case, is composed of twenty-four 'external *pīṭhas*', i.e., twenty-four countries such as *Pullīramalya*, etc. An 'internal *pīṭha*' is existent as long as it is an abode of a vein. A vein in turn is existent as long as it conveys a humour in it or it flows in an internal organ. Therefore, if one makes [the] twenty-four veins of one's own body *active*, through [the] yogic practice of making

23 See Shin'ichi Tsuda's *A Critical Tantrism*, Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko, No. 36 (Tokyo: The Toyo Bunko, 1978). Tsuda devotes a section of Chapter V (pp. 215-221) to "The Theory of Pilgrimage Places."

each of the humours flow through the corresponding veins or each of [the] veins flow through the corresponding internal organs, he transforms his body into an aggregate of internal *pīṭhas* or an aggregate of *ḍākinīs*, a homologous miniaturization of the world as an aggregate of external *pīṭhas* or an aggregate of *ḍākinīs* (*ḍākinījāla*). Thus he can unite himself with the ultimate reality on the basis of the Tantric logic of symbolism.²⁴

One other element in the passage from Chos-kyi-rdo-rje's *rnam-thar* deserves mention, namely the sacred water itself (Tib. *sgrub-chu*). Tibetan tradition says that there is a certain type of water found in sacred caves in Tibet which is a kind of holy nectar. Padmasambhava, the Indian *siddha* revered as having first firmly established Buddhism in Tibet, is said to have given long-life initiations to his disciples using such holy nectar.²⁵ Here again there is room for further elaboration with respect to this *sgrub-chu*. In Tantric literature water is often a symbol for the female or, more specifically, for menstrual blood.²⁶ The fact that the earth surrounding the water is here said to turn to *sindhura* would seem to have specific reference to the supreme *ḍākinī*-consort, the Goddess Vajrayoginī, chief consort to Lord Cakrasamvara, for marking the disciple's three doors (i.e. forehead, throat and heart) with *sindhura* powder is a special feature of the initiation into the higher tantric practice of this particular deity (i.e. Vajrayoginī) or of the pair of deities (i.e. Cakrasamvara and Vajrayoginī) in union. In fact it would seem that this episode, using the veiled language of the *tantras*, narrates the unfolding and the acting out in Chos-kyi-rdo-rje's own body of the Yoga of the Completion Stage techniques involved, in this case with the practice based on the cycle of Cakrasamvara.

The above is an analysis of a brief and isolated event in a single *rnam-thar*. But other events similar in nature appear in the other five Dge-lugs-pa lives with which I have worked. Studying these texts has

²⁴ Ibid., p. 221.

²⁵ This was told to me by the Dge-lugs Lama, Thubten Zopa Rinpoche.

²⁶ Cf. Alex Wayman's discussion of this idea in his *Yoga of the Guhyasamājatantra*, pp. 234-235. Using Tson-kha-pa's *Pañcakrama* commentary, Wayman (p. 383) illustrates that "rivers as external water agree with menses and blood as personal [or internal] water."

strongly suggested to me that approaching this literature in the manner I indicate above may prove helpful. Treating a given *rnam-thar* as a piece of tantric literature intended to impart instructions to practitioners, in addition to inspiration, can help us to glean valuable information about the Vajrayāna in general, and about specific tantric practices in particular. In this way Tibetan sacred biographies become less obscure, certainly less folkloric, and capable of providing us with valuable *entrées* into the *lived* world of Tibetan Tantric Buddhism.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GCOD TRADITION*

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Gcod, a traditional meditative technique for cutting attachment to ego, is more figuratively referred to as *gcod yul*, "that which is to be severed," or often *bdud kyi gcod yul*, "the demon as that which is to be severed." Still performed widely by Tibetan Buddhists, Gcod involves both the practice of specialized *sādhana*s (visualization meditations) and a general lifestyle. The large body of literature on Gcod that is available addresses a broad range of topics, such as the nature of vision and hallucination, the use of geomancy, a system of psychology *cum* demonology, and the ritual music and dance peculiar to this tradition, in addition to describing the specific visualizations of the *sādhana* proper.

Conforming to the ideology of Buddhist praxis as a whole, Gcod is performed by the Tibetan yogin primarily to facilitate clarification of mind and the understanding of reality. The teaching is based on the notion that the ignorance and attachment that are the roots of human suffering can be eradicated simultaneously with the destruction of our subjugation to the obstructive but illusory situations of life, as personified by the various demons. In the central *sādhana* of Gcod the practitioner meditatively imagines that he is offering the parts of his physical body as food (*phuñ po gzan bsgyur*) to devils, ghouls and gods, leaving behind a purified state of consciousness in which all phenomena are understood in their true sense.¹

* I gratefully acknowledge the advice and information I received from the Ven. Kalu Rinpoche, Khenpo Tsewang, and Lama Norlha during the course of this research.

¹ For particulars of the Gcod *sādhana*, see Kazi Dawa Samdup's translation of 'Jigs-med gliñ-pa's *Mkha' 'gro gad rkyan* in W.Y. Evans-Wentz (ed.), *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), pp. 301-333. The editor's notes should be read with a critical eye, however. A summary of the Gcod practice may be found in G. Tucci, *The Religions of Tibet*, trans. G. Samuel (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of

The Gcod-pa traditionally neglects his physical appearance and continuously wanders in cemeteries, deserted beaches, dark forests, and other "haunted" sites. The external unconventionality, however, belies the strict discipline necessary to control the normally terrified attitude towards evil spirits. Even a special gait is assumed when the yogin approaches the "locale of the ferocious ones" (*gñan sa*) as an aid to his intimidation, capture and subduing (*zil gnon*) of the resident demons.² Unlike many esoteric Buddhist systems, the practice of Gcod does not require hermitic retreat; the Gcod-pa concentrates on conquering all dualistic discrimination and in fact welcomes

California Press, 1980), pp. 87-92. The psychological significance of Gcod is considered by F. Sierksma, *Tibet's Terrifying Deities* (The Hague: Mouton & Co., 1966), pp. 141-158, which offers a curious mixture of insight, overstatement and rather facile observation. For a description of the musical instruments used in the Gcod ritual, see Rinjing Dorje and Ter Ellingson, "Explanation of the gCod *Da ma ru*: An Exploration of Musical Instrument Symbolism," in *Asian Music*, vol. X, 2 (1979), pp. 63-91, which includes a translation of 'Gyur-med blo-gsal's *Gsan gcod da ru'i bsad pa*. For details of the Gcod demonology and its psychological concordances, see *Khrid yig gzuñ don chen mo'i klad don bdud nos 'dzin*, in *Grub mchog rgyal po than ston pa'i zab gter chos mdzod rin po che* [henceforth: *Than ston chos mdzod*](Thimphu and Delhi: Kunsang Topgay, 1976), vol. 1, pp. 359-425; Dpal-sprul O-rgyan 'jigs-med chos-kyi-dban-po, *Bdud kyī rgyu brtags te spon tshul gyi man nag bdud las rnam rgyal*, in his *Collected Works* (Gangtok: Sonam T. Kazi, 1971), vol. 2, pp. 639-673; and, in the tradition of Padma gliñ-pa, the *Gcod kyī spyi khrid chen mo*, in *Zab don thugs kyī sñiñ po bdud kyī gcod yul gyi skor* (New Delhi: P.K. Tashi, 1981), pp. 47-339. The *bdud* are commonly divided into *thog bcas*, *thog med*, *dga' spro*, and *sñems byed*; or *phuñ po*, *ñon mons*, *'chi bdag*, and *lha'i bu*.

² Cf. 'Jigs-med gliñ-pa, *Klon chen sñiñ gi thig le las: Gcod yul mkha' 'gro gad rgyan* (ed. Rtsib-ri), f. 2b: *'gro lugs rnam pa bzi dag las: lta ba'i gden gros zugs kyis 'gro*. See also, Padma dgyes-pa'i-sde, *Zab mo bdud kyī gcod yul dan 'brel ba'i rtul zugs lam khyer gyi rdo rje'i thol glu 'khor 'das ran grol*, in *Khrid*, pp. 422-423, where the four gaits are listed as those of the Hero Tiger, Dancing Dākinī, Swift Black Snake, and Proud Yogi. [Abbreviated references occurring in the notes to this paper will be found given in full on pp. 341.]

confrontation with the negative forces. In the biographies of such adepts we often read of the community calling on them to control plague and cure illness.

Origins and Precedents

Although formally the origin of Gcod is ascribed summarily to four Indian Buddhist teachers, we clearly need to consider a wider milieu as contributing to its development. Beyond the universal themes of death and resurrection, we can find many elements of Gcod that have similarities to what we know of shamanic beliefs and practices, as several scholars have noted. An instance of Central Asian shamanism reported by M. Eliade, in which Siberian shamans in trance witness their own dismemberment by mythical beings, this leading to revelation and transcendence, typifies the recognizable parallels.³ It is interesting to recall the early Tibetan image of the ascension of the *dmu* ladder and entrance through a "sky-door" (*nam mkha' sgo 'byed*):⁴ the same phrase is almost invariably part of the nomenclature of the Gcod empowerment rite, here referring to the ascension of the purified consciousness (*dbyiñs rig sres*) through the technique of '*pho ba*.⁵ Of the many other elements of Gcod that suggest shamanism, we may briefly mention the identification of demons as the cause of our suffering and as the targets of subjugation or appeasement, the use of the drum to facilitate the onset of meditative trance, the role of the Gcod-pa as a healer in the community, the belief that springs are inhabited by spirits, etc.⁶

³ Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, trans. W.R. Trask (New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1964), p. 62ff. Charles D. Van Tuyl, in "Mi-la ras-pa and the gCod Ritual," *The Tibet Journal*, vol. IV, 1 (Dharamsala, Spring 1979), suggests that the treatment of the skeleton in the dismemberment process of the various Gcod liturgies reveals the relative proximity to the "original form" of the rite as practiced by Eskimos and others.

⁴ Cf. R.A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, trans. J.E.S. Driver (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), pp. 211ff. The image of ascension to the upper realms via a vertical device is a well known feature of shamanism.

⁵ This term also occurs in other Buddhist contexts. See Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, p. 225. For the variety of its forms in the Gcod transmissions, see *Gsan-yig*, vol. 2, p. 171.

⁶ Exemplifying the latter are those types of Gcod to be practiced at

Nonetheless, the traditional positing of Indian Buddhism as the doctrinal, philosophical and textual source of Gcod cannot be dismissed as a mere attempt to embellish a shamanic rite with classical Buddhist trappings, for we find ample precedents for the theory and practice of Gcod throughout Buddhism. The Tibetan historians quote numerous Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna texts which use the image of cutting to symbolize the destruction of the defilements (*kleśa*) and their externalization as demons.⁷ We can easily find the metaphor in Pali sources as well, as when Buddhaghosa defines the technique of “abandoning by cutting off” (*samuccheda*) as the “supramundane path that leads to the destruction (of defilement).”⁸ We may further cite such *Jātaka* stories as the “Bodhisattva’s Gift of His Body to the Hungry Tigress,”⁹ or the *Sāsajātaka*, in which a hare offers his body as food.¹⁰ These stories convey the classical Buddhist notion of self-sacrifice for the sake of sentient beings. Another canonical instance of self-dismemberment is found in the story of Sadāprarudita in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñā-pāramitā-sūtra*.¹¹ Many other examples could also be listed, but of course the fact that shamanistic ideas and practices were assimilated by Buddhism itself at its earliest stages tempers any attempt to identify decisively the ultimate source of the Gcod technique.

sites of one hundred springs, e.g. Gśons-chen Mkhas-btsun bstan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan, *Chu mig brgya rtsa'i sgrub thabs 'zal bkod*, in *Thaṅ ston chos mdzod*, vol. 2, pp. 471-493.

⁷ BA, pp. 980ff., quotes the *Hevajratāntra*, the *Prajñā-pāramitā-saṅcayagāthā* and the *Abhidharmakośa*. *Khams-smyon*, pp. 413-427, discusses the classical Buddhist antecedents of Gcod in depth.

⁸ Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, *The Path of Purification*, trans. Nyānamoli, vol. 1 (Berkeley & London: Shambhala, 1976), XXII. 122, p. 816. Translator's parentheses.

⁹ Cf. Hendrik Kern (ed.), *Āryasūra's Jātakamāla*, Harvard Oriental Series, vol. I (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1891), pp. 1ff.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 33ff.

¹¹ Edward Conze, trans., *The Perfection of Wisdom in 8,000 Lines and its Verse Summary* (Bollingen: Four Seasons Foundation, 1973), ch. 30. See also p. 217, etc., where the bodhisattva allows a demon (*bdud*) to devour him.

Gcod is traditionally linked specifically to the teachings of the Prajñāpāramitā and the cultivation (*spyod yul*, a pun on *gcod yul* found often in the Gcod literature) of the six *pāramitās*.¹² Here the gift of the body to sentient beings is characterized as *dānapāramitā par excellence*.¹³ The term Prajñāpāramitā itself commonly appears in apposition to Gcod as a title for the the system as a whole. The connection is underscored by the inclusion in the Gcod liturgies of the *dhāraṇī* “gate gate paragate parasamgate bodhi svāhā” from the *Hṛdayasūtra*,¹⁴ and the inclusion of the anthropomorphized Prajñāpāramitā, the female deity, as the ultimate Dharmakāya in most of the Gcod lineages. On a more general level, we may recall the prominence of Māra (*bdud*) and the teachings on how to avoid his influence that occur throughout the Prajñāpāramitā *sūtras*. Certainly this statement from the *Prajñāpāramitā-saṅcayagāthā*, one of the earliest Prajñāpāramitā scriptures, viz. “...the four types of demons, though difficult to endure, cannot upset the bodhisattva who is endowed with knowledge and fortitude...” is the recurring theme of the Gcod instructions.¹⁵ We should further note that Mahāmudrā is also used in apposition to Gcod as a title of the tradition. In at least one Gcod cycle we even find Saraha, forefather of the Mahāmudrā, as an envisioned source of Gcod.¹⁶ In any case, the philosophical

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- 12 E.g. *Dpa'-bo*, p. 736: ...*gcod kyi man nag zes bya la sgrub pa'i sgra sbyar na byañ chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po'i spyod pa pha rol tu phyin pa drug gcig du bsdus pa ston pa'i phyir spyod yul zes*.
- 13 See *Phar phyin drug gi nams len rgyas bśad*, in *Thañ ston chos mdzod*, vol. 1, pp. 425-492.
- 14 Cf. Koñ-sprul Blo-gros mtha'-yas (ed.), *Gcod kyi tshogs las yon tan kun 'byuñ gsuñs rgyun 'khrul med ltar bkod pa bźugs pa'i dbu phyogs lags so* (ms. in possession of Lama Norlha, New York), pp. 21ff. See also Zur-man Bstan-'dzin rnam-rgyal, *Gcod kyi tshogs las yon tan kun ldan gyi dmigs rim bla ma'i gsuñ rgyun gyi zin bris śel dkar me loñ*, pp. 655-656, in *Gdams nag mdzod* (Delhi: N. Lungtok & N. Gyaltzen, 1971), vol. 9, pp. 646-695, for a description of the visualization of this *mantra* during the performance of Gcod.
- 15 Quoted in *BA*, p. 981; my translation from *Dpa'-bo*, p. 763. For the four types of *bdud*, see n. 1 above.
- 16 See, in particular, *Gcod khrid sa ra ha pa'i sñiñ thig zab mo* in *Bdud-'joms gliñ-pa*, *Khros ma'i sgrub skor* (Kalimpong: Mani Dorji, 1979), vol. 2, pp. 527-623. Saraha is often referred to

contents of Mahāmudrā and Prajñāpāramitā are closely compatible, both being appropriate descriptions of the formless realization engendered at the completion of the Gcod *sādhana*s.

Finally, we may briefly consider the iconographical debts of Gcod to the Buddhist *tantras*. Of the many aggressive deities of the Vajrayāna pantheon who confront and subdue the obstructions to enlightenment, it has been one form or another of the *ḍākinī* that has been adopted for the Gcod *sādhana*s.¹⁷ Most commonly used is an aspect of Vajrayoginī, often Vajravārāhī or her more wrathful counterpart, the black Khros-ma. Ma-gcig Lab-sgron or sometimes Ye-śes mtsho-rgyal are also found idealized as *ḍākinī*s.

Indian sources and Tibetan codification:

Pha Dam-pa and Ma-gcig Lab-sgron

The four main Indian sources, or “streams,” of the teachings of Gcod are listed by Karma Chags-med thus:¹⁸

- (1) Āryadeva’s *Tshigs bcad*;
- (2) Nāro’s *Ro sñoms*;
- (3) O-rgyan’s *’Khrul gcod*; and
- (4) Pha Dam-pa’s *Zi byed*.

We should note, however, that Koñ-sprul fails to mention Āryadeva in his similar list, citing instead what he calls the *Bka’ brgyud don gcod*.¹⁹

¹⁷ elsewhere in this cycle.

It is interesting to compare the Indian images of the *ḍākinī* carrying her decapitated head in her own hands with the similar vision of the meditator in the Gcod rite. Cf. Sierksma, *Tibet’s Terrifying Deities*, p. 142; and B. Bhattacharyya, *Indian Buddhist Iconography* (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), p. 247.

¹⁸ Karma Chags-med, *Gcod kyi gdeñs bśad nūñ nur bsdus pa bźugs pa’i dbu phyogs*, pp. 230ff., in *Tshogs-las*, pp. 229-239.

¹⁹ Koñ-sprul Blo-gros mtha’-yas, *Ses bya kun khyab ’grel pa* (Paro: Lama Ngodup, 1976), vol. 4, pp. 159-160. See also *Rdza-sprul*, p. 40.

These streams refer to basic instructions, or *upadéśa* (*man ñag*), upon which the theory of Gcod is based, and not to the developed cycles of *sādhana*s, liturgies and rituals. We have not yet determined whether they refer specifically to four “root texts” (*g’zün rtsa*); to date we have identified only the root text of Āryadeva. A number of other root Gcod texts, including the *Bka’ tshoms chen mo* attributed to Magcig, are presented in the *Gdams ñag mdzod* in addition to that of Āryadeva,²⁰ but we find here nothing that would point exclusively to any of the other three streams cited above.

Most of the Tibetan historians agree that the Āryadeva of the Gcod lineages is not the famous Mādhyamika thinker and disciple of Nāgārjuna, but rather a brāhmaṇ who was an uncle of Pha Dampa.²¹ The root Gcod text that is attributed to him, however, variously titled *Śes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa man ñag*²² and *phyin pa tshigs su bcad pa chen mo*,²³ could easily be the work of the former. It discusses the various demons, the primordial nondiscursive nature of consciousness, the illusoriness of phenomena, etc., notions that are common to Gcod and standard Prajñāpāramitā thought. Virtually the same text is found in the Peking edition of the *Bstan ’gyur*, although here the title is incorrectly Sanskritized to read *Prajñāpāramitā-mahāparipṛcchā*.²⁴ The Peking text was translated by Mi-pham mgon-po (Ajitanātha?) and is a somewhat different version than that published in the Gcod collections,²⁵ which was

20 See *Gdams ñag mdzod*, vol. 9, pp. 450-610. These texts are loosely classified as *g’zün rtsa ba*.

21 Identified as such in the colophon to his root Gcod text, *’Phags pa śes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa man ñag*, in *Gdams ñag mdzod*, vol. 9, p. 456. See also *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 10-11; *Thu’u-bkwan*, p. 112; *Gsan-yig*, vol. 2, p. 172; and *Khams-smyon*, p. 43.

22 *Gdams ñag mdzod*, vol. 9, pp. 451-456.

23 In *Gcod kyi chos skor* (New Delhi: Tibet House, 1974), pp. 1-9.

24 The actual reading is *°paripṛcchā*. The Tibetan title here is *’Phags pa śes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa tshigs su bcad pa chen po*. Daisetz T. Suzuki (ed.), *The Tibetan Tripitaka: Peking Edition* (Tokyo & Kyoto: Suzuki Research Institute, 1957), vol. 146, pp. 171-4-8 to 172-5-1 (*No mtshar bstan bcos* section, vol. *No*, fol. 234b-426b).

25 There are numerous minor differences in grammar and vocabulary, with some lines of each entirely missing in the other. The Peking ed. also includes a passage (from fol. 425a:3 to 425b:4) that is not found in the editions listed in notes 22 & 23.

translated by Dam-pa and his student Źwa-ma Lo-tṣā-ba.²⁶ The redactor of the Peking canon was certainly aware of the text's importance in the Gcod tradition, introducing it with the statement, "Gcod *kyi rgya gzuñ Āryadevas mdzad pa.*"

The *Ro sñoms* cycle of Nāropa, specially popular in the 'Brug-pa bka'-brgyud, is well known. During the course of this research, however, I have not seen any statement explicitly asserting that Nāropa taught Gcod.²⁷ We have further not been able to ascertain what tradition is meant when Koñ-sprul refers to the *Bka' brgyud don gcod*.

Of the four Indian streams, that of Dam-pa is generally held to be the primary source of Gcod. Pha Dam-pa Sañs-rgyas (11th-12th century), whose agnomen Dam-pa Rgya-gar-ba emphasizes his Indian nationality, is known best for introducing the Źi-byed teachings in Tibet, these consisting of a wide range of esoteric Buddhist instructions concerning yogic meditation and realization.²⁸ Dam-pa's teachings are chronologically divided into the early (*sña*), middle (*bar*), and late (*phyi*) transmissions. The teaching of Gcod is said to be one of the separate lineages (*rgyud pa thor bu pa*) transmitted by Dam-pa during the middle period.²⁹ Thus Gcod is

²⁶ Cf. *BA*, p. 914. The edition in *Gcod kyi chos skor* does not mention Dam-pa at all in the colophon.

²⁷ A *sādhana* of the *Ro sñoms* Gcod found in the *Collected Works of Padma dkar-po* begins by paying homage to Nāropa and frequently cites the text of the *Ro sñoms* cycle, but seems only to be based on that cycle in a general way. In its content it is largely indistinguishable from the mainstream Gcod of Ma-gcig Lab-sgron. Moreover, the following work by Padma dkar-po on Gcod is specifically traced to Āryadeva, Pha Dam-pa and Ma-gcig. See *Nā ro gsañ spyod kyi dmigs rim*, pp. 357-375, and *Śes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i spyod yul du sen ge rnam par rtse ba*, pp. 377-386, both in *Collected Works of Kun-mkhyen Padma dkar-po* (Darjeeling: Kargyud Sungrab Nyamso Khang, 1973). Note that *Ro sñoms* is said to have been transmitted to Ma-gcig by Skyo-ston Bsod-nams bla-ma: *Khams-smyon*, p. 439.

²⁸ See B.N. Aziz (ed.), *The Tradition of Pha Dam-pa Sañs-rgyas* (Thimphu: Druk Sherik Parkhang, 1979), 5 vols., including a biographical sketch of Dam-pa in vol. 5, pp. 324-363; *BA*, pp. 867-979; *Khams-smyon*, pp. 573-594; *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 11-23; *Thu'u-bkwan*, pp. 107-114.

²⁹ *BA*, p. 911.

counted as a subsidiary of the larger *Zi-byed* cycle, the latter providing the general philosophical and meditational basis.³⁰ Still, *Gcod* is usually treated separately by the surveys of Tibetan Buddhism.

As far as can be ascertained there was no text on the teachings of *Gcod* by *Dam-pa*. Moreover, the occasions on which he is explicitly said to have taught *Gcod* are few. The biographical accounts report that during his third visit to Tibet he was asked to cure two boys of leprosy, in response to which he taught *Gcod* to *Sma-ra ser-po*, a Tibetan he had previously met in Nepal, to the two boys, and to *Skyo Śākya ye-śes*.³¹ Later, he taught *Gcod* to *Skyo-ston Bsod-nams bla-ma*.³² It is also summarily stated that he transmitted *Gcod* to the Tibetan yoginī *Ma-gcig Lab-sgron*, although in fact the histories of *Gcod* do not really support this.³³

- ³⁰ See, e.g., *Khrid*, pp. 79-173 (untitled text, missing first fol.), which describes the techniques for entering meditation, such as the way to hold the eyes, etc. The colophon states that *Dam-pa* gave these teachings to *So-chuñ-pa*, an important figure in the *Zi-byed* lineages.
- ³¹ *BA*, pp. 871 & 996-997; *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 18-22; *Khams-smyon*, pp. 578ff. For biographical sketches of *Skyo Śākya ye-śes*, see *BA*, p. 997; *Khams-smyon*, p. 436; and *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 19-20.
- ³² *BA*, p. 871; but cf. p. 997 where it says that *Dbon-po Bsod-nams bla-ma* received *Gcod* from *Skyo Śākya ye-śes*. See also *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 23ff.; *Khams-smyon*, pp. 437ff.; *Thu'u-bkwan*, p. 114. The lineage in *Gsan-yig* lists both *Skyo-chen La-śes* (?) *bla-ma* and *Skyo-chuñ Bsod-nams bla-ma*. The *Bka' brgyud tshogs las in Gdams nag mdzod*, vol. 9, p. 781, simply lists one *Skyo-chuñ* between *Dam-pa* and *Ma-gcig*. The *Gcod yul gyi khrid yig zab don sñiñ por dril ba* in *Rin chen gter mdzod* (Paro: Ngodrup & Sherab Drimay, 1976), vol. 58, p. 360, lists *Skyo-ston Khu-dbon* between *Dam-pa* and *Ma-gcig*.
- ³³ *BA*, pp. 97 & 911; Aziz, *The Tradition*, vol. 5, p. 346, and *Thu'u-bkwan*, p. 111 state summarily that she received *Gcod* directly from *Dam-pa*. *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 50-51, describes the teachings she received from *Dam-pa*, but there is no explicit mention of *Gcod*. *Khams-smyon*, p. 464, does not specify any of the teachings she received from *Dam-pa*, nor does *Dpa'-bo*.
- ³⁴ The earlier sources such as *BA* and *Dpa'-bo* spell her name *Labsgron*. Note the curious orthography, *Ma-1* (using the Tibetan

It is Ma-gcig Lab-kyi-sgron-ma³⁴ who is universally credited with the codification of Gcod. Setting aside the accounts of her divine origins, etc., such as are often ascribed to Buddhist teachers, and which mark the later versions of her biography, we may take note of the particularly detailed narratives of her immediately previous existence which form an integral part of her legend as a whole. Here she is born in Ser-skya, south of Vārāṇasī, as an Indian brahman boy whose name is rendered in Tibetan as Smon-lam-grub.³⁵ After receiving instruction in Buddhism, the young man debates with the *tīrthikas* at Vārāṇasī, triumphs, but is forced to flee. Soon after, a *ḍākinī* instructs him to go to Tibet to teach. The *ḍākinī* proceeds to take his life in a manner reminiscent of the Gcod rite itself: his consciousness is separated from his fleshy body, the *ḍākinī* severs his head with her crooked knife, ensconces the lifeless body in the Po-ta-ri cave near Vārāṇasī,³⁶ and propels the purified essential consciousness (*rnam ses*) to Tibet.

numeral 1), found in the *Zab don thugs kyi snin po bdud kyi gcod yul gyi skor* of the Padma glin-pa tradition. For biographical sketches of Ma-gcig, see *BA*, pp.983-984; *Dpa'-bo*, p. 763; Gsöns-chen Mkhas-btsun bstan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan, *Ma gcig gi rnam thar mdzad pa bco lna ma in Than ston chos mdzod*, vol. 1, pp. 21-41; *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 25-78; *Khams-smyon*, pp. 439-476; Lho-pa sprul-sku, *Phun po gzan skyur gyi rnam bsad gcod kyi don gsal byed*, pp. 11-44, in *Gcod kyi'chos skor*, pp. 9-410. We wonder on what basis Roerich (*BA*, pp. 225 & 919) identifies Za-chun-ma with Lab-sgron. *BA*, p. 218ff., is clearly discussing Ma-gcig Za-ma. Lacking evidence that Lab-sgron is to be counted among the 24 *ma-jo* of Dam-pa, we would reject Roerich's identification on p. 919. Lab-sgron is identified only as one of the "four *ḍākinīs*" of Dam-pa: *BA*, p. 984.

35

See *Khams-smyon*, pp. 445ff.; *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 29ff.

36

Later Dam-pa and the three fleet-footed yogins (see below) confirm that the body is still there: see *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 75ff.; *Khams-smyon*, p. 473.

37

Rdza-sprul, p. 32; *Khams-smyon*, p. 451; T.G. Dhongthog Rinpoche, *Important Events in Tibetan History* (Delhi, 1968), p. 86. *BA* calls the place Khe'u-gan, but on p. 984 also indicates that it is called gYe. *Dpa'-bo* states that she was born in gYe'i-labs, in the town of Tshe-mer-mo. *Khams-smyon*, p. 454, indicates that the area of her birth was called Lab as well. Lab-

Her birth in E-dam-śod in Smad³⁷ is dated in the mid-11th century.³⁸ The biographies report that she was born with three eyes and describe her natural luminescence, which accounts for the name Sgron-ma, "lamp." Her early teacher is the *gter-ston* Grwa-pa Mñon-śes (b. 1012),³⁹ who ordains her, but directs her to Dam-pa's student Skyo-ston Bsod-nams bla-ma for the advanced initiations.⁴⁰ She demonstrates an early propensity for Gcod in her lack of concern for appearance, society, and propriety. We read of her controversial marriage to the yogin Thod-pa Bhadra,⁴¹ and the subsequent birth of three sons and two daughters.⁴² It seems that Ma-gcig knew of Dam-pa even during her early studies, but did not actually receive teachings from him until she was middle-aged.⁴³ She later moved to

phyi, bordering Nepal to the west of the Gauri-Shankar massif, is the actual pilgrimage site honored as her birthplace.

38 Dhongthog Rinpoche, op. cit., dates her birth to 1031. Sum-pa mkhan-po, *Re'u mig*, in *Dpag bsam ljon bzang*, part 3, ed. Lokesh Chandra (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1959), gives the dates 1055-1143 for Ma-gcig. None of our biographical accounts provides dates for her birth or death.

39 For his biography according to the Gcod tradition, see *Khams-smyon*, pp. 483-494. He is also mentioned as her reading teacher by *Dpa'-bo*, p. 763.

40 During these her mind "flies into the sky," etc.: see *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 42-43; *Khams-smyon*, p. 458.

41 *Khams-smyon*, pp. 460-463; *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 44ff.; *BA*, p. 983.

42 *BA*, p. 983, lists her sons as Sñin-po-grub, Grub-chuñ, and Yañ-grub, and her daughters as Koñ-lcam and La-lcam. Sñin-po-grub is also called Grub-be, and is later known as Rgyal-ba don-grub. See *BA*, pp. 985-986; *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 68-70; *Khams-smyon*, pp. 494-506. *Dpa'-bo*, p. 764, mentions only her son Sñin-po-grub. *Khams-smyon*, p. 478, lists Grub-be, Grub-chuñ and Yañ-grub, which, though the same names as those appearing in *BA*, do not seem to refer to the same persons. Further, *Khams-smyon*, p. 464, states that only these three are definitely her children: Rgyal-ba don-grub, Thod-smyon bsam-grub and Lcam-mo. *Rdza-sprul*, p. 48, lists Grub-pa, Grub-se and the daughter Grub-chuñ-ma.

43 *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 48-49, says that she was thirty-seven years old. *Khams-smyon*, pp. 463-464, indicates her to have been fifty-five when Thod-pa returned to his home, after which she went to study with Dam-pa. According to *Khams-smyon*, however, she

Zaṅs-ri Khañ-dmar in Lho-kha,⁴⁴ where she stayed in retreat for the rest of her life and taught numerous disciples, including her own children.⁴⁵ She died at ninety-five.⁴⁶

The transmission of Gcod is theoretically divided into a varying number of lineages, all of which, however, seem to refer exclusively to the Gcod of Dam-pa or Ma-gcig. The distinction is made between *pho gcod* and *mo gcod*, or again between *pha brgyud* and *ma brgyud*, with a third branch being the *sras brgyud*. The latter clearly refers to the "Sons' Lineage" that passes through Ma-gcig's children and close disciples,⁴⁷ but the division into male and female Gcod is a bit more problematic. Usually *pho gcod* is defined as comprising those teachings passing from Dam-pa to Sma-ra and Skyo-ston,⁴⁸ and seems to be synonymous here with the term *pha brgyud*, although according to Karma Chags-med the *pho gcod* encompasses the *pha*, *ma*, and *sras brgyud*.⁴⁹ More interesting is Rdza-sprul Nag-dbañ bstan'dzin nor-bu's division of Gcod into a successive lineage (*rin brgyud*), direct lineage (*ñe brgyud*), and very direct lineage (*śin tu ñe brgyud*), where the successive lineage is that passing from Dam-pa through Ma-gcig on down; the direct lineage denotes Ma-gcig's revelations on the teachings of Prajñāpāramitā and Vajravārāhī; and the very direct lineage is the transmission from the Jñānaḍākinī to Ma-gcig.⁵⁰ The direct and very direct lines would be included within

had met an emanation of Dam-pa previously. See *Khams-smyon*, pp. 455-456.

44 BA, p. 984; *Dpa'-bo*, p. 763. The later sources spell it Mkharm-dmar.

45 Among her students was included the *siddha* Pham-thin. See *Rdza-sprul*, p. 62.

46 BA, p. 984; *Dpa'-bo*, p. 763; *Rdza-sprul*, p. 71; but Gśons-chen, op. cit., p. 37, states that she died at 98.

47 Nonetheless, in one case (*Gsan-yig*, vol. 2, p. 172) the *sras brgyud* consists of Buddha, Maitreya, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu and Āryadeva. Here it is the (*pho mo sras*) *gsum ga 'dus pa* line that is said to continue through Dam-pa, Skyo-chen, Skyo-chuñ, Ma-gcig, Rgyal-ba don-grub, etc. See also *Gcod kyi gsol 'debs*, pp. 3ff., in *Zab don thugs kyi sñin po bdud kyi gcod yul gyi skor*.

48 See BA, pp. 996-999; *Thu'u-bkwan*, p. 114.

49 Karma Chags-med, *Gcod kyi gdeñs bsad ñuñ ñur bsdus pa bzugs pa'i dbu phyogs*, pp. 233ff.

50 *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 5-6.

what is elsewhere called *mo gcod*,^{5 1} although some would have it that *mo gcod* refers simply to all of the teachings of Gcod given by Ma-gcig.^{5 2} That visionary inspiration is sighted as a major source of Ma-gcig's knowledge is to be understood as suggesting that much of this tradition is Ma-gcig's own creation. It is, in fact, not uncommonly stated that it is only with Ma-gcig that the system first receives the name Gcod.^{5 3}

A number of points that can be raised in connection with Ma-gcig's biographies further reduce the centrality of Dam-pa in the teaching of Gcod. One is the paucity of information on Ma-gcig's course of instruction with Dam-pa, which seems to have been quite short-lived.^{5 4} Much more is made of her receipt of Gcod from Dam-pa's student Skyo-ston Bsod-nams bla-ma, who is described as her "root guru."^{5 5} Further, the occasion which is cited as the inception of the *Jo mo'i brgyud*, i.e. Ma-gcig's own teaching lineage, is her liberation resulting from her receipt of the four types of *nam mkha' sgo 'byed* initiation from Skyo Śākya ye-śes.^{5 6} In any case, the

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- 51 *Khams-smyon*, p. 477: *Yum gyi thugs sprul Ma cig lab sgron la mkha' 'gro thams cad kyiś zal mñon sum du bstan ciñ sñan du bstims pa rnam mo gcod yin no. Gsan-yig*, vol. 2, p. 172, defines *mo gcod* as Ma-gcig's visionary teachings received from Tārā and Sukhasiddhi.
- 52 *BA*, p. 982; *Thu'u-bkwan*, p. 114. Karma Chags-med, op. cit., p. 233, states that *mo gcod* is that given by Ma-gcig to the *sras mo rgyan bñi*.
- 53 Cf. *Dpa'-bo*, p. 763: *Dam chos bdud kyi gcod yul źes bya ba ni/ Ma gcig labs kyi sgron ma nas grags pa ste*. It also seems significant that *Dpa'-bo* places the statement that the teachings of Gcod appeared to Ma-gcig (*gcod kyi man ñag thugs la śar*) even before her meeting with Dam-pa in the latter's brief biography. A similar statement is made by Padma Luñ-rtogs rgya-mtsho, *Ne brgyud gcod kyi khrid yig gsal bar bkod pa legs bśad bdud rtsi'i rol mtsho*, in *The Collected Gter-ma Rediscoveries of Gter-chen Bdud-'joms gliñ-pa*, ed. H.H. Bdud-'joms 'Jigs-bral ye-śes rdo-rje (Kalimpong: Dupjung Lama, 1978), vol. 20, p. 12.
- 54 *Khams-smyon*, p. 464, specifically states that she stayed three or four days with him. *Rdza-sprul*, p. 51, states that she stayed a while (*re źig*). See also n. 33 above.
- 55 *Khams-smyon*, p. 459. *Dpa'-bo*, p. 763, states that her "birth of *jñāna*" occurred after she was initiated by Skyo-ston.
- 56 *Khams-smyon*, pp. 436-437.

accounts emphasize Ma-gcig's inherently advanced level of realization which was independent of teachings bestowed by any teacher. Rdza-sprul reports that when she requested the *bodhicittotpāda* empowerment from Skyo-ston, he replied that she did not need it.⁵⁷ Similarly, the *Blue Annals* relates that she walked out in the middle of the *Māyājāla* initiation being given by Skyo-ston, confident that she had already received the essential empowerment (*don dban*).⁵⁸

Another incident recounted in the biographies concerns the arrival at Zañs-ri Khañ-dmar of three Indians skilled in the yoga of fleet-footedness (*rkañ mgyogs*), who were sent by their colleagues in Vārāṇasī to determine whether Ma-gcig was an incarnation of the mother of all Buddhas or of an evil demon.⁵⁹ The story goes on that Ma-gcig could preach to them in Sanskrit, since she still remembered that language from her past life as Smon-lam-grub. The three, needless to say, were convinced of the efficacy of Gcod and of Ma-gcig's authenticity, and later they carried the teaching back to India. At the close of this incident Ma-gcig proclaims, "Many Indian teachings were transported to Tibet. The only Tibetan teaching that has been transported to India is mine."⁶⁰

Transmission through the successors of Ma-gcig

Ma-gcig's main disciples are usually counted as sixteen.⁶¹ Much is written about her variously listed sons and daughters, and the stories of their rebellious and unconventional activities give us a colorful picture of the characters who typify the early Gcod lineages. Outstanding were her notorious son Rgyal-ba don-grub, who became the first lineage-holder,⁶² and Thod-smyon bsam-grub, probably her

57 *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 49-50.

58 *BA*, p. 984.

59 See *Khams-smyon*, pp. 467ff.; *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 72-78.

60 *Rdza-sprul*, p. 78: 1-2. Cf. *Khams-smyon*, p. 475.

61 See *BA*, p. 985; *Khams-smyon*, pp. 560-561; *Rdza-sprul*, p. 78.

62 Originally named by Ma-gcig as Grub-be, Grub-che, or Sñiñ-po-grub. See n. 42 above. *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 68-70, calls him Grub-pa, and relates a story similar to that found in *BA*. The same incident, with different details, is found in *Khams-smyon*, pp. 494-506. The name Rgyal-ba don-grub is not mentioned by *BA*, or by *Dpa'-bo*, who, however, lists a Rgyal-ba ston-grub as the brother of Thos-smyon bsam-grub!

great-grandson,⁶³ who was the progenitor of a special "Sons' Lineage."⁶⁴

From Khu-sgom Chos-kyi-señ-ge,⁶⁵ who is said to have been "almost a son" to Ma-gcig, proceeds what we may call the standard successive lineage (*rin brgyud*) for Gcod, which passed to Dol-pa Zan-thal,⁶⁶ a Chinese yogin called Gcer-bu-pa,⁶⁷ Sans-rgyas rab-ston,⁶⁸ Rtogs-ldan Dge-slon,⁶⁹ Zen-med Ras-pa,⁷⁰ and the Sans-pa patriarchs Sans-rgyas ston-pa Brtson-'grus señ-ge (1219?-1290?)⁷¹ and Mkhas-grub chos-rje (d. 1319).⁷² The same standard Gcod lineage passes from Sans-rgyas ston-pa by stages down to Chos-dbyins ran-grol (1604-1669), who transmitted the teachings of Gcod to the Fifth Dalai Lama Nāg-dbañ blo-bzañ rgya-mtsho (1617-1682).⁷³ The Fifth also received a transmission of Gcod from Gter-bdag gliñ-pa (1646-1714).⁷⁴

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- 63 See *BA*, p. 986; *Dpa'-bo*, p. 764. His father was Tshe-dbañ. However, *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 64-68 and *Khams-smyon*, pp. 478ff. (cf. p. 559), equate him with one of Ma-gcig's sons, and tell of his struggle with *smyo brgyal*. *Thu'u-bkwan*, p. 114, rightly observes that there are differences of opinion as to whether he was Ma-gcig's son, grandson, or great-grandson.
- 64 Variouslly called *sñan brgyud* and *gsaṅ sñags brgyud*. It may be recognized by the common use of the epithet Gañs-pa, indicating a lengthy stay in a snow-bound retreat. See *BA*, p. 986; *Khams-smyon*, pp. 532ff.; *Dpa'-bo*, p. 764.
- 65 See *Thu'u-bkwan*, p. 114; *BA*, pp. 988-989; *Rdza-sprul*, p. 78.
- 66 See *BA*, p. 989; *Rdza-sprul*, p. 82; *Khams-smyon*, pp. 512ff.
- 67 *BA*, p. 990; *Khams-smyon*, pp. 514-517; *Rdza-sprul*, p. 84. The latter qualifies the epithet, stating that he was of Chinese ancestry but was born in Phra-nañ.
- 68 *BA*, p. 990; *Khams-smyon*, p. 517; *Rdza-sprul*, p. 85. *Gsan-yig*, vol. 2, p. 172, adds Rgya-sgom ri-pa after Rgya-nag gcer-bu.
- 69 *BA*, p. 990; *Rdza-sprul*, p. 86; *Khams-smyon*, p. 517.
- 70 *BA*, pp. 990-991; *Rdza-sprul*, p. 87; *Khams-smyon*, p. 518.
- 71 *BA*, p. 991; *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 88-90; *Khams-smyon*, p. 522.
- 72 *Khams-smyon*, p. 526.
- 73 *Gsan-yig*, p. 172, inserts 'Jam-dbyaṅs mgon-po, to whom is attributed the codification of the of the main Gcod teaching, between Rgyal-ba don-grub and Khu-sgom chos-señ.
- 74 *Gsan-yig*, pp. 173-174.

The main link through whom Gcod enters the Karma Bka'-brgyud is Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje (1284-1339), who seems to have had an important role in the codification of Gcod.⁷⁵ Further, he is credited with having purged the tradition of the so-called aberrant Gcod (*gcod log*),⁷⁶ characterized as promoting cannibalism, the use of offensive odors, the copper trumpet (?), etc.⁷⁷ Such profanations are traced to the teachings of one "Co Lab-sgron" from Hor and a fraudulent Thod-pa Bhadra from the West, who are said to have appeared fifty years after the genuine Lab-sgron and her husband. So that the undiscerning practitioner does not take up these misguided practices, lists of the authenticating marks of true Gcod are enumerated; e.g., refuge must be taken in the Three Jewels, compassion must be the basis of the practice, the defilements (*kleśa*) are the only things that are cut, etc.⁷⁸ The existence of aberrant practices is also given as the occasion for the concealment of *gter ma*

75 *Dpa'-bo*, p. 764, traces his lineage to Kham-bu ya-le, perhaps a son of Rgyal-ba don-grub. See also *BA*, p. 986, and *Khams-smyon*, p. 497. Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje, *Zab mo bdud kyi gcod yul kyi khrid yig*, in *Gdams nag mdzod*, vol. 9, p. 629, recounts his own lineage. See also his *Gcod kyi khrid yig*, in *Khrid*, pp. 202-203. *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 90ff., connects Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje to the line that passed through Sañs-rgyas ston-pa. See also *Khams-smyon*, pp. 541ff., for the Karma Bka'-brgyud lineage. The Zur-mañ lineage of Gcod also traces back through a number of the Karmapas to Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje. See *Riñ brgyud kyi gsol 'debs ma cig gis mdzad par ban sgar 'jam dpal bzañ pos kha bskañ ba*, in *Gdams nag mdzod*, vol. 9, pp. 779-780. A collection of texts on his *Tshogs las rin chen 'phreñ ba* cycle has been published recently in Paro. See *Tshogs las*. His *Gcod bka' tshoms chen mo'i sa bcad* and *Zab mo bdud kyi khrid yig* are to be found in the *Gdams nag mdzod*, vol. 9. See also n. 84 below.

76 *Khams-smyon*, pp. 546 & 550. Brtson-'grus señ-ge is also said to have clarified Gcod-log by discovering a Gcod *gter ma*. See *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 89-90; and Karma Chags-med, *Gcod kyi gdenś bśad ñuñ nur bsdus pa bźugs pa'i dbu phyogs*, p. 235.

77 *Khams-smyon*, p. 550. See the detailed account of Gcod-log in *Khams-smyon*, pp. 550-558. It is said to have been foreseen when Ma-gcig received her prophecy from the Buddha.

78 See *Khams-smyon*, pp. 558-559; also Dpal-sprul O-rgyan 'jigs-med chos-kyi-dbañ-po, *Gcod yul mkha' 'gro'i gad rgyaṅs kyī man nag zab mo*, p. 764, in his *Collected Works*, vol. 4, p. 749-765.

by Ma-gcig.^{7 9} (The latter, however, should be distinguished from the *gter* transmission of Gcod attributed to Padmasambhava that is mentioned below.)

We also read of Karma Pakśi (1204-1283) in the early stages of the transmission of Gcod;^{8 0} and writings on Gcod by the VIIIth Karma-pa Mi-bskyod rdo-rje (1507-1554) are reported,^{8 1} as are those of the Vth Žwa-dmar Dkon-mchog yan-lag (1525-1583).^{8 2} Karma Chags-med (17th century) was a major contributor to the Karma Bka'-brgyud Gcod and edited Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje's *Tshogs las rin chen 'phreñ ba*.^{8 3} Zur-man monastery seems to have been very active in this tradition, preserving among other texts Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje's *Gcod tshogs yon tan kun 'byuñ*.^{8 4}

The Gcod of the Jo-nañ-pas is represented by a work of Tāranātha (b. 1575) found in the *Gdams ñag mdzod*.^{8 5} We have not

79 *Khams-smyon*, p. 557. See also Kun-dga' rnam-rgyal, *Gcod kyi bśad pa gsal ba'i sgron me bźugs pa'i dbu phyogs*, p. 17, in *Khrid*, pp. 1-23.

80 *Khams-smyon*, p. 541, reports that he received the *Gnam mtsho*.

81 Karma A-ra-ga (i.e. Karma Chags-med), *Gcod khrid gdan thog gcig ma'i sgrub thabs*, in *Tshogs-las*, pp. 241-253. Mi-bskyod-pa's *Gcod tshigs bcad ma* is cited as a source on p. 242, where the latter is declared to be the incarnation of Pha Dam-pa.

82 Karma A-ra-ga, op. cit., p. 242, refers to the *Man ñag sgrub thabs dños grub sgo 'byed kyi zin bris* of Žwa-dmar Dkon-mchog yan-lag. The *dkar chag* of the *Gdams ñag mdzod* attributes the *Gcod khrid zab mo'i 'dod dgu'i char* to him, though the text of that work found in vol. 9 is attributed to Karma Chags-med.

83 For Karma Chags-med's works on Gcod, see *Tshogs-las* and *Gdams ñag mdzod*, vol. 9.

84 See *Gcod tshogs yon tan kun 'byuñ: The Collected Gcod teachings of the Zur man Bka'-brgyud-pa Tradition* (Bir: Pema Lodoe, 1979). The Zur-man Gcod lineage is given in *Bka' brgyud tshogs las*, in *Gdams ñag mdzod*, vol. 9, pp. 781-783. See also Kun-dga' rnam-rgyal, op. cit. Several generations following Kun-dga' rnam-rgyal in the Zur-man line is Rtogs-ldan Bstan-'dzin rnam-dag, whose *Gcod kyi tshogs las yon tan kun ldan gyi dmigs rim bla ma'i gsuñ rgyun gyi zin bris sel dkar me lon*, in *Gdams ñag mdzod*, vol. 9, pp. 646-695, cites the former's teachings on p. 647.

85 *Gcod yul zab mo'i khrid yid gnad don sñiñ po*, in *Gdams ñag mdzod*, vol. 9, pp. 630-645.

come across a Gcod tradition in any of the Sa-skye sects, although their *Ku sa li'i tshogs bsags* practice is similar in content.

Transmission based on revelation

The traditions of Gcod we have been discussing thus far trace back through successive teacher-disciple lineages to the teachings of Ma-gcig and beyond. Other major branches of Gcod, however, trace rather to direct revelations (*ñe brgyud*) received either in meditative trance or through the discovery of visionary scripture. The important Gcod teaching for the Dge-lugs-pas, for example, is Tson-kha-pa's (1357-1419) pure vision (*dag snan*) of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī which, according to Thu'u-bkwan, involved a Gcod *upadeśa* and a *Khros nag byin rlabs*, and which was transmitted by Rgyal-ba Dben-sa-pa.⁸⁶

Of the Gcod teachings originating in visions of Ma-gcig herself, we may mention that of Rgyal-thaṅ-pa Bsam-gtan 'od-zer,⁸⁷ and the *siddha* Thaṅ-stoṅ rgyal-po's (1361-1485) vision of Ma-gcig as Vajravārāhī at the Rameśvara cemetery, which is preserved in the lengthy *Gsan spyod snan brgyud* cycle.⁸⁸ There is also said to be a

⁸⁶ Thu'u-bkwan, p. 115. See Dge-slon Dharmabhadra, *Ma gcig mkha' 'gro dbaṅ phyug labs kyi sgron ma'i sku gsun thugs kyi rtogs pa cuṅ zad tsam brjod par byed pa'i gtam dad pa'i sgo 'byed*, and the lineage in Dge-slon Dbaṅ-phyug chos-bzaṅ, *Gcod gzuṅ legs pa zig*, p. 366, both in *Ma gcig gi gcod kyi skor rnam phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs pa*, microfilmed xylograph SB230, Garma C.C. Chang Collection, Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions, Stony Brook, N.Y. See also Dge-bśes Don-ldan, *Gcod Practices of the Dge-lugs-pa Tradition* (Darjeeling: Damcho Sangpo, 1979). The Dge-lugs-pa *rin-brgyud* is listed on pp. 6-12; the *ñe-brgyud* from Tson-kha-pa's vision on pp. 12-15.

⁸⁷ Listed in *Gsan-yig*, vol. 2, pp. 278-279. Mentioned by Thu'u-bkwan, pp. 114-115. I have not yet located the texts of this tradition.

⁸⁸ *Khams-smyon*, pp. 549-550. Two editions recently published: *Gsan spyod snan brgyud*, in *Thaṅ stoṅ chos mdzod*, vols. 1-4; and *Thaṅ stoṅ snan brgyud* (New Delhi: Trayang, 1973). See also Janet Gyatso, "The Literary Transmission of the Traditions of Thang-stong rGyal-po: A Study of Visionary Buddhism in Tibet," Ph.D. dissertation (Berkeley: University of California, 1981), pp. 160-185.

visionary Gcod of Rgod-tshan-pa (1189-1258).⁸⁹

The numerous Rñin-ma Gcod cycles, which would seem to comprise O-rgyan's *'Khrul-gcod* mentioned above, are characterized as *gter ma* or *dag snan*, and their formulation is described in terms of the standard Rñin-ma concepts of the "realized" (*dgoñs brgyud*), "symbolic" (*rig 'dzin brda'i brgyud*), and "whispered" (*gan zag snan khuñ gi brgyud*) transmissions. Padmasambhava and Ye-śes mtsho-rgyal appear in inspirational roles here, but the position of Ma-gcig is generally not undermined in the Rñin-ma Gcod. Rather, the role of Ye-śes mtsho-rgyal is justified with assertions that she is a previous incarnation of Ma-gcig,⁹⁰ this supported by predictions from Padmasambhava that Mtsho-rgyal would be born as Lab-sgron in the future.⁹¹ The function of Ma-gcig herself in the Rñin-ma Gcod cycle varies, but her importance is recognized in almost all of the traditions we have looked at, and in a number of cases she is in the prominent position.

An important Rñin-ma Gcod cycle from the revelations of Bdud-'joms gliñ-pa (b. 1835) centers on *sādhana*s of Khros-ma.⁹² Here the source is Ma-gcig Lab-sgron herself⁹³ (Bdud-'joms gliñ-pa also received Gcod teachings from Pha-gcig Sans-rgyas and the *siddha* Saraha⁹⁴) and the lineage is traced ultimately back to Prajñāpāramitā and to the Buddha.⁹⁵

In the *Gcod yul stan thog gcig ma* cycle of Smin-grol-gliñ, which seems to be the only Gcod teaching included in the *Rin chen gter mdzod*,⁹⁶ Ma-gcig is explicitly identified as the principal figure in the

89 *Khams-smyon*, p. 550. I have not yet located the texts of this tradition.

90 As in *Rdza-sprul*, p. 27.

91 *Rdza-sprul*, pp. 27-28; and Padma Luñ-rtogs rgya-mtsho, op. cit., p. 12.

92 In addition to his *Khros ma'i sgrub skor* (see n. 16 above), there is available his *Khros ma nag mo'i sgrub skor* (xylograph, n.d.). See also Padma Luñ-rtogs rgya-mtsho, op. cit.

93 Padma Luñ-rtogs rgya-mtsho, op. cit., p. 12.

94 See n. 16 above.

95 *Khros ma nag mo'i sgrub skor*, pp. 1-6; Padma Luñ-rtogs rgya-mtsho, op. cit., pp. 10 & 12. Recall, too, that this cycle credits Ma-gcig with the introduction of the term "Gcod" (see n. 53, above).

96 Vol. 58, pp. 309-397. Note that the *gter sad* is not used to punctuate this cycle.

*sādhana*⁹⁷ and the standard successive lineage of Gcod, traced down to 'Gyur-med rdo-rje, is invoked.⁹⁸ Further, a Gcod text from the Padma gliñ-pa tradition identifies Ma-gcig's teachings as the source of Gcod.⁹⁹ Neither this *gter ma* cycle nor the Gcod found in the *Rig 'dzin srog grub* cycle of Lha-btsun Nam-mkha' 'jigs-med makes any mention of Mtsho-rgyal. The principal figure in the latter is the ubiquitous Vajravārāhī.¹⁰⁰

On the other hand, the widely practiced *Mkha' 'gro gad rkyan* of 'Jigs-med gliñ-pa (1729-1798) begins by paying homage to Ye-śes mtsho-rgyal and focuses upon Padmasambhava during the *guruyoga*, but the principal figure in the main *sādhana* is the generalized form of the *ḍākinī*, Ye-śes mkha'-'gro.¹⁰¹ The *Sñan brgyud gcod kyi gdams pa* of Rtsa-gsum gliñ-pa also focuses on Ye-śes mtsho-rgyal in a variety of forms.¹⁰² The *Gcod 'dzin pa ran grol* of Mdo-mkhyen-brtse Ye-śes rdo-rje equates Ye-śes mkha'-'gro with both Lab-sgron and Mtsho-rgyal.¹⁰³ We may further mention Dri-med gliñ-pa's *Gcod brgyad snañ srid yar gtad*, also attributed to Ye-śes mtsho-rgyal and Padmasambhava, and traced ultimately to Śakyamuni as Vajradhāra, and to Ānanda and 'Jam-dpal bśes-gñen.¹⁰⁴

97 Here her name reads "Labs-kyi-sgrol-ma."

98 Dharmasrī, *Gcod yul gyi khrid yig zab don sñiñ por dril ba*, pp. 360ff., in *Rin chen gter mdzod*, vol. 58, pp. 351-397.

99 *Gcod kyi spyi khrid chen mo*, in *Zab don thugs kyi sñiñ po bdud kyi gcod yul gyi skor*, p. 49: *Ye śes kyi mkha' 'gro Lab sgron gyi gsun gi bdud rtsi mchog tu gyur pa snañs bdud kyi gcod yul yin no.*

100 *Gcod kyi dgoñs 'grel gsal byed*, etc., in Nam-mkha' 'jigs-med, *Rig 'dzin srog sgrub* (xylograph, from blocks preserved at the Palace Monastery, Gangtok, 1975). "Ma-gcig" is quoted once, fol. 2b.

101 See 'Jigs-med gliñ-pa, op. cit.; Dpal-sprul O-rgyan 'jigs-med chos-kyi-dbañ-po, op. cit.; and the English translation by Dāwa Samdup in Evans-Wentz, op. cit.

102 Rtsa-gsum *gter-bdag gliñ-pa*, *Collected Rediscovered Teachings* (Darjeeling: Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche Pema Wangyal, 1979), vol. 1, pp. 237-277, esp. 241.

103 See *Mtsho rgyal dkar mo'i sgrub thabs*, p. 59, in (Mdo-mkhyen-brtse) Ye-śes rdo-rje, *Gcod 'dzin pa ran grol gyi 'don cha'i skor*, ed. Rgyal-dbañ ñi-ma (Paro: Ngodub & Sherab Drimay, 1978).

104 The phrase used is: *Ye śes mkha' 'gro lab sgron ma.*

Part of the *Tshe yum gsañ ba ḍakki* cycle in *Collected Gter-ma*

Finally, the Bon-po have a number of Gcod cycles which seem to stem largely from visionary transmission, and which have been classified into four types corresponding to the four tantric activities: peaceful, extending, powerful, and wrathful.¹⁰⁵ Time has not allowed me to determine the relationship of the Bon Gcod to the Buddhist versions. Perhaps these texts can shed light on the development of Gcod as a whole.

To summarize: the traditional linking of Gcod to Indian Buddhist thought has the support of valid evidence and so holds. Nevertheless, the consideration of Gcod's debts to shamanism permits a broader understanding of the system's origins. The doctrinal basis of Gcod is identified with four teaching streams from India, and of these that of Pha Dam-pa Sañs-rgyas is historically the best attested. In any case, evidence indicates that the actual codification of Gcod was largely the work of a Tibetan, Ma-gcig Lab-sgron, who retains a prominent position in the many Gcod lineages that have since developed, even in the *gter ma* cycles which would be expected to emphasize primarily Padmasambhava and Ye-śes mtsho-rgyal. Finally, we find that in all of the Gcod traditions we have seen thus far the major doctrinal statements, meditative technique, and other subjects discussed remain constant; the differences seem to consist mostly in the method of transmission, the specific figures of the *sādhana*, or simply in the lineage itself.

Discoveries of Dri-med Glin-pa (Thimphu: Kunsang Topgay, 1976), vol. 1, pp. 314-318ff.

105

Among the available Bon Gcod literature are: *Zab lam mkha' 'gro gsañ ba'i gcod kyī gdams pa* from the oral transmission received by Sprul-sku Khro-gñan rgyal-mtshan (New Thobgyal: Tashi Dorji, 1973); Skyañ-sprul Nam-mkha' rgyal-mtshan's vision of the teachings of Khro-gñan rgyal-mtshan, the *Mkha' 'gro gsañ gcod yid bzin nor bu'i dmigs pa'i skor rnam cha tshan* (Dolanji: Gelong Sonam Gyaltzen, 1974); idem., *Mkha' 'gro gsañ gcod kyī lag len skor* (Dolanji: Tashi Dorji, 1974); Gsen-gsas Lha-rje's vision of Stoñ-rgyun mthu-chen, the *Zab lam gnad kyī gdams pa drug mu gcod chen gyī gsuñ pod* (New Thobgyal: Tshultrim Tashi, 1973); the revelations of Mkha'-'gro Bde-chen dbañ-mo, the *Yum chen kye ma 'od mtsho'i zab gsañ gcod kyī gdams pa las phran dan bcas pa'i gsuñ pod* (Dolanji: Tshering Wangyal, 1974); and Nag-gter Gsañ-snags glin-pa's *Zab mo gcod kyī gdams nag yum chen thugs rje sgröl ma* (New Thobgyal: Patshang Lama Sonam Gyaltzen, 1973).

Abbreviations

- BA** George Roerich, trans. *The Blue Annals*, by 'Gos Lo-tsa-ba, 2 vols., The Asiatic Society Monograph Series, Vol. VII. Calcutta: The Asiatic Society, 1953.
- Dpa'-bo** Dpa'o Gtsug-lag 'phren-ba. *Chos 'byun mkhas pa'i dga'ston*, ed. Lokesh Chandra, Śatapiṭaka Series 9 (4). New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1962.
- Gsan-yig** Āg-dbañ blo-bzañ rgya-mtsho (Dalai Lama V). *Gsan yig gaṅga'i chu rgyun*, 4 vols. Delhi: Nechung & Lhakhar, 1970.
- Khams-smyon** 'Jigs-bral Chos-kyi-señ-ge (Khams-smyon), *Zi byed dan gcod yul gyi chos 'byun rin po che'i 'phren ba thar pa'i rgyan*, in *Gcod kyī chos skor*. New Delhi: Tibet House, 1974, pp. 411-597.
- Khrid** *Khrid Materials on the Practise (sic) of Gcod*, by Kun-dga' rnam-rgyal and others. Thimphu: Kunsang Topgay, 1978.
- Rdza-sprul** Rdza-sprul Āg-dbañ bstan-'dzin nor-bu, *Gcod yul ñon moñs ųi byed kyī bka' gter bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar byin rlabs gter mtsho*. Gangtok, 1972.
- Thu'u-bkwan** Thu'u-bkwan Blo-bzañ chos-kyi-ñi-ma, *Grub mtha' thams cad kyī khuñs tshul ston pa legs bsad sel gyī me loñ*. Varanasi: Chhos Je Lama, 1963.
- Tshogs-las** *Gcod tshogs rin chen 'phren ba*. Paro: Lama Ngodrub and Sherab Drimey, 1981.

INSIGHT AND LIBERATION IN NĀGĀRJUNA'S SEVENTY STANZAS ON EMPTINESS

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Among Nāgārjuna's six main treatises there are two that have a special relationship to each other in that they are both strictly expository philosophical treatises which put forth the fundamental theories of the *mādhyamika* system. These two are the *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, the *Treatise on the Middle Way*,¹ and the *Śūnyatāsaptatikārikānāma* or *Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness*.² Atīśa referred to their special relationship in his *Lamp of the Enlightenment Path*, mentioning the two of them as being particularly suitable for the study of *mādhyamika*.³ Tson-kha-pa states that Nāgārjuna wrote the *Seventy Emptiness* in response to questions raised about the seventh chapter of the *MMK*.⁴ More recently, Alex Wayman has also suggested that the most suitable work for comparison with the *MMK* is the *Seventy Emptiness*.⁵ In a limited way, that is what this paper intends to do.

In both Asian and Western traditions study of the *MMK* has been more popular than study of the *Seventy Emptiness*. Although there are numerous commentaries of Asian origin on the *MMK*, and a number of translations into Western languages, there are only three extant Indian commentaries on the *Seventy Emptiness*. One, which is referred to as an "autocommentary," primarily indicates the meanings of words.⁶ A second, by Candrakīrti, is the most useful of

¹ Otani 5224: D.T. Suzuki (ed.), *The Tibetan Tripitaka, Peking Edition* (Kyoto, 1957).

² Otani 5227.

³ Otani 5334, folio 276b.

⁴ Tson-kha-pa, *Rtsa še ṭik chen rigs pa'i rgya mtsho* (Varanasi: Pleasure of Elegant Sayings Press, 1973), pp. 26-27.

⁵ Alex Wayman, "Contributions to the Mādhyamika School of Buddhism," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. 89 (1969), p. 141.

⁶ Otani 5231, *ston pa n̄id bdun cu pa'i 'grel pa*.

the three, as it delves into the underlying arguments in the root verses.⁷ The third, authored by Parahita, dates from the 11th century.⁸ It primarily focuses on the meanings of the terms used in the root verses and appears to have been written as an aid for the translators working at the Mtho-glin' monastery in Western Tibet. All three of these commentaries, as well as the root verses, are solely extant in Tibetan and Mongolian, the original Sanskrit having been lost, except for a single *kārikā* which is quoted in the *Prasannapadā*.⁹ The root verses were translated into Chinese, but this work has also been lost, except for the nineteenth verse which is quoted in the *Twelve Topics Treatise*.¹⁰

The Tibetan editions of the *Seventy Emptiness* which are currently at our disposal are all to be found in the *Bstan 'gyur*, but there is one interesting manuscript fragment of the autocommentary which is considerably older. A single page of this work, which comments on stanzas 19-23, was recovered by Stein from the Tun-huang caves.¹¹ The colophon to the redaction of this work found in the Sde-dge edition of the *Bstan 'gyur* states that it was translated by Jinamitra and Ye-ses-sde, who also worked on the *Mahāvvyutpatti*.¹² Thus it is likely that this manuscript redaction of the autocommentary was originally translated during the Imperial period and, since its redaction in the *Bstan 'gyur* shows later editing, this fragment is all that remains of the work mentioned in the *Ldan dkar* catalogue. The same catalogue, which lists the scriptures found in the Tibetan canon as it existed in the late 8th or early 9th century,

⁷ Otani 5268, *ston pa nīd bdun cu pa'i 'grel pa*.

⁸ Otani 5269, *ston pa nīd bdun cu pa'i rnam par bśad pa*. All three commentaries, plus the root stanzas (see note 2), were compared to develop the text used in this paper. Details will be found in the work cited in note 17.

⁹ Louis de la Vallée Poussin. *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās de Nāgārjuna avec la Prasannapadā* (St. Petersburg, 1903-14), pp. 89. It begins: *paṭaḥ kāraṇataḥ siddhaḥ...*

¹⁰ *Shih-erh-men-lun*, folio 160a, in Junjirō Takakusu and Kaikyo Watanabe (eds.), *Taishō Edition of the Chinese Tripitaka* (Tokyo, 1924-34), no. 1568. Translated in Hsueh-li Cheng, *Nāgārjuna's Twelve Gate Treatise* (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1982), p. 85.

¹¹ Louis de la Vallée Poussin, *Catalogue of the Tibetan Manuscripts in the India Office Library* (Oxford, 1962), p. 204.

¹² Hakaju Ui et al. (eds.), *A Complete Catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon* (Sendai, 1934), Tohoku no. 3831.

depending on whether we prefer Lalou's dates or those given by Tucci,¹³ also tells us that in addition to the autocommentary a separate translation of the root verses was available at that time, as it has a separate listing.¹⁴

Finally, if we turn to the modern period, we find that up to now little work has been done on the *Seventy Emptiness*. Only slight mention of it crops up in the various Western works on Nāgārjuna,¹⁵ yet the XIVth Dalai Lama quotes it several times in his series of popular books for Western readers, thereby suggesting that it still maintains some currency in the Tibetan monastic community.¹⁶ Tibetan monks with whom I spoke in Dharamsala were all familiar with it, but preferred study of the *MMK* and the Tson-kha-pa commentary upon it. The preliminary translation of the *Seventy Emptiness* which I completed in my doctoral dissertation was the first appearance of the work in a Western language.¹⁷ In 1981 a book was published under the authorship of G. Luvantseren called

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- 13 Giuseppe Tucci, *Minor Buddhist Texts*, Serie Orientale Roma, vol. 11 (Rome, 1958), pp. 46-48.
- 14 Marcelle Lalou, "Les Textes Bouddhiques au Temps du Roi Khri-sron lde-bcan," *Journal Asiatique*, CCXLI (1953), p. 313. The catalogue numbers are 593 and 594 for the root stanzas and autocommentary respectively.
- 15 Several months after originally presenting this paper I received a copy of David S. Ruegg's *The Literature of the Madhyamaka School in India* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1981), which, among other things, notes the relevant Western and Japanese scholarly literature on the subject. He discusses the *Seventy Emptiness*, particularly stanzas 58, 69, 70, 71 and 72, on pp. 20-21. Several months after that I also received a copy of Chr. Lindtner's *Nāgārjuniana: Studies in the Writings and Philosophy of Nāgārjuna* (Copenhagen: Akademisk Forlag, 1982), which has a complete translation of the *Seventy Emptiness* on pages 31-69.
- 16 Dalai Lama XIV Tenzin Gyatso, *The Buddhism of Tibet and the Key to the Middle Way* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), pp. 69 and 75.
- 17 David Ross Komito, "A Study of Nāgārjuna's Śūnyatā-saptatikārikā-nāma" (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1979). A revision of this translation, jointly produced by myself, Geshe Sonam Rinchen and the Venerable Tenzin Dorjee is forthcoming under the title *Wisdom in Tibetan Buddhism* (Ithaca: Gabriel Press).

Philosophical Views of Nāgārjuna, which is based on the *Seventy Emptiness* and contains a translation of it.¹⁸ Unfortunately, as it was published in Ulan Bator, I have not as yet had an opportunity to examine it.

It is a bit difficult to develop an overview of the relationship of the contents of the *MMK* to those of the *Seventy Emptiness*, for while Candrakīrti supplies chapter headings in his commentary on the *MMK*, he does not do so for his commentary on the *Seventy Emptiness*. Nevertheless, a topical analysis of the latter text shows it breaking down into sections which are roughly as follows: first, there is a general introduction summarizing Nāgārjuna's views on conventional expressions, the three times, arising and causality. This is followed by an application of these principles to the twelve limbs of interdependent origination. Then there is an examination of the nature of phenomena, followed by comments on cessation and nirvāṇa. There is a discussion of the characteristics of objects, of karma and the *dhātus*, and, finally, in the last fifteen stanzas there is a discussion of the relationship between right views and liberation.

On the whole we can see that there is nothing truly unusual about the arguments presented in the *Seventy Emptiness*. Up to stanza 58 we find the same topics as we find in the *MMK*, with interdependent origination occupying center stage. However, stanzas 59-73 present something which we do not find in the *MMK*, namely a detailed analysis of the manner in which ignorance and grasping come about and how they may be removed, thus freeing beings from cyclic existence. This last section of the *Seventy Emptiness* therefore resembles sections of *Suḥr̥llekha* or *Ratnāvalī*, though in its strictly philosophical style and lack of comment on compassion or *bodhicitta* it is quite consonant with the content of the *MMK*.¹⁹ Because this last section of the *Seventy Emptiness* is rather unique, while the earlier portions would prove familiar to us, I would like to devote the balance of this paper to a presentation of it.

Before proceeding with the stanzas themselves, a synopsis of the argument would prove useful. Its pivotal point is that the ignorance of grasping at those phenomena that appear to have inherent existence has bound us to cyclic existence. The solution to the

¹⁸ Reviewed in *Buddhists for Peace, Journal of the Asian Buddhist Conference for Peace*, vol. 3 (1981), p. 63.

¹⁹ See, for example, the following passages: *Suḥr̥llekha* (Otani 5409), stanzas 49-50; and *Ratnāvalī* (Otani 5658), stanzas 35-45.

problem of being bound to cyclic existence is to eliminate ignorance and replace it with an unmistakable mind. To do this, one must understand what is the source of ignorance, and how this ignorance functions. Nāgārjuna's analysis proceeds by showing how this ignorance is actually just a belief in the inherent existence of phenomena, and how this belief causes us to grasp after them, thus setting in motion the entire round of the twelve limbs of interdependent origination, which, folding back upon itself, further reinforces ignorance. By shattering our belief in the inherent existence of phenomena, our grasping after their apparently true existence naturally ceases, and so the motion of the twelve-limbed wheel of interdependent origination (i.e. cyclic existence) ceases. This belief in inherent existence is shattered by showing how it arises from our attraction, hatred or closedmindedness toward apparently inherently existing phenomena. These three are in turn dependent upon preconceptions that phenomena are attractive, repulsive or neutral; and our preconceptions are in turn simply the manifestation of our holding extreme views about phenomena which we superimpose on them, thereby obscuring their true natures. Nāgārjuna dismembers this whole mechanism of ignorance (and of the consequent grasping which binds us to cyclic existence) by his analysis of these extreme views, showing how they are logically inconsistent.

As Nāgārjuna's analysis gets very subtle, I consulted Geshe Sonam Rinchen, originally of Sera Monastery, and the venerable Tenzin Dorjee, two monk-scholars at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala, India, in order to develop the interpretation of the stanzas. The commentaries of Candrakīrti and Parahita were used as a basis for establishing the terms and meanings of the stanzas, and were also used as a basis for Geshe Sonam Rinchen's oral commentary on the stanzas. The translations and comments which follow are an amalgam of these sources. The stanzas are rather cryptic when taken outside of the context of a commentary, but a full translation of one of the commentaries would be much too lengthy for a paper of this nature. So I have chosen to expand the stanzas with interpolations from Geshe Sonam Rinchen's comments, producing passages which I believe to be full and accurate in their representation of Nāgārjuna's meaning, though they go beyond his actual words. These comments are all from the perspective of the Dge-lugs-pa interpretation of the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika school. Obviously, other interpretations are possible.

*sdug dañ mi sdug phyin ci log
rkyen las chags sdañ gti mug dños
'byuñ phyir chags sdañ gti mug dañ
rañ bzin gyis ni yod ma yin (59)*

Through superimposition (*sgro 'dogs*) one develops the three distorted preconceptions (*rnam rtog gsum*) toward pleasing, repulsive and neutral objects, which respectively cause attachment, hatred and closedmindedness. Because they arise in dependence on these conditions, the essential nature of attachment, hatred and closedmindedness is without inherent existence (*rañ bzin gyis grub pa*).

Superimposition is an imposition or imputation (*btags*) of an extreme conception upon a basis of imputation, which is a supposed object. It is actually a process of overestimating the nature of such a basis in either of two extreme directions. An example would be the seeing of permanence in what is actually a transitory phenomenon. Out of this superimposing process we develop attachment for what appears to be pleasing, hatred for what appears repulsive, and closedmindedness or confusion toward what appears to be neutral. Such preconceptions (pleasing, repulsive, and neutral thoughts and feelings) are mere imputations without inherent existence, because they arise in dependence on the condition of superimposition.

*gañ phyir de ñid la chags śiñ
de la ze sdañ de la rmons
de phyir rnam par rtog pas bskyed
rtog de'an yañ dag ñid du med (60)*

A pleasing object does not exist inherently, because some persons develop attachment towards it, others develop hatred towards it, and still others develop closedmindedness towards it. Therefore the object is merely created by preconceptions, and these preconceptions also do not exist inherently, because they develop from superimposition.

Here Nāgārjuna carries the argument a step further. At a given moment three different observers may demonstrate the three distorted preconceptions toward the same object. This shows that the qualities associated with an object do not inhere in it, but are imputed to it through the power of the preconceptions. But, since making a distinction between a thing and its qualities is merely an intellectual

exercise, so also the very object of examination itself, as an object, merely exists through imputation. If this object lacks inherent existence, so must the thought-consciousness which imputes qualities to it, for they both arise in dependence, as Nāgārjuna states in the next stanza.

brtag bya gañ de yod ma yin
brtag bya med rtog ga la yod
de phyir brtag bya rtog pa dag
rkyen las skyes phyir ston pa ñid (61)

Whatever may be an object of examination (*brtag bya*) does not exist inherently. As that object of examination does not exist inherently, how can the thought-consciousness of that noninherently existing object exist inherently? Therefore, because the object of examination and the thought-consciousness arise from causes and conditions, they are empty of inherent existence.

Having demonstrated that thought-consciousness itself is without inherent existence, Nāgārjuna now turns to the heart of his argument, which is its implications for liberation.

de ñid rtogs pas phyin ci log
b'zi las byuñ ba'i ma rig med
de med na ni 'du byed rnams
mi 'byuñ lhag ma'an de b'zin no (62)

The mind which directly understands emptiness is an unmistaken mind (*ma khrul pa'i ses pa*) which eliminates the ignorance that arises from the four evil preconceptions (*phyin ci log b'zi*).²⁰ Without that ignorance the karmic formations will not arise, and so neither will the remaining limbs.

When the mind can see the lack of inherent existence both of things and of itself (that is, their emptiness), then it is unmistaken. Such an unmistaken mind eliminates the preconceptions by seeing the ultimate nature of things and thereby preventing the arising of

²⁰ Skt. *viparyāsa*. Cf. Edward Conze, *Buddhist Wisdom Books* (New York, 1972), p. 97.

new karmic formations, and so freeing one from the cyclic existence whose arising is described by the twelve limbs of interdependent origination.

Reasoning, such as that employed in the *Seventy Emptiness*, is a necessary step in developing an unmistaken mind. This is because, although one can directly perceive the gross nature of an object, one must first reason about the subtle nature of the object which is its lack of inherent existence, before one can develop the direct perceiver which directly perceives this subtle nature of an object. A thought-consciousness which correctly analyzes the subtle nature of an object is converted through meditation into an unmistaken direct perceiver (*mñon sum*) which knows the subtle nature of an object, which is a mere vacuity. In other words, this analytic process removes what is imputed to the basis of examination, these imputations ultimately being derived from the overestimation of phenomena.

The conversion of thought-consciousness into an unmistaken direct perceiver can only be accomplished through meditation. This meditation must follow the earlier reasoning about the subtle nature of an object, for this has shown the practitioner what is to be meditated upon. A two-step process is being described here which an analogy will help to clarify. Suppose a magician were to come to a crossroads and, setting up some sticks which were found there, magically convert them into horses and elephants. Attracting an audience, he bids the animals to do tricks for the entertainment of the onlookers. When the crowd disperses, the magician goes on his way, leaving the sticks behind. If some person were now to pass by the crossroads he would know nothing of the earlier performance, and would simply see some sticks in the crossroads.

In this analogy the audience is likened to the mind of the ordinary person, grasping at mere appearances produced through ignorance. The magician is like the mind of the practitioner who reasons about the subtle nature of objects. Though he attains an intellectual understanding of their emptiness, still, through the force of previously created karmic formations, he is unable to perceive directly their emptiness, for this requires the practice of meditation. Thus he sees horses and elephants, though intellectually he knows that actually only sticks exist. The person who passes by after the performance is over and knows nothing of the magic show is like the mind of the one who has cultivated direct perception and knows the true state of phenomena. This sage who has cultivated direct perception clearly sees things for what they are, a mere vacuity, devoid of the characteristics imputed to them.

The magician is also analogous to the practitioner who has entered the Path of Accumulation (*tshogs lam*). He gains his understanding through hearing and contemplation, using a generic image (*don spyi*) of emptiness. Then, entering the Path of Preparation (*sbyor lam*), he utilizes meditation in order to progress through four levels,²¹ successively removing the generic image at each level. When it is completely gone and the practitioner perceives emptiness directly, he has entered the Path of Seeing (*mthoñ lam*) and is called an "Ārya." What he sees and the state he has attained is indicated in the next stanza.

gañ gañ la brten skye ba'i dños
de de med pas de mi skye
dños dan dños med 'dus byas dan
'dus ma byas 'di mya ñan 'das (63)

Anything which arises in dependence on any causes will not arise if those causes do not exist. When ignorance is eliminated, functional things (*dños po*) which are produced phenomena (*'dus byas*) and nonfunctional things which are nonproduced phenomena are seen to be empty of inherent existence. With this understanding one will attain nirvāṇa, free from the extremes of functional things as inherently produced phenomena and nonfunctional things as inherently nonproduced phenomena.

The essential thing here is that the practitioner, having eliminated ignorance, ceases overestimating the nature of phenomena. That is, he ceases viewing phenomena as existing in either of the two extreme modes. One extreme is to view phenomena as being functional, seeing them as coming about through the collection of many causes and conditions and contributing to the arising of results. The other extreme is to view phenomena as nonfunctional things, which do not contribute to the arising of results. There are two types of such nonfunctional things, one of which is asserted to be conventionally existent, and the other of which is actually nonexistent, like the horns of a rabbit.

²¹ The four levels are heat, summits, patience, sublime *dharma*s. See Dalai Lama XIV Tenzin Gyatso, *The Opening of the Wisdom Eye* (Wheaton: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1972), p. 114.

These are extremes because they are asserted to be actual existences or nonexistences. Geshe Sonam Rinchen indicated that the Prāsāngika tradition recognizes three types of extremes in regards to functional and nonfunctional things. One type is the view that produced phenomena and functional things have a true existence or else are totally nonexistent. This is the eternalist/annihilationist error and is refuted. A second and subtler view holds functional things to be the five contaminated aggregates and nonfunctional things to be the nirvāṇa of the lesser vehicle. A third view is that "produced phenomena" refers to cyclic existence and "nonproduced phenomena" refers to nirvāṇa. The first view is in error because it asserts a final existence or an actual nonexistence of phenomena, while the second and third views are correct because they do not make such an assertion about the final existence or the actual nonexistence of phenomena. The correct view is that phenomena are mere dependent arisings without inherent existence. Realizing this one's grasping after their true existence ceases, thereby leading to the Mahāyāna nirvāṇa, which is free of extremes.

Here it would be useful to clarify the language Nāgārjuna uses when discussing extreme views of existence. For this purpose we can refer to stanza 44 of the *Seventy Emptiness*, where Nāgārjuna interprets the Buddha's use of language.

*yod ces pa dan yod med ces
yod dan med ces de yan yod
sans rgyas rnams kyi dgoṅs pa yis
gsuṅs pa rtogs par bla ma yin (44)*

Whatever is said by the Buddha has the two truths as its chief underlying thought (*dgoṅs gzi*); it is hard to understand and must be interpreted in this light. When the Buddha says "existence," his chief underlying thought is conventional existence (*tha sñad du yod pa*); when he says "nonexistence," his chief underlying thought is noninherent existence (*ran bzin med pa*); when he says "existence-and-nonexistence," his chief underlying thought is conventional-existence-and-noninherent-existence as a mere object of examination.

Nāgārjuna himself must use predicates such as "exists" in his discourse, but, like the Buddha, he does so only for the purpose of

instructing the ignorant who need to develop a generic image of emptiness. He himself maintains the correct view as his chief underlying thought. In order to argue against the extreme of nihilism he uses the term “exists,” thereby establishing conventional existence. Then, at the next level, he says “does not exist” in order to argue against the extreme of permanence, thereby establishing noninherent existence. Finally he says “exists-and-does-not-exist” to show the middle view which is free of both of these extremes. This is his real goal, the demonstration that things are actually mere objects of examination upon which we impute extreme views. With this realization we cease grasping at the true existence of objects. As we find in stanzas 64 and 65:

*rgyu rkyen las skyes dños po rnamś
yañ dag ñid du rtog pa gañ
de ni ston pas ma rig gsuñś
de las yan lag bcu gñis 'byuñ (64)*

*dños po ston par de rtogs na
yañ dag mthoñ phyir rmoñś mi 'gyur
de ni ma rig 'gog pa yin
de las yan lag bcu gñis 'gag (65)*

Functional things which arise from causes and conditions cannot exist inherently. Grasping at what appear to be truly existent things is said to be ignorance by the Teacher. The twelve limbs arise from the ignorance of grasping at the apparently true existence of things.

Understanding the noninherent existence of things means seeing the reality [i.e. emptiness] which eliminates ignorance about the reality of things (*gnas lugs*). This brings about the cessation of ignorantly grasping at an apparently true existence. From that the twelve limbs of interdependent origination cease.

Here in these two stanzas we have Nāgārjuna's restatement of the four noble truths. The twelve limbs are suffering existence. Their source is ignorant grasping. Suffering ceases when ignorant grasping ceases. Seeing reality is the path. This reality of things is then described in the next stanza in terms familiar to us from the *MMK*

and the *Perfection of Wisdom sūtras*.^{2 2}

'du byed dri za'i groñ khyer dan
 sgyu ma smig rgyu skra śad dan
 dbu ba chu bur sprul pa dan
 rmi lam mgal me'i 'khor lo mtshuñs (66)

Produced phenomena are similar to a village of *gandhārvas*, an illusion, a hair net in the eyes, foam, a bubble, an emanation, a dream, and a circle of light produced by a whirling firebrand.

A less metaphoric description of the reality of things is found in the next two stanzas.

rañ bzin gyis ni 'ga' yañ med
 'di la dños po med pa'añ med
 rgyu dan rkyen las skyes pa yi
 dños dan dños med stoñ ba yin (67)

dños kun rañ bzin stoñ pas na
 de bzin gśegs pa mtshuñs med pas
 rten ciñ 'brel par 'byuñ ba 'di
 dños po rnam su ñe bar bstan (68)

There is not anything with inherent existence. In this fashion functional things do not exist. Functional things and nonfunctional things are empty of inherent existence, because they arise from causes and conditions.

Because all things are empty of inherent existence the Peerless Tathāgata has shown the emptiness of inherent existence of dependent arising as the reality of all things.

Stanza 67 lays the logical groundwork for 68, but it does seem rather superfluous, as stanza 63 has already made the same argument. Indeed, although this stanza appears in the root verses and in the autocommentary, it is missing from both the Candrakīrti and Parahita commentaries, suggesting that it may be an

²² Conze, *Buddhist Wisdom Books*, pp. 67-70, discusses these metaphors at length.

interpolation. At any rate, stanza 68 is very interesting because it is such a clear statement of the actual nature of the reality whose conventional aspect was metaphorically described in stanza 66. As we see, it is quite free from extremes. By asserting dependent arising, nihilism is avoided, and by asserting the emptiness of inherent existence, eternalism is avoided. The reality revealed by the Buddha in the middle view is the empty nature of dependent arising. Its reverse face is the conventional appearance of things. In a certain sense the two complement each other, like concave and convex, because they are two aspects of one reality. In the next stanza this complementarity is implied by the postulating of a single limit (*tshad*) for all reality. This naturally leads to a further discussion of the Buddha's use of conventional expressions when teaching about this reality.

dam pa'i don ni der zad de
'jig rten nor byas tha sñad dag
sna tshogs thams cad rdzogs sanṣ rgyas
bcom ldan 'das kyis bden brtags mdzad (69)

Ultimate reality (*dam pa'i don*) is contained within the limit of the noninherent existence of a thing. For that reason the Accomplished Buddha, the Subduer, has imputed various terms in the manner of the world through comparison.

Reality is not beyond the limit of what is known by a valid direct perceiver. This limit must also subsume conventional reality. Within this limit the Buddha makes two kinds of comparisons. One is to examine the various things of conventional reality to determine whether the names used to designate these objects are actually suitable for this purpose. In the second case, he compares the different aspects of an object each other and to their names. These comparisons require that the Buddha utilize the different conventional terms used by the people of the world in order to examine the objects which they believe to exist. This process will eventually lead to the creation of a generic image of emptiness whose actual limit corresponds to that of reality. But in this process some people may become confused and, not understanding that the Buddha only uses these conventionalities for the sake of comparison, may take them to be realities, though actually they are merely imputed for the sake of analysis. This problem is described in the next stanza.

*'jig rten pa yi chos bstan mi 'jig ciñ
 yañ dag ñid du nam yañ chos bstan med
 de b'zin g'segs pas gsuñs pa ma rig pas
 de las dri med brjod pa 'di las skrag (70)*

What is shown conventionally to the world appears to be without disintegration, but the Buddha has never actually shown anything with true existence. Those who do not understand what is explained by the Tathāgata to be conventionally existent and empty of the sign of true existence are frightened by this teaching.

Here we see that when making comparisons the Buddha and Nāgārjuna seem to speak as if things were permanent, that is, do not disintegrate, but this is only because conventional expressions make things seem permanent. Such permanence would imply true existence for things, which they never assert. People who make such interpretations merely demonstrate their lack of understanding of the Buddha's intentions. Furthermore, many of these people have a dangerous misunderstanding of the middle way, believing that nonexistence is being taught, when actually noninherent existence is being taught. They have fallen into the extreme of the nihilistic view, misinterpreting emptiness as indicating actual nonexistence, and this nihilistic attitude causes them to be fearful when they hear the Buddha teach about noninherent existence. Another misinterpretation would be to take the Buddha's teaching about causality at face value, forgetting his chief underlying thought. As Nāgārjuna says in the next stanza:

*'di la brten nas 'di 'byuñ zes
 'jig rten tshul 'di mi 'gog ciñ
 gañ brten rañ b'zin med pas de
 ji ltar yod 'gyur de ñid nes (71)*

It is known in the way of the world that "this arises in dependence on that." Such statements are not refuted. But whatsoever arises dependently does not exist inherently, and how can that noninherent existence itself have inherent existence? In fact, that noninherent existence must definitely not exist inherently!

Here Nāgārjuna reminds his auditors that causality, which in reality is dependent arising, is itself without inherent existence. It would also be a mistake to believe that the noninherent existence of dependent arising itself had true existence, when in actuality it too must be without inherent existence. In another context this is known as the emptiness of emptiness. Both are refutations of a subtle eternalist interpretation of a teaching meant to refute eternalism.

Finally, in the last two stanzas of the *Seventy Emptiness*, Nāgārjuna summarizes the way in which his middle view leads to a nirvāṇa which is superior to the nirvāṇa of the lesser vehicle, because it does not postulate the extreme view which asserts an actual noncyclic existence.

*dad ldan de ñid chos la brtson
tshul 'di rigs pas rjes dpogs gañ
rten med chos 'ga' bstan pa yi
srid dañ srid min spañs nas 'zi (72)*

*'di dag rkyen 'di las rig nas
lta ñan dra ba kun ldog des
chags rmons khon khro spañs pa'i phyir
ma gos mya ñan 'das pa thob (73)*

Those who have faith in the teaching of emptiness will strive for it through a number of different kinds of reasoning. Whatever they have understood about it in terms of noninherent existence, they clarify this for others, which helps others to attain nirvāṇa by abandoning grasping at the apparently true existence of cyclic existence and noncyclic existence.

By seeing these internal and external phenomena arising from causes and conditions they will eliminate the whole network of wrong views (*lta ñan*). With the elimination of wrong views they will have abandoned attachment, closedmindedness and hatred and thereby attain nirvāṇa unstained by wrong views.

The clarification for others which is referred to in stanza 72 is not considered by Tibetans to be an act of compassion or of *bodhicitta*, but a simple offering of the teaching which is an offshoot of the practitioner's own striving for understanding through

reasoning. Tibetans hold two views on Nāgārjuna's teaching about great compassion. One group asserts that compassion is implied in texts such as the *MMK* and the *Seventy Emptiness*, while another group asserts that such texts are strictly philosophical and that Nāgārjuna's teachings about compassion are to be found in other texts, such as *Ratnāvalī*, or *Sūtrasamuccaya*. In any case, whatever our opinion on this subject may be, it is clear that here in the concluding fifteen stanzas of the *Seventy Emptiness* Nāgārjuna has demonstrated the practical implications of adopting the correct view (*yañ dag pa'i lta ba*) of the middle way.²³ For this view, implemented by meditative practice, will free the yogi from grasping after cyclic existence and set him on the path to nirvāṇa.

Abbreviations

- MMK* *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* (Tib. *dbu ma rtsa ba'i tshig le'ur byas pa ses rab ces bya ba*).
- Seventy Emptiness* *Sūnyatāsaptatikārikānāma* (Tib. *ston pa nid bdun cu pa'i tshig le'ur byas pa ses bya ba*).

23

For an analysis of the practical and liberative implications of Nāgārjuna's treatment of causality, see David Komito, "Nāgārjuna's Middle Path to Liberation," *The Tibet Society Bulletin*, vol. 15 (June 1980), pp. 10-15; and idem, "Psychology and Logic in Tibetan Education," *Phoenix; Journal of Transpersonal Anthropology*, vol. 6, nos. 1 and 2 (1983), pp. 77-93.

RELIGIOUS SYNCRETISM IN 13TH CENTURY TIBET:
THE LIMITLESS OCEAN CYCLE

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In 1978 two rare volumes attributed to Karma-pa Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje (1284-1339) and entitled *Rgya mtsho mtha' yas kyi skor*—the *Limitless Ocean Cycle*—were published in India. The title, it seemed to me at the time, was suggestive of two famous ślokas from the *Bhadracariprañidhānarāja* (*Bzañ po spyod pa'i smon lam gyi rgyal po*, 39-40):

Purifying the ocean of fields,
Liberating the ocean of beings,
Beholding the ocean of *dharmas*,
Immersed in the ocean of pristine cognition,
Refining the ocean of conduct,
Perfecting the ocean of prayer,
Worshipping the ocean of Buddhas,
May I practice for an ocean of aeons, never fatigued.

Through the biographical accounts of the third Karma-pa I knew that he had composed a śāstra concerning the cosmology of the *Avatamsaka-sūtra* (*Phal chen zin bkod kyi bstan bcos*).¹ Could this *Limitless Ocean Cycle* be Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje's work on the *Avatamsaka*? Obtaining a copy I plunged into the text and, as I soon discovered, into an ocean of philological difficulty.

The *Rgya mtsho mtha' yas skor* (*GThK*) is a collection of treatises which taken together presents an exceedingly thorough survey of the nine vehicles (*theg pa*, Skt. *yāna*) of the Rñin-ma-pa school of the Vajrayāna. The author's perspective, though, is that of one who has very close ties to the Gsar-ma-pa schools, the Bka'-brgyud-pa in particular. The published manuscript is incomplete—my guess is that it contains about half of the original content—but this much is

¹ *Dpa'-bo*, II.477; *MD*, p. 128. [A list of abbreviations will be found on pp. 371.]

sufficient to provide us with some understanding of the author's general scheme.² As that author, according to the colophons of individual texts making up the cycle, is Karma-pa Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje, both the publisher and the U.S. Library of Congress quite naturally identify him with the third Rgyal-dbañ Karma-pa hierarch.³

Here, however, as I read through the *GThK* something struck me as being amiss: my previous reading in the *oeuvre* of Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje had revealed an exacting thinker and precise stylist, one who was fascinated with the minutiae of astronomical calculations and yogic physiology, and who sought to express these in the clearest manner possible. This concern for exactitude was to be found even in his contemplative works.⁴ The author of the *GThK*, however, is

² Unfortunately there is no *dkar chag* giving a complete list of the contents of the *GThK*. Individual opuscles are denoted by letters of the Tibetan alphabet, beginning with *KA*, with the letters marking the title pages and those marking the margins differing by one throughout vol. I. This discrepancy results from a clumsy error: section *KA* is missing the first seven folia and *KHA* has been placed before it so as to begin the volume with a title page. The margins of *KHA* have then been relettered *KA*, those of *GA* relettered *KHA*, et cetera. The correct sequence of opuscles in vol. I. should be: *KA* (incomplete), pp. 25-208; *KHA* (complete), pp. 1-10; *GA* (complete), pp. 209-470; *NA* (complete), pp. 471-602; *CA* (complete), pp. 603-638; *CHA* (complete), pp. 639-647. In vol. II the title pages of individual opuscles are not marked with such letters at all. The marginal markings are *ZA*, 'A, *YA*, *RA*, and *LA*. Fifteen folia appear to be missing between *RA* and *LA*, suggesting a mislettering at this point. The English "Table of Contents," without any explanation, maintains the correct markings to be 'A through *SA*! In any case, the published *GThK* is certainly missing some passages from *KA*; all of *JA* through *ZA*; whatever intervened between *RA* and *LA*; and anything that might have followed *LA*. While no complete set of *GThK* has been located to date, some were in circulation in Tibet: my friend, the Rñin-ma-pa Bla-ma Bsod-nams stobs-rgyal, has told me of such a set that was kept at the home of his uncle in Khams Ri-bo-che.

³ The author refers to himself as Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje at *GThK*, I.29, 207, 435, 467, 637, II.453, and *passim*; and as "Bla-ma Karma-pa" at I.637.

⁴ On Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje's astronomical contributions, see Dieter

clearly a visionary who likes to work in great, broad strokes; who adheres to a well defined architechtonic, to be sure, but still ventures to make rambling digressions or to conjure up strange associations of ideas in the course of advancing his arcane, yet luminous, doctrine. That doctrine is one in which the teachings of all the nine vehicles, of the *tantras* old and new and of even the *tīrthikas* come crashing together in the realization of the Great Perfection (*Rdzogs-pa chen-po*). In short, my initial impression of the author of the *GThK* was that he differed greatly in intellectual temperment from Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje, hardly less than did Eckhart from, say, Aquinas. Nonetheless, in the face of the colophonic data and uncertain of the value of my general impressions I hesitated to conclude that the *GThK* was not the work of the third Karma-pa.

It was quite by accident that several months after beginning to study the *GThK* I came across the following passage, which laid bare the solution to the entire problem. It comes from the *Precepts on Solitary Retreat* (*Ri chos mtshams kyi źal gdams*) by the 17th century yogin Karma Chags-med. Significantly, as we shall see, it is found in the chapter of that work which treats the teaching of the *tantras* of the *anuyoga*-class:⁵

[What I have set forth here] is merely the kernel, based on my own experience and easily understood. It may be elucidated at length by regarding both the great text of the *Limitless Ocean of Precepts* (*Gdams nag rgya mtsho mtha' yas*)⁶ and the *Limitless Ocean of Profound Doctrines* (*Zab*

Schuh, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Tibetischen Kalenderrechnung* in the series *Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland*, Supplementband 16 (Wiesbaden, 1973), pp. 34-36, and *passim*. Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje's great work on yoga is the *Zab mo nan gi don*, a good modern xylographic edition of which is available at Rumtek Monastery, Sikkim. The autocommentary, unfortunately, is not currently available. For examples of his contemplative works, see *Gdams nag mdzod* (Delhi: Lungtok and Gyaltzan, 1971), vol. VI.

⁵ *Ri chos mtshams kyi źal gdams*, ed. *Rtsib-ri*, fol. 217.b.5-218.b.3. This passage was dictated on the 23rd of *Bhādrapada* (*Khrumszla*) during a fire-horse year, i.e. September 21st or 22nd, 1666.

⁶ This is not found in the present ed. of *GThK*. It is referred to, however, at I.4, 207, II.53, and *passim*.

chos rgya mtsho mtha' yas),⁷ which include numberless texts, fundamental and ancillary, these being found in the *Collected Works (Bka' 'bum)* of the great *siddha* Karma Pakśi [1204-1283].

Now, accepting Chags-med's attribution as a working hypothesis, it seemed essential to discover why it was that the colophons of the *GThK* were signed "Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje." *The Autobiographical Writings of the Second Karma-pa Karma Pakśi (AW)*, published in India at the same time as the *GThK* (and by the same publisher!), provided an answer on the first folio:⁸

This is the unborn, primordially pure
Lion's roar proclaimed by one who is
In the future to be emanated by Simhanāda,
In the past Dus-gsum mkhyen-pa himself,
At present Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje...

And again, some verses further on:

I am Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje,
The *vajra*-king, one of great might...

"Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje" occurs frequently throughout *AW* as the name whereby the author refers to himself,⁹ though he also uses "Dharmasiddhi" on occasion,¹⁰ and, in some of the episodes connected with the Mongol court, the famous title "Karma Pakśi."¹¹ In tales of past lives "Sems-dpa' Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje" is met with frequently, which may lead us to conclude that this is understood to

⁷ Unavailable, but referred to at *GThK*, I.207.

⁸ *AW*, pp. 2-3.

⁹ It is perhaps noteworthy that this is the name by which he chooses to be propitiated in a prayer to the Bka'-brgyud lineage: *AW*, p. 6.

¹⁰ E.g. *AW*, pp. 12 & 18; cf. the name given to him in infancy according to *Dpa'-bo*, II.442, i.e. "Chos-'dzin."

¹¹ The first occurrence of this name in *AW* is on p. 16, line 1. Note that in addition to the names given here Karma Pakśi also had the ordination-name of "Chos-kyi-bla-ma," which he received from the Rñiñ-ma-pa hierarch Byams-pa-'bum of Kaḥ-thog, certainly a major source of his Rñiñ-ma-pa doctrinal background.

be the proper name of the bodhisattva who in Tibet is manifest as the Karma-pa.¹² It is in the light of all this that an episode in the life of the third Karma-pa, which is reported by Dpa'-bo Gtsug-lag phren-ba, may be comprehended: the *siddha* O-rgyan-pa, having identified the youth as Karma Pakši's reincarnation declares, "As my guru's esoteric name (*gsaṅ mtshan*) was Rañ-byuṅ rdo-rje, I will name you just that." And so he names him.¹³

That the Rañ-byuṅ rdo-rje of *AW* is none other than the Rañ-byuṅ rdo-rje of *GThK* is, I believe, amply confirmed both by direct references to *GThK* within *AW* and by the stylistic and doctrinal similarity between the two. Among the direct references to *GThK* we find:¹⁴

Having journeyed to the land called "Ke-cu" in China, I remained there for eight months. At that time all of China arose shimmeringly, appearing as the *maṅḍalas* of Mañjuvajra and Cakrasamvara and their assembled deities. I then heard all sounds and voices as the doctrinal wheels of the various vehicles, and of the outer and inner philosophical systems, and I realized them. Thereupon, most of the *Limitless Ocean of the Teaching*, the doctrinal wheel of the nine vehicles, became clear, and I composed it at length.¹⁵

Again, he tells us:¹⁶

12 See, e.g., *AW*, pp. 21-22 and 79-80. Significant in this regard is the remark made to me by the Ven. Dpa'-bo Rin-po-che in July 1981: "Rañ-byuṅ rdo-rje is the name of *all* the Karma-pas."

13 *Dpa'-bo*, II.470; *MD*, p. 119.

14 *AW*, p. 25.

15 Of the available texts three have titles which include the phrase *Limitless Ocean of the Teaching*: i.e. (i) *Bstan pa rgya mtsho mtha' yas kyi spyi gzuṅ chen mo rtogs pa rab 'byams chos dbyiṅs ye ses lña ldan*, *GThK*, I.25-208; (ii) *Glegs bam 'dir bstan pa rgya mtsho mtha' yas kyi bśad pa Phun sum tshogs pa rgya mtsho mtha' yas*, I.209-470; and (iii) *Bstan pa rgya mtsho mtha' yas byin gyis rlabs pa'i bka' chen*, I.471-601. Judging on the basis of the contents of these I will hazard a guess that if the reference in the passage cited is not to *GThK* as a whole, then it is to (i).

16 *AW*, p. 86.

I, the renowned Karma-pa, realizing, obtaining the great transmission of myriad transmitted doctrines and so having perfected and analyzed, without adulteration and in particular, the words and the meanings of the trio of non-realization, mistaken realization, and partial realization, have discussed the *Limitless Ocean of the Teaching* (*Bstan pa rgya mtsho mtha' yas*), which accords with the intention of the Buddhas, with the host of *ḍākas*, *ḍākinīs*, *bodhisattvas*, *śrāvakas*, and *pratyekabuddhas*, and, in accord with all the philosophical systems, have discovered and realized within myself the Buddha, (who is endowed with) five *kāyas*.

Finally, we may remark that in one passage the AW are referred to as the background histories (*glen gzi*) for the *Limitless Ocean of the Teaching* (*Bstan pa rgya mtsho mtha' yas*) and the *Limitless Ocean of Pristine Cognition* (*Ye ses rgya mtsho mtha' yas*).¹⁷

We might note at this point that neither Dpa'-bo ·Gtsug-lag phren-ba, nor even the recent Sman-sdon-mtshams-pa Rin-po-che (writing in 1897), was in the least uncertain as to the use of the name Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje, or as to the provenance of the *GThK*. I have uncovered, in fact, no evidence whatever for there having been any confusion about these matters within the tradition itself prior to our own generation. Thus the mistaken identification of the author of the *GThK* must be regarded as a contemporary, and not as a traditional, misattribution.¹⁸

* * *

In the short space available to me here I should like to present something of the teaching of the *GThK*. It may be best to commence by making a somewhat rough and subjective observation: the *GThK* is unique among the Tibetan encyclopedic works which have come to

¹⁷ AW, p. 84. It is not entirely clear whether *Ye ses rgya mtsho mtha' yas* refers to a text, or to the enlightenment that is the goal of the *GThK*.

¹⁸ For the name "Rañ-byuñ rdo-rje", see *Dpa'-bo*, II.451, 455, 457, 460, etc.; and *MD*, pp. 83, 85, 101, etc. For the *GThK*, see *Dpa'-bo*, II.444 & 457; and *MD*, p. 85. Note, too, that *Dpa'-bo*, II.451ff. quotes AW profusely. *MD*, pp. 107-8 mentions that there are six volumes of Karma Pakśi's writings presently in the "human world."

my attention thus far in that it aims not to delimit and then to dissect the knowable, but rather to challenge us throughout with its irreducible, infinite grandeur. This is not to say that the notion that knowledge is without limits is a particularly novel one for Tibetan Buddhist scholasticism; the point here is that while the scholastic pedagogy prefers to treat carefully circumscribed bodies of learning, this is not true of Karma Pakši. He wishes, instead, to confront us at every turn with the “trio of non-realization, mistaken realization, and partial realization,” and thereby to make of ignorance and doubt catalysts for the emergence of an enlightened awareness.

Let us attempt to see just how this is evidenced within the text itself. One of the opuscles making up the *GThK* is a peculiar work called the *Limitless Ocean of Tenets* (*'Dod pa rgya mtsho mtha' yas*).¹⁹ Its relation to the entire cycle is known to us in very general terms through references to it found in other sections of the *GThK* itself, e.g.,²⁰

...the *Limitless Ocean of Precepts* (*Gdams ñag rgya mtsho mtha' yas*), the *Limitless Ocean of Dialogue* (*Žus lan rgya mtsho mtha' yas*),²¹ and the *Limitless Ocean of Tenets* (*'Dod pa rgya mtsho mtha' yas*) are all-embracing: the exposition of these does not belong to any sequence [i.e. they do not have set positions within the sequence of the nine *yānas*]... they are the general framework for the whole ...

In what way does the *Limitless Ocean of Tenets* “embrace everything”? What kind of “general framework” does it provide? Turning to the text we find a strange list of doctrines, dozens of them, with a minimum of explanation and analysis. Occasionally, however, the purpose of this catalogue is made clear:²²

In all the outer and inner philosophical systems there are various tenets. They appear all mixed together. The wise appear to have tenets; the ignorant appear to have tenets, too. Because tenets are all-pervading, I pray that the wise analyze them. It is held that Buddhahood is attained from having tenets; it is maintained that Buddhahood is attained

19 *GThK*, I.603-637.

20 *GThK*, I.45.

21 Presently unavailable.

22 *GThK*, I.610-611.

from not having tenets; and it is maintained that Buddhahood is attained from removing both extremes. I pray that you direct your attention to each and every such tenet in turn... It is held that Buddhahood is attained from gradually traversing the stages and paths; and it is held that Buddhahood is attained naturally, not performing the slightest virtue, not repenting of the slightest sin. The number of tenets is vast; because thought cannot embrace (all) tenets, do you not harbor doubts as to what is genuine?

If you do not doubt, Karma Pakśi seems to be telling us, you very well ought to do so. Why? I believe the answer is that he wishes us to proceed in almost Cartesian fashion until we have come to question the very foundations of our knowledge. Again, like Descartes he seems to maintain that there *are* foundations for knowledge and that these may be known intuitively. Where he differs, of course, is in his intuition of just what these foundations may be taken to be:^{2 3}

You must realize the perseity of the Buddha. You must realize the perseity of the Dharma and Saṅgha. You must realize the perseity of the deity and of the *mantra*... There is a limitless ocean of tenets pertaining to the *dharma*s of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa and to the particular philosophical systems. You must realize it to be neither conjoined with, nor separate from, the limitless ocean of realization, which is free from all acceptance and rejection, and which is spontaneously present pristine cognition.

Moreover:^{2 4}

Though there appear all the *dharma*s of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, various philosophical systems, and the inconceivably many adherences, the root of all of them is the essential abiding nature of actual entities (*dños po gśis kyi gnas lugs*), naturally and spontaneously present, the expanse of reality (*chos kyi dbyiñs*) that is limitlessly extensive and without measure. Without limit and center it can be labelled neither "Buddha" nor "sentient being." All

23

GThK, I.625-626.

24

GThK, I.634.

that appears, the *dharma*s of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, abiding naturally and essentially, cannot by any means be abandoned or acquired through effort and practice. Such is the essential abiding nature of the actuality of mind...

Thus the truly significant foundation we seek, which can only be known intuitively, is the enlightenment of the Great Perfection and all that this entails. The *Limitless Ocean of Tenets* embraces the entire content of the *GThK* by calling upon us to question any and all doctrines to which we might adhere before we have gained that realization. If, then, I am reading Karma Pakśi correctly, doubt provides us with a pathway leading to realization, so that any tenet belonging to the trio of non-realization, mistaken realization, or partial realization may legitimately become a point of departure for spiritual pursuit. This approach to doctrine may be exemplified by Karma Pakśi's distinctive attitude towards other religions. While his views here are difficult to interpret precisely, they do appear to confirm my basic thesis. To see this we may turn to the *Limitless Ocean of the Teaching* (*Bstan pa rgya mtsho mtha' yas*), where, after making some standard assaults on *mu stegs pa* positions, he continues:^{2 5}

²⁵ *GThK*, I.41. To assess Karma Pakśi's view of other religions it is essential that we take account not merely of his doctrinal viewpoint, which was derived from Buddhist textual sources, but also of his practical dealings with the religious life of the Mongol empire. A number of interesting passages may be found in *AW*, e.g., pp. 21-22, where he claims to have sponsored the restoration and new construction of non-Buddhist (*phyi rol mu stegs pa*) shrines, and pp. 101-102, where he notes with approval an edict promulgated by Möngke Khan directing all to adhere to the vows of their own religions (*thams cad rañ rañ gi grub mtha' dan 'thun par* (sic) *sdom pa sruñ ba'i 'ja' sa*). This latter reference occurs in connection with an assembly of the royal line at Sira-ordos during a dragon year (certainly = 1256; *'brug gi lo la zi ra 'ur rdor rgyal rgyud thams cad 'tshogs pa'i dus*), at which Karma Pakśi also claims to have turned the Khan and his immediate circle away from other religions and to have converted them to Buddhism (*mu stegs kyi grub mtha' las rje 'bañs thams cad bzlog cin/ nan pa sañs rgyas pa'i bstan pa la btsud...*). One is tempted to associate all this with the famed Buddhist-Taoist controversy of 1255-56. It has been

...birth in the *mu stegs pa* family has not arisen without cause. Because the causes (for achieving circumstances favorable to enlightenment) are amassed, the *mu stegs pa* paths tend towards the path, and their philosophical systems bring about a change of mind. One must not, then, disparage the *mu stegs pas*. Again, they magnify the teaching, for the philosophical systems of *mu stegs pa* teachers are said to be miraculous displays of the Conqueror... "Mu" is the expanse itself, and "stegs" is pristine cognition...

It may be worthwhile at this point to inquire into the sources of Karma Pakśi's inspiration. In the foregoing discussion we have several times met with a phrase which occurs throughout AW, that is, the "trio of non-realization, mistaken realization, and partial realization." It seems in fact to be drawn from a verse which we find repeated on numerous occasions in *GThK*, and which paraphrases a verse from the thirteenth chapter of the *Guhyagarbhā-tantrarāja*, the foremost of the Rñin-ma-pa *tantras* of the *mahāyoga*-class. The cryptic verse in question reads:^{2 6}

Intention, Discipline, and Esotericism,
Non-realization and mistaken realization,
Partial realization and not realizing what is genuine
Give rise to doubts about this absolute!

hypothesized that Karma Pakśi is none other than the somewhat mysterious Lama Na-mo, though the evidence for this identification is not to be found in the present sources. See, e.g., Paul Demiéville, "La Situation Religieuse en Chine au Temps de Marco Polo," especially pp. 205-9, and n. 29, in *Choix d'Études Sinologiques* (Leiden, 1973).

26

dgoñs pa 'dul ba gsañ ba dañ// ma rtogs pa dañ log par rtogs// phyogs rtogs yañ dag ñid ma rtogs// don dam 'di la the tsom za//
Cf., e.g., *GThK*, I.26, 30, 210, 632-3, II.53, etc. Karma Pakśi himself refers to the source at I.210 as being the *Rgyud kyi rgyal po gsañ ba'i sñin po de kho na ñid nes par 'byuñ ba*. The passage he is paraphrasing in this verse may be found on folio 30a of the Rumtek xylographic edition of that text.

According to the traditional exegesis of the *Guhyagarbha* each of the terms in the first three lines refers specifically to one or another of the philosophical systems, or vehicles, that is ranked below the *mahāyoga*.²⁷ Before Karma Pakśi's age the paṇḍita Roṅ-zom Chos-kyi-bzan-po (11th century), in commenting upon Padmasambhava's *Precepts forming a Garland of Views* (*Man nag lta ba'i phren ba*), had already utilized this passage as the framework for his analysis of the master's presentation of the various *grub mtha'*.²⁸ Now, Karma Pakśi tells us that²⁹

...the words and meanings (of the verse just cited) have been amply set forth in verse in the *Limitless Ocean of the Teaching*...

Given that that text never attempts a word-by-word exposition of the key-verse, we can only conclude that Karma Pakśi means here that the *Limitless Ocean of the Teaching* is in its entirety a revelation of the full implications of the one four-line mnemonic. But if this mnemonic provides some insight into Karma Pakśi's general approach as illustrated above with reference to the *tīrthikas*, that is, his tendency to move from exposition through doubt to the triumphant assertion of the Rdzogs-chen, still it does not reveal the source of his overall architectonic. This, clearly, is the nine-*yāna* system associated with the exegesis of the *anuyoga-tantras*, Karma Pakśi's extensive treatment of which would be noted by the Rñin-ma-pa polemicist Sog-

27 According to Līlavajra's influential commentary on the *Guhyagarbha* "non-realization" refers to ordinary mundane folk; "mistaken realization" to those who adhere to nihilism or eternalism, i.e. the non-Buddhists; "partial realization" to the *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and adherents of the *vijñaptimātravāda*; "not realizing what is genuine" to the *mādhyamikas*; and "intention, discipline, and esotericism" to the followers of the lower *tantras*. See *Commentaries on the Guhyagarbha Tantra and other rare Nyingma Texts from the Library of Dudjom Rinpoche* (New Delhi: Sanje Dorje, 1974), vol. I., pp. 160-1.

28 *Selected Writings of Roṅ-zom Chos-kyi-bzan-po*, Smarntsis Shesrig Spenzod, vol. 73 (Leh: S.W. Tashigangpa, 1973), p. 20. Roṅ-zom-pa's quotation agrees precisely with the *tantra*.

29 *GThK*, I.210.

bzlog-pa Blo-gros Rgyal-mtshan (b. 1552).³⁰ Karma Pakśi himself unequivocally states his opinion concerning the crucial role of the *anuyoga*:³¹

Because the *anuyoga* is the general transmission of all the vehicles, all vehicles and philosophical systems are distinguished and established within the *anuyoga*... Know that the *anuyoga* is like a vast ocean, in comparison with which all the other vehicles and philosophical systems are like rivers and streams. All vehicles are subsumed in the *anuyoga*. The utterly perfect fruit of *anuyoga* is *Rdzogs pa chen po*...

We may say summarily that Karma Pakśi's view of the general architecture of the path is derived from the *Mdo dgoṅs pa 'dus pa* and other fundamental works of the *anuyoga*, that his treatment of specific systems seems to be grounded in the teachings of the *Guhyagarbha* and its exegetical tradition, belonging to the *mahāyoga*, and that the goal to which he seeks to guide us is that of the *Rdzogs pa chen po*, or *atiyoga*. In the *GThK*, then, we have perhaps the grandest attempt, prior to the age of that crown jewel of Tibetan visionaries, Kun-mkhyen Klon-chen Rab-'byams-pa (1308-1363), to elaborate a syncretic approach to Buddhadharma based upon the peculiar traditions of the Rñin-ma-pa school.³²

³⁰ *Collected Writings of Sog-bzlog-pa Blo-gros Rgyal-mtshan* (New Delhi: Sanje Dorje, 1975), vol. II., p. 135. Though not referring to the *GThK* by name Sog-bzlog-pa does mention, among other works of Karma Pakśi, a *Dgoṅs 'dus kyi don so sor dbye ba*. This may well be a reference to the lengthy *anuyoga* section (pp. 374-435) of the *Phun sum tshogs pa rgya mtsho mtha' yas* (*GThK*, I.209-470). See, in particular, the remarks introducing that section, e.g., on p. 376: *de la Mdo dgoṅs pa 'dus pa lun thams cad kyi rtsa ba yin... so sor 'byed ses par bya'o*// "The *Mdo dgoṅs pa 'dus pa* is the root of all transmitted doctrines. You should know how to analyze it..."

³¹ *GThK*, I.430-31.

³² The origin of Klon-chen-pa's renowned epithet may well be the group of *Rdzogs-chen tantras* called *Klon chen rab 'byams kyi rgyud*. Karma Pakśi, referring to these (*GThK*, I.453), attributes to them the "ultimate view of the Great Perfection."

What of Karma Pakśi's Bka'-brgyud-pa affiliations? Often he refers to himself as one who is blessed by the lineage of Nāropa;³³ and the Gsar-ma-pa transmissions are considered at length in connection with the *mahāyoga* sections of the *GThK*.³⁴ In the *AW* he insists, at one point, that the Rdzogs-chen and Mahāmudrā differ only in name,³⁵ which perhaps accounts for Karma Chags-med's references to Karma Pakśi as a precursor of Chags-med's own synthetic teaching of the "coalescence of Mahāmudrā and Rdzogs-chen" (*phyag rdzogs zuñ 'jug*).³⁶ Still, the thrust of the *GThK* is without doubt Rñiñ-ma-pa, a fact which may account for its extreme rarity even in Karma Bka'-brgyud circles. While Karma Pakśi certainly anticipates much later Bka'-brgyud/Rñiñ-ma eclecticism, his actual impact on the later masters of these schools remains to be investigated.³⁷

In conclusion: the publication of *AW* and *GThK* allows us to flesh out somewhat the obscure figure who has been best known thus far for his alleged magical powers and for his connections with the Mongol Khans. He emerges not as a rigorous thinker of the first

33 E.g. *GThK*, I.27, 467, 637, and *passim*.

34 See, in particular, *GThK*, II.1-70, and 235-453, the latter being wholly devoted to an exposition of the *Gsar-ma tantras*.

35 *AW*, p. 86.

36 *Ri-chos*, 218.b: "Pakśi's intention was the coalescence of the new and ancient (schools of the Vajrayāna), and his ultimate intention was the coalescence of Mahāmudrā and of Rdzogs-pa chen-po." See, too, his *Thugs rje chen po phyag rdzogs zuñ jug gi dmar khrid* (Bir, H.P.: Khandro, 1974), p. 9: "Karma Pakśi received the three cycles of the *Mdo dgoñs pa 'dus pa*, *Guhyagarbha*, and *Rdzogs chen sems sde (Mdo sgyu sems gsum)* from Byams-pa-'bum of Kañ-thog, and he became learned in them. Hence, his own doctrinal compositions concern the coalescence of Mahāmudrā and Rdzogs-pa chen-po."

37 Two important works deserving attention in this regard are: Karma-pa VII Chos-grags rgya-mtsho's *Tshad ma rig gzuñ rgya mtsho*, which, the Rev. Mkhān-po Tshul-khrims rgya-mtsho kindly tells me, preserves extracts from Karma Pakśi's now unavailable *Tshad ma rgya mtsho mtha' yas*; and Karma-pa VIII Mi-bskyod rdo-rje's extraordinary commentary on Pakśi's *Sku gsum no sprod* precepts: *Sku gsum no sprod kyi rnam par bsad pa mdo rgyud bstan pa mtha' dag gi e wañ phyag rgya*. 4 vols. (Gangtok: Gonpo Tseten, 1978).

order, to be sure, but as a visionary of great breadth, whose originality seems to have been quite without parallel in 13th century Tibet.

Abbreviations

- AW** *The Autobiographical Writings of the Second Karma-pa Karma Pakśi and Spyi-lan rin-mo.* Gangtok: Gonpo Tseten, May 1978. "Reproduced from rare manuscripts from Rumtek collections." [Note: The author of the second work mentioned, a polemic addressed to gYag-sde Paṅ-chen, has not yet been identified. *Dpa'-bo*, II.484, refers to a polemic addressed to the same figure by the third Karma-pa's famed disciple gYun-ston Rdo-rje-dpal. Perhaps it is this very *Spyi-lan rin-mo*.]
- Dpa'-bo** *mKhas-paḥi-dgaḥ-ston of dPaḥ-bo-gtsug-lag*, Satapiṭaka Series, Volume 9. New Delhi, 1961. 4 fascicules.
- GThK** *Rgya mtsho mtha' yas kyi skor.* Gangtok: Gonpo Tseten, May 1978. 2 volumes. "...reproduced from an incomplete but possibly unique manuscript preserved in the library of Rumtek Monastery."
- MD** *Chos rje Karma pa sku 'phreṅ rim byon gyi rnam thar mdor bsdus dpag bsam khri śin*, in *The Collected Works of Sman-sdon-mtshams-pa Rin-po-che Karma-nes-don-bstan-rgyas*, vol. II, pp. 1-471. Bir, H.P.: D. Tsondu Senghe, 1976.

TSOÑ-KHA-PA'S INTEGRATION OF SŪTRA AND TANTRA

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The great Tibetan lama Tsoñ-kha-pa Blo-bzañ grags-pa (1357-1419) created a comprehensive synthesis for practice of the entire body of Buddhist teachings, including the Individual Vehicle, the Universal Vehicle, and the Vajra Vehicle.¹ This synthesis is contained in his major "path" works, the *Stages of the Bodhisattva Path* and the *Stages of the Path of Esoteric Mantra*.² But it would not be precise to say that he merely strung together the stages of practice extending from ordinary humanity to Buddhahood in a hierarchical ladder. The great virtue of his teaching was that he *integrated* these Vehicles into a seamless body of technique, or liberative art. In so doing he fulfilled the famous "square path" of Atīśa (982-1054), whose words he often quotes: "1) understand all teachings as free of contradictions; 2) all scriptures take effect as personal precepts; 3) the Victor's intent is thus easily discovered; and 4) so one guards against actions leading to the abyss (of abandoning the Dharma)."

How did Tsoñ-kha-pa understand the relationship between *sūtra*, here a general term for exoteric teaching, and *tantra*, the esoteric methodology of advanced meditative practice? How did he arrive at that understanding? And how did he present it in his teachings? In this brief paper we can only summarize some main points and illustrate them with a few examples.

Tsoñ-kha-pa studied with fifty-five main teachers, mostly from the Kadampa, Sakyapa, and Kagyüpa schools.³ At thirty-three years of age, he was already famous as a philosophical scholar, and much sought after as a teacher at monastic colleges in Central Tibet. But when he met the rustic lama Dbu-ma-pa, a cowherd turned visionary owing to a spontaneous encounter with the bodhisattva

¹ My terminology for Hinayāna, Mahāyāna, and Vajrayāna.

² The famous *Lam rim chen mo* (1402) and *Snags rim chen mo* (1405), Tashi Lhunpo edition of his *Collected Works*, Vols. *pa* and *ga*, respectively.

³ I.e., Bka'-gdams-pa, Sa-skyapa, and Bka'-brgyud-pa.

Mañjuśrī, he withdrew from academic pursuits to practice tantric meditation. During the next eight years he deepened his philosophical insight by directly questioning Mañjuśrī himself, having been introduced to the bodhisattva by Dbu-ma-pa, so to speak, and he ardently engaged in the ascetic and athletic yogas of the *anuttara-yoga-tantras*. At forty-one, he attained a culminating insight which can be explained equally well in terms of Mādhyamika practice or in terms of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* perfection stage.⁴ It should be remembered that his determination thus to attain the goals of the *tantras* as well as the understanding of the *sūtras* earned him the disapproval of his academic teachers and colleagues, who thought he had gone off the deep end. At that time the monastic academic (*mtshan nid pa*) and the mystic yogi (*grub thob*) were rarely fused in a single individual.

In his public life Tson-kha-pa is celebrated for his “four great deeds,” of which the second and the fourth are apposite here. In 1401 he joined with the Sakya lama Red-mda’-ba, his main academic teacher, and the Kagyü/Kadam lama-translator, Skyabs-mchog dpal-bzan-po, to convene a summer retreat near ’Bri-khuñ for many hundreds of monks of all orders to review in great detail the teaching of the *vinaya*, the monastic code foundational to the Individual and hence to all the Vehicles. From this great assembly arises his reputation as a monastic reformer. His fourth great deed was not the building of Ganden (*Dga’-ldan*) Monastery, but the erection within Ganden Monastery of three three-dimensional *maṇḍala* palaces, those of the thirty-two deity *Guhyasamāja*, the thirteen-deity *Vajrabhairava*, and the sixty-two deity *Cakrasamvara*.⁵ These two deeds thus reconcile any apparent dichotomy between two principles: that the monastic life was the root of the Dharma in Tibet, wherefore any corruption of its purity and precision would ruin the whole tree; and that the highest purpose of that monastic life was the practice of the esoteric yoga of the Vajrayāna, especially the creation and perfection stages of *anuttara-yoga-tantra*. Of course, the central principle suffusing the poles of this dichotomy is the bodhisattva

⁴ I.e., as understanding of the final subtleties of the Prāsaṅgika view, or as attaining the mind-isolation experience of immersion in the “son clear light brilliance.”

⁵ It is noteworthy that the great deed was the construction of the *maṇḍalas*, not the building of the monastery itself. Both monastery and *maṇḍalas* appear to have been completely destroyed in 1966 by the Red Guard invasions.

spirit of enlightenment of absolute voidness and relative love and compassion, the essence of the Universal Vehicle. Tson-kha-pa's public personification of this essential integration of the three vehicles soon became vividly apparent in the popular icon of the "refuge lama," a *bhikṣu* smiling in his monastic robes, with Śākyamuni Buddha in miniature in his heart, and with a tiny Vajradhara seated in the heart of Śākyamuni. It is described in the phrase "outwardly a monk, inwardly a bodhisattva, esoterically a Vajradhara."⁶

Turning to Tson-kha-pa's critical understanding of the three vehicles, he made it a distinctive specialty of his Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika philosophy that the Individual Vehicle contained the teaching of objective selflessness, or voidness, and hence, though interpretable in meaning, was a complete revelation of the Buddha-intent, holding nothing back.⁷ He understood the Vajra Vehicle as a facet of the Universal Vehicle, whose *sūtra* facet he called the "Transcendence Vehicle." In his *Stages of the Path of Esoteric Mantra*, he said that the Transcendence and Vajra Vehicles have the same mother, Transcendent Wisdom herself, but different fathers, different liberative techniques, or arts (*upāya*). The art of the former is the bodhisattva path of six transcendences and ten stages which serve as the cause of Buddhahood after three incalculable aeons. The art of the latter is the subtle mind-of-great-bliss intuition which, while focused on the clear light brilliance of voidness, simultaneously assumes the fruitional form body of Buddhahood with its 112 superhuman marks and signs. It is described as the "easy path," or the "quick path" in that context, in that it makes it possible for the bodhisattva to accelerate the three aeons into one or several lifetimes. Only a bodhisattva of supreme intensity of compassion, manifested as indomitable courage, truly dares to undergo aeons of evolutionary experience in such a short time, braving countless "great deaths" in the dream-like dimensions of the subtle and extremely subtle mind and body. Such a bodhisattva finds it easier to accelerate his evolution than to bear the intolerable sufferings of living beings without having attained the actual ability to liberate them immediately. The Vajra vehicle is easy in this way, but not lazy, not an escape from the trials of the bodhisattva transcendences.

⁶ *phyi rol du dge sloṅ, naṅ du byaṅ chub sems dpa', gsaṅ bar rdo rje 'dzin pa.*

⁷ This point is lucidly argued in the *Legs bśad sñiṅ po che ba*, forthcoming in my translation (Princeton University Press, 1984).

Tson-kha-pa could not sit back and enjoy his eminence as a teacher while beings on his planet in the fourteenth century suffered intolerably. He could not pay lip service to the glorious *tantras* and think of them as practices he might brave in some future life. He felt compelled to search the Indian sources for the keys to full integration of *sūtra* and *tantra*, and he discovered Vajrayāna to be embedded in every layer of the Buddha Dharma, in 1) historical, 2) philosophical, and 3) methodological terms. Every single teaching of the Buddha became for him like one of the jewels in Indra's net of interreflecting jewels.⁸ He could look at its surface and appreciate just that. He could look a little more deeply and see many others reflected therein as well as those reflections reflecting the immediate jewel. And he could look with total concentration and see all the jewels interreflecting. The one jewel never need be cast away; it is inexhaustible in its revelations.

Historically, Tson-kha-pa found the goal vehicle⁹ of the *tantras* in the biography of Śākyamuni, in the lives of the "great ornaments" of India, i.e. Nāgārjuna and company, and in the special mission of Tibetan Buddhists in the grand designs of Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, Maitreya, Vajrapāṇi, and even the Kālacakra Buddha. *Tantra* was thus not just an alternative to the Transcendence Vehicle, useful to some in certain circumstances; it was essential for the attainment of Buddhahood. From Nāgārjuna's *Five Stages* Tson-kha-pa accepted the perhaps apocryphal *Lalitavistara* account of Śākyamuni's Buddhahood wherein Siddhārtha entered the breathless trance while still on the Nairāñjana riverbank, left his gross body in an "illusion body" (*māyādeha*) developed on the third stage of the perfection stage of unexcelled yoga, visited the Akaniṣṭha heaven, received the four consecrations from the celestial Tathāgatas, and quickly attained Buddhahood as the "integration body" (*yuganaddhakāya*) of a Vajradhara.¹⁰ Thus even Śākyamuni would not have succeeded without the consecratory grace of the beatific body Tathāgatas. After Śākyamuni returned to his gross emanation body, his subsequent deeds can be read as symbolic of the perfection stage attainments.

⁸ Famous metaphor used in the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* for the interpenetration of all phenomena.

⁹ *phalayāna*, 'bras bu'i theg pa, a term for the Tantra opposed to *hetuyāna*, rgyu'i theg pa.

¹⁰ *Pañcakrama*. Nāgārjuna quotes the *Lalitavistara* (in the third chapter) on the illusion body, but I have not located the account in the Sanskrit or Tibetan versions of that text now available.

The female Sujātā's gift of ambrosial food and his washing in the river resonate with consecratory transformation. His body's assumption of a golden splendor shows the transformation of the ordinary reality into a perfected one. His determined sitting at the tree, the tree of life and the tree of the subtle nervous system of unexcelled *yoga*, evokes the commitment and interiority of the perfection stage adept. The struggle with Māra and his minions of hate and lust demonstrates conquest of the eighty instinctual natures (*prakṛti*) that swirl in the subconscious subtle mind of luminance, radiance, and immanence, which are scourged by Buddha-pride, or transformed self-concept, as the illusion body yogi immerses himself in the clear light brilliance of the fourth stage of perfection again and again. And the final triumph, the manifestation of the Supreme Emanation Body in the dawn of Buddhahood, symbolizes complete attainment of the fifth stage integration of the purified illusion body of great bliss intuitive wisdom with the "mother," or absolute clear light brilliance of universal voidness.^{1 1}

Once Tsoṅ-kha-pa saw these reflections in the single jewel of the ordinary Buddha deeds, he could also see in the teaching deed an indivisibility of *sūtra* and *tantra*. All turnings of the wheel of Dharma manifest a consecratory, or goal vehicle, reality at the same time as they interact precisely with the contingencies of ordinary history. Śākyamuni's luminous field of presence was in subtle reality an inexhaustible *maṇḍala*, automatically enthroning those who entered it on the seat of their own highest potential. His miraculous displays, often recorded in Individual Vehicle as well as Universal Vehicle scriptures, imparted instantaneously a transformed environment to his audiences. Most important, his speech opened the door of Dharma with a single word, so that even a hardened criminal, such as Aṅgulimāla, could at once feel his tormented self-habit crumble into the freedom of selflessness, immediately entering the stages of sainthood. And his science, revealed in the *abhidharma* as the sophisticated meditative psychology of altered states of the four contemplations (*dhyāna*) and the four trances (*samāpatti*), or eight liberations (*vimokṣa*), explicated the dissolution process of gross body and mind and the emergence of the subtle, which explication is continued in connection with death and the between and further evolution in the *tantras*.^{1 2} Even institutional procedures of the

¹¹ For a good discussion of these stages see Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, *Clear Light of Bliss* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1982).

¹² The correlations between the eight liberations and the eight

saṃgha—the translation into the extraordinary reality of monkhood through ordination, the creation of a new kingdom of sacred space within the monastic compound, the regulation of interactions with the ordinary community—these all emerge as part of the subtle art of creating an enlightened reality. Finally, of course, the Tibetan view of the history of the Dharma has Śākyamuni teaching the Universal Vehicle in a more obviously celestial embodiment, showing goal vehicle procedures in the *Lotus*, the *Garland*, the *Great Final Liberation*, the *Blissful Land*, and so forth, and even more extravagantly allows him to manifest the tantric scriptures in other emanation bodies such as Guhyasamāja, Heruka, Kālacakra, or Vajradākiṇī. This idea of an extraterrestrial origin of the Dharma naturally predisposed Tson-kha-pa to reenvision even an ordinary biography.

As for the later history of the Dharma, Tson-kha-pa thought that the Nāgārjuna of the *Wisdom* and the Nāgārjuna of the *Five Stages* were one and the same, as were *Four Hundred* and *Lamp of Combined Practice* Āryadeva, as were *Lucid Exposition* and *Brilliant Lamp* Candrakīrti. He saw them as having incorporated both *sūtra* and *tantra* in their attainments and their teachings, setting him a distinguished precedent. Moreover, his understanding of the destiny of Tibet, as the land of Avalokiteśvara where all the streams of the three vehicles were to be collected and preserved until such time as the Śambhala millenium would again make them useful to a world of apparent barbarism and holocaust, caused him to see the need for continued creativity in carrying further the liberative art of teaching the Dharma. His first great deed derived from his sense of being invested with a mission for the future from the bodhisattva Maitreya, whose temple he refurbished and rededicated at Rdziñ-phyi in 1395, and his third deed marked his assertion of his culture's having reached a new height in understanding and enactment of the mission of the Buddha, when, at the first Great Miracle Prayer Festival, which he organized in Lhasa in 1409 (the year of the earth ox), he crowned and adorned the national image of Śākyamuni with the jewel ornaments that symbolize his beatific body immanence. On this count, it should be noted that Tson-kha-pa was often discouraged about the political state of the planet and, according to hagiographic

stages of dissolution into extremely subtle mind in *tantra* are the subject of an article I am now working on. A preliminary version of it was given at the International Association of Buddhist Studies conference at Oxford, August 1983.

accounts, was only sustained in his millennial optimism by repeated visionary encounters with the Kācakakra Buddha himself.

Philosophically, Tson-kha-pa insisted that it was a category mistake to think of *tantra* as “higher” than the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika view descended from Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Buddhapālita, and Candrakīrti. Soteriologically, *tantra* can be exalted as higher because it goes beyond the gross conceptual mind to mobilize the subtle mind of luminance and great bliss intuition; but the object of that mind remains invariantly the voidness of intrinsic entityness of all subjective and objective things. The mother, ultimate reality, is never changing. It is the father, relativity, that always changes, and there is no limit to the development of liberative art. Thus Tson-kha-pa understood the perfection stage of unexcelled yoga, the Great Seal, and the Great Perfection teachings as identical in their goals of direct realization by the subtle mind of the clear light brilliance of universal voidness. He in no way slighted the fact that the Great Seal and the Great Perfection paths had led many master adepts to full realization, but he always recommended the great central way of Nāgārjuna and sons as unparalleled in subtlety, explicitness and precision for those with less than the most powerful intellects. He maintained that this insured attainment of the authentic view, free of the nihilistic extremism so easily succumbed to in the further reaches of voidness contemplation.¹³ While there had been many tantric practitioners with a Vijñānavāda or Svātantrika view, Tson-kha-pa’s own experience in 1398 led him to believe that complete philosophical understanding and Buddhahood were simultaneous, best described by the Prāsaṅgika view, and attained by the gross conceptual and nonconceptual minds at the third stage of the perfection stage, and by the subtle mind—that is, on the instinctual, subatomic level—only at fifth stage Vajradharahood. However, he recommended entry into the tantric versions of quiescence and transcendent insight (*śamatha-vipaśyana*) from the time of attainment of a clear, precise and unerring *conceptual* understanding of objective selflessness or voidness. He considered it more effective to exercise the subtle mind as soon as understanding makes it safe, entering the ocean of *tantra* under the guidance of a qualified lama. In sum, there was little need to integrate the two vehicles philosophically once he saw they had the same view.

¹³ See the “Supreme Nectar” section of *Life and Teachings of Tsong Khapa*, ed. R. Thurman (Dharamsala: Tibetan Library of Works and Archives, 1982); and final folios of *Legs bśad sñin po*.

Third, and most interesting, we come to his methodological integration of *sūtra* and *tantra*. It underlies the greatness of his *Stages of the Bodhi Path*, which, ostensibly a presentation of the exoteric paths of practice, is thoroughly infused with tantric methodology, artfully nested within the directions for the ordinary paths and their contexts. Let us first isolate from the many tantric works he wrote what he considered to be the basic principles of tantric practice. These can be boiled down to: 1) establishment of goal vehicle orientation on the foundation of a clear inference of selflessness and the concomitant strong motivation of universal compassion, through entering the relationship with the *vajraguru* and receiving the consecrations (the key reorientation being the articulation of compassion's passive mode of anguish into active, loving, universal bliss); 2) imaginative purification of ordinariness of perception/appearance through systematic visualization of emptiness/relativity as exquisite perfection; 3) purification of ordinary self-conception through the cultivation of Vajra selflessness as Buddha- or deity-pride (2 and 3 here constitute the creation stage); and 4) actual perfection stage yoga of the subtle body/mind which experiments with death, between and rebirth states, and accelerates the deepening of the nonconceptual experience of voidness by mobilizing the subtle subjectivity of great bliss intuition.¹⁴ These principles are elaborated in a vast literature of tantric practices which addresses ritual, art, thought, yoga, psychology, religion—even magic and ethics. None of these specific practices is brought into the *Stages of the Enlightenment Path* explicitly, but it was owing to Tson-kha-pa's understanding of these principles, experiential and intellectual, that he was able to review the past *sūtras* and *śāstras*, including those of the Individual Vehicle, and then to arrange all practical techniques into the most effective path within the most accelerating context. The *Stages* thus draws its power as a guide to practice from this nesting of advanced techniques within elementary ones, so that the practitioner may receive the blessing of the *tantras* without their pressure.

There is only space here to illustrate this key point with a single example; if we can see this principle at work here it will strongly suggest how such integration is involved throughout. The *Stages* begins with the basic practice of all Buddhism, the taking of refuge in the Three Jewels, which here is fused with the first Universal Vehicle

¹⁴ These four are distilled from the *Sñags rim* and *Sin tu gsal ba'i sgron me*.

step, the “way of reliance on the spiritual preceptor” (*bśes gñen bsten tshul*). This is taught for all three types of persons: those seeking their own evolutionary welfare in future lives; those seeking their own liberation; and those seeking the liberation of all beings—i.e. religious worldlings, individualists, and bodhisattvas. The idea of refuge is that one flees from misknowledge-driven suffering to that teacher, teaching and community that have the willingness and ability to provide such refuge, just as one is protected and aided in one’s aims by being adopted by a powerful family with wealth and status. Can we perceive all four of the tantric methodological principles at work here in the *Stages’* teaching of refuge? We easily find the consecratory atmosphere creating a new, spiritually vibrant context for the entire path. We find visualization practice vividly transforming the ordinary world during the sessions of meditation. We find a clear change of self-image, making realization of the specific goal easily accessible. And we even find the ritual and contemplative evocation of a dissolution of the coarse mind/body, an entrance into a subtle, luminous realm of spiritual potential, and rebirth in a new embodiment, a new identity in the world between sessions of practice. It would be desirable to quote the text fully for each of these occasions, but space dictates that we describe them in summary form.

The lama or guru who gives the teaching of the *Stages* himself represents the Three Jewels, thus becoming a powerful focus of the immediacy of their refuge. The practitioner purifies his perception of the ordinariness of the actual teacher, whose body becomes the Saṃgha-Jewel, being ordained in the Śākya community; whose speech becomes the Dharma-Jewel, his teachings emerging from the scriptures and commentaries; and whose mind becomes the Buddha-jewel, irrespective of his daily personality, as it is a vessel of Tsonkha-pa’s enlightenment, itself transmitting the enlightenment of all Buddhas. There is a marked difference between this refuge and a refuge with a remote historical Buddha, long gone beyond, with an abstruse textual Dharma, and an impersonal institutional Saṃgha. There is an immediacy in spiritual time and space of the Three Jewels in the living presence of the guru. The goal-vehicle context is powerfully suggested by the guru’s manifestation of the fruitional original time of the Buddha’s actual presence. The practitioner’s alienated self-image of one born too late, too far from the possibility of actually embodying the teachings, is immediately cancelled by a new sense of possibility, of the power to attain the goal himself or herself, whether it be rebirth in a pure land, liberation, or even Buddhahood.

This new sense of fruition is immediately enhanced by the mobilization of the creative imagination of the practitioner in a detailed visualization, the “refuge host-tree invocation” (*skyabs yul tshogs śiñ gsol 'debs*). He begins to superimpose a world of radiant enlightenment on the world of darkness and ignorance, creating a luminous icon in mental space of his Guru as Tson-kha-pa/Sākyamuni/Vajradhara, whose body, speech and mind are the Three Jewels, surrounded by a host of Buddhas and bodhisattvas, gods and angels, pacific and terrific. From this icon he is suffused with radiance, feeling protected and energized to practice. This visualization is maintained as the environment of meditation throughout all the *Stages'* practices, reinforced by the rite of the seven branches—refuge, offering, repentance, petition, congratulation, entreaty, and dedication—which opens each session of meditation.

The change of self-image, the third tantric principle above, occurs in the transition in each session of contemplation from the generation of the host-tree to the meditation on the topic of a particular stage, say evolutionary causality, suffering, compassion, or wisdom. The visualized field of luminous beings dissolves into pure rainbow golden light and is absorbed into the lama, Tson-kha-pa. Smilingly, this dreamlike embodiment of the Three Jewels descends to the practitioner and is seated on a lotus on his head to accompany him in his meditations, or, in alternatives given in the instructions, enters the subtle nervous system through the crown and sits in a lotus in the heart, or simply dissolves into light and merges with the practitioner. This sense of enlightened presence imparts a powerful confidence to address the meditation at hand, as the practitioner feels less like a hopeless case and more like a fortunate, blessed self capable of understanding the teachings and putting them into practice.

Finally, as the practitioner's power of concentration becomes stronger, there is instruction in experiencing the coarse mind/body itself melt into pure spiritual light and shine forth rays of illumination to all beings, reembracing the universe in the beatific subtle realm of the spiritual between. Emerging from the sessions of contemplation into ordinary activity in the world becomes like taking a new embodiment charged with the ideals and insights achieved during meditation and energized to put them into practice.

We must close with this one example briefly elucidated, acknowledging that we have only sketched Tson-kha-pa's integration of *sūtra* and *tantra* practices. We have suggested how the *tantras* have been nested within the *sūtra* practices, but we have not

addressed how the *sūtras* are integrated with the tantric practices. To explore this, we would have to examine the symbolism of Buddha-deities, their *maṇḍala*-palaces, and their activities; and what it means when a given *tantra* states that the eastern door of a *maṇḍala* is the four foundations of mindfulness, that the nine faces of a deity *are* the nine branches of the scriptures, that the arms and body, speech, and mind *are* the thirty-seven accessories of enlightenment. And we would have to examine Tson-kha-pa's correlations between bodhisattva stages and tantric stages, between abhidharmic contemplative states and tantric contemplative states. Perhaps this leaves us with an agenda for a sequel.

EARLY BUDDHISM IN TIBET: SOME ANTHROPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

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Two complementary orientations grew up within the monasteries and hermitages of Tibet, both concerned with the same central goal, which was identified with the Buddhist enlightenment. One approach aimed at attaining Buddhahood, the other at describing and analyzing it. For the most part, the first derived its methods and concepts from the Buddhist *tantras* as transmitted by the *siddhas*, the Indian tantric adepts of the 8th to 12th centuries C.E. The second derived from the Mahāyāna *sūtras* and *śāstras* taught in the Indian monastic universities of the same period. These two approaches can be seen as originating in two different types of religion, or rather two different orientations towards the rational and analogical aspects of human consciousness. I shall call these the "shamanic" and "clerical" approaches. The shamanic approach is characteristic of small-scale preliterate societies, the clerical approach of centralized states.

The term shamanism has been used by previous writers in a variety of senses.¹ I shall begin by explaining in some detail what I mean here by shamanic religion, and how it contrasts with clerical religion. In the remainder of this paper I shall explore some of the implications of my opening two paragraphs, concentrating on the early stages of the history of Buddhism in Tibet.

¹ In particular, it should be noted that the sense in which I use shamanism is considerably broader than that used in Mircea Eliade's classic study (1970). [Complete bibliographical data pertaining to works cited herein will be found on pp. 394-397.]

Shamanic and Clerical Religion

In all societies language, in conjunction with the material conditions of everyday life, creates a set of *conceptual categories* through which the world and the self are perceived. These categories are not merely cognitive. They imply ways of feeling about and acting towards the world and the self. They can be regarded as constructing both the world and the self as experienced by the individual. In any particular culture, certain of these categories are especially prominent. These key categories are familiar from anthropological studies, where they are often referred to as symbols.² Here I shall call them *modal states*. The world-view, emotional life and behavioral patterns of the culture are organized about these central categories.

Myth, ritual, drama, literature, and other forms of symbolic expression operate by manipulating the modal states in combination with each other, and by associating other conceptual categories with them through metaphor and analogy. This *analogical* mode of thought can be contrasted with another way of thinking, the *rational*. In rational thought the conceptual categories are treated as self-existent entities and are manipulated to a single objective or purpose. The objective might be a simple one, such as hunting an animal or organizing a ritual, or more generalized, such as the acquisition of power or financial profit. The two modes of thought, analogical and rational, are complementary and are present in all human societies. However the value placed on each and the social role carried out by each varies from society to society. The shamanic and clerical approaches are contrasting ways in which these two modes of thinking are incorporated into society. As presented here they are simplified and idealized (cf. Weberian "ideal types").

In *shamanic* societies the modal states are stated explicitly in myth, ritual and everyday life. The states provide both an analysis of the world and a description of forces operative within human beings. Totemism is a familiar example of shamanic thought. In it human beings and social groups are assigned to particular modal states identified by animal or plant species. While many shamanic societies do not evidence totemism, it is typical of shamanic thought in general in seeing human beings as part of a more inclusive ecological system. Another way in which this is frequently expressed is through associations between modal states and places in the environment. This, as will be noted below, was a feature of pre-Buddhist thought in

² Cf. Ortner (1973), Geertz (1973), Turner (1967 & 1968).

Tibet. Shamanic societies appreciate and value analogical thought, which subsumes individual events under the interplay of the modal states. Rational thought, while present, is restricted to specific contexts such as the technical aspects of subsistence.

An Indo-Tibetan example may help to clarify the above argument. The sound of a crow in Tibet can be identified rationally as the call of a particular species of bird. However it may also be perceived analogically. Depending upon its tone and direction, it may be related to one of a set of modal states and held to indicate, for divinatory purposes, the operation of that state. Divination is a central concern of shamanic religion, not because of a desire to know the future, but as a way to discover the appropriate action in specific circumstances.³

A different way of making the same point would be to say that the modal states of shamanic society constitute, at the human level, different styles, or moods, of behaviour. The key demand of shamanic society is that individuals act in a manner appropriate to the state in force and thus to the actual situation of which they are a part, rather than in accordance with abstract rational morality. From this point of view the states may be considered as defining a *set* of modalities appropriate for different occasions, relationships or social groups. This aspect is often conspicuous in the *rites de passage* of such societies, since these are initiations into new social roles, dominated by the symbolic representations of the corresponding modal state.⁴

In their transhuman aspect, the modal states form an analysis of the phenomenal world and so can be used to understand and control that world. Particular men and women are often recognized within shamanic societies as expert at understanding and manipulating the states. These people, shamans, are usually informally recognized; shamanic societies usually lack any centralized authority which might appoint them officially. There is generally, however, some kind of training for the shamanic role. The modal states of a shamanic

³ Cf. Berthold Laufer (1914) and Chime Radha (1981) on bird-divination; and Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1975), pp. 455-466, and Ekvall (1964), pp. 251-282, for Tibetan methods of divination in general.

⁴ Turner's discussion of puberty rituals for Ndembu boys (1966) and girls (1968, pp. 198-268) is a good example. For the "set of modalities," see Wagner (1978, pp. 22-23). Wagner's opposition between conventional and tropic usages is close to that made here between rational and analogical thought.

society are regarded as permanent and as underlying the natural order of things. Shamans interpret them, but are not seen to change them on their own initiative. Change arises from the world of the modal states themselves, a world such that of the Australian Aboriginal "dreaming," which is outside of the normal processes of time and causation.⁵ This is as true where the prevailing vocabulary speaks of a journey to the spirit-world as where it operates in terms of dream-revelations, visions or possession. All of these are characteristic expressions of the shamanic world-view. These procedures also help to define the shamanic function as objective and impartial with respect to particular interests within the community. Such impartiality is an essential component of the shamanic role. The shaman's task is to maintain balance in society by keeping the balance between the different states, and this cannot be done properly unless he or she is personally involved with one or more of the states being balanced.

Clerical religion is the dominant and typical kind of religion in literate, centralized societies. A primary function of the cleric, the typical religious functionary of clerical religion, is to provide ideological legitimation for the established political order. The ways in which this function is performed are complex, but will not be explored here. The major literate religions of the world are mostly clerical religions in their present form, although they did not necessarily begin as such. In modern Western society science and the universities perform many of the functions of a clerical religion.

The political order of shamanic societies is in general decentralized or, in anthropological jargon, stateless. Leadership beyond the local level is very limited, and even within the local community it is heavily dependent on informal group support. These societies are towards the "cold" end of Claude Lévi-Strauss's "hot-cold" opposition; the social order is regarded as fixed and there is little consciousness of historical change.⁶ Shamanic vision is the primary means of initiating major transformations and is typical of the so-called millenarian movements through which these societies adjust to rapid social change.⁷

⁵ On the Aboriginal "dreaming" see Stanner (1979), especially pp. 23-40 and 106-143.

⁶ Cf. Lévi-Strauss (1978), pp. 28-30.

⁷ Cf. Burridge (1969).

Any centralized state has a hierarchy of authority in which individuals are required to accept the legitimate commands of their superiors. Such a system is basically incompatible with stateless societies and shamanic forms of religion. Shamanic religion often survives at the village level in peasant societies such as those of traditional South and Southeast Asia, where centralized control over the villages has been limited on the whole to financial exactions. However in such societies it is explicitly subordinate to clerical religion and is ultimately under the control of the clerical hierarchy. Aspects of this situation have been studied in some detail by anthropologists working in, for example, Burma, Thailand and India.⁸ Tibet, as I have argued elsewhere, was nearer to a stateless society than to a centralized state for most of its history.⁹ It is not surprising, then, that the relationship between shamanic and clerical religion in Tibet is unlike that in South and Southeast Asian states, and centralized societies in general. In Tibet the two forms of religion exist alongside one another and there is no clear hierarchical relationship between them. The reincarnate lamas who have the highest status within the Tibetan system do so as much because of shamanic as clerical qualifications.¹⁰

If analogical thought is typical of shamanic societies, rational thought dominates within clerical societies. This does not mean that analogical thought and the modal states are absent. On the contrary, they continue to play a central, if mostly unrecognized, role in areas such as politics, entertainment, sport and advertising. Clerical religion, however, increasingly tends towards fully rational formulations, as centralized states move in the direction of the Weberian "rational-bureaucratic state." In the West, this process culminated in the late 19th century with classical physics, Darwinian evolutionary theory and the dominance of positivistic science in general.

The initial stages of this development have taken, then, a broadly similar course in many societies. As the rational dichotomies between self and other, and between mind (or spirit) and matter become firmly established, the shamanic modal states become externalized as spiritual forces and become personified, generating a polytheistic system. Within this system a single deity has precedence,

⁸ E.g. Spiro (1967 & 1970), Tambiah (1970), Mandelbaum (1966), Singer (1972).

⁹ Samuel (1982).

¹⁰ Cf. Aziz (1976).

mirroring the power of the ruler of the centralized state.¹¹ I shall suggest below that this development can be traced in early Tibetan religion.

Early Buddhism was centrally opposed to the acceptance of the self-other (subject-object) dichotomy, and can be seen as an attempt to halt and reverse this development. However, while it makes sense to see Buddhism as an adaptation of shamanic thought to the literate and increasingly politically centralized context of North India in the 6th century B.C.E., the Buddha did not preach a simple return to the shamanic world-view dominated by the modal states. If there is an equivalent within the shamanic world-view to the Buddhist path, it can be found in the training of the shaman, who must go beyond the modal states and attain balance (*upekṣa*) with respect to them.

Shamanic Religion in Pre-Buddhist Tibet

Evidence for the shamanic nature of pre-Buddhist Tibetan religion comes from early documents and inscriptions and less directly from later texts and from modern practices of the Tibetan folk religion, to use Giuseppe Tucci's term.¹² Seventh century Tibet was a society with some degree of centralization and of literacy, so we can expect to find clerical religion in its early stages. The imperial cult has been studied at length by Ariane Macdonald: it was centered about the mountain-gods who were held to be ancestors of the imperial lineage.¹³ Alongside this specifically state ritual, however, Macdonald's sources describe much that is close to the modern folk religion. The local deities, malevolent spirits, and complex divinatory techniques are all significant today as then. However there is one important indication of the differences between the early religion and its modern counterpart. This is the pair of terms *lha* (deity) and *bla* (spirit-essence). Rolf Stein has argued convincingly that these

¹¹ Cf. Bateson (1973), especially pp. 460-461.

¹² See Giuseppe Tucci (1980), pp. 163-212. Rolf Stein refers to much the same area of beliefs and practices as "tradition—the nameless religion" (1972, pp. 191-229). The term Bon should be avoided in this context, although it is sometimes used by modern Tibetans as a catch-all term for folk religion. It is best reserved to refer to: (i) the early *bon* and *g'sen* priests and their practices; and (ii) the modern Bon religion, which is essentially a deviant form of Buddhism.

¹³ Macdonald (1971).

originated in a single concept. They are not clearly distinguished in the early texts. An important clue to the nature of that concept is provided by the *'go ba'i lha lña*, the set of five guiding deities. These gods are the local deities represented as born within an individual and protecting that individual throughout life. The similarity between the *'go ba'i lha* and the *bla*, also located both within the individual and in external residences such as trees, lakes and mountains, is striking.¹⁴

It would make sense to assume that the *bla/lha* concept originated in a set of shamanic modal states. Originally, the spirit-essence or life-force within the individual would have been constituted by this set of forces active both within the individual and in the external world, where they were associated in a typically shamanic manner with specific places, primarily the local mountains and lakes.¹⁵ Several of the *'go ba'i lha* are still important in folk-religion practices, although primarily as individual deities conceived of as being outside the individual. They include the *yul lha* or regional deity, and the male and female gods (*pho lha* and *mo lha/phug lha*). Tibetan households usually have shrines to the last two.¹⁶ The domestic ritual of the house probably preserves many early features, and the songs and formal speeches at Tibetan weddings still reconstruct the analogical correspondences between the new household and the macrocosm.¹⁷

This picture of early Tibetan religion as shamanic is confirmed by Rolf Stein's study of the narratives in which folk-religion rituals are traced back to mythical events in a prior time, as is entirely typical of shamanic thought.¹⁸ The religion of the early courts such as Yar-luñ and Žaň-žuñ would have been an adaption of such a shamanic religion to the growth of centralized power and literacy. As centralization took place, particular families and their associated mountain gods would have come to enjoy especially high status. The shamanic modal states gradually transformed into gods as they came to be seen as outside the individual rather than both within and outside. Once externalized, their association with the ruling families came to be phrased in terms of ancestry. The *bon* and *g'sen* priests

¹⁴ Stein (1972), Macdonald (1971).

¹⁵ Cf. Stanner (1979) for Aboriginal Australia.

¹⁶ Cf. Tucci (1980), pp. 187-189, Fürer-Haimendorf (1964), pp. 266-269.

¹⁷ Cf. Aziz (1978), pp. 173-6, and this volume; Corlin (1980); Tucci (1966).

¹⁸ Stein (1971).

described in the texts as performing the ritual of these early courts would then represent early stages in the formation of clerical religion in Tibet. They seem to have borrowed many of their techniques and concepts from neighboring literate societies such as Iran, Gilgit, and India. As contacts with these societies grew, knowledge of more sophisticated literate religion, at that period primarily Buddhism, would have gradually filtered through to the Tibetan plateau.

Shamanic Religion in the tantras

If the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet was shamanic, it was not the only source of shamanic orientations and practices in later Tibetan Buddhism. The Buddhist *tantras* were themselves largely a product of shamanic thought. The interrelationship between these two currents of shamanic religion is one of the most significant and, so far, least adequately studied aspects of the history of Tibetan religion.

The tantric *maṇḍala* is a set of shamanic modal states whose quadripartite basic structure is closely paralleled in societies as distant as Native American and Aboriginal societies. As Alex Wayman has already noted, analogical thought is central to the *tantras*, and the modal states of the *maṇḍala* provide a basis for comprehending the human mind and body, and the universe as a whole.¹⁹ Despite the use in both Sanskrit and Tibetan of terms conventionally translated as the "deity," the deities of the *maṇḍala* are not simply divine powers external to the individual. They can be evoked within as well as outside of the individual. Indeed, the central process of invocation or realization (*sādhana*) of the tantric deity is at its base a typical shamanic visionary and magical procedure.²⁰

Sādhana has two possible aims: the acquisition of magical powers (*siddhi*) of a typical shamanic kind, and the attainment of the supreme *siddhi*, the Buddhist enlightenment. The magical powers are amply attested in the *tantras* themselves, as well as in accounts such as the *Lives of the Eighty-four Siddhas*.²¹ The major classes of tantric magical ritual (pacifying, increasing, overpowering, destroying) are correlated with the basic states within the *maṇḍala*, and are performed through the evocation of deities from the appropriate state. The magical powers of the Buddha himself are described in the earliest *sūtras*, and, in some respects, Tantra here

19 Wayman (1961), (1974), pp. 30-35.

20 This is pointed out by Stablein (1976).

21 Robinson (1979).

was continuing themes that were always part of Buddhism. The early tantric teachers however seem to have developed a whole new set of methods to attain the Buddhist version of the shamanic goal. They may have learnt them in part from the tribal populations surrounding major tantric centres such as Kāmarūpa, Oḍḍiyāna and Śrīparvata, as well as from the yogīs and yoginīs of the Kāpālika and similar orders. By the late 8th century, when tantric teachers were active in Tibet, Tantra had been a written tradition for at least two or three centuries and possibly much longer.²² By the 9th century teachers with mixed tantric and literate-clerical backgrounds were common (for example Virūpa, Nāropa, Atīśa), although the *tantras* never seem to have formed part of the academic curriculum at the great Indian monastic universities such as Nālanda and Vikramaśīla. Even at this late stage, many tantric teachers did not have clerical backgrounds.²³

The Early History of Tibetan Buddhism

I have already suggested that the early Tibetan court was only in the initial stages of centralization and clerical religion. The process of political centralization was to be interrupted by the collapse of the empire after 842. While subsequent rulers such as Ye-śes-'od and Byan-chub-'od in the 10th-11th centuries were opposed to Tantra and appear to have been interested in Buddhism as providing the moral authority for a centralized legal system, they were never in a position to eliminate tantric practice.²⁴ By the 15th century, as a result of Tson-kha-pa's activity, all Tibetan monasteries and religious centres were fully committed to tantric Buddhism.

If we return to the late-8th century, there are signs of an imperial preference for clerical over shamanic religion, but also indications that the shamanic world-view remained very strong. Thus the 8th century emperor Khri Sron-lde-btsan's preference for Indian Madhyamaka Buddhism over Chinese Ch'an can doubtless be interpreted as pro-clerical, whatever the precise positions of the two

²² Cf. Wayman (1974), pp. 13-19, and (1980); Matsunaga (1977).

²³ Cf. Robinson (1979).

²⁴ The law code attributed to Sron-btsan sgam-po, which is an explicit attempt to incorporate Buddhist morality (the ten virtuous actions) in a legal framework, may date from the 9th century. See Uray (1972).

sides at the Bsam-yas debate.²⁵ The early emperors appear to have restricted the teaching of the *tantras*.²⁶ However, if they saw the desirability of a well ordered state, they seem to have conceived of it as being brought about as much by analogical as rational means.

The well known Skar-cuñ inscription can be cited as an example. Here building temples and other religious foundations is a ritual act bringing about future benefits.²⁷ A Tun-huang text recently published by Hugh Richardson likewise regards the support of Buddhism by the rulers as leading to direct social benefits such as good harvest, lack of disease among human beings and cattle, respect for others and absence of theft and robbery.²⁸ All this is quite in agreement with the theory of karma and can be paralleled in Indian material such as the *jātaka* stories. It would make sense, however, that this aspect of Buddhism, so consonant with the shamanic world-view, would be salient in the official perspective of Buddhist activities in 8th-9th century Tibet.

The Tibetan equivalents to key Sanskrit terms were also fixed at about this period. It is worth examining these for indications of how Buddhist and the indigenous shamanic thought reached a mutual accomodation. The terms *bla ma* and *sañs rgyas*, Tibetan equivalents of *guru* and *Buddha*, will be cited here. *Bla ma*, as Turrell Wylie has suggested, is surely derived from *bla* in the early combined sense discussed previously.²⁹ The *guru* or *bla ma* for the Tibetans was the shaman, the controller of the *bla* or modal states. *Sañs rgyas* preserves the Indian tradition of interpreting *buddha* and cognate terms to imply both *praññā* and *upāya*, both the Buddha's purified insight into the true nature of things and his widespread activity to liberate sentient beings.³⁰ Nonetheless it is striking that the syllable *sañs*, "cleansed" or "purified," is found also in the term for the central purificatory ritual of the folk religion: *lha bsañs*.³¹

However clerical the religion of Khri Sroñ-lde-btsan's court may have been, it is clear that the hereditary lineages of tantric lamas who date back to that period or shortly afterwards were taking over

25 Cf. Wayman (1977); and Wylie (1980).

26 Cf. Karmay, this volume.

27 Richardson (1973).

28 Richardson (1977).

29 Wylie (1977). I had made the same suggestion in my Ph.D. thesis (1975).

30 Wayman (1955), p.257, note 27.

31 On *lha bsañs* cf. Tucci (1980), pp. 169, 199-202.

the function in Tibetan society of shamanic practitioners. They certainly appear this way in Ye-sés-'od's decree attacking their practices.³² They would seem to have been in competition with similar hereditary lineages descending from the *bon* and *g'sen* priests. The services both would have provided—protecting the community, household and individual from destructive spirits and maintaining prosperity and the life-force (*bla, bla tshe*)—have continued to be a primary activity of Tibetan lamas into modern times.³³

When contact with India began again in the 11th century the clerical and rational side of the tradition was renewed, above all through the activities of Atiśa and his patrons. The Bka'-gdams-pa order was the first result of this renewal, and with it celibate monasticism and clerical religion were firmly established in Tibet. The renewed contact with India also led to developments on the shamanic side of Tibetan religion as the new *tantras* were introduced, so-called by contrast with the old *tantras* dating from the 8th and 9th centuries. Many of the proponents of the new *tantras*, such as Mi-larā-pa and Khyun-po rnal-'byor, came from hereditary lama families. Tibetan accounts suggest that Tibetans going to India at this period were engaged not only in the pursuit of enlightenment but also in the acquisition of a body of magical techniques which they could pass down to their children or sell to others in Tibet.³⁴ Some hereditary lamas, such as those belonging to the future ruling families of Sa-skyā and Sde-dge, adopted the new *tantras* while keeping their older practices alongside them. At the same time other lamas were extending and reworking the old tantric practices and ideas under the impulse of new developments, and evolving syntheses of old and new traditions. The importance of discovered texts and visionary techniques in this process, which laid the foundations for the latter Rñin-ma-pa and Bon orders, is well known.³⁵

The clerical and shamanic aspects of Buddhism thus both became solidly grounded in Tibetan society. In the process, however, the stage was already being set for future syntheses between the two aspects. Both Atiśa, founder of the clerical Bka'-gdams-pa order, and major figures connected with the new *tantras*, such as Virūpa and Nāropa, had combined clerical and shamanic backgrounds, and their Tibetan followers inherited a sense of the complementarity of the two

32 Karmay (1980).

33 Cf. Beyer (1973), Samuel (1975).

34 Of course the two are not necessarily incompatible.

35 Cf. Gyatso (1980).

traditions. Sgam-po-pa, the founder of the Bka'-brgyud-pa order, was an important early example of this fusion of the currents of *sūtra* and *tantra*. Sa-skya Paṇḍita and Karma Pakśi³⁶ in the 13th century, and Dol-po-pa, Bu-ston, Klon-chen-pa, Tson-kha-pa and many other later lamas were likewise centrally concerned with achieving a synthesis between what I have called clerical and shamanic religions. I shall not try to trace this process here beyond indicating that it had the two complementary aspects already indicated at the start of this paper.

Neither the course of this development, nor the success of particular syntheses, can be divorced from the social and political environment within which they were taking place. The links here go in both directions. Specific religious developments (such as the reincarnate lama) had important political and economic implications, while the support of secular patrons was critical for the rise to supremacy of particular traditions. The developments which took place at the level of consciousness in Tibetan society were intimately related to political and economic developments, but neither can be reduced to the other. An adequate account of Tibetan religions will need to combine within a single framework these two levels, which bear a more than accidental resemblance to the two truths, *paramārtha* or relational, and *saṃvṛti* or conventional, of Buddhist thought.

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³⁶ Cf. Kapstein, this volume.

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