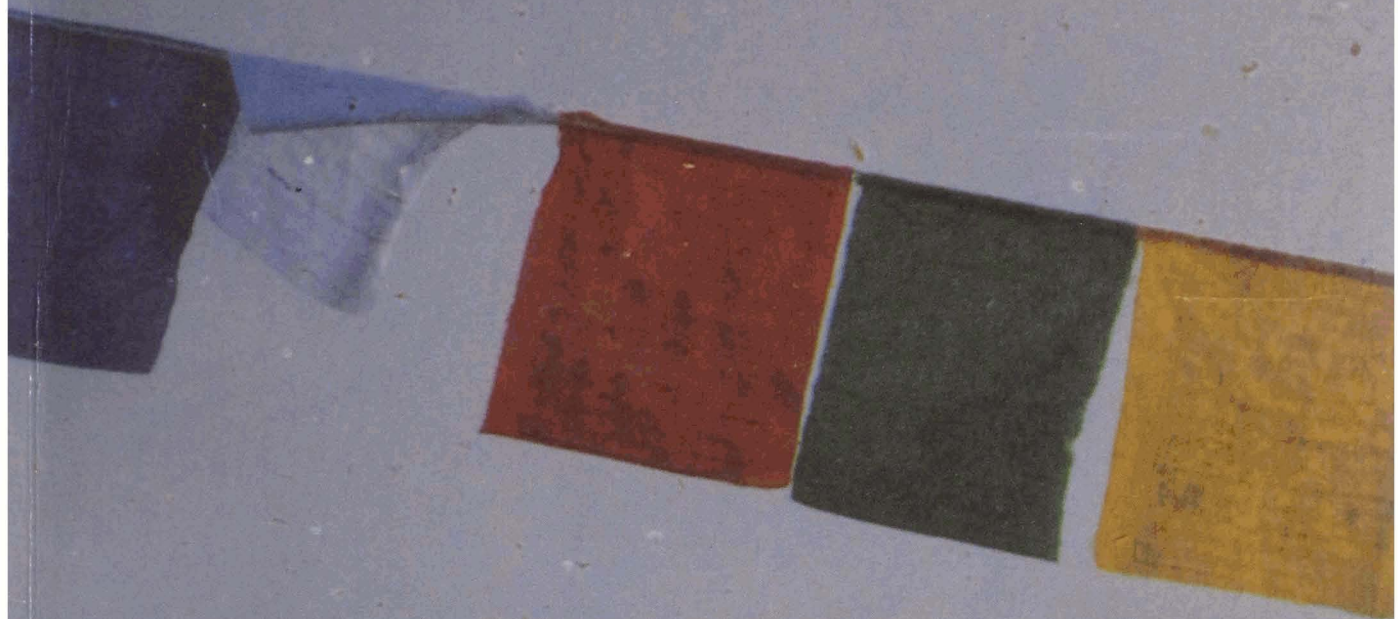




Drung, Deu and Bön

*Narrations, Symbolic languages
and the Bön tradition in ancient Tibet*



Namkhai Norbu

Drung, Deu and Bön
Narrations, symbolic languages
and the Bön tradition in ancient Tibet

by
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edited and annotated
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Foreword

It gives us great pleasure to publish this erudite and fascinating account of the origins of Tibetan culture by Professor Namkhai Norbu, one of the finest lama scholar of the century. *Drung, Deu and Bön* contains rare and valuable information on pre-Buddhist Tibetan culture, from the time of Tibet's first King, Nyatri Tsenpo, to the 28th King, Lhathothori Nyentsen. This is presented within the three categories commonly described as the foundation of the kingdom of Tibet, namely *drung* (narrations), *deu* (symbolic languages) and the *Bön* tradition.

Professor Norbu's fine intellect and compassionate mind are evident throughout the book. He investigates in turn the epic poems and legends of Tibet's secular culture, the mysteries of the ancient symbolic languages that conveyed wisdom inexpressible in conventional terms, or the complexities of the pre-Buddhist Bön religion in the context of its 12 'lores' or 'sciences'. In all three sections of the book, he seeks to uncover and preserve knowledge of the authentic roots of the present-day Tibetan culture.

The Library of Tibetan Works and Archives particularly welcomes scholarly works which shed light on the ancient wisdom of Tibet and reveal its influence upon the historical and cultural continuity of the Tibetan people today. Thus, we celebrate the emergence of this book and are confident that its contents will be of benefit to scholars and students of Tibetan culture around the world.

We are grateful to Don Eisenberg who devoted much time to the computer formatting of the book. We trust that this great work will continue to be esteemed far into the future.

Gyatsho Tshering
Director
Library of Tibetan Works & Archives

March, 1995

Guide to the Phonetic Transcription

We have adopted a somewhat simplified system of phonetic transcription for the Tibetan terms which enables the non specialist reader to pronounce, easily albeit not perfectly, the various Tibetan phonemes. As a general rule the consonants are pronounced like in English and the vowels like in Italian, with the following exceptions

The vowels ö and ü are pronounced like in German.

The consonant z is pronounced like in French or like the Italian voiced s;

zh is pronounced like the French j in jour;

ph and th are pronounced like the respective consonants but aspirated;

ng at the end of a word indicates nasalisation of n;

the gutturals g and k, labials b and p and dental d, after a vowel or at the end of a word are barely pronounced;

g before a vowel is always hard.

Most Tibetan words are of two syllables and the stress generally falls on the second syllable. For the notes and most of the terms in brackets, I have used the Wylie scientific transliteration system.

Preface

The author of this book, Professor Namkhai Norbu, is one of the most original and singular personalities in the field of contemporary Tibetan culture. As well as being well known in the west as one of the most authoritative masters of Dzogchen (*rDzogs chen*), an ancient teaching that embodies the essence of Tibetan spirituality, he is also deeply and widely versed in all the religious, medical and astrological traditions of his country, to which he has devoted studies, and on which he has written numerous works.¹ Particularly, over many years he has undertaken research into the origins of Tibetan culture, identifying in the ancient kingdom of Shang Shung (*Zhang zhung*), which had its centre in western Tibet, and in the Bön religion the roots of the marvellous flowering of wisdom and spirituality that took place on the 'roof of the world'.

In this book,² written in 1982, he gives a global overview of pre-Buddhist Tibetan culture, taking his cue from the statement, repeated in several historical texts, that rule of the ancient Tibetan kingdom was based on three factors: *drung* (*sgrung*: narrations); *deu* (*lde'u*: symbolic languages);³ and Bön (*bon*). On the basis of several quotations drawn from historical sources and ritual texts the author unfolds with great clarity the functions and characteristic traits of the ancient Tibetan wisdom, delving particularly into each of the diverse cognitive and magic ritual traditions belonging to the twelve 'lores' or 'sciences' (*shes pa bcu gnyis*) of Bön, utilising an original and deep interpretative method which could also be applied to the study of the other religious traditions of the past.

The first chapter of the book is devoted to the *drung*, which comprised every kind of narrative, from epic poems to legends, from fables to anecdotes, and which undoubtedly formed the 'secular' culture of the country. Just as in other ancient civilisations, the cultural heritage of the people actually lay in the hands of the bards (*sgrung mkhan*) who in their epics and poems, as well as the ancestry of the royal and noble families and the narrations of important historical events, handed down all the heritage of traditional knowledge and cosmogonic notions of the country. Thus it represented the main means of diffusion of culture and of education. Moreover, many of these tales were, as the author explains, derived from the 'origin myths' which guaranteed the efficacy and correct functioning of the Bön rites and of which we will read numerous examples in the course of the book.

The *deu*, treated in the second chapter of the book, consisted in symbolic or cryptic languages used to communicate information and secret messages through the use of words and with the aid of objects charged with special imports. Thus they were instruments for the discovery of wisdom which could not be communicated openly, 'keys' to open the

door of knowledge of the ineffable and the unknown, as we can deduce from their use in the Dzogchen teaching and by the association of the probable original meaning of the term *deu* with certain divinatory practices. However the field of the *deu* was not limited to spiritual initiations or divination, they were also widely used as a kind of cipher code by members of the court for strategical and political ends and by the common people to resolve particular problems and needs. It is likely that with the passing of time only the outer and more superficial aspect of this ancient form of knowledge remained, that of the enigma or riddle, because this is the meaning of the term which has survived in modern Tibetan.

The major part of the book is devoted to Bön. It is divided in thirteen chapters, one introductory and twelve treating of the 'twelve lores' of Bön. It appears that originally Bön consisted in an assortment of magico-ritual cognitions and practices based on the principle of the interaction of man and the outer forces of nature and of the cosmos, 'invisible' to ordinary perception but highly influential and determinant in human existence. The ancient Bönpos,⁴ as transpires from the extant ritual literature and from the pages of this book, had deep knowledge of the energy dimension⁵ of the individual and of the energies present in the universe, personified or dominated by a great variety of powerful non human beings capable of benefitting but also of disturbing man. According to tradition at a certain moment in time these ritual cognitions and practices, some of which included animal sacrifices, were revised and codified by Shenrab Miwoche (*gShen rab mi bo che*), a master from Shang Shung who was in many ways similar to the great sages and founders of religions of the past. His teachings were then classified in different ways; that of the 'twelve lores' appears to be the most ancient classification, as we shall have occasion to see.

Only in recent years in the Tibetological field has Bön become the object of serious study and research, so that there still persist several doubts and uncertainties concerning its origin and the history of its evolution, also on account of the scarcity of ancient sources and archaeological findings. Current Bön religion, codified into a canon of scriptures very similar to the Buddhist one, does not differ in its philosophical principles and ritual and meditative practices from the other Tibetan schools of the Buddhist tradition. The separation of the more 'authentic' or ancient traditions from those influenced by Buddhism has been one of the major tasks of those who in recent years have devoted themselves to the study of Bön; however the results have not always been satisfactory or in accord.⁶ For this reason at times there has been a tendency to dismiss the idea that Bön might have been the autochthonous religion of

Tibet and to hypothesize that it was instead the outcome of a religious syncretism of Indian, Buddhist, Iranian and other elements which took place in the west and northwest of the country in an era preceding the official introduction of Buddhism in Tibet in the seventh and eighth centuries. As a result of this tendency in the field of Tibetology it is considered that the study of the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet should be distinguished from the study of the Bön religion and based mainly, if not exclusively, on the Tun Huang manuscripts⁷ notwithstanding the fact that these manuscripts, generally recognised as reliable sources for the study of Tibetan history and religion, contain numerous descriptions of rites performed by officiants called *bönpo* and *shenpo*.⁸ Moreover, large part of the cognitive and magico-ritual traditions found among the 'twelve lores' of Bön are generally subsumed under the name 'folk religion', an expression which although it transmits the sense of 'autochthonous' and 'traditional' nevertheless does not help clarify their origin or historical collocation.⁹

The importance of Professor Namkhai Norbu's study and research lies, in my view, in its capacity to explain the various cultural and religious phenomena of ancient Tibet in the light of a clear and consistent key of interpretation: the conception of man as the indivisible centre of inner energies symbolised by deities on one side and as the 'support' of outer energies dominated by different classes of beings on the other. On the basis of this knowledge the various phenomena of existence were interpreted as modalities of the interaction between these two types of energy. In ancient times the Tibetans believed that by intervening in nature and altering the original harmony man could disturb the energies or 'deities' tied to various environments and that the ensuing disharmony could provoke a decline in his health and prosperity. The Bönpos were specialists in identifying the causes of the disturbances, through divination, astrology etc. and in prescribing suitable remedies which in most cases consisted in rites, according to this tradition the main means of restoring cosmic and individual harmony. Understanding in our own time the value and significance of these rites means opening a door onto the immense panorama of the primordial experiences and knowledge of man because, as the great scholar Mircea Eliade suggested at the conclusion of his study of Australian religions "The ultimate goal of the historian of religions is not to point out that there exist a certain number of types or patterns of religious behaviour, with their specific symbologies and theologies, but rather to *understand their meanings*."¹⁰

In our era we have witnessed the disappearance of values and traditions based on civilizations thousands of years old, and nowadays man seems to have forgotten that part of himself which formed the essential

nucleus of the myths and rites of ancient peoples. For this reason the danger of extinction of a culture tied to ancient traditions, as the Tibetan tradition is, means the loss of a knowledge that belongs to all of humanity, as it is part of that original wisdom or global vision that we find in various forms in all the religious cultures of the world.

In my translation of the original Tibetan and in my edition and annotation I have enjoyed the generous collaboration of the author, who was my Professor of Tibetan at the Istituto Universitario Orientale in the University of Naples, where he currently holds the chair in Tibetan and Mongolian Studies. With unsparing patience he went over the whole translation and helped me resolve several doubts and difficulties, particularly in the interpretation of passages from ancient ritual texts which frequently contained terms and expressions that have disappeared from modern Tibetan and are not to be found in the Tibetan dictionaries currently available. Heartfelt thanks are also due to Lobpön (*slob dpon*) Tenzin Namdak (*bsTan 'dzin rnam dag*), a leading exponent of Bön from Menri (*sMan ri*) Monastery in central Tibet, who during his stay in Italy in August 1989 clarified aspects and characteristics of the ancient ritual traditions for me. Finally I wish to thank Geshe (*dge bshes*) Tenzin Wangyal (*bsTan 'dzin dbang rgyal*), a young Bönpo scholar currently living in the west, who helped me resolve certain doubts in the translation.

Adriano Clemente

May 1991

Introduction

The study of the Bön religious tradition, that was present in Tibet for many centuries before the spread of Buddhism, is an indispensable reference point for research into the birth and history of the civilisation of the 'Land of Snows'. Originally the term 'bön' designated the various existing religious and magico-ritual traditions, very probably based on elements common to the heritage of panasiatic Shamanism.¹ Etymologically the term derives from the verb *bon pa*, 'to recite magical formulas', because the power its practitioners obtained derived from the recitation of *mantra*, syllables or sounds with the capacity of influencing certain energy dimensions. In fact through the vibration of *mantra* the ancient Bönpos came into contact with, and succeeded in controlling, the invisible energies and occult forces that govern existence.

In a historical era which can probably be dated about the beginning of the second millennium B.C.² one stream of the several ritual traditions gained supremacy over the others, conquering them so to speak, and absorbing them into its own system. The foundation of this stream, which was to become 'official' Bön, is ascribed to the master Shenrab Miwoche who lived in Shang Shung, in that area between Mount Tise (Kailāsa) and Lake Mapham (Manasarovar) which can in all respects be considered the cradle of Tibetan culture. The name Shenrab Miwoche means 'Great Supreme Man of the Shen'; Shen was the name of the clan to which he belonged and to which historical sources attribute the names of his ancestors for several generations.³ The most remarkable innovation in his teaching was the abolition of the ancient cruel sacrifices and the adoption of the use of clay or butter 'effigies' to replace the human or animal victims, a tradition still observed today not only in Bön but also in all the schools of Tibetan Buddhism.⁴ Thus the main aim of his mission was to renew and reform the pre-existent cognitive and ritual traditions, as clearly transpires from the theoretical principles and methods of practice comprised in the 'twelve lores', twelve types of Bön that were spread in Tibet at the time of the first king, Nyatri Tsenpo.⁵ According to the historical sources these represent the whole of Tibetan culture as it existed until the definitive advent of Buddhism in the eighth century.

Let us dwell a moment on the history of Tibet in order to have an overall picture of the origin and evolution of the country. Broadly speaking it can be divided into three historical periods: in the first only the kingdom of Shang Shung existed; in the second Shang Shung coexisted with the new kingdom of Tibet located in the fertile Yarlung valley; the third, which starts with the annexation of Shang Shung by Tibet, ends with the collapse of the Tibetan empire in the ninth century.⁶

The centre of the kingdom of Shang Shung lay in what is now the region of Guge in western Tibet, but its dominion spread over practically all the territory subsequently encompassed in central and eastern Tibet. The government of Shang Shung probably did not exercise direct control over those regions, limiting itself to levying annual taxes, however its civilisation and culture, based on the Bön traditions, spread widely in all parts of Tibet. The beginning of this era probably coincides with the life of the master Shenrab Miwoche and of his royal patron Triwer Sergyi Charuchen.⁷ As regards the name 'Shang Shung', probably the original name was simply 'Shung' and 'Shang' (*zhang*: maternal uncle) was added later as a sign of respect, as many Tibetan kings had married princesses from Shang Shung. The word 'shung' (*zhung*) corresponds to the Tibetan *khyung*, the *garuḍa* eagle⁸ that in this ancient civilisation symbolised the energy force linked with fire, considered the most active of the five elements in Bön. Still today in the vicinity of Mount Tise there exists a place called Khyunglung, 'khyung valley', which was for a time capital of the kings of Shang Shung.⁹

The second period saw the rise of the dynasty of the kings of Yarlung, a small kingdom in central Tibet, which was to lay the foundation of the Tibetan empire of the succeeding centuries. But the culture of the kingdom was that of Shang Shung, as was its religion. All the historical texts report that for thirty-three generations of kings, from the time of Nyatri Tsenpo to that of Songtsen Gampo (died 649), the state religion was Bön and the king was always accompanied by one or more royal priests called *kushen* (*sku gshen*). These priests served as the king's bodyguards and were essential for maintaining his prestige and well being as well as ensuring the prosperity of the people and the nation. Nevertheless there were occasions when the kings attempted to rebel against the power of the priestly caste, which was directly tied to the interests of the kingdom of Shang Shung that initially enjoyed a sort of supremacy over the new state: it is sufficient to observe that traditionally the names of the Tibetan kings were conferred by the Bön priests in the language of Shang Shung. Trigum Tsenpo¹⁰ (c: 1st century A.D.), the eighth king, was the first to try to suppress Bön for political reasons, exiling all the priests and enforcing a harsh repression of the clergy. He was concerned about the growing prestige of the priestly caste and feared that Shang Shung could conquer Tibet, a kingdom quite young in relation to the other and which still lacked adequate political and military power to protect its independence. But Trigum Tsenpo's persecution did not achieve its desired ends for long, however, as the king was murdered and with the accedence of his successor Pude Kungyel¹¹ Bön was reinstated in its prestigious position. In the light of subsequent events Trigum Tsenpo's failure can be ex-

plained by the lack of a culture to pose as an alternative to the Bön of Shang Shung, because the endeavour to disengage the political power from the influence of the clergy was not accomplished until the reign of King Songtsen Gampo who, availing himself of the Buddhist culture from India and China, succeeded in laying the foundation of a new culture and religion capable of bearing comparison with the autochthonous religion.

With this king begins the third and last phase of ancient Tibetan history, corresponding to the annexation of the kingdom of Shang Shung and the culmination of the Tibetan empire, which in a short time became one of the greatest powers in central Asia. Forging diplomatic ties with the rulers of Nepal and China, Songtsen Gampo promoted the introduction of Buddhism, although it was only in the reign of King Trisong Deutsen (742-797) in the following century that Buddhism came to be officially adopted as the state religion. Having laid the foundation for the diffusion of a new culture Songtsen Gampo prepared an ambush for King Ligmigya¹² of Shang Shung and murdered him, thus consummating the annexation of Shang Shung. This marked the beginning of the decline of the ancient Bön religion, but in spite of this throughout the period of the Tibetan monarchy until its collapse, which according to tradition coincided with the murder of King Langdarma in A.D. 842, the king of Tibet continued to be flanked by a Bönpo priest whom he asked to perform the most important rites to propitiate fortune and glory, on the birth of a prince, at a royal matrimony and on other momentous occasions.

Until this period the basis of Tibetan culture, as we have suggested, had consisted in the 'twelve lores' of Bön, where we find the ritual knowledge and traditions that, merged with the principles and practices of Buddhism, have characterised Tibetan culture and spirituality up to the present day: medical and astrological cognitions, methods of divination, apotropaic and propitiatory rites, cosmogonic narrations etc. When Bön was subsequently classified in 'nine ways' (*theg pa rim dgu*) these 'twelve lores' were incorporated into the four 'Bön of Cause' (*rgyu'i bon*), so called to distinguish them from the five 'Bön of the Fruit' (*'bras bu'i bon*) officially considered as higher teachings.¹³ Let us try to understand the possible origin of this classification. The five 'Bön of the Fruit' contain mainly teachings that can be found in the *Mahāyāna* and *Tantrayāna* Buddhist traditions, so one can assume they were introduced into Bön in a period later than that of the 'twelve lores'; the authenticity and originality of the ninth and last 'way', comprising the Dzogchen teachings, alone is beyond doubt as its historical inception can be correlated with the kingdom of Shang Shung.¹⁴ In any case we can hypothesize that the Bönpos absorbed elements of Buddhism without recognising them as such, as some scholars maintain,¹⁵ or that they did so in order to survive,

to counter the great success of the Buddhist faith. The fact remains that in the contemporary Bönpo canon can be found some of the most important Buddhist texts, albeit with different titles, and even the iconography of Shenrab Miwoche emulates that of Buddha Śākyamuni.¹⁶ There may originally have been valid reasons for this work of transformation and adaptation of Buddhist elements, perhaps for the very preservation of the authentic Bön teachings, but this principle was soon forgotten and the importance of the original traditions was neglected in favour of the philosophical teachings derived from Buddhism. It was probably at this point that the original Bön was classified as 'Bön of Cause', that is as inferior or preliminary to the 'Bön of the Fruit'¹⁷ and the authentic principles of the ancient Bön culture were misconstrued and almost excised by the protagonists of official Bön.

The fundamental principles of the ancient Bön tradition are not expressed in philosophical concepts and are rarely found in the canonical texts.¹⁸ Rather they must be 'distilled' from the mythological narrations contained in the ancient ritual texts which act as prelude to the rites and guarantee their efficacy. Reading these myths we can understand the principles underlying the various rites and identify the most particular characteristics of the ancient Bön tradition: a practical and concrete knowledge of the various aspects of the energy of the individual in relation to the dimension in which he lives, whereby it differs greatly from Buddhist philosophy which is more centred on the nature of the mind and its manifold psychological aspects. This was the original wisdom of the Tibetans, which has imbued all the cultural and religious aspects of Tibet but which today runs the risk of sinking into oblivion.

Today, as is well known, Tibet is under the domination of the People's Republic of China, and of its vast territory the central and western regions and a small part of eastern Tibet form the 'Autonomous Tibetan Region' under Chinese rule, while the eastern region has been absorbed into four Chinese provinces (Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan). Ladakh, a country with Tibetan population and culture, is under Indian rule and only the small state of Bhutan, also culturally Tibetan, enjoys political independence. The Tibetan population, including refugees who have settled down mainly in India and Nepal, does not seem to total over six million people and such a small number of inhabitants in a territory as large as Tibet, which is almost a quarter the size of modern China, is clearly insignificant compared to one billion Chinese. The consequence of this fact is the danger that the Tibetan people and culture may be destined to vanish. The only way to save the identity of a people is to preserve its culture, and in order to appraise the culture of a country to enable it to survive it is necessary to search for its genuine roots, which

in Tibet's case undoubtedly derive from the ancient Bön tradition and civilisation of Shang Shung.

Concerning the organisation of this book, I have chosen to present the culture of ancient Tibet through a tripartition in *drung* (narrations), *deu* (symbolic languages) and Bön on the basis of the statement which often recurs in works by Tibetan historians to the effect that the kingdom of Tibet was founded on these three constituents. For example the *Mirror of Royal Genealogies* by Södnam Gyaltzen (1312-1375)¹⁹ states:

Politics (*chab srid*) was based on the *drung* and *deu*.²⁰

The *Red Annals* by Tsalpa Kunga Dorje (1309-1364)²¹ inform that:

Rulekye²² had Prince Nyatri ascend to the throne and gave him the name Pude Kungyel. He entrusted to the elder brother, Shatri, and the younger brother, Chatri, the rule of Kongpo and Nyangpo.²³ He defeated Lonam. During the time of these two (Rulekye and Pude Kungyel)²⁴ the *drung* and the *deu* came.²⁵

And the *Annals* by the Fifth Dalai Lama Lobsang Gyatso (1617-1682)²⁶ assert that:

Chatri was called Pude Kungyel.²⁷ During the reign of his father (Trigum Tsenpo) there arrived the Bön of the *Dur* (rites) of the *shen* (priests)²⁸ of Shang Shung and of Trusha (Gilgit). During his reign Chingwa Tagtse fortress²⁹ was built and the *drung*, *deu* and the great *shenpo* of the Bön of the Sky (*gnam bon*) came... (Tridra Pungtsen) and Menza Luteng had a son, Tri Thogje Thogtsen (c. 3rd century), and for twenty-seven generations of kings³⁰ politics was protected by the *drung*, *deu* and Bön.³¹

Judging the custom of the ancient Tibetans of governing their country on the basis of narrations and symbolic languages to be a primitive usage characteristic of backward civilisations, many scholars have underestimated their importance and have neglected to undertake precise research into the true nature of the *drung*, *deu* and Bön and into their characteristic functions in ancient Tibet; consequently exhaustive studies and research on this matter have yet to appear.³² However as the historical sources clearly indicate research in this field is vitally necessary and a deep understanding of the meaning of these three fundamental aspects is the only key that will open for us the precious treasury of Tibetan culture.

Cognisant of this, I have undertaken research on the *drung*, *deu* and the Bön traditions based on original historical texts of both the Bön and Buddhist traditions, endeavouring to clarify their fundamental characteristics and to resolve, as far as I have been able, the more obscure and

difficult points. With this work, which represents the fruit of my research, I hope to make a contribution to the preservation of the inestimable Tibetan culture and to provide the Tibetans of the present and of the future, who will be the custodians of this culture, and all those who love and study it, with a global understanding of its authentic roots.



***DRUNG,
DEU and
BÖN***

Chapter I

Drung: The Narrations

i THE WORD DRUNG

Drung (*sgrung*) is an ancient Tibetan term traditionally used to designate two different kinds of narrative. The first includes all the narrations of ancient historical events, enriched with allegorical elements and poetical embellishments. Classical examples consist in the legends forming the epic of King Gesar of Ling and other cycles of tales, e.g. Akhu Tönpa¹ and Nyichö Zangpo,² in which fantastic and legendary elements are built onto a historical foundation.

The second type comprises only marvellous, humorous or astonishing tales recounted in enchanting style but lacking any historical basis, such as the *Tale of the Golden Corpse* (*Mi ro gser sgrung*), extremely popular among Tibetans, or the *Tales of the Sparrow* (*mChil pa'i sgrung*), and fables about other kinds of birds and stories about animals such as monkeys, hares, etc. These tales, which have always been loved by all Tibetans regardless of age or sex, have been handed down orally from generation to generation, with inevitable insertions added to the original core. Only few of them have been put in writing. The *drung* which, according to statements found in historical texts, during ancient times were used in the government of Tibet, belonged to both genres.

ii THE EPIC OF GESAR OF LING

The epic poems about King Gesar of Ling³ represent the most popular cycle of legends in all Tibet. They do not stem from a very ancient era and thus cannot be taken as a model of the ancient *drung* quoted in historical documents, but as they contain elements and particular features of noteworthy literary and cultural value, they undoubtedly deserve our attention.

The legends of Gesar accurately describe the ideas and behaviour of Tibetans in past ages, including the customs and habits current in certain places at certain times, so that they can be considered as an authentic testimony of life and social conditions in ancient Tibet. Moreover, unlike other cycles of stories and legends, they are written in poetic language, musical and easy to understand, characterised by witty and humorous traits, all elements which unequivocally reveal their derivation from the creative inspiration of bards.⁴ For this reason all Tibetans, young and old, greatly enjoy reading them.

There are many reasons to believe that King Gesar of Ling and the other heroic protagonists of the epic really lived in a precise historical era, because many of the places, peoples, families and ruins of castles de-

scribed have since been identified.⁵ But even if we accept the historicity of the king of Ling, portrayed in the legends as a kind of superhuman hero endowed with the same miraculous magic powers as a yogi, *mahāsiddha* or *tertön* (revealer of sacred treasures),⁶ it is difficult to establish exactly when he lived and whether he could really have accomplished, in the span of a single life-time, all the innumerable deeds recounted in the poems forged around his personage, such as *The War between Hor and Ling*,⁷ *The War between Mön and Ling*,⁸ *The Fortress of the Treasures of Tazig*,⁹ *The Fortress of the Armours of the Trugu*¹⁰ etc., all of which amount to about sixty volumes containing over one hundred thousand verses.¹¹ Nevertheless, even if only the core of these legends has a historical foundation and the majority of the episodes are the fruit of poetic creation, the epic of Gesar contains such a great quantity of verses that no other work of its genre can bear comparison, not only from Tibet but from any other country. Thus it shines on the horizon of Tibet's literary production like a priceless gem shedding light on the national culture. Furthermore, it has always played a fundamental role in the formation of the Tibetan people as a means for spreading education and culture, demonstrating the great importance of the *drung* in this ancient civilisation.

iii ESTABLISHING THE DATES OF THE HISTORICAL PERIOD OF GESAR

Concerning the possibility of establishing the dates of the life of the hero of Ling, historical texts of the Sakyapa¹² tradition state that when Phagpa Lodrö Gyaltzen (1235-1280) returned from China to Tibet¹³ he received as a gift the 'invincible sword' (*ya zi*) of Prince Dralha Tsegyel of Ling after the latter's death. It was to be used as 'support' for the spiritual practices for the benefit of the deceased prince. Subsequently this sword was kept in the treasury of sacred objects in Sakya Monastery. On the basis of this account we should date Gesar's era about the first half of the thirteenth century, as Dralha Tsegyel was the son of Gyatsa Shelkar, Gesar's stepbrother; on the other hand, an invocation addressed to the *mahāsiddha* Thangtong Gyelpo (1385-1509)¹⁴ found in the poem *The War between Mön and Ling*¹⁵ would shift the date to the fifteenth century. However, many scholars are of the opinion that the date should be placed far earlier. The great Nyingmapa scholar Tsewang Norbu (1618-1755)¹⁶ asserts:

The King of Ling known as Gesar must have lived at the time of Namde Ödsung or of his son.¹⁷ In fact, in the *Single Volume of the Lang*¹⁸ it is written that Gesar was the patron (*sbyin bdag*) of Ame Changchub Drekol (966-1076) of the Lang, and that after the latter

had recognised Gesar as an emanation of Trisong Deutsen and himself as an emanation of *guru* Padma(sambhava) he predicted that Gesar would live eighty-eight years. This is the precise period when Gesar lived, and it should not be set earlier or later. Certain Nyingmapas,¹⁹ in agreement with the statements in the (*Single Volume of the*) *Lang*, maintain that he was an emanation of the powerful king (Trisong Deutsen), but my principal master²⁰ held him to be a miraculous manifestation of Dorje Legpa.²¹ This seems to me more likely, however there is no contradiction in assuming that, in his wish to bring happiness to Tibet through the power of his command or of his vow, King Trisong Deutsen actually made Dorje Legpa manifest in human form.²²

iv A PASSAGE FROM BIRTH IN LING

There are frequent inconsistencies in the epic poems about Gesar, some chronological, others related to meaning, but we must bear in mind that most of these poems sprung from the creative inspiration of various bards whose improvised verses were transcribed only at a later date. Furthermore, in the course of several generations certainly many new episodes were encompassed into the original cycle, so it is hardly surprising that there are contradictions. In any case all the poems are remarkable for their exceptional style, for the quality of the literary artifices such as simile and allegory, for the graceful alternation of verse and prose and for many other features. As an example, let us read a passage from *Birth in Ling*²³ which describes the birth of Gesar's stepbrother Gyatsa Shelkar.

Senglön was born to Muza (Mu wife);²⁴ he was an emanation of the Brahmin Devadatta, his skin was as supple as white Chinese silk and inside he was as soft as a knob of white butter. He had the delicate warmth of the spring sun and was sweetly relaxed, like a smooth knot. His body was a shining essence, his voice a melodious flute, his mind a manifestation of clear light; these were his qualities. He was born like a fortress to imprison enemies, like a *senkhar* (a small temple or tabernacle) to attract the Werma²⁵ and like a 'la stone'²⁶ as support for the oath-bound deities. Chipön married Pödza (Tibetan wife) Metog Trashi Tso and had four children; three sons, Yunphen Tagyel, Lenpa Chogyel and Nangchung Yutag, and one daughter, Lhamo Yudrön.

Senglön married Gyaza (Chinese wife) Lhakar Drönma, who on the full moon day of the 'victorious' month of the female water bull year²⁷ gave birth to a son. His face was like the moon, his

mind was as vast as space, and his conduct was spiritual activity. He was born like a poisonous thorn for enemies but like white Chinese silk for friends. He had the courage of a fierce tiger and the prowess of a ruthless hawk. The members of his family called him Shellu Nyima Rangshar (Small Face Like the Rising Sun); the people gave him the name Bumpa Gyatsa Shelkar. Then the Lamas performed the rites to invoke prosperity and long life, his paternal uncles expressed their aspiration vows and his maternal aunts sang and danced for thirteen days to celebrate the birth.

One after the other the three governors of the higher, middle and lower lineages (of Ling), Lhabu Namkha Senshel, Lenchen Tharpai Södnam and Chipön, offered auspicious scarves to the new-born infant, wrapping them around his neck. Chipön sang:

“Oh great, pure, divine race!
The first fruit of our merits
is the sign heralding the increase of power,
it is the first actualisation of our dreams,
it is the first time we will conquer our four enemies²⁸
so listen attentively to this melodious song!”

And the three governors sang this song:

“The chant is *a la tha la tha la!*²⁹
We offer it to Tsangpa, great deity!³⁰
We offer it to Magyel Pomra, deity of the place!³¹
We offer it to powerful Gendzo, local guardian (*zo dor*)!³²
We offer it to Nyentag Marpo, deity of birth (*skyes lha*)!³³
May the all-covering sky continue to cover us!
May the all-supporting earth continue to support us!
If you do not know what land this is, it is the expanse of pleasant
laughing pastures,
the meeting place Tagthang Tramo (Dappled High Plateau of the
Tiger).
In the great four cornered yak hair tent³⁴
is the realm of happiness.
If you do not know who I am, I am Chipön Gyelpo of Rongza,³⁵
the governors of the higher and middle lineages accompany me
in this song,
we three brothers offer you this song.
There is a propitious constellation in the sky today,
and the hour and earth signs are also favourable.
In this coincidence of three auspicious signs,

to celebrate the Lord of the Mupa³⁶

let the pure people of Ling sing and dance!

Let the divine Lamas perform the rites of long life and prosperity
and of purification by smoke and by water!

Let the mother and the maternal aunts express pure aspiration
vows!

Let the father and the paternal uncles inspire hope and courage!

An ancient Tibetan adage says:

'If the deities, jewels and governors are worshipped all wishes
will be realised.

If you engage in trade, work in the fields and war, all wealth will
be obtained.

If you look after your horse, your wife and your home, it is in
your own interest!'

Since the time of (the forefather) Ling Chönphen Nagpo
this has been the custom of the country of Ling of the high
passes:

if enemies come we all raise our lances together,

but when friends come if we have only one morsel of food we
(cut and) share it with the point of a knife.

These are the gifts for the new born from the Serpa, the higher
lineage:

Ten items decorated with yellow gold,

a gold tabard fringed with silk,

a gold helmet with the 'victory banner'³⁷ of yellow silk,

a sword with a gold hilt,

a tawny horse called 'Flying Golden Bird'

with gold saddle, bridle and caparison, all adorned with an auspi-
cious yellow silk scarf;

these are the nine gifts of yellow gold.

The gifts for the new born from the Ombu, the middle lineage of
Ling, are:

a white *chörten*³⁸ (made from a) conch shell of dextrorse spiral and
sweet sound,

a white conch tabard with long gold fringes,

a white conch helmet with a white silk crest,

a sword called 'Cuts Merely by Thinking'³⁹

with a white sterling silver hilt,

a trotter, the colour of the moon,

with silver saddle; bridle and caparison,

all adorned with an auspicious white silk scarf;

these are the nine white conch gifts.

I, Chipön of the Mupa of the lower lineage, proffer these gifts:
a pale turquoise with a mark like a drop of milk,
a turquoise habard called 'That Protects a Mountain',
a turquoise helmet called 'Round Vault of the Sky' adorned with
teeming clouds of little banners,
and these are the family riches of Coral Deity (*byur lha*), Lord of
Jang.⁴⁰

a tawny horse with turquoise mane
with sumptuous turquoise saddle, bridle and caparison,
a sword called 'Hacks a Deer to Pieces At One Stroke'
adorned with an azure sash
and a crocodile skin scabbard with brocade decorations;
these nine azure turquoise gifts

are offered to the new born by the lower lineage.

The populace that forms the six communities of Ling
is descended from three lineages, higher, middle and lower
divided in this way not by rank or prestige,
but by the earlier or later origin of the clans
from the time of the forefather Chönphen Nagpo;
the paternal descent is one alone.

The three golden flowers of the lineage of the governors
are in vases adorning the crowns of our heads;
their words are nectar on the tip of the tongue,
their deeds are for the benefit of the six communities.

A proverb of the ancient Tibetans says
'In the four cornered monastic college,
the holder of the vase of the *sūtra* and *tantra* teachings
is he who is expert in the practice of the three trainings.⁴¹

In the court of the supreme ruler
the holder of the throne denoting high rank
is the one with greatest capacity and intelligence.'
Thus the race of the turquoise-maned white lioness
keeps only the snow for company
and has no desire to roam the city.

The descent of the azure turquoise dragon
joins its melodious song only with the clouds
and has no desire to disperse itself in distant lands.
The descendants of the Mugpo Dong race⁴²
think only of conquering other peoples
and are not afraid of failing to rule their own land.
But even though the sun heats the four continents
if the conch moon were not to rise in the sky

who would show the way in the dark?
The clear starlight would not help.
So, in order to conquer the twelve fortresses of Tibet
and the four demonic realms at the four borders⁴³
the deities have chosen a man from among the pure Ling.
He will be able to fight against the bravest men,
he will be the support and strength of the chosen armies
and the three governors will shine like the rising sun.
He will subjugate the immaterial beings that cause hindrances
(*bgegs*),
he will subdue deities, cannibal demons and evil spirits,
he will be like a superhuman being.
He will be assisted by the Lha deities⁴⁴ above,
worshipped by the Nyen tutelary deity,⁴⁵
he will receive gifts from Tsugna the Lu⁴⁶
and will obtain a body endowed with miraculous faculties:
may his birth be like an ornament for the pure Ling!
In the line of the three brothers of the Dong clan
birth is predestined by past actions
and depends on the aspirations of the people of Ling.
The aspirations which today have slipped from my mouth
are not only a wish but also a prophecy!
May these words of the truth of the auspicious signs and the
golden sun of the three governors
always be covered by the all-covering sky
and always be supported by the all-supporting earth!
May all the chants become teachings
and all the melodies communicate the meaning.
If I have made a mistake in my song I crave forgiveness,
if I have said senseless things please be patient,
but may the six communities of Ling keep them in mind!"

So all the population of Ling belonging to the three lineages, higher, middle and lower, celebrated the birth with many songs.

In one month Shelkar grew more than other children grow in a year, until he reached full development. Then Gyami Chen invited his three nephews, Nyitri Karchen, Prince of Sadam of Jang, Lhabu Legpa, Prince of Achen Hor⁴⁷ and Bumpa Shellu Karpo of the Dong, and gave to each unmatched gifts of family riches as well as a horse, a sword, armour and great quantities of gold, silver, tea and silk.⁴⁸

v THE ANCIENT TALES

To give an example of the ancient *drung* the historian Pawo Tsuglag Trengwa (1504-1566)⁴⁹ stated that "to herald the advent of the sūtra scriptures the *drung* were spread: (tales such as) *The Living Corpse that Turns into Gold* (*Ro langgs gser sgrub kyi sgrung*), *The Legends of the Masang* (*Ma sang gi sgrung*), *The Tales of the Sparrow* (*mChil pa'i sgrung*)."⁵⁰

Examining this passage we can deduce, firstly in Tsuglag Trengwa's time (16th century) many tales and fables of the kind found in the Buddhist sūtras were widespread, and secondly these types of tales were used by the ancient Tibetans and, since they constituted one of the factors determining the rule of the land, they must have been of fundamental importance. To understand the reason for this, it is sufficient to reflect on how Buddha himself used examples and parables to communicate the truth of the law of causality and the other basic principles of his teaching traditionally summarised in the four aphorisms (*chos kyi sdom bzhi*):

All aggregates are transient,
everything that is material is suffering,
all phenomena are empty and void of substance,
nirvāna is supreme peace.

The *Sūtra of the Wise and Foolish*⁵¹ is a very clear example of this literary genre, since we find chapters containing stories and tales such as the one called *The Chapter which Shows Different Examples* (*dPe sna tshogs bstan pa'i le'u*). Likewise diverse types of tales are contained in the works belonging to sections of the *Sūtrapitaka* and the *Vinayapitaka*⁵² of the Buddhist canon as well as in the writings of eminent masters and scholars, both Indian and Tibetan, which enable us to intuit what may have been the function of the *drung* in pre-Buddhist Tibet.

vi TWO TALES FROM THE DZOGCHEN ATRID

As an example of the ancient *drung* which were used as marvellous means to awaken deep spiritual knowledge, let us read two parables found in the collection of teachings of the *Dzogchen Atrid* of the Bön tradition.⁵³ These passages will enable us to realise the important function of this kind of *drung*, which had the capacity to communicate the fundamental principles of the teachings and to clarify their meaning.

The first is called *The Parable of the Prince* (*rGyal bu'i stong thun*):

Once there was a king who had two sons. The elder died as soon as he ascended to the throne. When still a child, the younger son went out to play, lost his way and never returned, so when the

king died there was no successor. Then a minister said "A long time ago a prince got lost; if we look for him now, maybe we will find him again. His unmistakable distinguishing marks are a sun on his right shoulder, a moon on his left shoulder and marks like *cholo*⁵⁴ on the insides of his thighs." The subjects were immediately sent out to search and at last they found someone corresponding to the description. After having bathed and cleansed him they dressed him in new robes and crowned him. Happiness was restored in all lands.⁵⁵

According to the explanations in the text in this tale the king represents the original condition of existence and the two sons the two aspects of *samsāra* (transmigration) and *nirvāna* (liberation), the outcome of ignorance and knowledge. The child who gets lost while playing stands for the beginning of transmigration, the minister for the master while the bathing and cleansing for the preliminary spiritual practices. Finally the coronation symbolises the recognition of one's primordial state and the attainment of *nirvāna*.

The second parable is called *The Imprisoned King* (*rGyal po btson 'dzin*):

In a country there lived two kings, and each had three Ministers of the Interior, five Foreign Ministers, sixty-one ranking Officers and eighty-four thousand soldiers. The two kings were always at war with each other, and since the good king did not manage to defeat the bad king, a Minister suggested to him, "This time let's ambush him in a dangerous passage. The King will certainly be at the head of his army: we must try to seize him. In the same way each of our three Ministers of the Interior, five Foreign Ministers, sixty-one ranking Officers and eighty-four thousand soldiers must capture his peer in the enemy army. This is the only way we can we defeat him." So they put the plan into action, and the bad King was conquered together with his Ministers, his army and his people. Thus in that country there were no more enemies.⁵⁶

In this parable the good king and the bad king stand for knowledge and ignorance, and their armies for all the aspects connected with these two states. By applying the essential methods (laying the ambush in a dangerous place) the practitioner (the good king) succeeds in conquering the body, voice and mind (the three ministers of the interior), the five poisons (the five foreign ministers), the sixty-one passions (the sixty-one officers) and the eighty-four thousand passions (the eighty-four thousand soldiers).

vii THE TALE OF THE GOLDEN CORPSE

The Tale of the Living Corpse that Turns into Gold mentioned by Pawo Tsuglag Trengwa, also known simply as *The Tale of the Corpse (Ro sgrung)*, still enjoys great popularity among Tibetans. There are various versions, manuscript and printed, sometimes bearing different titles such as: *The Tale of the Corpse which is a Source of Attainments, called 'Rain of Wishes'*; *The Tale of the Corpse which is a Source of Attainments, called 'Extraordinary Marvel'*, by Ācārya Nāgārjuna and Prince Sukhācāryabhadra; *The Teaching Tale of the Living Corpse that Turns into Gold*, in the long version of twenty-one chapters by the Glorious Ārya Nāgārjuna; *The Tale of the Jesting Corpse*.⁵⁷

Evidently the great historian mentioned this tale as an example of the *drung* only because it was popular in his time, certainly not in order to prove that in ancient times there existed written versions of the *Golden Corpse*, comprising various collections of tales such as the ones we know today. In fact on analysing these versions, we can easily deduce that they could not have existed in ancient times and that consequently they did not form part of the *drung* mentioned in the historical documents alongside the *deu* and *Bön*, because in all the versions currently available the protagonist of the incident serving as preamble to the plot of the tale is presented as Nāgārjuna, the great Indian Buddhist philosopher (second century A.D.), while some versions expressly quote his name as author of the book. Since no historical source informs us of the existence of Buddhism in Tibet before the reign of Songtsen Gampo (-649), it is highly unlikely that any works by Nāgārjuna were known in ancient times.

The various versions of the *Golden Corpse* differ in the number of chapters, but the style and the content are quite similar. Even if at times we find subtle differences in the description of the episodes, there are no substantial variances in the actual plot. As mentioned, Nāgārjuna is always the protagonist of the introductory chapter recounting the origin of the incident described in two different ways which I will now briefly relate.

The first version narrates that long ago, when Nāgārjuna was engaged in meditation on Mount Śri Parvata in south India, three boys lived in a valley: the son of a king, the son of a rich man and the son of a poor man. One day to amuse themselves the three boys decided to climb the mountain, and they walked until they reached a big rock that was on the peak of the mountain. They saw a crow's nest on the side of the rock and swore that they would not return home until they had made the crow come out of its nest. So they picked up a lot of stones and started throwing them. After a while the king's son got tired and returned home. Then, when the sun was about to set the rich man's son, exhausted, also set

off on his way back home. But the poor man's son thought "I, poor little Candrakirti, will keep the oath!" and continued throwing stones with even greater insistence. At dusk an ascetic with shoulder length hair appeared from the crow's nest and said "Why do you continue banging at my retreat door with these stones? What do you want?" The boy told him everything in detail and the master, admiring the boy's courage, felt compassion for him and afforded him protection. So the poor man's son remained with the ascetic.

At that time in Śrī Parvata there was a great cemetery where there was an old corpse called 'Ocean of Obtainments' (*dnogs grub rgya mtsho*) who was very shrewd and skilful in striking up conversations. The master knew that if someone succeeded in capturing him by managing not to answer any of his questions the corpse would become a gold mine for the benefit of all beings. So he decided to send poor little Candrakirti on that mission. He changed the boy's name to Prince Sukhācāryabhadra, gave him a net, a sword, a big sack and a lasso and warned him absolutely not to answer the old corpse's questions, whatever he asked him, because only in this way could he be captured. The boy set off.⁵⁸

The second version tells that, long ago in a country there lived seven brothers who were sorcerers. A young boy named Seljed went to them to learn the magic arts, but after three years he still had not learnt to work wonders. One day his brother Töndrub, who was very intelligent went to visit him and to bring him supplies and stayed with him for a while. That evening while the sorcerers practised performing magic Töndrub spied on them and discovered their secret for working wonders. When night fell the two brothers returned to their village and Töndrub told Seljed "There is a beautiful horse in the corral, try to sell it!" and transformed himself into a marvellous horse.

Meanwhile the seven sorcerers had noticed that the two brothers had escaped and said "Seljed and his brother have escaped. This means they have discovered our secret." So assuming the guise of seven merchants they arrived at the two brothers' door. Seljed did not recognise them and welcomed them into the house and sold them the beautiful white horse. The sorcerers, however, were well aware that the horse was Töndrub and gladly took him, but while they were leaving the horse managed to free himself and escaped. So they immediately set off in pursuit and just as they were about to catch him they arrived at a river bank where the horse, seeing a fish swimming, promptly turned into a golden fish and escaped. The seven sorcerers instantly turned into seven otters and chased him. When they were about to catch him, the fish looked into the sky and seeing a dove flying above turned into a dove and escaped. Then the sorcerers took on the form of seven hawks and set off in pursuit, but the

dove managed to take shelter in a cave situated in the middle of a rock. Inside he found the master Nāgārjuna engaged in meditation and asked for his protection. The master told him to transform himself into the counter beads (*mdo 'dzin*) of his *mālā*⁵⁹ and to remain still.

After a while the seven sorcerers came, disguised as seven cotton clad yogis (*ras pa*). They asked the master where the dove was, but since they did not receive an answer they turned into seven insects and started pestering him. Töndrub could not bear the master being tormented on his account and so transformed himself into a rooster, and with seven pecks killed the seven insects who died instantly becoming seven corpses. The master was very distressed, and Töndrub promised him he would perform any deed to expiate his crime. Then the master told him "In Śitavana cemetery⁶⁰ there is a corpse called 'Fount of Attainments' which when captured will grant all wishes. To expiate your crime go and capture him but remember, the only way to do it is not to say a single word." Then he changed Töndrub's name to Sukhācāryabhadra, gave him a white sickle shaped like a crescent moon, a big coloured sack, a coil of multi-coloured rope and a bun of flour and butter that never finished however much one ate it, and sent him off to capture the old corpse.⁶¹

It is difficult to establish if the written versions of this tale are really by Nāgārjuna, and whether in ancient times the tale had a preamble like the ones quoted above. It is more likely that originally there was a book of the *Golden Corpse* in ten or twelve chapters which with the passing of time was extended and enriched with new chapters that included some ancient Tibetan tales. This would explain why we have different versions with such disparity in the number of chapters and the fact that we find ideas, customs and conditions typical of Tibetans described in most of the episodes narrated therein.

viii THE LEGENDS OF THE MASANG

The Masang, protagonists of the *drung* mentioned by the great Tibetan historian, are a class of semi-divine beings of the Theurang⁶² type but the tales about them, set in ancient eras, also contain stories about other types of non human beings. In general Tibetans believe that man is in relation with various classes of beings, although most people do not have the capacity to perceive them. In particular, the Theurang are very closely tied with mankind and it is handed down that in ancient times their presence could easily be discerned. I believe this is the reason the custom arose to ascribe to them the responsibility for any prodigy accomplished by non human beings, and many tales were spread with the title of 'Legends of the Masang'.

These tales narrate how in primordial times there were few humans in Tibet, and how the whole country was ruled by the 'Nine Masang Brothers';⁶³ how when men started inhabiting Tibet, they set up different kinds of relationships with the Masang, and how mankind multiplied after some of the humans mated with the Masang; how various types of arms and tools made by the Masang fell into the men's hands; how their lord fought against men of enormous strength, power and wealth; how, due to his magic powers the great master from Oddiyana, Padmasambhava, succeeded in conquering their lord and made him swear to protect his teaching, giving him the name 'Oath-bound' (*dam can*) Dorje Legpa;⁶⁴ how some travellers and traders who found themselves in distant lands made pacts of friendship with the Masang and were helped by them; and how some dice players invoked the Masang and thus were helped in the game.

There is one tale in particular, which I believe lies at the origin of the Tibetan custom when playing dice of calling out the desired number in the 'language of the Masang'. It recounts that in ancient times some dice players who were friends with the Masang, and who knew they also loved to gamble, invoked their help, and every time they shouted out the desired number, it came up. But the language they used was different from normal: for two they said *para* instead of *nyi*, for three *sug* instead of *sum*, for four *dzig* instead of *zhi*, for five *kha* instead of *nga*, for six *ndrug* instead of *trug*, for seven *ri* instead of *dün*, for eight *sha* instead of *gyed*, for ten (aspirated) *chu* instead of (not aspirated) *chu*, for eleven *thog* or *thoge* instead of *chuchig*, for twelve *njam* or *chala* instead of *chunyi*.⁶⁵ This language is still in use today among Tibetan gamblers. Other tales, finally, narrate the adventures of the 'monopode' (*rkang gcig*) Theurang, so called because they have only one foot, whose tracks in the winter snow are said to have been seen by many Tibetans in various regions of the country.

I have never seen written versions of these tales, except for a few episodes of the 'Nine Masang Brothers' and others regarding the origin of the first Tibetan king scattered in ancient historical texts of the Bön and Buddhist traditions,⁶⁶ although I do not exclude they may possibly exist. In any case it would be a precious contribution to Tibetan culture if someone were to commit them to writing by listening to them from the lips of old Tibetans still alive today.

As an example of the episodes of the Masang we find in the historical texts, I will relate a work by Khepa Deu (12th century)⁶⁷ which contains the legend of how Nyatri Tsenpo, the first king of Tibet, descended from the Theurang.⁶⁸

The 'most secret' tradition (*yang gsang*) holds that he was descended from the Thedrang (*the brang=the'u rang*) and that then he took the name Nyatri. In the land of Puwo⁶⁹ a local woman called Motsün gave birth to seven Thedrang brothers, the youngest of whom was Thedrang Manya Ubera. He had a tongue so large it covered his whole face, webbed fingers and a mien indicating ferocity and magic powers. For this reason the powerful Bönpos⁷⁰ of Puwo said "He is too powerful, we must exile him!" and after having performed the rite to transfer the Thedrang by offering gifts, they exiled him to Tibet. Here he was met by the Tibetans, who were looking for a king and who asked him "Who are you?" He answered "I am a man from the land of Puwo." "Your fingers and your tongue are truly amazing. With what magic powers are you endowed?" they enquired, and he replied "I have miraculous powers and faculties, that is why I was banished." "Then we will make you our king!" they declared, and raised him onto a throne (*khri*) supported on the napes of their necks (*gnya' ba*). So, proclaiming "He is King Nyatri Tsenpo!" they crowned him. This version aims to discredit the king and display his defects.⁷¹

ix THE TALES OF THE SPARROW

The *Tales of the Sparrow* can certainly be identified with those fables about the 'Old Speckled Sparrow' (*mchil rgan rgya bo*) which belong to the famous cycle of tales called *Allegories of Birds and Fables of Little Birds* (*Bya dpe bye'u'i sgrung*). If we find them mentioned in Pawo Tsuglag Trengwa's work this is probably because in his time they were the most popular stories and fables of that genre. The cycle of *Allegories of Birds and Fables of Little Birds* contains stories featuring not only birds, but also a great variety of other animals, from hares to monkeys, foxes to lions, and insects such as bees and butterflies. To give the reader some idea I will list the titles of some of the most famous of these tales:

The Story of the Peacock, the Sage and the Hawk, called 'Joy for Children'; The Story of the Animals, called 'Conjuring Spectacle'; The Queen of all Stories, called 'The Thousand Generations of Sparrows'; The Joyous Dance of the Birds; The Judgement in the Conflict between the Domestic Birds; In Search of the Cause of the Conflict between Swallow Mother Gyadrub and Son Penkye; The Auspicious Story of the Bodhisattva Bear; The Story of the Bees, called 'Necklace of Merriment'; The Story of the Monkeys; The Precious Necklace of Teachings of the Birds ;⁷² The Story of the Minister called 'Owl'; The Story of the Hundred Birds, called 'Joy for Children'; The Story of the Crow; The Short Story of the Magpie; The

*Story of the Great Ascetic Dove; The Story of the Great Ascetic Marmot; The Story of the Friendship between Dezang the Hare and Kyau the Avra (shrew); The Story of how an Intelligent Monkey Converted Predatory Animals to the Buddhist Teachings; The Story of how Three Hundred and Sixty Kinds of Birds Told Ancient Tales; The Story of the Red Chaffinch's Disguise; The Story of the Red Chaffinch with the Protruding Head.*⁷³

In all these kinds of stories found in collections called *tamtsog* (*gtam tshogs*) made by masters and scholars belonging to all the Tibetan religious traditions, deep spiritual meanings are communicated in a simple way through allegories and parables about birds and other animals. Even though they may appear under the diverse names 'treatise' (*bstan bcos*), 'biography' (*rtogs brjod*), 'genealogy' (*rabs sde*), 'history of previous lives' (*skyes rabs*), 'elegant sayings' (*legs bshad*), 'traditional tales' (*gtam rgyud*), etc. their only purpose is to guide the reader to understand the basic principles of spiritual teachings. Thus from this point of view they do not stray from what we may assume were the fundamental characteristics of the ancient *drung*.

I have never seen written versions of the tales of the *Old Speckled Sparrow* (*mChil rgan rgya bo'i sgrung*) that narrate the exploits of an old sparrow of marked cunning and intelligence, always busy devising strategies. As a child I heard three different episodes of the 'old sparrow', the first from my maternal grandmother Tsogyel when she was one hundred and sixteen years old, the other two, which formed part of a single story, from my paternal grandmother Lhundrub Tso (1864-1945). I later heard other tales from the local townspeople but noticed several differences from those I already knew, which leads to suppose that a great variety of tales existed about this bizarre personage. In the future I hope to find the time to put to writing the episodes I know, and I think it would be of great benefit if these tales were collected from the lips of old Tibetans.

x THE 'ORIGIN MYTH' NARRATIONS

In many historical texts we find passages where *drung* and *deu* are alluded to as though they were part of the religion.⁷⁴ Let us read some examples.

In Nyatri Tsenpo's time there came the religion of the gods (*lha'i chos lugs*: Bön), the *drung* and the *deu*.⁷⁵

In the time of Chatri or Pude Kungyel, one of Trigum Tsenpo's three sons, there came the *drung*, the *deu* and the great *shen* of the 'Bön of the Sky'...Buddha's teaching was not known until the

reign of Tri Thogje Thogtsen, but there was the cult of the *drung*, *deu* and Bön.⁷⁶

It is said that politics was established on the basis of Bön, *drung* and *deu*. In fact to herald the arrival of the Buddhist scriptures in Tibet Bön, *drung* and *deu* were practised.⁷⁷

Consequently for twenty-three generations of kings, as there was not yet Buddhism the Tibetans were in the dark. At that time the politics of the kingdom was based on *drung*, *deu* and Bön, the harbingers of the three sections of the Buddhist scriptures.⁷⁸

Then with great happiness the ministers and subjects said "It seems this king is very wise (*sgam po*)" and called him Tri (*khri*) Songtsen Gampo. In those times, in order for ordinary people to approach the spiritual teachings first the *drung*, *deu* and Bön were taught. Thus the historical chronicles and enigmas composed by the king were engraved in the Rasa Trulnang temple⁷⁹ (Tsuglakhang in Lhasa).⁸⁰

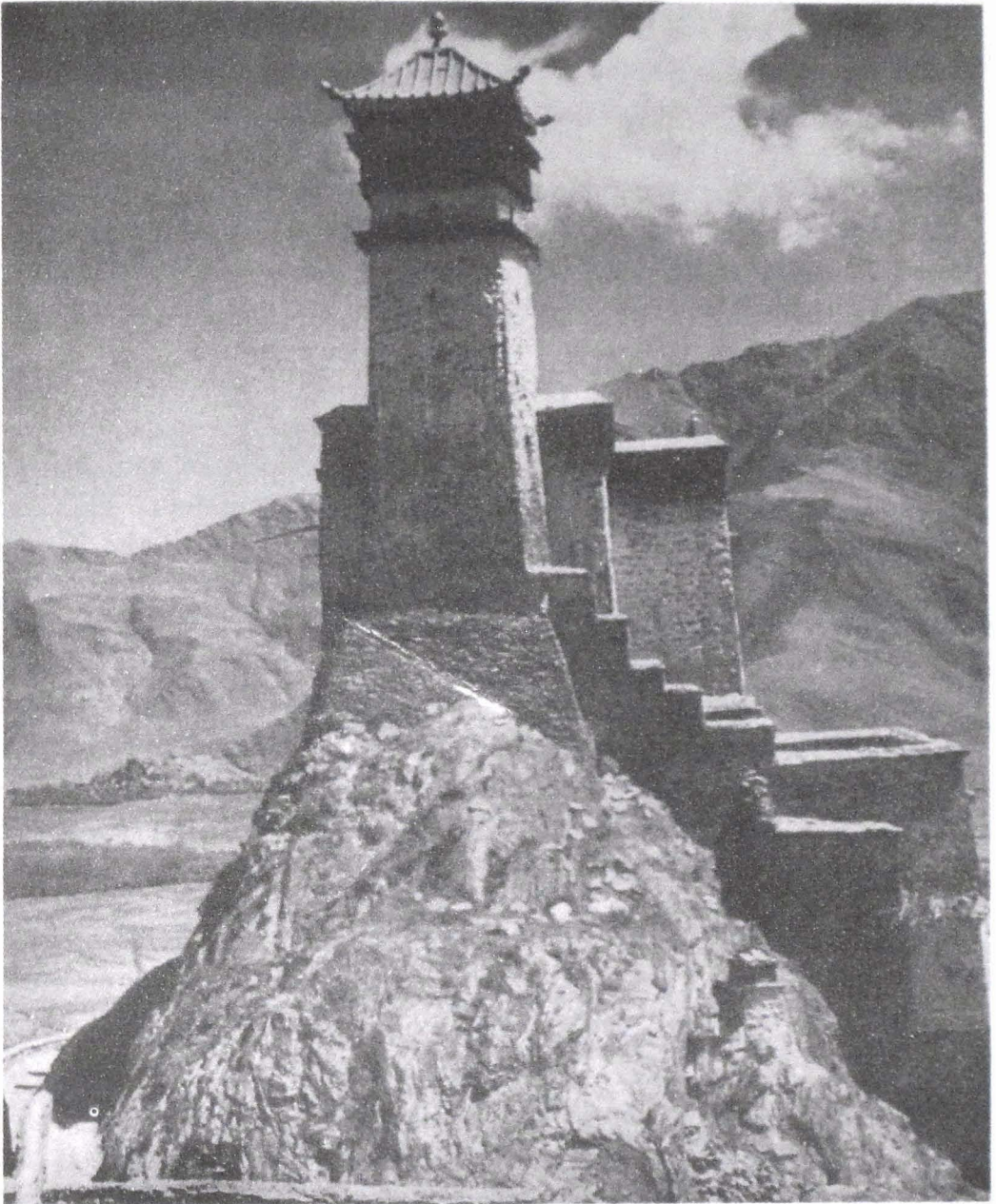
On examining these passages we are led to conclude that in all probability the source of the *drung* mentioned in the historical texts are related to the narrations of the 'origin myths' (*cho rabs* or *chog rabs*)⁸¹ which explain the origin and history of the Bön rites. Generally these myths recount how in primordial times the universe and beings originated from a 'cosmic egg' (*srid pa'i sgong nga*); how the Lha (sky gods), the Nyen (demi gods of intermediate space) and the Lu (spirits of water and of the underworld) were born; how the various races of mankind sprang up, and how relations between these and the various classes of non human beings in the universe were established; how the different capacities for exerting positive influences or causing disturbances manifested; and finally the reasons that determined the need for a particular rite and its effective function.⁸²

With the introduction into Tibet of the four Bön traditions called the 'Shen of the Cha' (*Phywa gshen*), the 'Shen of the Phenomenal Universe' (*sNang gshen*), the 'Shen of Existence' (*Srid gshen*) and the 'Shen of Magic Power' (*Phrul gshen*)⁸³ the numerous 'origin myths' pertaining to them also spread widely, whence the narrations which also derived from those myths came inevitably to be considered part of the religion.

Concerning the myth of the 'cosmic egg'⁸⁴ Kyoppa Jigten Gönpö (1143-1217)⁸⁵ ascribes its origin to Śaivism, as we will have occasion to see, but I believe this statement to be simply the result of the Tibetan custom of attributing any cultural phenomenon, good or bad, to India. In fact the

problem of whether Śaivism or Bön is of more ancient origin has yet to be resolved.⁸⁶

In conclusion I wish to underline that even if tales like *The Golden Corpse*, *The Legends of the Masang* and *The Old Sparrow* are not connected with the Bön myths they nevertheless formed part of the ancient *drung*. In fact when we discuss the role of the *drung* in ancient Tibetan society, I deem it should be interpreted in the sense of serving in cultural diffusion and formation, not unlike what happens nowadays in the western world through the means of mass communication.



YUMBU LAGANG (YUMBU BLA SGANG) CASTLE,
RESIDENCE OF THE FIRST KING OF TIBET

Chapter II

Deu: The Symbolic Languages

i THE MEANING OF THE TERM *DEU*

The lore of the *deu* was a particular science which, as we shall see, made use of symbols, enigmas and secret languages to transmit knowledge and communicate information and which is widely documented in Tibetan literature. *Deu* (*lde'u*) is an ancient Tibetan term, probably originally from the language of Shang Shung,¹ but which may have been common to both languages. In modern Tibetan *deu*, together with its variant *de* (*lde*), does not have a specific meaning. It is only used as the first syllable of the word *deumig* (*lde'u mig*) which means 'key' and as an alternative name of Nön (*snron*), one of the twenty-eight constellations according to Tibetan astrology.

Regarding the word *deumig* we must assume that 'key' may have had imports other than the ordinary one of 'instrument for opening doors' and alludes to the intelligence or cognitive capacity. In fact in Tibetan *go* (*sgo*), 'door', can also refer to the 'three doors' (*sgo gsum*) of the individual: the body, voice and mind. Nothing exists which is not in some way related to these three aspects, and since the only 'key' to open the 'doors' is supreme knowledge or capacity for understanding (*shes rab dam pa*), we can deduce with certainty that the import of *deu* also included the meaning 'intelligence' or 'understanding'. Nevertheless this is only a hypothesis, as the suffix *mig* is indispensable in order for the morpheme *deu* to acquire the meaning 'key'.

Even if the origin of the word *deu* could be attributed to the constellation bearing its name, it would be necessary in any case to discover its meaning whereby it was used as the name of a constellation; in fact I do not think this can be one of those names defined in Tibetan as 'arbitrary' (*sgra rgyal*), that is without any etymological meaning, such as *tso* (lake), *ri* (mountain), *sa* (earth), *shing* (tree) and *ta* (horse): if that were the case pursuing our research would be pointless.

ii *KHEG*: THE RIDDLES

When Tibetan historians have tried to explain the term *deu* which appears in the ancient historical documents, they have interpreted it to mean *kheg* (*khegs* or *khed*), a kind of riddle found everywhere in Tibet and particularly in the eastern region of Kham, such as "What is a coral purse full of gold coins? A chilli pepper". There existed various kinds of these riddles in which the object to be identified was described in cryptic language, but it appears the historians have attributed the meaning of *deu* to all of them. Pawo Tsuglag Trengwa wrote:

To herald the *Abhidharma* scriptures the *deu* were practiced. Queries such as “What has notches like wrinkles and a big gullet?” for a set of scales, “What has a head that grows and gets fatter?” for a *potho* (a small heap of earth covered by grass),² and other (sayings) inscribed on the funerary mounds (*gdung*)³ in Lhasa about the *drung, deu* and Bön. They broadened the Tibetans’ horizons somewhat.⁴

From this passage we can glean that the *deu* was mainly identified with riddles but the expression ‘and other’ leads to suppose that other meanings may have been embraced. In general, the riddle is a means of training the intellectual faculties, and in a way that does not give rise to those difficulties and causes of fatigue encountered when studying a branch of knowledge. In fact one applies to the solution of a riddle with a relaxed mental attitude, and a sense of pleasure and of enjoyment in playing the game. In this way any person, regardless of social class, age or cultural level can train their cognitive capacity, improving their memory and intelligence. This exceptional feature of riddles is indisputable. So even if ‘riddles’ cannot subsume the entire meaning of *deu*, they certainly constitute an ancillary aspect, leaving no doubt that they were practiced by Tibetans in ancient times.

However, it would be a grave mistake to think that the *deu* comprised only of riddles, because although the historical texts assert that in ancient times kings and ministers ruled Tibet by *deu* this certainly cannot be interpreted to mean that such personages governed on the basis of intellectual faculties considerably developed through the assiduous practice of riddles, or that they gathered in great assemblies to discuss various matters by asking each other questions in the form of riddles. The term *deu* must have had a wider and deeper meaning, demonstrated by the fact that the word, together with the variant *de*, appears in the names of many of the ancient kings of Tibet.

iii THE NAMES OF THE TIBETAN KINGS

In ancient times in Tibet when a son was born to the king, it was customary, after having purified the newborn child by the *Sang* fumigation rite and bathed him with milk and water in the *Tsentrü*⁵ lustrative ceremony, for the royal Bön priest, or *kushen*, to confer on him a special name in the language of Shang Shung. This custom obtained since the time of Nyatri Tsenpo, the first Tibetan sovereign, as we can read from a text of Bön tradition by Khyungpo Lodrö Gyaltzen (14th century).⁶

When the king descended from the sky to the earth two herdsmen from Dagpo and Kongpo⁷ saw him and asked "Where do you come from?" The king pointed at the sky and laughed, clearly displaying a swastika on his tongue. "Who are you?" they asked, and he answered "I am a man of royal birth." So they built a wooden throne (*khri*) and supporting it on their necks (*gnya' ba*) they showed everyone (the king). Some people were frightened, some were terrorised, some were disgusted and others trembled. He was shown to a Brahmin who said "At first he will bring good, but in the end, bad," but when the *shenbön* (priests) Choden and Tse-drön saw him they exclaimed "How marvellous, extraordinary! Let us make him King of Tibet." So they bathed him in lustral water according to the Bön *Tsentrü* rite and named him Mije (Lord of Men) Nyatri Tsenpo (king on the throne supported by necks).⁸

In ancient times the names of the Tibetan kings were given in the language of Shang Shung, not only because nearly all the foremost Bön priests at that time came from that country, but also because 'central' (*bar pa*) Shang Shung,⁹ corresponding to the modern region of Guge in Ngari (west Tibet), was the birthplace of Shenrab Miwoche, the founder of Bön. It was the most important place where his teachings were transmitted and preserved. Moreover, many Bön historical texts relate that in the area in front of Mount Tise (Mount Kailāsa, also known as *gangs rin po che* in Tibet) and near Lake Mapham (Manasarovar) lay the capital of King Triwer Sergyi Charuchen of Shang Shung and of other ancient kings of this land.¹⁰ Since wherever it spread, the cradle of Bön was Shang Shung, in order to honour Bön and its fountainhead, as well as to display in public that the kings of Tibet were patrons of this religion, the custom arose to give them names in the language of Shang Shung.

iv THE SHANG SHUNG WORD TRI

The explanation usually given of the origin of the name of king Nyatri Tsenpo and repeated in most historical texts, both Buddhist and Bön (as we read in the preceding passage), is that the Tibetans raised onto the napes of their necks (*gnya' ba*) a wooden throne (*khri*) on which they sat the king (*btsan po*) to acclaim him. However this interpretation appears plausible only if the Tibetan language alone is taken into account, whereas the word surely originated from the Shang Shung language. The word *tri* (*khri*), in fact, appears in the names of several personages of the ancient kingdom of Shang Shung: kings such as Triwer Sergyi Charuchen, Bönpos of the spiritual lineage of *Gekhöd Sangwa Dragchen*¹¹ such as Tri

Ödse and of Dzogchen such as Rasang Trine Khöd: Likewise we can observe how frequently the syllables *tri* (*khri*), *de* (*lde*) and *deu* (*lde'u*) appear in the names of Tibetan kings: Nya-tri Tsenpo (*gNya' khri btsan po*), Ö-de Pugyel (*'Od lde spu rgyal*), Mu-tri Tsenpo (*Mu khri btsan po*), Ding-tri Tsenpo (*Ding khri btsan po*), So-tri Tsenpo (*So khri btsan po*), Mer-tri Tsenpo (*Mer khri btsan po*), Dag-tri Tsenpo (*gDags khri btsan po*), Sib-tri Tsenpo (*Srib khri btsan po*), Pu-de Kungyel (*sPu lde gung rgyal*), Sanam Sin-de (*Za nam zin lde*), De-trul Namzhung Tsen (*lDe 'phrul nam gzhung btsan*), Senol Namde (*Se snol gnam lde*), Se Nolpo De (*Se snol po lde*), De Nolnam (*lDe snol nam*), De Nolpo (*lDe snol po*), De Gyelpo (*lDe rGyal po*), De Trintsen (*lDe sprin btsan*), Tri-tsen Nam (*Khri btsan nam*), Tri-dra Pungtsen (*Khri sgra dpung btsan*), Tri Thogje Thogtsen (*Khri thog rje thog btsan*), Tri-nyen Zungtsen (*Khri gnyan gzung btsan*), Dronyen Deu (*'Bro gnyan lde'u*), Tri-de Tsugtsen (*Khri lde gtsug btsan*), Tri-de Songtsen (*Khri lde gtsūg btsan*), Tri-song Deu-tsen (*Khri srong lde'u btsan*), Mu-tri Tsenpo (*Mu khri btsan po*), Tri-tsug De-tsen (**Khri gtsug lde btsan*), Tri-de Gönni (*Khri lde mgon nyi*), Tri-de Rigpa Gön (*Khri lde rig pa mgon*).

I am not convinced by the argument that the Tibetans named the first king Nyatri Tsenpo because they raised him onto a throne supported on their necks, and that as an act of homage succeeding kings kept the syllable *tri* in their names. In fact there is no shadow of doubt the word *tri* originally comes from the language of Shang Shung, as many texts demonstrate that it was in use in the country since the most ancient times. In a passage from the *Zijid*,¹² the long biography of Shenrab Miwoche, concerning one of the aboriginal clans of Olmo Lungring,¹³ the master's birthplace, we read:

Jerig Tsünpo and Tsugchag Dangma had six sons, Triwer (*Khri wer*), Trima (*Khri ma*), Tritsün (*Khri btsun*), Triten (*Khri brten*), Trije (*Khri rje*) and Triu Ratsa (*Khri'u ra tsa*). Their progeny was endowed with the characteristic signs of supreme birth...and became the source of an uninterrupted lineage of ministers.¹⁴

Seeking the meaning of the word *tri* in the Shang Shung language, at the present state of knowledge we can ascertain that it can have the various imports 'mind' (*sems*) or 'absolute condition of the mind' (*thugs nyid*), 'life' (*srog*) or 'longevity' (*tshe*),¹⁵ all terms which express something of great importance and worthy of forming part of the name of a sovereign. In the ancient documents Nya, the first syllable of the name Nyatri Tsenpo, has different spellings, the most common being *gnya'*, *snya* and *nyag*, however I am sure that in the case of this word, too, by carrying out accurate research it will be possible to establish the original spelling and meaning.¹⁶

In any case the custom of giving babies meaningful names is not confined to royal families, but has always been widespread among Tibetans of all social classes and cultural levels. Traditionally when a child is born, whether a boy or a girl, the parents or a respected Lama give it an auspicious name which expresses a positive meaning. They do this after long reflection, and the name chosen is always composed of several words (*rjes grub*). It would thus seem strange that the ancient kings of Tibet, who ruled over men, should have been given names such as Agsho Leg, Tisho Leg, Desho Leg, Mune Tsenpo and Murub Tsenpo, which have no meaning in Tibetan. In fact all these names belong to the language of Shang Shung, the original cradle of Tibetan civilisation, and assuredly in this language they must have expressed deep meanings. All this leads us to conclude with reasonable certainty that the term *de* or *deu*, often found in the names of the kings, must also have expressed an important meaning.

v THE *DEUTRUL* DIVINATION

Of fundamental importance in order to understand the meaning of *deu* is the *Deutrul* (*lde'u 'phrul*), a system of divination which was very widespread in the ancient Bön tradition and which lies at the origin of several types of divination methods now known under the name *Mo* (*mo*) or *Cha Mo* (*phywa mo*). It is considered to derive from Shenrab Miwoche himself, who taught this method as part of the teachings of the 'Shen of the Cha' and therefore in a very ancient era. Let us read from a *Deutrul* manual, still in use today among Bönpos:¹⁷

The miraculous Cha Legyel¹⁸ requested to receive this method of clairvoyance through signs, belonging to the 'causal way' called the 'Shen of the Cha', from the omniscient master 'Lion of Speech' (*smra ba'i seng ge*: Shenrab Miwoche) who manifested as the Master of the Thugkar deities¹⁹ and transmitted the empowerment for the interpretation of signs as the method of clairvoyance of hidden phenomena. Sidpa Yekhyen Trulgyel²⁰ codified the system in the land of the Nyen Masang and transmitted it to the Bön of the Nyen (*gnyan bon*) Thangthang Trolwa. He in turn was asked for the instructions by the great master Trenpa Namkha²¹ who spread them in Tibet. Then, when the Bön teachings were in decline in Tibet, the great master himself hid them as a *terma* at Tagna in Sar (in Tsang in central Tibet). Consequently the great Jedrug²² discovered the *terma* at Tagna in Sar and transmitted it to the Indian (Pha) Tampa²³ and to Ada Lhase (Jedrug's nephew). The instructions were transmitted by Ada Lhase to Lhagyel (his nephew) and were gradually spread. Pha Tampa's disciples and

the descendants of his lineage incorporated the system into the Buddhist tantric tradition and composed several versions, all concordant with the original, and did not hesitate to add lengthy explanations to facilitate understanding.²⁴

As we have just seen, as well as in Bön this system of divination thus also spread in Tibetan Buddhism, and I have often heard of the existence of various manuals of the Buddhist version. In Tibet as a child I myself practiced this divination, and I clearly remember that the text I used to consult, and with which I had become quite familiar, had been edited by the great Buddhist master and scholar Jamyang Khyentsei Wangpo (1820-1892).²⁵

In some later texts *Deutrul* is spelt *deltrug* (*rdel drug*), lit. 'six pebbles', and this has given rise to the widespread custom of interpreting the name of this divination system as indicating a method in which six pebbles are used. But if we read the instructions contained in the *Deutrul* texts, we realise that even though the use of pebbles is prescribed there is no reference to the number six. In fact these explain that first of all, in order to eliminate the hidden obstacles hindering clairvoyance (*rmu gab*) the diviner takes three black pebbles in his hand, and while invoking the answer to his question recites the divination mantra three times. Then he rolls the pebbles three times towards the left so that they pass over the forty-two crystal pebbles or the *mālā* of forty-two crystal beads specifically used for divination, and finally hides them under his seat to signify the elimination of the negativities.²⁶ At this point he divides the forty-two pebbles into three heaps and counts off the beads in each heap four at a time, then sets aside the beads remaining in each heap, which can number from one to four. He then repeats the procedure twice more with the remaining pebbles and writes the results in a lattice of nine squares, for example:

1	1	4
3	4	1
4	4	4

on the basis of which he will interpret the future.

In colloquial Tibetan *trug* (*drug*) and *trul* (*'phrul*), the second syllable in the two variants, sound very similar, because in words composed of two syllables the prefixes 'a and ha of the second syllable are difficult to pronounce. In our case the word *deutrul*, composed of the two syllables *lde'u* and *'phrul*, has the first syllable ending with 'u and the second syllable starting with 'a (rendered by an apostrophe), which combination makes pronunciation particularly troublesome. We can therefore assume that with the passing of time the pronunciation involuntarily changed

and simplified, and *deltrug* (six pebbles) being easy to pronounce and simple to understand, those people who did not know the meaning of the word altered the original spelling, giving rise to the perpetuation of the mistake.

As we have seen nine squares are used in the *Deutrul* for interpretation of the results. Their names, from top to bottom along the three vertical columns are:

1. Drala Khyung Bird (*sgra bla bya khyung*)
2. Only One Born from Slate(-coloured) Meadows (*g.ya' spangs skyes gcig*)
3. Reddish Grey Stone Mare (*rdo rta gro mo*)
4. White Sky Lady (*gnam sman dkar mo*)
5. Young Slate(-coloured) Dri (female yak) (*g.ya' 'bri si li*)
6. Hind (*sman sha yu mo*)
7. Long-Necked Sinpo (*srin po gnya' ring*)
8. Sinmo Riding a Pig (*srin mo phag zhon ma*)
9. Bitch with a Keen Sense of Smell (*khyi mo sna gsang ma*).

These nine squares are examined on the basis of the three vertical columns which represent, respectively, the place of the deities (*lha sa*) and of males (the first column), the place of the family (*khyim sa*) and of females (the second column), the place of enemies (*dgra sa*) or of the external (third column).²⁷ As regards the main ways of assessing the results, there are thirty-two general readings of the three horizontal columns: upper, middle and lower, for example:

1	3	2

3	3	2

3	1	4

eight diagonal results, for example:

		1
	1	
1		

twelve vertical results, for example:

3		
3		
3		

For specific interpretations sixteen different results of the upper square of the place of the deities are used, for example:

3	4	3

thirteen results of the middle square of the place of the deities, for example:

1	3	4

and four results of the lower square of the place of the deities, for example:

4	4	4

Then there is a kind of reading called the 'Total Miraculous Reading' (*yongs rdzogs 'phrul gyi dpyad*) on the basis of which, in relation to the positive aspect, there can be three good results:

1. The Source of Existence
(*srid kyi chu mig*)

1	1	4
1	1	2
1	3	4

2. The Lake of Prosperity
(*g.yang gi mtsho mo*)

3	3	4
3	3	2
3	3	2

3. The Gold Head
(*gser gyi mgo bo*)

3	1	2
4	4	4
4	4	4

and three excellent results:

1. The Palace of Victory
(*rnam rgyal khang bzang*)

3	2	1
3	3	2
1	3	4

2. Mount Meru
(*ri rab lhun po*)

1	3	2
1	1	2
3	3	2

3. (The Tree that Grants)
The Wishes of Existence
(*srid pa'i dpag bsam*)

1	3	2
3	3	2
3	3	2

Regarding the negative aspect there are three bad results:

1. White Poisonous Snake
(*re 'byams dkar po*)

3	3	4
4	4	4
4	4	4

2. Mottled Poisonous Snake
(*re 'byams khra bo*)

3	4	3
4	4	4
4	4	4

3. Black Poisonous Snake
(*re 'byams nag po*)

4	3	3
4	4	4
4	4	4

and three terrible results:

1. White Gyajin
(*rgya byin dkar po*)²⁴

4	4	2
4	4	4
4	4	4

2. Mottled Gyajin
(*rgya byin khra bo*)

4	2	4
4	4	4
4	4	4

3. Black Gyajin
(*rgya byin nag po*)

2	4	4
4	4	4
4	4	4

As well as all these, that are the main readings, numerous readings are made for individual cases by combining the nine squares with the nine *mewa* numbers and with the positions of the eight *parkha* trigrams²⁹ in order to obtain many other keys to interpretation.³⁰

Deutral, the meaning of which can be rendered as the 'manifestation' ('*phrul*) of 'knowledge' (*lde'u*) or of 'clairvoyance', has been practiced continuously in Tibet over the centuries and has been diffused as a particularly efficacious science which can reveal, in any circumstances and concerning any aspect, everything that normally forms part of the occult dimension, portending, for example, how a person should act to avoid misfortune and obtain the fulfilment of his wishes. Originated from the ancient Bön tradition of the 'Shen of the Cha' and widely spread in

sundry forms in more recent times, it has given rise to numerous types of divination which are easier to consult, such as the Treng Mo (*phreng mo*) using a *mālā* and the Sho Mo (*shwo mo*) performed by casting dice, still widely practiced today by Bönpos and Buddhists alike.³¹

vi THE *DEU* AS A MEANS TO TRANSMIT DEEP KNOWLEDGE

In the scriptures of Dzogchen, a teaching that has been known in Tibet since ancient times and considered to be the essence of all the spiritual traditions,³² the *deu*, in the form of a brief enigmatic parables, is used to introduce true knowledge of reality through symbols: without doubt this represents a particularly profound and elevated aspect of the significance of the *deu*. Let us look at some examples. From the *Tantra of the Symbolic Transmission of the Secret Sphere*:³³

Long ago in a country called 'Self-luminous Bliss' there lived a king called Total Vision. Having no cushions on which to sit he spread out the sea for a carpet. Having no clothes to wear he donned the sky. Having no food to eat he fed on the four elements. Being jackal-eyed he kept away the dark both by day and by night. Keeping vision within he reabsorbed it without defects into the precious eye. With his great energy of body, voice and mind he caged lions. Since his vision did not depend on anything else he hid the sun under his armpits. He killed everyone and ate them and finally nobody survived. Left alone he had no friend to talk to, but nor were there any more enemies, and he was very glad about this; yet it is said he could not remain calm.³⁴

In this passage the king symbolises the individual's primordial state of pure awareness (*rig pa*), the wisdom of which illuminates everything and rules all the phenomena of existence, hence it says he "spread out the sea for a carpet", "donned the sky" and "fed on the four elements". The natural luminosity of this state, which dispels all darkness, is compared to the eyes of a jackal. The limitless energy of the body, voice and mind, the three 'doors' of the individual, is defined as mighty enough even to capture strong lions. But the conclusion means that, even though the primordial state is the lord of existence, because of the pranic movement of innate thoughts one enters illusion, and so "he could not remain calm".

Let us now read a passage from the *Tantra of the Self-originated State of Pure Awareness*³⁵ in which methods for spiritual realisation through the most esoteric *Mennag* Dzogchen teachings are described. Thus we find images and characters that symbolise, among other things, the five senses, the 'four principal points' of contemplative practice (*gnad bzhi*), the five

sense objects, the twenty-one types of 'introduction' to knowledge and the 'four visions' of the *Thödgal* method of realisation³⁶ leading to the self-liberation of the 'eight aggregate consciousnesses'.³⁷

In ancient times in a country called 'Immensity' there lived the Master 'Radiant Light'. It is told that he had two sons, and that these two brothers were imprisoned in a deserted valley, how strange! Then five soldiers arrived who destroyed the stone fortress from top to bottom, how strange! The two sons were then confined in a ditch and an old woman afflicted with a cataract locked the entrance, how strange! Four men pursued the five soldiers, how strange! The two sons managed to free themselves and killed the prison guard, how strange! Then they escaped together directly into the land of the sun, where they collected taxes from the people. Twenty-one queens took counsel together and fled into the temple of the impotence of thoughts, and five men protected by shields guarded the entrance so nobody could enter, how strange! So the four men looked into four mirrors, saw their reflections and recognised themselves, how strange! And when they saw a house with eight doors they burst out laughing at themselves: so it is told, how strange!³⁸

In conclusion let us read a passage from the *Ultimate Treasure of the Secret Sphere*³⁹ where the process of self-liberation of the 'six aggregate consciousnesses' is symbolised:

On an island in the sea in the middle of a precious sparkling jewel, the King of Desires with his six sons and two parents were grazing a horse. Suddenly father and sons lost control of the horse which fled and reached the five Goddesses of the External. But even the Goddesses of the External could not control it, and the horse furiously unbridled itself. Finally a child just one year old succeeded in taming it and the horse turned into the (wish-fulfilling) jewel. How marvellous!⁴⁰

We find many *deu* of this kind in the scriptures of the three series of Dzogchen teachings,⁴¹ and their sole purpose is to lead, through the enigma, to direct understanding of the deepest, most secret principles and methods of practice: these can definitely be considered the highest expression of the form of knowledge subsumed under the name *deu*. Furthermore, since the origin of the Dzogchen teaching is very ancient, we can deduce that this marvellous lore has been spread since the distant past.

vii THE *DEU* AS A MEANS TO COMMUNICATE SECRET MESSAGES

Another exceptional feature of the *deu* in ancient times was its use as a means to convey secret messages through symbolic objects and through actual codes. Let us look at some examples. The first is taken from the Tun Huang documents and describes the answer sent to King Songtsen Gampo by his sister Semarkar, who had been given to King Ligmigya or Ligmirhya of Shang Shung in marriage.⁴²

While (the Minister) Mangchung was paying homage to her, the Queen said "I have no written reply to send to my brother the King. I am happy he has let me know he is enjoying good health. Deliver this gift from me directly into his own hands," and gave him a sealed packet. When Gyimtsen Mangchung returned to the king he reported "The Queen has not sent a written reply, she sang these verses^{42b} and gave me this sealed packet." The king opened the small packet and saw it contained thirty ancient turquoise stones of excellent quality. After long reflection (the king said) "It seems to mean If you have the courage to confront Ligmirhya wear the turquoise stones (around your neck, as men do), otherwise you will show you are like women so wear them as ornaments in your hair (as women do)!" Then the king and ministers reflected further and consulted together and in the end they demolished Ligmirhya's power.⁴³

The second example, taken from the collection of Dzogchen teachings of the *Oral Transmission of Shang Shung*⁴⁴ relates how, by having been able to decipher the symbolic meaning of certain objects, the King of Tibet managed to ambush and murder the King of Shang Shung:

Since the King of Tibet was not capable of defeating the King of Shang Shung in open conflict, he thought he would use a treacherous stratagem to achieve his purpose. At that time the King of Shang Shung had three wives: the last, Sa Nangdrön Legma of Gurub, was eighteen. The King of Tibet decided to send her his Minister (*phrin blon*: a kind of ambassador) Nangnam Legdrub, a sly man of wicked character, very cunning in dealing and contriving subterfuges. So the minister presented himself to Nangdrön Legma bearing a *drong* (wild yak) horn full of gold powder and told her "(It is a shame that) one like you, Nangdrön Legma, should be the last wife of the King of Shang Shung, you are worth much more, and the King of Tibet, too, cannot tolerate this. Could there be a way of depriving the King of Shang Shung of his power? If there were you would become the first wife of the

King of Tibet, and as a gift you would receive two thirds of the properties of his kingdom." Nangdrön Legma replied "The King of Shang Shung has an army that can fill the land, whereas the King of Tibet's army can barely cover the white stripe at the centre of the back of a (speckled) cow: he could never defeat him in open battle. But if you want to conquer (the King) by cunning and wickedness, next month together with his attendants he will leave Shang Shung for Langyi Gyimshöd in Sumpa⁴⁵ to take part in an assembly. Lie in ambush and kill him! I myself will be your secret messenger." She spoke thus because, not having any children, she had no interests to defend. They then decided that to inform them of the exact date she would leave some signs on the latse (cairn)⁴⁶ on top of the pass.

When the time came the King of Tibet with his ministers and several thousand soldiers went to the place they had agreed, accompanied by his Minister Nangnam Legdrub. The King was the first to climb to the peak of the pass, where he found a pan full of water containing three objects: a small piece of gold, a small piece of conch shell and a poisoned arrow head. The King said "The pan full of water means he will arrive on the full moon day next month; the small pieces of gold and conch shell mean we should keep soldiers ready in the Gold Cave and the Conch Cave at Dangra⁴⁷ and lie in ambush; the poisoned arrow head means we should ambush the King and kill him!" They made the necessary preparations, and when the two kings met the Tibetan soldiers slew the King of Shang Shung.⁴⁸

In these two episodes the *deu* are based on the art of interpreting the symbolic import of objects, a kind of cipher language that enables one to transmit secret information without the use of words. Instead in the next passage it is verbal language, in the form of the enigma, that is used to communicate secrets. It is taken from the famous historical text *The Mirror of the Royal Genealogies* by Södnam Gyaltzen (1312-1375) and tells how the Minister Gar Tongtsen,⁴⁹ forced to remain in China after having negotiated the marriage of the Chinese Princess Weng Chen Kong Jo to King Songtsen Gampo,⁵⁰ managed to convey a message to the Tibetan ministers using a 'secret language' (*log pa'i skad*):

The Minister regained his strength, and while he was getting ready to go to worship the deity an envoy of the Tibetan ministers arrived disguised as a beggar. Talking in a secret language the Minister told him:

“Pretend not to recognise the bearded goat that is far.
 Keep silent and shout.
 I have made the black arrive at the iron castle.
 In the valley where there is no exit either from above or below
 cut the hair off the little sticks and put them inside.
 Furl up the white silk and wave the black.
 The moon has reached where the sun is!”⁵¹

Then the beggar departed, and when he met the Tibetan ministers he reported his words but they could not understand their meaning. So the Chinese Princess Kong Jo, who had understood, said “It seems that the Minister has committed a grave crime in China. ‘Pretend not to recognise the bearded goat that is far’ means the beggar should not have spoken to him, as he had a long beard. ‘Keep silent and shout’ means that in that moment he should have remained silent, but that later he should speak to the Tibetan ministers. ‘I have made the black arrive at the iron castle’ means ‘I have burnt the seeds and have had them sown’. ‘In the valley where there is no exit either from above or from below cut the hair off the little sticks and put them inside’ means ‘Prepare many arrows in quivers’. ‘Furl up the white silk and wave the black’ means ‘Rest during the day and advance by night’. ‘The moon reaches where the sun is’ means ‘I will soon reach you!’”⁵²

There are many examples of this kind in Tibetan literature,⁵³ and they can all be considered as types of *deu*, which science, as we have been able to attest, was based on a remarkably developed use of the deductive and interpretative faculties of the human intellect.

Chapter III

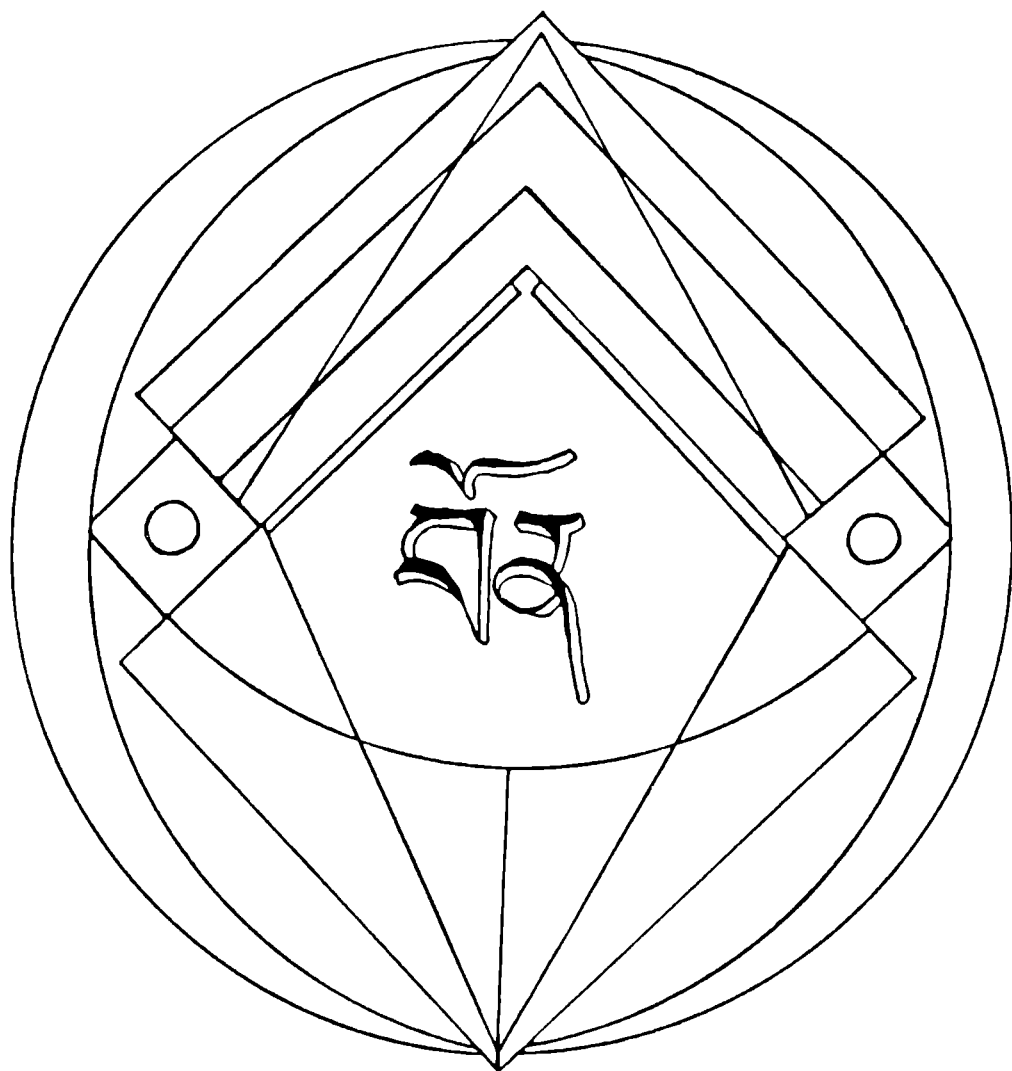
Bön: The Tradition of the Twelve Lores

i THE FOUR SERIES OF DIVINE BÖN

In the different periods of the history of Bön there have been different ways of classifying and designating its teachings. One of the most ancient designations appears to be that of the 'Four Series of Divine Bön' (*lha bon sgo bzhi*) which was very widespread in Tibet at the time of King Trigum Tsenpo. In fact in a Bön historical work describing how the Bön priests were banished into exile by the king, we read:¹

The Minister Sinam Taggu said: "If for the King's protection we keep one *shenpo* to worship the pure deities they will not inflict punishment. Only if we send the rest far away, however, will the power be in our hands. Let us meet in council!" Drusha Namse said "If we do not firmly keep the Four Series of Divine Bön, the Bön of Offerings (*bon gshos kyi lha bon sgo bzhi*) to protect the King, his life will be in danger. So let us meet again, because unless one Royal Priest (*sku gshen*) Master of the Four Series of Divine Bön remains, the Gödcham goddesses² will be angry!" Then the King, whose mind had been provoked by an evil spirit, sent messengers to summon all the *shenpos* of the four directions and told them "Listen, *kushen* Fathers (*pha ba*)! If you put on a hat that is too heavy, in the end you sweat. If you eat too much delicious food, in the end you feel sick. If a louse gets on your foot, in the end it will climb up to your head. You *shenpos* are getting too much power, and that is dangerous for the King's authority. So I ask Gyimbu Lentsa, Gekhöd Thiphen and Tsemi Lüd tong to remain as my Royal Priests of the Four Series of Divine Bön, but all the other *shenpos* must leave the four districts of Tibet (*bod ru bzhi*)!"^{2b} Gyimbu Lentsa (who had been asked by Gyungyar Khöd pung or Trenpa Namkha to leave) said "If in winter clouds are not lacking in the sky, in spring rain clouds form. If in winter there is water hidden under the earth, in summer heat and moisture rise. If you practise virtue in this life, its sign will manifest in the next. If the Four Series of Divine Bön are practiced, the temples (*gsas mkhar*)³ will survive. So I will not leave, I will remain. Divine Bön must not disappear," and did not agree to leave. So one and a half of the series of Bön⁴ were consigned to him, and taking with him the *Thimar*⁵ (text) to protect the King, he was confined in the palace as if in a prison.⁶

BON



ii THE FOUR SERIES OF BÖN AND THE FIFTH, THE TREASURY

Another designation found in the historical texts is the 'Four Series of Bön and the Fifth, the Treasury' (*bon sgo bzhi mdzod lnga*), as we can see in a passage from another Bön work,⁷ in which the protagonist is King Trisong Deutsen (742-797):⁸

While the King (Trisong Deutsen) was lying in the temple ambulatory he had a vision of a black woman with flowing iron-coloured hair and three eyes, gnashing her canines and wearing a mantle of peacock feathers. She told him "Deliver to me the basic texts and commentaries of my Four Series of Divine Bön and the Fifth, the Treasury! If you do not hand them over to me, and instead transform or destroy them, you will not have the time to propagate false teachings because I will end your life at sunset! And when you will be dead you will purify yourself in the hells!", and disappeared into nothingness. The King was frightened and started to worry.⁹

In the *Zermig*,¹⁰ the medium length biography of the Master Shenrab Miwoche, the names and contents of the Four Series of Bön: (1) *Pönse* (*dpon gsas*), the 'Masters';¹¹ (2) *Chabnag* (*chab nag*), the 'Black Waters'; (3) *Phenyul* (*'phan yul*);¹² (4) *Chabkar* (*chab dkar*), the 'White Waters'; and the Fifth Series, called the 'Treasury' (*mdzod*),¹³ are elucidated:

Even though Everlasting Bön (*g.yung drung bon*) is vast and manifold, it has been classified and committed to writing in the 'Four Series and the Fifth, the Treasury'. The Bön of the 'Essential Oral Instructions' (*man ngag lung gi bon*), called 'of the essential instructions' (*lung*) because it contains concise teachings, has been written in the *Pönse* series and enclosed in a golden volume. The Bön of the 'Original Lineage of Existence' (*srid pa rgyud kyi bon*), called 'of the lineage' (or 'of continuation': *rgyud*) because it contains detailed explanations and references, has been written in the *Chabnag* series and enclosed in an iron volume. The Bön of the 'Hundred Thousand Vast Teachings' (*rgyas pa 'bum gyi bon*), called 'of the hundred thousand' (*'bum*) because it contains extensive explanations and concise conclusions, has been written in the *Phenyul* series and enclosed in a copper volume. The Bön of the 'Black Mantra' (*nag po sngags kyi bon*), called 'of the *mantra*' in praise of its fundamental importance, has been written in the *Chabkar* series and enclosed in a silver volume. The Bön that treats of all four series and embraces them comprehensively is the 'Treasury of the All Embracing Pure Summit' (*gtsang mtho thog*

spyi rgyug mdzod kyi bon), called 'of the pure summit' (*gtsang mtho thog*) because it leads to a single view of the teaching. It was put in writing in the *Dzöd* (Treasury) series and enclosed in a turquoise volume. In this way the Master collected Bön into the 'Four Series and the Fifth, the Treasury'.¹⁵

iii THE NINE WAYS

In the *Zijid* we find a detailed explanation of a further classification of the Bön teachings, that of the 'Nine Ways' (*theg pa dgu*), four 'Bön of Cause' (*rgyu'i bon*) and five 'Bön of the Fruit' (*'bras bu'i bon*).¹⁶

The four 'Bön of Cause' are:

1. The 'Way of the Shen of the Cha' (*phywa gshen theg pa*), comprising methods of divination, astrological calculation, medicine and *To* rites.
2. The 'Way of the Shen of the Phenomenal Universe' (*snang gshen theg pa*), comprising rites for protection, exorcism, ransom and apotropaic rites in general.
3. The 'Way of the Shen of Magic Power' (*'phrul gshen theg pa*) comprising fierce rites of destruction and liberation (*bsgral*)¹⁷ of the consciousness-principle of wicked beings.
4. The 'Way of the Shen of Existence' (*srid gshen theg pa*), comprising different types of funerary rites.

The five 'Bön of the Fruit' are:

5. The 'Way of the Virtuous Ones' (*dge bsnyen theg pa*), comprising rules of conduct for lay persons.
6. The 'Way of the Ascetics' (*drang srong theg pa*), comprising rules of monastic discipline.
7. The 'Way of the White A' (*a dkar theg pa*), containing tantric teachings.
8. The 'Way of the Primordial Shen' (*ye gshen theg pa*), containing further tantric teachings.
9. The 'Supreme Way' (*yang rtse bla med theg pa*), comprising the Dzogchen teachings.¹⁸

iv REVEALED BÖN, DERIVED BÖN AND TRANSFORMED BÖN

Let us now analyse the classification of Bön found in texts of the Buddhist tradition. In the majority Bön is subdivided in three fundamental types corresponding to three historical periods: 'revealed' Bön (*rdol bon* or *'jol bon*), 'derived' Bön (*'khyar bon*) and 'transformed' Bön (*bsgyur bon*). Let us read the extensive explanation given by Kyoppa Jigten Gönpö:

There have been three traditions of Bön: first, Bön 'revealed' (*rdol bon*) by Shenrab Miwo; second, Bön 'derived' from the bad theories of the extremists; third, Bön 'transformed' by evil spirits who wanted to destroy the Buddhist teachings. Concerning the first, at the time of Tride Tsenpo, the sixth king of the dynasty founded by Nyatri Tsenpo, in a town called Nam Showon in the Ü region of central Tibet, a thirteen-year-old boy belonging to the Shen clan (*rus*: paternal lineage) was kidnapped by spirits and for thirteen years he was taken to all the regions of Tibet. When he was twenty-six he was brought back among men, and thanks to the power of non human beings he had obtained the capacity to discover which deity or spirit inhabited a place, which kinds of benefit or harm it could cause and how the rites to make offerings or to send ritual objects should be performed.

He married Tricham, the daughter of Kongje Karpo¹⁹ but she was taken away from him by a disciple. So on account of his carelessness the three 'karmic enemies' manifested. Through not having thoroughly examined his disciples one of these became the 'karmic enemy' who abducted his wife. Through not having thoroughly examined his wife she became the 'karmic enemy' who forsook him. Through not having thoroughly examined his friends, the Tsen Yawa Kyachig²⁰ became the 'karmic enemy' who suppressed old Bön, rent his drum and broke his cymbal. But Shenrab knew the life essence *mantra* of the pure Tsen (*gtsan btsan*), practiced it and manifested its powers.

This episode, the one concerning the construction of the Shampo Lhatse *senkhar*²¹ and other events are said to be recounted in detail in the texts on the practice of the pure Tsen. Subsequently when King Trigum Tsenpo was killed by the subject Lonam Tadzi²² Shenrab was invited to perform the funerary rite for the slain (*gri bshid*), but he is reported to have said, "Even though I practice many kinds of Bön, they can all be arranged in three fundamental types: the rites to suppress the Dre and the Si (spirits) below, those to worship the ancestral deities above, and those to guard the domestic hearth in the middle. I do not possess other Bön, and I do not know the funerary rites for the slain.' These Bön are also known as *Chabnag*, the 'black waters', or the 'Bön of Cause', and all pertain to 'revealed Bön'.

Concerning the second tradition, called 'derived' Bön because it is derived from the bad theories of the extremists,²³ the Bön texts say that in the beginning there was the emptiness of primordial non being, from which primordial existence barely emerged.

Then some yellowish rime formed, etc...and at the end existence arose from an egg, through the creative act of the gods Cha, Wangchuk (Īśvara=Śiva) etc.; all of this is derived from the very bad extremist theories of the Śaivists. In fact the erroneous philosophical theory of eternalism was the basis of four types of practice that were spread: the 'conquest of wild spirits' (*rgod 'dur*) and other kinds of funerary rites; handling scorching iron²⁴ and cutting iron with a bird feather; the *Lhaka* (oracular trance), *Juthig* (by means of knotted strings) and *Sogmar* (scapulamancy)²⁵ divinatory methods; and the sacrifice of horses and sheep. Thus, as Shenrab did not know how to perform the funerary rites for King Trigum Tsenpo, who had been murdered, three Bönpos, from Kashmir, Trusha (Gilgit), and Shang Shung were expressly invited. One of these three, as a result of the practices of Gekhöd, Khyung (the *garuḍa* eagle) and Melha (the fire deity),²⁶ displayed the powers of flying in the sky astride a drum, handling scorching iron, cutting iron with a feather etc. Another, through practicing the *Juthig*, *Lhaka* and *Sogmar* divinations, knew how to predict the future and distinguish good from bad. The third, finally, knew how to perform various types of funerary rites (*bshid*), such as those to liberate the dead from obstacles (*gshin po 'dur ba*), to appease the spirits of the slain (*gri 'dul ba*) etc. Before they came Bön did not have a philosophical theory, but from that time a view based on the cult of deities, on the suppression of the Si spirits etc. and on other aspects began to be elaborated. So, as a consequence of the negative *karma* accrued due to the cult of deities, spirits and demons and to wrong views, the followers of this Bön accumulated impure causes. All of this pertains to 'derived' Bön.

The third tradition, 'transformed' Bön, in its turn comprises three types, linked to as many transformations that took place in different historical periods. As regards the 'first transformation', it is said that, because he had been punished by King Indrabodhi for having committed lustful acts, *pandit* Shamnön Chen (Blue Apron) contrived to ruin the Buddhist teaching. With hostile intentions he mingled with the Buddhists and became the King's Officiant Lama, and then asserted that the monks would achieve final liberation if they were beheaded; then, having transformed several Buddhist works into Bön, he hid them near a reliquary belonging to the King.

(Concerning the 'second transformation',) once in the time of King Trisong Deutsen, Master Padmasambhava and other Bud-

dhists, translators, *paṇḍits* and ministers who were in favour of Buddhism such as Gögen etc., took their places in a row on the right; the shen Trenpa Namkha, Khyungpo Duntse and other Bönpos, together with the ministers in favour of Bön such as Nam Tagra Lugong etc., took their seats in a row on the left. The King, seated in the middle, ordered the two factions to compete in debate, and the Buddhists won. Then the King said "Now compete in miraculous powers!", and everybody gathered around the corpse of Nam Tagra Lugong, who had died, to perform the funerary rites. The *shen* Trenpa Namkha summoned the *la* (vital soul) of the deceased and brought the minister back to life, exclaiming "These are the powers the Bönpos have!" Consequently the King did not render particular homage to the Master (Padmasambhava), who asked him "Does the King really believe this?" The King answered "The Minister is before my eyes, and I believe it." With a gesture of his hands the Master stopped (the ghost) and ordered him to answer his questions, but as many times as he was asked his 'secret name'²⁷ (the ghost) did not know it, so he was driven out, chased by sparks in the form of *vajra*,²⁸ crying "I don't know!" The Bönpos were humiliated, and the Master had rendered Buddhism a great service. Finally the King declared (to the Bönpos), "They (the Buddhists) have won the debate, they have proved themselves superior in miraculous powers and also, as regards knowledge of the final state of enlightenment, it is they who possess it and not you! So now all of you must follow Buddhism" and, addressing Gyelwa Changchub, he added "You, go and listen to the *dharma* (Buddhist teaching) taught by *ācārya* Rinchen Chog!"²⁹

Instead of listening to Rinchen Chog's *dharma* Gyelwa Changchub said "I prefer to read books!", and refused to obey. The King punished him and had him tied up; Gyelwa got angry and joined the Bönpos, and transformed certain Buddhist works into Bön texts, substituting the words Shenrab Miwo for Sangye Chomdende (Bhagavan Buddha), *bön* for *chö* (*dharma*), *bönku* for *choku* (*dharmakāya*), Yumchenmo Satri Esang for Yumchenmo Sherabkyi Pharoltu Chinpa (*Mahāmātra Prajñāpāramitā*), Kuntu-zangpo for *longku* (*sambhogakāya*), Shenlha Ödkar for Nampar Nangdze (Vairocana), Sidpa Sangpo Bumtri for *trulku* (*nirmāṇakāya*), even Yeshen for Sangye (Buddha), *shense* for *drachompa* (*arhat*), Tonbu Bumse for Shariipu (Śāriputra), Yidkyi Khyeuchung for Mougalyipu (Maudgalyāyana), Rigpai Khyeuchung for Kungao (Ānanda), Teu Tong for Drachen Dzin (Rāhula), Selwa

Öden for Rabjor (Subhūti), *yungdrung sempa* for *changchub sempa* (*bodhisattva*), *charuchen gyed* for *sempa gyed* (*aṣṭa sattva*), Bön Gappa for Dzogpa Chenpo, Walgyi Phurnag for Dorje Phurba (Vajra Kīla), Tsugshen Gyelwa for *lobpön* Phagpa (*ācārya* Āryadeva), Walbön Taglha Menbar for *lobpön* Pema (*ācārya* Padma) etc., and transforming as many other terms as possible. When the King found out he ordered that whoever transformed the scriptures of the *tathāgata* (Buddha) into Bön texts be beheaded, and as many were punished in this way the Bönpos became afraid and hid the plagiarised works, including unfinished ones, in secret places. Subsequently these (works) were recognised as Bön *terma*.

The 'last transformation' took place in recent times, during the period when what remained of the Buddhist teachings was undergoing a revival in east Tibet.³⁰ In the Upper Nyang region in Tsang, after having spent a long time making friends with the custodian of the Tsang Chumig Ringmo temple a certain Shengur Luga³¹ gave him a large reward and transformed the place into a Bön centre. Here he transformed the long version (of the *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*) into (the Bön text) *Khamchen*, the version in twenty-five thousand verses into the *Khamchung*,³² the series of the *Tenla Phabpa* into the *Bön Dö*,³³ the *Five Series of Dhāraṇī* (*gZung chen sde lnga*) into the *Collections of White and Black Lu* (Lubum Karnag)³⁴ etc. After having transformed these texts he concealed them in the white rock of Tsona Dreuchung and subsequently extracted them himself, pretending he had discovered some *terma*. But in the end he died with many signs of ill omen and his body was torn to pieces. Subsequently, and until today, Bönpos such as Khyungpo Bönshig³⁵ etc. have continued their work of transformation. These (three traditions) are 'transformed' Bön, also known as *Chabkar*, the 'white waters' or the 'Bön of the Fruit'.³⁶

Thus, according to what we have just read, 'revealed' Bön should be set in the time of Tride Tsenpo, the sixth king of the Tibetan dynasty; 'derived' Bön supposedly originated from the Indian Śaivist tradition and was introduced into Tibet on the death of King Trigum Tsenpo; and 'transformed' Bön, finally, purportedly arose in three successive phases, respectively through the activities of a *paṇḍit* named Shanmon Chen in the first phase, of a certain Gyelwa Changchub during the reign of Trisong Deutsen in the second phase, and of Shenchen Luga (996-1035) and Bönshig Khyungnag (1103-1183) in the third phase.

This analysis of the Bön tradition is reiterated in its entirety in the *Mirror of Philosophical Systems* by Thuken Lobzang Chökyi Nyima (1737-

1802),³⁷ bar the abbreviation of certain passages and the use of the term *Jol Bön* (*'jol bon*)^{37b} in place of *rdol bon*. Moreover, he comments that "even if the historical texts state only that for twenty-six generations of kings, from Nyatri Tsenpo to Tri Thogje Thogtsen, political power was protected by Bön, it is very likely that the first kind of Bön originated in this way," that is, at the time of the sixth king of the dynasty, and he explains that, since this original Bön did not have any philosophical theory "some royal chronicles and histories of religion state that Bön was spread starting from the time of Trigum Tsenpo."³⁸

Concerning the origin of the first type of Bön, 'revealed' Bön, Pawo Tsuglag Trengwa too has given a similar version, albeit adorning the boy with a fine pair of ass's ears and reducing by one year his age and the number of years spent with the spirits. In fact he says:

At Ön in Ü region, in the 'Place of the Shen' Bönmo Lungring, there was a boy of the Shen clan who had ass's ears. When he was twelve years old he was kidnapped by spirits, and for twelve years he did not meet any human beings. When after twelve years he returned, he had acquired the capacity to discover which spirit resided in a place and which offerings had to be made to it. To hide his ass's ears he wore a woollen turban. Thus 'revealed' Bön (*rdol bon*), the cult of spirits, was spread.³⁹

We can therefore conclude that very probably the story of the boy kidnapped by spirits was taken from a traditional Tibetan tale, and that Kyoppa Jigten Gönpo did no more than put into writing the gossip of certain factious Buddhists who nurtured a strong aversion for Bön. Sumpa Khenpo Yeshe Paljor (1704-1788) also gives a similar explanation stating, regarding 'revealed' Bön, that:

At the time of the first Tibetan king, who had Yumbu Lagang palace⁴⁰ as his seat, the Bön of Sumpa came. His descendants were his son Mutri Tsenpo, then Dingtri, Sotri, Mertri and Sibtri Tsenpo. At the time of the last of the 'Seven Tri of the Sky' (*gnam gyi khri bdun*: the first seven Tibetan kings) *Jol Bön* was spread.

And regarding 'derived' Bön:

At the time of Trigum Tsenpo, son of Sibtri, the Bön of the Dur rites (*'dur bon*) came from Shang Shung and Trusha. At the time of Chatri, or Pude Kungyel, one of Trigum's three sons, the *drung* and the *deu* were spread, and the great *shens* of the 'Bön of the Sky'⁴¹ came.

The last phrase in particular can easily be referred to Pawo Tsuglag Trengwa's well known statement "The great *shens* of the Bön of the Sky and the Bön texts arrived".⁴²

However a disparaging attitude towards another religious tradition, exemplified in the Buddhist texts by the story of the boy kidnapped by spirits and by the accusations against the Bönpos of plagiarism, can also be found in certain Bön texts. For example let us read from the *History of Bön* by Khyungpo Lodro Gyaltzen (14th century):⁴³

At that time in central Tibet there were diseases and famine, frost and hail, and because no remedy had been found to improve the situation the expert diviner Penegu was asked to give a response. He announced "There is a fatherless boy in this country, he is the cause of all the calamities!" "Who is he?" the questioners enquired further. "You will be able to recognise him by these clues: he is fifteen years old with ruddy complexion, arched eyebrows and a fine set of white teeth," answered the diviner. "In what way can the situation be remedied?" they persisted, and Penegu said "It would be of benefit if twelve Bönpos belonging to twelve different families perform the 'Great Sky Exorcism' (*gnam sel chen po*) rite and then make the boy mount on a reddish bull and exile him to a land with a different language."

So they carried out everything that had been indicated, and after having eluded the dangers of bridges, of impracticable passes and wild beasts the boy reached Kashmir, where he met the Master Padmasambhava who was staying there. He studied Buddhism under the master, became very intelligent and was given the name 'Bodhisattva'.⁴⁴ Then, as he bore a grudge against the Bönpo diviner in Tibet who had had him exiled, he wrote the King (of Tibet) a defamatory letter. "Bön is very difficult to learn, but a real teaching does exist, the sacred *dharma*, so I ask you to abolish Bön and to adopt Buddhism." The King thought "If I were to abolish Bön, would it not be like the sun and moon disappearing?", and for a while he paid no heed (to the calumny). But influential ministers in favour of Buddhism like Yudra (Nyingpo) told the King "Your Majesty, to drink chang,⁴⁵ first you must brew it in water. To eat meat, first you must kill an animal. To surpass your ancestors, first you must abolish Bön and adopt the Buddhist teaching, and the *dharma* must be introduced from India by inviting a master. If you succeed in doing this, the sign of your superiority over your ancestors will manifest more

clearly than the light of the sun and moon and you will be 'like a mule sired by an ass, like a *dzo*⁴⁶ sired by a bull'.⁴⁷

The Bönpos, too, have accused the Buddhists of plagiarism, and in some texts we find passages like "Bön scriptures were transformed by force into Buddhist works. Many Bön texts of the Mind Series (*sems phyogs*) have become teachings of the Mind Series of Buddhism,⁴⁸ the Bön *g.Yung drung khams brgyad* has become the Buddhist *Tongtrag Gyapa* (*Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* in one hundred thousand verses)⁴⁹ and "The Bön *Yungdrung Yekhyab* (*g.Yung drung ye khyab*) has been transformed into the Buddhist *Marvellous Dharma* (*Adbhuta Dharma*), the Bön *Dragpa Thugkyi Peutse* (*sGrags pa thugs kyi pe'u tse*) has become the Buddhist *Abhidharma-kośa* (by Vasubandhu)."⁵¹

The aftermath of this is that, if we adopt the Buddhists' point of view it seems the Bönpos have plagiarised Buddhism, but from the point of view of the Bönpos the exact opposite seems true. Thus we can understand how generation after generation it has been possible for all kinds of rumours to spread. But it would be absolutely pointless to attempt to prove the veracity of any of these accusations, as we would thereby only intensify the conflicts and controversies and reveal ourselves narrow-minded from both a secular and a religious point of view, and ignorant of the true meaning of history. In any case, it appears the terms 'revealed Bön', 'derived Bön' and 'transformed Bön' were all coined by Buddhists according to their way of judging and classifying Bön, because it transpires these names have never been used in this tradition in any of the phases of its history; nor do they correspond to the contents of its teachings. Therefore in this work I will not use this classification as the basis of my treatment of 'Bön' belonging to the triad '*drung, deu* and Bön'.

v THE FOUR BÖN OF CAUSE

Let us now turn to the classification of the four 'Bön of Cause'. From the *Mirror of the Royal Genealogies*:

At the time of this king and this minister (Pude Kungyel and Rulekye) Everlasting Bön (*g.yung drung bon*) arrived. The founder, Shenrab Miwo, was born at Olmo Lungring in Tagzig⁵² and all the teachings of the Bönpos, such as the *Kham chenpo gyed* (*Khams chen po brgyad*), were introduced and widely propagated after having been translated from (the language of) Shang Shung. Bön is divided in nine series, four Bön 'of cause' and five Bön 'of the fruit'. Regarding Bön of the fruit it is said that, once one has entered the Supreme Everlasting (*g.yung drung*) Way one attains

rebirth in the higher states where one enjoys happiness. The four Bön of cause are:

1. The Shen of the Phenomenal Universe, that has a woollen turban (*snang gshen bal thod can*).
2. The Shen of Magic Power, that has coloured wool (*'phrul gshen tshon can*).
3. The Shen of the *Cha*, that has the *Juthig* (*phywa gshen ju thig can*).
4. The Shen of the *Dur* (funerary rites), that has weapons (*dur gshen mtshon cha can*).⁵³

The Shen of the Phenomenal Universe that 'has a woollen turban' summons the *cha* (positive force) and prosperity (*g.yang*), worships the male and female deities, and by developing fortune and well being multiplies men's wealth.

The Shen of Magic Power that 'has coloured wool' sends the *Dö* and *Ye* ritual ransoms, makes the continuity of the generations stable and fixes the protection support, and eliminates all unfavourable conditions, transient and lasting.

The Shen of the *Cha* that 'has the *Juthig*' predicts the positive and the negative, resolves all doubts, and gives responses on the basis of 'relative' clairvoyance (*zag bcas*).⁵⁴

The Shen of the *Dur* that 'has weapons' eliminates hindrances (*bgegs*) to the living, performs funerary rites (*dur*) for the dead, subdues the *Si* that torment children (*chung sri*), scrutinises the constellations in the sky, and subjugates the evil spirits (*'dre*) of the earth.

All played the *shang*⁵⁵ and the drum and the politics (of the kingdom) was based on the *drung* and the *deu*.⁵⁶

We find this explanation of the four Bön of cause repeated by Pawo Tsuglag Trengwa, who adds that "all play the drum and the *shang* and are said to have many miraculous 'relative' powers such as making clay deer fly and flying in the sky astride a drum."⁵⁷

vi THE FOUR BÖN OF THE SHEN OF THE PHENOMENAL UNIVERSE

As we can observe, this classification of the Bön of cause concurs with that found in the *Zijid*, and the only doubt that could arise concerns another classification found in the same text of Bön in 'four series' (*sgo bzhi*) within the single 'Shen of the Phenomenal Universe'. In fact it says:

The Bön of the 'Way of the Shen of the Phenomenal Universe' is generally subdivided in four (series): the River of Black Waters, the series of exorcism (rites) (*chab nag chu bo sel gyi sgo*); The White Waters, the series (of rites) for the Dre and Si (spirits) (*chab dkar 'dre dang sri yi sgo*); Phenyul,⁵⁸ the series of ransom (rites) through equal exchange (*'phan yul mnyam brje glud kyi sgo*); the Pönse with the powerful Cha, the series of *To* rites (*dpon gsas phywa gnyan gto yi sgo*).⁵⁹ Combining the method of communication of the 'nine melodies' (*gcong dgu*)⁶⁰ with each of the four series of Bön, and practicing adherence to the rules and the tradition, through the Bön of the Shen of the Phenomenal Universe, where 'phenomenal universe' (*snang*) signifies all the perceptible universe and 'shen' the person who dominates it, one guides all beings.⁶¹

These four ritual traditions are in their turn subdivided in the following way:

1. The River of Black Waters, the Series of Exorcism Rites, comprises:
 - a. The Great Proclamation of the Origin of Existence, the exorcism rites (*srid pa smrang chen sel gyi gzhung*).⁶²
 - b. The Rites of the Powerful Thugkar Deities (*thug kar gnyan po lha yi gzhung*).⁶³
 - c. The Rites of the Heroic Drala and Werma Hordes (*sgra bla wer ma dpa' khrom gyi gzhung*).
 - d. The Rites of the Human Generations of the Origin of Existence (*srid pa mi'u brgyud kyi gzhung*).
2. The White Waters, the Series of Rites for the Dre and the Si, comprises:
 - a. The Rites to Remove the Nine Dre and Suppress the Ten Si (*'dre dgu skyas kyis 'debs shing sri bcu thur du gnon pa'i gzhung*).
3. Phenyul, the Series of Ransom Rites through Equal Exchange, comprises:
 - a. Ransoms for Men (*pho glud*).
 - b. Ransoms for Women (*mo glud*).
 - c. Ransoms for Children (*chung glud*).
4. The Pönse with the Powerful Cha, the Series of *To* Rites, comprises:
 - a. The Rites of Offerings to the Deities of the Pure Dimensions (*dbyings kyi lha tshogs mchod pa*).
 - b. The Rites of Expiation⁶⁴ of the Walmo of the Sky (*mkha' yi dbal mo bskang ba*).

- c. The Rites to Consolidate the Support of the Oath-bound Protectors of Space (*klong gi dam can brten pa*).
- d. The Rites of Reconciliation with the Sadag, Lu and Nyen (*sa bdag klu gnyan bcos pa*).⁶⁶

The above-mentioned 'nine melodies' (*gcong dgu*), nine kinds of sound modulations used for chants during the rites which imitate the voice or song of nine animals and which enable the officiant to communicate directly with the diverse classes of non human beings, are:

1. The Melody of the Roar of the Turquoise Dragon, to invite the hordes of deities.
2. The Chirping Melody of the Female Eagle (*khyung mo*) or of the Kite (*ne le*), to exhort to action (*bdar ba*) the wrathful deities.
3. The Melody of the Duck that has Lost its Ducklings, to invoke men's *cha* (positive force).
4. The Melody of the Peacock Beating its Feathers, to summon the *cha* and prosperity of livestock.
5. The Sweet Melody of the Cuckoo, to gladden deities and demons.
6. The Warbling Melody of the Lark, to dispatch ransoms and ritual objects.
7. The Shrieking Melody of the Parrot, to communicate with deities and demons.
8. The Screeching Melody of the Hungry Crow, to warn that the presence of Si has been noticed.
9. The Droning Melody of the Hornet (*stag sbrang*), to keep provocations by the Si under control.⁶⁷

I have paused to examine the four ritual series of the 'Shen of the Phenomenal Universe' because their names concur with those used to designate the 'Four Series of Bön' in the *Zermig*, as we have seen. But if we were to assume that these four traditions encompass the contents of the "Four Series of Divine Bön' mentioned in the ancient texts, the problem would arise of the exclusion of all the other types of Bön belonging to the Shen of the Cha, the Shen of Magic Power and the Shen of Existence, the other three 'ways of cause'. Therefore it is most likely that the four ancient traditions of 'divine Bön' correspond with those series of Bön subsequently known as the 'Four Ways of Cause'.

vii THE BÖN OF THE TWELVE LORES

The most ancient classification of the different kinds of Bön practiced, however, in Tibet, turns out to be that of the 'twelve lores' or 'sciences' (*shes pa bcu gnyis*), as we can read in various historical texts. The *History*

of Bön states, "It is said that during the reign of each of the kings who held power, there was a shen 'bodyguard' (*sku srung*), a bön counsellor, a translator who was an expert in the scriptures, and a bön for the king's personal practice. In Nyatri Tsenpo's time the 'twelve lores' of the Bön of cause were spread," followed by a list of their names.⁶⁸

In the *Chamma* (*Byams ma*) too, a Bön *terma* rediscovered in the tenth century⁶⁹ and quoted from by both Patsün Tengyel Zangpo (14th century)⁷⁰ and Shardza Trashi Gyaltzen (1859-1935),⁷¹ we read that "In King Nyatri Tsenpo's time there were the 'twelve sages' (*shes pa can bcu gnyis*) of the Bön of cause," followed by a list of their names.⁷² At times the names of the 'twelve lores' do not correspond, but collating the various texts I have established their order to be the following:

1. The 'Bön of the Deities, Lore of Protection' or 'Bön of the Deities Who Knows How to Protect' (*mgon shes lha bon*).
2. The 'Bön of the Cha, Lore of Prosperity' or 'Bön of the Cha Who Knows (How to Perform the Rites for) Prosperity' (*g.yang shes phywa bon*).⁷³
3. The '(Ransom) Rites, Lore of Destination' or 'He Who Sends Ransoms, Who Knows How to Address Them' (*'gro shes glud gtong*).
4. The 'Shen of Existence, Lore of the Funerary Rites' or 'Shen of Existence Who Knows How to Perform the Funerary Rites' (*'dur shes srid gshen*).
5. The 'Exorcism (Rites), Lore of Purification' or 'He Who Exorcises, Who Knows How to Purify' (*gtsang shes sel 'debs*).
6. The 'Lore that Releases from Curses' or 'He Who Knows How to Release from Curses' (*'grol shes gtad byad*).⁷⁴
7. The 'Therapeutic Methods, Lore of Healing' or 'He Who Uses the Therapeutic Methods, Who Knows How to Heal' (*phan shes sman dpyad*).
8. 'Astrology, the Lore that Controls the Order (of Existence)' or 'The Astrologer, He Who Knows How to Control the Order (of Existence)' (*skos shes rtsis mkhan*).⁷⁵
9. The '*To* (Rites), Lore of the Proclamation (of the Origin)' or 'He Who Performs the *To* (Rites), Who Knows How to Proclaim (the Origin)' (*smrang shes gto dgu*).⁷⁶
10. The '(Rites of the) Deer, Lore of Flight' or He Who Performs the (Rites of the) Deer, Who Knows How to Fly' (*lding shes sha ba*).
11. The '*Juthig*, Lore of Divination' or 'He Who Practices the *Juthig*, Who Knows How to Divine' (*'phur shes ju thig*).⁷⁷

12. The 'Bön of Magic Power, Lore of Ritual Destruction' or 'Bön of Magic Power, Who Knows How to Perform the Rites of Destruction' (*sgrol shes 'phrul bon*).⁷⁸

In Shardza Trashi Gyaltzen's text there is a brief commentary on these traditions:

Worshipping the deities above, they afforded protection. Summoning prosperity, they increased wealth and livestock. Sending ransoms, they appeased the spirits. Performing the rites for the dead, they brought them happiness. Separating the pure from the impure, they satisfied the protective deities. Destroying the enemies that cause hindrances, they eliminated disturbances. Healing illnesses, they eliminated interruptions to life. Performing astrological calculations, they interpreted the signs regarding the past and the future. Addressing the clay ransom effigies, they knew how to deal with spirits. Sending the deer effigies made of dough, they knew how to fly in the land of the Tsen. Invoking the divination deities, they obtained clairvoyance of the positive and negative aspects. Offering diverse kinds of aromatic plants, they made them reach the abodes of the deities and spirits and assuaged the disturbances caused by them.⁷⁹

There is no doubt these 'twelve lores' represent the most ancient of the diverse Bön traditions that existed in Tibet, for which reason I will discuss their contents, devoting a separate chapter to each of them.

Chapter IV

The Bön of the Deities: The Protection Rites

i THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DEITIES OF PROTECTION

The 'Bön of the Deities, Lore of Protection' consists mainly of two ancient ritual traditions of the 'Shen of the Phenomenal Universe': the 'Powerful Thugkar Deities' (*thug kar gnyan po lha'i gzhung*) and the 'Heroic Drala and Werma Hordes' (*sgra bla wer ma dpa' khrom gyi gzhung*), both belonging to the 'River of Black Waters, the series of exorcism'. Bön masters and practitioners consider these deities extremely important, because they are the special protectors who always accompany and protect them. From the *General Dö of Existence*,¹ an ancient ritual text that discloses the most authentic principles of Bön:

Who is important to the masters (*dpon gsas*)?

To the masters the Thödkar (*thod dkar*=*thug kar*) are important.

The Thödkar gather like clouds,

those they attend are the practitioners (*gsas*),²

those they protect are the practitioners.

We proffer the well-prepared offerings

and confess errors if we have mingled with evil!

Who is important to the masters?

To the masters the Werma are important.

The Werma whirl like snow-storms,

those they escort are the practitioners,

those they assist are the practitioners,

those they protect are the practitioners.

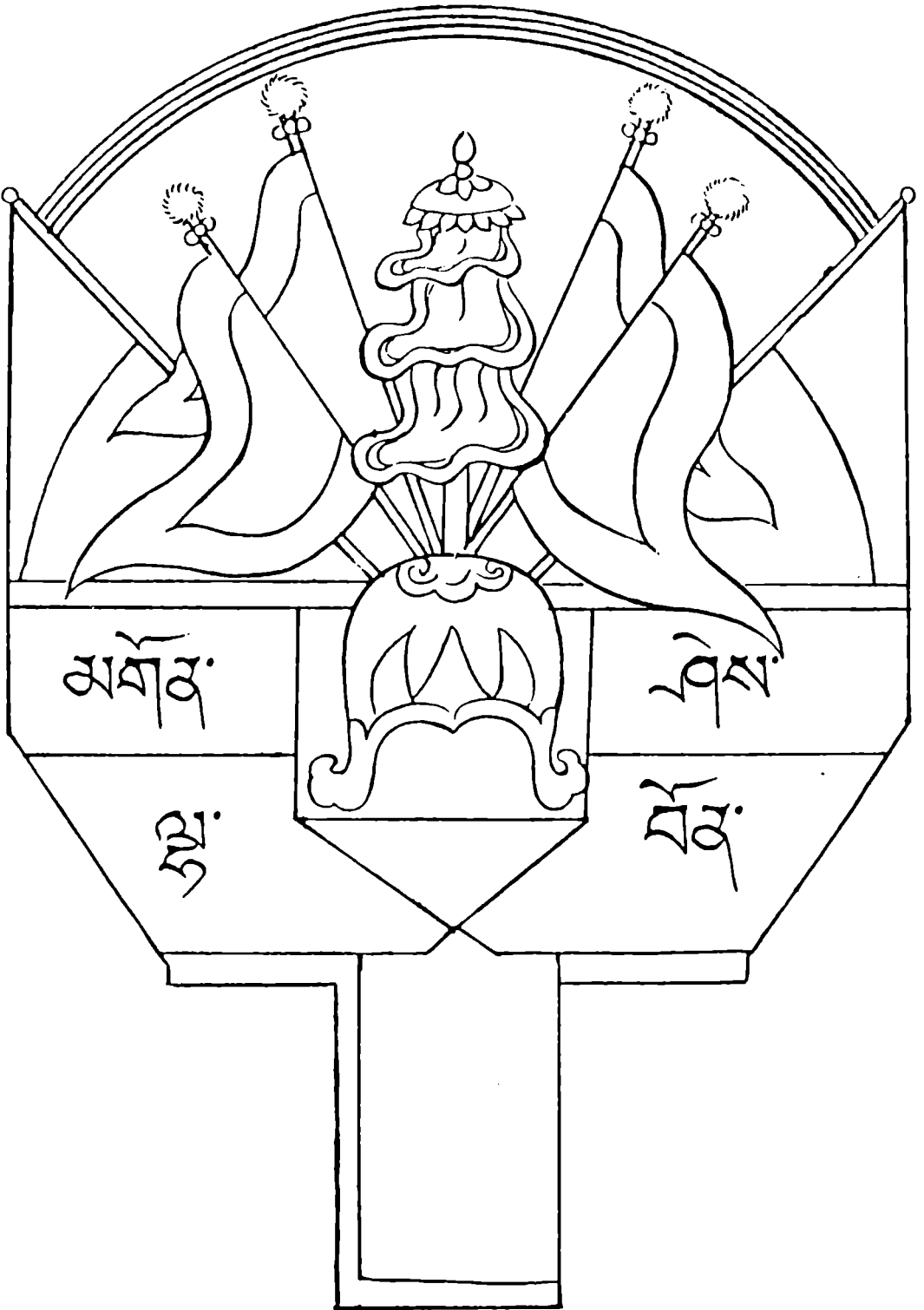
We proffer the well-prepared offerings

and confess errors if we have mingled with evil!³

ii THE POWERFUL THUGKAR DEITIES

The ritual cycle of the Thugkar deities includes three different traditions or systems of practice, the 'white' tradition of the Lha⁴ of Primordial Existence (*ye srid lha gzhung dkar po*) numbering three hundred and sixty deities; the 'many coloured' tradition of the Nyen⁵ with Primordial Power (*ye dbang gnyan gzhung khra bo*) with two hundred and fifty deities; the 'black' tradition of the Armies of the Primordial Conquerors (*ye 'dul dmag gzhung nag po*) with one hundred and eight deities. These three classes seem to tally with those mentioned in a *Sang* rite ascribed to Padma-sambhava:⁶

THE BÖN OF THE DEITIES: THE PROTECTION RITES



May the three hundred and sixty Thugkar be purified!

May the two hundred and fifty Barma⁷ be purified!

May the one hundred and eight Werma be purified!⁸

According to the explanations in the *Zijid*,⁹ including the dependent deities there are ninety thousand Thugkar living in ninety thousand citadels that are like enormous palaces or fortresses made of jewels and precious materials miraculously emanated in immense celestial space, situated at the boundary between primordality and existence defended by divine armies numbering nine hundred and ninety thousand soldiers. Those who unceasingly worship and pay homage to the 'Nine Thugkar Sons and the Father, Making Ten' and to the 'Seven Celestial Sisters (*dgung sman mched bdun*) and the Mother, Making Eight' and to the divine armies surrounding them receive their assistance in every moment. In particular their help is considered urgently necessary in eight important circumstances: when reciting the ritual formulae for the prosperity of the generations (*yag kha*: especially during birth ceremonies); when brave commanders depart to fight decisive battles; when making offerings at small tabernacles (*bya rdang*) before competing in horse races at the gallop;¹⁰ when one wants the divine army to vanquish enemies and rase their fortresses to the ground; when kings accede to the throne and assume the rule of the kingdom; when queens wish to conceive children to ensure the royal descent; when important ministers start to run the politics of the kingdom; when one wants horses and cattle to multiply.¹¹

The rites of the Thugkar deities must be performed adhering strictly to the tradition and the instructions contained in the texts. It is very important not to get distracted or to perform the various phases in a haphazard way, such as offering whatever object is at hand, reciting imprecise formulae, or chanting melodies according to vague memory. Moreover, as all the 'worldly' deities prize cleanliness and abhor dirtiness it is generally inadvisable to mix clean objects with dirty things and, notably as regards the Thugkar spotless cleanliness is recommended.

Broadly speaking their rites are performed in the following way: in a clean secluded place on an altar, one prepares the *mandala*¹² offerings arranged so that in the centre there are clean pyramid shaped *shöbu* (ritual cakes of *torma* type made of flour and butter),¹³ chalices of first pourings (*phud*)¹⁴ of *chang* and tea and the specific 'vow symbol' objects (*dam tshig gi rdzas*);¹⁵ around the border there are all the ritual offering objects, like the arrow with multicoloured ribbons,¹⁶ the mirror (*me long*), the hanging banner ('*phan*), the parasol (*gdugs*), the canopy (*bla bre*) etc. Then the deities are invoked with the sound of the drum, the *shang*, the conch shell and the flute (*gling*),¹⁷ and after having chanted the thanksgiving verses

(*gtang rag*) one recites their essential *mantra* several times. Then one exalts them and requests that of the 'four actions'¹⁸ one specifically wants. It is considered that then, thanks to the intervention of the Thugkar it is possible to obtain what is lacking and fill what is empty, restore what is destroyed and raise what is in decline, make the poor rich and the weak brave and guarantee an ample progeny to those who are childless.¹⁹ Furthermore, it is in their power to extend a nation's sphere of dominion, assuage epidemics and war, develop fortune and prosperity, and steer the world onto the path of virtue.

iii THE HEROIC DRALA AND WERMA HORDES

The ritual tradition of the 'Heroic Drala and Werma Hordes' comprises four systems of practice, connected with four different classes of divine manifestations: Drala, Werma, Changseng (*cang seng*), and Shungön (*shugs mgon*).²⁰

The Drala are in their turn grouped in three classes: the Drala 'Manifestation of Primordial Existence' (*ye srid 'phrul gyi sgra bla*), Drala 'Lords of the Primordial Aspiration' (*ye rje smon pa'i sgra bla*) and Drala 'of Primordial Power' (*ye dbang mthu'i sgra bla*). The forefather of the first group is said to be Drala Khyungchen Ralchen (Great Long Maned Khyung),²¹ from whom there manifested the armies of the Drala 'of Primordial Knowledge' (*ye mkhyen sgra bla*): from the precious jewel on the crown of the Khyung's head were born the Drala 'Powerful Wish-Granting Deities' (*gid bzhin lha dbang*), from the two horns the Drala 'Young Deities' (*lha gsas dar ma*), from the two ears the Drala 'Vigorous Dragons' (*ngar chen g.yu 'brug*), from the two eyes the Drala 'that Illuminate Existence' (*yod khams kun gsal*), from the gaping beak the Drala 'Black Carnivorous Khyung' (*khyung nag sha zan*), from the three hundred and sixty great feathers – three hundred and sixty Drala, from the claws rooted in the ground the Drala 'Great Khyung that Subdues the Lu' (*klu 'dul khyung chen*).²² As all these Drala have existed since the time when existence was formed they are called the Drala 'Manifestation of Primordial Existence'.

This is the mythical origin of the Drala 'Lords of the Primordial Aspiration': in ancient times, at the dawn of existence when mankind was about to be born, from a golden mountain with a turquoise valley on the right, from a conch-white mountain with a chalcedony (grey-blue) valley on the left, and from a lake of light near a rock crystal, respectively, the three Drala 'Lions of Aspiration' (*smom pa'i seng sum*)²³ were born. The human races descended from them, and for each clan a Drala manifested, for each Drala a divine army, for each divine army a defender, and for

each defender a guardian. All these are called the Drala 'Lords of the Primordial Aspiration'.

The Drala 'of Primordial Power' are the 'Nine Drama Brothers' (*drwa ma mched dgu*),²⁴ deities of the original lineages of existence that the *shen* Yeshen Wangdzog²⁵ worshipped with offerings and exhorted to action. The rites devoted to them are comprised in four systems of practice called the 'Four Traditions of the Drama Endowed with Primordial Power' (*ye dbang mthu' rdzogs drwa ma gzhung bzhi*): the 'Natural Miraculous Manifestation' (*rang bzhin sprul pa 'phrul*), the 'Precious Self-Created Fortress' (*rang grub rin chen mkhar*), the 'Precious Seats of the Mewa' (*rin chen sme ba gling*) and the 'Sole Self-Originated Drama' (*rang byung drwa ma nyag gcig*).²⁶

The origin of the powerful Werma, another important class of divine manifestations, is narrated in the following myth. In ancient times, by the miraculous action of the Lha, Se and Wal (three types of deities) in the empty space of the sky an egg made of the five precious substances^{26b} appeared. The egg hatched by its own energy, and from the shell protective armour formed, from the membrane a weapon for defence, from the albumen a magic potion bestowing heroism, from the yolk (*sgong pri*) a castle in which to reside, a dark castle called 'Cast-Iron Fortress of the Mu' (*khro chu dmu rdzong*) which in order to have light stole it from the sun.

From the inner essence of the egg a miraculous man was born with a lion's head and lynx's ears, a fierce face with an elephant's trunk, the mouth of a *chusin*,²⁷ and tiger's fangs. His feet were swords and his wings sabres, and between the flaming horns (*rwa dbal*)²⁸ on the great Khyung's head he had the diadem of the wish-fulfilling jewel as an ornament. He was called 'heroic' (*dpa' chen*) Werma Nyinya and was the fount of four distinct ritual traditions. In fact from the union of the Werma with the Lha were born the 'Werma of the Lha that Subjugate the Düd'²⁹ (*lha'i wer ma bdud 'dul*), from union with the Nyen the 'Werma of the Nyen that Subjugate Enemies' (*gnyan gyi wer ma dgra 'dul*), from union with the Khyung the 'Werma of the Khyung that Subjugate the Lu' (*khyung gi wer ma klu 'dul*), from union with the divine 'Lions' (*seng*) the 'Three Werma Brothers that Subjugate Heroes' (*dpa' 'dul wer ma mched gsum*). From these four divine manifestations, which in their turn emanated armed hordes of nine hundred and ninety thousand valorous Werma, originated the four systems of ritual practice devoted to the class of the Werma that, as is written in the *Zijid*, "all arose from the Lha, descended from the Se and are similar to the Wal...and appeared in order to subjugate all hostile entities causing obstacles and disturbances."³⁰

iv THE CHANGSENG AND THE SHUNGÖN

Four systems of ritual practices are devoted to the class of the Chang-seng 'Brothers and Sisters' (*cang seng lcam dral*) named after four types of protective deities: the 'Six Heroic Brothers Skilful in Journeys' (*byes thub dpa' bo spun drug*), who, for example, protect commanders when they go to war and traders when they undertake long journeys; the 'Six Multi-Coloured Fortresses that Protect the Home' (*gzhis srung khra mo rdzong drug*) that mainly protect women and other members of the family who remain at home; the 'Thirteen Chanseng Experts in Covering Long Distances' (*cang seng mgron yag bcu gsum*) and the 'Eight Powerful Brothers Deities of the Road' (*lam lha gnyan po mched brgyad*), another two classes of deities that protect travellers.³¹

Finally the ritual tradition of the Shungön is devoted to the 'Thirteen Shungön Guardians' (*shugs mgon rdzi'i bcu gsum*). One hundred and eight Shungön manifested from these original powerful Shungön, and on the basis of the archetypal pattern of existence, for each race there was a Shungön; for each Shungön a system of 'ritual proclamation' (*smrang*) and an origin myth (*cho rabs*).

In conclusion, by worshipping the Drala, Werma, Changseng and Shungön and honouring them with the 'first offerings' (*phud*) of the three 'white substances' (*dkar gsum*: milk, yoghurt and butter), the symbolic substitutes for the three 'red substances' (*dmaz gsum*: flesh, blood and bones) and with nectareous medicines, the practitioners of the 'Shen of the Phenomenal Universe' allay the disharmonies of the universe and protect the Bön teaching, subdue hostile beings and negative energies, restoring happiness in the world: all of this is clearly explained in the texts of this ancient ritual tradition.

v THE DRALA SEU RUCHIG AND THE MANIFESTATIONS OF THE WERMA

Interesting, clear descriptions of the Drala and Werma can be found in two passages drawn from the monumental work on the *Juthig* divination by Ju Mipham Jamyang Namgyal (1846-1912).³² The first passage describes the 'unicorn' Drala Seu Ruchig (*bse'u ru gcig*), one of the most important manifestations among Drala and Werma:³³

Among the armies of the Werma of Magic Power
many are expert in travel but few are skilful in combat.
Deft in fighting is Seu Unicorn.
Seu has red skin
made of scales like the rhinoceros:
this is a sign that his father is 'Golden Frog' (*gser sbal*).

Like the rhinoceros his body is crenellated
and he irradiates rays of light from his horn:
this is a sign that his mother is a 'Lake Goddess' (*mtsho sman*).³⁴

The powerful Seu Unicorn
received power as a gift from the King of the Lu,
and from the King of the Sadag³⁵ he received magic powers.
The upper part of his body is formed by three superimposed
Khyung.

As a sign that he is a Khyung he has bird feathers,
as a sign that he is a frog he has little watery wrinkles spread
over all his body,

as a sign that he is a cow he has four limbs and a head making
five,

and an old tail, six.

Cow, frog and Khyung, three,

Lha, Lu and snake, six,

light and darkness, eight,

and his origination from his 'aspiration vow',³⁷ nine:

in this way the powerful Seu is complete.

As a sign of being a king he wears a turban,

as a sign of being a queen he has ornaments on his chest,

as a sign of being a prince he has a gold belt.

He lives on the peak of the 'Supreme Mountain' (Meru),³⁷

rocky mountains are his subjects surrounding him.

He flows in the central course of the river,

tributaries are his subjects surrounding him.

When he rises he climbs the staircase of virtue,

when he sits he rests on the great flames of existence

and subdues even the torturers in the hells.

For food he eats human flesh and horse meat,

for beverage he drinks human blood and horse's blood.

When Seu goes to the land of the dead

all the Shinje³⁸ call him

'Seu Shinje Chögyel' (Seu Lord of Death, King of Existence):

in his hands he holds a black tramshing³⁹

and becomes Commander of all the armies of the Shinje.

When he goes to the land of the deities

all the Lha call him

'Chökyong Mahākāla'⁴⁰ (Great Black Protector of Existence):

in his hands he holds a sandalwood stick (*bing chen*)

and becomes Commander of all the Lha.

When he goes to the land of the Lhamin (demi gods)⁴¹

all the Lhamin, call him

'Seu Lhawang Dangsang' (Seu Pure Divine Power):

in his hands he holds a multi-coloured gold lance

and becomes Commander of all the Lhamin.

When Seu goes to the land of the Nyen

all the Nyen call him

'Seu Nyengen Deva' (Seu Old Nyen Deva):

in his hands he holds a dragon-headed staff

and becomes Commander of all the Nyen.

When he becomes Commander of the Lu

he is called 'Tsugna Rinchen' (Jewel on the Crown of the Head)

and in his hands he holds the 'flaming jewel'.⁴²

When he becomes Commander of the animals

he is called 'Tunseng Karmo' (White Lioness)

and in his hands he holds a turquoise mane.

When he becomes King of the Yidag (hungry ghosts)

he is called 'Khabarma' (Flaming Mouth)

and in his hands he holds a stream of nectareous milk.

When he becomes Commander of the Land of the Mön⁴³

he is called 'Thuchen Mönpa' (Mönpa with Magic Power)

and in his hands he holds a sharp-bladed sword.

He is the Drala (*dgra bla*) who extended the power of Shang

Shung,

the Leader of the armies of the Drala of the Virtuous Deities,

the Fast Runner of the Werma with Magic Powers.

At that time and in that *kalpa*⁴⁴

Lhau Lödpo said,

"If the Mönpa lead the armies against Ngam⁴⁵

and we do not entrust the charge of protecting the Land to a

Drala

there is the danger the Drala will disperse."

Yeshen Wangdzog answered,

"I have heard that a Drala has been given the task of defending

the army at war."

Lhau Lödpo retorted,

"The powerful Seu Unicorn

holds the 'support of the *la'* (*bla rten*) of all the Drala

so he has been chosen as Lord of all the Drala."⁴⁶

The second passage describes the manifestations of the Werma in the four directions:

In the borderland between Ye (light) and Ngam (darkness)⁴⁷
the Werma with Magic Power built a fortress:

it had its entrance facing east,

four gates, four walls and eight corners.

The dome was made of precious conch shells,

the foundations of diamonds and the roof of gold,

the four corners were made of well-tempered cast iron.

On top he made a nest for the Drala Khyung bird.

When the white Khyung flew in the sky,

white bird feathers fell like snow flakes

and became one hundred thousand white soldiers:

they are the Werma defenders of the east.

South of the Fortress of Magic Power

the Drala Black Angry Smith (*she sdang mgar nag*)⁴⁸

made a fortress with nine rings (of walls)

and called it 'Nest-smithy of the Werma'.

In every corner of the fortress appeared manifestations of fierce
beings

seated on a throne of ten thousand white bulls.

The wrathful emanations were one thousand nine hundred:

the upper part of their body was wrapped in a ring of wind,

the darkness of the *kalpas* manifested in the lower part,

the waist was girdled by a belt of poisonous snakes (*re 'byams
sbrul*).

As their dependents they emanated twenty thousand white
monkeys:

they are the Werma defenders of the south.

To the west of the Fortress of Magic Power

the Drala White Hawk (*dung khra*) made a nest.

Big hawks swooped like hail stones,

small hawks fluttered like sleet,

female hawks whirled like snow storms.

When they beat their wings

little multicoloured (*gzi*) feathers fell all around

and one hundred thousand multi-coloured soldiers manifested

seated on a throne of one hundred thousand tigers:

they are the Werma defenders of the west.

At the north gate of the Fortress of Magic Power

Small White Lark (*lcog chung dkar mo*) made a nest.

When the nine hundred thousand small white larks

rose warbling in flight,

little turquoise feathers fell all around

and became one hundred thousand turquoise soldiers:
they are the Werma defenders of the north.

Inside the Fortress

there were the powerful Gönpo Brothers and Sisters (*mgon po lcam dral*).⁴⁹

The powerful brothers and sisters are like this:
the upper part of their body is human,
the lower part is dragon,
they have chusin teeth and a tongue which is lightning,
a lion's head and a copper mouth
and their waist is girdled by a ring of wind.
They scour the space of the four continents
and reside in the sky of magic powers.⁵⁰

vi THE MEANING OF DRALA

In many ancient Bön texts the name 'Drala' is spelt *sgra bla*, which literally means 'la of sound', where *la* (soul or vitality) stands for a type of individual energy that is also endowed with a protective function.⁵¹ In more recent texts, notably those of the Buddhist tradition, we find the spelling *dgra lha*, 'deity of the enemy', a term which has been interpreted to mean a warrior deity whose task is to fight one's enemies.⁵² In fact the *Sang* ascribed to Padmasambhava quoted above has:

May the *dgra lha* everybody has be purified!
May the *dgra lha* that always accompanies us be purified!
May the *dgra lha* that has enemies killed be purified!
May the *dgra lha* that maintains vigour be purified!
May the *dgra lha* of those who aspire to the strength of the
powerful be purified!⁵³

And a ritual text of offering to the 'Thirteen *dgra lha*'⁵⁴ states:⁵⁵

May you be the *dgra lha* that destroys the enemies' armies!
May you be the *dgra lha* that seizes the enemies' weapons!
May you be the *dgra lha* that conquers the enemies' flag!
May you be the *dgra lha* that rases the enemies' fortress!

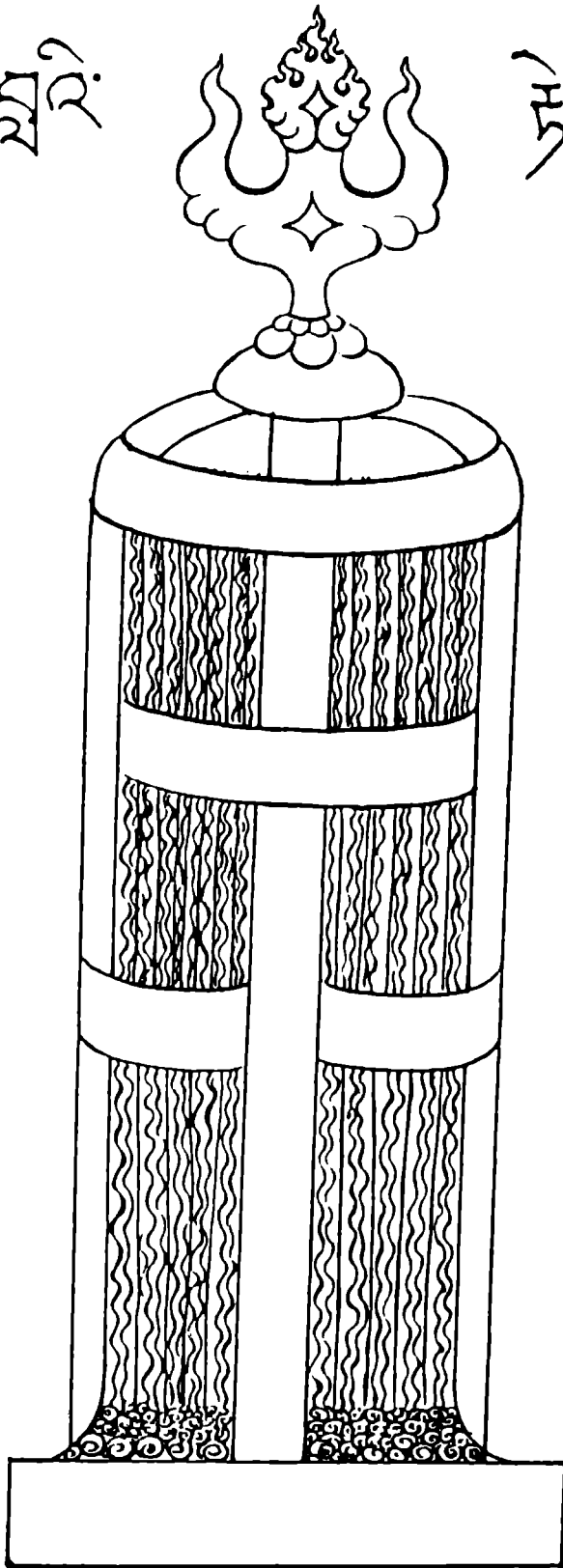
There are many other examples of this kind, and at present this spelling is very common. Other authors, interpreting the term in the sense of 'deity that conquers the enemy's *la*' have instead spelt it *dgra bla*, 'enemy's *la*'. Let us read from a *Sang* rite addressed to the 'Thirteen *dgra bla*'.⁵⁶

The armies of the Lha, Gönpo and Nyen
and the assistants of the Lha, Gönpo and Drala (*dgra bla*),

THUG: THE SUPPORT OF THE DRALA

ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་

ཏཱ་ལའ་བུ་བླ་མ་



the Deities of Wealth (*nor lha*),⁵⁷ Deities of Foods (*zas lha*)⁵⁸ and
Deities of Gain (*grogs lha*),⁵⁹
Deities of Trade (*tshong lha*),⁶⁰ Deities of the Roads (*lam lha*)⁶¹ and
Deities of Journeys (*mgron lha*),
with the white Deity of Life (*srog lha*):
in all they are thirteen.⁶²

The spelling *sgra bla* ('*la* of sound') found in the ancient texts as a matter of fact is based on a very deep principle characteristic of the most authentic Bön tradition. Sound, albeit not visible, can be perceived through the sense of hearing and used as a means of communication, and is in fact linked to the *cha* (the individual's positive force, the base of prosperity),⁶³ *wangthang* (ascendancy-capacity),⁶⁴ and all the other aspects of a person's energy, aspects that are directly related with the protective deities and entities that every person has from birth. Moreover, sound is considered the foremost connection between the individual himself and his *la*. From all this we can easily understand the deep meaning of the word *sgra bla*.⁶⁵

Chapter V

The Bön of the Cha: The Rites for Prosperity

i THE MEANING OF CHA

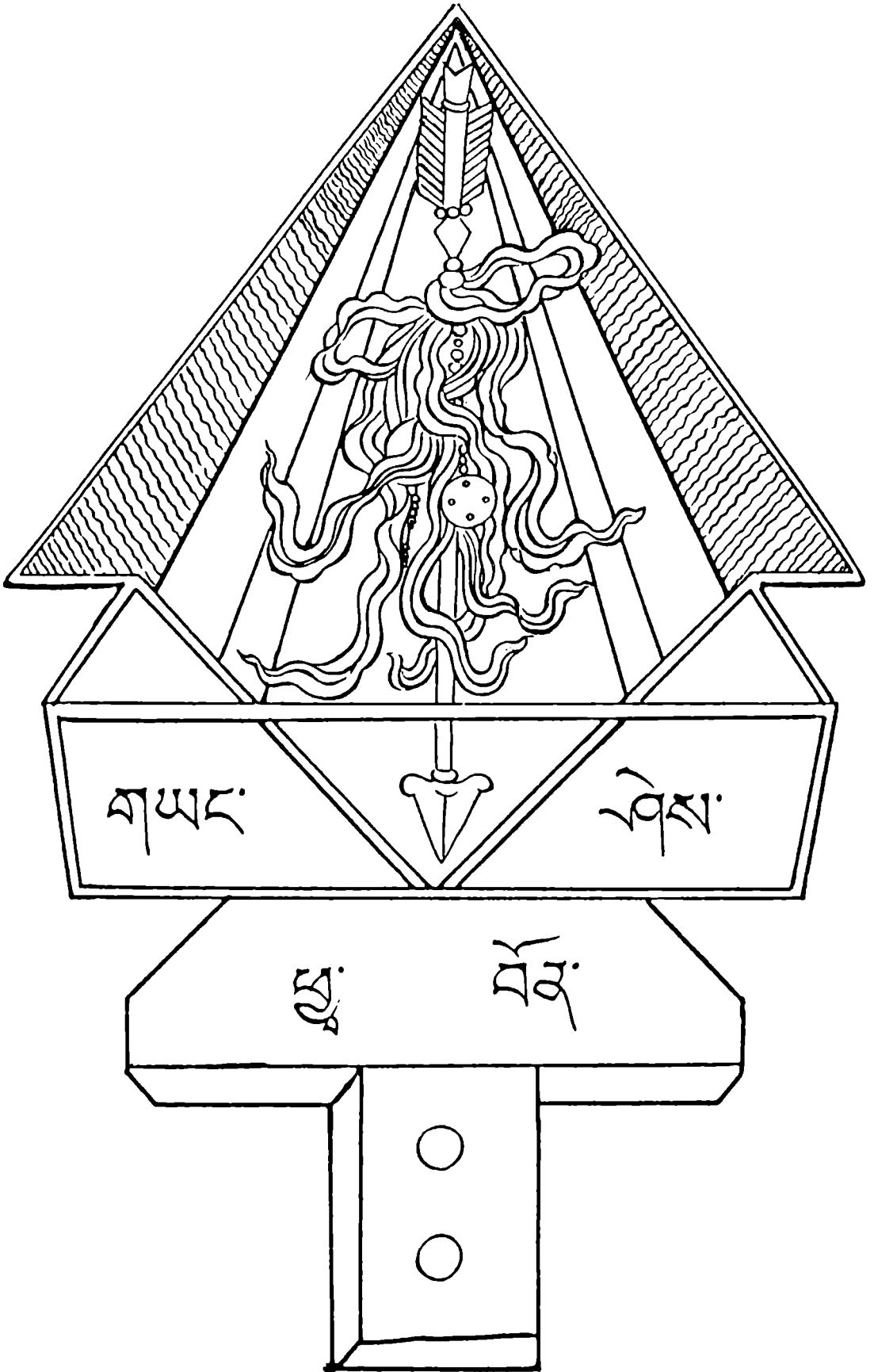
In the Bön of the 'Shen of the Cha' it is explained that all phenomena, positive as well as negative, are determined by the *cha*.¹ Concerning the meaning of this term, it is interesting to observe how in the rites of 'propitiation of prosperity' (*g.yang sgrub*) characteristic of this tradition, it is sometimes used as a synonym of *yang*² (prosperity or fortune), for example in the recurrent expression 'summon the *cha*' (*phywa 'bod*) in place of 'summon the *yang*'. Therefore, it would seem the two terms have the same meaning. On the other hand in the series of divination methods (*mo pra*) of the 'Shen of the Cha', very widespread among the practitioners of this Bön, the term *cha* is used in combination with the different aspects and circumstances about which one is seeking an answer. Thus we have a variety of names of the divinations, all bearing the suffix *cha* meaning 'lot' or 'destiny'. The reason for this can be explained by the principle that all the various conditions and situations of a person's life are ineluctably controlled by or dependent on the *cha* force. For example there are *lha-cha*, 'cha of the deities' (regarding one's protective force); *khyim-cha*, 'cha of the family'; *drön-cha*, 'cha of the traveller' (requested by the person expecting the traveller); *trog-cha*, 'cha of gains or earnings'; *nor-cha*, 'cha of wealth' (and of livestock); *tön-cha*, 'cha of wishes' (regarding the outcome of an action); *ned-cha*, 'cha of illness'; *dra-cha*, 'cha of enemies' (to know the outcome of a war etc.); *sog-cha*, 'cha of life' (concerning eventual mortal dangers); *sid-cha*, 'cha of generation' (regarding procreation, family descent etc.); *dön-cha*, 'cha of the *dön*' (the so-called 'provocations of energy'³ causing disturbances and diseases); *tsong-cha*, 'cha of trade'; *lam-cha*, 'cha of roads' (concerning conditions of a journey one is about to undertake).⁴

Thus we can conclude that the term *cha* refers to a principle or force that embraces all the positive aspects expressed in Tibetan by words such as *yang* (prosperity), *pal* (glory), *phunsum tsogpa* (completeness), *wangthang* (ascendancy-capacity), *trash* (good fortune) etc., which when they concern a person are subsumed under the expression 'cha of the individual'. This import is clearly confirmed in diverse ritual texts, for example in an invocation contained in a *terma* of the Buddhist tradition rediscovered by Chogyur Lingpa (1829-1870):⁵

From the miraculous dimension of the infinite manifestations of
the 'five families'⁶

I summon the *cha* and the *yang* of the ornament of inexhaustible
enjoyments,

THE BÖN OF THE CHA: THE RITES FOR PROSPERITY



the *cha* of the riches of all the worlds of the 'three thousand world systems'⁷ in the ten directions and of all the beings living in them, the *cha* of the pure luminous energy of the four great elements: earth, water, fire and air, the *cha* of the life, intelligence and strength of the highest classes of beings in the world, the *cha* of the wisdom energy of knowledge and love of the 'noble' *Śrāvaka* and *Pratyekabuddha* and of the inferior practitioners.⁸

From the east (I summon) the *cha* of youth of the land of the Triza⁹

and of the inflexible and esteemed law of China.

From the south the *cha* of the melodious song of the Trulbum¹⁰ and of the sacred *dharma* of India.

From the west the *cha* of the treasures of jewels of the powerful Lu

and of the riches of the coffers of Tazig.

From the north the *cha* of the treasure vessel of the Nödjin¹¹ and of the heroism and strength of Gesar.

(I summon) the *cha* of a long life, virtuous and without illness,

the *cha* that mitigates the suffering of poverty,

the *cha* that increases harvests, goods and wealth,

the *cha* that multiplies horses, herds and cattle,

the *cha* that brings food, drink, clothes and ornaments,

the *cha* that has the three worlds¹² in its dominion,

the *cha* that eclipses the three dimensions of existence,¹³

the *cha* that spreads fame in the 'three thousand world systems',

the *cha* that keeps the transmission of the teaching alive like a river,

the *cha* that eliminates any interruption to the continuity of mankind,

the *cha* that subdues the hostile enemies that cause disturbances and hindrances.

I summon the *cha* and the *yang*, good fortune and happiness: may they remain by day and by night!¹⁴

ii THE FIVE DEITIES OF THE INDIVIDUAL

The foremost of the 'Deities of the Cha' (*phywa'i lha*) that protect and sustain a person's *cha* is the 'white' Khyilcher Phuwer¹⁵ but equally important are two particular classes of protective deities which according

to the tradition invariably accompany the individual without ever leaving him: the Five Deities of the Individual (*'go ba'i lha lnga*) and the Deities of the Lungta (*klung rta'i lha*).

The Five Deities of the Individual that live with each person, follow him like his shadow and increase his well being are: the Deity of Females (*mo lha*), the Deity of Life (*srog lha*), the Deity of Males (*pho lha*), the Deity of the Place (*yul lha*) and the Deity of the Enemy (*dggra lha*).¹⁶ In an offering rite composed by the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682)¹⁷ they are thus described:

The Deity of Females is a young woman of exquisite beauty. Her body is white with one face and two hands: in her right hand she holds an arrow with multicoloured ribbons, in her left a mirror. She wears a blue silk mantle, a diadem of jewels and other ornaments and rides a hind. Her emanations take the appearance of mothers and maternal aunts. Also, the Deity of the Maternal Uncle (*zhang lha*) appears as a young man, and his emanations can manifest as several lammergeyers (*go bo*)¹⁸ and ministers of the maternal lineage (*zhang blon*).¹⁹ The Deity of Mothers (*ma lha*) and the enchanting Metsuns assume the appearance of many young girls and hinds.

The Deity of Life is white and looks like a young man, with one face and two hands. He wears a helmet and armour, holds a lance with a banner in his right hand and a lasso in his left. Around his waist are bound a bow in a tiger skin sheath and a leopard skin quiver. He dons boots embroidered with silk frills and rides a black caparisoned horse. His emanations appears as several white men and white horses. Also, the Innate Deity (*lhan cig skyes lha*) wears several silk and jewel ornaments, and his emanations manifest as white men.

The Deity of Males is white and looks like a man in the prime of youth. He has one face and two hands: in his right hand he holds the (wish-granting) 'jewel', in his left a tray full of gems and precious metals. His long hair is bound on top of his head with a silk knot and he wears a blue cloak. He is adorned with jewels and dons boots embroidered with silk frills, and rides a swan-white caparisoned excellent horse (*rta mchog*). His emanations appear as many paternal cousins and men armed with arrows, lances and daggers. Also, the Deity of the Paternal Ancestors (*pha mes kyi lha*) and the Thirty Deities of the Wangthang (*dbang thang gi lha*)²⁰ are all perfectly attired with silk and jewel ornaments.

The Deity of the Place is white, with one face and two hands holding a bow and arrow. He wears a helmet and armour, and around his waist are bound a bow in a tiger skin sheath and a leopard skin quiver. He dons boots embroidered with silk frills and rides a white caparisoned horse. His emanations appear as friends and brothers, local governors, flocks of sheep and several white yaks.

The Deity of the Enemy looks like a young man, white and smiling, with one face and two hands: in his right hand he holds a lance with a banner, in his left a lasso. He wears a white cloak and a silk turban and around his waist are bound a bow in a tiger skin sheath and a leopard skin quiver. He is adorned with several jewels, dons boots embroidered with silk frills and rides a white caparisoned horse, as fast as the wind. His emanations appear as geshes (learned monks), white men in armour and many hawks, wolves, yaks and vultures. Also, above, below and in all directions the deities that protect the generations and the 'Guardians of the Teaching' (*chos skyong*) appears as masters and tantric yogis. The powerful deities that protect Buddhists and those that protect Bönpos manifest as *chawang* birds²¹ and Bönpos.²²

After having thus described the Five Deities and their emanations, the text proceeds to specify the parts of the body where they abide, which offerings must be made to them, and the characteristic actions each of them has the special faculty of accomplishing:

I invite the Deity of the Enemy, Nyenpo (powerful)!²³

Come out, I pray, of the right shoulder
and emanate in the form of many geshes.

I praise you with offerings of clean *shöbu*.

Today, help me!

Send your army and vanquish the enemy!

I invite the Deity of the Maternal Uncle, Phawang (bat)!

Come out, I pray, of the left armpit
and emanate in the form of many ministers of the maternal
lineage.

I praise you with offerings of smoke and a clean sheep.²⁴

Today, help me!

Drive away adversities and foster good fortune!

I invite the Deity of Life, Dzinpo (holder)!

Come out, I pray, of the chest
and emanate in the form of many white men.

I praise you with offerings of a ruddy goat.

Today, help me!

Protect my life from the dangers of interruption!

I invite the Deity of Females, Jungmo (female spirit)!

Come out, I pray, of the right armpit

and emanate in the form of many mothers and maternal aunts.

I praise you with the offering of an elegant 'heart shaped' *torma*
(*'brong rgyas ldem pa*).²⁵

Today, help me!

Make it rain food and riches!

I invite the Deity of the Place, Gönbu (protector)!

Come out, I pray, of the top of the head

and emanate in the form of many friends.

I praise you with offerings of smoke and of this white yak.

Today, help me!

Fulfil all my wishes!²⁶

These five deities are closely tied not only to the physical body (composed of the five elements) of a person, dominating his *cha*, *wangthang* and *lungta* (fortune),²⁷ but also have power over the *cha* related to the elements of the outer world, which explains how it is possible to enhance a person's *cha* through the *cha* of the surrounding environment. This means, in practice, that the state of health or illness of a person's body depends primarily on these deities, that dominates the five external elements.

In the absolute one cannot talk about an actual external force acting against a person's *cha*, *wangthang* and *lungta*; nevertheless, since we have the concept of 'positive', then inevitably there is that of 'negative'. Hence among the many circumstances and situations which occur continuously, it is natural that events that are for us 'contrary' and negative manifest. Particularly when the forces of our *cha*, *wangthang* and *lungta* are weak and in decline, secondary negative causes arise more conspicuously and the energies dominating these negativities, whether one calls them Dre ('dre: evil spirits), Geg (*bgegs*: spirits that cause hindrances) or Dredön ('dre *gdon*: spirits that disturb energy), take the occasion to disturb us. We can easily notice this by observing how in our life there alternate periods of good fortune, during which everything goes well, with periods of misfortune in which we are absolutely incapable of realising our wishes.

iii THE MEANING OF LUNGTA

The word *lungta* (*klung rta*) is composed of two syllables: the first, *lung*, represents the element 'space' in the fivefold classification of the elements 'earth, water, fire, air and space'²⁸ and signifies 'universal foundation' or

'omnipervasiveness'. In fact this latter meaning is partly expressed also when *lung* is combined with other terms to produce composite words such as *nag-lung* (*nags klung*) for a forest (*nags*) that is very thick or 'all-pervading' (*klung*), and *chu-lung* (*chu klung*) for a river whose water course is perennial and ever-flowing. Furthermore, in certain ancient texts such as those contained in the *Collection of Tantras by Vairocana*²⁹ the term is sometimes found with the meaning now ascribed to *long* (*klong*), 'space', 'dimension'. For example in the *Cuckoo of Pure Consciousness*,³⁰ a Dzogchen text rediscovered among the Tun Huang manuscripts, one can read "Paying homage means naturally being in this dimension (*klung*):"³¹ this is probably on account of the similarity in significance between *long* and *namkha* (space, sky).

The second syllable *ta* (horse) refers to the 'excellent horse' (*rta mchog*), and since in ancient times in Tibet the horse was the symbol of travelling with the greatest speed, in this case it seems to refer to the transmutation of every thing that depends on the five elements from negative to positive, from good to bad, from misfortune to good fortune, from baleful portents to auspicious signs, from poverty to prosperity, and it implies that this should ensue with the greatest speed.

At the centre of the coloured flags called *lungta*,³² the cult of which is exceptionally widespread in all Tibet, there is depicted a horse adorned with the 'flaming jewel' with at the four corners a tiger, a lion, a Khyung eagle and a dragon. Some have interpreted the portrayal of the four animals endowed with claws to symbolise fearlessness or invincibility, this may undoubtedly be true, but in fact the four animals actually represent the four elements air, earth, fire and water. The tiger that roams the forest symbolises the 'wood' or 'air' element (in the sense of dynamic energy that makes a tree grow); the lion that ranges on mountains (according to Tibetan popular tradition) stands for the 'earth' element; the Khyung that soars high in the sky and emanates flames from its horns symbolises the 'fire' element; the dragon, that according to legend lives in the sea, stands for the 'water' element. The fifth element 'space', the 'all pervading dimension' expressed by the term *lung* (*klung*), is represented by the 'excellent horse' depicted at the centre. That the elements were not symbolised directly by forest, mountain, sky and sea, but instead by the four animals living in those environments undoubtedly connotes the intention to express not only the condition of the elements, but above all their active function. This same function is symbolised by the 'excellent horse', traditionally adorned with the 'wish-granting' jewel (*nor bu me 'bar*) to express that through the elements misfortune can change into fortune and all a person's aspirations can be fulfilled. I believe this to be the true meaning of *lungta*. In more recent times the custom has arisen of spelling

this word *rlung rta* (wind horse), ascribing to it the meaning 'that which rides the wind', but I think this is derived from the practical function of the *lungta* flags of being raised in the sky and moved by the wind.

iv THE LUNGTA DEITIES

In order to identify the Lungta Deities and the deeds they have the power to perform and to know how to worship them, I quote here in full an invocation contained in a collection of ritual texts of the Buddhist tradition.³³

In ancient times, in the first time cycle
 Sidpa Yemön Gyelpo (King of the Primordial Aspiration)³⁴
 and his wife Sidag Tsunmo (Queen Mistress of Existence)
 went into the 'sky of existence' of the world of the deities
 and requested of the deities to receive fortune (*klung*).³⁵
 So their children were born, powerful divine princes.
 The white man of (the element) metal³⁶
 clasps a metal (coloured) flag in his right hand
 and rides tiger, horse and dog.
 He is present everywhere in the three spheres of existence;
 his assistants have bird and monkey heads
 and his secondary emanations are the Tridüd (*gri bdud*).
 I purify the Lord of the Lungta of the West
 with his retinue of nine hundred and ten thousand (deities of
 fortune)
 with the smoke of the five (aromatic) plants.³⁷
 I offer him clean *shöbu* made of the substance of cereals
 and for him I set up a yellow flag as support:³⁸
 develop the *lungta* and spread fame!
 Make this adverse fortune (*klung*) propitious!
 Prince of the Lungta Deities
 is the red copper man of (the element) fire.
 In his hands he clasps a copper coloured flag
 and he rides pig, sheep and hare.
 He totally dominates the elements in the three spheres of exist-
 ence,
 his assistants have snake heads
 and his secondary emanations are the deer-headed Trisen (*gri
 btsan*).
 I purify the Lord of the Lungta of the South
 with his retinue of nine hundred and ten thousand (deities of
 fortune)

with the smoke of the five (aromatic) plants.

I offer him clean *shöbu* made of the substance of cereals

and for him I set up a green flag as support:

develop the *lungta* and spread fame!

Make this adverse fortune propitious!

Prince of the Lungta Deities

is the green man of (the element) wood.

In his hands he has a green flag

and he rides mouse, dragon and monkey.

He is present everywhere in the three spheres of existence;

his assistants have tiger heads

and his secondary emanations are the chusin-faced Sadag.

I purify the Lord of the Lungta of the East

with his retinue of nine hundred and ten thousand (deities of
fortune)

with the smoke of the five (aromatic) plants.

I offer him clean *shöbu* made of the substance of cereals

and for him I set up a blue flag as support:

develop the *lungta* and spread fame!

Make this adverse fortune propitious!

Prince of the Lungta Deities

is the blue man of (the element) water.

In his hands he has a blue flag

and he rides bird, bull and snake.

He is present everywhere in all existence;

his assistants have pig-heads

and totally dominate the spheres of existence of the Död.

His secondary emanations are the Sadag and Sasen.³⁹

I purify the Lord of the Lungta of the North

with his retinue of nine hundred and ten thousand (deities of
fortune)

with the smoke of the five (aromatic) plants.

I offer him clean *shöbu* made of the substance of cereals

and for him I set up a white flag as support:

develop the *lungta* and spread fame!

Make this adverse fortune propitious!

I raise the great banner of merit and glory!

I set up the crest banner (*ldem 'phru*) with the vulture feathers of
fame!

May this fortune resound like thunder in the three spheres of
existence!

For the metal (element) man of the *lungta*

I set up a crest banner of the earth (element), symbol of heroism:
deities of fortune (*klung gi lha*), come onto the support!

For the copper (element) man of the *lungta*

I set up a crest banner (of the wood element) decorated with
fruit:

three deities of fortune,⁴⁰ come onto the support!

For the wood (element) man of the *lungta*

I set up a blue crest banner of the water (element):

three deities of fortune, come onto the support!

For the water (element) man of the *lungta*

I set up a conch-white crest banner:

three deities of fortune, come onto the support!

You four (classes of) assistants and emanations of the *lungta*
(deities),

tiger, monkey, pig and snake-headed deities of existence,
come onto the four divine symbols (*lha rdzas*)!⁴¹

Make this adverse fortune propitious!

Raise the great 'victory banner' (*rgyal mtshan*) of merit!

Fulfil wishes and spread fame!

Bring all happiness and fortune!⁴²

v THE RITES TO DEVELOP THE CHA AND PROSPERITY

The *Zijid*⁴³ explains that when somebody is particularly afflicted by poverty and destitution it is necessary to develop or increase the *cha* and *yang* to foster all the positive aspects of a long, fortunate and rich life. To this end one must summon the *cha* and *yang* present in the universe, and reinforce the individual's *cha* through a series of rites of 'propitiation of the *cha*' (*phywa sgrub*) called the 'To that Strike the Interdependence of Ritual Objects' (*mdos cha rten 'brel brdeg gto*)⁴⁴ that are broadly speaking performed in the following way: a swastika is traced with cereals on the clean base of an altar, and on it one carefully arranges the various ritual objects: the 'casket of the *cha*' (*phywa sgam*) full of the propitiatory objects and substances, the 'arrow of the *cha*' (*phywa mda*) adorned with coloured silk ribbons, the 'sack of the *cha*' (*phywa khug*) full of different kinds of cereals, the 'chalice of the *cha*' (*phywa phor*) filled with melted butter, the 'support of the *cha*' (*phywa rten*) made of jewels and precious materials, and so on. Then one pays homage to the 'Eight Glorious Deities of the Cha and the Yang' (*phywa g.yang dpal gyi lha brgyad*)⁴⁵ with first pourings (*phud*) of libations (*gser skyems*),⁴⁶ consecrated *chang* (*g.yu 'brang*) and various gift objects, and the auspicious formulae for the prosperity of the generations are recited. In this way the happiness of beings is restored.

A great variety of these rites exist, which in more recent times have spread widely not only among the Bönpos but also among the Buddhists of Tibet. Of these rites, one that is widely practiced is the consecration rite of the 'vase of the *cha* and *yang*' (*phywa g.yang gi bum pa*) in which the forces of the *cha* and prosperity are invited to enter a vase expressly used for this purpose and to abide therein permanently.⁴⁷ The instructions for the preparation of the vase are given in a ritual text edited by Jamyang Khyentsei Wangpo (1820-1892):⁴⁸

The vase (*gter bum*) must be made of clay or of precious materials, without defects nor chipped, painted white or yellow, and decorated with pictures of the 'eight auspicious signs'⁴⁹ or with the 'flaming jewel'. Inside it one puts different objects considered to attract prosperity (*g.yang can gyi rdzas*) such as jewels, cereals, medicines, cloth, food etc., the principle ones of which are known as the 'twenty-five substances' (*bum rdzas nyer lnga*). Then it is filled to the brim with the 'substances that maintain long life' (*tshe'i rdzas*) such as *chongzhi* (a kind of calcite), *dragzhün*⁵⁰ and the 'five medicinal roots' (*rtsa ba lnga*).⁵¹ In the middle of the vase if possible one should put a statue or picture of Ratna Thödtrengtsel (an aspect of Padmasambhava linked with the *ratna* family) dressed in yellow, in union with his consort.⁵²

vi PHUGLHA: THE DEITIES OF THE HOME

A tradition which has spread widely in eastern Tibet since the most ancient times is the cult of the Deities of the Home known as Phuglha (*phug lha*: lit. 'deities of the inside') or Khyimlha (*khyim lha*: 'deities of the family') that control the *cha* and prosperity of families. As I wrote many years ago in an essay published by G. Tucci:⁵³

It is not customary to erect tabernacles (*gsas mkhar*) for these deities on mountains or on the roofs of houses (as happens for example in the case of the Deities of Males and of the Deities of the Place). Their 'support' is placed inside the kitchen, probably because according to popular belief the Deities of the home are female and because kitchen work is taken care of by women: mothers, sisters and aunts who have great respect for these deities and always worship them in the correct way. For example, if a new supply of aromatic shrubs for the *Sang* or of coloured wool arrives in the house, they offer the first part to the Deities of the Home, and if while cooking some food spills over onto the hearth

and gives off a bad smell they exclaim "The Phuglha will be disturbed!" and promptly seek to make amends.⁵⁴

This is how they are described in an invocation of the 'Deities of the Cha and Yang of the Home' (*phywa g.yang gi phug lha*):⁵⁵

The great Phuglha of the East
is white and resplendent with rays,
and in her hands she holds the 'Mu cord' of the Phuglha:
in the house of the generous beneficiary (*rgyu sbyor yon bdag*)⁵⁶
I invite her from the east and ask her to enter
this 'support of the home' (*phug rten*)⁵⁷
and always to remain in this treasure chest.

The great Phuglha of the South
is blue and resplendent with rays,
and in her hands she holds the 'Mu cord' of the Phuglha:
in the house of the generous beneficiary
I invite her from the south and ask her to enter
this 'support of the home',
and always to remain in this treasure chest.

The great Phuglha of the West
is black and resplendent with rays,
and in her hands she holds the 'Mu cord' of the Phuglha:
in the house of the generous beneficiary
I invite her from the west and ask her to enter
this 'support of the home'
and always to remain in this treasure chest.

The great Phuglha of the North
is red and resplendent with rays,
and in her hands she holds the 'Mu cord' of the Phuglha:
in the house of the generous beneficiary
I invite her from the north and ask her to enter
this 'support of the home'
and always to remain in this treasure chest.

The great Phuglha of the Centre
is golden yellow
and in her hands she holds the 'Mu cord' of the Phuglha:
in the house of the generous beneficiary
I invite her from the centre and ask her to enter
this 'support of the home'
and always to remain in this treasure chest.⁵⁸

This is the way to address these deities and beseech them to abide constantly in the home. The Phuglha, in fact, reside with the family and protect all the members, govern the *cha* and *yang* of the home and defend them against possible damage. However, if they do not remain in the home, or if they get weakened through contamination by impurities or for other reasons, there is the danger that all kinds of misfortune may befall the family members. As the proverb says, "If the Deities of the Home are not well the family is not well. If the Deities of the Home are in decline there will be misfortune for the family".⁵⁹ So in these cases it is necessary to try immediately to redress any possible offences or contaminations caused:

If the Phuglha have been contaminated
 I ask them to bathe in this clean nectar.
 If the Phuglha are wandering without an abode
 I implore them to enter this 'support of the home'.
 If the Phuglha are wandering I summon them!
 If the Phuglha have collapsed on one side I straighten them
 perfectly!
 If the Phuglha are broken I repair them perfectly!
 If the Phuglha are in decline I raise them perfectly!⁶⁰

For the preparation of the 'support of the Phuglha' (*phug lha'i rten*), made of twigs of the five aromatic plants, wool threads of five colours, pieces of cloth, jewels and other objects, I refer readers to my work mentioned above.⁶¹

vii THE MU CORD

The 'Mu cord' (*dmu dag* or *rmu thag*),⁶² which we found listed among the attributes of the Phuglha, is often mentioned in the ancient historical texts, particularly in reference to the early Tibetan kings, as we can read in the *Mirror of Royal Genealogies*:

Of these early kings called the 'Seven Tri of the Sky' (*gnam gyi khri bdun*) it is said that, as soon as the prince was able to ride the father ascended to the sky by means of the 'Mu cord' and disappeared like a rainbow. The 'Seven Tri' had their tombs in celestial space: dissolving like rainbows into their divine bodies they did not leave mortal remains.⁶³

The Mu (*dmu*) are an ancient class of celestial deities,⁶⁴ and tradition has it that the paternal lineage of the great Master Shenrab Miwoche, the founder of Bön, descended from the Mu. From a Bön text:⁶⁵

Emanated from the mind of the Shenpo (Shenrab Miwoche), a dark red light shone on the peak of the brown mountain of the Mu. From that light a marvellous egg formed, a precious egg that glowed with rays. Then it burst open and from its essence a precious man appeared adorned with the five jewels (gold, silver, turquoise, coral and pearl), wearing a turban as tall as an arrow. He was called Mepo Muchuk Kyerzhön (Wealthy Ancestor of the Mu who Rides the Kyer(?)). From his union with Lhamo Kangdragma (Greatest Goddess) was born a son, Mutsen Shergyi Gyelpo (Powerful One of the Mu, King of the Sher(?)), whose union with Chacham Gyelmo (Queen of the Cha) generated the son Mutsen Gyelwa (Powerful Victorious One of the Mu). His wife Ringnam Gyelmo gave birth to a son, Mugyel Lengyi Themke, who in union with Lhaza Trulmo begot a son, Gyelpo Thödkar (King with the White Turban). He lay with Yochi Gyelshedma and, in the era when man's average life span had become one hundred years, the Master Shenrab, Lord of the Teaching, was born.⁶⁶

Chapter VI

The Bön of the Lüd: The Ransom Rites

Lüd (glud) is the general name used for all the types of 'ransom' rites which, broadly speaking, can be classified in three categories of decreasing importance: the *Dö (mdos)*, *Lüd (glud)* and *Ye (yas)* rites. More specifically, the term *lüd* denotes the 'substitute' for a person or animal, usually made of tsampa (barley flour and butter), which during the rite is offered to the particular class of beings held responsible for the disturbances, in order to ransom life or overcome other kinds of difficulties. It is used only with this meaning, and in fact to denote a substitute in the sense of somebody's 'representative', in Tibetan the word *tsab (tshab)* is used, as in the expression *gyelpoi kutsab (rgyal po'i sku tshab)* for 'king's representative', which means something quite different from *gyelpoi kulüd (rgyal po'i sku glud)*, the 'ritual substitute for the king'.¹

i THE DÖ RITES

The *Dö* rites are the most important of the ransom rites. Their aim is to exorcise the danger of death, diseases and disturbances caused by the Lha, Lu and Nyen, or any of the other powerful and fierce classes of non human beings present in the universe generally grouped in 'eight classes' (*sde brgyad*): Död, Tsen, Lu, Lha and Nyen, Mamo, Shinje, Gyelpe and Shaza, Nödjin and Sinpo.^{1b} From Mipham's book on the *Juthig* mentioned above:

Non human beings (*g.yen*) of the sky, of the earth and of intermediate space:

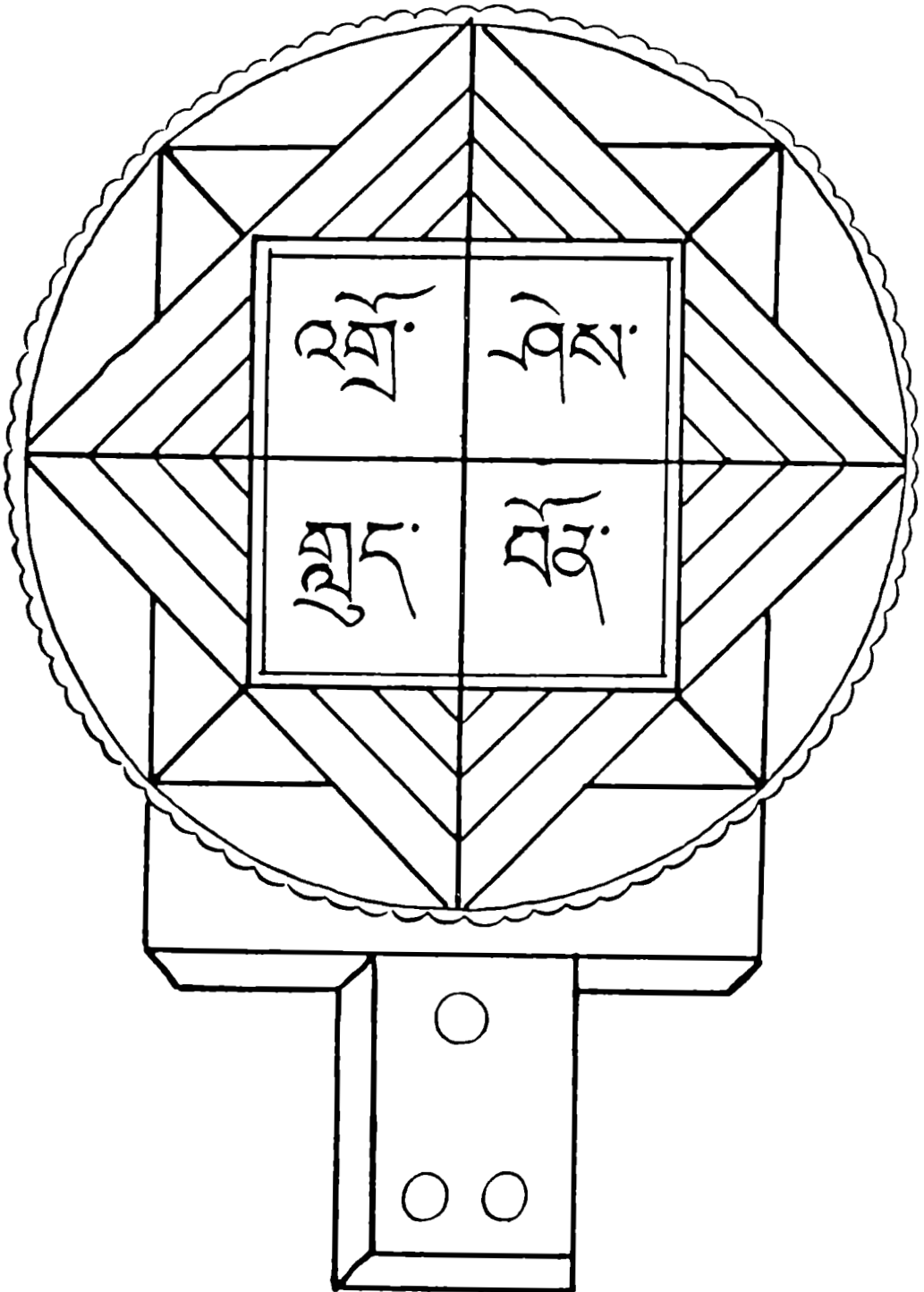
there are thirty-three dimensions of non human beings (*g.yen khams*)²

inhabited by the Död, Tsen, Lu, Nyen, these four, Mamo and Shinje,

Shaza and Sinpo make eight (classes).³

Thus, according to the needs of the case the appropriate ritual method is employed to fully satisfy the specific class of beings responsible for the disturbances, and to ransom the life of the victim who has been attacked, in the following way. The applicable ritual objects and substances (*mthun rdzas*) are prepared, in particular a great quantity of (painted or printed) images of mountains, palaces, houses, trees, forests, birds, fierce beasts, wild animals, horses, yaks, sheep, goats and other livestock animals, symbolising all the riches of the universe. At the centre is placed the substitute effigy (*glud gzugs*) of the person to be ransomed, dressed in the person's clothes and ornaments and surrounded by the following ritual

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objects: the 'male figure' (*pho gdong*) and the 'female figure' (*mo gdong*), two tablets which have the painted images of a man wearing typical man's clothes and a woman attired in woman's clothes and ornaments, the former symbolising the ransom for men and the latter that for women; the 'arrow' (*mda' bkra*) and the 'spindle' (*'phang bkra*) with a skein of wool, two objects, real or drawn, representing respectively male and female; the *namkha* (*nam mkha*), the 'thread cross'⁴ that serves to harmonise the energy of the five elements, in which the two crossed wooden sticks symbolise the person's life and the coloured threads wound around them the continuous functioning of the elements; the *gyangbu* (*rgyang bu*), another ritual object for harmonising the elements made of a wooden stick (representing life) to which are tied at different levels coloured woollen threads symbolising the diverse elements of 'life', 'body', 'ascendancy-capacity' and 'fortune', according to the principles of Tibetan astrology, and with the intermediate spaces painted in the corresponding colours. Furthermore, different kinds of cereals and materials are necessary, as well as anything else that represents the objects of enjoyment of the five senses. In order to increase the efficacy of their symbolic value, all these objects are empowered by means of *mantra*, *mudrā* (hand gestures) and meditation, and then delivered as a 'ransom' or 'substitute' in place of the person for whom the rite is being performed. Having in this way fully satisfied the particular disturbers held responsible for the misfortunes, the danger of death is exorcised, diseases are eliminated and one attempts anew to nurture circumstances propitious for the person's achievement of their wishes without obstacles.⁵

ii THE LÜD AND YE RITES

Less important than the *Dö* rites, those generally known by the name *Lüd* can be performed for the benefit of important personages like kings and ecclesiastical dignitaries as well as ordinary people and livestock. The field of non human beings to whom these are addressed is also wide, from the powerful deities and demons of the 'eight classes' to the spirits that disturb energy (*'dre gdon*) and those that provoke ominous portents (*than*) and mishaps (*byur*). Whether the disturbances are caused directly or indirectly, the rite takes its name from the person or animal for which it is performed. For example 'ransom for the king' (*rgyal glud*), 'ransom for the lama' (*bla glud*), 'ransom for the horse' (*rta glud*), 'ransom for livestock' (*phyugs glud*) etc. and it can be of three types, of grades of greater or lesser elaboration according to the requirement. In any case, after having prepared the prescribed ritual objects and empowered them with *mantra*,

mudrā and meditation, they are dispatched to the specific instigators of the disturbances.⁶

The last category of *Lüd* rites is called *Ye*, the purpose of which can be compared to that of a gift or 'tip' one gives in order to free oneself of disturbances by people who try to create obstacles in order to extort a reward. In the same way, in order to free oneself of negativities caused by the wild-natured beings who are the servants of the eight classes and provoke all sorts of hindrances, by wicked spirits that try to attack the body or the very life of the victim by disturbing his energy, and by those beings who harbour thoughts of revenge against us, or with whom we have contracted karmic debts (*lan chags*: debts due to past actions, including those of previous lives): in all these cases the substitute effigy (*ngar glud*) is prepared, surrounded by *changbu* (payment symbols made by squeezing *tsampa* in the fist) and the other requisite ritual objects (*yas stags*), which are empowered by means of the 'proclamation of the truth' (*bden pa'i smrang*) and by *mantra* and then dispatched.

The reason all three ransom rites are known by the general name *Lüd* is that the indispensable element in the *Dö*, as well as in the *Lüd* and *Ye* rites, is the image of the victim to be ransomed, and this effigy is called *lüd*, 'substitute'.

From the most ancient times these rites have been popular in all the regions of Tibetan population and culture and have, therefore, had a marked influence on the ideas, modes of behaviour and way of life of Tibetans to the extent that, on the introduction of Buddhism, they were incorporated extensively into the new creed and their practice has continued intact in all the schools of Tibetan Buddhism up to the present time.

iii THE RANSOMS FOR MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN

The practitioners of the 'Shen of the Phenomenal Universe' consider the series of *Lüd* rites to be the most important of its four ritual traditions. They explain the expression 'equal exchange' (*mnyam brje*) contained in the name 'Phenyul Series of Ransom Rites as Equal Exchange,' as the actual barter, contracted between the officiant and the class of beings addressed, whereby the disturber frees the victim in exchange for the ritual 'substitute effigy' which resembles him both in physical appearance and in the quality of the sense organs.

A more specific classification of the ransom rites, in particular of the *Dö* type, groups them in three great categories, each of ten rites, for the benefit of men (*pho glud*), women (*mo glud*) and children (*chung glud*), as explained in the *Zijid*.⁷

The ten 'ransoms for men' are:

1. From the centre⁸ the 'Dö for (the reparation of) disturbances (caused) to the Lhamin' (*lha min 'khrugs mdos*);
2. From above the 'Dö for the Tsangpa deities' (*tshangs pa'i lha mdos*);
3. From the east the 'Dö of expiation to appease the Gyelpo' (*rgyal po'i skong mdos*);⁹
4. From the north the 'Dö of expiation to appease the Tsen' (*btsan gyi skong mdos*);
5. From the west the 'Dö of (redemption from) the crosses of the Död' (*bdud kyi khram mdos*), where 'cross' (*khram*) refers to the cruciform notches on the ritual tablets called *tramshing*, which stands for the victims beset by the various kinds of wicked beings (in this case by the Död).
6. From the south the 'Dö to repel (the curses of) the Shinje' (*gshing rje'i bzlog mdos*).
7. From the south east the 'Dö for (protection against the curses of) the females of the Mu' (*dmu yi btsun mdos*).¹⁰
8. From the north east the 'Dö for (protection against) disturbances by the Tsen' (*btsan gyi dal mdos*), should they have been offended or irked.
9. From the north west the 'Dö for (the elimination of) the witchcraft of the powerful Lu' (*klu dbang gtad mdos*), for release from the baleful effects of curses sent by the Lu in response to any disturbances caused to them.
10. From the south east the 'Dö castle of the Sinpo' (*srin po'i mkhar mdos*),¹¹ a Dö structured in the form of a castle or fortress to appease the Sinpo and Nödjin and hence assuage of their hostility.¹²

The ten 'ransoms for women' are:

1. The 'Dö for prosperity for the Queen of the Chüd' (*chud kyi rgyal mo'i g.yang mdos*), to summon fortune and prosperity by satisfying the 'Queen' of the class of the Chüd (a sub-species of the Mamo).¹³
2. From above the 'Dö of expiation to appease the Mamo' (*ma mo'i skong mdos*).
3. The 'Dö to repel (disturbances from) the Queen of the Mayam' (*ma yam rgyal mo'i bzlog mdos*).
4. The 'Dö for (reparation of) disturbances (caused) to the Mamo of the universe' (*snang srid ma mo'i khrugs mdos*).
5. The 'Dö for (redemption from) the crosses of the armies of the Tenma'¹⁴ (*brtan ma'i khram mdos*).

6. The 'Dö for (redemption from) the nailed crosses of the Kyongma' (*skyong ma khram gyi bze mdos*). Generally both the above mentioned Tenma and the Kyongma, who belong to the class of the Mamo, have a peaceful, smiling countenance. However in cases where a serious offence is committed against them they easily get angered and inflict severe punishment. In this particular case the *Dö* serves to appease them and to eliminate the consequences of the 'cross signs' on the *tramshing*, to which the names of the victims are affixed as if they were 'nailed'.
7. The 'Dö for the Menmo Khala Kangkar' (*kha la gangs dkar sman mdos*), to remove hindrances caused by Khala Kangkar, the foremost Menmo, and other female deities of the same family. Although the Menmo do not usually assume a fierce mien or cause disturbances, if they are irritated by an offence against them they immediately take on the guise of a beautiful girl and by deception easily manage to provoke negativities.
8. The 'Dö (to ransom families) from the Menmo Zed' (*sman mo gzed kyi tshang mdos*), to eliminate disturbances and adversities caused by the Menmo and particularly by the sub-species of the Zed who, to avenge offences and outrages, hurl misfortunes that strike whole families.
9. The 'stable *Dö* for the Queen of the Madüd' (*ma bdud rgyal mo'i brtan mdos*), to appease the queen with a ritual structure of large size set on a stable base, for example in the form of a castle.
10. The 'Dö (in the shape of a) tent for the Queen of the Tsomen' (*mtsho sman rgyal mo'i gur mdos*), adorned with many tents, some small and others large, made of cloth or paper, to satisfy the Tsomen (lake goddesses) and exorcise their hostility. These female beings, that dominate lakes and are descended from the union of the Lu with the Menmo, usually have a peaceful countenance, but are extremely irascible by nature, and when they bear a grudge against someone who has disturbed them have the capacity to provoke the same types of diseases that are inflicted by the Lu.

The ten 'ransoms for children' are:

1. The 'Dö (for the ransom) of families from the nine Dre' (*'dre dgu'i tshang mdos*), to free a family from disturbances and misfortunes brought on by the 'nine Dre spirits'.
2. The 'Dö (for the ransom) of families from the ten Si' (*sri bcu'i tshang mdos*),¹⁵ to free a family from provocations by the ten kinds of Si.
3. The 'Dö to repel the black Död that hamper life' (*tshe bdud nag po'i bzlog mdos*).

4. The 'Dö for the hordes of the Eight Lords' (*skyes bu brgyad kyi dpung mdos*), to appease the eight Tsen Yawa (*ya ba rkya brgyad*): when these are disturbed they provoke chains of disasters and misfortunes, aided and abetted by all the hordes of the Tsen.
5. The 'Dö of ransom from the powerful Geg' (*dbang ldan bgegs kyi glud mdos*).
6. The 'Dö of (redemption from) corpses caused by the Sadag and the Töd' (*sa bdag gtod kyi spur mdos*), to allay the anger of the Sadag and the Töd,¹⁶ two classes of powerful beings that dominate the earth and places, the Töd being tied particularly to rocky areas. When they are irked by harmful acts committed against the soil, rocks etc. they easily become resentful and punish by provoking chains of deaths in whole towns or within families.
7. The 'Dö for (the elimination of) mixing cleanliness and dirtiness' (*gtsang sme 'dres pa'i skyom mdos*), to repair improper acts committed against beings like the Sadag and Lu, that are disturbed by fouling and pollution of their environments.
8. The 'Dö for the conflicts of two matching contending forces' (*mtshungs gnyis bsor ba'i skyon mdos*),¹⁷ for cases where a person considers himself to be the owner of lands or buildings without realising that other classes of beings, especially the Sadag, Lu and Nyen, also feel they are the owners, thereby giving rise to a contention that troubles and offends that class of beings and makes reparation necessary in order to avoid negative consequences.
9. The 'Dö of ransom through the exchange of two equivalent things' (*mnyam gnyis brje ba'i glud mdos*). The 'two equivalent things', as already explained, are the person to be ransomed and the substitute effigy.
10. The 'Dö for (the elimination of) obstacles to procreation' (*rtsa dkar 'phel ba'i gag mdos*), to repair offences against the Sadag, Lu, Nyen and other types of beings who can hinder the possibility of conceiving children, thereby ensuring the family descent.

iv VARIETIES OF DÖ AND REQUIRED QUANTITIES

Thirty-three 'ornamental Dö' (*rgyan mdos*), corresponding to the thirty-three dimensions of non human beings, branch off from these thirty main Dö, and from these sixty-three Dö are derived further rituals, from the most important and elaborate ones such as the 'Ornaments of Existence' (*snang srid rgyan mdos*) to the minor and simpler ones such as those called 'Flight of Small Birds' (*bye'u chung 'phur mdos*) amounting, according to the tradition, to three hundred and sixty different kinds of Dö. In these rites

all the *lūd* (substitute effigies) for men must be elegant, those for women must have a luminous complexion, and those for children must be very pleasing. Concerning the ritual objects that accompany the *lūd* in their function as ransoms, it is explained that anything in the world can be used to that represents the objects of sense enjoyments, without exception, just as a person may own and enjoy any kind of object.¹⁸

However more or less elaborate the preparatory phase of the *Dö* may be, in general they are considered to have three aspects: outer, inner and secret. The outer *Dö* is the material structure prepared for the performance of the rite, the inner *Dö* comprises the ritual chant and the 'proclamation of the origin' (*smrang*), and the secret *Dö* is the state of concentration or meditation: by combining all three elements one can protect and concretely benefit all beings. In particular, the 'outer' *Dö*, the material structure with all the diverse types of ritual objects, can in its turn be of three kinds, of decreasing degrees of elaboration according to the needs of the case. In the most elaborate type the complete series of ritual objects must be repeated one thousand million times (that is, it is necessary to have one thousand million exemplars of each object), in the medium type ten thousand times, and in the most simple type one hundred times. Moreover, the quantity necessary is traditionally established according to the importance of the person for whom the rite is being performed. For example, for a 'Lamp of the Universe' (a powerful *shen* or a great master) one thousand million times; for a 'Universal Emperor' ten million; for a *shen* one hundred thousand; for a minor king five hundred; for a queen three hundred and sixty; for a minister or a general one hundred and sixteen; for a monk one hundred and eight; for the head of a family sixty-one; for a noble land-owning woman fifty-one; for a boy or a girl twenty-five; for a messenger thirteen; for all others, five times. As we can see, the amount required increases or decreases according to rank, because the gravity of the negative consequences of a disturbance may depend on the importance of the person struck. All of this is explained in detail in the *Zijid*.¹⁹

v THE QUALITIES OF THE *LÜD* AND THE VALUE OF THE RITUAL OBJECTS

In a ritual text from the cycle of the Bön deity Meri²⁰ there is a description of the specific qualities of the *lūd*, of the substances used in its preparation, and of the function they serve:

Great are the qualities of the *lūd*!

This great substitute effigy (*ngar mi*), supreme ransom,

has as its causes the five elements, precious materials, cereals and medicines.

The paternal lineage is the pure ancestry of the turquoise dragon.
 The blood is the water element and vermilion,
 the flesh is of precious substances, different cereals and prized
 leather (*bse*),²¹
 the heart is of *shosha* and the eyes of *lungthang*,²²
 the teeth are cowrie shells and the tongue made of red paint (*le
 brgan*),
 the hair is of thorny twigs²³ and the clothes are of fine silk.
 The limbs are of gold, turquoise, copper and iron,
 the complexion is given by paint made of precious powders,
 the mind is the condition of emptiness and clarity of space,
 the breath is the flux of the air element,
 the heat is that of the fire (element) (*tshang stang*).²⁴
 He wears elegant clothes, is strong and walks gracefully.
 The attire is not like that of we humans;
 the *lüd* for men, the *lüd* for women and the *lüd* for children
 don men's clothes, women's dresses and pleasing garments
 with ornaments, riches and objects of enjoyment
 and, still more, they have the luminosity of peacock feathers.
 The clothes, better than man's, are those of a divine prince,
 the complexion, more luminous than man's, is rainbow light,
 the voice, more melodious than man's, is Tsangpa's,²⁵
 the riches, more valuable than man's, are gold and precious
 materials,
 the tongue, more supple than man's, is that of the bat,
 the ease with words, superior to man's, is that of the parrot,
 the strength, greater than man's, is that of the elephant,
 the gait is more graceful than man's.
 The qualities of the *lüd* are unimaginable!²⁶

Another ritual text,²⁷ this time from the Buddhist tradition, enables us
 to understand the necessity for and the symbolic value of the diverse
 ritual objects that 'accompany' the *lüd*:

The father of the substitute effigy is the blue sky,
 the mother is she who sustains beings (*'byung po 'dzin ma*).
 Born of sky and earth,
 the *lüd* substitute (*ngar glud*) is made of the five precious ma-
 terials,
 has all the sense organs with their functions,
 has the luminous complexion of the elements.
 To keep warm it has garments of fine silk,
 it is adorned with many delightful ornaments,

and bearing gold and turquoise in its hands
 it walks majestically with the feet of method and knowledge.²⁸
 Accept this great *lüd*, better than any real person,
 as ransom for (the body of) the male or female sponsor!
 The chalice that represents method and the outer universe
 is brimming with melted butter, symbol of knowledge and of
 beings:

together with the light of the flame of the wisdom of union
 I offer it as ransom for the voice, accept it!

'*Nam*' signifies the multiplicity of visions,
 '*kha*' the nature of emptiness.²⁹

I offer the woven union of vision and emptiness
 as ransom for the mind of the sponsor.

Furthermore, *torma*, *tinglo* (a small butterlamp made of dough),³⁰
changbu and savoury fare, both liquid and solid,
 meat, *chang*, tea and drinks,
 cereals, fine silk, cotton cloths,
 objects of gold, silver, copper, iron and crystal,
 tiger and leopard skins: these are the things that are necessary.

The 'male figure' (*pho tang*), ransom for men,
 the 'female figure' (*mo tang*), supreme ransom for women,
 are enchanting images with excellent lineaments,
 they seem real, they sing and dance,
 and drawn according to the general model of existence,
 all the things of the universe and all beings appear.

The arrow is decorated with 'tiger's eye' patterns,
 the spindle is decorated with 'fish eye' patterns,
 the 'child's figure' (*bu tang*) is a young child with a forelock.

The magic manifestations assume any form,
 the *gyangbu* is like a rainbow in the sky,
 (and there are) images of horses, mules, cattle and sheep of
sheltsig (mixture of white and black grains):³¹
 in brief anything is suitable.

With all these objects, those prepared materially as well as those
 visualised mentally,
 one fills the universe.³²

Chapter VII

The Shen of Existence: The Dur Rites for the Dead

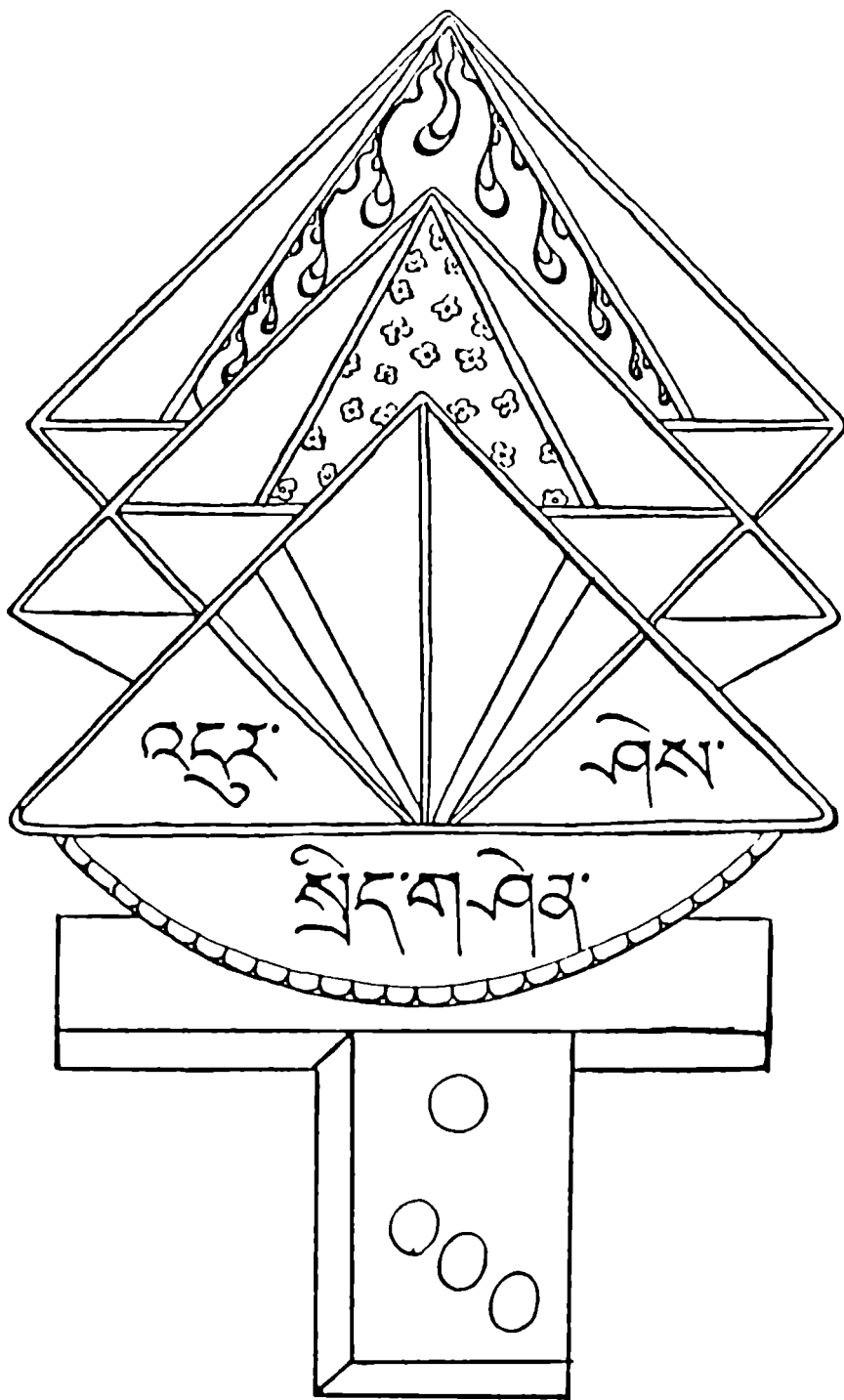
i THE MOMENT OF DEATH

The chapter of the *Zijid* devoted to the 'Shen of Existence'¹ explains that beings that transmigrate, having material bodies chained to the cycle of birth and death, are afflicted with four hundred and four different kinds of diseases, and that their life is in constant danger of attack by sixty thousand kinds of *dön* or 'provocations of energy'. Furthermore, they are all in the power of four uncertainties: the place where they will die, the conditions of their death, the cause of death and the time when death will occur. In whichever of the four phases of life a person finds himself: whether a baby, a child, a youth or in old age, he can suffer the pain of a sudden catastrophe such as murder, a violent quarrel, an illness, an epidemic etc. and meet his death. It is said that on account of ignorance, as soon as he is dead he will see his *la* (vital soul), perceptual consciousness (*yiä*) and mind (*sems*)² cleave in three separate elements and his pure original awareness (*rig pa*),³ which is devoid of 'I' or 'ego', will appear to him as two separate entities, the 'innate deity' (*lhan cig skyes lha*) and the 'innate demon' (*lhan cig skyes 'dre*). The deity helps and protects the deceased person, but the demon takes on the guise of evil beings such as 'devouring spirits' (*za 'dre*), 'Shed of death' (*shi gshed*), 'interrupters of life' (*srog gcod*), 'thieves of the vital breath' (*dbugs len*), 'stealers of the vital capacity' (*tshe len*), 'predators of the complexion' (*mdangs 'phrog*), 'living demons' (*gson bdud*), 'torturers of the dead' (*gshin lcags*), 'spirits of the dead' (*shi 'dre*) and 'Si of death' (*shi sri*), that afflict and torment him, chasing him to take his breath and kill him and not giving him any peace.

Distraught, he looks for a refuge or a place to go, but he sees the effects of the deeds he has committed during his life and is overcome by so many thoughts that he cannot find a moment's peace, in agony like a sick man. He has no physical obstacles, like the wind in space. He is frightened, terrorised and in anguish, like a deer fallen into a trap. His mind is confused, like that of a traveller (*ku hrang*)⁴ lost in a distant land. He has no hope of getting free, like a prisoner in a dark cell. He seeks shelter, like a newborn bird that has fallen from its nest. He has nowhere to take refuge, like a baby abandoned by its mother. He is oppressed by hunger and thirst, like a wretched hungry ghost. His mind is perturbed and agitated, like someone chased by an evil spirit. He has no control over himself, like a bird feather on top of a mountain. He is completely subject to external forces, like someone arrested by the law.

At death all beings are fiercely tormented by these states of distress and suffering, and tradition has it that for their benefit there arose the

THE SHEN OF EXISTENCE: THE DUR RITES FOR THE DEAD



Bönpos of the 'Shen of Existence', who by meditating on the great deity Durse Mawo⁵ are able to reunite the *la*, the perceptual consciousness and the mind of the deceased, and through the power of the deity's compassionate energy gives him back peace and serenity. Thus, according to the phase of life in which the person dies and the circumstances causing death, for example an illness, poisoning, a wound, a *dön* etc., the most effective *Dur* rite is performed to free the deceased from the negative energies hindering and to lead him to a spacious and comfortable intermediate dimension.⁶

iii THE BÖN OF THE SHEN OF EXISTENCE

All the Bön of the 'Shen of Existence'⁷ are based on two fundamental methods: the examination of the mode of death (*shi thabs*) and the rites to free the deceased from negative energies ('*dur thabs*).⁸ There are eighty-one modes of death, twenty by provocations of energy (*gdon*), twenty by diseases of the humours,⁹ twenty by sudden accidents, twenty by wounds from weapons and one by natural cause. The *Dur* rites are classified in three hundred and sixty types, including the '*Dur* for men' ('*pho 'dur*) and '*Dur* for women' (*mo 'dur*), the '*Dur* of fortune' (*bkras 'dur*) for persons who have died in old age,¹⁰ '*Dur* for the Si' (*sri 'dur*) for youths, '*Dur* for infants' (*chung 'dur*) for babies, '*Dur* for the slain' (*gri 'dur*) for murder victims, etc. But the real base of the 'Shen of Existence' comprises eighty-one series of Bön necessary for the performance of all these rites, which are the following:¹¹

Ten Bön 'that examine data on the basis of astrology' (*don brtag rtsis kyi bon*), because if first the events are not clarified on the basis of astrological calculations it is impossible to distinguish the primary and secondary elements necessary for the particular type of *Dur*.

Then there are ten Bön 'that eliminate curses by means of powerful rites' (*gto gnyan gtad bcos kyi bon*), that liberate from the negativities that can be caused by the beings that control the soil, because all the kinds of *Dur* rites must be performed after having chosen a specific terrain. To this end it is necessary therefore to examine whether the place where the death occurred is a 'king land', 'minister land', 'queen land', 'commander land' 'servant land' etc.

There are eight Bön 'of the genealogies of the dead' (*shi rabs kyi bon*), based mainly on the 'proclamation of the origin' (*smrang*), which take into account the different ways the *mang* has been utilised from the primordial time of the formation of existence until the present; twelve Bön 'that sever the ties with material things' (*gdos pa thag gcod kyi bon*), to eliminate the dead person's attachment to the material dimension; ten Bön 'that

eliminate the obstacles of transmigration' (*'khor ba'i gag sel ba'i bon*), that uses different methods in order to lessen the dead person's attachment to what he has left behind; seven Bön 'of the examples and meanings of the genealogies of the dead' (*dpe don shi rabs kyi bon*), that through the systematic narration of the ways deaths have occurred in a specific family line, using examples and emphasising similarities, serve to persuade the entities that cause hindrances to desist. Then there are three Bön 'to reunite *la*, perceptual consciousness and mind' (*bla yid sems 'thor ba bsud pa'i bon*) separated at the moment of death; eight Bön 'of the sense enjoyments' (*yul shes 'dod yon gyi bon*) to satisfy the sense consciousnesses of the deceased with offerings;¹² twelve Bön 'that divide the dimension of the living from that of the dead' (*gson gshin yul bgos pa'i bon*), to separate the sphere of perception of the living from that of the dead.¹³ The aim of the last Bön is to escort the deceased so that he will not take wrong directions, to protect him from precipices, and to eliminate all discords with the living caused by the wicked spirits of death (*log g.yang dbyen*).¹⁴

Of all the numerous varieties of Bon methods of the 'Shen of Existence' and of *Dur* rites, two ritual traditions have assumed outstanding importance and have spread widely. These are the 'Ransom of the La' (*bla bslu*),¹⁵ essential for the living, and the 'Vanquishment of the Shed' (*gshed 'dur*), indispensable for the dead, both based on the concept that the person is composed of three elements: 'la, perceptual consciousness and mind' or 'la, potential longevity and vital essence' (*bla tshe srog*).¹⁶

iii THE RITE OF THE RANSOM OF THE LA

In cases where a person's *la* is deteriorated or weakened, has fled, has got lost and is wandering without a home, has been abducted by the major Dön¹⁷ (beings that cause disturbances of energy) or captured by the minor Dön, or, finally, has been lured by the guardian deities that sends curses (*byad ma lha srung*), it is necessary to summon or recall the 'vital soul' so as to bring it back to its proper abode and reunite it with the vital principle and the potential longevity; this is the purpose of the rite of the 'ransom of the *la*'.

The 'Major Dön' (*gdon chen*), that have the capacity to take possession of the *la* are: above, the Lha; in the east, the Gyelpo and Triza; in the south, the Trulbum and Shinje; in the west, the Lu; in the north, the Nödjiyin; in the four intermediate directions the Melha (fire deities), Sinpo, Lungina (wind deities),¹⁸ and Jungpo;¹⁹ below, the Sadag. In particular the 'Lord of the Död' (*bdud rje*) Rete Goyag and the 'Ruler of Life' (*srog bdag*) Gyelpo Pehar are called 'The Two, Död and Gyelpo, Who Hinder the La'

(*bla gshed kyi bdud rgyal gnyis*).²⁰ In fact they torment the living as well as the dead, because they seize the *la* and potential longevity of the former, attacking the vital principle, and take hold of the *la* of the latter. The 'Minor Dön' (*gdon phran*) are the 'thirteen male Düd' (*pho bdud bcu gsum*) emanations of Rete Goyak and other types of minor spirits, who, steal the *la* and longevity of men, hinder the course of pregnancy in women, kidnap the *la* and life of newborn babies, and in these and other ways afflict all mankind.

A ritual text contained in the famous collection of *terma*, the *Rinchem Terdzöd*,²¹ explains how to detect whether a person's *la* is in danger:

These are the signs that indicate if the *la* is wandering in enemy lands, staying in a cemetery or has been taken away by the dead. If one dreams of being naked or undressed, or that other people are naked, certainly the *la* has been abducted. Furthermore, if accidents recur at astrological intervals (*skeg*), caused for example by discordance between the elements,²² if one suffers from apathetic or catatonic states (*yed yed pa*)²³ or one continuously wakes up at night overwhelmed by fear etc., these are all signs that the *la* is wandering without an abode. So without indolent procrastination, one must immediately intervene by devoting oneself with great zeal to the rite to ransom the *la* and longevity.²⁴

An accurate description of the preparatory phase of the 'ransom of the *la*' can be very useful in order to have a clearer idea of the significance of this rite, and consequently also of all the other types of *Lüd* and *Dö* ransom rites dealt with in the previous chapter. For this reason I deem it necessary to quote in full the instructions on the preparation for this rite from the same text:

On a table or mat with coloured powders, one draws a human figure, naked and with all the sense organs, lying supine with arms and legs stretched out. Around this one traces two concentric circles, the space between them divided in eight sections, the east corresponding to the wood element, the south to the fire element, the west to the metal element, the north to the water element and the four sections of the intermediate directions to the earth element. Since they represent the places of the *parkha* trigrams²⁵ they should be coloured according to the astrological system (of the elements), that is green, red, white, blue and yellow respectively for the wood, fire, metal, water and earth elements.

Around (the two circles) one marks out a square, also divided in eight sections: the east section is coloured white, the south yellow, the west red, the north green and the four intermediate directions all of a nice colour as one likes. In cases where one does not have coloured powders at one's disposal the human figure should be drawn on paper or cloth and coloured by distemper.

At the centre of the picture, corresponding to the heart, one places the *lüd* effigy ('*dra glud*) resembling the beneficiary of the rite, whether male or female, no smaller in size than the palm and four fingers. The effigy, made of barley flour and butter (*ngar phye*) mixed with precious materials and medicinal substances, must have all the sense organs, be painted in many colours, must wear (a piece of) clothing (belonging to the beneficiary of the rite) and other fine 'ransom attire' (*glud gos*) of silk etc.

Facing the *lüd* one places the 'ransom objects' (*glud rdzas*): hedgehog quills, pearls, pumpkins, *lungthang* (the medicinal plant *sapindus mukorossi*), pieces of brown cloth, cowrie shells, conches, *tsel* (a mineral from which the colour vermilion is obtained), *se* (a type of treated and painted leather), grey antimony (a mineral, *rdor gyus*), (the medicinal plants) *nying shosha* (*spondias axillaris*), *khelma shosha* (*mucuna prurita*), *wanglag* (*orchis latifolia*) and *chusin dermo* (*lycopodium clavatum*), iron and copper, foods, medicines, clothes, silk, wool and cereals: one must obtain exemplars of each of these. On the right one puts substances (taken) from the south: *tsöd* (*rubia cordifolia*), *gyakyeg* (*rgya skyegs*, a type of resinous lacquer), *shunkhen* (*symplocos crataegoides*) etc. On the left one puts the substances from the north: salt, soda etc. In practice things coming from the two regions are placed on the two sides (of the *lüd*). In front and behind one places the substances from passes: *tsala* (a kind of mineral salt), stones from *latse* (cairns) etc. and those from valleys: garlic, onions, pieces of wooden bridges etc.

All these things are placed in a container made of precious materials, on the right of which one places a piece of gold, on the left a turquoise and behind a *namkha* having the centre (of the colour) corresponding to the (life) element (of the beneficiary) and (the other threads) the colours of the rainbow, a *gyangbu*, an arrow and a spindle. Then if the person (for whom the rite is being performed) is a man, a birch tablet (*byang bu*) with notches carved of the same number as the years of age of the beneficiary is placed on the right shoulder; if the person is a woman, the

tablet is of *langma* (a type of willow)²⁶ and is placed on the left shoulder.

Furthermore, according to the tradition one should light three butterlamps, symbolising body, voice and mind, in front of the *lüd*. At this point it is necessary to have fresh, clean meat, without the least speck of dirt, of a sheep not expressly butchered for the rite. If the *la* of a man is to be ransomed meat from the right thigh is used; if it is of a woman, from the left thigh. Inside the meat one must place the 'turquoise of the *la*' (*bla g.yu*) and a number of grains of white barley corresponding to the age of the beneficiary, all wrapped in a clean cloth. Then the piece of meat is wrapped in a clean white cotton or wool cloth which must be tied with a rope fastened with the seal of the beneficiary (*yon bdag*): for a man one places the package on the right of the *lüd*, for a woman on the left.

In the most urgent cases one is advised to write the essential *mantra* of the *yidam*, for example of 'long life', and the *mantra* to 'summon the *la*' (*bla 'gugs*) on a sheet in vermilion mixed with relics, with invocation verses and prayers at the bottom of the page; this sheet should be wrapped around the 'support of the *la*' (*bla rten*) and then the whole bound in wool. The oral tradition has it that inside this package one should also put the 'sheep of the *la*' (*bla lug*, made of *tsampa* and butter).

Around it, on each of the thirteen parts of the human figure, that is the head and twelve limbs: the two legs, two thighs, two arms; two elbows, two shoulders, the upper part of the body and the lower part, one puts a handful of barley mixed with earth or flour and a *lüd* effigy (*'dra glud*) resembling the beneficiary moulded from barley flour and butter six fingers in size (*mdzub gang*). Behind each (of the thirteen *lüd*), one places a rainbow coloured *namkha*, a *gyangbu*, an arrow, a spindle and a tablet (*byang bu*), if possible made of beech for men or of *langma* for women, with the beneficiary's face drawn on it. In front of each (of the *lüd*) one places a *thebkyu* (a small offering made by moulding *tsampa* between the fingers), a *shöbu*, a *changbu*, a small piece of sinew (*ije ngar*) and a cup of first pouring of *chang* (*chang phud*): in all thirteen items must be prepared. Then in the spaces between the arms and legs and the other limbs, and in that between the human figure and the circle circumscribing it, one places the 'emblems of the *la*' (*bla rtags*) of the person for whom the rite is being performed: images of horses, *kyang* (a type of wild ass: *equus hemionus*), *lawa* (musk deer: *moschus moschiferus*), stags, *nawa*

(a type of wild sheep: *ovis nahura*), yaks, bulls, goats and sheep made of barley flour mixed with butter, with all the sense organs and of the same sex as the beneficiary, each painted in its characteristic colours and turned inward (that is towards the central *lüd*).

Around these, in the concentric space divided in the eight sections of the *parkha* trigrams, one places the following on clay pedestals on each section: a *namkha* with the central colour corresponding to the colour of the trigram and having the other colours of the rainbow, a *gyangbu* decorated with fringes and ribbons, an arrow, a spindle, the 'male figure' (*pho gdong*) and the 'female figure' (*mo gdong*). In front of these one places a *shöbu* adorned with the *lüd* effigy of the beneficiary, a *changbu* and a *thebkyu*, each of these eight times. Above one arranges the images of the 'eight classes of Dön' (*gdon gyi sde brgyad*) associated with the eight trigrams, with their assistants drawn on *tsakali* (painted cards)²⁷ or wooden tablets (*shing byang*), as one likes, and arrayed in the following order: in the south the Tsen, represented by a red human figure in armour and riding a red horse, and the Triwo (*gri bo*: murderers), a dark red human figure of wrathful mien and with long hair standing on end.

In the south west the Sadag, a yellow figure wearing king's robes and a turban, and the Phudag (*phu bdag*), a white man in a long robe with tight sleeves (*'dung ma*). In the west the Död, a black human figure in a black cloak and riding a black horse, and a white man in white garments. In the north west the Gyelgong,²⁸ a pale yellow figure in monk's cowl with a yellow hat, and the Theurang, a grey white child with hair tied in a tuft. In the north the Lu, a blue figure with a snake's head and tail, and the Mamo, a black woman in a black silk dress (*go zu*) riding a black mule. In the north east the Bedre (*rbad 'dre*: cursing spirits) and the Kordre (*dkor 'dre*: wealth spirits), two human figures with raised arms, one dressed in black and the other in yellow. In the east the Gyelpo, a white figure with a *setheb* (round yellow) hat and monachal shawl and tunic riding a bull, the Lumen, depicted like the Lu (described above) and the Nyodre (*smyo 'dre*: spirits of madness), a naked black figure with long hair standing on end. All the figures have complete sense organs, their arms raised and look at the *lüd* with a fierce, voracious expression.

Around in the eight directions and the sections above and below representing east and west, one places a *namkha*, a *gyangbu*, an arrow, a spindle and a wooden tablet on which is drawn the

'general sign of existence' (*srid pa spyi ris*: probably a cross): ten of each of these. Since above these one arranges the images of the ten classes of major Dön associated with the (ten) directions, if one has something like an altar the sections are subdivided, including those above and below, in the same way as explained above. Otherwise one must subdivide the sections, combining the one above with the west direction and the one below with the east.

These images of the major Dön, whether they are depicted on *tsakali* or wooden tablets or are moulded from clay, must have the following characteristics: they must have a fierce voracious expression, wear a silk turban and cloak, brandish a lance with a banner in the right hand and a lasso in the left, majestically ride a caparisoned excellent horse (*rta mchog*), have a bird hovering overhead, and keep a dog on a leash. The colour of every figure, including the cloak, turban, lance, lasso, horse, bird and dog, must correspond to that of the direction with which the particular class of Dön is associated, that is: for the section above, associated with the Dön of the Lha, blue; for the east section, associated with the Dön of the Gyelpo and Triza, white; for the south section, associated with the Dön of the Shinje and the Trulbum, yellow; for the west section, associated with the Dön of the Lu, red; for the north section, associated with the Dön of the Nödjin, green; for the four sections of the corresponding intermediate directions associated with the Dön of the Melha in the south east, of the Sinpo in the south west, of the Lunglha in the north west and of the Wangden in the north east, different variegated colours; for the section below, associated with the Dön of the black Sadag, smoky brown (*dud kha*).

If one wants to depict all these images on *tsakali* cards one must have eighteen in all, eight each having the figures of two classes of Dön associated with the trigrams and ten with the major Dön of the ten directions. All the figures of the Dön, who are like invited guests, must face forward (towards the *lüd*).

Finally everything is enclosed in the 'Dö fence' (*mdos dkris*: made of woollen threads of different colours). If he or she is present, the beneficiary of the rite is seated on the right or left, according to preference, otherwise on a clean cloth as 'support of the *la*' one must place a garment of good quality and visibly soiled (as a sign of having been worn by the beneficiary). This is the explanation, but in practice if the beneficiary is a man he sits on the right, if it is a woman she sits on the left.

Furthermore, in cases where the beneficiary is a person of rank or of a certain importance, such as an officer or a Lama, it is necessary to prepare a throne with an ornate back (*khri rgyab yol*) and put on it (personal clothes and objects such as) his robes, hat, *mālā* etc. To ascertain (at the end of the rite) whether one has succeeded in summoning the *la*, in front one places a decorated container, not at all chipped or splintered, full of a mixture of different kinds of spring water, on which is laid a wooden bowl painted the colour corresponding to the beneficiary's (life) element, the 'sheep of the *la*',²⁹ a figure made of dough of good quality mixed with relics and scented substances. The 'sheep', moulded according to tradition, must be of the same sex as the person for whom the rite is being performed, have all the sense organs, and be adorned with painted decorations.

As well as all this, the 'general *torma* for the eight classes' (*sde brgyad spyi'i gtor ma*), the 'payment gifts' (*rngon cha*), the libation offerings (*gser skyems*) and so on should be meticulously arranged. Particularly regarding the libations, as they are offered each time (to each of the thirteen *lüd*) if possible thirteen cups should be prepared, otherwise some first pouring of *chang* is decanted into a single cup together with cereals and powders of precious materials and placed before the *Dö*. If the ritual objects are not clean there is the danger that the *la* of the officiant will be taken away in ransom (instead of the substitute offerings) so one must be very careful.

Moreover, if one makes a mistake in the sequence of the coloured threads of the *namkha* of the *parkha* trigrams etc. the 'eight classes' might be disturbed, so the central colours must always correspond to that of the pertinent trigram and the rest of the threads must be coloured on the basis of the 'friend' relationship in terms of the centre, without any mistakes in the order.³⁰ The border is then wrapped in rainbow colours according to the principle of harmonisation of the elements (*'byung 'phrod*, according to the mother-son relationship, that is, wood-green, fire-red, earth-yellow, metal-white and water-blue).

The central colour of the *namkha* of the *lüd*, on the other hand, should correspond to the life element of the beneficiary, with five rounds of colours following the order (of the elements) of the 'enemy' relationship from centre (towards the outside) and of the 'friend' relationship from the outside (towards the centre), and with the border of different colours, as already explained and as one sees done in practice. Furthermore, according to the oral

tradition, if one has the chance one should draw the 'protection wheel' for the ransom of the *la* (*bla bslu khor lo*)³¹ and put it together with the 'support of the *la*'.³²

iv THE RITE OF VANQUISHMENT OF THE SHED

Tradition has it that the rite of 'Vanquishment of the Shed' (*gshed 'dur*) was introduced into Tibet with other types of *Dur* rites on the occasion of the death by murder of King Trigum Tsenpo.³³ The term *shed* (*gshed*) means 'hindrance', and with this meaning is also used in Tibetan astrology,³⁴ but in the present context it refers specifically to a type of negative energy tied to particular entities with the capacity to 'hinder' the dead by taking possession of his *la* in order to use his vital force. When a person is alive, in fact, the *la* has the support of the body, so that it is difficult for it to be attacked and taken away; at death, however, and especially in cases of violent death, it is easier for the entities called Shed to act as the *la* is without support, separated from the mind and the perceptual consciousness. From a ritual text on the 'Astrology of Death' (*gshin rtsis*):³⁵

When one falls into the power of impermanence
one leaves the aggregation of one's body,
the *la* is abducted by the Shedpa spirits,
the perceptual consciousness remains attached to the bodily
aggregation,
the mind wanders in the transmigration of the world.³⁶

When the Shed takes possession of the *la*, it is necessary to intervene with the rite of 'Vanquishment of the Shed' to recover the *la* and reunite it with the perceptual consciousness and the mind of the deceased. To give an idea of how the rite is performed, let us look at a ritual text edited by Karma Chagmed (17th century)³⁷ from the series of *Dur* rites linked with the Chöd system.³⁸

For the preparation, one must first get ready the offering *torma* and in front of oneself set up the triangular container called *homkhung*,³⁹ but not visualising it at one's feet otherwise it is said one's descent could die out. Then on a black base one sets up a hearth, using as andirons three stones from three different mountains, on which one places a pan (*sla nga*). A triangle is drawn in blood on the surface of the pan, inside which one puts three swords with the cutting edge turned inwards. Then one arranges the following ritual weapons that serve to conquer and capture the Shed: the knife (*gshed gri*), thong (*gshed bring*), sack (*gshed sgro*), sickle (*gshed mda*), bow (*gshed gzhu*), axe (*gshed sta*), the *shalagpa* (the foreleg of an animal, usually a sheep, with the flesh attached), the black tail of a yak

and mustard seeds (*thun rdzas*).⁴⁰ One also needs seven or twenty-one white pebbles, twenty-one black pebbles and a *phurba* (ritual dagger)⁴¹ set on a base made of a tray full of barley. At this point one draws the *liṅga*,⁴² the image representing the Shed, light blue and thin-limbed so that it has an emaciated look. In a *Dur* for a man it must have the head of a deer; in a *Dur* for a woman, of a black pig; in a *Dur* for an important person (*rab 'dur*), of a *chusin*; in a *Dur* for a child, of a mouse; in a *Dur* for the slain, the head must be of a red monkey. On different parts of the image and around it are written *mantra* and magical formulae with invocations to call the Shed, like "Disturbers, devouring spirits and Shed of death, wherever they might be, may they come running here! May they be captured! May they be bound! May they be detained!"

Furthermore, if the person for whom the rite is being performed died through the agency of the *Za*,⁴³ the image must have the head of a *Za*; if he died of famine, the head of a hoopoe; if he choked to death (*rmug 'dur*), the head of a *trawa*,⁴⁴ if he died falling off a mountain or under a rock fall (*rbab gri*), the head of a magpie; if he died in his own bed, the head of a yak; in the case of a mother who died by being infected by her own son or vice versa, the head of a hare; if death was caused by the 'Si of death' (*shi sri*), the head of a *dzomo*; if he died by drowning, the head of a water bird; if he died by suicide, the head of a *dzo*; if he died by accidental death at a very old age, the head of a monkey. Once the figure of the *liṅga* has been completed, it is purified by passing it over fire and shaking it in the wind, and finally it is tied with coloured threads.

Then one prepares nine ritual tablets (*byang bu*), which in a rite for a man must be of 'male wood': beech, *kyerpa* (*berberis asiatica*, a type of barberry) or cypress; in a rite for a woman of 'female wood': *langma* or willow; in a rite for a youth aged between seven and twenty of 'child wood' (*bu shing*): *tsarbu* (a shrub with a very slender trunk). On the tablets one must write in blood invocations similar to those on the *liṅga*. Finally on some paper or on a card one writes the name of the deceased and the syllable *nri* symbolising his life, and also prepares several small dough *liṅga* (*zan ling*) made with a mould. This ends the preparatory phase, which according to circumstances can be considerably simplified and abbreviated.⁴⁵

At this point the rite begins and the officiant, having visualised himself as the wrathful deity, invokes the help of the guardians and protective deities, and then describes the ritual objects and the *liṅga*:

On the human skin covering all the land, the base of the Shed, on three power stones like three human heads as andirons there is the pan full of boiling red cast iron of the hells.

The sack for the Shed made of human skin does not let out air.
The thong for the Shed, like the snare of (the hunter) Suta is nine fathoms long.

The axe to cut,
the sickle to scythe,
the bow and arrow to strike,
the tail to thrash,
the hammer to beat,
the mustard seeds to hurl,
the *phurba* to pierce,
the *shalagpa* to hit,
they all flare and strew sparks
and have the power to pulverise everything they touch!
This (*linga*) has the eyes of a dead person,
with his right hand he strikes his breast,
with his left hand he pulls out his hair,
his hands and feet are chained,
he bleeds from the nine body orifices,
he is blue and looks coarse,
he looks gaunt and emaciated,
he is naked and his whole body trembles...⁴⁶

The *linga*, the ritual tablets (*byang bu*) and the pebbles are put in the sack which is secured with a knot. Then an assistant takes the sack in his right hand, and with the axe resting on his left shoulder, the thong wrapped around his left elbow and the sickle in his left hand, he stands up and goes towards the east. While he beats the sack on the ground to make the Shed enter, the officiant visualises the wrathful deity's 'messengers' helping him in the capture and exclaims:

This disturber, devouring spirit, Shed of death (*shi gshed*)
I summon from the east, may he come running immediately!
May he be smitten by the human skin (*g.yang gzhi*)⁴⁷ being beaten
on the ground!
May he be struck by the big axe for the Shed!
May he be captured by the hooked scythe for the Shed!
May he be trapped in the skin sack for the Shed that does not let
out air (*rlung thub*)!⁴⁸
May he be tied with the nine-fathom-long thong for the Shed!⁴⁹
May he come running here immediately!⁵⁰

Then he returns and pours out the contents of the sack into the pan inside the triangle formed by the three swords. If the beneficiary of the

rite is a man, to indicate that the Shed has been caught the tablets must fall facing downwards, if it is a woman, they must fall facing upwards. The tablets that have fallen in the correct position are put in the homkhung ritual container while the others are put back into the sack together with the paper *liṅga* (*shog ling*) and a dough *liṅga*, then the assistant goes towards the south and repeats the same procedure as in the east.

When he returns he pours the contents of the sack into the pan and puts the tablets that have fallen the right way into the homkhung and puts the rest back into the sack. Then he repeats the procedure towards the west, the north, all four directions. Since only when all the tablets have fallen the right way can one be sure the Shed has been captured, if at this point this has not yet taken place, in order to discover the Shed's hiding place the sack is beaten on the ground throughout the house, repeating the same procedure as before. As a final method, while the officiant visualises the manifestations of the four deities with four animal heads (*gdong chen bzhi*)⁵¹ in action the sack is tied with the 'thong for the Shed' and two men belonging to different families grab it by the hafts and each pulls towards himself, beating it on the ground in all directions.

Finally the phase of 'cutting the escape route' (*'bros lam bcad*) of the Shed is carried out: all the men present take up the ritual weapons and surround the pan, and while they make striking gestures the officiant enjoins the Shed not to try to escape in any direction or at any time by day or night, because now he is in the officiant's power:

Oh disturber, devouring spirit, Shed of death,
do not escape towards the east!
If you think of escaping (remember)
in the east there is the *khandroma* of the Dorje (family),
she is my messenger
and will block the escape route of the Shed!
Do not escape at dawn!
If you think of escaping at sunrise (remember)
the dawn has the white face of the lion:
it is my emanation,
it will stop the Shed and will block its escape route!
Do not escape in the morning!
If you think of escaping in the morning (remember)
the morning has the yellow face of the jackal:
it is my emanation,
it will stop the Shed and will block its escape route!
Do not escape at midday!

If you think of escaping at midday (remember)
midday has the yellowish white face of the vulture:
it is my emanation,
it will stop the Shed and will block its escape route!
Do not escape in the evening!

If you think of escaping in the evening (remember)
the evening has the blue face of the crow:
it is my emanation,
it will stop the Shed and will block its escape route!
Do not escape at night!

If you think of escaping at night (remember)
the night has the red face of the fox:
it is my emanation,
it will stop the Shed and will block its escape route!
Do not escape at midnight!

If you think of escaping at midnight (remember)
midnight has the black face of the tiger:
it is my emanation,
it will stop the Shed and will block its escape route!
Do not escape at dawn!

If you think of escaping at daybreak (remember)
daybreak has the green face of the pig:
it is my emanation,
it will stop the Shed and will block its escape route!⁵²

It is explained that signs that the Shed has been captured can come in dreams, for example: dreams of catching a duck, of pouring molten metal, of finding yak fabric (*re ba*) or shoes that have been thrown away all indicate that the rite has been successful.⁵³

After the capture, the 'execution' (*bsgral*) of the Shed, represented by the *linga*, is carried out, a ritual action of destruction characteristic of the 'Shen of Magic Power'.⁵⁴ The officiant takes hold of the knife and the sickle, and while the assistants take up the other weapons he performs a visualisation that tallies with the cause of death of the beneficiary of the rite: if the person drowned, he must visualise a great wave of poison striking the Shed; if the person was murdered, he must visualise a rain of swords; if the person died pierced by an arrow, he must visualise a rain of arrows; if the person died by hanging (*'gag gri*), he must visualise a poisonous noose; if the person was poisoned, he must visualise poisonous water; if the person died by the agency of a Dön of men (*pho gdon*), he must visualise flames; if the person died by the agency of a Dön of women (*mo gdon*), he must visualise bloodstained mustard seeds; if the

person died by the agency of a Dön of the Lu, he must visualise poisoned mustard seeds etc. Finally all the weapons are placed on the *hornkhung* and the officiant pierces the *linga* with the *phurba*. The executed *linga* is then displayed in the four directions and the limbs are offered to the deities, while the consciousness principle of the Shed is transferred into the pure dimension of a deity.⁵⁴

In this way the officiant recovers from the clutches of the Shed the *la* which has been abducted, bringing it back to its abode together with the perceptual consciousness and the mind, to the great relief of the deceased. Moreover, as well as benefiting the dead these rites also perform the task of freeing those still alive from all disturbances by the 'devouring spirits' and the 'Shed of death' who, by taking hold of the *la* of the deceased, are able to assume his appearance in order to deceive and torment the living.

As they are of great benefit to the living as well as the dead these Bön rites⁵⁵ have always been extremely useful and necessary to everybody. For this reason, when the Master Padmasambhava arrived in Tibet and spread the Buddhist *Vajrayāna* teachings,⁵⁶ discerning with great acumen the propensities and requirements of the Tibetans he adapted to Buddhism the rites of 'Vanquishment of the Shed', along with several other ritual traditions originally found in Bön, such as the *Sang* rites (of fumigation by aromatic plants), the rites to ransom and summon the *la* (*bla bstu* and *bla 'gugs*), and the different types of *Dö*, *Lüd* and *To* rites linked with astrology. He compiled numerous texts of all these rites and hid them as *terma* which were subsequently rediscovered by various *tertön*, and which are still practiced today in all the Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Likewise, the great Tibetan lady Master Machig Labdrön (1031-1129) used the *Dur* rites as specific actions of the Chöd system of practice in order to liberate the dead from the hindrances of the Shed. In this tradition too there are numerous ritual texts, more or less elaborate, the efficacy of which has been of immense benefit right up to the present day.

Chapter VIII

The Bön of Exorcisms: The Rites for Purification

i THE TWELVE SERIES OF SEL RITES

This Bön comprises the *Sel* rites of 'exorcism' of negative forces which belong to the series of the 'Great Proclamation of the Origin of Existence', one of the four traditions of the 'River of Black Waters' of the 'Shen of the Phenomenal Universe'.

In the *Zijid*¹ these rites are subdivided in three groups each comprising four categories: exorcisms 'upwards' to enhance the white channel (fertility, fortune etc.) (*rtsa dkar 'phel ba'i yar sel*), exorcisms 'downwards' to eliminate the black channel (sterility, misfortune etc.) (*rtsa nag 'grib pa'i mar sel*), and exorcisms 'in middle space' to resolve conflicts between two equal forces (*mnyam gnyis bsor ba'i bar sel*).²

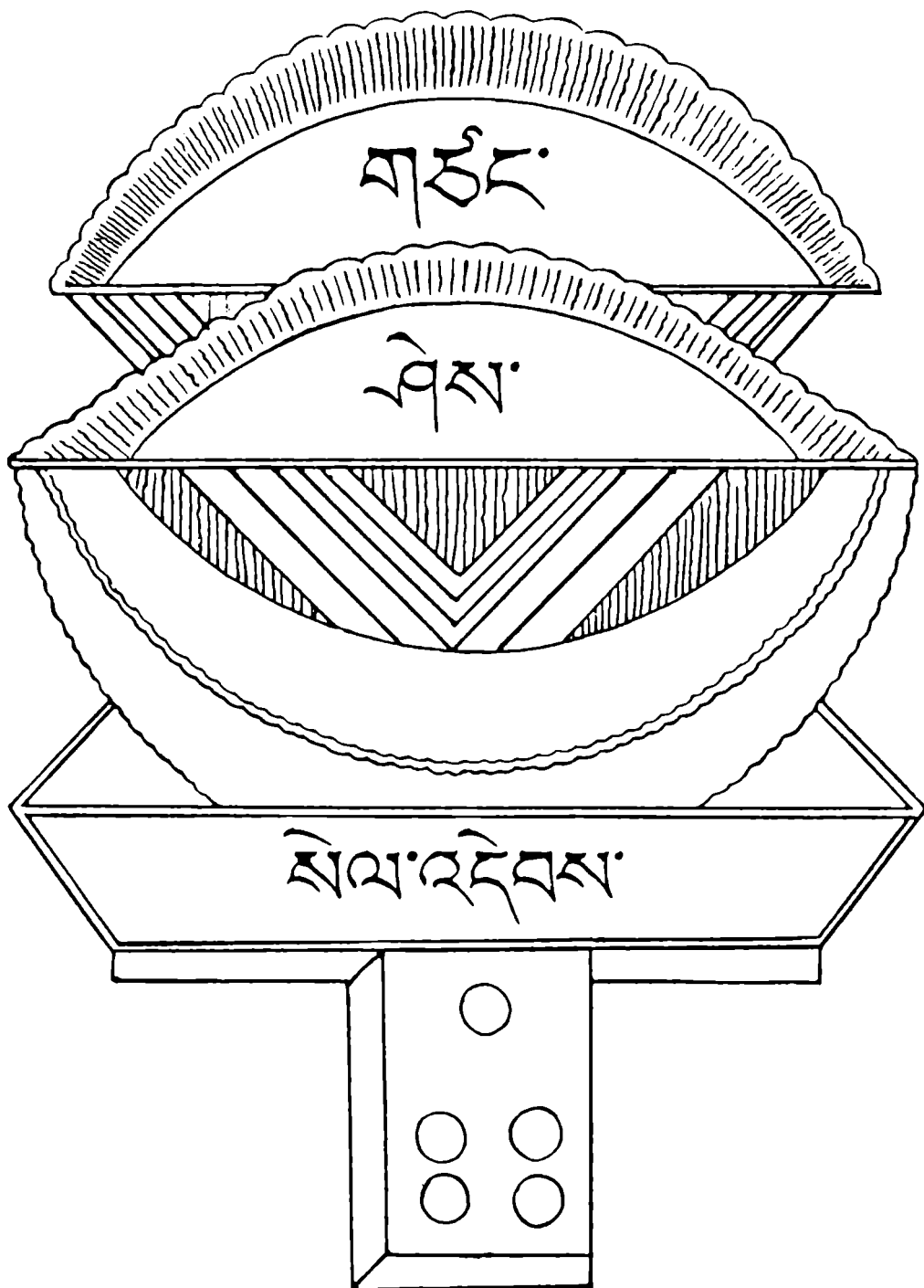
The four categories to enhance the 'white channel' are:

1. Exorcism to increase the vitality of the immortal white channel (*g.yung drung rtsa dkar srid pa'i 'phel sel*) for those without children (*rmang po*) who desire a copious progeny (*'phan pa*).
2. Exorcism to develop (the positive force of) existence (*srid pa gar gyi gyen sel*)³ for those afflicted by poverty who wish to become rich. When a person's energy is weak, it is easy to encounter material difficulties. In order to overcome these, in this rite the condition of the individual's energy is strengthened through the power of the *cha*.
3. Exorcism of the hindrances to the ascent of the 'protective horse' (*bsrung rta mthon por dar ba'i gegs sel*)⁴ for the weak and disheartened who wish to become powerful.
4. Exorcism to accede to the throne of the king (*rgyal gyi khri 'phang 'dzegs pa'i gong sel*), for those burdened with a low social class who wish to become important.

The four categories to eliminate the 'black channel' are:

1. Exorcism 'downwards' of the nine Dre and ten Si (*'dre dgu sri bcu'i thur sel*), if a family line is scant and there is the danger of its dying out. Here it is called 'exorcism downwards' because the Dre and Si spirits, which are the foremost of the entities causing sterility and children's deaths, act from below, from the lower dimension of the earth.
2. Exorcism 'downwards' of the Sadag of Existence (*srid pa'i sa bdag thur sel*) for the destitute in danger of dying of starvation.
3. Exorcism of the misfortunes and (the negative forces of) the Malachüd (*byur dang ma bla chud kyi dman sel*)⁵ for those in danger of being struck by drastic adversities. 'Malachüd' denotes a general class of female entities that dominate the land and places where men live, such as the

THE BÖN OF EXORCISMS: THE RITES FOR PURIFICATION



Tenma, Kyongma and Sadagmo (female Sadag), but constituted by the most wicked and savage members of these classes.

4. Exorcism of the negativities that do not allow one to rise (*mtho ru mi ster nyen pa'i skyon sel*) for those who are in a highly critical situation and about to succumb.

Finally the four categories to resolve conflicts between equal forces are:

1. Exorcism of the discords between men and deities (*lha dang mi'i bar gyi dbyen sel*), for those who have provoked the anger of the Lha, Lu, Nyen etc.
2. Exorcism of hindrances by means of the red vermilion bird (*bya dmar mtshal bu'i gag sel*), for cases of the gravest catastrophes. The name of this rite probably derives from the ancient custom practised in certain types of Bön of sacrificing cocks in order quickly to overcome sudden calamities and difficulties.
3. Exorcism of the impurities derived from the murder of blood relations, illegitimate children and incest (*dme mug nal gyi btsog sel*), for those contaminated by impure and negative deeds.⁶
4. Exorcism of bodeful portents to remove ill omens (*ltas ngan bzlog pa'i than sel*), for those tormented by extremely bad dreams and predictions.

With each of these twelve original categories of *Sel* rites of the 'River of Black Waters' there were linked ten 'archetypal events' (*srid pa'i dpe*), for each of which there arose a series of exorcism rites, and for each of these series, a ritual system of 'proclamation of the origin' or *mang* (*smrang*). Thus three hundred and sixty types of exorcism rites were established: one hundred and twenty 'white' *Sel* rites (*sel dkar*), such as the 'exorcism upwards of the lark' (*lco ga'i yar sel*: probably linked with the 'melody of the lark' listed among the 'nine melodies' (*gcong dgu*) to exhort the deities and the Walmo of the dimension above); the 'exorcism for the pure deities' (*gtsang ma'i lha sel*);⁷ the 'exorcism for the Se of the four regions' (*ru bzhi'i gsas sel*);⁸ the 'exorcism for the land of the divine princes' (*lha sras dog sel*) etc; one hundred and twenty 'black' *Sel* (*sel nag*), such as the 'exorcism to repel the eight classes' (*sde brgyad bzlog sel*); the 'red exorcism for the Theurang' (*the'u rang dmar sel*: perhaps connected with ancient animal sacrifices) etc; one hundred and twenty 'multicoloured' *Sel* (*khra sel*), such as the 'exorcism by means of arrows of the (same) number of men' (*mi grangs kyi mda' sel*:⁹ probably a rite in which the number of arrows prepared as support (*srog shing*) correspond to the number of persons to be protected, in order to reinforce their vital principle).

ii THE MEANING OF 'EXORCISM' AND THE DESCRIPTION OF A RITE

The underlying purpose for which these three hundred and sixty types of exorcism arose was the elimination (*sel ba*) of the disease of the passions and the sufferings derived from them, which afflict all beings. However the specific motive is that as men do not distinguish good from evil, and do not know how to maintain purity and avoid impurity, they create a basis of negativity. In fact, by the murder of blood relations (*dme*), the birth of illegitimate children (*mug*) and incest (*nal*), bodeful portents, ill omens and accidents, widowhood, contagion by impure energies, contaminations of the hearth (*thab gzhob*) and violent quarrels etc., men accumulate a large number of deeds which disturb the deities' vision and contaminate the deities of the pure regions (*gtsang ris kyi lha*). Consequently the power residing in the land and the places (linked to different kinds of beings) are contaminated and weakened (*mnol bar 'gyur*), the exhalations of these contaminations (*mnol brib*)¹⁰ recoil on man, and destitution, epidemics, famine, war and other catastrophes ensue in the world. The specific task of the *Sel* rites is the purification and elimination of all these negative causes in order to restore the happiness of beings, and it is precisely because of their function of exorcism of contaminations and of all kinds of hindrances and fateful influences that they were named *Sel*: literally, 'eliminate'.¹¹

The *Zijid* contains the following brief description of the way to perform one of these exorcisms, which can give some idea of the complexity of these kinds of rites:

The place, the objects and their arrangement,
the ritual chant (*gyer*) and the concluding section: (these) four (are
the necessary elements).

The place must face the confluence of valleys or hills (*mdo dang
mdud*)

with a majestic (mountain) (*'gying*), a place where water flows
(*'khyil*),¹² a propitious (terrain) (*dpal*) and a crossroads.

The majestic (mountain) must be behind and (the rite) must be
performed in the place where the water flows,
homage must be paid (to the deities) on the propitious (terrain)
and (the ritual gifts) left at the crossroads.

The (necessary) objects: diverse aromatic plants, bird feathers,
coloured wool, *sheltsig*,

the 'wish-fulfilling cow' and plumed birds,

the white monkey, the badger (*klong grum*) and the white cow,

the bat (*bya ma byel bu*) etc., these and other things must be collected. Furthermore, offerings of different qualities of cereals and enjoyment objects: white, sweet¹³ and of meat and blood, all these must be prepared in full.

Once one has determined the power place where one is to perform the exorcism of existence,¹⁴ with (behind one and) above the three valleys (representative) of being,

(in front and) below the three valleys (representative) of non-being

and in the middle in the meeting place of men and deities,¹⁵ on the divine white altar

one pours grains of green barley,¹⁶

as 'support' one sets up the divine arrow with the white feather and arranges the offering objects for carrying out the exorcism.

The Bönpo of the Exorcism of Existence, who performs the 'great proclamation' (*smrang chen*),

must majestically wear a white turban,

must imbibe the libation drinks,

proffer with his hands the offering objects

and chant the *mang* with the (appropriate) melody.

Offerings of human beings must be rejected.¹⁷

The (proclamation of the) *mang* must be exhaustive and detailed:

the power of the 'Black Waters' derives from the *mang*,

the power of the 'White Waters' derives from the *mantra*.

The power of the officiant priest (*dpon gsas*) is precious,

that is why the 'Black Waters' function through the *mang*.

For the concluding section, one must chant the verses for the prosperity (of the generations) (*yag kha*).¹⁸

iii THE IMPURITIES TO BE ELIMINATED

Of all the methods of exorcism from the series of *Sel* rites, those currently most popular, among Bönpos and Buddhists alike, are the *Sang* (*bsang*) rites of purification by the smoke of aromatic plants and, to a lesser extent, those of sprinkling with lustral water called *Tsen* (*tshan*), *Tsentrü* (*tshan khrus*) or simply *Trü* (*khru*).¹⁹ Therefore, analysing the fundamental characteristics of these two classes of purificatory rites we will be able to understand the intention underlying the series of *Sel* rites in order to identify the genuine principle of the need to 'exorcise' negative forces.

To this end it is important first of all to understand which are the impurities and negativities that have to be eliminated, and the means of

effecting the purification. In general it is explained that what needs to be purified are all the different types of contaminations (*mnol grib*) that weaken the positive force. The primordial cause of these contaminations, according to a text from the ritual cycle of *Gekhöd Sangwa Dragchen*,²⁰ is mythically imputed to a 'strewing of poisons' which took place in the remote past:

In ancient times, during the first time cycle,
 from the centre of the darkness of ignorance
 spread jealousy, unconsciousness of the three poisons,
 and (there arose) obscuration, the poison of unconsciousness and
 ignorance,
 attachment, the poison that makes one take on bodies in trans-
 migration,
 anger, the poison of the passion that makes one take rebirth
 continuously
 and pride, the poison of the illusion of a form:
 jealousy is a more potent poison than that of the Lord of Death
 and the five poisons are nothing but aspects of the poison of
 jealousy.

Thus did the poison spread
 and the blood frog groaned like a bull.
 The poisons of the oath spread
 and the blood lake boiled by itself.
 The poisons of rancour spread
 and the black dog and the goat confronted each other and
 fought.

The poisons of murder of relations spread
 and the red monkey ate its own flesh.
 The poisons and the jealousy of the Död and the Tsen
 caused disturbances through the change of the fabric and the
 'black' shift (of nomads' tents).²¹

The jealousies of the Theurang and the Sinpo
 caused disturbances through objects and riches.
 The poisons of the Modön and the Senmo²² caused disturbances
 through the transport of black kitchen utensils.²³

Concerning these 'poisons', an invocation from another ritual text²⁴
 tells us:

Murder of blood relations, illegitimate children, incest, twins,²⁵
 lepers and widows,

the living buried in tombs²⁶ and the vapours from the blood of those murdered by members of the family, the fumes from cremated corpses²⁷ and the exhalations from dead bodies etc.:

may whichever kind of impurity that has been caused be suppressed by this exorcism of the poisons of the elements!²⁸

As already mentioned there are two preeminent means of purification, the *Sang* fumigation rites and the *Tsentrü* sprinkling rites, which I shall treat separately.

iv THE SANG: PURIFICATION BY AROMATIC PLANTS

Although in more recent times the custom has arisen to consider the *Sang* rite an offering to satisfy the sense of smell, serving the same function as incense and scent in the offerings of the five senses traditionally practised in Tibetan Buddhism, its fundamental characteristic and purpose is another: to purify or eliminate all the types of impurity and contamination, in conformity with the principle of the *Sel* rites. In fact, an origin myth of the *Sang* taken from the Gekhöd cycle says:²⁹

Where did the *Sang* originate?

Above the peak where the three existences meet

Namchi Kungyel (Queen Sky Ancestress),³⁰ nectareous mother, wore a mantle of nectar,

let nectar rain from her mouth,

held a vase of nectar in her hands

and was engaged in scattering nectar everywhere.

To eliminate the passions and suffering

and to glimpse the divine countenance of Gekhöd,

with a sudden movement of her eyebrows

she filled her mouth with saliva

and invoked the fulfilment of her aspirations:³¹

“In the human world with four continents

suffering and the thoughts of the passions are many:

may there come into the world the substances and the medicines

that eliminate thoughts

and the plants that purify the ‘savage god’ (*lha rgod*: Gekhöd)!³²

Then she spat the spittle from the sky onto the earth

and so (the substances for) the *Sang* came into being:

white sandstone,³³ substance of the snows;

nectareous stalwort,³⁴ substance of slate;

nectareous carex,³⁵ substance of rocks;

white peaked edelweiss,³⁶ substance of meadows;
 sweet scented *pöme*,³⁷ substance of barren rocky mountains;
 golden leaf artemisia,³⁸ substance of clefts in rocks;
 turquoise leaf cypress, substance of sunny slopes;
 white *patru*,³⁹ substance of north-facing slopes;
 brown sandalwood, substance of the forests.

The Bönpos of the original lineage of Shang Shung
 cut the leaves of the aromatic plants for purification
 and burnt them as a symbol of the poison of the passions.
 Wild sparks flew out like fierce thunderbolts
 and the evil, hostile and obstructive spirits (*bgegs*) were sub-
 jugated.

The flames pervaded intermediate space and
 brightened the darkness of the thoughts of the passions.
 The embers remained on the earth
 and were the delight of men and deities.
 The white ashes were scattered by the wind
 and the hostile obstructive spirits were reduced to dust.
 Clouds of smoke gathered in the sky
 and were absorbed into the nostrils of the Lha, Se and Wal.
 The impurities were purified and the contaminations eliminated.⁴⁰

And, from a text belonging to a collection of rituals attributed to Padma-
 sambhava:⁴¹

Where did the *Sang* originate?

The *Sang* came from the sky.

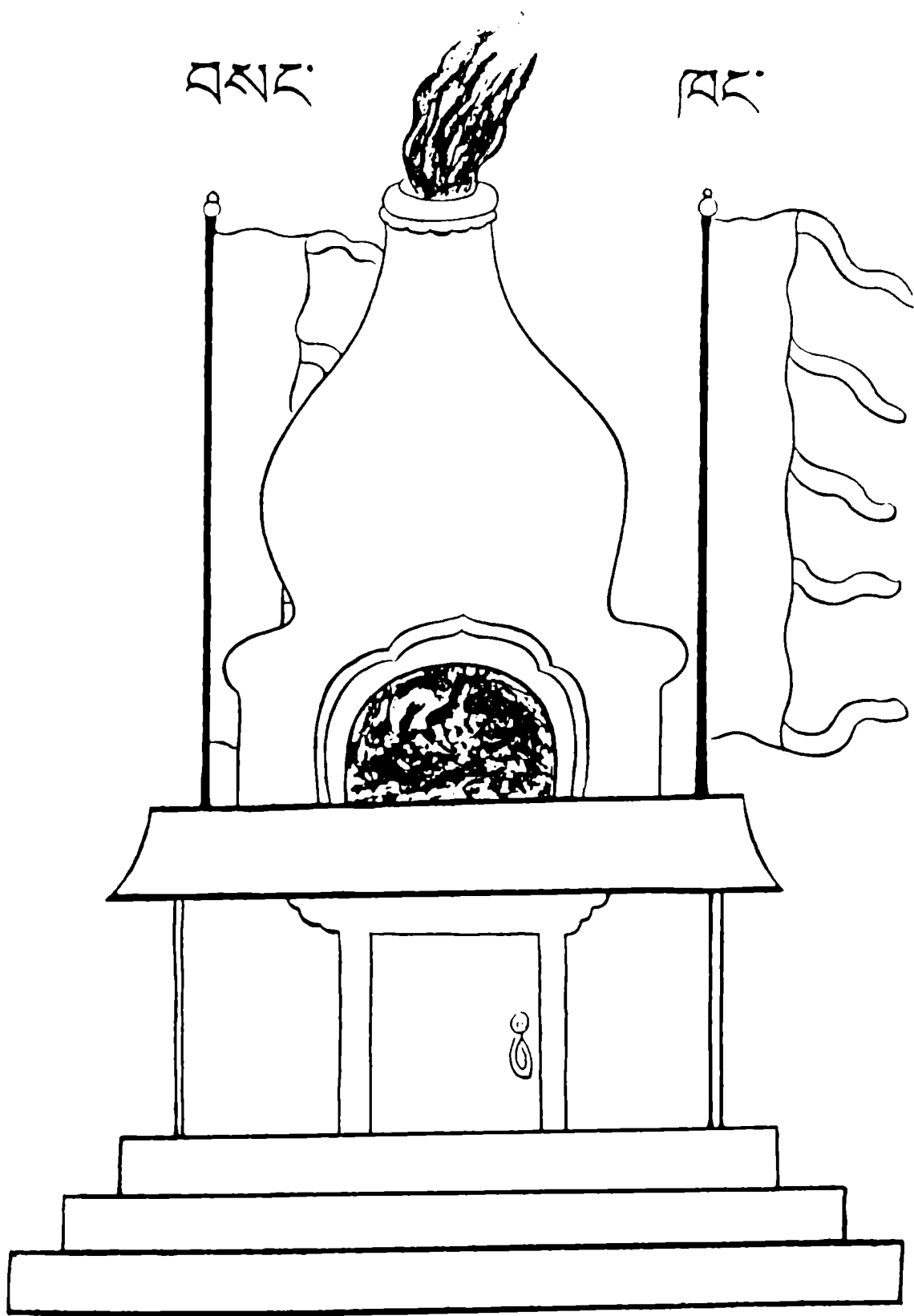
The father was the thunder that rumbled in the sky,
 the mother was the lightning that flashed onto the earth,
 the offspring were the snow that piled on Mount Tago,⁴²
 the foam (*kha zhag*) of turquoise Lake Mapham,
 the healing power of the six excellent medicines⁴³
 and the fragrance of perfumed incenses.

We offer *chemar* (barley flour and butter),⁴⁴ boiled milk and
 scorched foods,

the beech resplendent with golden leaves,
 the cypress resplendent with turquoise leaves,
 the rhododendron⁴⁵ resplendent with conch white leaves,
 the artemis, the *pökar*⁴⁶ and the eaglewood.⁴⁷

We offer the smoke of the aromatic plants
 with *chemar*, first portions of food (*phud*) and libations
 to purify all the deities and spirits.⁴⁸

HEARTH FOR SANG FUMIGATION



From another text in the same collection:⁴⁹

Purified! Purified! May the obscurations (*rmugs pa*) be purified!
 Purified! Purified! May obfuscation (*thig pa*) be purified!
 Purified! Purified! May torpor (*byings pa*) be purified!
 Purified! Purified! May the contamination caused by vow breaking (*mnyams grib*) be purified!
 Purified! Purified! May the contamination caused by rancour (*'khon grib*) be purified!
 Purified! Purified! May the contamination caused by the murder of blood relations (*dme grib*) be purified!
 May the smoke that rises into the sky
 purify the Lha that fill the sky:
 may all the impurities that have contaminated the Lha
 be purified from today!
 May the sparks that flash into intermediate space
 purify the Nyen that fill that space:
 may all the impurities that have contaminated the Nyen
 be purified from today!
 May the flames that roll on the earth
 purify the Lu that fill the earth:
 may all the impurities that have contaminated the Lu
 be purified from today!
 So all of you, protective deities and retinues,
 remain in health without obscuration or obfuscation!
 When obfuscation is eliminated there is great pleasure!
 There is nothing the *Sang* does not purify!
 There is nothing the *Trü* (lustral sprinkling) does not cleanse!⁵⁰

v *TSENTRÜ*: THE RITES OF LUSTRAL SPRINKLING

Tsentrü or *Tsen* is a characteristic name used in the Bön tradition to designate the rites of purification by sprinkling water and other lustral substances, that certainly date back to very ancient times. In fact, the legend of the origin of the first king of Tibet recounts that for his purification before being crowned the king was bathed in water and milk, in accordance with the *Tsentrü* rite.⁵¹ Moreover, in most of the *Dö* ransom rites, *Sang* fumigation rites, rites to summon the cha and prosperity etc. this sprinkling is performed as an indispensable preparatory phase. From the *General Dö of Existence*:

YAM RAM MAM LAM AM:⁵² may all be purified!
 With this clean water of the *Tsen*

may the Lha above be purified!
May the Nyen in the middle be purified!
May the Lu below be purified!
May the base (altar) be purified!
May the prepared objects be purified!
May the 'castle' acting as support be purified!
May all be cleansed and purified!⁵³

In fact this purification rite comprises two different categories, the 'white *Tsen*' (*dkar tshan* or *tshan dkar*) in which water, milk and medicinal substances are used, and the 'red *Tsen*' (*dmар tshan* or *tshan dmar*) in which the purifying agent consists of different types of blood.

vi THE WHITE *TSEN*: PURIFICATION BY WATER

A text from the ritual cycle of Gekhöd⁵⁴ informs that the preparation for the 'white *Tsen*' consists in blending different kinds of medicines, incenses and precious substances in a mixture of clean water and milk in a ceremonial vase (*bum pa*) made of precious materials or in a container made from a conch shell (*dung phor*); also, the right wing of a grouse (*gong mo*)⁵⁵ is needed to sprinkle the liquid. The myth that explains the origin of the 'white *Tsen*' says:

Where did the *Tsen* originate?
To whom do these lustral waters belong?
Above the peak where the three existence meet
Namchi Kungyel, nectareous mother,
wore a mantle of nectar,
clouds of nectar gathered around her head,
she held a vase of nectar in her hands,
she made nectar rain from her mouth,
she was busy sprinkling nectar everywhere.
The substance of nectar was her food,
the juice of nectar was her drink.
To heal the diseases of the passions
of beings enslaved by the passions and suffering,
and so that the god could meet the 'Owner of the god'⁵⁶
she filled her mouth with saliva
and invoked that it might become nectareous medicine:
"In the human world with four continents
may there be born for the benefit of beings
the substances and medicines that eliminate suffering!"
Then she spat the spittle onto the earth

and so there came into being (the substances for) the *Tsen*.
Because they fell in series they are called *Tsen*.⁵⁷

As they heal diseases they are called medicines (*sman*).

As they cleanse impurities they are called *Trü*.

As they purify contaminations they are called *Tsen*.

Nectareous camphor, medicine from the snows,

cuttle fish bones, medicine from the waters,

yellow marigold,⁵⁸ medicine from the meadows,

white calcite, medicine from stones,

brown *dragzhun* (mineral pitch), medicine from rock,

chalcedony-coloured (musk of the) *lawa* (musk deer), medicine
from the forests,

bezoar (intestinal concretion), medicine from the elephant,

the medicinal snows of Tise

and the waters of Lake Mapang

were blended into a nectareous medicine

that was poured with a silver ladle.

But the *Tsen* did not have a tongue (i.e. an instrument for sprinkling),

and there was no horse for the *Trü*.

The pure bird of the deities

surrounded by pure medicines,

the grouse, the bird of medicine,

had vermilion patterns on its feathers,

wore a reddish shawl,⁵⁹

and around its blue neck

it had slate-coloured patterns.

Its beak was a gold chisel,

its shoes were of copper,

and its song was the melodious sound of the *piwang*.⁶⁰

It flew on the peak of the King of mountains (Meru),

it lived in the slate mountains, in mountain meadows and on the
snow,

it dug wells of nectar

and with *mantra* it separated nectar from poison.

It pronounced the *mantra* that eliminate poisons:

“*dugchom dugthub tsangyur chik*” (may the poisons be controlled,
eliminated and purified!).

When the grouse said “*dugchom*” (may the poisons be destroyed!)

it was the divine mantra to control poisons;

When the grouse said “*tsang tsang*” (pure! pure!)

he invited the deities to purify themselves.

The right wing of the grouse, bird of medicine,
thus became the tongue for the nectareous *Tsen*.
The impurities were purified and the contaminations eliminated.⁶¹

Another text says:⁶²

They wanted to offer the *Tsen* and the *Trü* to the deities
but there was not the substances for the *Tsen*.
“Where will we now find the substances for the *Tsen*?”
In the beginning there was emptiness in which there was nothing,
from there primordial existence came forth,
little by little it developed to the state of atoms,
then became a condensation of dew,
and from this the precious Supreme Mountain (Meru) formed.
East of the Supreme Mountain
sprang the river Sindhu Karpo (White Sindhu)
whence originated nine types of lustral water (*tshan dgu*).
North of the Supreme Mountain
sprang the river Walchu Sinmo (Sinmo Boiling Liquid).
West of the Supreme Mountain
sprang the river Menchu Sinme (Pure Medicinal Waters).
South of the Supreme Mountain
sprang the river Dödtsi Sojed (Healing Nectar).
From the four corners of the Supreme Mountain
sprang the river Kunso Lenjed (Moistening Panacea).⁶³
These became the substances for the divine ‘white *Tsen*’.⁶⁴
Now there were the substances for the *Tsen*
but there was no container for the *Tsen*.
A white recipient made from a conch shell,
a ladle of yellow gold
and five vases made of precious materials
became the containers for the *Tsen*.
Now there were the containers for the *Tsen*
but there were no ingredients (*phrod*) of the *Tsen*.
Nine types of water from snow (*gangs tshan*) and slate (*g.ya’ tshan*)
became the ingredients of the *Tsen*.
Now there were the ingredients of the *Tsen*
but there were no substances to protect (*skyobs*) the *Tsen*.
The milk of the white sheep
and the milk of the brown *dri* (female yak)
were the substances to protect the *Tsen*.
Different kinds of medicines

were the substances to protect the *Tsen*.

Now there were the substances to protect the *Tsen*
but there was no 'tongue'.

The right wing of the grouse, bird of the deities,
wool from the head of the white sheep
and hairs from the tail of the divine white *dri*
became the 'tongue' of the *Tsen*.

Now there was a tongue of the *Tsen*
but there was no officiant for the *Tsen*.

"Where will we find the officiant for the *Tsen*?"

The divine child Khorang Khorchung
wore a silk waistcoat;
the top part of his body

was untainted by murder of blood relations or robbery,
the lower part was untainted by contaminations or impurities.

He said "*tsango*" (may it be purified!) and "*taggo*" (may it be
cleansed!)

and was chosen as officiant for the *Tsen*.

Then the vase of the *Tsen* was delivered to him
and the child took it in his hands.

He exclaimed "*tsango*" three times into the sky,
three times into intermediate space,
three times towards the earth
and three times in all four directions.

Then he hurled the *Tsen* (lustral liquid) three times into the sky
and the three hundred and sixty Gekhöd of the sky⁶⁵ were
purified.⁶⁶

So far we have discussed the function of the *Sang* and *Tsentrü* rites to purify the deities that dominate the outer world, such as the Lha that dwell in the skies, Nyen that reside in intermediate space and Lu that live under the ground, because by contaminating them and making them become impure man can easily receive misfortune and diseases from them befalling both himself and his livestock. However the sphere of contamination is not confined to the external: all the energies or 'deities' that live in symbiosis with the individual, such as the Five Deities of the Individual (*'go ba'i lha lnga*), the Nine Protective Deities (*skyobs pa'i lha dgu*),⁶⁷ the Deities of the Cha, of the Yang, of the Lungta etc. can also be contaminated or weakened through man's deeds. When this happens the person's ascendancy-capacity or power (*dbang thang*) dwindles and he becomes like a magnet that attracts all sorts of misfortune and negativity. In these cases, in order to purify the impurities that have contaminated

the 'inner deities' it is considered very important for the person to submit himself to the *Sang* fumigation and the *Tsentrü* lustral sprinkling.

Concerning the latter, in nearly all the regions of east Tibet a particular custom is enacted when a wedding is celebrated:⁶⁸ the moment when the bride enters the spouse's kitchen, first of all the officiating lama, called the *pagla* (*bag bla*), sprinkles a mixture of water and milk over the bride and the Deity of the Home (*Phuglha*), in a ceremony called *Tsentrü*. Immediately afterwards the bride is given a new name, and it is by this new name that she is introduced to the Deity of the Home. When it is the bridegroom who goes to live in the bride's house, the same rite is performed for him. The close links between this custom and the ancient Bön purification rites is evident.

vii THE RED TSEN: PURIFICATION BY BLOOD

According to a text of this rite taken from the Gekhöd cycle⁶⁹ the preparation of the 'red *Tsen*' consists in putting into a clean container all the requisite substances, principally different kinds of precious materials, medicines and blood, that are 'empowered' by visualising them as an ocean of nectar. Then the *torma* (sacrificial cakes) and other offerings are prepared, while all the objects that are impure or infected by 'poisons' and that have to be purified, belonging to the officiant or the person who has sponsored the rite, are put in one or three other containers. At this point the origin myth is chanted:

How did it happen that in ancient times Gekhöd was contaminated?

That savage god, 'Subduer of the Död' (*lha rgod bdud dul*)⁷⁰
took on the guise of a Khyung

and eclipsed the three worlds.

He manifested as a sturdy lion
and his body was endowed with all energy.

He took the form of a fierce intrepid tiger
and luminous stripes appeared on his back.

He took the shape of a *drong* (wild yak)⁷¹
and his horns radiated flames.

He conquered the world of the Död,
destroyed the world of the Sinpo,
pulverised the world of the Dön:

he did not disobey his father's orders.

Dödza (Död wife) Yumingma⁷²
felt affection for the Död

and went to the black country of the Död:

she abandoned her little son
and forsook her husband.

The son was told nothing by his father,
he did not recognise his mother
and destroyed the world of the Dūd,
killing Dūdza Yumingma.

He gave the ring finger of the left hand
and a white silver ring
to his father as a token of what he had done.

The father was satisfied by (the deed against) the mother
and gave his son a prize for his heroism,
(but when) the son recognised his mother
the negativities (*khrom*) and the impurities of the murder (*dme*)
contaminated the deity.

Then Gekhöd 'Subduer of the Dūd'
stole the sun and the moon,
hid them in his right and left cheeks
and went to sleep in a dark cell having nine rings (of walls):
darkness fell over the land of the deities.

The world of the Lha was contaminated and the world of the Se
was infected.

Sleeping day after day he did not wake for months.

Sleeping month after month he did not wake for years.

The world of the deities was in danger of being destroyed by the
Dūd,

the human world was wrapped in darkness.

Then many inhabitants of the divine world met in council
and decided that whoever succeeded in waking Gekhöd
would receive insignia of power,
but nobody could awaken Gekhöd.

Then Kuji Mangke⁷³ said:

"I will be able to waken Gekhöd!"

He donned a tunic of fox skin and weasel skin,
a small gilt cap

and a gold coloured cloak

and mounted the horse 'White-Mouthed Ibex'

with reins as sheer as a cobweb,

filled a cup with boiling molten iron

and poured it into the ear of Gekhöd 'Subduer of the Dūd'.

Gekhöd woke up and raised his head,

'White-Mouthed Ibex' reared in fright

and Kuji Mangke fell senseless.

Gekhöd burst into loud laughter
and the sun and moon flew out of his cheeks.
The sun and moon shone again, darkness was dispelled.
As Gekhöd had reawakened, the world of deities brightened.
Kuji Mangke told him,
“If you feel pity for the deities you have contaminated
I ask you to purify them with the *Sang* and the *Tsen*.”
Then into a ladle made of the horn of a *drong*
he poured the thirteen types of blood that purify contaminations
(*mnol thub khrag sna bcu gsum*):
the purifying blood of the thoroughbred horse,
the purifying blood of the crystal-white goat,
the purifying blood of the *seuruchig* (rhinoceros, or a type of
roebuck),⁷⁴
the purifying blood of the cemetery pig with an iron-coloured
head (*dur phag lcag mgo*),
the purifying blood of the brown bull,
the purifying blood of the white vulture,
the purifying blood of the female *drong* (*khong mo 'brong*),
the purifying blood of the white snow lynx,
the purifying blood and bile of the *dom* and the *dred* (two kinds
of bear),⁷⁵
the purifying blood of the *nye* (a type of deer) and of the *kasha*
(the dappled fawn),⁷⁶
the purifying blood of the blue hawk (*ye tse sngon mo*).⁷⁷
With the thirteen types of blood that purify contaminations
Gekhöd washed his hands soiled by the murder
and the negative deed of matricide with its consequences was
purified.
Then he sprinkled the *Tsen* over all the world:
Gekhöd was purified, the ‘savage god’ was clean.
May all the divine worlds be purified!⁷⁸

The text continues by listing the specific contaminations that have to be eliminated by using the thirteen types of blood:

When Gekhöd is not happy,
first one must confess errors,
then repent sincerely,
and finally purify them by means of the *Tsen*,
bathing with the different types of blood that purify contam-
inations.

If one has repudiated one's *yidam* (tutelary deity) to take another
 (deity)
 one must bathe with the purifying blood of the vulture.
 If one has contaminated the 'vow deity'⁷⁹
 one must bathe with the purifying blood of the blue hawk.
 If one has broken or spoiled one's 'vow'
 one must bathe with the purifying blood of the thoroughbred
 horse.
 If one has mated (lit. 'mixed his sweat') with an 'impure woman'
 (*mun nag mo*)⁸⁰
 one must bathe with the purifying blood of the goat.
 If one has lain with a woman tarnished by murder (*dme rag mo*)⁹¹
 one must bathe with the purifying blood of the snow lynx. .
 If one has donned 'impure' attire (or belonging to an unknown
 person: *ya ma can gyi gos*)⁸²
 one must bathe with the purifying blood of the cemetery pig.
 If one has eaten food offered by someone who has broken his
 vow
 one must bathe with the purifying blood of the *drong*.
 If one has eaten the meat from a horse's back
 one must bathe with the purifying blood of the brown bull.
 If one has touched a bare corpse with one's hands (*mi ro dmar*)
 one must bathe with the purifying blood of the *dom* and the *dred*.
 If one has stopped worshipping the Nyengöd⁸³ and taken on
 other deities
 one must bathe with the purifying blood of the *seuruchig*.
 If one has offended the Lhagöd⁸⁴
 one must bathe with the purifying blood of the *nye* and the *kasha*.
 All the hidden obstacles due to murders, illegitimate children and
 incest,
 the hindrances due to rancour and contaminations of the hearth,
 and all the poisons and negativities of past actions and latent
 traces
 of we *shenpo* practitioners,
 of our masters and our spiritual brothers and sisters,
 of all the deities that live inside us and protect us
 and of all the male and female members of the family that has
 commissioned (the rite) etc.:
 may whatever kinds of impurity and decay that exist
 be cleansed with these types of blood that purify contamina-
 tions!⁸⁵

viii BLOOD AND MEAT IN TANTRISM

On reading that for the 'red Tsen' rites it is necessary to have the blood of different types of animals, one may be led to think that the accusations often brought against the Bönpos of performing cruel sacrifices are true, and indeed someone might even use these ancient myths to prove the existence of these ritual practices. But these would be superficial assumptions, that would certainly collapse were one to analyse the matter in the proper way. In fact, in both the ancient and modern Buddhist tantric traditions in the *maṇḍala* of the *Heruka*⁸⁶ there are prescribed the offerings of the 'five meats', the 'five nectars'⁸⁷ and the five sense organs, while in the *gaṇacacakra* rite⁸⁸ the indispensable *samaya* objects (*dam tsi gi rdzas*) or 'vow symbols' are meat and *chang* (or any alcoholic drink). Let us read from one of the most famous Buddhist tantras, the *Guhyasamāja*:⁸⁹

If for food one eats the meats,
carefully discerning the 'great meats',
one will obtain all the realisations
of body, voice and mind, and the secret one.
The meat of the elephant, the meat of the horse,
and the sacred meat of the dog
should be eaten as food.
If one does not touch other food
the wise Bodhisattvas and Buddhas
will be satisfied.⁹⁰

Another passage says:

With the supreme *samaya* (vow) of the 'great meats'
one must practice for the realisation of the three *vajra*.⁹¹
With the supreme *samaya* of excrement and urine
one becomes the principal 'knowledge holder'.
With the *samaya* of elephant meat
one obtains the five clairvoyances.⁹²
With the *samaya* of horse meat
one becomes master of the invisible.
With the *samaya* of dog meat
one obtains all the realisations.
With the *samaya* of ox meat
one achieves the supreme realisation of the indestructible state
(*vajra*).⁹³

One should not think that these '*samaya* objects' spoken of in tantric Buddhism, whether they are materially prepared or only mentally

visualised, serve a function that is very different from that of the various types of blood in the 'red *Tsen*' rites, and there is no reason to allow the observance of these practices to the Buddhists and deny it to the Bönpos. Moreover, when a tantric practitioner has to use the '*samaya* objects' he makes do with what he can find at the moment, and one has never heard that in order to obtain the 'great meats' Tibetan yogis used to go first to India to kill elephants, then to Mongolia to butcher horses and finally returned to Tibet to slaughter all the dogs and oxen they could find. Likewise, it is logical to assume that the Bönpo practitioners must have used as 'vow objects' of the 'red *Tsen*' only those types of blood that were relatively easy to obtain.

ix HEALING PROPERTIES OF THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF BLOOD

Also in traditional Tibetan medicine, many drugs derived from animals are used, generally grouped in twenty-nine categories corresponding to as many organs and substances, naturally including blood. Let us read from an 18th century medical treatise:⁹⁴

The horns, eyes, tongue, teeth, neck, heart, lungs,
liver, bile, spleen, kidneys, stomach, intestine,
genitals, bones, marrow, brain, fat,
blood, flesh, skin, hair, feathers,
nails, stomach, the residue of ruminants (*slo*),
faeces, urine, milk, the whole body (*bub ril*: for example of an
insect).⁹⁵

And in particular, concerning the healing properties of different types of blood:

The blood of the pig concentrates the poisons and the *mugpo cherwa* (a 'phlegm' disturbance associated with the blood);⁹⁶
the blood of the bull and of the yellow cow concentrates diffused intoxications;
the blood of the internal organs of the wild yak (*g.yag rgod*) and of the *dzo*, the blood of the ass's tail, and the blood of the nose of the goat, of the antelope (*rgya*) and of the yellow dog heals wounds;
the blood of the nose of the black pig and the blood of the blackish goat fix the synovial fluid in the articulations;
the blood of the deer eliminates parasites and stops uterine hemorrhages;
the blood of the crest of the cock improves the complexion and keeps it soft;

the blood of (its) neck wattle stops menstrual discharge;
the first flow of regular menstrual blood protects against the
‘weapons of the Dön’;
healthy menstrual blood cures intestinal colics and loss of blood
in the faeces,
strengthens the nerves, heals wounds and makes tissue regrow;
the blood of the ass cures arthritis and eliminates excess serosity
from the articulations;
the blood of the goat eliminates smallpox and syphilis;
the blood of the *tsöd* (a type of antelope)⁹⁷ and of the wild yak
stops diarrhoea;
the blood of man and of the dog eliminate leprosy;
the blood of the crow protects against the ‘Dön from above’;
the blood of the porcupine (*gzug mo*) makes the hairs of the
eyebrows regrow;
the blood of the *nawa* (a type of wild sheep)⁹⁸ prevents the ail-
ments of alcoholism;
blood that is still warm of the ruddy bull stops poison spreading
in the channels;
the blood of the horse, taken after having tired out the animal,
helps heal wounds, stops nasal hemorrhages and restores the
excretory functions.⁹⁹

As this passage shows, many types of blood are used in medicine, but the purpose of the explanations of their properties found in the treatises is obviously only to indicate to the doctor which blood he should choose from those available to him at the moment, and surely not to turn all doctors into butchers who obtain blood by taking beings’ lives. Undoubtedly on the basis of a similar principle the Bön practitioners used the different kinds of blood in the ‘red *Tsen*’ rites, and seeing the curative properties ascribed to them there is no reason to be surprised by their use in this ancient tradition.

The assumption that in the Bön myths one can find numerous factors that prove the practice of animal sacrifice is unfounded, and seems to me to be merely the residue of rumours perpetrated in Tibet until recent times. Actually these myths (*chog rabs*), which exhaustively illustrate the origin, type and manner of performance of the various rites, are of inestimable value for acquiring knowledge of the most authentic Bön tradition. As they form part of the ancient Tibetan culture they deserve to be studied in depth and treated with respect and attention, instead of being neglected and despised by the Tibetans themselves, not least because in the Buddhist tantric texts devoted to the *Heruka*, the Gönpo

(*mgon po*: deities tied to the *Mahākāla* cycle), Palden Lhamo¹⁰⁰ and other deities we find several narrations with contents similar to those of the Bön myths. On this subject I have written two books, *The Necklace of Jewels* (*Nor bu'i do shal*) and *The Necklace of Gzi* (*Gzi yi phreng ba*),¹⁰¹ to which I refer the reader.

Chapter IX

The Bön that Liberates from Curses

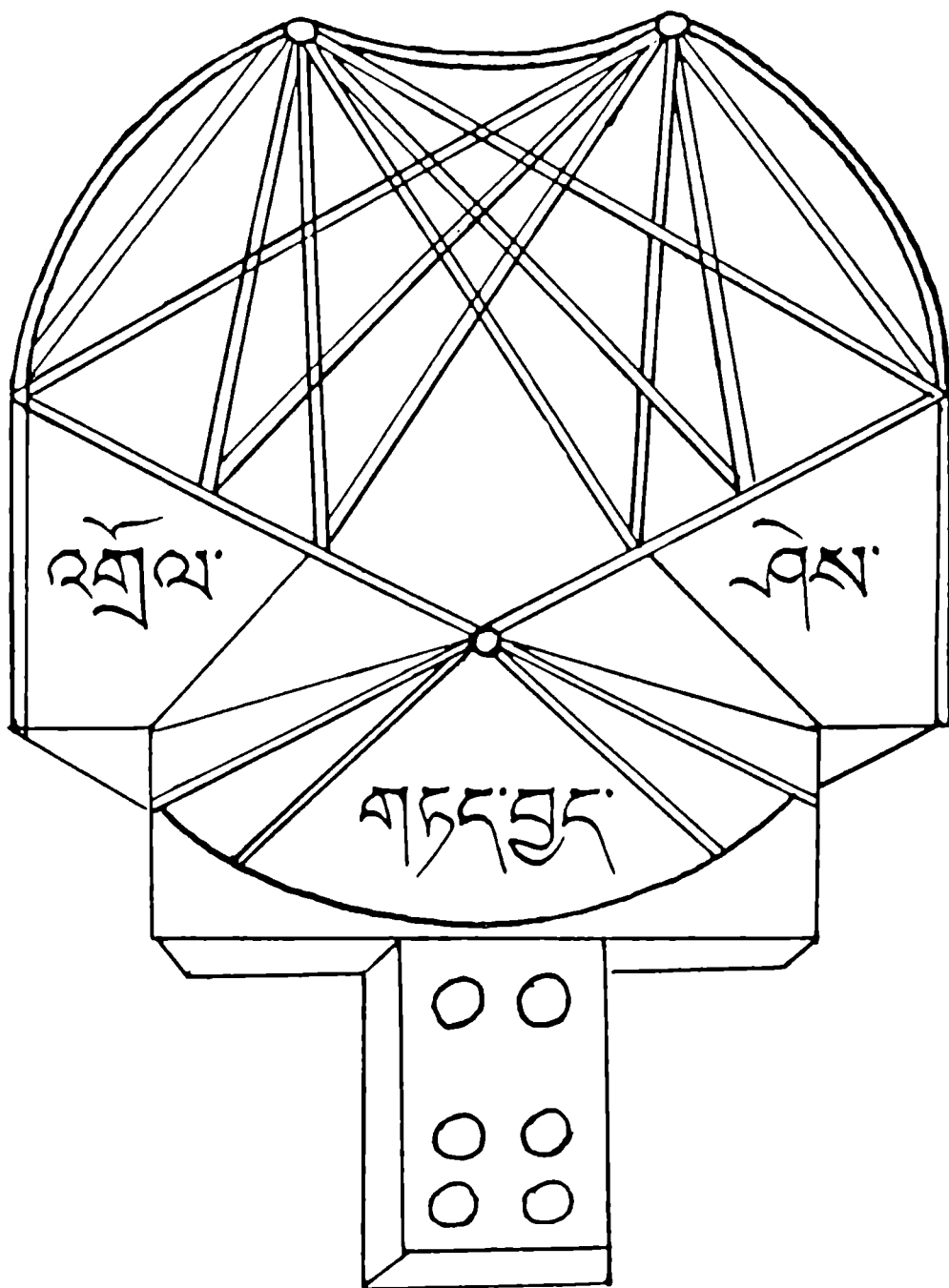
i VARIOUS TYPES OF CURSES

This Bön belongs to the series of the 'Pönse with the Powerful Cha, the To rites' (*dpon gsas phywa gnyan gto yi sgo*)¹ and comprises the rites that serve to remove any type of curse, from maledictions cast by the powerful classes of non human beings to witchcraft devised by men.

As already explained, when men perform actions that disturb and irritate the divine and semi-divine beings, such as the Lha, Lu, Nyen, Sadag, Död, Mamo, Shinje, Tenma, Kyongma etc. these avenge the offences they have suffered by inflicting punishment, which creates heavy problems for man. Consequently, the potential longevity, ascendancy-capacity and well-being of a person deteriorate, the *lungta, cha* and *yang* forces weaken and mishaps, accidents, bad omens, diseases, suffering and all sorts of misfortunes occur. To eliminate all these negativities it is necessary to repair the offences and damage wreaked on the other classes of beings and to placate their hostility through performance of the appropriate rites, traditionally grouped in four categories as explained in the *Zijid*: the 'Offering Rites to the Deities of the Pure Dimensions' (*dbyings kyi lha tshogs mchod pa*); the 'Expiation Rites for the Walmo of the Sky' (*mkha'i dbal mo bskang ba*); the 'Rites to Establish the Support of the Oath bound Protectors of Space' (*klong gi dam can brten pa*) and the 'Rites for Reconciliation with the Sadag, Lu and Nyen' (*sa bdag klu gnyan bcos pa*).²

On the other hand, a person may be subjected to the harmful influences of curses sent by human beings aided by immaterial non human entities, through destructive magic rites of such types as the *Cheka* (*byad ka*), based on the power of destructive *mantra*; the *Phurka*, in which the elimination of the victim is effected by means of the magic dagger called *phurba*;³ the *Bödtong* (*rbod gtong*), in which one invokes the presence of one's own guardian deities to destroy the enemy; and the *Nented* (*mnan gtad*: lit. 'suppression') or *Ted* (*gtad*), in which diverse substances and *mantra* empowered with destructive magic properties are inserted into a yak horn which is then hidden under the ground near the enemy's home.⁴ These harmful influences, whether they are due to a curse that struck one's family several generations previously and from which one has not yet been able to free oneself, or to witchery that has struck one personally, bring about the deterioration of the prosperity, longevity, fortune and prestige of a family with the danger of its total extinction. In these cases, congruent with the type of curse received one has to apply the ritual antidote to get rid of the baleful magic influence. To this end

THE BÖN OF THE RITES THAT LIBERATE FROM CURSES



there exist the *Chedrol* (*byad 'grol*) rites to avert the effects of the *Cheka*,⁵ the *Tedrul* (*gtad rul*) rites to eliminate the *Ted*,⁶ etc.

Regarding the rites for reconciliation with the Lha, Lu Nyen and the other powerful beings of the universe, the *Zijid* explains these must be performed meticulously, without making any mistakes or being disrespectful in any way. This is because, if the Bönpos 'of the lineage of existence' (*srid pa rgyud kyi bon po*)⁷ evince pride, harsh manners or arrogance towards these beings, for example by boasting about their own importance before the powerful Masang, by behaving meanly towards the Sadag or by proffering the offerings to the deities while feigning to have great powers, the Masang and the Nyen will get angry, the Sadag and the Töd will become indignant, the Lha who live in the pure dimensions will be displeased, the Walmo of the sky will not be appeased and the 'Oath-Bound Protectors' of the space will express their disapproval.⁸ Thus it is necessary to perform these rites adhering strictly to the instructions contained in the texts of the 'Shen of the Phenomenal Universe'. In order to give an idea of these rites I will quote some summary descriptions from the *Zijid*.

ii THE OFFERING RITES TO THE DEITIES OF THE PURE DIMENSIONS

In the rites of offerings to the deities of the pure dimensions the officiant Bönpo of the 'lineage of existence' must satisfy the hordes of Wal (fierce or 'flaming')⁹ deities in the retinue of the powerful Karse Tsenpo (or Karse Wal)¹⁰ in the following way:

On a clean base

he should arrange the heaps of cereals

and place on top the *shöbu* for the Wal,

the meat, blood, 'white' and 'sweet' offerings and the other objects of enjoyment,

chang (*yu ti*), *shelze* (a type of *torma*),¹¹ precious objects and objects of pleasure,

drinks (*du sam*), meat (*mang thun*), 'accumulation' *torma* (*bang ne*)¹² and *shöbu*:

(to satisfy) sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch

he should prepare infinite enjoyment offerings,

purifying and multiplying them in the state of meditation.

The vastness of the 'three thousand world systems' and the immensity of space,

(like) a boundless ocean of inexhaustible enjoyments

filled with all the precious treasures of the world:

these limitless offerings, (like) clouds in the sky,

(he) should offer to the Lha, Se and Wal,
satisfying their desires and redressing offences,
and (finally) request the powers of Karse Wal.
In this way he liberates beings from hindrances.¹³

iii THE RITES OF EXPLANATION OF THE WALMO OF THE SKY

The expiation rites to appease the Walmo,¹⁴ wrathful looking female deities, belong to the *Dö* type of rites, and in the following passage we find the description of a ritual offering structure that represents the model of the universe:

In the place of expiation, to appease them one offers
Mount Meru (*ri rab*) and the (four) continents as the model of
existence,¹⁵

surrounded by the ring of seven mountain ranges and seven seas,
the wish-granting tree and the all-eclipsing Khyung,
the city 'Pleasant to Behold' with the palace of victory,
the 'Impressive' Park, the Parks 'Of the Carts', 'Of Pleasures' and
'Of Unions',¹⁶

the Park 'of the Udumbara Flowers',¹⁷
the 'Vermilion Mountain where the Deities Meet' and the 'Armo
floor',¹⁸

the resplendent light of the sun and the moon,
the eight auspicious objects (*bkra shis rdzas brgyad*),¹⁹
the 'seven precious jewels'²⁰ and treasures of sparkling gems,
ornaments with folded, twined and wavy decorations, the palaces
of wisdom (represented by the) *namkha*,

decorated tablets (*shing ris*), ornamental objects and riches,
gyangbu and hanging ribbons (*'phan*), coloured wool, canopies and
curtains,

the ritual arrow and spindle as symbols of method and know-
ledge,

an abundance of birds, wild and domestic animals (*g.yung dwags*),
wild beasts with beautiful coloured skins with clear patterns,
livestock, lands, houses and men's objects of pleasure,

the 'male figure', 'female figure' and the *lüd* as ransom payments,
horse races, archery contests and other entertainments,

all the requisite ritual objects are prepared in their entirety,
(together with) the decorated *torma* appropriate (to the class of
beings),

gold, turquoise, silk and flowing ornaments

and libations of first pourings of nectareous *chang* (*g.yu 'brang*).

With the sound of the drum, the *shang*, the conch and the melodious flute
(one chants) the proclamation of the truth with words of explanation,
communicates, in order to be understood, (according to) the original ritual tradition (*srid pa'i gzhung*)
and narrates the myth (*cho rabs*) on the basis of the ancient archetype.

And, concordant with the original model of existence,
the Walmo mothers in the sky will be appeased,
the ocean of Oath-Bound Protectors in the space will be satisfied,
the three existences will be under control,
the disharmonies in the world will be reconciled
and the suffering and passions of beings mitigated.
Thus, having removed disturbances and interruptions
all the world will be happy and will rediscover its equilibrium.
To do this, it is necessary to repair (the harm done to) the Walmo
with (the rites of) expiation,
appeasing them in the infinite space of the sky.²¹

I refer the reader who wishes to acquire a more thorough knowledge of these kinds of rites to the numerous and more or less elaborate 'expiation *Dö'* (*skongs mdos*), texts devoted to the Mamo, Tenma, Kyongma and other female deities which can be found in the ritual literature of both the Bön and Tibetan Buddhist traditions.²²

iv THE RITES TO ESTABLISH THE SUPPORT OF THE PROTECTORS OF SPACE

The rites to make stable or restore the 'support' of the oath-bound protectors of space²³ in order to receive their help are described in the following way:

(One must) prepare the ritual objects (*dam rdzas*) suitable to serve as support
and offer objects of enjoyment, delights and payment gifts (*brngan cha*),
meat and blood, 'white' and 'sweet' offerings and first pourings of *chang*,
and general offerings (*'ban tshogs*) of *torma* for the deities.
Then remind them of the promise (they have made) and exhort them to action,
satisfy them and request the supreme powers
to protect long life, prosperity and the 'Mu cord' of beings.

The Oath-Bound Protectors will effortlessly hurry to come, and one will set up the specific 'support' for the messengers of Karse Wal and exhort them to action.²⁴

Concerning the 'specific support' (*dmigs pa'i rten*) mentioned in the text, as 'support of the body' (*sku rten*) of the deities in the retinue of Karse Wal inside the *senkhar* (tabernacle)²⁵ one installs a statue depicting a Wal; as 'support of the voice' (*gsung rten*), one makes spin a cylinder, the surface of which is entirely covered with written *mantra*, or sets up a *tarchog*, a staff bearing many small flags full of *mantra*; as 'support of the mind' (*thugs rten*), on top of the *senkhar* one places a black *thug* (a cylinder of yak hairs surmounted by a trident, 'support' of the deities);²⁶ as 'internal support' (*nang rten*) of the *senkhar* of the Wal, one must set up the 'support lance' (*rten mdung*) of Karse Wal.²⁷

v THE RITES FOR RECONCILIATION WITH THE SADAG, LU AND NYEN

There are numerous types of To rites to repair harm done to the different classes of beings in the universe and to be reconciled with them, traditionally classified in six main categories:

1. The rites to repair loss of equilibrium due to disharmonies in the 'three thousand world systems of the universe' (*stong gsum 'khrugs pa'i 'grams bcos*).²⁸
2. The rites to repair disturbances due to derangement of the elements (*'byung ba 'khrugs pa'i 'grams bcos*).
3. The rites to repair and adjust disharmonies between Ye (light, the positive principle) and Ngam (darkness, the negative principle) (*ye ngam 'khrugs pa'i 'grams bcos*).
4. The rites to repair (disturbances to) the Sadag in the seats of the *mewa* (*sa bdag sme ba'i gling 'grams bcos*).
5. The rites to repair disturbances to the Lu, Nyen and Töd (*klu gnyan gtod kyi 'grams bcos*).
6. The rites to repair, pacify and appease all existence (*snang srid kha skong 'grams bcos*).³⁰

To understand which kinds of deeds can provoke the distress and anger of the various classes of beings, let us take as an example the Sadag, the 'Lords of the Earth'. If in a family for seven successive generations there have been births and deaths in years, months, positions of the *mewa* and *parkha*, of planets and constellations, or in other astrological conjunctions when they should not have occurred because the periods were considered inauspicious for the Sadag, then without doubt this will vex the Sadag. If acts are performed which are unfitting in their regard, such

as leading armies, committing robberies, leaving corpses, celebrating weddings, leaving *Dö* ritual structures, or hurling magic *sor* (*zor*) weapons³⁰ in places where they live, the Sadag will wreak vengeance for the offence received. Moreover, cutting down trees that are sacred (*gnyan*: powerful because they sustain the energies of the Sadag), excavating in sacred lands, destroying sacred rocks or stones, irrigating fields by diverting water from sacred streams, digging in marshy meadows (*ne'u seng*), ploughing virgin land, carrying out building work such as replacing the roof of an old house, making a loud noise on top of a sacred mountain, burning a mountain, killing birds and wild beasts, bearing witness to sacred oaths, removing sacred stones, polluting the hearth etc. are all acts that, performed wittingly or unwittingly offend and disturb the powerful Sadag and incite their resentment. This holds true for all the various kinds of disturbances man can cause the Lha, Lu, Nyen and others of the 'eight classes' of non human beings, who reciprocate for the transgressions directly or indirectly by causing man diseases, accidents and misfortune.³²

The series of 'To Rites of Reconciliation with the Sadag, Lu and Nyen' serve to enable man to avoid all these negative consequences. This is how to perform them:

Let the Bönpo of the original lineage of existence
 set out the (offering) *maṅḍala* on clean earth,
 and with five coloured powders draw the divine palace
 (for) the Sadag, Lu, Nyen and Töd,³³
 (with the astrological diagram of) the places of the
parkha, of the (twelve-) year cycle and of the *mewa*,
 and (for) the powerful beings of the soil and their dependents.
 (Then let him prepare the) images made of cereals and the clean
shöbu,
 birds, wild and domestic animals,
 fierce beasts, livestock, lands and houses of men,
 images of living beings and of water animals,
 all with different furs and all the characteristic signs,
 aromatic plants, wool threads interwoven with bird feathers,
 diverse ornaments of gold, turquoise and silk.
 Let him prepare infinite enjoyment offerings,
 multiplying them by *mantra* in the state of meditation.
 As for the deity, let him invoke Karse Tsenpo,
 inviting him with the sound of the drum, *shang*, conch and flute,
 signaling to him by waving the banner (*ru mthson*) and hanging
 silk bands (*ba dan*),

offering him libations, *chang* (*g.yu mngon*) and payment gifts
(*brngan cha*),

and communicating by the proclamation of the truth (*bden pa'i
smrang gis bkrol*) of the Victorious Ones.³⁴

He should use two types of vocal melodies (*skad kyi gcong*) for the
chant:

to put into action (*skos 'debs*) the 'powerful *cha* of the *Pönse*.³⁵
and bring all existence under control

he will chant the queen of melodies, that of the dragon;

mentally to address the ritual objects and the *lüd*,

and to dispatch to its destination the powerful *cha*

he will chant the sweet melody of the cuckoo.

In all the dimensions of the universe

the ransom objects and the *torma* must reach their goals,

the wishes of all the worlds must be satisfied,

all existence must be rendered happy and serene,

one must be reconciled with the Sadag, Lu and Nyen,

all conflicts must be quelled

and joy be brought to all of existence.³⁶

Chapter X

The Bön of Medicine: The Healing Methods

i THE MEDICINE OF THE SHEN OF THE CHA

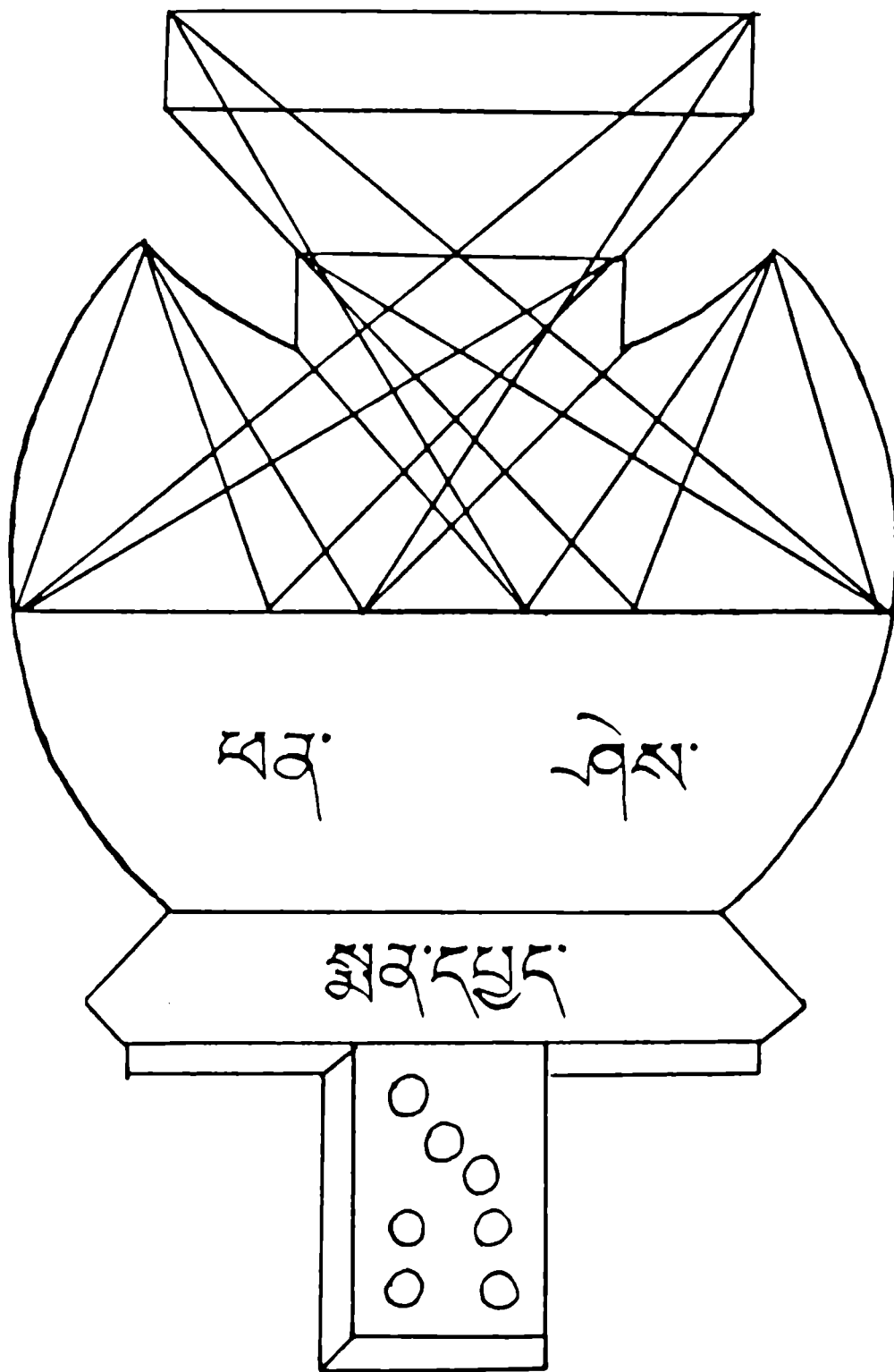
Medical knowledge and the various healing methods belong traditionally to the Bön of the 'Shen of the Cha'. It is handed down that the Master Shenrab Miwoche transmitted them to his son¹ by his wife Hoza Gyelmed called Chedbu Trishe, known for his marked intelligence, and to Tobum, Selwai Senge Sabmo and the others known as the 'eight sages of medicine' (*gso rig 'dzin pa'i drang srong chen po brgyad*) to satisfy their requests. The Master taught various kinds of medical sciences and therapies, such as those contained in texts such as the *Variiegated Collections of Therapies* (*dPyad 'bum khra bo*) and the *White and Black Collection of Medicines* (*sMan 'bum dkar nag*),² and delivered them all to Chedbu Trishe and the 'eight sages of medicine' who subsequently disclosed them. The series of teachings on medicine in the 'Shen of the Cha' speaks of twenty-one thousand different types of therapeutic methods (*dpyad thabs*), but the fundamental principles, briefly expounded in the *Zijid*,³ are the following.

First of all one must carry out the diagnosis on the basis of four tests: understanding of the primary and secondary causes (*rgyu rkyen mthong la dpyad pa*), identification of the type of pulse (*ngos 'dzin rtsa la dpyad pa*), ascertainment of the state of health or illness through examination of the urine (*phan gnod chu la dpyad pa*) and examination of the characteristic signs of death or recovery ('*chi sös khams la dpyad pa*). In this way it is possible to identify whether the kind of disturbance afflicting the patient is an illness or a *dön* (provocation). The illness will then be treated through diet (*zas*), behaviour (*spyod*), medicine (*sman*) and external cures (*dpyad*); in the case of a *dön*, however, first of all divination and astrological calculations are performed to determine how the particular class of being has managed to cause the disturbance, what is the present condition, and how to eliminate it. In general, to increase the sick person's positive force and remove negativities the *To* rites 'which remove adverse conditions' (*rkyen sel gto*) are performed and, finally, definitively to avert the danger of death and re-establish full health, the appropriate external curative methods ('*chi bslu dpyad*) are applied.

ii THE DIAGNOSIS: THE EXAMINATION OF THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY CAUSES

To diagnose an illness, first of all one carries out three tests (*brtag pa gsum*): of the primary and secondary causes that have brought about the illness, of the symptoms it manifests, and of all the things that alleviate or aggravate it. Then one proceeds with the 'science of listening' (*thos pa*

THE BÖN OF MEDICINE: THE HEALING METHODS



sgra'i rig pa), that consists in the examination, on the basis of the patient's answers, of the conditions that fostered the first symptoms, how much time has passed since the onset of the illness, the present condition, in which parts of the body pain is felt, whether the symptoms change in different places and seasons and, finally, which food, behaviour, medicine and therapy have a beneficial effect and which have a deleterious effect. The doctor will then apply the 'science of sight' (*mthong ba yul gyi rig pa*) to examine through visual observation the facial complexion, sclerotic coat, nose, tongue, saliva, faeces, urine, vomit, physical appearance and eventual changes in appearance. He will finally base his diagnosis on the 'science of the examination of the organs' (*dpyod pa don gyi rig pa*), which consists in palpation of different parts of the body to test the patient's body heat, the degree of hardness or suppleness of the abdomen and the various organs, the roughness or softness of the skin etc. and other related factors.

iii THE EXAMINATION OF THE PULSE AND OF THE URINE

As for the diagnosis through the examination of the pulse, in general three types of pulse found in normal healthy conditions are classified: the 'male pulse' (*pho yi rtsa*) when the beat is strong and deep, the 'female pulse' (*mo yi rtsa*) when the beat is tenuous and fast,⁴ and the 'neutral pulse' (*ma ning gi rtsa*) or 'pulse of the bodhicitta' (*byang chub sems rtsa*) when the beat is long, delicate and steady.

Then there is an examination based on the characteristic pulsations of the liver, heart, lungs, kidneys and spleen, respectively, in relation to the five seasons: spring, summer, autumn, winter and the 'intermediate period' (i.e. the last eighteen days of each of the four seasons) and the five elements: wood, fire, metal, water and earth. Another type of test concerns the 'seven marvellous pulses' (*ngo mtshar rtsa bdun*), which serves to obtain divinatory responses on the basis of the characteristics of the elements of the pulse of a person in a state of health. The first five are in relation to the family (*khyim phywa*), to someone who is travelling far and is expected (*mgron phywa*), to possible attacks from enemies or negative forces (*dgra phywa*), to income and earnings (*grogs phywa*) and to provocations by negative energies (*gdon phywa*); the sixth is the examination of 'the inversion of water and fire' (*me chug go ldog*) in which, for example, for the son's illness the father's pulse is tested, for the mother's illness the daughter's pulse is tested, for the daughter's illness the mother's pulse is tested, for the husband's illness the wife's pulse is tested, etc. The seventh is the 'pulse of the son' (*bu rtsa*) and concerns pregnancy and childbirth.⁵

Then the doctor tests for the different types of pulsation indicative of health or sickness and, in the case of the latter, by examining six types of general pulsation he can distinguish whether the illness belongs to the 'hot' or 'cold'⁶ category of disturbances; by examining twelve pulsations found under the index, middle and rings fingers he can identify which organ is afflicted,⁷ and by examining the type of relationships between the five full organs (lungs, heart, liver, spleen and kidneys) with eventual transformations and pauses discernible in the pulsations, he can identify specific provocations by the Dön. Finally, by feeling the 'pulse of the *la*' (*bla rtsa*, which can be felt in the cubital artery) he examines the potential longevity and eventual deteriorations of the *la* and of the vital principle and ascertains whether the *la* is abiding in its natural place or has strayed and is wandering in unbecoming places,⁸ and other related factors.

Diagnosis on the basis of the urine, whether it is for a healthy or an unhealthy person, is performed bearing in mind three phases: when the urine is warm, when it is tepid and when it is cold. When the urine is warm one examines the colour, vapour, smell and froth; when it is tepid, the suspended impurities (*ku ya*) and the foam (*spris ma*); when it is cold, how long it takes to change colour, how the change occurs and the final colour it takes: through these tests the doctor can diagnose the type of illness affecting the patient. There is also another kind of diagnosis, based on examination of the urine by observing its relationship to the five elements and the different directions, that serves to identify precisely *dön* or provocations of energy.⁹

iv THE EXAMINATION OF THE SIGNS OF DEATH

The examination of the signs of death or recovery is carried out by analysing the characteristic aspects of the pulse and urine. Regarding the pulse, there are three characteristics that portend death: when the pulse changes continuously (*rtsa rgyud 'gyur ba*), when it is incomplete (*ma tshang ba*) and when there are intermittent pauses (*sdod*).

About the pulse that changes, a Bönpo medical treatise¹⁰ tells us:

The transitional pulse (can be) like banner fringes fluttering in the
wind,

like the end of a hawk's tail, like water dripping from a cleft,
like a fish's tail, like a sparrow pecking food.

In a slow, debilitating illness, with an ample, palpitating pulse,
in a 'cold' illness with a 'hot' beat or a 'hot' illness with a 'cold'
beat,

in an inflammation of the lungs, meat poisoning or an accumula-
tion of 'phlegm' or 'bile' in the chest:

in these four cases if one comes across a normal healthy pulse it is a sign of death.¹¹

About the incomplete pulse:

The incomplete pulse is tied to external signs to be examined:

if the heart beat is missing (i.e. not felt), the tongue is black and the patient has a blank fixed stare;

if the lung beat is missing, the nose twisted downwards and the hairs inside it grow backwards (i.e. outwards);

if the liver beat is missing, the eyes stare upwards and the eyebrows grow in tufts;

if the spleen beat is missing, the lips hang down and the sternal cartilage curves inwards;

if the kidney beat is missing, (the perception of) sound is interrupted and the ears adhere (to the head):

in these cases one will die within one, two, three, five or eight days, respectively.¹²

Finally, about the pulse with intermittent beats:

There are three types of pause: the pause of illness, the pause of death and the pause of the spirits (*'dre sdod*).

The pause (indicative) of illness is detected in correspondence to the part struck by the disease;

the pause (indicative) of (disturbances by) the spirits is irregular, strong and slow;

the pause (indicative) of death is detected at regular intervals.¹³

To determine the characteristic signs of death by the urine test, one takes into consideration the symptoms of different kinds of illness: 'cold' or 'hot', caused by the 'air' (*rlung*), 'bile' (*mkhris pa*) or 'phlegm' (*bad kan*) humours or by an imbalance between these three (*'du ba*) or, finally, due to disturbances of the blood or by poisoning.

From the same text:

The urine indicating death (*'chi chu*) is like blood and has an unpleasant smell like decayed skin:

to try to find a remedy is useless, it is the urine that indicates death from 'hot' illness.

Likewise if the suspended impurities disappear and the urine does not change, it is a sign of death.

If the urine is bluish and without odour, vapour or taste, to try to find a remedy is useless, it is the urine that indicates death from 'cold' illness.

If (the froth) forms conglomerations which disappear and reappear intermittently it is (a sign of) death from 'air' illness;
 if (it) is like yellowish liquid that disappears and reappears intermittently, it is death from 'bile' illness;
 if (it) is like vermilion liquid that disappears and reappears intermittently, it is death from blood disease;
 if it is like sour milk that disappears and reappears intermittently, it is death from 'phlegm' illness;
 if it is like black ink that disappears and reappears intermittently, it is death by poisoning;
 if one has no disease of the kidneys but cannot urinate any longer, it is death by inner deterioration of the three humours.¹⁴

v THE CLASSIFICATION OF ILLNESSES

Illnesses are classified into a great variety of types, but in the last analysis they are generally distinguished in three fundamental categories: air, bile and phlegm, as we find in the classic text by Yuthog Sarma (12th century) *The Essence of Nectar*:¹⁵

The general cause of all diseases is ignorance;
 particularly, from it develop the causes of the three poisons:
 the passions of attachment, anger and obscuration (*gti mug*),
 from which develop the fruits (of the humours), air, bile and
 phlegm
 (called) the 'three disturbing agents' (*nyes pa gsum*).¹⁶

In the Bön tradition five fundamental categories are discerned: hot, cold, phlegm, bile and the combination of the humours ('*du ba*). From the *Zijid*:

For (disturbances due to) heat, cold, phlegm, bile or the combination of the humours
 apply medicines that cool, warm or restore balance...
 all heat (disturbances) are eliminated by cooling,
 all cold (disturbances) by warming,
 all phlegm (disturbances) by separating hot from cold;¹⁷
 all bile (disturbances) by concentrating and evacuating;¹⁸
 all (disturbances) due to disorders of the three humours combined, by restoring balance.¹⁹

In a contemporary Bön medical text,²⁰ however, we find illnesses divided in four types: air, bile, phlegm and the combination of the humours:

There exist eighty-four thousand diseases of the 'humours' which can be embraced in four hundred and four categories, which are in their turn based on the four (factors) air, bile, phlegm and the combination of the humours, in the last analysis subsumed under the two (factors) hot and cold,²¹

whereas in other texts of the Bön tradition the four categories are identified as air, bile, phlegm and blood (*khrag*).

vi THE HEALING METHODS: DIET AND BEHAVIOUR

- Concerning the classification of the means of cure, the same text states that:²²

The curative methods to be used as antidote are one thousand and two, contained in four categories: medicine (*sman*), therapy (*dpyad*), diet (*zas*) and behaviour (*spyod*);

while an eighth century medical treatise explains:²³

There are four antidotes to cure illnesses: behaviour, diet, medicine and therapy. First the illness should be treated through behaviour, and if this is not enough one must take up a diet. If even this is unsuccessful in eliminating the illness one must take medicine, and, as last resort, apply the diverse therapeutic techniques. This is the order one should follow.²⁴

Thus, in both texts we find that there are four curative methods: diet, behaviour, medicine and therapy, albeit their order may not always correspond.

As regards diet, the different types of food are classified in two categories, according to whether they have beneficial properties or deleterious effects on the organism, and on the basis of this classification one should always try always to take food and drinks that enhance health, learning to discern these intelligently, while it is important to abstain from those that can cause disturbances or illness. The *Essence of Nectar* says:

Concerning knowledge of food and diet to use as antidotes to cure illnesses, carefully chosen food and drinks enhance the body and the vital force; too little or too much, or if they have harmful properties, they can provoke illness or instant death,

so it is useful to become expert in knowing how to combine food and drinks.²⁵

The text then continues by dealing at length with the characteristic properties of different kinds of foods, with the unsuitable foods from which one should abstain and with the correct amount of food one should consume.²⁶

As regards daily behaviour, in general it is explained that too much travelling or wandering about at night, prolonged lack of sleep, states of depression and intense frights, excessive intellectual or sexual activity, severe physical exhaustion, copious loss of blood etc. are all factors that cause 'air' humour illnesses. Thus, by adopting modes of behaviour opposite to those mentioned, these types of disturbances are eliminated. 'Hot' illnesses or those of the 'bile' humour are caused by strong feelings of pride, sleeping during the day, performing violent acts, prolonged exposure to the sun or to the heat of a fire, etc. 'Cold' illnesses or those of the 'phlegm' humour are caused by states of extreme apathy, bathing in cold water, sitting in damp places, etc. Furthermore, if a person's habitual behaviour includes activities of all three of these types, illnesses can arise caused by the combination of the humours. In any case, in order to eliminate the disturbance it will always be necessary to take up behaviour opposite to that which caused it.

vii THE MEDICINES

Medicinal drugs are classified in thirteen categories, listed in the following way: (1) from precious materials (*rin po che'i sman*); (2) from stone and earth (*rdo sa'i sman*); (3) from essences (effusions and secretions) (*rtsi sman*); (4) from trees (*shing sman*); (5) from plants (*ldum sman*); (6) from herbs (*sngo sman*); (7) from mineral salts (*lan tshwa'i sman*); (8) from animal products (*srog chags las byung ba'i sman*); (9) from cultivated plants (*zhing skyes sman*); (10) from water (*chu sman*); (11) from fire (*me sman*); (12) from concentrated substances (*gdug pa'i sman*).²⁷ Among the types listed above, the 'medicines from fire' are those based on contact with heat and include the eleven types of cauterisation (*tel gyi me*), such as those performed with the golden cautery (*gser gyi tel*) etc. Medicines derived from the concentration of substances comprise two categories: those in powder form (*thal sman*) produced by prolonged baking, e.g. the 'golden powder' (*gser thal*), and those known as *khaṇḍa* derived from the maceration of substances in cold water, such as the *dali'i khaṇḍa*. The identification of the type and function of each medicine is established on the basis of taste, postdigestive effects (*zhu rjes*) and the possibility of being combined with other medicines (*sbyar thabs*).

Actually, the curative methods are numberless and depend on the infinite number of cases that are possible, as we can read in the *Zijid*: "Applying the twenty-one thousand types of medicine for the twenty-one thousand types of (disturbances of) the humours one eliminates ignorance and the passions."²⁸ However, if one can live and improve one's health using nectareous medicines, medicinal drugs that strengthen the body, specific methods and modes of behaviour, or in other ways that are not predetermined, for recovery from an illness one must apply, congruent with the type of disturbance, one of the four main therapies: drugs, bloodletting (*gtar*), moxibustion (*me gtsa'*), the application of specific remedies or of *mantra*.²⁹

viii THERAPIES AND EXTERNAL TREATMENTS

The main external treatments used in Tibetan medicine are bloodletting, moxibustion and acupuncture (*thur ma'i dpyad*). By practising bloodletting in the ninety main points appropriate to this kind of treatment, the general benefits are, that disturbances to the circulation are attenuated and bad blood is purified, pain is alleviated and swellings are eliminated, the body is strengthened and takes on a healthier complexion, superfluous fat is eliminated and persons who are excessively thin gain weight.

Treatment by moxibustion, mainly using a cone of artemisia or of other vegetable substances ignited at one end, is applied to seventy-one main points and in four different ways: cauterisation (*btso ba*), burning (*bsreg pa*), heating (*bsro ba*) and stimulating by heat from a distance (*sdig pa*), according to the needs of the case. The general benefits are, that dysfunctions of the nerves and of the circulation are blocked, pains in diseased parts of the body are attenuated and 'air' disturbances spread in various parts of the body are eliminated, undigested food is assimilated and stomach swellings are deflated, and excrescences, old wounds, ulcerous wounds and welts are cured. Also, one can extract lymph by drying points where it is in excess, develop the inner body heat and enhance the memory.

Also classified as moxibustion is treatment by cauterisation, performed with small sticks called *tel* made of different metals, with horn cauteries called *nabra* (*rngab rwa*) and with small metal cups called *mebum* (*me bum*), all of which give excellent results in the treatment of 'air', 'cold' and lymphatic disturbances.

Operations by acupuncture (*thur ma*), finally, are performed mainly on the two points called *rangsang* (*rang gsang*), on the eight *dasang* (*mda' gsang*) points where the needles penetrate directly, on the twenty-six

jiyinsang (*'byin gsang*) points where impurities are extracted, and one hundred and ten other specific points. The benefits of these applications include the elimination of depressive disturbances, tumours, illnesses caused by the combination of the 'air' humour with cold, imbalances of the organism, and epileptic fits (*grib nad*). All these are results that are generally obtained, but many other benefits are possible, which can be learnt by studying the various cases.

ix DÖN: THE 'PROVOCATIONS OF ENERGY'

"Sixty thousand (types of beings) demand payment through the provocations of negative energies": so it is written in the *Zijid*,³⁰ to convey the great variety of non human beings that have the capacity to cause disturbances by directly influencing the sphere of an individual's energy.

The above-mentioned Bön medical treatise gives the following list of the best known of these:

Lha, Lhamin (demigods), Triza (smell eaters), Lu, Nödjiyin, Tsangpa, Sinpo, Shaza (carnivores), Yidag (hungry ghosts), Trulbum, Chedtem (*byad stems*: 'that send curses'), Yengjed (*g.yeng byed*: 'that cause distraction'), Rolang (living corpses), Tsünlha (*mtshun lha*: ancestral deities), Lama (masters of the deities),³¹ Trangsong (divine sages),³² Gen (*rgan*: ancient ones) and Druppa (*grub pa*: realised ones): these are the 'eighteen great Dön' (*gdon chen bco brgyad*).³³

Let us read about the Dön who strike children (*byis pa'i gdon*):

There are five types of Dön of males and seven of females: they are classified in twelve types, but counting the Lejed (*las byed*: 'active ones'), the Gyelpo and Senmo forming a pair and the Trulzhi (*sprul gzhi*: 'that cause illusion') the 'Dön of children' are fifteen. Counting also the 'Dön of children' called Chadre (*bya 'dre*: lit. 'bird spirit', i.e. spirits that take the form of birds) in all there are twelve types.³⁴

There are other lists of Dön which are much longer, and in which, among others, we can find the following: Lha, Lu, Lhamin, Lunglha (wind deities), Namkha Ding (*garuda*-eagle),³⁵ Triza, Miamci (lit. 'are they men or what are they?'),³⁶ Toche Chenpo (*lto 'phye chen po*: 'that slither on great bellies'),³⁷ Nödjiyin, Sinpo, Jungpo, Yidag, Shaza, Trulbum, Sulpo (*srul po*: 'that cause to rot'),³⁸ Lü Sulpo (*lus srul po*: 'that putrefy the body'),³⁹ Kemjed (*skem byed*: 'that emaciate'),⁴⁰ Jedjed (*brjed byed*: 'that cause obli-

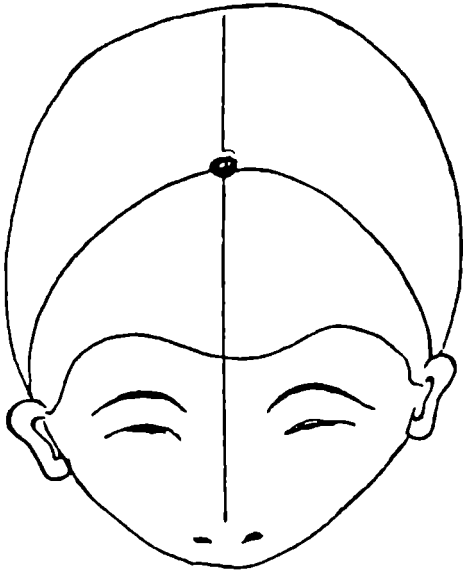
vion'),⁴¹ Dribnön (*grib gnon*: 'that contaminate'),⁴² Nyojed (*smyo byed*: 'that drive insane'),⁴³ Nönpo (*gnon po*: 'that suppress'), Khandroma (female sky beings),⁴⁴ Namdru (*rnam gru*: name of a constellation),⁴⁵ Shinje, Cha (*bya*: birds),⁴⁶ Mamo Gawar Jedpa (*mo mo dga' bar byed pa*: 'Mamo that make happy'), Kuntu Drowa (*kun tu 'gro ba*: 'that go everywhere'), Tserma Dönpa (*tsher ma 'don pa*: 'that pull out thorns'). In conclusion, according to a tradition common to Tibetan Buddhists and Bönpos alike, all the Dön can be classified in three fundamental categories: the Dön of above (*steng gdon*), the Dön of intermediate space (*bar gdon*) and the Dön of below (*'og gdon*).⁴⁷

The etymological meaning of the term *dön* (*gdon*), 'to doubt', implies the process of the formation of doubt: somebody who has absolutely no doubt is influenced or 'provoked' by something that gives rise to doubt, and finally that doubt becomes firmly established in the person. In fact, when one has no doubts and there is not even the base for doubt, the expression used is *don mi za*, 'there is no shadow of doubt'. In the same way, in our context the term Dön does not refer only to a disturbance caused by one of the classes of non human beings, in which case one would use the term *nödpa*, 'disturbance' – such as in the expressions *lha'i gnod pa*: disturbances by the Lha, *klu'i gnod pa*: disturbances by the Lu etc. – but, more specifically, the provocation of an imbalance in the energy sphere of an individual made possible by his condition of weakness and proneness to receive negativity, and it is in this sense that the expressions 'Dön of the Lha', 'Dön of the Lu' etc. are used. In fact, if a person is in a period when his *la* is wandering outside its seat, his *cha* is ruined, his *lungta* is in decline and his ascendancy-capacity is weak, he becomes passive or receptive towards external negative energies contrary to his well-being, and as these energies are tied to the Lha, Lu, Nyen etc. these powerful classes of beings can succeed in dominating and directing them to 'provoke' the person's energy.⁴⁸

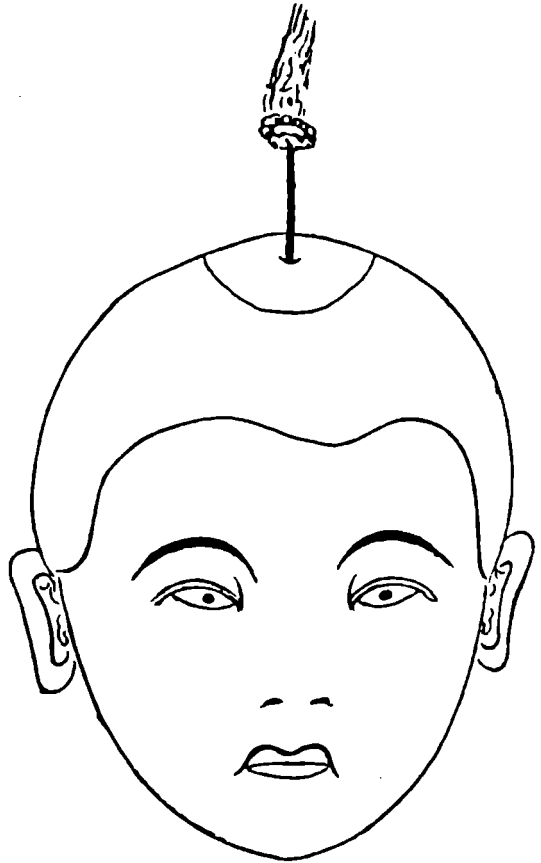
Connected with these provocations are the eighty thousand 'Geg' or 'obstructive spirits' (*bgegs rigs stong phrag brgyad cu*), so called because they create obstacles and hindrances to a person's fortune and prosperity, in their turn linked with the Jungpo, powerful entities endowed with the particular capacity to control those kinds of negative energies.

Should one be subject to provocation by a Dön, abetted by causes and conditions similar to those described, then cure by means of diet, behaviour and medicine will not be enough. To eliminate the illness it will be necessary first to perform efficaciously the type of *To* rite appropriate to the circumstances and the specific class of Dön, and only after this will one be able to restore health definitively through bloodletting, moxibus-

tion, application of needles etc. or whatever other type of treatment is necessary.



Application point of the golden needle (*gser khab*)



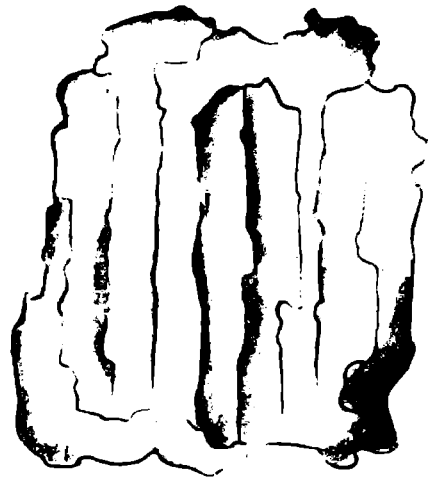
The way to apply the golden needle



Blue utpala (*ut pal sngon po: meconopsis quintuplinervia*). The utpala eliminates inflammations of the lungs and the liver.



Drong ('brong: *bos grunniens*). The heart of the Drong eliminates provocations of energy (*gdon*) caused by the Gyelpo, collapses caused by psychic disturbances and heart pains.



Chongzhi (*cong zhi*: a type of calcite). The *chongzhi* stops diarrhoea and eliminates 'phlegm' (*bad kan*) disturbances.

THE BÖN OF ASTROLOGY: THE CONTROL OF EXISTENCE



Chapter XI

The Bön of Astrology: The Control of Existence

i ASTROLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE IN TIBET BEFORE SHENRAB MIWOCHÉ

The Bön of the astrological sciences (*gtsug lag rtsis kyi bon*) belongs to the series of the 'Shen of the Cha', and it is handed down that the master Shenrab Miwoche taught it to the 'shen of the Cha' Legyel Thangpo and other disciples.¹ Nevertheless, analysing the names of the Bönpos who, according to the tradition, came at the great master's birth to pay homage, we can deduce that there already existed certain forms of Bön astrology.² Let us read from the *Zermig*:

Rompo, Bön of the Wal (*dbal bon rom po*),³ Togyel, Bön of Widowhood (*yogs bon gto rgyal*),⁴ Chasang, Bön Of Laws (*khri bon phywa sangs*),⁵ Tochen, Bön of Protection (*gnyer bon gto chen*),⁶ Drangzu, Bön of Milk (*'o bon 'brang zu*),⁷ and Yotru, Bön of Weddings (*'tshams bon yo kru*)⁸ stayed with Shenrab. Chuchag, Bön of the Död (*bdud bon chu lcags*), Yeuthen, Bön of the Mu (*dmu bon ye'u than*),⁹ and Tselchag, Bön of the Tsen (*btsan bon 'tshal lcags*) stayed with Shenrab. Mucho, Bön of the Generations (*srid bon mu cho*),¹⁰ Tsugse, Bön who Controls the Order of Existence (*skos bon gtsug sras*),¹¹ Theule, Bön of the Cha (*phywa bon the'u legs*)¹² and Thöd-kar, Bön of Deities (*lha bon thod dkar*):¹³ all of these, the 'Thirteen Bönpo Who Control, the Powerful Primordial Shen' (*ye gshen gnyan pa bcu gsum 'dul ba'i bon po*)¹⁴ stayed with Shenrab. Also, Tsepa, Bön of the Moon (*zla bon tshes pa*), Trangma, Bön of the Sun (*nyi bon drang ma*),¹⁵ Tsiggu, Bön of Stars (*skar bon tshig gu*), Bathul, Bön of Clouds (*sprin bon ba thul*) and Khugtang, Bön of Rainbows (*gzha' bon khug tang*) stayed with Shenrab. Lugu, Bön of Epidemics (*dal bon lu gu*),¹⁶ Dangnyen, Bön of Rays (*zer bon gdang snyan*), Tsideb, Bön of Harvests (*lo bon rtsis 'debs*)¹⁷ and Churwa, Bön of Livestock (*rdzi bon phyur ba*):¹⁸ all of these, the 'Bönpos of the Nine Powerful Classes of Beings of Intermediate Space' (*bar g.yen gtod po dgu'i bon po*) stayed with Shenrab.¹⁹

ii THE MEANING OF THE TERM KÖ

Among the 'twelve lores' of Bön astrology appears with the name 'The Astrologer, Who Knows how to Control the Order of Existence' (*skos shes rtsis mkhan*) and the term *kö* (*skos*: lit. 'the person entrusted') is to be understood as an attribute of the person (the astrologer) who, by virtue of the power of past actions, has the authority to control the course of existence (*srid pa la dbang byed par bskos pa*) and to act as judge and discern

between good and bad actions. We find this term in the ancient mythological narrations contained in the *Treasury of Existence* (*Srid pa'i mdzod phug*), a text on Bön cosmogony and metaphysics ascribed to Shenrab himself. In the commentary to this text written by Trenpa Namkha,²⁰ there is an allusion to the existence 'of the *bön*, the *shen* and the *kö*'²¹ where the Ancestress of Existence, Chuchag Gyelmo, is called 'She Who is Entrusted to Control the Order of Existence' (*sko ba chu lcags rgyal mo*). Let us read her myth:

From the primordial dimension of the causes of the five elements rain and dew formed, from which the outer ocean was born. Then by virtue of the aspiration vow of Sidpa (Sangpo Bumtri)²² and of the power of the actions of beings, a woman appeared in the middle of the lake: the lake was stirred by the wind and a bubble was formed as big as a tent, from which an egg of blue light was born. The egg hatched by its own energy and a turquoise blue woman appeared, with blue hair in seven plaits down to her armpits. Her father Sangpo Bumtri called her Chuchag Gyelmo Sidpai Yum (Mother of Existence and Queen of Metal Water); she is also called Köpa Chuchag Gyelmo (Queen of Metal Water Entrusted to Maintain Order), Chabshang Trulmo (Magic Manifestation of the Sound of Water[?]), Zangza Ringsün (Virtuous One of Noble Birth[?]), Sidpai Gyelmo (Queen of Existence) and Satrig Erti.²³

The term *kö* is also found in the name of one of her sons, one of the 'Eighteen Brothers and Sisters, Forebears of Mankind' (*srid pa'i lcam dral bco brdyad*): Köje Drangkar (*skos rje drang dkar*), 'Lord Entrusted with Controlling Order, Who has a White Staff', whose name is thus explained:

(He is called) Köje Drangkar (because he) is the Lord (*rje*) who has established the 'nine orders' (of existence) (*skos dgu*): the Düd for men and the hawk for birds, the axe for trees and the scythe for grass, the cold wind for the heat and the sun for the cold, wild beasts for the Düd, medicines for diseases and the *To* rites for obstructions by spirits (*bgegs*), and because he has a white wooden staff in his hands to keep order (*skos kyi drang shing dkar po*). The men of today who like giving orders (*kha skos*) and trading (*tshong sprul*) are descended from him.²⁴

iii KABTSE: THE ASTROLOGY OF THE HIDDEN POINTS

In the astrological series included in the 'Shen of the Cha', there are said to be three hundred and sixty methods of horoscopy called *kabtse* (*gab*

rtse) or 'hidden points', condensed in four main systems: the 'Mirror of the Manifestations of the Hidden Points' (*gab rtse 'phrul gyi me long*),²⁵ the 'Diagrams of the Places of the *Parkha* and *Mewa*' (*spar kha sme ba'i gling skor*), the 'Temporal Cycle of the Elements' (*'byung ba dus kyi 'khor lo*) and the '*Chuzhag*: the Astrology of the Interdependence of Actions' (*ju zhag rten 'brel las rtsis*).²⁶

As regards the meaning of the term *kabtse* or 'hidden points', *kab* ('hidden') refers to the specific element, *mewa* or *parkha* of each of the three hundred and sixty days of the year and to the various classes of beings: Lha, Lu, Nyen, Sadag etc. that control them, which are 'hidden' or imperceptible to ordinary people, and *tse* ('point') to the most important astrological conjunctions during which these classes of beings have a more direct relation with man and find it easier to cause disturbances, such that they are dangerous, like the 'sharpened blade of a sword': hence the name 'hidden points'. In fact, the 'three hundred and sixty *kabtse*' scrutinize and establish the cyclical astrological rotations of powerful beings like These, Halkyi, Piling, Sinpung, Kingkang, Namchi of the Sadag²⁷ and others of the 'eight classes', the kinds of influence these have on the *la*, life, ascendancy-capacity (*dbang thang*) and fortune (*klung rta*) of a person, and the way to enhance the positive aspects and eliminate the negative. This system of knowledge is given the general name of 'Mirror of the Manifestations of the Hidden Points'.

iv THE ORIGIN OF THE ASTROLOGY OF THE ELEMENTS

The opinion is widely held that the twelve-year cycle associated with twelve animals (mouse, bull, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, bird, dog and pig), and which combined with the five elements (wood, fire, earth, metal and water) forms the basis of the so-called 'astrology of the elements' (*'byung rtsis* or *nag rtsis*), is a traditional Chinese system, and there is no objection to this. However, the fact that it is acknowledged as such does not imply that in ancient times it existed only in China and that it was introduced in Tibet only at a later date, during the reign of King Sontgsen Gampo in the seventh century. Certainly, during the reign of this king diverse astrological texts were imported into Tibet from China, on account of which the knowledge of astrology in Tibet was greatly developed, but this does not mean that before then this type of astrology did not already exist. In fact, many historical texts relate how, at the time of the first Tibetan king Nyatri Tsenpo, there were the 'Twelve Sages of the Bön of Cause', one of whom was in fact an astrologer. Moreover, as we know, in the vast Bön literature it is handed down that astrology, in the same way as medicine, was

taught by Shenrab Miwoche in Shang Shung as part of the teachings of the 'Shen of the Cha'. It is true that in ancient times the astrological system based on the cycle of the twelve years and the five elements was unknown in India, but the same cannot be asserted of Tibet or Shang Shung, nor of Oḍḍiyāna, the small kingdom north west of India (modern Swat in Pakistan) to which tradition ascribes the origin of the Dzogchen teaching of the Buddhist tradition. In fact, in the principal *tantra* of the 'Secret Instructions' (*man ngag*) Series of Dzogchen, *The Sound That Goes Beyond*,²⁸ we read:

Three decades of days
 make a month,
 when twelve of these pass
 we have a year.
 When seven hundred and twenty pass,
 of days and nights,
 we have three hundred and sixty 'days',
 when these pass we have a year.
 The days are divided in male and female.
 Autumn, spring, summer and winter
 have three months each.
 In relation to the five elements
 and the twelve animals: mouse, bull and tiger,
 hare (*rna ring*), snake and dragon,
 horse, sheep and monkey,
 bird, dog and pig,
 are unfolded the astrological calculations of the elements (*'byung
 ba'i rtsis rnams spel ba'o*).²⁹

In the same way, according to the traditional texts the astrology of the elements had been widespread in Tibet and Shang Shung since ancient times. For example, the *Zermig* recounts how, before taking birth, the great master of Bön carefully chose the year, the month, the day and the hour, according to their particular astrological characteristics:

He chose to be born in the first of years, the mouse year, to teach all beings and to develop the teaching in all its aspects with great energy. He chose to be born in the first of months, the first month of spring, to accomplish the 'twelve deeds' in the world...³⁰ He chose to be born on the essential of days, the fifteenth, to emulate the masters of the past who took birth on that special date and to realise 'the essence of the secret moon' (*zla gsang thig le'i dngos grub*). He chose to be born under the supreme constella-

tion, the 'victorious' (*rgyal*), to subdue and vanquish the 'four demons'³¹ and to take control of the whole world. He chose to be born in the first of hours, at dawn, to be able to spread from his body, just born, hundreds of thousands of emanations for the benefit of beings, in the same way the sun shines immediately after the dawn.³²

v KONGTSE TRULGYEL IN THE BÖN TRADITION

In the *Zermig* we find Kongtse Trulgyel,³³ the Chinese Sage traditionally reputed by the Tibetans to be one of the founders of the astrology of the elements, in the role of patron king and disciple of Shenrab Miwoche, so that one could also hypothesise that the great spread in China of the systems of the *mewa* and *parkha* of the astrology of the elements was in some way connected to the teachings bequeathed by the great master of Bön. This is the description of the birth of Kongtse Trulgyel as the son of a king of the region of Olmo Lungring called Gyalag Ödmai Ling:

South of the Mijed world ('that does not fear': our world)³⁴ there lived a very virtuous king named Selchog Tampa who constantly turned the wheel of the Bön teachings. Then he died and left that world, but was immediately reborn as the son of the king of the west in our world, Kandala Sergyi Dogchen ('gold-faced'). As soon as he was born, thanks to the virtues accumulated (in other lives) he manifested (the signs of) the great merits he possessed: he was the receptacle in which the teaching was preserved... As the sign of royalty he was born with thirty magic *kongtse* (of geometric shape?)³⁵ letters imprinted in a circle on the palms of his two hands, right and left. His father was very pleased by all this, and called him Gya Kongtse Trulgyi Gyelpo, because he was a king (*rgyal po*) by the Gya race³⁶ and because on his hands he had thirty magic letters (*kong rtse 'phrul yig*) written in a circle.³⁷

The following passage, that describes how, to examine the positive or negative result of a deed he had performed,³⁸ he made use of astrological calculations, could prove that the astrology of the elements was practised in Shang Shung before it was practised in China:

Having the desire, in order to accumulate virtue for death (*'chi rgyags*), to accomplish an act that would prove greater than any other human deed, he examined the *kongtse* letters on his hands. Performing the astrological calculations (*gtsug lag brtsis pas*), he discovered that, thanks to his merits, he would succeed in consummating any virtuous undertaking.³⁹

vi THE SYSTEM OF THE *PARKHA* TRIGRAMS

According to many historical texts the astrological system of the *parkha* (*spar kha*)⁴⁰ trigrams originated in China at the time of the first legendary sovereign. The great erudite scholar Kongtrul Yönten Gyatso (1813-1899) affirms:⁴¹

The so-called 'astrology of the elements' (*'byung rtsis*) or 'black astrology' (*nag rtsis*) originated in China. (In fact it is handed down that) Fu Hsui (Spa Hu Hshi Rdhi),⁴² the first emperor, received the gift of a gold-coloured turtle from a subject who lived on the ocean coast, and when he observed and examined it for the first time he intuited the symbols of the eight *parkha*. On this basis he elaborated the astrological systems of the *parkha* and the *mewa* in relation to the cycle of years, which were subsequently further developed by other wise sovereigns and ministers (who were considered) emanations (of divine beings). In particular Confucius (Kong spu tsi), an emanation of Mañjuśrī and known in Tibet as Kongtse Trulgyel, elaborated innumerable systems of astrological calculations and *To* rites,⁴³ giving rise to a genre that has subsequently been greatly developed.⁴⁴

Even if we accept that the *parkha* system originated in China, we cannot discard the possibility that it was known in Shang Shung, because among Shenrab Miwoche's disciples there were also Chinese translators, as is asserted in the Bön historical literature:⁴⁵

Then (Shenrab Miwoche) went to China and taught the Chinese Bönpo Legtang Mangpo, (as the science) concerning the external condition, the method of calculating the 'black and white' *mewa* according to the Chinese astrological system (*rgya'i gtsug lag*).⁴⁶

It is written in the *Dodü* (the abbreviated biography of Shenrab Miwoche)⁴⁷ that from Olmo Lungring the original scriptures and commentaries of Bön were translated from the everlasting language of the deities (*g.yung drung lha skad*) into the respective languages of the countries of the 'six translators' (*lo tsa ba drug*): Mutsa Trahe, the translator from Tagzig, Trithog Partsa from Shang Shung, Ghuhi Liparya from Sumpa, Lhadag Nagdro from India, Legtang Mangpo from China and Serthog Chejam from Trom.⁴⁸ These six great sages, known as the 'six ornaments of the world' (*'dzam bu gling gi rgyan drug*), who had studied at the feet of Dungsob Mucho (Shenrab Miwoche's son), were endowed with miraculous powers and translated the scriptures of Bön into

three hundred and sixty different languages, (including) those of India, of China, of Trom, of Tagzig, of Tibet and of Shang Shung, enhancing the development and the diffusion of Bön.⁴⁹






Thus we can conclude that it is highly likely that in those times the Chinese astrological system of the *parkha* was already known in Shang Shung and that, combined with the astrological tradition taught by Shenrab Miwoche, it gave rise to the system of the Kabtse.

vii THE MEWA SYSTEM OF NUMBERS

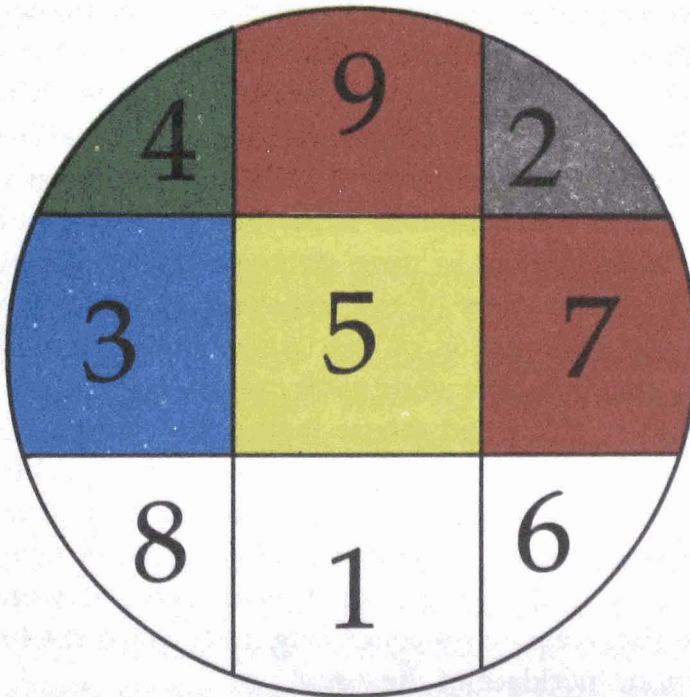
There is no doubt the astrological system based on the nine *mewa* numbers is a science characteristic of the ancient Bön tradition. In common usage the Tibetan word *mewa* (*sme ba*) means 'mole', 'birthmark', and this is the etymological meaning underlying the astrological term. In fact, just as moles are unmistakable signs that remain throughout one's life in the same places on the body, the *mewa* are characteristic positive or negative signs that recur invariably and with periodic consistency during astrological time cycles. They are symbolised by the numbers from one to nine, to represent the totality of the phenomena of existence which can be calculated by numbers, one being the base or starting point of all numbers, while nine is their extreme limit. Beyond nine is zero, emptiness, and in order to begin counting again one has to start again from one in order to obtain eleven, twelve etc., on to infinity.

The nine *mewa* have specific colours, which are white for one, black for two, blue for three, green for four, yellow for five, white for six, red for seven, white for eight and red for nine, which symbolise their particular functions, and from their combination and collation with the five elements innumerable systems of calculations of the *mewa* have been elaborated. The best known is the computation of the years in a one hundred and eighty-year cycle subdivided in three sixty-year cycles, combining each *mewa* with each of the years of the sixty-year cycle (*lo rgan drug cu*) resulting from the combination of the twelve-year cycle with the five elements. Thus, combining the white *mewa* number one with the first year of the cycle, that is, the wood mouse male year, counting forward or backward, only after three sixty-year cycles, that is, after one hundred and eighty years, does there again recur the white *mewa* number one combined with the wood mouse male year. Such a period or temporal cycle is called *menkhor*, 'cycle of the *mewa*', or at times *mezthag* 'day of the *mewa*', while the three sixty-year cycles composing it are called the first, second and third *metren* or 'necklace of the *mewa*'.

THE COLOURS AND SHAPES OF THE FIVE ELEMENTS:

Wood	Green	Rectangle	
Fire	Red	Triangle	
Earth	Yellow	Square	
Metal	White	Semicircle	
Water	Blue	Circle	

THE SEATS OF THE MEWA (SME BA'I GLING SKOR)



THE CYCLE OF THE MEWA (SME 'KHOR)

Mouse	Bull	Tiger	Hare	Dragon	Snake	Horse	Sheep	Monkey	Bird	Dog	Pig
FIRST METRENG (SME PHRENG)											
1 	2 	3 	4 	5 	6 	7 	8 	9 	10 	11 	12
13 	14 	15 	16 	17 	18 	19 	20 	21 	22 	23 	24
25 	26 	27 	28 	29 	30 	31 	32 	33 	34 	35 	36
37 	38 	39 	40 	41 	42 	43 	44 	45 	46 	47 	48
49 	50 	51 	52 	53 	54 	55 	56 	57 	58 	59 	60
SECOND METRENG (SME PHRENG)											
1 	2 	3 	4 	5 	6 	7 	8 	9 	10 	11 	12
13 	14 	15 	16 	17 	18 	19 	20 	21 	22 	23 	24
25 	26 	27 	28 	29 	30 	31 	32 	33 	34 	35 	36
37 	38 	39 	40 	41 	42 	43 	44 	45 	46 	47 	48
49 	50 	51 	52 	53 	54 	55 	56 	57 	58 	59 	60
THIRD METRENG (SME PHRENG)											
1 	2 	3 	4 	5 	6 	7 	8 	9 	10 	11 	12
13 	14 	15 	16 	17 	18 	19 	20 	21 	22 	23 	24
25 	26 	27 	28 	29 	30 	31 	32 	33 	34 	35 	36
37 	38 	39 	40 	41 	42 	43 	44 	45 	46 	47 	48
49 	50 	51 	52 	53 	54 	55 	56 	57 	58 	59 	60

viii ESTABLISHING THE DATE OF SHENRAB MIWOCHÉ'S BIRTH

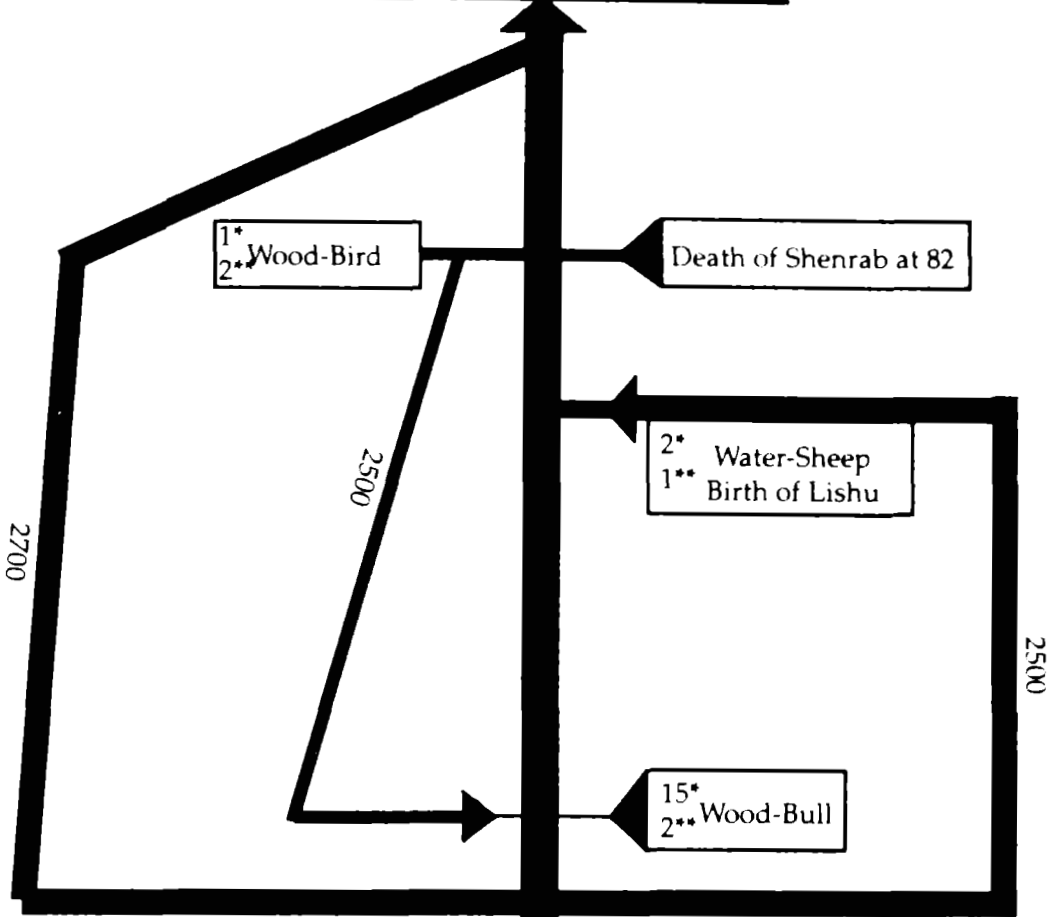
The Bön literature is unequivocal in recounting that the birth of the master Shenrab Miwoche took place on the fifteenth day of the first month of the wood-mouse-male year, as we read above in the passage from the *Zermig*.⁵⁰ As regards the duration of his life, there are sources that assert that he lived very many years, calculable only in 'shen years' (*gshen lo*), each equivalent to one hundred human years.⁵¹ Evidently this lies beyond judgement by our limited capacities, and since history must be studied in congruence with ordinary human perception, I prefer not to base myself on these traditions. However, nearly all the other texts agree in attributing to him the age of eighty-two years at the moment of his death, such that the year of his passing away must correspond to the wood bird year of the second *metren* or sixty-year cycle of the first *menkhor* (one hundred and eighty-year cycle).

To obtain a possible date of the birth of Shenrab Miwoche, in the *History of Bön* there is an interesting passage that warrants examination. It says:

After the master passed away Lishu (Taring)⁵² was born, and when the latter reached the age of two thousand five hundred years, in the water-pig year, Trisong (Detsen) started to persecute Bön.⁵³

Counting 2500 years from the wood bird year of Shenrab Miwoche's death, we arrive at the wood bull year, the second year of the second *metren* of the fifteenth *menkhor* (665 A.D.), which is the same *menkhor* in which Trisong Deutsen lived, albeit the *metren* does not correspond. His year of birth, according to reliable sources, was the horse water-male-year (742 A.D.),⁵⁴ the nineteenth year of the third *metren* of the fifteenth *menkhor*, 2659 years after the beginning of the first *menkhor* taken as the starting point of our calculations. If the passage quoted above states that 2500 years after the birth of the great Bönpo sage Lishu Taring, in the water pig-year, the king started to persecute Bön, this year must of necessity correspond to the sixtieth year of the fifteenth *menkhor* (783 A.D.), when the king was forty-one years old (forty-two according to the Tibetan system) and 2700 years after the start of the *menkhor*. The resulting difference of two hundred years obtained by subtracting the 2500 years mentioned in the text can be explained by dating Lishu Taring's birth two hundred years after the birth of Shenrab Miwoche, in the water-sheep year, the twentieth of the first *metren* of the second *menkhor*. Now, counting from the year in which it is stated that 2500 years had passed since the birth of Lishu Taring and when Trisong Deutsen was forty-two

BEGINNING OF MENKHOR CYCLE
(1917 B.C.)
Wood-Mouse—Birth of Shenrab



15* Wood-Pig
3** Wood-Pig

Trisong aged 41
2500 years since Lushu's birth

22* Water-Dog
2** Water-Dog

1982

3899
Since the birth of Shenrab

* Mekhor (*sme 'khor*)
** Metreng (*sme phreng*)

years of age, the water-pig year (783 A.D.) to the current water-dog year (1982), the fifty-ninth year of the second *metren* of the twenty-second *menkhor*, we have 1199 years, which, added to the 2700 years that have passed since the beginning of the first *menkhor*, give us 3899 years. Thus, three thousand eight hundred and ninety-nine years have passed since the start of the first *menkhor*, corresponding to the birth of the Master Shenrab Miwoche, and this date (1917 B.C.) could effectively mark the beginning of Tibetan history.

ix THE TIME CYCLE OF THE ELEMENTS AND THE *CHUZHAG*

Although the 'Time Cycle of the Elements' contains the expression 'cycle of time' (*dus 'khor*) it does not correspond to the homonymous astrological system known in Sanskrit as *Kālacakra*, which combines the characteristic sciences of the zodiac (*dus sbyor*) and of numerology (*dbyangs 'char*).⁵⁵ It forms instead the basis of the astrology of the elements and serves to describe the different combinations and relations of interdependence that obtain between the elements and each of the twelve years of the cycle, the four seasons, the planets (the seven days of the week) and the twenty-eight constellations in the cyclic succession of each year, month and day. Using this system in order to ascertain whether to expect positive or negative aspects, one then carries out diverse types of calculations relative to the year (*lo rtsis*), the month (*zla rtsis*), the day (*zhag rtsis*) and so on.

The *Chuzhag*, 'Astrology of the Interdependence of Actions', consists mainly in a system of calculation of the natal horoscope (*tshe rabs las rtsis*), literally 'calculation of the actions of previous lives', which is very widespread in Tibet and serves to identify the primary and secondary, positive and negative causes a person brings with him from previous lives and, in the case where he meets many misfortunes in the present life, to identify their precise astrological cause, and to prescribe the remedies necessary in order to overcome the obstacles. Moreover, also belonging to this system are the diverse types of calculations of 'nuptial astrology' (*bag rtsis*) to detect any eventual disharmonies in the horoscopes of the two betrothed, of the 'astrology of death' (*gshin rtsis*) to discover any possible harmful influences caused by a person's death etc., and of other methods based on the examination of different interdependent factors.

x THE TERM *TsUGLAG* IN THE TIBETAN ASTROLOGY

Tsuglag (*gtsug lag*), the term sometimes used to designate the astrological sciences, is common to both Bön and Buddhist literature. Analysing the meaning of the two syllables comprising it, *tsug* means 'peak' or

'superior', like in the words *chitsug* (*spyi gtsug*) meaning 'the top of the head' or *sinciput*, and *tsuggyen* (*gtsug rgyan*) which indicates 'ornaments worn on the head'. For example the King of the Lu is known as Tsugna Rinchen, 'Jewel on the Top of the Head', and in fact it is with this ornament that he is usually portrayed. The second syllable *lag* is a contraction of *yenlag* (*yan lag*), 'branch' or 'limb.' It is used in several two-syllable composite words meaning something ancillary or secondary in relation to a central element; for example, *chalag* (*cha lag*), 'part' or 'portion', *lelag* (*le lag*), 'section' or 'paragraph', and *tsalag* (*rtsa lag*), literally 'member of a root', that can be used in different contexts to indicate anything that belongs to or descends from a central base. The structure of the word *tsuglag* thus seems the same as that of *khyilkhor* (*dkyil 'khor*: Tibetan for *maṇḍala*) where *khyil* means the fundamental centre or base and *khor* stands for everything that originates from it or lies around it: *khyilkhor* thus expresses the sense of a total dimension, inclusive of centre, surroundings and circumference. Analogously, the word *tsuglag* signifies 'what is most important' or 'esteemed above all other things' (*gtsug*), together with all the secondary elements pertaining to it (*lag*).

Tibetan Buddhists have commonly used the term *tsuglag* to designate the sacred scriptures in their totality, that is the original discourses ascribed to Buddha as well as the later treatises and commentaries. In this context *tsug* refers to the 'supreme' word of Buddha that perfectly points out the path of liberation, and *lag* refers to all the texts based on the original scriptures, from the works written by ancient masters and Indian philosophers like the famous 'six ornaments and two supreme ones'⁵⁶ to the treatises composed by Tibetan authors of the Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyü and Gelug Tibetan Buddhist traditions starting from the time when Buddhism was introduced into Tibet thanks to the exertions of Trisong Deutsen, Padmasambhava and Śāntarakṣita. Thus, great Tibetan scholars and exegetes used to be eulogised with the epithet 'Expert in Commenting the Scriptures' (*gtsug lag smra ba'i dbang po*), so that the custom arose of adding the term to the names of great Buddhist personages, such as the above-mentioned Pawo Tsuglag Trengwa, to pay homage to their knowledge of the scriptures. The places containing the *tsuglag* (sacred scriptures) were thus called *tsuglag khang* (*gtsug lag khang*), as can be evinced from many texts belonging to sections of the *Vinaya* (the codes of monastic discipline) where there is often mention of the *tsuglag khang* where monks meet. At times it is used as a proper name, for example the Tsuglag Khang of Lhasa, but in general it was a common name. In fact, there was a different *tsuglag khang* in each district of Drepung monastery,⁵⁷ near Lhasa.

Let us now examine the meaning of the term *tsuglag* in the context of astrology. As we have suggested, the astrology of the elements is very widespread among Tibetans (Bönpos and Buddhists alike) and lies at the basis of the computation of years in sixty-year cycles (*lo rgan drug cu*) obtained by combining the five elements and the twelve animals of the twelve-year cycle (*lo 'khor bcu gnyis*), and in one hundred and eighty-year cycles, called *menkhor*, obtained by collating the sixty-year cycles with the nine *mewa*. The responses obtained through astrological calculation are indispensable in all the most important circumstances in the life of a Tibetan. Thus, when a child is born one casts his natal horoscope on the basis of the 'astrology of the previous lives' (*tshe rabs las rtsis*) to discover adversities or fortune he may encounter in life and to predict the means necessary to remove the former and to enhance the latter. When a woman and man want to marry, specific calculations are performed based on 'nuptial astrology' (*bag rtsis*) to determine whether the elements of the two spouses are in harmony or in conflict, and in the case of the latter possible remedies are studied. Also very important is the 'astrology of hindrances' (*skeg rtsis*) which serves to cast an annual horoscope for each of the twelve animals of the cycle to determine the possible hindrances of the year (*lo skeg*), the month (*zla skeg*) and the day (*zhag skeg*), and disharmonies between the person's element, *mewa* and *parkha* and those of the current year, obviously also in this case in order to advise how to avoid misfortune and obstacles. When somebody dies, finally, on the basis of the 'astrology of death' (*gshin rtsis*) one determines any eventual negative repercussions that might befall the living, as well as the deceased himself, and prescribes the appropriate apotropaic *To*, *Dur*, etc. rites to perform. Related to these different branches of the astrology of the elements there also exist a great variety of *To* rites to remove negativity, *Dö*, *Lüd* and *Ye* rites to ransom life and prosperity, etc. The whole collection of astrological calculations and rites is referred to in the astrological literature by the name *Tsuglag*. Of the numerous astrological treatises and ritual texts that can demonstrate this, it is sufficient to mention the famous *White Vaidurya* (*Bai du rya dkar po*) by Desid Sangye Gyatso (1653-1705).

xi TSUGLAG AND BÖN IN THE TUN HUANG MANUSCRIPTS

Having ascertained that in several texts of distinctly Bön ilk found among the Tun Huang manuscripts the term *tsuglag*, but not the term *bön*, occurs, some contemporary western scholars have drawn the conclusion that in ancient times the name Bön did not exist and that that religious tradition was known as *tsuglag* or simply *tsug* (*gtsug*).⁵⁸ Such a thesis seems to me to say the least somewhat paradoxical, because those manu-

scripts in which the term *tsuglag* is found are not other than *To*, *Dö*, *Lüd* etc. rites belonging to the system of the 'Shen of the Cha'. These kinds of texts had spread far since the most ancient times, not only in Tibet but also in bordering areas such as north India, Nepal and certain regions of China, because in all these places the rites linked to astrology were widely practised. Thus, the astrological science of the *tsuglag* represented something extremely useful for all the social classes in order to confront all circumstances of death as well as of life, because it was directly connected with the most widely practiced rites (*sku rim*), which even after the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet continued to enjoy great prestige among Bönpos as well as Buddhists. For these reasons it is hardly surprising that in those times the Tun Huang libraries contained collections of scattered texts connected with the Bön tradition of the 'Shen of the Cha'.

If these libraries did not contain collections of explicitly Bön texts, as appears to be the case according to the current state of research of the Tun Huang manuscripts, this is because from the time Buddhism was officially introduced into Tibet from India Bön underwent a great decline and even suffered heavy persecutions which are historically documented. It is thus natural that the Buddhist libraries of that era (8th and 9th centuries) should not contain Bön books. For example, in ancient times in the most famous libraries of Tibet such as those of Samye,⁵⁹ Sakya, and Trandruk,⁶⁰ large numbers of volumes belonging to all the schools of Tibetan Buddhism and also treatises concerning the various secular sciences were kept, but it was probably impossible to come across even one single Bön text. Moreover, those few texts that could be found, especially in some small monasteries or village temples, would undoubtedly have been *To* or *Lüd* rites tied to astrology, or other ritual texts such as those found in the *Collections of the White, Black and Multicoloured Lu* (*Klu 'bum dkar nag khra gsun*),⁶¹ because they were used by Bönpos and Buddhists alike to satisfy the daily needs of ordinary people. It is therefore somewhat rash, to say the least, to surmise on the basis of the difficulty of finding Bön texts of other kinds among the Tun Huang manuscripts, that in ancient times Bön did not exist in Tibet, or that it was not known by that name. Moreover, reading in the manuscripts themselves we often come across terms such as *bön*, *bönpo* and *shenpo*, so that it would be absurd to deny their existence. Let me quote some examples:⁶²

This Bön, the secret Bön.⁶³

If the son of the wealthy dies,
there is not a *bön* that will save him...⁶⁴

He is a son of the deities,
 grandson of the Sinpo:
 he is a supreme *shen* of the Bön of death.
 Manana, the *shen* of the *Dur* (rites),
 Trilbu, the *shen* of 'summoning',
 Munbu, the *shen* of the *Deu*,
 the best officiants (*gsas*) of the Bön of death
 prepared the ritual vestments...⁶⁵

Nyendrung was the *bön* of the *Sel* (rites),
 Pudrung was engaged in meditation
 and swore an oath in his heart.
 Mana, the *shen* of the *Dur*,
 Shenrab Miwo⁶⁶
 and Theu, *shen* of the stars, were there.⁶⁷

He is a supreme *bön shen*,
 he is the son of the deities,
 he is grandson of the Sinpo.
 The *bön* of men, the *bön* of the deities
 and Tritang, the Chinese *bön*,
 displayed one hundred signs of victory.⁶⁸

The *kushen* (royal *shen*) *jol bönpo*...⁶⁹

The *kushen*, *shen* of the ancestry (*rigs gshen*),
 and two *phang bönpo*,⁷⁰ these three proceeded ahead...⁷¹

Then, when night fell,
 the *nyun bönpo*, the *mag bönpo*
 and the *jol bönpo*
 also went to the burial site to chant hymns (*gyer*)
 and performed the rite continuously.
 At first break of dawn they blew the conches
 and the *kushen*, the *phang bönpo*,
 the *led bönpo* and the *ringkhen*
 together with two assistants
 purified themselves with the smoke of the artemisia (*mkhan pa*).⁷²

Chapter XII

The Bön of the Origin Myths and the To Rites

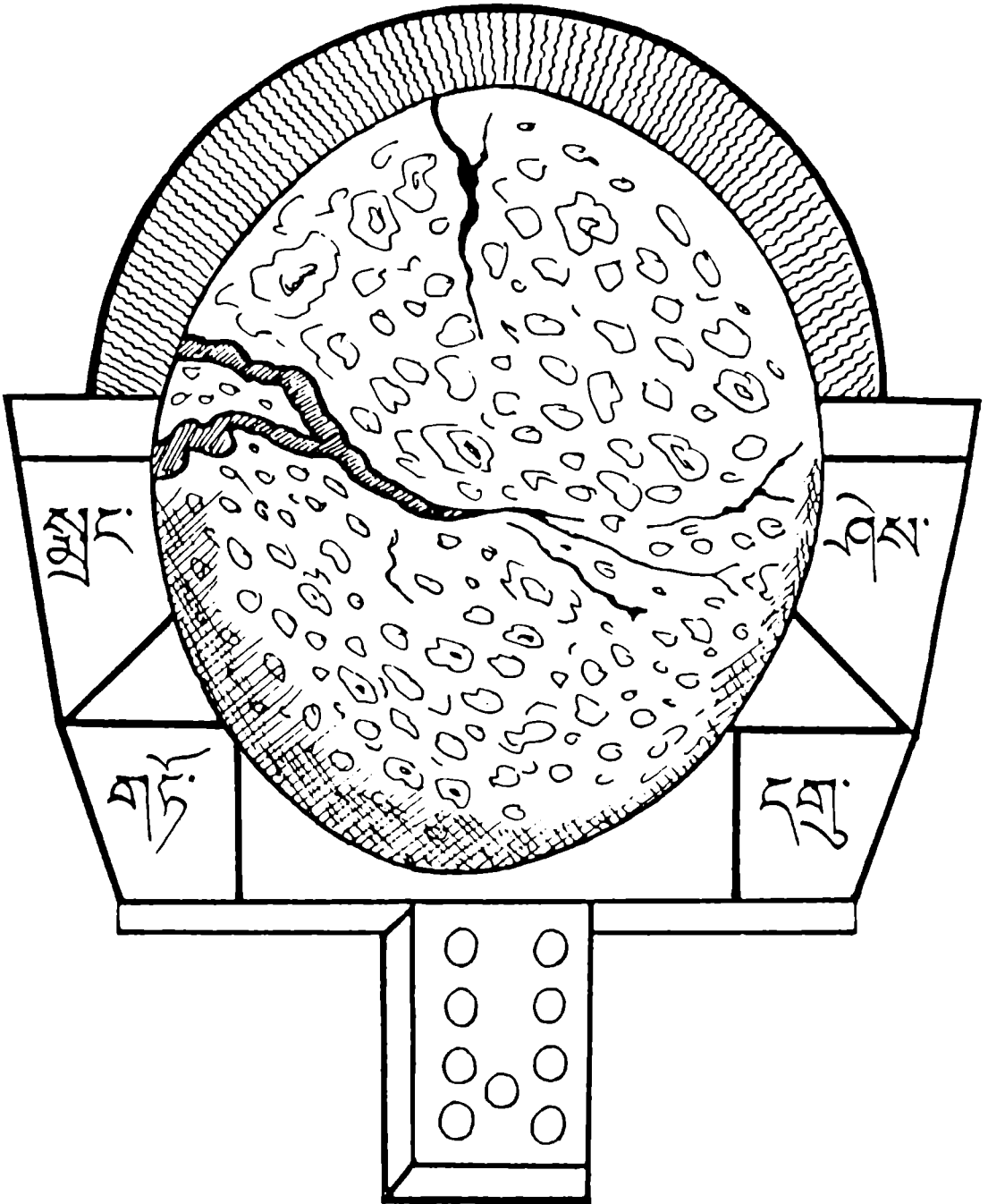
The Bön of the 'To Rites, Lore of the Mang' (*smrang shes gto dgu*) comprises two ritual traditions: 'The Human Generations of the Origins of Existence' (*srid pa mi'u rgyud kyi gzhung*) from the Series of the Black Waters, and 'The Rites for the Dre and the Si' (*'dre dang sri yi sgo*) from the Series of the White Waters. As regards the meaning of the expression *to gu* (*gto dgu*) – literally 'nine To', in the name of this Bön from the twelve lores, I think in this case it does not specify the number of categories of these kinds of rites but simply denotes the plural. In fact, there are other Tibetan expressions where analogous use is made of the term *gu* (*dgu*) as the second syllable, such as *död gu* (*'dod dgu*) meaning 'all desires' and *yöd gu* (*yod dgu*), 'everything that exists', and this can be explained by the import of totality ascribed to the number nine as the final term of all numbers, according to mathematical principles, as we saw above in reference to the *mewa*.

i THE MEANING OF MANG AND THE RITES OF THE HUMAN GENERATIONS

On the basis of the explanations contained in the ritual tradition of the 'Human Generations of the Origin of Existence' we can comprehend the term *mang* to denote the 'proclamation or declaration of the power of the truth' (*bden pa'i smrang*) by which the officiant opens communications with the specific class of beings to which the rite is addressed.¹ This proclamation is always based on the particular origin myth (*chog rabs*), which generally starts by narrating how in primordial times, when the outer universe formed, the dimension of existence of our world was born and the origins of the generations of mankind came into being.²

At the base of the rites of the 'Human Generations' there is the myth of Sidpa Yemön Gyelpo (King of the Primordial Aspiration of Existence),³ which describes the origin of existence (*srid pa'i grol phug*) in the following way. First of all, being arose from nothingness, then, from the junction of congruent causes, the elements came into being. Then, from the deities of the clear light existence manifested, and from the deities mankind descended, becoming differentiated into special and ordinary men. Thus there arose the four ritual traditions known as 'The Human Generations of the Origins of Existence': the 'Great Rites of the Original Formation of the Kalpa' (*bskal srid chags pa'i gzhung chen*), the 'Four Divisions of the Fortresses of Aspiration' (*smon lam mkhar gyi gling bzhi*), the 'Hundred Thousand Human Generations of the Origin of Existence' (*srid pa mi'u'i rgyud 'bum*) and the 'Great Rites for the Armed Protector Drala' (*mtshon*

THE MANG IN THE ORIGIN MYTHS AND THE TO RITES



mgon sgra bla'i gzhung chen). From these four traditions there branch off twenty-four secondary systems from which, in response to the diverse needs of man, there arose in turn a multitude of ritual systems as numerous as the number 'of trees in a forest'. This tradition of the 'Human Generations' is also known as the 'Bön of the Original Lineage of Existence, the Black Waters' (*chab nag srid pa rgyud kyi bon*).⁴

ii THE MYTH OF THE COSMIC EGG: THE ORIGIN OF EXISTENCE

The myth of the origin of existence (*srid pa'i grol phug*) is narrated in detail in the above-mentioned *Treasury of the Origin of Existence* (*Srid pa'i mdzod phug*) and in Trenpa Namkha's commentary. It describes two 'cosmic eggs' (*srid pa'i sgong nga*), one luminous and the other dark, which give rise, respectively, to the dimensions of being and non being, of light and of darkness. Here is a summary:⁵ In the beginning in the dimension of empty space, thanks to the power of Trigyel Khugpa⁶ there formed the winds (the air element) *tsentin*, whose nature was to retain and not allow to disperse, *nentin*, whose substance had the characteristic to support and not allow to fall, and *trinni* which had a screen of heat.⁷ The movement of the winds produced a vortex of light that whirled vigorously from whose energy heat was emitted, and (the element) fire was formed. Then from the cold vapour of the wind that supported and from the heat of the fire (the element) water was formed as dew and rime, on which minute particles of matter (*rdul phra rab*: the earth element) condensed. These particles, shaken and blended by the wind whirling swiftly in space, formed the earth and the mountains. From the essence of the five elements (thus formed) there came into being two eggs, an egg of light (*'od kyi sgong nga*) and an egg of darkness (*mun pa'i sgong nga*). Due to the power of the aspiration vow of the deity (Trigyel Khugpa) from the pure essence of the five elements the egg of light formed, with four faces and eight corners, the size of a seven-year-old female yak (*grus ma*). From the impure essence, and due to the aspiration vow of Medbum Nagpo (Infinite Black Non Being)⁸ the egg of darkness formed, with three corners and as big as a three-year-old bull (*shad*) lying down.

The luminous egg hatched by the force of its own light and its own rays, and from the clear light that spread in space were born the three hundred and sixty Thorse (*'thor gsas*: Scattered Deities), men of light who took on the task of protecting virtuous actions. From the rays that gushed downwards were born the Dase (*mda' gsas*: Arrow Deities), ten thousand men with one hundred thousand horses who took on the task of sustaining heroism in deities and men. From the inner essence of the egg was born the emanation of Trigyel Khugpa called Sidpa Sangpo Bumtri, a

divine manifestation in human form, a white man with seven turquoise plaits down to his armpits. He is the king of existence, of plenitude, of the good (*dkar*: literally, 'white') and of virtue.

The black egg hatched in the dimension of black darkness, and from the black light that was emitted upwards were born darkness, obfuscation (*thibs*) and obscuration (*rmugs*). From the rays that spread falling downwards were born madness, obfuscation and obscuration. From the inner essence of the egg was born a man of black light with his hair tied in three big plaits. Medbum Nagpo gave him the name Munpa Serden (Radiant Black Darkness). He is a king who likes to annihilate and to empty, to interrupt and to destroy.⁹

iii THE EIGHTEEN FOREBEARS OF MANKIND

The myth continues by recounting how the 'Eighteen Brothers and Sisters, Ancestors of Mankind' were born from Sidpa Sangpo Bumtri's union with Chuchag Gyelmo, a woman miraculously born from an 'egg of blue light': The blue lake was stirred by the wind and a bubble the size of a tent was formed, from which was born an egg of blue light. When the egg hatched a blue woman appeared with her hair tied in seven plaits that reached her armpits. Sangpo Bumtri gave her the name Köpa Chuchag Gyelmo. They then lay together, and from their union were born eighteen brothers and sisters, the 'Nine Primordial Males' (*srid pa pho dgu*) and the 'Nine Primordial Females' (*srid pa mo dgu*).¹⁰

The nine males were:

1. White Lord that Controls Existence (*Srid rje 'brang dkar*);
2. Lord of Order with a White Staff (*sKos rje drang dkar*);
3. Lord of the Cha Dressed in White (*Phywa rje ring dkar*);¹¹
4. Powerful Narrator of the Divine Genealogies (*lHa rabs gnyan rum rje*);
5. Awakened Lord of the Mu (*Thum thum rnal med rje*);
6. Lord that Governs the Atmosphere (*sKyin dang ngar gyi rje*);
7. Miraculous King of Primordial Knowledge (*Ye mkhyen 'phrul gyi rgyal*);
8. Lord of the Hundred Thousand Protector Deities of the Earth (*Sa lha mgon 'bum rje*);
9. Lord of Plants and of the Cycle of Existence (*lJon phyug 'khor ba rje*).

The nine females were:

1. Ancestress Queen of the Sky (*gNam phyi gung rgyal*);
2. White Menmo of the Sky (*gNam sman dkar mo*);
3. Woman Who Does Not Talk (*sMra ste mi mkhan ma mo*);
4. Female Tiger (*Za ma stag mo*);
5. She who Develops and Strengthens (*Shed za na ma*);

6. Sharp Flaming Point (*dBal so rmon mo*);
7. She who Rides a Deer and Protects Livestock (*Ya sha phyug mo*);
8. Queen of the Cha and of Longevity (*Phywa thse'i rgyal mo*);
9. White Goddess (*lHa mo dkar mo*).

The various human races and generations then descended from each of these eighteen ancestors, as described in Trenpa Namkha's commentary.¹²

iv THE RITUAL FUNCTION OF THE MANG

We have discussed the specific function of the *mang*, to declare the power of the truth (*bden pa'i smrang*) by recounting a myth related to one's lineage. The following is an example, from a ritual text belonging to the cycle of the deity Meri.¹³

Once in the past, in the first time cycle,
the deities and the arrogant demons (*dregs pa*) of the 'nine dimensions'¹⁴
suddenly provoked fierce epidemics,
and when all living beings,
from the peak of existence
down to the depths of the hells
were about to be destroyed and annihilated
by four rivers of unbearable sufferings,
Kunzang Ati Muwer,
lovingly considering the good of beings
manifested in the active emanation
of Great Wal (*dbal chen*) Gekhöd 'Subduer of the Dūd'.
Standing upright on the peak of the seven gold mountains
he brandished a flaming gold stone (*gser tso gtar rdo*) as big as a
drong (wild yak)
and twirling it in space hurled it onto the earth.
It fell into the outer ocean
and the immense sea boiled and contracted,
the four (major) continents and the minor ones caught fire from
the borders
and Mount Meru was about to collapse from the peak.
Then the deities and the demons of the nine dimensions
trembled with fear, fainted and were paralysed.
About the same period
the miraculous emanation Kuji Mangke
pronouncing *dang ra hib chu*¹⁵

swallowed the ocean in one sip,
 pronouncing *tso mar tsug tse na*¹⁶
 lifted a flaming gold boulder:
 then the deities and the demons of the nine dimensions
 paid homage to him and offered him their lives.
 (So) if you receive an order of everlasting Bön
 do not forget the oath you have sworn
 to come running like dogs when you are called,
 to hurry like servants if exhorted to action,
 to submit when conquered if your power is reduced and to
 vanish if you are dismissed
 and to do everything you are commanded!
 Subsequently, in the intermediate cycle of time,
 the great *shen Sangwa Düpa*,¹⁷
 after having practised in nine secret caves (*dgu rgyud*)
 manifested in the wrathful aspect of the 'Subduer of the Död'
 and bound by oath the deities and demons of the nine dimen-
 sions,
 taking their vital essence in pledge.
 (So) do not forget the oath you have sworn
 to perform any action asked of you:
 you descend from those deities and demons,
 I belong to the lineage of that master,
 so do not violate the pact!¹⁸

v THE NINE DRE AND THE TEN SI

The series of rites for the Dre and Si spirits, known in the 'Shen of the Phenomenal Universe' as 'The Bön of the White Waters', comprises two traditions: the 'Removal of the Nine Dre' (*dre dgu skyas kyis 'debs pa*) and the 'Suppression of the Ten Si' (*sri bcu thur du gnon pa*), both of which perform the task of removing the negative energies engaged by these two classes of wicked entities.

Regarding the mythical origin of these two classes of spirits, the *Zijid*¹⁹ narrates that once in ancient times, the two progenitors of existence (*srid pa stang dbyal*) lay together at midnight, and by the interaction of being and non being, good and evil (*dge sdig*), light and darkness, were born the deities and demons, white and black. This produced an opaque grey egg that exploded: from the shell were formed the dimensions of existence of the Dön and of the Triza; from the membrane (*bdar sha*) there came into being the three hundred and sixty ill omens; from the yolk that spilt onto the ground, the four hundred and four kinds of diseases; from the essence

of the egg, the three hundred and sixty types of provocations of energy (*gdon*); from the vapour that ascended curling into intermediate space, the twenty-one thousand negative circumstances (*rkyen*); from the impurity that overflowed onto the ground, the sixty thousand types of *geg* (hindrances); from the residual particles that scattered everywhere, finally, were born the 'Nine Dre and Ten Si of Existence' (*srid pa'i 'dre dgu dang sri bcu*).

The original nine Dre were:

1. The Dre that drags down and does not allow to rise (*mtho ru mi ster dma' ba'i 'dre*);
2. The Dre that annihilates and does not allow to exist (*yod du mi ster med pa'i 'dre*);
3. The Dre that makes poor and does not allow to become rich (*phyug tu mi ster dbul ba'i 'dre*);
4. The Dre that makes sterile and does not allow to propagate (*'phan tu mi ster rmang ba'i 'dre*);
5. The Dre that empties and does not allow to fill (*gang du mi ster stong ba'i 'dre*);
6. The Dre that destroys and does not allow to develop (*chags su mi ster 'jig pa'i 'dre*);
7. The Dre that causes making mistakes and does not allow to do well (*yag tu mi ster nyes pa'i 'dre*);
8. The Dre that makes sad and does not allow to be joyous (*skyid du mi ster sdug pa'i 'dre*);
9. The Dre that diminishes and does not allow to increase (*'phel du mi ster 'grib pa'i 'dre*).

As regards the specific origin of the 'ten Si', maleficent spirits whose fundamental characteristic is to cause the cyclical repetition of different types of misfortunes on the basis of a calamity that once occurred,²⁰ it is told that from the negative energies of death (*mas kyi shid*)²¹ were born the father 'Male Si', Long-Maned King of the Död (*pho sri ral chen bdud rje*) and the mother 'Female Si', Young Queen of the Död (*mo sri dar gzhon bdud rje*). They lay together and begot eight sons: the Si (disturber) of the Large (*che sri*), the Si (disturber) of the Small (*chung sri*), the Black Face Si of the Hearth (*thab sri ngo nag*), the Si (disturber) of the Old (*rgan sri*), the Si (disturber) of the Young (*gzhon sri*), the Si (disturber) of Adults (*dar sri*), the Si (causer) of Separations (*byer sri*) and the Si (causer) of Misfortunes (*byur sri*). This is how the ten Si came into being together with their armies. All these negative entities are known as the 'Nine Dre and Ten Si of Existence' because they have existed since the moment existence formed. Their dwelling is the bowels of the earth, their routes include all directions, their companions are the Malachüd, the provocations they

cause consist of different kinds of sudden attacks (*ye 'brog*). They go around all the worlds of the universe unleashing wars between nations, spreading epidemics, provoking diabolical hindrances to men, harming animals and livestock and inflicting all sorts of calamities and disasters. It is handed down that the great master Shenrab Miwoche, expert in all methods, taught a specific series of *To* rites to eliminate the disturbances caused by the Dre and Si spirits, in which the negativities are removed by offering them small ritual gifts, as in the '*To* with the proclamation of the *mang*, to remove the nine Dre' (*'dre dgu skyas 'debs smrang gto*) and the '*To* of the Si, for the suppression of the ten Si' (*sri bcu gnon pa'i sri gto*), just as for the benefit of beings he had taught the sciences of medicine, astrology, divination and the diverse apotropaic rites of exorcism, ransom, power etc.²²

vi VARIOUS TYPES OF *TO* RITES

In this series of *To* rites, in order to establish which specific rite must be performed, it is indispensable to identify the type of demonic entity responsible for the negativity, for which purpose a method of divination called 'The Mirror that Reveals the Clues' (*pra ltas gsal ba'i me long*) is used, based on the visions that appear to the diviner on the surface of a ceremonial mirror used to this end.²³ In this way, one discovers the precise name and characteristics of the class of beings that has caused the disturbance, and only at this point can one carry out the rite to remove or drive away the negativities thus described in the *Zijid*:

Sprinkle some green barley on the divine altar,
and on this, arrange offering lamps.

As the deity, meditate on Karse Tsenpo,
and with the proclamation of the origin of existence (*srid pa'i smrang*) ask him to act as mediator.

Invite the presence of Karse Tsenpo,
offer him gold, turquoise and precious jewels
and honour him with the first offering of nectareous *chang* (*g.yu 'brang*).

Two types of ritual melodies are played:
when the officiant of the original lineage of existence (*srid pa gsas*)²⁴

has to admonish and exhort (*bzhen 'debs pa*)²⁵

all the beings living in the universe

he will chant the melody of the Khyung, king of birds.

When he has to admonish and exhort the nine Dre and the ten

he will chant the sweet melody of the parrot.

With a clear exposition of the *mang*, one must make oneself understood,

the desired *lūd* and the other ritual objects must be delivered:

one must carry out the removal with different objects.

With the gifts that satisfy all their desires one will send them far away,

and the ransom objects must reach their destination.

(One can) perform the 'To of the *mang* to drive away the nine

Dre' (*'dre dgu bskyal ba'i smrang gto*),

the 'To for the Si, to suppress the ten Si' (*sri bcu gnon pa'i sri gto*),

the 'To for dangers, to repel periodic misfortunes' (*kag nyen bzlog pa'i nyen gto*)

and the 'astrological To, to harmonise the interdependence of existence' (*rten 'brel srid pa'i rtsis gto*).

From among these four methods of To rites

one must discern which is most suitable to subjugate (the negative entities).²⁶

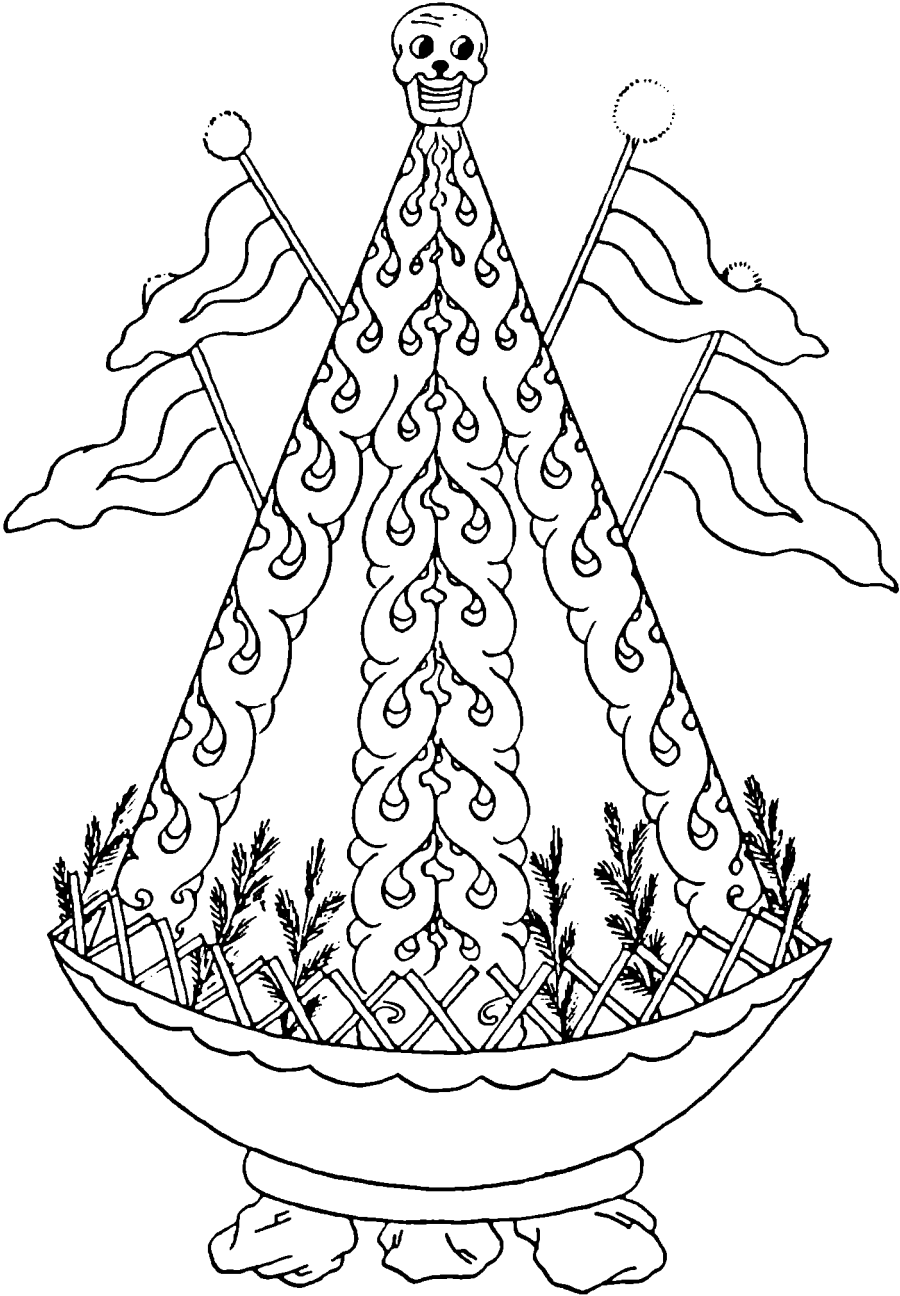
Concerning the last two types of To mentioned in the passage, the 'To for Dangers, to Repel Periodic Misfortunes' is a rite that serves to free a person from the danger of accidents that can bring about death in specific astrological periods (*kag*) and to repel other types of recurrent interruptions. In practice, first one must perform astrological calculations and by divinatory methods identify whether the disturber belongs to the class of the Dūd, Tsen, Mamo, Shinje, Tsedūd (*tshe bdud*: Dūd that attacks the life capacity), Kagsi (*kag sri*: Si that provoke chronic interruptions), Sogdūd (*srog bdud*: Dūd that attack the vital principle) etc. Then one performs the appropriate rite which, according to the case may be a 'ransom of the longevity' (*tshe bslu*), a 'ransom of the vital principle' (*srog bslu*), a 'payment' (*lan chags*) etc., and then by proffering offerings to the 'Eight Deities that Protect Longevity and Well-being' (*tshe dpal skyobs pa'i lha brgyad*),²⁷ one frees oneself definitively from all danger.

The 'Astrological To, to Harmonise the Interdependence of Existence' is a rite performed in order to eliminate the negativities and hindrances caused by the conflict or disharmony between the elements of the *mewa*, the *parkha*, the twelve animals of the cycle etc., particularly when the 'enemy' relation (*dgra gshed*)²⁸ is very strong. In order to remedy this on a base of clean earth, one marks out the offering *maṇḍala* with the five coloured powders on which one arranges aromatic plants, threads of coloured wool, various types of cloth, clean *shöbu* made of different cereals, and the prime 'white' (yoghurt, milk and butter) and 'sweet'

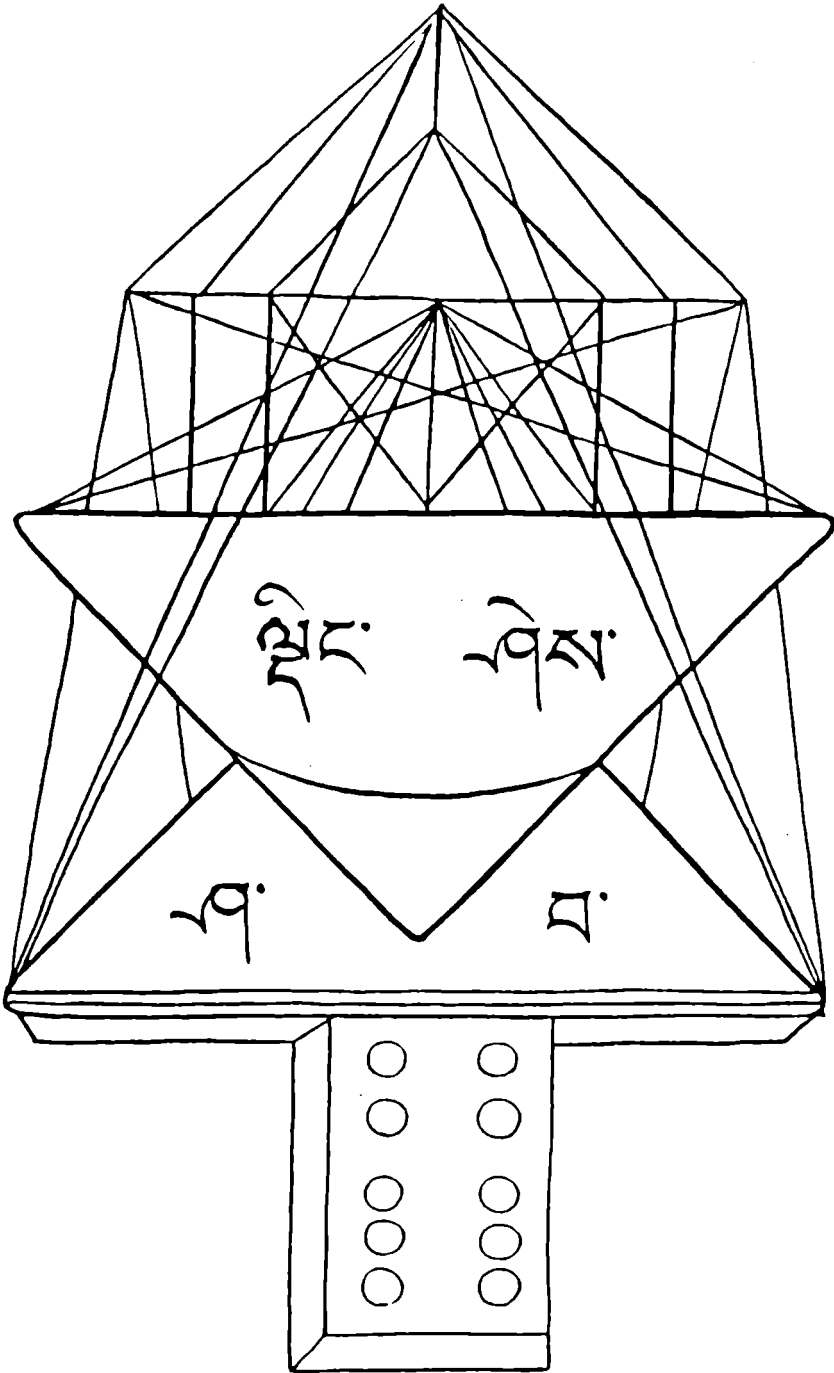
(sugar, molasses and honey) offerings; all according to one's means. Then one proffers the offerings to the 'Goddesses of the Elements and of Time' (*'byung ba dus kyi lha mo*),²⁹ and through the proclamation of the power of the truth releases the beneficiary of the rite from the misfortunes by which he is afflicted.

In conclusion, the traditional texts speak of three hundred and sixty different kinds of *To* rites, grouped in four main categories: the 'White *To*' (*gto dkar po*), the 'Black *To*' (*gto nag po*), the 'Red *To*' (*gto dmar po*) and the 'Multicoloured *To*' (*gto khra bo*).³⁰ One type of 'white' *To* is addressed to the Lha (*lha gto*), for example to the deity Yala Daldrug.³¹ A type of 'black' *To* is the 'Three-Headed *To*' (*gto mgo gsum*) addressed to the Sadag, Lu and Nyen. A 'red' *To* is the 'Bluish Striped Thunderbolt(?) *To*' to eliminate contaminations (*dme mnol thog gto rgya'u mthing*). A type of 'multicoloured' *To*, finally, is called the 'Aspiration Vow to Restore the Harmony of Existence' (*srid pa yo bcos smon lam*).³²

TORMA OF THE 'TO' TYPE USED IN FIERCEFUL RITUALS



THE BÖN OF THE RITES OF THE DEER AND THE ART OF FLIGHT



Chapter XIII

The Bön of the Rites of the 'Deer' and the Art of Flight

i THE NINE CATEGORIES OF RITES OF THE DEER

The Bön of the 'Deer, the Science of Flight' (*lding shes sha ba*) comprises a great variety of *Dö* ransom rites, subdivided in nine main categories:¹

1. The 'Deer that ransoms men through the *lüd*' (*mi bu glud kyis bslu ba'i sha ba*),² to eliminate illnesses and the danger of interruptions of the life of men and women.
2. The 'Deer that vanquishes the *Düd*' (*bdud kha 'bangs su bsgyur ba'i mdos*), to eliminate misfortunes and mishaps provoked by the King of the *Düd* and his demonic armies.
3. The 'Deer that diverts elsewhere disturbances from the *Lha*' (*lha dal kha bsgyur ba'i sha ba*) to turn against one's own enemies curses, and misfortunes caused by the *Lha*.
4. The 'Deer that diverts elsewhere the attacks of the *Geg*' (*bgags rigs byol kha bsgyur ba'i sha ba*), in case one is struck by a curse, originally cast by one of the Eight Classes at specific people, but which has mistaken the target or has been deflected through magic power towards an easier victim, and has been used by the *Geg* (obstructive spirits) to cause disturbances.
5. The 'Deer that repels the curses of angry (enemies)' (*sdang sems byad kha bzlog pa'i sha ba*), to hurl back curses at the angry enemy who sent them.
6. The 'Deer that diverts elsewhere (the punishments by) the law (caused) by a fortunate (adversary)' (*klung bus khrims kha bsgyur ba'i sha ba*).³ It is for cases in which one is in danger of being punished by law because the person with whom one is in litigation is enjoying a period in which his fortune and the protection of his *lungta* are very strong.
7. The 'Deer that diverts the Destroyer *Si* away from the protective horse' (*srung rta'i 'phung sri bsgyur ba'i sha ba*), for cases where the 'protective horse'⁴ (i.e. the support in which the protective deities of a person or family, such as the *phug lha'i rten* or the *thug*, resides) has been usurped by the Destroyer *Si* (*phung sri*)⁵ so that one has become subject to their harmful influences.
8. The 'Deer that repels bad signs and ill omens' (*ltas ngan dgra than bzlog pa'i sha ba*).
9. The 'Deer that repairs (offences caused to) the *Lu*, the *Tsen* and the *Sadag*' (*klu btsan sa bdag bcos pa'i sha ba*).

ii THE RITE OF THE DEER WITH BRANCHED ANTLERS

Among the various rites belonging to the series of the 'Deer' there are some differences in the preparation of the ritual structure of the *Dö*, in the chanted sections and in the proclamation of the *mang*, but along general lines they do not differ from the rite of the 'Deer with Branched Antlers' (*sha ba ru rgyas*), a kind of *Dö* still practiced today, which we can therefore take as representing a typical rite of the 'Deer'.⁶ First of all, let us read a description of the preparatory phase of this rite:

With yellow clay mixed with powdered precious substances one should mold a fine deer, the size of a three-year-old ram (*lug thong tsir*), painted in the following way: the front half of the right flank, white, the back half, red; the front half of the left flank, blue, the back half, yellow; the tail, black, the back, white, the belly, yellow. For the right antler one should use wood of the 'male tree' (*pho shing*: birch), and for the left antler wood of the 'female tree' (*mo shing*: a type of willow); (to the two horns) one then attaches feathers of various birds of prey tied with black thread. One then arranges the ritual arrows and spindles, the decorated tablets (*shing ris*), the *namkha* and the *gyangbu*, thirteen or fourteen exemplars of each item.⁷ All the *lüd* for males must be placed on the right of the deer, all the *lüd* for females on the left. Then in a recipient one puts (the following objects): crows, choughs (*skyung ka*),⁸ 'nine skulls and nine bones' (*thod dgu rus dgu*),⁹ 'nine contrary objects' ('*gal sna dgu*'),¹⁰ (images of) goats, monkeys, peacocks, parrots, *shangshang* (mythological bird), precious silks, different sorts of plants, substitute-effigies (*ngar glud*), black birds, *shöbu*, libation-offerings (*gser skyems*) and incense. All the *lüd* for children are placed at the centre.¹¹ The base for the deer can be a wool mat or some sprinkled barley, as one prefers. With the offering lamps (*snang gsal sgron me*) one invites the deer and offers the meat of birds and of sheep, without bones or sinew.¹² The substitute effigies (*ngar glud*) must be offered in large quantities, and the libations thrown in the four directions.¹³

iii THE ORIGIN MYTH OF THE RITE OF THE DEER

The central phase of the rite is tied to the exposition of the mythical antecedent:

Listen! In the beginning, at the origin of existence there were the three dimensions of empty space,¹⁴ there was Luminous Vision (*sNang ba 'od ldan*),

there was Radiant Darkness (*Mun pa zer ldan*).¹⁵
At the conclusion (of the formation) of existence
there were the king, the minister and the vassal.
In twelve great countries
there lived the king, the minister and the vassal.
In the land of Yalung Sokha¹⁶
the King was Shele Gyutse,
the Minister was Khyungpo Rabsang,
the Vassal was Trukhu Migkar.
At the border of the country inhabited by the king, the minister
and the vassal
the symbol of the king was Mount Meru,
the symbol of the minister, the snow-covered mountain,
the symbol of the vassal, the tree:
these were the outer 'king, minister and vassal'.
For the inner 'king, minister and vassal'
the symbol of the king was flaming fire,
the symbol of the minister, the pillar and the beam,
the symbol of the vassal, the empty house.
The *la* (vital souls) of the king, of the minister and of the vassal
took the guise of the precious cuckoo,
the precious deer and the precious tree.
So, in that time
the land was full of *la* and of men,
but this struck and disturbed
the king, the minister and the vassal of the Düd.
Luminous Vision
made non being into being,
made the dawn appear and the sun rise.
Radiant Darkness
made being into non being,
made night fall
and made the living die.
From the lower part of his body
Radiant Darkness
(emanated) the king, the minister and the vassal of the Düd
and all the time
he demanded ransoms and manifestations of magic.¹⁷
So then Shenrab Miwo,
Thangpön Lamdrag
and Sorbön Thangpön,
these three *shenbön*

answered with general symbols,
 answered with the symbols of men
 and according to the Chinese astrological system.¹⁸
 They answered with the symbols of the 'böñ fathers' (*pha bon*),
 they answered with words and voice.
 They answered with the symbols for angry enemies,
 they answered with weapons and armour.
 They answered with the symbols for the impediments to fertility,
 they answered with nine skulls and ninety bones.
 They answered with the symbols for the contamination of the
 hearth,
 they answered with the nine or ten contrary objects,
 they answered with the *Ye* and other methods.
 These three *shenböñ*,
 collecting together the bird, the tree and the deer
 pronounced: "May the *lüd* ransom man!"
 and together they sent them (as an offering).
 Above (*rtse la*), the bird hovers,
 the chough, the bird of the *Düd*, hovers.
 In the middle (*bar na*) the willow sways,¹⁹
 the black willow of the *Düd* sways.
 On the earth (*logs na*)²⁰ the deer walks (*khrol*),
 the black deer of the *Düd* walks:
 with the bird and the tree that sway harmoniously
 we offer it as ransom to the Lord of the *Düd*.
 SO! SO!^{20b} Above the bird hovers,
 the *gonön* (blue head?),²¹ the bird of the *Mu*, hovers.
 In the middle the willow sways,
 the brown willow of the *Mu* sways.
 On the earth the deer walks,
 the brown deer of the *Mu* walks:
 with the bird and the tree that sway harmoniously
 we offer it as ransom to the Lord of the *Mu*.
 SO! SO! Above the bird hovers,
 the red bird of the *Tsen* hovers.
 In the middle the willow sways,
 the red willow of the *Tsen* sways.
 On the earth the deer walks,
 the red deer of the *Tsen* walks:
 with the bird and the willow that sway harmoniously
 we offer it as a gift to the Lord of the *Tsen*.
 SO! SO! Above the bird hovers,

the white cock (*khyim bya*) hovers.
In the middle the willow sways,
the white willow of the Gyelpo sways.
On the earth the deer walks,
the white deer of the Gyelpo walks:
joining the bird, the willow and the deer
we offer them as a gift to the Lord of the Gyelpo.
SO! SO! Above the bird hovers,
the grouse (*gong mo*), the bird of the Lha, hovers.
In the middle the willow sways,
the white willow of the Lha sways.
On the earth the deer walks,
the white deer of the Lha walks:
with the bird and the willow that sway harmoniously
we offer it as a gift to the Lord of the Lha.
SO! SO! Above the bird hovers,
the yellow bird of the Lu hovers.
In the middle the willow sways,
the yellow willow of the Lu sways.
On the earth the deer walks,
the yellow-bellied deer of the Lu walks:
with the bird and the willow that sway harmoniously
we offer it as a gift to the Lord of the Lu.
SO! SO! With the *lüd* offered to the Lu may the ransom be dis-
charged!

When these three *shenbön*,
joining together the bird, the tree and the deer
offered them as a gift to the deities and the spirits,
they pronounced only these words.
SO! SO! And the deities and the spirits of the universe said:
"Oh you, chough, bird of the Död,
what is your lineage (*cho 'brang*)?²²
Why does your body resemble a jar of poison?
Why do your feathers seem to ooze black blood?
Why do you exclaim '*khyung kha*'²³ when you fly in the sky?
Why do your bird's eyes close from below?
Why do your bird's ears close from above?
Why do you dig up the food you eat?
Why do you move by hopping?
Why is your bird's head triangular?
Why is your beak a copper dagger?
Why have you got the four limbs of a bird?

Why have you got twelve joints?"

They asked him this.

SO! SO! Then the chough, the bird of the Dūd, answered:

"Listen, you deities and spirits of the universe!

For me, great bird, there is no great origin myth,²⁴
and I have no important deeds to recount.²⁵

If my body resembles a jar

it is because it is like a jar of perfume;

if my feathers are like a coat of black chain-mail²⁶

it is to divert elsewhere the curses of you deities and spirits of
the universe;

if when I fly in the sky I exclaim '*khyung kha*'

it is because I am descended from the border

between Luminous Vision and Radiant Darkness;

if my bird's eyes close from below

it is because existence formed from below;

if my bird's ears close from above

it is because they listen to the voice of everlasting Bön;

if I dig up the food I eat

it is because with my beak I seize all the wicked;

if I move by hopping

it is to exterminate masses of Dūd;

if my beak is a copper dagger

it is because I have the capacity to mark time;

if my bird's head is triangular

it is because I possess the triangular vase of Mount Meru;

if as a bird I have four limbs

it is because I possess the four major continents;

if I have twelve joints

it is because I possess the twelve minor continents.²⁷

So, for me, the bird, there is no great origin myth.

But may I ransom the *la* of the king!

May the deities and the spirits be satisfied with the *lüd*!

May I, a bird, ransom the *la* of the king!

May the beneficial rite (*gto*) immediately give results!"

SO! SO! Again the deities and the spirits asked:

"Oh you, deer, offered as ransom,

why have you got antlers forking into ten branches?

Why are you girded by a white necklace?

Why is your fur so thick?

Why (are your antlers) first shed then regrown?²⁸

Why do your antlers grow more than those of others?

Why have you got so many variegated patterns?"

They asked him this.

SO! SO! Then the deer answered:

"Listen, you deities and spirits of the universe!

For me, the deer, there is no great origin myth,
but when Shenrab proclaimed the *mang*²⁹

the deities and the spirits of the universe came to terms.

As regards the ten branches forking from a single antler,
the first ransoms the body,

the second ransoms the voice,

the third ransoms the mind,

the fourth ransoms the four kinds of birth,³⁰

the fifth ransoms the five aggregates,³¹

the sixth ransoms the six categories of beings,³²

the seventh ransoms the 'seven-times born',³³

the eighth ransoms the eight aggregates of consciousness,³⁴

the ninth ransoms the universal base,³⁵

the tenth ransoms the beneficiary of the rite.

That is why I have ten horns,

ten ransoms for the nine ministers and the queen.³⁶

If my fur is so thick

it is because the ministers are cruel;

if I am girded by a white necklace

it is because the ministers are in concord in acting;

if my horns grow more than those of others

it is because the deer's intelligence is greater than that of others;

if (my antlers) grow and are then shed

it is because they are offered to the Död to ransom men,

if they regrow after having been shed

it is because they are looked after by all the Gonnön.³⁷

For me, the deer, there is no great origin myth,

but the antlers on my head are harmonious,

my fur shines with the colours of the rainbow,

my deer's movements are sprightly and nimble,

my deer's ears are slender and graceful!

May the deer ransom the miraculous *la* of the minister!

In the past we have received benefits in this way,

and today we offer it as ransom for the beneficiary: accept it!"

SO! SO! Again the deities and spirits asked:

"Oh tree, decorated *Dö* (*rgyan mdos*), what is your lineage?

Why have you got a root from which branches grow in many directions?

Why then do several blossoms bloom?
 Why do different fruits ripen?"
 SO! SO! Then the tree answered:
 "If several branches grow from one root
 it is because, even though the four types of birth are simultane-
 ous
 the six categories of beings manifest in disparate ways;
 if different blossoms bloom
 it is to satisfy the desires
 of you deities and spirits of the universe;
 if different fruits ripen
 it is so they can be offered as ransom for the various beneficiaries.
 My painted colours shine, luminous:
 these are the qualities of the tree.
 May the tree ransom the la of the vassal!"
 So Shenrab Miwo
 performed the original rite (*srid pa'i gto: To of existence*)
 and the offerings proceeded harmoniously.
 Sorbön Thangpo
 hurled the *sor*³⁸ after the *lüd*
 and the *sor* flew harmoniously.
 The tree, the bird and the deer
 are ornaments of that world,
 adorned with gold and turquoise.³⁹

iv THE FUNCTION OF THE RITE OF THE DEER

The text continues by explaining for which types of negative influences, and for which specific classes of beings, one needs to perform the rite of the 'Deer':

May the astrological hindrances (*skeg*) of the year and of the
 month,
 every kind of negativity and impurity,
 and all the curses (*zhal kha*)
 which have befallen we officiants and beneficiaries
 be removed and diverted by this (rite)!
 May the curses of the Dūd be removed by this (rite)!
 May the curses of the Mu be removed by this (rite)!
 May the curses of the Tsen be removed by this (rite)!
 May the curses of the Gyelpo be removed by this (rite)!
 May the curses of the Gongpo be removed by this (rite)!
 May the curses of the Mamo be removed by this (rite)!

- May the curses of the Lu be removed by this (rite)!
- May the curses of the Sadag be removed by this (rite)!
- May the curses of the Theurang be removed by this (rite)!
- May the curses of all the Düd (that strike) males (*pho bdud*) be removed by this (rite)!
- May the curses of the Düd (that strike) females (*mo bdud*) be removed by this (rite)!
- May the curses of the Shinje 'Lords of Death' (*'chi bdag*) be removed by this (rite)!
- May the curses of the Dön that provoke epidemics be removed by this (rite)!
- May the curses of the Tenma be removed by this (rite)!
- May the curses of the Sinpo be removed by this (rite)!
- May the curses of the Jungpo and of the Triza be removed by this (rite)!
- May the curses of the Triwo and of the Trimo be removed by this (rite)!
- May the curses of the Mamo Menmo be removed by this (rite)!
- May the curses of the planets (*gza'*) and constellations be removed by this (rite)!
- May the curses of the deities and of the demons of the eight classes be removed by this (rite)!
- May the curses of the Deities of the Place (*yl lha*) and of the Lords of the Soil (*gzhi bdag*)⁴⁰ be diverted by this (rite)!
- May the deities and spirits of the universe be satisfied with the ransom!
- May this *lüd* ransom the king, the minister and the vassal of men!
- May what has been taken be released and what has been bound be freed!⁴¹

v MAGIC FLIGHT ASTRIDE THE DRUM

I have quoted at length passages from the 'Deer with Branched Antlers' in order to render easier the analysis of the fundamental characteristics of the Bön of the rites of the 'Deer'. This Bön, in fact, appears to lie at the basis not only of the magic powers of flight astride a drum attributed to the Bönpos, but also of the cruel animal sacrifices of which they have occasionally been accused. There are several sources attesting to the 'flight astride a drum' and the miracle of making clay deer fly in the sky, among them the work by Pawo Tsuglag Trengwa quoted earlier.⁴² It is worthwhile nevertheless to read the famous story of the

contest between the Bönpo Naro Bönchung and the great ascetic Milarepa, narrated in the biography of the latter.⁴³

Naro Bönchung said "You call me magician, but in my opinion you are the magician, and I am not convinced by your miraculous powers! So, on the fifteenth day of this month we will have this contest: whoever will be the first to reach the peak of Mount Tise (Kailāsa) will be its lord and will also have given proof of having really obtained supreme realisation." Milarepa answered "As you wish! But it is a pity that you mistake the little spiritual experience you have for supreme realisation. In order to obtain supreme realisation you must discover the essence of your mind, and to acquire this knowledge you should follow the teachings of my lineage and practice meditation." Naro Bönchung retorted "What disparity of quality could there possibly be between your mind and mine? And what difference could there possibly be between Bön and Buddhism? Our spiritual levels are equal, but, until now, perhaps because of your conjuring tricks, your miraculous powers have revealed themselves superior. The competition on Tise will settle everything!" And Milarepa rejoined "Agreed, everything will be decided!"

Whereupon Naro Bönchung started fervently invoking his deities, whereas Milarepa did not change his usual behaviour. When dawn of the fifteenth day came, Naro Bönchung donned a blue cloak and playing a *shang*, mounted onto his drum and flew into the sky. Milarepa's disciples saw Naro, and since their master was still sleeping, Rechungpa⁴⁴ told him "Venerable One! At dawn Naro Bönchung mounted his drum and started flying, and he is already half way up Tise. Will the Venerable One still remain in repose, allowing the Bönpo to reach the summit?" He implored him thus, and the other disciples, too, insisted, so Milarepa gazed intently and said "Now watch!". The Bönpo could rise no further, but started to circle around the mountain. Then, when the sun was about to rise Milarepa snapped his fingers, and opening the folds of his cotton tunic like wings rose in flight. In an instant he reached the peak of Tise, the very moment the sun rose, and in a flash clearly saw the masters of his lineage and the major and minor deities of the Cakrasamvara cycle,⁴⁵ all with joyous expressions. Then he felt great joy, even though he knew the nature of everything to be suchness. At that point Naro Bönchung had reached the neck of the mountain but, unable to withstand the shining glow of Milarepa's energy he fell

from the sky, and his drum rolled after him down the southern slope of Tise. His pride and arrogance vanquished, Naro Bönchung humbly addressed Milarepa: "Your miraculous faculties and your power have proved superior, so you have won Tise and I will leave. But I want to find a place to live which will allow me at least to see Tise!"⁴⁶

Bön literature also relates episodes when Bönpos have displayed such powers; for example, a historical text describes the dispute between Bönpos and Buddhists at the time of King Trisong Deutsen: "During the competition in magic powers Tongjung Thuchen⁴⁷ mounted the central band of his drum and flew far into the sky."⁴⁸ Thus it is natural to assume that the expression 'science of flight' (*lding shes*), which appears as an attribute of the Bön of the Deer among the twelve lores, should be associated with these kinds of phenomena.

vi ANIMAL SACRIFICES

The miraculous faculties of flying on a drum and of sending into the sky clay effigies of deer pertain to the so-called 'relative' powers (*zag bcas*), and have never been the cause of disparagement by Buddhists in Tibet. However, according to certain texts the Bön of the Deer purportedly was also the origin of the rites performed by those who carried out animal sacrifices. This is a point which deserves and requires meticulous investigation.⁴⁹ As an example, let us read a passage taken from the biography of the Tibetan lady master Yeshe Tsogyel (757-817),⁵⁰ which describes the performance, with great cruelty, of one of these rites by the Bönpos within the Samye monastic compound, at the time of King Trisong Deutsen:

Then the Bönpos assembled in Jomo Ling Sum (temple) to perform the rite for the well-being of the king (*rgyal po'i sku rim*). The Bönpos were staying in Ling Gyed (temple), while the *paṇḍitas* were staying in Tamdrin Ling. The Bönpos said: "Since it is the rite for the prosperity of a great king we need a stag with branched antlers and a hind with a turquoise halter, one thousand yaks, one thousand male goats and rams and one thousand female goats and ewes. Then we need a complete outfit of royal garb," and immediately the king furnished them with everything. Likewise they asked "We need (an exemplar of) everything that exists in the world," and their request was fulfilled; "We need eight types of *chang* and eight kinds of cereals," and these were supplied; then they invited the great king with his retinue. Then

the king, the queens, the ministers and dignitaries came (to where the Bönpos had assembled) and remained to watch. At the centre there were the 'nine sages' (*mkhas pa mi dgu*) seated in a row, and on the right and left were the rows of the 'nine sorcerers' (*mthu' chen mi dgu*) and others. Many *shenbön* called 'assistants of the rite' (*mchod g.yogs*) took hold of knives, and many others, called 'Bön purifiers' (*bkru bon*), held gold ladles which they used to draw water to sprinkle the deer and the other victims. Other Bön called 'black Bön' (*nag bon*), threw black grains of cereal, and yet others, the 'Bön interrogators' (*zhu bon*), posed questions and received many answers from the deities and spirits that surrounded them.

Then exclaiming "Here is a unicorn deer!" the *shenbön* cut the deer's throat and offered it, and in the same way they cut the throats of three thousand yaks, sheep and goats and offered them. Then, exclaiming "Here is a black *dri*! Here is a black sheep! Here is a black goat!" etc, they cut off the limbs of a further three thousand animals and offered them. Horses, bulls, *dzo*, mules, dogs, birds, and pigs: all were sacrificed in various ways, and the stench of their burnt pelts pervaded Samye while their meat was being offered.

(At that point) some Bönpos called 'Bön quarterers' (*bshig bon*) cut into pieces all the meat and others, called 'Bön carvers' (*bse bon*), cut them into little pieces and distributed them to all those present. Yet others, the 'Bön calculators' (*grangs bon*), carried out calculations. Those who had caused the blood to spout filled many copper goblets with it and arranged them on pelts, while all the meats were piled on other pelts. Then they started to perform the chanted section of the rite (*bon gyer*), and while the king and the queen watched in disgust the blood began to boil, from the vapour flashed several images like rainbows and lugubrious disembodied voices were heard, as well as other strident, stifled sounds like "hu shu" and "ha ha." "These are the voices of the Immortal Gods (*g.yung drung gi lha*) of the Cha and of the Yang" exclaimed the Bönpos, elated and wonder-struck, and daubed in red they offered all the meat and the blood. Then the king asked, "Of what benefit is this cruel rite?" "It is of great benefit for the king, but not for we Bönpos. Does the great king not have faith? Is he not filled with wonder?" replied the Bönpos, but the king was disgusted, and together with the others, who were confused and perplexed, he returned to the Utse temple.⁵¹

vii THE CONTROVERSIES BETWEEN BÖNPOS AND BUDDHISTS

Underlying this kind of story, however, are, evidently, the intention and the necessity to exalt the excellence of one's own religion and to intensify the devotion of its followers. However, these needs are not peculiar to Buddhists, and have also given rise to similar attitudes in Bönpos. Thus, just as the Buddhists have denigrated the Bönpos, alleging that they performed animal sacrifices, the Bönpos have unjustly accused the Buddhists of other kinds of negative actions.

Let us look at a Bön work:

King Trisong Deutsen invited Padmasambhava and asked him to perform virtuous actions, and many Indian *paṇḍits* also came. So for three years in the great cave of Chim(phu)⁵² they made offerings and practised virtue, using as positive elements contaminated meat (*dme sha*), horse meat, bad blood and other impure substances. Invoking many spirits and demons they worshipped them with the offerings, but the protector deities of Tibet were not pleased, and provoked epidemics all over the land.⁵³

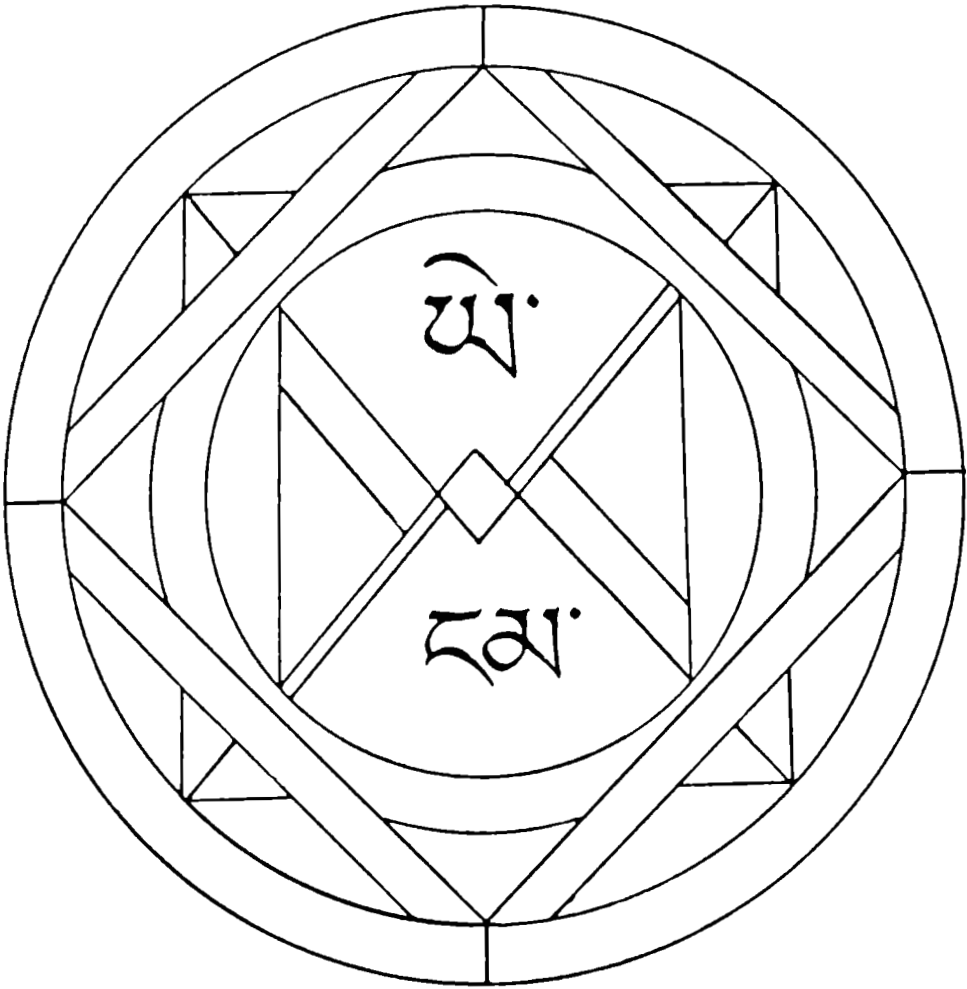
And concerning the episode of Naro Bönchung and Milarepa, a Bön 'Guide to Tise' written in the last century⁵⁴ comments:

Once (Milarepa) went on pilgrimage to Mount Tise with some disciples, and fully cognisant that since the beginning of time it had been the 'mountain of the *la'* (*bla ri*) of everlasting Bön and a retreat centre for its followers, he was overcome by feelings of hatred and attachment and thought he would ruin the reputation (of Bön). He changed the name of his disciple Rechungpa to 'Naro Bönchung', and together they discredited Tise, and without any respect for the truth they filled the land with lies...The episode when Naro Bönchung fell from his drum while flying merely shows that his disciple Rechungpa had not obtained the signs of realisation.⁵⁵

The moment a sectarian ideology takes root, its adherents are inevitably conditioned by it, and in the attempt to support their own theories, the ensuing lack of objectivity often leads them to disparage those of other sects and in some cases actually to falsify them. This attitude, which in Tibet also influenced 'non sectarian' scholars, most certainly presents a serious obstacle to the true knowledge of history. Therefore, I deem it of the utmost importance that all those who wish to study Tibetan history work with a mind free of all sectarianism in order to be able to discover,

through research on the available sources, the authentic origins of the Bön tradition in ancient Tibet.

YE AND NGAM: LIGHT AND DARKNESS



Chapter XIV

The Bön of the Juthig: The Science of Divination

The 'Shen of the Cha' contains four series of Bön: the 'Divinatory Methods' (*pra ltsa mo*), the 'Astrology that Reveals Existence' (*snang mthong rtsis*), the 'Medical Therapies that Save from Death' (*'chi bslu gto*) and the 'To Rites that Cure Illnesses' (*nad gso dpyad*).¹ The methods of divination, known under the general name *Mo*,² are in their turn subdivided in four categories:

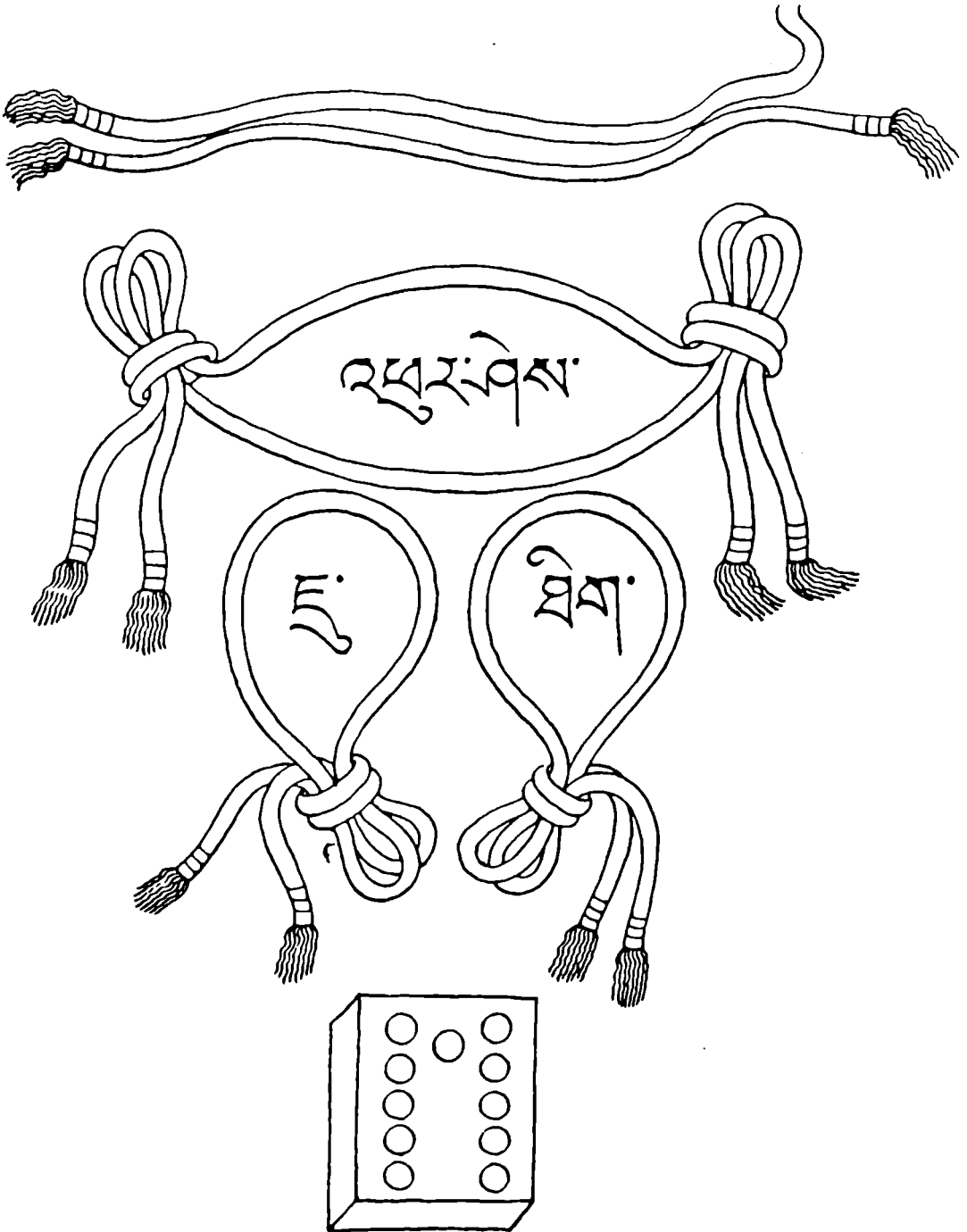
1. The 'Juthig of the Manifestation of Primordial Existence' (*ye srid 'phrul gyi ju thig*), that comprises divination by means of cords,³ will be dealt with in this chapter.
2. The 'Clairvoyance of the Drala of Primordial Knowledge' (*ye mkhyen sgra bla'i mngon shes*), that comprises diverse methods of divination, through signs appearing on a mirror (*pra*), using pebbles (*lde'u 'phrul*), *mālā* (*phreng mo*) etc.
3. The 'Dream of the Lords of Primordial Aspiration' (*ye rje smon pa'i rmi lam*), based on the interpretation of dreams after having performed certain invocations of the Drala deities.
4. The 'Oracle of the Deities of Primordial Power' (*ye dbang lha yi bka' babs*), in which a medium⁴ becomes the temporary dwelling of a deity that discloses predictions.⁵

i THE ORIGIN AND LITERATURE OF THE JUTHIG

The 'Juthig that Renders Existence Manifest' (*srid pa 'phrul gyi ju thig*) is the first of the four systems of divination of the 'Shen of the Cha', and its origin is ascribed directly to the master Shenrab Miwoche: thus this method of divination has been practiced in Shang Shung and Tibet since the most ancient times.

In the land of the Shen, Olmo Lingchen,
the master Shenrab Miwoche,
one *shen* year after his birth,
at the request of Legyel Thangpo, *shen* of the Cha,
and of other worthy disciples
taught the Bön of the 'Shen of the Cha', first of the nine ways,
as the series of the indirect path (*bkrid drang*)...⁶
These *Juthig* of the manifestation of primordial existence,
symbolic forms of the interdependence of phenomenal vision
(composed) of deities and spirits, good and evil, benefits and
disturbances etc.,
appear to the diviner of existence as a revelation of symbols,

THE BÖN OF THE JUTHIG: THE SCIENCE OF DIVINATION



in the same way that the planets, stars, years, months and days appear due to the interdependence of the karmic visions of beings.

The great sage Shenrab Miwoche, just as he saw them, taught them for the benefit of beings.⁷

These verses are taken from the monumental treatise on the *Juthig* by the great scholar Ju Mipham Jamyang Namgyel (1846-1912),⁸ a work which is now of inestimable value for the study of this science. In fact, in ancient times there must have been a vast literature on the *Juthig*, but with the passing of centuries many texts have been lost, and very few of those extant are available to us. Fortunately, Ju Mipham has given summaries of the contents of the greater part of the ancient texts, as he explains in the following passage:

The *Juthig* is the most important of the methods of divination, and albeit it has been practiced everywhere since ancient times, the numerous texts (forming its literature) have not been gathered in an ordered collection, so it is difficult for the diviners to derive benefit from them. For this reason, already for some time it had been my intention to gather the writings which are available, until, recently, showing great zeal the scholar Mañjughosaḡaṅa collected various of its texts and asked me to complete my endeavour. Thus I found in my hands eleven bulky volumes containing instructions on the *Juthig*, and using these as my basis, I have been able to summarise the fundamental elements of this tradition. The titles of the manuscripts I consulted are:⁹ *dPyad don sgyu ma gser 'bum*, *gTer mo rig pa'i khong bsdong*, *Bram ze gong rul*, *Bram ze klu yi ber nag*, *Ma sang 'khor lo mdo chen*, *'Khrugs pa'i stong thun dmar po*, *Nad mo rig pa'i mdo bdun*, *Ti tshang g.yu sgron gyi man ngag*, *Ju thig srid pa'i rgyud 'bum*, *Khog chen 'phrul gyi rgyal po*, *Gling bzhi nyi ma 'khor rtsis*, *sNyan rgyud nyi ma'i 'od zer*, *sNyan rgyud dang lde'u mig skor*, *Ma sang thi gu rang smra*, *Mo sde srid pa'i gzhi 'bum*, *mGron mo gsan ba sde gcig*, *Mo mtsho srid p'i bla gnas*, *dGra phywa gsang ba yang khug*, *Sa mo gser gyi yang snying*. Furthermore, I consulted ancient manuscripts on the practices of 'invocation' (*bdar*) of clairvoyance and treatises on the 'forms of the knots' (*mdud rdzongs*) and on the different methods of responses, such as *mDud rdzong kun gsal me long*, which explains the fundamental characteristics of the twenty-five principal knots, *mDud rdzong khra mo gzhung khral*, by the scholar Gyangla Ukar, *rKyang dpyad gsal ba'i me long*, that also contains a concluding recapitulation, *mDud rdzong khra mo gzhung 'grel las gto dpyad dkar*

nag khra gsum bstan pa, and others. Finally, I examined texts that epitomise the contents of several ancient scriptures, such as *mDud rdzong rdo rje gsang ba'i tha ram* and *Khog dbub khyung chen lding ba*, edited by Barchung Trashig Gyatso on the basis of seventeen volumes on the divination of Shang Shung, *rGyud chen dgongs pa rab gsal*, by Jowo Khen Lobsang Dogyüd, and others.¹⁰

As well as all these texts, Mipham's work also mentions manuscripts that he himself was not able to consult, which gives us some idea of the complexity of this science and the vastness of its literature:

Among the texts we have not yet been able to obtain are the following works: *sMon chen g.yu kha drug 'dus*, *Nag rigs srid pa'i rgyud 'bum*, *Nad mo gsal ba'i me long*, *bZang dgu sbas pa'i lde'u mig*, *rTsod pa gnam lcags 'khor lo*, *Yod mtsho dmar nag*, *rGyal po sprel dkar*, *Jag mo tsi tsi dgu skor*. It seems there exist several other texts on the *Juthig*, hence should they be found it would be useful to summarise the most important points and include them in this book in order to make it complete.¹¹

ii THE CORDS, SUPPORT OF THE DIVINATION

In order to practice the *Juthig* divination it is indispensable first to learn how to prepare the cords that function as 'support' for the divinatory faculties (*ju thig gi rten*), summarily described in the following way in Mipham's work:

After having driven a large flock of sheep around the banks of a lake, decorate with silk a ram with a white head with circles of black hairs around the eyes (*thod dkar bong mig*) and let it go towards a high place. Then tie a 'To that repels negativity' (*bzlog gto*: a kind of *torma*) on a black dog with a strip of white hairs on its back (*khyi se mkhal nag*) and leave it go towards a low place. Finally, put ornaments on the nose and withers of a black yak with white flanks (*nag po dpyi dkar*)¹² and offer it to the deities and protectors. Then, from a donkey (*rgya tsa bzhin bzang*), a ruddy speckled bull (*dmar tsa mtshal kha*), a metal-blue horse (*sngon mo lcags kha*) and a mule with a veil of white hairs over its face (*ka ba bong mig*),¹³ all four without defects of the eyes or of the other sense organs, take some hairs from the shoulders, alternately three times from the right shoulder and three times from the left, so as to produce a bundle of wool. Into this bundle blend hairs from the beards of white goats, from the ears of *tremong*,¹⁴ from the tails of mountain wolves, hairs of *drong*,

leopard and tiger, feathers from the nape of a white back vulture, hairs from the legs of camels, from the vermilion manes of prized horses and wool from the shoulders of thirteen sheep torn to pieces by blue mountain wolves.

At this point, starting on an auspicious date three girls whose parents are still alive will spin clockwise on three mornings, counterclockwise on three afternoons and will twist the threads into four filaments on three days at midday. This is the way to prepare the cords with eight threads inside and four threads outside, no thicker than a vulture's claw and no thinner than the intestine of an avra (a small rodent). The five lesser cords (*thig gu*) must be two cubits in length, while the greater cord (*mo rta*: 'the divination guide') should be one or three fathoms long. The ends of the cords should then be adorned with fringes two fingers in length, made of eight or thirty threads of silk or cotton, if possible, otherwise of wool. To the greater cord, at a height of two cubits attach four fringes symbolising the 'four knowledges' (*shes bzhi*),¹⁵ and put a silver mirror in the same place. The fringes can all be blue or of different colours, white, yellow, red, green, blue and black. As well as these (main ones) you must then add seven hundred and twenty small fringes. The length of the (main) fringes should be eight palms (*mtho brgyad*) and they should be arranged so as to form a shape resembling a vulture's claw, or all the threads can be left loose for beauty's sake, or they can be tied with other threads of five colours etc.; in brief, they should be made to appear very beautiful, as one usually sees them. Also, you should attach a transparent crystal, owl feathers, hairs from tiger and leopard pelts, nails of white lynx and snow leopard, the hind talons of the *lag* eagle,¹⁶ tiger and leopard claws, the 'five precious things' (*rin chen sna lnga*)¹⁷ and other jewels: turquoise, coral, conch etc., as is traditional. Furthermore, you can add the hoofs and teeth of the yak (*mgron g.yag*),¹⁸ any object or substances that bring good luck, and sundry cloth (ribbons). Then, after having driven away the obstructive spirits (*bgegs*) and eliminated poison, performed the *Trü* lustral aspersion and *Sang* fumigation, (the cords) should be consecrated as 'support' of the Werma.¹⁹

iii THE FORMS OF THE KNOTS: THE ELEMENTS FOR THE RESPONSE

The instructions just given concern a type of *Juthig* called 'Manifestations of the Six Cords' (*shar ba rkya drug*). As the name suggests, six cords

are used, one of which (*mo rta*) is longer than the others. To obtain the response the diviner joins the ends of two cords at a time in a knot, in order to get a total of four knots, while firmly clasping in his hands the four remaining ends, two in each hand. Then he lets everything fall forward, examining the knots thus formed. He will repeat this up to thirteen consecutive times, each time writing the names and characteristics of the knots that have been formed and marking them with cholas (or something else). Finally after having interpreted them he must give a precise response.

However, before performing the divination, it is indispensable first of all to propitiate with *mantra* and invocations the 'Seven Deities of the Cha' (*phywa'i lha bdun*), that is, the three Kyilchen Phuwér Brothers (*dkyil chen phu wer mched gsum*), kings of the deities of divination (*rno mthong mo*) since the dawn of existence, the three Tsamin Sisters (*sring mo tsa min mched gsum*), and Chau Yangkar. While one is getting ready to form the knots, moreover, one should make offerings to the Deities of the Cha of the Universe, and recite the *mang* to invoke the response (*mo bdar ba'i smrang*). This can all be éduced in detail from the sundry texts on the *Juthig*.

There exist a great variety of knots that can come up in the divination and which form the factors of the response. In fact:

The main knots (*bla mdud*) currently known, considered in detail, are six hundred, but (in the texts) it is explained that the combinations that exist are ten thousand *sang*, one hundred thousand *trag*²⁰ etc. In practice, the knots that occur most frequently can be subsumed in three hundred and sixty (types), the possible combinations (*brgyag gis bsgyur ba*) are ten thousand, and of these seven hundred and twenty are the most important ones. Furthermore, according to whether the cords are twisted to the right or the left, whether they are allowed to fall to the right or the left, upwards or downwards, and on the basis of the way the ends of the knots are gripped and the position of the ornaments of the small cords etc., innumerable other combinations (can be taken into consideration)...²¹ The *Gyuma Serbum* (*sGyu ma gser 'bum*) informs us: "As regards the instructions for examining (the knots), of the three hundred and sixty divination knots (*mo mdud*) the hundred and twenty called 'pure' (*dwangs ma*) represent the principal place (*bla gnas*) of the dimension of existence of the deities, the hundred and twenty called 'wise' (*mdzangs*) represent the principal place of the dimension of existence of man, and the hundred and twenty called 'impure' (*snyigs ma*) represent the

principal knots (*bla mdud*) of the dimension of existence of the spirits. As regards the instructions for identifying them, the three hundred and sixty knots have three hundred and sixty names of divination (*mo ming*), (added to which there are those) of the seven hundred and twenty combinations (*brgyag kha*), the ten thousand *trag* and the hundred thousand *sed*: recite them and commit them to memory!²²

Despite this enormous variety of forms of knots, there are thirty-three main ones which form the basis of all the possible combinations: twenty-four 'pure' knots, like *ding ding*, *kyin ding* and *kalbar*, and nine 'impure' knots, like *kyam*, *charam* and *liyen*. Innumerable further combinations branch off from each of these thirty-three main knots. According to the same text, in fact:

The *ding ding* alone has as many subdivisions as the number of hairs in the mane of a sorrel horse. All diviners know the saying:²³

"There is no diviner who does not know (the fame of) the *ding ding*,
but there is no diviner who (really) knows the *ding ding*!"

iv THE ETHICS OF THE DIVINER

The diviner practising the *Juthig* has to respect a precise code of conduct shared by all those who adhere to the 'Shen of the Cha', described in the following way in the *Zijid*:

First of all, as the preliminary phase
one must lay the foundations of compassion and altruistic commitment (*sems bskyed*),
and with this intention to help beings
approach divination, astrology, the *To* rites or the healing methods (any of these)
aware of the need to become expert therein.²⁴

A passage quoted by Mipham states:

There are nine 'vows' (*dam tshig*) the practitioner of the 'Shen of the Cha' must keep:
not to proffer offerings to those that cannot enjoy them,²⁵
not to attend unknown deities and spirits,
not to disturb the lives of beings,
not to renounce Phuwer, deity of the *shen*,

as his view, not to base himself on preconceived ideas,
 as behaviour, not to offer objects belonging to others,
 not to deliver human beings as offerings or as ransom,
 not to prescribe medicines and foods if one is not sure,
 not to practise moxa and blood-letting in doubtful cases.²⁶

v NECESSITY AND VALUE OF THE *JUTHIG*

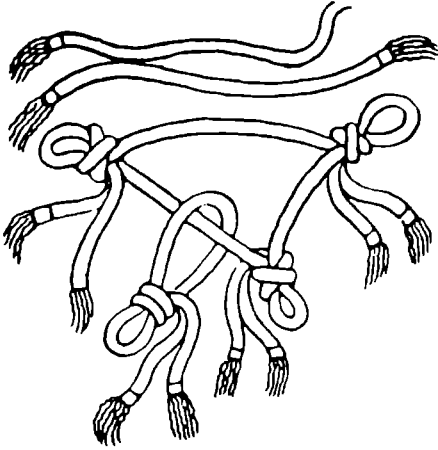
The *Zijid* also explains the reasons why the master Shenrab Miwoche taught the *Juthig* and the other lores of the 'Shen of the Cha', motivations that have informed the aspiration of all the practitioners of succeeding centuries. The following words are attributed to the great master:²⁷

First of all, one enters the way of the Shen of the Cha
 to benefit beings and bring happiness to the world.
 So, of the sundry ways of Bön that I will teach,
 now that one *shen* year, (equivalent to) one hundred human
 years, has passed
 I will explain the great way of the 'Shen of the Cha'.
 (I will teach you) to discern between good and bad signs,
 to separate truth from lies, the false from the rightful, the flawless
 from the corrupt,
 to heal illness, save lives and increase longevity, prosperity and
 well-being:
 certainly, gradually all beings will benefit from this.
 And even though (at times) the relief will be brief,
 the benefits that will follow will be inconceivable.
 The happiness of beings is the supreme Bön,
 so one must apply oneself in all ways to make oneself useful,
 and, where necessary, body and life, too, must be sacrificed.
 When there is no selfishness altruism arises naturally,
 and this is the sole root of the commitment to others:
shen of the Cha, Legyel Tsugphüd, always remember this!

In conclusion I wish to quote some verses expressly on the benefits of this divination, composed by Ju Mipham Jamyang Namgyel himself:

(The *Juthig*) can make wrinkles disappear from a face lined by
 suffering,
 like muddy water becoming clear again,
 and show the splendour of a smile on a happy face,
 radiant as the full moon.
 To men it can clearly show, as if it were a lamp,
 the knives of the Död aimed at the tree of life,

EXAMPLES OF THREE PURE KNOTS (DWANGS MA'I MDUD PA)



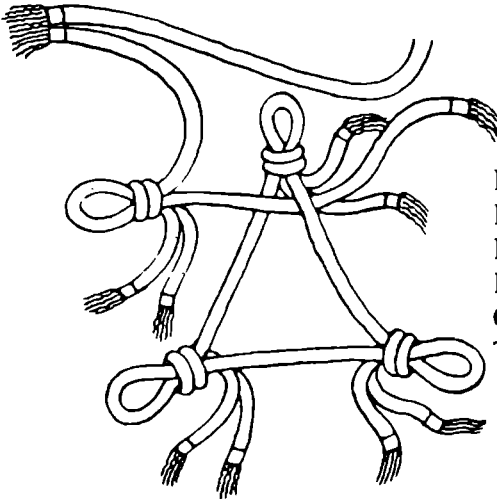
Eight Khyung (*khyung brgyad*)

The four divisions of the conch lake of the eight khyung (*khyung brgyad dung mtsho sde bzhi*).

Eight *khyung* is a male *dzo* with long horns. White *khyung* is the *la* knot of the *dzo*.

Khading (*mkha lding*) is the divination knot of the *khyung*.

He is the one who eliminates the skin diseases caused by the powerful Lu.²⁹



Kalbar

Kalbar, Mount Meru.

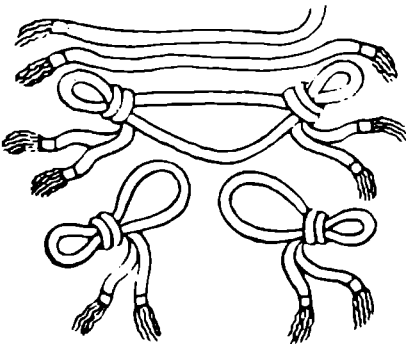
It is the seat of the *la* of Yablha Daldrug.

It is Mount Meru that lies at the centre...

It fell at the time of Yemön Sidpa.

On the border land between Ye and Ngam

The powerful Werma built a fortress.³⁰



Sangze (*srang ze*)

Sangze is the kind of bones.

It fell at the time of the Nyengod of (original) existence.³¹

His father is the snow-clad mountain,

His mother is the evil skull,

His palace is the invincible ocean.³²

the hooks of the spirits ready to steal the jewel of the *la*,
and (other) invisible (negative forces) that attack us.

With (the *Juthig*) one effortlessly obtains
the nectar that saves life and cures illnesses,
the jewel that makes the poor rich and the sterile fertile,
and the seal that makes the weak powerful.

The miraculous *Juthig* is (like) a secret voice
that warns all beings, alike in their attachment to life,
like travellers laden with riches on an unknown path,
to stay clear of the road where the enemies, inner and outer
disturbances, are lying in ambush.

For those desiring predictions about time and place
the miraculous *Juthig* is a voice that clearly says:

“This is the door from which fortune will come!”,
like revealing an unknown treasure hidden underground.

It resolves everything, it helps everyone and is necessary to
everyone.

For this reason Shenrab, the compassionate master,
although his mind was of the nature of space,
taught this indirect way because of his love of ignorant beings.
Believing in the truth of interdependence is the view,
concentrating with devotion and compassion is the meditation,
impartially showing what to undertake and what to abandon is
the behaviour:

in this way one obtains the fruit of the divination, benefit for
oneself and for others.

“Will a sage ever need useless divination?”:

when those who speak empty, senseless words like these
encounter difficulties they buy for their weight in gold
the impudent lies of fools: what sort of sages are they?

“The true words of the miraculous divination (*rno mthong 'phrul
gyi mo pra*)

transmitted by the clairvoyant sage (Shenrab)

are teachings which bring hundreds and thousands of benefits”:
so it is handed down, and the one who has faith in this is the
true sage.³²

Chapter XV

The Bön of Magic Power: The Rites of Destruction

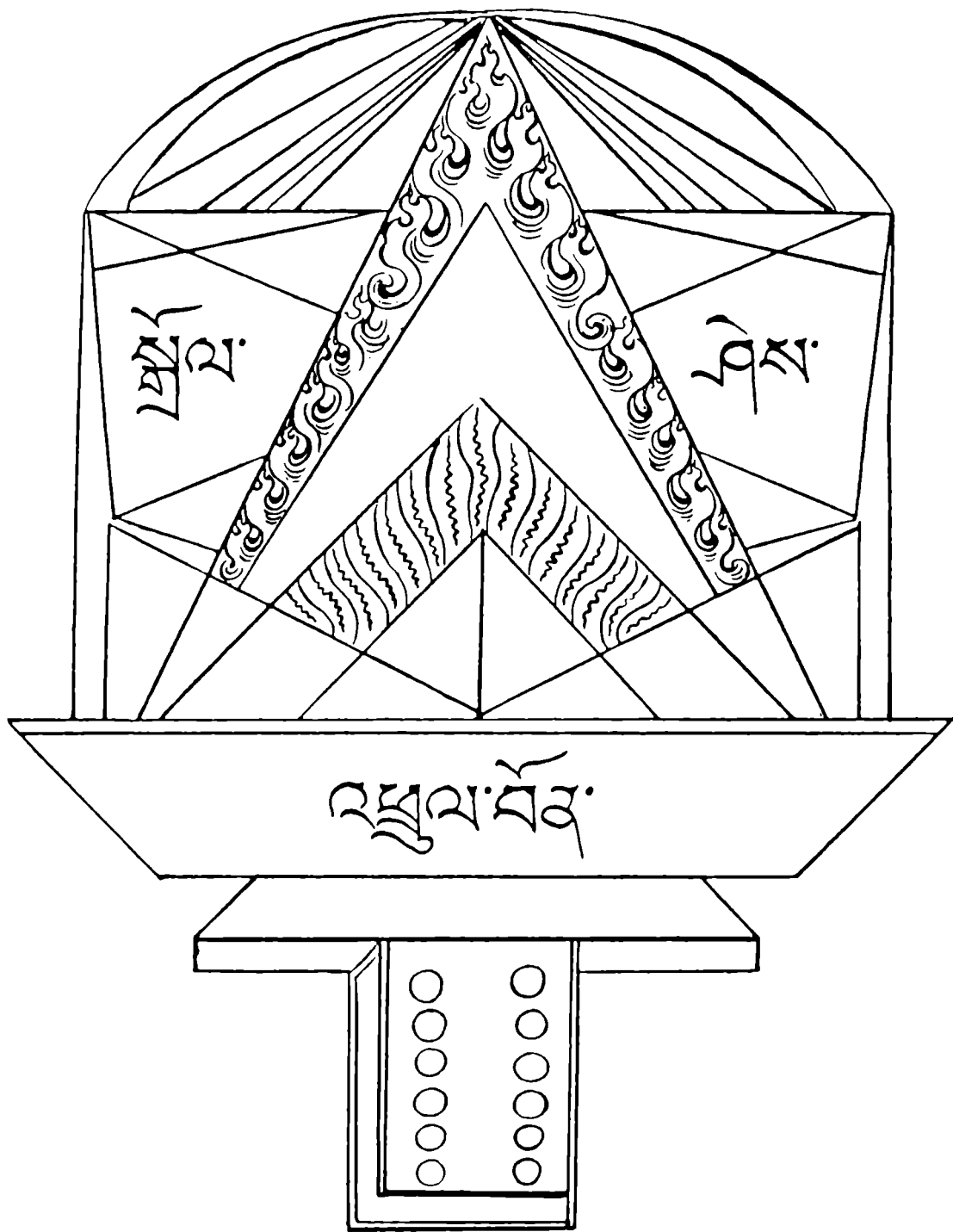
i THE MOTIVATIONS OF THE SHEN OF MAGIC POWER

The *Zijid* explains that the Bön of the 'Shen of Magic Power' (*'phrul gshen*) serves to liberate all those oppressed by ignorance and afflicted by negative circumstances from disturbances and provocations, to subdue all the 'arrogant ones' (*dregs pa*) of the world, to eliminate the enemies that create obstacles and interruptions, and to 'release by destruction' (*bsgral ba*)¹ the hostile persecutors of the teaching. To this end the practitioner must retire to an isolated place, prepare the ritual objects that will serve as support, meditate on the deity of magic power and recite the wrathful *mantra*. Having marked out the boundary of his area of retreat, he must devote himself undistractedly to the three principal phases of this Bön: the reliance (*bsnyen pa*)² on the divine master (*dpon gsas lha*),³ the obtainment of power (*sgrub pa*), and the destructive action (*las sbyor*), until he achieves their actualisation. Only then will he be in the position to liberate beings from adversities, to repel all sorts of negative provocations, and to consolidate the teaching and annihilate those who oppose it. The benefit of beings and the protection of the teaching, however, should be his only aims, without harbouring any feelings of personal animosity. When applying himself to the various phases of evocation (*dbab*) of the enemy's *la*, cutting (*gcad*), killing (*gsad*), destruction (*bsgral*) etc., and to whichever other kind of ritual action, he must never deviate from the fundamental import of the practice.⁴

ii RELIANCE ON THE DIVINE MASTER

The reliance or approach consists in entrusting oneself to a master and following him utterly, and on receiving the necessary initiations, in practising the meditation on the *yidam* deity.⁵ First of all, however, it is indispensable that one find a master possessing the right qualifications: his body must be stable as a mountain, his voice unchanging like an ocean, his mind imperturbable as the sky. He must be perfectly endowed with wisdom, compassion, power (*mthu' dbang*) and spiritual energy (*byin rlabs*). The aspirant must have a four-fold attitude when seeking him: with intense longing; like a child looking for its mother; like someone calling for an escort on a perilous pass; like someone running after his best-loved friend. Once he has found him, he should cleave to him and devote himself to him with body, voice and mind, and ask him for the instructions in the 'Shen of Magic Power'. Furthermore, during all this time the practitioner should constantly cherish feelings of veneration and of the greatest respect for the parents who have given him his body, for the

THE BÖN OF MAGIC POWER: THE RITES OF DESTRUCTION



master of 'indestructible knowledge' (*rdo rje slob dpon*) who has given birth within him to the commitment to realisation, and for the spiritual brothers and sisters (*lha gsas lcam*)⁶ who render circumstances favourable for his practice, because they are as precious "as the heart in the chest, the eyes in the forehead and the head, that is the most important part of the body."⁷

Attending the master in this way and gaining familiarity with the methods of practice, he must receive the initiations and the spiritual energy, after which he will intensely yearn to enter into the fortress⁸ of the *yidam* deity, empowering himself by the deity's heart *mantra* and donning the armour of meditation. These are the different phases of the 'reliance', the fruits of which are the obtainment of energy for one's own benefit and the mastery of the methods for the benefit of others; uniting these together he will be able to realise the final goals.

iii THE OBTAINMENT OF POWER

In order to obtain the power it is necessary to choose a suitable place, such as a cemetery or a fearful-looking rocky mountain which is pervaded by the presence of the 'protectors of the directions' (*rigs kyi srung ma*)⁹ and displays the characteristic wrathful signs. The necessary ritual objects will be those serving, respectively, as offering (*mchod rdzas*), as support of certain forces (*rten rdzas*), for the empowerment of the practitioner (*sgrub rdzas*) and for the propitiation of the divine guardians (*mthun rdzas*). When they have been gathered together one begins the preparatory phases: setting up the altar for the deities, preparing the ceremonial vase, the *torma* etc., adorned with silk curtains above (*lding gur*) and at the sides (*yol ba*), canopies (*bla re*), parasols (*gdugs*) and victory banners (*rgyal mtshan*). After having satisfied the non human classes of beings of the outer world (*phyi'i g.yen*) with the clean first offerings, one arrays in pleasing fashion the objects that will serve as support of the deities. Having carried out all this meticulously, the meditation phase (*ting nge 'dzin*) begins, consisting in meditation on the essential state of existence, its compassionate manifestation and the visualisation of the deity through the seed-syllable.¹⁰ Then, in the essential phase (*snying po*), through the visualisation of the three syllables¹¹ one must dissolve the deity in the luminous sphere (*thig le*) in order to receive the empowerment. At this point begins the phase of the *mudrā* or symbolic hand gestures: holding the hands with the palms turned upwards different gestures are formed and then dissolved by snapping the fingers towards the sky, respectively to invite the Se deities to appear in the space before one, to dissolve them into the dimension of the natural essence (*klong*) and to unite indissolubly with the

vow (*dam tshig*). In this phase of the offering one proffers all the objects of enjoyment, materially and mentally, visualising them as infinite as space. After having thus satiated the deities, one reminds them of the commitment they have undertaken, and exhorts them. Accompanying oneself with the sound of the drum, the shang and the cymbals (*rol mo*) one then performs the chanted phase (*tshig bshad*) to recall their attention through the chant and the cries of invocation. Finally after having praised them, one carries out the phase of the request for the desired act (*phrin las*) which must be executed in space. One must apply oneself with diligence to all these phases in order to obtain the necessary power.¹²

iv THE ACTION: THE TANTRAS OF THE NET OF MAGIC FEROCITY

The instructions on the ritual act of destruction, known as the 'Net of Magic Ferocity' (*brnag pa sgyu 'phrul drwa ba*), in which there is the union of contradiction and coherency, that is, contradiction in terms of usual behaviour and coherency in terms of the real sense, are contained in twelve *tantras* grouped in three principal series: the 'outer' *tantras* of Khangying Wal¹³ (*mkha' 'gying dbal gyi rgyud*), the 'inner' *tantras* of Walse Tragpo¹⁴ (*dbal gsas drag po'i rgyud*) and the 'secret' *tantras* of the Sphere of Actions¹⁵ (*las kyi thig le'i rgyud*).

The series of *tantras* of Khangying Wal comprises:

1. The Destructive Magic of the *Dzo Wal Thi mantra* (*dzo dbal this kyi sngags byad*), based on the power derived from the practice of *mantra* tied to the action of the fire element.
2. The Destructive Magic of the Curses of twenty thousand Lhagöd (*lha rgod nyi khri'i dmod byad*), based on the intervention of this class of fierce deities.
3. The Destructive Magic of the Thünsor of the Mamo (*ma mo'i thun gyi zor byad*), based on hurling 'mustard seeds' (*thun rdzas*), one of the particular 'magic weapons' called *sor*, empowered by *mantra* and linked to the power of the Mamo.¹⁶
4. The Destructive Magic of the View of the Black Död (*nag po bdud kyi lta byad*), tied to the desire to destroy enemies, proper to the class of the Död.

The series of *tantras* of Walse Tragpo (or Walse Ngampa) comprises:

1. The Ferocity of the Action of Conquest (*dbang sdud las kyi brnag pa*)
2. The Fierce Wheel that Repels (negativities) (*drag po bzlog pa'i 'khor lo*).
3. The Great Tantra of Miraculous Ferocity (*drag po rdzu 'phrul rgyud chen*).

4. The Black Long-Maned All-Suppressing Khyung (*zil gnon khyung nag ral chen*).

Finally, the series of *tantras* of the 'Sphere of Actions' (of the Walmo) comprises:

1. The Sphere of the Actions of the Walmo (*dbal mo las kyi thig le*).
2. The Sphere of the Life of the Walmo (*dbal mo srog gi thig le*).
3. The Razor of the Life of the Walmo (*dbal mo srog gi spu gri*).
4. The Ritual Tablet of the Actions of the Walmo (*dbal mo las kyi byang bu*).¹⁷

Related to these twelve basic *tantras*, that also include the destructive actions tied to the curses of classes of 'worldly' beings acting as assistants or attendants to the guardian deities, there are one hundred and eight commentaries and one thousand secondary treatises containing more detailed instructions. In any case, whichever series of *tantra* the practitioner has chosen to follow, only after having completed the phases of reliance and of the obtainment of power will he be able to apply finally the magic of fierce action (*mngon spyod*) of the 'Shen of Magic Power'.¹⁸

v THE EXECUTION OF THE RITE OF DESTRUCTION

Briefly outlined, the actual execution of the rite of destruction is performed in the following way: In a terrifying place the practitioner prepares the distinctive triangular 'retreat cell' equipped with all the objects necessary for the fierce action called *elong tragpoi thün khang*¹⁹ – also known as *chog* – and on a day when all the planets, constellations and signs are auspicious, he will start the practice. First of all he applies himself to meditation on Walse Ngampa, visualising himself in the guise of this wrathful deity, and then puts into action the 'wheel of life' (*srog gi khor lo*):²⁰ he writes the 'life letters' (*srog yig*) of the guardian deities and charges them with wrathful power, then arranges the pledge objects (*gtad pa'i gta'*) and the magic diagram called 'the palace of life' (*srog mkhar*). Then he invites the Walmo to fling themselves on the meat and blood, and proffering the first offerings to the worldly Lhagöd he enjoins them to perform the requested action. At this point he writes the name of the enemy guilty of causing hindrances and clearly visualises the target, in order to hit it with the *thün* (mustard seeds etc. empowered by *mantra*) and other 'magic weapons'. He will thus complete the action of destruction, and will satisfy the deities by summoning the enemy's *la*, uniting it with his effigy called *liṅga* and killing him (*dgug bstim gsad gsum*), hence destroying him, offering him and turning him into an object of enjoyment (*bsgral bstab rol gsum*). Furthermore, according to necessity he can perform

other types of destructive magic: 'suppress, burn and hurl' (*mnan sreg 'phang gsum*),²¹ 'visualise the target, invoke the wrathful deities and cut' (*gzir dbab gcad gsum*), 'drive away, chain and separate' (*bskrad 'ching bkar gsum*) etc., and send his enemy sundry manifestations of magic power.²²

To deserve becoming the target of wrathful action, one must fully possess ten requisites: to be the enemy of a master and the principal enemy of a *shen* practitioner, to slander the teaching and violate the rules and vows, to steal the personal possessions of the *shen* and torture the innocent, to disturb others' practice and torment all beings, to oppose the practice of the 'To of existence' and disparage everlasting Bön.²³ Also belonging to this category, but deserving only to be warned and terrorised with fierce manifestations of magic, are disciples who break their vows (*dam tshig*), practitioners who defy the protective deities (*le'u lha log mkhan*),²⁴ those who rebel against their father's will, subjects who revolt, those who betray sworn friends, those who make their wives suffer for a long time, those who openly hinder or who slander in secret and all those who steal, make false accusations and cause disturbances in other ways.²⁵

vi THE UNION OF CONTRADICTION AND COHERENCY

The *Zijid* contains a lengthy explanation of the meaning of 'contradiction in terms of behaviour and coherency in terms of the sense' (*spyod lam 'gal zhing don la 'brel*) of the ritual series of the 'Net of Magic Ferocity':

In the Bön way of the 'Shen of Magic Power'
there is contradiction regarding behaviour, but coherency regarding the sense.

Dwelling in fierce places conflicts with behaviour,
(but if it serves to) reduce everything into one's power it corresponds with the sense.

Wrathful actions conflict with behaviour,
(but if they serve to) consolidate the teaching they correspond with the sense.

Cruel offerings of meat and blood conflict with behaviour,
(but if they serve for) the application of sexual union and of destruction (*sbyor sgröl rol pa*)²⁷ they correspond with the sense.

The five vow objects²⁸ conflict with behaviour,
(but if they serve to) purify the five poisons²⁹ in one's condition they correspond with the sense.

The consort with the right qualities³⁰ conflicts with behaviour,
(but if she serves for) the inseparability of method and knowledge this corresponds with the sense.

Stopping the flow of thoughts³¹ conflicts with behaviour,

(but if it serves for) retiring to secluded places it corresponds with the sense.

Wrathful anger conflicts with behaviour,
but if its true nature is love, it corresponds with the sense.

Arrogant pride conflicts with behaviour,
(but if it serves to) bring to the world peace and happiness it corresponds with the sense.

The methods of ritual magic conflict with behaviour,
(but if they serve to) convert followers of wrong views they correspond with the sense.

Fierce actions against enemies conflict with behaviour,
(but if they serve to) eliminate disturbances and interruptions they correspond with the sense.

Having the concepts of 'benefits and disturbances' conflict with behaviour,

(but if it serves to) benefit beings it corresponds with the sense.

(Making judgements of) 'good and bad' and 'near and far' conflicts with behaviour,

(but if it is based on) an attitude of goodness it corresponds with the sense.

Having the concepts of 'positive and negative' conflicts with behaviour,

but if they give rise to good actions they correspond with the sense.

The 'wheel of life'³² conflicts with behaviour,

(but if it serves to) emancipate from the condition of ignorance it corresponds with the sense.

Torma of human flesh (*mang sa'i gtor ma*) conflict with behaviour,

(but if they serve to) self-liberate obfuscation (*gti mug*) they correspond with the sense.³³

Heaps of bones conflict with behaviour,

(but if they serve to) liberate anger in the condition of emptiness they correspond with the sense.

Human skins³⁴ conflict with behaviour,

(but if they serve to) self-liberate jealousy they correspond with the sense.

Offering the life and breath conflicts with behaviour,

(but if it serves to) uproot pride, it corresponds with the sense.

Offering *chang* (*yu ti*) conflicts with behaviour,

(but visualised as) nectareous drink (*g.yu 'brang bdud rtsi*) it corresponds with the sense.

The skull with locks of hair conflicts with behaviour,

(but used as) the ritual skull-cup (*yol chen*) with the right characteristics (*mtshan ldan yol chen*) it corresponds with the sense.

The wrathful *phurba* conflicts with behaviour,

(but if it serves to) suppress transmigration it corresponds with the sense.

The triangular ritual receptacle (*e klong 'brub khung*) conflicts with behaviour,

(but if one has knowledge of) the infinite nature of existence (*bon nyid*)³⁵ it corresponds with the sense.

Bloody thorny stakes as weapons (*rtsang dmar mtshon cha*)³⁶ conflict with behaviour,

(but visualised as) the net of continuity of existence (*srid pa'i drwa ba*)³⁷ they correspond with the sense.

The harried *linga* conflicts with behaviour,

(but if it serves to) convert those who are without knowledge it corresponds with the sense.

(The ritual actions of) 'burning, hurling and suppressing' conflict with behaviour,

(but if they serve to) raise (beings) to the condition of the true nature of existence they correspond with the sense.³⁸

vii THE *DZO WAL THI* AND THE CYCLE OF *CHIPUNG* TEACHINGS

It seems that, in all probability, the *tantras* and the instructions concerning the *Dzo Wal Thi*, one of the four ritual traditions belonging to the series of *Khangying Wal*, were practised in Tibet at the time of the first king, Nyatri Tsenpo, if not earlier. In fact, the historical texts recount that one of the first masters of the lineage of the tradition, the *shen* Namkha Nangwai Dogchen, was in Tibet before the appearance of the first king, and that he himself subsequently transmitted the teachings to Nyatri Tsenpo's son, Prince Mutri Tsenpo. According to the *History Of Bön* by Khyungpo Lodrö Gyaltzen:

At that time, the descent of King Mangpö Kurwa (Mahā-sammata),³⁹ the progeny of the world famous ancestor Senge Dram (Siṃha Hanu)⁴⁰ had not yet appeared in Tibet, but even though the law of a king did not yet exist, the law of Bön prospered and Tibet was happy. It was the time when the *shen* Namkhai Dogchen was in Tibet.⁴¹

And, from a text of the ritual cycle of *Khangying Wal*,⁴² concerning the original lineage of this ritual system:

In the beginning (the *Dzo Wal Thi*) was practised by the deity of existence (*srid pa'i lha mo*) Sangza Ringstün,⁴³ mind emanation of Sidpai Gyelmo Satrig Erti Sang, by her son Chimed Tsugphüd⁴⁴ and by the *shen* Sangwa Düpa. Then the *shen* Sangwa Düpa transmitted it to 'Bön of the Wal' (*dbal bon*) Tagla Menbar,⁴⁵ who practised it and transmitted it to the '*shenpo* of the Deities' (*lha'i gshen po*) Yongsu Tagpa, who practised it. He in turn transmitted it to the '*shenpo* of the Family of the Victorious One' (*rgyal rigs kyi gshen po*)⁴⁶ Milü Samleg, who practised it. He transmitted it to the *bönpo* 'Born of the Lu' Yeshe Nyingpo,⁴⁷ who practised it and then transmitted it to the *shen* Namkha Nangwa Dogchen, who in his turn practised it. The latter, finally, transmitted it to the prince, Mutri Tsenpo, who practised it.⁴⁸

It transpires the *shen* Namkha Nangwai Dogchen is also one of the principal holders of both the 'Mantra series' (*sngags phyogs*) and the 'Mind series' (*sems phyogs*)⁴⁹ of the famous cycle of teachings known by the name *Chipung* (*spyi spung*), concerning the origin and lineage of which, another historical text informs us:

Regarding the Mantra series, the 'bön of the Deities' (*lha bon*) Yongsu Tagpa asked Sangwa Düpa for the teachings (originally) propagated 'above', in the world of the deities. After having practised them at Tselri Lhai Dünsa, as ordinary realisation he obtained the powers of transforming himself into a crane by snapping his fingers, of making flowers bloom by spitting on the ground and of making the army of the deities defeat that of the demigods by flying in space. As supreme realisation, his body dissolved into the deity Khangying.

The '*shen* of the Victorious One' (*rgyal gshen*) Milü Samleg asked Chimed Tsugphud for the teachings (originally) propagated 'in the middle', in the human world. After having practised them at Gyakhar Bachöd,⁵¹ as ordinary realisation he obtained the powers of making showers of flowers rain, of building *chörtens* in the depths of the sea and of burning with the fire of concentration the followers of wrong views. As supreme realisation, his body, free of material impurities, was indissolubly united with the *yidam* deity.

The *bönpo* 'Born of the Lu' (*klu grub*) asked Sangza Ringtsün for the teachings (originally) propagated 'below', in the world of the Lu. After having practised them at Chumig Gyedchu Tsanyi,⁵² as ordinary realisation he obtained the powers of not sinking in water and of making showers of flowers rain from the sky. As

supreme realisation his body, manifesting as rays of light, was indissolubly united with the *yidam* deity.

Namkha Nangwai Dogchen, son of Mugyel Seje, asked these three for the teachings of the three tantric cycles, and, after having practised them at Rigyel Lhünpo⁵³ as ordinary realisation he obtained the powers of making showers of flowers rain from the sky, and of conquering and reducing to servitude deities and evil demons. As supreme realisation, he had the capacity to transfer himself indissolubly into (the deity of) wisdom. These four great masters thus brought great benefits to beings in the above, middle and below worlds.

Regarding the Mind series, Sangwa Düpa transmitted the teachings to the 'shenpo of the Deities' (Yongsu Tagpa), who transmitted them the 'Lu-born' Yeshe Nyingpo, who in his turn transmitted them to Milü Samleg. In particular, it was precisely the last-named, the 'shen of the Victorious One', who propagated this profound series of teachings in the human world. In fact, after having asked for the teachings from both the 'bön of the Deities' and the 'Lu-born' he spread both series of Bön in the human world as the merits of mankind were greater than those of the beings of the other 'six classes'.⁵⁴ Then the 'shen of the Victorious One' transmitted the teachings to Namkha Nangwai Dogchen, who practised them.⁵⁵

Therefore, if in those times Bön was widespread in Tibet and there were there masters of the spiritual stature of Namkha Nangwai Dogchen, one might naturally infer that the Mantra and the Mind cycles of *Chipung* were practised, too, and that this took place in an era prior to the inception of the Tibetan dynasty. Let us read further in the *History of Bön*:

Concerning the origin of the first king, it is written in the *Chamma* (*Byams ma*) that when one million two hundred and fifty thousand years had passed since the beginning of the royal dynasty of Mangpö Kurwa (Mahāsammata), a prince of the Kyaseng (Pāṇḍava)⁵⁶ was exiled and sought refuge in Tibet. Gam Lhase, Dog Lhabön and other Bönpos of the 'twelve lores' (*shes pa can bcu gnyis kyi bon po*) examined his marks, purified him with lustral water and crowned him king with the name Nyatri Tsenpo. But before these, in Tibet there was the *shen* Namkhai Dogchen, and notwithstanding there existed no royal law, the law of Bön was observed. Therefore in Tibet there came the Bönpos before the kings.⁵⁷

This last statement, which maintains that there were already Bönpos in Tibet when the first king appeared, should be linked with the fact that in ancient times Shang Shung was divided into three regions, respectively known as 'outer' (*sgo pa*), 'inner' (*phugs pa*) and 'central' (*bar pa*) Shang Shung. The Ü and Tsang regions of central Tibet and large part of the Kham and Amdo regions of east Tibet belonged to 'outer' Shang Shung, although it is not certain whether at that time the name by which Tibetans called their country, 'Pöd' (*bod*),⁵⁸ already existed. Later, that is, starting from the time of Nyatri Tsenpo, a new kingdom came to be formed which separated from Shang Shung, and for which in all likelihood, the name Tibet (*bod*) started to be used. It is for this reason that it is said that Bön existed before Tibet itself. In any case, if at the time of the first Tibetan king the *shen* Namkha Nangwai Dogchen was already in Tibet, we can deduce that the essence of the Bön that was practised consisted of the cycles of *Chipung* teachings. Another passage from the same text is even more explicit on this point:

Then (Nyatri Tsenpo) asked Namkha Nangwai Dogchen for the Bön teachings of the *Chipung* cycle, and received them. His son, prince Mutri Tsedpo, comprehended the sense of what he had to understand, obtained the results of the practice and realised the culmination of what he had to meditate on. So then he had the (Bön) texts translated by translators from Tagzig and other countries, he invited one hundred and eight great sages to Shang Shung and founded forty-five great centres of Bön (*bon gyi 'du gnas*) in Tibet. From then until the time of Sengtri Tsenpo, during all the period of the 'Seven Tri of the Sky', the Bön teachings of the 'Six Great Masters' (*bla che drug*)⁵⁹ were spread: the Bön of the 'Supreme Father Series' (*pha chen bla na med pa'i bon*), the 'Bön of the Supreme Mother Series' (*ma chen bla na med pa'i bon*), the 'Bön of the Supreme Way' (*theg pa bla na med pa'i bon*), the 'Bön of the Supreme Behaviour' (*spyod pa bla na med pa'i bon*), the 'Bön of the Supreme Fruit' (*'bras bu bla na med pa'i bon*) and the 'Bön of the Supreme Absolute Meaning' (*don dam bla na med pa'i bon*). This is what is written in the *Chamma* (*Byams ma*).⁶⁰

viii THE ORIGIN MYTH OF THE WAL

Returning to the series of ritual practices of the *Dzo Wal Thi*, let us now read the myth recounting the origin of the cycle dedicated to the Wal deities from a text belonging to the *Walchu* rites:⁶¹

At the time of the first time cycle, when in Shang Shung the prestige of everlasting Bön was great, the kings were powerful and the masters (*gyer spungs*)⁶² were the kings' bodyguards:

Once from the centre of darkness,
Heavy Rapidly-Spreading Obfuscation (*gti mug lji la 'bar ba*)
climbed onto the musk deer, mount (of contamination) of the
hearth (*thab sha*),
and at the head of thirteen Dre of the hearth (*thab 'dre*)
and Si of the impurities of burnt substances (*gzhob sri*), he ex-
claimed:

"We must destroy the worlds of the deities and of men!"
Nine-Headed Anger (*zhe sdang mgo dgu*)
climbed onto the white grouse, the bird of incest (*nal bya*),
and at the head of thirteen Dre of rancour (*'khon 'dre*) and Si of
vow-breakage (*dam sri*) he exclaimed:

"We must destroy the worlds of the deities and of men!"
Black Mountain of Attachment (*'dod chags ri yol nag po*)
climbed onto the speckled bear (*dom sha rgya bo*),
and at the head of thirteen Dre of bears (*dom 'dre*) and Si of
darkening (*rmugs sri*) he exclaimed:

"We must destroy the worlds of the deities and of men!"
In this way, the (original) Dre of existence and the ten astrological
Dön (*gtsug lag gdon bcu*) spread.

The generations of talking humanity were about to die out,
epidemics and losses struck the livestock,
and there arose contaminations due to crimes by kin, to accidents
and to widowhoods.

The *shen* master (*gyer spungs*) was worried.

Then on that occasion,

the King of Tagna of Shang Shung⁶³
gave the master (*gyer spungs*) Charu Shen⁶⁴

a precious vase of white crystal

and asked him: "Try to find a remedy!"

The great master

used it as the ceremonial vase for the purification with lustral
water (*khrus*),

but the white and black existence did not separate.

Then he meticulously performed the exorcism of the astrological
negativities (*gstug lag sel*),

but did not succeed in coming to terms with the deities and
spirits.

Finally, he hurled like thunderbolts the *sor* empowered by *mantra*,
but he did not manage to subjugate the spirits and demons.
Then the great master,
lamenting loudly, addressed all the worlds of the deities
and invoked the assistance of Shenrab's presence:
playing the drum and the *shang*
he made the invocation crying "SO!" and "HE!"
Shortly afterwards, suddenly
from the inner space of the sky
he saw three eggs of precious materials appear,
that flew in space
until they fell on the top of the snow-laden mountain of the *la*
(*bla ri gangs dkar*).

The eggs hatched by their own energy:
when the red copper egg hatched
a red Wal man (*dbal gyi mi pho*)⁶⁵ appeared,
strewn flames and sparks (*dbal gyi tsha tsha*);
when the blue metal egg hatched
a blue Wal man appeared,
wearing a flaming(?) blue tunic (*dbal gyi chu slag*);
when the white crystal egg hatched
a white Wal man appeared,
with nine heads and eighteen arms.

Then the three Wal men
manifested three hundred and sixty emanations.
The great master
asked the three Wal men for help,
and on the eighth day of the first month of each of the four
seasons (*ra ba bzhi*)
on the divine white altar
he sprinkled three measures (*bre*)⁶⁶ of Wal barley (*dbal nas*),
and as support prepared the divine yak, the divine sheep and the
divine goat.

On the right he placed the *torma* of the three supports of the
white deities (*lha dkar rten gsum gtor ma*),
at the centre, the *torma* of the three 'Great Wal' (*dbal chen*),
on the left, the heart-shaped *torma* (*'brang rgyas*) and those of the
offerings of the five senses (*zhal zas rnam lnga*),
in the front, the nectareous *torma* of the 'accumulation of offer-
ings' (*tshogs mchod*).

In the middle he placed the *walsang* (receptacle)⁶⁷ 'boiling subduer
of the Död' (*dbal zangs khol mo bdud 'dud*)

into which he poured water from snow, from slate rock and from rain.

Then he prepared the 'Wal heart' (*dbal snying*) (*torma*) with the five precious substances,

the three hundred and sixty yaks of the Wal (*dbal g.yag*),

and with precious shrubs

he rigged up the nest of the all-suppressing Khyung.

Finally, he arrayed the 'nine arms of existence' (*srid pa'i mtshon cha sna dgu*).⁶⁸

He collected the thirteen poisons of existence (*srid pa'i dug yas bcu gsum*)

and everyone purified themselves of the poisons.

He collected the thirteen types of blood of existence (*srid pa'i khrag sna bcu gsum*)

and everyone washed their contaminated hands (*dme lag*).

He collected the thirteen substances of existence (*srid pa'i rdzas sna bcu gsum*)

and everyone cleansed their whole bodies.

He collected the thirteen incenses of existence (*srid pa'i spos sna bcu gsum*)

and everything was purified, outside and inside.

Then the great master

played the fine and precious drum and *shang*,

and became absorbed in meditation on the wrathful 'Great Wal' (*dbal chen khro bo*).⁶⁹

ix THE RITUAL WALSANG RECEPTACLE

There is also a myth about the ritual receptacle called *walsang* (mentioned in the previous passage) which describes its origin. Taken from another text:⁷⁰

This boiling *walsang* 'spacious continent' (*dbal zangs khol mo gling chen*)

originated in this way, the first time.

In the vibrant land of Shang Shung,

the cutting potency (*dbal ngar*) of the snows of the Tago

and the foam of the great lake Mapang

united with a miraculous wind.

A light arose from the snow

and a ray glowed from the rock,

they shone on the lake

and three eggs were born from the lake.

The largest egg

hatched in the space of the sky,

and from the outer shell of the egg

there formed the boiling *walsang* 'spacious continent';

from the yolk that spilled onto the ground,

there formed the ocean of 'liquid wal' (*dbal chu*);⁷¹

from the intermediate membrane (*gdar sha*) of the egg

there formed the Wal mountains (*dbal ri*) and Wal rocks (*dbal brag*);

from the inner essence of the egg

were born the father Shelgyung Karpo

and the mother Dzozcham Thangmo.

The middle-sized Wal egg

hatched in atmospheric space,

and from the outer shell of the egg

there formed the boiling *walsang* 'Sun Face' (*dbal zangs khol mo nyi zhal*);

from the yolk that spilled onto the ground

there gushed forth the 'limpid boiling Wal liquid' (*dbal chu rang khol sil ma*);

from the intermediate membrane of the egg

there formed the Wal rock of green *armo*;

from the inner essence of the egg

were born the father Gekhöd Tamgyel (King of the Vow)

and the mother Lungza Menchig (Only Wind Goddess).

The smallest Wal egg

hatched breaking itself against the waves of the lake,

and from the outer shell of the egg

there formed the boiling *walsang* 'Moon Face' (*dbal zangs khol mo zla zhal*);

from the yolk that spilled onto the ground

there formed the substances for the boiling-over Wal liquid;

from the intermediate membrane of the egg

there formed the 'nine Wal weapons' (*dbal gyi go mtshon sna dgu*):

the sword that kills by itself,

the hammer that beats by itself,

the iron-shod club (*thu lum*) that whirls by itself,⁷²

the axe that chops by itself,

the lance that hurls itself,

the hook that snares by itself,

the claw that tears by itself,

the sling (*sna thod*) that twirls by itself,

the bow that darts (arrows) by itself.

From the inner essence of the egg

was born the fierce Khyung bird of the Wal (*dbal gyi bya khyung*):

the right wing flared with Wal flames (*dbal me*),

the left wing boiled over with Wal liquid (*dbal chu*)

and from the vase of his Khyung body

all wishes fell like rain,

and in this way the Wal lake (*dbal mtsho*) formed in the *walsang*.⁷³

The 'nine Wal weapons' listed in this passage correspond to the 'nine arms of existence' mentioned in the preceding myth together with the 'thirteen poisons', 'thirteen types of blood', 'thirteen substances' and 'thirteen incenses' of existence.

The 'thirteen poisons of existence' are listed in another ritual text⁷⁴ as: (1) black aconite (*bong nga nag po*),⁷⁵ poison of earth (*sa dug*); (2) *khargong sinchen*,⁷⁶ poison of stone (*rdo dug*); (3) the birch and the *langma*, poison of trees (*shing dug*); (4) datura (*thang khrom*) and *rechag*,⁷⁷ poison of plants (*ldum dug*); (5) maize and peas, poison of cereals (*'bru dug*); (6) water from marshes and rusty liquid (*btsa' chu*), poison of water (*chu dug*); (7) poison of gold (*gser dug*); (8) poison of turquoise (*g.yu dug*); (9) poison of the conch-shell (*dung dug*); (10) poison of iron (*lcags dug*); (11) poison of silver (*dngul dug*); (12) poison of copper (*zangs dug*); (13) poison of brass (*rag dug*). Classified into categories, these are also known as the 'nine poisons' (*dug sna dgu*).⁷⁸

We have already seen the thirteen types of blood listed in the myth of the 'red *Tsen*', while the thirteen substances and thirteen incenses of existence (found in the same myth) must in all likelihood, allude to those substances catalogued in the mythic precedents of the *Sang* and the 'white *Tsen*' rites, to which I refer the reader.⁷⁹

x A STORY OF THE MAGIC DZO BOMB

In a text from the collection of Dzogchen teachings of the *Oral Transmission of Shang Shung*,⁸⁰ there is a very clear account of the magic action of the Dzo (*dzwo*) or Tso (*tswo*) rites.

After King Ligmigya of Shang Shung had been murdered in ambush, as related in an earlier chapter,⁸¹ the great Bön Master Nangzher Lödpo,⁸² who was asked to avenge the king, sent a 'magic bomb' made of gold which severely wounded the king of Tibet. Let us read the whole story.

When the tens of thousands of communities of Shang Shung were separated from the thousands of communities of Sumpa and Tibet was reduced to fragments, Khyungza Tsogyel, first wife of

the king of Shang, Shung, decided to avenge herself on the king of Tibet. And so she invited the Master (*gyer spungs*) Nangzher Lödpo. She prepared for him a seat of nine brocade cushions and having pitched a white silk tent decorated with deer patterns, offered him rice *chang*, delicious dishes and precious objects. Then, shedding tears of sorrow she told him "The King Protector of Bön has been killed. The silk knot of the law of Bön has been cut. The gold yoke of the king's law has been broken, and all Tibet is in pieces. The teaching of everlasting Bön has been abolished. As we have reached this point, I beseech you to wreak vengeance!"

Nangzher Lödpo replied "I know a (rite called) *Pu* (*spu*): if I practise it for three years with an ounce (*srang*) of gold and then hurl (the device) Tibet will be swept away, as if by the wind. Do you want me to carry it out? Or, (I know) a (rite called) *khyung*: if I practise it for three months with half an ounce of gold and then hurl (the device), Yarlung Soka, King Trisong Deutsen and his court will be destroyed. Do you want me to carry it out? Or, finally, (I know) a (rite called) *Nup* (*rngub*): if I practise it for a week with a tenth of an ounce (*zho*) and then send (the device), only the king will be killed. Do you want me to carry it out?" Then Tsogyel decided "I ask you to perform the one called *Nup*!"

Then the great master pitched a white silk tent decorated with deer patterns on the islet Tarog of Tsoling (*da rog mtsho gling*),⁸³ sat on a seat of nine brocade cushions and practised for a week. At this point he divided the tenth of the ounce of gold in three parts, and at dusk he hurled the first part: it fell in the lake in front of Yarlung Shampo, the lake dried up and the Lu fled, and the lake was subsequently called Yarlung Tsokam (Dried Lake of Yarlung). At midnight he hurled the second part: it hit seven deer that were sleeping on Mount Sogka Pünpo, two deer died and the others were paralysed, and the mountain was subsequently called Shawa Rengri (Mountain of Paralysed Deer). At dawn he hurled the third and last part: it fell on Chiwa Tagtse fortress and the king was struck by a sudden illness. But the king was intelligent, and immediately said "The teaching of everlasting Bön has been suppressed and the King Protector of Bön has been murdered. So, if the *tso* arrived this morning at dawn it is a sign that the great master is angry. Fill a *drong* (wild yak) horn with gold dust and straight away send one hundred knights: the master knows the remedy to cure me. If you do not succeed in inviting him, I feel I will soon die!"

The hundred horsemen arrived in Draje valley and asked a shepherd of Shang Shung: "The master has taken revenge and the king of Tibet has been taken ill, so we must offer gifts to the master from the king and invite him. Where does he live?" The shepherd answered "He lives at the foot of the white rock on the islet of Tsoling, where he has pitched a tent of white silk decorated with deer patterns. But he does not have only one appearance, he can assume any likeness." So the knights crossed the lake by boat and reached that place, where they saw the master in the guise of a crystal horn (*shel gyi rna ru*) seated on a seat of nine brocade cushions. They proffered the *drong* horn full of gold dust, circumambulated him and prostrated at his feet as signs of respect. Then the crystal horn resumed the form of the master who said "The King Protector of Bön has been slain and the teaching of everlasting Bön has been suppressed: that is why I thought to take revenge. But if the king of Tibet too were to die the whole country would be ruined. So, are you willing to fulfil certain requests?" The ministers answered "This is the message sent by King Trisong Deutsen: 'I want to state that it is not my fault that everlasting Bön has been abolished, but the fault of the calumnies of Bodhisattva,⁸⁴ of learned Indian scholars and of the court ministers. Anyway, I am ready to grant anything you ask!" The master retorted "Agreed! Here are my four requests. The first is that the three hundred and sixty series of Bön of Shang Shung which I practice should not be destroyed. The second, that when the members of the Gurub family⁸⁵ go to Yarlung Sogka they should be exempted from both state and religious taxes and they should sit in the row on the right (as a sign of honour). The third, that a golden *stupa* shall be built, as big as king Ligmigya's body and with a swastika one fathom in size. The fourth, that Khyungza Tsogyel shall be atoned for the loss (of her husband) (*stong 'jal*) by a compensation corresponding to the twelve limbs and the head. Do you accept?" The three powerful ministers swore an oath.

The master then went to visit the king, and performed a rite called *Sangthi Pharma Gukor* (*gsang this 'phar ma dgu skor*) in order to reverse the course of the magic action. From the nine orifices of the king's body he drew gold strands as slender as silk threads, which when put on a scale pan weighed a third of a tenth of an ounce. Then great quantities of infected blood, pus and serum came out of the body and the illness disappeared.⁸⁶

xi THE LINEAGE OF THE TEACHINGS OF NANGZHER LÖDPO

The teachings on the *Dzo Thi* transmitted by the master Nangzher Lödpo are linked with the tantric cycles of the deities Meri and Gekhöd.⁸⁷ This is how their origin is described in a historical text:

Concerning the Mantra series, when the average human life span was eighty thousand years, from the unchanging dimension of the state of existence (*bon sku*)⁸⁸ there magically manifested the wisdom of movement, and as its emanation there appeared the deity of wisdom Ati Muwer. From his state, as the emanation of the dimension of perfect enjoyment (*longs spyod rdzogs sku*)⁸⁹ there manifested the miraculous deity Kuji Mangke, from whom in order to convert beings with wrong views there manifested the divine emanation 'Great Wal' (*dbal chen*) Gekhöd that transmitted the *Tso Mar Thi* and other *tantras*...Then, on the peak of the everlasting mountain (*g.yung drung ri*) in the west, in a heavenly palace emanated by his spiritual power the master Shenrab transmitted to a secret circle of disciples the *tantras* of Meri, the teachings of which, albeit numerous, can be subsumed in three principal series: *Sungma Gu* (*Srung ma dgu*), *Dogpa Thi* (*Zlog pa this*) and *Sang Len* (*Bsang slan*); or: the 'outer' *tantra Tso Kya Theu Dulwa* (*Tswo rkya the'u 'dul ba*), the 'inner' *tantra Tso Mar Drandul* (*Tswo dmar dgra 'dul*) and the 'secret' *tantra Meri Gyedphur* (*Me ri gyad phur*). They were then transmitted to the king of Shang Shung, Tride Chagkyi Charuchen, and handed down from him they reached Tsepung Dawa Gyaltsen through the same lineage of masters as that of the 'Oral Transmission' (of Dzogchen of Shang Shung).⁹⁰

On the origin of the lineage of the Mind series, the Dzogchen teachings of the *Oral Transmission of Shang Shung*:

The (teachings of the) Mind series were transmitted by the primordial master (*ye nyid ston pa*) Kuntu Zangpo directly through the state of the mind (*dgongs pas thugs su brgyud*),⁹¹ until they reached Sangwa Düpa. Then from the 'Bönpo of the Deities' Yongsu Tagpa until they reached Tsepung Dawa Gyaltsen they were transmitted orally to a single disciple through a straw pipe. Tsepung Dawa Gyaltsen transmitted the teachings to the son of Rasang Lugsyel, Rasang Tapihritsa, who practised them in the Tagthab Senge cave for nine years without being interrupted by human speech. As the fruit of his practice, Tapihritsa did not leave human remains but realised the immense bliss of the

dimension of the state of existence (*bon sku*) for his own benefit; for the benefit of others he manifested in the dimension of form (*gzugs sku*) and came to the place where the master Nangzher Lödpö and Merchug lived, and was given the name Khyeu Nyedleg (Well-Found Child). To Nangzher Lödpö, who was full of pride and arrogance on account of his magic powers, and to Merchug, who was still a slave to material things, the emanation (Tapihritsa) transmitted a teaching in three words, by virtue of which they were liberated. At Dol Tsoling and in other places the emanation Tapihritsa wrote, in turquoise letters on white sheets, four teachings⁹² which he entrusted to the meritorious *shenpo* Nangzher Lödpö: the 'General Understanding of the View' (*phyi lta ba spyi gcod*) – the 'outer' teaching; the 'Essential Instructions' (*man ngag dmar khrid*) – the 'inner' teaching; the 'Naked Recognition of Pure Awareness' (*rig pa gcer mthong*) – the 'secret' teaching; and the 'Total Understanding of the Natural State' (*gnas lugs phug chod*) – 'the most secret teaching'.⁹³

In conclusion, it is worth remembering that the Dzogchen teachings of the *Oral Transmission of Shang Shung*, of the Mind series and those of the cycle called *Shang Shung Meri* (*Zhang zhung me ri*) of the Mantra series have enjoyed direct and uninterrupted transmission from ancient times to the present, whereby, apart from the inherent value of the teachings themselves they are also extremely precious as historical sources.

Notes to the Text

NOTES TO THE PREFACE

1. See the author's bibliography in the appendix.
2. Published in Tibetan under the title *sGrung lde'u bon gsum gyi gtam e ma ho* by LTWA, Dharamsala 1989.
3. I have translated *sgrung* and *lde'u* as 'narrations' and 'symbolic languages', albeit these terms limit their semantic import, which however will be clarified in the course of the book.
4. The term bonpo (*bon po*) is generally used to designate practitioners of Bon; sometimes 'bon' may also refer to the practitioners of Bon.
5. 'Energy' denotes the vital dimension that connects the body with the mind. It is linked with the breath, the voice and the function of the five internal and external elements.
6. For a compendium of studies on Bon up to the present and a general overview of the current situation cf. Kvaerne, 1990.
7. The Tun Huang documents represent one of the most ancient source materials for the study of the history of Tibet. They consist in manuscripts discovered at the turn of the century by A. Stein and P. Pelliot in caves of Tun Huang, in the Chinese province of Ningxia (east Turkestan), once garrison of the Tibetan empire. They have been studied by F.W. Thomas *Tibetan literary texts and documents concerning Chinese Turkestan* (London 1953); Thomas, Tournant and Bacot *Documents relatifs a l'histoire du Thibet* (Paris 1940); Pelliot *Histoire ancient du Thibet* (Paris 1961).
8. For an essay on the Bonpo rituals contained in the Tun Huang manuscripts cf. Stein 1988.
9. Analysing the matter, it appears that many of the divergencies of opinion can be attributed to terminology rather than to content; i.e. whether or not it is correct to use the name *bon* to designate the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet. For example, in his work *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism* Prof. Snellgrove tends to refute the equation of Bon and autochthonous religion, but in a note he refers to the twelve lores of Bon (*Bon shes pa bcu gnyis*) as "what was surely a summary of pre-Buddhist indigenous Tibetan religion" (Snellgrove 1987, p. 399 note 39).
10. Eliade 1973, p. 200. Italics in the original.

NOTES TO THE INTRODUCTION

1. Some types of Bon were certainly based on principles and practices similar to those of Shamanism, which is proved by the numerous elements that still survive in Bon rites and in the rites derived from

Bön adopted by the Buddhists. For example, the issue of the abduction of the soul (*bla*) by spirits and its recovery by the shaman (or in this case, the *bon po*) through his power, is common to many shamanic traditions, and not only Asian ones. However exhaustive studies on the relationship between Bön and Shamanism have yet to be undertaken. For a general overview of the argument cf. Nebesky, 1975, pp. 538ff.

2. Doubts have at times been cast on the historicity of the master gShen rab mi bo che by western scholars, although his name appears in the Tun Huang manuscripts (Chapter XI, xi). In the present work the author suggests a date for his birth based on traditional Bön texts (Chapter XI, viii).
3. gShen rab mi bo che's clan is considered to be descended from the dMu deities (Chapter V, vii). dMu is also the name of one of the four original tribes of Tibet (*rus chen bzhi*). Cf. Tarthang Tulku (ed.), *Ancient Tibet*, 1986, pp. 114-119.
4. These rites are dealt with mainly in Chapter VI.
5. There are several uncertainties regarding the chronology of the first Tibetan kings, just as there are for all the history previous to the great empire of the seventh century. Some traditional Tibetan texts ascribe the date 126 B.C., others 414 B.C., to the appearance of the first king. In *The Necklace of Gzi* the author suggests that the king may have been a contemporary of Śākyamuni Buddha (6th century B.C.). Cf. Namkhai Norbu 1981, p. 11.
6. The author has written a book in Tibetan on the ancient history of Zhang Zhung and Tibet under the title *Zhang bod gna' rabs kyi lo rgyus nor bu'i me long* published by Si kron mi rigs dpe skrun khang in 1990. An expanded version in three volumes is to be published in the near future under the title *Zhang bod kyi lo rgyus ti se'i 'od*.
7. Khri wer la rje gu lang gser gyi bya ru can, traditionally considered a contemporary of Shenrab Miwoche (Op. 81, p. 34) is listed among the 'eighteen kings of Zhang Zhung in horned headgear' (*zhang zhung gi rgyal po bya ru can bco brgyad*), who held different regions of the ancient kingdom as their realms. In *Gangs ti se'i dkar chag* (Op. 25), a Tibetan guide to sacred Mount Kailash, the names of each king and of his palace are given. Cf. Namkhai Norbu and Prats 1989, pp. 127-128.
8. See Chapter IV, note 21.
9. E.g. Khyung lung dngul mkhar, residence of Lig mi rgya (also Lig mi rhya, Lig mi rkya) the last sovereign of Zhang Zhung.
10. According to tradition Gri gu bstan po was the first king to leave mortal remains, unlike the first seven kings who on dying ascended

to the sky by means of the 'dmu cord' (*dmu thag*). In a duel the commoner Lo ngam rta dzi cut the king's 'dmu cord' with a sword and killed him, so that in order to carry out the funerary rite *bon pos* who were specialists in performing these rites had to be expressly invited from Zhang Zhung and other countries (see Chapter III, iv). Cf. Karmay 1972, pp. 66ff.

11. There were important innovations during sPu lde gung rgyal's reign, in the fields of agriculture and metallurgy. According to certain sources he was a contemporary of the Chinese emperor Wu ti of the Han dynasty, who ruled from 140 B.C. to 85 B.C. Cf. Shakbpa 1984, p. 24.
12. Bon sources give king Lig mi rgya as a contemporary of Khri srong lde'u btsan (see Chapter XV, x), but according to the Tun Huang documents, the king who had him murdered and who definitively annexed Zhang Zhung was Srong btsan sgam po (Gedun Chos-'phel 1978, p. 67). The Bonpo scholar Tenzin Namdak has attempted to resolve this contradiction by explaining that *lig mi rgya* was a term used as an attribute by many kings of Zhang Zhung, corresponding to the Tibetan *srid pa'i rje*, 'King of Existence', and that it was only during the 'last' Lig mi rgya, contemporary of Khri srong lde'u btsan, that Zhang Shung was conquered (Op. 81, pp. 44 and 152; also pp. 42-46 for his interpretation of the fall of the Zhang Zhung kingdom).
13. The 'Nine Ways' of Bon have been studied by D.L. Snellgrove in *The Nine Ways of Bon* (see Bibliography), which contains extracts from *gZi brjid*, the 'extended' biography of gShen rab mi bo che. First published in 1967, this work represents the first real study of the Bon religion in its totality of autochthonous traditions and elements assimilated in later periods. Cf. Chapter III. iii.
14. The most authoritative collection of *rDzogs chen* teachings of the Bon tradition is the *Oral Transmission of rDzogs chen of Zhang Zhung* (*rDzogs chen po zhang zhung snyan brgyud*), whose masters were usually also protagonists of the tantric cycle of Zhang zhung Me ri, in which lineage one also finds the name of king Khri lde lcags kyi bya ru can of Zhang Zhung. Cf. Karmay 1972, p. 50.
15. This is the opinion held by D.L. Snellgrove. This would validate those contemporary Bonpos who hold that their teachings were imported into Zhang Zhung from Tag zig, a region generally identified with Persia but which may have indicated all the area west of Pamir, which in those times included the regions of Bactria and Sogdiana, where the Buddhist doctrines were spread owing to the intense activity of the caravans on the 'silk route'. Cf. Snellgrove 1987, pp. 390-391.

16. A very particular iconographic description of gShen rab mi bo che, contained in *Srid pa spyi mdos*, an ancient ritual text which, as it is apparently without Buddhist influences, clearly brings to light the characteristics of original Bon. In this text, widely quoted from by the author in *Bod kyi lo rgyus las 'phros pa'i gtam nor bu'i do shal*, the Bon master is depicted with long blue hair, wearing a cloak of vulture feathers and a rainbow kilt and holding a 'cosmic egg' in his hand (Op. 86, p. 2; Op. 56, pp. 4 and 36). This text was the object of a thesis presented at the I.U.O. of the University of Naples by E. Dell'Angelo under the title *Contributo allo studio dell' insegnamento di gShen rab mi bo che*.
17. It should be borne in mind that in all its traditions Tibetan Buddhism has been influenced by Bon as regards its ritual aspects. It is for this reason that in the present work there are several passages from Bon rites 'adopted' by the Tibetan Buddhist schools.
18. A work which systematically expounds the fundamental principles of Bon cosmogony and metaphysics is *Srid pa'i mdzod phug* (Op. 83), in which, however, alongside ancient mythological narrations one finds philosophical interpretations that are strictly Buddhist.
19. From *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* (*The Mirror of the Royal Genealogies*), a historical work written in 1372.
20. Op. 68 p. 13, l. 14.
21. From *Deb ther dmar po* (*The Red Annals*), a historical work written in 1346.
22. Ru las skyes murdered Lo ngam rta rdzi (cf. above, note 10) and became king sPu lde gung rgyal's minister.
23. Two regions in eastern central Tibet.
24. Parentheses within quotes are the editor's.
25. Op. 15, p. 34, l. 2.
26. *Bod kyi deb ther dpyid kyi rgyal mo'i glu dbyangs* (*Tibetan Annals, Song of the Spring Queen*).
27. The Tibetan sources do not agree on King sPu lde gung rgyal's original name before acceding to the throne, giving the variants *Bya khri*, *Sha khri* and *Nya khri* (Haarh, 1969, p. 47).
28. The term *gshen* is often used in the Bon literature as a synonym of *bon po*, and one could surmise that the term originated in order to distinguish followers of gShen rab mi bo che from practitioners of other kinds of Bon. On the basis of their study of the Tun Huang manuscripts certain western scholars have drawn the conclusion that the two terms denoted two different kinds of officiants, who were at times rivals (Cf. Stein 1972, pp. 235ff; 1988, pp. 41-42).

29. Phying ba stag rtse fortress, in 'Phyong rgyas valley, was the seat of many of the kings of Tibet until Lhasa was established as the capital. Before that time the kings resided in Yum bu bla sgang fortress, built at the time of the first king, gNya' khri btsan po, situated in Yar klungs valley.
30. Tradition has it that the first signs of the spread of Buddhism appeared during the reign of the 28th king of the dynasty, lHa tho ri gnyan btsan (c. 4th century) in the form of books and sacred objects which fell onto the roof of Yum bu bla sgang fortress.
31. Op. 5, p. 13, l. 14 and p. 14, l. 15.
32. Among the few scholars who touch on this subject, cf. Stein, 1972, pp. 191ff; Tucci 1980, pp. 232ff.

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. The tales about A khu ston pa are very popular among Tibetans because of their humorous contents. The protagonist is a strange character, endowed with magic powers, always ready to excogitate the most amusing stratagems to seduce women or to make ends meet. Tradition has it that he was born in southern Tibet about the thirteenth century. Some of the tales have been translated into English by Rinjing Dorje in *The Tales of Uncle Tönpa* (see bibliography). A collection in Tibetan was published in 1980 by Si kron mi rigs dpe skrun khang under the title *A khu bstan pa'i gtam rgyud*.
2. The tales about Nyi chos bzang po describe the adventures of a minister at the court of King sNe gdong in a principality of the Lho ka region in central southern Tibet. A collection of tales in Tibetan was published in Lhasa in 1980 under the title *Nyi chos bzang po'i sgrung*.
3. For an excellent introduction to the Epic of Gesar of Gling, with a summary of the contents of the main books, cf. Stein, *Introduction to the Ge-sar Epic*, 1981. An anthology of passages has been selected, translated and edited by A. David-Neel in *The Superhuman Life of Gesar of Ling* (see bibliography).
4. The profession of *sgrung mkhan*, 'bard', was extant in Tibet until the last years of its independence, and the Epic of Gesar constituted the most prestigious part of the bard's repertoire.
5. Some have identified the legendary land of Gling, celebrated in the epic, with the kingdom of Gling tshang in the Khams region in eastern Tibet, whose population is supposedly descended from rGya tsha zhal dkar, Gesar's stepbrother.

6. In the Bon tradition and in that of rNying ma pa Tibetan Buddhism part of the sacred scriptures consist in the *gter ma*, 'treasures' which can be either texts or sacred objects hidden by a master and rediscovered at a later time by persons qualified to do so called *gter ston*, 'gter ma discoverers'. Cf. Tulku Thondup, *Hidden Teachings of Tibet*, 1986.
7. *Hor gling g.yul 'gyed*. In ancient times Hor denoted the region north of eastern Tibet in what is now Xinjiang Uighur.
8. *Mon gling g.yul 'gyed*. Mön is a region in south east Tibet on the border with Bhutan.
9. *sTag gzig nor rdzong*. For a possible identification of sTag gzig or Ta zig see Introduction, note 15.
10. *Gru gu'i go rdzong*. The *Gru gu* were populations of Turkish origin at one time living in east Turkestan.
11. Traditionally, the epic cycle of Gesar comprises eighteen volumes called 'The Eighteen Fortresses' (*rdzong chen bco brgyad*) (Namkhai Norbu, 1990, pp. 12-3), but other poems have been added to the original cycle. In recent years over thirty volumes of the poems of the epic have been published by different publishing houses in India, China and Tibet.
12. The Sa skya pa tradition of Tibetan Buddhism was founded by 'Khon dkon mchog rgyal po (1034-1102), who built Sa skya monastery in 1073 in the Tsang region in central Tibet. 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan was one of the 'five great masters' (*Sa skya gong ma lnga*) of this school, and in 1254 he was authorised by the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan to govern all Tibet. Cf. Shakabpa 1984, pp. 65ff.
13. In 1265 or 1274. Cf. Shakabpa 1984, pp. 65-67.
14. Thang stong rgyal po (1385-1509) is one of the most singular personages in the history of Tibetan culture. As well as being venerated as a great master and yogi, he is ascribed several social and artistic works including the construction of several iron bridges and the creation of the traditional Tibetan opera known as A ce lha mo.
15. Op. 55, p. 318, l. 21.
16. In *lHa btsad po'i rabs dam pa'i chos ji ltar byung ba'i tshul* (*A History of the Origins of the Sacred and Divine Dharma*). Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu was an important master and scholar from Ka thog rdo rje gdan monastery of the rNying ma pa tradition.
17. gNam lde 'od srung (843-887) was the son of the second wife of King Glang dar ma (803-842). His son was dPal 'khor btsan (865-?). However, according to certain sources the dates of the former were 907-967 and those of the latter 925-985, which were probably those used by the scholar Tshe dbang nor bu.

18. *rLangs kyi po ti bse ru*, a literary cycle written to extol the *rLangs*, the clan of Ta'i si Byang chub rgyal mtshan (1302-1364) of Phag mo gru, who ruled Tibet from 1354 to 1364. (Cf. Shakabpa 1984, pp. 73ff.) Part of this cycle begins with an assembly convened at bSam yas by Padmasambhava and King Khri srong lde'u btsan, where the former foretells his future rebirth as A mes Byang chub 'dre bkol, the great yogi of the *rLangs* clan.
19. The *rNying ma pa* ('ancient') tradition comprises all the Buddhist teachings introduced in Tibet by masters, such as Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, Śāntaraksita etc., during their first propagation (*snga dar*) in the time of King Khri srong lde'u btsan (742-797).
20. Very probably the *gter ston* Pad ma bde chen gling pa (17th century).
21. *rDo rje legs pa* is one of the most important protective deities of the *rNying ma pa* tradition, and in particular of the *rDzogs chen* teachings. See viii.
22. Op. 48, vol IV cha, p. 9a, l. 6.
23. *'Khrungs gling me tog ra ba*, that describes the birth of Gesar under the guise of a ridiculous child called Jo ru and his exile, together with his mother 'Gog tsha lha mo, to a wild land near the sacred mountain *rMa chen spom ra*.
24. *rMu bza'* was one of the three wives (together with *Rong bza'* and *sGa bza'*) of Chos la 'bum, a descendant of Chos 'phan nag po, forefather of the people of Gling. Her son Song blon was the putative father of Gesar, whose real origin was a pure heaven.
25. On the sacred constructions called *gsas mkhar* see chapter III note 3. For the class of the *Wer ma* see chapter IV, iii.
26. *Bla rdo*. According to the Tibetan tradition the *bla* can have a support or be personified by an object, like a precious stone, a mountain, a lake etc. See chapter IV, note 51.
27. In Tibet, on the basis of the astrology of the elements (*'byung rtsis*) the years are calculated according to a system that groups them in twelve year cycles represented by twelve animals and associated with the five elements wood, fire, earth, metal and water. Furthermore, the years are defined alternately as 'male' or 'female'. The 'victorious' month (*rgyal zla ba*) is the twelfth month of the Tibetan calendar, corresponding to January or February of the western calendar.
28. Ge sar's traditional four enemies were: China to the east; India to the south; Tag zig (Persia?) to the west and Hor to the north.
29. Onomatopoeic exclamation used by story tellers to introduce the chanted verses, and inserted in the written epic.

30. Tshangs pa is one of the most important of the 'worldly' deities (*'jig rten gyi lha*) and corresponds to the Hindu deity Brahmā. Cf. Nebesky, 1975, pp. 145ff.
31. rMa rgyal spom ra is the name of the deity of the homonymous sacred lake south of Lake mTsho sngon (Kokonor) in the A mdo region, also known as A myes rma chen. Cf. Nebesky, 1975, pp. 209ff.
32. Ge 'dzo, the deity that protects the hero, is the deity of the homonymous sacred mountain of Gling.
33. gNyan stag dmar po (Powerful Red Tiger) is probably a type of *dgra lha*. Cf. Nebesky, 1975, p. 333.
34. The yak hair (*re ba*) tent called *sbra* (*sbra chen*) is the customary dwelling of Tibetan nomads. The Epic of Ge sar is set in north east Tibet in regions generally inhabited by nomads. Cf. Namkhai Norbu, 1990, pp. 13 & 48.
35. Rong bza' was the name of sPyi dpon's mother.
36. The rMu pa are the descendants of rMu bza', rGya tsha zhal dkar's paternal grandmother.
37. The 'victory banner' (*rgyal mtshan*) is a cylindrical ornament made of multicoloured cloth and of metal, usually placed on the roofs of palaces and temples. It symbolises the Buddha's teaching.
38. The *mchod rten* (Skt. *stūpa*) is a sacred Buddhist construction whose architectural form symbolises the five elements. It is erected both as a commemorative structure and in order to contain the ashes and relics of important masters.
39. It is characteristic of the Epic of Ge sar that all the heroes' personal objects (such as swords, armour etc.) have names.
40. Jang corresponds to the modern Chinese province of Yunnan, bordering south east Tibet.
41. The Buddhist scriptures are generally classified in two categories: *sūtra* and *tantra*. The *sūtras* contain the discourses attributed to Buddha Śākyamuni, while the *tantras* are esoteric texts ascribed to different manifestations of 'divine' Buddhas. The three trainings (*bslab pa gsum*) at the base of Mahāyāna Buddhist practice are morality (*tshul khrims*), contemplation (*ting nge 'dzin*) and wisdom (*shes rab*).
42. sMug' po gdong or ldong, one of the four original tribes of Tibet from which the people of Gling were descended.
43. For the four demonic kingdoms see above, n. 28. The 'twelve fortresses of Tibet' (*bod kyī rdzong chen bcu gnyis*) probably represent the division of Tibet into twelve administrative districts, each governed from a fortress (*rdzong*).

44. In the Tibetan tradition the world of divine and superhuman forces is divided in three planes or dimensions of existence: the sky, intermediate or atmospheric space, and the earth and underworld, respectively dominated by the *Lha*, the *gNyan* and the *Klu*, introduced here as Ge sar's assistants on his earthly mission.
45. *Sku lha* or *sku bla*, a term found in many ancient texts means 'deity that protects the body'. Often associated with a sacred mountain, this type of deity generally belongs to the class of the *gNyan*.
46. *gTseg na rin chen*, Lord of the *Klu* or *Nāga*. See chapter IV, note 22.
47. A term which probably denoted all the territories of *A mdo* and *Hor*.
48. Op. 41, p. 5, l. 2.
49. From *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston* (*A History of the Dharma: Celebration of the Wise*), a historical work composed in 1564.
50. Op. 14, p. 8b, l. 6.
51. *mDzo mdzangs blun*, a *Mahāyāna sūtra* translated into Tibetan from Sanskrit and Chinese by 'Gos chos 'grub in the ninth century. An English translation by S. Frye was published in 1981 under the title *Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish* (see Bibliography).
52. The original Buddhist scriptures are classified in three sections or 'baskets' (*pitaka*): the *Sūtrapitaka*, containing sūtras on general topics, the *Vinayapitaka*, containing discourses about monastic rules, and the *Abhidharmapitaka*, whereby the psychological, cosmogonic and metaphysical principles are expounded.
53. The *rDzogs chen A khrid* system was founded by dGongs mdzad ri khrod (1038-1096) and was subsequently elaborated by Bru chen rGyal ba g.yung drung (1242-1290). Part of this system has been analysed and translated by Per Kvaerne in *Bonpo Studies: The A-Khrid System of Meditation* (see Bibliography).
54. The *cho lo*, a kind of 'pawns' with drawn figures, were used in ancient times for divination, and as markers in certain games. Cf. Tenzin Namdak, Op. 65, p. 895.
55. From *gDams pa rin po che a khrid kyi gtam rgyud rgyal bu stong thun* (*The Tale 'The Epitome of the Prince' from the Precious Teachings of the A Khrid*), Op. 64, p. 199, l. 2.
56. Ibid. p. 200, l. 19.
57. *dNgos grub can gyi sgrungs dgos 'dod char 'bebs zhes bya ba; Slob dpon klu sgrub dang rgyal bu bde spyod bzang pos mdzad pa'i ro dngos grub can gyi sgrung ngo mtshar rmad byung zhes bya ba; dPal mgon 'phags pa klu sgrub kyis mdzad pa'i ro langs gser 'gyur gyi chos sgrung nyer gcig pa rgyas par phye ba; Mi ro rtse sgrung*. There are manuscript versions of this tale in western libraries also. For example, Liverpool Library (U.K.) has a Ms. in *dbu can* script called *Slob dpon klu sgrub snying po'i bstan bcos*

ro langs gser 'gyur chos sgrung le'u nyi shu rtsa lnga pa. Prof. Stein's library in France has a Ms. called *Slob dpon klu sgrub kyis mdzad pa'i ro sgrung le'u bcu gsum pa ngo mtshar yid kyi dga' ston zhes bya.* The library at Merigar, the centre of the Dzogchen Community in Italy, has a Ms. in fine *dbu med* characters called *Mi ro gser grum bra ba'i mig dgu ma* of one hundred and sixteen pages in eleven chapters. As well as these, other versions seem to exist in public and private libraries in other countries. Some versions of the tale have also been published outside Tibet and translated into other languages. For example, there is a version in Mongolian called *Si din tu khe gur un cha dig,* in thirteen chapters, published in Beijing in 1920. A version in Russian by an uncredited translator was published in 1922 by Prof. Zhamkaranov. A bilingual version in Tibetan and Mongolian, called *Ro dngos grub can gyi sgrung* in Tibetan and *Shi di thu khe gur un u li ger* in Mongolian, in twenty-six chapters, was published in Ulan Bator in 1926. The Russian scholar Vladimir Kob translated a version in twenty-six chapters from the Oirat language into Russian, published in Moscow in 1958. Another bilingual version in Tibetan and Mongolian, called *Slob dpon klu sgrub kyis bstan bcos mthong ba 'dzum shor le'u nyi shu rtsa gcig pa* in Tibetan, was published in Ulan Bator in 1957. A version in Kalmuk Mongolian called *Sid ki lin khur* in twelve chapters was published in Eltsi in 1960. Finally, Prof. A. MacDonald has edited a French translation, collating three different versions of one tale, found in Prof. Stein's library and two others, respectively in eleven and eighteen chapters; the volume was published in Paris in 1967 by a university press. (Author's note; subsequent notes by the author are marked A.N.)

58. This is the introduction found in the version published in Lhasa in 1980 by the Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang under the title *dPal mgon 'phags pa klu sgrub kyis mdzad pa'i ro langs gser 'gyur gyi chos sgrung nyer gcig pa rgyas par phye ba*
59. The Buddhist *mālā* (*phreng ba*) is a rosary of one hundred and eight beads, with two counter threads of ten beads, each used in the recitation of *mantra*.
60. *Śītavana* (*bsil ba'i tshal*) was a famous cremation ground south east of Bodhgaya in India, where many ascetics went to practice meditation.
61. The boy then reaches the cemetery and manages to capture the corpse by cutting the tree where it was hiding. On the return journey the corpse attempts to strike up a conversation with the boy to distract him, but the boy does not answer so the corpse starts to tell him a story with a plot so enthralling the boy lets out an exclamation that allows the corpse to free himself and escape. This repeats

- itself in every chapter, each one of which contains a different story told by the corpse; only at the end does the boy, remembering the master is waiting for him, manage to remain silent and bring his task to a successful conclusion. Cf. the brief tale *The Talking Corpse* in Thurlow 1985.
62. On the *The'u rang* belonging to the class of the *gNyan*, cf. Nebesky 1975, p. 282-283.
 63. *Ma sang spun dgu*. Many traditional texts relate the myth that in ancient times, before being inhabited by men Tibet was gradually dominated by various classes of non human beings, among which were the *Ma sang*. Cf. Op. 81, pp. 21ff.
 64. On *rDo rje legs pa* cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 154-159.
 65. The spelling variants given by the author are *pa ra, sug, dzig, kha, 'brug, ri, sha, chu, thog, tho ge, 'jam, ca la*.
 66. Among the Buddhist sources cf. *Deb ther sngon po (The Blue Annals)* by *gZhon nu dpal* (1392-1481), in Roerich 1979, I, p. 65 and *Deb ther dmar po (The Red Annals)*, Op. 15, p. 32.
 67. From *rGya bod kyi chos 'byung rgyas pa (The Extended History of the Dharma in India and Tibet)* by *lDe'u Jo sras* (12th century).
 68. There are three different traditions on the origin of the first Tibetan king: *gsang ba chos lugs* (the secret Buddhist tradition) in which he was descended from the Indian Licchavi dynasty; *grags ba bon lugs* (the exoteric Bon tradition) in which he was of divine origin; *yang gsang lugs* (the most secret tradition) in which he was descended from the *The'u rang* in the *sPo bo* region of Tibet. Cf. Haarh 1969, pp. 168ff.
 69. *sPu bo* or *sPo bo* is a region in central eastern Tibet.
 70. *Ban bon* in the text, "Bonpos and Buddhists"; this could be due to a graphical error, as it is unlikely that there were Buddhists in Tibet at the time of the first Tibetan king.
 71. Op. 69, p. 226, l. 13.
 72. Translated into English by E. Conze in *The Buddha's Law among the Birds*. Delhi 1955.
 73. *rMa bya drang srong khra gsum gyi btsan bcos byis pa dga' byed; Srog chags kyi btsan bcos sgyu ma'i rol rtsed; bsTan bcos thams cad kyi rgyal po mchil pa khri sde'i skyes rabs; Bya kun tu dga' ba'i zlos gar; Khyim bya rnams 'dos rtsa byung bar zhib bcad khra 'thung; Ma rgya grub dang bu spen skyes gnyis phrug thabs; Dom byang chub sems dpa' bkra shis rtogs brjod; rKang drug gi bstan bcos nyams dga' phreng ba; sPre'u'i bstan bcos; Bya chos rin chen phreng ba; Blon po ug phrad ces pa'i bstan bcos; sKya ga'i mdo sgrung; Phug ron sgom chen gyi bstan bcos; sGom chen phyi ba'i bstan bcos; Ri bong bde bzang dang a bra skya'u gnyis grogs byas pa'i rabs*

sde; sPre'u legs pa'i blo gros kyis gcan gzan rnams chos la bsdus pa; Bya rigs gsum brgya drug bcus sngon gyi gtam rgyud mdzad srol; dMar chung rdzu ba'i bstan bcos; dMar chung lcog mgo'i bstan bcos.

74. It is on the basis of these sources that many western scholars have interpreted *sgrung* and *lde'u* to mean two types of priests who accompanied the bonpos at the royal court.
75. From *rGyal po bka'i thang yig* (*The History of the King*), one of the five *bKa' thang sde lnga* of the Padmasambhava cycle discovered by the *gter ston* O rgyan gling pa (1323-1360). Op. 66, p. 115, l. 6.
76. From *dPal bsam ljong bzang* (*The Good Wish-Fulfilling Tree*), a historical work by the *dGe lugs pa* scholar Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor (1704-1788). Op. 18, p. 175 (150).
77. Op. 69, p. 249, l. 4.
78. From *Chos byung chen mo bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan* (*The Banner of Victory of the Teaching: a Great History of the Dharma*) by lDe'u Jo sras (12th century). Op. 13, p. 105, l. 3.
79. The Ra sa 'phrul snang was built by King Srong btsan sgam po in 641 to preserve the Jo bo statue (portraying Prince Siddhartha at the age of thirteen), which had been brought to Tibet by the Chinese princess Weng Chen, whence it is also known as Jo khang, 'House of the Jo bo'.
80. From *rGya bod yig tshang chen mo* (*Historical Documents on China and Tibet*) written in 1434 by Stag tshang rdzong pa dPal 'byor bzang po. Op. 70, p. 146, l. 5.
81. According to Tenzin Namdak (henceforth T.N.) the term *cho rabs* literally means 'history of the paternal lineage', as *cho* is a synonym of *pha*, 'father'; cf. Snellgrove 1980, p. 286. If the original spelling was *chog rabs* the meaning could be 'history of the rite' (*cho ga'i rabs*).
82. In this work we will have occasion to read many examples of these narrations of the 'mythic antecedents'. The custom of 'mythic antecedents' is corroborated in many other religious traditions.
83. The so-called 'Four Bon of Cause' (*rgyu'i bon gzhi*), on which see Chapter III, v.
84. For a philosophical interpretation of the myth of the 'cosmic egg' (*srid pa'i sgo nga*) characteristic of Bon cosmogonic narrations, see Namkhai Norbu, Op. 56, pp. 3ff.
85. Skyob pa 'Jig rten mgon po Rin chen dpal (1143-1217) established 'Bri gung monastery in 1180, and was the founder of the 'Bri gung bka brgyud tradition. For the passage concerning his opinion on the origin of the theory of the cosmic egg, see Chapter III, iv.
86. On this subject see the author's article *Bod kyī ya thog gi lo rgyus skor* (*The Ancient History of Tibet*), Op. 8, pp. 12-13. The myth of the cosmic

egg, however, is found throughout the Hindu *purāṇas* and not only in narrations concerning Śiva.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

1. An important document for the study of the language of Zhang Zhung was published in Delhi in 1965, under the title *sGra yi don sdeb snang gsal sgron me*. It has been examined by Erik Haarh in *The Zhang Zhung Language*. See Bibliography.
2. The first riddle '*srang la them gnyer sba ba che*' should be read by separating *srang la* (for a set of scales), that contains the answer to the riddle, from *them gnyer sba ba che*, that constitutes the riddle itself, where *them* (pegs) and *gnyer* (wrinkles) refer to the notches on a balance indicating various weights: *zho*, *srang*, *nyag*, *rgya ma* etc; *sba ba* (*lba ba*: gullet) refers to the weights themselves, called *rgya rdo*, *nyag rdo* etc. As regards the second riddle, the structure is the same and the object of the riddle is a *spo tho*, here called 'por head' (*por mgo*) i.e. one of those small mounds of earth covered with a thin layer of grass which almost resemble a human head (*mgo can*) growing in the north Tibetan highlands and which increase in size month after month, and year after year (*skyed cing rgyas*). (A.N.) These two riddles have been translated and interpreted in different ways by E. Haarh 1969, p. 104 and R. Stein 1959, p. 420.
3. Read *gdung khang*; otherwise this might refer to inscriptions carved on the beams (*gdung ma*) of temples and palaces.
4. Op. 14, p. 9a, l. 1.
5. For these purification rites see chapter VIII, iv and v.
6. From *Gleng gzhi bstan pa'i byung khungs* (*The Origin of the Teaching*)
7. Two regions in central eastern Tibet.
8. Op. 30, p. 18.
9. In ancient times Zhang Zhung was divided in three regions called outer (*sgo*), central (*bar*) and inner (*phugs*), which included large part of the Tibetan territory. See Chapter XV, vii. Cf. Op. 34, p. 620, and S. Karmay 1975, p. 180.
10. Cf. Namkhai Norbu and Prats 1989, pp. 125-127.
11. *Ge khod gsang ba drag chen*, a cycle of tantric teachings connected with the *yi dam* Ge khod, one of the most important of the Bon deities, included among the 'five supreme *gsas khar*' (*gsas mkhar mchog lnga*). Cf. Karmay, *ibid.* p. 198. A collection titled *Ge khod gsang ba drag chen gyi sgrub skor*, based mainly on the *gter ma* of dByil ston Khyung rgod rtsal (born 1175), was published in Delhi in 1973.

12. *gZi brjid* is the longest of the three biographies of gShen rab mi bo che, in twelve volumes. Among the Bon scriptures it is classified as *snyan brgyud*, 'oral transmission', and was transmitted by sTang chen mu tsha gyer med, one of the 'eight sages' (*mkhas pa mi brgyad*), masters of Dran pa nam mkha' (a contemporary of Gri gum btsan po), to the *gter ston* Khyung po Blo ldan snying po (1360-). For the particular manner of rediscovering texts called *snyan brgyud* cf. Kvaerne, 1974, pp. 35-36. The two other biographies of gShen rab mi bo che are *gZer mig*, in two volumes, a *gter ma* rediscovered by Drang rje btsun pa gSer mig (11th century), and *mDo 'dus*, in one volume, a *gter ma* rediscovered by Sad gu rin chen grags pa and Dre'u rgya ra rdza (10th century). For a summary of the contents of each of the chapters of *gZi brjid* and *gZer mig* cf. Op. 100.
13. For 'Ol mo lung ring see Chapter III, n. 52.
14. Op. 36a, Ka p. 342, l. 2. For the quotations from *gZi brjid*, especially those concerning the traditions of the four *rgyu'i bon*, I have given the references from both the versions published in India, indicated by 'a' and 'b'. As regards the spelling of the technical terms and the names of the rituals I have also consulted dPal tshul's work. See Bibliography, Op. 33.
15. To give examples of the possible meanings of the word *khri* I will quote some expressions in the language of Zhang Zhung with the corresponding Tibetan terms drawn from *Srid pa'i mdzod phug* (*The Source of the Treasure of Existence*), a bilingual Zhang Zhung-Tibetan text rediscovered in 1108 by *gter ston* Gyer mi nyi 'od (Op. 83): *khri tshar/sems can* 'sentient being' (5,8); *khri seg/srog* 'life' (12,17); *khri tse/tshe* 'length of life' (14,15); *khri tsu/tshe* 'length of life' (16,14); *khri tse/thugs nyid* 'primordial state of the mind' (20,21); *khri tsun/bras bu* 'fruit' (22,19); *khri tse/bdag* 'I' (22,20); *tsha khri/khor lo sgyur rgyal* 'universal emperor' (27,21); *khri tse/sems* 'mind' (30,10); *khri tsan/sems can* 'sentient being' (30,18); *khri seg/srog gi dbang po* 'vital force'; *mu khri khri seg/srog gi dbang po* 'vital force'; *khri tse/sems* 'mind'; *dus khri/gnod sems* 'intention to disturb' (52,3); *mu khri/mngan sems* 'evil intention' (52,3); *khri tsar/sems pa* 'mental factors' (66,13); *khri tse/sems* 'mind' (73,17); *khri tsan/sems nyid* 'nature of the mind' (75,17); *khri tsan/sems can* 'sentient being' (82,22); *khri min/rnam shes* 'perceptual consciousness' (83,5); *sad khri/lha sems* 'divine mind' (87,17); *khri seg/srog dbang* 'vital force' (90,6).(A.N.)
16. Cf. the author's article *Bod kyi ya thog gi lo rgyus skor*, Op. 8, p. 27, where he interprets *gnya'* as *gnyag*, 'only one'.
17. *sMra seng 'phrul gyi rdel mo mngon sum gsal ba'i sgron me* (*The Lamp that Illuminates the Miraculous Divination Using Pebbles by the 'Lion of*

Speech), rediscovered by rJe 'brug chen po Khro tshang 'brug lha (956-1077).

18. Phywa Legs rgyal thang po, to whom gShen rab mi bo che transmitted the teachings of the *Phywa gshen theg pa*, according to the *gZi brjid*.
19. For the Thug dkar class of deities see Chapter IV, i.
20. It is not clear whether the name Srid pa ye mkhyen 'phrul rgyal (The Miraculous King of the Clairvoyance of Existence) is an attribute of the manifestation of gShen rab mi bo che as master of the *Thug dkar* deities or whether it refers to another master.
21. Dran pa nam kha' is one of the outstanding personalities in the history of ancient Bon. A native of Zhang Zhung, he was active in Tibet at the time of king Gri gum btsan po (see chapter III, i) and concealed numerous *gter ma*. Another Dran pa nam kha', considered an emanation of the first, lived in Tibet at the time of King Khri srong lde'u btsan and was converted to Buddhism, becoming one of Padmasambhava's twenty-five disciples. (Cf. Karmay 1972, pp 90-91.) However, scholars tend to identify the two personages in the Dran pa nam mkha' of the eighth century.
22. rJe 'brug chen po Khro tshang 'brug lha (956-1077), an important Bon *gter ston*.
23. Pha Dam pa sangs rgyas, a Indian mahāsiddha who visited Tibet in the eleventh century, was the founder of the *Zhi byed* system, which flowed into the *gCod yul* system of his disciple, the Tibetan lady master Ma gcig Lab sgron ma (1031-1129).
24. Op. 80, p. 1.
25. 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po (1820-1892) was one of the most important figures of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, both as *gter ston* and as inspirer of the non sectarian *ris med* movement.
26. Op. 80, p. 2.
27. In general in Tibetan divination 'deity' (*lha sa* or *lha phywa*) refers to the person's protective force, and 'enemy' (*dgra sa* or *dgra phywa*) refers to the hostile external forces which can cause disturbances.
28. The meaning of this expression is not clear. It could be the Tibetan name of the Indian deity Indra, *brGya byin*, but the prefix *ba* is missing.
29. For the nine *sme ba* and the eight *spar kha* see Chapter XI, vi and vii.
30. Op. 80, pp. 12ff.
31. For the different forms of divination see Chapter XIV, i.
32. The *rDzogs chen* teaching in Tibet exist in both the Bon and the Buddhist traditions. In Bon its origin is ascribed to gShen rab mi bo che himself, who according to *gZi brjid* taught it as the ultimate of

the 'nine ways'. The first master of the Buddhist tradition was dGa' rab rdo rje (3rd century B.C.?) from Oddiyāna (Swat in modern Pakistan).

33. *Thig le gsang ba'i brda' rgyud*, from *Bairo rgyud 'bum*, the collection of works translated from Sanskrit and from the language of Oddiyāna into Tibetan by Pa gor Vairocana (8th century).
34. Op. 91, Ga p. 117 (2a), l. 3.
35. *Rig pa rang shar chen po'i rgyud*, one of the seventeen main tantras of the *Man ngag* series of *rDzogs chen*.
36. *Thod rgal* is a method of contemplation of light by which *rDzogs chen* practitioners attain the 'rainbow body' ('*ja' lus*) without leaving mortal remains at death.
37. The eight aggregate consciousnesses (*rnam shes tshogs brgyad*) are the five sense consciousnesses and the mind consciousness (together called the 'six aggregate consciousnesses'), the passions consciousness (*nyon mongs*) and the universal base consciousness (*kun gzhi*). This notion comes from the *Yogācāra* Buddhist philosophical system.
38. Op. 74, Cha p. 87a, l. 2.
39. *Thig le gsnag ba yang gter gyi rgyud*, from *Bairo rgyud 'bum*.
40. Op. 92, Ca p. 371 (2b), l. 3.
41. The three series of *rDzogs chen* teachings are the Mind series (*sems sde*), the Space series (*klong sde*) and the Secret Instructions series (*man ngag sde*). The first two series are derived mainly from the Tibetan master Vairocana, who introduced them into Tibet from India; the third series comprises teachings transmitted in Tibet by Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava. All three masters were active in Tibet in the eighth century.
42. From *Tun Huang nas thon pa'i bod kyi lo rgyus yig cha* (*Tun Huang Documents on the History of Tibet*).
- 42b. The verses sung by the queen had expressed her deep distress in finding herself in a foreign country.
43. Op. 96, p. 78 l. 11. Cf. also Gedun Chos 'phel, 1978, pp. 66-68.
44. *rDzogs pa chen po zhang zhung snyan brgyud*, the most important cycle of *rDzogs chen* teachings in the Bon tradition. According to tradition it was first put in writing by sNang bzher lod po (8th century) from instructions received from the 'rainbow body' ('*ja' lus*) Tapihritsa. See Chapter XV, xi. The text from which the passage is taken is *rDzogs pa chen po zhang zhung snyan brgyud kyi bon ma nub pa'i gtan tshigs* (*The Reason Why Bon of the Oral Transmission of Zhang Zhung was not Suppressed*).

45. Sum pa, a territory which in ancient times included part of modern A mdo, was a province of Zhang Zhung until the latter was conquered by Tibet.
46. The *la btsas* are formed by heaps of stones in which poles bearing *klung rta* flags are put up. They are set up on top of passes in honour of the local deities.
47. The region around Lake Dwang ra and the sacred mountain rTa sgo, in north west Tibet.
48. Op. 63, p. 259 (2a), l. 4.
49. mGar stong btsan (died 667) was the most important of King Srong btsan sgam po's ministers. In 641 he went to China to invite Princess Weng Chen Kong Jo, betrothed to the king, to come to Tibet.
50. King Srong btsan sgam po had already married the Nepalese princess Bal bza' Khri btsun (in 639) and Li thig dman, daughter of the King of Zhang Zhung.
51. *Thag ring gi ra pho rgya bo la ngo shes mi bya'o/ kha rog sdod la ku co thong/ nag mo lcags mkhar thug nas yod/ lung pa phu brdug mda brdugs su/ thu ru co brags khong la zhog/ dar dkar dril la dar nag bskyod/ zla bas nyi ma'i rtsa ru sleb.*
52. Op. 68, p. 119, l. 17.
53. A further example of this kind of *lde'u* can be found in the biography of the great yogi and poet Mi la ras pa (1040 1123) in the episode where his mother sends him some gold hidden in a traveller's cloak, informing him about it in a letter written in a coded language Cf. Lhalungpa (trans.) *The Life of Milarepa*, NY 1977, pp. 30-32.

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

1. *sGrags pa rin chen gling grags* (*The Precious Continent of Propagation*), a *gter ma* ascribed to Dran pa nam mkha'. Cf. Karmay 1977, pp. 114-115.
2. The *rgod lcam* are female Bon deities corresponding to the *dākinīs* (*mkha' 'gro ma*) of Buddhism.
- 2b. dBu ru, g.Yas ru, g.Yo ru, and Ru lag, the four administrative districts of the dBus and gTsang regions during the time of the Tibetan kings.
3. In Bon, the term *gsas mkhar*, 'castle of the *gsas*', stands for sacred constructions in general, from temples to the tabernacles erected on the roofs of houses and on mountains. *gSas* is synonymous with *lha*, 'deity', but appears only in the names of male deities, such as dBal gsas rngam pa, Gar gsas btsan po etc. Moreover, often the triad '*lha gsas dbal*' is found, as if these were three different classes of deities.

Finally, at times it is used as an epithet of great masters, as in the term *dpon gsas*, synonymous with *bla ma*.

4. Probably *sNang gshen* and half of *Srid gshen*. Cf. Karmay 1972, p. 59.
5. The *This dmar* teachings belong to the tantric cycles of Me ri and of Ge khod.
6. Op. 77, Ka p. 24 (13a), l. 5.
7. *Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang* (*The Register of the Lineages of Existence*), a *gter ma* rediscovered by Khod pa Blo gros thogs med (born 1280) in 1310.
8. Khri srong lde'u btsan (742-797) officially adopted Buddhism as the state religion and according to Bon sources instigated a harsh persecution of the old religion.
9. Op. 84, p. 154 (78b) l. 2.
10. The '*Dus pa rin po che'i rgyud gzer mig* (in two volumes) was rediscovered as a *gter ma* by Drang rje btsun pa gSer mig (11th century). See above, Chapter II, note 12.
11. See above note 3.
12. It is not easy to determine the original meaning of the term '*phan yul* (also spelt '*phen yul* and *phan yul*). Some scholars are of the opinion it refers to the 'Phan po valley in central Tibet. Cf. Karmay 1975, p. 178.
13. The *dPon gsas* series comprises *rDzogs chen* teachings; the *Chab nag* comprises different types of propitiatory and apotropaic rites; the '*Phan yul* comprises literature that corresponds to the Buddhist *Prajñāpāramitāsūtra*; the *Chab dkar* consists in Tantric teachings. However, these four names are also used to denote four types of ritual traditions of the *sNang gshen theg pa*. See section vi.
14. 'Everlasting Bon' (*g.yung drung bon*) is the name that distinguishes *gShen rab mi bo che's* Bon in the traditional texts. *g.Yung drung* also denotes the swastika – symbol of Bon.
15. Op. 35, Kha p. 110b, l. 5.
16. Extracts from *gZi brjid* that clearly illustrate the characteristics of the *theg pa rim dgu* of Bon according to the *lho gter* system are contained in Snellgrove 1980. Also cf. n. 18.
17. For the meaning of the term *bsgral* see Chapter XV, n. 1.
18. The contents of the four Bon of Cause are included in the 'twelve lores' (*shes pa bcu gnyis*) treated in the following twelve chapters. The lores or sciences listed as numbers 2, 7, 8, part of 9, and 11 pertain to *Phywa gshen*, numbers 1, 3, 5, 6, part of 9, and 10 to *sNang gshen*, number 12 corresponds to '*Phrul gshen* and number 4 to *Srid gshen*. This classification of the 'nine ways' of Bon is from the tradition of the 'southern *gter ma*' (*lho gter*). In the tradition of the 'central *gter*

ma' (*dbus gter*) the classification in nine ways is more similar to that in the Buddhist *rNying ma pa* tradition and does not include the ancient pre-Buddhist ritual traditions. The 'nine ways' according to the *dbus gter* are: (1) *Lha mi gzhan rten theg pa*; (2) *Rang rtogs gshen rabs theg pa*; (3) *Thugs rje chen po sems dpa'i theg pa*; (4) *g.Yung drung sems dpa'i theg pa*; (5) *Bya ba gtsang spyod ye bon theg pa*; (6) *rNam pa kun ldan mngon shes theg pa*; (7) *dNgos bskyed thugs rje rol pa'i theg pa*; (8) *Shin tu don ldan kun rdzogs theg pa*; (9) *Ye nas rdzogs chen yang rtse bla med theg pa*. According to the *byang gter* the names are: (1) *sNang ldan* (2) *Rang ldan* (3) *bZhed ldan* (4) *Tho tho* (5) *Ya tho* (6) *sPyi tho* (7) *lHa rtse* (8) *sNang rtse* (9) *Yang rtse*. Cf. Op. 33, pp. 393-396, also *Theg pa'i rim pa mngon du bshad pa'i mdo rgyud* in *Bonpo Grub Mtha' Material*, Dolanji 1978. For the three different *gter ma* traditions mentioned cf. Karmay 1972, pp. 190-191.

19. According to the traditional biographies, *Khri lcam*, the daughter of King *rKong rje dkjar po* of the Kong po region of Tibet, was offered in marriage to *gShen rab mi bo che*, who took her with him to 'Ol mo lung ring.
20. A deity of the *bTsan* class, wrathful beings that together with the *gNyan* dominate intermediate space. They can provoke diseases such as cancer. Cf. Nebesky, 1975, pp. 166-176; Tucci 1949, pp. 718ff.
21. One of *gShen rab mi bo che's* eight palaces in 'Ol mo lung ring.
22. See above Introduction note 10.
23. *Tb. mu stegs pa* (Skt. *Tirthika*), a term used to designate all the followers of other religious traditions, classified according to two philosophical creeds: those who believe in the eternal existence of a creative principle (*rtag pa*), and those who deny the existence of any supersensible reality (*chad pa*). The Śaivists (mentioned in the passage) are defined as *rtag pa*, 'eternalists'.
24. In the text *gtar ba len pa* should be read as *gtar tshan len pa*, an ancient *bon po* practice consisting in holding scorching metals or stones in one's hand to demonstrate one's superhuman powers. cf. T.N. Op. 56, p. 896, l. 11.
25. It appears scapulimancy (*sog dmar*) had been practiced in Tibet since the most ancient times, like in many regions of Central Asia and North America. The shoulder blade of a sheep is laid in a fire, and the positive and negative aspects of the future are read from the resulting cracks. Cf. Nebesky, 1975, pp. 455-456. A manual of Sog mo divination by Tenzin Namdak has recently been published in India. (Op. 62)

26. *Me lha* is the fire deity associated with the fire offering rites called *sbyin sreg*. After the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet this deity was identified with the Hindu deity Agni. Cf. Nebesky, 1975, pp. 528-532.
27. The 'secret name' (*gshang mtshan*) is usually conferred during a tantric initiation; the disciple should not reveal it to anyone.
28. The *vajra* (*rdo rje*) is a ritual object used in tantric Buddhism composed of two sections of three, five, or nine prongs connected with a central sphere. It symbolises the primordial condition of the individual in its aspect of unlimited manifestation.
29. *rMa rin chen mchog*, one of the first seven monks (*sad mi mi bdun*) ordained at *bSam yas* at the time of king *Khri srong lde'u btsan* and an excellent translator of Sanskrit. He was a disciple of *Padma-sambhava* and *Vimalamitra*.
30. After the death of king *Glang dar ma* (murdered in 842), who had abolished Buddhism, the religion was revived in the *A mdo* region in east Tibet, thanks mainly to the work of *dGong pa rab gsal* (952-1035).
31. The famous *Bon gter ston gShen chen klu dga'* (966-1035).
32. *Khams brgyad stong phrag brgya pa*, rediscovered by *gShen chen klu dga'*, and *Khams chung*, rediscovered by *gNyan ston Shes rab rdo rje* (11th century).
33. *gTan la phab pa'i sde*, one of the 'twelve sections of the Buddha's scriptures' (*gsung rab yan lag bcu gnyis*). As regards the *Bon mdo*, a *Bon* text of this name does not appear to exist, so that it may be understood in the sense of general discourses attributed to the master *gShen rab mi bo che*, belonging to the *mdo* section of *bon po* scriptures. Cf. *Kvaerne*, 1974, p. 24.
34. *gZungs chen sde lnga* or *gZungs grwa lnga*, a collection of tantric Buddhist protection formulae. The *Klu 'bum dkar nag khra gsum*, also rediscovered by *gShen chen klu dga'* (*Kvaerne*, 1974, pp. 43 & 102), is a text that recounts *gShen rab mi bo che's* encounters with the *klu* (*nāga*) and describes the ritual methods of assuaging them. Cf. *Op.* 43.
35. The important *gter ston Bon zhig khyung nag* or *gShen sgom zhig po* (1103-1183).
36. From *'Jig rten mgon po'i gsung bzhi bcu pa* (*'Jig rten mgon po's Forty Scriptures*), *Op.* 38, Vol. I, 291, (Ga 20a), l. 1.
37. *Thu'u kwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma* (1737-1802), a famous *dGe lugs pa* scholar and author of *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long* (*Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems*) in which he devotes a chapter to the history of *Bon*.

- 37b. The term 'jol bon (or mjol bon) also appears in the Tun Huang manuscripts. See. Chapter XI, xi.
38. Op. 32, p. 165a, l. 3.
39. Op. 14, p. 8b, l. 4.
40. Yum bu bla sgang (or Yum bu bla mkhar), traditionally reputed the first fortress to have been built in Tibet, seat of the first king gNya' khri btsan po, in Yar klungs valley.
41. Op. 18, p. 150.
42. Op. 14, p. 8b, l. 2.
43. *rGyal rabs bon gyi 'byung gnas*.
44. This is the name by which Śāntarakṣita (the Indian monk who visited Tibet at the time of King Khri srong lde'u btsan) was known in Tibet.
45. The Tibetan national alcoholic drink, made of fermented barley (*nas chang*) or rice (*'bras chang*).
46. The *mdzo* is the cross between a yak and a cow or between a bull and a 'bri (female yak).
47. Op. 67, p. 146 (73b), l. 2.
48. This may refer to the *Sems sde* series of Buddhist *rDzogs chen*.
49. Op. 84, p. 152 (77b), l. 5.
50. *g.Yung drung ye khyab* may be identified with *gSas mkhar g.yung drung ye khyab lta ba'i rgyud*, a *gter ma* discovered by Khu tsha ba zla 'od (born 1204) belonging to the *sPyi spungs* cycle (Karmay 1977, p. 18). *rMad du byung ba* is a text of the *Sems sde* series of Buddhist *rDzogs chen*.
51. From *bsTan pa'i rnam bshad dar rgyas gsal ba'i sgon me* (*The Lamp that Illuminates the Teaching*), a historical work written by sPa btsun bsTan rgyal bzang po in 1345. Op. 11, p. 678 (92a), l. 1.
52. Concerning the question of the identification of sTag gzig and 'Ol mo lung ring in the *bon po* scriptures, cf. Namkhai Norbu, 1981, pp. 16-17; Karmay 1975, pp. 171ff; Snellgrove, 1987, pp. 390-391.
53. It seems the expressions used to denote the attributes of the different types of *gshen* refer to characteristic ritual objects, but it is not easy precisely to identify the meaning of 'woollen turban' (*bal thod* – maybe a type of ritual headgear) or of 'coloured wool' (*bal tshon* – used in various *glud*, *mdos* etc. rites to construct *nam mkha'*, *rgyang bu* and so on). *Ju thig* is the name of a kind of divination carried out using knotted cords, and is also the name for the cords themselves. For the 'ritual weapons' (*mtshon cha*) used in the 'dur rites see Chapter VII, iv.
54. I.e. clairvoyance that needs a material support in order to manifest, as opposed to spontaneous or absolute clairvoyance (*zag med*).

55. The *gshang* is a small metal plate with a clapper in the concave side, rung by holding the instrument between the thumb and index finger of the left hand. It corresponds to the tantric Buddhist *dril bu* (bell).
56. Op. 68, p. 47, l. 11.
57. Op. 14, p. 8b, l. 6.
58. See above, note 12.
59. In certain versions of *gZi brjid* the expression *phywa gnyan* is spelt *phyag gnyen*, interpreted in Snellgrove 1980, p. 302 as *phyag brngan*, 'religious office or service'.
60. *Gcong brgyad*, 'eight melodies', in the text, but the scholar dPal ldan tshul khriims (see note 67) lists nine, so there may be a scribe's error in the text.
61. Op. 36a, Kha p. 435, l. 4; Op. 36b, Kha p. 564, l. 5.
62. The term *srid pa* is of great importance in the ancient Bon cosmogonies and mythological narrations. It signifies existence, but with the import 'original', 'primordial', hence the meaning 'original lineage', because the power of Bon or of a deity derives from the fact that it originated *in illo tempore*, at the time of primordial creation, imbued with power and sacredness. Thus we have the terms *srid pa rgyud kyi bon po*, *Srid pa Sangs po bum khri*, *srid pa smrang chen* etc.
63. The name Thug kar is also spelt as Thugs khar and Thugs dkar.
64. I have rendered the term *bskang ba* as 'expiation'; literally, it means 'satisfaction' and refers to offering rites for repayment for offences caused to the divine protectors.
65. The term *brten pa* indicates both reliance on the protectors and the material 'support' that acts as abode for their energies.
66. The Sa bdag, Klu, and gNyan – according to a tradition parallel to the tripartition in lHa, Klu and gNyan, respectively dominate the dimensions of earth, underworld and space. Worship of these is very widespread in the Bon tradition. Cf. Op. 43, pp. 4ff.
67. From *g.Yung drung bon gyi bstan 'byung* (*The History of g.Yung drung Bon*), a historical work by the Bonpo scholar dPal ldan tshul khriims (1902-1973) containing an interesting summary of the four 'ways of cause'. Op. 33, p. 416, l. 3.
68. Op. 67, p. 99 (50a), l. 5. The list of the *shes pa bcu gnyis* is (1) *mgon shes lha'bon*; (2) *g.yang shes phywa 'dod*; (3) *'gro shes glud gtong*; (4) *'dur shes srid gshen*; (5) *gtsang shes sel 'debs*; (6) *sgrol shes lha byad*; (7) *phan shes sman*; (8) *lto shes rtsis mkhan*; (9) *smra shes gto dgu*; (10) *lding shes sha ba*; (11) *'phur shes ju thig*; and (12) *'gro shes 'phrul bon*.
69. *Byams ma* (*Shes rab byams ma la mdo 'bum gzungs gsum rgyud dang bzhi*), a *gter ma* rediscovered by Khro tshang 'Brug lha (956-1077).
70. See Bibliography, Op. 11.

71. In *Legs bshad rin po che'i gter mdzod* (*Precious Treasury of Elegant Sayings*), Op. 46. Partly translated by Karmay in *The Treasury of Good Sayings* (see Bibliography).
72. Op. 11. p. 644 (75a), l. 4. gives the following list of the *shes pa can bcu gnyis* : *mgon shes lha bon, g.yang (g.yung) shes phywa bon, 'gro shes glud gtong, 'dur shes srid gshen, gtsang shes sel 'debs, sgrol shes lta byad, phan shes sman dpyad (spyad), skos shes ju thig, 'gro shes 'phrul bon*. The list given in Op. 46, p. 161, l. 15 is: *mgon shes lha bon, g.yang shes phywa bon, 'gro shes glud gtong, 'dur shes srid gshen, gtsang shes sel 'debs, sgrol shes lta bon, phan shes sman dpyad, skos shes gto dgu, lding shes sha ba, 'phur shes ju thig, 'gro shes 'phrul bon*. The *Byams ma chen mo skyon gyis 'jigs skyobs ma'i gzungs* (Op. 12, p. 137, l. 1) – perhaps the original source of the lists of the *shes pa can bcu gnyis* – in the edition consulted gives a list which appears to contain numerous spelling mistakes: *mgon shes lha bon, g.yang shes phywa ston, 'gro shes glud btang, 'dul shes srid gshen, gtsang shes sel steg, grol shes lha byad, phan shes sman spyod, skos shes gtsis mkhan, smra shes dor sku, lding shes sha ba, 'phur shes ju thig, 'gro shes 'phrul bon*.
73. Although *Bon 'byung* has *g.yang shes phywa 'dod*, there is no doubt that the name given in *Byams ma, g.yang shes phywa bon*, is correct. (A.N.)
74. *Byams ma* (Op. 11) has *sgrol shes lta byad*, and *Bon 'byung* gives *sgrol shes lha byad*, the sole difference being between *lta* (to look) and *lha* (deity), but both expressions *lta byad* and *lha byad* are unconvincing. Together with the term *byad* (meaning 'curse'), it is possible that instead of *lta* or *lha*, there should be *gtad* (another type of curse) in order to form the word *gtad byad*. As regards the term *sgrol* (to release, to destroy ritually), it generally refers to the ritual act of destruction characteristic of the 'twelfth lore', '*Phrul bon*, hence I believe that in order for this Bon not to be confused with the wrathful actions belonging to the latter tradition the term should be replaced by '*grol*, 'to release from something', in this case from curses. (A.N.)
75. *Bon 'byung* has *lto shes rtsis mkhan*, but the name given in *Byams ma, skos shes rtsis mkhan*, must be correct because the term *skos* (entrusted, charged) can take the meaning 'to control the order of existence' through astrology (*srid pa skos su 'debs pa*). (A.N.)
76. Both *Byams ma* and *Bon 'byung* have *smra shes gto dgu*, though I am not entirely convinced by *smra*, 'to speak' and believes this term should be replaced by *smrang* (ritual proclamation). In fact in the *Srid pa mi'u brgyud* tradition, belonging to the *Chab nag* of the *sNang gshen theg pa*, it is explained that in order to open communications with the

class of beings to whom the rite is devoted, together with the exposition of the origin myth (*chog rabs*) it is necessary to pronounce the *bden pa'i smrang* (proclamation of the truth). See Chapter XII, i. The *smrang* is an element which is indispensable in all the *gto* and *glud* rites. (A.N.)

77. All the texts have '*phur shes ju thig*', but we might assume that the term '*phur*', which nowadays only means 'to fly' or 'to rub' (maybe in relation to the preparation of the divination cords) was originally linked to divination. Another possibility would be to read '*phur*' as a corrupt spelling of '*phrul*', in the sense of 'magic manifestation' or 'clairvoyance', like in the *lDe'u 'phrul* divination.
78. Both texts have '*gro shes 'phrul bon*', but '*gro*' 'to go' must certainly be corrected to *sgrol* 'to release', as this *Bon* contains the practices of destructive magic (*mngon spyod*) characteristic of the '*Phrul gshen theg pa*'. (A.N.)
79. Op. 46, p. 161, l. 23. Also cf. Karmay 1972, pp. 31-32.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

1. See Introduction, n. 16.
2. Here synonymous with *gshen bon*. (A.N.)
3. Op. 86, p. 13a, l. 5.
4. *lHa* is a term used to designate any type of deity in general, and also as the name of a specific class, as in this case, corresponding to the *deva* of the Indian religious pantheon. The *lHa* dominate higher celestial space.
5. The *gNyan* are a class of powerful beings that dominate 'intermediate' space, the layer or atmosphere connecting earth and sky; hence they are associated with trees, mountains etc. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 288-289; Tucci 1949, pp. 721-722.
6. The *bSang mchod* is from the *lHa bsang rgyags brngan chen mo* (*Great Regalia of the Divine bsang*) cycle, a *gter ma* rediscovered by Rig 'dzin rGod kyi ldem 'phrul (1337-1409).
7. The term '*bar ma*' could read *bar pa*, referring to the class of *gNyan*, 'those who are in the middle'. Cf. Op. 36a, Kha p. 440, l. 2; Op. 36b, Kha p. 571, l. 3.
8. Op. 10, p. 10b, l. 1.
9. This section is based on *gZi brjid*, Op. 36a, Kha pp. 439-442; Op. 36b, Kha pp. 571-574. Cf. Snellgrove 1980, pp. 50-57.
10. *Tb. rgyug chen bya rdang bkyag na dgos* (Op. 36a, Kha p. 440, l. 6). According to T.N. *bya rdang* (also spelt *bya ldang* and *bya gdong*) is a type of small temple or tabernacle of the *gsas mkhar* type, set up on

mountains or near houses, which in ancient times was devoted exclusively to the divine protectors of the *sNang gshen theg pa*. Often found in the *gZi brjid* is the expression *mgon po bya rdang*, 'bya rdang of the protectors'. The expression *rgyug chen* (lit. 'great race') can refer to a military action, race, robbery etc. (Op. 65, p. 894); in this context the author has interpreted it to mean a 'race at the gallop'.

11. *'Phel chen yag ka brjod na dgos/ shas chen dmag la chas na dgos/ lha dmag dgra la bshig na dgos/ rgyal po rgyal sa gnon na dgos/ btsun mo rtsa dkar phel na dgos/ blon po dar sa 'dzin na dgos/ yo ma 'phel kha rtsi na dgos/ re dgos pas gal che brgyad* (Op. 36a, Kha p. 440, l. 6; Op. 36b, Kha p. 572, l. 5).
12. A *maṇḍala* (*dkyil khor*) is a representation of the universe in its pure aspect and can function as an offering (as in this case) or as support for meditation on the *yi dam* deity, as in tantric practices.
13. *gTor ma* are cones made of *rtsam pa* mixed with butter, coloured and decorated in different ways according to the type of deity to which they are addressed. They can function as offerings, as placations for hostile forces, as support for the energies of certain deities etc. When they act as 'support' they may be made of clay. The *bshos* or *bshos bu* is a small *gtor ma* used as an offering. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 348-352; Snellgrove 1980, p. 279.
14. The term *phud* indicates the first part of food, drink, etc. that is offered to the deities.
15. The *dam tshig gi rdzas* or *dam rdzas* are all the 'pledge' objects (including foods) that symbolise the vow or promise (*dam tshig*: *samaya*) made by the deities bound by the oath not to hamper practitioners and to help them in all circumstances. Related to these are the *mithun rdzas*, the 'favourable objects' suitable to propitiate specific deities.
16. The *mda' dar* is an arrow adorned with silk bands of five colours (representing the five elements) to which is attached a small mirror (*me long*). It is used in rites to summon fortune and long life. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 365-368.
17. Probably the *rgya gling*, a wind instrument.
18. The four actions (*phrin las bzhi*) are: pacifying (*zhi ba*), increasing (*rgyas pa*), conquering (*dbang pa*), and wrathfully destroying (*drag pa*).
19. *rMang la 'phan par srid pa* (Op. 36a, Kha p. 442, l. 4; Op. 36b, Kha p. 577, l. 6). The term *rmang ba* refers to someone who is childless or to a woman who has difficulty bearing children; *'phan pa* means on the contrary a plentiful and prosperous progeny.
20. This and the following sections are based on *gZi brjid*, Op. 36a Kha pp. 443-446; Op. 36b, Kha pp. 576-580. Cf. Snellgrove 1980, pp. 56-65.

21. The Khyung (corresponding to the Indian *garuḍa*) is a divine manifestation that resembles an eagle, and symbolises control over all the negativities coming from the different classes of non human beings. It is depicted with two horns emanating flames with a 'wish-fulfilling jewel' between them, and with its beak it clutches a snake symbolising its dominion over the class of the *Klu*. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 256-257.
22. The *Klu* (*nāga*) are semi-divine beings that dominate the underworld and water habitats such as seas, rivers and lakes. They hold an extremely important position in the Tibetan pantheon and there are many ritual texts devoted to them, including the celebrated *Klu bum* (*vid.* Op. 43). If offended they wreak vengeance by provoking infectious diseases and skin ailments. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 290-291; Tucci 1949, p. 723.
23. Three lion faced *sGra bla*, emanations of the *Phywa*, *dMu* and *gTsug* classes of deities. (Op. 36a, Kha p. 47).
24. Nine protective deities distinguished by different kinds of weapons. Cf. Op. 36a, Kha pp. 48-49.
25. Ye gshen dbang rdzogs, lit. 'The Primordial *gshen* Endowed with All Powers', a legendary ancestor of mankind.
26. For other types of *sGra bla* cf. Op. 89, pp. 513-538 and Op. 72, pp. 555-578; cf. also Nebesky 1975, pp. 318-340.
- 26b. *Rin chen sna lnga*: gold, silver, turquoise, coral and pearl.
27. The *chu srin* (*makara*) is a mythological marine monster. In the Tibetan astrological system derived from India it occupies the tenth house and corresponds to Capricorn.
28. For the term *dbal* see Chapter XV, note 65.
29. The *bDud* are a class of semi divine beings aboriginal to the ancient Tibetan tradition and later assimilated to the Indian *Māra* after the introduction of Buddhism. The term *bdud* also means 'hindrance' to spiritual realisation, and precisely this is said to be the characteristic activity of the class of the *bDud*. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 273-277; Tucci 1949, p. 718.
30. Op. 36a, Kha p. 445, l. 7.
31. For a description of the *Cang seng* cf. Op. 93, pp. 328-331.
32. 'Ju Mi pham 'Jam dbyangs nam rgyal (1846-1912) was one of the foremost masters and scholars of the *rNying ma pa* tradition. His work on *Ju thig* divination, *Srid pa 'phrul gyi ju thig dpyad don snang gsal sgron me* (*The Lamp that Illuminates the Practice of the Miraculous Juthig of Existence*) is of great importance for understanding this ancient science. See Chapter XIV.

33. Cf. Op. 89, p. 526 where *bSeu'u ru gcig* (*bSe bu ru gcig*) is defined as an 'assistant' (*phyag brngan*) of *Nyi nya* (*Nyi'u nya*), Lord of the *Wer ma*.
34. The *mTsho sman* belong to the class of the *sMan mo*. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 200-201.
35. The *Sa bdag* (lit. 'Lords of the Earth') dominate the soil and habitats connected with the earth, which is why they are easily disturbed and irritated by men. They are also tied to the nine *sme ba* and eight *spar kha* of the astrology of the elements (*'byung rtsis*). Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 291-298; Tucci 1949, pp. 722-723.
36. *Tb. smon lam grol phug*. The term *smon lam*, here rendered 'aspiration vow', is very common in Tibetan and indicates the expression of a wish so that it might come true. A person's destiny can thus be explained as the outcome of a wish made in previous lives. In this passage the expression means that the manifestation of the *sgra bla* is due mainly to its intention to manifest for the benefit of beings.
37. Mount Meru (*ri rab lhun po*) is the *axis mundi* in traditional Indian cosmology. See Chapter IX, iii.
38. The *gShin rje* (Lords of Death) are a class of beings that have been assimilated to the *Yama* of the Indian pantheon. They are considered to be the bearers of death. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 82-87.
39. The *khram shing*, attribute of King *Chos kyi rgyal po* of the *gShin rje*, is a tablet on which are carved crosses, symbols of death. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 358-359.
40. *Mahākāla* (*Nag po chen po*) is one of the most important protective deities of Tibetan Buddhism. He is Lord of the class of the *mGon po*, a type of *IHa*. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 82-87.
41. The *IHa min* (*asura*) are the 'titan' demigods perpetually at war with the *IHa*. In the Buddhist classification of the 'six classes of beings' (*'gro ba rigs drug*) they fill the second position, beneath the *lha* and above humans, animals, *yi dwags* (preta or hungry ghosts) and hell beings.
42. The flaming jewel (*nor bu 'bar ba*) is the mythical wish-fulfilling jewel (*yid bzhin nor bu: cintāmani*).
43. I.e. the dimension of existence of the *ye rje smon pa'i sgra bla*, also known as *smon pa*.
44. According to ancient Indian philosophical theories a *kalpa* is an extremely long period of time, amounting to over four billion years.
45. In ancient Bon cosmology the universe and existence are founded on the dualistic principle of light and darkness, being and non being, the positive and the negative etc. – represented respectively by the terms *Ye* and *Ngam*. See also note 47.

46. Op. 87, p. 418 (209b), l. 3.
47. The expression 'in the borderland between *Ye* and *Ngam*' (*ye ngam. gnyis kyi sa mtshams*) can be understood to refer to the primordial condition which in Dzogchen thought is defined as 'before the separation of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*'. The term *ye* signifies the principle of light and the positive while *ngam* stands for the principle of darkness and the negative. (A.N.)
48. *mGar nag* or *mGar ba nag po* (Black Ironsmith) is one of the most important emanations of rDo rje Legs pa and is the patron of ironsmiths. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 155-157.
49. This may also be a form of Mahākāla called Gur mgon lcam dral. Cf. Nebesky 1975, p. 49.
50. Op. 87, p. 87 (44a), l. 3.
51. The *bla*, one of the fundamental principles at the base of the ancient Bon rites, represents the psychoenergetic function of the individual in relation to the energies of the external world. As long as a person's *bla* is integral his protective force will be efficacious, but if his *bla* leaves him he cannot live for more than a further six months, in which case it becomes necessary to perform the rite 'to ransom the *bla*' (*bla bslu*). As it is the link between the inner and the outer energy the *bla* is often depicted or personified in the form of an animal, and can have as its 'support' an object such as a precious stone (*bla rdo*), a mountain (*bla ri*), a lake (*bla mtsho*) etc. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 481-483. See also Chapter VII, n. 2.
52. It seems that the spelling *sgra bla* is consistently found in Bon texts. Moreover, the term is pronounced 'dabla' by modern bonpos such as *slob dpon* Tenzin Namdak. Cf. Snellgrove 1980, p. 258 note 20.
53. Op. 10, p. 10a, l. 5.
54. From *Legs ldan dgra bcu gsum gyi gsol mchod* (*Offering to the Thirteen Benevolent dgra lha*), from the *lHa bsang rgyags brngan* cycle.
55. Op. 17, p. 5b, l. 3.
56. The *mGon po dgra bla bcu gsum gyi bsang mchod* (*The bsang Offering to the Thirteen dgra bla Protectors*) by Nam mkha' rin chen, from the *lHa bsang rgyags brngan* cycle.
57. *Nor lha*, the deity of wealth, has been assimilated to Kubera of the Indian tradition. He is white. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 68, 70, 331.
58. *Zas lha*, the deity of food, is red and has the power to transform any food ingested into medicine. Cf. Nebesky 1975, p. 332.
59. Deities that enhance income and the economy.
60. *Tshong lha*, the deity of trade, has an elephant's head and resembles the Indian god Gaṇeśa. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 331-332.
61. *Lam lha*, the deity of roads, rides a tiger. Cf. Nebesky 1975, p. 332.

62. Op. 51, p. 1a, 1.
63. For the meaning of *phywa* see Chapter V, i.
64. *Dbang thang* signifies both the ascendancy or charisma a person can exercise over others, and the capacity to perform activities of the first order in any field, such as government or conquest. Cf. Namkhai Norbu in Tucci 1966, pp. 182, 192.
65. On the *sGra bla* deities see A. Clemente, "The *Sgra bla*, gods of the ancestors *gShen-rab mi-bo* according to the *sGra bla go bsang* from the *gZi brjid*", in *Tibetan Studies*, pp. 127-136, Oslo 1994.

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

1. Op. 33, p. 399, l. 6.
2. The term *g.yang* can be rendered by prosperity, fortune, glory; etc. but should be distinguished from *phywa*, which is its base or necessary condition. Dran pa nam kha's comment to *Srid pa'i mdzod phug* tells us (Op. 60, p. 58, l. 6) "*phywa* signifies the indestructible vital capacity, *g.yang* is its function which manifests" (*phywa zer na g.yung drung gi tshel/ g.yang zer na de nyid kyi bcud du bstan pa'o*). Cf. Karmay 1975, p. 209.
3. I have rendered the term *gdon* (usually translated as 'evil spirit') by 'provocations of energy' in the sense of disturbances tied to the individual's psychoenergetic dimension. See Chapter X, x.
4. It is important to understand the concept underlying the use of the term *phywa* in the sense of 'prediction'. Every activity or circumstance is tied to the energy of the moment, and that energy is the result of the interdependence between the person's energy or *phywa* and the *phywa*, in the sense of 'positive force', of the outer environment.
5. The *Nor sgrub rin chen bang mdzod* (*Precious Casket to Realise Riches*), a *gter ma* rediscovered by mChog 'gyur gling pa (1829-1870).
6. The 'five families' (*rigs lnga*) of the dimension of enlightenment (according to the principles of tantric Buddhism) are situated at the centre and the four cardinal points of the *mandala*. They are represented by five Buddhas in union with their consorts and symbolise different aspects and functions of the primordial wisdom of the individual.
7. *sTong gsum* (lit. 'three thousand') is a concept derived originally from the metaphysical *Abhidharma* Buddhist scriptures, according to which the universe is divided in three spheres. The first contains one thousand worlds, each structured in the same way with Mount Meru in the centre, with four major continents etc.; the second contains

one thousand times as many worlds as the first; the third contains one thousand times as many worlds as the second.

8. The *Śrāvaka* (*snyan thos*) and the *Pratyekabuddha* (*rang sangs rgyas*) represent two types of practitioners of *Hīnayāna* Buddhism; the term 'noble' (*'phags pa*) indicates those who have attained the 'path of vision' (*mthong lam*), the third of the five paths or levels of attainment according to the Buddhist Sūtra system.
9. The *Dri za* (smell eaters) are a semi-divine class corresponding to the *Gandharva* of the Indian tradition. It is explained that according to whether their *karma* is good or bad they feed on good or bad smells.
10. The *Grul bum* live in the sea and have human bodies with animal heads. They are the *Khumbhānda* of the Indian tradition.
11. *gNod sbyin* literally means 'those that cause disturbances', and it is from this characteristic function that they take their name. They are the *Yakṣa* of the Indian tradition.
12. The 'three worlds' (*kham s gsum*) are the formless realm (*gzugs med pa'i kham s*), the form realm (*gzugs kham s*) and the desire realm (*'dod pa'i kham s*).
13. The 'three spheres of existence' (*srid gsum*) are the underworld, dominion of the *Klu*, the dimension above the ground, dominion of the *gNyan*, and the sky dimension, dominion of the *lHa*.
14. Op. 58, p. 16b, l. 5.
15. *dKyil chen Phu wer* is the main deity of the *Phywa gShen* cycle.
16. I have translated *dgra lha* literally as 'deity of the enemy', even though it is a protective deity. See Chapter IV, vi. At times the '*Go ba'i lha lnga*' are listed as: *pha lha*, *ma lha*, *zhang lha*, *dgra lha*, *srog lha* (Nebesky 1975, p. 328) or *dgra lha*, *zhang lha*, *srog lha*, *mo lha*, *yul lha* as in one of the passages quoted below.
17. '*Go ba'i lha lnga'i mchod 'phrin* (*Offerings to the Five Deities of the Individual*) by Blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617-1682).
18. The *go bo* (belonging to the genus *gypaetus barbatus*) is a species of vulture leading a solitary life.
19. During the time of the Tibetan monarchy the most influential ministers belonged to the king's wife's family, giving rise to the custom of calling them 'maternal uncle ministers'.
20. Nebesky 1975, p. 327 mentions the thirty-three gods of the *dbang thang* (*dbang thang gi lha gsum bcu so gsum*).
21. I have not been able to identify the *bya wang*, which according to the author's description are white birds with a red crest and black tail often seen flying in flocks in east Tibet.
22. Op. 31, p. 18b, l. 4.

23. In this passage the five 'go ba'i lha are given the epithets *gnyan po*, *pha wang*, 'dzin po, 'byung mo and *mgon bu*.
24. During certain types of rites such as the *bsang* rite, animals, called *spyang gzigs*, such as yaks and sheep are dressed up, decorated and brought near the altar as symbolic offerings. In this text it appears that a sheep and a yak, mentioned later, fulfil this purpose.
25. A *gtor ma* or *bshos* shaped like the heart of a yak or a 'brong. In ancient times in Tibet there were certain types of Bon, such as *btsan bon*, *bdud bon* and *gdon bon* in which animals were sacrificed in order to eliminate disturbances caused by other beings, but with the arrival of the master *gShen rab mi bo che* these sacrifices were replaced by offerings of these kinds of *gtor ma*. (A.N.)
26. Op. 31, p. 21a, l. 3.
27. I have rendered *klung rta* or *rlung rta* by 'fortune' although this term only partially conveys the meaning. The *klung rta* is a protective energy tied to a person's *bla* and *phywa* and is based on the function of the five elements. The author writes, in Tucci 1966, p. 182 that "if a person's *rlung rta* develops he becomes famous and he easily accomplishes any task he undertakes."
28. There are two ways of listing the elements in the Tibetan tradition: space, air, fire, water and earth, according to the tantric teachings, and wood, fire, earth, metal and water, according to the astrology of the elements or 'byung rtsis. In the latter, wood corresponds to the air element and metal is like the essence of the earth element.
29. The *Ba'i ro rgyud 'bum*, which contains numerous original texts of the Dzogchen *sems sde* and *klong sde* translated by Pa gor Vairocana (8th century).
30. *Rig pa'i khu byug* is one of the first five Dzogchen texts (*snga 'gyur lnga*) translated into Tibetan. Cf. Karmay 1988, pp. 41ff. Cf. also Part Two of Namkhai Norbu, *The Self-Perfected State*, Harmondsworth 1989.
31. Op. 73, p. 2a, l. 5.
32. For a description of the various types of *klung rta* cf. Namkhai Norbu in Tucci 1966, pp. 183-186 and 192-193.
33. *Klung rta'i gsol kha dge legs kun stsol* (*Cult of the Deities of the Klung rta in Order to Obtain Fortune*) from the *lHa bsangs rgyags brngan* ritual cycle.
34. In Bon mythology *Ye smon rgyal po* is the forefather of positive existence and of light (*ye*) from whom humanity is descended.
35. Uncertain translation of *smom lam lha la klung du btsal*.
36. In this passage to each of the four elements metal (or earth), copper (fire), wood (or air) and water are associated three animals from the

- twelve year astrological cycle. Metal is connected with the tiger, horse and dog; fire with the pig, sheep and hare; wood with the mouse, dragon and monkey; and water with the bird, bull and snake.
37. The five aromatic plants (*bdud rtsi can gyi shing lnga*) used in the *bsang* fumigation rites are *shug pa* (*sabina tibetica*, a type of cypress), *sur kar* (*ledum palustre*, a type of rhododendron), *stag pa* (birch), *spen dkar* (*potentilla leucophylla*) and *nya sbrid* (a mountain shrub). For identification of medicinal plants and substances I have consulted mainly Das 1976 and Molvray 1989.
 38. In *'byung rtsis* astrology the relationship between the elements can be of four types: mother, son, enemy or friend (*ma bu dgra grogs*), and when it is necessary to harmonise the elements to overcome problems it is considered important to restore the 'mother-son' sequence. For example, in this passage for the metal element one sets up a yellow flag symbolising the earth element which is 'mother' element of metal in the sequence wood-fire-earth-metal-wood (*shing me sa lcags chu*).
 39. The Sa gsen or Bsen mo are the female counterparts of the Sa bdag. Cf. Nebesky 1975, p. 385.
 40. *Klung gi lha gsum*: four triads of deities represented by the twelve animals of the astrological cycle.
 41. The four divine symbols are the four flags symbolising the four 'mother' elements.
 42. Op. 44, p. 1a, l. 2.
 43. Op. 36a, Kha p. 411, ll. 6ff; Op. 36b, Kha p. 525, l. 4.
 44. Cf. Op. 33, p. 400, l. 6 where these rites are called *hos cha rten 'brel brtags pa g.yang sgrub gto*.
 45. Elsewhere there are mentioned the seven deities of the *phywa* (*phywa'i lha bdun*): the three *dkyil chen Phu wer* brothers (*dkyil chen phu wer mched gsum*), the three *Sring mo Tsa min* sisters (*Sring mo tsa min mched gsum*) and *Phywa'u g.yang dkar*. See Chapter XIV, iii.
 46. Libation offerings (usually of *chang* and tea) are called *gser skyems* lit. 'golden beverages', possibly because of the ancient custom of serving drinks to an important person in a cup in which a piece of gold was mounted.
 47. There are various kinds of *gter bum* or 'treasure vases', such as the *nor bum* (vase of wealth), *sa bum* (vase of the power of the earth), *klu bum* (vase of the *Klu*), *srung bum* (vase of protection), *dbang bum* (vase of power), *tshe bum* (vase of long life) etc. The vase of prosperity (*g.yang bum*) is linked to the practice of deities whose activity consists in increasing (*rgyas pa*) such as rNam thos sras. It can be made of clay or precious materials and inside it must have the 'column of life'

- (*srog shing*) on which are written the essential syllables of the deity to whom it is addressed. The vase is then filled with medicine, cereals, coloured cloths, jewels etc. and after having been consecrated it is put in the 'casket of prosperity' (*g.yang sgam*). In this way the person's capacity, fortune, wealth, longevity and fame develop. Cf. Namkhai Norbu in Tucci 1966, pp. 157-162 and 187-188.
48. *Tshe g.yang 'gugs pa'i phrin las khrigs su bsdebs pa'i tshe bsod 'dod dgu'i dpal ster* (*The Obtainment of Glory, Wishes, Fortune and Longevity through the Practice of Summoning the g.yang*).
 49. The eight auspicious emblems (*bkra shis rtags brgyad*) are the parasol, golden fish, conch, lotus, victory banner (*rgyal mtshan*), vase, wheel, and infinite knot (*bal be'u*).
 50. The *brag zhun* is an effusion of which there are five varieties derived from gold, silver, copper, iron and lead.
 51. The five medicinal roots (*rtsa ba lnga*) are *ra mnye* (*poligonatum erythrocarpium*), *nye shing* (*asparagus brachyphyllus*), *lca ba* (*pleurospermum tibeticum*), *ba spru* (*mirabilis himalaica*, a type of hellebore) and *gze ma* (*tribulus terrestris*).
 52. Op. 94, p. 14a, l. 2.
 53. *Phug lha'i skor* (*On the Phug lha*) by Namkhai Norbu in Tucci 1966, pp. 171-181 and 190-191.
 54. Ibid. pp. 171-172.
 55. *Khyim lha phug lha'i bstod pa bkra shis char 'bebs* (*In Praise of the Phug lha Deities of the Home: Rain of Fortune*) from the *lHa bsangs rgyags brngan* ritual cycle.
 56. I.e. the person commissioning the rite and paying all the expenses.
 57. See note 61.
 58. Op. 42, p. 2b, l. 6.
 59. The *Phug lha* may be disturbed if a tantric Buddhist or Bonpo practitioner comes into the kitchen, as it is believed that his protective deities nearly always belong to the classes of the *rGyal po* or *bTsan*, which can easily conflict with the *Phug lha*. Signs indicating a disturbance of the *Phug lha* are children crying at night for no reason, herds bellowing, and the birth of monstrous animals. To restore harmony with the *Phug lha* it is necessary for the officiant to perform the *Tshan khrus* lustral aspersion rites and the *bSang* fumigation rites. Cf. Namkhai Norbu in Tucci 1966, p. 176.
 60. Op. 42, p. 3b, l. 4.
 61. The support of the *Phug lha*, made of twigs of aromatic plants decorated with pieces of cloth of the five colours, is hung from the central pillar of the kitchen, especially in east Tibet where the kitchen is the place where most time is spent. To the support one can

- attach *nam mkha'*, jewels, *mda' dar*, mirrors and coloured egg shells. It is usually covered with a layer of silk threads so that it cannot be seen from the outside. Cf. Namkhai Norbu in Tucci 1966, pp. 174-175.
62. Cf. Karmay 1975, pp. 210-211.
63. Op. 68, p. 55, l. 15.
64. On the class of the *rMu* or *dMu* cf. Stein 1986, pp. 182-183; Tucci 1949, p. 714.
65. From *Kun gsal nyi zer sgron ma* (*The Light of the Sun Rays that Clarifies Everything*), a *gter ma* rediscovered by Bra bo sgom nyag (13th century).
66. Op. 85, p. 80 (40b), l. 5.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

1. I have used the capital L (*Lüd*) when referring to the ritual, and the small l (*lüd*) when referring to the substitute effigy.
- 1b. For the 'eight classes' (*lha srin sde brgyad*) cf. Tucci 1949, pp. 717ff; Nebesky 1975, pp. 254ff; Beyer 1988, pp. 292-301; Trungpa 1984, p. 28. At times the list may vary, and in the Tibetan and Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (see Bibliography) p. 1472 the following names are found: *lHa*, *Klu*, *gNod sbyin*, *Dri za*, *lHa ma yin*, *Nam mkha' lding*, *Mi'am ci*, *lTo 'phye chen po*.
2. The thirty-three dimensions of non human beings (*g.yen khams sum cu tsa gsum*) are a classification found in the ancient Bon tradition, the term *g.yen* meaning 'non human being'. The thirty-three classes of beings, to which correspond an equal number of *bon*, according to the Bon literature, are divided in three groups: 'The Thirteen Powerful Beings of the Higher Dimensions' (*yar g.yen gnyan po bcu gsum*): *dBal*, *Yogs*, *Khrin*, *gNyer*, 'O', 'Tshams, *bDud*, *dMu*, *bTsan*, *Srid*, *sKos*, *Phywa*, *lHa*; 'The Nine Inflexible Beings of Intermediate Space' (*bar g.yen gtod po dgu*): *Zla*, *Nyi*, *sKar*, *sPrin*, 'Ja', *Dal*, *Zer*, *Lo*, *rDzi*; and 'The Eleven Great Beings of the Earth' (*sa g.yen che ba bcu cig*): *Klu*, *gNyan*, *rGyal*, *sMan*, *gZed*, *Srin*, 'Dre, *Sri*, *Byur*, *gShin rje*, *Chüd*. Cf. Op. 33, p. 81 (41a), l. 1. See Chapter XI, i.
3. Op. 87, p. 464 (232b), l. 2.
4. 'Thread cross' has erroneously been used by certain western scholars to translate the term *mdos*, giving rise to the confusion between the *nam mkha'* ritual objects and the *mdos* rites in which they are used. For example Nebesky 1975, p. 369 states that "an alternative term for *mdos* is *nam mkha'*." The structure that forms the base of the *mdos* is generally made of wood covered with clay or paste, with four steps

leading up to a house with a peaked roof, symbolising Mount Meru and the four continents.

5. For the *mdos* rites cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 369-397; Beyer 1988, pp. 318-330.
6. Usually the 'ransom' is left at a crossroads, considered a power place of confluence of energies connected with various kinds of beings.
7. The spelling of the names of the thirty types of *mdos* vary at times. Cf. Op. 36a, Kha pp. 453ff; Op. 36b, Kha p. 590, l. 4; Op. 33. pp. 411-412; Snellgrove 1980, pp. 76ff.
8. The different directions mentioned in this list of *mdos* can refer both to the presumed location of the diverse classes of beings and to the direction in which the place to celebrate the rite must be sought.
9. The *rGyal po* are fierce natured beings and can cause nervous disturbances and epilepsy. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 128ff.
10. *dMu yi btsun mdos* could also refer to a *mdos* to liberate one from curses from the *dMu* that strike women (*btsun*).
11. The *Srin po* are cannibal demons corresponding to the *Rākṣasa* of the Indian tradition.
12. Some of these *mdos* are described in brief ritual texts contained in the *mKha' klong gsang mdos* collection (see Bibliography Op. 53).
13. The *Ma mo* are a class of fierce female beings that provoke epidemics, famines and wars. They correspond to the *Mātrka* of the Indian tradition. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 269-273.
14. For the *brTan ma* cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 181ff.
15. Or 'to ransom from the families or 'nests' (*tshang*) of the Ten Sri' and, in the preceding title, 'of the Nine Dre'. For the 'nine Dre' and the 'ten Sri' see Chapter XII, v.
16. The *gTod* are fierce beings that dominate rocks and mountains; their worship in Bon (such as in the *Nye lam sde bzhi*, Op. 59) is generally associated with that of the *Sa bdag* (Lords of the Earth), the *gNyan* (Lords of Intermediate Space between earth and sky, symbolised by trees) and the *Klu* (Lords of Water and the Underworld).
17. T.N. interprets the expression *mtshungs gnyis bsor* (or *gsor*) *ba*, similar to *mnyam gnyis bsor ba* that we will find below (Chapter VIII, i) to mean the 'exchange of two equivalent things'.
18. Op. 33, pp. 412-413.
19. Op. 36a, pp. 465ff; Op. 36b, p. 595, ll. 5ff.
20. *mDos kyi smad khrig* (*The Practice of the mDos*) by Phyug tshang bya bral, from the *Zhang zhung me ri bka' gter gnyis kyi sgrub skor* collection.
21. *bSe* generally means leather treated and painted a golden yellow colour, highly appreciated by Tibetans. However according to T.N.,

- the term can also refer to copper, more precisely a darker type of copper than that called *zangs*. Cf. op. 65, p. 922.
22. The seeds of two medicinal plants: *snying zho sha* (*spondias axillaris*) and *lung thang* (*sapindus mukorossi*).
 23. The Tibetan *zer mang* could read *gze ma*, the medicinal plant *tribulus terrestris*. Cf. Nebesky 1975, p. 527, where we find the term *gze mong* (?) as the substance used for the hair of the *glud*. According to T.N. it is instead synonymous with *tsher ma*, a general term used for various types of thorny bushes.
 24. A term in the Zhang Zhung language.
 25. In mythological tradition the deity *Tshangs pa* (Brahmā) is praised for his melodious voice.
 26. Op. 50, p. 578 (4b), l. 2.
 27. '*Dod yon rgya mtsho* (*Ocean of Enjoyments*) by Kar ma Phrin las rnam rgyal (1740-1798), a master of the bKa' brgyud pa tradition.
 28. These are concepts typical of tantric Buddhism, according to which the primordial condition of existence has two aspects, form and emptiness or energy, which in tantric practice are applied as method (*thabs*; *upāya*) and knowledge (*shes rab*; *prajñā*). Their unification (*zung 'jug*) corresponds to final realisation.
 29. *Nam* and *mkha'* are two syllables that compose the word *nam mkha'*, 'space'.
 30. The *ting lo* is lit. the moment when the *glud* is delivered to the class of beings to whom it is addressed.
 31. *Shel tshigs* is a mixture of roasted barley grains, part of which are scorched to give its black colouring. It symbolises the offering of livestock animals such as yak, *mdzo*, sheep etc.; the original meaning of the term is precisely 'domestic animals' (*gnag lug sems can*). (A.N.)
 32. Op. 71, p. 572 (6b), l. 3. For a detailed description of the preparation of the ritual objects in a ransom rite see Chapter VII, iii.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

1. Op. 36a, Ga, pp. 50ff., 36b, Ga, pp. 67ff.
2. dPal ldan Tshul krims explains: "The *sems* is all-pervading and unceasing by nature, and possesses a spontaneous energy that is the basis of all that manifests as positive and negative: it pervades all beings having a body and gives them the capacity to understand. The *yid* judges objective vision as good or bad, and through the five sense doors enjoys the six sense objects (of the five senses and the mind); it is a function that arises miraculously from the *sems*. The *bla* is an emanation of the *sems* and *yid*, and follows all vision that arises

- like smoke developing from fire. It arises from *yid* and *sems* and maintains their vitality." Op. 33, pp. 423-424. Also cf. Snellgrove 1980, p. 259 note 36.
3. In *rDzogs chen* the term *rig pa* refers to the true condition of the mind of the individual, pure awareness free of subject-object dualism.
 4. In the Zhang Zhung language the term *ku hrang* means *rkyang*, the wild ass (cf. Haarh 1968, p. 27) and it is in this sense that Snellgrove interpreted the phrase (1980, p. 117).
 5. 'Dur g_{sa}s r_{ma} bo – principal deity of the *Srid gshen* cycle.
 6. *Bar sa* appears to be a synonym of *bar do*, the intermediate state between death and rebirth, but whether the ancient Bonpos believed in rebirth as it is explained by Buddhism is a matter still to be examined. (A.N.)
 7. Op. 36a, Ga pp. 53ff; Op. 36b, Ga pp. 71ff; Op. 33, pp. 422ff.
 8. 'Dur may originally have meant 'conquering' or 'subduing', the subjugation of the negative forces that disturb the deceased. It should be noted that in more recent texts, especially those connected with the *gCod* system, the 'dur rites are denoted by the expression *gshed 'dul*, an evident corruption of the more ancient *gshed 'dur*.
 9. The three humours ('*du ba*) underlying Tibetan medical theory are air (*rlung*), bile (*mkhris pa*) and phlegm (*bad kan*). See Chapter X.
 10. According to Tibetan tradition, when a person dies at a very old age this can cause misfortune to his family, who therefore try to bury the corpse near the house, or if unable to do so perform particular rites to recall prosperity (*g.yang chog*), and, if there are disturbances, 'dur rites. (A.N.)
 11. Cf. Op. 36a, Ga pp. 53ff; Op. 36b, Ga pp. 70ff.
 12. This may refer to the satisfying of the 'eight aggregate consciousnesses' (*rnam shes tshogs brgyad*) by means of offerings connected with each of the diverse consciousnesses but in this case, too, we cannot be certain that the authentic Bon tradition comprised the characteristically Buddhist concept of the 'eight aggregate consciousnesses'. (A.N.)
 13. Probably ritual methods to separate the karmic vision of the 'six aggregate consciousnesses' of the living from the vision of the dead produced by 'karmic traces' (*bag chags*) of the 'six consciousnesses'. (A.N.)
 14. The text only has *log g.yang dbyen* (Op. 33, p. 423, l. 4. In Op. 36a, Ga p. 54, l. 4 and Op. 36b, Ga p. 73, l. 1. *legs g.yang dbyen* which can be interpreted as 'putting the deceased on his guard against taking wrong directions' (*lam log pa*), protecting him from the dangers of frightening precipices (*g.yang sa*) and releasing him from disturbances

provoked by entities such as the *gshin 'dre* that by cunning deception cause discord between the living and the dead. (A.N.)

15. The rite 'to ransom the *bla*' (*bla bslu*), studied in Lessing 1976, belongs to the series of *glud* rites, but has been included in this chapter because of the importance attributed in it to the principle of the *bla* 'soul', fundamental in the *Srid gshen*.
16. *Tshe* and *srog* differ in that the former means 'vital capacity' or 'potential longevity' while the latter means 'vital principle' or 'vital essence'. Furthermore the term *srog* is also sometimes used to refer to vegetative life.
17. *gDon* refers both to the classes of beings that cause disturbances and the disturbances themselves. In the first case I have used the capital D (*Dön*), in the second the small d (*dön*).
18. For the *rlung lha* cf. Nebesky 1975, p. 469.
19. 'Byung *po* is the name of a class of spirits that corresponds to the *Bhūta* of the Indian tradition.
20. For *Re te mgo yag*, Lord of the *bDud* and *Pehar*, Ruler of the *rGyal po* cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 274ff and 94ff. respectively.
21. The *Rin chen gter mdzod* is a famous collection of *gter ma* made by the scholar Kong sprul Blo gros 'mtha yas (1813-1899). The text in question is *Srog gi btsan rdzong* (*The Invincible Fortress of Life*).
22. Literally 'the elements in the 'enemy' relationship' (*'byung ba dgra thog song ba*). For the tiger and hare years the life element (*srog gi khams*) is wood, for horse and snake it is fire; for bird and monkey it is metal, for mouse and pig it is water and for bull, sheep, dog and dragon it is earth. Their 'enemies' are the respective enemy elements of the life element: for the tiger and hare years, metal, for horse and snake, water; for bird and monkey, fire; for mouse and pig, earth and for bull, sheep, dog and dragon, wood. (A.N.)
23. *Yed yed pa*: a state of mind without thoughts and without the desire to do anything; if one does undertake any deed, one cannot complete it on account of confusion and distraction. (A.N.)
24. Op. 88, p. 1b, l. 3.
25. The eight *spar kha* trigrams are: *li* (fire element), *khon* (earth element), *dwa* (metal element), *khen* (fire element), *kham* (water element), *gin* (wood element), *zin* (earth element) and *zon* (earth element).
26. In general the *stag pa* (birch) and *glang ma* (a type of willow) are called the 'male' tree (*pho shing*) and 'female' tree (*mo shing*). See iv.
27. *Tsakli* or *tsha ka li* are small cards like miniature *thang ka* on which are painted images of deities, offerings etc. used during rites and initiations.
28. The *rGyal 'gong* are a class of spirits born of the union of the *rGyal po* and 'Gong *po*. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 284-285.

29. The 'sheep of the *bla*' (*bla lug*) is placed on the surface of the water within the container, facing towards the offerings and away from the officiant. If at the end of the rite the sheep has turned around so that it faces the officiant it means the *bla* has been recalled.
30. The 'friend' order is wood, metal, fire, water, earth; i.e. wood is the friend of metal, metal is the friend of fire, etc. The 'enemy' order is the reverse.
31. A protective circle (*khor lo*) made of paper or cloth on which mantra or invocations are written or printed.
32. Op. 88, p. 1b, l. 6.
33. See above Chapter III, iv. According to certain sources this rite was performed by sTong rgyung mthu' chen, the *bon po* from Zhang Zhung (Op. 40, p. 7).
34. For example, for each person there is a day of the week called *gshed* on which he is more likely to encounter difficulties.
35. *dGe legs kun 'byung (Fount of Virtue)* by 'Jams dbyangs mkhyen rab (1878-1944).
36. Op. 16, p. 20a, l. 3.
37. *gShed 'dul gdug pa tshar gcod (Annihilation of the Wicked and Vanquishment of the gshed)* by Karma Chags med Araga (17th century), Op. 26, pp. 1-27.
38. *gCod* is a system of practice promulgated by the Tibetan lady teacher Ma gcig lab sgron ma (1031-1129), based mainly on the *Zhi byed* teachings of Pha dam pa Sangs rgyas (11th century). There is also a *gcod* tradition in Bon, which however has not yet been the object of study. The cycle of *gcod* teachings most widely spread in the Bon tradition is *mKha' 'gro gsang gcod*. Cf. Karmay 1977, pp. 89-90.
39. A triangular black iron recipient used in the destructive rites of the '*Phrul gshen theg pa*, also called '*brub khung*.
40. *Thun* denotes various substances, of which the most important is a kind of mustard seed (*yungs kar*) empowered by *mantra* and hurled from a horn (*thun rwa*) as 'magic weapons' (*zor*) against an effigy representing the enemy. See Chapter XV, note 16.
41. The *phur pa* is a ritual dagger associated with cycles of tantric teachings centred on the deities dBal phur in Bon and Vajrakila (*rDo rje phur pa*) in Buddhism. Cf. Karmay 1975, pp. 198-199. For a discussion of the origin of the *phur pa* cf. R. Mayer 1990.
42. For the ritual device called *liṅga* cf. Stein 1957.
43. The class of the *gZa'* (Rāhu) is linked with planetary influences and can cause disturbances such as paralysis. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 259ff.
44. The *bra ba* is a small rodent similar to the *a bra* (*ochotona erythrotis*).
45. Op. 26, pp. 1-3b.

46. *Ibid.* p. 6a, l. 4.
47. An intact human skin complete with the skin of head and limbs. (A.N.)
48. A sack of well-treated yak skin with a perfect fastening so that 'no air can escape'. (AN.)
49. A thong or rope made of yak skin nine fathoms long (*gzhu 'doms*). (A.N.)
50. *Ibid.* p. 8a, l. 6.
51. Four *mkha' 'gro ma (dākinī)* with lion, tiger, chu srin and dragon faces, respectively associated with the east, south, west and north directions and with the *rdo rje, rin chen, pad ma* and *phrin las* tantric families.
52. *Ibid.* p. 17b, ll. 4ff; p. 19, ll. 4ff.
53. *Ibid.* p. 21a, l. 5.
54. This phase is also called '*dur nag* (black '*dur*'); the preceding phase is the '*dur dkar* (white '*dur*'). For a description of the performance of a rite of destruction see Chapter XV, iv and v.
55. Op. 26, p. 24a, l. 5.
56. A compilation of ritual *gshed 'dur* texts, the *Khro bo dbang chen gyi gshed 'dur dang gsang phur nag po'i phrin las 'gug bsgral 'dren skor* (see Bibliography Op. 40) has recently been published in India. It contains *gter ma* of Khu tsha Zla 'od and dByil ston Khyung rgod rtsal (both 11th century). For a study of a funerary rite performed in modern times by the Bonpo monastic community in Dolanji (northern India) cf. Kvaerne 1985. For the ancient funerary customs associated with the cult of the Tibetan kings as found in the Tun Huang manuscripts cf. Haarh 1969, pp. 327-297; Lalou 1952.
57. *Vajrayāna*, the 'way of the *vajra*' denotes the teachings of tantric Buddhism. It is synonymous with *mantrayāna*, the 'way of *mantra*'.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VIII

1. Op. 36a, Kha p. 346, ll. 2ff; Op. 36b, Kha p. 586, l. 3; Op. 33, p. 403, ll. 5ff.
2. T.N. interprets *mnyam gnyis bsor* in the sense of 'an exchange (*bsor ba*) between two equivalent things' (*mnyam gnyis*) on the basis of the principles of the *glud* rites.
3. *Srid pa ba gar gyen sel* in Op. 36b, Kha p. 566, l. 5. Cf. Snellgrove 1980, p. 257 note 13.
4. *bSrung rta* or *srungs rta* could refer to the 'supports' of the protective deities (see Chapter XIII, i) or may be a corruption of *klung rta*. Cf. Snellgrove 1980, p. 257 note 10.

5. *Byur dang mi la'i chu* in Op. 36b, Kha p. 567, l. 1. Cf. Snellgrove 1980, p. 257 note 13.
6. *dMe*, *mug* and *nal* are three types of 'impure' conditions caused by actions which Tibetans find particularly dire or ominous. *dMe* is brought about by murders, violent quarrels etc. among members of the same family or devotees of the same religious confraternity. *Mug*, according to T.N., denotes the birth of an illegitimate child (*mug phrug*) that can cause misfortune or disasters. Finally, *Nal* denotes sexual relationships between relatives and the offspring these can produce, considered impure. See note 10.
7. T.N. recalls that the *gTsang ma'i lha sel* rite was very popular among Tibetan Bonpos before 1959. It was carried out in the house of the unwed mother for cases of *mug phrug*, in place of the more elaborate *dbal chu* (for which see Chapter XV, note 61).
8. Four manifestations of deities, corresponding to the four directions: Gar *gsas btsan* (east), rGod *gsas kham pa* (north), gSas *rje rmang po* (west), gNam *gsas dbying rum* (south). In general the central deity is *dBal gsas zo'o*. Op. 89, pp. 517-518.
9. Corrected from *mi srangs kyi mda' sel* in Op. 33, p. 405, l. 5.
10. I have rendered *mnol grib* by the generic term 'contamination', but it is important to understand the underlying concept. *Mnol* is a 'contaminated' condition of the energy of a being, be it a man, *lHa*, *Klu* etc., that causes weakness and vulnerability to external negative energies. There are various possible causes of *mnol*, ranging from the 'contamination of the hearth' (*thab gzhob*) by spilling food that then gives off a bad smell, to eating certain foods etc. (i.e. see vii.). *Grib* is the effect of different types of contamination, giving rise to the expressions *dme grib*, *nal grib* etc.
11. Op. 36a, Kha pp. 437-438; Op. 36b, Kha pp. 567-568.
12. The term *'khyil* is interpreted as 'mountainous amphitheatre' (on the suggestion of T.N.) in Snellgrove 1980, p. 292.
13. The 'three white' (things) (*dkar gsum*) are milk, butter and yoghurt; the 'three sweets' (*mngar gsum*) are honey, sugar and molasses.
14. *Srid pa'i sel ra gnyen por* (amended to *gnyan por*) *bskos*. (A.N.)
15. *Yar la yod kyi ral chen gsum/ mar la med pa'i lung chen gsum/ bar na lha mi tshogs pa'i gnas*. *Yar la yod kyi ral chen gsum* may also refer to the first three phases of the formation of existence according to Bon myths: primordial being just as it emerges, its development at the atomic level and its condensation in the form of dew drops before the birth of the supreme mountain (see vi). *Mar la med pa'i lung chen gsum* may refer to the madness, obfuscation and obscuration that occurred when the black rays of the dark egg fell downwards,

according to the myth of Med 'bum nag po, Lord of Non Being and Darkness (see Chapter XII, ii). (A.N.) The three valleys of being and the three valleys of non being represent the dimensions of *ye* and *ngam*: positive and negative, good and bad entities, respectively, with which the officiant must always be in contact in order successfully to consummate the necessary rites.

16. *sNong mo nas kyi sbran ma*: unripened green barley grains that are bluish green in colour. (A.N.)
17. *Mi 'gro yas stags* – this probably refers to the Tibetan custom of sending human beings as *glud* by exiling people to desert lands from whence they could not possibly return for a certain period. (A.N.) Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 507ff.
18. Op. 36a, Kha p. 438; Op. 36b, Kha p. 569. Cf. Snellgrove 1980, pp. 48-51.
19. Tibetan Buddhists generally use only the term *khrus* to designate these rites.
20. *Dug phyung 'bar ba nag po* (*Black Flame that Eliminates Poison*), a *gter ma* probably rediscovered by dByil ston Khyung rgod rtsal (born 1175).
21. *Re long skyas nag sna la sdang*: nomads usually replace the yak hair (*re ba*) fabric of their tents every year and to celebrate the occasion they have a feast called *re ston*. The passage could refer to this event, particularly important in the lives of nomads, or to the period during which they move to regions more befitting the season, where they reform their tent camps. (A.N.) Cf. Namkhai Norbu 1990, p. 80. According to T.N. in Tibet it was considered inauspicious for a bride travelling to join her future husband to meet nomads carrying their black kitchen utensils (*spyad nag*, mentioned below), as it was feared that they were accompanied by evil spirits.
22. *Mo gdon* and *bSen mo*: female entities or spirits with the capacity to disturb people's energy.
23. Op. 23, p. 64 (8b), l. 4.
24. *Kun bzang bsang nag* (*The Black bsang of Samantabhadra*) from the *Zhi khro'i sgrub skor* ritual cycle.
25. According to Tibetan tradition the birth of twins is not usually considered of ill omen or impure (as it is in certain other traditions, i.e. among some African tribes) so that the meaning of *mtshe* in this context is obscure. T.N. suggests that it may refer to an unnatural birth in which 'Siamese twins' (twin babies born joined together at some point of the body) are born, or a similar event among animals, considered fateful omens. Otherwise *mtshe* can be read with the preceding *nal* to form *nal mtshe*, synonymous with *nal*, incest.

26. Probably a reference to the ancient custom of entombing living men in the huge funerary buildings, consisting of various chambers, where the deceased kings were buried. Cf. Haarh 1969, pp. 327ff..
27. *gShin gyi ro dud*: the smoke from corpses cremated without the due ritual purifications.
28. Op. 45, p. 81 (5a), l. 3.
29. *Ge khod mnol bsang*, from the *Ge khod gsang ba drag chen* cycle. *Ge khod* is one of the preeminent deities of Bon and is included among the five '*gsas mkhar*' (*gsas mkhar mchog lnga*) of the tantric teachings, together with *dBal gsas rnam pa*, *lHa rgod thog pa*, *gTso mchog mkha'* 'gying and *Phur pa*. Cf. Karmay 1975, pp. 197-198.
30. *gNam phyi gung rgyal* is one of the foremost female deities of the Tibetan pantheon. She is the first born of the Nine Sisters who are the Ancestresses of Mankind (see Chapter XII, iii) and as queen of the *Gung sman* she resides in the 'thirteenth heaven', the highest level of existence in *bon po* cosmology. She was subsequently identified with the protective deity *Srid pa'i rgyal mo*. Cf. Tucci 1980, p 274.
31. *Bden pa'i smon lam btab*.
32. From the context *lha rgod* appears to refer to *Ge khod*; however there is a class of guardian deities bearing this name tied to the *yi dam lHa rgod thog pa*.
33. *A krong dkar po*: *arenaria kansuensis*.
34. *Sro lo*: *stellaria dichotoma*.
35. *A ba*: *carex sp.*
36. *Spra ba*: *leontopodium dedekensii*.
37. *Spos me*, maybe standing for *spos dkar*: *shorea robusta*.
38. *mKhan pa*: *artemisia sieversiana*.
39. *Ba spru*: *milabiris himalaica*, hellebore.
40. From *Ge khod mnol bsang*, Op. 29, p. 79 (16a), l. 1.
41. The above mentioned *bSang mchod*.
42. Mount *rTa sgo* near Lake *Dwang* ra in northwest Tibet; or a name for Mount *Ti se*. Cf. Namkhai Norbu and Prats 1989, p. 5, l. 14.
43. The 'six excellent medicines' (*bzang drug*) are: *chu gang* (bamboo juice), *dza ti* (nutmeg), *gur gum* (marigold), *ka ko la* (cardamon: *amonum subulatum*), *sug smel* (another type of cardamon: *elettaria cardamomum*), *li shi* (cloves).
44. *Phye mar* is a mixture of roast barley flour and butter, used in Tibet as an auspicious offering during the new year celebrations.
45. *Ba lu*: *abies webbiana*.
46. See above note 37.
47. *A ga ru*: *aquilaria agallocha*.

48. Op. 10, p. 7b, l. 1.
49. *mNol bsang* (*bSang for Contaminations*) from the *lHa bsang rgyags brngan chen mo* collection.
50. Op. 54, p. 1a, l. 1.
51. See above Chapter II, iii and cf. Op. 46, p. 129, l. 13.
52. The syllables symbolising the elements air, fire, water, earth and space.
53. Op. 83, p. 1, l. 4.
54. *Ge khod dkar tshan* (*The White tshan of Ge khod*) from the *Ge khod gsang ba drag chen* cycle.
55. *Gong mo: tetraogallus tibetanicus*.
56. *Lha bdag* refers to the *gshen*, the officiant who enters into contact with the deity through the rite.
57. Uncertain translation of *tshan du babs pas tshan zhes bya*. According to T.N. *tshan* is in the Zhang Zhung language and means 'pure water'.
58. *Gur gum* – a kind of marigold, *carmathus tinctorus* or *crocus sativus*.
59. *gTsos kyi la'u* read as *gtsod kyi la'u*. (A.N.) The *gtsod* is a type of antelope (*pantholops hodgsoni*).
60. The *pi wang* is a Tibetan stringed instrument used in popular music.
61. Op. 27, p. 74 (13b), l. 6. Cf. Karmay 1975, pp. 204-205.
62. *lHa'i rgyal po nam mkha' bcu'i tshan* (*The Ten tshan of Space, King of Deities*) from the *Zhi khro'i sgrub skor* ritual cycle.
63. These four rivers springing from the foot of the 'supreme mount' (*ri rab*) must be the 'four great rivers' (*kha 'babs kyi chu chen bzhi*) that flow from Mount Ti se (Kailāsa): the Brahmaputra, Indus, Sutlej and Karnali. Cf. Namkhai Norbu and Prats 1989, pp. 15-16 and 115.
64. The lustral waters to be offered to the deities. (A.N.)
65. Divine manifestations linked to the astrological cycle of three hundred and sixty days. Cf. Tucci 1976, p. 266.
66. Op. 47, p. 98 (1b), l. 3.
67. Probably the same as the *skyobs pa'i spun dgu* (Nine Protector Brothers) mentioned among the *dgra lha* in Nebesky 1975, p. 339. According to T.N. they belong to the class of the *Sa bdag*.
68. For the rites connected with wedding celebrations cf. Karmay 1975, pp. 207-213; Namkhai Norbu 1990, pp. 52-56.
69. *Ge khod lo khrom e yi dmar tshan* (*The Red tshan for the Negativities of the Year of Ge khod*) from the *Ge khod gsang ba drag chen* cycle.
70. *bDud 'dul* (lit. 'subduer of the *bDud*') is the translation in Tibetan of Ge khod's name, which is in the Zhang Zhung language.
71. *Khong mo 'brong* could also refer to a pregnant 'brong. (A.N.); according to T.N. it is only a synonym of 'brong, the wild yak (*bos grunniens*).

72. I.e. Ge khod's mother, who belongs to the class of the bDud, and whom he kills unintentionally. This matricide constitutes the 'mythic antecedent' of the red *tshan* rite.
73. Ku byi mang ke, A ti mu wer and Ge khod form the 'triad of protectors' (*mgon po gsum*), three of the most important deities of Zhang Zhung. Cf. Karmay 1972, p. XXIX.
74. *bSe'u ru gcig*: the rhinoceros, or a type of single horned roebuck. Cf. Das, p. 1319; Roerich vol. 10, p. 182.
75. *Selenarctos thibetanus* and *ursus arctos*, respectively.
76. Or a very young *kha sha* (*cervus elaphus wallichii*) whose horns have not yet sprouted. (A.N.) T.N. identifies the *mgas* as a type of reddish long horned deer.
77. *Ye tse* or *yel tse* may also be synonymous with the Zhang Zhung words *tse ze* (Haarh 1968, p. 38), that corresponds to the Tibetan *gna' ba* (*ovis nahura*), a type of wild sheep, in which case the bluish colour would indicate youth. Finally, it could also be the water bird with a flat bill known in China as *ya tsi*. (A.N.) Its identification as a 'bluish hawk' is by T.N.
78. Op. 28, p. 68 (10b), l. 1; Op. 45b, pp. 29ff.
79. *Dam tshig lha*: the deity conferred on the disciple by the master during the initiation, and with whom the practitioner is indissolubly linked from that moment.
80. *Mun nag mo* can be understood to mean a woman whose life and attitude are entirely contrary to those of a practitioner. (A.N.) T.N. interprets the term as 'widow'.
81. *dMe rag mo* – for example, a woman who has murdered her husband. (A.N.)
82. *Ya man can* – dirty clothes of which one does not know the owner, where they come from, or which one has never seen before. (A.N.)
83. *gNyan rgod* – powerful, wrathful deities belonging to the 'eight classes' (*sde brgyad*).
84. To offend in one's thoughts, or to lack respect towards, wrathful deities such as the lHa rgod. (A.N.)
85. Op. 28, p. 72 (12b), l. 4.
86. *Heruka* are tantric male *sambhogakāya* manifestations in wrathful (*khro bo*) or joyous (*sgyes pa*) form.
87. The 'five meats' (*sha lnga*) used in Tantrism are the flesh of the elephant, human, horse, dog and ox or peacock. The 'five nectars' (*bdud rtsi lnga*) are faeces, urine, blood, flesh and sperm.
88. *Tshogs khor* – a tantric rite in which the food, drinks and other objects of enjoyment of the senses are 'transformed' into nectar through the power of *mantra*, *mudrā* and concentration.

89. The *Guhyasamāja* (*gSang ba 'dus pa*) is one of the tantras belonging to the 'father series' (*pha rgyud*) of the *gsar ma* tradition (*Sa skya pa*, *bKa' brgyud pa* and *dGe lugs pa*).
90. Op. 20, p. 27b, l. 4.
91. The three *vajra* (*rdo rje gsum*) are the pure, intrinsic aspects of the primordial dimension of the body, voice and mind.
92. The five clairvoyances (*mngon shes lnga*) are: miraculous clairvoyance (*rdzu 'phrul gyi mig gi mngon shes*), clairvoyance of the eyes of the deities (*lha'i mig gi mngon shes*), clairvoyance of the ears of the deities (*lha'i rna ba'i mngon shes*), clairvoyance of previous lives (*sngon gnas rjes su dran pa'i mngon shes*), clairvoyance of others' thoughts (*gzhan gyi sems shes pa'i mngon shes*).
93. Op. 20, p. 61a, l. 4.
94. *Dri med shel gong* (*The Pure Crystal Sphere*), a medical treatise by Dil dmar bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs (18th century).
95. Op. 22, p. 22 (11b), l. 1.
96. *sMug po byer ba*: a disturbance of the phlegm humour linked with the blood.
97. *Pantholops hodgsoni*.
98. *Ovis nahura*.
99. *Ibid.* p. 28 (14b), l. 4.
100. *dPal ldan lha mo* (*Śrīdevī*) is an important female deity of fierce mien, connected with *Rematī* and to the class of the *Ma mo*. Cf. Nebesky, 1975, pp. 22-23.
101. See author's bibliography.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IX

1. *gTo* is a general name designating various types of rites in which the officiant relies on the power of his protective deity, after having satisfied the deity with offerings, to eliminate disturbances and subjugate negative forces. See Chapter XII, vi. *gTo zor* is a particular type of *gtor ma* that is 'hurled' against enemies. Cf. Tucci 1966, p. 148.
2. Op. 36a, Kha p. 49; Op. 36b, Kha p. 599.
3. See above, Chapter VII, note 41.
4. The *mnan gtad* is one of the best-known rites of destructive magic in Tibet. Various impure substances and objects are put in a yak horn, together with a sheet on which are written destructive *mantra*. After an offering rite and a request to the fierce deities to send the curse, the horn that serves as 'support' of the destructive magic is hidden under the ground, if possible under the foundations of the enemy's house, otherwise nearby. The effect of such a curse can be that the

- generations of a family may be struck by deaths and disasters from which they can be released only by discovering the yak horn and destroying it. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 483-486.
5. In order to eliminate the *byad kha* curse, one performs a rite in which the arms and legs of the victim of the negative influences are bound with coloured thread into which the negative magic force is transferred and then eliminated when the officiant cuts the thread. (A.N.)
 6. Once the yak horn (support of the *mnan gtad* curse) has been found it must be burnt or thrown into a river.
 7. I.e. the *bon pos* descended from a lineage of masters, the founder of which was the protagonist of one of the 'origin myths' that explain the purpose of the rite and guarantees its efficacy.
 8. Op. 36a, Kha p. 458, ll. 5ff; Op. 36b, Kha p. 598, ll. 4ff.
 9. For the *dBal* class of deities and for the semantic import of this term see Chapter XV, viii and note 65.
 10. Gar g₂as btsan po is the principal deity of the *sNang gshen theg pa* cycle, like 'Dur g₂as smra bo in the *Srid gshen*, *dBal g₂as r₂ngam pa* in the '*Phrul gshen* and *dKyil chen Phu wer* in the *Phywa gshen*.
 11. The term *zhal zas* can denote food offerings in general, and also a specific type of *gtor ma* or *bshos bu*.
 12. A term in the Zhang Zhung language, like the preceding terms *yu ti*, *du sam* and *mang thung*, corresponding to the Tibetan *tshogs gtor*, the *gtor ma* used in *tshogs 'khor (ganacakra)* rites.
 13. Op. 36a, Kha p. 459, l. 5; Op. 36b, Kha p. 600, l. 1.
 14. I have used the term 'expiation' for *skong* (or *bskang*), a verb which literally means 'to fill' or 'satisfy'. The *dBal mo* are a class of female deities of the type of, but inferior to, the *rGod lcam*. Many *dBal mo* are considered emanations of *Srid pa'i rgyal mo*.
 15. This description is based on the concept of the structure of the universe found in the Buddhist *Abhidharma* scriptures, in which Mount Meru lies at the centre surrounded by the four major continents and the eight minor continents. What follows is instead a representation of the 'palace of the thirty-three deities' (*lha sum cu so gsum gyi gzhai yas khang*), abode of the god Indra. For an illustration cf. Snellgrove 1980, pp. 288-289.
 16. *Shing rta*, *r₂sub 'gyur, dga' ba*, '*dres, skyed mo'i tshal* – these are the names of parks surrounding the divine palace.
 17. A legendary flower that grows on the top of Mount Meru, called 'the plant that destroys the bDud' (*bdud 'joms shing*).
 18. *Ar mo*, a legendary stone, or *ar mo nig*, a black calcareous stone found in southern Tibet.

19. The 'eight auspicious objects' (*bkra shis rdzas brgyad*) are the mirror, yoghurt, bezoar, dextrorse spiralling conch shell, white mustard (*yungs dkar*), the mineral *li khri* (*sindhūra*, used for the colour red), *dur ba* grass (*cynodon dactylon*) and the fruits of the *bil ba* (*aegle marmelos*).
20. The 'seven precious jewels' (*rin chen nor bdun*) are the ruby (*pad ma ra ga*), zephyr (*indra ni la*), lapis lazuli (*bai du rgya*), emerald (*ma rgad*), diamond (*rdo rje pha lam*), pearl (*mu tig*) and coral (*bye ru*).
21. Op. 36a, Kha p. 460, l. 1; Op. 36b, Kha p. 600, l. 5.
22. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 383-385 and 387 for *mdos* of the Buddhist tradition offered to the *Ma mo* and the *brTan ma*. As regards the Bon tradition, a collection has been published in two volumes under the title *bsKang 'bum*, cf. Karmay 1977, pp. 130-134.
23. For the different kinds of 'support' (*rten*) erected as abodes for the protective energy of sundry deities cf. Namkhai Norbu in Tucci 1966, pp. 163ff and 188ff.
24. Op. 36a, Kha p. 461, l. 2; Op. 36b, Kha p. 602, l. 4.
25. The *gsas mkhar* is a small construction in stone or clay to which are attached cypress twigs and threads of coloured wool or *rlung rta* flags. They are usually set up on top of houses, in the middle of fields or at passes. Cf. Namkhai Norbu in Tucci 1966, pp. 155-157 and 187.
26. The *thug nag* are the 'support' of the protective deities and are very common on the roofs of monasteries in Tibet. For other types of *thug* cf. Namkhai Norbu in Tucci 1966, p. 189 note 3.
27. For the *rten mdung*, a lance also used by Tibetan oracles, cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 294-295.
28. A collection of ritual texts from this series has recently been published in India under the title *sTong gsum 'khrugs bcos sa snying gi cho ga'i skor*. See Op. 90.
29. The *Sa bdag*, and to a lesser extent the other classes of beings, are closely linked with the astrological influences of the *sme ba*, *spar kha* etc., so that if a person is born or dies under an astrologically unfavourable configuration this can disturb these beings. On the connections between the *Sa bdag* and the different astrological cycles cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 294-295.
30. Op. 36a, Kha p. 461, l. 4; Op. 36b, Kha p. 603; Op. 33, p. 416, ll. 1ff.
31. For the various kinds of *zor* see Chapter XV, note 15.
32. Cf. Stein 1986, pp. 214-215.
33. A very famous ritual cycle in Bon is devoted to these four classes of beings that dominate the earth, water, trees and rocks respectively, called *Nye lam sde bzhi'i zin thu gsal byed 'phrul gyi me long*. See Bibliography, Op. 59.

34. 'Victorious One' (*rgyal ba*), which here refers to gShen rab mi bo che, is usually used to connote the 'Enlightened Ones', the Buddhas (*sangs rgyas*).
35. I.e. the power of the officiant who must be able to control external energies.
36. Op. 36a, Kha p. 461, l. 6; Op. 36b, Kha p. 603, l. 3.

NOTES TO CHAPTER X

1. Tradition has it that gShen rab mi bo che had eight sons by different wives: gTo bu 'bum sangs and dPyad bu khri shes by Hos bza' rgyal med, Lung 'dren gsal ba and rGyud 'dren sgron ma by dPo bza' thang mo, 'Od drug thang po by gSas bza' ngan ring, Mu cho ldem drug by Phywa bza' gung drug, g.Yung drung dbang ldan by Kong bza' khri lcam and 'Phrul bu chung by rGya bza' 'phrul bsgyur. Cf. Karmay 1972, p. 3.
2. Included among the *gSo rig sman gyi mdo dgu* (*Nine Essential Teachings on Medicine*), a *gter ma* rediscovered by Bu mcho Srid pa'i rgyal po (11th century). Cf. Kvaerne 1974, p. 101.
3. Op. 36a, Kha p. 412, ll. 7ff; Op. 36b, Kha p. 534, ll. 3ff.
4. 'Male pulse' and 'female pulse' do not apply only to members of the corresponding sexes; persons can have any of the three types of pulse, regardless of their sex.
5. For a detailed analysis of the 'seven marvellous pulses' (*ngo mtshar rtsa bdun*) cf. Dhonden and Topgay 1980, pp. 20-24.
6. Underlying Tibetan medical theory is the notion of the 'three humours': air (*rlung*), bile (*mkhris pa*) and phlegm (*bad kan*). Diseases are caused by imbalances of these three. 'Hot' disturbances (*tsha ba'i nad*) are attributed to an excessive increase in bile, 'cold' ones (*grang ba'i nad*) to an increase in air and phlegm.
7. At the index finger one can detect the beats of the heart, large intestine and lungs; at the middle finger, those of the spleen, stomach, liver and gall-bladder; at the ring finger, those of the left kidney, seminal sac, right kidney and urinary bladder. For the examination of the pulse cf. Lobsang Dolma 1986, pp. 152-172.
8. In general the *bla* is considered to circulate in the energy channels following a fixed course; whenever its position does not correspond to the customary one, this can be a sign of disturbance.
9. This is done by placing four sticks on the recipient containing the urine, two vertically and two horizontally, so as to form a lattice of nine sectors (*ling tshe dgu*) that correspond to the different directions and classes of beings with the capacity to interfere with the indi-

vidual's energy sphere. Stirring the urine one observes where the bubbles form, and on this basis the divinatory response can be interpreted. For the examination of the urine cf. Lobsang Dolma 1986, pp. 173-178.

10. *dPag bsam ljon shing* (*The Wish-Granting Tree*) by the *bon po* master and scholar 'Jigs med nam mkha' (1897-1956).
11. Op. 19, p. 497 (11a), l. 6.
12. Op. 19, p. 498 (11b), l. 2.
13. Op. 19, p. 498 (11b), l. 3.
14. Op. 19, p. 503 (24a), l. 1.
15. From *bDud rtsi snying po* (*The Essence of Nectar*), a medical treatise based on the *Four Tantras* (*rGyud bzhi*) by gYu thog gsar ma Yon tan mgon po, considered to be the reincarnation of the famous homonymous 8th century doctor at the court of King Khri srong lde'u btsan. Part of the *rGyud bzhi* has been translated by Donden and Kelsang in *The Ambrosia Heart Tantra* (see Bibliography).
16. Op. 2, p. 369, l. 4.
17. *gSing gis dbye* – using medicines, food and behaviour to help clarify or separate the 'hot' characteristics from the 'cold'. (A.N.)
18. *bsDud kyis 'byin* – using medicines to concentrate the excessive bile factors and expel them through evacuation. (A.N.)
19. Op. 36a, Kha p. 413, l. 3; Op. 36b, Kha p. 535, l. 2.
20. *dPyid kyi dga' ston* (*Spring Feast*), another medical treatise by 'Jigs med nam mkha'.
21. Op. 21, p. 15 (7a), l. 5.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Nor bu'i phreng mdzes* (*Precious Jewel Necklace*) by Jñānadhara (8th century).
24. Op. 57, p. 88, l. 25.
25. Quoted from *Tsho byed gzhon nu'i mgul rgyan* (*The Young Doctor's Neck Ornament*) by Khro sprul 'Gyur med ngag dbang. Op, 95, p. 30, l. 9.
26. In Chapters 16, 17 and 18 respectively.
27. Op. 21, p. 519 (21a), l. 4.
28. Op. 36a, Kha p. 413, ll. 5ff; Op. 36b, Kha p. 535, ll. 3ff.
29. *Mantra* are used particularly to treat disturbances of the energy sphere and karmic diseases whose causes are apparently unidentifiable.
30. Op. 36a, Ga p. 50, l. 6; Op. 36b, Ga p. 67, l. 6.
31. In this case *bla ma* refers to Brhaspati (*gza' phur bu*), 'teacher' of the Hindu deity Brahmā. Cf. Op. 99, pp. 385-386.

32. In the present context *drang srong* refers to semi divine beings endowed with magic powers. Cf. Op. 99, p. 248.
33. Op. 21, p. 320 (59b), l. 2.
34. Op. 21, p. 309 (54a), l. 1.
35. *Nam mkha' lding*, lit. 'that hovers in the sky', is sometimes used as a synonym for the *khyung*, the legendary *garuda* eagle.
36. *Mi'amci* (Skt. Kinnara) is the name of a class of legendary beings described as halfway between man and gorilla.
37. Skt. Mahoraga.
38. Skt. Pūtana.
39. Skt. Katapūtana.
40. Skt. Skanda.
41. Skt. Apasmāra.
42. Skt. Cāyā.
43. Skt. Unmada.
44. The class of *mkha' 'gro ma* (Skt. *dākinī*) also includes female beings that can cause disturbances by manipulating negative energies. Cf. Dowman 1985, pp. 234-235.
45. Skt. Revatī.
46. Skt. Śakunī.
47. In Ayurvedic medicine the equivalent of 'gdon-provoked' disease is called *graha*.
48. However it should be borne in mind that negative energies can also be 'simple', that is, not 'dominated' by the various classes of beings. (A.N.)

NOTES TO CHAPTER XI

1. According to tradition one of the most important persons to receive and promulgate the astrological teachings was gShen rab mi bo che's son, 'Phrul bu chung. Cf. Karmay 1972, p. 23.
2. The list of *bon pos* that follows corresponds to the first two of three groups of non human beings found in the compendium of the thirty-three *g.yen khams*. See above Chapter VI, note 2. These *bon pos* seem to represent different ritual traditions tied to particular functions or needs. According to T.N. their epithets are derived from the names of different classes of beings, each with a corresponding non human *bon po*.
3. *dBal bon*: a *bon po* who specialised in ritual acts connected with control of the fire element, like the *dBal chu* and *Dzwo*. (A.N.) See Chapter XV, vii.

4. *Yogs bon*: read as *yugs bon*, might refer to a *bon po* who specialised in suppressing the 'Dre and Si spirits linked to the negative energies of widowhood. (A.N.)
5. *Khrim bon*, a *bon po* entrusted with inspecting the observance of the laws. (A.N.)
6. *gNyer bon*: a *bon po* entrusted with executing the rites prescribed for obtaining the protection and assistance of the protective deities such as the *Yul lha*. (A.N.)
7. 'O *bon*: interpreting 'o as 'o *ma* (milk). This might refer to a *bon po* whose task was to perform propitious rites to increase the yield of dairy products among nomad populations. (A.N.)
8. *Tshams bon*: a *bon po* who specialised in the performance astrological calculations relative to marriage and in the application of the appropriate methods in cases of disharmony. (A.N.)
9. *dMu bon*: a *bon po* entrusted with worship of the *dMu* deities, to obtain benefit for himself and others. (A.N.)
10. *Srid bon*: a *bon po* who specialised in rites for the continuation and increase of generations. (A.N.)
11. *sKos bon*: a *bon po* who specialised in astrological calculations to identify positive and negative aspects and to discover the right way to improve circumstances. (A.N.)
12. *Phywa bon*: a *bon po* who was expert in performing rites to summon the *phywa* and *g.yang* to enhance fortune and prosperity. (A.N.)
13. *lHa bon*: a *bon po* entrusted with performing rites of purification for the deities that protect the individual ('go *ba'i lha*), in order to develop power. (A.N.)
14. Also called the 'thirteen powerful ones of the higher dimension' (*yar g.yen gnyan pa bcu gsum*).
15. Evidently names such as 'bon of the sun' and 'bon of the moon' must refer to particular types of astrological calculations connected with the solar and lunar cycles.
16. T.N. translates *dal* as 'mist'.
17. According to T.N. *lo* is to be read *lo skor bcu gnyis* – i.e. the twelve-year astrological cycle.
18. T.N. translates *rdzi* as 'wind'.
19. Op. 35, p. 81 (41a), l. 1.
20. *bDen pa bon gyi mdzod sgo sgra 'grel 'phrul gyi lde mig* (*The Miraculous Key: A Commentary on the 'Treasury' Series of True Bon*) ascribed to *Dran pa nam mkha'* and rediscovered as a *gter ma* by *rMa ston Jo lcam* (12th century).
21. *Bon gshen skos dang gsum gyi srid pa*. Op. 60, p. 53, l. 15.

22. In Bon cosmology Srid pa Sangs po 'bum khri, an emanation of Khri rgyal khug pa, Lord of Light and Positive Creation (*ye*), is the forefather of the human race. With Chu lcam (lcags) rgyal mo he fathered the 'Nine Brothers and Nine Sisters', each of whom was entrusted with a precise task in the context of cosmic and earthly forces. He is a constituent of the '*lha gshen srid*' triad of deities; cf. Karmay 1975, p. 176.
23. Op. 60, p. 53, l. 16.
24. Op. 60, p. 54, l. 13.
25. The *Gab rtse 'phrul gyi me long* is depicted as a circular diagram on a tortoise. The nine *sme ba* are at the centre surrounded by the eight *spar kha* and the animals of the twelve year cycle.
26. Op. 36a, Kha p. 406, l. 3 and p. 410, l. 6; Op. 36b, Kha p. 525, l. 3 and p. 531, l. 2; Op. 33, p. 400, l. 6 has *ci yag* instead of *ju zhag*.
27. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 292-294.
28. From *sGar thal 'gyur chen po'i rgyud*, one of the most important of the seventeen tantras of the *Man ngag sde* series of *rDzogs chen*.
29. Op. 78, Ka p. 49 (25a), l. 5.
30. *mDzad pa bcu gnyis*: twelve great deeds performed by gShen rab mi bo che, corresponding to the 'twelve deeds' described in the biographies of Buddha Śākyamuni.
31. The 'four demons' (*bdud bzhi*) represent four hindrances to spiritual realisation. They are the demon of the passions (*nyon mongs pa'i bdud*), the demon of the physical body (*phung po'i bdud*), the demon of the lord of death ('*chi bdag gi bdud*), and the demon of the son of the deities (*lha'i bu'i bdud*).
32. Op. 35, p. 75 (38a), l. 3.
33. On Kong rtse 'phrul rgyal, sometimes identified with Confucius, cf. Karmay 1975 (II), pp. 563-564.
34. *Mi mjed 'jig rten*, the 'world that does not fear to practise the *dharma*', a name used in Buddhist *Abhidharma* texts as a synonym of '*Dzam bu gling*, our world.
35. T.N. suggests replacing *kong tse* with *gab rtse*, the diagram used in the astrology of the elements.
36. The rGya clan is one of the six semi-legendary royal races of 'Ol mo lung ring (*rgyal rigs drug*), the other five being: dMu, dPo, Shag, gNyan, Hos (Op. 46, p. 17); however the Tibetan *rgya* term also means 'Chinese'.
37. Op. 35, p. 714 (77a), ll. 6ff.
38. The deed narrated in the biographies of gShen rab mi bo che is the construction of a temple which was to contain Bon images, scriptures and *stūpa* (*btsan pa rnam gsum*).

39. Op. 35, p. 722 (81a), l. 1.
40. The Tibetan term *spar kha* is probably derived from the Chinese *pa k'ua*, the trigrams which also form the basis of the I Ching divination.
41. *Shes bya kun khyab* (*Encyclopedia of Knowledge*), a work that treats of all the branches of Tibetan Buddhist religious culture, by Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1813-1899), the great master and inspirer of the *ris med* 'non sectarian' movement.
42. The legendary emperor Fu Hsui (2852-2738 B.C. traditional date) – first of the 'five mythical sovereigns' of ancient China.
43. Certain ritual texts attributed to Kong tse 'phrul rgyal are found in *gTo phran* (i.e. Bibliography Op. 49 and 82).
44. Op. 79, OM p. 594 (220a), l. 1.
45. On the spread of Bon in China cf. Karmay 1972, pp. 23-26.
46. Op. 84, p. 23 (12a), l. 7.
47. *mDo 'dus* ('*Dus gsum sangs rgyas byung khungs kyi mdo*) a *gter ma* rediscovered in the 10th century by Sad gu rin chen grags pa and Dre'u rgya ra dza, the 'two *ācārya*' (*atsa ra mi gnyis*).
48. *Phrom* or *Khrom* is probably the name given by the Tibetans to Byzantium and the Anatolian peoples.
49. Op. 67, p. 96 (48b), l. 1.
50. Cf. Op. 11, p. 584 (44a). l. 4.
51. Cf. Kvaerne 1971, pp. 220ff.
52. sNya chen Li shug stag ring is one of the most prominent personalities in ancient Bon. A native of Zhang Ṛhung, he is ascribed the authorship of two important cycles of *rDzogs chen* teachings: *Yang rtse klong chen* and *bsGrags pa skor gsum*, both *gter ma* rediscovered by gZhod ston dNgos grub grags pa (11-12th century).
53. Op. 67, p. 183 (92a), l. 5.
54. This date is found in the Tun Huang documents.
55. *Kālacakratantra* (*Dus kyi 'khor lo rgyud*) is the basis of the zodiacal astrology (*dkar rtsis*) which was introduced into Tibet from India in 1026. This date marks the start of the system of computation of time in sixty-year cycles called *rab byung*. *dByangs 'char* is a method of prediction through the interpretation of the vowels and consonants associated with numbers, and corresponds to the science of numerology. For a brief study of *skar rtsis* (or *dkar rtsis*) astrology derived from India cf. Berzin 1987.
56. The 'two supreme ones' (*mchog gnyis*) are Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga; the 'six ornaments' (*rgyan drug*) are Āryadeva, Dignāga, Vasubandhu, Dharmakīrti, Gunaprabha and Śākyaprabha.

57. 'Bras spungs monastery, near lHa sa, is one of the most important monasteries of the dGe lugs pa tradition. It was founded in 1416 by 'Jams dbyangs Chos rje bkra shis dpal ldan.
58. Cf. MacDonald 1971; Blondeau 1976, pp. 9ff.
59. bSams yas was the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet, built by King Khri srong lde'u btsan (started probably in 775 and completed in 787).
60. Khra 'brug temple, built by King Srong btsan sgam po in 641; it lies near sNe gdong in Lho kha.
61. See above Chapter III, note 34; cf. also Tucci 1949, p. 711.
62. From the Pelliot-Tibetaine manuscripts: *Les Documents de Touen-Houang*, Paris.
63. Bon 'di gsang ba'i bon (PT 1640; PI 314, 1).
64. 'Phan gyi bu grongs na/ gso ru bon ma mchis (PT 1134; PI 460, 44).
65. Bu ni lha'i bu/ tsa ni srin gyi tsa ste/ bon gshin gshen drag cig/ dur shen rma nga na/ blan shen dril bu/ lde'u shen rmun bu/ bon gshin gsas drag gi gos gto bgyis (PT 1134; PI 460, 48).
66. The name gShen rab (rabs) myi bo seems to appear at least six times in the Tun Huang manuscripts. Cf. Stein 1988, pp. 43-45.
67. sNyan drung ni sel bond/ spu drung ni nyams bzhaq/ thugs rum du them s bzhaq pa/ dur shen rma nga dang/ gshen rabs myi bo dang/ skar shen the'u bzhug (PT 1134; PI 460, 60).
68. Bon gshen drag/ bu ni lha'i bu/ tsha ni srin gyi tsha'/ myi bon/ lha'i bon/ rgya bon bris tang gis/ rgyal tag brgya (PT 1134; PI 460, 118).
69. sKu gshen mjol bon po rnams (PT 1042, 49).
70. For a tentative interpretation of the meaning of these and of the other types of bon mentioned below cf. Haarh 1969, pp. 368-370.
71. sKu gshen rigs gshen dang/ phangs bon po gnyis te gsum gyis drang (PT 1042, 49).
72. De nas nam tshab thsub na/ snyung bon po/ smag bon po/ 'jol bon po rnams kyang/ sa sar gyer la mchi/ cho ga nar ma la/ tho ras dang po dung bus pa dang/ rlad bon po dang/ ring mkhan dang/ bzhes pa'i phyag tshang gnyis/ 'di rnams mkhan sprus bsangs (PT 1042, 57).

NOTES TO CHAPTER XII

1. Cf. Op. 65, p. 899 where T.N. glosses *smrang brjod* ('to pronounce the *smrang*') with 'to narrate the origin and history' (*byung khung dang lo rgyus bshad pa*). During rites the section with the exposition of the *smrang* is always chanted.
2. Op. 36a, Kha p. 447, ll. 3ff; Op. 36b, Kha p.581, ll. 6ff.
3. See above Chapter V, note 34.

4. Op. 36a, Kha p. 448, ll. 1ff; Op. 36b, Kha p. 582, ll. 2ff.
5. This myth has been studied in Karmay 1975, pp. 191-196.
6. *Khri rgyal khug pa* represents the principle of light and being called *ye*, contrasted to that of darkness and non being called *ngam*.
7. *Tshan ting, nan ting, sprin ni*: these seem to be three Zhang Zhung terms designating three types of wind, each with specific characteristics.
8. *Med 'bum nag po* represents the dimension of *ngam*: darkness, non being, ignorance etc. On possible Iranian and Zoroastrian influences on the radical dualism apparent in these myths cf. Kvaerne 1987; Karmay 1975, pp. 194-195.
9. Op. 60, pp. 51ff.
10. The names of the eighteen ancestors have been translated on the basis of explanations contained in the commentary to *mDzod phug*, Op. 60, pp. 54ff.
11. The first three brothers are known as 'The Three, *Phywa, Srid* and *Skos*' (*phywa srid skos gsum*). *Srid rje 'brang dkar* fulfils the task of ensuring the continuation of generations, *sKos rje drang dkar* is responsible for keeping order in the contrasting forces of nature, and *Phywa rje ring dkar* is the protector of the life and prosperity of beings. The *dMu* clan (to which *gShen rab mi bo che* belongs) is descended from the first of these three; the royal Tibetan dynasty, whose forefather is the deity *Ya bla bdal drug*, is descended from the third.
12. Op. 60, pp. 54ff.
13. *Bla bslu tshe 'gugs srog gi chad mthud* (*The Reuniting of Life through the Ransom of the bla and Summoning of Long Life*) by *Nyi ma bstan 'dzin* (born 1812).
14. *g.Yen dgu* or *bar g.yen gtod po dgu*; cf. Chapter VI, note 2.
15. An expression in the Zhang Zhung language meaning 'to swallow the ocean in one sip'.
16. *Tso dmar* means the same as *dzwo dmar*, the power obtained through control of the fire element (*dbal*); *tsug tse* is a Zhang Zhung expression that means 'to put into action through magic'. (A.N.)
17. *gSang ba 'dus pa* is one of the foremost figures in ancient Bon and one of the principal masters of the original lineages of *rDzogs chen* and of the *sPyi spungs* tantric cycle. Cf. Karmay 1972, p. XXI.
18. Op. 3, p. 293 (2a), l. 6.
19. Op. 36a, Kha pp. 449ff; Op. 36b, Kha pp. 585ff. Cf. Snellgrove 1980, pp. 68ff.
20. For example, if in a family the first born son dies and this tragedy recurs every time a first born son is born in the succeeding genera-

- tions. Cf. Beyer 1988, p. 299. On the different kinds of *sri* cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 300-303.
21. Op. 33, p. 411; Op. 36b, Kha p. 586, l. 5 has instead *mas kyi srid*, 'inferior existence'.
 22. Op. 36a, Kha p. 450; Op. 36b, Kha p. 586.
 23. *Pra* divination is quite far spread in both the Buddhist and Bon traditions. In order to acquire the ability to 'see' the clues, the practitioner must first have obtained the power through the practice of the divination deity (e.g. *rDo rje g.yu sgron ma* in the Buddhist tradition, or a *sGra bla* or a *Wer ma* in Bon) and of the deity's *mantra*. The *pra* vision may appear in a mirror, in space, on the surface of a lake, on a finger-nail, on the blade of a sword etc. Cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 462-464.
 24. The expression could also refer to *Gar gsas btsan po*, 'gSas of the Origin of Existence'.
 25. *bZhen 'debs pa* to exhort the deities to keep their vow, or to issue threats to induce them to action. (A.N.)
 26. Op. 36a, Kha p. 451, l. 2; Op. 36b, Kha p. 587, l. 3.
 27. I have been unable to identify this deity that may be connected with the *skyobs pa'i spun dgu* mentioned in Nebesky 1975, p. 339.
 28. Female deities linked with the astrological cycle of the years and of the five elements.
 29. Cf. Bibliography Op. 49 and 82.
 30. See above, note 11.
 31. Op. 33, pp. 413-414.
 32. See Chapter VII, note 22.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XIII

1. This classification is based on dPal ldan tshul khrim's work, Op. 33, p. 413.
2. The term *bu*, found here in the word *mi bu*, is used in modern Tibetan to distinguish male from female (*bu mo*). However, in ancient times it was used for males and females, as can be gleaned from the fact that to distinguish the sexes it was necessary to add the suffixes *pho* (*bu pho*) and *mo* (*bu mo*). (A.N.)
3. *Klung bu* denotes the attribute of a person endowed with a highly developed *klung rta* so that good fortune is on his side. (A.N.)
4. *Srung rta* could be a corruption of *klung rta*. See above Chapter VIII, note 4.
5. On the *phung sri* cf. Nebesky 1975, p. 302.

6. *Bon sha ba ru rgyas*, published in *gTo phran*. It is also mentioned in Nebesky 1975, p. 387 and Hoffmann 1950, p. 183.
7. *Bya ngan sna tshogs sgro dus btsugs la skud pa nag po'i bsgyur la dar la mdog/ mda' kha phong khra shing ris nam mkha' rgyang bu bcu gsum gnyis bya'o* amended to *bya ngan sna tshogs sgro spu btsugs la/ skud pa nag po'i rgyud kha dar la 'dogs/ mda' bkra 'phang bkra shing ris nam mkha' rgyang bu bcu gsum mam bcu bzhi bya'o*. (A.N.)
8. *sKyung ka (kha) (pyrrhocorora graculus)* is a bird of the crow family, common in the Tibetan high plateaux. It has a black body, with red beak and claws.
9. Probably skull and bones, real or painted, of different kinds of animals.
10. *'Gal sna* refers to objects usually considered inauspicious and bearers of ill fortune, e.g. a piece of burnt black wood that has not been entirely consumed by fire. (A.N.) T.N. suggests that it may refer to nine types of burning wood, of which the flames are extinguished while they are still ablaze.
11. *sNod bya rog po dang kyung ka dang thod du rus rgya ras dgu 'gal sna dgu* amended to *snod du bya rog po dang skyung ka thod dgu rus dgu 'gal sna dgu; bshos bu gab gser bskyams* amended to *bshos bu 'am gser skyems*. (A.N.)
12. *sNang gsal sgron ma'i sha ba'i spyang ngo la/ bya dang lug gis sha'i srung phrul* amended to *snang gsal sgron mes sha ba spyang drangs la/ bya dang lug gi srung sha*. *Srungs sha* denotes a piece of meat without bone, sinew or nerves. (A.N.)
13. Op. 9, p. 478 (1b), l. 1.
14. *Nam mkha' stong pa phyod gsum*: the three primordial dimensions from which are derived three levels of existence symbolised by the king (*rje*), minister (*blon*) and vassal (*'bangs*) described below in the text.
15. For an explanation of the meaning of the names of the two deities personifying the principles of light and darkness cf. Op. 43, p. 5.
16. In the Yar klungs region in central Tibet. The characters mentioned appear to be legendary.
17. *Mun par zer ldan gyis/ sku stod man chod nas/ bdud kyi rje blon 'bangs dang bcas/ snga rabs phyi srid kyi/ glud dang sprul par 'byung*. The interpretation is uncertain.
18. *rGya nag dang ni rgyug pa mthun*.
19. The term *rkyang* (wild ass) is read as *lcang (lcang ma)*, 'willow', as from the context one can deduce that between the bird and the deer there must be a tree, which also represents the material structure of the *mdos*.

20. I have rendered *logs na* 'on (the surface of) the earth' in accordance with the Bon tripartite division of the sphere of existence. In fact it is on the earth that the clay effigy of the deer is placed.
- 20b. *Bswo bswo* is a characteristic exclamation found in ancient Bon ritual texts.
21. The *go sngon* bird, lit. 'blue-headed', has not been identified. It could be the *gong mo*, but this bird is presented as the bird of the lHa.
22. According to T.N. the expression *cho 'brang* should be read *pha'i cho dang ma'i 'brang*, 'paternal lineage and maternal lineage'. Cf. Snellgrove 1980, p. 298.
23. Onomatopoeic expression which is also the name of the bird (*skyung kha*).
24. *Cho che med* read as *cho rabs che ba med*. (A.N.)
25. *Bya nga la bya che chung med*: 'I, bird, (*bya nga la*) do not have actions or deeds (*las dang bya ba*) more important (*che ba*) than these to recount.' (A.N.)
26. In Tibetan the question is *spu ni mun pa'i khrag stang 'dra ba ci'i don*, but the answer reads *spun ni mun pa'i khrab stong* with a variance between *khrag stang* (to bleed) and *khrab stong* (coat of chain mail).
27. The four major continents and the twelve minor continents which surround Mount Meru and form the universe.
28. '*Bod cig skyes pa*, 'born with a cry' amended to '*bog cing skyes pa* on the basis of the deer's reply.
29. *gShen rab smrang*s *gis bkrol ba na snang srid lha 'dre'i phyag yangs so*.
30. The four kinds of birth (*skyes gnas bzhi*) are from: the womb (*mngal skyes*), an egg (*sgong skyes*), miraculous (*rdu 'phrul skyes*) and by heat and humidity (*drod gsher skyes*).
31. According to Buddhist theory the five aggregates (*phung po lnga*) constituting the personality are: form (*gzugs*), sensation (*'tshor ba*), recognition (*'du shes*), impulse (*'du byed*) and consciousness (*rnam shes*).
32. '*Gro ba rigs drug*: deities, demi gods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts and hell beings.
33. The 'seven great births' (*skye chen bdun pa*) denote the particular spiritual qualities considered to have been possessed by those reborn seven consecutive times as Brahmins.
34. See Chapter II, note 37.
35. In Buddhist philosophy *kun gzhi (ālaya)* indicates a kind of Unconscious in which all past causes and future predispositions are deposited, whereas in *rDzogs chen* thought this term intends the primordial condition of existence, synonymous with 'emptiness'.
36. *Blon dgu mchis dang bcu'i glud*: the interpretation is tentative.

37. *Gong sngon spyi yis gso ba'i rtags*. The term *gong sngon* could be the same as *go sngon*, the bird of the dMu mentioned above, or it could refer to the Lord of the gNyan called gNyan rje gong sngon. Cf. Nebesky 1975, p. 289.
38. On the *zor*, a kind of 'magic weapon' empowered by mantra, see Chapter XV, note 16.
39. Op. 9, p. 480 (2b), l. 4.
40. On the *gzhi bdag*, protective deities of places and of the earth, cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 226-230.
41. Op. 9, p. 501 (13a), l. 5.
42. See Chapter III, v.
43. *Mi la ras pa* (1040-1123) is one of Tibet's most famous ascetics and mystics, and his biography and spiritual songs have been translated several times into western languages. The passage is taken from *Mi la'i mgur 'bum* (*Milarepa's Hundred Thousand Songs*) written in 1488 by gTsang smyon he ru ka (*Sangs rgyas rgyal mtshan*) and translated into English by G.C. Chang in *The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa* (see Bibliography).
44. *Ras chung rDo rje grags pa* (1083-1161), one of Milarepa's foremost disciples.
45. *Cakrasaṃvara* (*'Khor lo sdom pa*) is the deity worshipped in one of the most famous tantric cycles of the 'mother series' (*ma rgyud*) of *Anuttaratantra*.
46. Op. 52, p. 99a, l. 5.
47. *sTong rgyung mthu' chen* of Zhang Zhung is one of the most prominent personalities in the history of ancient Bon. He was one of the 'four sages' (*mkhas pa mi bzhi*), alongside Sha ri dbu chen, IDem gyim tsha rma chung and Me nyag lCe tsha mkhar bu, who were the masters of Dran pa nam mkha
48. Op. 84, p. 129 (66a), l. 6.
49. However, it is worth bearing in mind that the custom of animal sacrifice continued officially until the end of the Tibetan empire. On the *rdo ring* raised to commemorate the peace treaty with China of 821-822, during the reign of Khri gtsug lde bstan or Ral pa can (died 836), it states that the pledge was solemnised by the slaying of animals. Cf. Richardson 1985, p. 126.
50. *Ye shes mtsho rgyal* (757-817) was one of Padmasaṃbhava's foremost consorts and disciples. Her biography, *Ye shes mtsho rgyal gyi rnam thar* (*The Life and Liberation of Ye she mtsho rgyal*) by sTag sham rdo rje (17th century) has been translated into English by K. Dowman: *Sky Dancer* (see Bibliography).
51. Op. 97, p. 190 (95b), l. 4.

52. *mChims phu* is a sacred place near bSam yas.
53. Op. 84, p. 133 (68a), l. 3.
54. *Ti sei'i dkar chag* (*Guide to Ti se*) by dKar ru grub chen bsTan 'dzin Rin chen rGyal mtshan bDe chen sNying po (born 1801), published in transliteration and partly translated in Namkhai Norbu and Prats 1989.
55. Op. 25, p. 43a, ll. 5ff.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XIV

1. *gZi brjid* has *na gso gto* (*gTo that Cure Diseases*) and '*chi bslu dpyad* (*Therapies that Redeem from Death*); but these may be scribe's errors. Cf. Op. 36a, Kha p. 404; Op. 36b, Kha p. 523.
2. The diverse divinatory methods are treated in Nebesky 1975, pp. 454-466.
3. According to T.N. *ju thig* is in the Zhang Zhung language and means 'cords'.
4. The medium is usually called *lha pa* or *dpa' bo*, and in ancient times the deity that possessed the medium was a *sgra bla*. On this type of divination by oracular trance (*lha bka'*), which is also performed by the celebrated State Oracle of gNas chung, cf. Nebesky 1975, pp. 409-443; Berglie 1976.
5. Op. 36a, Kha p. 406; Op. 36b, Kha p. 525; Op. 33, p. 400.
6. Op. 87, p. 5 (2b), l. 4.
7. Op. 87, p. 458 (229b), l. 4.
8. *Srid pa 'phrul gyi ju thig dpyad don snang gsal sgron me*, already mentioned above.
9. For the titles of the books mentioned in Mipham's text I have given only the Wylie transcription.
10. Op. 87, p. 808 (404b), l. 5.
11. Op. 87, p. 810 (405b), l. 2.
12. *Nag po dpyi dkar* tells us only that it is a black animal with white flanks, but since the animals usually offered to the deities as 'objects pleasing to sight' (*spyang gzigs*) are sheep and yak. As the sheep has already been mentioned, presumably the animal in this case is a yak. (A.N.)
13. The text mentions four names that can indicate either four sheep each of a different colour or four different animals – I have chosen the latter conjecture. *rGya rtsa bzhin bzang* in this case must mean a donkey, because the colour of its face (*bzhing bzang*) is similar to that of the hairs of the hoof (*sug tsa*) of the *rgya glang* (a kind of chamois but larger in size). *dMar rta mtshal kha* should read *ba lang* (bull) *dmar*

zal, where the latter term indicates a vermilion fur with a white or black central stripe on the back. *sNgon mo lcags kha* is a special term used to denote the colour of certain horses – grey tending to blue. *Ka ba bong mig* is read *gwa pa bong mig* where *gwa pa* is used to indicate horses, mules, yaks, etc. having a ‘mask’ of white hairs on their faces and *bong mig* refers to an animal with eyes like a donkey, i.e. a mule. (A.N.)

14. *Dred mong* (*ursus arctos*), a kind of bear.
15. This probably refers to the four divinatory methods of the *Phywa gshen theg pa*.
16. A kind of eagle (*haliaetus leucoryphus*).
17. *Rin chen sna lnga*: gold, silver, turquoise, coral, pearl, or gold, silver, copper, iron and tin (*bsha’ tshe*).
18. *mGron yag* should be read *mgron g.yag.*, ‘yak hosts’, in the sense of yaks offered as *spyang gzigs* to the protective deities. (A.N.) Otherwise, *mgron yag* is the name of a class of *sgra bla*. See Chapter IV, iv.
19. Op. 87, p. 814 (1a), l. 1.
20. The names of the *sangs* and *phrag* combinations in *sGyu ma gser ’bum* quoted below are given as *sad* and *brag*; also their quantities are inverted.
21. Op. 87, p. 457 (229a), l. 5.
22. Op. 87, p. 802 (401b), l. 3.
23. *Ding ding mi shes mo pa med/ ding ding shes pa’i mo pa med*. Op. 87, p. 19 (10a), l. 4.
24. Op. 36a, Kha p. 407 (204a), l. 6; Op. 36b, Kha p. 527, l. 1.
25. *Mi dbang yas dang thod mi bkye*: i.e. not to make offerings to classes of beings who are not worthy of receiving them or capable of enjoying them; or not to send as ransom (*yas*) important men (*mi dbang*) such as *gshen po* and kings and not to provoke their anger (*thod du mi bkye*). (A.N.)
26. Op. 87, p. 803 (402a), l. 6. Cf. Op. 33, p. 402, l. 4.
27. Op. 36a, Kha p. 403, l. 7; Op. 36b, Kha pp. 521ff.
28. Op. 87, p. 805 (403a), l. 5.
29. Enigmatic verses of this type introduced the name and origin of the various knots of the *Ju thig*. Cf. Op. 87, p. 167, l. 6.
30. Op. 87, p. 87, l. 2.
31. I.e.: how the knot fell for the first time during the divination practice.
32. Op. 87, p. 199, l. 1.

NOTES TO CHAPTER XV

1. The verb *bsgral ba* (*sgrol ba*), which originally meant 'to release' or 'to liberate', has become a technical term meaning 'to destroy ritually' or 'to eliminate', on the basis of the 'liberation' of the consciousness-principle of the victim through its transference into a pure dimension by the officiant after the execution. Cf. Beyer 1988, p. 305.
2. *bSnyen pa* is used in tantric teachings to designate the first phase of the practice – that of 'reliance' on or 'approach' to the master and the tutelary deity (*yi dam*), in which the fundamental practice consists in the recitation of the *mantra*.
3. *dPon gsas lha*: lit. 'divine *dpon gsas* (master)', divine because it is he who transmits the power of the *yi dam* deity.
4. Op. 36a, Kha p. 490, ll. 5ff; Op. 36b, Kha p. 669, ll. 6ff. For this and the following five sections cf. Snellgrove 1980, pp. 98-115.
5. The main deity of the '*Phrul gshen* cycle is *dBal gsas rnam pa*.
6. *Lha gsas (sras) lcam* could also allude to the 'male and female deities'.
7. Op. 36a, Kha p. 492, l. 6; Op. 36b, Kha p. 672, l. 3.
8. I.e.: the pure dimension or *maṇḍala* of the *yi dam* deity.
9. Four protective deities with the form of four animals. Cf. Snellgrove 1980, p. 259 note 32.
10. These three meditative phases (*ting 'dzin rnam gsum*), characteristic of the *bskyed rim* tantric system, are called *de bzhin nyid*, *kun tu snang ba* and *rgyu*.
11. The 'three syllables' are OM Ā HŪM, symbols of the pure state of the body, voice and mind of all the Enlightened Ones. The sequence is often Ā OM HŪM in Bon texts.
12. Op. 36a, Kha pp. 493-494; Op. 36b, Kha pp. 673-675.
13. *Khro bo gtso mchog mKha'* 'gying, one of the five wrathful deities (*gsas mkhar mchog lnga*) of the *sPyi spungs* cycle. The most important ritual collection is *Khro gzhung ngo mtshar rgyas pa*, a *gter ma* rediscovered by *gShen chen klu dga'*. Cf. Karmay 1972, p. 45.
14. *dBal gsas rnam pa*, another of the five *yi dam* mentioned in note 12. The main ritual collection is *dBal gsas las rim*, a *gter ma* rediscovered by *dByil ston khyung rgod rtsal* (born 1175). Cf. Karmay 1977, p. 41.
15. *dBal mo las kyi thig le*, a tantric cycle devoted to the *dBal mo* deities. A *gter ma* rediscovered by *rMa ston srol 'dzin* (born 1092). Cf. Karmay 1977, p. 38.
16. *Zor* is a generic term applied to various kinds of objects charged with magic power, of which one of the most common, apart from those mentioned in the text, is the *gtor zor*, a *gtor ma*; however the magic power can be transferred to a weapon (e.g. an arrow, a dagger, a

torch etc.) which is always 'charged' through the *gtor ma* that acts as temporary 'support' of the deities invoked.

17. Op. 36a, Kha p. 496, l. 5; Op. 36b, Kha p. 677, l. 6.
18. Op. 36a, Kha pp. 497ff; Op. 36b, Kha pp. 678ff.
19. The *e klong drag po'i thun khang* is a triangular construction suitable to the execution of the rite of destruction by practitioners of the 'Phrul *gshen*; it is also known as *lcog mkhar*. It is quite similar to the ancient buildings in Arizona called *kiwa* where certain Indian tribes performed their rites. (A.N.) Cf. Op. 7, pp. 24-25. According to T.N. the term may also be a synonym of *e klong 'brub khung*, the triangular container in which the *linga* is 'executed'.
20. *Srog gi 'khor lo*, the 'wheel of life', a name used for this series of ritual acts of destruction derived from the *cakra* ('*khor lo*) or circular 'magic diagram' (*srog mkhar*) on which the 'life syllables' (*srog yig*) of the wrathful deities and of the 'eight classes' (*sde brgyad*) used to activate its magic power are written.
21. Names of different types of destructive magic. The first consists in burying the *linga* under the ground, the second in burning it (usually in the *sbyin sreg* rite) and the third in hurling a mantra-empowered arrow in the direction of one's enemies.
22. Op. 36a, Kha pp. 497-498; Op. 36b, Kha pp. 678-679.
23. For a similar list in the Buddhist tradition cf. Beyer 1988, p. 305; also the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* Dictionary, p. 2389 (*zhing bcu tshang ba'i bstan dgra*).
24. *Le'u lha log mkhan*: *le'u* or *lhe'u* can be interpreted in the sense of 'practitioner,' and the whole expression could also intend a practitioner, who, after having received the instructions on the rites of destruction, puts the power into action but combining it with unsuitable deities. (A.N.) T.N. interprets *le'u* or *lhe'u* as a synonym of *sbyin bdag*, lit. 'benefactor' or 'donor'; the 'sponsor' who commissions the execution of the rite. In ancient times the village *gshen* performed the important function of maintaining contact with the protective deities to ensure good harvests, keeping away illnesses etc. and the expression *le'u'i lha* was used to denote deities such as the '*Go ba'i lha lnga* and the *sKyobs pa'i lha dgu*, intimately connected with the fortune and prosperity of the individual and the community.
25. Op. 33, p. 420.
26. The verses that follow are an *apologia* of tantric practices, in contrast with the moral principles observed in other types of Bon.
27. Sexual union (*sbyor ba*), through which one realises the union of bliss and emptiness (*bde stong zung 'jug*), and 'liberation by destruction' (*sgrol ba*), that allows one to eliminate the hindrances caused by cruel

beings and to 'save' their consciousness-principles, are two important practices also found in the Buddhist *Anuttaratantra* tradition.

28. *Dzam rdzas lnga*, synonymous with *bdud rtsi lnga*. See Chapter VIII, note 87.
29. The five poisons (*dug lnga*) are attachment, jealousy, pride, avarice and mental darkness; their pure or 'transformed' aspect is symbolised by the 'five nectars'.
30. Tb. *mtshan ldan gzungs ma*: the partner's characteristics are always listed in the tantric texts on these practices. Cf. Snellgrove 1980, pp. 192-195.
31. *rTog pa'i rgyang mtshams*, a correction of *rtogs pa rgyangs mtshams* (cf. Op. 36a, Kha p. 495, l. 3) and *rtog pas rgyang mtshams* (cf. Op. 36b, Kha p. 676, l. 1).
32. *Srog gi khor lo*, the magic diagram used for the destruction of the enemy. See above note 20.
33. The *gtor ma*, heap of bones, human skins etc. mentioned in the rite serve to purify or transform the five fundamental passions.
34. *Zhing chen g.yang gzhi*.
35. This probably means that the 'brub khung container must be visualised as the immense dimension of the nature of existence (*bon nyid klong yangs*).
36. A small enclosure that surrounds, for example, a *gtor ma* of the *gto* type (see the illustration in Tucci 1966, p. 205), made of thorns from a prickly bush called *skyer pa* (*berberis asiatica*: a kind of barberry) and coloured with blood or with red colouring made from a root called 'bri mog (*onosma echioides*).
37. The 'bloody weapons' are necessary for the continuity of the generations. (A.N.) According to T.N. the 'net of existence' (*srid pa'i drwa ba*) symbolises all the negativities and disturbances caused by evil beings.
38. Op. 36a, Kha p. 494 (247a), ll. 7ff; Op. 36b, Kha p. 675, ll. 5ff.
39. The first legendary 'universal monarch' (*'khor lo sgyur rgyal*) of India, from whom, according to the Buddhist tradition of the *gSang ba chos lugs*, was descended the prince Rupati who fled to Tibet and there became the first king, *gNya' khri btsan po*. Cf. Tucci 1949, pp. 731-733.
40. Simhahanu, forty-seventh in the lineage of 'universal monarchs'
41. Op. 67, p. 98 (49b), l. 4.
42. *Khro bo dbang chen gyi gzhung* (*The Ritual Tradition of Khro bo dbang chen*), a *gter ma* of the *Tso mchog mkha'* 'gying cycle rediscovered by *gShen chen klu dga'* and included in the *Zhi khro'i sgrub skor* collection.

43. bZang bza' ring btsun is the mother of 'Chi med gtsug phud. Cf. Karmay 1972, p. XXI.
44. According to certain traditions 'Chi med gtsug phud was gShen rab mi bo che's previous incarnation as a deity.
45. sTag la me 'bar is one of the great *siddhas* of the original lineage of the *Phur ba* cycle, one of the five *gsas mkhar* and should not be confused with the homonymous wrathful deity. Cf. Karmay 1972, p. XXII.
46. I.e.: belonging to gShen rab mi bo che's family.
47. The three masters Yongs su dag pa, Ye shes snying po and Mi lus bsan legs are famous for having transmitted the three *sPyi spungs* cycles (*sPyi spungs bsgrags pa skor gsum*) to the worlds of the deities, of the Klu and of men, respectively. Cf. Karmay 1972, pp. XXII-XXIII and p. 15.
48. Op. 40, p. 178 (2b), l. 1.
49. 'Mind series' (*sems phyogs*) denotes the *rDzogs pa chen po* teachings.
50. The above mentioned *Dar rgyas gsal ba'i sgron me*. See Bibliography Op. 11.
51. rGya mkhar ba'chod, an important centre in ancient Zhang Zhung.
52. *Chu mig brgyad bcu rtsa gnyis*, 'Eighty-two Springs', probably Mukti-nath on the Nepalese-Tibetan border.
53. *Ri rab rgyal po* (Mount Meru) could in this case indicate Mount Ti se (Kailāsa).
54. Tb. *ris drug*, synonym of *rigs drug*, the six classes of beings. See above Chapter XIII, note 32.
55. Op. 11, p. 617 (61b), l. 3.
56. The five Pāṇḍava brothers made famous in the great Indian epic Mahābhārata.
57. Op. 67, p. 99 (50a), l. 1.
58. For a discussion of the origin and etymology of the word *bod* cf. Gedun Chos'phel 1978, pp. 22-24, and the author's article *Bod ces bya ba'i tha snyad la dpyad pa* in *China Tibetology* (see Bibliography Op. 4).
59. The 'six great masters' (*bla ma che drug*) are gSang ba 'dus pa, rMa lo dar dpyangs, Yongs su dag pa, Mi lus bsam legs, Ye shes snying po, and sNang ba'i mdog can. Cf. Karmay 1972, p. 58.
60. Op. 67, p. 100 (50b), l. 4.
61. The *dbal chu* rite was performed in order to purify various types of negativities, such as the birth of an illegitimate child (see above Chapter VIII note 7), thought liable to cause calamities. In this case the father was blamed for any misfortune befalling the unwed mother's family and had to indemnify it for any losses. To avert this danger, he had to commission the performance of the *dbal chu* rite in

the mother's house paying all the costs himself. The rite, which lasted from seven to ten days, was performed by four officiants. On the last day, in order to attest the power achieved through the recitation of the mantra, one of the officiants had to immerse a Khyung made of butter in boiling water in the *dbal zangs* container and then take it out with his bare hands. If the *khyung* had not melted then the officiants could proceed with the final phase of the rite, in which the *dbal chu* or 'boiling liquid' was sprinkled in every corner of the house to purify contaminations. Then on the birth of the child the father had to marry the mother, paying her family a considerable sum of money. (T.N.) The text from which the next quotation is taken is *rTog 'joms dbal chen wer spungs gyi zhung* (*The Ritual Tradition of the dbal chen wer spungs that Defeats Thoughts*), attributed to King Khri lde lcags kyi bya ru can and rediscovered as a *gter ma* by Bon zhid Blo gros rgyal mtshan.

62. Zhang Zhung term meaning 'Bon master'.
63. This may be King sTag rna gzi byid Khri lde lcags kyi bya ru can of sTag rna in the Tsi Na region of Zhang Zhung. Cf. Namkhai Norbu and Prats 1989, pp. 55 and 117-118.
64. The name of the royal *gshen po* of the king mentioned in the preceding note is 'Dzu 'phrul ye shes. *Ibid.* p. 117.
65. The term *dbal* has different connotations in Bon literature. In ritual texts it can mean 'flaming' or 'magic flame', linked with specific *mantra* practices for controlling the fire element, whence the term *dbal chu*, 'boiling liquid', i.e. a liquid prepared with appropriate substances and empowered by *mantra*. (A.N.) There is also a class of deities called *dBal*, the most important of which is *dBal gsaṅ rṅam pa*: the *dbal mo* are their female counterparts. Finally, in certain cases the term may mean 'sharp', 'cutting' or 'powerful'; this is the only interpretation given by T.N. Hence, in most cases I have preferred to keep the original Tibetan.
66. The Tibetan measure *bre* corresponds to just under one kilo.
67. *dBal zangs*, lit. 'dbal copper cauldron', is a ritual container in which medicines, aromatic herbs etc. are boiled to produce the *dbal chu* liquid:
68. See the following section.
69. Op. 76, p. 2 (1b), l. 1.
70. From *Dzwo dmar glang chen 'bying ba* (*Majestic Elephant of the dzwo dmar*), from the *gter ma* cycle mentioned in note 61 above.
71. See above note 65.
72. *Thu lum* read as *thur lum*.
73. Op. 24, p. 50 (9b), ll. 6ff.

74. The above mentioned *Dug phyung 'bar ba nag po*. Op. 23, p. 65 (9a), ll. 6ff.
75. *Bong nga nag po: aconitum ferox*.
76. *mKhar gong srin can*, one of two varieties (the other is *srin med*) of *mkhar gong*, a poisonous white stone.
77. *Re lcag: stellaria chamaejasne*.
78. Op. 45b, p. 43 gives the following list of the nine poisons: (1) earth (*sa dug*); (2) stone (*rdo dug*); (3) water (*chu dug*); (4) fire (*me dug*); (5) trees (*shing dug*); (6) plants (*ldum dug*); (7) meat (*sha dug*); (8) bones (*rus dug*); and (9) cereals (*'bru dug*).
79. See Chapter VIII, iv and vi.
80. *rDzogs pa chen po zhang zhung snyan brgyud kyi bon ma nub pa'i gtan tshigs* (*The Reason Why the Bon of the rDzogs pa chen po of the Oral Lineage of Zhang Zhung was not Suppressed*) – a historical work from the *Zhang zhung snyan brgyud* cycle.
81. According to tradition Gyer spungs snang bzher lod po (7th century) put in writing the *rDzogs pa chen po zhang zhung snyan brgyud* teachings after having received them from *sprul sku* Ta pi hri tsa (see the following section). In the following passage he appears to be a contemporary of King Khri srong lde'u btsan, but it is more likely that he lived during the reign of Srong btsan sgam po, the king who definitively annexed Zhang Zhung (see Introduction, note 12). On this personage cf. Snellgrove and Richardson 1980, pp. 102-104.
82. See Chapter II, vii.
83. Probably the strip of land lying between lakes Ma pham (Manasarovar) and Raksas Tal.
84. I.e. Śāntarakṣita.
85. Gu rub was the master's clan.
86. Op. 63, p. 264 (3b), l. 4.
87. The deities Me ri and Ge khod are considered to be two aspects of the same essence – manifestations of A ti mu wer and of Ku byi mang ke, and in the tantric cycles devoted to them one finds practices common to both.
88. *Bon sku* corresponds to the Buddhist term *chos sku* (*dharmakāya*).
89. Corresponds to the Buddhist *sambhogakāya*.
90. Op. 11, p. 619 (62b), l. 3.
91. That is, without the aid of words. Kun tu bzang po (Samantabhadra) is the primordial Buddha in the *rDzogs chen* teachings of both the Buddhist and Bon traditions.
92. The four teachings mentioned later form the four main sections of the *rDzogs pa chen po zhang zhung snyan brgyud* teachings.
93. Op. 11, p. 621 (63b), l. 3.

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Note: TBMC stands for Tibetan Bönpo Monastic Centre, Dolanji.

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Index of Tibetan and Sanskrit Names and Terms

EDITOR'S NOTE

In the following index, bearing in mind the needs of both the general reader and the specialist, I have given all the Tibetan terms in scientific transliteration, and in phonetic transcription whenever any word appeared this way in the text (always with the exact transliteration in brackets for further reference). The order in the English alphabet has been followed, so that a Tibetan word such as 'brTen pa', in which the main letter (*ming gzhi*) is the 'ta', is listed under the letter 'B'.

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DRUNG, DEU AND BÖN

Drung, Deu and Bön offers a rare opportunity to explore pre-Buddhist Tibetan culture, presented within the three categories commonly described as the foundation of the kingdom of Tibet—*drung* (narrations), *deu* (symbolic languages), and the *Bön* tradition.

In this important work, Professor Namkhai Norbu begins by investigating the epic poems and legends of Tibet's secular culture. He then turns his attention to the mysteries of the ancient symbolic languages that conveyed wisdom inexpressible in conventional terms; and he concludes by elucidating the complexities of the pre-Buddhist Bön religion in the context of its 12 'lores' or 'sciences'.

This fascinating book sheds new light on the ancient and authentic wisdom of Tibet, in the process revealing its influence upon the historical and cultural continuity of the Tibetan people.