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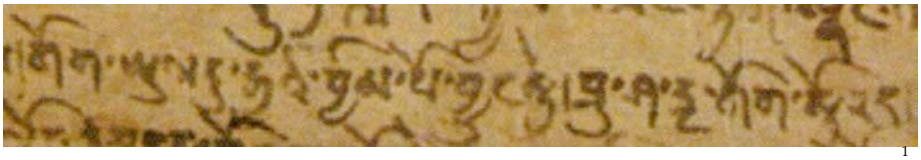
❖

A Tibetan Toponym from Afghanistan

John Mock
(Independent Scholar)

The Old Tibetan Annals (OTA) provide us with a record of 8th century toponyms that have persisted to the present day. Written in Old Tibetan and sent from central Tibet to Dunhuang, the OTA recorded Gog and Brusha as the names for what we now know as "Wakhan" and "Brushal" (the land of the Burushaski-speaking Burusho people of Hunza and Yasin):

 [1]

gog. yul. du. rgya'i. byim. po. byungtse/ bru. sha. dang. gog. stord/
"The Chinese *byim-po* (army) arrived at Gog-yul (Wakhan).
Bru-sha and Gog were lost."[2]

This brief entry for the year 747-748 CE records the Tang Empire's campaign against Imperial Tibetan force in Wakhan, in which General Kao-Hsein Chih's 10,000 Tang troops defeated a Tibetan army near present-day Sarhad-e Broghil in Wakhan District of Afghanistan's Badakhshan province, an event more fully recorded in the Tang Annals, as would be expected (Chavannes 2006a:186-89; Stein 1922:117-22; Beckwith 1987:130-33).

The Tang Annals transcribe the name of Wakhan as *Hu-k'an*, and Christopher Beckwith (1987:133 fn) notes that the Tang pronunciation of *Hu*[3] would have been /γwak/ or /γwag/, both of which would have been transcribed in Old Tibetan as *gog*. Gog, or Gog-yul, he notes, is the Old Tibetan transcription of the native name for

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1 Old Tibetan Annals II, OR.8212.187, line 10. Dotson, 2009:315 Plate II.i OTA images © British Library Board. Available online at: http://otdo.aa.tufs.ac.jp/

2 Dotson 2009:128-9. Also available onlne at: http://otdo.aa.tufs.ac.jp/

3 Schuessler's recent study confirms that Old Chinese *hù* (GSC 2-8; GSR 784) was pronounced as *gwâkh* (Schuessler 2008:67).

John Mock, "A Tibetan Toponym from Afghanistan", *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 27, Octobre 2013, pp. 5-9.

Wakhan. The Old Chinese toponym *gwâkh*, preserved in Old Tibetan *gog*, is remarkably close to Wakhan, which is derived from *wuxh*, the toponym used by Wakhi people today. (The phoneme *xh* is a palatal fricative, difficult to pronounce for non-native speakers of Eastern Iranian languages, who often transcribe it as /*k*/ or /*kh*/).[4]

On several trips to Wakhan, I located a previously unknown site where rock carvings and inscriptions give ample evidence of Tibetan occupation over time (the site is discussed at length in Mock 2013). At this site, in the center of a large boulder with a glacially-polished surface, are Tibetan characters, bruised into the surface, that spell *gog*. Immediately following *gog* is an amorphous bruised area, which is quite illegible and may be an artifact. In any case, the characters appear in isolation. This inscription appears to be an on-site confirmation of the toponym Gog in Old Tibetan.

[5]

In the OTA, the toponym Gog occurs in the years 745, 747, 756. Brusha/Bru-zha (with which Gog is closely associated) occurs in the years 737, 740 and 747. Both are mentioned more frequently in the Tang Annals, where the toponym Balur[6] is used rather than Brusha (Beckwith 1987:30, 116; Chavannes 2006b). The importance of Balur is

[4] For more on the cultural, historical and linguistic background of Wakhan, see Mock 2011:118-20.

[5] Original photograph © John Mock, 2012.

[6] The geographical and political extents of both Lesser and Greater Bolor, despite considerable efforts, are not well-defined. See Denwood 2008 and Zeisler 2009.

underscored by the words of the Chinese Imperial Commissioner, when in 722, Tibetan forces invaded Balur. King Mo-chin-mang of Little Balur fled to Tang territory and appealed for aid, to which the Imperial Commisioner replied; "Balur is Tang's western gate. If Balur is lost, all of the Western Regions will be Tibetan!" (Chavannes 2006a:182 fn, my translation).

The Palola Shahi kings of Balur were wealthy patrons of Buddhism, commissioning sumptuous bronze Buddha images and copying and preserving important Buddhist texts – the famous Gilgit manuscripts. Their "astonishing rich and flourishing Buddhist culture" (von Hinüber 2003:35) also left a legacy of Brahmi inscriptions and Buddhist art on numerous rocks throughout the Gilgit region.[7] The cultural, political and strategic significance of Balur for the Tang court is undeniable. Therefore, it is not surprising that when, in 740, the ruler of Little Balur married a Tibetan princess[8] and the Tang Imperial Commissioner's fears of losing the western regions to Tibet were realized, the Tang Empire sent an army of 10,000 to re-take the "western gate."

Chinese dominance, however, was brief, and Tibetan control of Wakhan appears to have resumed in 756 CE and lasted until the mid or late 9th century CE (Beckwith 1987:144-5, Denwood 2009:156). The decline of Tibetan power in Wakhan not unexpectedly corresponds with the end of the Imperial Tibetan period and of Tibetan control of Dunhuang in 848 (Dalton 2007:18).

Two interesting points are highlighted by this brief study. First, the emergence of Tibetan influence in Balur corresponds with the decline of Chinese influence and the end of several centuries of Palola Shahi rule (von Hinüber 2004:7), a shift that is reflected in the decline of the toponym Balur in favor of the toponym Brusha.[9] Second, the ethnonyms and toponyms used by the inhabitants of Wakhan and Brusha, as recorded in the Old Tibetan Annals, are accurate historical antecedants of terms in use by the indigenous population today. Brusha, the toponym recorded in the OTA, persists today in the ethnonym Burusho, the language name Burushaski, and the toponym Brushal. The toponym Gog/γwak, which is recorded in both the Tang Annals and the OTA, persists in the ethnonym Wakhik, the

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[7] In addition to the discussion of the Palola Shahi rock inscriptions in von Hinüber 2004, see also the wider discussion of rock art and inscriptions in Jettmar 1989.

[8] The Lady *Khri ma lod* married the *Bruzha rje*, or Lord of Bruzha, the title the Tibetans conferred on him. Such marriages resulted in *zhang dbon* relationships, in which the Tibetan king was *zhang* or uncle, and the local king who married the princess was *dbon* or nephew (Richardson 1998:16, Dotson 2009:31-37).

[9] Jettmar comes to a similar conclusion, linking it to growing influence of Kanjudi/Burusho ministers in the Palola Shahi realm (Jettmar 1993:83-88).

language name Wakhik-wor, and the toponym Wuxh/Wakhan. The Old Tibetan inscription from Wakhan offers *in situ* confirmation of the OTA toponym, and undoubtedly dates from the Old Tibetan imperial period.

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Darkot Revisited: New Information on a Tibetan Inscription and *mchod-rten*

John Mock

Despite being well-known, the Tibetan inscription and associated *mchod-rten* outline incised on a boulder south of the Darkot pass in present-day Gilgit-Baltistan (Pakistan) has remained unexamined since Aurel Stein's visit on August 29, 1913. Subsequent scholars have relied on Stein's black and white photograph (Stein 1928: Fig.46, reproduced in Denwood 2007:51), A.H. Franke's translation of the inscription (Francke 1928:1050-51), and Stein's description and analysis linking the *mchod-rten* and inscription to the period of Tibetan imperial power in the Wakhan-Balur region from roughly the late 7th century CE to the mid-9th century CE (Stein 1928:44-47, Jettmar 1993:95, Denwood 2007:45-46).

I visited the Darkot Pass in 1994 and photographed the 45-degree angle rock in color (Mock and O'Neil 1996:facing p.225). The rock appears much as Stein described. The dark surface patina is an inscribed palimpsest with long-horned ibex figures as perhaps the oldest depictions, the Persio-Arabic phrases and names as the newest, and the Tibetan inscription and associated *mchod-rten* dating from some time in between. The singular rider above and to the right of the *mchod-rten* Stein judged to be from about the same time as the *mchod-rten*.[1]

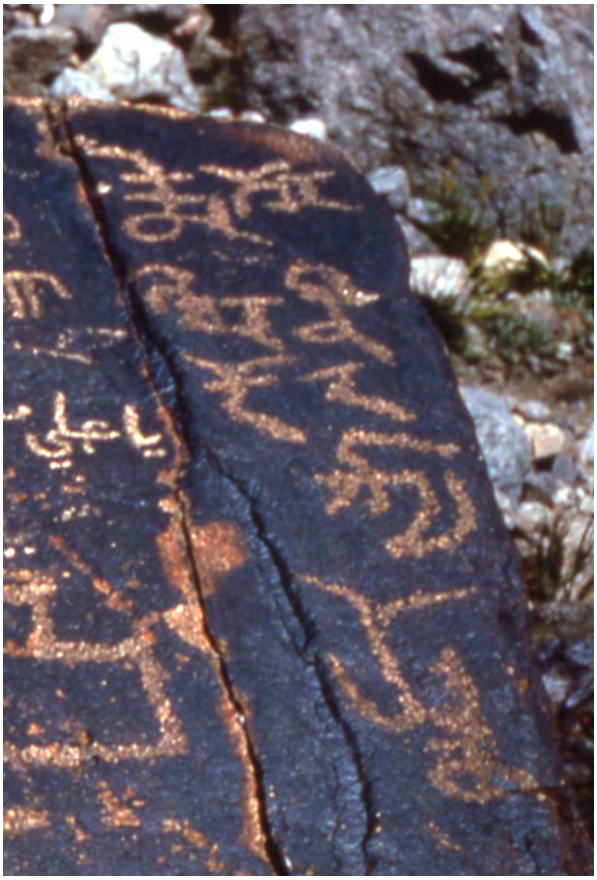
[1] Stein based his chronology on "weathering" and "difference of colouring" (1928:46), which is today termed repatination, or the gradual return of the weather-induced patina to the rock surface. It offers a relative chronology for rock palimpsests such as this, but gives no indication of the time interval between the layers of composition. Fortunately in this case, historical and orthographical evidence allows for more accuracy in the dating of the inscriptions and the *mchod-rten*.

John Mock, "Darkot Revisited: New Information on a Tibetan Inscription and *mchod-rten*", *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 27, Octobre 2013, pp. 11-19.

Darkot Pass boulder, John Mock 1996

In Stein's black and white photograph, taken from a position to the photographer's left of the rock, the inscription, especially the final line, is, as Denwood (2007:45) noted, "certainly difficult to make out". Nor does Stein's image clearly show the ibex figures, the Persio-Arabic writing, or the rider on horseback.

However, by using both photographs, it is possible to offer a new reading of the inscription. This can be compared with a newly-discovered Tibetan inscription from nearby Wakhan (Afghanistan). The locations of the Darkot and Wakhan sites, their historical provenance, and the relationship of the rock carvings with the landscape can be combined to offer new information on the Tibetan imperial period in the Wakhan-Balur region.



Enlarged view of inscription, John Mock 1996

Francke read the first three lines of the Tibetan inscription as:

rMe-'or
lir ni
dor

with *rMe-'or* as the clan name and *lirni dor* as the personal name of the "erector" of the *mchod-rten*. The name *lir ni dor* is difficult to read in both photographs, due to the angle, weathering, and a large crack along the left edge of the inscription. In particular, the character "la" is unclear, and an alternate reading of "wa" cannot be ruled out. The vowel "i" (*gi gu*) above the "la" appears to be a reversed *gi gu*, an archaic orthographic variant that was very common in Dunhuang manuscripts but gradually fell out of use by the 12th century (Den-

wood 1980:161; van Schaik n.d.). Howsoever we may read the second line, it does appear to be a name, following a typical inscription formula in which clan name (*rus*) precedes personal name (*mying*) (Francke 1928:1050; Richardson 1998:18; Tsuguhito Takeuchi personal communication). This inscription is similar to inscriptions from Ladakh,[2] which follow the clan name – personal name formula.

Francke read the fourth line as *gyi*, which the color photograph confirms. However, Francke read the final line as *om*, noting that "the *om* is extraordinary". He ascribed this extraordinary quality to the two characters in the final line, which he interpreted as "*o* above the *m*", noting that "the *Anusvara* [was] not being used."

In Stein's black and white photograph, the final line is not clear and so could be misread as the vowel "o", which when written with the *a-chen*, is similar in shape to the consonant "ya" with *na-ro*. The final character "na" is even more difficult to read in Stein's photograph, due to the odd angle from which the photograph was taken and the low contrast of the black and white image. Syntactically, however, Francke's reading is improbable ("the *om* of lir ni dor"), which may have prompted Denwood (2007:45) to suggest that the inscription is "probably fragmentary".

The more recent color photograph clearly shows that the final line of the inscription is better read as *yon*. The phrase *gyi yon* is a typical offering phrase in which the possessive/genitive case marker *gyi* and the noun *yon* ("gift") follow a name (Karmay 1998:327, 330). Francke notes that similar inscriptions recording the donations of *mchod-rten* are found throughout Ladakh and that most show the name of the donor in instrumental case, but "only the most ancient inscriptions show the name in the genitive case", which, he notes, follows "the example of Indian inscriptions of a similar type … written in Brahmi, Kharosthi, and Sarada" (Francke 1928:1050-51). The last syllable *yon,* not *om*, is the appropriate grammatical and semantic ending for a *mchod-rten* offering inscription, which in this example may be rendered in English as "the gift of *rMe-'or Lirnidor*" (with alternative readings of the personal name possible).

The onomastics of the names deserve comment. Although the clan name *rMe-'or* does not appear in any known lists of Tibetan clan names,[3] Francke (op.cit.) remarks that it is "distinctly Tibetan". Nor is the name *lir ni dor* attested in any Old Tibetan documents. Denwood (2007:45) comments that "*li* suggests a person from Khotan" and

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[2] Published examples from the ruined fort (*mkhar 'gog*) on the left bank of the Indus near Saspol on the road to Alchi are found in Denwood 1980 and Francke and Jina 2003. Orofino 1990 has examples from beyond Alchi.

[3] A similar clan name, *rMe-u*, is well-known as one of the founding clans of Bonpo (Karmay 1998:120; Karmay 2007:73).

suggests the inscription and *mchod-rten* may have been made by "a passing Tibetan trader" (2007:50). The previously mentioned uncertainty in the reading of this name leaves open the question of whether it is a Khotanese name.

The clan name *rMe-'or* can now be accepted with greater certainty, as it also appears in a similar *mchod-rten* donation inscription in Wakhan (Mock in press 2013). The Wakhan inscription reads: *rMe-'or btsan la gzigs gyI* [*yon*], with the final syllable illegible, but one may assume it follows the similar pattern where *yon* ("gift") would be expected. The genitive marker has a reversed *gi gu*. The *ga* preceding *zigs* appears at the end of the preceding line, faintly apparent inside the *mchod-rten* structure. *btsan la gzigs* appears to be a title (*mkhan*) rather than a name, possibly from Ladakh (Francke 1914:40, 51; Richardson 1998:17-20).

Wakhan *mchod-rten* and inscription, John Mock 2013

The design of the two *mchod-rten* also deserves comment. They share an unusual shape, which Francke (1928:1051) first termed "cross-like". Denwood noted that this design is typical of the western Himalaya and Karakoram,[4] and that Jettmar considered the design to be an innovation made during the time of imperial Tibetan rule in the region (Denwood 2007:45). Denwood published a similar design from near Alchi in Ladakh (Denwood 2007:52, fig.5), Tucci photographed similar designs near Alchi and at Khalatse (Orofino 1990:figs. 17, 18, 30, 39, 40), and Jettmar and Sagaster discuss an example from Punyal near Darkot (1993:129, Abb.8).

The shared *mchod-rten* design, inscription formula, and identical clan name, together with the Tang Annals documentation of the Darkot pass as a route from/to Wakhan, link the Darkot *mchod-rten* to the Wakhan *mchod-rten* and site.

I have proposed elsewhere (Mock in press 2013) that the Wakhan site is located on the "Northern Gorge" route taken by three thousand horsemen of the Chinese army to attack a Tibetan force at the *Lien-yün* fort in 747 CE (Chavannes 2006a:183; Stein 1922:118). The Wakhan site was probably the location of a hill-station (*ri-zug*), used for signaling with fire or smoke to raise the alarm if enemies approached. Stein (1912:152-53) described these at Miran near Dunhuang and Takeuchi, who studied them in detail, suggested they may have also existed along the southern route of the Silk Road including "Little and Great Balur … and the Pamirs" (2004:55). Dotson links Tibetan hill-stations with "red fire raising stations" that are mentioned in the Old Tibetan Annals (2009:56-57).

The above-mentioned stylistic and epigraphic parallels of the Wakhan *mchod-rten* and inscription with the Darkot *mchod-rten* and inscription, suggest that the two sites may have shared a similar function. The Wakhan site appears to have been a *ri-zug*, and the Darkot site also may have been near a *ri-zug*.

The inscribed Darkot boulder sits along the trail about 45 minutes below the edge of the Darkot glacier at an altitude of approximately 4000m. The boulder is about 5 minutes below a small level area where even today Wakhi men occasionally camp when traversing the Darkot glacier for purchasing supplies at the road head bazaar in the Yasin valley. This site is on a ridge which is visible from the valley below and is marked by a large stone cairn. From the boulder to Rawat, the first village in the Yasin valley, it is a steep 1 ½ hour descent of 1000m (Mock & O'Neil 1996:177-78). The location is not one that a "passing Tibetan trader", like today's Wakhi traders, might

[4] Laurianne Bruneau (personal communication) notes that this design is actually quite rare in the rock art of both Gilgit and Ladakh.

have stopped at for more than one night. The approximately one meter tall *mchod-rten* and inscription, carefully bruised into the rock surface to a depth of approximately 5 cm., could not have been completed in one day; more probably, many days were needed, which raises the likelihood that a person or persons stationed at this high elevation remote post near the base of a glacier inscribed the gift of a *mchod-rten*. Takeuchi has noted that *ri-zug* were typically manned by two Tibetans and two Khotanese (Takeuchi 2004:54), which buttresses Denwood's hypothesis that the individual named in the inscription may have been Khotanese. If the site were used for signaling, then several men would have been present, suggesting that the Darkot *mchod-rten* may have been the gift of a Khotanese man, but the actual rock carving and inscription may have been done by another person literate in Tibetan, possibly a Tibetan man.[5]

Conclusion

The historical associations of the site with both Tang Chinese and Tibetan imperial annals (Chavannes 2006a, 2006b; Dotson 2009) and the parallels with similar *mchod-rten* offering compositions in Wakhan (Mock in press 2013), clearly place this inscription in the Tibetan imperial era. As Denwood (2007:46) observed, the inscription may have been created during an initial Tibetan impulse into Wakhan and Balur in the early 8th century CE, but more likely, it was created after the major Tang – Tibetan conflict at the contiguous Broghil pass region in 747 CE, when Tibetan troops were made keenly aware of the need to guard the routes to and from Balur/Bru-zha.

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[5] Or perhaps the inscriber was not Tibetan but was literate in Tibetan. Scribes from Khotan worked at Dunhuang (Dalton et.al 2007). Rock inscriptions at Alchi, dating from the same time as proposed for the Darkot and Wakhan inscription, were likely made by Central Asians (Denwood 1980:162-163).

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The Trapchi Lhamo Cult in Lhasa

Daisuke Murakami

Ones' understandings should be like the gods',
but ones' behaviour should be in accord with human beings'.
(rtogs pa lha dang mnyam yang spyod pa mi dang bstun dgos)

A Tibetan Proverb

1. Introduction

It seems to be since some point in the early 2000s that the worship of Trapchi[1] Lhamo *(Grwa bzhi lha mo)*, a wrathful female deity, has gradually become popular amongst Tibetans. For those living in Lhasa, it is difficult not to notice the displays of the deity's photos which prevail in the public spaces such as teahouses, shops and on public transportation, where those of revered lamas and the Jokhang Temple's Shakyamuni had formerly been predominant. Indeed, the Trapchi cult has evidently become a significant element of the Tibetan religious landscape. An increasing number of people in Lhasa, across different social statuses, have started to pray to her for overtly mundane purposes, particularly for ones' individual economic prosperity, of which she is believed to be a guarantor. It can be said that the emerging popularity of Trapchi Lhamo as a deity of treasure, of wealth *(nor lha)* is one of the most peculiar religious phenomena in contemporary Lhasa, and Tibetans themselves appear, to varying degrees, to be aware of this distinct character.

It is peculiar and distinct in two senses. First of all, the nature in which the deity is worshipped is radically different from that of the typical, traditional mode, wherein people pray for protection, well-being, or transcendental motivations informed by Buddhist worldviews. The Trapchi cult, in contrast, squarely makes the promise of rapid economic gain. The people who practise the cult are expected to swiftly achieve material and monetary benefits, the nature

[1] The spelling "Drapchi" is used in most literature referring to the deity and her monastery, excepting a few examples (e.g. Richardson 1994) utilising "Trapchi". I employ the latter throughout this article since it is closer to the local pronunciation of the word.

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of which is characterised by the devotees' naked desire and individualism. It is true to say that lay people's worship for secular purposes was and still is observable extensively in the Tibetan cultural environment. However, such worship is normally restricted either to prayers that are generally considered perilous[2] and are therefore made in secret or, most commonly, to essentially passive prayers such as those intended to prevent or nullify obstacles and misfortunes. The Trapchi cult is a radical departure from this conventional way of praying, in its *active and open* commitment to gain more.

The other feature peculiar to the cult is its origin. To my knowledge, no religious authorities such as high lamas and Buddhist texts specifically acknowledge the divine status of Trapchi Lhamo as a deity assisting people to increase their wealth. Also, this deity has no history of being renowned as that type of deity. Moreover, strictly speaking, Trapchi Lhamo is *not* a Buddhist deity, as some informed locals are aware. Trapchi Lhamo, though now enshrined in a monastery of identical name, is neither a supernatural being introduced from the world of Indian Buddhism nor an indigenous Tibetan deity subdued and subsequently incorporated into the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon. According to local belief, Trapchi Lhamo was originally a princess of the Qing court. She lived a few centuries ago, came to Lhasa, and became transformed into the deity.

Certainly, what is known about the cult is rather strange. Moreover, it does not explicate the sudden fervour for and the popular selection of Trapchi Lhamo as a modern mundane deity. Indeed, the cult is somewhat of a mystery. This riddle can be rephrased roughly in the following two interrelated questions: firstly, what kind of forces and conditions led to Trapchi Lhamo serving as a deity of wealth?; secondly, and this is more fundamental, why was it Trapchi who came to play that role rather than one of the other more powerful worldly gods?

The main objective of this article is to approach the kernel of these questions through ethnographic and historical analysis. It will be tackled by focusing on the recent economic climate in Lhasa, but more particularly, through exploring the historical space of Trapchi Lhamo, wherein power, economy and national sentiments are mutually intertwined. This religious as well as worldly space is, as will be shown, characterised as an ideological arena for contemporary Tibetans who, confronted with economic development and Chinese

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[2] In recent Tibet, the most controversial one of all is, of course, the practice of Shugden. For more detail, see Dreyfus's article, *The Shugden Affair: Origins of a Controversy Part I* (http://www.dalailama.com/messages/dolgyal-shugden/ganden-tripa/the-shugden-affair-i) /*Part II* (http://www.dalailama.com/messages/dolgyal-shugden/ganden-tripa/the-shugden-affair-ii).

modernity, (de)value their Buddhist morality and identity. Indeed, the 'genesis' of the Trapchi Lhamo cult, as an amalgamation of past memory and present circumstance, is constituted by a discordant unison of Tibetan religious tradition and China's market economy, forming part of a dilemma with which Tibetans have increasingly been haunted. It may certainly be said that the noble phantom who landed from China a few centuries ago, has been revived as a (pseudo-)Buddhist deity in no small part due to enduring ambivalent Tibetan sentiments towards Chinese affluence and power.

2. Economic Development and Its Influences on Tibetan Lives

In order to give backdrop to the emergence of Trapchi cult, it will firstly be helpful to give a general overview of the rapid economic development that has taken place in Tibet (TAR – Tibet Autonomous Region), and its influences over people in contemporary Lhasa.

Since the early 1980s, following the turmoil of the Cultural Revolution, the Tibetan economy started to regenerate due to political initiatives. Under the slogan of the 'Reform and Opening up' policy *[gaige kaifang Ch.]*, the central government implemented various liberal cultural and religious policies, and simultaneously introduced a 'socialist market economy' for the improvement of the general well-being of Tibetans. As is well known, the nature of the policy, despite the heavy dependence on Chinese subsidiaries, was presented as a gradualist attempt to initiate and encourage indigenous economic development in the interests of local Tibetans. However, in the late 1980s, this state endorsement of economic liberalisation was overshadowed by a number of political demonstrations demanding the independence of Tibet, which led to the subsequent declaration of martial law in Lhasa in 1989 (Schwartz 1994; Barnett and Akiner 1994).

After this political disturbance, fast-growing economic development was targeted under the hard-line leadership of Chen Kuiyuan, the then TAR Party Secretary, who advocated economic development as indispensable for the security of Tibet (Barnett 2003) – the dialectic relationship between social stability *[wending]* and economic progress *[fazhan]* was proclaimed and institutionalised throughout the 1990s. According to the internal logic of this political economy, it was expected that economic affluence, more precisely the removal of economic disparity between Tibet and China, would automatically render Tibetan nationalism obsolete. In other words, once the important element of ethnic distinctiveness – Tibetan religious culture – would be nullified by rapid economic development, this would strengthen

national unity and security in Tibet. Thus, along with a variety of suppressive measures being placed upon religious and cultural activities, including the infamous anti-Dalai campaign (ibid.), numerous infrastructure projects were devised and implemented to 'aid Tibet' *[yuanzang]*, funded with heavy subsidies from central and affluent provincial governments. Consequently, a number of Han Chinese entrepreneurs and skilled workers immigrated to the urban areas of Tibet, particularly its capital of Lhasa, where local Tibetans were largely excluded from an increasingly competitive job market due to their lack of linguistic and technical skills (cf. Fischer 2005). True, the average rate of annual increase of Tibet's GDP maintained nearly 14%[3] during Chen Kuiyuan's reigning period, between 1993 and 2000, but this was largely accomplished without local Tibetans either participating or benefiting much (ibid.).

From around the year 2000 onwards, the TAR government attempted to accelerate its economic growth through promoting Tibet's tourism industry, which had already been becoming a central source of the TAR's income due to the acquisition of foreign currencies. What was propagated by the media at that time was that Tibetan Buddhist culture would be cultivated as a significant, economically viable commodity for the development of the industry (Murakami 2008; 2011). Confidence in this trajectory originated from a growing Chinese interest in Tibetan culture and religion (e.g. Murakami 2008), stimulated to some extent by existent Western fantasy discourses regarding Tibet and its people. Thus, whilst the boom of 'Tibet Tour' *[Xizang lüyou]* which continued until the 1990s was mainly led by the increase of international tourists, domestic tourists were now also making a significant contribution to the development of the TAR's tourism economy. For years, from 2000 to 2009, the annual increase of Chinese tourists entering Tibet was nearly 40%[4], the number reaching about 5.4 million in 2009; almost double the whole population of the TAR[5]. It is without doubt that various constructions of infrastructure, such as the Qinghai-Tibet Railway (completed in 2006), along with the fast improvements made to tourist facilities and services, supported this development. Income from the tourism industry now constitutes nearly 13%[6] of the whole of the TAR's GDP (2009); the

[3] My calculation is based upon data from section 2-8 (Indices of Gross Domestic Product) in *Tibet Statistical Yearbook 2010*.

[4] My calculation is based upon data from section 13-5 (Number of Tourists and Foreign Earnings) of the statistical book above. Note that the statistical data given for tourist numbers might be dubious, since it may include *all* the domestic people, such as immigrant workers, who used the transportation to enter Tibet.

[5] About 2.9 million (2009) according to section 3-1 (Population and its Composition) of the book above.

[6] My calculation is based upon data from sections 2-6 (Gross Domestic Product)

Tibet Tourism Bureau recently claims that tourism has become the TAR's leading industry, allegedly employing about twenty thousand people.[7]

With tourism as the main booster of the economy, the TAR's GDP growth rate during the 2000s was more than 12% (except in 2008, when it was 10.1%), which represents a larger growth rate than that of the whole China. This rapid economic growth, however, has not been achieved without an increasing disparity between urban and rural income (Fischer 2005)[8], nearly 80% of the whole population being rural people. Moreover, a growing intra-ethnic stratification among Tibetans in terms of cultural and economic welfare is evidenced (e.g. Murakami 2009). As often pointed out, this widening gap in the quality of life of individuals in contemporary Lhasa played a significant part in creating the backdrop for the uncontrollable spread of 'anti-Chinese' demonstrations in March 2008. Accordingly, in the Fifth Tibet Work Forum, held in Beijing in 2010, existing social contradictions were explicitly indicated as Tibet's primary obstacle to overcome in constructing a 'harmonious' *[hexie]* society, leading to an official proclamation of intent to tackle the economic problems in rural Tibet.[9] It is too early to judge the degrees of success or failure implementing this directive has produced, but many people in Lhasa seem dubious it would be at all effective.

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Following rapid economic development spanning almost two decades, it is indisputable that visible modernisation and increasing wealth have become more in evidence in the Lhasa's cityscape. Many traditional houses in Old Lhasa, centred around the Barkhor area, have recently been demolished and supplanted by modern, pseudo-Tibetan style constructions, some of which have been transformed into massive tourist souvenir shops. Chinese business and administrative buildings, which used to be concentrated in the western area of the city, have extended in all directions, alongside the construction of wide, refurbished roads. Apparently, no restriction to protect traditional spaces is being implemented. For example, the 13-story Lhasa Public Security Bureau, completed in 2002, is an extremely prominent building which drastically affects the city's historical appear-

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and 13-5 (Number of Tourists and Foreign Earnings) of the book above.

7 *Xizang zizhiqu "Shiyiwu" lüyou chanye fazhan guihua* (Tibet Tourism Bureau 2008: 2-3).

8 For some details of the urban-rural economic disparity, see section 2-5 (Per Capita Main Indicators on Economic Benefit) in *Tibet Statistical Yearbook 2010*.

9 TibetInfoNet 29 Jan 2010. (http://www.tibetinfonet.net).

ance,[10] in conjunction with the proliferation of new modern hotels and shopping centres that have sprung up in the vicinity of the Barkhor. The most characteristic cityscape in modern Lhasa, however, may be the development of large-scale suburban residential constructions in response to an increasing number of Chinese residents and affluent real estate investors. The local media, on the whole, describes the rapid transformation of the cityscape as 'welcoming' and 'good' for the welfare of the Tibetans, extolling the present change with rhetoric referring to it in descriptive terms such as 'a splendid combination of tradition and modernity' *[chuantong yu xiandai wanmei jiehe]*[11].

Whilst the city's outlook has rapidly been transformed, the features of the propaganda displayed in public space have also been fundamentally changing. Until around 2000, overwhelmingly predominant were explicitly political messages, such as those of the anti-Dalai and the national fraternity between Tibetans and Chinese – devised and disseminated by the local government. However, as years passed, many of these began to be replaced with those bearing economic and commercial content[12]. True, red-banners demonstrating the civilisation *[wenming]* campaign, or some other communist-inspired directive, are still prevalently observable – for example, just after the March 2008 Incident, when the local government needed to disseminate the significance of Chinese nationalism and communist morality. However, very recently, the government propaganda embellishing the cityscape seems to be selected largely to promote its economic imperative, the most typical being those encouraging further investment or supporting the development of the TAR's tourism industry. Not surprisingly, public spaces once dominated by political messages are now mostly occupied with commercial advertisements promoting telecommunications, real estate, and the latest Chinese and foreign products.

Another observable change, that has taken place in Lhasa since the late 1990s, is the wide circulation of a variety of commodities imported from different regions of China. Those goods include various foreign brands, ranging from necessaries such as foods and clothes to lavish goods such as computers and cars. Until the late 1990s, cars were normally purchased only for companies or government units, but recently, an increasing number of wealthy people in Lhasa have started to acquire private cars. Concurrently, due to the boom of

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10 See for some details Tibet Information Network (2003: 83-98).

11 *Lasa wanbao* (Lasa Evening News) 24th Nov 2001.

12 This view is based upon my observation as a resident of Lhasa since 2000. I lived there for two years since 2000, summer times in 2005 and 2006, and have been working there for most part of the year since 2007.

tourism industry, the trade of domestic products – Tibetan antiques, medicinal fungus *(dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu)* and precious stones, such as turquoise, coral and the *gzi* stone – are also becoming intensely popular, and so are the problems deriving from loaning money at high interest rates in order to repay debts and/or for further investment.

On the other hand, since about the year 2000, the increasing price of commodities has largely begun to oppress the lives of many people in Lhasa, particularly, those who are less affluent[13]. The prices that have increased most dramatically to Tibetan perceptions may be, as often addressed, those of traditional daily staples, such as butter and yak meat. For example, the latter cost about eight yuan per a half kilo in 2000, but it has now (in 2012) more than tripled. Indeed, the price of many daily foods has increased over the last decade. Due to the dramatic hike in the price of general necessities, the salaries of government officials have risen. However, those of many unskilled employees working in small or medium sized companies and shops saw only a limited increase, which has naturally led to the further socio-economic exclusion of many of these Tibetan workers.

For the deprived, their wish may be to achieve a stable life with a secure job, whilst for the affluent, their priority is wealth typified by further consumption and investments. It seems that stark economic stratification has firmly been established and strengthened in contemporary Lhasa, at least according to the experiences of Tibetan residents, who have suffered and/or gained from the rapid modernisation there.

This radical transformation of the socio-economic environment has caused major concern regarding the corruption of 'Tibetan morality', particularly amongst the senior and elderly. Above all, the deterioration of *Buddhist value* coupled with the dissipation of 'Tibetan-ness,' is a predominant issue. It may be worth introducing here some representative utterances and phraseologies in local currency. The first is that due to their sudden acquisition of wealth, many Tibetans are becoming 'self-centred' *(rang shed tsha po)* and 'greedy' *(ham pa tsha po),* ignoring the significance of Buddhist causality *(las rgyu 'bras)* informing their words and deeds and therefore becoming evermore trapped in the ephemeral blissfulness of this present life. Following on from this is the opinion that the more wealth Tibetans gain, the more they discard traditional values of modesty *(sems chung)* and respect *(gus zhabs)*; that their affluence made them become miserly *(lag pa dam po),* arrogant *(nga rgyal)* and exceedingly proud of

[13] Before 2008, even the local newspapers, such as *Lasa Wanbao*, often criticised the relevant authorities of their failures to control the increases of the prices of commodities.

themselves like the 'non-Buddhist' Chinese. Finally, the modern penchant in Lhasa for sending small children to China for the quality education which may secure their economic success will deprive them of their 'Tibetan-ness,' particularly, their faith in Buddhism. Instead, they will come to associate themselves with the economic motivations that the Chinese espouse. Indeed, the negative moralities and secular values, perceived as rapidly prevailing, tend to be attributed to the increasing presence of the Chinese and their influence.

In contemporary Lhasa, the desire for economic wealth has irreversibly expanded, which Tibetans, regrettably or not, admit. However, interestingly enough, the simultaneous decay of Tibetan Buddhist morality is normally articulated against the background of the 'Chinese Other'. Ethnic boundary is implicitly or explicitly demarcated in their contingent manifestations of the oppositional characters of their (non-)greediness. One subtle but symbolic example in daily contexts is the predictably recurring phrase often used by elder Tibetans to reprove younger ones for their greed: "You are a Tibetan, aren't you? Don't you feel ashamed?" The implication of this phrase is that the Tibetan concerned has forfeited his or her identity as Buddhist (*nang-pa*, literally meaning 'insiders'), due to dishonourable acts committed and the lack of shame towards them; being akin to secular, greedy Chinese. Across different social statuses, identical or similar phrases are often employed on a variety of occasions with different degrees of intent or seriousness. This distinctive way of phrasing, which connects Tibetan identity and morality, seems to bear such an evocative power, that Tibetans receive a forceful daily imperative to self reflection in relation to the perceived backdrop of an 'immoral', 'corrupt' and 'non-Buddhist' Chinese.

It is now widely believed that traditional Buddhist values, characterised as 'faith', 'modesty' and 'respect', are now being progressively supplanted with Chinese values prioritising immediate affluence over the importance of mind and next life. At the same time, however, it should be noted, Tibetan self-perception as inherently benevolent and religious seems to be durably sustained, however paradoxical it sounds given these pessimistic notions of Tibetan identity – yet this positive self-perception, it should be remarked, is commonly held in tandem with an opposite imagining of the Chinese as vessels of immoral qualities.

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Off the Barkhor Street, along some narrow lanes in the traditional area of Lhasa, one finds it difficult to ignore the distinctive popular prayers performed by a small group of lay practitioners. Reading a text aloud, they clap hands to repulse *(zlog)* an evil spirit called *mi kha*

– a gossiper who is believed to malevolently influence the people by her mere existence. If one feels threatened by the negative energy *mi kha* emits, one must make some offerings and prayers for protection. The opening section of these prayers is interesting[14]:

> …
> *khyod ni mi na dgu na gtong*
> *khyod ni mi lab dgu lab byed*
> *mi kha'i bu mo tshur la nyon*
> *nag mo tig ta mgo zing ma*
> *khyod dang po yong yong ga nas yong*
> *dang po rgya bod mtshams nas yong*
> *mi kha mang po rgya la gzugs*
> *rgya nag rgyal pos bod la bsgyur*
> *rgya 'dre mang po sde la logs*
> *yul sa yar lung zer ba na*
> …
>
> …
> You are spreading various illnesses.
> You are speaking various [unspeakable] things.
> *Mi-kha* girl, listen!
> Black, small girl with tangled hair,
> When you first arrived, where did you come from?
> You first came from the boundary between China and Tibet.
> Much malicious gossiping was 'planted' in China.
> A Chinese king changed [your dwelling place] into Tibet[15].
> Many quarrels (Chinese demons) are now found in the communities of the region.
> It is called Yarlung.
> ...

The act of gossiping is deeply connected to one's jealousy, desire and greed, and is indeed counted as one of the non-virtuous deeds in

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[14] An extraction from folio 2ab of *Slob dpon pad mas mdzad pa'i mi kha'i bzlog 'gyur bzhugs so. gtong* in the first line is originally *stong*, and *yul sa yar lung* in the last *yul la lung pa*. In order to make sense, I changed as above, following another analogous text, *mi kha'i bzlog bsgyur* (Published by Tibetan Cultural Printing Press: Dharamsala – 176215 (H.P.)). *tig-ta* in the forth line is a type of medicinal plant, but it is used as a slang word indicating 'small'. The meaning of *sde la logs* in the ninth line is ambiguous. Here, looking at the meaning of the following sentence, I translate 'communities *(sde)* of the region *(logs)*'.

[15] If we interpret the transitive verb *bsgyur* in the eighth line as a misspelling of *'gyur* [intransitive verb], this sentence can be translated as 'A Chinese king became a king of Tibet'.

Buddhist teaching[16]. It is noteworthy that the text above obviously implies the spirit of this immorality originates from China, and accidentally or not, came down to Yarlung, the land of Tibet.

Mi kha is pure negativity which causes the intensification of any existing animosities and conflicts between people. Therefore, in a sense, it is very easy to deal with her – to expel her from Tibet as the above prayers countering *mi kha* aim to do. In contrast, in the case of our Trapchi Lhamo, the situation is much more complicated and ambivalent, as will be shown. The latter is the case even though these two spirits are identical in terms of their worldliness, gender and origin – and, moreover, in terms of their fundamental relation to desire.

3. Trapchi Lhamo Cult

Thus far the rapid economic development of modern Lhasa and its influences on people's lives, particularly on their traditional moralities, have been discussed. As shown, the recent economic situation has naturally stimulated people's desire to gain more, regardless of their economic statuses, the context of which has undeniably been contributory to the emerging popularity of Trapchi Lhamo as a deity of wealth. Now, we can proceed in tackling more fundamental questions, such as how can the secular, mundane desire for economic gain be *openly* protected and expressed within the sacred realm of an explicitly Buddhist space such as a monastery? In what historical and social condition is it possible to accommodate this apparent contradiction in terms? And, to reiterate, the primary issue at stake here is the riddle of why and how Trapchi Lhamo came to be destined to play that role in preference to other (non-)worldly deities. These questions are certainly intriguing, and treatment of them inevitably requires one to employ a subtle, broad approach, constituted by the use of different sources, both ethnographic and historical. First of all, a general description of the Trapchi cult will be presented.

Trapchi Monastery, where our Trapchi Lhamo is enshrined, is located a few kilometres north of the Jokhang Temple, on the way to Sera Monastery. Its formal name is *Grwa bzhi brtan bzhugs chos 'khor gling* (Monastery of Trapchi Eternal Dharma Wheel). The Tibetan word, Trapchi, is spelled either *Grwa bzhi* or *Gra bzhi*. In both cases, it reflects, it is widely believed, the origins of the monastery, wherein

[16] In the *Mi dge ba bcu* (ten non-virtues), one of the most cited moral codes among Tibetan Buddhists, *mi kha* naturally belongs to divisive, slanderous speech *(phra ma)* or senseless talk *(ngag kyal)*.

initially 'four monks' *(grwa pa bzhi)* resided. According to a renowned local scholar, Chos 'phel, the monastery used to belong to the Kagyu School of Tibetan Buddhism, but it was transformed to that of Gelug during the rein of the Fifth Dalai Lama in the seventeenth century (Chos 'phel 2004: 71). From the early nineteenth century up until the middle of the twentieth, the monastery was institutionally affiliated with Ke'u tshang hermitage *(ri khrod)*, whose main lama, Ke'u tshang Rimpoche, successively kept his room atop the Trapchi monastery (Cabezón 2006: 51). Now the Trapchi, composed of nearly thirty monks, is a branch of Sera Monastery, one of the Lhasa's three greatest Gelug monasteries.

Everyday, more particularly on precious days *(tshes bzang)*, and on Wednesdays which is the 'soul date' *(bla gza')* of the week for the present Dalai Lama[17], Trapchi monastery is crowded. A number of fervent devotees queue with libations in hand from early morning. They are predominantly Tibetans, who may be young or elder, residents of Lhasa, or nomads and farmers from rural areas. The primary aim of most people is identical – to give monetary and spiritual tributes to the wrathful female deity Trapchi Lhamo whose divine power assures her worshippers' mundane wishes. On the other hand, there are some pilgrims who may also request the monks to conduct worldly rituals, such as *mo* (dice divination) or *bla 'gug tshe 'gug* (ritual for restoring one's life force), for which the Trapchi Monastery enjoys some renown.

Due to her worldly nature *('jig rten pa),* Trapchi Lhamo is enshrined not at the innermost shrine within the main building, but near the entrance of it. However, the numerous other statues of transcendent Buddhist beings inside the monastery are evidently paid less attention by the visitors. It is locally rumoured that pilgrims' monetary offering for Trapchi Lhamo are estimated to accrue more than seven million Chinese Yuan annually, which is, possibly, much larger than those received in Trapchi's head monastery, Sera Monastery or, that of Drepung. The disproportionate amount of money offered clearly manifests the magnitude and anomaly of the cult of Trapchi Lhamo in contemporary Lhasa.

In the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon, there certainly exist traditional deities of treasure *(nor lha),* the most representative of whom are *Dzam bha la, Nor rgyun ma* and *rNam thos sras* (one of the Four Guard-

[17] Local people in Lhasa usually say that Wednesday is a precious day since this is the day of the week upon which the present Dalai Lama was born. However, this is clearly a misunderstanding, as some informed Tibetans are aware. The zodiac sign of the Dalai Lama is that of the pig and, according to the traditional Tibetan calendar, the 'soul date' *(bla gza')* of the week for the people born in the year of pig is Wednesday *(gza' lhag pa).*

ians, the Protector in the North), all of whom are in fact seen all over Tibetan regions. Paintings of the latter deity in particular are often hung in commercial enterprises, such as restaurants and business offices, due to his supposed power in assisting the accumulation of wealth. However, as far as contemporary Lhasa is concerned, this traditional deity has not enjoyed as many spiritual tributes as our triumphant Lhamo.

If one asks the locals – whether lay or clergy, devotees or not – the *reason* for her sudden popularity, some typical answers would be that it is because of a 'contemporary trend' *(dar srol),* or due to the 'development of transportation' which attracts devotees from all over Tibetan regions beyond the TAR. It seems to me that people just worship Trapchi Lhamo without much if any familiarity with her historical background and real identity.

Who on earth is Trapchi Lhamo? A local legend[18] claims that she was originally a princess from the court of the Qing Dynasty a few centuries ago. When the Second Ke'u tshang Rimpoche, 'Jam dbyang smon lam (born in 1791) – the then official owner of Trapchi Monastery, as noted earlier – was invited to her court in Beijing, she, a young princess who was constantly tormented by her sisters on account of her beauty, asked the Rimpoche to take her back to the land of Tibet with him. The Rimpoche might have appeared to her, in her predicament, as potential rescuer and protector, possibly due to her faith in Buddhism. Her attempt to escape was initially thwarted by the Rimpoche's rejection, so she transformed herself into a kind of bird in order to fly after him on his return to Lhasa. Another version of the story says that, after being poisoned by her sisters, it was only the princess's consciousness *(rnam shes)* who followed him. In whatever the case, her strong attachment to the Rimpoche successfully brought her to the land of Trapchi in Lhasa. It is also said that her sisters had mutilated her legs, but chicken legs grew to replace them. Whether the statue validates this cannot be confirmed due to it being clothed. Yet her tongue, emphatically poking out of her mouth, is evidently visible; it is believed that she attempted to vomit the food poisoned by her evil sisters, causing her tongue to remain fixed outside. A Chinese scholar gives us a different version of the story in which the mutilation of her legs and the poisoning were not carried out by her sisters, but by the local Tibetan *shannü* (literally, 'female hermit', possibly indicating dakini; *mkha' 'gro ma*), who was jealous of her beauty (Su 2000). In both Tibetan and Chinese versions, the beautiful Chinese princess, despite undergoing tremendous physical tor-

[18] The following account of the legend is constructed according to local oral testimonies I collected and on Chos 'phel's description (2004: 70-72).

ments, miraculously 'survived' in the land of Trapchi, presumably due to her strong adherence to life. In the end, the Qing princess endowed with incredible beauty and patience, flying far away from China down to Trapchi, became Trapchi Lhamo, 'Goddess of Trapchi'. Also believed is that Trapchi Lhamo is one of the embodiments of Palden Lhamo, the protector goddess of successive Dalai Lamas, and the supreme guardian deity of the land of Tibet.

Trapchi Lhamo (photographed by the author)

For some local Tibetans who are aware of the above background given for Trapchi Lhamo, she appears more like a local spirit, like a *gtsan*; a roaming consciousness of a deceased person, rather than a proper deity worthy of devotion. Moreover, even if she is treated as a deity, her identity is more than sufficient to actively refuse to worship her[19]. Her Chinese origin and 'non-Buddhist' character naturally incline them to keep distant from her monastery. Her worldliness, they claim, signifies no soteriological power with which to benefit human beings, who should instead turn to transcendent *('jig rten las 'das pa)* Buddhist deities for salvation. Some such Tibetan critics of the Trap-

[19] For the same reason, informed Chinese people and tourist books tend to emphasise that the cult of Trapchi Lhamo evidences a positive historical relationship between the Chinese and Tibetans.

chi Lhamo cult even go as far as claiming that "worshippers are mostly Chinese." Even if there may be some Tibetans, they say, these are predominantly merchants or traders *(tshong pa)*, who invest their capital in the hope of succeeding in their business enterprises. Tibetans who devalue the cult seem to believe that the devotees of Trapchi Lhamo are basically mammonists; therefore the majority are necessarily Chinese and the Tibetans involved are limited in number, since only a minority would blindly follow the Chinese in this fashion. This is very peculiar, since as mentioned earlier, the overwhelming number of visitors to the monastery are undeniably Tibetans, young and old, city dwellers and agriculturalists, who seem to be not all *tshong pa*, but originating from different social and regional backgrounds[20]. Perhaps those levelling such critiques have not visited the monastery and, therefore, have never seen the fervour demonstrated by no small number of their fellow Tibetans. Nevertheless, this discord is noteworthy – the discrepancy of the reality and fantasy is confirmed and manifested in local discourses on the cult.

In a literary dimension, the association between Trapchi and Tibetan religious culture is also neglected or denied in an oblique but explicit manner. In *An Encyclopaedic Tibetan–Chinese Dictionary (bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo)*, the most authorised dictionary for decades for Tibetans and others, an item about Trapchi Lhamo or her monastery is conspicuous by its absence. This is a little bizarre, since this dictionary, due to its encyclopaedic nature, extensively encompasses a variety of minor and major gods, and small and large monasteries existing in both past and present Tibetan areas inside China. This act of omission is observable likewise in another authoritative dictionary, the *Dungkar Tibetological Great Dictionary (dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo)*, authored by the extremely erudite, late Dungkar Rimpoche. This tendency cannot only be seen in these great dictionaries but also, surprisingly, in the recent pilgrim's guidebook *(gnas yig)* for monasteries and sacred geography in Lhasa. Thus, *Catalogue of Lhasa's Monasteries – Mound of Gemstones and Ornaments – (lha sa'i dgon tho rin chen spungs rgyan zhes bya ba bzhugs so)*, authored by a Tibetan scholar (bShes gnyen Tshul khrims 2001) from the Tibet Academy of Social Science, contains Lhasa's forty-five monasteries and temples, including even ones such as *bZhi-sde*, which now lie in ruins, yet omitting to include the popular Trapchi Monastery. *Lhasa's Historical Remains – Pleasant Grove of Lotus – (lha sa'i gna' shul lo rgyus padma'i dga' tshal zhes bya ba bzhugs so)*, written by another Tibetan author (bSam shod

[20] This is confirmed not just by my observations during my frequent visits to the Trapchi monastery, but also by the general comments of the monks there whom I have spoken with over a number of years.

2010), again omits to mention Trapchi monastery from its interesting explanations regarding Lhasa's monasteries and historical sites. The only exception to this omission from publications is that of the renowned local researcher Chos 'phel (2004) in his *Guidebook for Sacred Places in Lhasa Area (lha sa khul gyi gnas yig)*, which devotes a few pages to Trapchi Monastery[21].

The overall non-existence of the descriptions of Trapchi Monastery and its Lhamo in literature is certainly remarkable. It seems that most Tibetan authors do *not* actively acknowledge the Trapchi as a proper monastery, or its Lhamo an authentic deity. It could be plausibly pointed out that this literary repression is not unrelated to the general Tibetan disavowal of devotion to Trapchi Lhamo as discussed earlier. What is this practice of repression and why are Tibetans seemingly so often 'impelled' to do so? In what way is this repression normally sustained? The answer to the last question is, in a way, implied in the cited literatures above. Indeed, most of these literary works specifically refer to the land of Trapchi not as a sacred site, but instead as a field of the ultimate worldly power – *armed force*[22].

4. Trapchi in History

There is a mystery about the toponym, Trapchi. If one naturally pronounces its Tibetan spelling *Grwa bzhi*, it would be 'Tra*shi*' or, possibly 'Trap*shi*'. However in reality, people normally say 'Trap*chi*'. This peculiar phonetic use is also confirmed in Hugh Richardson's work – *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year* (1994: 34), whose description[23] partly evidences that 'Trap*chi*' was the main pronunciation among Tibetans even more than half century before the Chinese takeover. This finding appears insignificant, however it is quite intriguing to note in relation to the fact that the common Chinese term for *Grwa bzhi* is zhaji

[21] This may be due to Chos 'phel's conviction that Tibetans in general, though very religious *(chos sems chen po)*, are miserably ignorant of the historical backgrounds of monasteries and temples to which they make pilgrimages (my personal communication with Chos 'phel in 2007). His inclusion of Trapchi and many other minor sacred sites in his book may be a reflection of this conviction.

[22] For example, the *Dungkar Tibetological Great Dictionary* includes *Gra bzhi glog 'phrul las khung* (Trapchi Electrical Machine Office), *Gra bzhi dmag sgar* (Trapchi Army Barrack), *Gra bzhi rtsis bsher* (Trapchi Army Inspection) and *Gra bzhi ya mon dang dmag sgar* (Trapchi Amban Office and Qing Army Barrack), but gives no items for the monastery or the Lhamo. Likewise, *Encyclopaedic Tibetan–Chinese Dictionary* lists only *Gra bzhi las khung* and *Gra bzhi rtsis bsher*.

[23] In his description of 'The Review at Trapchi', he employs the spelling, *Gra phyi*, that can be pronounced 'Trapchi'.

(扎基)[24], which could literally be translated as 'The Foundation of a Garrison.' What should be noted here is that the colloquial Tibetan pronunciation of *Grwa bzhi* is very close to that of zhaji in Chinese. The character zha (扎) is often used in Chinese phonetic transliteration of many Tibetan words[25], irrespective of whether they are related to military terms. However, in the case of Trapchi, it is more than apt, as will be shown. It is probable that the local Tibetan pronunciation of *Grwa bzhi* reflects an historical feature of the Trapchi land, and importantly, that the Trap*shi* signifying 'four-monks', which is locally believed to be the origin of the toponym, could be a kind of distorted narrative concerning the land.

* * *

As far as the political history of modern Tibet is concerned, the early eighteenth century witnessed a crucial turning point. Qośot Mongols, Dzungars and Manchus, the then great powers, were intensely competing with each other to gain authority over the land of Tibet. In 1717, Lha-bzang, the 'King of Tibet', a descendant of Gu-shri Khan of the Qośot Mongols, was assassinated by Dzungars (with whom Sangye Gyatso, the Regent of the Fifth Dalai Lama, had previously been affiliated). However, in 1720 the Dzungars were driven away by the Qing army, who tactfully brought with them the newly reincarnated Dalai Lama to Lhasa, aiming to establish the Manchu authority as the supreme protector of the Gelug School and its Government. The Qing army was militarily and symbolically successful, and the garrison, composed of two thousand troops, was left to guard against possible re-attacks from Dzungars.

The huge presence of this external army in Lhasa naturally caused constant friction between Tibetans and Manchu, similar to that previously existing between the Tibetans and Qośot Mongols or Dzungars, whose troops had also been stationed in or nearby Lhasa. However, after the Dzungars' threat was removed in 1733 by the Qing's successful military campaign, the then Emperor, Yongzheng, declared the intention to effect a massive reduction of the Chinese troops stationed in Tibet[26]. Furthermore, partly in response to a re-

[24] Another transliteration of *Grwa bzhi* is zhashi (扎什), which is often seen in classical texts. In modern context, however, zhaji (扎基) is most commonly employed.

[25] For example, look at the *Dictionary of Common Tibetan Personal and Place Names* (Chen and An 2004: 356-363) for a variety of Chinese terms that employ the character zha (扎) for Tibetan words.

[26] The official proclamation by the Emperor Yongzheng is recorded in *Qingshilu [The Veritable Records of the Qing Dynasty] – Daqing Shizong Xian Huangdi Shilu (Vol.129 pp.1-2).* For convenient access to the record see, for example, *Qingshilu*

quest from Pho lha nas, the then Chief Minister of Tibet *(mi dbang)*, the military encampment of the remaining 500 troops was transferred from the area north of the Jokhang Temple far away to the northern plains. Qingbao, one of the two Ambans, representatives of the Qing government, reports as follows to the Emperor on the new military site:

> … Setting out to investigate an area between Jokhang and Sera, *Zhashitang*, where all *Diba* previously built their buildings, [I found it] extensive and level, near to a source of water, far away from agricultural fields, distancing five-*li* [2.5 kilometres] from the Jokhang Temple, extremely good topography…[27]

Two points should be noted. Of the toponym, *Zhashitang*, *tang* most possibly means a 'plain land' *(thang)* in Tibetan, and *Zhashi* (扎什) could signify either 'four-monks' (if one believes the local narrative) or 'auspiciousness' *(bkra shis)* – therefore, the meaning of *Zhashitang* would be either 'field of four-monks' or 'auspicious land', the then possible toponym used by the Tibetans. Another transliterated word, *Diba*, is slightly confusing, since it sounds as if it is referring to the thrown-holder of Ganden Monastery *(dGa' ldan khri pa)*. But in this case, *Diba* is actually *sde srid* in Tibetan[28], meaning a regent (or high bureaucrat) of the Tibetan administration. In describing the topos of *Zhashitang*, the building of regents – the symbolic figures of mundane power – is mentioned. However, any single words or hints as to the existence of a monastery, or any kind of religious connotation, does not appear either in this or in the many other related Qing court documents. Here, it is worth noting that *Vaidurya Serpo,* an extensive catalogue of Gelug monasteries in Lhasa and beyond, written by Sangye Gyatso (1653-1705), also follows this trend: even the Tibetan side in the similar period does not mention anything about Trapchi Monastery or a religious compound of some kind in a land called Trapchi.

Zangzu Shiliao [1] (1982: 358-9) and *Daqing Shizong Xian (Yongzheng) Huangdi Shilu* (1978).

27 This report is recorded in *Manwen Junjichu Lufu* (Document No. 0941-005; Microfilm No. 020-0825), which is presently preserved in The First Historical Archives of China *(Zhongguo Diyi Lishi Dang'an Guan)* in Beijing. The report is also included in the recent publication, *Yuanyilai Xizang Difang Yu Zhongyang Zhengfu Guanxi Dang'an Shiliao Huibian [2]* (1994: 463-6) where the report is entitled "Qingbao and others humbly report on the situation regarding the project of constructing *Zhashitang* military encampment".

28 According to *An Encyclopaedic Tibetan–Chinese Dictionary*, the Tibetan term, *sde srid*, could be transliterated as *Dici* (第司), *Diba* (第巴), and so on.

If one examines the topography of Trapchi land, it is a smooth, extensive plain, where monasteries and temples are most unlikely to be constructed. True, in the earlier diffusion of Buddhism to Tibet *(snga dar)* more than one millennium ago, plain land near a water source where people tend to dwell was selected as ideal construction site for religious centres, perhaps partly due to the Tibetan Empire's grand mission to propagate the new religion to the common people. Most notable examples are the Jokhang and Ramoche temples in Lhasa, and Samye Monastery in Lhoka. However, from the eleventh century onwards, when Buddhism was reformulated and re-disseminated with a new ethos and fervour *(phyi dar)*, monasteries – *dgon pa*, literally meaning 'wilderness' or 'remote' – tended to be built away from residential areas, namely, at the top or foot of an auspicious or sanctified mountain[29]. If a religious compound was built in the middle of a vacant plain, as Trapchi was, this particular geographical location would normally have been chosen due to its being imbued with a sacred narrative – for example, the birthplace of a famous saint or the existence of a particularly shaped stone considered indicative of the presence of a divinity. In the case of Trapchi land, there seems no such legend or peculiar topological shape. It is, therefore, a total enigma as to how this place was chosen as location for a monastery where 'four monks', allegedly, intended to live.

It is at this juncture that the possibility of the involvement of the Qing military, as described above, should be considered. As mentioned, in 1733, their garrison, composed of 500 troops, was transferred from Lhasa to the Trapchi land. Interestingly, at some point during their station, a shrine to *Guandi*, a warrior god of the Qing army, was constructed for their protection. Every summer, it is said, there was a festival in which the statue of *Guandi* was carried outside to circumambulate the Barkhor in central Lhasa, together with civilian and military attendants[30]. It is unknown exactly when the shrine was built, but it could presumably be speculated that it was in or after 1761 (Richardson 1974: 25)[31]. Indeed, this is the year when the then

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[29] The apparent difference between the locations of monasteries constructed in *snga dar* and those in *phyi dar* is indeed noteworthy, an insight based upon my extensive pilgrimage trips in U-Tsang over a number of years.

[30] See the *Dungkar Tibetological Great Dictionary* (p. 556)

[31] To cite Richardson (1974: 25), "[i]t is possible that when the Grwa-bzhi barracks were built in 1733 for the Chinese garrison a Kuan-ti [Guandi] temple was also made; but it might have been expected that if the Ambans had included a pre-existing cult in their new foundation, the fact would have been mentioned." In the stone tablet dedicated to Trapchi's *Guandi* by an Amban, Helin in 1793, no hint is given as to the exact year of the establishment of the temple. The text of this stone tablet is introduced in Zhang (1988: 485-7), though the author seems to misinterpret this, asserting that the tablet is located near Tashihunpo Monastery,

two Ambans officially constructed a monastery in the Trapchi encampment, for the further development of the Gelug School. An inscription on a wooden panel found at the foundation site of the monastery and left in Trapchi monastery, was recorded by Hugh Richardson (ibid.: 25-7) as reading:

> On the thirteenth day of the eighth month of the iron-snake year [1761], the 26th of the reign of Lha-skyong [Chien-lung Emperor], as an act of special diligence appropriate to the birthday of our holy Hong-ti to [huangdi?] whom be ten thousand years, his humble servants the colleagues Ji Pu and Phu Nas [the names of the two Ambans] who, having been commissioned to dwell on this distant frontier, are unable to attend in person at the Golden Palace and offer together with the nobles who reside at Court the homage that fulfils the desires of his subjects, have therefore, in accordance with our great Emperor's practice of extending widely the Yellow Hat doctrine, respectfully raised a subscription. And his humble servants have founded brTan-bzhugs [firmly established] monastery on the Grwa-bzhi plain and have set up there images of the mighty Sage, the Lord of Doctrine; the Two Elder Brothers among the Spiritual Sons… [32]

The exact location of the shrine of *Guandi*, the above *brTan-bzhugs* monastery and Trapchi Lhamo's chapel is unknown to us. They may not have been identical to each other in a strict sense, but it can be presumed that all of them belonged to the same site on the Trapchi plain (Su 2005: 12-3). Above all, the most significant point is that the maiden land of Trapchi was forcefully cultivated by the presence of external military, and in consequence the monastery was subsequently established there by these foreigners. Indeed, the Trapchi space was initiated and used primarily for the ultimately mundane purposes of the aliens; it was, in a sense, an unwelcomed but inevitable consequence of the incessant interventions of external powers, towards which Tibetans, as is well known, were ambivalent – both exploiting and resisting them since the seventeenth century (e.g. Ishihama 2001).

Nearly half a century after the construction of the Trapchi barracks *(dmag sgar)*, in 1789, it was transformed into a military drilling space[33],

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Shigatse (ibid.: 487).

[32] Richardson (1974: 26).

[33] The then Amban suggested to the Qing cout that a drilling space be built at Trapchi, as seen in *Qingshilu [The Veritable Records of the Qing Dynasty] – Daqing Gaozong Chun Huangdi Shilu (Vol.1339 p.9).* This report by Amban is also included

possibly in response to the first invasion of Gurkha in the previous year. It is said that this marked the inception of official inspections of Manchu and Tibetan military forces in the land of Trapchi (Ou 1988: 50), which is commonly known as the 'Trapchi Inspection' *(Grwa bzhi rtsis bsher)*. Later, this event came to be held annually on the 23rd of the First Month, and many foreign residents in Lhasa in the early twentieth century reported the magnificent standard of Tibet's ancient militia, as demonstrated by Tibetan generals with their armour, weapons and extravagant costumes in Mongol styles (e.g. Richardson 1994: 34-8; Bell 1928: 273-6). Although the Manchu garrison was transferred from Trapchi to Lugu *(Klu sgug)*, a site west of the Jokhang, in the late nineteenth century (Ou 1988: 50-1), it could be presumed that the Trapchi site continued to be a place permeated with the aura of ultimate worldly power, due to the alien inception of the land, annually symbolised and re-enacted by a demonstration of armed force.

As shown so far, the modern belief in the 'four-monks' seems to have been crafted in a later period – whether it referred only to a frequently observed Tibetan wordplay[34], or something more serious. Whatever the case, this modest myth would seem to me to involve a sort of (un)conscious act of *concealment* – a reflection of the psychological suppression of the Chinese, military connections to the foundation of the Buddhist site visited and reversed by so many contemporary Tibetans.

However much the successive Qing Emperors, the supreme masters of the Qing military, declared themselves as supporting the Gelug School and its Government as 'Buddhists' (cf. Ishihama 2001), it is not too difficult to imagine that the very existence of an external force in the vicinity of local residences may have been a source of grave concern or even a fearful menace to all sections of Lhasa society. The religious compounds constructed by aliens, particularly the shrine of *Guandi*, a pagan god of warfare, may have appeared ominous in the view of traditionalist Tibetans[35]. It is possible to speculate that Tibetan national sentiment has, at least in part, operated to 'cover up' the origin of Trapchi as part of an impulse to dilute what is seen as Chinese contamination.

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in *Qingshilu Zangzu Shiliao [7]* (1982: 3222) and *Daqing Gaozong Chun (Qianlong) Huangdi Shilu* (1978).

[34] Some familiar examples of wordplay given by local Tibetans are the transformation of the word *ra sa* (land of goat) into the present *lha sa* (land of gods), and that of *yum bu bla mkhar* (Yumbu High Fortress) to *yum bu lha khang* (Yumbu Temple). Note that the contingent transformation of Tibetan words seems to normally operate to re-sanctify the things or places that the words denote.

[35] Apparently, the statue of *Guandi* at Trapchi was either taken away or destroyed before the Chinese takeover in the mid twentieth century.

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The genesis of Trapchi monastery has long been buried in complete oblivion, but on the other hand, the past identity of Trapchi as a military area is widely known (as noted earlier when referring to contemporary literature mentioning Trapchi). Moreover, the military presence on that soil may be a vivid memory for many elderly Tibetans and others who have direct connections or relatives involved with the Trapchi land at some point during the twentieth century. It is indeed at this critical time in Tibet's modern history that the land has resurfaced in the consciousness of Lhasa's population.

During the two decades after the thirteenth Dalai Lama's return from his exile in 1913, Tibet experienced its *de facto* independence (Goldstein 1991). The Dalai Lama's first and foremost priority for this vulnerable nation was to rapidly modernise it, the most significant act towards which was that of strengthening Tibet's indigenous army against foreign powers, particularly the Chinese. In 1914, the military force called 'Trongdra Regiment' *(Grong drag dmag mi)* was established, and its location was selected to be that of the former Qing garrison – the Trapchi land. Most likely, this was a natural choice due to technical and/or geographical reasons.

The regiment was composed of 1,000 troops or more[36], influencing Lhasa society and its people, who, however, did not necessarily welcome the new move towards rapid modernisation. Particularly, the traditional segment of Tibetan polity, the Gelug hierarchs, opposed the sudden emergence of the political power of Tibetan commanders and soldiers, who had appeared to them a tremendous menace due to their overtly secularist attitudes and material strength, derived in large part from foreign (British) influences (ibid.). It can be said that even after the removal of the Qing's martial influence, the land of Trapchi, a centre of the newly developed Tibetan military, continued to be a place of intractable power – the space imbued with modern, external and worldly force.

The existence of the 'Trapchi Electrical Machine Office' *(Grwa bzhi glog 'phrul las khungs)*[37], established in 1931, appeared to symbolise Trapchi's affiliation with worldly power. Headed by Kumbela, an able, young Tibetan who was most favoured by the Dalai Lama, this office produced important modern items, such as currencies and munitions, and even provided electricity for some affluent homesteads.

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[36] See *Dungkar Tibetological Great Dictionary* (p. 555).

[37] Its formal name is 'Trapchi Electrical Machine Office, Treasure of Extraordinary, Limitless Power of Mind' *(Gra bzhi glog 'phrul las khung ngo mtshar mtha' klas rig 'phrul gter mdzod) Dungkar Tibetological Great Dictionary* (p. 554).

The Tibet's first hydroelectric plant[38] constructed in *Dog sde* Valley, was the source of energy for the office's factories. Afterwards, it merged the agricultural office *(So nam las khungs)*, and exercised an influence over the finance and economy *(nor srid dpal 'byor)* of the government[39]. Fully backed by foreign technology and the Dalai Lama's tutelage, Kumbela, in the land of Trapchi, was even able to organise his own regiment equipped with modern arms and Western-style training (Goldstein 1991: 146-156). A British colonial officer reported on the Trapchi land in 1933: "[t]he whole place had an air of energy and efficiency which is rare in Tibet"[40], and on the regiment, "outside the regular units of the British and Indian armies, I have never seen such smartness and precision."[41]

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After the middle of twentieth century, when the Tibetan hope of establishing their own nation-state had dissolved, the Trapchi space was transformed into 'Lhasa Prison No.1' to accommodate 'hundreds of thousands of'[42] Tibetan dissidents. Now commonly called 'Drapchi Prison,' it has become internationally notorious for the maltreatment of prisoners. The majority of the prisoners are Tibetan political (ex-)protestors – lays and monks/nuns – who were directly or indirectly involved in largely peaceful demonstrations against the Chinese government and the suppression of their religious activities. The number of inmates dramatically increased towards the end of the 1980s, when the Tibetan demand for national independence culminated in riots. The locals normally keep silent about this fearful prison, which is located just behind Trapchi monastery, so close that the inside of the prison can be viewed from the monastery roof.

5. The Emergence of Trapchi Lhamo as a Modern Worldly Deity

Although the brief history of the Trapchi land given in the previous section may be rather fragmented, we are now in a better position to

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38 See bSam shod (2010: 78-9) for some details of the plant.

39 *Dungkar Tibetological Great Dictionary* (p.555).

40 Re-cited from Goldstein (1991: 152). IOR [India Office Records], L/PS/12/4175 (letter from the political officer in Sikkim [F. W. Williamson] to the Government of India, reporting on a visit to Lhasa in 1933, dated 6 January 1934).

41 Re-cited from Goldstein (1991: 155). IOR [India Office Records], L/PS/12/4175 (letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, reporting on a visit to Lhasa in 1933, dated 6 January 1934).

42 Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD) website: http://www.tchrd.org/.

tackle the riddle presented in the introduction: why has Trapchi Lhamo, in preference to other powerful worldly gods, emerged as the supreme deity of wealth, despite no religious authorities such as high lamas and Buddhist texts acknowledging her status as such?

First, let us consider *Guandi*, the warrior god of the Qing garrison, whose shrine, as noted earlier, was constructed on the land of Trapchi in or after 1761. *Guandi* is a divine form of famous *Guanyu*, an ancient, legendary Chinese warrior of the Shu Dynasty (221-263 AD). He is now almost universally worshipped in culturally Chinese areas as a deity of commerce. It is not known to us whether *Guandi* in Trapchi was expected to play this mundane role at that time, when his shrine was demolished, and moreover, exactly when the phantom of the Chinese princess landed in Trapchi and became acknowledged as a Lhamo (goddess). However, the physical and temporal proximity between these two gods is noteworthy. It is possible that at some point the goddess began to be associated with commerce or other worldly matters with which the warrior god of identical origin, situated in her vicinity, is believed to assist.

In relation to this, one is reminded of the existence of another *Guandi* in Lhasa, whose shrine is located on the top of a small hill, *Bar ma ri* (or *Bong ba ri*) near the Potala Palace. Constructed by a general of the Qing army at the end of the eighteenth century[43], this shrine continues to exist to the present date; however, it attracts few pilgrims, and then only Chinese. If *Guandi* had been of any real significance in Trapchi, such that he could have affected the main features and capabilities attributed to Trapchi Lhamo, it would seem likely that *Guandi*'s shrine on the small hill would have attracted more attention from contemporary Tibetans both historically and in the present. It is possible to suggest that the reason for the lack of popularity accorded *Guandi* by local Tibetans may well be due to his appearing too explicitly Chinese, and therefore representative of alien interests, in their eyes[44].

On a most fundamental level, the secret of the emergence of Trapchi Lhamo seems to lie less in *Guandi*'s possible influence on her, than in a more 'lived' dimension, that is, the *(re)production of historical space* (cf. Lefebvre 1991[1974]) that occurred in Trapchi. To put it differently, Trapchi Lhamo emerged from a mutual correlation between space, power and morality, which she came to embody during her

[43] See for example Richardson (1974: 53-4) and Zhang (1988: 481-2) for some details of the stone tablet and the statue of *Guandi* on *Bar ma ri*.

[44] In fact, the statue of *Guandi* on *Bar ma ri* was and is widely believed by Tibetans to be that of the Tibetan legendary hero of Ling Gesar (see also Richardson 1974: 53-4). The existence of a worldly Chinese god at a Tibetan Buddhist site may seem to the locals to be unnatural or unacceptable.

reign in the land of Trapchi. The Trapchi area has long been very distinctive as a locus of a formidable profane power, entailing that the radiation of its worldly quality influenced or intimidated the local people in a variety of ways; the significant result of this is that the main deity governing the land, Trapchi Lhamo, was naturally imbued with this absolute worldliness.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Qing garrison was constructed on the land of the regent's building, and subsequently, the space was transformed into a place for military drilling. Following the two-century presence of this alien army, the Trapchi land was utilised as a garrison for the modern Tibetan army, and also as a centre of technology and energy, where electricity, munitions and currencies were produced and distributed. In the aftermath of the 1959 Chinese takeover, the space was turned into the most notorious prison in Tibet, the existence of which has functioned to both suppress and stimulate national sentiments. The Trapchi land has thus been continuously imbued with a variety of tremendous mundane powers, characterised by externality and violence. A local perspective on the Trapchi land as *a source of profane power* has been formulated under the above historical conditions, giving rise to the successive transmission of local projections of fears, wishes and disgust towards that northern space, in the centre of which, the worldly deity has witnessed and fully assimilated the enormity of ruthless, ultimate forces.

As shown earlier, economic development has been rapidly enforced in modern Lhasa over the last few decades by the Chinese leadership and under their tutelage, resulting in Chinese economic dominance in Lhasa and beyond. It is significant to note that the market economy initiated in contemporary Lhasa is, at a fundamental level, remarkably analogous to the armed forces of Trapchi's history in that it is of an alien, sudden and invading nature. Thus the emerging popularity of Trapchi Lhamo is, in a way, a Tibetan expression of their perceived association between these two different powers – economy and army – in a form of worship. The locals seem to instinctively recognise the parallel between the two. To put it more precisely, the intrinsic similarity of these powers, it seems, sustains the ideological backdrop against which Trapchi Lhamo, powered by her land of violence, has increasingly resonated with the colonial nature of the Chinese economical governance, under which many Tibetans are (dis)affiliated with this goddess of Chinese origin.

Let us now approach the question of why Trapchi Lhamo became such a prominent worldly deity of wealth in Lhasa from a different angle, by asking why other powerful worldly deities in Lhasa have *failed* to come to fulfil this divine role. The answer seems to be inherently related to the general nature of Tibet's worldly deities (*'jig rten*

gyi lha). In contemporary Lhasa, the worldly deities are predominantly Buddhist protectors *(srung ma)* who serve the interests of respective schools and monasteries. The most prominent ones are Palden Lhamo and Nechung *(Srung ma dmar nag gnyis)*, the two main traditional protectors for the Gelug School and the Dalai Lama's government. Some other minor but conspicuous examples are *Nyangra (Nyang bran rgyal chen)* of the same school, who particularly serves Sera monastery; Sakyabamo *(Sa skya 'bag mo),* the protector of the Sakya School, enshrined in *Pho brang gsar pa* (a branch of Sakya monastery) to the west of the Jokhang Temple; and Apchi *(A phyi chos kyi sgrol ma)* in *Nub rigs gsum lha khang*, a temple run by the Drikung Kagyu school. The infamous Shugden can also be enlisted as one of Lhasa's many mundane deities, being a supreme protector for Gelug fundamentalists[45]. Such worldly deities are believed to be effective and powerful particularly in the physical world, in this present life, since they are essentially mundane beings of a different class to humans but sharing their worldly nature.

If one needs to pray for worldly matters, one tends to select a familiar deity, according to one's origin *(lung pa)* and religious affiliation. In Tibetan folk traditions, the most ideal choice for worship is a territorial god from one's natal place *(yul lha* or *skyes lha)*, who, if properly propitiated, will increase one's life force and fortune in this present life. The original identities of these deities are often deceased local kings, warriors or even high lamas, whose souls have gone on to become worldly gods who watch over the place they were affiliated with in life. In general, worldly deities are especially associated with war and violence, easily affected by their own anger and jealousy, and so likely to harm their devotees if displeased, particularly if they are not worshipped regularly. In some cases, like the ones mentioned above, these territorial gods are promoted to the role of protector *(srung ma)* for local monasteries and temples.

In modern Lhasa, the custom of propitiating one's territorial gods has increasingly been dying out, even among senior generations, and many Tibetans now do not even know the names of their local gods. The generations of immigrant Tibetans from rural areas – who comprise the majority of Tibetan residents in present Lhasa – have mostly ceased to worship their local deities, since it is believed that occasional pilgrimage visits to the shrines of these territorial gods will anger the gods more bitterly than the complete terminations of worship. This belief naturally causes migrants to refrain from propitiating the gods even at the rare times they return home. However, un-

[45] For some details see Dreyfus's article, *The Shugden Affair: Origins of a Controversy Part I and II* (footnote 2).

derstandably or not, this does not mean that the inclination to pray for divine help in mundane matters has become extinct – an eloquent demonstration of which, of course, is the devotion accorded our Trapchi Lhamo. Most significantly here, the many other powerful deities listed above are tragically ineffective in competing with Trapchi Lhamo in gaining the people's faith for help in worldly matters[46]. However powerful and 'Buddhist' they purport to be, all of them attach to their individual localities and/or sectarianism too heavily to attract a wide range of followers. Our Trapchi Lhamo, in contrast, can easily transcend these rigid boundaries of sectarianism and territoriality to which the Tibetan deities above are historically bound. Even if she abides in an officially Gelug monastery, her origin beyond Tibet makes her distinct and immune to traditional demarcations. The result is that these indigenous gods, who attract followers within their localities, are less popular contemporary worldly deities than Trapchi Lhamo, a female Chinese god who is generically an alien. In addition to this, our Lhamo, unlike other envious mundane deities, is believed not to punish occasional worshippers and those who also worship different deities. This is an exceptionally generous aspect, given the generally jealous characteristic of worldly deities. Accordingly, Trapchi Lhamo has emerged as the supreme worldly deity encompassing the whole Tibetan ethnicity across different localities and religious affiliations. It can be said that within the vacuum of appropriate mundane divinities dwelling nearby, Trapchi, who had flown from far China to Lhasa, has been selected as a kind of modern substitute for Tibetan territorial gods. As those traditional territorial gods used to promise their agriculturalist followers protection of and good harvests for their cultivated fields, this new god of Chinese origin, presiding over Lhasa's secular world, guarantees her devotees fertile economic ground. In a sense, Trapchi Lhamo has been transformed into a *modern territorial god*[47] for a rapidly urbanising Lhasa. She listens to the wishes of the old and new residents from a variety of dif-

[46] Among the deities listed above, Palden Lhamo and Nechung are those who are most worshipped, whilst there do seem to be quite a few Shugden followers in contemporary Lhasa. However, as far as I observed, even the latter divinity appears much less popular than Trapchi Lhamo, although it should be noted that the worship for this controversial deity is normally hidden from public view.

[47] Despite some obvious differences, such as origins and (non-)enviousness, Trapchi Lhamo is endowed with what would be some peculiar characteristics for a traditional territorial god. The most noteworthy of these is her death by physical violence (i.e. poisoning) at the end of her human lifetime, which reminds us of the births/deaths of Shugden and Nyangra (although the types of violence that took their lives are different). The limited spatiality of her divine power – no temples and monasteries outside Lhasa seem to enshrine images of her – is, perhaps, another intriguing characteristic.

ferent origins. Simultaneously though, the more she has become worshipped and her reputation has grown, the more palpable is, as we saw earlier, a certain rupture in perceptions of her divinity; a rupture that people tend to avoid facing.

6. Concluding Remarks: Trapchi – Ideology and Social 'Symptom'

I hope here to have shed some light on the enigma surrounding Trapchi Lhamo's sudden emergence as such a powerful deity of wealth in contemporary Lhasa. Yet, another question remains: that of how it is possible that secular prayers be openly made in the consecrated realm of a Buddhist monastery. In the process of exploring the primary enigma, interestingly, this second one has developed into a new question, that is, what precisely is the variety of Tibetan *repressions* regarding certain 'fissures' that the Trapchi Lhamo cult represents? The second one initially appeared less significant than the first, however, now it seems more fundamental particularly in its ideological connection with Tibetan perceptions of themselves within Chinese modernity.

To recapitulate the types of repression observed above: firstly, the general Tibetan tendency to *disavow* their countrymen's pilgrimage to Trapchi monastery, claiming that visitors there are predominantly Chinese and those Tibetans who visit are primarily traders *(tshong pa)* following corrupt Chinese morality; secondly, the literary repression which has almost completely disregarded Trapchi monastery and its Lhamo, thoroughly replacing their listings with those denoting the past existence of the Trapchi military; and lastly, the Tibetan belief regarding the origin of the monastery as being Buddhist ('four-monks'). The evident contradiction of these with observable realities is certainly remarkable. What creates and sustains this inconsistency? The answer is, of course, 'the Chinese', or more precisely, Tibetan ambivalence towards Chinese power and influence. Such apparent contradictions found within behaviour, thoughts and minds are *not* problematic at all, as is celebrated in the traditional Tibetan proverb which begins this article. Rather, the fundamental problem lies in the fact that such contradictions regarding Trapchi Lhamo inevitably involve the 'Chinese' *(rgya mi)* – and the undeniable Tibetan revulsion *and* reverence towards the worldly and menacing Chinese forces under which they live. Once such contradictions surface and are revealed to consciousness, they tend to then be repressed through a somewhat psychological operation to conceal or deny a particular part of the total reality, so that Tibetan identity in terms of an ideo-

logical self-integrity as Buddhists vis-à-vis the Chinese as corrupt mammonists is manifested and maintained. What is repressed in this operation is the thought of Tibetan desire for Chinese power and affluence; the possibility of Tibetan monetary aspiration is denied here, i.e. the amoral quality that the cult for Trapchi Lhamo appears to demonstrate.

In his most celebrated work, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Slavoj Žižek (2008[1989]) submits an interesting psychoanalytical account of the ideological mechanism of anti-Semitism. Though historical and political contexts are radically different, his analysis of this enduring European ambivalence seems to provide us with a constructive framework from within which to consider our Trapchi cult. Firstly, he says, there is 'displacement'. The hidden secret of anti-Semitism is to displace social antagonism into a particular entity: 'the Jew'. Although society itself cannot fundamentally sustain itself without intrinsic splits among its constituents (cf. Laclau and Mouffe 1985; Laclau 1990), an adamantly held belief in society as a harmonious whole pushes people to look for the cause of internal defects *externally*. The figure of 'the Jew' is born at this moment. The process of this displacement is sustained by 'condensation', in which opposing characteristics are imagined and projected onto the social entity of 'the Jew' – dirty *and* intellectual, voluptuous *and* impotent, and so on. The riddle of how the figure of 'the Jew' captures our desire, according to Žižek, lies in 'the way 'Jew' enters the framework of fantasy structuring our enjoyment (ibid.: 141)'. This is crucial. Here, by fantasy he means an 'ideological fantasy' in which society is imagined as a corporate body, constituted in the relations between organic, complementary parts. To rephrase the articulation above, the fundamental impossibility of such a society is masked by this fantasy, and its apparent contradiction with the reality is attributed to 'the Jew', whose very existence appears to manifest the positive cause of social negativity. However, Žižek argues further, in the moment when 'the Jew' is imagined as a source of corruption for social totality, 'the Jews' simultaneously and necessarily embodies a certain block; a naked disclosure of the impossibility of our fantasy, the revealing of invalidity of the fantasy, whose only function, i.e. the function of our ideological fantasy, is to fill out the empty space of the fundamental impossibility. Therefore, once this fantasy is 'traversed', 'the Jew' is revealed as a*'point at which social negativity as such assumes positive existence* (ibid.: 143; *italic original*)'. It is due to this logic that the figure of Jew, as the embodiment of *fundamental impossibility* of our imagining-living world, threatens us and stimulates a desire to assimilate *and* annihilate them in order to restore what is in fact unattainable social order and harmony. As long as such a fantasy never ceases to

uphold its imaginative frame of corporatist social order, the paranoid images of 'the Jew' return again and again, as history evidences. It is in this sense that the (images projected onto) 'Jews' can be identified with a sort of social 'symptom' (ibid. 143-4) where immanent social antagonisms and fissures – however traumatic they may appear – become visible and palpable. In a psychoanalytic endeavour, most crucially, it is in this sphere, in the properties attributed to 'Jew', that one may discover some truth about oneself, the ideological kernel constituting one's identity and the fictitious totality upon which one rests.

Evidently, our Trapchi Lhamo, as an embodiment of 'Tibetan impossibility', is 'the Jew' in the above analysis. As we saw, the goddess, explicitly or implicitly, represents a Chinese power that can be considered constitutive for contemporary Tibetan identity. Firstly, opposing features are projected onto the figure of Trapchi Lhamo – effective *and* unenlightened, worshipped *and* denigrated. Her figure captures Tibetan desires within the psychological operation in which she enters the framework of Tibetan fantasy – the fantasy of national identity as 'pure Buddhist' in opposition to avaricious concerns exemplified by the 'Chinese'. Here, the fundamental impossibility of Tibetan identity is characterised as the complete negation of modern Chinese involvement in its own construction (i.e. on the social, economical and political levels). This impossibility is concealed by the Tibetan fantasy, but its apparent contradiction with the empirical world is immediately identified, and then projected onto external, dominant figures such as Trapchi Lhamo and her 'deviant' worshippers. Far from being the positive causes of social negativity, however, the Lhamo and her mammonist worshippers inevitably embody a certain impossibility of the Tibetan fantasy; they comprise a sort of traumatic modern kernel, which radically discords with existing Tibetan self-perception. In a sense, the Trapchi cult is a point at which impossible moral negativity – *avarice in Buddhism* – assumes positive existence. Thus, the figure of Trapchi (and her followers), as the embodiment of fundamental impossibility of Tibetan imaginative world, threatens them, stimulates their desire to worship (assimilate) *and* denigrate (exclude) the goddess in order to restore an unachievable 'pure' Tibetan identity as Buddhist. Since the Tibetan fantasy operates to conceal the immanent fissures within the Trapchi cult, the peculiar discourses on Trapchi Lhamo and her devotees appear in a form of conspicuous *repressions* – it is in this subtle sense that the contemporary Trapchi cult can be paralleled with a sort of social 'symptom'.

In a similar way to Žižek's 'the Jew', as indicative of an oblique reflex in which one could discover hidden elements of oneself, the

Trapchi cult brings us closer to understanding a vital aspect of contemporary Tibetan identity. The Trapchi cult is the point at which the Tibetan desire for economic gain assumes a positive form, erupts from hidden depths and rises up to the surface. It is a manifestation of the reality that Tibetan self-perception as 'unpolluted' Buddhist is unsustainable; the point at which Tibetan identity is dismantled. If Tibetans (and we) are fully captured by their fantasy, Trapchi appears as a form of anomaly, an intruder who disturbs the Tibetan tradition by her ambivalent externality. However, at the moment when the ideological fantasy underlying her divine aura is revealed, the true nature of Tibetan ambivalence is exposed, confronting contemporary Tibetans – Trapchi Lhamo is a Tibetan disguise, she wears the mask of a kind of Buddhist *persona,* but her real identity is embedded in an enduring Tibetan simultaneous desire for *and* rejection of Chinese power and affluence. The Trapchi cult, therefore, is *ideological* at a most fundamental level, whatever its claims to religiosity might be. It is due to this quality of the cult that local discourses on Trapchi Lhamo assume 'symptomatic' features such as fervent devotion and/or active ignorance regarding the cult. 'Symptom,' as recognised in psychoanalysis, is not a purely pathological and degrading entity, *never* a negative attribute, but is rather a pivotal point at which one could be confronted with one's hidden enjoyment, as structured by past traumatic events, and challenged to undertake a psychic act of redemption; a struggle to transform this hidden kernel into a manageable entity that is consistent to one's being-in-the-world. Hence analysis of the Trapchi cult could be productive for comprehending some ideological dimensions of contemporary Lhasa. However, it is of course entirely up to contemporary Tibetans how or if they face the symptomatic phenomena widely observed in their rapidly transforming society. However, the most essential thing for them, it seems to me, is to engage in an historical mission to dissociate the Chinese power from what is regarded as prosperity, thereby dismantling their heavy reliance on the Chinese as convenient, seductive brokers, through re-linking and exposing themselves *directly* to modernity itself in the interests of their own ideological liberalisation.

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This article aimed to illuminate the peculiar nature of the Trapchi Lhamo cult in both temporal and spatial dimensions. Through examining contemporary Lhasa and its rapid modernisation, it has explored the temporal distinctiveness that has generated the Trapchi cult. Through exploring the history of the Trapchi land, the spatial peculiarity where the goddess has reigned was revealed. In the process of this quest in both temporal and spatial dimensions, what I

wished to do overall was to get closer to appreciating the nucleus of Tibetan culture and identity in contemporary Lhasa. Hopefully, I have offered a glimpse of this during my struggle to unravel the intricate webs of ideological discourses within which the secretive Lhamo wraps herself up.

Note on Transliteration

In this article I employ the Wylie system in transliterating Tibetan words. Round brackets with italics are used throughout to indicate these words, whereas square brackets with italics are for Chinese pinyin. Tibetan words in current circulation amongst English speakers are given phonetic representations (e.g. Barkhor).

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Mchog gyur gling pa's Visionary Journey to the Copper-Colored Mountain

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I. Invitation

In the middle of the nineteenth-century, the treasure-revealer known as Mchog gyur bde chen gling pa spent some time in isolated retreat in a small hermitage above the 'Og min Karma dgon monastery. His biographies relate that one day during this retreat he noticed that the air was filled with a particularly pleasant scent of incense and sounds like trumpeting elephants resounded through the sky. Looking up, he saw five ḍākiṉīs adorned in fine silks and jewels, flying effortlessly toward him. In the words of his most comprehensive biography:[1]

> They were five in number but they spoke with one voice:
> "We have come from the emanated realm of O rgyan.
> At the sacred site, the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain,
> The wheel of the vast and profound dharma of
> The vast ocean of the collected teachings is being turned.
> We were sent as messengers to invite you, son,
> To come and witness this wondrous spectacle.
> Aḥ Haṃ!"
> As soon as they said that, an experience of joy blazed forth and without noticing that he had a body, in an instant, he was in the vision.[2]

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[1] For an overview of the hagiographical corpus devoted to Mchog gyur gling pa (consisting of twelve distinct texts), see Doctor 2005: 75–83. The biography referred to here and throughout this article is Dkon mchog 'gyur med's 1921 composition, *Gter chen mchog gyur bde chen gling pa'i rnam thar bkra shis dbyangs kyi yan lag gsal byed*.

[2] *Yan lag gsal byed*, 102.3–5: *lnga byung nas mgrin gcig tu 'di skad do/ nga o rgyan sprul pa'i zhing nas 'ong/ gnas zangs mdog dpal ri bo na/ bka' 'dus chos kyi rgya mtsho yi/ zab rgya che'i chos 'khor ba bskor bar yod/ bu ngo mtshar ltas mo gzigs pa ched/ spyan 'dren pa'i pho nyar mngags pa yin/ A haṁ/ zhes gsungs pa'i mod la dga' ba de'i nyams 'bar zhing lus yod du mi tshor ba snang ba'i ngang la dal gcig song ngo/.*

Benjamin Bogin, "Mchog gyur gling pa's Visionary Journey to the Copper-Colored Mountain", *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 27, Octobre 2013, pp. 55-79.

The next twenty folios of this biography tell the story of Mchog gyur gling pa's journey from his retreat hut in eastern Tibet to the Copper-Colored Mountain and back again. The richly detailed account of this voyage provides a wealth of information regarding Tibetan views of the imagined land and an opportunity to explore the role of visions within Tibetan Buddhist literature.

Despite the central role that such visionary journeys play in the biographical and hagiographical literature of Tibet, these stories have received little scholarly attention.[3] In part, disregard for these narratives may be attributed to the well-documented bias for philosophical writing, meditation manuals, and political history in studies of Tibetan Buddhism. A broader anxiety around the category of "religious experience" has also deterred scholarly attention from this material. The critical backlash against a twentieth-century preoccupation with religious experience (from William James' *Varieties of Religious Experience* to the influential writings of Mircea Eliade) has shifted attention away from the personal and toward critical theory focused on the constitutive systems of language, ritual, and institutions.[4] These shifting trends in the academic study of religion have not changed the fact that a great deal of Tibetan Buddhist writing is concerned with personal visionary experiences such as Mchog gyur gling pa's journey to the Copper-Colored Mountain. By considering the literary structure and style of this story, I hope to demonstrate that closely reading a narrative of personal religious experience need not imply a naïve acceptance of the essentialist model of *sui generis* religious experience. Prominent theorists in religious studies are already proclaiming the need to move beyond the "literary turn" and move toward a more sophisticated recovery of religious experience, most often drawing upon perspectives from psychology and cognitive science. In this study of an early-twentieth century Tibetan text, I hope to demonstrate that we still have much to learn from analyzing the public literary representations of private religious experiences.

In Dkon mchog gyur med's text, when the five ḍākiṇīs introduced themselves and invited Mchog gyur gling pa to join them at the Copper-Colored Mountain, "an experience of joy blazed forth and without noticing that he had a body, in an instant, he was in the vision." Rather than attempting to answer the phenomenological question of what it means to be "in the vision," my reading of the text will argue that the author's twenty-folio narrative is a carefully structured ac-

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[3] Notable exceptions include Gyatso 1996, Kapstein 1992 & 1997, and Newman 1996. For considerations of the "vision quest" motif in Indian Buddhist literature, see Beyer 1977 and Studholme 2002: 98–104. The same topic is considered in the context of Korean Buddhist Literature in McBride 2003.

[4] For a concise summary of this turn in the study of religion, see Taves 2009: 3–12.

count that unpacks this moment, gradually leading the reader from the substantial mundane world into the ethereal visionary world of the pure land. In this reading, the shift from ordinary perception to the "pure perception" of the vision is the actual topic at hand and the story of Mchog gyur gling pa's journey is interpreted as an allegory of sorts, one that serves to gradually map the transformation that is here described as instantaneous. Accepting that we do not have access to whatever subjective experience Mchog gyur gling pa had that day in the retreat hut above 'Og min Karma dgon, we must pay attention to the forms and structures of the literary representation of that experience and attempt to discern the implicit logic of the text and its relationship to the network of texts, practices, and histories in which it was created and understood.

Two place names appear in the first lines of the ḍākiṇīs' invitation: O rgyan and the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain. In the detailed itinerary that follows, it becomes clear that these are neighboring and closely associated regions. For Tibetan Buddhists, the two locations mark the beginning and end points in the hagiography of Padmasambhava, the eighth-century tantric master credited with establishing Buddhism in Tibet and renowned as "the Second Buddha." Padmambhava is said to have been born in O rgyan and most accounts describe this birth as a miraculous one—spontaneously appearing as a boy seated in a lotus flower in the middle of a lake. The stories of his life describe his adoption by a Buddhist king, his exile from the palace, his training in Buddhism both within and beyond the monastic system, his eventual travel to Tibet where he tamed the indigenous spirits, assisted in establishing the first monastery, and guided numerous disciples to complete awakening (entrusting many of them with the task of revealing in the future 'treasures' that he concealed at that time). At the conclusion of his long sojourn in Tibet, Padmasambhava is said to have departed for the southwest, where he "liberated" the demon king who ruled an island populated by vicious demons from the top of the Copper-Colored Mountain[5] and established a "pure land" where he resides to this day. Thus, the first two lines of the verse invitation may be read as a very condensed parallel to the life story of Padmasambhava, coming from O rgyan and leading to the Copper-Colored Mountain. When the ḍākiṇīs mention that the "wheel of the dharma is being turned" and that they were "sent as messengers," it goes without saying that Padmasam-

[5] This article is part of a larger research project devoted to the Copper-Colored Mountain. I hope to address the broader history of the island and its relationship to demon-inhabited islands found in Indian Buddhist literature in a separate article.

bhava is the teacher who is turning the wheel and the authority who dispatched them with the invitation.

The recipient of this extraordinary invitation, Mchog gyur gling pa, was one of the most prolific and influential *gter ston* of his day. His close collaboration with 'Jam mgon kong sprul (1813-1899) and 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po (1820-1892), the two luminaries responsible for the monumental institutional, editorial, artistic, and publishing projects known as the "nonsectarian" *(ris med)* movement, ensured his revelations a prominent place in the lineages that took their inspiration from this nineteenth-century renaissance.[6] The thirty-nine volumes of Mchog gyur gling pa's *New Treasures* remain widely practiced in Nyingma and Kagyu circles today. As with any *gter ston*, Mchog gyur gling pa's life story is marked with attempts to clarify doubts regarding the authenticity of the treasures that he revealed. He was born into the Skya su clan in the Nang chen region and reported that his first encounter with Padmasambhava as well as his first treasure-revelation took place before he had reached the age of thirteen. His autobiography describes skepticism in Nang chen regarding his treasures and relates that early in life he was called Skya su *gter ston*, a slightly dismissive moniker in which the authority of the *gter ston* title is mockingly undermined by being paired with the worldly name of a minor local clan. At the age of twenty-five, Mchog gyur gling pa left Nang chen for Sde dge and the vibrant monastic communities of Dpal spungs and Rdzong gsar where Kong sprul and Mkhyen brtse were teaching and working on their monumental collections of Tibetan Buddhist literature. The recognition by these two figures unquestionably secured Mchog gyur gling pa's place in the pantheon of great *gter ston* and his presence provided their scholastic endeavors with the authority of Padmasambhava's power. In this sense, the special invitation received in the beginning of this account also granted Mchog gyur gling pa entry into the most important religious and secular communities of Tibet.

After Mchog gyur gling pa's death in 1870, a search for his reincarnation led to the recognition and enthronement of a young boy from Sde sge.[7] This boy, Dkon mchog 'gyur med bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan, was trained by both 'Jam dgon kong sprul and 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang po and dedicated most of his religious career to

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[6] On Mchog gyur gling pa's role in redefining the religious geography of Khams in the context of the nonsectarian movement, see Gardner 2006.

[7] Another boy was recognized as a simultaneous rebirth of Mchog gyur gling pa shortly thereafter and through association with Gnas brtan Monastery, this lineage of rebirths has come to be known as the Gnas brtan mchog gling incarnation line. On the two Mchog gling incarnation lineages, see Orgyen Tobgyal 1982: 47-60.

codifying and publishing the revelations of his previous incarnation. As part of this project, Dkon mchog 'gyur med btsan pa'i rgyal mtshan also composed a six-hundred folio biography of his predecessor that drew upon earlier biographies and combined these with oral traditions and other documents. The massive biography is organized according to the ten headings that 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang po had introduced as the outline *(sa bcad)* for his commentary on 'Jam mgon kong sprul's biographical supplication prayer to Mchog gyur gling pa. From among these ten headings,[8] the section that I will be discussing in this article is found under the sixth one, devoted to "visions" *(dag snang).* Dkon mchog 'gyur med's description of Mchog gyur gling pa's journey to the faraway world of the Copper-Colored Mountain has many parallels from various cultures and times. One thinks immediately of Dante's *Inferno* and *Paradiso* and the pilgrimage of Sudhana in the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra*. The most famous English work in this genre is John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, first published in 1678. As famous as this work is, we forget that the full title is *The Pilgrim's Progress from this world to that which is to come; delivered under the similitude of a dream wherein is discovered the manner of his setting out, his dangerous journey, and safe arrival at the desired countrey*. That last phrase, "delivered under the similitude of a dream wherein is discovered the manner of his setting out, his dangerous journey, and safe arrival at the desired countrey" could easily be the ornamental title of Dkon mchog 'gyur med's description of his previous incarnation's magical journey from Eastern Tibet to the Copper-Colored Mountain, the potent abode of Padmasambhava himself.

Such a text might be described as "visionary." Yet the English term "vision" implies a dichotomy between reality and imagination, a dichotomy that has often been challenged by Buddhist philosophy, practice, and in this case, literature. The text is a masterful demonstration of the ways in which reality and imagination are interwoven, describing an incremental movement from the substantial mundane world to the ethereal pure land through a variety of modes, including pilgrimage, sacred history, myth, and ritual. The text serves a host of purposes, both spiritual and mundane, purposes that I will address in a longer study. The present paper is devoted to a close reading of several of the most fascinating portions of the text in order to provide something of a commentary on what can sometimes seem a strange and bewildering narrative.

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[8] The ten are: 1. youth, 2. awakening karmic potential, 3. teachers, 4. spiritual development, 5. meditative realization, 6. visions, 7. treasure revelation, 8. students, 9. establishing sacred sites, 10. passing into nirvāṇa.

II. A Pilgrim in Tibet

The story of the actual journey follows this invitation and introduction. The five ḍākiṇīs place a golden crossed-vajra with twelve spokes before Mchog gyur gling pa and explain that the twelve spokes are a symbol of the classic Buddhist doctrine of the twelve links of dependent origination. Eschewing the traditional elaborations of the causal relationships between these various links, sometimes counted across a single lifetime and other times as spanning three lifetimes, the ḍākiṇīs emphasize the simultaneous presence of all twelve links in every single moment, equating the twelve links of the dependent origination of saṃsāra with the "confusion that does not recognize the nature of a moment of misconception."[9] The correspondence of a numbered object or group with a numbered list from Buddhist doctrinal literature is a standard convention of Buddhist visionary writing. Here, rather than using the twelve spokes of the vajra as an opportunity to review the twelve links of dependent origination, the author asserts that every moment of conceptual thought that does not recognize its own awakened nature is itself the cause of saṃsāra. The ḍākiṇīs urge Mchog gyur gling pa to "cut through miconceptions."[10] Instantaneously, Mchog gyur gling pa finds himself seated in the center of the vajra as they lift him into the sky and head southwest. Compared to other works of visionary literature, the story of Mchog gyur gling pa's journey to the Copper-Colored Mountain contains little symbolic interpretation of this type. It is interesting to note that one of the few places that we find such a clear identification of a particular symbol is at the very beginning of the story, where the mode of conveyance is defined as the dependent origination of saṃsāra itself.

Seated upon the crossed-vajra, Mchog gyur gling pa is lifted into the sky as his flying escort carries him off to the southwest. Despite a great deal of disagreement regarding the location of the Copper-Colored Mountain, there is almost universal agreement that it is to be found in the southwest. Some of the confusion results from the simple fact that directional terms are relative and that a place to the southwest of Tibet could simultaneously be northwest from parts of India. The first part of the journey follows a southwestern path that would be familiar to most of Mchog gyur gling pa's contemporaries: the way from the eastern Tibetan region of Kham to the sacred sites of Central Tibet. Although much of the travel between these regions

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[9] *Yan lag gsal byed*, 103.2-3: *rnam par rtog pa skad cig ma'i rang ngo ma shes pa'i 'khrul pa*.

[10] *Yan lag gsal byed*, 103.4: *sgro dogs gcod pa*.

involved mercantile, political, or social concerns, the journey from Kham to Lhasa is also envisioned as a pilgrimage. The popularity and centrality of pilgrimage to Tibetan religious life has been amply documented and aspects of Tibetan pilgrimage practice have received significant scholarly attention.[11] The Tibetan literary genres associated with pilgrimage (*gnas yig*, *dkar chag*, *lam yig*, etc.) bear striking similarities to aspects of this visionary journey narrative. On his flight to the southwest, the first site that Mchog gyur gling pa reports is the holy Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, the primary destination of most terrestrial pilgrims from his native region. His conduct there ("offering the seven-branch supplication prayer and a maṇḍala with measureless faith and devotion") also conforms to the expected practice of an ordinary pilgrim to Lhasa. This is repeated in the briefly mentioned second stop on his itinerary, Tibet's first monastery, at Samye.

The connections between this account of a visionary journey and Tibetan pilgrimage traditions become most clearly apparent as the party approaches the third stop:

> Then, there was a tent of rainbow light pitched on a five-peaked mountain. The central mountain was like a crystal stūpa. At the horizon there were dense forests, rocky outcroppings, caves, valleys, small valleys, lakes, ponds, great rivers, various streams that flowed together, great mountains entirely surrounded by many small mountains. On the mountain slopes, herds of wild animals roamed and stayed still. Just as the gods ceremonially bathe the feet of the great god Viṣṇu, great rivers from all directions flow along like silk unfurling and looking there [he] saw the shimmering bodies of the deities of the three roots. The ocean of his faith and reverent devotion was churning and he said, "Over there! What's that?"[12]

The movement from the historic temples associated with the beginnings of Buddhism in Tibet to the landscape of Tibet itself brings a shift in language with much more detailed and evocative descriptions. Although much of the imagery may seem to indicate a vision-

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[11] Some of the most important work in this topic may be found in McKay 1998, Huber 1999a & 1999b.

[12] *Yan lag gsal byed*, 104.3–105.1: *de nas gangs ri rtse lnga pa la 'ja' 'od kyi gur phub pa/ dbus ri shel gyi mchod rten 'dra ba/ mthar nags tshal stug po dang/ brag gi skyibs dang/ ke'u tshang dang/ lung pa dang/ lung phran dang/ mtsho dang/ mtshe'u dang/ chu chen dang/ chu bran sna tshogs pa 'bab pa/ ri chen dang ri phran mang pos yongs su bskor ba/ ri bo'i sul ri dwags kyi tshogs rnams bag phebs te gnas pa/ lha chen khyab 'jug la lha rnams kyis dga' ston zhabs bsil phul ba bzhin phyogs mtshams nas chu bo chen po rnams dar yug brkyang bltar ngang lhang lhang du 'bab pa'i bar bar nas rtsa gsum lha yi sku gzugs khra chem chem mthong bas dad pa dang mos gus kyi chu gter rab tu g.yo ba zhig 'dug pa pha ki gang lags zhus pas/.*

ary mode (rainbow tents, crystal stupas, etc.), this language is found in most Tibetan pilgrimage guides. In fact, the guidebooks themselves often present a poetic vision of the landscape intended to aid the pilgrim in the quest to infuse the mountains and rivers of Tibet with religious meaning. The fact that Mchog gyur gling pa immediately sees the landscape in this way demonstrates the purity of his perception. Although he was able to see the landscape in this way, when he is overwhelmed with faith and devotion, he still turns to his guides (the five ḍākiṇīs) for assistance and asks in a very informal and colloquial manner, "Over there! What's that?" This conversational tone further emphasizes the sense that Mchog gyur gling pa's visionary journey is not that different from the pilgrimage that anyone might take.

One of the most significant differences between an ordinary pilgrim and Mchog gyur gling pa is the fact that he is guided by five ḍākiṇīs who are direct emissaries of Padmasambhava. Thus, his prosaic question regarding the spectacular sight is met with an extraordinary answer. In fifty-five nine-syllable lines of verse, the ḍākiṇīs sing a melodious response that identifies the place as the sacred site called Tsari. Their verses praise Tsari as supreme among the "twenty-four great sacred places" and describe its characteristics in vivid detail. At the conclusion of the song, the ḍākiṇīs present a brief sacred history of the site, identifying the most important figures who traveled there in the past (Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, Lawapa, Kyebu Yeshe Dorje, and Karma Pakshi) before proclaiming that Mchog gyur gling pa himself has profound and meaningful connections with Tsari that he must realize in the future.

> When they said all of that, while thinking how wonderful it would be, how delightful it would be to directly encounter this particularly glorious supreme sacred place, a place that just hearing about makes one's body-hair stand on end, just seeing purifies one's obscurations; and just circumambulating gives birth to virtuous qualities, he offered completely pure prayers of supplication and aspiration again and again.[13]

The language here, once again, mirrors the most common features of pilgrimage guides by listing the beneficial effects of venerating the sacred place in question. The repeated offering of prayers that Mchog gyur gling pa makes in response also conforms to the standards of

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[13] *Yan lag gsal byed*, 108.2–3: *zhes gsungs pa na/ thos pa tsam gyis pa spu g.yo zhing/ mthong ba tsam gyis sgrib pa dag pa/ bskor ba tsam gyis yon tan skye pa'i gnas mchog khyad par 'phags pa mgon sum mjal bar re dga' re skyid bsam pa'i ngang nas gsol 'debs dang smon lam rnam par dag pa yang yang bgyis so/.*

pilgrimage practice and highlights the importance of embodied (body-hair standing on end) and emotional (delightful) states of devotion in this tradition.

III. Historical and Mythological Geography of Buddhist India

By the nineteenth-century, the monuments of Buddhist India had largely fallen into ruin after centuries of neglect. There were still Tibetans who traveled to India and occasional visitors from India to Tibet, but for most Tibetans, these images of India came from Buddhist literature and most specifically the life story of Śākyamuni. As such, India occupied a space between the worlds of historical geography and the imagined world of mythological narrative. After the lengthy discussion of Tsari, Mchog gyur gling pa expresses his desire to collect some of the earth, water, and medicinal substances found at the sacred place. This further echo of common pilgrimage practice is clairvoyantly understood by the ḍākiṇīs who assure their passenger that he is welcome to alight and gather these substances and magically create a horse for him to ride. Again, a standard pilgrimage activity (collecting blessed earth, water, and herbs from the site) is reframed in a visionary context through the clairvoyance of the guides and the appearance of the magical steed. The seamless interweaving of these two types of narratives continues throughout the text and successfully blurs the distinction we might draw between visionary and actual pilgrimage. Whereas the three specific locations from Tibet (Lhasa, Samye, Tsari) do follow a geographically coherent order and are all places that we could identify on a map, the travel account after Tsari becomes a bit more difficult to follow.

Mchog gyur gling pa sees a white stūpa that appears to have been made from crystal and asks his guides what it is. They explain that this stūpa marks the site where Prince Siddhārtha cut off his royal locks and entered the path of renunciation. From the stūpa marking the site where the prince cut off his topknot, Mchog gyur gling pa sees a particularly beautiful river with clear flowing water. He observes that the river seems to have the purest water he has ever seen and drinking some, notes that its taste is superior to any other. In response to his query, the ḍākiṇīs explain that this is the Nairañjanā River, the site of Siddhārtha's extreme austerities. Of course, in terms of historical geography, an ordinary pilgrim would never be able to see the Nairañjanā River from the site of the topknot stūpa. The proximity of these two sites in Mchog gyur gling pa's vision reflects their place in the life story of Śākyamuni and not their places in the land-

scape of Magadha. Just as seamlessly, from the banks of the river Mchog gyur gling pa gazes out across flower-filled meadows with mountains in the distance and is lost in reverie at a place of exceptional beauty. When asked, the ḍākiṇīs identify this location as Kuśīnagara, the site of Śākyamuni's parinirvāṇa. Overcome with sadness at this direct encounter with the place where the Buddha's absence from the world is memorialized, Mchog gyur gling pa breaks into tears. The chief ḍākiṇī consoles him by stating that, "The Buddha has not passed completely into nirvāṇa. The dharma never disappears." She expands on the meaning of this claim through a four-line verse equating Buddhahood with the nature of one's own mind. The fact that relatively more attention is paid to the site of Śākyamuni's death rather than the earlier episodes in his life suggests the entire text's concern with the question of the Buddha's absence from the world. This is a recurrent theme throughout the story and will be highlighted again at the Copper-Colored Mountain itself.

At a glance, this rapid movement from one place to another seems to indicate a lack of geographic knowledge and a more dreamlike mode of travel. However, on the basis of Toni Huber's study of Tibetan pilgrimage to India, the proximity of these various locations may be explained in much more concrete terms. The historic site of Śākyamuni's final passing and cremation has been identified through excavations conducted by the colonial archeologist A. C. L. Carlleyle in 1875-76 about forty kilometers from the city of Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh. This site, however, seems to have been abandoned and forgotten by Buddhists by the eleventh century. Even as early as in the seventh century, the famous Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang described the site as being in ruins when he visited. From the sixteenth century, however, many Tibetan pilgrims identified the sacred sites of Śākyamuni's life not with their ancient locations in Magadha, but with a "replica holy land" that had been discovered and established in Assam at a place called Hājo. Toni Huber describes the seventeenth-century pilgrimage to Hājo recorded by Dpag bsam ye shes (1598-1667) in the following terms: "Upon reaching Hājo—which he referred to in Tibetan as the "Town of Kuṣa Grass"—he found not only an alternative Kuśīnagara but, more remarkably, a whole range of relocated Magadhan sites and landscapes, an entire replica Buddhist holy land. This replica Magadha was in fact a highly compressed version of the original Buddhist Magadha."[14]

It seems clear that this "highly compressed" Magadha is reflected in the itinerary followed by Mchog gyur gling pa in the vision. The identification of Hājo with Kuśīnagara had been known to the *gter*

[14] Huber 2008: 136.

ston Nyi ma grags pa (1625-1697) who hailed from Mchog gyur gling pa's native Nang chen and was confirmed as the authentic sacred site by no less an authority than 'Jigs med gling pa (1729/30-1798). The theory that this "replica Magadha" was the blueprint for Mchog gyur gling pa's visionary itinerary gains further credence when we consider the pilgrimage accounts collected by Toni Huber. For example, a pilgrim from Kham at the beginning of the nineteenth century named Blo bzang thabs mkhas journeyed to Central Tibet and then proceeded on to Tsari: "From Tsari, it was only a relatively short journey west via Loro before he reached the Monyul corridor, the favoured route to the Tibetan replica Buddhist holy land in Assam."[15] Finally, L. Austine Waddell encountered pilgrims from Kham at the "Kuśīnagara" in Assam during his expedition there in the 1890's, that is, between the date of Mchog gyur gling pa's death in 1870 and Dkon mchog gyur med's composition of his biography in 1921.[16]

The seemingly incongruous geography in this section of the journey actually corresponds to a pilgrimage tradition that had established alternative sacred sites when access to and knowledge of the ancient sites had been lost. The proximity of Tsari to the Nairañjanā River and Kuśīnagara could easily be misread as simply a result of the dreamlike or visionary nature of the narrative when, in fact, the geographical proximity of these sites was an accepted fact in Mchog gyur gling pa's time and only came to be thoroughly questioned after Tibetans became familiar with colonial archaeology in the twentieth century. Tibetans have always been concerned with establishing the authenticity of sacred sites but the criteria and methods employed differ from those of the archaeologist. These differences become increasingly clear as the ḍākiṇīs lead their passenger onward.

If one were to remove the ḍākiṇīs and the magical travel from the account to this point, there would really be nothing to distinguish it from a Tibetan pilgrimage itinerary. Mchog gyur gling pa's perceptions of the places visited might be considered very "pure" in the spectrum of ways of seeing, but they are basically of a kind with the experiences of any devout pilgrim. With the next destination after Kuśīnagara, we enter into a different landscape altogether:

> Then, they traveled many *li* and they came to a land with many villages surrounding a blue mountain the color of a clear sky that was incredibly bright and incredibly high. The summit seemed like it had absolutely no path to it up the smooth face of the mountain. He saw a small red house on the peak and said, "Over there, what's that?" They answered, "Oh son, that is no small house. That is the

[15] Huber 2008: 142.
[16] Waddell 1934: 306-14.

> palace of the herukas, with the ornaments of wrath, it is wondrously big but because this mountain is so high you cannot see it clearly. This is the mountain called Malaya Blazing Meteoric Iron.[17]

The narrator's passing comment that this next destination was only reached after "many *li*" had been crossed emphasizes the sense of distance. The earlier transitions from Lhasa to Samye to Tsari to the sites connected with Śākyamuni were all quite seamless and gave the impression of great proximity. The sense of distance is further exaggerated by the strange appearance of the mountain, perfectly smooth and blue and of immense height. Mchog gyur gling pa's erroneous sense that the divine palace at the mountain's peak is a "small house" alerts the reader that the scale has shifted, appearances are not to be taken at face value, and that even the hero of the story is now in a realm beyond his previous experience. Failing to account for distance in estimating the size of a building is a common experience and there is a gentle humor in the ḍākiṇīs' correction. The ḍākiṇīs go on to describe the significance of Mount Malaya, well-known as the location where the Buddha subjugated the demon Rudra and where the Buddhist tantras were first taught.[18] Although attempts have been made to locate Mount Malaya in South Asia, unlike the sites connected with the exoteric life of Śākyamuni, archeology has not been able to offer any assistance in determining the historical location.

We might explain this shift from locations that are potentially identifiable on a map to the geographic indeterminacy of Mount Malaya as representing a move from the realm of sacred history into that of myth. However, these categories are not distinguished within the text itself. There is clearly a shift as the journey takes us from Kuśīnagara to Mount Malaya. The earlier stops fit into ordinary human maps without difficulty, whereas this mountain disorients and confuses Mchog gyur gling pa. The author focuses on the unreliability of worldly vision in terms of measuring size at a great distance. Rather than make a mystical claim about Mchog gyur gling pa's divine sight, the text emphasizes the unreliability of ordinary vision in a very mundane way: at great distances it becomes difficult to gauge the relative size of objects. As we read of Mchog gyur gling pa being chided by the ḍākiṇīs for the limitations of his vision, the reader may

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[17] *Yan lag gsal byed*, 110.3–6: *de nas le bar mang po brgal te phebs pas yul ljongs grong khyer mang pos bskor ba'i dbus su ri bo sngon po nam mkha' dwangs ba'i mdog lta bu gsal zhig 'tsher ba rgya ha cang mi che bad pangs mtho ba/ ngos 'jam pa la lam gtan nas med pa 'dra ba zhig gi rtse mor khang pa dmar po chung du yod pa mthong pas pha ki gang lags zhus pas/ kyai bu/ khang pa chung ngu ma yin he ru ka'i pho brang drag po'i rgyan bkod dang ldan pa sa ngo mtshar ba yod kyang ri bo dpangs mtho bas mi mngon pa yin te/ 'di ni ri bo ma la [ya] gnam lcags 'bar ba zhes…/.*

[18] See Dalton 2011 for a translation and study of this myth.

easily relate to his experience, and one's attachment to the objective reality of the visible world is loosened. This brief conversation between Mchog gyur gling pa and the ḍākiṇīs about the size of the palace at the summit of Mount Malaya strikes me as a key to understanding the logic of the text as a whole. The reliability of mundane perceptions is questioned and this opens up a space for the possibility of an alternative, more refined way of seeing. The journey to the Copper-Colored Mountain takes place in this spirit, and the pilgrim's progress is marked by his increasing confusion about where he is. After singing verses of praise and offering dances together with the ḍākiṇīs, Mchog gyur gling pa attempts to clarify this geographical confusion by asking his guides, "Is this the place southwest of the Vajra Seat called the demonic land of Lanka-puri?"[19] The ḍākiṇīs provide a fascinating answer that challenges our interpretive temptation to separate the realms of historical geography, cosmology, and Buddhist myth:

> That's the mountain peak of the southwestern island of demons and the surrounding Eye-Hand Province. This is neighboring Zahor in India. We will get to the demonic island still further on, but we need to cross the water. Previously, Śākyamuni Buddha was invited to this place by the boy [Rāvaṇa], the 'Ten-necked One' of Lanka, and this is the place referred to in the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* requested by Mahāmati. This forest is also the place where the Anuyoga tantras actually descended. These days, it is famous as the island of Siṅgala. These different names for the island refer to the same place. There is also the island of *Rnga yab (Cāmaradvīpa)*. This place is near here.[20]

The precision of this answer defies the presumption that Mount Malaya is located "off the map" in a realm of pre-historical myth. The ḍākiṇīs very clearly set out the relationship between the island of Lanka, known in nineteenth-century Tibet as the island of Siṅgala (and now as Sri Lanka) and Mount Malaya. Referring to another island that is often confused with these locations (and that will feature later in the journey), they take the opportunity to specify the location of Cāmaradvīpa as well. Although all this seems quite clear, it must

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[19] *Yan lag gsal byed*, 111.4–5: *gnas 'di rdo rje gdan gyi lho nub srin yul langka pu ri yin nam ces dris pas/.*

[20] *Yan lag gsal byed*, 111.5–112.5: *de ni lho nub srin po'i gling kai ri brtsegs pa dang byan lag ljongs dang 'dabs 'byor du yod/ 'di ni rgya gar za hor dang 'dabs 'brel pa can yin/ srin po'i gling du phyin pa la da dung chu bo las brgal dgos/ gnas 'dir sngon bcom ldan 'das rgyal ba shā kya thub pa langka'i bdag po sgra sgrogs kyi bu/ lang ka mgrin bcus spyab drangs nas blo gros chen pos zhus pa lang kar gshegs pa'i mdo gsungs pa'i gnas de yin/ A nu yo ga'i rgyud rnams kyang nags tshal 'dir glegs bam dngos su bab pa yin/ deng sang singga la'i gling zhes kyang grags la gnas 'di dang ming don mtshan nyid gcig pa'i dngos de rnga yab gling du yod cing 'di ni nye ba'i gnas yin no/.*

be noted that Mchog gyur gling pa was prompted to ask about this owing to his own confusion and that the explanation comes from the ḍākiṇīs, beings who may have access to maps unintelligible to ordinary humans.

If Mount Malaya is located at the edge of the map known to ordinary humans but easily located by the ḍākiṇīs, the next two destinations take us even further into the world of the ḍākiṇīs and yet remain closely tied to worldly geography. From Malaya, the party travels to "a great town with an enormous temple set in the middle. On the outside there were the five types of stūpa and on the inside it was encircled by seven rings of iron mountains, as in descriptions of maṇḍalas."[21] Mchog gyur gling pa's question to the ḍākiṇīs ("Over there, what's that?") has now become an anticipated refrain. They identify the site as the Vajra Seat, the location of Śākyamuni's enlightenment. After offering several verses of praise to the site, Mchog gyur gling pa confesses that he is perplexed because he recollects visions of the Vajra Seat from other treasure-revealers that are much less elaborate than the immense maṇḍala before him. When he asks the ḍākiṇīs about this discrepancy, they sing a song in six thirteen-syllable lines that urges him to remain steady in his vision of the Vajra Seat as a pure land, contrasting this with the limited perceptions of more ordinary pilgrims. This tells us that Mchog gyur gling pa (or the narrator) was familiar with the visionary accounts of other treasure-revealers and used these descriptions both as a guide for understanding and for locating the sites encountered. At the same time, this account clearly aims to distinguish Mchog gyur gling pa's vision of the Vajra Seat as superior to that of his predecessor (in this case, Gter ston Bdud 'dul).

The disorienting experience of Mount Malaya's immense height and the expansive vision of Bodh Gaya as a pure land stretches the boundaries of ordinary perception and signals a stepping outside of mundane geography and into the realm of tantric mythography. After crossing a turbulent river, the traveling party arrives at a triangular-shaped land with a three-storied temple in the center. Various wild beasts roar and rolling mists, roaring thunder, and rains of flowers generate a scene that is at once menacing and inviting. Hosts of ḍākiṇīs fly through the air reciting symbolic incantations. The five guides explain that they have reached Oḍḍiyana,[22] the land of the ḍākiṇīs. As with the previous stops on the itinerary, they offer prayers and supplications in praise of the sacred spot and Mchog gyur

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[21] *Yan lag gsal byed*, 112.5–6: *yang phebs par 'grong khyer chen po zhig gi dbus na gtsug lag khang bkod pa rgya che ba/ phyi mchod rten rigs lnga la nang gzhal yas khang gi mtshan nyid can lcags ri rim pa bdun gyis bskor ba zhig mjal bas…*

[22] See Tucci 1940, Lokesh Chandra 1980, and Schweiger 1996.

gling pa experiences great devotion and faith. However, unlike the previous stops, here the pilgrim is also said to have experienced joy and intense delight. The blissful nature of his response to this particular place is an appropriate reflection of the goals of the tantric practices associated with the ḍākiṇīs. Perhaps most significantly, these generic feelings of devotion and delight are then followed by a very specific experience: "His own body appeared in clear vision to have the nature of being made of light." [23] The substantiality of the body and the possibility of recognizing the essential luminous nature of the body is an important theme in tantric literature and became particularly central to the Tibetan "rainbow body" tradition.[24] The question of whether or not a visionary journey was undertaken in one's own body or in an illusory body became the principal criterion for distinguishing between different types of visions.[25] Within the structure of this account, the experience of his own body as made of light serves as the immediate precursor to Mchog gyur gling pa's arrival at his island destination.

IV. Guided Tour of a Tantric Paradise

Up to this point, the five ḍākiṇīs have demonstrated complete ascendancy; they travel wherever they please and are able to explain anything they encounter. Oḍḍiyana is said to be divided from the demon-land of Cāmaradvīpa by a large river. Though the river is spanned by a natural rock-bridge, there is also a naturally formed stone building in the shape of a stūpa that functions as a toll-house. The bridge-keeper *(zam dpon)* is identified as Lha dpal gyi ye shes, renowned in Tibetan lore as an accomplished adept who was one of the twenty-five principal disciples of Padmasambhava. For the first time, the ḍākiṇīs are obstructed as Lha dpal gyi ye shes demands a payment before they are allowed to cross. The ḍākiṇīs are able to magically gather some nutmeg from the air and the bridge-keeper, satisfied with the offering, allows them to pass. In the narrative, this encounter heightens the sense of moving into progressively more sacred ground. Even the apparently all-powerful ḍākiṇī guides need to secure permission before crossing the river into Cāmaradvīpa. The fact that the bridge-keeper is identified with a historical figure from the eighth century likewise adds an element of greater distance from the sphere of ordinary experience. While the sacred places associated

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[23] *Yan lag gsal byed*, 115.5: *rang lus 'od kyi phung po'i rang bzhin du gyur pa'i gsal snang shar ro/*.

[24] See Kapstein 2004.

[25] See Doctor 2005: 96-8.

with the life of Śākyamuni inspired reflections on his absence from the world and the presence of a more abstract notion of Buddhahood in the world, here we encounter an individual who lived in Tibet a thousand years ago in his own body, as himself. As the bridge-keeper he controls access to the island, but he also serves as the first of the many figures from Tibetan religious history, all of whom reside outside of historical time at the Copper-Colored Mountain, that Mchog gyur ling pa will encounter.

Once passage to Cāmaradvīpa has been assured, the ḍākiṇīs impart some important advice to Mchog gyur gling pa. The shift in tone again serves to rhetorically heighten the expectations for the next destination. Rather than simply describe the significance of the sacred place they have arrived at, the ḍākiṇīs offer a kind of meta-discourse on the way in which Mchog gyur gling pa should view what he is about to see. Aside from providing a direct commentary on the rationale for the entire visionary journey, the instructions also confirm the sense that the ḍākiṇīs are entering territory that is a bit intimidating even for them. They proceeded through the most sacred sites of Tibet, India, and Oḍḍiyana without taking the time to really instruct Mchog gyur gling pa about the proper way to approach the journey. As soon as they cross into Cāmaradvīpa, however, they are compelled to make sure their ward understands precisely what to do:

> Noble son, secret mantra practitioner whose name is Norbu, like a jewel, in order to obtain the miraculous power of swift-mind[-travel] and the divine eye, keep your mind on all of the demon islands without forgetting. Son, when you return to Tibet you will accomplish a great miracle. For the benefit of your family and disciple lineages, write all of this down and anyone who sees, hears, or thinks of what you have written will definitely be reborn immediately at the time of transference into Cāmaradvīpa.[26]

Here the benefits of visiting the demon island in the proper manner are presented as twofold: Mchog gyur gling pa's attention during the visit will provide him the magical power "swift-mind" and his later representation of his experience will assure rebirth at the Copper-Colored Mountain to those who see it. In this sense, the ḍākiṇīs injunction at the threshold of Padmasambhva's pure land is also an origin story for the very text that we are reading. The evidence of its

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[26] *Yan lag gsal byed*, 116.4–6: *rigs kyi bug sang sngags kyi rnal 'byor pa nor bu'i ming can nor bu lta bu la/ yid mgyogs gyi rdzu 'phrul dang/ lha yi mig thob par bya yis/ srin po'i yul gling thams cad ma brjed par yid la zungs shig dang/ bu khyod bod kyi yul du phyin tsa na ngo mtshar chen po thob/ khyod kyi bu slob brgyud 'dzin rnams kyi don du yi ger thob la bkod pa bris dang de nyid mthong thos dran pa'i skal ldan thams cad 'phos ma thag tu rnga yab gling du skye ba'i dgos pa yod Ang/.*

existence is the proof that Mchog gyur gling pa did pay careful attention, remember every detail and write everything down for the benefit of his disciples and future lineage-holders, including the author and audience of the text itself.

These twin goals of the personal attainment of magical powers and the benefit for others produced by creating a representation of the Copper-Colored Mountain with the power to ensure rebirth in that pure land are the only explicit ones mentioned in the account. However, we may identify a number of implicit concerns in the text that will serve as an interpretive framework for considering the description of the Copper-Colored Mountain itself. My reading of Mchog gyur gling pa's representation of the Copper-Colored Mountain will focus on four distinct yet related themes: 1. the descriptions of Cāmaradvīpa'a denizens as an example of "otherworld ethnography," 2. the vision as authenticating and legitimating the treasure tradition, in general, and Mchog gling's treasures, in particular, 3. the residents of the Copper-Colored Mountain as a model for the perfect tantric community, and 4. the site of the Copper-Colored Mountain as a source of treasure teachings.

Otherworld Ethnography: The Twelve Demon Islands

As soon as the ḍākiṇī concludes her injunction to Mchog gyur gling pa, "all twelve demon lands actually appeared before his eyes, unobstructed by rock mountains or anything, and it was as if he arrived there without needing anything other than the desire to go there."[27] The experience of his own luminous body in Oḍḍiyana now seems to have progressed to the point where Mchog gyur gling pa's perception is not impeded by obstacles, distance, or any of the limitations of ordinary vision. He sees the twelve lands simultaneously and completely. The chief ḍākiṇī addresses her guest again, saying, "Son, now listen carefully and don't forget what I am going to tell you. I am going to give you the orientation to the places of the demonic lands."[28] What follows is a fascinating gazetteer of the twelve islands around the outer perimeter of Cāmaradvīpa with descriptions of the distinctive topographical and architectural features of each one and observations of the dietary habits, special magical powers, and religious practices unique to the inhabitants of each island.

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[27] *Yan lag gsal byed* 116.6–117.1: *srin po'i yul gling bcu gnyis po thams cad ri brag sogs gang gis kyang mi sgrib bar mngon sum mig sngar snang ba las 'gro sdod ma dgos pa'i de dang der slebs pa 'dra zhig byung ba na/.*

[28] *Yan lag gsal byed*, 117.4: *bu me yengs pas nyon la mi brjed pas zungs dang ngas bu la srin po'i yul gling rnams ngo sprad par bya'o/.*

> This is the terrifying palace of the east side of the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain, "Demon Land Nutmeg *(Dzāti)* Town." Here there are two million eight hundred thousand [demons]. The guru's emanation, Demon King Rdo rje 'bar ba rtsal teaches the doctrines of Śrī Yangdak Heruka. Their food and drink are only nutmeg. The miraculous power of those who reside here is the ability to fly unobstructed in the sky. The temple and the grove are an assembly-hall for the guru's emanations, a palace of the peaceful dharma.[29]

The elements of this survey remain the same for each of the twelve lands, with varying degrees of detail regarding each element. Compare the paucity of topographic and architectural detail in the preceding example with the following:

> Above that there is a red cliff like a bristled weapon and at the base of that there is a sharp red rock formation and a turbulent lake with churning waves that create steam. Vast forests spread in all directions. Amidst all of that there is a red citadel with many corners, adorned with garlands of heads, hands, and hearts. It is terrifying.[30]

The inhabitants of half of the dozen kingdoms are said to sustain themselves with flesh and blood (for some, certain varieties of flesh and blood are specified). The name of the guru's emanation[31] and the principal teaching also match the outer environment, with peaceful or wrathful settings providing the environment for peaceful or wrathful emanations and teachings. The specificity of the descriptive guide offers a further example of the hybridity of real and imagined worlds. Although the journey narrative has moved from the concrete substantiality of the Tibetan pilgrimage sites into increasingly wondrous landscapes, here at the Copper-Colored Mountain the ḍākiṇī presents an objective inventory of the demon lands in the manner of

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[29] *Yan lag gsal byed*, 117.4–118.1: *zangs mdog dpal ri'i shar phyogs kyi pho brang 'jigs su rung ba 'di ni srin yul dzā ti grong khyer yin/ 'di la 'bum tsho nyer brgyad yod/ gu ru'i sprul pa srin rgyal rdo rje 'bar ba rtsal gyis dpal yang bdag he ru ka'i chos rnams ston/ 'di rnams kyi bza' btung ni dzā ti kho na yin/ 'dir 'khod pa thams cad rdzu 'phrul gyis nam mkha' la thogs med du 'gro bar nus/ gtsug lag khang dang kun dga' ra ba ni/ gu ru'i sprul pa'i tshogs khang zhi ba chos kyi pho brang yin no/.*

[30] *Yan lag gsal byed*, 120.3–120.4: *de yi gong du brag brag dmar po mtshon cha gzings pa 'dra ba'i zhol du brag dmar zang nge ba dang/ mtsho nag rba klung 'khrugs shing rlangs pa 'phyo ba'i phyogs thams cad du ljon shin grab tu rgyas pa na/ mkhar dmar po zur mang po dang ldan pa mgo lag snying phreng sogs drag po'i rgyan gyis 'jigs su rung ba 'di/.*

[31] Interestingly, one of Mchog gyur gling pa's most important treasure revelations, *Bla ma'i thugs sgrub bar chad kun sel*, includes practices focused on twelve manifestations of Padmasambhava. However, the twelve manifestations in the *Bla ma'i thugs sgrub kun sel* do not correspond with those encountered at Cāmaradvīpa.

an ethnographic survey. This serves to demonstrate the ḍākiṇī's power through her mastery of the territory, her ability to map this inconceivably different realm, and that power is transmitted to Mchog gyur gling pa through her direct transmission.

Authentication of the Treasure Tradition

The ḍākiṇī's survey of the twelve demon lands also serves another function that emerges as a central theme in the story. Regarding the land of the terrifying red citadel described above, the text further relates:

> The guru's emanation, Demon King Rdo rje khyung chen teaches Vajrakīlaya here. Son, all of the dharma-cycles of your [treasure] "Sole Dagger of the Most Secret Mind" and in particular, the perfection stage cycle, are here in their entirety.[32]

The teachings that are the central practice of the demons inhabiting each of the twelve lands represent a variety of canonical Buddhist traditions, primarily (though not exclusively) drawn from the tantras. The inclusion of one of Mchog gyur gling pa's own treasures in this list indicates that his revealed teachings are considered to be just as authentic as these other texts. Skeptics and critics who might consider his nineteenth-century revelations as inauthentic novelties are here told that one of his treasures devoted to Vajrakīlaya[33] is taught by an emanation of Padmasambhava to an assembly of rākṣasas at one of the outer regions of Cāmaradvīpa.

After the ḍākiṇī's overview of the twelve demon islands, the party proceeds across another large body of water on a ferryboat with a horse figurehead at the prow. On the other shore, Mchog gyur gling pa is led up the "Secret Path of the Ḍākiṇīs" to the Copper-Colored Mountain itself. At this point, the organizational scheme of the Copper-Colored Mountain is introduced through the description of four boulders that are associated with the four tantric activities and located in the four cardinal directions, each bearing the footprints of Padmasambhava: a circular diamond boulder in the east representing acts of pacification, a square gold boulder in the south representing acts of expansion, a half-moon-shaped ruby boulder in the west representing acts of power and a triangular emerald boulder in the north

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[32] *Yan lag gsal byed*, 120.6–121.1: *gu ru'i sprul pa srin rgyal rdo rje khyung chen gyis rdo rje phur pa'i chos gsungs/ bu khyod kyi yang gsang thugs kyi phur gcig gi skor thams cad dang/ khyad par rdzogs rim gyi skor yongs rdzogs bzhugs so/.*

[33] For translations of materials from this cycle, see Doctor 2005: 105-75.

representing acts of wrathful subjugation. Footprints of Padmasambhava are a common feature of pilgrimage places across the Tibetan plateau, where they are revered as markers, simultaneously, of the guru's past presence in Tibet and his present absence.[34] It is curious that the perimeter of the Copper-Colored Mountain, a location defined by the fact of Padmasambhava's unceasing presence there, would likewise be marked by footprints. This may serve to again connect the visionary landscape of the distant demon land with the more familiar geography of Tibetan pilgrimage sites. Additionally, the footprints may be seen as a further challenge to the very dichotomy of absence and presence itself, a dichotomy that Padmasambhava is understood to transcend. The circumambulation of the temple complex is described as being completely effortless and the travelers are able to move about simply by thought. After seeing the four boulders marking the four directions and the various groves and lotus-pools surrounding the central structure, the ḍākiṇīs pause as an enormous procession passes by. One hundred thousand ḍākiṇīs together with a hundred great scholars, a hundred translators, and a hundred knowledge-holders all lead Padmasambhava in a golden chariot. The ḍākiṇīs inform Mchog gyur gling pa that arriving at this precise moment is particularly auspicious but insist that they should go see the temples of the four directions before following the procession into the central building.

In each direction there is a temple devoted to one of the four tantric activities and an emanation of Padamsambhava teaches to a large assembly in each one. It is in the southern temple, associated with the tantric activity of expansion, that we find our next explicit example of the authenticating function of the narrative. An emanation of Padmasambhava called Mahāguru Padma Tshe dpag med teaches the practices of the subtle channels and energies *(rtsa rlung)* to a large assembly. Mchog gyur gling pa starts to sing the *Bdag lus phung khams* prayer composed by Klong chen pa and everyone joins in immediately. Mchog gyur gling pa expresses amazement that this prayer by a fourteenth-century Tibetan is known at the Copper-Colored Mountain and one of the ḍākiṇīs assures him that Klong chen pa's words are just like the tantras themselves, they are venerated in all of the buddha realms.

[34] For an art historical consideration of footprints in Tibetan Buddhist art, see Selig Brown 2004.

The Perfect Ritual Performance: Goal, Model, Alternative

The most elaborate description is saved for the north, where a group of renowned treasure-revealers perform the "liberation" rites in an elaborate *'chams* dance. This type of highly choreographed ritual is an important part of the Tibetan monastic calendar. In Mchog gling's case, it resonates with a famous episode from earlier in his life-story that helped set him on the path to becoming a treasure-revealer. In his youth, as a monk at Tshe bcu Monastery in Nang chen, Mchog gling was appointed to the important role of principal dancer. One day, while leading the dance, he had a vision of Padmasambhava and his twenty-five close disciples performing a different dance and he joined them. The other monks were confused by the sudden change and chaos ensued, which brought on a sound beating for Mchog gling and his eventual expulsion from the monastery. Here, at the Copper-Colored Mountain, Mchog gling recognizes luminaries from the history of treasure-revelation (such as Sangs rgyas gling pa, Ratna gling pa, Zhig po gling pa) among the dancers and is delighted to find that the dance master *('chams dpon)* is none other than the seventeenth-century treasure revealer, Yongs dge Mi 'gyur rdo rje. Mchog gling spontaneously joins the dancers and falls perfectly in step with them. The ease with which he harmoniously joins these great figures vindicates Mchog gling and offers proof that the monastic authorities of his youth were the ones truly out of step. The performance of this dance suggests another role of the Copper-Colored Mountain vision. It is the perfect ritual community, a goal to aspire toward and a standard against which terrestrial rituals might be judged.

Source of New Treasures

Once inside, Mchog gling finally encounters Padmasambhava. The most common depiction of the Palace of Lotus-Light at the top of the Copper-Colored Mountain connects each of the three stories of the palace with the three bodies of the Buddha: Padmasambhava as the *nirmāṇakāya* form on the ground floor, Avalokiteśvara as the *saṃbhogakāya* form on the middle floor, and Amitābha as the *dharmakāya* form on the top floor. Here, however, different forms of Padmasambhava occupy every level of the palace. On the ground floor, Padmasambhava teaches the *Bka' 'dus chos kyi rgya mtsho* to a vast assembly including a hundred great paṇḍitas, a hundred translators, a hundred vidyādharas, and a hundred treasure-revealers. Guided by the ḍākiṇīs, Mchog gyur gling pa joined the teachings and re-

ceived the initiations directly from Padmasambhava. Then, in a corner of this floor of the temple, Mchog gyur gling pa encountered a beautiful sixteen-year-old ḍākiṇī surrounded by the five ḍākiṇīs who had guided him and a countless assembly of other ḍākiṇīs. His questions about the identity of this ḍākiṇī are met with mocking laughter and she identifies herself as the chief of all ḍākiṇīs, Ye shes mtsho rgyal. The five ḍākiṇīs who had guided Mchog gyur gling pa all the way from his retreat hut at this point dissolve into the heart of the chief ḍākiṇī, demonstrating their ultimate identity with her. After offering some prophetic statements, the ḍākiṇī instructs Mchog gyur gling pa to proceed to the next story of the palace in order to receive direct teachings from Padmasambhava. On the middle floor, Padmasambhava was teaching the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) to a large assembly led by the eight Indian *vidyādhara*s. On the top floor Padmasambhava appears as the five "Skull-garlanded" precious gurus. On each of these floors, the direct instruction to Mchog gyur gling pa again focuses on urging him to remember every detail of what he sees and pronouncements regarding the benefits of this memory. Although Dkon mchog 'gyur med does not describe an explicit treasure revelation at the Copper-Colored Mountain, elsewhere it is specified that Mchog gyur gling pa did, in fact, reveal his *A ti zab don snying thig* treasure cycle at the Copper-Colored Mountain itself. This illuminates a fourth role of the Copper-Colored Mountain vision: beyond providing authentication and a model of perfection, the vision itself is often a source of new treasure teachings.

V. Bridges Between Worlds

After Mchog gyur gling pa has visited all of the twelve demon-islands, the four temples surrounding the mountain, and the three stories of the central Palace of Lotus-Light, he takes in the view from the very top of the temple on the peak of the Copper-Colored Mountain. From this vantage point, the universe stretches out in all directions and Mchog gyur gling pa observes that the sky and sea in each direction are the same color as the corresponding side of the palace. Thus, the Copper-Colored Mountain has taken the place of Mount Meru, the center of the universe in traditional Buddhist cosmology. While taking in this view, Mchog gyur gling pa wonders whether or not he has fully obtained the ultimate teaching that he was invited here for. In a final discussion with Padmasambhava, the same instructions that he has been receiving throughout the journey are repeated once again, he is urged to remember every detail that he has seen in order to be able to represent the pure land vividly back in

Tibet. Once again, our expectations of a "vision quest" in search of esoteric knowledge are challenged by the fact that the true object of the quest seems to be nothing more than the "vision" itself.

The paramount importance of the visual image of the Copper-Colored Mountain is reinforced by Mchog gyur gling pa's actions upon returning to Tibet (he flies back directly, no longer requiring the ḍākiṇī escort). Back in his retreat hut, Mchog gyur gling pa described the visionary journey to some of his close disciples and soon thereafter arranged sponsorship to commission an elaborate narrative painting depicting the events of the journey. Dkon mchog 'gyur med provides not only the name of the sponsor (the Seventh Tre hor zhabs drung rin po che sku phreng bdun pa, Phrin las dbang po) and the painter (Karma bsam gtan), but also explains that Mchog gyur gling pa himself made corrections to the outline drawing in his own hand before the paint was applied to the canvas.[35] He also reports that this painting was used as a model for murals executed at important monasteries throughout Khams. At least three *thangka* paintings depicting Mchog gyur gling pa's visionary journey to the Copper-Colored Mountain survive.[36] In many ways, the tradition itself considers the most significant and valuable aspect of the visionary journey to have been the public representation of what had been seen. In this sense, Dkon mchog gyur med's text itself offers an argument for the importance of considering literary and artistic representations of visionary experiences in precisely those terms, as bridges between the ordinary world of mundane perceptions and extraordinary worlds such as the tantric paradise where Padmasambhava abides.

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[35] See *Yan lag gsal byed*, 142-43.

[36] I plan to address the relationship between the text discussed in this articles and these paintings (one in the collection of the Rubin Museum of Art in New York, one in the Mkhyen brtse'i bla brang at Rdzong gsar Monastery in Tibet, and one in the collection of Dil mgo mkhyen brtse rin po che at Zhe chen Monastery in Nepal) in a forthcoming monograph on the Copper-Colored Mountain.

[This text also appears as Dkon mchog 'gyur med. 2002. *Mchog gyur gling pa rnam thar bkra shis dbyangs bsnyan*. Hong Kong: Zhang gang then mi dpe skrun khang.]

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The Forgotten Citadel of Stok mon mkhar[1]

By Martin Vernier[2]

Having spent over ten years of my research exploring Ladakh in search of historical remains, I can testify that there are ruins of all sorts scattered throughout the landscape of this country, among them, many and diverse remains of buildings of a defensive type. The sites, for the greater part attributable to the medieval period, are mainly located on almost inaccessible rocky outcrops that sometimes really challenge the extravagances of the surrounding terrain. I find them particularly attractive, since despite the years that have gone past since they were last in use, they retain their strong evocative power.

One of the fortified sites I find most impressive consists of some ruins located a couple of hours walk upstream from Stok (*sTog*) village. There, perched high up on the rocks, stands an amazing ancient fort, locally known as Steng Lagar Khar (*sTeng la gar mkhar*, the military castle above) or, more commonly, Stok mon mkhar (*sTog mon mkhar*, the castle of the "mon" people).

This paper is a compte rendu of the repeated visits I have made to Stok mon mkhar. It should be noted that this site stands in territory that is part of the Hemis National Sanctuary, freely open to tourists. All the evidence reported here is taken from observation of the structures standing above ground or visible on the ground surface. No excavation or disturbances of any kind have been carried out. This paper does not claim to analyse the defensive features of the fortified settlement, nor to propose a complete architectural and technical survey of the place. That would require further investigations using more elaborated methods.

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[1] An extract from this paper was published in J.V., Bellezza's newsletter: "The flight of the kyung", September 2012 issue, in addition to his own remarks on this fortified site.

[2] Martin Vernier is an independent scholar on Ladakhi history and archaeology based in Switzerland. He is a member of the MAFIL (Mission Archéologique Franco-Indienne au Ladakh) and of the academic board of the Central Asian Museum Leh in charge of the display and exhibition. To contact him: zskvernier@gmail.com.

Martin Vernier, "The Forgotten Citadel of Stok mon mkhar", *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, no. 27, Octobre 2013, pp. 81-102.

The comparisons I am attempting to make with other sites, the resulting dating proposal and the general description of other historical remains from Stok valley are the result of my field experience. I am sharing my findings here in the hope they will lead to further debate and discussion.

About the name of the site

I surveyed the ruined fort of Stok several times, in 2003, 2004, 2006 and 2012. To my knowledge it has not yet been studied nor published with the exception of a mention in the recent NIRLAC inventory under the name of "Steng Lagar khar"[3]. When I first surveyed and documented the site, people from Stok village mainly refered to it as "*Mon* mkhar". This name, even if rather vague and indeed common all over Ladakh when people try to attribute an origin to remains that predate local records, has our preference as it refers to the "*Mon*"[4] people and thus assumes an older connotation, while the Steng Lagar khar name is subject to various interpretations[5]. Indeed, on the subject of these ruins, the NIRLAC inventory states that "the kings of Ladakh built this fort to protect them from enemy attacks and they retreated here during the mongol invasion". The local tradition retains this historical memory, most probably referring to the 17th c.

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[3] NIRLAC 2008, p 449.

[4] When people in Ladakh refer to the "*mon*" or "*mon-pa*", they allude in a very general and vague manner to the people who lived in Ladakh prior to its tibetanisation around the 7th c. The question as to who were the first inhabitants of the area remains an open question. Bronze Age petroglyphs found throughout the country suggest, through stylistic comparison, that their authors were people of Central Asian steppic origins (Bruneau, Vernier, 2007, p 27-36). Petech and Dainelli assume for their part that a Dardic population later on fused with or replaced these earlier Indo-European inhabitants "often known as 'mon' " (Crook, Osmaston, 1994, p 437). Joseph Gergan the first modern Ladakhi scholar gives a rather vague definition of the *mon* while trying to answer the question regarding their identity, which can be translatede as follows: "To those wondering who are the *Mon* we can reply like this: the *Mon* people are those living on the borders of India and Tibet, from the Tawang Mon of the eastern valleys of the Himalayas (North East Frontier Agency) up to the Kashmiri ones in the west, with the exception of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan" (Gergan 1976, p. 630). Clarke for his part goes beyond the purely geographical attribution to give "*mon*" a kind of identity meaning: "(…) the word "*mon*" refers in a general way to people from the wooded regions on the southern slopes of the Himalaya, and that in Tibetan *mon* is a rather classification, not a proper name." (Clarke 1977, p.340-41).

[5] J.V. Bellezza proposes 'military' as the most obvious meaning for *gar*. If this later is the most likely, the spelling of it being not asserted other meanings might as well be possible.(private comunication: e-mail form Aug 31st 2012).

A.D. Mongol invasions or other invasions made from Central Asia. Local tradition seems to classify as "Mongol" (*hor)* anything that emanates from beyond the Central Asian oasis of Yarkand and Khotan. It is clear to those of us who have studied the site, as we hope we will demonstrate below, that this complex predates by far the Mongol invasions (at least those of the end of the 17th century) although it does not exclude a reuse of the site at that particular time in the local history. For us, the construction of the site is more likely to be associated with the other ancient remains of the valley that we list and briefly describe below, dating back to the second diffusion of Buddhism or a little earlier, sometime around the 10th c. A.D.

General description of the site

Stok mon mkhar ruins are part of a complex, which, besides the ruined fort itself and its incredible setting, includes petroglyphs. As in almost all such complexes, the ground of the site is dotted with terracotta shards of various sizes and types. Unlike most other Ladakhi fortifications, however, there are no religious structures such as Lhatho-s[6] or chorten-s present on the site.

Approaching from Stok, one has to look high up above the path to see the ruins of the fort as they are located on a crag, roughly orientated North-West South-East, in an almost perpendicular manner to the valley that runs along a South-West North-East axis. The South-Western slope of the crag on which the fort stands consists of a vertical wall that provides it with an impregnable natural protection. **[Fig.1]**. The North-Eastern slope, towards Stok valley, is steep but quite regular and still accessible **[Fig.2]**. The ruins stand about 180 meters above the valley at the highest, and are surrounded on three sides by a stream.

The ruins extend along the summit of the crag. They start on the lowest side to the South-East with two round towers and surrounding walls **[Fig. 3]**, and extend up to the top-most part of the rock to where are what obviously were the main buildings, the heart of the complex. Further North-West, and separated from the main complex by a ravine and some 120 meters, stands another tower surrounded by low walls.

From the valley, the fort could be accessed in two manners. A first and obviously main approach, located on the Stok village side, was a hillside trail ascending the steep slope and reaching the complex at

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[6] *lha.tho*, an altar, residency of a local spirit, a construction crowned with branches of juniper.

its largest section after passing between two rocky escarpments at the feet of the outer walls. Today, it is hard to know if this meandering path, based on its slope and the width on some of the portions that remain, was ever accessible to horses. The slope is spotted with various remains made up of unrecognizable piled stones, sections of low walls and traces of terracing work. The second access was through a much more concealed path, and is located on the other side of the complex, i.e. its South-Eastern side. This path was obviously built to secure the water supply from the stream. It connects the lower third of the complex, and descends perpendicularly into a funnel-shaped rocky formation. The path then winds between two great rock pillars - where part of a postern gate still stands and, about halfway, reaches a high rocky ridge. **[Fig.4]** Turning to the east, the path is then contiguous to the ridge; buried partly in the land rubble and partly covered by large stone slabs. This stepped corridor, still almost entirely covered in its lowest section, reaches the foot of the cliff, a few meters only from where the stream flows nowadays. Today, the last portion of this concealed path is crumbling dangerously. This part of the complex stands as a magnificent example of ancient stone architecture with all stone corbelled structures, lintels and stairs, all executed in a skilful manner.

Description of the ruins

The fortified complex is almost entirely built of mud-mortared stone structures of a random texture. Only some of its chambers and small parting walls are built in dry stone. It is not clear whether some of the stones have been hewn or not.

The complex is 200 meters long. It is divided into three main and distinct parts (lower, medium and upper) and is composed of three types of buildings.

The first category, mostly present in the lower and medium part of the complex, is most numerous. There are approximately eighty room-like structures that can be identified within this first group. They consist of rectangular room-like structures about one and a half to two meters high, interconnected to each other by walls of various shapes. The construction follows the edge of the ridge and the contour lines or other constraints of the topography. Among these, some retain small structural details pertaining to their functionality. There are small wall niches or floor arrangements that divide up the floor space in various manners (paving slabs, parting lines). Some of these small structures presumably had stone corbelled roofs and even if none are still extant some still clearly show remains of stone

corbels. Some might have had temporary roofing such as tents. There are several stone lintels of doors and windows still standing. In this first category of smaller structures, the division into compact groups of contiguous buildings and lesser-built areas seems to be imposed by the terrain and its topography, thus main groups of buildings are located on larger and flatter areas, while narrower escarpments that interconnect them include surrounding walls, sections of parting walls and paths.

The second type of construction is made up of five (possibly six) round towers. They are located throughout the entire length of the complex and at both ends. Their construction along the outer wall of the North-Eastern side, towards Stok and the Indus Valley, clearly indicates which side of the fort was to be defended. These towers, built of mud-mortared stone masonry, had at least two floors, but none remain. The lower section of a stone staircase set in the walls with an ensuing curve to reach a second floor is still in place, half covered by debris. Some of the round towers still standing have loop holes of a size designed for the use of bows and arrows.

The third type of building consists of the edifices of the central body located on the topmost part of the complex. They are of a much larger size and have obviously been built with better care and workmanship. Three of the main buildings had their outer walls, together with their inner walls, mud plastered. The sockets that once held the beams supporting the floor together with those for the roof are still clearly visible. These buildings had roofs supported by wooden beams. The ground floor of these main buildings uses a box-like building technique, a feature that is also present in some of the less elaborate buildings of the first type in the medium part of the complex. Laying the ground floor of the main buildings was carried out by erecting large stone pylons and/or walls at regular intervals, taking advantage of already existing natural rock outcrops, thereby creating a level grid-like pattern, which was topped by stone lintels. **[Fig.5]** This was surely a way to create a flat surface on which to build large buildings, avoiding too much terracing work that would have been quite arduous due to the steep and rocky nature of the terrain. The stone covering of these floors that today has almost totally crumbled away, probably due to the collapsing of the upper storeys, looks like rows of small compartments partly filled with rubble. It is important to note how in one building facing the main and tallest one, one of these box-like basements had its inner walls mud plastered. **[Fig.6]** This plastering work seems to have been executed very conscientiously which might indicate their use as stores, maybe grain silos. In fact the location of these stores as well as

their general aspect and size, strongly reminds us of similar ones, documented elsewhere, in Nubra valley for instance[7].

The largest building in the central space at the top of the site forms the core of the complex. It consists of two adjoining buildings, altogether measuring 4.5 x 5.5 meters, accessed by a stone staircase. On the South-Western façade of this "main" building, on the second floor, is a large rectangular opening built into the wall, the size of which recalls that of a balcony-like structure (ladakhi *rab gsal* style structure) **[Fig.7]**. The orientation and location of this opening, overlooking the eastern side of the complex tends to indicate that the building was used to protect the leading authority of the fort. Unfortunately, there is no significant architectural detail in the inner space to provide clues as to its original use and function. The building is surrounded on one side by what might well have been a paddock for large animals (horses, yak or dzo). It is built on the very edge of the abyss that surrounds this central body of buildings on three sides.

In front of the main buildings where the main access is reached from the North-West side, there is a large open space of about fifteen meters wide that looks like a central square. It contains a rectangular-shaped flat engraved cobble. On one side of the cobble there are twelve small rounded shallow hollows, set into two rows of six facing each other. These small bowls, each a few centimetres wide, are well weathered. This stone, the only such one known to us in Ladakh, remains a mystery as to its possible use: was it a game, an instrument used to count or calculate, or a device used for some specific ritual? It is interesting here to note that similar cup-marks with hatched wheel of various sizes and organized in various ways, mostly in rows but also in circles, have been documented in areas adjacent to Ladakh and in other locations in the Himalayas[8].

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[7] Similarly mud plastered grain store of similar size were documented in Sumur-Mal ruined castle first by Q. Devers in 2010 then by our team (Bruneau Vernier Devers) in 2011. For a description of this site see: Bruneau L., Devers, Q. and Vernier, M., forthcoming 1. (See also Nyima 2010, fig 13, showing a granary, partially dug into the ground and embedded in the walls of Brag mkhar-monastery in Spiti). Similar plastered grain stores built of mud bricks are still in use in many ancient houses across Ladakh (on the house grain stores see for example: Kaplanian,1981, p146).

[8] See Olivieri and Vidale 2004, pp. 121-2 for an account of J.H. Rivett-Carnac's researches on cup-marked rocks in the 1870s as well as for the authors' recents finds of similar artefacts in the nearby Swat region of Pakistan. See also P. Pohle 1999 for Mustang area of Nepal and Zoller 1993, pp. 119-161 on Kumaon area. In his paper Zoller presents a table showing the different ways in which "cup cuttings on stone" are organized in the Kumaon area. Some perfectly match those of Stok mon mkhar.

Even if within the two main types of building there are several categories of construction that can be defined, depending on the technique and care with which they have been built, nothing indicates a later redevelopment of the site. Here and there, several dry-stone parting walls were clearly added subsequently between two mud-mortared ones, but these are likely to be contemporary additions made to the rest of the complex. Indeed Stok mon mkhar site appears more as a coherent whole, most probably arising from a single building impulse.

The antiquity of the site

The general defensive features, or more specifically the round towers and stone building techniques used at the site, tend to indicate an early date. In his article about the fortresses of Ladakh, when referring to the period ranging to the foundation of the kingdom of Ladakh up to the end of the 14th c., and even slightly before, Howards notes that even if "no clear single pattern of fortification type dominates (…) we may suggest some common practices"[9]. Among these he lists the "defensible town". His definition, matching our case, deserves to be quoted here in full: "A town or large village whose dwellings are placed so close together, and with contiguous outer walls at the perimeter, that an attacker would find it very difficult to gain entry. The outer walls have few windows and there is usually only a single narrow entrance to the town (…)". Indeed the situation of the fort itself reminds us of the one at Hankar which also stands on a crag[10], its walls are similarly built on the very edge of a precipitous rock. However the architectural characteristics of Hankar are much more advanced than those of Stok mon mkhar (higher walls, use of timber lacings, wooden carved frame elements, larger rooms, systematic use of mortared masonry, wider use of mud-coating, etc.), and the ruins in Hankar are in a much less advanced state of decay.

To our knowledge the closest architectural example, as far as the stone corbelled technique is concerned, is that of Nyarma fort, located a day's walk away. This fort is said to be at least 900 years old[11]. Nyarma contains sections of brickwork, built with bricks of an early size[12] (40 x 25 x 10cm), a component missing at Stok. Regarding

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9 Howard, 1989, p 256, (40)
10 Devers, Vernier. 2011, p 22
11 Sharma, 2003, p 144.
12 Although a systematic study on the topic is missing, it is clear through repeated observation and measurement that the size of the mud brick of the oldest still

Nyarma fort, Howard noted the stone corbelled roofing technique as being a potential sign of great antiquity[13]. Another building, also at a distance of a day's walk to the South-West across the Stok pass, is the Rumbag tower. **[Fig.8]** This all-stone corbelled structure, that still has most of its stone corbelled roof, is also linked by the local tradition to Mongol invasions[14], and, like Stok mon mkhar, Rumbag clearly shows signs of antiquity. Contrariwise, these two sites, Nyarma and Rumbag, are both topped by a lhatho, a religious element surprisingly missing at Stok mon mkhar and that tends to point to an even earlier date. Indeed a lhatho presupposes an existing link between the builders or at least the occupants of the fort and a specific deity identifiable under the generic term of "lha", a lhatho being the residency offered to the lha-s. The fact that a big lhatho is actually found at the foot of the fort instead of being located at its top-most part tends to indicate that the construction predates the habit of building lhathos[15], which would take us back to a greater antiquity.

Other remains of the complex

There are various petroglyphs, engraved on the rocks' surface all around the fort. In fact petroglyphs in the vicinity of ancient defensive sites is a recurrent feature throughout Ladakh and this, in our view, is linked to the highly defensive location of the sites more than to the fortifications themselves. The fact that rock art is located inside the complex itself, some at its very heart, is noteworthy.

Rock art is located at different spots, three in and around the fort's vicinity, a fourth one a kilometre downstream on the way to Stok and a fifth one near the tower located at the valley's turn.

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standing buildings in Ladakh (Nyarma temple, Basgo, Zgang and Kardong Choskor "lotsawa" ruined temples) is radically different to those built later. On the size of early mud bricks see: Howard, 1989, p 219 and Devers Q., forthcoming,

13 Howard, 1989, p 269 (53) - 271 (55). And Bellezza, 2008, p 32-37, 56-57 among others.

14 NIRLAC. 2008. p 300

15 Two Lhatho style structures are located down the crag, next to the path, clearly outside the ancient fortified complex and nothing indicates a contemporary origin with the remains on the crag. They most probably are later additions built there as a way to stave off remains foreign to the known tradition. This way of warding off ancient evidence is a recursive feature in a Ladakhy rock art context in which it is expressed through the superimposition of Buddhist symbols, most often chorten-s, over hunting or fighting scenes.

The first group of petroglyphs, and obviously the most ancient, is located at the eastern-most end of the cliff on which the fort stands, near the stream and today almost on the pathway. It consists mainly of very dark animals, drawn in a basic way, and also two footprints of realistic size. **[Fig.9]** The patina of these later motives is as dark as the original stone surface making them difficult to see, and it tells us of their antiquity[16]. This supposed antiquity tends to be confirmed by the style of the motive represented[17] and by the type of hammering[18]. There is also a chorten motif with a lighter patina colour engraved among this first group: it is of the lhabab (*lha bab*) style and has two eye circles engraved in its dome part, a rare feature in the early depiction of chorten-s in Ladakh[19].

A second group of motives is engraved on an almost vertical stone wall on the southern side of the site. It consists of chorten designs of a basic stair-style type with a rounded dome topped by a trident pole. A few ibexes are also depicted as well as a human figure holding a kind of fringed standard or banner. This second group of petroglyph is less dark than the first one but one has to take into account the fact that the rock wall here is much less exposed to the elements and the sun than the slabs of the first group.

The third group of ancient engravings is located inside the fort, at three different spots. A first rock, located in the semicircle formed by the buildings at the arrival of the southern stepped path is engraved with three chorten designs. Another chorten is engraved on the rock on which the main building of the central body stands. These four chortens are very similar and consist of a series of four or five stairs of decreasing size posed on a square base, the whole topped by a circular dome. A last group of petroglyphs documented by Bellezza and depicting chorten-like motives that he describes as "geometric motifs that appear to be highly stylized shrines of the *chorten* or *sekhar* class" is located within the fort complex[20].

There is a group of sixteen engraved chortens on the left bank of the river located about a kilometre downstream from the fort, just opposite the group of ancient buildings and terraced fields standing on the other bank and described below. Several types of chortens are represented. Some are similar to those described above and others

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16 Even if not a proof in itself, the patina has to be taken into consideration as a mean of relative analysis.

17 Jettmar and Thewalt 1985.

18 About a chronology of the petropgyphs in Ladakh see : Vernier, 2007.

19 About the "eyed" chorten-s in Ladakh, see Kimmet and Kozicz 2012, p 46.

20 In the account of his "visit to Stok mon khar", Bellezza cautiously points out that these chorten-like motives might date back to the Imperial period. For a photograph of these: Bellezza 2012, fig 12.

are of a more elaborate type comprising a compartmentalized central mast topped by a crescent moon and a circle. Some motives have obviously been retraced over. **[Fig.10]** Seeing these various types of engraved chorten motifs at various points in the valley arround the site, it is interesting to note that there is no built chorten to be found.

The final group of petroglyphs is located at the feet of the hillock a few kilometres downstream on which the tower described below stands. We are nonetheless including them here as part of the whole because of their proximity with the tower that is so obviously linked with the remainder of the ruins.

Indeed in addition to petroglyphs, Stok mon mkar obviously has secondary sites with buildings connected to it.

The round tower guarding the turn of the valley leading to Stok mon mkhar is one of these. It stands on a small hillock about one kilometre upstream from the last irrigated fields of Stok village. It stands on the left side of the valley with a view over the top-most part of Stok village as well as a section of the path leading to the fort ruins. It features the same building technique and material as the fort with similar loopholes and stone corbelled elements. **[Fig.11]**

Between the tower and the fort itself are other remains that might be linked with the latter as well. They consist of a cluster of small ancient buildings set in the middle of ancient terraced fields. The buildings are in an advanced state of decay. They have obviously been reused and adapted over the years to serve as stable and barns but their original appearance remains. They were entirely built of stones using the same technique as for the fort. The terraced land extends over about two hundred meters along the river with a width of about one hundred meters. More than twenty crescent moon-shaped fields of various sizes are still visible, following the contour and lines of the terrain. The site is divided into two in its lowest third by what is nowadays a dry stream that descends from the nearby mountain. Ancient irrigation channels are still visible in places on the upper-most edge of the fields.

During the summer of 2012, J.V. Bellezza documented another site featuring both archaic and recent structures located on a ridge above the uppermost fields of Stok. "Of special interest is a single building consisting of five small rooms. It appears to have been an all-stone corbelled structure, as evidenced in its heavily built walls (now reduced to 1.5 m or less in height), buttressing partitioning rooms, three small window openings with stone lintels, rough alignment in the cardinal directions, possibly one or two small in situ corbels, bowed walls, and overlapping upper wall courses."[21]

[21] Bellezza, 2012.

The location of the watchtower, the proximity of the ruins with the fort complex surrounded by ancient fields, together with the site most recently documented by Bellezza, raise several yet unanswered interesting questions about the history of this upper part of the valley and the possible links between these different remains. The distribution of the various ruins clearly indicates that the fort was part of a whole advanced defensive system.

Proximity alone is of course no proof, but as other evidence is not yet available, the existence of further remains within the valley seems to us a possible fruitful approach in ascertaining more clearly the range of Stok mon mkhar's possible dating. Thus let us briefly look at the valley's other remains.

Neighbouring remains

Apart from its well-known and very recent royal palace (built in the early 1820s) and surrounding buildings such as the Lonpo mkhar (*blon po mkhar*) or Gur-phug monastery (*bsKur phug dga' tshal gling dgon pa*), ancient monuments are located within or on the edge of the cultivated zone of Stok valley[22].

Starting on the left bank of the valley, upstream of the monastery, is an ancient fortified structure on the craggy part of a hill next to the cultivated area. This now very much ruined fort is built in mud mortared stone masonry and has several stone lintels and a triangular loophole. At the foot of these ruins is a group of old derelict houses clustered together around the small newly built Zamlingang ('*dzam gling sgang*) temple. A little further up, on the edge of the cultivated area, is a group of three massive wall sections aligned in parallel and built of bricks of an early size[23] on top of a mud stone masonry base and standing near some rock shelters. From their size and technique, these highly ruined remains strongly recall early temple structures found elsewhere in Ladakh[24]. Slightly higher is located what are undoubtedly the ruins of an ancient temple,

[22] Over time, the agricultural activities have certainly demolished the ruins of lesser importance which might have been distributed here and there on the arable land. This does not exclude the fact that other remains might well have been located, and maybe still are, within the large irrigated zone of Stok village.

[23] c. 42 x 20 x 10 cm.

[24] We refer here for example to the ruined temples at Basgo (Institut für Architekturtheorie, Kunst und Kulturwissenschaften Technische Universität Graz : www.archresearch.tugraz.at/results/Basgo/basgo1.html), Zgang (personal observations) or the better known ones of the Nyarma complex (Howard, 1989 p 63, Devers Q., forthcoming).

locally known as "gom gog" (*dgom gog*), featuring a ground plan[25], thickness of walls and brick size (36 x 26 x 8 cm) that find parallels in other early religious buildings as well. The last remains of importance on this side of the valley are of the old Zamling temple, a modest building built on the hill overlooking the last upper fields of the village. This single storied temple includes a walled courtyard and is surrounded by chortens, many of which are believed to date back to the Lotsawa Rinchen Zangpo's period (*lo tsa ba rin chen bzang po*, 958-1055). The original dukang (*'du khang*) is also said to date back to the translator's period. At least two other ruins of ancient temples are located on the other bank of the valley. The first one, nowadays reduced to a ruined entrance hall, is located next to an ancient painted chorten[26] at the Ramoshong (spelling unknown) hamlet. This temple, like the previous, is locally said to be a "Lotsawa Lhakhang", i.e. to have been built by Lotsawa Rinchen Zangpo, or around that time. Another ruined structure of a large size stands a few kilometres downstream in the middle of an alfalfa enclosure. The ruins of both temples are again made of the early brick size[27] and show the typical general feature (implantation, size, ground plan) of the category we link them to. Furthermore, these structures are in a very decayed state of conservation, pointing to their antiquity.

The village area is dotted with numerous chortens, some grouped some not, some of them of considerable size and antiquity. There is a ruined row of a hundred and eight chortens built on a common basis. Among these very numerous chortens built in and around the village some are believed to date back from the translator's time. Three Buddhist stone stele have been documented as well: one represents a bodhisattva carved in deep relief[28]. The figure, even if it has now eroded considerably, obviously dates back to an early Buddhist art period. This stele can be compared to those in Leh (Changspa, Skara, Shey)[29]. It bears a mantric inscription on the side. Two other such engraved stones are located on a mani wall facing the entrance

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[25] See Vitali's typology of temples built during the 10th and 11 th c. in West Tibet, Vitali 1996, p. 94.

[26] The existence of this chorten was first mentioned to us by Andre Alexander in 2011. It is locally known as "Lotsawa chorten". A publication including it is in process by our team: Devers, Q., L. Bruneau and M. Vernier, forthcoming 2. See also NIRLAC, 2008 p 468 and Kozciz 2012.

[27] Ramoshong ruined temple bricks' size: c. 36 x 23 x 12 cm. The "alfalfa enclosure" ruined temple : 42 x 20 x 10 cm. I am grateful to Q. Devers for sharing his notes about bricks measurements with me.

[28] This stele was long located next to a main wall, down at the palace complex, but was removed in 2010 and relocated to the front of the Palden Lhamo gompa. See also: NIRLAC, 2008 p 472.

[29] About stele in Ladakh see : Dorje, 2007.

chorten of the palace. A particularly square one depicts the figure of the four-armed and single-headed form of Avalokiteshvara while the other stone, much more elongated in shape, depicts the figure of a bodhisattva wearing a multi pointed crown. Its identity is uncertain.

Conclusion

The Stok valley is indeed a place full of hidden treasures, and as several of these remains are on the verge of disappearing, one can only hope for its ancient remains to be properly studied in the near future. The description and identification of all these other sites and the links they might share with each other as well as their possible connection with the ruined complex we are discussing here, is beyond the scope of this paper. Nonetheless, we believe these ancient monuments have a potential and are pieces of importance in the puzzling history, not only of the valley but beyond it to Ladakh itself at the turn of the first millennium AD. This is why we chose to briefly draw up a list here and to highlight the potential clue their study might bring to Stok mon mkhar complex itself.

In view of the historical richness of this valley, the fort of Stok mon mkhar appears more like the keystone to an entire historical heritage than simply to isolated ruins, lost in a side valley. Indeed, the study of Stok valley as a whole demands for further investigation.

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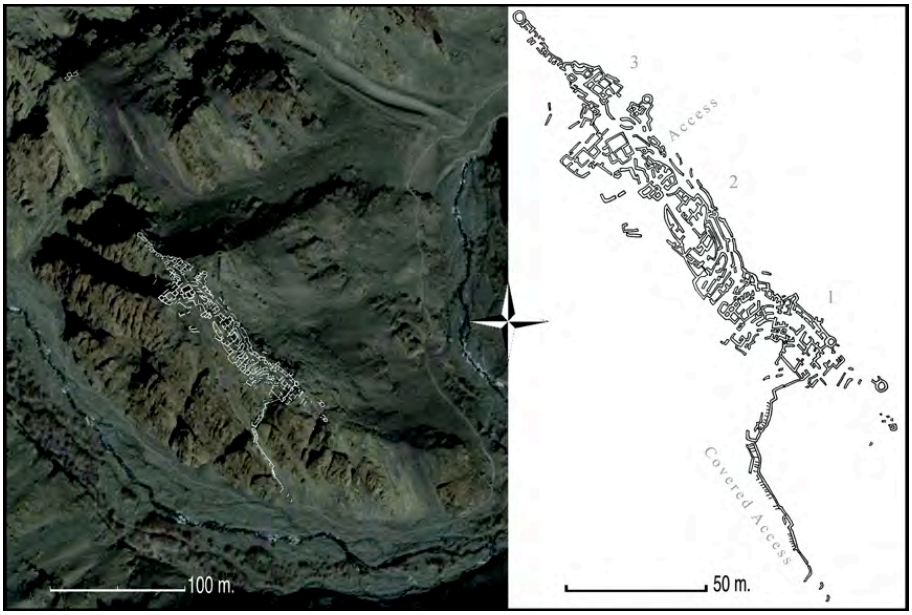

Figure 1 : Sketch plan of Stok Mon khar superimposed on an aerial view of the site (left), closer view standing alone (right). Aerial view: Google Earth (November 2012). [Credits Vernier 2012]

Figure 2: The north-eastern slope, towards Stok valley. [Credits Devers 2010]

Figure 3: General view of the southern part of the side, facing south-east.
[Credits: Devers 2010]

Figure 4: Protected stairways on the southern side.
[Credits: Devers 2010]

Figure 5: Detail of a box-like floor structure. [Credits: Devers 2009]

Figure 6: A larger box-like floor structure, possibly used as a storage silo. [Credits: Devers 2009]

Figure 7: Building at the core of the complex. [Credits: Vernier 2004]

Figure 8: Tower at Rumbag. [Credits: Vernier 2003]

Figure 9: Petroglyphs at the feet of the fort. Here, two foot print motifs. [Credits: Vernier 2012]

Figure 10: The group of engraved chortens located about a kilometre downstream from the fort. Some have obviously been retraced over. [Credits: Vernier 2012]

Figure 11: The watch tower at the valley's turn.
[Credits: Vernier 2012]

Le Tantra du Précieux Amoncellement exprimant la Quintessence des Trésors — analyse thématique & édition critique —

Abréviations

DG	Edition xylographique du NGB de sDe dge.
GTb	Edition manuscrite "b" du NGB de sGang steng.
NGB	*rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*
TB	Edition manuscrite du NGB de mTshams brag
TK	Edition manuscrite du NGB de gTing skyes

1. Introduction

Le *Tantra du Précieux Amoncellement exprimant la Quintessence des Trésors* (*gTer snying rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud*) est l'un des dix-sept Tantras formant le corpus du *sPyi ti yoga* dans la collection des *Cent Mille Tantras Anciens* (*rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*).[1]

Le Buddha central, au cœur de la révélation de ce Tantra, est "Lumière Immuable" ('Od mi 'gyur ba), c'est-à-dire Samantabhadra lui-même, encore appelé le "Buddha Primordial Eminence Apicale" (sNgon thog spyi phud sangs rgyas).[2] Son interlocuteur est le Souve-

[1] Le texte est inclus in DG, vol. 2, fol. 315b-317b ; in TD, vol. 10, pp. 543-549 ; in TK, vol. 5, pp. 238-243 ; et in GTb, vol. 10, fol. 240b-243b. Il figure sous le no. 41 dans le catalogue de l'édition de DG (Achard, "Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang mchog grub...", p. 54 ; sous le no. 120 du catalogue de 'Jigs med gling pa (Achard, "La liste des Tantras du *rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*...", p. 75) ; et sous le no. 102 du catalogue de E. Kaneko (voir bibliographie *in fine* pour les références). Le texte figure également dans les éditions de Nubri et de Taipei, ainsi que dans l'édition manuscrite de Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu mais je n'ai pas accès à ces versions (voir cependant C. Cantwell et R. Mayer : http://ngb.csac.anthropology.ac.uk/csac/NGB/cha/8). A ma connaissance, il n'existe aucune étude ni traduction de ce Tantra en langues occidentales. Toutefois Guenther l'utilise dans *Wholeness Lost and Wholeness Regained*, ainsi que dans *Up and Down Again*, et dans *The Teachings of Padmasambhava*. Dans cette dernière référence, Guenther précise qu'il utilise l'édition de DG, mais ses citations, notamment p. 193 n. 164, montrent au contraire qu'il continue à utiliser TD ou peut-être TK. Son rendu du passage cité en n. 164 est toutefois discutable.

[2] Ce nom du Buddha est extrêmement prégnant de sens. Il fait directement référence à l'état primordial (*gdod ma'i gnas lugs*) qui caractérise la Nature de l'Esprit

rain du Discernement Sapiential (Shes rig rgyal po ou encore Rig pa'i rgyal po, le Souverain du Discernement)[3] qui l'interroge sur une série de huit principes formant la structure du Tantra, après l'énoncé des perfections (*phun sum tshogs pa*) indispensable à la révélation de ce dernier.[4]

1-1. Structure

Le Tantra est organisé en fonction de neuf chapitres (*le'u*) qui présentent le dialogue entre le Souverain du Discernement et le Buddha Primordial et qui couvrent les thèmes suivants :

1. L'introduction exposant les perfections (*gleng gzhi phun sum tshogs pa*) : 315b-316a.[5]

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avant l'avènement du temps. Les notions d'antériorité (*sngon*) et d'origine (*thog*) indiquent clairement qu'il s'agit du Buddha originel (*thog ma'i sangs rgyas*) en tant que principe de l'Esprit advenu avant (*sngon*) toute distinction temporelle et spatiale. Il symbolise l'Eminence (*phud*), c'est-à-dire les sublimités de l'état naturel qui sont placées en position apicale (*spyi*), c'est-à-dire au-dessus de tout. L'explication de Guenther de ce même nom — sNgon thog spyi phud — in *Wholeness Lost*, p. 21 no. 28, en particulier du membre *spyi phud* ("the primal nothing that harbors in itself the idea of (what becomes our) world ») est tout simplement fantaisiste et en aucune manière en adéquation avec la signification réelle de ce nom. Ce type d'interprétation erronée constitue une double translation — de sens et d'intention du texte — que l'on ne peut que qualifier de dégénérescence interprétative en laquelle le "traducteur" force intentionnellement le sens du texte original pour aboutir à une dénaturation totale du résultat en traduction.

[3] Cette dernière forme est la plus utilisée dans le Tantra. Ainsi qu'on le verra ci-dessous, cet interlocuteur n'est que le reflet ou l'émanation directe du Buddha énonciateur du Tantra. Cet artifice littéraire est très fréquent dans les Tantras du rDzogs chen, l'exemple le plus parlant étant très certainement celui du corpus de textes centrés autour du *Roi Omni-Créateur* (*Kun byed rgyal po*) dans lequel Vajrasattva dialogue avec son reflet Sattvavajra. Dans l'iconographie, il existe d'ailleurs une forme bleue de Vajrasattva qui est appelée Sattvavajra (Namkhai Norbu, *Talks in Oz, California, USA*, 1982, p. 194).

[4] Ces huit principes ou thèmes sont listés ci-dessous dans la section 1-1 consacrée à la structure du Tantra. Sur les perfections, voir la note suivante.

[5] Les perfections (*phun sum tshogs pa*) sont les conditions qui permettent la Révélation d'un Tantra. Elles sont généralement au nombre de cinq et comprennent : 1. un Sanctuaire (*gnas*) où la Révélation a lieu, 2. un Révélateur (*ston pa*) qui enseigne, 3. un entourage (*'khor*) qui est souvent représenté par un ensemble d'émanations du Révélateur, 4. une Révélation (*bstan pa*), et 5. une temporalité ou moment (*dus*) propre à la Révélation (en général "un temps en dehors du temps"). Dans les textes mahāyāniques, ces cinq perfections sont appelées les cinq certitudes (*nges pa lnga*). Sur les diverses possibilités d'équivalents sanskrits de ces cinq perfections, voir Garson, *Penetrating the Secret Essence Tantra*, p. 34 n.

2. L'exposé sur la Base (*gzhi bstan pa*) : 316a.[6]
3. L'exposé sur l'égarement (*'khrul pa bstan pa*) : 316a-316b.[7]
4. L'exposé sur l'éradication [de l'égarement] (*rtsad gcod bstan pa*) : 316b.
5. Les méthodes de réalisation (*rtogs thabs*) : 316b.
6. La transcendance (*la zla ba*) : 316b-317a.
7. L'exposé des Formules Secrètes à l'aide de symboles (*gsang sngags brdas bstan pa*) : 317a.
8. L'exposé des précellences (*mchog bstan pa*) : 317a-317b.
9. L'exposé du nom [du Tantra] et [des caractéristiques] du Calice (*mtshan dang snod bstan pa*) : 317b.

A sa lecture, l'on voit que le texte ne possède pas de double schéma d'introduction (*gleng gzhi*, extraordinaire et ordinaire), comme c'est par exemple le cas dans certains Tantras de la Section Secrétissime (*yang gsang*), comme par exemple le *sGra thal 'gyur*, etc. Il s'ouvre par une stance qui indique que le texte est énoncé par le Buddha lui-même et qui place donc théoriquement le chapitre initial du texte sur un plan similaire à celui des introductions dites extraordinaires (*thun mon ma yin pa'i gleng gzhi*) dans lesquelles l'énonciateur est indifférencié de l'entourage qui assiste à sa Révélation.[8] De fait,

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53. Pour un exposé détaillé de ces perfections selon le Mahāyoga, voir Garson, *op. cit.*, p. 281-304.

6 La notion de Base (*gzhi*) est le thème récurrent le plus fréquent des Tantras du *sPyi ti* et apparaît de manière explicite dans au moins onze des dix-sept Tantras formant le corpus du *sPyi ti* dans le NGB. Par exemple, dans le *Tantra des Perles de l'Elixir Ambrosiaque propre à l'Union de l'Existence Manifestée, qui Eradique le Saṃsāra à son Commencement et à sa Fin* (*sNang srid kha sbyor bdud rtsi bcud thigs 'khor ba thog mtha' gcod pa'i rgyud*, fol. 207a-207b), cette Base est définie comme l'état naturel qui préexiste à l'avènement des Buddhas et des êtres animés. Cet état, totalement indicible et incréé ne dépend d'aucune terminologie (*tha snyad*), nom (*mtshan*), ou mot (*tshig*), parce qu'il transcende les limitations sémantiques. Il est néanmoins appelé "Base primordiale" (*thog ma gzhi*) dans le sens de cette préexistence à toute forme de dualité. Il ne peut être proprement illustré par quoi que ce soit, parce qu'il se tient au-delà de toute représentation, etc. Cette Base est l'état tout simplement indicible de l'Essence même de l'esprit. Voir également *infra* n. 16 et 17.

7 Sommairement, l'égarement intervient lorsque la nature des manifestations de la Base (*gzhi snang*) n'est pas reconnue. A ce moment, du mode potentiel du Discernement (*rig pa'i tshul*), l'esprit passe au mode d'ignorance (*ma rig pa'i tshul*), caractérisé par les saisies dualistes, etc.

8 Dans l'introduction ordinaire (*thun mong gi gleng gzhi*), le compilateur du Tantra est différent de son énonciateur. Le compilateur est donc celui qui rapporte le Tantra et qui introduit son discours par une phrase classique telle que "Voici les paroles qu'un jour j'ai entendues" (*'di skad bdag gi thos pa'i dus gcig na*). A l'inverse, dans l'introduction extraordinaire (*thun mong ma yin pa'i gleng gzhi*), l'énonciateur de cette introduction et le compilateur sont une seule et même personne. Dans ce cas, le Tantra s'ouvre par une phrase différente, comme par

l'interlocuteur "Souverain du Discernement" (Rig pa'i rgyal po) est le reflet purissime du Buddha Primordial émané en une forme de Sapience qui ne sert guère qu'à structurer le dialogue et à lui donner sa forme littéraire traditionnelle.[9]

A ce titre, l'entourage (*'khor*) du Buddha est, comme à l'accoutumé dans les Tantras du *sPyi ti*, extrêmement complexe et se compose des émanations représentées comme le rayonnement du dynamisme (*rtsal zer*) du Buddha lui-même.[10] L'entourage comprend ainsi :[11]

— un entourage mouvant, formé par l'éclat lumineux propre au rayonnement du dynamisme incessant du Buddha (*ma 'gags rtsal zer 'od mdangs 'gyu ba'i 'khor*),
— un entourage sapiential, formé par le mental, l'esprit, les concepts et l'intellect (*shes rig yid sems dran rtog blo yi 'khor*), et
— un entourage dit naturel ou de la Nature (*rang bzhin gyi 'khor*).

Il est possible qu'il faille se représenter ces trois entourages comme exprimant des modalités de plus en plus subtiles, la première, manifestement visionnaire, étant conçue comme extérieure (*phyi*) ; la deuxième, comme intérieure (*nang*) ; et la troisième, comme secrète

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exemple celle du présent Tantra disant : "Voici les paroles qu'un jour j'ai expliquées après avoir réalisé ma propre Nature" (*'di skad bdag gis rang bzhin rtogs nas bshad pa'i dus gcig na*). Toutefois, dans le présent texte, la structure réelle du Tantra montre que l'énonciateur et le compilateur (parfois lui-même interlocuteur du Buddha) sont différents, ce qui donne l'impression que le texte est rapporté par une tierce personne, et ce, malgré sa stance introductive.

9 Evidemment, tous les Tantras ne sont pas présentés sous une forme dialogique, mais c'est toutefois leur modèle classique, hérité de celui des Sūtras.

10 Le binôme *rtsal zer* est l'un des termes les plus spécifiques du *sPyi ti* et du *Yang ti*. On ne le rencontre pas, à ma connaissance, dans le corpus du cycle secrétissime de la Section des Préceptes (c'est-à-dire dans les *Dix-Sept Tantras*), ni dans les œuvres exégétiques de Klong chen pa. Sur sa signification dans le *Yang ti*, voir le *Klong gsal* de Nyang ral (*Nyi zla 'od 'bar*), fol. 123b-124a. Dans ce contexte, ce dynamisme fait clairement écho à celui dit de l'épiphanie de la Base (*gzhi snang*), même si cette dernière expression n'est pas utilisée. La distinction entre la Base et son dynamisme est importante, notamment lors de l'explication de l'égarement. Ce dernier n'intervient en aucune manière au sein de la Base elle-même, sinon celle-ci verrait son Essence Primordialement Pure (*ngo bo ka dag*) souillée par l'ignorance elle-même : il intervient, ainsi qu'on le verra ci-dessous dans le résumé du texte, uniquement au niveau du dynamisme (*rtsal*) ou de l'épiphanie de la Base. Cette idée est en parfaite adéquation avec les représentations des *sNying thig* sur le sujet. Voir *inter alia*, Klong chen pa, *Tshig don mdzod*, p. 169-170 ; *bKra shis mdzes ldan*, p. 214.

11 Voir également Guenther, *Up and Down*, pp. 9-10, qui traduit le passage concernant ces diverses modalités de l'entourage (*'khor*) du Buddha. Une partie de la description de cet entourage est reprise in *ibid.*, p. 153.

(*gsang*). L'entourage naturel lui-même se subdivise en les trois catégories suivantes :

— l'entourage exprimant la Nature ou qui demeure au sein de la Nature propre à l'état primordial (*rang bzhin gnas pa'i 'khor*),
— l'entourage qui contemple la Nature (*rang bzhin la lta ba'i 'khor*), et
— l'entourage qui réalise la Nature (*rang bzhin rtogs pa'i 'khor*).[12]

Une troisième série d'entourages — formant le collectif de l'entourage de la Grande Sublimation (*smin pa chen po'i 'khor*)[13] — est ensuite énumérée par le Buddha qui la définit comme comprenant :

— les *bodhisattvas* causaux (*rgyu'i byang chub sems dpa'*),[14]
— les *bodhisattvas* de la Voie (*lam gyi byang chub sems dpa'*), et
— les *bodhisattvas* du Fruit (*'bras bu'i byang chub sems dpa'*).[15]

1-2. Résumé du Tantra

[12] Je n'ai pour l'instant pas trouvé d'exégèse satisfaisante pour expliquer les divers aspects de ces trois entourages. Il faut croire que leurs spécificités sont à s'évaluer en fonction de leurs actions consistant respectivement à demeurer, contempler, et réaliser. L'explication orale (le patriarche à la source de cette explication souhaite rester anonyme) que j'ai reçue sur ce point avance la théorie suivante : les membres de ces entourages sont des émanations du Buddha. Elles sont projetées par altruisme, afin de montrer aux êtres la Voie à suivre. Les adeptes membres de ces entourages commencent donc par demeurer recueillis au sein de leur propre Nature, avant d'en contempler les splendeurs visionnaires (*snang ba'i cho 'phrul*), pour finalement en réaliser la Nature véritable (c'est-à-dire l'expression dynamique de leur propre état naturel).

[13] L'expression Grande Sublimation (*smin pa chen po*) n'est pas, à ma connaissance, exclusive au système de la Grande Perfection. Elle remonte manifestement à la *Prajñapāramitā* en 8000 vers (avec une seule occurrence du terme, chap. 10, fol. 125a), mais elle n'apparaît qu'une seule autre fois dans les Tantras du *sPyi ti* (voir ci-dessous note 15). On la retrouve toutefois, *inter alia*, dans le *Rin chen 'khor lo'i rgyud* (fol. 191a) qui est un tantra de *Sems sde*.

[14] La notion de cause (*rgyu, hetu*) est ici évidemment identique à celle de Base (*gzhi, hetu = ālaya*).

[15] Dans le *Tantra des Lampes Amoncelées* (*sGron ma brtsegs pa'i rgyud*, fol. 323a), cet entourage de la Grande Sublimation est composé de quatre éléments, mais cette fois-ci de nature nettement plus visionnaire : 1. l'entourage constitué de la Claire-Lumière propre au Dynamisme naturel [du Buddha] (*rang rtsal 'od gsal gyi 'khor*), 2. l'entourage formé par l'éclat naturel purissime [du Buddha] (*rang dangs rnam dag gi 'khor*), 3. l'entourage formé par l'éclat naturel qui rayonne naturellement (*rang dangs rang gsal gyi 'khor*), et 4. l'entourage exprimant l'indifférenciation [du dynamisme de l'état naturel] qui naît de lui-même et se résorbe en lui-même (*rang byung rang rlag dbyer med pa'i 'khor*).

1-2-1. Thèmes principaux

D'un point de vue purement doctrinal, ce sont les chapitres 2-4 qui représentent le cœur même du Tantra et qui exposent les principes centraux de la Grande Perfection. Le premier de ces trois chapitres traite de la Base (*gzhi*) de l'état naturel.[16] Cette Base est indicible et insubstantielle. Elle correspond à la Pureté Primordiale (*ka dag*) qui transcende le mental.[17] Elle ne peut être illustrée de manière correcte par aucun exemple archétypal, par aucun mot ni aucune désignation spécifique. Elle possède des qualités spontanées et est en même temps immuable, Base de toute chose (*kun gzhi*)[18] et Abîme impartial

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[16] La notion de Base est l'une des trois modalités fréquemment utilisées pour exposer les enseignements de la Grande Perfection en fonction d'une Base (*gzhi*), d'une Voie (*lam*), et d'un Fruit (*'bras bu*). La Base est la définition de l'état naturel exprimé dans l'indifférenciation de la Vacuité-Clarté (*stong gsal dbyer med*). La Voie consiste dans la familiarisation expérimentale avec cette Vacuité-Clarté. Dans les *sNying thig*, cette Voie est généralement exprimée en fonction de l'Eradication de la Rigidité (*khregs chod*) et du Franchissement du Pic (*thod rgal*). Le Fruit, quant à lui, consiste dans l'atteinte non régressive des Corps et des Sagesses du Plein Eveil. Sur le traitement de la Base dans le *sPyi ti*, voir *supra* n. 6.

[17] La plupart des Tantras du *sPyi ti* insistent pour définir la Base comme étant primordialement pure (*ka dag*) et non, comme c'est le cas dans le *Man ngag sde*, comme l'indifférenciation de la Pureté Primordiale et de la Spontanéité (*ka dag lhun grub dbyer med*). La présence de la Spontanéité est directement liée à la Clarté (*gsal ba*) dans le *Man ngag sde*, mais dans le *sPyi ti*, cette présence est parfois conçue comme une source occasionnant l'émergence de défauts (*skyon*). Le *Tantra de la Quintessence du Soleil et de la Lune* (*Nyi zla'i snying po'i rgyud*) dit ainsi dans son chapitre 13 (fol. 42b) : « — Etant donné qu'il y a alors Spontanéité au sein de la Base, cela ne fait qu'advenir le défaut des partialités et des chutes dans les distinctions individuelles » (*gzhi la lhun grub yod pa'i phyir/ /rgya chad phyogs lhung skyon du 'gyur/*). Tout ce chapitre est d'ailleurs consacré à la réfutation de l'*A ti* du point de vue du *sPyi ti*. On verra toutefois ci-après dans le même paragraphe que la Spontanéité est reconnue dans le *sPyi ti* au niveau des qualités (*yon tan*) de la Base. Les qualificatifs les plus fréquents associés à la Pureté Primordiale dans le *sPyi ti* sont ceux de l'absence de naissance (*skye med*), de l'insubstantialité (*dngos med*), et du caractère immaculé (*dri med*). La notion de quintessence (*snying po*) lui est également associée dans plusieurs textes de ce corpus. Dans le chapitre 10 du *Tantra de la Clarté Universelle des Disques Lumineux* (*Thig le kun gsal gyi rgyud*, fol. 315a), la Pureté Primordiale est définie en ces termes : « — La "Pureté primordiale" renvoie à ce qui est originellement déjà purifié de la surimposition des obscurcissements, des souillures liées aux imprégnations karmiques, des ténèbres de l'ignorance, et des souillures des passions » (*ka dag ces pa ni ye nas sgrib g.yogs dang / bag chags kyi dri ma dang / ma rig pa'i mun pa dang / nyon mongs pa'i dri ma ka nas dag pa'o/*). L'approche est on ne peut plus littérale. On attendrait plutôt les notions de Vide (*stong pa*), absence de naissance (*skye med*), de Corps Absolu (*chos sku*), etc.

[18] Comme dans le reste du rDzogs chen, le *sPyi ti* distingue clairement la Base Universelle (*kun gzhi*) de la conscience de la Base Universelle (*kun gzhi rnam shes*), distinction subtile qui a égaré des polémistes aussi mal armés dans la compréhen-

de la Réalité. Lorsque l'on ne parvient pas à réaliser la nature de cette Base, l'on entre alors dans le mode dit de l'égarement (*'khrul pa*) qui est exposé dans le deuxième de ces trois chapitres.[19]

L'égarement s'impose donc lorsque l'on ne réalise pas la Pureté Primordiale de la Base. En réalité, la Base elle-même ne connaît ni égarement (*'khrul*) ni non-égarement (*ma 'khrul*), car c'est uniquement au niveau de son dynamisme que les éventualités d'égarement et de non-égarement prennent place.[20] En somme, ne pas réaliser la Pureté Primordiale revient tout simplement à s'égarer. Pareillement, ne pas réaliser son insubstantialité (*dngos med*) revient à expérimenter la souffrance (*sdug bsngal*) ; ne pas réaliser sa véritable expression (*rnal ma*) signifie errer dans le Saṃsāra (*'khor bar 'khyams*).[21] Ne pas réaliser ce qui relève de sa compréhension directe (*dbye bsal*) signifie s'obscurcir dans l'ignorance (*ma rig*).[22] Finalement, ne pas s'emparer de son propre état naturel (*rang sa ma zin*) signifie s'égarer dans les six migrations (*'gro drug*).[23] Tout le propos de l'égarement tient donc à l'incapacité de reconnaître la nature du dynamisme de la Base, selon le modèle du cairn que l'on prend pour un homme, de la corde que l'on prend pour un serpent, etc. Ces exemples illustrent clairement le mode d'égarement tel qu'il doit être compris : celui-ci n'existe pas au sein de la Base (de même que l'homme n'est pas le cairn et ne l'a jamais été, ou que la corde n'est pas un serpent et ne l'a jamais été),

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sion du rDzogs chen que Mi bskyod rdo rje (le 8e Karmapa, 1507-1554). Voir Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 181.

19 Correspondant donc au chapitre 3.

20 Voir *supra* n. 10. Lorsque l'égarement se manifeste, c'est donc en conséquence de la non-reconnaissance de la nature de la Base. Dans le *Tantra de l'Union de l'Existence Manifestée* (*sNang srid kha sbyor*, fol. 209a), le mode d'égarement vers le bas (*mar 'khrul*, par opposition au mode de libération vers le haut, *yar grol*) est défini comme suit : « — Ceux qui se sont égarés hors du principe authentique/ Saisissent leur discursivité comme étant le soi et, en conséquence/Ils s'empressent de faire des nœuds dans le ciel,/ Ecrasent leur propre tête avec leurs pieds/ S'entravent eux-mêmes avec leur propre ceinture/... » (*yang dag don las gol ba rnams/ /rnam rtog bdag tu bzung ba yis/ /nan gyis nam mkhar mdud pa byas/ /rang mgo rang gis rkang pas mnan/ /rang gi ske rag rang gis bcings/*). Plus explicitement, le texte dit plus loin (fol. 210a) : « — Saisir duellement l'état non-duel,/ Cela fait mûrir le Fruit de l'égarement » (*gnyis med ngang la gnyis su bzung/ /de yis 'khrul pa'i 'bras bur smin*).

21 Il faut rappeler ici que cette notion d'expression véritable ou d'aise naturelle (*rnal ma*) est celle qui entre directement dans le composé *rnal 'byor* qui traduit en tibétain le sanskrit *yoga*. Ainsi, pour les traducteurs tibétains, le *yoga* signifie jouir de l'aise naturelle de la Réalité ou jouir de son expression véritable. Le chapitre 95 de *La Suite propre à la Suite du Tantra de l'Union de l'Existence Manifestée* (*sNang srid kha sbyor phyi ma'i phyi ma*, fol. 261b) est consacré à l'explication littérale (ou définition crypto-étymologique, *nges tshig*) de *rnal 'byor*.

22 Sur *dbye gsal* ou *ye gsal*, voir *infra* n. 68.

23 A savoir, par ordre ascendant: 1. les destinées des enfers, 2. des fantômes faméliques, 3. des animaux, 4. des êtres humains, 5. des demi-dieux, et 6. des dieux.

mais provient d'une saisie conceptuelle erronée. Lorsque ce mode est engagé, les défauts et les souffrances inhérentes à l'égarement deviennent proprement infinis.

L'objectif de l'adepte qui s'engage dans la pratique du *sPyi ti* va donc être d'éradiquer l'égarement à sa racine même. Lorsque cette égarement est définitivement tranché, les réalités Mère et Fils (*ma bu*) se rencontrent[24] et l'on quitte l'errance dans les Trois Domaines (*khams gsum*)[25] et les six migrations (*'gro drug*). A ce stade, qui est en réalité celui du Fruit, les noms mêmes de l'ignorance (*ma rig pa*) et du Saṃsāra (*'khor ba*) n'existent plus : ces notions disparaissent tout simplement à l'image du sel qui se dissout dans l'eau (sur cette image, voir *infra* n. 30) ou d'un poison qui est neutralisé par une formule mantrique appropriée.

1-2-2. Thèmes secondaires

Le reste des thèmes secondaires du Tantra est abordé dans les chapitres 5 à 9, couvrant respectivement les sujets suivants :

- les méthodes de réalisation ou manières de parvenir à la réalisation (*rtogs thabs*),
- la transcendance (*la zla ba*),
- le symbolisme des Formules Secrètes (*gsang sngags*),
- les sublimités ou précellences (*mchog*) du Tantra, et
- l'exposé sur la signification du nom (*mtshan*) ou titre du Tantra, ainsi que celui des caractéristiques du calice qui en reçoit la transmission.

Les méthodes permettant de parvenir à la réalisation ne sont pas exposées de manière explicite dans le Tantra.[26] Elles ne décrivent par

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[24] Sur cette "rencontre", voir Karmay, *The Great Perfection*, p. 176. Les réalités Mère et Fils sont conçues, comme dans le tantrisme, comme correspondant aux Claire-Lumières (*'od gsal*) Mère (*ma*) et Fille (*bu*, la langue française ne peut faire autrement que d'exiger le genre féminin alors que celui-ci est évidemment masculin en tibétain). Toutefois, dans le rDzogs chen en général (et donc dans le *sPyi ti*) l'émergence de cette union ne s'appuie pas sur les techniques tantriques proprement dites.

[25] Le Domaine du Désir, de la Forme, et du Sans-Forme.

[26] En d'autres termes, et c'est l'une des caractéristiques essentielles des Tantras du *sPyi ti*, les points-clefs (*gnad*) de la pratique ne sont pas expliqués de manière à être mis en application. Au contraire, la lecture de ces Tantras donne l'impression que toutes les techniques de pratique doivent être recherchées dans les cycles complémentaires, comme par exemple celui de sPa gro gter ston (voir Achard, *Le Cycle de l'Immortalité Adamantine*, *passim*).

exemple aucun point-clef (*gnad*) propre aux diverses techniques contemplatives du rDzogs chen en général. Au contraire, la réalisation elle-même est conçue comme étant atteinte sans aucun effort (*rtsol med*) et sans s'appuyer sur la pensée (*bsam bral*) : elle ne relève donc pas des modes spécifiques aux notions de Vue (*lta ba*), de Méditation (*sgom pa*) et de Conduite (*spyod pa*). En fait, cette réalisation est l'intuition directe et non régressive de la Pureté Primordiale insubstantielle. Cette dernière n'est pas quelque chose de particulier (dans le sens de "désignable" et de "tangible"), mais elle est la Base de toute chose (*kun gzhi*), dans la mesure où tout se déroule en son sein. Cette Base atemporellement pure est vierge de désir, au-delà de l'intellect, inimaginable, limpide, vide et lumineuse, animée d'un éclat originel (*ye gdangs*) qui rayonne au sein de l'Espace, et exprimée comme la Profonde Clarté (*gting gsal*) indicible de l'état naturel.[27]

Dans le chapitre 6, cette Base est directement associée à la notion de transcendance (*la bzla ba*) dont l'expression fonctionne ici — d'un point de vue littéraire — selon les principes de la rhétorique de l'absence chère au Mahāyāna. Ainsi, la Pureté Primordiale insubstantielle ne dépend pas des Buddhas, de la Parfaite Pureté (*byang chub*) ou *bodhi*, ni des enseignements du Dharma (*chos*). En son sein, il n'y a pas de Corps, de Clans, de déités à méditer, etc. Pareillement, cet état n'est pas altéré par d'éventuelles brisures de serment, par l'émergence de signes, de presciences, etc., et ne dépend d'aucune terminologie particulière. Il ne relève ni du Saṃsāra ni du Nirvāṇa, ni de la permanence ni du néant. Les activités saṃsāriques ne sont que des manifestations de l'égarement qui doivent être impérativement rejetées. En terme d'attachement, même l'attachement à la déité (tutélaire) ne conduit à rien d'autre qu'à une chute (*ltung*) en sorte que la conduite authentique à suivre consiste à ne s'attacher à rien du tout.[28]

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[27] Comme le montrent les enseignements de sPa gro gter ston par exemple, la pénétration de cette Pureté Primordiale est rendue possible grâce à une confrontation directe (*ngo sprod*) à l'état naturel. Cette confrontation est donnée par le maître et marque le début de l'entrée dans la Voie de la Grande Perfection proprement dite. L'essentiel des données relatives aux méthodes réalisation (*rtogs pa'i thabs*) dans les Tantras du *sPyi ti* relève de ce que dans les *sNying thig* on désigne comme l'Eradication de la Rigidité (*khregs chod*). On va voir dans le paragraphe suivant que le présent texte expose le thème de l'état naturel du rDzogs chen (*rdzogs pa chen po'i gnas lugs*) et non celui des méthodes permettant à un adepte de l'expérimenter. En effet, les données présentées relèvent essentiellement de la Vue et il importe ici d'en distinguer les principes de ceux de la pratique et de la Conduite. Faute d'appliquer une telle distinction, l'on fait "chuter la Vue dans la Conduite" (*spyod pa la lta ba 'bebs pa*), écueil fréquent des calices non appropriés à la transmission du rDzogs chen (le jeune Milarépa est l'exemple paradigmatique de ce type d'erreur).

[28] L'absence d'attachement (*zhen med*) pour quoi que ce soit est le thème qui revient régulièrement dans l'exposé de la Conduite du *sPyi ti*. Dans le chapitre 11 du

Le chapitre suivant, consacré au symbolisme des Formules Secrètes (*gsang sngags*), est directement lié au chapitre 5 qui traite des méthodes de réalisation. Il présente les instructions orales (*gdams ngag*) qui manquent au chapitre 5 et invite dans un premier temps l'auditoire du Buddha à contempler le ciel. On pourrait en déduire ici qu'il s'agit d'une référence indirecte à la pratique de concentration sur le ciel (*nam mkha' ar gtad*), technique fréquemment utilisée dans la pratique de la Grande Perfection.[29] Ici, en réalité, le ciel n'est qu'un support pour l'investigation intérieure, afin de découvrir que le fait de ne rien voir au sein du ciel est précisément ce que le Buddha entend faire comprendre à son auditoire. Il invite également cet auditoire à ne pas appréhender le cairn au sommet d'une montagne (*la ka'i la btsas*) comme s'il s'agissait d'un homme, etc., et à laisser toutes les perceptions erronées se fondre comme du sel dans de l'eau, etc.[30]

Dans le chapitre suivant, Rig pa'i rgyal po questionne le Buddha sur des sujets tels que le sanctuaire où pratiquer, la contemplation, etc. Le Buddha répond en élargissant son discours à d'autres modalités de la pratique et déclare que :

— le meilleur maṇḍala est celui de la Claire-Lumière (*'od gsal*) purissime,
— la meilleure déité est celle de la Pureté Primordiale (*ka dag*)

Tantra des Cinq Sections qui Eradiquent les Elaborations (*sPros pa gcod pa sde lnga'i rgyud*, fol. 275b), le Buddha dit explicitement : « — Peu importe ce qui se manifeste à l'esprit ou en tant que manifestations,/ Ne pas s'y cramponner et ne pas s'y attacher constitue la précellente Conduite./Ne pas s'attacher aux objets qui se manifestent, quels qu'ils soient,/ Est dit être l'ornement même de la Conduite/ » (*snang sems gnyis su gar snang kyang/ /ma chags ma zhen spyod pa'i mchog/ gang snang yul la ma zhen na/ /de ni spyod pa'i rgyan du gsungs*). La même idée est reprise dans la définition de la Conduite fournie par le Buddha dans le *Tantra des Flamboiements Lumineux des Lampes* (*sGron ma 'od 'bar ba'i rgyud*, fol. 319b) : « — Ne pas avoir d'attachement pour/ La Non-Action spontanée du Corps, de la Parole et de l'Esprit vierges d'activité,/ C'est là la Conduite » (*byar med lus ngag yid gsum gyi/ /bya ba dang bral shugs 'byung la/ /zhen pa med pa spyod pa yin/*).

[29] La pratique de contemplation du ciel est l'une des plus importantes pratiques du neuvième Véhicule. Voir son explication détaillée in Achard, *Les Arcanes de la Pratique des Trois Cieux*, Editions Khyung-Lung, 2013. Cette pratique s'accomplit aussi bien dans le contexte de l'Eradication de la Rigidité (*khregs chod*) que dans celui du Franchissement du Pic (*thod rgal*). Dans les deux cas, elle est généralement désignée comme la pratique des Trois Cieux (*nam mkha' sum phrug*). Je n'ai jusqu'à présent trouvé aucune référence explicite à cette pratique dans les Tantras du *sPyi ti*.

[30] L'image du sel qui se fond dans l'eau est utilisée dans les deux premiers Tantras du corpus du *sPyi ti yoga* dans le NGB. Les autres Tantras de cette catégorie n'en font pas usage. Cette image très parlante ne semble guère usitée dans les textes rdzogs chen à ma disposition, mais on la retrouve *inter alia* dans les Tantras du *Yang ti* (*sPros bral don gsal*, etc.), ainsi que dans le *Trésor de la Connaissance* (*Shes bya mdzod*) de Kong sprul (p. 211).

insubstantielle et impartiale,
— la meilleure confession, la meilleure louange et la meilleure offrande ne sont autres que la Non-action (*byar med*) qui transcende l'intellect,
— la meilleure Consécration est celle de l'aise naturelle (ou expression véritable) propre à la Pureté Primordiale,
— le meilleur festin d'offrandes est celui de l'indifférenciation de l'existence manifestée,
— la meilleure porte d'entrée dans la Voie est celle de l'absence d'effort et de désir,
— la meilleure Contemplation[31] est celle du Non-né en lequel il n'existe aucune saisie élaborée par l'intellect,
— la meilleure Vue est celle qui ne présente aucun support pour le désir et l'attachement,
— la meilleure Méditation est celle de l'esprit qui ne meut en aucune manière,
— la meilleure Conduite est celle qui n'a aucun attachement pour les pensées et les souvenirs,
— la meilleure expérience est celle en laquelle la conscience discursive ne s'est aucunement investie,
— le meilleur Fruit est celui de la Pureté Primordiale insubstantielle, qui transcende l'intellect,
— le meilleur Fruit des Terres et des Voies est celui de la conquête des Terres auxquelles on aspirait,
— la meilleure activité est celle qui est sans action, sans effort ni rien à accomplir, etc.

Dans le dernier chapitre du Tantra, le Buddha répond au Souverain du Discernement à propos du nom du Tantra et du calice qui est susceptible d'en recevoir la transmission. Ce Tantra est défini comme possédant la Quintessence des Trésors (*gter snying*) dans le sens où il contient l'essence même de tous les enseignements.[32] Il est conçu comme un Tantra contenant un véritable Amoncellement de Joyaux (ou un précieux Amoncellement, *rin chen* [ou *rin po che*] *spungs pa'i rgyud*)[33] parce qu'il réunit en lui les élixirs principiels (*don gyi bcud rnams*) des enseignements du *sPyi ti yoga*.

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[31] Le texte utilise *bsgom pa* mais la lecture fournie par TD (p. 548), TK (p. 242) et GTb (fol. 243a) donne *dgongs pa*, ce qui fait sens étant donné la répétition de *sgom pa* ci-après.

[32] Il est clair, d'après le contexte, qu'il ne faut pas interpréter cette notion de *Trésor* (*gter*) comme correspondant à celle des *gter ma*, ce qui serait une évidente erreur anachronique.

[33] Pour le distinguer du *Tantra des Joyaux Amoncelés* (*Rin chen spungs pa'i rgyud*) du cycle secrétissime des *Dix-Sept Tantras*.

Le Calice (*snod*) ou fortuné (*skal ldan*) qui reçoit ce Tantra doit avoir un continuum plein de bonté, être pauvre en négativité mais plein de foi. Il doit être capable de dévotion, de préserver ses serments, et faire preuve d'intelligence.

En revanche, le texte ne doit en aucune manière être révélé ou transmis (lit. donné, *sbyin*) à quelqu'un sans serment (*dam med*, c'est-à-dire qui n'a pris aucun serment ou, plus certainement, qui ne respecte pas les serments pris), plein d'orgueil et habile en tromperies.

1-3. Colophon

Le colophon du texte est le suivant :

> *« — (Ce Tantra) fut expliqué par Urgyan Padma et traduit par le lotsāwa sKa ba dPal brtsegs, avant d'être transmis au roi Khri srong lde btsan. Sceau du Trésor ! Sceau Profond ! Sceau confié ! »*

Comme pour les autres Tantras du *sPyi ti*, le texte est directement rattaché à la figure semi-légendaire du 8e siècle, le grand guru Padmasambhava, originaire de l'Oḍḍiyāna, à l'Ouest de l'Inde.[34] Cette attribution est évidemment improuvable en l'état actuel des recherches et ce que l'on peut simplement en dire pour l'instant, c'est qu'elle s'inscrit avec pertinence — littérairement parlant — dans la droite ligne des autres attributions de paternité des Tantras du *sPyi ti*.[35] Le traducteur sKa ba dPal brtsegs est l'un des luminaires de la première diffusion du Bouddhisme au 8e siècle qui a joué un rôle important en organisant le catalogage des textes disponibles (en traduction) dans les bibliothèques royales de l'époque. Il s'est également investi dans de nombreux travaux de traductions allant des Sūtras[36]

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[34] Il semble bien que le *sPyi ti* soit une catégorie entièrement associée à Padmasambhava, alors que les cycles de *Yang ti* par exemple ne lui sont pas tous attribués puisqu'au moins un cycle est crédité à Vimalamitra (NGB, DG, nos. 17-26), et que d'autres textes sont associés à Śrī Siṃha (sans référence à Padmasambhava), etc.

[35] Il faut rappeler que Padmasambhava est, dès les manuscrits de Dunhuang, associé au rDzogs chen par la mention de l'*Atiyoga* dans le Pelliot 44. Voir Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism*, p. 158. D'ailleurs, l'exposé de Kapstein sur Padmasambhava dans cet ouvrage (pp. 155-160) reste la meilleure référence permettant de synthétiser les éléments "sûrs" à propos du grand Thaumaturge. Voir également la série d'articles électroniques de Rob Mayer, "Padmasambhava in early Tibetan myth and ritual" (http://blogs.orient.ox.ac.uk/kila/2011/05/06/padmasambhava-in-early- tibetan- myth- and-ritual-part-1/).

[36] Voir Dan Martin, "Gray Traces", p. 337. Selon certains auteurs, sKa ba dPal brtsegs n'a pas œuvré au cours du règne de Khri srong lde btsan mais au cours de

au rDzogs chen. Le roi Khri srong lde btsan (r. 755-797) est, bien entendu, le principal acteur politique qui fit du Bouddhisme la religion officielle du Tibet. Dans la tradition rNying ma pa tardive, il joue un rôle décisif aux côtés de l'Abbé Śantarakṣita et de Padmasambhava lui-même. Au vu des textes les plus anciens,[37] ce rôle spirituel semble de toute évidence très largement exagéré.

L'expression "Sceau du Trésor" (*gter rgya*) signifie que le texte a été caché comme *gter ma* et que des sceaux de protection lui ont été apposés (notamment sur le coffret ou réceptacle dans lequel il a été déposé). L'expression "Sceau Profond" (*zab rgya*) fait référence à la profondeur extrême des enseignements qui sont contenus dans le texte et qui ne doivent donc être révélés qu'à des fortunés. Enfin, l'expression "Sceau confié" (*gtad rgya*) a un double sens. Elle indique que le texte a été confié (*gtad*) à des Protecteurs des Trésors (*gter srung*) qui devront eux-mêmes veiller sur lui jusqu'à ce que le moment de sa révélation soit venu. Selon les circonstances, ils pourront alors le confier (c'est-à-dire le remettre, *gtad*) au *gter ston* prophétisé pour le révéler.

2. Edition critique du texte

Fol. 315b

rgya gar skad du | nidhi hridaya ratna kuṭa tantra[38] | bod skad du | gter snying rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud | bcom ldan 'das thog ma'i sangs rgyas 'od mi 'gyur ba la phyag 'tshal lo | |'di skad bdag gis rang bzhin rtogs nas bshad pa'i dus gcig na | rang bzhin gyis rnam par dag pa'i gnas |[39] kun gzhi[40] pho brang | kun gzhi'i[41] sems

Fol. 316a

nyid khyab brdal chen po'i dkyil | 'od gsal 'gag pa med pa'i klong | rin po che rtsal zer kun 'byung gi mkha' | sgrib[42] pa med par 'od gsal ba | de nyid du[43] rnam par dag pa | rgyu rkyen 'pho 'gyur med pa[44] | rgya chad phyogs lhung med pa'i gnas de na | sngon[45] thog[46] spyi

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celui de Ral pa can (Martin, *op. cit.*, p. 339 n. 11), ce qui le place à un moment de l'histoire qui ne coïncide pas avec la présence de Padmasambhava au Tibet.

37 Manuscripts de Dunhuang, et *sBa bzhed*.

38 TD (p. 543), TK (p. 238) & GTb (fol. 240b) : *Su ran dha na rad na ra swi tan tra*.

39 TK (p. 238) omet le *shad*.

40 GTb (fol. 240b) : *gzhi'i*.

41 GTb (fol. 240b) : *gzhi*.

42 TK (p. 238) : *bsgrib*.

43 Omis in GTb (fol. 240b).

44 Ce vers manque in TD (p. 543), TK (p. 238) & GTb (fol. 240b).

45 TK (p. 238) : *mngon* (de toute évidence une erreur).

phud kyi sangs rgyas 'od mi 'gyur ba bzhugs so| |de'i tshe rtsal zer shes rig gi[47] 'khor yang 'di lta ste| |ma 'gags rtsal zer 'od mdangs[48] 'gyu[49] ba'i 'khor dang | shes rig yid sems dran rtog[50] blo yi[51] 'khor dang | rang bzhin gyi 'khor yang 'di lta ste| rang bzhin gnas pa'i 'khor dang |rang bzhin la[52] lta ba'i 'khor dang | rang bzhin rtogs[53] pa'i 'khor ro[54]| |gzhan yang smin pa chen po'i 'khor yang 'di lta ste| rgyu'i byang chub sems dpa' dang | lam gyi byang chub sems dpa' dang | 'bras bu'i byang chub sems dpa'o| |bstan pa'i rgyal po gter[55] snying rin[56] po che spungs pa'i rgyud 'di| dus gsum dbyer med snga phyi med pa'i dus su gsungs so| |gter snying rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud las| **gleng gzhi phun sum tshogs pa'i le'u ste dang pa'o**||

||de nas shes rig rgyal po yis| |sngon thog spyi phud sangs rgyas la| |gzhi 'khrul rtsad gcod rtogs thabs gang | |zhes[57] zhus pa dang | ston pas 'khor la bka' stsal pa| |gzhi ni ming ma thogs[58] pa la| |dngos med ka dag blo las 'das| |dpe med tshig med tha snyad med| |lhun grub kun ldan gang yang med| |mi 'gyur kun gzhi phyogs med klong | |zhes[59] gsungs so| |gter snying rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud las[60]| **gzhi bstan pa'i le'u ste gnyis pa'o**||

||de nas shes rig rgyal po yis| |sngon thog spyi phud sangs rgyas la| |ka dag ma rtogs[61] ci ltar 'khrul| |zhes[62] zhus pa[63] dang[64] |ston pas 'khor la bka' stsal pa| |gzhi la 'khrul[65] dang ma 'khrul med| |rtsal la 'khrul dang ma 'khrul byung[66] | |ka dag ma rtogs

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46 TK (p. 238) : *thong* (poursuite de l'erreur précédente).
47 TK (p. 238) : *gis* (manifestement une erreur).
48 TD (p. 544), TK (p. 238) & GTb (fol. 240b) : *dang*.
49 TK (p. 238) : *'gyur*.
50 TD (p. 544) & GTb (fol. 240b) : *rtogs* (évidemment une erreur).
51 TK (p. 238) : *yis*.
52 *La* omis in TD (p. 544), TK (p. 238) & GTb (fol. 240b).
53 TK (p. 238) & GTb (fol. 240b) : *rtog*.
54 TD (p. 544), TK (p. 238) & GTb (fol. 240b): *dang*.
55 TK (p. 238) : *gting*.
56 TK (p. 238) ajoute *chen*, ce qui donne la lecture erronée *rin chen po che* (sic).
57 TK (p. 239) : *ces*.
58 TK (p. 239) & GTb (fol. 241a) : *thog*.
59 TK (p. 239) : *ces*.
60 Ce vers est omis in TK (p. 239).
61 TK (p. 239) : *rtog*.
62 TD (p. 545) & TK (p. 239) : *ces*.
63 GTb (fol. 241a) : *pas*.
64 Omis in GTb (fol. 241a).
65 TK (p. 239) : *'khor*.
66 Ce vers est omis in TD (p. 545), TK (p. 239) & GTb (fol. 241a). Il fait pourtant parfaitement sens et répond en fait au vers précédent de manière fort logique car, comme on l'a vu ci-dessus, si l'égarement n'existe certes pas au niveau de la Base (*gzhi*), c'est précisément au niveau de son dynamisme (*rtsal*, qu'il faut comprendre ici comme renvoyant à l'épiphanie de la Base [*gzhi snang*]) que l'égarement (ou le non-égarement) prend place.

'khrul pa yin| |dngos med ma rtogs sdug bsngal myong | |rnal ma ma rtogs 'khor bar 'khyams| |dbye[67] bsal[68] ma rtogs ma rig mun| |rang sa ma zin 'gro drug 'khrul| |tho[69] yor thag pa smig rgyu gsum|

Fol. 316b

|mi sbrul[70] chur 'khrul dpe dang mtshungs| |gzhi la med de rtog pas bzung | |nyes skyon sdug bsngal zad mtha' yas| |zhes[71] gsungs so| |gter snying rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud las| **'khrul pa bstan pa'i le'u ste gsum pa'o**||

||de nas rig pa'i rgyal po yis| |sngon thog spyi phud sangs rgyas la| |'khrul pa[72] rtsad nas ji ltar bcad[73]| |ces zhus pa dang | ston pas 'khor la bka' stsal pa| |gzhi 'khrul rtsad chod ma bu 'phrad| |'khrul chod klong gyur[74] rgya yis thebs| |khams gsum 'gro drug rtsad chod pas| |ma rig 'khor ba'i ming yang med| |lan tshwa chu ru thim pa'am| |dug la sngags kyis thebs pa 'dra| |zhes[75] gsungs so| |gter snying rin po che'i[76] [77]rgyud las| **rtsad gcod bstan pa'i le'u ste bzhi**

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[67] TD (p. 545), TK (p. 239) & GTb (fol. 241a) : *ye*.

[68] TD (p. 545), TK (p. 239) & GTb (fol. 241a) : *gsal*. Cette lecture de *dbye bsal* en *ye gsal* est extrêmement intéressante et donne un sens plus direct à ce vers (« Ne pas réaliser la Clarté primordiale, (c'est errer dans) les ténèbres de l'ignorance. »). Le concept *ye gsal* n'est en effet pas inexistant, puisqu'on le retrouve par exemple dans *La Clarté du Principe vierge d'élaboration* (*sPros bral don gsal*), le principal Tantra du *Yang ti* (fol. 50a). On retrouve par ailleurs un vers presque identique dans le *Tantra du Ciel Flamboyant* (*Nam mkha' 'bar ba'i rgyud*) : « — Ne pas réaliser la Clarté primordiale, c'est franchir le porche saṃsārique des ténèbres » (fol. 93b : *ye gsal ma rtogs mun pa'i 'khor sgor chud*). Ce concept de Clarté primordiale (*ye gsal*) n'apparaît qu'une seule fois dans tout le corpus des *Dix-Sept Tantras* (dans le *Seng ge rtsal rdzogs*, p. 402) et n'est donc pas une représentation centrale de ce corpus. Il n'est toutefois pas étranger à Klong chen pa qui l'utilise en contexte indirect dans son *Shing rta chen po* (vol. 1, p. 4) : *sems kyi rang bzhin **ye** nas 'od **gsal** ba* (« … la nature de l'esprit qui rayonne primordialement de lumière... »). En revanche, il l'utilise sous cette forme (*ye gsal*) dans le *Commentaire* de son *Trésor de l'Etat Naturel* (*gNas lugs mdzod*), p. 496, seule occurrence dans l'intégralité de ses *Sept Trésors* (*mDzod bdun*), ainsi que dans son *Commentaire* du *bSam gtan ngal gso* (p. 261). La notion de Clarté primordiale se trouve déjà dans le *bSam gtan mig sgron* de gNubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes (p. 60 ; Esler, p. 40-41). Voir le rendu différent de ce passage in J. Broughton, *The Bodhidharma Anthology*, p. 68, et in C. Meinert, "The Conjunction of Chinese Chan and Tibetan rDzogs chen Thought", pp. 255-256. Ce concept de Clarté primordiale n'est par ailleurs pas étranger à la tradition Bon po (voir *inter alia* Rossi, *The Philosophical View of the Great Perfection*, p. 238).

[69] TD (p. 545) & GTb (fol. 241a) : *mtho* (évidemment une erreur).

[70] TK (p. 239) : *sprul*.

[71] TK (p. 239) : *ces*.

[72] TD (p. 545), TK (p. 239) & GTb (fol. 241b) lisent *'khor ba* au lieu de *'khrul pa*.

[73] GTb (fol. 241b) : *gcad*.

[74] TD (p. 545), TK (p. 239) & GTb (fol. 241b) : *du*.

[75] TK (p. 239) : *ces*.

[76] TK (p. 239) : *che*.

pa'o།།

།།de nas rig pa'i rgyal po yis། ।sngon thog[78] spyi phud sangs rgyas la། ।dngos med ka dag gang gis rtogs། ।zhes[79] zhus pa dang । ston pas 'khor la bka' stsal pa། ।dngos med ka dag rtogs thabs ni། ।rtsol[80] med bsam bral rtogs pa las། ।lta sgom spyod pas ma yin no། ।cang med cing[81] snang dngos med kun gzhi de། ।'dod bral blo 'das bsam med dangs[82] sang nge । ।stong gsal ye gdangs[83] sang nge dngos med dbyings། ।gting gsal gdangs[84] la gang gi[85] tha snyad med། ।ka dag[86] rnal ma[87] blo 'das rtogs། ।zhes[88] gsungs so། ।gter snying rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud las། **rtogs thabs bstan pa'i le'u ste lnga pa'o**།།

།།de nas rig pa'i rgyal po yis། ।sngon thog[89] spyi phud sangs rgyas la། ।la bzla[90] chen po ji ltar lags། ।zhes[91] zhus pa dang । ।ston pas 'khor la bka' stsal pa། ।ka dag dngos med rnal ma la། ।sangs rgyas byang chub chos rnams med། ।sku dang rigs lnga lha[92] bsgom[93] med། ।nyams rtags[94] mngon shes tha snyad med། ।'khor 'das yod med rtag chad med། ।chags sdang 'khor ba'i bya ba la[95]། ।yid ni[96] 'brengs[97] kyang ma brtags[98] 'khrul snang yin། ।'khrul snang

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77 TK (p. 239) & GTb (fol. 241b) ajoutent *spungs pa'i*.
78 TK (p. 240) : *thong*.
79 TK (p. 240) : *ces*.
80 TK (p. 240) : *brtsol la*.
81 TD (p. 546) & GTb (fol. 241b) : *cir*. TK (p. 240) : *spyir*.
82 TD (p. 546) & TK (p. 240) : *dang* (évidemment une erreur). GTb (fol. 241b) : *ngang*.
83 TK (p. 240) : *dangs*.
84 TD (p. 546), TK (p. 240) & GTb (fol. 241b) : *gdang*.
85 TK (p. 240) : *gis*.
86 TD (p. 546) & GTb (fol. 241b) ajoutent *zang ka*.
87 TD (p. 546) & GTb (fol. 241b) ajoutent *bsam bral*.
88 TK (p. 240) : *ces*.
89 TK (p. 240) : *thogs*.
90 TK (p. 240) : *zla*.
91 TK (p. 240) : *ces*.
92 TD (p. 546), TK (p. 240) & GTb (fol. 242a): *lta* (probablement une erreur, sauf si le sens est effectivement celui de visualiser une divinité et non celui du couple sémantique "Vue et Méditation").
93 GTb (fol. 242a) : *sgom*.
94 TD (p. 546), TK (p. 240) & GTb (fol. 242a) : *rtogs* (probablement une meilleure lecture).
95 TD (p. 546), TK (p. 240) & GTb (fol. 242a) : *med*.
96 Omis in TD (p. 546), TK (p. 240) & GTb (fol. 242a).
97 TD (p. 546), TK (p. 240) & GTb (fol. 242a) : *brengs*.
98 TD (p. 546) & GTb (fol. 242a): *btang*. Cette différence de lecture entre *brtags* et *btang* vient peut-être d'un original en cursive dans lequel les suffixes *g* et *s* ont été contractés en une lecture qui a été mal lue in TD et comprise comme un suffixe *nga*. Ce type d'erreur est fréquent lorsqu'on passe d'un manuscrit en *dbu med* à un texte en *dbu can*. Il semble (mais je me trompe peut-être) que TK (p. 240) lise *gtad*, encore que, dans sa graphie, le suffixe *d* semble plus court que de raison.

chags sdang nams[99] kyang bslu[100] ། །de bas 'khor ba'i bya ba thongs[101]།

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chags na lha la chags kyang[102] ltung[103] ། gang la'ang chags sdang ma byed cig[104] །ces gsungs so། །gter snying rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud las། **la bzla[105] ba'i le'u ste drug pa'o**།།

།།de nas rig pa'i rgyal po yis། །sngon thog spyi phud sangs rgyas la། །gzhi yi 'khrul pa rtsad chod pas། །rtogs thabs gdams[106] ngag[107] ji ltar bstan། །ces zhus pa dang ། ston pas 'khor la bka' stsal pa། །gsang sngags brdas[108] bshad 'khor rnams nyon། །nam mkha'i dbyings la ci 'dug ltos། །zhes[109] gsungs pa dang ། 'khor gyis nam mkha'i dbyings su bltas[110]། །ci yang mi gda' gang ma mthong ། །de la ston pas bka' stsal pa། །ma mthong ba de mthong ba yin། །zhes[111] gsungs so། །ston pas 'khor la bka' stsal pa། །nam mkha'i mthongs su 'ja' tshon shar ba de། །dngos por 'dug[112] zin nam[113] mkha' nyid[114] la dangs[115]། །zhes[116] gsungs[117] pa dang ། 'khor gyis bltas nas 'di skad zhus། །gsal la dngos gzhi mi gda' mkha' la dangs། །zhes gsol pa dang ། yang ston pas bka' stsal pa[118]། [119]la ka'i la btsas mi la ltos། །thag ring[120] thang chad mgron[121] po la། །sngon na [122]khang stong gnyis 'dug pa[123]། །sgo gnyis gang zhig phye nas 'gro། །mgron[124] po

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[99] TK (p. 240) : *nam*.
[100] GTb (fol. 242a) : *slu*.
[101] TD (p. 546), TK (p. 240) & GTb (fol. 242a) : *thong*.
[102] TK (p. 240) : *sdang*.
[103] TK (p. 240) : *ma byed cig*.
[104] Ces vers manque in TK (p. 240) qui condense *chags na lha la chags kyang ltung/ gang la'ang chags sdang ma byed cig/* en *chags na lha la chags sdang ma byed cig/*.
[105] TK (p. 240) : *zla*.
[106] TD (p. 547) : *gdam*.
[107] Omis in TK (p. 241).
[108] TK (p. 241) : *bsdus* (manifestement une lecture erronée).
[109] TK (p. 241) : *ces*.
[110] TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242a) : *ltas*.
[111] TK (p. 241) : *ces*.
[112] TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b) ajoutent : *na ma*.
[113] Omis in TD (p. 547).
[114] Omis in TD (p. 547) & GTb (fol. 242b).
[115] TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b) : *gdangs*.
[116] TK (p. 241) : *ces*.
[117] Omis in TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b).
[118] Cette partie soulignée manque in TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b).
[119] TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b) ouvrent ce vers avec *yang*.
[120] TD (p. 547) & GTb (fol. 242b) : *rings*.
[121] TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b) : *'gron*.
[122] TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b) : *lha*.
[123] Omis in TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b).
[124] TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b) : *'gron*.

skyel[125] med 'jigs[126] sar phyin| |mi byung dgra gnyen gang yin no[127]| |mi[128] gcig 'gro la bshol 'debs gnyis[129]| |thog[130] mar gang du ldog[131] lags na| |long ma'i mig phyed mun nag nyi shar ram| sha btson[132] gdos[133] 'grol[134] dug la sngags thebs sam| |lan tshwa[135] chur thim gnad[136] la mda'[137] phog gam| |gser 'gyur rtsir[138] ldan nad pas sman sos[139] sam| |sdong po rtsad chod dwa[140] phrug ma phrad dam| |zas kyi bcud 'thungs nor gyi dbyigs[141] rnyed dam| |zhes[142] gsungs so| |gter snying rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud las| **gsang sngags brdas bstan pa'i le'u ste bdun pa'o**| |

||de nas rig pa'i rgyal po yis| |sngon thog spyi phud sangs rgyas la| |gnas[143] mchog bcud dgongs ji ltar lags| |zhes[144] zhus pa dang | ston pas 'khor la bka' stsal pa| |rnam dag

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'od gsal dkyil 'khor mchog[145] |phyogs med[146] ka dag dngos med lha yi mchog |blo 'das byar med[147] mchod bstod bshags pa'i mchog |ka dag rnal ma dbang gi mchog |snang srid dbyer med gtor tshogs mchog |zhe 'dod rtsol[148] med[149] 'jug sgo'i mchog |'dzin med blo ni gang du'ang skye med bsgom[150] pa'i mchog |gang yang zhe 'dod rten[151] med lta ba'i mchog |yid sems gang yang mi rgyu bsgom[152] pa'i

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125 TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b) : *skye*.
126 TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b) : *'jog*.
127 TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b) : *nam*.
128 TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b) ajoutent : *gnyis*.
129 Omis in TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b).
130 TK (p. 241) : *thogs*.
131 TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b) : *lhogs*.
132 TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b): *btsan*.
133 TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b) : *rdos*.
134 TD (p. 547), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b) : *khrol*.
135 TK (p. 241) : *cha*.
136 TK (p. 241) : *gnas*.
137 TD (p. 548) & GTb (fol. 242b) : *mdas*. TK (p. 241) : *mdangs*.
138 TK (p. 241) : *stsir*.
139 TD (p. 548), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b) : *zos*.
140 TK (p. 241) : *wa*.
141 TD (p. 548), TK (p. 241) & GTb (fol. 242b) : *dbyig*.
142 TK (p. 241) : *ces*.
143 TD (p. 548) & GTb (fol. 242b) : *gnad*.
144 TK (p. 241) : *ces*.
145 TK (p. 242) : *'dir*.
146 *phyogs med* omis in TD (p. 548), TK (p. 242) & GTb (fol. 242b).
147 *byar med* omis TD (p. 548), TK (p. 242) & GTb (fol. 242b).
148 TK (p. 242) : *brtsol*.
149 TK (p. 242) : *mod* (ou bien le texte est biffé et corrigé en *med,* le *'grengs bu* se mêlant maintenant à l'ancienne marque pour former un *na ro*).
150 TD (p. 548), TK (p. 242) & GTb (fol. 243a) : *dgongs*.
151 TD (p. 548) : *brten*. GTb (fol. 243a) : *bstan*.

mchog ।dran rig gang[153] la'ang ma chags spyod pa'i mchog ।shes pa gang la'ang mi 'jug nyams kyi mchog ।dngos med ka dag blo 'das 'bras bu'i mchog ।smon pa'i sa non sa lam 'bras bu'i mchog ।btsal[154] bsgrub bya byed med pas[155] phrin[156] las[157] mchog ।snang srid yod med kun rdzogs rdzogs chen mchog ।ces gsungs so। gter snying rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud las। **mchog bstan pa'i le'u ste brgyad pa'o**।।

।।de nas rig pa'i rgyal po yis। ।dngos med sangs rgyas spyi phud la। ।mtshan dang gtad[158] rgya ji ltar lags। ।zhes[159] gsol pa dang । ston pas 'khor la bka' stsal pa। ।sna tshogs kun 'byung snying por 'dus। ।snying po gter snying rgyud du zung । ।dgos 'dod ma lus 'byung ba yis[160]। ।rin po che yi rgyud du zung । ।don gyi bcud rnams spungs pa'i phyir। ।rin chen spungs pa'i rgyud du zung । ।rgyud 'di gtad pa'i skal ldan ni[161]। ।rgyud bzang ngang ring dad pa che। ।gus dang dam tshig shes rab ldan। ।de lta bu la rgyud 'di gtad। ।dam med nga rgyal g.yo sgyu can। ।de lta bu la mi sbyin no। ।zhes[162] gsungs so। ।gter snying rin chen[163] spungs pa'i rgyud las[164]। **mtshan dang[165] snod bstan pa'i le'u ste dgu pa'o**।।

।।gter snying rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po rdzogs so।।

।।u rgyan padmas bshad cing[166] lo tstshā[167] ba ska[168] ba dpal brtsegs[169] kyis bsgyur nas। rgyal po khri srong lde'u[170] btsan la gdams pa'o।। ।।gter rgya। zab rgya। gtad rgya'o।।.[171]

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[152] TD (p. 548) & GTb (fol. 243a) : *sgom*.
[153] Omis in TK (p. 242).
[154] TK (p. 242) : *btsol*.
[155] TK (p. 242) & GTb (fol. 243a) : *pa*.
[156] TK (p. 242) & GTb (fol. 243a) : *sangs*.
[157] TK (p. 242) & GTb (fol. 243a) : *rgyas*.
[158] TK (p. 242) : *btad*.
[159] TK (p. 242) & GTb (fol. 243a) : *ces*.
[160] TD (p. 549), TK (p. 242) & GTb (fol. 243a) : *yi*.
[161] Ce vers manque in TD (p. 549),TK (p. 242) & GTb (fol. 243a).
[162] TK (p. 242) : *ces*.
[163] TK (p. 242) : *po che*.
[164] Vers omis in TD (p. 549) & GTb (fol. 243a).
[165] *mtshan* et *dang* sont omis in. TD (p. 549) & GTb (fol. 243a).
[166] TD (p. 549), TK (p. 243) & GTb (fol. 243a) : *cing*/.
[167] TD (p. 549) & GTb (fol. 243a) : *tsa*. TK (p. 243) : *tsha*.
[168] TD (p. 549), TK (p. 243) & GTb (fol. 243a) : *ka*.
[169] TD (p. 549), TK (p. 243) & GTb (fol. 243b): *rtsegs*.
[170] TD (p. 549), TK (p. 243) & GTb (fol. 243a) : *lde*.
[171] TK (p. 243) ajoute : *shubhaṁ/ dge'o*//.

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— *Nyi zla'i snying po'i rgyud : rGyud thams cad kyi rgyal po nyi zla'i snying po 'od 'bar ba bdud rtsi rgya mtsho 'khyil ba'i rgyud*), DG, vol. 3, fol. 18b-46b.
— *gTer snying rin po che spungs pa'i rgyud*, DG, vol. 2, fol. 315b-317b ; TD, vol. 10, pp. 543-549 ; TK, vol. 5, pp. 238-243 ; GTb, vol. 10, fol. 240b-243b.
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— *sPros pa gcod pa sde lnga'i rgyud*, DG, vol. 2, fol. 271b-277a.

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Klong chen pa (1308-1364)

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[172] Il est possible que certains de ces Tantras soient à classer sous les révélations de Nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124-1192). Ce point demande à être clarifié. D'après Guru bKra shis, les Tantras du *sPyi ti* ont été découverts par le *gter ston* bon po Nye mo zhu yas gNod sbyin 'bar (*Chos 'byung*, p. WW). gNod sbyin 'bar est son nom ; Nye mo un toponyme indiquant la région d'où il provenait, localisée à l'ouest de Lhasa ; et Zhu yas indique son clan familial. L'on sait que gNod sbyin 'bar a remis sa découverte des Tantras du *sPyi ti* à Nyang ral et il convient tout de même de noter que ce dernier ne fait aucune référence à ce corpus de textes dans son propre *Chos 'byung*.

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Compte-rendu

Cathy Cantwell, Robert Mayer: *A Noble Noose of Methods, The Lotus Garland Synopsis: A Mahâyoga Tantra and its Commentary*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-Historische Klasse, Denkschriften, 449. Band. Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Asiens Nr. 73. Herausgegeben von Helmut Krasser. Vienna (Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften), 2012. xii + 375 pp. + CD.

Per Kvaerne (Oslo)

"Perhaps nowhere in the Buddhist world do questions of the production and reception of texts, of textual and cultural translation, and of historical transmission across time and place, appear so fascinating yet more obscure and less understood, than in the occasion of the early transmission of Tantric Buddhism to Tibet" (p. 6). It is against the background of this assertion – which certainly is entirely justified – that the volume under review must be assessed. A massive and highly important contribution to Tibetan studies, its significance should – at least potentially - transcend the boundaries of Tibetology.

Cantwell and Mayer's book contains a critical edition of a text, the *'Phags pa thabs kyi zhags pa padma 'phreng gi don bsdus pa, "A Noble Noose of Methods, the Lotus Garland Synopsis"*, to be found among the Dunhuang finds, "one of only two full-length, complete Ancient Tantra scriptures recovered form Dunhuang" (p. 2). It is "admired as a key scripture by the rNying ma pa" (p.1) and is therefore also preserved in later textual compilations. Thus it is "prominently included in all known editions of the Ancient Tantra Collection (*rNying ma'i rgyud 'bum*)" (p.1), and is also found in several local Kanjur copies. Accordingly, it has been possible for the authors to prepare a critical edition (pp.103-228). The edition, divided into 42 short chapters, is in Tibetan script – the authors express the hope that this may make it more accessible to Tibetan readers. For each chapter the authors note the exact location of the versions of the text in the various Kanjur editions as well as in other texts, and each and every variant reading is meticulously noted. This edition is followed by a hitherto little-known Tibetan commentary to the root text, likewise found at Dunhuang. It, too, is carefully presented in the form of a critical edition, this time, however, in transliteration. The Dunhuang version of

Per Kvaerne, Compte-rendu de "Cathy Cantwell, Robert Mayer: *A Noble Noose of Methods, The Lotus Garland Synopsis: A Mahâyoga Tantra and its Commentary*", Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines, no. 28, Octobre 2013, pp. 127-129.

the root text is embedded in the commentary, but the latter, although surviving in three Tenjur editions, "does not seem to have a consistent presence in appropriate rNying ma collections…and few if any highly learned rNying ma lamas we showed it to appeared to have had much prior awareness of its existence" (pp. 2-3). Although the root text is not translated into English, there is a summary of the commentary (pp. 68-83), though not of the root text itself.

Given this somewhat obscure history, establishing the complicated stemma of the root text (pp. 43-67) is a remarkable scholarly achievement, made possible only through the unique and long-standing familiarity of the authors with Tibetan tantric texts of the rNying ma tradition.

In itself this critical edition would be an impressive achievement. In addition, the first hundred pages of the book, including the chapter "Textual Analysis" touched on above, are taken up by two further sections: "Introduction" and a chapter dealing with "Padmasambhava, the *Thabs zhags* and its Commentary".

As mentioned above, the book is of potential interest for a wider academic circle of readers, especially historians of religion. A quotation from the Introduction will make this clearer: "*TZ* and *TZComm* [the two texts dealt with in this volume - PKv] present versions of Mahâyoga theory and practice that in their details bear resemblances to the doctrine of the sameness of all dharmas (*mnyam pa'i chos*) of the *rGyud gsang ba'i snying po*… This famous doctrine of the *rGyud gsang ba'i snying po*, the basis of which involves realizing all phenomena as primordially pure, is seen by some modern scholars… as one of the historical roots of the rDzogs chen or Great Perfection mysticism of the rNying ma pa. A very similar kind of thinking pervades the entirety of the *TZComm*, so that the various aspects of tantric ritual are consistently interpreted from this more inward or mystical viewpoint" (p. 4). rDzogs chen theory and practice (from the rNying ma as well as the Bon traditions) has aroused considerable interest among Tibetan scholars, but like so much else in academic life, this interest remains constricted by the rhetoric of academic research and discourse. Serious research, as instanced by the present volume, is, needless to say, essential, but it would be good if it could also be pursued in an interdisciplinary way so that Tibetan studies could be made more interesting and relevant to representatives of other fields of scholarship as well. For example, a comparative study of a suitable rDzogs chen text and the English 14th century mystical text *The Cloud of Unknowing* might prove to be a fruitful beginning. Tibetan studies have undergone unprecedented development in recent decades, but

are still hampered by a high degree of in-group culture and frames of reference.

While the present volume cannot receive anything but the highest praise, one or two minor questions might be pertinent. Thus one wonders why, since the root text is given in Tibetan script, the commentary is not likewise presented in Tibetan script. Personally I believe the entire effort of using Tibetan script in this kind of publication is unnecessary, as it would seem highly unlikely that many of this volume will come into the hands of Tibetans who cannot read Tibetan in transliteration. More importantly, one misses an English translation of the root text, the more so as a summary, as indicated above, is provided of the commentary. Perhaps a translation is planned for a future volume.

Accompanying the book is a CD containing images of the Dunhuang manuscript of "A Noble Noose of Methods" and its commentary (IOL Tib J 321), from the Stein Collection, held at the British Library in London.

One can only admire the enormous care and effort that has gone into preparing this extremely important volume, and the authors deserve the warmest praise and gratitude of their colleagues.

Compte-rendu

Karl Debreczeny, *The Black Hat Eccentric: Artistic Visions of the Tenth Karmapa*, with contributions by Ian A. Alsop, David P. Jackson, and Irmgard Mengele. New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2012. 320 pp. Numerous plates.

Reviewed by Matthew T. Kapstein
Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris

The art of Tibet, like much of Indian, Byzantine, and Western Medieval art, is the work of anonymous masters. Exceptions do occur, and in some cases groups of artworks seem certainly to have been produced by one and the same anonymous hand, so that the "master of thus-and-such" begins to assume a shadowy form, almost as if his identity were known. The search for these nameless masters, or, conversely, for work to attribute to some whose names we know, but whose art we so far lack, has been a prominent trajectory in recent art history. A particularly spectacular achievement along these lines was the Metropolitan Museum of New York's 2011 exhibition "Master Painters of India."[1]

The trend we see here has not been without ramifications for the study of Tibetan art. The contributions of David P. Jackson have been crucial here. His efforts to establish, with unprecedented rigor, the links between textual references to artwork and actual surviving works has meant that, although the artists themselves have often remained obscure, their creations in a growing number of cases may be assigned to relatively precise places and times, and to specific groups of religious teachers and patrons.[2] In reference to the noted 18th century Karma Bka'-brgyud master, Si-tu Paṇ-chen Chos-kyi-'byung-gnas (1699-1774), in particular, his role as designer and pa-

[1] For the catalogue, see John Guy and Jorrit Britschgi, *Wonder of the Age: Master Painters of India, 1100-1900* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011). The exceptional research underlying this exhibition, however, is best exemplified in the collaborative publication of the curators: Milo Beach, B. N. Goswamy, Eberhard Fischer, *Masters of Indian Painting, 1100-1900*, 2 vols. (Zurich: Artibus Asiae, 2011).

[2] Jackson's *A History of Tibetan Painting* (Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 1996) provided the first sustained effort (earlier suggestions were found chiefly in several of the prefaces authored by E. Gene Smith) to explore the relevance of literary references for the history of Tibetan art.

Matthew Kapstein, Compte-rendu de "Karl Debreczeny, *The Black Hat Eccentric: Artistic Visions of the Tenth Karmapa*,", Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines, no. 28, Octobre 2013, pp. 131-137.

tron has begun to be carefully clarified, and his own efforts as a painter as well.[3]

The prospect of identifying certain of the paintings of the tenth Karma-pa hierarch, Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje (1604-74), whose achievements as an artist have been long celebrated in Tibetan literature, with particular surviving *thang-ka*s was first rigorously examined by Jackson as well.[4] A slowly swelling body of Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje attributions has followed. It was, however, Karl Debreczeny who undertook to explore fully the pathways to which Jackson's initial synthesis seemed to point, visiting out-of-the-way temples and local collections in Yunnan and Sichuan, studying thoroughly the relevant Tibetan and Chinese literature, and finally establishing a substantial corpus of work that can be convincingly assigned to Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje, to the workshops he directed, or to his followers and imitators. The results of that research form the basis for *The Black Hat Eccentric*, the splendid catalogue for a 2012 exposition at the Rubin Museum of Art (RMA) in New York that, alas, failed to materialize after promised loans from the Chinese collections could not be secured, though there remains some hope that a future effort to mount the exhibition will yet prove successful.

Seven of the ten chapters of *The Black Hat Eccentric* are Debreczeny's work. They form the core of the volume and represent the major achievements of the project as a whole. These begin (chapter 2) with an examination of Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje's early artistic career during the troubled period of civil war that engulfed Central Tibet, at which time the Karmapa was elevated to ecclesiastic supremacy by the rulers of Gtsang, and his subsequent exile to Lijiang in northern Yunnan after forces allied with the Fifth Dalai Lama crushed the Gtsang-pa kingdom. This was a disaster for both the Karma-pa and the order he led, but for the history of Tibetan art was mitigated by the opportunity it presented to the Karma-pa to absorb Chinese painting technique and imagery, well represented in the collections of the Lijiang royal household. One of the marvels of the Karma-pa's prodigious artistic talent was his seemingly endless ability to weather adversity through creativity, and to reinvent his visual idiom as he matured. The favor he received, as religious teacher and artist, from

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[3] David P. Jackson, *Patron and Painter: Situ Panchen and the Revival of the Encampment Style* (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2009).

[4] Jackson, *A History of Tibetan Painting*, chapter 9, "Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje, the 10th Zhwa-nag Karma-pa." As Jackson is careful to document throughout, a number of paintings and sculptures had already been attributed to Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje. His work, and Debreczency's, will clarify for interested readers subsequent assessments of these earlier attributions.

the Lijiang court, meant that his years of exile were particularly productive ones.

Chapters 3-5 offer detailed studies of several sets of paintings in whose creation Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje was intimately involved. A magnificent set of the arhats, preserved in the Lijiang Municipal Museum, is attributed by Debreczeny to the Karma-pa's own hand. These make subtle use of Chinese brush techniques and incorporate motifs derived from earlier Chinese paintings which, in many cases, Debreczeny has been able to identify precisely. But these paintings are also filled with whimsical details, demonstrating that their creator was by no means a mere imitator, but instead sought to use whatever he had appropriated from past work in order to advance his own, distinctive vision. This vision was furthered by those who worked under his direction in the workshops he established, as seen in surviving sets of the arhats (chapter 4) and of the deeds of the Buddha (chapter 5). The latter are noteworthy for their unusually crowded composition, with numerous people and animals jostling all about the central actors. Given the brightly colored backgrounds and costumes of these scenes—a far cry from the subdued, sinicized palate of the arhat paintings—one may even wonder whether the distant influence of contemporaneous Mughal art might not be a factor at work here, a possibility (?) that is not raised at all in the present text.

In chapter 6, Debreczeny turns to reconsider the paintings assigned to Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje in earlier scholarship, and in chapter 7 to questions of "Genre, Style, and Medium." If in the first he is notably cautious in his assessments, in the second he is unequivocal in presenting the conclusions of trenchant comparisons with the Karma-pa's Chinese and other sources of inspiration. Debreczeny's noteworthy control of the pertinent Chinese and Tibetan visual and textual sources strikes this reader as particularly compelling throughout this chapter, and should stand as model for future scholarship treating of "Sino-Tibetan" visual culture overall.

Debreczeny's final contribution to the volume, chapter 9, takes up "The Tenth Karma-pa's Place in Tibetan Tradition," surveying both Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje's reputation as an artist, as documented in Tibetan literary sources down to the present day, and the diverse ways in which his œuvre plausibly impacted upon the work of later artists, within and beyond the Karma Bka'-brgyud school. Taken together, Debreczeny's accomplishment throughout this volume is outstanding, leading one to long only for the opportunity to actually see the work reproduced here, something that one hopes will become possible if and when the appropriate authorities succeed in clearing the way for the success of the orginally planned RMA show.

The Black Hat Eccentric includes three additional chapters. The first (chapter 1, "The Artist's Life"), by Irmgard Mengele, is an abridgement of the Karma-pa's biography, and is based on the author's extensive dissertation researches detailing the biographical traditions.[5] Though much useful information is indeed contained here, the chapter is disappointing in virtue of its frequent lapses of style and editorial care, its flat retelling of the story as an uninterpreted narrative. An important section of the account, for instance, concerns a harrowing journey from Lijiang north to Mi-nyag and Mgo-log (pp. 51-56), but though the pains and hardships of the voyage are recounted at length, we are never clear about why the Karma-pa undertook all this trouble in the first place. The tale, as it is told here, seems barely coherent. Far more satisfactory is the recent life of Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje authored by the present Zhwa-dmar Rin-po-che, which clearly relates these events to the exigencies of the seventh Zhwa-dmar-pa Ye-shes-snying-po's recognition.[6]

One minor detail in Dr. Mengele's chapter also merits a brief comment: On p. 47 one notes that, while traveling in the region of Lho-brag, Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje is offered an animal called a *ba-men*. As Dr. Mengele's n. 145 shows, it was not possible for her to identify this species securely. The late Michael Aris, however, offered this comment on the *ba-men*, which, given the territories mentioned, is entirely pertinent here:

> The mithan (or mithun, mytton etc., *Bos frontalis,* in Tibetan *ba-men,* lit. "noncow") is the hybrid of the wild Indian ox known as the gaur *(Bas gaurus)* and the domestic cow. It has great prestige value in the eastern Himalayas, extending from eastern Bhutan through the whole of Arunachal Pradesh.[7]

Although I have some doubts regarding Aris's proposed etymology—it is not at all clear to me that *men* should be interpreted as equivalent to *min*—I believe that the zoological and social information he supplies is quite certain. It may be worthwhile to take a

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[5] A version of Mengele's thesis has recently been published by Vajra Publications, Kathmandu, under the title *Riding a Huge Wave of Karma: The Turbulent Life of the Tenth Karma-pa.* I have not yet seen this work.

[6] Shamar Rinpoche, *A Golden Swan in Turbulent Waters: The Life and Times of the Tenth Karmapa Choying Dorje* (Lexington VA: Bird of Paradise Press, 2012), pp. 193-195.

[7] Michael Aris, *'Jigs-med-gling-pa's "Discourse on India" of 1789: A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation of the lHo-phyogs rgya-gar-gyi gtam brtag-pa brgyad-kyi me-long* (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1995), p. 67, n. 23.

new look at some of the bovines depicted in Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje's work with this in mind.

Although my comments on *The Black Hat Eccentric* have focused upon the Karma-pa's achievements as a painter, the volume also treats his career as a sculptor, an aspect of his work that has so far been most thoroughly studied by the Swiss collector and art historican Ulrich von Schroeder. Debreczeny, indeed, touches upon the sculptures at various points throughout, but the subject is given more focused treatment only in chapter 8, "The Sculpture of Chöying Dorje, Tenth Karmapa," by Ian Alsop, who seeks to identify a number of puzzling images, both carved and moulded, as the likely creations of the Karmapa, as well as some that were inspired by or imitative of his style. He rejects the position advanced by von Schroeder that several of these sculptures, although bearing inscriptions attributing their fabrication to Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje, are in fact very early Tibetan statues, dating to the period of the "Yar-lung dynasty" of the 7^{th}-9^{th} centuries, and that the engraved inscriptions are later additions. Similarly, he rejects von Schroeder's contentions that a number of closely similar statues also belong to the early period, and that the real works by Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje are imitative of these ancient statues. Alsop, by contrast, holds that the inscriptions must be taken at face value and establish the Karma-pa to have been their creator, that the closely similar statues must also be his, and that the apparent imitations are due to Chos-dbyings-rdo-rje's later followers and mimics. That the issues involved here are somewhat contentious may be seen in the sharply worded review of Alsop's chapter that von Schroeder has published on Alsop's asianart.com website: http://www.asianart.com/articles/10karmapa-uvs-review/index.html.

It is of course striking, and most revealing with respect to the degree of advancement of the field of Tibetan art history, that two well-regarded experts might differ by almost a millennium in their assesment of the dating of certain objects. Indeed, so few sculptures of undoubted Yar-lung dynasty provenance are known to us that any assignment of statuary to this period must be somewhat treacherous. Despite the fact that I have no expertise in this particular area and have not in any case examined the original objects, but have seen only photographs, it seems to me that neither Alsop nor von Schroeder succeeds in making a fully convincing case. Alsop notes, for instance, the odd feature of several of the images, in which the main figure is mounted upon a cow, that the animal is depicted chewing on a mouthful of fodder. This is a most unusual iconographic element, so far as I am aware, and yet, as Debreczeny's careful analysis of the Karma-pa's paintings clearly shows, the depiction of animals eating is virtually a leitmotif throughout his œuvre. Von

Schroeder's case, by contrast, seems particularly strong in view of the evident wear of some of these works, concerning which Alsop's proposed explanations seem somewhat hasty (e.g., p. 229: "I would imagine that there were many times when more than one sacred metal image was tumbled into a saddlebag without the benefit of bubblewrap…"). Particularly fraught, too, is the problem of Tibetan fakery. Though the manufacture of reproductions of old Tibetan images by ateliers in Qing China is well documented, we have little positive knowledge regarding such a practice in Tibet, though Tibetan metal-casters undoubtably had the requisite skills. Ultimately, possibly only forensic testing will resolve the matter in this case, and its eventual resolution, one way or the other, will likely advance our knowledge of the history of Tibetan sculpture in as yet unforeseen ways.

The tenth and final chapter, "The challenge of translating art historical terms from the biography of the Tenth Karmapa," by David P. Jackson, will be of interest primarily to specialists on Tibetan textual traditions dealing with art and recalls some of the outstanding difficulties we face in determining the correspondences between text and image.

Given the overall importance and excellence of *The Black Hat Eccentric*, it may seem petty to point out small blemishes. The few that I have noted are mentioned here solely for the interest of specialists.

Two typographical errors are repeated throughout the book:

- For Potala(ka) one sees the erroneous Poṭala(ka). The name of Avalokiteśvara's paradise-like mountain is derived from Sanskrit *pota* in the meaning of "ship," and not from *poṭa* meaning "bundle." Curiously, this same error is found in the entry *gru 'dzin* in the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*.
- The Tibetan letter called *'a chung*, ' in Wylie transcription, has been incorrectly treated as if it were a single quotation mark and allowed to default to ‘ at the beginnings of words. It should be consistently represented as ' throughout.

Some bibliographical points may be signalled as well:

- On p. 83, fig. 2.16, we find an illustration of some pages from the 'Jang Sa-tham edition of the Kangyur, with reference to a work entitled *Kangba lun zang*, that is nowhere referenced, so far as I can tell. It would seem that the work in question is: 杰当·西饶江措著 ;云南省民族学会藏族研究委员会编 (Jie dang · xi rao jiang cuo ; yun nan sheng min zu xue hui. zang zu yan jiu wei

yuan hui), 康巴论藏 (*Kang ba lun zang*). 云南民族出版社 Kunming : Yun nan min zu chu ban she, 2008.

- In the bibliography itself, p. 313, we find the surprising entry: "dGe 'dun chos 'phel (1923) 1998. *Gnas yig phyogs bsgrigs*. Chengdu: Sichuan minzu chubanshe. Reprinted." To the best of my knowledge, Dge-'dun-chos-'phel published no such work in 1923, when he was perhaps 18 years old, nor did he at any time during his later life. The volume in question is an anthology of pilgrimage guides by various hands, and includes Dge-'dun-chos-'phel's well-known guide to the holy places of India, but he was by no means the author or editor of the work as a whole. Where the date 1923 may have come from is a mystery to me.

Finally, I note one recent publication that may be of interest to readers of *The Black Hat Eccentric*: 康-格桑益希 (Khams Skal-bzang-ye-shes), 藏传噶玛嘎孜画派唐卡艺术 (*Karma sgar bris lugs kyi thang ka sgyu rtsal*). 2 vols. (in Chinese). Chengdu: Sichuan meishu chubanshe, 2013. This very extensive work treats many of the same paintings as do *The Black Hat Eccentric* and Jackson's *Patron and Painter*. A critical assessment of it must, however, await another occasion.

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