A large crowd of people is gathered in a rocky, mountainous area. In the foreground, many people are sitting on the ground, looking towards the background. In the middle ground, several men are standing, holding long wooden poles. They are wearing traditional red and black clothing. The background shows a steep, rocky hillside with some sparse vegetation. The overall scene suggests a traditional performance or ceremony.

THE GREAT TRANSFERENCE AT DRIKUNG
ITS LAST TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCE
6-13 AUGUST 1992

MATTHEW T. KAPSTEIN

Cover: the arrival of the “servants of virtue” at the teaching assembly

The Great Transference at Drikung
Its Last Traditional Performance
6 –13 August 1992

Matthew T. Kapstein

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a pilgrim rests during the ascent to the Kere Yangdzong Cave



འཇིགས་མེད་ལྷ་སྐྱབས་མགོན་ཕྱག་རྒྱུད་ཁང་།

The Office of His Holiness Drikung Kyabgon

PREFACE

It is my privilege to introduce this book on the Great Drikung Powa Chenmo of 1992 written by Prof. Matthew Kapstein (University of Chicago and École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris).

The beautiful pictures in the book remind me of when I was eleven years old in Tibet and giving the Drikung Powa Chenmo for the first time. Every twelve years, during the Monkey Year teaching, it commemorated in particular the birthday of Guru Padmasambhava, who first brought Buddhism to Tibet in the eighth century. It was also an important time for recalling the year in which Guru Rinpoche visited the realms of the demons in the west.

During the Monkey Year teaching it is considered to be especially important to undertake the pilgrimage to the Great Dakini Cave of Drikung Terdrom, where Guru Rinpoche hid the five-colored texts of the Yangzab Terma. Later, Rinchen Phuntsok revealed these as hidden treasures from the cave and since then the Drikung Kagyu lineage has combined its teachings with those of the Nyingma tradition.

The Great Drikung Powa Chenmo is the essential instruction imparted during the Monkey Year teachings. At the moment of death, the Powa teaching is the proper and swift way to transfer the mind to the Pure Land.

The last Monkey Year teaching was held at Drikung-thil in 2004, gathering about 300,000 people. This year in August the same teaching will be taking place at the same location at Drikung-thil. The teaching is now being given internationally and I very happy that this book will benefit many beings.

With my prayers,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang', written in a cursive style.

Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang
The Head of the Drikung Kagyu Lineage of Tibetan Buddhism

27 May 2016
Los Angeles, USA

The Great Transference at Drikung
Its Last Traditional Performance
6-13 August 1992



*tsha-tsha, miniature impressions of icons and
stūpas deposited by pilgrims near Terdrom*

INTRODUCTION

In November 2015, Dr. Elmar R. Gruber kindly wrote to me to suggest that I make some of my photographs of the 1992 revival of the monkey year Drikung Powa Chenmo, the “Great Transference at Drikung,” available for the booklet that he was preparing in connection with teachings planned for this year, the monkey year 2016. I of course welcomed his invitation, but at the same time was particularly struck by one phrase in Dr. Gruber’s message: “It seems 1992,” he wrote, “was the last time the Drikung Powa Chenmo was held in Drongur.” These words reminded me that 1992 marked not only the revival of this ancient festival of pilgrimage and religious teaching, but, as changing times would have it, the only revival of the Drikung Powa Chenmo in its traditional form. For this reason, the documentation that I was able to accomplish at that time had gained a particular value that could not have been foreseen when I attended the festival nearly a quarter of a century ago. I resolved, therefore, to digitize my entire photographic record of the event, which hitherto had been preserved only in the original transparencies, just nine of which had been reproduced in black-and-white in my study of the revival when it appeared in 1998. The present publication provides a much larger selection of the original images, in color for the first time, accompanied by the 1998 article

I was able to return to the monkey year Drikung Powa Chenmo when it was convened once more, this time under the leadership of H. H. Drikung Chungtsang Rinpoche during the summer of 2004. Circumstances, however, made it impossible for me to stay for more than a day and I was unable to attempt any detailed documentation of the type that I had completed in 1992. A few key points of difference may nevertheless be mentioned. The 2004 event was much larger in scale—according to sources within the Drikung

Kagyü lineage more than a quarter of a million persons attended, while officials of the Tibet Autonomous Region maintained a more modest, but still impressive, count of about 150,000. In preparation for this huge turn out, which to some extent had been anticipated, the regional authorities had decided to hold the festival not at Drongur, the traditional site, but in the more open and accessible valley below the monastery of Drikung-thil, and to shorten the teachings from a week to just three days. I received several explanations for this, but in my own view these changes were fully justified by considerations of health, sanitation, and environment. The fragile trails, limited camping space, and restricted water supplies at Drongur could not have sustained such an onslaught at all, and even in the larger Drikung valley it is difficult to imagine that salubrious conditions could have been sustained for more than just a few days. Because the Drikung Powa Chenmo planned for August 2016 will similarly be convened in the lower valley, the performance in 1992 remains the unique revival adhering to the program that had been followed for over four centuries down to 1956 in the sacred site of Drongur.

At the same time, the diffusion of the Drikung Kagyü tradition outside of Tibetan areas and now throughout the whole world has resulted in the teaching of the Drikung Powa Chenmo becoming established as a prominent aspect of the international Buddhism of the twenty-first century, as can be readily confirmed by searching the hundreds of references to it one finds on the worldwide web. In this context, its former association with the monkey year teachings is weakened and the homologies of time, place, and ritual that I described in connection with the 1992 Drikung Powa Chenmo at Drongur are largely lost. The essential content remains vital, thanks to the energy and dedication of the leading masters of the contemporary Drikung Kagyü lineage, but that there have been significant changes of context—with the important shifts in cultural meaning that these inevitably entail—cannot be denied. The present book therefore offers only a snapshot

from the past and cannot pretend to document the ritual it concerns throughout its recent elaborations in space and time.

In reprinting my earlier study of the Drikung Powa Chenmo here, alterations of the text have been kept to a minimum. The major departure from the 1998 edition is to be found in the inclusion of a broad selection of photographic documentation. Nonetheless, a small number of changes in the text have been called for:

In accord with the usage adopted in the Drikung Kagyü lineage itself, the spelling “Drikung” has replaced “Drigung.”

Cross-references within the volume in which the original article appeared have been modified to accord with the present context.

Where required, bibliographical references have been brought up to date, though I have not attempted to update the bibliography with respect to all of the relevant Tibetological research of the past twenty years. Readers should note, however, that note 12, which states that “the doctrinal contributions of Kyopa Jikten Gönpö have not yet been so well studied,” is no longer quite accurate. Thanks in particular to the publications of the Garchen Foundation, Drikung doctrine is now much better understood than it was when my article was written.

Finally, I must call attention to one change that I have not made. In the context of scholarship in the field of Religious Studies, the use of the terms “sect” and “subsect” in my article presented no particular

problem when it was first published. These terms simply described identifiable groups (such as the Kagy lineages) within larger religious communities (for instance, Tibetan Buddhism, or Buddhism generally) that are not themselves considered as constituting distinct religions. In recent years, however, “sect” has come to acquire a distinctly negative connotation, referring usually to small, dissident religious movements whose relationship with the surrounding society is often thought to be somehow troubled. Nothing of this sort, of course, is intended here, and were I to rewrite the article and not merely reprint it, I would certainly now prefer to use “order” and “suborder.”



I am profoundly grateful to the Garchen Foundation for having made this publication possible and, in particular, to the Foundation’s Chair, Dr Liane Pitsos, for her enthusiastic encouragement of this project. Dr. Elmar R. Gruber has my thanks for having inspired me, as noted above, to retrieve my original images. For her care with the publication process, I am indebted to Mrs. Claudia Göbel. Finally, I am deeply honored and touched that H. H. Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche has generously taken time from his busy schedule to write a preface for this book. If any merit has been accrued through this undertaking, it is my hope that it will contribute in some small way to the appreciation and understanding of the magnificent Drikung tradition which he heads.

Paris
6 June 2016

*A PILGRIMAGE OF REBIRTH REBORN:
The 1992 Celebration of the Drikung Powa Chenmo*

In August 1992 the pilgrimage and festival of religious teaching known as the Drikung Powa Chenmo was revived after a hiatus of thirty-six years. Like certain other important Tibetan religious and cultural celebrations, it was traditionally held only once in every twelve-year calendrical cycle, in this case during the sixth lunar month of each monkey year,¹ and so had been last convened in 1956. Its performance in 1968 was prohibited by the relentless assault on virtually all aspects of traditional Tibetan life that marked the Cultural Revolution, then at its height; while in 1980 the partial relaxation of restrictions on religious observance in China, and above all on the cultural traditions of China's ethnic minorities,² had not yet advanced sufficiently to permit the reinception of an event of this scale. In this study, based on both textual research and first-hand observation of the Drikung Powa Chenmo during its revival, I survey its history and development, the pilgrimage as I witnessed it in 1992, and its implications for our understanding of the role of pilgrimage in Tibetan religious life and in the formation of Tibetan identity, in the past and at present.

Pilgrimage (*gnas-skor*) has long figured prominently among the characteristic religious activities in which Tibetans almost universally participate. Many, for instance, regard it to be particularly important to visit the religious shrines of Lhasa, where pilgrims can make the rounds of the numerous important temples and monasteries in the vicinity of Tibet's ancient capital. Before 1959 they could perhaps even have attended a public blessing given by the Dalai Lama, and today his absence is vigorously recalled by the many pilgrims who arrive in what is now a predominantly Chinese city. The pilgrims who flock to Lhasa bring offerings for

the temples and monks and also frequently engage in trade so as to finance their journeys. Thus, in addition to besides its more purely religious significance, pilgrimage has generally played an important role in Tibetan commerce, both cultural and economic. In recent years the economic activity accompanying pilgrimage has to some extent resumed in Lhasa, though on a much smaller scale than in earlier generations, and under greatly changed circumstances.³

The capital, however, was never the sole center of pilgrimage in Tibet. There was, in fact, a sort of national pilgrimage network, whose routes, extending throughout the length and breadth of geographical and cultural Tibet,⁴ helped to maintain communications among even the most far-flung districts. The pilgrimage to the small valley of Terdrom⁵ during the Drikung Powa Chenmo well exemplifies some pervasive themes relating to sacred places, emphasizing the symbolic significance of the landscape and of specific sacred objects to be found there, as well as legendary and historical associations with some of the great culture heroes of the Tibetan past. Configurations of stone, designs seen in the cliffs, and so forth, are described as the natural images and shrines of deities, or the tangible evidence of the great deeds of past masters. Uncanny occurrences, unusual features of climate and environment, are all also typically interpreted as being imbued with profound spiritual meaning.

Tibetan pilgrimage, then, as also pilgrimage in other cultural settings, involves much more than the mere physical journey to places deemed sacred.⁶ Through religious teaching, ritual activity, and the attendant assimilation and replication of symbols, as well as through the formation of a rich network of social and economic relationships, pilgrimage has functioned in Tibet as an integral dimension of the construction of society and self, transforming the body, consciousness, and status of the pilgrim throughout the course of the journey. This certainly has been the case even if never brought to the level of deliberate reflection, though traditional Tibetan religious culture has in fact long been conscious of the transformative dimension of the pilgrimage experience, and so intentionally has sought to refine and thus to accentuate it



pilgrims at Tsurpu Monastery, June 1992



the monastery of Drikung-thil in 1990

THE LAND, THE LINEAGE, AND *PLANTING THE STALK*

The district of Drikung is located to the northeast of Lhasa. After reaching the town of Mendrogongkar, slightly less than one hundred kilometers from the capital, the main road swings towards the east, in the direction of the Kongpo district.⁷ An unpaved track leads north, past the ancient temple of Katsel, and then, farther north, skirts a track leading to the almost equally old shrine at Uru Shei Lhakhang. These monuments, both severely damaged during the 1960s, recall the antiquity of Drikung and its connections with the Tibetan monarchy of the late first millennium. The first, associated with the very beginnings of Tibetan Buddhism in the seventh century, is said to be one of the temples founded by the Tibetan emperor Songtsen Gampo (617 – 649/50) to subjugate by geomantic means the great ogress who embodies the land of Tibet.⁸ The second was the center of the estate granted to a famed monk who served as an imperial tutor at the beginning of the ninth century.⁹ Desperately poor today, the rocky fields and poor pastures of Drikung provide little indication that this was once one of Tibet's great fiefdoms¹⁰

Despite the presence of religious monuments dating back to the dynastic period, Drikung's emergence as a major center of Tibetan Buddhism began only in the late twelfth century. It was then that Kyopa Jikten Gönpö (1143 – 1217) established his monastery at Drikung-thil, dramatically situated in the upper reaches of the valley. Jikten Gönpö, who originally came from far eastern Tibet, had journeyed to the central region when he was in his twenties to study with Phakmotrupa (1110 – 1170), one of the preeminent masters of the Kagyü school, an order renowned for its proficiency in advanced and esoteric techniques of Buddhist tantric yoga.¹¹ He quickly established himself as the master's favorite and lineage successor, but after Phakmotrupa's death he chose not to accept the responsibilities that that role would have entailed, and instead fled to the Drikung valley with some close companions. There he was offered a small monastic community

by a yogin also affiliated with the Kagyü order and soon thereafter founded Drikung-thil. He became known for his compassion, learning, and strict adherence to the monastic code and was reputed to be an incarnation of the renowned Indian Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna. His charisma was such that it was said that 180,000 monks once gathered for his teaching, and even if we allow for considerable exaggeration here, the conclusion is unavoidable that Jikten Gönpö was both a gifted and exceedingly successful Buddhist teacher. It is highly probable that even during his lifetime hermitages adhering to his tradition were founded as far away as the Kailash region, in the kingdom of Guge in far western Tibet. His writings included highly respected expositions of Buddhist philosophy and meditational practice, but came to be regarded in some circles as doctrinally controversial.¹²

The order Jikten Gönpö established, known as the Drikung Kagyü, after the location of its foremost seat, has remained one of the most successful of the Kagyü subsects, with affiliated monasteries in many parts of the Tibetan world: Ladakh (India), Limi (northwestern Nepal), and Nangchen (Qinghai Province) are among the main centers of its activity, besides Drikung itself.¹³ These widely separated communities have continued to maintain their loyalty to the main seat of the order at Drikung, which has preserved an unbroken hierarchical lineage. The highest ranking Drikung hierarch currently lives in India, where the order has established monasteries and educational centers in the Tibetan refugee community.¹⁴ Like several of the other Tibetan religious orders in exile, it has extended its teaching activity beyond the traditional range of Tibetan Buddhism and now has some representatives in other parts of the world, including the United States.

According to tradition, it was in a monkey year during the sixth of Tibet's sexagenary cycles, perhaps in 1308,¹⁵ that the ninth in the hierarchical lineage of Drikung Monastery, Dorje Gyelpo (1284 – 1350, head of the lineage from 1314 until his death), is said to have “reopened” the pilgrimage sites of Terdrom, which lies

in close proximity to Drikung-thil.¹⁶ Terdrom was famed for its mineral hot springs and for its many caves and other landmarks that had been hallowed by the eighth-century Indian tantric master Padmasambhava and his circle, above all his Tibetan consort Yeshe Tsogyel. In these places, it was said, the treasures—spiritual and material—that they had concealed for the benefit of the Tibetan people might be found. During the monkey month, the time when the birth of master Padmasambhava is celebrated, Dorje Gyelpo ordered performances of the ritual dances associated with that teacher’s favored deity, Vajrakīla (*Rdo-rje-phur-pa*).¹⁷ In connection with this, he also began the custom of convening a regular public series of religious teachings, which were held every twelve years thereafter, though the location seems to have shifted from time to time, always remaining in the general vicinity of Drikung.¹⁸

Some two centuries later, the famous “treasure-finder” (*gter-bton*) of Drikung, Rinchen Püntsoḳ (1509 – 1557), thoroughly reorganized these regular duodecennial observances that were followed in each monkey year. Rinchen Püntsoḳ, a discoverer of the cached scriptural treasures, was a devoted adherent of the cult of Padmasambhava and as such promoted a syncretic form of tantric Buddhism.¹⁹ This involved integrating elements of the traditional Kagyü teachings of Drikung Monastery together with the doctrines, rituals and meditational practices of the Nyingma school, the ancient tradition of Tibetan Buddhism that was especially associated with Padmasambhava. Rinchen Püntsoḳ also sometimes preferred to live as a contemplative hermit, outside the precincts of the large Drikung Monastery, and among his favored abodes was the upper part of the Terdrom valley, three hour’s trek beyond the hot springs, where, at an altitude of approximately 15,000 feet, he founded the hermitage of Drongur. Here he reconvened the cycles of public teaching, using these occasions to instruct those assembled in the treasure doctrines that he himself had recovered. Some of his discoveries had taken place in the high Kere Yangdzong Cave, the upper chamber of the large cavern known as the “Great Assembly Hall” (*Tshogs-khang-chen-mo*), situated in the peak looming above Drongur. The cave



Terdrom and its mineral hotsprings, 1990



was reputed to have been Yeshe Tsogyel's favored place of meditation, and figures prominently in pilgrimage activity during the Drikung Powa Chenmo.²⁰

The celebration appears to have been fixed in its modern form during the first half of the following century, when two famous Drikung hierarchs, the brothers Könchok Rinchen (1590 – 1654) and Rikdzin Chödrak (1595 – 1659), sought to renew and refine the combined Nyingma and Kagyü heritage of the Drikung succession.²¹ They maintained Rinchen Püntsock's cycle of Nyingma instruction and are said to have augmented this by bestowing in addition such popular Kagyü rites as the empowerment of longevity according to the tradition of the yoginī Siddharajñī,²² and, as the culminating teaching to be conferred on the final full moon day, an especially treasured esoteric precept called *Planting the Stalk* (*'jag-zug-ma*),²³ a means to achieve the safe passage of the consciousness principle from this life to the next at the moment of death. This final instruction of *powa*, literally “transference,” henceforth would be the main attraction for the faithful, and so lent its name to this entire festival of pilgrimage and religious instruction. The event as a whole thus came to be known as the Drikung Powa Chenmo, “the great [conferral of the yoga of the] transference [of consciousness] at Drikung.”

In general, the technique of *powa*, a special form of yogic exercise, is said to cause the consciousness of the dying individual to depart suddenly from the body through a forced opening at the crown of the skull and to travel immediately to a pure land, usually the Sukhāvātī realm of the Buddha Amitābha, in which enlightenment may then be swiftly attained. The technique is one that produces swift and unmistakable physical effects, as described here by a scholar of Tibetan Buddhism, H. V. Guenther:

When a competent Guru imparts this instruction to his disciple, the region of the fontanel opening becomes highly sensitive to touch and remains so for some time. Moreover, when after the instruction he touches this

region with Kusa-grass, symbolically representing the opening of the passage to the ultimate, the distinct sensation of being pierced from top to bottom is created. Needless to say, this practice is not without its dangers and under no circumstances can it be performed when there is any deformation in the bones of the skull or in the spinal cord.²⁴

Indeed, powa has consistently been a topic of fascination for Western writers on Tibetan esotericism and yoga. Alexandra David-Neel has dramatically described the practice in her works, as has W. Y. Evans-Wentz.²⁵ More pertinent, perhaps, in our present context are the observations of an anthropologist, Martin Brauen-Dolma, commenting on the recent popularization of a version of the powa practice among Tibetan refugees living in Switzerland:

Amitābha's paradise has become the focus of a salvation-practice for lay persons, with attainment actively being pursued. ... To this extent, at least, its goal resembles that of a millennial movement. Secondary manifestations of this ritual are also reminiscent of characteristics of millennial movements: some participants in this rite—most are women—fall into trance-like states which are accompanied by rhythmic hyperventilation, moaning, whimpering, or loud sobbing, and less often by movements of the arms. For anyone accustomed to the quiet atmosphere of Buddhist meditation these seances are alien and extraordinary. The fact that this cult gains importance during the critical time of exile leads me to see yet another connection to the movements referred to by some authors as “crisis cults.”²⁶

However, the manifestations described here are by no means peculiarly characteristic of the community in exile. A recently published account in Tibetan of the traditional performance of the Drikung Powa Chenmo offers the following remarks on its performance during the seventeenth century: “The signs that accompanied the conferral of the transference included headache, the appearance of pus at the crown of

the head, the opening of the fontanel, and, among some, momentary loss of consciousness.”²⁷ Nevertheless, Brauen-Dolma’s observations on the millennial dimensions of the ritual do contribute to our understanding of it, both in its past formation and present revival. For, as will become clear later in this chapter, the rituals of powa seem intimately connected with the construction of identities in an inherently unstable and so crisis-ridden world.

The particular version of the powa practice known as *Planting the Stalk* originated among the “rediscovered treasures” (*gter-ma*) that were traced back to master Padmasambhava and his disciples. It had been discovered, probably during the fourteenth century, by an obscure figure named Nyinda Sangye, who is said to have recovered the texts from the Black Maṇḍala Lake in southern Tibet. It was recorded that the esoteric methods he thus brought to light were so powerful that by means of them he was able to secure the liberation of all the spirits and animals inhabiting the lake itself. The association of the teaching’s origins with the spiritual sublimation of the chthonic forces of Tibet is an important motif for the Drikung Powa Chenmo as well, though the precise location in which this connection is most apparent, interestingly, is removed from a lake to a mountain cave. Significant too is the report of some texts, that Nyinda Sangye was the father of Karma Lingpa, the discoverer of the well-known “Tibetan Book of the Dead,” for this association further strengthens the authority of the Drikung Powa teachings in connection with the rites of death.²⁸

The title *Planting the Stalk* refers to a widespread test for the efficacy of the powa practice: after the adept has received the teaching and cultivated it in seclusion for several days, the opening of the fontanel grows sufficiently so that one is able to place a stalk of grass upright within it. In a famous passage David-Neel once reported witnessing this, and the present writer can confirm that a similar degree of success in the technique has been observed also among contemporary Western Buddhist practitioners.²⁹

This, then, was the teaching stressed by Könchok Rinchen and Rikdzin Chödrak. By making it, together with other valued elements of the Kagyü heritage, available to the assembled public, the hierarchy of Drikung was in effect inviting all to participate directly in the special charisma of the Drikung Kagyü line, an invitation that would no doubt enhance Drikung's standing among the Tibetan people at a time when several of the rival Kagyü lineages were in fact facing stiff opposition in Central Tibet.³⁰

Until 1956 the Drikung Powa Chenmo continued to be held every twelve years, adhering to the general pattern of Nyingma and Kagyü teaching just described, combined with pilgrimage rounds through the sacred sites of Terdrom. In its traditional performance, however, the entire valley of Terdrom is supposed to have been in effect ritually sealed off from its surroundings, to become a self-contained realm for the duration of the pilgrimage. A description of this process was recently published in Tibetan and, as it has some importance for our analysis of the Drikung Powa Chenmo and much intrinsic interest, we offer a translation of it here:³¹

The Monkey Year Powa Chenmo is convened at the place called “Drongur, the intersection of three valleys,” situated in Zhotö Tidro (= Terdrom), during the period from the seventh through the fifteenth of the sixth Mongolian month. Because the two Drikung lords of refuge—the Chetsang and Chungtsang—were the chief officiants for the religious performance, we state in brief the old custom whereby they rode [from Drikung to Drongur]. On an astrologically propitious day, having ridden from Dridzong to Tetrak-thang, they spent a day performing the propitiations of Achi, the chief protective deity of Drikung, at length. After exoteric and esoteric prognostications favoring the ride up from Dokashak the lamas, incarnates, and monks of the seat at Drikung-thil would guide the horseback journey by stages. Following casual ablutions and consecrations at the Dzentshang Kyopa Temple, the Lama of Drongur and the chief steward of Terdrom would welcome the party at Khatsel-gang with incense, whereupon the chief steward would offer the maṇḍala, the symbolic offering of the cosmos, together with an explanation of the sacred features of the site. Then, there would be further ablutions and consecrations

at the Maṅi Temple. Following a monetary offering at Chötsel they proceeded to Tayak-thang. That afternoon, together with an offering of fragrant incense to the local deities (*bsang*) and other observances, they performed a circuit of the hot springs and proceeded to Drongur via Dinggyel. Then, with the nuns of Terdrom and the lamas of Drongur performing a procession known as the “yellow rosary,” they entered the great stronghold of Drongur. Following the admonitions that issued from the residence, the monks and nuns of Drongur and Terdrom made the preparations for the great teachings of the Monkey Year by stages.

Besides that, the taxpayers and others belonging to the Drikung administration had to appear for an assessment of revenue and be forthcoming with their payments. Then, beginning on the sixth day of the sixth month, the monks of Gar College and those of the college at Drikung-thil, together with the eastern and western retreatants of the seat and those of Salt Cave, gradually had to assemble at Drongur. After riding up with the lamas who were officials of the two colleges, they then had to invite into their presence the representations of the Buddhas’ Body, Speech and Mind [in the form of the images, books and symbols that were installed at Drongur for the teachings]. On the seventh day, the colleges of Gar and Thil were asked separately to pitch their assembly tents—the assembly tent of Thil, “Blue Heaven,” and that of Gar, “White Snow Peak,” had been the presentations of the lord of refuges Peme Gyeltsen (the twenty-ninth head of the lineage of Drikung, b. 1770). These two colleges together would then request that the great tent of empowerment, the commission of the Ven. Thukje Nyima (the 32nd head of the lineage), be pitched above the religious court of Drongur.

From Gar, four “servants of virtue” with four deputies from the larger taxpaying households, such as those of Khengchugyü, would have to shoulder the responsibility for the adherence to the religious laws according to Gar, along with the laws of the monastic and lay public in general. During the afternoon of the seventh day, at the valley closing the fortress of Drongur, all would have to listen to a proclamation of the ordinances of the religious law. Then by stages, following rounds in the habitations of the two colleges, and the most important campsites of the public, the path was closed, and it was arranged that neither mundane business nor affairs involving unclean sorts of things should arrive there. The entire legal power for the duration of the religious assembly was then held as the responsibility of the “servants of virtue” and the deputies.

entering Drongur, the temple and assembly tent seen in the background







a “servant of virtue” explains the rules of entry at the Drongur temple

facing page: general view of Drongur, the temple to the left and the great assembly tent at center

Clearly, then, the lay and monastic populations of the Drikung valley were generally drawn into some degree of involvement with the pilgrimage, and this required a profound reconfiguring of ritual and economic and indeed even of spatial relationships. There have been, of course, many alterations resulting from the great changes that have taken place in Tibet since the festival's last fully traditional performance in 1956. Some of these will be discussed in greater detail below. Let us just note for the moment that the old revenue system has long been dismantled, so that the fiscal responsibility for the 1992 performance was in the hands of the Mendrogongkar district government together with Drikung monastery, aided by a grant from the Tibet Autonomous Region's (TAR's) Council on Religious Affairs (*chos-tshogs*). Moreover, the ideal of a complete sealing-off of Drongur, so that it became for the duration of the festival a ritual and legal realm unto itself, could at best be recapitulated only symbolically, if, indeed, it had ever been fully effected in the past. Finally, given the greatly reduced monasticism of the region (as is the case throughout Tibet), the elaborate configuration of assembly tents described above was realized only in a much reduced form.

In the wake of the Tibetan revolt of 1959, followed by the onset of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, the observance of Drikung Powa Chenmo was forbidden, and Drikung-thil and other religious sites in the region, even some that were very remote and difficult of access, suffered almost complete demolition. Those monks and lamas who had not fled from Tibet in 1959 were mostly forced to disrobe and join rural work units in nearby communes or in their native districts. (The young Drikung Chetsang, for instance, prior to his 1975 escape from Tibet, was consigned to a work unit at Tsünmo-tse, between Mendrogongkar and Lhasa.) Some were subjected to much harsher treatment and as a result perished during the Cultural Revolution years. After the ouster of the Gang of Four in 1978 and the subsequent inception of Deng's reform program, which permitted a degree of liberalization to take place, Pachung Rinpoche (deceased during the late 1980s), one of the few learned monks associated with Drikung who had survived in Tibet, began initial restoration

work at the monastery and attracted others affiliated with Drikung to join him in his efforts. At about this time, too, a charismatic woman, Tendzin Chödrön, appeared on the scene at Terdrom and came to be regarded as the Drikung Khandro. This title is traditionally conferred once in each generation on a female adept residing at Terdrom who is held to be the emanation of Padmasambhava's Tibetan consort Yeshe Tsogyel.³² An extremely forceful personality, Tendzin Chödrön has played a pivotal role in the recreation of the nun's community at Terdrom.

By the early 1990s the local government of Mendrogongkar, under whose jurisdiction the Drikung district falls, responded favorably to the requests of the monastery and the local public to convene the Drikung Powa once again, in August 1992, and they succeeded in securing the permission of the authorities of the TAR to do this. Remarkably, this happened despite the set-backs to liberalization policies in the wake of the Tibetan protests of the late 1980s and the martial law that followed, the pattern of deliberalization in Tibet having been compounded by the generally hard-line position on political and social protest that came to characterize the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) under Li Peng and Jiang Zemin.³³ This perhaps explains in part why the event was not well-publicized in advance and the attendance of non-Tibetans not encouraged. Nevertheless, I had the good fortune to be among the handful of foreigners who made their way to the festival during its revival, to join the pilgrims who had gathered there in their treks to hallowed sites, and to attend the public teachings that were conferred throughout the week-long program.³⁴

THE DRIKUNG POWA OBSERVED

In accordance with established tradition the teachings of the revived Drikung Powa Chenmo were conferred during the period from the eighth through fifteenth lunar days of the sixth, or monkey, month of the mo -

key year. In 1992 this was the period from August 6 through 13. Normally, the occasion would be presided over by the two foremost hierarchs of Drikung, the Chetsang Rinpoche and the Chungtsang Rinpoche, the direct heirs to the incarnation lines of Könchok Rinchen and Rikdzin Chödrak. In 1992, however, both of these figures were living in India and were unable to return to Tibet for the celebrations, to the disappointment of many with whom I spoke. About a half dozen high-ranking lamas of the Drikung school, who remain in Tibet, were present to officiate at the Drikung Powa Chenmo. They included the Riwang Tendzin Rinpoche, Soktrül Rinpoche, Nuba Namka Gyeltsen Rinpoche, Nyedak Rinpoche, and Angön Rinpoche.

Some of the pilgrims I interviewed, expressing widespread Tibetan distrust of the Chinese government, reported that they regarded as prudent the decision by the Chetsang Rinpoche and Chungtsang Rinpoche to remain safely in exile, for some suspected that they would have courted kidnap by the authorities had they returned. Recent experience, however, suggests that such extreme fears are not in fact very well founded, though the possibility that they would have faced lesser difficulties cannot be ruled out³⁵ Be that as it may, later that same year, in November, the teaching of the Drikung Powa was in fact granted by the two leaders of the sect to their adherents in exile in connection with the official opening of the Drikung Kagyü Center in Dehra Dun, India. Some Tibetans in India and Nepal later expressed to me the view that this was therefore the spiritually more authentic event, but in Tibet itself in August no one I interviewed was of the opinion that the authenticity of the revival was at all in question.³⁶

Following tradition, the pilgrimage opened with the procession of the leading lamas and their attendants from Drikung monastery to Terdrom, where ablutions were performed before proceeding to Drongur. By the sixth of the Tibetan month (August 4), many monks and nuns of Drikung, Terdrom, and adjacent convents had begun to assemble there and to make preparations for the teachings as well. By this date, too, lay devotees and monastics from nearby districts started to arrive in large numbers, together with smaller

numbers of pilgrims from distant locations, some of them connected through sectarian allegiance to Drikung, such as Nangchen in far eastern Tibet and parts of the Kailash region in the far west. The small area of relatively flat ground at Drongur soon became little sea of tents, an overcrowded but jovial campground

Beginning on the seventh (August 5), Drongur became symbolically sealed off from the world below by the proclamation of religious law, and during the remainder of the festivities monk-policemen (*dge-skos* or *dge-g.yog*, “servants of virtue,” but popularly equated with the *rdab-rdob*)³⁷ would be conspicuously present as tangible evidence of this, though actual traffic between Drongur, Terdrom and the Drikung valley continued unabated. Besides the authority of the religious law, contemporary Chinese civil law seemed but thinly represented: throughout the entire course of the revived pilgrimage there was no military presence, only a small company of local Tibetan policemen, not more than a dozen of whom were in uniform, though there were known to be some others present in plain clothes. It was clear that neither the monastic nor the civil authorities anticipated difficulties. My few encounters with the representatives of the Mendrogongkar government, however, left me with the distinct impression that they were not without some anxieties: the local government officials of the Mendrogongkar District, in whose precincts Drikung is situated, were clearly delighted with the reinception of the pilgrimage but very worried that it might become an occasion for nationalistic protest. When I first arrived at Drongur, I was made to feel very much welcome by the pilgrims, but representatives of the local government were visibly unnerved by a foreign presence and told me in no uncertain terms that I could not be accommodated and would have to leave immediately. It was only after the monastic leaders provided them with some reassurance that the fear of possible foreign agitation was quietly dropped.³⁸

The actual cycle of teaching began on the eighth (August 6), the commencement of the second half of the waxing phase of the moon and thus a date for regular religious observances. From this time, until



ascending the trail from Terdrom to Drongur



pilgrims gathering at the Drongur temple



evening circumambulations at the Drongur stūpa



haggling over prices at the entrance of a trader's tent



Nyingmapa adepts from northern Tibet performing the ritual of Cutting

the fifteenth, when all present assembled together for the instructions of the powa, the activities of most of those in attendance were only loosely connected with the formal rounds of teaching. These were delivered in a large tent set up in the field in front of the small Drongur monastery, without the tents of the individual colleges described in the account translated above, thus simplifying to some extent the more elaborate arrangement of assembly tents that would have characterized the pilgrimage until 1956. Besides attending the teachings, many laypersons preferred to perform prostrations and circumambulations, or to pursue mundane, but necessary occupations, such as trade.³⁹ Among those assembled, too, were religious specialists of various types, loosely or not at all affiliated with Drikung, who regarded the event as a special opportunity to pursue their own paths of practice. The presence of large numbers who were for the most part only peripherally connected with the main teaching program, and engaged instead in activities otherwise regarded as suitable, lent a carnival atmosphere to the festivities, so that Drongur became increasingly like a Tibetan Buddhist Woodstock as the days progressed. The wide variety of costume, both the local dress of the laypersons who had arrived from remote districts and the many different styles of religious garb, further accentuated this impression.

The actual program of religious instruction, therefore, was followed throughout only by a minority of those present, above all by the ordained monks and nuns of Drikung and its affiliated monasteries and temples. Their routine began at daybreak each morning with the daily offering of fragrant juniper smoke (*bsang*) to the local deities, followed by a formal procession of the monks and nuns from the monastic quarters to the assembly in the main tent. The morning was then given over primarily to prayer services with offerings of tea and the dedication of the offerings that had been sponsored by the laity and others.⁴⁰ After a late morning break for the main meal of the day, the designated teaching was conferred to the religious and laypersons in attendance, with a different lama presiding each day. These daily programs were prominently posted on

a wall of the Drongur monastery, permitting those present to select the particular teachings they wished to attend and to record accurately the titles of those in which they participated. The general schedule was given there as follows:⁴¹

- Day 1. August 6. Nyedak Rinpoche confers the initiation of Buddha Śākyamuni and receives the formal request of those in attendance to bestow the powa-teaching.
- Day 2. August 7. Riwang Tendzin Rinpoche confers the initiation of the six-syllable mantra of Avalokiteśvara (i.e. the well-known formula *Oṃ Maṇipadme Hūṃ!*) and receives a similar formal request. (This would be repeated on each successive day.)
- Day 3. August 8 (= tenth day of the lunar calendar). Nangse Könchok Tendzin Rinpoche confers the initiation of the Vanquisher of the Lord of Death (*'Chi-bdag-zil-gnon*).
- Day 4. August 9. Gambu Rinpoche confers the initiation of Padmasambhava in his peaceful aspect.
- Day 5. August 10. Nuba Namka Gyeltsen Rinpoche confers the initiation of the goddess Parṇāśabarī (*Ri-khrod lo-gyon-ma*).
- Day 6. August 11. Nyedak Rinpoche confers the initiation of Padmasambhava in his wrathful aspect.
- Day 7. August 12. Riwang Tendzin Rinpoche confers the initiation of Amitāyus, the Buddha of Longevity, according to the tradition of Siddharajñī.
- Day 8 (full moon). August 13. Soktrül Rinpoche confers an extended discourse on the merits of teaching the doctrine, and then bestows the actual instructions of the powa.

There is a general pattern of development to be discerned here, an initiatory progression that would be clear to at least some of the monks and nuns, as well as to religiously educated laypersons, who attended these teachings on a daily basis. We may say that the progression of the teachings is one from universality

within the Buddhist tradition to specificity in relation to the particular tradition of Drikung and from teachings that govern the cultivation of positive attributes in this life to those that focus on inevitable mortality and death. Thus the initiation of the Buddha Śākyamuni represents the Buddhist tradition in the broadest terms, while that of Avalokiteśvara more particularly addresses the outlook of the Mahāyāna. Though this is still extremely broad, it must not be forgotten that the bodhisattva of compassion is always regarded by Tibetans as the special patron of their land.⁴² The two initiations of Padmasambhava move beyond even this Tibetocentricity to establish a special connection with the Drikung Kagyü lineage and the Drikung Powa Chenmo, for both are derived from the “treasures” discovered by Rinchen Püntsock in the peaks looming above Drongur, and were first taught by him publicly in the very place in which the pilgrims are now assembled. Further, there is the contrast between the initiations of the Vanquisher of the Lord of Death and of the goddess Parṇāśabarī, both teachings concerned with dispelling spiritual and temporal obstacles overall, and the two culminating teachings, which focus directly upon the specific obstacles to longevity and to the attainment of fortunate rebirth.

The double progression just described is further reinforced by its correlation with the waxing moon, splendidly visible above the valley’s crags at night. Though these and other similar relationships are well understood by many of the religious elite who are present, clear consciousness of them is for the most part expressed only by such persons. For, as has been already noted, only a small percentage of those present actually participated in all of these teachings, and others were not apparently expected to do so.

In contrast, certainly the favored activity, for the lay pilgrims at least, as well as for many of the non-monastic religious,⁴³ was in fact pilgrimage. At daybreak every morning, as the monks offered incense and the procession to the assembly began, large numbers of persons set out to trek to the many sacred sites that are accessible from Drongur. The most famous and impressive of these expeditions is the ascent to the

massive Kere Yangdzong cave, the Great Assembly Hall in which Rinchen Püntsoḱ made his discoveries, the basis for the teachings bestowed on the fourth and sixth days. The site is believed to be hallowed by the meditations of Padmasambhava’s consort Yeshe Tsogyel, who, according to a tradition with which virtually all the pilgrims I met seemed familiar, dwelt in retreat here for seven years, practicing the widely revered Great Perfection (*rdzogs-chen*) system of meditation.

To ascend to the cave, one must first return to the Terdrom hot springs, and from there turn to circumambulate the peaks that rise directly above Drongur, which are thought to house the guardians of the valley. The path spirals upwards and the geographical configurations on all sides are described as embodying important aspects of the Tibetan esoteric Buddhist world. On the way I passed, for example, a site identified as the “charnel ground” (*dur-khrod*), a favored place for tantric practice, that is situated beneath a series of spires that are themselves regarded as the *Ḍākinīs* of the five Buddha-families. When I stopped to rest there, I found a small congregation gathered to perform the rite of Cutting (*gcod*), a meditational and ritual practice that is renowned for its exquisite chants and whose practice is regarded as particularly well-suited for cemeteries, whether metaphorical or real.⁴⁴

The trail continued to ascend until, approaching the summit spires, I discovered myself to be now perched on the cliffs some 2,000 feet directly above Drongur. Turning to the highest peak, the pilgrim is greeted by the great, gaping mouth of the Great Assembly Hall. Inside, I first visited the small retreat cell of Yeshe Tsogyel, before beginning a harrowing climb up a makeshift series of wet and slippery ropes and ladders, for a tour of the summit of the peak from the inside. The configurations of the tunnels are all imbued with symbolic significance and are described as recapitulating the physiology of the subtle body, whose channels and energies are the foci of yogic methods including both the practices of *powa* and Cutting. In the cave the ordinary order of things is thus in a sense inverted, for now one finds oneself located within the



*daybreak at Drongur, beneath the spires that mount
to the Kere Yangdzong Cave*



the days begins with the offering of burnt juniper to the protective deities of the region



om the trail that ascends to the cave



lay practitioners at the “Charnel Ground” beneath the peaks of the five Ḍākinīs perform the rite of Cutting



scrambling up the cliffs, as the trail approaches the summit



at the mouth of the Kere Yangdzong Cave

facing page: the meditation cell of Yeshe Tsogyel and the ascension in the interior of the cave





beginning the perilous descent to Drongur



relaxing at the conclusion of the afternoon's teachings

body that, in meditation, one otherwise visualizes within the physical body. The pilgrims who complete the ascent to the cave, therefore, are granted, in virtue of their undertaking, an especially powerful performative initiation, introducing the esoteric lore that forms the background to the culminating teaching of the pilgrimage overall.

Following the tour of the cave, one makes a rapid descent via the steep slope of skree that falls from the side of the cliffs. This was perilous, and if it had any special symbolic significance, it was for the moment lost on this pilgrim, who was exclusively preoccupied with self-preservation. As it happened, it was at this point that I rejoined the teachings on the afternoon of the fourteenth (August 12th), while the Riwang Rinpoche was bestowing the blessings of longevity to those in attendance.⁴⁵ I was by now in fact very grateful to be able to receive them. (Perhaps this was the point I had missed!)

The next day was the full moon. At daybreak all who were present began to gather around the teaching tent, trying to sit close, so that they would be certain to hear the powa instructions clearly. This would probably have been a real difficulty in former times, but in 1992 a primitive but adequate portable public address system was used. The teaching, in fact, did not begin until the early afternoon, though all seemed content to stake their claims for choice places early. Following a general discourse on the benefits of propagating the doctrine, and of attending to it correctly, the actual teaching of the powa, which in 1992 was conferred by the Soktrül Rinpoche, lasted little more than a half hour. In my previous experience of large, public teachings among the Tibetans in India and Nepal, I have seldom seen a crowd that was not to some extent restless, even when such revered figures as the Dalai Lama and the late Gyalwa Karmapa have presided. On this occasion, however, the assembled crowd adopted contemplative attitudes and listened to the Soktrül Rinpoche's every word, completely still and silent. Some of the devotees wept softly as the Rinpoche

explained the visualization of the subtle body, the gathering of consciousness in the heart-center at the time of death, and the means to swiftly project that concentration of energy to the pure land of Amitābha.

Though I would not suggest adopting Victor Turner's approach to the study of ritual as a general interpretive framework for the investigation of Buddhist and Tibetan rituals of all types,⁴⁶ this did seem to be a quintessentially Turnerian event. For in this public rehearsal of death persons from many different regions, representing diverse facets of the Tibetan world, had been brought together and introduced to that most characteristic of liminal states; and in participating then in a common set of meditations and exercises, something much like Turner's conception of *communitas* was surely engendered among them. Considering, in particular, Turner's insistence that religious pilgrimage generally does place pilgrims in a liminal passage and that the emergence of *communitas* is a characteristic feature of such pilgrimage experience, it would appear that the Drikung Powa Chenmo, by compounding pilgrimage with an imagined performance of death and rebirth, succeeds in accentuating these themes in a direct and striking manner.

After concluding the transmission of the powa, final prayers of dedication were recited and then, in an instant, everyone was hurrying about in an effort to break camp in order to descend down the narrow path to Terdrom before nightfall, so that the trail became hazardously crowded. Within an hour, the entire campsite was virtually clear, and only the abundant garbage left by the pilgrims remained.⁴⁷ Following final ablutions at the springs, the pilgrims departed to return home, or to continue their pilgrimages elsewhere.

Before concluding this description of the revived Drikung Powa of 1992, I should add some brief observations of a political nature. The pilgrims themselves were well aware that political demonstrations would inevitably have had negative ramifications for the future development of such events and also seemed to feel the religious value of the pilgrimage was too great to compromise. However, those present



at the Drongur temple, the monks prepare the procession to the tent. Soktrül Rinpoche, holding a khata, is seen in the doorway



the monks assembled for a session of teaching



in the monastic congregation



a sea of devotees waits patiently for the instructions to begin

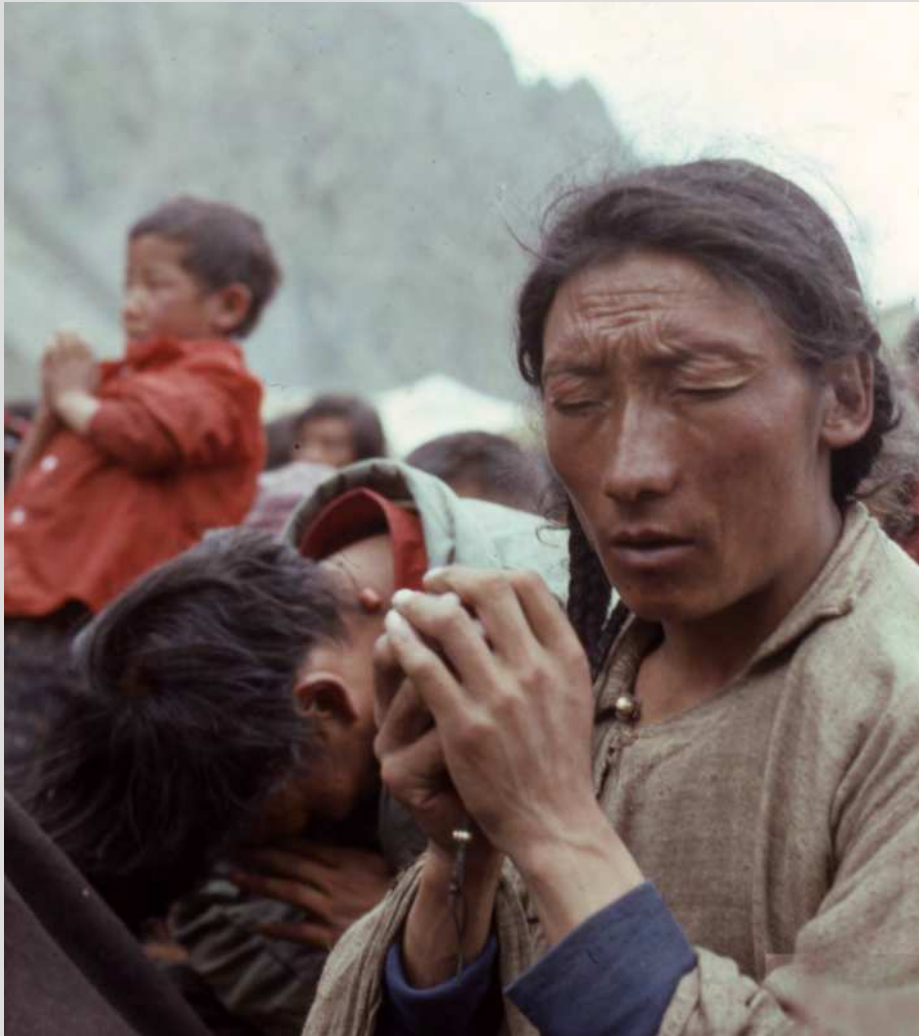


crowds milling around the assembly tent in anticipation of the teaching



nuns from Terdrom signal the teacher's approach





facing page: Soktrül Rinpoche arrives to bestow the teaching of powa

left: those in attendance listen to the instructions with devotion



were outspoken in the opinion that this was an especially *Tibetan*, that is, non-Chinese, happening, and small groups convened in the evening on several occasions to display furtively the flag of the government-in-exile and to hum the national anthem of free Tibet. Very few actually participated in these soirées, but virtually everyone I spoke to volunteered with pride that this was known to be taking place: “Last night we showed the flag!” they whispered, “last night we showed the flag

TIBETAN PILGRIMAGE PAST AND PRESENT

It has often been remarked that Tibet, before its forced entry into the People’s Republic of China, had only a very weak state structure, whose authority, such as it was, was supported by little coercive force.⁴⁸ Indeed, large parts of the Tibetan world were often outside of the Central Tibetan state altogether and were either subservient to other states, to local princes, or virtually stateless. Despite this, however, and despite the presence of strong tendencies, intensified by the exigencies of geography and poor systems of communication, to accentuate the particularisms of region, dialect, and sect, there were traditionally, and persist today, strong sentiments of affinity and cohesiveness running throughout the Tibetan cultural world. The relative coherence of Tibetan culture, considered in the light of the powerful forces that seem to oppose any such unifying disposition, presents a general problem in the study of Tibetan civilization, requiring some attempt at explanation.

It seems plausible at once to seek such explanation in part in the analysis of Tibetan religion. But here some caution is needed, for Tibetan religion, unlike, say traditional Judaism or Islam, does not have even in theory a highly uniform body of religious-cum-legal obligations that apply to the entire community of the faithful.⁴⁹ The very great variations of Tibetan religious life, according to differences of status, edu-

cation, and obligation, among monastics and lay persons and individuals of different sectarian and regional background suggest that Western models of religious commitment cannot be readily applied to Tibet. Indeed, in Tibetan scholastic philosophy there was even a bit of debate concerning just what was required in order for one to be considered a Buddhist at all, and the preferred answer was that the taking of refuge in the Three Jewels alone was definitive.⁵⁰ Obviously this is much too thin to account for the deep continuities running throughout the sphere of Tibetan civilization.

To indicate more precisely the nature of the problem, we may consider briefly some conclusions drawn by Sherry Ortner in her early work on Sherpa rituals. The issue we confront here is underscored in her supposition that Buddhism promotes individualism to a remarkable degree: “Sherpa Buddhism ... retains the central Buddhist tendency to isolate and atomize the individual, and devalue social bonding and social reciprocity. Indeed it is hard to imagine how Buddhism could be Buddhism without retaining this bias. A Buddhism of social bonding and communal solidarity seems a contradiction in terms.”⁵¹

Clearly, however (and as Ortner, too, seems to suggest), the coherence of Tibetan culture becomes unintelligible if understood solely in such terms. In *Sherpas Through Their Rituals*, Ortner sought to resolve this difficulty with allusions to the Tibetan state

In Tibet, where the Sherpas originated and where their religion took the form that it retains for the most part today, the religion was supported by the theocratic state. State support of religion, in turn, allowed the monastic community to cut itself off from society more completely, because it was not directly dependent on the laity for support. Thus although Tibetan Buddhism absorbed a great many elements of popular religious practice and belief, it did not get involved in popular social life as such.⁵²

This perspective requires that we posit an almost ubiquitous and uniform “Tibetan state,” capable of supporting a massive religious establishment while almost thoroughly concealing from laypersons their ultimate role in the maintenance of that establishment. Such a state must also be supposed to have been relatively stable over a very long period of time, if it was to have engendered the peculiar social arrangements that are demanded of it. However, this appears to be not adequate to explain the role of religion in the formation of Tibetan culture and identity, for, as a matter of fact, the ethnography and history of Tibet provide little evidence in support of this odd picture. Tibetan monks were routinely supported by their families, and the larger Tibetan monasteries depended in part on estates and other appanages, requiring an ongoing involvement in “popular social life,” for such purposes as recruitment and fund-raising and to fulfill the ritual functions they were expected to perform on behalf of the laity. The religious life of Tibet, moreover, was at no time limited to the great monastic centers and the activities directly sanctioned by them. A whole range of small temples and shrines, local rites and festivals, lay religious and itinerant preachers, to mention just a few of the alternatives, thrived with but tenuous ties to the “theocratic state,” and that state, indeed, did not exercise authority in large parts of the Tibetan world.

With this in mind, it is clear that the symbolic dynamics of religious systems within Tibetan culture should be considered in important respects as having primacy over state institutions in our investigations of the problem of Tibetan cultural and national identity.⁵³ In this connection pilgrimage may be examined as one of the paradigmatic phenomena contributing to, and perhaps even to some extent engendering, the cultural unity of the Tibetans. Pilgrimage, among other things, promoted trade in both goods and information. It brought persons from far distant parts of the Tibetan world into direct contact with one another and thus militated to some extent against divisive regionalistic tendencies. By ordering the cycles of pilgrimage

according to calendrical cycles, by establishing the locations visited and the routes traversed, and by promoting specific religious teachings, historical narratives, and symbolic interpretations of the landscape and the events taking place within it, the Tibetan religious world constructed for its inhabitants a common order of time, space, and knowledge.

But pilgrimage, even while engendering Tibetan communitas, also involved various particularisms; for the pilgrimages themselves were specifically tied to particular times, places, and institutions. Thus, for instance, the Drikung Powa Chenmo, though attracting Tibetans from all sorts of places and promoting cults, like that of Padmasambhava, whose following extended throughout Tibet and involved adherents of all sects, was equally an event that enhanced the standing of the Drikung Kagyü order in particular. And the Drikung Kagyü order, in its turn, may be seen to embody precisely the problem confronted by Tibetan civilization overall: how does one achieve some measure of unity, given great dispersion and little coercive force? Besides the question, therefore, of enhancing Drikung's status within the Tibetan world in general, there was a specific, perhaps more pressing requirement that the Drikung Powa Chenmo may have to some extent addressed, namely that of calling in the sect's own adherents, and reinforcing, in this way, the center of its authority in their eyes. There is perhaps a fractal logic at work here, significant structural features of Tibe - an culture and civilization being recapitulated at different levels, on different orders of scale.

The dialectical relationship between widespread, in some cases even universal, Tibetan cultural symbols, and the particularities of time, place, and person provides an appropriate point of departure for the interpretation of a particular event, such as the Drikung Powa Chenmo. In this connection it seems worthwhile especially to reflect upon the apparent homologies obtaining among features of geography, ritual, and body, and, in some instances, possibly history as well. Thus the ascent to the Kere Yangdzong Cave, the

teaching cycle of the Drikung Powa, and the rehearsed passage of the principle of consciousness from the body at death are all, from a formal point of view, equivalent. For the homology of the cave and the subtle body, whence consciousness departs from the crown, is again recapitulated in the performance of the powa at the culminating moment of the entire sequence of teaching (much as it ought to be, too, at the culminating moment of life). Death is here thematized as a liminal passage, but at the same time as a culminating and, literally, peak experience. We may suspect as well that the historical displacement of the fundamental locus of the teaching of *Planting the Stalk* from a spirit-filled lake—in Tibetan mythology the very image of the underworld realm of corruption and death—to a mountain hermitage further exemplifies a similar principle. Thus, in the symbolic order exemplified in the Drikung Powa, body, ritual, landscape, and history come to be mutually embodying, and so cosignifying.

As described above, it may appear that the 1992 performance of the Drikung Powa was primarily a replication of similar performances in the past. Such claims made in other contexts regarding rituals revived after long periods of interruption have sometimes been greeted with skepticism, and I think some reservations about this must apply here as well. Bruce Lincoln has compellingly argued, for instance, with respect to the interpretation of the Ncwala ritual marking the supremacy of the Swazi king, that relatively “minor” changes had to be understood in the context of the changing colonial situation in which the Swazi have found themselves in this century. In the present connection Lincoln’s remarks on our understanding of Swazi affirmations seem apt: “Of all grammatical forms, I know of none more subtle and problematic in their sociopolitical implications than pronouns of the first person plural that, when skillfully employed, permit speakers to construct groups in which they join with unnamed others and stand apart from others still: others who fall outside this ‘we.’”⁵⁴ In the case of the 1992 Drikung Powa, it must be noted that the changes were not minor at all: the two lamas normally expected to officiate were in exile; the monastic

population was considerably reduced; the Tibetan state and the Drikung estates had been dismantled and political and economic life now determined by the CCP—these and many other alterations escaped no one’s attention.

If the general approaches to the interpretation of Tibetan pilgrimage sketched out here have some merit, then, we may expect to see the continuation, resumption, and revival of traditional pilgrimage operating in part as both an assertion of and an initiation into a distinctively Tibetan cultural and ethnic identity in the face of such changes. At the revived Drikung Powa Chenmo there was indeed some evidence that something of this sort was taking place, as was reflected both by the pointed remarks of some of those in attendance, their pride that the Tibetan flag had been displayed and the anthem hummed, if only for a moment, and the obvious concern on the part of the local organizers that the pilgrimage not become an overtly political event. As these observations suggest, the conditions prevailing in the Tibetan world are by no means what they once were, and we cannot expect that the practice of pilgrimage will simply recapitulate the past, without reflecting the great changes that continue to transform the Tibetan world throughout. Indeed, future researchers will have to ask how events like the revived Drikung Powa Chenmo are received and understood by, for instance, the growing numbers of unemployed Tibetan youth who cluster around the billiard tables and bars in the towns. The eventual answer to such questions will depend in part on the degree of success with which traditional cultural symbols are creatively redeployed given the harsh actualities surrounding the cultural life of contemporary Tibet.

To conclude in brief, the study of Tibetan pilgrimage contributes much to our understanding of the Tibetan past, and certainly deserves more thorough consideration in this regard. The role of the pilgrimage in Tibet’s present and future, however, must be assessed with some caution, taking care not to project

the past too facilely onto a changing scene. It will be particularly important to follow Lincoln's counsel and weigh with special care each pilgrim's utterance of the pronoun "we."



a Lhasa pilgrim's bright smile



a Sakyapa monk from Kham among those who have made the journey to Drongur



a family of nomads from Radreng (Reting) to the northwest of Drikung



the pilgrims break camp and hasten to depart before nightfall



the procession descends slowly through the narrow ravine



the line of pilgrims reaches the opening of the valley at Terdrom

NOTES

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- 1 The Tibetan calendrical system, like the Chinese, uses a twelve-year animal cycle. The monkey year is of particular importance for Tibet owing to its associations with the ape who was the mythical progenitor of the Tibetan people and because it is also the year consecrated to Guru Padmasambhava, the Indian master of esoteric Buddhism who played an important role in Tibet's conversion to Buddhism during the eighth century. Certain other important pilgrimages also are organized during the monkey year, especially the famous pilgrimage to Tsa-ri, to the north of Bhutan, on which see Stein 1988; Riccard et al. 1994: ch. 10; Huber 1994b; and especially Huber 1999.
- 2 In fact, the current "liberal" religious policy was officially sanctioned only in 1982, with the promulgation of the Party directive known as "Document 19," for a translation of which see MacInnis 1989: 8 – 26.
- 3 For testimony concerning traditional pilgrimage in and around Lhasa, see, e.g. David-Neel 1983; Richardson 1993.
- 4 Large-Blondeau 1960, though of course reflecting only the rather limited sources available during the period in which that article was written, remains nevertheless valuable precisely because it surveys the most important and prominent pilgrimages, which had gained the attention of foreign visitors to Tibet early on. For general background, see also Dak-pa 1987. Stein 1988 discusses many sites in Tibet, China, and other parts of Asia that may be usefully compared with those considered here. The articles presented in Huber 1994a represent some of the most up to date work

on Tibetan pilgrimage, with extensive references to earlier contributions. Huber 1999 and Buffetrille 2000 do much to augment our knowledge of the traditions and practices of Tibetan pilgrimage.

- 5 The name Terdrom (*Gter-sgrom*) is of relatively recent origin, and literally means “treasure chest,” referring to the place as a site of discoveries of Ter. See, for instance, Germano 1998. The older name, and the one most frequently met with in the historical literature, is the near-homonym Tidro (*Ti-sgro*), abandoned no doubt in part because it is an obscure term. It means perhaps “pigeon quill,” alluding to the shape of the rock spires rising above the valley. The names of the valley are discussed in Dkon-mchog-'phel-rgyas 1991: 12.
- 6 This is of course not the place to enter upon a general discussion of current scholarly reflection on pilgrimage. Naquin and Yü 1992: 35 – 38 provide an excellent bibliographic survey of contemporary studies of pilgrimage in different religious cultures.
- 7 Chan 1994: 544 – 69 provides useful travel information and maps of the area.
- 8 Aris 1979: 3 – 41 includes an excellent analysis of these traditions. Refer also to Gyatso 1987.
- 9 On the Uru Shei Lhakhang and its early history, see Richardson 1952 – 3, 1983.
- 10 Refer to Tucci 1971: 195 – 201 for a brief account of Drikung among the principal fiefs of Central Tibet. During my visits to Lhasa in 1990 and 1992 I was repeatedly told that large numbers of the indigents then begging in the city were from Drikung or from Uyuk (*'u-yug*), to the west of Lhasa. Both are characterized by poor conditions for agriculture, when compared with the richer river valleys, and meager pastures, relative to the more prosperous nomadic regions of the plateau.
- 11 A traditional introduction to the Kagyü tradition, representing the Drikung lineage in particular, and including hagiographical accounts of Phakmotrupa and Kyopa Jikten Gönpö, may be found in Könchog Gyaltzen 1990.

- 12 On the spread of the Drikung Kagyü in the Kailash region, see Dkon-mchog-bstan-'dzin 1992: 43 – 72. The doctrinal contributions of Kyopa Jikten Gönpö have not yet been so well studied as they deserve to be; some aspects pertaining to Buddhist epistemology are discussed in Kuijp 1987.
- 13 The main centers of the sect in Ladakh are Lamayuru and Phiyang (*phyi-dbang*) Monasteries, briefly discussed in Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977: 20 – 22 and 122 – 25. The treatment of the latter, despite some interesting photographs, is particularly inadequate.
- 14 This is the Drikung Chetsang Rinpoche, whose main center is established in the city of Dehra Dun, Uttar Pradesh State. The second ranking Drikung hierarch, the Drikung Chungtsang Rinpoche, resides in Tibet, but was in India during the revival described in this essay. Ayang Rinpoche, representing an important eastern Tibetan branch of the tradition (from the Nangchen district), has established a monastic settlement at Byllakuppe, near Mysore, in Karnataka State.
- 15 Pad-rgyal 1989: 128 – 31, supplies the traditional biographical account of Dorje Gyelpo. Dkon-mchog-'phel-rgyas 1991: 50, states that his activities at Terdrom commenced during an earth monkey (*sa-sprel*) year, which in Dorje Gyelpo's lifetime could have only been 1308, a date that is possible if these activities preceded his ascension to the Drikung throne in 1314. Pad-rgyal's account (p. 129) does in fact mention his residence at Terdrom a few lines before recounting his enthronement.
- 16 The notion of opening or reopening a religious site is a mystical and geomantic one, referring to the disclosure of the location's special powers and potentialities. Cf. Germano 1998.
- 17 On the cult of this deity, see Dudjom Rinpoche 1991: I: 710 – 716 and Boord 1993, the bibliography of which details other relevant sources and investigations. The rites of Vajrakīla are considered particularly efficacious means to remove obstacles to both material and spiritual success.

18 Dkon-mchog-'phel-rgyas 1991: 50.

19 For a brief hagiography of Rinchen Püntso, see Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, vol. 1: 676 – 77. On the phenomenon and significance of treasure discovery, refer to Germano 1998

20 Dkon-mchog-'phel-rgyas 1991: 24 – 26 explains the configuration of the cave and its symbolic associations

21 Dkon-mchog-'phel-rgyas 1991: 50. The biographies of the brothers are given in Pad-rgyal 1989: 240 – 88. Könchok Rinchen was the first of the Chetsang line of incarnations and Rikdzin Chödrak the first of the Chungtsang line wh have alternately served as the lineage holders of Drikung down to the present time.

22 Shaw 1994: 117 – 22, summarizes traditional accounts of the origins of this teaching. In her final paragraph about this, Shaw's assertion that “all but the intelligensia ... are not aware that [the longevity teachings of Siddharajñī] are based on the revelations and teachings of a woman” does not square with my own observations. I found that both monks and laypersons generally referred to Siddharajñī using her honorific title *Ma-gcig* (*Grub(-pa'i)-rgyal(-mo)*), the “sole mother” Siddharajñī, which leaves little room for misunderstanding.

23 Dkon-mchog-'phel-rgyas 1991 spells this as *'ja'-tshug-ma*, meaning perhaps “Rainbow Ascent,” an interpretation that I also received from some pilgrims orally. However, interviews with lamas of the Drikung lineage, the works cited in note 28 below, and the actual practice of using a stalk to test the opening in the fontanel that is induced by the powa, all support the spelling and translation offered here.

24 Guenther 1963: 201.

25 David-Neel 1931, Evans-Wentz 1958.

26 Brauen-Dolma 1985: 247. In note 6 on the same page, Brauen-Dolma cites Michael Aris's description of a public teaching of powa in Bhutan as "an outbreak of religious hysteria."

27 Dkon-mchog-'phel-rgyas 1991: 50.

28 Könchok Gyaltzen 1988: 119 – 27 summarizes the powa instructions and their history. Accounts of Nyinda Sangye are given in Gu-ru Bkra-shis 1990: 480 – 81; 'Jam-mgon 1976: 524 – 25.

29 David-Neel 1931. When visiting Dhagpo Kagyu Ling, the center of the Karma Kagyü tradition in Dordogne, France, in August 1979, I was asked to translate the powa teachings of the resident Lama on behalf of a French disciple, who, following a couple of days of practice in retreat, experienced the characteristic opening of the fontanel, accompanied by a clearly visible swelling from which there was some bleeding.

30 It should be noted, however, that the Drikungpas were among the few Kagyü traditions favored by the Fifth Dalai Lama, who effected the unification of Tibet during this period. On the Great Fifth's sectarian relationships, refer, e.g., to Smith 1970: 16 – 18; Dudjom Rinpoche 1991: I: 682 – 84. The experiences of Rikdzin Chödrak during this period, as reported in Pad-rgyal 1989: 279 – 81, reflect the deeply troubling events that affected Tibet: in 1641 – 43 the hardships wrought by the Mongolian and Tibetan forces engaged in civil war and several successive years of hail brought severe famine to the populace, with many deaths, "the unprecedented evil being such that some women ate the flesh of slain dogs." Rikdzin Chödrak succored the people as best he could and in 1645 entered into formal ties with the Fifth Dalai Lama.

31 Dkon-mchog-'phel-rgyas 1991: 50 – 51. In the present translation some expansion and explanation has been added, without annotation, wherever the Tibetan is so terse as to preclude clear understanding if interpreted more literally.

32 Tashi Tsering (Dharamsala), oral communication.

33 Schwartz. 1994, chaps. 6 – 7; Goldstein 1995: 46 – 52.

34 I arrived at the festival on 10 August 1992, that is, after it was already underway. In what follows, references to events in the preceding days are based on interviews with participants and the schedules publicly posted at Drongur Monastery.

35 During the late 1950s several prominent lamas from eastern Tibet disappeared immediately after meeting with Chinese authorities, and it was widely rumored that, had the Dalai Lama not escaped from Tibet in 1959, he would have met with the same fate. (See, e.g., Donnet 1994: 33 – 36.) Turning to the post-Cultural Revolution period, some Tibetan lamas living abroad have experienced difficulty with Chinese visas and travel papers in recent years, and dissident lamas within Tibet, as is well-known, have sometimes been arrested, imprisoned, and tortured. The disappearance of Gendhun Choekyi Nyima, the Dalai Lama's candidate for the office of Panchen Lama, in the summer of 1995 is currently offered by some as evidence that the kidnap of religious figures regarded by the authorities as somehow troublesome is still a very real possibility, though in 1992 events had not yet taken this turn. In any event, the untroubled return of the Chungtsang Rinpoche to Tibet a year or so after the revived Drikung Powa Chenmo suggests that his position is a relatively secure one and that the worries expressed by some on his behalf were indeed not warranted.

36 A refugee Kagyü Lama living in Nepal with whom I spoke afterwards (September 1992), who was familiar with the reputation of the Drikung Powa Chenmo as it was performed in 1956 and before, was specifically concerned to learn from me, for instance, whether during the culminating teachings large numbers of persons were observed in trance, unconscious, or otherwise profoundly affected. The fact that, despite my observation of considerable and deeply felt religious fervor, no such occurrences took place in the immediate area in which I was seated (though they may well have elsewhere), he regarded as an indication of the diminished spiritual power (*byin-brlabs*) of the teaching.

37 On the fraternities of “fighting monks” in some of the larger Tibetan monasteries, see Goldstein 1964. “Monk-polic - men,” however, need not be drawn from the ranks of the *rdab-rdob*, and the latter category is not recognized in all monasteries.

38 It appears to be very widely believed by local political authorities in Tibetan regions of China, including both ethnic Tibetan and Han cadres, that the protests in Lhasa during the late 1980s were at least in part aroused by the presence of foreign spectators, even if direct foreign agitation was not involved. In some parts of eastern Tibet, in particular, this is frequently mentioned (“unofficially” at least) as one justification for maintaining restrictions on foreign vi - tors. Cf. Schwartz 1994: 38 – 42.

39 The practice of trade in connection with pilgrimage is accepted practice in the Tibetan world, and is not regarded as contradicting the religious aims of pilgrimage, unless worldly gain is one’s primary motivation (*kun-slong*).

40 As described in Goldstein 1998, the distributions of offerings in connection with these ceremonies are essential for the maintenance of the monks (and, in this case, nuns as well).

41 The schedule as I give it here reflects the actual program that was followed. This in fact does accord with the written program posted at the monastery, except in the matter of the teaching of the powa itself, on which occasion the Sok-trül Rinpoche actually conferred the teaching instead of the lama who had been scheduled to do so but who fell ill the day before. Dkon-mchog-'phel-rgyas 1991: 51 – 2 provides the following summary of the traditional program:

During the eighth day there is the initial preparatory empowerment. When the assembled public is very numerous there are about thirty thousand, but if not then roughly twenty thousand. On the ninth day there is the empowerment of the Sage, the Vajrāsana empowerment. On the day of the great festival of the tenth day, the two lords of refuge don the ceremonial garb of Oḍḍiyāna and Za-hor, and also the Central Asian woven cape called Nechuma that was offered to Kyopa Rinpoche by the emperor, and they set up the parasol of peacock feathers that the emperor offered. [In this regalia] they confer the *torma*-empowerment of the peaceful guru, the empowerment of longevity, etc.

On the eleventh and twelfth, if there are none with special requests, they bestow such [initiations] as those of the Six Syllables, the longevity empowerment, Lo-gyon, the Wrathful Guru, and the three wrathful ones together. On the thirteenth, the great Drikungpa's profound and uncommon Great Generation of Spirit is conferred, this being a rite for generation of the enlightened attitude. On the thirteenth, if there are none with special requests, such empowerments as those of Tārā, Māricī and Mañjuśrī are conferred.

On the fifteenth is the so-called Drikung Powa Chenmo, a profound doctrine renowned throughout all the numberless districts. The entire populace, high and low, harbors great hopes of obtaining the Powa Chenmo. Anywhere throughout the east, center or west of Tibet, one who has obtained the Drikung Powa Chenmo is counted as being fortunate. In order to obtain it, many people, without regard to sectarian affiliation, travel from afar, undertaking many hardships. Up to that [date], every morning each day, when the great empowerment is performed, the two lords of refuge, as is desired, bestow each day's empowerment. In the afternoon, in the lower part of the great empowerment tent, they bestow guidance on the so-called "background doctrines," i.e., the venerable Kyopa Rinpoché's "Heart of the Teaching" (*bstan-snying*) and "Single Intention of the True Doctrine" (*dam-chos dgongs-gcig*), as well as whatever teachings of the doctrine are desired by the faithful, without regard to sectarian affiliation. To those from the meditation colleges, according to the stages of their practice, they bestow the cycles of experiential cultivation, and the empowerment and instructions of the Further Profundity (*yang-zab*, the main *terma*-cycle of Rinchen Püntshok), etc. They also bestow the full monastic ordination, etc. It is the custom that during an interval [in the program of teaching], in the Terdrom assembly tent, Auspicious Whorl, the two lords of refuge join the assembly, at which time prayers for their longevity are offered by the entire assembly.

42 See Kapstein 1992 on the some of the distinctively nationalistic dimensions of the Tibetan Avalokiteśvara cult.

43 By "non-monastic religious" I mean to refer to the not insubstantial numbers of Tibetans who have some ritual proficiency but are not ordained monks or nuns. Some of these persons, such as the adepts of Cutting (*gcod*) with their distinctive headgear as seen in the accompanying photographs, may well have formal religious designation applied to them, in this case *sngags-pa*, "mantra-adept." Others, like the two men seated in the "Charnel Ground" in the mountains, may be for all intents and purposes ordinary laypersons who are distinguished by having mastered a ritual repertoire.

44 The “eight great charnel grounds” (*dur-khrod chen-po brgyad*) were thought to be major centers of tantric practice in medieval India. Many of the important pilgrimage routes in Tibet include locations metonymically identified with these sites. Occasionally one hears of them being used as the sites for “sky burials,” the dismemberment of the deceased who is then fed to vultures, as well, but this is by no means essential to the function of the site in pilgrimage.

45 See note 22 above.

46 See Kapstein 1995, for example, where I have examined some of the rituals connected with artistic production. Though I would not deny that Turner’s themes of liminality and *communitas* might be invoked in connection with the materials studied there as well, they are certainly much less prominent than the structures of order that I sought to emphasize in my analysis. Turner 1977b summarizes the main features of his theory of ritual. Turner and Turner 1978 investigates pilgrimage in Christian culture, and Turner 1977a examines the relationship between pilgrimage and death.

47 The Tibetan people are often popularly depicted as having an admirable ecological sensibility, and indeed, I would concur that this was largely true of traditional Tibetan society. It remains a question, however, to what extent this was due to the relatively low-tech features of that society and to what extent to a deliberately cultivated view of nature. What I saw in the aftermath of the Drikung Powa some might regard as sad evidence that Tibetan Buddhists, given plastic, glass and cardboard, are unfortunately no more ecologically aware than are most other contemporary peoples. Some of the monastic leaders of Drikung, whom I met afterwards, did say that they had not foreseen a problem that, after all, had not existed in earlier times, and so were not adequately prepared to address it.

48 Goldstein 1989: 5 – 6 observes that, “the government maintained no police or magistrate force in the rural areas,” and “there were only 400 to 500 fully gazetted lay and monk officials administering a country that contained at least one million inhabitants in an area that was almost as large as Western Europe.” Goldstein’s remarks apply, of course, just to the area of political Tibet ruled from Lhasa. See also Dawa Norbu 1985.

49 Having had the privilege to have participated on a number of occasions in discussions between H.H. the Dalai Lama and leading Jewish rabbis, I have more than once noted the surprise expressed by the latter on learning that, for instance, Tibetan Buddhism does not possess a common prayer book. While sectarian and lineage differences are not in particular what is at stake here (Judaism and Islam, for instance, are no less divided than Tibetan Buddhism in this regard), one may note nonetheless that tradition maintains that even when the political forces dominating Tibet gave the ecclesiastical leadership the opportunity to bring about sectarian unity by force this was refused. See, e.g., Thu'u-bkwan 1984: 451 – 52 on Khubilai Khan's failed attempt to arrange for the paramouncy of the Sa-skyapa sect under Chos-rgyal 'Phags-pa. Even the Fifth Dalai Lama and his successors, who went further in the direction of bringing about religious unity than had any other Tibetan leaders, still left much latitude for sectarian difference.

50 Lcang-skya 1989: 11 – 12.

51 Ortner 1978: 157. I emphasize Ortner's earlier work here only because it clearly exemplifies some assumptions which appear to be very widespread in thinking about the Tibetan state and its relation with religion. However, the theoretical approach elaborated in Ortner 1989, from which I have learned much in connection with the present chapter, clearly suggests a very different perspective from that developed in the earlier work. Cf. also the critical discussion of views of the Tibetan state in Samuel 1993: 139 – 46.

52 Ortner 1978: 159.

53 Ortner 1989 suggests a similar conclusion.

54 Lincoln 1989: 74.

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SPELLINGS OF TIBETAN NAMES AND TERMS

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Achi | <i>A-phyi</i> |
| Angön Rinpoche | <i>A-mgon Rin-po-che</i> |
| Black Maṇḍala Lake | <i>Mtsho Maṇḍal-nag-po</i> |
| Chetsang Rinpoche | <i>Che-tshang Rin-po-che</i> |
| Chötsel | <i>Chos-'tshal</i> |
| Chungtsang Rinpoche | <i>Chung-tshang Rin-po-che</i> |
| Dinggyel | <i>Sding-rgyal</i> |
| Dokashak | <i>Rdo-kha-shag</i> |
| Dorje Gyelpo | <i>Rdo-rje-rgyal-po</i> |
| Dridzong | <i>'Bri-rdzong</i> |
| Drikung Kagyü | <i>'Bri-gung Bka'-brgyud</i> |
| Drikung Khandro | <i>'Bri-gung Mkha'-'gro</i> |
| Drikung Powa Chenmo | <i>'Bri-gung 'pho-ba chen-mo</i> |
| Drikung-thil | <i>'Bri-gung-mthil</i> |
| Drongur | <i>'Brong-ngur</i> |
| Dzenthang Kyopa Temple | <i>Rdzan-thang Skyob-pa'i lha-khang</i> |
| Gambu Rinpoche | <i>Sgam-bu Rin-po-che</i> |
| Gar College | <i>Sgar grwa-tshang</i> |
| Gyalwa Karmapa | <i>Rgyal-ba Karma-pa</i> |
| Kagyü | <i>Bka'-brgyud</i> |
| Karma Lingpa | <i>Karma Gling-pa</i> |
| Katsel | <i>Ka-tshal</i> |

Kere Yangdzong
Khatsel-gang
Khengchugyü
Könchok Rinchen
Kyopa Jikten Gönpö
Ladakh
Limi
Mañi Temple
Mendrogongkar
Nangchen
Nangse Könchok Tendzin Rinpoche
Nuba Namka Gyeltsen Rinpoche
Nyedak Rinpoche
Nyinda Sangye
Nyingma
Pachung Rinpoche
Phakmotrupa Dorje Gyelpo
Peme Gyeltsen
powa
Rinchen Püntso
Riwang Tendzin Rinpoche
Salt Cave
Soktrül Rinpoche
Songtsen Gampo

*Ke-re-yang-rdzong
Kha-'tshal-sgang
Kheng-chu-rgyud
Dkon-mchog-rin-chen
Skyob-pa 'Jig-rten-mgon-po
La-dwags
Gli-mi
Ma-ñi lha-khang
Mal-gro-gung-dkar
Nang-chen
Gnang-gsal Dkon-mchog-bstan-'dzin Rin-po-che
Nub-pa Nam-mkha'-rgyal-mtshan Rin-po-che
Gnya'-ldag Rin-po-che
Nyi-zla-sangs-rgyas
Rnying-ma
Dpa'-chung Rin-po-che
Phag-mo-gru-pa Rdo-rje-rgyal-po
Padma'i Rgyal-mtshan
'pho-ba
Rin-chen-phun-tshogs
Ri-dbang Bstan-'dzin Rin-po-che
Tshwa-phug
Srog-sprul Rin-po-che
Srong-btsan sgam-po*

Tayak-thang
Tendzin Chödrön
Terdrom
Tetrak-thang
Thukje Nyima
Tsünmo-tse
Uru Shei Lhakang
Yeshe Tsogyel
Zhotö Tidro

Rta-g.yag-thang
Bstan-'dzin-chos-sgron
Gter-sgrom
Lte-khrag-thang
Thugs-rje nyi-ma
Btsun-mo-rtse
Dbu-ru zhwa'i lha-khang
Ye-shes-mtsho-rgyal
Zho-stod ti-sgro



facing page: my companions during the ascent to the Kere Yangdzong Cave

rear cover: the procession of pilgrims at the festival's conclusion

In 1992 the Tibetan Buddhist pilgrimage and festival of the Great Transference at Drikung was revived after a gap of thirty-six years. This would prove to be the only renewal of its traditional performance . . .

Matthew T. Kapstein, whose study of the event is reproduced here for the first time with color photographic documentation, is the author of many works on Buddhism and Tibetan history, including *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism* and *The Tibetans*. He is Director of Tibetan Studies at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, and Numata Visiting Professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of Chicago.

