Tibetan Mountain Deities

Their Cults and Representations

Anne Marie Blondeau

TIBETAN MOUNTAIN DEITIES, THEIR CULTS AND REPRESENTATIONS

Papers Presented at a Panel of the
7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies
Graz 1995

Edited by Anne-Marie Blondeau

ÖSTERREICHISCHE AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN
PHILOSOPHISCH-HISTORISCHE KLASSE
DENKSCHRIFTEN, 266. BAND

VERÖFFENTLICHUNGEN ZUR SOZIALANTHROPOLOGIE

Band 3

ÖSTERREICHISCHE AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN
PHILOSOPHISCH-HISTORISCHE KLASSE
DENKSCHRIFTEN, 266. BAND

Proceedings of the
7th Seminar of the International
Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995

General Editor: Ernst Steinkellner

Volume VI

Tibetan Mountain Deities, Their Cults and Representations

Papers Presented at a Panel of the
7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies
Graz 1995

Edited by

Anne-Marie Blondeau

VERLAG DER ÖSTERREICHISCHEN AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN
WIEN 1998

Vorgelegt von w. M. ERNST STEINKELLNER in der Sitzung am 15. Oktober 1997

Gedruckt mit Unterstützung des Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung

Front cover:
Ngam ring Pass, Western Tibet
Modern offerings to the territorial gods (photograph by K. Buffetrille, August 1996)

ISBN 3-7001-2748-0

Druck: Grasl Druck & Neue Medien, 2540 Bad Vöslau

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD

The present volume is the outcome of the panel entitled "Mountain Deities and their Cults", which was convened at the seventh seminar of the IATS. This panel, originally proposed by Hildegard Diemberger and Brigitte Steinmann, was a sequel to a round table discussion on the subject of the cult of sacred mountains that was held in Paris in the framework of a joint Franco-Austrian research project. The proceedings of this round table have been published by the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften,[1] and we are grateful to Professor Ernst Steinkellner and the Academy for undertaking to produce the present volume in the same series, as a natural sequel to the earlier collection. Since Hildegard Diemberger was unfortunately unable to see the project through to its conclusion and to take part in the seminar, the task of editing the panel proceedings was undertaken by me at Professor Steinkellner's request.

Because the articles contained here are not published in same series as the Proceedings of the IATS Seminar, the panel's title, which was too general outside a Tibetological context, has had to be more precisely focused on Tibetan mountains. Likewise, several contributions may seem out of place in this collection to the extent that, although they refer to the Tibetan world, they do not deal with it directly. This being said, they provide a welcome perspective that extends our comparative scope beyond the cultural confines of Tibet proper, into those marches where, even now, different cultures overlap, mingle, clash or simply ignore one another. The articles have been organised, for the reader's benefit, less according to geographical region than to subject matter. Thus, the section entitled "Tibetan cultures" contains contributions on subjects that are specifically Tibetan – in a cultural, rather than political, sense, because the geographical area covered comprises not only Tibet proper but also Bhutan and Dolpo, in Nepal. By contrast, the majority of the articles grouped under the rubric of "Linguistic and Cultural Borders", which include studies from Lahul, Nepal, Sikkim and north-east Amdo (modern Gansu) are indeed concerned primarily with the question of cultural interaction. The third and final part, "Mongolian, Turkic and Tungus Perspectives", contains two articles that provide a comparative angle from north of the Tibetan cultural sphere. The contributions within each of the sections are arranged in alphabetical order of authors' names.

The first article, by Katia Buffetrille, takes us to an unusual pilgrimage site in Tibet, mChod rten nyi ma, the northern gateway to the "hidden land" (*sbas yul*) of Sikkim. The place is unusual not because of its configuration, which includes the ubiquitous mountain and lake, *stūpa* and monastery, but for its peculiar virtues: pilgrims who are guilty of incest and can survive the formidable test of diving into its icy waters are absolved, and can resume their places in their families and communities. The consistent character of the accounts collected by Katia Buffetrille leave no doubt either about the particular benefits for which this pilgrimage is known, or its considerable fame, at least in Central Tibet and among the Sherpas. It is worth noting that the possibility of purifying the cardinal pollution of incest contradicts the consensus of the existing literature whereby incest results in the irreparable rupture of social ties, with the guilty parties being banished from their communities, or even put to death. The facts presented here raise anew hard questions about the fragmentary nature of our knowledge and, in this particular instance, about social taboos that are not readily broached with an outside investigator: this much is evident from the fact that, while pilgrims to mChod rten nyi ma deny that incest is the motive for their visit, others insist that "that sort of thing" does not happen in

---

I am deeply indebted to Charles Ramble, who translated the French version of this foreword into English.

[1] *Reflections of the Mountain. Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya.* A.M. Blondeau & E. Steinkellner (eds.), Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996.

their community. It may also be difficult to admit to an outsider that things can be "arranged with heaven", and the examples collected by Buffetrille show that other places, too, may have the same properties as mChod rten nyi ma, but are kept secret. In this case, water seems to play a major role, while the *yul lha*, the divine mountain of a territory or a village, figures neither in the oral tradition nor in the pilgrimage guides. Nevertheless, the punishment of the guilty parties is explained in terms of fear of the consequences for the community that might be unleashed by the god's anger at the occurrence of incest. And, if we agree with Buffetrille's suggestion, plunging into the icy water might be a trial by ordeal, the divine judge being, in this case, the *yul lha.*

The next two articles, by Hildegard Diemberger and Guntram Hazod, complement each other. Following up their work on the *Shel dkar chos 'byung*,[2] they examine written and oral sources to retrace the history and the role of two divinities who became protectors of the lords of Southern La stod and the monastery of Shel dkar. The study provides us with new examples of the extreme typological complexity of such protector divinities. These gods have graduated from the status of clan deities (*pho lha*, gods of the patrilineage) – during the dynastic period, tradition has it – to the rank of Protectors of the doctrine (*chos skyong*, Sk. *dharmapāla*), bound by oath to the service of Buddhism and henceforth propitiated by the monastic rites of *bskang gso* (appeasement and reestablishment of relations with a god). Parallel to this straightforward diachronic development, however, the divinities in question continue to be venerated as *pho lha, yul lha* or *chos skyong* according to place, community or lineage, and are duly *worshipped* in accordance with the ontology accorded them.

Pho lha lHa btsan sgang dmar, the "Horseman in Red" who is discussed by Diemberger, is a "native" of sGang dmar, in the Ding ri area, where his seat is the eponymous mountain Ding ri sgang dmar. As the chief of the mountain gods of the region, he rules over this mountains' entourage, his ministers and vassals situated in the four directions and extending beyond the border of Nepal. The god's title conveys his identity as the ancestral divinity of the Shes phrug clan, from which the lineage of the lords of Southern La stod later emerged. This lineage, which migrated from Khams, originally settled near the foot of the mountain. The god followed them on their subsequent journey to Shel dkar, and after the construction of Shel dkar monastery in 1385 he became its protector, and was elevated to the rank of *chos skyong*. At the site of his original mountain, however, he is still the subject of a typical *pho lha/ yul lha* cult and even, until 1959, received a biannual sacrificial offering of a white sheep. The survival of animal sacrifice is well documented on the Tibetan periphery, where its existence is usually attributed to the patchiness of Buddhist influence on the communities in question. Examples of blood-sacrifice from Tibet itself are therefore of great ethnographic importance. This is particularly true in the present case where, as Diemberger emphasises, the ritual had something of an official character to the extent that it involved the participation of a long-established local army camp, and even monk-musicians from the nearby monastery.

Guntram Hazod adopts a more historical perspective in his unravelling of the origins, iconography and functions associated with bKra shis 'od 'bar, the other protector of Shel dkar monastery. The trajectory of this god as a protector seems to be straightforward enough on the face of it: brought to Tibet from India by dPang lo tsā ba (1276-1342), he became the protector of the Bo dong pa and of Shel dkar monastery, which originally belonged to this school. He appears in his peaceful manifestation as bKra shis 'od 'bar and in wrathful guise as rDo rje rgyal mtshan. But the situation on the ground is rather more complicated: within the proper ambit of Bo dong pa influence, he is regarded as a *yul lha* in several places – including the famous Yar

---

[2] Ngag dbang skal ldan rgya mtsho, *Shel dkar chos 'byung. History of the "White Crystal", Religion and Politics of* Southern *La stod.* Translation and Facsimile Edition of the Tibetan Text by Pasang Wangdu and Hildegard Diemberger in Cooperation with Guntram Hazod, Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996.

'brog bSam sdings – where he is identified with certain mountains as the beneficiary of local cults. By retracing the course of other possible origins, Hazod uncovers the numerous links between this divinity and the ancient dBa'/dBas clan, plotting his course from Khams to Pha drug in Southern La stod and his installation as the *yul lha* bKra shis 'od 'bar. This is, for Hazod, the original biography, which appears to have been revised in order to establish the connection with dPang lo tsā ba. Future excavation of the ruins at Pha drug – known as the "Mon tombs" and "Mon buildings" – may confirm the author's conclusions. But to come back to the principal theme of the present volume, we may note the similarities in the development of the two divinities bKra shis 'od 'bar and Pho lha lHa btsan sgang dmar, and the fact that, as *yul lha* mountains in nomadic areas, their cults include possession among spirit-mediums (*lha pa*).

Mediums and the composite divinities that they incarnate are also the subject of Françoise Pommaret's contribution. Pommaret takes us from Tibet into Bhutan, but the mediums she presents are quite distinct from the type of specialists – variously called *lha pa, dpa' bo* and so forth – that are widespread on both sides of the Himalaya. These mediums, who are peculiar to the sKur stod region, are known as *gter bdag* – "lords of treasure". The name is ambiguous insofar as it denotes on the one hand the local god who was subdued by Padmasambhava and charged with the protection of treasure (precious items and texts), and, on the other, the human receptacle of whom the god takes possession. The rNying ma pa tradition of the "treasure-text discoverers" (*gter ston*) forms the background to this study, and the author highlights the key role played by the great Padma gling pa in the development of the traditions associated with these *gter bdag*: the discovery of the "hidden land" of mKhan pa ljongs; the exile of Mu rug btsan po/ Khyi kha ra thod, the monstrous son of adulterous liaisons contracted by the wife of Khri srong lde btsan; and the story of King Sindha ra dza, whose "soul", kidnapped by a demon, was retrieved by Padmasambhava.

The divinities who incarnate through the *gter bdag* mediums have also been integrated into the Buddhist pantheon in the category of Protectors of the doctrine (*chos skyong*). Two of them, Pe har and Tsi'u dmar po, are well known for their habit of incarnating in Tibetan "oracles", while a third, Zo ra ra skyes, seems to be an autochthonous god. Pommaret tackles the possibility that the Bhutanese mKhan pa ljongs may have been fabricated by Padma gling pa along the lines of the Nepalese mKhan pa lung, which was "revealed" a century earlier by Rig 'dzin rGod ldem, and that Zur rwa ra skyes may have been translocated as part of the process. She does however point out that in the Bhutanese setting, Zo ra ra skyes, the treasure-guardian of mKhan pa ljongs, is associated with a mountain identified as a *sku bla,* a term designating a class of gods that provided the personal divinities of early Tibetan Sovereigns. Might this mountain have originally been regarded as the *sku bla* of the banished prince Mu rug btsan po? I wonder whether this hypothesis may one day be borne out by the emergence of new materials. If it were confirmed, this example would complement the cases of Pho lha lHa btsan sgang dmar and bKra shis 'od 'bar, thereby reinforcing the emergent pattern of ancestral mountain gods (*pho lha/ sku bla*) being absorbed by Buddhism and transformed into Protectors of the doctrine. Since the time of Padma gling pa, at any rate, Zo ra ra skyes has belonged to a set of five brothers, who include in their number Pe har and Tsi'u dmar po, the celebrated guardians of the riches of bSam yas. Pommaret suggests that Padma gling pa's links with bSam yas might explain the role of these divinities at sKur stod, as well as the derivation of aspects of Zo ra ra skyes from the figure of Tsi'u dmar po, and the particular form of mediumship that enables them to incarnate: this is typical of Tibetan oracles (*chos rje*), well known in the West through the foremost of them, the oracle of gNas chung. The description of the *gter bdag* and the seance in which they are consulted after falling into trance are indications of their Tibetan origin, a conclusion that is further substantiated by the "Khams language" in which their utterances are delivered.

The article by Christian Schicklgruber that concludes this first section brings us to a less problematic field of inquiry than the more nebulous study of the identity and history of gods. Schicklgruber describes a horse-race, a contemporary event that constitutes the nucleus of the annual cult surrounding the territorial god (*yul lha*) of the village of gNam mdo, in Dolpo. This god, the mountain A pha yul lha, is surrounded by an entourage consisting of his wife, A ma ri nag, and a group of seven brothers, situated on neighbouring hills. The horse-race by itself provides a paradigm for the observations to be found in the existing literature: the cult of the *yul lha* is the province of men, with the women being content to match their husbands with their finest attire and to play the part of spectators at the race. Only the men of the village community that is directly dependent on A pha yul lha participate, and at least one person from each household must take part. Victory is a sign of divine favour, and bestows power on the winner. It is as if time, in gNam mdo, were suspended, and as if every year the villagers reenacted the race that secured Gesar his throne, as the author quite properly reminds us. As in the case of Gesar, anyway, the outcome of the race is a foregone conclusion, because the god invariably grants victory to the same clan, the lHo ris blon po, whose *pho lha* he happens to be. This clan provides the hereditary political chief (the "mayor", *gras po*) of the village, as well as the specialist whose principal task it is to deflect hailstorms from the crops (*ser ba bkag mkhan*). Anyone who has attended one of these races, where excitement, disorder and the spirit of competition reign supreme, is entitled to wonder about the sleight of hand that always assures victory to the same party. Schicklgruber does not enlighten us on this score, but he does show how more or less recent social and political developments have wrought changes in the seemingly immutable rubric of this ritual. To begin with, as in the cases discussed by the preceding articles, the Buddhist clergy has gained control of the ancestor cult, which is henceforth "framed" within a Buddhist ceremony performed at the racetrack itself. The appropriation is complete, right down to the names by which the Buddhist ritual is known: *lha bsang* (fumigation offering to the god) and especially *lha gsol* (propitiation of the god), a term that was used to denote the collective worship of the sovereign's personal divinity during the dynastic period. And furthermore, in an act that finds its exact parallel in the Western world, the Lama blesses both horses and riders by sprinkling them with consecrated water! It is the Lama who, during the ritual, entreats the gods for the spiritual welfare of people as well as for their success and prosperity, and in this role of intercessor for the community has supplanted the "preventer of hail", whose social position has accordingly suffered a decline. Even more recently, the traditional structures of political power have been undermined by the advent of Nepalese democracy and the election campaigns: power is no longer in the hands of the divinely-elected "mayor" but is now held by a representative who is chosen by ballot. As in the case of the horse race, however, the ballot has favoured a candidate from the lHo ris blon po clan. But for how much longer will the villagers of gNam mdo continue to worship a *yul lha* whose position as arbiter of the political and social order has been usurped?

Ann Forbes, who opens the second section, takes us to a world apparently far removed, both linguistically and culturally, from the Tibetan context: that of the Yamphu Rai of the Upper Arun Valley in north-east Nepal. The landscape here is not invested by the divine, and there are no mountains or lakes to remind people permanently of the presence of the invisible world. But this world does exist, in the form of the realm of the ancestors, accessible to priests and shamans who are able to cross the boundary at the original spring (*tsawa*) where the first ancestors stopped in the course of their migration to their present territory. The recitation of this first journey is transmitted as part of the corpus of oral tradition concerning the origin myths (*pelem*), and the journey is reenacted every time the "bard" (*pelemgi*) ritually performs the recitation. The foundation myth of Hedangna, the village on which Forbes's study is focused, and the discussions stimulated there by the various local interpretations of the myth, offer a striking illustration of the villagers' awareness of being at a fulcrum, "sandwiched between the two

literate creeds of Hinduism and Buddhism": the first ancestor is the son of a Kiranti king from Kathmandu, but his journey in quest of the territory that awaits him takes him to Tibet, where the travel-weary prince settles down and marries a Tibetan. The journey is resumed by his two sons, who travel down from Tibet until the expected signs inform them that they have reached their goal, Hedangna. The same separation between Buddhist Tibet and Hindu Nepal appears in the reenactment of the ancestors' journey undertaken by the *pelemgi* during funeral rites, when the "bard" has the task of accompanying the soul of the dead person to the realm of the ancestors: he travels up the Arun, enters Tibet and passes beyond Lhasa, where the gateway to the land of the ancestors is apparently located. Then, after leaving the soul here, he returns to Hedangna and announces that he has to go and visit the king of Kasi (Benares?), from where he will bring back the essence of various grains. Forbes emphasises that this imaginary journey, like the relations that the other religious specialists, the shamans and priests, maintain with the ancestors, entails an accurate description of a real topography and makes use of everyday objects that are temporarily endowed with a sacral character by mythic time. Space and time are those of the first ancestors, and objects and plants belong to the ancestral realm. We are indeed, as Forbes remarks, a long way from the idealisation and "mandalaisation" of the landscape characteristic of Tibetan Buddhism. Nevertheless, is the world-view of the Yamphu Rai of Hedangna, with their realm of the dead modelled on this world, not familiar from other Tibeto-Burman populations and, as far as pre-Buddhist Tibet is concerned, represented in the funeral rituals of the Dunhuang manuscripts?

According to Forbes, a number of authors have attributed the remarkable resistance of the Yamphu Rai to Tibetan Buddhist and Hindu ideologies, which have apportioned out most of the Himalaya between them, to the system of land tenure established by the Nepalese government. This is not the case in Mustang, which has come under the wholesale influence of Buddhism, and to a lesser extent of Bon, and is generally regarded as a Tibetan enclave. An exception to this cultural homogeneity is found in a group of five villages in the southern part, Baragaon, an area that is known to us largely through the earlier work of Charles Ramble. These villages are distinctive both in terms of their language, *Se skad*, and their religious practices. A number of arguments support the hypothesis that the original occupants of this area were the "Se", a population that became increasingly Tibetanised and subject to the influence of Buddhism. As Ramble shows, this process is neither complete nor homogeneous. In Baragaon, beside the "orthodox" Buddhist and Bonpo clergy, there are specialists of the "nameless" tradition, called *lha bon* or *a ya*. The author rightly avoids referring to these specialists by the standard sobriquets (such as "pre-" or "non-Buddhist", or "popular"), and prefers the term "pagan", in its etymological sense of "local", to distinguish them from the literate priesthood. As in similar situations both in Nepal and across the border in Tibet (the articles by Hazod and Diemberger provide examples of the latter), the worship of territorial gods included animal sacrifices that were abandoned under pressure from the Buddhist and Bonpo clergy. Ramble compares the main rituals for the territorial gods of each of three Tibetan-speaking villages, Khyenga, Dzar and Purang. He shows how the classification of the gods that emerges from the corresponding recitations is linked to other indications of Tibetanisation within these rituals. The extent of this Tibetanisation varies from one village to another. The most conspicuous area of influence is the language in which the rites are performed. The Purang *lha bon* always officiates in *Se skad,* but although the language used in the other two villages is Tibetan, the *lha bon* recall that the linguistic change took place just one or two generations previously, at the time when blood-sacrifices were abandoned. According to the information collected by the author, it was also at this period that the *lha bon* of Khyenga and Dzar "Buddhicised" their invocations to the territorial gods by interspersing them with passages such as the *mantra* of Padmasambhava, the prayer to the twenty-one Tārās, and the libation ritual for the eight classes of *numina* (*sde brgyad gser skyems*). The consequence is that the local gods are no longer the boundary-

markers of a political territory – as is still the case in Purang – but have been incorporated into a non-local Buddhist pantheon that has altogether deprived them of topographical bearings. In view of the fact that the *lha bon* are illiterate, it would be interesting to know the circumstances under which they were persuaded to tranform their rituals, and from which Lamas they learned the texts that they have inserted into their recitations. Whatever the case, this example reveals a less well-known aspect of the propagation of Tibetan Buddhism and Bon: one that does not involve the subjugation of territorial divinities along classical lines, nor the appropriation of local cults as in the case described by Christian Schicklgruber, but the more insidious adoption of alien ideological models on the part of the local priests.

Brigitte Steinmann pursues much the same line of inquiry in the setting of Sikkim, examining how the stereotypes devised by foreigners as well as myths belonging to their own culture are taken up and reinterpreted by the Sikkimese to reinforce their identity or territorial claims. Broadly speaking, the contemporary situation in Sikkim is comparable to that of Baragaon: the Tibetan conquest and conversion to Buddhism resulted in the marginalisation of the Lepchas; British rule, followed by the Indian administration, extended this marginalisation beyond the Lepchas themselves – who were classified as "tribals" and assigned to reserves – to the previous colonists, the Tibetan (Bhutia) population of the borderlands. Steinmann situates her observations within a methodological perspective on the stereotypes devised by other anthropologists, maintaining that "ce sont aussi bien les anthropologues, ces spécialistes de la réduction des singularités ethniques, que les sociétés qu'ils étudient, qui sont susceptibles d'avoir recours à ces formes de pensées axées sur la schématisation et le préjugé". The examples she provides of "la stéréotypie de l'exotisme" applied in Sikkim may seem risible, but are rather less amusing when seen in the light of their impact on the treatment reserved for these populations by successive regimes; and their repercussions on the people themselves, who are faced with both the devaluation of their image and the "modernisation" of their environment. The Sikkimese are consequently left with no option but to reject the consequences of an alien perspective (for example by coining new ethnonyms or upholding a system of traditional values), or to adapt their myths and gods to the prevailing discourse – which includes that of Christian missionaries. Here, too, we find a certain resonance with the situation described by Charles Ramble. To mention only the concepts related to sacred mountains, Steinmann shows that the opposition between the life-giving mountain of the Lepchas and the protective warrior-god of Buddhism and the monarchy came down on the side of the latter, following the establishment of the (originally Tibetan) ruling family. While the Lepchas are introducing flood-stories into their myths, and, when translating into English, are eliminating all traces of their polytheism, the Bhutias have again begun to perform the royal ritual of Mt. Kanchenjunga, a ritual that was banned for a certain period by the Indians, who had clearly grasped its implicit reassertion of royal power. But detached as it is from political power (Indian democracy and its party system), the ritual is, according to Steinmann's assessment, undergoing "folklorisation", as indeed is the mountain god mDzod lnga himself, even for the Buddhist clergy, who are responsible for propitiating the god and taking care of his images.

Elisabeth Stutchbury presents a case from Lahul that illustrates a different kind of integration into the "Indian nation": the Hinduisation – at least from the Buddhist point of view – of the cult of Raja Gephan, the protective mountain god of the region. Stutchbury depicts a highly complex society, situated on an ancient trade route between India and the Himalayan countries. The area appears to have no distinctive cultural identity, but consists of groups that are inclined towards either Tibetan Buddhism or Hinduism and practise a mixture of the two as occasion demands. It is therefore not surprising that the two most powerful gods of the region, Gephan and his elder brother Tangyar, should themselves have shifting identities and that the various forms of worship they receive should be mutually incompatible. Seen from a Tibetan perspective, the case reveals the same variations and oppositions that are described in the articles by Guntram

Hazod and Hildegard Diemberger: the 'Brug pa monasteries ritually renew the subjugation of local gods, who have been raised to the rank of Protectors of the doctrine. In this case they undergo a dual subjection, to the extent that they are integrated into the landscape of *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas*, who transcend the mundane level of the Protectors and transform the place into a sacred site (*gnas*). But these divinities continue to exert their power outside the Buddhist sphere, a fact that Stutchbury regards as indicative of the partial character of their submission: they take possession of mediums, and through them demand blood sacrifices and pronounce oracles, to the predictable disapproval of the monasteries. Here, however, we see a divergence from the Tibetan examples: Gephan and Tangyar traditionally incarnate in the lowly Domba caste, blacksmith-musicians who speak a dialect related to Hindi, whereas the four regions of Lahul speak Tibetan-related languages. Gephan is, moreover, worshipped by Hindu *pūjāri* in little temples called *maṇḍir*. One of these temples is a regular halting-place where travellers on the new road entreat Gephan for his protection before crossing the Rohtang la, a pass of nearly 4000 metres which marks the entrance to Lahul.

This was the complex situation that Stutchbury found when she first stayed in the area in the 1980s. But on her return in 1992 things had taken a problematic turn: for the first time Tangyar had chosen a medium outside the Domba caste in a family of good "bone" (*rus*). The individual in question had been recognised and "consecrated" by his younger brother Gephan – through his Domba medium – and the two gods were making heavy demands for animal sacrifices. The Buddhist clergy insisted that "this" Tangyar was not a god but a demon, and that Gephan and his cult were Hindu. The new medium had been banned from his family and his village, and was leading a wretched life elsewhere serving in a restaurant. The laity seemed to be divided between the obedience to Buddhism that the monasteries enjoined on them and their faith in the power of the god Tangyar, as manifested in the acknowledged capacities of his medium. This example from Lahul is diametrically opposed to the more general trend of blood-sacrifice disappearing under the pressure of Tibetan clericalism, whether Buddhist or Bonpo. Are we to follow the line taken by the Buddhist monks in attributing these developments to the influence of Hindu India, which, as Stutchbury tells us, has already resulted in Tibetan being replaced by Hindi as the *lingua franca*? It is clear at least that the choice of a medium outside the traditional caste, and the associated social consequences of this shift, indicate a destabilisation of the precarious balance that Lahuli society maintains between Indian and Tibetan culture, and unquestionably marks a setback for the latter.

The confrontation between Hinduism and Buddhism among the Eastern Tamang of Nepal, described by Gabriele Tautscher, takes a less dramatic form. Both religions have been assimilated by the Tamangs, who have allocated two separate mountains to their gods and the cults associated with them, an arrangement conducive to both peaceful cohabitation and genuine syncretism. In short, the female mountain Kālingchok is the seat of the goddess Kālingchok Māi, who is worshipped by the bonpo. In her terrible form of Kālī, situated at the top of the mountain in the form of a quadrangular rock, she demands blood sacrifices in exchange for her protection. But when the author accompanied the pilgrims who were following the bonpo on their way to worship the goddess, a Buddhist Tamang priest was performing a *sbyin sreg* for the benefit of a patient. On the other hand, Sailung, a male mountain, is regarded by Buddhists as the seat of the "white male lord of the earth" (phoi sibda karpo) – the Tibetan *gzhi bdag* – a peaceful divinity who does not countenance animal sacrifice. The mountain is also generally regarded as the dwelling place of the dead, for whom rituals are performed here by Buddhist priests. There are, however, two caves that are visited by the bonpo and regarded as the seats of Mahādev and his consort. Phoi sibda karpo forms the subject of an earlier article by the author,[3] and here she focuses instead on the festival of Kālingchok (Kālingchok Jātra) which is held in

[3] "The five Tamang ancestors and Sailung phoi sibda karpo", in *Reflections of the Mountain* (ref. in note 1), 157-178.

October-November, and on a set of myths and oral traditions concerning the hybrid – to say the least – divinities of the local Tamangs. Like the myths, the cult reveals the historical vicissitudes experienced by the Tamang as well as a number of borrowings from the politically dominant culture of the region. But the elements they have purloined are mingled with their clan histories and their putative Tibetan origin (a theme that recurs throughout the Himalaya), as well as with shamanic practices of more uncertain provenance. For example, Kālingchok Devī is said to have come "from Tshe ring Jo mo, a white mountain in Tibet", and according to one myth Bhimsen – the hero Bhīma of the Mahābhārata – is a *gzhi bdag* who accompanied a family of the Moktān clan on its journey from Tibet to Nepal, where it settled in Dolakha. For the Tamangs this is also a basis for their claim to a territory that was once theirs, and perhaps also an idiom in which to assert priority over the other ethnic groups that converge on the summits of the sacred mountains during festivals.

Wang Xinxian's article removes us from the problems raised by Buddhist-Hindu confrontations to a study focused on the cult of territorial divinities (*gzhi bdag*) among the dPa' ris Tibetans, in Amdo. This far-flung Tibetan area has all the hallmarks of a linguistic and cultural borderland, and the author provides examples of other kinds of cultural borrowings and transactions. Nowadays, the ethnic group[4] known as the dPa' ris are divided into seven Chinese administrative units, located mainly in the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Then kru'u. Their traditional homeland was the valley of 'Ju lag chu, north-north-east of Tsong kha. The region has long been known as an ethnic mosaic, and even now comprises a mixed population of Tibetans, Chinese, Hor, Sog po, Yus ku'u (?) and Hos (Hui), the latter being Muslims. People propose *dpa' bo'i yul,* "the land of the heroes", as the etymology of the ethnonym dPa' ris, a reference to the victorious battles fought by the group's ancestors while extending their territory to Tsong kha and adjacent regions. Thirteen peaks in the 'Ju lag chu valley are revered as the 'Ju lag mthon po bcu gsum ("The Thirteen Heights of 'Ju lag"). The author suggests that these were originally thirteen chieftains of the valley who were subsequently transformed into territorial gods (*yul lha gzhi bdag*) and venerated as *dgra lha,* protectors of the region. His opinion is substantiated by oral traditions, now remembered only by elderly men, that relate the origin of the *gzhi bdag.* Every year, with no consideration for present-day territorial divisions, the men gather at the *la btsas* of their "soul-mountain" (*bla ri*) and perform a fumigation rite (*bsang*). The author is of the opinion that the construction of the *la btsas* and the annual *bsang* ritual that he describes have not changed in recent times. He does, however, emphasise the historical transformation of what he considers was once a Bonpo cult and its subjection to Buddhist influence. The result is comparable to the situation described by various other contributions in this volume, with mountain gods being incorporated into the ranks of Protectors of the doctrine. In modern times, a well-known lama and an assortment of monks are invited to consecrate the *la btsas,* and, on this occasion, the Buddhist ritual is combined with the traditional form of worship performed by the laity. Similarly, on the occasion of the annual ceremony held in the sixth month, lamas (of the dGe lugs pa school?) and rNying ma pa masters are invited (in the past the officiants used to be Bonpo tantrists, says the author), and perform various rituals while the lay people burn appropriate items in front of the *la btsas.* Wang Xingxian provides a further illustration of the extent of Buddhist influence on the local cult: after the laymen have planted spears, swords and other paraphernalia in the *la btsas,* they accompany their traditional victory call of *lha rgyal lo!* with a recitation of the *maṇi* and the taking of refuge. (But the mountain god has the last say: after the horse-race that follows, the

[4] "Ethnic group" here is my non-commital rendering of the author's *tsho ba.* In Amdo, *tsho* can signify a confederation of villages or a "tribe", but in view of my unfamiliarity with the region I have opted for this more neutral gloss.

participants return home directly without stopping at any houses on the way for fear of losing whatever "luck" [*g.yang*] the god may have granted them.)

The Buddhicisation of the local Tibetan population and of their *gzhi bdag* cult is also explained in terms of the religious history of the area. In the past (from the ninth century, according to Wang Xingxian) the region was dominated by a Bonpo monastery that the fourth Karmapa converted to a Buddhist establishment before it later came under the control of the dGe lugs pa. More interesting than these intra-Tibetan developments is the adoption of the *gzhi bdag* cult by the non-Tibetan ethnic groups (except the Muslim Hui), and the reciprocal borrowing of divinities with the names and functions of these sometimes being altered. In one place for example, the Tibetan, Hor and Chinese communities jointly built a temple to the protective divinities (*mgon khang*), installed inside it a statue of Rab bzang, one of the thirteen *gzhi bdag* of dPa' ris, and asked a Tibetan lama to consecrate it. Wang Xingxian provides a number of other examples of popular syncretism. As in the case of Lahul, these cults are probably the object of monastic disapproval, and our knowledge of their very existence is possible thanks only to ethnographic enquiry, since they are studiously ignored in both Buddhist and Bonpo clerical literature.

Tibetan Buddhist influence on the Mongols is, by contrast, well known, as are the efforts of the Buddhist clergy to Buddhicise shamanism and shamanic representations. Obos – the Mongol equivalent of the Tibetan *la btsas* –, were, as Ágnes Birtalan tells us, subject to the same missionary zeal, and she cites an eighteenth-century manuscript, studied by C.R. Bawden, that was "written to integrate obo worship in Lamaist ritual". This phenomenon corresponds precisely to the Tibetan assimilation of the cult of *pho lha/yul lha*. But Birtalan is concerned primarily with the present situation in Mongolia, which she analyses on the basis of materials collected in the field. As is well known, the restoration of independence in Mongolia stimulated strong feelings of nationalism, which found expression in the exaltation of the country's glorious past and a shamanistic revival. Birtalan observes that the reconstruction of ancient obos and the resumption of their worship in an archaic, non-Buddhist form, is a part of this trend. While there are old classifications of obos, the author offers a typology, based on her own observations. This typology sometimes makes it possible to draw a parallel with the Tibetan cult of territorial divinities: for instance, among the obos that she categorises on the basis of their social status, the clan obo is set up in a hidden location kept out of bounds for women and strangers. This obo is worshipped on a number of occasions such as the New Year, and in areas where shamanism has been completely eradicated by Buddhism, the shaman, who conducts the ritual in other areas, is replaced by a group of lamas who perform rituals rather as in the case of dPa' ris.

The last contribution, a few concentrated pages by Catherine Uray-Kőhalmi, takes us beyond the confines of Tibet and occasionally outside Asia altogether with the reminder that "mountains have played a salient role in nearly every folk mythology", and that the cult of mountains takes a great many forms. Here she discusses the anthropomorphisation of the mountain and the most extreme expression of this phenomenon: the notion of marriage with the mountain and the various forms that this takes in the Asiatic context. One of these aspects is the sex of mountain divinities, who may be either male or female even within the compass of a single culture, such as Tibet itself. While mountains are usually regarded as male among the Mongols and Turks, mountain and forest deities are more often represented by the Tungus as being female. On the basis of myths, legends and selected literature presented by the author, it seems to me that two types of marriage emerge, depending on the sex of the mountains concerned: when the mountain is female, the hero is obliged to undergo a series of trials set up by the reluctant goddess, and only after he has overcome these can he possess her and enjoy her abundance. When the mountain is male, the bride is a poor young girl who is sent as a more or less willing victim to satisfy the god and ensure the prosperity or survival of the community or family that sent her. Uray-Kőhalmi suggests that the latter model may contain echoes of actual sacrifice,

but, more important, represents the exchange of women that is necessary in all societies. It may also be the case that the first model represents another form of marriage – the tradition of bride capture.

Concluding this brief survey of the articles presented in this volume, I am again struck by the diversity of the social, political and religious contexts in which representations and cults of territorial divinities are set, and the areas of similarity that emerge from the accounts. One of the most striking aspects, to my eyes, is the continuing adaptability of these gods and their cults to the constraining ideologies that impinge on the societies that harbour them. The quest for an "archetype" of the Tibetan mountain-god begins to look like a fool's errand, and we should, in any case, beware of hasty theoretical elaborations, which – to repeat Brigitte Steinmann's salutory warning – are only too likely to lead to the fabrication of new stereotypes.

Anne-Marie Blondeau

Tibetan Cultures

PÈLERINAGE ET INCESTE: LE CAS DE MCHOD RTEN NYI MA[1]

par

Katia Buffetrille, Paris

"La société n'interdit que ce qu'elle suscite".[2]

La purification des fautes, des souillures et des péchés, est l'un des bienfaits couramment énumérés parmi ceux que procure le pèlerinage dans les différents lieux saints. Mais il arrive aussi qu'un pèlerinage permette à un individu de réintégrer sa place au sein de la société lorsqu'il a transgressé des interdits, commis certaines fautes très graves, on pourrait dire des crimes, qui ont entraîné un désordre rejaillissant sur toute la communauté. A cet égard, le cas de l'inceste est particulièrement frappant.

I. mChod rten nyi ma

J'entendis parler pour la première fois d'un lieu saint appelé mChod rten nyi ma en 1989, par une vieille femme originaire de Chiplung,[3] un village du gTsang. Alors que je lui demandais quels étaient les pèlerinages qui lui paraissaient importants, elle me cita tout d'abord celui de mChod rten nyi ma, ajoutant que l'on s'y rendait généralement dans trois cas:

- lorsque "l'on a couché avec un parent", *spun zla nyal po byed pa* (donc en cas d'inceste);
- à la suite d'un parricide ou d'un matricide;
- si l'on a entretenu une liaison avec une personne de strate inférieure (*rigs ngan*).

Elle me précisa aussitôt que, même si elle avait fait ce pèlerinage, elle n'appartenait à aucune des trois catégories citées et que les pèlerins y venaient en grand nombre, du Tibet central mais aussi du Khams.

Ce lieu saint était composé, selon elle, d'une source que Padmasambhava avait créée avec son bâton; d'une montagne qui avait la forme des épaules d'un lama portant sa cape; d'un lac sacré qui procurait des visions, essentiellement celle de l'image d'un monastère qui apparaissait dans le lac si l'on avait réussi à être purifié. Elle ajouta que, dans le cas contraire, cette même image était encore visible mais à l'envers. Elle mentionna finalement la présence d'un *stūpa* et d'un monastère.

Peu à peu, je découvris que ce lieu saint était très connu de beaucoup de Tibétains. Il me suffisait de prononcer le nom de mChod rten nyi ma devant des gens du gTsang ou du dBus, et aussi devant de nombreux Sherpa, pour que l'inceste soit aussitôt évoqué. Souvent le parricide et le matricide y étaient ajoutés; il est arrivé que les raisons de se rendre à mChod rten nyi ma, telles que me les avaient énumérées ma première informatrice me soient récitées comme une litanie. Chaque informateur se défendait, bien évidemment, de s'y être rendu pour l'un de ces motifs; tous considéraient ce lieu saint comme extrêmement puissant et disaient y être allés

---

[1] Mes remerciements s'adressent à A.Chayet, R. Hamayon, S.G. Karmay, F. Meyer et P. Sagant pour leurs commentaires, corrections et suggestions et surtout à A.M. Blondeau pour les informations dont elle m'a fait part.

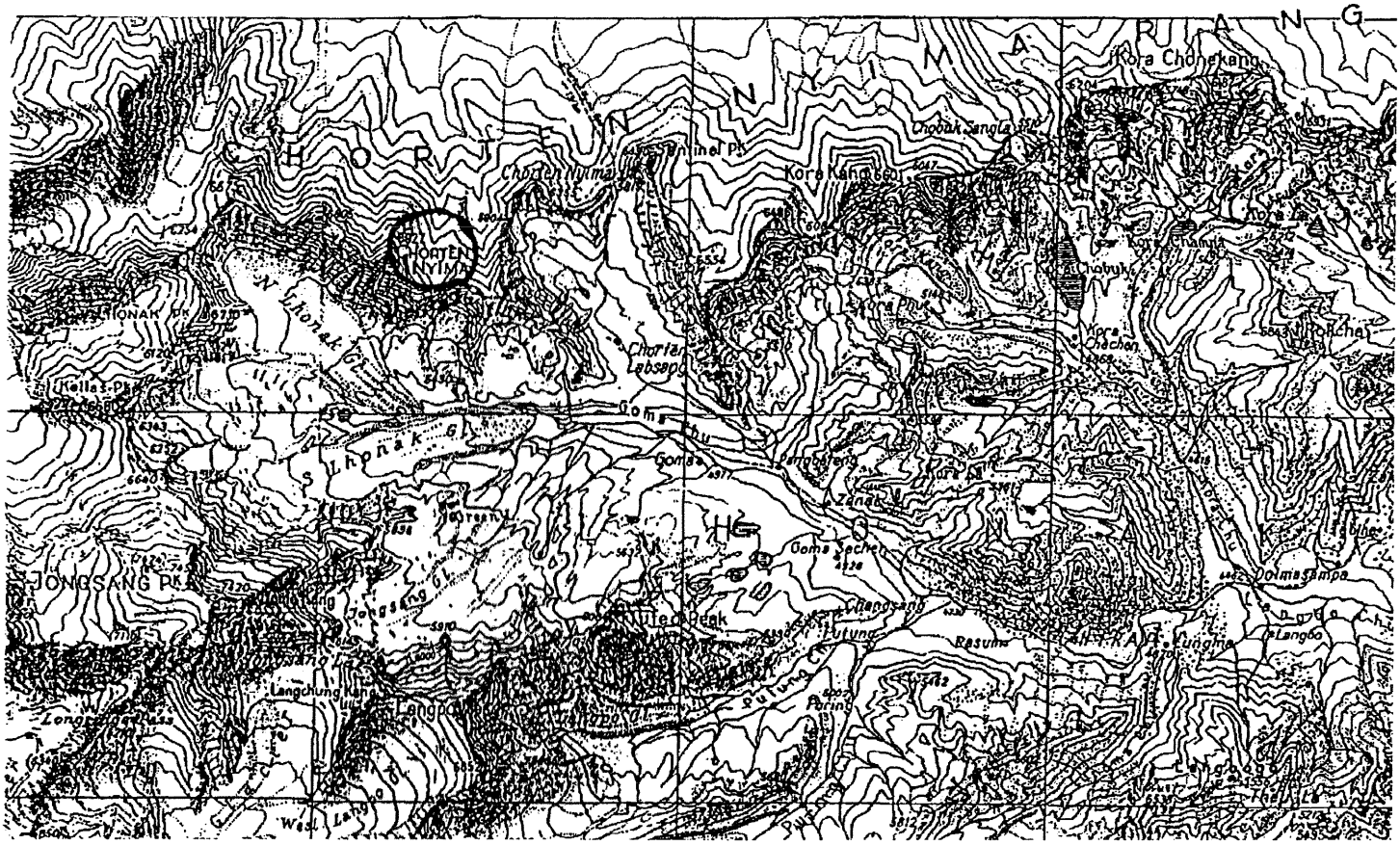
[2] C. Lévi-Strauss ([1947] 1967: 22).

[3] Orthographe tibétaine non restituée.

SIKKIM HIMALAYA

1 : 150 000

Aequidistanz 100 m 1 cm ≙ 1,5 km

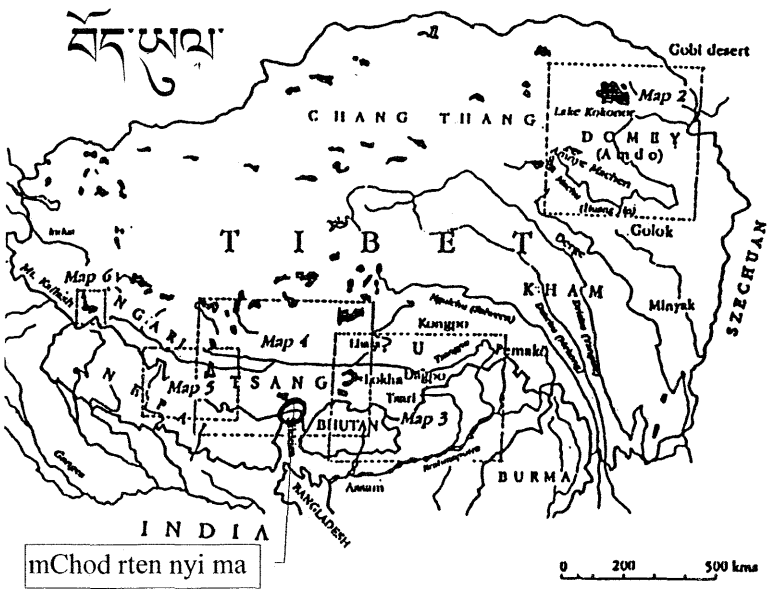


Herausgegeben von der

SCHWEIZ. STIFTUNG FÜR ALPINE FORSCHUNGEN

Bearbeitet und gezeichnet nach Kartengrundlagen des Survey of India und mit photographischen Aufnahmen verschiedener Expeditionen von

H.F. BOSSART, TOPOGRAPH, BERN



mChod rten nyi ma

pour cette simple raison. En revanche, les A mdo ba et les Khams pa interrogés semblaient ignorer jusqu'à son nom et, parmi eux, nombreux étaient ceux pour qui un pèlerinage purifiant la faute d'inceste paraissait invraisemblable; s'ils acceptaient parfois de reconnaître que cette transgression pouvait exister au Tibet Central, ils en déniaient totalement l'existence dans les provinces orientales du Tibet.

On trouve dans la littérature quelques mentions de ce lieu, mais surtout du col du même nom. Situé à la frontière du Sikkim et du Tibet, il fut emprunté par divers explorateurs, par exemple le capitaine J. Noel (Lhalungpa 1983: 151), par des pandits (Das [1902] 1970, Rinzin Namgyal[4]), mais aussi par des alpinistes (Freshfield [1903] 1979) et des officiers politiques (White [1909] 1984: 92).

1. mChod rten nyi ma dans la littérature occidentale

mChod rten nyi ma, appelé aussi rDo rje nyi ma, est un lieu saint au sud de Sa skya, à la frontière du Sikkim, en territoire tibétain (*cf.* carte). Situé dans une large vallée où se dressent de hautes falaises, il est dominé par des montagnes enneigées; la chaîne de mChod rten nyi ma comporte quatorze sommets dont l'altitude moyenne est de 6700 mètres; le plus haut, appelé mChod rten nyi ma, s'élève à 6927 mètres (Chan 1994: 806). D. Freshfield (1979: 322) y passa au début du siècle et il décrit l'endroit, avec un lac donnant naissance à une rivière, un *stūpa*, quelques cellules monastiques et des murs de pierres gravées. Il ajoute que, chaque année, des pèlerins originaires de toutes les parties du Tibet, mais aussi de Mongolie et de Chine, y viennent. A. David-Neel s'y rendit en 1912. Elle fut frappée par la beauté, l'aridité du paysage due à la haute altitude (qu'elle ne précise pas). A son époque, le monastère tombait en ruines, dit-elle, ce qui n'apparaît pas nettement sur les photos qu'elle présente (1979: 28). Elle parle de cent huit sources, certaines froides, d'autres chaudes, dont la majorité ne peuvent être vues que "par ceux qui ont l'esprit particulièrement pur" ([1921] 1977: 90-93) et dit avoir chevauché quatre jours à partir de mChod rten nyi ma avant de voir les toits d'or du monastère de bKra shis lhun po, à Shigatse (citée par Miller 1984: 156). Lama Anagarika Govinda ([1969] 1976: 24) décrit "un endroit large et ouvert avec, ici et là, des pics neigeux qui percent le ciel d'un bleu profond typique de ces grandes altitudes". V. Chan (1994: 808) situe le lieu saint à une journée de marche du Sikkim: une route récemment construite y conduit à partir du pont de Sa skya; les pèlerins du Tibet central y viennent dorénavant en camion, et leur nombre s'élève souvent à plus de cent par jour à la saison (en été?). Ce monastère abritait autrefois une communauté de religieux et de nonnes. Lors du passage de A. David-Neel, il y avait quatre nonnes. V. Chan (1994: 806) estime le nombre actuel à douze nonnes et à quelques moines. Selon un informateur de rTsa skor, village situé au sud de la montagne sacrée de rTsib ri, sur la route qui conduit du Népal à Lhasa, la communauté religieuse ne restait là que l'été, les conditions de vie durant l'hiver étant trop difficiles à cause de la haute altitude. V. Chan signale (1994: 801-810) une rangée de *stūpa* à l'entrée du complexe monastique, la présence de trois autres *stūpa* et d'un monastère dont la chapelle la plus importante, située à l'ouest, est consacrée à Hayagrīva.

2. Témoignages oraux

Tous les informateurs s'accordent sur la présence d'un lac, d'une source, d'une montagne, d'un monastère et de *stūpa,* mais le nombre de ces derniers varie selon les témoins: il y en a parfois un, quelquefois trois, d'autres fois quatre (il s'agit alors d'un gros et de trois petits), et une fois treize (ce qui devrait correspondre à la rangée mentionnée par V. Chan). Selon des informations

[4] Il voyagea autour du Gangs chen mdzod lnga (le Kanchenjunga des alpinistes) en 1885. Lettre de H. Richardson du 11.1.91.

obtenues par A.M. Blondeau en 1991,[5] on y trouverait le Gu ru *mchod rten* dont l'histoire est la suivante: lors de la venue de Padmasambhava en ce lieu, il y avait trois démons *bdud* qui s'appelaient (l'un d'eux?) Srin po. Afin de les vaincre, le saint indien enfonça sa canne dans la terre. On construisit à cet endroit un *stūpa* noir sous lequel est comprimé le démon. Ce *stūpa* est seul (isolé?) et situé dans un endroit désert (*sa cha stong pa*).

Deux de mes informateurs sherpa localisaient l'origine de la source sous le *stūpa* (lequel?). Le lac qui fait naître des visions est couramment évoqué, non seulement dans son rôle de purificateur, mais aussi dans sa fonction de miroir: les jeunes femmes célibataires peuvent y voir le village dans lequel elles se marieront (informatrice de Walungchu Gola, Népal oriental). Il arrive aussi que l'on ne parle plus d'un seul lac mais de deux, un blanc ('O ma mtsho) et un noir (Nag po mtsho).[6]

Ainsi, il y a unanimité sur les motifs qui conduisent à se rendre en pèlerinage à mChod rten nyi ma, le plus étonnant étant la purification de l'inceste.

Lors d'un entretien effectué en 1989, au Népal, avec un habitant du village de bKong rtsa, situé au nord de rTsib ri (Tibet méridional), j'appris qu'il y avait eu un cas d'inceste dans sa parenté. La fille d'une de ses "tantes" avait eu une relation avec le fils d'une parente (il ne sut préciser le degré de parenté). Le couple avait songé à s'enfuir mais avait finalement décidé de rester. Une fois l'histoire connue, ils furent battus par les villageois et envoyés à mChod rten nyi ma. Là, ils durent se baigner dans le lac puis dans la source. Après le bain, ils allèrent au monastère afin d'obtenir une lettre munie d'un cachet prouvant leur venue. Revenir à bKong rtsa sans ce papier équivalait aux yeux de la communauté à ne pas avoir fait le pèlerinage et aurait conduit les villageois à les renvoyer à mChod rten nyi ma. A leur retour, chacun d'eux retourna dans sa famille et retrouva sa place habituelle au sein de la communauté. Un enfant naquit de cette union mais il mourut presque aussitôt, ce qui résolut la question de savoir quel aurait été son statut.

Dans ce récit, il est bien précisé que le couple est envoyé à mChod rten nyi ma; mais une villageoise de Walungchu Gola apporta une autre version: si, dans le couple fautif, l'homme était de strate supérieure, c'était sa mère qui l'accompagnait mais si c'était la fille qui était d'une strate supérieure, c'était son père qui la conduisait. Je n'ai pas reçu, à ce jour, d'autres témoignages corroborant cette assertion. Les autres informations recueillies n'étaient pas aussi détaillées mais faisaient ressortir une contradiction supplémentaire: ce n'était pas toujours le couple qui était envoyé à mChod rten nyi ma, mais parfois seulement l'homme.

Un informateur sherpa qui avait résidé longtemps à Lhasa m'a affirmé que les coupables étaient envoyés à mChod rten nyi ma montés sur un boeuf et qu'ils étaient accompagnés par un homme à cheval. Au retour, ils devaient marcher. Cette information, quoique isolée, paraît suffisamment importante pour être relevée. L'expulsion des criminels chevauchant un boeuf brun apparaît, ainsi que nous le verrons, comme un châtiment déjà noté dans la littérature (Karmay 1991: 362).

Mes informateurs n'ont jamais mentionné un quelconque stigmate attaché à la personne des incestueux qui regagnaient le village munis du certificat.

---

[5] L'informateur de Madame Blondeau était originaire du gTsang et avait une quarantaine d'années.

[6] Le thème d'un lac noir maléfique habité par un démon et situé à proximité d'un lac bénéfique est une constante. Pour d'autres exemples de contreparties malveillantes à des éléments bénéfiques, *cf.* K. Buffetrille (1993: 106).

3. Les récits

Les renseignements donnés par le Prince Pierre de Grèce (1963: 455) corroborent en partie les informations précédentes. Il rencontra un jour de 1952, à Kalimpong (Bengale), l'abbé du monastère de mChod rten snying(?) ma, et se renseigna à son sujet.

> It appeared that he was the abbot of the monastery at Chöten Nyingma, and that the latter was a very special one in Tibet, because the waters of the lake had the property of being able to wash away the sin of incest. Anyone having had sexual relations with somebody within the prohibited degree of consanguinity could be purified of the pollution by making a pilgrimage to Chöten Nyingma Tso (lake) where, after having plunged in its waters, he or she would make an offering to the monastery. The abbot whom I met would, in exchange, deliver a certificate that the person was now absolved of all sin, and the petitioner could go home satisfied and appeased. It appeared that the principal source of revenue of this particular monastery came from this trade in certificates and that this was the reason for the prosperous appearance of the Incarnation whom I just met.

L'une des nonnes qui se trouvaient au monastère lors du passage de A. David-Neel ([1929] 1977: 92) lui affirma que le lama du lieu résidait à Grang rlung,[7] à une journée de marche, et était un tantriste très riche, capable de nombreux prodiges comme de faire tomber ou d'arrêter la pluie ou la grêle. On sait que dans le monde tibétain, les fidèles font à la communauté monastique des dons proportionnels à leur richesse ou à leurs demandes, raison suffisante pour expliquer l'éventuelle aisance d'un religieux.

II. Questions soulevées par le cas de mChod rten nyi ma

1. L'inceste dans le monde tibétain

L'inceste est un sujet dont les gens parlent avec une grande réticence. Très souvent, ils disent ne jamais avoir eu vent de cas concrets, mais reconnaissent que cela peut arriver parfois, ou encore, comme la plupart de mes informateurs sherpa, que cela n'existe pas chez eux. Les informations obtenues sont tirées de nombreux entretiens avec des Tibétains réfugiés au Népal, et de mentions trouvées dans la littérature occidentale, qui se contredisent parfois entre elles.

Il faut souligner qu'il existe un terme tibétain pour désigner l'inceste (*nal*),[8] ce qui n'est pas toujours le cas: il est absent des langues turco-mongoles.[9] Le terme *nal* est inconnu de la grande majorité des Tibétains contemporains et S.G. Karmay pense que c'est un mot que l'on rencontre dans les textes rituels et qui fut conservé jusqu'à aujourd'hui.

Le code pénal de Byang chub rgyal mtshan (1302-1373), le *Zhal lce bco lnga* (1989-3: 74), englobe sous l'expression *byi byas pa* (?), l'adultère et l'inceste et donne comme définition: "avoir des relations [sexuelles] avec la femme d'un autre, sa [propre] mère ou sa soeur";[10] ce qui définit un inceste très limité. Le châtiment consiste à expulser les coupables, après leur avoir amputé un membre.[11] Les deux fautes sont donc considérées comme identiques sur le plan

---

[7] D'après un informateur tibétain, réfugié à Paris, et qui a visité mChod rten nyi ma, l'appellation Grang rlung, "Vent froid", s'explique par le vent glacial qui souffle de manière fréquente.

[8] Un manuscrit de Dunhuang étudié par R.A. Stein (1971: 528 *passim*), et intitulé par ce dernier "Le conte des trois soeurs", parle d'un démon qui tue le père, le mange, se déguise en père et, de retour à la maison couche avec la mère (*brnal*). R.A. Stein (*ibid.*: 529, n. 112) renvoie à "*rnal/mnal* : dormir? ou *mnol* : souillure et *nal*, inceste?".

[9] Communication orale de R. Hamayon (Paris 1995).

[10] *gzhan gyi chung ma dang ma'am sring mo dang brel ba'i phyogs la byi byas pa* |.

[11] *yan lag gi phran bcad nas yul gzhan du spyugs par bshad kyang* |.

pénal. Le dictionnaire moderne *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (p. 1523) définit *nal* comme un foyer "de même os" (*rus gcig pa'i khyim thab*). Avoir le même os signifie, au Tibet, appartenir à la même lignée patrilinéaire (*rus rgyud*).[12] Si l'on suit la définition de l'inceste donnée par ce dictionnaire, il apparaît qu'un inceste du côté maternel, du côté de la "chair" (*sha*), n'est nullement pris en compte. On ne peut que relever la contradiction entre cette définition et celle de Byang chub rgyal mtshan car, si la mère et le fils ont la même "chair", ils n'ont pas le même "os". Les théories de la conception peuvent expliquer pourquoi l'os intervient dans la filiation patrilinéaire: "Du sperme paternel naissent les os, le cerveau et la moëlle épinière. Du sang menstruel maternel naissent la chair, les organes pleins et les organes creux" (Meyer 1981: 111). Ces idées sont très répandues en Inde (Jaggi 1973: 97-101) mais aussi en Asie, "du Tibet en Assam en passant par la Chine toute entière" (Lévi-Strauss 1967: 454), comme en Sibérie (Hamayon 1990: 103).

Qu'appelle-t-on donc inceste dans le monde tibétain? Les règles d'exogamie ne sont pas les mêmes au Tibet et dans les ethnies tibétaines du nord du Népal. Au Tibet même, il faut être prudent: on sait maintenant qu'il est fort difficile d'étendre au Tibet dans son ensemble des faits ou des règles observables dans telle région ou telle autre. Au Tibet central, il n'y a pas actuellement de prescription matrimoniale positive, ni même de préférence. Il est interdit de se marier avec une personne de la parentèle d'ego à sept générations du côté patrilatéral et entre cinq et sept générations du côté matrilatéral suivant les régions concernées (Guigo 1986: 109). Il est probable que le mariage avec la cousine croisée était répandu au Tibet auparavant. Le père Desideri ([1937] 1995: 192), jésuite qui demeura au Tibet de 1715 à 1721 et qui était un fort bon observateur, affirme que toute relation avec une personne appartenant au même "os" (*rus*) est considérée comme un inceste, quel que soit le degré d'éloignement; en revanche, s'il est interdit d'avoir une relation du côté de la "chair" avec une personne à la première articulation (un oncle ne peut épouser sa nièce), le mariage avec une cousine maternelle (la cousine croisée matrilatérale: FiFM) est autorisé et n'est pas chose rare. Le mariage avec la cousine croisée matrilatérale est également l'union privilégiée chez certaines communautés de langue tibétaine, par exemple à Dolpo (Jest 1975: 252), chez les Nyin ba de l'ouest du Népal où existe le mariage avec les deux cousines croisées (Levine 1988: 59); de même à Baragaon où, si le mariage avec la cousine croisée patrilatérale est accepté, celui avec la cousine croisée matrilatérale est préféré (Schuler 1983: 183; Ramble 1984: 138).

Peut-on se souvenir de ses ascendants jusqu'à la septième articulation? Les réponses à ce sujet sont contradictoires. D. Guigo (1986: 109) affirme que "les Tibétains n'ont pas toujours une idée très précise de la définition de la parentèle exogamique. Au premier degré, il est évident que toute alliance avec les cousins germains est prohibée mais dès le deuxième degré, le tableau se brouille parfois".

Cela signifierait que les règles d'exogamie appartiendraient au domaine des normes et que le décalage serait grand entre celles-ci et les faits. Pour S.G. Karmay, la plupart des familles de sa région (Shar khog, en A mdo), possédait un genre de "généalogie" écrite (*rus yig*); il était donc possible de remonter sur sept générations.[13] Lors des funérailles, il y avait une cérémonie de transfert des mérites sur tous les ancêtres morts dont les noms étaient notés sur un papier appelé "Support de dédicaces", *bsngo rten*. Le nom du dernier défunt y était ajouté dès le décès.

---

[12] Au sujet du concept *rus*, de sa signification dans une population de culture tibétaine du nord-ouest du Népal, les Nyin ba, voir N. Levine ([1981] 1984).

[13] Même oralement: G. Condominas ([1957] 1974: 106) montre que chez les mNong Gar du centre Vietnam, certains sont capables de réciter de longs poèmes "généalogiques" et de remonter ainsi jusqu'à la quinzième génération.

Dans le vocabulaire mgo log, avoir une relation incestueuse avec un proche parent est assimilé à le tuer (Guigo 1986: 113), conception qui pourrait expliquer que les trois crimes majeurs conduisant les gens à se rendre à mChod rten nyi ma sont le parricide, le matricide et l'inceste.

Comment était considéré l'inceste dans le monde tibétain? Là encore les informations glanées dans la littérature sont contradictoires.

G. Patterson (1954, cité par le Prince Pierre de Grèce 1963: 455) dit avoir connu le cas d'un père et de sa fille vivant ensemble au vu et au su de tous, ce qui soulevait, selon lui, une certaine réprobation mais n'éveillait surtout qu'un sentiment de curiosité.[14] A son tour, le Prince Pierre de Grèce (1963: 455) signale avoir recueilli, en 1939, des informations d'un agent commercial britannique (dont il ne donne pas le nom) qui affirmait que les Tibétains n'attachent aucun "stigmate moral" à une telle faute, la considérant simplement néfaste pour la santé du couple et préjudiciable aux enfants issus d'une telle union. Cependant, les expressions que le Prince Pierre de Grèce cite, liées à l'inceste ou le désignant, contredisent cette affirmation: "Tuer l'enfant [résultat] de la souillure d'une relation incestueuse" (*pha spun mnol zhing nal bu gsod*); "je confesse l'inceste entre un frère et une soeur"[15] (*bu sring mus nal pyas* (*byas*?) *pa mthol lo bshags*); ou encore, "un frère et une soeur [qui couchent ensemble, c'est] de l'inceste noir" (*ming sring nal nag*); "frère et soeur incestueux doivent être séparés" (*ming spun gyis shag nal*); "l'inceste divin par le maître" (*slob dpon gyis lha nal*). Finalement, la plupart des auteurs occidentaux (par exemple B. Aziz 1978b: 58) et tous les Tibétains interrogés s'accordent pour dire que l'inceste est considéré, dans le monde tibétain, comme un crime particulièrement abominable et la difficulté à obtenir des informations montre bien les tabous qui entourent le sujet.

Dans le monde himalayen et tibétain, la faute pèse bien sûr sur ceux qui ont commis l'inceste. Mais l'inceste est considéré également comme un acte anti-social, générateur de calamités qui risquent de retomber sur la communauté.[16] De ce fait, le groupe tout entier se sent concerné par un tel acte. L'inceste trouble l'ordre de la nature. Tous les informateurs disent que s'il y a un couple incestueux dans le village, la tempête et la grêle surviendront, des avalanches tomberont, les membres des familles des coupables mourront jeunes et toutes leurs entreprises seront vouées à l'échec. En pays limbu, au Népal, "le village se ferme, lui aussi atteint par la souillure" (Sagant 1982: 167). D'autres sanctions surnaturelles peuvent survenir. La vieille femme de Walungchung Gola qui s'était rendue en pèlerinage à mChod rten nyi ma ajouta que l'herbe jaunissait sous les pas des coupables d'une telle faute. Chez les Nyin ba de l'ouest du Népal (Levine [1981] 1984: 57), ceux qui transgressent cet interdit auront les os fendus, on pourra le voir après leur mort; châtiment qui montre que l'on est puni par où l'on a péché puisque l'inceste est la relation entre deux personnes ayant le même "os". A Ding ri (Tibet méridional), les coupables sont condamnés à rester dans un état permanent de pollution (Aziz 1978: 58); il en est de même chez les Khumbo de l'est du Népal (Schicklgruber 1992: 733). Le rôle de mChod rten nyi ma n'en est que plus étonnant.

Traditionnellement, l'inceste pouvait être sanctionné par la peine de mort, comme à Dol po (Jest 1975: 259) où les coupables étaient cousus dans une peau de yak et jetés dans la rivière, châtiment qui était appliqué également pour le meurtre de père ou de mère au Sikkim (Waddell

---

[14] Peut-être G. Patterson a-t-il extrapolé. On sait qu'au Tibet, il est possible pour le mari de la mère d'avoir des relations avec la fille de la mère tant qu'il n'est pas le père.

[15] Cette expression et les suivantes lui furent données par R.A. Stein en janvier 1955. L'expression, *slob dpon gyis lha nal,* se trouve dans "un rituel très répandu de confession des péchés [qui] donne toute une liste de relations sexuelles considérées comme 'incestueuses' ou défendues". Ce texte intitulé *Sa bdag bshags 'bum* est un xylographe de 17 pages, sans nom d'auteur (R.A. Stein [1962] 1981: 129 et 302).

[16] C. Jest (1975: 259), G. Gorer [(1938] 1984: 151), P. Sagant (1982), S. Mumford (1990: 238).

[1899] 1978: 107) et qui frappait généralement tous les grands criminels. Le couple incestueux était souvent expulsé de la communauté et exilé au loin,[17] "au-delà de sept cols et de sept rivières".[18] Chez les Tibétains de Gyasumdo[19] (Népal central), la relation entre un lama célibataire et une de ses disciples nonnes est considérée comme "le pire des incestes" (Mumford 1990: 238). Il n'y a pas consanguinité dans ce cas, mais la relation entre un religieux et ses disciples proches est considérée comme une filiation, ainsi que l'expriment les termes *sras*, "fils", et *thugs sras*, "fils spirituel", qui désignent le disciple proche et renvoient à la formule citée par le Prince Pierre de Grèce: "l'inceste divin par le maître", *slob dpon gyis lha nal*. On peut qualifier cette relation d'"inceste de deuxième ordre", selon l'expression de F. Héritier (1979) pour qui "la symbolique de l'inceste qui repose sur les piliers solides de l'identique et du différent n'a pas nécessairement de lien avec la consanguinité réelle, proprement généalogique; elle suppose par contre un rapport logique, syntaxique, qui unit entre eux divers ordres de représentations: les représentations de la personne et de ses parties, les représentations génétiques des transferts verticaux et horizontaux qui s'opèrent entre individus par voie de filiation ou de contagion, les représentations du rapport des sexes et du monde de la parenté, mais aussi les représentations du monde naturel et de l'ordre social dans leurs rapports intimes avec l'homme biologique" (1979: 239). Le village de Tshap (Népal central) connut un cas de ce genre à l'époque contemporaine. Le coupable était le lama du village. Il avait participé très activement à la propagation de l'idéologie bouddhique et à la suppression des sacrifices sanglants pratiqués par les Gurung voisins; la nonne était la fille du chef du village. La communauté entière fut bouleversée; le père de la jeune nonne avoua qu'il était atteint dans son honneur; "ils ont coupé mon nez" s'exclama-t-il (Mumford 1990: 238), expression qui évoque le châtiment parfois infligé à une femme adultère et qui consistait à lui trancher le bout du nez (Duncan 1964: 69; Tucci 1969: 260).

La mythologie de nombreuses populations de culture tibétaine ou de langues tibéto-birmanes véhicule des récits relatant un inceste et les conséquences qui en découlent. Il y a des mythes à finalité cosmogonique; ils sont fréquents dans la littérature tibétaine, dans les précédents mythiques de nombreux rituels.[20]

Les mythes ont parfois une finalité sociale: chez les Tamang de l'est, le premier mariage humain fut un inceste primordial entre un frère et une soeur de clan (Steinmann 1987: 188, 195-197); de même chez les Gurung de Gyasumdo (Mumford 1990: 143) ou les Khumbo de l'est du Népal (Diemberger 1991: 145, Schicklgruber 1992: 724). Ces derniers connaissent un mythe d'origine de la souillure (*grib*) chez les humains. Il raconte l'inceste entre un fils humain et sa mère, une "émanation de la Mère terre" (*sa gzhi a ma'i sprul ba* [*pa*]). Ce premier inceste est à l'origine de la malédiction qui conduit tout être humain à retourner là d'où il vient: la matrice de la terre-mère. Le mythe raconte que, depuis, naissance, mort et conflits sont les souillures qui doivent être purifiées si l'on veut appartenir à l'ordre social présidé par le clan et les dieux montagnes de Khumbo (Schicklgruber 1992: 724).

C. Lévi-Strauss ([1947] 1977: 29, 35) a expliqué que la prohibition de l'inceste "constitue la démarche fondamentale grâce à laquelle, par laquelle, mais surtout en laquelle, s'accomplit le passage de la nature à la culture [...] et qu'elle exprime le passage du fait naturel de la consanguinité au fait culturel de l'alliance". Ces mythes indiquent que d'un état de désordre social

---

[17] G. Gorer ([1938] 1984: 152), S. Mumford (1990: 238), P. Sagant (1982).

[18] *la bdun dang chu bdun rgyab nas.*

[19] Orthographe tibétaine incertaine: peut-être rGya gsum mdo.

[20] Communication orale de A.M. Blondeau (Paris 1995).

culminant avec un inceste, l'ordre est rétabli par les règles de l'alliance et que leur transgression plonge à nouveau la société dans le chaos.

2. Sort des enfants issus d'une union incestueuse

Tous les informateurs s'accordent sur ce point: un enfant né d'une union incestueuse n'a aucune place dans l'organisation sociale. Il est décrit généralement affligé de tares physiques: il sera aveugle chez les Sharwa de l'A mdo (Guigo 1986: 109), paralysé ou muet, ou bien il aura le visage déformé; chez les Lepcha et les Nyin ba, un enfant issu d'une union incestueuse sera idiot et aura une vie courte (Gorer [1938] 1984: 151, Levine [1981] 1984: 57). Certains ajoutent que la naissance d'un enfant exclut toute possibilité de purification et entraîne l'exclusion définitive du couple et de l'enfant.

3. Ordalie ou simple épreuve?

Des différents entretiens que j'ai eus avec mes informateurs, il ressort que le pèlerinage de mChod rten nyi ma a quelque chose d'une épreuve, peut-être même d'une ordalie. Pour se purifier, il faut effectivement se baigner mais l'eau est si froide, me disait-on, que cela fait mal aux os; certains informateurs ajoutaient que si l'on trempe son doigt dans le lac, la circulation s'arrête, ou bien que si l'on ne boit pas immédiatement du thé ou une soupe bouillants, la mort s'ensuit. Une autre version, obtenue lors de la halte du soir dans le village de gNas 'og, au nord de la montagne sacrée de rTsib ri (Tibet méridional), dit qu'il faut simplement plonger son bras dans le lac; s'il en sort raide et gelé, on est condamné et l'on mourra à brève échéance; en revanche, le bras indemme est le signe que la faute est purifiée. Les informations obtenues par A.M. Blondeau précisaient que les gens du commun coupables d'inceste devaient se baigner dans l'eau glacée du lac noir et que la plupart en mourait. Son informateur relatait que si un hiérarque sa skya pa prend une femme dans une strate inférieure, il interrompt la lignée des lamas (*bla ma'i brgyud*). Pour réparer, il faut qu'il se baigne plusieurs fois dans le lac blanc, le "Lac de lait" ('O ma mtsho), où seuls sont autorisés à se baigner les lamas de toutes les écoles. Lorsque la souillure est purifiée, de la lumière (*'od*) émane du *stūpa*. Il ne m'a jamais été possible de savoir si les religieux devaient également obtenir un papier attestant leur venue.

L'ordalie n'est pas inconnue dans le monde tibétain. Un code de lois dit qu'afin d'être sûr de la culpabilité d'un voleur, deux pierres, l'une blanche l'autre noire, sont déposées dans un baquet d'huile bouillante. L'accusé doit plonger la main dans l'huile et choisir l'une des deux pierres; s'il sort la blanche, il sera reconnu innocent, dans le cas contraire coupable.[21] La littérature tibétologique offre d'autres exemples. Il y a plusieurs siècles, une querelle s'éleva entre deux hameaux du nord-ouest du Népal, dont l'un avait une population Nyin ba. La dispute fut réglée, selon les coutumes anciennes, par une ordalie qui consistait à appliquer un fer chauffé au rouge dans la bouche du représentant de chacun des deux groupes. Celui qui en sortit indemme fut considéré innocent (Levine [1981] 1984: 65).

Il existe au moins un autre type d'épreuve, la chasse rituelle en pays sharwa (A mdo), qui, par certains aspects, peut être comparée au cas de mChod rten nyi ma. Les animaux sauvages qui vivent sur la montagne ou dans les forêts alentour, appartiennent au dieu du terroir (*yul lha*), maître du sol et, comme tels, ne peuvent être chassés. Cependant, chaque année, une chasse aux grands herbivores était organisée; participer à la chasse pouvait entraîner la mort, mais les chasseurs qui survivaient étaient les "élus" du dieu du terroir (Karmay-Sagant: sous presse). Le risque encouru était réel, la conclusion, bonne ou mauvaise, était considérée comme une

[21] Communication orale de S.G. Karmay qui se réfère à un texte de lois qu'il ne peut identifier actuellement (Paris, Mai 1995).

"sanction" qu'on peut rapprocher de la "sanction" recherchée à mChod rten nyi ma; on y reviendra en conclusion.

Les informations recueillies à ce jour ne permettent pas d'affirmer que l'épreuve de l'eau glacée est une ordalie. La prudence conseille de dire, pour le moment, que c'est cette épreuve qui va déterminer la survie ou la mort des coupables et en conséquence la possibilité pour eux de réintégrer leur communauté (séparés bien évidemment). La question reste cependant ouverte. Cette épreuve constitue le rite essentiel que l'on doit obligatoirement accomplir si l'on veut être purifié de la souillure entraînée par l'inceste, le parricide, le matricide et les relations sexuelles avec une personne de strate inférieure, puis réintégrer la communauté. Ce genre de rite au sein d'un pèlerinage est, à ma connaissance, très rare. Par ailleurs, il faut remarquer que la possibilité d'obtenir la purification en faisant seulement un nombre plus ou moins élevé de circumambulations d'un des *stūpa*, du lac ou du lieu saint, accompagnées de la récitation de *mantra*, ainsi que de prosternations et d'offrandes – pratiques habituelles des pèlerinages –, n'a jamais été évoquée; l'originalité de l'épreuve est fonction de la gravité et de la spécificité de la faute.

L'exemple de mChod rten nyi ma fait apparaître que la souillure engendrée par l'inceste peut être "lavée" si l'on se rend en pèlerinage dans ce lieu particulier, à condition de survivre à une épreuve physique redoutable. La question se pose de savoir si mChod rten nyi ma est un cas unique ou s'il y a d'autres lieux de pèlerinage réputés supprimer la souillure consécutive à de tels crimes. J'ai connaissance des exemples suivants:

• Un informateur de Baragaon, au Népal, a confié à C. Ramble qu'il existe, à une semaine de marche de Muktinath, un lieu où les pèlerins se rendent en cas d'inceste. Il dit connaître un mythe à ce sujet mais il refusa de donner davantage de précisions parce qu'il est nécessaire que le nom de ce lieu reste inconnu, afin que ceux qui y vont puissent le faire sans que cela se sache; ce qui confirme la difficulté d'obtenir des renseignements sur un sujet aussi sensible et tabou.

• La grotte supérieure de Halase-Maratika, au sud-est du Népal, renferme quatre "chemins de l'enfer" (*dmyal lam*).[22] Lorsqu'on s'introduit dans un passage étroit, on ignore ce qui va advenir, si l'on est coupable ou non. La peur qu'éprouve le dévot est à la mesure de l'enjeu. La notion d'ordalie est présente et, avec elle, celle de sanction surnaturelle. Le lama sherpa du lieu, Maratika lama, attribue à l'un de ces "chemins" la capacité de purifier la souillure entraînée par un inceste ou par une relation entre un religieux et une femme. Les pèlerins semblent en ignorer les qualités spécifiques ou n'y portent pas une attention particulière; seul le guide de pèlerinage composé par ce lama[23] évoque la possibilité de purifier cette faute en ce lieu.

• Les Tibétains installés depuis une centaine d'années dans la région de Gyasumdo, à l'est de Manang au Népal, font également des pèlerinages pour être purifiés de souillures très graves. Dans les années quatre-vingt, un Tibétain d'une grande famille s'enfuit avec une femme de naissance inférieure. Lorsqu'il rentra, il dut faire le pèlerinage de Muktinath (au Népal occidental)[24] et se laver la bouche avec l'eau des sources, pour se purifier avant de pouvoir partager à nouveau nourriture et boisson avec ses pairs (Mumford [1989] 1990: 46). Il faut relever que,

---

[22] Ces "chemins de l'enfer" sont fréquents dans les lieux de pèlerinage. Ils se présentent souvent comme d'étroits boyaux creusés dans la roche ou des passages étroits entre deux rochers. Leur franchissement réussi purifie le dévot de ses péchés et lui assure une traversée aisée du chemin intermédiaire entre la mort et la renaissance (*bar do*).

[23] La traduction de ce guide est donnée dans ma thèse sur "Les pèlerinages aux montagnes sacrées, lacs et grottes dans le monde tibétain" (1996).

[24] Au sujet de Muktinath appelé en tibétain Chu mig brgya rtsa, "Les cent sources", voir D.L. Snellgrove (1979: 73-170 et [1961] 1981: 199-202); et D. Messerschmidt (1982 et 1992).

dans ce cas, seul l'homme (non le couple) est envoyé en pèlerinage et qu'aucun stigmate ne semble le marquer à son retour.

Une différence essentielle existe cependant entre les deux sites sacrés précédemment cités (Halase et Muktinath) et mChod rten nyi ma: la notoriété remarquable de ce dernier pour l'inceste. A ce jour, mChod rten nyi ma apparaît donc comme un cas, sinon unique, du moins très isolé.

III. Les guides de pèlerinage

L'unanimité des informateurs sur les motifs qui poussaient les pèlerins à se rendre à mChod rten nyi ma était étonnante. Tous disaient que leur connaissance provenait des guides de pèlerinage. J'ai pu trouver deux d'entre eux:[25]

• Le premier est intitulé "Guide de pèlerinage secret de rDo rje nyi ma" (*rdo rje nyi ma'i gnas yig gsang ba'i dkar chag*).[26] Il a un sous-titre en anglais: "A pilgrim's guide to the Hidden land in Sikkim revealed from its place of concealment by Rig 'dzin rGod kyi ldem 'phru can (1337-1408)". Il fut publié à Delhi en 1983. Ecrit en caractères dits d'imprimerie (*dbu can*), il comporte vingt-quatre feuillets de cinq lignes chacun (si l'on excepte les trois premiers qui en comportent: feuillet 1: 1; feuillets 2 et 3: 3).

Le thème essentiel est l'histoire de la construction des *stūpa* de rDo rje nyi ma (et non de mChod rten nyi ma, mais il s'agit bien du même lieu). Le père Rig 'dzin mThong mchog mthong grol, de lignage Hūm ra, eut un fils qui fut appelé rDzi bu (Pâtre), à cause de ses occupations. Il était en fait Nam mkha'i snying po, l'un des vingt-cinq disciples de Padmasambhava. Il avait Mahākaruṇa comme divinité tutélaire et sa foi était si profonde que des signes miraculeux divers apparurent. Un jour, du coeur de Mahākaruṇa fut émané Hayagrīva rouge. Le pâtre lui demanda l'autorisation de construire un *stūpa,* afin "de dissiper les souillures des êtres vivant dans cette époque de dégénérescence". Il obtint l'autorisation [1-7]. Le dixième jour du quatrième mois, un yak apparut sur le Gangs chen mdzod lnga (Kanchenjunga) et le pâtre le suivit, accompagné de son troupeau de yaks et de moutons. Il arriva ainsi au Tibet et, dans une vision, il vit Padmasambhava et Ye shes mtsho rgyal. Il interrogea le saint indien sur l'époque de dégénérescence et les signes qui l'indiqueront. Après avoir fait miraculeusement jaillir une source de nectar de la base de son trône, Padmasambhava répondit:

> De la base du trône des Buddha des trois temps, sont apparues cent sources de nectar. Si l'on s'y baigne, les maladies disparaîtront, les démons-obstacles seront apaisés. Si l'on en boit, *karma* et souillures seront purifiés. En particulier, [viendra une époque où l'] on commettra les dix [actes] mauvais[27] et les cinq péchés sans rémission.[28] A l'époque de dégénérescence, apparaîtra le signe qu'est l'inceste entre frère et soeur.[29] A ce moment, l'essence de la terre, amoindrie, sera emportée par le

---

[25] Le premier texte m'a été donné par F.K. Ehrhard; j'en ai trouvé un second exemplaire, peu de temps après, dans la bibliothèque de 'Khrul zhig rinpoche, au monastère de Thub bstan chos gling (pays sherpa, Népal oriental); le second m'a été signalé par A. Chayet. Je les remercie tous les deux.

[26] Dorénavant: *Dorje 1.*

[27] *Cf.* Dudjom rinpoche (1991, II: 166).

[28] Les *mtshams med lnga* sont: le matricide, le meurtre d'un *Arhat*, le parricide, entraîner la division à l'intérieur de la communauté monastique, dire du mal d'un *Tathāgata* .

[29] *snyigs dus spun zla mi(ng) sring 'dzol ba'i ltas.* Le *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* (2349) donne pour *'dzol ba*: *nor ba'am 'khrul ba dang 'gal ba*: se tromper ou être en dehors de la norme (faire quelque chose de non-conventionnel), rompre l'harmonie.

> vent et il est sûr que l'on ira dans l'enfer de *vajra*. Parce que l'on aura eu des relations [sexuelles] avec [une personne] de strate inférieure ou que l'on aura porté un cadavre, l'intelligence sera bloquée et les canaux du sperme desséchés. [11] Cela sera clair tout comme [dans] un miroir [de cuivre] poli. Cependant toutes les fautes, telles que les cinq péchés pardonnables,[30] seront purifiées. [...]
>
> La montagne centrale est la montagne sacrée (*gnas ri*), siège de la planète Rāhula. Derrière, il y a trois lacs: un d'or, [l'autre] de turquoise et [le troisième] de conque. Les futurs descendants du pâtre sont désignés par prophétie pour ouvrir ce lieu.

Suit une brève description du lieu saint; elle mentionne un lac dans lequel apparaît le *karma* de chacun, ainsi que tout ce qui arrivera dans la vie future, et une montagne sur laquelle il y a des images de *buddha* et de *bodhisattva*.

A son tour, Ye shes mtsho rgyal interrogea le Maître sur la période de dégénérescence. Avant de répondre, Padmasambhava planta son bâton dans le sol et, à cet endroit, se mit à couler "un nectar, eau médicinale aux huit qualités"; il expliqua ensuite les bienfaits de cette eau.

Vient alors l'histoire de la construction de trois *stūpa*: l'un par le pâtre (c'est-à-dire Nam mkha'i snying po), l'autre par Ye shes mtsho rgyal et le troisième bâti en commun, conformément aux instructions du Maître. Un jour, alors que le soleil (*nyi ma*) se levait, le pâtre, dans une vision, vit apparaître dans l'espace un *vajra* (*rdo rje*) d'or à cinq pointes, ce qui explique l'étymologie du nom du lieu, rDo rje nyi ma:

> [19] "Quant aux noms [de ces *stūpa*], à cause des présages décrits plus haut, ils sont appelés les *stūpa* de rDo rje nyi ma (*Vajra*-soleil) et leur renom résonne comme le son du tambour de l'été [= le tonnerre].

Nombreux sont les bienfaits obtenus en faisant prosternations, circumambulations et offrandes à ces *stūpa*, entre autres l'obtention d'enfants pour une femme [19]. Dans une brève description du lieu saint qu'est le pays caché du Sikkim, rDo rje nyi ma est présenté comme "la porte nord qui donne accès au pays caché du Sikkim" [22-23]. Le texte se termine avec l'historique de ce texte-trésor (*gter ma*) qu'est le guide, écrit et caché par Ye shes mtsho rgyal, puis découvert par un descendant du pâtre, "le deuxième Rig 'dzin tshe dbang, descendant et émanation de la parole du pâtre", et finalement imprimé par un héritier du lignage de Hūm ra.

• Le deuxième texte, un "Bref résumé du guide de pèlerinage des *stūpa* de rDo rje nyi ma" (*rDo rje nyi ma'i mchod rten gyi gnas yig nyung bsdus*)[31] est, ainsi que son titre l'indique, beaucoup moins détaillé que le précédent. Il fut raconté par le Seigneur d'Oḍḍiyāna (Padmasambhava) à mTsho rgyal et écrit par cette dernière. Il est attribué au découvreur de trésors (*gter ston*) rDo rje rgyal mtshan.[32] Le texte en ma possession est en écriture dite d'imprimerie (*dbu can*) et comporte cinq *folio* qui présentent un nombre de lignes inégales (de quatre à six). Les fautes d'orthographe, assez nombreuses, ont été corrigées pour moi par des religieux érudits résidant au Népal.

---

[30] Les *nye ba lnga* sont: violer une femme *arhat*, tuer un *bodhisattva*, tuer un moine, prendre les biens de la communauté monastique, détruire un *stūpa*.

[31] Dorénavant: *Dorje 2*.

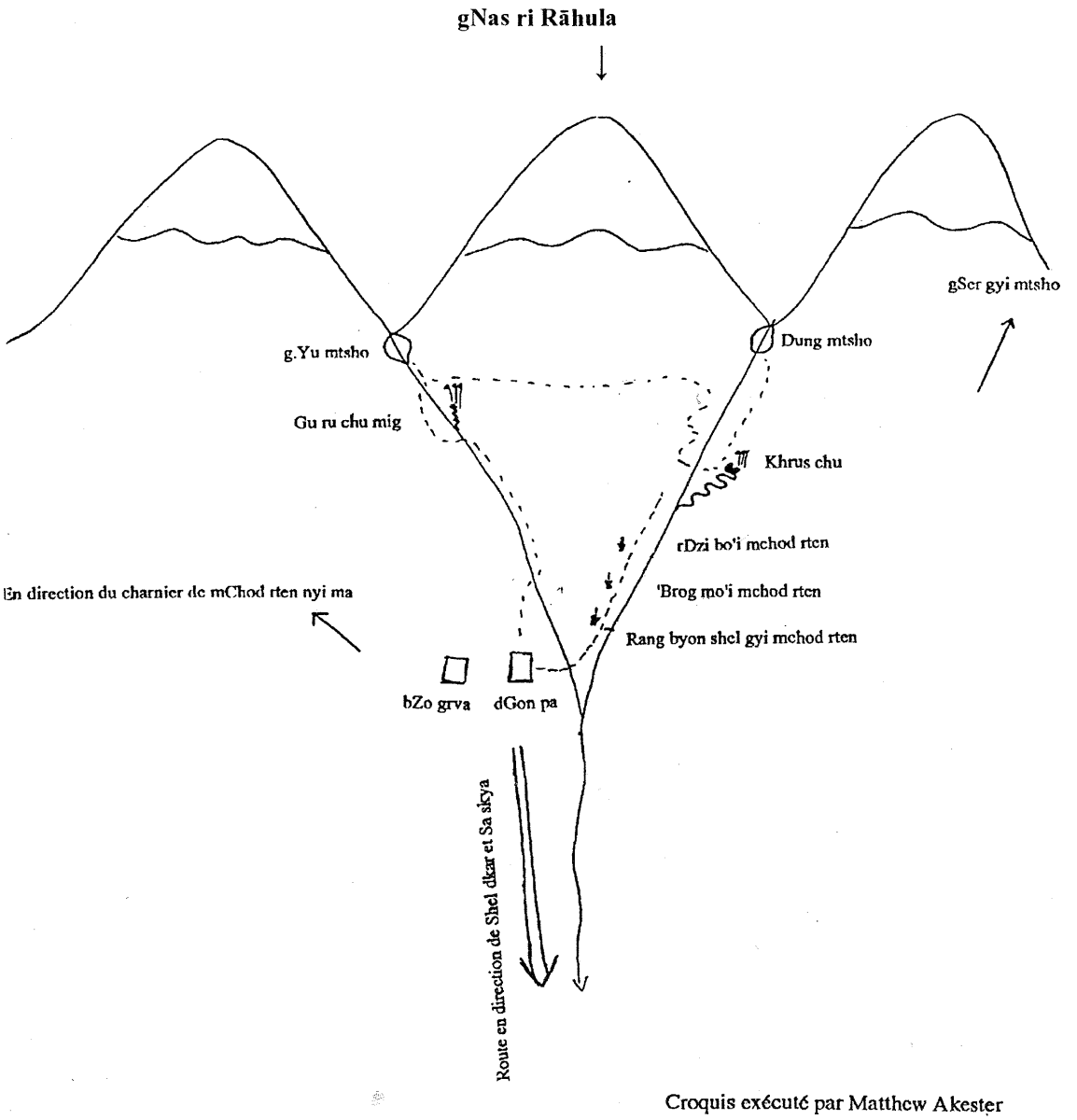
[32] Non identifié.

Le texte débute par une louange à Avalokiteśvara dont rDo rje nyi ma est le lieu de méditation. Le site comporte "un pic enneigé élevé, et une rivière de nectar aux huit qualités y coule" [1b]. Répondant à une question de Ye shes mtsho rgyal qui désirait connaître "les signes merveilleux [manifestés] dans ce lieu particulièrement excellent", le Maître enseigna les diverses qualités de rDo rje nyi ma, puis les bienfaits particuliers que le site dispense:

> [4b] Si on fait prosternations et circumambulations en ce lieu, les cinq péchés sans rémission, les cinq péchés pardonnables, les dix [actes] mauvais seront purifiés. Tous les souhaits se réaliseront spontanément et on obtiendra les *siddhi*, ordinaires et suprême. En particulier, [c'est un lieu] excellent pour une femme qui désire un fils. Les fruits obtenus par la simple écoute du nom [de ces *stūpa*] [conduiront à renaître] comme dieu ou homme.

Le lieu saint est décrit avec des *stūpa* spontanément apparus, un lac donnant des visions aux êtres qui n'ont pas de souillures consécutives à un mauvais *karma* et qui possédent la bonne fortune.

MCHOD RTEN NYI MA



Croquis exécuté par Matthew Akester

IV. Deux traditions, deux discours?

1. La tradition orale

mChod rten nyi ma fut créé, selon les traditions écrite et orale, on pourrait dire "ouvert", par Padmasambhava. C'est un lieu saint parfait composé d'un lac et d'une montagne mais aussi d'une source, trois caractéristiques du paysage que les informateurs n'omettent jamais de citer; ce n'est que dans un deuxième temps qu'ils ajoutent à leur description ce qui est censé être l'élément le plus important du site si l'on se fie à la toponymie, le(s) *stūpa*. Or, dans aucun des récits recueillis, le *stūpa* ne joue de rôle, si ce n'est lorsque les lamas coupables se baignent dans le "Lac de lait" et que de la lumière émane du *stūpa*, signe de la purification de ces religieux. Selon deux informateurs sherpa, la seule fonction du *stūpa* semble être celle d'abriter la source. Toutes les personnes interrogées, bien que connaissant le nom de rDo rje nyi ma,"*Vajra*-soleil", n'employaient que celui de mChod rten nyi ma, "*Stūpa*-soleil", rappelant ainsi la présence de ce(s) *stūpa* dont leurs récits ne font guère mention. A. David-Neel ([1929] 1977: 90-93) explique le nom de mChod rten nyi ma par le fait qu'un *stūpa* "contenant de précieuses reliques s'est miraculeusement transporté, à travers les airs, de l'Inde jusqu'à cet endroit". Cette histoire de *stūpa* volant ne m'a jamais été confirmée.[33]

Si l'on suit la tradition orale, le *stūpa* de mChod rten nyi ma n'a aucune utilité ni aucun rôle dans le déroulement du pèlerinage, ce qui conduit à penser qu'il est une construction postérieure (à la fois littéraire et physique), une réinterprétation faite par les bouddhistes pour détourner un lieu de sa signification première. La lumière qui est dite en émaner lorsqu'un religieux se purifie ne fait que confirmer cette hypothèse. Le monastère a, lui, une présence plus marquée dans les récits où il joue un rôle important: c'est là que les coupables obtiennent la lettre qui prouve leur venue, le fait qu'ils se sont purifiés, et donc leur réussite. Malheureusement, à ce jour, je n'ai pas pu savoir à quelle date remonte la construction du monastère.

Le rôle principal est joué par les eaux, celles du lac ou de la source qu'a fait jaillir Padmasambhava; les récits ne sont pas toujours très explicites. La tradition orale ne relève pas un bienfait clairement mentionné dans les deux guides et qui conduit souvent de nombreux Tibétains à se rendre en pèlerinage: l'obtention d'un enfant. Deux informateurs seulement semblaient en tenir compte, les renseignements les plus détaillés étaient recueillis par A.M. Blondeau: si un couple sans enfant fait la circumambulation (du lac? des *stūpa*?) et, le soir, a des relations sexuelles, ils auront un enfant à qui ils devront obligatoirement donner un nom comportant le terme Gu ru; par exemple, Gu ru sGrol ma si c'est une fille, Gu ru Tshe ring, si c'est un garçon, rappelant ainsi que l'enfant est né à la suite d'un souhait émis à mChod rten nyi ma, lieu saint de Guru Padmasambhava.

2. La tradition écrite

La tradition écrite, quant à elle, met en avant la construction et l'existence du ou des *stūpa* duquel (ou desquels) le lieu saint tire son nom. La présence d'une montagne sacrée est mentionnée dans les deux guides (*Dorje 1*: 11 et *Dorje 2*: 1b). Le guide "découvert" par Rig 'dzin rGod ldem évoque l'apparition de l'inceste comme signe propre à l'époque de dégénérescence, ainsi que les conséquences de relations sexuelles avec une personne de strate inférieure ou encore du fait de porter un cadavre. Il précise effectivement que ces souillures (comme celles qui sont consécutives aux cinq péchés sans rémission, aux cinq péchés pardonnables et aux dix actes mauvais) seront purifiées si l'on fait le pèlerinage à rDo rje nyi ma, la porte nord du pays caché du Sikkim.[34]

---

[33] Pour les *stūpa* volants et les montagnes volantes, voir K. Buffetrille (1996).

[34] Le guide souligne, aux *folio* 18-19, que "les bienfaits [recueillis] en faisant prosternations, circumambulations et

Le second texte ne contient aucune mention qui permette de faire un lien entre ce lieu saint et la souillure consécutive à la faute d'inceste ou à une relation sexuelle avec une personne de strate inférieure, et sa purification, si ce n'est une exclamation de l'auteur alors qu'il cite les bienfaits obtenus en ce lieu: "Que dire alors des pollutions dues aux impuretés?" [3a]. Ne serait-ce pas une évocation discrète de la pollution majeure qu'est l'inceste? En revanche, le parricide et le matricide font partie des cinq péchés sans rémission (*mtshams med lnga*) explicitement purifiés en ce lieu.

L'inceste n'est évidemment pas le thème essentiel de ces guides et il y a un décalage flagrant entre le discours des laïcs et celui des textes, donc des religieux. mChod rten nyi ma est un exemple qui montre bien que, même si les religieux proposent un scénario, les laïcs en disposent. Nous n'avons pas affaire à deux discours parallèles; ils se mêlent. L'un des guides de pèlerinage rappelle qu'à l'époque de dégénérescence apparaîtra le signe de l'inceste, et la tradition orale véhicule l'idée que l'on purifie la souillure consécutive à de tels crimes en venant en pèlerinage à mChod rten nyi ma.

Malheureusement, rien ne nous renseigne sur les raisons qui donnent à ce lieu particulier la faculté de purifier de telles fautes. Les guides de pèlerinage trouvés à ce jour et les informateurs sont muets sur ce point. Une enquête sur le lieu même serait nécessaire, mais cela s'avère difficile du fait de sa situation à la frontière tibéto-sikkimaise.

V. Tentative d'interprétation du pèlerinage de mChod rten nyi ma

Ce pèlerinage apparaît comme un moyen de répondre à la transgression d'un interdit, à un crime qui rejaillit sur toute la communauté et entraîne diverses calamités. Il permet la réintégration dans le groupe de ceux des "coupables" qui survivent à l'épreuve de l'eau glacée, preuve qu'ils sont purifiés. La présentation d'un mythe peut aider à comprendre la relation entre pèlerinage, inceste et épreuve.

1. Du mythe à la réalité

On trouve dans le *bKa' chems ka khol ma* (1989: 305-306), "Le testament [de Srong btsan sgam po] caché dans le pilier", texte-trésor découvert, selon la tradition, par Atiśa (982-1054), un passage surprenant.[35]

Au moment de la construction du monastère de 'Bum thang, le roi Srong btsan sgam po partit dans le 'Phan yul, à la recherche d'artisans:

> [305] Il y avait là un père et une mère, qui n'avaient pas de nom de clan, et qui avaient eu deux filles et deux fils, beaux comme des dieux. Comme ils s'aimaient mutuellement, [les filles] n'avaient pas accepté de partir [ailleurs] comme épouses, [les garçons] n'avaient pas accepté de faire venir des femmes [de l'extérieur]; mais, parce qu'ils avaient honte, ils n'avaient pas osé s'installer en tant que couples [mariés]. C'étaient des artisans.
>
> Le roi leur dit: "Vous devez venir pour être mes artisans".
>
> Les artisans répondirent: "[il y a quatre conditions]: 1. ne pas être astreints [aux règles] de la pudeur; 2. ne pas avoir à chercher un autre travail; 3. avoir un repas chaud apporté avant [le travail]; [306] 4. porter une cape. Roi, si vous acceptez [ces conditions], nous irons".

---

offrandes à ces *stūpa*, [19] sont égaux aux bienfaits [obtenus] à ces sources [Chu mig brgya rtsa]", c'est-à-dire Muktinath. Il serait intéressant de savoir si les gens avec qui S. Mumford a travaillé connaissaient ce texte.

[35] Je remercie S.G. Karmay pour avoir attiré mon attention sur ce passage.

> Le grand roi accepta et, les ayant invités, ils travaillèrent comme artisans à 'Bum thang, Ra mo che, mKhar brag, Them bu kog pa, Mig mangs tshal, etc. Ils étaient heureux. Les quatre, frères et soeurs, vivaient en couples et leurs enfants se multiplièrent tels des *Kyi* (chiens?).[36] On dit qu'il y en avait sept grands villages, appelés les Sept Maisonnées de Kyi mi (hommes-chiens?).
>
> Ong cong [l'épouse chinoise du roi] dit: "Ceux-là, sans honte, se multiplient exagérément comme des *kyi* (chiens?)". Ils reçurent [alors] comme nom de clan celui de Kyi, "Chien?".
>
> Un Bon po de Sum pa[37] [dénommé] Kakari dit: "Vos artisans ayant commis l'impureté de l'inceste, le *pho lha* du roi a été frappé par l'impureté, [le souverain] tombera malade et mourra. Ne les laissez pas faire. S'ils n'obéissent pas, je ferai de la magie noire". Il réalisa un maléfice de poux (*liṅga*) qu'il lança. En un instant, les poux prirent la taille de pigeons. Ils remplirent l'extérieur et l'intérieur des Sept Maisonnées Kyi mi; mais quoi qu'on fît, [les artisans] n'acceptaient pas de partir et leur nombre augmentait, dit-on.
>
> Puis, les Sept Maisonnées Kyi mi prirent peur; les soeurs-épouses furent envoyées comme brus et les frères-maris firent venir des épouses [de l'extérieur]. Alors ils se multiplièrent encore plus qu'avant, et ils remplirent le dBu ru [Tibet central] tout entier.
>
> Parce qu'ils disaient: "Le centre (*dkyil shod*) de ce pays est [la patrie] des tribus Kyi", on l'appela dBu ru [s]Kyid shod; et parce qu'ils disaient: "Nous buvons de cette rivière bleu-turquoise", on appela la rivière Kyi [=sKyid] chu sngon mo.

Ce récit, donné par le *bKa' chems ka khol ma* comme étymologie de toponymes, peut être interprété comme une légende d'origine d'un premier clan. On pourrait alors comprendre qu'inceste et absence de honte existaient avant que l'organisation en clans ne se mette en place. Sinon, l'attitude du roi et des artisans est difficilement explicable. Le premier accepte les conditions émises par les artisans, ce qui laisse supposer qu'il n'a pas conscience des conséquences qui peuvent en découler; les autres exigent non seulement de poursuivre leurs relations incestueuses, mais de ne pas être frappés par la honte. Ce texte nous apprend que le *pho lha* du roi, atteint par la souillure due à la faute d'inceste, est responsable de la maladie du roi qui va mourir. La légende de Gri gum est là pour rappeler les graves conséquences de l'abandon du roi par son *pho lha*, son *dgra lha* et son *mgur lha*.[38] Le *pho lha*, dieu de la lignée mâle, fait partie des cinq dieux nés avec l'homme (*'go ba'i lha*) qui siègent sur différentes parties du corps. Les listes de ces derniers varient,[39] et les auteurs ne s'accordent pas non plus sur les endroits du corps que ces dieux occupent.

De son côté, S.G. Karmay dans un article récent (1995: 166), rapporte une légende tirée du *gZi brjid*[40] dans laquelle il est dit qu'un jour, le démon Khyab pa lag ring jeta à la tête de gShen

---

[36] Il faut noter que la version du *bKa' chems ka khol ma,* publiée dans *Literary Arts in Ladakh*, Vol. 1. Darjeeling 1972, en 14 chapitres, et celle du *Ma 'ongs lung bstan gsal ba'i sgron me* (sMan rtsis shes rig spendzod. Vol 33. Leh 1973) en 12 chapitres, ne contiennent pas le passage ci-dessus.

Selon S.G. Karmay, la suite du texte laisse penser qu'il faut remplacer *kyi* par *khyi.* (Voir aussi Schicklgruber 1992: 725.)

[37] Région au nord-est du Tibet (A. Macdonald 1959: 441).

[38] G. Tucci (1949: 733), A. Macdonald (1971: 302), R. de Nebesky-Wojkowitz ([1956] 1975: 318), R.A. Stein ([1962] 1981: 195).

[39] Voir entre autres A. Macdonald (1971: 301, n. 407) et S.G. Karmay (1975: 193).

[40] C'est la biographie longue de gShen rab mi bo, fondateur du Bon, selon la tradition. Voir S.G. Karmay (1975).

rab mi bo un foudre contenant les neuf impuretés, dans le but de le tuer ou au moins de le polluer, sans y réussir. Une liste de ces neuf impuretés est donnée: "homicide/fratricide (*dme*), naissance d'un enfant juste après le décès de son père (*mug*), inceste (*nal*),[41] impudicité (*btsog*), signes imprécatoires (*than*), mauvais augures (*ltas ngan*), chose possédée par l'esprit (*byu*), impureté due au décès du mari ou de l'épouse (*yug*), pollution du foyer (*thab mkhon*)".

Un autre mythe permet d'avancer un peu plus dans la compréhension de ce qui est impliqué pour les Tibétains dans la faute d'inceste et ses conséquences. Alors que le Bon déclinait au Tibet, le roi Khri srong lde btsan, à cause de sa décision de faire pratiquer le bouddhisme par ses sujets, tomba malade et de nombreux fléaux frappèrent le pays (Karmay 1972: 83-84 et 1991: 365). Le souverain fit alors appel à un devin afin d'en connaître les causes et de déterminer les rituels qui seraient bénéfiques. Le devin expliqua:

> "O Seigneur, c'est à cause de la pollution d'un enfant né d'une union incestueuse et de la magie du démon Nal mi zan snying dmar (Inceste Anthropophage, Coeur rouge) [...]. S'il y a des malheurs dans ce pays, c'est que les treize divinités pures de ce monde sont mécontentes de l'existence de cet enfant". Tout le monde s'inquiéta [...]. Les ministres lui dirent: "O devin clairvoyant, nous te demandons de trouver cet enfant et de nous indiquer le rituel dont l'exécution sera bénéfique". Le devin dit: "[...] Les dix-huit Bonpo appartenant aux différents clans doivent exécuter le rite Glang nag thur sel, ('le rite au boeuf noir d'élimination par le bas'). Pour ce rite, il faut avoir un boeuf brun chargé des objets d'offrande et des rançons pour l'homme et la femme avec, par-dessus, l'enfant incestueux. L'expulsion doit se faire dans la direction sud-ouest, ce sera bénéfique".[42]

Différents thèmes de ce récit mythique se retrouvent dans le pèlerinage de mChod rten nyi ma: celui de l'inceste, des diverses calamités qui frappent la communauté et celui de l'enfant qui en est le fruit et qui, s'il survit, présente des caractères "monstrueux".[43]

2. Divinité-montagne et inceste

S.G. Karmay précise en note (1991: 365, n. 157) que les treize divinités pures sont toutes des divinités montagnes. Fâchées, elles envoient diverses calamités. Par le rituel et l'expulsion de l'enfant sur un boeuf chargé des rançons, la souillure de l'inceste est éliminée et les divinités montagnes sont apaisées.

La notion de divinités montagnes responsables de l'ordre de la nature, de la prospérité, est bien connue dans la tradition tibétaine. Déjà, les documents de Dunhuang soulignent que, de la satisfaction des *sku bla*, "divinités montagnes, ancêtres et supports du principe vital des rois" (A. Macdonald 1971: 303), dépendaient "le prestige de la personne royale et sa santé, la stabilité du royaume et du gouvernement, l'absence de maladies pour les hommes et les animaux, l'abondance de la nourriture" (*ibid.*: 309). Nous l'avons dit, tous les informateurs et la littérature tibétologique reconnaissent que lorsqu'il y a un cas d'inceste, diverses calamités surviennent, entre autres la tempête et la grêle. Lorsque tombe la grêle, disent S.G. Karmay et P. Sagant (1987: 251), c'est le *yul lha* qu'on invoque, car "de son bon vouloir de maître du sol (*gzhi bdag*) dépend l'attitude de tous les autres dieux sur lesquels il exerce son empire". Le *yul lha*, dieu du terroir et divinité montagne, est généralement considéré comme l'ancêtre de la population qui vit

---

[41] Souligné par moi.

[42] Ce passage traduit par S.G. Karmay (1991: 365) est tiré du *Srid rgyud* de Khod po Blo gros thogs med (XIIIème siècle), texte qui traite de l'expansion et du déclin du Bon à l'époque royale.

[43] Le thème de la rançon (évoqué par l'envoi du [des] incestueux monté[s] sur un bœuf) ne sera pas abordé ici, car cela conduirait à un développement trop long.

alentour.[44] Il n'est pas très étonnant que le dieu du terroir, ancêtre de la communauté, réagisse de manière violente à l'inceste, au parricide, au matricide et même aux relations sexuelles avec une personne de strate inférieure. D'une certaine manière, on pourrait dire qu'il s'agit d'une "affaire de famille". Irrité s'il constate des transgressions, il se détourne et le territoire, ainsi que la communauté qui y vit, ne bénéficient plus alors de la protection du dieu et sont abandonnés à toutes les forces maléfiques.

VI. Conclusion: le règlement du "crime"

La nature du rite accompli à mChod rten nyi ma est difficile à déterminer avec certitude. Disons, prudemment, que c'est une épreuve qui présente un caractère d'ordalie. Le jugement ne porterait pas sur la culpabilité ou l'innocence du couple, mais sur le fait d'être ou non pardonné. La transgression du tabou de l'inceste ne serait donc pas si irrémédiable.

Le lien, brièvement évoqué ci-dessus, entre l'inceste et les calamités déclenchées sur la communauté par le *yul lha*, amène à considérer une interprétation possible du rite purificateur à mChod rten nyi ma. Pour la communauté, ne serait-ce pas le dieu du terroir (*yul lha*) qui s'exprimerait (les traditions écrites et orales mentionnent la présence d'une montagne)?[45]

Cette hypothèse est étayée par le traitement habituellement réservé aux incestueux: en les expulsant, la communauté espère échapper aux sanctions surnaturelles envoyées par le dieu du terroir. L'expulsion doit également lui permettre de retrouver son honneur perdu. Rappelons le père de la jeune nonne dans le village de Gyasumdo.

Mais c'est ici que le bouddhisme interfère à mChod rten nyi ma. La société exige une attestation certifiant l'épreuve subie par le (ou les) incestueux; ils l'obtiendront au monastère. Celui qui se rend en pèlerinage dans ce lieu sans avoir commis de faute grave n'a nullement besoin de ce papier. L'autorité religieuse bouddhique intervient au moment de la délivrance de la lettre; elle se contente d'entériner un état de fait décidé par l'épreuve. Le bouddhisme apporte ainsi sa caution et reconnaît à ce pèlerinage la possibilité de purifier la souillure provoquée, entre autres, par la faute d'inceste. Sans cette attestation, le pèlerinage est nul et non avenu aux yeux de la communauté. C'est la preuve que l'homme (le couple?) s'est bien rendu à mChod rten nyi ma, qu'il s'est soumis à l'épreuve et qu'il est purifié. Sa survie prouve à la communauté qu'elle ne sera plus frappée par les sanctions surnaturelles.

Le cas de mChod rten nyi ma montre qu'en certains endroits du Tibet et dans certaines populations des marches himalayennes, lorsque deux membres du groupe commettent un inceste, la peine de mort ou l'expulsion définitive ne sont pas toujours les moyens utilisés pour résoudre la transgression de l'interdit.

Nous avons relevé l'histoire du Lama Dorje. Bien que tous les villageois se soient accordés pour reconnaître que la faute était fort grave et bien que certains d'entre eux aient avoué ne plus avoir confiance dans ce moine, la plupart désiraient qu'il reste et étaient prêts à lui pardonner et à le voir réintégrer le monastère, cette fois-ci en tant que religieux marié. Un lama très âgé intervint et donna deux raisons possibles pour expliquer le "crime" de Lama Dorje: la première était que, dans une vie passée, il avait pu commettre un très grave péché, dont la rétribution était la cause de l'actuelle tragédie; la seconde était que ses qualités avaient dû exciter les calomnies (*mi kha*), ce qui avait entraîné sa chute alors même qu'il approchait de la réalisation. Il n'y avait donc pas eu de réelle mauvaise intention de sa part et la communauté pouvait retrouver

---

[44] Il semble, dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances, que ce concept ne soit connu ni au Bhoutan (Pommaret 1996: 39-56), ni au Zanskar (Riaboff 1996: 23-38).

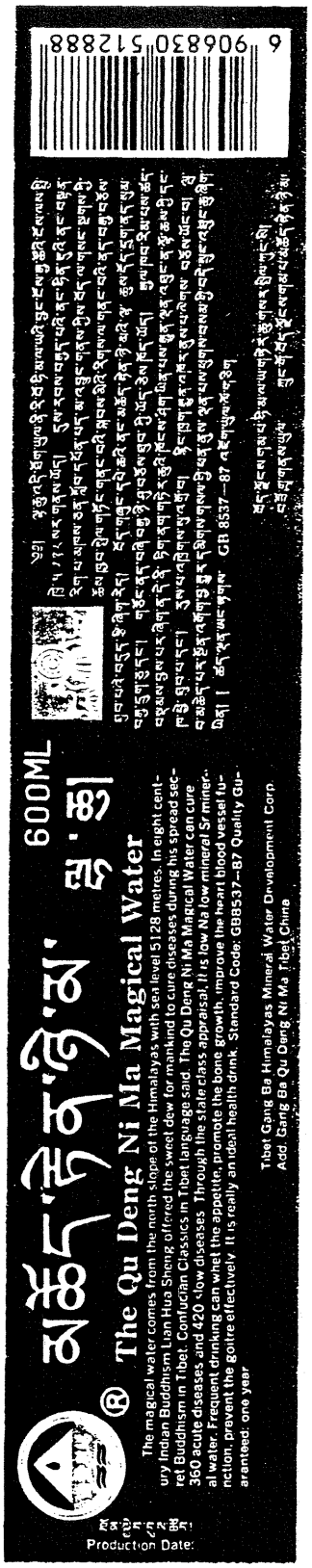
[45] Si c'était le cas, cela signifierait que la juridiction du *yul lha* s'appliquerait à des gens qui ne relèvent pas de son territoire. La question reste ouverte.

l'harmonie sans avoir recours à l'expulsion (Mumford 1990: 238-39). Les villageois, tout comme la communauté bouddhique, avaient besoin de ce religieux si actif; c'est ce qui explique l'intervention du lama. On peut donc comprendre plus facilement les dispositions prises pour le réintégrer, en tant que religieux marié, avec sa jeune disciple.

"Remettre de l'ordre dans l'espace est essentiel pour préparer le retour de la civilisation, pour permettre aux gens de retrouver la pureté nécessaire à leur vitalité, à leur prospérité", dit P. Sagant (1982: 167) et il montre combien les mêmes idées se retrouvent en Chine mais aussi en Asie du Sud-Est, par exemple chez les Mnong Gar du Centre Vietnam (Condominas [1957] 1974: 97-134).

Les autorités bouddhiques ne pouvaient accepter que la faute d'inceste soit purifiée par une simple épreuve physique, sous-tendue, si mon hypothèse est juste, par le culte ancien des *yul lha*; elles voulaient jouer un rôle. Elles ont fait de ce site, sans doute indigène, un lieu saint ouvert par Padmasambhava; les guides de pèlerinage nous l'apprennent, les voyageurs le confirment, un *stūpa* et un monastère ont été érigés. De cette manière, le monastère réussit à contrôler un ensemble socio-culturel qui n'appartient pas au bouddhisme.

POSTFACE: Un article paru récemment dans la revue *China's Tibet* (Vol. 6, n° 5, 1995: 22) apporte des développements nouveaux sur mChod rten nyi ma. On apprend ainsi qu'au cours du dernier millénaire, des pèlerins indiens, bhoutanais, sikkimais, népalais et tibétains sont venus pour s'immerger dans les eaux de mChod rten nyi ma et en boire. Chaque jour, huit-cent vingt tonnes d'eau s'écoulent. De nombreux dévots retournent chez eux, chargés de bouteilles qu'ils offrent aux membres de leur famille et à leurs amis. Au début des années quatre-vingt, les habitants de la région réalisèrent la valeur de ces eaux sacrées; en 1989, ils firent analyser des échantillons. En 1990, le Comité de l'Eau Sacrée de mChod rten nyi ma affirma que c'était, en fait, de l'eau minérale. En août 1992, le Ministère de la Géologie et des Ressources minérales annonça que cette eau contenait des éléments rares, très bénéfiques pour la santé des gens: elle augmentait l'appétit, permettait un meilleur développement des os, améliorait la circulation, renforçait le cœur et avait des vertus curatives sur les goitres. En 1993, fut établie la Compagnie de Développement des Eaux Minérales de mChod rten nyi ma; une usine fut construite et la mise en bouteilles débuta. Les premières bouteilles furent offertes au *stūpa* funéraire du défunt Xème Panchen lama. L'article ne mentione pas la purification de l'inceste parmi les bienfaits que procurent ces eaux! Serait-il possible que, désormais, les "coupables" se contentent d'aller au bazar de Lhasa afin d'acheter quelques bouteilles d'eau minérale pour être purifiés de la souillure causée par l'inceste, le parricide, le matricide ou les relations avec une personne de basse strate?



Etiquette d'une bouteille d'eau minérale de mChod rten nyi ma

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

Sources tibétaines

rDo rje rgyal mtshan, *rDo rje nyi ma'i mchod rten gyi gnas yig nyung bsdus.* Manuscrit, Musée Guimet. 5 *folio.*

Byang chub rgyal mtshan, *g.Yu 'brug sgrog pa'i zhal lce bco lnga,* in *Bod kyi snga rabs khrims srol yig cha btams bsgrigs.* (*Gangs chen rig mdzod* n° 7), Lhasa, Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1989.3: 75-76.

Rig 'dzin rGod ldem, *rDo rje nyi ma'i gnas yig gsang ba'i dkar chag. A pilgrim's guide to the hidden land in Sikkim revealed from its place of concealment by Rig 'dzin rGod kyi ldem 'phru can.* Reproduced from a print carved by Rig 'dzin rtogs ldan dpa' bo. Delhi, 1983. 24 pages.

Atiśa (découverte attribuée à-), *bKa' chems ka khol ma.* Gan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1989: 305-306.

Sources occidentales

Aziz, B.N. (1978), *Tibetan Frontier Families.* New Delhi, Vikas Publishing House PVT LTD.

Buffetrille, K. (1993), "Preliminary Remarks on a Sherpa Pilgrimage: the Pilgrimage to the Milk Lake in the District of Solu (Nepal)", in *The Anthropology of Nepal. From Tradition to Modernity.* G. Toffin (ed.). Proceedings of the Franco-Nepalese Seminar held in the French Cultural Centre, Kathmandu, 97-111.

Buffetrille, K. (1996), "One day the mountains will go away... – Preliminary remarks on the flying mountains of Tibet", in *Reflections of the Mountain. Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya.* A.M. Blondeau, E. Steinkellner (eds.), Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Veröffentlichungen zur Sozialanthropologie, Band 2), 77-89.

Chan, V. (1994), *Tibet Handbook, A Pilgrimage Guide.* Hong Kong, Moon Publications INC.

Condominas, G. ([1957] 1974), *Nous avons mangé la forêt.* Paris, Flammarion (Champs).

Das, S.C. ([1902] 1970), *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet.* Kathmandu, Ratna Pustak Bhandar.

David-Neel, A. ([1929] 1977), *Mystiques et magiciens du Tibet.* Paris, R. Laffont.

David-Neel, A. (1979), *Le Tibet d'Alexandra David-Neel.* Paris, Plon.

Diemberger, H. (1991), "Lhakama [lha bka' ma] and Khandroma [mkha' 'gro ma]: The Sacred Ladies of Beyul Khenbalung [sbas yul mkhan pa lung]", in *Tibetan History and Language.* Studies dedicated to Uray Géza on his seventieth birthday. E. Steinkellner (ed.), Wien, Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde 26, 137-155.

Dudjom rinpoche, (Dorje G. et Kapstein M., trads.) (1991), *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism.* Boston, Wisdom Publications.

Duncan, D.W.H. (1964), *Customs and Superstitions of the Tibetans.* London, The Mitre Press.

Freshfield, D.W. ([1903] 1979), *Round Kanchenjunga.* Kathmandu, Ratna Pustak Bhandar.

Gorer, G. ([1938] 1984), *The Lepchas of Sikkim.* Delhi, Cultural Publishing House.

Guigo, D. (1986), "Le système de parenté tibétain", *L'Ethnographie* 82/98-99 (1-2), 71-117.

Hamayon, R. (1990), *La chasse à l'âme: Esquisse d'une théorie du chamanisme sibérien.* Nanterre, Société d'Ethnologie.

Héritier, F. (1979), "Symbolique de l'inceste et de sa prohibition", in *La fonction symbolique.* Essais d'anthropologie réunis par M. Izard et P. Smith, Paris, Gallimard (NRF), 209-243.

Jaggi, O.P. (1973), *Indian System of Medicine.* Delhi, Atma Ram and Sons.

Jest, C. (1975), *Dolpo: communautés de langue tibétaine du Népal.* Paris, C.N.R.S.

Karmay, S.G. (1972), *The Treasury of Good Saying: A Tibetan History of Bon.* Oxford, Oxford University Press.

Karmay, S.G. (1975), *A General Introduction to the History and Doctrines of Bon.* Tokyo, The Toyo Bunko.

Karmay, S.G. (1991), "L'homme et le boeuf: le rituel de *glud* (rançon)", *Journal Asiatique* 279/3-4, 327-382.

Karmay, S.G. (1995), "Les dieux du terroir et les genévriers: un rituel tibétain de purification", *Journal Asiatique* 283/1, 161-207.

Karmay, S.G. et Sagant, P. (sous presse), *Les neuf forces de l'homme. Récit des confins tibétains.* Nanterre, Société d'Ethnologie.

Lama Anagarika Govinda, ([1969] 1976), *Le chemin des nuages blancs. Pèlerinages d'un moine bouddhiste au Tibet.* Paris, Albin Michel.

Levine, N. (1988), *The Dynamics of Polyandry: Kinship, Domesticity and Population on the Tibetan Border.* Chicago and London, The University of Chicago Press.

Lévi-Strauss, C. ([1947] 1977), *Les structures élémentaires de la parenté.* Paris-La Haye, Mouton.

Lhalungpa, L.P. (1983), *Tibet, The Sacred Realm.* New-York, Library of Congress Card Catalogue.

Macdonald, A. (1959), "La naissance du monde au Tibet", in *La naissance du monde.* Paris, Sources orientales, Le Seuil, 417-452.

Macdonald, A. (1971), "Une lecture des Pelliot Tibétain 1286, 1287, 1038, 1047 et 1290. Essai sur la formation et l'emploi des mythes politiques dans la religion royale de Sroṅ bcan sgam po", in *Etudes Tibétaines dédiées à Marcelle Lalou.* Paris, Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient A. Maisonneuve, 190-392.

Meyer, F. (1981), *gSo ba rig pa: le système médical tibétain.* Paris, C.N.R.S.

Messerschmidt, D.A. (1982), "Social Process on the Hindu Pilgrimage to Muktinath", *Kailash* 9/2-3, 139-159.

Messerschmidt, D.A. (1992), *Muktinath: Himalayan Pilgrimage, A Cultural and Historical Guide.* Kathmandu, Sahayogi Press.

Mumford. S.T. ([1989] 1990), *Himalayan Dialogue. Tibetan lamas and gurung shamans in Nepal.* Kathmandu, Tiwari's Pilgrims Book House.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. de ([1956] 1975), *Oracles and Demons of Tibet. The Cult and Icongraphy of the Tibetan Protective Deities.* Graz, Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt.

Pommaret; F. (1996), "On local and mountain deities in Bhutan", in *Reflections of the Mountain. Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya.* A.M. Blondeau, E. Steinkellner (eds.), Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Veröffentlichungen zur Sozialanthropologie, Band 2), 39-56.

Prince Pierre de Grèce (1963), *A Study of Polyandry.* The Hague, Mouton.

Ramble, C. (1984), *The lamas of Lubra: Tibetan Bonpo Householder Priests in Western Nepal.* Thesis presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Oxford. Non publiée.

Riaboff, I. (1996), "gZhon nu mdung lag, mountain god of Zanskar", in *Reflections of the Mountain. Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya.* A.M. Blondeau, E. Steinkellner (eds.), Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Veröffentlichungen zur Sozialanthropologie, Band 2), 23-37.

Sagant, P. (1982), "Le chamane et la grêle", *L'Ethnographie* 78/2-3, 163-173.

Schicklgruber, C. (1992), "*Grib*: On the Significance of the Term in a Socio-Religious Context", in *PIATS* Narita 1989, 723-735.

Schuler, S.R. (1983), *Fraternal Polyandry and Single Women: a Study of Marriage, Social Stratification and Property in Chumik, a Tibetan Society of the Nepalese Himalaya.* Harvard, Harvard University Press.

Snellgrove, D.L. ([1961] 1981), *Himalayan Pilgrimage. A study of Tibetan religion.* Boulder, Prajna Press.

Stein, R.A.([1962] 1981), *La civilisation tibétaine.* Paris, Le Sycomore-L'Asiathèque.

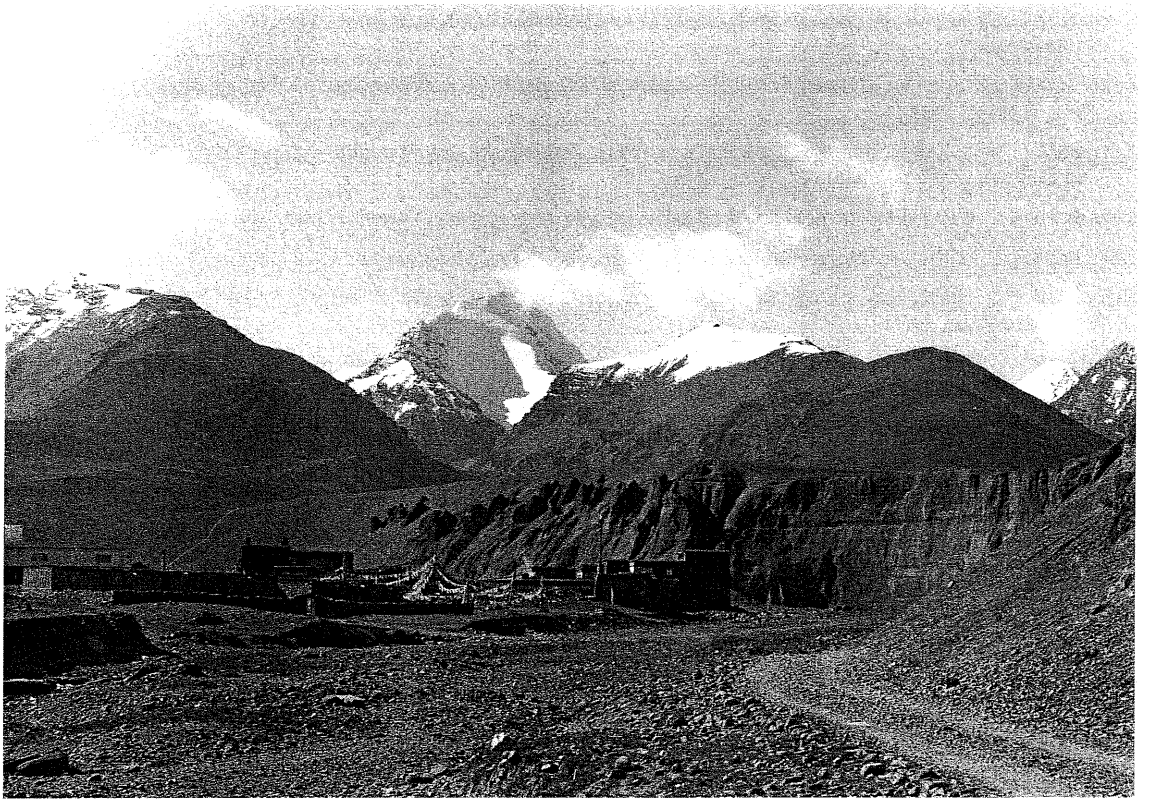
Steinmann, B. (1987), *Les Tamang du Népal, usages et religion, religion de l'usage.* Paris, Editions Recherche sur les Civilisations.

Tucci, G. ([1949] 1980), *Tibetan Painted Scrolls.* Kyoto, Rinsen Book.

Waddell, L.A. ([1899] 1978), *Among the Himalayas.* Kathmandu, Ratna Pustak Bhandar.

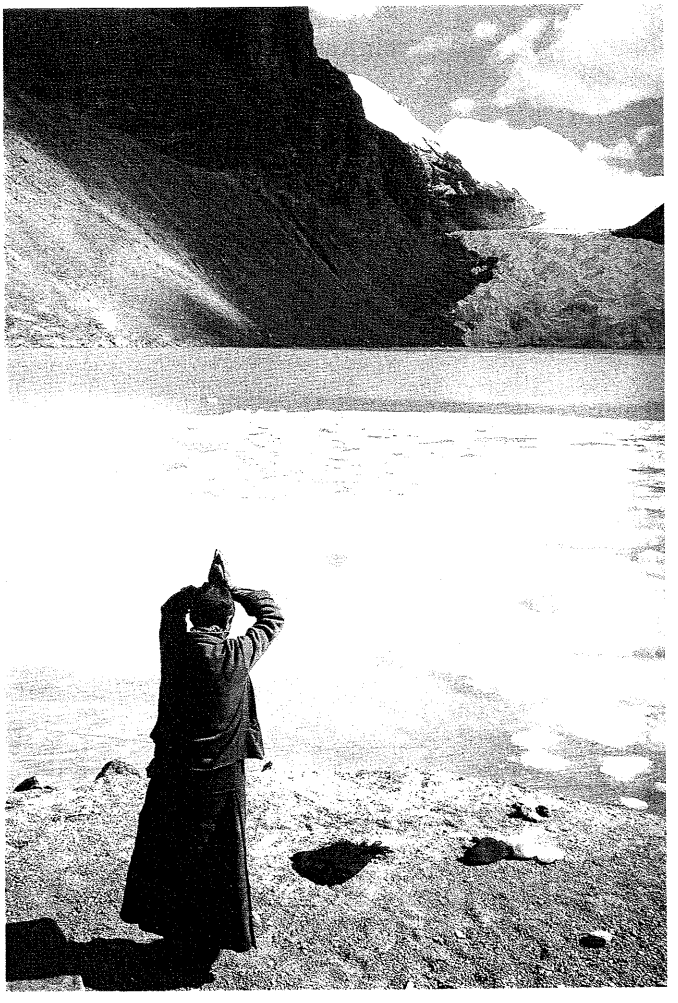
White, J.C. ([1909] 1986), *Sikkim and Bhutan. Twenty-one years on the North-East Frontier, 1887-1908.* Delhi, Manas Publications.

Planche I



mChod rten nyi ma: le temple et les bâtiments de l'usine (Photo: Frances Howland)

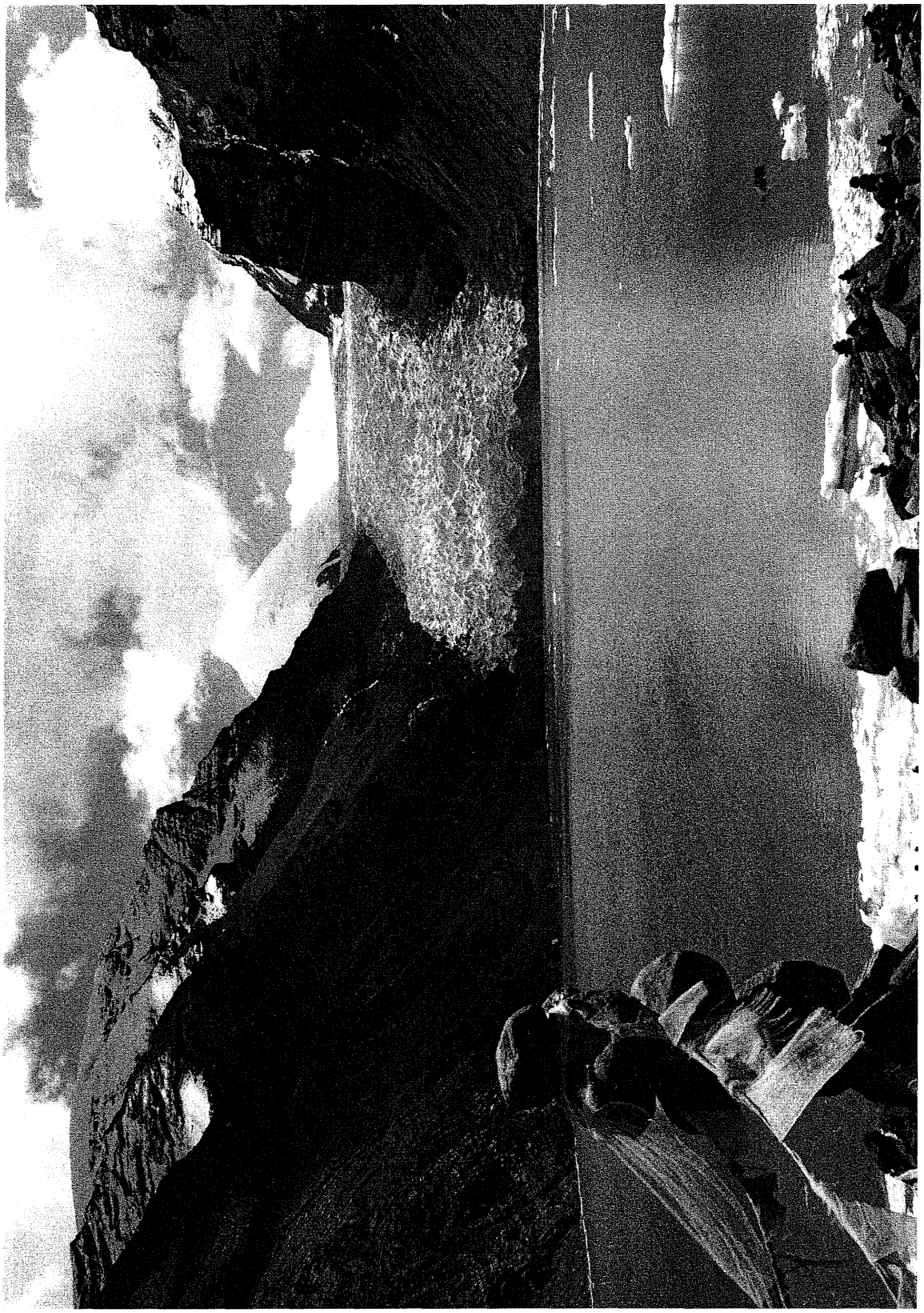
rDzi bo mchod rten (Photo: Frances Howland)



Dung mtsho (Photo: Frances Howland)

Dung mtsho (Photo: Frances Howland)

Planche III



g.Yu mtsho (Photo: Frances Howland)

THE HORSEMAN IN RED
On Sacred Mountains of La stod lho (Southern Tibet)[1]

by

Hildegard Diemberger, Vienna

lHa btsan sGang dmar is a mountain god residing on a small peak close to Ding ri Glang skor in the area traditionally called La stod lho.[2]

In both written and oral traditions he turns up as a protecting territorial deity and sometimes as an ancestral god with a wide range of cults and myths related to him. Appearing as a horseman in red, he was considered the protector not only of local communities but also of the ancient lords of La stod lho, as well as of one of the kings of Gung thang born in Ding ri, the monastery of Shel dkar and the traditional military camp of Ding ri.

At present he is still the main deity of a number of nomadic and farming communities living in the Dingri County and he is part of a network of interrelated territorial deities who shape the sacred geography of this region.

The fierce lord of the landscape, ruler of the natural elements and human fortune

The nomads of Tsam phu[3] gather at the full moon of the Fifth Month to worship Pho lha lHa btsan sGang dmar and his powerful southern minister gSer chung. Dressed in their best costumes, they offer incense, *rtsam pa*, *chang* and milk. One representative from each household must be present bearing the family flag-staff (*dar lcog*). Monks from the Chos lung dgon pa[4] join them, carrying ritual items and sacred texts.

The temple of Tsam phu, which nowadays lies in total ruins, was once adorned with impressive paintings depicting this deity and his retinue. He was the sacred lord of the entire area and his ministers – gSer chung, the southern minister, in upper Pha drug;[5] Zur ra, the eastern minister, in Kha rta[6] – directly intervened through oracles (*lha bab*) in the vicissitudes of the population.

---

[1] I wish to thank the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences for its support in the realization of the research project upon which the present paper is based, the Austrian Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung for the relevant financial funding, Pasang Wangdu, Tinley Namgyal, Khangar Dondrub, Aya Pema, Maria Antonia Sironi, Guntram Hazod, Charles Ramble, Maureen Stewart and all the colleagues and friends who provided useful comments and suggestions.

[2] The confines of the area traditionally defined as La stod lho were the Himalayan range to the south, the gTsang po to the north, the area of Sa skya to the east and the area of Gung thang to the west. La stod lho was one of the thirteen *khri skor* during the Sa skya rule, cf. Tucci 1971: 191-192.

[3] Tsam phu is a locality in the upper basin of the rDza dkar chu to the north of Mt. Everest.

[4] Chos lung dgon pa is located to the south of Ding ri sGang dkar and used to follow in particular the *Zhi byed* tradition of Pha dam pa sangs rgyas. When in the 17th century the abbot of Shel dkar tried to introduce there the dGe lugs pa tradition, it was already a seat of lay practitioners. Cf. *Shel dkar chos 'byung* 63a,2-3.

[5] Pha drug comprises the basin of the rDza dkar chu, a tributary of the Bong chu (Phung chu), to the north of Mt. Everest. See the paper by G. Hazod in this volume.

[6] Kha rta (mKhar rta) is an area to the southeast of Pha drug where the Bong chu (Phung chu) flows before entering Nepal (where it takes the name of Arun).

The text of worship (*bskang gso*)[7] which is still kept in the village beneath the Chos lung dgon pa invokes and describes sGang dmar as follows:

> In the sky are rainbows and thick clouds. In their midst is the red body of dGe bsnyen lHa btsan sGang dmar, riding a red god-horse. He has one face and two hands. In the right hand he holds a red spear (*mdung*) of gold pointing to the sky, in the left hand he holds a red *btsan*-lasso (*zhags pa*) to throw at the *gnod sbyin* like an arrow. He has a wrathful expression, two teeth and fierce red eyes. The eyebrows and beard are flaming fire. The red-yellow hair hangs over his shoulders. His body is adorned with brocade and jewels... In front of him numerous Asura (*lha ma yin*) girls sing and dance. On his left an army comprising thousands of gods rides red *btsan*-horses. On his right innumerable *klu btsan* ride on blue *klu*-horses. These are surrounded by animals such as tigers, leopards, wolves, pigs, foxes, red dogs devouring meat and drinking blood, as well as numerous *btsan*-birds in flight... All of them are immediately invited to attend. In order to control bad elements, as well as to gain power and fame, all the *btsan rgod* with their retinues of gods are invited to this place. As he has originated the thought of enlightenment, being a protector of the Buddhist doctrine, the great god sGang dmar, the protector of living beings in this degenerated time, may observe the doctrine by performing meritorious deeds... flowers, the perfume of incense, lamps, music and *gtor ma* are offered...
>
> In upper eastern Ding ri, the *gnyan* of the head of the three valleys (*phu*) are in the mountains, the *gnyan* dwelling at the bottom of the three valleys (*mda'*) belong to the lineage of the *klu* of streams and rivers. In the pure holy place of these spirits lies the red castle with the high iron throne and a suitable golden door. A lake of blood is burning with fire, poisonous snakes are crawling together and little red birds fly above. In that royal castle (*sku mkhar*, 'body-castle') stays the king lHa btsan rgyal po, who holds great magic powers. Pronouncing the name of his father, this is mKhrid (Khri) btsan btsan po; pronouncing the name of his mother, this is Klu sa (bza') klu btsan sman. The son is known as lHa btsan sGang dmar, with a red body, red armour of gold, a red helmet of gold and a red cloak of brocade... (*sGang dmar bskang gso* 1a,1-4a,2).

Described repeatedly with the typical features of a *btsan,* he is invoked as the 'king of the four seasons' (*dus bzhi rgyal po*) to suitably arrange months and seasons and to control the seasonal influence of *btsan* and *bdud* deities, hail, thunder and disease. As king of the defending deities (*dgra lha rgyal po*) he should protect against enemies and grant the area protection through local spirits mentioned in a long list (*sGang dmar bskang gso* 5a,3-6b,2) together with the relevant localities – comprising the town of sGang dkar. He extends his influence in the four cardinal directions through his powerful ministers:

> «...As far as the body of your ministers is concerned: your minister to the east is called Su ra ri (Zur ra).[8] He rides a black *bdud*-horse. His body is covered by a red cloak. He wears a belt of snakes around his waist, a helmet (*rmog*) of iron on his head and short turquoise shoes. He carries a scabbard made of tiger fur to his right

---

[7] The so-called *sGang dmar bskang gso* is a text of worship recorded in a manuscript of 12 folios which is kept by a lay religious specialist who celebrates the rituals. The title is unreadable and the text contains many mistakes.

[8] The local oral accounts in Ding ri and Kha rta confirm the identity of Zur ra [rwa skyes] and Su ra ri as the eastern minister of sGang dmar. Zur ra is a mountain god situated on the border between Tibet and Nepal and is worshipped in particular by the Tibetans of Kha rta and the Tibetan-speaking groups of the Arun Valley in Nepal. He is also considered the guardian of the eastern gate of sBas yul mKhan pa lung and the protector of the hidden valleys in general. For his role in Bhutan, see F. Pommaret in this volume.

and a quiver made of leopard skin to his left. A sword of flaming light is fastened to his belt. In the right hand he holds a red spear with a red flag. In the left he holds a black *bdud*-lasso. Three blackbirds which are brothers fly overhead and a black dog with a white mark on its heart follows. The Rol ba skyabs bdun (*sic*) sing *sha ra ra,* the song of force (*shugs pa'i glu,* possibly for *spyugs pa'i glu* = song of expulsion) shall inflame the air. Good offerings are made.

Your minister to the south is called gSer chung.[9] He rides a yellow horse. His body is covered by a green cloak. He carries a helmet of gold on his head and wears red shoes. He carries a scabbard made of tiger fur to his right and a quiver made of leopard skin to his left. A sword of flaming light is fastened to his belt. In the right hand he holds a red spear with a red flag. In the left he holds a *btsan*-lasso of entrails. A yellow owl follows singing *pu ru.* Riding on red horses and with unpleasant voices *tshe re re* the *bgregs* (*bgegs* ?) follow. The Rol ba skyabs bdun sing *sha ra ra,* the song of force (*shugs pa'i glu*) shall inflame the air. Good offerings are made.

Your minister to the west is g.Yung gi btsan riding a golden horse. His body is covered by a cloak of red brocade. He wears a white helmet on the head, white shoes of snake skin and many jewels. He carries a scabbard made of tiger fur to his right and a quiver made of leopard skin to his left. A sword of flaming light is fastened to his belt. In the right hand he has a red spear with a red flag. In the left he carries a *btsan*-lasso... A white dog with red eyes follows. The Rol ba skyabs bdun sing *sha ra ra,* the song of force (*shugs pa'i glu*) shall inflame the air. The enemies shall be captured like sheep. Good offerings are made.

Your minister to the north is called lCags ri. He rides a blue horse with a black face. His body is covered by a black cloak. He wears a helmet of iron on his head and rainbow-coloured shoes. His locks are blue water snakes. In the right hand he holds a red spear with a red cloth. In the left hand he holds a lasso of snakes. He carries a scabbard made of tiger fur to his right and a quiver made of leopard skin to his left. A sword of flaming light is fastened to his belt. Three blackbirds which are brothers fly above... The song of force (*shugs pa'i glu*) shall inflame the air. The Rol ba skyabs bdun sing *sha ra ra* and the *bgregs* sing *zhu ru ru.* Good offerings are made» (*sGang dmar bskang gso*, 6a,2-8a,4).

The text continues by describing the retinue which comprises local spirits of the outer regions, seven messengers (*pho nya*) and four obedient *bdud mo* (*bka' nyan bdud mo*) occupying the four cardinal directions and bearing the names of valleys and *klu mo*. Offerings are made to the whole retinue as they ride and sing whilst holding the banner (*ru dar*) in the sky. They shall subdue all evil and fulfil all hopes.

The same text includes further formulae for offerings to sGang dmar, addressed as *rje yis dgu lha* (sic), *srog lha*, *bstan pa'i dge [bs]nyen*, *dgra lha* and his help is invoked:

«Good food and *gser skyems* are offered to you, lHa btsan sGang dmar and your retinue. A red turban (*thod dmar*) of silk is offered to your head. A red cloak of brocade is offered to your body. Beautiful forms are offered to your eyes. Music is offered to your ears. Perfume of good incense is offered to your nose. Precious jewels are offered to your mind. An excellent red horse is offered for riding. The red appearance is offered as support for the eyes. A white-yellow yak is offered. All this is offered with prayers. Please protect us all, like a mother protects her

[9] gSer chung is a mountain god situated in the upper basin of the rDza dkar chu and is especially worshipped by the nomads of upper Pha drug.

> child. In going to war, be our general. In trading, be our greatest trader. Whilst robbing, be our head of the robbers. Lead the army to the land of the enemies, destroy them and achieve victory...
>
> Wealth and *bsangs* are offered, please fulfil our hopes. Please help us against the dangers. Eliminate all obstacles. Destroy at their roots all enemies of the doctrine. May our deeds for which we ask your help reach their result!» (*sGang dmar bskang gso* 11b,3-12b,5).

Like most mountain deities sGang dmar is considered to be the lord of a territory attributed to him where he controls the natural elements, the regular course of time, the fortunes of the community and the prosperity of the Buddhist doctrine. In particular, the defence of the territory from natural and supernatural enemies is entrusted to him. Such features are common to many other deities of this kind (cf. Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 203ff.), as they reflect the ancient pre-Buddhist roots of mountain cults (cf. Macdonald 1971: 301ff.) combined with Buddhist aspects which stem from the redefinition of such cults in Buddhist terms. However this process of redefinition, far from being merely an ancient event, has instead been the object of controversy and negotiation up to the present day.

The link between sGang dmar and 'his' territory is particularly evident in the practice of animal sacrifice which, according to eyewitnesses and to widespread indirect accounts, was until 1959 dedicated to this deity. An 87-year-old farmer of Glang skor who in his youth attended these rituals told us[10] that some of the lay communities and the military settlement (*Ding ri dmag sgar*)[11] used to perform animal sacrifices for Ding ri sGang dmar at the 3rd moon of the 5th month and at the 3rd moon of the 11th month of the Tibetan calendar:

> «...This ceremony was a kind of *lha bsangs* and used to be performed in front of the holy mountain, in a place marked by two big *dar lcog*. At that time it was a white sheep which had to be sacrificed.
>
> Each year, and in strict rotation, a particular family had to provide the sheep and every household had to send a representative to take part in the celebration. According to the account, monks from the nearby monastery used to take part in the celebration where they played the ritual instruments.
>
> It was a youth whose father and mother as well as grandfather and grandmother were still alive who had to slaughter the animal with a long needle. The skin was then removed and the meat cut up so that the first portion could be given to the two headmen. The entrails were examined by elderly experts: a full bladder (*gang phug*) meaning an abundance of rain; a 'high' gall (*mkhris pa*) in the bladder indicating that the *bla ma*-throne (*khri*) would be held in high esteem; an intestine full of 'beans' indicating prosperity. Then the sheep was cut into four pieces. The right front leg was laid on the ground and used as a target by youths or the army riding horses and throwing stones in a ritual competition...»[12]

The analogy on which the practice of divination is based reveals an intimate link between the animal sacrificed to sGang dmar and the territory with its natural and divine features and the community belonging to it. Through the animal sacrifice, the relationship between the cele-

---

[10] Prof. Pasang Wangdu, Maria Antonia Sironi, Hildegard Diemberger.

[11] Traditionally there used to be a military camp of the Tibetan army in Ding ri. Such a militia is also mentioned by the Blue Annals in the narration concerning Mi la ras pa (Roerich 1988: 429; Aziz 1976: 29). In 1959 there were about 500 Tibetan soldiers with their families (cf. *Bod kyi rig gnas lo rgyus dpyad gzhi'i rgyu cha bdams bsgrigs*, in *Chab srid gros tshogs* no. 8, p. 45, Lhasa, 1986).

[12] Interview of July, 7, 1993 in Glang skor.

brating community and the deity presiding over the territory was expressed and reconfirmed. The observance even recalled the ancient perspective of territory conceptualized as an animal founding social relations (cf. Stein 1959: 461ff.; Macdonald 1980: 203). Within the celebrating community, in fact, social relations were also reaffirmed by the rituals: the reciprocal status of men and the exclusion of women. Indeed no women had access to Ding ri sGang dmar at the time of the sacrifice and the rituals gave dominance not only to the sacred mountain as such but also to the deity of defence (*dgra lha*). It seems therefore that within the framework of the ritual which celebrates the relation between community, territory, and defence, social relations between men and women were also shaped as in the case of the people of Gunsa (Diemberger 1994: 147-148) and, in a different context, that of the rTsa ri pilgrimage (Huber 1994: 350ff.).

The privileged link between the god and the political leadership of the community expressed by the order of meat-sharing was probably originally given more emphasis. In fact it seems a paradox that the *bla ma*-throne is mentioned as a symbol in divination, but only in the case that it is acknowledged as throne from the viewpoint of its political relevance. This ritual role seems to have been applied occasionally even to Buddhist institutions when the power of the god did not allow the sacrifice to be abolished or reformed. However, relevant sources are extremely scanty, given the fact that such practices stemming from archaic politico-religious cults, possibly combined with heterodox developments in tantric practices,[13] were, in general, condemned.The reasons which allowed such practices to survive until recent times are still obscure and probably stem from the tight link between local communities and a territorial god.

sGang dmar – ancient deity subdued by Guru Rin po che and Pha dam pa sangs rgyas

The names of sGang dmar's parents – Khri btsan btsan po and Klu bza' klu btsan sman – evoke in a local variation the famous mythological theme of the union between the royal ancestor and the female chthonian deity. A link with the Tibetan royalty is thereby indicated in the ritual. Such a link, either as a later mythological development or as a reflection of ancient historical relations which need further investigation, is present both in the oral tradition and in later textual sources. sGang dmar is mentioned in the *Gung thang gdung rabs* as being related by kin to the *btsan* Rol pa rkya bdun, protectors (*'go ba'i sku lha*) of the lineage of Khri srong lde btsan (*Gung thang gdung rabs* 130), and these deities are also mentioned as Rol ba skyabs bdun by the *sGang dmar bskang gso*. The land under the dominion of Ding ri sGang dmar included Ding ri and Pha drug, which are areas listed by the *rGyal po bka' thang* (*bKa' thang sde lnga* 185,13) among the *yul tsen* of Ru lag during royal times. According to the *Shel dkar chos 'byung* these areas were mentioned in the *dmag deb* of Khri srong lde btsan (*Shel dkar chos 'byung* 9a,2). The worship of sGang dmar until 1959 has preserved features which sharply contradict the Buddhist perspective and possibly recall ancient ritual practices (cf. Li & Coblin 1987: 10). Locally, sGang dmar is considered an ancient autochthonous deity who was converted to Buddhism. He is said to have been subdued by either Pha dam pa sangs rgyas or Guru Rin po che and transformed into a protector of Buddhism. Local oral accounts point to this having been accomplished by Pha dam pa sangs rgyas, the Indian *yogin*, who resided in Ding ri in the 11th century and became a religious hero throughout the area. They narrate that this god used to be a cruel lord who looked like a demon and carried fire on his shoulders. It is said that Pha dam pa sangs rgyas converted him and transformed him into a king of religion (*chos rgyal*). Subsequently, he became a *lha srung ma*, who protected the area, having ministers in the four cardinal directions and a huge retinue.

---

[13] Cf. Karmay 1980: 151, 154, 160 (note 43).

The *Shel dkar chos 'byung*, however, attributes his taming to Guru Rin po che: «The red man on the red horse is cited in the *Seng rdzong dkar chag* [14] as being Pho lha lHa btsan sGang dmar. This god, endowed with magic powers, belonged to the seven *Dregs pa'i sde dpon btsan rgod 'bar ba* brothers. The great teacher Padmasambhava had bestowed upon him the empowerment (*dbang*) relevant to the *maṇḍala* of the *'Jig rten mchod bstod dregs pa* and the assignment as protector of the Buddhist religion» (*Shel dkar chos 'byung* 13a,4-5). The group of deities to which sGang dmar is said to belong is identifiable with the seven *btsan rgod 'bar ba* under the leadership of Tsi'u dmar po – an important group of *'jig rten pa'i srung ma* described by Nebesky-Wojkowitz (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 166ff.).[15] sGang dmar is not explicitly mentioned by Nebesky-Wojkowitz who gives a number of lists of the seven deities which differ from each other and suggest local variations in the composition of the group. In any case the iconography described by the *bskang gso* and that given by Nebesky-Wojkowitz present numerous analogies.

sGang dmar as ancestral protector of the lords of southern La stod

From the *Shel dkar chos 'byung* we know that Pho lha lHa btsan sGang dmar was a particular protective deity of the family which ruled La stod lho. It seems that this territorial deity granted his protection to the local political leadership whether its origins were from other areas or not. This was so in the case of the lHo *bdag* family as well as, later on, in the case of the Gung thang king Khri rgyal bsam sgrub lde who was born in Ding ri in 1459 and who considered sGang dmar as his *skyes lha* (*Gung thang gdung rabs* 130,2-7; Macdonald 1971: 300).

According to the *Shel dkar chos 'byung*, the lHo *bdag* family stemmed originally from the ancient dBas clan, and in particular from the Shes phrug lineage which had established itself in 'Phan yul. The son of Shes phrug bSod nams 'bum was invited to become an adoptive son of the ruler of La stod lho, Phyug po sGang dkar ba (*Shel dkar chos 'byung* 4a6-5b5). This fact is confirmed by an independent source, the *Byang pa lho bdag po'i gdung rabs*,[16] which narrates:

> In early times there were four *tsho*:[17] 'Gu tsho, Tsa tsho, sPu tsho and Dar tsho. Each *tsho* in turn provided the general *rgan po* (headman) of the four *tsho*. Once Phyug po sGang dkar ba was required to go to pay homage to the Mongolian Emperor and, since he had no descendants (*rus tsha*), he had to go to China himself. On the way he stayed overnight at the house of bSod nams 'bum in 'Phan yul... Phyug po sGang dkar ba asked the son of bSod nams 'bum to go on to China as his representative. gZhon dbang told the Emperor that he was the son of Phyug po sGang dkar ba and later on the Emperor gave him the seal of dBus-gTsang *dpon chen* and appointed him lord of the Lho *khri skor*. He organized the census of dBus-gTsang and the codification of the law.

The text also mentions the son of gZhon nu dbang phyug, the *dpon chen* 'Od zer seng ge,[18] and, in turn, his son Don yod dpal who, according to the *Shel dkar chos 'byung*, moved the capital of

---

[14] Seng rdzong was a monastery built in the fourteenth century on the northern slope of the holy mountain of rTsib ri, cf. *Shel dkar chos 'byung* 28b,1-4.

[15] To this same group of deities belongs bKra shis 'od 'bar, a mighty protector of Shel dkar chos sde and of the Bo dong pa tradition to which the early abbots of this monastery appertained. Cf. G. Hazod, "bKra shis 'od 'bar – On the History of the Religious Protector of the Bo dong pa", in this volume.

[16] *Byang pa lho bdag po'i gdung rabs* 7b,3-8a,2, Manuscript no. 002776 (4) kept at the Mi rigs pho brang, Beijing.

[17] *Tsho* is an ancient traditional administrative unit which can still be found in many remote areas (cf. Goldstein 1971: 15).

[18] Concerning the *dpon chen* who stem from the lHo *bdag* family and the relevant historical period, cf. Petech, L.

La stod lho from Ding ri sGang dkar to Rin chen spo.[19] The god sGang dmar seems to have taken under his protection the lineage of the Shes phrug family as its members moved to La stod lho and provided its rulers. The god kept this protection even when the capital was moved away from Ding ri sGang dkar. This emerges from the following account concerning the son of Don yod dpal, *si tu* Chos kyi rin chen, the lHo *bdag* who founded Shel dkar rdzong and who is extensively mentioned in the *Shel dkar chos 'byung*:

> *Si tu* Chos kyi rin chen, being very young, was humiliated by an uprising. A local headman called Dung 'od sha of rTsa skor[20] and the abbot of the Pha drug sKal monastery who was a follower of *dge slong* lHa chen po plotted against him and sent a message to the Byang *bdag*. Owing to the fact that the traitors revealed the internal situation and that the *zhal ngo*[21] was sick, troops from the army of Byang managed to approach secretly, surround and attack the fortress of Rin chen spo several times. Some officers were not to be trusted, the fortress surrendered and the great lord (*si tu* Chos kyi rin chen) was taken prisoner by his enemies. The army, whilst taking their prisoner, the great lord, back towards the north, stopped in g.Yang khang thang[22] to set up camp. At that time, some soldiers, pointing their fingers towards the rGyal mo ri,[23] said that, this time, they had seized Rin chen spo without major difficulty, whereas, had the fortress been on that hill, it would have been hopeless. The great lord kept this in his mind. While the greater part of the army left for the north, there was opposition from rTsa skor Dung 'od sha and the abbot of the sKal monastery culminating in some of the generals taking the great lord towards Kha rta, stopping in Dam pa 'phrang.[24] There they wanted to throw him into the river. With his mind turned towards his impending death by drowning, sorrowfully he recited the *sGrol ma nyer gcig bstod pa*. After his prayer, a magnificent red man on a red horse appeared in the sky with his three weapons (arrow or lasso, spear and sword). He spoke the prophecy of the gods (*lha lung*): 'Don't kill the king of religion (*chos rgyal*) or terrible wind and storms will rise!' The generals were shocked and confused by this apparition. Afterwards two messengers appeared bearing *ha lo* flowers as a sign. They said that the Byang *bdag* ordered that the lHo *bdag* be brought without being tied up and that proper instructions would soon arrive. So the execution of the lHo *bdag* was suspended. When the generals and the great lord arrived at the summit of the Che la on their way towards the north, they ran into two actual messengers who were the image of those who had appeared in the vision. They delivered a message containing the orders of the Byang *bdag*. It said: 'The generals are informed that they are to take over the fortress with the relevant estates (*rdzong gzhis*) and subjects of the southern area, as well as to appoint a *rdzong dpon*. The great lord is invited to come to the north without being tied.' Accordingly, the great lord was invited to proceed at a slow

---

(1990), *Central Tibet and the Mongols*. Roma, IsMEO.

[19] The capital Rin chen spo was in the area of rGyal nor to the north of Shel dkar. Nowadays a village bearing the same name is where once the residence of the lHo *bdag* stood.

[20] rTsa skor is a locality situated between Shel dkar and Ding ri.

[21] Main official under the lHo *bdag*.

[22] The great plain lying to the east of the rGyal mo ri hill where later the fortress and the monastery of Shel dkar were built.

[23] rGyal mo ri is the ancient name of the hill of Shel dkar which is also called sGrol ma ri, rDo rje ri, Shel ri.

[24] Dam pa 'phrang is a locality characterized by a gorge of the Bong chu in Kha rta.

> pace to Ngam ring[25] in Byang stod. The above-mentioned red man on the red horse is cited in the *Seng rdzong dkar chag* as being Pho lha lHa btsan sGang dmar. This god, endowed with magic powers, belonged to the seven *Dregs pa'i sde dpon btsan rgod 'bar ba* brothers. The great teacher Padmasambhava had bestowed upon him the empowerment (*dbang*) relevant to the *maṇḍala* of the *'Jig rten mchod bstod dregs pa* and the assignment as protector of the Buddhist religion. Besides, wise men report that the two figures which resembled messengers were emanations of *rje btsun* sGrol ma (Tārā). After the arrival of the great lord at Ngam ring, the generals reported the extraordinary event saying that when they were about to throw the great lord into the river his *pho lha* and his *yi dam* saved his life.
>
> The Byang *bdag* was deeply impressed by this account and offered to marry his daughter *lha lcam* Nam mka' 'bum to the lHo *bdag* even though no such request had ever been made before. Despite the fact that the lHo *bdag* seemed to be heavily guarded during his stay in [the country of] Byang, he enjoyed some freedom with his wife. Since the lHo *bdag* was very expert in both [religious and civil] laws, the Byang *bdag* happily said: 'For a short while we will administer the law in the lHo *khri khor*. In the future, if you take proper care of my daughter, I will give you a good position...'» (*Shel dkar chos 'byung* 12a,5-13b,4).

In fact he was sent back as administrator of La stod lho under the control of the Byang *bdag* and later he was made autonomous again with the title of ruler of the lHo *khri skor* given him by the Yüan emperor.

The favour of the local gods was therefore an important factor which led the lord of La stod byang to a political marriage alliance and to the recognition of the political prestige of his prisoner. *Si tu* Chos kyi rin chen built the famous fortress of Shel dkar in La stod lho and, in 1385 together with the great translator Grags pa rgyal mtshan, he founded the monastery of Shel dkar chos sde.

sGang dmar as protector of the Shel dkar monastery

When *si tu* Chos kyi rin chen decided to build Buddhist temples on the Shel dkar ri, sGang dmar was included among the depicted deities:

> At that time seven craftsmen, dressed as Nepalese, appeared and asked whether the king had any religious symbol (*rten*) to be built. Considering the circumstances to be auspicious (*rten 'brel 'grigs pa*), [Chos kyi rin chen] established a workshop for the construction of symbols of the three jewels on three small land elevations within the fortress compound. He constructed three temples to subdue the earth's hostile spirit (*sa dgra*) of the demoness (*srin mo*) gDoms gdangs of the eastern hill... Then the Phun tshogs lha khang was built. It is a three-storeyed building, now called the Red Temple. The middle floor has six pillars and there are mural paintings of Thub dbang, sMan bla, 'Jam dpal dbyangs, Byams pa, rNam rgyal ma, Red and Green sGrol ma, Gur mgon brother and sister, the rNam sras rta bdag brgyad,[26] lHa btsan sGang dmar and many other gods... (*Shel dkar chos 'byung* 18a,4-20a,6).

So, the fierce horseman in red, protector of the rulers of La stod lho, appears here as protector of the monastery constructed by *si tu* Chos kyi rin chen. He also protected the son of this latter, lHa btsan skyabs, who became the sponsor of Thang stong rgyal po in the construction of gCung ri

---

[25] Ngam ring is the capital of La stod byang.

[26] Retinue of Vaiśravaṇa.

bo che. According to Thang stong rgyal po's biography, the *stūpa* was built where the people of [La stod] byang, of [La stod] lho and mNga' ris Gung thang could meet and the wood was provided by the lHo *bdag* lHa btsan skyabs (*Thang rgyal rnam thar* 269-270).

Oral tradition attributes to sGang dmar an important role in the construction of this famous monument.

sGang dmar helps Thang stong rgyal po...

A monk residing in gCung ri bo che narrated:

> «When Thang stong rgyal po was young, he lived in Kha rta where he worked as a shepherd. At that time he was known as 'crazy little monk' (*btsun chung smyon pa*). Whilst he was looking after the cattle of a particular family, the herd increased greatly in size. Another family, on seeing this, also wanted him to work for them. The number of cattle of this family also increased greatly. Then Thang stong rgyal po decided to leave Kha rta. The families thought that, since he had worked well, they should give him a good reward. They asked him: 'What do you need?' Thang stong rgyal po replied: 'I need only some wood from the upper areas (*phu*) of this village.' The landlords were surprised and thought that he must be crazy. He wanted no other reward than some wood and they wondered: 'What will he do with this wood?' Thang stong rgyal po insisted: 'I need wood', and the people agreed. Thang stong rgyal po let the Asura (*lha ma yin*) cut large quantities of wood. When the local people realized the huge amount of wood which had been cut, they tried to catch Thang stong rgyal po but he transformed himself into a bird and all the wood flew into the sky. Only one huge pole, the *srog shing,* was left. Thang stong rgyal po asked for the help of lHa btsan sGang dmar who took the pole to gCung ri bo che. All the wood was then used to build the gCung ri bo che *stūpa*...»[27]

Kha rta, from where the wood originated, is the southeastern part of La stod lho and was under the protection of Zur ra ra skyes, a powerful minister of sGang dmar. From time immemorial, wood has come from this area, rich in thick forests. It used to be carried by yaks and people to Shel dkar where it was sold or bartered. Oral tradition also attributes control over this area – which provided the wood offered by the lHo *bdag* for the construction of gCung ri bo che – to sGang dmar. Only the help of the god himself allowed Thang stong rgyal po to release the most important piece of the future construction, the *srog shing*, the 'life-pillar' from the land of origin to the construction site.

Zur ra, the powerful minister of sGang dmar, is considered in Kha rta the lord of the territory, the protector of the hidden valleys (*sbas yul*) and the ruler of all the little spirits who inhabit the landscape.[28]

sGang dmar and his relatives

Not only ministers and members of his retinue extend the influence of sGang dmar, linking this deity to other territorial gods of La stod lho. Ties of kin link him also to the gods of neighbouring regions. Sherpas who have been closely connected to the Tibetans of Ding ri by trade,

---

[27] Interview of May, 18, 1995 in the village of gCung ri bo che.

[28] In particular he is considered the protector of the hidden valley of mKhan pa lung and the ancestor of the lHa bon priests of the Khumbo who sacrifice black goats to this god, cf. Diemberger & Hazod (forthcoming), "Animal Sacrifices and Mountain Deities in Southern Tibet: Mythology, Rituals and Politics", to be published in the volume in honour of Prof. Alexander W. Macdonald, *Les habitants du toit du monde*. S. Karmay & P. Sagant (eds.), Paris – Nanterre, Société d'Ethnologie.

religious contact and even marriage alliances consider sGang dmar to be the son of Khum bu Yul lha. The main territorial god of Khum bu, called Khri btsan rgyal po or Khri btsan dkar po, is located above the village of Khumjung. Oral accounts tell that sGang dmar is an illigitimate son of Khum bu Yul lha who, feeling ashamed of him, decided to hide him under a reddish copper cup which had been turned upside-down. In this way they explain the shape and the colour of the mountain as well as its name. Sherpas are aware of the bloody sacrifices requested by this mountain god and their feelings of shame for the controversial practices carried out in worship may be hidden behind an assumed embarrassment for the presumed illegitimacy.

Similar practices were dedicated also to rTa skyong, another wild mountain god related to sGang dmar.[29] This god, with ministers in the four directions, is one of the main protectors of the nomads of sPo rong (an area situated to the northwest of Ding ri) and of their lord in particular. The sacrifice of white sheep and the relevant divination used to be performed by ritual specialists called *a ya*, whose name and ritual function recall priests of other remote areas (northwestern Nepal, sKyid grong) and an ancient class of Bon priests mentioned in the *gZer mig*.[30] The *a ya* priest who performed these sacrifices before fleeing from Tibet in 1959 considers rTa skyong and sGang dmar as belonging to the same lineage, as well as being ministers of Ge sar and emanations of rTa mgrin. In such a way, despite all contradictions, he achieves a syncretistic fusion with the cosmology of the Tibetan epic as well as with that of the horse-headed tantric deity – just one peculiar example of the innumerable syncretistic phenomena wide-spread throughout Tibet and discussed by Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Stein.

rTsib ri and sGang dmar: the sacred mountain from India and the fierce god

Mountains identified with territorial deities like sGang dmar and rTa skyong present in their more or less Buddhified aspects a kind of subjectivity. They protect, threaten, require respect and can be subdued. As minor gods they are invoked in Buddhist monasteries but they are not objects of circumambulating Buddhist pilgrimage. Between sGang dmar and rTa skyong, another sacred mountain with a completely different character is located: the jagged chain of rTsib ri, alias Śrī ri or Śrī ri dpal. This mountain chain is seen as a *gnas ri* which flew from Bodhgayā to Tibet and landed – probably not by chance – between the two territorial gods. Here the sacred mountain was fixed to the ground by monasteries, it was blessed by Buddhist saints such as Pha dam pa sangs rgyas and rGod tshang pa and, for centuries, has been circumambulated by pilgrims (cf. Buffetrille 1996).

Between the sacredness of a mountain as a territorial god and the sacredness of a mountain as a holy place blessed by Buddhist saints and goal of pilgrimage, there is a qualitative difference. Often the two perspectives overlap: when a *yul lha* is considered also to be a *gnas ri* and when minor *yul lha* are situated on a *gnas ri*. However, these perspectives differ essentially: in the one case the sacred mountain is part of an animated subject, a perception of nature with which human beings interact and as a result of which it is often difficult to see the abode of the deity and the deity itself as two separate entities. In the second case, that of the *gnas ri,* the foundation upon which its sacredness is based lies in a discourse which transcends the features of the world as these are perceived by man. The holy mountain is a site/object for ritual practice on a soteriological path to liberation. However, it is precisely the integration of the gods of the landscape as *'jig rten gyi srung ma* – as part of the relative truth to be transcended – that has allowed the two perspectives to combine in the everyday practices of the Tibetans from the time of the Tibetan kings up to the present time.

---

[29] For a detailed account cf. Diemberger & Hazod, *op. cit.* [cf. above n. 28].

[30] Ramble, Charles (1992), "A ritual of political unity in an old Nepalese kingdom", *Ancient Nepal* 130-133, 57.

sGang dmar and the local administration: secularization of the landscape or compromise with surviving traditional perspectives

Even today it is possible to see local administrators dressed in traditional multicoloured costumes carrying out cults dedicated to the ancient 'owners' and protectors of the territory, together with some traditional masters of the rituals. Is this the last of the numerous redefinitions of such rituals?

By celebrating, they acknowledge the ancient perspective which intimately links the human community and the territory in a system of intersubjective relations. Even as part of the relative truth with its relevant law of cause and effect, natural features are conceived as part of a whole system of interdependent relations. This sacred perception of nature, with all its syncretistic aspects, entails an attitude of respect and awareness of the human dependence upon the environment. Since 1990 the ancient La stod lho has been part of a national park, the Qomolangma Nature Preserve. Will the surviving part of the traditional perspective inevitably disappear in the near future with the secularization and the objectification of nature, or will it encounter an ever-increasing and urgent awareness of ecological issues throughout the world?

REFERENCES

Tibetan Sources

bKa' thang sde lnga — U rgyan gling pa, *bKa' thang sde lnga*. Beijing, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1986.

Gung thang gdung rabs — Rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu, *Bod rje lha btsan po'i gdung rabs mnga' ris smad gung thang du ji ltar byung ba'i tshul deb ther dwangs shel 'phrul gyi me long zhes bya ba*, in *Bod kyi lo rgyus deb ther khag lnga* (*Gangs can rig mdzod* 9). Chab spel tshe brtan phun tshogs (ed.), Lhasa, Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, 1990, 87-150.

sGang dmar bskang gso — Ritual text available as manuscript of 12 folios kept in the village below Chos lung dgon pa. Full title, author and colophon are missing.

Thang rgyal rnam thar — 'Gyur med bde chen, *Thang rgyal rnam thar*. Chengdu, Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1982.

Shel dkar chos 'byung — Ngag dbang skal ldan rgya mtsho, *Shel dkar chos 'byung legs bshad nor bu'i me long skal bzang mgrin rgyan*. Manuscript of 118 folios available in the monastery of Shegar. A commented translation and a facsimile edition is published by Pasang Wangdu & H. Diemberger in cooperation with G. Hazod under the title *Shel dkar chos 'byung. History of the 'White Crystal'* (Vienna, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996).

References in English and other languages

Aziz, B.N. (1978), *Tibetan Frontier Families*. New Delhi, Vikas.

Buffetrille, K. (1996), "One day the mountains will go away...", in *Reflections of the Mountain. Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya*. A.M. Blondeau, E. Steinkellner (eds.), Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Veröffentlichungen zur Sozialanthropologie, Band 2), 77-89.

Diemberger, H. (1994), "Mountain deities, ancestral bones and sacred weapons. Sacred territory and communal identity in Eastern Nepal and Southern Tibet", in *PIATS Fagernes 1992*, 144-153.

Diemberger, H. & Hazod, G. (forthcoming), "Animal sacrifices and Mountain deities in Southern Tibet: Mythology, Ritual and Politics", in *Les habitants du toit du monde*. S. Karmay & P. Sagant (eds.), Paris-Nanterre, Société d'Ethnologie.

Goldstein, M.C. (1971), "Taxation and the structure of a Tibetan village", *Central Asiatic Journal* 15: 1-27.

Huber, T. (1994), "Why can't women climb pure crystal mountains?", in *PIATS Fagernes 1992*, 350-371.

Karmay, S.G. (1980), "The ordinance of lHa Bla-ma Ye-shes-'od", in *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*. M. Aris & Aung San Suu Kyi (eds.), Warminster, Aris & Phillips, 150-162.

Li, F.K. & Coblin, W.S. (1987), *A study of the old Tibetan Inscriptions*. Taipei, Institute of History and Philology Academia Sinica.

Macdonald, A. (1971), "Une lecture des Pelliot tibétains 1286, 1287, 1038, 1047 et 1290. Essai sur la formation et l'emploi des mythes politiques dans la religion royale de Sroṅ-bcan sgam-po", in *Études tibétaines dédiées à la mémoire de Marcelle Lalou*, Paris, Adrien Maisonneuve, 190-391.

Macdonald, A.W. (1980), "Creative Dismemberment among the Sherpas and Tamang of Nepal", in *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson*. M. Aris & Aung San Suu Kyi (eds.), Warminster, Aris & Phillips, 199-208.

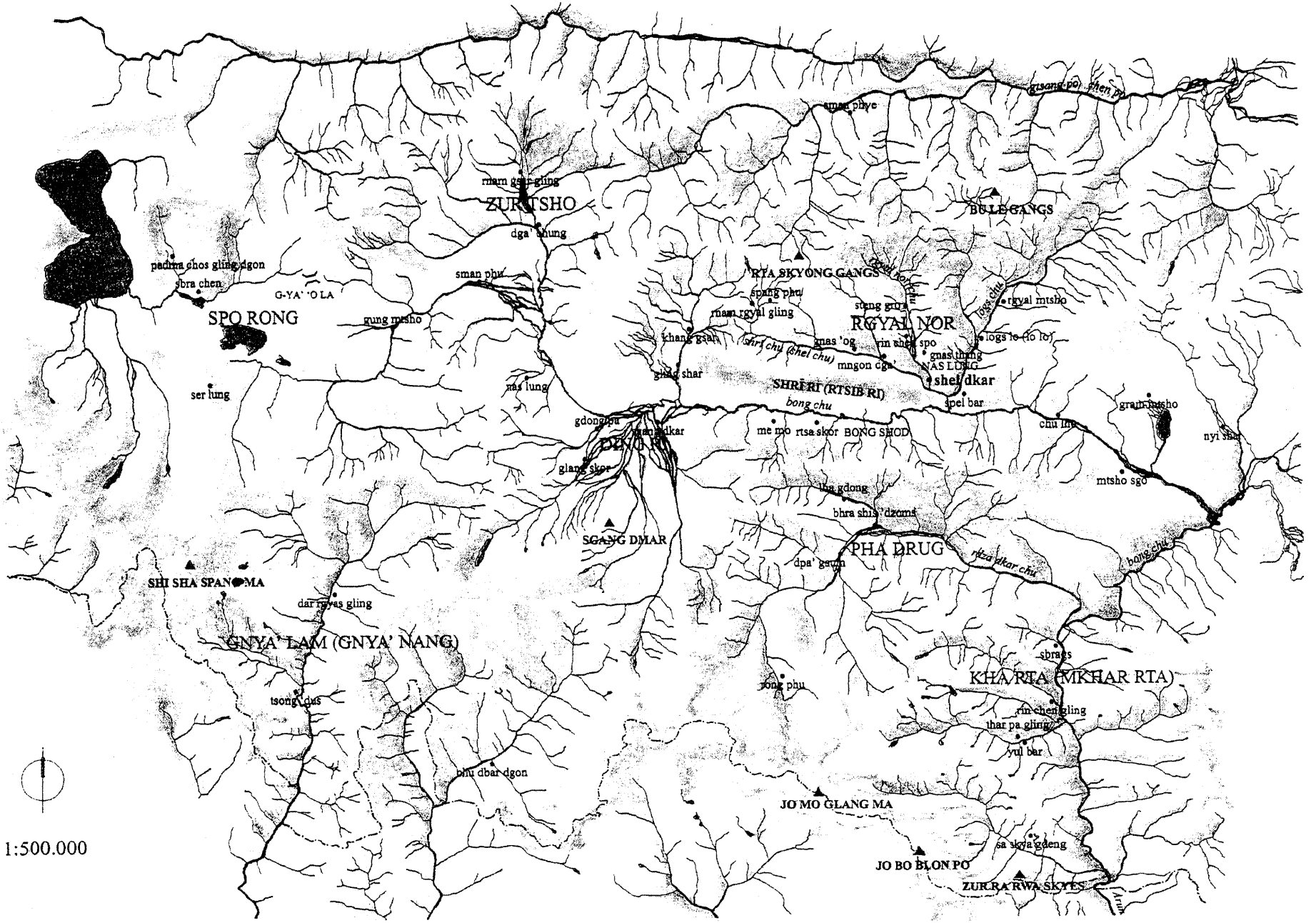
Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. de (1975), *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. Graz, Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt.

Petech, L. (1990), *Central Tibet and the Mongols*. Roma, IsMEO.

Roerich, G.N. (repr. 1988), *The Blue Annals*. New Delhi, Banarsidass.

Stein, R.A. (1959), *Recherches sur l'épopée et le barde au Tibet*. Paris, Presses Universitaires de France.

Tucci, G. (1971), *Deb t'er dmar po gsar ma. Tibetan chronicles by bSod nams grags pa*. Roma, IsMEO.



La stod lho (map extracted from *Shel dkar chos 'chung*, ed. Pasang Wangdu et. al. p. 158)

BKRA SHIS 'OD 'BAR

On the History of the Religious Protector of the Bo dong pa[1]

by

Guntram Hazod, Vienna

bKra shis 'od 'bar, "Burning Light of Blessing", is the protector god (*chos skyong*, "protector of the religious law") of the Bo dong tradition whose founding goes back to the South Tibetan scholar Bo dong paṇ chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1375-1451). Owing to recently published sources we now have a more exact knowledge of the history of this school of Tibetan Buddhism which had its heyday in the 15th century.[2] One of the questions which arose was that of its protective deity, which was – with a few exceptions – hardly ever mentioned in Western literature.

A special problem in the history of bKra shis 'od 'bar is the issue of the origins of the deity. According to the Bo dong pa it was introduced from India by dPang lo tsā ba (1276-1342). However, apart from bKra shis 'od 'bar as Bo dong protector, we also came across a deity called bKra shis 'od 'bar in connection with other Tibetan traditions which, to some degree, are far apart from each other in time and distance. The crucial question is whether there are any relations between them and if so, how we can ascertain them.

On this issue I would like to lay out some of the relevant stations in this deity's history; this includes also the functions which the *chos skyong* holds in the respective local contexts of the different Bo dong pa areas. One of them is the function of a land- and territorial god (*yul lha*), which we observed in the Bo dong pa areas of sPo rong Pad ma chos lding and Yar 'brog bSam sdings. With that bKra shis 'od 'bar reverts to a position which he has already at one time held in his history: in the Pha drug "station" we are confronted with an – in all likelihood "authentic" – *yul lha* bKra shis 'od 'bar that the Bo dong pa also refer to but which is connected to a place whose history dates back to the 10th century or even earlier and which is thus far older than the appearance of the first Bo dong pa (14th/15th century). Here the history of bKra shis 'od 'bar, the issue of the origins, iconography and function of this deity have their central crossing point.

---

[1] This paper is based on inquiries which were conducted in the course of a research project financed by the Austrian Fonds zur Förderung der Wissenschaftlichen Forschung. I wish to thank Hildegard Diemberger and Pasang Wangdu for their contributions to the discussion on the history of bKra shis 'od 'bar, with whom we were confronted for the first time during our joint fieldwork in South Tibet (winter 1993). My thanks also go to Tsering Gyebo for his support during the fieldwork of 1995. Finally I wish to thank Michael Gingrich for the editing of the English text.

[2] On this subject see the publication of the manuscript *Shel dkar chos 'byung* (written in 1732), a book on the history of early La stod lho and chronicle of the (former) Bo dong monastery of Shel dkar: Ngag dbang skal ldan rgya mtsho, *Shel dkar chos 'byung. History of the "White Crystal". Religion and Politics of Southern La stod.* Translation and Facsimile Edition of the Tibetan Text by Pasang Wangdu and Hildegard Diemberger in Cooperation with Guntram Hazod. Vienna, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996 (hereafter referred to as *Shel dkar chos 'byung*). In addition special mention should be made of the biography of Phyogs las rnam rgyal (*Bo dong paṇ chen gyi rnam thar* by dPal ldan 'jigs med 'bangs. Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, Lhasa, 1990) and of the *Bo dong chos 'byung* (a 16th-century manuscript in the Bo dong E monastery) as the most important sources for the history of this school, whose doctrine is laid down in the main work of Phyogs las rnam rgyal, the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa* (in *Collected Works of Phyogs las rnam rgyal.* Tibet House Library Publications, New Delhi, 1973, vol. 119). – Pasang Wangdu and Hildegard Diemberger are at present preparing a publication on the history of the Bo dong pa on the basis of these sources.

1. bKra shis 'od 'bar in Shel dkar and the basic iconography of the *chos skyong*

The first station we will turn to is Shel dkar, which as it happens is the place where, in the course of the 1993 field research, the question of the deity's history arose for the first time. As the *Shel dkar chos 'byung* records, Shel dkar (the present-day New Tingri) became the new centre of La stod lho and the lHo *khri skor* at the end of the 14th century. The foundation is described as one of the so-called thirteen propitious deeds (*legs mdzad bcu gsum*) of the lHo *bdag si tu* Chos kyi rin chen; he descended from the line of Shes phrug, a side line of the ancient dBas clan[3] who took over the residence of the lHo *bdag* and lHo *khri dpon* in Ding ri sGang dkar in the 13th century[4] and later transferred it to the north, to Rin chen spo in the valley of rGyal nor (north-west of Shel dkar). After the armed conflict with La stod byang and the return of *si tu* Chos kyi rin chen from the captivity of his northern rival, the lHo *bdag* ordered the erection of the great fortress on the Shel dkar hill and afterwards supported the foundation of the Shel dkar chos sde monastery (1385), whose early (eighteen) abbots adhered to the Bo dong tradition.[5]

This religious movement played quite an important role in 15th-century gTsang stod; its popularity was connected with Bo dong paṇ chen Phyogs las rnam rgyal (also called 'Jigs med grags pa and Bo dong 'Jigs bral) who defined the doctrine of the new school in his main work, the *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa*.[6] For its distribution the early Bo dong pa were granted support and patronship – beside the *lHo bdag* – by the royal family of Mang yul Gung thang, by the lords of the nomadic principality of sPo rong and by the princes of sNa dkar rtse and of Rin spungs (among others).[7] Phyogs las rnam rgyal stood in the teaching tradition of his maternal relatives dPang blo gros brtan pa (alias dPang lo tsā ba, 1276-1342), Byang chub rtse mo (1303-1380), and Grags pa rgyal mtshan (1352-1406), who all were active at E monastery.[8] In Shel

---

[3] One also finds frequently the spellings sBa(s), dBa' and dBa's in the literature but they always seem to refer to one and the same clan. As is known, the clan played a prominent role during the time of the Tibetan kingdom and even before that when the clan was involved in the founding of the Yar lung confederation (end of 6th century A.D.). – Bacot, J., F.W. Thomas, Ch. Toussaint (1940), *Documents de Touen-houang relatifs à l'histoire du Tibet*. Paris, Libraire Orientaliste Paul Geuthner: 137f.

[4] The *Shel dkar chos 'byung* links the origin of the Shes phrug to the legend of the military expedition led by Mu tig btsan po and Minister lHa bzangs klu dpal to occupy Bhata hor and to convey Pe har from there to bSam yas, which was managed with the help of the *yakṣa* (i.e. Vaiśravaṇa [Tib. rNam thos sras] and his retinue) (*Shel dkar chos 'byung* 4a; – cf. Tucci, G. [1949], *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*. Roma, La Libreria dello Stato: 734ff.). It is said that some army units were left in the north "to protect the border between China and Tibet" and that in this connection a particular lineage stemming from the dBas clan "received the order to proclaim the laws to the great northern nomadic communities". This is the Shes phrug clan; its name derives from *shes su 'jug pa*, "to proclaim (the law)" (*Shel dkar chos 'byung* 4b). Later the clan moved to Central Tibet from where the descendants Ma sangs Śākya 'bum and gZhon nu dbang phyug were invited to Ding ri sGang dkar to continue the lineage of the first lHo *bdag* who had no male offspring (9a, 9b).

[5] A condensed account of the founding history of Shel dkar is given in the "Appendix" of the *Shel dkar chos 'byung*.

[6] For a short description of the contents of this comprehensive work see the "Introduction" to the *Shel dkar chos 'byung* (based on the biography of Phyogs las rnam rgyal, *op. cit.* [Lhasa 1990]: 223-227 and 333-334 [cf. above n. 2]).

[7] It was in the course of these patronages that the most important Bo dong pa monasteries were founded. Apart from Shel dkar chos sde and Bo dong E (s. note 8) these are sPo rong Padma chos lding, mNga' ris chos sde (in rDzong dga'), and bSam sdings (in Yar 'brog), all of which had several branches.

[8] This is the monastery in the Bo dong region in gTsang from which the new tradition derived its name. It was founded in 1049 by *dge bshes* Mudrā chen po of whom almost nothing is known to us (Ferrari, A., [1958] *mK'yen brtse's guide to the holy places of Central Tibet*, Roma, IsMEO: 67, 156). The monastery became the seat of the Indian scholar Sthirapāla ('Bum phrag gsum pa), a teacher of rNgog lo tsā ba, and later of scholars like Bo dong Rin chen rtse mo and finally of dPang lo tsā ba and his followers; – s. *Deb ther sngon po* by 'Gos lo gzhon nu dpal. Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, Chengdu, 1985: 420; – Roerich 1979: 345f.

dkar dPang lo tsā ba and Byang chub rtse mo, who had prophesied the foundation of the monastery, are retrospectively regarded as the first two abbots. Phyogs las rnam rgyal came to Shel dkar as the fourth abbot, thereby following his mother-brother Grags pa rgyal mtshan, who was the spiritual teacher of the patron *si tu* Chos kyi rin chen and who must be historically regarded as the first abbot of Shel dkar chos sde. After Phyogs las rnam rgyal the succession of abbots continued in his lineage which is given as the *rus* of Zha ma of Pha drug (cf. Fig. 1) (Biography of Phyogs las rnam rgyal 16; *Shel dkar chos 'byung* 44b).

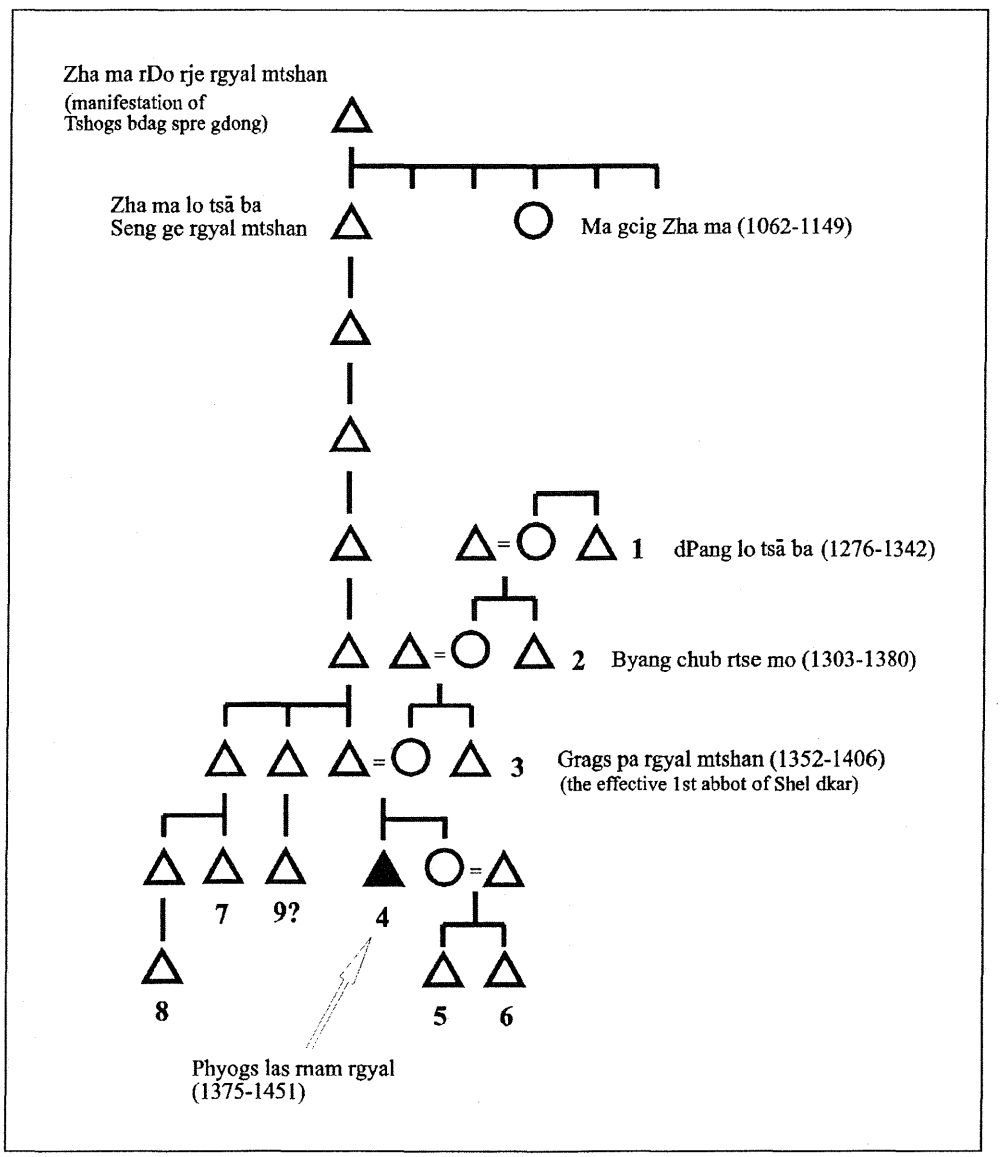


Fig. 1: Phyogs las rnam rgyal's patrilineal descent (i.e. the lineage of Zha ma in Pha drug) and his relation to the first abbots of the Shel dkar monastery (Nos. 1-9)

With the foundation of Shel dkar the religious protector of the Bo dong pa, bKra shis 'od 'bar, also makes his appearance.[9] The *dharmapāla* – as in all Bo dong pa monasteries – not only acts as the protector of the teachings and of the doctrine in a narrower sense, but at the same time he is also the primary (male) divine patron of the monastic institutions, i.e. of the monastery itself and its protagonists and of the people, livestock, and fields bound to the monastery's land.[10] In later times, after Shel dkar was transformed into a dGe lugs pa monastery (at the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama), bKra shis 'od 'bar was given the assistance of the gNas chung chos skyong Pe har (the protective deity of the dGe lugs pa), who from then on appears at the monastic *bskang gso* together with bKra shis 'od 'bar (*Shel dkar chos 'byung* 65a, 101a, 102b).

According to the present abbot of Shel dkar the painted stone relief, which is kept in the *mgon khang* of the monastery dates from this time (late 17th century; plate 1). This object gives us a first insight into the iconographic aspects of bKra shis 'od 'bar. Under a portrayal of Tsong kha pa and the first abbot of Shel dkar we can see the deity in the centre of the representation in the typical Bo dong iconography of a horseman clad in a red robe and a red hat, sitting on a blue horse, the so-called Rlung rta sngon po ("blue wind-horse"); in his right hand he holds a lance, in his left one the flame-jewel and in his belt there is a knife with a white handle which is regarded as the ritual knife of Phyogs las rnam rgyal.[11] The deity is flanked by personal guards designated as *a pha* and *a ma*, whose weapons and masks are kept in the bKra shis 'od 'bar-niche of the *mgon khang*. Three animals, an elephant, a lion, and a monkey support the deity in its function as protector of the doctrine. To intimidate the renegades the monkey is seen tearing out a sinner's twitching heart from his breast. It is said that these figures represent the wild and wrathful aspect (*khro ba*) of bKra shis 'od 'bar, which in other iconographies is depicted as a deity in its own right. It is the wrathful rDo rje rgyal mtshan, riding through a lake of blood on his horse Phur bu rag pa ("brownish *phur bu*") and dragging a bound sinner behind him.[12] This virtual split-up of the personality into a peaceful and a fierce aspect reserves the benevolent features for bKra shis 'od 'bar, a characteristic property which is effusively confirmed by oral tradition. But at the same time one stresses the fact that in reality bKra shis 'od 'bar and rDo rje rgyal mtshan are one; wherever bKra shis 'od 'bar is, there is also rDo rje rgyal mtshan. In the

---

[9] He is placed side by side with two divine figures who gained special importance in the course of the founding history of Shel dkar. These are Pho lha lHa btsan sgang dmar, the *pho lha* of *si tu* Chos kyi rin chen, and *yi dam* sGrol ma, the personal protective goddess of the lHo *bdag*, who is reverently addressed as the "mistress of Shel dkar" (*jo mo shel dkar ma*) in the *Shel dkar chos 'byung*. Pho lha lHa btsan sgang dmar is identical with the holy mountain Dingri sGang dmar in Ding ri/ Glang kor under whose ancestral protection the line of Shes phrug placed itself after it had taken over the residence of Ding ri sGang dkar (s. also the paper by H. Diemberger in this volume).

[10] This substantial influence on economy and resources finds its expression – as related by the *Shel dkar chos 'byung* (54a, 65a) – when disasters (such as famines, loss of livestock) or personal tragedies are due to irritations of the protector god, which for their part are caused by a decline in the ritual observances of the *chos skyong*.

[11] He had to use the knife in his fight against the demon Men khab skyab pa, whose sword thereby was twisted into unuseableness in the act. This sword is kept in the sPo rong Padma chos lding monastery.

[12] See plate 2, a representation from bSam sdings. – In his right hand rDo rje rgyal mtshan carries the same red-flagged lance as bKra shis 'od 'bar, in his left he holds the snare (*zhags pa*); while the "divine" bKra shis 'od 'bar is surrounded by clouds, the grim rDo rje rgyal mtshan is surrounded by a ring of fire. His clothing, a leather collar and the striking helmet with three-cornered pennants, is reminiscent of that of the great *yakṣa* (*gnod sbyin*) and mountain god Yang le bar (for a picture see Schumann, H.W. [1993], *Buddhistische Bilderwelt. Ein ikonographisches Handbuch des Mahāyāna- und Tantrayāna-Buddhismus*. München, E. Diederichs: 171). The leader of the *yakṣa* army, the god of wealth and *lokapāla* of the northern quarter of the world, rNam thos sras (note 4), is depicted in a small fresco in the courtyard of the bSam sdings monastery together with bKra shis 'od 'bar (plate 4). Possibly one of these figures could be regarded as a model for the iconographic design of the Bo dong pa deities; Nebesky-Wojkowitz, for example, mentions a special form of rNam thos sras which is designated as "rNam sras with red lance and blue horse" (*rnam sras mdung dmar rta sngon can*; Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 69). – (On the rNam thos sras cycle see Tucci 1949: 571ff. [cf. above n. 4], Lo Bue/Ricca 1990: 39f., 115, 180f.)

monastic rituals we find the latter only as a kind of appendage to bKra shis 'od 'bar and his retinue (the *gtso 'khor brgyad,* Fig. 2).

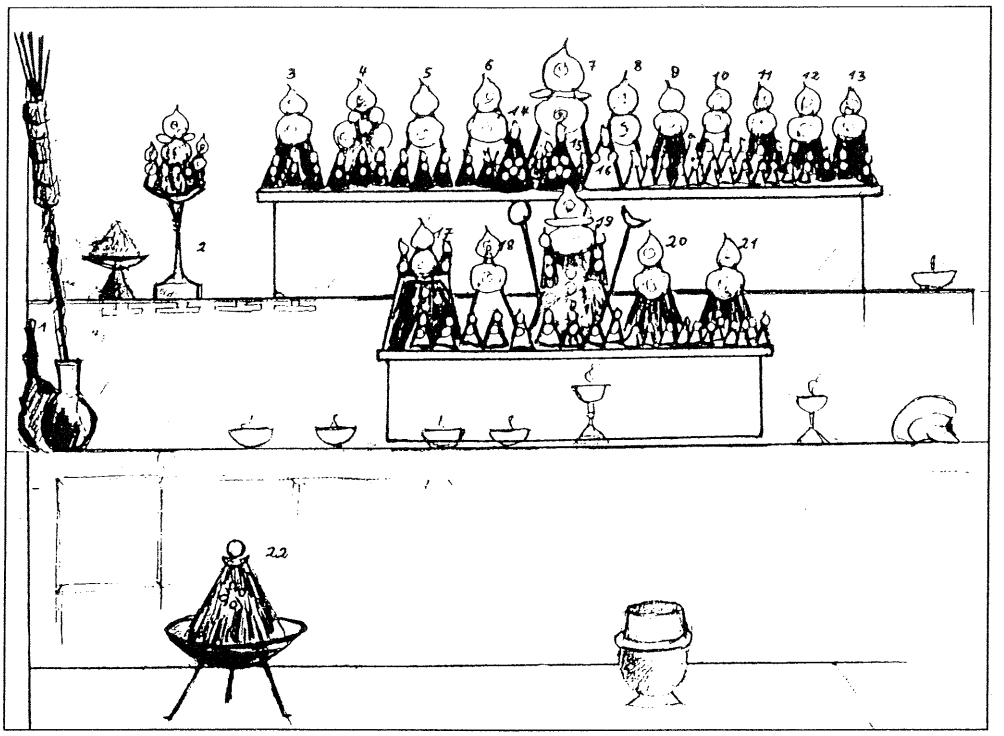
The texts address bKra shis 'od 'bar as *dge bsnyen*, his full title being *chos bdag chen po dge bsnyen* bKra shis 'od 'bar, and according to a Bo dong lama he is a member of the 21 *dge bsnyen.*[13] A *bskang gso* text from sPo rong Padma chos lding names bKra shis 'od 'bar's father as bDud gyi rgyal po and his mother as bTsan dmar dbang phyug tsa mun ti. It is said that their son has the face of a water-demon (*chu srin*) and is endowed with extraordinary physical strength. Eight followers joined him, who had the power to destroy all the enemies of the doctrine.[14] In some way this classification is in contradiction to an additional iconographic feature of bKra shis 'od 'bar which points him out as Tshogs bdag dmar po spre'u gdong can, as the "red Ganeśa with the monkey face" (*sPo rong chos spyod* 370). This corresponds to bKra shis 'od 'bar's ape-mask used in the mask-dances of sPo rong Padma chos lding (plate 3) and which is said to represent the "presence" of Phyogs las rnam rgyal, the founder of the monastery, who brought the deity there. It is this ape-mask (and the "monkey-faced" iconography) which the Bo dong pa present as one of the explanations for their protective deity's origin from India, the land of Hanuman (the ape-god). The *Shel dkar chos 'byung* specified that during one of his study travels to India dPang lo tsā ba, the scholar from Bo dong E and so-called first abbot of Shel dkar, brought the deity to Tibet from there (*Shel dkar chos 'byung* 37b).

In Shel dkar, when we asked for the abodes of bKra shis 'od 'bar we were referred to the "*yul lha* bKra shis 'od 'bar" in lower Pha drug which is said to be the regular seat of the deity. There, half-way up a mountain ridge behind the village Shan chung, one finds this seat represented by a simple shrine which is placed on a red rock and next to a small spring; prayer flags and some old parts of weapons (knives, arrow-heads) decorate the shrine which is worshipped by the inhabitants of Shan chung as the abode of their "land-god" (plate 5). The locals say that coming from India dPang lo tsā ba rested here on his way back to Tibet; he put his hat in which he was carrying the deity bKra shis 'od 'bar on the ground and left it behind. But one can also hear an entirely different story, being told by the locals, according to which bKra shis 'od 'bar is a warrior from Khams who had been killed in action. This statement is confirmed by Nebesky-Wojkowitz, who (unfortunately without stating his sources) records bKra shis 'od 'bar as a *btsan*-deity (and member of the retinue of Tsi'u dmar po) which is said to be known in Khams by the name of dPa' bo khro 'bar and "supposed to be the spirit of a war-lord from Kham who had been killed in a battle" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 174). Prayer books from the Dungkar monastery in the Chumbi Valley, which the author refers to, describe the *dharmapāla* as a red deity which in its right hand "brandishes an all-conquering 'banner of victory', while the left one holds a fresh blood-dripping heart". Here bKra shis 'od 'bar has a younger brother, the *dge bsnyen* rDo rje khro 'bar whose mount is a red horse with the characteristics of having the wings of a *rlung rta* (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 174, 175). To what extend this *btsan*-deity has anything to do with the bKra shis 'od 'bar of Pha drug, is as yet uncertain. Nevertheless diverse circumstances suggest that this place is the scene of an "authentic" *yul lha* bKra shis 'od 'bar and that the dPang lo tsā ba connection virtually constitutes a secondary interpretation. We will come back to that later on.

---

[13] Cf. Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 222. – The term *dge bsnyen* corresponds to Sanskrit *upāsaka* ("lay devotee") which one frequently finds preceding the names of ancient Tibetan mountain gods who became protectors of the Buddhist doctrine. But also other ancient classes of spirits bear the title of *dge bsnyen*. See Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 304f.

[14] *Chos bdag chen po bkra shis 'od 'bar gyi bskang ba* 373; this text is part of a collection of ritual texts, the *sPo rong chos spyod*, which are used in the sPo rong Padma chos lding monastery and which were printed in its new branch in Kathmandu in the 1980s.



1 *g.yang 'gug* -- "summoning of *g.yang*" represented by the *mda' dar* and the shoulder of a sheep
2 *mthun gtor* -- a general *gtor ma* representing all *srung ma*
3 Dri btsan (plus 3 followers)
4 bKra shis 'od 'bar (in front of it rDo rje rgyal mtshan and the *gtso 'khor brgyad*)
5 *yi dam rgyal gtor*
6 *gnas bdag*
7 lHa mo *yi dam* (1 high and 3 smaller *gtor ma*)
8 *gzhi bdag*
9 dPal ldan lha mo (= *yul lha* of the village g.Yu tho)
10 Tshe ring ma (plus 5 smaller *gtor ma* = the group of the Tshe ring mched lnga)
11, 12, 13 *dgra lha* -- 3 high and 6 smaller *gtor ma* forming the group of the nine *dgra lha*
14 Thang lha
15 rDo lha
16 bsTan ma (plus 12 smaller *gtor ma* forming the group of the bsTan ma bcu gnyis)
17 rTa mgrin
18 Yab lnga -- "five fathers"
19 Blon po lnga -- "five ministers"
20 Yum lnga -- "five mothers"
21 bTse ro wa rgyab bdun -- "seven bTse ro wa rgyab"
22 *'tshogs* ("gathering") -- *gtor ma* symbolizing the "gathering of all good things"

Fig. 2: Altar picture of the *lha gsol* for bKra shis 'od 'bar in Bo dong E

2. The ritual for the Bo dong protector

The classic monastic ritual for a *chos skyong* and guardian (*srung ma*) of a monastery is the *bskang gso* ("satisfaction") ritual. Among the Bo dong pa it is usually carried out on a smaller scale several times a month and on a larger scale twice a year. But there are also other monastic rituals behind which adoration for bKra shis 'od 'bar is concealed. When, for instance, on the

occasion of the *dgra lha* ritual in Shel dkar (at the beginning of the ninth month) the lance of bKra shis 'od 'bar is affixed to his fresco in the courtyard, the ritual at the same time turns out to be a bKra shis 'od 'bar ritual, to whom the (nine) *dgra lha* are subordinated as protective deities.

In Bo dong E (note 8)[15] on the 8th, 10th, 15th, and 30th day of each month a small *bskang gso* takes place, a small *lha gsol* once a month and a great *lha gsol* at the end of the 8th or the beginning of the 9th month. The largest celebration in bKra shis 'od 'bar's and rDo rje rgyal mtshan's honour, a *mnga' gsol*, takes place on the 15th day of the 6th month when the lay population also is included to a greater extent. Representatives of the twelve *grong tsho* of Bo dong bKra shis gangs bring offerings of rice, barley, and butter to the monastery.

According to the local lama the rituals differ only in their length and in the titles and the quantity of the texts being read[16] while the procedure and the altar-arrangement are more or less identical. Fig. 2 is a sketch of the altar of the *lha gsol* for bKra shis 'od 'bar and rDo rje rgyal mtshan, which is held at the end of October, after the harvest has been brought in. In its outward appearance the *lha gsol* shows the course of events which is characteristic for such lamaistic cultic acts and liturgies (*mchod pa, cho ga*) consisting of joint recitations of scriptures (*zhal 'don*), ritual gesture (*phyag rgya*) and musical expression (*dbyangs*, in particular using the drum, the small and the big trumpet [*lag rnga, rgya gling,* and *dung chen*]); the order of events is defined by the text being read. In the starting phase of the ceremony, which takes place in the newly-erected assembly hall (*'du khang*), a *bsangs gtor* is placed on the roof, a creation made of dough in a bowl with smouldering juniper which opens the connection to the divine level. This is followed by the deities (from the village's *yul lha*, the local *gzhi bdag* and *gnas bdag* to the higher, supra-regional protective deities, Fig. 2) being invited to the room, together with a call-up of the sacrificial offerings intended to satisfy them and hopefully inducing them to a positive intervention in the earthly fate. The fact that bKra shis 'od 'bar moves into the centre of the cultic act becomes apparent from the distribution of the big sacrificial cake of the *'tshogs-gtor ma* ("assembly-*gtor ma*"), which sets in during the middle period and which lasts until the end of the ceremony. First the top of the mountain-shaped red *gtor ma* (the highest ranking part) is taken off and placed on the altar in front of the *chos skyong* bKra shis 'od 'bar and rDo rje rgyal mtshan and their retinue (*gtor ma* No. 4); the next part is put on the roof of the monastery, the third part is distributed among the monks, and at the end the last part is distributed among the population outside. This dividing into four parts of the hierarchically structured "sacrificial mountain" symbolizes the act of connecting the supreme protective deity, the divine level in general (represented by the "level" of the roof of the monastery), the level of the priests, and that of the village people and lay community. Between the phases of the distribution of the sacrificial cake the separate ceremony of *g.yang 'gug* takes place, in which one of the lamas swings the bone of a sheep's shoulder and the "arrow with the five silk bounds" (*mda' dar*)

---

[15] The monastery is situated to the south-west of the Bo dong valley, in the area of Bo dong bKra shis gangs which is named after the main settlement (bKra shis gangs) and was traditionally subdivided into 12 *grong tsho*, village units. A newly erected modest assembly hall and parts of the old *mgon khang* are the remains of the once spacious installation of the monastery situated in a dense forest. Today this space is entirely taken up by the village g.Yu tho, which was erected on the monastery's ruins and which in former times allegedly consisted only of miserable huts at the fringe of the monastery. The *yul lha* (land- and village deity) of the new village is dPal ldan lha mo whose seat is in a *mchod rten* located next to that of bKra shis 'od 'bar in front of the *mgon khang*. – The introduction of bKra shis 'od 'bar is ascribed to dPang lo tsā ba; however, it cannot be ruled out that already from the beginning a precursor of the Bo dong protector of the same name had been worshipped there.

[16] The following texts are used: a) for the *lha gsol* the scriptures called *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa las byung ba'i bsangs mchod nyes pa kun sel, gSang ba'i bdag pos gnang ba'i dgra lha dpangs bstod,* and *rGyal chen sku lnga'i mchod sprin gsal ba'i me long*; – b) for the *mnga' gsol* the text *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa las byung ba'i bstan bsrungs chen po'i mnga' gsol dgra bgegs myur sgrol dngos grub cher 'bebs;* – c) for the *bskang gso* the text *dPal de kho na nyid 'dus pa las byung ba'i bstan bsrungs dam can rnams kyi gtor bsngos bskang gso bo* [*dong*] *lugs.*

through the air in a dancing step. The *g.yang 'gug* and its symbolic representatives are known to us from the traditional mountain-god ritual (from which it has obviously been borrowed)[17] and which in both cases aims at the "summoning of good fortune, of wealth and of vegetative plentifulness" (*g.yang 'gug*).[18]

3. bKra shis 'od 'bar in the local context of sPo rong Padma chos lding and of Yar 'brog bSam sdings

3.1. bKra shis 'od 'bar in sPo rong

In the sPo rong Padma chos lding monastery which is located to the west of the Pad khud mtsho in the nomadic area of sPo rong, a *lha pa* had the function of the local medium of bKra shis 'od 'bar. People say that the oracle was frequently consulted on the occasion of social conflicts, such as disputes on the right of pasture, and that the deity also took disciplinary action against the irritated local gods. A particular phenomenon in the local history of bKra shis 'od 'bar and rDo rje rgyal mtshan is that the two religious protectors who were originally "imported" from outside were eventually identified with two different mountains after their introduction to the sPo rong area. The mountains, which are said to have the shape of a heart (= rDo rje rgyal mtshan) and of a camel (= bKra shis 'od 'bar), are denoted as *bla ri* ("soul-mountain") of the two *chos skyong* and are addressed as *yul lha*, to whom numerous traditional *yul lha* are subordinated. One can say that thereby they entered the territorial order of the nomadic society of sPo rong which until 1959 was headed by the hereditary princely family of the so-called sPo rong *rje dbon*.[19] The common pastures cover the northern zone (located between the Bong chu and the gTsang po) of the former La stod lho and to the west it extends as far as the territory of what was once the kingdom of Mang yul Gung thang. This west-east tract is marked by numerous smaller and higher *yul lha* which were worshipped by the nomadic groups during their seasonal transitions from one residence to the other. At New Year, for instance, the nomadic court of the *rje dbon* resided in the vicinity of the Bo dong monastery of mNgon dga' (to the north of Mount rTsib ri, not far from Shel dkar), where on the one side they took part in the great New Year's festival of Shel dkar and conducted their business there, and on the other side they held the great mountain cult ritual in honour of rTa skyong gangs in their own ranks. This mighty mountain god who is mentioned in the *Shel dkar chos 'byung* as the westernmost of four mountains surrounding the new capital of La stod lho (*Shel dkar chos 'byung* 21a, 22b) is considered the brother of Ding ri sgang dmar (s. note 9) and the holy mountain of the *a ya* clan (i.e.

---

[17] The "elements" of arrow and sheep traditionally represent the male side of the village lay community, who are also reserved the right to attend the (periodically held) sacrificial ritual for their relevant territorial deity (*yul lha*, usually, but not always, a mountain or mountain god respectively). Cf. a. o. Hazod, G. (1996), "The *yul lha gsol* of mTsho yul. On the relation between the mountain and the lake in the context of the 'land god ritual' of Phoksumdo (Northwestern Nepal)", in *Reflections of the Mountain. Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya.* A.M. Blondeau, E. Steinkellner (eds.), Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Veröffentlichungen zur Sozialanthropologie, Band 2), 91-111.

[18] Hazod 1996 (cf. above n. 17); Karmay, S.G. (1975), *A General Introduction to the History and Doctrines of Bon*, Memoirs of the Toyo Bunko, Tokyo: 208f; – *g.yang 'gug* is also the designation for the white drawings made on the threshing place after threshing (which are constantly renewed throughout the winter); the most frequent form is that of a spiral, often decorated with three stones piled on top of each other. This custom is found all over gTsang stod.

[19] The principality of sPo rong was part of La stod lho and it had traditionally close ties to Shel dkar. Some of the early Bo dong pa abbots of Shel dkar chos sde and its branches came from the princely family. The prince (*rje dbon*) was master of sPo rong tsho brgyad, the "8 *tsho* of sPo rong", territorial and federal units which trace back to five original clans. See Diemberger/Hazod (forthcoming). (An evaluation of documents of the archives of a minister of sPo rong kept in the sPo rong Padma chos lding branch of Kathmandu is being prepared by H. Diemberger and Ch. Ramble).

one of the five original clans of sPo rong).[20] For the locals in sPo rong to regard a *yul lha* as being powerful the mountain god must be acknowledged by more than just one village (or local groups, respectively) or even, as in the case of rTa skyong gangs, be worshipped by more or less the whole confederation.[21]

A particular case is that of the *yul lha* Dar lcog dkar ba, an inconspicious hill located in the mountain area to the east of sPo rong Padma chos lding, who is supposed to be the *pho lha* of the *rje dbon*. The ancestor and territorial god is represented by a big flagstaff (*dar lcog*) which was installed at the summerly *yul lha*-ceremony held by the ruler's family on the top of the hill and flanked by smaller "*yul lha*" of the groups which also participated in the feast. Today the mountain is the *yul lha* of the village sBra chen ("big tent") which takes the place of what was once the ruler's summer residence of the same name. An empty spot in the middle of the village marks the position of a big tent which stood there until 1959; it indicates the symbolic centre of the former nomadic principality; the princely family actually resided inside a walled palace in the immediate vicinity (in addition they also had palaces in other parts of the country).

According to the hierarchic principles of a community lead by a hereditary dynasty this *yul lha* is endowed with a special significance. Thus the locals proudly call the hill the "*yul lha* of sPo rong". In this sphere of political dominance in sBra chen there was a temple dedicated to bKra shis 'od 'bar. Two monks from the Padma chos lding monastery, who were relieved every month, cared for the temple which allegedly contained a huge *thang ka* of the Bo dong protector. bKra shis 'od 'bar's presence in sBra chen is an indication for the significant process given here (but also elsewhere in post-dynastic Tibet) of the inclusion of religious (Buddhist) demands under a sovereign's patronage, but which, on its part, kept up the traditional socio-religious principles, as it was expressed in this phenomenon of the *pho lha /yul lha* connection.

3.2. bSam grub chos kyi sdings in Yar 'brog and the institution of rDo rje phag mo

"In former times gNod sbyin gang bzang was the protector of Yar 'brog here, today it is bKra shis 'od 'bar". This statement by a Bo dong lama from bSam sdings is proof of the respect accorded to the great mountain god from Yar 'brog, even if putting them on a par as is done here seems to be the result of an ideology rather than that of reality. The holy mountain and mountain god gNod sbyin gang bzang (the *yakṣa* [*gnod sbyin*] Gang ba bzang po), for whom a *lha bsangs* is regulary being read in bSam sdings, too, is traditionally regarded as the "*yul lha* of the entire Yar 'brog area".[22] It is possible that the mountain god in a way represents one station on the

---

[20] From this clan came the so-called *a ya* priests of sPo rong, who in former times regularly had carried out animal sacrifices in honour of rTa skyong gangs; the victim was a white sheep from whose entrails they read prophecies for the prince and the land. Cf. Diemberger/Hazod (forthcoming). – According to Ch. Ramble the expression *a ya* in old Bon po texts denotes a category of priests from the ancient Zhang zhung kingdom (Ch. Ramble [1992], "A Ritual of Political Unity in an Old Nepalese Kingdom", *Ancient Nepal* 130-133: 57). Apart from sPo rong, recent proof for their existence can also be found in the old Se rib area of upper Kali Gandaki (Ch. Ramble, *op.cit.*: 54) and – as I was able to ascertain during my field research in 1995 – in sKyid grong. (In sKyid grong the *a ya* were represented by eight men, the so-called *mi brgyad*, who were responsible for specific "field rituals" (the *g.ya' gsol* and *ma sman gdod*) held in the context of the vegetational cycle of the *gra a'u* plant (a sort of buckwheat).

[21] The size and height of a mountain and its impressiveness, as we might see it, is no criterion for the "greatness" of the resident mountain god and *yul lha* which is defined by his local history (s. the case of the *yul lha* of the *rje dbon* mentioned below). The great Shi sha sbang ma towering over the plain of Pad khud is regarded among the sPo rong pa as nothing more than a tiny *yul lha* (by the name of Pho lha dgon chen) who is responsible for merely one village. (The history of this mountain is combined with the danger of winter; it is said that once there was such heavy snowfall that a huge number of animals at pasture perished and that the starving people had nothing else to eat than this dead meat [*shi sha*] and the malt used for beer-brewing [*sbang ma*]; hence the name Shi sha sbang ma.)

[22] The mountain which rises on the border between the provinces of dBus and gTsang is also said to be the lord of all the *sa bdag* of gTsang (s. bsTan 'dzin dpal 'byor, *dGa' bzhi ba'i mi rabs kyi byung ba brjod pa zol med gtam gyi rol*

history of bKra shis 'od 'bar's classification; this concerns the above-mentioned classification (coming from bSam sdings) of the deity as a member of the 21 *dge bsnyen*. For in this group there is no bKra shis 'od 'bar to be found, whereas gNod sbyin gang bzang is in it.[23]

The *chos skyong* bKra shis 'od 'bar and rDo rje rgyal mtshan who were brought there together with other deities (such as Dri gtsang zhags pa, Kham bu tshig, Shing skyong lba pa) by Phyogs las rnam rgyal represent the local protective deities of bSam sdings. Their residence is made up of an ensemble of old *mchod rten* behind the monastery, of which those of bKra shis 'od 'bar and rDo rje rgyal mtshan carry the significant designation of *zhi ba* and *drag po* ("peaceful and terrifying"). Two ancient trees, the remains of a forest which once covered these hills, are regarded as *bla shing*, "soul-wood", of the *chos skyong*. The two are frequently spoken of synonymously by the names of their horses (Rlung rta sngon po and Phur bu rag pa); it is said that in former times several caparisoned horses representing the local protective deities were paraded during a *lha bsangs* ceremony held twice a year. In addition to Rlung rta sngon po and Phur bu rag pa there were also the black and the red mount of Shing skyong lba pa and Dri gtsang zhags pa, respectively.[24] Rlung rta sngon po and Phur bu rag pa act as *yul lha* of the two villages situated at the foot of the hill of the monastery. One of them, sGo chen, already existed before the foundation of the monastery and is regarded as the first settlement in the sNa dkar rtse plain. Today the *yul lha*-function of the original village god (Brag dmar brag bzang) has been completely taken over by Phur bu rag pa.

The monastery of bSam grub chos kyi sdings (bSam sdings), which is being operated again on a small scale today, harbours the legendary bSam sdings rDo rje phag mo, a designation for the female abbots of the monastery in whom the *yi dam* rDo rje phag mo ("Diamond-Sow", Skt. Vajravārahī), a form of Tārā, manifests herself.[25] The "throne of Yar 'brog mtsho", as this place is called in a song,[26] is one of the destinations of the traditional pilgrimage around the adjacent

---

mo. Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang, Chengdu, 1987: 10f.; Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 221). In fact Gang ba bzang po is equally worshipped on the other (western) side, the area of the upper and lower Myang (Nyang) river which has its source in the Gang ba bzang po massif. It is said that Padmasambhava found the spring, drank from it and thereby sanctified the water. Nyang was the domain of the princes of rGyal rtse and one of them (the great lord Kun dga' 'Phags pa, 1357-1412) was regarded as an incarnation of the *yakṣa* Gang ba bzang po (Lo Bue/Ricca 1990: 40f., 179). – According to a wide-spread classification the mountain god is regarded as the westernmost of the four great holy mountains of Central Tibet (with gNyan chen thang lha in the north, sKu lha mkha' ri in the south, and Yar lha sham po in the east). The oral tradition of upper Yar lung designates him as the elder brother of Yar lha sham po; he invited the great mountain god (and member of the *lha dgu*, the nine ancient mountain gods of Tibet) to come down from his snowy mountain. – Gang ba bzang po is also mentioned by some as the male partner of the lake goddess of the Yar 'brog g.yu mtsho (s. Karmay, S.G. [1996], "The Tibetan Cult of Mountain Deities and its Political Significance", in *Reflections of the Mountain* [cf. above n. 17]: 59-75), but the Bo dong pa of bSam sdings do not confirm this.

[23] Cf. Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 222. – At the same time gNod sbyin gang bzang leads us again to the link between bKra shis 'od 'bar and the *yakṣa* and rNam thos sras, respectively (s. note 12). As is known the deity belongs to the retinue of rNam thos sras, the "eight masters of the horses" ([*rta bdag brgyad*], s. the descriptions of the rNam thos sras *lha khang* of the great rGyal rtse *stūpa* by Lo Bue, E. & F. Ricca [1993], *The Great Stūpa of Gyantse*. London, Serindia Publications: 87f., 242).

[24] Tucci, G. (1987), *To Lhasa and Beyond*. New York, Snow Lion Publications: 86.

[25] In portraits rDo rje phag mo is represented with a pig's head behind the ear and it is said that, as a sign for an incarnation of the goddess, the new candidate of the bSam sdings rDo rje phag mo has bristles on her back. (Dhondup/Tsering 1979: 12). For a description of the monastery and the seat of the goddess as in older reports s. Waddell, A.L. (1895), *The Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism*, London, W.A. Allen: 245, 275-276 and Das 1902: 135-139. – Waddell mentions two more, similarly run convents dedicated to rDo rje phag mo, one in Lahul and the other one on the western bank of the gNam mtsho. Waddell 1895: 276.

[26] Dhondup/Tsering 1979: 12.

holy Yar 'brog g.yu mtsho, also called Tibet's "soul lake" (*bla mtsho*) by one of the traditions.[27] It is claimed that the monastery is situated at the location of the heart of a giant demoness lying on her back covering the entire area up to the *bdud mo* (or *'dre mo*) lake, one of the sister lakes of the Yar 'brog g.yu mtsho. In former times there was only a small spring at that place, which was defiled when the demoness washed her hair in it, upon which it swelled to become a lake. Legend has it that the monastery and the cultic presence of rDo rje phag mo serve to cast a lasting spell on the water, which would flood all of Tibet if it was broken.[28] Thus the foundation of the monastery stands in direct relation to the myth according to which Avalokiteśvara and Tārā, in the form of rTa mgrin (Hayagrīva) and rDo rje phag mo, overpowered the sea-monster (*chu srin*, i.e. *makara*) of the Yar 'brog lake.[29]

As far as the history of the foundation of the monastery and the succession of the female abbots is concerned, one can find different versions in the literature; a recently written *dkar chag* of bSam sdings specifies a succession of 12 abbesses (including the present rDo rje phag mo), beginning with the disciple of Phyogs las rnam rgyal, the Gung thang princess A grol chos kyi sgron me.[30] In 1440, after an extended pilgrimage through Central Tibet, she founded the monastery under the patronage of the then Yar 'brog khri dpon of sNa dkar rtse.[31] Phyogs las rnam rgyal himself took part in this, and along with him also came bKra shis 'od 'bar. As the protector of the place the deity also acts for the bSam sdings rDo rje phag mo, which on its part in its many-sided appearance as the manifestation of both Tārā and the "lake-banisher" "has held considerable spiritual and mystic sway over the Tibetan mind" since its foundation.[32]

---

[27] Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 482; – it is also regarded as one of the "four great terrific deity lakes" (*drag po'i mtsho chen bzhi*) with the seat of the *makara*-demon (Wylie, T.V. [1962], *The Geography of Tibet according to the 'Dzam gling rgyas bshad*, Roma, IsMEO: 73). – The lake is seen in the shape of a scorpion with the one "horn" in the north, the other one in the south, and the tail and sting in the east. This creates a peninsular structure, a hilly landscape dominated by the sacred mountain ridge of rDo nang bzang pa ri. – A description of the holy sites of the lake district, which is mainly populated by nomadic groups, is found in the guide *Yar 'brog yon bo rdo'i ri mtsho zung gi gnas yig* of the rNying ma pa monastery of Yon bo rdo. (The monastery is situated on an island in the south-eastern part of the lake and today is run again by a few monks who also serve the sparse settlements in the south-east of inner Yar 'brog, among other things conducting the rituals for their *yul lha*.)

[28] Cf. S. Ch. Das 1902: 136.

[29] S. Ch. Das 1902: 138.

[30] rDo rje phag mo bde chen chos sgron & Thub bstan rnam rgyal (1994), "bSam sdings rdo rje phag mo'i 'khrungs rabs dang sku phreng rim byon gyi mdzad rnam yar 'brog bsam sdings dgon gyi dkar chag bcas rags tsam bkod pa", in *Tibetan Buddhism* 2, 33f. According to this text (which unfortunately states no sources) the succession is as follows: 1. A grol chos kyi sgron me, 2. rJe btsun Kun dga' bzang mo, 3. rJe btsun sNya grags bzang mo, 4. 'O rgyan gtso mo, 5. mGa' (read: dGa') spyod dpal mo, 6. 'Phrin las mtsho mo, 7. Chos sgron dang mo, 8. sKal bzang mchog ldan bde chen dbang mo, 9. Chos dbyings bde chen mtsho mo, 10. Ngag dbang kun bzang dang mo, 11. Thub bstan chos dbyings dpal mo, 12. bDe chen chos kyi sgron me (the present rDo rje phag mo).

A grol chos kyi sgron me is also mentioned in the *Gung thang gdung rabs* as an incarnation of rDo rje phag mo and as the Ya 'brog btsun ma (in *Bod kyi lo rgyus deb ther khag lnga*, Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, Lhasa, 1990: 125). She is the grand-daughter of King Khri rgyal bsod nams lde who invited Phyogs las rnam rgyal to Gung thang to became abbot of mNga' ris chos sde (*Shel dkar chos 'byung* 46a). There the princess became his disciple and partner. The *'Dzam gling rgyas bshad* says: "In that monastery (bSam sdings) there is the successive rebirth of the *rig ma* (female partner) of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal." (Wylie 1962: 73 [cf. above n. 27]). Cf. on the other hand the versions of the succession of abbesses compiled by Tashi Tsering, where Chos kyi sgron me only appears as the third bSam sdings rDo rje phag mo. Tashi Tsering (1993), "bSam sdings rDo rje phag mo sku phreng rim byon gyi mtshan dang 'khrungs gshegs kyi lo khams star chags su 'god thabs sngon 'gro'i zhib 'jug mdor bsdus", *Yum mtsho, Bod kyi bu med rig pa'i dus deb* 1993, 1, 20-52.

[31] rDo rje phag mo bde chen chos sgron & Thub bstan rnam rgyal 1994: 35 (cf. above n. 30).

[32] Dhondup/Tsering 1979: 12. – In comparable stories known to us from Tibet and the Himalaya the lake- or flood-banishing factor is usually reserved to male heroes (s. Allen, N. [1997], "'And the lake drained away': an essay in Himalayan comparative mythology", in *Maṇḍala and Landscape*. A.W. Macdonald [ed.], Delhi, D.K. Printworld).

In Petech's study of the development of the Sa skya myriarchies (*khri skor*) we read that the area of Yar 'brog were granted as a *khri skor* to the ruling family of sNa dkar rtse, to the family of the (ninth) Sa skya *dpon chen* Ag len, to be exact (end of 13th century); and before that parts of this area "had been bestowed upon the Phag mo gru hierarchs in order to defray the expenses of the ritual lamps to bKra shis 'od 'bar at gDan sa mthil".[33] This statement brings us back to the question of the origins of the deity bKra shis 'od 'bar which quite obviously takes us back in time far beyond the early Bo dong pa of the 15th century.

4. The shrine "*gdung rten* bKra shis 'od 'bar" in gDan sa mthil and the *mchod rten* of bKra shis 'od 'bar in Glo don stengs

The above-mentioned ritual lamps for bKra shis 'od 'bar were presumably intended for the shrine called "*gdung rten* bKra shis 'od 'bar" in gDan sa mthil which holds the mortal remains of the founder of the Phag mo gru pa sect, 'Gro mgon Phag mo gru (1110-1170). The wise "Khams pa", as he is also called, comes from 'Bri lung rne shod of southern mDo khams, from the We na 'Phan thog clan, a sideline of the dBas-clan, to be exact.[34] Concerning his death in gDan sa mthil in 1170, the *Deb ther sngon po* reports that after the cremation of the body the tongue and heart had remained intact, whereupon his tongue was cut into two parts which are allegedly preserved in Khams, whereas the heart is said to have been laid to rest in the *caitya* (*gdung rten*) bKra shis 'od 'bar which became "the chief sacred object of the *vihāra* (gDan sa mthil)".[35]

We find a parallel to the "female lake-banisher" of Yar 'brog in a local tradition from Kha rta in South Tibet where the *mkha' 'gro* Ma gcig zha ma drained a lake (s. Diemberger/Hazod 1994). This is remarkable in so far as on the one hand Ma gcig zha ma (b. 1062) comes from a social background of Pha drug, which – as we shall see below – is connected to the origins of bKra shis 'od 'bar and on the other hand she is indirectly related to the (far younger) institution of bSam sdings rDo rje phag mo. Lo Bue writes that through the master 'Gro mgon Phag mo gru pa "her lineage was continued by the foremost female incarnation in Tibet, bSam sdings rDo rje phag mo" (Lo Bue, E. [1994], "A case of mistaken identity: Ma gcig labs sgron and Ma gcig zha ma", in *Tibetan Studies, PIATS Fagernes 1992*. Per Kvaerne [ed.], Oslo, The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture: 482). This master and founder of the bKa' brgyud pa school of the same name was a disciple of Ma gcig zha ma (Roerich 1979: 575) and his biography is also being related to bKra shis 'od 'bar (s. below). As Lo Bue told me (letter dated Dec. 12, 1995) this explanation comes from a personal statement by Tashi Tsering, the author of the above-mentioned article on bSam sdings rDo rje phag mo; in the lists he cites on the precedessors of the actual bSam sdings rDo rje phag mo, one can however not find the Ma gcig zha ma, instead they include (among others) her contemporary Ma gcig lab sgron (Tashi Tsering 1993: 39 [cf. above n. 30]). So this remains an unsettled point. – For the people of bSam sdings it is certain that bKra shis 'od 'bar did not come to Yar 'brog until the Bo dong pa arrived. Maybe later studies will be able to show to what extend he was integrated in the local cult of rDo rje phag mo.

[33] Petech, L. (1990), *Central Tibet and the Mongols*. Roma, IsMEO: 58.

[34] *Deb ther sngon po* 653, Roerich 1979: 553; however, the *Deb ther dmar po gsar ma* states that his lineage "belongs to the family of the Glangs lHa gzigs". Tucci, G. (1971), *Deb t'er dmar po gsar ma. Tibetan Chronicles by bSod nams grags pa*. Roma, IsMEO: 203.

[35] Roerich 1979: 563; *Deb ther sngon po* 663. – The erection of a "*gdung rten* bKra shis 'od 'bar" seems to have been passed on as tradition among the g.Ya' bzang bKa' brgyud pa. This branch of the Phag mo gru pa sect is named after the monastery of g.Ya' bzang in Yar stod (upper Yar lung), which was founded by Chos rje smon lam pa (1169-1233). There the latter erected for his teacher, a disciple of Phag mo gru pa, a *gdung rten* bKra shis 'od 'bar which, apart from personal ingredients of former bKa' brgyud pa masters, "contained in particular parts of the ashes of the *rje btsun* Khams pa rDo rje rgyal po (= Phag mo gru pa)" (*khyad bar du rje btsun khams pa rdo rgyal gdung nag khyor ba gang yang bzhugs*; – fol. 29b, 30a of the *g.Ya' bzang dkar chag*, a text of 52 folios kept in the g.Ya' bzang monastery). A successor of Chos rje smon lam pa also erected a "*sku 'bum* bKra shis 'od 'bar" (*ibid.* 35a). – bKra shis 'od 'bar *stūpa*s are also known in other places, in 'Bri khung (bsTan 'dzin dpal 'byor 1987: 1052) and in Lhasa, for example. The golden *gdung rten* of the seventh Dalai Lama situated in the Potala Palace is called *bKra shis 'od 'bar* (bsTan 'dzin dpal 'byor 1987: 73). In these cases the term seems to indicate just a specific type of *stūpa*. – I only came across these passages of the text after this paper had been completed, so that these questions cannot be followed up here.

Already 100 years before these events a bKra shis 'od 'bar was known in Central Tibet, proof of which is given by the "*mchod rten* bKra shis 'od 'bar" of Glo don stengs (east of bSam yas) which is described in the *gTam gyi tshogs*.[36] To my knowledge this is the earliest known evidence for the existence of a bKra shis 'od 'bar. The *stūpa* was built by the early bKa' gdams pa sPyan snga Tshul khrims 'bar, a disciple of *dge bshes* sTon pa ('Brom ston),[37] who, according to the *Deb ther sngon po*, was born in the year 1038 as "son of dBas Śākya rDo rje" (Roerich 1979: 284). The *mchod rten* is regarded as the "best" (*mchog tu*) of the many *stūpa* erected in the so-called "*pad spungs* style" by sPyan snga Tshul khrims 'bar.[38] Its construction was carried out according to the prophecy of his *yi dam*, the goddess dByangs can ma (Sarasvatī), who, in connection with the "land discrimination" (*sa dpyad*) gave the instruction that the *stūpa* be erected on a stone in the shape of a turtle (*rus sbal*) which was the seat of a *klu* (*gTam gyi tshogs* 395, 14; 396, 1-2). In the course of the consecration (*rab gnas*) of the *stūpa* a woman from Khams appeared, an incarnation of dByangs can ma, who was prompted by the lama to bring along her three sons who were then led "on a rainbow-path" (*'ja' lam la*) into the temple by the "five classes of *mkha' 'gro*" (*mkha' 'gro sde lnga*, *ibid.* 396, 12-16). The three brothers were bKra shis, the eldest, 'Od 'bar, the second one, and Don ldan, the youngest. Since then the *stūpa* has been named *mchod rten* bKra shis 'od 'bar (*ibid.* 396, 13, 16-17).[39]

These two reports do not give any indication whether the bKra shis 'od 'bar of the 11th and 12th century is one and the same deity; but the circumstances of the persons involved in the stories do refer to a peculiarity they have in common. It is the connection to Khams and the dBas clan, which is made mention of. In the case of the report on the *gdung rten* bKra shis 'od 'bar, which designates the tomb of Phag mo gru pa, bKra shis 'od 'bar seems to be directly connected to the personal history (if not "clan history") of Phag mo gru pa, in so far as parts of the mortal remains of the master were brought back to his land of origin. As we have already mentioned earlier, the eastern Tibetan region of Khams is related to the origins of bKra shis 'od 'bar who is known as dPa' bo khro 'bar there and is regarded as the spirit of a fallen hero. We have said that this explanation is also known to the oral tradition of Pha drug; it exists there beside the "Bo dong pa-version", according to which dPang lo tsā ba, on his way back from India, is supposed to have "laid down" bKra shis 'od 'bar there at the place of the "*yul lha* bKra shis 'od 'bar".

5. Pha drug

A myth of settlement from Pha drug[40] tells of a clan ancestor by the name of Thim mi who came out of a tree. He is described as a man who works like a bark beetle during the day and disappears into the inside of the wood at night. He had six sons (the "six *pha*"), who came there

---

[36] *gTam gyi tshogs theg pa'i rgya mtsho* by 'Jigs med gling pa. Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, Beijing 1989: 394-398. The description is based – as stated at the end – on a *gnas yig* by Rin chen bsam grub; the *stūpa* is mentioned in "mKhyen brtse's Guide", which also refers to the *gTam gyi tshogs*. Ferrari 1958: 47, 53 (cf. above n. 8).

[37] Roerich 1979: 241-327; Lo Bue/Ricca 1990): 356f.

[38] *gTam gyi tshogs* 395; this speciality of the "*pad spungs stūpa* erection" by sPyan snga Tshul khrims 'bar is equally mentioned in the *Deb ther sngon po*; Roerich 1979: 285.

[39] In addition it should be mentioned that – apart from the usual insertion of holy objects and substances – "four nails" (*gzer bzhi*) were affixed to the *stūpa* "to avoid damages by the Hor army" (*hor dmag gi gnod pas kyang mi tshugs*, *ibid.* 397, 4-5).

[40] Pha drug is situated south-east of the holy mountain *gnas chen* rTsib ri and refers to the valley of the Dza dkar river which flows into the great Bong chu. Nowadays the area is subdivided into the *shang* (administrative units) of dPa' gsum and bKra shis 'dzoms. The last is mentioned as the seat of *si tu* Chos kyi rin chen where he stayed with his family and followers before he founded the great Shel dkar fortress (*Shel dkar chos 'byung* 13b).

and distributed the land among them. There in the valley of Dza dkar chu which forms upper and lower Pha drug (Pha drug smad and Pha drug stod), before the settlement, there was a lake, which was drained off by Padmasambhava. One relates this story to the place of Pha glang in Pha drug smad which is concurrently regarded by all informants as the first settlement of Pha drug, as the place of the first of the "six fathers" (*pha drug*). This site is located opposite the village Shan chung, on the other side of the river (plate 5). There eight old *mchod rten* mark the spot where the king of the Tibetan opera (A phyi lha mo) allegedly killed the "bad woman".[41] Several tombs and ruins, which the locals call "Mon-tombs" (*Mon dur sa*) and "Mon-buildings", are situated in the immediate vicinity. Such ruins can also be found on the other side in Shan chung where they stretch at greater distance, up-stream all across Pha drug smad. They show a marked resemblance to the great ruins of Ding ri in the upper Bong chu plain and their dimensions are suggestive of strategic military installations or a connection with a more centralistic form of social organization.

The *Shel dkar chos 'byung* reports that Pha drug and Ding ri are mentioned in a military document (*dmag deb*) of King Khri srong lde btsan (*Shel dkar chos 'byung* 9a); at this time they formed the first more central settlements (*grong khyer*) in the "southern region" (lHo brgyud, identical with the later La stod lho) which belonged to the ancient Ru lag (3b). In the *rGyal po bka' thang* the two areas are also listed by name as one of the subdivisions of Ru lag.[42] It is possible that these not yet identified complexes of ruins[43] date back to this time, but younger historical stratums must be taken into consideration as well. The sample of a piece of wood which we took from the complex below the *yul lha* place in Shan chung was examined with the radio-carbon method and established a date of 971 A.D. +/– 50 years. It is assumed that this decayed building is a former monastery or a temple and that the village Shan chung, whose inhabitants worship bKra shis 'od 'bar as their *yul lha*, has already existed even at this time.[44] We proceed on the assumption that this god of place is directly connected to this historical social background, which indicates a social stratum of the 10th century. Whether there are any relations to the (earlier) story of the original territorial division and the first "*pha*" of Pha glang cannot be ascertained on the basis of our material to date, but this is of no great relevance for the present discussion.

According to the *Deb ther sngon po* (272f.) and the biography of Phyogs las rnam rgyal (16f.) the area of southern Pha drug is regarded as the seat of the Zha ma family, whose most notable representatives in the 11th and 12th century are the *mkha' 'gro* Ma gcig zha ma (b. 1062, note 32) and her brothers Zha ma lo tsā ba Seng ge rgyal po and Zha ma Chos rgyal 'Khon bu pa (b. 1069).[45] Local tradition mentions their father as an important *sngags pa* (magician) of his time.[46] The *Deb ther sngon po* (272, in the translation by Roerich 1979: 219)

---

[41] It is possible that this fact refers to the lake story of Pha drug which manifests itself as a local variant of the "Tibetan lake story"; there the central motive, i.e. the keeping off of the water and the opening of the land, appears to be linked to the killing of the original demoness. Cf. Hazod 1996 (cf. n. 17).

[42] In *bKa' thang sde lnga*. Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, Beijing, 1986: 185.

[43] According to a personal communication by Pasang Wangdu and Sonam Wangdu (Director of the Administrative Commission of Museums and Archaeological Data, A.R. Tibet), the tombs and ruins of Pha drug were registered on the premises (in the 1980s) but no excavations were carried out.

[44] Information given by Lobsang Sherab, abbot of Shel dkar chos sde.

[45] They followed the "Path and Fruit" doctrine (*lam 'bras*) of their teacher rMa lo tsā ba; Ma gcig zha ma is mentioned as one of his *mudrā*, tantric assistants. She also appears as an adherent of the *Zhi byed* doctrine of Pha dam pa sangs rgyas, whom she consulted in Ding ri after the death of rMa lo tsā ba (on this s. Lo Bue 1994: 481-490 [cf. above n. 32] and Diemberger/Hazod 1994: 23-45).

[46] In connection with the above-mentioned lake history of Kha rta (note 32); Diemberger/Hazod 1994: 29f.

says of him: "In the country of Pha drug (there lived) a father named Byi ba hab sha ('greedy mouse') whose real name was Zha ma rDo rje rgyal mtshan. He was said to have been a manifestation of Gaṇapati Ha-lu-manta"; this is Tshogs bdag spre gdong, monkey-faced Ganeśa, a form which only exists in Tibet, as Roerich remarks (*ibid.*).[47] As we have already said the Zha ma lineage from Pha drug is listed as the paternal clan of Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal (Fig. 1); thus the Bo dong founder stands in direct genealogical relation to this strange apparition of the monkey-faced Ganeśa of the 11th century whom we have already met earlier as the iconographical feature of the Bo dong protector. This suggests the assumption that this (historical) figure Zha ma rDo rje rgyal mtshan was the primary model for the creation of the Bo dong deity bKra shis 'od 'bar, and, further than that, a model for its *alter ego*, the deity rDo rje rgyal mtshan of the same name, whose wrathful aspects are embodied as monkey and elephant. Obviously bKra shis 'od 'bar's iconographical division in two finds its original unity in this figure of the rDo rje rgyal mtshan/ Tshogs bdag spre'u gdong from Pha drug. It is this unity which is emphasized by the Bo dong pa and in all likelihood it is embodied in the above-mentioned ape-mask of the bKra shis 'od 'bar from sPo rong Padma chos lding.

We assume that once there was a relation between the (*sngags pa*) Zha ma rDo rje rgyal mtshan and the *yul lha*-place in Shan chung in whose social background the figure appears. Thus the creation of the Bo dong *chos skyong* corresponds to the version according to which the deity's appearance in this place goes back to dPang lo tsā ba. In this the connection with the scholar from Bo dong E might just as well be a secondary one, just as this "precursor" of the Bo dong school is retrospectively listed as first abbot of Shel dkar. On the contrary the actual "author" of the Bo dong protector seems to be the founder of this school himself, Phyogs las rnam rgyal who, in doing so, referred to one of his ancestors.[48]

Pha drug proves to be the key scene in the history of the deity bKra shis 'od 'bar; it is a crossing point where the story of the Bo dong protector meets with a "land-god" (classified as *btsan*) which has already been worshipped in the 10th/11th century under the name of bKra shis 'od 'bar. And that is the time of the foundation of the Glo don stengs *stūpa* (and also of the Bo dong E monastery, s. note 48).

Now the question is who is this deity in the shrine on the red rock of Shan chung? We have said that the locals call the large ruins of this area "Mon-buildings"; to that we get an interesting reference by oral tradition coming from outside of Pha drug. According to Diemberger one frequently hears among the people in the border region of mKhan pa lung of a mythical "Mon-king" whose position is given as being within the vicinity of lower Bong chu (Bong shod). The large buildings of the 10th century in Pha drug could be an indication of the "realm" of this legendary figure. He is considered by the people as an ancestor "stemming from the dBa' clan"; he is called Paru Pawo (dBa' ru dpa' bo), "hero of the dBa' clan".[49]

Could it be that this is the original bKra shis 'od 'bar, and that the afore-mentioned bKra shis 'od 'bar of Khams, the fallen hero dPa' bo khro 'bar, is identical with the spirit of a fallen representative of dBas who became a *btsan* and ancestor? Basically such a course of events is not

---

[47] On related forms of Tshogs bdag see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 56, 80; Bunce, F.W. (1994), *An Encyclopaedia of Buddhist Deities, Demigods, Godlings, Saints and Demons.* New Delhi, D.K. Printworld: 558f.

[48] However, it should be born in mind that it is quite possible that bKra shis 'od 'bar had already been present in the monastery of Bo dong E from the very beginning (11th century; s. notes 8 and 15). This is by no means a contradiction to our line of argument; it would mean that there had been a kind of "kinship relation" beween Pha drug and Bo dong, and it explains why tradition lets dPang lo tsā ba appear in Pha drug as well.

[49] Diemberger, H. (1994), "Mountain-Deities, Ancestral Bones and Sacred Weapons. Sacred Territory and Communal Identity in Eastern Nepal and Southern Tibet", in *Tibetan Studies, PIATS Fagernes 1992.* Per Kvaerne (ed.), Oslo, The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture: 150.

unusual, as Professor Karmay demonstrated in his study on Pe har.[50] In the given case we would thus have an explanation for the above-mentioned entanglement of the persons stemming from dBas with the history of bKra shis 'od 'bar.[51] This also means that all the different appearances of the deity we have discussed here trace back to one and the same figure.

The history of bKra shis 'od 'bar quite obviously puts us on the track of this (Central Tibetan) clan dBas,[52] whose history does indeed bear a special connection to Khams. This goes back to the time of the beginning "civil war" after the death of King Glang dar ma in the 9th century which, not least due to initiatives by dBas clansmen, extended to Khams. In this context one is reminded of the story mentioned in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* and other sources about the wild rebel dBas Kho bzher legs stengs who, after the death of Glang dar ma, wanted to push through his conceptions of a renaissance of the monarchic idea in the districts of Amdo, tragically failing in 866.[53] Maybe he is the "fallen great hero from Khams"? But whoever comes into consideration here as a candidate, it must obviously be a figure of clan-internal origin, a "tribal spirit", who set the history of bKra shis 'od 'bar in motion and whom we could retrospectively recognize as the connecting link within this history.

Summing up I would say that bKra shis 'od 'bar originally came as an ancestor of a dBas branch to Central and/or South Tibet in the course of an east-west movement of groups from Khams to these regions. There, sometime in the 10th century, after settling, he became, beside his other appearances, the "*yul lha* bKra shis 'od 'bar" of Pha drug and much later the religious protector of the Bo dong pa, as we know him today.

---

[50] According to Karmay's exposition the spirit of the murdered monk Byang chub blo gros, the victim of the (9th-century) civil war between the 'Bro and dBa' (dBas) clan, could be standing behind the figure of Pehar. He became a *rgyal po* ("kings") demon and the author lists several examples of this kind. Karmay, S.G. (1991), "L'homme et le boeuf: le rituel de *glud* ('rançon')", *Journal Asiatique* 279, 3-4: 358f.

[51] Among them we also have to count the prince of Shel dkar and founder of the first Bo dong monastery of La stod lho, *si tu* Chos kyi rin chen, whose lineage derives from dBas. However, this point needs further investigations, particularly concerning the linkage of this lineage with the legend of Pe har's transfer from the north which for its part is combined with the complex figure of rNam thos sras and his acolyts, one of the (iconographic) models for the Bo dong protector (cf. notes 4, 12, and 23).

[52] Richardson presumes one of the original territorial domains of this clan in the sTag brag valley (south-west of Lhasa) where great tombs are situated. Richardson, H. (1963), "Early Burial Grounds in Tibet and Tibetan Decorative Art of the VIIIth and IXth Centuries", *Central Asiatic Journal* 8: 89f.

[53] Petech, L. (1994), "The Disintegration of the Tibetan Kingdom", in *Tibetan Studies, PIATS Fagernes 1992.* Per Kvaerne (ed.), Oslo, The Institute of Comparative Research in Human Culture: 651, 652.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

bsTan 'dzin dpal 'byor (1987), *dGa' bzhi ba'i mi rabs kyi byung ba brjod pa zol med gtam gyi rol mo.* Chengdu, Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

Das, Sarat Ch. (1902), *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet.* London, John Murray.

Dhondup, K. & Tashi Tsering (1979), "Samdhing Dorjee Phagmo – Tibet's Only Female Incarnation", *Tibetan Review* 14/ 8, 11-17.

Diemberger, H. & G. Hazod (1994), "Machig Zhama's Recovery. Traces of Ancient History and Myth in the South Tibetan Landscape of Kharta and Phadrug", *The Tibet Journal* 19/4, 23-45.

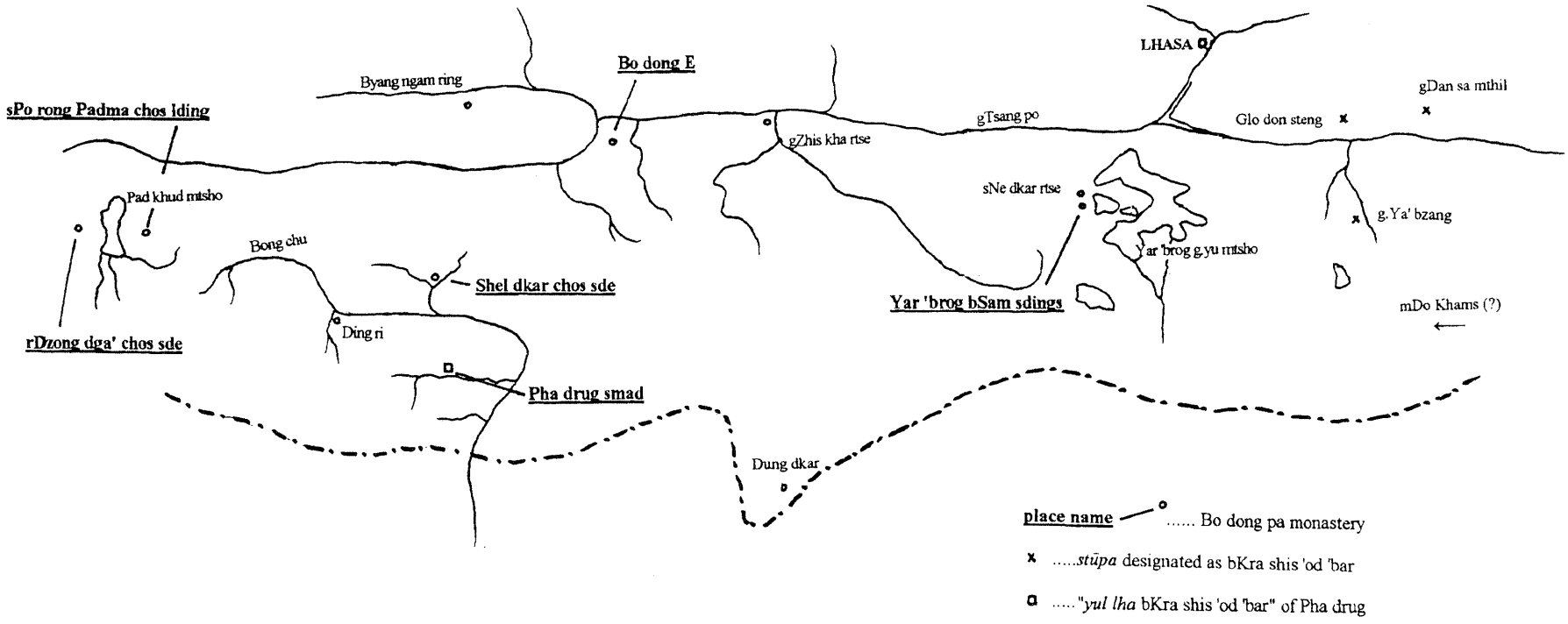
Diemberger, H. & G. Hazod (forthcoming), "Animal Sacrifices and Mountain Deities in Southern Tibet: Mythology, Rituals and Politics", in *Les habitants du toit du monde. Volume in honour of Alexander Macdonald.* S.G. Karmay & P. Sagant (eds.), Paris-Nanterre, Société d'Ethnologie.

Lo Bue, E. & F. Ricca (1990), *Gyantse revisited.* Firenze, Casa Editrice Le Lettere.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. de (1975), *Oracles and Demons of Tibet.* Graz, Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt.

Pasang Wangdu and H. Diemberger in cooperation with G. Hazod (1996), *Ngag dbang sKal ldan rgya mtsho, Shel dkar chos 'byung. History of the 'White Crystal'.* Translation and Facsimile Edition of the Text. Vienna, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Roerich, G.N. (1979 [1949]), *The Blue Annals.* Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass.



Map 1: "Stations" in the history of bKra shis 'od 'bar

Plate I: bKra shis 'od 'bar and his "wrathful aspects" represented by the monkey, elephant, and lion. (Painted stone relief kept in the *mgon khang* of the Shel dkar monastery.)

Color reproductions of Plates 1–3 are to be found in Pasang Wangdu *et al.* 1996.

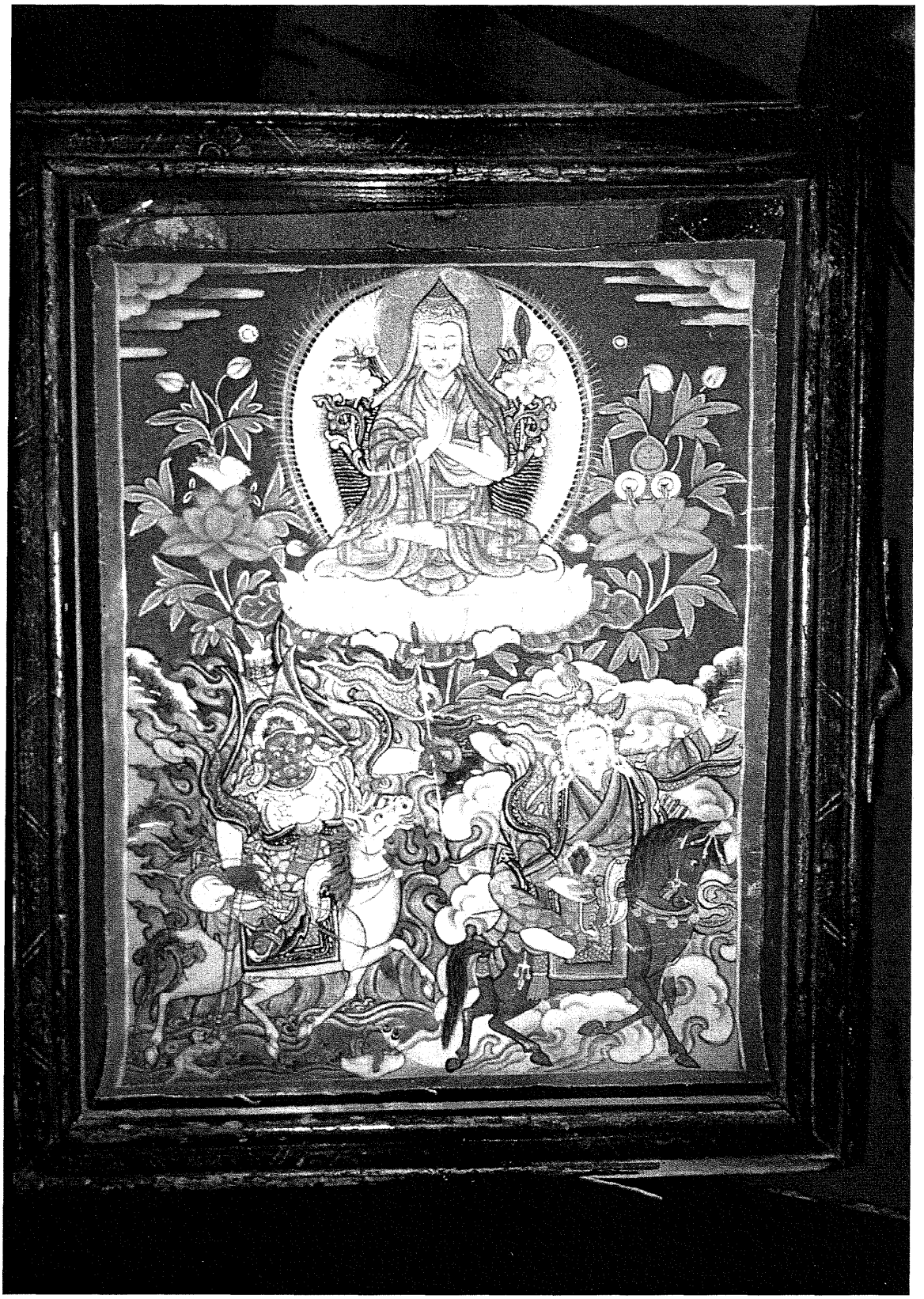


Plate 2: Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal and the two protector gods, bKra shis 'od 'bar on the horse Rlung rta sngon po and rDo rje rgyal mtshan on the horse Phur bu rag pa. (Miniature painting belonging to the bSam sdings monastery.)

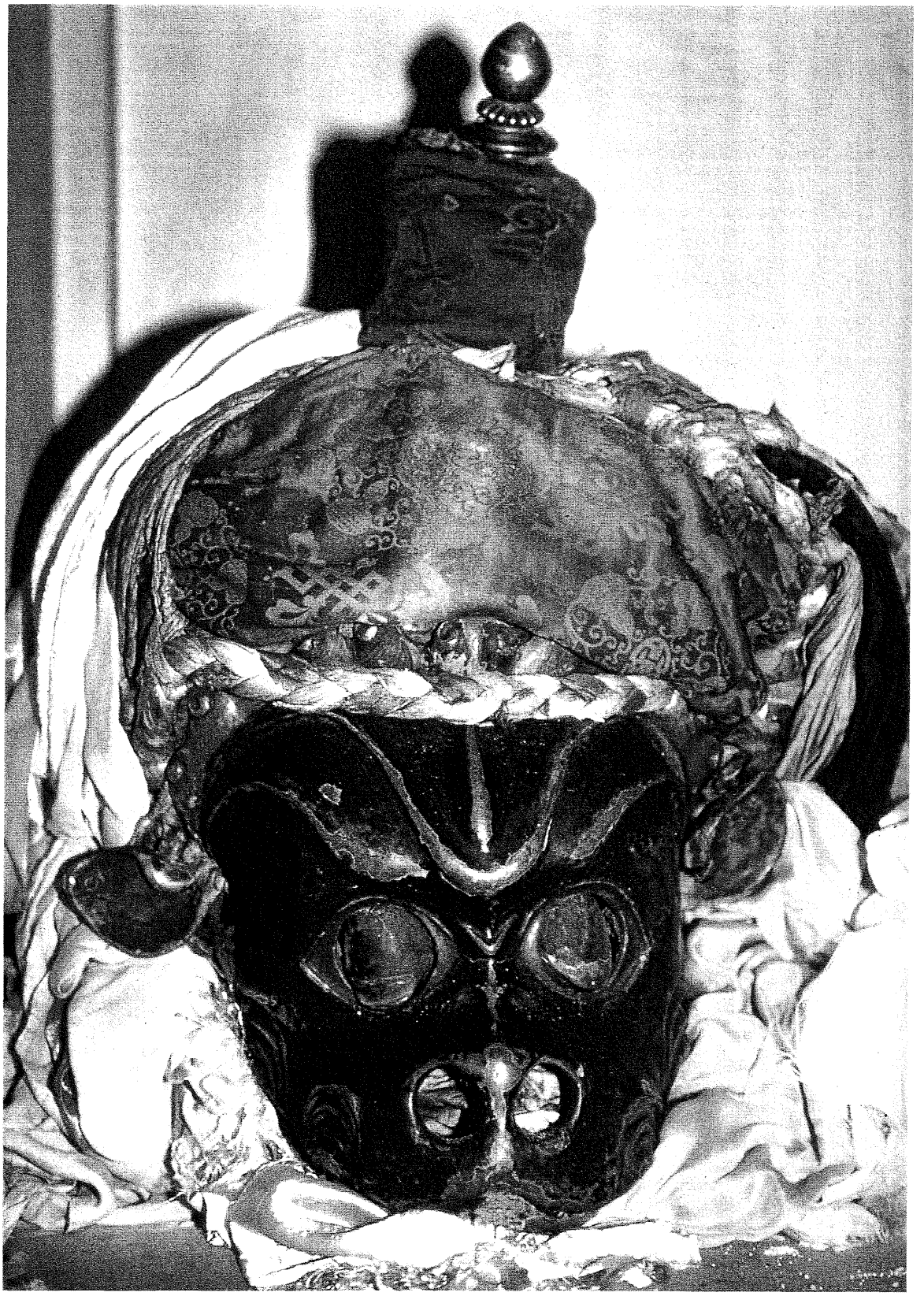


Plate 3: The mask of bKra shis 'od 'bar with his monkey face from sPo rong Padma chos lding. Nowadays this mask is kept in the Bo dong pa monastery in Kathmandu. (Photo: Carlo Meazza)

Plate 4: bKra shis 'od 'bar and rNam thos sras in a small fresco of the bSam sdings monastery.

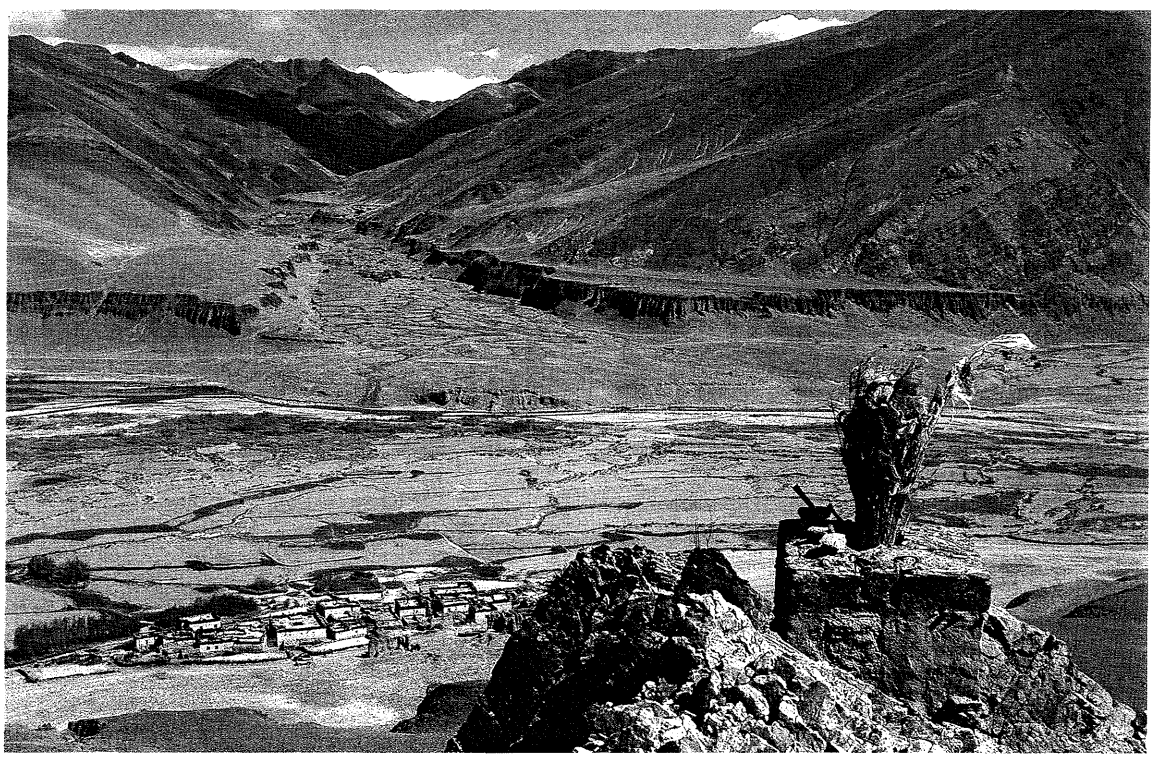


Plate 5: The place of the "*yul lha* bKra shis 'od 'bar" in Pha drug with the ancient ruins situated beneath the local shrine of bKra shis 'od 'bar (in the background the place of Pha glang). (Photo: Kurt Diemberger)

"MAÎTRES DES TRÉSORS" (*GTER BDAG*): DIVINITÉS LOCALES ET MÉDIUMS AU BHOUTAN

par

Françoise Pommaret, Aix-en-Provence

La région de sKur stod, au nord-est du Bhoutan (aujourd'hui district de Lhuntsi), est la seule région où sont encore vénérées les divinités *phywa*;[1] elle est aussi la seule à connaître un type particulier de médiums appelés *gter bdag*.

Les médiums dans le monde himalayen ont fait l'objet de nombreux articles, ainsi que de débats concernant leur caractère chamanique ou non.[2] Il ne m'appartient pas ici d'entrer dans cette controverse mais, plus simplement, d'apporter un autre témoignage sur les intercesseurs du domaine himalayen.

Il existe de nombreux médiums au Bhoutan dont les plus communs sont les *dpa' bo* ou *dpa' mo*, ces dernières parfois appelées *rnal 'byor ma* dans l'ouest du pays. Leurs caractéristiques sont assez proches de celles des *jhãkhri* et des autres intercesseurs qui font partie du vaste

---

Mes remerciements vont à Yoshiro Imaeda qui a collaboré aux deux séances et à Anne-Marie Blondeau qui a collaboré à celle de Lhuntsi et m'a encouragée à rédiger cet article.

D'autre part, la parution longtemps retardée du recueil *Maṇḍala and Landscape*, édité par Alexander W. Macdonald, New Delhi, D.K. Printworld, 1997, ne m'a pas permis de prendre connaissance avant publication de ces Actes, de deux articles importants qui traitent de certains aspects de mon article et auxquels il faut se référer: "Beyul Khenbalung, the hidden Valley of the Artemisia: on Himalayan Communities and their sacred landscape" by Hildegard Diemberger, 287- 334; et "A 'Hidden land' in the Tibetan-Nepalese Borderlands" by Franz-Karl Ehrhard, 335-364.

[1] Pommaret, Françoise (1994), "Les fêtes aux divinités-montagnes *Phywa* au Bhoutan de l'est", in P. Kvaerne (ed.), PIATS Fagernes 1992, 660-669.

Il semblerait que des médiums de ce type existent aussi dans la vallée de Sakteng où ils sont appelés *lha 'bab pa* (information orale de Sonam Wangmo). Je n'ai malheureusement pas eu l'occasion d'assister à une séance *de lha 'bab pa* et donc de vérifier si les séances étaient semblables. Toutefois, il faut rappeler qu'il existe probablement des liens, pour l'instant mal élucidés, entre cette région et la région limitrophe de rTa dbang en Inde et sKur stod comme l'a montré, entre autres, l'étude des *Phywa*.

[2] Les articles sont trop nombreux pour être tous cités ici. Il faut toutefois mentionner Jest, Corneille (1976), "Encounters with intercessors in Nepal", in *Spirit Possession in the Nepal Himalayas*. John T. Hitchcock, Rex L. Jones (eds.), Warminster-New Delhi, 294-308; Macdonald, Alexander W. (1975), "The healer in the Nepalese world", in *Essays on the Ethnology of Nepal and South Asia*. Kathmandu, Ratna Pustak Bhandhar, 113-128, et (1976) "Preliminary notes on some *jhãkhri* of the Muglan", in *Spirit Possession in the Nepal Himalayas*. J.T. Hitchcock, R.L. Jones (eds.), Warminster-New Delhi, 309-342, ainsi que tous les autres articles de ce volume.

Philippe Sagant a également beaucoup écrit sur le sujet mais nous ne citerons ici que (1979), "Le Chamane assoupi", in *Asie du Sud, traditions et changements*. Paris, 240-247. Il faut aussi ajouter Steinmann, Brigitte (1987), *Les Tamang du Népal: usages et religion, religion de l'usage*. Paris, ERC; et Dollfus, Pascale (1989), *Lieu de neige et de genévriers*. Paris, Eds. du CNRS, pour le Ladakh. Enfin, Berglie, Per-Arn (1976), "Preliminary remarks on some Tibetan 'Spirit-mediums' in Nepal", *Kailash* 4/1, 87-109; (1982), "Spirit-Possession in Theory and Practice - Seances with Tibetan Spirit-mediums in Nepal", in *Religious Ecstasy*. N.G. Holms (ed.), Stockholm, Almqvist & Wiskell, 151-166; (1992), "Tibetan Spirit-mediumship: Change and continuity. Some observations from a Revisit to Nepal", in PIATS Narita 1989, 361-368.

Consulter aussi Samuel, Geoffrey (1993), "Shamanism, Bon and Tibetan Religion", in PATH. Charles Ramble, Martin Brauen (eds.), 318-330; Schenk, Amelie (1993), "Inducing trance: on the training of Ladakhi oracle healers", in PATH, Charles Ramble, Martin Brauen (eds.), 331-339.

ensemble magico-religieux de l'Himalaya où s'enchevêtrent les influences de différentes cultures.[3]

Les *gter bdag* s'en distinguent par leur accoutrement, la forme de leur séance et par le fait qu'ils sont tous originaires de la région de sKur stod. Ces médiums sont très semblables aux *chos srung* (*dharmapāla*) tibétains, déjà décrits ailleurs et plus souvent appelés *chos rje*.[4] Comme ces derniers, ils sont investis par des divinités de la classe des "protecteurs de ce monde", les *'jig rten pa'i srung ma*. Ces divinités autochtones ont été "liées par serment" par Padmasambhava et ont juré de protéger le bouddhisme.

Le nom *gter bdag* donné à ces médiums s'explique par le fait que les divinités qui les investissent sont elles-mêmes appelées du nom générique de *gter bdag*, "Maître des Trésors". Selon Tulku Thondup Rinpoche,[5] ce sont des entités surnaturelles qui ont reçu des enseignements de Guru Rinpoche et qui ont fait le voeu de protéger la religion. La plupart d'entre elles sont les chefs de leur propre catégorie et Tulku Thondup ajoute un peu plus loin: "At the time of Guru Rinpoche's departure (...), he summoned the local spirits (*gzhi bdag*) from all over the central and outlying regions of Tibet. He entrusted to them the various termas and instructed them, saying, 'you conceal this much at your place'".[6]

Où l'on retrouve mKhan pa lung/ljongs et Zo ra ra skyes

La région de sKur stod est l'un des bastions de l'école *rnying ma pa* au Bhoutan et s'enorgueillit de deux sites hautement symboliques, mais pour l'instant hors d'accès pour les étrangers car trop proches de la frontière tibétaine: Seng ge rdzong où Padmasambhava aurait médité sous son aspect rDo rje gro lod; et mKhan pa ljongs, "la vallée de l'armoise", un "pays caché" (*sbas yul*) où aurait été exilé le prince Mu rum/rug btsan po, surnommé Khyi kha ra thod, "Bouche de chien, crâne de bouc". Il serait, selon la légende, né des unions de l'épouse de Khri srong lde btsan, la reine dMar rgyan, avec un chien et un bouc.[7] Le prince Mu tig btsan po, trouvant que Khyi kha ra thod et ses sujets n'avaient pas été exilés assez loin du Tibet, demanda à Padmasambhava de l'entraîner dans une région plus reculée. Padmasambhava y réussit grâce au subterfuge d'un *garuḍa* de bois et, ayant déposé le roi et ses sujets dans la vallée de sTang à Bumthang, il retourna à mKhan pa ljongs où "all the wealth of the lord and his subjects was hidden as a treasure. The sites of mKhan pa ljongs were sealed up internally, externally and secretly so as to be invisible, and all the guardian spirits of the treasure were entrusted to care for them and were given commands. It was done so that nobody should see (the hidden land) until the time should come."[8] Dans les passages translittérés et traduits par M. Aris,[9] Padma gling pa

---

[3] Ceci a été exposé par Macdonald 1976: 326.

[4] Les auteurs qui ont traité ce sujet sont, entre autres, Nebesky-Wojkowitz, René de (1975), *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. Graz, Akademische Druck-u.Verlagsanstalt; Rock, Joseph F. (1952), *The Na-khi Naga cult and related ceremonies* 2. Roma, SOR, IV; (Oct.1935), "Sungmas, the living oracles of the Tibetan church", *National Geographic Magazine* 68, 475-486; et (1959), "Contributions to the Shamanism of the Tibetan-Chinese Borderland", *Anthropos* 54, 796-818. *Cf.* aussi Dundul Namgyal Tsarong (1990), *What Tibet was*. New-Delhi, Pradeep Malhotra & associates: 33-36.

[5] Tulku Thondup Rinpoche (1986), *Hidden teachings of Tibet: an explanation of the Terma Tradition of the Nyingma School of Buddhism*. London, Wisdom: 73.

[6] *Ibid.*: 112.

[7] Pour le mythe de Khyi kha ra thod et les développements sur le mKhan pa lung/ljongs bhoutanais, *cf.* Aris, Michael (1979), *Bhutan: the early history of a Himalayan kingdom*. Warminster, Aris & Phillips: 60-82.

[8] Aris 1979: 69, traduisant le folio 9a-b du *sBas yul mKhan pa ljongs kyi gnas yig Padma gling pa'i gter ma* (13 folio), inclus dans le vol. Ca des *Collected Works*, 493-517. *Cf.* aussi Slob dpon gNag mdog (1986), *'Brug dkar po.*

ne cite pas nommément les Maîtres des trésors. En revanche, dans son autobiographie, lorsqu'il redécouvre mKhan pa ljongs et y retrouve des trésors, Padma gling pa donne les noms des deux divinités gardiennes du lieu: "Commands were issued and the truth of the matter conveyed to the two treasure-guardians Zo ra rwa skyes and Khrag mig ma, and once they had been made offerings the sun shone forth",[10] Khrag mig ma étant la parèdre de Zo ra ra skyes.

Zo ra ra skyes, une divinité complexe au Bhoutan

L'identification de Zo ra ra skyes est difficile; cette divinité apparaît aussi en pays sherpa, avec une graphie légèrement différente de son nom. Le problème que présente Zo ra ra skyes a déjà été évoqué ailleurs.[11] Il faut poser ici la question de l'antériorité de la tradition écrite concernant les "pays cachés" de mKhan pa ljongs/lung qui existent au Bhoutan et au Népal. Le premier guide de mKhan pa lung au Népal fut découvert par le *gter ston* Rig 'dzin rGod ldem (1377-1410) et Zo ra ra skyes y apparaît sous la graphie Zu rwa rwa skyes. G. Orofino a recensé les différents guides de "pays caché" attribués à rGod ldem, dont les cinq qui concernent mKhan pa lung.[12] Ses conclusions permettent de penser que Padma gling pa s'est peut-être servi du *gter ma* établi par rGod ldem pour élaborer, éventuellement sur un substrat local, l'histoire du mKhan pa ljongs bhoutanais. Et, dans cette hypothèse, il aurait aussi emprunté le nom de la divinité-montagne qui serait alors devenue la divinité-montagne du mKhan pa ljongs bhoutanais. Tout en gardant ce problème en mémoire, nous nous intéresserons uniquement, dans le cadre de cet article, à la perspective bhoutanaise.

Zo ra ra skyes pourrait être rapproché des Zur ra skyes drug, qui font partie de la suite de rDo rje legs pa,[13] et M. Aris suggère de l'identifier avec le groupe des Zar ma skyes drug qui apparaissent dans le *rGyal po bka' thang* comme une série de rois divins du Tibet antérieurs à gNya' khri btsan po.[14] M. Aris propose l'hypothèse que "in Bhutan they (the Zur ra skyes drug) appear to have been contracted into a single deity who functions both as the guardian of certain *gter ma* and also as the local spirit of sTang."[15]

Il faut noter ici que Zo ra ra skyes est qualifié de *sku la* (sic) *mun po* au folio 35a du texte utilisé par le médium-oracle[16] de Lhuntsi sur lequel je reviendrai plus loin. Ceci donne une dimension intéressante à cette divinité puisque ce terme est, on le sait, l'un des plus importants pour les croyances non-bouddhiques de l'époque royale.[17] A.M. Blondeau écrit que les *sku bla*

Thimphu: 9-10; et surtout *Slob dpon* Padma Tshe dbang (1994), *'Brug gi rgyal rabs*. Thimphu, National Library: 40, qui reprend le texte attribué à Padma gling pa.

[9] Aris 1979: 63-70 et 301-305.

[10] Aris 1979: 41, traduisant *Collected Works*, vol. Pha, ff. 114b-116a.

[11] Pommaret, Françoise (1996),"On local and mountain deities in Bhutan", in *Reflections of the Mountain. Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya*. A.M. Blondeau, E. Steinkellner (eds.), Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Veröffentlichungen zur Sozialanthropologie, Band 2), 39-56.

[12] Orofino, Giacomella (1991), "The Tibetan myth of the hidden valley in the visionary geography of Nepal", *East and West* 41/1-4, 239-272.

[13] Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 156.

[14] Tucci, Giuseppe (1980), *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*. Kyoto, Rinsen Book Co., vol.II: 732.

[15] Aris 1979: 301 n. 4.

[16] Je désignerai ainsi les *gter bdag* pour les distinguer des autres types de médiums.

[17] Le *sku bla* serait la divinité du Seigneur, lié à la force ou l'âme du seigneur/roi et ce terme est sujet à différentes interprétations. *Cf.* Macdonald, Ariane (1971), "Une étude des P.T. 1286, 1287, 1038, 1047 et 1290: Essai sur la

sont des "dieux ambigus, à la fois montagnes et divinités supports du principe vital, résidant sur le corps".[18]

D'autre part, l'iconographie de Zo ra ra skyes au Bhoutan ne correspond pas à celle qui est décrite par Nebesky-Wojkowitz, et elle ne semble pas stable: tantôt Zo ra ra skyes apparaît monté sur un lion, tantôt sur un bouc comme rDo rje legs pa. Toutefois, il porte toujours le chapeau de *btsan* mais, curieusement, il n'a pas dans ses rares représentations iconographiques l'aspect guerrier généralement attribué aux *btsan*.

Un autre texte bhoutanais[19] que je possède, reprend dans son intégralité le *gter ma* de Padma gling pa translittéré et traduit par M. Aris dont j'ai parlé plus haut, mais dont la translittération s'arrête au chapitre 6. Les quatre chapitres suivants consistent essentiellement en une prophétie de Padmasambhava annonçant la redécouverte de mKhan pa ljongs par Padma gling pa et donnant des instructions détaillées sur la façon dont il doit procéder. Les divinités "maîtres des trésors" y sont bien mentionnées. Il faut offrir un yak noir en *bskang gso* à Zo ra ra skyes et quatre "maîtres du sol" sont assignés à mKhan pa ljongs, tous liés à une montagne: "En ce qui concerne ce lieu sacré (= mKhan pa ljongs), il y a rDo rje legs pa sur le Phu btsan po gangs, Zo ra ra skyes sur le Kha mo gangs, Khrag mig ma sur le bKra shis gangs et Rin chen 'gong g.yag sur le Se mo gangs. Ce sont les quatre gardiens de trésors de ce lieu sacré."[20] Ici, Zo ra ra skyes se trouve à nouveau en relation avec rDo rje legs pa.

Pourquoi tant s'intéresser à cette divinité? Tout d'abord, elle est la moins connue des divinités associées à une montagne et à un territoire qui investissent les intercesseurs *gter bdag*; de plus, au Bhoutan, elle est liée à cette région de sKur stod où se trouve mKhan pa ljongs; enfin, excepté Zo ra ra skyes, les divinités qui investissent les médiums *gter bdag* de sKur stod et que ceux-ci nous ont énumérées, sont différentes des divinités "maîtres des trésors" qui apparaissent dans les sources écrites ci-dessus. Mais l'on y note la présence de Pehar et Tsi'u dmar po.

En effet, comme beaucoup de divinités autochtones qui sont regroupées en frères ou soeurs,[21] Zo ra ra skyes a cinq frères qui sont rGyal po (Pehar), Tsi'u dmar po, Drang srong (gZa'/Rāhu), dGe bsnyen,[22] et Zla ba gdong btsan. Drang srong, aussi connu comme *Chos skyong* gZa' bdud

---

formation et l'emploi des mythes politiques dans la religion royale de Sroṅ bcan sgam po", in *Etudes tibétaines dédiées à la mémoire de Marcelle Lalou*. Paris, Maisonneuve, 190-391.

S.G. Karmay (1995) propose une nouvelle interprétation et le traduit par "l'âme du corps" dans un article récent, "Les dieux des terroirs et les genévriers: un rituel tibétain de purification", *Journal asiatique* 283/1: 169.

[18] Blondeau, Anne-Marie (1976), "Les Religions du Tibet", in *Histoire des Religions*. Paris, Gallimard (La Pléiade), t. III: 241-242.

[19] *Klong gsal las sbas yul mKhan pa ljongs kyi gnas yig Padma gling pa'i gter ma*, "Guide du Pays caché de mKhan pa ljongs, trésor découvert par Padma gling pa, [extrait de la collection de rituels] *Klong gsal [gsang ba snying bcud]*", in *lHo 'Brug sman ljongs chos ldan zhing gi sbas yul khag dang sgrub gnas khyad 'phags rnams kyi gnas yig dang lo rgyus gang rnyed phyogs bsdus dang pa'i nyi ma 'dren pa'i skya rengs dkar po*, n. d. (probablement les années 1980), 73-103; texte aussi connu comme le *'Brug gi gnas yig*.

[20] *gNas de'i gzhi bdag ni | Phu btsan po gangs la rDo rje legs pa | Kha mo gangs la Zo ra ra skyes | bKra shis gangs la Khrag mig ma mo | Se mo gangs la Rin chen 'gong g.yag ste | de ni gnas de'i gter bdag bzhi'o*, in *'Brug gi gnas yig*, n.d.: 102.

Il serait intéressant de faire une étude détaillée de ce texte et de le rapprocher du texte traduit par G. Orofino (1991) concernant le mKhan pa lung népalais.

[21] Les liens familiaux entre les divinités sont bien connus dans le monde tibétain et ressortent clairement dans les articles du volume *Reflections of the Mountain. Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya*. A.M. Blondeau, E. Steinkellner (eds.), Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Veröffentlichungen zur Sozialanthropologie, Band 2), 1996.

[22] Pour l'instant, il est impossible de dire s'il s'agit ici du *dGe bsnyen* 'Jag pa me len, l'un des *btsan* les plus importants du Bhoutan (*cf.* Pommaret dans *Reflections of the Mountain*). L'appellation *dGe bsnyen* recouvre en effet un grand nombre de divinités dont les noms, sinon le rôle et l'apparence, changent selon les endroits.

chen po Rāhula, a été étudié par Nebesky-Wojkowitz qui le classe parmi les *dregs pa*.[23] Ce groupe de divinités fort complexes comprend entre autres, selon Nebesky-Wojkowitz, certaines divinités "maîtres des trésors", *gter bdag* ou *gter srung*.[24] Bien que Drang srong n'y soit pas inclus, Nebesky-Wojkowitz reconnaît que ses listes ne sont pas exhaustives, et il est possible de penser que Drang srong s'est trouvé, en tout cas au Bhoutan, associé aux *dregs pa* "maîtres des trésors".

Zla ba gdong btsan est le plus jeune des frères. Il est boîteux car il s'est enfui quand Padmasambhava a voulu le convertir. Padmasambhava l'arrêta en lui lançant son trident et, depuis, il boîte. Son nom est proche de celui d'un gardien mineur de la doctrine, dGra lha gdong btsan, mentionné par Nebesky-Wojkowitz.[25]

Exceptés Zla ba gdong btsan sur lequel je n'ai pas davantage de renseignements et Zo ra ra skyes dont la personnalité est difficile à cerner, les autres divinités mentionnées par les médiums sont donc bien connues et sont parmi les *'jig rten pa'i srung ma* les plus importantes du monde tibétain.

Zo ra ra skyes, Pehar et Tsi'u dmar po

Zo ra ra skyes est donc associé à Pehar et à Tsi'u dmar po qui se trouvent tous deux au centre d'un faisceau enchevêtré de traditions écrites et orales.[26]

Nebesky-Wojkowitz cite l'un des noms de Pehar comme *Dam can* Shel ging dkar po.[27] Or, Shel ging dkar po apparaît aussi dans une tradition bhoutanaise[28] comme *'Chi bdag* Zo ra ra skyes, le chef des *bdud* et des *lha 'dre* qui s'empare de la force vitale (*bla*) du roi de la région de Bumthang. S'il s'agit bien de la même divinité, on aurait une équivalence explicite entre un aspect de Zo ra ra skyes et un aspect de Pehar. Néammoins, et ceci est valable pour toutes les divinités de ce type, en fonction de quels critères, de quelles nécessités, l'assimilation ou l'intégration d'un trait d'une divinité à une autre furent-elles opérées?

A. Macdonald-Spanien a montré[29] le développement de la mythologie de Pehar qui trouverait son origine dans les écrits du grand *gter ston* Myang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1124-1192 ou 1136-1204).[30] Il fut en effet le "découvreur" du plus ancien rituel connu consacré aux cinq *rGyal po* dont Pehar est le chef, "ce quasi-homophone bouddhisé du nom d'un dieu du sol prébouddhique Pe kar ou Pe dkar."[31]

Tsi'u dmar po, un *gnod sbyin* et *btsan*, serait, selon les textes postérieurs au 17ème siècle, la divinité qui a supplanté Pehar comme divinité gardienne du monastère de bSam yas. Pehar était

---

[23] Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 259-264.

[24] Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 253-254.

[25] Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 248.

[26] Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 94-133; Tucci 1980: 734-736; Macdonald, Ariane (1975), *Annuaire de l'EPHE IVe section*, Paris, 979-984; 1978-1979: 1023-1030; et surtout 1978: 1139-1145.

[27] Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 96.

[28] Aris 1979: 46, citant et traduisant le ch. III du *rGyal po'i Sindha ra dza'i rnam thar*, attribué à Padma gling pa.

[29] Macdonald 1975, 1978, 1978-79. Malheureusement, A. Macdonald-Spanien n'a pas rédigé jusqu'à maintenant d'article regroupant sa démonstration et ses conclusions. Ses recherches sur le sujet n'ont donc connu qu'une diffusion discrète.

[30] "Découvreur", entre autres, du *bKa' thang Zangs gling ma*, l'une des plus anciennes biographies révélées de Padmasambhava.

[31] Macdonald 1978: 1141-1144.

alors parti près de Lhasa, d'abord à 'Tshal, puis à gNas chung où, sous la forme rDo rje grags ldan, il prenait possession de l'oracle d'état. Or, selon A. Macdonald qui s'appuie sur des sources antérieures au 17ème siècle, en 1558 Pehar était identifié à Tsi'u dmar po et au dieu qui s'incarnait dans le médium de gNas chung; d'autre part, celui qui, au 16ème siècle, était le gardien du temple des richesses de bSam yas et qui s'incarnait dans un médium, était Tsi'u dmar po. La conclusion de A. Macdonald est que, avant la prise de pouvoir des Dalai Lamas, ce n'est pas Pehar qui servait de modèle aux autres *chos skyong*, mais Tsi'u dmar po de bSam yas. Bien plus, Pehar étant un nom qui peut s'appliquer à n'importe quel gardien de temple car c'est la transcription du sanscrit *vihāra*, "temple", au 16ème siècle le dieu des richesses de bSam yas était déjà Tsi'u dmar po qui était appelé Pehar.[32]

Cette digression nous permet de comprendre que les divinités qui sont associées aux médiums n'étaient pas à l'origine aussi différenciées que les classifications tardives le laissent penser. D'autre part, elles eurent aussi au Tibet le rôle de "gardiens des richesses" qui s'incarnaient dans un médium. Or, on se souvient que selon le guide de mKhan pa ljongs attribué à Padma gling pa, ce sont les richesses de Khyi kha ra thod et de ses sujets qui furent scellées par Padmasambhava comme *gter*.[33] Ces divinités jouent donc au Bhoutan le même rôle qu'au Tibet. Et l'on pourrait alors s'interroger sur la transposition de la notion de "richesses" à celle de "trésors religieux" dans le contexte du passage des croyances pré-bouddhiques au bouddhisme et remarquer que ce sont des divinités attachées à la notion de richesse qui deviennent les gardiennes de ces trésors religieux.[34]

Toutefois, sKur stod est la seule région du Bhoutan où Pehar et Tsi'u dmar po tiennent une place aussi importante, notamment en s'incarnant dans des médiums. Je suis loin d'avoir trouvé une raison satisfaisante à cette atypie, mais l'on peut s'interroger sur le rôle de Padma gling pa dans leur émergence dans cette partie du Bhoutan à cette époque. Il faudrait aussi examiner l'influence possible que d'autres *gter ston* ont exercée sur Padma gling pa et, en particulier, Guru chos dbang (1212-1273) auquel la tradition bhoutanaise attribue la fondation d'au moins un temple à sKur stod, qui était associé à la fondation de lHa lung, monastère du lHo brag qui deviendra celui de Padma gling pa, et qui aurait découvert le *Mon Bum thang gter, "le Trésor de Bumthang [au pays] Mon"*.[35] Bien plus, Padma gling pa aurait été dans deux de ses vies antérieures deux nonnes, partenaires tantriques du même Guru chos dbang mais aussi de Myang ral nyi ma 'od zer qui fut probablement l'instigateur du développement de la figure de Pehar, comme on l'a vu.[36]

mKhan pa ljongs est situé à la frontière du Tibet, entre la vallée de sTang à Bumthang dont Padma gling pa était originaire, et la région de sKur stod qui est son accès principal. Padma gling pa a effectué de nombreux voyages au Tibet, surtout au lHo brag et à bSam yas et c'est lui qui est, semble-t-il, le premier au Bhoutan à indiquer que le *gter bdag* de mKhan pa ljongs est Zo ra ra skyes. L'influence des divinités associées à bSam yas transparaît dans son oeuvre. Il

---

[32] Macdonald 1978: 1144.

[33] *rje 'bangs kyi dkor rnams gter du sbas*, folio 10a du *sBas yul mKhan pa ljongs kyi gnas yig Padma gling pa'i gter ma.*

[34] On pourrait gloser sur le terme *dkor* qui est l'honorifique de *nor* et qui désigne au départ des biens matériels et en particulier au Bhoutan les troupeaux de bovins. A.M. Blondeau ajoute aussi un élément de réflexion en me signalant que dans une partie des chapitres du *rGyal po'i bka' thang*, les rois cachent des richesses "trésors" pour les besoins des générations futures. Ceci pourrait expliquer que les *gter ston* ne découvrent pas seulement des "trésors religieux" mais aussi des richesses.

[35] Dargyay, Eva (1977), *The rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet.* Delhi, Motilal: 107-109.

[36] Aris, Michael (1988), *Hidden Treasures and Secret Lives.* Shimla/Delhi, Indian Institute of Advanced Study/Motilal: 26-27.

écrit dans son autobiographie, à propos de la construction du temple de gTam shing, qu'il avait fait ériger une statue de Pe kar.[37] D'autre part, a lieu lors de la fête de gTam gshing, le monastère qu'il a fondé à Bumthang, un *'chams* venu du monastère-mère de lHa lung au Tibet et dédié à Tsi'u dmar po.[38] Cette divinité y porte un masque terrifiant rouge et un chapeau de *btsan* rouge. Il est assisté de deux jeunes moines qui portent des *dbugs rkyal*, des "sacs du souffle" des ennemis, faits en peau de chèvre rouge.[39] Cette danse a lieu le dernier jour de la fête de gTam shing et Tsi'u dmar po y produit les gestes de la transe: assis, il tremble et trépigne rapidement tout en frappant son miroir de poitrine avec sa bague de pouce; puis il se lève, brandit son épée, se rassied, recommence à trépigner et à frapper son miroir; un moine lui passe alors une écharpe blanche autour du cou. A ce moment-là, les villageois se précipitent pour offrir de l'argent tandis que les jeunes moines les bénissent avec les *dbugs rkyal*. Cette danse est, à ma connaissance, la seule dédiée à Tsi'u dmar po au Bhoutan et elle est, semble-t-il, la même que celle qui avait lieu à lHa lung au Tibet.[40] Tsi'u dmar po est aussi présent dans le temple de gTam shing où il siège dans le *mgon khang*.[41]

Zo ra ra skyes et les médiums-oracles gter bdag

Il est certain qu'il ne sera pas possible de comprendre la divinté Zo ra ra skyes sans aborder le problème posé par Zo ra ra skyes au Népal et donc sans examiner les textes de rGod ldem, ainsi que les emprunts que Padma gling pa a pu faire. Toutefois, ceci ferait l'objet d'une autre étude.

Dans le contexte bhoutanais, il serait plausible de penser que Zo ra ra skyes est une divinité composite, une divinité autochtone qui aurait emprunté des traits d'autres divinités venues du Tibet et en particulier à Tsi'u dmar po qui, aux 15e et 16e siècles, au moment où Pad ma gling pa séjourna à bSam yas, était le gardien des richesses. Cet emprunt ne concernerait pas tant le pouvoir d'investir des médiums, un trait qui se retrouve chez de nombreuses divinités autochtones, que la forme de cette possession, c'est-à-dire la ressemblance avec les *chos rje* tibétains qui est si particulière à la région de sKur stod. Toutefois, cette hypothèse implique que la forme de possession ait peu changé depuis cette époque, ce qui reste encore du domaine de la supposition.

Zo ra ra skyes est une divinité importante dans cette région du Bhoutan mais il est virtuellement inconnu au Tibet. Le fait qu'il soit égalé dans un lien fraternel à Pehar et Tsi'u dmar po lui permet donc de recevoir une sorte de légitimation de divinités plus célèbres. De plus, Pehar et Tsi'u dmar po s'incarnent dans des médiums très célèbres: ceux de Zo ra ra skyes, en prenant la même forme, s'affilieraient ainsi à des médiums tibétains prestigieux. Toutefois, Zo ra ra skyes a deux particularités: il est le seul associé à une montagne et c'est la seule divinité "bhoutanaise" parmi les cinq frères. Les autres divinités-montagnes mentionnées dans le *gter ma* de Padma gling pa, c'est-à-dire Khrag mig ma mo, rDo rje legs pa et Rin chen 'gong g.yag,

---

[37] Aris, Michael (1988), "The Temple-palace of gTam zhing as described by its founder", *Arts Asiatiques* 43: 36, citant l'autobiographie de Padma gling pa, folio 149a.

[38] Padma gling pa s'était rendu vint-quatre fois au Tibet et avait établi son monastère principal à lHa lung au lHo brag, juste au nord de la région de Bumthang.

[39] A ce sujet voir Heller, Amy (1985), "An early Tibetan ritual: *rkyal 'bud* ", in *Soundings in Tibetan Civilization*. Barbara Aziz, Matthew Kapstein (eds.), Delhi, Manohar, 257-267.

[40] Information orale du *Yongs 'dzin* Tseten Dorje qui supervise le monastère de gTam zhing.

[41] Padma gling pa avait entretenu des liens de maître à disciple avec rGyal ba don grub, le chef de la région de lHa lung, et ce dernier n'était pas en bons termes avec le religieux *karma pa* dPa'o gtsug lag phreng ba (1503-1566) qui avait sa résidence à lHa lung, fondé en 1154 par Dus gsum mkhyen pa. A la mort de dPa'o gtsug lag, ce seigneur s'arrangea donc pour que le monastère revienne aux réincarnations de Padma gling pa, mort en 1521. *Cf.* Imaeda Yoshiro, Pommaret, Françoise (1987), "Le monastère de gTam zhing (Tamshing) au Bhoutan central", *Arts asiatiques* 42: 20.

ne prennent pas, à ma connaissance, possession des médiums *gter bdag* bien qu'elles soient mentionnées dans les textes qu'ils utilisent.

Il est alors possible d'émettre l'hypothèse, rejoignant en cela A. Macdonald-Spanien, que si Tsi'u dmar po a été le modèle pour les médiums-oracles tibétains, il a peut-être été aussi, par l'intermédiaire de Padma gling pa, un modèle pour Zo ra ra skyes, la divinité principale de mKhan pa ljongs. Ce qui expliquerait pourquoi ce dernier est le seul des *btsan* divinités-montagnes de sKur stod à avoir un médium qui est similaire aux médiums-oracles tibétains. Cette hypothèse, pour tentante qu'elle soit, ne doit pas faire oublier le problème de la transposition au Bhoutan par Padma gling pa du modèle du mKhan pa lung de Rig 'dzin rGod ldem, y compris de la divinité Zo ra ra skyes. Cependant, même s'il s'agit bien d'un emprunt de Padma gling pa à rGod ldem, rien n'interdit de penser que Padma gling pa a pu s'inspirer de Tsi'u dmar po pour Zo ra ra skyes en tant que divinité qui prend possession d'un médium-oracle.

Une autre question reste en suspens: pourquoi n'existe-t-il pas de médiums-oracles à Bumthang où s'est déroulé l'essentiel de l'activité de Padma gling pa? Un élément de réponse pourrait se trouver dans le fait que mKhan pa ljongs et Zo ra ra skyes, *btsan*, divinité-montagne, et "maître des trésors", sont plus étroitement liés à sKur stod qu'à Bumthang. Des recherches, en particulier sur les conditions politiques au Bhoutan central au 16ème siècle, sont encore nécessaires avant de pouvoir répondre sur ce point.

La perspective synchronique dans laquelle les médiums *gter bdag* se présentent aujourd'hui rend difficile une recherche diachronique, faite à travers les textes et les traditions orales qui se sont transformés et influencés au cours de l'histoire. La complexité de ces traditions et des filiations religieuses nous permet simplement, pour l'instant, d'émettre une hypothèse sur le Zo ra ra skyes bhoutanais, et nous fournit des éléments de compréhension des liens existant entre les divinités *gter bdag* et leurs médiums dans le contexte du Bhoutan.

Les médiums-oracles *gter bdag*

Il n'existe actuellement que quelques médiums *gter bdag* au Bhoutan, cinq ou six, qui viennent tous de la région de sKur stod. Cette région étant depuis une trentaine d'années grande pourvoyeuse de soldats, plusieurs *gter bdag* sont des soldats de métier et se trouvent donc en poste dans différentes régions du pays. Toutefois, leur activité de *gter bdag* ne s'adressse qu'à des personnes originaires de sKur stod et les Bhoutanais des autres régions ne semblent pas les consulter. Je reviendrai ultérieurement sur ce point.

Il nous a été possible d'observer deux séances, toutes deux commanditées pour trouver l'origine de maladies. La première a eu lieu à Lhuntsi (sKur stod) le 15 octobre 1985 et la seconde à Thimphu le 12 septembre 1990. Les deux séances se déroulèrent de façon très semblable.

La personne

• Le *gter bdag* de Lhuntsi est l'un des plus célèbres. C'est un paysan du nom de Tshering Wangchuk. En 1985, il avait 52 ans. Selon ses dires, son père aurait été un médium *chos rje* du Khams, lama *rnying ma pa*. Sa mère venait d'un village du nord de sKur stod situé non loin de mKhan pa ljongs. Il a une soeur aînée née du même père et de la même mère, qui lui sert d'assistante et d'interprète lors des séances. En effet, comme tous les *gter bdag*, Tshering Wangchuk s'exprime alors dans une langue qui n'est pas comprise à sKur stod et qu'il appelle "langue du Khams". Il est marié, sans enfant, mais a adopté la fille de sa soeur et deux enfants qu'il avait recueillis et sauvés lorsqu'ils étaient malades.

Tshering Wangchuk a perdu pour la première fois conscience le 10ème jour du 4ème mois vers l'âge de dix-huit ans. Lorsqu'un lama a voulu le toucher, il l'a violemment repoussé en disant qu'il était un *chos srung*. Le lama s'est alors prosterné en s'excusant, et il a été déclaré *gter*

bdag. Depuis, les divinités descendent en lui chaque année le 10ème jour du 4ème mois. Ce sont les divinités elles-mêmes qui l'ont initié.

Lorsqu'une séance est finie, il est très fatigué et boit beaucoup d'eau mais aussi d'alcool. Il ne suit pas de régime alimentaire particulier.

• Le *gter bdag* de Thimphu s'appele Shintala. Il est dans l'armée bhoutanaise et est né à sKur stod. En 1990, il était âgé de 38 ans, avait été marié une première fois à une femme de sKur stod. Après un divorce, il a épousé une femme de Bumthang dont il a des enfants. Il est devenu *gter bdag* à 29 ans dans les circonstances suivantes: son oncle maternel était *gter bdag*. A la mort de son oncle, il est tombé malade et il avait des crises de violence. Il se jetait à l'eau, s'échappait dans la forêt, perdait conscience. Il refusait d'aller à l'hôpital car il disait que cela entraînerait sa mort. Trois ans après la mort de son oncle, il a été investi (*lha 'babs*) par une divinité *gter bdag*. C'est à ce moment-là que les gens du village ont pensé qu'il était un *gter bdag*. Le grand *gter bdag* Jamyang est alors venu le voir, l'a reconnu comme tel et l'a pris comme disciple pendant six ans. Ce sont les gens du village qui se sont cotisés pour lui offrir un costume et les objets indispensables.

Quand il est en transe, il parle tibétain. Il suit un régime alimentaire: il ne mange ni porc, ni oeufs, ne fume pas et ne mâche pas de bétel. Il mange de la viande de boeuf. Depuis qu'il est *gter bdag*, ses crises de violence ont cessé.

Une fois par an, à une date qu'il n'a pas voulu révéler, il se réunit avec les trois autres *gter bdag* qui sont dans l'armée, et ils font des offrandes (*gser skyems*) aux divinités *gter bdag*, mais lui-même fait aussi des offrandes personnelles deux autres fois dans l'année.

Le costume

Le *gter bdag* porte une robe en brocart aux manches triangulaires, un tablier noir sur lequel est peint le visage d'une divinité terrible, et une large collerette. Ce costume est très semblable aux robes de religieux tantristes tels qu'ils sont représentés dans de nombreuses peintures ou lors de la danse des Chapeaux Noirs (*Zhwa nag*). Le *gter bdag* porte des bottes. En travers de sa poitrine sont nouées des écharpes de cinq couleurs.

Il arrive sur le lieu de sa séance avec des chapeaux de différentes formes qui correspondent aux divinités qui le possèdent. Chacune d'elles a son propre chapeau et le *gter bdag* porte celui de la divinité qu'il a décidé d'invoquer ce jour-là. Il peut changer de chapeau pendant la séance s'il décide d'invoquer une autre divinité mais il faut que le rituel à la divinité précédente soit terminé.

Tshering Wangchuk avait apporté les chapeaux de Zo ra ra skyes, rGyal po, dGe bsnyen, Zla ba gdong btsan et Drang srong. Les chapeaux des quatre premières divinités étaient des chapeaux de *btsan* (*btsan zhwa*), tandis que celui de Drang srong était une calotte jaune surmontée d'une tête de corbeau, fidèle en cela à l'iconographie de cette divinité.

Shintala avait apporté les chapeaux de Zo ra ra skyes, dGe bsnyen, Tsi'u dmar po et Drang srong. Le chapeau de Drang srong était jaune avec une tête de corbeau. les chapeaux de Zo ra ra skyes et Tsi'u dmar po étaient des *btsan zhwa*, identiques, l'un bordeaux, l'autre rouge. Le chapeau de dGe bsnyen était bleu foncé, plat avec des rebords noirs, et ressemblait à la couronne des Rois du Bhoutan.

Les objets indispensables du *gter bdag* sont un miroir, une bague – en ivoire à Thimphu, en métal à Lhuntsi – qu'il passe au pouce droit et une épée. La bague de pouce joue un rôle important. Le *gter bdag* Shintala à Thimphu, l'ayant oubliée chez lui, refusa de commencer la séance jusqu'à ce qu'on soit allé la chercher. Ce dernier avait également un couperet, un lasso en poils de yak et un petit bâton terminé par une tête de chèvre en bois qu'il tenait à la main lorsqu'il était possédé par Zo ra ra skyes.

La séance

La notion de propreté/purification est très importante. Les divinités ne peuvent descendre dans un support souillé et si les *gter bdag* ne sont pas propres, leur principe vital (*srog*) peut être saisi par les divinités, ce qui entraînerait leur mort. Ils se lavent donc, juste avant d'enfiler leur costume qui est conservé soigneusement plié. D'autre part, une fumigation rituelle (*bsangs*) a lieu dans la maison et autour de celle-ci. Enfin, la pièce où doit se tenir la séance est soigneusement balayée.

Les préparatifs de la séance sont longs. Comme dans tout rituel, les assistants arrivent quelques heures ou même parfois un jour à l'avance dans la maison du commanditaire (*sbyin bdag*), pour confectionner les gâteaux sacrificiels (*gtor ma*) et préparer l'autel. La forme des *gtor ma* est, comme toujours, spécifique pour chaque divinité et les assistants qui sont d'anciens moines ou des religieux laïcs,[42] suivent les instructions d'un livre où sont dessinés les *gtor ma*.[43] Ceux-ci sont faits de riz cuit ou plus rarement de farine de blé. Les ornementations sont aujourd'hui sculptées en Dalda, une sorte de végétaline qui vient de l'Inde, bien moins chère que le beurre et qui a l'avantage de mieux résister à la chaleur.

En plus de ceux pour les divinités invoquées, sont confectionnés des *gtor ma* pour Guru Rinpoche, le *yi dam* et la *mkha' 'gro ma*, ainsi qu'un grand *gtor ma* rouge figurant un visage courroucé entouré de baguettes de bambous qui est posé au pied de l'autel et sera jeté à la fin de la séance car il aura alors absorbé les mauvais influx. Des cartes (*tsag li*) figurant les divinités qui sont invoquées sont également posées sur l'autel et une peinture de Guru Rinpoche est accrochée au mur. Les offrandes de nourriture sont aussi placées sur l'autel: assiettes de grains mélangés (maïs, riz, blé, amaranthe et pois chiche); de morceaux de pommes, de biscuits, et de riz rouge cuit, de porc et de navets qui ont été cuits pendant que se faisait la préparation des *gtor ma*. Les offrandes peuvent varier en fonction de la richesse du commanditaire et des conditions locales.

Selon le *gter bdag* de Thimphu (celui de Lhuntsi était beaucoup plus simple), les ingrédients suivants sont aussi nécessaires pour le rituel: de l'eau provenant de neuf sources différentes, de la terre provenant de neuf endroits différents, neuf espèces de végétaux dont le plus important est l'armoise qui est placé derrière la porte d'entrée et qui a des vertus purificatrices.[44] Comme souvent, il est pratiquement impossible d'obtenir des explications du *gter bdag* sur la signification précise des ces neuf eaux, neuf terres, et neuf espèces de végétaux. Toutefois, l'ensemble terre, eau et végétal peut être mis en rapport avec le monde terrestre sur lequel les divinités invoquées ont le pouvoir.

Les vêtements, chapeaux et objets du *gter bdag* sont soigneusement arrangés, comme s'ils étaient exposés, près de l'autel sur un siège bas et sur le siège où le médium prendra place.

---

[42] Les religieux laïcs sont appelés *sgom chen* au Bhoutan. *Cf.* Pommaret, Françoise (1991), *Bhoutan*. Genève, Olizane: 54-55.

[43] Il s'agit du *gTer bdag chen po Zo ra rwa skyes | sMon mo Khrag mig ma | mKha' ri lCam sring | rDo rje legs pa | gNod sbyin rGod ma | rDo rje Khyung bdud | Rong btsan dmar po | Rin chen mgon g.yag | Rig 'dzin bzang po | Zla ba gdong btsan la sogs mdor na sbas yul chen po mKhan pa ljongs kyi gnas pa'i dpa' bo mkha''gro lha klu btsan bdud sa bdag dge bsnyen mthu bo che gzhi bdag gnas bdag rnams la bdag gis mchod gtor rgya chen po*, aussi appelé *gter bdag gsol kha*, "Présentation de nombreux gâteaux sacrificiels comme offrandes aux grands maîtres des trésors Zo ra rwa skyes, sMon mo Khrag mi ma, mKha' ri lCam sring, rDo rje legs pa, *gNod sbyin* rGod ma, rDo rje Khyung bdud, Rong btsan dmar po, Rin chen mgon g.yag, Rig 'dzin bzang po, Zla ba gdong bstan et bien d'autres; en résumé aux *dpa' bo, mkha' 'gro, klu, btsan, bdud, sa bdag*, puissants *dge bsnyen, gzhi bdag* et *gnas bdag* qui résident dans le grand 'pays caché' de mKhan pa ljongs."

[44] A ce sujet, l'article de S.G. Karmay 1995: 176-177 et 190, contient des éléments fort intéressants. S. Karmay traduit dans cet article le texte *Ge khod mnol bsang* qui contient le mythe originel du rituel de fumigation et précise les neuf sortes "d'arbres purificatoires", dont l'armoise.

Lorsque l'autel est prêt et le *gter bdag* habillé, les assistants deviennent musiciens. Les instruments utilisés sont les grandes trompes, le tambour, les cymbales et une trompe en fémur. Comme déjà mentionné, à Thimphu les assistants-musiciens étaient des religieux laïcs *rnying ma pa* et un ancien moine. A Lhuntsi, les musiciens étaient quatre moines du *dzong*, donc d'obédience *'brug pa*, deux anciens moines, et le chef de choeur était un religieux laïc *rnying ma pa*.

Le texte utilisé à Thimphu était appelé *Chos srung dpe cha*, "Livre des Protecteurs de la Doctrine". Il s'agissait d'un texte de 270 folio dont le titre complet est *Pad gling bla ma nor bu rgya mtsho'i las byang Ma ning phyag gnyis pa sNgags srung ma Dud gsol ma | Drang srong | Dam can | rNam sras | rDor legs | Tshe ring ma | g.Yu sgrol ma | Rematī | Bu dzi ma | Jo mo | rGyal po | dGe bsnyen | sKyes bu rlung btsan | dMu btsan | Shel ging | Drang ling | Tsong tsong ma gzhi bdag bcas ngag 'gros bka' gros chog mar bsgrigs pa*, "Collection de rituels du *Bla ma nor bu rgya mtsho* de Padma gling pa, discours énoncés, arrangés en rituel, des divinités mGon po Ma ning (et?) à deux bras, Dud gsol ma, la protectrice des *mantra*, Drang srong, Dam can, rNam sras, rDo rje legs pa, Tshe ring ma, g.Yu sgrol ma, Rematī, Bu dzi ma, Jo mo, rGyal po, dGe bsnyen, sKyes bu rlung btsan, dMu btsan, Shel ging, Drang ling, Tsong tsong ma et des divinités du sol".

Le *Bla ma nor bu rgya mtsho* fut découvert par Padma gling pa en 1483 à lHo brag sMan mdo. Il existe aussi un texte *bka' brgyud pa* qui peut être utilisé et qui s'appelle: *Dpal 'brug pa bka' brgyud kyi chos srung nyer mkho'i rigs phyogs gcig tu bsdebs pa dgos 'dod kun 'byung*, "Compilation des catégories essentielles des Protecteurs de la Doctrine des 'Brug pa bka' brgyud pa, Joyau qui exauce tous les désirs".

Les textes utilisés par le *gter bdag* de Lhuntsi étaient intitulés *rNams* (sic) *thos sras kyi mchod sprin 'dod dgu'i char 'bebs chos srung yongs rdzogs*, "Totalité des Protecteurs de la religion: Nuage d'offrandes de Vaiśravaṇa qui fait tomber la pluie qui exauce les désirs", attribué au grand religieux *'brug pa* Padma dkar po (1527-1592), 56 folio, et *sDe brgyad gser skyems yongs rdzogs*, "Complètes libations aux Huit classes de divinités", (2 folio, sans indication d'auteur).

Il a été totalement impossible de se procurer les textes complets pour voir s'ils se recoupaient et je n'ai pu les consulter que brièvement. Toutefois, il est probable que, comme dans beaucoup de cas, il s'agit de recensions de différents passages d'autres textes concernant les divinités concernées et qui sont collationnés et utilisés lors de rituels.[45]

Si l'on suit les textes, la séance se décomposait en invitation (*spyan 'dren*), offrandes (*mchod pa*), prière de transposition des trésors (*gter bsngo*), louanges (*bstod pa*), libations (*gser skyems*) et assouvissement (de la divinité, *bskang ba*). Selon les étapes du rituel, la musique était d'un rythme très différent et elle était particulièrement saccadée lorsque le *gter bdag* était en transe, c'est-à-dire lorsque la divinité était présente.

Il ne semble pas y avoir d'heures particulières pour la séance. Elle a lieu quand le commanditaire et le *gter bdag* sont libres de leurs activités, donc souvent en fin de journée.

Les deux séances étaient très semblables dans leur déroulement ainsi que dans la gestuelle et l'attitude du *gter bdag*. Ce dernier choisit la divinité qu'il va invoquer et se coiffe de son cha-

---

[45] Les Bhoutanais n'emportent que rarement un texte complet pour un rituel de ce type. Autrefois, les passages nécessaires étaient sélectionnés et recopiés par un copiste. Aujourd'hui, en ville, les religieux font des photocopies des passages nécessaires et ceux qui ont accès à un ordinateur peuvent même les faire saisir avant de faire un tirage sur papier.

Le spectacle de religieux tibétains allant d'une page à l'autre dans un gros volume pour localiser le passage qu'il faut lire est familier à ceux qui étudient les rituels.

peau. Lors des deux séances, une seule divinité a été invoquée mais les *gter bdag* affirment que, s'ils le désirent, ils peuvent être possédés à tour de rôle par des divinités différentes.

Bien que la séance soit commanditée par une personne particulière, les voisins ou les villageois peuvent y assister et même en profiter comme nous le verrons.

Dès que le *gter bdag* a coiffé son chapeau, il s'asseoit sur son trône. L'assistance siffle pour éloigner les esprits mauvais. Les musiciens n'ont alors pas droit à l'erreur et doivent exécuter le rituel correctement car s'ils se trompent, la divinité peut entrer dans une personne non préparée tout autre que le *gter bdag*, ce qui bien sûr est considéré comme néfaste. Aussi, une attention extrême est portée au bon déroulement du rituel car sinon, comme à Thimphu, la divinité/*gter bdag* peut se mettre en colère et agresser les musiciens en faisant avec son épée des gestes menaçants à leur égard.

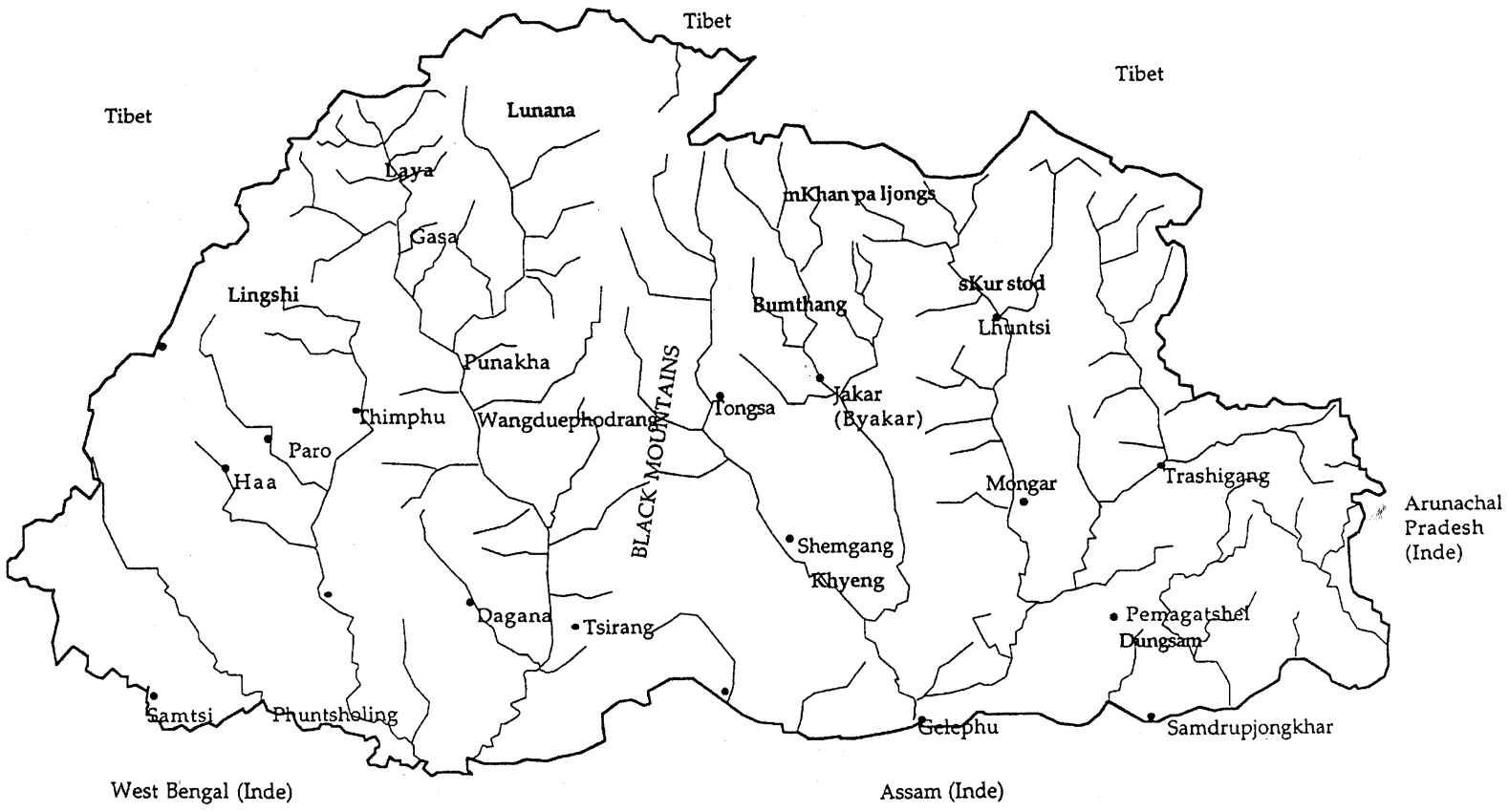
Son assistant lui présente une assiette remplie de riz et de graines qu'il lance à travers la pièce, ainsi que de l'alcool dans une tasse. Le *gter bdag* entre en transe très rapidement. Assis, il commence à avoir des mouvement saccadés du haut du corps de plus en plus violents. Lorsque son assistant (sa soeur à Lhuntsi, un ami à Thimphu) estime qu'il est en transe complète, il lui donne son épée et lui passe la bague au pouce droit. Le *gter bdag* émet des grognements, frappe sa bague contre le miroir de poitrine.[46] Il se lève en brandissant son épée; il exécute alors une danse dont les pas sont les mêmes que ceux des danses exécutées par les personnages guerrriers dans d'autres cérémonies. Il se rasseoit lourdement.

Suit alors un enchaînement de séquences répétitives. Le *gter bdag* s'asseoit, il souffle et grogne, son visage est rouge et et il transpire, ses yeux sont révulsés. On remarque que ses mouvements sont les mêmes que ceux dont Tsi'u dmar po est agité pendant la danse qui lui est dédiée au monastère de gTam shing. Le commanditaire s'approche et, un genou à terre, décline son nom, sa date de naissance et la raison pour laquelle il a fait venir le *gter bdag*. L'assistant traduit en tibétain, le *gter bdag* répond de façon totalement inintelligible et lorsqu'il émet son diagnostic ou son oracle, il frappe très rapidement son miroir avec sa bague. Entre deux phrases, il pousse des grognements. Son assistant(e) traduit en langue locale. Le *gter bdag* peut alors bénir le commanditaire avec de l'eau parfumée contenue dans une aiguière. Il fait couler l'eau d'abord le long de son épée puis sur la tête du commanditaire, qu'il renvoie ensuite. Il se relève, danse à nouveau, gesticule avec son épée et fait mine de se passer la lame au travers du corps. Puis il se rasseoit. C'est alors que la famille du commanditaire, puis des membres de l'assistance peuvent lui poser des questions; ces derniers lui donnent une somme symbolique, 1 ou 2 Ngultrums. De cette façon, le commanditaire, en étant d'une certaine façon le bienfaiteur de la communauté, acquiert des mérites. Entre chaque personne, le *gter bdag* répète sa danse.

Lorsque la série des questions est terminée, le *gter bdag* danse pour la dernière fois, se dirigeant tour à tour vers l'autel, les musiciens et l'assistance. Il fait tournoyer son épée, déployant ainsi l'écharpe blanche qui y était enroulée. Sa danse se ralentissant, des assistants posent un matelas à terre et s'approchent de lui. Le *gter bdag* s'écroule brusquement, les assistants le rattrapent, lui ôtent immédiatement son chapeau et l'étendent sur le matelas. Le *gter bdag* se retourne sur le ventre, la main gauche agitée de spasmes. Puis il s'immobilise complètement. Dès qu'il tombe, les musiciens changent de registre et psalmodient doucement sans accompagnement musical pendant quelques minutes. Ils s'interrompent lorsque le *gter bdag* bouge à nouveau et revient à lui. Les assistants l'aident à s'asseoir, lui enlèvent son costume et lui offrent de l'alcool qu'il boit goulûment. La séance dure entre deux et trois heures et les *gter bdag* se plaignent de grande fatigue et même d'épuisement.

---

[46] A propos du miroir, voir le très intéressant article de Bentor, Yael (1995), "On the Symbolism of the Mirror in Indo-Tibetan consecration rituals", *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 23, 57-71.



CARTE DU BHOUTAN (D'APRÈS LE GEOGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF BHUTAN)

A la fin de la séance, le grand gâteau sacrificiel est emporté à l'extérieur, souvent assez loin de la maison (à Thimphu, il a été jeté dans la rivière qui se trouvait à deux kilomètres de là).

Le *gter bdag* de Thimphu s'est aussi servi d'un petit tambour à boules fouettantes dont il jouait en chantant, de la même façon que les *dpa' bo* et *dpa' mo* mentionnés au début de cet article.

D'autre part, on lui a présenté en fin de séance une effigie en pâte qu'il a aspergée d'alcool et découpée avec un poignard rituel. Puis il a pris un morceau de cette effigie et l'a offert aux divinités de l'autel. Enfin, toujours à Thimphu, le *gter bdag* a terminé sa séance par ce qui ressemblait à un court rituel de *liṅga* qui se déroula dans le jardin: en tenant un poignard rituel, il exécuta d'abord une danse autour d'un grand morceau de papier sur lequel avait été dessinée une figure d'homme nu couché sur le dos; puis il enflamma le papier afin que la figure se consume.

Le paiement

Le commanditaire offre alors de l'alcool à tous les participants et les paie en fonction d'un tarif dégressif parfaitement connu, qui est dans la proportion de 1 pour les assistants et musiciens, 2 pour le maître de choeur et 5 pour le *gter bdag*.

En outre, le commanditaire doit nourrir les assistants et le *gter bdag* avant la séance, offrir de l'alcool et du thé pendant la séance et, bien sûr, payer pour tous les ingrédients nécessaires au rituel. Avant l'apparition de l'économie monétaire, les paiements se faisaient en nature.

Rôle et spécificités

Comme la plupart des intercesseurs, les *gter bdag* ont une activité principale, fermier, soldat, et mènent une vie normale. Ils ne sont pas organisés en confréries; ils sont indépendants mais se rencontrent une fois par an pour faire un rituel (*gser skyems*) aux divinités *gter bdag*. Au Bhoutan, les *gter bdag* sont tous des hommes, ce qui semble être logique puisque les divinités sont de sexe masculin et ont un aspect guerrrier. Toutefois, il m'a été signalé des médiums féminins investis par Zo ra ra skyes au mKhan pa lung népalais.[47] Ne connaissant pas les conditions socio-religieuses de cette région du Népal, il ne m'est pas possible d'en tirer des conclusions.

Il semble que, contrairement aux *dpa' bo* et *dpa' mo* qui font des rituels de guérison, les *gter bdag* ne soient pas impliqués dans la cure. Leur rôle est consultatif et ce sont des oracles. Les gens les questionnent sur l'origine de leur maladie, ou sur des problèmes de la vie quotidienne. Ils répondent en identifiant la source des problèmes et en conseillant telle ou telle solution – éventuellement des rituels – mais ils ne font pas, à ma connaissance, les rituels de guérison en cas de maladies, tout au plus un rituel général d'expulsion de forces mauvaises à la fin de la séance, comme le *gter bdag* de Thimphu.

Une fois encore, on observe donc à travers ces médiums la façon dont les divinités locales sont impliquées dans la régulation harmonieuse de la vie de la communauté et de la famille. Les gens consultent les *gter bdag* pour des problèmes immédiats et il n'y a aucune préoccupation métaphysique dans leurs requêtes.

Comme tous les intercesseurs, ils se démarquent du commun des mortels non seulement par leur pouvoir, mais aussi parce qu'ils ont été spécialement choisis par des divinités. Choisis certes, mais il faut remarquer que les liens de parenté entre les *gter bdag* sont forts. En effet, le père de Tshering Wangchuk était *gter bdag* (ou *chos rje*?) au Tibet de l'Est, l'oncle de Shintala était *gter bdag*. L'autre *gter bdag* appelé Jamyang a un neveu qui est aussi *gter bdag*. Pourrait-on

---

[47] Christian Schicklgruber, information orale, Vienne, Mai 1995.

alors parler d'une transmission héréditaire plus ou moins occultée dans le discours, où l'emphase est mise sur la relation avec les divinités?

Le cas des *gter bdag* bhoutanais renvoie au problème récurrent de la définition du chamanisme, phénomène polymorphe si insaisissable qu'"il paraît échapper à sa propre définition. Il n'y a de consensus que sur une base fragile: la présence d'un personnage assurant, par ses relations particulières avec le monde des esprits, toutes sortes de fonctions."[48] D'autre part, les *gter bdag* sont investis par des divinités dont le caractère non-bouddhique et local est bien établi, en particulier les *btsan*. Le lien entre territoire et pouvoir est ici très fort puisque seuls les gens de sKur stod consultent les *gter bdag*. Leur efficacité ne s'exerce et ne peut s'exercer que dans le contexte bien défini de cette vallée. Les divinités appartiennent à la vallée et la vallée leur appartient. La question de leur pertinence et de leur efficacité dans un contexte extérieur ne se pose même pas pour les Bhoutanais.

Le *gter bdag*, médium ou chamane? R. Hamayon revient sur cette distinction à propos de la spécificité technique du chamane: "les critères usuels pour distinguer, quant au mode de relations avec les esprits, le chamane du médium et du possédé – son "voyage" volontaire et maîtrisé chez les esprits, au lieu de leur incorporation plus ou moins subie – n'ont, de l'aveu général, qu'une valeur limitée, tout auteur s'étant trouvé face à des cas où les deux procédures se succèdent ou s'entremêlent."[49] Dans le cas du *gter bdag*, une seule procédure existe, l'incorporation, mais il est évident qu'il possède certains aspects attachés au chamanisme: maladie initiatique, initiation directe puis formation auprès d'un autre *gter bdag*, transes volontaires qui se répètent, accoutrement. L'aspect chamanique se révèle aussi par son "pragmatisme (à la différence des religions instituées) ainsi que par la disponibilité jamais démentie de ce qui fonde son action: l'idée de contact direct avec les esprits."[50]

A la différence de certains chamanes, il faut remarquer que les *gter bdag* bhoutanais ont seulement les réponses et ne formulent pas les questions; il n'y a pas non plus socialisation de la parole puisqu'ils ont besoin d'un assistant pour traduire questions et réponses, ce qui introduit une notion de secret, de distanciation par rapport à leur communauté et donc renforce leur statut d'êtres à part.[51] Le fait qu'ils parlent tibétain, que ce soit le dialecte du Centre ou du Khams, pourrait s'expliquer par plusieurs raisons: un désir de se rattacher à une ascendance culturelle prestigieuse, le fait que les divinités sont d'origine tibétaine, ou le fait que le phénomène des médiums *gter bdag* est venu du Tibet.[52]

Ce qui semble une spécificité bhoutanaise pose indirectement la question de la datation du phénomène *gter bdag* au Bhoutan. Comme nous l'avons vu, ce phénomène a probablement une origine tibétaine et il ne devrait donc pas être antérieur aux manifestations similaires au Tibet. Le problème est que leur datation au Tibet même est inconnue. Cependant, A. Heller suggère que, "au Tibet, la tradition de tels phénomènes semble remonter à une date ancienne. Toutefois, les plus anciens récits qui les décrivent datent seulement du 17ème siècle et relatent des séances

---

[48] Hamayon, Roberte (1990), *La Chasse à l'âme*. Nanterre, Société d'Ethnologie: 29.

[49] *Ibid.*: 29.

[50] *Ibid.*: 39.

[51] Roberte Hamayon dans un ouvrage récent s'interroge sur l'usage du langage "qui va en particulier, éclairer d'un jour nouveau la difficulté d'appliquer la distinction typologique habituelle entre chamanisme et possession, fondée sur le lieu du contact avec les esprits"; *cf.* (1994), "En guise de postface: qu'en disent les esprits?", in *Paroles de chamanes, paroles d'esprits*. Paris, INALCO (Cahiers de Littérature orale 35): 190.

[52] R. Hamayon, *ibid.*: 201-202, s'interroge sur cette faculté qu'ont les chamanes brou au Vietnam de s'exprimer dans une autre langue, et y voit peut-être dans ce cas une "ancestralisation d'un rapport de domination, en vue de pouvoir l'utiliser à son profit".

d'oracle qui avaient eu lieu au milieu du 16ème siècle."[53] D'autre part, au Bhoutan, le rôle de Padma gling pa dans la constitution de l'histoire de mKhan pa ljongs ainsi que l'influence religieuse et politique de son fils Kun dga' dbang po (né en 1505) sur la région de sKur stod, pourraient aussi rendre difficile une datation antérieure à la fin du 16ème siècle. Les textes, pour l'instant, ne m'ont pas éclairée sur ce point et d'autres recherches seront nécessaires.

gter bdag et *chos rje*

En cet attachement au territoire, les *gter bdag* sont proches des revenants de l'au-delà (*'das log*) que seuls les Bhoutanais de l'est consultent et qui sont un phénomène propre à cette région du Bhoutan.[54] Ils s'en rapprochent également par leur réticence à se rendre dans des endroits souillés, comme l'hôpital, par la maladie initiatique, par les séances volontaires (bien que les *'das log* n'aient pas de transe à proprement parler), par le régime alimentaire que certains observent et par leur fonction d'intercesseurs entre les vivants et les esprits dans un cas, entre les vivants et les morts dans l'autre, c'est-à-dire entre le monde ici-bas et le surnaturel.

Cependant les liens les plus évidents se trouvent entre les *gter bdag* et les *chos rje* (ou *srung ma*) tibétains. La similitude est frappante et les descriptions qui existent du parcours des médiums-oracles, des séances et du costume des oracles tibétains imposent le rapprochement, même si les séances des *gter bdag* bhoutanais sont peut-être moins impressionnantes que celles des *chos rje* tibétains.[55] Le nom est certes différent, mais il désigne la même catégorie de divinités. Outre les articles de J.F. Rock, Nebesky-Wojkowitz décrit une séance qui est en tous points semblable à celle des *gter bdag*.

Il n'est besoin que de reprendre ici brièvement le déroulement de la séance décrite par Nebesky-Wojkowitz pour s'en rendre compte:[56]

> • A set of ceremonial garments and the various weapons used at the time of the trance are always kept in readiness on or near the throne (...). The objects kept on the throne have to be arranged in a ritually fixed order.
>
> • Chanting the invocation of the *dharmapāla* who is asked to take possession of the medium, *spyan 'dren*, 'invitation'.
>
> • Litany sung in praise of the *dharmapāla*, who by now should have occupied the body of the oracle.
>
> • Offering of tea, beer, or milk to the *dharmapāla*.
>
> • Questionning the *dharmapāla*.
>
> • Abrupt collapse of the medium at the moment in which the *dharmapāla* is supposed to have left his body.
>
> • End of the ceremony by reciting prayers of thanksgiving.

Bien que le costume des grands oracles tibétains soit plus élaboré, il est très similaire à celui des *gter bdag*, y compris la bague au pouce droit. Quant au lourd casque que les grands *chos rje* tibétains portent, il est souvent considéré comme le signe distinctif de ces oracles. Comme il

---

[53] Heller, Amy (sous presse), "Les grandes divinités protectrices des Dalai-Lamas", in *Lhasa, Terre du Divin*. Françoise Pommaret (ed.), Genève, Olizane.

[54] Pommaret, Françoise (1989), *Les Revenants de l'au-delà dans le monde tibétain: sources littéraires et tradition vivante*. Paris, Editions du CNRS.

[55] *Cf.* n. 4.

[56] Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: 412-429.

n'existe pas au Bhoutan, on pourrait donc penser qu'il y a une différence importante. En fait, si l'on étudie les photos de J.F. Rock,[57] on remarque qu'au Tibet de l'Est, les oracles possédés par des divinités *btsan* portent aussi des "chapeaux de *btsan* " et que ceux possédés par d'autres classes de divinités portent des chapeaux différents, ce qui rejoint la pratique bhoutanaise: les photos de Nebesky-Wojkowitz montrent plusieurs types de chapeaux correspondant à différentes classes de divinités.[58]

Etant donné les problèmes que les classifications des divinités posent aujourd'hui, l'affirmation de J.F. Rock selon laquelle il n'y a que deux types de *srung ma*, "the *rGyal po* (or King type) and the Tsen (*btsan*) type",[59] doit être considérée avec prudence. Toutefois, il note que rTse ma ra ou Tshe ma ra est le plus important des *btsan*. Ce nom semble renvoyer à Tsi'u dmar po. En effet, il est possible que ce soit une prononciation locale comme celle de son nom prononcé au Bhoutan qui peut être "Tsi'u marp" ou "Tse marp", la différence entre les voyelles "i" et "é" n'étant pas aussi marquée qu'en tibétain du centre. Cette identification semble être d'autant plus plausible que Rock dit que rTse ma ra réside à bSam yas.[60]

Les différences entre les *chos rje* tibétains et les *gter bdag* bhoutanais sont donc minimes et peut-être apparaîtraient-elles encore moins importantes si un travail de fond sur les médiums-oracles au Tibet avait été possible dans le passé.

Au Tibet, il semble que les femmes n'avaient pas le droit de toucher au costume et que beaucoup de médiums-oracles étaient des moines ou religieux. Ce n'est pas le cas au Bhoutan où les médiums-oracles ne sont pas des religieux, même s'il n'est pas en théorie exclu qu'un religieux puisse le devenir. Cela expliquerait pourquoi au Bhoutan les femmes peuvent toucher le costume des *gter bdag*, comme on l'a vu dans le cas de la soeur de Tshering Wangchuk.

D'autre part, contrairement au Tibet, il n'y a jamais eu au Bhoutan de médium-oracle d'état ou de médium-oracle officiel. On peut se demander si cela ne tenait pas à la spécificité de la fonction, liée à l'origine à Zo ra ra skyes, divinité-montagne de mKhan pa ljongs, mais aussi à Tsi'u dmar po qui n'est pas vénéré par les *'Brug pa*, l'école religieuse politiquement dominante.

Conclusion

Cet article laisse plusieurs questions en suspens, mais il est certain que mKhan pa ljongs et la divinité Zo ra ra skyes fournissent un exemple illustrant la problématique des divinités-montagnes. Dans ce contexte, il est maintenant possible de présenter quelques indices qui pourraient former une hypothèse de travail: ne serait-il pas justifié de rapprocher Zo ra ra skyes de Khyi kha ra thod, prince expulsé de bSam yas vers le Bhoutan? Ceci permettrait d'éclairer sous un jour nouveau la question de Zo ra ra skyes, seule divinité-montagne à s'incarner dans un médium-oracle.

M. Aris dans une note,[61] écrivait déjà: "Could part of his (Zo ra ra skyes) name (*ra-skyes* = 'goat-born') carry lexical allusion to that of Khyi kha ra thod?"

Or, il faut se souvenir que l'histoire de Khyi kha ra thod est rapportée par Padma gling pa et que, selon lui, le prince a d'abord été exilé à mKhan pa ljongs. Pour l'instant, je n'ai pas trouvé de lien textuel entre Khyi kha ra thod et Zo ra ra skyes. On peut néammoins se demander si cette

---

[57] Rock 1959: 796-818.

[58] Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975: plates X, XIV.

[59] Rock 1959: 807.

[60] Rock 1959: 814-815.

[61] Aris 1979: 301 n. 4.

RACE, WIN AND PLEASE THE GODS: HORSE-RACE AND *YUL LHA* WORSHIP IN DOLPO

by

Christian Schicklgruber, Vienna

Each night of the full moon in the sixth month of the Tibetan calendar the villagers of Namdo (gNam mdo) in the heart of Dolpo (Dol po) in western Nepal camp out at the foot of their "divine protector", the "god of the land" (*yul lha*). Some put up tents, others just camp out in the open. On the following day spirals of purifying smoke will rise skywards and the people will present their mountain god with a special form of adoration: a wild horde of riders will race each other along the dry river-bed in full gallop. This pleases the mountain god rising above the scenery. The lama from the nearby Buddhist monastery will perform a ceremony before the race. But this evening alcohol is still flowing freely and nothing indicates the next day's martial character. And neither is there any indication of the fact that, like almost every year, the winner will come from the same clan as last year.

The great Tibetan epic says that the gods had wanted to see that person on the throne of the empire of Ling (Gling) who won a horse-race. And they, above all others Padmasambhava, wanted to see Gesar (Ge sar) on this throne. And so they endowed his horse with supernatural speed. When the horses set off none of his competitors could even get close to him. Thus the victory in such a race is directly connected to the support of benevolent gods. And since the time of Gesar the race is also connected with political power.

The historical, social and religious sphere of the race

The history of Dolpo's settlement lies in the dark, just as does the role of the patrilineal clan of this time. But by deduction and educated guesses we can establish with a certain degree of probability that the first immigrants or rather the social structure of the first settlements were closely connected to patrilineal clans. This supposition is based on analogies with the Tibetan history from the time before the first monarchy[1] and with other recent Tibetan groups in the Himalayas. We can assume clans as local groups who settled around ("around" mostly in an idealistic sense) a holy mountain. The relation mountain – society, and especially that of mountain – clan-structure, is a widespread phenomenon among Tibetan groups on the fringes of the central state's structure, particularly at the northern and southern foot of the Himalaya. But we'll come back to that in more detail at a later point.

Let us dwell on the topic of the "holy mountains" for a while, the "gods of the land", the *yul lha*. At the spiritual centre of each village there is a holy mountain, the owner and protector of all the land economically used by a certain village community. Far beyond Dolpo these lords of the land, the "gods of the land' (*yul lha*), are defined by common characteristics. They are mostly mountains, the ideal centre of a clearly defined community in a clearly defined area, iconographically depicted as mythological heroes in the style of a traditional warrior, bound by

---

[1] Snellgrove, D. & Richardson, H. (1968), *A Cultural History of Tibet*. London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson: 21-22. Rona Tas, A. (1955), "Social Terms in the List of Grants of the Tibetan Tun-Huang Chronicle", *Acta Or. Ac. Scient. Hung.* 5, 249-270.

oath to protect the Buddhist doctrine, watching over the social order and morality.[2] In exchange for regular worship and offerings they act as protectors of the area. They or rather their goodwill are the precondition for the settlement of an area. They grant fertility and keep evil demons at bay. In anthropological lingo we can say that the population of Dolpo abstracts its categories of order (descent, heritage, claims to political leadership and patterns of residence) into religious beliefs. If we interpret these mountain gods and their characters as abstractions of the social order, we could say that these gods, with their demands upon the behaviour of society and the individual, claim the observance of social order and morality in general.

Dolpo was divided into four provinces (*gru bzhi*), whose villages were subjected to a common tax liability. The village Namdo (gNam mdo) lies in the *gru* Nankhong (Nang khong). Although the tax authority changed more than once in the course of the years,[3] the internal organization of life remained reserved to Dolpo's inhabitants. During the past centuries very little seems to have changed on that level. So on the one hand the province was a homogeneous revenue area, but on the other hand living together on an everyday basis, organizing the economic affairs and maintaining the relationship with the gods was regulated on the village level. The village has always been the administrative unit with a clear sense of uniqueness and separate identity.

Even if the importance of the clan in the relation to the superordinate central state institutions was subdued and replaced by the latter's interests and administrative structures, it still remained of importance in the internal village organization. Not only does it regulate marriages by a command of exogamy, but it also determines the appointments to the traditional political and religious positions. The administration and jurisdiction of the village is incumbent upon the mayor (*gras po*). This position is hereditary in that line which can claim the most direct approach to the mountain god – be it that this line was first to immigrate or that one of its members in his position as a lama (*bla ma*) subjugated the deity and thus ensured his protection. Apart from the mayor there is a second position in the village which is hereditary in a direct line of descent. The "preventer of hail" (*ser ba bkag mkhan*) is the religious specialist who can claim the direct ritual approach to the mountain god for himself. In particular he must turn to the *yul lha* in times of importance for agriculture, in order to induce him to grant protection from thunderstorms, especially hail. Thus the name. Both positions have a determinant influence on the social and political programming of village life – the mayor's influence acting directly through his position, while that of the "preventer of hail" works indirectly, since his high prestige gives weight to his opinion, which cannot be ignored on the level of verbal discourse when matters of interest for the village have to be decided.

Before the start

The village of Namdo lies at about 3.800 m. above sea-level (12.500 ft.) on the western slope of the river (gNam mdo chu) which, deeply cutting through the terrain, at first drains the province of Nang khong in a northern direction and then flows into the Karnali outside of Dolpo.

The village is divided into four settlement units (*dum ba bzhi*): gDung, Bong ra, Shu gug and rTtsa ba. Although in each of these village quarters there is a stone structure (*lha rtse*) for the offering of smoke sacrifices and also serving as the residence of local earth owners (*sa bdag*), the common and uniting master of all the quarters is A pha yul lha with his wife A ma ri nag and their large retinue.

---

[2] Pommaret 1996; Buffetrille, K. (1996), "One day the mountains will go away... Preliminary remarks on the flying mountains of Tibet", in *Reflections of the Mountain ...*, 77-89.

[3] Snellgrove, D. (1967), *Four Lamas of Dolpo.* Oxford, Bruno Cassirer: 84. Jackson, D. (1984), *The Mollas of Mustang.* Dharamsala, LTWA.

The venue of the horse-race is several hours walking distance away from the village. The mountain is not visible from the village. Since the ceremony bears a direct relation to the mountain the celebration party must follow the course of the valley upstream for about three hours' walk to reach the place called Nelde sumdo (Ne lde gsum mdo). This is where the river, which has its source at the foot of the A pha yul lha, flows into the river Namdo. The resulting triangle adds to the name of the place (*gsum mdo* always designates the area around the confluence of two rivers). Nelde plays an important role in local mythology. The army of the mythological King Gesar pursued two dümos (*bdud mo*) who were fleeing from Tibet to the South through the Namdo Valley. As Padmasambhava just arrived from this direction at that moment, Gesar withdrew and left the job to the Guru, who destroyed the fugitives on the spot.

Standing in the triangle of the confluence of the two waters, only a small distance apart from each other, there are two chörten (*mchod rten*) depicting the A pha yul lha and his wife A ma ri nag. The designation of these structures is a local custom. In their meaning they resemble the structures which are frequently designated as *lha rtse* or *gung dkar* and which are best understood as houses or reproductions of the mountain or clan deities.[4]

The closest followers (*'khor*) of A pha yul lha – the "nine quick brothers" (mGyogs pa spun dgu) – are seen on the hills of the vicinity. We will find a copy made of dough of this sacral landscape on the altar when we come to the description of the ceremony.

Only men – women are excluded – who live and were born in the direct sphere of influence of the A pha yul lha are allowed to participate in the horse-race. He would not accept competitors from other regions, i.e. people under the protection of another *yul lha*.[5] Thus their participation is absolutely impossible. Any man from Namdo's inhabitants can take part. But only those really do who own a horse which is fast enough to offer a fair chance for a good placing or even the victory. The horses are always ridden by their adult owners and not, like in Mongolia for example, by light-weight young boys.

On the day before the race the riders are "spruced up" by their wives. They comb their hair, plait new braids and put out their best clothes. Before he leaves the house the woman blesses rider and horse with butter (*mar rgyan*). The man leaves the farmstead on horseback. Frequently the women independently follow their husbands to the venue in groups of female friends, relatives or neighbours.

A pha yul lha demands that at least one representative from each household – be it man or woman – attends. Households who haven't sent any representative are sentenced to severe fines by an assembly of important men after the race. It is expensive to deny the mountain a village community present in full number, thereby also showing a lack of solidarity concerning the repulse of enemies.

The journey to the place of the festivity is a great revelry. Many men, but also some women, ride in groups. They repeatedly dismount from their horses, on which occasion hard liquor (*a rag*) flows like water. It almost seems as if no one should reach the race-track sober.

On this day the tent, in which the lama of the Buddhist Hrab-monastery (Hrab dgon pa)[6] will carry out the ritual, is erected at the site of the ceremony. Beside it another tent is put up in

---

[4] I have to thank Charles Ramble for the information that such representations of Tibetan groups on the flat roofs of houses in the Kaligandaki valley are called *lha rtse*, those standing free in the landscape *mchod rten*.

[5] In the following narrative description of the proceedings emic and etic patterns of explanation are not strictly kept apart. Thus expressions such as "the mountain demands this or that" should be regarded from this methodological angle.

[6] The Hrab-monastery is situated on the southern end of the settlement slope of Namdo, high on the slope of the opposite (eastern) side of the valley. The founding of the monastery goes back to dPal ldan blo gros (1527-1596), who

which the important men of the village will pass the night. But that is still a long time away. Now there is drinking, singing and dancing until late at night, a public festival with alcohol, men and women.

The next morning the atmosphere is quite different. With the light of the new day the lama and five of his pupils start the preparations for the ceremony which he calls "sacrifice for the gods of Namdo" (*gNam mdo lha mchod*). The ceremony is equally called *lha bsangs*[7] or *yul lha gsol*. The lamaistic terminology classifies it as belonging to the cultic acts for sacrifice and purifying which have a local bearing. On a stone pedestal the lama puts up the dough figures (*gtor ma*), which thus lend a body to the gods, enabling them to take part in the ritual. They give a good picture of those to whom the celebration is dedicated. In front of the tormas are the sacrificial offerings: *phye mar* (flour and butter), *g.yag lug ra gsum* (three small dough figures of a yak, a sheep and a goat); *mngar gsum* (the three sweet substances) and *dkar gsum* (milk, butter and curd) are offered in bowls. The offerings are usually presented to the peaceful *dharmapālas*.[8]

In the physical centre of the altar as well as in the spiritual centre of the ritual proceeding of the lama stands the largest torma "three roots" (*rtsa gsum yongs khyab*[?]) (no. 1). It stands for the three root objects of devotion: teacher (*bla ma*), protective deity (*yi dam*) and heavenly goddess (*mkha' 'gro*). Behind this torma the ritual arrow (*mda' dar*) protrudes from a cylinder filled with grain. As a whole this torma puts the ritual in a basically Buddhistic light, while the details of its architecture put it closer to the actual context. The two columns at the side of the main structure refer to the local "earth-orientated" sphere of the religion. The right column represents the "guardian of the treasures" (*gter srung*) and the left one the "owners of the earth" (*gzhi bdag*). According to the performing lama the entire figure refers to Padmasambhava (*gu ru* Padma 'byung gnas). As frequently happens in the Himalayas, monastic Buddhism intersects with locally oriented concepts of faith in the understanding of his personality. Two tormas (no. 2 and 4) are regarded as "preliminary tormas" (*sngon gtor*). Their purpose is to expel hindering demons, thus defining the limits of the sacred space (Beyer 1973: 258).[9] In interviews two informants, the performing lama of the Hrab-monastery and its superior lama, had differing designations for the tetragonal torma (no. 3). They called this torma either "Thousand-Board of Warriorgods" (*dgra lha spang stong*) or "High Praise of the Warriorgods" (*dgra lha dpangs bstod*). "High Praise of the Warriorgods" is that part of the ritual which is mainly directed at the worship of the warriorgods and which usually follows a *lha bsang* ceremony (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956: 319 ff.). From their contents the two versions are not contradictory but follow the logic and aim of the ritual. Both informants agreed on the fact that this figure contains (beside many others) the brotherhood of the "Thirteen Warriorgods" (*dgra lha bcu gsum*) (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956: 319). The torma *dam can spyi gtor* (no. 5) generally refers to all the numina which are sworn to the protection of Buddhism by oath. The small applications of dough on the figure represent the retinue (*'khor*) of the A pha yul lha. Apart from the many local gods residing in the immediate vicinity, the *dharmapālas* of the *'jig rten las ma 'das pa'i srung ma*, known from the supraregional realm, also count among them. These protectors of

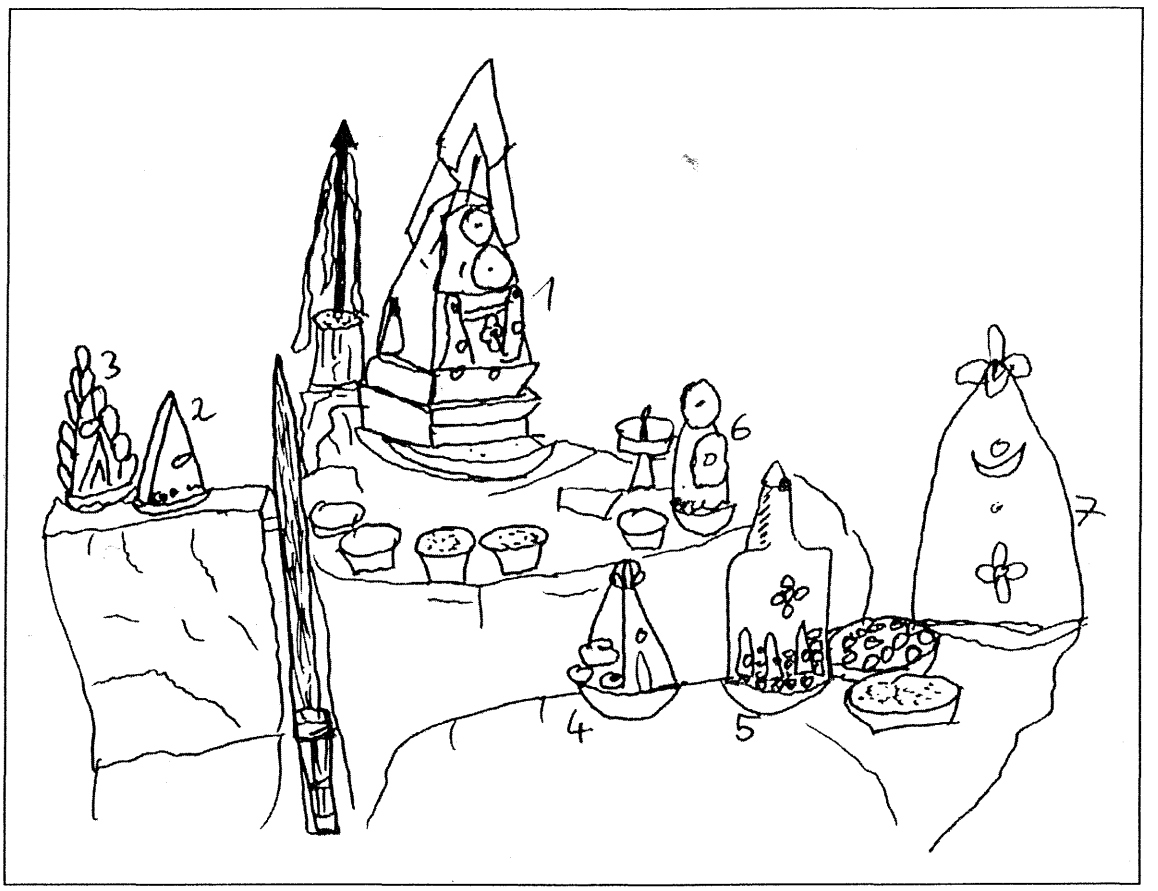
---

erected the monastery on the location of a cave for meditation (Snellgrove 1967 [cf. above n. 3]).

[7] For a detailed description of this ceremony see Karmay, S.G. (1995), "Les dieux des terroirs et les genévriers: un rituel tibétain de purification", *Journal Asiatique* 283/1, 161-207.

[8] Before the monastery took over the execution of the ceremony from the local *ser ba bkag mkhan* (more on that later on), a sheep was slaughtered, too. But A pha yul lha appeared to a lama from the Hrab-monastery in a dream and demanded that the slaughtering of animals be stopped; he would prefer "white sacrifices" (milk, etc.). In the Tibetan Himalaya one frequently comes across such changes from bloody "red sacrifices" to "white" ones which are more in keeping with the concepts of Buddhism.

[9] Beyer, S. (1973), *The Cult of Tārā, Magic and Ritual in Tibet.* Berkeley, University of California Press.



Arrangement of the tormas on the altar inside the tent.

Buddhism are still subject to the karmic laws. Among the retinue of 18 there are rDo rje legs pa, the black warrior god in the eastern part of the world, the servants of the Mahākāla (Nag po chen *phyag phyi*), a black four-headed protective deity (dPal mgon nag po) and Ma mo sngags kyi srung ma, who are listed in the *Rin chen gter mdzod* as being among the rulers of the *Dregs pa*. A connection to the nine figures of the geomancy is established by IHa chen dbang phyug che. While this torma shows the A pha yul lha's retinue, he himself appears in a figure which is shortly called "earth owner" (*gzhi bdag*) (no. 6). Again the two lama informants gave different explanations concerning this figure. The performing one simply declared it the Tsen torma (*btsan gtor*), while the superior lama of the Hrab-monastery sees the *bsTan ma bcu gnyis*, the "Twelve Protective Goddesses of the Buddhist Doctrine" in this figure. Still neither of them has any problem in classifying A pha yul lha as *btsan*.

Closer inspection of the gods participating in the ritual in the shape of tormas allows us to draw some preliminary conclusions on its basic character. On the one hand the main torma (*rtsa gsum*) and a part of the *dam can spyi gtor* put the course of events into a fundamentally Buddhist framework, while on the other hand the figures 3, 5, 1 and 6 clearly refer to the relation with the region and the martial character of the event. We shall come back to this point in more detail later on.

Before the lama even begins with his preparations, a representative of each household brings a bundle of sacrificial offerings (*mchod 'bru*) to the tent. These consist of flour of different sorts of grain wrapped in prayer flags. The flags are printed with a picture of the "wind horse" (*rlung rta*). In addition an offer of incense plants collected on the hills of the vicinity is made. These gifts must be of the finest quality. They are declared as prayers (*smon lam*) whereby a request for these very things is made. Helpers open the parcels and form a large sacrificial torma (*tshogs*) out of the flour and from the butter they shape the first prize for the winner of the race.

After the lama has begun with his recital of the text, a great fire is lit in front of the tent near the chörtens and all the participants throw some of the collected dough and incense into it. Buttermilk is sprinkled onto the chörtens with twigs. The prayer flags are sown onto a long cord and fixed to the A pha yul lha chörten, and thus to the mountain itself. These acts are accompanied by shouts of "May the gods be victorious!" (*lha rgyal lo*). All this is performed by the laity itself, they don't need a lama for it.[10] Following Pre-Buddhist tradition these elements form the core of the *yul lha* ceremony. They have remained alive mainly on the periphery of the central state and of the great monasteries. These were also the areas where the dangerous neighbours were most menacing, thus necessitating protection by the mountain gods.

While the purifying smoke is rising to the sky in a mighty colum in front of the tent, the lama reads five locally drawn up folii included in the main *lha bsangs* text (*rdo rje'i chos skyong ba'i srung ma rnams kyi las byang 'phrin las rnam par rol ba'i dga' ston ces bya ba*).[11] They describe the iconographic appearance of A pha yul lha. This is followed by a listing of his retinue (*'khor*). When this group is present through the recitation and the accompanying visualization in the lama's meditation, they are given a number of sacrificial offerings.[12] One of the most driving expectations behind the performance of the ritual is explicitly expressed on the last folio of the manuscript. After the many sacrifices the community has given to the mountain he is first expected to let the Buddhist doctrine thrive in the monasteries and secondly to grant fertility to the animals and the fields. These foundations of life shall also be protected from hail, droughts and epidemics and be amply watered by rain. The connection between horse-race and wishes for rain is widespread in Tibet. Bell described Tibetan horse-races whose intent it is to achieve rain for the harvest.[13] In addition war and enemies shall also be warded off.

The martial aspect becomes more and more apparent in the further course of events. On the altar the representation of the "god of war" (*dgra lha*) moves more intensely into the centre of the proceedings. "The title *dgra lha*, 'enemy god', is usually given to those deities who are believed to be especially capable of protecting their worshippers against enemies, and to help them to increase their property" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956: 318). Objects referring to the god of war are put next to the torma: a knife, adorned with butter signs (*mar rgyan*), a sling whose wickerwork must show nine eyes, and two dice made of dough.[14] All this is offered to him in

---

[10] A good description of a similar event is given in Karmay 1994.

[11] The assumption of this ritual by a lama from the Hrab-monastery seems to have gone hand in hand with the textual determination of the A pha yul lha. The colophon of this text dates it not older than 30 years. On the integration and probable transformation of the A pha yul lha into the world of monastic Buddhism in this text see Schicklgruber 1996.

[12] I don't go into the course of the *lha bsangs* ceremony in detail here. Suffice to say that it follows the usual pattern of preparation, cleansing, invitation, sacrifice and sending off.

[13] Bell, Ch. (1928), *The People of Tibet.* Oxford, Clarendon Press: 270.

[14] Dice and the game of dice are in Namdo also connected to the local gods in other matters. Thus one plays dice for the right to get a favourable allotment of water for the artificial irrigation of the fields. Here, too, only someone favoured by the gods can win.

exchange for his manipulation of the karmic link (*rten 'brel*),[15] in order to be able to survive in everyday life and also to be able to win the race. Furthermore the weapons shall induce the *dgra lha* to help the men in war.[16]

While in the tent the gods are bidden farewell at the end of the *lha bsangs*, the horses are dressed up on the forecourt. Mane and tail are braided in plaits and coloured ribbons are worked into them.

After the lama has divided up the sacrificial figure (*tshogs*) and distributed it among those present, he leaves the tent and sprinkles cleansing water (*khrus*) over horses and riders in order to wash off any impurity (*ma dag pa*) and obstacle (*'gegs*). Each horseman is given two balls made of flour and butter. To what extent the statement by an informant, that this is done because one should not ride on an empty stomach, is sufficient as an explanation remains an open question. This food shall also heighten the *rten 'brel*. Now all the men present who have arrived on horseback get on their mounts. Howling wild war cries at the top of their voices and without regard for any kind of choral ensemble, each one beseeches the A pha yul lha for his personal protection. Three times the horde circles the two chörtens, that of the A pha yul lha and that of the A ma ri nag. This ritual circling of the mountain is an expression of respect (*gus zhabs*) for the *yul lha*.

Start and race

Now the actual contestants ride to the starting line, about 500 m. away from the center of the events having taken place so far. Each rider relies on the light-footedness of his horse and on his personal luck (*rlung rta*). This luck can only be granted by the local gods.

Although the race is regarded as a communal sacrifice (*mchod*) to the A pha yul lha, each rider sees the other contestants as his competitors. They all line up at an imaginary starting line and, without any starting signal being given, they race off as soon as the first one kicks his horse's flanks. Some ride with saddles, others, trying to save weight, without and some secure themselves by tieing a rope around their waist which is then fastened under the horse's tail. The animals are driven along with short whips. The loud cries of the riders – "victory to the gods" (*lha rgyal lo*) – and the thunder of hooves along the stony soil of the dry river-bed crack the silence of this otherwise lonely place. The mountain must be impressed with this show of cavalry, this proof of the readiness to defend oneself against any enemies. Charles Bell reports of the New Year games in Lhasa that the horse-races should be reminiscent of the war hordes of the times of the first Tibetan kings.[17] Although the horsemen are unarmed,[18] it is easy to imagine them riding against an enemy and not just to a winning post.

The martial aspect of the race is also expressed in how the A pha yul lha is being addressed. In the course of the ceremony we have already seen how the war god *dgra lha* moved more and more into the focus of the proceedings. As soon as the actual race is started the A pha yul lha is not addressed as *yul lha* any more – which would really be part of his name – but as *dgra lha*

---

[15] Samuel, G. (1993), *Civilized Shamans, Buddhism in Tibetan Societies.* Washington & London, Smithsonian Institution Press: 448-449.

[16] Mythological stories in which the protective deity wards off attacking armies are known from different regions of the Buddhist Himalaya. Amongst others, Pommaret for Bhutan (Pommaret, 1996).

[17] Bell 1928: 276 [cf. above n. 13].

[18] Some older men could remember that in the "old days" guns were also brandished by the riders here. In the course of the mopping-up operation by the Nepalese army, when Tibetan resistance fighters were driven back across the border to Tibet from their camps in Dolpo, the weapons of Dolpo's men also disappeared. But no one likes to talk about that in detail.

instead. How a deity is addressed depends on the speaker and on the context.[19] Both gods, the *yul lha* and the *dgra lha*, have a place of residence on the body of every human being. Belonging to the group of the "five gods on the human person" (*'go ba'i lha lnga*), the *yul lha* resides on the crown of the head and the *dgra lha* on the right shoulder.[20] So they all ride along.

The distance of about 2000 m. (6.500 ft.) at a height of around 4000 m. (13.000 ft.) above sea-level drives men and horses to the limits of their physical capacities. But the mountain god grants only one of them the necessary amount of *rlung rta* to be the first to jump off his horse and stand with both legs behind the finishing line. It is reverence for the mountain which demands that the winner dismounts from his horse. It is the rider who is victorious and not his steed.

This year, like almost every year, the winner is once more a rider from the lHo ris blon po clan.[21] A pha yul lha clearly seems to favour these men in his accordance of *rlung rta*. This is not particularly surprising. This clan from Namdo addresses A pha yul lha not only as *yul lha* but as their *pho lha* as well. For them he is also their ancestral deity for their very special protection.[22] The mayor (*gras po*) and the "preventer of hail" (*ser ba bkag mkhan*) have always come from this clan.

At this point a Western spectator would quite naturally begin to suspect a rigged affair. For the Dol po pa the special relation between the mountain and the men from the lHo ris blon po clan is confirmed just like every year.

The modern political conditions of the state of Nepal have increasingly reduced the concrete political effects of the race in the past few years. Representatives of the political parties running for elections carry their propaganda into the villages of Dolpo which until recently had remained relatively untouched by the goings-on in faraway Kathmandu (apart from the fact that due to their status as a "very underdeveloped area" their tax burden did not exceed a symbolic amount). In the last elections in Namdo that person from the lHo ris blon po clan still won the vote, who, according to the traditional pattern, would have been entitled to the post of *gras po* anyway. In other villages of Dolpo this kind of modernization has already gone further.

The Tibetans had already worshipped their holy mountains long before Buddhism ever came to their country. In these rituals of unwritten tradition neither Buddhism nor the Bonpo clergy played a significant role (Karmay 1994: 115). Until a few years ago the preventer of hail played the most important part in the mountain ceremony. Although he is still consulted for his religious abilities on occasions pertaining to the individual, such as illnesses, he has lost his original position, as the representative of the entire village community facing the local numina, to the monastery. In return for its new duties the monastery collects a tax from every household. The list with the exact fiscal duties which are imposed according to the size of the arable land, is kept by the mayor. Beyond this material profit this new role of the monastery changes the traditional structure of power in the village. The preventer of hail is beginning to lose his prominent role in decision-making.

---

[19] On the difficulties of the classification of certain deities as *yul lha, dgra lha, btsan, dge bsnyen, dgegs* etc., see Pommaret 1996.

[20] This group of five is completed by the god of the maternal line (*mo lha*) under the left armpit, the god of the maternal uncle (*zhang lha*) on the left shoulder and the god of the male line (*pho lha*) under the right armpit (Stein, R. A. [1972], *Tibetan Civilisation.* Stanford, Stanford University Press: 222).

[21] On this clan designation see Schicklgruber 1996.

[22] In the course of the settlement history the A pha yul lha seems to have turned from the *pho lha* of the lHo ris blon po clan into the *yul lha* of all the descent lines (Schicklgruber 1996).

For the winner none of all this is of any importance when he proudly accepts his prize (*phye mar*)[23] in the shape of a large ball of butter. Even if his victory has no direct consequences, such as a certain social position in the village,[24] his gain in prestige puts him in the rank of a man whose voice cannot be easily ignored in the assemblies for the discussion of village affairs.

While the winner enjoys himself until late at night in the company of the great men from the village, the girls and women sing for the pleasure of the mountain and his wife. They also sing of the picture of the world, of the three levels of the landscape, of the animals and the place where the people are happy:

High up in the valley
Rises the white mountain
On the white mountain lives the great white lion
The great white lion and I are equal
The great white lion and I won't stay (there)
I'm going back to my village, where I am happy.

In the middle of the valley
Rises the red rocky mountain
On the red rocky mountain lives the king of birds, the Eagle
The king of birds, the Eagle and I are equal
The king of birds, the Eagle and I won't stay (there)
I'm going back to my village, where I am happy.

Down in the valley
Flows the torrential river
In the torrential river lives the little golden-eyed fish
The fish and I are equal
The fish and I won't stay (there)
I'm going back to my village, where I am happy.[25]

---

[23] The *phye mar* is also regarded as a sacrificial offering on other occasions, such as the New Year's ceremony.

[24] In the Chumbi valley for instance, where a game of dice can also only be won with the support of the local gods, the winner becomes the institutionalized first man of the village (Walsh, E.H. (1906), "Elective Government in the Chumbi Valley", *Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal,* New Series 2: 303-308)

[25] *lung pa'i phu gsum phu la chags pa'i*
phu yi gangs ri dkar po chags yod
gangs ri dkar po 'di la chags pa'i
seng chen dkar po nga gnyis 'dra byung
seng chen dkar po nga ni mi sdod
skyid po rang gi yul la log 'gro

lung pa'i mdo gsum mdo la chags pa'i
mdo yi gtsang chu sdo mo chags yod
gtsang chu sdo mo 'di la chags pa'i
nya chung gser mig nga gnyis 'dra byung
nya chung gser mig nga ni ma sdod
skyid po rang gi yul la log 'gro

lung pa'i skyed gsum skyed la chags pa'i
skyed la brag ri dmar po chags yod
brag ri dmar po 'di la chags pa'i
bya rgyal rgod po nga gnyis 'dra byung
bya rgyal rgod po nga ni mi sdod
skyid po rang gi yul la log 'gro

(tape recording, July 1993)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. de (1956), *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. The Hague, Mouton & Co.

Karmay, S.G. (1994), "Mountain Cult and National Identity in Tibet", in *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*. Barnett, R. (ed.), London, Hurst & Company.

Pommaret, F. (1996), "On local and mountain deities in Bhutan", in *Reflections of the Mountain ...*, 39-56.

Reflections of the Mountain. Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya. A.M. Blondeau, E. Steinkellner (eds.), Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Veröffentlichungen zur Sozialanthropologie, Band 2), 1996.

Schicklgruber, Ch. (1996), "Mountain high, valley deep – The *yul lha* of Dolpo", in *Reflections of the Mountain ...*, 115-132.

Linguistic and Cultural Borders

SACRED GEOGRAPHY ON THE CULTURAL BORDERS OF TIBET

by

Ann Armbrecht Forbes, Harvard

In Hedangna, a Yamphu Rai village in the upper Arun valley of northeastern Nepal, trees, rocks, mountains become sacred when incorporated into metaphorical journeys that re-enact the travels of the ancestors.[1] Once the journeys are over, the places are no longer sacred. In order to enter this sacred space, priests and shamans must pass through the *tsawa* (Y). *Tsawa* is an indigenous concept found among many Kiranti groups that refers to a spring where the original ancestors first settled (cf. Gaenszle 1995; Hardman n.d.). The *tsawa* also identifies the Yamphu before the ancestors and in turn ensures that the rituals needed to sustain life on the lands of the ancestors can be performed. The *tsawa* proves that particular Yamphu clans are descendants of the Kiranti who first settled in the village and in turn enables individual households to claim village land as *kipat* (form of land tenure N). With *kipat* the connections between ethnic identity and place of dwelling that are embodied in *tsawa* are recognized and reinforced by the system of tenure. The legal code reinforces local conceptions of identity and place. This overlap is considered one of the primary reasons the Kiranti have been able to resist the acculturation that has occurred elsewhere in Nepal (cf. Höfer 1979: 201; Levine 1974: 74).

This paper will examine the place of the *tsawa* in the metaphorical journeys of healers across the landscape to shed light on how the boundary between the sacred and the profane and, more generally, between nature and culture, is maintained by the Yamphu. Though I do not consider the political and economic consequences of this identity, this discussion provides the basis for a broader analysis of the overlapping boundaries between the cosmological and political territories of the Yamphu Rai (see Forbes 1995).

The Yamphu Rai

The Yamphu live on the political, economic and cultural border between Tibet and Nepal, sandwiched between the two literate creeds of Hinduism and Buddhism. Though they borrow from both traditions, more so from Hinduism, they have not embraced the world view of either. The point of the rituals performed by local *yadengpas* (priests Y), *mangpas* (shamans Y) and, at times, the *pelemgi* (Y)[2] is not defined by a religious doctrine, such as enlightenment. Rather, the objective of the journeys taken during these rituals is to keep the living on the side of the living. Failing that, religious practitioners seek to ensure that dead souls are escorted safely to the world of the dead and don't return to create trouble in the village. This is done according to the

---

[1] This paper is based on research conducted in the upper Arun valley in 1992-93. Research in Nepal was funded by a Fulbright-Hays Fellowship for Doctoral Research Abroad and assisted by a grant from the Social Science Research Council. The material discussed in this paper was gathered with the assistance of Raj Kumar Rai. A follow-up research trip in 1993 was carried out with the approval of the Makalu-Barun Conservation Area Scientific Research Committee. My participation in the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies was made possible with support from the Mountain Institute.

[2] In Hedangna, *pelem* referred to stories about their origins learned from village elders. Anyone who learned the *pelem* could say it. The *mindhum* (cf. next note), on the other hand, called up the ancestors and deities of the Yamphu. Even if one learned the words of the *mindhum*, as many elder men had, only those who were said to have been given these words in their dreams were allowed to chant them. In contrast, Hardman (n.d.) describes the *pe-lam* of the Lohorung as being comparable to the *mundhum*, the body of oral traditions (rituals, customs, habits, traditions) of the Limbu (and thus the *mindhum* of Hedangna).

body of oral traditions, called the *mindhum* (Y), which is a collection of stories about the way things were in the time of the ancestors.[3]

Almost all of the rituals done according to the *mindhum* involve some re-enactment of the journeys of the ancestors. The places named along these journeys are places where the ancestors traveled and thus they now mark the boundaries of the Yamphu cultural world. The journey examined here is taken by the *pelemgi*, an individual who knows particular parts of the *pelem*. The *pelemgi* has not inherited the role of priest or shaman. Though he can approach the edges of the world of the ancestors he cannot cross over into this world. His job instead is to escort the soul (*lawa* Y) of the dead individual away from the village into 'heaven'. In doing so he follows the original journey of the ancestors who first settled on the lands that became Hedangna. Before describing the ritual itself, it is necessary to tell the story on which it is based.

The founding of Hedangna

Seven hundred years ago, as the story goes, there was a Kiranti king in Kathmandu. This king had seven (in other versions there are four or five sons) sons: Khambu the eldest, Yamphu the second eldest, Limbu the third eldest, Aka and Dabla were the fourth and fifth eldest, and the youngest two were named Koce and Mece.[4] When the Kiranti king was defeated and forced from Kathmandu, he sent his sons to claim their inheritence in the lands of eastern Nepal (what eventually came to be known as Pallo and Majh Kirat).

> Khambuhang (*hang* means king Y), the oldest brother, went to the Dude Kosi in Bhojpur district. Limbuhang went up the Tamur river, Aka Dabla went to Assam in northern India, and Koce and Mece, who were too young to travel far on their own, stayed in the Terai. Yamphuhang, the second eldest brother, walked up the Arun River to claim his land. To stay warm, he peeled bark from the trees, wrapped it around his arms and legs, and slashed it on with strips of bamboo. He traveled for days and days through thick dense jungle until he finally reached the place where Tibetans lived. Tired from his journeys, Yamphuhang settled in Tibet.[5] He married

---

[3] Gaenszle defines the *mindhum* as «the total corpus of texts, that is myths, ritual songs and ceremonial dialogues... This term refers in a general way to inherited knowledge concerning the ancestors. It comprises histories of the origin of the ancestors, beginning with the primal creation of the universe and the coming into being of natural and cultural orders and extending up to the settlement of the ancestral territory. It also concerns the proper means of communicating with ancestors and ritually maintaining the order they have established... It evokes a way of life predefined by the ancestors, a 'life-world' rooted in the past. For the Kirati it is the very essence of their culture, the foundation of their identity» (Gaenszle 1995: n.p.).

[4] This myth about four or six brothers traveling out into eastern Nepal is widespread among the Kiranti of the upper Arun. Though almost all versions mention Limbuhang, Khambuhang, and Koce-Mece, the name of the second eldest brother changes depending on the group with whom one is speaking. Gaenszle found that the Mewahang, a Kiranti group to the west of Hedangna, name this brother Mewahang. Hardman (n.d.) found that the Lohorung name it Lohorung. Gaenszle concludes that «All Rai groups of the Arun valley trace their line back to the same mythical ancestor, no matter what this second eldest brother may be called, and the present-day subtribes are accordingly only the result of further fission in the course of further migration» (1995: n.p.).

[5] The question of whether the Yamphu came from Kasi (India and are thus associated with Hinduism and Indo-Aryan groups) *gotra* (origin) or Lhasa *gotra* (in Tibet and thus associated with Buddhism and with Tibetans) raised a fair amount of discussion when this myth was recounted. Educated Yamphu were particularly concerned to prove that they were from Kasi *gotra,* which is what they had learned in school. In all of the versions of this myth that I collected in Hedangna, Yamphuhang is said to have originally come from Kasi, and then to have spent several years in Karta before traveling south to what is now Hedangna. Villagers do point out that there are Mangbakim (clan name) in both Hedangna and in the Bhote village of Hatiya. They speculate that originally the Bhotes in Hatiya and the Yamphu in Pathibhara were *dajyu-bhai* (literally brothers but refers to any relatives). After the Yamphu settled in Hedangna, they began to wear the clothes of the Kiranti, to speak their own language, plant different crops and so

a Tibetan woman[6] and built a house in a place called Kharta.[7] They had two sons. After some time, the two sons decided to head south where it was warmer to look for a new place to settle. They took a wooden bowl lined with silver and a walking stick to Rudong Pokari and Sepa Pokari, two lakes north of Popti La (a pass on the current border between Tibet and Nepal). They threw the bowl and walking stick into the lakes, and made an oath that wherever the bowl and walking stick surfaced, that place would be where they would settle. The bowl and walking stick spun around the centers of the glacier blue lakes and then disappeared from view. Having made this promise, the two set off down the Arun to see where their new home would be.

Looking, thinking, walking slowly the two brothers came down. Looking, looking they reached a lake just below Popti La. There was no wooden bowl and no walking stick in the lake, so they kept going. Singing, walking, and looking they reached a place below the present Tibetan village of Saksila. They climbed a tree to see what they could. The wooden bowl and walking stick were slowly circling in the center of the lake. They looked around. The land was steep and rocky. It wasn't a good place to live, so they threw the wooden bowl and walking stick back into the water and set out south once again. Then, searching as they walked, they reached Angsiyak, a ridge just north of what is now Hedangna. They stopped there to catch their breath and to rest. The two brothers built a *maṇi* (prayer N) wall in the name of their mother and father. They then headed south through the thick jungle toward a level spot at a place now called Rudong.[8] They climbed a *Pyapuling* tree to get out of reach of the tigers and bears lurking in the jungle and to look around. They looked out and saw a deep blue lake. It was so blue and so big and so surprising to see in the middle of a dense forest that the two brothers were afraid. Then they looked down and saw the wooden bowl and walking stick spinning slowly around in the center of the lake. The land surrounding the lake sloped more gradually than any of the land they had yet traveled through and it looked like good farming land. They looked at each other and swore that they would always stay on this land (*raso baso* N).

The five stone spouts are the site of the original lake where the brothers saw the wooden bowl and walking stick. After deciding to stay at this place called Rudong, the brothers went down and drank from the spring feeding the lakes; this spring in turn became their *tsawa*. Over time the lake has dried up and all that remains is the watering hole by the five stone pillars. It is said that rice grows here year after year without ever being replanted.

---

they became Yamphu, Rai, Kiranti. The others stayed north, wore Tibetan clothes, spoke Tibetan language and practiced Buddhism. Thus they became Bhote.

[6] The Mewahang have a similar version of this story. They say their ancestors traveled up the eastern side of the Arun to an area north of Hedangna. There the ancestors also married a Bhote, before moving back down along the western side of the valley to their present settlement area in Tamkhu (Gaenszle 1995).

[7] Tibetans in Kharta say that there is a place nearby where Nepalese once lived (Diemberger, personal communication).

[8] Rudong is the Tibetan name for Hedangna. A Sherpa lama from Ekuwa speculated that the name Rudong comes from the Tibetan *ro tong* (or *thang*). *Ro*, he said, means dead body and *thang* means the name of the place. He suggests that the name comes from the time of the Nepal-Tibet war, when the Tibetans had a fort below Hedangna. The Nepalese, who were across the river in Num, snuck around by Seduwa, and took the Tibetans by surprise. So many people were killed that the water was red with the blood of the dead bodies; hence, this Sherpa claimed, the name Rudong.

The *Pelemgi*'s journey

Elaborate rituals surround the departure of the soul. A good send off and company on the trip north to 'heaven' are as important for the peace of mind of the living as they are for the dead. The living want to make sure that the soul makes it over the boundary and is then unable to cross back over to bother those who are still living. And so three (for women) or five (for men) days following a death, the sons of the dead person sponsor the funeral to detach the soul from the land and people of Hedangna. At that time, a group of five village elders gather to send the *lawa* beyond the physical boundaries of the village. Their purpose is to take the *lawa* away from the village, not to lead it to a new place. This is the job of the *pelemgi* who, later that evening, comes to the home of the dead individual and escorts the soul to 'heaven'.

January 1993

That evening, after the funeral, a crowd of neighbors and relatives gathered in Amrit's house to send off his mother's *lawa*. It was crowded, smoky and hot. The doors were closed and it was dark. Children crowded onto the second floor, peering down through the opening for the wooden ladder. Sisters and aunts smoked around the coals of the dying fire. Gurunyimba, the *pelemgi*, and two other men sat at the front of the room. Each had a *tongba* (N) on the ground at their ankles. A brass urn filled with wildflowers and ferns, a brass plate of husked rice, and a burning butter lamp were placed by Gurunyimba's side. A large, worn bamboo basket was filled with husked rice and a bottle of *raksi* (N); the leg of the water buffalo eaten earlier at the funeral stuck out from the top of the basket. The candle light flickered off the dull grey fur of the now dead leg; the leg sticking out of the shadows made the ceremony something raw, something wild. Gurunyimba began his chant, emphasizing his words with a gesture of his hand, and sighing heavily to express the weight of his load:

> Ye, older mother, older father,
> In this mother's name, we have all come together;
> Ye soi, young boys, young girls; ye soi friends, *phul sathi* (N), people who say the *pelem;*
> We are here in this mother's name;
> Ye soi, from this door, we start to take away (untie) this person;
> From here, the person who says the *pelem* has been placed here (by others);
> I don't know anything, that's the way it is, Hey!
> ...
> After dying, a person saying the *pelem* like me is going to take her toward Bishnu's big city, toward his big door and resting place, hey!
> Ye, with a gold *achetā* (consecrated rice N) and coins; with a light and with a load of wormwood;[9]
> With a load of *michuung* (flower Y), and a leg of buffalo;
> Ye! I take the load myself on top of a wool blanket and a straw mat;
> After lifting the load, lo hai!
> I walk with a walking stick.
> *Huiya* (sigh from being tired), while sighing I wipe off the sweat.
> I take the load from upstairs to the veranda;
> Walking down I arrive at the porch.
> Let's go! Let's go!

He then begins walking, slowly, with his walking stick. He leaves the house, passes through the *tsawa* of the house, and then heads up the ridge above Hedangna and on toward Tibet. His load

[9] Actually he listed three different plants: *singkhawa, pangkhawa* and *titepati* (wormwood) Y.

is heavy and he sighs, with fatigue and with sorrow, and rests at the various *cautaras* (N) along the way. Sometimes he refers to his resting spots by the type of plants that grow there, at others he refers to them by name. Eventually he reaches the place where juniper grows, and then crosses the Popti La into Tibet. He travels through Kama Khola, Kudok (north of Lungdep), Khartalung and finally Lhasa. Beyond Lhasa, he pulls down a ladder to climb to the place where he will leave the *lawa*. He carries her up the ladder and then quickly climbs back down and throws the ladder away, so the *lawa* can't follow him down.[10] I quote him again:

> Ye, after reaching the place of separating;
> Lo, hai, you mother,
> You, with the gold *achetā* and the gold light and the money and the load of wormwood;
> Ye, you with the load of the buffalo leg;
> You, mother go walking through the big gate to heaven;
> By walking, please go!
> Ye, The person like me, who doesn't know, whose ears can't hear and whose mouth can't speak,
> Ye, the person saying the *pelem* is going to return.

He then calls out for his four *lawa* to follow him down, not to get lost.[11] «Calling all of the *lawa* together, I take the gold ladder down. Without playing, follow me!»

He left his load above Lhasa and so his return trip isn't marked by sighs and rest stops. To prevent the *lawa* from following him back home, he returns by a different route: Khartalung, Sukhuma, Kudok, Lungdep, Nadang, Tahaliya, Ridak, Makpalung to the confluence of the Arun and Barun rivers. He then walks down the edge of the Arun, following the route of the ancestors when they first came south from Kharta in Tibet. He describes his progress by chanting the tributaries that enter the Arun: Lyaksuwa, Thado Khola, Ikuwa, Isuwa (Jor Khola, at the edge of Hedangna). He passes through Hanghong, the *tsawa* for the entire village, then through Kripantsawa, the *tsawa* for the Prityadengsa clan, and enters the house. He tells the mother of the house and the father of the house that he has returned. Then he says that he has to go to Kasi[12] to deliver the hair that had been shaved from Kalimaya's sons (*tangduphawa* Y) to rid the village of any lingering pollution. And once again he leaves the house, passes through the *tsawa* and this time heads south.

Again as he travels down the Arun, he lists the names of the tributaries entering the river: the Iduwa, Kasuwa, Apsuwa, Sisuwa, Chirkhuwa, Sankhuwa until he reaches the Sabhaya. At the Sabhaya, he blocks the river with a stone to make a lake. He then pulls the stone away and lets the water run again. Walking again, he reaches the confluence of Piluwa, Mangmaya, Tamur, Dudh Kosi, Tama Kosi, Tapa Kosi, Sun Kosi. And then he reaches Kasi. «A person like me who says the *pelem* has brought the polluted hair [to the place where] seven oceans come together – the hair will reach all these places through the seven oceans.»

Then he says he is going to return. Since he has come this far, before returning, he also asks for *charawa* (essence of grain Y). He asks for *charawa* for the rice that comes from the place where the sun rises, *charawa* for rice that comes from the place where the sun sets; *charawa* for

---

[10] Ramble (1992) says that the ritual use of ropes and ladders to establish a link between heaven and earth is fairly widespread among groups on the northern border of Nepal. He cites Risley who describes the use of spirit ladders among the Magar in the nineteenth century: «The Mangar [sic]... use a symbolic stairway by making nine notches or steps in a stick, which they plant in the grave; by it the dead man's soul goes up to heaven» (Eliade citing Risley, quoted in Ramble 1992: 84, n. 1). Hardman also discusses the use of these ropes among the Lohorung.

[11] *Lalu tembe* (Y) is the place where the *lawa* (*tembe* means place) goes at death.

[12] He calls this Kasi *hang*, the king of Kasi.

rice from the Terai and *charawa* for rice from Tibet. He asks for *charawa* for *pyapuli* rice (names of rice grown in Hedangna Y), *subholi* rice, *baluwa* rice, *sewaba* rice; «Yo, give *charawa* for rice from all of these places», he chants. «Ye lo hai, King of Kasi, you stay here!»

Before leaving, he once again calls his *lawa*, telling them not to get lost. Taking his *lawa* he begins to walk back up from Kasi. Again, he chants out the confluence of all the tributaries he must cross on his way back up the Arun. He reaches Hanghong *tsawa* and then Kripantsawa and then finally enters the house, where he greets everyone and tells them what he has done, where he has been. He gives the *charawa* that he requested in Kasi to the mother of the house, «Until all of the places for storing rice are filled, let there be more *charawa*.»

The *mindhum*

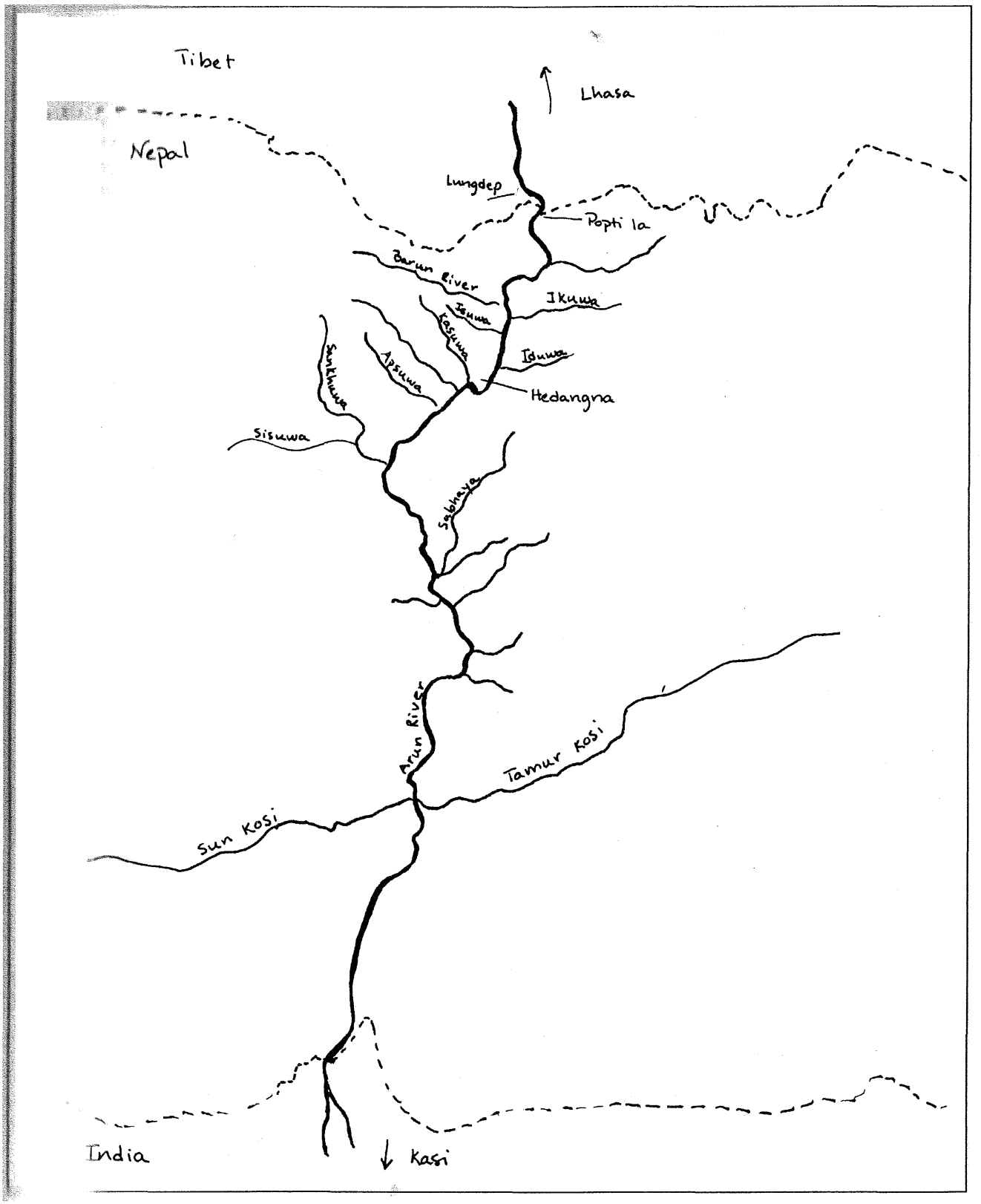
Two of the most striking features of the sections of the oral texts (*pelem* and *mindhum*) I collected are the emphasis on the known world and the importance of naming. Unlike Tibetan Buddhist ideology where the point of reference for understanding the nature of reality is ritual texts and sand *maṇḍala*s and where the experiential world is ultimately an illusion, in the *mindhum* that experiential reality is the basis for understanding the 'other' world of the ancestors. Both the journeys and the named objects emphasize the known world: the places, the plants, the foods, the actions of this life are the basis for conceptualizing the world of the ancestors.[13] In the *pelem*, Gurunyimba follows the route to the grazing lands northwest of Hedangna and he returns along the main north/south trading route up the Arun to Tibet, following the route that the two brothers took when they followed the wooden bowl and walking stick south from Tibet. Village shamans and priests say that for the *mindhum*, you always need to go (to act, to play) by way of the origins. This is not a recitation of the origin of the world, but rather a reenactment of the origin of the world as the ancestors knew it, a world that is just slightly different from the place of Hedangna.

This 'other' realm is rendered meaningful and comprehensible by naming the objects in it. The chants of the *mindhum* are often simply lists of objects that have a place in this realm: flower names, place names. The importance of naming as a basis of knowing is illustrated in the founding myth of the village. After the two brothers decided to settle in Hedangna, they needed fire. They saw a thin trail of smoke rising from the thick forest and went to see what they could find. Deep in the forest they came upon an old man tending a fire. They asked him for some coals. The old man refused. «I can't give you fire», he said. «I don't know you. I don't know your names.» The two brothers, Minaba and Sepa, told him their names (which are contemporary clan names). They asked him his name. He didn't know. The brothers named him Prityadengsa. Now that they were all named, they all 'knew' each other, and the old man agreed to give them fire. Similarly, the *tsawa* names an individual before the ancestors. Without a name, people and places are unknown, there is no basis for establishing a relationship. With a name, a place, a person is given an identity and thus a place in the *mindhum* – and a relationship becomes possible.

---

[13] Villagers, those who are *mangpas* and *yadengbas* and those who are not, describe the ancestors in terms used for humans. The ancestors are greedy and fickle, jealous, and quick to anger. Whenever I asked for people to describe the different *sammang*, they would begin by telling me the number of chickens or goats that had to be sacrificed to them. When I asked why, for example, Matlung Thuba needed four chickens and Chakatangma only two, Nandhoj, a middle-aged man, explained that it was the same as with humans: some people liked to eat a lot of rice, while others could only eat a little.

ARUN VALLEY
Northeastern Nepal



The power of the ancestors

Another theme in this journey that becomes even more salient in the performances of priests and shamans is the danger associated with communicating with the ancestors. Given this danger, it is essential that those seeking this encounter follow the course laid out in the *mindhum*. As mentioned before, because the *pelemgi* has had to learn his craft rather than inheriting it in his dreams, he can only go up to edge of the world of the ancestors. The *yadengpas* (priests) and *mangpas* (shamans), however, are able to cross over and meet the ancestors. It is worth making a few comments about these journeys.

Yadengpas follow the path taken by whichever particular ancestor is being called upon in any particular ritual, and *mangpas* go south to Kasi, as the *pelemgi* did, and down into the center of the earth. In their rituals, the *yadengpas* and *mangpas* bring the objects needed on the journey into a particular order by naming them. These objects are not theirs, they 'belong' to the ancestors. The *mangpas* and *yadengpas* can only use them temporarily and they must ask the ancestors for the right to do so. By building a shrine, chanting the lists of words that few villagers understand completely and waving a bamboo wand or container of wildflowers, they create a boundary between themselves and the collection of villagers gathered around to watch. They redefine secular space and time as sacred space and time and enter the realm of the ancestors.

The tools used to enable the healers enter this other world are impermanent. After a few hours, the flowers and banana leaves wilt and after a few days the shrines fall down. In a week or two, the ancestors will once again become fickle or bored or hungry and again will come in search of food and attention. Any security attained from the offerings is short-lived. The rituals performed by the healers mark the moments of control in a relationship that is inherently uncontrollable.

Taming

The distinction between taming and wild used by Tibetan scholars in describing people/land relations is useful in unpacking the relationship that these practitioners have with this other realm. Tibetan Buddhist lamas seek to tame minds, a process which, Aris writes, includes taming the land. Creating sacred valleys or sacred mountains is one dimension of this kind of taming (Aris 1990: 126).[14] And Samuel suggests that the lamas' role in the Tantric ritual dance drama, the *'cham* is an «acting-out of the power to tame and civilize disorderly and destructive aspects of reality. Becoming an oracle,» he says, «involves 'taming' the god» (Samuel 1993: 196).

These and other scholars suggest that landscape in Buddhist ideology is conceptualized as a *maṇḍala*; a religious symbol of the universe is believed to represent the ultimate nature of that universe. The *maṇḍala* symbolizes a place that is no place (cf. Diemberger 1992; French 1994; Ramble 1997). The *maṇḍala*, like the text, becomes the point of reference for experiencing the land or ritual that is depicted in the symbol or the document. By meditating on these texts and symbols, the practitioner can learn to control his/her mind in order to work toward a more accurate understanding of the nature of reality.

In Hedangna, the Yamphu priests and healers do not pretend to tame or domesticate the ancestors nor do they make any effort to control their mind. Their goal is to keep their sponsors on this side of the boundary, to keep them alive and healthy. Though the shamans and priests may

---

[14] He explains that *gdul zhing* (T), 'the field to be tamed', refers to an 'area destined to be brought together under religious control of a lama – the area itself together with all the spirits, humans and animals inhabiting it'. *Sa dul* (T), 'taming the ground', is a mental analogue of *sems dul* (T), 'taming the mind' (Aris 1990: 126).

become more skilled in their performance, it is only during the performance that they can interpret the words of the ancestors and negotiate the gap between the seen and the unseen, the living and the not-living, and accomplish their objective. Rather than taming, they are 'caught' by their guru and carried by the wind. Over time, they learn to bear the power of the ancestors within their bodies; they bear the power, they ride it, but only temporarily – and only when they have to. It is only in the moment of the performance that things seem tame.

The *mindhum* is a sacred story that attains its meaning by transforming secular space. It organizes the terms in which the Yamphu perceive the lands they share with the ancestors. This sacred space is not some 'other' place. House beams, bamboo, flowers, all become sacred when they are incorporated into the journeys to the realm of the ancestors; rocks, mountains, forests become sacred places when they are inhabited by the ancestors or visited by the healers. Everything potentially embodies the sacred and no thing, no place, is always sacred.

The soul in places

This unboundedness of the sacred is embodied in the Yamphu conception of *lawa* or soul. As long as a person's *lawa* stays with him/her, he/she will stay alive. This concept of the soul is not tightly contained by the skin of the body. *Lawas* frequently become lost and *mangpas* have to go off in search of them. The *lawa* can attach itself temporarily to the soil, to rivers, and places outside the body, or it can be snatched away by a hungry or jealous ancestor.

This concept of *lawa* is likely related to the Tibetan concept of *la* (*bla*), soul, which is found among other 'tribal' groups living on the margins between Hindu and Buddhist ideology (cf. Holmberg 1989; March 1977; Mumford 1990; Samuel 1993 among others).[15] Among these groups, not only is *bla* a soul that can temporarily leave the body, it can also reside in hills, lakes or groves of trees (Samuel 1993: 187). Karmay writes that:

> This 'soul' can reside in different parts of the body, in particular places or objects (trees, stones, mountains, etc.) which are endowed with symbolic and ritual significance for the person concerned. A particular place (usually a mountain or lake) can also be the residence of the 'soul' of a whole community... The prosperity of that community is directly linked to the integrity of the natural features in which the 'soul' of the community resides (Karmay 1987, "L'âme et la turquoise", *L'Ethnographie* 33, 97-130 as cited in Diemberger 1992).

A three-day walk north of Hedangna, in the middle of the Popti La, there is still a glacial lake that is described in the founding myth of the village. This lake at Popti La was where the two brothers threw in the walking stick and wooden bowl that eventually led them to Hanghong *tsawa*, and Hedangna. Now, when the water in this lake is low, the Yamphu say that the productivity of their rice harvest will be poor (it will have no *charawa*). When the water is high,

---

[15] Hardman also defines *lawa* as the essence of life, but argues that *saya* (L) is more important. She defines *saya* as «an ancestral substance infusing all persons and some natural and material objects with an ancestral heritage» (n.d.: 413). She says that the two concepts make up what she would call the «'unconscious' element of man [*sic*]», but distinguishes the two, stating that «*saya* is essentially strong whereas *lawa* is essentially timid» (*ibid.*: 419). When I asked about the difference between the two in Hedangna, people described *saya* as something that falls when you are scolded or criticized or ignored. You become depressed and lethargic but your soul is not lost, and you don't really become sick from it. You just need to have your *saya* raised. One's *lawa* gets into trouble in encounters with the ancestors, and it can leave the body. *Saya* doesn't leave, it falls, and it does so through circumstances of everyday life. Hardman goes on to associate *saya* with the Tibetan concept *[bla]*, suggesting that the notion of *chawa* (L), or sacred clan spring is «an example of *saya* residing in an object, which is the 'outer soul' of each clan member, as well as the clan as a whole». *Lawa,* she suggests is the link between the *chawa* and *saya*, which «reside in both people and things» (*ibid.*: 271). I found *lawa* to be the more significant concept used in Hedangna, particularly in relation to the soul in things outside the body, and so I will only consider its usage in this discussion.

their rice harvest will be good (will have *charawa*).[16] When the *yadengbas* and *mangpas* pass through the *tsawa*, they say «*Thubayuk, Thumayuk*» (Grandfathers, Grandmothers Y) as a way of honoring the ancestors that live there. These places in the original story of the ancestors hold the key to the prosperity and well being of the Yamphu community. This past is evoked each time a *yadengpa* or *mangpa* performs a ritual in which they invoke the *tsawa*.

Sacred/profane//nature/culture

These points about the creation and maintenance of cosmological boundaries illuminate the relationships that Yamphu have to the lands on which they live. The cosmology, ecology, and economy of their lives reinforce a respect for what is outside their control, an acknowledgement of the limits to what they can control. The boundary between what can and cannot be fixed shifts, and their relationship to this 'other' realm, be it Kathmandu or beyond the horizon of the *tsawa* is provisional. The blurred boundaries between sacred and profane express a more general blurring in the *mindhum* of distinctions between nature and culture. There is no 'natural' world that is always out of control; no 'cultural' world that is completely controllable.

In concluding his discussion of the place of forests in the literary imagination of the west, Harrison writes:

> The originating source itself remains unspeakable, for it already claims human language in advance. It lies behind the landscape, to be sure, yet not like a face that hides behind a mask. It is nothing other than the landscape in its unaccountable presence. As it withdraws behind the appearances, it leaves in its place a landscape, that is to say a forest of phenomena to which language and history intrinsically belong (Harrison 1992: 241).

The originating sources for the Yamphu: Matlung Thuba, Manguhang, Kimmahang, and Yimmahang, have withdrawn up the ridge, beyond the *tsawa*, but they still speak through the landscape, through a landscape that is sacred because it expresses their words. The metaphorical journeys the *yadengbas* and *mangpas* make to the summit of Kembalung and to a clear lake in the bowels of the earth, enable them to put features on this originating source, to bring it to life. For the entire community, the world of the ancestors lives through the *tsawa*: a water spring that embodies the soul of the community and that is embodied *in* the souls of individual members of the community. At the *tsawa* the gap between the seen and the unseen, between the living and the dead, becomes indistinguishable. The *mangpas* and *yadengbas* travel through the *tsawa* to go back in time and beyond space, to create and re-create the sacred space to which they all intrinsically belong.

[16] March similarly describes the link between the well being of a Sherpa village in Solu and Womi Ts'o high mountain lake. Sherpas «voiced great concern that the lake was so dried up: it was clearly shrunken to about one-third its normal size, a disturbing phenomenon to Sherpas who look to this lake especially, its fullness and purity, as a visible symbol of their own prosperity and health» (March 1977: 94).

REFERENCES CITED

Aris, Michael (1990), "Man and Nature in the Buddhist Himalayas", in *Himalayan Environment and Culture: Analysis and Prospect.* N. Rustomji and C. Ramble (eds.), Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass.

Caplan, Lionel (1991), "From Tribe to Peasant? The Limbus and the Nepalese State", *Journal of Peasant Studies* 18/2: 305-321.

Diemberger, Hildegard (1992), *The Hidden Valley of Artemisia: Tibetan Sacred Geography as seen within a framework of representations of nature, society, and cosmos.* PhD Dissertation, Universität Wien.

Forbes, Ann (1995), *The Boundary Keepers: The Poetry and Politics of Land in Northeastern Nepal.* PhD Dissertation, Harvard University.

French, Rebecca (1994), "Space and Law in the Cosmology of Buddhist Tibet", Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association, Atlanta, Georgia.

Gaenszle, Martin (1995), *Kinship and Mythology among the Mewahang Rai of East Nepal.* In press, Kathmandu, The Makalu-Barun Conservation Project Working Papers. English translation.

Hardman, Charlotte (n.d), *Conformity and Self-expression: a Study of the Lohorung Rai of East Nepal.* PhD Dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies.

Höfer, Andras (1979), *The Caste Hierarchy and the State in Nepal: A Study of the Muluki Ain of 1854.* Innsbruck, Universitätsverlag Wagen.

Holmberg, David (1989), *Order in Paradox: Myth, Ritual, and Exchange among Nepal's Tamang.* Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

Levine, Nancy (1987), "Caste, State and Ethnic Boundaries in Nepal", *Journal of Asian Studies* 7/1, 71-88.

March, Kathryn (1977), "Of People and Yaks: the Management and Meaning of High Altitude Herding among Contemporary Solu Sherpas", *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* 4/2, 83-97.

Mumford, Stan (1990), *Himalayan Dialogue: Tibetan Lamas and Gurung Shamans in Nepal.* Kathmandu, Tiwari's Pilgrims Book House.

Ramble, Charles (1997), "The Creation of the Bon Mountain of Kongpo", in *Maṇḍala and Landscape.* A. W. Macdonald (ed.), Delhi, D. K. Printworld.

Samuel, Geoffrey (1993), *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies.* Washington, Smithsonian Insitution Press.

THE CLASSIFICATION OF TERRITORIAL DIVINITIES IN PAGAN AND BUDDHIST RITUALS OF SOUTH MUSTANG[1]

by

Charles Ramble, Paris

1. Introduction

A certain amount of recent scholarly attention has been directed towards the question of geographical representation in Tibet and the Himalayas. The availability of new ethnographic materials has made it possible to draw comparisons between the representation of landscape and territory among non-literate Tibetan and Tibeto-Burman communities on the one hand, and, on the other, the perspectives implied in Tibetan literature. This comparative approach has the advantage of revealing those aspects of geographical representation that are particularly susceptible to change from one genre to another, while also making it possible to discern patterns within this flux. In an earlier contribution I have suggested that evidence from a wide variety of materials – primarily songs, rituals and textual descriptions – suggests a progression away from the naturalness of landscape towards stricter formalisation in terms of conventional Buddhist or Bon imagery (Ramble 1995). Elsewhere (Ramble 1996), I have proposed that the notion of personalised gods of place may to some extent be an elaboration of the more primary idea of place itself. The importance accorded to places (for example as boundary markers or as points on a vertical axis related to rituals of fertility) in non-literate Tibeto-Burman communities, as well as in certain Tibetan popular rituals, scarcely has a sacred character at all. In other schemes, places with important political associations come to be regarded as the abode of divinities; sacred mountains, as presented in visionary "guides", reorganise and subdue nature according to the geometric exigencies of the *maṇḍala* and transubstantiate base material – rock, water, wood and so forth – into extraordinary stuff; and finally (at least in one example of modern Tibetan pilgrimage literature)[2] a separation is effected between the sacred and its terrestrial base, such that the divine is merely represented by holy places, not immanent in them, while the places themselves recover their original secular character by becoming suitable subjects for historical or archaeological research.

While there is evidence that these representations do correspond to a historical progression, the appearance of new schemata does not necessarily eclipse older ones, since an apprehension of the former may be dependent on literacy and a grasp of religious conventions that lie outside the education, not to mention the sphere of interest, of many nominally Buddhist or Bonpo communities.

Although there is clearly a wide spectrum of representations, with varying degrees of formalisation, a convenient division in the range can be made between Lamaist and non-Lamaist schemes, and the present article will explore some of the distinguishing features of these two

---

[1] The research on which this article is based was carried out in the course of a project funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and supported by the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University. I am indebted to Nyima Drandul for his help with the interpretation of the recordings presented here. The task of collecting the material was greatly facilitated by the patient help of my colleagues Dr. Angela Simons in Dzar and Leona Mason in Khyenga. And finally, I am grateful to Anne-Marie Blondeau for her valuable remarks on an earlier version of this article.

[2] Tenzin Namdak 1983. For a discussion of this work see Ramble 1995: 112-16.

main categories. Sacred geographical paradigms may be deduced from a variety of sources (such as songs, rituals, literary "guides" and so forth), but I shall concentrate here on the evidence of one category of rites: ceremonies for the propitiation of territorial divinities.

The material to be examined here is drawn from Baragaon, a Tibetan-speaking enclave situated in the southern part of Mustang, in West-central Nepal. The area is a particularly useful field for the kind of comparative enquiry proposed, since it sustains both Lamaist and pagan traditions, and even permits us to examine the implications of a transition from the latter to the former within a single settlement.

A word should be said here about the use of the term "pagan" in the last sentence and in the title. Non-Lamaist Tibetan traditions of a sacred or ritual character are, notoriously, nameless. Giving a name to a set of disparate practices carries the risk of reifying them and creating the illusion of a coherent, systematised religion. I can only emphasise that "pagan" is used here as a convenient adjective and should not be seen to denote a follower of some organised creed called "Paganism". With reference to cults of place-gods in Mustang, the various epithets I have used in the past are frankly unsatisfactory. "Pre-Buddhist" and "non-Buddhist" are inadequate for a number of reasons: the first not least because it begs important questions about the relative antiquity of the two traditions in the region, while the second fails to distinguish other forms of "non-Buddhism" – such as Hinduism – that exist in Mustang. "Popular", another handy evasion, is perhaps even more misleading because of its implication that the cults of place-gods lie within the sphere of public activity, whereas they are in fact quite specialised fields. Whatever its shortcomings, "pagan" at least expresses the essentially local character of these cults (the Latin *pagus* could be very acceptably rendered by the Tibetan word *yul*), and also suggests an ethos that is at odds with the tenets of high religion, whether Buddhism or Bon.

The study of territorial cults in Baragaon is intimately connected to another field of enquiry, namely, the demographic history of the area. While the details of this subject are not relevant for our purposes, at least a cursory outline of local ethnography and history are a necessary background to the changing fortunes of local gods.

The area commonly known as Baragaon is an enclave – and, once upon a time, a large administrative unit – comprising nineteen villages. The inhabitants of the area speak a form of Western Tibetan that is locally referred to as the Dzardzong dialect, after the names of two of the most important settlements in the area, Dzar and Dzong. An exception to this linguistic homogeneity is provided by a group of five villages, collectively known as the Shöyul (Tib. Shod yul), that speak a Tibeto-Burman language called Seke (*Se skad*) that is closely related to languages such as Thakali and Gurung. It is likely that the term Seke is cognate with Se rib, the name of an old political entity that probably included what is now Baragaon. In a forthcoming work I have suggested that the element Se is the obsolete ethnonym of a people that lent its name to compounds such as Seke (the "language of the Se") and Se rib (possibly "enclave of the Se"), as well as a number of other expressions that are currently used in southern Mustang (Ramble in press; on the subject of Se rib, see especially Jackson 1978). The only modern-day use of the term Se as an ethnonym in Mustang occurs in the epithets Se dkar, "White Se", and Se nag, "Black Se", that are applied respectively to the people of Tshug and Te, two of the Shöyul communities. To the south of Baragaon is Panchgaon, the Nepali name of an enclave of five villages which also speak a form of Seke.

This discontinuity in the distribution of Southern Mustang's population has caused a number of researchers to speculate on whether the Seke-speaking Shöyul are the odd-ones-out in a region of Tibetan-speakers, or whether it is the Tibetan-speakers of Southern Baragaon – the Muktinath Valley and its immediate vicinity – who represent the anomaly. There is some circumstantial evidence to suggest that the latter is the case. A number of places in the Muktinath Valley have Seke, not Tibetan names (Ramble 1984: 104), while a seventeenth-century docu-

ment, issued by the Tibetan-speaking rulers of the Muktinath Valley, implies that the indigenous people were at least culturally different. The work "refers to the inhabitants of Kag as *mi ngan*, 'bad persons' who followed bad practices (*srol ngan*), a characterisation that may well refer to the non-Buddhist manner in which they exercised their religion" (Schuh 1995: 25). It is certainly the case that animal sacrifice was performed in most villages of Baragaon until relatively recent times, when the practice was halted by a succession of Buddhist or Bonpo missionaries. As far as I am aware, blood-offerings now occur in only two villages of Baragaon: Samar (Tibetan speaking) and Te (Seke speaking), in both cases in the context of propitiatory rites for territorial divinities.

Blood sacrifice is merely the most conspicuous point of contention in what is a generally uneasy relationship between Buddhist monks and pagan priests. In a number of nominally Buddhist settlements monks and nuns are not permitted to attend propitiatory ceremonies for place gods, on the grounds that their presence is likely to rouse the gods to anger and subsequent retribution. In Te, this antipathy was formalised in an undated memorandum, kept in the village archive, which states that "monks and nuns may not go beyond the [place called] Ko or via the pass up to Yathang".[3] Delicately enough, the reason for the prohibition is not specified, but villagers were unequivocal in their interpretation of the stricture in terms of deference to dangerous place-gods living in certain uncultivated locations on the periphery of the settlement.

It may be mentioned that these restrictions do not apply to Nyingmapa tantric lamas. The opposition is not a simple polarity between Buddhist and pagan ideologies, but this complex issue will not be discussed here.

2. Pagan priests of Baragaon

Who, then, are the protagonists in the propitiation of these pagan gods? With very few exceptions, every village of Baragaon has one priest who is responsible for this task. The term by which such priests are known is *lha bon,* a name that has been recorded for similar specialists in other parts of Nepal. Another term that is used for the incumbents of this role is *aya* (Tib. *a ya*). This name, which appears in certain Bon texts in relation to priests of Zhang-zhung, is still current in Thini, just south of Baragaon. *Aya* were still active in parts of Tibet adjacent to Nepal until the 1950s, when their performances also included animal sacrifice.[4] It is probable that the *aya* of South Mustang are not functionally different from the *lha bon*, but rather that the latter name has become more prevalent in recent times. For example, the usual name for these priests in Marpha, in Panchgaon, is *drom,* but various documents from the region (for they were also active outside Marpha) from the seventeenth century and later refer to them as *aya*. Similarly, the present-day *lha bon* of Taye, in the Shöyul, possesses a written version of his recitation. The text, written in Tibetan script in a mixture of Seke and Tibetan, was the work of the present *lha bon*'s great-grandfather, who refers to himself in its pages as an *aya*.

While there are broad similarities in the roles of the *aya*, *lha bon* and *drom* of South Mustang, there are also considerable variations in the form of territorial cults from one place to another, not to mention differences in the roles of individual priests. A proper comparative study of these traditions would certain be rewarding, especially if the scope were extended further to include, say, the Tibetan *aya* and the Tamang *lambu* (the name itself is very probably derived from the word *lha bon*).

---

[3] The unedited text reads: *rtsun pa jo mo sko des nas bro rkyu mi yong | ya' thang la nas bro skyu mi yong.*

[4] My colleague Hildegard Diemberger and I have made videotaped recordings of the *aya* of Porong, now a member of the diaspora community of Boudha, in Kathmandu, performing a *g.yang 'gug* ceremony; the role of the *aya* of Kyirong will be discussed in a forthcoming work by Guntram Hazod.

In the present article, however, I shall concentrate on the cult of territorial divinities in three adjacent Tibetan-speaking villages of the Muktinath Valley: Khyenga, Dzar and Purang. The *lha bon* of these three villages perform a number of different seasonal and occasional functions, but here we shall consider just one: the spring ceremony for the propitiation of territorial gods. The rituals provide a useful base for comparison to the extent that they have a similar form and purpose, and are performed at about the same time of year.

The relatively narrow scope of the present article should be emphasised: this is not intended to be an exhaustive study of the *lha bon*'s role in society, and we shall ignore the complex organisation that underlies these performances in order to concentrate on the recitations themselves. Furthermore, little attention will be given to the gods who are the subject of the propitiatory rites: it may simply be noted here that while some of them are confined to a single settlement, others enjoy quite wide popularity, and are the centre of a variety of different cults. And finally, the discussion of the recitations themselves will be confined to an assessment of their implicit classification of the gods themselves.

The material will be dealt with as follows. The texts of the recitations from Khyenga, Dzar and Purang will be presented in turn, with the transcript of the tape-recording on the left and a parallel English translation. In a number of instances the different sections of these recitations comprise known Tibetan scriptures that have been committed to memory with varying degrees of fidelity by the *lha bon* (it should be mentioned that none of the *lha bon* is literate). In such cases the content of the recitation has been omitted and an indication given that the work is recited *texto*, with certain inevitable variations due to nothing more than imperfect memory. The sections that are reproduced in full below are those which, as far as I am aware, have no written form, and are the most "local" and, for our purposes, the most relevant parts of the performance. I have described the texts that will be presented below as transcriptions, but it will be evident that a degree of interpretation has taken place in order to arrive at this form. For the most part, the recitations adhere to a language that lends itself to transliteration. The occasional expressions in Dzardzong dialect that have no obvious literary form are presented between asterisks. In some cases, aberrant grammatical forms have been retained in order more faithfully to reproduce the pronunciation. Thus the recurring expression *nunga dze*, "please give", is rendered *gnang ba mdzad* rather than in the more correct literary form *gnang ba mdzod*. Words and phrases that we have not been able to interpret, as well as proper names of uncertain etymology, are given in italics. Material that is obviously superfluous is presented in brackets {...}. All expressions in Seke are underlined.

3. The archery festival of Khyenga

The principal occasion for the propitiation of territorial gods in Khyenga is the spring archery festival (*mda' chang*), which is held from the full moon of the third Tibetan month (usually April-May). The day begins with the elderly *lha bon* riding to the shrine of nearby Muktinath (on a horse of any colour other than black) and purifying himself by bathing in the one hundred and eight springs. On his return journey he must take a circuitous route across the hills in order to avoid contamination by "community pollution" (*yul grib*). With the help of certain village officials he prepares an altar in front of one of the main village gods, Jowo Chögyal (Jo bo chos rgyal), a triple chorten sandwiched between two huge poplar trees at the eastern end of the village. Jowo Chögyal appears throughout Mustang as a place-god associated with water, or possibly the underworld. (For a discussion of the name of this god and his position in constellations of place-gods, see Ramble 1996.) The cult of Khyenga's territorial gods is a very complex affair, a situation that has possibly arisen from the fact that the village land is a composite of several different territories. The four protectors (whom the *lha bon* referred to as *yi dam*) represented on the altar are in fact the four main gods of the abandoned settlement of Khalung, where the rite is

performed. The four are conceived of as a family unit with Jowo Chögyal as the grandfather, two others his son and daughter-in-law and the fourth his grandson. In the recitation, these four are contracted into the single figure of Jowo Chögyal. The other divinities invoked but not represented on the altar are: Yulsa Daro (Yul sa Dar po);[5] Lama Suna Yeshe (bSod nams ye shes); Jowo Üki Dakpo (Jo bo dbus kyi bdag po), the "Lord who is Master of the Centre". Yulsa Daro is a common name for village gods throughout South Mustang. Suna Yeshe is the name of a legendary figure, a tantric lama who is said to have held both spiritual and temporal power over Khyenga during his lifetime. Following his death he became a harmful spirit belonging to the category known as *mi shi btsan skyes* "one who dies a man and is born a *btsan*". The village besought him to stop his harmful activities, and through a medium he expressed his assent. From then on he was transformed into a *lha*. Unlike the other village gods, Lama Suna Yeshe never received blood-sacrifices. He is said to have inhabited a castle (*mkhar*) between Khalung and the present village. A field known as mKhar is identified as the site of this vanished edifice.[6] The fourth god, Jowo Üki Dakpo, is also situated in the modern village.

3.1. The recitation of the Khyenga lha bon

A. Fumigation: ***bSang byung yid bzhin nor bu (texto)***

B. Libation: ***sDe brgyad gser skyems (texto)***

C. Prayer (*sMon lam*)

khyeng ga yul sa dar po zhal du mchod	Yulsa Daro of Khyenga, receive these offerings!
bla ma bsod nams ye shes zhal du mchod	Lama Suna Yeshe, receive these offerings!
nyigya newe (?) zhal du mchod	Dwellers of the two hundred places (?),[7] receive these offerings!
nyigya chugpo (?) zhal du mchod	[Dwellers of the] two hundred springs(?),[8] receive these offerings!
gsum brgya grong gi bdag po	Master of the three hundred households
dbu'i ral stong gi bdag po[9]	Master with the thousand tresses
jo bo dbus kyi bdag po zhal du mchod	Master of the Centre, Lord, receive these offerings!
dgon pa (?) yid bzhin nor bu zhal du mchod	Wish-fulfilling gem of the temple, receive these offerings!
jo bo chos rgyal chen po zhal du mchod	Lord Yama, receive these offerings!
owa la ye shes kyi spyan	You have eyes of transcendent wisdom
rdzu 'phrul gyi zhabs	And feet of magic;

---

[5] *yul sa*: this spelling is the only one I have encountered (albeit rarely) in local texts. Concerning its standing for *yul lha*, and the justification for an alternative form, *yul rtsa*, see the articles by S.G. Karmay and I. Riaboff in *Reflections of the Mountain. Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya*. A.M. Blondeau, E. Steinkellner (eds.), Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Veröffentlichungen zur Sozialanthropologie, Band 2), 1996.

[6] A fifth *gtor ma* on the altar, described as the "servant" (*g.yog po*) of the family of four, strongly resembles the *gtor ma* of Lama Suna Yeshe in the *Kalag Bigwa* ceremony of Dzar, but the Khyenga *lha bon* did not identify it as such.

[7] Translation based on the interpretation of *nyigya newe* as *gnyis brgya gnas pa'i* .

[8] Dz. **chugpo**: "spring".

[9] The *gtor ma* that represents Suna Yeshe is crowned with ten strips of dough, each representing one hundred locks of hair.

ya 'gro *gi* bsu ma mdzad	When we go up, receive us,
ma 'gro *gi* skyel ma mdzad	And be our escort when we come down;
srog gi lhan pa mdzad	Be a patch over our life-force [to stop it leaking out]
tshe *gi* 'thud ma mdzad cig	And be an extension to our lives;
brag la 'gro na them pa'i skyor ba mdzad	If we go on the crags, be steps to support us,
chu la 'gro na zam pa skyor ba mdzad	And if we go on the water support us as bridges;
tshong la 'gro na tshong dpon gnang ba mdzad	If we go trading, make us the foremost traders;
dmag la 'gro na dmag dpon gnang ba mdzad	If we go to war, make us the generals;
yul la bsdad na yul dpon gnang ba mdzad	If we remain in the village, make us the village chiefs;
'gro na gom gsum gyi mgyogs ba gnang ba mdzad	If we travel, make us three steps quicker;
mna' na tshig gsum gyi rgyal ba gnang ba mdzad	If we speak, let us be three words more convincing;
bsdad na pus rkang gi mtho ba gnang ba mdzad	If we are seated, let us be one knee-height loftier;
kha dgyes pa ja chang dang 'bral med gnang ba mdzad	Let our mouths never be without tea and beer to please them;
lus dgyes pa ma bya dang 'bral med gnang ba mdzad	To please our bodies, let them ever be like peacocks;
rna mchog dgyes pa gtam dang 'bral med gnang ba mdzad	Let our ears never be without speech to please them;
mig dgyes pa ltad mo dang 'bral med gnang ba mdzad	Let our eyes never be without a view to please them;
lag dgyes pa nor dang 'bral med gnang ba mdzad	Let our hands never be without wealth to please them;
skyang la mis 'khengs pa	May the top floor of our houses be full of people;
bar khang 'brus 'khengs pa	May the middle of the houses be full of grain;
'og khang phyugs kyis 'khengs pa	May the ground floor be full of cattle;
skyang gi mi la na tsha ma btang	Spare the people of the upper floor from illness;
'og gi phyugs la god kha ma btang	Spare the cattle on the ground floor from disease;
sems pa bzang po la bar chad ma btang	Spare our fine minds from obstructions;
lus po bzang po la na tsha ma btang	Spare our fine bodies from illness;
skyob pa'i srung ma mdzad	Shelter us as our guardian;
ya 'gro'i bsu ma mdzad	Receive us when we go up,
ma 'gro'i skyel ma mdzad	And accompany us when we come down;
srog gi lhan pa mdzad	Be a patch for our life-force;
tshe yi 'thud ma mdzad	Be an extension on our lives;
lo phyugs rtag tu lags 'a	Let there always be harvests and cattle;
char chu dus su 'bab pa mdzad	Let the timely rain fall;
mi nad phyugs nad kyi rgyun gcod	End the succession of illnesses among people and cattle;
bla ma bsod nams ye shes zhal du mchod	Lama Suna Yeshe, receive these offerings!
'bru sna gtsang ma mchod	Eat these pure kinds of grain!
skyob pa'i srung ma mdzad	Protect us as a our guardian!
chang phud gtsang ma mchod	Drink this pure oblation of beer!

D. Prayer to the twenty-one Tārās: *sGrol ma nyi shu rtsa gcig* (*texto*)

...lha rgyal lo | lha rgyal lo...

4. The *Kalag Bigwa* ceremony of Dzar

There are lengthy preliminaries to the *Kalag Bigwa* ceremony which, as in the case of the Khyenga archery festival, involve the *lha bon* of Dzar riding to the shrine of nearby Muktinath and purifying himself. (A similar purification is undergone by the priest of Khyenga.) He returns to Dzar, dons a white turban, and after a brief ceremony in the village temple is accompanied to the site of the main ritual by a retinue of village functionaries. The ritual is performed on the roof of the principal noble family of Dzar. An altar is set up against the rooftop shrine (*btsan khang*, "*btsan*'s house") of the main household god. In this particular case the god in question is Shel rdzang dkar po.[10]

The top rank of the altar bears images of the eight main territorial gods of Dzar. To the left is the "male row" (*pho rgyud*), comprising: Yulsa Daro; Jowo Chögyal; Lagyab Dewa Nyenpo (La rgyab sde pa gnyan po, the "Fierce Ruler from Beyond the Pass") and Pare Dütsen Nyenpa (*Pare* bdud btsan gnyan po).[11] To the left is the female row (*mo rgyud*), which numbers four goddesses: Ama Dagmo Trashi (A ma bDag mo bkra shis, "Mother Lady Good Fortune"); Ama Tshangdzom Momo (A ma Tshang 'dzom *momo*, "Mother Abundance Maternal Aunt");[12] Ama Nobrug Gyalmo (A ma Nam 'brong rgyal mo, "Mother Queen Wild Yak of the Sky"),[13] and Ama Kargyenma (A ma dKar rgyan ma, "Mother Auspicious Butter Ornament"), whose epithet is "Lady of Milk" (*bzhon gyi bdag mo*). Below the rank of the protectors stands a *gtor ma* representing Lama Suna Yeshe, whom we have encountered above in Khyenga. In this case, Lama Suna Yeshe is not one of the village gods but an intermediary between the *lha bon* and the eight protectors. Among the various offerings on the altar – which, for reasons given above, will not be detailed here – is the dough image of a sheep. This effigy, it was explained, represents a sheep that in past time used to be released as a live offering to the gods. There are numerous instances of animals – particularly yaks, horses and sheep – that used to be offered to place gods in this way. In the nearby village of Putra, four goats each year are still selected as live offerings by the *lha bon* of the community. In addition to this dough sheep there are the effigies of three goats, which are not placed on the altar but on a plate near the *lha bon*. These represent the live goats that once used to be sacrificed during the ceremony.

A few words should be said about the name of this ceremony, *Kala Bigwa*. The only literary reference to this ceremony of which I am aware, a passing mention in an undated document from Dzar, gives the name as *ka lag bi pa*, but – as so often in such literature – the orthography

---

[10] The *lha bon* has no authority to perform rituals to the latter himself. Instead, the annual propitiation is performed by the Bonpo lama of the village, who reveres him as the closely-related Bon god rGyal po Nyi pang sad. Both in Dzar and in the nearby Bonpo village of Lubra there is a tendency to conflate these divinities into a single figure. (As for the association between Shel 'gying dkar po and Nyi pang sad, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956: 147.)

[11] The meaning of *Pare* is unclear. It may be noted, however, that the term *pare/ bare* denotes a category of clan priests among the Thakalis of southern Mustang.

[12] **Momo** in the Dzar dialect signifies "maternal aunt" (elsewhere in Dzardzong **hrumo*, < *sru mo*).

[13] The spelling of this name as Nam 'brong rgyal mo appears on the two occasions when this goddess is mentioned in a *gser skyems* text from Taye, and is not necessarily authoritative. I have not encountered the name anywhere else in written form. As we shall see below, two of the territorial divinities of Purang are likened to herds of domestic animals. This would justify an interpretation of the term "*drong*" as **drong** (presumably Tib. *grong*), which means "herd" in the Dzardzong dialect. The translation of *grong* as "household" in the recitation of the Khyenga *lha bon* (see above) is justified by the exegesis of the *lha bon* and other informants. The usual term for household in the region is *grong pa*.

gives little indication of the etymology. Now the *Kalag Bigwa* ceremony corresponds in form to a ritual that used to be performed in Kag, a short distance from Dzar, by the *aya* of Marpha, one of the five villages of Panchgaon. The ceremony, called the *Bale Subpa*, is said to have been abandoned some thirty-five years ago at the instigation of the Shangba Rimpoche, an influential reformer from Tibet. The name of this ceremony appears in a seventeenth-century document from Kag with the spelling *ba le gsum pa*. While *gsum pa* is certainly Tibetan, *ba le* appears to be a rendering of the Nepali *bali,* meaning blood sacrifice. *Ba le gsum pa* might therefore mean simply "threefold sacrificial offering", and indeed the document in question does imply that three animals – two sheep and a goat – were offered on this occasion (Schuh 1995: 32). However, the Seke language provides us with an alternative etymology that suggests a relationship between the *Bale Subpa* and the *Kalag Bigwa* ceremonies, and further explains the fact that the second word is pronounced "*subpa*" rather than "*sumpa*". Now *Kalag* in the Dzardzong dialect signifies "limb" (< *rkang lag*). The root *big* (possibly cognate with *'big pa*, to pierce or bore), means "to insert, bury". *Bale subpa,* understood as a Seke, rather than a mixed Tibetan-Nepali, expression, would have exactly the same meaning: *bale* in Seke means limb (in the case of humans, legs only, but any limb with reference to quadrupeds); *subpa,* to insert or bury. Informants in Kag who remembered the performance of the *Bale Subpa* noted that part of the ritual involved burying a limb of the sacrificial goat at the shrine of the divinity being worshipped. Archaeologists working at the long-abandoned settlement of Garabdzong, near Thini in Panchgaon, have recently discovered a large repository of goat tibias beside the remains of what appears to be a *stūpa* or some similar shrine (Ernst Pohl and Angela von den Driesch, personal communication), and it is difficult not to interpret this finding in the light of some ceremony similar to the *Bale Subpa* and the *Kalag Bigwa.*

The following transcript of the *Kalag Bigwa,* recorded and filmed in Dzar in 1995, deals only with the recitation performed on the roof of the ruling family of Dzar. It should again be emphasised that this is in no sense a complete study of the ritual. However, the text, as presented here, is interspersed with occasional descriptions of the more relevant activities with which the *lha bon* accompanies his recitation. Also included are a few revealing remarks that he himself added as asides. This additional material is presented in italics in order to distinguish it from the formal text.

4.1. The recitation of the Dzar lha bon

A. Fumigation

bsangs so bsangs so bsangs so...	Be purified, be purified...
skyang gi lha la bsangs so bsangs so	Gods of the top floor, be purified!
'og gi klu la bsangs so	Serpent-spirits below, be purified!
bar gi btsan la bsangs so	*btsan* in the middle, be purified!
dme grib yugs grib shi grib sdig grib	Defilement from incest,[14] defilement from widowhood, defilement from death, defilement from sin

[14] In the texts cited by Samten Karmay in his study of Bonpo fumigation rituals the word for incest is *nal. dMe/ sme* means "impurity", and "refers particularly to the type of impurity incurred by murder, *especially of a member belonging to the same family or clan*" (Karmay in press; my emphasis). As far as I am aware *nal* is never used in the Dzardzong dialect, and *dme* unquestionably signifies incest. The expression *dme sre ba* means "to commit incest" (*sre ba*: "to mix"), and *dme phrug* denotes a child born from an incestuous union. The apparent difference in meaning is perhaps resolved by the notion, common to both interpretations, of a prohibitively close degree of kinship within which an otherwise legitimate (or at least non-polluting) activity takes place. This suggestion is borne out by one of the definitions of *dme grib* given in the *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*: *snga dus kyi shod srol du rigs rus gcig pa 'am*

bsangs so (x 5)	Be purified...
sa la 'bar ba khen pa'i bsang	The purifying smoke of wormwood, that burns on the ground,
chu la 'bar ba ma nu bsang	The purifying smoke of bryony, that burns on water,
spang la 'bar ba spang spos bsang	The purifying smoke of spikenard that burns on the meadow,
brag la 'bar ba shug pa'i bsang	The purifying smoke of juniper, that burns on the crags,
chu la 'bar ba ma nu bsang	The purifying smoke of bryony, that burns on water,
dri bzang spos dkar	The finely-perfumed frankincense:
bsdus pa'i bsang rdzas *puli tsenu* (?) 'bul ba mdzad pa	These gathered substances of purifying smoke we offer you!
bsangs so (x 7)	
dme grib lus grib shi grib dam grib btsog grib	Defilement from incest, defilement from the body, defilement from death, defilement from [broken] vows, defilement from impurity
(*fumigation repeated*)	
bsangs so bsangs so	
dme grib ro grib lha srung sde brgyad gang bo la {dme grib ro grib} sbang grib shi grib 'phog pa'i bsang tshogs gtsang ma phul yod	I have offered this clean collection of purifying smoke to all the eight classes of tutelar gods [against] affliction by defilement from incest, defilement from corpses, {defilement from incest, defilement from corpses}, defilement from birth, defilement from death;
bsang ma dag pa med do	There is nothing that has not been cleansed by purifying smoke;
khrus ma dag pa med do	There is nothing that has not been cleansed by purifying water;
'bru ma dag pa med do (sic)	There is nothing that has not been purified by grain (?);
bsangs so...	

B. The invitation

spyan drang ngo (x 3)	I invite you to come...
dzar yul sa dar po spyan drang ngo	Yulsa Daro of Dzar, I invite you to come!
lung pa (sic) 'di'i nang du	Here in this village
'ja' dang 'od kyi gur khang phubs yod	We have pitched a tent of rainbows and light;
dkyil 'khor 'di'i nang du spyan drang ngo	I invite you to enter this *maṇḍala*!
yul sa choru spyan drang ngo	Yulsa Choru, I invite you to come!
dkyil 'khor (sic) 'di'i nang du	Here in this *maṇḍala*

| *gnyen phyogs nang khul phan tshun gsod res byas pa dang pho mo bsdebs pa'i grib* | "In popular usage in the past, impurity from reciprocal killing or sexual relations between members of the same clan or close relations".

'ja' dang 'od kyi gur khang phubs yod	We have pitched a tent of rainbows and light;
dkyil 'khor 'di'i nang du spyan drang ngo	I invite you to enter this *maṇḍala*!
jo bo chos rgyal gnyan po...	Lord Yama...
la rgyab sde pa gnyan po...	Largyab Dewa Nyenpo (Fierce Ruler from Beyond the Pass)...
pare bdud btsan gnyan po...	Pare Dütsen Nyenpo...
a ma dag mo bkra shis spyan... etc	Mother Dagmo Trashi, I invite... etc.
a ma tshang 'dzom mo mo ...	Mother Tshangdzom, Maternal Aunt...
a ma nam 'brong rgyal mo...	Mother Nobrug Gyalmo...
bzhon gyi bdag po a ma dkar rgyan ma...	Lady (lit. Lord) of Milk, Mother Kargyenma ...
bla ma bsod nams ye shes spyan... etc.	Lama Suna Yeshe, I invite... etc.
(...? *a few inaudible phrases*)	
da phebs pa *ra*	Now they have come

C. Oblation of beer

(*gets up, to the accompaniment of drums and cymbals played by the village officials, and ladles beer from the flask into the dough cup in front of each of the gtor ma, inviting each to receive the contents*)

dzar yul sa dar po dzar yul sa dar po (*rpt. several times)*	Yulsa Daro of Dzar...
mchod pa 'phul gyi yod do mchod pa bzhes	I make you these offerings, receive these offerings!

jo bo chos rgyal gnyan po... (*etc. for each of the nine divinities on the altar in turn*)

D. Libation *sDe brgyad gser skyems* (*texto*)

E. *Badzra gu ru* (repeated ca. x 108)

F. Beer oblation

(*He rises and ladles beer into the cup in front of each gtor ma on the altar, calling each by name and uttering the following phrase to each*)	
chang phud gtsang ma'i mchod pa bzhes (*rpt. several times*)	Receive this offering of a pure oblation of beer!

G. Requesting the omens

dkar po gangs kyi bzhugs pa'i lha srung sde brgyad [spyan] zhus [yod]	You eight classes of tutelar gods who dwell on the white snow-mountains, I have invited you!
gu ru rin po che gtso 'khor bzhengs[15] yod	Padmasambhava and his associates have come (or gone?)
gnas chen chu mig brgya rtsa spyan zhus yod	I have invited the great holy place of Muktinath!
yul gyi lha srung sde brgyad spyan zhus yod	I have invited the eight categories of tutelar gods of the village!

[15] **zhang** sometimes used in Dzar as a respectful form of both *yong* and *'gro*. It is not to be confused with **shag** (< Tib. *gshegs*), an honorific term reserved for women.

ra ma cha la ten karu spyan zhus yod	I have invited... (?)
dkyil 'khor 'di'i nang du	Into this *maṇḍala*,
'ja' dang 'od kyi gur khang du spyan zhus yod	Into this tent of rainbows and light, I invite you,
rtags pa 'di owe gis snum la pheb cig gnang ba mdzad	I pray you to bring the omens!
nga ni chos yang med	I am illiterate,
chos ni yon tan med do	I am illiterate and unaccomplished;
nga 'jig rten gyi mi yin no	I belong to the ephemeral world;
nga sdig pa'i dkor *ma na* med do	I am recompensed only for performing sinful acts;
nga dge ba'i dkor med do	It is not for virtuous acts that I am recompensed;
rtags pa 'di nyan te ngas da lta zhu 'o	I request the omens, listening for them (?)
dkar mo dmar mo la rtags pa [gnang ba] mdzad 'o	Give me the omens for the white and the red [barley]
dkar mo 'o ma'i nang du	Inside the white milk,
rtags pa 'od kyis bstan te gnang ba mdzad do	Give me the omens, revealed by light!
mi nad phyugs nad byung na	If there is to be illness among people or cattle
rtags pa 'di ru bstan te gnang ba mdzad do	Reveal the omens here and give them to us;
yul lags pa'i rtags pa (gtam {pa}?) yod na	If the omens indicate abundance in the village
bstan te gnang ba mdzad do	Reveal them and give them to us!
jo bo *non non* (?nan ten?) yod na	If...?
rtags pa bstan te gnang du pheb bo	Reveal the omens and give them to us;
nga ni *owe* lha srung sde brgyad la gsol ba phul mkhan *ma na* mi shes so	I know only how to make offerings to you, the eight classes of tutelar gods;
nga ni 'jig rten gyi sdig pa'i sbyin bdag *ma na* med do	I have only patrons who are [concerned with] worldly sins;
rtags pa bstan te gnang ba mdzad do	Reveal the omens and give them to us.

H. The sacrifice

(*Producing his knife, he comments:*

da sdig pa babs song | nga dkar mchod ma na dmar mchod mi byed.	*Now I am afflicted with sin. But I only perform "white" offerings, not blood sacrifices.*

He begins to cut up the goats)

Oṃ ma ṇi pad me hūṃ... *rpt. ad. lib.*

gzhan 'bral dus gri 'thebs pa brgyab pa brgyab	I have seized and wielded this timely knife that parts [body from life];
shable (sha las) ri rab byas pa 'di thibs par byas (?)	This butchery that is as great as mount Meru, this I have done abundantly (?)
dran par ldan mdzad par mdzad (?)	Please be mindful of this!
dpung pa 'di *nen* ba mdzad	Receive this shoulder!

(*He comments:*

*sngon la dmar *ra* da lta dkar *ra**	*In the past it used to be a blood offering. Now it's a "white" one*)

dzar yul sa dar po mkhyen no (*rpt. several times*)	O Yulsa Daro of Dzar...
ra lug bsad pa 'di mchod pa gtsang ma | dam pa phul gyi yod do	I am making you a pure offering of these goats and sheep (*sic*)[16] that have been slaughtered!

jo bo chos \| chu rgyal gnyan po... (*etc. for all the figures on the altar*)

I. *Nang rol gyi mchod pa* (offering of entrails [and bones])

dzar yul sa dar po	Yulsa Daro of Dzar
rkang dang rus pa'i mchod pa bzhes	Receive this offering of marrow and bone!

jo bo chos rgyal gnyan po... (*etc. for each of the divinities in turn*)

J. Prayer for prosperity etc.

gu ru rin po che mkhyen no (*rpt.*)	O Guru Rimpoche
dzar lung pa la bkra shis pa gnang ba mdzad cig	Bestow good fortune on the village of Dzar;
lung pa rtswa med la rtswa'i dngos grub gnang ba mdzad 'o	Give grassless valleys the power to have grass;
lung pa chu 'di [*err. for* med?] la chu gnang ba mdzad 'o	Give water to waterless valleys;
mi la na tsha med mkhan dngos grub gnang ba mdzad 'o	Give people the power to be free of illness;
dus [*err. for* tshe?] la bar chad med pa'i dngos grub gnang ba mdzad 'o	Give us the power to have lives free from obstructions;
ri ka rtswa med la rtswa'i dngos grub gnang ba mdzad 'o	Give grassless hillsides the power to have grass;
lung ba chu 'di [*err. for* med?] la chu'i dngos grub gnang ba mdzad 'o	Give waterless valleys the power to have water;
gang bo la lung bstan (?) tshe'i dngos grub gnang ba mdzad 'o	Give everyone the power of long life as prophesied (?);
sman bu mo la bu yi dngos grub gnang ba mdzad 'o	Give women the power to bear sons;
nya ru mi 'phel ba'i dngos grub gnang ba mdzad 'o	Give people, who live on top, the power to increase;
'og tu phyugs 'phel ba'i dngos grub gnang ba mdzad 'o	Give cattle, that live below, the power to increase;
bsam tshad don du grub pa'i dngos grub gnang ba mdzad 'o	Give us the power to fulfil our desires to the utmost!

K. Offering of white barley (*dkar mo nas*)

The name of each of the nine gods is called as he ladles some barley into their bowls, saying

dkar mo nas kyi mchod pa bzhes	Receive this offering of white barley!

L. Inspection of omens by the village officials

[16] In fact only the effigies of the goats are cut up.

M. Dismissal of the gods

yul sa dar po mkhyen no	O Yulsa Daro
rang rang so so nag po'i rdza la ma chag	Do not settle among the black slates!
dkar po'i gangs la ma chag	Do not settle among the white snow-mountains!
bzheng ba mdzad (x 2)	Please depart!
la rgyab sde pa mkhyen no	O Largyab Dewa
rang rang... etc.	Do not.. etc.
And so on for the rest of the pho rgyud	
a ma dag mo bkra shis mkhyen no	O Mother Dagmo Trashi,
rang rang so so nag po'i rdza la ma chag	Do not settle among the black slates!
dkar po'i gangs la ma chag	Do not settle among the white snow mountains!
a ma gshegs pa mdzad (*rpt.*)	Mother, please depart!
Etc. for the mo rgyud *and for Lama Suna Yeshe*	
rang khang gnas khang	To your own dwelling places,
so so rang gi khang pa	To your respective houses,
rang gi rig pa don dag la rang ni zin te	Collecting your wits regarding your own affairs,
bzheng ba mdzad	Please depart!
nga ni chos mi shes	I am illiterate
yon tan mi shes	And unaccomplished
digi yang ngas zhus pa yin	And I have just told you that;
da bzheng ba mdzad o	Now please depart!
chos mi shes *ngur* (?) mi shes	I am illiterate and I do not know... ?
phrag dog dmod sdigs med mkhan phyir	So that there should be no jealousy or the threat of curses
'gro ba thams cad [bde ba?] gnang ba mdzad	Grant [peace?] to all living beings;
rang rang bzheng ba mdzad	Each of you, depart!
khang pa la chag pa ma mdzad	Do not settle in our houses!
gnas khang la bzheng ba mdzad	Depart to your own dwellings;
nga ni chos med yon tan med	I am unlettered and unaccomplished;
gnas khang la bzheng ba mdzad	Depart to your dwellings!

5. The propitiation of the gods of Purang

The third and last ceremony to be discussed here is known simply as the "Offering to the gods of Purang" (sPu-hrangs *lha mchod mkhan*). The *lha bon* of Purang, alone among the priests of the Muktinath Valley, does not have recourse to astrological works (or rather, to lamas who are competent to consult such works) in order to determine the date on which the ceremony should be performed. Instead, he calculates the occasion – the summer solstice – by observing the alignment of certain mountains and ridges with the rising sun.[17]

[17] A similar technique is incidentally used in Taye, one of the Shöyul. In the latter case it is the village headmen and

The site of the performance is a red- and whitewashed shrine south-east of the settlement. The god is called Jowo Sele Rakar. *Sele* is an epithet of yak-cows, and indeed the god is said to be like a herd of these animals. The *lha bon* himself interpreted the word *rakar* as *rag dkar*, lit. "white brass", a term which usually signifies the ornamental brass strips on wooden beer-flasks. Other informants suggested that it meant simply "white horns" (*rwa dkar*). The Jowo forms a pair with a goddess, situated downhill on the north side of the village, called Jode Sele Yungkar (probably Jo-sde *Sele* g.yu-dkar).[18] She is said to be "like a flock of sheep". Like the priests of Khyenga and Dzar, the *lha bon* of Purang begins the day of the ceremony by visiting Muktinath for a bath in its purifying waters. The altar in this case is a relatively simple affair, which includes 360 small *gtor ma* to be offered to the gods "one for each day of the year" and the dough effigy of a sheep.

5.1. The recitation of the Purang lha bon

A. Fumigation

rme grib shi grib 'bag grib gson po grib ma dag pa gang yang med mchis	There is no defilement at all from incest, from death, from uncleanliness or any living being not purified by smoke;
bsangs so bsangs so	Be purified!

B. Invitation

sPu hrangs yul sa dar po	Yulsa Daro of Purang,
slob dpon gtso 'khor gsum po	And you three, the Teacher (Padmasambhava) and his companions,
tinyi puli yöto chöyi yö ji	Today I am making you this offering, am worshipping you,
tinyi so la ri jöngo	Come and receive these offerings today!
lha tshogs *sele* ra dkar	Divine Host Yak-cow with White Horns,
tinyi puli yöto chöyi yö ji	Today I am making you this offering, am worshipping you,
tinyi so la ri jöngo	Come and receive these offerings today!
gnas chen chu mig brgya rtsa	Great holy place of Muktinath,
rang byon rdo la me 'bar	Self-originated fire burning on stone [and earth and water]
tinyi puli yöto chöyi yö ji	Today I am making you this offering, am worshipping you,
tinyi so la ri jöngo	Come and receive these offerings today!
ducö sna yi lha srung gzhi bdag...	Tutelar gods and lords of the place of Ducö Spur,
tinyi puli yöto chöyi yö ji	Today I am making you this offering, am worshipping you,
tinyi so la ri jöngo	Come and receive these offerings today!

their assistants who, on behalf of the *lha bon*, observe the position of the setting sun behind a jagged ridge.

[18] In view of the rich pastoral imagery in the names of these gods, "Yung" might very well also represent *g.yung*, meaning "domestic [cattle]", although the term is not current in the Dzardzong dialect.

la[ra] liri jala jete gala gungkar lha srung gzhi bdag	Tutelar gods and lords of the place of Lara Liri, Jala Jete and Gala Gungkar
tinyi puli yöto chöyi yö ji	Today I am making you this offering, am worshipping you,
tinyi so la ri jöngo	Come and receive these offerings today!
dragdowe chörgyü gnas pa'i lha srung gzhi bdag	Tutelar gods and lords of the place who dwell in the vicinity of Dragdowa
klu brag *chörgyü* gnas pa'i lha srung gzhi bdag	Tutelar gods and lords of the place who dwell in the vicinity of Lubra
tinyi puli yöto chöyi yö ji	Today I am making you this offering, am worshipping you,
tinyi so la ri jöngo	Come and receive these offerings today!
rong *thalgye* gnas pa'i lha srung gzhi bdag	Tutelar gods and lords of the place who dwell at Rong Thalgya
tinyi puli yöto chöyi yö ji	Today I am making you this offering, am worshipping you,
tinyi so la ri jöngo	Come and receive these offerings today!
bkag *chörgyü* gnas pa'i lha srung gzhi bdag	Tutelar gods and lords of the place who dwell in the vicinity of Kagbeni
tinyi puli yöto chöyi yö ji	Today I am making you this offering, am worshipping you,
tinyi so la ri jöngo	Come and receive these offerings today!
sa dmar *chörgyü* gnas pa'i lha srung gzhi bdag	Tutelar gods and lords of the place who dwell in the vicinity of Samar
tinyi puli yöto chöyi yö ji	Today I am making you this offering, am worshipping you,
tinyi so la ri jöngo	Come and receive these offerings today!

C. Offering

(*He throws a tray full of* gtor ma *over his shoulder*)

D. Dismissal

dme grib shi grib 'bag grib gson po grib ma dag pa gang yang med mchis	There is no defilement at all from incest, from death, from uncleanliness or any living being not purified by smoke;
bsangs so bsangs so	Be purified!
lo gcig zla ba bcu gnyis gtor ma gsum brgya drug bcu	These 360 tormas for the twelve months of the year
pul ang jinji chöla ang jinji	I have given to you, have offered to you;
tinyi shagso (< gshegs so)	Please depart today!
gnas chen chu mig brgya rtsa	Great holy site of Muktinath,
rang byon rdo la me 'bar	Self-originated fire burning on rock, [on earth and on water],

lha tshogs *sele* mgon po	Divine Host, Yak-cow Protector,
lo gcig zla ba bcu gnyis gtor ma gsum brgya drug bcu	These 360 tormas for the twelve months of the year
pul ang jinji chöla ang jinji	I have given you, have offered you
tinyi shagso	Please depart today!

Return journey as above: see commentary below

6. The conservation of Seke in territorial rituals

Undoubtedly the single most striking feature in all the recitations above is the fact that passages of the Purang text should be not in Tibetan but in Seke. Purang, after all, like the entire Muktinath valley, is Tibetan speaking. This discovery naturally raised the question of whether there might not be any other instances of the use of Seke in the Valley. Subsequent enquiries revealed that there is, in fact, at least one occasion in the year when the *lha bon* of Purang performs a ritual in Seke. At the southern end of the settlement, beside a juniper tree, is a rock marking the source of a small spring that produces water in the warm months after the snow on the glaciers has begun to melt. Accompanied by a small retinue of village officials, the *lha bon* visits this site in order to perform a ceremony to "open" the spring and to ensure that it produces water throughout the summer. After daubing butter on the rock, the *lha bon* hits it with a rock three or four times, and exclaims:

ja khuyug gyamo dola jinji; kyu dong-ngo, kyu dong-ngo[19]
The cuckoo, queen of birds, has come: send forth water, send forth water!

In the neighbouring village of Chongkhor, a Tibetan-speaking community of Nyingmapa householder-priests, propitiatory rituals are periodically carried out for one of the territorial divinities, Ama Nobrug Gyalmo, who is addressed in Seke. (An excerpt from the ritual is cited in Ramble 1984, although it is clear that at that time I had not grasped the significance of the use of this language.)

Enquiries were also made in Dzar and Khyenga as to whether the territorial gods might ever, in the past, have been propitiated in Seke rather than Tibetan. The predecessor of the present Dzar *lha bon* is still alive, although it is several years since he retired from his ritual functions owing to his health and frailty. He recalled that, during the time of his own predecessor, the ceremony used to be conducted in Seke, but he could remember no details about the recitation. He did, however, confirm that the component of animal sacrifice was abandoned along with the change in the language of the performance.

The *lha bon* of Khyenga clearly remembered that his father used to propitiate the village gods in Seke, not Tibetan, and was able to furnish a number of interesting details about the obsolete form of the ceremony. In addition to the main village protectors, the place gods of a substantial swath of Mustang district were invited to receive offerings. These sites were summoned with the phrase tinyi ngatse cendren shütse mu, "Today I invite you". While cendren shü is obviously a Tibetan formula, meaning to "offer an invitation" (*spyan 'dren zhu*), the remainder of the sentence is in Seke. The places were invited in male and female pairs, with the *lha bon* "visiting" each in turn in his recitation and accompanying it to the altar. Thus Mt. Nilgiri, named in the old song as Seli/ Sele Gangmoche,[20] was paired with Dong-goche (a name for which I

[19] The phrase ja khuyug gyamo, lit. "the cuckoo bird, the queen", which is very similar to its local Tibetan equivalent (< *bya khu byug rgyal mo*) is a stock expression that occurs in many Tibetan songs.

[20] Pronounced in other villages, and usually written as, Se/Si-ri gangs-mo-che.

have no definitive Tibetan orthography), a mountain located at the southern limit of Mustang district. The sites were for the most part situated on the slopes and ridges to the east and west of the Kali Gandaki, but included settlements in the Muktinath Valley, the Shöyul and Lo. The narrative journey for the invitation was made in a clockwise direction, while the return journey was anticlockwise.

According to the *lha bon*, the custom of sacrificing goats was abandoned at the instigation of one Lama Angyal, a celebrated Bonpo tantrist from the nearby settlement of Lubra who, like his grandson at the present time, was responsible for the performance of certain ritual functions in Khyenga. The *lha bon* at first objected strenuously, accusing the would-be reformer of hypocrisy by pointing out that certain offerings to protective gods in both Buddhist and Bon tradition are far from being innocent of blood and betray a spirit of sacrifice, and he quoted back to Lama Angyal a passage from a Bonpo ritual:

> *sha khrag brgyan gyi gtor ma 'di bzhes lags | rnal 'byor bcol ba'i 'phrin las grub par mdzod |*
> Please receive this torma that is adorned with flesh and blood, and fulfil the task entrusted to you by the yogin!

But at last, at the insistence of the Bonpo and the villagers of Khyenga, the *lha bon* ceased to sacrifice animals. Shortly afterwards he fell ill of a malady that was generally attributed to the fury of one of the protectors at being denied his due, and the village accordingly entreated him to resume his customary sacrifice. He refused, saying that his decision could not now be reversed, and the community decided instead to drive the angry god from the territory. A large mob of men, armed with swords and the poles of biers abandoned (for they are highly polluting) at the cemetery, and women brandishing the wooden blades of their looms, gathered at the shrine of the god to menace him and force him out. But the protector refused to move and instead caused a number of other people to fall ill. The *lha bon*, claims his son, died within a year of abandoning blood sacrifice (even, it is said, as the reformer Lama Angyal himself was leading a sheep from Jomsom to Khyenga to furnish the sick priest with a remedial victim), and the present form of the ritual has been in use ever since. The god's wrath abated after the death of his priest, and no further attempts were made to displace him.[21]

The fact that four adjacent Tibetan-speaking communities in the Muktinath Valley should either at the present time or within living memory address their territorial gods in Seke argues very strongly in favour of the likelihood that the area was once populated by speakers of that language. Moreover, it is likely that – as certain other evidence suggests (Ramble 1984; Schuh 1995) – the linguistic change is not the consequence of the earlier population having been displaced by Tibetan-speakers but of their having been Tibetanised. This process of Tibetanisation is likely to have received its main momentum from the arrival in the area of Tibetan-speaking rulers from the north during the sixteenth century, with further changes taking place over subsequent generations due to the influence of Bon and Buddhist reforms as well as considerations of status. Cultures evolve, but the different components of a given culture do not all evolve at the same rate, and in this case the notion of place appears to be marked by a relatively high degree of cultural conservatism.

7. Pagan and lamaist classifications of territorial gods

Now the recitations that have been summarised above exhibit certain differences other than the language in which they are performed, although the differences do appear to be correlated with

[21] Two villages of Baragaon, Samar and Te, did in fact resume the practice of animal sacrifice some years after abandoning the ritual at the instigation of the Shangba Rimpoche, precisely because certain misfortunes were attributed to the agency of peevish gods.

the linguistic medium. These differences can be examined by comparing the two "Tibetanised" rites of Dzar and Khyenga on the one hand with their earlier versions, as far as it has been possible to reconstruct these, and on the other with the modern, relatively un-Tibetanised recitation from Purang. The most striking difference, it would seem, is the context within which the main territorial gods are framed.

As far as I am aware, the ritual for the gods of Purang contains no passages excerpted from Buddhist or Bonpo literature. Following a few lines to accompany the fumigation, the priest immediately begins the offerings to the territorial gods of Purang. Yulsa Daro, the principal deity, is followed by Guru Rimpoche and his entourage. It would be as well to point out certain inconsistencies in the recitation. After summoning each of the deities in turn and making offerings to them the priest then accompanies each to his place of residence. One would have expected the same places to be listed in the same (or at least, as in the case of Khyenga, in reverse) order, but in fact during the dismissal Yulsa Daro and "the Teacher" are omitted, and two other sites, Amoga and Tawag, are introduced. We should attach no significance to this disparity: the *lha bon* himself said that the names and order of appearance of the guests in both the invitation and the dismissal should be the same, and that any differences between the two sequences were due to lapses on his part.

In the Purang rite, the main territorial deities are invoked as part of a seamless sequence that departs from the village itself and charts a clockwise circuit around Mustang. The former have individual names – or epithets – Yulsa Daro, the Teacher, and Jowo Sele Rakar and well-defined places in the village, but the guests who follow them are vicariously designated by the names of the places they inhabit. The village gods are a highlighted section of a circle of significant sites: *primi inter pares*. From what we have been able to gather about the archaic forms of the rituals of Dzar and Khyenga, the form of the invocation is similar to that of Purang. The invocation to the village protectors of the former was followed by an invitation to selected places demarcating a similar, if not identical, area to the space described in Purang at the present day.

This important characteristic of the "archaic" form of the ritual may be contrasted with the modern, Tibetanised performances of Dzar and Khyenga. Both these rites include a recitation of the *sDe brgyad gser skyems*. This work is dealt with in some detail by Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1956: 253ff.). It consists of invocations to six groups of divinities, each comprising "eight sets" (the *sde brgyad* of the title). The last of these groups is designated *snang srid sde brgyad*, the "eight sets [of gods] of the visible world". The sixth set in this group is entitled "all the place-gods of this territory" (*yul 'di'i gzhi bdag thams cad*). In Dzar and Khyenga, then, the place-gods (*gzhi bdag*) other than the main territorial divinities (*yul sa, yul lha*) are invoked and propitiated. However, no names or locations for them are specified, and they remain an unindividuated category, one of forty-eight sets of *dregs pa,* a term which, according to Nebesky-Wojkowitz, is "a general appellation of the multitude of gods and goddesses occupying a lower rank" (*ibid.*: 253) who otherwise have little or nothing to do with place. The territorial gods of Khyenga and Dzar have been detached from the genii loci of the surrounding area, and these in turn have been deprived of their regional specificity and pigeonholed among the *dregs pa*.

8. Conclusions

The discussion of the recitations presented above has concentrated very narrowly on certain differences in the classification of territorial gods, and our conclusions will be limited to these same modest confines. Buddhism, as Gendun Choephel remarked, has been the single most potent force against the emergence of regionalism and nationalism in Tibet, and the rituals examined above provide a succinct illustration of his point (cited in Stoddard 1994: 129). In the

pagan versions of the territorial cults, the context in which the village gods is presented is essentially geographical. This geographical entity is, in turn, defined by a variety of criteria. First, the area is political, to the extent that it corresponds to the region that was once under the sway of Lo. Even if the basis of the circumscription may originally have been political, we should not make too much of its significance for the sensibilities of the inhabitants of Baragaon: the unity of the area was dismantled by the powerful kingdom of Jumla long before its absorption into Greater Nepal by the Gorkhas. The cultural unity of the region is another defining factor. In spite of their differences, the Tibetan-speaking north and the Seke-speaking south are perceived as relatively homogeneous by opposition to the Nepali- and Magar-speaking region below Mustang. The focus of each of the rituals is the little territory of the village, represented by the central divinities who are thrown into relief by the fact that they have individual names and characteristics. These deities, and the political space that they define, are set against the culturally salient background of the larger territory of Mustang.

It may seem strange that Padmasambhava, "the Teacher", addressed in the Purang recitation, should find his way into a set of territorial gods. This apparent anomaly was explained to me by the fact that the Padmasambhava in question specifically denotes the image of the saint on the altar of the village temple: Padmasambhava's presence is therefore apparently justified not because of his importance to Buddhism, but because he defines an important location in the village.[22]

In the lamaicised version of the rite, the village gods are detached from their geographical context and re-embedded within the framework of the Buddhist pantheon. The process of lamaicisation amounts to more than merely the abandonment of animal sacrifice and the adoption of Tibetan as the language of worship; in Dzar and Khyenga, at least, it has entailed a displacement of the village gods away from the surrounding territory and into a more abstract realm of divinities unrelated to places.

---

[22] It was noted earlier that the Buddhist-pagan opposition drawn in this article is something of an oversimplification. In fact here, as elsewhere, Buddhism is far from being a homogeneous set of beliefs and practices: the tantric lamas of certain communities would appear to have more in common with the pagan *lha bon* than with Buddhist monks. In Te, for example, the prohibition against monks and nuns from visiting certain areas of wilderness on the grounds that offence may be caused to certain place gods (see above) has never applied to tantric lamas. Similarly, the Te village temple, where tantric lamas officiate, was closed to Buddhist monks and nuns but not to the *lha bon* (the temple is in fact regarded as one of the five *yul lha* of the village); moreover, the rituals of place-gods performed by the lamas of certain villages resemble those of the *lha bon* to the extent that they invoke a territory defined by sacred landmarks; and finally, until very recent times, and probably in consequence of external pressure, local lamas never seem to have been greatly troubled by the custom of animal sacrifice in their communities.

REFERENCES

Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo. Beijing, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1981.

Jackson, D. (1978), "Notes on the history of Serib and nearby places in the Upper Kali Gandaki", *Kailash* 6/3, 195-227.

Karmay, S.G. (in press), "The local deities and the juniper tree: a ritual for purification (*bsang*)", in S.G. Karmay, *Myths, Rituals and Beliefs in Tibet*. Kathmandu, Mandala Book Point. (Originally published in French, 1995, as "Les dieux des terroirs et les genévriers: un rituel tibétain de purification", *Journal Asiatique* 283, 161-207.)

Kostka, R. (1993), "Cartographic activities in the Mustang District", *Ancient Nepal* 134, 82-88.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. de (1956), *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. London/ The Hague, Mouton.

Ramble, C. (1984), "The Lamas of Lubra: Tibetan Bonpo Householder-priests in Western Nepal", D. Phil. thesis, University of Oxford.

(1995), "Gaining ground: representations of territory in Bon and Tibetan popular tradition", *The Tibet Journal* 20/1, 83-124.

(1996), "Patterns of places", in *Reflections of the Mountain. Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya*. A.M. Blondeau, E. Steinkellner (eds.), Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Veröffentlichungen zur Sozialanthropologie, Band 2), 141-153.

(in press), "Se: preliminary notes on the distribution of an ethnonym in Tibet and Nepal", in *Les habitants du Toit du Monde*. Samten G. Karmay and Philippe Sagant (eds.), Nanterre, Société d'Ethnographie.

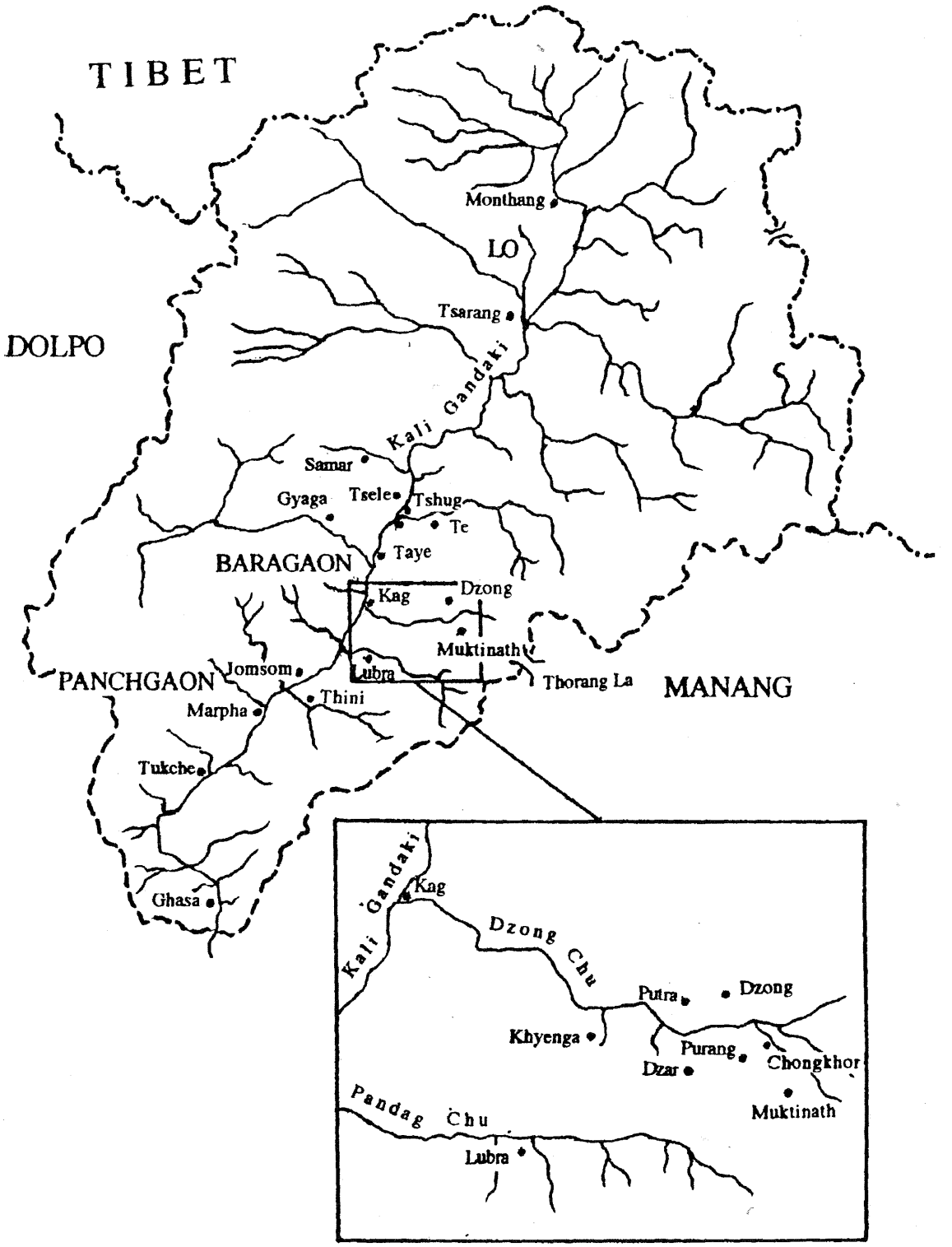
Schuh, D. (1995), "Investigations in the history of the Muktinath Valley and adjacent areas", part 2, *Ancient Nepal* 138, 5-54.

Stoddard, H. (1994), "Tibetan publications and national identity", in *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*. Robert Barnett and Shirin Akiner (eds.), London, Hurst & Co.

Tenzin Namdak (1983), *Bod yul gnas kyi lam yig gsal ba'i dmig bu zhes bya ba* . Dolanji.

Mustang District and the Muktinath Valley

(based on Kostka 1993: 84)



TERRITOIRE ET FRONTIÈRES POLITIQUES, ROYAUME ET DIVINITÉS MONTAGNARDES: L'USAGE DE STÉRÉOTYPES DANS LA CONSTRUCTION D'UNE IDENTITÉ NATIONALE (SIKKIM)

by

Brigitte Steinmann, Montpellier

Dans le Sikkim multi-ethnique et militairement occupé des années quatre-vingt-dix, des discours concernant ce qu'il est convenu d'appeler "revendications identitaires" se développent dans la population à l'aide de stéréotypes, ou généralisations culturelles.[1] Ces stéréotypes, que l'on peut qualifier aussi de lieux communs, servent ironiquement aux groupes marginalisés et tribalisés (Bhotia des frontières et Lepcha des réserves) à se définir identitairement et à résister à l'emprise de l'Inde, nouvel État-Nation[2] hégémonique dans cet ex-royaume sikkimais. Les "NBC", ou groupe des "Newar, Bahun, Chetri", qualifiés de "long nose", sont, par exemple, opposés aux "OBC" ("Other Backward Classes") qualifiés eux de "flat nose". Ces stéréotypes identitaires, unités transculturelles véhiculées d'un pays à l'autre, naissent de différents horizons thématiques. La littérature des agents coloniaux administrateurs du pays, les considérations des missionnaires, des orientalistes et des anthropologues, en constituent un premier volet qui tourne autour de descriptions exotisantes, de fabrication d'ethnonymes et, plus généralement, autour du repérage des populations par les origines supposées et par la religion. Un deuxième thème alimente les discours urbains politiques et touristiques concernant la distribution raciale: qui mérite d'entrer dans la catégorie des Demjongpa ou Sikkimais de souche, et dans celle des "tribals"? En troisième lieu, des motifs mythologiques, mis en avant dans la littérature par des écrivains issus des minorités, ont pour but de retrouver des origines dans une antériorité indéfinie, en s'appuyant largement sur des travaux d'exégèse bouddhiques et chrétiens. Ce sont les populations les plus durement soumises à la loi des frontières et des réserves qui sont les plus aptes à reprendre ces discours de l'universel mythique. Un quatrième thème serait constitué par les revendications territoriales et politiques des anciens nobles et leaders religieux, qui s'appuient sur un modèle de la montagne royale centralisatrice afin d'évoquer un passé prestigieux, source de leurs anciens privilèges. Parallèlement, on assiste dans les villages à la naissance d'assemblées politiques fragmentées, modelées sur les partis et qui viennent peu à peu remplacer les structures communautaires bhotia plus traditionnelles. Enfin, le discours des chamanes (*dpa' bo*) reflète un certain nombre de stéréotypes attendus sur le paysage et les pouvoirs locaux, ainsi que sur la représentation de l'autre comme plus ou moins pur ethniquement. Analyser ces formes variées du discours identitaire à travers leur mode rhétorique répétitif

---

[1] Je considère ici les stéréotypes sous leur acception très générale de "lieux communs de la pensée et du discours". Il existe plusieurs définitions et approches théoriques du stéréotype. En sémiotique et ethnolittérature, le stéréotype a été associé au motif, "forme sémantico-syntaxique donnée, reconnaissable comme telle (...) qui se caractérise à première vue par sa réitération": Courtès, J. (1995), "Ethnolittérature, rhétorique et sémiotique", in *Ethnologie française, Le motif en sciences humaines*, 1995/2: 157. Le motif narratif serait un processus stéréotypé par excellence. Pour une étude des formes narratives du stéréotype en anthropologie, *va* Belmont, N. (1995), "L'enfant cuit", *ibid.*, 180-186.

[2] J'ai conscience de l'immensité du problème de la définition de l'Inde comme un État-Nation. Je n'emploie ces termes qu'en référence à l'assimilation du Sikkim, ancienne monarchie, dans une administration moderne qui ne pouvait qu'être le fait d'un grand État, capable d'imposer sa langue et sa religion.

et figé, revient à dégager la façon dont un particularisme attendu (le fait des minorités), se met au service d'un universalisme de rigueur (la langue de bois des bureaucrates). La revendication identitaire devient ralliement et, ultérieurement, l'emploi systématique de stéréotypes aidera à la fabrication de traditions folkloriques, ce qui est largement le cas pour l'ancien rituel royal de *dPang lha gsol* au Sikkim.

L'étude anthropologique des stéréotypes identitaires

La stéréotypie des attitudes identitaires a été analysée par les anthropologues comme récupération et renversement du discours dominant des élites bureaucratiques (Herzfeld 1992: 69-74; Althabe 1982: 27 *sq.*; Mühlmann 1968: 211-258).[3] Les coutumes alimentaires et vestimentaires américaines et européennes, par exemple, sont autant de signes de statut imités par les bureaucrates dans des stratégies de faste destinées à marquer leur appartenance aux sphères du pouvoir. On pourrait multiplier les exemples pour constater cette "continuité substantielle entre (...) les stéréotypes modernes et les catégories des sociétés d'échelle réduite" soulignée par Herzfeld (*ibid.*: 74). Mais ce sont aussi bien les anthropologues, ces spécialistes de la réduction des singularités ethniques, que les sociétés qu'ils étudient, qui sont susceptibles d'avoir recours à ces formes de pensée axées sur la schématisation et le préjugé. Roland Barthes écrivant: "En chaque signe dort ce monstre: un stéréotype. Je ne puis jamais parler qu'en ramassant ce qui traîne dans la langue", définit le processus stéréotypique comme une catégorie résiduelle présidant à toute tentative d'énonciation d'une vérité spontanée; la vie jaillissante et frénétique ne pourrait se dire qu'à travers ces cadres *a priori* figés et réducteurs que sont les lieux communs de l'expression, *topoi* aux formes fixées et reconnues d'avance comme telles. Au Népal, c'est à travers de tels lieux communs que les Tamang se reconnaissent lorsqu'ils s'appliquent à eux-mêmes la définition de "mangeurs de viande de vache et buveurs d'alcool" que leur réserve l'échelle hiérarchique des castes. C'est en s'excusant humblement "de n'être que cela" qu'un jeune porteur tamang se présentait ainsi, dans son village, à l'ethnologue. Ce qui était une humble attitude villageoise devient, dans la diaspora urbaine, argument d'une revendication identitaire. Dans un mouvement de reconnaissance nationale, les Tamang revendiquent le droit à cet ethnonyme à partir d'élaborations "historiques" qui font remonter la généalogie de la population tamang à l'institution dans un passé indéfini d'une cavalerie tibétaine dont le déracinement ultérieur aurait produit cette ethnie. Cette logique, retournée contre ceux qui s'imaginaient la manipuler, peut se convertir en une ironie subversive. Elle s'est accompagnée récemment d'un désir de transcrire dans une forme appropriée la langue courante non écrite et ce sont des ethnologues qui ont été pressés de fournir des modèles dans l'ordre de ces revendications.[4]

La stéréotypie de l'exotisme

D'autres sortes de simplifications de la réalité sociale sont abondamment illustrées à travers les descriptions orientalisantes du riche éventail ethnique asiatique; M. Pallis (1974: 103),[5] par

---

[3] Herzfeld, M. (1992), "La pratique des stéréotypes", *L'Homme*, janvier-mars 1992, XXXIIe année, n° 121, p. 67-77; Althabe, G. (1982), *Oppression et libération dans l'imaginaire*. Paris, LD/Fondations; et Mühlmann, W.E. (1968), *Messianismes révolutionnaires du tiers-monde*. Paris, Gallimard.

[4] Dans une revue intitulée *Syomhendo*, publiée par une association destinée à revivifier la langue et la culture tamang, M. Mazaudon, linguiste, et B. Steinmann, ethnologue, ont été conviées à expliquer un certain nombre des principes et des résultats de leurs recherches aux Tamang; *cf. Syomhendo*, july-sept. 1993, 14-28.

[5] Pallis, M. (1974), *Peaks and Lamas*. London, The Woburn Press.

exemple, décrit le choc "exotique" de la rencontre avec les "Mongols" à Kalimpong, dans les années soixante dans ces termes: "In Kalimpong, many races rab shoulders, Bengalis and merchants from Marwar celebrated for business acumen, neat little Nepalis and high-cheeked Tibetans, lanky bullet-skulled Bhutanese in short striped tunics, heroic-looking Khambas (...)". Traits physiques, comportements culturels et vestimentaires, appartenance géographique sont ici liés dans un même tout pour créer cet effet spécial d'exotisme. Une logique identique, mais autrement orientée, guidait Risley, dans *The Gazetteer of Sikhim* (1894: XXI),[6] lorsqu'il écrivait: "Most of all will our position be strengthened by the change which is insensibly but steadily taking place in the composition of the population of Sikkim. The Lepchas are rapidly dying out; while from the west, the industrious Newars and Goorkhas of Nepal are pressing forward to clear and cultivate large areas of unoccupied land on which the European tea-planters of Darjeeling have already cast longing eyes. The influx of these hereditary ennemies of Tibet is our surest guarantee against a revival of Tibetan influence (...). The Tibetan proprietors will gradually be dispossessed, and will be take themselves to the petty trade for which they have an undeniable aptitude. Thus race and religion, the prime movers of the Asiatic world will settle the Sikkim difficulty for us, in their own way." De cette hindouisation inéluctable du Sikkim qu'évoque Risley et qui a l'air d'être un produit des gènes des populations ("ennemis héréditaires", "Tibétains naturellement commerçants", "Newars plus industrieux que les Lepchas"), on peut aisément découvrir qu'elle fut une formule de gouvernement préparée et théorisée grâce à l'aide active des planteurs et des administrateurs coloniaux, Anglais, Indiens, Marwari, Newari, qui eurent intérêt au défrichement de ces terres "inhospitalières", et à la propagation des cultes hindous. Pour justifier la dépossession de leurs terres pour les habitants du Sikkim, on a recours ici aux stéréotypes en vigueur: Tibétains naturellement faits pour le commerce; capitalistes avides; industrieuses populations du Népal "ennemies naturelles" des Tibétains. Finalement, ce sont l'appartenance religieuse et la race, qui seraient toutes deux également plus "pures et entières" en Asie, qui convaincraient leurs fidèles dévots, là où les arguments militaires seraient impuissants. Par une force naturelle des qualités ethniques, celles-là même qu'on prisait chez les Gurung et les Tamang, valeureux et ascétiques habitants des montagnes, pour en faire des recrues militaires dignes des bataillons gurkha ou des ascensions himalayennes, les gens se rendront progressivement à la raison et à la constatation de leur impuissance naturelle à se gouverner eux-mêmes. Les exemples suivants, empruntés aux populations marginalisées du Sikkim ainsi qu'aux classes moyennes constituant une forme d'élite dans les villes, montrent comment les discours stéréotypés sur l'appartenance ethnique se reproduisent éventuellement, de façon plus subtile, comme forme de résistance et de revendication identitaires. Ils permettent l'accession symbolique de ces classes sociales à des formes nouvelles de pouvoir, institutionnalisées au sein des partis politiques et signant la disparition des anciennes valeurs monarchiques et théocratiques.

Comment devient-on Demjongpa ou "tribal"?

Les Bhotia sikkimais (*'Bras ljongs pa*, "les habitants de la vallée du riz") se répartissent eux-mêmes en différents groupes revendiquant des appellations ethniques et territoriales variées. Les historiens et les anthropologues rappellent inlassablement la tripartition schématique traditionnelle des populations en trois strates: Lhorig, ou Tibétains sikkimais "du sud" (par rapport au Tibet historiquement dominant); Monrig, désignant les populations lepcha dominées successivement par les Tibétains bouddhistes et par les Occidentaux chrétiens; et Tsongrig ou Limbu

[6] Risley, H.H. (1894), *The Gazetteer of Sikhim*. Calcutta, The Bengal Secretariat Press.

du Népal oriental, qui comptent parmi les plus anciens habitants avec les Lepcha ou "aborigènes" sikkimais, souvent confondus avec les populations népalaises en général (S.K. Datta-Ray: 1980; J.N. Kazi: 1993).[7] Depuis l'annexion du pays à l'Inde en 1975, l'application des divers plans de développement et des réformes administratives, dont les groupes officiellement tribalisés (c'est-à-dire les Lepcha et les populations des villages-frontières du nord) étaient censés être les bénéficiaires, a produit un bouleversement de l'espace villageois, en particulier des territoires situés près des frontières tibétaines: de nouvelles routes traversent les villages, des cantonnements militaires pullulent, accompagnés de leur clientèle de service vivant au bord des routes, des barrages et des restrictions générales de la circulation sont imposés aux résidents comme aux étrangers. Les populations les plus proches des régions soumises à cette visée géopolitique intensive, c'est-à-dire les Lepcha de Dzongu dans le District nord ainsi que les Lachenpa et Lachungpa des frontières, sont les plus sensibles aux discours stéréotypés qui les constituent en réserve tribale. Ils sont également les plus aptes à réintroduire ces stéréotypes dominants en un discours de la ségrégation des uns envers les autres, qui reproduit celle qu'ils subissent. On trouve toujours qu'un voisin est plus "noir" que soi. Ce type de discours stéréotypé, exact reflet des descriptions des Occidentaux, se développe dans la classe touristique indo-népalaise, elle-même sévèrement entravée dans ses activités par la politique indienne de fermeture des frontières. Des agences sikkimaises, destinées à guider les touristes étrangers à travers les régions réservées aux Lepcha, désignent ces derniers avec les termes réservés aux "tribals". Un directeur d'agence newari à Gangtok est devenu le spécialiste de ces retrouvailles avec la nature et fait admirer aux touristes "les nouveaux tribaux", tout en recherchant activement dans les villages traversés des alliances stratégiques dans les grosses maisons de chefs (*kazi*) lepcha ou tibétains, où il pourra commodément par la suite loger ses groupes à peu de frais. Une stéréotypie identique anime les nouveaux guides touristiques tamang du Népal, qui ont appris de leurs clients ce goût très spécial du "paysage" et qui le font admirer dans des termes empruntés à la prose internationale des agences.

Les ethnonymes qui ont été appliqués aux diverses populations du Sikkim et en particulier aux Lepcha, ont été examinés et rejetés par eux-mêmes, bien que souvent au nom d'autres stéréotypes introduits par les missionnaires, les administrateurs et les anthropologues. Ces nouveaux termes d'élection permettent de comprendre comment se fabriquent les traditions d'enracinement dans le terroir. K.P. Tamsang (1982, 1983),[8] auteur d'un dictionnaire de la langue lepcha, rappelle que le nom "Lepcha" signifie "vile speaker", et qu'il fut appliqué par les Népalais à leurs voisins gênants des forêts. Il propose à la place "Rongkup", "fils de la montagne", ou "Mutunchi", "fils bien-aimé de la mère nature", qui lui paraissent conformes aux voeux des populations, bien que ces nouvelles appellations ne fassent, là encore, que reproduire les points de vue d'un membre lettré de la population ne prenant pas nécessairement en compte les catégories locales des Lepcha agriculteurs. En effet, si les Lepcha ont été rapprochés d'un certain état de nature, c'est bien tout d'abord dans le discours, et en particulier celui des différents explorateurs et recenseurs qui les employèrent au cours de leurs trajets de reconnaissance des frontières. Ce phénomène, ou "invention de l'ethnie", tel qu'il a été analysé et caractérisé par J.L. Amselle (1985: 112),[9] consiste à "procéder à contresens d'un inventaire sémantique.

---

[7] Datta-Ray, S.K. (1980), *Smash and Grab, annexation of Sikkim.* Vikas Pub. House; et Kazi, J.N. (1993), *Inside Sikkim. Against the tide.* Gangtok, Hill Media Pub.

[8] Tamsang, K.P. (1982), *A Study of the Original Lepcha Names of Places of Sikkim and Darjeeling and their Stories.* Darjeeling, Deep Printers; et (1983), *The unknown and untold reality about the Lepchas.* Hong-Kong, Luen Sun Press.

[9] Amselle, J.L. (1985), *Au coeur de l'ethnie, ethnies, tribalisme et état en Afrique.* Paris, Editions La Découverte.

Pour que le nom accède à son statut ethnologique, à sa fonction de désignation d'une entité unique, il faut lui retrancher du sens, l'appauvrir de son ambiguïté par des opérations de prélèvement, de sélection, de censure qui lui confèrent l'univocité." L'ethnie apparaissant alors comme "le résidu savant d'une polysémie pratique contraire à la rationalité ethnologique comme à la raison d'Etat."

Classer les dieux en réduisant le sens

Cette même logique de la fabrication du nom unique s'applique également à la fabrication du nom de "Dieu" dans les chants des chamanes (*bomthing*). Après un séjour auprès d'un *bomthing* lepcha dans la région de Laba (Sikkim de l'Ouest), j'eus recours à l'aide d'une traductrice lepcha native de Kalimpong, qui se proposait de m'aider à comprendre un chant que j'avais enregistré. Il s'agissait d'une forme du rituel *sa gi* dont H. Siiger (1967: 86) donne une version.[10] La traduction par elle du chant, après qu'il eût été retranscrit en alphabet romain par le traducteur officiel de l'Assemblée du Sikkim, comprenait une réduction systématique des noms de divinités, les Lepcha devenant *de facto* plus monothéistes que les missionnaires eux-mêmes. Le *bomthing* s'adressait donc "au grand Créateur de l'Univers", sous couvert des offrandes diverses faites aux divinités *rum* des forêts. Dans ce même mouvement d'auto-censure et sous l'influence des enseignements des mêmes missionnaires depuis le 19ème siècle, les Lepcha ont introduit dans leurs récits cosmogoniques des éléments de l'histoire hébraïque; en particulier l'histoire du déluge et du sauvetage des Justes sur la montagne *Araot Lho*, dont Tamsang (*ibid.*: 4) fait remonter le nom au Mont Ararat. Le frère de l'écrivain Foning (A.R. Foning: 1987),[11] rencontré à Darjeeling, produit des manuscrits retraçant la Genèse, en écriture manuscrite lepcha, dont il assure qu'ils sont plus anciens que les enseignements des chrétiens dans la région. Le fond de cette argumentation repose, de fait, sur la négation d'un sens propre à donner aux chants chamaniques des *bomthing* et des *mun*. A.R. Foning déplore que (*ibid.*: 71): "Some writers, anthropologists and others have tried to observe, study and, in some cases, take down the incantations of these *mun* and *bomthing verbatim*. They have tried to get at the meanings of the words uttered, faithfully. But because of the deficient understanding of the cult of the *mun* and the *bomthing* as also because of the oblique and special unintelligible language used in these incantations, the interpreters have fallen short of their aim. As for the informants, some of whom, may be conservant with the creed, the same language-medium difficulties arise; they are unable to express themselves as much as they would have liked to." L'attitude de l'anthropologue qui évoque des *mantra* intraduisibles redouble, ironiquement, ces affirmations d'inintelligibilité des chants lepcha par Foning. L'anthropologue est figé dans une attitude stéréotypée concernant la compréhension des "formules magiques", tandis que le porte-parole des traditions perdues est figé, quant à lui, dans l'idée que le message reçu par les médiums serait de l'ordre de l'ineffable.[12] Mais ses motivations, à la différence de celles de l'anthropologue, sont politiques.

---

[10] Cette version est une courte invocation à l'esprit *rum "anyu thing"*, déesse des tantes ancestrales, *cf.* Siiger H. (1967), *The Lepchas, Culture and Religion of a Himalayan People*. Part II, Copenhagen, The National Museum of Denmark: 88-89. La version que j'ai recueillie moi-même est sensiblement différente. Le chamane *bomthing* s'adressait à plusieurs esprits *rum* de la forêt et de la montagne, *cf.* Steinmann, B., "Mountain deities, the invisible body of the society", in *Reflections of the Mountain. Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya*. A.M. Blondeau, E. Steinkellner (eds.), Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Veröffentlichungen zur Sozialanthropologie, Band 2), 179-218.

[11] Foning, A.R. (1987), *Lepcha, my Vanishing Tribe*. New-Delhi, Sterling Pub.

[12] Tel n'est pas le point de vue de G.G. Maskarinec, qui analyse au contraire minutieusement la façon dont les mots du chamane sont "implacablement pourvus de signification", à travers ce qu'il définit comme "une approche méta-

Transcrire et traduire un chant de chamane, n'est-ce pas, d'ores et déjà, le vouer à sa disparition et les anthropologues, à ce titre, feraient-ils autre chose que de commenter des préjugés et de gloser sur de fausses traditions? En effet, la transcription des chants chamaniques repose sur des mécanismes identiques à ceux de l'invention de la tradition, c'est-à-dire la mise à distance, dans un passé écrit, de ce qui était de l'ordre du récit vivant. La redondance dans l'écriture n'est pas du même ordre que la répétitivité dans le chant. La tradition n'existe qu'avec l'écriture et suppose le recours à des vérités d'ordre général similaires aux stéréotypes, dont les proverbes et les paraboles sont des exemples extrêmes. En fixant la mouvance du chant et l'improvisation mémorisée, on obéit à ces "coefficients de traditionnalité" analysés par G. Lenclud (1994: 28, 41),[13] qui permettent de créer des "phénomènes culturels plus traditionnels que d'autres, par le recours obligé à l'écriture (...) en transformant certaines attitudes par rapport au passé, aptes à créer de l'exemplarité pour le présent." C'est ainsi que le stéréotype peut devenir l'exemple à suivre. La réduction des ethnonymes, accompagnée de la réduction des noms des divinités auxquelles s'adressent les Lepcha, trouve donc un appui singulier dans les traditions inventées. Afin de comprendre cette "exemplarité de l'exemple", tournons-nous maintenant vers le phénomène stéréotypé des "vies exemplaires".

Prêcher d'exemple, les *vitae* mémorables

J. Dorje, jeune et brillant avocat se définissant comme Demjongpa, natif du Sikkim "aux traits mongols" (selon lui) et se réclamant d'un bouddhisme internationaliste, ironise sur les tentatives d'identification des populations par les ethnonymes: "Les trois noms des différentes ethnies du Sikkim, *Lho, Men, Tsong*, ont fini par désigner familièrement les trois pieds du foyer, et on dit qu'ils constituent à eux trois le support nécessaire pour un pot." Ces propos s'accompagnent d'une vive mise en accusation de l'armée indienne qui, dit-il, est elle aussi "assise" sur la population-foyer, l'exploitant grossièrement après lui avoir volé son territoire. Il rappelle qu'il revenait aux Anglais, et à Claude White en particulier, d'avoir les premiers encouragé les envahisseurs népalais pour contenir les Tibétains et démembrer le territoire tout en vendant le Sikkim à son voisin du Sud. J.D. caricature la propension locale à entretenir des stéréotypes raciaux dans des buts politiques. Les politiciens se servent des schémas indiens ("NBC" *versus* "OBC", voir ci-dessus), constate-t-il, en déplorant que ces schématisations soient alimentées par les différents groupes ethniques eux-mêmes, qui continuent à se distinguer selon les critères raciaux de "nez longs" et "nez plats". J.D. adopte, quant à lui, un comportement mêlant une certaine ascèse à la pratique du football et à l'élégance européenne d'un juriste "branché". Il donne à sa pratique des justifications religieuses bouddhistes, s'engageant dans le travail, comme dans le sport, ainsi que dans une ascèse destinée à laver toutes ces compromissions avec une modernité aussi désirée que redoutée et qui entre en contradiction avec son désir de retrouver les racines qui lui permettraient d'alimenter son opposition au régime politique démocratique indien. Ériger sa vie en exemple est une certaine réponse à la montée des pressions d'une modernité marchande dont ces jeunes bureaucrates peuvent attendre des bénéfices sans la contrôler. Cette modernité est désignée globalement comme corruption et démoralisation dues à la perte des valeurs traditionnelles. L'*exemplum* consiste à promouvoir des formes traditionnelles d'éducation et d'observance religieuse s'appuyant sur le bouddhisme monastique et sur certaines conceptions d'une vie ascétique dans laquelle le pèlerinage aux lieux saints joue un grand rôle. Plusieurs associations sikkimaises bouddhistes se sont constituées sur de telles ba-

---

physique très pragmatique" des chants chamaniques, *cf.* (1995), *The Ruling of the Night. An Ethnography of Nepalese Shaman Oral Texts*. Madison, The University of Wisconsin Press: 16.

[13] Lenclud, G. (1994), "De la tradition", in *Transcrire les mythologies*. Paris, Albin Michel.

ses, en promouvant la reviviscence des anciens rituels royaux, comme le *dPang lha gsol*, et la revalorisation de l'éducation dans un Sikkim conçu comme "une démocratie spirituelle."

Le maître à l'origine de ces principes est un membre de l'ancienne garde privée du Chögyal, qui dut à ses convictions monarchistes et à sa fidélité au roi dans les plus sombres jours de la débâcle, d'être emprisonné en Inde. C'est en prison qu'il commença à faire de sa vie une *vita* exemplaire.[14] Il raconte qu'il recevait de nombreuses visites de fervents admirateurs, qui reconnaissaient son charisme et sa sainteté en tant que résistant et fidèle garde du roi. Il se mit à calquer les épisodes de sa vie sur celle de lHa btsun chen po et sur les modèles des grands *gter ston*. Il commença à rédiger en prison les principes de la Démocratie Spirituelle que devait devenir le Sikkim. Libéré et ayant réintégré la vie civile, il aime à se présenter maintenant comme l'acteur de son propre rôle et se montre toujours vêtu du costume religieux des lamas, porté en tant que membre de l'assemblée ecclésiastique (*lha sde*). Il décrit donc la double mission que lui conférait son rôle de Capitaine de la garde royale et celui de membre du *lha sde*. Selon K.R. Chakaravarthi (1994: 98-99):[15] "The Sangha constituency or monk's body (Lhade Tsokpa) is a unique feature of not only Sikkim but also for the whole of India. It is a reserved seat for the representation of the monasteries of Sikkim as a whole and their lamas. It basically aims at protecting the interest of the Buddhist minority. This constituency was always considered to be above petty party politics (...). But in 1979 elections, a Sangha candidate was given a Cabinet Minister rank." Selon le Capitaine, cette assemblée tirait sa légitimité du couronnement royal à Yoksum, lorsque fut instituée la théocratie bouddhique. Il est, selon lui, urgent de restaurer l'ordre ancien qui repose sur cinq principes:

- les prédictions de Guru Rinpoche,
- le serment entre le roi lepcha Thekong Tek et le roi bhotia Kye Bhumsa à Kabi Lonstok,
- la découverte des textes révélés par lHa btsun chen po à la grotte de Lhari Nyimphuk,
- la célébration des fêtes liées à la royauté et aux textes-trésors,
- le respect de l'officialisation de ces fêtes après la formation de la "démocratie spirituelle" en 1604.

"Auparavant – explique-t-il – les trois tribus constituant le Sikkim (Lhorig, Monrig, Tsongrig) envoyèrent chacune douze représentants et ces trente-six membres formèrent l'ossature du gouvernement. Ils comprenaient dix-huit moines ordonnés (lHa sde) et dix-huit moines laïques. Cette démocratie spirituelle fonctionnait grâce au fait que toutes les maisonnées consacraient un de leurs membres à la vie monacale et qu'elles fournissaient des biens pour la fabrication des statues et l'entretien des monastères, ainsi qu'une partie des récoltes pour la célébration des fêtes. Il y avait au moins un monastère à proximité de chacune des montagnes du pays. Les gens, à cause de cette participation spontanée à la vie spirituelle, ne payaient pas de taxes terriennes. Ce sont les Anglais, dirigés par Claude White, et les chefs féodaux *kazi* corrompus, qui provoquèrent le déclin du pays." Cette nostalgie pour une communauté spirituelle de nature théocratique et monarchique, mais fonctionnant sur un modèle utopiste à la Proudhon, est matérialisée dans les projets du Capitaine par la fondation d'un collège monastique qu'il a créé aux environs de Pemayangtse, au coeur de l'ancienne royauté sikkimaise. Cet établissement scolaire reçoit des pensionnaires parmi les enfants de chefs de village et se propose de dispenser une

---

[14] P.J. Geary (1990), *Le vol des reliques au Moyen-Age*. Paris, Aubier: Histoires, 29, écrit : "plutôt qu'une vie du saint et de son monde, la *vita* offre la vision d'un monde stéréotypé où la vérité prime sur le fait, un monde composé de *topoi* glanés parmi d'autres *vitae*." *Va.*: *Prêcher d'exemples. Récits de prédicateurs du Moyen-Age*. Textes présentés par J.C. Schmitt, Paris, 1985, Stock/Moyen-Age, 1985.

[15] Chakaravarthi, K.R. (1994), "Government and Politics in Sikkim", in *Sikkim, Society, Polity, Economy, Environment*. M.P. Lama (ed.), New-Delhi, Indus Pub. Cy., 92-112.

éducation élitiste à base d'études tibétaines et bouddhistes "scientifiques". D'autres projets paraissent en contradiction avec ce désir d'intégration du bouddhisme dans tous les aspects de la vie civile; le Capitaine met également en scène la tradition sikkimaise reconstituée, pour les touristes, dans sa propre maison transformée en *lodge*. Dans un service familial collectif auquel sont conviés tous les pensionnaires, un repas traditionnel est servi "dans le style sikkimais", tandis que le Capitaine entretient ses hôtes sur l'histoire et les traditions du pays. Cette tentative d'annulation d'une certaine forme de rapports marchands se monnaye cependant fort cher. L'étranger se voit convié à partager une intimité nationale et familiale ni plus ni moins stéréotypée que les repas occidentaux "à la ferme", où l'on fait miroiter les vestiges d'archaïsmes perdus d'une convivialité paysanne hypothétique.

Le lieu de prédilection pour la renaissance des vertus bouddhiques est situé le plus près du Kanchenjunga, à Pemayangtse, région dans laquelle les Lepcha situent la montagne des origines et les bouddhistes, le lieu de la fondation de la monarchie. Ce thème de la Démocratie Spirituelle s'articule autour du stéréotype important de la "divinité montagnarde-guerrière" (mDzod lnga) qui, mise en scène dans une dramatisation dansée et des représentations iconographiques, permet de régler des enjeux de pouvoir autour de la centralisation politique et de la sacralité des anciens rois.

Les lieux communs de la montagne

Au Sikkim, comme au Tibet, les montagnes globalisent des images guerrières et des drames martiaux, dans une symbolique d'autant plus surprenante que ces lieux élevés n'ont pas été véritablement dans l'histoire le théâtre de violents conflits. Il s'y déroule, plutôt, une sorte de guerre imaginaire de potentialités militaires, représentées dans la mythologie bouddhique par la majesté guerrière des dieux qui les habitent et la férocité des gardiens de ces lieux inhospitaliers. A part les corps d'élite de l'armée indienne, les "Black Cats", et les Lepcha, personne ne songe réellement que les gens vont s'y approvisionner ou songent à s'en emparer de quelque manière. Les *topoi* de la montagne la représentent simultanément comme espace et figure. Dans les mythes des Lepcha, la montagne-espace est lieu de ressource, d'approvisionnement, Paradis et lieu de sépulture. Dans la mythologie bouddhique, elle est figure d'être redoutable, lié et converti à la loi religieuse. Les sources scripturaires et iconographiques décrites par Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1975: 217)[16] évoquent une montagne personnifiée, rNam thos sras mdung dmar can, et son émanation, le dieu Gangs chen mdzod lnga. D'autres traditions établiraient que cette montagne Kanchenjunga serait (*ibid.*) "the residence of five divine brothers (*mched lnga*) who dwell upon the five main peaks, and who are to be regarded as the fivefold reproductions of one and the same mountain-god." Espace et figure, ces deux caractères d'un même lieu constituent l'articulation d'un certain parcours "figuratif" articulé autour du thème du lien par la parole donnée (la montagne est "convertie" au bouddhisme). On peut décomposer ce modèle comme suit:

- La montagne est apte à sécréter des êtres prédateurs (*btsan*),
- le saint convertisseur (lHa btsun) intervient, appelé par une émanation de la montagne (oie blanche),
- la montagne espace-figure est convertie et les prédateurs deviennent gardiens de la doctrine.

Deux logiques sont sous-jacentes: l'une consiste à penser que certaines qualités naissent directement du paysage; ici, les montagnes équivalent à férocité et obstruction au passage des

[16] Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. de (1975), *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. Graz/Austria, Akademische Druck-u. Verlagsanstalt.

idées civilisatrices (alors que pour les Lepcha, le mont Kanchenbu est plutôt bienveillant et pourvoyeur de ressources car protégeant leur habitat naturel). La deuxième idée consiste à souligner la propension de la doctrine à s'imposer d'elle-même. Les montagnes sont converties par adhésion et par consentement spontanés, ce qui peut laisser entendre également qu'il n'y eut aucune résistance sérieuse de la part des Lepcha à la pénétration tibétaine. Pour illustrer d'exemples ce dogme de la montagne ogresse pacifiée, on rejoue chaque année, dans un drame dansé, l'histoire de l'arrivée des saints évangélisateurs. Mais ce que l'on représente n'est pas une histoire véritable du saint; il s'agit d'un stéréotype de l'image guerrière de la montagne, entourée de ses guerriers. Dans les monastères, le dieu mDzod lnga est représenté comme un géant en effigie, botté et casqué et accompagné de son acolyte Yab bDud. Parallèlement à l'interdiction formelle toute religieuse de photographier les effigies dans le sanctuaire de Pemayangtse, l'avenir de cette figure, dans l'esprit des jeunes moines, ressemble à celui du Chat Botté, des Fées et du Petit Poucet. A Pemayangtse, l'un d'eux, âgé de dix ans, me montrait avec une délicieuse épouvante les bottes de l'effigie en me disant: "C'est un homme!" Cette figure de la terreur et de l'effroi religieux est en passe de devenir un genre folklorique dont le tourisme s'empare, tandis que la durabilité de la métaphore guerrière continue à s'alimenter dans les textes religieux qui ont fixé la forme des pas de la danse et la métonymie du nom. Dire "Kanchenjunga", c'est évoquer d'emblée "les Cinq Greniers des Grandes Richesses"; c'est, à partir de là, passer à l'image du dieu-guerrier en armure chevauchant le lion des neiges et devenu le garant de la bonne circulation des dons dans le royaume et, partant, c'est désigner aussi la source du charisme du roi-donateur.

Ce thème de la montagne divine a alimenté nombre de thèmes stéréotypés, dont ceux des mystiques à prétention orientaliste. Un journaliste qui vécut les événements politiques de l'annexion du Sikkim (Datta-Ray, *op. cit.*: 24) et dont l'ouvrage fut censuré en Inde dès sa parution, nous offre une saisie concrète des réalités cachées sous la figure féroce du dieu. Il rappelle en ces termes les propos de lHa btsun chen po arrivant du Tibet au pied du Kanchenjunga: "'Nous voici, trois lamas, dans un pays nouveau et païen. Nous devons trouver un dispensateur de dons (un roi), pour diriger le pays de notre part.' Rigdzin se proposa en tant que neveu d'un gouverneur. Sempah, de naissance royale, le contesta. lHa btsun intervint alors: 'Selon la prophétie de Guru Rinpoche, il est écrit que quatre nobles frères se retrouveront au Sikkim. Nous sommes trois venus du nord, de l'ouest et du sud. A l'est, est-il écrit, se trouve un homme du nom de Phuntsog, un descendant de braves ancêtres du Kham. Selon la prophétie du Guru, nous devrions le trouver.'" Datta-Ray souligne que Phuntsog se vit donner le nom de clan de lHa btsun, "Namgyal", et que le Dalaï Lama envoya ses bénédictions au "roi de la terre sacrée du sud", en confirmant ainsi les ambitions politiques de Lhasa sur le Sikkim. Desideri devait renchérir en nommant le Sikkim au même titre que les provinces tibétaines de Phari, Haldibari et Purnea. Ordre était donné au Sikkim par l'Amban chinois à la cour du Dalaï Lama, d'interdire ses frontières à la pénétration anglaise. Il ne restait plus, pour ce minuscule royaume, qu'à tenter de résister aux coups de boutoirs répétés de ses différents voisins, Bhoutanais, Népalais et Indiens, qui en annexèrent tour à tour des parties importantes. La montagne avait donc toutes les raisons de se développer en figure guerrière, bien que ses représentations terribles fussent corrigées par les effets pacificateurs de la doctrine dont le roi était le gardien.

Tel est donc le cadre historico-mythique dans lequel on voit le Sikkim accéder à une histoire nationale, à partir de l'inscription de ses frontières montagneuses au sein d'une doctrine bouddhique centralisatrice. L'histoire de cette tentative de centralisation du royaume, si menacé sur ses bordures, se manifeste à travers cette ambiguïté de définition de la montagne dans la mythologie, décrite à la fois comme émanation d'un dieu *btsan* et comme résidence divine. On pourrait déceler qu'il se joue là toute la tension historique concernant l'emplacement du Palais Royal. De par les vicissitudes historiques et les guerres, la capitale royale se déplaça successi-

vement, depuis sa fondation à Yoksum en 1604, d'abord à Pemayangtse dans l'ouest, puis à Rabdentse dans les Etats du sud, où elle fut occupée par les Gurkha népalais en 1788, ensuite dans la Vallée de Chumbi, qui devint un temps la résidence bhoutanaise du Chögyal, et enfin à Gangtok, sous le contrôle du Police Officer anglo-indien. Tous les Etats pré-modernes ont eu, de fait, à régler ce problème crucial de l'équilibre entre le centre et la périphérie, tel que l'a démontré Kulke (1993: 309),[17] en particulier, à propos des *deva rāja* de l'Indonésie ancienne. Le Sikkim illustre aussi dramatiquement cette ambivalence permanente entre un centre fixe, une montagne mythifiée, et une royauté constamment déchirée et mouvante.

Anciens liens et nouveaux statuts: le stéréotype de l'étranger

De nombreux chefs de village traditionnels, ceux que l'on désignait du nom "mahométan" de *kazi*, se sont convertis au christianisme dans l'espoir de regagner un statut perdu en s'assimilant à la religion des nouveaux gouverneurs. C'est le cas du chef *kazi* Samten Dorje, originaire du village de Pedong situé près de la frontière bhoutanaise, à l'est de Kalimpong. Il s'agit du siège ancien du monastère gSang chen rdo rje, fondation bka' brgyud pa qui était sous la dépendance du monastère de Paro, au Bhoutan, jusqu'au milieu du XIXème siècle (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1976: 36). gSang chen rdo rje, construit en 1836, est pourvu des statues des principales divinités-montagnes environnantes. Nebesky y assista à la représentation d'un *'chams* le 5 avril 1952, célébré en l'honneur de Padmasambhava.[18] Aujourd'hui, sept lamas de l'ordre 'Brug pa bka' brgyud pa y résident toujours. Le chef *kazi* qui habite non loin, est le gardien du monastère. Il possède des terres étendues tout autour et est devenu professeur-assistant au collège chrétien local de Saint Georges, tenu par des missions protestantes. Il marque son appartenance à ce collège par un mépris délibéré pour les lamas locaux et fait visiter le monastère aux étrangers en les laissant ostensiblement garder leurs chaussures et photographier les statues et les peintures intérieures, y compris dans le *lha khang*. Le nouveau statut de ce chef se marque, en l'occurrence, par une rupture avec les attitudes stéréotypées d'obéissance et de respect envers la hiérarchie religieuse bouddhiste. Son sens de la hiérarchie existe toujours, néanmoins, par rapport aux paysans tenanciers sur ses terres, qui le saluent très bas lorsqu'il passe dans les champs. Samten Dorje est toujours également le chef des compétitions de tir à l'arc qui se déroulent entre jeunes gens lors de la célébration du Nouvel An sikkimais (*lhosung*).

Les chefs locaux ayant été mis en minorité après l'instauration des nouvelles structures administratives des *panchayat* et l'instauration des partis politiques de type indien, une forme de résistance consiste pour eux à adopter les stéréotypes de domination de ceux qui les considèrent désormais comme des mineurs politiques. Les Indiens disent et écrivent: "Le pays est dans une phase de transition, entre la suppression des anciens liens traditionnels de type tribal et la progression vers une société moderne." Les dominés répondent en utilisant le discours des nouveaux chefs religieux qui essaient de promouvoir des structures égalitaires par la conversion au christianisme et en promettant des bénéfices à leurs nouveaux adeptes. A la base des prophéties messianiques et des millénarismes, W.E. Mühlmann (*op. cit.*: 58) avait analysé dans le discours millénariste des nouveaux convertis, le rôle moteur du thème du "renversement", c'est-à-dire la nécessité de l'expulsion des étrangers comme base de la restitution d'un état originel. Cette "guerre eschatologique" contre l'Autre peut prendre des formes d'ampleur variable. Mühlmann montre comment la normalisation, au sein d'une secte, des mouvements messianiques sponta-

---

[17] Kulke, H. (1993), *Kings and Cults. State Formation and Legitimation in India and Southeast Asia*. New-Delhi, Manohar.

[18] Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. de (1976), *Tibetan Religious Dances. Text and Translation of the 'chams yig*. Paris, Mouton.

nés, repose sur un processus mimétique de groupe où "les conduites sont standardisées et stéréotypées. Ayant reçu l'assentiment du groupe, elles sont désamorcées et retrouvent l'innocuité des conduites traditionnelles culturelles et collectives" (*ibid.*: 211). Sans pour autant constater, à travers la renaissance des doctrines sociales nationalistes bouddhiques le surgissement d'une forme de millénarisme, on retrouve cependant ces thèmes de l'élimination de l'étranger sous des formes diverses. Les propos du chamane *dpa' bo* du village-frontière de Lachung vont nous en donner un dernier exemple. Là encore, les montagnes servent de référent à ces stéréotypes.

Le *dpa' bo* de Lachung se décrit tout d'abord comme un "pur Lachungpa", ni bhotia, ni tibétain, ni demjongpa, mais ayant tous ses ancêtres originaires de Lachung depuis longtemps. Ce discours identitaire s'appuie sur la non mixité d'alliance avec d'autres groupes (comme les Bhotia sikkimais et les Lepcha, par exemple) et sur une certaine définition des dieux du terroir (*yul lha*) qui sont ses auxiliaires. Il existe un emplacement important d'offrande aux *yul lha* dans le village: la divinité principale se nomme Jobo Chuba. Mais le *dpa' bo* insiste surtout sur l'importance de certains dieux du lieu, qu'il nomme aussi couramment, dans la conversation, les *kila* (sa prononciation du terme laissant penser au nom sanscrit du poignard rituel, alors qu'il peut s'agir éventuellement des *skyes-lha*, "dieux de naissance"?). Ils sont plus immédiatement autochtones, pour lui, que les *yul lha*. Quant aux *btsan* des rochers, ils n'ont pas de réalité plus proche que celle que leur confère leur image canonique sur les murs du monastère et ce qu'il en est dit dans les livres des lamas. Le *dpa' bo* se définit, par ailleurs, comme strictement végétarien: "Je vais soigner les gens qui sont malades, mais je ne suis pas comme les *jhãkri*, qui boivent et qui fument. Moi, je ne prends ni viande, ni oeufs, ni alcool. Je suis comme les lamas", dit-il. Cette définition le singularise par rapport aux chamanes indo-népalais, présents dans cette région. Il préfère se rattacher à l'ordre rnying ma pa du monastère de Lachung. Il faut souligner dans ce récit le lien implicite qu'il dresse entre la "pureté" de ses dieux et la "pureté" du groupe ethnique des Lachungpa auxquels il s'identifie. Les catégories divines, dans son discours, apparaissent comme un reflet direct des catégories sociales et sont définies en relation à la manière dont le territoire est habité et circonscrit à des groupes généalogiquement reconnaissables. Si l'on examine les origines des habitants de Lachung, on peut constater en fait une grande variété d'alliances entre Bhotia sikkimais (Demjongpa), Sherpa du Népal, Tibétains et Bhoutanais. La pureté lachungpa est un horizon idéel pour le chamane, qui revendique en fait la maîtrise sur ses groupes de malades. En temps ordinaire, c'est-à-dire lorsque la circulation des villageois n'était pas restreinte par l'occupation militaire, il allait soigner jusqu'à Lachen. Ses mouvements sont entravés maintenant par l'intrusion de "l'Étranger" (l'armée, l'ethnologue, le non natif du lieu), qu'il assimile à tout habitant non né de parents lachungpa depuis plusieurs générations.

Si l'intrusion de la structure militaire indienne dans le village bouleverse, et rend clairs à la fois, un certain nombre de stéréotypes sur la représentation de l'autre, l'évolution de l'assemblée politique locale, la *dzumsha*, et du système d'élection des chefs de village, va nous offrir un dernier exemple de ce que nous voudrions démontrer à propos de l'importance des lieux communs dans les définitions identitaires globales.

Destructuration des anciens liens, apparition des stéréotypes politiques

On observe actuellement une décomposition des anciens systèmes de relations dans la communauté villageoise, par l'instauration officielle de la démocratie de type indien. La *dzumsha* élisait traditionnellement deux chefs de village (*spyi dpon*) par an.[19] En décembre 1994, de nouvelles élections eurent lieu dans le village de Lachung pour remplacer les anciens chefs.

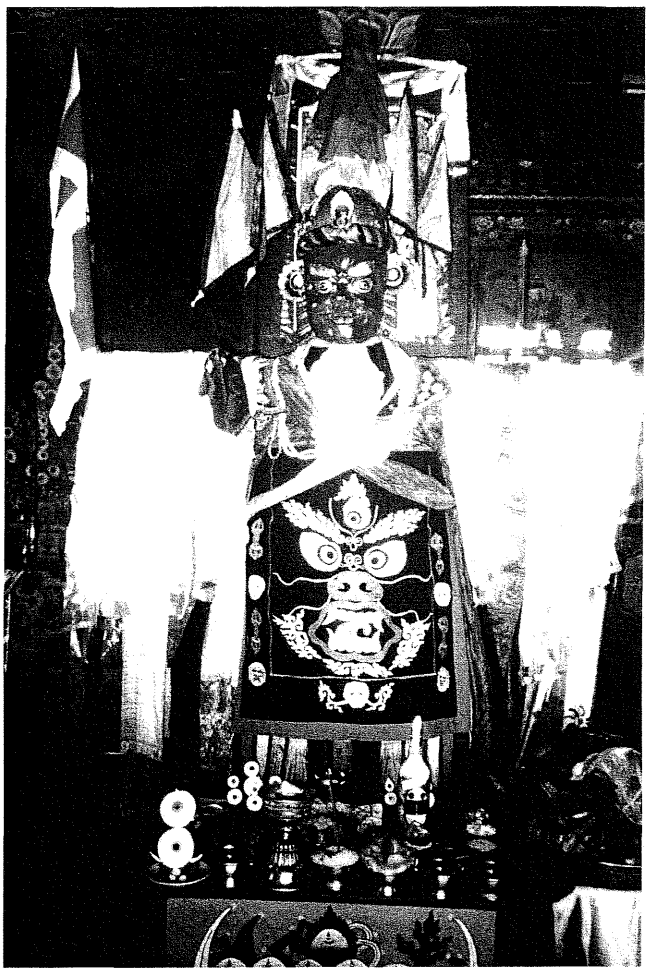
[19] Voir les descriptions de l'assemblée politique à Lachen et Lachung par Bhasin, V. (1989), *Ecology, Culture and Change: Tribals of Sikkim Himalayas.* New-Delhi, Inter India Pub.: 292 *sq.*

L'assemblée se réunit dans une cour à ciel ouvert, gardée par les militaires indiens qui en contrôlaient strictement l'accès. Elle était pourvue d'une tribune surélevée située au nord, et d'un siège d'honneur situé à l'ouest. A l'est, on trouvait deux pièces collectives, la resserre et la cuisine, servant lors des longues séances. Les délégués gouvernementaux: le secrétaire des relations publiques et de l'information et la secrétaire du développement rural, arrivèrent en premier et prirent place sur la tribune. Les discours d'introduction furent entamés dans un rite d'ouverture, auquel il fut répondu longuement par les anciens *spyi dpon*. Ces derniers rendirent compte de leurs activités et on passa à l'ordre du jour. Il s'agissait, en l'occurrence, d'élire de nouveaux chefs tout en traitant la question de l'organisation du groupe chorégraphique du monastère chargé des danses de célébration du nouvel an (*lhosung*). Quelle devait être la participation financière des villageois dans les *'chams*? Il fut ensuite question de l'élection proprement dite, entamée sous le grief général des villageois que l'ancien *spyi dpon* ne transmettait pas correctement leurs voeux auprès de l'administration centrale à Gangtok. Il en ressortait clairement que les Lachungpa (et les Lachenpa) se sentaient (et étaient) considérés comme des citoyens de seconde zone, en état d'occupation. Si un tel sentiment a pu se développer dans la population, c'est par l'infiltration, au sein de l'ancienne assemblée communautaire très démocratique, de la structure politique des "partis" régnant dans la lointaine capitale: le parti du Congrès calqué sur le modèle indien, et le Front Démocratique Sikkimais (SDF) ou parti d'opposition. Cette division de partis recoupe à présent celle qui existait traditionnellement entre les Bhotia sikkimais, plus récemment installés dans le village et majoritairement en faveur du Congrès, et les Lachungpa, votant pour l'opposition car en général moins nantis. Cette nouvelle division politique a entraîné l'élection de quatre *spyi dpon* au lieu de deux, c'est-à-dire deux par parti. Cette scission se concrétise par la tenue de deux groupes discutant séparément après la tenue de l'assemblée générale afin de mettre au point des stratégies de choix électoral, à l'abri de l'autre groupe. Ce qui était jadis une alternance normale des chefs, réglée par le débat et par un consensus global, s'est désormais transformé en conflit politique dans des discussions dont les termes échappent à tout le monde, dans la mesure où les villageois ne sont pas initiés au langage des politiciens. La politique se passe désormais en dehors du village. Ce phénomène d'apprentissage d'une langue de bois est admirablement illustré par Datta-Ray (*op. cit.*: 212) lorsqu'il évoque le discours tenu le 11 mai 1974, un an avant l'annexion du Sikkim, par le chef *kazi* Lendhup Dorje, leader du parti qui s'était fait l'instrument des point de vue de Delhi et qui allait mettre fin à la royauté sikkimaise. Lendhup Dorje, issu des mêmes couches sociales que les *spyi dpon* traditionnels, tint devant le Congrès à Gangtok, dans une langue sikkimaise qu'il ne maîtrisait pas, un discours préparé en ces termes: "Those who fail to adjust themselves to the changes of time and circumstances will have per force to stark reality in all its consequences, and that too, with a modicum of grace." Et Datta-Ray de conclure: "Où Lendhup Dorje avait-il appris de tels mots? Comprenait-il seulement leur sens, lui qui ne savait même pas lire les journaux."

A travers les différents exemples traités ici, la langue de l'identité culturelle apparaît donc comme le vecteur par excellence d'unités banalisées du discours. Ces unités, que nous avons définies sous leurs diverses formes de lieux communs (réduction des singularités par les ethnonymes, *topoi* de la mythologie, thèmes stéréotypés de l'expression politique), affecteraient, de manière consciente ou inconsciente, le langage de l'identité culturelle. On pourrait comparer l'influence de ces schémas généraux de la stéréotypie discursive au travail de l'accent maternel, qui, dans la langue, constitue la forme la plus intime que peut prendre la culture. On ne serait pas plus libre, à ce titre, de modifier son accent maternel, que de se passer des stéréotypes "qui traînent dans la langue". Nous avons vu également, à travers les exemples de conversions religieuses et politiques et l'élaboration des *vitae* exemplaires, le rôle qu'avaient ces lieux

communs dans la fabrication de traditions et dans l'élaboration de nouveaux schémas de reconnaissance identitaire. Bien que de tels schémas ne passent plus par les anciens liens de fidélité royaux, parentaux ou territoriaux, ils n'en alimentent pas moins de nouveaux stéréotypes, entièrement tournés vers la fabrication de traditions. Au terme de ces réflexions, on pourrait donc se demander si toute élaboration de tradition ne passerait pas nécessairement par l'usage de lieux communs et, à ce titre, si les anthropologues qui travaillent à l'intersection de l'écrit et de l'oral, n'en seraient pas les premières victimes? Le décryptage des lieux communs n'en constitue pas moins l'un des premiers travaux de l'anthropologie.

mDzod lnga
Détail du thangka représentant l'introduction du bouddhisme au Sikkim, au 17e siècle.



mDzod lnga

Yab bdud

RAJA GEPHAN – THE MOUNTAIN PROTECTOR OF LAHUL

by

Elisabeth A. Stutchbury, Canberra

The perpetually snow covered twin peaks of Gephan (Gye phan?[1] 5,800 and 6,000 metres or 19,000 and 19,600 feet) rise behind the Rohtang Pass (Ro thang la, 'Plain of Corpses Pass', 3,980 metres or 13,050 feet) dominating the landscape as one enters the barren glaciated rain-shadow region of Karzha (dKar zha, Gar zhwa, Gar sha, Ga sha, Gar za)[2] Khandroling (mKha' 'gro gling, land of the *ḍākinī*, 'enlightened female energy') or Lahul, in the state of Himachal Pradesh, India. The narrow mountainous valleys of the Chandra and Bhaga Rivers have for centuries been traversed by traders and pilgrims moving between the plains of India and the Tibetan plateau. Safety while travelling is sought from the devtas Gephan, and other lesser mountain deities, which are the focus of village rituals and cults of possession.

Context – mountain deity cults

Research into 'mountain deity cults', including pioneering studies[3] as well as the studies in the current discourse,[4] have attempted to classify the diverse range of phenomena which focuses on features of the natural landscape, such as mountains, rocks, soil, water (lakes, springs etc) and trees, which are understood to be imbued with energetic qualities other than those normally constructed into inert geographical features in a western world-view. Such perceptions of landscape are pervasive throughout the Tibetan cultural context. However, as the research to date clearly indicates, the systems of classification of such phenomena are not clear and precise, with apparent variations depending upon perspective (eg. textual, popular traditions), as well as upon regional location.[5]

I have elsewhere discussed some of the ways in which landscape is perceived and talked about, with particular attention on the né (*gnas*, 'power place') of the peak Drilburi (Dril bu ri), the bell mountain, in Karzha, and on 'geomantic' considerations, which include the way in which chorten (*mchod rten*, *stūpa* Skt.) are seen to modify the landscape, creating harmony and balance within the community and in the people's relationship to their environment (Stutchbury 1994).[6] As an extension of this discourse, the current discussion presents preliminary ethnographic material pertaining to the popular cult of Gephan, the so called 'mountain protector' of Lahul. It emerges from this discussion that the identity and cultural affiliations of this mountain deity are not fixed, but are rather open to interpretation, dependant upon varying social and

---

[1] Although Peter lists Gephan with the Tibetan orthography, *Gye phan* (Peter 1977: 12), this name is from the Karzha dialect, rather than a Tibetan borrowing.

[2] Foreign words are written as pronounced in Karzha. Wylie transcription of the Tibetan is then given between brackets, if known. Many words used in the Karzha language do not have a Tibetan equivalent. Sanskrit terms are indicated with Skt.

[3] Notably that of Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956.

[4] There is now a growing body of material which could be cited. Particular mention should be made of the participants of the Franco-Austrian Seminar 1994, as well as the participants of the session on Mountain Deities and Cults at the 7th IATS.

[5] See for instance Pommaret's (1996) thoughtful discussion of these issues.

[6] See also Stutchbury 1991 and forthcoming.

cultural contexts. Furthermore, it is clear that within Karzha, the interpretations given vary between people, with popular opinions contrasting with that of the Tibetan Buddhist religious specialists.

Crossing the Rohtang-la and Gephan, the Mountain Protector of Lahul

The valleys of Lahul form part of the trade corridor through the Western Himalaya, with evidence from the art historical record from the seventh century onwards suggesting Buddhist cultural affiliations, particularly with early Tantrism.[7] Lahul itself is in the Inner Himalaya, and experiences the dry arid conditions typical of the rain shadow. One enters Lahul from the south through the green and once heavily forested Kulu-Manali valley, which experiences monsoon from June to September. As one travels up the Beas river from Kulu, towards Manali, two gleaming snow peaks come into view, indicating the presence of the Pir Panjal range of the Himalaya. These two peaks are identified as Gephan, the mountain protector of Lahul, who can ensure safe passage through the treacherous mountain terrain. However, a little further up the valley these twin peaks are again hidden from view. It is only after several more hours of travelling up the valley that these twin mountain sentinels become visible again, as the traveller actually enters Lahul, while crossing the Rohtang Pass.[8]

For centuries, a bridle path, which is still in operation, led up the Beas valley and across the Rohtang. An alternate route across the Rohtang Pass, a jeepable road, was built and upgraded by the Government of India, so that in the summer months, since 1970, trucks and buses have been able to travel along Highway 21, through Lahul on their way to Ladakh and the sensitive border areas. The Pass is closed by snow for six months of each year, isolating Buddhist Lahul[9] from plains India.

Crossing the flat, two kilometre Rohtang Pass, brings the traveller face to face with these twin peaks of Gephan, and other mountains and glaciers, which loom above on the other side of the valley. A cairn of stones, some carved with *mantra*s, and prayer flags, mark the place where offerings of sang (*bsang*) are sometimes made to Gephan by those with the leisure to stop. In the past, all travellers passed by this cairn as they made their way across the pass. However, it is at some distance from the roadway, and neither the buses full of Lahuli people returning from shopping in Manali and a few adventurous westerners, keen to trek through Zangskar up to Ladakh; nor the trucks laden with potatoes, the cash crop which has dramatically altered the economic situation in Lahul over the past twenty-five years, stop on the pass.

After the first snows have closed the Rohtang and there is the threat of sudden snowstorms, which sometimes results in death for those trapped on the pass, those who cross the pass by foot do not tarry for long, but quickly descend into Lahul and the narrow Chandra valley, or down to Mahri and the Beas valley. Although those who cross under these conditions may ask for Gephan's protection, this is better negotiated before approaching the Rohtang in the village of Sissu, where there is a small temple to Gephan.[10]

---

[7] See Klimburg-Salter 1982 for details.

[8] There are several other passes and routes by which one can enter into Lahul, however, the Rohtang is the most frequently used pass, connecting Lahul to India in the south (see Stutchbury 1991, Map 2).

[9] This generalisation is clarified below. Some of the people of Lahul are Hindu, particularly the Swangla of the Chandrabhaga valley, and some both Hindu and Buddhist. Furthermore, there are considerable numbers of Lahulis who now reside in Kulu-Manali. (Stutchbury 1991: 37, 50-52, 55; and forthcoming).

[10] Tobdan reports that the Gephan shrine is at Sra-srin in Tinan, one of the locally defined regions within Lahul (1984: 74). Sissu is in Tinan but I have never heard it called Sra-Srin. This may be attributable to the different dialects associated with the locally defined regions, of which there are five in Lahul.

Following the Chandra River downstream, the valley becomes a little wider between Sissu and Gondhla. This plain is called Rohlangtang (Ro langs thang, 'Plain of Possessed Corpses'). It was here, I was told, that an invading Mongol army was washed away by an avalanche sent by Gephan.[11] Shields and other weapons have been unearthed from the fields, some of which are kept nearby in Gephan's *maṇḍir*, or temple, at Sissu. Gephan has in the past been associated with other warring activities, an association noted in other mountain deity cults. For instance, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, a contingent of Lahuli men united under Gephan's banner in a fight at Bajuara against the Raja of Mandi, against whom the Lahuli were victorious.[12]

These days, the people of Lahul turn to Gephan for protection, particularly against the vicissitudes of the mountain environment and weather, such as avalanche and untimely snow which can totally destroy the years' harvest and close the pass, preventing the export of the potato to Manali, where it is sorted before its distribution for seed to the rest of India. Travellers, including the bus drivers, stop and leave a small offering there before proceeding further into Lahul, or to the Rohtang-la, along the narrow and dangerous roads. The *pūjāri* who tends the temple provides thin strips of fabric to be worn as a protection to those who enter the temple. In this shrine, as well as in other small shrines elsewhere, Gephan is represented by a stick to which thin strips of cloth are tied. These pieces of cloth may be of any colour, though mostly they are white.[13]

There are several other local spirits or gods who inhabit the landscape of Karzha, such as lu (*klu*) or nāga water spirits, zhidag (*gzhi bdag*) and sadag (*sa bdag*). But Gephan and his brother Tangyar[14] are regarded as being the most powerful of these beings, as well as particularly associated with Karzha. Within the context of Tibetan Buddhism, the beings of these lesser classes contrast with the many other energies of *enlightened* beings embedded into the geographical features of the landscape in Karzha, such as the three Bodhisattvas of the Buddhist pantheon and Khorlo Demchog ('Khor lo bDe mchog, Cakrasaṃvara Skt.) the main yidam (*yi dam*, 'meditational deity') of the Drukpa ('Brug pa) yogic tradition, whose presence shapes and defines the né (*gnas*), the pilgrimage power places, particularly Drilburi, for which Karzha Khandroling is known in the Tibetan cultural arena.

Taming the Beings of the Local Environment

We are already familiar with the process through which the pre-Buddhist local gods in Tibet and the Himalaya, such as mountain deities, as well as other beings who reside in particular features of the local terrain, are said to have been tamed by Guru Rinpoche and made protectors of Buddhism in the conversion and subjugation made possible by the power of this tantric adept. Tibetan Buddhist ritual specialists continue that process of subjugation, incorporating complex practices to the protectors into their repertoires, while laypeople, with this-worldy pragmatic concerns, make regular daily offerings as well as special emergency offerings to some of these beings as circumstances require.

---

[11] This was possibly the 17th century Mongol invasion of Ladakh (Mamgain 1975: 36).

[12] This is reported by Tobdan (1984: 54), a Lahuli scholar, who bases this assertion on material recorded by Francke, one of the Moravian missionaries who set up a mission in Kyelang, the capital of Lahul (Francke 1907, No 15: 16-18).

[13] Cf. Tobdan (1984: 75).

[14] It is probable that Tangyar is a Karzha name, but cf. *brtan ma* and *bstan srung* (Jäschke 1975: 225). Tobdan spells this name as Tangjar (Tobdan 1984: 89, 1993: 95).

In Karzha, the subjugation of these local deities is an ongoing process which is not yet complete, with blood sacrifices demanded by persons possessed by the spirit of Gephan, and also Tangyar, his elder brother, despite the strong presence of the Drukpa Kargyu practitioners in the village gonpa, who decry and condemn these sacrifices. Recent innovations in the possession cults have caused considerable concern among many people, particularly those most strongly identified with Buddhism, lamas and villagers alike. Although they identify the possession cults with Śaivite Hinduism, which is practised by the Swangla people of the Chandra Bhaga valley, as well as in Kulu-Manali, what we can glean from historical and linguistic evidence suggests a more complex situation. It is highly significant however, given that Lahul is encapsulated politically and economically within the Indian nation state, that the resurgence of non-Buddhist practices of possession and blood sacrifice associated with Gephan, and Tangyar, is considered to be an assertion of Hindu practice, whatever the historical origins of these practices are.

Multiple and Changing Identities

This description of Gephan, Lahul's mountain deity, and of Lahul itself, elides between a cultural construction which is essentially Tibetan Buddhist, on the one hand, and Hindu Indian, on the other. The main shrine to Gephan at Sissu is called a *maṇḍir*, and the ritual officiant is a *pūjāri*. Furthermore, the lamas who live and practice in the various gonpa (*dgon pa*) in Lahul have no part in the rituals which are performed in this *maṇḍir*.

One of the challenges of working with a people who have lived on the periphery of the Tibetan cultural arena for centuries, rather than in 'Tibet' or with people who regard themselves as Tibetan (a perception of ethnic identity), is to give appropriate recognition to the larger cultural arena whilst simultaneously appreciating and giving primacy to the people with whom one has lived, to provide a broader perspective which contextualises an ethnography of the particular.[15] In the lower Bhaga valley of the Lahul, where I focussed my research, people construct their identity depending upon particular circumstance, and although within this continuum of identity which is oriented to modern India on the one hand, and towards Tibet and Buddhism on the other, some people may see themselves more as one or the other, an essential part of living in this valley corridor through the Himalayan ranges of the Pir Panjal is the elision of identity. They are 'Lahuli' and Indian, and may refrain from eating beef, and perhaps are Hindu, but are also 'Karzhapa' and Buddhist, and more particularly, Drukpa Kargyu ('Brug pa bka' or dkar brgyud).[16]

Not only do the people varyingly construct their own identity, depending upon circumstance and situation, but also the identity of their land's mountain deity, Gephan, who is regarded as both a blood-thirsty Hindu devta, Raja Gephan, as well as one of the five brothers (*khu lnga*)[17]

---

[15] I have discussed the ethnography of the particular, and my indebtedness to Abu-Lughod (1991), in a recently published article (Stutchbury 1994b). For instance, such an endeavour requires establishing the standardised Wylie transcriptions of words from the dialects used in the research area, where possible, whilst also presenting local pronunciations and usages. In this way both the connections with and differences from the broader Tibetan cultural arena are acknowledged, and cross-cultural studies enhanced. The inclusion of a glossary which provides Tibetan transliterations of Sherpa words is a welcome addition to Ortner's latest contribution (1989) and a frustrating omission from the first printing of her earlier book (1978). I explore the comparison between my ethnography and Ortner's elsewhere (Stutchbury in press).

[16] I have discussed the ways in which identity is constructed with reference to transmission and practice lineages of Tibetan Buddhism by the spiritual practitioners of Kardang Gonpa in Stutchbury (1994b).

[17] *Khu* means father's brother or uncle (*rgyal po khu nga yun chen a*). Tobdan provides an English translation of the 'History of the Gods' (*lha rabs*), as an appendix. He collected this story in 1974 from the 82 year old attendant of the shrine to Gyungdul in Sakar village, Tinan, who informed Tobdan of a Tibetan text which had been lost in an ava-

of the Gyalpo (*rgyal po*) class, in the Eight Class (*lha srin sde brgyad*) classification of gods and spirits who inhabit the landscape.[18] These gods, as local deities, are also sometimes referred to as Zhidag (*gzhi bdag*), or 'Lords of the Manor or Soil', and as such may require blood sacrifice.[19] It is these varying identities that I wish to discuss in greater detail, with focus on the appropriate ritual behaviour made towards these beings, as well as appropriate behaviour *by* such beings.

Possession and the Devtas Tangyar and Gephan

In 1992 I returned to Karzha for a few weeks of fieldwork, re-establishing the friendships I had made with the people of Kardang village and Gonpa during my initial period of fieldwork in the early 1980's. During my earlier sojourn in Karzha, it had seemed that the cult of possession associated with Tangyar was in the process of dieing out. Tsering Ngodrup (Tshe ring dngos grub) from the Yurnath Domba household, who had previously become possessed by Tangyar, had died, and the god had not chosen anyone to take his place.

It was very difficult to collect information about this local deity during this period, as nobody was willing to utter his name, nor talk about him.[20] It was only in 1992, the year after Tangyar had chosen a young man in his late twenties, from Peukar village, as his vehicle, that I was able to understand more about Tangyar. I realised that everyone's previous unwillingness to talk about this deity, and the fear he invoked at that time, was because such activity may have attracted the god. People preferred to leave the deity dormant.

Tangyar is especially associated with the village of Peukor, about two hours walk up the Bhaga Valley from Kardang village, where I focussed my research. It is here that he resides, and from here that he journeys, carried in the wooden chair-like carriage, once every three years when the deity makes his main ritual journey through the region. The person chosen by the god trembles and shakes while possessed, and is credited with being able to answer queries pertaining to illness, and other everyday maladies. The carriage is carried by two men from either Kardang or Peukor, one at the head and the other at the rear. The carriage sways and rocks, the god directing its' carriers. If the god is willing he visits the villages, and knocks on the doors of the houses, giving blessing to the house-holders who offer food and chang (*chang*, fermented liquor).

Gephan, on the other hand, is associated with the village Sissu, which is comparatively much farther away from where I resided, although Gephan is important for all of Lahul, and also beyond, for he has a particular connection with the devta of Malana, a side valley running of the Kulu-Manali valley. He is connected through myth and ritual activity with his brothers residing in other villages in Lahul, such as Tangyar, his elder brother from Peukar.

To appreciate the complexity of the multiple and changing identities of Tangyar and Gephan, and in particular to discuss recent innovations in the cult of possession, particularly that associated with Tangyar, Gephan's elder brother, it is necessary to provide a brief ethnographic

---

lanche. In this oral account there are said to be nine brothers (Tobdan 1984: 89-91). My ethnographic research did not focus on Tinan, or the lower Chandra Valley, but rather on Punan or Gar (Karzha), the lower Bhaga Valley.

[18] For a description of the Eight Classes see Cornu (1990: 226-229) and Samuel (1993: 161-163). Note also that the Hindi 'Raja' is understood to be highly comparable to the Tibetan 'Gyalpo', both indicating 'King'. Similarly, Hindu conceptions of nāgas are comparable to Tibetan ideas. Detailed comparative research would be profitable.

[19] See also Tobdan (1984: 74-75) and Jäschke (1975: 480).

[20] This god is mentioned by Prince Peter, in a description of a marriage ceremony (1963: 321).

outline of Lahuli society, with particular attention to the way in which ritual activity is articulated between village and gonpa.[21]

The Domba and Shipi of Lahul

Since Independence and the region's continuing integration into the Indian nation and with the increase of Hindi-teaching schools in the District, the *lingua franca* for the region has become Hindi. Previously it had been Tibetan, which is now known to some extent by the older folk, and the spiritual practitioners. Each of the four regions within Lahul has its own distinct dialect. These dialects are related to Tibetan.[22] The Shipi (a.k.a. Chinal or Chahan) and Lohar (a.k.a. Domba or Gara), the two musician and blacksmith castes in the region, also have their own dialects, which are related to Hindi.[23]

These people from this caste of blacksmiths and musicians, are in many ways peripheral in the social and ritual activities of the village. During winter, when snow envelopes the land, the practitioners from the gonpa retire into personal retreat for several months. This quiet time of retreat is in contrast to their busy schedule of the summer months, when they visit many households in the surrounding villages, performing rituals as requested. The villagers, on the other hand, who are no longer engaged in the agricultural work cycle during the winter months, socialise with much chang drinking and story telling. They also engage in the complex village ritual cycle, particularly focussed on New Years' celebrations at the Winter Solstice. The Domba (blacksmiths and musicians), however, have limited participation in these village rituals.[24] They may be called upon to provide music, but on these occasions it is not their exclusive right to do so.

The village blacksmiths and musicians are regarded as low caste, and do not intermarry with the other villagers, all of whom have higher status and marry according to their rus (*rus*) affiliations. Instead they marry between themselves. They have never married polyandrously and thus their households are normally much smaller than the average.[25] Some Domba families, such as one in Cheling, are goldsmiths. In a few villages such as Kardang, and in Kyelang there are three or four Domba families, and in other villages none. They are generally poorer than the average Lahuli household, as is the case in Kardang, with smaller houses, landholdings, and family size.

---

[21] By necessity the current discussion is very brief. I have covered this topic extensively elsewhere (Stutchbury 1991 and forthcoming & in press).

[22] In vocabulary these dialects are related to Tibetan, whereas in grammatical structure they are akin to the Mundari dialects, such as Kunawari. Jäschke was the first to establish a connection between the Lahuli dialects and Kunawari language in 1865. From this apparent relationship Francke, another Moravian, and others have presumed some pre-historic (circa 2000 BC) contact between the Munda, the 'original' inhabitants of India and mongoloid peoples in these regions (Francke 1905, reprint 1978: 181-191). See discussion in Tobdan (1984: 23-26). Jäschke used the Tibetan script to render these languages in written form, incorporating vocabulary into his *Tibetan-English Dictionary* (1881, reprint 1975). More recently it has been asserted that the languages of Kinnaur (Kunawari) and Karzha (Punan, Tinan and Manchad dialects) are related to Zhang-zhung sMar-yig (Haarh 1968: 8-9, 24-26; Kvaerne 1976: 10), an avenue of research with considerable implications for the ancient history of the region.

[23] There has been little recent research done in the field of linguistics, with Grierson's original studies providing the standard classifications and the research by the Moravian linguist Heinrich Jäschke and by Georges de Roerich, whose study is focussed on the Tod (sTod) dialect, being the most extensive (Grierson 1967, Negi T. S. 1976: 97-113, 170-181; Roerich 1934; Tobdan 1984: 11-13).

[24] For instance they may never wear the masks of the ritual performance of Bagh, at the New Year.

[25] In Kardang village in 1983, the largest family had seventeen members. This contrasts with the four Domba households with between four and six members each.

Yet their role in playing music at the time of death is important. The Dombas are called and they begin to play their music at the deceased person's house, which they continue for three days. The practitioners from the gonpa also come and perform the appropriate rituals for the deceased who is said to be in the Bardo (*bar do*), in transition before rebirth into one of the six realms (including human).[26] The body is cremated the day after death, while the Dombas continue with their music at the cremation ground and the gonpa members perform rituals.[27]

Tangyar Chooses

It is also from the Domba caste that Gephan and Tangyar choose their human vehicle. At least this was the case until the autumn of 1991, when Tangyar chose Rigzin (Rig 'dzin) Chosgye, from Peukor. The Chosgye family was thought to have good rus, although it is not clear how this new vocation of one of their sons will effect that. Their daughter, Palmo (dPal mo), is a practitioner at Peukor Gonpa and was in a three year retreat during this time. She will not be marrying and so the issue of rus and status does not directly affect her. However, another brother is very antagonistic towards Rigzin. Rigzin is no longer welcome in his natal household. He now resides in Kyelong, the district capital across the valley, working as a servant at a small restaurant there, when he is not possessed and roaming from village to village. Previously he had worked as a shepherd, and he then had moved to Kyelong, where he seemed to be rather aimless a lot of the time, just hanging about and mixing with all the itinerant workers who came into Lahul for the summer potato season.

When he came to Kardang village saying he was Tangyar, the people responded with both disbelief and fear. They did not think that Rigzin could really be possessed by Tangyar, for he is not Domba. Some of the practitioners from the gonpa told their families that if they invited this devta to their house they would not come again with the other practitioners to perform rituals. Particularly they disliked the way Tangyar demanded many sheep and goats to be killed. They claimed that rather than a god, that Rigzin was possessed by some srinpo (*srin po*) and said that there is no compassion in demanding blood and meat. They strongly identified the whole practice as Hindu, seeing it as opposed to the teachings of Buddhism. Some of the villagers are in agreement, although some are happy that Tangyar has again become active, even if he has chosen a non-Domba. They are relieved that Tangyar didn't choose anyone from their household.

However, in Kyelong, the Domba man who is the vehicle of Gephan recognised Rigzin as Tangyar when he came walking down the road, and the two embraced. Some of the people who were watching were overcome with emotion and cried to see these two brothers embracing. The people of Kyelong offered flowers, dipping them in chang, and some offered khatags (*kha btags*). But each night the gods demanded that several sheep be killed, amidst the drumming of the Dombas, and the drinking of liquor, into which the blood and meat is mixed and cooked over a fire.

A type of ritual empowerment called a garwa[28] was performed between Gephan and Tangyar, and after that, over the next month or so, Tangyar accompanied Gephan to many houses in many villages and well over a hundred sheep were sacrificed. Later Tangyar returned to Peukor, where he performed a garwa to demonstrate his power and reclaim his place of resi-

---

[26] For a discussion of Bardo, and the six realms, see Fremantle and Trungpa (1975: 3-12).

[27] See Asboe for comparative material on disposal of the dead (1932: 66-67).

[28] This is a Lahuli word, though I am uncertain whether it is from the Karzha dialect, or from the Domba or Shipi dialects. A lama explained the ritual process to me by referring to the transmission between teacher and disciple which takes place in a wang (*dbang*).

dence. Naked, he cut the sheep, spilling the blood and quickly pulling out the sheep's heart. This was placed in a bowl and tied around his chest with a cloth. In order to demonstrate the power of the devta, the heart should remain warm for two days. Then people have faith and offer him 150 Rs and ask him questions about problems and illnesses, which he can answer because he has foreknowledge, diagnosing what demon is causing the problem.

So Tangyar has returned to Peukor, but Rigzin Chosgye is living as a servant in Kyelong and no longer regarded as a member of his household.

One of the practitioners from Kardang Gonpa was in Kyelong at the time Tangyar met Gephan, staying close by. This is his account:

> Then all the night he stayed in Tashi Angrup's (bKra shis dngos grub) house, and during the night they killed three sheep. I never before heard this drumming, this drumming they make when they kill the sheep. This is devta's drum – really suffering. This man is holding the sheep which he takes outside the house, and Tangyar and Gephan also go outside the house, and they cut, and then the blood they are offering to devta. They say that devta raja is never eating this meat. Only Bhoti, Bhoti is another small one, a cook.[29] So Gephan is not eating this meat, just Bhoti is eating.
>
> Then what to do? For one or two days he is living in Kyelong. Then I told them that this is a bad situation. I saw that nobody there is really understanding religion how is Buddhism, how is Hinduism, how is Bon. They don't understand. Nothing is understood.

Indeed, I must agree. It is difficult to fix the identity of Tangyar and Gephan, although several indicators seem critical. It is not only whether they demand blood sacrifice but whether they consume the meat that is thus obtained. Although brothers, they may not both be Gyalpo. Or at least, perhaps Tangyar is behaving more like a zhidag, of which there are several in Lahul, rather than like a Gyalpo? Or perhaps as some of the Lamas suggested, the behaviour is really that of a srinpo. They explained the process to one family in Kyelong in which there had been several deaths, resulting in their consulting Tangyar and making sacrifices for him:

> This is not a real god. This is a *srin po*. It is more like a hungry ghost. When they kill some animal and take the blood they become a little happy and then they have a little power, *dngos grub* you know? But then again they become hungry and then they want more, and if they do not get more blood then they are destroying. I told them not to do like that because we are Buddhist. Yes.

Whatever the origins and past associations of Gephan and Tangyar, it seems these days that the practices of ritual possession associated with them have been encapsulated by the dominant Hindu construction of devta cults, an expression of the on-going and continuing threat that is felt and experienced by the people of Karzha who see themselves as Buddhist, in a time of rapid economic and social change, as they are increasingly integrated into modern India.

---

[29] Although Bhoti may mean 'cook' in the Karzha language, it may also refer to Tibetans in Hindi language. This multiple identity is part of the complex constructions occuring in Lahul.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abu-Lughod, Lila (1991), "Writing Against Culture", in *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in The Present.* Fox, Richard G. (ed.), New Mexico, School Of American Research Press.

Asboe, Rev. Walter (1932), "Disposal of the dead in Tibet", *Man* 32, 66-67.

Cornu, Philippe (1990), *L'astrologie Tibétaine.* Paris, Collection Présences.

Francke, A.H. (1905, reprint 1978), *History, Folklore and Culture of Tibet.* New Delhi, Sumit Publications.

Francke, A.H. (1907), *Die Historischen und Mythologischen Erinnerungen der Lahouler.* Kyelang 15, 16-18.

Fremantle, Francesca and Chögyam Trungpa (1975), *The Tibetan Book of the Dead.* Berkeley and London, Shambhala.

Grierson G.A. (1967), *The Linguistic Survey of India* (reprint). Delhi, G.O.I.

Haarh, Erik (1968), "The Zhang zhung language: a grammar and dictionary of the unexplored language of the Tibetan Bonpos", *Acta Jutlandica* 40/1.

Jäschke, H. A. ([1881] 1975), *A Tibetan-English Dictionary with Special Reference to the Prevailing Dialects.* Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass.

Klimburg-Salter, Deborah E. (1982), *The Silk Route and the Diamond Path: Esoteric Art on the Trans-Himalayan Trade Routes.* Los Angeles, UCLA Arts Council.

Kvaerne, Per (1976), "The genesis of the Tibetan Buddhist tradition", *Tibet Review* 11/3 (March), 9-15.

Mamgain, M.D. (1975), *Himachal Pradesh District Gazetteer Lahul & Spiti.* Chandigarh, H.P. Government.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz, René de (1956), *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective deities.* The Hague, Mouton.

Negi, Thakur Sen (1976), *Scheduled Tribes of Himachal Pradesh: A Profile.* Simla, Thakur Sen Negi.

Ortner, Sherry B. (1978), *Sherpas Through Their Rituals.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

Ortner, Sherry B. (1989), *High Religion: A Cultural and Political History of Sherpa Buddhism.* Princeton, NJ. Princeton University Press.

Peter, F.A. (1977), "A glossary of place names in Western Tibet", *Tibet Journal* 2/2, 5-37.

Pommaret, Françoise (1996), "On Local and Mountain Deities in Bhutan", in *Reflections of the Mountain. Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya.* A.M. Blondeau, E. Steinkellner (eds.), Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Veröffentlichungen zur Sozialanthropologie, Band 2), 39-57.

Prince Peter (1963), *A Study of Polyandry.* The Hague, Mouton.

Roerich, Georges de (1934), *Dialects of Tibet: The Tibetan Dialect of Lahul.* Naggar, Kulu and New York, Urusvati Himalayan Research Institute of the Roerich Museum (Tibetica 1).

Samuel, Geoffrey (1982), "Tibet as a stateless society and some Islamic parallels", *Journal of Asian Studies* 41/2, 215-229.

Samuel, Geoffrey (1993), *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies.* Washington, D.C., Smithsonian Institution Press.

Samuel, Geoffrey, Hamish Gregor and Elisabeth Stutchbury (eds.) (1994), *Tantra and Popular Religion in Tibet.* International Academy of Indian Culture, New Delhi. Aditya Prakashan (Śata-Piṭaka Series Vol. 376).

Stutchbury, Elisabeth A. (1991), *Rediscovering Western Tibet: Gonpa Chorten and the Continuity of Practice With a Buddhist Community in the Indian Himalaya.* PhD Dissertation. Anthropology, R.S.Pac.S. Australian National University.

Stutchbury, Elisabeth A. (1994a), "Perceptions of Landscape in Karzha: 'Sacred' Geography and the Tibetan System of 'Geomancy'", *The Tibet Journal* 19/4, 59-102.

Stutchbury, Elisabeth A. (1994b), "The Making of Gonpa: Norbu Rinpoche from Kardang and Kunga Rinpoche from Lama Gonpa", in Samuel, Geoffrey, Hamish Gregor and Elisabeth Stutchbury (eds.) 1994, 155-204.

Stutchbury, Elisabeth A. (forthcoming), *Rediscovering Western Tibet: Gonpa Chorten and the Continuity of Practice With a Buddhist Community in the Indian Himalaya.* State University of New York Press (McGill Studies in the History of Religions Series, (ed.) Katherine K. Young).

Stutchbury, Elisabeth A. (in press), "Images of Change and Continuity in Karzha and the Ethnographic Mirror of Nepal", in *Envisioning Tibet: People Process and Practice.* Stutchbury, Elisabeth and Hamish Gregor (eds.), New Delhi, Aditya Prakashan.

Tobdan (1984), *History and Religions of Lahul: From the Earliest to circa A.D. 1950.* New Delhi, Books Today.

Tobdan (1993), *The People of the Upper Valley (The sTodpas of Lahul in the Himalaya).* Delhi, Book India Publishing Co.

KĀLINGCHOK AND SAILUNG: A 'FEMALE' AND A 'MALE' MOUNTAIN IN TAMANG TRADITION

by

Gabriele Tautscher, Vienna

1. Introduction

Two mountains of central eastern Nepal stand out as destinations of pilgrimage travels for the Eastern Tamang and their traditional healers, the bonpo: the mountains Kālingchok and Sailung.

Kālingchok in Tamang popular tradition is the abode of the goddess Kālingchok Māi. On its summit a quadrangular stone is the manifestation of her fierce aspect Kāli Māi and a small pond with a rock is the seat of Mahādev in union with Seti Devī. The Tamang bonpo assign Kālingchok Māi to the 'seven sisters' (tib. *ma bdun*) and classify Kāli Māi as a *mamo* (tib. *ma mo*). They ascend this mountain to unite, or as A. Höfer aptly describes it, to go into a 'unio mystica' with the goddess to gain 'life-force' and 'healing-power'.[1] The pilgrims pile tridents on the seat of Mahādev and Seti Devī, offer the blood of female goats to Kāli Māi and some of the Tamang stab a knife (tib. *chu gri*) into the earth of Kālingchok Māi to 'pin her down' before they leave.

For the Tamang who have settled on the terrain of Sailung the summit, Ṭhūlo Sailung, is the abode of the 'white male Lord of the earth' (tam. *phoi sibda karpo*, tib. *pho'i gzhi bdag dkar po*) who in the Buddhist interpretation is recalled *nyegi dagpo* (tib. *gnas gyi bdag po*). The mountain Sailung is also regarded as the abode of the dead where the Tamang Buddhist priests perform rituals for the dead at the site of the Buddhist *chorten* (tib. *mchod rten*). In Tamang popular tradition two caves of Sailung are the seats of Mahādev and Seti Devī where the Tamang bonpo 'unite' with Seti Devī and 'communicate' with the dead. There is no manifestation of Kāli Māi on this mountain and no blood offerings are allowed.

The mountain Kālingchok is regarded as female and the popular tradition emphasizes the fierce and bloodthirsty aspect of the goddess where the rituals are directed to the benefit of the living. The mountain Sailung is seen as male who is peaceful and who does not tolerate fierce female deities on his domain. The rituals are directed towards the dead who ensure the well-being of their descendants.

The data presented in this paper is based on oral traditions collected among the Tamang living in the area of Kālingchok and Sailung and on personal participation at Tamang pilgrimages and rituals on these mountains.[2] The paper contains the description of the Tamang mountain ritual on Kālingchok whereas the description of the rituals on Sailung are part of a previous article and shall be omitted here.[3]

---

[1] Höfer, A. (1994), *A Recitation of the Tamang Shaman in Nepal.* Bonn, VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, p. 56.

[2] The data of this paper is based on field research conducted in the autumn 1994 and 1995 financed by the Austrian Fund of Scientific Research (ÖWF).

So far literature on Kālingchok is limited to C. J. Miller's (1979) description of the shamanistic festival on Kālingchok at the full moon of July/August (nep. *janai pūrnima*) and the festivals in Dolakha, the capital of a former Newar kingdom at the south-eastern flank of Kālingchok.

One historical work on the history of the town Dolakha, which is based on old inscriptions found in the temples of Dolakha, reflects the Newari point of view: Bajracharya/ Shrestha 1974.

[3] Tautscher 1996.

2. Kālingchok and Sailung: Some notes on geography, ethnic composition and history

Kālingchok and Sailung are mountain massifs located in the middle hills of eastern central Nepal in the districts Dolakha, Ramechap, Kabre Palanchok and Sindhupalchok of the modern Nepalese state.[4]

Kālingchok is the higher of the two mountains and has a small rocky treeless peak (3.810 m). Adjoining to the south lies the mountain Sailung with the summit Ṭhūlo Sailung (3.300 m) which in contrast to the former peak is a wide and flat green grassland. The natural boundary of Kālingchok and Sailung is formed by two rivers: the river Sun Kosi springs from Kālingchok and forms the western and southern boundary of the two areas whereas the eastern boundary is formed by the river Tama Kosi. This river's main source is on the Tibetan plateau. It then flows through La phyi, flanks Kālingchok and Sailung to their east and finally joins the Sun Kosi south-east of Sailung. Charanawathi Khola, a tributary of the river Tama Kosi which has its source on Kālingchok forms a partial boundary between Kālingchok and Sailung (see map).

Kālingchok and Sailung are situated south of the Himalayas and the Nepal-Tibet border and lie north-east and within easy reach of the Kathmandu valley. On both sides of the mountains two historically important trading-routes have passed connecting Kathmandu and Tibet. One route led from Kathmandu to Dhulikhel and Risiangku and via Dolakha and Bigu, the settlements on Kālingchok, to Kuti or to Yolmo and Kyirong (tib. sKyid grong). The other route passed over the mountain Sailung to Dolakha and continued along the river Tama Kosi to La phyi and Tibet. Dolakha, situated at the south-eastern edge of Kālingchok, was an important trading town where even today beautiful palaces, temples, *stūpa*s and houses give testimony of its great past.

Since the conquest of the Gorkhali rulers, the Indo-Nepalese Chhetri and Brahmin have gained the majority in the political districts of Kālingchok and Sailung. The Tamang are the second largest ethnic group. Today Kālingchok and Sailung are sacred mountains for diverse ethnic groups who live on their territories: the Tibeto-Burmese Tamang, Thami and Newar, the Indo-Nepalese Chhetri, Bahun and the untouchable Hindu castes Kami, Damai and Mājhi.[5]

Literature on the history of this area is sparse and the earliest written sources date from the 13th century. They are found in temple inscriptions of Dolakha and mainly concern the history of the former principality of Dolakha.[6]

In their own local oral history the Thami claim to be the first to have settled in the area of Kālingchok, to have founded the town Dolakha, and to have owned its surrounding land. Today their main villages are situated just north of the town Dolakha. According to the oral tradition of the Tamang and according to a Tamang Buddhist cosmogonic text, the Kukpa Khachyoi (tib.: *lkugs pa kha dpyod*), a 'Tamang corpus' have migrated from Tibet via Kyirong and Kuti to Nepal, have settled east of the river Sun Kosi, first in the area of Kālingchok, and have then moved further south to the area of Sailung and to Temal, which became their main area of settlement.[7]

---

[4] The names Kālingchok and Sailung apply to the summits of the mountains as well as to the whole area of the two mountain massifs.

[5] On the ethnic composition of central Nepal see: Frank, W. A. (1974), *Ethnische Grundlagen der Siedlungsstruktur in Mittelnepal unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Tamang*. Innsbruck-München, Universitätsverlag Wagner.

[6] See Bajracharya/Shrestha 1974.

[7] The 'Tamang corpus' of Sailung consists of five clans: Moktān, Yonjon, Ghising, Brokchan and Bal. See Tautscher 1996.

The Tamang of this area had no central political organization of their own and the different Tamang villages had been organized either around the main patrilineage and their eldest (tam. *choho*) who claim to be the direct descendants of the village founder, or around a Buddhist monastery, the gompa (tib. *dgon pa*) and the lama lineage in charge of the monastery.

In the early Malla period (1100-1480 A.D.) the Newar expanded from the Kathmandu valley to the north up to Dolakha, which by the 14th century was a fully fortified city and became the capital of a vassal state. At the end of the 15th century until the second half of the 16th century Dolakha most likely had the status of an independent kingdom. Dolakha then was an important trading post between Kathmandu and Tibet[8] where the first silver coins of Nepal were stamped.[9] The size of the territory and the boundaries of the old principality of Dolakha are still obscure. It was most probably limited to the area around the mountain Kālingchok. According to the oral history of the Tamang most of the area around the mountain Sailung remained independent at that time and was the territory of Tamang clans or was ruled by Tamang Buddhist priest lineages.

When Prithivi Narayan Shah conquered Dolakha in 1744 A.D., he handed Dolakha to Ranajit Malla of Bhaktapur.[10] Many land properties belonging to the Tamang were confiscated by the new Gorkha government and given to army members from the Hindu Chhetri caste and to Magars who had fought for the Gorkha rulers as soldiers.

3. Kālingchok Jātra: a description

The festivals on Kālingchok, Kālingchok Jātra (nep.), take place on the full moon of July/August (nep. *janai pūrnima*) and October/November (nep. *kartik pūrnima*). The Kālingchok Jātra on *janai pūrnima* has been described in detail by C. J. Miller who accompanied a Thami *jhãnkri* climbing the summit from northwest and briefly by A.W. Macdonald.[11] The present article describes the festival of Kālingchok on *kartik pūrnima* as the author went the main path to the Kālingchok Jātra with Tamang bonpo and their villagers. Most of the pilgrims who come to these festivals are Tamang, some are Thami, and few are Sherpa and Chhetri.[12]

The main path of pilgrimage ascends Kālingchok from the south. One of the footpaths starts in Karidunga, a market town on the motor road to Jiri, leads up through dense forests and passes grazing land of Yak cattle of Sherpa families. The bonpo of the Tamang are dressed in their ritual outfit which consists of the long white pleated frock (nep. *jāmā*), the head dress (tam. *sortat*), the chain of *rudrakṣa* beads, and the chain with bells (tam. *syang syang rolmo*). The Tamang bonpo constantly plays his drum (tam. *nga*, nep. *dhyangro*), which has a carved *phurba* for a handle with a bamboo drumstick in the form of a snake (nep. *gajo*) and dances in the rhythm of three steps up the mountain. The people who accompany the bonpo take their

---

[8] On the history of Newar trade see: Lewis, Todd T. (1993), "Himalayan Frontier Trade: Newar Diaspora Merchants and Buddhism", *Ethnologische Schriften Zürich*, ESZ 12, Charles Ramble a. Martin Brauen (eds.), 165-178. Slusser, M. (1982), *Nepal Maṇḍala*. Princeton, Princeton University Press. Stiller, L. (1973), *The rise of the house of Gorkha*. Ranchi, The Catholic Press.

[9] According to inscriptions of the reign of Ujot Dev (around 1516-1534 A.D.) and Sinha Dev (around 1534-1550 A.D.) Dolakha had an independent status from the Malla rulers of the Kathmandu valley and minted silver coins. The first known silver coins from Kathmandu are the 'Mahendra Malli' at the time of king Mahendra Malla (1560-1574). See Bajracharya/Shrestha 1974.

[10] See Bajracharya/Shrestha 1974.

[11] Miller 1979, Macdonald, A.W. (1983), "The Janaipūrnima and the Gosainkunda", in *Essays on the Ethnology of Nepal and South Asia I*. Kathmandu, Ratna Pustak Bhandar (Bibliotheca Himalayica Ser. 3, Vol. 3).

[12] That the majority of the pilgrims on Kālingchok are Tamang has also been observed by Miller (1979) and by Macdonald (1983) [cf. previous note].

children with them. They are from the same village, sometimes from the same family. One of the men accompanying carries the trident (nep. *trisul*, tam. *barsa*), another the lance (tam. *tarwar*), and a young girl (sometimes a man) carries the sacred vase (tam. *bumpa*). At a spot called 'sixteen *khros*' (nep. *sora khros*, skr. *krośa*, approximately 32 miles) the summit of Kālingchok can be seen for the first time. Here several foot paths from different directions join. The deity Kālingchok Māi is greeted and honored by the pilgrims for the first time and the bonpo go into trance. After one more day of walking you reach a small valley where a brook is fed by an additional spring. The spring is said to be the tail of Kālingchok Māi. The pilgrims sprinkle themselves with the water from the spring before they cross the brook, which also is considered to be a symbolic borderline of an 'inner domain' of Kālingchok Māi. At dawn you reach a beautiful green valley just below the summit of Kālingchok through a natural rocky gate, called the 'copper gate'. At this natural gateway the rocks are adorned with many copper tridents. In the center of the valley stands a white Buddhist chorten and nearby a few basic lodges and teahouses which can accommodate (or stack in) hundreds of pilgrims at the times of the festivals.

The night before the final ascent to the summit the pilgrims spend the night either in one of the lodges or they cuddle together in a cave below the summit. The men and women sing alternating songs all night long and the bonpo invoke the goddess Kālingchok Māi with the help of their drums. They say that Kālingchok Māi 'comes into their body'.

At daybreak the pilgrims begin the final climb up to the summit of Kālingchok. From the lodges it takes one hour to reach an iron bridge which from the west leads to the top platform of Kālingchok. First the pilgrims and the bonpo circumambulate the summit three times, then stop in front of a small pond on the western side. This pond, which is rather a water-hole, has a natural rock on its northern side, it is fenced in the east and west by stonewalls and is left open to the south. Above the pond is a wooden construction where thousands of copper tridents have been piled up by generations of pilgrims. The tiny pond is named by the Hindu Bhagawati Kunda. For the Tamang the rock and the pond are the seats of Mahādev and Seti Devī and they call the rock Mahādeuthān, thus emphasizing the male aspect. At this sacred site the pilgrims offer copper tridents, flowers, cow milk, coins, uncooked rice, vermilion powder and butter and they light butter lamps.

The bonpo play their drums in front of the Mahādeuthān, go into trance and hold the drums horizontally into the space below the tridents above the small pond. The adults at the same time take off the shabby clothes of the children and dress them in new, 'pure' clothes. The bonpo give the offerings of uncooked rice and red powder lying on the Mahādeuthān on the drum and from there onto the heads of the children as a blessing of the gods. Then they give every participant a blessing on the forehead (nep. *tikka*).

Afterwards the pilgrims, with the bonpo at the head of the procession playing their drums, proceed to the stone of Kāli Devī, respectively Kāli Māi. The seat of Kāli Māi is a quadrangular rock in the south-east of the summit. The bonpo sacrifice the blood of the female goats taken along by Tamang families, killing the goats one by one with one cut through the throat and pour the blood over the quadrangular stone. The head is separated from the body and the tip of the tail of the dead animal is placed into its mouth.[13]

At the same time other bonpo and men sacrifice a cock or a fowl to the god Ganesha. His seat is a vertical stone slab in the north-east. After the animal sacrifices all the pilgrims exchange *tikkas* on their foreheads, according to seniority and social hierarchy. The Tamang man

---

[13] Miller (1979) writes that a Newar priest sacrificed the animals and provoked a tension between himself and the Tamang bonpo, which was solved by the Newar priest by taking the knife of the bonpo to kill the sacrificial animal. When I observed the Kālingchok festival, there was no Newar priest or any other Hindu priest on Kālingchok.

carrying the lance poses on the summit of Kālingchok like a Nepali king, with the modern attribute of dark sunglasses, and in the background is the beautiful white peak of Gauri Shankar. The sacred vase is filled with water from the Bhagawati Kunda and taken as a blessing of the goddess to the homes. Before the procession leaves the summit towards the east, one of the Tamang men takes a knife from his belt and sticks the blade into the ground just beside the beginning of the descending path.

Simultaneous to the bonpo ritual, a Tamang Buddhist priest performs a ritual called *jinsek* (tib. *sbyin-sreg*) or in Nepali language described as a 'Rudri-ritual' in a small empty space in the center of the summit of Kālingchok.

This Buddhist ritual includes purification through fire (tib. *bsang*) and water (tam. *tui*)[14] and is carried out by the priest for one Tamang household of which only one woman is present at the ceremony. The ritual is explained by the priest to be a completion of the setting of the *luntar* (tib. *rlung rta*) near the house of the woman's husband. She explained that he had been very ill. The text to this ritual is named Dorje Namjung and is part of the book Gyamto (tib. *gyam gto*).[15]

The priest draws a *maṇḍala* (tam. *kilkhor*) on the ground and sticks a tuft of juniper (tam. *payu*) into each corner of the *maṇḍala*. In the center of the *maṇḍala* he builds a small pyre of wooden branches. In front of the priest lies a wooden board where he has placed the offerings: a bowl with milk, a sacred vase (tam. *bumpa*) with 'blessed water' *tui chu* (tam. *tuibum*), four plates with the flour of different grains (tam. *sadbiu,* skr. *sadbij*), uncooked rice, bread (tam. *selgyeng*), and fruit. The priest recites the text and during the course the pyre is lighted. While the fire is burning the priest orders the woman to sprinkle the flour, *sadbiu*, mixed with butter into the fire as an offering. Next she pours some blessed water, *tui*, from the sacred vase, *bumpa*, into the milk bowl. Then the priest pours the mixture of milk and blessed water back into the sacred vase. They pour back and forth several times. At the same time the woman adds flour and butter to the pyre to keep the fire burning. Finally, the woman carries the milk bowl with the mixture of milk and blessed water (tam. *tui chu*) to the Mahādeuthān and pours the liquid into the pond.

Macdonald observed at the Kālingchok Jātra of the full moon of July/August a bahun (nep., Hindu brahmin) read from a Hindu text the *Rudrayamalatantra* and intone '*rudri*-hymns' in praise of Śiva.[16]

4. Kālingchok Jātra: an interpretation

The Tamang pilgrims regard the rocky summit of Kālingchok as an emanation of Kālingchok Māi. When the pilgrims first see the summit on their way up they bow in the direction of the mountain and greet the goddess Kālingchok Māi.

---

[14] *Tui* in Tamang ritual contains substances of medicine, is empowered with *tantra*, *mantra* and *mudrā*.

[15] Gyamto is the title given by Tamang Buddhist priests for the collection of all the Buddhist texts necessary for Buddhist rituals in Tamang village life; another title used for a collection of ritual texts is 'Domang' (tib.: *mdo-mang*).

[16] See Vasini, Kamala A. (1992), *Iconography of Śiva*. Delhi, B. R. Publishing Corporation. In the Rigveda Rudra is a form of Śiva. «The word Rudra means the liquidator of misery as also the giver of knowledge. It also means one who makes the sinner weep. (...) In the view of the Vedic Aryans whenever the lightening strikes man or beast, it is the work of Rudra. (...) He causes havoc among children, men, cattle and the horses. His arrows are strong and swift. He is man slaying (*nṛghna*). He is an Asura of Heaven. He is terrible as a beast, destructive and fierce. (...) Rudra is also known as Girisanta, which signifies one who extends happiness to all from his residence in Kailasa or in speech or in rain.» (p. 29-30).

In a legend told by a Tamang from Makaibari, Kālingchok Māi has freely chosen to come down from her snowy abode in Tibet to restore the cosmic order so that the people may be able to live:

> When sun and moon were rising at the same time, when all the vegetation dried out and every living being died, Kālingchok Devī came by herself from Tshe ring Jo mo, a white mountain in Tibet, to Kālingchok because she knew that there people will live who will bring her offerings.

In popular Tamang belief all snowy mountains are the abodes of female deities, Jo mo, and the Himalayas in Tamang language are called Jo mo gang.

The snow mountain of Tshe ring Jo mo can be seen from the summit of Kālingchok: arriving on top of Kālingchok the majestic white twin-peak of Gauri Shankar comes into sight.

According to a Tamang Buddhist priest Gauri Shankar is the residence of the Tibetan goddesses Tshe ring mched lnga who also gather in the five lakes of La phyi gangs.[17] By this Buddhist priest Kālingchok Māi is considered as one of the 'long-lived sisters', Tshe ring mched. The female deity of this myth is seen as the precondition of life and the arrival of the goddess reestablished the cyclic order and made the local territory, the realm of the goddess, suitable again for human habitation.

For the Tamang bonpo and Tamang pilgrims, Kālingchok Māi is viewed to be the eldest of 'seven sisters', *ma bdun* (tib., tam. *thangla ma bdun*) and Kālingchok is considered by the Eastern Tamang to be the most powerful of all the sanctuaries of the māi goddesses (nep. *māithān*). Kāli Māi of Dakshin Kāli, south of the Kathmandu valley, is said to be the youngest. The remaining five sisters are unknown or have been forgotten.

When the pilgrims reach the summit of Kālingchok, they first walk around the summit to circumambulate all the godly manifestations. Then they stop at the rock with the enormous pile of tridents under which the small pond with the rock is almost buried, the Mahādeuthān. The first god the Tamang pilgrims bring their offerings to is Mahādev who is in union with Seti Devī. Mahādev is considered to be the male aspect of the mother goddess and Seti Devī is her peaceful aspect. More tridents, the weapon of Mahādev or his embodiment, are added. Only then do the pilgrims and bonpo proceed to give the blood offerings to Kāli Māi. The fierce aspect of Kālingchok Māi is called Kāli Māi. Her the Tamang pilgrims and bonpo identify with the *mamo* (tib. *ma mo*), the threatening goddesses who cause various diseases, but who are able to counteract and to strengthen the 'life-force' and health of the children and the adults.

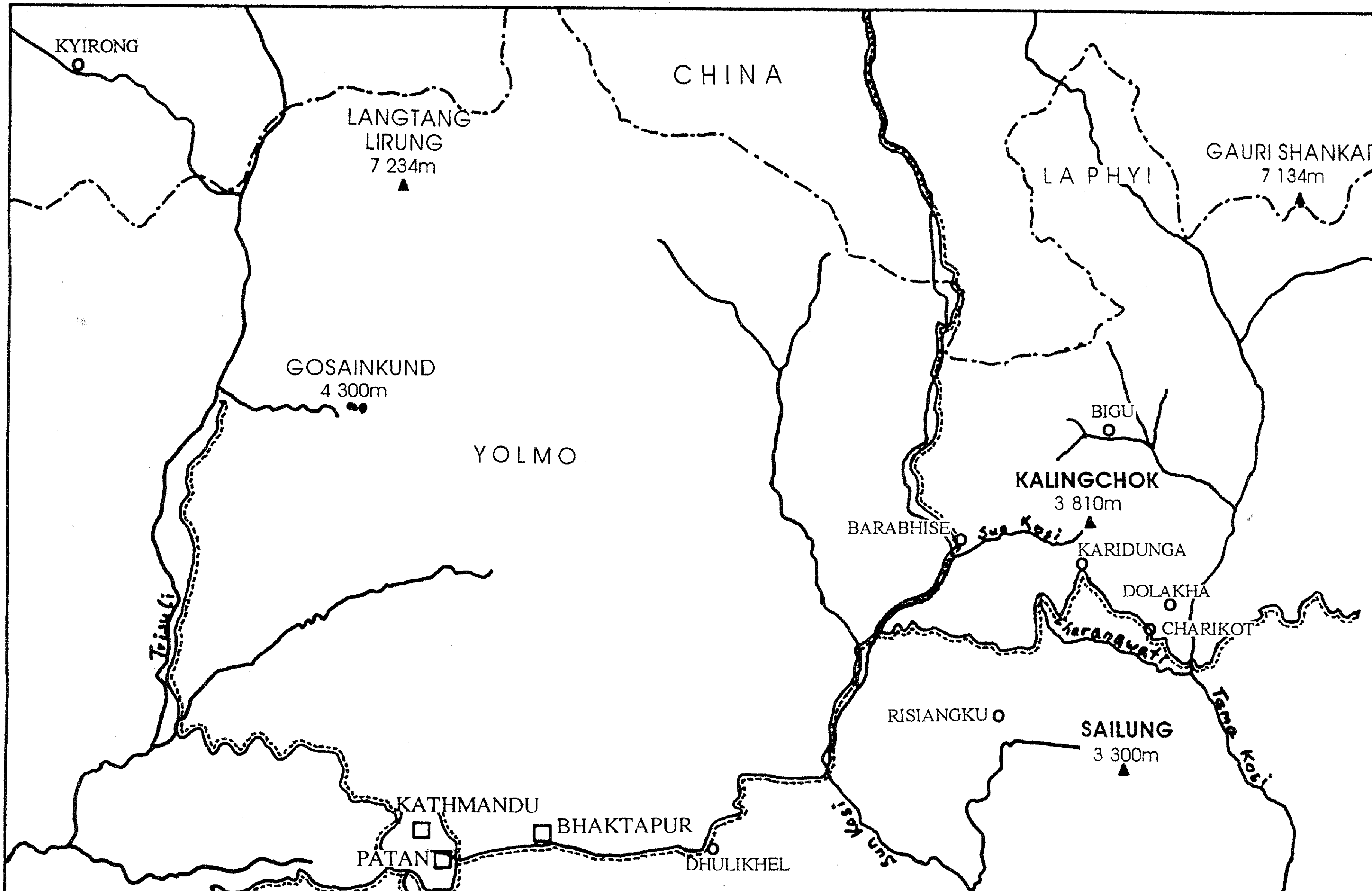
The last of the deities who receives an offering from the pilgrims is Ganesha, the commander of the attendants of Śiva, the *gan*, and the remover of obstacles.[18] The Thami refer to him as

---

[17] Nebesky-Wojkowitz, R. de (1975), *Oracles and Demons of Tibet. The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities*. Graz, Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt (repr.). He writes (p. 177): «The *Tshe ring mched lnga* are mountain-goddesses, whose residence is supposed to be the *Jo mo gangs dkar* or *La phyi gangs*. At the foot of this mountain are supposed to be five glacial lakes with water in different colors, which are consecrated to this group of goddesses. Usually the Tibetan works only mention that the residence of these five goddesses lies 'on the border of Nepal and Tibet'.»

Gauri Shankar lies east of La phyi gangs and north of the Rolwaling range. The Hinduist goddess Gauri is the mild form of the Śakti of Śiva and means 'the yellow', 'the brilliant' or the 'white goddess'. Sankara means 'Auspicious' and is a name of Śiva in his creative character or as chief of the Rudras. See Dowson, J. (1992), *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion*. New Delhi, Heritage Publishers, and Eck, D. (1983), *Benares: City of Light*. London, Routledge a. Keagan Paul Ltd.

[18] Dowson, *op. cit.* 106-107 [cf. previous note].


KYIRONG
LANGTANG
LIRUNG
7 234m
CHINA
LAPHYI
GAURI SHANKAR
7 134m
GOSAINKUND
4 300m
YOLMO
BIGU
KALINGCHOK
3 810m
BARABHISE
Sun Kosi
KARIDUNGA
DOLAKHA
CHARIKOT
Trisuli
RISIANGKU
SAILUNG
3 300m
Tama Kosi
KATHMANDU
BHAKTAPUR
PATAN
DHULIKHEL
Sun Kosi

sikari (nep.), a hunter, or as *ban jhãnkri* (nep.), according to them a non-human being living in the forests who kidnaps children and teaches the shaman the magic formulas.[19]

Before the pilgrims and the bonpo leave the summit a Tamang man stabs a knife into the earth to 'pin the goddess down' that, as they explained, she is not able to follow them to their homes and harm them.

The Buddhist and Hindu priests often refer to Kālingchok as Mahādeuthān, the sanctuary of Mahādev (or Padmasambhava) and avoid the term *māithān* used by the bonpo or the lay people.

The Tamang Buddhist priest of Makaibari explains the *jinsek* ritual (tib. *sbyin-sreg*) on the summit of Kālingchok as an old *bsang* ritual of the bon tradition which has been 'purified with holy water' (tam. *tui*) to be incorporated into the Buddhist tradition. In Tamang Buddhist tradition *bsang* purification is part of the Buddhist water (*tui*) purification. The *jinsek* ritual shall strengthen the life-force of the living being and remove moral obstacles.

In Tamang popular tradition no *bsang* ritual as described by S.G. Karmay among Tibetan communities is performed on Kālingchok.[20]

The *jinsek* ritual is also called 'Rudri ritual' and the offering is directed towards the Buddhas of Rudra. According to D. Gellner this ritual is a rNying ma Mahāyoga ritual based on a conscious inversion of Śaivite ritual.[21] Rudra is Śiva in his terrible form, alternatively identified with *preta*, *yakṣa*, *rākṣasa* or *srin po*. In the Buddhist text *Padma thang yig* of the 14th century Rudra is lying on his back, defeated like the demoness (tib. *srin mo*) who represents the Tibetan soil, and carries the 'wheel of life' (tib. *srid pa'i 'khor lo*) a theme of transformation of the demon (or demoness) into divinity corresponding to the transformation of 'wild nature' into a civilized and 'sacred' territory. Rudra becomes the 'Master' of the three worlds and of the gods, the men and the *asura*. His counter-force is his wife Kālī (tib. Dus mtshan ma).[22]

5. Bhimsen of Dolakha

In Dolakha, the former capital of the principality which is situated at the southern flank of the mountain Kālingchok, stands the temple of the most powerful 'landlord' (tam. *sibda*, tib. *gzhi bdag*) of the Eastern Tamang who is also regarded as the 'Lord and authority' of the entire area. His name, most probably introduced by the Newar, is Bhimsen and is derived from the Hindu god Bhīma, one of the 5 Pāṇḍavas of the Hindu epic Mahābhārata. According to Newar oral tradition he reached Dolakha during the time of the secret exile to introduce the Hindu religion. All inscriptions regarding land rights found in Dolakha, starting from the 14th century, are in his name. During the Rana period the *kipaṭ* [23] of the Tamang and Thami of the area of what is now Dolakha district (including part of the area of Sailung) were given to the *guṭhi* [24] of Bhimsen. Bhimsen is also called Bhimesvar and is explained by the Newar as the united power of Rudra

---

[19] The statement on the Thami is based on Miller 1979.

[20] Described in Samten G. Karmay (1995), "Les Dieux des Terroirs et les Genévriers: un rituel tibétain de purification", *Journal Asiatique* 283/1, 161-207.

[21] Gellner, D.N. (1992), *Monk, Householder, and Tantric Priest. Newar Buddhism and its Hierarchy of Ritual.* Cambridge University Press: 342.

[22] See R. A. Stein (1995), "The subjugation of Rudra and other tantric tales", *Journal Asiatique* 283/1, 142-160.

[23] *Kipaṭ* is a communal form of land tenure at the time of the early Nepali state, with the right to *kipaṭ* land by virtue of the membership in a particular ethnic group and their location in a particular area (in Nepal: Limbu, Rai, Danuwar, Sunuwar and Tamang). See Regmi, M.C. (1976), *Landownership in Nepal.* Berkeley, University of California Press.

[24] *Guṭhi* was a land donation of the state to a religious institution, a land title which could not be withdrawn. Regmi 1976: 16 [cf. previous note].

and Bhagawati. Bhimesvar is known to 'sweat' (liquid oozes from the stone) indicating a crisis in the kingdom of Nepal or even a threat to the power of the royal family of Nepal. Bhimesvar is said to have 'sweated' in 1949, before the Rana prime ministers lost their ruling power, and in 1990 when heavy demonstrations occurred against the Panchayat government. The chief district officer of Dolakha himself had to worship the statue of Bhimesvar and the sweat of Bhimsen was carried in a cotton pad to the royal court in Kathmandu for sacrificial *pūjā* to appease the god.

The mighty god Bhimsen of Dolakha who does not tolerate a roofed temple is manifested in a black rock. Today he is worshipped by the entire population, the Indo-Nepalese castes, the Newar, the Thami and the Tamang.

In local popular belief he is considered to be the 'younger brother' of Kālingchok Māi and at the western wall of the temple compound of the deity Bhimsen stands a shrine of Kālingchok Māi which is heaped with tridents.

According to a Tamang myth, recorded in the district of Dolakha, the Tamang claim Bhimsen to be their protective deity, and some Tamang even go as far as saying that Dolakha was originally a Tamang area although the Thami, are generally described as the first settlers of Dolakha who had been conquered and suppressed by the Newar:

> A man from the Tamang clan Moktān[25] possessed several chicken. On the spot of the Bhīmesvarthān there was a tree and every night one of his chicken slept on this tree. The people were astonished about this exceptional habit of the chicken and took a closer look. Thereupon the chicken explained to the people that it is a manifestation of the god Bhimsen.

In a second Tamang myth, recorded in Risiangku, Bhimsen is explained to be a *sibda* deity (tib. *gzhi bdag*) who has come with the clan Moktān from Tibet to Nepal on his own will, like Kālingchok Māi:

> A family of the clan Moktān came from Tibet to Nepal. They had to carry heavy loads in baskets on their backs. A god, the *sibda* Bhimsen, hid himself in one of the baskets and thus was carried by the Moktān from Tibet to Nepal. When they reached the river Sun Kosi, the Moktān built their camp for the night on its shore. The next morning they took three stones, including the stone from the basket to build a fireplace to cook rice. But the stone from the basket always fell and made it impossible to cook. One of the men finally became so furious and hit the stone with his foot. Blood oozed from the stone and the man who had hit the stone immediately died. Another man began to shake like a bonpo and through him they could hear the god speak: 'I am Bhimsen and I have come with you from Tibet to protect you, and you hit me!' The Moktān were sorry and asked for his forgiving. Then all the Moktān gathered to decide in which direction they should proceed. They decided to move on to the east. When they crossed the river Sun Kosi its water spirit (tam. *lu*, tib. *klu*) took all their jewelry away from them. They carried the stone, the manifestation of Bhimsen, with them and put it at the place where it is now, in the Bhīmesvarthān in Dolakha. At the time when they were living in Dolakha there was a Newar king and this king was very cruel. One day a man of the clan Moktān killed the queen and they had to flee and hide in the forests near the present Tamang village Makaibari. After 14 years they were discovered by the Newar, but the king said, that they should not be killed, since he needed people for

[25] Interesting is the fact that most origin myths of the Tamang of Sailung are connected with the clan Moktān. See Tautscher 1996.

his kingdom. At that time a Tamang *guṭhi* at the Bhīmesvarthān in Dolakha was founded.[26]

For the Eastern Tamang Bhimsen of Dolakha does have the characteristics of a *sibda* deity. He is included in all current cults regarding the fertility of the fields and he is worshipped by the main pillar at the construction of every house. In fact Bhimsen today is a 'landlord' for the Tamang and for many of the other peoples residing in the districts Dolakha, Ramechap, Kabre Palanchok and Sindhu Palchok and thus acts as a unifying force in his territory. The Tamang of the clan Moktān claim to be the first choice of Bhimsen that he is their, in one myth even Tibetan, protector who later was taken over by the Newar and gave him the name Bhimsen. In the 18th century Bhimsen was appropriated by the Gorkhalis.

Bhimsen is viewed as a *sibda* or protecting deity of the Tamang clan Moktān, whose sanctuary, maybe, is near one of their first settlements in this area. Also the sanctuary (nep. *sibda thān*) of Sailung phoi sibda karpo is situated on the land formerly claimed to be that of the Moktān. Neither sanctuary of the two *sibda* is on the summit of the mountains Kālingchok and Sailung.

6. Kālingchok versus Sailung

The festivals on Kālingchok and Sailung are local mountain cults for which the village communities of all ethnic groups living in the realm of Kālingchok Māi and Sailung phoi sibda karpo periodically ascend the summit to propitiate the gods for mundane pursuits. The times of the festivals are also the only times when most of the people of the entire territory, be they Tamang, Thami, Chhetri, Bahun, etc., crowd round the summit, drink and sing alternating songs between women and men. Tea stalls are erected, tea, biscuits, liquor and beer are sold in great quantities. Numerous traders arrive to displace their goods and travelling entertainers initiate games of chance. The contact between the different ethnic groups, however, is limited and the individuals tend to stick to their own people. The rituals of the different traditions shamanistic, Buddhist and Hinduist can take place simultaneously, but there is no communication between the various religious specialists, the shaman, the lama and the brahmin.

In the history of the areas of Kālingchok and Sailung several traditions met. On Kālingchok it prevailingly was the chthonic traditions of the Thami and Tamang. When the Newar expanded from the Kathmandu valley and took possession of Dolakha and Kālingchok, Hinduism was introduced. For the Newar rulers Kālingchok became the abode of the Hindu goddess Kālī Devī as a protection towards the north and Bhimsen, the *sibda* and protector of the Tamang clan Moktān, became the protector of their ruling power. Hindu caste rules became the basis of the hierarchical social structure of the principality of Dolakha. Due to the importance of the trade relations with Tibet, Tibetan Buddhism was respected, above all in the 16th century A.D., but not taken over. During the Rana government (1846-1950) Kālingchok remained to be an important religious sanctuary for the ruling elite. Evidence of that are large donations placed on the summit of Kālingchok by members of the Nepalese army, some made after the receipt of land grants from the government within the realm of Kālingchok Māi. On the summit of Kālingchok stands a pillar with a brass lion on top donated by Colonel Rajpad Bhakta in 1916 A.D., a huge bell donated by Shanker Sham Sher Jang Rana in 1946 A.D., the son of the prime minister Chandra Sham Sher, and two bells donated by Colonel Dal Bahadur in 1909 A.D. Bhimsen of Dolakha remained to be an important protective deity of the Gorkhali kings of Nepal.

---

[26] An interesting parallel is quoted by A. Höfer (1994: 63, footnote 35 [cf. above n. 1]) regarding a stone in a basket by the Na-khi in China described by J.F. Rock (1952), *The Na-khi Nāga Cult and Related Ceremonies.* Roma, IsMEO (Serie Orientale Roma IV), I: 250 n. 527: «The life god resides in a special basket for each family, and in this basket, a black rock the size of a fist [...] represents indestructibility and unchangeableness and [...] the father of the Na-khi (human) race.»

For the Tamang of Kālingchok and Sailung the Buddhist tradition of the Nyingmapa householder lama was prevalent in the last millennium[27] re-interpreting the old tradition of the Tamang, and the Buddhist lama have to a certain extend become rivals to the Tamang bonpo and dhami. Kālingchok, the abode of the eldest of the 'seven sisters', *ma bdun,* of the Tamang bonpo was re-interpreted by the Buddhist as one of the Tshe ring mched lnga. The area of Sailung was the main area of settlement for the Tamang and the mountain Sailung was the abode of their dead and the realm of the chthonic 'Lord of the land', Sailung phoi sibda karpo. Sailung retained a politically more independent status and Ṭhūlo Sailung became a holy place, *gnas ri,* in the Buddhist sense. During the Rana rule Hinduism was enforced and Kālī temples at several ponds of Sailung were erected by Hindu institutions. They were all destroyed since 1990 by the Tamang Buddhists after the Hindu's decline of power since the majority of the population in this area are Tamang, and the Buddhist priests regained the supremacy. Today, on the Buddhist *gnas ri* no 'black water spirits' (tam. *mlangai lu*) which were propitiated as Kālī Devī by the Hindu, and no blood offerings are allowed.

In legends the rivalry of tantric Hinduism and Buddhism, which among the Tamang is congruent to the rivalry between the bonpo and the Buddhist tradition, continues through the battle between the fierce Hindu goddess Devī and Padmasambhava, respectively Mahādev:

> In the Tamang village Kangla, which is facing the mountain Sailung, the fierce goddess Kangla Devī started a dispute with Mahādev of Sailung. Mahādev was more powerful and defeated the goddess through causing a large erosion of land beside her seat.

The erosion is enormous and can be seen from a far distance. For many farmers it was a great loss of agricultural land.

At the same time Tamang legends talk of the complementary character of the female goddess of Kālingchok and the male god of Sailung, stating a necessary polarity of female and male in Tamang tradition.

According to a legend told by the Tamang from Risiangku:

> Sailung has given to Kālingchok the seeds of many flowers, trees and fruits. That is why Kālingchok has such a rich vegetation. On the other hand, Kālingchok has given to Sailung only roasted seeds which were unable to sprout on Sailung.

Sailung phoi sibda karpo sends his semen to Kālingchok Māi which richly sprout on Kālingchok and he thus ensures fertility and a great variety of plants. Kālingchok, in the contrary, sends roasted seeds. How is this to be interpreted? In the same culinary field falls the characteristic feature that Bhimsen whose stone manifestation was unsuspectingly used on the fireplace, prevents the rice from being cooked. Does this mean that Kālingchok Māi alone without the male power of Sailung phoi sibda karpo is unable to create life? To me the statement recalls a necessary polarity but expresses the supremacy of the patrilineage in Tamang society, strengthened by the Buddhist namegiving- and death-rituals, over the matrilineage and the inferiority of the archaic non-literate bonpo tradition to the literate Buddhist tradition.

In India as well as in Tibet the earth in the archaic tradition was seen as a female divinity where mountains too were linked to the goddesses. In India Hindu Devī of local and regional significance have attracted supplicants for their blessings and protection for nearly three thousand years. The word *śakti*, especially with the rise of the Tantra came to be used to describe these female divinities. *Śakti* means 'energy' or 'power' and these are understood as the life-energies of the world, firmly associated with both the nourishment and the vagaries of the na-

---

[27] The first Buddhist monastery (tam. *gompa*) of the Tamang is said to date back to the 11th century and is Carigyang near Dolakha.

ture. All the various aspects of nature became in the Hindu tradition the *pīṭha*s, in Nepali language the *thān*, the 'seats', 'benches' or 'sanctuaries' of the goddesses.

According to J. Gyatso the demoness of Tibet *srin mo*, her *ma mo*s and *lu*s are being pinned down through 'sky pillars' (*gnam gyi ka ba*), 'earth nails' (*sa yi phur ba*) and 'stone pillars' (*rdo ring*) by the early Buddhist Tibetan kings to mark their possession and their dominance over the underworld. But also the primary activities of Bon, at least starting from the time of the quasi-mythical King Gri gum btsan po, is to suppress the *srin* and the *'dre*.[28]

The Tamang bonpo tradition definitely has traits of the Hinduist tantric tradition of the Śiva-Śakti cult. In language and etymology regarding the chthonic deities, however, it certainly refers to an old archaic Tibetan culture. The bonpo periodically invoke the goddess into their body on her abode to receive her energy or power. At the same time Tamang men and bonpo 'pin her down' with the knife to manifest their dominance and right to use the land within her realm.

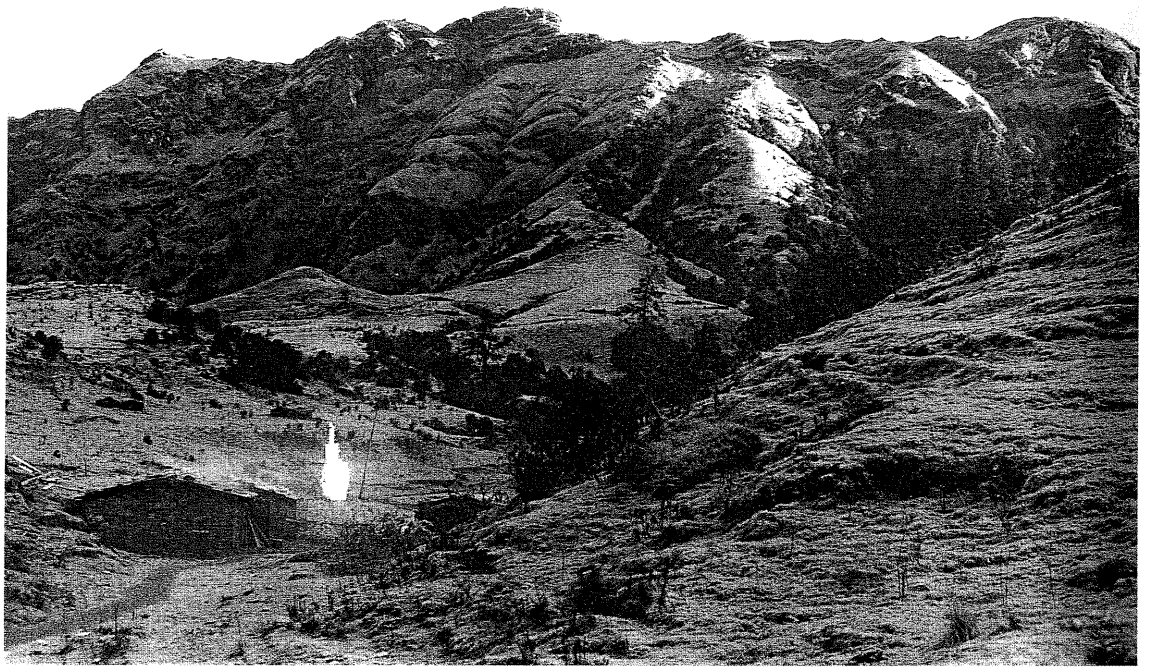
BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bajracharya, D. and Shrestha, T. B. (1974), *Dolakhako Aitihasik Rup Rakha*. Kathmandu, Tribhuvan University (Historical Publication No. 8).

Miller, Casper J. (1979), *Faith Healers in Nepal*. Center for Nepal and Asian Studies, Kirtipur, Tribhuvan University.

Tautscher, G. (1996), "The five Tamang ancestors and Sailung phoi sibda karpo", in *Reflections of the Mountain. Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya*. A.M. Blondeau, E. Steinkellner (eds.), Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften (Veröffentlichungen zur Sozialanthropologie, Band 2), 157-178.

[28] Compare with Gyatso, J. (1989), "Down with the Demoness: Reflections on a Feminine Ground in Tibet", in *Feminine Ground: Essays on Women and Tibet*. Janice D. Willis (ed.), New York, Snow Lion Publications, 33-51.



View of Kālingchok and the valley below with the Buddhist *chorten* and teahouses from the "copper gate".

A Tamang stabs the knife (tib. *chu gri*) into the earth of Kālingchok Māi to "pin her down" before the descent.

Piles of copper tridents and bells above the Bhagawati Kunda, the seat of Mahādev and Seti Devī, offered by generations of pilgrims.

དཔའ་དེས་མ་ཤཀའ་ཤེའི་སྡེ་རྣོང་ཞིག་ཡིན་ལ། རེའི་མིང་ནི་ལོ་རྒྱས་དང་ཡུལ་སྡེའི་གནས་ཚུལ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་ཐོབ་ཨ་ཁུ་hwa—ri ཞེས་བློ་གདོགས་པ་དང་། དེ་ནི་"དཔའ་ཤེའི་ཡུལ"་ཞེས་པའི་དོན་དུ་སྣང་ཞིང་། མིང་དེ་དུ་ཡུ་བར་རྒྱུན་ཆགས་སུ་ཡོད། དཔའ་དེས་ཚོ་བར་ཤེས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས་ཐོབ་ཏུ་ཕྱིའི་རྣམ་པར་གྲུབ་པའི་ཚེ་རྒྱལ་ཁབ་སྐྱོང་ཐེངས་དང་སྐྱོང་རྗེའི་ལས་དང་དུང་སྐྱེས་ཀྱི་ཚེ་ཡང་ཐོག་ཏུ་ཡོད། དཔའ་དེས་ཚོ་བར་ཤེས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་ཚེ་ཡང་ཐོག་ཏུ་ཡོད། དེ་ཀུན། ཤོག་ཡོ། ཡུས་ཀུའུ། རྒོལ་ཤོགས་མི་དེགས་རྣམས་རྒྱང་བསྡད་ཡོད། འདི་ཁར་རྒོལ་དེགས་མང་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་ས་སྒའུ་ལེ་ལིམ་ཀྱི་ཚོར་ལུགས་ལ་དད་ཀྱས་ཉེད་པ་ལས་མི་དེགས་ཀཁན་པ་དག་ཀིས་ཀཁན་པའི་རྣམ་པར་ཐེག་པ་དང་ཀཁེ་བའི་ཐབས་ལ་མཚེད་བཀུར་ཉེད་པའི་ཐུ་ཤལ་ཁོད་དེའ་ཀཁས་སྐྱ་མདའ་འབྲུས་པའི་རྣམ་པ་ཞིག་ཁག་འདུག

ཁོ་ཚོ་ཀཁས་ཚུལ་དེར་འདུན་པ་དང་ཀོ་སྐྱེས་པར་མ་ཟད། དེ་ལ་མི་དེགས་ཞིབ་འཇུག་ཀི་ཚ་ནས་དེག་ཀཁུང་ཀི་རིན་ཐང་ཆེ་བར་སྐྱམ། དེའི་སྐོར་ནས་ཞིབ་རྟགས་ཁིག་པཁད་ན་ཡིག་ཚོགས་མང་འཛོག་བར་... དོགས་ནས། ཁོ་ཚོས་ལོ་ཀཐྱེས་ལ་ཐེ་བའི་རིང་ཡུལ་ དཀོན་ རྟེག་ཞིབ་ཐུས་པའི་འཇུག་སྤྱོད་ཀྱི་ཐོག་ཏུ་ཡོད་པ་ཞིག་ཡོད། འཇུ་ལཀ་ཆུ་ཚེའི་སྡོད་སྣུད་བར་ཀཁུམ་ཀུ་ཀཁས་པའི་འཇུ་ལཀ་ཁཚེན་ཚོ་ཁུན་ཀཁུམ་དང་། ཀཚོ་ཚེ་མི་རྟམས་ཀྱིས་དེ་དཀའ་ཚེའི་མཇོད་སྐོ་ལ་རཀས་ཅོམ་ཞིག་དཔྱད་པར་ཐེད་ལ་དེའི་ཞེང་ཀུ་ཀཁས་ཆུ་ལ་ཀཁེན་པ་འབའ་ཞིག་ཡོད་མོད། འོན་ཀྱང་། ཀཁེ་ཞེའ་ཐེ་ཀཁུང་ཚེའི་ཁོ་ཚོ་ཀཁས་ཀཁོད་པའི་ཁཇོད་ཀྱི་ཐོག་ཏུ་ཡོད་ཅིང་།

དང་ཚོ།

དཔའ་དེས་ཞེས་པའི་ཀཁའ་རྩེ་མོའི་ཚོ་བའདི། ཀ་ལྟ་ས་ཀྱལ་མང་ཡོར་ཆད་ཡོད་དེ། མཚོ... སྡེན་ཞིང་ཆེན་གྱི་ཅོང་ཆུའི་ཁང་ཆུད་ཀུ་ཀནས་པའི་ལོ་ཏུའུ་དང་། ཏུའུ་ཏུའུ། ཏ་ཐུན། མིན་ཡོན་ཁཅས་དང་། ཀཀ་སུའུ་ཞིང་ཆེན་གྱི་སུའུ་ཀན་རྩོང་ཀི་ཀཁ་ཅྱེག་ས་ཀྱལ། ཟེན་ཏུའུ། ཡུན་

དེས་བཙས་རྫོང་ཁཿབའུན་ལ་སྐྱེས། དཔའ་རིས་ཞེས་པའི་མིང་འདི་དུས་ནམ་ཞིག་ནས་བཏགས་ཤོང་པ་ལྟ་རྟོགས་དཀའ་ནའང་། དཔའ་རིས་དེ། དཔའ་བོའི་ཡུལ་ཞེས་པའི་ཚིག་དོན་ཐུ་ཚ་ནས་དཔྱད་ན། གཞའ་རབས་སུ་ས/ཁུལ་འདིའི་ཡུལ་སྡེ་བཙོང་པོ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ས་འཛོག་རྩོད་ཅིང་ཞིག་ཡིན་རེས། ཇ་ལམ་"དཔའ་བོའི་དུས་རབས"སུ་ཁབས་པའི་དུས་རྒྱུད་ཚོ་བ་ཞིག་ལ་འཁྲུག་རྩོད་ཞིབ་ཏུ་བྱས། དཔའ་རིས་ཞེས་པའི་མིང་འདི་རྩིག་ས་ཁུལ་ཞེས་བཤད་ཚོག་པ་འདུ། དེ་ནས་བཟུང་། དཔའ་རིས་ཞེས་པ་ནི་ཚོ་འཛི་མིང་དང་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ས་རྒྱུས་ཀྱི་མིང་ཁའི་སྡུག་ཏུ་ཐུམ་པར་འདོད།།

ཞེའ་འཇུག་ཅུས་པ་ལྟར་ན། "ཁམའ་རབས་ཀྱི་སྒྲུང་(羌)དང་པོད་ཀྱི་འཁྲུང་ཞུང་ས་ལ་མི་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་དཔྱད་པ་མཛད་བ་བཏང་ཨོད་མོད། སྤར་ཀྱི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་དེབ་ཆེར་(དཔེར་ན། མི་ཉ་ཁ(ཞེས་ཁ)་ཀི་ཡི་གེར་བིས་པའི་《ཚུཁ་ཁི་ཁྲེང་བ》ལྟ་བུ)་དང་། དཁ་རྒྱུན། ཁམའ་སྤ་མོའི་ས་མིང་དང་། ཚོ་བའི་མིང་སོགས་ཚོ་ཁས་མང་པོ་ནས་དཔྱད་ན། སྒྲུང་དང་པོད་ཀྱི་སྐད་ཆ་ཁིབ་མཐུན་ཡིན་པ་དང་། མཚོ་སྔོན་ཀྱི་སྒྲུང་སྡེ་ནི་པོད་དེཁས་ཀྱི་འཁྲུང་ཞུང་ཁིབ་ནེད་རེད་ཅེས་ཚོ་ཐ་ཁཁ་ཆོ་ཁ་འདུ།"[1] ལོ་རྒྱུས་སུ་ཁགོད་པ་ལྟར་ན་ཅུ་རྒྱུས་པ་ཁས་ཀྱི་དུས་སུ། འཇུ་ཁ་ཁྲུ་ཁོ། སྒྲུང་ཁུང་ཆུ་ཁོ། ཙོང་ཆུ་བཙས་ཀྱི་འཁབ་རྒྱུད་དུ་ཁབ་ལིམ་སྒྲུང་(先虏羌)དང་། རྩབ་ཚབ་སྒྲུང་(罕开羌)། དོ་ལི་སྒྲུང་(日勒羌)། ཏིང་ཧབ་སྒྲུང་(当前羌)། རྩེ་ཀྱེ་སྒྲུང་(火烧/何羌)སོགས་ཁགས་ཁས་ཁསྡུད་ཨོད།[2] མོང་ཁས་ཁཁད་པའི་དཔའ་རིས་ལ་ཁབོས་པའི་ས་ཁི། ད་སྐབས་ཀྱི་ལོ་ཏུཏུ་དང་། ཏུཏུ་བྱཏུ། ཏ་ཐུན། མིན་ཨོན། སྡུཏུ་ཁན་རྩོང་ཁི་ཁཁ་ཙྷེ་ཁས།

ཐེན་བྱཏུ། ཡུན་ཏིན་བཙས་རྩོང་ཁཁ་རྐམས་ཡིན་ལ། དེ་དཁ་ཁི་འཇུ་ལཁ་དང་། སྒྲུང་ཁུང་། ཙོང་ཆུ་བཙས་ཆུ་ཚོ་ཁསྡུམ་ཀྱི་འཁབ་ཡུལ་ཏུ་ཁརྐས། དེར་བཅེན། ཁམའ་སྤ་མོའི་དཔའ་རིས་ཚོ་ཁ་ཁི་ས་ཁྱུལ་འདི་དཁ་ཏུ་ཏུས་རྒྱུད་ཚོ་བ་ཁཁམ་དཁ་ལས་རྒྱུ་ཅེ་འཛེལ་རྒྱས་ཐྱེད་དཔའ་ཅོད་དུལཁ་ཅོས། དཔའ་རིས་ཞེས་པའི་མིང་འདི་ཐེཁས་ཆུ་ལ་ལའང་རྒྱས་ཀྱུལ་ཅེ་འཛེལ་རྒྱས་ཐྱེད་ཁས། ཚ་མདོའི་ཁ་སྐད་ད་ཁུ་བར་དཔའ་རིས(hwa—ri)ཞེས་པར་ཀློཁ་ནའང་། དབྱས་ཁཙོང་ཁ་སྐད་ཏུ་དཔའ་རིས(pa⁵⁴—ri ɪ/ɪ²)ཞེས་ཡང་ཀློཁ།

ཆུ་ཚོ་འའི་དཁ་འབས་ཡུལ་ཀྱི་ནང་ནས། འཇུ་ལཁ་ཆུ་ཚོ་འབས་ཡུལ་ཏུ་ཁནས་པའི་འཇུ་ལཁ་མཐོའ་ཚོ་བཙུ་ཁསྡུམ་ནི། མཚོན་སྐྱེ་རབ་ཏུ་འབར་བའི་ཁཁི་བདག་ཀླ་རི་སྐོར་ཁཙོཁ་ཡིན་ཏེ། 《འཇུ་ལཁ་མཐོའ་ཚོ་བཙུ་ཁསྡུམ་ལ་བས་མཚོད་འབྱུལ་ཆུལ》ཞེས་པར། "དེ་ཚོ་ཀི་དཁ་ཅུཁས་སྒྲུང་པའི་རྩེ་འོའོ་བཙུ····ཁསྡུམ་ཡིན་"པ་དང་། "འཆོ་ཁ་ཅུཁས་ཀྱི་རི་མཐོའ་ཚོ་བཙུ་ཁསྡུམ་ཏུ་མིང་བཏཁས་ཁཁི། དབྱ་ལྟུ་ཚེའ་ཚོར་ཁ་ཚོལ་ནས་སྒྲུའ་འཇེའ་པ"བཙས་ཀྱི་རྩོའ་ཁ་ཀོད་ཨོད་པ་ལས་ནང་དོམ་ཁ་ཉིས་མཚོའ་ཨོད་པའི་ཁཁོ་ཁི།

དེ་དཁ་མ་ཁ་ཤེཁས་ཚོང་འཇུ་ལཁ་ཆུ་ཚོ་འབས་ཡུལ་ཏུ་ཁརྐས་པའི་ཚོ་ཁ་བཙུ་ཁསྡུམ་ཀྱི་ཚོ་དཚོའ་ཡིན་པ་

དང་། གཉིས་ཀི། གཅེག་རྟེས་འཇུ་ལག་ཚུ་བོ་འབབ་ཡུལ་གྱི་དེ་རྩེ་བཏུ་གསུམ་ཀྱི་མིང་འདྲིས་ཡིང་། ཡུལ་ལྟ་གཞི་བདག་ཏུ་གཉེར་གཏད་ཐུས་ནས་སྤེ་ཚོ་སྤུང་སྐྱེས་ཉེད་ཡའི་དགུ་ལྟ་ཆེན་པོར་འགྱུར། དེ་དག་མིང་གི་ཚོར་རིམ་ལྟར། 1. མེས་ལྟ་གངས་དཀར། 2. མཚོན་པོ་གདོང་དམར། 3. གནམ་ལས་སྐྱེས། 4. ཀུ་ཏུར། 5. ཁྲ་ལེབ། 6. ར་རྐོད། 7. སྤྲུགཅོ། 8. ཚེར་འཛིངས། 9. དམར་མཐེ། 10. སྐུ་ཀ་དེ། 11. ལྟུན་པོའི་རྩེ། 12. རབ་འབྱང་། 13. ཀླུ་རི་ལཀས་ཡིན། དེང་སང་ཐུན་མོང་གིས་ལག་རྩེ་(=ལག་ཅོས་) འསྐྱེད་པོ་དང་བསང་མཆོད་ཉེད་ཡའི་ཚོ་ག་སྐྱོབ་སྐབས། ས་ཁུལ་སོ་སོར་གཏེགས་ཡའི་དབང་གིས་མཆོད་འདུལ་ཉེད་མཁས་ཀུང་རེའི་རྗེས་སུ་སོ་སོར་ལཅད་ཀྱི་ཡོད་དེ། ཁོ་རེའི་ཐུན་མོང་གིས་ཀ་ཁྲི་བཏབ་ནས་མཆོད་ཉེད་ཉིན་ལ་ཐེབ་དུས། བསང་མཆོད་ཉེད་མཁས་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ཚེས་སོ་ནས་བསང་རྫས་ཁྱེར་ཏེ། དང་དང་གིས་འསྐྱེད་ཡའི་ཀླ་རིར་སོང་ནས་མཆོད་འབུལ་ཀྱི་ཚོར་སྐྱ་ཚོགས་སྐྱབ་པ་རེད།།

བོད་ཀྱི་ཀནད་དབས་ལོ་རྒྱུས་སུ་ལེང་ཀྲོད་ལྟེ་བར་ཉིས་ཡཁ་བོད་སྤེ་ཀཁྱང་དྲུག་གི་སྲིད་དབང་[3]ཐྱོང་བར་ཀྱིས་པ་དེ་ནི། བོད་ཀྱི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་སྐྱ་ནཱ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ཤེས་ཀིས་ལུ་རེད། བོད་སྤེ་ཀཁྱང་དྲུག་ནི་ཀ་ལས་ད་ལྟའི་ཞེན་ཀྲུའུ་བོད་རིས་ཀྱི་རྟགས་དཔྱིབས་ཡིན་ཏེ། དེ་དག་ནི་བོད་ཀྱི་ཡུལ་དབུས་ནས་མདོ་སྐྱད་དུ་དམག་ཉེད་དུ་ཡོང་བ་རྣམས་པ། ཁར་ཏུ་ཀནས་སྐྱོས་ཡའི་མི་སྤེ་ཚོ་ཁོ་ལྟ། “བོད་དམངས་”ཞེས་ལངས་ཉིས་ཡའི་ཟན་... དང་མི་ཤེར་དཔྱིས་པ་རྣམས། ས་དེར་ཡོད་ཡའི་སྐྱང་དང་རྩེའུ་ཏུ་ཆུང་བ། འ་ཞ། རྒྱ་ལ་སོགས་པ་ལ་... མཉམ་དུ་བསྡེགས་ནས་ཀྱུབ། གོང་ནས་སྐྱོས་ཡའི་ལྟ་ཀཉན་ཀཞི་ཡདག་བཏུ་གསུམ་ཡོད། ཀཞུང་དྲུག་གི... རང་ནས་འཛུལ་ལག་ཆུ་ཚོ་ཁཞུར་ཀཞུང་ལ་ཀནས་ཀིང། དེའི་ནང་གི་ཀཞི་ཡདག་རབ་ཁཆང་ཞི་འཛུལ་ལག་ཆུ... ཀཞུང་ནས་སྤེ་ལེ་ཀཉིས་ཙོམ་གྱི་སར་ཀནས་པ་དང་། མི་སྡེ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་དེ་ཉིད་མཆོད་པསྐྱོད་ཉེད་ཡའི... ཀནས་ཆུ་ལ་ནི། ངས་ལེ་ཀཉིས་ ལ་རྐྱེ་ཞི་ཉིད་ཡུལ་དང་། དཔྱད་རྩོམ་འཛིའི་ཁརྩོད་ཉ་ཀཚོ་ཚེ་ཡིན། ཀཞི་ཡདག་རབ་ཁཆང་ནི་སྲོལ་ཡས་ཆོང་ཚོ་ཁར་ཀའོ་ཀས་ཡིང་། ཚོ་ཁ་དེར་རྒྱུད་ཆོན་ལྷུད་... ཡོད། དཔྱིལ་རྒྱུད་ཆོན་ལྷུད་ཡོ་ཀན་སུའུ་དང་མཚོ་སྐོན་ཞིང་ཆེན་ཀཉིས་སྐྱ་ཆད་ཡོད་མོད། ལོན་ཐུང་། ལེ་རེའི་དུག་ཡའི་ཁཅོ་ལྟ་སྟེལས་སྐྱབས། རྩོ་ཀས་ཚོ་སོ་ནས་ཀན་སུའུ་ཞིང་ཆེན་ཟེན་ཀྲུའུ་རྩོང་ཀྲུའུ་ཁྲ་ཞང་མར་ཞེ་སྐྲེ་ཁའི་རབ་ཁབང་དོ་རྩོར་ཁའོོམས་ཏེ། ལབ་ཅོར་ལ་རྒྱན་ཀཏེང་པ་དང་། ཁསང་མཆོད་ཉེད་པ་ཚོས་ཀྱི་ཚོ་ག་རྣམས་ཀོ་རིམ་ལྟན་པར་ཉེད།།

ཀཉིས་པ།

རྡེ་དང་། “ཀནས་རི”། “ཀཞི་ཡདག”ཀསུམ་ལ་ཀོ་དོན་མི་ཁའུ་བ་རེ་ཡོད་དེ། དེ་ཀི་རང་ཐུང་

གི་རི་ཡིན་ཞིང་། "གནས་རི"དང་"གཞི་བདག"གཉིས་ནི། རི་མཐོ་ལུང་ཟབ་ཏུ་གནས་པའི་གནའ་མི་རྣམས་ཀྱིས། རང་བྱུང་ཁམས་ལ་འཐབ་རྩོད་བྱེད་པའི་གོ་རིམ་ཁྲོད། ཡུལ་ཁམས་ཀྱི་ཡ···མཚན་ཞིང་ཕྱོགས་དུ་གྱུར་པའི་རང་བྱུང་སྣང་ཚུལ་ལས་བསམ་ཚུལ་སྣ་ཚོགས་སྐྱེས་ཏེ། རང་བྱུང···ཁམས་ཀྱི་ནུ་དངོས་ཡོད་ཚད་ལ་ལྷའི་ནུས་མཐུས་དབང་བསྒྱུར་བཞིན་ཡོད་པར་འདོད་པ་དང་། རང་ཉིད་ཀྱིས་རང་བྱུང་ཁམས་འདུལ་བའི་ནུ་གཞན་ཁྲོད་ཐབས་ཟད་ནུས་མེད་དུ་གྱུར་ནས་ཡམ་ཁ་བགྲང་ལས་འདས་པ་ཞིག་རེག་པ་ན། འཇིག་རྟེན་ལས་འདས་པའི་ལྷའི་ནུས་མཐུས་ལས་བཀོད་བྱེད་ཀྱི་ཡོད་པར་འདོད་པས། རང་བྱུང་གི་རི་ནི་ལྷའི་བླ་གནས་ཡོད་པའི་རི་ལ་སྒོམ་ཞིང་། དེ་མཚུངས་སུ་ཐམ་བརྟེན་ཕྱུན་ཞིང་རྩེ་མོ་གཟེངས་སུ་མཐོ་བའི"གནས་རི"དེ་དག་ལའང་འགྲོ་བ་མིའི་སྐྱོ་ཚོགས་དང་འདྲ་བར་རང་རང་གི་འགོ་འཛིན་དབང་བསྒྱུར་མཁན་ཡོད་པ་དང་། དབང་བསྒྱུར་མཁན་དེ་ནི"གཞི་བདག"གོ ། སྤྱིར་ན"གནས་རི"དང་"གཞི་བདག"ནི། གདོད་མའི་མི་རྣམས་ཀྱི་བརྟན་གཡོའི་དངོས་པོ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་བླ་ཡོད་པའི་འདུ་ཤེས་ལས་བྱུང་བའི་བསམ་བློ་རེད། ངས་ལོ···གཉིས་ལ་ཉེ་བའི་རིང་རྟོགས་ཞིབ་ཅུས་པ་ལས། "གཞི་བདག"ཅེས་པ་འདི་ལའང་འགྲེལ་རྒྱག་སྟངས་མི་འདྲ་པ་ཡོད་དེ། གཅིག་ནི"གཞི་བདག"ཆེ་གེ་མོ་དེ་ནི། ཚོ་ཁག་ཆེ་གེ་མོ་གང་གི་དཔོན་པོའི་སྐུ་མཐའ་རེད་ཅེས་པ་ལྟ་བུ་ལ། དཔེར་ན། "གཞི་བདག་རབ་བཟང་ནི་སྔོབས་ཚང་ཚོ་བའི་སྡོན་ཀྱི་དཔོན་པོ་ཡིན་ཏེ། ཁོ་ཚེ་ལས་འདས་རྗེས་གཞི་བདག་གི་འཁོར་དུ་སོང་པ་རེད"ཅེས་པ་དང་། བཤད་ཚུལ་གཉིས་པ་ནི"གཞི་བདག་ཆེ་གེ་མོ་དེ་ནི་ཚོ་ཁག་ཆེ་གེ་མོའི་དཔའ་བརྟུལ་ཞིག་གི་བླ་གཤིད་ཡིན་པ་དང་། ཁོང་ནི་རང་སྐྱེའི་ཕན་ཁེའི་ཆེད་དུ་འཐབ་ནས་ཤི"ཟེར་ཡང་། གཞན་སྟེ་འགའ་རེས"དེ་ནི་རྐུན་ཇག་གཏེ་བོ་མི་མ་ཡིན་ཐན་ལྟས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་དུ་སྐྱེས་པ་རེད"ཅེས་དམའ་འབབ་ཏེ་བཤད། བཤད་ཚུལ་གསུམ་པ་ནི"གཞི་བདག་ལ་ལ་ནི་བློན་ཆེན་དྲུང་ཡིག་ཆེ་གེ་མོའི་སྐུ་མཐའ་རེད། ལ་ལ་ནི་རྩིས་པ་ཆེན་པོའི་སྐུ་མཐའ་རེད······"ཅེས་པ་སོགས་ལྟ་བུ་རེད། དེང་དུས་ཀྱི་གཞོན་ནུ་མང་ཆེ་བས་བཤད་རྒྱུན་དེ་རིགས་ཤེས་ཀྱི་མེད་པ་དང་། རྒན་པོ་རེ་གཉིས་ཀྱི་ངག་ལས་བྱུང་"བདག་ཅག་གི་ཕ་མེས་ཡང་མེས་རིང་ནས་བཤད་ཚུལ་འདི་དག་གཅིག་གིས་གཅིག་ལ་བརྒྱུད་ནས་འོངས···པས། གསལ་ཆ་ཐོན་པ་ཞིག་སུས་ཀྱང་བཤད་མི་ནུས"ཟེར། ཤེས་རྟོགས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་པ་བཤད་ཐབ་ནས་བལྟས་ན། བཤད་ཚུལ་འདི་གསུམ་ལ་རྒྱུ་བའི་ཁྱད་པར་ཆེན་པོ་མེད་པ་རེད། "གཞི་བདག"བྱུང་བ་དང་"གཞི་བདག"ལ་དད་གུས་བྱེད་པ་ཚང་མ་མཐར་གཏུག་ནས་བཤད་ན། གདོད་མའི་དུས་སུ་མི་ས་པོ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ཆེ་སྲིག་ཁོ་ན་ཉིད་ལ་དད་གུས་བྱེད་པ་ལས་བྱུང་ཞིང་། ཁོ་ཚོས་བརྟན་གཡོའི་དངོས་པོ་ཡོད་ཚད་ལ་བླ་སྲོག་ཡོད་པའི་ལྟ་ཚུལ་དང་། དད་མོས་འདུ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་ཀུན་སློང་གིས་བསྐུལ་ངོར་རང་རང་ཚོ་བའི་ཁོངས་མིའི་སེམས་ནས་བསྐྲུན་པའི་གཟུགས་མེད"གཞི་བདག"དེ།

གཟུགས་ཅན་དུ་མཐོང་པའི་སྣང་ཡུལ་དུ་བཀོད་པ་ནི་ལེབ་ཙེ་ཡིན་ཞིང་། རི་རྩེ་མཐོན་པོའི་ལེབ་ཙེ་ནི་གཞི་བདག་གནས་ས་ཡིན་པས། ཚིག་ངེས་ཅན་ཞིག་སྒྲུབ་པ་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་བཀུར་སྟི་དང་དད་མོས་ཞུས་ཏེ། དངོས་གྲུབ་བྱིན་རླབས་ཞུ་ཞིང་། ངན་བཟློག་མགོན་སྐྱབས་གནང་བར་གཉེར་གཏད་བྱེད། མི་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་འཇིག་རྟེན་ལས་འདས་པའི་སྐྱབས་ཁུངས་ལ་བསམ་གཞིགས་ཞུས་པ་ལས་དྲན་སྣང་ཟུང་ཞིང་། དྲན་སྣང་དེ་དག་ལ་བརྟེན་ནས་གཟུགས་བརྙན་བཞིན་དུ་སྣང་བའི་ཆོས་ལུགས་ཀྱི་ནང་དོན་འདྲེས་པའི་ལྷ་སྲུང་དང་ངག་རྒྱུན་མང་པོ་བསྒྲིགས་པར་མ་ཟད། ལྷ་སྲུང་དང་ངག་རྒྱུན་དེ་དག་སྐྱེས་ལྷ་གཞི་བདག་དང་སྲུང་མ་མི་རབས་ནས་མི་རབས་སུ་བརྒྱུད་པ་དང་། མི་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ངག་ཐོག་གི་རིག་གནས་ཁྲོད་བསྲུས་ཏེ་རྒྱུན་ཆད་མེད་པར་སྤེལ། སངས་རྒྱས་ཆོས་ལུགས་དར་པ་ནས་བཟུང་། སྐྱེས་ལྷ་གཞི་བདག་དག་ཀྱང་བོད་བརྒྱུད་ནང་བསྟན་དུ་བསྒྱུར་ཤིང་། བླ་མ་དགེ་བའི་བཤེས་གཉེན་སྐྱེས་ཆེན་དམ་པ་དག་གིས། དམངས་ཁྲོད་དུ་དར་བའི་ངག་རྒྱུན་འགའ་རེ་གཞིར་བཟུང་ནས་སྐྱེས་ལྷ་གཞི་བདག་རྣམས་ཆོས་སྐྱོང་སྲུང་མའི་སར་བཀོད་དེ། མཆོད་འབུལ་དང་བཀུར་སྟི་བྱེད། མི་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་ད་ལྟ་གཞི་བདག་མཆོད་པའི་མཛད་སྒོ་སྟབས་བདེར་བསྒྱུར་ཡོད་པར་བཤད་མོད། འོན་ཀྱང་། སྐྱིད་བདང་གི་མཆོད་པའི་ཚིག་སྒྲུབ་སྟངས་ད་དུང་གནས་བཞིན་པ་རེད།

1. ལེབ་ཙེ་ཐོག་མར་རྩིག་སྐབས་བཀྲ་ཤིས་པའི་ཉི་མ་ཞིག་འདེམས་དགོས། ལེབ་ཙེ་རྩིག་ས་ནི་སྤྱིར་བཏང་དུ་རི་མཐོན་པོའི་རྩེ་རུ་བྱེད་ཅིང་། ཕྱི་དུ་ལྟ་རིག་གམ་གཞན་པའི་ཕྱུག་ཕྲན་མང་པོས་གཡོགས་དགོས། བུམ་པའི(བུམ་པ་ནི་སྤྱིར་བཏང་དུ་འཁར་ཟངས་ཁོག་ཡིན་པར་བཤད)ནང་གསེར་དངུལ་ཟངས་ལྕགས་གཡུ་བྱུར་སོགས་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་རིགས་དང་། འབྲས་དང་ནས་སོགས་འབྲུ་རིགས།

གནས་ཆེན་མང་པོའི་ས་སྣ། ཐབ་བཙའ། དཀར་ཡོལ་སོགས་འཚོ་བའི་ཡོ་བྱད་རྣམས་འཇོག་པ་དང་། གཞི་བདག་དེ་ཚོ་ནི་ཚོ་དཔོན་ནམ་དཔའ་བོའི་བླ་གཞིད་ཡིན་ན། མདའ་མདུང་གྱི་སོགས་མཚོན་ཆའི་རིགས་དང་རྟའི་སྒ་སྲབ་སོགས་ཀྱང་འཇོག་པར་བཤད། བུམ་པའི་ནང་བཞག་པའི་དངོས་པོ་སྤྱིའི་མིང་ལ་ལེབ་ཙེའི་གཏེར་རྫས་ཟེར། བུམ་པའི་གཡོགས་ཁྲིག་ཏུ་སྔགས་ཡིག་བྲིས་པའི་ལེབ་ཙེའི་སྲོག་ཤིང་འཛུགས་དགོས་ལ། དེའི་རྩེ་ལ་ལྕུ་རིག་སོགས་ཤིང་ཕྱུག་མང་པོ་གྲོན་དུ་བཞག་སྟེ། རིམ་པ་རེ་རེ་བཞིན་བལ་ཐག་དཀར་པོས་དཀྲིས་ཏེ་དམ་པོར་བྱེད། ལེབ་ཙེའི་མདུན་དུ་བསང་ཁྲི་རྩིག་ལ། ཁྱིམ་ཚང་རེ་རེས་བསང་རྫས(བསང་རྫས་ནི་ཅུང་ཟད་བརྫེས་པའི་ནས་ཡས་དང་། འབབ་པ། ཁུག་པ་སོགས་བསྲེས་པའི་ནང་མར་ཅུང་ཟད་ཀྱིས(ཁ་རྒྱན་བཏང་སྤྱི་གྲུབ)གྲ་སྒྲིག་བྱེད་པ་དང་། མཆོད་ཇ་སྐོལ་བ། ཁྱིམ་ཆེན་པོ་ཞིག་ཁྱུས་ནས

བསང་མཆོད་སྐྱོམ་དུ་འདུག་པ། (བསང་མཆོད་ཀྱི་ནང་དོན་ནི་གཞི་བདག་གི་མཚན་དང་། ལོ་རྒྱུས་ཐུག་ཏུ། ཆིབ་རྟ། མཆོག་ཆ། ན་བཟའ་སོགས་དང་གཞི་བདག་ལ་གཏད་གཅེར་ཟེད་པ་སོགས་ཡིན།) དུས་བཟང་ཞོ་ཞིག་འདེམས་པའི་ཉིན། མཚན་སྐྱེས་ཀྱི་ཤས་ཡོད་པའི་ཤུ་མ་ཞིག་གིས་ཆོས་འདོན་མཁན་མང་ཞོ་ཁྲིད་དེ། ལས་ཅེའི་མདུན་དུ་སྐུན་ཐེ་རབ་གནས་ཀྱི་མགོ་རྩོམ་པ་དང་། རབ་གནས་མཁོ་བརྩམས་རྗེས། ཐོག་མར་ཤུ་མས་གཞི་བདག་ལས་ཅེའི་ཁོ་བྱང་དུ་འདེབ་ཞུ་ཞིང་། དེ་ནས་ཁོང་གིས་དགུ་མཛད་དེ་ཆོས་འདོན་མཁན་གཞན་རྣམས་དང་མཁྱེན་ཚུལ་ནས་ཀུན་ཏུ་བཟང་པོ་ལྟ་བུ་ཞིག་ཏུ་ཡང་ཡང་མཆོད་བརྩེན་པ་ན་ལས་ཅེ་བསྟོད་པར་ཡོང་མཁན་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་སྐད་གསེང་མཐེན་ཚོས་ལུ་འབེད་ཟེད་པ་དང་། དུང་དགར་འབྱུང་པ། རྒྱང་རྟགཉེར་བ། དར་ལྷེག་འཕྲིག་པ། ལས་ཅེའི་ཁྲོད་དུ་མདའ་འཕྲུག་ཀུང་ཆུམ་འཆང་མེད་པར་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས་པ་བཅས་ཟེད།།

2. གཞི་བདག་ལས་ཅེར་རབ་གནས་བྱས་རྗེས། མང་ཚོགས་རང་བཞིན་གྱི་གཞི་བདག་ལ་དང་ཐུག་ཟེད་པའི་ཐུ་འཕུལ་ཚོ་རིམ་ཅན་དུ་འགྱུར་བ་དང་། ཁ་ལ་ཆེར་ལོ་རེའི་ཟླ་བ་དྲུག་པའི་ཚེས་བཅོ་ལྔ་ནི་གཞི་བདག་མཆོད་པའི་དུས་ཆེན་དུ་ཟེད། ལས་ཅེ་བསྟོད་པའི་གཞི་རྩེ་མཛད་སྐོ་ནི་འདི་ལྟ་སྟེ།

①. ལས་ཅེ་བསྟོད་པར་ཡོང་བའི་མང་ཚོགས་ཀྱིས་རའུ་ལ་སྐོསདར་གཡོང་དང་། མདུང་། གྲི་རྒྱལ་མཚན། བལ་དཀར། དར་ཚོན་སྣ་ལྔ། ཤུགས་པ། འཕན་པ། རྡོ་ཀ་ར། ཝེལ་ཏེ་ག མར། རྩ་མ་པ། འབྲུ་ལྔ་དང་འོ་ཐུག་སོགས་མཆོད་རྫས་ཉེར་ཚོང་བ་དང་། ཕུ་ཞོ། ལུག བཀའ་སོགས་··· གཞི་བདག་ལ་ཐུག་ཏེ་གཤ་ཁང་མི་གསོད་པའི་ཚེ་ཟར་གཏོང་། ② མི་མང་འདུས་རྫས་བསང་མེ་གཏོང་བ་དང་། མཆོད་རྫས་སྣ་ཚོགས་བཀའ་སྩལ་དུ་བཏབ་ཏེ་ཆང་དུ་བདག་དྲང་པའི་ལྷ་མ་དང་རྟེའི་མའི་སྲོག་དབོག་རྒྱས་ཞོ་སོར་རྟ་མཐྱེག་དང་། འཕོ་བའི་ཕུ་ལྟ། གསེར་སྐྱེས། པེ་ཧར་རྒྱལ་པོ་སྐྱ་ལྟ། གཤས་བདག་དཔལ་ལྡན་ལྷ་མོ། འཇིགས་རྒྱལ། རྒྱལ་ཁབ། དཔལ་མགོན། རྒྱང་རྟ། མགོན་ཆོས་ལྷ་རྒྱམ་སོགས་ཆོས་རྒྱལ་འདོན་པ་རེད། འདི་ནས་གསལ་བཤད་ཀྱི་ཤུལ་ཅེའི་ཁྲོད་དགོས་པ་ནི། དང་ཐེག་ལས་ཅེ་བསྟོད་པའི་ཆ་རྐྱེན་ཡང་ཡོད་ཅིང་། ③ ལས་ཅེ་ལ་གཡས་སྐོར་བརྒྱབ་ནས་དར་ཁིང་འཇུག་ས་དང་། ལས་ཅེའི་སྲོག་ཤིང་དང་། མདུང་། རལ་གྲི་ རྒྱལ་མཚན། བལ་དཀར་དང་། དར་ཚོན་སྣ་ལྔ་སྐོར་བ་གསུམ་རེ་བཏུག་བཟེས་དེ་དག་ནང་གི··· གཅིག་རེ་འཇུག་ས་བཞག་ཟེད་ཀྱང་། སྐད་གསེང་མཐེན་ཚོས་ལུ་རྒྱལ་ལོ་ཞེས་འབོད་པའི་ཚེར་ཏུ། སྐུ་གསལ་འགྲོ་ཚེགས་ཤ་ཅོ་ནས་རྒྱབ་ཏུ་ཟེད།། ④ རྟ་རྒྱུགས་ཚེགས་དགའ་སྟོན་གྱི་ཚེས་གཞི་བདག་དགེ་སྐྱེས་ཤུ་འཇུག་པ། རྟ་རྒྱུགས་ལ་ཞུགས་མཁན་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་རྟ་ཁྲིད་དེ་ལས་ཅེ་ལ་སྐོར་བ་གསུམ་

བསང་མཆོད་རྩོམ་དུ་འཛུགས་པ། (བསང་མཆོད་ཀྱི་ནང་དོན་ནི་གཞི་བདག་གི་མཚན་དང་། ལོ་རྒྱུས་ཕྲན་བུ། ཆིབ་རྟ། མཚོན་ཆ། ན་བཟའ་སོགས་དང་གཞི་བདག་ལ་གཏད་གཉེར་བྱེད་པ་སོགས་ཡིན།) དུས་བཟང་པོ་ཞིག་འདེམས་པའི་ཉིན། མཚན་ལྡན་གྲགས་ཡོད་པའི་བླ་མ་ཞིག་གིས་ཆོས་འདོན་མཁན་མང་པོ་ཁྲིད་དེ། ལབ་ཙེའི་མདུན་དུ་སྤྱན་ཕྱེ་རབ་གནས་ཀྱི་མགོ་རྩོམ་པ་དང་། རབ་གནས་མགོ་བརྩམས་རྗེས། ཐོག་མར་བླ་མས་གཞི་བདག་ལབ་ཙེའི་ཕོ་བྲང་དུ་གདན་འདྲེན་ཞུ་ཞིང་། དེ་ནས་ཁོང་གིས་དབུ་མཛད་དེ་ཆོས་འདོན་མཁན་གཞན་རྣམས་དང་མགྲིན་དབྱངས་གཅིག་ཏུ་བསང་མཆོད་བཏོན་པ་ན་ལབ་ཙེ་བསྐོར་བར་ཡོང་མཁན་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་སྐད་གསང་མཐོན་པོས་ལྷ་འབོད་བྱེད་པ་དང་། དུང་དཀར་འབུད་པ། རླུང་རྟ་གཏོར་བ། དར་ལྕོག་འཕྱེན་པ། ལབ་ཙེའི་ཁྲོད་དུ་མདའ་འཛུགས་པ་དང་རྒྱུན་འཆད་མེད་པར་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས་པ་བཅས་བྱེད།།

༢. གཞི་བདག་ལབ་ཙེར་རབ་གནས་ཞུས་རྗེས། མང་ཚོགས་རང་བཞིན་གྱི་གཞི་བདག་ལ་དད་གུས་…བྱེད་པའི་ལྷ་འགྲུལ་གོ་རིམ་ཅན་དུ་འགྱུར་བ་དང་། ཕལ་ཆེར་ལོ་རེའི་ཟླ་བ་དྲུག་པའི་ཚེས་བཅོ་ལྔ་ནི་གཞི་བདག་མཆོད་པའི་དུས་ཆེན་དུ་བྱེད། ལབ་ཙེ་བསྐོར་བའི་གཞི་རྩའི་མཛད་སྒོ་ནི་འདི་ལྟ་སྟེ།

① ལབ་ཙེ་བསྐོར་བར་ཡོང་བའི་མང་ཚོགས་ཀྱིས་རང་འགུལ་སྒོས་དར་ཁྱིང་དང་། མདུང་། གྲི་རྒྱལ་མཚན། བལ་དཀར། དར་ཚོན་སྣ་ལྔ། ཁུག་པ། འཁན་པ། རྡོ་ཀ་ར། སིལ་རྟོག མར། རྩམ་པ། འབྲུ་ལྔ་དང་འོ་ཞུན་སོགས་མཆོད་རྫས་ཁྱེར་ཡོང་བ་དང་། ཕྱི་ཕོ། ལུག གཡག་སོགས…གཞི་བདག་ལ་ཕུལ་ཏེ་ནམ་ཡང་མི་གསོད་པའི་ཚེ་ཐར་གཏོང་།། ② མི་མང་འདུས་རྗེས་བསང་མེ་གཏོང་བ་དང་། མཆོད་རྫས་སྣ་ཚོགས་བཀྲམས་ཏེ་ཆེད་དུ་གདན་དྲངས་པའི་བླ་མ་དང་རྙིང་མའི་སློབ་དཔོན་གྱིས་སོ་སོར་རྟ་མགྲིན་དང་། འགོ་བའི་ལྷ་ལྔ། གསེར་སྐྱེམས། པེ་ཧར་རྒྱལ་པོ་སྐུ་ལྔ། གནས་བདག་དཔལ་ལྡན་ལྷ་མོ། འཇིགས་བྱེད། རྣམ་སྲས། མགོན་པོ། དཔལ་མགོན། རླུང་རྟ། མགོན་ཆོས་ལྷ་གསུམ་སོགས་ཆོས་རྣམས་འདོན་པ་རེད། འདི་ནས་གསལ་བཤད་ཅིག་བྱེད་དགོས་པ་ནི། དང་ཐོག་ལབ་ཙེ་བསྐོར་བའི་ཚོ་བ་རྣམས་བོན་པོའི་སྔགས་མཁན་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་འདོན་པར་བྱེད།། ③ ལབ་ཙེ་ལ་གཡས་སྐོར་བརྒྱབ་ནས་དར་ཁྱིང་འཛུགས་པ་དང་། ལབ་ཙེའི་སྲོག་ཤིང་དང་། མདུང་། རལ་གྲི། རྒྱལ་མཚན། བལ་དཀར་དང་། དར་ཚོན་སྣ་ལྔ་སྐོར་བ་གསུམ་རེ་བརྒྱབ་བརྗེས་དེ་དག་ནང་གི…གཅིག་རེ་འཛུགས་པའམ་འཛོག་པ་དང་། སྐད་གསང་མཐོན་པོས་ལྷ་རྒྱལ་ལོ་ཞེས་འབོད་པའི་ཞོར་དུ། སྐྱབས་འགྲོ་སོགས་ཁ་དོན་རྣམས་ཀྱང་བཟླ་བར་བྱེད།། ④ རྟ་རྒྱུགས་སོགས་དགའ་སྟོན་གྱིས་གཞི་བདག་དགྱེས་སུ་འཇུག་པ། རྟ་རྒྱུགས་ལ་ཞུགས་མཁན་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་རྟ་ཁྲིད་དེ་ལབ་ཙེ་ལ་སྐོར་བ་གསུམ

བརྒྱབ་རྗེས་དྭ་རྒྱུགས་སར་སོང་ནས། དབུ་མཛད་ཀྱིས་དྭ་རྒྱུགས་བརྡ་དུང་འབུད་པར་སྐུལ་ནས་འདུག་དགོས།

དྭ་རྒྱུགས་མཇུག་རྫོགས་རྗེས་རྒྱལ་ཁ་ཐོབ་མཁན་དག་ལ་དགའ་རྟགས་གནང་བ་དང་། ཁྱད་པར་དུ་ཨང་བཅུ་གསུམ་པར་ལྷ་དགའ་ཆེན་པོ་སྟེར། བཤད་སྲོལ་ལྟར་ན། གནའ་དང་ཐོག་དཔའ་རིས་ལ་དཔའ···ཞིང་བརྩལ་ཡོད་པའི་ཕུ་ནུ་བཅུ་གསུམ་ཡོད་པའི་ཨ་ཆུང་ནི། སྔོ་རིག་བཀྲ་ཞིང་སྙིང་སྟོབས་ལྡན་པ···ཞིག་ཡིན་པ་ལ། དེ་ཉིད་རང་སྲུང་གི་འཁྲུག་རྩོད་གཅིག་གི་ཁྲོད་རང་སྲོག་ཤོར་བར་གྲགས། ཕུ་ནུ་དེ་དག་ལ་རྗེས་དྲན་ཞུ་ཆེད། ལོ་རེར་གཞི་བདག་མཆོད་སྐབས་ཀྱི་དྭ་རྒྱུགས་འགྲན་བསྡུར་ཁྲོད་ཨང་བཅུ་གསུམ་པ་ཐོབ···མཁན་ལ་དགའ་རྟགས་ཆེན་པོ་གནང་ཞིང་། སློས་སུ་དེ་ལ་ཀུན་གྱིས་ཁ་བཏགས་དྲངས་ཏེ་གཙིགས་ཆེན་བྱེད་པ་དང་། སྡེ་འབངས་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་དཔའ་རིས་དགྲ་ལྷ་བཅུ་གསུམ་གྱིས་རང་གི་ཕ་ཡུལ་སྲུང་བར་རྗེས་སུ་ཡི་རང་བྱེད་པའི་བསམ་བློ་སྟོན། ། ⑤ གཞི་བདག་མཆོད་མཁན་གྱི་མང་ཚོགས་སྤྱི་གཞུག་ལྟར་རང་ཁྱིམ···ལ་ལོག་སྐབས། ལམ་བར་ནས་ཁྱིམ་ཚང་གཞན་པར་གདན་ནས་མི་འགྲོ་སྟེ། རྒྱུ་མཚན་ནི་ལྷས་གནང་བའི···གཡང་རྣམས་འཕྲོ་བརླག་ཏུ་འགྲོ་བར་སེམས་སོ། །

ཚོ་བ་གཅིག་གིས་མང་ཚོགས་ཀྱིས་གདན་འདྲེན་ཞུས་པའི་དུས་སུ་རང་རང་གི་གཞི་བདག་མཆོད་པར་མ་ཟད། ཁྱིམ་ཚང་རེ་རེའམ་མི་སྒེར་གྱིས་གཞི་བདག་མཆོད་པ་དང་གསོལ་བ་འདེབས་མཁན་ཡང་ཡོད། དེ་དག་གི་ཉི་མ་སྐར་མ་ནི་བླ་མའམ་སྔགས་པ་པས་མོ་བཏབ་ནས་ཐག་གཅོད་དགོས། །

གོང་ནས་བཤད་པའི་གཞི་བདག་མཆོད་པའི་ཚོ་ག་མང་པོའི་ཁྲོད། བོད་བརྒྱུད་ནང་བསྟན་གྱི་རིག···གནས་འདྲེས་ཡོད་པ་དང་། ཕན་གཉིས་ཀ་འོ་ཆུ་ལྟར་འདྲེས་ནས་དབྱེ་བ་འབྱེད་མི་ཐུབ་པ་ལྟར་སྣང་མོད། འོན་ཏེ་བརྟག་དཔྱད་བྱེད་མཁན་གྱིས་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ཀྱི་ཆ་ནས་ཅུང་ཟད་ཙམ་མཉམ་བཞག་པ་ཡིན་ན། དེང་དུས་ཀྱི་"གཞི་བདག་རིག་གནས་"ཁྲོད་གདོད་མའི་དམངས་ཁྲོད་ཆོས་ལུགས་རིག་གནས་ཀྱི་གྲུབ་ཆ་འདྲེས་ཡོད་པ་འབད་མེད་རྟོགས་ཐུབ། །

གསུམ་པ།

མིའི་རིགས་ཀྱི་སྤྱི་ཚོགས་ལོ་རྒྱུས་འཕེལ་བའི་གོ་རིམ་ཁྲོད་དངོས་པོ་དང་བསམ་བློའི་རིག་གནས་འབར་ཆེན་གསར་གཏོད་དང་བསགས་ཡོད། གཞི་བདག་མཆོད་པའི་ལྷ་འབྲེལ་ནི་དོན་སྙིང་ལྡན་པའི་རིག་གནས···སྣང་ཚུལ་ཞིག་ཡིན་ཏེ། ངས་དེ་ལ་"གཞི་བདག་རིག་གནས་"ཞེས་པའི་མིང་བཏགས་པ་ཡིན། ངས་བརྟག་དཔྱད་ཞུས་པའི་སྟོབས་ཚད་综合ཚོ་བར་མཚོན་ནས་བཤད་ན། དེང་སྐབས་བོ་ཚོས་གཞི་བདག···མཆོད་པའི་ལྷ་འབྲེལ་ཁྲོད་བོད་བརྒྱུད་ནང་བསྟན་རིག་གནས་གཞི་རྐང་བྱས་པའི་རིག་གནས་སྣ་མང་འདུས···

པའི་ཡིད་རྟོན་འཐེར་ལ། འདིས་དེང་སང་གི་བོད་ཀན་ཁྱུད་ནང་བསྡུས་རིག་གནས་ཀ་ཞི་རྒྱང་ཐུང་པའི་རིག་ནས་སྣ་མང་འདེས་པའི་"ཀ་ཞི་བདག་རིག་གནས་"ནི། རང་ཉིད་ལ་དད་གུས་ཅིད་པའི་ཀ་དོད་མའི་བོག་ཙོང་ངོག་ཀྱི་ རིག་ཀ་ལས་ལས་ཀ་ཞི་ཐུབ་པ་ཀ་ལ་བཀའ་ཉས་ཡོད། ཡིན་ན་ཡང་དེང་དུས་ཀྱི་ཀཞི་པཁ་རིག་ཀ་ནས་ལ་མཚོན་ཚུལ་རྣམ་མང་ཡོད་ཀྱང་། བོད་ཀྱུད་ནང་བསྡུས་ཀྱི་ཀ་ཞི་རྒྱང་ཞོ་ཀ་ནས་ནི་བསྡུས་ཀྱ་བས་མེད་པ་ཞིག་རེད། དེའི་རྒྱུ་མཚན་ཀཙོ་ཞོ་ནི། ལ་བ་ཅེའི་ནང་"ཀ་ཏུ་རྟ་ས"་འཇོག་པ་དང་རབ་ཀནོ་ས་ཉིད་ཡར་ནང་པའི་བྱ་མས་འཞོ་འདོ་ཀ་ནང་དཞོས་པ་དང་ཀཅིག ཀ་ཞི་བདག་བསྡུད་པའི་བས་མཚོད་དེས་ཡར་ཏུ་ནང་པའི་བྱ་མས་རྟོ་མ་དཞོས་པར་མ་ཟད། ཞོང་དཔོས་ཀྱིས་ཀྱ་བ་ཀཞན་ལ་འཞོ་འཇོན་ཀནང་ནས་"་ འདོན་དཞོས་པ་དང་ཀཉིས། རྡོག་མར་རབ་ཀནས་ཉས་རྟེས་ཀྱི་ལོ་རེའི་ཀཞི་བདག་མཚོད་སྐབས། ནང་བའི་བྱ་མ་དང་ཁ་ཏོུན་པས་འབྱེལ་ཡོད་བས་མཚོད་སོགས་འདོན་དཞོས་ཏུང་ཀྱས། ད་ལྟ་མཚོད་བཞིན་པའི་ཀཞི་བདག་ཀི་ཀདོད་མའི་དམངས་ཞོང་ཚེས་ལྷ་ས་ཤོག་ཁྲི་ཀྱི་ཐོ་རོམ་ལས་ཁཀ་ལ་ཡོད་པ་དང་། དེ་ཉིད་ཡོད་ཀྱུད་ནང་བསྡུན་ཀྱི་སྡུང་མར་བསྐོས་ཡོད་པ་དང་བཞི། ཀཞི་བདག་མཚོད་པའི་མང་ཚོགས་ཀྱིས་"ལྷ་རྒྱལ་ལོ་"ཞེས་སྐྱོ་ཀ་པ་ལས་ཀཞན། ཁ་ཏོན་མང་ཆེ་བ་ནི་མ་ཏི་ཡིག་དྲུག་དང་སྐྱབས་འཞོ་སོགས་ནང་ཆོས་ཡིན་པ་དང་། ཇ། ཀཞི་བདག་མཚོད་པར་ཞུགས་མི་རྣམས་ཀྱིས་མཚོད་རྟེན་རྣམས་བཞག་ནས་བས་མཚོད་སྐོང་བ་ཅིད་སྐབས་ཀ་ཤས་སྐོང་ལས་ཀཡོན་སྐོང་རྒྱ་མི་རྟང་པ་དང་དྲུག་བཅས་ཀྱིས་མཚོན་ནི། དེང་དུས་ཀྱི་"ཀ་ཞི་བདག་རིག་ཀ་ནས་"ཞོད། བོད་ཀྱུད་ནང་བསྡུན་ཀ་ཞི་རྒྱང་ཅིས་ཡང་ལོད། ཅེན་ཀང་། ཀཅོད་མའི་ཞོས་ཚེས་ཡང་རྟེ་ཞོས་ཡོད་པ་རེད། དེ་ནི་ཞོ་ཞོས་ཀས་ལ་ཁཀ་བཅའ་ཅིས་"ཀ་ཞི་བདག་རིག་ཀ་ནས་"ཞོད་འཇེས་པའི་ས་ཤོག་ཁྲི་ཀྱི་ཐོ་ཀ་ཀས་ཀ་ཞི་ཐུབ་ཀ་ཞི་ཀ་ཅིག་ཡོད་ཅེས་པ་ཡིན།།

ཞོ་ཅོས་ཞོང་དུ་ཁཀད་པ་ཡུར། དཔའ་རིས་ནི་ཀན་ཅོའི་རྟེ་རྩིང་ཞི་ཀ་ཡིན་ཞིང་། ངང་དུས་ཐྱིད་འཇོས་ས་ཞུལ་ཀཅོད་ཚུལ་ཁས་མཚོ་སྟོན་དང་ཀན་སུའུ་ཞིང་ཆེན་ཀཉིས་ཀྱི་རྩོང་བྱུན་ལ་ཀཏོ་ཀས་པ་དང་། མི་རིཀས་མང་ཡོ་འདུས་སྟོང་རྩེ་པའི་ས་འདིར། ཞོད་རིཀས་ལས་ཀཞན་དུ་དུང་རྒྱ་དང་། རྟོས། རྟོར། ཡུས་ཀུའུ། ཞོཀ་ཡོ་ཁཅས་མི་རིཀས་རྣམས་ཡོད་དེ། དེའི་མང་ཀི་རྟོས་རིཀས་ཀྱིས་སུའུ་ཡི་ལིམ་ཀྱི་ཚོས་ལྷཀས་ལ་དང་ཀུས་ཅེད་པ་ལས། རྒྱ་དང་། རྟོར། ཞོཀ་ཡོ། ཡུས་ཀུའུ་ཞོཀས་མི་རིཀས་ཀྱིས་ཞོད་རིཀས་དང་མཉམ་དུ་རང་རང་ཀཏོས་པའི་ཚོ་ཁའི་ཀཞི་བདག་ལ་དང་ཀུས།

ཅིང་པའི་ཐུབ་ལ་ཞུགས་པ་རེད། རྟོར་དང་། ཡུས་ཀུའུ། སོག་ཡོ་བཅས་ཀྱི་མང་ཚོགས་ཀྱིས་གཞི་བདག་མཆོད་བར་ཐུབ། ཁཱུ་ཚེ་པ་མཆོད་ཅེར་བ་དང་། ཡུས་ཀུའུ་དང་། རྟོར་རིགས་ཀྱི་ཆུང་ཡོ་ཚོགས་གཞི་བདག་མཆོད་སྐབས་རྒྱུན་མི་འཆད་པར་ཞོ་ཚོགས་དང་མོས་ཅིང་པའི་གོངས་མའི་ལྟ། ཡེ་རྟར་རྒྱལ་ཡོངས་ལྟ་ཞིག་ལ་ཡོད་ཅིང་། ཁོ་བོས་འདི་ནས་དཔའ་བོའི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་སྐྱེན་ངན་«ཞེ་སར་»ལས་དེ་ཞེན་ཞིག་བྱིངས་ན། «ཞེ་སར་»སྐྱོང་ཨང་རྟོར་དང་། ཡུས་ཀུའུ་རིགས་ཀྱི་མང་ཚོགས་ཀུང་དུ་ཨོད་དེ། ངས་ཟེངས་མང་པོར་ཞི་ཚོར་རྒྱུས་ལོན་ཅུས་པ་ལ། རྟོར་ཀྱུང་དཀར་རྒྱལ་པོ་ནི་ཚོའི་མེས་ཡོ་ཡིན་པར་བཤད་ཅིང་། «ཞེ་སར་»སྐྱོང་དུ་རྟོར་གྱིང་གཉིས་འབྲེག་སྐབས། ཀུར་དཀར་རྒྱལ་པོས་ཀཱའི་མེས་ཡོ་ཡིན་པར་བཤད་ཅིང་། བར་ཟེལ། ས་ཟེལ་བཅས་དཀར་པོ་དང་། ཁྲ་པོ། ནག་པོ་གསུམ་གྱི་ལྟ་ཤཀེན་སྐྱབ་ལྷུ་ཚུལ་བྱེས་ཨོད། དཔལ་མོ་ཤཱན་ཁྲི་ཤའི་ཚོ་པའི་ཁྲུ་ཡའི་ཝེད་རིག་པའི་མཁས་དབང་... མེ་པེ་ཅི་ཅིས་མཇད་པའི་«ཝོད་ཀྱི་འདྲེ་གཏོད་དང་ལྟ་ཀྱུ་»ཞེས་པའི་གསུང་རྟོགས་དུ། ལྟ་འདི་གསུམ་ལ... ཞིས་འཇུག་ཅས་ཨོད་པ་དང་། «ཞེ་སར་»སྐྱོང་གོས་ཀུང་གཤམ་ཟེལ་དང་། བར་ཟེལ། ས་ཟེལ་བཅས་དཀར་ཝོ་དང་། ཁྲ་པོ། ནག་ཚོ་བཅས་ཟེའུ་རང་གསུམ་ཚོ་དེ་དག་ལྟ་རིགས་ཀཅིག་ཡིན་པ་བདེན་དཔང་ཅུས་ཨོད། མེ་པེ་ཅི་ཅིའི་ཞེས་ནས་དུའང་ "..... ང་ཚོས་ཤིན་ཆ་ཟེལ་དཀར་ཨོའི་ཀྱོད་མའི་ཤིན་ས... ཚུལ་ལ་ཐལ་ཀྱས་ན། པེ་རྟར་རྒྱལ་ཚོ་ནི་འདྲའི་འཕྲུང་ཝེའི་རྒྱས་ཡིན་ཏེ། མིང་ལ་ཟེའུ་རང་རྣངས་ཀྱི་ཅེར་"ཞེས་པ་དང་། «མདོ་སྨད་ཚེས་འཕྲུང་»ལུ་"ཡུས་ཀུའུ་ས་ཁུལ་དུ་ལྟ་བར་མིང་ལ་རྟུ་ཏོ་ལ་ཟེར་བའི་ཐ་རྒྱུད་ཚོ་བ་དང་སྐོམ་ཀུ་སྐྱོར་ཞིག་ཀི་རྩེས་ཀྱལ་ཡོད་པ་དེ་ནི། དེ་ཏུས་བསམ་པས་གཏུག... ལག་ཁང་ལ་ཚེས་སྐྱོང་ཏུ་ཁ་དོག་འདེག་ཁས་པའི་འཚག་གས་ཡུལ་རྟ་ཏོ་རྟོར་ཀྱི་སྐོམ་ཀུ་དེ་ཡིན་པར་འདོད།"

ངས་རྒྱས་ལོན་རྩེད་སྐབས་རྟ་ཏོ་རྟོར་ཀྱི་རྩེས་ཀྱལ་ནི་ཡུས་ཀུའུ་རིགས་ངང་སྐྱོང་རྩྭ་ཀྱི་ད་ལྟ་ཨང་མིང་ལ་རྟ་ཏོ་ཁེས་སྤེ་བ་ཞིག་ཨོད་པ་དེ་ཡིན་པ་དང་། ས་འདི་ཡུས་ཀུའུ་རིགས་ཀྱི་ཆུང་ཡོ་ཚོས་དང... ཏུང་པ་མཚོམ་པའི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ཀཏིམ་རྒྱུད་དེ་བཀའ་བཞིན་ཡིན་པ་མ་ཟད། ཡེ་རྟར་རྒྱལ་ཡོང་ཨང་དང་ཀྱས་ཅེད།

ཡེ་རྟར་རྒྱལ་ཡོ་བསམ་ཡས་ཀནས་སྐྱོང་ལ་ཀདན་དྲངས་པ་ཀི། བཚོན་ཡོ་ཞྭ་སྐྱོང་ལྟེ་བཚོན་རྟིས... བསམ་པས་ཀཏུག་ལཀ་ཁང་བཞེངས་སྐབས་ཀྱི་ཀནས་ཚུལ་རེད། དེང་བཟེག། རྟོར་རིགས་ཀྱི་ཆུང་ཡོ་ཚོས་ལབ་ཅེ་བསྟེད་སྐབས་ཡེ་རྟར་རྒྱལ་ཡོངས། ཀནས་ཅེལ་རོགས་ཀྱི་ཁ་ཤོལ་བཞིའི་ཀཤས་ཡང་ཞུ་ཨང་ཁ་ཤས་ཀྱི་ཡུལ་ཨང་ལཞེལ་བཀའ་རྒྱབ་པཞིག་རེད། ।

དཔལ་ ཨང་སྐྱར་ངས་རྒྱས་ལོན་ཅེད་ས་ཀཅོ་ཝེ་སྟེ་སྟོབས་ཚོང་ཚོ་འདི་ཀནས་ཚུལ་ལ་དཔྱད་ན། ས་འདིར་སྟོད་པའི་ཝེད་དང་། རྟོར། རྒྱ་ཝོཀས་མི་རིགས་ཀསྒམ་རྒྱས་ཀྱི་བདག་དབ་བཟང་ལྟུད་དེ་མཚོམ་

པའི་ཡ་མཚན་པའི་རིགས་ཤས་ཀྱི་སྐྱང་ཚུལ་ཞིག་ནི། ཁོ་ཚོ་ཐུབ་མོང་གིས་"རྟེག་རྟེའི་ལྕུ"ཞེས་པ་ཞིག་མཚོད་... ཀེཤ་ཡོད་དེ། སྤེ་བའི་ནང་གི་མི་སུ་ཞིག་ལ་ནད་ཐུང་ན། "རྟེག་རྟེའི་ལྕུ"གདན་དུང་ས་ནས་ནས་སོ་དུ་འཕྲུག "རྟེག་རྟེའི་ལྕུ"ཞེས་པ་འདི་དང་རྟོག་རྟེ་ནང་ལོག་རྒྱུ་རིགས་དམངས་ཁྲོད་དུ་དར་བའི་མིང་ལ་"སྐྱུང་རྒྱུས"(ཤར ཏԼ)ཞེས་པའི་མེ་རྟོས་རྒྱུ་རྟེ་རྟོ་ཡིན་ཐུང། དུས་ནམ་ཞིག་ཚེ་དོར་རིགས་དམངས་ཁྲོད་དུ་དར་ནས་དང་... བྱས་རྟེད་བཞིན་ཡོད་པ་དང། ཐྱིས་སྐུ་ཡང་ས་འདིའི་ཤོད་རིགས་མང་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་ཁོ་ཚོས་མཚོད་པའི་ཡུལ་ལྟུ་གཞི་བདག་གི་ནུས་སུ་བཞག་ཅིང། དཔལ་ཤོད་པང། རྒྱ། རྟོད་བཅས་མི་རིགས་གསུམ་གྱི་ས་དང་མོས... ཤེད་བཞིན་ཡོད། "རྟེག་རྟེའི་ལྕུ"ཞེས་པ་འདི་རྟོད་རིགས་མང་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་མཚོད་སྐབས། རྒྱུ་བར་ཁོ... ཚོས་བཀུར་སྟི་རྟེད་པའི་བློ་རྒྱལ་དང་མཉམ་དུ་འཛེལ་ནས་མཚོད་པ་རེད། དཔལ་རྟེ་ནས་ཚང་ཚོ་བར་གཏོགས་པའི་ཉིག་ཅེ་སྤེ་བའི་ཤོད་པང། རྟོད། རྒྱ་བཅས་མི་རིགས་གསུམ་གྱི་མང་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་སྤེ་ཅ་དང་བར་ཕན་མི་དིང་བའི་སར་མཚོན་ཁང་བཞེངས་ནས་གཞི་བདག་རབ་བཟང་གི་སྐུ་འདྲ་དང་མཉམ་དུ་བཞག་ནས་མཚོད་པར་རྟེན་ཤོད་པར་མ་ཟད། ཤོད་བཞུད་མང་བསྡུམ་ཀྱི་ཀླ་ཁུས་ནས་གཞི་བདག་རབ་བཟང་གི་སྐུ་འདྲ་མང་རྟེན་འཛིན་འཛོད་པ་རེད། ཤག་ཚུལ་ཚོ་ནས་"རྟེག རྟེའི་ལྕུ"ཞེས་པ་ནི་ཡོག་དུ་རྒྱུས་པའི་རྣམ་པ་དང་། ཐྱུང་ཟུས(ཤར ཏԼ)ཞེས་པ་ནི་རྒྱ་ཀླུང་གིས་ཁབ་པའི་མི... སྡུ་ཞེག་རེད། ངས་འདི་ནས་གཅིག་པར་འདོད་པ་ནི། "གཞི་བདག་རིག་གནས"ཀྱི་ང་ཚོར་མཚོན་པར... རྟེས་པའི་རིག་གནས་སྐྱ་མང་འདུས་པའི་རྣམ་པ་དང་། མི་རིགས་མང་ཡོའི་མང་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་ཁ་ཞེ་བདག་མཚོད་པའི་ཆུ་འཁྱལ་ཞིང་ཀྱི་ཁ་ཤས་ནས་བཟའ་རེས་དང་ཁྱེ་ལེན་རྟེས་པ་དེ་ཡིན། ཞེན་ཡང། ཁོང་ཀྱི་ཞེན་ཡུལ་"དེ་བཅོན"ཞེས་ཀྱ་ཁ་ཞིག་ཡོད་དེ། ཁཤ་ཆེར "འཕྱང་ཡོ་དྲེ་ཟའི"ཀྱིས་སྐུ་ཞེད་ཞེས། དེ་ཉིད་ཞེས་ས་ནི་ཉ་ཞེ་ཡིན་ཏེ། ཀྱི་ས་ཚུལ་ལྟུ་ནང་རེས་ཁྱུང་ངམ་ཁྲེར་ཡོད་པས། ཞི་ལ་སྲིད་མི་རེ་ཞེ་ལ་འཕྲད་ན་ཞེད་སྐྱེས་འཇུང་བར་བཤད། ནམ་ཞེ་ཞི་ཚོ་དེ་ཉིད་ཡང་ཉ་ཞེ... ཁེས་ནས་ཏོར་རིགས་ཁྱིམ་ཚང་དུ་ཞེད་དུངས་ཡོད་དེ། ཏོར་རིགས་ཁྱིམ་ཚང་ལ་ལས་བྱ་མར་ཞེལ་ལ་... ནས་དེ་ཉིད་ཁང་བའི་ཅུ་འདབ་འོག་དུ་ཞེད་འཁྱུག་ཤོད་པའི་ཐྱི་ཡི་རྣམ་པ་ནི་ཀ་ཤ་མཚོ་ཅན... ཞེག་ཡིན་པ་དང། མང་གི་སྲོག་རྟེན་ཞེད་ཤས་ལེང་དམར་ཤོ་དང་དར་ཚོག་སྐྱ་ལྟས་ཞན་ཁྱེད། ཞི་ཞེ་བདག་གི་སྐུ་ནན་ཞེད་པ་ཞེན། ཚོ་ཞ་སྐྱབ་ཅིང་རབ་ཞེས་ནས་ཅུས་རྟེས། ཁང་བའི་ཅུ་འདབ་འོག་ཞི་ཞེས་ནས་ཕྱི་འདེམས་ཏེ་ཞཁུ་ཞས་སྡུ་ཞེས་པ་ཞེན། ལོ་རེར་མཚོད་པ་རེ་ཡུལ་ནས་མི་རྟེ་ཁཞ་ཁྱེས... ཅང་ལ་རྟུང་དན་ཐྱིས་མི་ཚུ་ཞས་པར་ཅེད། ।

བཞི་པ།

དཔའ་རིས་ས་ཁུལ་གྱི་བོད་རིགས་མང་ཚོགས་ཐུན་མོང་གིས་གཞི་བདག་མཆོད་པའི་ཞྭ་འཁྱུལ་ནི…གནའ་ནས་དར་ཡོད་པ་ཞིག་ཡིན་མོད། འོན་ཀྱང་། ད་ལྟ་བར་ཚོ་བ་རང་བཞིན་གྱི་ས་ཁུལ་བསྐོས་ཡོད་པ་རེད། བོད་མི་རིགས་དང་མཉམ་དུ་ས་ཁུལ་གཅིག་ཏུ་གནས་པའི་རྒྱ་དང་། ཧོར། སོག་པོ། ཡུས་ཀུའུ་སོགས་མི་རིགས་གཞན་དག་རྣམས་ཀྱང་བོད་མི་རིགས་ཀྱི་རྗེས་སུ་འབྲང་སྟེ་གཞི་བདག་རིགས་གཅིག…ལ་མཆོད་བཀུར་བྱེད་བཞིན་ཡོད། དེང་དུས་ཀྱི"གཞི་བདག་རིག་གནས"ཁྲོད་གནའ་རབས་གདོད་མའི…དམངས་ཁྲོད་ཀྱི་ཆོས་ལུགས་རིག་གནས་ཀྱི་གྲུབ་ཆ་འདུས་ཡོད་ཀྱང་། དེའི་གནས་སྟངས་གཙོ་བོ་ནི་བོད…བརྒྱུད་ནང་བསྟན་གཞི་རྐང་བྱས་པའི་སྣ་འདུས་རིག་གནས་ཡིན། རིག་གནས་སྣ་འདུས་ཀྱི་རྣམ་པ་འཛིན་པའི་གཞི་བདག་དང་གུས་བྱེད་པའི་ཞྭ་འཁྱུལ་གྱིས། འདི་གའི་བོད་རིགས་གཙོ་བྱས་པའི་མི་རིགས་མང…པོའི་མང་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་ཆོས་དད་རེ་འདུན་བསྐང་ཡོད། ས་ཁུལ་འདིའི་འདྲ་བ་ལས་གཞི་བདག་མཆོད་པའི་ཞྭ…འཁྱུལ་གྱིས་ཇོ་བོའི་ཐོག་ནས་ད་དུང་མི་རྣམས་ལ་ངན་གཉིས་དོར་ནས་དགེ་བ་སྒྲུབ་པའི་ལེགས་ཁྲིད་ནུས་པ་ཐོན་ཡོད་པར་མ་ཟད། མི་རིགས་མང་པོའི་མང་ཚོགས་ཀྱི་ཞེན་སྐྱེད་དང་འཚོ་བའི་ཁྲད་ཀྱི་ཆིག་སྒྲིལ་དམ་དུ…གཏོང་བའི་ནུས་པ་འང་བསྐྱེད་ཡོད་པ་རེད། རི་ཁུལ་དུ་བཅོས་བསྒྱུར་སྒོ་འབྱེད་བྱེད་པ་དང་བསྟུན་ནས། ཐུན་མོང་གི་གཞི་བདག་མཆོད་པའི་ཞྭ་འཁྱུལ་ཁྲོད། ཚོང་འདུས་ཀྱི་ཚོང་གི་རྣམ་པ་ཆེ་རུ་འགྲོ་བཞིན་པ་དང་། རིག་གནས་དང་ལུས་རྩལ་ལ་རྩུར་པོར་འགྲོ་བ། དུས་སྟོན་གྱི་རྩེ་དགའ་འཕེལ་བཞིན་པ་བཅས་ཀྱིས་སྔར་གྱི"གཞི་བདག་རིག་གནས"ལ་སྣང་ཚུལ་གསར་བ་བསྟན་པ་བཅས་ནི། "གཞི་བདག་རིག་གནས"ལ་རྣམ་པ་གསར་པའི་འཁོར་ཕྱོགས་གསར་པ་ཞིག་ཡིན་པ་དང་། སྤྱི་ཚོགས་འཕེལ་རྒྱས་དང་སྔོན་ཐོན་ཅན་དུ…འགྱུར་བའི་མཚོན་དོན་ཤུང་བའི་རྟགས་རེད།།

མཆན་འགྲེལ།

1. ཨུའུ་ཙོན་གྱིས་མཛད་པའི་《འབྲི་སྟོད་རྒྱ་སྟོད་ས་ཁུལ་གྱི་བོན་པོའི་རིག་གནས་ཀྱི་ཁུངས་རྐྱེན》, 《རྒྱང་མོའི་བོད་ཀྱི་ཤེས་རིག》ཀོ་བཞི་ལོའི་དེབ་གསུམ་པའི་ནང་བཀོད་ཡོད།

2. 《ཐེན་ཀྲུའུ་རྫོང་གི་ལོ་རྒྱུས》ལས་དྲངས། ཀན་སུའུ་མི་རིགས་དཔེ་སྐྲུན་ཁང་གིས་1994ལོའི་ཟླ་10པར་བསྐྲུན་བྱས།

3. ལང་ཀྲོའུ་གཞུང་དྲུག་ཉི《ཐེན་ཀྲུའུ་རྫོང་གི་ལོ་རྒྱུས》ནང་བཀོད་པ་ལྟར་ན་འཛུ་ལག་དང་། ཅིན་ཆང་། ཀུའུ་ལང་། དུ་ཞེས། ཐུའུ་པེ། ཡུན་ཁྲང་ཕྱོ་རིའི་རྒྱ་གཞུང་བཅས་ཡིན་པར་བཤད།

4. 《བསང་མཆོད》ཡོངས་རྫོགས་ནི།

༄༅།། རབ་བཟང་སྟོན་གྱི་ནང་གི་ལེའུ་ཚན་འགའ།།

རྩེ་ཅོ་དུས་སྤྱིད་ཁ་ཆགས་པའི་ལས་ཀ་ལ། ། ལུ་སྲུ་མི་ཤུས་ཤ་ཁཅིག་མཐུན་པསོད་ནམས་ལས། ། སྐྱོད་པ་ཅུང་དགེ་ … མཚན་རྟགས་པའི་ཡུལ་གྱུ་འདིར། ། དཔང་པས་ཀྱུར་དེག་པའི་དཀྱུ་འཕང་ཁ་ཐུན་པོར་བསྡོད། ། བརྒྱཅིན་ལུ་ཡི་དཔང་པོས་འཕོས་གློང་ཀི ། དེ་ཁ་པ་ཡོངས་ལ་བཀའ་རྟགས་སྩལ་བའི་ཚེ། ། མཁོ་སྤྱད་ཡུལ་འཁོར་མ་ཏོང་དུས་རྣམས་སུ། ། ཁམས་འཇོན་པས་ཀྱང་སྐྱེ་བས་བསྟོས་པ་ཐོབ་ལ་བསྡོད། ། དང་སྐང་བསོད་ནམས་ཚས་གྲུབ་ཁ་ཤས་ཀས། ། ཤེ་བའི་ཡོ་ཅུ་སྐྱོད་བཅུད་ཕྱུར་ཆོག་ལ། ། དཔང་པས་ཀྱུར་དེག་པའི་རྩེ་དཔོན་རབ་བཟང་ཞེས། ། ཡུལ་ཕྱུའི་རྩེ་ཁོས་ཆེན་ཡོ་ཐོད་ལ་བསྡོད། ། ཁམས་དུས་པོན་རྩེ་ས་མས་དཔའ་ཆེ་རྣམས་ཀྱིས། ། འཕྲོ་ལ་ཁན་བའེ་སྲེལ་ཐྱིར་ཁྱང་དྲང་ཀི ། ཐེག་པ་རིམ་དགུས་བླང་དོར་སྐྱོན་པའི་ཚེ། ། ཁ་ཁེག་རབ་ཁཁིག་འཕྲིག་འཛིའི་ཐུན་ཆོག་ཡིད་ཆེས་སྐྱོང་ལ་བསྡོད། ། དགོན་མཆོག་ཁུས་མཐུའི་ཉིན་རྟག་ཟབ་རྒྱས་རྩེ་མཐུ། ། དྲུས་ཐུ་སྐྱིན་པས་ཁ་ཏུན་བའེ་སྐྱབ་ན་ཡི། ། ལྷང་དོར་མ་ཁོར་སྐང་ཁ་ཁས་ལ་བའི་ཚེ། ། དཀར་ཚོག་ས་ཁ་ཁྱབ་ཁ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་ཞེས་ཡིས། ། སྐང་ཐྱིད་ཡོངས་ལ་ཐུན་རྒྱས་བཏང་བའི་ཚེ། ། ཁམས་ཟླུ་ཁ་ཁྱབ་ཁ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་ཞེས་ཡིས། ། ཞེས་ཁ་ཅིལ་ཁཁོར་རྩེ་རྩེའི་རེ་ཞ་ཡིས། ། སྐང་ཐྱིད་ཡོངས་ལ་ཐུན་རྒྱས་བཏང་བའི་ཚེ། ། ཁཁའ་སྐྱུ་ཐུན་ཁཁའ་ཞེང་ཟླུ་ཁ་ཁྱབ་ལ་ཁྱོད་ལ་བསྡོད། ། འཁོར་འཁྲུས་འཕྲིངས་སུ་རྩེ་ཁཁིག་ཐུན་རྒྱུ་ཆེ། ། འའི་རྩེ་ཁོས་ཡེ་ཁེས་མངོན་རྒྱུ་བའི་དཔང་། ། ཚོས་རྩེ་ཁཁྱིའི་ཁཁའ་བསྐྱང་མཐུ་རྒྱལ་ཅུ་ཅན། ། ཁཁས་ཆེན་བསྐྱན་པའི་བསྐྱང་མ་ཁྱོད་ལ་བསྡོད། ། ཁྱོ་བཅང་རྒྱལ་ཁ་ཁྱིས་པའི་འཕྲུལ་ཅུལ་བསྐྱན། ། ཁོར་འཕྲོན་སྐང་བའི་རྒྱུ་ཁཁར་ཁ་ཁ། ། ཐུ་འཕྲོན་འབཁ་ཡོ་ཡབ་ཐུས་བརྒྱུད་འཛས་ཀྱི། ། ཁཁའ་ཁཁྱུ་ཁཁའ་ཁྱེན་ཆེན་ཡོ་ཁྱོད་ལ་བསྡོད། ། དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་བདག་ཡོ་ཁོར་ནམས་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་རྩེ། ། སྤྲུ་སྤྱེང་སྤུ་ཡྱི་རིས་ཅྱོན་ལ་ཁོན་ཁའི། ། དམ་པ་དུ་མས་ཡུལ་ཁྱི་བསྐང་མ་ཆེད། ། མངའ་ཁོས་ལྷ་ཡུ་ཡི་རྒྱལ་ཡོ་ཁྱོད་ཡ་བསྡོད། ། ཁྱོད་ཀྱི་སྤྲུ་ཡི་རྣམ་འཁྱུད་ཁབྱང་ཡས་ཀྱང་། ། རྡུ་རྣ་དེན་ཆེན་སྤྲུས་རྒྱུན་མཆོངས་སྟེང་། ། རྒྱལ་བ་བྱ་མཆོག་ཡིད་ཁཁིག་ཧོར་བཀའ་ཁོད། ། ཟ་ཁོག་དར་ཀྱི་ན་བཟའ་ལྷ་ལྷུ་བར། ། ཧོར་བྱའི་ཅོད་པཏྲ་ཡིད་ཁོང་ཁྱོན་མཆོངས། ། མངའ་ཟང་དགྱང་ངུ་མཁོ་ཁས་སྐང་ཡིད་ལ། ། དཔང་བསྐྱར་དེག་པའི་ཁར་ཀྱི་རོལ་ལ་བསྡོད། ། ཡུམ་ཆེན་སྤུ་མོ་ར་དམ་ར་ཧོར་བྱ་ཁངས། ། མཆོས་སྐུ་ཉ་ཁམས་ཅན་སྐྱབ་ཚོང་ཁུ་ཅོག་ཁྱིས་སྤྱོས། ། བའི་སྟེར་ཁདོར་པའི་སྐྱ་རྒྱལ་ངོས་ཀྱི་ཞེས། ། དེཁས་པའི་ཡིད་ཁཁུག་ཁཁང་མོ་ཁྱོད་ལ་བསྡོད། ། ལྷ་ཡི་ཐུས་ཁོ་ཨིང་ཁྱིང་ཁཁོན་ཁཁྱའི་ཆོཁས། ། སྐྱབ་ཆོས་རྣམ་ཁཁྱུ་ཁདོར་ཁཁུའི་ཁཁ་མཆོན་ཁཁོན། ། ཁར་ཀྱི་ན་བཟའ་ཡིན་ཆེས་རྐྱབ་ཁང་ཁཁས། ། རབ་ཁཁའི་རྩེ་ཁཁའ་རོལ་ཅ་ཀུན་རྒྱང་བསྡོད། ། ཁཁན་ཡང་ཁཁོར་ཁཁས་དེཁས་པའི་ལྷ་ཐྱིས་ཆོས། ། ཁྱི་དྲཁ་མ་རེས་ … རྣམ་ཁཁྱུ་སྐྱ་ཆོས་ཅན། ། ལས་མཁྱན་ཉེར་ཐྱོད་ཁཁ་མཆོན་སྐྱ་ཆོས་ཁཁང་། ། ཁང་བཅོལ་ཁཁྱི་ཁྱིན་ལས་ཐོས་ས་མེད་ … རྣམས་ལ་བསྡོད། ། །

dPa' ris

(Map extracted from David Jackson, *A History of Tibetan Painting*. Wien, Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 1996. [Beiträge zur Kultur- und Geistesgeschichte Nr. 15])

Mongolian, Turkic and Tungus Perspectives

TYPOLOGY OF STONE CAIRN OBOS (Preliminary Report, Based on Mongolian Fieldwork Material Collected in 1991-1995)

by

Ágnes Birtalan, Budapest

The aim of my article is to give a survey of the present situation concerning the worship of stone or wooden etc. heaps or cairns in Mongolia, on the basis of material collected during the fieldwork of the Hungaro-Mongolian Joint Expedition. This expedition carried out research into Mongolian dialects and popular culture in Western and Northern districts of Mongolia from 1991 to 1995. As an other source of this paper serves an Oirat manuscript from Western Mongolia kept in the archives of the Institute of Linguistics and Literature of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences.

The main points of the survey are: tradition and surviving practice of erecting obos, obo sites (and their possible connection with the so-called 'no man's place') and a preliminary typology of obos.

The sacrificial cairns are called *owoo*[1] (the modern Mongolian form of written Mongolian *oboγ-a*) and its phonetical variants in most Mongolian dialects, except the archaic Mongolian language of the Monguors living in China, on the borders of Gansu, Qinghai, who have an expression borrowed from Tibetan: namely *lasdze, lawdze.*[2]

The cult of obos, heaps or cairns of stones, pieces of wood, soil or snow, in Mongolia has attracted much attention among travellers since the earliest mention of the elements of the cult by the Christian missionaries and the later traveller-scholars such as P.S. Pallas,[3] among others. Several studies have been devoted to the worship of obos, including articles by scholars like C.R. Bawden,[4] M. Tatár,[5] C. Humhprey, K.M. Gerasimova,[6] D. Sneath[7] etc. Much has been written about the probable origin of the cult of obos, it being explained as a symbolic manifestation of the cult of high places, as an ancestor cult, in connection with burial rites. According to Vreeland's survey[8] obos can figure as boundary marks between tribal territories.[9] I would

---

[1] In the article the term 'obo' will be used, since it is common in English academic literature.

[2] Cf. Tib. *la-btsas, la-rtse.* Further examples from several Mongolian languages and Mongolian borrowings in Turkic languages, see in M. Tatár (1971), "Zur Fragen des Obo-Kultes bei den Mongolen", *AOH* 24: 302-303.

[3] P.S. Pallas (1801), *Sammlungen historischer Nachrichten über die mongolischen Völkerschaften* II. St. Petersburg, 214-217.

[4] C.R. Bawden (1994), "Two Mongolian Texts Concerning Obo-Worship," in *Confronting the Supernatural: Mongolian Ways and Means.* Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 1-19.

[5] M. Tatár 1971: 301-330, and M. Tatár (1976), "Two Mongol Texts Concerning the Cult of the Mountains", *AOH* 30, 1-58.

[6] K. M. Gerasimova (1981), "De la signification du nombre 13 dans le cult des *obo* ", *Études mongoles* 12.

[7] D. Sneath (1992), "The Obo Ceremony in Inner Mongolia: Cultural Meaning and Social Practice", *Altaic Religious Beliefs and Practices.* Budapest, Research Group for Altaic Studies etc., 309-318.

[8] H. H. Vreeland (1957), *Mongolian Community and Kinship Structure.* New Haven.

[9] Vreeland 1957: 11: «The resulting demarcation in effect sanctioned the customary boundary lines which had previously existed between Mongol tribes and sub-tribes, and which had followed natural terrain features such as ridge and stream lines. The official boundary lines of each banner were then marked with stone cairns.»

suggest that these two roles of the obo, the functional and sacred, should not be separated from one another. Most of the obos were built in the surroundings of something that is clearly visible like passes, mountains, springs, rivers, strangely-shaped hills, rocks, trees (to mention only the most important ones), that could originally have marked natural boundaries between pastures. In settled civilisations it is easy to establish and mark boundaries, but it can cause problems in a nomadizing society. The question of boundary marks in Inner Asia and its connection with the erection of sacred obos requires more research. But boundaries as 'no man's land', where sacrificial actions like offerings, the taking of oaths, and sacrifice of animals etc. used to be carried out, should not be neglected.

A further explanation of the roots of obo-worship can be added to those mentioned above, which connects the erection and worship of obos at high places with fertility magic. An aetiological motive of this kind can be found in the folktale version of the *Qan qarangγui* epos, 'The Darkness-Khan', which explains that Khan Mital, the father of the future hero, Khan Kharangui, being childless was ordered by an oracle to erect thirteen obos on the thirteen summits of Mount Altai in order to have a child. Ever since then Mongols have erected thirteen obos on the tops of mountains.[10] (Regarding the meaning of thirteen obos, see below.)

The tradition of obo-worship

Obos are the dwelling places of local deities, spirits of earth or water, and therefore the obo must be constructed to symbolise a world model, where, in the appropriate places (on the top, bottom, inside etc. of the obo – layers of the world), the spirits could reside and receive the offerings. There are numerous manuscripts describing the erecting and worship of obos in detail. Among them is a Mongolian manuscript from the 18th century, compiled by Mergen Diyanči Lama, and written in order to integrate obo-worship into Lamaist ritual, which can be used as a manual. C.R. Bawden points out in his article devoted to the problem of Mergen Diyanči Lama's work that the obos, serving as dwelling places for local deities, must be constructed according to the Buddhist cosmogony. «The lama», as C.R. Bawden interprets the manuscript, «recommends the practice of constructing thirteen obos on the same pattern, since it is stated in an old text that the obo is full of majesty like Mount Sümber the King of Mountains, therefore one should construct the thirteen obos like Mount Sümber, the four great continents and the eight small continents.»[11]

Texts published by M. Tatár give a description of the method of construction and the objects offered there.[12] According manuscript No. 4[28], kept in the archives of the Institute of Linguistics and Literature of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, written in Oirat characters[13] and entitled *Γazar usuni sang sudur orošiboi*, «The sūtra of incense offering to the lords of earth and water begins», some of the offerings are the following:

---

[10] W. Heissig (1991), *Heldenmärchen versus Heldenepos? Strukturelle Fragen zur Entwicklung altaischer Heldenmärchen*. Opladen, Westdeutscher Verlag. (Abhandlungen der Rheinisch-Westfälischen Akademie der Wissenschaften 85): 17: «Ich werde auf den dreizehn Gipfeln des Altai mit roten, golden genannten Steinen und mit weißen, silbern genannten Steinen die Obo errichten ...! Was die *Oboγa*-Verehrung durch Opfer der Mongolen wurde, hat davon seinen Anfang genommen.»

[11] Translation from Mergen Diyanči Lama's *Oboγa bosqaqu yosun* by C.R. Bawden 1994: 7. The 'old text', containing the Buddhist motif of Mount Meru and the twelve continents, to which Mergen Diyanči Lama refers, probably never existed in this form and is a later addition by Mergen Diyanči Lama.

[12] Cf. Tatár 1971 and 1976.

[13] The Oirat script, also called *Todorxai üsüq*, 'clear script', was created by Oirad Zaya Paṇḍita, Oγtoryui Dalai in 1648, in order to eliminate the polyvalence of the graphemes of the Uigur-Mongolian script.

takil baling,[14]	'food offering made of dough'
ceceq utuxui küji	'incense with flower fragrance'
zölen ünürtü usun	'water, having light smell'
idekü kiged tangsuq	'food and sweets'
büjiq doun cenggel	'dance, song, joy'
üzeskülengtei deedü morin	'beautiful, best horse'
küčütü yamaan, xonin	'strong goat, sheep'
šilibkekü sürtei temeen	'majestic-looking camel'
buxan üker	'bull'
eldeb mese zemeseg	'several kinds of weapon'
sayin toryon, bös	'good silk, cotton'
sayin et	'fine goods'
yesün küsüliyin deeji	'the best of nine wishes'[15]
erdeni sang	'jewel-like, incense offering' etc.

From these examples it is clear that it was the most valuable objects or goods that were offered to the spirits of the obo, very different from what is offered nowadays. Most of the traditional offerings must have been pre-Buddhist, the mention of livestock refers to the former practice of blood sacrifice. In the manuscript there is no reference as to how livestock was sacrificed; they are only given as material offerings which represented great value to their owners.

The present situation of obo-worship

Discussing Inner Mongolian obo-worship, D. Sneath states that the modern revival of the obo ceremony is an expression of the national and cultural identity of the Mongols. Concerning the customs connected with the obo-worship in the Mongolian Republic, it can be stated that although it was practised continuously in Mongolia and never died out completely, and although it has lost some of its former features, in the last four to five years, some old obos have been rebuilt and old methods of worship revived due to the recent political changes, for example, the thirteen obos in the northern Khöwsgöl district of Mongolia. Most of Khöwsgöl district is covered by taiga forest and is almost inaccessible, so pre-Buddhist traditions were able to survive here, and a lot of shamans practice here even today. Öliin dawaa, the pass where the thirteen obos were erected, is a boundary between the 'higher' and 'lower' parts of the district, so an obo (or obos) built here in ancient times could serve both as sacred places and boundary marks. These thirteen obos symbolise the so called thirteen obos of the Darkhats in the 'lower' place.[16] Although these thirteen obos were rebuilt only a few years ago, they have already become the most important place of worship for the Darkhats. These obos are constructed out of branches of trees and stones. Although there are thirteen of them, they are not placed according to the Buddhist cosmogonical pattern (see above) of Mount Meru and the continents but in a line. The offerings are the following on each obo: the most common are pieces of stones (if the obo is on the top of a mountain one should take pieces of stones from the foot of the mountain and offer them), ribbons, incense sticks, the burned powder of Juniper leaves, curds, cheese, empty bottles of brandy, pieces of money, although some of these are traditionally considered to be *xog,* 'dust', and the attention of the visitors is drawn to this with an inscription. The objects of offering testify that the meaning of value transformed, because people should not offer dust to the

---

[14] Cf. Tib. *gtor-ma.*

[15] Cf. Tib. *'dod-dgu*, «all wishes, *i.e.,* the desires in general, the word *dgu* here signifying many» (Sarat Chandra Das [1902], *A Tibetan-English Dictionary.* Calcutta: 691).

[16] There is a whole list of the names and places of the obos in Darkhat places in S. Dulam (1992), *The Tradition of Darkhat Shamans.* Ulanbaatar: 22-23.

spirits who bless their way, their household etc.; they offer goods which have value for themselves. However those who know the tradition and try to uphold it put inscriptions forbidding the offering of several things.

Among the Dsakhchins (a Western Mongolian, Oirat tribe) we collected information about the New Moon Year offering: «There will be milk libation sprinkled to make merry the Gold Earth. The food (prepared) for the libation contains the five delicious (foods):

1. Meal of grain – *taraanaa guyur*
2. Dried cheese, the white meal – *xurus, bašlak gisin cagaan ideen*
3. Cut off meat, among others: ribs, the four long ribs, the upper part of the anklebone cut off, the anklebone and sternum scorched – *maxa kösgilji oruulnaa daramta xawsaŋ = dörwün öndür, šagaa čimginää börüw kösigilnää, šagaa čimgiin' tülnää, öbčüügni tülnää.*
4. Sugar, dried grape, sweets – *šikir üzüm, amtataa araataa yuu-l*
5. Tea – *cää.*

Then during the libation a benediction to the *luus* and *sabdag* [17] will be recited:

Cööd xäärxaŋ, bayan xaan Altaamin'i	*Cööd,* sacred mountain, my rich King Altai,
baatar iki bokda min'i	my great, heroic holy master,
Altaa, Xaŋgaa nutukmin'i	my homeland, Altai, Hangai,
köörkii gääd nutuklui bääsäm bolim	me, the wretched one, would live here,
ara gurwuŋ Seŋkrään maktanuuš!	Let me praise the Northern Three Senker (caves)!
Altaa, Xaŋgaa nutuk mini	My Altai and Hangai
ara gurwuŋ Seŋker mini	my Northern Three Senker (caves)
Cööd xäärxaŋ!	*cööd*, sacred mountain!
Zudaaŋ caaraan ergüülteŋm	You of mine, who keep the calamities away,
zunaan naaraaŋ xäläälgätäŋm	you of mine, who made the summer look at us,
xän'ääd tomuuguaa bäätxaa	let (us) be without cough and illness!
cööd xäärxän!	*Cööd*, sacred mountain!
Lusaŋ xaaduud mini!	My Kings of the luus!»

The typology of obos

The different types of cairns were already classified by the Buddhist missionaries who incorporated the obo ceremonies of shamanic origin into Buddhist ritual. An original, pre-Buddhist classification is reflected for example in Blo-bzang nor-bu shes-rab's work devoted to the obo ritual.[18] According to his manual the obos are divided into the following types:

1. *rgyal-po'i la-brtse ri rtser brtsegs-pa*
2. *btsan-po'i la-brtse gong-khar*
3. *rmang-po'i la-brtse khel-khar*
4. *phyugs-po'i la-brtse*
5. *la-brtse gnyan-po dang la-brtse ma bu bcu-gsum.*[19]

---

[17] Cf. Tib. *klu* and *sa-bdag.*

[18] Cf. a work by Blo-bzang nor-bu shes-rab, (Sumatimaṇiprajñā) that spread in several variants under different names; the quoted manuscript is known under the title: *Dpal phyag-na rdo-rje'i sgo-nas la brtse mchod tshul bsam don myur 'grub.* Cf. Gerasimova 1981: 163-175, and K. M. Gerasimova (1981a), "Sinkretizm kul'ta dalha", in *Buddizm i tradicionnye verovanija narodov Central'noj Azii.* Novosibirsk, Nauka: 16-18.

[19] Cf. Gerasimova 1981: 166-167 and Gerasimova 1981a: 17-18. K.M. Gerasimova interprets the Tibetan terms as follows: «1. obo suprême sur le sommet des montagnes, pour un gouvernement pacifique et stable, pour la consolidation du pouvoir étatique en accord avec la religion; 2. obo de souverain, sur le sommet des collines, pour avoir de la chance dans l'acquisition du bétail et des richesses, pour la consolidation de leur pouvoir; 3. obo clanique, construit sous forme d'amas (de pierres) pour la distinction entre les lignées des descendants du fondateur, pour l'accroissement

According to the present situation concerning the erection of obos in Mongolia, I would suggest the following typology, taking into consideration local, temporal and functional features.

1. The types of cairns according to their social status:

a) Obo with superclanic importance.[20] Obos erected in memory of battles, for example the Öwgön owoo in Tüdewtei banner of Dsawkhan district in Mongolia, erected by the Khalkha tribes as my informant said: «... in commemoration of the Khalkha Ööld (=Oirat) wars, with the aim of establishing peace and keeping off enemies, strangers from our land.»[21] My informant referred probably to events in 1687 and 1688, when the Oirat Khan Galdan invaded Tüsheetü Khans' territory through Dsasagtu Khan's pastures to which the above-mentioned banner belonged, and the local population suffered considerably in this war.[22] This type of obo is the most respected one and is worshipped in the same way as the obo of the clans.

b) Obo of the clan.[23] This kind of obo is worshipped at certain annual celebrations like the New Moon Year festival, the ceremony for good pastures (rain magic) around the summer solstice, and at the beginning of autumn, when the herdsmen move to the autumn camp. These obos were built at hidden places, women, strangers or foreigners may not approach them[24] except for the high ranking officials of a banner who were specially invited to the ceremonies. In the territory where Shamanism is still alive the obo celebrations are conducted by shamans and even by shamanesses. In other parts of the land, where Shamanism was fully replaced by Lamaism, a group of lamas also take part in the ceremony, reciting ritual text in Tibetan. Although this type of obo is worshipped nowadays by every male member of a dwelling-place, mostly a banner, where not all the men belong necessarily to one and the same patrilineal kin group, it is considered as a place of worship of the members of a clan.[25]

c) Obos of the larger community and travellers.[26] This type of obo is built on mountain passes, at cross-roads, by the side of dangerous routes that are difficult to ride on or drive. They are worshipped frequently by the families nomadizing nearby and by every traveller, riding or driving there; women, strangers and foreigners can also approach it. This type of obo is also used for 'personal reasons' by some herdsmen and travellers asking blessings and protection from dangers and sickness. Heads of horses, oxes, sheep shoulder-blades, horse hair and earmarks of sheep cut from the ears are offered by the local herdsmen, bottles of brandy

---

des membres du clan, des richesses et de la nourriture; 4. obo d'éleveur, érigé sur les sentiers de montagnes, contre les maladies et épidémies des hommes et du bétail, et pour la prospérité; 5. obo de maître (esprit-maître) courroucé et des treize petits obo.»

[20] Cf. Blo-bzang nor-bu shes-rab: Nos. 1, 2.

[21] This information was collected from Šaadain Cedendorj, a 74-years old lama in Tüdewtei in August of 1995.

[22] Cf. C.R. Bawden (1989), *The Modern History of Mongolia*. London: 74-75.

[23] Cf. Blo-bzang nor-bu shes-rab: 3.

[24] Nowadays male persons, living for example in the centre of a banner, can attend the annual ceremonies even if they are new-comers, so the taboo of approaching of the clan-obos is not so rigid anymore. In the fifties – according to Vreeland's study – the men not living in their kin group had to attend ceremonies in their own banner. Cf. Vreeland 1957: 191.

[25] Vreeland suggests the term 'banner obo' in his survey about the religious cairns of a dwelling place called Üči oboo. He also notes the close connection of the clan system with obo-worship: «Religious cairns were located with particular kin groups in the pasture. Two cairns of this kind were located on the hills north of the village of Üci Oboo; one of these belonged to people who bore the surname of Hangin and was called Hangin oboo, the other belonged to people who bore the surname of Borjigit and was called Borjigit oboo.» Vreeland 1957: 189.

[26] Cf. Blo-bzang nor-bu shes-rab: 4.

(sometimes containing milkbrandy), incense sticks and pieces of money are offered by travellers to the lords of the mountain, or water. This type of offering is always individual.

The obo of the clan and the obo of the larger community are explained as having two different origins: the first one is supposed to have its roots in the worship of ancestors and burial rites, the second originated from the cult of high places. Now these two different origins and roles are combined and it is hard to distinguish one from the other.

d) Individual, personal obos. Obos of travellers who frequently travel along the same routes, built with an individual magical aim. Offered only by the owner.

2. Types according to the placement of the obos (this is recorded among the Darkhats, but it is said that other tribes also range obos according to their location):

a) Obos of the forest (*Täägiin owoo*).

b) Obos of the steppe (*Taliin owoo*).

In the tradition of the Darkhads there are five obos of the forest and thirteen obos of the steppe.

3. Types according to when the obos are worshipped:

a) Obos worshipped frequently (obos of a larger community).

b) Obos worshipped on the occasion of annual ceremonies (obos of the clans).

c) Obos worshipped temporarily (temporary snow obos, built for New Year).

4. Obos according to their numbers:

a) Isolated obos (obos of clans, or of the larger community, individual obos).

b) Group of obos:

b.1) Definite number (7, 9, 17, 19).
b.2) 13.
b.3) 108.
b.4) Indefinite number in the group of obos.

The most interesting and widespread group of obos is the group of thirteen obos, which is explained as a later phenomenon due to Buddhist influence. The thirteen obos are explained as follows: the greatest is called Mount Meru, which is in the middle, four others are built at the four cardinal points and are called the four great continents, and the remaining eight, placed also at the four cardinal points, are the eight smaller continents (see above). This type of obo group was usually erected close to monasteries. According to some scholars, the origin of the thirteen obos is rooted in pre-Lamaist religion: Gerasimova explains the thirteen obos by relating them to the thirteen *dalha* < Tib. *dgra-lha*, (nine *dalha* and their four ancestors) which are pre-Buddhist gods.[27] I would suggest that the tradition of thirteen is much earlier than the above mentioned manifestation of Mount Meru and the continents, and that the relation with the thirteen *dalha*s also spread to Mongolia later, because this phenomenon became known there after the spread of Lamaism.[28] The earliest layer of this phenomenon is rooted in the pre-Buddhist tradition and is connected with the belief in natural phenomena which demand respect. It is still a living tradition among the Western Mongolian Oirads to have a whole chain of so-called 'thirteens', like the thirteen Altais, the thirteen summits of Altai, thirteen forests of Altai, thirteen wild animals of Altai, the thirteen pastures in the Altai, the thirteen horses of black, yellow,

---

[27] Gerasimova 1981a: 18.

[28] Cf. also Blo-bzang nor-bu shes-rab: 5.

bay etc. colours, all these thirteens having their representations in folksongs.[29] I suppose the tradition of the thirteen obos is rooted in this common phenomenon and is connected with the thirteen mountains, in our case with the Altais. But the reason why the number thirteen is so respected is the topic of another study.[30]

5. Types according to the strength of the taboo of placing offerings:

a) Traditional offerings no longer those that are allowed in the manuscripts (for what is allowed now, see the Dshakhchin data mentioned above).

b) Traditional offerings, and bones and hair of the livestock. Probably these are the remains of blood animal sacrifices with the symbolic meaning that the owner of the livestock keeps a 'part' of the 'luck' from his cattle.

c) Traditional offerings, bones, hair and taboo food like strong spirits in bottles.

d) The above mentioned objects and pieces of money.

e) The above mentioned objects and things belonging to the worshipper (clothes, shoes, crutches, pram etc.). For similar objects offered in Inner Mongolia nowadays cf. D. Sneath's study.

6. Taboos for persons:

a) Obos that can be approached by male persons belonging to one and the same clan (superclanic obos and clan obos).

b) Obos that can be approached by both male and female members of the clan and strangers (usually if an obo can be worshipped by women it can also be approached by strangers).

c) Clan obos that can be visited by dismounting from a horse.

d) If the obo is worshipped in connection with the lords of a lake or pond, people may not enter the water.

7. The basic material of the obos:

a) Stone. The most common obo material. The early travellers described and drew mostly stone cairns. Even now this is the most frequent type, because almost all the obos of the larger community, built at cross-roads, passes etc. are built of stones (pieces of stones are a kind of offering on this type of obo).

b) Branches of trees. The clan obos are built of branches of trees (pieces of stones are a kind of offering on this type of obo).

c) Soil. Although this type of obo is known from sources and descriptions, we never saw one, and even our informants did not know about this kind of obo in their area.

d) Snow. Typologically this type of offering place is also considered as a kind of obo by the Mongols themselves, built on the occasion of the New Moon Year festival by several Mongolian tribes. Vreeland describes this phenomenon and calls it a snow altar, made from snow, or dung in the absence of snow.[31] Erecting snow obos is described as an Üdshümchin and Barga (Southern and Eastern Mongolian tribe) custom, but we collected data about it among the Baids

---

[29] On the songs of the thirteens see: J. Coloo (1987), *Arwn gurwan xülgiin duun.* Ulaanbaatar: 535: "Songs of the Thirteen Riding Horses".

[30] Cf. K. Sagaster (1981), "Bemerkungen zur Dreizehn in mongolischen Epos", *Veröffentlichungen der Societas Uralo-Altaica* 14.

[31] Vreeland 1957: 192: «This observance was the *tengerd mörgene* or 'bowing to Heaven'... The ceremony was held before dawn on the last day of the New Moon Year and lasted only 10-15 minutes.»

in Western Mongolia, so this practice must also be known among other Mongolian populations. Among the Üdshümchins two snow cairns are erected close to the dwelling of the family: one is called *süldiin owoo,* 'obo of the genius', and worshipped by men, the other is called *tengeriin owoo,* 'obo of Heaven', and worshipped by women and children in the evening on the last day before the New Moon Year. This type of obo has preserved the original features of pre-Lamaist religion: the ceremony is carried out by the family members, without the assistance of lamas.[32]

Summary

In this short survey I compared the tradition and survival of obo-worship in Mongolia and emphasised some main points of obo typology. Some of them are discussed in detail, such as the phenomenon of thirteen, the basic material of the obos. Some of them need further research such as the question of obos and boundary marks and their connection with the 'no man's land'. In a second part of this survey I will deal with the symbolic meaning of obos, obos as world models, world model and the connection of the placing of offerings and the lords of earth and water. There are places in Mongolia where *stūpa*s are erected beside the rebuilt obos, probably indicating the establishment of a new kind of worship in Mongolia.

[32] Cf. S. Dulam (1992), *Cagaan sariin belegdel.* Ulaanbaatar: 26: "The Symbolical Meaning of the White Month".

1. The rebuilt great obo from the thirteen obos in Khöwsgöl district, constructed according to the Buddhist pattern symbolizing Mount Meru. There are offerings inside the obo.

2. 6 obos on the right of the great obo from the thirteen obos of Darkhats, placed in one line, at variance with the Buddhist pattern.

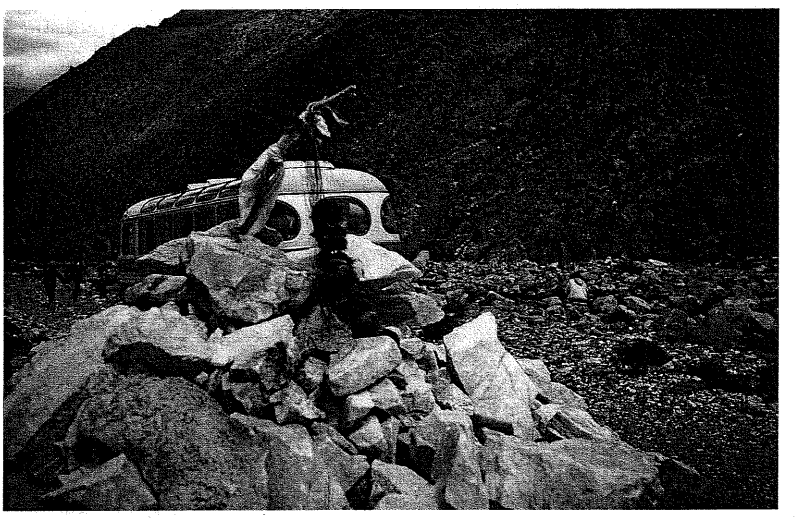
3. 6 obos on the left of the great obo of Darkhats.

4. An inscription beside the great obo of Darkhats: «Attention. It is prohibited to put pieces of money, empty bottles which are dust, iron objects etc. on the obo.»

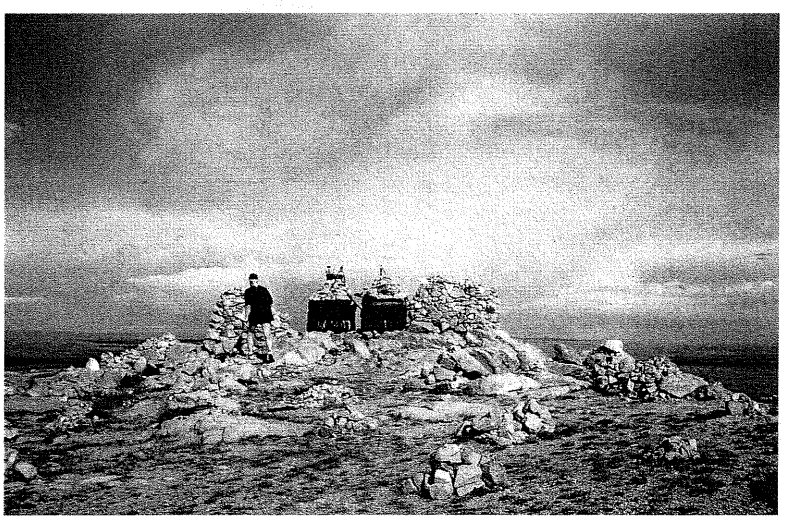
5. Obo of a larger community and of travellers in Khöwsgöl.

6. Offerings on the obo (Photo No. 5): sheep shoulder-blades.

7. Offerings on the obo (Photo No. 5): horse head, pieces of money.



8. Obo of larger community (herdsmen) in Khowd district (Western Mongolia), offerings are earmarks of sheep.



9. Group of individual obos, erected by drivers in Bayanghol district (Southwest Mongolia).

MARRIAGE TO THE MOUNTAIN

by

Catherine Uray-Kőhalmi, Budapest

Mountains have played a salient role in nearly every folk mythology. Let it suffice to recall the mountain of mountains, Sumeru, the centre or navel of the world. To quote a fragmentary list alone, there was Olympus, the habitat of Gods, Parnassus, home of the Muses, Ararat where Noah anchored his ark, Mount Sinai where the God of the Old Testament appeared, Wu-tai-shan, the holy mountain of Buddhists in China, Kailasha of the Tibetans and Fuji of the Japanese. Every land, every people had its own sacred mountain, an elevation dominating the environment, with myths and legends associated with it.

The mountain cult assumes any of a rich variety of forms. To list only the most important: the centre, navel or axis of the world, the home of the deities of heaven and storm, the dwelling place and burial ground of the ancestors of the people living around the mountain or of their rulers; the residence of the spiritual master or numen of the area and its manifestation (hypostasis); the spiritual owner of the forest's game and the spirit of hunting, etc. In this paper I am only concerned with one aspect of the mountain cult: the marriage and love of mountains.

Mountains were anthropomorphically identified with divine or demoniac spiritual beings. Linguistic reflection of this created expressions like the nose, back or foot of the mountain, etc. In Mongolia and Tibet, the valleys, deep gullies were even seen as the mother's womb or vulva. Deep valleys and triangular hills reminiscent of the vulva provoked erotic thoughts in Mongolian and Tibetan lamas. This was also used in rituals of rebirth.[1]

In myths and legends, the mountain deity usually manifests itself in human form: as a powerful male, a white-haired old woman, a young woman of enticing beauty or a strong old man. It may also be personified by an animal, stag, wolf, boar, bear, tiger or snake.

Contrary to generally prevalent belief, mountain deities are female in Siberia and the Far East, including Japan as well. They are at the same time spiritual masters of the beasts.[2] In Mongolia, mountains appear to have been mostly male as the titles *qan, bayan* in mountain names suggest. In Siberia and East Asia, however, female mountain names can also be found. In Tibet, the mountain names reveal that about half the mountains were considered to be female. Even today, Tibetans believe that male and female mountains have sexual intercourse and marry. Such occurrences are very rare with Turkic and Mongolian people. Only the Nanays (Golds) are recorded as having a legend including the marriage of mountains and the bearing of children. The tallest mountain of the Koppi valley, Künga, was seen as a man who took a nearby mountain, Omoko, as his wife. The huge boulders scattered around them were believed to be their children.[3]

What would seem to be very ancient are the legends in which the mountain or rock assumes the role of the female principle and gives life to the hero, the forefather. When the semen of some divinity is ejaculated onto the rock, it conceives and after nine months a divine child is

---

[1] Walther Heissig (1982), "Felsgeburt (Petrogenese) und Bergkult", in *Fragen der mongolischen Heldendichtung. Teil II.* Walther Heissig (ed.), Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz [16-37]: 19.

[2] Ichiro Hori (1966), "Mountains and their Importance for the Idea of the other World in Japanese Folk Religion", *History of Religions* 6 [1-23]: 16-20.

[3] V. G. Larkin (1964), *Orochi.* Moskva, Nauka: 95.

born. Many examples of this can be cited from Asia Minor, Mesopotamia and the Caucasus. The god of the Hurry, Kumarpi, spits the semen sprouting from his father's bitten off genitals onto the rocks from which deities are born. Then he fertilizes with his own semen a rock which bears a stone demon, Illikummi.[4] The story displays similarities to the Uranus-Gaea-Kronos story. Fine examples of heroes springing forth from rocks are found in the Caucasian Nart epics. The heroine, Satana, who was born in a rock grave herself, notices that the demon Uastyrji ejects his semen in his arousal for her into a rock. Nine months later she helps the hero Sozryko, or Soslan, to life from the rock.[5]

In Mongolian, Turkic and Tungus epic poems and myths no sexual events of this kind are mentioned except the outcome, the birth of heroes from rock or mountain.[6] In one of the Turks myths of origin, a cave is noted in which a stag with golden antlers lives and from which the ancestors of the Turks emerged.[7] The forefather of one of the clans of the Nanays, the Akunka, also sprang from a cave along the river of the same name.[8]

Mongolians and Turks tended rather to see the mountains as male spirits. Mythology of the Tungus, on the other side, also included female spirits, local deities, the spiritual masters of the beasts in the region envisioned in female form. In a mythic tale, Torganei, the goddess of woods and wild animals, is named. In a story of the Tungus living along the Seja river, a boy is snatched by a bear. He manages to escape and an old woman tells him the way to Torganei and gives him a miraculous reindeer. With its help he overcomes the ordeals: thick forest, fire, sea, and gets to the sylvan palace of Torganei. He is received by a woman who passes herself off as Torganei, treats him well and sleeps with him at night. At midnight the real Torganei arrives, beats her disloyal servant whose body is covered in bark. The boy must also undergo purification from this defilement by subjecting himself to trials of endurance. At first he has to tend to Torganei's herds of wild bears and wolves. He is then sent to the birch wood where the trees thrash him. Finally, he has to kill his reindeer and bathe in its blood. That done, he can marry the goddess of the beasts. In another version, three young men set out to put themselves to the test, but only Mokogdir reaches the lady of the forest having swum the river of death and overcome similar ordeals caused by beasts living in that area. In this popular myth among the Tungus, the hero marries the goddess of the mountains and woods, a spiritual being, a numen.[9]

A belief was also recorded among the Negidals, the Tungus living along the Amur. They believe that among the spirits of the mountains and woods is one that also manifests itself as a wild duck, especially in spring and autumn. It must be preyed on and the bag kept between its legs to preserve the souls of the beasts in form of hairs, seized. The divine mistress tries to get the talisman back every day, but whenever someone manages to resist for two years, she becomes the wife of the hunter and ensures that he is successful in his hunting. This belief appears

---

[4] V. Haas (1983), *Vorzeitmythen und Götterberge in altorientalischer und griechischer Überlieferung. Vergleiche und Lokalisation.* Konstanz, Universitätsverlag: 10-12.

[5] A. Sikojev (1985), *Die Narten, Söhne der Sonne.* Köln, Diedrichs: 28-29, 70.

[6] Heissig 1982: 36; I.L. Kyzlasov (1982),"Gora - praroditel'nica v folklore xakasov", in *Sovetskaja Ětnografija*: 83-92; Ě.A. Novgorodova (1992), "Samanizm kak rannaja forma filosofii drevnyx plemen Mongolii", in *Meshdunarodnyj Kongress Mongolovedov.* Moskva, Nauka: 147-151.

[7] D. Sinor (1982), "The legendary origin of the Türks", in *Festschrift for Felix J. Oinas. Indiana University Uralic and Altaic Series* 141. Bloomington, 223-257: 230.

[8] V.A. Avrorin - E. P. Lebedeva (1966), *Oročskie skazki i mify.* Novosibirsk, Nauka: 174.

[9] G.M. Vasilevič (1966), *Istoričeskij folklor ěvenkov.* Moskva - Leningrad, Nauka: 14, 260-263, 276-280.

to be a practical variant of the previous myth. Anyone that stands the test of silence may marry the spiritual master of the mountains and woods and will always have good luck at hunting.[10]

These are the stories in which the divine masters of mountains appear in female form. Let me add an observation of mine to the role of the mountain as the female principle. In old Mediterranean and Near Eastern myths, eroticism appears in its crude reality, e.g. in the Kumarpi story and the Nart epics. Compared to these, the same content is expressed in subtle Freudian symbolism in the thematically similar myths of Central and Northern Asia. For instance, in the Manchu myth of origin, one of the fairy girls bathing in a mountain lake (female principle) swallows a purple fruit dropped from its beak by a divine magpie (male principle). The founder of the dynasty is born from the purple fruit conceived in the fairy.[11]

Far more frequent in Central Asia are the myths in which the mountain is the male principle and the mountain spirit is a man or a male animal. The story of the birth of Ge-sar or Geser-khan is well known. In the Mongolian variant, the would-be mother of the middle son of the deity Khormuzda, the liberator of the world, is banished to the mountainous wilderness where she meets a man of immense stature and faints. When she comes to, she follows the huge footprints and finds a man in a tigerskin seated on a throne in a cave, Oa Gunčid, the spirit of the mountain. While she was unconscious, she conceived and soon she gave birth to Ge-sar and his heavenly sisters.[12]

Several rulers and heroes of Tibet are believed to derive from mountain deities, e.g. gShen-rab from the spirit of Mount Kailasha and a turquoise cuckoo. The forebear of the Yar-lung dynasty was the spirit of Mount Yar-lha-sham-po. He appears in the form of a stately male figure to the widowed queen and passes his light beam into her lap before leaving in the form of a white yak bull.[13]

Marriage to a mountain deity is preserved most completely in a mythic tale of the Tungus along the Amur. A poor hunter and his three daughters are starving. On top of a mountain, he meets a rich young hunter, who promises him luck at hunting provided that he sends one of his daughters to the mountain. There is one condition: the girl has to undo all the knots in her dress as is the custom at a funeral. The two elder daughters refuse to obey this command and perish, only the youngest obeys. She meets with an old woman on the mountain who gives her a treat in the cave and prepares her for the wedding with her son, the spirit of the mountain. From then on, the hunter has good luck and the two elder daughters are also restored to life.[14]

It is significant that the girl headed for the mountain must undo the knots of her dress and while doing so, she says: «Yes, everyone must die one day!» It suggests that she is sacrificed to the spirit of the mountain in return for luck at hunting. Traces of the maiden sacrificed to the

---

[10] V.I. Cincius (1971), "Vozrenija negidal'cev svjazannye s oxotnič'im promyslom", in *Sbornik Muzeja Antropologii i Ětnografii* 27. Leningrad [170-190]: 177.

[11] *Huang-ts'ing k'ai-kuo fang-lüeh. Die Gründung des mandschurischen Kaiserreichs* (1926), Übers. u. erkl. v. Erich Hauer. Berlin, Gruyter: 1.

[12] I.J. Schmidt (1925), *Die Taten Bogda Gesser Chans des Vertilgers der Wurzel der zehn Uebel in den zehn Gegenden.* Berlin, Auriga: 9-10.

[13] E. Haarh (1969),*The Yar-luη dynasty.* Köbenhavn, G.E.C. Gad's Forlag: 145, 149-150, 155; G. Tucci, (1977), "On Swāt. The Dards and connected Problems", *East and West* 27: 26-27; G. Samuel (1985), "Early Buddhism in Tibet", in *Soundings in Tibetan Civilisation.* New Delhi, Manohar: 388-389; E. Dargyay (1988), "Buddhism in Adaptation", *History of Religions* 28/2 [123-134]: 132; A. Loseries-Leick (1990), "Kailasa", in *Die heiligsten Berge der Welt.* Graz, K. Grazl: 111.

[14] N. Ja. Bulatova (1987), *Govory ěvenkov amurskoj oblasti.* Leningrad, Nauka: 92-94, 109-111.

mountain can also be found among the Lamuts, related to the Tungus.[15] Dul'zon, the researcher concerned with the Yenissey people recorded a similar tale among the Kets in which the maiden is sacrificed, that is, married, to the spirit of summer in order to secure his goodwill.[16] Sacrifice might not only have been symbolic.

In the Secret History of the Mongols, Qorilartai mergen, looking for new hunting grounds, gives his daughter Alan goua to the spiritual owner of the Burqan Qaldun mountain, Dobun bayan, in marriage. That Dobun was a mountain spirit is confirmed by similar Yakut myths and even by a Mongolian sacred song. Later a splendid male appears to Alan goua, who directs his beam into her lap and leaves in the form of a yellow dog. The founders of the dynasty are born from this union.[17]

Both in everyday life and in folklore, the attitude of primitive societies towards nature and towards other ethnic groups is reduced to the simplest, most primeval human relations – family bonds. The security of a covenant is marriage, the exchange of women. The group of people that wish to live in a certain area enter into alliance with the owner of the region, the spirit of the highest mountain. The guarantee of the alliance is again the submission of a girl for marriage/sacrifice. This act legitimates the right to use the area.[18]

These ideas are not only detectable in myths. As is well known, the Doge of Venice betrothed the city with the sea it depended on for subsistence with a ring. Marriage as an expression of a mystic covenant also appears in the relationship between Christ and the Christian church.

---

[15] Xudjakov (1969), *Verxojanskij okrug.* Leningrad, Nauka: 109.

[16] Dul'zon A. P. (1972), *Skazki narodov Sibirskogo Severa I. Ketskie skazki idrugie telsti.* Tomsk, Univ. Izd.: 117-117; Girl sacrifices can also be traced among South Siberian Turks and the Japanese, occasionally in subsequently euphemic forms: J. Kreiner (1990), "Heilige Berge Japans: Miwa und Fuji", in *Die Heiligsten Berge der Welt.* Graz, K. Grazl: 147; M.M. Tatar (1992), "Human sacrifices in the Altay-Sayan area", in *Altaic religious Beliefs and Practices.* G. Bethlenfalvy, Á. Birtalan, A. Sárközi, J. Vinkovics (eds.), Budapest, Research Group for Altaic Studies: 337-344.

[17] K. Uray-Kőhalmi (1987), "Synkretismus im Staatskult der frühen Dschingisieden", in *Synkretismus in den Religionen Zentralasiens.* Heissig - Klimkeit (hrsg.), Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz: 140-145.

[18] That is also why mountain deities can be often detected among the ancestors of the ruling dynasties, cf. note 13; Ariane Macdonald (1971), "Une lecture des Pelliot Tibétain 1286, 1287, 1038, 1047, 1250", *Études tibétaines dédiées à la mémoire de M. Lalou.* Paris, Adrien Maisonneuve: 190-191; C. Anders (1988), *Korea.* München: 258.

Marriage (= sacrifice) with a river is also known from China, among the Kets and the Gilyaks; cf. J.J. de Groot (1964), *The Religious System of China.* Vol. IV. Taipei: 1196–1198; T. Pokora (1981), "Hsi-men Pao in Fiction and History", *Altorientalische Forschungen* 8: 267–292; Dul'zon 1972 [s. above n. 16]: 41–43, 117–117; Č.M. Taksami (1984), *Obščie čerty v duhovnoj kul'ture narodov Priamurja i Sachalina. Etnikul'turnye kontakty narodov Sibiri.* Leningrad: 136–159.

BEITRÄGE ZUR
KULTUR- UND GEISTESGESCHICHTE ASIENS

1 ERNST STEINKELLNER, *Nachweis der Wiedergeburt. Prajñāsenas 'Jig rten pha rol sgrub pa.* Ein früher tibetischer Traktat aus Dunhuang. Mit seinen Glossen diplomatisch herausgegeben, übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen versehen. (Denkschriften, Bd. 197) 1988. Teil 1: Texte. 46 Seiten, 7 Falttafeln. Teil 2: Übersetzung. 54 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, broschiert.
ATS 350,- DM 51,-

2 ERNST STEINKELLNER / HELMUT KRASSER, *Dharmottaras Exkurs zur Definition gültiger Erkenntnis im Pramāṇaviniścaya.* (Materialien zur Definition gültiger Erkenntnis in der Tradition Dharmakīrtis 1). Tibetischer Text, Sanskritmaterialien und Übersetzung. (Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 528) 1989. 104 Seiten, 15×24 cm, broschiert. ATS 210,- DM 31,-

3 OTTO LADSTÄTTER / SEPP LINHART (Hrsg.), *August Pfizmaier (1808–1887) und seine Bedeutung für die Ostasienwissenschaften.* (Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 562) 1990. 327 Seiten, 15×24 cm, broschiert. ATS 490,- DM 71,-

4 SYLVIA STARK, *Vātsya Varadagurus Tattvanirṇaya.* Teil 1: Kritische Textedition. 135 Seiten. Teil 2: Übersetzung und Anmerkungen. 151 Seiten. (Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 570) 1990. 15×24 cm, broschiert. ATS 700,- DM 101,-

5 JÁNOS SZERB †, *Bu ston's History of Buddhism in Tibet.* Critically Edited with a Comprehensive Index. (Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 569) 1990. 214 Seiten, 15×24 cm, broschiert.
ATS 532,- DM 77,-

6 GERHARD OBERHAMMER (Hrsg.), *Beiträge zur Hermeneutik indischer und abendländischer Religionstraditionen.* Arbeitsdokumentation eines Symposiums. (Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 573) 1991. 256 Seiten, 15×24 cm, broschiert. ATS 280,- DM 41,-

7 HELMUT KRASSER, *Dharmottaras kurze Untersuchung der Gültigkeit einer Erkenntnis.* Laghuprāmāṇyaparīkṣā. (Materialien zur Definition gültiger Erkenntnis in der Tradition Dharmakīrtis 2) Teil 1: Tibetischer Text und Sanskritmaterialien. 162 Seiten. Teil 2: Übersetzung. 144 Seiten. (Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 578) 1991. 15×24 cm, broschiert. ATS 350,- DM 51,-

8 ERNST STEINKELLNER (ed.), *Studies in the Buddhist Epistemological Tradition.* Proceedings of the Second International Dharmakīrti Conference, June 11-16, 1989. (Denkschriften, Bd. 222) 1991. 430 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, broschiert. ATS 420,- DM 61,-

9 GERHARD OBERHAMMER, unter Mitarbeit von ERNST PRETS und JOACHIM PRANDSTETTER, *Terminologie der frühen philosophischen Scholastik in Indien.* Ein Begriffswörterbuch zur altindischen Dialektik, Erkenntnislehre und Methodologie. Band 1: A–I. (Denkschriften, Bd. 223) 1991. 144 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, Leinen. ATS 252,- DM 37,-

10 ERICH PILZ, *Gesellschaftsgeschichte und Theoriebildung in der marxistischen chinesischen Historiographie.* Zur Entwicklung der Diskussion um die Han-Gesellschaft. (Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 582) 1991. 356 Seiten, 15×24 cm, broschiert. ATS 490,- DM 76,-

11 SUSANNE FORMANEK / SEPP LINHART (eds.), *Japanese Biographies: Life Histories, Life Cycles, Life Stages.* (Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 590) 1992. 299 Seiten, 15×24 cm, broschiert.
ATS 350,- DM 51,-

12 DAVID JACKSON, *Enlightenment by a Single Means.* Tibetan Controversies on the "Self-Sufficient White Remedy" (*DKAR PO CHIG THUB*). (Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 615) 1994. 220 Seiten, 15×24 cm, broschiert. ATS 465,- DM 67,-

13 SUSANNE FORMANEK, *Denn dem Alter kann keiner entfliehen.* Altern und Alter im Japan der Nara- und Heian-Zeit. (Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 618) 1994. 557 Seiten, 15×24 cm, broschiert. ATS 850,- DM 122,-

14 GERHARD OBERHAMMER (Hrsg.), *Im Tod gewinnt der Mensch sein Selbst.* Das Phänomen des Todes in asiatischer und abendländischer Religionstradition. (Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 624) 1995. 356 Seiten, 15×24 cm, broschiert. ATS 436,- DM 62,-

15 DAVID JACKSON, *A History of Tibetan Painting.* The Great Tibetan Painters and Their Traditions. (Denkschriften, Bd. 242) 1996. 456 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, Leinen. ATS 1.400,- DM 192,-

16 BERNHARD SCHEID, *Im Innersten meines Herzens empfinde ich tiefe Scham.* Das Alter im Schrifttum des japanischen Mittelalters. (Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 638) 1996. 408 Seiten, 15×24 cm, broschiert. ATS 718,- DM 98,-

17 GERHARD OBERHAMMER, ERNST PRETS und JOACHIM PRANDSTETTER, *Terminologie der frühen philosophischen Scholastik in Indien.* Ein Begriffswörterbuch zur altindischen Dialektik, Erkenntnislehre und Methodologie. Band 2: U–Pū. (Denkschriften, Bd. 248) 1996. 192 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, Leinen. ATS 420,- DM 60,-

18 FRIEDRICH A. BISCHOFF, *Djin Ping Meh.* Epitome und analytischer Namenindex gemäß der Übersetzung der Brüder Kibat. (Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 641) 1997. 302 Seiten, 15×24 cm, broschiert. ATS 724,- DM 100,-

19 GERHARD OBERHAMMER (ed.), *Studies in Hinduism.* Vedism and Hinduism. (Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 642) 1997. 177 Seiten, 15×24 cm, broschiert. ATS 331,- DM 45,20

20 SUSANNE FORMANEK and SEPP LINHART, *Aging.* Asian Concepts and Experiences Past and Present. (Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 643) 1997. 404 Seiten, 15×24 cm, broschiert. ATS 868,- DM 119,-

21 HELMUT KRASSER, MICHAEL TORSTEN MUCH, ERNST STEINKELLNER, HELMUT TAUSCHER (eds.), *Tibetan Studies I & II: Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995. Vol I & II.* (Denkschriften, Bd. 256) 1997. 1120 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, broschiert. ATS 2.490,- DM 342,-

22 HELMUT EIMER (ed.), *Transmission of the Tibetan Canon: Papers Presented at a Panel of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995.* (PIATS Graz 1995 Vol. III). (Denkschriften, Bd. 257) 1997. 178 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, broschiert. ATS 490,- DM 68,-

23 FRANK J. KOROM (ed.), *Tibetan Culture in the Diaspora: Papers Presented at a Panel of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995.* (PIATS Graz 1995 Vol. IV) (Denkschriften, Bd. 258) 1997. 119 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, broschiert. ATS 490,- DM 68,-

24 GRAHAM E. CLARKE † (ed.), *Development, Society, and Environment in Tibet: Papers Presented at a Panel of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995.* (PIATS Graz 1995 Vol. V). (Denkschriften, Bd. 262) 1998. 199 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, broschiert.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 7TH SEMINAR OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR TIBETAN STUDIES, GRAZ 1995

HELMUT KRASSER, MICHAEL TORSTEN MUCH, ERNST STEINKELLNER, HELMUT TAUSCHER (eds.), *Tibetan Studies I & II: Proceedings of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995. Vol I & II.* (Denkschriften, Bd. 256) 1997. 1120 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, broschiert.
ATS 2.490,- DM 342,-

HELMUT EIMER (ed.), *Transmission of the Tibetan Canon: Papers Presented at a Panel of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995.* (PIATS Graz 1995 Vol. III). (Denkschriften, Bd. 257) 1997. 178 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, broschiert. ATS 490,- DM 68,-

FRANK J. KOROM (ed.), *Tibetan Culture in the Diaspora: Papers Presented at a Panel of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995.* (PIATS Graz 1995 Vol. IV) (Denkschriften, Bd. 258) 1997. 119 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, broschiert. ATS 490,- DM 68,-

GRAHAM E. CLARKE † (ed.), *Development, Society, and Environment in Tibet: Papers Presented at a Panel of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995.* (PIATS Graz 1995 Vol. V). (Denkschriften, Bd. 262) 1998. 199 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, broschiert.

ANNE-MARIE BLONDEAU (ed.), *Tibetan Mountain Deities, Their Cults and Representations: Papers Presented at a Panel of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995.* (PIATS Graz 1995 Vol. VI) 1998.

DEBORAH KLIMBURG-SALTER and EVA ALLINGER (eds.), *The Inner Asian International Style, 12th–14th Century: Papers Presented at a Panel of the 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Graz 1995.* (PIATS Graz 1995 Vol. VII) 1998.

OTHER TIBETOLOGICAL STUDIES

ERNST STEINKELLNER, *Nachweis der Wiedergeburt. Prajñāsenas 'Jig rten pha rol sgrub pa.* Ein früher tibetischer Traktat aus Dunhuang. Mit seinen Glossen diplomatisch herausgegeben, übersetzt und mit Anmerkungen versehen. (Denkschriften, Bd. 197) 1988. Teil 1: Texte. 46 Seiten, 7 Falttafeln. Teil 2: Übersetzung. 54 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, broschiert ATS 350,- DM 50,-

JÁNOS SZERB †, *Bu ston's History of Buddhism in Tibet.* Critically Edited with a Comprehensive Index. (Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 569) 1990. 246 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, broschiert ATS 532,- DM 76,-

DAVID JACKSON, *Enlightenment by a Single Means.* Tibetan Controversies on the "Self-Sufficient White Remedy" (*DKAR PO CHIG THUB*). (Sitzungsberichte, Bd. 615) 1994. 220 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, broschiert ATS 465,- DM 71,-

DAVID JACKSON, *A History of Tibetan Painting.* The Great Tibetan Painters and Their Traditions. (Denkschriften, Bd. 242) 1996. 456 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, Leinen. ATS 1.400,- DM 192,-

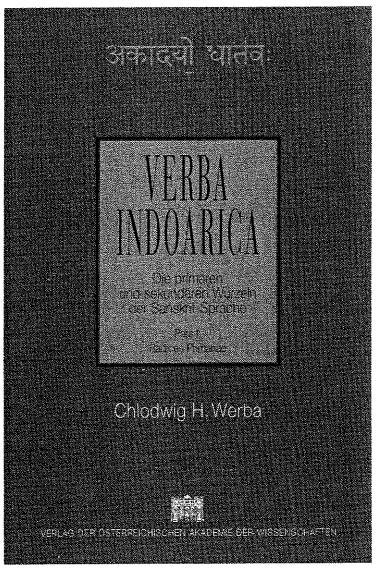
PASANG WANGDU and H. DIEMBERGER in cooperation with G. HAZOD, *Ngag dbang sKal ldan rgya mtsho, Shel dkar chos 'byung. History of the 'White Crystal'.* Religions and Politics of Southern La stod. Translation and Facsimile Edition of the Text. (Veröffentlichungen zur Sozialanthropologie, Bd. 1; Denkschriften, Bd. 252) 1996. 246 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, broschiert. ATS 435,- DM 59,60

A.M. BLONDEAU, E. STEINKELLNER (eds.), *Reflections of the Mountain. Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalaya.* (Veröffentlichungen zur Sozialanthropologie, Bd. 2; Denkschriften, Bd. 254) 1996. 273 Seiten, 21×29,5 cm, broschiert.
ATS 450,- DM 62,-

WERBA, Chlodwig H.

Verba IndoArica

Die primären und sekundären Wurzeln der Sanskrit-Sprache. Pars I: Radices Primariae



1998,
590 Seiten, 15x24 cm, broschiert,
ISBN 3-7001-2628-x
ATS 690,– DEM 94,50 CHF 86,–

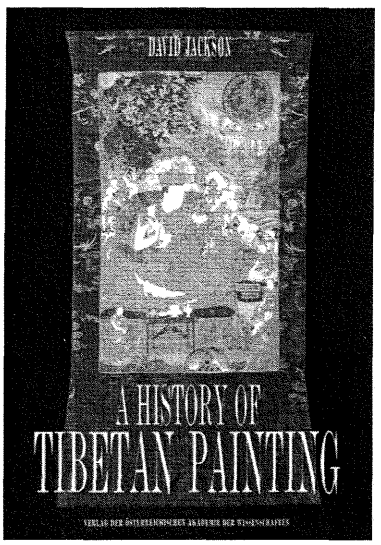
3200 Jahre Sanskrit und fast 200 Jahre seiner Erforschung werden in 663 Lemmata dokumentiert, die alles repräsentieren, was die bis heute lebendig gebliebene Kultursprache des alten Indien an Verben aus dem Urarischen des 3. bis 2. Jahrtausends v. Chr. ererbt hat. Erstmals bilden an die 500 ausgewerteten Sanskrit-Texte dafür eine sichere und umfassende Basis. Ein Schlüssel zur klassischen Sprache und zum lebendigen Geist Indiens!

Sanskrit *as*[8] 'be', together with its Old-Persian and Avestan counter-part *ah* originating from Proto-Indo-Iranian **Has* (3/2nd millenium BC) and being a cognate of New-English *is* via its Proto-Indo-European source **h₁es* (4th/3rd millenium BC), Skt. *dam*[i293] 'subdue', going back via PII **damH* to PIE **demh₂* (together with its NE cognate *tame*), Skt. *vas/uṣ*[536] 'spend the night', the source of which (as of OP/Av. *vah*) is PII **Hu̯as*, ultimately deriving from PIE **h₂u̯es* (as NE *was*), and 660 further mono(/bi)syllabic items which as basic verbal morphemes express an action, a state or a becoming, constitute the group of what is to be called the *primary roots of Sanskrit*, from which nearly two thirds of the exceedingly rich verbal inventory of the best- and longest continually documented Indo-European language of Asia are formed, as well as perhaps nearly a half of the nominal inventory. To present these *roots* and the stems and word-forms built on their basis as reliably as possible, nearly 500 texts composed over four millennia have been thoroughly exploited, from the *Ṛgveda Saṃhitā* (2nd half of the 2nd millennium BC) to Jagannātha's *Bhāmīmvilāsa* (17th century AD), from Pānini's *Astādhyāyī* (6th century BC [?]) to Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭa's *Dhātukāvya* (1st half of the 17th century AD), together with the body of published academic scholarship on the language and literature of (Vedic, Epic, Classical and Hybrid) Sanskrit since CHARLES WILKINS' *The Radicals of the Sanskrita Language* (London: East India Company, 1815) has been studied and duly cited. Concerning the mode of primary quotations, the standards of FRIDERICUS ROSEN's *Radices Sanscritae* (illustratas edidit F.R. Berolini: Ferdinand Dümmler, 1827), NIELS L. WESTERGAARD's *Radices linguæ Sascritæ* (ad decreta grammaticorum definivit atque copia exemplorum - exquisitiorum illustravit N.L.W. Bonnæ ad Rhenum: H.B. König, 1841) and the two *Petersburger Wörterbücher* (1855–1889), all of them citing the *loci* explicitly, have been combined with that of WILLIAM DWIGHT WHITNEY's *The Roots, Verb-Forms, and Primary Derivatives of the Sanskrit Language* (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1885 [repr. New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1945]), referring only to the text-strata. This combination helped, on the one hand, to avoid the many mistakes made by the latter in his famous monograph and, on the other, to enable the reader/user to check whatever he or she wants by referring to the quotes given. Thus the use of the first part of the *Verba IndoArica*, to be called *ákādayo dhātavaḥ 'ak/ac* and the other (662) roots', because it starts with *ak/ac 'see' (< PII **Hak/č* < PIE **h₃okᵘ*), a root which is not productive on the level of the language and is therefore marked with an asterisk, overlooked (not recognized) by WHITNEY in his *Roots* as were 901 others (marked in bold print), will be facilitated, as even the preverbs used in combination with finite or infinite verb-forms are duly recorded and their semantics amply documented.

Bestellung und Auslieferung: **Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften**
A-1011 Wien, Postfach 471, Postgasse 7/4 , Tel +43-1-515 81/DW 401–406, Fax +43-1-515 81-400
http://www.oeaw.ac.at/einheiten/verlag, e-mail: verlag@oeaw.ac.at

David JACKSON

A History of Tibetan Painting: The Great Tibetan Painters and Their Traditions



432 Seiten, 60 Farbabbildungen,
190 Schwarzweiß-Abbildungen,
2 Pläne, 21x29,7 cm, Leinen
ISBN 3-7001-2224-1
ATS 1.400,– DEM 192,– CHF 170,–

The present book is a first attempt at exploring the sacred painting traditions of Tibet from the mid-15th through 20th centuries on the basis of both the surviving pictorial remains and the extensive written sources that survive in the Tibetan language. The study of this period of Tibetan art history has in effect been neglected in recent years in favor of the earliest periods. Yet the vast majority of extant masterpieces of Tibetan Buddhist painting belong to this more recent period, and the relevant written and pictorial resources now available, though they have never been fully utilized until now, are in fact quite rich.

The present study attempts in the first place to identify the great founders of the main schools of Tibetan painting and to locate references to their surviving works of sacred art. Through recourse to the artists' own writings, if available, to the biographies of their main patrons, and to other contemporaneous or nearly contemporaneous sources, it has been possible to clarify many of the circumstances of the careers of such famous Tibetan painters as sMan-bla-don-grub, mKhyen-brtse-chen-mo and Nam-mkha'-bkra-shis, who were the founders of the sMan-ris, mKhyen-ris and Karma sgar-bris traditions, respectively.

For the convenience of students and researchers, the book includes a survey of the main available Tibetan sources and studies, both traditional and modern, as well as a detailed summary of previous Western research on this subject.

It also presents the texts and translations of the most important passages from the main traditional sources.

This richly illustrated volume also includes detailed indices, and it will be an indispensable guide and reference work for anyone interested in Tibetan art.

Bestellung und Auslieferung: **Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften**
A-1011 Wien, Postfach 471, Postgasse 7/4 , Tel +43-1-515 81/DW 401–406, Fax +43-1-515 81-400
http://www.oeaw.ac.at/einheiten/verlag, e-mail: verlag@oeaw.ac.at