

From Tibet to Bhutan

A Note on the Introduction of the Dance of Gesar in Bumthang

FRANÇOISE POMMARET & SAMTEN YESHI
(CNRS/CRCAO; Shejun Agency)

THIS ethnographic note on the dance of Gesar (Ge sar) in Bhutan is a very small token of my admiration for Mireille Helffer's work on Gesar.

I recently heard about the introduction of the dance of Gesar called *lingdro* (*gling bro*) in some festivals of Bumthang (Bum thang)¹ in Central Bhutan.² My colleague Samten Yeshi (bSam gtan yes shes) who is from Ura (U rva) in Bumthang, accepted to work with me and we have tried to collect information in a short span of time. Hence, the unpolished nature of this note but we thought that it was an appropriate contribution to Mireille Helffer's festschrift. We will not go here through the lengthy bibliography about Gesar, but just mention the works which are relevant in the context of this short note.³

The figure of Gesar is well-known in Bhutan but, to our knowledge, there are no bards reciting the Gesar epic as they can be found in parts of Tibet and Ladakh. However some lay people know portions of the text and

1. The Tibetan names and terms are transliterated in Wylie. The Bhutanese terms and names are transcribed as they are in Bhutan and the Wylie transliteration is given in brackets at the first occurrence.
2. One of the earliest articles on this dance is Lerner: 1983, pp. 50–57. Lerner saw it in a Tibetan exile settlement in Orissa in 1971 and identified it as the Lingdro Dechen Rolmo.
3. http://www.academia.edu/19791038/Erwan_Temple_Gesar_Studies_A_Short_Bibliography_Version_09_December_2015_ (retrieved on 2 Jan. 2017).

are able to recite them. Between 1979 and 1985, the Bhutanese publishers Kunsang Tobgyel (Kun bzang stobs rgyal) and Mani Dorji (Ma ni rdo rje) printed a version of the Gesar epic in 31 volumes in Western style, reproducing a hand written copy in Bhutanese script (*mgyogs yig*) of an Eastern Tibetan version. This handwritten copy is attributed to the great Bhutanese scholar Dasho Lam Sangngag (*Dra shos* Bla ma gSang sngags, 1934–2007) and is believed to be the first Gesar epic written in Bhutanese script.

In Bhutan, Gesar, known as Ling (Gling) Gesar, is first a warrior god (*dgra lha*) as described in the writings of the famous polygraph Ju Mipham (’Ju Mi pham rgya mtsho, 1846–1912). Ju Mipham belonged to the *rime* (*ris med*) movement which had a great influence on Bhutan. Indeed, the religious exchanges between central Bhutan and Eastern Tibet were important in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

It is difficult to know whether his cult existed in Bhutan prior to the 19th century, as we do not seem to have a mention of Gesar in the texts, but further research is needed. However Changchub Tsöndrue (Byang chub brtson ’grus, 1817–1856), who was the lama of the Trongsa Penlop Jigme Namgyal (Krong gsar *dpon slob* ’Jigs med nam rgyal, 1825–1881)—father of the first king, had received Gesar initiations before arriving in Bhutan in the first half of the 19th century. He might have passed some initiations to Jigme Namgyal.⁴ The watchtower of Trongsa, where Changchub Tsöndrue died, hosts a Gesar temple (*lha khang*) established in the 1930s. Inside this temple, a three-dimensional mandala, residence of Gesar, was erected in 1975 following the instructions of Dilgo Khyentse (Dil mgo mKhyen brtse, 1910–1991) Rinpoche to protect the people of Trongsa and the royal family. The text used in his daily worship is the *Dordze chegye* (*rDo rje tshé rgyas?*) attributed to Ju Mipham.⁵ The kings of Bhutan have a special connection to Gesar. It is said that after his cremation in Kuje (sKu rjes), Bumthang, the first king was seen ascending on a horse to the paradise of king Gesar.⁶ The second king, Jigme Wangchuck (’Jigs med dbang phyug, 1905–1952), was very fond of the Gesar epic and excerpts were read to him every day by his courtiers. In 1970,

4. Pommaret 2004, p. 77.

5. Schicklgruber 2009, pp. 133–140. However we know that there is another liturgical text to perform the ritual of Gling Gesar as *sgra lha* and *rlung rta* known as *Rig gsum Padma’i rnam sprul ’dzam gling Ge sar bsten sgrub mchod pa’i las rim*. This same liturgy is used in the Gesar *lha khang*, above the bDe chen chos gling.

6. Schicklgruber 2009, pp. 134–135, 137. Photo of the mandala pp. 138–139.

a Gesar Lungta temple was also built by the now Royal grandmother Ashi Kesang Choeden Wangchuck (A zhi sKal bzang chos srgon dbang phyug) on the advice of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche,⁷ behind the Dechen Choling (bDe chen chos gling) royal palace in Thimphu (Thim phu).⁸ There, in 1987, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche gave a series of Gesar empowerments, the reading transmission of Ju Mipham's Gesar practices as well "as the reading transmission of his own writing on the Gesar *sadhana* cycle, burned offerings, wind-horse ransom rites, wind-horse prosperity-propitiation rites."⁹ These transmissions reinforced the spiritual connection of the royal family to Gesar as a protector. The fifth king's name includes Gesar (spelt Khesar in English transcription), which shows his significant connection with Gesar and a luck-propitiation palace (*rlung rta pho brang*) to Gesar was built for the king's protection in 2011 at Tharpaling (Thar pa gling) in Bumthang.¹⁰

Gesar is also invoked in different healing rituals. He takes possession of intercessors as he has the power to defeat negative influences and is considered as more powerful than the local deities.¹¹

In Merak (Me rag), a remote region in Eastern Bhutan, during a ritual called *chökor* (*chos skor*), the people circumambulate their village carrying sacred texts in order to bless the harvest and perform a dance of Gesar: "Although no special events accompany the *chökor* other than singing and dancing, it is spiced up with the unique performance of the *arpha*

7. Anonymous 2017, p. 120: "A monastery dedicated to Ling Gesar or Gesar, the King of Ling, was vital for the protection of the Kings of Bhutan as well as the peace and stability of the Kingdom of Bhutan.[...] The centre-piece of this small monastery holds a detailed three dimensional structure of Ling Gesar's Celestial Palace built in accordance with His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche's Gongter or Mind Treasure. Since its inception, the Gesar Lungta Solchod Thinley Lhundrup and Yangdrup prayers in Gesar Lungta Lhakhang [...] have been performed annually by the monks of Nimalung and Tharpaling monasteries for over 46 years. In 2016, the temple was offered to the Fifth King."

8. On the four elements including the *rlung rta* see Karmay 1997, pp. 413–422.

9. Dilgo Khyentse 2012, pp. 258–259.

10. A *rlung rta pho brang* is a small construction which houses a particular person or family effigies in order to bring them luck and fortune (*rlung rta*). Since Gesar is considered a deity who subdues negativity and therefore brings luck, a *rlung rta pho brang* is associated to him and contains, in a three dimensional mandala form, his effigy as well as his retinue.

11. Pommaret 2015 a and Schrempf 2015.

(Wylie unknown) dance. People believe that *arphas* are the representations of heroes or warriors of King Gesar of Ling. They recite verses from the epic of King Gesar”.¹² The origin of this Gesar dance in Merak has not yet been researched.

In the last ten years, the Gesar dance called *lingdro* has been introduced in the central region of Bumthang, and more specifically in Ura and Chume (Chu smad) valleys.

It appears to have been introduced under the influence of lamas who studied either in Namdröling (rNam grol gling, Pe nor Rinpoche’s monastery in South India), or in Larung Gar (Bla rung sgar, the Buddhist encampment of Eastern Tibet, which also hosts Gesar dances).¹³

Jigme Phuntsok (’Jigs med phun tshogs, 1933–2004), the builder and abbot of Larung Gar, was a follower of the great master Ju Mipham¹⁴ to whom Gesar rituals are attributed and who edited and printed the block print version of the Gesar epic.

An area covering parts of Golok (mGo log) and Kham (Khams) was the epicentre of the Gesar cult, especially since Ju Mipham. Lamas who propagated the Gesar cult have come from and continue to come from these same regions where local traditions and clanic associations with Gesar have traditionally been strongest.¹⁵ Mikles writes that “Beyond the well-known composition of tantric Gesar rituals by Ju Mipham (1846–1912) and Gyurme Thubten Jamyang Dragpa’s (’Gyur med thub bstan ’jam dbyangs grags pa, 1883–1945) edition of the epic’s first three episodes,¹⁶ the region also witnessed the commencement of Dzogchen

12. *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Bhutan* 2015, p. 145.

13. On this topic, see Buffetrille 2010, pp. 523–554.

14. <http://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Mipam-Gyatso/4228> (retrieved on December 30th, 2016).

15. Fitzherbert 2016, p. 17.

16. Mikles, 2016 p. 233 note 8, adds an important comment regarding the authorship of the Mipham Gesar: “Despite only containing the first three episodes and its authorship by a man other than ’Ju Mi pham, the text is frequently called the ‘Mi pham Ge sar’ after the designation of the late Robin Kornman. Robin Kornman’s English translation of these has recently been completed by Sangye Khandro and Lama Chonam (Kornman, Sangye Khandro and Lama Chonam 2013). The composition and publication of this text has been discussed by G. FitzHerbert in his dissertation, *The Birth of Ge sar: Narrative Diversity and Social Resonance in the Tibetan Epic Tradition*”.

(rDzogs chen) monastery's Gesar operas [*sic*]¹⁷ by the Fifth rDzogs chen rin po che Thub bstan chos kyi rdo rje (1872–1935) and the era saw the construction of numerous temples devoted to the warrior-king.”¹⁸ Confirming this and the immense role of Ju Mipham, Buffetrille quoted Stein who “reported a lay play in Kham with Gesar as the subject and a Gesar *'cham* in the Dzogchen monasteries of Kham in the 11th Tibetan month which 'Jam mgon Mi pham rgya mtsho (1846–1912), one of the most respected figures of the Non Sectarian Movement' (*ris med*), would have authored. He also worked to develop the cult of Gesar as a “god-who-subdues-enemies” (*dgra lha*). He is the author of the *Gling bro bde chen rol pa*, ‘A dance of Ling, the music of great bliss’, a collection of song texts and dances centered on Gesar that was then performed in Rwa sgrengs monastery under the patronage of the Regent.”¹⁹

In the valley of Ura in Bumthang, the text used for the dance is entitled *The Wonderful Laughter being the Dance of Ling, called Music of the Great Blissfulness, which is a Part of the Life-Story of the Great Lion, the King Gesar (Seng chen Ge sar rgyal po'i rtogs brjod las gling bro bde chen rol mo ngo mtshar shis pa'i gad rgyang)*, which is also found in the *Brief History of the Origin, Lineage of Dancers and Diffusion of the Lingdro Dechen Rolmo Performance (Gling bro bde chen rol mo'i lo rgyus mdor bsdsu dkar phyogs gyul las rgyal ba'i ki bswo)*.²⁰ This text, edited by Tshe g.yang sgrol ma (2012), gives a detailed account of the origin and propagation of the dance from Tibet to India and now Bhutan.²¹ In particular, it enlightens the role of the Reting (Rwa sgrengs) regent (1912–1947) in Central Tibet, which had already been mentioned by Stein.²² Stein wrote that his Kalimpong informant on Gesar was the official singer of the Reting regent and that Samthar (bSam thar), a Gesar bard, visited Reting once a year. The Reting regent, who was a hierarch of the gelug (*dge lugs*) school, had in fact a personal interest in Gesar and had written around 1935 a Cycle of rituals of Gesar (*Ge sar chos skor*) because he considered himself an incarnation of the great treasure discoverer Chogyur Lingpa

17. Actually, this is not an opera but a *cham*. See I. Henrion-Dourcy's article in this volume that describes this *cham* in detail.

18. Mikles 2016, p. 233.

19. Buffetrille 2010, p. 537 and Stein 1959, pp. 335–336.

20. TBRC, www.tbrc.org, Resource ID: W1KG13990.

21. I am very grateful to Samten Karmay who helped me understand this text.

22. Stein 1959, pp. 334–335.

(*gter ston mChog gyur gling pa*), one of the masters of Ju Mipham also involved in the Gesar epic.²³ Therefore the regent started the *lingdro* in Reting monastery on the text attributed to Ju Mipham.

According to Tshe g.yang sgröl ma, who is the daughter of Nor bzang, the dance master (*bro dpon*) of Reting, Reting Rinpoche, distributed the text of the *Lingdro ritual (Gling bro cho ga)* in Tibet. The dance spread to India from 1959 onwards when Nor bzang and his young daughters arrived at Dündül Rabtenling (bDud 'dul rab brtan gling), a camp founded by Dödjom (bDud 'joms) Rinpoche in Orissa and where Lerner saw the dance in 1971. The dance first spread around Orissa with the blessings of different religious masters before being taught in Nepal, Kalimpong, Dharamsala, USA, UK and Switzerland in the course of the last thirty years, as associations were established for the promotion of this dance. In 1990, the dance was shown to Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche at the monastery of Shechen (Zhe chen) in Nepal and he spoke about the importance of the dance, saying that the Lingdro Dechen Rolmo contained the words of Manjushri and Mipham. The benefits of the dance include good harvest, timely rain, and protection against epidemic as well as barbaric actions, as well as a flourishing of Buddhism. Therefore the dance would benefit all the people.²⁴

In 1994 in Nepal, the *lingdro* was performed in front of Penor Rinpoche who then introduced it in his monastery in South India. Penor Rinpoche's *lingdro* was also introduced in the Tibetan camp locally known as Lama Camp, and located in Tindolong, about 6 kilometres from Tezu (Lohit district, Arunachal Pradesh) where many people are from Kong po and Pemakö (Padma bkod) and therefore close to the tradition of Dödjom Rinpoche.²⁵

This story seems to have taken us far from Ura in Bumthang but in fact Arunachal Pradesh is where we pick the thread. Several young religious practitioners from Ura went to Namdröling, Penor's Rinpoche's monastery in South India, to study and one of them, Karma Sonam (Kar ma bsod nams) then went to the Pemakö region of the upper Siang district

23. Stein 1959, pp. 90–91 and pp. 115–166.

24. Tshe g.yang sgröl ma 2012, pp. 165–185.

25. Tshe g.yang sgröl ma 2012, pp. 175–176.

in Arunachal Pradesh²⁶ where he earned the title of hermit (*tshams pa*).²⁷ From there he brought a female dancer to teach the dance to the men and women of Ura. The dance was performed for the first time in Ura in 2007. The dancers represent the characters of the Gesar epic including the generals. Dancers are both male and female. Karma Sonam also arranged through personal initiative to have the elaborate costumes made. It seems they were sponsored by his well-wishers in Arunachal Pradesh as no donations were asked in Ura. This might explain why costumes have no Bhutanese features but are close copies of the costumes of the *lingdro* performed in Eastern Tibet and India. The hats, in particular, are strikingly similar to those that have been depicted and documented by Katia Buffetrille.

Talking about a poster of Gesar that she saw in A mdo, Buffetrille wrote “The lower left section shows ’Brug mo, Ge sar’s spouse, a conical white hat adorned with red fringes on her head accompanied by several other ladies and a man also wearing a white hat with red fringes but with a slightly different shape. Both pieces of headgear remind that of Phying dkar ba, the mountain-deity of Rwa sgrengs, identified by many Tibetans with A myes rma chen: a white hat with large brims, the cone covered with red fringes and with a ball at the top. It is also the hat of his medium. In fact, the god’s name derives from his white felt hat (*phying zhwa*) worn also by Amdo tribes (mainly the Mgo log). Bya khyung, the territorial god of Reb gong, the native place of the painter, also wears this kind of hat. During the *glu rol* festival that takes place in some Reb gong villages, the villagers have a similar hat (without the ball and not so sharp).”²⁸ It is probable that neither Karma Sonam, nor the Ura villagers are aware of the symbolism and the connections of these hats to the important deities of Eastern Tibet. However the justification to perform this dance is the same as elsewhere in Eastern Tibet and India. As Gesar is worshipped as a warrior deity as well as the deity of the “wind horse” (*rlung rta*), this dance seeks the intervention of Gesar to improve luck, fortune and wellbeing for the community.

26. http://www.censusindia.gov.in/2011census/dchb/1208_PART_B_DCHB_UPPER%20SIANG.pdf and <https://greenerpasturesind.wordpress.com/2012/10/04/beyul-of-pemako-paradise-on-earth/> (retrieved 12 April 2017).

27. Incidentally, Pemakö is ecologically very similar to Bhutan and the majority of people speak tshangla, the same language as Eastern Bhutan as they migrated from there to Pemakö in the early 19th century. See Grothmann 2012.

28. Buffetrille 2010, pp. 526–527.



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Lingdro in Ura.



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The dance (*gling bro*) is comprised in a ritual which includes the invitation of Gesar (*Ge sar spyan 'dren*), a smoke offering (*bsang*), a libation (*gser skyems*), and at the end, a prayer for accumulation of wealth (*gyang phyug*).²⁹ In Ura in 2007, Karma Sonam initiated on the Purshela (Pur

29. It was given to me as *gyang phyug* but it could be *gyang 'gugs*.



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shel la), the sacred mountain of Ura³⁰, a day of annual world smoke offering (*'Dzam gling spyi bsang*) comprising several smoke offerings for Gesar and the local deities (*ri bo bsang mchod*). It is a rnying ma tradition which

30. <http://places.thlib.org/features/69906>: “Purhselya is roughly translated as the glass mountain of holy mortal remains (dead body). This is because the mountain stands high like a wrapped corpse with the rock bed on the face that overlooks the Ura valley appearing white like a reflection on glass when covered with snow. The mountain is considered as the residence of the local female deity known as A zhe Lha mo.” We will not discuss here *a lce lha mo* in Bhutan, as it would be the topic of another research. However *a lce lha mo*, also spelt *a zhe lha mo* (Elder Sister Goddess) in Bhutan, is the female local deity of the Ura valley whose abode is the Pur shel la mountain above Ura. She is worshipped every year on the 15th day of the 7th month during the unique *a lce lha mo/a zhe lha mo* ritual when the women of Ura climb the mountain at dawn singing praise to the deity. They lunch and dance on the summit of the Pur shel asking blessings for good weather and harvest. Then they return to the village dancing and singing the story of the deity’s journey. Some men and boys may follow to play pranks. At twilight, the girls arrive in the village temple where the village gathers to receive them. A feature of the dance is the use of a hand held drum by a woman (Karma Phuntsho, personal communication, 17 August 2004). See for a short excerpt of this ritual: www.bhutanulturalatlas.org/667/culture/intangible-heritage/religious-festivals-ceremonies-rituals/ashi-lhamo/ (retrieved on 2 Feb. 2017). For *a lce lha mo* in Tibet, see Henrion-Dourcy, 2017, especially pp. 138–142 for a discussion of this tradition in Mon and Bhutan.

marks the first smoke offering performed by Guru Rinpoche in bSam yas.³¹ On this occasion in Ura, the *lingdro* was performed for the first time on the mountain. The villagers also helped Karma Sonam to build on the top of the mountain a Gesar luck-propitiation palace (*rlung rta pho brang*), dedicated to the peace and prosperity of the kings and the kingdom. This personal initiative of Karma Sonam was supported by the villagers. Since 2007 in Ura the *lingdro* has become an occasional part of other local religious celebrations but also when important guests and lamas visit the village. The dance itself has fifteen chapters.³²

The dance is performed by male and female dancers, but their exact number depends on the dancers' availability in the village. The male dancers are

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31. It seems to have been introduced in Bhutan through contacts with the rnying ma monasteries in India. One of the most popular smoke offering text, the *bsang mochod bkra shis 'khyil ba*, was written by the 5th Dalai Lama but there are many such texts.
32. Chapter 1, Dance offerings (*le'u dang po/ bro'i mchod pa*)
 Chapter 2, The resplendence descent of the valiant male class (*le'u gnyis pa/ pho rgyud dpa' bo'i byin 'bebs*)
 Chapter 3, The resplendence descent of the valiant female class (*le'u gsum pa/ mo rgyud dpa' mo'i byin 'bebs*)
 Chapter 4, The blessings of the three Buddha bodies (*le'u bzhi pa/ sku gsum byin 'bebs*)
 Chapter 5, The great laughter of the Hor subduing hero (*le'u lnga pa/ hor 'dul dpa' bo'i gad rgyangs*)
 Chapter 6, (the title of the chapter is missing)
 Chapter 7, (*le'u bdun pa*, the title of the chapter is missing)
 Chapter 8, (*le'u brgyad pa/ bro gzhung*. Main text of the dance, but this is not the title of the chapter)
 Chapter 9, (*le'u dgu pa/ bro gzhung*, Main text of the dance, but this not the title of the chapter)
 Chapter 10, (*le'u bcu pa/ bro gzhung*, Main text of the dance, but this is not the title of the chapter)
 Chapter 11, The call for quintessence of wealth (*le'u bcu gcig pa/ gyang 'gugs*)
 Chapter 12, Resonance of the Dragon of Brahma, king of the gods (*le'u bcu gnyis pa/ lha rgyal tshangs pa'i 'brug sgra*)
 Chapter 13, The auspicious and pleasing melody (*le'u bcu gsum pa/ bkra shis dbyangs snyan*)
 Chapter 14, The auspicious and good path (*le'u bcu bzhi pa/ bkra shis lam yag*)
 Chapter 15, Peace (*le'u bco lnga pa/ zhi ba*).
 The whole sequence of chapters is not clear. Chapters 1, 4, 6 and 11 are marked with the word *zur 'jug*, supplement page and chapters 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13 are marked with *bro gzhung*, the main text of the dance. Chapters 7, 14 and 15 are marked with neither of them. I thank Samten Karmay for his help in reading the text.

mostly lay practitioners (called *sgom chen* in Bhutan) from the village and the female dancers are the village's young women. The male lead dancer represents Gesar while the female lead dancer is Gesar's wife, Seng leam 'Brug mo. Another dancer represents A khu Khro thun. The rest is the entourage of Gesar such as the generals (*dpa' thul*) as well as different rnying ma protective deities. The dance is characterised by, in the words of Lerner, stepping, hopping, and turning with graceful arms movements.³³

A symbolic change happened in 2016. The *lingdro* was never performed as a part of the Yagchö (*Yag mchod*), the most important religious festival in Ura.³⁴ However when the new large banner of Ura which liberates by sight (*mthong grol*) was unfurled for the first time at the Yagchö in 2016, the *lingdro* was performed as a part of the consecration ceremony.

To add to this short note, we have to mention that another *lingdro* was introduced in the late 1990s in Bumthang at Chöjam (sKyo byams/'jam), a small monastery of the Tang (sTang) valley in Bumthang,³⁵ by Chönyi Rangshar (Chos nyid rang shar), a lama locally called Tang Rinpoche.³⁶ Tang Rinpoche, from Golok, was a student of Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok in Eastern Tibet and took residence at Chöjam when he arrived in Bhutan. His wife, a former nun from Larung Gar, is said to have taught the dance to the local people. It was performed during the festival called "the consecration of Chöjam" (*skyo byams/'jam rab gnas*). According to Buffettrille, the dance of Gesar in Larung Gar was introduced only in the early 1980s.³⁷

Tang Rinpoche left Chöjam and has now his own new temple at Chumeypong (a modern mispronunciation of Chos sde spang) in the Chume valley of Bumthang. Today, the *lingdro* is performed during a new festival that he initiated there while in Chöjam, the local festival continues without the *lingdro*, as we could see it in November 2015. So far, we have not been able to witness the *lingdro* at Chumeypong, but Tang Rinpoche published photos on his Facebook account. This *lingdro* probably follows

33. Lerner 1983, p. 56.

34. The *Yag mchod* is a festival unique to Ura. It takes place on the 3rd month, from the 13th to the 15th day, and is a thanksgiving and community festival to a miraculous statue of Vajrapani, kept in a temple of Ura valley.

35. <http://www.bhutanulturalatlas.org/940/culture/sites-structures/monasteries-temples/choejam-lhakhang/> (retrieved on 2nd February 2017).

36. www.facebook.com/tangRinpoche/?ref=page_internal (retrieved on 1st February 2017).

37. Buffettrille 2010, p. 540.

the Larung Gar tradition and further research is needed to compare the *lingdro* traditions of Ura and Chumeypung.

The introduction in Bumthang of a new dance with strong Tibetan connections reflects a trend that is found throughout the Himalayas: the enduring spiritual influence of Tibetan lamas and the power of their rituals which seem to replace, almost seamlessly, local community rituals with rituals having the same purpose but encompassing a wider and perhaps more prestigious Himalayan perspective.

In Bhutanese history there are many examples of such interactions, and one of the most relevant in the context of this article is concerned with the dances of the festival of the 10th day in honour of Guru Rinpoche (*tshes bcu*). Many traditions of monastic rituals and dances were brought from rnying ma monasteries in Tibet and regularized by the 4th regent Tenzin Rabgye (*sde srid bsTan 'dzin Rab rgyas*).³⁸ Centuries of interactions have moulded the Bhutanese view of Tibetan religious manifestations. It is reflected in a continuum of cultural links which are not hampered by political borders or circumstances, but are based on religious prestige and ritual efficiency. The introduction of the *lingdro* dance—which was brought from Eastern Tibet—to Central Bhutan demonstrates the vitality of religious manifestations but also their adaptation to local contexts.

38. Pommaret 2015 b, p. 34.

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