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COVER: This image was taken during the annual Bco lnga mchod pa ritual at Brag 'go Monastery (Brag 'go County, Dkar mdzes Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China). Photograph by Lhundrom (Lhun 'grub), February 2010.

Dedicated to Ramona, who continues to inspire us all.  
Ramona aanee snquandi kuji ghariji, sain sgili sanasanni budahgini sgilisa  
zangda marishida adan.

ང་ཚོ་ལ་ནམ་ཡང་རེ་བ་དང་སློབས་པའི་ལམ་སློན་མཁན་ལུ་མ་རེད་མོ་ལ་ཚ་ལ་རྗེས་དྲན་དུ་ལུ་བ།  
Dasi yidaidu yizhi kujiliku Remaonadu xianligha.

Ramona ki khæ dzə jələ ŋo, p̄hen kətho sə.

Ramona, q<sup>h</sup>ata: na ŋimi ɛo zə.

献给永远激励我们的一雷蒙娜。

Ne Ramona dakhutale bedande nekur gecang ne chede mbu keci.

Věnováno Ramoně, která nás všechny neustále inspiruje.

Посвящается Рамоне, которая продолжает нас вдохновлять.

Присвячаецца Рамоне, якая працягвае натхняць нас усіх.

Für Ramona, die uns alle weiterhin inspiriert.

Ramona (ha xie de) ka lio zhi, a ge da ng mu yi da zi ha mi tai de guli zi  
lio de ge.

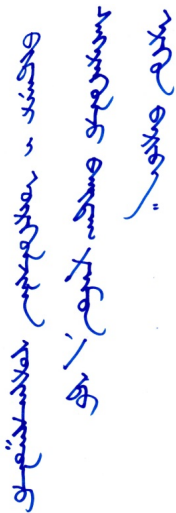
ŋə Gə ke ʔθ mə chæd ka bl Ramona kə.

Tillägnad Ramona, som fortsätter att inspirera oss alla.

Dla Ramony, która jest dla nas ciągle inspiracją.

מוקדש לרמונה שממשיכה להיות מקור השראה לכולנו.

ཚོང་གི་མང་གི་ཏུ་ནས་ལི་དི་ཚོ་ལྷུར་གི་གྲི་གུ་ལུ་རེད་མོ་ལ་ཚ་ལ་རྗེས་དྲན་གི་སེམས།



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REVIEWS

- 299-304 *Naga Identities*  
Reviewed by Magnus Fiskesjö
- 305-313 *Scripture on the Ten Kings*  
Reviewed by Paul K Nietupski
- 315-317 *Tibet – A History*  
Reviewed by Ivette Vargas-O'Bryan
- 319-327 Mongolian Language Scholarship on the Mongols of the  
Gansu-Qinghai Region  
Reviewed by Mátyás Balogh
- 329-338 *China's Environmental Challenges*  
Reviewed by Bill Bleisch
- 339-341 *Le bergers du Fort Noir*  
Reviewed by Katia Buffetrille
- 343-347 *Islam and Tibet*  
Reviewed by Faisal Chaudhry
- 349-355 *The Art of Not Being Governed*  
Reviewed by Andrew Grant
- 357-361 *Recent Research on Ladakh*  
Reviewed by Binod Singh
- 363-369 *Revisiting Rituals in a Changing Tibetan World*  
Reviewed by Christina Kilby
- 371-373 *Japanese-Mongolian Relations*  
Reviewed by Anja Reid
- 375-380 *China's 'Tibetan' Frontiers*  
Reviewed by Benno Ryan Weiner
- 381-385 *Drokpa*  
Reviewed by Ligaya Beebe
- 387-392 *Transforming Nomadic Resource Management and  
Livelihood Strategies*  
Reviewed by Daniel Winkler
- 393-396 *Explorers and Scientists in China's Borderlands*  
Reviewed by Gregory Rohlf
- 397-403 *Origins and Migrations in the Extended Eastern  
Himalayas*  
Reviewed by Jack Hayes

405-411

*The Sherthukpens of Arunachal Pradesh*

Reviewed by Christopher Weedall

413-417

*Critical Han Studies*

Reviewed by Zhiguo Ye

419-422

*Trade and Society Along the Silk Road*

Reviewed by Bina Sengar

423-449

*Emerging Bon*

Reviewed by Bettina Zeisler



SHIFTING CONTEXTS AND PERFORMANCES:  
THE BRAO-KAVET AND THEIR SACRED MOUNTAINS  
IN NORTHEAST CAMBODIA

Ian G Baird (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

ABSTRACT

The Brao-Kavet are an indigenous ethnic group in northeastern Cambodia and southern Laos. Although in recent decades most have been forced to resettle in the lowlands, many maintain close livelihood and spiritual links with forested mountainous areas. I discuss the shifting Brao-Kavet understandings and performances associated with sacred spaces and, in particular, the Haling-Halang, a pair of high mountains located on the Laos-Cambodia border. The Brao-Kavet do not hunt for wildlife on these mountains, and dare not cut down trees. A particular kind of thin bamboo that grows there is, however, especially useful for sucking jar beer. People are allowed to harvest it in small quantities, provided appropriate offerings are made to the powerful mountain spirits prior to cutting. Brao-Kavet identity politics are closely linked to religious practices associated with these mountains, as demonstrated by Brao-Kavet claims that only Brao-Kavet should be spoken there because the spirits do not understand Lao, Khmer, French, English, or other languages, and would be offended if anything but their own tongue was uttered. I argue that the performative nature of Brao-Kavet sacred mountains has considerable political potential for facilitating indigenous-supported biodiversity conservation, and for supporting the recognition of Brao-Kavet indigenous rights over land and other resources in Virachey National Park, where the mountains are located.

KEYWORDS

Cambodia, indigenous peoples, national park, performativity, sacred mountains, sacred spaces

INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

For many upland indigenous peoples, such as the Brao-Kavet of southern Laos and northeastern Cambodia, mountains are important in supporting their livelihoods and also are of great spiritual value. While the Brao-Kavet do not place as much importance on mountains as do more northern upland groups, such as the Tibetans and Bhutanese, mountains remain important sites. The Haling-Halang Mountains are located along the border between northeastern Cambodia's Veun Say District, Ratanakiri Province, and Phou Vong District, Attapeu Province, southern Laos. These mountains are particularly sacred to the Brao-Kavet of this region. They reach over 1,000 meters above sea level, straddle the international border, and are among the highest in Cambodia. Located in a remote part of the country, the Brao-Kavet have developed particular practices and adopted certain taboos deemed important for appeasing the powerful spirits they believe reside there. The rituals and other beliefs, discourses, and behavior associated with the Brao-Kavet's relationship with Haling-Halang are conceptualized here as performances that, following the work of Butler (1993, 1997), indicate that transformations take place.

Brao-Kavet beliefs that have been partially spiritually constituted through contestation and resistance involving outside influences and interactions over the last century have the potential to serve a new purpose, one that relates to conserving nature and protecting biodiversity. This is particularly relevant considering that the Haling-Halang Mountains are located within Virachey National Park, one of Cambodia's largest protected areas. Nevertheless, protected area managers have largely failed to engage the Brao-Kavet and their spiritual beliefs in order to encourage environmental

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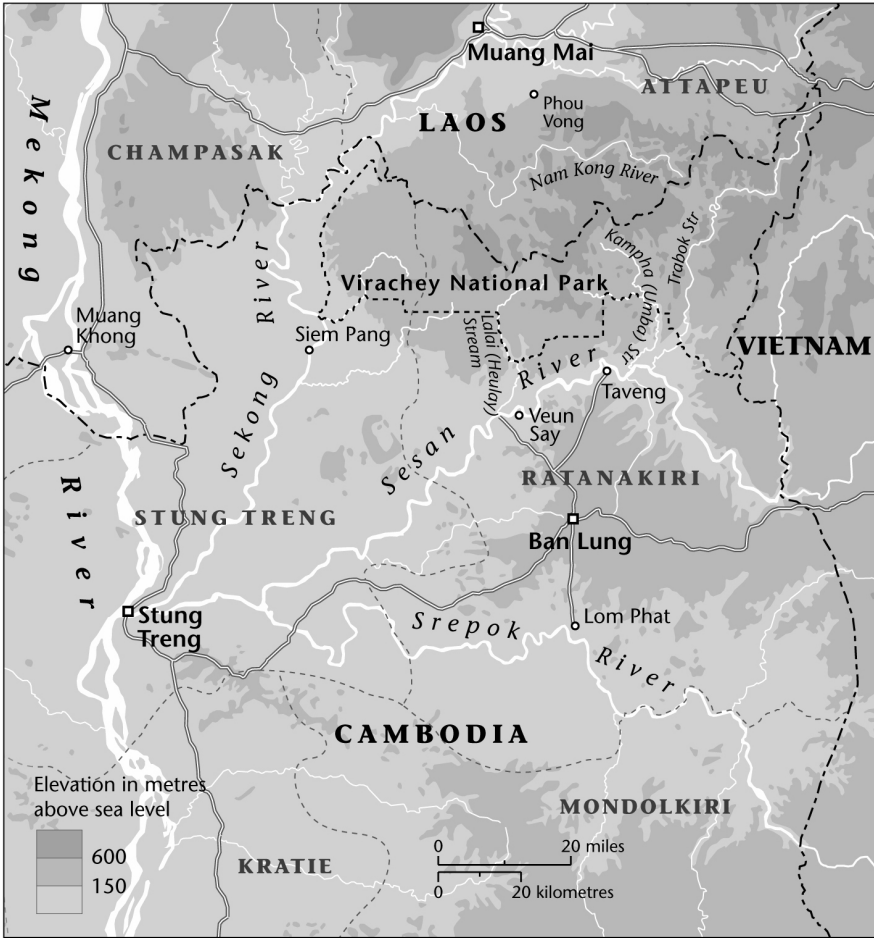
<sup>1</sup> An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 4<sup>th</sup> South and Southeast Asian Association for the Study of Culture and Religion (SSEASR) in Thimphu, Kingdom of Bhutan, 30 June-3 July 2011. The Cambodian NGO, Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFP), supported some of the research reported in this paper. I thank Jeremy Ironside, Jonathan Padwe, and *AHP* editors for helping to improve this paper. I am solely responsible for any deficiencies that remain.

protection and sustainable resource management. Here, I will demonstrate the potential of beliefs and taboos related to sacred mountains to benefit nature conservation and support Brao-Kavet culture and rights over resource access through promoting types of cooperative management that are respectful of local beliefs, history, and historical tenure.

The following section introduces the Brao-Kavet people. I continue with a description of the particular beliefs and practices associated with the Haling-Halang Mountains, arguing that they are invented traditions, following Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), and that they represent particular forms of cultural and political resistance. I then consider the role of Virachey National Park in relation to Brao-Kavet interactions with the Haling-Halang Mountains, and the potential for the state to cooperate with the Brao-Kavet in support of biodiversity conservation. I conclude with suggestions as to how the disconnect between the Brao-Kavet and protected area managers might be remedied.

Before proceeding, I review the context in which this research took place. I am a white Canadian male who first began interacting with the Brao in Cambodia in 1995 as a consultant working for a local non-government organization (NGO), the Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) Project, based in Ratanakiri Province in the northeast of Cambodia, bordering Laos (Figure 1). I later conducted studies in cooperation with the Brao, including my Master's thesis research between 2001 and 2003, and PhD research between 2003 and 2008. I have worked with the Brao off and on for many years, and have developed close relationships with many Brao people. I learned to speak Brao during my Master's thesis research. The information included in this paper has been gradually collected since 1995, and represents cumulative diachronic research, rather than information that emerged from a short field trip.

Figure 1. Veun Say District, Ratanakiri Province and the boundaries of Virachey National Park. Brao-Kavet villages are mainly located along the Lalai 'Heulay Stream', located in Kok Lak Commune, just outside the park.



### THE BRAO-KAVET

The Brao-Kavet, typically referred to as Kavet by themselves and others, are one of nine Brao sub-groups recognized by the Brao. The Kavet, Uмба, Kreung, Brao Tanap, and Lun are the sub-groups presently in Cambodia. The Kavet, Kanying, Hamong, Jree, and Lun are found in Laos (Baird 2008c; Keller et al. 2008). Globally, there are approximately 60,000 Brao, with more than half in Stung Treng

and Ratanakiri provinces in northeast Cambodia, less than half in Champasak and Attapeu provinces in Laos, and one village<sup>2</sup> in Kon Tum Province in the central highlands of Vietnam (Baird 2008c). This paper mainly focuses on the Kavet living in the four villages of Kok Lak Commune, Veun Say District, Ratanakiri Province, Cambodia (Baird 2008c).<sup>3</sup> They, along with those from other Brao sub-groups, are presently considered to be among Cambodia's 'indigenous peoples' (Khmer, *chuncheat daoem pheak tech*; Baird 2011, 2008a).<sup>4</sup>

The Brao-Kavet, and all the other Brao sub-groups, can be historically characterized as Animists, even if this term has a troublesome history.<sup>5</sup> This means, in the context of the Brao, people who believe in the existence of a wide array of malevolent spirits who manifest in various contexts and ways. These spirits need to be appeased to remedy or avoid various health related problems and other forms of misfortune. The rituals conducted by the Brao-Kavet and other Brao almost always require the consumption of a particular form of fermented rice-beer<sup>6</sup> made by the Brao.<sup>7</sup> Ceremonies typically involve sacrificing chickens, pigs, and water buffaloes and, less frequently, cows (Baird 2008c; Baird 2009c). Brown et al. (ND) identified six sacred mountains recognized by the Brao-Kavet in Kok

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<sup>2</sup> The village is called Dak My. The inhabitants fled Cambodia in 1970 in the face of intense US aerial bombardment (Baird 2008c).

<sup>3</sup> The Kavet population in Kok Lak Commune is 2,308 (Ironsides 2011).

<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed discussion of how indigenous peoples are defined and characterized in Cambodia, and the recent construction of indigenous identities in the country, see Baird (2011). Importantly, while all the historically upland highlander groups in Cambodia, including people who identify as members of all the Brao sub-groups, are being recognized as 'indigenous peoples', the Lao have been discursively excluded from being considered indigenous in Cambodia, largely because they are lowlanders and because the Lao ethnic group is seen as having its own 'ethnic homeland' in neighboring Laos.

<sup>5</sup> A small minority of the Brao in northeast Cambodia have recently converted to forms of evangelical Christianity (Baird 2009c). I intentionally capitalize 'Animist' to recognize local beliefs in spirits as having the same ontological position as mainstream religions, the names of which are normally capitalized.

<sup>6</sup> Often referred to in the literature as 'rice wine', which is not to be confused with distilled rice liquor.

<sup>7</sup> The Brao observe complex and important social rules with the consumption of fermented rice jar-beer.

Lak Commune, including Haling Mountain (Halang was not included in this list) and three smaller ones located within their Community Protected Area (CPA). According to Brown et al. (ND:9):

Kok Lak villagers point to direct proof of the consequences of not paying respect before entering these areas. There is a story during the French Indochinese war of two French soldiers who went to the top of one of these spirit hills to make a sign for a plane to come and get them. They soon died and the reason stated for their deaths is due to malaria, but villagers are sure the spirit of the mountain killed them, because they were disrespectful.

The Brao spatially organize in other particular ways, and have developed important spatial taboos to regulate behavior within houses, villages, and agricultural areas. These practices indicate how agricultural fields should be situated in relation to each other, how villages should be spatially oriented, where houses should be built, and where paths should be located (Baird 2008a).

Historically, the Brao-Kavet mainly inhabited mountainous, hilly, and forested areas, where their livelihoods largely depended on swidden agriculture, fishing, hunting, and collecting non-timber forest products (NTFPs) (Baird 2008c, 2010c). With a keen detailed knowledge of the ecological conditions they live in, the Brao have a deep understanding of the environments they interact with, including numerous micro-habitats (Baird 2013a). Since the 1960s, the Brao (including the Brao-Kavet) in both Laos and Cambodia have been largely resettled to lowland areas and along roads and rivers, where they have frequently been encouraged to engage in lowland wet rice cultivation (Baird 2008c, 2009b, 2009a).

## THE CAMBODIA NATIONAL PROTECTED AREAS SYSTEM AND VIRACHEY NATIONAL PARK

On 1 November 1993, the first National Protected Areas System (NPAS) of Cambodia – including Virachey National Park – was

established through a Royal Decree signed by King Norodom Sihanouk. The Decree immediately designated 3.3 million hectares of forestlands and other ecosystems within twenty-three variously classified Protected Areas (PAs), including National Parks, Wildlife Sanctuaries, Protected Landscapes, and Multiple Use Areas. The Ministry of Environment (MoE) was mandated to manage these PAs on behalf of the state (Baird 2009a),<sup>8</sup> and this remains the case today.

Virachey National Park is Cambodia's largest National Park. It covers 332,500 hectares in Siam Pang District, Stung Treng Province, and Veun Say, Taveng; and a small part of Andong Meas District in Ratanakiri Province (Figure 1). Dense semi-evergreen forests, upland savannah, bamboo thickets, and occasional patches of mixed deciduous forest cover most of the park (BPAMP 2003). The elevation of Virachey ranges from approximately one hundred meters above sea level (ASL) near the Sesan River to over 1,500 meters ASL on the high mountain ranges extending along the Laos-Cambodia border. Most of the park exceeds 400 meters ASL (BPAMP 2003; Koy 1999). Because of its large size and high biodiversity values, Virachey National Park is considered a key PA in Cambodia. Many threatened and endangered mammals, such as Asian elephants, tigers, leopards, gaur, banteng, Asiatic black bears, sun bears, douc langurs, and gibbons reside there (Baird 2009a). The PA is also internationally and regionally significant because of its transboundary links to other PAs in Laos and Vietnam (BPAMP 2003; Baird 2009a). Approximately half of Virachey National Park's 507 kilometer border constitutes parts of Cambodia's national borders with Laos and Vietnam (Baird 2009a). Koy (1999) reported that there were 11,799 people in forty-one villages and nine communes situated adjacent to or inside the park in the late 1990s, with the majority of these people identifying as ethnic Brao-Umba, Brao-Kavet, and Lao.

Over the last few years, Virachey National Park has been threatened by expansive mineral exploration concessions issued to

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<sup>8</sup> Apart from the national protected area system under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment, a separate national protected area system has more recently been established by the Forestry Administration, under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery (MAFF).

foreign companies (Global Witness 2009) and, more recently, by a large commercial rubber plantation concession within the park boundaries given to a Vietnamese company. The latter agreement is linked to building a road from the southern edge of the park and the northeastern corner of the PA, which is presently inaccessible by road within Cambodia – it is situated along the borders between both Vietnam to the east and Laos to the north.<sup>9</sup>

### THE HALING-HALANG SACRED MOUNTAINS

The Brao-Kavet people consider the Haling-Halang Mountains to be amongst their most sacred places. Located along the Cambodia-Laos border, and reaching more than 1,000 meters ASL, the mountains are presently situated in a remote, unpopulated (by humans) part of Virachey National Park, near an area previously hosting a large number of Brao-Kavet settlements, all of which were resettled along the Sesan and Sekong rivers in Veun Say District, Ratanakiri Province and Siem Pang District, Stung Treng Province since the 1960s (Baird 2008c, Ironside and Baird 2003). The Brao-Kavet have a long history of crossing the international border between Laos and Cambodia to escape from state power during periods when conditions appeared more favorable on the other side (Baird 2008c, 2010b).<sup>10</sup>

According to the Brao-Kavet, the Haling-Halang Mountains are subject to a number of behavior requirements and specific taboos linked to powerful malevolent spirits (generically in Brao, *arak*) in the mountains (Brao, *jundoo*) that are said to require those who walk up the mountain to speak only Brao-Kavet. Lao, French, and Khmer languages are said to anger the spirits, potentially leading to serious misfortune, illness, and even death. Furthermore, those ascending the mountains are required to smoke leaf-rolled tobacco in cigarettes

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<sup>9</sup> Anonymous personal communication, Ministry of Environment official, 31 May 2011.

<sup>10</sup> In some cases, the situation resembled the type of escaping behavior that Scott (2009) discusses, although I contend elsewhere that highlanders have had a much more varied and complex relationship with lowlanders than Scott would have us believe (Baird 2013b).



or pipes rather than commercially-made cigarettes. All visitors should wear 'traditional clothes', preferably loincloths. Loud, uncontrolled, argumentative speech is believed to disturb the spirits and is thus potentially dangerous to people who walk there.

The Brao-Kavet believe that spirits do not allow most trees and vegetation to be cut, and NTFPs cannot be harvested there. No hunting or fishing of any kind is permitted. Only one form of small mountain bamboo can be cut. This bamboo is highly suitable for sucking fermented rice beer from large clay jars and is found mainly on these mountains. It can be cut only after rituals are conducted to appease the spirits, which includes burning incense, lighting small candles, offering tobacco, and articulating particular performative chants.<sup>11</sup> Once completed, the Brao-Kavet believe they are permitted to carefully harvest a small number of the bamboo stems for personal use, which is not enough to deplete the bamboo or cause significant environmental impacts. The end result is that these vast mountains (the exact area is unclear due to their remoteness) are virtually fully protected from human-induced impacts, at least from the hands of the Brao-Kavet. Such practice has been referred to as 'territorial sealing' by Huber (2004), who writes that similar practices have been recorded in various parts of the world, including among Tibetan societies and Polynesian populations of the South Pacific. In the South Pacific, he pointed out that such practices are "related to prestige and power of local leaders and also to belief in supernatural or magical powers" (Huber 2004:127). This point is apt for the Brao-Kavet and the Haling-Halang Mountains. Moreover, Huber (2004) emphasizes that practices of taking control of particular territories by sealing them have religious and political dimensions, which applies to the Brao-Kavet as well.

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<sup>11</sup> These rituals can be conducted by anyone, young or old, male or female. The Brao are highly egalitarian.

UNTANGLING THE PERFORMATIVE NATURE OF BRAO-KAVET TABOOS  
ASSOCIATED WITH THE HALING-HALANG MOUNTAINS

Butler's seminal writings of the 1990s present a useful framework for assessing Brao-Kavet behavior associated with the Haling-Halang Mountains. Butler is best known for her attention to the performative aspects of practices, including speech.<sup>12</sup> Butler (1993) broke new ground, by arguing that the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality are culturally constructed through repeating particular stylized acts. Arguing that these acts are "bodily" and capable of establishing particular ontological "core" gender characteristics, Butler considers gender, along with sex and sexuality, to be performative, even if such performances are frequently non-voluntary. Drawing on Foucault's ideas about "regulative discourses", "frameworks of intelligibility", and "disciplinary regimes" (1975), Butler shows how sex acts, along with performances that construct gender and sexuality, produce and reproduce certain behaviors specifically linked to the particular discourses, or narratives, that produce them.

Butler (1997) expanded on the above work by questioning the efficacy of censorship on the grounds that hate speech is context dependent. Developing the idea of "performative utterances", she notes that the ability of words to "do things" makes hateful speech possible while also being dependent on specific embodied contexts of understandings. Essentially, she argues that a word's illocutionary force varies significantly depending on the particular context in which it is uttered, thus implying that it is impossible to adequately define the performative meanings of uttered words, such as those linked to hatred. Such words must be considered with regard to their performative function, or social context. Butler believes that because the context of language-use is crucial, it is impossible to assess the meanings of words without carefully considering their use in particular circumstances. Similarly, Bauman (1986) has argued that the context of performances is crucial, and that each performance is

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<sup>12</sup> Bauman and Briggs (1990) review some of the important literature on performativity that predates Butler's work.

thus unique.

I will show how Butler's work provides a useful starting point for considering how and why the Brao-Kavet have engaged in their own particular forms of performances in relation to taboos associated with the Haling-Halang Mountains, and how these performances have emerged within the particular social and political contexts in which the Brao-Kavet have become embedded. We may consider the taboos and utterances associated with the Haling-Halang Mountains to represent particular performances, in Butler's sense. They can help us to understand why these particular types of performances have emerged; and who the Brao-Kavet perform for.

The particular ritualistic performances associated with the Brao-Kavet and the Haling-Halang Mountains are linked to changes that occurred among the Brao-Kavet in the last century. While it is difficult to precisely date – locals claim to have no memory of their origin – I contend that they developed relatively recently for several reasons. First, certain taboos associated with the Haling-Halang Mountains are clearly linked to modernity. For example, people who ascend the mountains should not smoke commercial cigarettes, which were unknown among the Brao-Kavet until a few decades ago. Similarly, the requirement that those who enter the particular space linked to the mountains wear loincloths contrasts clothing from the past with garments perceived to represent modernity. Such modern clothing includes mass-produced short and long pants that have largely displaced loincloths among the Brao-Kavet over the last few decades. Even the requirement that Brao-Kavet language be used on the mountains can be interpreted as representing the struggle between their traditional language, Brao-Kavet, and languages linked to modernity: Lao, Khmer, and French. Arguing in this forest is also taboo out of concern that the spirits would be upset. There are also important proscriptions against hunting in these spaces, and only one special type of bamboo can be harvested there, and then only when appropriate rituals are conducted. Thus, one can consider the traditions associated with the Haling-Halang Mountains to be

invented.<sup>13</sup>

Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) argue that many traditions people claim as old were actually initiated recently. This concept has been widely applied for the cultural phenomena that I describe here. Crucially, the sharp distinction frequently made between "tradition" and "modernity" is actually often invented. However, my assessment differs from Hobsbawm and Ranger, who distinguish between "invented" and "authentic" traditions. I avoid this binary by considering all traditions to be fluid and invented, changing over time, but often with some link to the past. These shifts are associated with particular time and place-specific positionings, and are often articulated or demonstrated through various performances particular to the circumstances.

The Brao-Kavet performances linked with the Haling-Halang Mountains were not initially designed for non-Brao-Kavet people, but rather for the Brao-Kavet themselves, and particularly Brao-Kavet youth. The Haling-Halang 'traditions' already outlined emerged prior to the Khmer Rouge consolidation of control over northeastern Cambodia in 1970 (Baird 2008c), during the Sihanouk period of the 1950s and 1960s or, possibly, even earlier during the French colonial period. It is unlikely that these so-called 'traditional beliefs' existed prior to the French arrival. This is because until the beginning of the 1960s, commercial cigarettes were unknown in this area, and it was not until then that most Brao-Kavet were forcibly relocated from the high, remote mountains north of the Sesan River to consolidated villages in the lowlands along the banks of the Sesan River (Baird 2008c). Most Brao-Kavet at that time only spoke Brao-Kavet. However, beginning in the French colonial period, and continuing following Cambodia's independence from France in 1953-1954, many Brao-Kavet began increasingly interacting with speakers of other languages. Initially these speakers were the ethnic Lao who dominated the lowlands of Brao-Kavet areas in Cambodia during the French colonial period (Baird 2009b; 2010a) and, later, with the

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<sup>13</sup> Coggins (2003) describes similar sets of ecological practices in the protection of forests in China.

Khmer beginning in the 1950s and 1960s (Baird 2008c). It was during these periods that large numbers of Brao-Kavet youth began learning Lao and Khmer, allowing them to communicate with other peoples and seem more modern than those who could not speak other languages. The social and cultural implications of being multilingual are clearly important, because they gave these young Brao-Kavet opportunities to access the power of the lowlands and the state. The French appointed Lao speakers to most senior village administrative positions where the ability to communicate with the French and their largely ethnic Lao government agents was seen as crucial (Baird 2008c). Consequently, knowing Lao bestowed increased status among the Brao-Kavet themselves by providing the wherewithal to represent communities to outsiders. Similarly, after the 1960s, the Khmer, through state and state-sanctioned mechanisms, promoted the Khmer language, providing those who learned Khmer access to the Cambodian state, leading to an enhanced social status.

It seems likely that Brao-Kavet elders who mediated the Brao-Kavet spiritual world, invented the 'traditions' associated with the Haling-Halang Mountains to assert their own power and effectively resist the increased influences of Lao and Khmer cultures within their communities, and particularly among the youth. Many elders did not speak Lao or Khmer, and may have been frustrated with their own faltering power in the face of advancing outside influences. Thus, establishing taboos that promoted the use of Brao-Kavet language and other practices associated with an older way of life connected to their own power, must have been designed by the elders to link with the appeasement of powerful spirits, of which the mountain spirits are believed to be the most powerful, and particularly to discourage youth from becoming overly influenced by life in the lowlands. Appeasement of spirits is critical in daily Brao-Kavet life. Even now, not appeasing spirits means that misfortune will follow in the form of bad luck, serious illness, and death.

Creation of taboos associated with the Brao-Kavet's most powerful spirits should not be viewed romantically. Such taboos are not linked solely to spiritual beliefs associated with mountains, but as

reaction to outsiders' growing influence – a conflict between generations. They also are an attempt by elders to convince Brao-Kavet youth of the necessity, at least in an important space, of using their own language, wearing loincloths, and smoking tobacco in more traditional ways. These acts symbolize the struggle between the past and the outside modern world.

This was not the first time for the Brao to invent traditions in the face of changes of which they disapproved. Similarly, the Brao-Kreung in Kroala Village, O Chum District, Ratanakiri Province, presently claim that it is taboo to photograph their ritual posts that are associated with water buffalo sacrifices. Although they claim that this taboo has been in place since time immemorial, the taboo must have been created in recent years, as there were no cameras or people taking photos of their ritual posts until a few years ago. This taboo is likely linked to the uncontrolled nature of tourism in their village, e.g., in recent years large numbers of Western tourists have visited the village on a daily basis, usually with ethnic Khmer guides. These guides commonly fail to make any contact with the Brao-Kreung and do not demonstrate respect for locals' privacy and local control over the community. The response has been to invent the taboo – an attempt to reassert local control over spiritual space.

#### MOBILIZING BRAO-KAVET PERFORMANCES FOR A NEW AGENDA: SHIFTING CONTEXTS AND PERFORMANCES

The spiritually sanctioned taboos associated with the Haling-Halang Mountains are performative in that they were designed by elders to influence Brao-Kavet youth, who were becoming increasingly influenced by life in the lowlands. This is something that must have been seen as a threat. Time has passed since the taboos linked with the Haling-Halang Mountains were formulated, and those who created them have probably largely passed away, or are now very old. The original meanings of these traditions, and the struggles that they were a part of, appear to have largely been forgotten by present-day Brao-Kavet elders – or at least they are not prominent in today's

dominant narratives – but the Brao-Kavet still consider the Haling-Halang Mountains to be sacred. The meanings of these beliefs are, however, being produced and reproduced dramatically due to new contexts, resulting in the constitution of new political symbolism.

First, as explained in detail by Baird (2009a), the Brao-Kavet in Kok Lak Commune have long been dissatisfied with the way the Virachey National Park was planned and created without consultation, and without asking their permission to take control of the lands where the Brao-Kavet historically resided.<sup>14</sup> This has caused the Brao-Kavet to adjust their performances associated with the Haling-Halang Mountains. While taboos, chants, and particular forms of utterances associated with the required rituals may not have changed a great deal, the audience members are increasingly linked to new Brao-Kavet relations with outsiders, especially Western and Khmer NGO workers and researchers associated with Virachey National Park. Evoking ideas about the Brao-Kavet having particular taboos associated with the Haling-Halang Mountains, even if the actual chants or rituals are not heard or seen by outsiders, may potentially help establish Brao-Kavet access rights within the park. Their beliefs demonstrate their historical spiritual connection with the core area of the protected area and also help more firmly establish themselves as 'indigenous peoples' (first peoples). These practices demonstrate that the Brao-Kavet historically protected expansive areas of forests and the wildlife found there, and thus serve as a discursive tool, a particular narrative, for establishing a form of tenure deep within Virachey National Park. They also demonstrate to the state and others their ability to protect forests and wildlife in ways

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<sup>14</sup> Most protected area managers and rangers accept that the MoE have the right to manage areas inside Virachey National Park, and not the Brao-Kavet or other groups of people who historically used the area. This environmental narrative is, however, disputed by the Brao-Kavet, who contend that they were not consulted about their land being confiscated. This lack of consultation associated with creating the NPAS, including Virachey National Park, is not something remembered by most who are involved with protected area management. It is not unusual for Brao and, presumably, other indigenous groups, to remember important historical events of the past in both living memory and beyond, as Baird's (2007) example illustrates.

that may not mirror the protection frameworks mandated through the National Protected Area System under the MoE. Furthermore, they manage to potentially result in protection similar to what the NPAS aims to achieve.

To date, this discursive strategy has been largely unsuccessful with the protected area management and their foreign donors, including the Wildlife Fund for Nature (now WWF) in the late 1990s, and the World Bank BPAMP project of the early 2000s (Baird 2009a, BPAMP 2003). Instead, BPAMP established CPAs for the Brao-Kavet villages in Kok Lak Commune as part of Virachey National Park's management plan. However, PA managers did not seriously consider the Brao's management of the sacred mountains, including the Haling-Halang Mountains in the far north of the core area of the national park (Baird 2009a). Instead, they arbitrarily decided that CPAs must be situated within a four-hour walk from settlements. Consequently, the Haling-Halang Mountains are now officially inaccessible to the Brao-Kavet.

This situation is a lost opportunity for Virachey National Park managers, especially now that BPAMP has ended, and the number and salaries of park 'rangers' have been reduced. With a protected area as large as Virachey, it is unrealistic to expect rangers to protect the entire park without support from the many communities living in close proximity to Virachey's south and west boundaries. Furthermore, I have heard Brao elders on various occasions over the last decade voice concerns about Vietnamese poachers entering Cambodia and Virachey from the east border and unsustainably hunting and harvesting NTFPs in Brao territories, including on their sacred mountains. These elders would welcome a role in protecting nature from poachers deep inside the protected area, especially if they were given at least partial rights to use resources within the park in what they believe to be a sustainable manner. This would include the Brao-Kavet agreeing to not hunt threatened or endangered wildlife species. They have also expressed, at various times, dissatisfaction with illegal logging operations within and near Virachey National Park organized by ethnic Lao and Khmer loggers living near Sesan River in Veun Say District. As one Brao-Kavet elder



told me in relation to Vietnamese poachers a few years ago:

The park rangers just stay on the main paths. They cannot stop the Vietnamese poachers. Only we Kavet know how to stop the Vietnamese but nobody has asked us to help.

Brao-Kavet elders have expressed concerns about foreign mineral exploration with the park, and rubber plantations that have been granted through economic land concessions allocated by the central Cambodian government. With regard to mining, a Brao-Kavet elder once brought a sample of a rock embedded with the mineral that the companies were searching for. He was keenly interested in knowing what the mineral was, what it could be used for, and its value. He was concerned that the mineral would be over-exploited and depleted by outsiders. For him, the mineral was an important part of his homeland, and his identity, even if he did not use it himself.

Despite the potential for win-win scenarios involving Brao-Kavet communities and PA managers, there have been only half-hearted, irregular, and unsustainable efforts to cooperate with communities in protecting and sustainably managing resources within Virachey National Park.<sup>15</sup> This neglect has frustrated many Brao-Kavet and has expressed itself in critical, but frequently private admonishment of those responsible for managing Virachey National Park. These represent particular types of in-community performances, or performances for sympathetic outsiders, and may be considered performative utterances as discussed by Butler (1997).

Furthermore, park rangers have unfairly confiscated bamboo-handled forest knives that the Brao-Kavet routinely take to the forest; and provisions such as rice, have also been seized. A Brao-Kavet dog was killed by park rangers in one case, which enraged many Brao-Kavet. In another case, when the CPA boundaries were demarcated by protected area personnel in the early 2000s, PA staff did not accompany Brao-Kavet community representatives to confirm the appropriateness of the boundary demarcation process, resulting in a great deal of confusion. Initially the Brao-Kavet thought the

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<sup>15</sup> See Borrini-Feyerabend and Ironside (2010) for a similar perspective.

boundaries were designed to prevent them from entering their CPA, rather than simply indicating the boundaries for community use. This illustrates the mistrust that has accumulated and led to bad feelings. In this case, in a form of resistance in line with what Scott (1985) wrote about in his now classic *Weapons of the Weak*, the Brao-Kavet knocked down a boundary sign put up by PA staff, although the park officials were not in the area at the time.<sup>16</sup> For the Brao-Kavet, this action symbolized their resistance to PA enclosure, a practice that is presently frequently referred to as 'green grabbing'.

## CONCLUSIONS

I have addressed the performative nature of the production and reproduction of ideas about sacred mountains and associated taboos among the Brao-Kavet of Kok Lak Commune, Ratanakiri Province, northeast Cambodia. There has been an important shift in the representation of Brao-Kavet performances associated with the Haling-Halang Mountains and other, smaller, sacred mountains due to changing circumstances and contexts of their relations with outsiders and within their own communities. This is in line with Tannenbaum's (2000) observation of the changing roles of rituals in relation to local protests linked to tree ordinations in northern Thailand. I hypothesize that construction of the Haling-Halang sacred mountains was initially linked to efforts by Brao-Kavet elders to resist outside influences threatening their power within the context of increasing cultural and linguistic hegemony coming from the seemingly 'modern' lowlands. Later, however, within the context of the establishment of Virachey National Park, as well as the arrival of NGOs, especially the NTFP Project, and foreigners working with them on natural management issues (including me), the symbolic relevance of their sacred mountains changed.

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<sup>16</sup> Also see Baird (2009a) and Ironside and Baird (2003) for more examples of tense moments between PA managers and rangers, and indigenous peoples living near the park.

A new discursive political element was introduced, involving the maneuvering of positioning in order to use 'traditional beliefs' associated with sacred mountains to claim their rights to increased involvement in the use, management, and protection of the park. Their efforts, however, have been more enthusiastically received by some NGOs and especially their Western consultants, who have tended to see these sacred beliefs as a potentially important foundation for future win-win collaborations designed to benefit the livelihoods of indigenous peoples, and biodiversity conservation, than by the protected area managers (Ironside and Baird 2003). Unfortunately, this is not the only example of protected area managers failing to take advantage of possible alliances with indigenous peoples with an interest in protecting sacred sites. Shen et al. (2012) have, for example, recently reported similar lost opportunities in relation to Tibetan sacred mountains in western China.

The reality remains that the Brao-Kavet are largely willing to engage in a particular performative positioning that could be advantageous to protected area managers and their foreign donors. Hopefully, more people will realize this potential and take concrete steps to appeal to the legitimate concerns of the Brao-Kavet, while simultaneously reinforcing Brao-Kavet beliefs regarding the need to protect sacred mountains. This would benefit the Brao-Kavet culturally and socially, improve their livelihoods, and lead to a more sustainable future for Virachey National Park. Helping produce new environmental performative narratives, as socially constructed as they may be, is an important opportunity for both communities and the park. Such opportunity should not be ignored by those interested in protecting biodiversity within Virachey National Park, or those focused on the rights of indigenous populations.

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# THE 'DESCENT OF BLESSINGS': ECSTASY AND REVIVAL AMONG THE TIBETAN BON COMMUNITIES OF REB GONG

Dpal mo skyid (Independent Scholar)

## ABSTRACT

*Byin 'bebs* 'the descent of blessings' is an ecstatic state and expression of faith among the Bon community in Reb gong County, Rma lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, China, associated with the biannual Chos thog chen mo ritual. After 1958, the descent of blessings was not seen again until 1999. Bon adherents believe that blessings will descend if they are in the presence of a sufficiently powerful deity or *bla ma* and if their faith is strong enough. The ecstatic state is evident in dramatic changes in facial expressions, crying, laughing, dancing, jumping, the making of ritual gestures, and spontaneous uttering of prayers. This article introduces the Bon community of Reb gong, examines the descent of blessings in its ritual context, presents the phenomenon's recent history, and provides first-person accounts from those who have experienced the descent of blessings.

## KEYWORDS

Bon, 'descent of blessings', Reb gong, religious ecstasy, religious revival, ritual dance

INTRODUCTION

The Reb gong region, an agricultural valley system on the northeast Tibetan Plateau, is home to several communities of people who profess adherence to the Bon religion.<sup>1</sup> Since the early twenty-first century, these communities have experienced the dramatic revival of a traditional expression of faith, a form of religious ecstasy known as *byin 'bebs* 'the descent of blessings', associated with the biannual Chos thog chen mo ritual. Local Bon devotees state that if someone has strong faith, and if they are in the presence of a sufficiently powerful deity or *bla ma*, *byin* 'blessings' will descend, causing them to experience an ecstatic state. Their face then contorts. They may cry, laugh, dance, jump, and make tantric ritual gestures with their hands. They may also speak uncontrollably in an unusual tone.

From 1958 to 1999, this phenomenon disappeared from the Bon communities of Reb gong. Its revival in the context of the Chos thog chen mo ritual held in the Bon communities of Reb gong is presented in this article, based on multi-sited fieldwork in Reb gong carried out between 2008 and 2012. In addition, I have had personal experience as a spectator at this ritual since I was a child – my village, Khyung po,<sup>2</sup> hosts the ritual every other year. During the stated fieldwork period I attended the ritual seven times through visits to four villages: Khyung po (three times), Gling rgya bon tshang ma<sup>3</sup> (twice), Hor snyan Ri gong ma<sup>4</sup> (once), and Spyi tshang A rgya sting<sup>5</sup> (once). I observed, filmed, took photos of, and made notes about the ritual; collected relevant oral traditions; and conducted semi-structured interviews to complement my observational data.

My first key informant was A lags Nam mkha' bstan 'dzin, the second most important Bon *bla ma* in Reb gong's Bon brgya

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<sup>1</sup> For further background on the Bon religion see Samten Karmay (2009), Kværne (1996 and 1985), <http://www.himalayabon.com>, and <http://theyungdrungbon.com/>.

<sup>2</sup> In Tho rgya Township, seventeen kilometers north of Reb gong County.

<sup>3</sup> In Tho rgya Township.

<sup>4</sup> In Hor nag Township, twelve kilometers northwest of Reb gong Town.

<sup>5</sup> In Rgyal bo Township, five kilometers east of Reb gong Town.

Monastery – the most important Bon monastery in the area.<sup>6</sup> I met A lags Nam mkha' bstan 'dzin in Beijing when I was travelling to Reb gong from Oslo for my second period of fieldwork in October 2011. He and my second key informant, Bstan pa dar rgyas, a monk from Bon brgya Monastery, provided much useful information about the ritual process. My other informants are a monk from Bon brgya Monastery and six *bon gshen* 'Bon ritual specialists' (see below), who first participated in the Chos thog chen mo ritual when they were young.<sup>7</sup> I also interviewed laypeople who had experienced the descent of blessings, as well as those who had seen it but never experienced it personally. For these consultants, I provide only their sex and age, as well as interview dates, to better ensure their anonymity.

Tibetan terms are given in Wylie. For titles, personal names, and geographical names, I have capitalized the first letter of the first syllable. For text titles, I have given the complete title in italics. I have capitalized the first letter of the first syllable in the case where a Tibetan word begins a paragraph.<sup>8</sup> Chinese terms are given in Hanyu Pinyin.

My study site, Reb gong,<sup>9</sup> is located in eastern Qinghai Province, 188 kilometers southeast of Xining City, the provincial capital. Reb gong was declared a county in 1929 by the government of the Republic of China (1912-1949), at which time approximately ninety percent of the population was Tibetan, and the rest Han, Muslim, and Monguor (Tu).<sup>10</sup> As time passed, immigration created a

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<sup>6</sup> Bon brgya Monastery, located in Dmag sar Village, Chu khog Township, was founded in 1981 by Bon brgya dge legs lhun grub rgya mthso. Bon brgya had eighty monks in 2013.

<sup>7</sup> The first four *bon gshen* were Nyi ma (b. 1943), Bkra shis (b. 1950), Bstan 'dzin (b. 1952), and Zla ba (b. 1965). For the other two I provide only their sex, age, and interview dates, as they requested, in order to better ensure their anonymity.

<sup>8</sup> Tibetan terms in the plural have not been written with –s to avoid confusion with the Tibetan spelling.

<sup>9</sup> Reb gong (Tongren) County, Rma lho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sgnon (Qinghai) Province, China.

<sup>10</sup> Tongren xianzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui (1990:26). The description of Reb gong provided here focuses on the contemporary administrative unit. For more on the pre-1912 extent of Reb gong as a cultural area, see Thurston (2012) and Yangdon Dhondup (2011).

demographic shift. In 1990, the county's population of 68,349 was approximately sixty-nine percent Tibetan, thirteen percent Han, eleven percent Monguor, and six percent Muslim,<sup>11</sup> with the remainder consisting of Mongol and Manchu residents.<sup>12</sup> In 2013, Reb gong County consisted of twelve townships and one town, Rong bo (Tongren), which is the political, economic, and cultural center of the county.

#### AN INDIGENOUS HISTORY OF BON IN REB GONG

According to Bon brgya dge legs lhun grub rgya mtsho (2011), about 10,000 years ago, Gser thog lce 'byams, a Bon po scholar who is counted among the 'Dzam gling mkhas pa rgyan drug 'six great scholars of the human world', is believed to have spread the Bon religion in the area of contemporary Qinghai. During King Khri srong sde btsan's (ca. 742-797) reign, the Bon scholar Dran pa nam mkha'<sup>13</sup> came to Reb gong and founded A ba ngos bzang Monastery.<sup>14</sup> No physical traces of the monastery have been discovered.

During the reign of Glang dar ma,<sup>15</sup> three brothers who were *grub thob pa* 'siddhas' – Spyi rting 'khor lo, Ngo mo ye shes mtsho rgyal, and Khyung dkar tshangs pa – fled religious persecution in Central Tibet and came to Reb gong. They first reached Chad lung thang where, local accounts say, a poisonous tree grew.<sup>16</sup> People and

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<sup>11</sup> Including members of the officially recognized Hui, Salar, and Bao'an nationalities.

<sup>12</sup> Tongren xianzhi bianzuan weiyuanhui (1990:206).

<sup>13</sup> This important figure in the Bon tradition is said to have been obliged to adopt Buddhism in order to save the Bon teaching from total eradication (Samten Karmay 2007:75-76; Kværne 1996:119, 128-129).

<sup>14</sup> It is believed that the monastery was located about twenty-five kilometers north of the present Reb gong County seat, near a cave where Dran pa nam mkha' is said to have meditated (Bon brgya dge legs lhun grub rgya mtsho 2011:278).

<sup>15</sup> The name translates as 'Darma Ox'. Traditional accounts attribute the collapse of the Tibetan Empire to the apostasy of this king, who purportedly eliminated his brother, the monarch Khri ral pa can, in 838 (Kapstein 2006:79-80). Dates of the king's birth and death are unknown.

<sup>16</sup> This oral account is widely known among *bon gshen* in Reb gong (see also Bon brgya dge legs lhun grub rgya mtsho 2011:278).

animals that looked at the tree became blind, and those who stood underneath it died immediately. The three siddhas made *gtor ma*<sup>17</sup> to destroy the tree and then, from its wood, they made 1,900 *phur bu* 'magic daggers' and many *sgrub rnga* 'ritual drums'. They then expressed the wish that there would be many Bon practitioners in Reb gong in the future. The Bon po in Reb gong are, therefore, now called the Reb gong bon mang phur thog stong dang dgu rgya 'The Bon Tantrist Collective of Reb gong, the 1,900 Ritual Dagger Holders'.<sup>18</sup> After the destruction of the poisonous tree, the three brothers' fame spread throughout Reb gong.

Spyi rting 'khor lo resided in Spyi tshang Village,<sup>19</sup> Ngo mo ye shes mtsho rgyal resided in Ngo mo Village,<sup>20</sup> and Khyung dkar tshangs ba resided in Khyung po Village. Their spiritual tradition and disciples spread throughout Reb gong.

During the eighteenth century, the fifth Panchen Bla ma (1663-1737)<sup>21</sup> ordered the great Bon scholar, Shes rab rnam rgyal,<sup>22</sup> to go to the area of contemporary Qinghai and strengthen the Bon religion there. As ordered, he went to Reb gong and sustained Bon brgya Monastery, G.yung drung kun khyab gling Monastery in the east, Gnam tseng zhwa dkar gling Monastery<sup>23</sup> in the north, and over twenty Bon villages.<sup>24</sup>

During the time of Ma Bufang,<sup>25</sup> all the Bon monasteries,

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<sup>17</sup> Dough figures made mostly of *rtsam pa* 'barley flour' and butter, with forms that vary according to their purpose.

<sup>18</sup> See [www.rgdm123.com](http://www.rgdm123.com).

<sup>19</sup> In Rgyal bo Township.

<sup>20</sup> In Rgyal bo Township.

<sup>21</sup> The fifth Panchen Bla ma Blo bzang ye shes (1663-1737), was born in the Bru Family, an important Bon lineage family (Samten Karmay 2007:69-70).

<sup>22</sup> Birth and death dates are unknown.

<sup>23</sup> These were all Bon monasteries in the contemporary Reb gong County, but no longer exist.

<sup>24</sup> Bon brgya dge legs lhun grub rgya mtsho (2011:279).

<sup>25</sup> Ma Bufang (1903-1975) was born in Linxia, Gansu Province. From the age of nine, he was trained to be a military officer. He was a general when Qinghai Province was designated as a province in 1929. From 1939 to August of 1949, he was chairman of the Qinghai Provincial Government. There was much bloody conflict with Tibetans in Qinghai during his rule. The Communist Army arrived and defeated Ma Bufang's forces in August of 1949 in Lanzhou. Ma then escaped to Taiwan and later moved to Cairo. From 1957-1961, he was the ambassador to Saudi Arabia for Taiwan's Nationalist

except Bon brgya, were burned. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), Bon brgya Monastery was completely destroyed.<sup>26</sup> Fortunately, some *bon gshen* practiced their religion in secret and were able to contribute to the revival of Bon in not only Reb gong, but other Tibetan areas as well, when religious freedoms were reinstated beginning in 1981.<sup>27</sup>

The Bon villages in Reb gong fall into four main groups: Smad phyogs bon mang 'The Lower Bon Community', Stod phyogs bon mang 'The Upper Bon Community', Hor snyan bzang bon mang 'The Well-Respected Bon Community', and Yar nang bon mang 'The Higher Bon Community'.<sup>28</sup> The last group does not participate in the Chos thog chen mo ritual. The other three groups are further divided into five communities (*chos rtsa*) that host Chos thog chen mo.<sup>29</sup> These five communities consist of twenty-three villages that collectively have fifteen village temples, spread over Smad pa, Hor nag, Rgyal bo, and Chu khog townships.

#### THE CHOS THOG CHEN MO RITUAL

Chos thog chen mo is the colloquial term for this ritual, which is held in spring and autumn. The spring ritual may be referred to as *dpyid*

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Party government. He died in 1975 in Saudi Arabia (*Qinghai Baike quanshu bianzuan weiyuanhui* 1998:430-431).

<sup>26</sup> Bon brgya dge legs lhun grub rgya mtsho (2011:281).

<sup>27</sup> Bon brgya dge legs lhun grub rgya mtsho (2011:282).

<sup>28</sup> Smad phyogs bon mang consists of five villages: Khyung po, Sdong skam, Gling rgya sa so ma, Zho 'ong nyin tha, and Dar grong. There are approximately 300 *bon gshen* in this group. The second group, Stod phyogs bon mang, consists of seven villages: Spyi tshang, A rgya sting, Gad pa skya bo, Spyi mkhar Gong ma, and Zhol ma, Rgyal bo ngo mo, and 'Gying ri. In total, there are about 300 *bon gshen* in this group. Snyan bzang bon mang consists of seven villages: Hor nag, Khyung po la kha, Stong chen, Ri gong ma, Zhol ma, No'u rong, and Rgyal ri. In total, there are about 200 *bon gshen* in this group. The final group, Yar nang bon mang, consists of Bon brgya, Mdo ba, and Dmag sar villages with a total of about 200 *bon gshen*.  
<sup>29</sup> *Chos rtsa* literally means the root of *chos* 'religion' and refers to the five most important groups in the Bon community in Reb gong. Smad phyogs bon mang has two groups: Khyung bo thang and Gling rgya; Stod phyogs bon mang also has two groups: Rgyal bo and Spyi tshang; and Hor snyan bzang is one group. Each group consists of several villages.

*chos* 'the spring ritual', *rgya lo'i*<sup>30</sup> *sgrub chen* 'the great New Year ceremony', *smon lam sgrub chen* 'the great prayer ceremony', and *rgya lo'i chos thog* 'the ritual of New Year'. Two other names are given to the autumn Chos thog chen mo ritual: *bcu pa'i sgrub chen* 'the great ceremony of the tenth month', and *ston chos* 'the autumn ritual'. I have chosen to use the term Chos thog chen mo because it is the name most commonly used in everyday speech by local Bon adherents and because it applies to both the spring and autumn rituals.

Local oral tradition asserts that the Chos thog chen mo ritual was established by Spyi rting 'khor lo, Ngo mo ye shes mtsho rgyal, and Khyung dkar tshangs pa, the three siddhas discussed above.<sup>31</sup> However, it only flourished several centuries later, during the lifetimes of Rtse zhig stong nyid bya 'phur,<sup>32</sup> A lags Shes rab,<sup>33</sup> Drungts rims pa Shes rab rnam rgyal,<sup>34</sup> and Mkhar nag sku phreng.<sup>35</sup>

The annual date of Chos thog chen mo was fixed as the fifth day of the first month of the Chinese lunisolar calendar, in order to commemorate the powerful *bon gshen* Rje mnyam med Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1356-1415),<sup>36</sup> who is said<sup>37</sup> to have become a vulture on that date, in order to see his successor Rin chen rgyal mtshan (b. 1360).<sup>38</sup> As a result, this date is considered the best time to invoke *yi*

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<sup>30</sup> Lo sar 'New Year' is colloquially known to Reb gong locals as Rgya lo 'Chinese calendar'. This may be because it is celebrated by the inhabitants of A mdo according to the Chinese lunisolar calendar, not the Tibetan calendar.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Bkra shis and Nyi ma, October 2011.

<sup>32</sup> The founder of Rtse zhig Monastery in Bsang chu (Xiahe) County in Gansu Province, three kilometers north of Bsang chu County Town. Bya phur is a well known Bon family lineage in Rnga ba, consequently, he might belong to that lineage.

<sup>33</sup> Oral tradition in Reb gong claims that he was master of many temples and monasteries in A mdo during the eleventh century.

<sup>34</sup> He was the nephew of A lags Shes rab, and traveled to Central Tibet and studied in Sman ri Monastery for many years. He also had close ties with the fifth Panchen Bla ma Blo bzang ye shes (1663-1737) (see note 21), who gave him a title and seal investing him with authority over the Bon po monasteries throughout A mdo. He became known as Rtse zhig Drungts rims pa.

<sup>35</sup> He is renowned in Reb gong as a famous *bon gshen*. I was unable to verify his birth and death dates.

<sup>36</sup> Samten Karmay (2007:66); Kværne (1991:373-437).

<sup>37</sup> According to Bstan pa dar rgyas.

<sup>38</sup> Bstan pa dar rgyas was unable to explain how becoming a vulture helped

*dam* 'tutelary deities'.<sup>39</sup> It is believed that prayers made on this day are easily answered. There is no particular religious reason to hold the autumn ritual on the eighth day of the tenth lunar month, however, according to my consultant Bkra shis, it is a good time to hold the ritual because there is no farmwork to do, and the weather is neither hot nor cold.

Bon villagers of Reb gong consider themselves the main recipients of merit from Chos thog chen mo. According to the Bon tradition, after Chos thog chen mo, the villagers' *'byung bzhi* 'four elements'<sup>40</sup> are balanced and under the protection of *yul lha gzhi bdag* 'local deities', *lha srin sde brgyad* 'the eight classes of gods and spirits', and *dgra lha* 'warrior spirits'. Furthermore, it is believed that the ritual brings timely rain.

Chos thog chen mo participants play various roles that Table 1, below, describes according to their descending order of importance in the ritual.

Table 1. Chos thog chen mo participants and their roles.

Title	Role
<i>bla ma</i>	Bon brgya dge legs lhun 'grub rgya mtsho is the most important Bon <i>bla ma</i> and Bon religious master in Reb gong. He attends on the first or second day of Chos thog chen mo to lead the <i>bon gshen</i> in the invocation of the deities, as well as to give the <i>dbang</i> 'empowerment' and <i>lung</i> 'reading transmission' of the sacred texts. <sup>41</sup>

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him see his successor.

<sup>39</sup> A tutelary deity is a guardian or protector of a particular person, lineage, place, nation, or culture.

<sup>40</sup> *Me* 'fire', *chu* 'water', *rlung* 'wind', and *sa* 'earth'. Sometimes there are four and sometimes there are five (the fifth being metal/ iron *lcags*). The Tibetan cosmological worldview holds that the world came into existence based on these four or five elements.

<sup>41</sup> Bon brgya dge legs lhun 'grub rgya mtsho was born in 1935 in Dmag sar Village in the Yar nang bon mang group of Bon villages. He was recognized as the reincarnation of the G.yung drung phun tshog 'Jigs med dpal bzang po at the age of five. Skyang sprul Lung rtogs rgya mtsho and Bon rgya Sku skyes nam mkha' rgya mtsho were his key teachers. In 1942, he went to the Mda' chen dkar mo hermitage (located in Mzdo dge County, Rnga ba Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province), where he studied for five years before returning to Reb gong to teach. He was



<i>dge bskos</i> 'monastic disciplinarian'	The <i>bon gshen</i> in Reb gong elect two of their numbers for this role, who are then responsible for enforcing Chos thog chen mo rules.
<i>dbu mdzad</i> 'chanting master'	The chanting master leads the <i>bon gshen's</i> chanting during the ritual. There are particular rhythms for each <i>las rim</i> 'session of practice', for instance, the rhythms for <i>zhi</i> 'peaceful' and <i>drag</i> 'wrathful' practice are very different. The chanting master ensures that the chants are performed correctly.
<i>khri pa bla ma</i> 'enthroned <i>bla ma</i> '	There is one enthroned <i>bla ma</i> for each day of Chos thog chen mo. They are responsible for financing that day of the ritual. <sup>42</sup> Every <i>bon gshen</i> must be an enthroned <i>bla ma</i> at least once in his lifetime. If there is no enthroned <i>bla ma</i> for the ritual, then the village holding Chos thog chen mo is responsible for the ritual expenses.
musicians	There are two drummers and, as all the chanting, except for <i>skyabs 'gro</i> , <sup>43</sup> is accompanied by drumming, they must be physically fit. The drummers are usually selected from among the young <i>bon gshen</i> and have been chosen by the Bon mang to continue the drumming lineage of their family. Two <i>rgya ling</i> 'shawm' blowers participate. They are usually young <i>bon gshen</i> . The shawm are played when the <i>bon gshen</i> invoke the deities, when <i>bla ma</i> arrive, when <i>bon gshen</i> perform a ritual dance as a group, and during <i>ser phreng</i> 'procession of the <i>bon gshen</i> '. Two conch shell blowers and two <i>dung chen</i> 'great trumpet blowers' participate in the ritual. The conch shells are played to call people to the ritual early in the morning and when <i>bsang</i> 'fumigation' <sup>44</sup> offerings are made. The trumpet is played during the practice

imprisoned during the Cultural Revolution. In 1980, he was ordered by the tenth Panchen Bla ma, Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1938-1989), to revive the Bon religious tradition in Qinghai. He is now the abbot of Bon brgya Monastery and the *bstan bdag* 'religious master' of all Bon communities in Reb gong (Tshul khri ms bstan pa 'brug grags 2011:1-8).

<sup>42</sup> Ritual expenses include bread, *rtsam pa*, butter, *tshogs rdzas* 'feast offerings', and *gyed*. The total cost is about 40,000 RMB.

<sup>43</sup> This refuge-taking scripture is chanted at the beginning of most rituals.

<sup>44</sup> A smoke offering of juniper branches, barley flour, and such other items as fruit and candies (Samten Karmay 2009:380-412).

	sessions and ritual dances.
<i>bon gshen</i>	Senior Bon po in Reb gong are known colloquially as <i>dpon</i> and a <i>khu bon po</i> , and more formally as <i>bon gshen</i> . These ritual specialists invoke deities. Their role thus corresponds to the Buddhist term <i>sngags pa</i> .
<i>mchod g.yog pa</i> and <i>mkha' mgo pa</i> 'ritual assistants'	There are six ritual assistants who do not usually chant. They make and/ or move <i>gtor ma</i> , blow conch shells during <i>bsang</i> offerings, and cook for the <i>bon gshen</i> .
<i>cham pa</i> 'ritual dancers'	Fourteen people perform ritual dances during Chos thog chen mo. They are chosen by the ' <i>cham dpon</i> 'dance master', and may sometimes belong to a family lineage of dancers. They cannot eat chili or garlic, walk under drainpipes, or sleep with their wives for twenty-five days prior to the the ritual. It is believed that calamity will befall them if they violate these rules.
<i>bskal len ba</i> 'recipients'	<i>Bskal len ba</i> are those who do not chant or participate in the ritual, such as students, children, and workers.

Chos thog chen mo lasts three days, and the procedure for each of the three days is much the same, except for the scripture chanted to invoke the main deity each day.<sup>45</sup> The first day is devoted to the peaceful aspect of the ritual, while the second and third days focus on the wrathful aspect. On the first day, the *bon gshen* chant a text devoted to Kun tu bzang po,<sup>46</sup> entitled *Snyan brgyud a gsal*

<sup>45</sup> The other scriptures chanted during Chos thog chen mo are identical for each of the three days of the ritual. They are *Tshe sgrub kyi gzungs sngags*, *Skyabs 'gro*, *Sprul sku Ta pi hri tsa'i gsol 'debs*, *Rnam mkhyen rgyal ba gshen rab la 'a zha gsang ba mdo sdud kyis bstod pa'i mdzad bcu*, *Sprul sku blo ldan snying po'i bsang gzhung*, and *Bstan srung rma rgyal pom ra'i bsang mchod gong 'og gnyis*, which are chanted before breakfast. After breakfast, the *bon gshen* chant *Sangs rgyas sman lha'i cho ga*, *Brgya rtsa*, and *Rgyal yum byams ma chen mo'i sngags bstod*. In the afternoon, *bon gshen* chant *Tshogs 'khor*, *Bskang ba*, and later in the afternoon, *Dbal gas kyi sngags*, all the *Bka' skyong bskul ba*, *Dmar lam zor gyi bsgrub pa*, *Gzir mnan bro yi bsgrub pa*, and *Phywa tshe g.yang gi bsgrub pa*.

<sup>46</sup> Kun tu bzang po (Sanskrit, Samantabhadraz) 'the All-good', is an important deity in both Buddhist and Bon traditions, especially in the Nying ma pa and Bka' rgyud pa schools of the Buddhist tradition. In the Bon tradition, Kun tu bzang po has the status of *bon sku*, which literally means 'Body of Bon', i.e., the Ultimate Reality. He is regarded as the

*'phrul gyi lde mig ste/ kun bzang rgyal ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor, The Mandala of the Form of Kun tu bzang po Called Rgyal ba'i 'dus pa.*<sup>47</sup> The chanting of this text is the central element of the first day of the ritual. That this day is devoted to the peaceful aspect is signified by slow melodious chanting accompanied by gentle music, which is pleasant to the ear, and by the costumes of the *bon gshen*, who do not wear hats.

On the second day, the *bon gshen* chant a ritual text devoted to Tshe dbang rig 'dzin<sup>48</sup> called *Tshe dbang gzhung bzhi'i sgrub pa, The Four Traditions of Tshe dbang rig 'dzin*. The chanting of this text is the most important part of the day. There is a short masked dance during the feast rite when Khro tshogs<sup>49</sup> is defeated. On the second day, the monastic disciplinarian reads out the *bca' yig*<sup>50</sup> 'official notice' and a *tshogs gtam*<sup>51</sup> 'speech addressed to the assembly'.

On the third day of the spring Chos thog chen mo, *bon gshen* chant a scripture devoted to 'Bum pa,<sup>52</sup> called *Yi dam dbang chen 'Bum pa'i dkyil 'khor, The Mandala of the Powerful Tutelary Deity*

supreme deity in the context of meditational practice, and the source of the lineage of the Zhang zhung snyan rgyud, Aural Transmission of Zhang zhung (Kværne 1996:29).

<sup>47</sup> See Kværne (1996:30-31, 59-61).

<sup>48</sup> Tshe dbang rig 'dzin, the 'knowledge holder', and 'master of long life' is regarded as a manifestation of Gsang ba 'das pa. Tshe dbang rig 'dzin lived in the eighth century and was the son of Dran pa nam mkha'. His teachings, rituals, and iconographic representations are grouped 'according to the tradition of Zhang zhung (*Zhang zhung ma*)', 'according to the tradition of India (*Rgya gar ma*)', and 'according to the tradition of Tibet (*bod yul ma*)' (Kværne 1996:120; Ramble 2007:125-129).

<sup>49</sup> *Khro* means 'wrathful' and *tshogs* translates as 'assembly.' Khro tshogs is a *gtor ma* shaped like a sheep's body. It is an offering to tutelary deities. This effigy is symbolically defeated by the deities represented in the masked dance, symbolizing the defeat of malevolent forces.

<sup>50</sup> The new *bca' yig* was written by A lags Bon brgya Dge legs lhun grub rgya mthso in 2011 and entitled *Reb gong bon mang phur thog stong dang dgu brgya'i bca' yig* (2011:230-250). Previously, there was no common *bca' yig* for the Bon communities in Reb gong. There are three key ideas in this new *bca' yig* of Bon in Reb gong: a brief history of Bon in Tibet and Bon in Reb gong, ritual regulations, and punishment for violating regulations. For an example of another *bca' yig* see Cech (1985:69-85).

<sup>51</sup> A condensed form of *bca' yig* 'monastic rules'.

<sup>52</sup> 'Bum pa is an important tutelary deity worshipped by Bon believers. His cult is especially popular in Khyung po, Gling rgya bon tshang ma, and Spyi tshang villages. According to Nyi ma, the teachings and rituals of this deity only exist in Reb gong.

'*Bum pa*. In the autumn ritual, a text called *Dbal gsas rngam pa'i dkyil 'khor*, *The Mandala of Fierce Dbal gsas*,<sup>53</sup> is chanted instead. The wrathful aspect of the ritual on these two days is signified by the wrathful music that accompanies the chanting and the *bon gshen*'s costumes. For example, *dkar mo khyung gshog* 'white hat depicting the wings of a garuda', *dkar mo rtse rgyan* 'white hat depicting a leftward turning swastika', *dom pag* 'a hat made from bear skin', and *gtsod rwa* 'a hat with the horn of an antelope depicted on it'<sup>54</sup> are worn. The main ritual dance, a focal activity of Chos thog chen mo, takes place on this day. It is during this ritual dance that the descent of blessings typically occurs.

The main activities of this day are the *spyän 'dren* 'ritual of invitation', *tshogs 'khor* 'the feast rite', and *zlog pa* 'ritual of dispelling'. During the invitation, the retinues of *lha* 'deities' and their *gzhal yas khang* 'divine mansions' are verbally *bskyed* 'generated' by the *bon gshen* who chant the *spyän 'dren* 'invitation', inviting all the gods to the main assembly hall, and especially into the mandala.<sup>55</sup> Next, the *bon gshen* make prostrations and *gshags pa* 'confessions'. Offerings to the deities then begin.

The *tshogs 'khor* 'feast rite' is a tantric ritual during which liquor and various foods including meat are first offered to the

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<sup>53</sup> *Dbal gsas rngam pa* 'fierce piercing deity', is an important tutelary deity widely worshipped in the Bon tradition. The main ritual text of this deity is entitled *Dbal gsas rngam pa'i las rim* and is said to have been composed by *Dran pa nam mkha'*.

<sup>54</sup> The former two are supposedly the original hats of *bon gshen*, consequently, wearing them brings prosperity to the Bon religion. The latter two symbolize historical events important to the Bon tradition. Bon po were forbidden to wear their original religious hats during the two periods of decline in Bon. This was during the reigns of King *Gri gum btsan po* (the seventh or, according to some sources, eighth monarch of the Tibetan empire and the first to leave mortal remains (Kapstein 1996:38) and whose birth and death dates are unknown, and King *Khri srong sde btsan*. This explains why some practitioners wore *dom pags* and *gtsod rwa* to disguise their identity as Bon po and fled from Central Tibet to A mdo and Kham. These hats are typical for the *bon gshen* from Bon communities in *Reb gong*.

<sup>55</sup> This *gtor ma* represents the deities, including the peaceful deities *Kun tu bzang po*, *Tshe dbang rig 'dzin*, the tutelary deities *Dbal gsas* (for the autumn ritual), and '*Bum pa* (for the spring ritual), and their retinues, as well as male and female protector deities. The peaceful ones are generally represented by cone shapes, while the wrathful ones are represented by triangular shapes.

deities, and then they are distributed to the practitioners and laypeople. The remainder is given to *gdon* 'ghosts' and *bgegs*<sup>56</sup> 'obstacle-creating spirits' by throwing them outside the village temple.

For Chos thog chen mo, the main offerings are Khro tshogs (see footnote forty-nine, above) and *tshogs rdzas* 'feast offerings'.<sup>57</sup> First, the *bon gshen* make offerings to the deities with Khro tshogs and the 'feast offerings', after which the remaining offerings are distributed among the *bon gshen* and laymen. Eating the feast offering and Khro tshogs is believed to protect against disease. Afterwards, the *bon gshen* begin making offerings to hungry ghosts and other beings. These offerings are made from the uneaten leftovers of the feast offering and the Khro tshogs.

The ritual of *zlog pa* 'dispelling negative forces' is a tantric ritual, for which a *zlog gtor*<sup>58</sup> is made. For Chos thog chen mo, the *bon gshen* perform *zlog pa* in autumn for the deity, Dbal gzas, and perform in spring for the deity, 'Bum pa. During the ritual, the *zlog gtor* is kept inside the main assembly hall until the ritual dance takes place on the third day. After the ritual dance is completed on that day, the *zlog gtor* is carried above people's heads and discarded at an intersection. It is believed that all negative forces are exorcised, dispersed, or driven back by the deity and their retinue that are embodied in the *zlog gtor*. In addition, the deity and their retinue go to places where sentient beings are suffering, particularly as a result of natural disasters, in order to relieve their pain.

When the *zlog gtor* is carried out from the main assembly hall by *mchod g.yog pa* 'ritual assistants', the first group begins dancing counterclockwise in a circle in the courtyard. The musicians and banner holders<sup>59</sup> walk in a circle. The *bon gshen* in the main

<sup>56</sup> Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las rgya mtsho (2002:1751).

<sup>57</sup> The feast offering usually consists of homemade bread, and a large amount of fruit, candy, and various *ka ra go re* 'biscuits'. These offerings are usually provided by the enthroned *bla ma* or collected from each household if there is no enthroned *bla ma*.

<sup>58</sup> *Zlog* literally means 'to expel' and *gtor* is the abridged form of *gtor ma*. *Zlog gtor* is a group of *gtor ma* representing the deities with their retinues comprised of male and female protector deities.

<sup>59</sup> The banners include a parasol, two *rgyal mtshan* 'victory banners', and

assembly hall ring bells and chant. The laypeople on the temple roof make *bsang* offerings and throw *rlung rta* 'wind horses' in the air.<sup>60</sup> The *bon gshen* then leave the main assembly hall and dance counterclockwise, circling the courtyard. After circling the courtyard once, all the *bon gshen* are seated. Next, two *keng rus* 'skeleton dancers' put a *gtor ma* representing negative forces in the courtyard center, and the *bon gshen* chant.

The main ritual dance is performed by masked dancers, who are always laymen who represent protector deities. It consists of individual and group dances depicting the deities Gshin rje yab yum, Mchod 'bul lha mo, Bdud lha mo, Sgra bla'i rgyal mo, Rma chen spom ra, Btsan Dmu dpon, Shel khrab can, Bya seng can, Gza' mgo dgu, and Keng rus (see Appendix One). Except for Gshin rje yab yum and the skeletons, the dancers strive to guide all sentient beings to the right path and kill enemies (thus liberating their souls). Their dance is a symbol that the Bon religion will prosper and create happiness for all sentient beings.

Gshin rje yab yum's dance is *dge sdug shan 'byed kyi gar 'cham* 'judgment dance' indicating that the deities judge right and wrong while dancing. They brandish swords in their right hands and hold *khram shing* 'tally boards'<sup>61</sup> in their left hands. It is believed that the swords they hold slay all beings who do not know right from wrong, while they record the sins and virtuous deeds of all sentient beings on their tally boards.

The skeletons are servants of Gshin rje and Sgra bla'i rgyal mo in the dance. A lags Nam mkha' bstan 'dzin and Bstan pa dar rgyas told me that they symbolically offer the flesh, blood, and bones of the liberated enemies to protector deities. Among them, Sgra bla'i rgyal mo's dance is the most ferocious. While dancing, she constantly brandishes her sword quickly and erratically as compared to the slow, fluid movements of other deities. She runs to and fro, and then

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two flags depicting Srid pa'i rgyal mo and Sgra bla'i rgyal mo (see Appendix One).

<sup>60</sup> A small square paper symbolizing well-being or good fortune that is thrown in the air (Samten Karmay 2009:413-23).

<sup>61</sup> A wooden board featuring crossed lines that Gshen rje presumably uses to record the sins and virtuous deeds of all sentient beings.

collapses to the ground, her back arched, sweeping her sword in an arc above her head. The music that accompanies her dance is more intense than during other dance performances. 'Descent of blessings' is experienced during her performance, especially when her *bskyed pa* 'generation text'<sup>62</sup> is read out.

After individual performances, all male and female protector deities, led by Srid pa'i rgyal mo and Dmu bdud 'byams, perform a dance intended to evoke a burning fire. Firstly Gshin rje, and then other dancers, cut the *zan ling* into pieces, put it in the *zlog gtor*, and then discard it as described above. Next, all *bon gshen* and dancers perform a short dance in the courtyard, symbolizing their joy at the defeat and expulsion of all enemies. They shout, "*Lha rgyal lo* 'The deities have won!'" and the dance is considered a success.

#### THE 'DESCENT OF BLESSINGS'

When observing Chos thog chen mo in November 2007, some women told me of their inexpressible faith, and that when they saw the ritual dance they felt like crying and shouting, but could not. In 2010, I observed ritual dances in two villages.<sup>63</sup> The ritual practice was the same as I had seen before, but laypeople's reactions differed. In 2007, people told me that they had powerful feelings of faith, and though they wanted to cry, they did not, while, in 2010, people went into an ecstatic state called the *byin 'bebs* 'the descent of blessings' during the ritual dance.

The 'descent of blessings' bears similiarity to the spirit-medium<sup>64</sup> trance common in Reb gong. However, my consultant, Nyi ma, told me that it differs significantly in that a 'trance' occurs when a deity possesses a medium, through whom they

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<sup>62</sup> This text features instructions for the visualization transformation of the practitioners into the tutelary deity.

<sup>63</sup> I was in Gling rgya in November 2009 and in Khyung po in January 2010.

<sup>64</sup> The body of a *lha pa* 'medium' is believed to be possessed by local deities. The medium becomes the deities' mouthpiece through which the deities make their wishes known. The deities may also give prophetic answers to questions devotees ask them.

communicate with the laity. In contrast, the descent of blessings is not about possession. Rather, it occurs if people have strong faith and the deity or *bla ma* in whose presence they are is powerful enough to grant blessings. This can be seen from the literal meaning of the word *byin 'bebs*. *Byin* is an abbreviation of *byin rlabs*, which refers to the power or blessing of a *bla ma* or a deity granted to people, and *'bebs* is the present tense of *phab* meaning 'to cause to descend'.<sup>65</sup> Here it may signify 'to bless'.

People typically become ecstatic when the ritual dances take place, though sometimes during other moments in the ritual as well. In this state of ecstasy, people assume unusual facial expressions. Their face becomes pale. Some open their eyes wide while other close their eyes tightly. Some cry or laugh, while others dance, jump, and make ritual gestures.<sup>66</sup> Some shout, "*Rtsa ba'i bla ma, Root bla ma!*" "*Bla ma rin po che, Precious bla ma,*"<sup>67</sup> or "*Sgra bla'i rgyal mo!*"

Figure 1. Two women experience the descent of blessings at the appearance of *Sgra bla'i rgyal mo*.



<sup>65</sup> Pad ma rdo rje (2007:484).

<sup>66</sup> The two typical ritual gestures are the middle and ring fingers pressed to the palm with the thumb and the other two fingers extended, and the palms placed together and raised to the forehead. The former is done at the beginning of the ecstatic state and the latter at the end.

<sup>67</sup> These are two expressions people use when praying to their *bla ma*.



Nyi ma explained that a great *bla ma* or a great deity consecrates the minds of those with strong faith, and said that the heightened consciousness of those who experience this is very important. Because of the heightened consciousness while in a state of ecstasy, people become more compassionate and have an awakened mind by having relatively less hatred, ignorance, desire, arrogance, and jealousy. Both men and women experience the descent of blessings, but women are usually in the majority.

Figure 2. A *bon gshen* makes ritual gestures while in an ecstatic state.



This phenomenon became common in the five main Bon communities in Reb gong in about 2008. I asked many people why this phenomenon happened at this particular time, and I always got the same answer – people's faith had become stronger and purer. This explanation coincides with religious activities in Reb gong's Bon communities having become more organized and religious institutions more systematic than they were prior to the year 2000. People's higher incomes enabled the building of monasteries and village temples, and increased religious freedoms promoted an atmosphere in which religious scholars and specialists could flourish.

Those with knowledge of Bon tradition say that the descent of blessings is not a new phenomenon, but was widespread in Reb gong before the Cultural Revolution. Nyi ma said that the descent of blessings is explained in the transmission of Dbal gsaṅs entitled *Shes rab glog gi dbang 'phrin* and a text from a compendium *Rdzogs chen yul gru tha sad* entitled *Mkha' 'gro rin chen phreng ba'i rgyan*.<sup>68</sup> He said that these texts describe how, during the descent of blessings, people's facial expressions change, and how people may dance, jump, cry, laugh, or say *gtam med kyi tshig* 'meaningless words'.

The descent of blessings is said to have been widespread in Reb gong during the time of Skyang sprul lung rtogs rgya mtsho<sup>69</sup> and Bon rgya sku skyes nam mkha' rgya mtsho.<sup>70</sup> Many *bon gshen* became ecstatic when Skyang sprul lung rtogs rgya mtsho came to Reb gong in 1944 to attend Chos thog chen mo.<sup>71</sup> The same happened when these two *bla ma* gave *dbang lung* 'empowerments'. I was told that on at least one occasion, those who experienced the descent of blessings did so spontaneously and continuously until the *bla ma* ordered them to stop.<sup>72</sup>

However, after 1958, the descent of blessings was not seen again until 1999, when a monk from Bon brgya Monastery in Reb gong experienced the descent of blessings while A lags Bon brgya was giving an empowerment. Everyone was shocked to see this. Many said that the monk must have been ill and needed to be taken to hospital. However, the *bla ma* confirmed that the man was not sick, but experiencing the descent of blessings. He also said that this was very good, splashed the man with blessed water, and said that no one should restrain the monk, because doing so might make him sick with *grib*.<sup>73</sup> Nonetheless, even at present, many people try to restrain their relatives from going into trance, as most of them think it is

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<sup>68</sup> I have not had the opportunity to examine these monastic ritual texts.

<sup>69</sup> A disciple of Shar rdza rin po che (1859-1934) (Acchard 2008:5,109).

<sup>70</sup> A *bla ma* from Bon brgya 'brog Village. I was unable to verify his birth and death dates.

<sup>71</sup> Exact date unknown.

<sup>72</sup> Interview with informant Nyi ma, October 2011, Rong bo Town.

<sup>73</sup> This common sickness is caused by eating, wearing, or touching people or things considered to be unclean.

shameful to behave in such ways in public.

After this incident, the descent of blessings spread rapidly. Monks began to experience it, then *bon gshen*, and finally laypeople. I now describe my observations of several Chos thog chen mo rituals from 2009 to 2011, and the descent of blessings that occurred there.

First Observation. Gling rgya bon tshang ma Village. October 2009.

At around one p.m., people gradually began gathering in the temple courtyard. At about two-thirty p.m., the conch blower summoned the *bon gshen* to the assembly hall and they began chanting. As they chanted, different preparations for the afternoon ritual dance were made in the courtyard, including chalking out the performance area, arranging seating for the *bon gshen*, and bringing out flags.

Eventually, the first part of the ritual dance took place and concluded with the *bon gshen* seated on both sides of the entrance of the main assembly hall and the two monastic disciplinarians seated on higher seats. Later, A lags Bon brgya joined them, and sat on the throne in the center.

Male audience members assembled on the right side of the main assembly hall. Female audience members and children gathered on the left and on both sides of the temple's main entrance. Villagers told me that there were few spectators from other villages because people were busy doing side-jobs to earn money at that time.

Afterwards, the main ritual dance took place. Towards its end, a dancer dressed as Sgra bla'i rgyal mo entered. To greet her, *bsang* offerings were made; conch shells, shawms, and the great trumpets were blown; drums and cymbals were sounded; firecrackers were set off; and wind horses were thrown into the air. Sgra bla'i rgyal mo sat on a low table covered with felt, flanked by skeleton dancers on either side of the table. Numerous men offered *kha btags*. Four *bon gshen* stood beside her and read out her *bskyed pa* 'generation text'. Some people prostrated to Sgra bla' rgyal mo.

Several *bon gshen* and audience members began experiencing the descent of blessings. The first was a young woman of about thirty.

She emerged from a group of women standing to the left of the temple courtyard's main gate. Her body began shaking, she began making ritual gestures, danced into the inner space of the dance ground, and danced several circles in a counterclockwise direction around the *zlog gtor* at the center of the chalk circle, within which the masked dances had been taking place. About six or seven female spectators reacted by shaking, prostrating, and calling out, "*Rtsa ba'i bla ma* 'Root *bla ma*!' "*Bla ma rin po che* 'Precious *bla ma*!' and "*Sgra bla'i rgyal mo*!" Some elderly women began prostrating and proclaiming, "Truly *Sgra bla' rgyal mo* has come!"

A man in his late thirties then also began shaking. As his trance became more pronounced, he began calling out, "*Sgra bla'i rgyal mo stag ri rong*!" and moving into the chalk circle, but did not circle the *zlog gtor*. One *bon gshen* ensured that the man did not approach the dancer representing the deity too closely, and guided him back to the edge of the chalk circle. The men there held him under his arms, and he swayed from side to side as the woman in trance continued to dance with *Sgra bla'i rgyal mo*. His ecstasy subsided soon after that of the woman, who then returned to her mother and sister.

As the mother tidied her daughter's clothing, I heard her gently chide the young woman, asking why she had behaved like that in public. The woman cried, replying that she had been out of control, and could not have acted otherwise. The events ended with the *zlog gtor* being carried out through the main temple entrance.

Second Observation. Khyung po Village. January 2010.

As was the case in Gling rgya bon tshang ma Village, at around one p.m., conch shells were blown to summon the *bon gshen*. Some younger men climbed onto the temple roof with their offerings, made a *bsang* offering, threw windhorses into the air, and set off firecrackers when the ritual dance was about to start. After making their offerings, they watched the ritual dance from the roof.

The *bon gshen* were seated in front of the main assembly hall,

having completed their first dance. The older men were on the right of the main assembly hall. Women and children were on the left, and on both sides of the main entrance of the temple.

The main dance started after the first dance. About twenty minutes into the main dance, spectators from other villages rushed to the Khyung po Temple to see the ritual dance. Some audience members informed me that a basketball competition in the village had just finished, and people had then come to see the dance. Spectators were calm during the first hour of the dance.

About an hour into the performances, all the dancers entered, led by two Gshin rje, and began circling counterclockwise. Several spectators began to experience the descent of blessings. The first was the woman I had seen during my first observation in Gling rgya bon tshang ma Village. She began shaking and looked around among the spectators, as if to ensure that nobody was watching her. After a few minutes, she started to lose control of herself, began making ritual gestures with her hands, danced into the inner space of the dance grounds, and joined the dancers. She danced similarly to Sgra bla'i rgyal mo, though her movements were quicker than those of the other dancers. After circling the dance ground three or four times, she returned to her seat and tried to calm down. Several *bon gshen* then experienced the descent of blessings and joined the dancers. Their movements were quite slow, and they constantly called out, "Stag ri rong!" Several young women displayed similar behavior, and the first woman I just described became ecstatic again and rushed to join the dancers. Then, all the dancers exited and the spectators became calm.

It was the first time many spectators had seen the descent of blessings, and they were very surprised. Most paid no attention to the dancers, but only watched those experiencing the descent of blessings. Some asked why the *bon gshen* ignored the woman who danced like Sgra bla'i rgyal mo. "We feel she is really the deity," they said.

About half an hour later, a dancer representing Sgra bla'i rgyal mo entered and was greeted with *bsang* offerings and firecrackers, the great trumpets were blown, and drums and cymbals were played. Sgra bla'i rgyal mo sat on a low table and her generation text was read out. People offered *kha btags* and prostrated to her. About fifteen

spectators began experiencing the descent of blessings. Most were repeating, "Root *bla ma*," "Precious *bla ma*," or "Sgra bla'i rgyal mo," while placing their palms together and raising their hands to their foreheads. Some cried loudly, including three or four young girls who were about fifteen years old.

One woman said, "What's happening to these girls?" and added that they must have mental problems. The woman described above who had been the first to experience the 'descent of blessings' danced into the inner spaces of the dance ground, while the dancer representing Sgra bla'i rgyal mo remained seated on a low table.

The Sgra bla'i rgyal mo dancer soon began dancing. A girl of about fifteen experienced the descent of blessings and moved into the ritual space, but stayed at the edge of the chalk circle and made very graceful ritual gestures while singing incomprehensibly using a folksong melody. The dancer representing Sgra bla'i rgyal mo was still dancing, as was the woman. By this time, she was making different movements, alternatively prostrating and hopping from one foot to the other. One older *bon gshen* brought out a long bolt of yellow silk from the *btsan khang*,<sup>74</sup> put it around her neck, and tied it under her right arm.

Next, a boy of about eighteen rushed into the inner spaces of the ritual dance ground and began dancing furiously. Several *bon gshen* tried unsuccessfully to restrain him. However, after dancing in several frenzied circles, he collapsed on the ground with his palms together. At this time, several *bon gshen* came and lifted him up from under his armpits. He swayed from side to side as the woman and the young girl continued dancing with Sgra bla'i rgyal mo.

Most people returned to normal soon after the dancers exited, but the young girl remained ecstatic, apparently until the next morning.<sup>75</sup> Her family later reported that they had needed to stay awake all night, because the girl insisted on going to the village temple several times. She cried very loudly and called, "Mother, I

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<sup>74</sup> A house where protector deities are enshrined. In Khyung bo Village statues of Sgra bla'i rgyal mo and Gnam lha are enshrined in the *btsan khang*.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with a member of the girl's family.

miss you very much!" when she entered the main assembly hall. The next morning her parents took her to A lags Bon rgya who gave her a blessed thread, thus terminating the descent of blessings.

Third Observation. Rgyal bo ngo mo Village. January 2011.<sup>76</sup>

The seating arrangements in Rgyal bo ngo mo Village were the same as in the two villages described above. Sgra bla'i rgyal mo was greeted in the same way. Only men experienced the descent of blessings at the appearance of Sgra bla'i rgyal mo. The first was a *bon gshen* in his thirties. As Sgra bla'i rgyal mo entered the ritual dance ground, this man rushed into the chalk circle and danced. Sgra bla'i rgyal mo made three circles around the courtyard and sat on a low table. Four *bon gshen* read out her generation text and men stood in line to offer *kha btags* to her.

The second person to become ecstatic was a man of about twenty, who was standing in the line to offer *kha btags* to the dancer representing Sgra bla'i rgyal mo. He first cried out loudly, and then rushed into the chalk circle to dance. At this point, another man of about forty rushed into the chalk circle and danced furiously with him. He tried to stamp on the *zan ling* several times and two *bon gshen* came, held him by his arms, and guided him to the edge of the circle. Another *bon gshen* in his forties rushed in front of Sgra bla'i rgyal mo, who was seated on the low table. Another young *bon gshen* prostrated to Sgra bla'i rgyal mo, knocking his forehead hard on the ground, while two other men danced amid the crowd.

Sgra bla'i rgyal mo slowly rose from her seat and began circling the *zlog gtor* counterclockwise. The man who had tried to trample the *zan ling* was being held by two men at the edge of the chalk circle. He was still moving furiously, sometimes making ritual gestures, and sometimes raising his prayer beads above his head. However, after four or five minutes he placed his palms together,

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<sup>76</sup> This information is based on video footage that was taken by my husband who visited the village to observe the ritual dance on that day.

raised them above his head, and his ecstasy subsided. At this point most of the others experiencing ecstasy also returned to normal.

Compared to the situation in other villages, those who experienced the descent of blessings in Rgyal bo ngo mo exhibited freer movements, because they were less restrained by their fellow villagers. People fell in and out of ecstasy and then sat calmly. Nobody seemed shocked. This phenomenon did not seem to be regarded as unusual.

Fourth Observation. Rgyal bo a rgya sting Village. October 2011.

I observed the whole ritual in this village, including the descent of blessings, during the ritual dance and during the chanting. During the chanting, three or four *bon gshen* experienced the descent of blessings and began making various wrathful ritual gestures. Some knelt while they did so, but most remained sitting. In addition, one woman in her forties, who was the wife of the second day's enthroned *bla ma*, became ecstatic when the *tshogs rdzas* 'feast offering' was brought to the village temple. Three young girls from her family tried unsuccessfully to hold and calm her. An elderly woman said to them, "Do not hold her." She made very graceful gestures for five or six minutes, returned to normal, left the temple, and returned after about ten minutes and seemed very calm.

On the third day, three *bon gshen* and four laymen became ecstatic at the appearance of Sgra bla'i rgyal mo, particularly as her generation text was being read. They trembled and made ritual gestures.

A dancer representing Sgra bla'i rgyal mo also experienced the descent of blessings, which could be discerned from his quick movements and shouts. At first, the musicians appeared unsure if they should continue accompanying the dance. Then A lags Bon brgya, who was sitting on the second floor of the temple, gave the signal to play music and the musicians played as usual and the dancer danced as usual. During the dance, A lags Bon brgya and others threw windhorses. The dancer was still ecstatic when the dance was due to



conclude. Two *bon gshen* supported him under his arms and brought him to the main assembly hall. After a while, his ecstasy subsided.

A woman in the audience told me that if the dancer is faithful and avoids such polluting things as killing and sleeping with his wife for a month before the ritual dance, there is a good possibility that they will become ecstatic while dancing. This, however, is considered to be a rare occurrence. The villagers claim that only one other dancer (from Rgyal bo ngo mo Village), had ever become ecstatic while dancing. In addition, a dancer representing Sgra bla'i rgyal mo became ecstatic during the dance in Bon brgya Monastery on 21 October 2010. Some said that the dancer was not dancing on the ground, but in the air.

In addition to these observations, I conducted three interviews with people who had experienced the descent of blessings.

### Interview One<sup>77</sup>

The first time I experienced the descent of blessings was when our village held a ritual called Ten Thousand Lamps (*khri mchod*)<sup>78</sup> in 2007. I had an inexpressible feeling of *dad pa* 'faith' when I saw the lamps, which reminded me of Sgra bla'i rgyal mo. The women were having a *smyung gnas* 'fasting ritual'<sup>79</sup> during those two days.

I can't remember everything that happened, but people said that I jumped quite high with my legs crossed. I felt very sore and tired when I returned to normal, and my legs were covered in bruises. Unexpectedly, however, the bruises were gone the next morning and I felt very comfortable.

Since then, I experience the descent of blessings whenever there is an important ritual. There are several key

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<sup>77</sup> Female (b. 1978) interviewed October 2011.

<sup>78</sup> This is a ritual during which 100,000 lamps are offered and ritual texts are chanted.

<sup>79</sup> A two-day fasting ritual performed mostly by women. The performers eat lunch without meat, garlic, or onion, and only drink milk tea for both breakfast and dinner on the first day. They fast on the second day.

things that cause it. I feel as if my name is being called whenever I hear people reciting the expiation of Sgra bla'i rgyal mo, or when I see the *thang ka* of Byams ma. I feel strong faith and I have a very strong sense of compassion. In addition, I completely lose control when I see Sgra bla'i rgyal mo during the ritual dance. First, my energy channels feel *rtsa rud pa* 'numb' and then, when I experience the descent of blessings, my whole body goes numb. I am aware of what I am doing, but I am not in control. I feel very angry when people try to restrain me. Some time later, I suddenly return to normal when I become aware that everyone is watching me.

When I asked her why she was always the one who experienced the descent of blessings, she replied:

I think the most important thing is that you should have strong faith. If you have faith, then the protector deity (Sgra bla'i rgyal mo) will always take you under her protection. I also know this from a dream I have, in which a smiling, nomad woman riding a black mule comes to me. I think that it is also because of my family background. All my ancestors venerated Sgra bla'i rgyal mo and my family also owns her mask.<sup>80</sup> My grandmother often recited the expiation of Sgra bla'i rgyal mo and had strong faith in her. After Grandmother passed away, she appeared beside the pillars when our village temple was being built in 1982. My villagers believe that her appearance at that time was a manifestation of Sgra bla'i rgyal mo.

### Interview Two<sup>81</sup>

The first time I experienced the descent of blessings was when I returned to my parents' home during the New Year in 2008 and watched a movie that showed how *bla ma* from Sichuan Province practice religion. In particular, I saw a *bla ma* on retreat who only ate plants growing on the mountain. I felt deep admiration and faith when I saw that. Then, my whole body went numb and I became ecstatic. I don't remember anything clearly, but later, my family told me that I asked them to bring a wooden sword that

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<sup>80</sup> Owning a deity mask is comparable to owning its statue. It is placed in the shrine room, offerings are made, and it is prostrated to.

<sup>81</sup> Female (b. 1979) interviewed July 2011.

was kept in our shrine, which had been passed down from our ancestors. They said I cried for a while when they gave me the sword. I then said I had missed the sword very much. Since then, I become ecstatic whenever there are religious rituals. I especially lose control at the appearance of Sgra bla'i rgyal mo during the ritual dance. My sisters and nieces fall into trance whenever a ritual takes place at our home, but my brother always scolds us and says we are missing energy channels.<sup>82</sup> When all of us become ecstatic at the same time, he sometimes gets so angry that we suddenly return to normal.

When I asked her the same question, as to why she thought that she was always the one to go into a trance, she replied with a similar answer as the previous interviewee:

I recite the expiation of Sgra bla'i rgyal mo every day and I often dream about a black mule.<sup>83</sup> I also think this is related to my family background because previous generations of my family, including my father, were *chos pa nram dag* 'faithful religious practitioners'.

### Interview Three<sup>84</sup>

I became ecstatic at the appearance of Sgra bla'i rgyal mo during the ritual dance in 2008. Since then, it happens quite often, especially when I prostrate in the morning and evening, and when A lags Bon brgya gives empowerments. When I am about to become ecstatic, my whole body becomes numb, I experience a strong pressure that feels like air in my belly, and I feel great compassion in my heart. I have some feeling while I am ecstatic, for example, I can feel other people touching me, but I am barely conscious of what I am doing.

I think the most important thing that causes people to become ecstatic is their faith. Those who become ecstatic are mostly women, because they have very kind hearts and their faith is very pure.

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<sup>82</sup> 'Missing energy channels' is a phrase used to describe people who are excitable and easily lose self-control.

<sup>83</sup> Sgra bla'i rgyal mo is believed to ride a black mule. Dreaming of a black mule suggests that they are under Sgra bla'i rgyal mo's protection.

<sup>84</sup> Male (b. 1978), interviewed July 2011.

I also interviewed several people who have witnessed, but not experienced, the descent of blessings.

This is a totally new phenomenon. I am now over eighty years old but I have never seen such things in my life. I do not know what it is, but I feel that it is quite mysterious.<sup>85</sup>

I heard there are many female *lha pa* 'spirit mediums' in Bon villages. I have never heard of or seen such things in my life. I think it is either a sign that the Bon religion will prosper in the future or that it will disappear.<sup>86</sup>

My eyes fill with tears when I see people fall into trance. It reminds me that it is understandable that people have so much suffering in life, because I can see that the deities also have their own suffering, as many of those experiencing the descent of blessings cry a lot during trance.<sup>87</sup>

This trance phenomenon proves to me that our Tibetan belief in deities and ghosts is true. In addition, it proves to me that as long as we have faith, deities will always protect us.<sup>88</sup>

This phenomenon is very much like *lha pa* in other villages. The only difference is that most of them are women, which is interesting.<sup>89</sup>

This is the first time I have seen this phenomenon. I felt that it was very interesting and mysterious, and it proves at least one thing to me: that there are *gzugs med kyi sems can* 'formless beings'.<sup>90</sup>

Those people are missing *rtswa mi tshang* 'energy channels' and so they have such experiences.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Interview with a Buddhist woman (b. 1930s) from Khyung po Village in 2008.

<sup>86</sup> Interview with a Buddhist man (b. 1940s) from Ska bar ma Village in 2009. The people who experience the descent of blessing and *lha pa* are similar in the terms of losing self-control.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with a Bon woman (b. 1990s) in 2010.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with a Bon woman (b. 1970s) in 2010.

<sup>89</sup> Interview with a Buddhist man (b. 1980s) in 2010.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with a Buddhist man (b. 1980s) in 2011. When people see *lha pa* and people expressing themselves ecstatically, they feel that a deity is present, thus proving that formless beings exist.

<sup>91</sup> Interview with a Buddhist man (b. 1950s) in 2008.

Figure 3. A young man in an ecstatic state is restrained.



Figure 4. A woman in an ecstatic state is supported.



## CONCLUSION

In this article I first introduced the history of Bon in Reb gong, and then described the biannual Chos thog chen mo ritual that is associated with the descent of blessings, including the various other names of the ritual, its history, date, outcome, participants, and the ritual dance on the third day. I then addressed the article's main focus, 'the descent of blessing' including its recent history, its history before 1958, and local people's explanations of the phenomenon. I provided several observations to examine the descent of blessings in context, and first-person accounts of experiencing the descent of blessings.

The only explanation that I have heard for the descent of blessings is that people's faith is pure and a *bla ma* has great power to bless people. Does this mean that Buddhist *bla ma* lack power to bless people or do those who believe in Buddhism lack pure faith? Why has this phenomenon become popular at this particular time? Why does it mostly influence women? Is it because Sgra bla'i rgyal mo is female? What may happen in the future? Will this phenomenon continue? Why? Will it spread? There are many unanswered questions. Hopefully, other perspectives on the descent of blessings will be presented in the future, based on more in-depth and comprehensive research.

APPENDIX ONE: DEITIES DEPICTED IN THE CHOS THOG CHEN MO RITUAL DANCES

Gshin rje yab yum

Figure 5. Gshin rje yab.



Gshin rje, Yama 'Lord of Death', the judge of souls in the afterlife, and ruler of all beings is colloquially known as Chos rgyal 'Dharma King' (Nebesky-Wojtkowitz 1975:82). Gshin rje yab yum are two dancers representing the male and female Gshin rje. They wear gowns with long, broad sleeves that resemble Chinese imperial court dress, and blue, bull-headed masks. Each mask has a hat topped with five small skulls. Each skull has jewels on top, symbolizing the deities' high rank. The first, third, and fifth jewels are blue and red, the second green and red, and the fourth is white and red. The hat has a band of green (below) and a band of red (above). The mask has two long, green horns. A golden flame is atop each horn. The face has three eyes. The third eye is vertical, is located in the center of the forehead, and has a small eyebrow. The eyebrows of the other eyes are thick and prominent. The nostrils are flared. The mouth is open in a

grimace showing the teeth, which are flat and cow-like. Inside the mouth, the tongue is curled up at the tip. The female Gshin rje wears a fierce masculine mask and has three miniature skulls.

Figure 6. Gshin rje yum.





Mchod 'bul lha mo

According to *A lags Nam mkha' bstan 'dzin* and *Bstan pa dar rgyas*, there were originally eight Mchod 'bul lha mo 'Goddesses of Offerings'. In contemporary Bon ritual dances in Reb gong, usually only two, though sometimes four, Mchod 'bul lha mo are represented. Their masks resemble children's faces, with large ears and eyes, and a small mouth with beautiful lips. The mask is topped by a red hat with a black trim. There are five multicolored jewels atop the hat. The dancers are usually boys between the ages of ten and thirteen, who are dressed in colorful skirts and silk jackets. Each boy carries a *gshang* 'flat-bell' in his right hand and a string of prayer beads in his left.

Figure 7. Mchod 'bul lha mo.



## Bdud lha mo

This group consists of Lha mo, or Srid pa'i rgyal mo 'Queen of the Created World', and Bdud, or Dmu bdud 'byams. Srid pa'i rgyal mo is the most important Bon protector (interview with Bstan pa dar rgyas in Bon brgya Monastery, October 2011). Dmu bdud 'byams is an important male Bon protector deity.

Both of these dancers are dressed in long black robes. Their masks are very similar: bluish-black, with three eyes, and noses wrinkled wrathfully. Each mask is topped by a headdress with five small skulls, representing the deities' rank. Their mouths are wide open, showing their large flat teeth and four fangs. The tongue is curled up towards the palate as if making a clicking sound. They have gold beards and eyebrows.

Figure 8. Srid pa'i rgyal mo.



Figure 9. Dmu bdud 'byams.



### Sgra bla'i rgyal mo

Sgra bla'i rgyal mo is colloquially known as Nag mo 'Black Female', and is popular in Reb gong Bon communities. Most Bon po in Reb gong recite her *bskang ba* 'expiation' every day. An oral account says she was once a layperson who married a man who later died. She then married another eight men, each of whom died in succession. She was thus widowed nine times, causing her great suffering and pain. Everyone in her village denigrated her. When she eventually died, it is believed that she became a demoness who brought misfortune to sentient beings. Later, Ston pa gshen rab subdued her and ordered her to become a protector of Bon (interview with Nyi ma in A rgya sting Village, October 2011).

Sgra bla'i rgyal mo's mask is black and resembles an angry man's face. It has three large eyes, the third of which is vertical and located in the center of the forehead. The nostrils, rims of the eyes, and lips are red. Sgra bla'i rgyal mo's nostrils are flared and her

mouth is wide open. Her mouth is crowded with flat teeth and four prominent fangs. Her chin is covered with a short, gold beard. Gold eyebrows flare above two bulging eyes. She wears a headdress with five small skulls and her wild, disheveled hair hangs over her face. She holds a sword in her right hand and wears a long black robe, on which many white skulls and bone ornaments are painted.

Figure 10. Sgra bla'i rgyal mo.



## Rma chen spom ra

Figure 11. Rma chen spom ra.



The mountain deity, Rma chen spom ra, is the personification of a mountain range in Mgo log Prefecture, Qinghai Province. He is known to locals as A myes 'Grandfather' Rma chen (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1975:210). The mask of Rma chen spom ra depicts a white, shiny male face, representing the snow-capped mountain on which he dwells. His face appears less furious than that of other deities. He has very fair skin, a black beard, and eyebrows. His mouth is closed and his lips are drawn. He has a mole on his chin. Rma chen spom ra wears a red helmet with black edges and three multicolored jewels on the front. Flags top the helmet. He wears a long robe and holds a lance in his right hand.

## A bse rgyal ba

Figure 12. A bse rgyal.



A bse rgyal ba is a major protector of the *btsan* class, which are ancient Tibetan deities believed to be fiercely aggressive. They are portrayed as mounted warriors clad in armor, holding weapons. Their characteristic color is red (Kværne 1996:111).

The mask of A bse rgyal ba suggests a fat, angry man's face. It has three eyes, one of which is in the middle of his forehead. His skin is red and his nose is very large. He bares his large flat teeth, with the two fangs in the upper jaw jutting over the bottom lip. He has a golden beard and eyebrows and wears a golden helmet topped with flags and pheasant feathers.

## Btsan Dmu dpon

Figure 13. Bstan Dmu dpon.



Btsan Dmu dpon involves two deities: '*Btsan*' refers to Brag btsan and '*dmu dpon*' refers to Btsan rgod hur ba. Brag btsan was born from a copper egg that resulted from the union of A bse rgyal ba and Sa srin ma mo. He has a red complexion, flaming hair, bloodshot eyes, and conch-shell teeth. He wears a helmet and a voluminous cloak of red silk. Ston pa Gshen rab bound the Brag btsan demon with an oath and appointed him to be a Bon Protector.<sup>92</sup> Brag btsan wears a mask and robe identical to that of A bse rgyal ba. Dmu bdud wears a dark brown mask.

<sup>92</sup> Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1975:252).

## Shel khrab can

Figure 14. Shel khrab can.



Shel khrab can 'The One Wearing Crystal Armor' is known to local people as Rgyal po 'The King'. He wears a yellow mask with yellow skin.



Bya seng can

Figure 15. Bya seng can.



Bya seng can involves a deity with the head of a *skyung* 'jackdaw' and another with the head of a snow lion. They wear gowns with long, broad sleeves and hold *phur bu* 'magic daggers'.

## Gza' mgo dgu

Figure 16. Gza' mgo dgu.



Gza' mgo dgu is a nine-headed deity with a snake's body from the waist down. All of this deity's nine faces are green and each face features five miniature skulls on top. The nine heads are topped by a hawk's head. Each face has a gaping mouth with four fangs. The tongue is curled upwards. The dancers wear long robes, have a large string of prayer beads around their necks, brandish a bow in their left hand, and hold an arrow in their right hand.

## Keng rus

Figure 17. Keng rus.



Keng rus 'masters of the cemetery (*dur khrod*)' or 'protectors of the cemetery' (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1976:78) wear a white costume with white gloves and white shoes. Sky-blue silk, and orange and red cloth pieces are stitched onto the edges of their trousers, sleeves, and jackets.

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2011. *Mkhas dbang bon brgya rin po che'i gsung rtsom phyogs bsgrigs/ gsol 'debs dang tshogs mchod kyi skor (3) མཁས་དབང་བོན་བརྒྱ་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་གསུང་ཚོམ་ཕྱོགས་བསྐྱིགས། གསེལ་འདེབས་དང་ཚོགས་མཚན་གྱི་སྒྲིག་པ།* [Collected Compositions about Prayers and Feast Offerings of the Learned Bon brgya rin po che]. Reb gong རེབ་གོང་སོང་།: Zhang bod shes rig zhib 'jug dar spel lte gnas རང་བོད་ཤེས་རིག་ཞིབ་འཇུག་དར་སྤེལ་སྡེ་གནས། [The Center for Development and Research on Zhangzhung and Tibet].
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NON-ENGLISH TERMS

'Bum pa འབྲུག་པ།  
*'byung bzhi* འབྲུང་བཞི།  
*'cham dpon* འཆམ་དཔོན།  
 'Dzam gling mkhas pa rgyan drug འཛོམ་གླིང་མཁས་པ་རྒྱན་དུག  
*'gron dman pa'i rigs* འགོན་དམན་པའི་རིགས།  
*'gyed* འགྲེང།

A

A ba ngos bzang ཨ་བ་ངོས་བཟང།  
*a khu bon po* ཨ་ཁུ་བོན་པོ།  
 A lags Nam mkha' bstan 'dzin ཨ་ལགས་ནམ་མཁའ་བསྟན་འཛིན།  
 A lags Shes rab ཨ་ལགས་ཤེས་རབ།  
 A mdo ཨ་མདོ།  
 A myes rma chen ཨ་མྱེས་རྩ་ཆེན།

B

*bca' yig* བཅའ་ཡིག།  
 Bcu pa'i sgrub chen བཅུ་པའི་སྐྱབ་ཆེན།  
 Bdud lha mo བདུད་ལྷ་མོ།  
 Beijing 北京  
*bgegs* བགོགས།  
 Bka' skyong bskul ba བཀའ་སྐྱོང་བསྐྱུལ་བ།  
 Bla ma rin po che བླ་མ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ།  
 Blo bzang Ye shes བློ་བཟང་ཡེ་ཤེས།  
 Bod yul ma བོད་ཡུལ་མ།  
 Bon བོན།  
 Bon brgya བོན་བརྒྱ།

Bon brgya dge legs lhun grub rgya mtsho བོན་བརྒྱ་དགེ་ལེགས་ལྷུན་གྲུབ་རྒྱ་མཚོ།

*bon gshen* བོན་གཤེན།

Bon po བོན་པོ།

Bon rgya Sku skyes nam mkha' rgya mtsho བོན་རྒྱ་སྐུ་སྐྱེས་ནམ་མཁའ་རྒྱ་མཚོ།

Bon sku བོན་སྐུ།

Brag btsan བྲག་བཙན།

Bru བྲུ།

*bsang* བསང།

*bsgrub* བསྐྱབ།

Bskal len ba བསྐལ་ལེན་བ།

*bskang ba* བསྐང་བ།

*bskyed* བསྐྱེད།

*bskyed pa* བསྐྱེད་པ།

Bstan བསྟན།

*bstan bdag* བསྟན་བདག།

Bstan pa dar rgyas བསྟན་པ་དར་རྒྱས།

Bstan pa'i dbang phyug བསྟན་པའི་དབང་ཕྱུག།

Bstan srung rma rgyal spom ra'i bsang mchod gong 'og gnyis བསྟན་སྲུང་མ་

རྒྱལ་སྲོམ་རའི་བསང་མཚོད་འོག་གཉིས།

Btsan Dmu dpon བཙན་དུམ་དཔོན།

*btsan khang* བཙན་ཁང།

Bya seng can བྱ་སེང་ཅན།

*byin* བྱིན།

*byin 'bebs* བྱིན་འབེབས།

C

Chos kyi rgyal mtshan ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་མཚན།

*chos pa rnam dag* ཚོས་པ་རྣམ་དག།

Chos rtsa ཚོས་རྩ།

Chos thog chen mo ཚོས་ཐོག་ཆེན་མོ།

*chu* རྒྱ།



Chu khog རྩུ་ཁོག

D

*dad pa* དད་པ།

Dbal gsas དབལ་གསས།

Dbal gsas kyi sngags དབལ་གསས་ཀྱི་སྒྲགས།

Dbal gsas rngam pa'i dkyil 'khor དབལ་གསས་རྩམ་པའི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར།

Dbal gsas rngam pa'i las rim དབལ་གསས་རྩམ་པའི་ལས་རིམ།

*dbang* དབང།

*dbang lung* དབང་ལུང།

*dbu mdzad* དབུ་མཛད།

*dge bskos* དགེ་བསྐོས།

Dge lugs དགེ་ལུགས།

Dge lugs pa དགེ་ལུགས་པ།

Dge sdug shan 'byed kyi gar 'cham དགེ་སྤྱད་ཤར་འབྱེད་ཀྱི་གར་འཚམ།

*dgra lha* དག་ལྷ།

Dkar mo khyung gshog དཀར་མོ་ལྷུང་ག་ཤོག

Dkar mo rtse rgyan དཀར་མོ་རྩེ་རྒྱན།

Dmar lam zor gyi bsgrub pa དམར་ལམ་ཚོར་གྱི་བསྐྱབ་པ།

Dom pags དོམ་པགས།

*dpon* དཔོན།

Dpyid chos དཔྱིད་ཚོས།

*drag* དྲག

Dran pa nam mkha' དྲན་པ་ནམ་མཁམ།

Drungs rims pa Shes rab rnam rgyal ལྷུངས་རིམས་པ་ཤེས་རབ་རྣམ་རྒྱལ།

*dung chen* དུང་ཆེན།

G

G.yung drung kun khyab gling གཡུང་རྒྱུད་ཀུན་ལྷོང་གླིང།

G.yung drung phun tshog 'Jigs med dpal bzang po གཡུང་རྒྱུད་ཕུན་ཚོག་འཛིགས་

མེད་དཔལ་བཟང་པོ།

Gansu 甘肅

*gdon* གདོན།

Gling rgya bon tshang ma གླིང་རྒྱ་བོན་ཚང་མ།

Gnam tseng zhwa dkar gling གནམ་ཙེང་ཞུ་དཀར་གླིང་།

Gnya' khri btsan po གཉལ་ཁྲི་བཙན་པོ།

*grub thob pa* གུབ་ཐོབ་པ།

Gsang ba 'dus pa གསང་བ་འདུས་པ།

Gser thog lce 'byams གསེར་ཐོག་ལྷེ་འབྲམས།

*gshags pa* གསཤགས་པ།

Gshin rje yab yum གཤིན་རྗེ་ཡབ་ཡུམ།

*gtam med kyi tshig* གཏམ་མེད་ཀྱི་ཚིག།

*gtor ma* གཏོར་མ།

*gtsang* གཙང་།

Gtsod rwa གཙོད་རྒྱ།

Gza' mgo dgu གཟའ་མགོ་དགུ།

gzhal yas khang གཞལ་ཡས་ཁང་།

Gzir mnan bro yi bsgrub pa གཟིར་མནན་བློ་ཡི་བསྐྱབ་པ།

*gzugs med kyi sems can* གཟུགས་མེད་ཀྱི་སེམས་ཙན།

H

Hor nag ཧོར་ནག

K

Keng rus ཀེང་རུས།

*kha btags* ཁ་བཏགས།

Khams gsum sa dgu ཁམས་གསུམ་ས་དགུ།

*khram shing* ཁམ་ཤིང་།

*khri mchod* ཁྲི་མཚོད།

*khri pa bla ma* ཁྲི་པ་བླ་མ།

Khri srong lde btsan ཁྲི་སྲོང་ལྗེ་བཙན།

Khro tshogs ཁྲོ་ཚོགས།

Khyung dkar tshangs pa ཁྱུང་དཀར་ཚངས་པ།

Khyung po ཁྱུང་པོ།

Khyung po thang ལུང་པོ་ཐང་།  
 Kun bzang rgyal ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor ལུང་བཟང་རྒྱལ་བ་འདུས་པའི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར།  
 Kun tu bzang po ལུང་ཏུ་བཟང་པོ།

L

Lanzhou 兰州  
*las rim* ལས་རིམ།  
*lha* ལྷ།  
*lha pa* ལྷ་པ།  
*lha rgyal lo* ལྷ་རྒྱལ་ལོ།  
 Lha srin sde brgyad ལྷ་སྲིན་སྡེ་བརྒྱད།  
 Linxia 临夏  
*lung* ལུང།

M

Ma Bufang 马步芳  
 Ma Lin 马麟  
 Mchod 'bul lha mo མཚོད་འབུལ་ལྷ་མོ།  
*mchod g.yog pa* མཚོད་གཡོག་པ།  
 Mda' chen dkar mo མདའ་ཚེན་དཀར་མོ།  
 Mdo smad མདོ་སྐད།  
*me* མེ།  
 Mgo log མགོ་ལོག།  
 Mkha' 'gro rin chen phreng ba'i rgyan མཁའ་འགོ་རིན་ཆེན་ཕྱེད་བའི་རྒྱལ།  
 Mkhan chen bla ma shes rab rgya mtsho མཁན་ཆེན་བླ་མ་ཤེས་རབ་རྒྱལ་མཚོ།  
 Mkhar nag sku phreng མཁར་ནག་སྐུ་ཕྱེད།  
 Mkhas dbang bon brgya rin po che'i gsung rtsom phyogs bsgrigs མཁས་  
     དབང་བོན་བརྒྱ་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་གསུང་རྩོམ་ཕྱོག་བརྒྱུགས།  
 Mtsho sngon མཚོ་སྒོན།  
 Mu khri btsan po མུ་ཁྲི་བཙན་པོ།

N

Ngo mo རོ་མོ།

Ngo mo ye shes mtsho rgyal རོ་མོ་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཚོ་རྒྱལ།

P

Pad ma rdo rje པད་མ་རྡོ་རྗེ།

Panchen པན་ཆེན།

*phur bu* ཕུར་བུ།

Phywa tshe g.yang gi bsgrub pa ཕྱེ་ཚེ་གཡང་གི་བསྐྱབ་པ།

Q

Qinghai 青海

R

*ral ba* རལ་བ།

Rdzogs chen yul gru tha sad རྫོགས་ཆེན་ཡུལ་གྲུ་ཐ་སང།

Reb gong རེབ་གོང།

Reb gong bon mang phur thog stong dang dgu brgya'i bca' yig རེབ་གོང་

བོན་མང་ཕུར་ཐོག་སྟོང་དང་དགུ་བརྒྱའི་བཅའ་ཡིག།

Reb gong bon mang phur thog stong dang dgu rgya རེབ་གོང་བོན་མང་ཕུར་ཐོག་

སྟོང་དང་དགུ་བརྒྱ།

Rgya gar ma རྒྱ་གར་མ།

*rgya ling* རྒྱ་ལིང།

Rgya lo'i chos thog རྒྱ་ལོའི་ཆོས་ཐོག།

Rgya lo'i sgrub chen རྒྱ་ལོའི་སྐྱབ་ཆེན།

Rgyal ba'i 'dus pa རྒྱལ་བའི་འདུས་པ།

Rgyal bo རྒྱལ་བོ།

Rgyal yum byams ma chen mo'i sngags bstod རྒྱལ་ཡུམ་བྱམས་མ་ཆེན་མོའི་སྔགས་

བསྟོན།

Rje mnyam med Shes rab rgyal mtshan རྗེ་མཉམ་མེད་ཤེས་རབ་རྒྱལ་མཚན།

*rlung* རླུང།

*rlung rta* རླུང་རྟ།

Rma chen spom ra མ་ཆེན་སྟོམ་ར།

Rnam mkhyen rgyal ba gshen rab la 'a zha gsang ba mdo sdud kyis

bstod pa'i mdzad bcu རྣམ་མཁུན་རྒྱལ་བ་གཤེན་རབ་ལ་འཇགས་དབུ་མ་དོ་སྐྱེད་ཀྱིས་  
བསྟོན་པའི་མཛད་བཅུ།

Rnam shes tshogs brgyad རྣམ་ཤེས་ཚོགས་བརྒྱད།

Rnga ba རྩ་བ།

Rnying ma རྟིང་མ།

Rong bo རོང་བོ།

Rong bo dpal gyi dgon chen bde chen chos 'khor རོང་བོ་དཔལ་གྱི་དགོན་ཆེན་བདེ་  
ཆེན་ཚོས་ལའོད།

rtsa ba'i bla ma རྩ་བའི་བླ་མ།

rtsa rud pa རྩ་རུད་པ།

rtsam pa རྩམ་པ།

Rtse zhig Drung rim pa རྩེ་ཞིག་རྩུང་རིམ་པ།

Rtse zhig stong nyid bya 'phur རྩེ་ཞིག་སྟོང་ཉིད་བྱ་འཕུར།

rtswa mi tshang རྩ་མི་ཚང།

S

sa ས།

Sangs rgyas sman lha'i cho ga སངས་རྒྱས་སྐྱེན་སྟེང་ཚོག་

ser phreng སེར་ཕྲེང།

Sgra bla'i rgyal mo སྐྱེ་བའི་རྒྱལ་མོ།

sgrub rnga སྐྱུབ་རྩ།

Shar rdza rin po che ཤར་རྩ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ།

Shel khrab can ཤེལ་ཁྲབ་ཅན།

Shes rab glog gi dbang 'phrin ཤེས་རབ་སློག་གི་དབང་འཕྲིན།

Shes rab rnam rgyal ཤེས་རབ་རྣམ་རྒྱལ།

Skyabs 'gro སྐྱལ་བ་འགོ།

Skyang sprul Lung rtogs rgya mtsho སྐྱུང་སྐྱུལ་ལུང་རྟོགས་རྒྱ་མཚོ།

skye dman སྐྱེ་དམན།

Skye mched bcu gnyis སྐྱེ་མཛད་བཅུ་གཉིས།

skyung སྐྱུང།

Smad pa མྱད་པ།  
 Smad phyogs bon mang མྱད་ཕྱོགས་བོན་མང།  
 Sman ri མྱན་རི།  
 smon lam མྱོན་ལམ།  
 Smon lam sgrub chen མྱོན་ལམ་སྐྱབ་ཆེན།  
 Snyan brgyud a gsal 'phrul gyi lde mig stse མྱན་བརྒྱུད་ཨ་གསལ་འཕུལ་གྱི་ལྷེ་མིག་སྡེ།  
 Snyan bzang bon mang མྱན་བཟང་བོན་མང།  
 smyung gnas མྱུང་གནས།  
 Sprul sku blo ldan snying po'i bsang gzhung མྱུལ་སྐུ་བློ་ལྷན་སྙིང་པོའི་བསང་གཞུང།  
 Sprul sku Ta pi hri tsa'i gsol 'debs མྱུལ་སྐུ་ཏཱ་པི་ཧྲི་ཙཱའི་གསོལ་འདེབས།  
 spyian 'dren མྱུན་འདྲེན།  
 Spyi rting 'khor lo མྱི་རྟིང་འཁོར་ལོ།  
 Spyi tshang མྱི་ཚང།  
 Stod phyogs bon mang མྱོད་ཕྱོགས་བོན་མང།  
 Ston chos མྱོན་ཚོས།

T

Taiwan 台湾  
 Tongren 同仁  
 Tshe dbang gzhung bzhi'i sgrub pa ཚེ་དབང་གཞུང་བཞིའི་སྐྱབ་པ།  
 Tshe dbang rig 'dzin ཚེ་དབང་རིག་འཛིན།  
 Tshe sgrub kyi gzungs sngags ཚེ་སྐྱབ་གྱི་གཞུངས་སྐགས།  
 tshogs 'khor ཚོགས་འཁོར།  
 tshogs gtam ཚོགས་གཏམ།  
 tshogs rdzas ཚོགས་རྫས།  
 Tshul khirms bstan pa 'brug grags ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་བསྟན་པ་འབྲུག་གྲགས།

X

Xiahe 夏河  
 Xining 西宁

Y

Yar nang bon mang ཡར་ནང་བོན་མང།

Yi dam ཡི་དམ།

Yi dam dbang chen 'Bum pa'i dkyil 'khor ཡི་དམ་དབང་ཆེན་འབུམ་པའི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར།

yul lha gzhi bdag ཡུལ་ལྷ་གཞི་བདག།

Z

zan ling ཟན་ལིང།

Zhang chung ma ཟང་ཅུང་མ།

Zhang chung snyan rgyud ཟང་ཅུང་སྟན་རྒྱུད།

zhi ཞི།

zhi ba ཞི་བ།

zlog gtor ལྗོག་གཏོར།

zlog pa ལྗོག་པ།





# TOO MUCH LOVING-KINDNESS TO REPAY: FUNERAL SPEECH RITUALS OF THE WENQUAN PUMI

Gerong Pincuo (Independent Scholar) and  
Henriëtte Daudey (La Trobe University/ SIL International)<sup>1</sup>

## ABSTRACT

Two Pumi funeral speech rituals of the Wenquan Pumi area in northwestern Yunnan Province illustrate the traditional genre of speeches through their use of metaphor and parallelism. The speeches express the central concept of giving and repaying that plays an important role in strengthening social cohesion among Pumi relatives.

## KEYWORDS

China, funeral, metaphor, parallelism, Pumi, Yunnan

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<sup>1</sup> Gerong Pincuo (*kéizox p<sup>hi</sup>nts<sup>hu</sup>*) was born in Wadu Village, where he lived until he was sixteen. He then moved to Yongning because of schooling, to Kunming, and later moved to Lijiang because of work, but still regularly spends time in Wadu Village. He has a longterm interest in his language and culture and is currently writing a monograph on Wenquan Pumi culture. Henriëtte Daudey is a PhD candidate at the CRLD at La Trobe University, Melbourne. She is currently writing a descriptive grammar of the Wadu speech variety of Pumi. The two authors have worked together on documenting Wadu Pumi language and culture since 2010.

## INTRODUCTION<sup>2</sup>

This study introduces two interlinear Pumi (autonym  $t^{h\acute{o}ŋm\text{ə}^3}$  'White People') funeral speeches from the Wenquan area<sup>4</sup> of Southwest China that provide readers insight into the structure of the language and the beauty of its verbal art, something that is easily lost in translation. Due to China's push for rapid modernization, many minority languages are under great pressure – some are already disappearing (Kraus 1992, Bradley 2005). A record of traditional verbal art in its original language is thus valuable for language and culture documentation.

A detailed ethnographic description of a funeral is beyond the scope of the present study, but we do provide some detail on the background of religious and ritual practices to aid the reader. We write from a lay perspective and present a 'typical' Wenquan Pumi person's general knowledge of religion and ritual practices.

The English version was expanded from the original Chinese and edited for ease of reading, and is thus not a direct translation. For the benefit of local readers, a Chinese version follows the English version.

In this initial section, we provide background on the Wenquan Pumi and their language. The second section introduces the Wenquan Pumi funeral and the place of the two funeral speeches in the overall funeral ritual. The third section presents the interlinear text of the  $x^{w\acute{a}z^{w\text{ə}}}$  'dedication speech', followed by a brief commentary on the most relevant cultural background. We then present and comment on the interlinear text of the  $t\acute{i}dz\acute{o}ŋ$

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<sup>2</sup> The authors thank the editors for their comments.

<sup>3</sup> Pumi terms in general follow the guidelines of IPA transcription, except for a  $\eta$  syllable-final that denotes a nasalized vowel. Tone is marked by diacritics over the vowel: an acute accent ( $\acute{a}$ ) for high tone, a circumflex ( $\hat{a}$ ) for falling tone, and a haček ( $\check{a}$ ) for rising tone. Place names are presented in Chinese Pinyin.

<sup>4</sup> Yongning Township, Ninglang Yi Autonomous County, Lijiang Municipality, Yunnan Province. 'Wenquan area' is used here to refer to the area occupied by four Pumi villages adjoining Wenquan Village. The area is part of the administrative Wenquan Cunweihui, which includes about thirty villages.

'appreciation speech'. The paper closes with a discussion of the speeches, highlighting the cultural theme of reciprocity featured in these funeral speeches and, more broadly, in other areas of Pumi life.

The Pumi, one of China's officially recognized fifty-five minority groups, number 42,861, according to the Sixth National Census conducted in 2010.<sup>5</sup> This figure excludes Pumi-speakers living in Sichuan, who are classified as Tibetans.<sup>6</sup> In this paper we refer to the former as 'Pumi' and the latter as 'Pumi-speaking Tibetans'. Estimates of the number of Pumi-speaking Tibetans range from 31,000 to 50,000 people (Harrell 2001, Lu 2001).

Pumi is considered a Qiangic language of the Tibeto-Burman Language Family (Sun 1983; Bradley 2002; Thurgood and LaPolla 2003). Pumi-speakers live scattered over Muli Tibetan Autonomous County, Yanyuan County, and Jiulong County in southwest Sichuan Province and in Lijiang Municipality, Lanping Bai and Pumi Autonomous County, and Diqing Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Northwest Yunnan.

The Wenquan area on which this paper focuses borders Yiji Township (Muli Tibetan Autonomous County) in the north and Qiansuo Township (Yanyuan County) in the east (see Figure 1). There are about a hundred Pumi households with a population of approximately 800 people in the Wenquan area living in Wadu, Bajia, Biqi, and Tuoqi Villages.<sup>7</sup> The villages are situated in a basin at roughly 2,700 meters above sea level, with wet summers and cold dry winters.

Wenquan Pumi are mainly subsistence farmers cultivating Himalayan red rice, potatoes, maize, oats, (highland) barley, buckwheat, and wheat. Cabbage, radish, turnip, squash, beans, apples, pears, peaches, walnuts, sunflower seeds, and prickly ash (Sichuan pepper) are grown less extensively. A significant part of the annual crop is used as livestock fodder, in particular for pigs. A typical family

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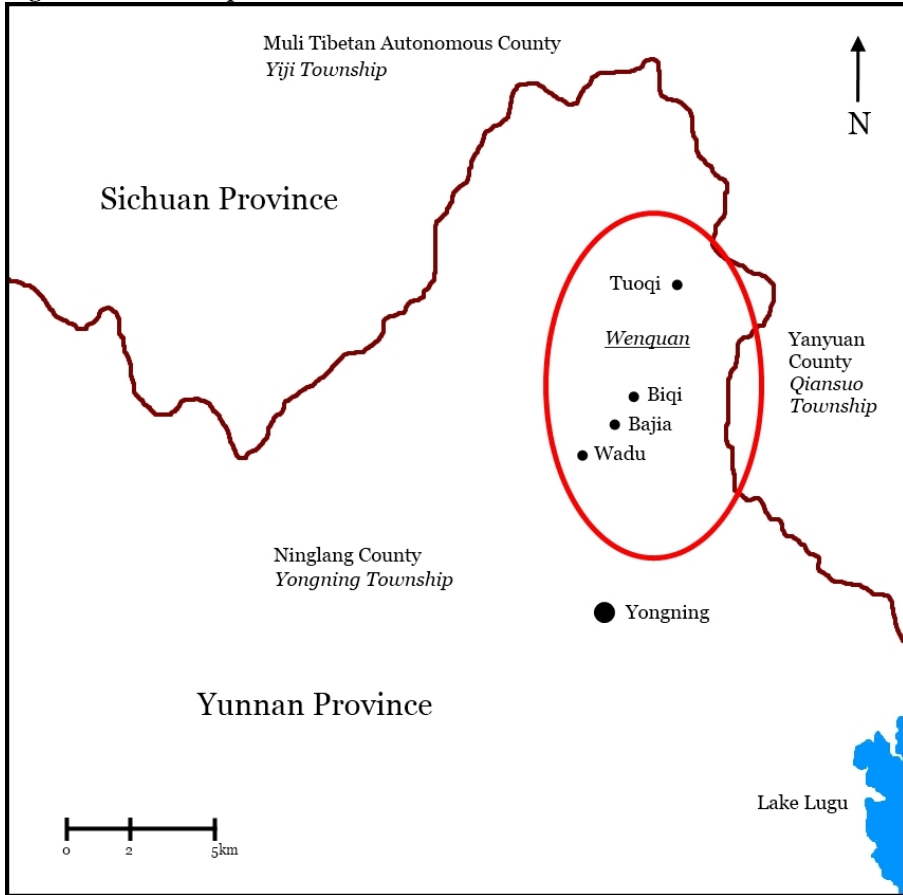
<sup>5</sup> <http://zh.wikipedia.org/zh/中华人民共和国第六次全国人口普查>, accessed 31 July 2013.

<sup>6</sup> See Harrell (2001) for the historical reasons for this situation.

<sup>7</sup> The four Pumi villages are administrative villages. Wadu Village is officially called Zhong Wadu Cun 'Middle Wadu Village'.

owns a plow-ox, a few mules or horses for transport, around twenty pigs, and several cows and chickens. Beginning in about the year 2000, many families have acquired a water buffalo for plowing, rather than the traditional plow-ox. Since around 2010, some families have bought tractors.

Figure 1. The Wenquan Pumi area.<sup>8</sup>



Houses in the Wenquan area are traditionally built from logs and consist of a main one-story building and three two-story buildings surrounding a courtyard. The two-story building on the uphill side of the courtyard has a *hit̚són̚* 'shrine-room' on the second

<sup>8</sup> Map drawn by Henriëtte Daudey based on Google Maps.

floor; the other two-story buildings have animal pens on the first floor and bedrooms and storage space on the second floor. The main building features the *tçimá* 'hearth room' where meals are prepared and eaten, guests are entertained, and most daily rituals such as offerings to the ancestors occur,<sup>9</sup> and an adjoining storage room. The hearth with the cooking tripod<sup>10</sup> is the center of social activity and also symbolizes family harmony.

Similar to Pumi-speaking Tibetans in Sichuan, the Pumi in the Wenquan area adhere to the Gelukpa 'Yellow Hat' Sect of Tibetan Buddhism, mixed with traditional animist practices.<sup>11</sup> Common religious activities include offering libations to the *pêpê* 'ancestors' and *zitsêŋ zidá* 'mountain deities' before meals;<sup>12</sup> inviting monks<sup>13</sup> to calculate auspicious days for travel (or, alternatively, *sôŋma* 'spirit mediums',<sup>14</sup> or elder lay fortune tellers); using a twelve-year cycle zodiac (similar to the Chinese zodiac) calendar to determine when to cultivate land; inviting monks to divine, chant Buddhist scriptures and exorcise *tsú* 'malevolent spirits' when sick; and inviting monks to perform during funerals and weddings. Moreover, if families have two or more sons, they often send one to a monastery (typically to Draemin Monastery [Zhameisi] in Yongning) to be a monk. Due to the relatively lenient enforcement of the one-child-policy in Wenquan and the presence of extended households due to the practice of 'walking marriage',<sup>15</sup> sending sons to become monks is common. An

<sup>9</sup> In the past, people also slept around the hearth.

<sup>10</sup> A metal tripod on which pots and kettles are heated from a fire under it.

<sup>11</sup> See Samuel (1995) for a discussion on how local animist practices are interwoven with Tibetan Buddhism in Tibetan areas.

<sup>12</sup> Libations are placed or poured on the cooking tripod. Such libations range from yak butter tea, broth and meat, to liquor, fruit, and candy, depending on what is served as a meal (the former), or what guests have brought as gifts (the latter).

<sup>13</sup> In Pumi no difference is made between lama and monk: both are referred to as *jemá*.

<sup>14</sup> From Tibetan *srung ma*. Pumi mediums are lay or monastic. Wadu Village has a female lay medium.

<sup>15</sup> 'Zouhun' in Chinese. The neighboring Mosuo are known (Walsh 2005) for this form of marriage in which both husband and wife stay in their own respective homes, and the husband only visits his wife at certain times. Children are raised in the mother's household. Her brother plays an important role in the children's upbringing. Not all Wenquan area Pumi practice this form of marriage.

ideal household has three sons, one of whom stays at home to work the land, one leaves the village to study or find a job, and one is a monk. Families are proud to have a son who is a monk.

The Wenquan area is of special geographic significance in that it forms a link between Pumi living in Yunnan and the Pumi-speaking Tibetans in Yiji Township (Muli Tibetan Autonomous County), Sichuan.<sup>16</sup> Close clan and marriage relationships between the two groups going back several centuries are still maintained through cross-border visits by relatives.<sup>17</sup>

Apart from recent MA fieldwork by anthropologist Wen Yao, in-depth research on Pumi has not been conducted in the Wenquan area. This paper hopes to fill some of those lacunae. For anthropological research conducted in other Pumi areas see Wellens (1998, 2010) and Harrell (2001).

## FUNERALS

Ideally, a Pumi dies by the hearth in the central room of his or her home. A person who dies outside the home becomes a *títsú* 'hungry ghost'. When a person dies, a male household member closes the eyes of the deceased, pours melted yak butter<sup>18</sup> with a piece of gold or silver in their mouth, and closes it. He folds the arms over the chest, bends the legs into a fetal position, and leaves the body lying down facing the hearth. An elder who feels death is near, often lies on the right side of the hearth in this position. A table is put near the corpse. A butterlamp is lit and put on the table together with rice, meat, an

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<sup>16</sup> In terms of religion, the area shows more similarity to Pumi-speaking Tibetans to the north than to animist Pumi areas to the south. Linguistically, the Wenquan speech variety shows overlap with the variety in Yiji Township, as well as other speech varieties in Ninglang County. The Wenquan area is also a bottleneck for trade: people from Yiji Township and Pumi areas further north usually pass through Wenquan on their way to Yongning or Lijiang.

<sup>17</sup> The term 'relatives' used in this paper includes members of a person's patrilineal clan and affinal relatives.

<sup>18</sup> The Pumi in Wenquan do not raise yaks, but buy yak butter from relatives or friends who do.

egg, brick tea, alcohol, and cigarettes. As soon as other villagers hear the wailing of the women of the household, every household sends a member with rice, meat, an egg, biscuits, and liquor<sup>19</sup> that are placed on the table. A person<sup>20</sup> sits next to the table and announces to the deceased which household has come to bring food and liquor and asks the deceased not to trouble that household. Meanwhile, the family of the deceased sends someone to invite one or two monks to come to the home, since the corpse can only be handled by the preparers of the corpse after monks chant Buddhist scriptures.

After the monks leave and it is dark, a group of young men comes to prepare the corpse. Household members are absent during this ritual. The men wash the body with lukewarm water in which pieces of cypress wood have been soaked, and use a hemp rope to secure the body's fetal position. A white (usually hemp) bag is soaked in melted yak butter, the body is put inside, and the bag is tied. A hole is then dug in the side-room,<sup>21</sup> the body is placed inside, and the hole is covered with wood and wet earth. The table with the butterlamps and offerings to the deceased is put next to the buried corpse. The rest of the offerings brought by villagers are consumed by the men, who then go home to ritually cleanse themselves with water and fumigate themselves with the smoke of *pen'áé* 'wormwood' or *q<sup>hwǎ</sup>ǎ* 'lowland rhododendron'. The deceased's clothes are burned in a gully outside the village. The date for the funeral is calculated by a monk the next day.

The complete funeral event lasts three days and two nights. On the first day, close relatives arrive and start such preparations as cooking. On the second day, guests from other villages and monks

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<sup>19</sup> In this paper 'liquor' refers to a distilled alcoholic beverage that is usually store-bought. The Chinese term is *baijiu*. During funerals it is presented in 500ml bottles. 'Ale' is used to distinguish beer brewed at home from store-bought commercial beer. We refer to the latter as 'beer'. It is not possible to buy ale in the market, where liquor and beer can be easily purchased.

<sup>20</sup> This person may be a household member or somebody who has been invited beforehand, such as a close relative or someone with a good relationship with the household who understands the ritual.

<sup>21</sup> On the symbolic 'upper' side of the house; the 'lower' side is for giving birth.

arrive.<sup>22</sup> Female guests go straight to the door of the side-room to wail and mourn the deceased. Men are expected to show little emotion. The guests present such gifts as cash, pork back, maize, wheat, rice, a jar of ale, and a bottle of liquor. The amount of the gifts is standard and is reciprocated in kind on other funeral occasions. The *x<sup>w</sup>áŕ<sup>w</sup>æ* ritual speech accompanies presentation of these gifts. After having presented their gifts, guests are served a meal in the courtyard and then go to the village household that is hosting them. The remainder of the day is spent eating and drinking at different households designated by the village to entertain guests, and at relatives' households. The monks stay at the household of the deceased to read Buddhist scriptures and conduct rituals. The most important ritual conducted during the funeral is the one conducted by monks on behalf of the dead to release their soul *dzǎ* 'soul' from *níwanisôŋ* 'hell' so that it can be reborn quickly.<sup>23</sup>

All Pumi in Wenquan practice cremation, which takes place on the third day between six and seven a.m. The body is placed in a brightly painted wooden palanquin at an auspicious time calculated by monks during the funeral. This container is carried to the *bâtsi* 'cremation site' outside the village and placed inside a wooden pyre. Monks sit near the pyre, reciting scriptures during the cremation ritual. At a certain point in the ritual, the pyre is lit and the deceased's household members who were crying next to the pyre now begin kowtowing. When the kowtowing ends, spectators return to the village. The monks stay. Upon entering the village of the deceased, people wash their faces and hands in the village stream or a communal tap and purify themselves by wafting the smoke of wormwood or lowland rhododendron fires that are lit at household doorways over and around their bodies.

Breakfast is served to the monks and the guests at the household of the deceased around nine a.m. Afterwards, the host

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<sup>22</sup> Sixteen monks were invited to conduct rituals at a funeral we attended in 2010.

<sup>23</sup> There are several views about what happens to a soul after death. The animist view is that the soul travels back to the land of the ancestors. The Buddhist view says that the soul is reborn after forty-nine days. The lay view of post-death seems to incorporate both views.



family, through the *tɪdzɔŋ* ritual, thank relatives and friends for attending and helping. The monks do not attend this ritual. After eating breakfast, the host family takes the monks to their homes by car, mule, or motorcycle. All other guests leave after the *tɪdzɔŋ* ritual.

The two funeral speeches below are the *x<sup>w</sup>áɰ<sup>w</sup>æ* 'dedication speech ritual', which visiting relatives hold when presenting gifts upon arrival at the host family's household, and the *tɪdzɔŋ* 'appreciation speech ritual' at the end of the funeral.

### THE *x<sup>w</sup>áɰ<sup>w</sup>æ* DEDICATION SPEECH RITUAL

The term *x<sup>w</sup>áɰ<sup>w</sup>æ* means 'gift-giving'.<sup>24</sup> In the Wenquan area, funerals are ceremonious and grand affairs, since people believe that the outcome of a person's incarnation partly depends on the scale of the funeral. Additionally, an extravagant funeral demonstrates a family's prestige. Funerals are thus a large expense for a household. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, a funeral cost 50,000 to 200,000 RMB,<sup>25</sup> which was chiefly spent on food for guests and payment to monks. The amount spent depends on the household's finances. Many households go into debt to fund such rituals.

When a funeral is conducted, both patrilineal clan relatives and affinal relatives extend financial and material help in the form of gifts and assistance in cooking for and serving guests. When relatives from other villages arrive at the household of the deceased by mule caravan<sup>26</sup> or car to present their gifts, the host family displays all the gifts in the household courtyard. The funeral gifts are standard, generally known, and not recorded. These gifts are repaid in kind at other funerals. Only smaller gifts that do not fit the standard reciprocal category, such as cash gifts by Nuosu (Yi) friends, are recorded for future reference. Visiting relatives stand by the gifts and offer a dedication speech. They might choose for their representative

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<sup>24</sup> The term is only used for this particular ritual.

<sup>25</sup> At the time of publication, six RMB was approximately one USD.

<sup>26</sup> A caravan consists of at least one horse and three mules loaded with goods.

a man who is considered 'eloquent', i.e., who has a good understanding of the poetics and register of formal speech genres and is proficient in delivering the speeches in the correct form and register. Funeral speeches are a subclass of speeches in general and show poetic qualities, especially the use of parallelism (see lines one, two, three, four, and seven below) and the employment of metaphors (see lines two, three, four, seven, and eight below).

Parallellism and metaphors are also used in blessings, another type of speech. Speeches have no specific meter. When a dedication speech is held, other guests in the courtyard listen. Apart from the dedication speech, of which the wording is completely formulaic, and the display of gifts in the courtyard center, the ritual is rather informal. Others stand around in the courtyard and listen. They do not have designated spots in the courtyard.

The following dedication speech was given by Nianba Pincuo during a funeral in Wadu on 18 July 2012. It was recorded by Gerong Pincuo who transcribed it, edited it, and translated it into Chinese. Henriette Daudey provided the English translation and glosses.<sup>27</sup> The explanation of the dedication speech follows the interlinear text.

X	bɬ	nɔŋ	Y	bɬ
X	household	and	Y	household

ɛpú	bu	gô	tʂ <sup>h</sup> ǎ	gæ	tɕ <sup>h</sup> âu,
grandfather	TOP	nine	generation	GEN	relative

ɛdî	bu	ŋ <sup>j</sup> ǎ	tʂ <sup>h</sup> ǎ	gæ	tɕ <sup>h</sup> âu.
grandmother	TOP	seven	generation	GEN	relative

1. Household X and Household Y have nine generations of blood relations on Grandfather's side and seven generations of blood relations on Grandmother's side.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Gloss abbreviations used in this paper are given at the end of the English version of this paper.

<sup>28</sup> *ɛpú* and *ɛdî* refer to paternal as well as maternal grandparents.

təçæ tɕ<sup>h</sup>âutçæ bu  
now relatives TOP

ɭ<sup>w</sup>éma bi bu ɭ<sup>w</sup>éɖau gə nɳni;  
drying rack pole on TOP drying rack brace DEF like this

ɭ<sup>w</sup>éɖau bi bu ɭ<sup>w</sup>êq<sup>w</sup>ei gə nɳni;  
drying rack brace on TOP drying rack pen DEF like this

ɭ<sup>w</sup>êq<sup>w</sup>ei bi bu ɭ<sup>w</sup>êta gə nɳni;  
drying rack pen on TOP drying rack stone DEF like this

2. The current blood relationship is like the drying rack braces on the drying rack poles; like the drying rack pens on the drying rack braces; like the stones holding the pens of the drying rack.

əkâu gæ qɬɖî bu  
uncle GEN loving-kindness TOP

q<sup>w</sup>é gæ qâɳ wu bu wusəŋ gə nɳni tɛi;  
ox GEN neck on TOP mountain wood DEF like EXIST.H

g<sup>w</sup>ə gæ dú tu bu çî gə nɳni tɛi;  
horse GEN back on TOP saddle DEF like EXIST.H

ɭ<sup>w</sup>é gæ qâɳ wu bu ɭ<sup>w</sup>éɖ<sup>w</sup>əŋ gə nɳni tɛi;  
yak GEN neck on TOP yak rope DEF like EXIST.H

tsé gæ dú tu bu jêŋəŋ gə nɳni tɛi;  
yak GEN neck on TOP yak rope DEF like EXIST.H  
əkâu gæ qɬɖî bu  
uncle GEN loving-kindness TOP

t<sup>h</sup>ě-p<sup>h</sup>ě ně-ts<sup>h</sup>á ɭí mǎ çí.  
FR.SP-repay DOWN-finish can NEG can

3. Uncle's<sup>29</sup> loving-kindness is like the yoke on an ox's neck; it is like the saddle on the back of a horse; it is like the rope around the neck of a yak; it is like the arrow stuck in the back of a red deer. Uncle's loving-kindness can never be totally repaid.

é tʰiŋɔŋ gə bu tʰě-ɹǎŋ,<sup>30</sup>  
 1SG leg DEF TOP FR.SP-long

ʒitʰɿ gə bu tʰě-tsʰŋ;  
 trouser leg DEF TOP FR.SP-short

é ʒəɔŋ gə bu tʰě-ɹǎŋ,  
 1SG forearm DEF TOP FR.SP-long

pajɿ gə bu tʰě-tsʰŋ;  
 sleeve DEF TOP FR.SP-short

é nə-sâudʰau tu ǎ-dzǎ, ɹǎ mə ɕǎ.  
 1SG DOWN-think on IN-achieve can NEG can

4. My legs are too long, my trouser legs are too short; my forearms are too long, my sleeves are too short. I am not able to achieve what I thought.

təçé é ɹədzǎ tǎ nə tʂǎ ti,  
 now 1SG liquor one two CL:pound INDEF

dzǎ tǎ nə tʰǎ ti,  
 tea one two CL:pack INDEF

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<sup>29</sup> *vkâu* refers to maternal uncles.

<sup>30</sup> The character 'ɹ' in the term ɹǎŋ, here and elsewhere in the text, should be represented as voiceless by the use of a circle beneath it, but we were unable to include this character.

ts<sup>h</sup>ĩ tǝ nǎ ʃŋ ti,  
salt one two CL:piece INDEF

ʃ<sup>h</sup>ũbu-li ti, tsáŋŋ-li ti,  
ale jar-DIM INDEF pork.back-DIM INDEF

gũ tǝ nǎ ɬ<sup>w</sup>ǎŋ ti,  
grain one two CL:measuring cup INDEF

pǝ tǝ nǎ ɬ<sup>w</sup>ǎŋ ti,  
flour one two CL:measuring cup INDEF

ɕauɕǎu tǝ nǎ mǎŋ ti dǎ-zǎ  
paper one two CL:yuan INDEF TO.SP-carry

ɛkâu gæ qɬɬi p<sup>h</sup>ǎ zǎ səŋ.  
uncle GEN loving-kindness repay come PERF:EGO

5. Now I have brought one or two bottles of liquor, one or two packets of tea, one or two pieces of salt, a small jar of ale, a small pork back, one or two measuring cups of grain, one or two measuring cups of flour, and one or two pieces of paper (*yuan*) to come and repay Uncle's loving-kindness.

é nǎ-sâud<sup>h</sup>au k<sup>h</sup>i bu, ʃæká bu ɕê zǎ tǝ  
1SG DOWN-think time TOP things TOP big very one

pá ʃu ɕi səŋ k<sup>h</sup>i bu,  
do VOL:SG think PERF:EGO time TOP

bêgu gŋ tɕ<sup>h</sup>ǎŋ ʃǎ mí ɕǎ.  
competence AGT complete can PERF:NEG can

6. When I was first thinking about it, I wanted to do things<sup>31</sup> in a very big way, but, because of (my lack of) competence, I could not complete it.

təçáé é gæ ní tǐ jěi mə gə bu  
 now 1SG GEN thus one get NMZ DEF TOP

pá dzəŋ wu bu  
 snow falling in TOP

t<sup>h</sup>ulǐ gæ ɹ<sup>w</sup>ê ní ti ta dzâ;  
 hare GEN road thus INDEF only be

jíŋmu q<sup>h</sup>u bu  
 tree trunk on TOP

elǐú gæ ɹ<sup>w</sup>ê ní ti ta dzâ;  
 squirrel GEN road thus INDEF only be

t<sup>h</sup>emá gəŋ bu tɕîşəŋ t<sup>w</sup>ǎŋ dɕu  
 pine branch AGT TOP clean water sprinkle DIR

ní ti ta dzâ.  
 thus INDEF only be

7. The things that I have brought now are only like a hare trail in the falling snow, only like a squirrel trail on a tree trunk, only like clean water sprinkled with a pine branch.

tâ pətsí q<sup>h</sup>ətsêi gə bu hí ɹæ ɹəts<sup>h</sup>í  
 this flower small GEN TOP god PL:GEN front

pətsí tó-pě gæ tíŋd<sup>w</sup>i k<sup>h</sup>ǎ-tɕ<sup>h</sup>əŋ ɕəŋ.

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<sup>31</sup> 'Do things' implies helping the deceased's household by bringing many gifts.

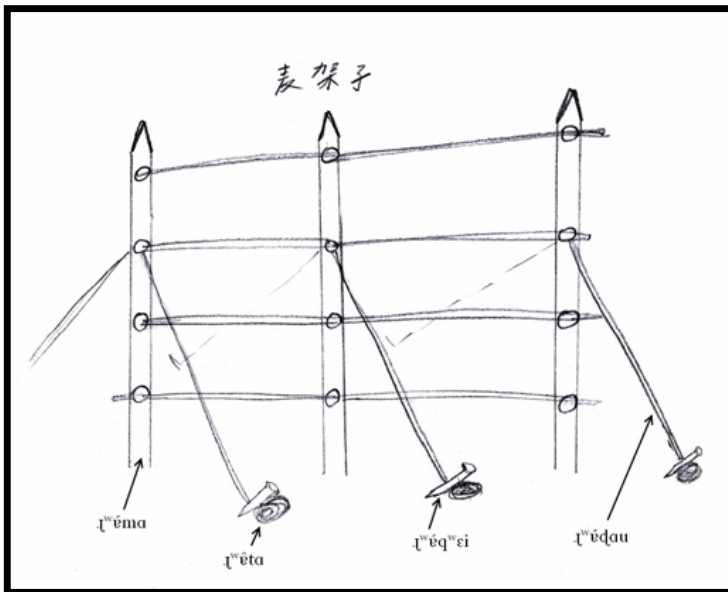
flower UP-bloom GEN luck OUT-come go:IMP:SG

8. May this small flower receive a blessing of blooming flowers before the deities.

The start of the speech (line 1) immediately indicates that the relationship between the deceased's household and that of the guests goes back several generations. The numbers 'nine' and 'seven' are symbolic, and indicate that the relationship between the two households is extremely close. 'Nine' is generally associated with males and 'seven' with females.<sup>32</sup>

This closeness is also symbolised by the metaphor of the drying rack (line 2; see Figure 2 below), wooden structures used for drying buckwheat, barley, oats, and wheat. The metaphor states that family relationships are like a drying rack; if one of the parts is missing, the whole drying rack disintegrates.

Figure 2. Drying rack (illustration by Gerong Pincuo).



<sup>32</sup> The source of these numbers is unclear. Nine generations of male ancestors and seven generations of female ancestors are also mentioned in offerings to the ancestors.

After describing the relationship between the two households, the speaker uses a series of metaphors to describe the 'loving-kindness' of the deceased towards him (line 3). The word *q#dŭ* 'loving-kindness' is not commonly used and refers to the care of parents for their children, or the help given by others in times of need. The speaker uses the yoke of a plow ox (poetically described as 'mountain wood'), the saddle of a horse, the rope that lassoed a yak, and the arrow stuck in the back of a red deer as metaphors to describe the intimacy and the bond of loving-kindness between the deceased and the speaker. The imagery is taken from different areas of daily life: agriculture (plow ox and yoke); trade (horse and saddle, denoting a mule caravan); husbandry (yak and rope, denoting yak herding); and hunting (red deer and arrow). Animals cannot escape the yoke, saddle, rope, or arrow, though they are burdens. The ox must still carry the yoke for plowing, even though it is very heavy. In the same way, even though Uncle's loving-kindness is very great and cannot be repaid, the speaker will still attempt to repay it.

The speaker's conclusion is that uncle's loving-kindness is very great and the relatives lack the means and ability to totally repay him. The metaphor, 'my arms and legs are too long and my sleeves are too short' (line 4) expresses the speaker's limitations, and that they failed to achieve what they set out to do. This form of self-effacement is used as a disclaimer of their performance<sup>33</sup> of gift-giving.

Even so, the speaker goes on, the guests have brought a range of gifts, which are now listed (line 5): the basic necessities of Pumi life: liquor,<sup>34</sup> tea, salt,<sup>35</sup> ale, pork back, grain, flour; and paper (referring to money). Ale is home-brewed beer that is made from a mixture of

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<sup>33</sup> For a discussion on performance see Bauman (1975). Disclaimers of performance in Pumi are used as performance keys of the formal speech genre. They are not only used to disclaim a speaker's ability to communicate, but also to disclaim their ability to uphold cultural values, such as to provide adequate gifts to the grieving family. Funerals are performances in which both the host family and the guests perform important cultural values as expressed through formal speeches.

<sup>34</sup> Liquor is counted in *jin*, since bottles of liquor normally hold 500 milliliters.

<sup>35</sup> This refers to rock salt, of which they brought a few pieces.



barley, highland barley, corn, and buckwheat or millet. It has a slightly higher alcohol content than store-bought beer. Ale is brewed in jars, and an unopened jar of home-brewed ale is one of the funeral gifts. Pork back (pipa meat) is the traditionally cured back of a fattened pig that is slaughtered in winter. The carcass is scalded with boiling water. The innards, bones, and lean meat are removed so that only the fat-layered rump remains. The inside of the rump is sprinkled with salt and prickly ash and then sewn up. The pork back is then stored horizontally on the raised wood platform in the hearth room (and nowadays also on planks in the side-room), and can be kept for years. Grain and flour are measured using traditional wooden measuring cups used in the past as standard dry measures. The  $q^w\check{\eta}$  holds about a liter. The amounts are modestly downplayed to the smallest possible numbers, 'one or two' of each gift, as a form of symbolic self-effacement.

Three other metaphors are used to describe the minimal impact the relatives' gifts have in helping the grieving family (line 7). These are again used as a disclaimer of performance. As invisible as 'a hare trail in the snow', as shallow as 'a squirrel trail on a tree trunk', and as insignificant as 'clean water sprinkled with a pine branch' all indicate that their help does not make the least difference. In Wenquan Pumi culture, a pine branch is used to sprinkle clean water on the home hearth and on a household's mountain shrine every morning as part of a daily incense burning ritual beseeching blessings and protection for the household. Every household has its own mountain shrine, an altar surrounded by a grove of trees in which prayer flags are strung, located on the mountain next to the village.

The speech ends in a prayer that the deities will look favorably on this offering of insignificant gifts 'a small flower' and bless it with a multiplication of much bigger blessings 'blooming flowers' (line 8). This illustrates a spiritual aspect in the mundane activity of helping relatives. Ultimately gift recipients are not only the host family, but also the deities.

## THE *tidzón* APPRECIATION SPEECH RITUAL

The Pumi term *tidzón* 'to sit in a row' has a happy connotation and was used in the past for such events as weddings. Nowadays, it is only used at the end of a funeral to thank the guests. The *tidzón* appreciation speech ritual is conducted in the courtyard of the house after cremation has taken place and the guests are ready to leave. At this time, relatives and other guests sit on benches in two rows facing each other. Men and women sit together with older people on the uphill side. Between the two rows enough space is left for two people to run back and forth side by side: the passageway for the people who offer guests drinks. The table of those who preside over the ritual to one side of the guests is below the eaves of the shrine-room. Seated at this table are venerable clan elders and relatives who gave the largest cash or material gifts. After everybody sits, the host, or a villager chosen for his eloquence, gives a speech thanking relatives and friends. Like the dedication speech, the appreciation speech is poetic (displaying parallelism in lines one, three, five, six, seven, eight, and nine, and metaphor in line three) and frequently has an extremely self-effacing and humbling theme, expressing the incompetence of the host family (as can be seen in lines one, three, six, seven, eight, and nine below). The latter is used as a means to honor the other party and strengthen social ties between relatives from different villages.

After the speaker has expressed the host family's appreciation for the guests, two young men offer him one horn of *ɲɛdzɪ* 'distilled liquor' and one horn of *næŋnæŋ* 'sweet liquor'. Sweet liquor is made from fermented wheat, corn, or rice and looks like porridge. The gruel and liquid are consumed together. The host drains two yak horns with an expression of disgust to indicate the poor quality of the alcohol (another disclaimer of performance). Then the two young men serve elders and guests. They offer liquor with bended waist, lowered heads, and the yak horn raised high above their heads. This expresses respect to elders and guests. This is a time of laughter and entertainment. The young men run back and forth between the guests

to serve them as quickly as possible, and guests sporadically try to trip them up in order to make them spill the liquor. Guests who do not drink the liquor or spill some liquor when drinking are pricked in their neck or face with pine needles by young women and men from the village as punishment. A guest is also punished if they are observed to not swallow the alcohol but, instead, keep it in their mouth to spit out later. After all guests have drunk the two horns of liquor, they bid farewell to the host family and return to their own villages.

The following dedication speech was given by Nianba Pincuo<sup>36</sup> during a funeral in Wadu on 19 July 2012. It was transcribed, edited, and translated into Chinese by Gerong Pincuo, and translated into English and glossed by Henriette Daudey. An explanation follows the interlinear text.

é tó ɛkâu gə bu  
1SG this uncle DEF TOP

zî ɣæ tǝ n̄ɔŋ bu tʂâ níni  
EXIST.AN PL:GEN one CL:day TOP dirt like this

ně-sǐ ɣæ tǝ n̄ɔŋ bu  
DOWN-die PL:GEN one CL:day TOP

mô q<sup>h</sup>u tǝ-ʂêi.  
sky on UP-go:PERF:NON.EGO

1. My uncle was like dirt on the day he was alive; on the day he died he went to Heaven.

mô q<sup>h</sup>u tǝ-ʂêi la  
sky on UP-go:PERF:NON.EGO also

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<sup>36</sup> Giving both speeches presented indicates his eloquence. The guests as well as the host family designated him as the representative for their respective households.

çîmæ            peik<sup>w</sup>âη,    q<sup>h</sup>óηmæ    tç<sup>h</sup>âutçæ    ɹæ  
 village person    brothers    family    relatives    PL:GEN

k<sup>w</sup>êʈj            dzî;  
 contribution    be

nîη = ɹçηni    dæmín    góηba            ʈtç<sup>h</sup>óη  
 2 = PL:AGT    Draemin    monastery    monastic community

ŋ<sup>ɔ</sup>ð            ɹçei            gə    ʃ-dzǎu    k<sup>w</sup>éi  
 seven    CL:hundred    DEF    IN-gather    let:PERF:NON.EGO

2. That he went to Heaven is also due to the contribution of (my) village brothers and relatives; you made 700 monks from Draemin Monastery gather.

təçé    é        bu    zəgóη    gə    bu    t<sup>h</sup>ʃ-ɹçéη,  
 now    1SG    TOP    forearm    DEF    TOP    FR.SP-long

paʈjǐ    gə        bu    t<sup>h</sup>ʃ-ts<sup>h</sup>óη,  
 sleeve    DEF    TOP    FR.SP-short

q<sup>h</sup>ð-tç<sup>h</sup>ú            bu    mâ        mæη            ɹʈ    mǎ    çǐ;  
 OUT-measure    TOP    person    keep up with    can    NEG    can

ʈ<sup>h</sup>çgəη            gə        bu    t<sup>h</sup>ʃ-ɹçéη,  
 lower leg    DEF    TOP    FR.SP-long

zɪʈ<sup>h</sup>ǐ            gə        bu    t<sup>h</sup>ʃ-ts<sup>h</sup>óη,  
 trouser leg    DEF    TOP    FR.SP-short

q<sup>h</sup>ð-d<sup>w</sup>ǎ            bu    mâ        mæη            ɹʈ    mǎ    çǐ.  
 OUT-step    TOP    person    keep up with    can    NEG    can

3. Now my forearms are too long and my sleeves are too short, when I measure with an outstretched hand, I cannot keep up with people;

my legs are too long and my trouser legs are too short, when I take a step, I cannot keep up with people.

çîmə                    peik<sup>w</sup>âŋ,    q<sup>h</sup>óŋmə    tç<sup>h</sup>âutçæ,  
village person    brothers    family    relatives

nŋŋ = ɿŋŋ            çæmínŋ            gôŋba            tçets<sup>h</sup>óŋ  
2 = PL:AGT    Draemin    monastery    monastic community

ŋ<sup>o</sup>ð            ɿei                    gə  
seven    CL:hundred    DEF

ě-dzău            k<sup>w</sup>éi                                    k<sup>h</sup>i            bu  
IN-gather    let:PERF:NON.EGO    time    TOP

é            əkâu            gə            bu            níwanisôŋ            wu  
1SG    uncle    DEF    TOP    hell                    in

tí-dzi                                    t<sup>h</sup>ă            mă            t<sup>h</sup>ŋŋ            mə            la  
upwards-location    escape    NEG    can    NMZ    also

tí-dzi                                    tó-t<sup>h</sup>ă            k<sup>w</sup>éi.  
upwards-location    UP-escape    let:PERF:NON.EGO

4. Village brothers and relatives, when you had 700 monks from Draemin Monastery gather, you also helped my uncle who was unable to escape from Hell, escape upwards (to Heaven).

zêgizé.ŋi            dzî            la            bu  
in the future    be    also    TOP

é            gæ            tsê            nŋŋ            mō            ɿi            bi  
1SG    GEN    son    and    daughter    PL    LOC

nŋŋ = ɿæ            qæçî                                    ně-sâud<sup>l</sup>au            kéi            ŋu;  
2SG = PL:GEN    loving-kindness    DOWN-think    let    VOL:SG

tsê nɔŋ mə̌ ɹɔŋ ts<sup>hw</sup>ɿ mə̌ t<sup>h</sup>ɔŋ la,  
 son and daughter PL:AGT return NEG can also

jĩtsɿ jílu ɹi bi  
 grandson granddaughter PL LOC

nĩŋ = ɹæ qæɖĩ nə̌-sâud<sup>ɹ</sup>au kei ʂu.  
 2 = PL:GEN loving-kindness DOWN-think let VOL:SG

5. In the future, I will have my sons and daughters think of your loving-kindness; if my sons and daughters cannot repay you, I will have my grandsons and granddaughters remember your loving-kindness.

tæçé é mə̌ ɖiɖê gə bu  
 now 1SG person bad DEF TOP

ɖeɹɿ gə tɔŋ mə̌ ʂu çí,  
 speech DEF narrate NEG VOL:SG think

tɔŋ k<sup>hw</sup>ǎ é qæŋ wu k<sup>h</sup>ǎ-tç<sup>h</sup>ôŋ  
 narrate responsibility 1SG neck in OUT-come:PERF:NON.EGO

ɹæçé gə pɿ mə̌ ʂu çí,  
 things DEF do NEG VOL:SG think

ɹæçé gə é qæŋ wu k<sup>h</sup>ǎ-tç<sup>h</sup>ôŋ  
 things DEF 1SG neck in OUT-come:PERF:NON.EGO

6. Now I – this incapable person – do not want to continue to speak, but the responsibility of speaking has come down on my neck; I don't want to conduct these things (i.e., the funeral), but the things have come down on my neck.

m̄ə̌ d̄ɨd̄ɨ̌ gə̌ bu  
 person bad DEF TOP

d̄ɨ.ɨ̌xi s̄ə̌ŋ ḡǔ ɨ̌i bu q<sup>h</sup>ɨ̌ tu t̄ə̌ŋ  
 speech three CL:phrase PL TOP head on narrate

s̄ə̌ŋ ḡǔ ɨ̌i bu m̄æ̌ŋ tu t̄ə̌ŋ w̄ə̌ŋ  
 three CL:phrase PL TOP head on narrate can

t̄s<sup>h</sup>ɨ̌ d̄ɨd̄ɨ̌ gə̌ bu ɕ̄ǐɨ̌æ̌ŋ s̄ə̌ŋ ḡǔ  
 dog bad DEF TOP village top three CL:phrase

ɕ̄ǐm̄æ̌ŋ s̄ə̌ŋ ḡǔ t̄ũ̌ w̄ə̌ŋ.  
 village end three CL:phrase bark can

7. This incapable person can speak three phrases at the beginning and three at the end; this incapable dog can bark three phrases at the top of the village and three at the bottom of the village.

ɕ̄ǐm̄ə̌ peik<sup>w</sup>ə̌ŋ, q<sup>h</sup>ɨ̌ŋmə̌ tɕ<sup>h</sup>ə̌utɕæ̌,  
 village person brothers family relatives

n̄ɨ̌ = ɨ̌ə̌ŋni é gæ̌ d̄ɨ.ɨ̌xi d̄ɨd̄ɨ̌ gə̌ bu  
 2 = PL:AGT 1SG GEN speech bad DEF TOP

k̄ə̌ta gæ̌ n̄ǔ n̄ɨ̌-p<sup>h</sup>ɨ̌ q<sup>hw</sup>æ̌ŋ;  
 threshold GEN outside DOWN-throw away POL:PL

d̄ɨ.ɨ̌xi tɕ<sup>hw</sup>í ḡǔ gə̌ bu  
 speech good CL:phrase DEF TOP

m̄ə̌d̄iŋ t<sup>h</sup>ɨ̌-z̄ɨ̌ q<sup>hw</sup>æ̌ŋ.  
 place FR.SP-carry POL:PL

8. Village brothers and relatives, please throw away my bad speech outside the threshold; and please carry the good phrases to other places.

pʌsəŋ            k<sup>h</sup>æ            t̂ə    ɽədziq<sup>hw</sup>á    ɡə,  
 this morning    time:GEN    this    liquor bowl    DEF

næŋnæŋq<sup>hw</sup>á            ɡə    bu  
 sweet liquor bowl    DEF    TOP

ʈsú    la    k<sup>h</sup>ǎ-t<sup>h</sup>ŋ    q<sup>hw</sup>æŋ,    q<sup>h</sup>ǎ    la    k<sup>h</sup>ǎ-t<sup>h</sup>ŋ    q<sup>hw</sup>æŋ.  
 sour    also    OUT-drink    POL:PL    bitter    also    OUT-drink    POL:PL

9. This morning, please drink this bowl of liquor and this bowl of sweet liquor; please drink it even if it is sour or bitter.

təçé    é    tç<sup>h</sup>ɪní    pú    t<sup>h</sup>ŋ    ɖau    ɡə  
 now    1SG    how    do    drink    DIR    DEF

ní    pú    k<sup>h</sup>ǎ-t<sup>h</sup>ŋ    q<sup>hw</sup>æŋ.  
 thus    do    OUT-drink    POL:PL

10. Please drink it the same way as I drink it now.

t<sup>h</sup>əzə!  
 thank you

11. Thank you!

The appreciation speech starts with, "My uncle was like dirt on the day he was alive" (line one). This self-effacing statement presents the deceased as unimportant, but, after his passing, the deceased 'went to Heaven' (the term *mə* 'sky' is also used to refer to 'Heaven'), indicating that the funeral was conducted in a grand, ceremonious way. Such an elaborate funeral was impossible without the help and material contribution of village 'brothers' and relatives,



who brought with them gifts such as those mentioned in the dedication speech (above). Their material and financial support made it possible to invite many monks to conduct funeral rituals for the deceased. In line four '700 monks' from Draemin Monastery are mentioned, which is hyperbolic.<sup>37</sup>

The same metaphor used in the dedication speech ritual ('our arms and legs are too long and our sleeves are too short,' see above) is used in an extended form in line three as an apology, conveying how inadequately the host family expresses their thanks and appreciation to the guests. Relatives' help made it possible to invite a group of monks who conducted rituals to help the deceased's soul escape from Hell (line four). The term 'loving-kindness' that was used to describe the deceased uncle (see line three of the dedication speech), is now used by the host family to describe their relatives' loving-kindness for them (line five). If their relatives' loving-kindness in helping the deceased escape from Hell cannot be repaid now, later generations will repay it.

The appreciation speech ritual continues with more self-effacing language (lines six and seven), disclaiming the speaker's eloquence, such as 'this incapable dog' that can only bark three random phrases. It invites the addressees to retain only the good words and leave the poorly spoken words behind (line eight).

As the speech finishes, the host invites the guests to drink the sour as well as the bitter liquor (line nine). Sour or bitter flavors only occur when ale or sweet liquor is poorly brewed. The host is suggesting that the alcohol he is serving is not very tasty, another disclaimer of performance. He also expresses this by grimacing when he drinks from the two horns. *q<sup>hw</sup>ǎ* 'bowl' is used in the speech, but in the ritual the guests drink from yak horns. The ritual ends with the guests drinking and then leaving.

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<sup>37</sup> Draemin Monastery is a Gelukpa Tibetan Buddhist monastery in the northeast of Yongning Town at the foot of Niupi Mountain. It has about 200 monks of whom only a few reside permanently at the monastery. The figure 700 may reflect the number of monks residing there at its peak.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The two speech rituals described in this paper are important parts of Wenquan Pumi funerals.  $x^w\acute{a}z^w\grave{a}$  is the dedication speech delivered by visiting relatives when presenting gifts at the funeral. *tǐdzóŋ*, the appreciation speech, is given by the hosts shortly before the guests leave. These speech rituals function somewhat like the funeral's opening and closing ceremonies.

Parallels between the two speeches are evident. Apart from the parallellisms and metaphors typical for formal speeches in general, the word *qudǐ* 'loving-kindness' occurs in both speeches. In Wenquan Pumi culture the term 'loving-kindness' expresses a relationship between persons that is fostered by mutual aid and reciprocity. In the  $x^w\acute{a}z^w\grave{a}$  dedication speech, an attempt at repaying the loving-kindness of the deceased is made by guests, by bringing financial and material help. In the *tǐdzóŋ* appreciation speech, an attempt at repaying the loving-kindness of the guests is then made by the hosts in promising to remember and repay this loving-kindness across the generations. 'Loving-kindness' binds relatives together and is expressed in practical mutual aid during times of hardship.

The balance between giving and repaying that emerges from these speeches can also be seen in the broader context of Wenquan Pumi culture. For example, one should bring a gift when visiting relatives, and relatives should send the visitor off with a gift.<sup>38</sup> This mutual gift-giving strengthens relationships between relatives. This reciprocity is also visible during the funeral. When guests from other villages arrive on the second day of the funeral, they are invited to eat at their relatives' households that same night. Female guests visit and present gifts (usually a packet of biscuits and a bottle of liquor) to every related household. On the morning of the day the guests leave, all related households visit with gifts for the guests to take home. Thus, funerals are important opportunities to strengthen family relationships and practice 'loving-kindness'.

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<sup>38</sup> This is also done to avoid emptiness, which attracts bad luck.

The dedication and appreciation speeches described in this paper are good examples of traditional Pumi speeches: the use of metaphors and parallelism are exemplary for this type of verbal art. The authors hope that this paper will contribute to the maintenance of Pumi verbal art among the Pumi people and that, through this paper, those interested in the area will be able to acquire a better understanding of Pumi language and culture.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGT	agentive
CL	classifier
COLL	collective plural
DEF	definite
DIM	diminutive
DIR	direct evidential
DOWN	downwards
EGO	egophoric
EXIST.AN	animate existential
EXIST.H	horizontal plane existential
FR.SP	from speaker
GEN	genitive
IMP	imperative
IN	inwards
INDEF	indefinite
INSTR	instrumental
LOC	locative
NMZ	nominalizer
NEG	negation
NON.EGO	non-egophoric
OUT	outwards
PERF	perfective
POL	polite
PL	plural
SG	singular
TOP	topic
TO.SP	towards speaker
UP	upwards
VOL	volitional

NON-ENGLISH TERMS

	B
Bai 白	
<i>baijiu</i> 白酒	
Bajia 八家	
Biqi 比奇	
	D
Diqing 迪庆	
Draemin ᠳᠡᠮᠢᠨ Monastery, see Zhameisi	
	G
Gelukpa (Dge lugs pa) དགེ་ལུགས་པ།	
Gerong Pincuo 格荣品措	
	J
<i>jin</i> 斤	
Jiulong 九龙	
	K
Kunming 昆明	
	L
Lijiang 丽江	
Lanping 兰坪	
	M
Muli 木里	
	N
Nianba Pincuo 念巴品措	
Ninglang 宁蒗	
Niupi (Mountain) 牛皮(山)	
Nuosu 诺苏	
	P
Pumi 普米	
	Q
Qiansuo 前所	
	R
RMB (Renminbi) 人民币	

S

Sichuan 四川  
*srung ma* སྤྱང་མ།

T

Tuoqi 拖七

W

Wadu 瓦都  
Wen Yao 文窈  
Wenquan Cun 温泉村  
Wenquan Cunweihui 温泉村委会

Y

Yanyuan 盐源  
Yi 彝  
Yiji 依吉  
Yongning 永宁  
*yuan* 元  
Yunnan 云南

Z

Zhameisi 扎美寺  
Zhong Wadu Cun 中瓦都村  
*zouhun* 走婚

还不完的恩情：

温泉普米在葬礼中举行的  $x^w a^{55} z^w \text{æ}^{52}$  和  $tj^{22} dz\text{ɔŋ}^{55}$  仪式

格荣品措  $kei^{55} z\text{ɔŋ}^{55} p^{h} iŋ^{22} ts^{h} u^{22}$

Henriëtte Daudey (La Trobe 大学,世界少数民族语文研究所,东亚部)<sup>39</sup>

### 1. 引言

本文介绍的是云南省丽江市宁蒗县永宁乡温泉村委会的普米（自称  $l^h \text{ɔŋ}^{55} m\text{ə}^{51}$ ）在葬礼中举行的  $x^w a^{55} z^w \text{æ}^{51}$  和  $tj^{22} dz\text{ɔŋ}^{55}$  两种仪式。

地理上温泉地区北与四川省木里藏族自治县的依吉乡相邻，东与四川省盐源县的前所乡相邻。温泉的普米大概有 100 户，800 左右的人口分别居住在瓦都村、八家村、比奇村和拖七村。

普米人生活的地区海拔都比较高，有牧区、农区和半农半牧区。温泉海拔在 2800 米左右，但是地势平坦，是山间的盆地，所以这里的普米都以农业为主，但是还饲养着很多的牲畜，例如：猪，牛，骡子，马，和羊等。

温泉处在一个特殊的地理位置上，它把云南的普米和四川木里操普米语的藏族连接起来，保持他们之间自古就建立好的紧密关系。从木里迁入温泉的普米，至今都跟木里的亲戚来往不绝，这包括了己家族中的人和跟自己家族有婚姻关系的人。

从来没有人在温泉普米地区做过任何深入的研究，因此，这个地区，对语言学学者和人类学学者来说，可以说是学术界里的一块处女地。温泉普米信仰藏传佛教和原始宗教，这些与生俱来的信仰，密切地影响着我们的文化。每户普米家里的每件事都跟宗教息息相关，包括每日的三次用餐前都要在锅庄上祭祖先和山神；出远门前要请喇嘛来看日子；种地前要看属相；生病时要请喇嘛占卜，诵经和赶鬼；葬礼和婚礼也务必请喇嘛诵经。此外，有两个以上男孩的家庭都会把其中一个送到寺院习经当喇嘛。在普米人眼里看来，家里有位喇嘛的话，是这个家庭的骄傲和荣誉。

<sup>39</sup> 格荣品措来自云南省宁蒗县永宁乡温泉村委会瓦都村，是土生土长的普米，从小就很爱自己民族的语言和文化，并以拥有自己的文化和能够说出自己的语言而感到自豪。从 2005 年开始，跟一位香港老师合作研究普米语和普米音乐，2010 年 6 月开始跟荷兰学者 Henriëtte Daudey 女士合作研究温泉瓦都村的方言。格荣品措也在研究温泉普米文化的方方面面，并准备出版研究所得的成果。本文所介绍的葬礼仪式是研究的其中部分。



在温泉普米地区，人必须在堂屋的火塘边断气，否则人死后就会变成流浪鬼。当一位老者在火塘边断气的时候，主人家会马上请一两个喇嘛来为他诵经做法事。在喇嘛没为死者诵经之前，人不可以碰他的尸体。举行葬礼的日子也会请喇嘛算日子而定。

温泉境外北部四川的普米（讲普米的藏族）大部分都实行火葬，温泉地区的普米也都实行火葬。火葬的整套礼仪通常会举行三天两夜，当中以众喇嘛为逝者超度的仪式为最重要。火葬一般在葬礼第三天的早晨6-7点进行。

下面介绍的是普米葬礼中举行的  $x^w a^{55} z^w a^{51}$  和  $tj^{22} dz\alpha\eta^{55}$  仪式。 $x^w a^{55} z^w a^{52}$  是亲戚家带礼到主人家之后在院坝里摆礼时，亲戚对死者的献语；而  $tj^{22} dz\alpha\eta^{55}$  是葬礼结束的时候主人家对亲戚和朋友感谢的献语。

温泉普米地图（地图由 Henriëtte Daudey 用谷歌地图绘制）



2. 温泉普米葬礼中的 x<sup>w</sup>ɑ<sup>55</sup>z<sup>w</sup>æ<sup>52</sup>

x<sup>w</sup>ɑ<sup>55</sup>z<sup>w</sup>æ<sup>52</sup>在普米语中是"摆礼"的意思。在温泉的普米地区，葬礼举办得很隆重。一般的葬礼就需要花上几万人民币；这些费用包括买菜和喇嘛的工资等。葬礼花费是按每家人的条件而定的。但是很多家庭都会愿意为死者负下一身的债。这是因为他们认为为死者超度得越多，对死者的转世就越有利。所以，一场葬礼的花费往往会为每户人家带来不小的经济压力。

从以前到现在，不管是谁家，在举行葬礼时，亲戚们都会从金钱和物资方面给予帮助。当一户亲戚从自己的村子用马帮（或车）把物资运送到举行葬礼的人家时，主人家就会把亲戚家带过来的所有物资摆在院坝里。那时，带来物资的亲戚或者亲戚请一位能言的人主持这仪式，这人就会站在物资的一旁献语。能言的人就是懂得如何主持葬礼仪式的人。献语的时候，所有的客人都会过来旁听。献语的内容虽然都是公式化的，但其体裁却如诗歌般优美。献语采用的体裁有排比与比喻：排比见下文第 1-4 句，比喻见下文第 2、3、4、7、8 句。以下是一篇完整的献语的记录。

此献语是 2012 年 7 月 18 日念巴品措在瓦都葬礼中讲述，由格荣品措录音和整理。荷兰学者 Henriëtte Daudey 女士翻译成英语。

40

X bu<sup>22</sup> nɔŋ<sup>22</sup> Y bu<sup>22</sup>  
Y 家 和 Y 家

e<sup>22</sup>pu<sup>55</sup> bu<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>22</sup> tʂ<sup>h</sup>æ<sup>22</sup> gæ<sup>55</sup> tɕ<sup>h</sup>au<sup>52</sup>,  
爷爷 (的话) 九 代数 的 亲戚

e<sup>22</sup>di<sup>55</sup> bu<sup>22</sup> n̄<sup>j</sup>ə<sup>22</sup> tʂ<sup>h</sup>æ<sup>55</sup> gæ<sup>22</sup> tɕ<sup>h</sup>au<sup>52</sup>.  
奶奶 (的话) 七 代数 的 亲戚

1. X 家和 Y 家是有着爷爷九代和奶奶七代的亲戚。

40 本文所用缩略语如下：（施助）：施事格助词；（与助）：与格助词；（定冠）：定冠词；（不定）：不定冠词；（已行）：已行体；（自称）：自称句；（他称）：他称句；（名物化）：加在动词后表示名物化的助词；（新知）：新知式，直接发现的知识；（命令）：命令式；（单数）：单数；（复数）：复数；（之时）：时间从属子句标志；（的话）：主题标志；（往下、离说话人等）：动词趋向前缀。

tə<sup>22</sup>ɕæ<sup>55</sup> tɕ<sup>h</sup>au<sup>55</sup>tɕæ<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
现在 亲戚 (的话)

ɬ<sup>w</sup>e<sup>55</sup>ma<sup>55</sup> bi<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup> ɬ<sup>w</sup>e<sup>55</sup>ɬau<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>22</sup> ni<sup>22</sup>ni<sup>22</sup>;  
麦架子 边 (的话) 撑麦架子 (定冠) 像这样

ɬ<sup>w</sup>e<sup>55</sup>ɬau<sup>55</sup> bi<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup> ɬ<sup>w</sup>e<sup>55</sup>q<sup>w</sup>ei<sup>22</sup> gə<sup>22</sup> ni<sup>22</sup>ni<sup>22</sup>;  
撑麦架子 边 (的话) 麦架子钉 (定冠) 像这样

ɬ<sup>w</sup>e<sup>55</sup>q<sup>w</sup>ei<sup>22</sup> bi<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup> ɬ<sup>w</sup>e<sup>55</sup>ta<sup>22</sup> gə<sup>22</sup> ni<sup>22</sup>ni<sup>22</sup>;  
麦架子钉 边 (的话) 麦架子石头 (定冠) 像这样

2. 现在的亲戚关系的话，就像麦架子和撑着麦架子的木头这样；就像撑麦架子的木头和钉在撑着麦架子下的木桩这样；就像木桩和垫在木桩下面的石头这样。

e<sup>22</sup>kau<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>22</sup> qɕ<sup>22</sup>ɬi<sup>55</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
舅舅 的 恩情 (的话)

q<sup>w</sup>e<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>55</sup> qæŋ<sup>55</sup> wu<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
牛 的 脖子 里 (的话)

wu<sup>22</sup>səŋ<sup>22</sup> gə<sup>55</sup> ni<sup>22</sup>ni<sup>22</sup> tei<sup>52</sup>;  
山柴 (定冠) 像这样 有

g<sup>w</sup>əŋ<sup>22</sup> gə<sup>55</sup> du<sup>55</sup> tu<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
马 的 背 上 (的话)

ɕi<sup>22</sup> gə<sup>55</sup> ni<sup>22</sup>ni<sup>22</sup> tei<sup>52</sup>;  
马鞍 (定冠) 像这样 有

ɬ<sup>w</sup>e<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>55</sup> qæŋ<sup>55</sup> wu<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
牦牛 的 脖子 里 (的话)

ɬ<sup>w</sup>e<sup>55</sup>ɬ<sup>w</sup>əŋ<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>22</sup> ni<sup>22</sup>ni<sup>22</sup> tei<sup>52</sup>;  
牦牛套绳 (定冠) 像这样 有

tɕe<sup>55</sup> gæ<sup>55</sup> du<sup>55</sup> tu<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
 马鹿 的 背 上 (的话)

je<sup>55</sup>səŋ<sup>22</sup> gə<sup>55</sup> ni<sup>22</sup>ni<sup>22</sup> tɕi<sup>52</sup>;  
 箭 (定冠) 像这样 有

e<sup>22</sup>kau<sup>55</sup> gæ<sup>22</sup> qɕ<sup>22</sup>dʒi<sup>55</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
 舅舅 的 恩情 (的话)

t<sup>h</sup>e<sup>22</sup>-p<sup>h</sup>ɕ<sup>35</sup> ne<sup>22</sup>-ts<sup>h</sup>ɑ<sup>55</sup> ʒi<sup>55</sup> ma<sup>22</sup> ɕi<sup>35</sup>.  
 (离说话人) 偿还 (往下) 完 能 不 能

3. 舅舅的恩情，就像耕牛脖子上的轭；就像马背上的马鞍；就像牦牛脖子上的套绳；就像鹿背上的箭。舅舅的恩情没办法偿还完。

e<sup>55</sup> t<sup>h</sup>i<sup>55</sup>gəŋ<sup>22</sup> gə<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup> t<sup>h</sup>e<sup>22</sup>-ʒæŋ<sup>52</sup>,  
 我 下腿 (定冠) (的话) (离说话人) 长

ʒi<sup>22</sup>t<sup>h</sup>i<sup>22</sup> gə<sup>55</sup> bu<sup>55</sup> t<sup>h</sup>e<sup>22</sup>-ts<sup>h</sup>ɔŋ<sup>52</sup>;  
 裤脚 (定冠) (的话) (离说话人) 短

e<sup>55</sup> zɛ<sup>22</sup>qəŋ<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>55</sup> bu<sup>22</sup> t<sup>h</sup>e<sup>22</sup>-ʒæŋ<sup>52</sup>,  
 我 手臂 (定冠) (的话) (离说话人) 长

pɑ<sup>22</sup>ʒi<sup>22</sup> gə<sup>55</sup> bu<sup>55</sup> t<sup>h</sup>e<sup>22</sup>-ts<sup>h</sup>ɔŋ<sup>52</sup>;  
 袖子 (定冠) (的话) (离说话人) 短

e<sup>55</sup> ne<sup>22</sup>-sau<sup>55</sup>dʒi<sup>22</sup> tu<sup>22</sup> e<sup>22</sup>-dza<sup>22</sup> ʒi<sup>55</sup> ma<sup>22</sup> ɕi<sup>35</sup>.  
 我 (往下) - 想 上 (往中心) 到达 能 不 能

4. 我的小腿太长，裤脚太短；我的手臂太长，衣袖太短。没能达到我想要的。

tə<sup>22</sup>ɕæ<sup>55</sup> e<sup>55</sup> ʒe<sup>22</sup>dʒi<sup>35</sup> te<sup>22</sup> nə<sup>22</sup> tʂi<sup>55</sup> ti<sup>22</sup>,  
 现在 我 白酒 一 二 斤 (不定)

dzi<sup>35</sup> tɛ<sup>22</sup> nə<sup>22</sup> tʰɰ<sup>55</sup> ti<sup>22</sup>,  
茶 一 二 筒 (不定)

tsʰi<sup>35</sup> tɛ<sup>22</sup> nə<sup>22</sup> tɔŋ<sup>55</sup> ti<sup>22</sup>, tʰɰ<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>-li<sup>55</sup> ti<sup>52</sup>,  
盐 一 二 块 (不定) 黄酒坛-小 (不定)

tsa<sup>55</sup> ɡɔŋ<sup>55</sup>-li<sup>22</sup> ti<sup>22</sup>, ɡu<sup>55</sup> tɛ<sup>22</sup> nə<sup>22</sup> ɕʷəŋ<sup>55</sup> ti<sup>22</sup>,  
猪膘-小 (不定) 粮食 一 二 圆的量杯 (不定)

pɛ<sup>35</sup> tɛ<sup>22</sup> nə<sup>22</sup> ɕʷəŋ<sup>55</sup> ti<sup>22</sup>,  
面 一 二 圆的量杯 (不定)

ɕau<sup>22</sup> ɕau<sup>35</sup> tɛ<sup>22</sup> nə<sup>22</sup> məŋ<sup>55</sup> ti<sup>22</sup> də<sup>22</sup>-zɑ<sup>52</sup>,  
纸 一 二 元 (不定) (往说话人) 带

ɛ<sup>22</sup> kau<sup>55</sup> ɡæ<sup>22</sup> qɰ<sup>22</sup> ɕi<sup>55</sup> pʰɰ<sup>22</sup> zɛ<sup>22</sup> səŋ<sup>22</sup>.  
舅舅 的 恩情 偿还 来 (已行) (自称)

5. 现在我带着一两斤酒，一两筒茶，一两块盐巴，一小坛黄酒，一小个猪膘肉，一两筒粮食，一两筒面，一两块钱，来换舅舅的恩情了。

ɛ<sup>55</sup> nɛ<sup>22</sup>-sau<sup>55</sup> ɕi<sup>22</sup> kʰi<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>,  
我 (往下) -想 (之时) (的话)

lʰæ<sup>22</sup> kʰæ<sup>55</sup> bu<sup>55</sup> ɕɛ<sup>55</sup> zu<sup>22</sup> ti<sup>55</sup> pʰɰ<sup>55</sup> ʂu<sup>22</sup>  
事情 (的话) 大 很 一 做 会

ɕi<sup>22</sup> səŋ<sup>22</sup> kʰi<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>,  
想 (已行) (自称) (之时) (的话)

bɛ<sup>55</sup> ɡu<sup>22</sup> ɡɔŋ<sup>22</sup> tɕʰəŋ<sup>22</sup> ɕi<sup>35</sup> mi<sup>55</sup> ɕi<sup>52</sup>.  
能力 (施助) 做好 能 没 能

6. 本来想把事情办很大，但是，我的能力有限。

tə<sup>22</sup> ɕæ<sup>55</sup>

现在

e<sup>55</sup> ɣæ<sup>55</sup> ni<sup>55</sup> ti<sup>55</sup> jɛi<sup>22</sup> mə<sup>55</sup> ɣə<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
我 的 这样 一 拿 (名化) (定冠) (的话)

pʰə<sup>55</sup> dzɔŋ<sup>22</sup> wu<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
雪 正在下 里 (的话)

t<sup>h</sup>u<sup>22</sup>li<sup>22</sup> ɣæ<sup>55</sup> ɭ<sup>w</sup>e<sup>55</sup> ni<sup>22</sup> ti<sup>22</sup> ta<sup>22</sup> dzi<sup>52</sup>;  
兔子 的 路 这样 (不定) 只 是

jiŋ<sup>55</sup> mu<sup>55</sup> q<sup>h</sup>u<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
树干 上面 (的话)

e<sup>22</sup>ɭ<sup>u</sup><sup>55</sup> ɣæ<sup>55</sup> ɭ<sup>w</sup>e<sup>55</sup> ni<sup>22</sup> ti<sup>22</sup> ta<sup>22</sup> dzi<sup>52</sup>;  
松鼠 的 路 这样 (不定) 只 是

t<sup>h</sup>e<sup>22</sup>ma<sup>55</sup> ɣɔŋ<sup>55</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
松叶 (工具) (的话)

tɕi<sup>55</sup> ʂɔŋ<sup>22</sup> ɭ<sup>w</sup>əŋ<sup>22</sup> ɕau<sup>22</sup> ni<sup>55</sup> ta<sup>22</sup> dzi<sup>52</sup>.  
净水 散 (新知) 这样 只 是

7. 现在我带来的这点物资，就只像兔子在雪地里走过的脚印那样小，就只像松鼠在木杆上走过的路那样浅，就只像（烧香时）洒的净水那样少。

tə<sup>55</sup> pɛ<sup>22</sup>tɕi<sup>55</sup> q<sup>h</sup>e<sup>22</sup>tɕei<sup>55</sup> ɣə<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
这 花 小 (定冠) (的话)

hi<sup>55</sup> ɭæ<sup>55</sup> ɭ<sup>h</sup>t<sup>22</sup>tɕ<sup>h</sup>i<sup>55</sup>  
神 (复数) 的 面前

pe<sup>22</sup>tsi<sup>55</sup> tə<sup>55</sup>-pe<sup>55</sup>      gæ<sup>22</sup>      tin<sup>55</sup>q<sup>w</sup>i<sup>55</sup>  
花                      (往上) 开花      的                      祝福

k<sup>h</sup>ə<sup>22</sup>-tɕ<sup>h</sup>ɔŋ<sup>22</sup>                      ɕɔŋ<sup>22</sup>.  
(离中心) 来 (已行) (他称)      去 (命令) (单数)

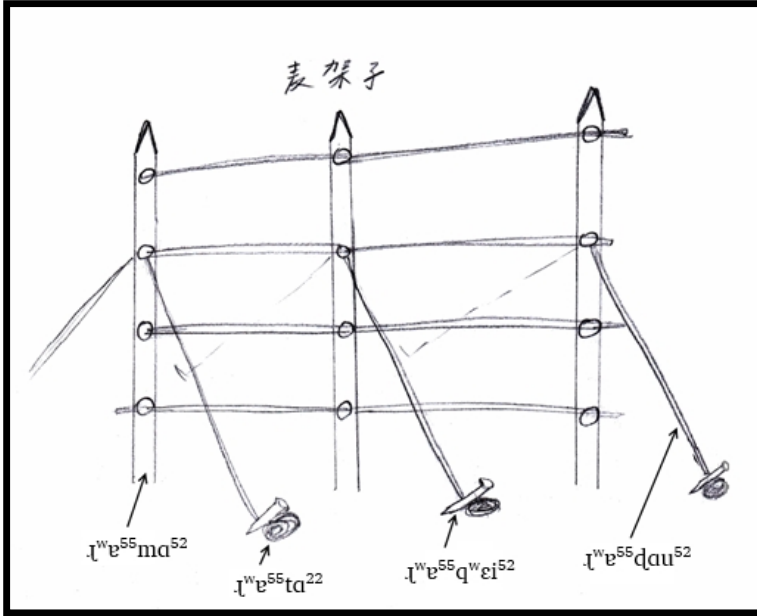
8. 我的这朵小花，希望能够在众神面前得到开放的福分。

献语的开始就开门见山地交代这两家人的亲戚关系很悠久。这里的九代和七代不是具体的数字，只是用这样的手法来说明这两家人有很深的亲戚关系而已。在普米文化里，九跟男性有关，七跟女性有关。

献语用麦架子来说明普米亲戚之间的关系。在普米人家里麦架子是用来挂收割回来的麦捆的建筑(见下面插图)。一个完整的麦架子是由不同部分来支撑着的，缺一不可。这麦架子比喻两家人的亲戚关系是分不开的。

献语者说了两家人的亲戚关系之后，就开始说到死者对自己的恩情。恩情这词不是常用的，一般用在描述父母对孩子的养育之恩，或者是某人对某人给予很大的帮助时才用。献语用耕牛之于轭，马之于马鞍，牦牛之于套牛绳，鹿之于箭这些比喻来说明死者与献语者之间的恩情也就是如此的关系。他负有很重的舅舅的恩情，这恩情是必须偿还的。虽然耕牛脖子上的轭很重，但是它还是需要用它来耕地；虽然舅舅给予他的恩情很大，但是他一定会报答舅舅。这些比喻同时体现了普米的农耕（耕牛和轭）、马帮（马和鞍）、游牧（牦牛和套牛绳）和狩猎（鹿和箭）文化。

麦架子 (插图由格荣品措绘制)



献语者的结论是，舅舅的恩情很大，他无法报答，只能用比喻“我的腿太长，裤脚太短；我的手臂太长，衣袖太短”的比喻手法来说明自己的无能，没法达到自己的愿望。献语时，献语者往往会用这种自贬的方式来营造强调的效果。

虽然献语时献语者会说无法报答舅舅的恩情，但是亲戚家还是会带来很多物资给予帮助，如酒、茶、盐巴、黄酒、猪膘、粮食、面、钱等。普米的黄酒是用大麦、青稞、包谷、苦荞和稗子等粮食酿制的，酒色淡黄，酒精度数比啤酒微高。在葬礼中的黄酒必须是自己酿制的，在市场上没法买来，至于白酒和啤酒则可以在市场买到。猪膘肉也叫琵琶肉，是普米人冬季杀年猪时制作的，也是一种腌肉。制作猪膘肉时会把杀死的猪的毛用开水烫掉，然后剖开猪的腹部，取出所有内脏和骨头，然后撒进盐巴和花椒，再用针缝合刀口，平放即可。这样的肉可以放上几十年。在过去，面和粮食都是用量筒来计量的，一量筒大约有两市斤左右。亲戚家献语时都用了最小的计量（一二）来描述自己带来的东西，也是自贬的手法。

献语也用三个比喻来说明自己带来的东西起不到很大作用，这也是一种自贬的手法。用“雪地里走过的兔子脚印，木杆上松鼠走过的



路，烧香是时撒的净水"来说明自己能做的微不足道。净水是普米人家每天在家里和山上煨桑(烧香)时洒的水。

"希望这朵小花能在众神面前得到开放的福分"是一句祈祷的话语，意思是说：求众神悦纳所献上的礼物。虽然在葬礼中亲戚相互帮忙是常事，但是，最后又归结到了众神的面前，这也体现了接受礼物的不只是主人家，还有众神。

### 3. 温泉普米葬礼中的 $tj^{22}dzɔŋ^{55}$

$tj^{22}dzɔŋ^{55}$  在普米语里是"排着坐"的意思，是温泉普米在葬礼快要结束时，为答谢客人而举行的一种最高礼节。当人们把逝者抬到火葬场火化之后，所有来参加葬礼的亲戚和喇嘛们都会回到主人家里吃早饭。之后，主人家就会用  $tj^{22}dzɔŋ^{55}$  这种独特的方式来答谢亲戚朋友们。喇嘛不会参加这种仪式，他们吃了早饭以后主人家就会安排人用车或骡子送他们回家。

$tj^{22}dzɔŋ^{55}$  一般在院坝里举行。此时，亲戚和客人们会面对面坐成两排，中间留有两个人可以并列来回走动的距离，成为献酒的人的通道。主席的桌子在通道的一端，一般在经堂的屋檐下，主席位是家族中的长者和付出最多礼金和物资的亲戚坐的。

大家坐好之后，主人或主人所请的村中一位比较能言的人代表主人家来向亲戚朋友讲说一篇谢辞。这谢辞的体裁非常优美，像诗歌一样；它的内容往往以主人家极度的自谦自贬为主，来说明他自己的无能，(参下文记述)。

主人或能言的人用精彩的言语答谢完了之后，会有两位小伙子用牦牛角给长者和客人一一献酒。这两位小伙子献酒时，必须弯着腰，低着头，把牦牛角的酒杯高举过头，来表示对客人和长者的尊敬。客人中谁不喝这酒或喝酒时滴在地上的，村里的小伙姑娘们就会用松叶刺他的脸和脖子，以作为惩罚。献酒的时候，会献两杯酒，一杯白酒和一杯甜酒。客人们喝了这两杯酒之后，就会向主人家告别，回到自己的村子去。

此献语是 2012 年 7 月 18 日念巴品措在瓦都葬礼中讲述，由格荣品措录音和整理。荷兰学者 Henrie□tte Daudey 女士翻译成英语。

$e^{55}$     $tə^{55}$     $e^{22}kau^{55}$     $gə^{22}$     $bu^{22}$   
我   这   舅舅   (定冠)   (的话)

ʒi<sup>55</sup> ɿæ<sup>22</sup> tɛ<sup>55</sup> ɳoŋ<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup> tʂæ<sup>55</sup> ni<sup>22</sup>ni<sup>22</sup>,  
有 (复数) 的 一 天 (的话) 土 像这样

nɛ<sup>22</sup>-si<sup>22</sup> ɿæ<sup>55</sup> tɛ<sup>55</sup> ɳoŋ<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
(往下) 死 (复数) 的 一 天 (的话)

mə<sup>55</sup> q<sup>h</sup>u<sup>22</sup> tə<sup>55</sup>-ʂei<sup>22</sup>.  
天 上 (往上) 去 (已行) (他称)

1. 我的这位舅舅，在世的一天，他像土一样；去世了的一天，他去了天上。

mə<sup>55</sup> q<sup>h</sup>u<sup>22</sup> tə<sup>22</sup>-ʂei<sup>22</sup> la<sup>22</sup>  
天 上 (往上) 去 (已行) (他称) 也

ɕi<sup>55</sup>mə<sup>22</sup> pei<sup>22</sup>k<sup>w</sup>əŋ<sup>52</sup>, q<sup>h</sup>əŋ<sup>55</sup>mə<sup>55</sup> tɕ<sup>h</sup>au<sup>55</sup>tɕæ<sup>22</sup> ɿæ<sup>22</sup>  
村里人 兄弟 亲戚 亲戚 (复数) 的

k<sup>w</sup>ɛ<sup>55</sup>tʃi<sup>22</sup> dzi<sup>22</sup>;  
功劳 是

niŋ<sup>22</sup> ɿəŋ<sup>55</sup>ni<sup>55</sup> dæ<sup>22</sup>min<sup>55</sup> ɡəŋ<sup>55</sup>ba<sup>22</sup> tʂ<sup>22</sup>ts<sup>h</sup>əŋ<sup>55</sup>  
你 (复数) (施助) 扎美 寺庙 一个寺院的僧人

ɳə<sup>22</sup> ɿɕi<sup>55</sup> ɡə<sup>22</sup> ɛ<sup>22</sup>-dzau<sup>22</sup> k<sup>w</sup>ɛi<sup>52</sup>.  
七 百 (定冠) (往中心) 聚 让 (已行) (他称)

2. 他去了天上也是村里人弟兄和亲戚们的辛劳，是你们让扎美寺一个寺院的七百位喇嘛相聚。

tə<sup>22</sup>ɕæ<sup>55</sup> ɛ<sup>55</sup> bu<sup>55</sup>  
现在 我 (的话)

zɛ<sup>22</sup>gəŋ<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>55</sup> bu<sup>22</sup> tʰɛ<sup>22</sup>-ɬæŋ<sup>52</sup>,  
 (手臂) (定冠) (的话) (离说话人) 长

pa<sup>22</sup>ji<sup>22</sup> gə<sup>55</sup> bu<sup>55</sup> tʰɛ<sup>22</sup>-tsʰəŋ<sup>52</sup>,  
 袖子 (定冠) (的话) (离说话人) 短

qʰə<sup>22</sup>-tɕʰu<sup>55</sup> bu<sup>55</sup> mə<sup>55</sup> məŋ<sup>22</sup> ɬi<sup>22</sup> ma<sup>22</sup> ɕi<sup>35</sup>;  
 (离中心) 拈 (的话) 人 赶上 能 不 能

tʰi<sup>55</sup>gəŋ<sup>22</sup> gə<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup> tʰɛ<sup>22</sup>-ɬæŋ<sup>52</sup>,  
 下腿 (定冠) (的话) (离说话人) 长

zɛi<sup>22</sup>ɬi<sup>22</sup> gə<sup>55</sup> bu<sup>55</sup> tʰɛ<sup>22</sup>-tsʰəŋ<sup>52</sup>,  
 裤脚 (定冠) (的话) (离说话人) 短

qʰə<sup>22</sup>-dʷa<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>55</sup> mə<sup>55</sup> məŋ<sup>22</sup> ɬi<sup>22</sup> ma<sup>22</sup> ɕi<sup>35</sup>.  
 (离中心) 步 (的话) 人 赶上 能 不 能

3. 我这人的话，手臂太长，衣袖太短；我用虎口量的时候，赶不上别人；我的小腿太长，裤脚太短；跨步时，赶不上别人。

ɕi<sup>55</sup>mə<sup>22</sup> pɛi<sup>22</sup>kʷəŋ<sup>52</sup>, qʰəŋ<sup>55</sup>mə<sup>55</sup> tɕʰau<sup>55</sup>tɕæ<sup>22</sup>,  
 村里人 兄弟 亲戚 亲戚

niŋ<sup>22</sup> ɬəŋ<sup>55</sup> dɕæ<sup>22</sup>miŋ<sup>55</sup> gəŋ<sup>55</sup>ba<sup>22</sup> tɕe<sup>22</sup>tsʰəŋ<sup>55</sup>  
 你 (复数) (施助) 扎美 寺庙 一个寺院的僧人

ŋi<sup>22</sup> ɬɛi<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>22</sup>  
 七 百 (定冠)

ɛ<sup>22</sup>-dzau<sup>22</sup> kʷɛi<sup>55</sup> kʰi<sup>55</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>,  
 (离中心) 聚 让 (已行) (他称) (之时) (的话)

ɛ<sup>55</sup> ɛ<sup>22</sup>kau<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup> ni<sup>55</sup>wa<sup>55</sup>ni<sup>22</sup>səŋ<sup>55</sup> wu<sup>22</sup>  
 我 舅舅 (定冠) (的话) 地狄 里

ti<sup>22</sup>-dʒi<sup>35</sup>      t<sup>h</sup>a<sup>35</sup>    ma<sup>22</sup>    t<sup>h</sup>ɔŋ<sup>22</sup>    mə<sup>55</sup>      la<sup>22</sup>  
(往上) 位置    跨越    不      能      (名化)    也

ti<sup>22</sup>-dʒi<sup>35</sup>    tə<sup>55</sup>-t<sup>h</sup>a<sup>55</sup>      k<sup>w</sup>ɛi<sup>22</sup>.  
往上-位置    (往上) 跨越    让 (已行)    (他称)

4. 村人兄弟和亲戚们，是你们让扎美寺一个寺院的七百位喇嘛相聚，让我这位不能跨越地狱的舅舅跨越了地狱。

ʒə<sup>55</sup>gi<sup>22</sup>ʒə<sup>55</sup>.ɿ<sup>55</sup>    dʒi<sup>55</sup>    la<sup>22</sup>    bu<sup>22</sup>  
以后                      是      也      (的话)

ɐ<sup>55</sup>    gæ<sup>55</sup>    tsɯ<sup>55</sup>    nɔŋ<sup>22</sup>    mə<sup>55</sup>    ɿ<sup>22</sup>      bi<sup>22</sup>  
我    的      儿子    和      女儿    (复数)    (与助)

niŋ<sup>22</sup>    ɿæ<sup>55</sup>                      qɯ<sup>22</sup>dʒi<sup>55</sup>    nə<sup>22</sup>-sau<sup>55</sup>dʒau<sup>22</sup>    kei<sup>22</sup>    ʂu<sup>22</sup>  
你      (复数) 的    恩情      (往下) 想      让      会

tsɯ<sup>55</sup>    nɔŋ<sup>22</sup>    mə<sup>55</sup>    ɿɔŋ<sup>22</sup>  
儿子    和      女儿    (复数)    (施助)

ts<sup>hw</sup>i<sup>35</sup>    ma<sup>22</sup>    t<sup>h</sup>ɔŋ<sup>22</sup>    la<sup>52</sup>,  
偿还    不      能      也

ji<sup>55</sup>tsi<sup>22</sup>    ji<sup>55</sup>lu<sup>55</sup>    ɿ<sup>22</sup>      bi<sup>22</sup>  
孙子      孙女      (复数)    (与助)

niŋ<sup>22</sup>    ɿæ<sup>55</sup>                      qɯ<sup>22</sup>dʒi<sup>55</sup>    nə<sup>22</sup>-sau<sup>55</sup>dʒau<sup>22</sup>    kei<sup>22</sup>    ʂu<sup>22</sup>.  
你      (复数)    (施助)    恩情      (往下) 想      让      会

5. 在以后的生活中，我会让我的儿女们思想你们的恩情；要是我的儿女们不能还你们的恩情的话，我会让我的孙子和孙女们思想你们的恩情。

tə<sup>22</sup>ɕæ<sup>55</sup> ɐ<sup>55</sup> mə<sup>55</sup> dʒi<sup>22</sup>dʒe<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
 现在 我 人 坏 (定冠) (的话)

dɛ<sup>22</sup>ɬei<sup>22</sup> gə<sup>55</sup> tɔŋ<sup>55</sup> ma<sup>22</sup> ʂu<sup>55</sup> ɕi<sup>52</sup>,  
 话 (定冠) 讲 不 会 想

tɔŋ<sup>55</sup> k<sup>hw</sup>æ<sup>55</sup> ɐ<sup>55</sup> qæŋ<sup>55</sup> wu<sup>22</sup> k<sup>h</sup>ə<sup>22</sup>-tɕ<sup>h</sup>ɔŋ<sup>52</sup>;  
 讲 缺口 我 脖子 里 (离中心) 来 (已行) (他称)

ɸæ<sup>22</sup>kæ<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>55</sup> pɯ<sup>55</sup> ma<sup>22</sup> ʂu<sup>55</sup> ɕi<sup>52</sup>,  
 事情 (定冠) 做 不 会 想

ɸæ<sup>22</sup>kæ<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>55</sup> ɐ<sup>55</sup> qæŋ<sup>55</sup> wu<sup>22</sup>  
 事情 (定冠) 我 脖子 里

k<sup>h</sup>ə<sup>22</sup>-tɕ<sup>h</sup>ɔŋ<sup>52</sup>.  
 (离中心) 来 (已行) (他称)

6. 我这没本事的人，不想说话，但是，说话的责任已经压在我的脖子上了；不想办这葬礼，但是，事情已经轮到自己的脖子上了。

mə<sup>55</sup> dʒi<sup>22</sup>dʒe<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
 人 坏 (定冠) (的话)

dɛ<sup>22</sup>ɬei<sup>35</sup> sɔŋ<sup>22</sup> gu<sup>55</sup> ɬi<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup> q<sup>h</sup>ɰ<sup>35</sup> tu<sup>22</sup> tɔŋ<sup>22</sup>  
 话 三 句 (复数) (的话) 头 上 讲

sɔŋ<sup>22</sup> gu<sup>55</sup> ɬi<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup> mæŋ<sup>55</sup> tu<sup>22</sup> tɔŋ<sup>22</sup> wəŋ<sup>22</sup>  
 三 句 (复数) (的话) 头 上 讲 能

tɕ<sup>h</sup>ɰ<sup>35</sup> dʒi<sup>22</sup>dʒe<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
 狗 坏 (定冠) (的话)

ɕi<sup>55</sup>ɬæŋ<sup>22</sup> sɔŋ<sup>22</sup> gu<sup>52</sup>, ɕi<sup>55</sup>mæŋ<sup>22</sup> sɔŋ<sup>22</sup> gu<sup>55</sup> tu<sup>22</sup> wəŋ<sup>22</sup>.  
 村头 三 句 村尾 三 句 叫 能

7. 没本事的人，讲话会头三句、尾三句地讲；没本事的狗，会在村头叫三声，村尾叫三声。

ci<sup>55</sup>mə<sup>22</sup> pei<sup>22</sup>k<sup>w</sup>əŋ<sup>52</sup>, q<sup>h</sup>əŋ<sup>55</sup>mə<sup>55</sup> tɕ<sup>h</sup>au<sup>55</sup>tɕæ<sup>22</sup>,  
村里人 兄弟 亲戚 亲戚

niŋ<sup>22</sup> ɿəŋ<sup>55</sup>ni<sup>55</sup>  
你 (复数) (施助)

v<sup>55</sup> gæ<sup>55</sup> dɐ<sup>22</sup>ɿei<sup>35</sup> dʒi<sup>22</sup>dʒe<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
我的 话 坏 (定冠) (的话)

ke<sup>55</sup>ta<sup>22</sup> gæ<sup>22</sup> nu<sup>55</sup> ne<sup>22</sup>-p<sup>h</sup>e<sup>22</sup> q<sup>hw</sup>æŋ<sup>52</sup>;  
门临 的 外面 (往下) 弄丢 请 (复数)

dɐ<sup>22</sup>ɿei<sup>35</sup> tɕ<sup>hw</sup>i<sup>55</sup> gu<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
话 好 句 (定冠) (的话)

mə<sup>55</sup>din<sup>55</sup> t<sup>h</sup>e<sup>22</sup>-zɑ<sup>55</sup> q<sup>hw</sup>æŋ<sup>22</sup>.  
地方 (离说话人) 带 请 (复数)

8. 村人弟兄和亲戚们，我说得不对的话语，请你们扔在门口的外面；我说得对的话语，请你们带到其它地方去。

pɑ<sup>22</sup>səŋ<sup>55</sup> k<sup>h</sup>æ<sup>22</sup> tə<sup>55</sup> ɿe<sup>22</sup>dzi<sup>22</sup>q<sup>hw</sup>ɑ<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>22</sup>,  
今天早晨 (之时) 的 这 白酒碗 (定冠)

næŋ<sup>22</sup>næŋ<sup>55</sup>q<sup>hw</sup>ɑ<sup>55</sup> gə<sup>22</sup> bu<sup>22</sup>  
甜酒碗 (定冠) (的话)

ʃsu<sup>55</sup> la<sup>55</sup> k<sup>h</sup>ə<sup>22</sup>-t<sup>h</sup>iŋ<sup>55</sup> q<sup>hw</sup>æŋ<sup>22</sup>,  
酸 也 (离中心) 喝 请 (复数)

q<sup>h</sup>æ<sup>22</sup> la<sup>55</sup> k<sup>h</sup>ə<sup>22</sup>-t<sup>h</sup>iŋ<sup>55</sup> q<sup>hw</sup>æŋ<sup>22</sup>.  
苦 也 (离中心) 喝 请 (复数)

9. 今天早上的这碗白酒和这碗甜酒，不管是酸是甜都请你们喝。

tə<sup>22</sup>ɕæ<sup>55</sup> ɛ<sup>55</sup> tɕ<sup>h</sup>i<sup>22</sup>ni<sup>55</sup> pɕ<sup>55</sup> t<sup>h</sup>iŋ<sup>22</sup> ɕau<sup>22</sup> ɡə<sup>55</sup>  
现在 我 怎么 做 喝 (新知) (定冠)

ni<sup>55</sup> pɕ<sup>55</sup> k<sup>h</sup>ə<sup>22</sup>-t<sup>h</sup>iŋ<sup>55</sup> q<sup>hw</sup>æŋ<sup>22</sup>.  
这样 做 (离中心) 喝 请 (复数)

10. 现在我怎么样喝，请你们也这样喝下去。

t<sup>h</sup>ə<sup>22</sup>zæ<sup>52</sup>!  
谢谢

11. 谢谢!

献语的开始以"我的舅舅在世的一天像土一样"来说明舅舅在世的时候不算什么，也是贬低舅舅身份的话。"去世的一天他去了天上"说明舅舅的葬礼很隆重。但是，隆重的葬礼也离开不了乡亲们和亲戚们从人力和物资方面的帮助。在文章的第二部分里说到物资，有了物资就可以举行很隆重的葬礼和请更多的喇嘛为死者诵经超度。在献语里说到"是你们让扎美寺七百位的喇嘛相聚的，"不是真的邀请到了七百位喇嘛，只是用了夸张的说法而已。扎美寺位于永宁坝子的西北方向，一盘山脚下，是一座藏传佛教格鲁派的寺院。（这里说到的七百喇嘛，也许是这座寺院在鼎盛时期住有七百位喇嘛之意，也可能是藏传佛教对寺院僧人人数的要求，这需要进一步证实。）

献语也用了文章第二部分的自贬方法来表达主人家对亲戚的歉意。主人家用"我的手臂太长，衣袖太短；腿太长，裤脚太短。"来说明是亲戚们的帮助才有能力请喇嘛为死者超度，让死者跨越了地狱。在文章的第二部分的献语里说了死者有"恩情"于亲戚，在此献语里主人家

就说亲戚有恩情于自己，还说这恩情要是自己还不了的话，会让他的后代来偿还。

献语继续用比喻的手法来自贬"没本事的狗会在村头叫三声，村尾叫三声。"还叫亲戚把主人家不好的话语留下，好的话语带走。

献语完毕时，主人家会请两位小伙子用牦牛角为亲戚和朋友献上一杯白酒和一杯甜酒。甜酒是用小麦、玉米面或者米酿制而成的，有酒度，形状像粥一样。主人在这里会说"不管这杯酒和这杯甜酒是苦味是酸味都请大家喝下。"酸味跟苦味只有在黄酒和甜酒酿制不好的时候才会产生，主人家的意思是说他酿制的酒不一定好喝。仪式完毕之后，客人们会离去。

#### 4. 结论

在温泉普米的葬礼中，除了宗教仪式之外，还有很多其它的仪式，但是， $x^w a^{55} z^w \text{æ}^{52}$ 和  $tj^{22} dz\text{ɔŋ}^{55}$ 两个仪式也是比较重要的。这两个仪式有点像葬礼的开始和结尾， $x^w a^{55} z^w \text{æ}^{51}$ 是亲戚带物资来参加葬礼献诵的，而  $tj^{22} dz\text{ɔŋ}^{55}$ 则是主人家在亲戚告别前用牦牛角献酒答谢时举行的。

"恩情"这词体现了普米文化中人与人之间的关系，在  $x^w a^{55} z^w \text{æ}^{52}$ 的献语里，亲戚说他们欠了死者的"恩情"，在  $tj^{22} dz\text{ɔŋ}^{55}$ 的献语里，主人家又说他们会记得亲戚家的"恩情"。"恩情"可以把亲戚间们连接起来，也体现了如麦架子般基于彼此间的需要而相互支撑的本质。从上面讨论的两个仪式来看，在温泉普米地区施受的平衡度很重要，也渗透到了普米日常生活当中。比如亲戚间来往时，也会相互送礼。当一个人带着礼物去探访亲戚，他离开的时候，亲戚家也会给他送礼物。这样会加深亲戚之间的关系。

以上两种仪式展示了普米诗词里所采用的比喻和排比两种手法。希望这样美丽的诗词能够一直流传于普米民间，也希望对普米文化感兴趣的朋友们能够通过此文章来了解和认识一点普米的葬礼文化。



# TOWARDS A LOCALIZED DEVELOPMENT APPROACH IN TIBETAN AREAS OF CHINA

Wang Shiyong (Qinghai Normal University)

## ABSTRACT

Since initiating far-reaching economic reforms in the late 1970s, China has experienced significant economic change and growth. However, Tibetans face many challenges such as growing inequality between rural and urban areas, poor education, and marginalization in the market place. These problems are analyzed and a localized development approach that takes into account the unique Tibetan environment, culture, and material development conditions, is suggested to address such issues.

## KEY WORDS

China, development, localized approach, Tibetan

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Since the government of the People's Republic of China (PRC) initiated its Reform and Opening (*gaige kaifang*) program in the late 1970s, China has experienced significant economic change and growth. However, this growth has not been equitable, and the present economic gap between eastern and western China is wide. Using gross domestic product (GDP) per capita as an example, one can see that most western provinces and regions lag far behind the provinces in the coastal areas. In 1998, the national GDP per capita was calculated to be 6,404 RMB<sup>2</sup> but, in the western regions, only Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region reached this figure. The Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), with a GDP per capita of 3,696 RMB, barely reached 57 percent of the national average (Zhuang 2003:39).

The Chinese government sought to address this disparity in its 'Western Development' program (*xibu dakaiifa*), which it announced in 1999. Since then, the western provinces and regions have demonstrated rapid and unprecedented economic growth. One of the major tasks of the Western Development program has been to mitigate the huge gap between west and east, and yet, the gap continues to widen. In 2005, the TAR and Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan, and Yunnan provinces reported per capita GDP in RMB, of 9,114 (TAR), 10,045 (Qinghai), 7,477 (Gansu), 9,060 (Sichuan), and 7,835 (Yunnan). In contrast, the GDP for Zhejiang, Guangdong, and Jiangsu provinces was RMB 27,703, 24,435, and 24,560, respectively (NBS 2006:66). The gap had been about 10,000 RMB in 2002, which translates into a doubling of the gap in just three years.

The stark difference in wealth between eastern and western China is also observable in specific areas pertaining to the social, material, and technical infrastructure, directly and indirectly impacting general economic development of the regions concerned. Crucial discrepancies may be found especially in technology, education, management practices, and levels of innovation. One area

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<sup>1</sup> Much of this article is a revised version of Wang (2009b).

<sup>2</sup> Renminbi refers to the currency of the People's Republic of China.

in which this gap is especially notable is in literacy rates, which are very low in western areas. In 2005, the national literacy rate (for people over the age of fifteen) was 88.96 percent. However, other than in Xinjiang and the Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, the literacy rate in the western regions was, on average, only about seventy-nine percent (NBS 2006:114). Tibetans, in particular, are in a dire situation in terms of literacy; in 2005, for example, literacy in the TAR stood at only 55.16 percent.

In recognition of the growing gaps between east and west in terms of education and income, the central government increased investment in Tibetan areas of China (Fischer 2012). The TAR has received special attention from the central government, in addition to assistance as part of the Western Development program. This is clear from records of the Fourth Tibet Forum held in late June 2001, during which it was decided that the central government would finance 117 projects worth 31.2 billion RMB in the TAR. An additional 1.06 billion RMB was to be provided by other provinces and municipalities to sponsor an additional seventy projects. Most such projects were dedicated to modernizing and improving agriculture, animal husbandry, infrastructure, science, and education, or to improving grassroots Communist Party organizations and environmental protection (Wang et al. 2004:100).

These investments have been the key factor supporting the TAR's above-national average growth rates since the launch of the Western Development program (Fischer 2012), but serious challenges remain. Certain of these problems are common to China's development experiences more generally, but many are unique to Tibetan areas. Similar to other autonomous regions, the Tibetan areas of China have been handicapped by transport difficulties, backward infrastructure, slow industrial development, and so on. However, the expanding urban-rural divide, marginalization of indigenous populations, and low quality education are particularly serious in Tibetan areas. Such problems are exacerbated by the centrally-devised development strategies that are inappropriately applied from eastern coastal regions to the western hinterlands. In

light of this, a locally appropriate model of development for China's Tibetan areas is proposed that takes into consideration the region's unique environment, local culture, and conditions of material production. Before turning to a detailed examination of this localized development model, however, I first outline some of the challenges such a model hopes to redress: issues related to the urban-rural divide, education, and market exclusion in the post-reform era.

#### MAJOR CHALLENGES FOR TIBETANS SINCE THE REFORM AND OPEN PROGRAM

##### The Rural-Urban Divide in Tibetan Areas

Inequality has risen between rural and urban areas all over China since the national Reform and Opening program was initiated (Wang 2009). However, Tibetan areas, especially in the TAR, display some of the most extreme examples of this in China. In 1985, the annual average income for farmers in China was 398 RMB while, in the TAR, it was 353 RMB. In 1996, these figures were 2,090 RMB and 975 RMB respectively – a dramatic increase in the gap between the TAR and China as a whole in this eleven year period. Nevertheless, per capita annual income of the TAR urban households was higher than the national average. For instance, in 1988, per capita annual income of the TAR's urban households was 1,211 RMB, while this figure was 1,192 RMB for China as a whole. In 1996, per capita annual income of the TAR's urban households increased to 5,912 RMB, while it was 5,160 RMB for China as a whole (Nan 2002:125). At this time, the average income of the TAR's urban citizen was therefore higher than that of China's average urban citizen, ranking seventh after Shanghai, Beijing, Guangdong, Zhejiang, Tianjin, and Fujian.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> This disparity had reversed by 2005, when per capita annual income of the TAR's urban households was 10,659 RMB, lower than the national average of 11,321 RMB

Meanwhile, rural incomes lag far behind. As Xu (2003:74) indicated, with the exception of Lhasa, all of the TAR's seventy-three counties are impoverished, making the TAR the largest impoverished area in China. The ratio of average income between the TAR's urban and rural areas increased from 2.79:1 in 1985 to 4.8:1 in 2000, nearly double the ratio of China's national urban to rural ratio. In 2005, per capita annual income of the TAR's rural households was 2,078 RMB, far less than the national average of 3,255 RMB (NBS 2006:357, 370). The ratio of average income between the TAR's urban and rural areas had, by this time, further increased to 5.1:1, despite a quarter of a century having elapsed since the Reform and Open program was implemented.

The situation is even more striking if we examine the average expenditures of urban and rural households in the TAR. As Figure 1 (following page) shows, in 1985, the TAR's average urban household consumption expenditure was 3.37 times that of the TAR's rural households, which had increased to 6.92 times by 1999. More specifically, the average TAR urban households' expenditure on food, housing, transportation, and communication increased much more than rural household expenditure from 1985 to 1999. Among these expenses, transportation and communication posted a huge increase from 1.04 times in 1985 to 37.9 times in 1999. Although the gap in medical services, education, and recreation narrowed somewhat, the difference between the TAR rural and urban areas remains immense.

Figure 1. Comparison of per capita annual consumption expenditure of the TAR's urban and rural households (Rural=1).<sup>4</sup>

Item	Year		
	1985	1995	1999
Average consumption expenditure	3.37	4.36	6.92
Food	2.74	3.50	4.99
Clothing	6.30	8.75	8.49
Housing	0.97	3.36	7.11
Domestic appliances and services	7.46	2.16	3.87
Medical and health	80.00	18.17	12.29
Transportation and communication	1.04	11.33	37.90
Education and recreation	48.48	54.33	46.38
Other goods and services	6.00	25.67	32.42

### Poor Education

A key challenge faced by Tibetans in the modern economic environment is limited access to quality education. Education plays a crucial role in today's knowledge-based economy. Investment in education contributes significantly to productivity growth and to fostering technological change and diffusion. Better education is essential for employability and reducing social exclusion. However, despite impressive progress in educational development in Tibetan areas of China since 1978, a large gap remains between the educational attainments of Tibetans and the Han Chinese majority, and between Tibetans and other ethnic minorities. Education in Tibetan areas is still hampered by such basic issues as improper language of instruction, under-qualified teachers, and lack of materials.

For example, as recently as 1990, less than twenty percent of Tibetans in the TAR had a primary school education (Postiglione et al. 2006). Although this figure increased to 42.3 percent by 2005, the

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<sup>4</sup> Hu and Wen (2001).

illiteracy rate in the TAR was 44.84 percent in the same year, the highest among the western provinces and regions and far higher than the national illiteracy rate of 11.04 percent. The failure at the level of secondary education is astonishing. By 2005, at the national level, 38.3 percent of PRC citizens had a junior secondary education and 12.4 percent had a senior secondary education, while in the TAR these numbers were 8.4 percent and 2.1 percent respectively, the lowest educational levels in all of China (NBS 2006:112-114).

Additionally, among Tibetans who have been to school, only a small number have received a skills-oriented education. Most jobs available to students are as cadres and teachers and the requirement is usually a college education. The major reasons for this are, firstly, the initial educational policy in ethnic minority areas was mainly to train minority cadres in order for the government to strengthen its political power. Consequently, the training needs of personnel in other sectors were neglected. Secondly, the primary economic activities in Tibetan areas are farming and herding. Although the government has established some modern industry in Tibetan areas,<sup>5</sup> most industries were established with the help of more developed provinces and with central government management. As a result, most personnel also came from those provinces. Therefore, there was little need for skilled technicians from Tibetan areas, which is why the training of local people was neglected (Wang 2007).

Education is critical for Tibet's economic development and Tibetan market participation. Language remains a critical issue in hampering the educational outcomes of Tibetans in China. As the official language of China, Chinese plays an important role in people's daily lives, and has become the language of commerce in many Tibetan towns, due to the increased number of Han migrants. Consequently, many government leaders and officials believe that learning Chinese well is crucial for Tibetans to be more competitive in the market. In order to learn Chinese well, they order schools to use Chinese as the instructional language, even though most Tibetan students speak no Chinese, or speak it poorly. This ignores Tibetan

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<sup>5</sup> For more detail, see Wang (2009b).

realities and the importance of mother tongue schooling (Wang 2007). Consequently, Tibetan students do not learn the content of various subjects well, and educational attainment suffers enormously. Nonetheless, many government officials, both Han and Tibetan, persist in thinking that Tibetans' poor Chinese language skills explain their poor educational outcomes.

Finally, the rugged topography and low population density of the Tibetan Plateau make providing educational infrastructure in the region particularly difficult. Additionally, poverty in Tibetan areas makes popularizing basic education a daunting task because of the expenses associated with maintaining children in schools that are often far from home. Furthermore, unbalanced educational structure and vague educational policies contribute to the difficulties of educational development.

### Marginalization of Tibetans in the Market

Limited Tibetan market participation is another critical challenge. It was partially in recognition of this problem that the PRC government launched its Western Development program. Although government policies provide many business opportunities, Tibetans are poorly equipped to respond to and take advantage of such opportunities. My research (Wang 2009a) reveals that, though the Tibetan population is in the majority in most Tibetan areas of China, Tibetans own only about twenty percent of businesses in those areas. This figure alone suggests challenges faced by the Tibetan community, revealing serious competition in seeking employment in their home areas (Wang 2009a).

Because government organizations do not organize and compile business information by ethnicity, I did not obtain information regarding private enterprises by sector during my research. However, Tibetan businesses are usually very small – they are not even medium-sized by international standards. Since small shops represent the most common Tibetan business, I counted small



shops in several major towns in Tibetan areas, and then sorted them by sector and owner ethnicity. For example, in Hezuo – the prefectural seat of Gannan – I visited two main streets where many shops were located and found a total of 370 shops that included clothing (sixty-three), commodities (fifty-nine), restaurants (fifty-two), and small food shops (fifty-two). Others included barbershops, shoe sales, and entertainment centers. The business owners were primarily Han and Muslims.<sup>6</sup> Only forty-two businesses (eleven percent) were owned by Tibetans.

Although the number of Tibetan-owned businesses in this case was limited, many of my interviewees claimed that an increasing number of Tibetans are now involved in business. They said that it was difficult to find a Tibetan-owned business in Hezuo in the late 1990s, but now, many Tibetans were doing business. Interviewees commented that, compared to other counties in Gannan Prefecture, more Tibetans do business in Xiahe, Hezuo, Maqu, and Luqu; nearly half of the restaurants in Xiahe are owned by Tibetans. However, in terms of absolute numbers, the number of Tibetan-owned businesses in Gannan Prefecture remains small. Most businesses are owned by Han and Muslims.

I was told a similar story in Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, during a research visit in 2006. While still few in absolute numbers, the number of Tibetans involved in business had increased in the past several years. For example, although Tibetans constitute more than ninety-five percent of Zeku County's population (as I was told by the director of the county's Bureau of Industry and Commerce), Tibetan-owned businesses accounted for only about thirty percent of the total number of businesses. In relation to the general population, the number of Tibetans involved in business was very small but, compared to seven years ago, there had been a dramatic increase. There were only five restaurants and fifteen shops run by Tibetans in 1999, but in 2006

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<sup>6</sup> The term Muslim refers primarily to members of the Hui and Salar ethnic groups.

there were twenty-three restaurants and 139 shops run by Tibetans in Zeku County Town.

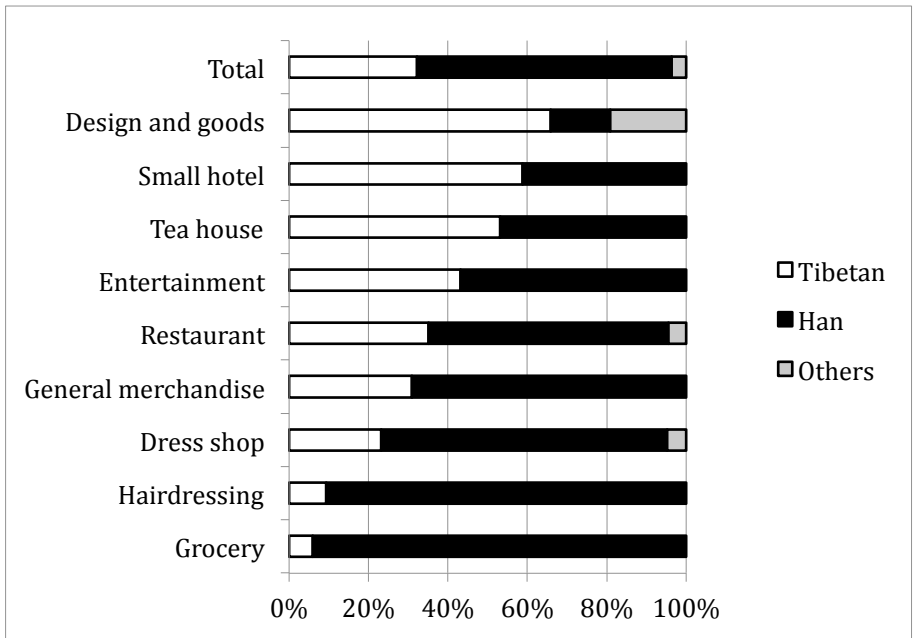
In Jianzha County Town, Huangnan Prefecture, there were a total of 529 businesses, but only fifty-three were Tibetan-owned, accounting for only around ten percent of the total in 2006. However, the Tibetan population accounts for sixty-nine percent of the total county population.<sup>7</sup> Again, compared to 1999, the number of Tibetan-owned businesses had increased significantly by 2006. For example, there were only eight newly-opened restaurants and a few shops run by Tibetans in Jianzha in 1999, but in 2006, there were seventeen restaurants and thirty-one shops run by Tibetans.

Aba Prefecture in Sichuan Province may serve as another example. Due to a relatively well-developed tourism sector, this prefecture's economy is stronger than that of many other Tibetan prefectures (Pad ma 'tsho 2010). However, Tibetan involvement in business activities remains limited. For instance, I counted a total of 675 businesses in 'Bar khams, the Aba Prefecture seat, of which 433 were owned by Han, while 217 were owned by Tibetans, twenty-two were owned by Muslims, and the remaining were owned by people from other nationalities (e.g., Bai). Tibetan-owned business accounted for about thirty-two percent of the total.

Figure 2 provides a breakdown of businesses according to nationality in Ma'erkang highlighting the finding that Tibetan businesses are concentrated in a few sectors, with virtually no Tibetan businesses in such trades as groceries and hairdressing salons.

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<sup>7</sup> See: <http://www.tjcn.org/rkpcgb/rkpcgb/201112/22722.html>, accessed 5 April 2013.

Figure 2. Sample of business breakdown by nationality in 'Bar khams'.<sup>8</sup>

In addition, as Hu (2003:28) noted, private businesses in China are generally divided into two groups. Small businesses such as small shops are called 'Individual Industrial and Commercial Households' (*geti gongshang hu*) and 'Business Households' (*geti hu*); large ones are called 'Private Enterprises' (*siying qiye*).

Interviewees told me that most 'private enterprises' were run by people of Han and Muslim backgrounds and that there were very few Tibetan-run enterprises. For example, according to information provided by the Bureau of Industry and Commerce of Aba County in late 2003, only two of the nine private enterprises in Aba County were run by Tibetans. According to information provided by the Bureau of Industry and Commerce of Hongyuan County, none of the county's seven private enterprises involved Tibetans.

Lhasa has received much more financial support from the central government than other Tibetan areas. Nonetheless, the

<sup>8</sup> Source: fieldwork in the summer of 2006.

situation there is no better than in other Tibetan areas. According to survey data provided by the Lhasa Federation of Industry and Commerce, the number of registered private enterprises in Lhasa was 438 in 2004. The survey carried out a sample analysis of 178 private enterprises. Of these, three enterprises were engaged in primary industry, seventeen in secondary industry, and 158 in the service sector. Among private enterprises, thirty-seven were owned by Tibetans, accounting for twenty-one percent of total enterprises; and 141 enterprises were owned by Han and other ethnic groups, accounting for 79.1 percent of the total.

Some of the Lhasa market displayed an even worse situation. For example, the market on the Potala Palace's west side was locally considered a substantial, significant market. Of its 645 businesses in 2003, Tibetans owned only two. The market with the highest proportion of Tibetan-owned businesses was central Lhasa, where two of the city's most famous temples – Jokhang and Ramoche – are located. Nonetheless, although the share of Tibetan-owned businesses in this area was the highest in Lhasa, it was less than forty percent of the total (Wang and Zhu 2005:169-170). Non-Tibetan migrants owned most businesses in Lhasa.

Tibetan marginalization in the market has been one of the most significant challenges facing Tibetans in their daily life since the promulgation of China's new economic policies. Without local Tibetan participation in the market, there can be only limited economic development. More importantly, development must be rooted where people live if people's well-being is the goal of development.

#### TOWARDS A LOCALIZED DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

The myriad challenges Tibetans face in the realm of development are interwoven. Various factors explain the persistence of these challenges into the twenty-first century, but the government's failure to take local conditions into account is critical. Without considering

Tibet's realities, simply replicating the eastern, coastal development model results in economic failure and continued reliance on government subsidies. Enterprise is not generating the expected capital for Tibet's economic development, and subsidizing industry has become a heavy burden for local governments. Consequently, they rely heavily on central government funding, creating a system of economic dependency that Fischer (2012) dubs 'fiscal Maoism'.

I argue that a localized development approach in Tibet would not only help to relieve this burden, but that it is in accordance with China's overall development strategy. Since rural Tibetans comprise approximately eighty percent of the TAR's population, a localized development strategy focusing on rural Tibet would meet the objectives of the government's people-oriented approach,<sup>9</sup> and is crucial to the central government's political concern of stabilizing Tibet. A localized development strategy must comprehend actual local conditions. Such an approach would assist in addressing the challenges mentioned above, and would need to take into account at least three significant factors of local realities on the Tibetan Plateau: the environment, local culture, and conditions of material production, each explored below.

### The Tibetan Environment

The Tibetan Plateau's environment is characterized by fragility and anthropogenic degradation. The Tibetan Plateau is often called the 'Roof of the World' in reference to its average altitude ranging from 3,000-5,000 meters above sea level. The weather is harsh and arid, and its environment is fragile. However, the Tibetan Plateau is also an extremely important environment. Tibet is the source of major rivers that support life throughout east, south, and southeast Asia, and is thus known as the 'Water Tower of Asia'. In this capacity, Tibet's environment is also of crucial importance to human

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<sup>9</sup> This refers to the government's plan of 'people-focused' development (*yi ren wei ben*).

populations in Asia and, more broadly, to planetary life-support systems. As Shi et al. (2006:10) observed, the Plateau's value in terms of ecosystem services is immeasurable in terms of GDP. Negative changes in the Tibetan Plateau's biosphere directly affects China's environment, impacting its security and development.

Environmental deterioration in Tibet is greatly affected by unrestricted human activity. For example, using the increased number of livestock as an indicator of development, Maduo County in Qinghai Province's Guoluo Prefecture saw an increase in livestock number while neglecting grassland grazing capacity. In 1979, Maduo was reclassified as a rich county due its high livestock productivity (Nan 2002). However, because the number of livestock exceeded the grazing capacity of the grassland, the percentage of deteriorated grassland relative to the total grassland area increased from ten percent in the 1960s to seventy percent in 1998. Consequently, the number of livestock decreased by 55.8 percent from 1979 to 1999, and Maduo become one of the poorest counties in the nation.

Since 1995, the rate of desertification has been twenty percent, and eighty percent of Maduo County's lakes and rivers have dried (Nan 2002:86). The negative effect of grassland deterioration is also demonstrated by loss in livestock weight. The average weight of a sheep and yak in the area was forty to fifty kilograms and 400-500 kilograms, respectively, in the 1970s, but only twenty to twenty-five kilograms and 300 kilograms at the turn of the century (Shi et al. 2006:145). Though a single case, this demonstrates the potentially disastrous results of improper environmental development policy. In addition, the total area of eroded land in China is 3,600,000 square kilometers and the Tibetan Plateau comprises one-third of that total (Shi et al. 2006:103). According to Deng (2005:131-139), each year, on average, about 1,310,000 hectares<sup>10</sup> of grassland of the Tibetan Plateau deteriorated from 1980 to 2000. Additionally, from 1980 to 2000, the average annual grassland deterioration rate of the Tibetan Plateau exceeded China's average, increasing 0.98 percent for China as a whole, but 1.16 percent on the Tibetan Plateau. Deng concluded

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<sup>10</sup> 1,310,000 hectares = 13,100 square kilometers.

that, even though natural causes were an important factor, human activities such as overgrazing were major causes.<sup>11</sup>

### Traditional Tibetan Culture

Traditional cultural practices on the Tibetan Plateau have positive environmental impacts, for example, in maintaining biodiversity (Wu 1997, Shen et al. 2011, Shen and Tan 2012). Indigenous knowledge also has an important role in managing the livestock and pastures of the extensive Tibetan grasslands (Wu 1998). It is important to avoid romanticizing Tibetan culture as inherently and exclusively environmentally friendly (Huber and Pedersen 1997) and acknowledge that traditional landscape management practices did, at times, result in environmental degradation, for example, the misuse of fires to manage pastures (Winkler 1998a) and deforestation (Winkler 1998b). However, it must also be noted that certain traditional environmental practices embody environmentally sound practices with demonstrable positive impacts, such as the practice of 'sealing' territories from human activity (Huber 2004). Such practices suggest that Tibetans have had a vested interest in understanding and adaptively managing the natural environment in which they live.

In addition to such practices, Tibetan Buddhist ideals regarding the interconnectedness of all life and dictums against excessive greed also influence environmental management practices (Xu 2012). After centuries of such practice, it has become difficult for many Tibetans to differentiate between the practice of religion and concern for the environment. Therefore, Tibetan Buddhism and its high-altitude adapted economy of animal husbandry and farming are thoroughly compatible.

Appropriate, localized development of Tibetan areas will consider the limits of the environment and employ Buddhist and other traditional environmental practices, rather than oppose them

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<sup>11</sup> See Stuart and Roche (2012) for a recent review on pastoral policies and environmental issues on the Tibetan Plateau.

as 'backward' and 'superstitious'. Buddhism is based on causality and a belief in the power of reason, which many Buddhist adepts see as according well with modern scientific methodologies (Mkhan chen 'Jigs med phun tshogs 'byung gnas 1995), even if it is at odds with the ideology of dialectical materialism. Employing Buddhism is even more meaningful for a people-oriented development strategy, because it has ideological weight in Tibetan communities. Tibetan well-being cannot be realized without Buddhist values.

### Material Production on the Tibetan Plateau

In addition to recognizing Tibet's unique environment and culture, a localized development approach must consider the local conditions of material development on the Plateau. Approximately eighty percent of Tibetans live in rural areas where animal husbandry and farming are their primary economic activities.<sup>12</sup> Rural poverty is a key factor hindering economic development in Tibetan areas of China and, therefore, focus on Tibet's rural areas is important for economic change and growth, and crucial in benefitting rural Tibetans, thereby increasing the well-being of the majority of Tibetans. However, given the Plateau environment's extreme fragility, expanding the scale of animal husbandry and agriculture are not options. Instead, optimizing high-altitude-adapted animal husbandry and farming production should be the focus of a localized economic development strategy. This strategy should be accompanied by appropriate use of state-of-the art technology, thus capitalizing on the region's unique characteristics and creating a high value-added and competitive product.

Tibetan areas produce localized items that have special value, such as yaks and highland barley. Consequently, one key for a localized development strategy is combining Tibet's unique production strategies and capacities with modern technology.

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<sup>12</sup> Rapid urbanization and resettlement is significantly changing this figure, however, rural poverty remains a major issue in Tibetan areas of China.



Recognizing Tibet's environment, traditional methods of production, and cultural conditions, I suggest that Tibet's economic development should focus on developing high-end, environmentally-friendly, and culturally-sensitive production. Manufacturing, tourism, and other forms of economic production in Tibet should be value-added by combining Tibet's unique resources with modern technology. Production with low environmental impacts should be prioritized. Meanwhile, relevant Tibetan cultural value is attached to production, adding additional value, making it more attractive and competitive. Consequently, the fragile environment would be optimally and sustainably exploited by a focus on high-end production, not mass production, and would also be further protected during production processing. Meanwhile, Tibet's unique material resources are better marketed by attaching cultural value, further demonstrating the uniqueness of Tibetan production. Since markets are increasingly competitive, the proposed development strategy is the only way to integrate Tibetans into a competitive market while preserving their culture and environment.

Tibet's economic development should be based on the local environment and production conditions, while utilizing Tibetan culture for the benefit of creating a sustainable economy. Tibetans understand their environment, production conditions, and culture better than anyone else. Consequently, Tibetan market participation would be greatly increased if such a localized development policy were implemented.

## CONCLUSION

Tibetans have experienced overall improvement in their standards of living since the implementation of the Open and Reform and Develop the West programs. Changes are notable in people's economic life, and also in their religious activities, e.g., Kelsang Norbu and Stuart (2013) note a dramatic increase in the number and accessibility of pilgrimage destinations in the early twenty-first century. This

coincides with Rdo rje bkra shis et al. (2012), who report twenty-two percent of an Amdo family's total annual income in 2011 was spent on religious activities. Nevertheless, Tibetans face such challenges as the expanding urban-rural divide, marginalization of the indigenous population, low quality education, and environmental deterioration. Many political, social, cultural, and environmental factors explain the difficulties met by Tibetan communities. However, the government's failure to take local conditions into account in its policy development has exacerbated the situation.

This paper suggests that a localized development approach would assist in addressing many of these issues. Such a localized model of development would take into consideration three features of the Tibetan Plateau that distinguish it from the rest of China: its fragile and degraded environment; local culture; and conditions of material production. If such a model of development were implemented in China's Tibetan regions then many of the mentioned issues would be solved.

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NON-ENGLISH TERMS

A

Aba 阿坝

B

Bai 白

'Bar khams འབར་ཁམས།

Beijing 北京

F

Fujian 福建

G

*gaige kaifang* 改革开放

Gannan 甘南

Gansu 甘肃

*geti gongshang hu* 个体工商户

*geti hu* 个体户

Guangdong 广东

Guangxi 广西

Guoluo 果洛

H

Han 汉

Hezuo 合作

Hongyuan 红原

Huangnan 黄南

J

Jiangsu 江苏

Jianzha 尖扎

Jokhang ཇོ་ཁང།



L

Lhasa ལྷ་ས།

Luqu 碌曲

M

Maduo 玛多

Maqu 玛曲

P

Potala པོ་ཏ་ལ།

Q

Qinghai 青海

R

Ramoche ར་མོ་ཚེ།

RMB 人民币

S

Salar (Sala) 撒拉

Shanghai 上海

Sichuan 四川

*siying qiye* 私营企业

T

Tianjin 天津

W

Wang Shiyong 王士勇

X

Xiahe 夏河

Xibu Dakaifa 西部大开发

Xinjiang 新疆

Y

*yuan* 元

Yunnan 云南

Z

Zeku 泽库

*yi ren wei ben* 以人为本

Zhejiang 浙江

# THE CHAM'S FIRST HIGHLAND SOVEREIGN: PO ROMÉ (R. 1627-1651)

William Noseworthy (University of Wisconsin-Madison)

## ABSTRACT

From 1627 to 1651, a member of the highland Austronesian Churu peoples, Po Romé, ruled over the lowland Austronesian Cham peoples' kingdom of Panduranga (now Khánh Hòa, Bình Thuận, and Ninh Thuận provinces in Việt Nam). Po Romé has been referred to as the 'Charlemagne' of Cham studies (Bruckmayr, 2013), indicative of his importance in larger understandings of the Cham and their role in Southeast Asian history. The Cham have generally been understood as a lowland people who brought highland peoples into their cultural sphere through conquest and trade. Scott (2009) has recently critiqued such simplistic presentations of the 'civilizing' of the highlands, and argued for a more nuanced understanding of highland identity. However, one conspicuous absence in Scott's portrayal is an examination of highland-lowland relations through the biographies of figures such as Po Romé. I argue that an examination of Po Romé's life and its ethnographic and historiographic contexts deepens our understanding of upland peoples and Cham history.

## KEYWORDS

Austronesians, Cham, Churu, highland-lowland relations in Southeast Asia, local history, Vietnam

INTRODUCTION <sup>1</sup>

This article is about the 'first highland king' of the Cham people of Southeast Asia.<sup>2</sup> The title 'first highland king' must be qualified here. For the lowland Cham Austronesian peoples, the term *po* is flexible. It can mean 'king' or 'sovereign', or may be a title for a diety. Po Romé (r 1627-1651) was almost certainly a 'king' of the Cham in the traditional sense. However, he himself was not Cham, but rather a highlander of Churu ethnic origin. Furthermore, he also was the last figure to be deified and have a Cham tower<sup>3</sup> dedicated to his worship. Thus, this article is concerned with the deification of a single highlander, and how the history of this deification reflects upon discussions of highland-lowland relations in Southeast Asia (Taylor 1989).

Upland Southeast Asia has received much popular attention in recent scholarship, often using the neologism 'Zomia'. This term, coined in 2002 by van Schendel (Scott 2009:14-16), is derived from the terms *zo* 'remote', and *mi*, 'people', terms that are common to several related Tibeto-Burman languages. In coining the term

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<sup>1</sup> Generous funding and support from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Center for Southeast Asian Studies and Department of History as well as the Center for Khmer Studies have made this article possible. Through their help this article includes a transcription of primary source material written in Cham script, Romanization, Vietnamese translation, and English translation. I thank the editorial staff of *Asian Highlands Perspectives* and the reviewers whose commentary helped complete this article, and to all the *anit* 'love' that went into it.

<sup>2</sup> The Cham people now inhabit Cambodia, the south-central coast of Vietnam and parts of the Mekong Delta, and have urban diaspora communities in Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Cambodia, France, Canada, and the United States. For recent studies on the Cham of Vietnam see: Lockhart and Trần Kỳ Phương (2011) or Bruckmayr (2013).

<sup>3</sup> Cham towers dot the coastline and upriver regions of Vietnam. The most famous are the UNESCO world heritage listed Mi Son tower complex, and the Bimong Po Inâ Nâgar tower in Nha Trang, Khánh Hòa, Vietnam. The Bimong Po Inâ Nâgar tower is an active religious site for Vietnamese, who refer to the tower as Tháp Ba, Tháp Thiên Y A Na, or Tháp Ba Po Nâgar. The total span of the tower complexes from north to south accounts for over 100 archeological sites. The towers were constructed from the sixth through the seventeenth century and while their brick composition is uniquely Cham, they resemble Khmer and mainland South Indian temples, as all appear to have been influenced by Pallava styles.

'Zomia', van Schendel sought to address a weakness in the definition of 'areas', particularly the nebulous region between the relatively well-formed area studies programs of East Asianists and South Asianists, the comparatively 'younger' Southeast Asianists, and the 'youngest' Central Asianists. He argued that, though individual expertise within fields had sought to understand 'margins', the very nature of area studies forced academics (willingly or not) to predominantly identify their expertise to outsiders as bound by states (for examples 'Vietnamologists', 'Indonesianists', etc. in Southeast Asia). Instead, van Schendel proposed a region of highland areas that was not limited to Southeast Asia, but also included portions of southern China and the Tibetan Plateau, Assam in India, Bhutan, and Nepal (van Schendel 2002:654-656).

By 2007 Van Schendel had 'tentatively' expanded Zomia to include major portions of regions that he had addressed briefly in his first article, but did not explicitly include – western China, northern Pakistan, and Afghanistan – based upon reactions from scholars of these regions (Michaud 2010:198). In 2009, Zomia was popularized by Scott's work on upland responses to state-making processes, in which he argued for a much smaller Zomia, limited predominantly to upland Southeast Asia, with a brief extension into southern China and Assam in India, thus encompassing five major ethno-linguistic groupings: Austronesian, Austro-asiatic, Tai-Kadai, Sino-Tibetan, and Miao-Yao peoples (Michaud 2010:187-190). Furthermore, Scott argued that many features of highland societies were cultural adaptations designed to keep the state at bay (Scott 2009:9), including: flexible social, ethnic, and linguistic identities; millenarian religious traditions; swidden agricultural practices; willingness to migrate; and oral or semi-literate historical traditions. However, as Aung-Twin (2011) has noted in his discussion of Scott's book, the question is always one of evidence (Aung-Thwin et al. 2011). Hence, Lieberman (2010) argued that geographical and cultural factors may have led to Zomian-like features amongst lowland peoples. In conjunction with Lieberman's thinking, I have also recently argued

that in cases such as the 'highland' liberation movement 'FULRO',<sup>4</sup> lowland minorities, particularly the Cham and Khmer Krom, were actors of paramount importance. Therefore, in some cases, *majority-minority* relations might be of equal importance to consider, rather than those based on elevation (Noseworthy 2013). Nevertheless, the concept of Zomia, and the potential of 'Zomian studies' has grown more popular and promises to continue provoking scholarly discussions.

Scholars of Southeast Asia have found local articulations of the highland-lowland relations discussed by Scott not only in mainland Southeast Asia, but also in island Southeast Asia: in the Philippine islands of Luzon, Mindanao, and the Visayas; the island of Borneo (Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei); and the island of Sumatra in Indonesia. For example, the notions of the Sa raya and Sa ilud regions in the Southern Philippines and Ulu/ Ilir (upstream/ downstream) among the Jambi-Palembang rivalry on the island of Sumatra have been particularly popular (Scott 1966, Illeto 1971, Andaya 1993, Silander 2006). The upriver-downriver extension of Scott's argument was actually largely established long before he published his book. Nevertheless, this makes his recent book relevant for a wider consideration of Southeast Asian history within the upriver/ downriver framework. This framework has hence been used by the most recent generation of Southeast Asianists to critique the foundations of the field.

When Southeast Asian Studies was still in its nascent stage as a discipline in the post-World War II era of scholarship, the 'Beyer Wave Migration Theory' was still an accepted formal argument for the origins of highland peoples. According to this theory the 'autochthonous' highlanders were 'remnants' of earlier 'waves' of migrations and colonial conceptions of highlanders as *indigènes*, *negritos*, or *sauvages* remained in recent memory (Scott 1966, 1997

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<sup>4</sup> The Front Unifié de Lutte des Races Opprimées (FULRO: Unified Front of the Fight of Oppressed Races) sought to create an independent state in the 1960s and 1970s along the southern portion of the Annamite Chain between present-day Vietnam and Cambodia.

[1994]:10-12, 2009:128; Junker and Morrison 2003:131-164).<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, while the initially overtly prejudiced overtones of these terms were discarded, certain common associations with the highlands and lowlands continue to pervade both governmental policy and scholarship throughout Zomia.

Lowlands are still commonly considered to be centers of power, prestige, culture, civilization, and homogeneity while highlands are imagined as non-prestigious, illiterate, marginal, and powerless (Scott 1997 [1994]:10-12, 2009:127-144; Giersch 2006:21-36). Through the examination of the Cham deification of Po Romé, I show that this highland-lowland dynamic must be rethought, particularly as I argue that Po Romé's reign has become remembered as a watershed moment in the history of the lowland Cham population. An important element to this watershed moment of historical change was the process of interaction between highlanders and lowlanders, highland-like characteristics present in lowland Cham society and lowland-like characteristics that Po Romé apparently either adapted or had as part of his personal characteristics. Combined, these historical tropes help to explain *why* Po Romé was deified. However, the deification of Po Romé as a highlands' representative and a potent figure that permeates the lowland historical and religious imaginaire of the Cham, adds a new dynamic to highland-lowland relations. This article examines this process by outlining the history of highland-lowland relations before Po Romé's reign, followed by a historical analysis of Po Romé's reign and an analysis of the impact of this history on Cham historiographic traditions and religious imaginings.<sup>6</sup>

## METHODS

Research for this article was completed in the libraries of the Social Sciences and Humanities at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

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<sup>5</sup> *Indigènes* and *sauvages* are French terms. *Negritos* is Spanish.

<sup>6</sup> 'Po' is generally a title meaning 'sovereign' or 'lord'.

(fall 2009 through spring 2013) and the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam (summer 2011 and fall 2012). Close readings and translations of several Cham language manuscripts written in Akhar Thrah were then completed from the personal collections of Dharbha Po Dam and Sikhara (fall 2012 and summer 2013). Finally, additional research was completed at the library of the Center of Khmer Studies in Siem Reap, Cambodia (summer 2013). Throughout this research, there was a sense that there are very few Akhar Thrah materials in library and archival collections. Hence, the broad variety of material that has been incorporated into this analysis includes a bilingual translation, transliteration, and transcription of a Cham manuscript titled *Da Lakal Po Romé Angan Ja Saot* that appears in the Appendix to this article. However, before giving a detailed analysis of this manuscript, it follows to outline the history of the Cham and uplanders before Po Romé.

#### THE CHAM AND UPLANDERS BEFORE PO ROMÉ

The Cham civilization owes its roots to the circulation and expansion of Austronesian peoples that moved out of Taiwan to the Philippines Islands, through the Indonesian and Malay archipelagos and then northward along the Vietnamese coast, beginning between 7,000 and 4,000 years ago (Reid 1988:1-10, Belwood 1999:126-135). The earliest written accounts of what may have been Cham polities are the characters 'Lín Yì' that appear on a Chinese map of Jin Rinan from 282 CE (Taylor 1999:155, Quach-Langlet 1988:27, Southworth 2001:323). Although the Chams were a predominantly coastal civilization at this point, recent archaeological evidence suggests that they became engaged in long distance tribute trade with the Chinese Han (206 BCE-220 CE) and later dynasties (Glover and Nguyễn Kim Dung 2011:64-78). The first Vietnamese history to record the Cham is the fifteenth century work of Ngô Sĩ Liên, the *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư*. Ngô Sĩ Liên recorded these polities as Lâm Ấp, the Vietnamese



pronunciation of the classical Chinese characters of *Lín Yì*.<sup>7</sup> Vietnamese language historiographic tradition rarely, if ever, mentions the potentially pejorative connotations of the characters *Lín Yì* in classical Chinese. Nevertheless, it is fairly certain that these terms had the connotation that the peoples of *Lín Yì* were 'barbarians' by usage of the character *yì* (Harrel 1990:531, Wengui 2001:96). However, in popular scholarly imaginings, Cham civilization has hardly ever been considered 'barbarous', as the civilization of the Cham demonstrated localizations of Indic culture at the centers of Indrapura (the city of Indra) and Amavarati (also a school of Buddhism).<sup>8</sup> As the archaeologist, Southworth (2011), has argued, the early Cham polities followed a Malay riverine pattern of settlement, meaning that upland areas were connected to protected ports, and that these port areas were settled by Austronesians first, while migrations into the hinterlands occurred later (Southworth 2011).

While it appears that Cham lowland areas are more prevalent in the archeological evidence of Cham polities, when compared to highland areas, trade and cultural relations have frequently been cited to demonstrate that Cham polities were poly-ethnic (Gay 1988, Nakamura 1999, Shine 2009). A collection of sixth century Chinese documents known as the *Shuijing zhu* referred to both 'red' and 'white' Chams. Certain historians currently believe that the so-called 'red' Chams were, in fact, upland peoples (Quach-Langet 1988:2). Highland peoples may have been first recorded by the Chams themselves in an 1160 CE epigraphic record, which is now in Khánh Hòa Province, that referred to the 'Randaiy, Mada, and other

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<sup>7</sup> Ngô Sĩ Liên's fifteenth century work, *Đại Việt Sử Ký Toàn Thư [The Veritable Records of the Great Viet]* began to refer to the *entirety* of Cham polities using the single name Chiêm Thành, the 'Cham Citadel' by the tenth century (Ngô Sĩ Liên 2010:170). For students of Vietnamese history, Ngô Sĩ Liên's work, while problematic, is also practically canonical.

<sup>8</sup> These urban centers were known as *nāgara*, from the Sanskrit for 'town' or 'city' (Monier and Williams 2005 [1899]:533-534), although translations of the term should show flexibility. The Cham term *nāgar* or *nāger* came to mean "city capital, country [in the rural sense], country [in the political sense] and State" through Aymonier and Cabaton's Cham-French dictionary in 1906 (Aymonier and Cabaton 1906:243). Today, the Cham term *nāgar* may also mean 'province' in reference to contemporary Vietnamese provinces.

Mlecchas'. Randaiy is taken here to mean Rhadé. Mada has been argued to refer to the Jarai or Bahnar peoples. Mlecchas is thought to signify 'barbarous tribes' and is often taken to mean other highland groups (Aymonier 1891:43-44, Maspero 1928:6-7, Majumdar 1963:194, Hickey 1982:2, Michaud 2009:40).

While the early references to the appearances of relations between lowland and highland peoples tend to be predominantly military, from the eleventh century onwards, trade relations became another important method of highland-lowland interaction. This statement does not presume that these interactions were always made on equal footing, as lowlanders are most likely to have been engaged predominantly in extracting from the highlands. Nevertheless, the reliance of lowlanders within the Cham polities upon highland goods such as horns, beeswax, feathers of rare birds, aloeswood, eaglewood, gold, and ivory likely allowed small groups or individuals, from the highlands to reposition themselves as intermediaries. It is thus no surprise that scholars have presented evidence of trade, along with archaeological, cultural, anthropological, and linguistic evidence that suggests the early Cham polities included both Austroasiatic (Maa, M'ngong, Bahnar, Stieng, and Sre) and Austronesian (Rhadé, Jarai, Roglai, Koho, and Churu) peoples (Quach-Langlet 1988, Gay 1988, Nakamura 1999, Shine 2009). The Cham polities were thus not an ethnically uniform political space.

Furthermore, due to the diversity of highland peoples present in Cham polities and the reliance on hinterland goods within these polities for both internal and external trade, it is not surprising that highland peoples eventually repositioned themselves, and a highlander from the half-Cham and half-Roglai/ Koho ethnic Churu group, named Po Romé, ascended to the head of the Cham royalty in 1627 (Aymonier 1890). A review of the hagiography of Po Romé demonstrates that it was possible for highlanders to have great impact on lowland culture or, at the very least, to become memorialized as such a catalyst, and even, in the case of Po Romé, a local marker for historical change.

THE HISTORY OF PO ROMÉ

The contemporary understanding of Po Romé's reign differs substantially from that recorded in the Cham text that will be examined in the next section. It is perhaps most marked by the Cham tower, Bimong Po Romé, in Hậu Sanh, Ninh Thuận Province, Vietnam, which was constructed in the seventeenth century. Cham towers were frequently constructed for the veneration of *devaraja* or 'god-king' figures, although occasionally these constructions were built to venerate female deities as well, such as in the case of the Bimong Po Inâ Nâgar in Nha Trang, Khánh Hòa, Vietnam. Constructing a tower meant that an earthly figure of local prowess or prominence could bridge the gap between the human and heavenly realm and become a deity. The Bimong Po Romé was the last of these towers to be built, and thus Po Romé may have been the last historical figure to enter the Cham pantheon. Construction of the last Cham tower marks the emergence of many contemporary Cham cultural trends, and the end of the 'ancient' Cham society in which it was still possible for an individual to become a god, venerated after death. The tower is an active site of worship for the more Shaivite-influenced Cham Ahier and the Islamic-influenced, though 'polythetic,' Cham Awal.<sup>9</sup> The first appearance of the Akhar Thrah script may be inside this tower. A series of small ancestral grave markers known as *kut* are nearby. Two of Po Romé's wives are portrayed in the form of statues at the site. For reasons explained later, there is no statue of the Vietnamese wife, Bia Ut, at this location. The other wives are a Rhadé – Bia Than [Su] Can – and a Cham Awal – Bia Than [Su] Cih (Sakaya 2008:91-92, 2013:35).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Cham Ahier and Cham Awal are ethno-religious subcategories.

<sup>10</sup> The Rhadé are an Austronesian people that are one of the original inhabitants of the Cham polities. The Cham Awal are an Islamic influenced ethnically Cham religious minority that are also known as the Bani. For information on the Awal population, see Yosuko Yoshimoto (2011, 2012) and Rie Nakamura (1999). For information on the Rhadé population, see Sakaya (2013) as well as (2008). For further information on the religious system of the Cham of Vietnam, see Thành Phần (2010).

Po Romé relied on personal relations to build his political base within the Cham community. An ethnic Churu who formed a marriage alliance with the highland Austronesian Rhadé and the Cham Awal, Po Romé journeyed to Kelantan Malaysia numerous times, where he studied *kabar rup* 'Malay magic', and began going by the Muslim name, Po Gahlau 'sovereign of aloeswood', (Inrasara 2006:50, Sakaya 2008:91-92). As a result of such connections, the Malaya-Muslim cultural influence in the Cham kingdom of Panduranga increased during this time. The European missionary, Father Escola Omf, for example, travelled along the coast of Panduranga in 1640 and noted that a distinct portion of the Cham population was Muslim (Yves-Maguin 1979:270-271). Cham scholars have since credited Po Romé with the stabilization of Cham society by unifying the Islamic-influenced Cham Awal and Indic-influenced Cham Ahier populations (Yosuko 2011:326).

Po Romé has also been credited with the creation of the Cham *sakawi* calendar, which is a hybrid of the Indic solar *sāka* system and the Malaya-Muslim *jawi* lunar calendar, and is still consulted to determine the dates of religious and social rituals in the Cham community (Yosuko 2011:326). Finally, the Po Romé reign can be seen in the legacy of several royal family members that he left behind from his journeys to Malaysia, the lineage of Churu-Cham royalty that lasted for the next seventeen Cham royals, and the title 'Po Gahlau' that was associated with a *tuan*<sup>11</sup> who moved, or perhaps even 'repatriated' to Cham territory more than a century later, as recorded in the Cham manuscript *Ariya Tuen Phaow* (Sakaya 2008:91-92).

As a highlander in Cham society, Po Romé's reign constituted a major, lasting shift in relations between highland peoples, mainly the Churu, and lowland peoples, particularly the Cham. The next fourteen sovereigns of the Cham were all Churu. The Jarai and the Rhadé peoples are said to have had royal Cham treasure that they received at the end of his reign.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the Cham king, Po

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<sup>11</sup> A *tuan* is a Malay Islamic teacher or educated elite.

<sup>12</sup> While there may not be enough evidence to assert that these groups necessarily became 'lowland' by interacting with lowland peoples, it is likely

Saut, who ascended the throne in 1655, was Po Romé's son by his Rhadé wife. Subsequently, the remaining Cham territories were actually ruled, in part, by highland peoples up until 1786 (Gay 1988:54-56). Po Romé's impact can also be seen through the influence that the text *Dalikal Po Romé* exerts on formative scholarly work for the next several centuries, including those of renowned Cham scholars Hợp Ai and Bó Thuận, and such French Orientalists as Etienne Aymonier and Paul Mus.

A sharp critique of Cham manuscripts from Aymonier questioned the historical value of their 'mythical content', leading him to the conclusion that they should not be used for historical study (Aymonier 1890). However, the replication, retelling and reinterpretation of the historical content contained within the manuscripts remained important well after Aymonier's time, developing a historicizable record of Po Romé in the tradition of Akhar Thrah manuscripts. Here we have the story of a highlander who has inverted the ingrained prejudices against highland peoples that have persisted throughout Southeast Asian history, by becoming a marker of the emergence of contemporary Cham lowland culture, through his association with: the Akhar Thrah script; the *sakawi* calendar; the practices of *kut* ancestral worship; and the unity between Cham Ahier and Awal factions. Hence, a highlander became the subject of veneration for this lowland community. While the highland 'adaptations' of Scott and others may have been strategies to 'keep the state at a distance' the adoption of 'lowland cultural traits' was also used by highlanders to rise to the top of lowland society. However, it is only through the continued reading, reprinting, and study of Akhar Thrah manuscripts that historians may gain a more complex view of the histories of highland-lowland relations that are critical to addressing Aung-Twin's (2011) concern about the *evidence* of these relationships. What follows is an in-depth analysis of the available source material that may be used for evidence of this in the case of Po Romé.

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that, in certain ways they came to increasingly resemble 'lowlanders'. However, this does not mean that their own societies did not have these features to begin with.

*DALIKAL PO ROMÉ*: CHAM MANUSCRIPTS AND THE TRANSLATION

This section examines a classic Austronesian Cham history of Po Romé told in the form of a *dalikal* – one of several genres of Cham literature written in the abugida script called Akhar Thrah, the script of the Cham peoples of Southeast Asia.<sup>13</sup> Abugida scripts are composed of consonant-vowel pairings with vowel sound modifiers placed below, above, in front, or after the consonant-vowel symbol. Since Akhar Thrah is an abugida script, both the appearance of the glyphs and the underlying logic to the script resemble many of the scripts of Southeast Asia, including Javanese, Balinese, Khmer, Thai, Lao, and Burmese. Like many other Southeast Asian scripts, the Cham script is derived from the Pallava subfamily of the Brahmi scripts that are associated with mainland southeast India (Blood 1980, Daniels 1990). There are many varieties of Akhar Thrah. However, the major two varieties in contemporary usage are Akhar Thrah, in Vietnam, also known as the written form of Eastern Cham and Akhar Srak, in Cambodia, also known as the written form of Western Cham. In this article the manuscripts referenced were almost all written in Akhar Thrah or Eastern Cham script. Hence, the eastern Cham script is used in the appendix and terms are written in their Eastern Cham forms and western Cham terms that do appear in this article do not appear in the terms list at the end of the article. Future comparison between Eastern and Western Cham scripts, traditions and communal histories is a ground that is ripe for new scholarly research.

In what is now Vietnam, the Cham have used Akhar Thrah to record a series of distinct genres, e.g., *dalikal*, *akayet*, *ariya*, and *damnây*. Distinguishing between forms can be difficult. However, *dalikal* are generally more prosaic, whereas *akayet*, *ariya*, and *damnây* are more lyrical.<sup>14</sup> *Damnây* are generally sung during

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<sup>13</sup> A good description of the *ariya* genre has been completed by Weber (2012:160-162). However, the best overall descriptions of Cham literary genres are in Vietnamese: Inrasra (2006:19-28) and Sakaya (2013:329-352). The Akhar Thrah script is still in use. However, computerized forms can differ significantly from the handwritten script.

<sup>14</sup> The assessment of the prosaic structure of the *dalikal* refers not only to

religious ceremonies. *Akayet* and *ariya* are considered forms of high, or classical, literature, with *akayet* being influenced by the Malay *hikayat*. *Ariya* generally appeared later than *akayet*. There are no absolutes, and individual texts that are technically *dalikal* may occasionally be labeled *damnây*. Furthermore, there are numerous forms of *dalikal* from *dalikal kalak* 'humorous stories' to *dalikal sakkarai* 'explicitly historical works' to *dalikal ampam* 'biographies'. These distinctions are not absolutes. An individual *dalikal* may have both *ampam* and *sakkarai* elements, or may contain other characteristics of other sub-genres (Sakaya 2013:329-352, Inrasara 2006:19-28).<sup>15</sup>

Cham Akhar Thrah manuscripts are named in four ways. The first is to apply the genre of the manuscript as the first word in the title. This method is then combined with any three of the following methods, in apparent order of popularity: 1) the use of the name of the central character in the text (*Damnây Po Nâgar*, *Dalikal Po Klaong Garai*, or *Dalikal Cei Sit*), 2) a thematic summary of the material presented in the text (*Ariya Bini-Cam*, *Ariya Cam-Bini*, *Ariya Po Pareng*), and 3) the use of the first line of the text (*Akayet Nai Mai Mâng Mâkah*) (Inrasara 2006:10-13). However, there are often multiple versions of the same narrative in the same genre (*Dalikal Po Romé* and *Dalikal Po Romé angan Ja Saot*, for example) and the most important characters can also be found in multiple genres of texts. Thus, while there are various versions of *Dalikal Po Romé*, there is at least one text that is an *Ariya Po Romé* and a *Damnây Po Romé* as well.

Importantly, all of these texts have self-realized visions of history – as Akhar Thrah texts frequently record historical details that are omitted from other oral or written histories. This is likely

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their tendency to be constructed with prose, but also to their tendency to be less complex. The *damnây*, *akayet*, and *ariya*, however, are not only constructed in verse but are also written in a more complex, poetic style filled with flowery language, metaphor, and nuance.

<sup>15</sup> The author recently worked with one such *damnây* of the goddess Po Inâ Nâgar, which is best considered a *dalikal* based on its form. The classification of genres used here is adapted from Sakya (2013) and Inrasara (2006).

because Akhar Thrah texts, while a fully distinct body of literature, also mediate between oral and literary traditions. Consequently, Akhar Thrah manuscripts provide historians a window into aspects of history that may have been overwritten or not recorded elsewhere, such as the history of Po Romé (Inrasara 1994:18, 2006:20-24, Weber 2012:160-162). For example, Vietnamese language historiography makes little mention of Po Romé, although Ken (2011:246) noted that a "recently published genealogy of the Nguyễn royal family acknowledges the marriage" between the Vietnamese princess Nguyễn Phúc Khoa and Po Romé. Conversely, the history of Po Romé has been recorded in at least three genres of Cham literature using the script Akhar Thrah: *damnây*, *ariya*, and *dalikal*, with multiple forms that exist in each genre of text.<sup>16</sup>

To give readers a sense of a sample text's format, an approximate translation of the Cham vision of history in the version of *Dalikal Po Romé Angan Ja Saot* follows:

This is the story of Po Romé when he was called the 'Poor Man Ja Saot'. When Po Romé was born in the village of Ranjueh his placenta was taken and buried in the village of Pa-Aok at Hamu Bhang Thoak. Then his mother brought him to Phan Rang. When they had just arrived at the territory of Phan Rang, they went to live in the village of Bihuh. Po Romé went to work as a water buffalo herder by the dam of Aia Kiak and slept under the ironwood<sup>17</sup> tree. One day when Po Romé was asleep under the tree, its dragon spirit drifted out and licked his entire body.<sup>18</sup> Po Romé thus gained his prowess<sup>19</sup> from the spirit of the ironwood tree. Then, in the Year of the Goat [1627], Po Romé was enthroned. At this time the Vietnamese led two or three strikes against the Cham, but they were unsuccessful and Po Romé remained sovereign. Then the Vietnamese sent a beautiful

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<sup>16</sup> Although I have not been able to access copies of each of these manuscripts, they do appear in the historical record.

<sup>17</sup> *Kraik*.

<sup>18</sup> This story of Po Romé and the dragon is remarkably similar to that of Yi epic hero Zhyge Alu's conception in the Nuosu epic, the *Hnewo Tepy*, see Bender (2008). The dragon (Cham: Inâ Garai) is a common feature in Cham literature, particularly in the story of another Cham sovereign: Po Klong Garai. For further discussion of the Zomian framework, Bender's analysis provides an excellent example of highland literacy.

<sup>19</sup> *Ganreh*.



princess to love Po Romé. Her name was Bia Ut and Po Romé loved her very much.

Bia Ut had lived with Po Romé for just one year when she began to complain that she could neither sleep nor eat because Po Romé was always taking care of the ironwood tree and could not simultaneously care for her. So she complained all day and all night that she could not sleep because an evil spirit<sup>20</sup> possessed her. So, Po Romé ordered an exorcism to remove the spirit and had a *mākgru*<sup>21</sup> healer treat Bia Ut. Nevertheless, she complained that she was getting worse and worse and cried, "Oh, Po Romé, if you really are a man of prowess, Po Po, please, go kill the ironwood tree so that I will be able to live. And if you really are a man of prowess and if you love me, then why not?"

But Po Romé did not realize that she was misleading him. The royal court and the sovereign's council pleaded with Po Romé not to kill the ironwood tree. That tree had an evil spirit inside it that was making the wife of the sovereign ill. But the soldiers pleaded, "Please do not kill the ironwood tree because if you kill the ironwood tree then the entire territory<sup>22</sup> will be in chaos."

So, Po Romé agreed with what they said. However, he did not realize at this time that Bia Ut was eavesdropping on his council. And, when she heard these words, she began to complain so loudly that Po Romé could hear her from her chambers. She cried, "Why have you not granted my request? You don't love me!" And so she cried, "I am the youngest daughter of the Vietnamese king, but... although I have left the house of my mother and father to follow you, you still do not follow my wishes, even though this will kill me!"

Because she uttered these words while sobbing, Po Romé decided that he should make a formal request for his soldiers to kill<sup>23</sup> the ironwood tree. The soldiers then went to the tree and hacked away at the bark for three days and three nights, but they could not kill the ironwood; the bark returned each day as it had been before. The soldiers then went to have an audience with the sovereign and brought the news that they could not kill the ironwood. However, Bia Ut overheard the

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<sup>20</sup> *Jin*.

<sup>21</sup> A *mākgru* is a traditional healer in Cham society.

<sup>22</sup> *Nāger*.

<sup>23</sup> This word is normally translated as 'cut' or 'chop', however, in the Cham version, the word for 'cut' or 'chop' is not used, rather, the word *mātai* 'to die', which implies 'to kill' or 'to murder' appears here. This emphasizes the deification or personification of the tree in conjunction with what Bender (2008) has referred to as 'ecocentrism'.

gossip<sup>24</sup> among the citizens that there was a plan to kill the ironwood tree. So, she calmed down and began to sleep. When Po Romé found Bia Ut sleeping calmly, but also had already received the report from his soldiers that the ironwood tree was not dead, his heart began to ache. So, he ordered the soldiers once more, "You must fell the ironwood tree in one day!"

Now the soldiers asked Po Romé once more to rescind the order, since they were again unable<sup>25</sup> to follow his orders. Now they obstructed Po Romé and would not support him at all. So one day they asked to have an audience with the sovereign and the issue of how to strike through the trunk of the ironwood tree was weighed. Po Romé shouted, "Hey! Everyone!<sup>26</sup> If you want to kill me, then OK! Go ahead! That's fine and regrettable to me only!" And so he said in vain, "Tell your king<sup>27</sup> that he can kill me!"

The soldiers struggled to get the sovereign to understand them. But Po Romé went outside and took the handle and head of a *jaung* axe<sup>28</sup> and tapped them together three times. Then there was a funeral rite to send off the soul of the ironwood, and Po Romé struck the trunk three times, and each time the ironwood let out a great moan. The blood<sup>29</sup> of the ironwood then ran out all over the face of the earth, for three days and three nights, and Bia Ut became healthy again. She had no problems whatsoever.

Bia Ut then sent a letter to her father to say that the prowess of the king of the Cham territories had been cut, as the felling of the ironwood tree was now completed. Then, when the Vietnamese king read the news from Bia Ut, he raised an army to strike Po Romé. And so, since the ironwood tree was killed and

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<sup>24</sup> *Jari jaro*.

<sup>25</sup> It is assumed that, by this point, the soldiers are attempting to reassert the morality of leaving the tree spirit alone.

<sup>26</sup> Here, Po Romé's anger caused him to slip into informal register.

<sup>27</sup> The text is not clear as to which *patau* 'king' is meant. The word *patau* is also found among the Austronesian highland Jarai peoples and the Austronesian Chamic Achenese language (Aymonier and Cabaton 1906:260, 288). Generally, this manuscript employs *patau* to refer to the Vietnamese king (*patau Jek*), however, it is possible that Po Rome refers to lesser kings or sovereigns among the peoples of the Cham *nâger*, such as a highland king (*patau Cek*), king of the Jarai (*patau Jarai*), or even the king of the Chams (*patau Cam*). However, in this manuscript and others I have examined, the term *Po Cam* 'Cham sovereign' more commonly refers to the head of the Cham polities.

<sup>28</sup> A *jaung* axe is two-handed, has a long handle, and a long blade. It is similar to other axes that were common throughout Malaysia and Vietnam.

<sup>29</sup> *Darah*.

uprooted, there was a war. The Vietnamese invaded and wrenched the land away from the Cham. As the Vietnamese king and his soldiers surrounded the door of the palace, so Po Romé abandoned the capital to flee, but the Vietnamese pursued and captured him. Po Romé was forced to pay tribute to the Vietnamese and so Bia Ut returned to her land.

Bia Ut returned already victorious and so the land of the Cham was lost because Po Romé followed the words of the Vietnamese and killed the ironwood tree.

So nobody knows when the ironwood tree will spread its leaves again and prosperity will return to the lands of the Cham people.

There was one person who blocked the wealth and progress of the Cham lands. Now nobody knows which year or which month in the future the Cham Po will be able to revive the lands to bring prosperity back to the Cham people. From this time onward the Cham lands became weak, and looking back upon a more prosperous time, the Cham people cry. If the Cham sovereign appears in public then prosperity will return, and so this *dalikal* was written. (Anonymous, nd)

A thorough reading of this text cannot be completed in a single sitting. Rather, it must be read multiple times in multiple sittings, finished at one moment and then revisited in the next. With the first reading, one might note certain historicizable information, such as Po Romé's birthplace, or the conflict with the Vietnamese, while one may also note certain mystical information, such the appearance of a dragon (*Inâ Garai*). Regardless, the deeper meaning of the text becomes apparent from its last lines, that is, that the Cham people could not return to prosperity through the silence of their ruling class, but only through the ruling class speaking out on the behalf of the Cham people. Understood in this way, *Dalikal Po Romé* calls to action those who read this particular version of the text. By reframing this call within the discussion of Zomia and an emergent Cham historiographic tradition composed in Akhar Thrah, the figure of Po Romé becomes re-encapsulated, highland identity de-emphasized on occasion (as in the above translated text), and read in different ways in different contexts, but remaining central to generations of Cham scholars as the following section demonstrates.

HISTORIOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS

The study of *Dalikal Po Romé*, placed in the context of a consideration of Cham historiographic tradition, sheds new light on the Cham people from the early-modern period through the colonial era. At the most basic level of analysis, the history of Po Romé in *Dalikal Po Romé Angan Ja Saot* records the loss of Cham sovereignty at the hands of the Vietnamese. The result is that the Cham are forced to pay tribute in land or tax to the Vietnamese king (*patau Jek*). Because this event was not recorded in Vietnamese histories, some historians doubt the text's validity (Ken 2011). Nevertheless, the text gives historians a Cham voice from early-modern Cham society in the seventeenth century. We see that there is still a Cham sovereign or *po* at the top of society, who lived in a *mâdhin* 'palace' and controlled several *buel bhap* 'classes of peoples' who were loyal to him. There are also several cultural tropes mentioned within the text that refer to common practices in seventeenth century Cham society, including a metaphoric reference to birth that appears in the first part of the text (see Appendix).

Secondly, the historical value of the text may not stem immediately from the context of Po Romé's reign. A more contemporary reading of the classic history of Po Romé and other Akhar Thrah texts (Po 1987) is informed by the additional context of later Vietnamese conquests of Cham and highland administered territories in 1653, 1692, and a particularly repressive series of administrative reforms and military campaigns from 1832 to 1835 under the Emperor Minh Mên (Po 1987). Memories of loss became more important in the context of the removal of Cham sovereignty over ancestral lands. As the historiographic record does not appear to contain an account of Po Romé's history in Akhar Thrah texts until the end of the nineteenth century, one can assume later texts that refer to areas formerly controlled by the Cham are partially informed by a somewhat shared experience of colonial conquest – not just Vietnamese conquest. Nevertheless, a historiographic examination of these texts allows a preliminary delineation of changes that occurred

in Akhar Thrah genres over time. Table 1 illustrates a brief outline of the Akhar Thrah historiography of Po Romé, listed by manuscript code, content, author, year, and location.

Table 1. Akhar Thrah historiography of Po Romé.

Manuscript Code	Content/Title	Author	Date(s)	Location
CM 23	Damnây Po Romé and studies of Akhar Rik, Akhar Yok and Akhar Tuel	Họp Ai	1880s-1890s (?)	Asiatic Society Paris
CAM 152	Dalikal Po Romé, Dalikal Po Klaong Garai, Akayet Um Murup	Bồ Thuận	1932	EFEO Library Paris
CAM 245	Dalikal Po Romé	?	? (1930s-1940s)	EFEO Library
CAM 248D	Dalikal Po Romé	?	? (1930s-1940s)	EFEO Library
CAM Microfilm 1	Damnây Po Romé	?	1975	Fonds of the EFEO Paris
CAM Microfilm 14	Hymns to (damnây?) Po Romé	?	1975	Fonds of the EFEO

Most scholarly examinations of Cham history begin with citations from French literature. It is thus odd that it has been forgotten that all major French studies of the Cham occurred in partnership with Cham scholars, who likely reproduced the history of Po Romé for 239 years before such histories appeared in the French language scholarship of Etienne Aymonier.<sup>30</sup> The first datable

<sup>30</sup> This assertion is based on detailed extant records of Cham history. Of all the non-state peoples in Southeast Asia, the Cham have produced one of the most detailed written historical records. Although he later determined that they were of little historical value when compared to Vietnamese sources, Aymonier used these sources as a consistent basis for his research on the Cham (Aymonier 1890, Aymonier and Cabaton 1906).

account appears in the work of Aymonier's contemporary and research partner, Hạp Ai, who was from the Cham village of Palei Hamu Tanran. He is most famous for his classic *Ariya Po Pareng* (1885) that details his journeys with several other Cham researchers up the Vietnamese coastline at the behest of Aymonier. Like many, but not all, of these assistants, he was forced to join the troupe (Inrasara 2006:71-87).

The journey afforded Hạp Ai extensive travel experience along the Vietnamese coastline and into highland areas that had once been under Cham control and likely informed his choice to concentrate on the study of certain Akhar Thrah texts, as well as his studies in the older ritualistic script of Akhar Rik and the 'middle Cham' scripts of Akhar Yok and Akhar Tuel. When he voyaged through areas formerly under Cham control, he marveled at writing on the Cham towers and noted that he could not understand why the former Cham sovereigns had fled their lands (Inrasara 2006:430-450). By studying the Cham past and promoting the culture, Hạp Ai could reconnect with portions of a history that were 'lost' to him. Further details come from an Akhar Thrah manuscript numbered CM 23, currently housed at the Société Asiatique 'Asiatic Society' in Paris. This manuscript provides historians with the earliest extant written account of Po Romé's history that is not found on the Po Romé tower. It also is of note that Hạp Ai's study of Po Romé is likely a *damnây* devotional text that was used in Cham religious ceremonies at the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century.

Hạp Ai's *Damnây Po Romé* remains a crucial historical text – it may be one of the oldest histories of Po Romé that can be readily studied.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, Hạp Ai's collection of studies written on CM 23 provides historians with a crucial window into the history of French colonialism by providing historians with a deeper understanding of the perception of the Hạp Ai as a representative of Cham scholarship. Five years after Hạp Ai composed *Ariya Po Pareng*, Aymonier published the first European language study of Po

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<sup>31</sup> This manuscript is available in Paris and may exist in other copies at the University of Malaysia-Kuala Lumpur or in Ninh Thuận Province in Vietnam.

Romé in "Legendes Historiques Des Chames [Historical Legends of the Cham]" in *Excursions et reconnaissance* (Aymonier 1890, LaFont et al. 1977:163-165).

Following the accounts of Po Romé in Hợp Ai's work, the next datable historical piece regarding the Cham sovereign is associated with the Cham scholar Bó Thuận. This historical record is from CAM 152, a *cahier* 'notebook' held at the library of the École Française D'Extrême Orient (EFEO) in Paris. The notebook appears to have been penned by Bó Thuận and given to the French scholar, Paul Mus, in 1932. It includes a forty-seven page version of the *Damnây Po Klaong Garai*, a lyrical story of the twelfth century sovereign who became a *devaraja*-like figure, and is associated with the most active<sup>32</sup> Cham tower in Vietnam today; a six-page genealogy of Cham divinities; and a thirty-seven page version of the Cham manuscript *Akayet Um Marup*, which bears heavy markers of Islamic influence in some versions, presumably including Bó Thuận's. The manuscript then continues with twenty-seven pages of hymnals devoted to Po Ganvor Mâtri.<sup>33</sup> These notes are followed by the *Dalikal Po Romé*, presumably penned by Bó Thuận, which includes notes in the page margins that were made by Paul Mus and includes references to objects that can be found in a Cham *sang*<sup>34</sup> *mâgik*, the equivalent of a mosque/ temple for the polythetic, yet Islamic-oriented, Cham Bani population (Yasuko 2012, LaFont et al. 1977:108-109). A comparison of the works of Hợp Ai and Bó Thuận would allow historians to better understand how historical literature related to Po Romé changed over time and was adapted for new contexts.

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<sup>32</sup> I use the term 'most active' because all the towers in Ninh Thuận and Bình Thuận provinces remain active religious sites, not only tourist destinations and sites of archeological study. Furthermore, the Po Klaong Garai Temple is centrally located, at the center of the largest cluster of Cham home villages in Vietnam and attracts thousands of people every year for the Katé religious ceremonies.

<sup>33</sup> Po Gineur Mâtri Cham deity is often described as an *avatar* of the Hindu god, Śiva. The image of Po Ginuer Mâtri adorns the entrance to the Po Klaong Garai Tower.

<sup>34</sup> In Cham populations around Phan Rang, Vietnam, the transliterated /s/ is pronounced as a hard /th/ as in the name 'Thomas', while the transliterated /th/ is pronounced as /s/.

Decades of brutal civil conflict swept the Indochinese peninsula following Bó Thuận's early work with Paul Mus. Although there are a few sources on the Cham community during this time, the protracted civil conflict directly impacted Cham scholarship. After Bó Thuận's early work there are few, if any, other datable texts of the *Dalikal Po Romé*, even though Bó Thuận remained a teacher in the Cham community through the 1950s.

Two other versions of *Dalikal Po Romé* in the EFEO library – CAM 245 and CAM 248D – cannot be associated with individual authors.

The next project that produced datable versions of the *Dalikal Po Romé* appears in work completed through the partnership of the French missionary, Father Gerard Moussay, and several scholars of the Cham community, including Nara Vija, Po Dharma, Thiên Sanh Cảnh, and others. *Po Romé's* story appears in a *damnây* on CAM Microfilm 1 (1974) that was a manuscript recopied and labeled B1 for the Cham Cultural Center that Moussay founded in Phan Rang, Ninh Thuận Province, Vietnam in 1969. Other works relating to Po Romé that were microfilmed as part of this project include hymns to Po Romé on CAM Microfilm 14.<sup>35</sup> Given that the Cham community seems to have preserved this narrative in a large number of works over the last 120 years, a more detailed study might reveal additional works in the historiographical record that refer to Po Romé (LaFont et al. 1977:113, 118-119; Po 1981).

After the major works of the 1960s and 1970s, there was a notable appearance of the *Dalikal Po Romé* in international scholarship in a graduate essay written by Taylor (1989), who likely relies on the work of the Cham scholar, Hợp Ai, as she extracted her history of Po Romé's life directly from the work of Etienne Aymonier. Taylor's essay made a critical argument in the field of art history by challenging the widespread assumption that the tower dedicated to Po Romé marked a decline in Cham art (Taylor 1989:1-5). Taylor appears to have been reacting to not so much 'classical' Orientalist scholarship (such as Aymonier or Durand), but to a study by the

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<sup>35</sup> It is likely that these are also *damnây*.



EFE0 in 1963 – Jean Boisselier's *Statuaire de Champa*. Rather than 'oriental decline', Taylor argued that the tower marked a shift in artistic styles, demonstrating an increased affiliation with Malay artisans among the Cham community, and was a sign of continued memorialization of the past (Taylor 1989).

While work such as Taylor's began to reconsider the history of the Cham kingdom in Vietnam in the 1980s and 1990s, this work could not have continued without the emergence of the prolific Cham scholars Po Dharma, Inrasara, and Dharbhan Po Dam (also known as Dr. Thành Phần, or Gru Hajan). A grant from the Toyota Foundation enabled Dharbhan Po Dam to collect over 10,000 unique pages of Akhar Thrah manuscripts in 500 volumes between 1998 and 2002. By 2007, Dharbhan Po Dam had catalogued one hundred of these manuscripts, including many versions of the stories such as the *Dalikal Po Romé* recorded by different Cham authors at various times (Thành Phần 2007).<sup>36</sup> This work is, however, only a fraction of Dharbhan Po Dam's research, which has sought to provide in-depth anthropological, historical, and epigraphic studies in Vietnam and tie these studies to the greater context of Southeast Asia.

In contemporary discussions of this history, Akhar Thrah manuscripts have contributed greatly to the understanding of Po Romé and the results of his reign for the Cham community at large, including several discussions that take place in online forums such as [nguoicham.com](http://nguoicham.com) and [champaka.info](http://champaka.info) regarding the legitimacy of local religious sites. It seems one member of the Cham community recently attempted to venerate the birth site of Po Romé's mother. However, others were considerably less interested in giving any form of consideration to this claim based on a lack of historical evidence (Quảng Đại Cẩn 2012).

Despite the proliferation of online materials among the Cham community on such sites as [nguoicham.com](http://nguoicham.com), [inrasara.com](http://inrasara.com), and

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<sup>36</sup> Chấm 43 was written by Thành Phần and is in his collection. It records the *Ariya* of Po Romé on pp 5-8. Chấm 45 was penned by Ông Kadhar Gru and has hymns to Po Romé on pp 80-83. Chấm 57 by Ông Quảng Tỷ has a *Damnây Po Gihlau* on pp 12-13 and a *Damnây Po Romé* on pp 15-17. Chấm 95 was penned by Ông Kadhar Gru and records the *Damnây* of Po Romé on pp 74-76 (Thành Phần 2007).

champaka.info, many Cham historical classics, including *ariya*, *dalikal*, and *damnây*, have not been digitized. Nevertheless, there has been a trend among Cham scholars, from both Vietnam and elsewhere, to increasingly focus on the historical details provided in Akhar Thrah manuscripts, although this trend has not always included reproduction of the manuscripts themselves. In a small Cham community in Cambodia, the Po Romé narrative has taken on new religious and societal functions as a critical aspect of the reconciliation process between the Cham in Cambodia and their relatively recent experience under the Khmer Rouge regime. Here, Po Romé appears in a different form – as a *chai* (also Romanized as 'cay') spirit present in spirit medium rituals (Trankel 2003).

Trankel (2003) sees the revival of spirit mediumship in the Cambodian Cham population of the Kaum Imam San/ Bani group as inherently linked to reconciliation because, after the Khmer Rouge regime, the line of authority for spirit mediumship was disassociated from claims to links with the Cham royalty (*po*), and reassociated with claims to having spent time in the O Russey community in Kampong Chhnang Province, during a critical period from the late 1970s through the 1980s. Although this community numbered 23,000, or only ten percent of Cambodian Chams in 2003, academic interest in this community has been strong. Trankel received his recounting from Imam El in 1996 from the community of Phum Thmey. Unfortunately, Trankel does not point out, and may not have been aware, that this narrative is almost the same as the *Dalikal Po Romé Angan Ja Saot* presented in this article, except for a few differences to account for the Khmer context: the king was named King Sas Cay (*chai*), the wife was named Pia A'Sas (Bia A'sas – wife of Sas), the tree was called a *satraw* tree, and, after his death, Sas Cay became a dangerous spirit (Trankel 2003:34). Hence, the spirit of King Sas Cay (Po Romé) became a central one among the twenty to thirty court spirits from the Cham royal court to be worshipped in the Kaum Imam San/ Bani group spiritual rituals (Trankel 2003:39).

Notably, the process of reconciliation in Cambodia has created multiple versions of the story with some (and potentially, the

dominant) versions of the *chai* spirit story being even closer to the narrative presented in Dalikal Po Romé Angan Ja Saot. Periero (2012) recently reported that, during his own fieldwork in Cambodia, the *satraw* tree was referred to as a *kerik* tree (Periero 2012:138-145). That this king was originally an uplander by bloodline, from the Churu group, and not a lowland Cham, however, seems to have been ignored in scholarly reportings of the legend of 'the Cham king Sas Cay'. On the one hand, it could be possible to look at this 'loss' of historical detail as a dropping of information that was unimportant to the Cham community in certain contexts. On the other hand, it is interesting to note that the figure of a highlander has been so influential in the historical record that Trankel (2003) considered the figure an integral piece to the spirit mediumship practice that, in and of itself, was also considered crucial to the reconciliation of the Cham community with its own history in the post-Khmer Rouge context. This reconciliation with history, which Hamid (2006) also refers to as the 'historical layer' of Cham identity, has been seen as one of the three essential elements along with 'religious' and 'repressed minority' layers, to understanding the Cham within Southeast Asia (Hamid 2006). Therefore, it is equally possible to assert that continued explorations of this historical layer are critical to the understanding of the Cham community in Vietnam, Cambodia, and region-wide. Finally, deeper examinations of this 'historical layer' will likely reveal new ways that highland-lowland relations manifest in a variety of different contexts. For example, in this article we have seen how a highland Churu not only became a leader of lowland society, but also was deified, in both Vietnamese-Cham and Cambodian-Cham contexts, adding a transnational frame to the veneration of Po Romé.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this article I have examined the narrative of what history may determine to be the 'first highland king of the Cham'. Although

Champa itself may have never existed in such a concrete sense, it is likely that Po Romé was one of the first, if not the first, highland Churu to hold the majority of political power in the lowland Cham civilization, emphasizing memories of him as an influential king. Many basic markers of contemporary Cham identity are traceable to his reign. The memory of Po Romé's reign is encapsulated in Cham documents written in Akhar Thrah, which influenced an emergent Cham historical memory and historiographic tradition. Recent anthropological findings show that the highland Churu king had such an impact on Cham society that he continues to be remembered in the form of a *chai* spirit, albeit by a different name. By tracing the historical, textual, and historiographical aspects of Po Romé's narrative, I conclude that Po Romé truly uproots standard perceptions of highland-lowland dynamics in the regions, inverting certain common perceptions about the monodirectionality of highland-lowland dynamics.

Finally, while this may not demonstrate a total upheaval of Scott's (2009) recent envisionings of the highlands as spaces of anti-state forming cultural practices, Po Romé's narrative provides a framework for further engagement with highland-lowland relations. It suggests that evidence of highland-lowland relations might be gleaned from the usage of lowland minority 'non-state' sources, such as those of Cham Akhar Thrah manuscripts. Hence, it was possible for a highlander to become the very marker of a watershed moment in the history of a lowland Southeast Asian peoples.

APPENDIX: DALIKAL PO ROMÉ

The manuscript that appears in this study was photocopied from the large personal collection of Dharbhan Po Dam (Gru Hajan or PGS. TS. Thành Phần), who has begun to catalog, translate, and analyze more than 10,000 non-repeating pages of Cham manuscript that he collected with support from the Toyota Foundation. While most of these manuscripts appear in a relatively standardized form of Akhar Thrah script, there are also many manuscripts that were produced by the Bani Muslim Cham population that show both variant orthography and other scripts.<sup>37</sup>

The Bani Muslim Chams are important in understanding the history of the Cham of Vietnam. They have produced Cham manuscripts using forms of Akhar Tuel, Akhar Bini, Akhar Jawi, and Akhar Qur'an that have not yet been adequately examined in English-language studies. Akhar Bini is the standard script of the Cham Bani Muslim population and, while computerized scripts for Akhar Thrah have been developed, a computerized script for Akhar Bini (a localized form of Arabic) awaits development.

The Bani Muslim population has been influenced by centuries of contact with the greater Muslim world, and consequently, the practice of noting who originally produced a Akhar Bini manuscript, who it was given to, and on what date the manuscript was produced appears to be more common than with Akhar Thrah manuscripts. Thus, historicizing manuscripts in Akhar Bini may often be an easier task.

Greater attention to all Cham manuscripts, regardless of the form of Cham script (*akhar cam*), is crucial to understanding the history of the Cham population according to Cham sources, which is the motivation behind this study. As such, this study has been completed with an attempt to remain as true as possible to the source, which is a six page manuscript titled *Da Lakal*<sup>38</sup> *Po Ramé*

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<sup>37</sup> This is not to say that Bani manuscripts are not presented in standard Akhar Thrah.

<sup>38</sup> This Romanization is inconsistent with the standard for the genre because

*Angan Ja Saot* that appears as pages 107 to 113 in a longer source manuscript of at least 117 pages. All commentary, explanation, transliteration, and translation of this *dalikal* into both Vietnamese and English were made possible with assistance from Gru Hajan, Gru Sakaya, Gru Sikhara, Mâ Hàn Ni, Mâ Thuyêt, Mâ Hoàng Yên, Sahbin, Jayang and Mâ Maily. Without their patience, this study would not have been completed.

A challenge was the condition of the manuscripts and that we worked from photocopies rather than originals. Cham manuscripts are not yet held in archives or museums and are not protected in climate-controlled areas. The Cham population has experienced centuries of overt oppression with only occasional tacit approval, and generally has been treated with ignorance by the Vietnamese. This may be changing. Nevertheless, this historical reality has forced a disconnect between orality and literacy among scholars of Akhar Thrah. This helps explain why both written and spoken Cham have not been standardized to the extent that Vietnamese has. Thus, Romé may also be written Ramé,<sup>39</sup> Ro Mé,<sup>40</sup> Ramo,<sup>41</sup> and Ramaiy.<sup>42</sup> The name 'Ramo' appears almost entirely throughout this manuscript. One notable exception is the title. Similarly, *dalikal* is often the standard for this genre although *da lakal* appears to be the standard in this manuscript.

Sikhara, Mâ Hàn Ni, Mâ Thuyêt, and others helped me comb through this text to identify and correct errors that appear in my translation and in the original manuscript. Errors that appeared in the original manuscript have been corrected the first time that they appear after the mistake [in brackets and underlined]. This method makes it possible to slowly produce more standardized versions of Cham manuscripts that are more easily read by those with literacy in

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variant spellings exist in handwritten Cham. This Romanization is a truer representation of what the actual text was titled, without correcting the spelling of the manuscript to accord with contemporary standards.

<sup>39</sup> 𑄑𑄢𑄣𑄤

<sup>40</sup> 𑄑𑄢𑄣𑄤 𑄑𑄢𑄣𑄤

<sup>41</sup> 𑄑𑄢𑄣𑄤

<sup>42</sup> 𑄑𑄢𑄣𑄤𑄥𑄦

Akhar Thrah, while also introducing this source to both Vietnamese and English language audiences.

Additionally, texts produced during this time feature a short [Tuel] variant for the word *nan*, which can not yet be produced with Akhar Thrah fonts and thus appears as 𑜄𑜂𑜫 in these manuscripts. 𑜄𑜂𑜫 is also used in many Akhar Thrah texts. However, since 𑜄𑜂𑜫 is correctly Romanized as *nân* and not *nan*, I have used 𑜄𑜂𑜫 here.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Any errors in this text are my own. Please contact me at this email address: [noseworthy@wisc.edu](mailto:noseworthy@wisc.edu) if you find errors so that they may be addressed in future texts.

Line #	Akhar Thrah	Cham Latin/ Cham Rumi	Vietnamese	Line #
Page 107				
၇	၇၂် လၢလၢ [၇၂်လၢလၢ] ဝ၇၂် ဝ၇၇၂် ဇၢ၇၇၇၇၇ ဇၢ ဝ၇၇၂်	Da lakal [dalikal] Po Ramé angan Ja Saot//	Truyện cổ về Po Ramé tên là Ja Saot	1
၉	တၢၢ် ဇၢ၇၇ ဝ၇၇၇ ၇၇၇ ဇၢ၇၇၇၇ ၇၇၇ တၢၢ် ဝ၇၇၇၇၇၇ [ဝ၇၇၇၇၇၇] ဇၢ၇ ဝ၇၇၇၇၇ ဝ၇၇၇ ဝ၇၇၇၇ ၇၇	Tak di kar ndih di apuei <sup>44</sup> di Palei Ranjuoh [Ranjueh] asaok Po nan ba	Ngày xưa ngày xưa, khi Po Ramo sinh ra tại làng Ranjueh và nhau thai <sup>45</sup> của ông ấy	2

<sup>44</sup> Ndh di apuei = *Ndh* có nghĩa là ngủ; *apuei* có nghĩa; là lửa *Ndh di apuei* là một cụm từ sử dụng để chỉ sự sinh đẻ của phụ nữ Chăm: "*Khi phụ nữ sinh con sẽ ngủ trên một cái giường có chậu than lửa ở dưới*"; tuy nhiên nói chung câu này có thể dịch ra: *sinh ra*.

<sup>45</sup> Although only occasionally practiced today, from the seventeenth century onward, the culture of Panduranga relied on a form of humidification to treat mothers and their newborn children. The mother and the infant rested on a bed in a small room constructed outside the family home. A bed of coals was kept under the bed. Hot water poured on the coals induced steam, which sterilized the air. The mother and newborn remained in this room for up to six months. Time was kept by two cacti planted outside the family compound. The area was kept clean and the husband or close family members did not enter in order to better ensure the safety of the mother and the child, who were treated only by approved nurses. When the cacti withered, the close family knew that the sixth month birth cycle was finished and that family members could enter. Furthermore, throughout Southeast Asia, the practice of burying the placenta at the home-village of an individual is common. This normally occurs at the place of birth. In Vietnam, this place is called the *noi chon*, which is synonymous with the home village (VN: *quê hương*; C: *bhum palei*). Thus, Po Romé differed from the rest of the community because his placenta was not buried where he was born (this commentary was made with special thanks to Gru Hajan and Sikhara.)



၉	မာခေ ဘေတ [ဘေ] မာက မာငါ မာခေခေက ဘေ မာခေ ဟေ ခေခေက တွေခေ ခ ခေ ခွေခေ ခေခေက	mârai dal [dar] pak palei Pa-aok di hamu Bhang Thoak, <sup>46</sup> Inâ Po Nan pok	Được đem đi chôn ở làng Pa-aok, ruộng Bhang Thoak, sau đó mẹ của Ông	3
၉	ခေခေ ခွေခေ ခေဟေက မာခေခေ ဟေခေခေ [ဟေခေခေ] ခေခေ ခေခေ ခေခေခေ မာခေခေ ခ ခေခေက ဘေ မာငါ ဟေခေ	Po Nan tabiak Panrang. Baruw nao tel nâger Panrang daok di palei Biuh <sup>47</sup>	ấy ra Phan Rang. Lúc mới đến xứ sở Phan Rang để sinh sống ở làng Biuh	4
၉	ခေခေက ခွေခေက ခေခေ ကေ ကဟေခေ ဘေ ဟေခေက ခွေခေ ကေက ခွေခေက ဘေ ခေခေ ခေခေခေ ခေခေက	tok apah nao kleng kubaw di banâk Aia Kiak ndih mâng ala 'phun kraik'.	[Po Ramo] đi chăn trâu thuê ở đập Akiak và ngủ ở dưới gốc cây 'kraik'.	5
၉	တွေခေ ကေဟေက ခ ခေခေက ဘေခေ ခေခေက ခေဟေက ကေက ခွေခေ * ခေခေ ဘေ ခေခေခေ ခေဟေက	Inâ garay daok dalam kraik tabiak liah drei. Nhu hu ganreh tabiak	Con rồng ở trong cây kraik bay ra liếm toàn thân [Po Ramo]. Ông ấy có sức mạnh phi thường được truyền từ	6
၉	ဘေခေ ခေခေခေ ခေခေက * ခေခေ ခေခေ ခေဟေက	Di phun kraik. Tel thun Nâsak pabaïy tagok	sức mạnh của cây kraik. Vào năm mùi, ông ấy đã lên	7

<sup>46</sup> Hamu Bhang Thoak = *ruộng khô khan* [không có nước]; Hamu Bhang Thoak refers to a *hamu* 'paddy plot' that has no water and likely refers to a paddy plot that has gone dry.

<sup>47</sup> Chắc là Palei Biuh bị mất rồi. It is likely that the village of Biuh has already been 'lost', which generally means that the village was either evacuated during Vietnamese conquest, destroyed by the Vietnamese, or in rarer instances, destroyed by flooding and seasonal rains.

	<p>ᩈᩣ᩠ᩉᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅᩣ᩠ᩅ                  (ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ                  ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ)</p>	<p>drâng rai Jieng                  patao</p>	<p>ngôi vua</p>	
ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ	<p>ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ                  [ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ] ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ                  [ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ] ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ                  ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ                  ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ</p>	<p>"Patao Jek"<sup>48</sup> hu                  ba baol [buel]                  mâsuh di dua                  klau mbeng di                  jai saong Po                  Ramo o</p>	<p>Vua người Việt đã                  dẫn quân đến đánh                  hai, ba lần, nhưng                  hông đánh thắng                  được Po Ramo.</p>	8
ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ	<p>ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ                  ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ                  ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ                  ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ                  ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ</p>	<p>Patao Jek ngap                  bandi biniai                  balimah sa urang                  kumei siam binai                  ka Po Ramo</p>	<p>Và vua người Việt                  đem một người con                  gái rất xinh đẹp gả                  cho Po Ramo</p>	9
Page 108				
ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ	<p>ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ                  ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ                  ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ                  ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ</p>	<p>Angan Bia Ut,                  Po Ramo tok                  ngap bhar randi                  Bia Ut daok                  saong Po Ramo</p>	<p>Thiếp ấy tên là Bia                  Ut<sup>49</sup> Po Ramo rất                  yêu thương nàng,                  Bia Ut ở với Po                  Ramo</p>	10
ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ	<p>ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ [ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ]                  ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ *                  ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ                  ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ                  ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ                  ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ ᩈᩣ᩠ᩅ</p>	<p>Kajaik hu sa                  thun gen. ngap                  bindi biniai                  mâruak mbeng                  oh tamâ ndih oh                  bangi</p>	<p>Gần được một năm.                  [Bia Ut] làm nũng                  nịu giả vờ bị bệnh                  ăn không được ngủ                  cũng không được</p>	11

<sup>48</sup> Patao Jek is a term for the Vietnamese kings and has extremely negative connotations, even stronger than the term 'Patao Yuen', a term that has roots in the Sanskrit term *yavanna* 'barbarian' according to Aymonier (1890).

<sup>49</sup> Có thể có nghĩa hai nghĩa: vợ bắc và con út. Bia Ut may mean 'wife from the north' or 'the youngest child'.

<p>၇၉</p>	<p>ကယုယု ဘေ [ငြိ] ဓ          ယုရ ဓဒ် ဓာဓ်          ယုဇာန် ကဏ် ဖေဒက          ခြောက် ဓဒ် ဓာဓ်          ဓာဓ်တေ</p>	<p>Kayua nyu mboh          Po Ramo          mâlieng kunâ          phun kraik Po          Ramo anit</p>	<p>Bởi vì nàng ta thấy          Po Ramo luôn luôn          chăm sóc cây kraik,          mà thờ ơ với nàng.          Po Ramo rất yêu          thương</p>	<p>12</p>
<p>၇၉</p>	<p>ဓာဓ် ဖေဒ ခြေ ဓဒ်          * ဖေဒ ခြေ က် ယု          ဖြေဓာဓ် ဓာဓ် ယုဇာန်          * ငါဘ ယုဇာန် ဓာဓ်          ယုဇာန်</p>	<p>ranam Bia Ut lo.          Bia Ut ka mâng          mraw harei          mâlam. Lac          mâlam halei jang</p>	<p>Bia Ut. Bia Ut          thanh thờ suốt ngày          suốt đêm. Báo đêm          nào cũng</p>	<p>13</p>
<p>၇၉</p>	<p>ဓာဓ်ရ ဓာဓ်ရ ယုဇာန်          ဓာဓ်က ယု ဖေဒက          ခြောက် ဓာဓ်          ဓာဓ်က ယုက ငါဘ          * ဓဒ် ဓာဓ်          ယုဇာန်</p>	<p>ndih mboh jin          daok di phun          kraik nan tabiak          mâk nyu Po          Ramo ngap</p>	<p>ngủ thấy ma quỷ          đậu ở trên cây kraik          đến bắt nàng, Po          Ramo làm</p>	<p>14</p>
<p>၇၉</p>	<p>ယု ဓာဓ်ရ          ဓာဓ်က ယုက ငြိ          ဓာဓ်က ဓာဓ်ရ          ဓာဓ်က က် ဖေဒ ခြေ          * ဖေဒ ခြေ ယု          ဓာဓ်</p>	<p>yang panduec          harak Mâk gru          pangap racaow          tiap ka bia ut,          Bia ut jang oh</p>	<p>Các nghi lễ, truyền          chi bắt các ông thầy          pháp đuổi tà, diệt          trừ ma quỷ cho Bia          Ut. Bia Ut cũng</p>	<p>15</p>
<p>၇၉</p>	<p>ဓာဓ်ရ ဓာဓ်က          ဓာဓ်က ဓာဓ်          ဓာဓ်က ငြိက ယု          ဓာဓ်က ဓာဓ်ရ ဓာဓ်          ဓာဓ်က ဓာဓ်က</p>	<p>abih hakim padak          harei padak trak          mbeng oh tamâ          ndih oh war, hia          caok</p>	<p>Không thể hết bệnh,          mà ngày qua ngày          bệnh càng nặng          them, "ăn không          được ngủ không          được" nàng ấy khóc          lóc với</p>	<p>16</p>

<p>၇၀၉</p>	<p>ပွန် ပွန် ပာရမ် *          ဟာဟာရာ လာဇြဲရာ          ပာရဇြဲ ကန် ကံ          ဟာဟာရာ ဇာဟာရာ          ရာက [ဟိုဟ ရာက]          ပွန်</p>	<p>saong Po Ramo,          mâyah ganreh          patrai kieng ka          dahlak ajuh sak          [duis sak] saong</p>	<p>Po Ramo: "Nếu          Ngài là người thật          sự tài giỏi thì sao có          thể để thiếp tội          nghiệp thế này.</p>	<p>17</p>
<p>၇၁၉</p>	<p>ပွန် * ပွန် ဂွာဟ          ပာဟဟာ ဃာဟစစာ          ခြဲက ခွာစ ခွာက          [ခဟက] ခွာစ ဖ်          ဟာဟာရာ ပာ [ဟို]          ပွန်က</p>	<p>Po Po ngap          habar pamâtai          kraik nan caik          [baik] nan mâng          dahlak hu daok</p>	<p>Po tìm cách nào đó          để giết Kraik kia đi.          Thế thì thiếp mới có          thể sống</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>Page 109</p>				
<p>၇၂၉</p>	<p>ပွီ ဝဲက ပွန်          လာဇြဲရာ ပာရဇြဲ *          ပွန် ပာရမ် ပာရမ်          [ဟို]ဟမ် ဝဲက ဝဲက          ပွီ ဖ် ကံ</p>	<p>Di lok saong          ganreh patrai Po          Ramo radnam          [ranam] Bia Ut          lo di thau ka</p>	<p>Trên đời này cùng          với sự tài giỏi đó          của ngài!" Po Ramo          rất yêu thương Bia          Ut lắm không biết là</p>	<p>19</p>
<p>၈၀</p>	<p>ပွန် ဂွာဟ ဟို          ဟိုစစာ ဟိုက ဟိုရာ          က [ဟို] ခွံ *          ဟာဟိုရာ [ဟာဟို]          ခဟာ ပွန် ငြဲရာ</p>	<p>nyu ngap bandi          biniai blek bleng          [blan] nyu o.          Baruw bai          saong krah</p>	<p>nàng đang nũng nịu          xạo trá với ngài.          Nên [ngài] lên triều          bàn bạc với quân          thần</p>	<p>20</p>
<p>၈၁</p>	<p>ဟိုဟာ ပာရမ် ပ          ဟိုက [ဟိုက] က          ပွန် ဟာဟိုရာ ခြဲက          ခဟာ ခဟာ          [ခဟက] * ဟာက          ပာရမ်</p>	<p>bikal pander          baol [buel] tak          pajaleh Kraik          nan caik [baik].          Dalam phun</p>	<p>Và hội đồng [của          vua], và bảo quân          thần giết chết cây          kraik đi. Vì trong          cây</p>	<p>21</p>

<p>၆၆</p>	<p>ခင်္ကြာက ခွဲခွဲ ဟေ [ဟေ] ဟေခွဲ [ဟေခွဲ] ဟေခွဲ ဟေ ဟေခွဲ * ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ</p>	<p>Kraik nan hu jin hajeng bhar radni. Dahlak ruak hakik lo, kuyua jin</p>	<p>kraik đó có con quý luôn làm hại nàng [vợ của ngài]. "Thiếp thường xuyên bị bệnh là do con quý ở trong cây Kraik làm hại."</p>	<p>22</p>
<p>၆၇</p>	<p>ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ခင်္ကြာက ခွဲခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ခင်္ကြာက ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ</p>	<p>daok dalam kraik nan dom krah bikar saong panraong jabaol lakau di</p>	<p>Tất cả quân thần liền cầu xin với</p>	<p>23</p>
<p>၆၈</p>	<p>ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ခင်္ကြာက ခင်္ကြာက ခင်္ကြာက ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ * ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ</p>	<p>Po Ramo juai tak kraik juai mârung nâger Jé. Po Ramo peng tuei panuec</p>	<p>Po Ramo đừng giết kraik kéo đất nước sẽ bị hoảng loạn mất", vì vậy Po Ramo cũng nghe theo lời</p>	<p>24</p>
<p>၆၉</p>	<p>ခင်္ကြာက ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ခင်္ကြာက ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ</p>	<p>Krah bikar lakau. Bia ut hamiit krah bikar lakau di brei patao</p>	<p>quân thần cầu xin. Bia Ut trộm nghe thấy lời cầu xin đừng giết Kraik của quân thần với Po Ramo.</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>၇၀</p>	<p>ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ခင်္ကြာက ခင်္ကြာက ခင်္ကြာက ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ * ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ</p>	<p>pa labuh kraik o mâng ngap mâng kamraw hia lo. Ndem [ndom] saong Po Ramo</p>	<p>Nàng lại đem lòng đố kỵ và khóc lóc rất nhiều, rồi nói với Po Ramo</p>	<p>26</p>
<p>၇၁</p>	<p>ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ ဟေခွဲ</p>	<p>Ki ni dahlak li-a di Po jé [paje]? Po di hu anit dahlak o</p>	<p>Rằng: "Bây giờ thiếp giận Po rồi, Po không thương yêu thiếp gì cả!"</p>	<p>27</p>

	<p>၁၁ [၁၁] ချာခါၼ်          ဃၢၤမၤဒၢက ခွံ</p>			
Page 109				
၆၅	<p>၃ၤမၤဒၢက ၁ၢ် ဝဲၣ်          ချာခါၼ် ခါၼ်ဒါၼ်          ၁ၤမၤဒၢက ဃၢၤမၤဒၢက          ၁ၤမၤဒၢက ဃၢၤမၤဒၢက</p>	<p>dahlak sa urang          anâk taluic patao          jek blaoh jhak          wak</p>	<p>Bia ut nói – "Thiếp          là con gái út của          vua Đại Việt, song          bạc mệnh</p>	28
၆၆	<p>၃ၤမၤဒၢက လူၣ်ခါၼ်          [ချာခါၼ်] ခါၼ်          လူၣ်ခါၼ် ဃၢၤမၤဒၢက          ဃၢၤမၤဒၢက ဃၢၤမၤဒၢက          ဃၢၤမၤဒၢက</p>	<p>klak inâ amâ mai          gam gambak di          Po blaoh Po thul          tian klak</p>	<p>... bỏ cha mẹ đến          sống với Po nhưng          Po nữ lòng bỏ mặc</p>	29
၆၇	<p>၃ၤမၤဒၢက ခါၼ်ခါၼ်*          ဃၢၤမၤဒၢက ခါၼ်ခါၼ်          ၁ၤမၤဒၢက ခါၼ်ခါၼ်          ခါၼ်ခါၼ် * လံ          ခါၼ် [ခါၼ်] လံ ၁ၤမၤဒၢက</p>	<p>Dahlak mâtai.          dahlak ciip halar          mâtai ming. Po          gam ndem          [ndom] gam hia.</p>	<p>Thiếp chết. Thiếp          cũng nguyện chịu          chết thừa Po." –          [Thiếp ấy] vừa nói          vừa khóc.</p>	30
၆၈	<p>ခါၼ် ၁ၤမၤဒၢက ခါၼ်ခါၼ်          ခါၼ် ခါၼ်ခါၼ် ဃၢၤမၤဒၢက          ခါၼ်ခါၼ် ခါၼ် ခါၼ်          ခါၼ်ခါၼ် [ခါၼ်]          ၁ၤမၤဒၢက ခါၼ်ခါၼ်          ခါၼ်ခါၼ်</p>	<p>Po Ramo mboh          yau nan di thul          tian o, ba mâk          baol [buel] patak          kraik nan</p>	<p>"Po Ramo thấy như          vậy thì không nữ          lòng, liền sai quân          thần đi giết cây          kraik kia."</p>	31
၆၉	<p>ခါၼ်ခါၼ် ခါၼ်ခါၼ် [ခါၼ်]          ၁ၤမၤဒၢက ခါၼ်ခါၼ်          ခါၼ်ခါၼ် ခါၼ်ခါၼ်          ခါၼ်ခါၼ် ခါၼ်ခါၼ်          ခါၼ်ခါၼ် ခါၼ်ခါၼ်          ခါၼ်ခါၼ် ခါၼ်ခါၼ်          ခါၼ်ခါၼ်</p>	<p>Harei baol [buel]          patak, mâlam          kraik nan cak          kalik thil wek.          Klau harei tak,          klau mâlam-</p>	<p>Ban ngày quân thần          đi giết cây Kraik          song ban đêm cây          kraik lại lành da          như bình thường,          quân thần giết tới ba          ngày ba đêm</p>	32

<p>လွင်</p>	<p>ဘက် ဖိလ် ဖွဲက ဂွင်          ငြဲဒုစ * စဒ် စ          ဖိလ် [ဖိလ်] စဒ်          ဒ် ဖာလ်ဂ ဖေန်          ဖာစဒ် က် ငြဲဒုစ          ဖာစဒ်ဒု</p>	<p>jang thil wek          yau krung. Dom          baol [buel] nao          pa halar saong          patao ka krung          janaoh</p>	<p>Thấy vậy, các quân          thần liền đi tâu lại          với vua về chuyện          giết kraik nhưng          kraik vẫn không          chết</p>	<p>33</p>
<p>လွင်</p>	<p>ဒ် ခွင် [ခွင်] ကေ          စကြဲက သာစက က် စ          ဒ် ဖာစဒ် * ဖေန်          ဖိလ် ဝဲက စဖုဒု စ          ဖိလ် [ဖိလ်] ဖာမာ          ဖေန် ဖာက ဖာမာ</p>	<p>Di ndam [ndom]          tak kraik nan ka          Po Ramo. Peng          Bia Ut mboh          baol [buel] bap          sa bhak jari</p>	<p>Bia Ut thấy dân          chúng hỗn loạn về          việc giết cây kraik,          làn liền thấy yên          lòng</p>	<p>34</p>
<p>လွင်</p>	<p>ဒ် ခွင် ကေ ကေ          စကြဲက * ဖိလ် သာစက          ဖေန် စဒ် ဖာစဒ် စ          ဖုဒု ဖိလ် ဝဲက ဖေန်          ခွင် * ဖိလ် သာစက</p>	<p>jaro kieng tak          kraik. Bia nan          tadu. Po Ramo          mboh Bia Ut          tadu ndih, ba          tian</p>	<p>Po Ramo thấy Bia          Ut ngủ yên lành liền          vui trong lòng</p>	<p>35</p>
<p>လွင်</p>	<p>ခွင် စဖုဒု စဖိလ်          စက ဖာဖိ က်          ဖာခွင် ဂွင် ခွင်          ဖာခွင်က ဒ် ဖာခွင်          ဖာက စဖိလ် [ဖိလ်]</p>	<p>aen mboh baol          rai pathau ka          panuec yau nan          pandik di hatai          mâk baol [buel]</p>	<p>Nhưn khi thấy quân          thần đến tâu về          chuyện giết không          được kraik như vậy          liền thấy đầu long</p>	<p>36</p>
<p>Page 111</p>				
<p>လွင်</p>	<p>ဒ် ဖာစဒ် ဖွဲက စ          က် က် က် က်          ဖာမာ ဖာလ်ဒု          စဖာက စဒ် ငြဲဒု          ဖိလ်က လ်က</p>	<p>pa ralo wek kaoh          kieng ka sa harei          jaleh baik dom          krah-bikar likau</p>	<p>Liên bảo nhiều quân          lính hơn nữa đi giết          [kraik], để trong          một ngày giết được          Kraik đó. Tất cả          quân thần cầu xin</p>	<p>37</p>

<p>၇၅</p>	<p>ညာ် ဝှုာ် ဘၣ် [၁၂၅]                  ညာ်က ဝှုာ် ဘၣ်က                  ညာ် ဝှုာ် ဘၣ် * ဝှုာ်                  ငြဲာ် ဖိာ်က ဖိာ်                  ဝှုာ်က ကၣ် ဝှုာ်က</p>	<p>jang oh hu, ghak                  Po Ramo jang                  oh peng. Dom                  Krah-bikar tian                  kurei abih,</p>	<p>không được, ngăn                  cản Po Ramo cũng                  không nghe. Thấy                  vậy tất cả quan cận                  thần không ai hải                  lòng và</p>	<p>38</p>
<p>၇၆</p>	<p>ဝှုာ် ဖိာ် ဘၣ်                  [၁၂၆] ဘၣ်က ငြဲာ်                  ညာ် ဘၣ် ဝှုာ်က                  [၁၂၇] ဘၣ်က                  ဝှုာ်က * ဝှုာ်က                  ကၣ် ဝှုာ်က ဖိာ်က                  ဝှုာ် [၁၂၈]</p>	<p>oh thei hadai                  [hatai] patih tra                  di harei baol                  [buel] ralo nan                  phun kayau                  Kraik éw ndem                  [ndom]</p>	<p>không một ai muốn                  bàn bạc thêm nữa.                  Vào một ngày, có                  mặt rất nhiều binh                  lính, cây kraik kêu                  bảo</p>	<p>39</p>
<p>၇၇</p>	<p>ဝှုာ်က ဝှုာ်က                  [၁၂၉] ညာ်က                  ဝှုာ်က [၁၃၀] ကၣ်                  ညာ် ညာ်က ကၣ် ဝှုာ်                  ကၣ်က ကၣ် ညာ်က                  ကၣ်က ညာ်က ဝှုာ်က                  ဝှုာ်က</p>	<p>Ey adam m̄ya                  adam kieng pa                  m̄tai kau kaow                  kau m̄tai gac                  min Juai ngap</p>	<p>"Hỡi các [quần                  thần] dù các người                  có cố giết ta song ta                  sũng không chết                  được đâu đừng cố                  gắng cho</p>	<p>40</p>
<p>၇၈</p>	<p>ဝှုာ်က [၁၃၁]                  ဝှုာ်က ဝှုာ်က ဝှုာ်က                  ဝှုာ် [၁၃၂] ညာ်က ဝှုာ်                  ဘၣ် ဘၣ်က ဘၣ်                  ဘၣ်က ကၣ် ဝှုာ်က ညာ်                  ကၣ် ဝှုာ်က</p>	<p>paglaih pagaih                  juai nao ndem                  [ndom] wek                  saong patao hà                  rai tak kau nan                  m̄ng kau ciip</p>	<p>mệt m̄oi. Đi nói với                  vua của các người                  hãy đến giết ta thì ta                  mới chịu</p>	<p>41</p>
<p>၇၉</p>	<p>ဝှုာ်က ဝှုာ်က                  [၁၃၃] ဝှုာ်က ဝှုာ်က                  ညာ်က ဝှုာ်က ကၣ်က</p>	<p>m̄tai. Baol                  [buel] nao                  pathau wek                  patao ganaong                  tabiak nuak</p>	<p>Chết." Quần thần                  tâu lại với nhà vua,                  tức giận lấy búa                  chôn ba lần,</p>	<p>42</p>





<p>၄၇</p>	<p>ပာတော့ နွာဟ [နွာဟ] လာဘ ခလံဝ ဟံ လူဇိန် ပာဟက နှီ ခြောက် ခမက သီ</p>	<p>patao amâ lac nâger cam ganreh biak di Kraik urak ni</p>	<p>vua cha và nói rằng: Nước Chăm mạnh mẽ bởi do họ có cây Kraik. Bây giờ,</p>	<p>47</p>
<p>၄၈</p>	<p>ခြောက် ချွခေ တက ဗျာလံနု ဟာဗာ် ဖိ ခဖိင် [ဟိင်] စော ဟမာနု ခဟက ဟာ ဇိ</p>	<p>Kraik nan tak jaleh pajei. ba baol rai mâsuh baik patao</p>	<p>Kraik đã bị giết chết rồi, hãy đem quân tới gây chiến đi. Vua</p>	<p>48</p>
<p>၄၉</p>	<p>ဗျာက မဟုနု ဟမက ခဗျာက ဝ ဖိင် [ဟိင်] ဟမာ ဟမာနု ခဗျာ ဟမာ ဟက က</p>	<p>Jek mboh harak pok baol [buel] mârai mâsuh Po Ramo mâk ka-</p>	<p>Việt đọc được thư báo, bèn đem quân đến gây chiến. Po Ramo lấy</p>	<p>49</p>
<p>၅၀</p>	<p>ဟံ ခြောက် ဗျာဟ ဟာက ချွက ခဗျာ ဝ ဟက ဟမာနု ဟမာနု နွာဟ နှီ ဗျာက က</p>	<p>-yau Kraik ngap plat ndik nao raok mâsuh mâsuh alah di Jek ka-</p>	<p>gỗ của thân cây Kraik làm tàu chiến chạy đi đón giặc mà đánh. Đánh thua quân địch, Po Ramo quay đầu</p>	<p>50</p>
<p>၅၁</p>	<p>ဗျာနု နွာဟက ဗျာက ဟမာ ဟက ဟမာဟ ဗျာက ဖိ ခဖိင် [ဟိင်] ဗျာ ဟမာဟ</p>	<p>-jaoh akaok wek mârai pak mâdhir Jek ba baol [buel] wang Mâdhir.</p>	<p>[lui quân] lại chạy đến kinh đô. Jek đem quân bao vây kinh đô.</p>	<p>51</p>
<p>၅၂</p>	<p>ခဗျာ ဟမာဟ ကက ဟက ဗျာက ဟာ [ဟာ] ဇိ ဟက ဟာ</p>	<p>Po Ramo klak Bal Dep nyu tuai mâk hu Po Ramo ciip pa ja la-</p>	<p>Vì vậy, Po Ramo từ bỏ kinh đô để chạy trốn. Nó [quân Jek] đuổi theo và bắt được Po Ramo buộc</p>	<p>52</p>

	[ဟေ့] ခဏ် ဟေဟ် ဗဟ်ဟ် ဟ် ဗဟ် ဟ်		phải nộp thuế	
ဒုဗ္ဗ	မူတု က် ဟေဟ် ဗဟ်က ခဏ်ဟ် ဟ် ခဏ် ဟ် မူဟ် ခဏ် ခဏ်ဟ် ဟ် [ဟေ့] // မူဟ်	-mah ka patao Jek. daok Bia Ut lua wek nao nâger nyu// wek	cho vua Việt. Còn Bia Ut thì trở lại đất nước của bà ấy//	53
ဒုဗ်	ဗဟ် // လာဗ်ဟ် ခဏ်ဟ် ဗ် ခဏ်ဟ် ကဟ် ခဏ် ဟေဟ် [ဟေ့ဟ်] ခဏ် [ဟေ့] ဗဟ်ဟ် ဟ်	Jé // langik nâger cam caik kayua Po Ramo tok [tak] Jek peng	Vùng trời đất của người Chăm đã bị mất là do Po Ramo nghe	54
Page 113				
ဒုဒု	ကဟ် ဗဟ် က ဟေဟ် ခဏ်ဟ် **	kadha Jek tak Kraik//	lời Jek giết Kraik//	55
ဒုဟ်	ဟေဟ်ဟ်ဟ် ဗဟ် ခဏ်ဟ် ဗဟ် ဟေဟ် ခဏ်ဟ် ဟ်ဟ် ဗဟ် ဟ် ဟေဟ် ဟေဟ် ** ဟေဟ်	habien mâng kraik cak hala nâger bit di ya mâthrum timbang // mâda	Đến khi nào Kraik mới có thể nảy chồi được thì xứ sở Chăm mới yên bình [thịnh vượng], giàu có trở lại.	56
ဒုဗွဲ	ဟေ [ဟေ့] ဟ် ခဏ် ခဏ်ဟ် က် ဟေဟ် ခ ဟေဟ် ဗဟ် ခဏ်ဟ် ** ဟေဟ် ကဟ်ဟ် ဟေဟ်	hu sa urang daok gleng paseng piaoh ngap nâger. Thun kandah balan	Có một người đang soi chiếu khô phục đất nước. Năm qua tháng tới	57
ဒုဗွဲ	ဗဟ်ဟ်ဟ် ခဏ် ဗဟ်ဟ် ခဏ်ဟ် ကဟ်ဟ် ဟေဟ်** ဟေဟ် ဗဟ်ဟ် ဗဟ် ဟေဟ်	pandal Po ngap nâger kajaik mârai. Nan Jéh di sak kharay [karay] tel	Po làm lại đất nước đang đến gần. Từ ngày suy vong của	58

	ကောဟက [ကောဟက] ဇော်			
၅၉	ပျဉ် ဖုဆဝ ဇာဆက ဇံ လာဖျ [လာဖျ] ** ဂျာက ဝေ ပာဒဆဝ ဝေက ဇံ ဆလံဇံ ဇံ လာဖျ [လာဖျ]	Po mârai anâk cam lambang [lawang]. Jek saong rahuan daok cang nâger cam lambang [lawang]	Po [Ramo] người Chăm trở thành người lưu vong. Jek với các nước láng giềng đang đợi đem thâu tóm vương quốc Chăm.	59
၆၀	ပျဉ်နု ဝေက လလဘ [လလဘ]** ကဆဒု ဝေ ဝေဆဝ ဖျဉ် လဘ ဝေက ဝေက လလ	Jaoh kaok galac [galuec]. Katuei saong paran ew lac jaoh kaok gala-	Khi quay đầu nhìn lại, người dân của đất nước Chămpa kêu than. Khi quay lại lịch sử,	60
၆၁	ဘ ပျဉ် ဇံ ဖဆ ဆဆ ကံ ဖဖျ ပာဖျ ဝေက ဇံ ဖဆ ပဉ်လ [ပဉ်လ] ဖက ပဉ် လလ	-c Po cam bandang. Nan ka mâthrum tawang Po Cam bandang baol [buel] thuk dalakal//	Mới hiểu về sự việc của Po Chăm. Khi nhìn lại lịch sử của Po Chăm viết thành dalakal.	61

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NON-ENGLISH TERMS FROM EASTERN CHAM IN ROMANIZED CHAM/  
AKHAR RUMI AND AKHAR THRAH

- ariya* ʔa:si:ha:  
*buel bhap* ʔu:ɬ ʔa:pa  
*dalikal* ʔa:ɬi:ka:  
*damnây* ʔa:ma:na:  
*darah* ʔa:ra:  
*gahlau* ɬa:la:  
*ganreh* ɬa:re:  
*jaung* ɬa:u:  
*jin* ʔi:  
*kraik* ɬa:ik:  
*mâdhin* ʔa:di:  
*mâtai* ʔa:ta:  
*nâgar* ɬa:ra:  
*nâger* ɬa:ra:  
Patau Jek ʔa:ɬe: ʔa:  
Patau Cek ʔa:ɬe: ʔa:  
Patau Cam ʔa:ɬe: ʔa:  
*po* ʔa:



## LITERATURE



## FOLKTALES FROM GCIG SGRIL: INTRODUCTION

Bsod nams 'gyur med

I was born in Khra la'i Village, Smin thang Township, Gcig sgril County, Mgo log Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Province, in 1991. I have a brother, 'Gro phan, and younger sister, Pad+ma mtsho. My father works in the township hospital. Most of Khra la'i Village territory is grazing land for yaks, sheep, and horses. The landscape is very beautiful and the grassland, air, mountains, and lakes are unpolluted. People in my hometown are friendly and knowledgeable. Though elders never attended school, they know how to respect and be kind to others. Most locals think they were very fortunate to be born in such a nice place.

In some sense, however, we were considered backward, but this was not worrying, because our Buddhist faith gave us great consolation. It was enough for people here to live peacefully and help each other. They were glad to assist those who were in need out of the goodness of their hearts and did not expect a "Thank you."

Now, however, everyone has changed and we don't believe our village is the same as it once was. People are stingy and don't value being kind to elders. They are busy trying to get richer than others. They envy those who have good homes in the village. They are too busy to remember their traditional culture. They ignore elders' advice and only think about themselves. They don't help those in need. Instead, they are kind to those who don't need help, such as leaders and wealthy people. Though most children are very naughty, they are generally kind-hearted. However, the children of some leaders and rich people are unkind and tease poor children.

Metal stoves have replaced traditional adobe ones. Cars and motorcycles have replaced horses. Beautiful wilderness has become a collection of artificial scenic spots. People have become modern, not realizing that progress is hazardous. Few people talk about their past.

Elders sit together near their homes with prayer wheels and chant Buddhist scriptures. Sometimes their eyes and expressions tell us that they are recollecting their childhood. Childhoods are different and are comprehended differently. I cherish my childhood as a time when elders taught me how to be a good person, and to care for and cherish those who offered me

friendship. I reflect on my childhood when I see children in kindergarten. Though my childhood was full of challenges, we were somehow satisfied. Some say everything Tibetan is backward, but I believe that our spirit is not backward. I'm honored to have been born in a traditional Tibetan area.

Below, I give a short account providing a general context for my childhood within which folktales were told. This is followed by several folktales that I remember.



## MY CHILDHOOD

Father worked as a doctor in Smin thang Township Town and returned home only once every several months, because he had to care for patients at the local clinic. He neglected me and our family. Sometimes we children asked Mother, "When will he return?"

"He'll come back soon," Mother replied. Her eyes told me she hoped Father would soon return, because she really missed him. We thus waited eagerly for Father. When Father *did* return, he always brought candy, and I honestly don't know if I wished to see him or just wanted to enjoy the candy.

Mother was busy everyday driving our yaks and horses to the mountains, returning home, bringing the livestock back in the evening, and she was also busy caring for Brother, Sister, and me.

Brother got up one morning and used withered flowers from a bush to make a fire in the stove. It produced a very pleasant odor. The smoke dispersed in our tent, although most went up through the skylight and then slowly wafted into the sky. Sunshine was beaming into our tent as Sister and I got up. I took Father's big sheepskin robe, draped it around myself, and sat near the warm adobe stove.

I heard someone say to Mother, "Po po, where did you herd your yaks yesterday?"

"On Rdo ra Mountain," Mother replied.

"Did you see a big white yak and a black yak?" he said.

"I didn't see those yaks," Mother replied.

The man said goodbye and left.

Brother boiled milk tea and, as he was tidying the tent, he looked at me and Sister and said, "Put on your robes and wash your faces."

We ignored him. Then he picked up a stick and threatened me with it. I ran outside and said, "Mother! Brother hit me."

"Don't cry. I'll teach your brother a lesson," she said, picked up two full buckets of milk, and walked into our tent. "Gro phan, why did you hit your younger brother? He's your brother, not your enemy. You must not beat him," said Mother.

Brother quietly sobbed and, through his tears, he told Mother he was being scolded unjustly.

"Bkra shis don 'grub, boil milk tea and take care of Pad+ma mtso. Your brother will take our yaks to the mountains while I finish collecting yak dung on the grassland," Mother said.

I lay on Fathers' big sheepskin robe and began to tell stories with Sister. After a while, I heard someone call my name from far away. I lifted my head and listened. It was our neighbor's child, Gser thub, my playmate. I went outside and saw him waving, inviting me to play with him. When he saw me he dashed over.

"When Mother returns home I'll play with you," I said.

"OK! I'll wait for you," he replied happily, and then returned to his home.

When Mother and Brother came home, we had lunch together. "Mother, may I play with Gser thub?" I asked.

"Yes, but come back when I go to the pasture to bring back our yaks," Mother said.

"Can I go play with Bkra shis don 'grub?" Brother said.

"No, you can't play with him because I worry you will fight with Bkra shis don 'grub. Stay here with me and do some work in the tent," said Mother.

I then ran out of our tent to our neighbor's tent and called my playmate to join me at the bank of a small limpid stream that meandered through the grassland.

"Look! A big fish is under this stone," Gser thub said excitedly.

I began looking intently for the fish in the water. Meanwhile, Gser thub snuck behind me and shoved me. I jumped to the other bank as he laughed loudly.

At that moment I saw something in the water and said without thinking, "Fish! Fish!"

He quickly stood up and looked for the fish. I snuck up behind him and shoved him. He hopped like a frog into the water. His brother saw me shove Gser thub into the water, grabbed a stick, and ran at me, scolding me all the while. I was terrified his brother would beat me and ran home. When I reached our yak enclosure, I saw a horse near our tent and happily guessed, "Yes! It's Father."

Suddenly I heard somebody shout my name. It was 'Od pa standing in front of his yak hair tent. "My mother says you must come to our tent," he said angrily. I went to Uncle Rig 'dzin's tent and saw Gser thub lying on a big sheepskin robe. He wouldn't look at me, and seemed angry with me. "Bkra shis don 'grub, come here and tell me why you were fighting," said Aunt Phun chung kindly.

I bowed my head and told her everything.

Suddenly Gser thub lifted his head and said, "I saw the fish in the water."

We all laughed.

Aunt Phun chung listened to me carefully and said, "Don't worry. That's all right. You are children. I love my son, but he pushed you first. It's his mistake. You are a good boy and also Gser thub's good friend. Always be his good friend. Don't be his enemy." She then took some candy from her bosom.

I thanked Aunt Phun chung and returned to my family tent.

PRINCE BSAM PA'I DON 'GRUB

One chilly winter night, Father put me and Sister in front of him near our warm stove, while Mother and Brother prepared dinner. A dog barked very loudly, as though scolding the chilly weather. Father then told us this story.

'Brug rgyas was king of the great country of Byang thang and had three sons – Bsam pa'i rgyal mtshan, Bsam pa'i nyi ma, and Bsam pa'i don 'grub. Their county was rich and the people who lived there were happy, until one day when terrible things began happening. After some time people became poor and hungry. The king decided that his three sons must find Bya mi la gser gron, the bird that could spit gold, and make the county rich again.

"Here are three cups of water and three trees. Plant each tree on top of a hill and then water each tree with one cup of water. Bsam pa'i rgyal mtshan, you go to a big hill. Bsam pa'i don 'grub, you go to a small hill. And Bsam pa'i nyi ma, you go to a medium-sized hill. So long as your tree is in flower and the water doesn't dry up, I will know you are alive. But, if your tree doesn't flower and the water dries up, then I will know you are dead," said the king.

The king and his servants then escorted the three sons to three nearby hills. Bsam pa'i rgyal mtshan and Bsam pa'i nyi ma went together to one hill. Meanwhile, Bsam pa'i don 'grub went alone to a small hill where he noticed two men arguing over a pair of shoes. "Why are you arguing over these shoes?" Bsam pa'i don 'grub asked in surprise.

"These shoes are *mgyogs pa'i lham lu pos pos* 'speedy shoes'. If you wear them, no one can catch you. I saw these shoes first!" one man said.

"No, I got these shoes first!" the other man said.

"I can solve your problem. You two go to the hill over there and run back as fast as you can. The one who gets here first gets the shoes," Bsam pa'i don 'grub said.

The two men agreed and ran to the designated hill. Meanwhile Bsam pa'i don 'grub put on the shoes and vanished.

When Bsam pa'i don 'grub got to the middle hill, he saw two men arguing over a big hat. Bsam pa'i don 'grub approached them and asked, "Why are you arguing over this big hat?"

"This is *mi rig zhwa mo nag re* 'the black hat of invincibility'. If you wear it, you become invisible," one man said.

"I saw this hat first!" the other man said loudly.

"No, I did!" said the first.

"Oh, don't argue! I suggest you two turn around, and then turn back and look at me. Whoever sees me first gets the hat," Bsam pa'i don 'grub said.

The two men agreed and turned around, but when they turned back, Bsam pa'i don 'grub had put on the hat and vanished.

Later that afternoon, Bsam pa'i don 'grub climbed a tall mountain and saw two men arguing over a club with many nails in it. "Why are you arguing over a piece of wood with nails in it?" Bsam pa'i don 'grub asked.

"This once belonged to Dgra nag zangs ma'i dzer ru can 'the evil foe with copper nails'. No one can bully you if you hold it," a fat man with a mustache said.

"I found it first!" the other, weaker man said.

"No, I grabbed it first," the fat, mustachioed man said.

"Don't quarrel! I suggest that whoever climbs that mountain first can have the club," Bsam pa'i don 'grub said, pointing to a nearby peak.

The two men then raced toward the mountain.

Meanwhile, Bsam pa'i don 'grub took the magic club, fled into the night, and anxiously searched for a place to sleep.

Eventually, he came to an enormous cave and heard sounds inside. He put on the hat and approached the dark cave. At that moment a woman with one pendulous breast dragging on the ground and the other slung over her shoulder emerged from the dark cave. She seemed to realize that someone was near the cave and looked here and there, and then she returned inside. Bsam pa'i don 'grub followed her. The cave was very large and smelly. When his eyes had adjusted to the dark, he saw his two brothers tied to a big rock. Their faces were gray. The demoness was busy tending a fire, intending to

cook his brothers. "Kill the demoness," Bsam pa'i don 'grub said to the nail-studded club, which immediately beat her to death. He thus rescued his brothers.

"How did you do that? You are so heroic," his brothers said enviously as they walked out of the cave.

Bsam pa'i don 'grub told his story about finding his magical items. The brothers then took shelter under some boulders and slept. The sun was shining when Bsam pa'i don 'grub awoke. He called his brothers, but they were gone. Bsam pa'i don 'grub wept sadly, realizing he had been robbed of his treasures and abandoned.

He walked for a long time and encountered some white yaks and some white-skinned people wearing white clothes, playing and laughing. When they saw Bsam pa'i don 'grub wailing, they beat him. "We are very happy to have finished our work for the ghost king, so you mustn't cry!" the people said.

Bsam pa'i don 'grub then started to laugh, and left. More time passed and he came to another place where there were red yaks and red-skinned people wearing red clothes. They were gathered in a red house and wailing sadly. When they saw Bsam pa'i don 'grub laughing, they caught him and demanded, "Why are you so happy?"

"I met some people wearing white clothes who said I must laugh," Bsam pa'i don 'grub giggled.

"Where are you from and where are you going?" the people asked.

"I'm from Byang thang and I'm looking for Bya mi la gser gron," Bsam pa'i don 'grub said.

"That's a very difficult task," the people said.

"Do you know where I can find this bird?" Bsam pa'i don 'grub asked.

"It is in the forest in front of this mountain, but only we know how to catch it," the people said.

"Please tell me," Bsam pa'i don 'grub said.

"We'll help you, but only on one condition," the people said.

"What is it?" Bsam pa'i don 'grub replied.

"Every year, we must give the king of the ghosts a boy and a girl to eat. If we don't, he will come to our village and kill everyone.

Please help us," the people said. Bsam pa'i don 'grub agreed to do whatever was necessary to stop the killing. The local people were overjoyed, stopped crying, and prepared to take Bsam pa'i don 'grub and a girl to the cave where the king of the ghosts stayed.

"What do you know about the king of the ghosts?" Bsam pa'i don 'grub asked the girl.

"I don't know much, but I heard he has nine heads and is huge," the girl said anxiously. Bsam pa'i don 'grub saw an old sword on the ground, picked it up, and sharpened it for a long time until it was very sharp. Then they waited for the king of the ghosts to appear.

Bsam pa'i don 'grub and the girl finally felt so tired that they sat on the ground to rest. Suddenly, a very loud sound came from inside the cave, terrifying the girl. Bsam pa'i don 'grub clutched his sword, went to the cave entrance, and waited for the ghost. Smoke wafted out from the cave and, with a loud sound, the ghost's first head poked out from the mouth of the cave. Bsam pa'i don 'grub swung his sword and cut off the first head. The ghost shrieked in pain and lunged back inside the cave.

Bsam pa'i don 'grub and the girl returned to the village and reported what had happened. The local people worried that the king of the ghosts would recover and take revenge. The locals then built two big stupas at the entrance to the cave to suppress the ghost. Then, they gratefully said to Bsam pa'i don 'grub, "In the forest in front of the mountain you will find a very tall tree, where many beautiful birds live. Take an ax and hack at this very tall tree. All the birds will say that they are the one you are searching for, except one gray bird, which will say that it isn't the right bird. That is the bird you must catch."

Bsam pa'i don 'grub took an ax, went to the forest, did exactly what the villagers said, and caught *Bya mi la gser gron*. He then returned to the village and thanked everyone. Before he left, the villagers gave him a herd of yaks in appreciation for liberating them from the king of the ghosts. Bsam pa'i don 'grub mounted one of the yaks and rode off, driving the other yaks before him. *Bya mi la gser gron* sat on his shoulder and spat gold. When Bsam pa'i don 'grub reached a bridge, he saw his two brothers there. He was very happy to

meet them, and they were also glad he had found Bys mi la gser gron.

"How did you find the bird?" asked his brothers. "You are now our king."

Bsam pa'i nyi ma led the way as Bsam pa'i rgyal mtshan drove the yaks behind Bsam pa'i don 'grub. When they were on the bridge, Bsam pa'i nyi ma said, "Look! There's a huge fish in the river!"

As Bsam pa'i don 'grub looked down to see the fish, Bsam pa'i nyi ma shoved him into the water, which was so deep that Bsam pa'i nyi ma and Bsam pa'i rgyal mtshan couldn't see him. Assuming he had drowned, they happily drove the yaks and took Bya mi la gser gron back home. When they arrived, many locals and their father received them. They asked Bsam pa'i nyi ma and Bsam pa'i rgyal mtshan, "How did you find Bya mi la gser gron?"

"We went to a very big forest and found it," the two princes lied. The king joyfully celebrated with his two sons, sure the county would be rich because Bya mi la gser gron spat gold. Sure enough, day by day, the country became richer and richer.

One day while the king and his servants were out hunting, a minister saw some deer and chased them into a forest. After a long time, he lost the deer and had also become lost himself. Suddenly, he saw something behind a big tree. He quietly approached the tree and saw a boy chopping it. "Who are you?" the minister asked.

"I am Bsam pa'i don 'grub," the boy replied.

Not believing his ears, the minister said, "Please say your name again."

"I'm Bsam pa'i don 'grub," he said and looked at the man.

"Oh! You are Prince Bsam pa'i don 'grub! How wonderful!" the minister said, and then the two embraced.



## SELFLESS FATHERS AND SELFISH SONS

"Fathers always think about their sons, while the sons only think about property," is a common saying. This story is often told to illustrate this saying.

Don 'grub had three sons. Their mother had died when they were children, leaving only their father to care for them. He worked hard every day for a wealthy family and, as his sons matured, he became more frail and wrinkled. In time, his eldest son married and took half of the family property. Several months later, his other two sons took the remaining property. There was now no one to care for Don 'grub, who had no home, and lived despairingly in a gully near the village. Though some villagers gave him food, and consoled him, his three sons were never kind to him nor did they give him food.

One evening Don 'grub sadly considered suicide, but then he saw a stranger and asked, "Who are you?"

"I'm a merchant, not a robber," said the stranger.

"I'm not afraid of robbers because I'm a beggar who has nothing to steal, I just want to know who you are," Don 'grub said.

"I'm from another village and have come here to buy antiques. I have nowhere to sleep. If you don't mind, may I stay with you for just one night?" said the stranger.

"If you don't mind lying on the ground, you can lie on the ground with me," Don 'grub said.

"Why do you live here?" the stranger asked.

"Because my cruel sons took all my property," Don 'grub sadly said, and then told his story.

The stranger said, "Don't worry, I have an idea. I'll give you this beautiful piece of cloth. Use it to wrap up a stone. Tomorrow morning, I'll go to the village and tell everyone I've come to buy antiques. Then you bring this stone to me."

The next morning the stranger went to the village to purchase antiques. Many people met the businessman and showed him their treasures. Don 'grub also came and said, "I have a precious antique

passed down from my grandfather's father. Now I must sell this antique because I have no other choice."

"May I see it?" said the stranger.

Don 'grub handed the stranger the stone wrapped in the beautiful cloth. The stranger unwrapped it, gasped in surprise, and said, "I've never seen such a precious antique! I don't have enough money with me to buy it from you. I must return to my village and bring more. Wrap it back up and don't sell this to others." The stranger then jumped on his horse and galloped away.

The village was soon abuzz with news of what had happened. When Don 'grub's three sons heard the news, they were delighted, and went together to greet their father, who they all suddenly fawned upon. The sons then decided to care for Don 'grub, agreeing that each son would take care of him for a year in turn. He lived with his eldest son for a year, and when the second son came to take Don 'grub to his home for a year, the eldest son disagreed, because he was afraid Don 'grub would die in his brother's home and then he would get nothing. Finally, Don 'grub lived in each son's home for only one month, and then moved to the next son's home. Each son prayed that Don 'grub would die in his home so that he could claim his precious antique.

One summer morning, Don 'grub died in his oldest son's home. When the other sons heard this news, they ran to the home, searched in Don 'grub's bedroom, and found the wrapped-up stone. Before they could unwrap it, other villagers arrived and said, "First you must hold a good funeral for your father, then the village will give you this antique."

The three sons held a grand funeral with many monks who chanted scripture for their father. They also made many offerings. Finally, the villagers gave them the antique. Some days later, the merchant returned to the village and Don 'grub's three sons offered him the antique and said, "It is our forefathers' precious treasure."

The merchant slowly unwrapped the beautiful cloth and then shouted, "This treasure has become a stone."

"Why did the treasure become a stone?" the three sons asked in surprised.

"Because you only valued the antique and didn't take good

care of your father, the treasure felt depressed and became a stone."

Don 'grub's three sons did not know what to do and fearfully returned to their homes, knowing that their wives would scold them.

## BECOMING A BUDDHA

An old Tibetan woman and her daughter, Me tog, lived in a very poor village. Their only livestock were two yaks and two sheep. Me tog was a very good, lovely girl. Many boys were attracted to her but no one wanted to marry her because her family was so poor. The old woman worried about finding a husband for her daughter. Every day, she prostrated to Red Sgrol ma, beseeching her to provide a good husband for her daughter.

One night, a devil passed by the village near the old woman's black tent and overheard her praying for a good husband for her daughter. The devil then went behind the tent and said, "Tomorrow morning a good man will visit your home. Give your daughter to him and he will bring your daughter happiness all her life."

The old woman then happily said to her daughter, "Our Red Sgrol ma ma has spoken!" She pulled out an old trunk, took out the few coral and other ornaments that she owned, and dressed up the girl as best she could. That night they were very happy and didn't feel tired or sleepy. The next morning, a stranger came to the old woman's tent. The old woman generously served him tea. The girl felt shy and stayed near the stove. The stranger was soon ready to leave. The old woman agreed that her daughter could go with him. When the stranger and the girl left, the old woman watched until they were out of sight, rubbed her bloodshot eyes, went inside the tent, sat in front of her Red Sgrola ma, and began praying.

When the stranger and the girl reached a river, he tied her with a rope, put her in a box, and said, "I am a demon. Tonight I will eat you." He closed the box, shoved it in a cave in the riverbank, and went searching for some vegetables.

Meanwhile, the local king's son and a minister's son were hunting. When they went near the river, the minister's son saw the box. The prince said, "Whoever hits the box with a stone first wins the box." The minister's son agreed and threw a stone, but missed. When the prince threw a stone, he struck the box. They ran over, opened the box, and found the beautiful girl inside.

"Why are you inside the box?" the prince asked.

"A devil bound me, put me here, and said he would kill and eat me tonight," Me tog said.

"Don't worry! I'll save you! You will be my queen," the prince announced proudly. The girl was so moved that she put the prince's hand on her head as a sign of deference and appreciation. After this, the two hunters put their ferocious, tiger-like dog in the box and left. That night the devil happily returned to the river, carrying many wild scallions he had gathered in preparation for cooking the girl. When he opened the box, the tiger-like dog lunged at the devil, tore out his throat, and devoured him.

Me tog was very happy to marry the prince and enjoy the king's wealth. Although she missed her mother, she never told her husband she had a mother or a family, because the king and his son believed she was from Heaven – that the deities had sent her to be the prince's wife. While she loved living in the palace with her husband, she constantly worried about her mother.

Meanwhile, the old woman missed her daughter terribly and prayed every day for her wellbeing. Me tog's mother often gazed in the direction where her daughter and the stranger had gone. The old woman's face soon became lined with even more wrinkles.

Me tog climbed atop the tallest palace building one day, and looked toward where her mother lived. Deciding that she must take care of her old mother, she summoned her servant and ordered him to bring her old mother to her room. She also cautioned the servant, "This is a secret between just you and me. I will punish you if you expose our secret."

The servant brought her mother, hid her in the king's storehouse, and cared for her.

Me tog was very afraid that her husband would discover this secret. The old woman prayed every day and saw her daughter only once every several months. Nevertheless, Me tog was happy that her dream had been realized and that her mother was well cared for.

After the old mother died several years later, Me tog sadly wrapped her corpse in a big robe, and put it in a box in the

storeroom. Some days later, the prince said, "Father will inspect our storeroom to see how much treasure we have,"

Me tog worried that her mother's corpse would be discovered. When the king and many servants came and began checking the storeroom, Me tog nervously stood in front of the box containing her mother's corpse. The king came near Me tog and, seeing a box he didn't recognize, said, "What is this? I've never seen this before."

"It's from my home. Please don't open it," Me tog pleaded.

"Oh, we never saw what you brought to the palace. We must see it," the king said curiously. Me tog then ran to her husband. When the king unwrapped the robe, he and his servants knelt in front of the box. The girl and prince were amazed, walked over, and saw that the old mother's corpse had become Red Sgrol ma.

NON-ENGLISH WORDS

'Od pa འོད་པ།

'Brug yul འབྲུག་ཡུལ།

'Gro phan འགྲོ་ཕན།

Pad+ma mtsho པདྨ་མཚོ།

Dgra nag zangs ma'i 'dzer ru can དག་ནག་ཟངས་མའི་རྩོར་རུ་ཅན།

Bkra shis don 'grub བཀ་ཤེས་དོན་འགྲུབ།

Bsam pa'i don 'grub བསམ་པའི་དོན་འགྲུབ།

Bsam pa'i nyi ma བསམ་པའི་ནི་མ།

Bsam pa'i rgyal mtshan བསམ་པའི་རྒྱལ་མཚན།

Bsod nams 'gyur med བསོད་ནམས་འགྲུར་མེད།

Bu sems rdo thog འབྲུ་སེམས་རྩོ་ཐོག།

Bya mi la gser gron བྱ་མི་ལ་གསེར་གྲོན།

Byang thang བྱང་ཐང།

Don 'grub དོན་འགྲུབ།

Gcig sgril གཅིག་སྒྲིལ།

Gser thub གསེར་ཐུབ།

Khra la'i ཁྲ་ལའི།

Me tog མེ་ཏོག།

Mgo log མགོ་ལོག།

Mgyogs pa'i lham lu pos pos མགྲོགས་པའི་ལྷན་ལུ་པོ་སེ་པོ་ས།

Mi rig zhwa mo nag re མི་རིག་ལྷ་མོ་ནག་རེ།

Mtsho sngon མཚོ་སྟོན།

Pha sems bu thog ཕ་སེམས་བུ་ཐོག།

Phun chung ཕུན་ཚུང་།

Po po པོ་པོ།

Qinghai 青海

Rdo ra རྡོ་ར།

Rig 'dzin རིག་འཛིན།

Sgrola ma སྐྱོལ་མ།





## LONGING FOR SNOW-COVERED PEAKS: DEITY POSSESSION IN THE PHILIPPINES

Lhundrom (Lhun 'grub, Tunzhi)

I wrote this story based on my experiences in the Philippines and what I imagined.

"Roach!" Adriano screamed. I turned and saw him running naked out of the bathroom, desperately trying to cover himself with a towel. He ran into the room where Madi, the landlord, and I were watching a local show on TV.

"It won't bite you!" said Madi, standing up, looking annoyed. "I'll take care of this just this once. Next time, do it yourself." He then grabbed a broom from behind the door and went inside the bathroom.

"Why are you always angry?! We pay you 3,000 pesos a month," Adriano responded unhappily, which is how he usually talked to Madi. Quarreling was constant in the boarding house and small issues sometimes grew into fierce conflicts.

Adriano continued, "Madi, I tell you honestly that there's no reason for you to be upset. Unlike your previous boarders, I don't drink and I don't smoke. I even gave you 500 pesos for your daughter's birthday last month."

Adriano sat down next to me. He was barefoot and smelled pleasantly of shampoo.

Nobody said anything. Madi probably hadn't heard him. A moment later Madi came out of the bathroom. As he passed me on his way outside, I saw a flattened cockroach in his left palm. I hadn't expected Madi to unleash his anger on that innocent creature. I was so distressed that I rushed upstairs to my room. Adriano followed, stopped at my bedroom door, and said, "I'm going to move to another house. He's too..." he didn't know what word to use, but I'm sure he was searching for a negative one.

A bit later, Madi knocked on my door, opened it, and said, "We're going to have an exorcism at a neighbor's house. Last night

you said you wanted to come. Get ready. We'll leave soon."

"OK, I'll come downstairs immediately," I said.

I got up and opened the window. Warm air rushed into my room. I felt as though I were suffocating. Every time I felt burning heat in the air – which was quite usual where I lived – I recalled what a priceless luxury it was to have snow back home and to be able to enjoy the beauty of different seasons. Such weather and such scenes were entirely different from Manila's scorching heat and days and nights of constant rain. I showed locals pictures of snow-capped mountains whenever I had the chance, knowing that they had probably never seen snow. Sometimes, just looking at pictures of snowcapped mountains made me feel cooler, especially when the air was particularly hot. I thought at times that the heat in Manila was a physical thing that I might be able to destroy or remove. Nothing was enjoyable in such awful weather. Anyway, I was excited about going with Madi to observe a local exorcism.

I put on my clothes, quickly grabbed my camera, and went downstairs. Joe and Madi were already waiting for me.

"You'll be surprised by what you will see today," Madi said as we walked outside the house.

"Please surprise me. I already know how you do divination," I replied.

Even though I made it sound like a joke, I hoped Joe would comment on what I had said so that I could ask him more questions about his practice of divination. Many in the local community came to Joe for divinations – there were even visitors from distant cities. What interested me most was that his practice was like nothing that I had seen before. How he changed physically during his period of possession made it even more interesting. Oddly, I never felt comfortable asking him questions about his practice, even though I was burning inside with curiosity.

"So, what is the context here? Why do they want you to perform an exorcism at their home?" I asked, turning to Joe who was walking right side of me.

"Their baby was crying the whole night and the doctors couldn't find any reason. The child's father thinks the spirit of his

long deceased father is the cause. They want us to drive his spirit away," Joe explained cautiously, regularly turning to me and making gestures because his English wasn't fluent.

I was born and raised in a culture where religious philosophy penetrates every aspect of life. Religious rituals are highly valued and a critical part of community life. Participants' roles, ritual implements, colors, and so on are laden with meaning in my home Tibetan community. It was partly because of this that I noticed every detail that day. Joe, the master practitioner, was a serious man in his forties. He had never married. He often wore two strings of prayer beads on his left wrist and he carried a Bible wherever he went. He was very sincere, had a very impressive voice, and rarely joked, even when we drank together. He carefully chose each word he uttered and had a certain charisma that made him even more convincing and believable. This was especially true when he spoke to visitors in Tagalog, though I didn't understand what he was saying. His expression told me that he was serious about what he was saying.

This particular day he wore a pair of camo-shorts and a white T-shirt. There was nothing special about the way he was dressed. The same was true for Madi and Alex, who had come along to assist Joe. I noticed Madi had two bags. Alex was holding a stick that was about a foot long. I guessed it was not going to be a large-scale ritual. It was a short walk to the neighboring family we were visiting. There was no time to ask Joe more questions about what he practiced. When we arrived, a woman greeted us and led us into the sitting room where she left us.

I looked around and was both surprised and puzzled by what I saw. There were no overt signs of a religious nature – no sacred images, for example, which are quite common in the homes of Dela Costa residents who nearly all seemed to be Catholic.

The kitchen, dining room, and bathroom were all on the first floor. There was little free space to move around. A twenty-two inch TV, made in China, sat on a large wooden table next to the door against the window. The TV obscured most of the window. The room was dark. A fan mounted on the wall was above the window. In a hot place like Manila, fans made life bearable and this family had a fan in

every corner. Atop the TV was a huge Chinese hand fan for decorative purposes. Next to the TV was a porcelain vase holding beautiful flowers. When I went close to take a picture I was surprised to see 'Made in China' on one leaf.

In front of the TV was a small free space. I sat on the wooden floor and looked around the room. Joe was sitting in an armchair against the wall next to the door, getting ready to go into trance. Right above him was a picture of Filipino boxing hero, Manny Pacquiao.

"Come help me light these candles," Madi said as I was inspecting the room.

I opened one bag and found four small white candles, a fist-sized ball of wool, and a couple of small bottles. Meanwhile, Alex was making a fire in a small concrete stove on which he placed a kettle. Then he picked up the metal stick and rolled a piece of wool around the head of the stick. Joe instructed him to put small bundles of wool containing sacred objects in each corner of the room and above the door. I finished lighting the candles and placed them on a glass table next to where Joe was sitting. He was already beginning the ritual by this time.

Joe's eyes were closed and his hands were on his thighs with his palms up. Madi sat in a small wooden chair just in front of Joe. Madi opened the Bible he had brought with him and turned to a page marked with a slip of paper. He started reading. A few minutes later Joe's hands began shaking as he breathed heavily. It was frightening because it seemed the real Joe wasn't there anymore. Madi continued reading. It seemed he was instructing Joe, whose upper body was now trembling rhythmically, matching the changes in Madi's intonations.

Joe began sweating profusely and then, suddenly, he started murmuring. His eyes were still closed. Alex approached and seemed to understand what he was saying because he kept nodding his head. I couldn't understand anything, but it didn't sound like the Tagalog I heard every day in Dela Costa homes. Joe occasionally made faces as though he were in great pain or perhaps very sad because of his seeming inability to communicate. His eyebrows rose rhythmically as

his tone changed. His eyes remained closed throughout the entire process. His lips kept moving, though nothing that sounded remotely like a human language came from his lips. It seemed as if he was trying to say something but couldn't get the words right. It was all exotic but, at the same time, exhausting to see Joe sweating and struggling to speak.

I was reminded of a scene from one of my recurring dreams: I was being chased by a huge dog. I was desperately trying to scream for help, but it took tremendous effort to make a sound.

When exorcisms are performed back home, strange sounds of unknown origins are often heard and objects fall to the ground without human involvement. I looked around, wondering if something like that would happen here, but it didn't.

About a half hour later, Madi ceased his recitation. I waited anxiously to see who of the family might come, but they were never present. It seemed to be a rule that the presence of a concerned family member was forbidden. We then packed up what we had brought and headed back to Madi's place.

You probably were expecting something more dramatic. I was too. It was all quite tame. However, I was struck by how familiar the idea of the existence of evil spirits was, and also how these local people believed that it was possible to remove such spirits.

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A week passed. It was another usual, hot Saturday in mid-October. I was staying at a boarding house that belonged to a couple who had moved to the US. They left the house in the care of the wife's brother, who was married and had a daughter. However, he didn't live with his wife and daughter. He had quite a few friends who visited him on weekends to drink.

"Do you eat dogs?" Dori asked me in Cantonese. It took me few seconds to realize he was speaking Chinese that I could barely comprehend.

"No. Nobody from my community eats dogs," I said.

"Chinese people eat dogs," he said.

"Where did you see Chinese people eating dogs?" I asked, wondering if he had really seen people eating dogs or if he was just

curious about rumors he had heard.

"Did you ever wonder why I can speak Cantonese?" he asked with a dismissive smile. He was obviously proud to be able to speak Chinese. Later, I thought I should have shown more interest in his Chinese language ability.

"You look Chinese. I thought maybe you were from China," I said as he handed me a wooden chair. We then sat under a big tree at the local basketball court and chatted. He told me more about himself:

I was twenty-five when I first came to Manila. Life in the city was exciting, but I was at a loss. I didn't know what to do, where to live, or where to look for a job. One day as I was walking aimlessly in the city center, a man approached me and asked, "Are you looking for a job?"

I was excited and said, "Yes!" Then he took me to lunch in a nearby KFC. It was my first time to eat at a KFC. He kept talking while I was eating, but I didn't pay much attention. When I finished eating, I suddenly realized that such good things don't happen without a reason. I then tried to remember every detail of what he had said. This man was well-dressed and about forty years old. There was nothing remotely suspicious about him. He just seemed to be a nice guy who liked to help others.

"There is a good opportunity to make some money if you are interested," he said calmly. There was no sense of encouragement, as if he didn't really care if I said yes or no. That made me more uncomfortable. I would have felt much better if he had encouraged me a bit. Anyway, I said that I was interested.

A few days later, I was headed to China. There were fifteen of us from the Philippines on the same boat. We didn't know each other before but, during the several days it took to get to China on that boat, we got to know each other pretty well. It was exciting and, at the same time, worrying. We docked in the afternoon in October. It was cold. It had been burning hot back home, but it was freezing in China. We hadn't brought any warm clothes with us. We thought China was also going to be hot. Nobody had told us about the weather.

When I got outside, I looked up and saw a dim, red sun that resembled a fading torch. The dock was huge. There were hundreds of ships there. We waited anxiously. We had been told someone would meet us at the dock. Thousands of thoughts flitted through my mind. I tried my best to conceal them. It was obvious that everyone was worried about our uncertain future.

I looked around and felt comforted to see English words - USA, France, Canada, and the names of other countries - on gigantic containers that were piled up about seven floors high. I kept looking, hoping to see 'Philippines' and then meet someone from the Philippines. I believed that if I could meet them, they would help us. But there was no 'Philippines' anywhere. I felt kind of scared.

A few hours later, a man approached us and spoke to us in heavily accented English. It was really difficult to understand him, but we were happy that someone had finally come to meet us. All fifteen of us then got into a van. After leaving the dock, the first thing I noticed was the huge number of people. As we drove along a busy road, there were people everywhere. Sometimes all I could see was just heads. It was just like looking at a nest of ants. It was very crowded, even on the roads. I wouldn't have really believed what I saw that very first day except that I went back there a year later and it was just like before.

There were small restaurants in the open area that had gutted dogs hanging on hooks. It was a terrifying scene. Nevertheless, these small restaurants were crowded with customers. I felt like vomiting, partly because of the awfulness of this scene and also because I was worried about myself. I thought, "If I die here, will anyone know or care?" I had never felt so uncertain, but I did feel better when I saw that the others in the van had the same look in their eyes.

We did construction work in that town for three years. Then we had a two-year break and then returned to the same place and worked for another two years.

"Do you have plans to go back and work again?" I asked Dori, who now was lying on the ground on his side, supporting his head with his right arm.

"No. The work's too hard. I can't do such hard physical labor now," he said, sipping from a bottle that seemed to contain an inexhaustible amount of beer. He looked at the bottle and continued, "I could certainly tell you more about my experience if I had more beer."

I wasn't sure his story was worth the investment, but I knew I had to be diplomatic. "I can buy you some beer, but not today. You look tipsy already," I said. The basketball court was now full of kids and very noisy, so I retreated back to my room.

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"Really! That's why Adriano moved out?" asked Alex, "I thought both of you were coming with us. This is the holy mountain everyone visits. You will see lots of interesting things there."

"He couldn't get along with Madi," I said. "Maybe we can ask Joe for a divination to find out why they can't get along."

Everyone laughed hysterically at this.

A week later I was in a Jeep with Madi's friends on our way to Mount Banahaw, one of the Philippines' holy mountains. They insisted that I go with them because, as Alex said, "We do special religious practices there that you won't ever learn about if you don't come with us."

I have always been a curious person and was intrigued by what he said. Before I agreed, I went over a few things carefully in my mind. I was from a different religious background. Though this didn't stand in the way of our friendship and sharing ideas and experiences with each other, I didn't want to be caught between two different belief systems. That worried me as I participated in their practices.

"Tonight we will stay in the church and you can participate in the ritual or just watch," Alex said. There were six of us in the Jeep. One was a scientist who worked for the government. Another man drove a school-bus. We had set off early that morning. It was beautiful along the way. Everything was green and there were animals that I had never seen before. We were already in the mountains by four that afternoon.

"We will first visit the mountain deity," Joe said decisively, as fit his position as our group leader. "We will show our new friend real miracles today," he continued solemnly, suggesting that he would soon be involved in a serious undertaking.

This made me nervous because I didn't want to return home as a Catholic convert. I was not sure what power he really had and how he was going to use it. It was an uneasy moment. Madi, who was sitting next to me, giggled, as he always did when he saw me confused and uncertain. He enjoyed seeing people taken by surprise. I felt I was being taken advantage of, but I also thought I was being too protective of myself.



"Is there a mountain deity here?" I asked, trying to sound really surprised, to show how interested I was in learning more. I leaned towards Joe, who was sitting in the front seat.

"Yes, and we will speak to him today," said Madi as he patted my right leg a few times. "He recognizes and protects us."

"You can ask him to protect you, too," suggested Alex and laughed, as if he thought that this was an insane idea.

I usually enjoyed getting attention, but now I felt nervous and didn't like the fact that they were suggesting that I do this and that.

We drove over a narrow track to the mountain deity altar. The road was slippery and covered with bushes. I couldn't remember when the last time was that I had been on such a frightening, nerve-racking ride. The wife of the scientist continued repeating non-stop, "Jesus help, Jesus help..." in a trembling voice until we got to the mountaintop. This made everyone more worried.

When we arrived, I followed them to the base of a huge tree where two wooden boards were placed. Various food and fruit had been placed there. Everyone knelt in front of the tree and began praying. I sat on a big leaf and watched. Suddenly, it began raining. We all rushed to the Jeep and headed to the church.

A terribly frightening experience happened next. As I stood in front of the old church, I thought, "How will I sleep in this church tonight? They will go into trance and won't be aware of anything around us. What should I do?" A huge tree obscured my view of the church. It was now evening and the dim moonlight, the tree, and church blended together and seemed somehow to be a gigantic moving creature, peeking through thick trees. Small statues attached to the outside wooden walls of the church seemed to smile menacingly at each other, taking perverse delight in the presence of an unfamiliar face. I comforted myself by thinking that the statue of Buddha I had seen earlier by the two boards with food offerings would ensure my safety and protect me from harm.

"Come in! We're about to start," Madi called.

"Oh! Why did you yell? You scared me!" I said, no longer able to pretend.

It was around ten p.m. We put the benches in the church

together along one side of the room so that we could use them as a bed that night. Everyone sat in a circle close enough to be able to touch the person next to them. After fruitless attempts to persuade me to join them, they continued without me in their circle. Joe, the leader, sat on a chair close to the wall and gave instructions. There was no electricity in the church. Candles that we had brought were the only source of light. They flickered near the window.

I sat right next to Joe with my camera. I turned my head to look at the image of Jesus that hung in the center of the front part of the church. It looked very dramatic in the flickering dim light that danced on Jesus's face and upper body. There were two angels with their wings spread. One was on either side of the Jesus statue. They had looked lovely when I first entered the church, but now their faces had changed. I felt the presence of sorrow and evil. I can't explain exactly why, but I was afraid.

I couldn't sit still. I turned to my friends - their faces revealed utter peace and calm. They sat straight with closed eyes. It was a time of silence. Then I was aware of my breathing becoming louder and louder. Suddenly, images seemed to be closing in on me. I felt that I was being suffocated, as if the angels were flying near us. I could feel the wind from their flapping wings.

Without any forewarning, Joe began shaking wildly. I was so scared my arms went numb. The rest of the group began shaking. I regretted not joining them. If I had, I reasoned, I would not be so terrified. I raised my camera to take a picture, but then I thought I might see something truly terrifying through the lens so I put my camera away.

Alex was completely out of control. His upper body was swaying wildly and his arms were waving madly. A candle was knocked over. I rushed over and put out the candle. I stood, watching everyone shaking and murmuring. I again regretted not participating. Somehow, I regained a sense of the present and tried to hold Alex who, by this time, was banging his head on the floor. I couldn't stop him. I didn't know what to do. I went up to Madi and patted his shoulder, but he did not respond.

I went back to Alex and put a jacket under his head. Then the

scientist's wife started screaming and pulling at her hair. I jumped. I was totally unready for what I was experiencing and seeing. I went to Joe and hit his head with the Bible he had earlier placed by his side. When he returned to a more normal state, I was calm enough to observe a chaotic scene that was strangely miraculous. They had obviously been possessed by a spirit. There isn't any other way to explain how a normal human would jerk out their own hair and speak in a language that they did not understand, but made sense to Joe, who explained after the ritual what everyone had said while they were possessed.

It was amusing to watch Madi making all sorts of faces and gestures that so sharply contrasted with his usual personality. I couldn't control myself and laughed.

Joe waved me over and said, "A mountain deity has possessed Madi."

I believed that. It was all taking place in front of my eyes. I just couldn't believe the possibility that Madi, whom I had known for a year, was capable of putting on such an act.

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"Wake up, we're back home," Madi said.

"You didn't sleep last night. You look tired," Joe said, handing me my bag.

I got out of the vehicle and said, "I can't believe what happened last night. If we weren't unpacking from the trip, I would think it was all just a dream." I then sat down near Joe in the sitting room.

I had thousands of questions for my friends but, somehow, I never found the right time to ask them. I thought I was trying to deny something. It was a confusing experience, waking up thinking about what I had seen on the holy mountain, and then walking downstairs and seeing the same people engulfed in the same ordinary life dramas as everyone else.

•••

A few months later, we were drinking around a table. Before I became totally drunk, I asked them where that Buddha image on Mount Banahaw was from. I'm still looking for an answer to that question.



### Thub bstan (Tudeng)

I graduated from Qinghai Normal University's English Training Program (ETP) in 2006. In 2009, I earned an MA in Sociology from Silliman University in the Philippines. Since that time, I have worked in a non-government organization on the Plateau. I enjoy working in rural communities to identify problems and their solutions.

This is a true story that happened in March 2012, in Ku'u sgang Village, which is situated in a forested, mountainous area about five kilometers off a national road, along the Shis chu River that runs through Brag 'go Valley. The relative remoteness and lack of a proper road have left forest and lush grazing land largely intact for villagers and their handful of livestock. Plenty of wild mushrooms and flowers grow near the village, and it is also an ideal place for cultivating barley, peas, and potatoes. Monkeys scamper about in the forest, which is also home to brown bears, wild boars, and white-lipped deer. This is a place that many would liken to paradise.

During my childhood in the 1990s, Ku'u sgang Village had only ten households. Later, two village families moved near the roadside for convenience's sake. Meanwhile, three new households were established. Today, this beautiful village is home to eleven households and has a total population of sixty-two people.

The village includes two families with Chinese surnames (Huang and Zhou) and two other families with Chinese sons-in-law (surnamed Zhang and Wang). People of the relatively nearby roadside villages refer to Ku'u sgang as Rgya ri zhing or 'mountain fields reclaimed by Chinese'. My generation is the fourth of the Huang Family. As descendants of the root family of Huang, my older brother, younger sister, and I have Chinese names. We are called the dragon character generation, which signifies that the first character of all our given names is *long* 'dragon'. However, in my generation, we rarely use our Chinese names and the names on our official identification cards are Tibetan, unlike the older generations. I have

seventeen cousins who do not have Chinese names. In the Chinese tradition, sons and daughters inherit the surnames of their fathers; however, my uncles married and moved into Tibetan homes, or else established their own independent homes, and thus feel little obligation to pass on a Chinese surname to their offspring.

My paternal grandfather's father was a drifter from somewhere near Chengdu City. He married our great-grandmother after he was kicked out of his first wife's home. Great-grandmother was from Nyag rong County, where she lived as a nomad. Her brother murdered someone in a rangeland conflict and, subsequently, she and her family fled to Brag 'go County to escape reprisal. Great-grandfather somehow met Great-grandmother and they moved to Ku'u sgang. Their descendants had both Chinese and Tibetan names.

These great-grandparents had five sons. My paternal grandparents had nine children. My third uncle, an articulate man locally famous for his stubbornness, established his own family in the village a year after my birth. He has three daughters. The oldest is finishing her fifth year in medical college, the youngest is a middle school student, and the middle one, Sgrol ma, dropped out of middle school several years ago to stay at home and help her parents.

Sgrol ma was born in 1990. She is tall and her eyes startle people because they seem so large, as though they were the eyes of a yak. She wears traditional robes like other village women. Sgrol ma was regarded as the most beautiful girl in our village.

For five years, her father worked very hard as a laborer at construction sites and as a carpenter for dozens of local families who were building new homes. He did this to pay his daughters' school expenses and otherwise support the family. Once, he fell off a tractor and broke two ribs while transporting logs to sell. The pain and worry from this accident seemed to make him age significantly overnight, as if life had become suddenly burdensome. Nevertheless, he has never given up.

Uncle is practical, and planned to do whatever was necessary to send his oldest daughter to college, hoping that she would get a government job and then have be able to support the youngest daughter to attend college. Meanwhile, he wanted Sgrol ma to marry

and bring her husband into their home after the eldest daughter graduated. Uncle realized that Sgrol ma's future husband would be resentful if he moved into the home and saw the income that he helped earn paying for Sgrol ma's sisters' schooling. Knowing this might cause problems, he decided to wait a bit before arranging Sgrol ma's marriage. This was the plan until a messenger came from the other side of the river and announced that Sgrol ma had eloped.

Two marriage forms are practiced locally – marriages arranged by family members and *sa 'bud* 'fleeing'. Arranged marriages ignore the feelings of the youths most directly involved. Parents ask their most trusted relatives to look for potential spouses from reputable families or, at least, who seem well behaved and whose families lack a history of such diseases as leprosy and tuberculosis. Parents consult a wide range of contacts about the qualities of potential spouses. Once both sides reach a preliminary agreement, negotiations ensue. One of the first things mentioned is how well the new in-law will be treated in the home they will move into.

The second topic of discussion is 'marriage price', which is *mo rin* 'brideprice' when a girl moves into her husband's home, and *pho rin* 'price of the groom' when a boy will marry and move into his wife's home. *Nu rin* 'milk price' or 'nursing price' refers to compensation paid to the mother who nursed the bride or groom who is leaving to their spouse's home. *Nu rin* is very small compared to *pho rin* and *mo rin*.

In most cases the sentiments embedded in the phrase *shug pa ri la bead nas ri la mchod* 'juniper cut from the mountain is burned to venerate the mountain' is followed – the spouse marrying-in brings with them property or cash that exceeds what has been paid as *pho rin* or *mo rin*.

*Sa 'bud* can refer to two very different situations – fleeing revenge, like my great-grandfather, and elopement. The practice of elopement leaves the parents of both sides in a passive situation, since the young couple has an agreement before they flee to the house of a friend or relative, who then becomes the messenger to inform the parents to prepare for negotiation. The news of Cousin's elopement

was a bolt from the blue. Uncle had been asking around about a son-in-law for about a year. Local villagers had gotten accustomed to this and imagined she would agree to whatever marriage her father arranged for her. Her disappearance raised many questions: What was the couple's plan? With whom had Sgrol ma eloped? Who were his parents?

The man Cousin had escaped with was thirty-eight year old Tshe ring. According to rumor, he was an ugly novice carpenter, had long hair, was a childless divorcee, had left his wife's home without so much as a needle, and had lived with a nomad girl for a year after his divorce.

Meanwhile, Tshe ring's brother and parents had forced their first daughter-in-law out of their home after she was unable to give birth again after her first son. Tshe ring's brother then found a woman from the next county and married her. Time passed and she drove her parents-in-law out of the home. Tshe ring then lived with his parents in an abandoned primary school building while constructing a new home nearby.

This information about Tshe ring and his family's colorful background further weakened Uncle's already tired, worn-out body. He called my father for a discussion. Father then took me and my brother to Uncle's home. Uncle was old enough to remember the earthquake that shook our county in 1973. Local wooden houses became famous for their resilience in the face of the earthquakes. Uncle's house is unique in the village because, unlike others, there is no ground floor for livestock. Uncle reasons that two-story wood houses are weaker than one-story houses during earthquakes.

When we reached Uncle's home, Aunt came out to greet us and open the courtyard gate. She had more white hair than the last time I had seen her, and her moist cheeks told us that she'd been weeping. When we entered the kitchen, I noticed felt rugs scattered on the floor. Uncle looked much darker and older than the last time I had seen him. He sat in a corner with a jug of home-made barley liquor and a big chunk of raw yak meat on a plate in front of him. It was obvious he had been drinking. Raw yak meat is a delicacy served at festivals to honored guests. Barley liquor is generally served with



raw yak meat. Today, however, festivity and joy seemed to be sadly absent.

He told Aunt to bring tea. I then looked more carefully at Aunt. Her upper body seemed to bend forward in a way that formed a right angle, as though she were being inexorably pulled to the center of the earth by the force of gravity. I then realized how terrible the process of aging is and what tragic consequences it has.

Uncle said, "A messenger came today and told us that Sgrol ma wishes to live in the man's home and serve his parents."

We could hardly believe our ears! Sgrol ma had been designated as the one to stay in her own parents' home and care for them. This was catastrophic news for Uncle and Aunt.

Uncle continued in a shaky voice, "I would like to hear my daughter confirm this. She fully understood that she was supposed to stay at home with us." Uncle felt terribly betrayed by his own daughter.

The timing of Sgrol ma's elopement was particularly difficult because Uncle's father – my grandfather – had passed away only five months earlier. His closest relatives now were to observe certain cultural taboos. For a year they should hold no celebrations – no weddings, and no New Year festivities. Any sort of celebration was strictly forbidden. The family could not even observe the ritual of mountain deity worship during that year, since the whole village celebrates after such rituals. Furthermore, those who touch a corpse should not enter the family shrine. Locals think that they have *lag btsog pa* 'polluted hands'. The deceased's close relatives also do not wash their hair and face during the forty-nine days after death, nor do they cut their hair or shave for a year.

The more we learned about Tshe ring, the surer we became that Sgrol ma she had been deceived rather than fallen in love. As this conviction grew stronger, we held some hope that she might return to her parents alone, or with Tshe ring.

Tradition dictated that a few of Tshe ring's closest relatives would come the next day to negotiate. After discussion, we agreed to send some of our relatives to visit Tshe ring's parents early the next morning to assume an aggressive role, rather than passively wait.

The next morning, Father and Uncle's older brother – who I will call Second Uncle – rode motorcycles along a zigzagging mountain road and crossed the river to visit Tshe ring's parents on the other side of the valley. When they arrived it was so early that the old parents had not yet gotten up. They quickly scrambled up and put on their clothes.

Father then put a bottle of liquor wrapped in a *kha dar*<sup>1</sup> on the table and said, "You two must have heard about the children's elopement. We have come to say that Sgrol ma's parents are very proud to have your son as a son-in law. We heard that you have your first son caring for you. Sgrol ma has been designated by her parents to serve them. We have come to take your son and Sgrol ma to her parents' home."

His parents silently stared at each other for a few seconds and then began to relate how they had been kicked out of their home by their son's wife and other pathetic stories we had heard before. After giving a detailed account of these miseries, they cunningly concluded, "This young couple has decided to live here and we feel we must honor their decision."

Three of Tshe ring's relatives had been chosen to visit Uncle and Aunt, but we had come first so their visit was no longer appropriate. After about an hour, Tshe ring's father received a phone call from one of those representatives and told him to come to his home. These three representatives then soon arrived with a bottle of liquor and a *kha dar*, which they tried to give Father and Second Uncle to take to Uncle. However, these two gifts were politely refused. Father and Second Uncle then left for the messenger's village where Sgrol ma and Tshe ring were staying to hear Sgrol ma's side of the story.

That village was located in a valley only twenty minutes on motorcycle from the old primary school. Cousin called the representative and told him to inform Sgrol ma to come meet them at the shrine the villagers had built at a spot just outside the village.

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<sup>1</sup> Strip of ceremonial silk, i.e., *kha btags*. A bottle of liquor wrapped in a *kha dar*, when accepted, signifies acceptance of the proposal.

When Sgrol ma appeared, Second Uncle scolded, "How heartless of you to leave your parents like this! Your father worked so hard to raise you and the other two girls, and now this is how you repay him!" Sgrol ma lowered her head and said nothing. "Did you know that Tshe ring is second-hand goods?" he continued.

Sgrol ma raised her head in shock and asked, "Who told you that? He never said anything about that."

Realizing that Tshe ring had lied from the very beginning, she put her head between her knees and began weeping. At this point, we felt there was some hope she would return to her parents. We also pitied Sgrol ma, who had so obviously been deceived, and understood that we had to handle this matter very carefully. If Sgrol ma left for her parents' home without a word, then Tshe ring's relatives would probably come and ask for compensation, because she had broken the tacit agreement she had made by eloping with him.

Finally, there was agreement that Sgrol ma would talk to Tshe ring about what he had so conveniently omitted from his life story. Meanwhile, our side would continue negotiating with Tshe ring's relatives. Since Tshe ring had never told her about his first marriage, it seemed that there had not been a real elopement but a conspiracy. Representing the relationship in this way meant we would have a better chance to prevail in negotiations and then be compensated.

We returned and reported the whole story to the elders who were preparing for negotiations. They were upset to hear what had happened but still had hope. We thought it would be good for Sgrol ma to leave Tshe ring, who had been deceitful from the beginning. However, a call from Sgrol ma's older sister vanquished this hope. She said that Sgrol ma had called her and said that if she returned home, she would be considered used goods and would never be able to find a husband and, furthermore, villagers would denigrate her behind her back. Given these realities, Sgrol ma had opted to honor the elopement. This decision dishonored all her relatives, causing even more frustration.

The next day, Tshe ring's representatives came to Uncle's home. Since Sgrol ma had said she supported the agreement, our side could do little. Uncle was not in the mood for negotiation. He just

wanted to know clearly from the visitors if there was a matchmaker among them. Uncle said, "Tshe ring never told Sgrol ma that he had been married before. This convinces us that this is a conspiracy rather than an elopement. We think there must be a matchmaker who bragged about how nice Tshe ring is and how nice his family is for my girl. The oldest person from your family needs to swear that there was no matchmaker of any kind. Only then can we start negotiations."

Followed by a discussion on their side, they called Tshe ring because someone from this group needed to make an oath. After a break, they reassembled for further negotiation that centered on the issue of the matchmaker. An old man with a wrinkled face stroked his white beard and said, "We asked Tshe ring. He said that there was no matchmaker. As the oldest representative, I will swear an oath."

Locally, it is believed that there are terrible consequences to falsely swear an oath. Whoever swears such an oath will be born in Hell after their death and their tongue will be pulled until it is as long as a field and then plowed repeatedly. Given the seriousness of taking an oath, it occupies a central role in negotiations. Oaths can be made by holding a *bla ma's* picture over the head, holding a door handle of a monastery both parties respect, and so on. The negotiation at Uncle's home took place in the living room, which featured several images of *bla ma* and deities on the walls. The old man representing Tshe ring swore facing a picture of a *bla ma* hanging on the wall. As soon as the oath was finished, our side raised such questions as: "Was there a matchmaker of any sort, such as someone giving out Sgrol ma's or her family's phone number? This is also considered matchmaking."

The old man's face turned deathly pale at once and then he said, "I'm very sorry. Tshe ring told us that there was a man who gave him a phone number."

Uncle immediately asked the name of the man who had given the number, but they begged for forgiveness and refused to tell his name. Giving out phone numbers is common among young people, but this action also connotes matchmaking. Their side was afraid that revealing this man's name would lead to more conflict.

Uncle then phoned his oldest daughter and told her to call Sgrol ma for a clear answer, but the response was similar. It was clear that Sgrol ma, for whatever reasons, didn't want to specify the man's name. Though she might have been deceived, she understood that the wrong answer could set off a blood feud – there were plenty of local examples. Now she had to accept her fate by honoring the elopement agreement, and also suffer from the knowledge that her family had been terribly humiliated.

Sgrol ma called as negotiations continued. Uncle stood and went outside to talk to her. After several minutes, he returned and said, "My girl called. She told me she will honor the agreement no matter what." The negotiators from our side were suddenly deflated.

Unwilling to respond immediately, Uncle told the representatives from Tshe ring's side to come again the next day for another round of negotiation.

The next day's meeting was brief. Uncle asked for 20,000 RMB for *mo rin*, and 3,000 RMB for *nu rin*. Tshe ring's relatives agreed at once, though this exceeded the local record for such payments. The old man who had sworn the oath searched his pocket and pulled out 500 RMB and a *kha dar* as a gesture to ask for forgiveness for the false oath he had sworn the day before. Marriage negotiations usually have a happy ending. Everything seemed headed in this direction until Uncle abruptly announced, "Please inform my daughter not to cross the threshold of this home for three years. After three years, I will see what mood I'm in to arrange a dowry," who then concluded by swearing an oath.

Everyone was shocked.

He added, "Tell her to be happy with her choice, live wherever she chooses, and not to do anything that would lead me to break my oath."

Tshe ring's relatives then departed victoriously, but somewhat bitterly.

Everything returned to normal. The village was soon as quiet as ever. Our tempers cooled after accepting that Cousin had made her own decision. It was her life to decide, not her father's and, of course, not ours either.

Several days later, I heard a rumor making the rounds in the village. Sgrol ma had, it was said, told a friend, "Father and my uncles were looking for a husband for me all over the place for a year. It seemed nobody wanted to marry me. The rumors I heard about me made me so ashamed that I no longer wanted to stay in the village."

NON-ENGLISH TERMS

*bla ma* ལྷ་མ།

*Brag 'go* བྲག་འགོ།

*bskyur zas* བསྐྱུར་བསམ།

*Chengdu* 成都

*go log ma* གོ་ལོག་མ།

*Huang* 黄

*kha btags* ཁ་བཏགས།

*kha dar* ཁ་དར།

*Ku'u sgang* ཀུ་ལུ་སྐང།

*lag btsog pa* ལག་བཙོག་པ།

*Lo sar* ལོ་སར།

*mna' bshags* མནའ་བཤགས།

*mna'* མནའ།

*mo rin* མོ་རིན།

*nu rin* ལུ་རིན།

*Nyag rong* ཉག་རོང།

*pho rin* ཕོ་རིན།

Qinghai Normal University 青海师范大学

*Rgya ri zhing* རྒྱ་རི་ཞིང།

*RMB* 人民币

*sa 'bud* ས་འབུད།

*Sgrol ma* སྐྱོལ་མ།

Shis chu ཤེས་ཅུ།

*shug pa ri la bcad nas ri la mchod* ལུག་པ་རི་ལ་བཅད་ནས་རི་ལ་མཚོད།

Sichuan ངལ་ཁྲོན།

*thang ga* ཐང་ག།

Thub bstan ཐུབ་བསྟན།

Tshe ring ཚེ་རིང་།

Tudeng ི་ཕེང་།

Wang ཡ།

*yuan* རྒྱལ།

Zhang རྩ།

*zhe dgu* རྩེ་དགུ།

Zhou རྩ།





Ba. Lobsang Gonbo ('Ba' blo bzang mgon po)

I was born in 1984 in Btsal ba Village, Gru ba lung Township, 'Ba' thang County, Dkar mdzes Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China. I graduated with a degree in Tibetan-English-Chinese translation from Qinghai Normal University in 2006.

Dom mgo bla ma tshe ring o rgyan, who features in this story, lived about a century ago in Btsal ba Village. Locals said that he went to Shambhala after he passed beyond suffering. This story illustrates the possibility of love not only between two people, but also between different ethnic groups and religions, while emphasizing Buddhist compassion toward animals – even tiny ants. The story suggests that when all sentient creatures and religions are held in equal respect, the world will be at peace.

Bkra shis was exhausted. He lay on a small bed in his home shrine room. Laymen rarely sat or slept on this bed, because it had been given by a highly respected local reincarnation *bla ma* – Dom mgo bla ma tshe ring o rgyan – who had spent much of his life meditating alone in a cave. Local elders said that the great *bla ma* passed beyond suffering, leaving nothing behind but his fingernails and toenails, a sign of great spiritual attainment.

Bkra shis tightly gripped his head in his hands and thought, "I have seen the bodies of many great masters much reduced in size as they meditated for several months on their throne after they stopped breathing. Why did Dom mgo bla ma tshe ring o rgyan only leave hair and nails? Is this enlightenment? Where did he go after his death? Did he go to the Kingdom of Shambhala?" These questions swirled about in his mind as his eyes slowly closed and he drifted off to sleep.

He stretched out on the bed with both shoes on, and after he was deeply asleep, he dreamed...

He was having breakfast at his home while his mother saddled his black horse. Then she went into the garden, pulled up a few handfuls of grass, picked some pears and apples from their fruit

trees, and put the fruit in a knitted woolen bag. She fed the horse with the grass she had just pulled, quickly returned to the second floor, and burned sacred juniper in the stove, which produced much fragrant smoke. She told Bkra shis to let the smoke waft over him and to fumigate himself in the smoke, adding that it would bring him luck during his journey to collect caterpillar fungus<sup>1</sup> on the mountains. She then went to the shrine room, took an amulet, and put it around his neck. They touched their foreheads together to say goodbye.

Bkra shis said, "Mother, I'll miss you! Take care," and then walked to a neighbor's big walnut tree, collected some walnuts, and put them in his leather bag before mounting his black horse and riding off. While riding, he repacked the special gift he had prepared for his girlfriend.

After two hours of riding, the horse was coated with sweat. Bkra shis dismounted, rested in a forest near a small pasture, and watched his horse graze on the fresh grass. Bkra shis climbed up a big pine tree and looked down at his home village, which he could clearly see. The village was surrounded by mountains. A clear brook ran at the southern edge of the village. Terraced fields sprouted corn and buckwheat.

As Bkra shis recalled the doting care his mother had shown him before he left, he wiped away tears with his robe's long sleeves. He slowly climbed down from the pine tree, mounted his horse, and ambled toward the herding area.

After another three hours of riding, he reached the Li shul Grassland where many young people from Btsal ba Village were pitching black tents. Both Bkra shis's brother, Nyi ma, and father, Rgya mtsho, looked up and smiled when they saw Bkra shis and his horse approach. Bkra shis crossed a small stream, quickly dismounted, and greeted his father by pressing his forehead against his father's. When Bkra shis entered the tent, his brother was churning butter tea. Bkra shis's father was sitting cross-legged. After making the tea, Nyi ma sat next to his father. Bkra shis then sat next to Nyi ma. Bkra shis's father handed a chunk of butter and some *rtsam pa* 'roasted barley flour' to Bkra shis and said, "You must be hungry. It's a long journey. Have some *rtsam pa*."

Bkra shis said, "Yes," took his wooden bowl from a leather bag, and began making *rtsam pa*.

His brother Nyi ma said, "How's Mother?"

Bkra shis replied, "She's fine. She gave me some fruit for you and Father."

Nyi ma was delighted to hear this and stood up to take some

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<sup>1</sup> A valuable medicinal substance found on the grassland.

from the leather bag. Neighbors began arriving at the tent to see who had arrived and what they had brought from the village. Bkra shis looked around at the people, seemingly searching for something or someone. He responded absent-mindedly when a neighbor spoke to him. It had been a long while since he had seen his girlfriend, Gser skyid me tog. Their relationship was still secret. None of Gser skyid me tog's family members came to Bkra shis's tent, because Bkra shis's family members regarded them as enemies. Gser skyid me tog's grandfather had killed Bkra shis's grandfather ten years earlier. The two families had not talked since.

Thinking about the best way to give the gift he had prepared for Gser skyid me tog, Bkra shis asked his father, "Where are our livestock? Are they on the southern grassland?"

His father replied, "Yes, do you want to go find them?"

Bkra shis happily replied, "Sure! I'll go now."

Bkra shis draped the sling that he used to herd livestock over his shoulder, took out the gift he had prepared, and put it inside his robe. Bkra shis whistled as he passed Gser skyid me tog's tent – they used a special whistle to signal it was time to meet – and continued on his way to the grassland.

Bkra shis's gift consisted of a silver ring, a scarf, and a pair of leather gloves. Bkra shis also picked twenty-five lovely red flowers from the many decorating the grassland and thought, "How should I present this ring and these flowers to her? Should I embrace and kiss her? Will she accept my love and the engagement ring?"

Bkra shis sat on the green grassland and gazed into the distance. Some wild blue sheep were frolicking with the yaks and sheep. All Btsal ba villagers were Buddhists and believed that animals and humans were equal, so nobody dare disturb these wild creatures. Bkra shis enjoyed the fragrance of flowers around him, and the azure sky high above.

After a while, he noticed a tall girl with an attractive figure approaching. His nervous heart throbbed and he gripped the bouquet in front of his chest with both hands. Surprised to see Bkra shis with a bunch of flowers, Gser skyid me tog walked slowly toward Bkra shis with her head down. Meanwhile, Bkra shis summoned his courage and handed her the flowers. He murmured, "These twenty-five flowers symbolize your age and love for me."

Gser skyid me tog took the flowers, sniffed each one, and said, "Thank you. They are truly lovely."

Bkra shis replied, "You're welcome. I also brought some other gifts for you. Do you want to see them?"

Gser skyid me tog said, "Yes, I'm eager to see them."

Bkra shis took out the scarf and leather gloves, put the scarf around her neck, and helped her slip on the gloves. She was

delighted and thanked him.

Realizing that if she wore the gloves, she couldn't put on the ring, Bkra shis said, "How do you like these gifts?"

Gser skyid me tog said, "Very much!"

Bkra shis took off her left glove, told her to close her eyes, opened the ring box, slipped the ring on the middle finger of her left hand, and then told her to open her eyes. Bkra shis said, "It's our engagement ring. Will you marry me?"

Gser skyid me tog said, "I'd like to marry you, but our families..." and then she tightly embraced him as tears trickled from her eyes. It was their first embrace. Their two hearts throbbed like pounding drums. Bkra shis moved his hand to her upper back and tried to kiss her. Just as their lips and tongues joined, a melodious folk song seemed to burst forth. Gser skyid me tog felt afraid and covered her head and face with the scarf. They then scrambled up the mountain to tend the yaks and sheep. Before they set off in different directions, they agreed on the place where they should meet the next time.

Gser skyid me tog soon returned home and milked the female yaks, and then went inside the tent where her father was offering butter lamps before Buddha images. Her father asked her to make *mdzo sna*, a dish made from wheat flour, liquefied butter, and cheese, because it was the anniversary of Rje tsong kha pa having achieved enlightenment. This is a day when most Tibetans do not eat meat and make many butter lamps at home. After she finished cooking the *mdzo sna*, she asked her father to come eat. Before eating, her father recited scriptures and filled a bowl with *mdzo sna* as an offering to the Three Jewels. He also used a wooden spoon to offer some *mdzo sna* to the ground so that all who had died could also eat. Then her father said, "Gser skyid me tog, come eat some *mdzo sna*." They began eating. Her father ate three bowlfuls.

After discussing the next day's work, they went to bed. Her father drifted quickly into sleep, but Gser skyid me tog tossed and turned as she recalled Bkra shis giving her the gifts and flowers. The flickering of butter lamps and dancing shadows led her to imagine Bkra shis's presence. When the wind blew the flames grew brighter and moved more quickly, the shadows were more distinct, and her heart beat faster. She finally pulled the quilt up over her head and slept.

Bkra shis got up very early the next morning and finished all the housework. He took his spade, put bread in a bag, and went to the place where Gser skyid me tog usually collected caterpillar fungus. He searched and found ten before Gser skyid me tog came. He made a fire to boil water while Gser skyid me tog searched for

caterpillar fungus. A couple of hours later, Bkra shis called her to come eat.

Gser skyid me tog said that she hadn't found a single fungus, because she had slept poorly the night before. She added, "I can't eat now because Father will scold me if I find no caterpillar fungus."

Bkra shis hugged her and said, "It's important to eat. I promise I'll give you some fungus if you don't find any this afternoon."

She smiled and said, "Really? You're so kind to me."

Bkra shis said, "Of course, because you are my future wife." Then they ate together. Gser skyid me tog's eager eyes told Bkra shis what she wanted. Bkra shis then tightly embraced her and kissed her for a long time. Bkra shis was very proud to have finished, at long last, the first passionate kiss of his life, even though Gser skyid me tog had kissed him so hard it had left a small wound on his tongue. Meanwhile, Gser skyid me tog's uncle was peeping at them from behind a clump of bushes. As the sun moved toward the horizon, Bkra shis gave most of what he had collected to his girlfriend.

Gser skyid me tog's father glared at her when she entered their tent and angrily demanded, "How many caterpillar fungus did you bring? Who were you with?"

Gser skyid me tog quietly said, "I got eight fungi. I was alone."

Her father seemed to know something, but he said nothing. Gser skyid me tog picked up her wooden bucket and went to milk the yaks. While milking the last one, Bkra shis suddenly appeared and said, "Are you OK?"

She replied, "I'm fine, but you need to leave – quickly!" Full of curiosity, Bkra shis lingered. Suddenly, they heard a loud voice, and Gser skyid me tog's father rushed at them with a knife. As her father lunged at Bkra shis, Gser skyid me tog grabbed the knife, and her hands immediately began dripping blood. While continuing to grip the knife, she yelled, "Bkra shis! Run!" Bkra shis turned and fled.

Gser skyid me tog's relatives soon came and took her father into the tent. One of the relatives, Sgrol ma, was a doctor who cleaned the wound with alcohol and then wrapped it with gauze. Gser skyid me tog wept, not from the pain, but from heartache. She knew that her father would order her to never meet Bkra shis again.

Bkra shis returned, panting, to his tent. His father asked, "What's the matter? What happened?"

Bkra shis lied, "Nothing." He knew that if he told him the truth that his father would fight Thub bstan, Gser skyid me tog's father.

As Bkra shis poured a bowl of butter tea for his father, Nyi ma entered the tent and said, "Bkra shis, are you OK? I heard Thub bstan beat you?"

Bkra shis's father angrily jumped up, grabbed his rifle from the central tent pole, and said, "We must kill Thub bstan tonight! His father killed my father."

Bkra shis knelt on the ground and grabbed their legs.

Nyi ma said, "Bkra shis, what are you doing? Stop this!"

Bkra shis replied, "It's my fault! I really love Gser skyid me tog. Please forgive me."

Bkra shis's father replied, "What? You love our enemy's daughter? Are you mad? I'll forgive you just this time, but you must stop your relationship with Gser skyid me tog immediately!"

Bkra shis reluctantly murmured, "I will..."

His father told him to stand up and then told Bkra shis the story about Bkra shis's and Gser skyid me tog's grandfathers. Bkra shis pretended to listen carefully, but his heart was with Gser skyid me tog. After he finished, Bkra shis's father told his two sons to go to bed. Under his quilt, Bkra shis took his prayers beads from his wrist and prayed for Gser skyid me tog to recover soon.

The next morning, Bkra shis left to collect fungus while Gser skyid me tog stayed in her tent, nursing her wounds. Bkra shis heard a drumbeat while walking by a steep cliff. He looked around and noticed a cave twenty meters up on the cliff. He slowly climbed up, and as he neared the cave, he saw a tantric specialist with hair in a single long braid beating a drum. Bkra shis happily thought, "I'm very lucky, but he is meditating so I shouldn't disturb him."

The specialist stopped beating the drum and waved to him. Bkra shis took off his hat and made three prostrations. The specialist asked, "How many caterpillar fungi did you collect? How many people are collecting caterpillar fungus? How did you find me?"

Bkra shis replied, "I have only collected three caterpillar fungi today. More than a thousand people are collecting caterpillar fungus in this area. I'm just passing by."

The meditator shook his head, sighed, and said, "Even though caterpillar fungi can be sold for a lot of money, it is only brings temporary benefit. Collecting caterpillar fungus damages the environment and harms many future generations."

Bkra shis suddenly changed the topic, and asked the specialist to make a divination for his future with Gser skyid me tog.

The specialist agreed and said, after performing the divinations, "The signs are very good. They indicate that she will recover soon. In terms of your relationship, you should both leave for another place - your families will not agree to your marriage."

Bkra shis said, "Thank you! Where should we go?"

The specialist said, "Go very far away. You will face many difficulties. Are you sure that you want to go with her?"

Bkra shis eagerly said, "Yes, I do! Where exactly should we go?"

The specialist thought for a moment and said, "Go north to a place called Ka IA pa in the Kingdom of Shambhala. If you decide to go there, you must go very soon. Good luck to you and your future wife." The specialist then gave more detailed information about Ka IA pa.

After leaving the cave, Bkra shis made plans to go to Shambhala and returned home with only three caterpillar fungi. Bkra shis desperately wanted to communicate with Gser skyid me tog, but was afraid to go to her tent. Then he thought of Tshe ring, his best friend, who could be a messenger, because Tshe ring was also Gser skyid me tog's close relative. Bkra shis went to Tshe ring's tent who, luckily, was alone. Bkra shis asked him to tell Gser skyid me tog his plan. Tshe ring refused at first, but Bkra shis then told Tshe ring how much he loved Gser skyid me tog and begged, with tears in his eyes, to convey his message to Gser skyid me tog.

Moved by Bkra shis's tears and his obvious sincerity, Tshe ring finally agreed. They then discussed the plan in detail. Bkra shis planned to leave at midnight in two days' time. He wanted Gser skyid me tog to meet him in a place called Rtsed thang. Meanwhile, he would prepare a yak to transport their belongings and Gser skyid me tog could ride the yak when she was tired.

At the appointed time, Bkra shis got up very quietly and went to Rtsed thang. After about a half hour, Gser skyid me tog arrived. Seeing the trace of tears in her eyes, Bkra shis asked, "Did you cry when you left your tent?"

Gser skyid me tog said, "No," while dabbing at her eyes with her sleeve. Then she said, "Will we go to Shambhala? How do we get there? I heard that only highly realized holy people could go there. Is it also possible for laypeople to go there?"

Bkra shis replied, "It is possible. A tantric specialist advised us to go there and gave me detailed directions to Ka IA pa, which is in the Kingdom of Shambhala."

Gser skyid me tog said, "I understand. Shall we start our journey?"

Bkra shis replied, "Yes, let's begin," and then they set off.

After a half-day of travel, they reached Mount Kong btsan. Its peak covered in snow, the mountain resembled a person wearing a white scarf. They cut some juniper branches and took out clean butter, *rtsam pa*, and tea leaves from what Bkra shis had packed. Gser skyid me tog collected dry wood and grass. After Bkra shis had

made a fire, he added juniper branches, wheat flour, *rtsam pa*, and tea leaves and then chanted a prayer dedicated to the mountain deity. Bkra shis broke off a twig from a juniper branch, went to a small stream, put the twig in the stream, and took it back to the smoldering incense offering. He flicked water from the twig onto the smoldering pile of offerings to further purify the area. Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog knelt in front of the offering and prayed for the welfare of all sentient beings. They then continued their journey to Shambhala.

Eight hours later, when Gser skyid me tog felt tired, Bkra shis suggested she ride the yak. They then went on and eventually reached a quiet valley through which a river flowed. Bkra shis helped Gser skyid me tog dismount and then he located a good place to pitch their tent. Meanwhile, Gser skyid me tog unloaded the yak and turned it free to graze.

Bkra shis said, "What do you think about this place? Do you regret running away with me? You must be tired. Rest! I'll do all the work here."

She replied, "It's very quiet and beautiful. I love being here. I don't regret coming with you. In my heart, we are inseparable. I'm a little bit tired, but I'll cook for you. It is my first chance to cook for you and I'll do my best."

Bkra shis was sweating after pitching the tent. He said, "Sweetheart, I'll go collect some juniper tree bark to put on the grass under our sleeping mats."

Gser skyid me tog said, "OK. I'll prepare noodles."

Bkra shis went to a nearby forest of juniper trees. Noticing many ants when he peeled bark from one juniper tree, he thought, "Where will all the ants go? If I destroy this ant nest, many ants will die. As a Buddhist, I must not peel bark from juniper trees and injure the ants." Bkra shis then collected some dry leaves instead and took them back to the tent.

Gser skyid me tog was cooking noodles when Bkra shis entered the tent. Gser skyid me tog asked in surprise, "Why didn't you bring bark?"

Bkra shis joked, "The juniper trees were too tall!" and then explained about the ant nests and his reluctance to bring suffering to the ants. Gser skyid me tog applauded his compassion and then went outside to collect nettles to cook with the noodles.

As the nettles and noodles were bubbling in their cooking pot, Bkra shis recalled the great yogi, Rje btsun Mi la ras pa, a student of Mar pa Lo tsA ba. While Mi la ras pa was meditating in a cave he ate uncooked nettles after rubbing them between his hands.

Gser skyid me tog served noodles, playfully pulled Bkra shis's hair, and asked, "What are you thinking? Are you missing



home? Are the noodles OK?"

Bkra shis replied, "The nettles in the noodles made me think of Mi la ras pa. The noodles and nettles cooked together are really delicious."

She said, "I worried that you were homesick."

Bkra shis said, "How do you like this world of two people?"

She said quietly, "I like it very much."

A bit later, Bkra shis made a bed. It was clear he was expecting them to share one quilt.

Gser skyid me tog noticed and said, "I'll give you my virginity only on the night of our wedding day."

Bkra shis was annoyed and quickly made separate sleeping places. Once in bed, Bkra shis rolled over without saying anything to Gser skyid me tog.

Gser skyid me tog thought to herself, "Does love mean we must sleep together? I know he's angry with me, but he should wait until we marry." Then she recited scriptures and soon fell asleep.

At midnight, a furious storm awakened them. Gser skyid me tog called out "Bkra shis! I'm cold and afraid!"

Bkra shis told her to come to his bed and promised he would not bother her. She agreed and they slept together. Bkra shis held her tightly to keep her warm. Meanwhile Gser skyid me tog trembled from nervousness. Thinking she was still cold, Bkra shis asked, "Are you cold?"

She replied, "I'm not cold, just nervous, because it's my first time to sleep with a man."

Bkra shis giggled and kissed her neck. After a while, Gser skyid me tog became more relaxed and held Bkra shis. She was not wearing a bra. Bkra shis tried to touch her breasts by putting his right hand under her T-shirt. Gser skyid me tog then yelled, "Bkra shis! Please keep your promise!"

Bkra shis groaned, rolled over, and went to sleep.

Gser skyid me tog got up early and went out to collect some yak dung, so she could make a fire and boil some tea and wash their faces with warm water. She also heated the leftover noodles. Bkra shis got up and washed with warm water. They then made plans for the remainder of their trip. Bkra shis quickly finished breakfast and then went to find the yak and bring it to the tent. When Bkra shis came back with the yak, they gathered their belongings and loaded them on the yak.

Many months later they came to a large lake that marked the boundary of Shambhala. The only obvious way to cross the lake was to swim, but neither Bkra shis nor Gser skyid me tog could swim. Gser skyid me tog sadly said to Bkra shis, "We could easily cross if there were a bridge."

Bkra shis looked at Gser skyid me tog and said, "Don't be silly!" Then the sky became cloudy, lightning flashed, and thunder rumbled. At this juncture, the yak suddenly dove into the lake, swam a short distance, and then returned to shore.

Bkra shis said, "Look at the yak! He is very faithful and I trust him. He is signaling that he will help us cross the lake. If we drown, at least all three of us will die together."

They unloaded the yak, Gser skyid me tog and Bkra shis mounted it, and it began swimming across the lake amid the thunder and lightning. The yak did its best, despite a high wind that created huge waves. Realizing the gravity of the situation, the yak swam faster and panted desperately. Suddenly, when a gigantic wave came near, the yak shook itself, throwing its two riders up on the shore. Meanwhile, the yak was pulled back into the lake by the receding waves. Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog gazed at the yak, tears streaming from their eyes. Gser skyid me tog said, "The yak is now part of our lives. He sacrificed himself for us." She clasped her hands together and chanted, "*oM ma Ni pad+me hUM.*"

Bkra shis comforted her and also recited some mantras while sitting crossed-legged.

After chanting for a while, they walked up to the top of a small mountain. From there they could see Ka IA pa City in Shambhala. Both travelers joyfully knelt and prayed for the benefit of all sentient creatures. Snow covered the mountain peaks ringing Ka IA pa. Wild animals ambled through the town amid the melodious twittering of various birds. There were neither cars nor tall buildings. The highest building was, what seemed to be, a magnificent monastery in the center of Ka IA pa.

Gser skyid me tog said to Bkra shis, "Look! The Kingdom of Shambhala truly resembles a Tibetan place."

Bkra shis said, "Let's enter the town, and see more."

Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog walked to the main street of the town. Everyone came out and greeted them with big smiles, even though they were strangers. Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog were amazed to see that practitioners of different religions lived in this beautiful town. A tall man with brown hair took them to a beautiful house. Gser skyid me tog said, "You have a really nice house."

The man replied, "I will give you this house. I'm glad to meet you."

Gser skyid me tog said, "Thank you very much. I can't believe that people of Shambhala are so kind and generous. We are very glad to meet you, too."

Bkra shis added, "Thank you. Thanks very much."

A bit later, a Muslim woman wearing an open veil came and

gave them a big cooking pot. She said, "I'm sorry that I didn't come earlier."

Next, a monk wearing a red robe came and gave them a lot of food, and kindly greeted the other gift-givers. The monk and those bringing gifts were very friendly with each other. It seemed that they had known each other for a long time. The monk said, "My name is Dom mgo bla ma tshe ring o rgyan. I'm happy to see people from my home village here."

Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog shed tears and knelt before him.

Gser skyid me tog said, "We are very lucky to meet you. You are the main *bla ma* of Btsal ba Village. Everyone there is waiting for your return."

Dom mgo bla ma tshe ring o rgyan replied, "I also miss the villagers. I will return to Btsal ba to teach the Dharma after your wedding party."

After their conversation, Bkra shis went to wash vegetables in the stream near their home. Everyone in Shambhala was vegetarian, even though they practiced different religions, in the belief that the lives of animals and humans had equal value. Gser skyid me tog and the Muslim woman they had met earlier cooked the vegetables Bkra shis had washed. They then ate at one table and had an interesting conversation. When Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog suggested that they hold a wedding party two days later, Dom mgo bla ma tshe ring o rgyan agreed. He said, "The wedding party will be on Sunday, which is an auspicious day." Then they all toasted with tea, because none of them drank alcohol.

After their guests left, Gser skyid me tog and Bkra shis felt tired and prepared to sleep. Gser skyid me tog said, "What happened today that you found to be the most interesting? People here are very friendly, warm-hearted, and respect each other's beliefs."

Bkra shis replied, "I also noticed that. If everyone in the world respected each other's beliefs and cultures, then the whole world could be just like Shambhala. There would be no conflicts created by different religious beliefs."

The next day, Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog overslept. When Gser skyid me tog got up and opened the windows, she saw many people waiting outside. They had come to help Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog prepare for the wedding party. Gser skyid me tog went to the bedroom and awakened Bkra shis. After getting dressed, Bkra shis opened the door. Many people gave flowers and other gifts to Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog, who were moved by such kindness.

After many hours preparing for the wedding party, Bkra shis

and Gser skyid me tog were exhausted and went to bed early.

The next morning, a clanging bell awakened Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog. They got up quickly and dressed. Bkra shis found the wedding ring and put it inside his robe. They then went to the monastery garden, where they saw many people wearing beautiful clothing.

After breakfast at the monastery, Bkra shis said, "Let's go inside the main temple and pray."

When they went inside, they saw an image of Jesus Christ and the crescent moon symbol of Islam. Bkra shis said, "This doesn't look like a Buddhist temple. I guess we're in the wrong place."

As they started to leave, a monk shouted and gestured at them. Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog turned and went in the direction the monk was pointing. They soon saw a huge image of the Buddha, and made three prostrations. The monk explained that Shambhala had only one place for all religious practitioners, who lived in harmony without conflict, hatred, ignorance, jealousy, or selfishness.

After worshipping, Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog entered the monastery garden. The leaders of the various religious groups in Shambhala were seated and did as was appropriate for a marriage in their respective religious traditions. Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog finished the wedding that morning with the help of an old man.

That afternoon, all the people of Shambhala danced hand in hand, clad in their various ethnic costumes. Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog also danced and were delighted to see so many people participating in their wedding, and also happily received blessings from Shambhala's various spiritual leaders.

After everyone went home, Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog sat in the garden of their home. Bkra shis asked, "What did you think of today?"

Gser skyid me tog said, "I'm very glad that so many people attended our wedding. If our parents had been here, I would have been even happier."

Bkra shis said, "I feel the same," and then they went into their house. Bkra shis took a bath while Gser skyid me tog prepared the bed. When Bkra shis finished bathing, Gser skyid me tog also took a bath. Bkra shis lay under a single quilt as Gser skyid me tog dried herself and then slipped into a long, sleeveless gown. After getting into bed, Bkra shis kissed her cheeks, lips, and neck. She seemed to enjoy this, though she said nothing. Slowly, she became more passionate and returned Bkra shis's kisses. They slept very little that night.

The next morning, Gser skyid me tog pointed to blood on the sheets and proudly said, "Bkra shis, this shows my love for you."

Some years later, Bkra shis and Gser skyid me tog had two children and were a happy family. Meanwhile, Dom mgo bla ma tshe ring o rgyan returned to Btsal ba and taught the Dharma. The villagers thus all gained a better understanding of Buddhist concepts and became kinder to each other. The villagers stopped eating meat, stopped hunting animals, stopped smoking, began protecting the environment, and respected different religions and cultures. They realized that the earth was their home and that all people, regardless of ethnicity, were their brothers and sister.

Later, Bkra shis's and Gser skyid me tog's families regretted their conflict, exchanged *kha btags*,<sup>2</sup> and apologized to each other. Bkra shis was so moved by this that he shouted, "Love in Shambhala! Love in Shambhala!"

In the shrine room, Bkra shis twitched and muttered in his sleep shortly before his mother came and awakened him. As Bkra shis slowly woke up, he found himself murmuring, "Love in Shambhala! Love in Shambhala! ..."

#### NON-ENGLISH TERMS

'Ba' thang འབའ་ཐང་།

'bri འབྲི།

Ba. Lobsang Gonbo, Ba' blo bzang mgon po འབའ་ལྷོ་བཟང་མགོན་པོ།

Bkra shis བཀ་ཤིས།

bla ma ལྷ་མ།

Btsal ba བཅོལ་བ།

Dkar mdzes དཀར་མཛེས།

Dom mgo bla ma tshe ring o rgyan འོ་མ་མགོ་ལྷ་མ་ཚེ་རིང་ཨོ་རྒྱན།

Gru ba lung ལྷ་བ་ལུང་།

Gser skyid me tog གསེར་སྦྱིད་མེ་ཏོག།

Ka la pa ཀ་ལ་པ།

kha btags འ་བཏགས།

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<sup>2</sup> An offering scarf presented to religious personalities, guests, and friends to show respect.

Kong btsan ཀོང་བཙའ་བ།  
Li shul ལི་ཤུ།  
Mar pa lo tsA ba མར་པ་ལོ་ཙ་པ།  
Mdzo sna མཛོ་སྐ།  
Mi la ras pa མི་ལ་རས་པ།  
Nyi ma ཉི་མ།  
oM ma Ni pad+me hUM ཨོཾ་མ་ཉི་པདྨེ་ཧུཾ།  
Qinghai Normal University མཚོ་ལྗོང་དགེ་ཐོན་སློབ་ཆེན། 青海师范大学  
Rgya mtsho རྒྱ་མཚོ།  
Rje btsun mi la ras pa རྗེ་བཙུན་མི་ལ་རས་པ།  
Rje tsong kha pa རྗེ་ཙོང་ཁ་པ།  
rtsam pa རུ་མ་པ།  
Rtsed thang རུ་ཤེད་ཐང་།  
Sgrol ma སྐྱོལ་མ།  
Shambhala ཤམ་བུ་ལ།  
Sichuan སི་ཁྲོན། 四川  
Thub bstan ཐུབ་བསྟན།  
Tshe ring ཚེ་རིང་།

## THE PRICE OF A THESIS

Pad+ma skyabs

"Ring...ring..." bleated a mobile phone, waking Lha mo, a student in the Tibetan Department at a well-known nationalities university. She raised her head languidly and looked around the dorm room. Her roommates were applying various cosmetics and lotions to their faces, getting ready for class. The warm sun heated her bed. She slowly turned her head to the right and gazed at a small picture of a young Chinese movie star pasted on the wall by her bed. He was wearing a shirt that exposed his skin, which seemed as white as flour smeared on a cutting board beneath a ball of dough. Nearby was a panda doll wearing a suit of red clothes that made it resemble a sleeping guard. She was suddenly overwhelmed by nostalgia.

Lha mo came from an area where Tibetan was rarely taught. Sometimes she hated herself for being Tibetan. Lha mo would soon leave school and was required to write a thesis. Because her written Tibetan was very poor, she resolved to use Chinese, and spent two weeks writing a few lines in her notebook. What she wrote had many grammar mistakes and she quickly and angrily ripped the pages into pieces. She agonized about her situation and didn't know what to do. Then she heard the good news that a thesis could be purchased in Room 304, East Second Street. The problem was that it cost 2,000 *yuan*, which was far too expensive for her. She only received 1,000 *yuan* a month from her family, half of which was for food and the other half went to meet the cost of clothes and other expenses. She just didn't have the money to buy the thesis.

A few days later she met her friend, G.yang mo, as she was returning to her dormitory. They chatted for a bit and then G.yang mo, learning of Lha mo's difficulty, said, "I have a friend who is a great writer. I'll introduce him to you if you like. Perhaps he can help you," and then she gave his telephone number to Lha mo.

Lha mo expressed appreciation and dialed the number as soon as she got back to her dorm.

"Hello!" a man bellowed rudely.

"My friend, G.yang mo, told me about you. Would you consider helping me with my thesis?" Lha mo said.

The man's voice suddenly became much gentler, realizing that the stranger on the phone was a woman. "I'm glad to help you because we are schoolmates and we should help each other. I promise to give you a thesis this Saturday," he offered generously, which quieted her anxious heart.

...

It was Saturday. The sun seemed to be annoyed by the city's noise and frenetic activity and, in retaliation, was rushing to hide behind towering apartment and office buildings. Lha mo's mobile phone rang. She answered and heard a man say, "I'll come to the school's main entrance with your thesis. I'll wait for you there."

Lha mo then put on a little make-up and went to meet the man, who examined her closely when she arrived. Tshe rdor's hair was neither long nor short. He wore faded blue jeans and had a very dark complexion. All in all, not a good first impression. Tshe dor had a minor claim to fame among a small group of local Tibetan intellectuals on the basis of his poetry. He asked Lha mo, "Have you eaten? If not, let's go have dinner together."

Lha mo disliked him immediately and was reluctant to be seen with him. She feared rumors might reach her boyfriend, Zla ba, and that their relationship would be damaged. However, Tshe rdor had written her thesis and paying for a meal was a good way to show her appreciation. They then went to a Tibetan restaurant and ordered some vegetable dishes and a few bottles of Snow beer.

Tshe rdor said, "The thesis I wrote is titled 'A Discussion of Women's Rights'."

Lha mo said, "I'm sure it's excellent because you are such a famous poet at our school. Each of your poems is a masterpiece."

It was after eleven p.m. by the time they were ready to leave the restaurant. When Lha mo took out a one hundred *yuan* bill from her purse to pay for the meal, Tshe rdor grabbed her hand and said, "I'll pay!"

Lha mo said, "I must pay to thank you for your help with my



thesis. I haven't prepared any gifts for you."

Tshe rdor insisted and paid the cashier with a proud, conquering smile plastered on his face.

By now it was almost midnight. The city was still full of the hubbub of vehicles operated by busy people. The moon was clouded by the city's polluted air, preventing any enjoyment of rarely-seen moonbeams. When they emerged from the restaurant, Tshe rdor said, "We should find a hotel. The weather is so cold. What do you think?"

Lha mo shuddered when she heard this, nevertheless, she knew that her dormitory would be locked and she also understood that Tshe rdor also knew this. If she returned late to the dorm, the gate-guard would demand an explanation and the next day, she would have to write a report to school officials explaining where she had been and what she had done. With no real alternative, she accepted the invitation to the Peace Hotel, which was just across the road. Double and triple rooms were unavailable, so they registered for a single room.

Soon after they entered the room, Tshe rdor removed his trousers and shirt, leaving on his long underwear and t-shirt, and went to bed without comment. Meanwhile, Lha mo sat in a corner and nervously watched *Love is Awake* on a battered TV set. After some minutes Tshe rdor's snores made her think he was asleep. She then softly walked to the bed and, fully clothed, lay down.

A few minutes later, she suddenly stood and shouted.

Tshe rdor quickly sat up, pretending to have just awakened, and asked roughly, "What's the matter? What happened?"

Lha mo thought he had been dreaming and said nothing. But after this series of actions was repeated two more times she said angrily, "You're daydreaming, Tshe rdor. I respect you as a poet. I never thought you would behave like a dog!"

When Tshe rdor found sweet words would not charm her, he scowled and said, "Your thesis is in my hands. If you want it, then give me what I want."

Lha mo felt like a small dove in a cage. Without other choices, she betrayed her lover, Zla ba. She felt that without Tshe rdor's help, she would not be able graduate. She also thought Zla ba would never

learn of what she had done with Tshedor, because he was practicing teaching in an elementary school in a distant village. Zla ba and Lhamo had attended the same middle school some years earlier where the seed of love had begun to grow between them.

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Early one wintery Saturday morning, thick snow covered the city making it fleetingly resemble a mythological heavenly palace. Only a few students were on the lanes of the nationalities university. One was a lovely girl wearing fashionable clothes and a brilliant smile. Zla ba had called Lhamo that morning and told her he was returning to the city to visit her. When she reached the train station, it was as crowded as an anthill. Zla ba was waiting for her by an exit, carrying the black schoolbag Lhamo had bought him when he was leaving for his teaching internship. Overcome by emotion, tears streamed down her cheeks as she embraced him. Were these tears because she had missed him, or from guilt?

Some of Zla ba's friends had heard he was back and invited him to a party that evening at eight p.m. They urged him to not bring his girlfriend, and Lhamo unhappily agreed not to come. About seven students waited for him with some boxes of beer on the table in front of them in a small bar. All the students were from the same home place and no women were present.

Rinchen said, "We're so glad you could come without your girlfriend. This means you understand how important friendship is." Then they began drinking and bragging, all except Zla ba. Their talk centered on sex – who had slept with whom, how many times, and so on. It seemed university life had no meaning beyond sex and liquor.

Zla ba didn't drink and, and so, as he pretended to listen to this useless talk, he grew increasingly impatient and bored. More time passed and his friends became drunk. Then Rinchen said, "Dear friends, lend me your ears and I'll tell you a true story about what happened between me and a girl from the far northwest last month. I went to the Peace Hotel near our school with her. Her skin felt really special and I had a good feeling when we were intimate. It was absolutely indescribable! Then I heard a familiar voice from the adjoining room. I didn't believe it at first and then decided to peep.

My Buddha! We mustn't have faith in today's women."

When they asked Rin chen who she was, he drank a cup of beer and said smugly, "She was Zla ba's honey, Lha mo, but Zla ba doesn't care about that. We really shouldn't love girls – we should only concentrate on how to use them."

"Rin chen, are you serious?" Zla ba demanded several times.

Rin chen swore that he was telling the truth.

Zla ba then quickly drank until he passed out.

The next morning, Zla ba went to meet Lha mo, who wore a wide smile, but her eyes darted here and there. She was afraid that, somehow, Zla ba had learned about her unfaithfulness. Zla ba's face was pale as he came near her, and then he shouted, "Bitch! What did you do when I was away?" Tears ran down his cheeks, mixing with spittle.

Lha mo hung her head and slowly said, "I'm sorry to have embarrassed you. Please forgive me. I'll explain what happened and why. I really had no choice at the time."

Zla ba didn't listen and ran away with a loud cry.

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A signal-bell calmly clanged for lunch at the nationalities university. Someone shouted, "A boy jumped from the fifth floor!" In the days that followed, many rumors spread about why he had committed suicide.

#### NON-ENGLISH TERMS

G.yang mo གཡང་མོ།

Lha mo ལྷ་མོ།

Pad ma skyabs པད་མ་སྐྱབས།

Rin chen རིན་ཆེན།

Tshe rdor ཚེ་རོར།

yuan 元

Zla ba ཟླ་བ།



## SCATTERED MEMORIES OF A MISSPENT YOUTH

Pad ma rin chen

My village is located atop a high mountain in the northwest of Reb gong County, Qinghai Province. It is thirty-six kilometers from my village to the county town. We have much land, but drought for several years in a row is common. Gradually, we became impoverished and were designated as Lnga skyong families 'households with the five protections',<sup>1</sup> but we received only a sack of flour from the government at the end of the year, which was insufficient to liberate us from distress.

During the ten years of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), my grandparents had six children – my three aunts, two uncles, and Father, the eldest child. The family was very poor and feeding six children was as difficult as finding gold in the deep sea. Grandfather was required to work as a local government official and received a small salary, which was only enough for him. Because of the constraints on his time, he had little opportunity to help Grandmother. He tried to leave his job several times but failed, because he was the only local person who could do accounting. Nearly everything fell on Grandmother's shoulders who, nevertheless, never regretted marrying Grandfather.

Ten years later, everything had changed and Grandmother was free from much hard work because her children had grown up and could do most of the chores. Meanwhile, Grandfather had retired from work and spent all his time with them. They then enjoyed a happy family life, as did most other local families.

Father graduated from school and became a primary school teacher when he was eighteen. He received a small salary that helped the family. He was gentle, benevolent, and his mind was sharp, which

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<sup>1</sup> A designation for assistance provided to people/ households without income, old people without family members to care for them, and people unable to work. The 'five protections' are a stipend, clothes, health insurance, housing, and funerals.

made everything easy for him to learn. Villagers liked and respected him.

My parents met in Mother's village, fell in love, and married. Mother never attended school because she needed to care for her sisters. Mother worked very hard and did everything so well that everyone admired her.

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I was born in Father's home on 23 October 1987, clutching something in my left hand. My birth brought happiness to my family. Grandfather was very fond of me and did not allow others to touch me in fear I would be contaminated and made sick. Grandfather thought that I was lucky and would be a good person, because my birthday is a special day – Bcu pa'i lnga mchod, the anniversary of Tsong kha pa's death. My grandparents often took me to meet *bla ma* and visit monasteries on this day.

When I was three years old, I became seriously ill, worrying my family. Everything possible was done for me, but I became even sicker. I couldn't sleep at all. My grandparents stayed with me constantly and sang lullabies, hoping I would fall asleep. Meanwhile, my relatives hoped that I would die quickly, thus liberating my soul and my family from worry.

One day, Grandfather heard about a famous *sgom pa* 'meditator' who meditated in a secret cave and performed remarkably accurate divinations. My grandparents carried me to where the *sgom pa* lived, respectfully put their palms together under their bowed heads, and told my story.

When they finished, the *sgom pa* divined with his old beads, gave me a thick amulet, and said I should go on pilgrimage. My grandparents then carried me as they circumambulated monasteries and high mountains, burning *bsang* 'incense' and praying that I would be liberated from sickness. Eventually, I did recover.

...

When I was seven, my parents sent me to study at the primary school located in the upper part of our village. It had only four classrooms and teachers' quarters. It was built of mud-bricks and not structurally sound. Students from different grades shared one classroom. My

class had five students, all of whom were older and stronger than me. They frequently beat and otherwise bullied me. Though this upset me, I still wanted to play with them, because they often played fun games. Our teachers were busy gambling and spent little time with the students. When I was in grade three, I had learned nothing except bad habits. Villagers chose some people to report the situation to relevant leaders, who did nothing. Roads and transport to my village were terrible, and it was far from the city, so none of the teachers wanted to be there. Being at our school was so undesirable that, when a class in another township scored the worst on township-wide exams, the teacher was punished by being assigned to our school. There was no class schedule. Teachers did whatever they liked. These factors led most students to drop out of school.

For these reasons, Father sent me to another school, where I had problems keeping up with my new classmates. I was very depressed, did not want to study, and thought that I had the worst karma of any boy in the world. Fortunately, with the teachers' encouragement and help from my classmates I didn't drop out. Gradually, I became a good student.

•••

I was in grade six in primary school, and busily preparing for the final examination. Our score on this exam would determine the middle school we would attend. School rules were strict and I was challenged by life at school, and by other students. Relationships between students often soured and some classmates didn't speak to each other. I studied many hours each day and was confident that I would succeed in the examination. Some students never studied seriously, but instead, spent most of their time playing. During caterpillar fungus collecting season, a few students were ordered to leave school to collect this valuable medicinal substance. Examination results varied from student to student, and this gave students different opportunities. The top students were chosen by the best middle school and received awards and praise from the school, while other students had to repeat grade six and take the examination again.

Fortunately, I passed the exam. On the first day when I arrived at my new middle school, I was very surprised by the school

environment and conditions. The school gate was large and wide, and had Tibetan features. Two stone lions by the school gated added a sense of grandeur. The class buildings and office buildings were not as tall as I had imagined them to be, but everything was clean and tidy. Trees surrounding the school gave a nice green feeling. I liked the school immediately and very happily registered. Teachers kindly welcomed new students and introduced the school's history. Older students helped new students take their belongings to the dormitory rooms. It was totally different from my primary school.

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Teachers told the new students that we would meet at seven-thirty p.m. and added that all new students must attend to better understand school discipline. After dinner, I directly went to a classroom at around six p.m., sat in the back, and felt very lonely. I started imagining the things I wanted while recalling my happy life at home. I was homesick and unhappy. My new classmates trickled in one by one, speaking loudly and playing. They seemed happy, but their noise interrupted my reverie. I was very upset, but dared not tell them to stop, because we didn't know each other. I sat in my chair quietly, missing my family and my friends even more. Tears involuntarily filled my eyes. Worried that my classmates would see me and feeling deep humiliation, I put my head on the table, wiped away my tears with my left hand, and murmured, "Father, Mother," again and again, which brought me some comfort.

Students were from different villages, townships, and counties. I looked at each of them carefully. Some were obviously older than me, and some seemed very young. Most students were boys. At seven-thirty p.m., a teacher holding a packet of documents hurriedly entered the classroom. He was tall, very thin, wore a big pair of glasses, and was dressed in a clean suit. He looked to me what I imagined a professor looked like. We stood up and chorused, "Good evening, Teacher!"

He stood on the platform, told us to sit, and then introduced himself. He explained school discipline, class rules, and our schedule clearly and seriously. When he finished, he asked us to introduce ourselves. We then went to the platform in turn and introduced



ourselves. I was worried and had no idea what I would say, as I nervously listened to others. Some students were so shy that they couldn't keep their heads up, while others were brave and joyful. When it was my turn, I stood on to the platform as my face blushed and my legs shook. I couldn't get my voice to come out of my throat and sweat poured from my face. I whispered my name and then rushed back to my seat. I felt my chair was unsteady as I heard classmates whispering deprecating remarks about my pathetic presentation.

We gradually got to know each other better and our relationships improved. We had more conversations and often joked. We would say how beautiful our own home area was, which sometimes led to fighting.

A few boys started finding girlfriends. Most boys were naive and had no experience with romance, though they were happy if they did get a girlfriend. Some failed at finding girlfriends and looked sad and embarrassed. Every night, we could see couples tightly embracing in dark places, murmuring secrets. Some boys began drinking beer and doing other stupid things.

Rdo rje and I were close friends and desk-mates. We were often together and shared everything. He was a local boy from a rich family. He bought delicious snacks and drinks every morning. I had never seen some of those snacks and drinks before. He generously gave me half of whatever he bought. I was happy with him and did whatever he asked. I often praised him to my parents and friends. My parents liked him and thanked him for helping me.

Middle school life was very different from life in primary school. Study was challenging because there were many subjects. Students competed to see who could get up the earliest and study the hardest. I lay in my warm bed with Rdo rje, and almost forgot that I was a student. I never worried about study. I followed Rdo rje and his friends to dance halls. My companions had a lot of money and I started to drink and smoke, too. I was their servant and helped them buy beer and other things. In return, they gave me whatever I asked for. I felt I was lucky to spend most of my time with them.

Every night we noisily returned to our dormitory rooms very

late, disturbing our roommates, who didn't like Rdo rje and me, but who dared not report us to the teachers, because Rdo rje's parents were important people. I often dozed before our classes finished.

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One hot summer afternoon, Rdo rje and I were bored in math class. I put my head on my desk and tried to sleep, but couldn't. Then we decided to leave. I had two *yuan* for the bus fee to take me home that weekend. We had already spent Rdo rje's money the day before at an internet bar. I used the rest of my money to buy five cigarettes at the school shop. We first planned to go swimming but, when we reached the Dgu chu, we saw some naked girls swimming. They didn't see us as Rdo rje and I peeked at them lustfully. Suddenly, strong rough hands grabbed my ears. I turned and saw an older woman. She hit me hard, knocking me to the ground. I was angry because Rdo rje seemed to have disappeared. At first, I thought he'd seen the woman and escaped without warning me, but then I saw him. He looked like he had been beaten more seriously than me. We cursed the woman, saying we hoped she would soon die.

A few minutes later, Rdo rje took me to his home, which was near the school. The door was locked when we arrived and he had no key. So, he climbed up the courtyard wall and jumped inside, while I remained on guard outside to warn him if any of his family members came. When he returned, he gave me an expensive packet of cigarettes and showed me 200 RMB in his pocket. I was shocked because I had never seen so much money before. We headed to the dance halls and spent all the money there in the next few hours.

•••

I spent a year having a good time with Rdo rje and his friends, even though bad activities and bad thoughts contaminated me. I became another person. Only Rdo rje wanted to be my friend. I put my head up arrogantly, confident I was a lucky man. When the second semester began, the school leader organized a meeting with parents. I was afraid my family would learn my secret so I tried to escape the meeting. I talked to several of my teachers in their offices and lied about Father's inability to attend the meeting, telling them that my home was far from school, transportation was inconvenient, and so

on.

My head teacher didn't believe me, because I had failed almost all my subjects. He said that whoever's parents did not attend the meeting would be expelled. I lost hope and gloomily waited for the meeting. I began to imagine what would happen and was very worried about Father's bad temper. Finally, I phoned Father and told him that he needed to attend a meeting. He was happy with such news and was eager to come. I had changed all my marks and he had no idea how poorly I was really performing. All my family members thought I was a good student and were proud of me.

Father arrived at school early in the morning the day of the meeting, bringing bread and fruit. I took Father to my dormitory room where we waited for the meeting to begin. At ten a.m., parents gathered and sat by their child's desk in the classroom. My teacher began by talking about the class situation, complemented the best students, announced whose score was highest, and gave awards. The teacher also read some of the bad students' names and explained what they had done and expressed the hope that their family would educate them. I fearfully looked at Father's increasingly red, angry face. A few minutes later, Father left the classroom and then zoomed through the school's big gate on his motorcycle without a word to me. I was disappointed with myself and vowed I would start over and do my best.

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I stayed home during the winter holiday. I never reviewed my subjects and did nothing to help my family. My parents never talked about my study because they knew the results. Except for playing basketball, I had nothing to do. In fact, I thought I shouldn't do anything to help my family because I was a student. I spent much of the daytime playing basketball and every night I went to the small village shop where many people gathered after supper. Children came with their fathers, who often gambled. Young people my age drank beer and talked about their romantic adventures. I didn't like talking about my secrets, but still, I somehow couldn't control myself from revealing all of them. Our conversations were enormously exciting and filled the small shop with noise. Meanwhile, the gamblers

quivered and grimaced, waiting for their chance to win, while their children stood behind them, nervously watching, each praying their father would be successful.

...

One night, I was frightened by storm winds, which blew the whole night and then stopped the next morning. Fortunately, the accumulated paper and plastic garbage had disappeared from every corner, making our village as clean as my school. The sun rose from above Gnyan chen Mountain that morning, pouring bright sunshine onto the ground, warming everyone it touched. I got comfortable and then walked straight to the front of our temple gate, looking for friends, because this was the place we gathered in the morning. I took a cigarette, lit it, and inhaled deeply. I then switched on my cell phone, played some music, and checked the outgoing calls I had drunkenly dialed the previous night. Wondering what I had said, I felt intense regret and humiliation. My friend had introduced me to a pretty girl who was easy to communicate with. I intended to call her and thought about what I should say.

Meanwhile, Uncle Tshe b+ha arrived, murmuring scriptures as he began circumambulating the temple. After each round, he touched his head to the temple gate, closed his eyes, and prayed. I saw from his face that he was unhappy. Suddenly, he gave me a big smile and sat in front of me. I took a cigarette from my pocket and respectfully offered it to him. He took out his lighter and asked me about my school and study. I gave a simple response and gazed at him, hoping he would tell me about our village history. He knew a lot about my village because he was the oldest person there. All the villagers respected as him as much as a *bla ma*. He was wise and had resolved countless problems in my village.

Uncle Tshe b+ha told me how important school was, and said that society was not as simple as many imagined. He added that life never went as you expected. I paid little attention. I was much more interested in his romantic adventures, which I had heard about from his nephew, who was my best friend. Finally, he took a deep breath and absent-mindedly said, "What an evil boy G.yang skyabs is..."

The account below is partly what Uncle Tshe b+ha told me

and what most villagers know about G.yang skyabs:

G.yang skyabs's father was in prison and would have to stay there for two more years before he could be released. He had illegally sold guns, and had been sentenced to six years. His elder brother had become a monk when he was seven, and did very well at his studies in his monastery. Every year during the *ma Ni* festival, he returned home to visit his family members. During his most recent visit, he had discovered his family's miserable situation, felt unbearable anguish, and then had returned to his monastery.

His Uncle Rdo rje encouraged him to become a layman and help his mother. Realizing his mother's life was as difficult as that of a slave, he consulted a *bla ma* and finally resolved to become a layman. His grandmother was as angry as a mad elephant when she heard this and announced that if he became a layman, she would commit suicide.

The grandmother held a high position in their family. She never liked losing anything that belonged to her and wanted to keep everything, even old, useless things. Her children and relatives discussed creating merit for her next life and then invited a high *bla ma* and monks to read scriptures. Meanwhile, they prepared food and milk tea for villagers and other guests. The grandmother had even kept a tea brick from her wedding during the Cultural Revolution and thought this was the time to use her bridal tea to demonstrate her generosity. Unfortunately, the tea had turned to dust when she took it from the locked box where she'd stored it.

The family understood the grandmother's insistence on the older son remaining a monk. They waited with hope for the second son, who had roamed aimlessly in Lha sa for three years. His mother often heard of his bad behavior from others who returned from pilgrimage in Lha sa.

One day, G.yang skyabs's mother was delighted to hear that her son was returning and impatiently waited, telling everyone that he would soon be home. G.yang skyabs's relatives and friends gathered at his home to help clean it. His mother couldn't concentrate on work because she imagined her son had become as important as the greatest man in the local community. She smiled graciously at everyone and prepared nice food.

The grandmother said nothing as she sat on the warm bed, constantly spinning her prayer wheel. She took deep breaths and gazed at the gate, expectation etched on her wrinkled face. Eventually G.yang skyabs arrived, reeking of

alcohol. Only his mother recognized him. He was taller than before, skinny, and his face had numerous scars. He murmured unclear, simple auspicious words to everyone in the local dialect mixed with the Lha sa dialect. Ignoring the local taboo on drinking in front of elders, he disrespectfully took two bottles of beer from his bag and started drinking alone.

His grandmother was so disappointed and humiliated by his behavior that she recited *ma Ni* more quickly than usual, and then left for her youngest son's home. G.yang skyabs continued drinking beer and speaking in the Lha sa dialect. Everyone listened carefully but didn't understand much of what he said. No one responded. He got drunk and passed out within two hours. Then the guests then left. His mother's heart became as cold as ice, but she still regarded him as her son.

G.yang skyabs's return was big news in the village and everyone excitedly talked about him. Even the elders paused while chanting scriptures and commented on G.yang skyabs's return.

After a week, G.yang skyabs became a regular at the small village shop, drinking the days and nights away. Young men surrounded him and listened to his exciting stories. We all admired his boastful, imaginative accounts of his exploits and, somehow, we trusted what he said. His stories astounded us and we scrambled to pay for his beer. Meanwhile, G.yang skyabs's life was happy for it was as though he were at a never-ending feast. Who knew what secrets he was hiding?

His mother lived in grief and mourning after his return. Though she was terribly disappointed with her son's behavior, she still tried to imagine a bright future for G.yang skyabs. This seemed increasingly hopeless, because he never listened to her. On the contrary, he forced her to give him money and grain, and wandered everywhere. He stayed in expensive hotels and ate expensive foods when he had money, which stayed in his hand only as long as it takes paper to burn. His mind was focused on money and he was never calm without a little cash in his pocket.

One dark night, he climbed over the courtyard wall belonging to Aunt Bde skyid, who was nearly seventy years old. It was rumored that her father had been rich. Aunt Bde skyid had married a rich man at her father's command when she was seventeen. Her husband had died during the chaotic days of new China. Unfortunately, most of Aunt Bde skyid's father's life was spent in prison where he starved to death. The government searched for, but never found, his treasures. After becoming a widow, Aunt Bde skyid lived alone and never remarried. Her life became like a living Hell. None of her relatives helped her much

and many people abused her. However, as she got older and her relatives imagined that she would soon die, they began struggling with each other to care for her, because they thought she had kept her father's treasures and they wanted to inherit them.

After jumping over Aunt Bde skyid's courtyard wall, G.yang skybs rushed into her home, grabbed her by the neck, and demanded that she give him her secret jewels. She was shocked, screamed, and then she gave him the small amount of cash that she had. Awakened by her shrieks, her neighbors rushed in and saw a tall man wearing black clothes and holding a dagger, standing behind Aunt Bde skyid. He tried to escape but they caught him and discovered his identity.

The next morning, Aunt Bde skyid's relatives planned to take him to the local police station and lodge a formal complaint. Aunt Bde skyid felt sympathy for his poor mother who came several times to apologize. Aunt Bde skyid then pardoned him. G.yang skyabs's relatives thought imprisonment was the best way for him to change, but his mother didn't agree.

G.yang skyabs left and then returned with a friend a month later, bringing vegetables for his mother, which pleasantly surprised her. He told his mother that he would find a job the next day. His mother was doubtful, but happily cooked nice food for him and his friend. G.yang skyabs and his friend went to the village shop after dinner. His mother prepared some clothes for him, and then went to bed.

The next morning, Uncle Tshe ring shouted and banged on the door. G.yang skyabs's mother felt like somebody had grabbed her heart and was squeezing it. She could hardly breathe. Uncle Tshe ring's face grew as white as a corpse's as he told how G.yang skyabs had stolen Uncle Rdo rje's entire harvest of caterpillar fungus for that year. After hearing this, G.yang skyabs's mother fainted.

#### NON-ENGLISH TERMS

Bcu pa'i lnga mchod བཅུ་པའི་ལྷ་མཚོ་དཀ

Bde skyid བདེ་སྦྱིད།

bla ma ལྷ་མ།

bsang བསང།

Dgu chu དགུ་ཅུ།

G.yang skyabs གཡང་སྐྱབས།

Gnyan chen གཉན་ཚེན།

Lha sa ལ་ས།

Lnga skyong ལྷ་སྐྱོང་།

ma Ni མ་ཎི།

Pad ma rin chen པད་མ་རིན་ཚེན།

Rdo rje རྡོ་རྗེ།

Reb gong རེབ་གོང་།

sgom pa སློམ་པ།

Tshe b+ha ཚེ་བ་མ།

Tshe ring ཚེ་རིང་།

Tsong kha pa ཚོང་ཁ་པ།

yuan 元



Pad ma rin chen

A myes Bya khyung, dignified and magnificent, towers among its shorter peers behind the capital city of Reb gong. Frequently, Heaven seems to scatter white flowers on the mountain peak, making it splendidly picturesque. The mid slopes of the mountain were once covered with dense forest where countless animals thrived. Locals dared not go there alone or without weapons, in fear of being attacked by animals. However, they often did go there in small groups, as the forest was the main source of fuel for local people. At the foot of the mountain is an immense grassland full of valuable herbs and diverse flowers, which emit an overpowering fragrance. Babbling brooks flow from springs on the grassland, and quench the thirst of both people and livestock.

From their ancestors, the people of Reb gong had inherited the belief that the mountain is a deity called A myes Bya khyung. This deity has the most exalted position among local deities in Reb gong. People respectfully burn juniper and offer sweet food to this deity before they themselves eat anything. While doing this, they also express their innermost feelings to the deity, and ask for whatever they want. Some religious devotees read scriptures in meditation caves on this mountain.

Since early times, generations of smiling nomads had happily shared this pastureland, herding together and helping one another. Every year, they all gathered together to celebrate various sacred rituals. Marriage relationships between the tribes were also established. Consequently, other communities admired them and hoped their life would one day be as pleasant. In this way, Blon che Village was established, its reputation grew, and it became known throughout Reb gong.

Years passed swiftly and social transformations occurred one after another. The number of nomads increased. Household requirements increased and greed ended that once happy life.

Conflict began. The community divided into Blon che bde chen and Blon che rga ra communities. Conflict between these two communities led to killing, and the beautiful grassland gradually became a bloody battlefield where ruthless conflicts raged. Revenge and unspeakable malice led to twenty years of conflict and more than fifty deaths. Gradually, each tribe realized that conflict brought nothing but more revenge. People yearned for peace but dared not speak their thoughts because of memories of the martyrs who had died protecting their territory. The flames of the martyrs' parents and siblings' raging hate burned as high as Bya khyung Mountain. The only recourse they saw was more revenge.

Fortunately, high *bla ma* and various neighboring tribal chieftains ended the conflicts and brought a peaceful life and relief from immeasurable sorrow and misery. However, unbearable enmity had pierced each villager's heart and, when they recalled the battles and martyrs, the only thing in their mind was revenge. Afterwards, though the conflicts ceased, the community had lost its previous unity.

Time rushed on like the Dgu chu River, and life on the grassland grew more complex. Laughter was heard as rarely as flowers were seen growing in the sky. Meanwhile, the once-honest villagers became increasingly cunning. No one trusted anyone, not even their own relatives. Leaders cared only about their own benefit and worked for their own interest. The government divided the grassland between families and, predictably, government and local leaders colluded and allotted pastures according to the bribes they received. It was unfair, because the best pastures were then controlled by the well-connected families and their relatives, while high places and barren lands were given to poor families. Some of the latter families settled together and created Si rigs Village, where the climate was as cold as freezing earth, and sparse grass supported few livestock. As the calamity of harsh weather repeated itself several years in a row, and most of the livestock died, meeting basic needs for food and clothing became problematic. Life was unfair and Si rigs villagers became as poor as beggars. Meanwhile, few respected those who lived there. Villagers were the subject of frequent disdain and

humiliation.

Time amid such difficulties seemed to pass as slowly as a tortoise climbing a Himalayan mountain. People experienced unbearable conditions, and the only thing yearned for was a quick death.

Unbelievably, it eventually turned out that Si rigs village was situated on a veritable gold mine, as their barren lands were the ideal place for caterpillar fungus to grow. Caterpillar fungus grows at high altitude. Its horn is red and the body is yellow. The biggest is as big as a duck's webbed foot, and the smallest is as small as a chicken claw. It grows from May to June. It is a worm that becomes infected with a fungus and then dies.

Over time, more and more businessmen came to Si rigs to collect this precious substance, and prices increased. Caterpillar fungus income was attractive and the number of collectors grew ever larger, which brought renewed conflict to the grassland. Avaricious tribes and other communities wanted the best places for themselves, which led to various pretexts to invade others' lands.

Si rigs villagers were brave and their unity was as strong as stone. Although Blon che bde chen and Blon che rga ra villages cooperated to fight Si rigs Village, they failed to snatch the land where caterpillar fungus grew.

More years passed, and a new battle started between Si rigs and Sha sbrang villages. Sha sbrang, an agro-pastoral community near Reb gong City,<sup>1</sup> created the excuse that, long ago, ancestors of its current residents had herded in the caterpillar fungus place. Since the land had once belonged to them, Sha sbrang concluded that they had claim to it. Thus a battle began and continued for seven years. For Si rigs Village, it was a difficult war because its adversary was rich and had a population more than twice their own. Furthermore, Sha sbrang had many weapons. During the seven-year battle, Sha sbrang Village lost five men and much wealth, but gained much land. Si rigs

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<sup>1</sup> Most Sha sbrang residents herd and farm. A minority rely exclusively on agriculture. Sha sbrang Village is at the foot of a mountain and has fertile fields. The grasslands on the mountain are used for grazing.

village lost two men and their living conditions worsened. Si rigs villagers, knowing that the battle could not be won, surrendered. Afterward, they herded elsewhere and enjoyed a more peaceful life.

Sha sbrang villagers dug caterpillar fungus and made plans for getting more land. Meanwhile, another avaricious village appeared: Chu ma, which was wealthier than Sha sbrang Village, and had a population three times larger than Sha sbrang.

Chu ma Village was disciplined in battle. Village men aged seventeen and older were required to join its militia. Every soldier prepared a new gun and sufficient bullets before the time of battle. The militia was divided into groups. Within each group, a commander was chosen to be responsible for his soldiers' safety. The chieftain and commanders invited soldiers who were skilled marksmen to teach Chu ma's militia how to use the guns and protect themselves during battle. After practice, villagers were confident about the upcoming battle. Fearless young people often tried to start trouble with anyone from Sha sbrang Village. Once, some drunk men caught a Sha sbrang Villager on the road as he was returning home, ruthlessly beat him, stripped him naked, and then released him. Chu ma Village chieftains ignored this behavior and did not scold the young men. It seemed that they were challenging Sha sbrang Village. Meanwhile, Sha sbrang villagers did the same, cruelly beating Chu ma villagers and preparing their own weapons.

When the fighting began in earnest, all those who had prepared participated fearlessly, first using slingshots. During battle, each village had casualties. As their hatred deepened, they began to use guns. Meanwhile, a high *bla ma* and locally well-known wise men traveled to each village, teaching that war brought only suffering and an endless cycle of revenge. They tried their best to stop the fighting, hoping for peace between Chu ma and Sha sbrang communities.

They failed. The two villages fought for about ten years. Each village suffered more than five deaths. The government then, abruptly, divided the caterpillar fungus land into two parts. The largest was the lower part, which it gave Sha sbrang Village. The other section belonged to Chu ma Village. Everyone knew that the prefecture governor had accepted a large amount of money from Sha

sbrang Village for assistance during the war, and also that he needed to resolve problems in Reb gong in order to be promoted. After the division of land, the governor reported that no conflicts remained and boasted that people were now living in peace and joy. He was rewarded and complimented by provincial leaders, then promoted and reassigned to lead another prefecture.

On the surface, the conflict had been resolved by the government's division of land; but, the battle continued, especially during caterpillar fungus collection season. Sha sbrang Village had the largest, most valuable location and hired fungus collectors because they themselves could not cover the entire area. Chu ma Village owned a small area of land, but had a larger population, and therefore lacked land. Government interference thus inflicted much pain on Chu ma villagers.

When I was seven, most of my township's residents went to 'Bru gu chung to collect caterpillar fungus for free because we were invited by Sha sbrang Village. They hoped that we could help mediate if there was conflict between Chu ma and Sha sbrang. It was a good chance for us to make money. Whenever caterpillar fungus season came, Mother left all of my siblings in my maternal grandmother's home and went to dig the valuable herb. Father was busy with his work at school, and did not have enough time to take care of us. During the caterpillar fungus season I was bored and missed Mother every second. My relatives cared for me and were kind to me, but I did not experience the comfortable feeling that I had whenever Mother was with me. I was full of sadness and became thinner. It was just like I was living in Hell. I often counted how many days had passed in Mother's absence. I waited for Mother to return, and felt the passing time was as long as a dozen years.

I dreamed of digging caterpillar fungus because Mother had promised to take me with her. I incessantly asked her when we would set out and told my friends that I would go. I asked my friends how to find caterpillar fungus and how to dig it, because they were more experienced than me. Their parents halted their schooling and took them to dig caterpillar fungus every year. Children have keen eyesight and can find it more easily than elders. I was often puzzled about why

my parents did not take me to help them make money, and scolded them when my friends went off to dig. I did not understand my parents' decision until I was in middle school.

That year, the villagers decided to start off on the twenty-fifth day of the fourth lunar month. Father helped Mother collect what we would need and pack it into big sacks. Sister Tshe mo mkhar went to the courtyard to feed our mules grass and beans to strengthen them for the coming trek. I rushed out to see what other people were doing, and hurried back inside to report their activities to my parents. Father laughed and continued with his work. Mother cooked a wonderful dinner for us, but I was too excited to eat very much. At first that night, I could not sleep, but finally I found rest.

What seemed like only a few moments later, Mother shook my shoulders to wake me. It was still dark outside, but I did not complain. I immediately got up and went to wash my face. Meanwhile, my parents put our gear on the mules and tied it tightly with ropes. We set out with my relatives after a simple breakfast.

Father escorted us to the border of the village and told me what I should and shouldn't do.

I promised, "I'll obey Mother, or else I'm not your son," and watched satisfaction cross Father's face. He smiled as he kissed me, and then returned home. Villagers held their mules' reins and briskly walked in single file. I followed Mother and my sisters and brothers as well as I could. When dawn broke, we had already gone halfway. The weather was bad. Chilly wind stung my face. I was extremely tired and hungry, but I dared not mention it to Mother as my friends walked on without complaint. I plodded onward without relief. We had lunch and rested for an hour later. I drank a cup of water and lay on the ground to rest.

Curiously, I was on a mule wrapped in Mother's robe when I awoke. I felt comfortable because my tiredness had vanished. Snow was falling fiercely, covering the ground so that everything was white. It was beautiful scenery, but villagers were bemoaning the bad weather and cursing the heavens. I dismounted when we reached the base of a mountain. Sister gave me a piece of dry bread. I held it in my left hand, nibbled on it, and climbed the mountain with a walking

stick. Mother and my brothers watched the mules attentively as they placed their feet on the slippery path.

We moved on and reached our destination at around midday. We unloaded the mules and put our belongings on big stones because the ground was wet. I shivered where I sat on a stone, but I felt glad we had reached our destination. Mother and Brother located a piece of level ground for our tent. While we pitched the tent, my sisters Tshe mo mkhar and 'Brug mo collected firewood in a nearby forest.

Brother Snying dkar rgyal helped Mother store our gear inside the tent and made two beds from stones and dried grass. I was so hungry I could barely stand. I asked Mother for some food. There was only dried bread. I had no appetite to eat dried bread again, so I took a short nap. It was night when I awoke, and my stomach was rumbling from hunger. The odor of cooking food attracted me and I wanted it more than gold. I rubbed my eyes and asked when we would eat.

Mother gave me a sweet smile and asked me where I wanted to have supper.

I said I wanted to eat in my warm bed; I didn't want to get up because the tent wasn't as warm as home. I had never had such a delicious supper before. I ate in a rush while gazing at the pot. Mother and my brother and sisters giggled and teased me that I shouldn't eat the pot. I smiled at them and continued eating.

I went for a walk with Brother after I was full. Our neighbor had lit what seemed like thousands of candles. Some households were also using solar power. It was a beautiful scene, just like stars had fallen on the ground. A bright, clear moon was rising over the mountain. I could see everywhere without a flashlight. Brother took a cigarette from his pocket, lit it, inhaled deeply, and looked around. I was astonished and asked what he was looking for. He ignored my questions and, instead, led me back to the tent to sleep. Mother and my sisters were preparing for bed. I couldn't sleep because of our neighbors' loud conversations. They were talking about when the snow would melt and where fungus grew.

The next day was lovely, the sunshine was bright, the sky was blue, and there was not even a whisper of wind. People were busy re-

arranging their tent's positions, and bed and hearth locations. Mother spread out our clothes to dry. I was the only person who had nothing to do. I asked Mother if I could go play with my friends. She agreed but told me to be careful, because there the strong light from the snow would injure my eyes. She took dark sunglasses from a bag and gave them to me. I rushed to my friends' tents and called them to come out. We played and made snowmen near the tents. While we were playing, I noticed some people wearing uniforms carrying a lot of gear. It was the police.

The Sha sbrang Village chief took some young men and went to greet them. They carried all the policemen's gear above our position and helped them pitch their tents. I happily thanked the mountain deity and government for sending the policemen. I hurried to our tent and shared this news with my family. They surprised me by being displeased. I was confused and wondered if there was something wrong with what I had reported. I liked policemen and even dreamed of being one myself. I thought policemen were heroes because they spent their lives serving others, protecting society from criminals. I hoped the policemen would help solve problems if something bad were to happen.

After several hours of bright sunshine for a few days, the snow melted and created small rivulets in every nook and cranny. People formed small groups with their relatives and friends and discussed where to go first, because caterpillar fungus grows at different times in different places. It appears earlier at lower elevations. Some places never produce the fungus. Diggers suffered losses if they didn't dig in the right place. Those acquainted with this place didn't want to share their experience with others and often pretended to be busy with chores in their tent.

Mother hurriedly came inside our tent wearing a big smile, and whispered that Aunt Tshe ring mtsho had promised to take us with her. Aunt had been hunting fungus for several years in a row in this place and had good experience. Mother warned us that this was a big secret and also a good opportunity for us to collect more than others. Mother cooked dinner at five p.m. and we went to bed early. I woke up at midnight, annoyed by our noisy neighbors. While



wondering where the noise was coming from, I realized it was coming from the policemen's tents. I was frightened by this realization, because I thought the policemen must have caught some troublemakers who were drinking and bothering the people who were sleeping. I wrapped my head in my quilt and tried to sleep, but ghost stories came to my mind, which scared me. Fortunately, the noise continued outside. Now, in my frightened state, it had become a good companion because I knew others were near. Eventually, I fell back asleep.

Mother pulled my quilt away, waking me. I raised my head and looked around. Everybody else was up. Although I was still sleepy, I got up quickly because it was my first day to collect caterpillar fungus. I put on my clothes and washed my face quickly. Then we ate breakfast. While I slowly chewed, I imagined that I had collected many fungi and gotten a reward from Mother. Then, Brother suddenly shouted at me, "Hey! Time to get ready! Let's go!" I took my facemask and gloves from a faded bag, and hurriedly asked Mother where my spade was. Meanwhile, Aunt Tshe ring mtsho appeared, and we followed her.

The collectors resembled ants streaming in different directions after a naughty boy uses a stick to disturb their anthill. Some people seemed unsure of where to go and stood near their tents, watching others. We started looking for the caterpillar fungus on a small flat area not far from the tents. Suddenly Brother Snying dkar rgyal shouted to announce that he had broken his egg. Diggers describe the first caterpillar fungus each day as an egg. People don't ask you if you found a fungus, but if you broke your egg. Most people shout when they find a fungus. I rushed to Brother and looked at the caterpillar fungus. It was different than what I had imagined. The head was red mixed with dark brown. Only a short head was visible on the surface on the ground. It was barely visible. Brother pushed his spade near the caterpillar fungus and easily pulled it up.

Brother's good luck made me nervous, because I was competing with my family. I calmed myself and concentrated on looking for caterpillar fungus. A bit later, I proudly broke my egg. Mother praised me and promised to buy snacks for me. I continued

happily collecting caterpillar fungus. I had collected forty-one by the day's end.

People were as avaricious as hungry wolves and barely rested. They collected day after day. We collected different amounts each day. Some days we found many and on other days it was difficult even to break the egg. The happiest thing was that there was no conflict between Sha sbrang and Chu ma villages throughout those fifteen days. People thanked the territorial deities for protecting us.

The number of caterpillar fungi was dwindling and people were hoping for a big rain to nourish the earth. Chu ma and Sha sbrang youth gathered and wandered everywhere. Sometimes they scuffled when they encountered each other. The policemen carelessly stayed in their tents, gambling and drinking beer. We could hear their constant laughter.

One lovely morning I followed Brother far away from our tent to collect more fungus. The only creatures near us were sheep and yaks. Brother led me up a small hill. My eyes involuntarily went in the direction of our home in the distance. Brother scolded me several times, but I couldn't stop looking. I recalled when I was at home, playing with my friends. I started to feel homesick and tears flowed from my eyes. Meanwhile, Brother came and sat in front of me. I thought Brother would scold me but he didn't. I was astonished and sat silently. He took a cigarette from his left pocket, lit it, stretched his right hand out, stroked my head, smiled, and said, "I'm also terribly homesick, just like you. I want to go home immediately, but it's not the right time. We must remember why everyone is working so hard. If we don't grab this chance we'll get very little, and then we won't have a happy life."

I understood. His encouragement moved me, and I vowed to work hard. Meanwhile, an old woman emerged near the hill. She had a stick in her right hand and prayer beads in her left hand. She constantly murmured a mantra. She carried a baby on her back and staggered toward us. Her hair was as white as snow and her face was as wrinkled as a tortoise's. She must have been at least sixty years old. She sat by us and asked us where we were from. Her speech was lovely and elegant. It was soon lunchtime, and she took a bottle of

milk tea from her bag and handed it to me. I shared a piece of dried bread with her. I learned that she was from Sha sbrang Village and that her name was Aunt Mgon po mtsho.

When I asked about the conflict between Sha sbrang and Chu ma, her face changed immediately, shocking me. She then told Brother and me her story:

My husband died during the conflict between our village and Si rigs when I was twenty-seven years old. My family was poor. I had three sons. They were too young to help me, and so everything fell on my shoulders. My life was as difficult as a beggar's. Time passed so slowly for me and the children. People despised me and my relatives. I swallowed my misery and solved my problems as best I could by myself. My mother endlessly encouraged me to remarry but I refused. My hope was my children.

Eventually the children grew up and everything changed. My eldest son married a woman who is benevolent, lovely, and hardworking. I was then free from much hard work and largely liberated from suffering. After a year, my daughter-in-law gave birth to a son, bringing happiness and good fortune to my family. We enjoyed a happy life.

Three years passed swiftly and people started to go crazy about money. The conflict over grassland resumed, and many violent battles ensued. All village males above the age of fifteen joined the militia and went to fight. Others stayed at home busy with various rituals, reading scriptures, and beseeching the mountains deities to protect us. Mothers nervously and selfishly prayed for their sons' safety and impatiently waited for their return.

The conflict raged for five months. One day when I was in the *ma Ni* room, I saw a group of exhausted men near the edge of the mountain. When the men drew near, my body involuntarily trembled and my mind couldn't focus. I looked among the men, searching for my son. He was not there. My heart ached as though it had been stabbed with a dagger. Gradually I saw some young men carrying someone on their back. I knew something terrible had happened. I suddenly began hoping those men would never arrive. Finally, they reached the *ma Ni* room with the corpse.

The chieftain and some young men who were carrying the corpse went in to the caretaker's room without a word. The other men stood silently. I dared not look for my son. Tears flowed down my cheeks and plopped onto the ground. Then the

chieftain came and told me to come to the caretaker's room. I pushed him away and said, "Why are you asking me to do this? Where is my son?" and then I fainted.

That afternoon I woke up on my bed. My mother and sisters were around me. I wept and shouted. I told Mother it was all a dream, that it wasn't real. They were weeping, too. Villagers invited *bla ma* and monks to read scriptures, and brought what was needed for the funeral rituals. I didn't want to see anyone in my home, not even relatives. I blamed my evil luck on the sins I must have committed in my former life. I asked why I had come to this world.

A few months passed but I still couldn't accept the reality. My life was full of suffering. I considered suicide, but I couldn't do it when I saw my other sons and grandson.

Aunt Mgon po mtsho's tears flowed down her face and dropped to the ground. I sobbed, too. Though I sympathized, I was too embarrassed to say anything to console her. After a moment, Aunt Mgon po mtsho stood, said goodbye, and went toward her livestock. When I looked at Brother, I saw he had cried too. We had lost our desire to collect caterpillar fungus and returned in the direction of our tent.

We saw many people gathered around the tents when we got near. I felt nervous and rushed to the tents without thinking. Mother and my sisters were already inside. I asked Mother what had happened.

She said, "Chu ma and Sha sbrang villagers fought this morning. Men on each side were hurt."

I was shocked and wondered what would happen next.

We got up and went to collect caterpillar fungus at around nine a.m. the next day. The Sha sbrang Village chieftain told us, "Don't go near the border. You will be responsible for whatever happens if you do. I don't want to start more conflicts." We followed the others and climbed the mountain in front of our camp. Meanwhile, I saw all the Sha sbrang villagers, except for elders and children, going to the borderland. I looked for the policemen. They were in their tents, acting as if nothing special was going on. I imagined that they were unaware of what had happened the day

before. I hoped that they would prevent the coming fight.

I heard a terrible noise from the borderland at around two p.m. I stood, listened carefully, and was sure people were fighting. Some young men climbed to the mountaintop and I followed them. We could see the fighting clearly from our vantage point. Men from the two communities had gathered on the hills on either side of a valley, facing each other, and were using slingshots to fire stones at their enemies. Stones fell to the ground like hail. Some women helped injured men back to the tents, while others were collecting stones and giving them to their men. I looked at our people who were collecting caterpillar fungi, and at the policemen's tents and I hoped they would stop the fighting. But, the policemen did nothing, so all I could do was pray to the mountain deities.

Three hours passed, and the fighting continued. Then I saw some monks near the road. They went directly between the two groups of men and tried to stop the fighting. After a half hour, the fighting stopped and I felt better. I descended the mountain and went to Mother. I guessed she would scold me, but she only asked me what I had seen. I told her everything in detail.

That evening I heard that forty-three men from Sha sbrang Village had been wounded, of whom seven were badly hurt. Chu ma Village had fifty-six wounded, of whom thirteen were so badly hurt that they had been sent to a hospital in Gansu Province. Suddenly our tent door opened and two strangers entered. They were local officials and told us that we had to leave, as they could no longer guarantee our safety. They said they would not help us if we disobeyed. Everyone ignored the local officials, who came repeatedly to persuade us to return home.

Several days passed, and nothing happened between the two feuding groups of villagers, though they often gathered and had menacing standoffs. The collectors were busy collecting caterpillar fungus. Then in the middle of one snowy night, Mother shouted and woke me up. I heard gunshots. I had no idea what to do. Brother carried me outside, and I saw that all of our villagers were running. Sha sbrang men held weapons. Some of them shouted that today was as good a day as any to sacrifice their lives. Women and children were

screaming. I asked Mother what had happened, and she said that Chu ma villagers had surrounded the Sha sbrang villagers. This scared me. I had no time to imagine what would happen and ran as fast as I could. After a moment, everything became quiet, just like nothing had happened. Our village leader shouted at us to return. We silently stood for a moment and hesitatingly returned. The men were not Chu ma villagers – they were policemen. I wondered why the policemen had disturbed us.

Meanwhile, Brother rushed into our tent and told us the policemen had grabbed ten men and wounded seven. I asked Brother, "Why did the policemen hurt innocent people?"

He said, "Provincial leaders came to our county to do an investigation and discovered people were fighting on the grassland. They criticized the local leaders and ordered them to solve the problem. The local leaders were enraged and ordered policemen to catch ten people from each village."

We soon returned home and our lives returned to normal, but what I had seen and heard on the grassland was awful and unforgettable.

NON-ENGLISH TERMS

- 'Bru gu chung འབྲུ་གུ་ཚུང་།
- 'Brug mo འབྲུག་མོ།
- A myes Bya khyung ཨ་མེས་བྱ་མྱུང་།
- Blon che ལྷོན་ཅེ།
- Blon che bde chen ལྷོན་ཅེ་བདེ་ཅེན།
- Blon che rga ra ལྷོན་ཅེ་ར་ར།
- Bya khyung བྱ་མྱུང་།
- Chu ma ཚུ་མ།
- Gansu ཀ་སུ་ཀན་སུ་འབྲུ་
- Mgon po mtsho མགོན་པོ་མཚོ།

Mtsho sngon མཚོ་སྔོན།  
Pad ma rin chen པད་མ་རིན་ཆེན།  
Reb gong རེབ་གོང།  
Sha sbrang །ཤ་སྤྲང།  
Si rigs སི་རིགས།  
Snying dkar rgyal སྟིང་དཀར་རྒྱལ།  
Tshe mo mkhar ཚེ་མོ་མཁར།  
Tshe ring mtsho ཚེ་རིང་མཚོ།



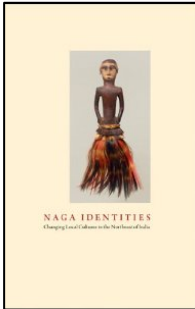


## REVIEWS



## REVIEW: *NAGA IDENTITIES*

Reviewed by Magnus Fiskesjö (Cornell University)



Michael Oppitz, Thomas Kaiser, Alban von Stockhausen, and Marion Wettstein (eds). 2008. *Naga Identities: Changing Local Cultures in the Northeast of India*. Gent: Snoeck Publishers. 464pp, numerous illustrations (400+ photos, drawings, and maps), index, bibliography. ISBN 9789053496794 (hardcover 45USD).

This rich volume, with 464 pages packed with information on many aspects of the history and culture of the Naga peoples of Northeast India and Burma, and with a wealth of fascinating illustrations, was simultaneously published in German as *Naga-Identitäten: Zeitenwende einer Lokalkultur im Nordosten Indiens*. This English version was translated by a team of dedicated editors and proofreaders, resulting in a remarkably rich and well-produced book of great value to everyone concerned with the peoples of Asia's highlands.

The Nagas, a large grouping of distinct Tibeto-Burman speaking peoples whose ancient lands have become a part of Northeast India and northern Burma, occupy a key place in the history of Asian highlands peoples. This book explores the last several centuries of their history, up to the present day. It deploys a host of different perspectives to examine how the Nagas have survived and dealt with the three major 'shock-waves' that have affected them over the last 150 years: the onslaught of British colonial rule over their areas, as extended from British-occupied India and Burma; the spread of Christianity by foreign missionaries; and the struggle for autonomy against the Indian state, which sent tens of thousands of

troops to deny the Nagas' aspirations for autonomy just after India itself had gained independence from Britain (on these terrible wars, also see Franke 2009).

The sheer scope of materials presented in this 'orchestral' composition of a book (to quote the preface) is most delightful and makes it probably *the* most important book on the Nagas in recent years – a critically important reference point on a host of issues.

Oppitz' moving preface makes clear that the key aim of the work is to present the Naga peoples' own perspectives on their dramatic history and their own view of their identity. Accordingly, the volume includes a number of articles by Naga authors, on topics such as Naga identity and heritage, changes in Naga family structure, and so on, as well as a series of interviews with Naga interlocutors, including the healer and craftsman S. Ayim Longkumer; a museum director; a social worker; a Christian priest; and a bishop (these latter two perspectives are important not least since today over ninety percent of the Nagas are Christians); a 'tigerman'; a musician and café owner; a freelance journalist; and a young woman who reflects on topics such as the beauty pageant, or fashion show, which is one of the latest phenomena in Nagaland (perhaps unexpectedly so, for many Western readers) – and which is also discussed and richly illustrated in a separate article on this topic.

These interviews are interspersed with topical articles, on the one hand, and with a series of 'object essays' and 'pictorial essays' on the other. The book as a whole makes for an eminently well-structured, readable, and enjoyable experience, which seems to never end, as the reader/ viewer navigates through it.

The scholarly articles written by a combination of Naga and non-Naga scholars discuss further topics, such as the earliest Naga history and the mapping of Nagaland by explorers and colonialists; the most recent gains made in Nagaland archaeology; how the many Naga languages relate to each other and to languages wider afield, in India, Tibet, Burma, China; and so on. Several closely related articles introduce the state of the art of research on Naga oral history and the folklore of magic stones and such matters; on the treasure house of Naga songs, which is fading fast; and Naga music generally. Other

articles deal with weaving (under the evocative heading of "Defeated Warriors, Successful Weavers"), woodcarving (a major Naga artistic genre also undergoing tremendous changes), jewelry, and basketry. There are several specialized articles on religion, healing, and pilgrimage. One piece on Naga tiger-men ("Shadows and Tigers," by Rebekka Sutter) is a tremendous contribution to the wider literature on were-animals and the like, in their social context. The recent history of occupation, proselytization, and war is discussed in the seventeen-page Introduction as well as in several other pieces, through the pictorial essays, and the interviews. There are also, appropriately, articles on the history of outsider's exploration and ethnography, such as on the exploits of Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf and on the history of British and other Western collections of Naga objects, and on their digitization, enabling 'the Return of Culture' to the Nagas.

The accompanying pictorial and object essays offer a wealth of both contemporary and historical photography, evoking other recent works (e.g., Jacobs et al. 1990 [2012], Stirn et al. 2003, van Ham and Saul 2008) similarly drawing on the vast archives of older photography from Nagaland. Nearly all previous literature is duly cited in the admirable and very useful bibliography (readers will love the well-made index, too).

It is difficult to think of anything omitted in this wide-ranging, indeed marvelously rich work. One aspect that could have been raised, but is not, is the important work of the American anthropologist Jonathan Friedman, whose *System, Structure, and Contradiction: The Evolution of "Asiatic" Social Formations* (1998 [1979]) includes much discussion of Naga ethnographies as a key part of his critique of Edmund Leach's much more widely known, but deeply flawed, *Political Systems of Highland Burma*. Friedman attempted to account for the processes of change in 'peripheral' societies of Asia's highlands from Northeast India to Laos and China, and argued forcefully (against Leach) that social structure and its transformations must be understood by reference to the inherent dynamics of the total ethno-political systems of which they form part, and which include both centers and peripheries as well as the

material conditions of these inter-related societies. One of Friedman's Swedish students, Thomas Hedén, wrote a sequel essay (1979) that took Friedman's argument further, specifically as regards the Nagas, but not many other scholars have taken up this challenge. One key advantage of the theoretical perspective that is deployed in the writings of Friedman and Hedén is that it provides a far more productive framework for explaining 'headhunting' as warfare and as the product of conflict – a more productive explanation than either the mystifying views of the origins of headhunting found in some of the indigenous Naga accounts referred to in this volume or, worse, the unconvincing generalizations about a supposedly violent human nature suggested by British observers like Hutton (also mentioned here, p. 19-20), but which today appears much more like demonization that directly served to justify British imperialist violence, than a scientific explanation. Of course, in overlooking Friedman's substantial attempt at understanding the long-term trajectories of Naga societies, this volume's editors are not alone. For unclear reasons, this is a pattern in recent scholarship of the region: even a voluminous 2007 book devoted solely to the reconsideration of Leach's work fails to engage it (still, see Bouchery 2007, a contribution on the Nagas included in that same work). And Friedman himself, in his preface to the 1998 second edition of his book, acknowledges his own lack of a historical perspective and expresses the hope for more historical accounts (including by indigenous peoples' representatives themselves) – exactly the kind of accounts contributed by this volume!

On another note, given the considerable impact of foreign Christian missionaries, it would have been interesting if the missionaries that brought Christianity to the lands of the Nagas had been included in some way. There is considerable and sophisticated discussion of Naga religion here already, such as in Joshi's contribution on healing, but perhaps a period piece from one of the American Baptists might have been included, expounding on the ideological justifications for their incursions, and the destruction of tradition that they wrought. Raymond Corbey's work (2010) is a fine example of the new genre of critical scholarship of Christian

missionaries, who often destroyed elements of local religious paraphernalia that they saw as being incompatible with the foreign religion they wanted to impose while, at the same time collecting specimens of those same paraphernalia for sale or for display in museums at home, as trophies of sorts, of the peoples and lands they helped conquer.

Michael Oppitz, one of the main editors of this comprehensive work on the Nagas, contributes a fascinating article on the imposing Naga log drums, which also extends to comparisons with the log drums of the Wa in Burma and in Yunnan, China, and those of other highland peoples of the region. I must note for the interested reader that Oppitz has published many other works on the region's religion and culture, including, for example, an important book in German on the widespread lore of 'lost writing' (*Die verlorene Schrift*; Zürich: VMZ, 2008; a topic that has recently come into focus in the English-speaking anthropology literature on the 'Zomia' region); and a film on Magar shamans in central Nepal (*Shamans of the Blind Country*). Especially notable for those interested in this Naga volume is the similarly rich and generously large-sized book *Naxi and Moso Ethnography: Kin, Rites, Pictographs* (also beautifully produced by the ethnological museum at Zürich, in 1998), co-edited by Oppitz and Elisabeth Hsu, on the Tibeto-Burman speaking Naxi and Moso peoples living in Yunnan, China, not far to the east of the Nagas – their distant relatives, we must assume.

The book will be of great interest and lasting use for everyone interested in Asia's highland peoples, including both amateurs and scholars and experts, and, I believe, of great interest to indigenous peoples' activists and other intellectuals, both among the Nagas, and also among other peoples across the region and around the world.

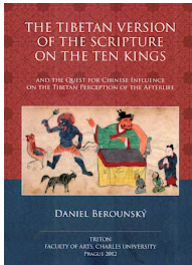
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## REVIEW: *SCRIPTURE ON THE TEN KINGS*

Reviewed by Paul K. Nietupski (John Carroll University)



Daniel Berounský (with Luboš Bělka, "Comparative Description of the Paintings"). 2012. *The Tibetan Version of the Scripture on the Ten Kings and the Quest for Chinese Influence on the Tibetan Perception of the Afterlife*. Prague: Triton Publishing House. 319pp, bibliographies, appendices, color plates, index. ISBN 9788073875848 (paper 19.80€).

This book is a study of the various influences on the complex Tibetan visions of the afterlife. It is based on new text-critical research and includes an introduction and translation of a rare Tibetan manuscript entitled *Scripture on the Ten Kings*, housed in the National Gallery, Prague. The book includes extensive references to secondary scholarship, as well as collaborative work by competent scholars and an appended study of the text illustrations by Luboš Bělka.

From the outset, the book raises a range of interpretive questions of central importance to at least Tibetan and Asian studies. The author describes the plan of the book and its parameters in the Introduction, noting that the manuscript under study does not include tantric perspectives (12), and is instead more oriented to popular understanding and use. This is an important and controversial methodological position, consistent with the formalized one circulated in scholastic and monastic circles that emphasizes secrecy and limited access to fully developed tantric studies.<sup>1</sup> This position can, however, be contrasted with, for example, the uses of texts noted by Cuevas (2003), and further emphasized by Prude (2005:1-3), who suggests more popular use of tantric texts. This view is discussed in detail by others, including Thurman (2006), in his obviously tantric-influenced introduction and translation of the

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<sup>1</sup> Noted briefly by Dreyfus (2003:118-120).

*Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Berounský explains that the tantric traditions have been avoided in the text under study, which instead:

concentrates only on seemingly marginal influences on the perception of the afterlife which, however, might have had a strong popular impact, and thus would have been hard to discern in the texts rendered in tantric garb (12).

Berounský's position about the Tibetan audiences and uses of his featured text presents an important voice in this still unresolved debate about who read, who engaged in relevant religious observances, or even knew about these and other, explicitly tantric texts.

As the title of the work suggests, the objective of the book is a "[q]uest for Chinese Influence on the Tibetan Perception of the Afterlife." However, the study is a more comprehensive and inclusive examination of the subject. The first chapter is a summary of Hindu, Buddhist, and other Indian religions' views of afterlife experiences, notably, descriptions of hells. With close reference to key secondary studies, the author presents the ideas of hells from the *Upaniṣads*, the *Laws of Manu*, and other Indian sources. Berounský pays attention to the developed ideas of hells in Indian Buddhist thought, and includes material from early Buddhist and later Mahāyāna sources. The chapter ends with the author's translation of a vivid passage on Buddhist hells by the ca. thirteenth to fourteenth century scholar, Chim Jampelyang, from his important commentary on the *Abhidharmakośa*. This is significant because, though a late text, it raises the issue of a much older Indian source for both Chinese and Tibetan visions of hells. This chapter, moreover, deals with the motives for what follows in the next chapter, the excursions to various hells, whether out of a Confucian sense of filial piety, or because of a Mahāyāna sense of compassion for the suffering of beings in hell, an underlying problem noted by Kapstein (2007:345-377). Also, as above, this chapter prompts the reader to question what social factors were at work in the reception of these texts and ideas, a recurring issue throughout the book, summarized in another work noted by Berounský, Cuevas' *Travels in the Netherworld: Buddhist*

*Popular Narratives of Death and the Afterlife in Tibet* (2008:6-11). The issues and depth of scholarship in this volume serve as a good platform for the next chapter, a summary of stories about visits to hells.

In Chapter Two, "Visits to Hells: Tibetan *Delog* Narrations and Chinese *Zhiguai* Stories," Berounský presents a bibliographical study of the relevant Tibetan and Chinese traditions on this subject. The study is strengthened by reference to relevant Russian scholarship. He opens the chapter with methodological considerations about the authorship of the texts, whether they are of the highest level of scholarship or otherwise, and citing Cuevas (2008), goes on to note that the categories of scholastic and popular literature are not rigid, and that there was borrowing across genres. He carries on beyond these considerations, noting that there was "an integration of the scholarly teachings into real life" (45). This point is well presented and explains the complexity of the literature under discussion, with influence from the Abhidharma literature, tantra, popular stories and, as we will see, from Tibetan, especially in the case of *delog* stories, and from Chinese traditions. Still, while the influences are manifold, there are recognizable differences, for example, in the precise descriptions of the death process in the Tibetan materials (45-46), and the more legalistic images of the afterlife found in Chinese sources, also mentioned by Kapstein.

Berounský describes Tibetan *delog* stories in detail, and summaries the available studies, their possible Chinese and/ or other origins, and the influences on this literature. Drawing on the work of Pommaret (46 n26), he lists the currently known *delog* literature, including the English translation in Delog Dawa Drolma (1995). The author goes on to describe possible Iranian<sup>2</sup> antecedents and compares the *delog* genre with the much older Chinese "Accounts of the Strange" (*zhiguai*) stories, through the work of Company (1990, 1995) and other scholars, again including Russian scholars. In this segment the author notes the possibilities and problems of intercultural literary borrowing across many centuries. He discusses

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<sup>2</sup> The term Berounský uses is 'Iranian', by which I assume he means 'Persian'.

the distinctive Chinese and Buddhist influences in the texts and closes this section with a translation of a section of one of the most popular *delog* stories, *Delog Lingza Choekyi*, edited and translated from Tibetan with reference to all available editions.

As in the previous chapter, the presentation of ideas and translation are useful for understanding this literature, and are thought-provoking in application to broader issues. Berounský's analysis is solid and comprehensive. He raises key interpretive questions, of whether the audience was exclusively a scholarly élite or the population at large, of possible sources of the stories in Tibetan or Chinese cultures, and of the transference of ideas and translation across cultures, including Iranian, Tibetan, and Chinese. Though not discussed in detail, Berounský questions and provides data on the processes of composition, production, copy, and circulation of written texts, and the extent to which texts available today reflect actual practice in real communities.

Chapter Three builds on an already detailed study with yet another full-length investigation of sources of texts on the afterlife, here including the well-known story of "Maudgalyāyana's Travels in Hells." Berounský opens the chapter with the emphatic statement that "the Tibetan *delog* narrations share an almost identical basic storyline with their much earlier Chinese precursors" (78). Having said this, however, he notes that beyond the obvious similarities there are significant differences in the Tibetan and Chinese traditions, typical of Chinese "transformation texts" (*bianwen*). He notes that the Tibetan version of "Maudgalyāyana's Travels in Hells" is a likely translation of one Chinese "transformation text," which itself has even earlier, perhaps Tibetan antecedents or, as one might expect, a type of Tibetan "transformation text." The opening pages of this chapter include a detailed description of a complex literary history that extends across languages, cultures, and religions. The reader, moreover, arrives at this chapter knowing of the possibilities of Indian, Iranian, Tibetan, and Chinese borrowings of text and story materials, and the considerations of the audiences, production, and circulation of written texts and oral traditions, including Chinese ghost festivals and Tibetan festivals, noted by other scholars. In the

opening section he discusses the history and secondary scholarship of the so-called *Yulanpen Sūtra* and its associated calendrical celebrations, noting that there were likely many more such texts and stories, both oral and written. Berounský includes reference to secondary studies by Kapstein, Teiser, and others, and uses these to build his description of a literary and religious genre.

Chapter Four, "Ten Kings of the Afterlife" brings the reader to the main text of the book. By this point, the reader well understands that Berounský's work is a description of a literary genre defined in part by a body of religious beliefs in the afterlife. The boundaries of death, like the boundaries of the cultural and literary contexts Berounský presents, are permeable. With his broad-based descriptive chapters as a foundation, he turns to a primary source text that is perhaps more remarkable for what it represents than the text itself. He opens the chapter with a description of the extensive Chinese texts, developed traditions, and sources of the "Ten Kings," including detailed comments on Teiser's (1994:132-140.) work. This section is very useful for its analysis of Chinese and other sources, and their relevance to the Tibetan text.

Chapter Four continues with a careful analytical description of the text holdings in the National Gallery of Prague and the known history of their acquisition, with a focus on the *Scripture on the Ten Kings*. The author makes helpful suggestions about the possible origins, motives, and use of these texts, with careful reference to Dunhuang texts and Teiser's works. He continues with a detailed and thorough description of the Prague *Scripture on the Ten Kings*, followed by summary remarks on the possible uses of the text in its original contexts. The next section is a careful translation of the *Scripture of the Ten Kings*, based on and at times critically reconstructed by the author's solid command of Tibetan language and literature. This valuable translation is followed by a facsimile of the entire Prague manuscript, which includes the illustrations in black and white. Berounský's "Concluding Remarks" (263) are a concise and lucid summary of the four chapters and the translation.

This already thought-provoking and encyclopedic book continues with a "Comparative Description of the Paintings" written

by Luboš Bělka. The Appendices include color plates of the illustrations in the Prague manuscript of the *Scripture of the Ten Kings*, already displayed in the facsimile of the text. Bělka's detailed descriptions of the paintings include close reference and comparison to Dunhuang paintings, and with careful consideration of the works of Masako Watanabe and Teiser (1994).<sup>3</sup> Bělka's detailed analytical descriptions and "Preliminary Conclusions" (297) are an excellent ending to an already detailed project.

In sum, this book is a remarkable study, ostensibly of a rare Tibetan manuscript, but also of so much more, including careful analysis of the text's possible source cultures, texts, and religious traditions. The Tibetan text under study is considered in light of Indian, Iranian, Mongolian, Tibetan, and not least, Chinese sources. The chapters are well organized, and include references to relevant primary texts and secondary studies. Berounský includes translations of primary texts, a key strength of the project. His command of Tibetan language is evident throughout. The book is thought-provoking for the obvious eschatological subject matter, and how this is dealt with in Tibetan, Chinese, Indian, and related contexts.<sup>4</sup>

Berounský's project is data rich, and provides foundations for further investigation. He raises issues of text production and circulation in Tibetan and the related cultures under study. For example, readers might consider who the author of the text was, whether a monk, an educated layperson, or a commissioned copyist. The text is not well written, and the paintings not high art; it was not a product of a highly educated writer or a skilled master painter. It does not appear in canonical collections, and yet it, or at least the ideas expressed in the text, as shown by the related texts under discussion, appears to have been widely circulated. Why was it written? For use in funeral rituals? To gain Buddhist merit for deceased persons? Or, was the text written to address concerns of communities with little access to or understanding of high level monastic traditions? In this case, was this text used exclusively by non-monastic persons and communities, and does this text represent

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<sup>3</sup> See also Teiser (1999:169-197).

<sup>4</sup> For detailed contextual studies see Cuevas and Stone (2007).

a very wide-ranging, non-monastic religious practice? Furthermore, given the title of the book, what is the relationship between Tibetan and Chinese communities with similar concerns? Is the Chinese text a prototype for the Tibetan, or do both traditions rely on Indian Buddhist and other materials? And what of art traditions? Luboš Bělka takes care to show how the ideas discussed in the written book are expressed in a visual medium. Berounský raises these and other compelling issues in this thoughtfully written and carefully researched book. Its broad range of data makes it useful for scholars and students interested in the subjects introduced. It is not burdened with excessive theological speculation, and it is for the most part well written. This compelling volume makes the material accessible to a wide range of readers.

The shortcoming of the volume is the frequency of lexical and spelling errors in the English text and less frequently in Sanskrit words, and occasional lack of clarity of expression. The book deserved a careful proofreading and editing and could also have included Chinese characters for technical terms and primary sources. These issues aside, the book is a valuable contribution to scholarship in Asian studies, religious studies, Asian art history, and all related fields.

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NON-ENGLISH TERMS

*bianwen* 变文

Chim Jampelyang མཚེམས་འཇམ་དཔལ་དབྱངས, མཚེམས་འཇམ་པའི་དབྱངས,  
(མཚེམས་འཇམ་པའི་སྐྱུངས, sic.)

*delog* འདས་ལོག

Delog Dawa Drolma འདས་ལོག་ལྷ་བ་རྫོལ་མ།

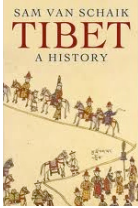
Delog Lingza Choekyi འདས་ལོག་གླིང་བཟའ་ཚོས་སྐྱོད

*zhiguai* 志怪



## REVIEW: *TIBET – A HISTORY*

Reviewed by Ivette Vargas-O'Bryan (Austin College)



Sam van Schaik. 2011. *Tibet: A History*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press. 324pp, 24 b/w illustrations. ISBN: 10: 0300154046; 13: 9780300154047 (hardcover 30.77USD; paper 20.48USD; mobi 17.71USD).

Sam van Schaik, a lecturer at London's School of Oriental and African Studies, the British Library's expert on early Tibet, and author of an informative site on early Tibet,<sup>1</sup> has written a unique, extensive history of Tibet, encompassing the pre-imperial period to the present day. Given that works by Tsering Shakya (2000), Goldstein (1991, 2009), and Kapstein (2006) exist, why is another on the subject necessary? In the present work, the author calls into question many preconceptions the general reader and scholars may have about Tibet in terms of its religion, society, and politics. Anyone who has encountered Tibet is aware that its history is messy. What is most significant about this work is the narrative style, reminiscent of how Tibetans themselves often tell their own stories, colorfully intertwined with intrigue and diversions. This innovative tale of several cultures, cities, and persons reveals insight into the region. At times, this book resembles an intimate novella, rather than a dry catalogue of lists and dates, thus providing an authentic sense of the past.

In ten dense chapters, the glory days of the Tibetan empire in the seventh century, the times of persecutions, the balance of power, the switching of positions of conquest in dealings with China, the Arabs, and other groups, and the practices and uses of religion,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://earlytibet.com>, accessed 21 November 2013.

particularly Tibetan Buddhism, are all illustrated. The selection of stories and events reveal the critique that, "the greatest representation of Tibet is that it was unchanging" (xviii).

Rather than succumbing to Orientalist or romantic notions of Tibet, or accentuating the predominance of the Dge lugs pa school, this work captures other stories – the lives of princesses, warlords, various Buddhist schools and religions, and cultures. At a time when Tibetan history has become a political tool in debates about Tibet's status within China, and as Chinese historians have looked for evidence of Tibetan dependence on China, van Schaik strikes a balance in perspectives by drawing from several historical and narrative sources.

Two critical aspects of Tibetan history in van Schaik's work are the varieties of Tibetan Buddhism and Tibet's constant interactions with outside powers. These two aspects work together throughout the development of plural Tibetan histories, capturing the representation of views from Tibetan and Chinese sources of the struggles to maintain power at all costs. This book emphasizes that Tibet has never been isolated, at least not for a very long while, given its key role in changes that occurred in Central Asia and China. As early as the eighth century, there were complex relationships and conflicts between Tibetans and the Chinese, the Uighur, and the Arabs.

In the nineteenth century, Tibet was drawn into the Great Game between Russia and the British Empire. Twentieth century events include the British-Tibetan War of 1904, the need for Russian and British intervention, the escape of the Dalai Lama, the takeover by Mao, to the struggles in contemporary Tibet and in exile. The accounts provide reports of divergent Tibetan Buddhist sects deeply involved in political intrigue, e.g., the Dalai Lama blessing rifles or monastics involved in fighting, alongside accounts of devout leaders of Buddhism seeking teachings from India and Central Asia.

Ironic moments include Tibetans attacking Khotan, a major Buddhist area, and later supporting Buddhism over their own native traditions. Assimilation is often key in the adoption and adaptation of

religion. Tibet was no exception. Religion also played a key role for the devout and for the powerful, creating allies as well as enemies.

Though few passages in the book make original academic points, information is presented in an intimate, accessible, and entertaining manner. It has much to offer the general reader and undergraduate and first-year graduate students. Throughout, readers may find their ideas about Tibet being challenged and gaps in knowledge filled by narrative-historical detail.

In requiring my own undergraduate students read this history for a digital humanities course on Tibetan cultures, alongside works by other scholars, we found that it filled some gaps in knowledge in accessible ways. To the uninitiated reader, the extensive list of historical figures van Schaik draws from may, at times, seem daunting, perhaps selecting events from the less famous figures of history and from life stories of other Tibetan figures would have had more appeal. Overall, however, it is a well-written history of what shaped Tibet in its many twists and turns of fate. What struck me most about this work is that I could not put it down. I wanted to show a film that captured all the vignettes that the book was capturing. It was like a Tibetan Borgias series. I often asked myself, "How did he know all this detail? Was he there?"

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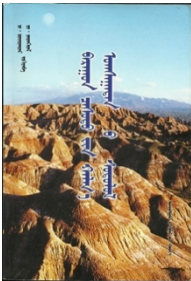


## REVIEW: MONGOLIAN LANGUAGE SCHOLARSHIP ON THE MONGOLS OF THE GANSU-QINGHAI REGION

Reviewed by Mátyás Balogh  
(Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary)



Ci. Bürinbayar, Burenbaya'er 布仁巴雅尔. 2001. *Degedü monyol-un tobciyan, Qinghai Mengguzu Gaikuang* 青海蒙古族概况 [A General Survey of the Deed Mongols]. Öbür Monyol-un Suryan Kümüjil-ün Keblel-ün Qoriya. Hohhot 呼和浩特: Nemenggu jiaoyu chunabshe 内蒙古教育出版社 ISBN: 7-5311-4965-6/k; 61, 272 (4+3+14+251), no index, bibliography, maps, or images (paperback 15RMB).



C. Coyidandar, Cha. Qiadanda'er 查. 乔旦德尔 and Ci. Cecengerel, Qi. Siqengerile 其. 斯琴格日勒. 2006. *Baruyun casutu-yin qalqa uysayatan-u sudulul, Xueyu Ka'erka Mengguren Minsu Zhiyan* 雪域喀尔喀蒙古民俗志研究 [A Study of the Halh Mongols of the Western Snows] Beijing 北京: Ündüsüten-ü Keblel-ün Qoriya. Minzu chubanshe 民族出版社 [Minority Nationalities' Press] ISBN: 7-105-07690-9, 497 (11+25+471). 11 color images, 1 genealogical table, list of author's publications (466-468), no index, bibliography, or maps (paperback 35RMB).

### QINGHAI AND GANSU MONGOLS

The majority of China's Mongol population (estimated at 3.5-4 million) live in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (IMAR). Some also live in the adjacent provinces of Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning,

and Hebei. A significant number of Mongol communities also exist in northwest China, notably in the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR), and in Qinghai and Gansu provinces.<sup>1</sup> The Mongols of these administrative regions are predominantly Oyrat-Mongols (Weilate), otherwise known as western Mongols. The four major tribes of the Oyrats – the Dörböt, Torguud, Hoshuud, and Choros – established the Jungharian Empire (1630-1758) in the seventeenth century in the north part of what is now the XUAR. When the Choros began gaining the upper hand in the struggle for hegemony in the late 1620s, many Dörböts and Torguuds left the region and migrated to the Volga delta, where they established their own khanate under Russian protectorate, and became known as the Kalmyks. In 1736, another group of Oyrats, under the Hoshuud Gülüshi Han's leadership, left the area for the Kuku-Nor region, roughly present-day Qinghai Province, in order to aid the fifth Dalai Lama and expel the Halh Tsogt Taiji's Mongols, enemies of the Dge lugs pa order of Buddhism.

The Mongols in Qinghai and Gansu provinces are most often referred to as Deed Mongols 'Upper Mongols' or Hoshuud, though Gülüshi Han's army also included some Torguud, Hoid (a minor tribe), and Choros troops. After a couple of decades in the region west of Kuku-Nor, some Deed Mongols migrated northwards to Dunhuang in Gansu Province, and their descendants currently live there in Subei Mongol Autonomous County. Bürinbayar's *The General Survey of the Deed Mongols* summarizes available information about the Deed Mongols in Qinghai Province, but does not include information on the Deed Mongols of Subei.

Southeast from Subei, in Sunan Yugur Autonomous County, is Baiyin, a Mongol ethnic township (C. *mengguzu xiang*). The Mongol residents of this area are surprisingly not Deed Mongols, but Halhs who fled their original homeland in present-day Gowi Altai Province, mostly during the 1920s and 30s. They are discussed in C. Coyidandar's *Study of the Halh Mongols of the Western Snows*.

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<sup>1</sup> Hurelbaatar (1999:196) states that in 1990 there were 138,021 Mongols living in the XUAR, 71,510 in Qinghai, and 8,135 in Gansu.



GENERAL SURVEY OF THE DEED MONGOLS

The book is an encyclopedic work consisting of ten chapters (*bölög*), with each chapter subdivided into several *keseg* 'units'. The author's intention was to write about everything concerning the Deed Mongols. As its Chinese title makes clear, it belongs to the genre called *gaikuang*, a general survey or description of the facts about a given topic. *Gaikuang* are frequently published in China about such administrative divisions as provinces, prefectures, and counties, and also about certain minorities or groups of minorities. The Mongol word (*tobciyan*) that translates Chinese *gaikuang*, echoes the title of the thirteenth century Mongol chronicle, *Moŋyol-un niyuca tobciyan*, *The Secret History of the Mongols*. This chronicle describes the origin and deeds of Temüjin, later known as Chinggis Khan, and ends with the reign of his son, Ögedei. Thus, the Mongol title of Bürenbayar's work suggests that it discusses the history of the Deed Mongols, contains descriptions of their rulers and conquests, explains where the Deed Mongols originated, and how they occupied the territory in which they currently live. However, the whole book is much more of a *gaikuang* than a *tobciyan* in the 'classical sense', i.e., the author also focuses on health-care, infrastructure, and mass-media in Deed Mongol territory.

The first chapter, as is typical of standard *gaikuang*, deals with geography, and gives a thorough description of the terrain in which the Deed Mongols live.

The second chapter discusses Deed Mongol territorial administration, beginning with the autonomous Mongol administrative units, namely Haixi Mongol and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Henan Mongol Autonomous County, and three Mongol ethnic townships: Halejing, Toli, and Huang Cheng, all located in Haibei Prefecture. The third and largest unit of this chapter deals with the old administrative division of the Deed Mongols, which consisted of the Hoshuud, Choros, Hoid, Torguud, and Halh tribes, the latter being the only non-Oyrat tribe that joined the Deed Mongols, having migrated from Jasagt Han Province of Outer

Mongolia in 1765.<sup>2</sup> Bürenbayar briefly discusses these tribes and then turns to a discussion of the twenty-nine Deed Mongol banners (twenty-one Hoshuud, four Torguud, two Choros, one Hoid, and one Halh) in great length and in much detail.

The third chapter, 'Historical Events', reviews the history of Mongol presence in the Kuku-Nor region before the arrival of the Deed Mongols. It also relates the Hoshuud Gūūshi Han's military campaign against Tsogt Taij, a Halh Mongol noble who came to the area in an effort to annihilate the Dge lugs pa order of Buddhism and replace it with the Rnying ma pa order. Gūūshi, with his ten sons and their followers, settled in the region, becoming an important ethnic component of the Kuku-Nor region. This chapter does not deal with the Deed Mongols' recent history, rather, the discussion ends at mid-twentieth century.

Chapters four to eight discuss the different aspects of contemporary Deed Mongol life including economic activities, culture and education, religious life, rules and regulations concerning autonomy, and traditional customs. These chapters are a very useful source of information for those interested in traditional Mongol culture and the herding way of life. In addition, they include such contemporary topics as water usage in the arid Tsaidam Basin, fish-farms in Kuku-Nor, Mongol and Tibetan ethnic schools, sports, games, and healthcare. The last chapter, again like many publications of the *gaikuang* genre, is titled 'Famous People' and lists the names of the most venerated Deed Mongols and their outstanding achievements.

#### *A STUDY OF THE HALH MONGOLS OF THE WESTERN SNOWS*

The discussion begins with a lengthy introduction (forty-five pages), consisting of four sections. In the first section, the authors describe the history of their research in the area that lasted from 1984 to 2005. The second section is an outline of the area's geographical

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<sup>2</sup> He and Zhang (2005:193).

features, and the third unit discusses the origin of the Sunan-Halh. It is curious why these important pages were made part of the introduction. However, this brief, but very informative, history contains the memories of a number of elders who personally participated in the migration from Mongolia to Gansu in their childhood or youth. These narratives make clear that migration was diffuse and happened because some left their homes owing to Kazak bandits harassing the Halhs of two neighboring banners (Toli gūng and Dayicin wang) and because they were afraid that the bandits would soon plunder their banner as well. Furthermore, nobles and Buddhist lamas fled from anticipated persecution from the newly emerging power of the Mongol Communists. The migrants first settled farther north in Gansu in Mazong, close to the Sino-Mongolian border. After a couple of years, most moved deeper into Chinese territory to either Sunan (Baiyin Township) or to Barayun qosiyun 'Right Banner' of Alashan League.<sup>3</sup> A few detoured to Xinjiang before reaching their final destination in Sunan, and some settled in Pingshanhu, another Mongol ethnic township in Gansu that is very near the Inner Mongolia border.

The main body of the text is divided into three long *bölög* 'chapters' that are subdivided into smaller units. Chapter One is titled 'Customs' (*yosu jansil*) and is subdivided into five units: Everyday life; Greetings and showing respect; Rituals of a person's lifespan; Celebrations, festivals, beliefs, and religious matters, and; Games and competitions.

Chapter Two, 'Oral Literature', comprises four units. The first is a *irügel* 'single praise' of a steed in the form of an alliterative verse, collected by the authors from a local resident in 1984. The second is a substantial collection of aphorisms and riddles. The third unit is a collection of sixty-nine Halh folksongs that occupy a very generous part of the book (pages 180 to 358). This is followed by the fourth unit, a collection of eighteen legends and tales.

Chapter Three deals with characteristic features of the Sunan-Halh dialect. It begins with an outline of its phonology and continues

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<sup>3</sup> Alashan is the westernmost prefecture level unit of IMAR.

with an enumeration of words and expressions that are unique to this dialect, both in Mongolian script and IPA transliteration.

The appendices include, among other items, a personal letter from the authors to a professor, and the latter's answer, containing the lineages of certain lords, who governed the Halhs in question around the turn of the twentieth century, before the migration took place. The lineages are followed by a list of the governors of Baiyin and Pingshanhu from 1950 to 2002 and from 1949-1997, respectively.

...

Both books are explicitly descriptive and summary in character. Folklore materials, traditions, customs, rituals, and taboos are presented without explanation or analyses. When history is touched upon, the events and facts are described – there are no hypotheses and speculation. Some sort of explanation would add much to the understanding of folk literature, particularly in terms of aphorisms, for example, C. Coyidandar and Ci. Cecengerel (169) write that, "A fatherless boy has a big head, and a motherless girl has big buttocks," but we are left wondering why.

Neither book challenges the results of previous studies, sets forth new ideas, or discusses their subject in a new context with a new approach. Instead, they present a tremendous amount of information, which I think makes them valuable repositories of data for further research.

The reviewed books are only two examples of a large number of such books written by Mongol authors in Mongol about their own nation's history, language, and culture. Their readers are almost exclusively Mongol scholars. Only a handful of foreign researchers of Inner-Asia use them because these books are extremely difficult to obtain; the best way to get them is to locate the author or turn to the publishing house, but possible readers outside the spheres of Chinese-Mongolian scholarship usually do not know that a book they would be interested in exists.

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
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
Note: In Written Mongolian c = ch, š, and s before i = sh, ŋ = ng, q = kh, γ = gh


Alashan 阿拉善


Baiyin 白银

Barayun qosiyun<sup>4</sup>  = The Right Banner of Alashan League,  
Alashan Youqi 阿拉善右旗

Bölög 

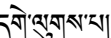
Bürinbayar 

Choros, Coros 

Coyidandar 

Dayicin wang 

Deed, degedü 

Dge lugs pa 

Dörböd, Dörbed 

Dunhuang 敦煌

gaikuang 概况

<sup>4</sup> Written Mongolian words in the original script are given as they appear in the original text.

Gansu 甘肃 Province

Güüshi Han, Güüši qan རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Haibei 海北 Prefecture

Haixi Mongol and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture 海西蒙古族藏族自治州

Halejing 哈勒景

Halh Tsogt Taiji, qalqa Coytu Tayiji རྒྱུ་ཤི་རྒྱལ་ཁྲིམས་ལུང་ལྷན་ཁག་

Hebei 河北

Heilongjiang 黑龙江

Henan Mongol Autonomous County 河南蒙古族自治县

Hoid, Qoyid རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Hoshuud Güüshi Han, Qošud Güüši qan རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ། རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Huang Cheng 皇城

Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region 内蒙古自治区

*irügel* རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Jilin 吉林

*keseq* རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Kuku-Nor, Köke nayur རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།, Oyrat: Kök nuur

Liaoning 辽宁

Mazong 马鬃

*mengguzu xiang* 蒙古族乡

Moŋyol-un niyuca tobciyan རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ། རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ། རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Ögedei རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Pingshanhu 平山湖

Qinghai 青海 Province

Rnying ma pa རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Subei Mongol Autonomous County 苏北蒙古族自治县

Sunan-Halh, sunan qalqa རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Temüjin རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

*tobciyan* རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Toli རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ། Tuole 托勒

Toli güng རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Torguud, Torγud རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།

Tsaidam, Cayidam རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།, Oyrat: Cäadm, Chaidamu 柴达木

Weilate 卫拉特 Oyrat, Oyirad རྒྱུ་ཤི་མངའ་སྡེ།, Oyrat: Öörd

Xining 西宁 City

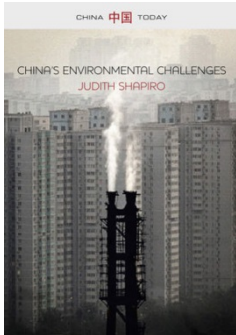
Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region 新疆维吾尔自治区  
*yosu jaŋsil* ཡུ་སུ་ཇམ་སུལ་





## REVIEW: *CHINA'S ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES*

Reviewed by Bill Bleisch (China Exploration & Research Society)



Judith Shapiro. 2012. *China's Environmental Challenges*. Cambridge: UK and Malden, MA: Polity Press. xxii+200pp, map, preface, index. ISBN 9780745663098 (paper 22.95USD, ebook 18.95USD).

Judith Shapiro's latest ambitious work picks up the story of modern China's checkered relationship with the environment at approximately the point where her previous study, *Mao's War Against Nature* (2001), left off. This latest book sets out to address questions of grave importance to China and to the world. The litany of challenges – poisonous water and toxic air, scarcity of water and other resources, deforestation, soil erosion, loss of biodiversity – seem nearly insurmountable, despite evidence of considerable attention from the Chinese government and from China's public, and despite the rocket-like rise of China's economic power and political influence in the world. Shapiro adds to this list the growing problems with lapses in environmental justice, both within China and passed on to its neighbours and to the countries with which it trades.<sup>1</sup> Not only do growing environmental problems affect China's ability to achieve the government's stated goals of a 'harmonious society' with 'moderate prosperity for all,' but these problems, and the ways that

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<sup>1</sup> Shapiro specifies that environmental justice exists:

when environmental risks and hazards, and investments and benefits are equally distributed with a lack of discrimination, ...and when access to information, participation in decision making, and access to justice in environment-related matters are enjoyed by all (138).

China seeks to address them, are now widely recognized as having major impacts on the entire planet. Chinese demand has become a major factor in the pricing of the world's natural resources, while pollution from Chinese sources, particularly emissions of CO<sup>2</sup> and other climate changing gasses, are having global consequences.

Shapiro sets out to explain these impacts by examining the effects of the growth of China's population, its emergence as the center of global manufacturing, and the rise of China's middle class. She also explores the constraints imposed on China's leaders by domestic politics and by trajectories that reflect past history and the perspectives and expectations that arise from the particularities of Chinese culture. Shapiro uses the tools of development studies to examine the issues and the sometimes obscure forces that lie behind the responses of the Chinese government and Chinese society, too. Shapiro demonstrates convincingly that there are forces within the Chinese government and the Chinese Communist Party that are actively trying to deal with environmental problems, even if perhaps only because they realize that their power and the very existence of their institutions are threatened by popular discontent that can bubble over in so-called 'environmental mass incidents' – demonstrations, strikes, and even violent action sparked by dissatisfaction over environmental harm. In the author's words:

Indeed, the nation's environmental challenges are so severe and so central to the manner in which China will "rise" that it is no exaggeration to say that they cannot be separated from its national identity and the government's ability to provide for the Chinese people. (9)

The book opens with a Preface recounting anecdotes from the author's own personal experiences in China during the past four decades of momentous change. She arrived as a student in the summer of 1977 when the country was just beginning to emerge from the ravages of the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976). This personal account, filled with particulars, provides a contrast to the rest of the book, which is sweeping in scope. Throughout, anecdotes and

examples cause the issues to stand out in relief and make the book immediately meaningful and enjoyable to read.

The rest of the book is carefully organized around five 'core analytical concepts' – globalization, governance, national identity, civil society, and environmental justice. The author pulls no punches and the audience is obviously not China's leadership, although a few privileged experts may get the chance to read the book and absorb its recommendations. Rather, the book is designed to be used by instructors and students in a Western classroom setting.

The introductory chapter, subtitled "The Big Picture," includes a clear overview of the entire book. It also provides an accessible and interesting summary of the approaches of different academic disciplines to the study of environmental issues, contrasting how scholars might deal with the same issues through a regional-studies perspective, a comparative perspective, by focusing on a specific sector or policy, or through the lens of political science, environmental anthropology, natural resources economics, political ecology, environmental history, environmental economics, or environmental justice.

Shapiro effectively introduces the nuanced perspective on environmental issues that she demands of her readers; we are introduced to a government caught between contradictory agendas created by the need to provide real improvements in the lives of over one billion people, many of whom are still desperately poor, others of whom have recently joined the expanding ranks of a new middle-class. This growing middle-class is a key player but a fickle one, experiencing new-found prosperity and confidence but simultaneously demanding a healthy environment, at least in their own backyards, while creating exploding demand for consumer goods that can only be met by break-neck development. Shapiro effectively conveys the quandary of a bureaucracy for environmental protection that is tasked to implement some of the strictest and best designed systems of environmental regulations in the world, yet which has little power in remote areas, and no power at all over the powerful state-owned companies that often have close family ties to the leading elite.

Chapter Two, "Environmental Challenges: Drivers and Trends," introduces the broad trends of China's historical and economic development, as well as the main drivers that explain China's growing environmental challenges, such as population growth; consumerism and the rise of the Chinese middle-class; globalization of manufacturing, urbanization and the resulting depopulation of rural areas; industrialization; loss of farmland; and climate change. The chapter ends with a review of some recent environmental disasters and of citizen action and conflicts fuelled by discontent over growing environmental problems.

Chapter Three, evocatively entitled "State-led Environmentalism: The View from Above," focuses on governance, covering the legal and institutional framework for environmental protection in China, with its odd contrast of top-down authoritarian decision-making that gives rise to policies that are usually undermined by the 'implementation gap' created by the decentralized and often corrupt administrative frameworks at the local level. While lapses in implementation were once applauded as brave and clever moves used by local governments to spare their constituencies from the worst excesses of misguided central policy, the implementation gap in environmental policy now "stems at least in part from a political and social conflict between Western-style economic growth and a healthy environment" (169).

Chapter Four, "Sustainable Development and National Identity," covers the historical and cultural context that constrains the leadership's response to the growing conflict between the imperative for economic growth and for environmental sustainability. Shapiro delves into the fascinating question of the Chinese national identity and the 'quiet struggle' that rages over it. Deciphering China's response to its environmental crises requires an understanding of the key concept of 'face' and its extreme importance, particularly in international diplomacy. The Chinese people "seem at times to swing between jingoism, or pugnacious nationalism, and insecurity or what a psychologist might call 'low self-esteem'" (100). Perhaps surprisingly, this sensitivity over face may also have led to positive movement in addressing global environmental problems.

The Chinese government has repeatedly stated its commitment to sustainable development and environmental protection, and has backed this up by ratifying a number of binding international conventions, some of which have never been signed by the USA. Shapiro argues that, far from being an exercise in hypocrisy, the government envisions China as a leader in international efforts to solve environmental problems, and that this fuels real action: heavy investment in renewable energy; bold, if over-ambitious experiments with 'Green GDP;' and binding targets for reducing 'carbon intensity.' "There is thus a possibility that China's preoccupation with 'face' and national identity may yet be channelled in support of an alternative model that the world has not yet seen" (100).

Chapter Five, "Public Participation and Civil Society: The View from Below," emphasizes the history of the civil society environmental movement in China and the role that it has played in changing policy. There have indeed been several high-profile cases in which polluting companies have been shamed into compliance with environmental laws by public exposure, or in which government decisions were at least reconsidered in the face of civil society organizing. In China, however, Western analysts have sometimes been fooled by the effective self-promotion of NGOs into over-emphasizing the role of NGOs in China's environmental progress. It is important to remember that, in China, NGOs are never allowed to act as an alternative to the Party. NGOs are now largely left out of decision-making and probably never had as much relevance to China's progress in addressing environmental issues as they would like their supporters to believe.

China's NGOs often manage to do no more than get out in front of the parade on issues that the government has already decided to resolve internally. Environmental NGOs in China have often been most effective when they collaborate with the government and the Party, giving advice, piloting innovation, and taking risks to fulfil an agenda already approved by the government, unconstrained by the conservatism and politics that limit all bureaucracies. NGOs can tackle foreign companies, like Adidas, Apple, or Chevron, but are

rarely allowed to take on a company that has strong central level connections, such as a Huaneng, Huadian, or Sinopec.

Also, NGOs may be allowed to highlight the crimes of a corrupt local official already targeted for discipline, but can never expose the web of connections that might link a top official and his family members to a Chinese company guilty of environmental excesses. Rare exceptions may occur when China is participating in an international convention, such as CITES or the Convention on World Heritage. This provides powerful reinforcements, and may give a small measure of protection to an NGO, but blowing the whistle on China's misdeeds internationally holds the risk that it might be misconstrued as sharing state secrets and committing treason. As multi-lateral organizations such as UNESCO and UNDP have become more dependent on China's cooperation, they may have also become less willing to stand up for in-country whistle blowers.

While emphasizing the role of NGOs in China's progress on environmental issues, the book seems to have underplayed the importance of contributions from trusted experts, including a handful of international experts like Shapiro herself. As Link (1992) has pointed out, throughout China's history, intellectuals have felt compelled by traditional duty to advise their rulers, at times continuing to offer unwanted advice even when persecuted and accused by vested interests of disloyalty for their pains. Despite the risks, trusted advisors have had deep and lasting influence on China's environment, largely by working within the system. Regrettably, this important phenomenon in China is hardly addressed in the book, aside from a brief mention of the strange, but surprisingly influential hybrid beast – the China Council for International Cooperation in Environment and Development – which allowed domestic and foreign experts to communicate their recommendations directly to the State Council.

The sixth chapter, "Environmental Justice and the Displacement of Harm," may interest readers of *Asian Highland Perspectives* most. Using case studies, it examines in some detail how environmental problems, such as pollution and loss of agricultural land to mining and infrastructure have been moved from the vicinity

of the homes of the middle class to remote regions, either peri-urban areas, remote western regions, or abroad. This tendency to solve environmental problems by 'displacement of harm' is not unique to China. Shift of the costs of development from majority populations to minority people, from urban areas to rural areas, from the center to the periphery, from wealthy nations to less-developed nations, and from those of us alive today on to future generations, has been a recurrent phenomenon throughout the world. It is perhaps ironic, but also telling, that Han Chinese citizens living in coastal Fujian suffer from toxins brought in by foreign 'electronic' garbage imported to China for recycling, just as China's rural residents suffer from the effects of initiatives designed to protect watersheds and tourism hotspots that mainly benefit eastern urban residents.

Shapiro provides two case studies of regions where 'displacement of harm' has affected China's minority peoples; in Inner Mongolia and Tibet. Shapiro reflects the suspicions of many that the government's 'ecological migration' program, which promotes urbanization of nomadic herders in Inner Mongolia (and also in Tibetan areas) is motivated more by a desire to secure access to grasslands in order to expand mining, commercial ranching, and farming, than to eradicate poverty or protect fragile grasslands. She points out that the environmental damage that is attributed to herders is often caused by irrational government policies of the past and not by traditional practices that were based on indigenous knowledge and worked to preserve an ecological balance on fragile dry-lands.

The book next considers similar changes in Tibet. Despite a disappointingly one-dimensional and over-simplified summary of Tibetan history, Shapiro does a real service to the debate about the future of the Tibetan Plateau by framing it in the larger context of the general tendency of modern societies to shift the burdens of environmental destruction from people with influence to people who are more vulnerable. One caution here: the brief summary misconstrues the recent environmental activism by certain minority people in China as a political stance against encroachment by the Han majority when, in fact, the reasons for this courageous activism

may have more to do with the close relationship and spiritual attachment of many minority people to the land, connected with their long and continuing dependence on natural resources from mountains, forests, grasslands, and wetlands.

The emphasis on environmental justice in this chapter is important and valuable, but it may lead some Chinese readers to suspect that campaigners are using environmental issues as an entrée to open up the more controversial issues of human rights. Throughout the book there is a tendency to conflate ecological justice and environmental sustainability, which may do a disservice to both worthy goals. While the two are undeniably interrelated, it is not immediately obvious that they are necessarily linked – certainly some factions in the Chinese government seem to think that environmental sustainability can be achieved without addressing issues of injustice. Logically, does one necessarily follow from the other? Public participation, for example, often seems to hamstring decision makers who must answer to demands for unsustainable levels of resource exploitation in support of temporarily low prices. US institutions, for example, seem to be politically incapable of considering a carbon tax, even though many mainstream economists recommend this as the most efficient mechanism for achieving the goal of lower carbon emissions. EU ministers have recently been accused of caving in to demands from the fishing industry to allow unsustainable catch levels.

Shapiro also emphasizes China's institutional problems and cultural peculiarities to the point that readers could get the impression that these are the roots of China's environmental challenges. True, these particulars explain much about the trajectory of China's development and the sometimes perplexing response of the government to environmental crises. Are these the roots of the problems, however, or just constraints in China's ability to find solutions? Ultimately, the source of many problems lies in inherent flaws in the vision of the future that has been imported to China, along with luxury brands and MBA degrees. As Wolf (2013), chief economics commentator at the *Financial Times*, points out "...what used to be the energy-intensive lifestyle of today's high-income countries has gone global."



Other societies, dedicated to freedom and equality, seem quite capable of marching in step off the cliff of extinction, blindly following the free pursuit of a misbegotten dream of unrestricted consumption, and misled by a shared fantasy of never-ending economic growth. Ultimately, China and its critics will all need to face the simple fact of exponential arithmetic that the 'Western' model of prosperity may be inherently unsustainable, making the phrase 'sustainable development,' as currently envisioned, an oxymoron. No amount of transparency, public involvement, or accountability is going to make this problem go away.

The final chapter of the book, "Prospects for the Future," restates the dangers facing China, but wisely avoids the pitfalls of prognostication. The shelves of libraries are crowded with old books predicting the imminent collapse of China, most of which place part of the blame for impending catastrophe on the ever-growing list of China's environmental problems. None of their prophecies of economic collapse have been fulfilled, perhaps in part because Chinese leaders, or at least their advisors, actually read these books and did their best to adjust so as to avoid the worst of the problems laid out.

Instead, Shapiro clearly states the issues that must be dealt with and the decisions that must be made by China and the world if they are to deal effectively with shared environmental problems. These are the hard questions that have no win-win answers:

Do the Chinese people have an inherent right to the higher living standards enjoyed in the developed world? Are such standards even possible? ... In a world of increasing limits on resources and pollution "sinks," or repositories, is it even possible to build an equitable world in which people enjoy equal access to resources without taking them from successive generations, from the vulnerable, or from other species? (11)

With perspectives like these, this book often rises above previous attempts to cover some of this same ground, many of which are little more than expressions of outrage about the inequities created by China's failure to deal with corruption or a litany of complaints about the environmental problems that China's re-

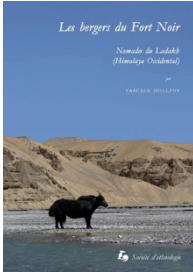
emergence as an economic power has created for the rest of the world. China, through its meteoric rise, has highlighted the fundamental dilemmas that are now shared by all countries and all people. Shapiro ends each chapter with a list of four or five thought-provoking 'questions for research and discussion' that lead students through the complexity of the issues at hand and the difficulties of crafting solutions. Far from being exceptional, China is both a microcosm of the challenges and a laboratory for testing solutions to problems that we all share.

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## REVIEW: *LES BERGERS DU FORT NOIR*

Reviewed by Katia Buffetrille  
(École pratique des Hautes Études, CRCAO, Paris)



Pascale Dollfus. 2012. *Les bergers du Fort Noir. Nomades du Ladakh (Himalaya occidentale)* Société d'ethnologie (collection "Haute Asie"). 343pp. bibliography, glossary, and transliteration of names. ISBN 978-2-901161-99-8 (paper 18.46£).

This is a detailed ethnography by Pascale Dollfus of the Kharnakpa (Mkhar nag pa), a small community of Ladakhi nomads living at more than 4,200 meters in the Indian state of Jammu-Kashmir. The total population was only 150 in 2004, down from 375 in 1992, and 261 in 1996. The author started her fieldwork in the 1990s, and was thus able to observe the slow disappearance of the way of life of the shepherds of the Black Fort over the last twenty years.

The book features thirteen chapters. The first deals with the problem of the definition of the terms 'nomads' and 'nomadism' and the relations between nomads and sedentary people. The author provides accounts related to the nomads of Ladakh that were written by missionaries, adventurers, scientists, and civil servants. In the second chapter, Dollfus questions the origins of the Ladakhi people, and more specifically of the Kharnakpa population, making use of written chronicles and oral traditions. In the third chapter, the community's religious life is introduced. All members belong to the Drugpa Kagyü ('Brug pa bka' brgyud) sect of Tibetan Buddhism and consider Dat Monastery their ideal religious center, where all gather for the spring *gyetsa* (*dge rtsa*) festival, which is described in detail.

The fourth chapter deals with the social organization of these nomadic pastoralists who, in spite of the 1941 law prohibiting polyandry, still practice this type of marriage in order "to have a joint

task force allowing a division of labor or even some specialization" (83). The fifth chapter describes the political organization centered on the figure of the '*go ba* 'chief' whose election, at present, takes place every year by drawing lots. The sixth chapter returns to the question of the opposition between high altitude nomads and sedentary valley people and looks at the images of Ladakhi nomads produced by travelers since the seventeenth century. Chapters seven and eight deal with the identity of the Kharnakpa as herders and give a description of their animals – yaks, goats, sheep, horses, and dogs – and activities related to animal husbandry.

In the ninth chapter, the author discusses local nomads' perception of their territory, as a combination of routes connecting sites:

a territory with blurred contours which may at any time be removed, rebuilt, enlarged or decreased depending on water resources or forrage, increase or decrease of livestock, political crises or divine injunctions (162).

Chapter Ten is concerned with black and white tents, and the replacement, little by little, of the traditional black yak-hair tent by ready-made white cotton tents. The author also points out that permanent houses are increasingly numerous as winter habitations. The Karnakpa move six times a year in response to pasture conditions, the availability of water, and religious events. The cycle of nomadisation is the focus of Chapter Eleven. The final two chapters are again dedicated to the territory, but this time in relation to the various activities of the Kharnakpa.

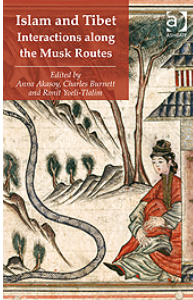
The author's keen observation is evident throughout the book. Attention to detail transports the reader into the nomads' world. Many of the specific examples Dollfus supplies are based on personal encounters during her years of field research. A remarkable characteristic of the book is the use of an extensive specialized vocabulary, as Dollfus makes use of the rich literature from various fields, including geography, botany, and zoology. This ethnography of an endangered pastoral population will attract not only readers from

academic circles, but also travelers and admirers of these populations that live at such high altitudes.



## REVIEW: *ISLAM AND TIBET*

Reviewed by Faisal Chaudhry  
(University of Pennsylvania)



Anna Akasoy, Charles Burnett, and Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim (eds). 2011. *Islam and Tibet: Interactions Along the Musk Routes*. Surrey: Burlington, VT: Ashgate. xiv+391pp, color photographs, index. ISBN 9780754669562 (hardcover 70£).

This important volume brings together eighteen chapters that originated as contributions to a 2006 conference at the Warburg Institute in London. Despite the highly divergent topics and the often tentative and argumentatively fragmentary nature of the individual contributions, the collection makes for a vital contribution to a much-neglected topic. The short introduction by Ronit Yoeli-Tlalim helpfully reminds the reader that 'Tibet' is adopted as a broad designation for the various regions that "participated in Tibetan culture," including both the Tibetan Plateau and such areas as Ladakh and Baltistan (1). Yoeli-Tlalim also makes note of various terms by which the lands of Islam and their peoples were referred to in Tibet (including *stag gzig*, *par sig*, and *phrom*, as well as several other cogent points that are framed, overall, in terms of "cultural interactions" between "Islam and Tibet").

Anna Akasoy contributes Chapter Two, which focuses on the representation of Tibetan lands and peoples in the learned tradition of Islamic geography (both 'human' and 'mathematical') and cartography through examining Persian and Arabic sources.

Chapter Three, a contribution by Kevin van Bladel, is one of the most engaging in the volume. It focuses on the famed Barmakid

family, long known by historians to have been important within the Abbasid administration – as well as for many of the early Arabic translations of Sanskrit works – but less so for its "Bactrian background." The chapter, thus, paints a very different picture of the family's cultural ancestry, using as its point of departure the under-considered awareness of the Barmak patriarch's identity as an educated Buddhist official from Tokharistan (Bactria).

An overview of interactions and connections between Iran and Tibet is presented in Chapter Four by Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, who discusses evidence of proto-historical artifacts dating from the first millennium BCE, instruments used for of Iranian wine banquets in Tibet dating from the seventh to eighth centuries CE, and the appearance of Iranian regalia in the early art of Tibet.

Chapter Five by Dan Martin exemplifies the often fragmentary nature of the conclusions and presentation styles of the volume's contributions. It describes important manuscripts of Tibetan medical texts that the author has accessed from Giuseppe Tucci's Tibetan library, in particular a work by the Regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho that "represents one of the first two medical history texts of the *khog-dbubs* genre" (119).

Anya King's contribution, Chapter Six, is a highly evocative account of the crucial importance of trade in Tibetan musk for Medieval Arab perfumery. King's discussion proves one of the most cohesive and straightforward in the volume, starting with relevant background on the musk deer, proceeding to the importance of musk as a medicinal and cosmetic substance, and then using the relevant Arabic sources both as textual evidence for determining when it was first known that musk originated in Tibet (in the eighth century) and for discerning that Near Eastern perfumery was unlikely to have been influenced by Indian or other traditions because Arabic perfume formulas focused strictly and continuously on Tibetan musk.

While one of the shortest, Chapter Seven, by Christopher I. Beckwith, is also one of the volume's most striking contributions in its argument that the origins of the scholastic method in both



Christianity and medieval Islam are to be found in the Sarvāstivādin Buddhist tradition. After providing relevant background on historian George Makdisi's famed demonstration that "the Latin scholastic method was borrowed from the Islamic world," (164) along with the institutions of the college (i.e., the Islamic *madrāsas*), Beckwith lays out the very particular structure of texts following the scholastic method. Ultimately, he argues that having originated in the Sarvāstivādin school of Buddhism that flourished in Central Asia and Northwestern India and that survived the Arab conquests intact – including with its famed *vihāra* institutions of higher learning – the scholastic method and the college were absorbed by the Islamic tradition.

Peter Zieme's contribution, Chapter Eight, considers the role of the Uyghur as "important mediators of cultural influence into Mongol society" (177). In particular, Zieme focuses on Uyghur attitudes about, and representations of, non-Buddhist religions, including Nestorian Christianity and Islam. He argues that Islamic influence on Uyghur cultures was negligible up to Genghis Khan's time and increased only during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

In Chapter Nine, Paul Buell looks at Tibetans in Mongol China, arguing that during the Yuan era they "influenced food and apparently medicine." He also shows that Tibetans "intermediated between India and the Mongols" and generally functioned in facilitating "truly international exchanges" (207).

Chapter Ten, by Arezou Azad, is a report on three rock-cut sites in the regions of Marāgha and Sulṭāniyya located northwest of the Plateau in contemporary Azerbaijan Province of northwest Iran. Azad examines references made to the sites in Persian chronicles, outlines the methodological approach of his field research in the area, and assesses the functions and dating of the sites.

In Chapter Eleven, Georgios Halkias discusses the Muslim *khatuns* 'queens' in the Himalayan states of Ladakh and Baltistan. Observing that the practice of exchanging princesses for the purposes of marriage alliances was a prevalent feature of diplomacy in Tibet

going back to ancient times, Halkias concentrates on Himalayan folk literature and the songs of the *khatuns*.

Marc Gaborieau's contribution, Chapter Twelve, deals with Portuguese missionaries as the earliest source of western contact with the Muslims of Tibet during the early seventeenth-century. Gaborieau uses Portuguese accounts to provide "a cross-check" (253) on our belief that Kashmir Muslims constituted the oldest Muslim community in Central Tibet, tracing their arrival to the period of the fifth Dalai Lama from 1640-1680.

Alexandre Papas' Chapter Thirteen takes up Sufi hagiographies and sacred space in Himalayan Islam, and is another compelling contribution in the collection. Papas frames the chapter in terms of Mircea Eliade's observations that the concept of "a sacred space is intimately linked to the creation of profane narratives" (262). He next turns to Eastern Turkestan (contemporary Xinjiang) to discuss narratives about the discovery of Sufi tombs and other hagiographical and legendary tales that served to define sacred space and, ultimately, link Samarkand to Lhasa and the wider Himalayan region in the Muslim imagination.

In Chapter Fourteen, Thierry Zarcone continues in a related vein, looking at legendary accounts around the supposed conversion of the fifth Dalai Lama (d. 1682) and the Mongol Jungghar Khan Ghaldan (d. 1697) to Islam. Zarcone argues that "the legends of the defeat and/or conversion of" both figures "constitute[d] a fictional, imaginary background" (290) to real historical events involving Muslim-Buddhist alliances.<sup>1</sup>

In Chapter Fifteen, Johan Elverskog explores the account of a nineteenth-century Mongol nobleman and fiction writer, Injannashi, writing amid Buddhist-Muslim civil war in Qing Inner Asia. "[I]nstead of following the conventional Buddhist anti-Muslim polemic" Injannashi's account is shown to have "used a form of ritual

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<sup>1</sup> The first involved Muslims joining the Qalmaq to end quarrels in their own kingdom in 1680 and the second a Qalmaq-Muslim alliance from 1690-1697 to fight other Mongols and resist the Chinese empire.

theory to argue that Muslims and their rituals were actually just like those of the Buddhists" (296).

John Bray's contribution, Chapter Sixteen, examines the activities of Khwaja Ahmed Ali (1770-1825), the Patna representative of a Kashmiri commercial house with agents in Dhaka, Kathmandu, Lhasa, and Xining, as well as Kashmir. Based on British colonial records, Bray reconstructs the twists and turns of Ahmed Ali's role in offering his services to the British as a source of wartime intelligence – asking, overall, whether he was a trader, middleman, or spy.

In Chapter Seventeen, Diana Altner provides a valuable account of the historical underpinning of the ethno-national designation 'Hui' – the single official ethnic group into which the People's Republic of China classifies all Muslims in Tibet.

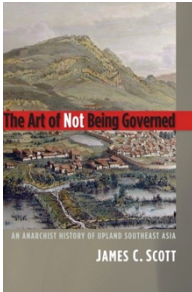
In Chapter Eighteen, Jan Magnusson discusses strategies for "mobilizing tradition" in the contemporary Baltistan movement. Specifically, Magnusson considers how the movement's focus on a "Greater Ladakh" has arisen as a response to the geopolitics of the Pakistani and Indian nation states through the battle over a Tibetan script for the Western Tibetan language of Baltistan, Kargil, and Ladakh. In order to do so, he examines the production and circulation of 'pop' Balti *ghazals*, which has been facilitated by a "small-scale cassette production industry" that continues to exist today (370).

A weakness in this collection is the lack of organization in terms of themes, sharply defined topics, or historically-specific blocks of time. While there is a logical progression to some of the chapters, this is all too rarely the case. Chapters Thirteen to Fifteen, for example, deal with questions of religious interactions, albeit only through conversion and ritual theory. This creates a related problem for the overall continuity of the reading experience – the collection often resembles a disparate series of interesting entries, rather than a means for sketching the main contours of its titular concern with the historical relationship between "Islam and Tibet." This difficulty aside, the collection is an extremely valuable addition to our knowledge.



## REVIEW: *THE ART OF NOT BEING GOVERNED*

Reviewed by Andrew Grant (UCLA)



James C Scott. 2009. *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press. xviii+442pp, 2 b/w illustrations, 7 maps, notes, glossary, index. ISBN 9780300152289 (hardcover 35USD), 978-0-300-16917-1 (paper 25USD).

In *The Art of not Being Governed*, James C. Scott frequently asks us to imagine that we are a Southeast Asian variant of Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619-1683), who was charged by King Louis XIV to oversee and design the prosperity of the French Kingdom. We are asked to imagine designing the ideal state, with ideal means of managing the population, transporting goods, and accessing crops. What comes to mind is a flat, unbroken plain, crisscrossed with roads and waterways transporting cargo from monocropped fields to the centers of state control. The toiling population is easily located in farmhouses, where they may be recruited for corvée labor or conscripted for military campaigns. Conversely, we are also asked to imagine designing the reverse: spaces that perfectly evade state control. Now we imagine steep, densely forested mountains divided by ravines or swamps, muddy roads inundated with rain, and a population always on the move, taking their agricultural techniques with them, their ethnonyms, religion, and social organization forever confounding those that attempt to record them.

These two opposing visions – the ideal state, and the ideal anti-state – form the basis of the dialectic relationship between lowland state societies and highland hill tribe societies in Southeast Asia. Scott argues that these types of political organizations, including their genesis and interactions with one another, are

generalizable. Throughout the world, wherever states have put people under the duress of forced labor or slavery, heavy taxation, or other forms of exploitation, people have absconded into the hills, swamps, and arid steppes that lay just out of the effective reach of the state. The book provides satisfying and wide-ranging examples to support its thesis and serves both as an inspiration and a toolkit for historians and social scientists interested in populations not fully enrolled in state systems.

Scott frames his study as an exploration of the world region Zomia. Willem van Schendel (2002) proposes Zomia as a heuristic tool for the imagining of regions that are not adequately grasped by the prevailing common sense classifications enshrined in world geography textbooks and university area studies institutes. Thus Zomia has served as a catalyst for many scholars of border regions, quickly inspiring a special journal issue (Clarence-Smith and Michaud 2010), a review symposium (Krasner et al. 2011), and special sessions at the Association for Asian Studies annual conferences. Scott suggests that 'Zomia Studies' can embrace places all around the world where people take refuge from the state. The highlands of the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau have topological and ecologic conditions that have made historic occupations of the land difficult for would-be state conquerors. Also, many parts of the highlands where mountain ridges divide arable or grazable land exhibit a high degree of ethnic, linguistic, and religious differentiation; these are the 'shatter zones' that Scott describes. Scholars can ask: what specific conditions have allowed for the continuation of this heterogeneity? What factors technological, political, or otherwise, might lead to a flattening out of difference in the future?

The rest of this review will discuss some horizons this book opens for scholars of peripheral and highland spaces today, followed by a discussion of some shortcomings that detract from the text to a degree. A primary contention of the book is that the alleged progression in social and political organization from tribe to state is but the 'cosmological bluster' that state societies generate. States

generate symbolic structures and civilizational narratives that position their own practices above those of unincorporated 'barbarian' groups at the state margin. The desirability and eminence of the state way of life therefore appears self-evident. In fact, societies at the margins of states have actually cultivated a variety of non-state practices; these include segmentary politics, swidden farming, and flexible oral accounts of group history and identity that resist demands for textual finality and legibility. Rather than viewing these features as primitive relics, Scott argues they are 'secondary adaptations' enabling anti-state societies to remain beyond the reach of valley-based rulers. While few of these insights can be considered *sui generis*,<sup>1</sup> as Scott readily admits in the Preface, his synthesis of these elements is highly readable and energizing. Furthermore, his engagement with the physical constraints of geography, and the possibilities of livelihood, politics, and social organization with which they are associated, is a welcome elixir to the contemporary academic avoidance the nexus of ecology and culture, which stems in part from the fear of invoking the specter of environmental determinism.

Scott frequently repeats that his study is primarily historical, because many of the constraints (for states) and advantages (for anti-state peoples) of geography have been rendered null by technological innovations and the subsequent closing of spatial frontiers. However, Scott also provokes discussions of the near present, using examples from Myanmar. In many parts of the world, this study is more than a historical exercise. Indeed, the last several decades have witnessed Southeast Asian states' efforts to integrate their hill peoples through infrastructure development, enculturation, and even violent conflict. Scott outlines a compelling framework for analyzing the variety of economic, social, and cultural factors that scholars may attend to when studying the various ways that peripheral groups are brought into a state's orbit. For instance, these insights can be applied to the

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, the idea of pastoralism as, in part, a response to agricultural problems such as state harassment and difficult terrain has been considered in general by Owen Lattimore (1940) and specifically in the context of the Tibetan highlands by Robert Ekvall (1977).

situation in contemporary China, where the state still attempts to close the periphery with new highways, railroads, and programs to settle pastoral people (Goodman, 2002; Yeh, 2005). As geographical distances close, censuses are taken, standardized languages are taught, and cash cropping replaces more flexible polycropping strategies.

The discussion of anti-state groups' ability to re-organize seemingly foundational aspects of their societies is insightful. Liable to move their homes, present genealogies for any political ends, and break away from leaders that have abused their power, members of anti-state societies cannot be easily categorized. Scott provides amusing examples of colonial bureaucrats befuddled by the impossibility of pinpointing the chief they so desire. Taken together with the discourse of 'cosmological bluster,' Scott provides an avenue for the ongoing historiography and ethnography of frontier groups. Historic records of such ethnic groups often obscure as much as they reveal. The political power behind tributary titles and their associated territories are often illusions. This view provides a strong rebuttal to scholars who search for ethnic origins and historic territories (Perdue, 2005; Tuttle, 2011).

This book's strengths outweigh the weaknesses, which at times can be frustrating. Three weaknesses of the book are: 1) an overemphasis on the state and its negative aspects, 2) the problems of agency and determination, and 3) the limits of the state/anti-state framework. Whereas the attributes and strategies of tribes are described in deeply textured ways, states are presented in a uniformly negative light as hubristic, homogenizing, and stratifying. The Chinese Empire and Shan padi states are reductively presented as part of the same cruel, disease-ridden category. The states presented here have a close affinity with the Western modernist states described in Scott's 1998 book 'Seeing Like a State.' Scott is at pains to acknowledge any positive aspects of states, such as education and infrastructure, which can also generate legitimacy and prestige for states. It is difficult to fathom how states could have ever developed if they are so uniformly bad.



This leads to the problem of agency. Interview excerpts in the book provide proof of hill tribe members' 'choice' to flee from oppressive states. Scott's hill people seem always aware of state threats, always strategizing against them. This fits in well with the political project of the book, teaching and celebrating the methods of apparently self-conscious anarchists. And yet, it is likely that many of these adaptations have been ingrained into these groups and, as in state societies, members are not fully aware of their choices. Indeed, when choices are made out of necessity, to what degree can we celebrate them as 'choices?' Marx's famous axiom is instructive here:

Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past (Marx et al., 1972:595).

The problem of agency would be less onerous if the determining factors of the attributes of Zomian societies were made clearer. Victor Lieberman (2010:343) has criticized Scott for failing to properly account for the determination of such properties, such as swidden farming practices and orality. Beyond Scott's argument that these adaptations are primarily state-evading choices, Lieberman suggests that a variety of ecological, technical, and political factors could equally account for the circumstances of highland societies. The onus is on Zomian authors to show what determines what.

The third weakness to be discussed here is the state/ anti-state framework, which would benefit from more nuance. Scholars should not allow the totalizing *efforts* of the state to blind them to other processes that shape political and cultural formations. For instance, C. Patterson Giersch (2010) has challenged Scott's division by revealing the connections between state institutions and non-state merchant networks in Kham Tibetan regions during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Giersch reveals that state and non-state actors were neither mutually exclusive nor necessarily working against each other. Today the *de facto* effective sovereignty of states within their borders is being challenged by extra-state and non-state sources (Agnew 2009).

As a result it is crucial to recognize such powerful forces as neo-liberal corporations (Ferguson 2005), transnational NGOs (Ferguson and Gupta 2002), and international markets in contemporary Zomian societies. Indeed, taking these challenges to the Zomian state/ anti-state dichotomy into consideration, it becomes difficult to entertain whether such a firm division could have ever existed.

A final point of criticism that this book has received, if it is a bit extreme, comes from Tom Brass (2012). He warns that Scott's explication of the attributes of Zomian peoples risks re-essentializing their cultures as authentically anti-state. If such ideas were institutionalized, Brass foresees the creation of dual-track governance schemes that permanently bifurcate state and Zomian societies in the name of allowing the latter to follow their more 'natural' trajectories. While it is doubtful that Scott's book will have this effect, this criticism does encourage reflection on what the political aspirations of Zomian peoples today ought to be.

Weaknesses aside, this book provides a compelling and exciting de-centering of conventional narratives about the people at the margins of state societies. Scott offers an excellent synthesis of historical and social science research that will be engaging and useful for scholars in many fields. While the study is focused on Southeast Asia, his model is generalizable enough to travel to difficult topographies around the world.

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## REVIEW: *RECENT RESEARCH ON LADAKH 2009*

Reviewed by Binod Singh (Peking University)



Monisha Ahmed and John Bray (eds). 2009. *Recent Research on Ladakh 2009: Papers from the 12<sup>th</sup> Colloquium of the International Association for Ladakh Studies, Kargil*. Leh: International Association for Ladakh Studies. 183pp, illustrations. (paper 450INR).

Although strategic interests between India, China, and Pakistan bring the region of Leh-Ladakh into the news, this area has otherwise been largely neglected by mainstream scholarship. The limited knowledge we have gathered is mostly from colonial government records and European travelers. The gazettes of local kings are also very helpful, but provide an incomplete record of the region. There is, however, a growing interest in this region among scholars of Himalayan culture and its indigenous residents, who meet at regular intervals to discuss cultural transitions taking place in this area. The book under review is a late but important contribution to a new literature on Ladakh's culture – a collection of papers from the 12<sup>th</sup> colloquium of the International Association for Ladakh Studies (IALS) held in Kargil from the twelfth to the fifteenth of July 2005.

This latest volume on Ladakh, entitled *Recent Research on Ladakh 2009* is edited by Monisha Ahmed and John Bray, and offers contributions by Ladakhi and other scholars. The papers in this volume focus on Ladakhi history, art, culture, architecture, language, customs, and mythology from early Balti settlement to travelers' tales. The twenty essays discuss diverse topics from the restoration of heritage sites to the state of language and environment in this region. The papers focus as much on the past as the present, while also reflecting concerns for Ladakh's future. They also focus on Kargil District, which entered the limelight only after a brief war there

between India and Pakistan in 1999, and the neighboring region of Baltistan, once administered together with Ladakh, but now part of Pakistan.

Abdul Ghani Sheikh, a veteran writer of Ladakh, examines historical travelers and government officials who passed through the region during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He focuses on their candid remarks on the places they visited and their comments on the idiosyncrasies they witnessed in the life of people in Kargil and surrounding areas.

Nawang Tsering Shakspo discusses the nostalgia people in Balistan have towards the Tibetan script (*yi ge*) and their efforts to revive it.

Syed Bahadur Ali Salik and Nasir Hussain Munshi explore Balti folksongs, music, and dance, and voice concerns for the future of regional performing arts.

Ghulam Hassan Hasni looks at common proverbs found in both Balistan and Ladakh and discusses their similarities and common origin.

Bettina Zeisler analyses the evolution of Ladakhi and Balti languages.

The assembled texts in this volume are an eclectic mix of issues involving Ladakh's history and cultural transformation. Over the last twenty years, the influence of globalization has been such that the Ladakhi people and their culture have changed greatly, and the people now face the common dilemma of choosing between tradition and modernity. The culture gap between younger and older generations is discussed extensively in this volume (e.g., Monisha Ahmad's contribution, "Why Are the Rupshupa Leaving the Changthang?"<sup>1</sup>).

Radhika Gupta provides a vivid description of Asad Ashura, an indigenous festival in Kargil District marking the martyrdom of Imam Hussein.

In "Military Masculinities", Mona Bhan looks at the changing social attitudes of the Brogpa community after the Kargil war, which

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<sup>1</sup> Changthang is a small region in lower Ladakh.

center on the recruitment of army personnel in the war's aftermath and the shift in Brogpa male identity from shepherd to soldier.

Other contributions in this volume include Asfandiyar Khan's study of Kesar (Ge sar) epic origins by examining references to the story in Mongolia, Tibet, Central Asia, and Ladakh. His comparison of characters in the Kesar epic with those mentioned in the myths of the *Avesta*, the sacred book of the Mazdaiyan, or Zoroastrianism faith of Persia, reveals parallels between the cult of Kesar and Zoroastrianism.

Sheikh Mohammad Jawad Zubdavi discusses the history of Balti settlement in the Indus Valley that neighbors Leh.

Jigar Mohammad's chapter looks at Ladakh relations with the Mughals during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Bray, current president of IALS, sheds new light on the practices of Begar, a form of corvée labor, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with a comparative study of labor exploitation by local governments in state economic activities.

Reference to material culture is sparse in this volume, with the exception of Lo Bue's essay on the sixteenth century school of Buddhist painting in Ladakh. Partly because of Ladakh's location between Kashmir and Tibet, scholars have always surmised that it never developed an indigenous painting style. However, Lo Bue explores a local tradition of painting that emerged in Ladakh after the introduction of Islam in Kashmir in the fourteenth century and before the Tibetan art forms gained predominance in Ladakh.

In addition to Ghani Sheikh's essay on historical travelers, Prince Peter is singled out by two European scholars, Pedersen and Howard, who discuss his journey from Manali to Serchu. The authors describe in detail the background and circumstances of Prince Peter's famous study of polyandry in Ladakh. At the same time they also criticize his lack of attention to historical sites, such as the Thakur of Tinnan's fort palace.

Fortunately for Leh, this palace (Lachen Spal-khar), is being restored, a process detailed by Sunder Paul and Tashi Ldawa. They outline the work that the Archaeological Survey of India has carried out in restoring the palace building and the methods they have used.

The last four chapters have a shared concern with the state of the environment in Changthang and the plight of its residents, the Changpa. Monisha Ahmed looks at the migration of the Changpa from Rupshu to Leh and its surrounding areas.

Tashi Morup, Richard Lee, and Blaise Humbert-Droz all consider environmental degradation taking place there – an alarm bell for the region. These essays on Ladakh's environmental degradation must be taken seriously by policy makers in the backdrop of recent natural disaster in the Kedarnath and Badrinath regions of Uttarakhand. The threat to Ladakh's biodiversity is clearly pointed out by Humbert-Droz, who also provides suggestions regarding how to preserve it.

Lee points out that the region is witnessing ecological imbalance due to increased human activities and calls on neighboring countries in the region, including India and China, to halt further damage to this region by controlling any further military construction.

This volume sheds light on various aspects of Ladakhi culture and its historical transformation in the era of globalization. Given the wide range of authors and subjects in this volume, it is difficult for readers to find a common message. Furthermore, the volume would have been more informative had the authors included more references in their individual papers.

Nevertheless, the book has established guidelines on the basis of which a comprehensive study of a diverse Ladakhi culture might proceed. This volume provides brief introductions to specific aspects of Ladakhi culture, including language, which will be very useful for those who are new to this field and want to explore it further. Such studies are important, for example, because of the limited knowledge we have of the region's role as an important juncture on the Silk Road, which will hopefully be a focus of future research. However, due to the physical and political obstructions to working in the region, opportunities for more in-depth research are limited. We can only wait until the region is demilitarized, restored to peace, and a new peaceful political environment emerges, to produce much more comprehensive work on Ladakh.

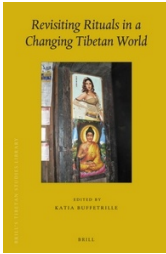


The International Association for Ladakh Studies (IALS) has done a commendable job by organizing conferences and supporting scholars, as evidenced by this volume. It is a valuable contribution to the growing field of Himalayan Studies and deserves a place in the library of students of Ladakh.



REVIEW: *REVISITING RITUALS  
IN A CHANGING TIBETAN WORLD*

Reviewed by Christina Kilby (University of Virginia)



Katia Buffetrille (ed). 2012. *Revisiting Rituals in a Changing Tibetan World*. Leiden: Brill. Volume 31 in *Brill's Tibetan Studies Library*. viii+386pp, b/w photographs, notes on contributors, index. ISBN 9789004232174 (hardback 182USD), 9789004235007 (e-book 182USD).

Featuring Buddhist ritual life in its diverse manifestations across the Tibetan Plateau, this volume engages the task of defining 'ritual' by analyzing moments of ritual change. Whether political regime change, technological innovation, or social upheaval, external catalysts of religious transformation have been prominently visible in the Tibetan cultural world since the mid-twentieth century. This volume takes up the sociopolitical shifts of the recent period as a call to investigate how rituals change under fire, thereby furthering our understanding of the relationship between ritual structures and the historical contexts in which they find expression. Ritual's intertwinement with political events, symbols, and attitudes is the resounding theme presented herein, as each chapter makes efforts to disambiguate the complex causes and contours of ritual change in a particular case study. Several chapters seek to distinguish deep structural transformation in ritual from the harnessing of ritual elements for single instances of political or social action. Others debate the ambiguous role of spaces, practices, or ideas that are employed in ritual but also in political or economic contexts. Finally, each chapter challenges in some way the polarization of ritual conservatism and the 'invention of tradition' (Ranger and Hobsbawm 1983).

*Revisiting Rituals* is an edited collection of conference papers presented at La Transformation des Rituels dans L'aire Tibétaine à

L'époque Contemporaine 'The Transformation of Rituals in the Tibetan Area in the Contemporary Period' held at the College de France on 8-9 November 2007. Like other conference volumes, this publication both benefits from the diversity of its contributors' approaches and is limited somewhat by a lack of consistency in presentation. In effect, this volume raises more questions than it answers. Nevertheless, each of its ten essays serves as an informed call for future research and offers an enriched vocabulary with which to proceed. Readers of *Tibetan Ritual* (Cabezón), which remains the best anthology of scholarship on Tibetan Buddhist ritual, will appreciate *Revisiting Rituals* for its broader geo-linguistic array and its careful historicization of ritual. This volume will prove a valuable ethnographic resource for scholars of anthropology, religion, and modern political and social history in Nepal, India, Bhutan, Mongolia, and China.

Hildegard Diemberger's "Holy Books as Ritual Objects and Vessels of the Teachings in the Era of the 'Further Spread of the Doctrine (*bstan pa yang dar*)'" details the 'double blessing' or dual agency attributed to Tibetan Buddhist scriptures: materially, their presence imparts blessing, while functionally, their content imparts teachings. Much of Diemberger's article is comprised of an historical overview of how Tibetan scriptures have been understood as agents or persons within the Tibetan cultural world. As material conditions have changed to enable the publication of scriptures online, on compact disk, and in western-style bound volumes, the question of texts' dual agency in the modern era comes to the fore in the latter section of Diemberger's article. Do compact disks have the power to bless in the same way traditional *dpe cha* format Tibetan scriptures do? Does a single painstakingly hand-crafted manuscript generate more or less blessing than 1,000 printed copies of a scripture? A question raised, but not answered in this chapter, is that of how the rise of woodblock-printing technology affected the sacred agency of scriptures.

Fabienne Jagou's "The Use of the Ritual Drawing of Lots for the Selection of the 11<sup>th</sup> Panchen Lama" outlines the history of the

golden urn lottery first established by Qing emperor Qianlong in 1792. She develops a narrative of the assimilation of the Manchu political aspects of the ritual with Tibetan religious precedents for recognizing reincarnate lamas, an assimilation that succeeded for a time but culminated in total dysfunction during the search for the eleventh Panchen Lama in the 1990s. Jagou analyzes the golden urn ritual's changing implementation over time within the context of a Chinese-Tibetan patron-priest (*yon mchod*) relationship; she then closes with a consideration of whether the ritual can retain any legitimacy for Tibetans in the contemporary political context, concluding that the ritual and its patron-priest basis alike are now effectively broken.

Thierry Dodin's "Transformed Rituals? Some Reflections on the Paradigm of the Transformation of Rituals in the Tibetan Context" contributes the most pointedly theoretical chapter in the volume. By drawing on three historical moments – the Lhasa riots in 1987, the incineration of fur pelts in 2006, and the mass long-life prayers for the Dalai Lama in 2007 – Dodin calls for a careful distinction between a ritual's 'transformation' and its application toward socio-political goals. Each of his three case studies involves a blurring of the boundaries between religious and political activity; his disambiguation of those boundaries makes a strong argument for scholars to employ more specific and thoughtful vocabulary when describing ritual change.

Fernanda Pirie's "Legal Dramas on the Amdo Grasslands: Abolition, Transformation, or Survival?" reveals the ritual roles of diverse mediators in nomad territorial conflict in eastern Tibet. She compares a contemporary instantiation of nomad conflict resolution in southern Amdo with the accounts of a similar event documented by Robert Ekvall in the 1930s and 1940s. Pirie calls attention to the new presence of Chinese Communist Party officials in the ceremonial signing of agreements and exchange of compensation that marks resolution between warring nomadic groups. Essentially, Pirie sees in contemporary Amdo's legal dramas the eclipse of the anti-order Tibetan ritual process of conflict resolution by a pro-order state-invented ceremony. Her chapter follows Dodin's well as it offers

further theoretical questions about a ritual's structural essence, transformation, and total reinvention.

Nicola Schneider's "The Ordination of *Dge slong ma*: A Challenge to Ritual Prescriptions?" provides a succinct summary of a complex, ongoing, and widespread debate among Tibetan Buddhists: the full ordination of nuns. As she considers the arguments proffered by various voices within the Tibetan Buddhist institutional community – from the more modernist Dalai Lama to monastic conservatives, and from feminist Western nuns to their less liberal Tibetan sisters – Schneider acknowledges the cultural and political factors at play, but pinpoints the crux of the conflict in the debate over faithful administration of the *vinaya* monastic code. Her study raises questions about whether canonical prescriptions for ritual life can be reinterpreted, supplemented, or revised in the effort to restore lost ritual traditions that are themselves also canonically orthodox. As this debate remains heretofore unresolved, we wait to see how Tibetan Buddhist leaders will creatively address this ritual conundrum.

Mireille Helffer's "Preservation and Transformations of Liturgical Traditions in Exile: the Case of Zhe Chen Monastery in Bodnath (Nepal)" describes the establishment of a new Zhe chen Monastery in exile through the lenses of its physical structures, liturgical schedule, translation and publication activities, and humanitarian projects. Monastic manuals from Smin grol gling and from the Zhe chen mother monastery in Khams ensure the continuity of tradition at the new Zhe chen, even as the monastery's outreach has extended to a global audience with the international touring performances of its '*cham* 'monastic dances'. Helffer considers the effect of the growing separation between the dances' ritual function and their aesthetic or promotional value when presented in foreign, non-monastic contexts. Despite this questionable move, Helffer argues, the new Zhe chen in Bodnath has effectively become the mother monastery and now defines the ritual life and character of the Zhe chen institution through its growing mandala of publications and patrons.

Katia Buffetrille's "Low Tricks and High Stakes Surrounding a Holy Place in Eastern Nepal: The Halesi-Maratika Caves" presents a thorough analysis of religious and political conflict over a holy site. Beginning with a well-researched history of land ownership in the area since the late eighteenth century, as well as the transmission of the hereditary office of *mahant* 'site guardian', Buffetrille narrates the role of contemporary Tibetan lamas in creating a new Tibetan Buddhist pilgrimage destination of the Halesi-Maratika Caves. Buffetrille's chapter is one of the most robust in terms of the richness of ethnographic detail and the depth of archival research. In the future, we hope to see further discussion of one of the many facets of ritual change Buffetrille provocatively raises in her conclusion: the overlay of Buddhist mythology and practice onto Hindu religious sites, the establishment of a new monastic institution in exile, the changing ethnic composition of lay devotees and pilgrims supporting a site, or the effects of the construction of new religious monuments on a site's meaning.

Alexander von Rospatt's "Past Continuity and Recent Changes in the Ritual Practice of Newar Buddhism: Reflections on the Impact of Tibetan Buddhism and the Advent of Modernity" presents an overview of the contemporary status of Newar Buddhist ritual life in the Kathmandu Valley. His discussion includes a consideration of the growing presence of Tibetan Buddhism in the valley, particularly in Tibetan lamas' sponsorship of the periodic renovation and re-consecration of the Svayambhu stupa. Von Rospatt also notes the effects of Theravada Buddhist modernism, rapid urbanization, and the state appropriation of Newar land-holdings that traditionally supported the economic life of their religious sites. These threatening forces have sparked a general spirit of revivalism among Newari Buddhists, a spirit that von Rospatt sees manifested in several ethnopolitically motivated reform efforts. Among the aspects of ritual change he documents are the expansion of ritual access to a broader spectrum of caste groups, the inclusion of girls alongside boys in public ritual performance, the proliferation of ritual training programs and standardized manuals, increased translations of

scriptures from Sanskrit into Newari, and the addition of Buddhist elements to the Newari rite of passage ceremony for boys.

Marie-Dominique Even's "Ritual Efficacy or Spiritual Quest? Buddhism and Modernity in Post-Communist Mongolia" provides a cohesive historical narrative of the suppression and revival of Buddhism in Mongolia during the twentieth century. Rich in detail, yet fully accessible to non-Mongolists, her chapter emphasizes the contemporary climate of competition in Mongolia, as Buddhist institutions vie with foreign Christian missionaries for the hearts of young Mongolians. Central issues she targets include how Mongolians' desire for ethno-political identity formation following the fall of the Soviet Union affects the resurgence of Buddhism in the nation today and, in a related vein, the debate over whether Buddhist liturgy should be conducted in the Mongolian language rather than in Tibetan. Finally, Even provides an ethnographic overview of the ways in which Buddhist modernism and the demand for ritual services (often deemed 'superstitious') collide in present-day Ulaanbaatar.

Robert Barnett's "Notes on Contemporary Ransom Rituals in Lhasa" is the lengthiest contribution to this volume and condenses many years of research on *glud gtor* 'effigy offerings' in the quickly changing urban landscape of Lhasa. Like the other articles in this volume, Barnett's begins with a generous introduction to the historical context and relevant scholarship on the topic at hand. He then describes recent changes in ransom ritual practice in Lhasa's cityscape: the effigies have grown increasingly colorful and elaborately constructed; ransom ritual practice has moved from the home (where it was conducted in secret during the Maoist years) to prominently public spaces; and automobiles, especially those driven by Chinese drivers, now play a primary role in destroying the effigies and thus preventing the return of harmful forces to the homes of those who execute the ritual. Barnett contrasts the official restriction and subsequent denial of ransom ritual practice in Lhasa with a much more open environment for such ritual expression in Amdo. He also considers the conflict between secular rationalism and ritual traditions in Tibetan public spaces across the Plateau. Twenty



photosets with lengthy descriptions add depth and detail to Barnett's presentation.

One of this book's major insights is that while the modern period has been marked by particularly abrupt sociopolitical shifts, the same factors of technological innovation, resource access, political change, and human migration have influenced the life of religious traditions in all eras of history. By illuminating modern moments of ritual change, or perceived ritual change, these scholars offer us a vocabulary with which to discern transformations in ritual structure or function in other eras and contexts. Thus, scholars researching the distant past as well as those who focus on the modern period will benefit from the methodological contributions this volume makes and the questions for future inquiry toward which it beckons.

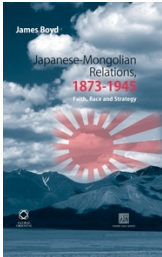
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## REVIEW: *JAPANESE-MONGOLIAN RELATIONS*

Reviewed by Anja Reid (Murdoch University)



James Boyd. 2011. *Japanese-Mongolian Relations, 1873-1945: Faith, Race and Strategy*. Kent: Global Oriental. xv+264pp, conventions, abbreviations, timeline, maps and illustrations, notes on the text, appendices, bibliography, index. ISBN 9781906876197 (hardcover 100USD/77€).

Japanese individuals were among the many foreigners with interests in Mongolia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. With the Soviet Union to the north and the Republic of China to the south, Japanese political, military, scholarly, business, and Buddhist elites were among those attentive to the region's strategic position. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, scholars of Japan, as well as Japanese scholars, have widely contributed to dispelling myths of Mongolia's isolation, as well as to unraveling the complex geopolitical relationships between Manchuria, Russia, Mongolia, China, and Japan.

Focusing on the period 1873 to 1945, and dealing with a range of topics beyond strategic political and military concerns, Boyd's seminal work explores the implications of Japanese understandings of the cultural relationships between Japan and Inner Mongolia, the so-called buffer zone between 'Outer' Mongolia and the Republic of China. Limiting his focus to Japanese perspectives during that period has permitted a comprehensive evaluation of the intricate interdependencies of Japan's non-military and military activities. Original research from Japanese archives adds fascinating and important insights, while maps and illustrations add visual depth to a well-articulated narrative.

The introduction alerts readers to the fluidity of Japanese interpretations of what constituted 'Mongolia' across a variety of spheres of Japanese influence. The imprecisely defined label of 'Man-Mō' – Manchuria-Mongolia – ultimately linked Manchuria with 'Inner' rather than 'Outer' Mongolia in ambiguous ways that varied with time and between writers.

The first chapter, aptly titled 'Soldiers, Adventurers, and Educators,' covers the period 1873 to 1912. It emphasizes the romanticized images of three pioneering figures of the Japanese encounter with Mongolia – the soldier, the adventurer, and the educator – to demonstrate the intertwining Japanese imperialist, political, and cultural interests. The 'soldier,' prominent military figure Fukushima Yasumasa, with close ties to Mongolia, wrote forewords to two books on Mongolia published in Japan between 1909 and 1913. The 'adventurer,' Kawashima Naniwa, was a political activist involved in covert operations in China supporting Japanese attempts to bring about an 'independent' Mongolia. The 'educator' is the 'forgotten hero,' Kawahara Misako, the headmistress of the first girls' school in Inner Mongolia. The networks established between these individuals and organizations on the fringes of Japanese imperialist, political, and cultural interests remained active until 1945.

The vacillating Japanese ideas of 'faith' and 'race' in the title are explicated in chapters two to five, in Boyd's descriptions of the complexities of Japanese socio-cultural involvement in Inner Mongolia. He pays most attention to Japanese academic interpretations of the encounters of mainstream and fringe Buddhists with the Mongols. Focusing on the period 1933-1945, chapter five in particular emphasizes the general link that flows throughout the book regarding the positive Japanese outlook toward the Mongols and Japan's 'civilizing' cultural diplomacies. These were to be achieved through the semi-official humanitarian organization Zenrin kyōkai 'Good Neighbor Association'. Boyd's in-depth exposition makes clear that the Association's publication of books and journals on Mongolia and the Mongols, the establishment of its own school in Tokyo, a

training facility in Inner Mongolia, and schools for Muslims, were all part of a complex Japanese imperialist project in the region.

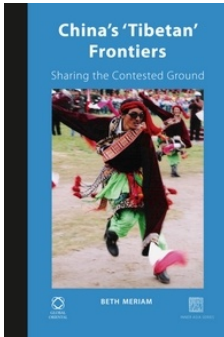
The project was underpinned by two important sub-texts of Japan's romanticized benevolence toward the Mongols and the Mongolian region. The tradition of *gekokujō*, 'overthrow of the senior by the junior', involved a process of "patriotic insubordination" (7) according to the conflicting necessities of force or persuasion to suit specific circumstances of the Japanese cause. To a lesser degree, the Japanese ideal of *gozoku kyōwa*, 'harmony of the five races', was utilized to distinguish between ethnic groups of Manchuria and Mongolia in order to achieve cooperation. Boyd is thus able to conclude that Mongolia was "unique among Japan's imperial relationships" (222).

The strength of Boyd's work is the detailed attention given to a wide range of Japanese figures involved in Inner Mongolian affairs, supporting his assertion that, "Mongolia was far more important to Japan than has been previously recognized" (222). Additionally, he introduces the value of the Mongolian horse to Japanese imperial strategies in a vast, largely inhabited region, although this does not directly appear in his index. The book is of obvious value to Mongolists interested in Japanese links, as well as specialists intrigued by affairs, both formal and informal, of the Asian mainland with Inner Asia.



## REVIEW: CHINA'S 'TIBETAN' FRONTIERS

Reviewed by Benno Ryan Weiner (Appalachian State University)



Beth Meriam. 2012. *China's 'Tibetan' Frontiers: Sharing the Contested Ground*. Leiden and Boston: Global Oriental. xxii+331pp, five maps (xvii-xx), preface, two appendices ("Chronology of China's Reform Era" and "Multilingual Glossary of Principal Political Terms"), references, index. Volume Six of the *Inner Asian Book Series*. ISBN 9781906876302 (hardcover 121USD), E-ISBN 9789004212695 (ebook 121USD).

In recent years, the study of China's minorities has become something of an ethnographic subgenre. Given the political sensitivities involved, however, it is unsurprising that relatively little of this fieldwork has been conducted among populations the Chinese state defines as 'Tibetan'. Beth Merriam's important new addition to the literature, *China's 'Tibetan' Frontiers*, begins to fill this gap. However, as the author is quick to point out, hers is not an ethnography of Tibet or Tibetans, nor the ethno-cultural region of Khams, or even Yushu Prefecture. It is, instead, an intensely local, "school-based study" (10) of Trinde (Khri 'du, Chenduo) Township, a remote, eponymously named county seat in the far south of Qinghai Province. Meriam spent fourteen months (2002-2003) as the first foreign teacher at Trinde County Nationalities Middle School. Her inquiry is focused on the region's cultural elite, "a small educated class of the local population" (10) primarily consisting of the school's directors and teachers, but also students, work unit functionaries, cadres, and NGO administrators. "Rather than analysing a specific 'ethnic group,' or political structure," Meriam writes, her study "proceeds from a critical vantage point of practices and concepts associated with a number of broadly-defined political themes and

social contexts" (292). The result is a compelling and sophisticated ethnography that not only problematizes the Chinese state's narratives of national(ity) unity, but also those disseminated within the exile Tibetan community. Moreover, Meriam explicitly challenges the English-language field of "Tibetan studies," in which "nationality rubrics are also commonly invoked as discrete, homogenous, and unambiguous objects of knowledge" (290). As suggested by the book's title, she summarizes, "A key argument of this ethnography is that context and practice are more appropriate bases for analysis than 'ethnicity,' 'identity' or 'Tibetans'" (147).

Meriam primarily focuses on questions of identity and belonging, "investigated through the lens of people's daily lives," to underline "how people's understandings are not fixed, and instead involve dynamic, contextual, temporal and, in some senses, creative and generative processes" (1). Leaning on previous ethnographies by Gladney, Litzinger, Kaup, Kipnis, and others, she rejects categories of analysis that posit binary distinctions such as majority/ minority, tradition/ modernity, resistance/ collaboration, cultural authenticity/ degeneration, and official/ unofficial discourse. For example, she demonstrates that the state is not a singular, external entity exercising power over a coherent, local society, but instead insists, "the idea of a separation between 'state' and 'non-state' must be problematized to highlight how these realms overlap and involve each other in ways that cannot be disentangled" (45). As such, Meriam maintains, "official rubrics are not foisted wholesale upon local people by a 'Chinese' regime. [...]. Instead, policies involve subjective, localized and context-specific differentiation [...]" (289).

Chapters one through four investigate "idioms of identification as bases for social inclusion and political mobilization" (1). In Chapter One, Meriam ably argues that Mao-era class distinctions continue to color present-day perceptions of wealth and morality. Although finding class in reform era China to be "an officially de-legitimized and locally suppressed discourse" (55), she balks at the suggestion that the reform era should be considered a period of "revival" of pre-revolutionary traditions. Instead, Meriam provocatively concludes:



These reform era social distinctions are not a return to pre-revolution identifications, nor are they entirely novel. Instead these expressions constitute new social phenomena informed by Mao era divisions and prior social arrangements (65).

Similarly, chapters two through four tackle the manner in which local elites mediate and disseminate ideas, applications, and anxieties generated by the state's respective discourses on development, nationality, and civilization. Finding, for example, that "Local ideas of 'development' are not coterminous with state-sponsored rhetoric" (89), Meriam shows that her subjects often internalize stereotypes in a manner that allows them to explain the perceived "backwardness" of their locality while simultaneously asserting moral superiority. Likewise, arguing that "Local articulations of nationality idioms are also part of a larger governmental discourse of local 'autonomy'" (146), Meriam demonstrates ways in which local people, individually and communally, are able to leverage state rhetoric and policies to support their material, political, or emotional aspirations. Challenging scholarship that has depicted nationality schools as loci of state hegemony, the author instead reports that in Trinde, "[schools] are prime sites for contesting and dismissing civilizing cultural ideals" (156). Rejecting the dyad of state domination versus social resistance, she concludes:

[Local authorities] enter into a series of micro-political practices aimed at redirecting people's esteem for scholarship and religious practice in a reform era system of relative nationality autonomy (157).

In chapters five through seven, Meriam makes a subtle switch from a focus on idioms of identification to instead "explore how key social concepts are elaborated in the contexts of 'ritual practice,' 'modernity' and 'media'" (3). For example, agreeing with several recent ethnographies of post-Mao China, she finds that reform era resurgences of religious practice:

are not a return to a previous tradition that counters the disturbances created by China's associations with modernity. [...] but are an adaptable way of *engaging with* modernity, even if that involves the expression of conflict" (197, italics in original).

Her multilevel analysis of new media (in this case, VCDs and cellphones) demonstrates how these technologies "facilitate the objectification and rearticulation of local practices as a stable, definable, exclusive body of knowledge known as 'nationality culture'" (246). In the process, Meriam concludes:

local media specialists have, in some ways, accomplished what the state failed to, namely to cultivate a politically unproblematic, culturally anodyne and socially bounded version of a single nationality, their lands and a 'way of life' (275).

*China's 'Tibetan Frontiers'* is an important, provocative ethnography, but it is not without imperfections. The text is dense, and arguably makes too frequent references to other authors without sufficient accompanying explanation to be of use to any but the most anthropological insider. Moreover, on several occasions Meriam makes controversial statements with no attempt to elaborate or defend them, other than citing another author's work, for example remarking, "The term *minzu* has been widely used only since the 1980s" (119). More substantially, there is a disconnect between Meriam's "call for ethnographies of given contexts" (292) and her historical framework that often relies upon sweeping narratives of China's nationality policies, in some cases referring to studies of other regions (e.g., Inner Mongolia) and other nationalities (e.g., the Yao) as if they are self-evidently applicable to her study of Trinde. Given the genre in which she is working and how little we know about the recent histories of localities such as Trinde, perhaps a more consistent concentration on communal memory would have been a more useful method to explore the remembered past and its implications for Trinde's present. After all, Meriam herself notes that her ethnography "highlights the latitude currently accorded to local people to interpret and represent local history" (281).

Methodological concerns common to many ethnographies include issues of representation, interpretation, and data collection. Meriam adroitly defends her focus on Tride's educated leaders by noting their "significant weight in evaluating and approving local political and cultural matters" (11). Still, much of her material is presented through a series of short anecdotes gathered through "spontaneous, informal conversations" (20) and less often "semi-structured interviews" (13) from which the ethnographer assumes tremendous power to assign meanings. While her intercession is acknowledged, the full impact of these power imbalances is not sufficiently addressed. In fact, exchanges were mainly conducted in local Trinde Tibetan or Qinghai Chinese, neither of which Meriam appears to have studied prior to conducting her fieldwork (20). Yet, in several cases she provides extensive direct quotations of animated conversations at which she was present but not a direct participant. Given the prominence she gives to the 'localization' of language and meaning, regardless of linguistic proficiency, it is difficult to imagine that something has not been lost in translation.

Lastly, in her conclusion, Meriam argues that "to analyse these fast-paced developments," researchers must move beyond bureaucratic and textual studies "in order to understand how particular social aspirations are harnessed, endorsed, sustained or reworked in practice" (289). Unfortunately, this important observation serves to underscore that her own research – in which the Iraq War appears as the major international event and her analysis of media technologies is based on VCDs and a recent increase in cell phone accessibility – was conducted a decade prior to the book's publication. This, perhaps unavoidable, passage of time, leads one to wonder how Trinde Tibetans' understandings of identity, belonging, and difference have been reshaped by the not insignificant domestic, international, and technological changes of the past ten years, including the 2008 uprising and an ongoing epidemic of self-immolations.

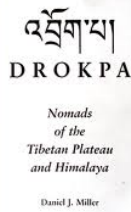
Nonetheless, these are relatively minor quibbles. Far more important are Meriam's contributions to a field that has often framed conflict "as a struggle between state domination and nationality

resistance" (44) while failing to investigate "differentiations, idiosyncrasies and stresses between local people" (66). In her own words:

More than anything, this book deconstructs the concept of nationality, and argues for a more nuanced, shifting and interpersonal understanding of identification, subjectivities and belonging (287).

We can only hope that Meriam, with her keen ethnographic eye, will have an opportunity to revisit Trinde and report on her findings.

Reviewed by Ligaya Beebe (Independent Scholar)



Daniel Miller. 2008. *Drokpa: Nomads of the Tibetan Plateau and Himalaya*. Kathmandu: Vajra Publications. 132pp, maps, notes, photographs. ISBN 97899946506052 (paper 42USD).

Daniel J. Miller is a rangeland ecologist who has studied agricultural and pastoral practices around the Himalayas and on the Tibetan Plateau since the 1970s. *Drokpa: Nomads of the Tibetan Plateau and Himalaya* is a collection of photographs published for a general audience. The text's stated purpose is to reach beyond the "restricted readership" of Miller's academic publications and to "[provide] the viewers with a more considerate and compassionate portrait of Tibetan nomads" (6-7). In addition to these generalized goals, Miller's photographic and textual narrative includes the following arguments:

1. The geographically widely distributed Tibetan-speaking nomads in Bhutan, Nepal, and The People's Republic of China may be viewed as a semi-cohesive whole, sharing similar landscapes, pastoral practices, and cultural and linguistic heritage. Furthermore, they face similar challenges in regards to modernization processes and policies.
2. Policy-makers in these areas have disregarded the cultural and ecological significance of Tibetan pastoral practices and, consequently, have enacted a range of policies that, while having brought educational and economic benefits to herding

communities, have done so at considerable cost.

3. Policy-makers in these areas should consider Tibetan nomads as important sources of knowledge about grassland ecology and animal husbandry. Tibetan nomads should be given a more active role in designing grassland management and settlement policies so their "desires and needs are considered along with an understanding of the ecology of the land and a vision for the future" (131).

The first point is evident in the thematic arrangement of photographs. The photo sections are arranged as following: "Herders of Forty Centuries", "Fields of Grass", "Herds on the Move", "Sacred Spaces", and "Winds of Change". Photos in the first four sections highlight similarities over time and distance (i.e., photos are from all time periods and from the Tibet Autonomous Region, Amdo, Kham, Nepal, and Bhutan). "Winds of Change", the last section, is the only one where this arrangement is not employed, i.e., photos shown in pairs or clusters are from Amdo or Kham regions. Only five of the twenty photos in this section are from the Tibet Autonomous Region, Nepal, and Bhutan. This presentation conveys a narrative of diverse peoples with a unified experience, as nomadic pastoralists with shared cultural and linguistic heritage facing similar challenges.

Thematically presenting the images effectively introduces a general readership to the vast geographic range, but similar cultural and linguistic aspects of Tibetan-speaking nomads in Bhutan, China, and Nepal. Miller makes the point about commonality explicit: "Despite the extent of the Tibetan nomadic pastoral world, all these nomads share many things in common" (120). He goes on to describe the following commonalities: high-elevation rangeland environments, grazing of livestock, pastoral production practices, patterns of mobility, yak-hair tents, and types of livestock. Miller also draws attention to similarities in language, culture, and religious practices. Miller concludes, "all nomads are now confronting and dealing with significant changes to their way of life" (120). This cohesive grouping could be considered a rhetorical "economy of scale" strategy to

increase the significance of his arguments about policy-making. Before he can make his case for policy, he needs to convince his readers that the nomads under discussion are worth caring about.

The second and third points regarding policy-making are not as evident in his photographic narrative, but may be inferred from the section titles. "Herders of Forty Centuries" implies a sense of temporal continuity with little change, a sense that is reinforced in "Fields of Grass", "Herds on the Move", and "Sacred Spaces" that present images of people, landscapes, dwellings, and livestock and other cultural practices that, while diverse, provide the reader with an overall sense of shared experience. Though many of the photos were taken in the 1990s, Miller has curated images that show nomads interacting with symbols of modernity (e.g., cars, trucks, motorcycles, sunglasses, Pepsi) and grouped them together in the "Winds of Change" section. This section provides the backbone of Miller's overall narrative arc: nomads across the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau share a strong, interconnected culture and an evolutionarily rational and sustainable pastoral system, and are threatened by change.

Miller's writing is informative, clear, and concise. Laying the foundations for his argument of how nomads should be included in policy-making, Miller starts with a general introduction to the rangelands of the Tibetan Plateau and Himalayas and a description of the ecological diversity and fragility of the grassland. Miller argues that since the grasslands have supported nomads and their livestock for millennia, the ecosystem is "resilient," and the rangelands can be heavily grazed and maintained "as long as livestock numbers are not excessive" (122).

This is a direct counter-argument to nomad settlement policies that claim ecological preservation as a primary reason for sedentarization of nomad communities. Grassland degradation is often cited as a reason why nomads should move off the grasslands, and over-grazing is given as an official reason for grassland degradation.

Miller describes the cultural and ecological significance of mobility and argues that nomads have a much more sophisticated

grasp of geography and pastoral practices than is generally realized (see 123-126). By highlighting the ecological importance of herd mobility, Miller provides another counter-argument to sedentarization and the increasingly common policy of fencing grasslands. In showcasing nomads' "keen knowledge" of animal husbandry, Miller adds weight to the argument that nomads should participate in grassland management policies.

Miller takes a hard stance against top-down modernization and development policies. He writes about conversations with a Khams pa nomad who, for the sake of maximizing economic output, was asked to cease raising horses and focus on raising sheep and yaks. The "proud nomad" tells Miller, "How can they tell us not to keep horses? We're Khampas. We ride horses. Always have, always will" (128). This is a singular example of how grassland management policies have ignored the cultural values of the people who are most influenced by these policies. In terms of ignoring nomads' knowledge of ecology and grazing practices, Miller writes:

The Chinese policy of settling nomads goes against state-of-the-art information and analyses for livestock production in pastoral areas. This body of scientific knowledge champions the mobility of herds as a way to sustain the grazing lands and nomads' livelihoods (129).

Miller summarizes the adverse consequences of these policies. Rapid sedentarization results in loss of rangeland-related ecological knowledge and subsequently the loss of nomads' "singular identity" (131). Settlement policies have also not addressed the lack of employment opportunities for newly settled nomads, which further contributes to the marginalization of nomad communities (see 129-130).

The strength of Miller's work comes from the interplay of his photographs, his narratives of interactions with nomads, and, crucially, his ecological expertise. His photographs and storytelling situate his arguments suitably for a general audience. Moreover, Miller's photographs provide an insightful historical window into



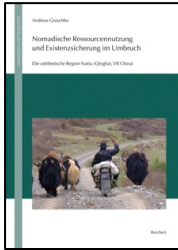
nomad settlement policies that were intensified on the Tibetan Plateau during his time there. In the mid to late 1990s, a government poverty alleviation policy, 'Four Way Scheme' (*sipeitao*), was introduced in nomad areas in China. This policy's four schemes include: i) subsidizing concrete housing for nomads, ii) subsidizing shelter for livestock, iii) erecting fences, and iv) growing additional fodder. Miller took most of the photographs that appear in *Drokpa* around 1996-1997. Many of these are from areas affected by this policy. As such, *Drokpa* is an excellent introduction to the history of Tibetan nomads and the challenges they currently face.

My criticisms are minor. First, the reader is left with the impression that all religious practices in the diverse regions Miller writes about are relatively homogeneous. The textual treatment of religious culture and customs is where Miller is the least comfortable. Second, Miller alludes to the specious premise that Tibetan Buddhism is somehow linked to, or responsible for, ecological harmony (see 128, 132). This type of non-evidenced adulation of Tibetan cultural practices unfortunately undermines Miller's own hopes to avoid romanticizing the Plateau and the people living there (see 117).



## REVIEW: *TRANSFORMING NOMADIC RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES*

Reviewed by Daniel Winkler (Independent Scholar)



Andreas Gruschke. 2012. *Nomadische Ressourcennutzung und Existenzsicherung im Umbruch: Die osttibetische Region Yushu (Qinghai, VR China)*. Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag. 504pp, map, notes, glossary of terms & place names, bibliography. ISBN 10:3895006432 (hardcover 136USD).

In late 2012, Andreas Gruschke published a densely packed, 450 page book based on his PhD dissertation, on the transformation of nomad livelihoods in Yushu [Yul shul] Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (TAP).<sup>1</sup> It is volume fifteen of the series of 'Nomaden und Sesshafte (Nomads and Settled People)' published by the Sonderforschungsbereich Differenz und Integration – Wechselwirkung zwischen nomadischen und sesshaften Lebensformen in Zivilisationen der Alten Welt (Special Collaborative Research Center, Difference and Integration: Interdependency Between Nomadic and Settled Life-forms in Old World Civilizations). The background information, rich data, dozens of detailed interviews with former and current nomads, and the findings in this publication are the result of eight years of study, including a total of sixteen months of fieldwork by Gruschke in Tibetan areas of Qinghai Province and neighboring Tibetan areas. This book contains case studies that have never been previously presented, and introduces these highland communities' current situation in a clear, detailed, and discriminating light that is rich in data.

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<sup>1</sup> Wylie equivalents are given in square brackets.

The greatest disappointment with Gruschke's important study of nomads' livelihood strategies is that it is only available in German. There are not even English, Tibetan, or Chinese language summaries. It is surprising that such fundamental sections were omitted. Luckily, reading the multitude of tables filled with detailed data such as household budgets, expenditures, and so on, information can be gleaned with a little effort and minimal language skills. Many of the very interesting verbatim case studies of diverse people with a *drokpa* ['*brog pa*] 'nomad' background sharing their economic life stories exist in English, but are not published yet. It is hoped that many more of the findings of this very detailed study will be made available in English for future reference. This study is a welcome addition to previous studies on the livelihood of communities in Eastern Tibet as published by Manderscheid (1999), Costello (2003), Ptackova (2011), and Sulek (2012), to name a few.

The extensive bibliography, featuring about 900 entries, contains hundreds of English and Chinese titles, the latter including their original Chinese titles and English translations. Furthermore, a map of Yushu and several tables giving place names in, Chinese characters, Chinese Pinyin, Tibetan Pinyin, and Wylie Tibetan, help to clarify the multitude of names available for each location in the study area. However, the common transcriptions of these place names commonly used in maps, research, and reports before Chinese took control are missing.

The main body of the study begins with an explanation of its theoretical concept, integrating the body of research on nomadic livelihood with a focus on issues of socio-economic resilience in the context of livelihood strategy adaptation to local resource availability and ensuing management approaches – especially in nomadic communities as expressed in seasonal mobility. Of special interest are adaptations to spatial resource management and studies of how communities are adapting to the continuous transformation of their environment, be it political, social, economic, or ecological. The geography, ecology, climate, natural resources, and economic potential of the study area in Eastern Tibet, much of it known in Chinese as Sanjiangyuan ziran baohuqu, 'the Three River National Park' is described in detail.

Social and political hierarchies and their history are also analyzed. Gruschke presents monastic institutions that once wielded great power in the region as entities separate from the community. However, it was common practice in the 'old' Tibet for every family to have members that were part of these institutions, and thus they were commonly well integrated in the community. This section is followed by an analysis of the demographic and socio-economic structure of Yushu and pastoral resources.

The core of the publication consists of detailed case studies from eight communities in four very different environments. Each case study elucidates the current conditions – socio-economic, ecological, and so on – and presents the unique circumstances of the region. Furthermore, the current situation and its recent history come alive by first presenting short life stories of selected community members. Through these case studies, the current economic opportunities and challenges are demonstrated and transformational trends become evident. These include increasing migration and participation in non-herding economic activities, for example, wage labor, employment, trade, dog breeding, and especially caterpillar fungus collection. A key component of this chapter is the discussion of how households adjust to change and challenge, and how they try to minimize risks, or fail to minimize the risks.

The first set of case studies are three different *drokpa* communities consisting of traditionally nomadic households living both on the periphery of small towns and out in the vast periphery of the Eastern Tibetan Plateau. The second set of case studies are communities, which Gruschke refers to as being "in the agrarian periphery," that besides herding, also have access to farm land – less than 0.1 percent of Yushu TAP can be farmed, however, areas with farming land have traditionally been important settlements. Out-migration from the communities is crucial for the economic survival of the herders, because limited pastoral resources cannot support the increased population and its demands. The remaining case studies examine households that have left the pastures to make a living elsewhere, the "periurban context" of Yushu, the "urban alternative" of nomadic livelihood in Gyegu [Skye dgu], the prefectural capital of Yushu TAP.

A common thread is how Tibetan nomads must adapt to a continuously changing environment. In the early second half of the twentieth century, nomads struggled to adapt to economic models designed by revolutionaries who were unfamiliar with conditions on the pastoral periphery. Economic liberalization and population growth brought a whole new set of challenges. Although nomads were again allowed to graze pastures based on their traditional knowledge, modernity has transformed nomadic society. The Chinese version of capitalism, a.k.a. "socialism with Chinese characteristics" successfully took root, aided by a booming trade in *yartsa gunbu* [*dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu*] 'caterpillar fungus' (*Ophiocordyceps sinensis*), an extremely valuable myco-medicinal commodity. Gruschke reports that this wild medicinal fungus has become such a valuable commodity in Yushu that the value of the annual harvest in Yushu TAP exceeds the prefectural government's annual budget! This is truly remarkable, especially taking into account that society is dominated by a powerful government sector (see Fisher 2012). The substantial fungal income allows for a variety of adaptations in household livelihood strategies. Most local households base their economic survival on *yartsa gunbu* income, making themselves very vulnerable to poor harvests or a price crash. Without the fungal industry, many households that are new to an urban setting and whose members often lack the skills to compete in an urban employment market, would be unable to sustain themselves. Many households that have recently settled in small towns or in Gyegu still revisit their homelands to collect caterpillar fungus. Still others use the profits from the *yartsa gunbu* trade to establish themselves successfully in a new small town or urban environment.

In sum, Gruschke demonstrates that *drokpas* cope successfully with continuous change and have diversified their livelihood strategies as a response to a multitude of external and internal pressures.

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## NON-ENGLISH TERMS

*drokpa*, 'brog pa འབྲོག་པ།

Gyegu, Skye dgu རྩེ་དགུ།

*pinyin* 拼音

Qinghai 青海

Sanjiangyuan 三江源自然保护区

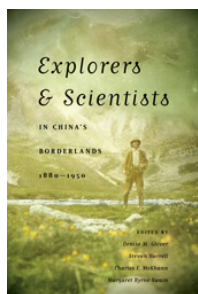
*yartsa gunbu, dbyar rtswa dgun 'bu* དབྱུང་ལྗོངས་དགུན་ལུགས།

Yushu, Yul shul ཡུལ་ཤུགས།



REVIEW: *EXPLORERS AND SCIENTISTS  
IN CHINA'S BORDERLANDS*

Reviewed by Gregory Rohlf (University of the Pacific)



Denise M Glover, Stevan Harrel, Charles F McKhann, and Margaret Byrne Swain (eds). 2011. *Explorers and Scientists in China's Borderlands, 1880-1950*. Seattle: University of Washington Press. xii+300pp, notes, gazetteer, references, contributors, index. ISBN 9780295991184 (paperback 35USD).

This collection of eight biographical essays from a 2007 symposium makes for engaging reading and holds together well as a book. The authors, mainly anthropologists, examine the lives of ten explorers who were active primarily in the first half of the twentieth century. Some worked for decades in the Chinese borderlands. Several became quite well-known and influential figures during their lifetime and after, such as Joseph Rock, but it is likely that most of the explorers featured here will be new to readers. They were active primarily in Sichuan and Yunnan and were North Americans or Europeans with one exception, Ding Wenjiang, who is examined alongside the Swede, Johan Gunnar Andersson. All were men with the exception of Hedwig Weiss, a German who travelled with her diplomat husband, Fritz, in Sichuan and photographed the Yi people of Liangshan.

As a collection of biographies, the authors have included the sort of details, first-person accounts, and photographs that make biography such a wonderful form of historical writing. Their life stories also narrate the broader story of Euro-Americans in China. The era included much violence, some of it produced by Western intrusion. We learn, for example, that these well-meaning North Americans and Europeans tended to treat the native people of

Chinese lands as their colonial subjects, though of course China was not a colony. For example, one botanist vowed never to kick his servants, reminding us of the extent of Euro-American power and violence at the interpersonal level in East Asia. Similarly, we learn that these men went out into the field with armed guards most of the time, or were themselves armed. As the authors describe, the rising Nationalism of post-Qing China meant that Euro-Americans were at times in personal danger of attack by resentful and politicized locals.

The book is also about what the explorers did and why they did it. Botanical and ethnological collecting are well-represented in the chapters, but most of these men were generalists, committed to collecting evidence in many areas of inquiry, including folktales, songs, insects, mammals, spoken languages, and written scripts. What drew Euro-Americans to the numerically small minority peoples amid the hundreds of millions of Han Chinese? Motive is perhaps the more interesting question, though harder to determine. One answer is articulated in several chapters, including Chapter One by Erik Mueggler, on British botanist, George Forrest. Forrest resented how Chinese crowds gathered and stared at him, which made him feel uncomfortable and angry. When he made eye contact with Tibeto-Burman peoples, on the other hand, he found they had an "ocular comportment" that Euro-Americans were more accustomed to, in which staring was considered impolite (33). In Mueggler's analysis, the way these people looked at each other partially determined how Forrest situated himself in the Chinese borderlands, identifying with minority peoples and against the Han Chinese. The analysis is difficult to evaluate in a social scientific sense, but it is fascinating to consider alongside recent scholarly work on the imperial 'gaze' of Europeans upon their subjects, as Mueggler does.

Similarly, other adventurers reported seeing their native landscapes in the alpine highlands of western China, or in the peoples themselves. As Tamara Wyss makes clear in her chapter on her grandparents, Fritz and Hedwig Weiss, Romanticism drove explorers to seek out an ideal they felt had been lost in the modernizing world. In this sense, what they saw in western China and the minority

peoples there were mainly projections of their own yearnings. For Hedwig Weiss, for example, the Yi reminded her of the German people's "warlike forefathers, as light-footed as the Lolos, chased through clefts and ravines" by centurions of the Roman empire, which, in her re-telling, had become the Chinese empire (104). Like any Romantic, she reported a profound sense of freedom in the hills, away from the stifling civilization of Chengdu. Orientalist projections are no longer presented with Weiss' facile enthusiasm but it seems likely that some portion of the Romantic imagination still inspires scholars and travelers to seek out the hard-to-reach destinations of China's West and Southwest.

For this and other reasons, North Americans and Europeans of the era sought out non-Han even as they were fully immersed in the language and practices of the racialist culture of white supremacy that condescended to both Han and non-Han. They were enmeshed in both the "big imperialism" of European and US expansion and the "little imperialism" of the Chinese state on its own peripheries. The Catholic priest Paul Vial, described by Margaret Swain in her contribution, illustrates this. Vial had a "well-honed antipathy toward the Han and the Chinese state" and sought to protect "his" Sani (155). Ultimately, he tried to do this by creating a new social system in which he himself was landowner and "lord" of a Catholic utopian community, which he called St. Paul la Tremblaye, after his aristocratic patroness in France. Vial was thoroughly vilified for this after the Communists came to power, but, like many of the other figures described in the book, was later rehabilitated and officially honored for his work recording the language and culture of the Sani.

Some chapters are also narrativized around the history of science and academic inquiry, particularly in the context of the mission work that some of the explorers were simultaneously engaged in. Englishman Ernest Wilson is credited with introducing more than one thousand Chinese plant species to European horticulture, for example. At the time, science was understood to be something that any Western-educated person could do, more or less. David Crockett Graham, who is credited with building the highest quality university museum in China, had all of a year's graduate

training in anthropology and archaeology, and started as museum curator immediately after his training. The relatively new use of photography as a scientific tool is analyzed in several chapters as well. It was clearly an era of both tremendous opportunity and productivity in field sciences, ethnology, and the like.

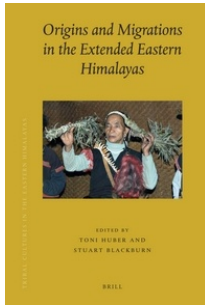
There are many other interesting accounts, such as the dispute between one missionary who viewed the Qiang as a lost tribe of Israel, and another, more progressive missionary, who refuted the analysis point by point, recounted in the contribution by Charles McKhann and Alex Waxman. We learn, too, in Jeff Kyong-McClain and Geng Jing's chapter that this progressive missionary, David Crockett Graham, supported the Republican Chinese nation-building efforts in the archaeological work that he did, even as Academia Sinica elbowed its way onto his turf to assert its primacy in the telling of China's origins.

Joseph Rock is the star of this group of adventurers, both during his own lifetime and after. His chapter is uniquely composed of contributions by four authors, including three who composed their sections as a tribute to Rock's career. These note that Rock was certainly a cultural chauvinist and imperious in his manner, yet the overall effect of the chapter comes close to making the biographer's error of loving the subject of the story too much.

In his superb introduction, symposium organizer Stevan Harrell notes that the spirit of courageous inquiry and the effort to expand knowledge that inspired these explorers is one that the current generation of borderlands scholars has proudly inherited, even as it has rejected the earlier generation's prejudices. Specialist and general readers with an interest in China's borderlands will find this book of value, above all, as a history of Western inquiry and adventure in the region. Sections of the book might also be used effectively in undergraduate or graduate courses on Modern China and its borderlands, European imperialism or the history of science.

REVIEW: *ORIGINS AND MIGRATIONS IN THE EXTENDED  
EASTERN HIMALAYA*

Reviewed by Jack Hayes (Kwantlen Polytechnic University)



Toni Huber and Stuart Blackburn (eds). 2012. *Origins and Migrations in the Extended Eastern Himalayas*. Leiden: Brill. Volume 16 in Brill's *Tibetan Studies Library*, Volume 4 in the *Tribal Cultures in the Eastern Himalayas*. viii+336pp, illustrations, maps, tables, notes, bibliographies, index. ISBN 9789004226913 (hardback 136USD/99€).

This multidisciplinary anthology draws from papers presented at the international conference "Origins and Migrations Among Tibeto-Burman-Speakers of the Extended Eastern Himalaya" held at Humboldt University, Berlin in 2008. This collection of articles contributes to discussions surrounding the nature of and questions surrounding data, hypotheses, and theories of origins and migration in the 'extended Eastern Himalaya'. This region includes the hill peoples and territory ranging from eastern Nepal to Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, upland Southeast Asia and southwest China. Although there is some thematic overlap among the fourteen essays, they are quite a diverse lot, critically examining local and regional history, theoretical and methodological issues writ large, myths and rituals, society and social narrative, language and linguistic relationships, identity formation, and local-state dynamics related to local ideas about origins and migration. This book is particularly useful for gaining a better understanding of the issues linked to topics and theories of identity in the Eastern Himalaya (and wider Himalaya region more broadly) considering the core importance of 'origins' in any construction or reconstruction of identity among diverse and widely spread communities. Graduate students and specialists

interested in the Himalayan region will find this book useful. Individual chapters, especially the more theory-oriented ones, are also well suited for undergraduate courses.

The editors of the volume immediately point out that questions and contrasting perspectives about the 'origins' of communities and ethnic groups continue to spark lively controversy both at the local and national levels as they intersect with national narratives, concepts of citizenship, majority and 'peripheral' populations (often lowland and upland populations), rights and privileges, the halls of academia, and the public domain. How *do* we start to untangle the complicated and contested nature of origins and migration – core elements of histories, identities, folklore, and local narratives – in a diverse and large region that stretches from eastern Nepal to upland Southeast Asia and southwest China? While the editors make no claim to cultural uniformity for the whole of this extensive region, similarities in material culture, ritual practices, and oral traditions, including ritual speech, do permit some interesting and sustained comparative analysis of diverse local communities, reminiscent of trans-border regions like Scott's (2009) highland 'Zomia' in Southeast Asia.

Toni Huber and Stuart Blackburn, editors and individual authors of a number of Brill publications and other volumes about the Himalaya region, offer much food for thought in the introduction, their individual articles in the publication, and in their execution of this volume. The introduction is clear, concise, and well-written. It offers a superb overview of the articles and a cogent, if rather short, introduction to where the focus and points of comparison lie among the articles.

One of the very few substantive quibbles I had with this volume was how it was situated in the wider literature of 'origins and migration' in the introduction, a stated goal of the conference and volume. Certain of this recent literature made an all-to-brief showing (e.g., Scott [2009], Duncan [2004], Giersch [2006]), but I was left wondering, especially after reading the rest of the articles, where Wim van Spengen (2000), Anderson (1991), Harrell (1995; 2001), Herman (2007), Agrawal (2005), and Ramachandra Guha (1990),

among others, might be situated in this discussion. While these authors discuss a wide diversity of borderlands, upland, and often marginalized communities in South and Southeast Asia, and China, they do share focus on identity formation, nation/majority vis-à-vis local identity construction, and often detailed discussions of communities that would have added depth to any discussion of theoretical frameworks on 'migration and origins'. Luckily, the first chapter (Childs) goes to much greater length in situating a theoretically-informed approach to studying how migrations and theories of origins are shaped by local and wider processes. I recognize that this is a quibble as only so much can be done in the introduction of a large, edited volume of fourteen articles. I hasten to compliment the editors on their article overview arrangement of the volume into four cogent themes in the introduction. This approach worked admirably and added much clarity and thematic cohesion to the wide-ranging studies – though it might have been better if the article arrangement in the volume reflected the same thematic order.

The fourteen chapters of the volume are arranged geographically from east to west along the line of the Himalayas. While this may make sense more generally from a visual point of view, it is unfortunate, and the thematic grouping discussed in the introduction makes more sense from a narrative and methodological point of view. The four coherent thematic groups include: theoretical and methodological interpretations, language, identification (local identity vis-à-vis nationality or nation state), and narratives of origins and migration. I found the thematic overview discussed in the introduction more compelling and will, therefore, follow suit in this review – with the caveat to the reader that this is not the order of the articles in the Contents.

Four chapters in particular raise issues directly related to theory and methodology in the studies of origins and migrations. It is these chapters that are particularly useful for in-class and academic discussion. In Chapter One, Childs offers an excellent study and discussion of 'processes' in community migrations that are really a series of protracted processes at the micro-local level. This is done through a case study of settlement history of Sama Village in Nepal's

highlands. This study starts with a sound and relatively extensive engagement with theoretical literature on migration in order to better understand the factors leading groups of people to migrate and perpetuate migration across space and time. His discussion of network theory and analysis of 'push-pull' dynamics related to social capital drawn from ethnographic and sociological data are particularly useful and grounded tools to explain the fundamental question of 'why' people migrate and how they do so in small groups over time - not necessarily *en masse*.

In a similar vein, Burling, in Chapter Three, asks the important question of why local populations even ask 'where' they come from, and concludes that the responsibility lies with outside forces such as schools and missionary activities as much as local social and political imperatives like boundaries. He further cautions that not all local Eastern Himalayan populations are equally concerned with questions of origins and migration.

Huber's article in Chapter Six adds another useful methodological point, a 'how' – how small scale 'micro-migrations' over time explain more of the ethnolinguistic variety and distribution than large scale, single-event migrations that have a tendency to dominate local, national, and scholarly narratives.

A fourth theory-oriented article, F.K.L. Chit Hlaing's Chapter Twelve, argues for more nuanced analyses, or jettisoning of 'single event' migration studies common to academia and the popular press, using the example of population movements of the Chin, Kachin, and Kayah of Burma. This article further cautions against simple links between ethnic category and language as multiple if related groups can use their languages differently, and contends that adopting ritual or singular languages obscures the power and presence of multi- or bilingualism.

A second major theme of the volume, language and linguistic data, offers complex and unique insights into the confluence of migration, origins, and the ethnolinguistic past of the Eastern Himalaya. Van Driem's study (Chapter Ten) situates linguistic data in a multidisciplinary framework of archeology and genetic studies. This approach highlights the sharp divides between upland Tibeto-



Burman and Indo-European languages, while helping to explain some of the complicated assimilative or non-assimilative aspects of north Indian ethnolinguistic complexes.

In Chapter Nine, Mark Post focuses on the Tani cultural-linguistic area in northeast India in order to trace different strains of contemporary Tani languages back to a kind of proto-Tani. By examining common cultural and environment-related terms in particular (a fascinating and original illustration of environmental linguistics and history), Post outlines a rough map of the diversity and movement of population splits, as well as highlighting certain of the cultural-linguistic 'islands' that fit the language family.

The third main theme of four articles relates to concepts of identity and their relationship to claims about origins and migrations. These articles are particularly pertinent for issues and analyses surrounding boundaries, national or citizenship status, and 'category-generating' practices common to contemporary states. The four following authors deal in some way with the nationalist 'imagined communities' of India, China, Burma, and 'Tibetans' (in Tibet) and smaller cultural groups part of the greater Tibeto-Burman-speaking cultural complex. In chapter eight, for example, Kerstin Grothmann analyzes the origins and migration of the Memba population on both sides of the McMahon Line and PRC-India frontier and how this population employs their own origin narratives to negotiate their current status with Tibetans to the north and the Indian state to the south.

In Chapter Eleven, Wettstein examines the Naga cultural-linguistic groups and their struggle to establish a collective identity in the nationalist(-ic) political struggles of India. Wettstein found that deployment of claims of common 'nationality' (or perhaps their origins and imagined community[-ies]?) and growing potential for more localized political factionalism over claims of origins and place have the potential to add even more stress on the north Indian ethno-political landscape.

Similarly, in Chapter Thirteen, Sadan examines how origin and migration narratives among the Jinghpaw or Kaching of northern Burma lose their cachet, complexity, and diversity when

stripped and simplified for deployment in modern state discourses. In another respect, Wellens moves away from localized ethnic deployment of Premi identity in Chapter Fifteen to analyze how the modern Chinese state has retrofitted Premi and Namuyi ethnic identity for its own purposes. While it is most obvious in the Wellens article, all these chapters share a common theme in revealing the totalizing (though not necessarily overwhelming) power of the state, or at least state-led or oriented identity, in shaping local perceptions of local origin and migration stories.

The four other authors discuss in various respects a final theme of origin and migration narratives and how different origins/migration narratives help define identity, position communities in wider political contexts, and reinforce social hierarchies. Gaenzle's article (Chapter Two) examines upland Nepal and in particular, how the Rai of southern Nepal map migration on the landscape in that the journey of the dead is a return to the point from which that their ancestors migrated – a journey fraught with danger and ambivalence - towards the place of origin.

In a similar fashion, McKhann in Chapter Fourteen examines the Naxi of Yunnan Province. His fascinating study of funeral rituals and origin myths, as well as the process of origin and return that links a landscape and 'ancestral roads', highlights social and metaphysical hierarches of the relationships between gods and humans, ancestors and the living.

In Chapter Seven, Blackburn analyzes the origins of the Apatani world and people in central Arunachal Pradesh. He found that the Apatani world began as a more unified whole, and that ancestors and objects can all be related back to a common source and ancestry. Finally, in Chapter Five, Alex Aisher examines the stories of the Nyishi and their world and migration – and emphasizes how landscapes, the spirit world, and the dead co-evolve through processes of exchanges to create the world as the Nyishi know it.

As the above attests, there is a broad spectrum of themes and localities that will interest Himalaya and migration specialists, historians, and anthropologists.

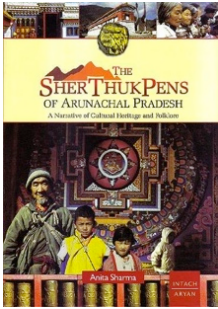
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## REVIEW: *THE SHERTHUKPENS OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH*

Reviewed by Christopher Weedall (Australian National University)



Anita Sharma. 2013. *The Sherthukpens of Arunachal Pradesh: A Narrative of Cultural Heritage and Folklore*. New Delhi: Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage and Aryan Books International. xv+184pp, foreword, preface, maps [x+xii], 32 color plates before page 1, appendix, glossary, bibliography, index. ISBN 9788173054440 (hardcover 1,500INR).

Scheduled tribes – indigenous people who are acknowledged to some formal extent by national legislation – of Arunachal Pradesh, formerly part of the North-East Frontier Association, in North-East India, have been largely neglected in terms of cultural and linguistic study, with a few exceptions, such as Elwin (1958, 1959, 1988), Das (1995), and Chowdhury (1973). This region, however, is home to a diverse group of individuals who have only recently been introduced to modernization. For this reason, until recently, most tribes in the area have retained traditions that were maintained for centuries or longer. Due to the contemporary influx of roads, electricity, and television, these traditions have been threatened and are gradually giving way to modern (largely Western) ideas and practices. It is for this reason that Anita Sharma's *The Sherthukpens of Arunachal Pradesh: A Narrative of Cultural Heritage and Folklore* (henceforth *Sherthukpens*) comes at an opportune time to investigate and record the heritage of the Sherthukpen people as it was and is now becoming.

*Sherthukpens* is a hardbound book with a well-made, attractive cover. The work features sixteen double-sided pages of color images. Following the foreword and images are thirteen chapters, an appendix, glossary, and bibliography. The first chapter provides an introduction to the Sherthukpen people and the region

where they live, and historical context, as well as cross-referencing some of the few historical writings that can be found about the people.

Chapters Two and Three investigate Sherthukpen social structure. The second chapter delves into the kinship system such as class/ clan and traditional marriage customs, including inheritance. The clans include the lower class, Chaos, upper class, Thongs, and a migrant class, the Yanlaks, who emigrated more recently from Bhutan (12-13). The Chao and Thong clans are both subdivided into several clans, based on a story indicating each clan descended from a son of Gyaptang-Bura (also Japtang Bura) who was the younger son of King Geporading-darje of Debolojari (Tibet) (2-3). The class/ clan system, therefore, is based largely on these perceived kinships. However, Sharma indicates that divisions are largely traditional and not strictly enforced in most interactions. The Yanlak clan, in contrast, appears to receive some ill-treatment (15). Marriage is generally not cross-class and often stems from negotiation or arrangement (19). The arrangement or negotiation is generally done secretly without the girl's knowledge, between the prospective groom and girl's parents. An assortment of traditional processes are generally followed, culminating in the girl's temporary abduction, feasting (excluding the girl), and gift-giving ceremonies. Inheritance is declared verbally before an individual's death (30). Sons generally receive property, because Sherthukpen wish to keep property within the clan, and because females from any clan can be married into any other clan. However, the Thong Clan does not approve of marriage with the Chao Clan (19).

The third chapter focuses on political positions, their hierarchy, and traditional judicial practices. It also introduces the titles of many positions and names for both permanent and temporary community/ cultural groupings. Permanent positions, such as the *gaonburah* 'headman' are held until the elected person is too old to continue (39) or until they step down for some reason. Temporary groupings include the *brampu*, which is a labor group sought for agricultural help, or to aid in house construction (45). Sharma indicates that some of these positions and several traditional group practices have recently fallen out of practice.

Chapter Four provides an overview of the traditional Sherthukpen economy: slash and burn agriculture supplemented by scavenging, hunting, and barter and trade practices, largely with Assamese and Monpa groups. Due to restrictive forest clearing policies, slash and burn farming is much reduced and limited to non-reserved forests (56). This, in combination with modernization in the form of new roads and imported goods, has created greater wealth and also greater poverty, especially for families with little access to education.

Chapter Five delves into religion as it exists in its various forms across the tribe's villages. A concise description is difficult because (semi-)urban and rural villages have been influenced differently based on their contact, or lack thereof, with outside religions. Lamaism and the author's self-defined Lo religion are the two religions practiced to varying degrees throughout this region. Lamaism is a Tibetan Buddhist-based religion while Lo is considered the tribe's older, more traditional, religion. Sharma investigates the priests and practices of both, providing some comparison and ongoing changes involving both religions.

Chapter Six provides a list of rites and festivals, including birth and death practices.

Chapter Seven discusses indigenous knowledge which, the author claims, is being lost due to the reduction of need, as villages become increasingly dependent on modern development and a Western lifestyle. Indigenous knowledge explored in the chapter includes language, folklore, and traditional medicine.

"Material Culture", the title of Chapter Eight, is a misnomer, as this chapter mainly focuses on production of materials and infrastructure, e.g., basketry, weaving, carpentry and wood-carving, smithing, bridge-building, hunting, fishing, clothing styles worn by gender and age, and jewelry. These topics encompass the Sherthukpens' means of making a livelihood.

Chapter Nine examines architecture, specifically of *gompa* 'monasteries' and stone and wood houses. Nothing is mentioned about construction techniques or rites relating to *gompa*. Rather, there are indications of architectural influence by Lamaist and

Bhutanese styles. House rites, before, during, and after completion are also provided.

Chapter Ten focuses on diet and is primarily a list of the most common foods constituting the staple diet. There is some discussion on the role of meat in the culture, including restrictions for *dzizi*'s 'priests' and Thongs 'the upper class'. *Phak* 'local beer' is also highlighted in terms of the common production method and consumption, which Sharma repeatedly insists is quite often.

Chapter Eleven presents a brief insight into music and dance, primarily as performed during festivals and ceremonies. Sharma indicates that music is also used during agricultural work, fishing, hunting, and when collecting honey.

Chapter Twelve's "Behaviour and Morality" considers social acceptability and how the community teaches and upholds these practices. Taboos are introduced and Sherthukpen social attitudes are compared to those of other tribes in the area. Sharma also illustrates how patriarchal culture does not impose strict social or legal limitations on gender roles in society.

The last chapter, "Modernity and Change", is an overview of pre-1962 Arunachal Pradesh and the continuity of change happening since, with a focus on the Sherthukpen. The most pronounced of these changes involves an influx of popular (especially mainstream Indian) culture, roads, agricultural development, and administrative changes. For the most part, these changes have been imposed upon the Sherthukpen in relatively short order and have accelerated the loss of traditions.

Sharma references the major published sources on the Sherthukpen, as well as adding a Thukpen Village Council (TVC) draft of meeting minutes from 2002. Sharma often, however, re-summarizes the information in the quotations she uses without providing meaningful additions. Furthermore, she often references neighboring tribes, such as the Aka, but provides few citations to support the details. For example, while there has been convincing evidence of Aka's warlike ways, Sinha (1962:11-12) indicates that after a peace agreement in 1888, the Aka became a "peace-loving people." This casts some doubt on Sharma's description of them as "a source



of terror and disruption for the Sherthukpens well up to the 1940s," (160), which has no citation. Consequently, descriptions of non-Sherthukpen peoples in this monograph should be treated cautiously.

The book suffers several other unfortunate drawbacks. The first, and perhaps the most avoidable, is the obvious lack of proofreading. There are errors of a single item being repeated twice in the same list (115, 141). Additional issues include spelling errors (e.g. "restrain" vs. "restraint", 149), beginning Chapter Five with a quote having no context, and multiple English expressions used incorrectly (consider "since long" vs. "since long [ago?]", 135). A skilled copyeditor would have addressed these embarrassments, including mistakes such as, "Perhaps this brings to conclude that [sic]" (78-79), "... detailed as under [sic]" (127), "But Some [sic] of the ..." (130), and "there is [sic] 675 hectares" (56). Sharma also seems to introduce grammatical issues in citations she uses, such as on page 102 "...was journeying [sic] his kingdom", without indicating that the source had the original error, via *sic*. Another questionable practice was copying almost an entire paragraph from page 22-23 and using it in a footnote on page 171. It is challenging to understand why Sharma did not contextualize the footnote with the applicable appendix content, or direct the reader to that paragraph.

Stylistically, Sharma uses multiple italicized Sherthukpen words throughout her text without immediately identifying their meanings. These words are often not clearly defined until many pages or chapters later. This situation leaves the reader confused or required to break their current thought process to look up the words in order to better understand. There is a glossary of these items, but Sharma does not accommodate the reader by consistently defining them within context.

Further problems arise from the fact that Sharma must have overlooked various aspects of her work. Consider her description of the Sherthukpen language being included in the "Tibeto-Burman school of languages" (94). Even a cursory search on Tibeto-Burman languages would have indicated that there is no 'school' of languages, but rather a language family. These types of basic research problems cause the reader to question some of the arguments that Sharma

presents throughout *Sherthukpens*. For example, the word for the people and their language(s) is commonly spelled Sherdukpen (Sarkar 1980, Sharma 1961, and Lewis et al. 2013 <http://www.ethnologue.com/language/sdp> – for some examples of how both the literature and the people themselves render the word). Why does Sharma spell it with a *T* instead of *D* and with an extra *H*? The book offers no explanation. Nonetheless, Sharma's spelling has been used here to be consistent with the book.

Despite these many problems, the book is a useful record of the people, offering valuable insight into a people transitioning from traditional village life to a modern lifestyle. For readers interested in the traditional cultures of South/ South-East Asia, *Sherthukpens* is packed with details from all walks of the villagers' lives. *Sherthukpens* is a good synthesis of knowledge obtained through Sharma's firsthand experience and existing records involving the tribe.

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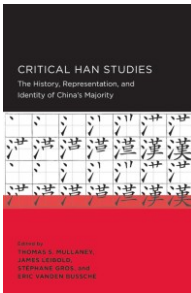
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## REVIEW: *CRITICAL HAN STUDIES*

Reviewed by Zhiguo Ye (Seattle Pacific University)



Thomas Mullaney, James Leibold, Stéphane Gros, and Eric Armand Vanden Bussche (eds). 2012. *Critical Han Studies: The History, Representation, and Identity of China's Majority*. Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press. vii+410pp, notes, character list, bibliography, contributors, index. ISBN 9780984590988 (paper 49.95USD).

This path-breaking volume is an academic collaboration that emerged out of the "Critical Han Studies Conference and Workshop" at Stanford University in April 2008. Eleven scholars contributed to the question of what it means to be 'Han' in China, both historically and at present. Constituting over ninety percent of China's population, the Han are not only the largest ethnic group in China, but are also one of the largest categories of collective identity in the world. Despite this, the dominant Han group has so far eluded careful scholarly scrutiny, with the Han often referred to as an unmarked majority category in contemporary China. This volume challenges such conventional views by conceptualizing new interdisciplinary approaches to the question of Hanness.

The eleven essays of the volume are divided into three themes: 'Han and China', 'The Problem of Han Origins', and 'The Problem of Han Formations'. The first theme, comprised of four essays, analyzes the ties that bind the category of Han to those of Chinese ethnicity, race, and polity. Kevin Carrico in "Recentring China: The Cantonese in and Beyond the Han" questions a single, unitary Hanness that he believes conceals "countless other perceived and imagined lines of differentiation" (25). The study examines how multiple identities

such as 'Chinese', 'great Han', 'Northerner', 'Southerner', 'Cantonese', 'urban resident', or 'citizen of the Republic of Guangdong', were employed by Guangdong Province and its people to either relate themselves to an imagined powerful center of China, or re-create themselves as a new center in the reform era (44).

In the second chapter by Emma Teng, "On Not Looking Chinese: Does 'Mixed Race' Decenter the Han from Chineseness", the unique experiences of two Eurasian women, Irene Cheng and Han Suyin, who self-identified as Chinese during the twentieth century, are explored. The limitations of 'Han' as a category of identity in transracial and transnational contexts beyond the geographic and political boundaries of the PRC is shown.

In the third chapter, "Climate's Moral Economy: Geography, Race, and the Han in Early Republican China", Zhihong Chen historicizes the construction of 'Chinese' and 'Hanness' in the early Republican era. This was a time when Chinese intellectuals and geographers in particular, first engaged with Western theories of geography and race. These theories were later used by Chinese nationalists to make claims for Han racial superiority and colonization of the frontier regions.

The last essay of this section, "Good Han, Bad Han: The Moral Parameters of Ethnopolitics in China", further complicates the usage of Han as a state-imposed, innovative category of identity. The author, Uradyn Bulag, explores the ethnopolitical practice of 'Good Han' (who treated minorities fairly) and 'Bad Han' (who treated minorities unfairly) under the PRC. 'Good Han' valued multiculturalism, mutual respect, and collaborative development, and stood apart from their perceived opposites, the 'Bad Han' or 'Great Han Chauvinist'. As Bulag describes, ethnopolitics has been used carefully by the Party to avoid the path of 'separatism' and ensure Chinese state stability.

The three essays in the second section constitute a provocative dialogue on the origins of the Han category among Chinese and Western scholars. Xu Jiashun's "Understanding the Snowball Theory of the Han Nationality" argues for the ancient origins of the Han. This represents a long-standing, dominant view in mainland Chinese

scholarship. Xu supports his arguments with evidence gleaned from ancient Chinese sources.

Tamara Chin in the next chapter, "Antiquarian as Ethnographer: Han Ethnicity in Early China Studies", demonstrates the pitfalls that modern antiquarian scholarship faced when using ancient materials to study Han ethnicity. Chin shows how ancient literacy was recorded and reinterpreted through practices of classical studies to strengthen a Sinocentric, ethnocentric worldview that was later transmitted into the inquiries of modern ethnology and archaeology, whose knowledge helped the formulation of the ancient Han nationality (*Hanzu*).

In "The Han Joker in the Pack: Some Issues of Culture and Identity from the Minzu Literature", Nicholas Tapp carefully examines the term *minzu* in relation to ethnicity. Tapp argues that the *minzu* concept is truly modern and its introduction "changes the nature of the playing field entirely" (148). He contends that "Han appears to be the joker in the pack, the one that supports all visible categories through its own hidden dominance" (170).

The third section focuses on the problem of the Han formation both as a term/label and as an ethnic identity. Mark Elliott, in "Hushuo: The Northern Other and the Naming of the Han Chinese", delineates how the term Han had been used and developed by the Hu, steppe people from the Northern Wei to the Ming. He provocatively argues that it is through this intergroup contact that the Han was transformed from a political concept to an ethnic term.

C. Patterson Giersch, in his chapter, "From Subjects to Han: The Rise of Han as Identity in Nineteenth-Century Southwest China", explores the formation of Han ethnic identity among immigrant groups who competed with indigenous communities for economic resources in nineteenth century Yunnan.

In "Searching for Han: Early Twentieth-Century Narratives of Chinese Origins and Development", James Leibold returns to Xu Jieshun's view on the origins of the ancient Han, and traces such a dominant view of mainland China to a history of Chinese urban male elites' struggle to locate an indigenous origin and unity for China's

culture and people when facing the threat of foreign imperialist expansion in the early twentieth century.

The final essay, "Han at *Minzu's* Edges: What Critical Han Studies Can Learn from China's 'Little Tibet'", is an anthropological study based on author Chris Vasantkumar's fieldwork in Xiahe, a Tibetan tourist town, where Han and non-Han interact in local sites and, through linguistic practices, form more subtle and tenuous forms of community beyond the narrow confines of official *minzu* politics.

*Critical Han Studies* is an important work that anyone who studies Chinese ethnicity, identity, or culture should read. The book draws strength from previous works on the construction of Han identity in China by, among others, Dru Gladney (1991, 2004), Stevan Harrell (1995, 2001), and Kai-wing Chow (1997, 2001). It also looks beyond China for methodological inspiration and theoretical guidance, particularly from Critical Race Theory and Whiteness Studies. Such new concepts and methodological approaches revolutionize the ways in which Han, Chinese, and China may be understood. In this context, this book is of great value to China studies in general.

Despite these very strong points, contributing scholars might have shown more reflexivity in questioning their own objectivity and political stance, as they applied postcolonial and postmodern critical theory to deconstruct, dislocate, and unpack the Han majority. Furthermore, such issues as gender, language, and diaspora remain to be further explored.

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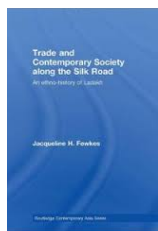


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REVIEW – *TRADE AND CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY  
ALONG THE SILK ROAD*

Reviewed by Bina Sengar  
(Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University)



Jacqueline H Fewkes. 2011. *Trade and Contemporary Society Along the Silk Road: An Ethno-History of Ladakh*. London: Routledge. xiii+196pp; list of plates, figures, maps, and tables; preface, acknowledgements, conclusion, glossary, notes, bibliography, index. ISBN 9780415775557, (hardback 100£), ISBN 9780415693158

(paper 28£).

Ladakh in the twenty-first century is well known as a religious and touristic destination as well as an Indian border territory with Kargil and Siachin - significant military posts. In contrast, the commercial role of Ladakh in trade within the Himalayan region and along the Silk Route is less explored.

In this well-researched book, Fewkes presents various components of Ladakh's ethno-history of trade. She focuses on Ladakh since the eighteenth century and its status as a trade center in pre-independence India and thereafter. Its lost legacy of trade and commerce and associated facets of its culture, history, and future challenges are presented compactly in less than 200 pages.

The book features an introduction and seven chapters, and is divided into three parts. Part I: Settings, has two chapters: "Beyond the Roof of the World", and "Recognising the Terrain: An Historical Background". Part II: Historical Trade, consists of "The Family Business: Community, Kinship, and Identity"; "Social Strategies for Profit"; "Living in a Material World: Cosmopolitan Elites"; and "The Demise of Trade: Coping with Borders". Part III: The Modern

Context consists of the final chapter, "The Memory and Legacy of Trade".

With a flair for narration, Fawkes weaves history and ethnography, moving from archival data to narratives of exploring these archives in Kargil, Kashmir, and Punjab. The author prefaces each chapter with descriptions of her encounters with people and their environs in the course of her research and thereafter, step by step, unveils the contents directly linked to these accounts. This technique draws readers into her historical descriptions.

Before further introducing the book and its contents, I wish to cite from the author's discussion of the work's objectives in the conclusion (168-169):

This research was undertaken as ethnohistorical work simply because there was no other way through which to understand the topic. "Ladakhi-ness", as an identity constructed through the interpretation of past and present, must be understood through a study of both.

In studying 'Ladakhi' identity, the author extensively researched the region and its background using an ethno-historical approach. She presents arguments that 'Ladakhi' identity was created through trade relations among various communities that settled in the region and thus formed a cosmopolitan Ladakhi identity. She argues that being 'Ladakhi' is not an ethnic or regional identity, but is rather a multifaceted, multi-layered, and multi-ethnic intermingling of community identities. This issue of cosmopolitanism is discussed in various sections of the book, most importantly in Chapter Five "Living in a Material World: Cosmopolitan Elites".

The author gives a detailed account of the nature of her sources in the "Introduction: Global Memories, Local Accounts". While exploring the Khan Archives, she gives a detailed narration of reaching the archives, sparking readers' interest in the content that follows.

She judiciously addresses the nature of trade routes and their significance in the commercial activities of Ladakh in Chapter One "Beyond the Roof of the World" and Chapter Two, "Recognizing the

Terrain: An Historical Background". These chapters give detailed accounts of the communities engaged in regional cross-border trade. However, the author does not provide detailed accounts of trade routes connecting Ladakh with the regions in the eastern, northern, and northwest sub-routes of the Silk Route. There are several discussions in the text related to the Arghuns<sup>1</sup> (Schimmel 2004), however, these discussions are hampered by persistent ambiguity regarding the Arghuns' identity. The author could have resolved this issue had historical sources been considered, in addition to the ethnographic accounts. In contrast to this unfortunate vagueness, the description of Ladakhi trade networks with traders in the Punjab is vivid and engages the reader while bringing to light the cultural weave of Kashmiri-Ladakhi and Punjabi culture.

In Part II, the author discusses class structure, social configuration and, most importantly, the value of Ladakhi trade in the north Indian economy before and during colonial times. Unfortunately, transnational trade in the Ladakh-Himalayas (van Schendel 2005) is not discussed by Fewkes, though such trade has contributed immensely to the formation of the cosmopolitan Ladakhi identity. Although Central Asian trade routes were the essence of Ladakhi trade, the discussions in the text leave scope for details that have been discussed elsewhere by such scholars as Hangloo (2000) and Levi (2002).

In Chapter Seven "The Memory and the Legacy of Trade", the author appropriately explains the reasons for the decline of once-flourishing Ladakhi trade. The border issues led to a fading of the cosmopolitan trading society in the region, and also created a regional identity crisis. The author discusses how the twentieth century (post-independence) political crisis and the 'scheduled tribe' status accorded the people of Ladakh have created new concerns.

Another important aspect of Ladakhi society that the author takes up is the co-existence of Islam and Buddhism. In the past, when trade flourished in the region, religious exclusiveness was not

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<sup>1</sup> The Arghun community traded in parts of Kashmir and Ladakh. Accounts of this community's trade relations appear in Mughal records.

dominant in Ladakh. In contrast, the Ladakh of today identifies primarily with Buddhist traditions. In the twenty-first century, Ladakh has become the ultimate tourist destination, has lost its wider trading networks and cosmopolitan legacy, and is facing serious environmental challenges.

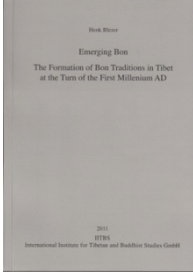
The book is valuable for insightful details about trade and society in Ladakh. The ethnographic approach in writing the history of trade provides thought-provoking details about people and their understanding of their past. Regarding the potential audience for the book, although the author's blending of literary flair with ethno-historical narrative renders the book highly readable, the specialized subject matter is limiting. Furthermore, the price of the book restricts the accessibility of the book to a wider, more general readership. Altogether, however, this book is a valuable contribution to the growing number of sources on the history and ethnography of Ladakh.

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## REVIEW: *EMERGING BON*

Reviewed by Bettina Zeisler  
(Eberhard-Karls-Universität Tübingen)



Blezer, Henk (ed). 2011. *Emerging Bon – The Formation of Bon Traditions in Tibet at the Turn of the First Millennium AD*. PIATS 2006: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Eleventh Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Königswinter. (Beiträge zur Zentralasienforschung, 26) Andiast: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies. 368pp, Introduction (Henk Blezer), 23 illustrations, 3 charts, 5 tables. ISBN: 978-3-03809-113-4 (paperback 98.50€).

The origins of Bon བོན་,<sup>1</sup> the putative pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet or Zhangzhung རང་ལྗང་, remain shrouded in mystery. To Western

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<sup>1</sup> [Editorial note – AHP prefers authors to use the Wylie system. We have published this review using a unique transliteration system at the author's insistence.] The Tibetan syllable-final *tsheg* ཚེག་ is a device to help identify the syllable core or the inherent vowel *a*, and does not primarily serve to separate isolated monosyllables. This is evident from handwriting where the syllabic representation is given up in certain cases, such as *bdagi* བདག་ཀྱི་ instead of *bdaggi* བདག་གི་ 'my'. Cf. also the case of *ngangur* རྒྱལ་ཀུར་, cited below. p. 10, where the first graphic syllable does not have a meaning of its own and the morpheme boundary actually lies on (or within) the initial consonant of the second graphic syllable. Since the inherent vowel *a* is conventionally 'transliterated', there is no need for a syllabic rendering (except in paleographic studies). Being a linguist as much as a 'lover of words' (philologist), I think that Tibetan should not be represented in an unstructured flow of syllables, and I shall thus transliterate (inflected) 'words', that is, intonational units. While each Tibetan letter should be represented by a single sign, I avoid diacritics in my own text, because the quotations have to follow the Wylie convention. An exception is made for the inversed vowel sign ཨི་ (*i*), to avoid typographical oddities, and for the letter འ

observers it has become evident that the origins of the present systematic or 'Eternal' Bon can only be sought in the *phyidar* ཕྱིན་ 'the later spread (of Buddhism)', the revaluation period of the late tenth to twelfth centuries, when both rulers and religious leaders attempted to re-establish Tibet's imperial power. To this end, they did their utmost to reinvent a shadowy, prehistoric past along with the reinvention of Imperial history. Tibetan scholars, particularly those of Bonpo བོན་པོ་ persuasion, contend that Bon was the original Tibetan religion, long before Buddhism was introduced and eventually established as the state religion. Not content with claimed anteriority in Tibet, the Bonpo tradition shifts the origins further and further into a mythological past, certainly not without some inspiration from the large numbers used in the Indian Buddhist historical tradition as received by the Tibetans.<sup>2</sup> While there must have been one or more non-Buddhist belief sets in Tibet, the lack of historical evidence for pre-imperial Tibet makes their reconstruction and the establishment of their relationship to the present Bon religion impossible. The main focus of this volume is thus on the revaluation period.

The first three contributions, however, deal with the prehistory of Western Tibet and the possibility of relating archaeological findings with textual traditions. Both Aldenderfer and Li report on systematic excavations, while Bellezza reports on surface surveys. Subsequently, two contributions by Blezer and one by Beckwith radically reject the traditional accounts of Bon prehistory, or at least try to put them into perspective, while McKay attempts to pin down the historicity of Zhangzhung from Indian sources. The remaining contributions – two by Kalsang Norbu Gurung, and the last by Nyima

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(*h*), as the commonly used elision sign is unsuitable for representing a consonant. I shall add Tibetan script on the first occurrence of each word or phrase.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the first section of the *Debgter sngonpo* དེབ་གཏེར་སློན་པོ་, which lists over a million generations of rulers before reaching Gautama, the ancestor of the Śakyas in twenty-four sub-lineages associated with different places. Most of these sub-lineages count between 5,000 and 85,000 generations.



Woser Choekhortshang – use a more conservative approach within the Tibetan historical tradition, dealing with the re-establishment of Bonpo and Buddhist monastic discipline and the identification of the *Hbyungkhungsmdo* འབྲུང་ལྷུངས་མཛོད་, the first *sūtra* of the oldest Bonpo *sūtra* collection. The last pages (pp. 321-368) contain a general bibliography. The book lacks an index.

The combination of quite different perspectives and methodologies should stimulate further discussion. However, the interdisciplinary approach would have been more effective if the editor had brought the contributors into discussion. The lack of communication, or at least cross-referencing, is regrettable, particularly in the first two and last two contributions.

One also expects more dedication in the general editing process. The space of more than three centimeters between headline and text is quite odd, but may still pass for bad taste. Pages 225 and 226, however, constitute a severe typographical offence: both pages, originally in landscape format, instead of having been rotated, have been reduced to half size with the miniature headlines positioned almost in the center of the page. Even more disturbingly, the editor (or publisher?) was unable to restart footnote numbering in each contribution. The cross references, however, do not follow this 'principle', so that we have to add 162 to Beckwith's cross references and 207 to McKay's.

Aldenderfer (13-34: The Material Correlates of Religious Practice in Far Western Tibet: 500 BCE – 500 CE) and Li (35-52: Archaeological Survey of 'Khung lung Silver Castle' in Western Tibet), both describe excavations at Mkhargdongri མཁའར་གཏོང་རི་ or Khyunglung ལྷུང་ལྷུང་ mesa near Gurgyam ལུར་གུམ་, at what they believe to be the location of the so-called 'Khyunglung Silver Castle' ལྷུང་ལྷུང་དངུལ་མཁའར་. Unfortunately, the satellite images do not match and the reader must struggle to conclude that one of the sites, referred to as 'Structure 66' by Aldenderfer, is identical to the site termed 'o4KLAS66' and 'S-66' by Li. From the base of this site, which may have been a religious building, an interesting bronze figure was excavated.

This figure sits in a crouching posture. The head, featuring a broad face and wearing a head ornament, part of which hangs down in a flat strip over a comparatively flat nose, constitutes almost half of the figure's height. No measurements are given, although this figure is quite peculiar and the only finding to-date that might be linked to religious practise, apart from the architectural remains. In note 3 on p. 20, Aldenderfer refers to Blezer's observation of "similarities" with "earlier artistic traditions of the Indus basin". However, without referring to any particular object, this is a disappointing speculation. There is assuredly no similarity with the terracotta or bronze figurines of Harappa and Mohenjodaro, nor with the stone sculpture of the so-called 'priest-king'.

As Li shows, the Mkhargdong site is a settlement with ordinary residences, a fortress, a sacred space, and large burial mounds. Even if not the location of the Silver Castle (see Blezer below), it is an important prehistoric site, dating from 3,000 to 2,000 years before the present. According to Aldenderfer, it must have been still occupied during the early Tibetan Empire.

In the longest contribution, (53-116: Territorial Characteristics of the pre-Buddhist Zhang zhung Paleocultural Entity – a Comparative Analysis of Archaeological Evidence and Popular Bon Literary Sources), Bellezza attempts to "document the territorial extent of the pre-Buddhist paleocultural zone, traditionally known as Zhang zhung" (53) and to identify archaeological sites with place names given in two comparatively recent Bonpo texts, the nineteenth century *Tisehi dkarchag* ཁི་སེའི་དཀར་ཆག་ by Dkarru Grubdbang Bstanhdzin དཀར་རུ་གྲུབ་དབང་བསྟན་འཛིན་ and the twentieth century *Bstanhbyung* བསྟན་འབྱུང་ by Lopon Tenzin Namdak ལྷོ་བ་དཔོན་བསྟན་འཛིན་རྒྱལ་དགེ་ལུགས་པ་.

In a second step, all monuments to be found in a radius of fifty kilometers of these sites are surveyed, demonstrating that "the centres of pre-Buddhist settlement, rather than existing in isolation are found in association with a variety of other monuments" (55). Finally, the distribution of two types of stone pillar is used to define the boundaries of this Upper Tibetan culture, which largely matches the boundaries given for Zhangzhung in the Tibetan Bonpo literature (ibid).

However, the label 'pre-Buddhist', which is treated as synonymous with Zhangzhung, is also used for allegedly non-Buddhist cultural phenomena that persisted after the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet. What may be a useful heuristic approach is quite problematic, due to its inbuilt circularity. It is also problematic to make assumptions about the extent of Zhangzhung on the basis of recent texts, when it is not even evident, which of the presently used names were applied to which regions in the distant past – if the names can be considered old at all. The place names of the Bonpo texts are at best drawn from Imperial sources and cannot definitively reflect any reality before the seventh century. At times, they only reflect post-Imperial idealisations of the Tibetan Empire. Extreme care must be used with identifications that seem obvious. For example, Lupon Tenzin Namdak refers to a castle in "Rbalte" ར་བ་ཏེ (p. 60, n. 50). This spelling is a variant of the more common form *Sbalte* སྐ་བ་ཏེ for what is now (a part of) Baltistan, but no place name *Sbal* སྐ་བ་, *Rbal* ར་བ་, *Hbal* ར་བ་ or *Bal* ར་བ་ followed by *te* ཏེ or *ti* ཏེ, appears in Old Tibetan sources, at least not in those that are currently available online.

Throughout recorded history, political entities reorganized, names were transferred from one place to another, and claims about political affiliations reformulated – all for various motives. There is no reason to assume that power shifts and/ or migrations of different ethnic tribes did not occur in prehistory. It is certainly not true that "contrasts in the archaeological record between the east and the west [of Upper Tibet] are due to ... relatively minor ethnological variations, not a major ethnical or linguistic watershed" (63), particularly as the Tibetan tradition itself associates the region east of the archaeological demarcation line with a different ethnic group – the Sumpas (64).

Nevertheless, Bellezza's survey is an important contribution to academic understandings of pre-historic Tibet, even if the relation between Zhangzhung and the Bon religion or some of the identifications of Bonpo place names need future revision. The maps, provided on pages 115 and 116 – unfortunately far too small to be easily readable – show a clustering of archaeological sites in three major regions: somewhat south of the east end of Panggong Lake

པང་གོང་མཚོ་, around and north of Lake Mapang མཚོ་མ་པང་, and around Lake Dangra G.yumtsho དང་ར་གཡུ་མཚོ་, particularly along its eastern shore. Stone pillars are found east of the upper course of the Indus, between and along the lakes, and along the upper course of the Brahmaputra.

In his first contribution (117-163: *In Search of the Heartland of Bon – Khyung lung Dngul mkhar the Silver Castle in Garuḍa Valley*), Blezer reconstructs the development of *Bon* origin narratives. According to him, the Bonpo would have shifted badly memorised facts and fiction from an original location in Rkongpo རྫོང་པོ་ to a more prestigious west. One part of the argument is that the reading *Rngulmkhar* རྩུལ་མཁར་ 'Silver Castle' is a later creation, based on a misunderstanding of an original *Rdulmkhar* རྩུལ་མཁར་ 'sand(y) castle'. A 'sand(y) castle' might be found in many places, whereas a 'silver castle' would be related only to certain geological formations, such as whitish rocks.

*The Old Tibetan Chronicle* (Pt 1287, line 408), is one of the first literary sources for the castle (only Pt 1060 might be earlier). Blezer, in keeping with Beckwith's repeated claims to this effect (e.g., Walter & Beckwith 2010 and below), avers that most Old Tibetan documents, and particularly the *Chronicle* might not have originated during the Tibetan Empire. However, 'post-Imperial' could be anything from 842 (the end of the Empire), to the beginning of the eleventh century, or even later – if one assumes that the Dunhuang cave had been opened after the first sealing (commonly dated to 1036). However, no document has been found with a date later than 1002 (see van Schaik and Galambos 2012:26).

For the attentive reader, the *Chronicle* is obviously a draft version, written and manipulated for a certain political purpose, which may have been motivated by the power struggles at the end of the Empire. Even without such political agenda, it is difficult to imagine who would have had an interest of compiling this document outside Tibet, in Dunhuang, several decades after the Empire's collapse. It is thus reasonable to date the *Chronicle* to the mid-ninth century or to the early second half of the ninth century at the latest. The same holds for the various 'catalogues of ancient principalities' (Pt 1060, 1286, and 1290).

While the *Chronicle* does not explicitly locate the Silver Castle, it states that Princess Sadmarkar སད་མར་ཀར་ had left for Lake Mapang. Blezer contends that the castle could not have been at Mkhargdong, about four days' journey from Mt. Tise ཧི་སེ, but must have been located "much further east", closer to Lake Mapang (135). There is actually no reason why the princess, who was unwelcome at her spouse's court, would not have stayed at some greater distance. However, this is only a minor issue.

The Silver Castle is also mentioned in one of the 'catalogues of ancient principalities' – actually only in Pt 1060 and not in Pt 1290 as Blezer claims – where it is associated with the 'high watershed of the rivers of the country' *yulchabgyi yabgo* ཡུལ་ཚབ་གྱི་ཡ་བགོ་.<sup>3</sup>

Blezer translates this expression as "the upper divide of the region's river", identifying it with the upper reaches of the Rtsangpo རྩང་པོ་ (143). To support this interpretation, Blezer adduces Pt 1136, a funeral text concerning a Rtsang རྩང་པོ་ princess, who committed suicide because she did not want to marry the Lord of Guge ལུ་གེ་. Her father is the Rtsang Lord, Hode Hosbdag ཧོད་ཧོས་བདག་, residing at or in *yulchabkyi yabgo* ཡུལ་ཚབ་གྱི་ཡ་བགོ་. However, 'divide' is an odd designation for an area of confluence, and is certainly more appropriate for an important watershed, such as the Kailash, between the Brahmaputra, the Indus, the Satlej, and, as the tradition has it, the Ganga (if the Kali Gandaki is taken as the source river).

Pt 1060 l. 63f., on the other hand, associates the *yulchabgyi yabgo* with the Silver Castle of Khyunglung and the Zhangzhung ruler Lig Snyashur ལིག་སྙམ་ཤུར་ (Zhangzhung is mentioned explicitly in l. 70), while the Lord of Rtsang is mentioned separately several lines further down.<sup>4</sup> In two of the catalogues, Lig Snyashur<sup>5</sup> is described as Lord of Zhangzhung Darpa རལ་ལྷུང་དར་པ་ (Pt 1286, l. 7) or Darma དར་མ་

<sup>3</sup> Or perhaps: 'the region: The Rivers' High Watershed', cf. Uray's (1972b:41) analysis in his transliteration.

<sup>4</sup> The latter is introduced at l. 74 as the Lord Phyva in the castle at the river [of] Upper Rtsang, where the country opens up: *yulkhala Rtsangstod rtsanggyi dngo mkhargyi nangnah / ... rje Rtsangrjehi Phыва // ཡུལ་ཁ་ལ་རྩང་སྟོད་རྩང་གྱི་དངོས་ཁར་གྱི་རྩང་ནལ་... རྗེ་རྩང་རྗེའི་ཕྱུ།*

<sup>5</sup> Pt 1290; spelling variants in Pt 1290: Leg/ Lag Snyashur ལེག་ལག་སྙམ་ཤུར་.

(Pt 1290, l. 5); and again, the Lord of Rtsang is mentioned separately. The region of Darpa/ Darma can be localised in the Upper Satlej Valley (cf. Dagkar Namgyal Nyima 2003). It is also given with the spelling *Hdarba* ར་ཐ་བ་ in the nineteenth century geography of Blama Btsanpo ལྷ་མ་བཙུན་པོ་ (Wylie 1962:8/61) as lying between Ladakh and Guge. The designation *yulchabgyi yabgo* thus included both sides of the watershed.

Blezer finally refers to the early *phyidar* texts *Kunḥbum goḥbyed* ཀུན་འབྲུམ་གོ་འབྱེད་ and *Mdoḥdus* མདོ་འདུས་, where Stonpa Gshenrab ལྷོན་པ་གཤེན་རབ་ is presented as the founder of the Silver Castle. While the first text locates the castle at Lake Mapang (p. 139f.), the second text is less clear: Gshenrab receives a bride from the Rkongpo ruler, a 'highway' (*shullam* ལུལ་ལམ་)<sup>6</sup> takes him (*phyung* རྒྱུད་) to the *yar[cha]b Rtsangpo* ཡར་[ཆ]བ་རྩང་པོ་, and after staying at Lhari Gyangdo ལྷ་རི་གྲང་དོ་, he builds the Silver Castle at Shuldkar Rtsangbya G.yungdrungkha ལུལ་དཀར་རྩང་བྱ་གཡུང་རྩུང་ཁ་ (pp. 130-132). If the text had given an accurate account of an ordinary man's journey, the latter place could be expected to be near Rkongpo – albeit only if the common identification of Lhari Gyangdo with Rkongpo Bonri རྫོང་པོ་བོན་རི་ (cf. p. 131 with n. 129) holds. But how is Rkongpo Bonri reached by travelling from Rkongpo along the upper (!*yarchab*) Rtsangpo – even if by this designation, as Blezer seems to suggest, the Yarklungs River ཡར་ལུང་ལམ་རྩང་པོ་ is indicated? The name element *Rtsangbya* certainly points to Rtsang. And while hagiographies are usually vague on geographical details, nothing would have prevented a man Stonpa Gshenrab's stature from covering the 1,000 kilometers magically in very short order.

Blezer eventually concludes that the *yulchabgyi yabgo* and hence the Silver Castle could be "anywhere in Greater Rtsang (Rtsang chen) between dBus (near Rkong po: *Mdo 'dus*) and Ma pang & Ti se" (146). All this would indicate that memories:

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<sup>6</sup> Alternatively, this word may perhaps be interpreted as the 'Shul-road', that is, the road leading to Shuldkar Rtsangbya G.yungdrungkha.

of a heartland of Bon or an important castle near Rkong po recombined with the growing importance of the Zhang chung Ti se 'central mountain and rivers'-type of geography, and thus a sandy castle may have ended up near lake Ma pang & Mount Ti se, both perceived at the heart of Zhang chung (150).

While Blezer assumes that the developing narrative shifted the Silver Castle slowly from east to west, his textual evidence shows the opposite movement: the *Mdohdus* must be later than the *Chronicle* and the various catalogues of principalities (otherwise, one would have to conclude that a form of Eternal Bon already existed during the Empire). The conspicuous anachronism, that is, the illogical insertion of Lhari Gyangdo/ Rkongpo Bonri into the narrative, not only testifies to a late compilation of the text, but also to an attempt of certain Bonpo to appropriate historical or mythological elements from the West, which parallels the appropriation of Western elements in the Imperial historical narratives.

It also testifies to a certain political interest in positioning Rkongpo as the original centre of Bon, but this does not prove that this was the sole region where such claims were formulated, and even less that it was the (sole) region where the *phyidar* Bon religion crystallised. Other possible East Tibetan candidates for a *phyidar* Bon heartland could be found: the northern lake district with the "Shang-shung-la" (ཞང་ཞུང་ལ་) at the river head of the Nagchu རྒྱལ་ཚུ་ (Kun Chang 1960, as cited by Uray [1972b:44, n. 95]), perhaps also Tsongkha ཚོང་ཁ་ in the north-east, as suggested by Beckwith (below).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The question of where the heartland of Bon is to be found is not necessarily related to the question which regions are to be identified with Zhangchung. Nevertheless, any such identification may depend on local Bonpo traditions and on claims concerning the original religious centre. I am informed that some Chinese scholars associate Zhangchung with Rgyalrong རྒྱལ་རྩེ་ in Sichuan (Timothy Thurston, pers. comm.). This must be on the base of an identification of Zhangchung with the (eastern) Women's Dominion (Nüguo). The latter is easily confounded with its western counterpart (possibly the Dardic areas around Gilgit, including perhaps also Uḍḍiyāna in the South and/or Hunza-Nagar in the North). There has been a certain

The whole argument rests on the professed late date of the *Chronicle* and on the reading of *Rdulmkhar*. The latter is more than problematic, as the meaning of *rdul* རདུལ་ is not 'sand', but 'dust', moreover "not so much as a deposited mass, but rather as particles floating in the air, motes, atoms", as Jäschke (1881) notes. Blezer does not give any reason why Jäschke should have been wrong. It is a fundamental necessity, unfortunately often ignored in translations from Tibetan texts, to verify the exact meaning of any given word or construction. Mere guessing or the wilful extension of meaning is not particularly helpful, when trying to readjust a tradition.

There is no doubt that the letters *da* ད་ and *nga* ཏ་ tend to become indistinguishable in poor handwriting. Bacot et al. (1940:116) read *rdul*, and the editors of the online version<sup>8</sup> followed this uncritically, although Uray (1972a: 8) rejected this spelling long ago, together with the translation 'chateau poudreux'. The Tibetan edition by Wang and Bsodnams Skyid (1992:58) has *rngul* རྩལ་ 'silver'. Blezer would have been wise to check the epigraphic evidence.

As one can see in Figure 1, the vowel graph *u* is typically a bit out of line, when combined with the letter *da*, that is, the end of the letter *da* and the onset of the vowel graph, form an angle. When combined with the letter *nga*, the vowel graph *u* tends to flow organically out of the right end of the lower line of the letter *nga*. Since the bottom line of the letter *nga* is thus lengthened, it often resembles the letter *da*. Not infrequently, the vowel graph is also slightly out of line, but the graph starts higher up than in the combination *du*. Both variants of the compound graph *ngu* can be found side by side, even in the same line, in the *Chronicle*. In l. 227, we are dealing with the same word, a compound of *ngang* ཏང་ 'goose' and

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overlap between (Lesser or western) Yangtong, the (western) Women's Dominion, and the country of the 'Goldrace' (Suvarṇagotra), all of which touch upon, or comprise parts of the Indus Valley and the western Cangthang རྩལ་མཚོ་ and hence areas that might have been part of Zhangzhung. See Zeisler (2010) for a detailed discussion of the problem.



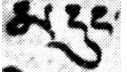
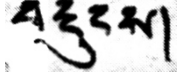

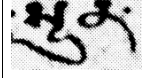
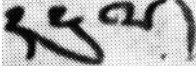

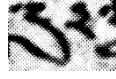


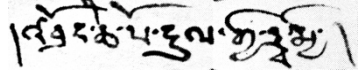

<sup>8</sup> Old Tibetan Documents Online:

[http://otdo.aa.tufs.ac.jp/archives.cgi?p=Pt\\_1287](http://otdo.aa.tufs.ac.jp/archives.cgi?p=Pt_1287), accessed 19 February 2013. For the print version, see Imaeda et al. (2007:218).



*ngur* རྩ་ 'duck' (cf. also l. 226), reduced to *ngangur* རྩ་རྩ་. In the first instance, the vowel is out-of-line, in the second, it flows out organically from the consonant, which thus almost looks like *da*. The case of *Rngulmkhar* is similar, cf. also the rendering of *rngul* in l. 215 in contrast to that in l. 436. The reading *rdul* is thus unwarranted.

Figure 1: Combinations of *du* and *ngu* in the *Chronicle*.

 l. 7: <i>du</i>	 l. 8: <i>du drung</i>	 l. 11: <i>mdung</i>	 l. 58: <i>brdungs</i>
 l. 119: <i>sdur</i>	 l. 150: <i>sngun</i>	 l. 417: <i>dngul</i>	 l. 436: <i>rngul</i>
 l. 226: <i>ngur</i>	 l. 227: <i>ngangur</i>	 l. 227: <i>ngangur</i>	
 l. 215: <i>hbrong chepo rngulgyi rva myi</i>			
 l. 408: <i>Khyunglung ni Rngulmkhar</i>			

While Blezer's contribution still provides valuable insight into how the founder narratives were construed, Beckwith's contribution (164-184: *On Zhangzhung and Bon*) is a marvellous construction of its own, which would have us believe that the words *Bon* and *Bonpo* were late inventions. Old Tibetan texts in which these words appear, such as Pt 1042 (a funeral text) would be "paleographically and linguistically late ... long after the Tibetan Empire period ... thus undoubtedly more or less contemporaneous with the 'transmitted' early Bon texts" (172). This claim is not further substantiated.

*Bon* as a religion would have come into being in the "intermediate propagation [of the faith] period" as an offshoot of a Western Central Asian Buddhist tradition. In contrast to the more

orthodox Rnyingma ལྷོ་མ་ Buddhists, the Bonpo practitioners would have lost the scriptural tradition, and would have incorporated syncretic material into their oral tradition (175).

The name *Bon* would have been derived from the Chinese designation for Tibet 蕃 *fán*, pronounced \**buan* in Middle Chinese. Because in the north-eastern areas, such as Tsongkha, a Tibetan vowel *o* is presently (!) realised as *wa*, ninth century inhabitants of that area would have interpreted \**buan* as *bwan* and as an equivalent for a not yet existing Tibetan word \**bon* (178-182). This Chinese designation for Tibet *buan/ bwan/ bon* would have first been:

applied by the Buddhists of the area to distinguish those Tibetan practitioners who followed a variant tradition unlike the 'mainstream' tradition followed by the Chinese, Sogdians, Uighurs, and the other Tibetans. ... When the school expanded outside the region ... it became known throughout the Tibetan-speaking world as Bon, and the Tibetan adjective form Bonpo was coined for its followers (182).

This implies that the Tsongkha Buddhists in question either did not recognise the meaning of the Chinese word or did not think of themselves or mainstream practitioners in general as being Tibetans. The non-canonical Buddhists in Tsongkha would then have taken over the designation *Bon* 'Tibet' to distinguish themselves from everybody else – and particularly from the rest of the Tibetans?

Then – after how much time? – somebody – the Tsongkha Bonpo? – must have smuggled the texts containing the word *bonpo* (Pt 1038: *On the Origin and Genealogy of the Btsanpo*, 1039: funeral rites, 1042: royal funeral, 1068: animal sacrifice, 1285: *Story of Bon and Gshen competing in their ability to cure diseases*, ITJ 0738, ITJ 740: divination with dice) into the already sealed Dunhuang cave. By doing so, these Tsongkha Bonpo in Dunhuang would have also felt the necessity to refer to place names in Western Tibet such as *yulchabkyi yabgo*, *Rtsang*, and *Guge* (as in Pt 1136)?

The noun *bon*, as an individual term or part of a compound, appears in many Old Tibetan texts. Apart from the already mentioned texts – Pt 1068, 1285, and ITJ 738 – it appears in texts concerning

divination (Pt 1043, 1047, 1051, ITJ 739), funeral rites (Pt 1040, 1134), and animal sacrifices at funerals (1136, 1194, 1289). Twenty-three instances of the word are found alone in ITJ 734 *The Age of Decline*. None of these texts can be described as being at least distantly sectarian Buddhist.

These texts are devoid of the typical, exaggerated elements of the later Gshenrab narratives. Two elderly men, addressed as *pha* བ་ 'father': a *gshenrab(s)* གཤེན་རབ(ས) 'chief ritualist', called *Myibo* མྱི་པོ་, and a *durgshen* དུར་གཤེན་ 'funeral ritualist', called *Rmada* མ་དད་, appear together with other persons in several funeral texts (Pt 1068, 1134, 1136, 1194, ITJ 731; in Pt 1289, a *gshenrabskyi myibo* གཤེན་རབས་ཀྱི་མྱི་པོ་ appears alone). It is evident that these individuals are nothing more than ritual functionaries (cf. Stein 2010: 255-258). The Old Tibetan funeral texts are technical manuals that do not need to prove the ancientness of the rituals described, and the various *Bonpo* and *Gshen* གཤེན་ are mentioned without excitement as if they were well-known and well-established ritual specialists, which they apparently were.

These professionals were so well-known that their appellations could translate the terms used in Chinese polemics against *xieshi* 'false teachers' or soothsayers and *shimu* 'female mediums', terms that refer to ritualists who performed divinations and animal sacrifices. In the Tibetan translations of these polemics, some of which date to the ninth century (e.g., those by Facheng alias Hgos Chosgrub འཕོས་ཚེས་གུབ་), *shimu* is always translated as *bonmo* བོན་མོ་, while *xieshi* is rendered occasionally as *mobon* མོ་བོན་ 'divination-Bon[po]'. This translation is also found in a few Dunhuang documents, among them a Tibetan-Chinese glossary and several translations, such as Pt 742, 748, and 2206 (Stein 2010:246-249). In another translation, Pt 239 fol. 7f., *bon* refers again to 'black' funeral rites, involving a psychopomp sheep. Why should the translations associate these rituals with "specifically *Tibetan* beliefs and practices" (Beckwith p. 182, n. 201, emphasis as in the original), if the original texts referred to Chinese, or at best, international folk traditions?

In the first part of his contribution, Beckwith presents a 'reconstruction' of the name *Zhangzhung*. He starts with the Chinese equivalent *Yangtong* (*Yang-t'ung*), which could be reconstructed

either as *\*lianglœung* or as *\*riangrœung*. Since Tibetan *zh* may correspond to an original Tibeto-Burman *\*ly* or *\*ry*, the Tibetan name *Zhangzhung* could similarly represent either a *\*lyanglyung* or a *\*ryangryung*. The tenth century Persian geographical work *Hudūd al-Ālam* (Minorsky 1937) mentions a place *Rānk-rnk* رانك رنك, which could be interpreted as *Rāngrong* (so by Minorsky 1937:61, 92, 194, and 256). Other readings could be *\*Rāngring* or *\*Rāngrang*.<sup>9</sup>

In an earlier publication, Beckwith (1989:168) maintained that this spelling is erroneous for *Zhāngzhng*, as the discriminating dots of ɹ for *z* and ʒ for *zh* might have been omitted – which in fact does happen, e.g., Beckwith (ibid, 169) mentions the case of a spelling ارا *Arā* for ازا *Azhā*, i.e., the Ḥazha ᠠᠷᠠ. The spelling *Rānk-rnk* could, at least theoretically, also represent the name *\*Zangzang* (cf. the place Zangszangs ཟངས་ཟངས་ in Rtsang), and since it could equally be possible that only one of the two letters had dots, it could also represent a hypothetical *\*Bzangrong* \*བཟང་རོང་ or *\*Rangzhung* \*རང་ལུང་, etc.<sup>10</sup>

In the contribution under consideration, Beckwith suggests that the reconstructed Chinese and pre-Tibetan forms corroborate an original spelling *Rāngrng*. The Persians would have been unable to hear a difference between a palatalised *ry* and a non-palatalised *r*, and hence would have used the letter *r*. The Tibetans, by contrast, would have heard the difference, but would have had no option other than to write the palatalised *ry* as *zh*.

Several questions must be asked. First, why would the reconstructed Chinese name form reflect a palatalised *ry* only in the first syllable, whereas the reconstructed Tibetan form would require a

<sup>9</sup> The long *ā*, seems to mark an accentuated syllable, which leaves the possibility that any vowel could be inserted in the second, unstressed syllable.

<sup>10</sup> However, as an anonymous reviewer (A.J.A., most probably the well-known British Orientalist, Arberry) remarked, it seems that the same place is rendered as *Ang-rang* انك رنك in another thirteenth century Persian work on *The Temperaments of Animals* (A[rberry] 1937). – I am grateful to Rainer Kimmig, Universität Tübingen, and Jan C. Turner, Deputy Librarian at the Royal Geographic Society for independently identifying the author of the review.

palatalised *ry* also in the second syllable? Secondly, why is a pre-Tibetan name form required at all, if the inhabitants of the country did not speak Tibetan before they were conquered by the Tibetans in the mid seventh century, and if the Tibetans merely took over an already existing name? Do the sound changes observed for Tibetan also apply for a language, the linguistic affiliation of which is all but established? Or for a place name that could have been, ultimately, from an Iranian or even Burushaski source? What evidence is there that the Chinese name form was transmitted via the same channels as the Tibetan one?

Furthermore, why should Tibetan writers not have been able to represent a palatalised *ry*, if they consistently used spellings such as ལྷ་ *rhya* over almost 200 years, e.g., ར་སང་རྗེ་འབྲོག་རིང་ལྷ་ལྷ་ *Rasangrjehi blon Ridstagrhya* in the first entries for the mid to late seventh century *Old Tibetan Annals* (Pt 1288 l. 24) and several other names, including ལིག་མྱི་ལྷ་ *Lig Myirhya* (the Zhangzhung King), in the mid ninth century *Old Tibetan Chronicle*? What was the value of the cluster *rhya*, if not a voiceless palatalised *ry*? And if the Tibetans perceived and represented a voiceless palatalised *rhya*, why should they have been unable to perceive and represent the voiced counterpart with *ry*? What exactly is the value of such spellings as *ryel* ལྷེ་ ~ *ryal* ལྷེ་ (Pt 1043), *ryags* ལྷགས་, *ryog* ལྷག་, *rye* ལྷེ་, *ryu* ལྷུ་, *ryung* ལྷུང་ (Pt 1047), *ryu* ལྷུ་, *ryam* ལྷམ་, and again *rye* ལྷེ་ and *ryung* ལྷུང་ in personal and place names in the *Old Tibetan Annals*, such as, e.g., Rasangrje Spung Ryeryung ར་སང་རྗེ་སྤུང་རྗེ་ལྷུང་ (ITJ 0750, l. 72)? Why would the same authors have used the spelling *Zhangzhung*, if the country's name were pronounced \**Ryangryung*?

Finally, how could a tenth century Persian from Khorasan, who never left his country,<sup>11</sup> come to know of a pre-Tibetan pronunciation, if this was not reflected by the ninth to tenth century Tibetan pronunciation and spelling? Unfortunately, the Persians of that epoch were not well informed about Tibet – the *Hudūd al-'Ālam* adds little to our knowledge. It contains many misconceptions in the

<sup>11</sup> Bosworth, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/hodud-al-alam>, accessed 14 May 2013.

spirit of the time, and the text can only be interpreted with knowledge acquired from other sources and, even then, interpretations are often quite speculative. The position of *Rānk-rnk*, e.g., is ambiguous: while it is associated with Western Tibet in the chapter on the provinces, it is associated with southeastern Tibet (present-day Yunnan) in the chapter dealing with the mountain ranges.

McKay (185-206: *In Search of Zhang Zhung – the 'Grey and Empty' Land?*) attempts to situate Zhangzhung "within the political and economic history of the western Himalayas" and to delimit its frontiers (p. 186). Assuming that the Old Tibetan documents reveal a polity with a somewhat centralised administration, one expects that this polity left "traces in the records of its southern and western neighbours" (187). However, since these records remain silent about Western Tibet, McKay concludes that "the western extent of Zhang zhung formed a cultural frontier and that the difficult terrain limited contacts across that frontier" (190). It is lamentable McKay did not consider the sixth to seventh century Chinese sources on Yangtong, Suvarṇagotra, and the so-called Women's Kingdom, made accessible by, among others, Pelliot (1963).

The idea of a cultural frontier is immediately contradicted by the assumption that Zhangzhung could not rely on its own resources, and that the main source of income was long distance trade, mainly the export of gold, borax, salt, and musk. Zhangzhung was strategically located, controlling the routes along the Indus towards Kashmir, along the Satlej and the Karnali towards India (193f.).

McKay takes up an earlier suggestion by Tucci that European models of centralised state formation should be replaced by a model of a dynamic confederation of clans with shared cultural features and shifting power relationships. This model almost inevitably leads to speculations about a tribal network with:

numerous principalities coalesced around their own religio-political centers while still maintaining ritual relationships across a wide geographical expanse reflecting their origins and culture (199).

This would then support an expansion far to the northeast or, alternatively, an origin in the Qinghai (Amdo) area with a subsequent westward migration (200). These are older ideas (as acknowledged by McKay), and they contradict the Bonpo's claims of an origin from Staggzigs ལྷག་གཞིགས་ 'Persia' or the Iranian borderlands, and the observable cultural influences from the west.

McKay further suggests that the ritual influence sphere of protector mountain deities maps the influence sphere of a tribal leader. The merely ritual demarcations could easily be transferred in a basically east-to-west movement (201-203). However, Kailash with its four-river *maṇḍala* is assuredly the result of a west-to-east movement of an original Pamirian model: with four major rivers flowing out roughly in the four cardinal directions: the Tarim to the east, the Gilgit-Indus to the south, the Oxus to the west, and the Jaxartes to the north. These rivers can still be found in Tibetan templates centering on Kailash, although usually helplessly mixed up. If any such conceptual transfer is to be associated with migrations, we should reckon with major migrations from the Pamirian borderlands into Western Tibet and perhaps beyond.

In his second contribution (pp. 207-245: *The Bon of Bon – Forever Old*), Blezer considers the historiographic strategies of the Rdzogschen རྩོགས་ཆེན་ transmissions, starting with the observation that every historian is obliged to 'sell' the historical facts in a narrative form, in which fiction and fabulation naturally intrude. The Bonpo face the additional problem of lacking any written source that verifies their claim that Bon is an indigenous religion of Tibet that even antedates Indian Buddhism.

Blezer lists the most common strategies to bridge the gap, such as projecting the origins of important lineages into a distant past, appropriation (and subsequent dissimulation) of Buddhist narratives, transposition of later events into an earlier period, reduplication of events, extension of life periods, transference of attributes from important historical persons, epic concentration of several figures into one and, finally, intentional manipulation of sources (214-218).

As an example of appropriation of Buddhist figures, Blezer mentions several 'curious' names of the Zhangzhung *Snyanrgyud* ལྷན་རྒྱུད་ (Aural Transmission) lineages (220): Darma Ḥbodde དར་མོ་འབོད་དེ་ (var. Bodde བོད་དེ་), corresponding to Skr. *Dharmabodhi*, perhaps actually Bodhidharma, the first patriarch of Chinese Chan, Dgaḥrab དགའ་རབ་, possibly the Rdzogschen master Dgaḥrab Rdorje དགའ་རབ་རྡོ་རྗེ་, or Gurib ལུ་རིབ་/ Gurub Shinglagcan ལུ་རུབ་ཤིང་ལག་ཅན་, suggestive of Grum Shinglagcan ལུ་མ་ཤིང་ལག་ཅན་ (*aka* Grum Yeshe Rgyalmtshan ལུ་མ་ཡེ་ཤེས་རྒྱལ་མཚན་).

Blezer concludes that the Aural Transmission lineages "show remarkably few signs of editing and cosmetic surgery" (224), their "biographical silence and reticence in the earlier parts" might be the "most eloquent advocate" for their "veracity" (223). Pure inventions would have more likely been prone to narrative inventions. Within an authentic transmission, the making up or the omission of biographical data does not seem allowable, only minor reconstructions in order to avoid gaps or contradictions (223f.). Pages 225-242 give an outline of the early Zhangzhung *Snyanrgyud* lineage.

Kalsang Norbu Gurung (pp. 247-272: *History and Antiquity of the Mdo 'dus in Relation to the Mdo chen po bzhi*) tries to establish the original content of the *Mdo chenpo bzhi* མདོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི་, the 'Four Great *Sūtra.s*' and the relation of the *Mdoḥdus* མདོ་འདུས་ to the *Gzermig* གཞེར་མིག་ as the possible candidates for the unidentifiable first *sūtra*, the *Ḥbyungkhungsmdo* འབྱུང་ལུངས་མདོ་. The sources generally agree that the *Mdo chenpo bzhi* were discovered in Bsamyas བསམ་ཡས་ by two Indian monks, and were translated into Tibetan, the details, however, vary, as the list on p. 253 shows. Bonpo scholars have also been of different opinion concerning the identity of the *Ḥbyungkhungsmdo*.

Thorough investigation of the various sources, however, yields more confusion than clarity (268). Particularly the position of the *Gzermig* as either part of the *Ḥbyungkhungsmdo* or as a compilation from all four *sūtras* remains unsolved. The author follows, tentatively as he assures, the position that it is not the *Gzermig*, but the *Mdoḥdus*, which is to be identified with the *Ḥbyungkhungsmdo* (269f.). However, as it becomes apparent from his discussion, this



position has formed and developed only over centuries. The contribution ends with a list of texts contained in the *Mdo chenpo bzhi*, according to the various sources.

In his second contribution (273-305: *Bon monastic discipline and the great master Dgongs pa rab gsal*), Kalsang Norbu Gurung investigates the origins of the Bonpo *vinaya*. The narrative of the decline of an earlier tradition and the reintroduction of the actual tradition shows clear parallels to the Buddhist tradition. In fact, as the contribution of Nyima Woser Choekhortshang (307-319: *The Origin and Transmission of the Buddhist Lower Vinaya Tradition*) shows, the same foundation figure, the Great Master Dgongspa དགོངས་པ་ or Dgeba Rab(g)sal དགེ་བ་རབ་(ག)སལ་ is claimed by both persuasions. The Buddhist sources even explicitly state that their *vinaya* tradition was of Bonpo origin (Nyima Woser Choekhortshang, 314-316).

There is considerable variation in the individual texts, which necessitates strenuous discussions of identity and who wrote what and when. However, only Kalsang Norbu Gurung provides tables (300-305) that alleviate the limits of memory. His Table 5 shows that not only is the founding figure the same in both traditions, but also a few other figures, such as Muzi Gsalbzangs མུ་བྷི་གསལ་བཟངས་ alias Muzu Gsalhbar མུ་བུ་གསལ་འབར་, Shesrab Tshulkhriims Yazi Bonston ཤེས་རབ་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་ཡུ་བཟོན་ལྷོན་ alias Klumes Shesrab Tshulkhriims ལྷུ་ཁེས་ཤེས་རབ་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་, and the already mentioned Grum Shinglagcan.

Nyima Woser Choekhortshan adds that the very name *Dgongspa Rabsal* may have been translated from the Zhangzhung language: *dgongspa* དགོངས་པ་ would translate *muthur* མུ་ཐུར་, an element that appears in the master's full title Blachen Muthur Dgongspa Rabsal བླ་ཆེན་མུ་ཐུར་དགོངས་པ་རབ་སལ་, whereas *rabsal* རབ་སལ་ would translate the element *kara* ཀར་ of the master's lay name Mañdzu Kara(h)phan མཎྜུ་ཀར་(ཨ)ཕན་ (312f).

The reader thus realises how intertwined Buddhism and Bon were in the early *phyidar*, and the Buddhists' acknowledgement that their *vinaya* tradition was derived from that of the Bonpo may have contributed to the Bonpo's general perception that they represent the older religious tradition in Tibet.

However, as Kalsang Norbu Gurung notes, it is also a fact that the "Bonpos used the name Dgongs pa gsal or Dongs pa rab gsal later than Tibetan Buddhists" (298). Apparently both religious groups "were writing about the same monastic lineage and it is evident that the stories influenced each other" (ibid).

Altogether, this publication leaves the reviewer with mixed feelings. Serious research into the origins of Bon, the prehistory of Western Tibet, or Tibet in general, should be welcomed. Any such attempts must be based on systematic deconstruction of transmitted myths. However, those authors who attempt such deconstruction appear to be caught between a general mistrust in the tradition and their own favourite scenario that, unlike the tradition, is taken for granted. McKay, Blezer, and Beckwith did not bring us any closer to an understanding of the early history of (Western) Tibet. On the contrary, Beckwith's contribution and Blezer's claims about the Silver Castle are misleading, and there is danger that these memes may go viral, as so often is the case with fanciful ideas.

The last two contributions corroborate earlier observations of the close cooperation (and perhaps double identity) of *phyidar* Bonpo and Buddhist masters, and particularly the archaeological data of the three initial contributions should be of greatest interest, especially to students of Tibetan history.

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NON-ENGLISH TERMS

A

*Arā / Azhā* ارا / ازا

B

*bdagi / bdaggi* བདག་ / བདག་གི་

Blachen Muthur Dgongspa Rabsal ལྷ་ཆེན་མུ་ཐུར་དགོངས་པ་རབ་སལ་

Blama Btsanpo ལྷ་མ་བཙན་པོ་

Bodhidharma བོ་ཤི་ཏམ་

*bon, Bon* བོན་

*bonmo* བོན་མོ་

Bonpo བོན་པོ་

Brahmaputra བླ་མཁུ་ཕུ་

Bsamyas བསམ་ཡས་

*Bstanḥbyung* བསྟན་འབྱུང་

\*buan, \*bwan

C

Cangthang ཟུང་ཅང་

Chan མཎ

*chateau poudreux*

D

Darma Ḥbodde / Bode དར་མ་འཛོད་དེ་ / བོད་དེ་

dBus དབུས་

Debgter sngonpo དེབ་གཏིར་སྟོན་པོ་

Dgaḥrab དགའ་རབ་

Dgaḥrab Rdorje དགའ་རབ་རྩོམ་

Dgeba / Dgongspa Rab(g)sal དགེ་བ་ / དགོངས་པ་རབ་(ག)སལ་

*dgongspa* དགོངས་པ་

*Dharmabodhi* ཏམ་བོ་ཤི་

Dkarru Grubdbang Bstanḥdzin དཀར་རུ་གུབ་དབང་བསྟན་འཛིན་

*durgshen* དུར་གཤེན་

F

Facheng

*fán* 蕃

G

Garuḍa ཀརུཌ

Gautama ཀའཏམ

Greater Rtsang རྩང་ཆེན་  
 Grum Shinglagcan གུམ་ཤིང་ལག་ཅན་  
 Grum Yeshes Rgyalmtshan གུམ་ཡེ་ཤེས་རྒྱལ་མཚན་  
 Gshen གཤེན་  
 gshenrab(s) གཤེན་རབ(སེ)  
 gshenrabskyi myibo གཤེན་རབས་ཀྱི་མྱི་པོ་  
 Guge གུ་གེ་  
 Gurgyam གུར་གུམ་  
 Gurib / Gurub Shinglagcan གུ་རིབ་ / གུ་རུབ་ཤིང་ལག་ཅན་  
 Gzermig གཟེར་མིག་

H

Hazha ཨ་ཇ་  
 Hbyungkhungsmdo འབྲུང་ཁུངས་མདོ་  
 Hdarba ཨ་དར་བ་  
 Hgos Chosgrub ཨ་གོས་ཚོས་གུབ་  
 Hode Hosbdag ཧོ་དེ་ཧོས་བདག་  
 Hudūd al-'Ālam حُدُودِ الْعَالَمِ

K

Kailash (Kailāsa) कैलास  
 kara ཀ་ར་  
 Khyunglung ཁུང་ལུང་  
 Khyunglung Silver Castle ཁུང་ལུང་དངུལ་མཁར་  
 Klumes Shesrab Tshulkhirms ཀུམ་མེས་ཤེས་རབ་ཚུལ་བྲིམས་  
 Kunḥbum goḥbyed ཀུན་འབྲུམ་གོ་འབྲེད་

L

Lake Dangra G.yumtsho དང་ར་གཡུ་མཚོ་  
 Lake Mapang མཚོ་མ་པང་  
 Lhari Gyangdo ལྷ་རི་གྲང་དོ་  
 \*lianglung  
 Līg / Leg / Lag Snyashur ལིག་ / ལེག་ / ལག་སྙ་ཤུར་  
 Līg Myirhya ལིག་མྱི་རྩུ་  
 Lopon Tenzin Namdak ལྷོ་བ་དཔོན་བསྟན་འཛིན་རྣམ་དག་  
 \*lyanglung

M

maṅḍala मण्डल  
 Mañdzu Kara(h)phan མཚུ་ཀ་ར་(འ)པན་  
 Mdo chenpo bzhi མདོ་ཆེན་པོ་བཞི་

*Mdohdus* མདོ་འདུས་  
*Mkhargdongri* མཁར་གདོང་རི་  
*mobon* མོ་བོན་  
*muthur* མུ་ཐུར་  
*Muzi Gsalbzangs* མུ་ཟི་གསལ་བཟངས་  
*Muzu Gsalhbar* མུ་ཟུ་གསལ་འབར་  
*Myibo* མྱི་བོ་

N

*Nagchu* ཉག་ཚུ་  
*ngang* ངང་  
*ngangur* ངང་རུར་  
*ngul* རུལ་  
*ngur* རུར་  
*Nüguo* 女國

P

*Panggong Lake* པང་གོང་མཚོ་  
*pha* པ་  
*phyidar* ཕྱི་དར་  
*phyung* ཕུང་

R

*rabsal* རབ་སལ་  
*Rānk-rnk* رانك رانك  
*Rasangrjeḥi blon Ridstagrhya* ར་སང་རྗེ་འོ་ལྷོ་ན་རིད་རྟུག་ཚུ་  
*Rasangrje Spung Ryeryung* ར་སང་རྗེ་སུང་ཕྱེ་རུང་  
*Rbalte / Sbalte* རལ་ཏེ་ / སལ་ཏེ་  
*rdul* རུལ་  
*\*Rdulmkhar* \*རུལ་མཁར་  
*Rdzogschen* རྗོ་གསེ་ཚེན་  
*Rgyalrong* རྒྱལ་རོང་  
*rhya* རུ་  
*\*riangræung*  
*rje Rtsangrjeḥi Phyvah* རྗེ་རུང་རྗེ་འོ་ཕུ་  
*Rkongpo* རྟོང་པོ་  
*Rkongpo Bonri* རྟོང་པོ་བོན་རི་  
*Rmada* རམ་ད་  
*Rngulmkhar* རུལ་མཁར་  
*Rnyingma* རྟིང་མ་

Rtsang རྩང་  
 Rtsangpo རྩང་པོ་  
 Rtsangstod རྩང་སྟོན་  
*ryags* རྟཀས་  
 \**ryangryung*  
*ryal* རྟལ་  
*ryam* རྟམ་  
*rye* རྟེ་  
*ryel* རྟེལ་  
*ryog* རྟོག་  
*ryu* རྟུ་  
*ryung* རྟུང་

S

Sadmarkar སད་མར་ཀར་  
 Śākya ལཱ་ཁྱལ་  
 Shang-shung-la ཞང་ཞུང་ལ་  
 Shesrab Tshulkrims Yazi Bonston ཤེས་རབ་ཚུལ་ཁྲིམས་ཡེ་བོན་ལྗོན་  
*shimu*  
 Shuldkar Rtsangbya G.yungdrungkha ཤུལ་དཀར་རྩང་བྱ་གཡུང་རྟུང་ཁ་  
*shullam* ཤུལ་ལམ་  
 Snyanrgyud སྤྱན་རྒྱུད་  
 Staggzigs ལྷག་གཟིགས་  
 Stonpa Gshenrab ལྷོན་པ་གཤེན་རབ་  
 Suvarṇagotra ལུ་བོ་རྒྱལ་གྱི་རྒྱུ་  
*sūtra* ལུ་རྒྱུ་

T

Ti se ཁྲི་སེ་  
*Tisehi dkarchag* ཁྲི་སེ་འི་དཀར་ཆག་  
*tsheg* ཆེག་  
 Tsongkha རྩོད་ཁ་

U

Uḍḍiyāna འུ་ཊུ་ཡུ་ཤུ་

V

*vinaya* འི་འཇུག་

X

*xieshi*



## Y

*Yangtong* 羊同

yar[cha]b Rtsangpo ཡར་[ཆ]བ་རྩང་པོ་

Yarkluns River ཡར་རྒྱུངས་རྩང་པོ་

yulchabkyi/gyi yabgo ཡུལ་ཆབ་གྱི་ཡ་བལོ་ / ཡུལ་ཆབ་གྱི་ཡ་བལོ་

*yulkhala Rtsangstod rtsanggyi dngo mkhargyi nangnah / ... rje**Rtsangrjeñi Phyvah* // ཡུལ་ཁ་ལ་རྩང་རྟོད་རྩང་གྱི་དངོས་ཁར་གྱི་ནང་ནལ།... རྗེ་རྩང་རྗེའི་ཕུ།།

## Z

Zangszangs ཟངས་ཟངས་

Zhangzhung ཞང་ཞུང་

Zhangzhung Darpa / Darma ཞང་ཞུང་དར་པ་ / དར་མ་