

# MAPPING THE MONGUOR

EDITED BY

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SUMMARY: This book focuses on the people officially referred to in China as the Tu and more commonly known in the West as the Monguor. The Tu live mostly in Qinghai and Gansu provinces, on the northeast Tibetan Plateau. The thirteen contributions in this collection shed new light on diversity among the Tu, challenging representations that treat them as a homogenous category. This mapping of cultural and linguistic diversity is organized according to the three territories where the Monguor live: the Duluun Lunkuang 'The Seven Valleys', where the Mongghul language is spoken; Sanchuan 'The Three Valleys', where the Mangghuer language is spoken; and Khre tse Bzhi 'The Four Estates', where the Bonan language is spoken. In addition to mapping diversity among the Monguor in terms of these territories, we also map the project of the contemporary Chinese state and Western observers to describe and classify the Monguor. Consisting of translations of valuable source materials as well as original research articles, this book is an essential reference work for Tibetologists, Sinologists, Mongolists, and all those interested in cultural and linguistic diversity in Asia. Includes maps, images, references, article abstracts, and a list of non-English terms with original scripts.

COVER: Section of a topographic map of the Duluun Lunkuang, 'The Seven Valleys', one of three traditional Monguor territories on the northeast Tibetan Plateau.

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: MAPPING THE MONGUOR Gerald Roche and CK Stuart	5
THE MONGUOR	
THE ORIGIN OF THE MONGUOR Cui Yongzhong, Zhang Dezu, and Du Changshun; translated by Keith Dede	18
THE FOURTH QINGHAI PROVINCIAL TU (MONGUOR) LITERATURE FORUM Limusishiden and Ha Mingzong	23
DULUUN LUNKUANG 'THE SEVEN VALLEYS'	
MAP OF THE DULUUN LUNKUANG	29
HEALTH AND ILLNESS AMONG THE MONGGHUL Limusishiden	30
A MONGGHUL COMMUNAL RITUAL: DIINQUARI Limusishiden and CK Stuart	64
MONASTIC CUSTOMARIES AND THE PROMOTION OF DGE LUGS SCHOLASTICISM IN A MDO AND BEYOND Brenton Sullivan	84
BILINGUALISM IN SONG: THE RABBIT SONG OF THE FULAAN NARA HUZHU MONGGHUL Qi Huimin and BURGEL RM Levy	106
SANCHUAN 'THE THREE VALLEYS'	
MAP OF SANCHUAN	115
A FAITHFUL SERVANT, SAMT'ANDJIMBA (1816-1900) Valère Rondelez; translated by Xénia de Heering	116
ON THE SHIRONGOLS Grigorij Potanin; translated by Juha Janhunen with assistance from Wen Xiangcheng and Zhu Yongzhong	139
MANGGHUER FOLKTALES AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVES Grigori Potanin; translated by Xénia de Heering	178
MANGGHUER EMBROIDERY: A VANISHING TRADITION Aila Pullinen	189
KHRE TSE BZHI 'THE FOUR ESTATES'	
MAP OF THE KHRE TSE BZHI	241
THE ORIGIN OF GNYAN THOG VILLAGE AND THE HISTORY OF ITS CHIEFTAINS Blo bzang snyan grags; translated by Leags mo tshe ring	242
RKA GSAR, A MONGUOR (TU) VILLAGE IN REB GONG (TONGREN): COMMUNAL RITUALS AND EVERYDAY LIFE Tshe ring skyid	251
AN INTRODUCTION TO RGYA TSHANG MA, A MONGUOR (TU) VILLAGE IN REB GONG (TONGREN) Tshe ring skyid	276
REFERENCES	301
SELECTED NON-ENGLISH TERMS	315
INDEX	333



The thirteen contributions in this collection shed new light on the people, officially referred to in China as the Tu, but in the West more commonly known as the Monguor,<sup>1</sup> who numbered 289,565 in 2010 (Poston and Xiong 2014:118), and who lived mostly in Qinghai and Gansu provinces. While considered in China to be a unitary *minzu*, or nationality, with a single history, language, and culture, and also assumed to be as much by Western scholars, a growing body of research is suggestive of the diversity within this group (Janhunen 2006). One indication of this diversity has been the proliferation of names used to describe localized populations of the Tu, including Karilang, Mongghul, Huzhu Mongghul, Huzhu Tu, Tianzhu Tu, Mangghuer, Gansu Mangghuer, Reb gong Tu, Dordo, Wutun Tu, Baoan Tu, Shaowa Tu, Mongolic Tu, Naringhuor Mongghuor, Datong Tu, and Halchighul Mongghul. Linguistic research has also revealed diversity among the Monguor, showing that their first languages may include Qinghai Chinese (Datong Tu) and other 'Creolized' Sinitic varieties (Wutun), as well as Mongolic (Mongghul, Mangghuer, Reb gong Tu) and Bodic varieties (Shaowa Tu) (Janhunen et al. 2007).

Rather than aiming to provide an encyclopedic account of the Tu, this volume explores the extent of diversity within the group, looking at what divides the Monguor as much as what unites them. Since Monguor Studies is a field that receives little attention, our efforts are aimed primarily at colleagues in other disciplines who may have occasion to mention the Monguor, including Tibetologists, Sinologists, Mongolists, and anthropologists and linguists who work in the area, and typically assume one of these disciplinary perspectives. The Monguor are dealt with differently in each discipline. Tibetologists typically refer to the Monguor as Tibetanized (e.g., Wang 2000) or so 'Buddhicised' as to be effectively Tibetan (e.g., Fischer 2014). Mongolists, and specialists on Inner Asia more broadly, tend to emphasize that the Monguor are Sinicized (e.g., Molnár 1994). Meanwhile, Sinologists drawing on Chinese language sources tend to portray the Tu as an 'indigenous' ethnic group with their own distinct traditions and identity (e.g., Mackerras 2003). What is remarkable about these claims, apart from their obvious contradictions, is their willingness to assume cultural and linguistic uniformity, as well as unity of historical and contemporary identity, with recourse to scant evidence. When the Monguor are mentioned, they are often not discussed in their own right, but deployed as an example of Tibetan cultural sovereignty, degradation of classical Mongol forms, or the capacity (or lack thereof) of the Chinese state to manage its multiethnic population. We hope this book will counter generalizing tendencies when discussing the Monguor. We also hope it will enable researchers to deal more respectfully and accurately with this diverse population beyond categorical generalizations, without recourse to discourses that elide diversity via uncritical use of concepts of fluidity and hybridity, and for purposes other than disciplinary boundary work.

We have adopted a 'mapping' approach to compiling and organizing this book, in order to place internal diversity at the center of our analysis. This is loosely based on the 'cultural mapping' approach used by UNESCO, which is a participatory, GIS-enabled approach that aims to create inventories of 'cultural resources' and thus 'safeguard cultural diversity'.<sup>2</sup> In contrast to this approach, we use 'mapping' in three distinct senses. Firstly, this book maps the cultural and linguistic diversity among different Monguor populations, aiming to trace the extent of difference rather than creating a full

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<sup>1</sup> We use Tu and Monguor interchangeably here.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unescobkk.org/culture/tools-and-resources/tools-for-safeguarding-culture/culturalmapping/>, accessed 7 December 2014.

inventory. We look at traditional forms of knowledge, folk arts, communal rituals, oral traditions, ethnonyms, glottonyms, social organization, and individual biographies in order to clarify the diverse experiences and practices that have constituted what it has meant to be Monguor from the mid-nineteenth century until today.

A second way we use the term 'mapping' is more literal. In addition to asking *who* the Monguor are in all their diversity, we also give attention to *where* the Monguor are. We have organized the book according to traditional territorial forms that structured much of the diversity among the Monguor. At the largest level, we have divided the book into three sections, each dedicated to one of the main Monguor population centers:

- Duluun Lunkuang 'The Seven Valleys', primarily in Huzhu Tu Autonomous County
- Sanchuan 'The Three Valleys', primarily in Minhe Hui and Tu Autonomous County, and
- Khre tse Bzhi 'The Four Estates' in Tongren County.

These three territories are in contemporary Qinghai Province, on the northeastern edge of the Tibetan Plateau.

Figure 1. Monguor population centers on the northeast Tibetan Plateau, in Qinghai Province. Most Monguor live in three prefecture-level administrative units: Xining Municipality (A); Haidong Municipality (B), and; Huangnan (Rma lho) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture (C). The Duluun Lunkuang are primarily in Huzhu Tu Autonomous County (2), but also in Datong Hui and Tu Autonomous County (1), and Ledu County (3). The Sanchuan region is in southern Minhe Hui and Tu Autonomous County (4), and the Khre tse Bzhi are in northern Tongren County (5).<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Maps in the introduction were made by Gerald Roche based on data from the Tibetan and Himalayan Library's interactive map ([www.thlib.org/places/maps/interactive](http://www.thlib.org/places/maps/interactive)) and using the image Subdivisions\_of\_Qinghai\_(China).png available at Wikimedia Commons ([commons.wikimedia.org/](https://commons.wikimedia.org/)).

The distance between these three territories, their lack of social, economic, and other connections, and their embeddedness in distinct local milieus, suggest that they should be treated separately. Beyond this tripartite division of the Monguor territorially, we also 'map' the Monguor spatially at an even finer level, looking at individual communities and communal networks, in order to tease out the organization of difference. Importantly, we make every effort to recognize and name this diversity in both traditional and modern administrative terms.

The final sense in which we 'map' the Monguor is temporally, as the subject of various projects to categorize and manage cultural and linguistic diversity. We see, for example, how the first Western encounters with the Monguor by Catholic missionaries saw them portrayed generically as Mongols. Following this, ethnographer-explorers began a project to disentangle the Monguor and the Mongols, which led to the contemporary state project and the creation, and the subsequent and ongoing reification, of the Tu *minzu*. This sense of 'mapping' crosscuts all the articles in this book, insofar as the diversity detailed in these essays highlights the problematic nature of referring categorically to 'the Monguor' or 'the Tu'. Nevertheless, the first two contributions of the volume deal most explicitly with the contemporary project to create a unitary Tu identity.

The first article in this collection is an encyclopedia entry by Cui Yongzhong, Zhang Dezu, and Du Changshun, translated by Keith Dede, examining the controversial origins of the Tu. The text presents two competing theories on Tu origins, namely the 'Mongol' and 'Tuyuhun' hypotheses, based on evidence from Chinese historical records. This article includes various ethnonyms used to describe the Monguor, as well as numerous extracts from Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911/12) dynasty records. The 'Mongol Theory' suggests that the Tu are descendants of thirteenth century Mongol soldiers, while the 'Tuyuhun Theory' posits that the Monguor originate in an older population that migrated into the region in the third century CE. What remains unexamined in the text is the suggestion that the Tu are a single people with a single origin that can be traced primarily by recourse to Chinese language texts. Evidence from non-textual sources, such as oral traditions or material culture, is given little consideration compared to textual sources. No attempt is made to consider the validity of the question being debated. In this light, the text can be read as a contribution to the ongoing project of constructing the Monguor as an unproblematically unitary ethnic group. By focusing on the controversy of origins, attention is diverted from the controversy of the nature of the Tu as a single *minzu*.

The next contribution in this section deals with continuing efforts to construct the Tu as a *minzu*, and focuses on the Fourth Qinghai Provincial Tu Literature Forum, held 26-28 July 2012 in Weiyuan Town in Huzhu. Limusishiden and Ha Mingzong provide a translation of the Forum program, which primarily focused on situating Tu literature within a framework of Chinese *minzu* literature, and assumes that Tu literature refers to anything written by a person officially classified as Tu, regardless of the writing's content and its relevance to Monguor people, their lived experiences, and their concerns. Limusishiden, who attended the Forum, suggests, in analyzing the Forum's content, that Monguor authors might fruitfully consider focusing on creations that provide more detail about their own culture, people, families, and communities.

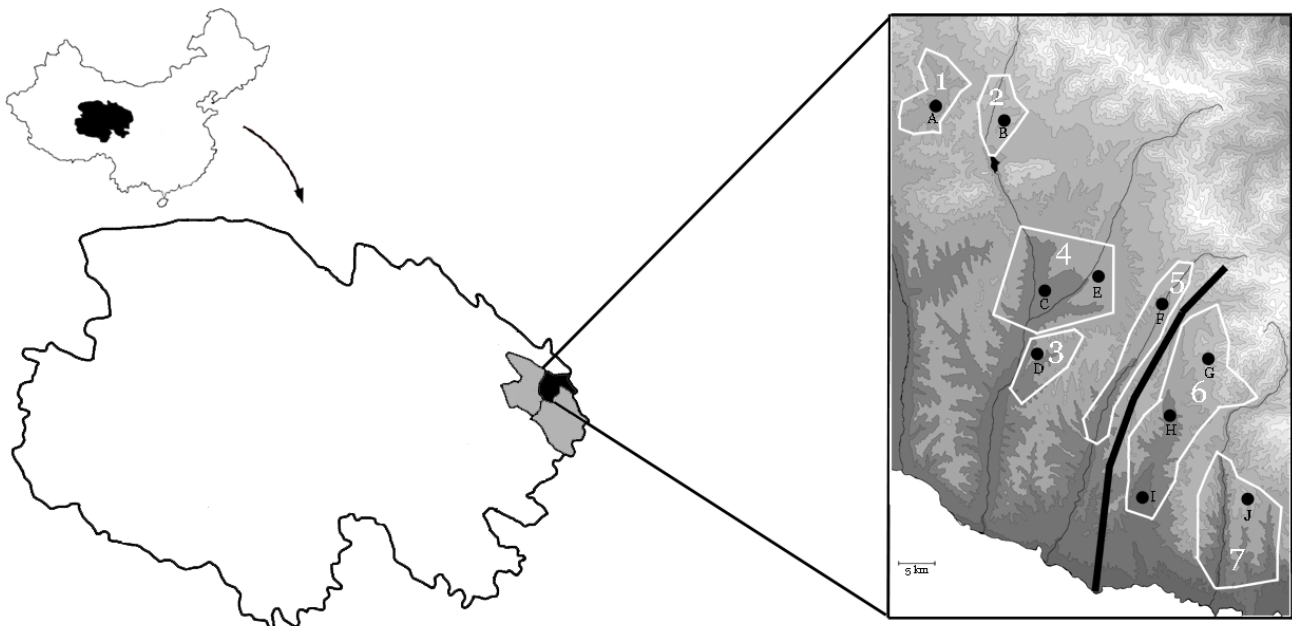
Following this, the book is organized according to traditional Monguor territories. The first of these sections deals with the Duluun Lunkuang, 'The Seven Valleys'. This territory was administered by Rgulang Monastery<sup>4</sup> before 1949. The traditional seven valleys and the modern administrative units they have become are:

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<sup>4</sup> Dgon lung, Erh-ku-lung, Yu-ning, Youning.

- Shdazi Lunkuang: Dala Mongghul Township; Yangja Village, Gaodian Town, Ledu Region; the Shdazi area in Hongyazigou Township, Huzhu County; and Qighaan Dawa<sup>5</sup> (Baiyahe in the north part of today's Dongshan Township, Huzhu County) were historically part of Shdazi Lunkuang, which was one of the smallest *lunkuang* in terms of household and village numbers.
- Tangraa and Shgeayili Lunkuang: Donggou Township, Huzhu County.
- Darimaa Lunkuang: Danma Town, Huzhu County.
- Saishigu Lunkuang: Datong Hui and Mongghul Autonomous County.
- Shde Qurizang Lunkuang: Nanmengxia Town, Huzhu County.
- Wuxi Lunkuang: Wushi Town, Huzhu County.
- Naringhuali Lunkuang: Dongshan Township, Huzhu County.

Figure 2. The Duluun Lunkuang: 1. Saishigu Lunkuang; 2. Shde Qurizang Lunkuang; 3. Naringhuali Lunkuang; 4. Tangraa and Shgeayili Lunkuang; 5. Darimaa Lunkuang; 6. Wuxi Lunkuang, and; 7. Shdazi Lunkuang.



We use the term 'Mongghul' to refer to all residents of the Duluun Lunkuang: those classified as Tu in Huzhu, Datong, and Tianzhu counties and Ledu Region, in addition to the Tu residents of Fulaan Nara,<sup>6</sup> who speak Mongghul and refer to themselves as 'Karilang' (Faehndrich 2007), rather than 'Mongghul'. In the past, residents of the Seven Valleys supported Rgulang Monastery by providing cash, wood, grain, wheat straw, and labor. Similarly, under Rgulang Monastery management, they assisted each other, and other communities in other valleys by, for example, helping villages or households in the case of drought, hailstorms, or fire, and in holding religious rituals. Members from other valleys were also invited to participate in key events held in a certain valley. There were close connections between Rgulang Monastery and all the communities of the Seven Valleys, as well as between those communities.

The first article in this section, by Limusishiden, is Health and Illness Among the Mongghul. Personal accounts of health, illness, and healing among the Mongghul are followed by an examination

<sup>5</sup> In 2012, there was no indication that Qighaan Dawa villagers contacted other villages of Shdazi Lunkuang. Few people knew the historical connection with the villagers of Shdazi.

<sup>6</sup> Fulaan Nara includes today's Songduo and Hongyazigou townships, Wushi Town, Huzhu County, and Dala Mongghul Township, Ledu Region.



of the causes of illness, medical practitioners, disease names and treatments, anatomical terms in the Mongghul language, preventative measures, narratives of the experiences of a Mongghul doctor in Xining (capital of Qinghai Province), and a brief description of contemporary healthcare infrastructure in Huzhu County. As Limusishiden notes, the local perception of the efficacy of traditional medicine has been influenced by family planning policy, changing labor/ work practices that nowadays see young people leaving Huzhu to perform migrant labor and returning with new ideas (including experiences of seeking medical treatment within the biomedical system), and the Rural Cooperative Health Insurance initiative. In total, these changes have increased people's reliance on and trust in the biomedical health system while simultaneously undermining traditional medical knowledge in Huzhu. This article is important in providing a veritable charter of the beliefs and practices among the Mongghul that once formed the foundations of a unique, localized worldview which is now rapidly corroding.

The next article, by Limusishiden and Kevin Stuart, is a detailed description of the Diinquari ritual observed in eight Mongghul villages in the Shdazi Valley, where it is held annually from the twenty-fourth day of the tenth lunar month to the first day of the eleventh month. These dates include the death date of Tsong kha pa as observed by Dge lugs Buddhist communities elsewhere in commemoration of his life. The ritual provides an example of how broad cultural patterns, in this case, Dge lugs Buddhist patterns, are organized and incorporated into territorialized social forms. The article concludes by suggesting that it is unlikely the ritual will continue. Many younger villagers earn cash in urban areas, and an increasing numbers of villagers, once they are financially able, move to towns and cities. With more frequent contact with the world beyond the village, locals quickly adapt to a more modern worldview and style of living that minimizes the value of investing in such rituals as Diinquari, and the traditional social structures through which such rituals were organized rapidly break down.

The following article, by Brenton Sullivan, again examines the role of the Mongghul within the wider Dge lugs Buddhist ecumene. Rather than examining how local society deals with Dge lugs influence, Sullivan examines how Mongghul individuals shaped the Dge lugs world. Sullivan focuses on relationships that existed over multiple generations between the Wang incarnate lama lineage based at Dgon lung Monastery on the northeastern Tibetan Plateau and various polities in Inner Mongolia. Dgon lung was a site of unparalleled influence during the first century of its existence and played an important role in promoting and maintaining orthodox Dge lugs scholasticism locally, and far beyond, to Inner Mongolia. Sullivan pays particular attention to the customary composed by the Fourth Wang Khutugtu (1846-1906) for Eren Monastery in Inner Mongolia, which prescribed the system for nominating, testing, and awarding candidates for scholastic degrees. An important implication of this study is to challenge the reification of the boundaries separating Mongolia from Tibet, and to also look at Monguor individuals and institutions as agents of cultural change, rather than merely as passive recipients of cultural patterns originating in Lhasa or Beijing.

The final article in the section on the Seven Valleys is by Qi Huimin and Burgel RM Levy and is titled *Bilingualism in Song: The Rabbit Song of the Fulaan Nara Huzhu Mongghul*. It provides musical notation, and musical and linguistic characteristics of a Chinese-Huzhu Mongghul bilingual song in the Fulaan Nara dialect of Huzhu Mongghul. Qi, a native of Qinghai Province and Levy, who did linguistic research in the area, collaborate to document a song that alternates between the Qinghai Chinese dialect and Huzhu Mongghul.

The next section of the book deals with Sanchuan, the 'Three Valleys'. Located in the south of Minhe Hui and Tu Autonomous County,<sup>7</sup> Sanchuan is home to a population of Tu now known in the literature as the Mangghuer (Slater 2003, Roche 2011), though they typically refer to themselves simply as *Dasini kun* 'Our People'. The heart of the Sanchuan region is the Guanting Basin, a flat fertile plain that lies on the north bank of the Yellow River, where it slows and broadens before plunging through yet another canyon on its way down from the Tibetan Plateau. The basin is densely settled, dotted with temples and monasteries, and covered in groves of poplar and well-watered fields. Behind the basin rises an arc of mountains, also home to numerous Mangghuer who farm in unirrigated fields on the terraced slopes, and herd sheep in the hills and gullies where it is too steep to farm. Many Mangghuer communities are side-by-side with Tibetan, Han Chinese, and Muslim communities. No single authority ruled over the Three Valleys prior to its incorporation into the modern Chinese state: communities were managed by a complex and fuzzy mosaic of local chieftains, known as *tusi*, monastic estates, village confederations, and direct administration by imperial magistrate.

Figure 3. The Sanchuan region in southern Minhe County. The southern border of the region is formed by the Yellow River, and the eastern and western borders are coterminous with the borders of Minhe County.



The first essay in this section takes us back to the initial appearance of the Monguor in Western literature, and examines the life of Samt'andjimba, a Sanchuan native who came to international attention in the mid-nineteenth century in the writings of the Catholic missionaries Huc and Gabet. Xénia de Heering's translation of the original French article by Valère Rondelez walks us through Samt'andjimba's life as reconstructed from missionary archival sources. Originally a Tibetan Buddhist monk, Samt'andjimba converted to Christianity, and spent much of his life in the company of Christian missionaries, acting as a cultural and linguistic broker between the worlds of Western missionaries and explorers; Tibetan, Mongol, and Chinese spheres; as well as his own home region of Sanchuan. The numerous quotes from nineteenth century European missionaries and explorers offer fascinating insight into how Samt'andjimba was viewed during the first documented cross-cultural encounter between the Monguor and the West. Throughout the article, Samt'andjimba is consistently referred to

<sup>7</sup> Haidong Municipality, Qinghai Province. Within Minhe County, the Three Valleys cover all of Guanting Town and Zhongchuan Township, as well as parts of Gangou, Xing'er, and Qianhe Townships.

as a Mongol, and treated with stereotypes that were typically applied to this category at that time – aimless, wandering, imbued with natural fortitude, but lacking discipline, and so on – all based on the assumption that as a Mongol, Samt'andjimba must have come from a nomadic background.

The next selection – On The Shirongols, written by Grigorij Potanin and translated by Juha Janhunen – ties in with the previous article through the person of Samt'andjimba. During his stay in Sanchuan in 1884-1885, the Russian explorer Potanin was accompanied and guided by Samt'andjimba. Potanin's writing provides the first eye-witness account of Sanchuan in any Western language. It includes detailed and accurate information on language, dwellings, clothing, food, agriculture, weaving and the division of labor, general information on religion, Buddhism and the cult of territorial deities, shamanism, the consecration of a religious icon, rituals during drought and thunderstorms, annual community festivals, and family customs and events. This text also includes perhaps the first attempt to look at the Monguor through a modern ethnographic lens. Potanin collates information on the various Monguor populations, discusses aspects of their history and demography and, after listing several possible ethnonyms, suggests that these populations should be referred to collectively as the Shirongols, a novel ethnonym that he admits to borrowing from Samt'andjimba, but which has never been in use among the Monguor.

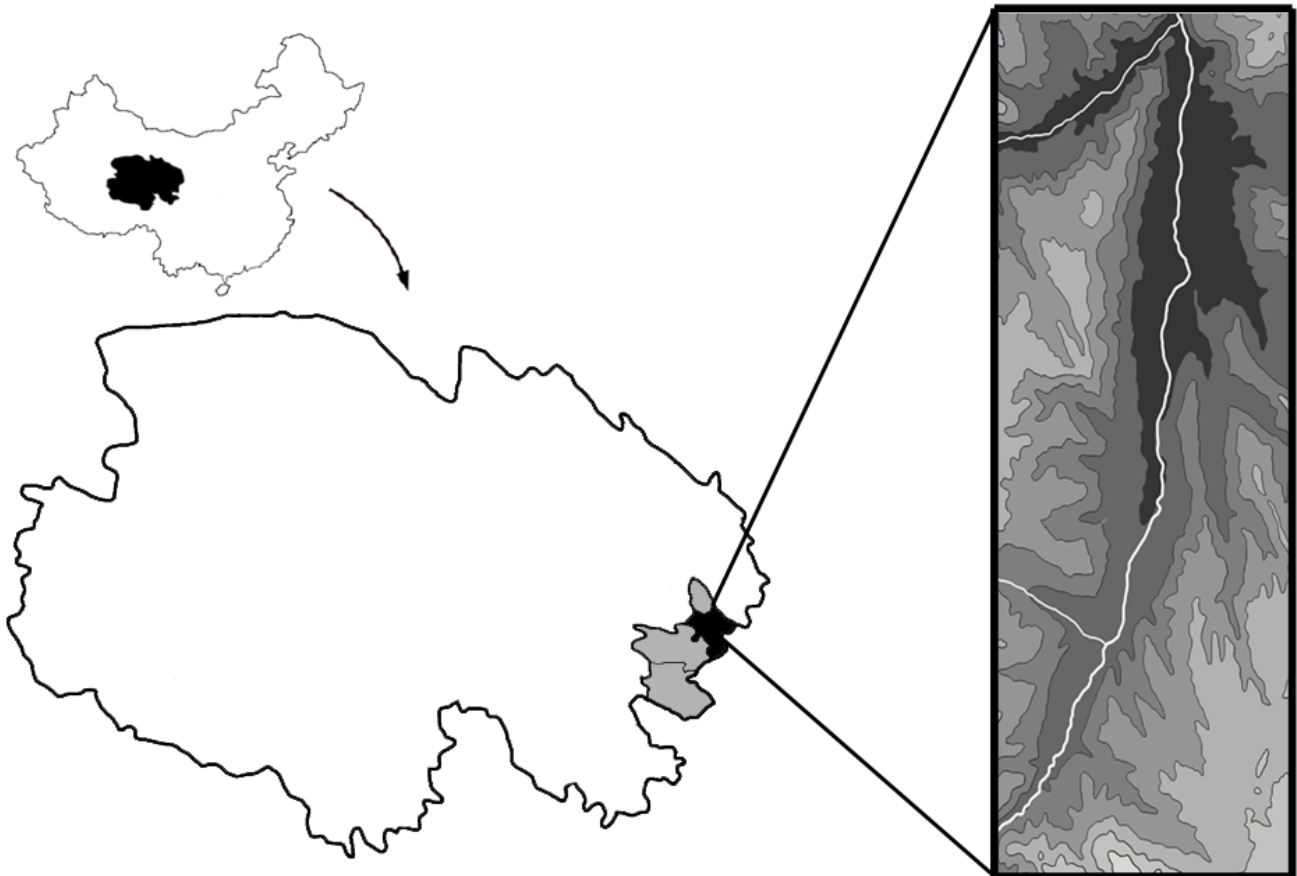
The next selection, also written by Potanin, translated by Xénia de Heering, features eleven folktales and historical narratives that were collected during Potanin's visit to Sanchuan in 1884-1885. These narratives deal with Wencheng Gongzhu, the Chinese bride of the Tibetan emperor, Srong btsan sgam po; the building of the Potala Palace; Tsong kha pa, the founder of Dge lugs Buddhism; the founding of Dmar gtsang Monastery in A mdo; events from the Chinese epic, *Journey to the West*, and events related to Li Jinwang, a Tang Dynasty general, and his adopted son, Li Cunxiao. Like many contributions in the volume, these folktales and their complex origins and local adaptations, reveal how problematic it is to make sweeping statements that define the Monguor as either Tibetanized or Sinicized.

Aila Pullinen presents the final contribution in this section, titled Mangghuer Embroidery: A Vanishing Tradition. Her description of women's folk art practices is based on consultations with numerous artisans and others undertaken during visits to Minhe County in 2001 and 2002. This research presents new information on a significant but unexplored aspect of Monguor women's lives, which have generally been overlooked in scholarship on the Monguor, and includes details of sewing tools and materials, embroidery techniques, embroidered items, and embroidery's significance in Mangghuer women's lives in various stages of the lifespan. The materials are richly illustrated with numerous photographs.

The final section of the book examines the Monguor population of the Khre tse Bzhi, 'The Four Estates' in Tongren County. Now consisting of seven distinct village communities – Gnyan thog, Sgo dmar, Rka gsar, Bod skor, Upper and Lower Seng ge gshong, and Rgya tshang ma – the Four Estates were originally land allotments granted at the founding of the Ming Dynasty to Tongren residents of Chinese and Mongol ancestry. The valley where the Four Estates are found, consisting of the Dgu chu 'River Nine' and its tributaries, is overwhelmingly Tibetan. Nonetheless, inhabitants of the Four Estates today speak two distinct non-Tibetan languages. Residents of Gnyan thog, Sgo dmar, Rka gsar, and Bod skor speak a language that they call Manikacha 'Our Language', but which linguists call Bonan (Fried 2010b) and local Tibetans call Dor skad 'Dor Language'. Meanwhile, residents of Upper and Lower Seng ge gshong and Rgya tshang ma speak a language they call Ngandehua 'Our Language', but which linguists refer to as Wutun (Janhunen et al. 2008) and local Tibetans call, once again, Dor skad. The term Dor in this glottonym refers to the fact that, whilst inhabitants of the Four Estates think of

themselves primarily as Tibetan, they are considered, and consider themselves to be, a distinct population of Tibetans, the Dordo. This term, typically used with derogatory undertones by local Tibetans, but used in a more neutral vein by the Dordo themselves, is employed to refer to residents in all seven villages of the Four Estates, regardless of the language they speak.

Figure 4. The lower reaches of the River Nine in Tongren County. This section of the valley contains the Khre tse Bzhi and its resident Dordo population.



The first article in this section, an excerpt from a book by Blo bzang snyan grags (translated by Lcags mo tshe ring), is titled 'The Origin of Gnyan thog Village and the History of its Chieftains'. It offers an historical narrative that may be seen as either reinforcing or contradicting the origin narratives introduced at the start of this volume. It reinforces by supporting the 'Mongol Theory' of Monguor origins by detailing the migration of Mongol soldiers from the southern banks of the Yellow River to their descendants' current residence in Gnyan thog Village. However, in focusing on the lineage of local chieftains and their relations with local Tibetan society and successive Chinese imperial dynasties, it undermines the official historical narrative of the Tu in demonstrating the lack of connection between the residents of the Four Estates and other Monguor populations, thus suggesting that the origins and historical trajectory of the Dordo should be considered separately from other Monguor.

The second selection on the Four Estates is Tshe ring skyid's article, Rka gsar, a Monguor (Tu) Village in Reb gong (Tongren): Communal Rituals and Everyday Life. Rka gsar is one of four villages in Reb gong where the Mongolic Bonan language (aka Bao'an, Dor skad, and Manikacha) is spoken. The text provides information on the village's location and population, language, livelihood, clothing, religion, and community festivals, focusing particularly on elements distinguishing Rka gsar from

nearby Tibetan-speaking communities. The final section provides information about a significant event in recent local history – a landslide that occurred in 2009.

The third essay in this section is by Tshe ring skyid<sup>8</sup> and is titled An Introduction to Rgya tshang ma, a Monguor (Tu) Village in Reb gong (Tongren). This essay presents background information on Rgya tshang ma Village, one of three villages where Ngandehua (Wutun) is spoken in Reb gong. Information includes population and location; housing; language; subsistence and income, focusing on the annual agricultural cycle; and religion and rituals, focusing particularly on communal rites.

Several principles guided our compilation of these materials. The first relates to the selection of translated texts, and aimed to present significant source materials that provided first-hand and other close-to-the ground observations of life in Monguor communities. In addition to the insights on the internal diversity among the Monguor offered by these texts, they also allow us to map different views of the Monguor held by outsiders over time. The selection of materials was also guided by our aim to map the internal diversity of the Monguor, thus we have included contributions from the three main Monguor territories, focusing on previously undescribed aspects of Monguor life. A final guiding principle was the participation of Monguor people in the project. Limusishiden, Ha Mingzong, Leags mo tshe ring, and both Tshe ring skyids, are Monguor authors who contributed writings or translations about their own communities. Two other Monguor individuals, Zhu Yongzhong and Wen Xiangcheng, also made significant contributions by assisting in the editorial process.

The manner in which we worked with local authors requires some explanation. For these authors, English is a third or fourth language that they have studied formally for only a few years. We worked intensively with these authors to edit their texts for readability, in a process somewhere in the gray regions of the authorial spectrum between editing and writing. Beyond editing the language for readability, we also elicited information from the authors so that their accounts contained maximal detail and specificity. We endeavored to identify the agents of actions, trying to attribute them to specific people or groups whenever possible, so as to reveal locally salient social distinctions based, for example, on age and gender, and to avoid generalizations that suggest unproblematic, unified behavior by collectives of individuals. We also sought specificity of place, tying descriptions to identifiable communities and administrative locations. This was done to avoid generalizing tendencies that suggest that common ethnic identification translates into what occurs in one community standing for the entire ethnic collective. Finally, we also sought specificity in time, seeking constantly to frame our descriptions in terms of the time-span in which they were written. This descriptive strategy, which we call 'restricted normativity', allows us to avoid two poles on the spectrum of possible temporal framings, each with their own shortcomings. On one end is the timeless, imaginary ethnographic present that ignores the dynamic aspect of culture. On the other end is a thin temporal slice of observed events that ignore the repetitive, conservative, prescriptive dimensions of the human experience. Our 'restricted normativity' approach allows us to acknowledge both the stable and dynamic aspects of cultural reproduction without privileging either.

The manner of compiling these materials also reflects our own disciplinary and professional backgrounds. Stuart is a student of culture who has lived in China since 1984. He has conducted research with local scholars on a variety of topics in a number of disciplines, including folkloristics, ethnography, development, ESL, and the environment. Roche is an anthropologist whose work has included a strong applied aspect, working with individuals to document endangered oral traditions and

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<sup>8</sup> Although they share the same name, Tshe ring skyid, the authors of the chapters on Rka gsar and Rgya tshang ma are different people.

other aspects of vernacular culture in their communities. We have both worked as English teachers in China, primarily with ethnic minority students in Qinghai, and in addition to classroom teaching, worked to develop linguistically and culturally appropriate materials and curriculum for students.

Preparing these materials presented numerous practical challenges and difficult editorial decisions. One of the most significant regards the representation of non-English terms from several languages (Mongolian, Mangghuer, Mongghul, Bonan, Chinese, Wutun, and Tibetan), especially when these had first been filtered through one or more other languages, for example, Chinese terms which had been rendered in French, Mongolian terms in Tibetan, Tibetan terms in Russian, and so on. Every attempt was made to render these terms in contemporary standardized orthographies: Hanyu Pinyin for Chinese, Wylie for Tibetan, Janhunen et al.'s (2008) system for Wutun, Slater's (2003) system for Mangghuer, and Mongghul Pinyin for Mongghul (Limusishiden and Dede 2012). We were unable to identify a number of terms, however, and have left them in the form they were presented in the original articles. The Manikacha (Bonan) language presented a unique challenge, as it has no formally recognized orthography. Following local folk orthographic practices, Tshe ring skyid chose to render her language in Tibetan script, which we then Romanized using the Wylie system. Readers familiar with Tibetan should note, however, that her transcription follows an A mdo pronunciation of the Tibetan syllabary. We have provided the non-Roman script equivalents for all terms that we were able to confidently identify, which was somewhere between eighty and ninety percent of all non-English terms. Other terms were too ambiguous for us to confidently identify. In certain cases where a term in Mangghuer or Mongghul has obvious origins in Tibetan or Chinese, we have noted those equivalents, but we have consistently sought to maintain Romanizations that reflect local language practice rather than the 'correct' renderings of source languages.

The use of square brackets [] throughout indicates editorial comments that we added in order to clarify and expand on certain points, and also in instances where rendering non-English terms into contemporary Romanization schemes has involved considerable interpretation on our behalf. We have also, in certain cases, provided tables of equivalencies showing the original spellings and the contemporary forms used in the text.

In addition to placing non-English terms in contemporary Romanization schemes, we have endeavored to locate all places mentioned in the text within the framework of contemporary administrative structures of the People's Republic of China. In some cases this was straightforward, but in many cases it involved a degree of interpretation, while in a few instances even pure guesswork was fruitless. As with renderings of general non-English terms, we have footnoted or provided tables of equivalences to show original forms in cases that seemed less than obvious. We have also changed original measurements, for example, in ells, fathoms, and feet, into the metric system.

In addition to these challenges of 'modernizing' the texts, another challenge was finding complete bibliographic information for the sources mentioned by the authors of translated texts. While every effort has been made to find such information, the incompleteness of the original articles has made this impossible in certain cases. Such citations are marked with asterisks to indicate that they contain no corresponding bibliographic entry.

In addition to the general issues above, we also note that in the translated article originally authored by Rondelez, we have omitted the 'Mr.' and other titles before surnames, other than in direct quotes; added a list of abbreviations; broken longer passages into shorter passages to assist the reader; and have made the occasional correction in obvious misspellings.

This work has taken almost ten years to complete. In the course of that time the editors have amassed many debts of various kinds to numerous people. In addition to all the authors and

translators, the editors wish to thank the following people for their help in making this book possible: Juha Komppa, Keith Slater, Bianca Horrleman, Tatiana Krampe, Klu rgyal 'bum, Dirk van Overmeire, Timothy Thurston, Elena McKinlay, Zhu Yongzhong, Wen Xiangcheng, Colin Mackerras, Jonathan Kramer, Françoise Pommaret, Berthe Nuevenzonderachternaam, and Bernard Roche. While completing this book, Roche was a post-doctoral research fellow at the Hugo Valentin Centre, Uppsala University, and would like to thank his colleagues at the center and elsewhere in the university for their encouragement, support, and stimulating company: Åsa Viridi-Kroik, Christin Mays, Florian Krampe, Hiroshi Maruyama, Ilmari Käihkö, Imke Hansen, Jelena Spasenic, Jonathan Hall, Leena Huss, Roland Kostić, and Tomislav Dulić. Thanks also to people who provided feedback on several versions of the cover of this book: Daniel Miller, Emanuele Gelsi, Lhagyal Dak, Dawa Drolma, and Ralph Litzinger.

Gerald Roche, Uppsala, December 2014

CK Stuart, Xi'an, November 2014





THE  
MONGUOR

## THE ORIGIN OF THE MONGUOR

Cuī Yǒnghóng 崔永红, Zhāng Dézǔ 张得祖, and Dū Chángshùn 杜常顺;  
translated by Keith Dede (Lewis and Clark College)

### ABSTRACT

This translated excerpt from the *Comprehensive History of Qinghai* examines two theories regarding the origin of the Monguor: the 'Mongol Theory' and the 'Tǔyùhún Theory'. The Mongol Theory, which is given most space in this text, suggests that the Monguor are descendants of thirteenth century Mongol soldiers. In contrast, the Tǔyùhún Theory suggests that the Monguor originate in an older population that migrated into the region in the third century CE. In addition to discussing these theories of Monguor origins, this text also provides various ethnonyms used to describe the Monguor in Chinese historical records, and gives extracts from Míng (1368-1644) and Qīng (1644-1911/12) dynasty records referring to the Monguor.

### KEYWORDS

Mongol, Monguor, origins, Qinghai, Tu, Turen, Tuyuhun

### ORIGINAL TEXT

Cuī Yǒnghóng 崔永红, Zhāng Dézǔ 张得祖, and Dū Chángshùn 杜常顺 (eds). 1999. *Qīnghǎi tōngshǐ* 青海通史 [*Comprehensive History of Qinghai*]. Xīníng 西宁: Qīnghǎi rénmin chūbǎnshè 青海人民出版社 [Qīnghǎi People's Press], 268-272.

### THE TRANSLATED TEXT

The Tǔzú refer to themselves as 'Ménggǔ'ér' (Mongolian) and 'Cháhǎnménggǔ'ér' (White Mongolian). The Tǔzú are a new ethnic community descended from Mongolians who entered and resided in the Hé-Huáng region of Qīnghǎi in the Mongol Yuán Dynasty (1279-1368), and who were formed after assimilating members of the Hàn and Tibetan ethnicities and elements of those cultures.

During the Yuán Dynasty, various Mongolian people moved into the present northwestern Gānsù-Qīnghǎi-Níngxià region under all kinds of circumstances. A significant number settled and became new native peoples. In the Míng Dynasty (1368-1644), Hàn and other ethnic groups referred to these descendants of Mongolians as 'Dádá', 'Dámín', 'Tǔdá', 'Tǔmín', and 'Tǔrén' (native people). For example, the third chapter of the Wànlì era (1573-1619) *Níngxià Gazetteer* records:

高祖略定陕西，残元部落率众归附，立灵州守御千户所，其属处于瓦渠四里为民，号'土达'

When Gāozǔ took control of Shǎnxī, the remnants of the Yuán armies led the masses into submission (to the Míng). A 'qiānhùsuǒ' protecting Língzhōu was established, and their camp-followers were settled in Wǎqúsilǐ as civilians and called 'Tǔdá'.

Also, the seventeenth chapter of the Kāngxī era (1661-1722) *Mín Prefectural Gazetteer* cites Wáng Yúnfēng's (of the Míng Dynasty) *Records of the Rebuilt School*, where it is recorded:

其在前元降者为土民

Those that surrendered from the Yuán of former times were regarded as 'Tǔmín'.

Again, the third chapter of the Qiānlóng era (1735-1796) *Zhuānglàng County Gazetteer* quotes the words of a Míng era county magistrate, Dòu Wényǔ, saying:

又见土达军户皆防御三边之卒，犹是元之种类，归附为民。

Moreover, there appeared soldiers of 'Tǔdá' military households who defended the three borders; they were of the Yuán category, and they all submitted [to the Míng] and were made civilians.

Examples of this sort are extremely easy to compile from the literature concerning the Northwest in Míng and Qīng times.

These descendants of the Mongolians, who were called 'Tǔdá', 'Dámín', 'Tǔrén', and 'Tǔmín', had long been separated from the main part of their ethnic group and the grassland region where they originally resided. After the fall of the Yuán Dynasty they lost their privileged position as the ruling ethnic group. As a result, their economic life, culture, customs, and ethnic consciousness was influenced by other ethnicities and cultures, which gave rise to a great deal of variation. This led to the gradual diminishment and even extinction of their original Mongolian characteristics. Some among them were gradually assimilated into other ethnicities, while others formed a new ethnic community upon assimilating to other ethnicities and mixing elements of other cultures with their own. The formation of the Tǔzú is the concrete embodiment of this historical phenomenon.

The Tǔzú were a portion of the people described above who were referred to as 'Tǔdá', 'Dámín', 'Tǔmín', and 'Tǔrén'. Therefore, these names are those that other ethnic groups (primarily the Hàn) used to refer to the Tǔzú throughout history (especially in the Míng-Qīng era). For example, the Tǔzú of Yǒngdèng County, Gānsù Province (which in Míng times was the Zhuānglàng Commandary) were referred to as 'Tǔrén', 'Tǔmín', and 'Tǔdá' in the Míng era. Moreover, *The Veritable Records of Míng: Yīngzōng*, Chapter 150 records:

命陕西庄浪卫土官指挥同知鲁失夹子鉴袭父职，管领土达官军操备。

[The Emperor] ordered the son of Lǔshījiā, the local commander of the Zhuānglàng Commandary in Shǎnxī to succeed to his father's position, and take charge in the exercise and training of 'Tǔdá' officers and troops.

As for this Mister Lǔ, his family ruled the local people for generations during the Míng-Qīng era; he himself was the descendant of the Mongolian ruling clan. Also, the residents of Bāzhōu, Hóngyá, Lǎoyā, and Sānchūānsìlǐ were primarily 'Tǔrén', as recorded in the Míng era *Gazetteer of the Xīníng Commandary*:

西宁卫，领驿七，递运所四，俱本卫三川等四里土民金当，自备马，骡，牛只

The Xīníng Commandary governs seven relay stations and four transfer posts, all of which are staffed by the 'Tǔmín' of this commandary's four districts, such as Sānchūān. The staff provides their own horses, mules, and cattle.

These locals were referred to as 'Tǔmín' (native people). The *Veritable Records of Míng: Yīngzōng*, Chapter Twenty-three, records:

免西宁卫达民税粮。先是，镇守西宁署都指挥佥事金玉奏：'洪武，永乐中，达民止当马牛站铺，耕种自食，其后设立里甲，征收税粮，以致逃窜。

[We order that] the 'Dámín' of the Xīníng Commandary be made exempt from the grain tax. Originally, Jīn Yù, the commander of affairs stationed at the Xīníng Bureau, memorialized, saying: "In the times of Hóngwǔ [1368-1398] and Yǒnglè [1403-1424] the 'Dámín' stopped serving at the horse and cattle stations, and cultivated fields to feed themselves, after which they established local protective organizations and collected grain taxes to alleviate [the problem of] escapees [from the protective system]."

Since the Tǔzú refer to themselves as 'Ménggǔ'ér', and throughout history have been referred to as 'Tǔdá', 'Tǔmín', then their deep historical relationship with Mongolians should be obvious. According to the *Veritable Records of the Míng: Xuānzōng*, Chapter Thirty-seven, the Hézhōu area, which was administered under the Xīníng Commandary, was "mostly inhabited by 'Tǔdá' foreigners." And, *Summary Records on the Qín Frontier*, written during the Kāngxī era (1661-1722), says that in the Hézhōu area, "there are many 'Tǔrén'." Therefore, we must regard these 'Tǔdá' and 'Tǔrén' as the same ethnic community traceable to the same stock. Moreover, the *Summary Records on the Qín Frontier* also records that the author investigated the origins of the Tǔrén (native people) of the frontier:

土人或云：其先世夷人。。。西宁庄浪者亦然。

Some among the Tǔrén say that their ancestors were 'Yí' people ... and that this is true of those in Xīníng and Zhuānglàng.

Throughout the *Summary of Records on the Qín Frontier*, wherever the term 'Yí' people' is used, it refers to Mongolians. As this makes clear, the native people of Hézhōu, Xīníng, and Zhuānglàng all have a common origin, and they originated as Mongolians.

In Tibetan historical materials, the native people of the south slopes of the Qílián Mountains and the Dàtóng and the Huáng river valleys are classified as originating from the Mongolian Prince Kōten (Kuòduān) (d. 1251) who was first stationed in Liángzhōu's Yǒngchàng, and who passed through Tibetan areas. *The Orthodox History of Amdo* records:

华热[按：今甘肃天祝，永登及青海大通，互助一带]这个地区里还有蒙古阔端汗，亦译作'库腾'的部下后裔，如吉家，李家，鲁家，杨家等等许多小土管。

In the area of Huárè [from Tiānzhù and Yǒngdēng counties, Gānsù Province, to Hùzhù and Dàtōng counties, Qīnghǎi Province] there are still military descendants of the Mongolian General Kōten; for example, such minor local officials as the Jí Family, Lǐ Family, Lǚ Family, and Yáng Family.

The Jí, Lǐ, and Lǚ families mentioned in this quote are undoubtedly the famous native local officials and *túsī* families of Gānsù and Qīnghǎi in the Míng-Qīng era. Moreover, Yáng is an important family name among the Tǔzú. Another Tibetan historical document, *A Brief History of Yòuníng Monastery*, records:

从前，大地梵天江格尔汗[按：成吉思汗]的大臣格勒特带领部属来到这里[按：佑宁寺所在的今互助地区]，现在的霍尔[即土族]多为他们的后裔。

In the past, Gélètè, the great official of Genghis Khan, came to this place (the area in Hùzhù County around Yòuníng Monastery) leading his military and their subordinates. The Hor (i.e., Tǔzú) of today are mostly their descendants.

The same text also records:

关于霍尔人的历史，从前霍尔王的后裔额尔丹王带领他的许多家人来到这里，相传后来融合于郭隆地区[按：佑宁寺所在地]，居住在威远堡[按：今互助土族自治县所在地]。。。后代繁衍。

As for the history of the Hor, in the past, King E'érdān, the descendant of the Hor king, led many of his family to this place. According to legend, they later mixed in the Guōlóng area (the location of Yòuníng Monastery), and resided in Wēiyuǎn (the location of the county seat of Hùzhù)...their descendants gradually increased in number over time.

The names 'Gélètè' and 'E'érdān' in the previous quotations are close in pronunciation, and they probably represent different ways of transcribing the same name. When Yòuníng Monastery was founded, Gélètè was honored as a protective deity.

Moreover, according to the investigations of a Tǔzú scholar:

民和县三川土族地区石崖上有个崖尔寺。寺内供的神名叫郭尔朵的的['的的'，三川土语，爷爷的意思]。据说郭尔朵是蒙古人，成吉思汗的大将，带兵打西藏，退兵时找不到马镫，便同部众在三川一带居留下来，和当地的妇女结了婚。

In Shíyá in the Sānchūān Tǔzú area of Mínhé County there is a Yá'ér Monastery. Within the monastery the name of the god to whom offerings are made is 'Guō'érduǒ dīdī' ('dīdī' means 'paternal grandfather' in Sānchūān Tǔ language). According to the story, Guō'érduǒ was Mongolian, a great general of Genghis Khan. He led troops to fight in Tibet, and when returning he could not find his stirrups, so he and his troops settled in Sānchūān and married local women.

Some scholars believe:

格日勒图[格勒特]和郭尔朵是一人，是放音之差，民和的郭尔朵是互助的格日勒图。。。这则传说与藏文《佑宁寺志》的记载完全相符

Gérìlètú (Gélètè) and Guō'érduǒ are the same person; this is a difference in pronunciation. Mínhé's Guō'érduǒ is Hùzhù's Gérìlètú. ... This legend is in complete agreement with the records of *The History of the Yòuníng Monastery*.

In making the connection to the records of *The Orthodox History of Amdo*, it is probably the case that 'Gélètè', 'E'érdān', and 'Guō'érduǒ' are all the same name as Koten, the Mongolian general. Therefore, the majority of the Tǔzú originated in the Mongol Empire and from the Mongolians, who repeatedly immigrated in the Yuán Dynasty, and there is an especially close connection with the armies of Khoten, the King of Yǒngchàng.

Another powerful piece of evidence supporting the position that the Tǔzú descended from Mongolians is that the languages of the Tǔzú belong to the Hé-Huáng group of Mongolic languages. The basic vocabulary of the Tǔ and Mongolian languages are the same. They share common morphological categories and grammatical forms. Especially significant is that the modern Tǔ

language, in terms of its phonetic features, syllable structure, and basic word meaning, is even closer to the Mongolian language of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

As an independent ethnic community, the Tǔzú formed around the time of the late Míng Dynasty.

Certainly, regarding the origin of the Tǔzú, at this point in time there is no settled opinion that receives the general acceptance and support of the academic community. In this work, we selected the 'Mongol Theory', which is the amalgamation of the research results of previous scholars who hold this position and the fruits of the investigations of this book's authors. Limited by the form and scope of this book, we are not able to present it in full.

In the view of others, the 'Tǔyùhún Theory' holds great influence. This theory holds that the Tǔyùhún Kingdom (~285-670) has a history of more than 300 years in Qīnghǎi, and was wiped out by the Tǔfān in the Lóngshuò era of the Táng Dynasty (618-907). A small group of their people followed the royal court and moved east to the area of Níngxià, Shǎnběi, and Shānxī, while the majority of their people stayed behind in their homeland. This latter group, except those who were assimilated into the Tǔfān, lived and flourished on the southern slopes of the Qílián Mountains and north of the Huáng River. In Classical Tibetan documents, the Tǔyùhún are referred to as 'Ācháí' (Āxià) or 'Hor'; this 'Hor' is a phonetic correspondent to the 'hún' of the Tǔyùhún. After the Mid-Táng (eighth century) the Tǔyùhún were referred to as 'Tǔhún', 'Tuìhún', and simply 'Hún'. In Tǔzú areas today, many villages use 'Hor' (sometimes written as Hé'ér, or Hè'ér) in their name, and there is a legend among a group of Tǔzú that their ancestors were called 'Hor'. In the investigation of Tǔzú history, Tǔzú people claim that their ancestors migrated from a place in the northeast called 'Húsījǐng'. This, and the historical fact that the Tǔyùhún came to Qīnghǎi from western Liǎodōng, substantiate each other. In Yuán times, Mongolians emigrated to Qīnghǎi and merged with the descendants of the Tǔyùhún, who were called 'Hor' by the Tibetans, and they absorbed members of such other ethnic groups as the Hàn and Tibetans, and formed a new ethnic community. Throughout the process of forming the Tǔzú, the Tǔyùhún were in the dominant position. The name of the Tǔzú, then, came from the *tǔ* in 'Tǔyùhún'. The *hún* means 'person' in Mongolian. 'Tǔhún' is then simply 'Tǔrén'. The name 'Tǔyùhún' died out in Yuán times and was replaced by the term 'Tǔrén' (native people).

The Tǔzú primarily reside in the valleys of the Huáng and Dàtōng rivers. A small group resides along the middle reaches of the Lóngwù River south of the Yellow River. In Yuán and Míng times the Tǔzú and their ancestors engaged in both agriculture and animal husbandry. Owing to the powerful influence of Hàn Chinese and the fact that the majority of Tǔzú reside in relatively low altitudes along river valleys that are better suited for cultivation, agriculture has taken an increasingly important position in their socio-economic life.

Because Tǔzú live in communities mixed with Hàn and Tibetan populations, their culture has been greatly influenced by them. The Tǔzú mostly believe in Tibetan Buddhism.

## THE FOURTH QINGHAI PROVINCIAL TU (MONGUOR) LITERATURE FORUM

Limusishiden (Li Dechun 李得春, Qinghai University Attached Hospital)  
and Ha Mingzong (translators)

### ABSTRACT

Limusishiden describes the Fourth Qinghai Provincial Tu (Monguor) Literature Forum held 26-28 July 2012 in Weiyuan Town, Huzhu Tu Autonomous County, Haidong City, Qinghai Province, PR China; comments on the Forum; and suggests Monguor writers focus on writings that provide much detail about their own culture, people, family, and communities.

### KEYWORDS

literature forum, minority literature in China, Monguor, Qinghai, Tu, Tu literature

### INTRODUCTION (Limusishiden)

I was fortunately invited to attend the Fourth Qinghai Provincial Tu (Monguor) Literature Forum held 26-28 July 2012 in Weiyuan Town, Huzhu Tu Autonomous County, Haidong City, Qinghai Province. Before this meeting, I was unaware that such forums had been held previously, and without an invitation, it would have been impossible for me to have attended.

In about 1989, I had begun studying and publishing Mongghul folklore and linguistic work with international scholars in English and written Mongghul. Until 2013, few scholars in China knew much about my Mongghul culture work, because my papers and books were not published in Chinese. A Chaoyang, Vice-chair of the Xining Literary Federation, is a poet who speaks Mongghul. He is a native of Rgulang Village, where the key Mongghul monastery, Rgulang, is located (Wushi Town, Huzhu County). As a close friend of mine, he was aware of my interest in Monguor culture, and thus he arranged for me to attend the forum. To my knowledge, I was the only person who attended the forum who has published about the Monguor in English and Mongghul – all other authors used Chinese as their medium of communication.

I did not attend the first day of the forum. I arrived at the venue on the second day. The forum was held in the conference room of the Tianyoude Hotel, probably the most luxurious hotel in Weiyuan. With about sixty people in attendance, the conference room seemed crowded.

On the morning of the second day (27 July) professors Zhong Jingwen and Yang Chun, and researcher Tang Xiaoqing – all from Beijing – lectured on Chinese ethnic minority research and written literature in general. They did not focus on Monguor literature. A few leaders gave speeches in the afternoon

On the morning of the third day (28 July) of the forum, MA students from the Department of Literature, Faculty of Minority Languages and Literatures, Minzu University of China (Beijing) evaluated some Monguor writers' published works. For example, one MA student commented on Bao Yizhi's *Mill Valley's Last Mill*. Another MA student commented on Qi Jianqing's *A Jade Tree in the Wind*. A retired Monguor professor lectured on 'Monguor Myths and Legends in Ancient Times'. Each person spoke for about fifteen minutes, and there were one or two questions from the audience following each speech. After lunch, the scholars and students from Beijing were taken to visit Minhe

Hui and Monguor (Tu) Autonomous County, signaling that the forum was over.

As the title of the forum suggests, the focus was on Monguor 'literature'. Points made included the importance and value of preserving Monguor culture, related research on language use, the endangered status of Monguor culture, and so on. Certain Monguor writers have written novels, articles, and poetry that lack a Monguor focus. Originally from Minhe, Bao Yizhi writes about life along the Huang River,<sup>1</sup> focusing on life in Haidong City. Qi Jianqing's work is unrelated to anything that can be identified specifically as Monguor.

Li Zhuoma from Huzhu County, in her first novel, *Tears Made Cactus*, explores modern city life. Dong Yongxue's and Na Chaoqing's writings reflect their memories of living in Mongghul villages and experience when they were teachers in public schools in Huzhu County. What they write about Mongghul culture is simplistic and superficial.

My impression was that this forum was very distant from anything distinctively Monguor. For example, although the forum was held in Huzhu, nobody used the Mongghul language. To-date, I am unaware of any Monguor whose writing has really focused on Monguor culture and life. I hope that Monguor writers will do what Tibetan writers like Alai have done – write passionately and with insightful detail about their own culture, people, family, and communities.

#### THE TRANSLATED TEXT

Program, the Fourth Qinghai Provincial Tu (Monguor) Literature Forum Weiyuan Town, Huzhu Tu Nationality Autonomous County, 26-28 July 2012.

Date	Time	Contents	Location	Host
July 26	All day	Registration	Lobby	The Forum Committee
	18:00	Meal	Dining hall, 1st floor	The Forum Committee
July 27	9:00	Seminar 1. Prof. Zhong Jingwen: Some Reflections on the Development of Ethnic Written Literature 2. Prof. Yang Chun: Contemporary Ethnic Minorities' Literature Writing and Research. (Creation of and Research on Contemporary Ethnic Written Literature) 3. Researcher Tang Xiaoqing: (Some Personal Reflections on Ethnic Minority Research) 4. Discussion	Conference room, 3rd floor	Ma Guangxing
	15:00	Opening Ceremony 1. Leader's speech/ Message 2. Group Photo	Conference room, 3rd floor, Ecological Park	Qi Jianqing

<sup>1</sup> [Huangshui.]



	17:30	Entertainment/Dinner	Dining hall, 1st floor	The Forum Committee
July 28	9:00	1. Interaction 2. Conference summary	Conference room, 3rd floor	Ma Guangxing Qi Jianqing
	13:00	1. Local visits 2. Departure	Hotel entrance	Ma Guangxing

Participants, the Fourth Qinghai Provincial Tu (Monguor) Literature Forum.

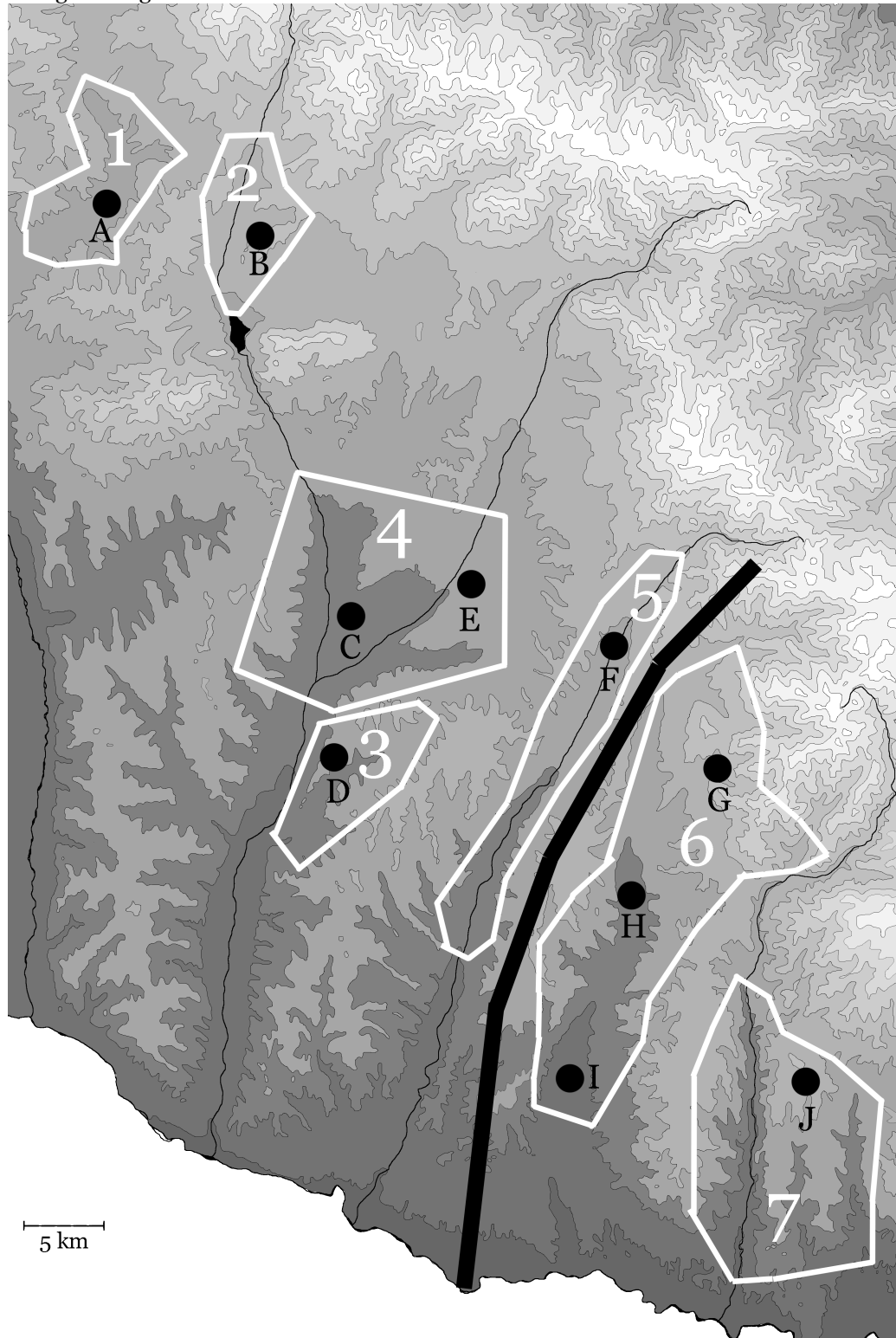
Names	Place of Work and Title
Jidi Majia	Director, Qinghai Provincial Propaganda Department; Qinghai Provincial Party Standing Committee
Bao Yizhi	Vice-Chairman, Qinghai Provincial Political Consultative Conference; Tu writer
Zhao Yongxiang	Deputy Director, Qinghai Provincial Propaganda Department
Ban Guo	Party Secretary and Chairman, Qinghai Provincial Literary Federation
Zhu Xiangfeng	Chief Editor, <i>Qinghai Daily</i>
Ma Youyi	Vice-Chairman, Qinghai Provincial Literary Federation Party Member; Professor
Qi Jianqing	Deputy Director, Political Department, Qinghai Provincial Military Command; Vice-Chairman, Qinghai Provincial Writer's Association; Tu writer
Wu Jiexun	Deputy Director, Qinghai Provincial Culture and News Publication Department
Zhong Jingwen	Head, Department of Literature, Faculty of Minority Languages and Literatures, Minzu University of China
Tang Xiaoqing	Deputy Director, National Institute of Literature, China Social Science Academy; Editor, <i>National Literature Studies</i> (journal); Deputy Director, Institute of Ethnic Minority Literature, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
Yang Chun	MA Candidates' Instructor, Professor, Department of Ethnic Minority Language and Literature College of Central Nationalities University; MA Student Advisor, Professor, Faculty of Minority Languages and Literatures, Minzu University of China
Qi Zhengxian	Director, Editor, Qinghai Nationalities Press
Shi Cunwu	Huzhu County Party Secretary
Li Qingchuan	Huzhu County Deputy Party Secretary; Huzhu County Head
Sha Delin	Minhe County Head
Chang Ping	Huzhu County Party Standing Committee; Director, Huzhu County Propaganda Department
Ma Guangxing	Director, Creative Literature and Research Office, Qinghai Literary Federation; Deputy Head, Qinghai Tu Nationality Association
Ma Jun	Head, Culture Section of <i>Qinghai Daily</i>
Li Zhanguo	Deputy Head, Huzhu County Government
Ma Yulan	Minhe County Party Standing Committee; Director, Minhe County Propaganda Department
Mo Fangxia	Deputy Head, Minhe County Government
Li Zhonglin	Professor, Qinghai Nationalities University
Xing Quancheng	Professor, Qinghai Nationalities University

Liu Daxian	Deputy Researcher, Institute of Ethnic Minority Literature, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS); Deputy Head, <i>National Literature Studies</i> (journal)
Yang Xia	Deputy Researcher, Institute of Ethnic Minority Literature, CASS
Mao Qiaohui	Deputy Researcher, Institute of Ethnic Minority Literature, CASS
Song Ying	Assistant Researcher, Institute of Ethnic Minority Literature, CASS
Li Peng	Intern Researcher, Institute of Ethnic Minority Literature, CASS
Wang Wenyan	Graduate student, Institute of Ethnic Minority Literature, CASS
Ma Qiuchen	Graduate student, Institute of Ethnic Minority Literature, CASS
Li Yaozu	Poet; retired cadre
Cai Yong'e	Vice Chairman, Qinghai Provincial Calligraphers Association
A Chaoyang	Vice Chairman, Xining Literary Federation; Tu poet
Li Zhuoma	Cadre, Huzhu County Literary Federation; Tu writer
Yi Lang	Tu poet
Li Xiande	Cadre, Huzhu County Literary Federation; Member, Council of Qinghai Provincial Calligraphers Association
Na Chaoqing	Cadre, Huzhu Education Bureau; Tu writer
Chen Mei	Director, Qinghai Provincial Cultural Center; Tu poet
Ma Xiaochen	Chairman, Minhe County Literary Federation; writer
Xu Xiufu	Tu folklore expert
Xing Haiyan	PhD student, Department of Anthropology, Florida University
A Jinlu	Director, Propaganda Department, Qinghai Nationalities University; Professor
Qiao Shenghua	Deputy Director, Minority Language Office, Qinghai Nationalities Affairs Commission
Li Fumei	Qinghai Provincial Maternal & Pediatrics Center; Tu writer
Li Dechun	Tu writer, Qinghai University Attached Hospital
Lu Zhankui	Dramatist, Qinghai Provincial Song and Dance Theatre
Yan Guoliang	Director, Huzhu County Cultural Center; Deputy Director of Huzhu County Social Development Bureau
Dong Yongxue	Tu writer; teacher in Taizi Township, Huzhu County
Lü Shengshou	Writer, farmer
Zhang Yongjun	Editorial Director, <i>Laoyeshan</i> (journal); Tu writer
Sangjie Renqian	President, Party School, Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County, Gansu Province; Tu writer
Li Zhanzhong	Editorial Board Member, Annals of Tianzhu Tibetan Autonomous County, Gansu Province; Tu writer
Mo Zicai	Reporter, <i>Qinghai Daily</i>
Zhang Xiang	Editor, <i>Qinghai Daily</i>
Su Shan	PhD student, Department of Literature, Faculty of Minority Languages and Literatures, Minzu University of China (FMLL, MUC)
A Rong	MA student, Department of Literature, (FMLL, MUC)
Hu Yanhong	MA student, Department of Literature, (FMLL, MUC)
Jiang Kexin	MA student, Department of Literature, (FMLL, MUC)
Kong Lingling	MA student, Department of Literature, (FMLL, MUC)
Xing Yonggui	Cadre, Qinghai Provincial Writers Association

Cai Jingping	Chairman, Huzhu County Literary Federation
Bi Yanjun	Research Associate, Qinghai Academy of Social Sciences; Deputy Secretary-General, Qinghai Provincial Critics Association
Hu Fang	Research Associate, Qinghai Academy of Social Sciences
Xue Wenhua	Editorial Director, <i>Wentan Liaowang</i> (journal)
Wang Yongqing	Cadre, Qinghai Provincial Creative Writing and Research Office
Ying Zhongyu	Director, Huzhu County Propaganda Department Office

DULUUN LUNKUANG  
'THE SEVEN VALLEYS'

Approximate location of the Seven Valleys: 1. Saishigu Lunkuang; 2. Shde Qurizang Lunkuang; 3. Naringhuali Lunkuang; 4. Tangraa and Shgeayili Lunkuang; 5. Darimaa Lunkuang; 6. Wuxi Lunkuang, and; 7. Shdazi Lunkuang. Letters show modern towns, all in Huzhu County, except (A), in Datong County and (J), in Ledu County: A. Dongxia Township; B. Nanmengxia Town; C. Weiyuan Town, the capital of Huzhu County; D. Donghsan Township; E. Donggou Township; F. Danma Town; G. Dgon lung Monastery; H. Wuxi Town; I. Hongyazigou Township, and; J. Dala Township. The thick black line separates the two regions of the Duluun Lunkuang: Fulaan Nara (right) and Haliqi (left). Altitude ranges from 2,200m (darker) to 4,200m, with each shade representing a change of 200m in altitude. The southern border of the shaded area is the Huang River.



## HEALTH AND ILLNESS AMONG THE MONGGHUL Limusishiden (Li Dechun 李得春, Qinghai University Affiliated Hospital)

### ABSTRACT

Personal accounts of health, illness, and healing among the Mongghul of Huzhu Mongghul (Tu) Autonomous County, Haidong Municipality, Qinghai Province are given. These are followed by an examination of the causes of illness, medical practitioners, disease names and treatments, anatomical terms in the Mongghul language, preventative measures, narratives of the experiences of a Huzhu Mongghul doctor in Xining (capital of Qinghai Province), and a brief description of contemporary healthcare infrastructure in Huzhu County.

### KEYWORDS

Huzhu, illness and healing, medical anthropology, Mongghul, Monguor, Qinghai

### INTRODUCTION

In the traditional Huzhu Mongghul worldview, illness is unrelated to such modern biomedical concepts as bacteria and viruses. Instead, it is related to an ontology that posits that such entities as *pudog mudog* 'evils', *yiile* 'ghosts', *purghan* 'deities', and *foori aadee aanee* 'graveyard spirits' that can influence human well-being. Within this worldview, for example, a herpetic infection may be attributed to disturbances of an ancestral grave.

Personal accounts of health, illness, and healing among the Mongghul are given. These are followed by an examination of the causes of illness, medical practitioners, disease names and treatments, anatomical terms in the Mongghul language, preventative measures, narratives of the experiences of a Huzhu Mongghul doctor in Xining (capital of Qinghai Province), and a brief description of contemporary healthcare infrastructure in Huzhu County.

### TWO ACCOUNTS

There are no written records of Mongghul medicine in Chinese or Tibetan.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in order to reflect on Mongghul traditional medicine, I present oral accounts from two different age sets.

#### Account One: Sanxiujii

I visited an elderly Mongghul woman, Sanxiujii (1914-2000) in Shdangja Village (Danma Town) on 25 July 1998. Her natal home was in nearby Liuja Village; she married into Shdangja Village at the age of fourteen. She gave this account:

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<sup>1</sup> I surveyed Chinese literature, and information on Tibetan literature was provided by Saishidang Sang (b. 1953), a Mongghul Living Buddha from Tughuangang Village (Wushi Town) Huzhu County. He currently resides in Rgulang Monastery in Huzhu County and is also a senior professor at the Traditional Tibetan Medicine Hospital in Xining.

Previously, people did not go to Weiyuan<sup>2</sup> or other places to receive medical treatment. When I was in my teens, there was a doctor in Danma Village (Danma Township) but no medicine. There were very few Han people in the area then. Death was frequent in the village and children suffered an especially high mortality rate. Thinking about my childhood, I believe there were many diseases that we considered strange at that time, but which are now better understood.

A common disease called *sarishiba* occurred suddenly and without warning. The sufferer first had a high fever and a headache, and soon afterward they went mad. Some people recovered from *sarishiba* after several days, but most died from it. *Sarishiba* no longer occurs. I suffered from *sarishiba* in my twenties. I got a high fever, could eat only a little, frequently fell unconscious, felt constantly tired, and had a constant, unbearable headache. I was one of the lucky ones who survived.

My mother died in her twenties from an unknown disease that manifested as intense bodily pain. My father died from food poisoning at the age of thirty-five. Back then, most people died at such early ages. Many of my peers died in their twenties – I was lucky to survive. Many babies died soon after birth, and no one knew why. My husband died in his thirties due to an infected sore in his groin. My life became very difficult after I became a widow. My only son died of a painful stomach illness shortly after the death of my husband. The double blow dealt by the two deaths made me nearly lose my will to live. I then took up smoking, at a time when a woman smoker was almost unheard of in Mongghul society.

People were very poor when I was young. They had little food and wore only *huguazi* and *laxjang*<sup>3</sup> year-round. These wool robes often scratched the skin, causing bleeding. People often died when these wounds became infected, for example, one of my relatives died the year after her marriage from an infected wound caused by her rough wool robe. Her body gradually grew weaker and she died one night after suffering violent convulsions.

Life today is much happier than in my childhood. People can eat and wear whatever they like. In the old days, a number of families were too poor to buy feed for livestock. Some people mixed powdered stone<sup>4</sup> with boiled water and swallowed it to treat bellyaches.

When I was in my forties<sup>5</sup> a contagious disease called *qijog*<sup>6</sup> became widespread in Mongghul areas. Many people, mostly children, died within a short time. The first symptom was that the eyes became red and, soon after, a painful red rash covered the body. The infection lasted a week, during which time strangers were usually forbidden from visiting the home. Meanwhile, people in the home maintained total silence. The child was treated by a *purghan*. Most people infected with *qijog* died.

In about 1978, two children died one after the other in Shdangja Village from *qijog*. In total, at least fifteen village children died that year in the village.

When I was in my fifties, some seriously ill patients began to go to Weiyuan for medical treatment.

There were many clinics in Huzhu by the time I was in my sixties. People got medicine from them and had operations, too. How did I live so long? I was one of the lucky ones among the hundreds of people in my home area, otherwise, I would have ended up like my husband, son, and parents, all of whom left the world at an early age.

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<sup>2</sup> Weiyuan is the capital of Huzhu Mongghul Autonomous County.

<sup>3</sup> Coarse robes of spun woolen thread; *huguazi* were black and worn by women, while *laxjang* were white and worn by men.

<sup>4</sup> Mongghul: *xashiduu*. A white stone brought from the foot of Chilib Mountain, located on the boundary between Huzhu County and Menyuan Hui Autonomous County approximately ten kilometers away from the first author's natal village. The stone was burned, ground into a fine powder, and a spoonful taken daily. It caused belching. The efficacy of the powdered stone in treating stomach ailments may be due to its alkali nature.

<sup>5</sup> 1950s-1960s.

<sup>6</sup> *Qijog* 'flower' refers to smallpox or measles.

## Account Two: Limusishiden

I was born on the thirtieth day of the eighth lunar month in 1968 into a Tughuan Village (Wushi Town) family. Until I was five or six, I lived in an extended family composed of my father's brothers and their wives, my father's unmarried younger sisters, my cousins, grandparents, brothers, sister, and my parents. This extended family eventually separated into three households. Father's elder brother's family and my immediate family both separated from the extended family to form new households. My father's younger brother remained in the old house with my grandparents.

It is said that my grandparents' house was built the year the ancestors of present-day Tughuan villagers moved from Wushi Town in order to herd livestock.<sup>7</sup> Later, they did not return to Wushi, but settled permanently.

Mother recalled that when I was two years old, my family was so poor that I had no trousers to wear. My father's mother did not care for me very well when Mother was away working in the fields.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps she hoped to toughen her grandchildren by allowing them to fend for themselves in the harsh environment. Mother once visited her parents-in-law when they were baby-sitting me, and found many infected sores and scratches on my legs and buttocks. Some of the wounds still had thorns, which Mother gently removed.

At the age of nine, I and other local students were injected with the *qijog* vaccine in the upper left arm. Father recalls that I had already had *qijog*, and had been close to death with a high fever that lasted about a week.

When I was a child, children went barefoot and wore no trousers – even in winter – until the age of seven or eight. At that age, parents felt that children could feel shame and should wear trousers and shoes. Groups of children played children's games in the village lanes between houses, on the threshing grounds, and in the fields. They particularly enjoyed playing on manure piles in front of house gates, so that roundworm, bacteria, and viruses in feces were easily transmitted to children.<sup>9</sup> Roundworms in children's feces was common. Many children felt pain around their navel and became weak – symptoms of roundworm infection. If a child had an open wound of any sort, a little soil was put on the wound, regardless of possible tetanus infection.

Grandmother bore twelve children, six of whom died before the age of five. Mother bore seven children. Her first son died soon after he was born, with a yellowish discoloration of the body.<sup>10</sup> Her fourth son died from diarrhea when he was about four years old and, in the same year, Father's older brother's wife had her first son in the extended family living in Grandfather's house. Unfortunately, the baby soon fell sick with a fever. Treatment involved administering *guangmu* soup<sup>11</sup> – made with the meat of *guangmu* caught in the forest and high mountains – and consulting the family *purghan*. Both treatments were unsuccessful and the infant died.

Grandfather often suffered from painful stomachaches, which he treated by ingesting *xashiduu* (see footnote four). The treatment was effective in treating the pain. I never saw him take any medicine other than this. Grandmother often suffered from headaches and dizziness. She died one afternoon in 1987 at the age of sixty-four after suddenly fainting. She probably died of a cerebral hemorrhage.

Mother's third son, Niidosirang, was born one night in 1974. At the age of four, his eyes became infected, he was in great pain, and he began to lose his sight. Father invited several knowledgeable monks to our home from Rgulang<sup>12</sup> Monastery to chant Buddhist scriptures to help relieve the problem. *Purghan* were also invited to the family home many times in order to expel

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<sup>7</sup> The number of graves in the ancestral graveyard and their arrangements suggest that Tughuan was first settled in the mid-seventeenth century.

<sup>8</sup> It was and still is common for Mongghul grandparents to care for children when their parents are working in the fields and, in the early twenty-first century, when they leave the village to undertake migrant labor.

<sup>9</sup> Every Mongghul family regularly moves manure from the pigsty and livestock pen and collects it in front of their front gates. The collected manure is used as fertilizer.

<sup>10</sup> It was probably infant jaundice.

<sup>11</sup> *Guangmu* live in forests and on high mountains. It is the size of a pheasant, has a gray plume, eats the roots of wild herbs, and its meat has an herbaceous smell. Locals regard it as herbal medicine. Ill people eat the boiled meat and drink *guangmu kua* 'guangmu soup'.

<sup>12</sup> Rgulang – also rendered Dgon lung, Erh-ku-lung, Yu-ning, Youning Monastery.



ghosts – thought to be the cause of the disease – from our home and from my brother's body. However, the situation continued to worsen until my brother became effectively blind.

When his situation became critical, an elderly village woman came to my home and gave my parents a small white pellet, telling them to put it under my brother's eyelid. She explained that the pellet would restore my brother's sight if we also worshiped Shge Tingere 'Great Heaven' by burning incense and kowtowing to the four directions. The woman explained that the pellet had been given to her ten years earlier by a famous *lama* (Living Buddha)<sup>13</sup> from Rgulang Monastery. My parents did as the woman advised, though they were skeptical. A week later, my brother could see again and was able to attend school when he was nine years old. His eye problem never recurred.

Mother gave birth to her fourth son in 1975. He became bedridden due to serious diarrhea when he was four years old. Father took him to a clinic after receiving permission from the family *purghan*. My brother was given injections for three days at the clinic, where he also took small white pills.<sup>14</sup> However, his condition continued to worsen. My parents brought him back home and asked the family *purghan* to help. As his health continued to deteriorate, my parents became extremely anxious and decided to visit some famous lamas in Hgunbin Monastery.<sup>15</sup> At the monastery, the child was treated with Traditional Tibetan Medicine and blessed by a Living Buddha. Unfortunately, he died on the way home.

In the summer of 1976, when I was about eight years old, my younger sister (aged five) and younger brother (aged three) suddenly fell ill and became bedridden. They had high fevers, ate and drank very little, and were weak and unable to speak. I knew from my parents' anxious expressions that they had contracted *qijog*. That year several other children in the village had contracted *qijog* and one or two had died. Our family gate was firmly barred from the inside and we all maintained total silence for several days. Father knew that they might recover if the rash left their bodies. My parents used a towel to wipe the sweat from my siblings' faces.

The atmosphere inside the house was very tense as the treatment continued. My older brother and I were only permitted to look at our brother and sister through a window. Father burned incense and kowtowed<sup>16</sup> almost constantly, asking Shge Tingere to bestow blessings on his children. Our family *purghan* was frequently consulted and beseeched to expel the ghosts that we believed were causing the illness. After about two days the rashes began to disappear, the fever subsided, and it became easier for the children to breathe. My brother and sister recovered without taking medicine.

There is another incident that I will never forget. During the summer of 1977 it rained continuously for one month; many walls collapsed, roofs leaked, and crops were flattened in the field and rotted.<sup>17</sup> One rainy afternoon, Mother was giving birth to her fifth son in the room where we slept. Father was outside the home earning money as a laborer. Because of Mother's contractions, we all went to bed together on the *bankang* as usual.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Regular monks are referred to as *lamadii* in Mongghul, while reincarnate lamas (Tibetan *sprul sku*) are referred to as *lama* or *shge lama*.

<sup>14</sup> At the time, Father did not know what the injections or the pills were.

<sup>15</sup> This Dge lugs monastery is located approximately twenty kilometers south of Xining, the capital of Qinghai Province.

<sup>16</sup> The Mongghul term is *tulighui murigu*. When performing *tulighui murigu*, the patient stands, stretches out their hands with palms together above their head, and then brings the hands down touching the forehead, lips, and chest, kneels with their palms on the ground, and touches their forehead to the ground three times. When the head is raised each time, the palms are also raised and then touched to the ground at the same time as the forehead.

<sup>17</sup> The walls and roofs of traditional Mongghul houses are made from rammed earth that softens in heavy rain. Only a few wealthy families began putting tiles on their roof in the early twenty-first century.

<sup>18</sup> An adobe platform built in the sleeping room was divided into two parts – the *yikang* and *bankang*. So that fuel may be added easily, the *bankang* had a large opening in the center of the platform, which was covered with planks of wood. The felt-covered *yikang* was built from adobe bricks and heated by flues that were fed fuel from a hole outside the room. Family males slept on the *yikang*, while women and infants slept on the *bankang* without any mattress. An infant's urine drained through cracks in the planks, and feces were easily scrapped off the non-absorbent surface. However, sleeping on a *bankang* was uncomfortable, because there was no cushion beneath the naked body, and smoke came from the fire below. Moreover, babies were burnt if they fell between the *bankang's* planks.

Mother started screaming as her contractions became more painful. Although she knew she was about to give birth, she still did not want us to get help. Suddenly Mother shouted, "Get on the floor now! The wall is going to collapse!" And in the silence after her sudden scream, we all heard the wall next to us groaning.

We jumped down to the floor and a few seconds later, a wall of the room collapsed across the sleeping platform where we had just been, leaving a large hole in the wall. We were dumfounded, but quickly moved the rubble outside, swept the *bankang* and *yikang*, and covered the hole in the wall with a large piece of cloth.

We fearfully got back up on the sleeping platform. Soon afterwards, Mother gave birth to her fifth son, Danjansirang (b. 1977). She told us to bring scissors and thread, cut and tied the umbilical cord, and then I was sent to summon my aunt to come and cook hot soup to warm Mother's weakened body.

One cold winter's day I contracted a bad cold that lasted several days. My parents were unconcerned, because colds were common. I had a dry cough, which became so severe that my throat became swollen and I felt a heavy pain in my chest. Because I was coughing frequently at home, Mother became irritated and told me to run around the threshing ground several times to cure my cold. I followed her instructions, believing that it would help. However, my cold only worsened.

Apart from the *qigog* vaccination, I never took any medicine until I entered Huzhu Nationalities Middle School in Weiyuan in 1985 at the age of nineteen. A simple clinic was set up inside the school so that students could be treated for free. I visited the clinic once and was given painkillers for a headache.

## CAUSES OF ILLNESS

Illnesses are caused by *pudog mudog* 'evils', *purghan*, moving soil, Zooya Aanee 'Kitchen Granny', and disturbances to ancestors in the graveyard. *Pudog mudog* is further divided into ghosts, *modaya*, *duduna*, and *zan*. Each is introduced below.

### *Purghan*

*Purghan* are deities represented as an image seated in a sedan chair, or as a cloth-covered pole. The sedan is carried by four or eight men. Only one man is needed to hold the *purghan* if it is a pole. Permeating every aspect of Mongghul life, a *purghan* is always available for consultation and, for Mongghul, represents the possibility that the supplicant's distress may be alleviated (Limusishiden and Stuart 1994). In Huzhu, a *purghan* can be consulted at any time and for almost any purpose. For example, the *purghan* can be consulted in order to: find a suitable spouse; treat illness and banish evils; ensure well-being; guarantee a good harvest; and to alleviate droughts.

*Purghan* communicate with humans by moving. In the case of a sedan, it may move backwards or forwards when being carried, in response to a question with two alternatives. A pole *purghan* may move up (to indicate a positive response) or down (to indicate a negative response) in the hands of the man holding it, in order to indicate a yes/ no question. In one case I observed, a *purghan* possessed a human body and caused a man to speak.

Every Mongghul clan<sup>19</sup> has its own *purghan* and each family has a *nelshigang* 'shrine room'.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *Dangjazi* 'clans' are typically named groups of agnatic kin of approximately ten households, who live near each other and assist each other on such occasions as weddings and funerals. Though commonly based on descent from a common ancestor, *dangjazi* may also be based on friendship or other non-kin relations in mixed ethnicity

Within some family compounds the *nelshigang* contains a *purghan*. In others, however, there is a picture of a Living Buddha and a few *rjalacan* 'pieces of red or yellow silk' hung from the wall in place of the *purghan*. Lamps are burned in the room as offerings.<sup>21</sup>

Death, birth, and menstruation are all considered sources of *pudog* 'pollution' for *purghan*. If someone returns from a room where a newborn and mother are confined,<sup>22</sup> or from a home where funeral rites were recently performed, they must purify themselves with straw smoke. If they fail to do this and then enter the *nelshigang*, this pollutes the *purghan*, angering it, and causing it to lose power. Drying women's clothes or hanging up dirty clothes on the roof of the *nelshigang* also pollute and anger the *purghan*. *Purghan* may send various diseases to the guilty person or family when polluted.

### *Purghan* Account One

A rich man living in Pudang Village (Danma Town) was a farmer until the age of thirty. He was selected by the local governmental to learn basic Chinese literacy and medicine in Weiyuan in about 1967. He graduated from the training class six months later and was assigned to a town clinic, where he became a doctor. His family home had enshrined a *purghan* for several generations but, when he became a government employee, he abandoned his religious beliefs and the *purghan* in his family home was moved to another house.

The man retired and returned home in 1995, by which time he had totally abandoned belief in *purghan*. Some time later, he fell ill and was unable to urinate. He took much medicine and visited hospitals in Xining, however, his condition did not improve. As a final resort, he went to the home where his clan's *purghan* was and asked the *purghan* for advice. The *purghan* indicated that it wanted to return to live on the second story of his family compound.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the rich man's grandfather had promised the *purghan* during a period of civil unrest that if the *purghan* protected the house from being burned down, then it could stay in the house forever. Recalling this story, he immediately agreed that the *purghan* could return. Afterwards, he offered incense once a day to the *purghan*. His condition soon improved, and he became an extremely devout Buddhist.<sup>24</sup>

### *Purghan* Account Two

Another man's family had a *purghan* for several generations. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), they had utilized the *purghan* (which was in the form of a pole) as a rolling pin.<sup>25</sup> The man was meanwhile selected to study Chinese language in school. He eventually got a job as a teacher and abandoned his traditional beliefs and practices. He used his position to help his two sons get government jobs, and eventually the family became the richest in their village.

One winter afternoon in 1983, the man's wife fell from a three-meter-high terrace on the threshing ground where she was working. She lost consciousness and was immediately sent to hospital, where she was diagnosed with a cerebral hemorrhage, and became completely paralyzed – a total invalid. After spending two months in hospital, her husband took her home and cared for

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villages.

<sup>20</sup> *Nelshi* is the Mongghul word for 'to offer'; *gang* is similar to the Tibetan *khang* 'room'.

<sup>21</sup> Butter or rapeseed oil is burned in the lamp, though burning butter is preferred. Usually one or three lamps are burned.

<sup>22</sup> Women are confined for a one-month period after giving birth.

<sup>23</sup> In the past, certain wealthy Mongghul families lived in two-story wood buildings with six rooms (three on the ground floor, three above). The left-hand room on the second floor was usually a shrine, the central room was used to store grain, and the room on the right was a bedroom. The rooms on the ground floor were storehouses or mangers. A wide wood ladder connected the ground floor to the second floor.

<sup>24</sup> Mongghul consider the worship of *purghan* an aspect of Buddhism.

<sup>25</sup> Pole *purghan* are typically approximately one meter long and three to four centimeters in diameter.

her.

Five years later, more trouble befell this family when a wolf killed one of their largest oxen. Next, two large pigs died for no reason, the youngest son lost his job, and the man's youngest daughter became epileptic. The family disintegrated and became impoverished.

Not knowing what else to do, the head of the home went to ask the village's *purghan* why such calamities had befallen his family, how the problems could be fixed, and how future disaster might be averted. The *purghan* indicated that there had been a family *purghan* in the man's home before the Cultural Revolution, and it had since been used as a rolling pin.<sup>26</sup> Women had used it to roll noodles and beat animals, thus the *purghan* had been defiled and offended. The man was told that to restore his family's fortune and, to avoid further disaster, he needed to renew the *purghan* and move the house to a new site, a short distance from where it stood at that time.

The man reinstated the rolling pin as a *purghan* after monks renewed it by chanting Buddhist scriptures in his home. He also delighted every *purghan* by offering tea and money in Rgulang Monastery. He also demolished his old home, built a new home in a new location, and offered incense and butter lamps to the new *purghan* every day. His family's fortunes soon improved.

## Ghosts

Ghosts may be divided into *sghanla yii hugusan yiile* 'untimely-death-ghosts' and *luasa hugusan yiile* 'starvation-ghosts'. Both result from abnormal deaths. The former died by such means as hanging, murder, and drowning. Generally, a person died in their youth, and did not experience a full life. The latter type of ghost occurs when people die of starvation, which was once common. Both types of ghost are fierce, cruel to people and animals, covet the happiness of the living, desire their possessions, wander aimlessly, and seize every chance to trouble the living.

Humans are thought to have three kinds of soul.<sup>27</sup> One disappears soon after death, one guards the person's grave forever, and the other enters Xnjin 'the underworld' to await *xjawa* 'reincarnation'. The spirit that enters the underworld may be denied another life or prevented from becoming a human. Instead, it might be reborn as a pig, sheep, or donkey. Donkeys and pigs are considered the worst reincarnation. Such animals are thought to have been bad people in their former lives.

If a spirit's hopes for reincarnation are frustrated, then in anger it wanders back to the land of the living, where it may create illness among those who contributed to their suicide or to those who were indifferent to them during their life. Wandering ghosts may be encountered when walking along a road. The ghost may then follow the person back home, hoping for food or clothes. Ghosts are usually harmless and invisible. If ghosts are treated with indifference or cannot benefit from people, they might, for example, make people ill by causing cerebral hemorrhage, facial palsy, or sudden aphasia.

One way to stop ghosts from entering the home is to discard bread brought back after visiting relatives or friends before reentering the home compound, thus discouraging the ghost from following further, as they have gotten the food they were seeking. Ghosts are also terrified of fire and flee immediately when encountering one. Mongghul are traditionally prohibited from opening the courtyard gate for visitors (especially at night) until a pile of straw has been lit.<sup>28</sup> Visitors burn the straw and rest for a short time in front of the gate before entering the home when they come back after

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<sup>26</sup> Prior to the Cultural Revolution, each Mongghul clan had a *purghan*. Many *purghan* were lost during the Cultural Revolution.

<sup>27</sup> The three different souls have no specific names.

<sup>28</sup> Someone often prepares a straw pile and sets it on fire in front of the gate just before family members return and enter the household. People collect and light the straw themselves if this is not done for them.

a long journey or after visiting a place that is considered evil. The person who has returned rests a little outside the gate while the fire burns, to make sure that no ghosts are with them.

Ghosts covet rapeseed and sesame oil. Consequently, a cart loaded with oil must cross above a burning straw pile in order to enter a home compound when returning from an oil press.

A small red rectangular paper is pasted on the front gate after a woman has given birth (on the top left side if a boy is born or on the right side if a girl is born).<sup>29</sup> Cypress twigs are attached to the top of the doorframe if a family lacks red paper. The location and significance are the same as the paper. Ghosts relish little boys, and often follow visitors into a home where a male child has recently been born, hoping to kill the boy by sending disease.<sup>30</sup>

### Ghost Account One

In 1996 a woman of twenty-five married and moved into her husband's home in another village. Her mother had died two years earlier and her father had married a second time, to a Tibetan woman. Before the daughter left her natal home, the family *purghan* was asked what they should avoid on the way to the groom's home. The *purghan* indicated that the husband's family should kill a white rooster after the bride arrived at the groom's home, but before she entered the family compound. The white rooster would expel any evils that had followed her on the way. Also, in the days prior to the marriage, the woman had declared she would visit her mother's grave in order to bid farewell by offering incense and kowtowing. However, she was unable to do this.

On the journey to the groom's home the matchmaker forgot to tell the groom's family to kill the white rooster. The bride arrived, entered the front gate, went to the bridal chamber, and soon contracted a headache. That night after the wedding celebrations, when most people had left the groom's home, an elder sister of the groom went into the bridal chamber to see the bride, and found her unconscious. Her face was contorted and foam was coming from her mouth. The groom's elder sister immediately asked people to come and they sprinkled water on the bride's face, while others busily burned incense and kowtowed, beseeching all *purghan* for help.

The bride regained consciousness about an hour later. She was weak, unable to speak, and needed help to urinate and defecate. She was sent to hospital where no diagnosis was given. Days later she had not improved, but nonetheless returned to her husband's home. The family was very upset, anxiously invited the village *purghan* to their home, and asked what was wrong. They were told that a white-robed ghost had followed her into the groom's home and now possessed her. It was also revealed that the girl had not gone to her mother's grave to bid farewell as she had promised. It was determined that the mother's spirit had taken possession of the bride.

The groom's family killed a white rooster and offered its soul as a substitute for the bride's, and the bride soon recovered. She and her husband went to her mother's grave and said, "Mother, please forget us, we will remember you forever."<sup>31</sup> They lit incense and kowtowed. The ghost was afterwards thought to have been expelled from the groom's home, but it continued to wander around the groom's home and reentered the family compound by following someone in at night, causing the bride to fall ill again.

### Ghost Account Two

During Sangjixji's (b.1963) occasional convulsions, her eyes always fixed on the brightest light-

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<sup>29</sup> This sign stops strangers from entering the house and bringing ghosts with them. It also prevents guilt and embarrassment on the visitor's part. This is particularly true for a man, for were he to enter such a home, he could not offer lamps in his family *nelshigang* for one month.

<sup>30</sup> While a ghost cannot directly kill children, it can send disease that will eventually kill them.

<sup>31</sup> Mongghul believe that their ancestors may cause disease for their descendants. If an ancestor forgets someone, then that ancestor cannot make that person ill.

source nearby. She did not improve with treatment from any of the various medicines the family bought from clinics, thus her family invited their clan *purghan* to their home to learn the cause of the illness. The *purghan* indicated that the ghost of a female who had died in her twenties was causing the disease because Sangjixji had taken two glass beads that belonged to this woman while she had been alive. The beads had been used as decorations on the edge of a hat. The ghost was causing the illness because it wanted the beads back.

Sangjixji recalled immediately that the girl was her elder brother's daughter, who had hung herself at the age of twenty-one. Sangjixji had been the girl's playmate in childhood and had given her two glass beads to put on her hat as decorations. Sangjixji and her family then decided to put the beads at the site where the girl had been cremated. Sangjixji later recovered and bore a son, despite having been unable to conceive during the first ten years of marriage.

## *Modaya*

*Modaya* are messengers for the deity Qurixjang that is enshrined in Zankang<sup>32</sup> Temple. Locals believe that Qurixjang was a brother of Genghis Khan who was sent to the area of present day Qinghai to suppress a rebellion. As he was returning home after accomplishing his mission, he was slain by an assassin's arrow. Mongghul regard him as a deity. The deities Baghari,<sup>33</sup> Danjan, Garidang,<sup>34</sup> and Qurixjang were all sworn brothers.

The seventy-two different manifestations of *modaya* include a beautiful lady, a handsome man, a goat, a sheep, straw ash, a donkey, a dog, colorful cloth, and glass beads.

*Modaya* often manifest as cats and are usually visible only to the members of the family where they live. *Modaya* in cat form differ from normal cats in having smaller or larger body sizes and also having more human facial expressions. Mongghul believe that an old woman originally trained her cat to become a *modaya*. Usually considered male, *modaya* can have *modaya* wives and prefer to live with rich families. Certain families in Smeen Village (Wushi Town), Niuqi Village (Hongyazigou Township), and Janba Taiga Village (Danma Town) are notorious for raising *modaya*. Several *modaya* commonly live together in the top story of two story homes.

Once it settles with a certain family, a *modaya* is faithful to their hosts, and helps them acquire things from others. *Modaya* are thought particularly adept at stealing grain and taking it to their hosts' granaries. Moreover, if guests arrive unexpectedly at noon or supper and the food prepared is insufficient, the *modaya* can add food. *Modaya* can acquire anything for its owners except coins or cloth, which are thought to be too heavy for *modaya* to carry.<sup>35</sup> *Modaya* relish liquor and often visit other homes to secretly drink their liquor.

*Modaya* are greedy, paranoid, and often steal from other homes, but they are afraid that others

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<sup>32</sup> A protector deity hall in Rgulang Monastery that is dedicated to the Mongghul hero Baghari, who fought against the legendary Tibetan figure King Ge sar. Zankang Temple is in the southwest section of Rgulang Monastery complex. Zankang Temple safeguards the entire Duluun Lunkuang (Seven Mongghul Valleys).

<sup>33</sup> Huarin Village (Danma Town) today enshrines Baghari in their village temple. Because of antagonistic relationships with Tibetans in the past, Mongghul believe that Baghari strictly forbids singing King Ge sar songs and displaying Ge sar pictures inside and outside of homes and temples in Mongghul areas. Nonetheless, Ge sar stories were sometimes told privately in the past. There is presently one elderly Mongghul man in Tiantang Township, Tianshu Tibetan Autonomous County, Gansu Province, who recites Ge sar stories in Mongghul (Wang 2010).

<sup>34</sup> The exact nature of Danjan and Garidang remains unclear, but these deities are worshiped devoutly as important deities in certain Mongghul villages, for example, Danjan Deity is enshrined in homes in Pudang Village.

<sup>35</sup> In the past, some coins bore the Emperor's seal and thus *modaya* were afraid of incurring imperial censure for stealing them.

will steal from their hosts. The following demonstrates these attributes.

### *Modaya* Account One

A man visited a wealthy villager whose home was said to host *modaya*. When he entered the courtyard he could see two *modaya* peeping at him from the second story of the rich man's home; they had not been quick enough in making themselves invisible. To trick the *modaya*, the man started talking nonsense to the rich man. "Hey! Watch out! I'm going to take your courtyard gate with me when I leave." When the man started to leave, he saw the *modaya* standing by the gate, holding it tightly; they stayed there staring at him until he had walked far into the distance.

*Modaya* send disease to people if they find someone has something belonging to their owners, as shown in the following account.

### *Modaya* Account Two

Sangjidanzhu from Janba Village (Danma Town) divorced his wife. A year later, he married a young woman from Smeen Village. Her parents' family had *modaya*. She once visited her parents and, when she was returning home, one of her parents' *modaya* stealthily followed her. Sangjidanzhu's household adjoined his elder brother's house – a traditional, two-story wood building. The left room on the second floor was a *nelshigang* where women and strangers were forbidden.

One night, a month after the woman married into the village, Sangjidanzhu's elder brother noticed that his and his wife's shoes were filled with strange smelling urine and excrement. He and his wife were shocked by how smelly the urine and excrement were. The urine resembled black tea. They quickly threw the shoes containing the urine and excrement out of the family compound. A fortnight later, the couple's shoes were mysteriously filled with wheat seeds. Now they were frightened, and invited a *purghan* to their home. The *purghan* indicated that the problem was caused by a *modaya* living in their second story shrine room. It had come from his younger brother's wife's parent's home and had begun living in the home when the woman married into the village. To drive it away, the elder brother avoided contact with Sangjidanzhu's family. Meanwhile, he invited several monks from Rgulang Monastery to hold a large *hgurin*, a Buddhist chanting ceremony.

They did exactly what the *purghan* instructed. Sangjidanzhu's elder brother's wife later fell ill, so they completely broke off contact with Sangjidanzhu. The whole village slowly ostracized his family. As a result of following the *purghan*'s advice, the *modaya* was expelled from the village, however, it later sought revenge. Two years later when Sangjidanzhu's wife went to visit her parents, her abdomen became swollen and she died in the grip of hysteria just as she reached her parents' home.

### *Zan*<sup>36</sup> 'Wind Spirits

*Zan* are evil and can send disease. There are twelve types of *zan* and all travel on paths in straight lines. If a person's path intersects that of a *zan*, the *zan* blocks their way and an illness such as paralysis<sup>37</sup> or an epileptic fit results. *Zan* can also knock down such obstructions as trees. *Zan* are only encountered on the first, eighth, and fifteenth days of each lunar month.

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<sup>36</sup> From the Tibetan, *btsan*, also referring to a similar class of spirits.

<sup>37</sup> The Mongghul term for paralysis, *kii niu*, literally means 'wind touch'. Mongghul consider all paralysis to be caused by *zan*, and treat it by inviting monks to chant scriptures in order to drive out the *zan*.

## Zan Account

Sangriji, a forty-three year old man from Tangraa Village (Donggou Township), went to his neighbor's home one day in 1996 to watch TV with his younger brother. On his way home he suddenly screamed and fell to the ground. His younger brother picked him up and helped him home, where he soon became paralyzed. His family immediately invited a *purghan* to their home. The *purghan* indicated that Sangriji had been struck down by a *zan* at a crossroad when he had inadvertently blocked its way. This had angered the *zan*, who sent the illness to punish Sangriji.

The *purghan* instructed the family to consult Rgulang Monastery monks in order to determine the identity of the *zan*. Divination indicated that the *zan* was still wandering at the crossroad during the day. Cooperation between the monks and a *purghan* was required in order to catch the *zan*. On the evening of the third day, the monks went to the crossroad to capture the *zan*. Following the *purghan's* directions, two men dressed in long robes ran around the crossroad, trying to force the *zan* into a goat-skin bag. Meanwhile, the two monks chanted Buddhist scriptures by the road. Unfortunately, the men failed to capture the *zan*, which fled.

Sangriji's condition worsened daily. A month later, Tughuan Living Buddha visited the village and was asked to treat Sangriji. He chanted *Xuarineng* (a Buddhist scripture for expelling evil) in the home, but Sangriji did not recover and instead, his condition continued to worsen. He could not leave his bed to defecate or urinate unaided when I visited his home. The family was encouraged to send Sangriji to hospital, but did not. They thought that the *zan*, which had caused the disease, could not be affected by medicine. Shortly afterward, Sangriji died.

## Duduna

*Duduna* are evil spirits that live in desolate, uninhabited areas and consume the blood and raw flesh of humans and livestock. Locals believe that *duduna* was originally a spatula and a pot-brush tied together and discarded in an uninhabited place. After a great length of time (the figure 1,200 years is mentioned) it turned into *duduna*. *Duduna* can assume thirty-two different forms including a person, a cow, a house, water, or wood. However, its most common form is that of a snake. *Duduna* affect both men and women, but are terrified of monkeys and consequently, never causes illness in houses where monkeys are kept.<sup>38</sup>

## Duduna Account One

In 1975, a young woman was killed by an illness caused by a *duduna*. The young woman's natal home was in Qighaan Dawa Village (Dongshan Township). The young woman married into Lamaguan Village (Donggou Township) and did not visit her parents for a long time. Her mother missed her very much, so she went to the girl's home to see her. Unknown to the mother, a *duduna* from her parent's home caught wind of her plans and went ahead of her.

When the *duduna* arrived, the young woman was busy working on the threshing ground. The *duduna* waited outside, disguised as a willow twig. As she returned, carrying a large bundle of straw on her back, she spat to the side of the courtyard gate. Her saliva landed on the head of the *duduna*, enraging it. After following her into the family compound, the *duduna* caused the woman to hang herself at the top of the straw pile, kneeling beneath the rafters. When the mother reached her daughter's home and found her daughter, she immediately began to babble hysterically, telling people that she had choked her daughter to death.

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<sup>38</sup> Though I have heard references to monkeys kept in some houses in Huzhu, I have never seen a monkey raised by a Mongghul family, nor are monkeys native to the area. In the past, Han people from Inner China came to Huzhu as itinerant entertainers and brought monkeys that performed tricks when a crowd gathered.



## *Duduna* Account Two

A woman married into Hara Bulog Village from Tangraa Village (both in Donggou Township). The woman's mother-in-law had a relative in Qighaan Dawa Village. The woman fell ill on the day she married. Afterwards, she was often bedridden. Because she stayed in bed and did not often go outside, she became depressed. Furthermore, her husband's family began to mistreat her because of her illness.

These troubles led the woman to conclude that staying in this home was not good for her. She then returned home to seek the advice of her clan's *purghan*. She was told that she would recover from the disease only if she left her husband's home, because his family had *duduna*. The *duduna* hated the woman because her zodiac animal was the monkey, and caused her illness in order to drive her from the family. The *purghan* told the woman that the *duduna* came to her husband's compound from an easterly direction. She was also told that she should leave as soon as possible or else the *duduna* would ruin her life. After hearing this, the woman fled and married into her second husband's home far from her first husband's village. She soon recovered and lived a happy life.

## Xruu Aadee 'Earth God'

Xruu Aadee (Earth Grandfather, Earth God) is thought to live in the soil at any place. Any disturbance of the soil enrages him. For example, Xruu Aadee is angered by building a household adobe wall, building a small courtyard garden, selecting a graveyard, or getting dry soil from slopes near the house for pigsty floors. It is safe to move soil if people ask a *purghan* to select a date. If soil is moved without asking a *purghan*, then Xruu Aadee is sure to send illness to that person or their family, mostly to women or young children. For example, Xruu Aadee causes headaches and bodily weakness in women. In children, he causes crying, sleepiness, vomiting, and coughing.

Xruu Aadee has a fixed schedule of movement. Some people can determine when to dig based on an approximation of this schedule. Starting at eight a.m. on the first day of each lunar month, the Earth God begins travelling in a southerly direction and returns at four p.m. the next day. From the following day (i.e., the third), Xruu Aadee stays at his house in the earth until eight a.m. on the fifteenth day, when he again travels in a southerly direction. He returns the next day (the sixteenth day of the lunar month) at four p.m.

It is safe to move earth when Xruu Aadee has left to travel southward. While away, Xruu Aadee will not know that the earth is being moved or alternatively, may know but not care. Mongghul also usually burn incense before moving soil, in order to placate this deity.

## *Foori* 'Grave'

Mongghul are extremely careful in selecting appropriate graveyard sites because they believe that a clan's strength and prosperity is related to graveyard location. Great care must be taken when making a new graveyard or moving a preexisting one to a new site. If a clan wants its members to have such good fortune as passing university entrance examinations or becoming rich or skillful at making felt and woolen cloth, then the graveyard site is considered extremely important.

Graveyards may be moved for several reasons. For example, if a new road is built passing through a graveyard, or if a deep gully begins to form around it because of erosion, then the graveyard must be moved. It is considered particularly harmful if a graveyard has a gully or ditch around it as

this obstructs the prosperity of the clan and may cause nightmares, facial paralysis, and even death among clan members.

Before moving a graveyard, the clan's *purghan* is asked to help select a new site.<sup>39</sup> Normally a site is selected at the foot of a mountain that is on a spur from such holy mountains<sup>40</sup> as Chileb<sup>41</sup> or Durizang.<sup>42</sup> Graveyards at the feet of mountains or hills that are not connected to a sacred mountain are considered lacking in strength and potential sources of clan weakness.

### Graveyard Account One

Before 1980, several children from Tughuan Village had graduated from universities. In contrast, no one from Jilog Village (Wushi Town), to the south of Tughuan Village, had studied at university, even though its population is much larger than that of Tughuan Village.<sup>43</sup> People believe Tughuan Village has an auspiciously placed graveyard because the hill behind the graveyard is a spur of Chileb Mountain.<sup>44</sup> Jilog Village's graveyard does not back onto this peak and is separated from Chileb Mountain.

If a tomb is seen to have many holes made by rats or other animals, those holes are filled.<sup>45</sup> If this is not done, the clan's ancestors may become angry and cause illness. Herpetic infections on the lips are generally considered related to ancestral graveyards. To placate the ancestors, incense is burned with *szuari* 'mixture of rapeseed oil and wheat flour' at the graveyard. People kowtow, ask for forgiveness from their ancestors, and say, for instance, "Grave grandfather and grandmother, please forget us. We will remember you forever."

*Snenshidog fuula* 'offering precious vases' is an effort to protect the graveyard site by delighting Xruu Aadee. Buddhist scriptures are put inside a pottery vase<sup>46</sup> that has an opening approximately four to five centimeters in diameter, a short neck, and a round body that can hold about half a liter. It is usually white and blue. The opening is covered with a piece of red cloth. An exact site by the grave is chosen by a *purghan*. A senior male family or clan member buries the vase at a depth of about one meter in this spot. Before the hole is filled in, wheat grain, cypress twigs, butter, and oats are scattered around the vase. This delights the Earth God, who then takes care of the graves.

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<sup>39</sup> In the past, some Mongghul invited a Living Buddha to come and select the site, but *purghan* were mostly consulted.

<sup>40</sup> Holy mountains are thought to provide strong backing for graveyards. Clans that have graveyards backing onto holy mountains are luckier than those whose graveyards do not.

<sup>41</sup> Located in today's Danma Town.

<sup>42</sup> Located in Wushi Town.

<sup>43</sup> Before 1980, there were about twenty families in Tughuan Village while there were around fifty families in Jilog Village.

<sup>44</sup> All Tughuan Village residents have the same ancestor and belong to the same clan. Their graveyard site was decided when villagers settled in Tughuan from Wushi Town in order to herd livestock. Xansa (an honorific for knowledgeable, literate people who could tell fortunes, and select graveyards) of Haji Village (Danma Town) chose the site in cooperation with the *purghan* of Tughuan Mengen. See Limusishiden and Stuart (1994) for further details.

<sup>45</sup> Mongghul repair their graves annually on Tomb-Sweeping Day, which is usually in the second or third lunar month.

<sup>46</sup> Made in Rgulang Monastery.

## Zooya Aanee 'Kitchen Granny'

It is thought that Zooya Aanee was originally a male who generously supported a poor Mongghul family.<sup>47</sup> After he died, that family smeared a white mud circle on the back wall of their kitchen and worshipped it to commemorate him.

Because the kitchen is the exclusive domain of women, people later started to call this deity Zooya Aanee. The cult of Zooya Aanee spread among the Mongghul. On the night of the twenty-third or twenty-fourth of the twelfth lunar month, Mongghul families see Zooya Aanee off to Shge Tingere, offering steamed buns, burning incense and oil lamps, and kowtowing. While Zooya Aanee is in Heaven, people refrain from consulting the *purghan*.<sup>48</sup> She is gone until the early morning of the first day of the first lunar month.

A straw horse mounted by a straw figure was made for Zooya Aanee. This effigy was about half a meter tall and one meter long. A long narrow paper bag was slung over the straw figure's shoulders and small steamed buns were put inside the bag, symbolizing Zooya Aanee mounting her horse to go to Heaven. Today this offering has become simplified, with families now offering twelve small steamed buns, an oil lamp, and incense. Meanwhile, women say, "Zooya Aanee, please go quickly to Heaven and return quickly on the morning of the first day of the first lunar month. Please bring happiness, children, grandchildren, livestock, and wheat oil. Please take away all disease from the family."

Early in the morning of the first day of the first lunar month, the courtyard gate is opened to welcome back Zooya Aanee, who is believed to bring happiness and wealth to families. Simultaneously, a big straw fire is lit, incense is burnt, and family members kowtow and set off firecrackers in the courtyard. If a family forgets to send off or receive Zooya Aanee, then people or livestock in that household may fall ill or other disasters will occur. For example, daughters-in-law may be childless or crops may be destroyed by hail.

## MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS

### Non-Specialists

Two methods are widely used by Mongghul to treat basic ailments such as colds, headaches, stomachaches, and other mild discomforts: *daji gharigha* 'expelling evil' and *huubada* 'expelling ghosts with straw fire'. Both methods are easy to perform and cheap enough that any family can perform them. When a family member suddenly gets a headache, for instance, a man (normally the father) performs *daji gharigha*. To do this he may use one of several things – ashes mixed with saliva, a piece of highland barley bread, or a kitchen knife – to quickly and lightly slap the patient on the back or shoulders, or on top of the head (if the patient has a headache). While doing so he says, "In my family, there is no food to eat, no clothes to wear. Do not remain. Please leave quickly." The bread or ashes are thrown out of the gate after this is done. If a knife was used, it is lodged into the gate's wooden frame with the blade pointing outwards<sup>49</sup> and the gate is firmly bolted from inside. It is then taboo for the family to receive visitors for at least half a day, or until the next morning.

*Huubada* is used if the pain is severe. A bundle of straw is tied to a stick and lit, after rape oil or

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<sup>47</sup> The details of who the man was, who the family were, or where the events took place, are unknown.

<sup>48</sup> All *purghan* are thought to go to Shge Tingere for a holiday during this period.

<sup>49</sup> This is done at night and the knife is removed the next morning before the gate is opened.

kerosene has been poured on it.<sup>50</sup> The patient sits in the courtyard center while the father passes the burning straw around them three times in a clockwise direction and then three times in an anti-clockwise direction. Once this is done, the bundle of straw is thrown out of the courtyard through the open gate. During the procedure, words identical to those used in *daji gharigha* are used.<sup>51</sup>

For injuries such as broken bones or flesh wounds, people now generally go to a clinic or hospital.<sup>52</sup> For other health issues, Huzhu Mongghul may consult *purghan*, *nenjengui*, *lamadii*, *hguandii*, *hguriden*, *smanba*, or *bog*.<sup>53</sup>

### *Purghan* 'Deities'

As described above, *purghan* are deities represented by images carried in a sedan, or by cloth-covered poles. *Purghan* are considered highly efficacious in determining the cause and treatment for illnesses and other troubles, and are commonly consulted.

A major role of *purghan* in curing disease is expelling or subduing ghosts. A *purghan* may employ several 'weapons', including sand, sacred water, heated chains, a wooden or iron knife, bow and arrow, and a spear. In accordance with a *purghan's* instructions, such weapons are used on the courtyard gate frame or under the threshold. If the weapon is used in the gate frame, it is lodged in the wood with its tip facing the direction from which the evil came. If the weapon is to be used under the threshold, it is buried with its tip pointing in the direction the evil originated.

Sand might also be flung into rooms following a *purghan's* instructions. This is usually done at night. Heated chains are used in a similar way to eradicate ghosts. Sacred water is prepared by boiling water containing wheat grain and cypress twigs. A *purghan* may instruct family members to wash their faces and bodies with such water to purify themselves.

In dealing with certain long-term illnesses, a *purghan* may request that a family burn paper ghosts in order to send them back to their source. Monks usually make the paper ghosts, which are in the shape of a human silhouette. The afflicted family burns the ghosts as monks chant.

A *purghan* may enlist the help of monks because the *purghan* can expel ghosts more easily when monks chant Buddhist scriptures. A monk may also make dough effigies of ghosts, which are then taken to a crossroad and tossed in the direction from which the ghosts are thought to have come.

A *purghan* may bless some materials that are then put around the neck, sewn into the clothing, or eaten.<sup>54</sup> Wearing or eating these materials is thought to protect from ailments sent by ghosts. A special way to protect a boy from disease is for him to wear a chain locked around his neck until he reaches the age of three or seven. This is considered very efficacious in protecting against ghosts and other evil forces.

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<sup>50</sup> Rapeseed oil was used for light in all Mongghul villages before 1975. Afterwards, villagers could purchase and use kerosene. Mongghul villages began to have electricity starting from about 1980.

<sup>51</sup> The family cannot receive visitors for several hours if the ritual is held during the day. They do not receive visitors until the next day if the ritual is held at night.

<sup>52</sup> In the past, broken bones were fixed with wooden boards. This was done by whoever had relevant experience. There were no specialist bonesetters. Sometimes the patient simply lay down and tried to keep still while the broken bone healed. Flesh wounds were usually bound up with cloth.

<sup>53</sup> A detailed explanation of each follows.

<sup>54</sup> See Limusishiden and Stuart (1994) for more detail.

## *Nenjengui* 'Eye-See-Ghost, Seers'

*Nenjengui* are also known as *yiile sgajin kun* 'ghost seeing person'. Both males and females can become *nenjengui*, but how one becomes a *nenjengui* is unclear. Their special ability is that they can see ghosts. A *nenjengui* told me, "I can see ghosts everywhere. Normal people cannot see them." To the *nenjengui*, ghosts look like normal people. Because they can see ghosts, the *nenjengui* are able to avoid them by not, for example, walking in gullies or near places where people were cremated because such places are haunted by ghosts. Once, a *nenjengui* told my mother that she disliked walking through Jinbu Valley<sup>55</sup> because ghosts harassed her whenever she walked there. *Nenjengui* cannot expel ghosts unaided. They must rely on the cooperation of the *purghan*.

### *Nenjengui* Account One

Lamuduriji, a man from Hgarilang Village (Danma Township), suddenly fell ill. A seventy-year-old *nenjengui* from Danyan Village (Donggou Township) was invited to his home. The *nenjengui* came out of the room he was sitting in that night, stood quietly in the courtyard for a moment, and suddenly cried out, "She's coming! She's coming! She's too strong! I can't hold her! Quickly bring your *purghan* to help me!" The family members immediately brought the *purghan* into the courtyard. The *nenjengui* indicated the direction the ghost was coming from. The *purghan* followed, trying to capture the ghost. Finally, the *purghan* captured the ghost under a black bowl, which was then buried deep in the earth at the spot where it had been caught. Lamuduriji recovered from his illness the next day.

### *Nenjengui* Account Two

In 1982, a man from Tangraa Village fell ill while doing construction work in Hainan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province. He became weak and disorientated, was bedridden, and unable to eat or drink. He returned home for treatment by *purghan* and medicine, which proved ineffective. His family was later informed by a *purghan* that a *nenjengui* was required to help capture the ghost that was afflicting the man. The family sent a member with two loaves of baked bread and a brick of tea to invite a *nenjengui* – an elderly woman, who agreed to come help.

Upon arrival, she immediately went to a spring in front of the ill man's gate, stood there, and behaved as if she saw something. She solemnly said, "There are two young girls walking here. A dog is following them. One is about seventeen and the other is about eighteen. They are young and strong."

The family immediately understood that this referred to two girls who had died ten years earlier. One had hung herself and the other had died after falling down a steep slope on a rainy day. They were sisters and both had been fond of dogs. The *nenjengui* quickly trapped the ghost of the seventeen-year-old under a black bowl. Meanwhile, she told the others to capture the other girl, who was fleeing with the dog. However, they were unable to capture the girl or the dog.

The *nenjengui* did not look any further that night. The next morning, a very young girl drowned in the spring when she was fetching water. People believed that the escaped ghost was taking revenge for her younger sister. Villagers immediately stopped fetching spring water, however, several days later, two horses died at the spring. Feeling helpless, the family invited the *purghan* again to seek help. The *purghan* communicated that they should make a tiger effigy with adobe bricks and put it beside the spring. Afterwards, the ghost did not dare come to the spring because she was worried that the tiger would eat her dog. The afflicted man eventually recovered.

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<sup>55</sup> Jinbu Valley, in today's Yamaha Village (Congou Township), is where my mother's natal home is located.

## Nenjengui Account Three

A man fell ill in Tangraa Village and a *nenjengui* was invited to his home one night. As the *nenjengui* entered his home she said, "Your grandfather is coming and he is leading a young boy. They are both wearing white woolen gowns."

The husband of the family skeptically said, "I don't believe what you are saying!"

She replied, "If you don't believe me, I'll show you what I see! Close your eyes, I'll call them over to you." Then the *nenjengui* said, "You two come here just a minute so that someone can see you! Quickly! Now please open your eyes and look!"

When he opened his eyes, he saw his grandfather and dead son standing before him about two steps away on the porch.<sup>56</sup> From then on the man became timid and dared not go outside alone at night.

*Nenjengui's* payment depends on the family's economic condition. Well-off families pay a lot while poor families pay little. A small amount of money such as seven RMB, a loaf of bread, or brick of tea may be given. The position of *nenjengui* is not hereditary, but certain villages are famous for producing effective *nenjengui*, for example, Rangghuali and Yomajaa villages (both in Donggou Township). *Nenjengui's* eyes are said to resemble cat eyes. Despite this, people do not fear *nenjengui*, nor do they especially respect them.

## Lamadii 'Monks'

*Lamadii* chant Buddhist scriptures and use *shdirima* 'dough effigies' to help people recover from disease. Almost all monks in Huzhu are invited from Rgulang Monastery, where nearly all the monks are Mongghul. A family first invites a *purghan* to the house when someone falls ill. If the illness is caused by a *purghan*,<sup>57</sup> inviting several knowledgeable monks to the house to recite texts may appease it. Buddhist scriptures are also recited if a ghost causes disease.

The number of monks needed varies according to the texts that will be recited. One to two monks are enough if the sutra is short, and more monks are needed if it is a lengthy text.<sup>58</sup> Monks ask for pieces of cloth from the sick person's household and throw them in the direction from which the ghost came. Sometimes cloth and *shdirima* are both used. The direction in which to throw these, and the time to throw them, are chosen by a *purghan* or decided by the monks.

Families occasionally go to Rgulang Monastery to offer tea, bread, small sums of money (around ten RMB per monk), and noodles, while monks recite Buddhist scriptures for the family and the patient. Monks are usually paid ten to thirty RMB, two loaves of baked bread, a tea brick, and *kadog*.<sup>59</sup> If someone suffers a prolonged illness and is considered unable to recover, the family may seek to alleviate their suffering by inviting monks to recite the *Lanjog* scripture that helps the person die sooner and suffer less.

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<sup>56</sup> His grandfather had died about ten years earlier. His son had died three years earlier. The same ghost killed them both.

<sup>57</sup> See the previous section on causes of illness for details of how *purghan* cause illness.

<sup>58</sup> The maximum number of monks required is 108. If assembled, three days are needed to chant the *Guan Jiri* (*Bka' 'gyur*, the 108 volumes of the Buddha's teachings). The minimum number of monks needed to chant is one, for example for chanting *Sandhog*, which can be chanted in three to four hours.

<sup>59</sup> A piece of white, yellow, gray, or blue silk given respectfully to important guests.

## *Hguandii* 'Tantrins'

*Hguandii* were similar to Tibetan *sngags pa*, non-monastic tantric practitioners of the Rnying ma Sect of Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>60</sup> The position was hereditary and *hguandii* wore a crimson robe. *Hguandii* did not learn Buddhist scriptures in monasteries and could marry and have children. Usually *hguandii* stayed at home working in the field, and were invited to people's homes to expel ghosts.

To become a *hguandii*, one needed to study Buddhist scriptures in a tent pitched at 108 locations in the wilderness. A common Huzhu Mongghul saying is "*Qulangshidari so*. Sit beside a spring and learn Buddhist scripture in a tent." This suggests that a *hguandii* sit cross-legged in a tent beside springs and chant Buddhist scriptures. By visiting 108 sites to study Buddhist scriptures, the *hguandii* mastered magic arts.

*Hguandii* could perform either good or bad acts. If their magical powers were sufficiently strong, a *hguandii* could summon evil powers and order them to do things for him. In some cases, *hguandii* expelled ghosts from an ill person's body by using a goat-skin bag to capture the ghost. With the *purghan* and *nenjengui's* cooperation, the *hguandii* put the ghost in the bag, and then chanted scriptures while tying the mouth of the bag with a string. If a ghost was captured, then the bag was burned while the *hguandii* chanted Buddhist scriptures, usually in a remote sheltered location far from the village. In the event of a suicide, particularly by hanging, the whole village participated in catching the ghost in a goat-skin bag, as suicide ghosts are thought to be particularly harmful.

*Hguandii* also sent illness to those they were unhappy with. Female body parts were considered to give power to the *hguandii*, therefore, *hguandii* often fastened the hair of dead young women to their own hair, which was worn long. An eighteen-year-old girl's thighbone was regarded by *hguandii* as an effective weapon in expelling evils. Ghosts are terrified by, but also attracted to, the sound of this instrument. The *hguandii* could capture ghosts in a goat-skin bag when they approached the sound of the thigh-bone shawm. Furthermore, the flesh of a young girl was considered delicious for evil powers, and was also thought to increase a *hguandii's* magical powers. It was widely believed by Mongghul that *hguandii* ate pieces of dead girls' flesh. A young Han woman was once riding a horse down the road. When she saw a *hguandii* she was so frightened that she fell off her horse and died, illustrating the fear that *hguandii* struck in young women.

A *xanjang* is a tall, thick-walled rectangular building, built atop a high hill. Xanjang Village (Danma Town) gained its name from a *xanjang* built on the top of the hill behind the village. It was still there in 2008. The building provided a place for *hguandii* to recite scriptures. *Hguandii* were taken to a *xanjang* to chant when invited to cure illness. Meanwhile, the patient sat cross-legged in front of, and slightly below, the *hguandii*. If a *xanjang* was lacking, this was usually done in the person's home.

*Hguandii* wore a crimson robe and long boots. They were usually paid in bread or cash.

## *Hguriden*<sup>61</sup> 'Deity Mediums'

*Hguriden* were mediums that embodied *purghan* and were called *fala* by the Han. In order to be possessed, the *hguriden* lit incense and kowtowed to a certain *purghan* in the home where he had been

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<sup>60</sup> The word *hguandii* is probably the Mongghulized pronunciation of a common oral A mdo Tibetan word for *ngags pa – dpon*. There are no longer any Mongghul *hguandii*.

<sup>61</sup> From the Tibetan, *sku rten* 'body base'. There were no practicing Mongghul *hguriden* in 2010.

invited. The *purghan* then possessed him. The *hguriden* shook his head from side to side and spoke indistinctly in Mongghul, explaining that such and such a *purghan* had possessed him, and gesticulated erratically with his arms and hands. He might have been possessed by different *purghan* on different occasions.

Questions were submitted to the deity that possessed the *hguriden*, and the deity replied through the *hguriden*. After the possession, which usually lasted less than an hour, the *hguriden* claimed to have been unaware of what had happened.

*Hguriden* typically performed while wearing a yellow or red gown bound at the waist by a red sash, a red cloth covered their head, and they wore a copper mirror on their forehead. Some *hguriden* attached small bells to the red cloth.

*Hguriden* learned Buddhist scriptures from *hguandii* in temples in the Nansan Mountains.<sup>62</sup> They may have gone alone to such temples, or with other *hguriden*. *Hguriden* were the same as *hguandii* insofar as they could use their powers for both good and evil.

*Hguriden* identified evils while possessed. Mongghul generally regarded them as less powerful than *purghan*.

The last *hguriden* was from Lawa Village (Danma Town). He became possessed immediately after touching Langja Village's *purghan's merilang*.<sup>63</sup> He died in a collapsed gold mine some time during the early twenty-first century.

### *Smanba*<sup>64</sup> 'Doctors'

Under government initiatives to improve rural health infrastructure, doctors began working in Mongghul communities after Liberation. Medical training classes were held irregularly in village primary schools. Some illiterate Mongghul attended and were trained for very short periods, usually two or three months. Some later received further training in Danma and Weiyuan towns.

### *Smanba* Account One

Baghaxja was recruited to work as an orderly in Huzhu People's Hospital (Weiyuan Town) in about 1967. A few years later, he was assigned to work in a pharmacy in Halazhigou Township, Huzhu County, after being trained for two months in basic medical knowledge at a clinic in Weiyuan Town. Class content was limited to how to give an injection and the function of a few traditional Chinese medicinal herbs. Their only equipment was a stethoscope and some acupuncture needles. Baghaxja's illiterate daughter succeeded him at the medical clinic after he retired. She became a nurse after attending some basic health training in Weiyuan Town.

### *Smanba* Account Two

Warimaduriji was recruited to take part in a medical training class in Maohebu Village (Halazhigou Township) for one year in 1966. The Qinghai Province Epidemic Bureau<sup>65</sup> provided the training in

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<sup>62</sup> Within the boundaries of today's Ledu Region, Qinghai Province.

<sup>63</sup> From the Tibetan, *me long* 'mirror', the *merilang* is a metallic disk on the forehead or middle upper chest of some sedan *purghan*.

<sup>64</sup> From the Tibetan *sman pa* 'doctor'.

<sup>65</sup> *Qinghaisheng fangyizhan*.



order to teach barefoot doctors how to give injections, use common Traditional Chinese Medicines, and how to give immunizations. Their only equipment was a stethoscope and a few acupuncture needles. Upon completion of the training, Warimaduriji worked as a doctor in Zelin and Dongdanma villages (both in Danma Town). In about 1998, he set up a private clinic in his village, where he now treats minor ailments for villagers.

## *Bog*<sup>66</sup>

The word *bog* refers both to a ritual (Bog) and to the ritual specialists who perform in it (*bog*).<sup>67</sup> The villagers invite several *bog* with two loaves of baked bread and one bottle of liquor.<sup>68</sup> A *purghan* determines how many *bog* will perform, and where in the village they should perform.

The performers sing and dance to invite gods and ancestors to come attend a symbolic banquet, which is held either by the whole village or by the members of a certain family. Bog is usually performed in the village temple or on a threshing ground at the village center.

On the second day of the second lunar month, a particularly large Bog is held in Shgeayili Village (Donggou Township) and, on the third day of the third lunar month, another large Bog is performed in Yomajaa Village. Dige Bog 'Egg Bog' is only performed in Sughuangghuali Village (Danma Town) on the eighteenth day of the third lunar month. During the latter Bog, attendees bring boiled eggs and knock them against others'. The cracked egg belongs to the participant whose egg did not crack.<sup>69</sup>

The *bog* ritual specialists may be Mongghul or Han, as determined by the village *purghan*. The month before the ritual, villagers invite *bog* according to a *purghan's* instructions regarding the direction of their homes from the village and the number of *bog*. Bog is intended to delight gods and ancestors in the hope that they will grant the village a bumper harvest, more knowledgeable scholars, and grant good health to people and livestock.

Bog usually lasts three days. The *bog* arrive in the morning of the first day and erect offerings called *fan* in the afternoon. A *fan* is a wooden cross-stick at the top of a high pole. Attached to it are two ring-shaped loaves of fried bread, to which are stuck many yellow, blue, red, white, and black papers. All villagers contribute to the construction of the *fan*. Putting it up signifies that the gods and

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<sup>66</sup>For video footage of this ritual, see <https://archive.org/details/MongghulBospiritMediumRitualInHuzhuCountyQinghaiProvince>, accessed 28 January 2015.

<sup>67</sup>Schram (2006:399) provides a description of the Bog ritual. He also (399) describes the *bog* ritual specialists, whom he calls shamans, as follows:

According to the Monguors, the shaman is a man who interposes between men and spirits, either as a friend of each, in case of good spirits or, as a protector of men in case of evil spirits. He devotes himself, and gives himself up wholly to the service of certain definite spirits which take possession of him, and which he gathers in his drum. They sometimes speak by means of his mouth, help him to call up other spirits which he sees and hears talking in his drum, and with which he is able to speak. The spirits help him to arrange appointments with other spirits, bestowing blessings and boons, and helping him combat evil ones, which play havoc and work damage. According to the Monguors, he is a more powerful man than others, able to save the villagers when their happiness is imperiled and the world in a mess.

<sup>68</sup>In the past, the main Bog were Tanzi Swine Bog, in Tanzi Village (Dongshan Town); Smeen Bog, in Smeen Village; Qaghuali Bog, in Qaghuali Village (Dongshan Township); Xanjang Bog, in Xanjang Village (Danma Town); Jangwarima Dog-Head Bog, in Jangwarima Village (Weiyuan Town); Yomajaa Bog, in Yomajaa Village; and Shuangshu Bog (Shuangshu Township).

<sup>69</sup>See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x9afvaVcy5Y> and <http://www.oralliterature.org/collections/limusishidenandjugui001.html> for an example of an Egg Bog filmed by Zhu Yongzhong on the eighteenth day of the third lunar month in the year 2000 in Sughuangghuali Village.

ancestors have been invited, and the feast is ready to begin. On the second day, *bog* start their performance. All villagers come to enjoy it. While *bog* recite scriptures, the *fan* is taken down<sup>70</sup> on the night of the third day in a westward direction, which prevents hailstorms that originate in the west.

During Bog, families take extreme care to prevent little boys from being grasped by *bog*, as this may cause illness and death. Most boys are prohibited from attending. If a certain boy insists on attending, his parents smear a round mark on his forehead with ash or red lacquer. The *bog* will not capture a boy marked in this way.

Parents also strictly interrogate male children to determine if they feel well during Bog. If a boy is found to be unwell during Bog, it is believed that the *bog* have caused the illness. If the *purghan* confirms that a boy's illness has been caused by the *bog*, then the only way to treat him is to immediately take a rooster to the Bog site. The parents beseech the *bog* to exchange the life of the boy for the rooster's life. The boy will probably recover if this is done early on, but if the parents are too late, and cannot present the rooster before the *fan* are taken down, the boy is considered doomed to die. Another way to heal the boy is for his family to hold a private Bog in their home. Even then, there is little chance of him recovering. Furthermore, many people cannot afford the expenses of food, liquor, and fees for the dancers involved with holding a private Bog.

Boys are highly valued in Mongghul areas. The *bog* can also protect a boy if his parents can get the *bog* performers to pledge their protection. During Bog, some families take their favorite boy to the *bog* to ensure his protection. The *bog* may offer a vow to protect the boy until he is seven or eight. Some boys may be protected until the age of fifteen. The boy's hair is not cut and it is taboo for him to visit his maternal uncles during those years. When the guardianship period expires, the boy is led to the place where the Bog is held in the threshing ground or in the temple (if it is a village-level Bog) or in a home (if it is a family Bog). The parents beseech the *bog* to return the boy safely to them. Meanwhile, the family offers a slaughtered pig or a live rooster, burns incense, and kowtows to thank the *bog* for protecting the boy. The slaughtered pig and live rooster are usually given to the *bog* when they have finished their performance and are preparing to leave. The boy is then allowed to cut his hair and can visit his maternal uncles once again.

## NAMES OF DISEASES AND TREATMENT METHODS

### Mongghul Words for Illness

The following Mongghul terms are used to describe illness.

*Nari*. Illness in general. This term may be translated as 'sickness' or 'disease' and describes human and animal physical and mental illnesses. If someone says that a certain person or animal has a *nari* this indicates that the person or animal is unhealthy or has serious psychological issues. This may include sadness or depression.

*Wuushu Gua*. *Xjiri Gua*. Discomfort. These terms are commonly used to describe such mild discomfort as dizziness or slight stomach pain and are also used to describe the general health condition of elderly people and small children. There is no difference between the two terms.

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<sup>70</sup> This means that all the deities and ancestors are happy and are about to leave.

## Mongghul Illnesses

The following describes several common diseases in Mongghul areas and the method of treating each.

*Kuiden naa.* Vaginitis and metritis. If a woman suffers vaginitis or metritis she mixes jujubes and wheat bran together, fries them in flax oil, puts the mixture into a cloth bag, and places it on her navel while lying down. The treatment may last from a few days to half a month. The woman may also lie down while a female friend or relative rubs her abdomen around the navel. These are considered efficacious treatments for vaginitis and metritis.

*Xriga naa.* The Mongghul term for hepatitis literally means 'liver descends'. Mongghul believe that the liver actually descends in the abdomen during hepatitis. A sash is worn around the abdomen at the height of the liver over the painful area. Usually a dead women's sash is considered most efficacious in treating the disease.

Another method involves a woman rubbing the ailing person. Any woman can do this. She starts on the lower back, and then works her hands to the front of the patient, rubbing over the liver area. Her hands slowly move up to the chest as she says, "*Xriga ruguwu? Ruguwa!* Liver repositioning? Repositioned!" The area is rubbed once in the morning, once at noon, and again at night. During the rubbing, the ailing person stretches out their big toes and thumbs and raises and lowers their head repeatedly.

*Qighaan naa.* Cataracts are treated by placing a consecrated, pea-sized pill from Rgulang Monastery under the patient's eyelid that remains there until the cataract disappears. A second method is to fill a urinal bowl with rainwater and adding seven wheat seeds. The bowl may be held by anyone while the following is recited: "*Nige, ghoori, ghuran, deeran, tawun, jirighun, duluun! Hanawu? Hanawa! Sajirawu? Sajirawa! Ghari xwu? Ghari xwa! Sainani? Saina!* One, two, three, four, five, six, seven! Effective? Effective! Crack? Crack! Rise? Rise! Better? Better!" as the patient sits on the ground. This is repeated daily until the cataract disappears. In some places in Huzhu, the same recitation is made while holding a mule placenta.

The third treatment involves *suutang taari*: a brown, round stone (usually three are used) from a riverbed that is generally used to expel ghosts. The stones are heated in a kitchen stove. Once they turn red they are put in a bucket of water. As steam rises from the bucket, the bucket is turned clockwise three times and then anti-clockwise three times. The patient then rubs the water over their eyes.

*Puu szari.* An efficacious treatment is to mix honey and bean flour together and apply to the tongue to treat cold sores. Anyone with previous experience may prepare this treatment.

*Liruu.* Asthma is treated with a mixture of white sugar, egg white, and boiled water, which is drunk three times a day. Drinking a young boy's first urine of the day is another treatment.

Broken bones. Injured limbs are also treated using a young boy's first urine of the day. It is considered effective in treating swelling and in sterilizing the wound. Usually a mother provides such treatment for her children, but anyone with previous experience may do this.

*Gujai nari*. Ingesting powdered stone treats stomach complaints by relieving pain. The stone is gathered in high mountains above the village, and is usually white. The powder is produced in a stone mortar by family elders, and eaten by the spoonful, followed by hot water.

*Tiugha*. Dysentery is treated with a mixture of vinegar and black sugar, which is boiled in a spoon that can hold approximately thirty milliliters.

Rashes. When rashes appear, a round piece of paper is cut with a circular hole in the center, the diameter of which is as big as the rash. Incense sticks are lit and the paper is lightly patted around the rash. Meanwhile, "*Burawu? Burawa! Ending? Ending!*" is repeated. This is done until the rash disappears. Another method is to smear soil from a pigsty on the rash.

## ANATOMICAL TERMS IN MONGGHUL

### Skeletal System

The skeletal system consists of the *tarogxjii yasi* 'skull'; *qurighua yasi* 'clavicula'; *dalii yasi* 'scapula'; *haisizi* 'rib'; *xjiuniuri yasi* 'sternum'; *ghari ganzi* 'humerus, radius, and ulna'; *huri yasi* 'ossa carpi, ossa metacarpi, and phalanges'; *kuazi yasi* 'hipbone'; *suul yasi* 'coccyx'; *budin lanji* 'thighbone'; *xjog* 'kneecap'; *gantii yasi* 'thighbone'; *kol yasi* 'phalanges'; and *gangsa yasi* 'vertebrae'.

### Digestive System

The digestive system is made up of the *huji, ama* 'mouth'; *mula kilee* 'palate'; *kilee* 'tongue'; *shdi* 'teeth'; *huula* 'larynges'; *fulaan huula* 'esophagus'; *gujai* 'stomach'; *mula gidesi* 'duodenum, jejunum and ileum'; *shge gidesi* 'intestinum crassum and colon'; *suul gidesi* 'caecum'; *haliga, xriga* 'liver'; *suulizi* 'gall bladder'; and *diliu* 'pancreas'.

### Respiratory System

The respiratory system consists of the *hawari* 'nose'; *huula* 'larynges'; *wuqog* 'trachea'; *mula wuqog* 'bronchi'; and *wuhgu* 'lungs'.

### Urinary System

The urinary system features the *bora* 'kidneys'; *xiisi shdazi* 'urethra'; and *dasizog* 'bladder'.

### Reproductive System

The reproductive system is made up of the *taxog* 'testis'; *tamog shdazi* 'ductus deferens'; *podanzi* 'scrotum'; *buudi* 'penis'; *furai sojin* 'ovarium'; *furai yiujin shdazi* 'tuba uterina'; *ger* 'uterus'; *shdugu, babii* 'vagina'; and *xiizi mara* 'pudendum femininum'.

## Cardiovascular System

The cardiovascular system consists of the *jirihga* 'heart' and *qizi shdazi* 'vessels'.

## Miscellaneous Body Parts

Miscellaneous body parts include the *jirihga shdazi* 'nerves'; *loshiba* 'brain'; *xjog* 'joints'; *jirihga* 'ligaments'; *hgang* 'spinal cord'; *tulighui* 'head'; *manglii* 'forehead'; *qigi* 'ears'; *qigi laxji* 'helix'; *nudu* 'eyes'; *aagu nudu* 'pupils'; *niuri* 'face'; *yaruu* 'chin'; *guji* 'neck'; *dalii* 'shoulders'; *xjiuniuri* 'chest'; *nurixjii* 'back'; *sangra* 'waist'; *ghuanjisi* 'hip'; *kiile* 'abdomen'; *kuizi* 'navel'; *ghuanjisi ama* 'anus'; *shghai*, *xghai* 'legs'; *kol*, *kuali* 'foot'; *qimusi*, *qimuzi* 'nails'; *xaa* 'malleolus'; and *kugua* 'breasts'.

## PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Mongghul typically prefer to visit Traditional Chinese Medicine clinics, rather than biomedical clinics, because there they can get a quicker diagnosis without an elaborate, expensive examination, and medicines from traditional Chinese clinics are cheaper than hospital treatments. Such diseases as cholecystitis, stomach diseases, heart disease, and liver problems can be diagnosed and treated at Traditional Chinese Medicine clinics.

## Dietary Restrictions

For common gynopathies, doctors recommend that patients avoid vinegar, chili, egg, and meat until they recover. The patient is also recommended to abstain from intercourse until the disease is cured.

## Inoculations

Inoculations are given to children only by clinic, 'barefoot,' and hospital doctors. Because parents do not understand the value of inoculations, doctors need to go from home to home inoculating children in villages. The purpose and precise nature of the process need to be carefully explained to parents before they will allow their child to be inoculated.<sup>71</sup>

## Funerals

A bowl full of clear water with a pair of red chopsticks across the top are placed before a person as they are dying, signifying that a road has been made for them to their next reincarnation and that the soul will be able to successfully pass to the underworld. If the red chopsticks and bowl of water are not brought, the soul might be unable to enter the underworld for reincarnation. If this happens, the spirit may return to the family and cause illness.

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<sup>71</sup> This situation has improved since the 1990s, and Mongghul now willingly have their children inoculated.

After death, a clansman is sent to Rgulang Monastery to consult a monk (usually a senior monk) to determine what caused the person's death, in which direction and to where the deceased soul has gone,<sup>72</sup> and how the funeral should be conducted.

After death, family members immediately kowtow and burn incense to Shge Tingere and all *purghan*. This is done so that the deceased's soul will not go far away.<sup>73</sup> Meanwhile, a male clan member is sent to ask a *purghan* the following questions:

- What should be done for the funeral?
- How many monks should be invited to the home to chant scriptures?
- What should the family send to Rgulang Monastery?
- On what date should the funeral be held?
- How much money should be distributed to participants during the mourning period?<sup>74</sup>
- What time should the corpse be taken for cremation?
- People of which zodiac signs should avoid the (sedan-shaped) coffin as the corpse is being moved out of the home?
- What position should the corpse face during cremation?
- How much time should pass after cremation before the bones and ashes are collected?
- When should the urn holding the ashes and bones be moved to the graveyard?

The family follows the *purghan's* instructions precisely. If this is not done, the *purghan* and also the soul of the deceased may send disease to the family, or to the person who disobeys.

After the corpse is taken out of the house, the whole house is swept clean with a broom, signifying that any lingering evil has been driven from the home. As the corpse is put into the clan's cremation oven, two cremators<sup>75</sup> are selected to burn the corpse.<sup>76</sup> The two cremators are later given two steamed breads for this service. When returning to the deceased's home from having taken the coffin to the cremation ground, visitors wash their hands and face with water outside the home gate. A straw fire is lit and people must jump over it to dispel any attached evils and purify themselves.

During the three-day mourning period, three to ten monks are invited to the deceased's home to chant scriptures. At night, family members kneel and worship at the foot of the *yikang* where the monks sit and chant. This chanting is believed to open a wide road for the deceased to travel to the

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<sup>72</sup> Mongghul believe that the deceased are reincarnated into a clan member's family.

<sup>73</sup> It is hoped that the soul will reincarnate into the household or into the family of nearby relatives.

<sup>74</sup> On a day during the mourning period or, on the morning when the corpse is taken to be cremated, the deceased's family distributes a small amount of money (usually one to two RMB) to every villager suggesting that they are paving a wide road to the underworld for the soul of the deceased.

<sup>75</sup> The cremators are two elderly men who had had no enmity with the deceased. Such people are selected because the deceased's family worries about the cremators interfering with the corpse in revenge for past offense.

<sup>76</sup> The round cremation oven is made of 108 bricks and can accommodate one person. When the corpse is put inside the oven, the two cremators burn incense, kowtow to the oven, and put pieces of the broken sedan inside. Cypress twigs are put in the four holes at the bottom of the cremation oven and set on fire. Historically, Mongghul added butter from the top of the oven to aid in burning the corpse, but I have not personally witnessed this done at the funerals I have observed. This may be because of the lack of milk cows in the Mongghul area and, therefore, the lack of butter. Butter can be bought, but the expense is prohibitive. The holes at the bottom of the oven allow for ventilation as the corpse burns. As the corpse burns, the two cremators sit near the oven, smoking, chatting, and drinking liquor that is provided by the dead person's family. The two men periodically go to the oven and check to see how the corpse is burning. If the corpse's head is hanging down, they put it upright to ensure a better incarnation. At lunch time, the deceased's family send someone with lunch for the cremators. Once the corpse has been cremated, the two cremators smash the oven to allow the ashes to cool in the open air.

underworld and is a very important part of the funeral ritual. If monks do not chant for the deceased, their soul will be angered and will send disease to the family and other villagers.

Corpses of those who died unnaturally<sup>77</sup> are put in common wooden boxes,<sup>78</sup> and cremated in a sheltered place. The corpse is normally sent to the cremation site in the afternoon because the ghost's harmful power is less at this time as compared to the morning when its power is much greater. It is believed that the spirit of someone who dies in such circumstances is naturally violent and may send disease to the family, villagers, and crops. Consequently, the corpse is usually cremated at the bottom of a gully or in a forest. Before the corpse is taken out of the gate, every household in the village lights a straw fire in front of their gate. While the straw is burnt, knives are stuck into a crack in the gate, with the tip pointing outwards. The gate is firmly locked, and remains so until after sunset that day to prevent the soul from entering a home to cause illness while the corpse is being taken for cremation.

When a woman learns that one of her parents has died, she immediately hangs a sieve on the wall over the courtyard gate and lights a straw fire there, thus preventing the spirit from coming into her house. It is thought that the spirits of a deceased parent may first visit their daughter's home, and send disease to her family.

## Weddings

*Purghan* determine which zodiac signs make a suitable couple (most marriages are still arranged by parents in consultation with a *purghan*). If a couple marries without taking into account their zodiac signs, the marriage will be unsuccessful. The couple will divorce, become ill, or be childless.

The timing of the wedding is critical and is determined by a *purghan*. Calamities may befall the couple if a wrong date is chosen. The *purghan* also determines the time when the bride should leave her natal home. Either the groom's or the bride's family may determine this, though it is most commonly the groom's family. A *purghan* is also asked which zodiac sign should be avoided when the bride leaves her natal home for the groom's home, and also when she reaches the groom's home. Violating the *purghan's* order quickly causes disease and even death. The only way to cure such illnesses is to cut off a rooster's head and ransom the chicken's soul for the person's.

## Construction

Before building a new courtyard gate, a *purghan* is consulted to determine an auspicious day for the construction, and which direction the gate should face. Choosing the correct direction is extremely important for the family, because a gate facing the wrong way allows evils to easily enter the home and bring illness to the family. A family that realizes that their gate faces the wrong direction immediately consults a *purghan* about moving the gate. A *purghan* is even consulted when building sheep pens.

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<sup>77</sup> Examples of unnatural deaths include suicide from hanging and drowning, and death from infectious disease.

<sup>78</sup> A sedan-shaped coffin is used in the case of a natural death.

## Temples and Nelshigang

Many Mongghul villages have their own temple<sup>79</sup> where the village *purghan* is enshrined. Elders often visit here to chant scriptures, burn incense, and kowtow. A temple keeper is selected by villagers or by the *purghan* to serve for one year.<sup>80</sup> People often go to the temple to ask *purghan* for help. For several days in summer, village elders gather in the temple to chant Buddhist scriptures to protect the village from diseases and protect the crops from hailstones.

Many homes have their own *nelshigang*. An oil lamp is lit in the *nelshigang* each night. Family members kowtow before the *purghan* and pray for the safety of the family. It is taboo for married women,<sup>81</sup> swine, and men who have recently attended a funeral or who have been in a room where a woman is confined with her newborn, to enter the *nelshigang*. Families take very good care of the *nelshigang* as precaution against disease because the *purghan* may bring serious illness to a family if defiled.

## Moving Earth

A *purghan* is consulted before moving earth. If soil surrounding the compound wall is moved it may cause their *purghan* or Xruu Aadee to send disease. If a graveyard site is selected without a *purghan*'s help, the family may become childless or poor.

## *Rdanggan Xjuzi* 'Sacred Trees'<sup>82</sup>

A tree planted at a crossroad, on a high slope, or on a hill behind a village is thought to suppress evil and protect the village from disease. Such trees are treated with much respect. It is taboo to break twigs or branches off such trees, or to cut them down. As a mark of respect and in recognition of the tree's sacredness, Mongghul villagers usually tie yellow or red pieces of cloth (in the past cotton cloth was used, but nowadays silk) to the tree. Such trees are usually willow.

## *Leng Gharigha* 'Raising the Main Ceiling Beam'

A red piece of cloth is tied around the main ceiling beam when the roof is being constructed. Gold, silver, small-denomination notes, grain, sourdough, and butter are tied between the cloth and the beam. This protects the new home from evils and is put in place by the family head.

Before the main ceiling beam is raised, several baked oily breads, jujubes, and steamed buns are thrown from above the roof beam by the carpenter responsible for constructing the house. The family members rush to grab these as tokens of good fortune.

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<sup>79</sup> Terms for temple include *laghang*, from the Tibetan *lha khang*; *muyiu*, probably from the Chinese, *miao*; and *smeen*, which is Mongghul and rarely used.

<sup>80</sup> The person is called *guangnii*. His main tasks in the temple are to burn incense and light lamps for the *purghan*, and to guard the temple at night. In addition, he assists villagers who come to consult the *purghan*.

<sup>81</sup> Married women give birth, which is considered polluting to the *purghan*.

<sup>82</sup> The tree is chosen by a *purghan* or is planted at a location according to a *purghan*'s instructions.



### *Zhobii* 'Protective Wall'

Some Mongghul households build a wall about ten meters in front of their front compound wall. The wall is the same height as the gate, but wider. This wall protects the household from evils that may attempt to enter directly through the front gate. There is no special ritual for building the wall, but its location is usually selected by consulting a *purghan*.

### *Xadari* 'Buddha Flag'

Many Mongghul homes erect a flag on which are printed Buddhist scriptures in Tibetan and a holy horse, on the top of the front gate wall, or in the courtyard on a post. It prevents evils from entering the house.

### *Binkang*

*Binkang* are built at crossroads, at the center of villages, on hillsides, between villages, beside springs, and near temples. They are made of adobe bricks, in the form of a square pavilion surrounded by many pillars. There are two big holes on the front and back walls. Usually the whole village cooperates to build it under a *purghan's* guidance. Each pavilion is said to contain 100,000 clay Buddha images. *Binkang* prevent hailstorms and disease, and maintain peace in the surrounding area. Elderly people circumambulate *binkang*, praying and chanting, on the first and fifteenth days of every lunar month.

### *Suurishidi*

According to the instructions of a Living Buddha or a *purghan*, *suurishidi* may be built at the center of a certain high slope to prevent hailstorms and disease. This pyramidal structure of adobe bricks or soil is usually about two meters high and about four meters diagonally across. People do not circumambulate it and the interior consists of only soil or bricks. Nothing is placed inside. An entire village usually cooperates to build a *suurishidi*.

### *Qurighula* 'Locking'

Mongghul prefer boys to girls. When a boy falls ill, a *purghan* is invited to the home, and may order that a locked chain be placed around the boy's neck, in order to protect him. He may wear this chain until the age of seven or thirteen, when he is considered stronger and old enough to repel evils on his own.

## *Qigi Nukula* 'Pierced Ears'

Until about the year 2000, the first-born son had both his ears pierced to receive protection against disease and ensure a long life. Usually the male infant's paternal grandmother pierced the ears on the twentieth day of the first lunar month after rubbing the earlobes to make them numb. She quickly jabbed the lobes with a needle or awl without prior sterilization. Small earrings were then put in the ears.

## Taboos and Omens

Numerous taboos exist to prevent illness. Omens in dreams and elsewhere may indicate the onset of disease.

- On New Year's Eve, ancestral ghosts visit homes to ask for delicious food. During the night children are prohibited from sleeping. If a child sleeps, a ghost may weigh their body, and if the child is overweight, ghosts may take the soul of the child, who will die.
- Children who eat pork toes are susceptible to trembling hands later in life, e.g., while writing or sewing.
- Serious illness may befall those who pass a *lasizi*<sup>83</sup> but do not shout "*Lasizi kolog!* Sacred *lasizi!*" or who rest nearby. The same fate awaits those who defecate or urinate too near the *lasizi*.
- Playing with chopsticks results in starvation.
- Defecating on a road results in blisters on the eyelids.
- Washing hands or the face, kneeling to drink water with the mouth, or fishing from a spring, cause blindness.
- Lying down immediately after a meal harms the intestines.
- The moon cuts off the ears of those who point at or mention the moon.
- A crow's cry predicts that someone will die.
- If an owl hoots at a home, someone in that home will suffer illness or injury.
- Dreaming of snow, harvesting crops, or teeth falling out, indicates that someone's parents or grandparents will soon die.
- Dreaming that a person is wearing wonderful clothes means that the person will fall ill.
- A white-bearded old man seen in dreams is Xruu Aadee. This is a good omen indicating good health and prosperity.
- Tughuan Village residents are wary of the numbers three and nine because Tughuan people are considered descendants of Li Jinwang,<sup>84</sup> who once received orders to fight against an enemy in a distant location. He set off in the third lunar month, suffered defeat in the ninth lunar month, and returned home with only a few surviving soldiers. Afterward, he ordered his people to avoid undertaking important activities in the third and ninth lunar months. Tughuan people do not undertake large projects such as building houses or holding weddings during these months. If

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<sup>83</sup> A square stone with a hollow base, rimmed by a low wooden railing. Numerous poles resembling arrows and spears are thrust into the *lasizi*, which are usually built atop mountains and consecrated to Heaven and various deities.

<sup>84</sup> Li Jinwang (856-908) was a famous general of the Tang Dynasty (618-907).

someone dies during those months, it is considered a bad omen and the corpse is not taken from the home until the next lunar month.

#### PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF A MONGGHUL DOCTOR IN XINING

In 1993, I graduated from Qinghai University Affiliated Medical College and was assigned to work in the Emergency Department of Qinghai University Affiliated Hospital where I gave emergency care and provided rapid diagnosis in order to transfer patients to the appropriate departments for treatment. I transferred to the Orthopedics Department in the same hospital in 1997. During my ensuing years of practice, many Mongghul have contacted me for assistance in obtaining medical treatment for a variety of illnesses.

Xining is the location of the Qinghai Provincial Government and the seat of key political, economic, and educational institutions within the province. Qinghai's best-equipped and best-staffed hospitals are in Xining. Patients treated in Xining are generally thought to have a better chance of recovery. If treatment in Xining fails, patients and their families are usually convinced that the patient's life cannot be saved. However, they will feel relieved that they sought treatment in Xining's excellent modern hospitals. This encourages people to seek treatment in Xining.

I am the only surgeon in Xining who speaks Mongghul. Being spoken to in their own language is often a great support to Mongghul in the alien environs of Xining. Therefore, Mongghul are now able to receive significant support in Xining.<sup>85</sup> For many patients, their visit to the hospital is their first visit to Xining and hearing the Mongghul language reassures them. I try to make time to assist them during examinations, when buying medicine and paying their fees, and when checking in or being discharged. I try to ensure that they get correct diagnosis and treatment. Due to this, many Mongghul receive successful treatment in Xining, which encourages more Mongghul to seek treatment in Xining. Clear communication is an important part of effective treatment. I also patiently explain to patients and their families whatever is necessary. When I prescribe medicines, I give patients a detailed explanation about the disease's causes, symptoms, treatment, and prevention.

The majority of Mongghul patients are women, about one third of whom suffer from neurosis and headaches. They have often been treated in the home by a *purghan* and have taken medication prescribed by local clinics before making the sizeable investment required to visit Xining. Often, they are misdiagnosed in the countryside and may have been given inappropriate treatments, which can have serious side effects. An example of this is a woman (b. 1980) from Qazi Village (Donggou Township), who suffered from headaches for two years. She was repeatedly treated by a *purghan*. After this failed, she was treated in various medical clinics, but her condition remained unimproved. She then went to the Huzhu Epidemic Prevention Station, where a doctor asked her what the problem was. When she replied that she suffered from headaches, the doctor rashly diagnosed meningitis, and administered treatment accordingly. About half a year later her problem had worsened. She was finally brought to visit me in Xining, and she was soon diagnosed with nervous headaches.

Village women lack financial independence. Prior to 2000, the majority of women did not spend even one hundred RMB in a year. This is an important reason why many suffer neurosis and

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<sup>85</sup> Including helping them to check into or leave the hospital, buy medicine, receive an examination in the laboratory, and get radiation therapy. If it is necessary that they stay in Xining for a few days, they can be helped to find a hotel. Many elderly Mongghul do not understand Modern Standard Chinese, and this assistance is particularly helpful for them.

nervous headaches. Another reason is that Mongghul women traditionally have a low position while residing in their husband's family's home where their mothers-in-law and husbands often mistreat them.

A woman from Jilog Village visited me with her husband, complaining that, in the previous month, she had had trouble swallowing food. She had become weak because she was not eating well. Her husband told me that she must have an incurable disease of the larynx and, if this was the case, he was not concerned for her welfare, and would merely wait for her to die. However, after an endoscopy, it became clear that she was suffering from gastritis. The neurologist also said that she suffered from neurosis.

Stomach cancer is common in Mongghul villages. Almost all stomach cancer occurs among males in their fifties and sixties.<sup>86</sup> Such people generally ignore such early warning signs as long-term stomach discomfort, difficulty swallowing food, and weight loss, because they know they cannot afford treatment. They thus delay seeking treatment and only consult *purghan* when their condition becomes severe. Most delay expensive medical expenditures until the cancer has spread to other parts of the body. Instead of having the operation, after diagnosis they return home to wait for death.

Cirrhosis of the liver is another common disease, caused by Hepatitis B and alcohol abuse. Liquor is an important element of traditional culture, particularly hospitality. Mongghul men drink frequently and in large amounts. The liquor may be distilled at home from highland barley, though it is more commonly bought from shops. Though many Mongghul men have Hepatitis B and should not drink alcohol, they often ignore this and continue to drink heavily, the liver rapidly deteriorates, and eventual liver failure causes death.

Eating infected pork may cause brain cysticercosis. This is very common among Mongghul, and was particularly so before 2003. Mongghul traditionally raised pigs inside their household compound, most of which had no toilets. Family members defecated in the pigsty, increasing the chance of infection by cysticercosis. Humans pass the tapeworm eggs in their feces. When swine eat human feces, the worm may pass to the pigs. When people eat infected pork, the tapeworm completes its life cycle. If a worm lodges in a human brain, it can cause convulsions and intracranial hypertension, resulting in headaches, nausea, and vomiting. Blindness may result if the tapeworm lodges in the eye.

During the early stages of cysticercosis, those infected are unaware they contracted the disease and attribute symptoms to other diseases, which they treat with such traditional methods as consulting a *purghan* or chanting scriptures. Medical treatment in a local clinic or hospital comes next, where treatment for headaches or convulsions may follow, but often not for the cysticercosis itself. Treatment expenses impoverish many families. Time passes, the patient's condition worsens, and treatment may then be sought in Xining, where CT and MRI enable a more precise diagnosis. Treatment in Xining is generally successful, but the expense<sup>87</sup> is such that money must be borrowed from relatives, friends, and villagers.

Poverty and a lack of education are the ultimate causes of cysticercosis. Every Mongghul household slaughters a fat pig in autumn and the pork is eaten during the New Year celebrations. Remaining pork is hung up to dry. If a family finds that their pork is infected with cysticercosis, not only will the immediate family eat the infected meat, but also their relatives and neighbors. The investment in the pig has been too great for people not to eat it. Elderly people in particular are unconcerned about eating the infected meat, because they believe that they will soon die.

There were several outbreaks of cysticercosis in Tughuan Village in 2000. Each involved more

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<sup>86</sup> I have met very few Mongghul women who suffered from stomach cancer.

<sup>87</sup> About 10,000 RMB in 2008.

than twenty households becoming infected. One outbreak occurred when a family was building an extension to their house. The whole village turned out to help with the construction, and were fed infected pork. Because of the large number of people, the meat was not thoroughly cooked and, though people were aware that the meat was infected, they ate it anyway.

#### MEDICAL CARE IN HUZHU<sup>88</sup>

A smallpox vaccination station was opened in Huzhu County in 1942, however, there were no specialized health-care agencies in Huzhu until a health-care department<sup>89</sup> was founded with four employees in September 1952. In 1984, it combined with the County's Family Planning Office<sup>90</sup> and was renamed the Health and Family Planning Bureau.<sup>91</sup> It employed ten people.

#### Huzhu People's Hospital

The County's People's Clinic<sup>92</sup> was founded on 15 May 1950. There were four employees and three rooms. It was renamed the County's People's Hospital<sup>93</sup> in 1956 and the number of employees increased to forty-two, including eleven biomedicine doctors and three Traditional Chinese Medicine doctors. The hospital featured departments of emergency medicine, surgery, gynecology and obstetrics, and Traditional Chinese Medicine; and a laboratory and an in-patient ward. There were thirty-one beds. In the same year, a simple outpatient building was built.

By 1985, the number of employees had increased to 145 and pediatric, stomatology, ophthalmology, and radiation departments had been added. Equipment at that time included an electrocardiograph, ultrasonic B machine, X-ray machine, a set of anesthesia machines, two operation tables, and two gastric lavage machines. The hospital also had two ambulances. Stomach, gallbladder, spleen, and kidney operations were done at the hospital at that time.<sup>94</sup>

In 2005, Huzhu People's Hospital had eighteen departments, 200 patient beds, and 243 employees. About forty large and medium-scale pieces of medical equipment had been purchased, including a spiral CT (for head to foot scans), an X-ray machine (500mA), a C-arm machine for bone surgery operations, and an entirely automatic biochemistry analysis machine. The hospital treated approximately 80,000 outpatients annually. More than 5,300 patients were treated in hospital, of which about 1,300 patients received surgery.

#### Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital

The Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital was founded on 3 May 1985 with departments of medicine, pediatrics, orthopedics, fistula, acupuncture and moxibustion, laboratory, and X-ray. There was also an

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<sup>88</sup> The information in this section is summarized from HTZX (1993) and QYW (1990).

<sup>89</sup> *Zhongdouju*.

<sup>90</sup> *Jihua shengyu bangongshi*.

<sup>91</sup> *Weisheng jihuashengyuju*.

<sup>92</sup> *Xianrenmin weishengyuan*.

<sup>93</sup> *Xianrenmin wiyuan*.

<sup>94</sup> This information was current in 1997.

ECG room. The hospital had fifty beds and fifty-two employees.<sup>95</sup>

By 2005 there were ninety-five employees of whom sixty percent were Traditional Chinese Medicine staff. The hospital had ten departments, three medical technique departments, and two community health outpatient services. There was an X-ray machine (200mA), a set of electric gastroscopes, an entirely automatic blood cell analysis machine, an automatic biochemical analysis machine, and an ultrasound machine. There were approximately 60,000 outpatients annually. More than 1,400 patients were treated in hospital with eighty-one percent reported as being cured.

### Clinics in Townships and Rural Regions

In 1952, the first clinic was founded in Shangzai<sup>96</sup> Township. From 1962 onwards, a succession of more than nineteen townships in Huzhu County opened medical clinics and by 1968, twenty-two townships in Huzhu had their own clinics. The major clinics were in Wushi, Donghe, Shatangchuan, Jiading, and Nanmengxia townships. There was a total of 167 health workers in Huzhu in 1985, and almost every town had its own clinic.

Patients were taken to clinics on wooden carts and later by tractor trailers. The distance from each village to their local clinic varies. For example, the clinic in Danma Town is situated at the center of a long, narrow valley. Villagers at either end of the valley must travel ten kilometers to the clinic. By cart, this distance took one to two hours; by tractor it takes approximately thirty minutes. There were four ambulances in Huzhu County in 2008 – two in Huzhu County Town at the Huzhu People's Hospital and one in each of Shuangshu and Donghe township towns.

The national government began implementing the Rural Cooperative Health Insurance Scheme in 2004<sup>97</sup> whereby each family member is required to annually contribute ten RMB to the cooperative. The cooperative then covers seventy percent of the cost for treatment in rural clinics and fifty percent of the cost for treatment in the county hospital. Ben Chengfang (b. 1979), a health care clinic worker in Dongshan Township Clinic, reported:

Infrastructure has recently been improved and medical equipment has been purchased, including ECG, ultrasonic B, and X-ray machines. Clinic medical staff now includes two doctors, one nurse, two public health specialists, and another two recent graduates. Due to improved clinic conditions, increased staff, and greater ease of access, an increasing number of villagers now use the clinic. On average, fifteen outpatients come to the clinic each day, and one patient will stay overnight in the clinic for treatment.

### Mongghul Basic Health Televised Program<sup>98</sup>

In 2000, the Canada Fund provided funds for the production of a Mongghul language health education program that was broadcast twice throughout Huzhu County. I wrote the script for the television program. In addition, one hundred booklets of the script were published in Mongghul and distributed free of charge to middle schools and health clinics. Fourteen copies of the program were made

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<sup>95</sup> This information was current in 1997.

<sup>96</sup> This large, predominantly Han village was given township status in 1962, a change that was later reversed.

<sup>97</sup> Nongcun hezuo yiliao baoxian.

<sup>98</sup> See Limusishiden (2000) for more information.

available in VCD format to healthcare clinics serving Mongghul clientele in Huzhu County.

The program was well received by Mongghul in Huzhu County. At the time it was shown, it was rare to hear the Mongghul language on television, which created a larger audience. In terms of educational impact, women, who are mostly illiterate, particularly benefited from this program.

Due to the program's success and changing health needs, I again applied for funds from the Canada Fund in 2005. New material was included in the previous production including SARS, HIV/AIDS, and Bird Flu. Information on HIV/AIDS had become particularly urgent due to the rapid spread of the disease into remote areas due to transmission via migrant workers who contract the disease in urban centers. The program was again broadcast twice in Huzhu County.

## CONCLUSION

Mongghul society and culture began experiencing rapid transformation in the early twenty-first century, including the practices and understanding of illness and health outlined above. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, most Mongghul children were receiving a Chinese language education, allowing greater access to information, including biomedical knowledge, through television, print media (including the internet), and radio. In this context, Mongghul oral culture and medical knowledge are less valued than Chinese language biomedical knowledge.

The program to Develop the Western Regions<sup>99</sup> has also influenced the transmission of Huzhu Mongghul medical knowledge. Transport facilities and communication technology have improved, and locals' income has risen. Ill people now have greater access to county and provincial level hospitals in Xining.

Practically all families now have television sets. Alien cultural expressions are rapidly replacing traditional songs, stories, dances, and the understanding of health and illness and other bodies of knowledge.

The local perception of the efficacy of traditional medicine has been influenced by family planning policy.<sup>100</sup> According to this policy, minority nationality couples may have two children, whereas large families were valued in the past. Due to the increased investment in smaller families, healthcare options for children are more closely scrutinized. Modern biomedicine is trusted more than traditional medicine.

Changing labor practices have also influenced the transmission of traditional understandings of health and illness. Young men and women in 2008 frequently leave Huzhu to perform migrant labor and return with new ideas, including experiences of seeking medical treatment within the biomedical system. Traditional concepts of illness and health, including consulting *purghan*, are increasingly regarded as superstitious.

The Rural Cooperative Health Insurance initiative described above has also increased people's reliance on and trust in the biomedical health system, further undermining traditional medical knowledge in Huzhu.

Under such circumstances, traditional practitioners are consulted much less often than before. By 2008, there were no *nenjengui*, *hguandii*, or *hguriden* in Mongghul areas and the majority of those consulting *purghan* were over forty years old.

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<sup>99</sup> Xibu dakaifa.

<sup>100</sup> Jihua shengyu.

# A MONGGHUL COMMUNAL RITUAL: DIINQUARI

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## ABSTRACT

Details of the Diinquari ritual are given for eight Mongghul villages in the Shdazi Mongghul area of Ledu Region, where this ritual is held annually from the twenty-fourth day of the tenth lunar month to the first day of the eleventh month, dates that correspond to the death of Tsong kha pa (twenty-fifth day of the tenth lunar month) as observed in the Tibetan Buddhist world. Ritual implements, *guwa* 'organizers', local deities, a schedule, ritual activities, attendants, and finances are described. Diinquari features elaborate religious ritual, veneration of local deities, and small-scale commercial activities on the part of local businessmen. It is also a time for locals to visit relatives who live in the village, friends to meet and chat, and for young people to find lovers.

## KEYWORDS

Diinquari, Huzhu, Mongghul, Monguor, Qinghai, ritual, Tsong kha pa, Tu

## INTRODUCTION

Diinquari<sup>1</sup> is a funeral ceremony or commemoration held for Jiirinbuqii, who froze to death on the twenty-fifth day of the tenth lunar month. No one knows when Mongghul began Diinquari. Some say it started after Jiirinbuqii passed away, or after the Duluun Lunkuung was formed. *Janhua Jancuu*

Jiirinbuqii (Rje rin po che/ Tsong kha pa [1357-1419]) founded the Dge lugs (Yellow Hat) Sect of Tibetan Buddhism. The Diinquari ritual is also held among Tibetan communities in Qinghai, e.g., in describing Skya rgya (Jiajia) Village, Skya rgya Township, Gcan tsha (Chinese: Jianzha) County, Blo brtan rdo rje and Stuart (2008:24) write, "Bcu ba'i lnga mchod = Offerings on the Anniversary of Tsong kha pa's death" are held on the twenty-fifth to the twenty-ninth days of the tenth lunar month. Tsong kha pa's attainment of Nirvana is also commemorated on the twenty-fifth day of the tenth lunar month in Gnyan thog Village (Gnyan thog Township, Tongren County, Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province). Each household in this Monguor village sends a representative to chant in the monastery courtyard; others circumambulate and make prostrations as they wish. A village household voluntarily provides breakfast and dinner to all the villagers. Families also burn oil lamps at home and do not eat meat (Roche and Lcags mo tshe ring 2013).

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<sup>1</sup> Likely derived from the Tibetan term *dur mchod* 'funerary offering'.



## CONSULTANTS

Caidog (b. 1962), a Mongghul from Walighuan Village, was unmarried due to his family's intense poverty, and had been the seven villages' public-temple keeper for eight years in 2012.

Huansuu (b. 1971), Mongghul, lives in Yangja Village with her son, daughter, and her husband's parents. Her husband died in 2007 from uremia. Huansuu was seriously injured after being struck by lightning while weeding a field in 2009. Diinquari is held only in Huansuu's home when it is observed in Yangja Village. Her natal village is Shgeayili (Dazhuang) Village, Dala Township, Ledu Region.

Janhua Jancuu (b. 1935), Mongghul from Yangja (Yangjia) Village, Gaodian Town, Ledu Region,<sup>2</sup> Haidong Municipality, Qinghai Province, was sent to be a monk at Quurisang Srishiji<sup>3</sup> (Huayuansi) Monastery, Songduo Township, Huzhu County when he was eleven years old. He left the monastery in 1958, during the Pochu mixín 'Eradicating Superstitions' campaign, and was sent to study Tibetan and Chinese at Qinghai Normal School in Xining City. His mother stopped him from returning to school during his fifth semester because she objected to him being away from home. He then farmed at home. He is occasionally asked to chant Buddhist scriptures in his village, and also practices as a *xrighua rjejin*.<sup>4</sup> He married a Mongghul woman when he was twenty-eight and has three daughters and two sons. Diinquari is held annually in Shdazi Lunkuáng.<sup>5</sup> Janhua Jancuu regularly participates and thus is very familiar with the ritual. Limusishiden visited him at Huansuu's home in Yangja Village on 2 January 2012.

## THE SHDAZI MONGGHUL AREA

Diinquari was historically held throughout the Duluun Lunkuáng 'Seven Valleys', but here we focus on the ritual as it was practiced in the Shdazi Mongghul area. This area is located in remote, rugged terrain in northwest Ledu Region, bordering Songduo and Hongyazigou townships, Huzhu Mongghul Autonomous County. Local Chinese use the term Shuimogou 'Mill Valley' to refer to the valley. A place of steep mountains and narrow valleys, certain areas are so narrow that locals comment that only a bit of sky is visible when looking up. Mongghul live along the Shdazi River. Average elevation is 2,300 meters. There are eight Mongghul-speaking villages (see Figure 1) with the Mongghul population being 1,233 (292 households as of 2003).<sup>6</sup> Each person has, on average, approximately two *mu*<sup>7</sup> of land to cultivate. Only Yangja Village's fields are irrigated, whereas the other seven villages' fields are located on steep slopes, are

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<sup>2</sup> Ledu County became Ledu Region, Haidong Region became Haidong Municipality, and Ping'an County became Ping'an Region in July 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Located in today's Songduo Township, Huzhu County.

<sup>4</sup> Lit: fortune-look-one; fortune-teller; one who makes predictions about human illness, selects auspicious days for house construction, and tells the direction in which a recently dead person's soul will be reincarnated. Fortune-telling by manipulating the fingers in Huzhu Mongghul areas is common.

<sup>5</sup> Explained later.

<sup>6</sup> Limusishiden collected these data in 2003 while preparing a proposal to build a dam and a concrete bridge over the Shdazi River between Maqang Tugun Village and Huayuan Village, Songduo Township, Huzhu County. The Germany Embassy funded this project, which built a bridge and dam in 2004 (<http://tibetanplateau.wikischolars.columbia.edu/A+Bridge+and+%20Dam+For+BAINAI%20+VILLAGE%2C+SHDARA>, accessed 26 October 2014).

<sup>7</sup> One *mu* = 0.067 hectares.

not irrigated, and produce unpredictable crop yields.

Mongghul in the eight villages lead difficult lives. Construction of a narrow concrete road to the valley began in 2009 and was completed in 2011. To the north, the road leads from Maqang Tugun Village, Dala Mongghul Township, Ledu Region to Huayuan Village, Songduo Township, Huzhu County. To the south, it leads from Maqang Tugun Village, passes through Gaodian Town, Ledu Region, and connects to National Highway Number 109, which runs from Beijing to Lha sa. Most transportation was done by animals along narrow tracks before the valley concrete road was completed. Mongghul living along the Shdazi River frequently intermarry and must cross the river to visit relatives and work in their fields. Before 2004, crossing the river was dangerous and inconvenient because there was no bridge.

Figure 1. Mongghul-speaking villages and population in Dala Mongghul Township and Gaodian Town<sup>8</sup> (2003).

Village Name	Households	Population
Binkang (Benkang)	21	89
Fangtuu (Qianbangou)	74	304
Handi (Hantai)	20	88
Lashizi Kayari (Heidinggou)	35	156
Maqang Tugun (Baiya)	38	157
Shdara Tang (Dalantan)	33	137
Shgeayili	41	167
Yangja (Yangjia)	30	135
Total	292	1,233

## SHDAZI LUNKUANG DIINQUARI

### Schedule

Diinquari is held annually in Shdazi Lunkuang from the twenty-fourth day of the tenth lunar month to the first day of the eleventh lunar month. It normally lasts seven days, or eight days if the tenth lunar month has thirty days.<sup>9</sup> Participating villages include Maqang Tugun, Fangtuu, Shgeayili, Lashizi Kayari, and Handi, Dala Mongghul Township, Ledu Region; Yangja, Gaodian Town, Ledu Region; and Walighuan (Bagushan) and Kuxin (Huzichang) in Hongyazigou Township, Huzhu County. The villages host the ritual according to the following sequence: Maqang Tugun → Fangtuu → Yangja → Walighuan → Lasizi Kayari → Handi and Kuxin<sup>10</sup> → Shgeayili, and then the cycle repeats. Each community thus holds the ritual once every seven years.

<sup>8</sup> Yangja (Yangjia) Village was part of Gaodian Town, Ledu Region in 2012.

<sup>9</sup> A thirty-day lunar month is known as *qasizari* or *nangang* in Mongghul.

<sup>10</sup> Handi and Kuxin are two villages that jointly hold Diinquari as a single community. Historically, the two villages were a single village. The population of Handi Village came from Kuxin and established a new village in Shdazi in order to more conveniently cultivate their farmland. Each of the two villages holds Diinquari in their own village once every fourteen years.

## Ritual Implements

The villages use one set of ritual implements in turn during Diinquari. The implements are stored in wooden boxes and sealed once Diinquari concludes, and then handed over to the villagers who will hold the ritual the next year. Ritual objects include:

- *Purghan*. *Purghan* [pram]<sup>11</sup> may take the form of deities in a *tangka* (but not the *tangka* itself), a spear, a clay statue, a bronze Buddha statue, a sedaned statue, a pole with the same shape and size as a deity-sedan pole, a *merilang* 'sacred mirror', and the table on which a *purghan* in a sedan is placed. Each of the seven villages has their own Walighuansang *Purghan* in their own village. It is consulted to identify a suitable spouse, treat illness, exorcise evil, ensure well-being and good harvests, and to alleviate droughts. In the case of a sedaned *purghan*, moving forward is affirmative while moving backwards is negative. Pole *purghan* move up and down in the hands of those who hold them to signify a positive answer. *Purghan* communicate through interaction between an elder who asks the *purghan* questions and a man who holds the sedan poles and, in the case of a pole *purghan*, who holds the pole. *Purghan* may belong to an individual household or be shared by a village. Each household has a commodious *purghan* room in the family compound of several adobe rooms built around tall, tamped-earth enclosing walls. Handi Village enshrines its *purghan* in a village home. In the other villages, it is enshrined in a village temple. The appearance of the *purghan* is the same. It is dressed in a Chinese-style unlined, upper garment (colors include red, yellow, pink, and green) and then draped in a monk's robe. *Purghan* include:
  - Eleven embroidered, painted, or appliquéd *tangka* featuring Jiirinbuqii, Shakyamuni, and the Longevity Buddha.
  - Six bronze statues: Jiirinbuqii (two), Shdanbasang (two), and Yangda (two).
  - One Zhahgu (clay Buddha statue) that is heavy and inconvenient to move, and has therefore been permanently housed in the Walighuan Village Temple.
- Two *joliu* 'copper ladles', each with a bowl of about ten centimeters in diameter and a handle about twenty-five centimeters long, used to ladle noodles for monks.
- One *suuligha* 'copper barrel' with a height of about thirty centimeters and a capacity of about thirty kilograms. It is used to contain noodles for monks' meals.
- Four to five *kingahga* 'hand drums'. The drum surface is made from goat-skin. The drumhead's diameter is about sixty centimeters and the handle is about one meter long. While performing a ritual, a monk sits on the ground, holds the drum handle in his left hand, and holds a curved beater for beating the drumhead in his right hand.
- Two *jalang* 'shawms'. They are about one meter long and blown by monks.

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<sup>11</sup> See Limusishiden and Stuart (1994). We have previously used the term *pram*, however, *purghan* more correctly reflects what is said. Tsong kha pa, Shakyamuni (Mongghul: Shdanbasang), and the Longevity Buddha (Mongghul: Yangda; Chinese: Changshoufo) are examples of Buddhas. Every Buddha is a *purghan*, but not every *purghan* is a Buddha, for example, Walighuansang *purghan* (described later) is not a Buddha.

- Eight *xedari* 'Buddhist flagpoles'. The pole is made of pine wood and the cloth is black with a black metal spear at the top. On the twenty-ninth day of the tenth lunar month, eight Mongghul men hold the flagpoles and go to the location where *shdirima* (*gtor ma*) 'figure made of toasted barley flour mixed with white or brown sugar and milk' are thrown into a fire. When the *shdirima* begin burning, the eight men wave the *xedari* downward several times, signifying the expulsion of evils and ghosts.
- Four *nbuu* 'copper cymbals'. The diameter of the large pair is about thirty centimeters while the other three have a diameter of about twenty-five centimeters.
- Ten pieces of white felt. Each is two meters long and 1.3 meters wide.
- Eight white blankets. They are three meters long and sixty centimeters wide, cover the felt, and are for monks to sit on.
- One *ndang* 'conch-shell horn' is used to awaken the monks in the early morning during the ritual.
- Eight tables. Each is about one meter long and fifty centimeters wide. Bread, bowls, and scriptures are placed on the tables for the monks.
- Three silver butter lamps about thirty centimeters tall.
- Several hundred small copper butter lamps. Each is about five centimeters tall.
- Four to five boxes of curtains and long strips of cloth for decoration.

#### The *Guwa*: Diinquari Organizers

Four *guwa* 'organizers' are men who are generally middle-aged and older. They are chosen during Diinquari by the *purghan* or villagers from the village that will hold the next Diinquari. The monks are not involved in choosing *guwa*, who serve for one year and are responsible for all the Diinquari objects. They ensure that they are all accounted for, placed into wooden boxes, and sealed by monks at the site where Diinquari concludes.

The *guwa* are busier than usual when preparing for Diinquari to be held in their village. They regularly consult the *purghan* about ritual preparations, and collect a small amount of money, flour, and rapeseed oil from each household in the seven communities for ritual expenses in their home village. They are expected to take their responsibilities seriously and cooperate with the monks who will conduct Diinquari.

The four *guwa* begin going to the seven communities two months prior to Diinquari *gashiguu* 'solicit donations' for Diinquari with two or three horse-drawn carts in cooperation with *guwa* from the visited villages. All households willingly donate wheat grain, highland barley seed, butter, cash, rapeseed, and rapeseed oil. There is no enforcement of certain rules – the items given and the amount depend on the individual household. Generally, the maximum amount of rapeseed donated per household is fifty kilograms and the minimum is one kilogram. After the year 2000, people began

giving cash, for example from ten to one hundred  *yuan* per household, however, certain households donate only one tea brick.

After *gashiguu*, the *guwa* ask men from their home village to take the collected grain and rapeseed to the local mills to grind the grain and press the rapeseed.

In the seven villages, Diinquari is held in individual households that have a large courtyard and many rooms. The village *purghan* chooses the particular household. The exception is in Yangja Village, where Diinquari is only held in Huansuu's home, because her home is the only two-storied building in her village. Additionally, rooms are on each side of her courtyard compound, providing convenience and accommodation during the ritual.

## Walighuansang

The deity, Walighuansang, is worshiped by all seven villages. '*Wali*' is a term for a young monk, '*ghuan*' suggests 'deaf', and '*sang*' suggests 'Buddha' or '*purghan*'. Walighuansang may thus be rendered 'Deaf Young Monk'. Yangja Village's *purghan* – Walighuansang – is kept in a room on the second floor of Huansuu's home.<sup>12</sup> Janhua Jancuu gave the following account of Walighuansang:

A sixteen-year-old Mongol boy from Wulan County (Haixi Mongolian and Tibetan Prefecture) came to become a monk in Shdazi Valley. He had two brothers. One was in today's Bazangou area (Ping'an Region) and the other was in Farishidin (Xingjia) Village (Hongyazigou Township, Huzhu County). When Walighuansang died, he was not reincarnated, nor could he become a *purghan*. A Mongol *shge* lama<sup>13</sup> then chanted scripture and Walighuansang became a *purghan*.

Another Walighuansang account was given by Caidog (b. 1962), a Mongghul from Walighuan Village, on 22 April 2012 when Limusishiden visited the temple:

There are three steep cliffs in Walighuan Mountain, (Hongyazigou Township). A boy shepherd from today's Farishidin Village often herded his sheep on Walighuan Mountain. As the shepherd was about to leave the mountain one afternoon, he heard a boy say, "May I come out? May I come out?" He was sure the call was from the three steep cliffs, but he saw no boy as he carefully looked at the three cliffs. He then ignored the call and returned home.

After he returned home and told his father the story, his father said, "Tell him to come out if you hear him calling from the cliffs when you are herding there tomorrow."

The next day, the boy went to herd sheep in the mountains as usual. At about lunch time he heard, "May I come out? May I come out?" coming from the three steep cliffs.

"Please come out!" the shepherd shouted back. Suddenly, the mountains collapsed, the earth split, and an arrow came out from one cliff, a bow emerged from another cliff, and a white horse came out from a third cliff. The shepherd picked up the arrow and bow and led the white horse back to his home.

That night, the white horse spoke in the voice of the boy who had shouted, "I was buried in the rocky mountain. Now I am free. You are my master. Thank you for your help! Please take my bow to a temple in the Nanshan (Nanshan) Mountains.<sup>14</sup> Use the arrow to make a trident. It will loyally guard and protect you and your land as a *purghan*. Put me in a temple please!" and then the white horse suddenly vanished.

The family obeyed the white horse. The trident was made and became the family's *purghan*, and a temple was built for it. A white horse image was made, mounted by a statue of a man holding a trident in his right hand. Locals have used the trident as their *purghan* till now (see Figure 4).<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Limusishiden visited her home on 2 January 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Incarnation lama/ Living Buddha; Mongghul: *shge lama* 'big lama' and *rnbuqii* (*rin po che*).

<sup>14</sup> Located north of the Huang River and south of the Qilian Mountains.

<sup>15</sup> A folktale, *Gadang Wuxi Naier*, with similar content collected in Minhe County may be found in Stuart and Limusishiden (1994:146-147).

Walighuansang is a male *purghan*. A communal Walighuansang *purghan* is kept in the village temple located in Walighuan Village. The temple has two spear *purghan* and two clay statues. Each is regarded as a Walighuan *purghan*. In addition, each of the seven villages has their own Walighuansang *purghan* in their own village for convenient consultation when need arises. For example, a spear Walighuansang *purghan* is kept in Huansuu's home in Yangja Village.

In addition, Zankang Purghan is kept in Fangtuu Village's temple. Zankang is King Foorigisigari, or Baghari King, a rival of King Gesar (Limusishiden et al. 2013). Zankang is a communal *purghan* for all Mongghul in the Duluun Lunkuang. It is taboo for those who venerate Zankang Purghan to sing Gesar songs and display his images. Except for Fangtuu Village, such villages as Rangdin Village, Donggou Township and Huarin (Hualin) Village, Danma Town venerate Zankang Purghan in their village shrines. Zankang Purghan is a spear in the above mentioned three villages. Fangtuu Village's Zankang Purghan is a two-meter long spear with a bronze tip and sandalwood shaft enlaced with brass. The base of the spear is an iron point that makes it easy to thrust into the small garden plot in the courtyard center when taken to a home for consultation.

#### YANGJA VILLAGE DIINQUARI

Yangja Village is located at the southern end of Shdazi Valley, and the northern part of Gaodian Town, Ledu Region. It is the only Mongghul village in Gaodian Town. Limusishiden visited Huansuu's home in Yangja Village and the specific Diinquari process that follows is based on what he learned during his visit.

Ten days prior to Diinquari, a member of each village household comes to Huansuu's home to help with preparations, e.g., clean all the rooms and courtyard; make noodles, cut them into *qiizi* 'small triangular pieces' and dry them in the sun; make *booshizog* 'deep-fried twisted dough sticks'; and make steamed bread buns that are twenty centimeters in diameter.

During Diinquari, each monk is offered one steamed bun and six *booshizog* on the first day (the twenty-fourth day), one steamed bun and seven *booshizog* on the second day (the twenty-fifth day), one steamed bun and eight *booshizog* on the third day (the twenty-sixth day), and so on. However, on the first day of the eleventh month (if the tenth lunar month has only twenty-nine days), each monk is given one steamed bun and twelve *booshizog*. In addition, each monk receives about 250 grams of butter daily.

Remaining wheat and highland barley grain are given to the monks when Diinquari concludes. Each monk receives approximately one hundred kilograms of grain. Remaining cash is also divided among the monks: each monk receives 700-1,000 RMB. In 2007, about sixteen monks attended Diinquari in Yangja Village.

All monks from the seven villages are expected to participate in the ritual and only they are invited. Most of these monks live at Rgulang, Quurisang Srishiji, and Hgunbin (Kumbum, Ta'er)<sup>16</sup> monasteries. If any local monk does not attend Diinquari, it is believed Walighuansang will send misfortune to monks in the coming year. The Diinquari schedule follows:

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<sup>16</sup> An important Dge lugs monastery located in eastern Qinghai Province, approximately twenty kilometers from the center of Xining City. According to Gruschke (2001) the first temple on the site was built in the years immediately prior to 1578 at the site of the birthplace of Tsong kha pa.

- The twenty-third day of the tenth month: Villagers come to Huansuu's home to decorate the rooms of her two-floored building with a monk who has been dispatched to the village. *Guwa* have already brought all the boxes of Diinquari objects from the households where the boxes were kept. Only the monk has the keys to the locks on the wooden boxes. Once all the boxes are brought, the monk inspects the seals to see if they have been broken. If the seals are intact, he unlocks them one by one and checks the contents.<sup>17</sup> Next, the monk instructs *guwa* and village men to decorate the three rooms, put the Buddha statue in its proper position on a table, and hang *tangka* on the walls.

Two to four of the main and/ or guest rooms are decorated to resemble monastic temples. Door, window, and ceiling curtains are put up and yellow cloth is hung from the eaves and put on the four interior walls of designated rooms. White felt is put on the floor and carpets are placed on the felt for monks to sit on. Rectangular, low wooden tables are put in front of the carpets. The tables are for food, monks' religious implements, and scriptures. Meanwhile, other villagers clean the kitchen where monks will cook for themselves beginning the following day.

- The twenty-fourth day: historically monks arrived individually on horseback, escorted by brothers of the monks who went to their monasteries. Since the year 2000, motorcycles began to replace horses and mules and, in about 2005, cars began replacing motorcycles. After Diinquari, the monks are escorted back to their monasteries by their brothers. The monks arrive at Huansuu's front gate and are greeted with a *kadog*,<sup>18</sup> and two baked round cakes on a round wooden plate with a dab of butter on the top cake. Once they are greeted, they directly walk up to the second floor where they sit on the carpet and are then offered bread, milk tea, butter, and toasted barley flour. They are not offered vegetable dishes.

At about three p.m., most monks have arrived and are offered a meal of noodles. Afterwards, the monks make a schedule. In 2007, seven monks worked in the kitchen where they cooked and make *shdirima*, while the remaining nine monks chanted Buddhist scriptures that are usually only chanted during funerals. For example, *Malan* is chanted, locals said, to pave a bright road in the hope they would obtain a good incarnation. *Doriji* is also chanted in the hope it will bring peace to the deceased during the incarnation process.

Monks are separately invited to sleep in previously arranged village households when they finish making the schedule.

Monks make three *shdirima*, each with a diameter of about seven centimeters and about twenty centimeters long. They are placed in front of all the *purghan* inside the rooms where Diinquari is being performed. These rooms are decorated so as to resemble temples. *Shdirima* are believed to delight all the *purghan*.

- The twenty-fifth day: the monks rise at about three a.m. and gather in Huansuu's home. They warm their hands over a wood or straw fire lit in the courtyard center and wash their faces and hands with water that *guwa* or villagers bring from the kitchen in a big wooden ladle. Next, the monks directly go upstairs to the second floor where they sit in rooms and begin chanting scriptures.

Monks in the kitchen cook noodles without salt and meat, put the noodles in one or two copper barrels, take them to the second floor, and offer them to the chanting monks. After eating,

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<sup>17</sup> In May 2005, some valuable articles (particularly *tangka*) were stolen from a household in Maqang Tugun Village. The lost contents had not been retrieved in 2012. The villagers raised funds and made purchases to replace what had been stolen.

<sup>18</sup> Tibetan: *kha btags*. Strips of silk offered to religious personalities, religious images, and friends to show respect.

the monks who chant walk in the courtyard for exercise and then return and resume chanting. Remaining noodles are eaten only by *guwa* and Huansuu's family members.

Monks continue chanting until lunchtime when they are offered butter; toasted highland barley; and three types of steamed dumplings – dumplings with carrot, potato, or brown sugar mixed with pig fat. They then rest. Older monks chat while young monks go outside to walk and amuse themselves. After one to two hours, they return and chanting resumes.

At about five p.m., they are served noodles without meat or salt. After resting, they continue chanting until about eleven p.m. and then sleep in village homes as previously arranged.

Three new *shdirima* are made and replace the *shdirima* put in place the day before. The latter are put in a large wooden box.

Villagers visit the household, clean butter lamps, make butter lamp wicks with cotton, and prostrate to all the *purghan*.

During Diinquari, women in Huansuu's family are assigned to sleep in other village households.

- The twenty-sixth day: activities continue as on other days, however, three *shdirima* are made that are much larger than previously. They have a diameter of about fifty centimeters, and are about a meter tall. About fifty kilograms of toasted barley flour are needed to make one. The three large *shdirima* are placed before all the *purghan*. The three made the day before are put into a big wooden box, placed in the room where the monks are chanting, and not moved until Diinquari is completed. All the *shdirima*, except for one large one that is given to the family where Diinquari is held, are then divided into pieces and distributed among village households who, in turn, feed them to family livestock.
- The twenty-seventh day: on the most important day, monks do not make *shdirima*. A representative from each household from the seven villages comes, bringing one to two RMB per monk. Upon arrival, these representatives light butter lamps, light incense that they brought from their homes, and then make three prostrations toward where the monks are chanting. They give their cash offering to the *guwa*, who later divide it among the monks. They are then invited to previously arranged households and entertained with bread, baked highland barley flour, and black tea made from brick tea.<sup>19</sup> No other food is served. They leave at three to four p.m.

Since 2000, increasing numbers of peddlers have come to Diinquari to sell noodles, *rangpi* (*niangpi*) 'cold noodles made from wheat flour and potato starch', clothes, and farm tools. Everyone – peddlers, passersby, and beggars – are welcomed to eat on this day and are offered bread, baked highland barley flour, and black tea.

Women come to Huansuu's home, light butter lamps, light incense they bring from their homes, and make three prostrations toward the rooms where Diinquari is being performed.

Many people from the local area attend, in addition to the representatives of each household. An attraction for young people is the possibility of finding lovers. Old people meet friends and relatives they have not seen for a long while. During these days, villagers also invite their daughters who have married and moved to their husbands' homes to join Diinquari. They prostrate to *purghan*, light incense, and are given five *booshizog* as a return gift prior to their departure.

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<sup>19</sup> It became much easier to buy milk from local shops, consequently milk tea became common after the year 2000.



- The twenty-eighth day: monks do not make *shdirima* on this day. Other activities are the same as on the twenty-sixth day.
- The twenty-ninth day: monks make one *shdirima* about a half meter high with a triangular base, which is not offered before all the *purghan*. Instead, at four to five p.m., young village men are told to dress in their long Mongghul robes and assemble to throw the *shdirima* in a place Walighuansang Purghan designates. The village men hold eight Buddhist flagpoles and walk toward the designated site. The monks follow behind, chanting,<sup>20</sup> beating cymbals and drums, and blowing horns. Other men follow behind the monks. Four Mongghul men hold the *shdirima*. The group proceeds to the designated site where a big straw pile has been made. The *shdirima* is placed on the straw pile and set afire, signifying that all evils have been discarded. Those assembled then turn and run to Huansuu's household without looking back in fear evils will follow them. All villagers then prostrate toward the smoldering fire and chant.

The burning of the *shdirima* signifies the ritual's conclusion. Locals believe that all evils and ghosts have been collected and burned in the fire, and that the seven villages will now be safe and peaceful.

When they return, *guwa* distribute sugar, jujubes, and small pieces of baked dough, all considered gifts from *purghan*. They are distributed by throwing them into the air. Such gifts must be eaten immediately and not taken away. Monks are then allowed to eat meat, food with spices, and vegetable dishes. Villagers kill a sheep and boil meat and sausages for the monks. Monks are also treated to rice. The monks relax, walk outside, chat with villagers, and make jokes.

- The thirtieth day: if the tenth lunar month has thirty days, the monks relax, chat, and joke. They are ready to return to their monasteries.
- The first day of the eleventh month: *guwa* are selected in the early morning on this day by *purghan* or villagers from the village that will hold the next Diinquari. On this last day, monks, *guwa*, and two or three men give the Diinquari objects one by one to the *guwa* and the men from the village that will hold Diinquari the following year. The ritual objects are put back in their boxes, and the monks seal them. One monk keeps the keys to the boxes until they are opened the next year. The villagers who will hold Diinquari the next year take the boxes to their village, generally using a truck.

The monks and their brothers pack the things the monks have been given, and then the monks are escorted back to their monasteries. What the monks have received may not be put in the monks' parents' homes in fear of bringing misfortune and disease to the monks.

The offerings the monks receive from Diinquari are enough to supply them with food for half a year, including highland toasted barley, butter, bread, and cash.

#### DIINQUARI IN OTHER DULUUN LUNKUANG AREAS IN 2011

There are no specific Diinquari objects as in the seven villages in Shdazi Lunkuang. The central ritual activity is the chanting done by monks. Below, Diinquari is summarized in other Duluun Lunkuang areas as it was observed in 2011. For each area, Diinquari was held from the twenty-fourth to the twenty-ninth days of the tenth lunar month:

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<sup>20</sup> The scripture chanted is known as *Zhuujiri*.

- Held in a household in turn in Binkangghuali (Benkanggou) and Hxin (Hashi) villages, Songduo Township and Xuangwa (Beizhuang) Village, Wushi Town, Huzhu County in the historical Wuxi Lunkuang by monks from the three villages.
- Held in the village temple by village monks in Jughuari (Zhuoke) Village, Wushi Town, in the historical Wuxi Lunkuang.
- Held in Shgeayili (Dazhuang) Village, Donggou Township Temple by a village monk from his own village and other monks from Rgulang Monastery in the historical Tangraa Shgeayili Lunkuang.
- Held in a household in turn in the villages of Duwa (Duowa), Xara, and Wughuang (Bahong), Wushi Town, in the historical Wuxi Lunkuang by monks from the three villages.
- Held in the village temple by monks from Rgulang Monastery in Qangsa (Chunsha) Village, Dala Mongghul Township, Ledu Region in the historical Shdazi Lunkuang.
- Held in a household in turn in the villages of Durishidii (Duoshidai) and Duluun (Baiya), Weiyuan Town in the historical Shde Qurizang Lunkuang by monks from Rgulang Monastery.
- Foorijang (Huoerjun) Village, Wushi Town, Huzhu County discontinued Diinquari in their village temple in 1999 because *guwa* were frequently outside the village engaged in seasonal employment.

## CONCLUSION

Mongghul born before 1980 are unfamiliar with the historically important term 'Duluun Lunkuang', which was intimately associated with the key Mongghul monastery – Rgulang. After the year 2000, Mongghul rarely sent their sons to become monks in monasteries because of increased economic opportunity, restrictive government policy, and couples generally having only one or two sons. The number of monks at Rgulang has declined annually – there were only about 250 in 2011. Some monks from Rgulang go to Han Chinese Buddhist temples in south China because of the financial benefits, as illustrated by what Ruuzhu (b. 1975, a monk) told Limusishiden, in Rgulang Monastery on 22 April 2012:

After 1995, about twenty Mongghul monks left Rgulang Monastery and went to southeastern China where they have become like Han Chinese monks in monasteries or temples in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shanxi, and Guangdong provinces, and in Shanghai. For example, Nengshida Xnzin Warima (b. 1978), stayed in Rgulang Lamasery for four years and then left after his monk teacher beat him. He fled to Shanghai where he has become like a Han Chinese monk in Qingyun Temple.<sup>21</sup>

Though Mongghul from the Duluun Lunkuang are asked to contribute labor to help construct buildings for such historically important incarnate lamas as Tughuan (Tuguan), Jangja (Zhangjia), and Sunbu (Songbu) the relationship between the Duluun Lunkuang and Rgulang Monastery is becoming

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<sup>21</sup> Qingyun Temple is located in Heqing Town, Pudong New District, Shanghai City.

more distant. Based on information collected while doing research for this paper, Shdazi is considered the most devoted to Rgulang Monastery in the Duluun Lunkuang followed, in descending order of devotion, by Wuxi, Tangraa and Shgeayili, Darimaa, Naringhuali, and Shde Qurizang and Saishigu.

Monks are sent to each Mongghul village in the Duluun Lunkuang with a *kadog* and a tea brick. They seek out *guwa* and extend an oral invitation to come help construct or congratulate a certain incarnation lama at the time a building he sponsored is begun or completed. Certain pious older Mongghul men may then attend. Younger men are generally outside the village engaged in seasonal labor. In some villages, only the village temple keeper attends a congratulation ceremony with several tea bricks and a few hundred RMB from the village temple, or collected from each household.

It is unlikely Diinquari in the Duluun Lunkuang will continue. Many younger villagers earn money in urban areas and a first priority is to use this income to build brick houses furnished with modern furniture and appliances, and thus the number of traditional-style Mongghul homes is rapidly decreasing. Furthermore, increasing numbers of villagers, once they are financially able, move to towns and cities. Villagers are now in frequent contact with the world beyond the village and quickly adapt to a more modern worldview and style of living that minimizes the value of such rituals as Diinquari. This is particularly true for younger Mongghul who regularly watch movies, play video games, and listen to popular music using mobile phones and other electronic devices.

Limusishiden invited Qijangkari (b. 1975) to his home in Xining on 14 February 2012. She is from Walighuan Village, which is located atop a steep mountain accessed via a narrow winding road. It is not possible to use cars and carts on snowy and rainy days. Villagers' drinking water comes from a spring. On average, each villager has six *mu* of cultivated land. Hailstorms and drought are common, making life difficult. Villagers use Horses, mules, donkeys, and oxen to plow fields that are very steep, whereas most Mongghul live in the plains and raise swine.<sup>22</sup>

Walighuan has fifty-two households and 243 villagers (127 females and 116 males). About twenty men of marriageable age are unmarried because girls living in mountain villages prefer to marry men from plain areas. Such men are generally richer and life is easier as compared to the mountain areas. Furthermore, the unmarried men are too poor to pay the more than 100,000 RMB in betrothal gifts to the girl's side that was generally required in 2012.

In 2012, only about five village children studied in college and universities. About seven young villagers worked throughout the year in inner China cities. Many young villagers do seasonal work outside the village.

Qijangkari said, "Villagers in Walighuan enthusiastically and piously participate in Diinquari annually." While this is likely true for older Walighuan villagers, the case of Foorijang Village where Diinquari abruptly stopped because the *guwa* were outside the village engaged in seasonal employment is a likely future for Walighuan and other villages. Diinquari has not been revived in areas where it was discontinued in the last twenty years.

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<sup>22</sup> Swine are the only farm animals Huzhu Mongghul keep in many plain areas.

## PHOTOGRAPHS

Figures 1, 2, and 3. Huansuu's traditional kitchen that is used only during Diinquari when monks cook (Limusishiden, 2 January 2012). The traditional Mongghul *pei* inside the kitchen is divided into two parts by the *langang* or low wall. The first part (Figure 3, foreground) and the other half (Figure 1) is the *pei*, or raised platform. The *pei* was where all the family slept at night, using robes as quilts. It was also a place to entertain guests with food and liquor, and to chat. The *pei* is made of adobe bricks and warmed by heat from the kitchen fire passing through channels to the chimney, or a fire fueled by animal dung and straw burned in the center of the *pei* in a metal container. People sat on the *pei* around the fire during winter and boiled tea over a smoky blaze. Pieces of felt were spread over the *pei* and bedding was folded and stacked along the wall. Wood chests were against the wall containing the family's clothes; mother's needle box, sewing materials, and so on; *taligha* 'baked highland barley flour'; home-distilled liquor; and utensils. In 2012, there were few Mongghul households with *pei* in the Fulaan Nara area. Ms. Huansuu's family does not cook in the traditional kitchen nor use the *pei* except during the Diinquari ritual, when it is held once every seven years at her home.





Figure 4. Huansuu's two-floor home. Diinquari is held on the second floor once every seven years. The home was renovated in 2005. Huansuu said, "Part of this building is several centuries old. None of my husband's relatives know when it was first built nor how long Diinquari has been held here." (Limusishiden, 2 January 2012).



Figure 5. An old ladder leads to the second floor of Huansuu's home (Limusishiden, 2 January 2012).



Figures 6 and 7. Zhahgu rides his white horse. This image of Walighuansang is considered the *muha bai* 'true body'/ 'flesh body' of Walighuansang in the Walighuansang Temple, Walighuan Village, Hongyazigou Township, Huzhu County (Limusishiden, 22 April 2012).



Figures 8, 9, and 10. Walighuansang Temple, Walighuan Village (Limusishiden, 22 April 2012).

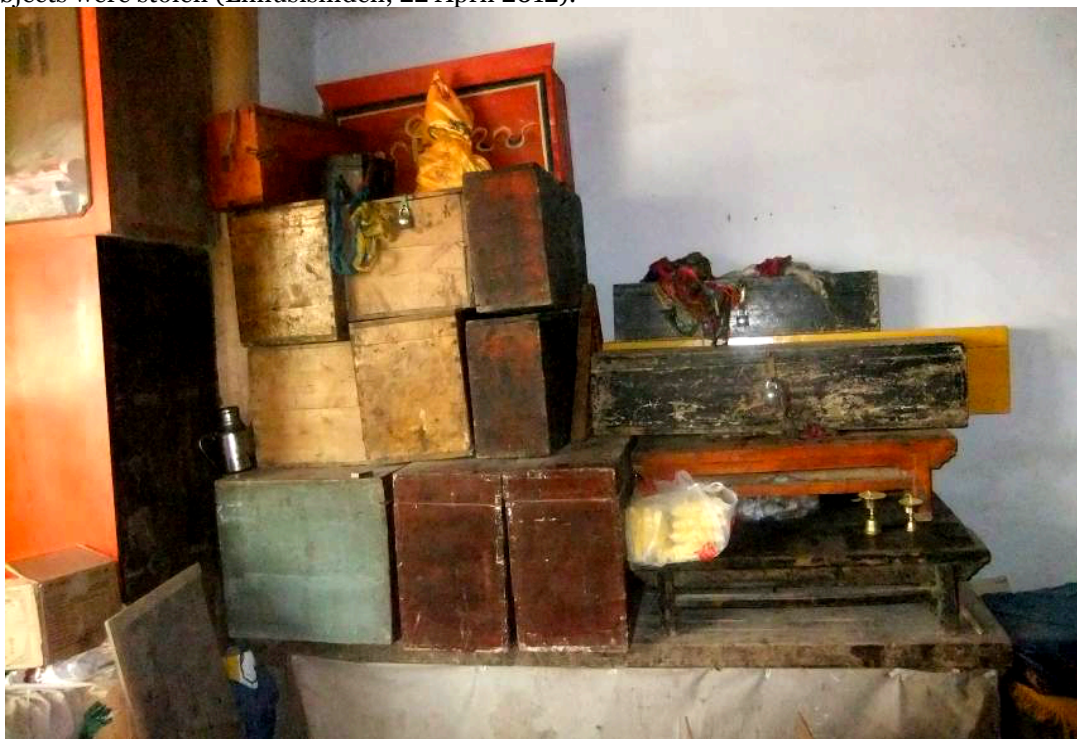




Figures 11 and 12. Walighuansang Purghan in Walighuansang Temple, Walighuan Village. A pole passes through the *purghan's* shoulders. The head consists of a trident covered with multi-colored thread. A round copper *merilang* is fixed to the chest. During a consultation, two *xilajin* 'men who hold the pole' respond as an elder *xilajin* asks the *purghan* questions (Limusishiden, 22 April 2012).



Figure 13. Wooden boxes containing Diinquari ritual implements are kept in Dugua Cairang's (b. 1956) home in Maqang Tugun Village, Dala Mongghul Township, Ledu Region. Diinquari was held in his home during the tenth lunar month of 2012. Other boxes are kept secretly in other households by the *guwa* because, in 2004, some valuable objects were stolen (Limusishiden, 22 April 2012).



Figures 14, 15, and 16. A new concrete road runs through narrow Shdazi Valley, Dala Mongghul Township, Ledu Region (Limusishiden, 22 April 2012).





# MONASTIC CUSTOMARIES AND THE PROMOTION OF DGE LUGS SCHOLASTICISM IN A MDO AND BEYOND<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

The relationships that existed over multiple generations between the Wang incarnate lama lineage based at Dgon lung Monastery in Northeastern Tibet and various polities in Inner Mongolia are presented. Dgon lung Monastery in general, and the Wang Khutugtu in particular, were responsible for promoting and maintaining orthodox Dge lugs scholasticism and liturgy in Dpa' ris and beyond in Inner Mongolia. Particular attention is given to the customary composed by the Fourth Wang Khutugtu (1846-1906) for Eren Monastery in Inner Mongolia, which prescribed the system for nominating, testing, and awarding candidates for scholastic degrees.

## KEYWORDS

*bca' yig*, Buddhist monasteries, customaries, debate, Dge lugs, Dgon lung, Inner Mongolia, monastic constitutions, scholastic degrees, scholasticism, titles, Wang Khutugtu, Younging si

## INTRODUCTION

This study examines a particular *bca' yig*, 'monastic customary', composed for Eren Monastery in Inner Mongolia, and its implications for the success of the Dge lugs Sect of Tibetan Buddhism. The customary provides instructions on how to institutionalize the proper way to nominate, examine, and honor candidates for scholastic degrees. It was composed in the late nineteenth century by Wang the Fourth, a lama<sup>2</sup> from the important monastery, Dgon lung byams pa gling (Younging si), in the cultural region known as Dpa' ris (pronounced 'Huari') in A mdo (Northeastern Tibet).<sup>3</sup> Dgon lung had extensive ties with the major religious centers of Central Tibet, particularly Sgo mang College of 'Bras spungs Monastery (i.e., Drepung Gomang). As such, this study demonstrates the manner in which programs of monastic behavior – specifically, study, debate, and examination – spread across the Tibetan Plateau and Mongolia, creating networks of allegiance and a system for ensuring compliance to orthodoxy and orthopraxy.<sup>4</sup>

*Bca' yig* have been variously referred to as 'monastic constitutions', 'monastic charters', and 'monastic guidelines', though I prefer the term 'customaries' because of its flexibility. There can be 'monastic customaries' as well as various 'non-monastic customaries'. *Bca' yig* also resemble

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<sup>1</sup> I thank Khenpo Ngawang Dorjee of Charlottesville and my teacher at Dgon lung Monastery, whose name I do not disclose. Thanks also to Gerald Roche, CK Stuart, and others of *Asian Highlands Perspectives* for their continuous, helpful feedback on the present article.

<sup>2</sup> I use 'lama' to refer to a revered, incarnation lineage of the Dge lugs Sect. I use the Wylie – *bla ma* – only in cases where it is necessary to distinguish a different sort of revered figure or authority figure.

<sup>3</sup> Dgon lung is located in present-day Wushi Township, Huzhu Tu Autonomous County, Qinghai Province.

<sup>4</sup> I first considered and wrote about the use of *bca' yig* as tools for imposing adherence to the Dge lugs Sect in a seminar on the Dalai Lamas taught by Professor Kurtis Schaeffer at the University of Virginia in the spring of 2009.

customaries found in the Christian monastic tradition.<sup>5</sup> Customaries purport to provide the monastery with guidelines for running the monastery and for ensuring proper comportment so as to maintain a reputation of virtue and thus ensure regular patronage. There is certainly doubt as to how much these normative texts corresponded to actual reality. For instance, much of the language found in a customary composed by Wang IV for Dgon lung Monastery is very similar (and sometimes identical) to the language found in a customary composed by the head of the aforementioned Sgo mang College for a major monastery in Alashan. Therefore, throughout this essay, I treat Wang's customaries as prescriptive rather than descriptive. Nonetheless, Wang often makes passing reference in his customaries to the way things were 'formerly' and to practices that 'used to be performed', suggesting an attempt to write a text corresponding to actual rather than idealized practices. Moreover, the fact that a monastery would regularly revise its customary or commission new ones suggests that the language found in customaries regarding the "need for a customary that accords with its time and place"<sup>6</sup> was more than just conceit.

It is important to point out that *bca' yig* were not exclusively concerned with scholastic practices such as curriculum, study, debate, examinations, and so forth. In fact, an earlier *bca' yig* written for Dgon lung Monastery, known as the 'extensive customary,'<sup>7</sup> is concerned mostly with the responsibility for ritual sponsorship, the appointment of monastic officials, and the resolution of disputes and quarrels (see Sullivan 2013). The later Dgon lung customary written by Wang IV is concerned with scholasticism, but it is equally concerned with Dgon lung's liturgy, that is, its collection or sequence of texts recited during a ritual or on various religious occasions. Like scholasticism, a liturgical tradition can act as an immediate sectarian identifier for the monastery. Beyer writes in his important work on ritual practice in Tibetan Buddhism that, "...the famous Gelug reformation in Tibet was basically cultic rather than doctrinal, and it was perhaps more a canonical fundamentalism than a reformation" (1973:53-54). His contention that cultic identity was more important than doctrine for

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<sup>5</sup> Jann Ronis first suggested that I use 'customary' for '*bca' yig*'. Ellingson's 1990 article on the subject is the classic and only thorough overview of this genre. The scant Western-language material published on the subject includes Ronis (2009:156-162), Cech (1988), Ellingson (1990), Cabezón (1997), and Jansen (2014). Examples of non-monastic customaries include the *Customary for Mantrikas* by the eleventh-century Rong zom. Steve Weinberger first brought this text to my attention in 2009. A more contemporary example is the *Composition that Binds the Many Mantrikas to Discipline: A Beautiful Ornament for the Community* by an important twentieth- and twenty-first century *sngags pa* 'mantrika' from Reb kong, Ban de rgyal. Nicolas Sihle kindly shared this with me in March 2011. Finally, Jansen's recent article also explains how *bca' yig* are found in both monastic and non-monastic religious communities. Jansen is currently undertaking a comprehensive study of *bca' yig*. My conversations and correspondence with her have been extremely informative for my understanding of this genre of texts.

<sup>6</sup> 'Jigs med ye shes grags pa (1737:30b.5-6).

<sup>7</sup> The title of the text is *Dpal snar thang gi bca' yig 'dul khrims dngos brgya 'bar ba'i gzi 'od [dang / rwa sgren / dgon lung byams pa gling dgon ma lag bcas kyi bca' yig]* (The Customary of Pelnarthang – The Radiance that Illuminates All the Realities of the Vinaya – and the Customaries of the Mother and Child Monasteries of Radreng and Gönlung) and appears in volume 'a of Rgyal sras 'Jigs med ye shes grags pa's (1696-1750) *Collected Works*. I have referred elsewhere to this as the 'Dgon lung *bca' yig* chen mo Print Edition' or 'Xylograph' in order to distinguish it from the incomplete manuscript from which I previously worked. It comprises both a *thun mong pa* 'ordinary' customary and a *thun mong ma yin pa* 'extraordinary' one. A (rather poor) scan of this was graciously sent to me by Rin chen sgröl ma of the China Tibetology Research Center. Later, I was able to photograph the xylograph at the Library of the Research Institute for Ethnology and Anthropology, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, on the campus of Minzu University, Beijing. In addition, my teacher at Dgon lung had previously allowed me to have a manuscript copy of the 'ordinary' customary, but not the 'extraordinary' one. A monastic official told me that the monastery's customary, particularly its extraordinary version, is a *bka' rgya ma* 'sealed teaching' – only for the eyes and ears of the monastery's disciplinarians. It was also explained to me that the monastery's extraordinary customary is what defines and makes unique the monastery's practices, and thus its status. I have written more about this in Sullivan (2013).

the reformation applies equally to later periods of the Dge lugs tradition. For instance, most entries for the monasteries in Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's (1653-1705) important survey of Dge lugs monasteries conclude with something resembling the following: "[This place] resembles most small, Dge lugs monasteries with its 'ritual practices and recitations'<sup>8</sup> such as those for Guhyasamāja, Saṃvara, and the *Trilogy of Kṛṣṇācārya*<sup>9</sup>..." (Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1998:311).<sup>10</sup> This indicates the continuing importance of ritual for a monastery's identity and reputation.

In addition, Dge lugs liturgy is inextricably linked to scholasticism and debate. The 'dharma classes'<sup>11</sup> held at Dge lugs monasteries are periods of reasoned debate that are the focus of all monastic energy and resources. Nonetheless, every dharma class is preceded by a devotional 'assembly'<sup>12</sup> at which tea and meals are served, and the dharma classes themselves open with a litany of hymns and rites that further set the stage. Texts that are fundamental to the scholastic curriculum are recited and melodically chanted during devotional assemblies. Debates begin and sometimes end with the ritual invocation of the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, Mañjuśrī. Therefore, to completely disentangle them and separately treat each one is a task that is confounded from the start.

With that caveat in mind, I now turn to the focus of the present article, scholasticism, a term that has seldom been employed outside a Christian context. This term is often associated with the early medieval education of clerics, focused on the liberal arts and scholastic theology (Cabezón 1994:13, 17). In his book on Indo-Tibetan scholasticism, Cabezón has persuasively argued that the term has analytical value for cross-cultural and comparative studies. One of the first scholars to make this suggestion, Cabezón explains, is Masson-Oursel, who writes:

If scholasticism is a teaching that bases its authority in the words of a sacred text, interpreted by a corps of professionals dedicated both to establishing and defending a religious truth, and to that end rely on formal and discursive reasoning, it is exemplary of a stage in civilization of which our own Middle Ages cannot be considered the only example (in Cabezón 1994:15).

Although Cabezón critiques and improves Masson-Oursel's definitions of scholasticism, he extols his perspicacious advocacy for the comparative study of scholasticism.

Among the various characteristics of scholasticism identified by Cabezón, I emphasize two (1994:19-21, 190-193; Cabezón 1998:4-6). First, "scholastic movements are highly tradition oriented." He writes:

They have a strong sense of history and lineage and are committed to the preservation of tradition. ... [T]here is no better way to ensure that what an adept experiences is particularly Christian or Buddhist, or that the way in which an adept behaves is particularly Confucian or Jewish, than to ensure that the 'experiencer' has had a strong foundation in his or her respective intellectual tradition. ... (1994:20)

Elsewhere, I have discussed the great concern with maintaining ritual traditions that stretch back to Central Tibet (Sullivan 2013). Such continuity enhances the monastery's prestige, and has the practical benefit of boosting the mobility of the monks and lamas trained in those traditions. Similarly, a mega

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<sup>8</sup> *'don chos spyod*.

<sup>9</sup> *nag po [spyod pa] skor gsum*.

<sup>10</sup> '*Nag po skor gsum*' refers to three treatises by the Mahāsiddha Kṛṣṇācārya. Khenpo Ngawang Dorjee, personal communication, 7 March 2012.

<sup>11</sup> *chos grwa*.

<sup>12</sup> *tshogs*.

monastery like Dgon lung shows great respect for the 'customs'<sup>13</sup> of scriptural study and debate that were established by the monastery's eminent forebears. The scriptures used at Dgon lung are ones used in the halls of Central Tibet's major monasteries. In fact, Dgon lung had formal ties with 'Bras spungs Monastery's Sgo mang College, such that 'continuing students'<sup>14</sup> of Dgon lung monks could easily travel to Central Tibet and find residence there.<sup>15</sup>

Cabezón also makes the following point about scholasticism:

Not only was rational inquiry perceived as essential to the preservation of the tradition's self-identity, it was also considered essential to distinguishing that tradition from others, to defending it against the intellectual assaults of others, and to demonstrating its relative superiority to others. (1994:21)

Philosophical debate is perhaps the foremost medium for conveying both an individual's and an institution's intellectual reputation. Lempert writes that during inter-monastery (or inter-collegiate) debates:

...curricular texts that support each college are threatened by virtue of being placed "next to" similar-but-competing texts that support a similar-but-competing neighboring college (a college that is its rival in respects other than just doctrine, to boot). This means that should the textbook literature begin to buckle during a debate, it can threaten the integrity of the whole college. This explains why a defendant's poor performance in a public defense (*dam bca'*) is not just bad for him as an individual whose career very much depends on his capacity to debate well. It may also offend the college. It risks being shameful in the maximal sense of the word (2012:36).

Dreyfus elaborates even more on the gravity of debate and scholastic allegiance:

The political character of Tibetan Buddhist schools became stronger during the protracted civil war between Central Tibet and Tsang during the sixteenth century. In that politically charged atmosphere, small doctrinal differences became markers of sectarian divides. Despite their marginal relevance to the political situation, the topics of the scholastic curriculum took on symbolic political value: knowledge of them provided a form of cultural capital that could be used to assert the supremacy of one's school. Holding the orthodox position became an expression of one's loyalty, and any deviation from the line adopted by the school came to be seen as political treason. In the Ge-luk tradition, failure to agree with the positions both of Dzung-ka-ba and of the monastic manuals is considered a sign of ingratitude if not outright betrayal, as expressed by the graphic condemnation of "kicking the bowl [from which one is fed]" (2003:319).

For this reason, even small references to debates between two individuals or vignettes of such debates found in histories and chronicles can be read as representing the reputations of different *institutions*.<sup>16</sup>

The Dge lugs Sect had developed a formal system of doctrine and a closed canon, two related

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<sup>13</sup> *srol*.

<sup>14</sup> *grwa rgyun*.

<sup>15</sup> Dgon lung monks may have stayed at the *mi tshan* 'affiliated houses' of its namesake, one at the Bsam blo khang tshan 'Bsam blo Regional House', for monks from farming communities, and another at the Har gdong khang tshan 'Har gdong Regional House', for monks from pastoral communities. Nothing is known about these affiliated houses (Tuttle 2010:57 and 57n43, citing Dreyfus' essays on 'Bras spungs Monastery on THL. Dreyfus, for his part, does not cite his source, which is likely the following: Bod ljongs spyi tshogs tshan rig khang chos lugs zhib 'jug tshan pa'i 'bras spungs dgon dkar chag rtsom sgrig tshogs chung [2009:237]).

<sup>16</sup> Elsewhere, I have given two such examples that I interpret as indicative of a decline in Dgon lung's intellectual reputation and a concomitant increase in the reputation of Bla brang bkra shis 'khyil Monastery (Sullivan 2013:54-55).

developments that help shield religious traditions from prophetic assault, among other things (Gorski 2005:179; Weber 1993:68-69). These developments were institutionalized and enforced at large and resourceful monasteries through the development of curriculums and systems of examination that measured monks' acquisition and knowledge of doctrine. Dgon lung documented and instantiated such a curriculum and system of examination by means of customaries (*bca' yig*), and it exported customaries to other monasteries. Whenever possible, monks who wanted any sort of scholastic education traveled to these larger monasteries, rather than staying at the smaller temple or monastery where they may have begun their monastic lives. They did this because these monasteries had the best teachers as part of its overall system of education, and also because it plugged them into a network of shared monastic practices and social mobility.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

One oral tradition has it that Dgon lung housed over 7,000 monks during the Kangxi reign (1661-1722).<sup>17</sup> Although I have yet to find an historical attestation of this statistic, a Tibetan source from the time gives the more conservative figure of 1,500 monks, a figure that nonetheless made it the largest monastery in A mdo and one of the largest monasteries on the Tibetan Plateau at that time (Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1998:340.25). The mid-nineteenth century Ocean Annals writes that in 1705, an important regional lama, the Sems nyid sprul sku Bstan 'dzin 'phrin las rgya mtsho (1655--1761), made offerings to each of the assembly's 2,400 monks (Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas 1982:117.8; Zhiguanba•Gongquehudañbaraoji 1989:116).

In addition to its sheer number of monks, Dgon lung also fostered eminent scholars. In fact, historical sources dating from as early as 1652 suggest that Dgon lung was the center (later sources say 'mother') of all A mdo "monasteries where philosophy is expounded"<sup>18</sup> (Skal ldan rgya mtsho 1999a:342).<sup>19</sup> It produced at least five *lha rams pa dge bshes* (Ngag dbang legs bshad rgya mtsho:137-139), although none of these are as renowned today as the monastery's literati, authors of doctrinal treatises, religious histories, ritual manuals, and so forth. Of these authors, perhaps the most famous are Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor (1704-88), Thu'u bkwan blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1737-1802), and Lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje (1717-1786).

Dgon lung's preeminence among monasteries in A mdo ended in 1723 when the Mongol lord Lubsang-Danzin (b. 1692) led a revolt against the Qing that ended in the defeat of Lubsang-Danzin and his supporters, including Dgon lung Monastery. Utterly destroyed, it was not until 1729 that monks slowly began returning to the site of the old monastery (Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas 1982:61.10). A few years later, in 1732, Emperor Yongzheng (1678-1735) issued a new name to the monastery, saying:

...the task [of reestablishing the monastery] is proclaimed accomplished, and because its old name was not elegant, a good name is decreed and established: the plaque that is bestowed reads "Youning si" [lit. Monastery that Protects the Peace] (Yang 1988:845).

<sup>17</sup> The figure of 7,700 monks during the Kangxi reign even appears in *Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las* (2002:616b), though no source is given for the figure.

<sup>18</sup> *mtshan nyid bshad pa'i grwa*.

<sup>19</sup> See Skal ldan rgya mtsho's biography of Sde ba chos rje, aka Skyid shod sprul sku, where he calls Dgon lung "*mdo smad kyi bshad grwa yongs kyi gtso bo dgon lung gi chos sde chen po*, the center of all the commentarial schools of Mdo smad" (Skal ldan rgya mtsho 1999b:248).



The young, nearby Bla brang Monastery appears to have passed through this momentous historical event unscathed (Nietupski 2011:9, 2009:186), and its size and influence continued to grow, eventually eclipsing that of Dgon lung (Sullivan 2013:51-59).

In 1866, Dgon lung was again burned to the ground, this time by a Muslim army, purportedly that of Ma Zhan'ao (1830-1886), a 'religious teacher'<sup>20</sup> and military commander at Hezhou in Gansu Province (Ngag dbang mkhyen rab rgya mtsho 1932:25b.6). The 1870s likewise saw the monastery plundered. Dgon lung's main assembly hall was not reconstructed until 1878, under the stewardship of the sixth Thu'u bkwan Lama. Then, in 1890, another series of events perpetuated the monastery's decline, the most significant being discord between Thu'u bkwan and Sum pa over the latter's decision to cohabit with a Mongol girl. Louis Schram (1883-1971), a Belgian missionary who spent several years (1911-1922) in the vicinity of Dgon lung, writes that "Erh-ku-lung had become a place of unrelieved misery. The year 1890 was one of the most fateful in the history of Erh-ku-lung" (Schram 2006:336). Finally, in 1895, more Muslim rebellions arose, damaging many monasteries in the region and threatening, but eventually sparing, Dgon lung. This is the point at which we find Dgon lung when the fourth Wang Khutugtu, the protagonist of what follows, at his prime. It is precisely because of the ruin of the monastery during Wang's time that his actions are so important and illustrative.

#### THE AUTHOR: WANG KHUTUGTU

The text to be examined here – *The Customary of the Mirror that Illuminates [What Should Be] Accepted and Rejected*<sup>21</sup> – was composed by Wang Khutugtu Blo bzang 'jam pa'i tshul khrims (1846-1906) for an Eren Monastery.<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, we do not yet know the location of or much else about this monastery. What we do know is that Wang IV composed this customary in 1898 while traveling through Inner Mongolia. He had received an invitation from the Aohan Prince in 1896, explaining that he was needed again in the 'lower regions'.<sup>23</sup> And so, "once again, he set out for and arrived in Mongolia."<sup>24</sup> In the realm of the Prince of Baarin,<sup>25</sup> he performed many empowerments, such as that of the Sole Hero<sup>26</sup> (i.e., one of the principal Dge lugs deities, Rdo rje 'jigs byed, a form of Yamāntaka) and that of the Thirteen Deities (i.e., another manifestation of Rdo rje 'jigs byed along with his twelve-member retinue). For some four years he travelled progressively to Naiman, 'Jitir',<sup>27</sup> Darkhan, the Josotu League,<sup>28</sup> and so on. This was only a few years after the 1891 'Way of the Golden Elixir'<sup>29</sup> uprising that killed tens of thousands of Mongols and otherwise devastated Mongol society in precisely the regions where Wang IV was traveling (Borjigin 2004). Thus, it is quite plausible that the customary

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<sup>20</sup> *ahong*.

<sup>21</sup> *Bca' yig blong dor gsal ba'i me long*.

<sup>22</sup> *'e ren*. It is spelled differently in the colophon: *e'u rin*.

<sup>23</sup> *smad phyogs*.

<sup>24</sup> *sog yul* – note that the author writes '*sog yul*' rather than '*chen po hor kyi yul*'. I am unable to explain this change in nomenclature.

<sup>25</sup> *pa ren*. This is a reference to one of the Baarin banners in Juu Uda League (Charleux 2012). Moreover, given that the Tibetan refers to this figure as a *wang* (< Ch. *wang*, 'prince'), it is likely he refers to the banner of Jasag Tōri Junwang of Baarin/ Pārin (Dharmatāla 1987:42).

<sup>26</sup> Rdo rje 'jigs byed.

<sup>27</sup> Unidentified. Pu, in the Chinese translation, writes Zhalute, which is Chinese for the Jarud 'tribe' (Mo. *aimag*) (Duo and Pu 1990:159; Lattimore 1969:194).

<sup>28</sup> Josotu League comprised five banners, including the Kharachin banners and the two Tūmed banners as indicated in Map 1.

<sup>29</sup> Jindan dao.

he wrote was an attempt to resurrect Dge lugs scholasticism in the region.

The Wang incarnation lineage is perhaps the least renowned of Dgon lung's five major incarnation lineages and 'estates',<sup>30</sup> the other four being Lcang skya, Thu'u bkwan, Sum pa, and Chu bzang. The lineage is said to be named after the village in which the first Wang lama was born, Wang chen khri.<sup>31</sup> The scholar-lama Per Nyi ma 'dzin writes that the first Wang was born into a Hor family with the surname Wang.<sup>32</sup> Despite the Chinese-sounding name of the lineage, four of the incarnations were likely Hor, and the third, may have been Tibetan (Per Nyi ma 'dzin Ngag dbang legs bshad rgya mtsho:99-114).<sup>33</sup> The name 'Wang' likely derives from the Wang Tusi, *tusi* being a title used to refer to the semi-autonomous 'indigenous rulers' that submitted to the Ming and later Qing dynasties in exchange for recognition of their right to rule (Yang 1988:609). The ancestor of the Wang Tusi, Nanmuge, submitted to the Ming in the fourth year of the Hongwu reign (1371). He was made an 'Assistant Commander'<sup>34</sup> and was promoted to 'Vice Battalion Commandant of Ningbo'.<sup>35</sup> The area that the Wang Tusi came to rule appears to be in the vicinity of Wang I's birthplace (Huzhu Tuzu zizhi xian zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 1993:625; Qinghai sheng zhi bianzuan weiyuanhui 1987:280; Qinghai sheng bianji zu 1985:2; Schram 2006:127).<sup>36</sup> Since families that were ruled by the Wang Tusi took the Wang name regardless of their ancestral descent lines, it is impossible to know if Wang I was born into the *tusi's* own family, the family of one of the noble households, or one of the many commoner households. According to Schram, the great majority of families surnamed Wang were "of Monguor extraction" (Schram 2006:127).<sup>37</sup> In any case, the ethnicity of the Wang incarnation lineage is not nearly as significant as the proximity of each of the incarnations had to the 'Great Mongol Realm'.

Schram writes that Wang I's predecessor was a lama from a Kharachin banner (Schram 2006:321). The Kharachin banners straddle the contemporary Liaoning Province and Inner Mongolia border (see Map 1 below). Schram's uncited source was probably an informant from the time he spent in the vicinity of Dgon lung Monastery (i.e., 1911-1922; in Schram 2006:86). Therefore, we cannot corroborate this curious suggestion. However, we do know that Wang II – Skal bzang ye shes dar rgyas (1739-1804) and Wang IV, our author – both spent many years traveling to and living in Kharachin.

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<sup>30</sup> *nang chen*.

<sup>31</sup> According to the editors of the *Younging si zhi*, Wang I's birthplace is present-day Xiaosi ('Little Monastery') Village in Weiyuan Township, Huzhu County. Per Nyi ma 'dzin Ngag dbang legs bshad rgya mtsho's history, on the other hand, gives 'tA si' (< Dasi Village, 'Big Monastery' Village), which he writes is part of one of Dgon lung's former western estates (Duo and Pu 1990:121n247; Ngag dbang legs bshad rgya mtsho:99).

<sup>32</sup> 'Wang skyA' might also refer to a village name. However, it is clear that Per Nyi ma 'dzin is identifying tA si as the place name and Wang as the family name. The Tibetan term 'Hor' is used in present-day A mdo to refer to the officially recognized 'ethnic group' known as 'Tu' in Chinese and 'Monguor' in English. Slater distinguishes between Minhe County Monguor whom he calls 'Mangghuers' and Huzhu County Monguor, whom he calls 'Mongghuls' (Slater 2003:9-10). It is unclear that we can safely use these ethnonyms to refer to those people and places our historical texts refer to as Hor. However, I consider the historical term Hor to refer to a Mongolic people and culture – a people and culture that finds their way into an encyclopedia of Mongolia (Atwood 2004:551-552). Ahmad calls the Hor 'Eastern Mongols' as opposed to Sog 'Western Mongols' (1970:110). I thank Gerald Roche for calling my attention to this latter point.

<sup>33</sup> Nyi ma 'dzin tells us that the first, second, and fifth were Mongghul, but does not specify the ethnicity of the fourth, although we know that the latter was born near Sems nyid Monastery. It is unclear what Nyi ma 'dzin's sources are for identifying the ethnicities of the various Wang incarnations, particularly the earlier incarnations.

<sup>34</sup> *zhahui qianshi*.

<sup>35</sup> *Ningbo fu qianhu shouyu*.

<sup>36</sup> Schram cites the *Gansu xin tongzhi*, ch. (*juan* 42:40b, 41a-b). Based on the scanned version I consulted, the section describing the domain of the Wang Tusi is actually on p42a. See also An (1989).

<sup>37</sup> Schram cites the Qing *Gansu xin tongzhi* where it states that the Wang Tusi oversees "eighteen Fan [Tibetan] households and 130 Tumin [Monguor] households" (*juan* 42:42a). The eighteenth-century *Huang Qing zhigong tu* likewise speaks of Tumin under the rule of the Wang Tusi (Fu 2007:*juan* 5:52-53).

Some time after returning from his studies in Central Tibet and ascending the throne of Dgon lung's Tantric College (in 1764), Wang II was told by Lcang skya III Rol pa'i rdo rje to spread the dharma in the realm of the Kharachin Prince Ratna Siddhi (Ngag dbang mkhyen rab rgya mtsho 1932:18a.3). This is probably the same prince whose son, the *lha rams pa* scholar *Lha btsun* Mthu stobs nyi ma (*fl.* 1778-1800), began his monastic career at Dgon lung before later serving as abbot at both 'Bras spungs Sgo mang and Dgon lung itself.<sup>38</sup> For several years, Wang II satisfied the religious needs of the people, both high and low, of the 'Great Mongol Realm' including both the Kharachin banners and the neighboring Aohan banner (Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas 1982:66.15; Ngag dbang mkhyen rab rgya mtsho 1932:18a.3). When Emperor Qianlong (1711-1799) was invited to "the famous temple of Erpü<sup>39</sup> in the realm of the Kharachin Prince," we are told:

... the emperor heard of the virtue of Wang II's greatness. The emperor looked kindly upon him, 'paid him reverence',<sup>40</sup> and bestowed on him both a superior golden 'offering scarf'<sup>41</sup> and a golden brocade. He also awarded him with the title of Khutugtu (Ngag dbang mkhyen rab rgya mtsho 1932:18a.4).

Eventually, Wang II returned to Dgon lung, where he served as abbot for three years (1785-1788). He is said to have donated many items to an endowment of Dgon lung, including a large statue of the 'Lion's Roar of Shakyamuni', a large Maitreya tapestry worth over 10,000 ounces<sup>42</sup> of silver, and pillar pendants made of the finest silk. He also pressed Thu'u bkwan to establish a 'trust'<sup>43</sup> for the 'monks' tea' and 'cash allowances'<sup>44</sup> necessary for the 'dharma class students'.<sup>45</sup> He then received an invitation from the Aohan Prince and returned to the latter's realm where he preached. He also preached in the territories of Kharachin, Tümed, Ongni'ud, Naiman, Khorchin, Darkhan,<sup>46</sup> and other banners (see Map 2 below) (Ngag dbang mkhyen rab rgya mtsho, 1932:19a.5). On one journey through Aohan, he printed the *Four Interwoven Annotations on Tsong kha pa's Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas 1982:66.15).<sup>47</sup> Altogether, Wang II is said to have visited the Great Mongol Realm five or six times.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> He was the forty-fourth abbot of Sgo mang College, taking the throne in 1792 (Bstan pa bstan 'dzin 2003:114). He served as abbot of Dgon lung from 1799-1800 (Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas 1982:69.8). See also Ngag dbang mkhyen rab rgya mtsho (1932:20a.4).

<sup>39</sup> Unidentified. 'Erpü' may be a transliteration of 'Efü,' meaning 'emperor's son-in-law' (Charleux 2012).

<sup>40</sup> *phyag*.

<sup>41</sup> *mdzod thag < mdzod btags*.

<sup>42</sup> *srang*.

<sup>43</sup> *theb*.

<sup>44</sup> *grwa 'gyed*.

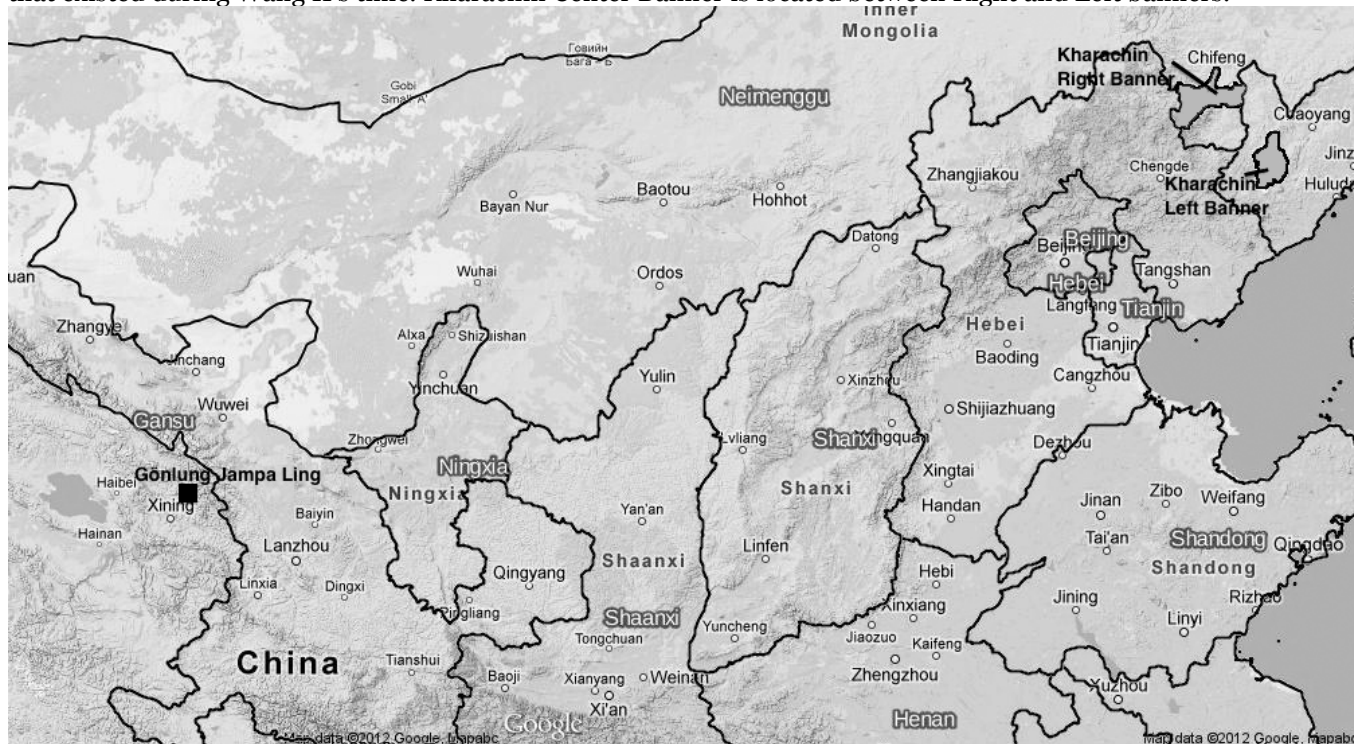
<sup>45</sup> *chos grwa pa*.

<sup>46</sup> *T. tar han*, appears to refer to the banner of the 'Khorchin Khoshuu of Jasag Khøshø Darhan Jinwang', also known as 'Darqan wang' of Jerim League (Dharmatāla 1987:428; Charleux 2003:364). I thank Professor Isabelle Charleux for confirming this identification (Charleux 2012).

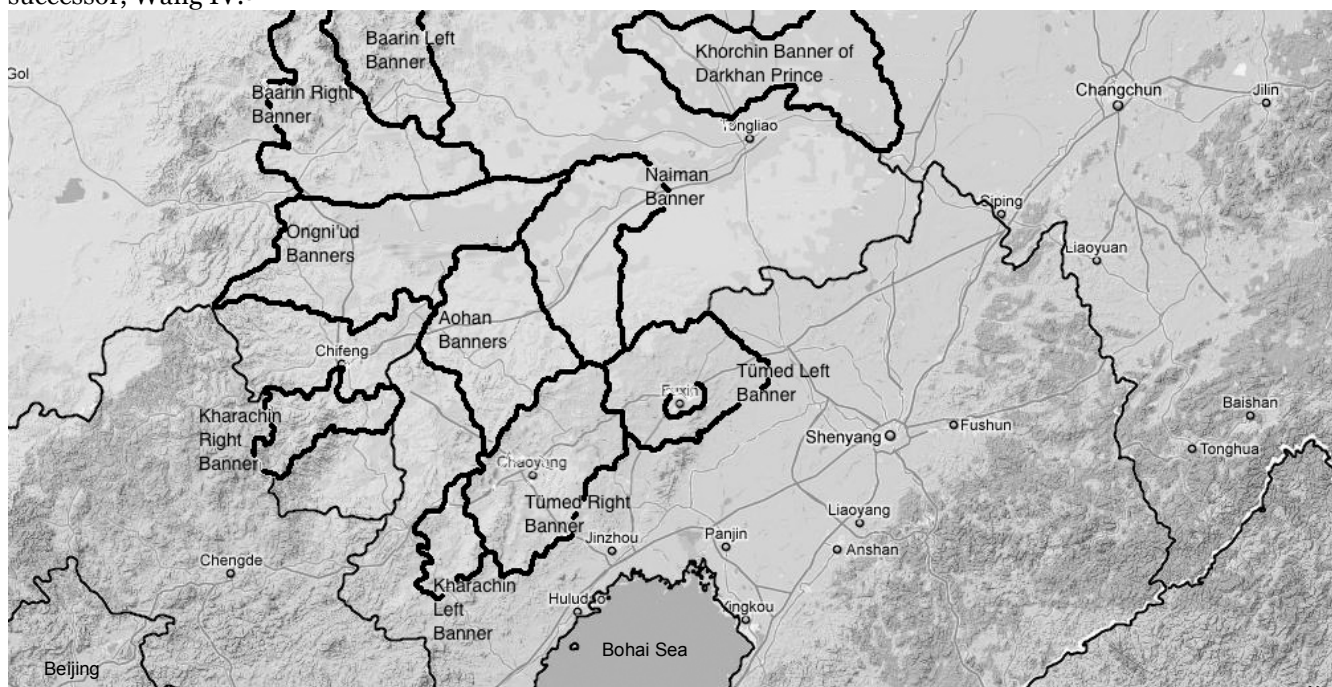
<sup>47</sup> The entire title of this text is *mnyam med rje btsun tsong kha pa chen pos mdzad pa'i byang chub lam rim chen mo'i dka' ba'i gnad rnams mchan bu bzhi'i sgo nas legs par bshad pa theg chen lam gyi gsal sgron* (TBRC W29037).

<sup>48</sup> Ngag dbang mkhyen rab rgya mtsho (1932:19a.5).

Map 1. Dgon lung Monastery in the west and the approximate location of two of the three Kharachin banners<sup>49</sup> that existed during Wang II's time. Kharachin Center Banner is located between Right and Left banners.<sup>50</sup>



Map 2. The approximate location of the banners in the 'Great Mongol Realm' visited by Wang II and his successor, Wang IV.<sup>51</sup>



<sup>49</sup> For more precise maps showing the location of these banners see Lattimore and Isono (1982) and Lattimore (1969). Atwood (2004) and Charleux (2006) have useful, less detailed maps.

<sup>50</sup> Generated using the THL Place Dictionary, places.thlib.org, and revised and improved with the help of Gerald Roche.

<sup>51</sup> Generated using the THL Place Dictionary, and revised and improved with the help of Gerald Roche.

His successor twice removed, Wang IV, likewise spent many years preaching and living in these areas. Although we know little about the ethnicity of this incarnation, we do know that he was born in Khu lung near Sems nyid Monastery, in present-day Menyuan Hui Autonomous County, Qinghai Province. Sems nyid Monastery sits along the Julak River (T. 'Ju lag; Ch. Datong he, Haomen he), situated between the Qilian Mountains to the north and the Daban Mountains to the south, the latter being the steep precipices dividing Menyuan County from Huzhu County where Dgon lung is located. From early in its history, Sems nyid Monastery had close ties with Dgon lung. For instance, Dgon lung 'cantors'<sup>52</sup> were sent to Sems nyid on several occasions during the first few decades following its founding to teach the Sems nyid monks how to recite, chant, and sing the liturgy and the proper manner for playing ritual music (Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas 1982:113.18; Zhongguo renmin zhengzhi xieshang huiyi Tianzhu Zangzu zizhi xian weiyuanhui and Kong 2000:208; Zhiguanba 1989:113). This is one reason Sems nyid came to be referred to as a branch monastery of Dgon lung.

Wang IV's father was a certain 'Mantra-holder'<sup>53</sup> Dkon mchog skyabs (Ngag dbang mkhyen rab rgya mtsho 1932:28a.2), suggesting that Wang IV was born into a family with a religious occupation. His older brother was the fifth Smin grol Nom-un Qan,<sup>54</sup> otherwise known as the Btsan po *Nom-un Qan*, Skal bzang thub bstan 'phrin las rgya mtsho (b. 1839) (Ngag dbang mkhyen rab rgya mtsho 1932:28.4; Duo and Pu 1990:201n175). The Smin grol Nom-un Qan lineage was based at Gser khog Monastery. Though Gser khog was founded by a former abbot of Dgon lung, it soon began competing aggressively with Dgon lung for power and influence. The Smin grol lineage, which also possibly consisted of ethnic Hor (Lobsang Yongdan 2012), is yet another example of Mongols in powerful positions at this time.

In 1853, the young Wang IV was invited to Dgon lung where he was enthroned with much ceremony at his 'palace' known as Bkra shis 'bum 'khyil. Eleven years later, at the age of nineteen (eighteen in Western reckoning), Wang's fame spread far and wide, and he thus received a special invitation from the Aohan Prince to preach the dharma in his land. In the Wood-Rat year (1864), he left for the prince's "great palace that promotes glory and wealth in this world and beyond," where he spent twelve years (Ngag dbang mkhyen rab rgya mtsho 1932:28b.5). There:

...in that realm, with the help of the prince, [Wang IV] nourished the individual, religious longings of countless wandering beings, providing the kind [teachings] of the dharma, such as great tantric empowerments for the Sole Hero, Tutelary Deity of Mount Dge Idan [i.e. Dge lugs], and of the Thirteen Deities. As all the hopeful wandering beings were benefited and pleased, he breathed life into all.

Here, in the words of Wang IV's biographer (his successor Wang V Ngakwang Khyenrap Gyatso [1906-1963]), we see an explicit reference to Wang IV's Dge lugs evangelism.

He again exhibited this desire to promote Dge lugs practice when he returned to Dgon lung in 1876. As noted above, Dgon lung had been burnt to the ground in 1866, and it continued to struggle through many years of strife in the 1870s. An important turning point in the monastery's modern history appears to be when the Precious Tutor of Thu'u bkwan, Bstan pa rgya mtsho (1825-1897), was invited to Dgon lung in 1878. He was welcomed by Thu'u bkwan, Sum pa, and Wang himself, and was moved to tears by the pleas of all the Dgon lung monks and lamas. They described how the monastery

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<sup>52</sup> *dbu mdzad*.

<sup>53</sup> *sngags 'chang*.

<sup>54</sup> T. *no mon han*. The term is Mongolian for 'ruler of the dharma'. Note that it has nothing to do with another Mongolian term, '*nomuqan*', which means 'gentle' or 'peaceful' and was the name given to Qubilai Qa'an's (Kublai Khan) son. My sincere thanks to Christopher Atwood for bringing this to my attention and correcting it in this article. Personal communication (19 September and 16 November 2014).

had been ravaged by warfare and called him 'He Who Incites the Flame of the Dge ldan'<sup>55</sup> (Ngag dbang mkhyen rab rgya mtsho 1932:27a.4). He gave numerous 'permission-blessings',<sup>56</sup> transmissions, empowerments, and so on. The next year, in 1879, Wang IV took the abbatial throne of Dgon lung.<sup>57</sup>

Major events that Wang oversaw as abbot of Dgon lung included the search for and identification of the reincarnation of Lcang skya V, Lcang skya VI Blo bzang ye shes rgya mtsho (1875-1890?) (Duo and Pu 1990:203n199, 228). Wang IV was requested to take charge of this task, which he did, we are told, "in accordance with the prophecies from 'Central Tibet',<sup>58</sup> the name roster of the 'great yellow edict' [of the emperor],<sup>59</sup> and so forth" (Ngag dbang mkhyen rab rgya mtsho 1932:30a.2). This curious inclusion highlights the political position Dgon lung held between the Qing court and the Dga' ldan pho brang government in Lhasa.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, as abbot, Wang IV is said to have vigorously promoted 'debate classes'<sup>61</sup> and to have overseen all the activities of the exoteric and esoteric teachings, such as the monastery's liturgy (Ngag dbang mkhyen rab rgya mtsho 1932:29b.4).

When Wang IV tried to resign in 1882, the monastery's major lama, the 'dharma kings'<sup>62</sup> from the surrounding communities,<sup>63</sup> and the monks pleaded with him to continue as abbot. He then served another year before resigning in 1883. Wang continued serving Dgon lung Monastery in various ways. Two years later in 1885, he composed the Dgon lung customary *The Profound and Secret Golden Key of a Hundred Doors to [Buddhist] Treatises*, to which we shall turn when attempting to interpret his Eren Monastery customary and fill in the lacunae in that text. In 1895, "the evil, barbarian/Mohammedan<sup>64</sup> forces" were on the rise and threatening the safety of Dgon lung. Due to Wang's hard work and prayers, "the monastery's protector, the Chinese army, came from Xining." Thus, "the emperor and altruistic councilors used power, strength, [and] vajra weapons to utterly vanquish without remainder the 'demonic army from the dark side,'<sup>65</sup>" and Dgon lung was saved from harm (Ngag dbang mkhyen rab rgya mtsho, Wang V [1906-1963] 1932:32a.1).

In 1896, Wang IV returned to Inner Mongolia where he composed the Eren Monastery customary. In 1899, he returned to Dgon lung, whereupon, like his predecessor Wang II, he contributed significantly to the monastery's 'endowment'<sup>66</sup> and gave goods, tea, noodles, and cash to each of the monastery's monks. In 1900, the 'monastic council'<sup>67</sup> asked him to serve again as abbot, to which he consented, serving for one year. He passed away in 1906.

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<sup>55</sup> *dge ldan bstan 'bar ma'i dbu bskul ba*.

<sup>56</sup> *rjes gnang*.

<sup>57</sup> Surprisingly, it was at this point that Wang IV, along with some fifty others, finally took full monastic vows (Ngag dbang mkhyen rab rgya mtsho 1932:29b.6-30a.2).

<sup>58</sup> *dbus gtsang*.

<sup>59</sup> *gser yig chen mo'i mtshan byang*.

<sup>60</sup> The Dalai Lama is also known to have issued decrees on yellow brocades (Nornang 1990:261-262). However, a 'gser yig' seems to refer more directly to the Manchu emperor's decree.

<sup>61</sup> *rtsod grwa*.

<sup>62</sup> *chos rje*.

<sup>63</sup> The text names Sha bar chos rje, Ba bOng chos rje, and Phyug rtse chos rje all refer to places in the vicinity of Dgon lung. It is likely that Sha bar chos rje was also the 'Sha bar nang so' (Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas 1982:77.25). The title of *nang so* "consisted basically of the granting of a territory, the fixing of a yearly tribute, the recognition of the chieftainship of the lama who had brought in the tribe, and of the heritability of that chieftainship" (Schram 2006:306-307). Moreover, some local *chos rje* may have been non-monastic figures. For instance, some *chos rje* are referred to as *lha pa* 'spirit mediums', which often are non-monastic figures (Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma 2000:646/7b.5, 650/9b.3). The first page number (e.g., 646) refers to the page numbers given the text by a later editor, whereas the latter (e.g., 7b.5) refers to the page number found printed in Tibetan in the margin of the text.

<sup>64</sup> *kla glo < kla klo*.

<sup>65</sup> *pha rol bdud sde'i dpung tshogs*.

<sup>66</sup> *spyi 'jog*.

<sup>67</sup> *dgon pa spyi*.

THE CUSTOMARY FOR EREN MONASTERY:

"THE MIRROR THAT ILLUMINATES [WHAT IS TO BE] ACCEPTED AND [WHAT IS TO BE] REJECTED"

Om. May there be happiness and well-being! I prostrate before [my] lamas and Mañjuśrī!

Here at this Eren Monastery, for the purpose of increasing the learning of disciples, the one called Wang Khutugtu, with the purest of intentions, at the time of the establishment of the new degree of *rdo ram pa*, wrote down some notes on the steps of the system of granting degrees, of carrying out formal debates [defenses], of examinations, and so on.

First, on an auspicious day, either the 'head of the college',<sup>68</sup> the disciplinarians of the great assembly, or the disciplinarians of the colleges – whoever is appropriate – consults with the 'abbot'<sup>69</sup> and confer together, whereupon they are to nominate [the candidate for the degree of *rdo rams pa*] while [offering him] ceremonial scarves. Then, at that time, [the candidate] is given an 'evaluation'<sup>70</sup> of the Perfection of Wisdom up to the topic of 'lineage'<sup>71</sup> in the first chapter [of the *Ornament of Realization*]<sup>72</sup> and an evaluation of the Madhyamaka up through Establishment and Refutation.<sup>73</sup> On the third day of the first month, [the disciplinarian] must proclaim the need for a formal debate.

As for the testing,<sup>74</sup> on one [day] at the end of the fourth month, a request is made to the venerable abbot, the college *bla ma*, the disciplinarian of the great assembly, the college disciplinarian, and the director of studies. On the following day, [the examinee] is invited to the 'abbatial villa',<sup>75</sup> and two servings of tea must be given. Each is then given a ceremonial scarf.

As for debating, for periods of three days in both the first and sixth months,<sup>76</sup> debate from the colors<sup>77</sup> of red and white [i.e., from the beginning Collected Topics material] to Vinaya [i.e., the most advanced material]. While this is being done, it is permissible for the upper-classmen to 'drill'<sup>78</sup> [the examinee]. During the Great Formal Debate,<sup>79</sup> custom is that the upper-classmen lead [in questioning the examiners].<sup>80</sup> No matter which of the five treatises one is reasoning over,<sup>81</sup> other than the words 'the reasoning is [or is not] connected',<sup>82</sup> when debating, no other interruptions to the assembly are allowed. The questioners 'team up',<sup>83</sup> however, other than establishing points of

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<sup>68</sup> *grwa tshang bla ma*.

<sup>69</sup> *bla ma khri pa*.

<sup>70</sup> *rdung rgyugs* - the manuscript reads '*rdung rgyug*'.

<sup>71</sup> *rigs*.

<sup>72</sup> *mngon rtogs rgyan*. I thank Khenpo Ngawang Dorjee for explaining this to me. Personal communication (February 2012). Jongbok Yi, after consulting with Jeffrey Hopkins, explains that this is known as the *rang bzhin gnas rigs* 'naturally abiding lineage' (Yi 2012).

<sup>73</sup> *thal zlog* – the manuscript reads '*thal srog*'. Jongbok Yi, after consulting with Jeffrey Hopkins, informed me this is likely a misspelling of '*thal zlog*' (Yi 2012). See Thub bstan lung rtogs rnam rgyal 'phrin las (1983:48, 60n22).

<sup>74</sup> *rgyugs* – the manuscript reads '*rgyug*'.

<sup>75</sup> *khri ba bla brang*.

<sup>76</sup> *zla ba dang po'i [sic] drug ba gnyis kyi nyin gsum gyi ring la*. The genitive particle connecting '*dang po*' and '*drug ba*' appears to be a mistake.

<sup>77</sup> A parenthetical remark in small, cursive script is found here. The first part of the line is illegible. The latter part reads "...do this at night. As for the method of taking the test, it is like in the past."

<sup>78</sup> *skyor*.

<sup>79</sup> *dam bca' chen mo*.

<sup>80</sup> '*dzin grwa gong nas bzhed srol yod*. The meaning of this line is obscure. It could be that an elderly monk from Dgon lung would be able to recall the 'custom' of examination that Wang IV is writing about here, but I have not yet had the occasion to ask.

<sup>81</sup> *thal 'phen* – to point out the absurd consequences of an opponent's assertion or thesis. As such, it is synonymous with the '*thal 'phreng*'.

<sup>82</sup> *rtag gsal khyab*.

<sup>83</sup> *tshogs*.

scripture and reason, other responses are not to be made at any time. [The examinees] must debate [lit. "say 'there is' (or 'there is not) any connection"] on each of the five treatises. At each assembly, the 'director of studies'<sup>84</sup> asks questions regarding the Vinaya ...<sup>85</sup> In addition, if spare time is needed to ask any [other] question, it should be asked.<sup>86</sup> As the assembly ends, [the exam] is complete. After the director of studies presents an 'extensive recitation',<sup>87</sup> the two [i.e., the director and the examinee<sup>88</sup>] recite the seed syllable of Mañjuśrī and then disperse.

Here I have prepared a brief set of instructions to act as an outline. I thought that a detailed one would be too long and confusing, and so I did not write one. In any case, [one] should not transgress the objective of the Teachings and the Buddhist Vinaya. So doing, may the protector deities and wisdom deities remain vigilant, watching for the appearance of the evil accomplices, the disturbers [of peace] – anger, envy, and desire.

This was written by the one called Wang Khutugtu Blo bzang dar rgyas rgya mtsho on an auspicious day during the waxing moon of the tenth month of the Earth-Male-Dog year [1898] while staying at Eren Monastery, the upper and lower stories of the Great Assembly Hall. May all benefits quickly and forever go to the Teachings and sentient beings! May this lend to the continuing presence of the Teachings of the Omniscient Victor!<sup>89</sup> ...<sup>90</sup>

#### EXPLANATION OF THE TEXT

There is great consistency between the system of debate, testing, and awarding degrees that is prescribed here and that set down for Dgon lung. This is not surprising, given that Wang IV is the author of the customary at Eren and of one of Dgon lung's two extant customaries. The point is that Dgon lung lamas – in this case Wang IV – penned such customaries and traveled to such monasteries, thus *exporting a standardized scholastic system*.

In fact, knowledge of Dgon lung's administration and examination system helps us interpret the rather terse customary written for Eren Monastery. Although caution must be exercised in making too many assumptions about the similarities that may have existed between the two institutions, doing so is justified due to the fact that Wang IV also penned one of Dgon lung's own customaries. In addition, the schedule of events and the terminology found in the Eren customary is strikingly similar to that found at other Dge lugs monasteries, including Dgon lung.

The most conspicuous difference between the two systems is that, at Eren Monastery, Wang IV is inaugurating the conferment of *rdo rams pa* degrees rather than *dka' bcu* degrees, as was the case at Dgon lung. This is simply the result of time. When Dgon lung established its system of conferring *dka' bcu* degrees, the custom of awarding *rdo rams pa* degrees did not yet exist on the Tibetan Plateau (Dreyfus 2003:144-5; Tarab 2000:18-19). A candidate for degree at Dgon lung was referred to as *gling bsres ba* 'examinee among mixed communities'<sup>91</sup> as one who completes the *grwa skor* 'academic

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<sup>84</sup> *gzhung las pa*.

<sup>85</sup> The actual meaning of the text here – '*dul ba'i bkod gzhung rgyas pa* – is unclear. It is likely not the 'Dul ba'i mdo tsa ba by Guṇaprabha (Yon tan 'od), since it does not appear to go by this title.

<sup>86</sup> *de'i phror gang len zhid tu long dgos babs la ltas nas longs*.

<sup>87</sup> *tshig sgra rgyas pa*.

<sup>88</sup> Another possibility is that 'the two' refers to two examinees. Dreyfus (2003:235) mentions occasions during which two defenders would face an entire assembly of interrogators.

<sup>89</sup> This might refer to the Dalai Lama, although it may also refer to Tsong kha pa.

<sup>90</sup> There is a final line that reads "*d+ha rma bu ti lba rta*." If the '*lba*' is an error for '*lnga*,' then this may very tentatively be translated as "Recite [*? rta*] the Five Scriptures of the Dharma!"

<sup>91</sup> Dreyfus writes that this title may have been created at Sangphu Monastery (gsang phu) (2003:366n74). See



circuit' and simply as 'degree candidate' (T. *ming btags pa*, lit. title-holder, or one [seeking a] title). From early in its history, Dgon lung awarded the title/ degree of *dka' bcu* (*gling bsres dka' bcu*), literally "the one [having mastered] ten texts," or "ten difficulties."<sup>92</sup> According to the *Ocean Annals*, Dgon lung's branch monastery of Sems nyid petitioned the 'government' of Lhasa<sup>93</sup> through the Precious Rgyal sras Lama (i.e., 'Jigs me ye shes grags pa (1696-1750), the author of Dgon lung's earlier, 'extensive' customary<sup>94</sup>), requesting to establish the system of awarding the *dka' bcu* degree at Sems nyid Monastery "like Dgon lung."<sup>95</sup> Perhaps it was the previous incarnation of this Precious Rgyal sras Lama (i.e., Blo bzang bstan 'dzin, ca. 1638-1696), or the founder of Dgon lung himself, Rgyal sras Don yod chos kyi rgya mtsho (death ca. 1637), who likewise established the system of awarding degrees at Dgon lung. In any case, '*rdo rams pa*' appears to be a later term that replaced older degree titles such as '*dka' bcu*' (Dreyfus 2003:144-145).

The most confusing aspects of Eren's customary are its schedule of examination and the extensive array of terms employed in the text to describe the examination system: *rdung rgyugs* 'evaluation', *dam bca'* 'formal debate', *rgyugs* 'testing', *dam bca' chen mo* 'Great Formal Debate', *rtag gsal khyab* "say 'there is' (or 'there is no) connection', and so on. In fact, monastic customs are full of specialized terminology pertaining to different aspects of debate and debate practices (e.g., *rtsod zla*, *tshogs gleng*, *bsgro gleng*, *zla po byed*). The meaning of Eren's customary is made clearer by reference to Dgon lung Monastery and to the customs found at Dge lugs monasteries in Central Tibet.

It is useful to understand that the examination system prescribed for Eren, like that in place at Dgon lung, consisted of four major phases: regular testing, nomination for candidacy, continued testing, and the defense. The latter was the formal event at which the candidate, already thoroughly vetted by his superiors and his peers, would take part in a *dam bca' chen mo* 'Great Formal Debate', displaying his erudition to the assembly of monks and earning his degree.

Testing was a regular, required component of the curriculum for the monks who were enrolled in the monastery's dharma classes for the study of exoteric, philosophical doctrine, and debate. Monks were regularly reviewed by the abbot himself by means of recitation lessons.<sup>96</sup> During these lessons, the abbot recited the relevant section from the text being learned to the 'class rehearsal leader',<sup>97</sup> who repeated what the abbot had recited (Dreyfus 2003:251, 388n50). The class rehearsal leader subsequently went through the text with the rest of his class. There were also tests associated with the recitation lessons<sup>98</sup> that determined whether one stayed at their current level and, for those nearing the

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also Tarab Tulku (2000).

<sup>92</sup> Sems nyid sprul sku bstan 'dzin 'phrin las rgya mtsho earned the latter in 1677 (Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas 1982:115.25). See also Thu'u bkwan III Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (2000:739/49a.5); Sagaster (1967:43); Qinghai sheng bianji zu (1985:49); and Dreyfus (2003:144). The definition of *dka' bcu* given in the *Bod Rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* 'Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary' (2008:50b) does not refer to "difficulties" but only to "five scriptures [*bka'*] along with their commentaries." (It also says that this was a title awarded to successful candidates at Bkra shis lhun po Monastery in Central Tibet). Dung dkar Blo bzang 'phrin las (2002:127) provides a similar gloss. The spelling of this term is inconsistent in the historical record; it is often given as *bka' bcu* and sometimes even *ka bcu*.

<sup>93</sup> This probably refers to the Dalai Lama's villa at 'Bras spung Monastery.

<sup>94</sup> This customary focuses primarily on such issues as responsibility for ritual sponsorship, the appointment of monastic officials, and the resolution of disputes and quarrels (see Sullivan 2013). In contrast, the later customary by Wang IV deals strictly with Dgon lung's scholastic curriculum, its manner of debate, and its liturgical schedule during the spring *chos thog* 'dharma/ study/ debate sessions'.

<sup>95</sup> Brag dgon zhabs drung Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas, *Mdo smad chos byung* (117.21-23).

<sup>96</sup> *brtsi bzhag*.

<sup>97</sup> *skyor dpon*.

<sup>98</sup> *rtsis bzhag gi rgyugs*.

completion of their studies, if they were fit to stand for degree exams in the summer.

The extensive customary of Dgon lung makes it clear that recitation lessons were a nonnegotiable component of monastic education and that all but the credentialed *dka'rams*<sup>99</sup> scholars and some who had been attending dharma class for several years were required to take these tests at every dharma session ('Jigs med ye shes grags pa 1737:25b.3-4 and 31b.3).<sup>100</sup> "If one does not understand these things and forsakes [such] listening and thinking," the author writes:

If he seeks out piecemeal *sadhanas*,<sup>101</sup> [ritual explanatory] 'individualized teachings,<sup>102</sup> and 'pith instructions,<sup>103</sup> then he should know that he is turning his back on the intention of great scholar-practitioners such as the Second Victor, the Great Tsong kha pa. During dharma classes one is not to go elsewhere to listen to the dharma...<sup>104</sup>

Recitation lessons were not to be interrupted for any reason except especially important village rituals at which the abbot was needed to officiate.<sup>105</sup> This older customary also instructs the monks to practice their recitations for as long as possible.<sup>106</sup>

Apart from these reviews by the abbot, the daily debate practice was monitored by the disciplinarians of the monastery, who made tours around the debate courtyard. Students' practice was monitored even during the breaks from dharma sessions.<sup>107</sup> Wang IV's customary for Dgon lung explains how the disciplinarians were to make nightly rounds around the monastery to inspect the young monks, who sat on the rooftops of their residences to study,<sup>108</sup> tirelessly reciting their lessons. They struck a wooden block or some other instrument to alert the young monks to their approach.<sup>109</sup>

The Eren customary does not specify when nominations of degree candidates were to take

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<sup>99</sup> This is probably an abbreviation for *dka'bcu rab 'byams pa* 'the universally learned one who has mastered the ten difficulties [or texts]'. Alternatively, this could be a compound for *dka'bcu* scholars together with *rab 'byams* scholars. *Rab 'byams pa* 'universally learned one' is a title commonly awarded by monasteries to successful candidates. '*Dka'rams*' is also written '*dka'ram*'.

<sup>100</sup> The latter passage ('Jigs med ye shes grags pa 1737:31b.3) is as follows: "*chos thog snga ma'i rtsis bzhag gi rgyugs chos thog rjes mar dka'ram ma gtog pa thams cad la len zhing ...*" The precise meaning of this is unclear, but it may indicate recitation-lesson tests of the earlier dharma sessions (i.e., earlier in the year) were administered at the later dharma sessions for all but the *dka'rams* scholars. Moreover, it could mean that the First Spring Dharma Session goes on without such tests, whereas the following dharma sessions have them. The Seventh Dalai Lama tells us that at 'Bras spungs Monastery's Sgo mang College in the 1660s, recitation lessons were incredibly long and took place even during the *chos mtshams* 'dharma breaks'. This was too arduous for students, however, and eventually the recitation lessons were shortened and conducted only during dharma sessions (Skal ldan rgya mtsho, *Khri chen spul pa'i sku blo bzang stan pa'i nyi ma dpal bzang po'i rnam par thar pa*, 1745 (1977):357/15b.1-359/16b.1-3).

<sup>101</sup> *lha'i sgrub thabs*.

<sup>102</sup> *khrid*.

<sup>103</sup> *man ngag*.

<sup>104</sup> Rgyal sras 'Jigs med ye shes grags pa (1737:23b.6-24a.2).

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 12a.3-4.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 11a.4-5.

<sup>107</sup> The extensive customary of Dgon lung also explains that all visiting and resident monks over the age of twenty had to take written exams (*yig rgyugs*) at every one of the dharma sessions ('Jigs med ye shes grags pa 1737:31b.3). It is not clear, however, what these 'written exams' entailed. They may have been the same as the recitation lesson reviews by the abbot. In this case, a better translation would be 'reading exam' or 'exam of the memorization of a text'. See also the reference to 'written exam takers' in Wang IV's customary for Dgon lung (3b.4).

<sup>108</sup> Dgon lung informant (personal communication 2012).

<sup>109</sup> Schram suggests that they cracked whips during their rounds (2006:374): "At night, the disciplinarian with some of his lictors, armed with rawhide whips, makes a tour of the lamasery. Lamas found brawling, quarrelling, or fighting are brought to the court of the intendant, where penalties are meted out in various brutal forms."

place, only saying that they occur "on an auspicious day" some time before the third day of the first month. Thus, by the time the new year had rolled around and preparations were under way for the first major dharma session, i.e., the Great Spring Dharma Session, the monastery's disciplinarians and abbot had to have a clear idea of the competency of the students. In the first month at Dgon lung, for instance, the disciplinarians are said to have presented the roster of dharma class students to the abbot. That practice bears a great resemblance to the process of nominating a degree candidate at Eren. On the seventeenth day of the first lunar month, Dgon lung's two 'disciplinarians'<sup>110</sup> are to offer 'merit scarves'<sup>111</sup> to the abbot, "along with the list of names of the 'dharma class students."<sup>112</sup> "A 'petitioning scarf'<sup>113</sup> and a 'last offering scarf'<sup>114</sup> for the abbot are both taken from the [monastery's] 'common property.'<sup>115</sup> The prepared list of dharma class students is formally presented by the twenty-third day of the month (Blo bzang 'jam pa'i tshul khriims 1885:2b.2). Nominations for degree candidates at both Dgon lung and Eren may have been considered by the abbot around this same time, that is, during the first month of the year.

The Eren customary also mentions an evaluation that coincides with the nomination of candidates at Eren. There is no explicit mention of this in the customs for Dgon lung Monastery. However, we can confirm that the subject matter of this evaluation at Eren was also part of the examination system at Dgon lung. A 'test'<sup>116</sup> of candidates at Dgon lung that took place in the fourth month demonstrates that degree candidates at both monasteries were required to have mastered the same material. The extensive customary of Dgon lung tells us that "those who have not already taken<sup>117</sup> the [dharma session] exams in Madhyamaka and Perfection of Wisdom are not given the *gling bsres* [degree exam]" ('Jigs med ye shes grags pa 1737:25b.7). Later in the same text we read:

Those who wish to participate in the 'academic circuit'<sup>118</sup> of this place must test on the 'Chain of Consequences'<sup>119</sup> of both Madhyamaka and Perfection of Wisdom in front of those who have gathered together, such as the abbot, the disciplinarians, and the director of studies.<sup>120</sup> Afterwards, no matter what [they] question him on – be it all of the Special Topics<sup>121</sup> of both Madhyamaka and Perfection of Wisdom, Vinaya, Abhidharmakoṣa, etc. – he must never refuse, saying "Don't go there [*ma song*]<sup>122</sup>!" ('Jigs med ye shes grags pa 1737:31b.6-32a.1)

Meanwhile, the Eren customary tells us that the newly nominated candidate was to be evaluated on Perfections of Wisdom topics and Madyamaka topics. Thus, at both Eren and Dgon lung monasteries, examinees had to prove their abilities in the Perfection of Wisdom and Madhyamaka philosophies. We also know that *some* familiarity with the more advanced material of Abhidharma<sup>123</sup> and Vinaya<sup>124</sup> was expected, since the Eren customary informs us that degree candidates were ultimately tested on "each

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<sup>110</sup> *dge skos*; Regional: *dge skol*.

<sup>111</sup> *bsod btags legs pa*.

<sup>112</sup> *chos grwa ba*.

<sup>113</sup> *zhu dar*.

<sup>114</sup> *mjug gi 'bul dar*.

<sup>115</sup> *spyi rdzas*.

<sup>116</sup> *rgyug*, i.e., *rgyugs*.

<sup>117</sup> Lit. given. In Tibetan, the proctor 'receives' the exam that is 'offered' or 'given' by the examinee.

<sup>118</sup> *grwa skor*, i.e., degree exams.

<sup>119</sup> *thal 'phreng*. See above.

<sup>120</sup> *gzhung las pa*.

<sup>121</sup> *zur skol*.

<sup>122</sup> This could also be translated as "I have not gone there," meaning "I have not studied that."

<sup>123</sup> I.e., Buddhist cosmology and metaphysics.

<sup>124</sup> I.e., traditional Buddhist law and discipline.

of the five treaties,<sup>125</sup> and degree candidates at Dgon lung could not avoid answering questions on this material by saying "Don't go there!" Moreover, it appears that this evaluation of the candidate's mastery of these scholastic subject matters was conducted primarily by the monastery's top scholastic officers at both Eren and Dgon lung monasteries and that it *preceded* the formal debates before the entire assembly.

In Central Tibet, candidates for the highest academic degree, of *lha rams pa dge bshes*, first had to pass this stage of evaluation in front of the Dalai Lama's representative or even the Dalai Lama himself (Dreyfus 2003:257):

Candidates would be given questions to debate with other candidates, each one taking his turn to answer and debate on each of the five texts. Though in the next two examinations one can disgrace oneself but cannot fail, failure was possible in this first examination. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama sent a few candidates back, humiliating both the candidates and the abbot who had admitted them to the Lha-ram rank.

Although the level of competition was far more intense for the pan-monastery *lha rams pa* degree candidates than it was for the *rdo rams pa* candidates at Eren, or the *dka' bcu* candidates at Dgon lung, the expectations were similar.

Once nominated, the candidate went through a process of intense scrutiny by the entire monastery before being allowed to participate in the 'defense'. The Eren customary refers briefly to 'testing' that took place at the end of the fourth month, which coincides with the latter half of the Great Spring Dharma Session. As mentioned above, Dgon lung carried out 'tests' at this point. The Great Spring Dharma Sessions was a period of heightened debate activity. Monks were already enrolled in their dharma classes, and they were participating daily in paired debate practice as well as witnessing and participating in 'formal debates' in which a single defendant would face off against a 'challenger'<sup>126</sup> or a group of challengers. The testing of degree candidates took place within this atmosphere.

At Dwags po College in Central Tibet, a Dge lugs institution that may have served as a model for Dgon lung, this period was referred to as the Ka rab Dharma Session, presumably because it was the point at which candidates for scholastic degrees were chosen (Nornang 1990:260). Dreyfus (2003:257-258) illustrates the intensity of a formal debate for a *lha rams pa dge bshes* candidate at other major monasteries of Central Tibet:

... [Candidates] defend their view in front of the whole monastery in a formal debate. One cannot fail but one can be humiliated in this difficult trial, which requires the candidate to spend up to ten hours answering questions on any topic related to the curriculum. This examination also involves a strong psychological element, since the defender stands against the entire audience (numbering several hundred to several thousand), which is expected to support and help the questioner [i.e. challenger]. When the defender hesitates in answering, the audience joins the questioner in pressuring him by loudly intoning "cir, cir, cir." If the answer is still not forthcoming, the questioner may start to make fun of the defender with the vocal support of the audience. Conversely, if the questioner falters, members of the audience may jump in and pick up the debate. At times, several questioners bombard the defender with a variety of questions. Sometimes they may join in unison as they forcefully press their points. When the defender loses, the whole audience joins the questioner in loudly slapping their hands and pointedly proclaiming, "Oh, it's finished."<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> *po ti lnga*, i.e., the five root texts of the Dge lugs curriculum, which included Vasubhandu's *Treasury of Abhidharma* (*Abhidharmakośa*) and Guṇaprabha's *Discourse on Vinaya* (*Vinaya-sūtra*).

<sup>126</sup> This is the term used by Lempert (2012).

<sup>127</sup> Lempert (2012) gives a very lively presentation and intriguing analysis of such a debate in the second chapter

Neither the Eren customary nor the Dgon lung customaries explain in great detail this phase of testing and scrutinizing the candidates. In Wang IV's customary for Dgon lung, we are merely told that the director of studies<sup>128</sup> commenced the testing after having sought permission from the two disciplinarians.<sup>129</sup> He began with the "Turnings of the Wheel of the Dharma," a topic in the Perfection of Wisdom literature,<sup>130</sup> and the abbot and the disciplinarians would also take part in directly questioning the examinee. The term used to refer to the examinee, *tshogs lang*, literally 'to stand [before] the assembly', provides another clue for reconstructing this event. The Chinese scholar, Liu Shengqi, discussing the examination system for the major Dge lugs monasteries in Central Tibet, writes:

...the result of these Tshogs-langs was not an official assessment for the monks' academic degree. However, it provided the heads and all monks of this monastery with a clear view of a monk's academic performance and based on this decided whether a monk could have a degree or not, though it was a long time before he took formal graduation examinations.<sup>131</sup>

Thus, it is clear that this testing at Dgon lung consisted of formal debates in front of the entire assembly and was similar to the formal debates illustrated above by Dreyfus. We can assume that the fourth month testing at Eren followed a similar pattern.

Finally, the candidate would have his defense – his Great Formal Debate. To some extent, this was a formality. As we have seen, the degree candidates first had to be nominated by monastic officials and then evaluated and tested to ensure their fitness for candidacy. On the other hand, we have already seen the intensity of the formal debates at the monastery, with the examinee facing off against a coordinated attack by the monastery's upperclassmen and resident scholars. Therefore, we should assume that the degree candidates and the examiners (or challengers) in the Great Formal Debate were equally animated and primed for the event. Moreover, the extensive attention given to the proper comportment of participants in this defense suggests that emotions could quickly escalate and get out of control.

The words and gestures of both the candidate and the challengers in the defense are prescribed in both the Eren customary and the customaries for Dgon lung Monastery. The older, extensive customary of Dgon lung goes to great length to prescribe behavior for all formal debates:

Whenever there is a formal debate, great or small, being attached to the desire for 'one's own victory',<sup>132</sup> having anger that wishes the debasement of one's opponent, as well as the defendant focusing primarily on [proposing] 'deceptive arguments';<sup>133</sup> having a smiling appearance while speaking quickly, arguing in factions, having 'conspiratorial talk'<sup>134</sup> of one's own distaste for 'debate';<sup>135</sup> in short, an 'intention'<sup>136</sup> marked by the wrongful behavior of degrading [others],

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of *Discipline and Debate*.

<sup>128</sup> *bla ma gzhung las pa*.

<sup>129</sup> *zhal ngo* - the manuscript has 'zha ngo'.

<sup>130</sup> The "Turnings of the Wheel of the Dharma" is a reference to the first chapter of the *Ornament* and its corresponding commentaries. The theme of this chapter is the Buddha's wisdom of knowing all modes. Commentaries spin off of the phrase 'this all-aspected variety' (*sna tshogs 'di*). I thank Khenpo Ngawang Dorjee for explaining this to me. See also Arya Vimuktiṣeṇa (vṛtti), Haribhadra (āloka), and Maitreya (2006:3).

<sup>131</sup> Liu (n.d.), accessed 5 September 2012. This English article is said to be a translation from a Chinese article published in the 2005 volume of *China Tibetology*. I have not seen the Chinese original.

<sup>132</sup> *rang nyid rgyal ba*.

<sup>133</sup> *g.yo sgyu'i sbyor ba*.

<sup>134</sup> My translation is tentative. *phug tshangs kyi gtam*.

<sup>135</sup> *bgro gleng*.

ridiculing, [saying] hurtful words, [speaking] 'querulous words',<sup>137</sup> speaking of others' faults, revealing others' weaknesses, etc. – [all of this] should not to be done.

Meanwhile, one should have a reverence that desires the realization of truth.<sup>138</sup> One should have a compassion that desires to dispel the misconceptions of others. One should have a kindness that desires to make one's opponents understand truth. While having such an intention and emphasizing scripture and 'reason',<sup>139</sup> to analyze and refute [one's opponent] in the proper fashion based on such things as the *Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition*<sup>140</sup> is a delight.<sup>141</sup> This is pure happiness ('Jigs med ye shes grags pa 1737:24a.4-24b.1).

The reference to the defendant in debate focusing on deceptive arguments relates to the lines in the Eren customary prescribing the types of responses a defendant may give, i.e., the formulaic constructions of "the reasoning is [or is not] connected," or "there is [or there is not] any connection." Thus *both* the defendant's comportment *and* that of the challenger(s) were of concern.

Lempert explains that such 'querulous words' were actually a regular part of debate:

Warnings about taking debate's martial idiom literally were conveyed to me with some urgency when I first visited Sera Mey. I was cautioned about the 'bad words' (*tshig nyen*) I might hear in the debating courtyard, like 'idiot' (*lkugs pa*) and 'donkey' (*bong gu*). Technically, such words are not permitted but slip out (*shor ba*) anyway, one monk explained. Doctrinally, consequences catalyze learning in defendants, but the kinesic accompaniments iconically figure this method as a kind of violence.<sup>142</sup>

The rules of comportment applied equally or even more during the defenses of degree candidates. Again, the extensive customary of Dgon lung elaborates:

... only one monk [is examined] at a time, and the formal debate is to last up to three days.<sup>143</sup> As for those doing the questioning,<sup>144</sup> except for a few particular [cases of] elders who are in poor health, every single one of the *dka' rab 'byams* scholars on the monastery's roster<sup>145</sup> are to inspire intelligent debate. Moreover, they are not to employ any covert deceit, any misleading strategies, or spurious topics in their questioning. Even if they do employ these, they are not to do improper acts that destroy the Teachings. The disciplinarians are to distinguish the good from the bad [debate]. After the *dka' rab 'byams* scholars have finished, the classes go each in turn.

Next year's *gling bsres ba* are to begin formal debating at the dharma sessions beginning at this year's Great Prayer Festival.<sup>146</sup> All candidates for titles<sup>147</sup> are as described above. [The monastery]

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<sup>136</sup> *kun slong*.

<sup>137</sup> *shags ngan*.

<sup>138</sup> *don rtogs pa*.

<sup>139</sup> *lung rigs*.

<sup>140</sup> *tshad ma sde bdun*.

<sup>141</sup> *tsha gad*. This gloss is a conjecture.

<sup>142</sup> Lempert (2012:56).

<sup>143</sup> Here we see that the duration of the defense – three days – is the same in both the Dgon lung customary and the Eren one. The only peculiarity is that the Eren customary prescribes two three-day periods, one in the first month and another in the sixth month, whereas the Dgon lung customaries specify that such defenses are to be held in the sixth month. However, the line in the extensive customary of Dgon lung requiring that degree candidates are to begin formal debating "at the dharma sessions beginning at this year's Great Prayer Festival" seems to indicate that Dgon lung's degree candidates also participated in defenses or at least formal debates during both the first month and the sixth month.

<sup>144</sup> *rigs lung byed mkhan*. This term is synonymous with '*rigs lam pa*' (Dreyfus 2003:211).

<sup>145</sup> *dgon pa'i sgrigs 'og tu yod do cog*.

<sup>146</sup> *smon lam*.

must not depart from the [practice of] wise one's leading debate and so forth, whereby only a little talk would take place [and one would earn a degree]. [Such] bad customs of awarding degrees must not be established... ('Jigs med ye shes grags pa 1737:25b.6-26a.4)

The defense was the culmination of conferring degrees, preceded by the nomination and formal testing, not to mention the months and years of review and examination. It was thus important to ensure that it remained a formal, solemn affair. At the major Dge lugs monasteries of Central Tibet, the Great Formal Debate eventually took on trans-regional and even political significance. There, the event occurred during the Great Prayer Festival of the New Year and involved candidates from multiple, major, scholastic institutions. As Dreyfus (2003:258) writes, "its importance goes well beyond the boundaries of the tradition, as thousands of pilgrims came to Lhasa to attend this festival." In that sense, the importance of the defenses held at Dgon lung and Eren paled in comparison. Nonetheless, we know that the reputations of successful *rdo rams pa* and *dka' bcu* candidates were significant both locally and regionally, since biographies and histories never fail to affix these titles to the names of those individuals who earned them. In addition, these titles may have carried the prestige of earlier times, when Dge lugs adherents had not yet systematized and centralized scholarly titles (see Dreyfus 2003:144-145 and Tarab 2000:18-19).

Far from Central Tibet, the defenses at monasteries such as Dgon lung and Eren had to be carried out appropriately. This explains the numerous rules specifying appropriate language and behavior. It also explains the normative, ideological backdrop to the defenses, namely, that everything be done to promote learning and understanding and to benefit the Buddha's Teachings more generally. The passage above from the extensive customary of Dgon lung also warns against awarding degrees without going through this process of debate ("whereby only a little talk would take place"),<sup>148</sup> since a proper debate was of benefit, not just to the candidate but to the entire gathered assembly. He describes the process for awarding 'honorary degrees',<sup>149</sup> a phenomena that may have existed at Eren Monastery. The only monks permitted to request and receive such degrees were those from other monasteries who were suddenly required to leave the monastery to attend to other business. Dgon lung's own resident monks were not. This may have been a way to attract renowned lamas and scholars with fame and money from elsewhere while simultaneously maintaining the integrity of its education system.

"As for the process of [awarding] honorary degrees," he writes:

[They] do not need to engage in formal debate. On top of giving five 'community teas', they must 'speak from between the pillars' [in the assembly hall]<sup>150</sup> as if they were standing and debating<sup>151</sup> ('Jigs med ye shes grags pa 1737:32a.3. Emphasis added.).

The petition for honorary degree comes at a price:

[Honorary] degree [seekers] must offer a minimum of one horse to the abbot. To the congregation of monks, two community teas and a mid-morning meal.<sup>152</sup> They must give an extensive *nam gzhag* offering.<sup>153</sup> And to [the monastery's] 'beneficial endowment'<sup>154</sup> an ounce<sup>155</sup> of silver.

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<sup>147</sup> *ming btags byed mi*.

<sup>148</sup> See above.

<sup>149</sup> *ming btags zur pa*.

<sup>150</sup> My translation is tenuous. The idea seems to be that the petitioners for honorary degrees are required to give a lecture in the assembly hall. The Tibetan is '*ka par nas bshad pa*'.

<sup>151</sup> *tshogs lang lugs bzhin*.

<sup>152</sup> *tshab grwa*. *Tshigs mdzod chen mo* 'Great Chinese-Tibetan Dictionary' defines '*tsha gra*' as "the *tsampa*

The arrival of an individual seeking an honorary degree meant instant wealth for the monastery and helped line the robes of its officials,<sup>156</sup> but there was a trade-off. The congregation would not have the opportunity to witness and participate in the grilling of a degree candidate. Therefore, this section of Dgon lung's customary concludes as follows:

If there are no individuals seeking a normal<sup>157</sup> [i.e., not an honorary] degree, then the *dka' ram* scholars or whoever is appropriate are to engage in a great formal debate<sup>158</sup> as is traditionally done ('Jigs med ye shes grags pa 1737:32a.4).

Such prescriptions did not guarantee that the debate and examination system was not abused or violated. Conversely, they likely reflect the actual existence of such departures from the ideal. Nonetheless, the very existence of hundreds or even thousands of such customaries, many of them composed by lamas from major institutions such as Dgon lung for smaller and sometimes distant assemblies of monks (or laypeople), illustrates the means by which sectarian and monastic orthodoxies and orthopraxies took shape.

## CONCLUSION

Dgon lung was a site of unparalleled influence during the first century of its existence. By the end of the nineteenth century, the monastery was literally in ruins, and other monasteries in A mdo, such as Bla brang, had long since taken over the principal role of 'local center' of Dge lugs scholasticism. Nonetheless, there were persistent efforts to renew scholasticism and monastic practice of ritual. The monastery continued to offer guidance to other monasteries, including its own branch monasteries in Dpa' ris and institutions far away in the eastern parts of Inner Mongolia, such as Eren Monastery.

Remarkable continuity exists in scholastic practices extending from Sgo mang College in Central Tibet, to Dgon lung in far northeastern Tibet, to Eren Monastery. The Wang incarnation lineage, one of the five major incarnation lineages at Dgon lung, maintained ties with patrons and religious adherents over several lifetimes. Wang Khutugtu IV, the protagonist in this essay, visited various banners in eastern Mongolia on several occasions. He spent over a quarter of his life living there and composed at least two customaries in his later years, one for Eren Monastery in eastern Mongolia, and another, lengthier customary for Dgon lung. These texts explain the necessary steps for maintaining a Dge lugs monastery complete with a system of examinations for degree candidates. The sectarian identity of these monasteries is implicit throughout these texts that describe the hymns that are to be recited (in the Dgon lung customary) and the treatises about which students are to discuss, debate, and be examined. I contend that Dgon lung Monastery functioned as an outpost of Dge lugs

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allotted to monks during the Great Prayer Festival by the Tsampa Office of the former regional government of Tibet" (Zhang 2008:2242). However, here, I surmise that the term is related to *tsha rting* 'mid-morning'. I thank Khenpo Ngawang Dorjee for suggesting this. See the possibly related term '*tsha bzhed*' in 'Jigs med ye shes grags pa (1737:31b.5).

<sup>153</sup> On "extensive *rnam gzhag*," "abridged *rnam gzhag*," and so on, see Sullivan (2013:199-200).

<sup>154</sup> *phan theb*.

<sup>155</sup> *srang*.

<sup>156</sup> Rgya sras adds here that "if there is an 'extensive *rnam gzhag* offering, the abbot and former abbots are all to receive 'great *rnam gzhag*' offerings each" ('Jigs med ye shes grags pa 1737:32a.5). On *rnam gzhag* offerings at Dgon lung, see Sullivan (2013).

<sup>157</sup> *kyus* < *dkyus*.

<sup>158</sup> *dam bca' chen mo*.



evangelism even in its time of decline.

An implication of this study has been to further challenge the reification of the boundaries separating Mongolia from Tibet. Historians have witnessed and analyzed the role of Mongols in the history of both China and Tibet. However, as Diemberger and Uradyn Bulag have pointed out, the great majority of these works have fallen "in the school of evidential scholarship, examining the religious and literary influences of the Tibetans upon the Mongols" (2007:1-2). A closer look at the regular, historic interaction between such places as Inner Mongolia and its immediate neighbor to the west and southwest, Amdo, has been stifled by what Diemberger and Bulag call a, "conceptual segregation ... aided as much by historical communist hostility to religion as by the use of the nation-state as the major reference of scholarship and research" (Bulag and Diemberger 2007:2). Wang Khutugtu was not the only connection Dgon lung had with Mongolia. In fact, *all five* of the major incarnation lineages at Dgon lung had extensive ties throughout Inner Mongolia.

Our review of this Dge lugs scholastic network contributes to the recent renewal of scholarly interest in Tibetan-Mongolian exchanges. Finally, I hope that the attention I have paid to the details of the examination system at Eren Monastery may facilitate future research on the consistency and divergence of monastic practice that took place over the centuries and across the vast Tibetan Plateau and beyond.

#### APPENDIX ONE: NAMES OF TEXTS

*Composition that Binds the Many Mantrikas to Discipline: A Beautiful Ornament for the Community;*

*sngags mang la khrims su bca' ba'i yi ge 'dus sde mdzes rgyan* སྐྱེལ་མང་ལ་བྲིམས་སུ་བཅའ་བའི་ཡི་གེ་འདུས་སྡེ་  
མངོན་རྒྱན

*Customary for Mantrikas; sngags rnam kyi bca' yig* སྐྱེལ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་བཅའ་ཡིག

*Four Interwoven Annotations on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment; lam rim mchan bzhi*

*sbrags ma* ལམ་རིམ་མཚན་བཞེས་སྐྱེལ་མ

*Ocean Annals; deb ther rgya mtsho* དེབ་ཐེར་རྒྱ་མཚོ

*Ornament of Realization; mngon rtogs rgyan* མངོན་རྟོགས་རྒྱན

*Profound and Secret Golden Key of a Hundred Doors to [Buddhist] Treatises; bstan bcos sgo brgya*

*'byed pa'i zab zing gser gyi sde mig* བསྟན་བཅོས་སྣོ་བརྒྱ་འབྲེད་པའི་ཟབ་ཟིང་གསེར་གྱི་སྡེ་མིག

*The Customary of the Mirror that Illuminates [What Should Be] Accepted and Rejected; bca' yig*

*blong dor gsal ba'i me long* བཅའ་ཡིག་སྟོང་དོར་གསལ་བའི་མེ་ལོང

## BILINGUALISM IN SONG: THE RABBIT SONG OF THE FULAN NARA HUZHU MONGGHUL (TU)

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### ABSTRACT

Musical notation, and musical and linguistic characteristics of a Chinese-Huzhu Mongghul bilingual song in the Fulaan Nara dialect of Huzhu Mongghul are given.

### KEYWORDS

bilingualism, folk song, Fulaan Nara, Haidong Municipality, Huzhu Mongghul, Monguor, Qinghai, Tu

### INTRODUCTION

Huzhu Mongghul is an endangered language of the Monguor (Tu) subgroup of the Mongolic language family, spoken in the provinces of Qinghai and Gansu in the People's Republic of China (Faehndrich 2007). The official Chinese name for the Monguor language is Tuzuyu. The Fulaan Nara dialect of Huzhu Mongghul is spoken in Wushi, Hongyazigou, and Songduo townships in Huzhu Mongghul Autonomous County and in Dala Township, Ledu County, which are all located in Haidong Municipality, Qinghai Province.

Most speakers of Fulaan Nara are bilingual in the local variety of Chinese (Qinghaihua; see Dede 2003). Young people also speak Modern Standard Chinese, many of them fluently, depending on the amount of schooling they have received. This widespread bilingualism is expressed in the song described here, which alternates between the Qinghai Chinese dialect and Huzhu Mongghul. Bilingualism in Mongghul song has previously been discussed by Qi (2007:66-76), including excerpts of the song described here, as well as other bilingual Huzhu Mongghul songs (both Mongghul-Chinese and Mongghul-Tibetan).

In addition to Mongghul and Chinese, a small number of people also speak Tibetan; mostly those who have learned it in school as a second language. Levy met only one male speaker, born in about 1935, who spoke Tibetan without having learned it in school. In spite of the few people who are genuinely bilingual (or trilingual),<sup>3</sup> certain Mongghul songs (mostly wedding songs) are sung in Tibetan.<sup>4</sup> Qi (1997) and Qi et al. (1998) discuss musical characteristics of Huzhu Mongghul wedding songs. These songs are generally sung from memory.

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<sup>3</sup> For examples of songs from Qinghai employing trilingualism (Salar, Tibetan, and Chinese), see 'Baxi Gaga' (Ma et al. 2001:218-227), which was sung mostly in Salar by Ma Guorui and recorded by Ma Wei.

<sup>4</sup> For an example of a drinking song sung in Tibetan by Mongghul women, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LVmDoXrqso> (accessed 28 January 2015), recorded by Limudanzhuu (b. 1966) in Qaalighua Village, Dongshan Township, Huzhu County on the fourth day of the second lunar month in 2004.

By 2009, Qi Huimin had not met any Mongghul farmers who were fluent in Tibetan. As mentioned by Qi (2007:66-76), singers sing lyrics that they do not understand. For example, in Qi (2007:66-76) the following conversation with Dong Youmei at the latter's home in Zanza Township, Huzhu County, 18 July 2001 was recorded:

歌手: 我唱的是"藏话" (藏语)

(Singer: I sing in Tibetan.)

笔者: 不管谁唱这首歌都用"藏话"唱吗?

(Qi: Does everyone sing in Tibetan?)

歌手: 不一定。中间有的人"土话" (土语) 也唱, 但前后还是用"藏话"唱。

(Singer: No, some sing the middle of the music line in Mongghul, but everyone should sing in Tibetan at the beginning and at the end.)

This means:

music line:TTTTTMMMMMMTTTTTTTTTTTTTT

T(ibtan): everyone sings this in the Tibetan language

M(ongghul): some sing this in Tibetan, others sing this in Mongghul.

The parts of the song represented above by T are easily sung in either Tibetan or Mongghul, sometimes consisting of non-lexical vocables. The parts represented by M are explanatory and a singer who has difficulty explaining in Tibetan uses their mother tongue instead.

References to songs titled Alima or Alimar in Minhe Mangghuer can be found in Stuart and Limusishiden (1994:62) and in Hu and Stuart (1992a:115). Stuart and Limusishiden mention a 'song and dance Alima' sung at weddings accompanied by "gestures of labor and [imitations of] the way Monguor, Tibetans, and Hui walk." While the song described here did not include gestures, it does describe an activity which, if not an every-day type of labor, must nevertheless have been a fairly common part of life at some point.

The song 'Alimar' described in Hu and Stuart is similar to the song discussed in this paper in that it describes steps in a process. In Hu and Stuart's 'Alimar' it is the process of obtaining dye, starting with spreading manure and plowing the fields, continuing with the sprouting of the new shoots and the budding of the plants, to harvesting the flowers, and making and wearing the dyed skirt.

## THE SONG

The song described in this article was sung by Lamikar (b. 1964),<sup>5</sup> a native speaker of Fulaan Nara from Wushi Township. She is bilingual in Mongghul and Qinghai Chinese. The song was recorded on 15 March 2007 by Levy in stereo on a Marantz PMD 660 at 44.1 KHz (bit rate 1411 kpbs) using the internal microphone. Editing of audio was done in Audacity, version 1.2.4. The translator for this recording session was Wen Xiangcheng.

This song is usually sung to children by mothers or grandmothers in order to educate the children.

In the following presentation of the song, the first line is a transcription in IPA, the second line

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<sup>5</sup> Limusishiden, October 2011, personal communication.

is the same transcription in Hanyu Pinyin, the third line is a morpheme-by-morpheme gloss, and the fourth and last lines give a free English translation. For the transcription of Huzhu Mongghul lyrics, we follow Li's (1988) system. The Chinese transliteration in Hanyu Pinyin is followed by the Chinese characters in parentheses.

1. alama malga-na: dʒo:-la ra  
 alama malgha-naa joo-la ra  
 alama hat-REFL put.on-PURP come  
*Alama*, come and put on your hat.
  
2. alama dei mo:dʒi alama dei mo:dʒi  
 alama dài màozi alama dài màozi  
 (帶帽子, 帶帽子)  
 alama put.on hat alama put.on hat  
*Alama* put on a hat, *alama* put on a hat.
  
3. alama de:l-a: misi-la ra  
 alama deel-aa musi-la ra  
 alama clothes-REFL put.on-PURP come  
*Alama*, come and put on clothes.
  
4. alama tʃuan iʃaŋ alama tʃuan iʃaŋ  
 alama chuān yīshang alama chuān yīshang  
 (穿衣裳, 穿衣裳)  
 alama put.on clothes alama put.on clothes  
*Alama* put on clothes, *alama* put on clothes.
  
5. alama mila: de:l-a: misi-la ra  
 alama mulaa deel-aa musi-la ra  
 alama pants-REFL put.on-PURP come  
*Alama*, put on your pants (lit. small clothes).
  
6. alama tʃuan kuɕi alama tʃuan kuɕi  
 alama chuān kùzi alama chuān kùzi  
 (穿褲子, 穿褲子)  
 alama put.on pants alama put.on pants  
*Alama* put on pants, *alama* put on pants.
  
7. alama pise:-na: pise:la-la ra  
 alama pusee-naa puseela-la ra  
 alama belt-REFL wear.a.belt-PURP come  
*Alama*, come and put on a belt.

8. alama lei de:ɕi alama lei de:ɕi  
 alama lēi dàizi alama lēi dàizi  
 (勒帶子, 勒帶子)  
 alama tighten belt alama tighten belt  
*Alama* tighten the belt, *alama* tighten the belt.
9. alama tʂanxei-na: misi-la ra  
 alama qanhei-naa musi-la ra  
 alama shoe-REFL put.on-PURP come  
*Alama*, come put on your shoes.
10. alama tʂanxei lai alama tʂanxei lai  
 alama qianhei lái alama qianhei lái  
 (牽鞋來, 牽鞋來。)  
 alama shoe come alama shoe come  
*Alama*, come and put on shoes, *alama* come and put on shoes.
11. alama tu:li:-ni pu:da-la ra  
 alama tuulii-ni puuda-la ra  
 alama rabbit-ACC shoot-PURP come  
*Alama*, come and shoot the rabbit!
12. alama da tu lai alama da tu lai  
 alama dǎ tù lái alama dǎ tù lái  
 (打兔來, 打兔來)  
 alama shoot rabbit come alama shoot rabbit come  
*Alama*, come and shoot the rabbit, *alama*, come and shoot the rabbit.
13. alama tu:li:-ni rasi-ni-ni xu:la ra  
 alama tuulii-ni rasi-ni-ni huula ra  
 alama rabbit-GEN skin-ACC-POSS peel come  
*Alama*, come skin the rabbit.
14. alama bopǐ lai alama bopǐ lai  
 alama bōpí lái alama bōpí lái  
 (剥皮來, 剥皮來)  
 alama skin come alama skin come  
*Alama*, come skin (it), *alama*, come skin (it).
15. alama tu:li:-ni maxa-ni-ni aw ɕi ra  
 alama tuulii-ni maha-ni-ni aw xi ra  
 alama rabbit-GEN meat-ACC-POSS take go come  
*Alama*, come fetch the rabbit's meat.

16. Alama na dzou lai alama ri na lai  
 alama ná zháo lái alama ròu ná lái  
 (拿着来, 肉拿来)  
 alama take take come alama meat take come  
*Alama, come take (it), alama, come take the meat.*

17. alama a:go-ŋ-la maxa de-la ra  
 alama aago-ng-la maha de-la ra  
 alama older.brother-PL-INST.COM meat eat-PURP come  
*Alama, come eat the meat with (your) older brothers.*

18. alama t̥ʂi ri sa alama t̥ʂi ri sa  
 alama chī ròu sa alama chī ròu sa  
 (吃肉撒、吃肉撒)  
 alama eat meat EMPH alama eat meat EMPH  
*Alama, come eat meat, alama, come eat meat!*

19. alama maxa-ni aw ç̣i ra  
 alama maxa-ni aw xi ra  
 alama meat-ACC take go come  
*Alama, come fetch the meat.*

20. alama tsi na lai alama tsi na lai  
 alama cù ná lái alama cù ná lái  
 come  
 (醋拿来, 醋拿来)  
 alama vinegar take come alama vinegar take come  
*Alama, come take the vinegar, alama, come take the vinegar.*

Figure 1. Melody of Alama

**Alama**

Line 1  
a-la -ma \_\_\_\_\_ mal -ga-na: \_\_\_\_\_ dzo: -la \_\_\_\_\_ ra,

Line 2  
a-la -ma \_\_\_\_\_ de: \_\_\_\_\_ l-a: \_\_\_\_\_ mi -si -la \_\_\_\_\_ ra,

Line 3  
a-la -ma \_\_\_\_\_ mi la: de: \_\_\_\_\_ l-a \_\_\_\_\_ mi si -la \_\_\_\_\_ ra,

Line 4  
a-la -ma \_\_\_\_\_ pise: \_\_\_\_\_ -na: \_\_\_\_\_ pise: \_\_\_\_\_ la-la \_\_\_\_\_ ra,

Line 5/6  
a-la -ma \_\_\_\_\_ tean -xei -na: \_\_\_\_\_ mi -si -la \_\_\_\_\_ ra,  
tu: -li: -ni \_\_\_\_\_ pu: -da -la \_\_\_\_\_ ra,

Line 7/8  
a-la -ma \_\_\_\_\_ tu: -li: -ni \_\_\_\_\_ ra -st -hr -ni \_\_\_\_\_ xu: -la \_\_\_\_\_ ra,  
tu: -li: -ni \_\_\_\_\_ ma-xa-ni -ni \_\_\_\_\_ aw ei \_\_\_\_\_ ra,

Line 9  
a-la -ma \_\_\_\_\_ a: -goi -la \_\_\_\_\_ ma -xa \_\_\_\_\_ de- la \_\_\_\_\_ ra,

Line 10  
a-la -ma \_\_\_\_\_ ma -xa -ni \_\_\_\_\_ aw ei \_\_\_\_\_ ra,

de: mo: -dzi \_\_\_\_\_                      dei- mo: -dzi \_\_\_\_\_  
 tsuan- i - san \_\_\_\_\_                      tsuan- i - san \_\_\_\_\_  
 tsuan ku -dzi \_\_\_\_\_                      tsuan ku -dzi \_\_\_\_\_  
 lei de: -dzi \_\_\_\_\_                      lei de: -dzi \_\_\_\_\_  
 a-la-ma tsan- -xei- lai \_\_\_\_\_                      a- la-ma tsan- -xei- lai \_\_\_\_\_  
 da - tu - lai \_\_\_\_\_                      da - tu - lai \_\_\_\_\_  
 bo - -pi - lai \_\_\_\_\_                      bo - -pi - lai \_\_\_\_\_  
 na - dzou lai \_\_\_\_\_                      ri - na - lai \_\_\_\_\_  
 tsi - ri - sa \_\_\_\_\_                      tsi - ri - sa \_\_\_\_\_  
 tsi - na - lai \_\_\_\_\_                      tsi - na - lai \_\_\_\_\_

## THE LYRICS

The song instructs a person how to prepare for and go rabbit hunting. In alternating lines of Chinese and Huzhu Mongghul, the steps necessary for rabbit hunting, from getting dressed to actually eating the rabbit, are described. Lines in Huzhu Mongghul and Chinese alternate, with the Huzhu Mongghul line preceding the Chinese line. The Chinese line repeats the meaning of the Huzhu Mongghul line. As much as the two different languages allow, the repetition is word for word, except for lines seventeen vs. eighteen, and lines nineteen vs. twenty, in which the Chinese differs slightly from the Mongghul. In lines seventeen and eighteen, the Huzhu Mongghul text includes the words 'with your older brother', which does not appear in the Chinese line. Lines nineteen and twenty differ in that the Huzhu Mongghul lyrics mention 'meat', while the Chinese lyrics mention 'vinegar'. The two repetitions of the text in the Chinese line are the same in almost all instances except for line sixteen, where the second repetition is slightly different from the first ("*alama*, come take (it)" vs. "*alama*, come take the meat").

The sentence given in the Mongghul line is repeated twice in the Chinese line, making the syllable-count of the two lines about equal. By doubling the sentence in Chinese, the difference in syllable-count between the two lines is between one and three syllables. In most cases the Chinese line is longer, but in two cases (lines thirteen and fifteen) the Mongghul line is one syllable longer. In terms of time, the Mongghul and the Chinese lines are roughly equal, with the Chinese lines sometimes slightly longer.

## THE MELODY

There are ten stanzas in the song. Each stanza has two phrases and the modes differ – one is minor and the other is major. The first phrase may change according to the Mongghul language lyrics. The second phrase is more rigid than the first. The singer switches keys, though it is unclear if this is intentional. For example, the starting key should be c<sup>#</sup> minor, but after the three passing notes the key is unclear and then changes to A<sup>b</sup> major. However, the key is not retained in the second phrase. It changes to F<sup>#</sup> major in the second phrase. Then the above segment is repeated, but not in one key based on a minor and major. Although after the first phrase the key is c<sup>#</sup> minor and then A<sup>b</sup> major, and the key in the second phrase is F<sup>#</sup> major and then G, A<sup>b</sup>, and final A in each stanza. The A key is written as the key of the whole song for ease of reading. Certain single notes such as B and F appear, for example:



appears in the first episode. Based on general Huzhu Mongghul music style we might expect:



Also, the following melody:





would be expected to be:



### COMPARISON WITH ALIMA IN QI (2007)

There are different rhythms in this song as compared to the version described in Qi (2007:66-76). In addition, the melody of the song described by Qi (2007:66-76) resembles the framework of this song. There are also grace notes in this song. For comparison, the following music is from 'Alima' in Qi (2007):

Figure 2. Melody of Alima from Qi (2007).

阿里玛

deel de yii juu la mali ghaa  
 deel de na mu si la  
 a li maa deel de yii pu zaina pu zaila  
 deel de yii mu s la  
 deel de yii hai na mu sila

5

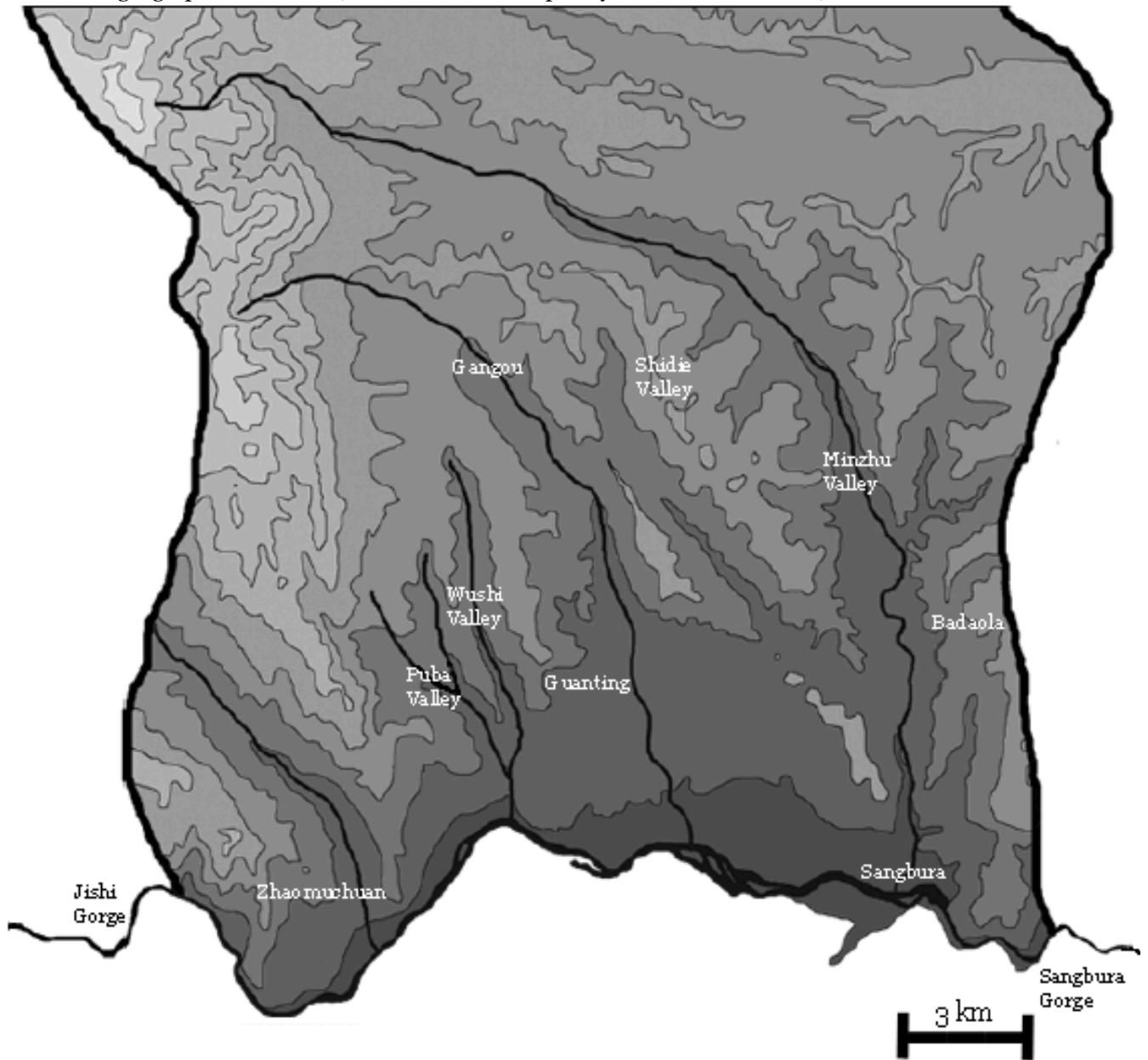
na,	阿	里	玛	戴	帽子	来,	阿	里	玛	戴	帽子	来,
rai,	阿	里	玛	穿	衣裳	来,	阿	里	玛	穿	衣裳	来,
la,	阿	里	玛	勒	带子	来,	阿	里	玛	勒	带子	来,
rai,	阿	里	玛	穿	裤子	来,	阿	里	玛	穿	裤子	来,
rai,	阿	里	玛	穿	袜子	来,	阿	里	玛	穿	袜子	来,

### CONCLUSION

Music and linguistic characteristics interact in this song, which features two different languages and two different melodies. Each language is associated with a different melody.

SANCHUAN  
'THE THREE VALLEYS'

The Sanchuan region, on the Yellow River's northern bank, in southern Minhe County. Altitude ranges from 1,800m (darker) along the Yellow River to 3,600m at the peak of Mount Kangeda on the border with Hualong County in the west. Each shade represents a change of 200m in altitude. Locations named on this map are traditional geographical divisions, rather than contemporary administrative units, which are not shown.



## A FAITHFUL SERVANT, SAMT'ANDJIMBA (1816-1900)

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### ABSTRACT

Samt'andjimba<sup>1</sup> (1816?-1900) was a Mangghuer (Tu). Originally a Tibetan Buddhist monk, he converted to Christianity, and spent much of his life in the company of Christian missionaries. The Lazarists, Gabet and Huc, who traveled across Mongolia, Western China, and Tibet made him famous. This biographical article provides details of Samt'andjimba's life and work.

### KEYWORDS

Christianity in China, Huc and Gabet, Mangghuer, missionaries, Qinghai, Sanchuan, Tu

### ORIGINAL TEXT

Rondelez, Valère. 1953. Un serviteur fidèle, Samt'andjimba (1816-1900) [A Faithful Servant, Samt'andjimba (1816-1900)]. *Neue Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft* [New Journal of Mission Studies] 9:1-20.

### ABBREVIATIONS

- AC, Apostolic Carmel
- ACM, *Annales de la Congr. de la Mission* (*Annals of the Congregation of the Mission*)
- CICM, Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
- CM, Congregation of the Mission (Vincentians or Lazarists)
- MCM, *Mémoires de la Congr. de la Mission* (*Memoirs of the Congregation of the Mission*)
- OC, Order of the Carmelites
- RR.MM, Reverend Missionaries
- RR.PP, Reverendus Pater, Reverend Père, Reverend Father (plural)
- VRP, Very Reverend Father

### NOTES FROM THE TRANSLATOR AND EDITORS

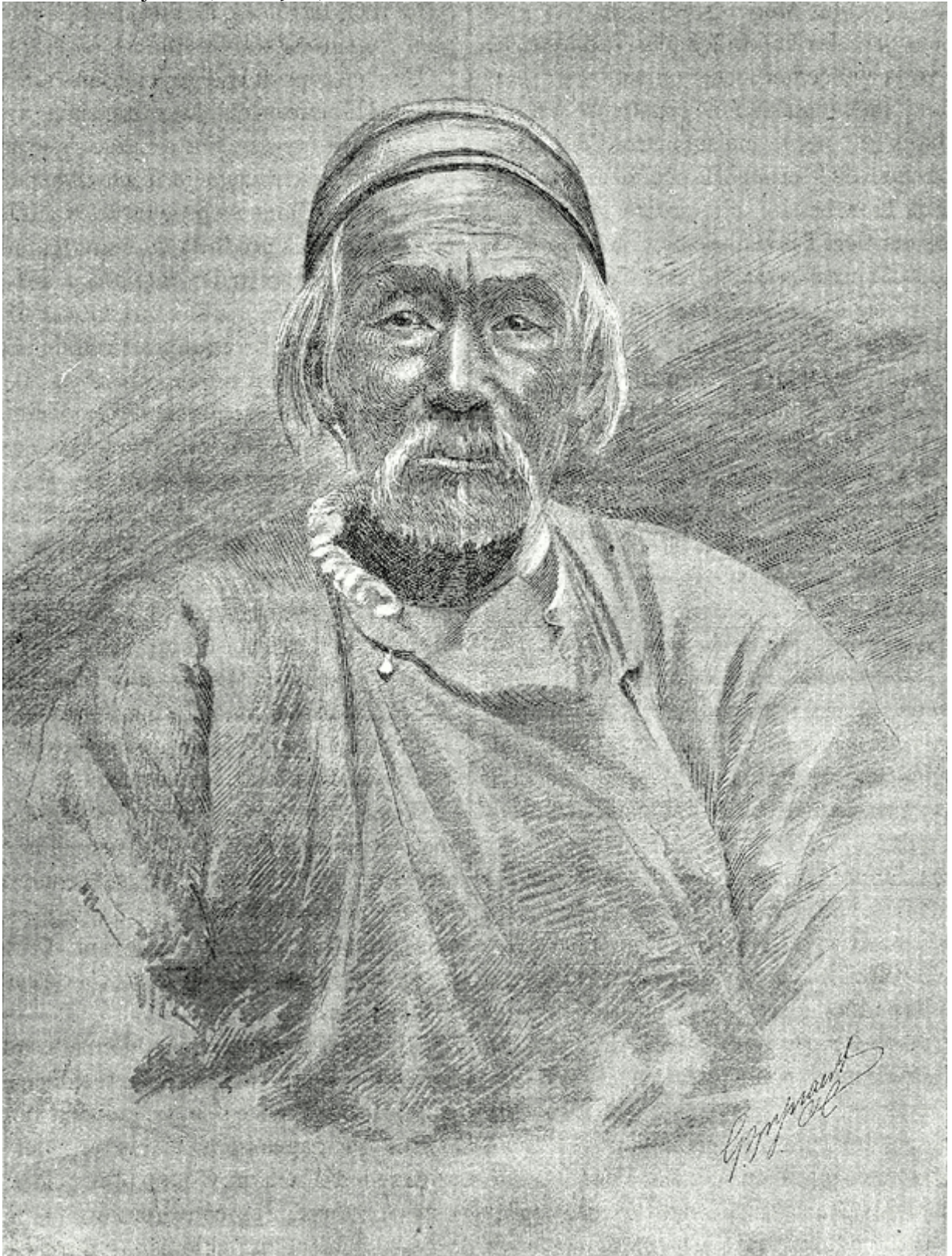
Valère Rondelez was born in Roeselare, Belgium 29 December 1904 and died in Torhout, Belgium 12 August 1983. He studied philosophy (1925-1927) and theology (1927-1930), and was sent to China in 1931. He studied the Chinese language until 1932 and was then sent as a missionary to Xiwanzi,<sup>2</sup> where he stayed until 1943. He interned in Weixian and Beijing between 1943 and 1945. In 1946 he became the director of the CICM China Museum and the archivist of the CICM in Belgium (until 1971). Rondelez's best known work is his early history of the congregation called *Scheut, zo begon het* [*The Scheut Congregation: How it Began*]. His younger brother, Jozef Rondelez, also joined the CICM as a missionary (in 1932) and was later also sent to Xiwanzi.

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<sup>1</sup> [Most likely from the Tibetan, Bsam gtan sbyin pa.]

<sup>2</sup> [Xiwanzi is in Zhangjiakou Municipality, northeast of the region's eponymous city, in Chongli County.]

Figure 1. Samt'andjimba (1816-1900)<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> [We thank KADOC Documentation and Research Center for Religion, Culture, and Society <http://kadoc.kuleuven.be/eng/index.php>, which conserves the archives of the Belgian province of the CICM Missionaries, for providing a copy of this engraving.]

## INTRODUCTION

In the writings of missionaries, one often encounters the name of one or another of their neophytes. One can guess the emotional gratitude that a missionary feels for a precious assistant or an experienced guide, and can imagine he is pleased in perpetuating the memory of a faithful man who, by his persevering courage and tireless dedication, allowed him to penetrate the unknown areas of his vast apostolate or to establish works of use to the Mission.

Samt'andjimba<sup>4</sup> was one such faithful missionary servant. It is mainly the Lazarists, Gabet and Huc, famous travelers across Mongolia, Western China, the Kokonor region,<sup>5</sup> and Tibet, who made him famous.

Being one of the first converts from Lamaism to Catholicism, he was involved in all the major events of the modern apostolate among Mongolians in the nineteenth century. He thrice accompanied missionaries in their perilous expeditions. Moreover, acting as courier of the Mission, camel driver across the desert, and catechist of the first Mongolian Christian communities, he supported priests and preached to Christians until the end of the last [nineteenth] century.

He is well entitled to the gratitude of the Mission. An original fellow, his name deserves to be retained by history. Here is the story of his life, reconstructed using documents that missionaries and explorers have left us.

## NATIVE LAND AND FAMILY

It would prove difficult to produce a civil status certificate or even Samt'andjimba's extract from the Baptism Register. One single document tells us, "Jean-Baptiste Samt'andjimba, 1818-1900," with no other comment.<sup>6</sup>

In the story he gives of his childhood and adolescence, Samt'andjimba somewhere says that at the age of ten he was placed in a lamasery<sup>7</sup> and, referring to his family, adds (in 1844), "I left them eighteen years ago,"<sup>8</sup> which would make 1816 his year of birth. Prjévalski met him while passing through Mongolia in 1871, "He belongs to the Tangut and Mongolian races, and is aged fifty-five"<sup>9</sup> ...

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<sup>4</sup> Authors spell his name inconsistently: we find, in Huc, CM (1925): Samdadchiemba; David, CM (1867): Sambdatchiemba; Bray,\* CM: Samdatchiemba; de Deken (1952), CICM: Samdadchiubo; Bax,\* CICM: Samtatchimba; Clerbaux,\* CICM: Samdantchimba; Steenackers, CICM (1891): Samdantchimba or 'Sam'; Van Heken, CICM (1949): Samtandjimba (p45), Samt'anchimba (p57), Samt'andjimba (p61), and Santanchimba or Santanshimba in a manuscript; [Remi] Verlinden,\* CICM: Sin tin timab; Rockhill 1891: San tan Chemda; de Rochechouart (1878): Shamba-shiemba; Prjevalski (1880) claims his real name to be Sengteng chimba; Braam,\* CICM writes that he was commonly called San-ta. Planchet, CM, in his new edition of Huc's *Souvenirs [Memories]* (Huc I:39):

...Tibetan name of our camel driver. The actual representation of this Mongolian name is, apparently, Samt'anthjimba; Mr. Huc so popularized the name of his companion that I deem I should keep the spelling, albeit mistaken, of this new Friday.

Mostaert (1947), CICM, who, being a missionary in Mongolia, knew Sam's family members very well, writes 'Samt'andjimba'. In this article, except for citations, this last spelling has been adopted.

<sup>5</sup> [Kokonor (Mtsho sgnon po, Qinghai Lake) is in contemporary Qinghai Province. Kokonor is also used to refer, in a vague way, to the region surrounding the lake.]

<sup>6</sup> Van Hecken (1949:34).

<sup>7</sup> Huc (1925:372).

<sup>8</sup> Huc (1925:109).

<sup>9</sup> Prjevalski (1880:80).

thus born in 1816, while Braam, CICM, says he often saw San-ta during the first years of his missionary life (1865-1896) and that he was close to eighty years old.<sup>10</sup>

Samt'andjimba's native land was the region of Sanchuan (Three Valleys),<sup>11</sup> in the province of Gansu,<sup>12</sup> southeast of the city of Nianbo,<sup>13</sup> Xining Prefecture. It belonged to Qi Tusi<sup>14</sup> of the Rgya hor<sup>15</sup> Mongolian tribe. "The Rgya hor," writes Huc:

...speak a specific language, that is a mix of Mongolian, Chinese, and Eastern Tibetan. If we are to believe them, they are of Tartar origin... Although under the jurisdiction of the Emperor of China, they are immediately governed by a kind of hereditary sovereign who belongs to their tribe and bears the title of Tusi.<sup>16</sup> In Gansu and on the borders of Sichuan Province, there exist several tribes that thus govern themselves following special laws. All have the title *tusi*, to which the name of their sovereign chief is added. Samdadchiemba belongs to Qi Tusi, tribe of the Rgya hor.<sup>17</sup>

Samt'andjimba adds himself that:

...in the West, the land of the Three Valleys is very renowned. My fellow countrymen regard life as being of little value. They never walk but armed with a large sabre or a matchlock gun. A man who has not killed anyone does not have the right to walk with his head high. One cannot say of him that he is a brave man.<sup>18</sup>

The missionaries-explorers' camel driver was a Mongolian of Gansu, some of whom descend directly from Genghis Khan;<sup>19</sup> in Chinese, Samt'andjimba's clan is called "Qi"....<sup>20</sup>

His family most probably included his parents and their three sons. Samt'andjimba was the eldest. His mother and his brothers still lived in the Three Valleys region at the time the Lazarist missionaries' caravan passed there (1844). The priests' servant visited his family, whose economic situation seems to have been one of poverty bordering on misery.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Note of November 1950.

<sup>11</sup> [Sanchuan is the location of Samt'andjimba's native Qijia Village, located in the south of contemporary Minhe Hui and Tu Autonomous County, Haidong Municipality, Qinghai Province.]

<sup>12</sup> [Refers, in part, to contemporary Gansu Province. However, during Samt'andjimba's lifetime the province also included significant portions of Qinghai Province, which did not become an independent administrative unit until 1928.]

<sup>13</sup> [Now renamed Ledu, Nianbo is presently a district of Haidong Municipality, Qinghai Province. During Samt'andjimba's lifetime, many communities in Sanchuan were administered by and paid taxes to the central government via Ledu.]

<sup>14</sup> [During Samt'andjimba's lifetime, *tusi* were local, hereditary leaders who administered generally non-Han populations in the frontier regions of the Empire. They were responsible for legal and other administrative duties relating to the population, and also collected taxes, corvée, and conscripts from the population.]

<sup>15</sup> [This term combines the Tibetan terms *rgya* 'Chinese' and *hor* 'Eastern Mongol' and is used by Tibetans in the northeastern Tibetan cultural realm to refer to a number of non-Tibetan, non-Chinese populations.]

<sup>16</sup> Note of Mostaert, CICM: "*Tusi* means: indigenous chief."

<sup>17</sup> Huc (1925:372).

<sup>18</sup> "I have killed no one, and this is, I believe, because I have not stayed long in my land of the Three Valleys" (Huc 1925:107, 109).

<sup>19</sup> According to Mostaert and De Smedt (1933) in Van Hecken (1949:35): 'Rgya hor' means Mongol-farmer and also sinicised Mongol. It is by this sobriquet that the Ordos Mongolians of Boro Balghasun refer to Samt'andjimba's nephew (Boroldoi) and currently still to his great-great-nephew, Rashidjirgai. The word *tumbu* exists in Monguor and means by extension 'the one who heads'. [Ordos is presently a municipality in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region. It lies north of both Shaanxi Province and the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region.]

<sup>20</sup> We find Tschy-lama, K'i-lama, and Ts'y-lama. David (1867:75), "Sambdatchiemba (that the Chinese call Tschy-lama)" in Huc (1925:358).

<sup>21</sup> Huc (1925:44-46, 62-64). Gabet had met a first cousin of Samt'andjimba at Sku 'bum Lamasery who spoke pure Tibetan wonderfully, wrote it with ease and had a great understanding of Buddhist books; moreover he was

Samt'andjimba's youth and adolescence were spent outside his family home, far from his native land. Fortunately, he told his story to Huc and Gabet. This life of adventures eventually brought him towards conversion and Catholicism. Here is his autobiography:

At the age of ten, I was made to enter a great monastery.<sup>22</sup> My master was an elderly, very harsh lama;<sup>23</sup> every day, he hit me with a rod, because I wasn't able to repeat the prayers he taught me. But no matter how much he beat me, it was no use; I never learned anything. Then he stopped forcing me to study, and I became responsible for fetching water and collecting dung. But this did not protect me from beatings. Eventually this life became unbearable, so one day I escaped, and ran in the direction of Tartary.

After walking randomly for a few days without knowing where I was going, I met a great lama who was on his way to Peking. I followed this large caravan and was employed to herd a flock of sheep that served as the troupe's food. There was no room for me in the tents, so I had to sleep out in the open. I fell asleep behind a group of rocks one day and when I woke up very late the next day, I found no one was left at the encampment. The caravan had gone and I was abandoned alone in the desert.

At that time, I was unable to distinguish the four directions. So I had to wander at random for a long time, until I came to a Tartar station. I lived in this way for three years, sometimes here, sometimes there, paying those who offered me hospitality by rendering them some minor services. At last I reached Peking. I immediately presented myself at the great Huangsi<sup>24</sup> Monastery, which is exclusively made up of Rgya hor and Tibetan Lamas. I was easily received there and, after my fellow countrymen joined forces to buy me a red scarf and a large hat, I was able to attend the recitation of prayers with the choir, and thus have my share of the alms distribution.<sup>25</sup>

Our young lama was to stay there several years.

## HIS CONVERSION

In the meantime, the Mongolia missionaries very much hoped to start the apostolate among Mongol tribes. Inspired by the encouragements of his Superior, Mouly,<sup>26</sup> and under his guidance, Gabet CM<sup>27</sup>

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familiar with several other idioms, such as Mongol, Xifan, Chinese, and Rgya hor; he stayed some time with the missionaries as language instructor. [Sku 'bum/ Ta'er si is located in present day Huangzhong County, Xining Municipality, Qinghai Province. Xifan may be used to refer to numerous peoples of the Sino-Tibetan border region and their languages.]

<sup>22</sup> He does not give the name of the lamasery.

<sup>23</sup> Huc (1925:30), "Lama, in Tibetan, literally means doctor; the word is a synonym for Buddhist religious [figures]." He also (1925:296) notes:

The *shabi* or disciple-lama studies his prayer book whenever he likes... When comes the time of going to bed, he must go recite, in an imperturbable manner, the lesson that was assigned to him in the morning... If he fails to render an adequate account of the lesson, the most severe punishments make him feel his fault. ...The disciples that find themselves too mistreated sometimes take flight, going to seek adventures far from their lamasery...

<sup>24</sup> Huangsi, the Yellow Monastery, is twenty-five minutes north of Peking. It was erected on the grounds of an ancient temple of the Qing Dynasty, from 1631 to 1694. The Mongol princes and the Dalai Lama resided here when invited to visit the Emperor (Huc 1925:110).

<sup>25</sup> Huc (1925:110-111).

<sup>26</sup> [Joseph Martial Mouly (1807-1863).]

<sup>27</sup> Joseph Gabet (1808-1853) reached Mongolia on 6 March 1837.



set about discovering young Mongolians "that would be employed, after their conversion, to introduce the Faith in their country, where it does not yet count a single neophyte,"<sup>28</sup> or searching for a location to settle down, if possible, among the Mongol tribes. Already in 1837, he had met a young lama who had become catechumen, and was baptized in July 1838. Paul became the companion of the young Lazarist, and they managed to convert a second lama, who was baptized by the name of Pierre, probably at the beginning of the year 1840, and who, in 1854, was to become the first Mongol priest.<sup>29</sup>

These two converts, full of zeal for the conversion of their fellow countrymen, accompanied their father in Faith in his numerous journeys across the steppe. Gabet conducted apostolic expeditions in Outer Mongolia (1838), Eastern Mongolia (1838, 1839, 1843, 1844), and in the area of the Blue City (Guisui-Suiyuan in 1842). Once the two lamas had been sufficiently instructed and the necessary doctrinal material had been composed in Mongolian, Gabet strongly wished to be accompanied by his converts and penetrate "into their [far-off] lands, and to form there a nucleus of entirely Mongolian Christianity."<sup>30</sup> Together, they took up studying the language and the doctrine. Mainly with Paul's help, Gabet – and later Huc<sup>31</sup> – made great progress. Paul translated prayers and the Catechism of Trent [*Catechismus ex decreto Concilii Tridentini ad parochos Pii V jussu editus, Romae, 1566* (in-folio)], and:

...the better he came to know the Gospel, the more he congratulated himself with having embraced it and became impatient to communicate his happiness to others. Sometimes he eagerly informed himself whether there was not some famous lamasery on our way, to go disabuse his brothers and attack the demon on his throne; sometimes he would stop some lama traveler on the way to tell him about Jesus the Savior.<sup>32</sup>

During his apostolic works, Paul, the ex-lama, went to Peking, probably for the needs of the Mission. It was in the autumn of 1842:

One day when Samt'andjimba (lama of the Hoang-Sse lamasery) was strolling in the streets of Peking, he met a few Christians who told him about their religion.

Paul came to know of this fortunate encounter, and by his neophyte zeal he managed to convince the young Samt'andjimba. The latter was touched by grace, became catechumen, and accompanied Paul to Xiwanzi, where his master, Gabet, was.<sup>33</sup> He thus became the third lama Gabet speaks of in his report to the Holy Father.<sup>34</sup>

Jean-Baptiste – such was his Christian name – was good-natured and full of frankness and dedication.<sup>35</sup> After having been instructed and baptized<sup>36</sup> by Gabet, he decided to devote himself to the

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<sup>28</sup> ACM, XIII:114-116.

<sup>29</sup> Pierre Feng in Chinese. His lama name was Gardi and his Mongol name is Tschinggeldjab. He entered the Macao seminary in 1840, and returned to Mongolia to receive his sacerdotal ordination (25 December 1854). He left Mongolia in 1866, and exercised his apostolate in the vicinity of Tianjin. He died in K'ingyunghsien on 11 July 1893.

<sup>30</sup> Report of Gabet, ACM. XIII:121, cited by Van Hecken, OC (1949:30).

<sup>31</sup> Huc (1813-1860) arrived in Mongolia on 17 June 1841.

<sup>32</sup> Letter of Gabet, 15 August 1838.

<sup>33</sup> Huc (1925:30).

<sup>34</sup> Huc (1925:30).

<sup>35</sup> Huc (1925:30).

<sup>36</sup> The exact date of his baptism is unknown. We do know that the missionaries made Paul do a catechumenate of close to one year (catechumen in July 1837, baptized on 19 July 1838); we can suppose that they did the same for Samt'andjimba; having become catechumen in the autumn 1842, he would have been baptized towards the end of

service of the missionaries.<sup>37</sup> It is during his apostolic journeys that Gabet continued to instruct his neophyte. Later, the latter would have the occasion to confess his faith in front of the Lhasa Resident, declaring with dignity:

...that he entered the religion of the Lord of Heaven because it is the only true one... How could I have thought that the great emperor banned a religion that orders to do good and avoid evil?... If I accompany them (the missionaries), it is to save my soul and not to earn money. My masters never let me lack rice or clothing; this is enough for me.<sup>38</sup>

## SERVING THE PRIESTS

At the beginning of 1843, Gabet received from Mouly – vicar apostolic and recently consecrated bishop on 25 July 1842 – the order to examine the limits of the new curacy of Mongolia. Jean-Baptiste and Paul were to accompany him to Eastern Mongolia. We find them again on 1 March 1843, right next to Sungchoutsoeitze. They continued their journeys and, in late 1843, went to Heishui (Black Waters), where Huc had been living since August 1843. Gabet writes, "I then asked Monseigneur for permission to go, at last, among the nomads and devote myself exclusively to preaching to the pagans."<sup>39</sup> His desires met the aspirations of Huc, who also wanted to work towards the ruin of Mongolian superstitions. In Heishui, he was already studying Tibetan and Mongolian and was living with the family of a rich Mongolian. They thus worked together on the composition of prayer and doctrinal books that had to be completed before they started the great apostolic enterprise among the Mongols.<sup>40</sup>

Meanwhile, the letter from Mouly arrived, appointing Gabet head of the future mission and Huc procurator.<sup>41</sup> The vicar apostolic further drew them a line of conduct that left them great freedom of movement:

You will go from tent to tent, from tribe to tribe, from monastery to monastery, until Providence makes you discover the place where it wants you to stop in order to begin.<sup>42</sup>

Choices were limited for the missionaries who needed a guide for their journey. Pierre was busy with his studies at the seminary, Paul was held up in Xiwanzi by the Vicar Apostolic, as Mouly wanted to set up a school there for the Mongols and, before starting this noble work, Paul was keeping himself busy with the translation of the Gospels of Sundays and liturgical feasts.<sup>43</sup> Mouly insisted on obtaining the return of Pierre Feng so that he would accompany Gabet and Huc. He expressed his wish thrice in his letters to the director of the seminary because, he said, "In this time we do not so much need a priest to hear our confessions and administer the sacraments, as a good and zealous Christian, full of fervor for preaching, who will manage to open a door for the Gospel somewhere."<sup>44</sup> The prayers of the Vicar Apostolic were unfulfilled.

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1843. This confirms what Huc (1925:30) writes about the preparations of their great expedition (August 1844): "a young lama, recently converted."

<sup>37</sup> Huc (1925:30).

<sup>38</sup> Huc (1925:282).

<sup>39</sup> ACM, XIII:160 in Van Hecken (1949:37).

<sup>40</sup> Van Hecken (1949:38).

<sup>41</sup> Letter of Mouly, in Gabet's report; ACM XIII:165.

<sup>42</sup> ACM, XIII:166.

<sup>43</sup> Van Oss (1947:65).

<sup>44</sup> Van Oss (1947:74).

The traveler missionaries did not want a Chinese guide or camel driver, and they were left with only one Mongol Christian. Hence Samt'andjimba was to become the two priests' only companion.

Given the antecedents of his youth and adolescence, such a journey towards his native land must have appealed to him. "The journey we had just accomplished was in complete harmony with his adventurous and wandering mood" ...and Huc adds that:

...it is easily understandable that this life of independence he led in the past had little polished the natural harshness of his character; his intelligence was entirely uncultivated, but in return, his muscular strength was inordinate, and he was not just a little proud of this quality, which he enjoyed parading.<sup>45</sup>

Taste for adventures and familiarity with the customs of the steppe could be of some use during the expedition; moreover, they were going towards the Mongolians and would have to deal with lamas – types of men and tribes well-known to the camel driver.

On the other hand, Jean-Baptiste was illiterate and this young man "did not feel any kind of calling for intellectual things."<sup>46</sup> Unable to read or write, he would be of no help for the study of Buddhist books. He was, however, the man to have, as:

...at the first glance, it was easy to distinguish in him the features of what is commonly called the Mongolic race. A broad and insolently snubbed nose, a wide mouth split in a straight line, thick and prominent lips, a strongly tanned complexion... When his little eyes came out from under his long eyelids completely devoid of lashes, and that he looked at you knitting his brows, he inspired all at once feelings of both trust and fear.<sup>47</sup>

Here he is as for his physical appearance.

And his character? Because it would be necessary to get on with him during this great hike across the steppe. "To tell the truth," writes Huc, "Samdadchiemba was not a pleasant young man. His rough, wild, at times insolent character, made him quite a bad travel companion."<sup>48</sup> The author of the *Memories*, however, adds that there was in him, "a core of honesty and dedication, which could well compensate, in our view, for the quirks of his nature."<sup>49</sup>

The Qi lama was certainly not a man capable of appreciating the value of a scientific expedition, but as a neophyte, entirely devoted to the apostolate, he was in a position to contribute to the success of the enterprise. No family ties held him back and, as a single man, he had to worry neither about his house nor about his temporal affairs.<sup>50</sup>

After these considerations, and especially after reading *Memories*, one would like to think that Huc is exaggerating when he writes that, "this young man was of no help to lead us across the deserts of Tartary; he knew this land no better than we did ourselves."<sup>51</sup> During the great journey, the direction in which to go was not the only problem. There were also the thousand and one incidents or the numerous adventures in which one easily notes the genuine qualities of this rustic man.

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<sup>45</sup> Huc (1925:44-45).

<sup>46</sup> Huc (1925:64).

<sup>47</sup> Huc (1925:45).

<sup>48</sup> Huc (1925:346).

<sup>49</sup> Huc (1925:346).

<sup>50</sup> Huc (1925:282).

<sup>51</sup> Huc (1925:46).

## THE DESERT CAMEL DRIVER

Here they are, ready to go. Jean-Baptiste received the razor from the missionaries and:

...an instant was enough to cut off the long braid that we had been growing since we left France. We arrayed ourselves in long yellow robes that were fastened at the right side by five golden buttons, and were bound at the waist by long red sashes. Over this robe, we put on red vests whose upper parts were lined with little purple collars. Yellow hats topped with red pompoms completed our new costumes.<sup>52</sup>

The dress of the Tibetan lamas had been preferred over any other, "because it was in accordance with the clothes worn by the young neophyte, Samdadchiemba."<sup>53</sup>

They left the Christian community of Majiazi on 10 September 1844:

Samdadchiemba, gravely placed on top of a black mule of stunted dimensions, opened the march, dragging behind him two camels loaded with our luggage. The two missionaries came following, Gabet and Huc, the first mounted on a large she-camel, the other riding a white horse. We left determined to abdicate our old wonts and to make Tartars of ourselves.<sup>54</sup>

The journey of the three brave men would last over eighteen months, from September 1844 to March 1846, when they parted in the city of Lhasa.

It is not the journey, the purpose, or the result of the expedition that we are concerned with here,<sup>55</sup> but mainly with the camel driver Samt'andjimba. In his *Memories*, Huc often tells us about him and retained this or that detail, highlighting some of Jean-Baptiste's character traits. The study of a few scenes of their journey will allow us to discover in him the man of burden, full of frankness, the man of the righteous heart, devoted to serving the priests, and trembling with joy at the thought of the opportunity to see his native home and family again. With the help of Huc's notes, let us recall some episodes of this long expedition.

From the outset, Samt'andjimba appears as the man to handle board and lodging issues with the Chinese innkeepers. He never allows the missionaries to be cheated, or the price of food they are served to be exaggerated. Full of care for the camels and horses, he also takes to heart to provide the travelers with anything they could need during their stay in the steppe. At dangerous river crossings, he becomes even more devoted than usual. Huc even notes, after crossing the Bagha Ghol:

Our hearts were filled with emotion at the sight of the dedication of this young neophyte, whom for the sake of our interests, had readily plunged into the water, in a season when the cold was already quite harsh.<sup>56</sup>

We know already that he likes parading his physical strength. He is even ready to fight. One day, they thought they might be under the threat of robbers! Samt'andjimba, frowning, asked, "What shall we do? Will we have to fight them? May we kill them? Does the Holy Church allow that?"

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<sup>52</sup> Huc (1925:43-44).

<sup>53</sup> Huc (1925:43). Huc (1925 I:30) says that Pierre Feng "recently converted to the Faith, and presently student of our seminary in Macao, gave me his long robe..."

<sup>54</sup> Huc (1925:39).

<sup>55</sup> Huc's *Souvenirs [Memories]* have known several editions and have been translated into different languages. The controversies about the expedition as well as the account of the latter are related in the Forward of Huc (1925). A rich documentation of the trip is Van Oss (1947).

<sup>56</sup> Huc (1925:273).

After the priests were reassured, they went to find the camel driver. "We found him busily sharpening, on the top of his leather boots, the Russian cutlass that he had bought in Dolonor."<sup>57</sup> The missionaries teased him by saying, "So you're acting brave, now that you know there are no thieves?"

He replied:

O my spiritual fathers, it is not so, one must always speak words of honesty. I do not deny that I have a very bad memory and have never been able to learn many prayers, but as for courage, I can proudly say I have just as much as another.<sup>58</sup>

The uprightness of his character caused him to give an admirable profession of faith in front of the Chinese Regent of Lhasa. Before the interrogation, the missionaries exhort him, "Martyrdom will be a beautiful crowning achievement to our fatigues. After eighteen months of walking, to arrive in Heaven, what do you think of that, Samdadchiemba?"

"I have never been scared of death; if they ask me whether I am Christian, you will see if I tremble."

In fact, Huc notes that their neophyte spoke, "With dignity but most of all with a caution that we were little expecting."<sup>59</sup>

He was the man of burden during the entire expedition. He told the Regent of Lhasa:

On my knees, standing or sitting, these positions are all more or less the same to me; a man of burden and fatigue such as me is not accustomed to comforts.<sup>60</sup>

Jean-Baptiste may be somewhat exaggerating in his declaration made in front of this improvised tribunal. The missionaries describe him as a man who, in his leisure time, did not think much about looking for work. They would have liked him to have been a little more hardworking, especially when they had to stay in the same place for a relatively long time. At that time, while the priests were fully absorbed by their study, the camel driver spent his time wandering in the streets and drinking tea.<sup>61</sup> Before the trip across Tibet, the combing of the camels served to procure an immense quantity of hair, and following the advice of a lama, they were making a good quantity of ropes they would be needing during their journey. However, Jean-Baptiste:

...contented himself with watching us work, and smiling from time to time. Half out of laziness, half out of vanity, he refrained from putting his shoulder to the wheel... and he did not understand how such cultivated people could lower themselves to the task of making ropes... The camel driver received a good reprimand and was cited the example of Saint Paul, who had not believed he was demeaning his dignity by working with his hands. No sooner had Samdadchiemba learnt that the apostle had been at the same time tanner and apostle, he abdicated his laziness and his pride... when we saw him at work, we were truly astonished. This fellow was a very distinguished trimming expert, and he had never told us... He took the general lead in rope-making.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> [Now in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.]

<sup>58</sup> Huc (1925:106). Later, he expressed regret at not having studied while he was in the lamasery (Huc 1925:371).

<sup>59</sup> Huc (1925:277-278).

<sup>60</sup> Huc (1925:281).

<sup>61</sup> Huc (1925:64). The missionaries were seeking to withdraw their guide from lamentable idleness by sending him to herd the camels in a valley of Kokonor. This measure had the double advantage of "giving Samdadchiemba an occupation corresponding to his tastes, providing the camels with better and less expensive feeding."

<sup>62</sup> Huc (1925:157).

When passing through Gansu Province, the missionaries witnessed another of their camel driver's character traits. As soon as he learned that the caravan was to pass less than two days away from the Three Valleys and from his home, he cried out:

I shall go see what is happening there... I shall go see whether my elderly mother is still there. If she is not dead, I will make her enter the Holy Church. As for my two brothers, I cannot answer for them.<sup>63</sup>

Remember he had left his family close to eighteen years ago. In spite of this, he did not stop talking about the Three Valleys. Huc writes, "Although his character is hardly sentimental, he strongly longed to go see his native land again." The missionaries gave him eight days off, a large tip, and, for his appearance at home to be triumphant, he was allowed to take a camel. As had been agreed, on the eighth day, Samt'andjimba reappeared, accompanied by his younger brother. Right away, they offered gifts from the family to the missionaries. The latter immediately cut into the good bread, "and we had a delicious meal, as we had never savored such a tasty bread since our departure from France."<sup>64</sup>

Jean-Baptiste told them about his family. His father had passed away long ago; his mother was blind and had not had the joy of seeing him. The young man that accompanied him, the second son, was the only support of the family and spent all his time cultivating a small field and keeping other people's cattle.

Samt'andjimba's costume – the missionaries noticed this at once – had been reduced to its simplest expression. He had given everything to his poor mother, even including his travel cloak. However, he did not want to stay in his home, as, "They hardly survive – where would they find food for me?"<sup>65</sup> The young brother left with considerable alms for the poor mother.

Before parting in Lhasa, the missionaries took advantage of his worthy sentiments of filial piety to advise Jean-Baptiste to go to the side of his mother to accomplish his duties of eldest son, to "instruct her of the mysteries of faith and to make her enjoy at her last hour the benefit of baptismal regeneration."<sup>66</sup> The Chinese Regent of Lhasa was full of kindness towards the camel driver and gave him quite a great sum for his journey. The missionaries added their contribution and he was thus able to decently go back to his paternal home.

At the time of parting, Huc felt the need to express his feelings of gratitude towards his companion:

As we parted from him, we experienced a profound grief that we felt all the more vividly that we would have never suspected having in the depth of our hearts such a profound attachment for this young man. But we had accomplished such a long and exhausting trip, we had endured together so many deprivations and suffered so many woes, that imperceptibly, as unbeknown to us, our existence had, so to say, become bound to his. The law of affinity, which unites men to one another, acts in the midst of sufferings, much more strongly than it does in a state of prosperity.<sup>67</sup>

Samt'andjimba was not to forget his spiritual fathers either. Long after that, when questioned by missionaries or explorers about this great journey, "with the intention to wring contradictions out of him," never did anyone succeed in making him deny anything that Huc had written or said about what

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<sup>63</sup> Huc (1925:372).

<sup>64</sup> Huc (1925:44-45).

<sup>65</sup> Huc (1925:47).

<sup>66</sup> Huc (1925:345-346).

<sup>67</sup> Huc (1925:346).

he had seen in Lhasa or on the way. "No one doubts that the Mongol speaks the truth. What interest would he have to defend the dead Huc, he whom lives with us, missionary."<sup>68</sup>

The travelers had to part in Lhasa. The missionaries would return to Europe by the China road, while the camel driver would head north, to take once again, alone or in company of this or that Tibetan caravan, the perilous desert road. During his return to the Three Valleys, he would have the time to think over the recommendation of his spiritual fathers, "once you have closed your old mother's eyes, go back to live among the Christians."<sup>69</sup> He was to be faithful to it, and it can be said one of the results of this long voyage will have been to form for the Missionaries of Mongolia a faithful and devoted servant.

Jean-Baptiste was thirty years old when he crossed Tibet again to regain his native land. Did he see his mother again? Did he stay at her side for long? For what reason did he not stay in Gansu, where there were also Catholic priests? These questions all remain unanswered.

In the 1924 edition of Huc's *Memories*<sup>70</sup> we find the following note:

We have recently received news of Samdadchiemba. After staying in his homeland for over a year, he has returned to our missions of Mongolian Tartary, and is currently in the village of Xiwanzi, outside the Great Wall (1852).

From Xiwanzi, center of the missionary activity of the Lazarists, Huc could have received this news from his colleagues, with whom he was in correspondence.<sup>71</sup>

## IN XIWANZI

The remainder of Samt'andjimba's life was to be spent in Mongolia, in different Christian communities where he was attached to the service of priests.

In Xiwanzi, the center of Mongolia's immense curacy,<sup>72</sup> the priests of the Congregation of the Mission were to exercise their apostolate for a few more years. Their number was too limited to envisage new attempts among the Mongols. The great promoter of the Mongolian Missions, Mouly, had been transferred to Peking, and the missionaries were complaining of the small number of new colleagues that were arriving.<sup>73</sup> Mouly's successor, Daguin, would yet attempt to convert the family

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<sup>68</sup> Huc (1925:8-9). Letter of de Deken, CICM, who met Jean-Baptiste in Santaohé, in the land of Ordos. De Deken was the travel companion of the Prince of Orléans and of Bonvalot (1889-1890). His journey is described in de Deken (1952).

<sup>69</sup> Huc (1925:346).

<sup>70</sup> Huc (1925:346). Huc stayed in the south after reaching Macao. After a short stay in the north, he returned to the south, where he embarked for France on 1 January 1852. Van Oss (1947:76).

<sup>71</sup> Already before their arrival to Macao, the Holy See had entrusted the territories of Tibet to the Paris Society of Foreign Missions (*Société des Missions Étrangères de Paris*). There has been a sustained correspondence between the travelers and the ecclesiastic Superiors. After composing their reports, they were not granted permission to return to Tibet. Huc and Gabet went to Europe. Gabet died in Brazil on 3 March 1853, while Huc died in Paris on 25 March 1860.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. our opusculé "La chrétienté de Siwantze" [The Christian Community of Xiwanzi], Tianjin, 1939, 144 p.

<sup>73</sup> Combelles,\* CM writes in 1850:

The reason why we are not initiating the evangelization of nomads is that we are just enough to take care of the servants of the faith and to run the seminary; all our wishes are now directed towards the arrival of new colleagues.

members of Pierre Feng. Before the ordination of the ex-lama (1854), he was to spend quite a long period of time in the native land of the great seminarian. Did Samt'andjimba accompany the vicar apostolic to this region of Eastern Mongolia? This, we do not know. Except for the note of Huc, dated 1852, we only have a passage of Bray, who says:

We also have in Xiwanzi the famous Samdatchiemba, so well-known in Mr. Huc's writing. He is far from being a Cresus, and if one of those in Europe who laugh at him were to send him a few hundred strings of cash, he would happily give them in exchange for the ironical name Mr. Huc has made him.<sup>74</sup>

This period of Jean-Baptiste's life, from his arrival to Xiwanzi before 1850, is quite obscure. An important event yet occurred in the ex-lama's life. Indeed, in Xiwanzi he married a local Christian.<sup>75</sup> The name of the young woman remains unknown, but the story, which says close to nothing about the remainder of the wife's life, reveals that Samt'andjimba did not have any children.<sup>76</sup> Subsequent events show, however, that this union did not in the least alter his taste for adventures and travels. Child of the steppe he would remain until the end of his life. This accounts for the facility with which he would always move along with the missionaries, to whom he remained very attached.

The missionaries from Scheut, to whom the curacy of Mongolia had been entrusted by the 1 September 1864 decree, reached Xiwanzi on 6 December 1865.<sup>77</sup> Samt'andjimba would have been among the crowd of Christians that greeted the new missionaries to the sound of Chinese music. "Upon our arrival," notes Vranckx, "we found him in Xiwanzi, and we attached him to the Mission in quality of courier" (David 1867 I:148). This may have been for a relatively short time, or perhaps he suspended his function already in 1866. Indeed, we find him in the company of Armand David, CM [1826-1900], French naturalist of renown, during an exploratory journey to Western Mongolia.<sup>78</sup> Samt'andjimba joined this missionary in Ershisanhao, central quarter of Xikouwei, occupied by the Lazarists until the autumn of 1866, when they withdrew entirely from Mongol territory. David had four companions:

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ACM, XV:512-513 and ACM XVI (1851:51-52). Bray writes along the same lines on 28 March 1859. Dauguin, in a letter dated 4 October 1854, writes that their plans to initiate a mission among the Mongolians are failing one after the other (MCM, III:479).

<sup>74</sup> ACM., XXVIII:488, cited by Huc (1925:358).

<sup>75</sup> Van Hecken (1949:57).

<sup>76</sup> Note communicated by Mostaert, CICM, in Peking in August 1945. When Samt'andjimba left Xiwanzi to go help Verlinden in Sikouewai (1870) – see below – he left his wife in Xiwanzi. On 2 January 1872, he set out to bring her to Ershisanhao [literally, Number 23; most likely a relay station on a road]. Verlinden\* writes about this:

Sin tin timba, in accordance with his dear better half's desires, sets out to go get her in Xiwanzi. ...He wishes to sell you his rooms and asks me to urge you to purchase them... I beg you to entrust an honest man to help Sin tin timba in the sale of his movable and immovable properties, otherwise he will once again be fooled, and, as you know, this man is under the Mission's responsibility.

<sup>77</sup> The departure of the first caravan of Scheut missionaries to Mongolia had to be delayed until August 1865 due to passport issues, as these documents were deemed necessary for foreign missionaries in China.

<sup>78</sup> Armand David,\* CM (1826-1900), brought to China by Mouly in 1862:

...did his first excursion by foot, followed by the famous Samdatchiemba... This journey, completed between 13 March and 26 October 1866, in parts of Western Mongolia called Tumet, Oirat, Ordos, and Muuminggan, was used to study both the fauna and the flora, as well as the geology of these highlands.

Thomas OC, (1925) II:497. Van Hecken (1949) gives 1867 (57) and 1866 (44).



My fourth traveling companion arrived yesterday evening (i.e., 7 April). It is Sambdatchiamba, who is to guide me across Mongolia; he is now some thirty years older<sup>79</sup> than at the time of the famous journey, but he is still full of vigor and would only be too pleased to experience new adventures. His nature is carefree, but frank and righteous, just as sincere as he is stubborn. He has nothing of the Chinese save the clothes, having left those of lama to make himself a Christian and live with his new coreligionists in Xiwanzi.<sup>80</sup>

After this journey, which lasted several months (March-October 1866) and led the caravan to the regions of Western Mongolia, Jean-Baptiste returns to his home in Xiwanzi, where he probably resumed his duties as the Mission's courier.<sup>81</sup> But his sojourn there would not be long. Indeed, the Scheut missionaries manifested, right from the start, extraordinary zeal and enthusiasm for the conversion of nomads.

The letters of [Theophiel ] Verbist, founder of the Scheut Congregation who led the first caravan to Mongolia, describe the fervor with which they aspired to start the apostolate among the Mongolians.<sup>82</sup> The Founder's apostolic life was to prove too short to accomplish this firmly established will.<sup>83</sup> One of his successors, Bax,<sup>84</sup> pro-vicar and first vicar apostolic from Scheut in Mongolia, assisted by a group of pioneers, would work for the accomplishment of one of the Founder's most fervent wishes. The Scheutists were constantly to seek Samt'andjimba's good offices.

#### IN XIKOUWAI

With the exception of Samt'andjimba, the few thousand Christians in Mongolia were all Chinese.<sup>85</sup> They lived in the three districts of Eastern Mongolia, in the central district of Xiwanzi and in Xikouwai (in the western part) and until the outskirts of the city of Guisui-Suiyuan.<sup>86</sup> Scattered over a territory of 300 leagues, the missionaries would very soon be obliged to part and, upon the departure of the Lazarists, they would moreover need to take care of the Xikouwai (1866) region situated west of the city of Kalgan,<sup>87</sup> very near the border of the current provinces Chahar-Suiyuan.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> To be precise, one should read "some twenty years."

<sup>80</sup> David (1867:75).

<sup>81</sup> Huc (1925:358), writes, "It seems that upon returning from his trip with David, he has settled definitively among the Mongols, in Ershisanhao." This appears to be inexact, as Verlinden had Samt'andjimba come to Ershisanhao to help him with the Mongolian apostolate.

<sup>82</sup> In his letter dated 14 January 1866, among others, Verbist manifests his desire to preach to "actual Mongols," as soon as some missionaries come to assist him.

<sup>83</sup> Theophile Verbist (1823-1868) reached Mongolia on 6 December 1865. He died in Chengde on 23 February 1868. [Chengde/ Jehol is presently a municipality in Hebei Province, to the northeast of Kalgan/ Zhangjiakou and bordering Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region in the north.]

<sup>84</sup> [Jacques Bax (1825-1895).]

<sup>85</sup> Van Hecken (1949) gives the figure 6,282. Dieu (1931:17-18) gives the following figures: "for the district of Xiwanzi, about 2,700 Christians. For the western part, 1,300. And for the eastern part, 3,286." Pierre Feng left Mongolia with the Congregation of the Mission, to which he belonged. After the departure of Gabet and Huc, except for a few rare texts by Mouly, before 1846, we learn nothing more of the ex-lama Paul. Cf. Van Oss (1947:77).

<sup>86</sup> [Guisui-Suiyuan is presently known as Hohhot/ Huhehaote, the capital of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.]

<sup>87</sup> [Kalgan is presently called Zhangjiakou, which is a municipality in northwestern Hebei Province, bordering Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.]

<sup>88</sup> [Chahar Province, part of present-day Inner Mongolia, existed from 1912-1936. Suiyuan was also a former province located in the contemporary Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, centered in Hohhot (Huhehaote).]

The new director of the Xikouwai was [Remi] Verlinden (1830-1892).<sup>89</sup> Before coming to Mongolia, he had wanted to be a missionary in the Americas. From the outset, in Mongolia, he felt a strong sympathy for Mongols. He took into his service an old Chinese man who knew the Mongolian language very well. The conversions came quickly. Two women in Xiyingsi<sup>90</sup> had become catechumens and were baptized in 1868. Verlinden also baptized a Mongol family from Daihai<sup>91</sup> on Easter 1869. One of the sons of this family was to enter the Xiwanzi seminary after July 1869. Verlinden writes:

If by any chance he was to have the joy of receiving the ordination, he would be of invaluable help to us for the conversion of his unfortunate fellow countrymen.<sup>92</sup>

The future was very promising in Xikouwai. In 1869, there were already three Chinese priests and three Scheutists. They were serving four centers surrounded by many villages where Christians lived. Rutjes (1844-1896) writes, "Behind my house start the Mongolian prairies, where they (the Mongolians) set up their tents." The three Europeans took up the study of Mongolian language and were especially careful to maintain good relations with lamas in the area. They started building a big church in Xiyingsi, a small village situated on the great caravan road usually frequented by the nomads. In short, the pioneers were quickly overwhelmed with work and needed an assistant. To this end, Verlinden had Samt'andjimba come to Ershisanhao to assist him with the Mongolian apostolate.

It is during these years in particular that the Mongolian camel driver revealed himself to be a fervent catechist, an exemplary missionary-assistant – in a nutshell, a member of Catholic Action, as we conceive of them nowadays.

In fact, one of the means of apostolate used by Verlinden much resembles the Catholic Action of our times. I am referring to the Saint-François-Xavier Association, founded in Belgium by Van Caloen, whose center was Ste. Anne's Church, parish of Sts. Michel and Gudule in Brussels. Before leaving for Mongolia, Verlinden had been the director of this work in the parish of Molenbeek. He knew that the number of members in Belgium reached 50,000 and he had the opportunity to judge the results of the association's activity during his apostolate in the archdiocese of Malines. As early as the end of 1869, he told his neophytes about the association, and requested its canonical erection for all the men and women in the Mongolia curacy, "The main objective of the Congregation in China will be to work towards the conversion of pagans and to provide the holy baptism to their dying children."<sup>93</sup> On 20 March 1869, the fervent missionary wrote to Van Caloen:

The Chinese Christians, pusillanimous by nature, had until now shied away from speaking of religion in the presence of pagans, which is quite forgivable, as a matter of fact, to these unfortunate people, who have been moaning for centuries under the iron birch of the persecutors. Since they enrolled under the banner of the great apostle of the Orient, the zeal of souls has suddenly seized their hearts. Far from hiding, they campaign even in public squares, and the benediction of God obviously favors their efforts.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> After very hard years in the Missions of Ordos, he left Mongolia in January 1879.

<sup>90</sup> Xiyingsi, not far from the Christian community of Nanhaochan. In Mongolian, Khadan Khanchuu [Rock Sleeve (*xadan* 'rock' + *xancuu* 'sleeve')].

<sup>91</sup> [Daihai is located in the contemporary Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.]

<sup>92</sup> David (1867 I:135).

<sup>93</sup> David (1867 I:125). About this Association, see also the same book, 124-126, 126-129, 133-137, 183... The decree of consecration of the Saint-François-Xavier Association is kept in the Xiwanzi archives, dated from Rome, "sub annullo Piscatoris die XXVII Martii MDCCCXXIV."

<sup>94</sup> David 1867 I:126.

And he cites, to bolster his argument, a few beautiful examples of the apostolic zeal of the lay people.

Jean-Baptiste was enrolled in this association and became one of its most courageous members.<sup>95</sup> His zeal, however, was oriented mostly towards his fellow countrymen, those who lived in the area, first, and later those whose bodily or spiritual misery he came to know of.

He was meanwhile presented with a new undertaking:

One day, Samt'andjimba came to inform the missionaries that a Mongol tribe from the West had been pillaged by the Hui (Muslims). Tents, food supplies, herds, everything had been taken away, and these unfortunate people were wandering aimlessly in the most dreadful misery. We asked Samdadchiemba... if he would go look for these poor people and bring them to us. The same day, he set out across the desert..."<sup>96</sup>

...to Daihai Guihuacheng where were the refugees from Ordos.<sup>97</sup> De Vos writes:

The good old man, being entrusted with such an honorable mission, felt the strength of old times come back to him... The Good Lord guided his steps and blessed his charitable efforts.

This journey took place in the summer of 1870.<sup>98</sup>

Great was the joy of the missionaries when they saw Samt'andjimba come back a few weeks later, with a real colony of Mongols! The missionaries established them on a piece of land that belonged to the Mission, in Yaotzekeou, in the vicinity of Chorji Lamasery, eighteen kilometers from Xiyngzi, and gave them Samt'andjimba as leader and catechist. There was an erudite lama, well versed in Tibetan and Mongolian languages, two whole families, and a young orphan girl. Verlinden decided to settle his catechumens in an exclusively Mongolian village and to build a little church for them. He thus assembled in Yaotzekeou three families of migrants from Ordos and two families of converts from the neighboring areas. He gave them tents to live in, and to secure their livelihoods, gave them a small herd of cows.<sup>99</sup>

They did not like this sedentary life so much. Indeed, several of these Mongolians aspired to return to their homes in the Ordos. Their departure rekindled Verlinden and De Vos' desire to travel

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<sup>95</sup> David 1867 I:184.

<sup>96</sup> David 1867 I:184.

<sup>97</sup> Van Hecken (1949:57).

<sup>98</sup> Van Hecken (1949:57).

<sup>99</sup> Van Hecken (1949:57-60). De Rochechouart (1878) writes:

Shamba-shiemba, who nowadays assumes the duties of catechist... preaching the benefits of Catholicism and attempting to train the neophytes, has especially taken charge of the Mongols, whose language and customs he knows.

The orphan Sonomtchitchik, whose story is described in Van Hacken (1949:58-59), was to become the wife of Samt'andjimba's brother, named Boro. The latter also lived under the tent in Yaotzekeou. He later left with his wife in the direction of the Dzungar kingdom, where he still lived in 1874-1875, close to Bagha Ejen. The missionaries moved the Chinese and Mongolian Christians westwards during the 1877-1878 famine, to the region of Boro Balghasun and Santaohé. Currently, Samt'andjimba's nephew and great great nephew still live in the Christian community of Boro Balghasun. On this topic Van Hecken, (1949:35, 60, 67, 103). The story does not tell us when Samt'andjimba's brother came to Mongolia. In Huc (1925:47), about the visit that the camel driver paid to the Three Valleys in 1844: "Samdadchiemba later attracted his family to the Ordos, where they converted [to Christianity]. His nephews lived comfortably in the little Christian community of Boro Balghasun."

Van Hecken (nd:14), writes that Sam had brought his brother Boro, a lama, to Xiwanzi where he had been instructed and baptized.

towards those regions. In 1873, Verlinden eventually formally sought permission to leave with De Vos in order to establish a mission among the Mongols of Kokonor, because, according to a converted Mongol who had recently come back from those regions:

...the Muslims destroyed and took everything there, the lamaseries have been burnt down. The people and the king are in dire misery, and since their gods and lamas have failed to protect them against their enemies, they do not believe in anything anymore. May God make this terrain fertile for the new seeds.<sup>100</sup>

## TOWARDS THE ORDOS

After his beginnings in the apostolate, a task that he had accomplished to the great satisfaction of the missionaries, there was no doubt that Samt'andjimba was to be the travelers' guide. Bax, pro-vicar of Mongolia, fully supported the project and was very willing to make exceptional financial sacrifices to ensure its success.

The pro-vicar records, in his notebook:

On 6 February 1874, RR Verlinden and De Vos left. It was a touching expedition. They did not know where to go, but were accompanied by three Mongols, of which two were already Christians. The first Samt'andjimba, the one who had accompanied RR.MM. Huc and Gabet in their journey to Tibet. The second was a recent convert, and the third, a catechumen named Dongrob.<sup>101</sup> They left from Ershisanhao. The missionaries were riding horses, the Mongols were leading eight camels, loaded with the tent, the altar and the belongings of the missionaries, who were taking 500 taels as travel stipend. The rest of the expedition had cost just about as much.<sup>102</sup>

In a letter to the Superior General of Scheut, he writes:

Never will I forget the solemn, awe-inspiring, moment, when these dear colleagues took to the road... Four Mongols were leading them.<sup>103</sup> First came Samdadchiemba, who, despite the horrible deprivations he suffered when he crossed the whole of Tartary... happily volunteered to serve as a guide for our missionaries...<sup>104</sup> Let's pray God blesses this expedition, that is done solely for his glory and for the salvation of souls.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Van Hecken (1949:67-67). Letter from Verlinden from late 1873 or early 1874.

<sup>101</sup> [This is a Mongolian rendering of the Tibetan name Don 'grub.]

<sup>102</sup> Personal notes of Bax, kept in the Xiwanzi archives.

<sup>103</sup> In his notes, he says 'three'. Van Hecken (1949:73), drawing from a letter of Verlinden (25 April 1874), gives the names of the Mongolians: Dongrob, Sat'andjimba, and Bayar from Dzungar.

<sup>104</sup> The Russian explorer, Prjévalski, went through Ershisanhao in 1871, and asked to have Samt'andjimba as his guide. Prjévalski (1880:80) writes that he refused to accompany him to Tibet, "taking as excuse the advancement of his age." Huc (1925:359), adds, "...it is as though this faithful servant had foreseen the unjustified attacks of this explorer against his spiritual father." About these attacks, see the same book, Huc (1925:7-8). It is also possible that Tibet scared our guide, or, even better, that he was busy at that time with the first nucleus of Mongolian Christianity in Yaotzekeou. At any rate, three years later, he eagerly volunteered to be the missionaries' guide. Nothing is said about Samt'andjimba's wife, who was in Xikouwai as of 1872.

<sup>105</sup> David 1867 II:78. Mostaert, OC, pVI:

The Ordos make up the confederation of the Great Temple, that comprises the following seven banners: Wang, Dalad, Dzungar, Otog, Khangin, Üüshin, Jasag. The first three compose the left wing, and the latter four the right wing. In addition to the Mongolians belonging to these seven banners, the Dalad, who are responsible for the cult of Genghis Khan, also belong to the Ordos... The territory of the confederation of the Great Temple is part of the province of Suiyuan. It borders the provinces of Shanxi, Shaanxi, and Ningxia. Its

The region of the Ordos, passing through the Heoupa, Guihuacheng, and the Yellow River, was not unknown to our experienced guide. He was taking this road for the fourth time, although each time it had been in quite different circumstances. This time, he would not return towards Xiwanzi. He would stay in the Ordos, engaged in different Christian communities until the end of his life.

The caravan was advancing slowly. They paid visits to the kings of Dzungar<sup>106</sup> and Üüshin, and went as far as the Chinese city of Ningt'iaolang, close to the Great Wall. After a few days:

...they reached a very long valley, five to six kilometers wide, and bordered by high sandy hills. This plain was called Tch'eng tch'ouan because in its middle rose the ruins of the ancient city of Hengtou, that the Mongols called Boro Balghasun.<sup>107</sup>

They stopped fifty *li* from Ningt'iaoliang. Their food supplies were exhausted, and they sent Samt'andjimba to purchase flour and millet.

Imagine! Samt'andjimba came back the next evening, with cakes and good news! Had he not found flour or millet? He had found much better still, and for this reason, the spiritual fathers had to have some cakes. The catechist had indeed met several Christian families. They were the survivors of the 27 January 1868 massacre, who had fled before the city was taken by Muslims.

Samt'andjimba had not only looked for food. As a good scout, he had also found the first Christians, who, the following day (11 April),<sup>108</sup> "informed of the arrival of the missionaries by Samt'andjimba, were coming to greet the '*shenfu*'<sup>109</sup> from the West."<sup>110</sup>

#### IN THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES OF THE ORDOS

Verlinden and De Vos decided not to push further, as they feared they might be encroaching upon the territory of other missionaries or getting too far away from their base. They stayed in the vicinity of Ningt'iaoliang and tried to radiate from there towards the different kingdoms of the Ordos.

The difficult beginnings of the Western Mongolia Mission<sup>111</sup> will interest us here only for the role played by our Jean-Baptiste Samt'andjimba.

It is not risky to suppose that he was the missionaries' travel companion when they visited the King of Otog. In 1874, at the time of the first persecution in the kingdom of Üüshin, Verlinden sent Samt'andjimba to the mandarin, saying that by preventing the Mongols from hearing the doctrine, he

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borders on the eastern and southern sides are the Yellow River with, however, a part of the territory spreading beyond this river on the northeast and northwest.

[Pegg (2001:26) writes that, "the Dalad (freed-men) [are] hereditary custodians of shrines housing relics, manuscripts, ritual texts, and other precious items related to Chingghis Kahn." According to the same author, another Dalad group live in northwest Mongolia.]

<sup>106</sup> [Dzungar/ Jüünghar/ Zungar/ Jungar is a generic term, synonymous with Oirat, referring collectively to the Western Mongols.]

<sup>107</sup> Van Hecken (1949:78). [Boro Balghasan literally means 'Gray Town'.]

<sup>108</sup> David 1867 II:158. Van Hecken (1949:78) OC indicates that the meeting between the missionaries and the Christians occurred on 12 April.

<sup>109</sup> [Catholic missionary, abbot.]

<sup>110</sup> David (1867 II:158).

<sup>111</sup> The curacy of southwestern Mongolia was established in December 1883; de Vos [Alphonse de Vos, CICM 1883-1889] was the first vicar apostolic (21 July 1888).

was violating the Emperor's decree.<sup>112</sup> The faithful servant appears to be an invaluable assistant to Verlinden and remained attached to the service of the Mission. Leading camels, he arrived in Santaohé in 1878, where De Vos was living, "The P De Vos kept him in Santaohé and appointed him head of the Mongolian colony." Gueluy<sup>113</sup> writes:

He does not lack a certain zeal, only the improvised master raised a hue and cry over our Mongolians' ignorance in religious matters. And what was there to be surprised of? Their catechist was himself only a catechumen...

...and Samt'andjimba, an old Christian having lived in old Christian communities for a long time, wanted them all to be as learned as he was.

In late 1878, he left Santaohé, going towards the south, to the region of Guihuacheng, for the needs of the Mission. There he helped organize the caravan that was to lead Hamer,<sup>114</sup> vicar apostolic of Gansu, across the Ordos. "Our cart was replaced by camels," writes the Vicar apostolic:

...and the illustrious Samdadchiemba, the former traveling companion of Huc and Gabet, who happened to be just in our residence, agreed to set us on the right path. Gun on the shoulder and eye on the lookout, he proudly led the way, with the ease of an old squaddie.<sup>115</sup>

From Santaohé, Jean-Baptiste returned to Boro Balghasun, an exclusively Mongolian Christian community. This village was gradually acquiring the appearance of a real mission post. A zealous missionary, Van Aertselaar,<sup>116</sup> arrived there in May 1879. The following year, he wrote there were about 200 Christians and catechumens:

I do not so much wish to have an extended core group of Christians, as I wish to have a good core of good Christians. And to achieve this result, it is best if the number of catechumens does not increase too quickly, in order for it not to exceed the number of baptized Christians. It is the example and the authority of the latter that train and improve the newcomers.<sup>117</sup>

To give greater authority to the example of his good Christians, he had the five most meritorious Christians elected through universal suffrage, and these were appointed catechists: Samt'andjimba, Patai, Dongrob from Otog, Chogto, and Sengke. The catechists became the administrators of the mission, and fulfilled their duties with exemplary zeal. It may be during these years that Samt'andjimba acquired the habit of preaching in church. Failing a missionary who knew the language of the Mongol Christians well, catechists sometimes fulfilled this function. Samt'andjimba kept this habit until the last years of his life.

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<sup>112</sup> Van Hecken (1949:93).

<sup>113</sup> Gueluy left for Gansu in 1879.

<sup>114</sup> [Ferdinand Hubertus Hamer, CICM 1840-1900.]

<sup>115</sup> *Les Missions Catholiques [The Catholic Missions]*, XI:443, 1879.\*

<sup>116</sup> J[erome] Van Aertselaar [1845-1924] stayed in the Ordos for only one year, before returning to Xiwanzi in 1880. After having occupied the function of assistant to the Superior General of Scheut, he became Superior General himself and, at the end of his decade of leadership (1898), he was appointed vicar apostolic in Central Mongolia. He died in Xiwanzi on 12 January 1924.

<sup>117</sup> Van Hecken (1949:143).

## THE FINAL YEARS

1880-1900 were the last twenty years of a life rich in events and so distinctively marked by the touch of divine Providence. In those days, people talked about "the oldster, San-ta." De Denke finds him in Santoahe, in 1881, "where he lives with us, the missionaries, at the expense of the mission."<sup>118</sup>

Was he really going to give up journeying through the desert to become sedentary, just like the Chinese? Or was he to confirm the saying of an author who writes:

The Mongol – may we be forgiven for this expression, but we find no other one – the Mongol is essentially a migratory animal, like the duck and the crane. He feels at ease everywhere, on condition that he does not stay for long, and it is not merely the grazing land necessary for his herds that pushes him to change location, but also his naturally wandering mood.<sup>119</sup>

We are in 1882. Four Russian explorers traveling through the Ordos stayed for eight days with [Jean-Baptiste] Steenackers. Wanting to reach Tibet via the Kokonor, they were set on having the old Samt'andjimba among their new servants. Steenackers knew his man and took the necessary precautions. Here is how he describes the measures he deemed appropriate to take before the departure of the caravan:

Our Sam was thrilled by the proposal. He would be able, in spite of his seventy years and over,<sup>120</sup> to ride for long months and, at the Kokonor, see again his family and friends. In fact, he came back from this journey as alert as a young man, but without a single bit of cash, despite the generous salary he had received. In Mongolia, generous and carefree, he had completely divested himself for his cousins of the Kokonor. Luckily, foreseeing this would happen, I had had three nice cows bought for him before his departure, and upon his return, he found these, along with a considerable progeny.<sup>121</sup>

A nice engraving of 1891 shows us the good old man. Clerbaux puts him in the spotlight one last time, and tells us that Samt'andjimba still lives in the Ordos:

Despite his old age, he has lost nothing of his roving mood and wit. When people tell him about the brilliant reputation he enjoys in Europe, he replies he would rather have a very large pouch filled with good tobacco.<sup>122</sup>

Certainly not without local color, this remark seems characteristic of the Mongol that we know.

Jean-Baptiste spent his last years in the fine Christian community of Boro Balghasun, without material worries, edifying everyone by his good example. Every day, leaning on his walking stick, he went towards the church. On Sundays, after the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, walking around in the church, he reeled off a sort of sermon starting with the words, "My dearest Christians." He spoke a dialect different from the language of the Boro Balghasun Mongols, but everyone seemed to understand him and appreciated the old man's fervor. Towards the end of his life, however, his mind

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<sup>118</sup> Huc (1925:8-9).

<sup>119</sup> Steenackers (1891:451-452).

<sup>120</sup> The four Russians: Skassi, Berozowski, Potanin, and Mrs. Potanin, must have come in 1882, when Jean-Baptiste had not yet turned seventy years old.

<sup>121</sup> Steenackers (1896:200). Rockhill, in 1888, stated that he was still vigorous and brave, loved gambling and good food, and, all in all, was not a very fervent Christian. "These malicious comments," writes Huc (1925:359), "are contradicted by the information transmitted by the missionaries of the Ordos."

<sup>122</sup> Steenackers (1891:449).

was not very clear.

The Good Lord did not allow Samt'andjimba to live through the terrible months of the Boxer Rebellion. He died two months prior to the storm that caused so many disasters in the Ordos region, and particularly in the Christian community of Boro Balghasun. His grave is inside the surrounding wall, close to the south wall of the old city of Boro Balghasun.<sup>123</sup>

Have we not the right to cite Samt'andjimba among the lay apostles of the Mongolian Missions? Have we not the duty to praise the Lord for guiding our faithful Jean-Baptiste, by the obscure play of his Divine Providence, across a thousand and one events and incidents of life, to make of him what He had intended to: the assistant and the guide of missionaries among his fellow countrymen?

Jean-Baptiste, as his illustrious patron, was truly a pioneer. He was the first among many lay apostles that dedicated themselves to the service of the apostolate among the Mongolians, to the great consolation of the messengers of the Bible, lost in the Mongolian steppe.

Young *shabi* and wanderer of the steppe, lama in the capital and young neophyte in Mongolia, camel driver and exile from Tibet, fervent Christian and courageous Xaverian, preaching to Christians and educating catechumens, guide of the missionaries and zealous apostle until the end of his long career, such was the life of Samt'andjimba.

Is he not the great vagabond of the Good Lord, whom, happy with his lot and not much concerned with material things, taking each day as it comes, glad to do people favors and to help those less fortunate than himself with his generosity.

One of the Mongolia missionaries has written that he was not a Ceresus. He speaks about the worldly Samt'andjimba. The Good Lord will have recognized his faithful servant and we do believe that the celestial Samt'andjimba is a great Ceresus, who, far from having the ironical nickname his feats on Earth brought him, lives crowned with glory in eternal happiness.

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<sup>123</sup> Notes communicated by the RR.PP Mostaert and Braam.



APPENDIX: ORIGINAL SPELLING OF NON-ENGLISH TERMS IN THE FRENCH TEXT

Term	Original Spelling
Bagha Ejen	Bagha Edjin
Bagha Ghol	Paga-gol
Bayar	Bayer
Boro	Poro
Boro Balghasun	Porobalgason
Chahar-Suiyuan	Chahar-Suinyuan
Chengde	Laohoukeou
Chogto	Tchokto
Chorji	Tchortchi
Daihai	Taihai
Dalad	Dalat, Darkhat, Dalhat
Dalai Lama	Talai-lama
Dolonor	Tolon-noor
Dongrob	Tongrepo, Tongrop
Dzungar	Djunghar, Dzunghar
Ershisanhao	Ehrchesanhao, Eul-che-san-hao, Ehrchesanhao
Gansu	Kansou
Genghis Khan	Tsingis-khan
Guihuacheng	Koeihoatch'eng, Koeihoatch'eng (Kweisui)
Guisui-Suiyuan	Kweisui-Suiyuan, Kewisui-Suiyuan
Heishui	K'oulit'ou / Hei-choei
Huangsi	Hoang-Sse
Hui	Houi-dze
Jasag	Dzasak
Khadan Khanchuu	Hadan hadjoo
Kokonor	Kokonor, Kou-kou-noor
Majiazi	Makiatze
Muuminggan	Maomingan
Nianbo	Nienpai
Ningxia	Ning hia province
Oirat	Ourats
Ordos	Ortos, Ortous
Otog	Otok
Qi	Tsi
Qi Tusi	Ki tou sse, Kitousse
Rgya hor	Dchiachour, Djiahor
Sanchuan	San-tch'ouan
Sandaohé	Santaoho
Sengke	Sengke
Shaanxi	Chensi
<i>shabi</i>	<i>chabi</i>
Shanxi	Chansi
<i>shenfu</i>	<i>chenn-foe</i>
Sichuan	Seu-tch'ouan
Skou 'bum	Koumboum
Suiyuan	Souei uien
Tianjin	Tientsin
Tumet	Toumet

<i>tusi</i>	<i>tou-sse, t'ou-seu</i>
Üüshin	Usin
Xifan	Si-fan
Xikouwai	Sikouéwai, Sik'eouwai
Xining	Sining
Xiwanzi	Siwan, Si-wan, Siwantze, Sywandze, Sy-wan-se
Xiyngzi	Siyingtze, Siyintze

## ON THE SHIRONGOLS

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### ABSTRACT

This translated text provides the first account of the Sanchuan Mangghuer in a Western language, based on first-hand observations made by Grigorij Potanin in the winter of 1884-1885. The text includes information on ethnonyms, the distribution of the Mangghuer, their language, history and legends, dwellings, clothing, food, agriculture, weaving and the division of labor, general information on religion, Buddhism and the cult of territorial deities, shamanism, the consecration of a Zushi icon, rituals during drought and thunderstorms, annual community festivals, family customs and events, and other occasions.

### KEYWORDS

Mangghuer, Minhe, Monguor, Qinghai, Sanchuan, Tu

### ORIGINAL TEXT

Potanin, Grigorij. 1893. Тангутско-тибетская окраина Китая и Центральная Монголия. Путешествіе Г. Н. Потанина, 1884-1886 [*The Tangut-Tibetan Borderlands of China and Central Mongolia, The Expedition of GN Potanin, 1884-1886*], t.2, Издание Императорскаго Географическаго Общества [Imperial Russian Geographic Society]: Saint Petersburg.

### ON THE NAMES OF THE SHIRONGOLS

This discussion deals with the Mongols best identified as the 'Settled Mongols of A mdo'. In contrast to the Mongols of the Mongolian Plateau, they live in A mdo, and their settled way of life distinguishes them from the nomadic Kokonor Oirat. 'Settled Mongols of A mdo' is, however, a long name, and being descriptive it might also be misleading if some of these people actually live on the Plateau, or if there are nomadic groups among them.<sup>1</sup> The name is, in fact, mistaken, as some of the Oirat groups also turn out to be settled. For these reasons, it is necessary to turn to the names by which these people call themselves, or by which they are known to their neighbors.

The Mongols of A mdo call themselves simply 'Mongols'. The question "What is your ethnicity?"

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<sup>1</sup> [To the best of our knowledge, there are not, nor have there been in the past century, any full-time pastoralists among the inhabitants of Sanchuan. Households may send a family member into nearby high altitude regions to herd livestock on a seasonal basis. Such practices have occasionally led to the establishment of new permanent agricultural settlements in such areas, but not to the establishment of permanent pastoral communities. In contrast, there have been a few Huzhu Mongghul engaged in permanent mobile pastoralism, though these appear to have been households and individuals rather than communities. It is likely that such individuals and households underwent rapid Tibetanization after taking up pastoralism. For more on Mongghul pastoralism see Schram (2006 [1954, 1957, 1961]) and Limusishiden and Jugui (2011).]

will be answered by a person from, for instance, Sanchuan, in the following way: "*Bi mangghuer kun* I am a Mongol person."<sup>2</sup> If you continue asking how the Mongols of A mdo call themselves in distinction from the Mongols of the Plateau, you occasionally get the answer that they call themselves Chighang Mangghuer 'White Mongols', or according to other data, Chahar.<sup>3</sup> The Mongols of A mdo can seemingly only distinguish themselves from the Mongols of the Plateau by using a descriptive name.<sup>4</sup>

The Chinese call them Turen, a name composed of two words: *tu* 'land, earth', in Mongol *shoroi*, and *ren* 'person'.<sup>5</sup> The Mongols of the Plateau call them Dalda or Doldo<sup>6</sup> and speak of them as *dolon helitei Doldo* or 'the Doldo with seven languages', referring to the fact that these Mongols speak several mutually unintelligible languages. The name Dalda was adopted for them by the late Przheval'skii,<sup>7</sup> and it is indeed the least ambiguous name. The only reason I prefer the name Shirongol is that the latter can be inflected in Russian. I had already heard the name Shirongol in Ordos from our companion Samt'andjimba, who is a member of this tribe. After arriving in the area where the Shirongols live, that is, in Sanchuan, I realized that they are identical with the Przheval'skii's Dalda. Because I did not know whether this name could refer to all settled Mongols of A mdo, or only the western populations with which Przheval'skii was familiar, I could not adopt the name Dalda for the inhabitants of Sanchuan. In my notes I thus started using the name Shirongol for the eastern Dalda.

The name Shirongol is as unknown as the name Dalda to the Mongols of A mdo. The only person from whom I heard this name was Samt'andjimba, who occasionally used it in the form Shirongol-Mongol. He derived it from the Mongol word *shoroi* 'land' and connected it with the name Shirongol, which occurs in the Mongol Ge sar Epic. He said that the Shirongols once had had a separate kingdom on the upper Yellow River, with the capital in Lanzhou. This kingdom was ruled by three kings, who were defeated by Ge sar, after which the kingdom of the Shirongols ceased to exist.<sup>8</sup>

Samt'andjimba did not invent the name Shirongol himself. It seems to have been used in the past, and it is also attested to in Mongol literature, though in a slightly different shape. In the Russian version of the *Altan Tobchi*, published in St. Petersburg, it is mentioned that, "Sain Altan Khagan valiantly conquered the Sharegol people of A mdo, who lived between Tibet and Tangut." If these people were not the actual Shirongols, they must at least have been the tribe from whom the name

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<sup>2</sup> The sound *r* is pronounced by the local Mongols with a burr, as in Chinese.

<sup>3</sup> Meng Hong\* mentions that the *chagan tata* 'White Tatars' were a mixture of Tatars and Chinese.

<sup>4</sup> [Sanchuan residents commonly refer to *dasini kun* 'our people' primarily as a linguistically defined community, but might also extend this to include local Han and Hui residents who do not speak their language. In daily interactions among themselves, inhabitants of Sanchuan typically refer to one another according to place of residence and add *kun* 'person', for example, Wenjia kun (for a resident of Wenjia Village) or Wushighuer kun (for a resident of Wushi Valley). Although there appears to have existed a strong sense of solidarity among Sanchuan inhabitants based on a shared language, this was typically not conceived of in ethnic terms.]

<sup>5</sup> [This is reflected in the contemporary government classification of these populations as Tuzu 'Tu ethnicity'. The terms Turen and Tuzu are problematic in their relativity, designating simply the original or prior inhabitants of an area rather than a specific group. Terms incorporating *tu* have historically been used in many locations in China to refer to local, typically non-Han populations. See Brown (2002) and Deal and Hostetler (2006) for instances where *tu* has been applied to indigenous populations.]

<sup>6</sup> [The ethnonym Dor rdo is used by Tibetans in Reb gong County, Rma lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, to refer to local Mongolic speaking inhabitants. Such populations are found in Gnyan thog, Sgo dmar, Rka gсар, and Bod skor villages. This ethnonym is considered derogatory except when applied by members of the group to themselves or other Dor rdo. Dor rdo refer to their language as Dor skad.]

<sup>7</sup> [Nikolai Mikhaylovich Przhevalsky (1839-1888) was a Russian of Polish origin who travelled in Central and Eastern Asia, including northern Tibet and contemporary Qinghai. His significant contributions to European knowledge of Central Asia included a description of a wild horse (*Equus ferus przewalskii*) and gazelle (*Procapra przewalskii*) that are named after him.]

<sup>8</sup> He also said that the Shirongol king who lived in Lanzhou was called Hor spun zla.

Shirongol derives.<sup>9</sup>

The neighboring Tibetans call the Shirongols 'Rgya hor' or 'Chzhahuri'. This name appears to be composed of two elements: *rgya* (Chzhapyk) 'Chinese' and 'Hor', which is the name of a non-Tibetan, possibly Mongol, nomadic tribe of northern Tibet.<sup>10</sup> Thus, 'Chzhahuri' means 'Mongol-Chinese'.<sup>11</sup>

#### DISTRIBUTION AND POPULATION

The Shirongols live to the north and south of the Yellow River, west of the city of Lanzhou. On the northern side, their territory comprises the whole lowland area of the Yellow River Valley from the lower end of the Jishi Gorge<sup>12</sup> to the upper end of the Sangbura Gorge, that is, the so-called Sanchuan region. From here, their territory continues in a narrow strip towards the Huang River in the north, where it comprises the lower course of this river and extends to the banks of the Datong River. The uppermost village along the Huang River is Shina, which is located at a distance of 4.3 kilometers from the place where the Bazhou River flows into the Huang River.<sup>13</sup> The region west of here to Xining City is occupied by Chinese.<sup>14</sup>

Another area occupied by the Shirongols lies in the mountains north of Xining. The environments of the towns of Weiyuan<sup>15</sup> and Mubaishingu, and the territory between them is again occupied by the Shirongols.<sup>16</sup> Thus, there are two separate areas of Shirongol habitation north of the Yellow River.<sup>17</sup>

In exactly the same way, there are two other Shirongol areas on the southern side of the Yellow River: one is in the middle of the road between the cities of Lanzhou and Hezhou in the locality named Dongxiang, and the other is close to the town of Bao'an in the Longwu River Valley.<sup>18</sup>

In Sanchuan, as was mentioned above, the whole left bank of the Yellow River Valley is

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<sup>9</sup> In his notes to *Sanan Setsen*, Schmidt\* mentions the Schara Scharaigol Tuluhun group, against whom the Tibetan king, Srong btsan sgam po, waged war.

<sup>10</sup> [Bellezza (1997:86 n82) says of the Hor, "The name Hor was first given to the Uighurs of Kanchow around 800 by Tibetans and was later used to describe the Mongols of Genghiz Khan..." Ahmad (1970) translates the term as 'Eastern Mongols' as opposed to the term Sog, used for Western, i.e., Oirat, Mongols and their descendants.]

<sup>11</sup> The Shirongols call the Tibetans 'Tiebie', the Chinese 'Qidai', and the Mongols of the Plateau *doro ghazher mangghuer* or 'the Mongols of the Low Country'. [See Snying bo rgya and Rino (2009) for the use of a related term, Sog rgya, by Tibetans in Reb gong (Tongren) County.]

<sup>12</sup> [Potanin: Dondon.]

<sup>13</sup> [The region described here is presently within Minhe Hui and Tu Autonomous County, Haidong Municipality, Qinghai Province. The village of Shina is adjacent to the county capital, Chuankou. The Mangghuer (Shirongol) populations are currently found only in the south of the county on the north bank of the Yellow River, in the Guanting basin and surrounding hills and tributary valleys. Administratively, this territory lies within Xing'er Tibetan Autonomous Township; Guanting Town; and Zhongchuan, Gangou, and Qianhe townships.]

<sup>14</sup> [The Chinese (Han) population primarily occupies the riverine valley zone on the banks of the Huang River. Higher altitude zones to the north and south of the riverine valley are also home to Tibetan, Hui, and Mongghul populations.]

<sup>15</sup> [Potanin: Wuyangbu.]

<sup>16</sup> [We refer to these populations as Mongghul. For more on the Mongghul, see Schram (2006 [1954, 1957, 1961]) and Limusishiden and Jugui (2011).]

<sup>17</sup> [Although clearly related, the languages spoken in these two territories are mutually unintelligible. Considerable cultural differences also exist between the two areas.]

<sup>18</sup> [The Dongxiang, a Mongolic speaking Muslim population, are introduced in Li and Stuart (1991) and Kim (2003). Legerton and Rawson (2009) also provide a few details on this poorly documented group. For more on the Bao'an Shirongol see the two chapters by Tshe ring skyid in this volume, Fried (2010a, 2010b), Roche and Lcags mo tshe ring (2013), and Skal bzang nor bu et al. (1999).]

occupied by the Shirongols. The name 'Sanchuan', in Mongol 'Ghurban Salar', means 'Three Valleys' (by which, of course, the valleys of the northern tributaries of the Yellow River are to be understood). If all the northern tributaries of the Yellow River between the eastern end of the Jishi Gorge and the western end of the Sangbura Gorge are counted, however, there are not three but six of them. They are, starting from the west: Xing'er,<sup>19</sup> Baojia, Gangou, Aral, and Wenjia rivers, as well as the Sangbura River, which is known as Molto River along its upper course. The name Sanchuan implies the territory between the Gangou River (on which Nijia Village<sup>20</sup> is located) and the Wenjia River (by which is Qijia Village).

The Xing'er River Valley is separated from Sanchuan by a ridge covered by a thick layer of loess that extends to the banks of the Yellow River and forms a narrowing of the river with uncovered conglomerates where a ferry crossing has been built. There runs only a narrow path beside this rock along which a mule with a light burden can pass. The mountains turn towards the north downriver from the narrows and the valley becomes as broad as 4.3 kilometers at Nijia Village.

The mountains turn again towards the south at Qijia Village, and from here they gradually approach the river and reach it where the next gorge begins. The part of the valley downriver from Qijia Village (or east from the mouth of the Wenjia River) bears the special name Sangbura. In Xing'er River Valley there is only a single Shirongol village by the name Zhaomuchuan<sup>21</sup> that is located in the lowest part of the valley. Tibetan villages occupy the middle and upper parts of this valley.<sup>22</sup>

The entire lowland between the Sangbura Gorge in the east and the ferry crossing in the west is occupied by Shirongol villages. The villages of Wujia,<sup>23</sup> Wangjia, Hulijia,<sup>24</sup> Xinjia, Zhujia, Lajia, Qijia, Ganjia, Majia, and Tujia are found in the territory between the Gangou and Wenjia rivers, that is, in Sanchuan proper. They live partly mixed and partly separated along family lines, so that it is possible to establish villages with a single surname, such as, for instance, Qijia Village on the Wenjia River.

There are three villages in the upper rocky part of the valley towards the west from Nijia along the Baojia River<sup>25</sup> and there is also Baojia Village located downriver at the place where the river emerges from the ravine. Upwards along the Sangbura River Valley, there are Shirongol villages on Badaola Mountain east of the Sangbura River.<sup>26</sup> These are the easternmost Shirongol settlements on the way to Lanzhou. Songjia Shan<sup>27</sup> Village is even further east and is also inhabited by Shirongols, but these people are recent migrants from the region of Dongxiang. Shirongol villages also extend along the rocky upper course of the Aral River that crosses Sanchuan in the very middle.

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<sup>19</sup> [Potanin: ITEL.]

<sup>20</sup> [Nijia Village has now been absorbed by Guanting Town.]

<sup>21</sup> [Zhaomuchuan traditionally consisted of a confederation of seven Mangghuer communities, rather than a single village.]

<sup>22</sup> [Tibetan communities are found to the north of Zhaomuchuan proper (the territory of the seven communities) within Xing'er Valley. Gamaka Village is the first Tibetan village encountered moving north from Zhaomuchuan. From this point, several Tibetan communities are scattered among the Mangghuer villages. Xiera Village has both Mangghuer and Tibetan households (divided by a narrow gully) and is the northernmost Mangghuer community in the Xing'er Valley. From there northwards, all communities are Tibetan.]

<sup>23</sup> [Site of present day Zhongchuan Township.]

<sup>24</sup> [Potanin: Fujia.]

<sup>25</sup> [Although it is unclear which three villages the author is specifically referring to here, he is clearly indicating communities in the Wushi and Puba valleys.]

<sup>26</sup> [These villages have now mostly been relocated to the lowlands on the north bank of the Yellow River. Locals traditionally recognized two communities in this region: Badaola (Badaoshan) and Hongnai. The two communities were adjacent to one another and in many respects integrated, being distinguished primarily according to differing settlement histories.]

<sup>27</sup> [Potanin: Songjia Shir.]

The whole population consists of Shirongols in the region thus described; there are Chinese only in the single village of Nijia that serves as the local trade center.<sup>28</sup> The easternmost point of this Shirongol area is thus marked by Badaola Mountain, while the westernmost point is Zhaomuchuan Village. The distance between these points is about 21.3 kilometers.<sup>29</sup>

South of the Yellow River, opposite Sanchuan, the entire population is Chinese, except for the settlement of Datongping, located opposite Zhaomuchuan Village, which is occupied by Shirongols who have come from Bao'an.

I know little about the other sections of the Shirongols. I only passed Dongxiang in autumn of 1884 on the way from Lanzhou to Hezhou, and saw only one village, Soloba. I also visited the Shirongols in the vicinity of Wuyuangbu Town in the winter of 1885-1886, but was in only one village west of this town and only spent one night there. I saw the Shirongols of Bao'an during a one-day stop in the town of Bao'an in 1885.

There are 1,200 households in Sanchuan, that is, in the territory between the Gangou and Wenjia rivers.<sup>30</sup> Assuming that each household has five souls of both sexes, we get the total figure of 6,000 souls for Sanchuan. If we further assume that the population of Baojia, Zhaomuchuan, Sangbura, and Badaola is approximately 2,000 souls, the whole population in this region nears 8,000 souls. In Dongxiang, there are thirty-six villages. Counting one hundred households per settlement they must contain a total population of 18,000 inhabitants but, assuming that the figure thirty-six is exaggerated, the actual population may be as low as 10,000 souls. The Shirongol population on the lower course of the Huang River and along the Datong River can also be estimated at 10,000 souls. The population in the environments of Weiyuan and Mubaishingtuo cannot possibly be larger than 20,000 souls. There are likely to be no more than 2,000 souls around Bao'an. All of this gives the following conclusion:

Sanchuan	8,000
Datong	10,000
Dongxiang	10,000
Weiyuan	20,000
Bao'an	<u>2,000</u>
Total	50,000

It is possible that the same Shirongol tribe also includes the Shira Yughurs, who live in the valleys of Nanshan south of Ganzhou and Suzhou cities. The tribe inhabiting these valleys is divided into two sections – one speaking a Mongolic language, the other speaking a Turkic language. The members of the former section are called Shira Yughurs or Yellow Yughurs, while those of the latter are called Khara Yughurs or Black Yughurs. The Chinese call the Yughur, Huangfan 'Yellow Barbarians'. The work *Suzhou Xinzhì* or *Description of the Suzhou District* mentions this name. The name Huangfan was applied in ancient times to some tribes living in the northern parts of Amdo and their

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<sup>28</sup> [There is a significant contemporary Hui population in Guanting Town and Zhongchuan Township.]

<sup>29</sup> [In his description, the author excludes two significant centers of Mangghuer populations. The first is Minzhu Valley, which contains Mangghuer populations in its southern reaches and Han and Hui populations in the north. This valley extends to the north of Sangbura to the west of Badaola. A second population center is Shidie Valley, located between the Minzhu and Gangou valleys. Finally, he also excludes the Mangghuer village of San'erjia, on the southern bank of the Yellow River, opposite Sangbura.]

<sup>30</sup> [Thus excluding populations in Zhaomuchuan, Badaola, Shidie Valley, and Minzhu Valley.]

princes mentioned in the book bear Mongol names. According to this Chinese book, the tribe was called this in memory of some kingdom that was called Shila Guo, the Shira Kingdom. The Shira Yughurs are descendants of this kingdom according to the book.<sup>31</sup> Could it be that the Shirongols were originally a Turkic tribe that for the most part (with the exception of the Khara Yughurs) was Mongolized, after which it was transformed once more due to Chinese influence?

#### THE SHIRONGOL LANGUAGE<sup>32</sup>

The language of the Shirongols is Mongolic. Its differences with regard to the language of the Plateau include the following.

#### Abundance of Alien Elements

The largest amount of foreign mixture in the Shirongol language has come from Chinese. It is difficult here to make a distinction between ancient and recent borrowings; apparently, the borrowing of Chinese words continues even today.<sup>33</sup> There are also a few words that, although superficially Chinese, are unknown to the neighboring Chinese and are used only by the Shirongols, as is confirmed by the Shirongols themselves. These seem to be dialectal words of local Chinese groups that were completely absorbed by the Shirongols. The Shirongols of Bao'an, and partly also those of Weiyuan, use many Tibetan words. Finally, there are Turkic words, such as, for instance, *beghe* 'tree', *tashi* 'stone', *dimei* 'bread', *bazer* (Turkic *bazar*) 'town', *ana* 'mother', *bulai*<sup>34</sup> (Turkic *bala*) 'child', and *sangpusighe* (*sarymsak*) 'garlic'.

#### Presence of Words Specific Only to Shirongol

For example, *agur* 'girl', *mula* 'small', *huang* 'year', *noqier* 'thunder',<sup>35</sup> *enzhasi* 'cow',<sup>36</sup> *chaibai* 'bank, border',<sup>37</sup> *shuoshighai* 'lizard', *kaler* 'basket'.

#### Special Pronunciation of Mongolic Words

The guttural *h* of Mongol is in Shirongol replaced by a guttural *k* (*kh*), e.g., *nughuai* 'dog', *khuoni* 'sheep', *fugur* 'cow', *kheghai* 'pig', *pughang* 'god', *museng*<sup>38</sup> (Mongol *buha*) 'ox',<sup>39</sup> *khuru* 'finger', *boduo*

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<sup>31</sup> It may be mentioned here that Schmidt, in one of his notes to the Ge sar Epic, associates the Shirongols of this epic to the land of Lake Kokonor and the Upper Yellow River.

<sup>32</sup> [For other sources on the language, see Janhunén (2003), Mostaert (1931), and Slater (2003a, 2003b).]

<sup>33</sup> [Borrowing has also taken place in the opposite direction. See, for example Dede (2003), Dwyer (1992), and Feng and Stuart (1992).]

<sup>34</sup> [*bulai* = boy.]

<sup>35</sup> [*Noqier* in fact means 'storm'; thunder is *zhalei*.]

<sup>36</sup> [*Enzhasi* in fact means 'plow'; cow is *fugur*.]

<sup>37</sup> [*chaibai* = edge.]

<sup>38</sup> [*pykha*.]



'knee'. Words beginning with a vowel have an initial aspiration, e.g., *hulan*, in the speech of some people even *fulan* (Mongol *ulan*) 'red', *huotu*, *fotu* (Mongol *odun*) 'star',<sup>40</sup> *herbigi* (Mongol *erbeke*) 'butterfly', *hundughai* (Mongol *undugun*) 'fox', *humugai* (Mongol *umuhei*) 'stinky'.

Some words contain extra consonants, e.g., *chighezi* (Mongol *tsasun*) 'snow', *jiarghasi* (Mongol *dzagasun*) 'fish', *yighesi* (Mongol *yasun*) 'bone', *mersi* (Mongol *musun*) 'ice', *chersi* (Mongol *tsasu*) 'paper'. Some words appear with somewhat different meanings, e.g., *yimeghe* 'village' (Mongol *aimak* 'people'), *berghasi* 'wall', *manang* 'fog', *mer* 'road' (Mongol 'trace').

The sound *k* or *h* is replaced word-initially by *ch*, e.g., *qideghuo* (Mongol *hutuga*) 'knife', Qidai (Mongol *kitat*) 'Chinese'. In word endings, *l* is pronounced with a burr, e.g., *xier* (Mongol *söl*) 'tail', Mangghuer (Mongol *mongol*), *baler* (Mongol *baryul*) 'handle of vessel', *chorbon* (Mongol *tsolmon*) 'summer lightning', *ertang* (Mongol *altan*) 'gold'.

Apart from this, there are distortions of the following types: *wugur* 'winter' (Mongol *ubyl*'), *tegheji* 'button' (Mongol *tobchi*), *shuguo* 'big' (Mongol *iki*), *lumu* 'arrow' (Mongol *nomun*), *mughashi* 'tomorrow' (Mongol *margashi*), *maosai* 'ugly' (Mongol *muhai*), *ghur* 'two' (Mongol *hoir*), *mandeghai* 'frog' (Mongol *melehei*).

Instead of Khalkha *dz*, the Shirongols use *dzh* as in Ordos, e.g., *zhuzhuang* 'thick', *jierghang* 'six', *zhuerge* 'heart', instead of *dzudzan*, *dzurgan*, *dzyurhu*.

The nominal ending *sun* in Shirongol is changed to *si*, e.g., *biesi* 'grass', *duruasi* 'liquor'.

In the realm of grammatical features, we note the following peculiarities: The Mongol verbal ending of the past tense *sen* or *ksen* in Shirongol is replaced by the ending *jiang*, e.g., *hugujiang* 'died', *khegherajiang* 'broke', *dijiang* 'ate'. In the present tense the verbs in Shirongol end in *lang*, e.g., *kelilang* 'speaking', *dilang* 'eating'. In the imperative, the element *a* is added, e.g., *ri a* 'come!'<sup>41</sup> In the conditional, the element *balani* is added, e.g., *baibalani* 'if there is', *kereglibalani* 'if it is necessary', *yaobalani* 'if you go'. Negative forms: *qida dalang* 'impossible', *wu dalang* 'cannot drink', *yao dalang* 'cannot pass',<sup>42</sup> *kuiqi dalang* 'is not enough'.<sup>43</sup>

## HISTORY AND POPULAR LEGENDS

The Shirongols arrived on the Yellow River from Ordos according to a popular legend that I heard from many local people in different places.<sup>44</sup> This tradition tells that the Shirongols were sent to Sanchuan in the time of Genghis Khan to function as Mongol border guards. There are indications that they were brought here by Genghis Khan himself.<sup>45</sup> As to the question concerning the date of the Shirongols'

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<sup>39</sup> [*museng* = male offspring of a yak sire and a cow.]

<sup>40</sup> [*fotu/hotu* = handle.]

<sup>41</sup> [Potanin gives *ra* as the imperative particle.]

<sup>42</sup> [In fact, '*yao dalang*' means 'cannot walk'. 'Cannot pass' is *nuoqi dalang*.]

<sup>43</sup> Certain features of Mongol words recorded by an Armenian historian, a contemporary of the Mongol invasion, are reminiscent of the features exhibited by the Shirongol dialect. [*kuiqi dalang* = not to be caught.]

<sup>44</sup> Przheval'skii noted the similarity of the names Dalda and Talat. The latter is the name of one of the seven Ordos banners, located in the northwestern corner of Ordos. Cf. also the name Diledi, attested among the appellations of the western peoples in the times of the Khitans.

<sup>45</sup> [The origin of Sanchuan inhabitants remains an unresolved issue. The theory presented here, also expounded in Schram (2006 [1954, 1957, 1961]) is that Sanchuan residents originated with Mongol soldiers stationed to guard the borders of the Chengisid Empire, who then submitted to the Ming at the fall of the Yuan. An alternative view, expressed by Hu (2010), is that the present inhabitants of Sanchuan are descended from the Xianbei people of Northeast China, who later became the Tuyuhun. Recent research on Sanchuan clan histories suggests more

arrival in A mdo, Chinese historical sources available to us in translation mention three occasions of large-scale migrations from Ordos or its vicinity to A mdo. The Tungusic Xianbei tribe migrated from western Manchuria through Ordos to the Yellow River in A mdo in the beginning of the fourth century. *Sanan Setsen* relates that the brothers of Khubilai, Dorda, and Godan (this may have happened in the thirteenth century), on the order of their mother, moved with all their people to the region of Shiratala, located northeast of Xining. Here they occupied a locality by the name Lienston, subsequently known as Liangzhou,<sup>46</sup> inside the Great Wall. A tribe by the name of Alutusy came from the north (from Ordos) to the Kokonor land in the fifteenth century. The Shirongol-Mongols might represent a mixture of these three migrations, or they might be connected with either one of the two later migrations.

Apart from the legend mentioned above, the Shirongols know only traditions about their princes, which are published in a separate volume containing folkloric materials. The Shirongols regard a certain Li Jinwang as the ancestor of their leaders, the so-called *tusi*.

This Li Jinwang was a high Tang Dynasty (618-907) court official in Xi'an according to a local tradition. He was sent to an uninhabited place due to improper behavior at the court after a feast or, more exactly, to the place at the conjunction of the Bazhou and Huang Rivers where the Chinese town Chuankou is located today. This place, covered by infertile sands, was called Santahu before Li Jinwang's arrival. Li Jinwang invited Chinese people, built a town, and introduced agriculture. Chuankou became a capital of a separate state and the commercial center of the whole region. The Shirongols regard Chuankou as the most ancient town in the region and maintain that its current condition does not give a proper understanding of its past splendor.

All the Shirongol *tusi* descend from Li Jinwang, but his direct lineage is continued by the Li Tusi Clan, whose residence is located on the Datong River. Li Jinwang's grave is said to lie near Byang thang Village on the left bank of the Huang River downriver from the mouth of the Bazhou River.<sup>47</sup> I was told that a sacrificial ceremony is held annually in honor of Li Jinwang. Byang thang Village is obliged to present a sheep for this festival, while Chuankou Town must present a cow.

Chinese historical sources available in Russian translation make no mention of Li Jinwang.<sup>48</sup> The *History of Tibet and Kokonor*, translated by Iakin,<sup>49</sup> tells that for 351 years from 312 to 663 AD, A mdo was the Tuyuhun<sup>50</sup> Kingdom territory founded by Xianbei people from Manchuria.<sup>51</sup> Tuyuhun

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diverse origins than either of these theories posit, with individual clans tracing their origins to local Han, Hui, and Tibetan populations (Roche 2011).]

<sup>46</sup> [Potanin: Lientsu.]

<sup>47</sup> There is a large, old cemetery beside Byang thang Village. It is located at the foot of a steep mountain that rises above it in the north, west of the village. Li Jinwang's grave is marked by a hill on which a stele with Chinese characters is erected. In front of the stele, which faces south, there are stone statues representing, if I remember correctly, sheep in a lying position. People assign healing properties to the stone at the grave of Li Jinwang and break pieces off it. Only a third of the original stone seems to remain today. There is another stele in the same cemetery in better condition that is also equipped with statues of sheep.

<sup>48</sup> Babu Chandra Sarat Das found a legend of the land of Li (Li yul) in Tibetan books and assumed it referred to Khotan. Khotanese legends, as we will show in the fourth part of this work, are similar to those still current in northern A mdo. If the identification of Li yul with Khotan is correct, it should not be ruled out that the name Li was transferred in popular concepts to the region of Kokonor. The Chinese legend concerning the bringing of the statue 'dzu' [probably Tibetan: *jo bo*] also mentions a Tibetan kingdom named Li.

<sup>49</sup> [Nikita Yakovlevich Bichurin (1777-1853) was also known as Iakin (Hyacinth) and is considered important in the development of Sinology. He was tonsured with the name Iakin in 1802 and sent to Beijing, where he spent the next fourteen years. His interest in Chinese history and language was such that he was charged with a lack of religious zeal, stripped of his rank as abbot, and imprisoned in Valaam Monastery. It was here that he translated ancient and medieval Chinese writings, and published on Chinese and Mongolian history, geography, religion, and so on. He started the first Chinese-language school in the Russian Empire in 1837.]

<sup>50</sup> [Potanin: Togon.]

allegedly set up the kingdom and the Xianbei completed the migration under his leadership. His descendants changed the name of their people from Xianbei to Tuyuhun to honor his memory. This is likely to be a later explanation while in reality, Tuyuhun was the original name of the people. The leader with this name is thus probably a legendary figure marking the point of origin of popular genealogy.

The Tuyuhun Kingdom was replaced by that of the Tufan, which existed from 634 to 866, for 232 years. Later, the Tangut Kingdom or Xia Guo (999-1227, totaling 237 years), was formed on the Plateau, with the capital at Ningxia. At the same time, A mdo was organized into the small duchy of Tubot (also known as the Northern Small or New Tufan), which existed for only 116 years (from 1015 to 1131). A certain Gusiluo (or, according to VP Vasil'ev,\* Gosrai) founded the latter. The duke's residence was located at Zonggecheng<sup>52</sup> from which his possessions extended 915 *li* east to Yongning, 500 *li* northeast to Liangzhou, 500 *li* northwest to Ganzhou, 300 *li* east to Lanzhou, 415 *li* south to Hezhou, and 400 *li* west to Lake Kokonor. At the intersection of Lanzhou, Ganzhou, and Kokonor this location corresponds exactly to the location of Chuankou, the legendary residence of Li Jinwang.

This is the only definite historical information on A mdo, and the Shirongol legends apparently refer to this particular duchy. However, it is possible that only the very existence of the duchy is a historical fact, while it is difficult to verify the authenticity of a real-life Gusiluo, its alleged founder. Histories referring to the founders of dynasties always incorporate popular legends of mythical figures and consequently, it is also possible to view Gusiluo as a not fully historical person. His name in the Chinese original as translated by Father Iakin, is explained as being composed of the words *go* or 'holy' and *silo* or 'son', which are supposedly derived from the Tufan language of the Hezhou region. This shows that Gusiluo was a nickname and not the real name of the founder. The name Gusiluo is similar to the name of Ge sar, whose story is sung at weddings in A mdo,<sup>53</sup> and who has a legendary connection with many localities in this province from Ganzhou to Songpan. As we have seen, Shirongol legends attribute the destruction of the Shirongol Kingdom to Ge sar, and the Shira Yughurs regard Ge sar as their ancient king.

The legend of Gusiluo is told in the *History of Tibet and Kokonor* as follows. He was a Tufan prince whose real name was Chinan Dewen Zanpu<sup>54</sup> and he was born in Gaochang (i.e., Turfan) in a royal family. When he was twelve years old, Helang Yexian, a Tufan person from Hezhou, who travelled through Gaochang, noticed Gusiluo's wonderful and valiant physique and took him to Gongxingcheng. Songchang Suzhun then moved him to Yigongcheng with the intention of making him Duke of Wenfu.<sup>55</sup> After this, however, Li Lizong, a lama from Zonggecheng, together with Wenbu, the main leader of Miaochuan,<sup>56</sup> abducted Gusiluo and made him the head of Hezhou. His subjects grew stronger and he settled at Zonggecheng. Li Lizong, or simply Lizong, served as his minister. It is further reported that Gusiluo waged war against Tuoba Yuanhao,<sup>57</sup> the Xia ruler.

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<sup>51</sup> [See Molè (1970) for more on this kingdom.]

<sup>52</sup> [Zonggecheng is present-day Ping'an, the seat of Haidong Municipality.]

<sup>53</sup> [We are presently unaware of any locations in A mdo where the Ge sar epic is sung at weddings. There is much literature dealing with the Ge sar epic. See Karmay Samten (1993, 1995), Li (2001), Roerich (1942), Samuel (1991), and Yang (2001) for important contributions. For translations of the epic into English see David-Neel and Lama Yongden (1934) and Wallace (1991).]

<sup>54</sup> [Potanin: Tsinian Lingwen Kiabu.]

<sup>55</sup> [Perhaps more appropriately: wanting him to establish the rule of law that in this context means re-establish clan/ tribal order.]

<sup>56</sup> [Miaochuan is present-day Ledu, in Haidong Municipality.]

<sup>57</sup> [In this case, Tuoba is an ethnonym, and Yuanhao a personal name. His full name is Li Yuanhao.]

The latter entered the territory of Gusiluo in 1035, and Gusiluo retreated and made his base at Shanzhou. Learning through spies that Yuanhao had crossed the Zongge River and placed marks at shallow places, Gusiluo ordered the marks to be secretly moved to deep places, after which he attacked Yuanhao. The Xia army began to retreat and was drowned while crossing the river.

Along the entire course of the Yellow River between Guide and Lanzhou there are no fords, thus it is likely that the disastrous crossing took place on the Huang River. In that case, Shanzhou may be identified with either Gushan or with Ba yan rdzong<sup>58</sup> and more probably with the former because it is regarded as a very ancient locality, about which there is also a popular legend. But the Yellow River, more exactly the Jishi Gorge, is the site of the legendary crossing of Ge sar and the defeat of his enemies who attempted to cross the river after him; the story in question is included in the second volume of the present work, which contains tales and legends. Possibly there really was a Chinan Dewen who founded a duchy at Zongge and, who in order to enhance his prestige, took the name Ge sar, about whom there already existed legends among people. One of these legends about the crossing of a river was attached to his historical person and found its way into A mdo history.

The genealogy of the Shirongol *tusi* and the legend of Li Jinwang are apparently included in the book *Xining Zhi* that is a geographical description of the Xining region.<sup>59</sup> We were able to examine this book at Dung dkar (Huangyuan) Town. Mr. Parker was accompanying us at that time and found an entire chapter devoted to this topic while examining it. Mr. Uspenskii used this book and another one titled *Suzhou Xinzhi* for his interesting article on Kokonor, but his extractions from these books concerning the Shirongols are unfortunately very brief.

We may remark at this point that Mr. Uspenskii is wrong when he criticizes Przheval'skii for allegedly inventing a new tribe with the name Dalda; he claims that these Dalda were long ago known to the Chinese under the name Huangfan or 'Yellow Barbarians', and that they are simply Mongols. However, the Chinese only refer to the Yughurs using the name Huangfan. The Huangfan are always distinguished from those aborigines to whom Przheval'skii referred, and whom the Chinese call Turen. This distinction may have been necessary for the Chinese because one group of these barbarians are nomads while the other group are settled farmers. But it is possible that in more ancient times the name Huangfan was applied to all Mongols inhabiting A mdo. This name was possibly translated from the Salar<sup>60</sup> term Shira-mongol, which is used for those earlier inhabitants of A mdo whom the Salars, according to their tradition, pushed away when they occupied the region of Xunhua.

The Shirongols are divided into surname groups, or clans, such as: Qi, Wang, Fu, Lu, and others. These clans, as was already mentioned above, live mixed, though families of a single surname group occasionally dwell together. Thus, in Sanchuan, the Qi Clan forms a village of their own at the Wenjia River, while the Baojia have a village west of Nijia Village on the Baojia River. Legends remain about certain of these surname groups that claim they are of non-Mongol origin. Thus, for instance, the Baojia are said to descend from Tibetans who entered the composition of the Shirongol people.<sup>61</sup> The surname group Ni (Nijia, from whom the village derived its name) is claimed to be of Chinese origin. Certain of the Sanchuan surnames are also encountered elsewhere. It happens that the surname Qi is

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<sup>58</sup> [Neither of these locations are on the Huang River.]

<sup>59</sup> [Schram (2006[1954, 1957, 1961]) draws heavily on this work.]

<sup>60</sup> [The Salar are a Turkic-speaking Islamic people. For more on the Salar see Goodman (2008), Hahn (1988), Li and Stuart (1990), Ma et al. (1993), Ma and Stuart, (1996), Ma et al. (1999), Ma et al. (2001), and Poppe (1953).]

<sup>61</sup> It is possible that the current surnames are based on the initial syllables of ancient Mongol names. A similar development can be observed in Ordos.

particularly widespread, and is also found in Weiyuan among Tibetan-speakers.<sup>62</sup> These people are assumed to be Mongols who lost their language in a Tibetan environment, but the Qijia *nar* in Sanchuan still regard them as their kin.<sup>63</sup> Part of the land within the municipality of Xining is the property of Qi Tusi.

Certain clans have elders who are the so-called *tusi*. Thus, there are Qi Tusi, Lu Tusi, Li Tusi, and others. Upon the death of a *tusi*, this hereditary title goes to the eldest son, while the younger sons all become members of regular society (*khara kun* ['black people']). Folk tradition can hardly give definitive information as to whether all clans once had their own *tusi*. Some clans, however, lost their *tusi* during the memory of people who are still living. Thus, it is told that the surname group Xin, who occupy the territory to the west of Qijia *nar*, recently still had their own *tusi* (Xin Tusi), but his title was cancelled by the Chinese authorities. The last Xin Tusi took much tribute from his subjects; the Xinjia *nar* lodged a protest with the Chinese leadership, and the latter removed the title from the profit-seeking *tusi* and made him an ordinary subject of the emperor, and the Xinjia *nar* were placed under the direct rule of Chinese officials. In olden times the total number of Shirongol *tusi* was eighteen, but it is unclear how many remain today, even to the Shirongols themselves. Some *tusi* lost their title in the same way as Xin Tusi, while others became impoverished and lost their social position. Many *tusi* clans have disappeared. These *tusi* are still extant: Qi Tusi (there are two), Li Tusi (his residence is located in the town of Liangcheng on the Datong River), Wang Tusi, and Gan Tusi.<sup>64</sup>

## DWELLINGS

The Sanchuan Shirongols live partly in separate farmsteads, and partly in groups of farmsteads. They are all settled, and no traces remain of their former nomadic way of life. The houses are built of clay bricks and are called *gar*. Every house has a courtyard, surrounded by a wall three to five meters high. Such a house appears from the outside like a small fortress or castle and the way into the courtyard goes through a small wicket that only a mule without a burden can pass through. For this reason, mules with a burden are unloaded outside of the courtyard and carts are also left outside.

We spent the winter of 1884-1885 in such a Shirongol house. A description of this house may also give an understanding of other houses in the region. Our house was quadrangular in shape with sides fifteen meters long. The sides were oriented according to the points of the compass. There was a wicket in the southern wall of the compound. There was a room thirteen meters long along the northern wall. There was a building of similar length along the western wall divided into two halves – in one half there was a stable and the other half served as living quarters. There was an empty space three meters across used for dumping ashes and rubbish where the two buildings did not join each other at the northwestern corner. The rooms were up to two and a half meters high, with the walls of the courtyard rising one or two meters above them. The community living inside of these high walls

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<sup>62</sup> [See Sperling (1997) for more on the Qi Clan.]

<sup>63</sup> In another place I have the following note that apparently refers to these same Qijia: there is a group called Qijia Lakka north of the town of Nianbo. These are Tibetans who do not grow crops, but are engaged in cattle breeding and live in black tents. They are administered under Qi Tusi, who lives in Nianbo. I also have a note on the Qijia *nar* living around Weiyuan. They are called Qijia Kaksung, and they are more numerous than the Sanchuan Qijia.

<sup>64</sup> According to the *Xining Zhi* there is a stone at Honggucheng on the northern bank of the Yellow River, down from the mouth of the Huang River, with an inscription marking the boundary of the possessions of Li Tusi.

thus could not see what happened outside of the house. The people in the house had to climb by ladder onto the roofs of the room in order to see the crowd in the street when there was noise in the village streets accompanied by the crackle of firecrackers, or if there was a festive entrée or a procession. The walls were built of bricks and covered by clay on both sides.

Our house was adjoined in the east by another one exactly the same, and to the latter a third one was adjoined. All three together formed on the southern side a continuous high wall with three wickets. There was a dark pile up to two meters high at some distance from each wicket beside the wall. This was the stock of fertilizer for the field, of which we will say more in connection with agriculture. There was an empty space up to twenty meters broad belonging to these houses in front of this wall, while there was the back wall of the next block to the south of this space. They prepare the threshing-floor on these openings in front of some farmsteads.

Even rich people have such relatively small houses. If the space occupied by a farmhouse is large, it is divided into separate rooms, with a separate room serving as the stable for the mules, or as the dwelling of a married son. The actual dwelling of a household always remains relatively small. However, if a person grows wealthy, he can surround his courtyard with rooms on all four sides, or also build a second floor above the room located along the northern wall. Certain pious house owners build a platform of clay in the middle of the courtyard with a height of half a meter and burn yellow paper here during festivals.

The northern room located opposite the wicket is normally considered to be the most important. Guests are received here and it has the best furnishings. It has a door in the center and, on both sides of the door, are large windows through which the interior receives light. There are no partitions inside this room. The whole forms a single room that in a rich house might be called the living room, and in a poor house called the storage room. There is a sleeping platform along the whole west end of the building that is heated in winter. Firewood is laid in openings that are located on the exterior wall of the room. A large wooden chest is usually placed opposite the window on the sleeping platform that in poor homes is undecorated, but in rich homes, it is made of elaborately carved walnut wood and a finishing of lacquer. Rice, fruit, and nuts are kept inside.<sup>65</sup> They have a table opposite the door,<sup>66</sup> above which, on the wall, they either hang a picture depicting some Buddhist deity or glue an enormous sheet of red paper with Chinese characters. The other end of the room is either empty, or if no other space is available, it is used for storing grain-filled painted trunks and glazed pots or *gang*, straw casks,<sup>67</sup> and other vessels containing agricultural products.<sup>68</sup>

The rooms' walls are so thin that thieves, having established where the housemaster's chest with silver is kept, occasionally manage to make a hole in the wall beside the chest and steal the silver during a single night without entering the house. For this reason, rich people surround their premises with an external wall and let watchdogs run free during the night in the space between the two walls.

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<sup>65</sup> [A storage chest is given to a woman when she marries and moves to her husband's family home. This is placed on the sleeping platform and is used to store the woman's private property. Traditionally, most important among this property was her embroidering equipment. The woman maintains the key to this box throughout her life.]

<sup>66</sup> [This table is referred to as the *baxian* 'Eight Immortals' table.]

<sup>67</sup> By straw cask I mean a special vessel that is used for keeping grain, made of a long plait or rope. One end of the rope is laid on the floor of the room in a circle with a diameter of two meters; the remaining rope is laid in rings lying one above the other forming a cylinder up to nearly three meters high. The cylinder is hollow and narrows slightly upwards. Such implements are used here instead of actual chests and granaries.

<sup>68</sup> [The northwest corner of the compound's main room was also where *jiashen* 'household deities' were enshrined and venerated.]

## CLOTHING

The clothing of men in no way differs from that of the local Chinese. The clothing of women is, however, characterized by considerable peculiarities, though their hairstyle and footwear also show a strong Chinese influence. Girls' feet are bound, though not quite as strongly as among the Chinese so that, although their feet are also deformed, the Shirongol women can nevertheless walk well and even carry heavy burdens.<sup>69</sup> The main difference in clothing is contained in the headdress that varies from place to place. The headdress is relatively simple in Sanchuan.<sup>70</sup> The hair is drawn up from the sides and tied with a red band so tightly that an upwards-pointing cylindrical rod about twenty centimeters high is formed slightly back of the top of the head. The rest of the hair in the back is laid in rings around the base of the rod. On the fore side of the head in front of the rod, a kind of wreath or *noudar*, is laid on the hair. It is sewn from a strip of cloth with a thickness of 1.5 fingers, and on the exterior side it is decorated with corals and large round silver plates forming rosettes. This is the everyday headdress of married women. For festivals, women fix to the *noudar* a thick fringe made of tiny red coral beads that hangs down and covers the upper part of the forehead.

Weiyuan women wear several types of headdress. Some of them are illustrated in Przheval'skii's *Third Expedition*. In the immediate vicinity of Weiyuan, Shirongol women wear a piece of cardboard that covers only the fore part of the head. These headgear are gathered inwards in the middle like cavalry caps, i.e., the diameter of the piece from the forehead upwards becomes smaller up to the middle part of the piece, but higher up becomes larger again, so that the whole headgear consists of two parts. The lower part is like a little cap, while the upper part forms a ridge across the head. The headgear is glued together of paper and covered with red cotton cloth. In places it is decorated with gold paper glued onto it. A thick fringe is sewn from silk tassels onto the upper edge of the ridge that completely covers the front side of the piece. The plaited hair is threaded through a round opening located in the lower back part of the headgear and the place where the hair comes out through the opening is covered with a round brass plate. They throw on the headgear a covering made of blue cotton cloth that extends to the waist or lower on the back. When Weiyuan Shirongol women work in the field, they gather this covering in a bundle upon the headgear, which makes their heads appear enormously big from far away. The covering is sewn in the form of a half bag, i.e., they take a piece of cloth the size of a towel, fold it in the middle as if making a bag, and then sew together one side of the bag, while the other side is left open. The result is a kind of hood with a rectangular top.

Another type of headdress consists of brass plates more than twenty centimeters long that are fixed radially around the face. This headdress, like the one mentioned above, can be seen in the illustrations in Przheval'skii's work. I did not see it being worn by women, but a dealer in old clothes did obtain a specimen of it for me at Weiyuan, together with two specimens of the headgear described above.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> [See examples of Minhe Mangghuer women with bound feet: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/koknor/3027522301/>; <https://www.flickr.com/photos/koknor/3028356562/>, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/koknor/3027522251/>, and <https://www.flickr.com/photos/koknor/3028356484/>, accessed 28 January 2015. Women whose feet had been completely bound were very old and very few in 2011 in the Minhe Mangghuer area.]

<sup>70</sup> [See examples of Minhe Mangghuer women's headdresses in the pre-1949 era: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/koknor/sets/72157625322866853/>, accessed 28 January 2015.]

<sup>71</sup> These two headdresses are now kept at the Museum of the East Siberian Branch of the Geographical Society in Irkutsk. Tibetans (according to one source) call Shirongol people who wear these clumsy headdresses Karlong. [See Faehndrich (2007) for more on the Karlong dialect.]

Finally, a third type of headdress consists of a cap with a wooden rod one meter high on top. There is an iron trident at the end of the rod. Przheval'skii does not have this, and I was also unable to obtain a specimen of it, since it is used somewhere in remote corners to the north of Weiyuan. But I heard detailed descriptions of such a headdress and eventually saw a Shirongol woman wearing such a piece on a street in Xining. Women wearing this type of headdress add to it a broad strip of cloth about one handbreadth wide that runs from the back of the head along the back almost down to the hem that is decorated with silk embroidery and small shells. At the height of the waist a white circle like a small plate with a diameter of thirteen centimeters in a completely horizontal position is attached. It is carved out, as it appears, from some large seashell.<sup>72</sup>

Finally, we encountered new types of headdress again around Bao'an. Married women let the plaited hair fall down along the back. The root of the hair is covered with a three-finger-broad envelope or plate of cloth, the ends of which are bent under the plait so that the lower ends are bent more and the upper ends less. It appears as if the upper end passes through a case that narrows downwards and widens upwards like a bell-shaped socket. This covering is decorated with ornaments sewn with multicolored silks on the exterior side. A horizontal copper arrow or plate passes through this plate below this covering. Old women cover the head with a cylindrical cap that is sewn from black textile and is placed closer to the back of the head.

Regarding other clothing among the Sanchuan Shirongol women, the skirt or *khurmo*<sup>73</sup> is unique. It is sewn of brown calico. A white band of fur is sewn with a breadth of fifteen centimeters to the skirt's upper border. The back of the skirt is split along its entire height so that this sort of skirt may also be characterized as a large apron that covers the feet down to the shoes. The two sides of this apron are drawn one upon the other at the back so that the feet are hidden in a tube. Intakes are only made under the ends of the fur band at the waist. The skirt is even in the front and along the sides. There is also a split in the front from the hem upwards, but only halfway along the height of the skirt. Along the hem runs a sewn strip made of black cotton cloth 7.5 centimeters wide. The same strip runs along the sides of the two splits.

The actual apron is of completely European dimensions and is worn on the skirt. It is mainly sewn of red cloth. On the sides and on the hem it is decorated with a strip of green material with the breadth of a hand. The breast and the spine are covered by a jacket called *ange*<sup>74</sup> that is often green and has wide arms. Its lower part is red. Women wear broad cotton pants and an abdominal band under the skirt that also serves as a pocket.

Women's shoes are of the Chinese type and sewn of silk by Shirongol women themselves. Men wear shoes sewn by their wives. Leather shoes of the piston type, known in Chinese as *luoti* that I observed being worn by the Salars, are not used by the Shirongols.

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<sup>72</sup> I was occasionally told that the Shirongol tribe whose women wear this kind of headdress with a rod are called Dpa' ris, while others claimed that this is the name of a locality. The habit of wearing certain caps with a rod among ancient Mongols is mentioned in the notes of the Chinese scholar Meng Hong\*. [Dpa' ris is the Tibetan name for the region comprised of contemporary Huzhu, Ledu, and Tianzhu counties. The name given to the inhabitants is usually Dpa'ris ba, though Dpa' ris is also affixed at the beginning of personal names to indicate the individual's origins, for example, Dpa' ris Tshe ring don 'grub.]

<sup>73</sup> [*khurmo* = elderly Mangghuer lady's long coat.]

<sup>74</sup> [*Ange* is the Mangghuer word for the front part of a jacket.]



Shirongol food has only two peculiarities: first, the baking of a special bread in cast-iron pots called *chonggur*, and second, the brewing of beer (*pyushing*). The main feature of these breads or *chonggur dimei* in Shirongol is that they are leavened. The whole of China knows only unleavened bread – rolls the size of Russian Orthodox communion breads, baked in steam.<sup>75</sup> The baking of *chonggur dimei* requires a special leavening that is taken from old sour dough with some admixtures. This leavening is *kurniege* in Shirongol. It has the form of lentil-shaped loaves with a hole in the middle; these loaves are threaded on a string like our Russian ring rolls. To some extent the Shirongols make *kurniege* themselves, but the best quality is received from Lintao.

Peasants from the region of Lintao move all around Amdo looking for jobs as weavers in both Chinese and Tibetan villages. At the same time they distribute *kurniege*, deliver it on credit, and collect their debts when returning home. In the spring, *kurniege* from Lintao costs three cash apiece, while the price is six cash in the autumn. The dough used to make these pieces contains such herbs as *tizhu*, *Thymus serpyllum*, but hops are not used and their properties are unknown, although the hop, *Humulus lupulus*, grows in the forests. This *kurniege* is also used when making alcoholic drinks.

The Shirongol leavened breads have the shape and size of our round rolls. The cast-iron form in which they are baked consists of two cups, of which one serves as the bottom and the other as the lid.<sup>76</sup> To be precise, these breads are not confined to the Shirongols, for similar breads are also baked by the Salars, as well as by the Chinese Muslims. In the Chinese context, however, they are exclusively a Muslim feature. It is probable that this tradition of bread-baking was brought here by the Turks. The same method of leavening bread is also known in Hami.

The same *kurniege* is also used in the process of brewing beer and when preparing grain for distilling liquor (*durvasi*). The distilling device consists of a kettle with a lid, a cooler, and a tube. The kettle is the same in which food is prepared, that is, the kettle is fixed into the stove. It is covered with a round flat wooden lid or *bergesi*. There is a cross-bar with a hole fixed to the lid for removing the lid. The word *bergesi* is probably of the same root as Mongol *burhel*, which denotes the dome-shaped lid used to cover the kettle in which liquor is prepared from milk. In Shirongol, however, any type of lid is called *bergesi*. The lid has an opening into which the end of a straight pipe or *tongzi* is placed. The other pipe end goes into the side of a high earthenware pot nine centimeters below the rim of the latter. This pot functions as a cooler (*ker*). It is divided with a horizontal partition into two parts. Water is poured into the upper part while steam from the *tongzi* enters the lower part and is condensed into drops that run out through a short pipe fixed to the opposite side of the pot near the bottom. A clay vessel is placed to collect the spirits under this pipe.

*Kunderge* is probably the same word as Buryat *hurungu*. It shows exactly the same kind of metathesis as Shirongol *merge* or 'camel-hair material' when compared to Ordos *urmege*. Buryats use *hurungu* to denote fermented milk from which they distil milk liquor or *tarasun*. It is probable that, in Central Asia, distilling liquor from milk was invented before distilling liquor from grain, so that the terminology of the former technology was applied to the latter.

<sup>75</sup> In a special device consisting of a sieve into which steam is directed from boiling water.

<sup>76</sup> It appears that *chonggur* is the same word as Mongol *kangar* or 'paired cups'. The letter *k* in the beginning of Shirongol words is occasionally represented as *q*, as, e.g., in 'Qidai' for 'Kitai', etc.

Land in Sanchuan is private property. Landowners are entitled to pass their land to heirs or sell it as they like. In contrast, people who have a *tusi*, such as the Qijia *nar*, lack the right to sell their land without their *tusi*'s permission. Moreover, the Qijia *nar* can only sell their land to other Qijia *nar*, while people from other clans who do not have a *tusi* can sell their lands to other surname groups as well.

The house and the land are divided equally between sons after a father's death. Some brothers receive money instead of real property if the household is crowded. Daughters get no share and continue living with their brothers. Land can also be rented and pawned. Thus, for instance, Shanba, a nephew of Samt'andjimba, gave two *sheng*<sup>77</sup> of his land as security for a loan of 17,500 cash. It is possible to similarly pawn individual walnut trees. Rich people in Sanchuan own up to 100 *sheng* of land, while poor people own five to nine *sheng*, and even no more than two *sheng*.

The soil all over Sanchuan consists of loess but is nevertheless manured. Artificial irrigation channels drawn from Yellow River tributaries water the fields. The fields are flooded in autumn and are covered by a thin layer of ice during winter. Local people explain this as a measure to prevent the fertilized layer of soil from being blown away by spring winds. There are two harvests a year.<sup>78</sup>

The soil is tilled with a mule-drawn plow. The plowshare has a heart-shaped form; a wooden rod is placed into the plow socket, and the upper end of the rod has a cross-bar that serves as the plow handlebar. The rod, which functions as the trunk of the plow, is called *motu enzhasi*, while the ends of the cross-bar are called *qigi* or 'ears'. Some distance above the plowshare on the front side of the rod there is an additional pole, *zar*, which is fixed to the rod with the help of a cross-piece called *sumu motu*<sup>79</sup> or 'arrow'.

Fertilizer is made from a mixture of loess with dung, ash, and various dirt. As mentioned above, there is a heap of such fertilizer in front of the wicket of every house. Making fertilizer is women's task. Women take loess from the field in baskets and carry it to the wicket on their backs. Then, in winter, they bring frozen dirt from the toilet, break both components with mallets into dust, and mix them together. The women take this fertilizer to the fields in the spring, also in baskets. Those who have donkeys use them to carry fertilizer, loading one donkey with two baskets. One *sheng* of seed-corn requires one hundred donkey baskets of fertilizer.<sup>80</sup>

Crops include barley (*arpa*), *qingkuo* (awnless barley), wheat (*bodi*), and buckwheat (*sigha*), but the variety of the latter that is cultivated in Chahar for animal fodder is not sown in Sanchuan. Potatoes are not grown in Sanchuan. People buy potatoes from villages situated in the nearby mountains.<sup>81</sup> A popular crop is *gaizi*, *Brassica juncea* [mustard greens/ leaf mustard], which is grown for making vegetable oil. This oil is one of the principal products of Sanchuan together with walnuts,

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<sup>77</sup> In this context a *sheng* is a piece of land on which one *sheng*, or one bucketful of grain, can be sown. The measure *sheng* is used for dry substances, and its size varies in different parts of China. A *sheng* is a box with a bottom measuring twenty centimeters in square, and with a height of seventeen centimeters in Sanchuan.

<sup>78</sup> [This is true for lowland communities in the Gaunting basin. Villages on mountain slopes in the hinterland and tributary valleys harvest once a year.]

<sup>79</sup> [*sumu motu* = pine wood.]

<sup>80</sup> In marshy places, as in Sku 'bum, people cut turf, *dongul* in Shirongol (in Ordos and Chahar *kala*), burn it, and fertilize fields with the ashes.

<sup>81</sup> [These villages were most likely in Sanchuan and inhabited by the same population that lived in the lowlands. Sanchuan mountain villages are known today for high yields of potatoes that are easily cultivated in the rich, loosely packed soil.]

which are taken to marketplaces in Lanzhou. The oil from *gaizi* is used for lamps and cooking. The leaves of *gaizi* are pickled and added to soup. The areas of rice and cotton cultivation do not extend up to Sanchuan. Hemp is unknown to Sanchuan people.

Barley is first sown in the fields, and then, during the same summer, buckwheat. Another possibility is to first sow wheat and then Italian millet (*xonok*).<sup>82</sup> One *sheng* of barley yields forty *sheng* of crop grain. A family of five is considered to require one hundred *sheng* of grain annually.

As far as fruit-bearing trees are concerned, Sanchuan people grow peaches, pears, and walnuts. Apples and *zao* (*Zizyphus vulgaris* [jujube/ buckthorn]) are absent in Sanchuan. According to local people, there used to be a multitude of peach and walnut trees in Sanchuan, but the Muslim rebels cut them all down. The whole of the Sanchuan Valley was green with fruit and walnut trees like an endless garden before the rebellion. In addition to fruit-bearing trees, two other kinds of tree are cultivated in Sanchuan: *honghua* (*Wisteria chinensis* [Chinese wisteria]) that yields red oil and paint, and *jiaozhi* (*Zanthoxylon bungei* [Chinese prickly ash]), the fruits of which are used by local people as a pepper substitute.

I can only say that apiculture exists in Sanchuan. We did not see any beehives in use since it happened that we stayed in Sanchuan only during the winter and autumn. We often had local honey from Sanchuan. It is of low quality, thin, and dark-colored. White saccharine honey is brought to Lanzhou only from Sichuan.

Sanchuan people have the following domestic livestock: cattle, pigs, sheep with white wool and a small tail, donkeys, hinnies, and rarely horses. Mules, yaks (*xainek* in Shirongol), and mixed offspring of yaks and cows are absent. Some people keep stallions for mating with female donkeys. They try to prevent such a stallion from seeing a mare, otherwise it will stop mating with donkeys. The person with the female donkey gives the stallion's owner a sieve-full of peas for the coupling and if the donkey produces a foal, the donkey's owner gives the stallion's owner 300 cash and a large loaf of bread, and entertains him with liquor.

The wool of the sheep is shorn twice a year. I was told that Tibetans, both in Sanchuan and elsewhere in Amdo, shear their sheep only once a year, in the spring, and this is why Tibetan wool is longer.

Sanchuan people raise chicken and ducks.

#### WEAVING AND THE DIVISION OF LABOR

Weaving in Sanchuan is solely men's activity. They weave only woolen textiles. One type of textile (*merge* in Shirongol) is relatively broad and is used for making trousers and outer garments, while another type is narrower and is used for sashes. They also weave a coarse material called *mabu* that is used for making sacks.

Sanchuan people, like the peasants of Lintao, travel round Tibetan nomad camps and are commissioned to weave for non-agricultural Tibetans. They carry a dismantled loom with them. They charge the wool owner fifteen cash for two meters of woven textile. An experienced weaver can complete twenty-seven meters in one day. Apart from the salary, the weavers surreptitiously take for

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<sup>82</sup> Predictions about the harvest are made on the basis of a magpie's nest. If the entrance in the nest that a magpie makes in the spring points southwest, the harvest will be good, but the harvest will be bad if the entrance points north. There will be drought and no rain if the entrance points somewhat upwards.

themselves yarn and pieces of yarn that are unsuitable for weaving. Such pieces are collected by a weaver from a single household to the value of up to one hundred cash – this is called 'the weaver's share'. The master of the house may, however, take away 'share' if he detects it.<sup>83</sup> Women in Sanchuan do not weave.

A reed is only used to regulate the passing of the yarn onto the heddles. After threading the yarns into the slits in the reed, the weaver passes them behind onto the heddles and then extracts them from the reed, which will no longer be used. The yarn is fixed into position not with the reed, but with a shuttle, which for this purpose has a considerable length and weight. There are four heddles (*kudzoh*) and, accordingly, four pedals (*cheigun*). The shuttle (*sumu* or 'arrow') is boat-shaped. There is an iron needle inside the shuttle that is fixed to the bobbin or to a reed pipe. The other end of the yarn that is wrapped around the bobbin and passed through a hole that is located either on the side or on the bottom of the shuttle. The block to which the heddles are attached is called *irgach*. The pinioned ridge used for pulling the warp threads is called *ogung*;<sup>84</sup> the rear spindle around which the warp is wound is called *lugo*. The front spindle onto which the woven fabric is wound is called *kundzhu*. The weft is called *cuizi*; the wheel for winding the weft on the bobbin is *terge*. The spool with an iron rod (spindle) is *terge ig*.

The Shirongols make felt and sometimes color it red. Red felt is named *phying*, which in Tibetan means simply 'felt', showing that this technique was adopted from the Tibetans. Similarly, a woolen material with brown crosses inside white circles is known to the Shirongols by the Tibetan name *phrug*.

Shirongol women are overloaded with work. They use mallets to break lumpy soil used for fertilizer and carry it in baskets on their backs, or with donkeys, to the field. They help men till the soil and sow. They fetch water for the household from streams and springs in buckets. They do all the sewing for the family and care for the children. They get up earlier than their husbands. The husband can travel away from home, or go to see the Mchod pa festival at Sku 'bum, and can be certain that his wife will, even without him, harvest the field or prepare the fertilizer. This burdening of women with fieldwork, especially with dirty work like the preparation of fertilizer, results in a general slovenliness of women. One would not believe that the hands of Shirongol women are parts of a human body. Instead of a poker, Shirongol women use their bare hands to dig out the ashes and coal from the stove, and this is why their hands are dirty, rough, and black.

There is also a lack of clothes in the region. Women from poor households own only a single dress that they never change. Every scrap of textile is appreciated and, however bad it might be, it is washed and used at least for shoe insoles. Coarse cotton fabric that we would only possibly use to wrap a parcel of mail, is here embroidered with silk thread and used for pillows to decorate the sleeping platform in the living room.

Children live in filthy conditions, and it is not surprising that they often have skin diseases. Adult people also often have sores on the neck and chest, a disease that Ordos Mongols call *hulugana dzhara* or 'rat wound'.

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<sup>83</sup> Chinese women in Guangdong practice similar stealing when they spin cotton yarn.

<sup>84</sup> [We were unable to find an exact translation for the Russian term *prituzhal'nik*. See here for an image: <http://www.bibliotekar.ru/ruswood/43.htm>. Thanks to Tatiana Krampe for assistance translating this term.]

## GENERAL INFORMATION ON RELIGION

The Shirongols are divided into Muslims and non-Muslims in terms of religion. The Muslims live in separate villages, have mosques (*libai si*) and *ahong*, and despise their neighbors' religions. Only the single village of Majia is occupied by Muslims in Sanchuan, while in contrast, all the Shirongol villages in Dongxiang are Muslim. The non-Muslim Shirongols are all Buddhists, but beside the cult of Buddhist deities they also worship certain non-Buddhist gods. They have monasteries and temples built in the Tibetan style, with statues following the patterns generally seen in temples in Tibet and Mongolia. In addition, there are temples of the Chinese style, with the Chinese type of gods.

The non-Muslim Chinese have three kinds of temples in other parts of China – Confucian, Buddhist, and Daoist – but the people are not divided according to these denominations. A person may worship both at a Daoist and at a Buddhist temple, just as an ill person in our own society can turn to either an allopath or a homeopath.

Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism are philosophical teachings that have developed into religions. Confucianism is regarded as the state doctrine in China, but Confucian temples exist only in cities.<sup>85</sup>

Buddhist temples are even less numerous, while there are more Daoist temples. Buddhist and Daoist temples can only be found in Buddhist and Daoist monasteries, and are maintained with the help of alms received from worshippers; some are also maintained with government subsidies.

In addition to these three kinds of temple there is a fourth type that is organized on the initiative and agreement of rural or urban communities, or urban merchants' guilds or other corporations. Like Confucian temples, they have no monks but guards and laymen carry out rituals of sacrifices and processions, resembling the situation in Confucian temples, where police officers carry out the rituals. This popular cult relates to the three religions mentioned above very much as folk poetry relates to poetry and arts created by intellectuals.

Only two of these four cults are present in Sanchuan: the popular cult and Buddhism. There is not a single Confucian temple or Daoist monastery in the region.<sup>86</sup> The Daoist monks, who are called here by the name *daoren*, and who are recognized by their trident and their haircut, appear here only rarely in search of alms.<sup>87</sup> The relation of Sanchuan people to Buddhism is different from that of the Chinese. Their position towards Buddhist temples is not that of worshippers but rather a community or, so to say, a Buddhist church. The existence of two cults in the same minds makes Sanchuan a rare example of double beliefs. Our monk, Tshe ring, was a monk from Wenjia Monastery, had a cell there, and lived there permanently; but meanwhile he was fervently engaged in decorating the temple for the popular cult of the non-Buddhist deity, Longwang,<sup>88</sup> and was one of the most unremitting contributors to this temple.

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<sup>85</sup> [See Jing (1998) for more on Confucianism in the area.]

<sup>86</sup> [The Daoist monastery of Shancheng is nestled high in the mountains above Sangbura and was probably in operation at the time the author was writing.]

<sup>87</sup> [Daoist practitioners called *yinyang* reside in Sanchuan and were likely present at the time the author was writing. *Yinyang* are married, household Daoists. One of their main duties is to chant scriptures at funerals in order to ameliorate the potentially negative effects on the living of pollution emanating from the corpse. They also choose auspicious dates for weddings and beginning such new undertakings as building a house. Their final major role is curing illness.]

<sup>88</sup> [Longwang, 'Dragon King', is in fact a term of address for male deities in general, rather than the name of a specific deity.]

Sanchuan has several Buddhist monasteries (*ximie* in the local pronunciation), including Wenjia Monastery, Ghada Monastery, Kadiga,<sup>89</sup> Wushi Monastery, and others. Each *ximie* has disciples of its own who have volunteered to maintain it. It is said that Wushi Monastery is maintained by nine villages, and Wenjia Monastery by twenty-four villages; these figures are probably exaggerated due to the vainglory of the monks.<sup>90</sup>

The monasteries are filled by monks from the ranks of the Shirongols themselves; there are also rarely Mongols from Ordos in Shirongol monasteries, and once we even saw a Solon. The number of monks in Shirongol monasteries is connected to local landownership practices. Land in Sanchuan is divided among sons but when the property is not large and the resulting shares would be insignificant, some sons become monks. The number of monks was high when the population in Sanchuan was large and there was little land before the Muslim rebellion. Of four brothers, one remained at home to continue the household and the others became monks. The Muslim rebellion and the ravaging of Sanchuan greatly reduced the population and there was a need of labor to work the fields and consequently, only a small percentage of the population is currently sent to become lamas.

Lamas earn money by reading prayers on the occasion of illness or death of laypersons, and also by providing sick people with medicine, as well as by making Buddha statues and pictures. During the time when the number of lamas grew large in Sanchuan, Shirongol lamas were scattered all over Mongolia and Tibet. Many of them even now live in Co ne, Sku 'bum, Bla brang, Lha sa, Dolonor, Alashan, and other places. Presently, a third of Sku 'bum monks are Shirongols.

If the brother remaining with the family dies and there is no one to replace him and care for the household, another brother who has made monastic vows leaves the monastery and becomes a layman once more. I often met such people in Sanchuan wearing a pigtail, although they had previously been monks. I did not observe lamas living openly in a relationship of marriage and managing a household, as often occurs in Mongolia and among the Kokonor Oirats. The whole monastic class lives in monasteries, however, this does not prevent certain monks from having a secret worldly sweetheart.

Sanchuan is located in the middle of several sacred Buddhist places. The famous Sku 'bum Monastery, the birthplace of Tsong kha pa, the reformer of Buddhism and founder of Lamaism, lies west of here and there is also Bya khyung, the hermitage of Tsong kha pa's teacher, where Tsong kha pa took his first lessons in the Buddhist doctrine. Kadiga is in Sanchuan proper, where a wonder-working painting of Tsong kha pa was allegedly once brought.<sup>91</sup> There are also the monasteries of Bingling Si and Dmar gtsang Monastery, Lake Xinxia, and other places associated with Buddhist legends in the vicinity.

This all suggests the prolonged influence of Buddhism on the tribes living in the Yellow River Valley. The very emergence of a religious reformer from this region can only be explained by the role of A mdo as an intellectual center of the Buddhist world. It is very likely that intellectual culture and arts had already found a shelter in ancient times in these warm valleys of the Yellow and the Huang Rivers that are protected on all sides by high mountain ranges from invasion by hostile hordes. The notes of Orazio della Penna\* [1681-1745], the eighteenth century missionary who visited Lha sa, mentions that

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<sup>89</sup> [Kadi Kawa.]

<sup>90</sup> [The lay community associated with monasteries is referred to as *terdi*. The figures provided here for the size of monastery *terdi* accord precisely with oral accounts collected between 2008-2010 (Roche 2011).]

<sup>91</sup> [See Feng and Stuart (1992) for details.]

all educated persons in Lha sa, scholars and teachers, descended from A mdo. Even the teacher of the Dalai Lama himself was an A mdo Tibetan. Maybe it is this superior knowledge and culture that the popular legend about the building of Lha sa refers to when it tells that the builders, in order to solve the secret of completing the construction work, had to leave for A mdo to find advice.

Evidence from historical data suggests that A mdo had civilization earlier than the Yar klung tsang po Valley. To the latter valley, where Lha sa, the Rome of the Tibetan world, is located today, Buddhism was introduced during the reign of King Srong btsan sgam po (born in 617, ascended the throne in 629). At the same time, we know that the Chinese monk Xuanzang [602-664], who, also in the seventh century, travelled from China to India, found Buddhism flourishing in such cities north of Nanshan as Lanzhou, Hami, and Khotan. Moreover, even earlier, at the beginning of the fifth century, that is, 200 years before the Tibetan king Srong btsan sgam po [605 or 617?-649], the monk Faxian [337-422] found Buddhism in the same places where it was later observed by Xuanzang, i.e., along the southern border of Mongolia.

If Buddhism had already taken root and become dominant in cities located at the foot of Nanshan, it is hardly thinkable that the Yellow River Valley, separated from these cities only by a narrow ridge, would have remained outside of Uighur Buddhist influence. In times of military massacres on the Mongolian Plateau, Buddhists living in Uighur cities north of Nanshan could not have found a better refuge from the destruction than the A mdo part of the Yellow River Valley, which is isolated like a natural fortress. The fact that it did serve as such a refuge is demonstrated by its ethnographic composition, which comprises, apart from Tibetans and Chinese, also the Shirongols and the Salars.

In view of the distance of Lha sa from A mdo, and considering the unfriendly deserts and mountains that separate these places, one inevitably reaches the conclusion that Buddhism became established much earlier in the homeland of Tsong kha pa than in the kingdom of Srong btsan sgam po. This was probably the type of Buddhism that was professed by the Uighurs of southern Mongolia; it was probably taken here from Khotan, and to Khotan from Kashmir, or even more exactly, from Kabul via Bamyān. It is also likely that, after it had been taken so early to the Yellow River region, it started to expand from here along the Plateau to Ordos, Guihuacheng, and possibly even further north, so that the Mongols could have become familiar with Buddhism even before they met Tibetans.

If we now consider that it was the Tibetan script that came to be the sacred script of northern Mongolia, that the role of Rome for the Mongols came to be played by Lha sa, and the role of the Pope by a pontiff living on the southern outskirts of Tibet, we can presume that the solution to this enigma lies in the history of A mdo and Ordos that were meeting places for Uighurs, Tibetans, and Mongols before Genghis Khan. The roles could be changed, and the place of the Uighurs could be occupied by the Tibetans. Just as the imperial crown could pass from the Uighurs to the Tibetans of the Tangut empire, so could the hat of the chief priest. The Tibetans, who in the beginning lived very near Uighur cities and who subsequently became their rulers, must have constantly borrowed cultural features from the Uighurs, who were a race standing at a considerably higher intellectual level. And anyone who studies the ancient history of the Uighurs is likely to find it useful to study the A mdo Tibetans. The Ge sar legend may be one piece of heritage that was transmitted by the Uighurs to the Tibetans.

How the Shirongols adopted the cult of Chinese deities is a question that can be answered only after a careful study of the Shirongol oral traditions. The Shirongols certainly had specific beliefs before they adopted Buddhism, but they would have to resemble those relics of the ancient cult that can still be encountered among the Mongols of the Plateau. However, what we observe now is that the

Shirongols have replaced this ancient cult by one borrowed from the Chinese. The adoption of Chinese deities cannot be explained by assuming a racial mixture, for in the valley of the Xing'er River that adjoins Sanchuan, in the villages of the sedentary Tibetans there are in exactly the same way, in addition to Buddhist monasteries, also Chinese temples with statues of Chinese popular gods, in spite of the fact that the Tibetans do not intermarry with Chinese.

The most popular Chinese deities in the region under study are Longwang and Niangniang.<sup>92</sup> The largest number of temples in honor of Longwang is to be found in the eastern part of the territory of our survey, in the region of Hezhou, while Niangniang is worshipped more actively in the east, around Xining. This has given rise to the Chinese saying: *Longwang duo de difang Hezhou, Niangniang duo de difang Xining*. Both of these names, Longwang and Niangniang, are based on common nouns: *long* means 'dragon', and *wang* means 'king'. It is said that there are many *longwang*, and they are differentiated by personal names. The *longwang* in whose honor a temple in Qijia Village in the eastern half of Sanchuan is built, has the special name Suojie Longwang and he is also sometimes called Suojie Ye. The word Niangniang means 'young lady' and this name is given to a female deity whose variants are apparently also distinguished by special names.

#### SHAMANISM<sup>93</sup>

The Shirongols also have shamanic deities in addition to Buddhist and Chinese popular gods. These seem to be few in number and are only worshipped by certain clans. Thus, the Ganjia, Tianjia, Hejia, Xinjia, and Nanjia clans revere the deity Zushi (also known as Heima Zushi or 'Zushi on a Black Horse'), while families from the Majia Clan revere the deity Baima Tianjiang ('Heavenly General on a White Horse').<sup>94</sup> These clans simultaneously worship Buddhist and Chinese deities. Shamanic god images are made on canvas, and the worshippers keep these pictures in their room. They are consecrated by special persons, whom the Chinese call *yinyang*, while the Shirongols call them *bo*, i.e., the same name other Mongols call shamans.<sup>95</sup>

I had a chance to be present during the consecration of a picture of Zushi, and I include here a description of what I saw. One inhabitant of Ganjia Village had ordered an image of Zushi for his house and invited a *yinyang* from Nianjia Village for its consecration.

Zushi is always depicted in the same way.<sup>96</sup> The center of the picture is occupied by a large

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<sup>92</sup> [As with Longwang, Niangniang is a term of address rather than the name of a specific deity, and is used to address female deities.]

<sup>93</sup> [The author's organization of materials is somewhat misleading. People in Sanchuan generally refer to aspects of local religion as Fojiao 'Buddhism' and Shenjiao 'deity religion'. The latter includes the territorial cult deities that the author refers to as Chinese popular religion, and the deities he describes as shamanic.]

<sup>94</sup> Apart from these, I was told that there is also a shamanic god with a sheep's head. He is called Yangtou Huhua. During a war, one person was beheaded. He caught the first available head lying on the ground, which happened to be a sheep's head, and placed it on his shoulders. It grew fast and he became a god after this.

<sup>95</sup> [The author here is conflating two separate religious practitioners. *Yinyang* are Daoist practitioners, see above. The other practitioner is referred to as *huashi* (*fashi*) in Sanchuan, though the drum used by *huashi* is called *bo* and such practitioners are also called *bo* among the Mongghul. *Yinyang* typically do not participate in the rituals for *huashi* deities, though *huashi* and *yinyang* do occasionally cooperate in treating illnesses.]

<sup>96</sup> [In fact, Zushi may be depicted in numerous ways. Although a single deity, Zushi has several forms, generally classified according to the size of the retinue that accompanies them. Two locally common forms include Shi'er Wei Zushi 'Zushi with Twelve Person Retinue' and Ershisi Wei Zushi 'Zushi with a Twenty-four Person Retinue'. See Grootaers (1952) for more on this deity.]



figure of Zushi astride a black horse, galloping from right to left. The outstretched body of the horse divides the picture into two parts, a lower part and an upper part. Zushi holds a sword in his hand raised in the air and there is a canopy that is held by an invisible figure behind the horse above the head of the image. Above Zushi, immediately below the upper margin of the picture, there are depictions of six figures that represent the following deities (from left to right): (1) Jiutian Shengmu Niangniang (i.e., 'the nine celestial ladies'; the artist who was explaining the picture was unable to tell why a single figure represents nine deities);<sup>97</sup> (2) Lingle Huangdi;<sup>98</sup> (3) Guan Laoye (Wandin Xingxiang); (4) Riyue Dalang who holds the sun (*ri*) in one hand and the moon (*yue*) in the other; (5) Zhongda Tianzi; and (6) Qinglong Tianzi. These figures seem to represent the celestial world. We encounter here a figure with the attribute *tian* 'celestial', and another figure holds the sun and the moon.

Three further figures that probably belong to this world are depicted somewhat lower, i.e., (7) Chuanhuang Erlang, accompanied by a white dog, and located above the horse's head; (8) Heihu Lingguang, accompanied by a tiger, under the sixth and leftmost figure of the upper row; and (9) Shuangma Tongzi, under Heihu Ling. According to the artist, he is travelling to Heaven with a letter.

There are also seven somewhat smaller figures around Zushi himself, three in the front and four in the back. The figures in the front are called Qiangsang. One of them has a piece of paper and a brush and is writing down good and bad deeds. The next one carries a bag of tobacco and the third one has a tobacco pipe. The four figures in the back are called Hīsī. One of them carries a canopy or *tuk*, another one has a treasure that in Mongol is called *erdeni* and in Chinese is called *baobei*, and a third one has a written document with a seal. In the background there is a stone stele (*shibei*) for inscriptions.

There are the following secondary figures below the figure of Zushi: below the front legs of the horse a human-shaped figure called (1) Mangghushin ren;<sup>99</sup> and below the latter, within a square, two figures standing at a table on which lie two plates, apparently with offerings; these figures are called (2) Jinggu Mudiang. These are deities that Zushi worshipped during his time on earth.

There is a scene showing a shamanic ritual below them. Here is a picture of a shaman with a rooster, his assistant with a drum, a master of a house with his wife, and a ritual mast, the so-called *huanggan*. There is a depiction of a turtle below the horse's belly that is carrying two serpents that are intertwined in a way resembling the caduceus of Hermes – this is *guishe erjiang*. This was the name of a monster that devoured humans when Zushi lived on earth and was sitting in a cave. Zushi tamed the monster and made it impossible for it to harm people.

The following figures are depicted below the turtle: (3) Kailu Jiangjun; (4) Huolu Jiangjun (in Shirongol *gal edzhen* 'the lord of fire'), and (5) Cuilu. Between them and Mangghushin ren there is (6) Xiama Lingtongzi who is carrying a letter.

Wu dou 'five figures' are at the lower margin. According to the artist's explanation, these are not deities but strong men or heroes. One of them is black and corresponds to the north, the second one is red and corresponds to the south, the third one is blue and corresponds to the east, the fourth one is white and corresponds to the west, and the fifth one is yellow and corresponds to the middle, or to the center of the sky. The first one holds a mirror, the second one cooks a sinner's soul in a kettle, the third one leads the soul by a string, the fourth is a strong man who carries a mountain on his head, and the

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<sup>97</sup> [The name actually suggests something like 'Female Goddess of the Ninth (Layer of) Heaven'.]

<sup>98</sup> [Beyond finding the modern spellings for the names of these deities, we were unable to locate further details on the individual deities mentioned here.]

<sup>99</sup> ['Devil person' / 'monster'.]

fifth is a strong man who is turning timber. The Wu dou figures are supposed to represent the underground kingdom. The man with a mirror resembles Erlik, who also has a mirror in hell, as depicted in the Buddhist picture Sansariin kurde. The two following figures also resemble pictures of Hell on this same picture.

This shamanic picture is reminiscent of the *onggons* of Northern Mongolia. These consist of a quadrangle piece of cloth, on which at the upper margin are sewn several dolls, representing the celestial ladies. The sun and the moon also figure on the pictures painted on shaman drums in Northern Mongolia. Besides, these two heavenly bodies are often depicted on Buddhist icons, at the upper margin of which there is also occasionally a row of small figures.

I heard the story that follows in Sanchuan about Zushi. He was praying in a cave and threw himself down from a hill. His belly consequently burst open, and his entrails were wrapped around thorny trees. His bowels turned into a man-eating serpent, while his heart and *hargi* 'spleen' turned into a man-eating frog (*mandeghai*). God told Zushi to collect his entrails. Zushi collected them, and they turned into *guishe erjiang*, i.e., into a frog intertwined with a serpent, as is also shown on the picture depicting Zushi.

Another legend is as follows. A man who had taken refuge was praying in a cave. Arya Balo, assuming the form of a virgin, went down to him into the cave, but Zushi attacked the temptress with a sword. The virgin was thrown out of the cave, fell from the hill into the valley, and was killed. Zushi then threw himself down from a hill in the mountains and was killed. His soul rose to Heaven, where he was ordered to become a god who controls rain, so that people would revere him, burn incense to him, and worship him.

#### THE CONSECRATION OF A ZUSHI ICON

The *yinyang* ritual was to take place in a small courtyard, within which there was only a single room with a veranda and an entrance facing south. When the three of us – myself, Samt'anjimba, and one other peasant from Qijia Village – approached this solitary house, we heard regular beatings of several drums from the road. We saw certain special arrangements necessitated by the impending ceremony when we entered the courtyard.

A mast about five meters high, known in Shirongol as *huanggan*,<sup>100</sup> stood in the courtyard center. There was a sheaf of millet attached to its top and the mast was wrapped with a fringe of paper below the sheaf. The paper was clipped in a decorative pattern. This bundle is called *shipagur*. A quadrangular flag or *tianqi* onto which two wedges were sewn was attached to the mast below the *shipagur*. There was a long tape called *moghai chersi* below the *tianqi* and there was a triangular flag called *sheqi*.<sup>101</sup>

A wooden cross hung in a horizontal position below this flag and a quadrangular chip of wood hung from each point of the cross. A piece of paper had been attached to each of the latter and was glued into the shape of a tube in the same way as they make paper lanterns. The length of each tube was at least two meters. All the paper was pierced with holes cut in a decorative pattern, and the lower

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<sup>100</sup> Probably related to the Mongol *onggon*. [The etymology is actually traceable to Chinese. The initial syllable, *huan*, is derived from *fan* – paper – while the second syllable *gan* means 'pole' or 'mast'. A *huanggan* is a pole to which papers are attached.]

<sup>101</sup> [*Sheqi* is the Chinese translation of *moghai chersi*, meaning snake paper.]

ends of these hanging paper tubes were also decorated with lacework. This part of the construction is called *huanggan*.<sup>102</sup> The cross that sustained the *huanggan* could be raised and lowered on a halyard.

A table stood below the mast and some wooden *dou* (measures for grain) with flour and grain, flasks with liquor, trays with bundles of noodles, and so on were placed on it. What was most important here, however, was a cubical box with each edge about thirty-five centimeters long. This box was filled with millet, but it was not the box itself that was sacred, but a piece of wood that was half-immersed in the millet.

The pieces of wood consisted of two halves that could be completely separated, but which, when joined, formed an object similar in shape to a pod of red pepper, but with a blunter tip. Of the two flat surfaces along which the two halves were joined, one had protuberances of tin mounted into the wood, while the other half had indentations corresponding to these protuberances. The configuration formed by the insets of tin in the wood represented one of the eight signs of the Chinese mystical figure *bagua*. This wood is called *shuoghur* in Shirongol. The sharp end was thrust into the millet.

There was a saucer with burning butter beside it in the millet in the same box, and at the box's edges, standing in the millet, there was a yellow paper flag on a chip of wood called *qiqir*, and a stalk of millet or *tyuch ibisi*,<sup>103</sup> to which a lace of paper was attached.

A shed on poles had been built in the back<sup>104</sup> of the courtyard. Its roof was made of brushwood and it was covered on the upper side with clay. Paper decorated the eaves of the roof and numerous strips of white and yellow paper hung in bunches from the ceiling, like long beard moss on trees in the taiga. Paper lacework also decorated the ceiling margins.

Two worn-out pictures representing Zushi hung on the shed's back wall, which was covered with linen cloth; in all respects they conformed to the description given above. There still remained room on the cloth for a third picture of the same size as the two others. It was already finished, but it was to be hung in the shed only during the ceremony. The two pictures already exhibited had been acquired from other people, while the new specimen of Zushi was to remain in the house under the maintenance of two old people. A *dou* with millet and protruding paper flags was on a long shelf under the pictures, as well as a *kudzhi* and lanterns with burning lamps.

A *shenjian* stood in the corner against the wall. It is an iron trident attached to a short stick; to the side of the stick, a bronze mirror (*toli*) had been attached. A rhomboidal spear point was attached to the stick's lower end. A large spherical iron bell with a massive bunch of rags cut from red, blue, and yellow cotton cloth hung from the trident's neck.

We found three men beating drums and dancing under the shed, but they were volunteers. There was no shaman among them.<sup>105</sup> The shaman came out of the room soon after our arrival. He was a lean man of about thirty years with a long face and swarthy skin, through which a healthy blush was discernible. He appeared to be very cheerful.

The volunteers gave the shaman his drum. A low table was placed on the outer side of the ground, and the cubical box with the *shuoghur* was placed on the table. A white piece of felt was spread in front of this table. The shaman sat on the felt facing the *shuoghur* with his back towards the wall where the pictures of Zushi hung. His assistant sat to his left, and they placed a local peasant to his right; it turned out later, he knew the whole ceremony excellently by heart. All three started beating

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<sup>102</sup> [Potanin: *hoig'in*.]

<sup>103</sup> [A more modern term for *ibisi* is *biesi* 'grass'.]

<sup>104</sup> [Probably the north side of the courtyard, opposite the compound entrance in the southern wall.]

<sup>105</sup> I use the word *shaman* here, since the Shirongols themselves replace the Chinese word *yinyang* with the Mongol *bo*.

drums and singing.

The drum of the *yinyang* is composed of an iron hoop covered with goat-skin, to which an iron handle is attached. The form of the drum is kidney-shaped and, as a whole, it resembles an unfolding Chinese fan. An iron ring is riveted to the end of the handle, and three freely-moving rings hang on it. Apart from this, there are also three rings passed through a staple on the left side of the handle, and two more on the right side. Altogether there are seven rings.

The drum is beaten with a stick with a length of thirty-five centimeters, called *gubian*. It is either a wooden stick trimmed with cotton cloth, or a leather strap turned double and sewn together. The drum surface is about forty-five centimeters in diameter when measured against the direction of the handle, and somewhat less, if measured in the direction of the handle.

The drummers stood after first drumming while sitting on the felt. The felt was removed and the three men started dancing under the shed. They proceeded in a single row quickly towards the gods at one moment, dropped a curtsy, and then, drumming and holding the same formation, slowly stepped back, retreating to the outer end of the veranda. They made the same movements the next moment, but with their backs turned towards the gods, or turning their left sides and finally their right sides towards them.

They danced throwing their legs forward to the rhythm of the drums, and revealing the soles of their clumsy boots to the audience standing in the courtyard. Sometimes they went round clockwise or counter-clockwise. The sign for proceeding from one configuration to the other was always given by the shaman with a special stroke of the drum that was almost simultaneously repeated by his fellows. All of their movements were subjected to a single discipline. The sweep of the legs, and the position and management of the drum at each given moment were identical for the three. They kept the drums as one keeps a fan in front of themselves for the most part. Sometimes they turned the drums around their heads with a rapid movement that could hardly be followed. It also happened that, after hitting the drums with the sticks, they held them horizontally in their outstretched hands, forcing them into a rapid spin. This produced a very good effect: all the three stood motionless with their hands stretched out, facing either the gods or the surrounding spectators. Their songs ceased, and there was no tramp of feet. Only the surfaces of the drums flashed in the air, and one heard the rustle of iron, caused by the rings attached to the handles. It was, in a way, a tragic whispering, translated into the language of iron rattles.

It was entertaining to watch this dance at the beginning and amusing to see how elderly peasants, who perhaps already had grown-up sons, danced with a serious expression without noticing the comical nuance given to their dance by the heavy Chinese boots with thick soles. But then the attention grew lax due to the monotony of the dancers repeating the same movements over and over. Of course, this was no ballet for the entertainment of the spectators. This was hard work in the name of the gods, and its value was measured by its duration, rather than by how entertaining it was to the spectators.

The real action began after this performance. A person (apparently, the master of the house) lifted the box containing the *shuoghur* with his hands. He was placed in the center under the shed, and they placed another person back-to-back with him who took on his left shoulder the trident that until then had stood on the shelf. They placed five persons in addition to the first one in the same way. Three of those sitting faced the back wall, on which hung the two depictions of Zushi, and the three others faced the mast. All six were tightly pressed against each other, back to back and side to side. One held the box with the *shuoghur* in his hands, the second one held the trident, the third one held a tray with

packages of dried noodles and *kudzhi* on his head, the fourth one also had a tray on his head with four cups of *terha*<sup>106</sup> (roasted barley flour) and butter, the fifth one had a tray with all sorts of biscuits and finally, the sixth one held a flask of liquor in both hands. In other words, everything that had stood on the table in front of the *huanggan* had now been brought here.

The shaman and his companions began turning and circulating around the sitting persons, shaking and beating the drums. Suddenly they stopped and placed the drums edgewise on the sitting group and, bending forward towards the latter as if listening attentively, gave a prolonged simultaneous cry of *you!* The sitting persons answered with a similar prolonged *you!* This was repeated two or three times, alternating with dance and rotation.<sup>107</sup>

Then the sitting persons stood, and all the nine started whirling and dancing under the shed. Those carrying the trays and boxes had apparently been gathered from among the people in the family without any chance to practice shamanic dancing before. They were clumsy and thus often caused confusion. They stumbled on each other and jostled and thronged irrationally, which aroused laughter and pointed mockery among the audience. The shaman was forced to stop the action and restore order, after which the whirling to the rhythm of the drums resumed.

There were pauses, during which the whirling stopped and the shaman started singing alone without his companions, who at this time only beat the drums. The shaman placed his drum in a horizontal position after the song and the *shuoghur* was placed on the drum. The shaman lightly tilted the front edge of the drum and shook it, making the *shuoghur* roll down on the ground. As a result, the two halves of the *shuoghur* fell apart, lying with either both or only one of the joining sides upwards. The shaman asked the audience about the position of the *shuoghur*, and the crowd answered him with one voice what the outcome was: fortune or misfortune. Apparently, this was divining of the same type as *torök* and *oigo* among the Uryankhais.

The people carrying the trays moved aside and went to stand at the side wall under the shed towards the dancer's end. The shaman and his companions stood facing the gods while the companions beat the drums and the shaman sang. One of the six companions separated from his fellows and started whirling around and then carried his burden to the mast to the sound of his drum, where he placed it on the table standing beside the mast. They first carried the box with the *shuoghur* in this way, and then all the remaining paraphernalia. The trident was also hung on the mast above the table. A hawker's tray with crudely-made buns was brought from the room at this time and placed on the same table. Small paper flags were stuck into the buns.

The shaman with his companions danced to the mast and remained standing on its western side. The master of the household and his wife knelt before the mast. The shaman took a lump of butter from the table, broke it into two pieces, and stuck one piece on the forehead of each of the house couple. He then caught the end of one of the four paper tubes of the *huanggan* that were swaying in the wind and, holding it in his left hand, started singing prolonged songs, accompanied by beating on the drums by his companions. He held a goblet of liquor in his right hand. When he finished a song he prolonged its end while pouring the liquor on the ground. The crowd responded with a concerted shout. He received a new one after each emptied goblet.

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<sup>106</sup> [Potanin: *talkan*.]

<sup>107</sup> [Such rituals often contain sections of call and response that end in the particles *meiyou* 'has not?' and *liao*, indicating the past tense. For example, "*Lailiao meiyou?*" is shouted by the *huashi* to ask if the deity has come or not, and "*Lailiao!*" is shouted to announce that the deity has arrived. "*Kaile meiyou?*" is shouted by the *huashi* to ask if the deity's orifices have been opened or not, and "*Kailiao!*" is shouted in reply to announce that the orifices of the deity have indeed been opened.]

Three people were standing at the table under the mast, filling one goblet after the other, and adding to the liquor the crumbs that they nipped off from the buns and piles of pieces of butter lying on the table. The shaman emptied some seven to nine goblets of liquor on the ground while holding the end of the paper lace that hung at the northeastern point of the *huanggan* cross. He then emptied an equal number of goblets while holding the lace hanging at the northwestern point of the cross. He was singing during all this time and his companions were drumming, while the master of the house and his wife knelt in front of the mast on its western side.

After finishing these songs and libations the shaman took his stand before the altar and began singing together with his companions. In this connection, one of his assistants kept losing the thread. The shaman stopped and gave him remarks, but the assistant defended himself each time with energetic jokes that aroused enthusiasm and laughter among the audience.

After finishing this trio, the shaman took in his palm some white *terha* (roasted barley flour), went to the master of the house and, grasping him by the back of the head, started singing. The meaning of his song, as they explained to me, was briefly as follows: "The shaman has no peace in the night, and his legs cannot rest during the day." He then gave the master of the house *terha* directly into the mouth, trying to thrust in as much flour as possible, while the latter, afraid of getting choked, twisted his head and tried in every way to evade. The shaman then smeared the *terha* remaining in his hand onto the master's face so that the latter, when he went away, looked as if he had just returned from a mill. Friendly laughter was heard in the crowd.

After this, the shaman gave him a goblet of liquor and a piece of a bun. He did the same with the master's wife. I noticed that even the forehead of the one-year-old baby, whom she held in her arms, was smeared with white flour when he left her. Next, the master and his wife stood and left, while the shaman and his companions continued beating the drums and dancing in front of the mast.

Two young boys hurried to the scene soon afterwards. They apparently also belonged to the family, but had been absent somewhere. They rested on their knees, and the shaman carried out the same ritual with them, that is, he first placed lumps of white butter on their foreheads, and then he also humorously filled their mouths with white flour and gave them liquor and pieces of bun.

After this, he placed all the three drums in a row beside the table under the mast and entered the room to rest. At the same moment the children, of whom there were all the time a considerable number present, picked up the drums and started trying to imitate the shaman.

I wanted to use this intermission to draw a picture of the *huanggan* and the other parts of the arrangement on the courtyard. I had barely made sketches of the trident and the mast when Samt'anjimba came and took me out of the courtyard into the street, telling me that the shaman asked me not to draw a picture of the *shuoghur*, since it is a sacred object, on which the grain crop depends. He also said that the crowd already blamed my presence for the unlucky way in which the *shuoghur* had fallen, and that the shaman nourished a feeling of fear towards me. The intermission continued for about one hour and, during its whole duration, three volunteers were drumming and dancing under the shed. Obviously it is considered better not to allow the ears of the gods to rest.

Then the shaman came out, but this time he was wearing a costume. On his head he had a net made of hair, with the meshes measuring one fourth of an inch across. There was a hole on the top in the net, through which a braid, apparently beginning from the top of the head, passed. The braid was organized in a few rings lying one above the other, and the braid's end hung freely in the back. The net was fastened on the forehead with a red cotton tape that was tied up with a ribbon on the back of the head. Above the forehead, attached behind this tape, was a crest of white paper, folded like a fan and

then opened. This crest is called *shipagur*. Above the ears, fixed to the net, there were large bundles of white paper lace – *qigi* or 'ears' – hanging down to the shoulders. The shaman's body was covered with a woman's dress. The upper part of the body was dressed in a sleeveless jacket of blue cotton cloth that had an opening in the front from the neck down to the lower hem. The lower part of the shaman's body was covered by a woman's skirt of brown cotton cloth. The shaman's frame was girdled with a red-brown sash two handbreadths wide, upon which a leather belt was added. From the latter, on the back, hung eleven spherical iron bells. On the back, stuck behind the belt, there were three paper *qiqir* covering the shaman's back. Stuck in the same place there was also a long tuft of lace from white paper, hanging down to below the knees like a tail. Laces, called *xiangliang*, were also attached to the hips.

The shaman went under the shed followed by another person who was apparently the master of the house. The latter was carrying in one hand the new picture of Zushi, rolled into a tube and, in the other hand, three large *qiqir* from white paper. He held these objects crossed on his breast. He was placed with his back towards the wall on which the old specimens of Zushi already hung, and facing the mast. The shaman and his two assistants took their stand opposite him and started beating the drums. Then all this company together with one more person who had taken the trident on his shoulder, went out of the courtyard into the street and started walking towards the threshing-floor that was located to the south of the courtyard along the wall of the latter.

The procession stopped in the middle of the threshing-floor. Here a piece of felt was spread on the ground, and the person carrying the picture sat on it. He was given a pitchfork to hold, and the picture was hung by a string from a tine of the pitchfork, and unrolled. Before us appeared a fresh picture, just painted by an artist for two *liang* of silver. It was a copy of the two specimens that already hung under the shed. The head of Zushi was painted disproportionately large compared to the body of both the god himself and of the horse, and the god looked like a big-headed baby galloping on a foal. Zushi had golden eyes. Beside the picture they placed a table with a cup of liquor, a basket with a *toli* (metal mirror) and a scale or scales, and another basket with a besom and a ladle.

The picture faced the west. The shaman and his companions took their stand before the picture and started dancing, drumming, and singing. Gradually they started to beat their drums with an increasing frequency, and the more frequent the beating got, the more powerfully the shaman trembled. Finally he gave his drum to another person. The shaman received a brush, and they started rubbing ink. The rubbing took a long time, and the shaman, with the anxiety of impatience in his eyes, watched the process of rubbing while trembling feverishly and standing immediately under the nose of the god.

He finally received a brush with ink on its tip, and made a mark with it at the root of the god's nose, or so it seemed to me. Then he received a silk thread with needles on both ends. He took a long time to move the needles all over the picture until he had pierced holes in the pupils of the eyes of all the human-shaped figures on the picture, beginning with the very figure of Zushi. He presented them with the ability of real sight with this operation. He stuck one of the needles in Zushi's mouth in conclusion, and the other one at some place in the upper part of the picture, leaving the needles in this way.

He then received two burning candles that he passed first in front of Zushi's face as if wishing to illuminate it, and then led along Zushi's whole body and the body of the horse down to the hooves, and also along all the upper and lower figures on the picture. He received a rooster next. He first pulled a bunch of feathers from under the rooster's wing with his teeth and sprinkled Zushi's face with them. Then he took the rooster in his left hand with the beak towards the picture and, flapping the rooster on

the back with his right hand and forcing it to crow, started moving it in front of the picture in the same way as he had done before with the candles and the needles. In the end, he once more pulled with his teeth a bunch of feathers from under the rooster's wing and again besprinkled Zushi's face with them. The rooster was then replaced by liquor served in a Chinese cup.

The shaman received a comb and a piece of white cotton cloth together with the liquor and, dipping the corner of the comb in the liquor and holding this moistened corner of the comb at a short distance from the piece of cloth that he held in his other hand, the shaman again started moving these objects along the picture. The shaman treated the picture in the same way after returning the comb, first by the metal mirror (*tolì*) and then by the scales.

Next, they gave him burning *kudzhi* and a bunch of paper lace. The shaman first circulated these objects along the picture, and then burnt the paper after placing it on the ground in front of the picture. He sang throughout this process. Having burnt the paper he took the drum in his hands and, singing, started placing the drum under the *shuoghur*. This was the beginning of another round of fortune-telling.

Seven glazed pottery cups were brought and placed along the entire length of the threshing-floor, a distance of twenty-five to thirty steps. One cup was placed right opposite the middle of the picture. The remaining six stood farther away in two parallel rows, so that the cups formed a lane leading westward from the picture. The cups were filled with millet from the box into which the end of the *shuoghur* was immersed. Small paper *qiqir* were stuck into the millet in each cup. On the threshing-floor beside the cups, husks were strewn to form a path that ran in zigzags around all the cups. A burning butter lamp made of dough was placed beside each cup.

When everything was ready, an entire procession started under the leadership of the shaman, who held the rooster in his right hand and also the drum in his left hand with the drumstick pressed against it. After the shaman came his two assistants beating their drums; then came the master of the house holding the new picture on the pitchfork. Next, came a person carrying three paper flags, and, finally, a person with the trident.

The procession started circumambulating each cup. Beginning with the cup that stood separately, it proceeded to the first cup of the row on the left, then to the first cup of the row on the right, then to the second cup on the left, and so on. They stopped at the last cup. The shaman started a separate song, then bit a bunch of feathers from the rooster, spat them out on the picture, and led the procession again to the cup from which the dance had begun. The cups were circumambulated altogether three times, and each time the rooster lost some feathers. The direction of the movements was, of course, led by the shaman, but this was noticeable only when the procession had to move from one cup to another. The shaman seemed to be lost in among the others when the procession was moving around a single cup but then, like an electric spark, he flew to another cup, and the rest of the procession moved after him. Then the cups and the lamps were taken away.

The procession formed a circle. The shaman and his companions took their stand facing the picture. The shaman sang, the drums were beaten, and all participants moved slowly, as in a circle dance. During this, the man holding the picture tried to keep it facing the shaman and was thus forced to slowly rotate around himself. Thus the procession circulated almost at the same place for more than an hour.

Finally the procession moved towards the house, led by the dancing shaman. Occasionally, the shaman gave an exclamation and turned backwards, which caused two persons going beside the picture, one with the besom and the other with one of the baskets, to throw themselves on the ground



in front of the picture. The former pretended to be throwing dust with the besom from the ground into the ladle against the direction of their movement, that is, the besom swept in a direction away from the house, while the ladle was placed by the side of the picture. He then poured this imaginary dust from the ladle into the basket held by his companion. They lured the soul of the new Zushi to the house in this way.

The procession stopped at the wicket of the house. The wicket was blocked up from the inside with a table on which had been placed trays and flasks of liquor. The shaman took his stand in the wicket, while the others, together with the picture, remained in the street. They started giving the shaman in the wicket goblet after goblet of liquor, which was probably mixed with crumbs of bread and butter. The shaman, singing songs and facing the picture, poured the liquor on the ground in front of it. Then he took butter from the table and placed a lump of it on the forehead of each of those who had carried something, and then he gave everyone a handful of *terha* directly into the mouth and a draught of liquor. The table was removed, the procession entered the courtyard, and the picture was carried under the shed and hung on a nail on the place left for it on the wall, beside the two old specimens.

This was the end of the consecration of the picture. We left Ganjia Village and returned to Qijia Village, with the intention of returning for the final act of the shaman, which would involve removing the paper lacework from the ceiling of the shed and burning the *huanggan*.

The Shirongols told me that the final act – the burning of the *huanggan* – was to occur at the hour of the cock. It was already getting dark when we again entered Ganjia. The drums were already rumbling, but the drummers turned out to be volunteers. Soon, however, the shaman himself came out dressed in his costume, wearing a skirt and decorated with a crest on his head and a tail on his back and together with his companions, initiated general singing and dancing under the shed. This lasted more than an hour; the dancers circulated around each other with great speed for most of the time, finding at the same time an opportunity to beat time on the drums and to wave the drums above their heads.

The space under the shed was illuminated. The crowd was standing around, pressed tightly in about three rows, and it was difficult to see what was taking place under the shed, but apparently, nothing special occurred. Periodically, the dance was interrupted and the shaman started singing alone. His song usually ended with placing the *shuoghur* on the drum and divining.

After finishing dancing, the dancers sat on the felt, facing the three Zushi. They sang several songs to the accompaniment of the drums and moved closer to the gods, finally sitting immediately under their noses and singing and drumming a few more minutes.

Then the shaman rose and loosened his braid. I was told that there was an iron hook at the end of his braid, but I was unable to see it from afar. The shaman started dancing and shaking his head so furiously that the braid lashed all over the ceiling of the shed and tore down the paper lacework decorating the ceiling. Soon there was only a little paper left, and the white ceiling had turned black. Then the remaining paper was scraped off the ceiling with spades.

The shaman next went to the mast, carrying the drum in one hand and the trident in the other. He took the trident under the shed after singing a song at the mast with a special, solemn, and steadfast melody, returned to the mast and began dancing and singing before it with his companions.

At this moment, a hawker's tray with seven white bread buns was brought and placed on the ground on the mast's west side. There were *qiqir* stuck in the buns, and seven burning candles were attached to the tray. People appeared carrying trays and troughs on their heads behind the shaman. The shaman joined these newcomers and led the whole company around the mast, passing it from left

to right, i.e., clockwise. The tray with the consecrated buns was carried behind him, followed by the persons carrying trays and troughs on their heads. I noticed one woman among them who appeared to be the lady of the house.

After circling the mast once, the carriers knelt from the western side. I was unable to see what happened here, due to the crowd and darkness, but judging by the fact that somebody raised his hand above the heads of the carriers and dipped it in each tray and trough, I concluded that it was a question of collecting sacrificial crumbs, while the shaman was probably again sprinkling liquor on the ground and also probably throwing the *shuoghur*.

They now brought a bench, covered with white felt. The shaman sat down astride it as though riding a horse, and galloped around the mast to the sounds of drums, followed by his assistants, the persons carrying trays on their heads, and two persons holding burning candles in their hands. At each point of the compass he stopped and sang a song with the same serious melody he had sung when carrying out the trident.

After getting off the imaginary horse, the shaman took his stand on the western side opposite the mast. His assistants and the persons carrying trays on their heads stood by him. They all formed a line in front of the trays containing buns of bread that were lying on the ground under the mast. The shaman was given a rooster and a broad kitchen knife.

The whole company then started singing and dancing. The shaman moved more energetically than the others, and his song was louder. He first pulled a tuft of feathers from the rooster with his teeth and then started waving the rooster and the knife in the air. It was an energetic dance and his feet rose high above the ground. There was a smile on all the faces and everyone was enthusiastically singing and dancing. Some outsiders also joined the line and took part in the song and dance. There was even an old man mingling with the company and rhythmically moving his limbs.

I happened to stand exactly opposite the line of dancers, and I saw them illuminated from below by the fires burning by the buns. The shaman's face had turned even redder than before. The dancers seemed to be happy, as if they had seen the prosperity for which they had been praying the whole day flowing upon them with their own eyes. This picture of peasants dancing in the night in the light of fires could call forth a wish to behold it again, had only the shaman been holding in his hands an image of a rooster instead of a living animal, to which he was going to show no mercy.

He waved the bird in the air as if it were a kerchief, and the knife that he held in his other hand, was dangling so close to the rooster's head that I thought that death would follow by mere accident. Every now and then the shaman stooped down to the buns and struck them with the rooster, all of which happened to the beat of the drums and the rhythm of the song. I thought that he was stooping in order to kill the rooster but no, he stretched himself erect again and danced once more. The bird was at first crowing but then it apparently became dizzy and fell silent. The lively dance and animated song recalled to us stories about human sacrifices, accompanied by songs that muffled the victim's last cries. The paper hanging on the *huanggan* was gathered in a heap to the eastern side of the mast and burnt as the last act of this operation.

We left for Qijia after this, without waiting for the end. On the road we still heard the sound of the drums, but these were the last strokes. Soon they stopped, probably with the last flash of the burning paper. We were soon overtaken by pedestrians who, like ourselves, were returning from the performance to their homes. We heard the people's voices to the right and left of us going along various paths. Some were discussing loudly, others sang melodies to shamanic motifs, some caught up with us, and others turned aside and their voices slowly disappeared.

Rituals for averting calamities caused by lightning and hailstorms are conducted in Sanchuan by special elective officials called *turaoqi* in Shirongol.<sup>108</sup> Every surname group formed for the maintenance of a temple or *miao* (of the popular cult), elects its *turaoqi*. Thus, the surname groups of Yangjia, Qijia, and Wenjia have a common *miao* and elect twelve *turaoqi*.<sup>109</sup> According to tradition, they used to have twenty-four *turaoqi*.

The surname groups of Nijia, Xinjia, Hejia, and Zhangjia also have a separate *miao* and elect four *turaoqi* every year. They are all elected from one surname group for a year. The villages alternate, and all *turaoqi* of this group were from the He Clan in the year of our stay in Sanchuan.

In Shina Village (on the Huang River) there are four *turaoqi* or, as they are also called here, probably from Chinese, *suitou*. They elect a *paitou* and a *zongjia* from among the *turaoqi*, who lead them.

The principal obligation of *turaoqi* is to conduct rituals at times of thunder. The elders among the *turaoqi* take sticks and start knocking them together immediately after the onset of a thunderstorm. All *turaoqi* run into the public *miao* upon hearing this, grasp drums, *pandai*,<sup>110</sup> and *luo* and beat them. At the same time they keep *qiqir* (flags) in their hands and shout: "*Qiliao! San liao! It is over, they have dispersed*" (in Shirongol: "*Yaosang! Erderasang!*").<sup>111</sup> Irrespective of how severely they might be soaked by the rain, and however strong hailstones might be hitting their heads, they must continue their ceremony under the open sky. The *turaoqi* wear winter hats made of felt to protect themselves from hailstones.

The *turaoqi* go from the *miao* to the closest crossroad if the thunder does not calm down, and if even this does not work, they go to a hillock or elevation on which a *chapai* has been set up in the spring by the same *turaoqi*. The ritual is joined by the *laozher* (more below) if the storm still does not retreat. This ritual procession with drums is called *nuoqir kharerjiang* ('guarding against thunder').<sup>112</sup> Every *turaoqi* is obliged to participate in it without fail. A *turaoqi* is fined one hundred cash if he comes too late to the crossroad and 400 cash if he comes too late to the hillock. Therefore, if a *turaoqi* has business away from home, he appoints a neighbor to be his deputy during his absence.<sup>113</sup> They buy liquor from the money received from the fines.

The term *chapai* denotes a four-pointed wooden cross that is erected at some elevated location close to the fields. A human face is carved at the upper end of the vertical beam of the cross. The ends of the horizontal beam count as hands. The height of these crosses corresponds to the height of a man. The peasants under the guidance of the *turaoqi* set them up in the fourth month. They first invite a *yinyang* (shaman),<sup>114</sup> who shamanizes in front of the completed *chapai*; then one of the *turaoqi* carries it to the hillock and erects it without further speeches. The *turaoqi* slaughter a goat during the erection of the *chapai*. Its meat is cooked and eaten, while the skin is stuffed with straw and the stuffed animal is then tied to the cross in such a way that its head comes below the depiction of a human face on the

<sup>108</sup> The Kirghiz have a clan name *Chireuchi*. [Alternative names for *turaoqi* include *paitou* and *shuipai*.]

<sup>109</sup> [Some time after Potanin's visit, but before Liberation, Yangjia and Wenjia split from Qijia and constructed their own temple in Yangjia.]

<sup>110</sup> [*pandai* = clothing with reference to a deity or official.]

<sup>111</sup> [The Shirongol phrase is not used].

<sup>112</sup> [*nuoqir kharerjiang* = showers stopped.]

<sup>113</sup> The important thing is apparently, the number of the *turaoqi* participating in the ritual, and it seems that a special significance is attached to the number four, from which the multiples eight, twelve, sixteen, etc., derive.

<sup>114</sup> [The *yinyang* is actually a lay Daoist tantrin.]

cross. The goat's head must face the north. They drive a tablet called *shazhuang* into the ground with Chinese characters at the root of the cross. Another tablet or *banber*<sup>115</sup> is attached to the intersection of the cross. I was told that they place four such crosses on one hillock; one is placed facing north, the other south, the third west, and the fourth east. I was unable to observe them myself for they are burnt in autumn, and on both occasions I arrived in Sanchuan only after the *chapai* had been removed from the fields. Their complete name is *khura wujiku chapai* or 'rain-watching *chapai*'. The peasants bake loaves of three different sizes and ten of each size during the erection of the *chapai*. The loaves baked in Sangbura differ from all others by their large size and are called *zhengbing*. According to the peasants, the *chapai* are erected in order to protect the fields from hailstorms.

According to an account I recorded in Shina Village (on the Huang River north of the town of Chuankou), *chapai* (in the local pronunciation *shabei*) are erected by *hulabir* (a particular person at a temple) in honor of Taiwang Niangniang or Uhai Longwang. Horse and pig skulls are placed by the *chapai*, in addition to the table *shazhuang*. The *hulabir* sticks three arrows in his breast beforehand and then erects the *chapai*.

The same *turaoqi* are assigned to keep an eye on the damage caused by grazing cattle to the fields. On a certain day in spring, the *turaoqi* go around in the villages beating sticks together and shouting that they will collect fines for any damage caused by cattle from that day on. They again go around in the villages when the crops have been harvested in autumn and announce that they will no longer collect fines for cattle caught grazing on fields. If a *turaoqi* encounters cattle grazing in a field between these dates, he collects a fine from the cattle owner. The *turaoqi* also ensure that nobody cuts hay on plowed boundary lands in the summer.<sup>116</sup> The fines for damage by cattle and for mowing hay in boundary lands are not taken immediately, but are written down and collected later. The *turaoqi* stand security for their friends. With the deduction of the price of a sheep and some paper, the sum collected in fines is used to buy liquor.

During times of drought, the Sanchuan people make a visit to the temple of Shuilian Dong (close to Bingling Si) that is located on the left bank of the Yellow River downriver from Sangbura.<sup>117</sup> The temple is built in a cave that contains a spring of cold, fresh water. The water runs out of the rock and fills a basin. There is a small fist-sized protuberance in which there is a cavity like a drinking glass above the basin in the rock. This cavity is also always filled with water, and the water trickles from it into the basin. The walls and the ceiling of the cave are painted in fresco and a statue of the goddess Guanyin Pusa stands in front of the basin in a special case.

Sanchuan people place the statue of their local Longwang on a litter and carry it to Shuiliangdong when there is a long period without rain.<sup>118</sup> The *turaoqi* and the *hulabir* of the temple concerned also go with the procession. The participants carry with them a flask (*longhu*) and a silk

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<sup>115</sup> [wood board.]

<sup>116</sup> The Salars also have a kind of *turaoqi*. They keep an eye on the damage caused by cattle in the fields and are called *tseuku*. Such a *tseuku* has the right to choose and harvest for his own purposes in any field an area equaling in circumference to the height of the highest plant in the field.

<sup>117</sup> A local tradition in Sanchuan ascribes the building of Bingling Si Monastery to Lu Biansheng (the Chinese god of carpentry). He was a skillful carpenter or *purghang* [deity] according to Sanchuan people. He carried a plane that was too heavy for an ordinary person to lift. He sat down to rest at Sangbura Gorge and people still point out the trace of his seat.

<sup>118</sup> [This was perhaps only true for Qijia and the surrounding villages. In Sangbura, villagers cross the Yellow River to visit Juetan Temple to the south of Sanchuan. Villagers in Shidie Valley visit a spring near Xinjia. Villagers in Wushi and Puba valleys annually visit a lake atop nearby Suoke Mountain in order to ensure sufficient rainfall in the coming year.]

ribbon. The litter with the statue of Longwang is placed by the goddess, Guanyin Pusa, upon reaching Shuilian Dong Temple. The flask is then placed on the floor by the basin, one end of the silk ribbon is tied to the flask, and the other end is tied to the drinking-glass-shaped cavity in the rock from which water trickles. The litter with Longwang remains in the temple overnight.

According to tradition, Longwang was once a ferocious god, but was tamed by Guanyin Pusa and now is compelled to spend a night by her side in order to remind him of the lesson taught by the goddess, whenever the god becomes reluctant to give water. The Sanchuan people think that Longwang is afraid of the goddess and will open the skies. The next morning, the people performing this ritual take the flask with the water that has collected in it along the ribbon, lift Longwang, return to Sanchuan, and wait for rain. The flask is once more taken to Shuilian Dong when it does rain, and the water in it is poured back into the basin.

#### ANNUAL COMMUNITY FESTIVALS

Apart from Buddhist festivals organized in Buddhist monasteries that all Sanchuan inhabitants attend, the Sanchuan peasants also arrange their own popular festivals. Thus, on a certain day in the seventh month they have a festival called Duolong Sara Nadun or the Festival of the Seventh Month.<sup>119</sup> The Qijia Clan performs this festival on the sixteenth day of the seventh lunar month, the Nuojie Clan on the thirteenth day, and the inhabitants of Sangbura on the fourteenth day.<sup>120</sup>

Community members bake huge loaves of wheat flour for this day and buy liquor. Rich people make the loaves approximately one meter in diameter and acquire large earthenware pots or *gang* full of liquor for the feast. This is all carried to the place selected for the community gathering. They also take a box sealed with four locks to this place. The keys to these four locks are in the custody of four key-keepers or *laozher*.<sup>121</sup> Not one of them is able to open a box alone – the presence of all four is required. This box is kept by one of the *laozher* with a more spacious and sturdy house. The *laozher* open the box and take out clothes as well as stage decorations and utensils. Crowd members are invited to wear these clothes for the dances and those who take the clothes pay a fee.

Meanwhile, the *turaoqi* examine the loaves and liquor. They demand additional payment in money for bad supplies. It is permitted to change the liquor to a better one, in which case the liquor owner need not pay extra money. Next, the *turaoqi* shout, "Sit and do not stroll around! Treat yourselves and watch the play!" They serve liquor to everyone and distribute the loaves. Smaller loaves are given whole to monks, while the larger ones are divided into two or four parts and served to the rest of the people.

The peasants dance in the ritual clothes in the middle of the circle formed by those sitting. Other Sanchuan people told me that the peasants in Sanchuan arrange a theatrical performance in the middle of the summer, and that they usually play scenes from the history of Ge sar Khan's adventures. I do not know whether this is a separate festival, or identical with the 'plays of the seventh month'. In Shina Village (on the Huang River), no dances are organized in the seventh month, but they do bake loaves.

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<sup>119</sup> [See Stuart and Hu (1993) and Roche (2011) for more on Nadun.]

<sup>120</sup> [The ritual is held in numerous communities throughout Sanchuan and the surrounding areas annually from twelfth day of the seventh lunar month to the fifteenth day of the ninth lunar month.]

<sup>121</sup> [*Laozher* refers to male elders in general, rather than to the key-keepers specifically.]

For New Year's day (Chihang Sara),<sup>122</sup> Sanchuan people bake loaves from various kinds of flour. They throw the loaves to dogs and foretell which crop will yield a rich harvest on the basis of how willingly or reluctantly the dog starts eating the sop. They set rows of small fires in front of house gates on New Year's Day.<sup>123</sup> The master of the house takes a bunch of burning torches and makes a round inside the house, trying to illuminate all corners with this fire.

As in other areas of China, Sanchuan people celebrate the Fifth Day of the Fifth Month, Wuyue Dangwu, and hang tree twigs on this day at windows and doors and also inside the house on icon cases.<sup>124</sup> People tie five-colored silk threads around the wrists, fingers, ankles, and necks of children.<sup>125</sup> They also collect medicinal herbs on this same day.

#### FAMILY CUSTOMS AND EVENTS

The fear of remaining without children, and the factors of infant mortality and female infertility, have given rise to a number of special practices and customs among the Sanchuan people, as among other Mongol tribes. When a child is born, its name is not given by the parents, rather, the father takes the child unnoticed early in the morning to the street and if he meets a passer-by, he asks them to give a name. If he meets a dog, he throws bread to it and plays with it and, in this case, gives the name Gouwar to the child. There are many such Gouwar in Sanchuan. The implication is that a dog gave this name. They also hang an iron chain on the neck of a son and close it with a lock or *cherghuo*. All of this is done to deceive Chitkur (the unclean one) and lead him to think that this is not a child but a dog that was born. To the same effect, they put a ring in the ear of a son to give the impression that it is not a son, but a daughter.

They go and steal shoes from the goddess, Green Tara, in the monasteries of Ghada Monastery and Lozha Dong if no children are born and replace the stolen shoe with money. For this eventuality, there is always a stock of small children's shoes in a special cavity under the goddess's statue. If they accidentally find a discarded child's shoe on the road, they hide it in a sleeve and take it home, for it is a lucky find, and they believe that a child will be born after this.

If a child falls ill, somebody is asked to change its name. The person who is to change the name takes the child in his arms and creates a new nickname for it. Afterwards, the child's mother calls that person *aha*, while the child, after growing up, will call him *awu* 'father'. In general, such a pseudo-father is called *ganda*. He is respected in the house concerned, is entertained when he comes to visit, and is given presents. A child is taken to the temple under the *zhong* (a large metal bowl rung like a bell) during illness, or the child is placed under a kettle. Fires are made around the kettle, which is beat with a stone, and sand is thrown at it. There is also the custom of another family raising the child.

The wedding ceremony among the Shirongols has undergone strong Chinese influence.<sup>126</sup> When a young man is to marry, his relatives go to the bride's father carrying two bottles filled with liquor

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<sup>122</sup> [*chihang sara* = white moon.]

<sup>123</sup> [This and the following activities described by Potanin actually take place on the fifteenth day of the first lunar month.]

<sup>124</sup> [An unidentified article in] *Annales du Musée Guimet* mentions that people hang out three plants on this day: *acore* (*Acorus gramineus*?), *armoise* (*Artemisia*), and *ail*. I did not check this information in Sanchuan.

<sup>125</sup> The Khitans used to plait a 'cord of happiness' from threads of various colors that they wrapped around their shoulders on the fifth day of the fifth month.

<sup>126</sup> [See Hu and Stuart (1992a) for more on Sanchuan weddings.]

(*irakī*), plugged up with berries of *zaoren* (*chubugha*), and tied with five-colored threads. If the bride's parents drink the liquor, it signifies that they agree to give their daughter. They do not drink it if they disagree.

The bride thus arranged is taken by the groom to his home three, five, or even seven years after the agreement. Thus, when an agreement has been made concerning a fifteen-old girl, she will be taken from her parents' home when she is seventeen years old; meanwhile, the groom may not see her while she is living at home. He gives her silver, which she will use to sew a dress and make headgear for herself. The bride's relatives travel to the groom's home and stay in his house for three days when the time arrives to take the bride to the groom's house, after which they return home. Then, the groom's relatives leave to pick up the bride.

Shirongol grooms usually marry girls older than they are. The difference can be up to three years. A similar disparity in marriage is observed among the Mongols in Ordos. Brides are necessarily taken from other surname groups. For instance, a young man from the Qijia cannot marry a girl from Qijia, but must look for a bride in Ganjia, Hulijia, or other villages.

My wife and I had the opportunity of being present at a wedding on 8 December 1884, in Sanchuan, which I describe below. The bride was led past our apartment to a house located northeast of us at dawn. The bride came from a different village, and this house was selected as the place where she would be prepared to enter the groom's house. She rode a mule and her face was not visible because a fur coat had been thrown from the foreshore on her head with the hair inside. A man led the mule by the bridle and another man walked by the rider holding the saddle. Some ten other men surrounded the bride from the sides and behind. Another crowd of men sang about ten to fifteen steps in front of the bride.

The procession was moving in the direction of a fire that had been made in front of the house at a distance of some one hundred steps from its gate to which the bride was being taken. Some finely-dressed women were waiting for the bride by the fire. The bride dismounted at the fire, her fur coat was removed, the women came to her, undid the end of her braid, and made up her hair in the style of a married woman. Then the bride was taken into the house, where she remained until eleven a.m. According to what I heard, she was dressed up there, and her head was covered with the headgear of a married woman.

We were invited to the bride's father's house at eleven a.m. It was located in a narrow lane that went south from our house and was inhabited by members of the He Clan. Strips of red paper with Chinese characters written on them were glued on doorposts and on the fence, indicating the place of the wedding feast. Having entered the compound, we saw that in its northern half, a tent canvas had been stretched in such a way that its lower margin hung 2.5 meters above the ground. They had placed tables and benches under the tent and guests were already sitting here eating snacks. Red spherical lanterns hung in the tent and under the sheds of the verandahs. We were led to the western wing.

Here, felt mats had been spread on the sleeping platform. There were also four pillows with the ends decorated with embroidery placed on chests. These were samples of the bride's needlework exhibited for public view. The room had obviously been redecorated. Strips of red paper with Chinese characters had been glued everywhere and, on one of them was a list of the more important gifts given to the young couple by relatives. The wedding was said to have cost as much as 200,000 cash. There was a table prepared for worshipping in front of the door, and on it there was a tablet with, as they told us, three Chinese characters on yellow ground: 'heaven', 'emperor' (Huangdi), and 'parents'. Two small lamps stood in front of the table.

Samt'anjimba, who had accompanied us, gave the bride's father and grandfather a piece of red cotton cloth, 500 cash from me and my wife, and 250 cash personally from himself. The bride received a Russian kerchief and one double-handful of Russian sugar. The red cloth is given for the purpose of girdling it around the groom's shoulders but, since he had already received a similar gift and was already decorated with it, our gift was simply placed on his shoulders and then taken away. The groom was forced to make several kowtows to express his gratitude for our contribution in front of the table standing by the door. The groom was already wearing two strips of red cloth. One was thrown around his right shoulder and tied in a bowknot on his left hip, and the other around his left shoulder with the bowknot on his right hip. There were also bowknots on his shoulders.

We then received tea. The guests came out from the tent in the courtyard after an hour and remained standing along its edges. Two felt mats were spread in the courtyard center; they were white below and red above. They were placed one after the other with the red side up. In front of the first mat they placed a table with the yellow tablet that had been taken from the room where we had been sitting. The groom was placed in front of the table behind the first red felt mat, while the bride was placed behind the groom and behind the second felt mat. Two men stood beside the corners of the table, and two women stood on both sides of the bride. The men set strips of yellow paper on fire and knelt, while the groom and, after him, the bride began kowtowing. Firecrackers were set off. Then all of this was taken away. The groom was forced to make a couple of additional bows inside the tent, spreading the red felt mat each time. We left after this.

We were again invited to the same house for dinner at about three or four o'clock p.m. We were again placed in the same room where we had sat during the first visit. Sitting on the sleeping platform and through an open window, we saw how guests were feasting in the tent. Servants<sup>127</sup> were incessantly scurrying in and out of the tent, bringing in new dishes and carrying out empty vessels. The guests, who had already had some alcohol, were singing dreary songs.<sup>128</sup>

The ceremony of delivering the gifts started after an hour. The actual procedure was invisible to us, since it took place inside the tent, and the foreground under the raised margin of the canvas was occupied by a crowd of guests, standing like a dense wall. We could only hear fragments of a long measured speech, consisting of an enumeration of the gifts. The groom had been pressed to the edge of the terrace on which the crowd was standing. A red felt mat, on which he was forced to kowtow at the required moments, had been spread for him behind the hindermost guests. We could only see the backs of the Shirongol people and the small figure of the groom painstakingly kowtowing behind the backs of the others. This was the announcement of the gifts from the bride's side.

They then started to deliver the gifts given from the groom's side to the bride's side. This was also preceded by a speech inside the tent, but the delivery took place in the courtyard center. The gifts consisted of pieces of cloth and quadrangles embroidered with silk that were to be used for pillows.

The farewell ceremony to the bride's side started next. No one remained in the courtyard, and the tent was also empty. In it we could only see a table buried under heaps of raw mutton that had been presented by the bride's side. Two donkeys carrying packs that had been loaded on the same courtyard were being led behind the crowd that had departed. They were apparently also intended for the entourage of the bride's relatives. The groom's relatives saw the guests off with liquor and soon returned with cups in their hands.

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<sup>127</sup> [The 'servants' were most likely relatives of the groom's family, members of his *jiawu* 'minimal lineage'. See Roche (2011) for more on Mangghuer kin groups.]

<sup>128</sup> [See Wang and Stuart (1995a, 1995b) and Wang et al. (1995) for more on Mangghuer music.]



After this, new guests appeared in the tent, were seated at the tables, and began to be served food. This was the time when we also received our dinner. It was made from beef and pork. The dishes were very delicious and had an elegant external appearance. The pork resembled a semi-transparent, juicy fruit like a melon with longitudinal stripes. Another dish consisted of a rosette of symmetrically arranged pieces of liver, accompanied by lard colored to a pink hue; in the center of the rosette stood a rod, on which a piece of white bread had been placed.

The young couple came also to our house while paying a round of visits to their relatives on 10 December. A red blanket had been spread on the floor in front of a red board for the reception of the guests. Dishes with nuts, pears, and sugared fruit were placed on the cornice in front of the board. The young couple remained standing in front of the board upon entering our room, with the groom in the front and the bride behind him, with the accompanying ladies at her sides. A young man from the escort took the command, and the groom and the bride started making kowtows in front of the board, first for my health and then for the health of my wife. The groom made three kowtows each time and the bride one. The ladies standing at her sides also made kowtows together with the bride. Then the guests went to our landlords' room, where a festive meal had been prepared for them.

The bride was taken to her parents' house on 11 December. She rode a mule, and her face was uncovered. Still wearing the red strips and bowknots, her husband led the mule by the reins. Another man drove a loaded donkey at a distance of about ten steps in front of them.

The Shirongols follow an order of seniority based on kinship relations when seating guests at their places at feasts. There are cases when an uncle is younger than his nephew – the uncle may be a child, while the nephew is an old man. Nevertheless, the uncle is seated higher than the old man at a feast, for even if he is younger of age, his 'bone' is bigger, or, as the Shirongols say, *bombeï*<sup>129</sup> *shuguo*.

The Shirongols bury their dead in the Chinese way in the earth beside their arable fields.<sup>130</sup> They make a small hill above the grave. There are no monuments of any kind on Sanchuan graves. Only before the graves of more wealthy persons they place cubes cut out of stone with a height of fifteen centimeters for burning paper. The graves are located among the fields in small groups.

#### OTHER CUSTOMS

The Shirongols worship local spirits called *gadziren lositu* or *gadzir ulustu*. The Tibetans call these spirits *sa bdag* or *gnas bdag* (one Ordos Mongol pronounced this as *sheptak neptak*). They sacrifice sheep to these spirits, but they do not asperse milk.

When they sell an animal, they take wool from the mane and the tail, rub the lips of the animal with it, keep this wool, and hang it on the wall in their homes. Tibetans also know this custom and I saw entire bunches of such wool in their homes. This ritual is called *talarga abku* in Sanchuan while in Tibetan it is *g.yang*.

The Shirongols have no script of their own, and the Mongol script is unknown to them. The lamas study the Tibetan alphabet and others learn to read and write Chinese. There is a Chinese school in Nijia Village. The teacher in this school was from Xunhua during my stay.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> [*bombeï* = generation.]

<sup>130</sup> [See Stuart and Hu (1992b) and Zhu and Stuart (1999a) for more on death and funerals in Sanchuan.]

<sup>131</sup> [See Zhu and Stuart (1999b) for details of education in Sanchuan during the twentieth century.]

## MANGGHUER FOLKTALES AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVES

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### ABSTRACT

Eleven folktales and historical narratives are presented that were collected by Grigori Potanin during his visit to the Sanchuan Region in 1884-1885. The folktales all appear to have been collected from males, mostly monks. One folktale deals with Wencheng Gongzhu, the Chinese bride of the Tibetan emperor, Srong btsan sgam po. One deals with the building of the Potala Palace in Lha sa, another with the founder of Dge lugs Buddhism, Tsong kha pa, and two more with the founding of Dmar gtsang Monastery, in A mdo. Two narratives relate events from the Chinese epic, *Journey to the West*, and four narrate events related to Li Jinwang, a Tang Dynasty general, and his adopted son, Li Cunxiao.

### KEYWORDS

folklore, Mangghuer, Monguor, Qinghai folklore, Sanchuan, Tu

### ORIGINAL TEXT

Potanin, Grigorij. 1893. Тангутско-тибетская окраина Китая и Центральная Монголия. Путешествіе Г. Н. Потанина, 1884-1886 [*The Tangut-Tibetan Borderlands of China and Central Mongolia, The Expedition of GN Potanin, 1884-1886*], t.2, Издание Императорскаго Географическаго Общества [Imperial Russian Geographic Society]: Saint Petersburg.

### GREEN TARA<sup>1</sup>

The Tang Emperor had a daughter named Green Tara.<sup>2</sup> Five kings came to ask for her hand in marriage: Ge sar dmag gi rgyal po, Stag gzig nor gyi rgyal po, Spun zla hor gyi rgyal po, and two others whose names the narrator had forgotten. The Tibetan king sent Minister Mgar stong rtsan<sup>3</sup> to make a formal proposal. The princess did not want to marry any of them.

In order to finish off this business with the suitors, the Tang Emperor, following the advice of a eunuch, announced that he would give his daughter to the one who succeeded in passing a thread through a piece of turquoise. The stone was not pierced straight, so the hole going through the stone was crooked. All five kings tried to pass a thread through the stone, but none succeeded. Then, Minister Mgar stong rtsan put a spider in the hole and started blowing into it. The spider walked into the cavity, and came out of the hole on the other side of the stone, dragging a thread of spider web behind it.

The Tang Emperor was surprised at Minister Mgar stong rtsan's intelligence. Still, he didn't

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<sup>1</sup> Told by Phun tshogs, a Shirongol monk from Sanchuan. This sixty-eight year old man lives in Wenjia Monastery. He spent thirteen years in Southern Tibet in Se ra Monastery, and is literate in Tibetan.

<sup>2</sup> [Potanin's original term is Nogon Darihe 'Green Tara'. Although the story clearly refers to Wencheng Gongzhu (Chinese, or Rgya bza' kong jo in Tibetan) we have chosen to translate the original term.]

<sup>3</sup> [His full name is Mgar stong rtsan yul zung. In the original text, he is referred to as Lamba Gvardamba.]

give his daughter to him, but summoned twenty-one young women who all looked alike, and ordered Minister Mgar stong rtsan to guess which one was Green Tara. Minister Mgar stong rtsan didn't know what to do; he couldn't guess. However, the princess's servant told him that she wanted to tell him how to recognize the princess, but she was scared. The emperor's diviners<sup>4</sup> were so cunning that they would surely discover who betrayed the secret. Minister Mgar stong rtsan told the servant that he knew a trick that would fool the diviners. He told her to sit in a large earthenware vat filled with water, which was placed in a pit; and he then placed three stones by the edge of the large earthenware pot, gave her a copper tube to put in her mouth, and made her put plowshares on her feet. Then the woman spoke through the copper tube, "Green Tara always holds a flower that is invisible to human eyes. A bee, however, will be flying above the flower." Minister Mgar stong rtsan then went to the palace and pointed at the young lady above whom a bee was flying.

The king guessed that someone had divulged the secret. He summoned the diviners and ordered them to discover the traitor. The diviners consulted their books for a while, and announced to the Tang Emperor that the secret had been disclosed by a thousand-eyed woman<sup>5</sup> with iron feet and a copper nose, sitting in a sea lying between three cliffs. The Tang Emperor replied, "There are no such people!" and ordered that all the diviners' books be burned. After that, he had to give the princess to Minister Mgar stong rtsan, who took her off to Tibet.

On the way, Minister Mgar stong rtsan had an idea. He decided to not give the princess to the Tibetan king, but to make her his own son's wife instead. He assured the princess that she would be overwhelmed by the king's awful stench if she did not cover her nose in his presence. Meanwhile, he assured the king that the princess had no nose. When the king met the princess, he noticed that she covered her nose, so he believed Mgar stong rtsan and refused her.

Some days later, the king was inspecting a temple that was under construction, and saw the princess's face reflected in a mirror. He realized that he had been fooled. He became angry with Minister Mgar stong rtsan, ordered that he be forced to stare at the sun's reflection in a mirror until he went blind, and banished him to an area where, nowadays, lies Lake Kokonor.

There used to be no lake there, only a well. Minister Mgar stong rtsan had a disciple with him. Every day, the disciple went to fetch water at the well. Following Minister Mgar stong rtsan's advice, after fetching water in the morning, he always covered the opening with a stone, otherwise the water would overflow.

The Tibetan king then started building Mengudzhu,<sup>6</sup> but couldn't manage to finish the construction. Whatever they built collapsed. At this point, Minister Mgar stong rtsan's great intelligence was remembered, and two noblemen from A mdo were sent to find him. They were dressed as mendicant monks, as if they were on pilgrimage to holy places. The disguised travelers went throughout the country: they went across A mdo, and also went around all the countries that lay beyond the boundaries of A mdo. But they didn't find Minister Mgar stong rtsan. Feeling miserable,

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<sup>4</sup> [The Russian rendering *tsurhaitchi* appears to be the Mangghuer term *turaoqi* (Mongghul, *tiruuqi*) that refers to the men who carry the deity in a sedan during divinatory and other rituals. More broadly, the term is a Mongolian loanword found in nineteenth century Russian texts to refer to Mongolian diviners.]

<sup>5</sup> Obviously in Mgar stong rtsan's advice the sieve with which the woman must cover her face has been omitted.

<sup>6</sup> [Mengudzhu refers either to Lha sa in general, or specifically to the Potala Palace. Lessing (1960) uses the phrase *möngke zuu* (transliteration = *muivggae jiu*) 'eternal monastery' and defines it as a popular name for Lha sa. The Mongolian word *zuu* (transliteration = *jiu*) comes from Tibetan *jo bo* 'lord' and normally means 'monastery' in Mongolian. The word *möngke* (*muivggae*) is Turko-Mongolic for 'eternal' (Juha Janhunén, personal communication, April 2012). Given the timing of the story, during the reign of Srong btsan sgam po, Mengudzhu likely refers to the Jo khang in Lha sa.]

they headed back to Tibet.

They passed through A mdo again on the way back. One day they got tired and entered a tent they saw in a valley. They found a blind old man in the tent – this was Minister Mgar stong rtsan. He offered them tea and asked where they had been. They said that they had been on pilgrimage to various places, including Mengudzhu, and were now returning to their native place in A mdo.

"Have they really built Mengudzhu?" asked Minister Mgar stong rtsan.

"They have," said the monks.

"You're not telling the truth. It can't be built."

The monks, however, insisted that they had seen Mengudzhu with their own eyes, with its golden roofs, and had prostrated before its golden gods. "No, these are all lies, because to build Mengudzhu you must know a certain trick, and I'm the only one who knows it. It can only be built after sprinkling some milk from a white cow, and if the building materials are carried on a gray bull. Have the builders satisfied all of these requirements?"

Having drunk lots of tea, the wandering monks left. Only after they had left did Minister Mgar stong rtsan guess that they were interrogators in disguise. He understood that that he had gotten worked up in the dispute, and ordered his disciple to catch up with them and kill them. "Catch up with them and kill them, because they have taken away my *blo* (idea)!" The disciple caught up with the monks and asked, "Was it you who were in the tent of my father, the blind old man, and had tea?"

"Yes, that was us."

"My father got angry with you and has sent me with the order to kill you, because you have taken away his *blo*."

"Indeed, after we left the tent, we picked up a *glo* (cow's girth)<sup>7</sup> on the steppe. We thought it had been discarded because it was useless, so we took it. The rope that serves to tie and carry our load is all worn out and we need to replace it. But if you need it, here it is, please take it," replied the monks. And they gave back the girth.

The disciple let the monks go, thinking, "How cruel is my teacher! Killing two people for an old rope!"

"Did you kill the monks?" Minister Mgar stong rtsan asked him when he returned.

"No, I didn't, because they gave back your girth."

Meanwhile, the cover of the well from which the disciple fetched water came off, and water started flooding the valley. Minister Mgar stong rtsan fled.

A lake now called Kokonor formed in this place. The island in the middle of Kokonor is called Mtsho snying in Tibetan, or "Heart of the Lake."

#### TSONG KHA PA<sup>8</sup>

Tsong kha pa<sup>9</sup> came to the mountain where Dga' ldan Monastery now stands (at that time, there was no Mengudzhu) and settled in a cave. Two monks coming from Rgya gar rdo rje gdan [Bodghaya] saw a woman milking a cow and asked, "Where can we find the lama with a big nose?"

She replied, "Wait! I am milking my cow!" When she was done milking, she washed her hands,

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<sup>7</sup> [The confusion relies on the fact that *blo* and *glo* are homophonous in A mdo Tibetan.]

<sup>8</sup> Told by Dzundui, a Shirongol monk from Sanchuan.

<sup>9</sup> [In the original text, Tsong kha pa is referred to as both Djitsunkava and Djilama.]

set up three lamps, bowed towards the West and said, "I bow to Tsong kha pa, who lives in that direction. I don't know any big-nosed lama."

The monks went further west, and met another woman who was collecting dung. They asked her, "Where around here does the big-nosed lama live?" She pointed towards a cow patty and said, "The cow laid this thing; where is this thing's head, on the top, or on the bottom?"

The monks didn't know what to answer.

She lit three lamps, bowed, and said, "In front of me, in a cave, lives Tsong kha pa, but I don't know any lama with a big nose!"

The monks then approached the cave, thinking, "We won't bow to Tsong kha pa!" However, their hats brushed against the lintel while they were entering the cave. Their hats fell off and they had to bow down to pick them up. Both monks then became disciples of Tsong kha pa.

Tsong kha pa decided to build a monastery on the mountain where he lived, and told his disciples, "We must first find out how to build a monastery, but the method can only be discovered in Rdo rje gdan. There is an old man there, an eighty-year-old lama who lives in a cave. Go ask him."

The two disciples reached the place where this lama was. He asked them, "So, have they built Dga' ldan?"

"They have," answered the disciples.

"You're lying!" said the old man. "Surely they have not milked a lioness?"

"They have," lied the monks.

"You're lying! And have they carried the earth on a red bull?"

"They have," the monks assured him.

"All lies!" said the old man.

The disciples left. After they had gone, the old lama told his disciple, "What have I done? These people have taken away my *blo* (idea)! Go get it back from them! Kill them!"

The disciple caught up with the monks and said, "You've taken away my lama's idea! Give it back!"

The two monks took off the leather girth (*glo*) that they had found on the road and were using as a belt, and gave it to the envoy.

When the disciple got back home, the lama asked him, "So, did you kill them?"

"No," said the disciple, "they returned the stolen girth."

Then the lama realized that his disciple, instead of the word 'mind' *blo*, had understood 'girth' *glo*. He said, "Alas! Now the end has come for the Red Faith! A preacher has appeared in Dga' ldan and now the Yellow Faith will flourish."

When the disciples brought back the lama's secret, the construction of Dga' ldan began. Once sprinkled with lioness's milk, the water in the lake surrounding Dga' ldan froze, and a red bull brought earth and other construction materials over the ice. When the construction was finished, Tsong kha pa brought together all the carpenters, stonemasons, and other craftsmen who had worked on the construction, and organized a feast for them. He thanked them and said, "How much trouble you've been through!" As for the red bull, they forgot to invite him to the feast and so the bull decided that he would destroy the Yellow Faith within three centuries. First he was reborn in the form of the emperor Glang dar ma,<sup>10</sup> then in the form of the Xining *amban* Ninguë,<sup>11</sup> and then in the form of the Chinese

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<sup>10</sup> [In Potanin's text, Glang dar ma is variously referred to as Landarma and Lander.]

<sup>11</sup> [Possibly Nian Gengyao, the general who led the campaign that saw northeast A mdo firmly incorporated into the Qing Empire.]

general, He Zhungtang.

In the times of He Zhungtang, the Chinese emperor invited Lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje<sup>12</sup> to visit him in Beijing. During the reception, the lama was served a cup of tea, which he threw on the ground. The emperor angrily asked what this meant, and the lama explained that a fire was burning in the little town of Shahai,<sup>13</sup> not far from Beijing, and that he had thrown his tea on the fire to extinguish it. The Emperor ordered that this be investigated to see if this was indeed true, and promised that if it were true, he would keep Lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje in Beijing. It turned out that the lama had spoken the truth.

When the lama died, General He Zhungtang said to the emperor, "This was a great lama! We must build a stupa for him in Utaë." The emperor gave permission, and the general set off to fulfill the Emperor's orders. He built a stupa and buried the lama inside it upside down. He then declared, "During your lifetime, I couldn't do anything to you. At least after your death, I will do you evil." A prayer wheel naturally arose on the spot.

MENGUDZHU<sup>14</sup>

When the Dalai Lama was building Bla brang Monastery on Mount Potala, a carpenter working there didn't believe that the Dalai Lama would pay the workers. All the workers were the lama's subjects, and the carpenter thought their work would be considered unpaid corvée. Resentfully, he placed the main pillar that supported all the roofing upside down. Underneath it, he placed a little support that he could pull out whenever he wished. He thought, "If the Dalai Lama gives us nothing, then I'll pull out the little support, and the whole thing will collapse."

When the construction was finished, the Dalai Lama said, "You've been through great troubles and accomplished an immense labor!" and gave great quantities of silver to all the workers, stonemasons, and carpenters. After giving the silver, the Dalai Lama asked, "Is the building stable? Is there any defect?"

The carpenter didn't expect such an outcome, and was so full of shame that he confessed what he had done. He said, "There is a fault! I thought the lama would count our work as unpaid corvée so I placed a pillar upside down and underneath it I put a little support so that it could be pulled out. If it is removed, the whole building will collapse."

Then the Dalai Lama said, "You placed a tree upside down. For this you, and after you die, your offspring, every year, on the first day of the first month, shall fly from the Potala head down."

And so since those times, a ritual is held. A descendant of that carpenter wears the dress of a garuda, wearing a mask that looks like a bird's head and wings spread out for flight on his shoulders. A cable is stretched from the top of the Potala, to the bottom of the valley. The man dressed as a bird is placed on a bull skin and brought down, along the rope, to the bottom of the valley, head first. No one cries if he dies. He is given fifty *tael* of silver if he emerges uninjured.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> [Potanin refers to Lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje as both Dzhandzha-ruvi-dorje and Dzhandzha-Gegen.]

<sup>13</sup> [Possibly Shahai in present-day Liaoning Province, northeast of Beijing.]

<sup>14</sup> Told by Samt'andjimba. At the time of this festival, Samt'andjimba was sitting in a Lha sa jail with his hands tied together. He did not see the ritual, but did see a big crowd on its way to watch the ritual.

<sup>15</sup> See Klaproth (1829) for the ceremony of walking on the rope in Lha sa. It takes place on the third day of the second lunar month.

#### DMAR GTSANG<sup>16</sup> MONASTERY ONE<sup>17</sup>

In Mengudzhu there used to be a king called Glang dar ma who persecuted monks. At that time, a famous monk from Dan tig went on pilgrimage to Mengudzhu. Meanwhile, King Glang dar ma's oppression intensified. The monk from Dan tig declared that he could no longer stay in Mengudzhu under such an impious king, and that he intended to return to his native land. He took a white horse, painted it black, jumped on it, and raced off towards his homeland. A chase ensued. The pursuers began catching up as he approached the Yellow River. The monk rode his horse across the river and, as he was crossing, the paint washed off his horse. The pursuers saw a man riding a white horse on the opposite side of the river and said, "This isn't the one we are after! That one was on a black horse, this one is on a white one." So they went back. The monk sought shelter in a cave; he died, but his heart kept beating. A turtle-dove littered his face with bird droppings. His pursuers entered the cave and seeing that the corpse was motionless and that the face was covered in bird droppings, said, "He died a long time ago!" and left.

#### DMAR GTSANG MONASTERY TWO<sup>18</sup>

A lonely deity was sitting in the cave near Dmar gtsang rta chen po<sup>19</sup> Monastery. He had once been a monk who ran away from the Tibetan King Glang dar ma. He fled on a white horse that he had painted black. Having swum across the river, the horse became white again. The people who were chasing the monk said, "We are after a monk who is riding a black horse, but this monk is riding a white one!" and didn't follow him. Continuing their hunt, they found the cave where the monk had hidden and stiffened in a sitting position. A dove, flying around the cave, dropped a lot of dust on his face. The pursuers said, "There's lots of dust on this dead man. He must have died a long time ago," and they didn't touch him.

This deity has a flesh body, but his flesh is covered with clay. The people who live near the monastery are Tibetans from Dzhug Valley, near Lha sa. The monk who became the deity was originally from Dan tig Mountain, west of Sanchuan.

#### NIUTOU WANG 'OX HEAD KING'<sup>20</sup>

A deity named Niutou Wang lived in a kingdom. As tribute, he ordered that he be given a boy and a girl to eat every year. And so this was done. Every year a boy and a girl would be chosen, dressed in nice clothes, put on a throne covered with tasty cookies, and carried to a temple outside of town. At this time, the winds would start rising, and Niutou Wang would appear, escorted by numerous warriors. He

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<sup>16</sup> Dmar gtsang (i.e., 'Red cliff' in Tibetan [this translation applies to the longer name of the monastery, Dmar gtsang brag]) is a monastery on the left bank of the Huang River, lower than the town of Xining. The Chinese call this monastery Baima Si, i.e., 'White Horse Temple'.

<sup>17</sup> Told by Samt'andjimba.

<sup>18</sup> Told by a Shiringol monk.

<sup>19</sup> [The original Russian for '*rta chen po*' reads '*lta-tchinbu*'. The Tibetan '*rta chen po*' literally means big horse. Although this appears to be a somewhat unconventional rendering of the monastery's name, it bears some resemblance to the monastery's Chinese name, i.e., Baima Si 'White Horse Monastery'.]

<sup>20</sup> Told by Tshe ring, a Shiringol monk from Sanchuan.

would enter the temple and sojourn there. On the following day, people would inspect the temple, and find the children missing.

One day, four gods came to this kingdom: Sun Wukong, Lama Tangseng, Sha Heshang, and Zhu Bajie (the last one had a pig head), and stayed overnight in a house. Sun Wukong noticed that their hostess was crying. "What are you crying about?" he asked. The woman explained that she had only one son, and that he would be eaten by the deity Niutou Wang the next day. Without children, she would have no way to live in her old age. "Don't cry!" Sun Wukong told her. "I will go to be eaten by Niutou Wang instead of your son."

The woman's son and a girl from another family were dressed in fine new clothes the next day, seated on a table, and carried to the temple. The wind rose and Niutou Wang appeared. He asked, "What's been prepared for me here?" Meanwhile, Sun Wukong had taken the children's place, having turned himself into them and let the children go.

Sun Wukong said, "Today I was brought to be eaten by you. But when you eat me, don't chew me, just swallow me in one piece."

"Why should I chew you?" said Niutou Wang. "You are so small you can easily be swallowed in one piece!" And then he swallowed Sun Wukong.

After he had been swallowed, Sun Wukong grabbed Niutou Wang's heart and squeezed it. "So then, will you eat me now?" he asked. Niutou Wang asked him not to kill him, to release his heart, and promised he would not eat Sun Wukong when he came out in the open once again. Sun Wukong made Niutou Wang swear that he would leave that place and give up eating people. Sun Wukong then came out of Niutou Wang's nostrils, Niutou Wang ran away, and Sun Wukong returned to the woman's home. She was serving food to his companions when he arrived. Sun Wukong gathered all the people and said, "From now on, don't worship that deity and don't sacrifice children to him. That was a false deity!"

#### SUN WUKONG<sup>21</sup>

Sun Wukong used to be a wrathful deity; he was subdued by Suojie Ye, or Qijia Laoye, or otherwise Suojie Longwang.<sup>22</sup> The latter was sitting inside a flower. Sun Wukong approached it and said, "What a beautiful flower!"

"If it is beautiful," said Suojie Ye, "come sit inside it." The flower opened up, Suojie Ye came out, and Sun Wukong sat in his place. Immediately, the flower closed its petals and Sun Wukong was trapped inside. Suojie Ye agreed to open the flower, but only on the condition that Sun Wukong cease being a wrathful deity.

Then, they went off together and met an old woman who had only one daughter. This young lady was condemned to be devoured by the monster, Zhu Bajie.<sup>23</sup> Sun Wukong declared that he would go to be eaten instead of the girl, put on her dress, and set off. Zhu Bajie swallowed Sun Wukong. Sun Wukong, now inside the monster, grabbed his heart and throat and squeezed. Zhu Bajie begged for mercy, but Sun Wukong agreed to release him only if Zhu Bajie embraced Buddhism.

The mountains in Sanchuan used to be bare – there was no grass. The people prayed for rain

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<sup>21</sup> Told by a Shirongol monk from Sanchuan.

<sup>22</sup> [These are three names for the same deity.]

<sup>23</sup> Mongols translate the name as Gahaibakshi 'Pig-Teacher'.



that would bring vegetation. Sun Wukong said, "I shall be a god myself." He sat down in the manner in which gods usually meditate, trying to remain motionless. At one point, however, he needed to pee. The people held up cups, saying, "Our god is pouring ambrosia!" But when they drank the liquid they said, "Eh, that tastes bad!"

Sun Wukong burst out laughing. Then the Jade Emperor<sup>24</sup> overturned his vessel and poured rain on the earth.

#### LI JINWANG ONE<sup>25</sup>

The Tang Emperor living in Chang'an<sup>26</sup> had a paternal uncle named Li Jinwang.<sup>27</sup> One day, the Tang Emperor was hosting a gathering of noblemen and Li Jinwang got drunk, broke some crockery, and beat guests. The Tang Emperor angrily said, "You have embarrassed me! You have displayed an inability to act decently in my presence. Instead, you have behaved in a way that is absolutely unacceptable for a king and for the emperor's uncle!" He then exiled Li Jinwang to a Mongolian place, where he married the daughter of a Mongol khan and had twelve sons and three daughters.

At that time, an enemy king attacked the Tang Emperor. He was unable to defend himself, and began regretting having banished Li Jinwang. Eventually, the Tang Emperor sent an ambassador to his uncle asking him to return. When the ambassador appeared before Li Jinwang, he told him that the Tang Emperor felt guilty about banishing him, and asked him to forgive his offense and return. Li Jinwang refused to go to Chang'an. He told the ambassador that his heart was not yet at peace, and that he was still angry with his nephew.

Li Jinwang's wife overheard him talking, and asked, "What are you discussing?"

The king replied, "Woman, keep quiet! This is no woman's business." The queen objected, saying that she was no simple woman, that she was a queen, and the daughter of a king. Then Li Jinwang told her that his nephew was asking for assistance but, remembering the emperor's lack of mercy, he had refused to help.

Determined to convince him, his wife said, "If you don't go, I, a woman, shall go!" So then Li Jinwang set off for Chang'an.

However, before Li Jinwang reached the capital, the Tang Emperor had already left with his army for the city of Nianbo.<sup>28</sup> In this way, they missed each other. The Tang Emperor lost his kingdom and somebody else took his place on the throne. This is how the city of Nianbo acquired its name: *nian* means 'empty'; *bo* means 'rear,' i.e., the king came without his kingdom behind him.

Li Jinwang's three daughters did not enjoy sitting around at home; they were very independent and strong-willed. They went to the fields carrying baskets to pick wild edible herbs. There was a grave in the field on which a stone statue of a man stood. The young women started playing with the statue, throwing grass at his head and calling, "You be my husband, and I'll be your wife." One of the girls' baskets slipped from her hands and landed on the stone man's head. Later that night, she dreamt that the stone man came to life and spent the night with her. She discovered that she was pregnant soon afterwards.

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<sup>24</sup> In Mongol, Boron Etchjen 'Master of Rain'.

<sup>25</sup> Told by the old man Tchai'i, Shirongol from Qijia Village.

<sup>26</sup> Chang'an is the ancient name of today's Xi'an City.

<sup>27</sup> *Wang* is 'king'; *jin* could be 'gold'.

<sup>28</sup> [The seat of present day Ledu Region.]

When her pregnancy became noticeable, Li Jinwang became angry with her. He was thinking, "She has had no boyfriend, she hasn't married, but she's gotten herself pregnant!" and he ordered that she be killed. Her mother, feeling compassion, gave her a little bundle of food and a staff. She told her to go to Mount Iragu<sup>29</sup> – which was, in those times, covered by a thick forest – and to give birth there, in a cave far from human eyes.

The girl settled on Mount Iragu and gave birth to a little boy, whom she named Li Cunxiao. A tiger and a wolf, hunting in nearby flocks, provided them with lamb meat. They brought it to the cave, feeding the mother and her child.

When the boy reached the age of twelve he took a job herding for a wealthy family. He gave his mother what little money he received, and that was what she lived on.

One day Li Jinwang went hunting and saw the boy, Li Cunxiao, on the other side of the Datong River, herding sheep. A tiger ran into the flock and killed a lamb. Li Cunxiao grabbed the tiger by its throat, pressed him to the ground, and killed him. Li Jinwang started yelling at him, "Why did you kill the tiger? That was my tiger – I raised it! Give it to me!" Li Cunxiao took the tiger's corpse and threw it on the other bank. Li Jinwang was thinking, "What a strong boy!" and asked the noblemen surrounding him whose son he was. They told him that he was his grandson, called Li Cunxiao, who was born in a cave on Mount Iragu from the daughter he had chased away. Then Li Jinwang took the boy home with him. His mother was left without support. She thought, "How will I live now? There is no one to get food! And if Li Jinwang finds out that I'm alive, he'll send people to kill me!" She went to the stone statue and, bowing to it, hit her head so hard against the stone that she died. Li Cunxiao dug a hole, lay both the statue and his mother's body in it, and buried them.

For several days, Li Cunxiao did not appear before Li Jinwang. When Li Jinwang sent a man for him, he saw Li Cunxiao walking back and forth along the river, his hands clasped behind his back. Such a roaring came from the river that it seemed as if a huge crowd was shouting in unison. The man was scared and ran away. He arrived before Li Jinwang and told him what he had seen, and then Li Jinwang himself came to the riverside to have a look. He saw that Li Cunxiao was walking back and forth by the river, his hands clasped behind his back, and heard a roaring sound coming from the water.

Li Jinwang called out, and Li Cunxiao answered, "What is it you want?"

Li Jinwang said, "Why haven't you come to see me?"

Li Cunxiao answered, "It is not time yet. I'll come in about seven days."

"Why can't you come now? What is it you're doing?"

"I am making stone men and stone horses."

"May I see them?"

"You may," answered Li Cunxiao.

He took Li Jinwang to a cave, and showed him five stone men and five stone horses. They were already moving their limbs somewhat, but it was not possible for them to ride the horses yet. "Seven days from now, the horses will be just like live ones," said Li Cunxiao, "and then I will come to you!"

Li Jinwang thought, "This boy is cunning and dangerous!" and resolved to kill him.

Li Jinwang sent his twelve sons to seize Li Cunxiao and tear him to pieces by tying him to horses' tails. Li Jinwang's sons caught Li Cunxiao, attached ropes to his hands, feet, and neck, tied the other ends of these ropes to the tails of five horses, and began whipping the horses. Then Li Cunxiao pressed his hands and legs to his stomach and the horses couldn't move.

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<sup>29</sup> Mount Iragu is on the spit between the Datong and Huang Rivers.

Li Jinwang then ordered five carts to be loaded with stones, Li Cunxiao tied to the carts and, again, tried to tear him to pieces. They couldn't tear him apart this time either. Li Cunxiao pulled the carts towards himself. After that, thunder roared and Li Cunxiao rose to the sky.

After some time passed, the rebel, Wang Yanzhang, attacked Li Jinwang, and he didn't have enough strength to repel the rebel. He said, "What a pity that Li Cunxiao is not here now and that he rose to the skies!"

At this moment Li Cunxiao showed himself in the sky saying, "I'm here!" And suddenly the heads of Wang Yanzhang's warriors started to fall off by themselves and topple to the ground.

#### LI JINWANG TWO<sup>30</sup>

Li Jinwang had a son who never did anything. Li Jinwang chased him from their home, with the aim of having him go and learn some useful skill. Li Cunxiao went to the river that flows near Byang thang and started making people and horses out of clay. Later, a man called Wang Yanzhang attacked Li Jinwang, who didn't have enough strength to repel him. He said, "What a pity that I chased Li Cunxiao away!" At that moment, Li Cunxiao's soul appeared on the battlefield. Clay riders followed him, immediately stepped into the battle, and Wang Yanzhang's army was defeated.

#### LI JINWANG THREE<sup>31</sup>

There is a small town called Chuankou on the Shirongol land, and near it stands Mount Iragu. The Datong River flows between the two. Chuankou used to be a very busy place, with many merchants, and a big market. In the city lived the Shirongol *wang*, whose name was Li Jinwang. In those times, Chang'an was the capital of the Tang Dynasty. The ruler, who lived in Chang'an, sometimes gathered all the *wang* at his court.

Once Li Jinwang was invited to the emperor's palace. At that time, he got drunk, beat several minor officials, and smashed all the crockery. The ruler's envoy reported all this to the king, who angrily said that Li Jinwang was not a real *wang*, and exiled him. Li Jinwang was brought to the place where today's Chuankou stands.

In Zhili Province, to the north, they say that he was sent to a locality south of Kalgan,<sup>32</sup> which is where the town of Xuanhua stands (forty *li* from Kalgan and 360 *li* from Beijing), which is also called Bayan Sume in Mongol. It was a poor land full of sand dunes where it was impossible to cultivate grain for bread making. When Li Jinwang and his son settled there, it started to rain heavily, flooding the country and covering the sand dunes in silt. Since that time, it became possible to plant bread cereals there. Some Chinese also came to live there, and Li Jinwang found himself with a group of subjects.

Li Jinwang had thirteen sons. One was his, and the others were all adopted. One day Li Jinwang went hunting and reached the city of Linchu, west of Beijing. Having reached a river, he saw a twelve-year-old boy herding sheep on the other bank. A tiger ran into his flock and killed a lamb. The boy grabbed the tiger by the back of its neck, pressed him to the ground, and choked him to death. Li

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<sup>30</sup> Told by the old man Yanyar, Shirongol from Yangjia Village.

<sup>31</sup> Told by Samt'andjimba.

<sup>32</sup> [Today's Zhangjiakou, in northwestern Hebei Province.]

Jinwang shouted, "Hey, boy! Why did you kill the tiger? That was my tiger! I raised it!"

The boy Li Cunxiao answered, "And why did the tiger you raised eat the lamb that I raised? Is that a law?"

"Bring my tiger to my side of the river," Li Jinwang ordered Li Cunxiao.

The boy asked the *wang*, "How should I pass you the tiger? Should I do it quickly, or take my time?"

"Quickly, of course!" answered Li Jinwang.

Then the boy picked up the tiger and threw it over the river. The *wang* asked the boy, "Do you have parents?"

The boy answered that he had only a mother, no father.

Then Li Jinwang said, "Then you can be my son!" And so Li Cunxiao became Li Jinwang's adopted son. His strength equaled that of two tigers and nine bulls.

#### LI JINWANG FOUR<sup>33</sup>

From Li Jinwang to the present, thirteen centuries have passed. His adopted son, Li Cunxiao, had the strength of two tigers and nine bulls.

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<sup>33</sup> Told by a Shirongol from Shiana Village.

# MANGGHUER EMBROIDERY: A VANISHING TRADITION

Aila Pullinen (Independent Scholar)

## ABSTRACT

Visits were undertaken in the years 2001 and 2002 to Minhe Hui and Mangghuer (Tu) Autonomous County, Haidong Municipality, Qinghai Province, China to research and document Mangghuer embroidery. This research is summarized in terms of the history of Mangghuer embroidery, tools and materials, embroidery techniques, embroidered items, and embroidery's significance in Mangghuer women's lives. The materials are illustrated with numerous photographs.

## KEYWORDS

embroidery, Mangghuer, Minhe, Monguor, Qinghai, Tu

## INTRODUCTION

Embroidery was an appreciated art in Imperial China and used to decorate the robes, palaces, and homes of the rich and powerful, and continued to be used in similar ways in the early twenty-first century (Demick 2012):

In 2011, Chinese bought more Lamborghinis and Rolls-Royces than anybody else in the world. In time for Chinese New Year this month, Rolls is unveiling a "Year of the Dragon" model with hand-embroidered versions of mythical animals on leather headrests. Prices start at \$1.6 million.

However, alongside embroidery adding to the grandeur and magnificence of the elites, embroidery was also produced and consumed in much more modest circumstances. While many city and urban dwellers were poor, they also embellished their environment with embroidery, particularly for special occasions.

Much material in various languages on Chinese embroidery exists. A Google search for the term 'embroidery in China' on 4 January 2012 returned 280,000 hits. However, this literature often focuses on describing the most well-known embroidery-producing areas, e.g., Suzhou, Guangdong, Sichuan, and Hunan (Wang 1987, Chung 1979, Bertin-Guest 2003, Jiangsu Handicraft Art Society 1986, Zuo Hanzhong 1994). This obscures the abundance of embroidery produced in rural China, especially among ethnic minorities who have long, rich traditions of embroidery, including hand-sewn costumes, hats, and other objects of use. Wang (1987:14) mentions:

...the Miao, the Mongolians, the Uyghurs, the Yi, the Li, the Aini and others, who with their different historical background and traditions, besides making special textiles for consumption at home, also produced a great variety of exquisite and useful embroideries with a charm of their own.

According to Minick and Jiao (1966:18), "*Tiaohua* ('cross-stitch embroidery') is a traditional Miao technique practiced over a thousand years." And Prunner (1983:52) writes:

Die Schönheit der Webereien, Stickereien und Batiken der Völker des Südens hat bereits in der Song-Zeit (10. - 13. Jh.) die Aufmerksamkeit der Chinesen erregt, als derartige Arbeiten als

Tributgaben (*zongbu*) an der chinesischen Hof kamen...

The beauty of weaving, embroidery and batik of the peoples of the South was already established in the Song Dynasty (10th – 13th centuries), and attracted the attention of the Chinese, when such works came as tribute gifts (*zongbu*) to the Chinese court...

Folk embroidery impresses with its naiveté and impressive artistic ensembles, made all the more notable when bearing in mind that many of the makers received no formal training. Especially astonishing is how this beautiful tradition of folk embroidery – including silk embroidery – was carried out and maintained to this day, even in remote, and relatively poor regions along the eastern outskirts of the Tibetan Plateau – among the Mangghuer (Tu) people of Sanchuan in Minhe Hui and Tu Autonomous County, Haidong Municipality, Qinghai Province.

My first contact with Mangghuer embroidery came in 1999 when I joined the seminar on the Languages and Peoples of Qinghai while studying at the Institute for Asian and African Studies, University of Helsinki. At the end of the course, I wrote about the wedding ceremonies of Chinese families in Jingning Village, Gan'gou Township, Minhe County, on the basis of an article by Hu and Stuart (1992a), which noted that ceremonies in this area seemed to be similar to wedding rituals of Mangghuer living in southern Minhe County.

While reading related materials, I found mention of the bride and her family preparing embroidered articles as presents for the groom's relatives. However, the material I had access to lacked detailed information about these embroidered wedding gifts and the Mangghuer embroidery tradition, and there were no pictures. In my youth, I had created a number of embroidered articles – hangings, pillow covers, and initials on sheets, towels, and pillowcases. This partially explains my interest in embroidery. My curiosity thus aroused, I decided to visit the Mangghuer to learn more about their embroidery, local circumstances, possibilities of finding assistants and informants, and creating a network of contacts.

While preparing for my first trip in 2001 I received a message from Dr. Kevin Stuart, an American researcher who had been living in China since 1984. I thank him for the success of my investigation and for helping make my visits in Qinghai possible. He also had a personal collection of Mangghuer embroidery that I was able to photograph, scan, and study. I also had excellent local assistants, including Zhu Yongzhong from the Sanchuan Development Association (SDA) and Wen Xiangcheng in 2001, and Ma Taohua and Zhu Chunhua in 2002. They all appreciated the importance of my work and tried to help me in every way possible. I am very grateful to them. All these individuals speak Mangghuer, Chinese, and English, which was essential for me because the old women in the villages spoke Mangghuer, which I did not understand, and my Chinese was very poor.

During my 2001 and 2002 visits, I interviewed women between the ages of sixty and eighty, and their daughters and granddaughters to learn about their embroidery; embroidery implements they used in their youth, and how and where they acquired them; what objects they had embroidered and for whom; and to better understand the importance of embroidery in their lives. Everyone I met was very positive about my study. The women enthusiastically showed their embroidered items to me and described them. A Mangghuer widower in Chenjia Village showed me beautiful embroidered items that had been created by his wife.

## HISTORY OF MANGGHUER EMBROIDERY

When did Mangghuer begin to decorate their costumes with embroidery? How old is their embroidery tradition? Answers to these questions are difficult, but the technique and also the designs are of a very high level, suggesting development over many generations.

The Russian explorer Grigory (Grigoriy) Nikolayevich Potanin (1835-1920) mentions in his travelogue (1893) that he and his wife participated in a Mangghuer wedding and were told that the bride had personally made the embroidered pillows displayed on the *kang* for the benefit of the wedding guests. During the wedding, embroidered gifts were given to members of the groom's family, and the groom's family also gave gifts (380):

Подарки заключались въ кускахъ матеріи и въ расшитыхъ шелкомъ квадратикахъ, нашиваемыхъ на подушки.

The gifts consisted of pieces of cloth and silk embroidered squares sewn on pillows.

In Schram's study (1932:48) of Monguor weddings we find:

Les femmes en particulier s'intéressent fort aux cadeaux; elles examinant les étoffes et le fini des broderies, surtout celles des manches et des deux bouts des ceintures. On travaille souvent des mois et des mois à ces pieces. L'examen achevé on amène la fiancée.

The women in particular are very interested in gifts; they examine materials and the beauty of embroidered objects, especially the sleeves and the ends of the belts, the preparation of which has required months and months. When the inspection is finished, the bride is brought in.

A description of an embroidered item appears in Stuart and Hu's (1992:75) article on Mangghuer funerals, "The boy and girl with plate-and-liquor-flagon motif also are embroidered on stuffed pillow ends, and this pillow is used in the coffin, under the head of the corpse."

Traditionally, there is much singing at Mangghuer weddings, and I asked the interviewees if the songs mention embroidery. No one remembered any songs mentioning embroidery. In an article by Qi et al. (1999:89-90) concerning wedding ceremonies in Minhe County, however, a song called Embroidering Flowers [Xiu lianhua] is mentioned. While it lacks information about making embroidery, 'embroidering flowers' is repeated as a refrain.

The interviewees also did not know anything about the history of their embroidery, but certain objects were said to be very old – "from the ancestors." Some items that no longer had a present model – for example, previously used multi-colored, embroidered 'fake sleeves' or a wedding outfit, which could only be admired at the exhibition at the Culture Center in Guanting Town, where a traditional Mangghuer festive outfit with an apron, collar, and head ornament were on display.

## TOOLS AND MATERIALS

In embroidery we use needles, fabric, thread, pincushions, thimbles, and paper design patterns (Lü Jinlianmei) (F1).<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 'F' refers to 'Figure'. Jennifer Lai took photographs 6, 37, 40, and 49, Raisa Luomi took 5 and 11, and SDA took 8, 19, 21, 30, 44, 53, 54, 55, and 57. I took the others.

Clothes and shoes were generally made of cotton but silk was also common, if available, in embroidery. Many interviewees told me, however, that their families had been very poor; consequently, they used cotton instead of silk. Both fabrics and threads were purchased from peddlers, and later in stores. La Neia<sup>2</sup> (b. 1923) said that when she was a child there were no shops; they first appeared in the 1970s.

According to Deng Sangmei (b. 1924), hemp was cultivated in her home village and thread was spun from it and used for weaving bags and sewing shoe soles. Only one interviewee said her home had possessed a loom, which was used to weave fabrics for bags and sleeping pads. Only men wove with looms in Sanchuan.

Zhu Guobao (b. 1929) reported that when she was preparing woolen thread and fabric, she borrowed a drop spindle from her husband's brother. The weight was of stone and the shaft was of wood.

It was not easy to find a loom in the village. I found looms far from our village. Looms were used to weave fabrics for bags. We used sheep wool to make thread. We prepared bed clothes and outerwear with this thread. We used these clothes even when we were working in the field. We used white cloth to make socks, but we did not know how to knit socks from yarn. Few people knew (Lü Jinlianmei).

Figure 1. Nuo Shuangxihua's sewing tools: thimble, threader, scissors, and embroidered pincushion with needles.



<sup>2</sup> My notes contain this entry, but it is surely a mistake. Mr. Zhu Yongzhong suggested it might be Lu Nuer or La Erhua.



Many interviewees reported that it was difficult to obtain thread, and that silk was especially expensive (F2). Sometimes gold-coated thread acquired from monks was used.

Figure 2. An Liumei kept silk threads inside an old book. On the right is a stiff paper template for a pillow end panel.



The peddler purchased cotton thread from very far away, maybe from Lanzhou or elsewhere. At that time, thread and needles were expensive, unlike today (Lü Jinlianmei).

Threads were sold in bundles consisting of twenty-five different colors. The price of a bundle was one *yuan*. A bundle of five different colors could be bought for this price in 2001. Interviewees stated that colors remained unchanged (F3).

Figure 3. Modern bright-colored acrylic threads used in *duoke* technique. Bought from a peddler in Guanting in 2002.



If a suitable color was unavailable, white fabric and thread were dyed (F4). All dyes were derived from plants before the invention of aniline dyes in England in 1856 and their entry into China around 1870 (Garrett 1997:15). The interviewees also reported that, in their youth, plant leaves and old sunflower seeds were used in dyeing.

A black or blue dye was made by boiling sunflower seeds for twenty minutes. It was used especially for dyeing fabrics. Vegetable-based dye was more permanent than synthetic dyes, and also faded nicely over the years. Interviewees reported that synthetically dyed fabric and thread began losing color in ten years' time. Commercial dyeing powder was bought from peddlers.

The needles were straight and very short – two to three centimeters long – so that they would not bend when pushed through a thick layer of fabrics. They were expensive. La Neia reported that when she had no mother "nor anyone else," she borrowed a needle and thread from her friends, or stole wheat or eggs from home in order to buy supplies from peddlers. She first bought items at age twelve and was very pleased to go by herself to make purchases from the peddlers. She had some money at this age because she was already a skilled sewer and had made embroidery for other girls. Even so, she could not afford an entire package of needles, because it was too expensive. Each 'pack' contained twenty-five needles, and the price was five 'coins'. Eggs were a common medium of exchange when supplies were obtained from peddlers.

Needles were kept in beautifully embroidered pincushions (F5) when not in use, which also displayed the maker's embroidery skills because it hung from a button on the woman's dress, where it was easily accessible.

Figure 4. Old apron in appliqué. The background and appliqué fabrics were colored with vegetable dyes that have faded nicely over time (K. Stuart's collection).



Figure 5. Pincushion with plum blossom design embroidered in *sa* technique. Made by La Neia (author's collection).



The Mangghuer did not use metal pins but, instead, templates were usually fastened on the fabric with a few stitches. At times, small sharp pieces of stiff paper were put through the template and the fabric under it to keep the template in place.

No special embroidery scissors were used. Scissors with round handles, of different sizes were used.

The thimble – a sewing ring – was important. It was impossible to sew without a thimble because the layers of fabric in thick soles of shoes for bound feet had to be attached with needle and thread and were up to two centimeters thick.

The Mangghuer thimble differs from its Western counterparts by not covering the tip of the finger but being shaped more like a ring. It is a one centimeter wide metal ring, with small dents in the surface that prevent the needle from slipping out of position when sewing through fabric. The ring is closed or open with overlapping ends to fit around the finger. It is worn around the second joint of the third finger and not often taken off (F6).

When I was a child, I put it on my finger and now I cannot take it off (La Neia).

The needle threader (see F1) was rare – only two interviewees had one. It is small, gun-shaped, and very different from what I have seen used in the West.

Figure 6. La Neia's thimble.



Mangghuer did not use rectangular embroidery frames traditionally used in Chinese embroidery. They preferred embroidery hoops, where the fabric is tightened between a pair of concentric circular rings. Round hoops are light and easy to handle (F7).

Figure 7. Zhang Xihua doing *duoke* using a hoop.



Patterns were usually adapted from the mother or friends, but some women drew and cut them themselves, after looking at other's works. Li Xinghua (b. 1940) told me that, in her village, flower designs were made by moistening flowers, which were then glued on newspaper or yellow paper burnt as offering to deities or the ancestors and cut along the contours for a pattern.

Templates made out of stiff paper are very practical in preparing pillow ends: the template allows the same motif to be reversed for a mirror-image (F8). None of the interviewees said they bought paper templates; instead, they made them themselves. Some skilled cutters in the village were also asked to make templates.

Figure 8. Unfinished pillow end panels by Li Baoshou. The templates can be left under the stitches as support material.



The design was traced on cloth using various methods. The most expert embroiderers drew designs directly on the fabric. If a paper template was used, it was placed on the cloth and the pattern contours were drawn with ash. The template could also be left below the embroidery as support material.

Paste was needed to fasten two or more layers of cloth onto each other when a stable embroidery base was necessary, for example, in shoes, apron pockets, pillow ends, soles, and insoles. If a paper template was left under the embroidery pattern, it was fixed to the bottom fabric with paste or by tacking with thread. The paste was prepared by boiling flour and water until they formed a mixture of appropriate thickness. Preparation required twenty to fifty minutes, and required constant stirring.

## EMBROIDERY TECHNIQUES

### *Sa* Technique

The oldest interviewees reported that they had used only the *sa* technique, which consisted mostly of satin stitches with different variations. There were also other stitches: chain stitch, stem stitches, cross stitches, Pekinese stitches, knot stitches, and gold work (F9). The metal-coated thread for gold work was bought from the monks. Beautiful 'dog's tooth' stitching was applied while finishing pillow ends, where the embroidered pattern was 'framed' with cotton cloth, along with ordinary back stitches and cross stitches.

Figure 9. Example of *sa* technique that mainly includes satin stitches with variations (K. Stuart's collection).



### *Appliqué* technique

Decorative *appliqué* was evident in old aprons where the base fabric is decorated by sewing designs on it cut from a separate fabric (F10).

Figure 10. Example of *appliqué* on an old apron pocket. The fabric is decorated by sewing designs cut from separate fabric (K. Stuart's collection).



### *Woke* Technique

The interviewees born in the 1960s and 1970s also reported using the *woke* technique, which is a mixture of Romanian couching, also known as Oriental couching, and Bokhara couching where the slanting stitches are arranged to form lines across the laid threads, e.g., in large flowers and leaves (Webb 2006). This technique began to be popular in the 1970s and was common in flat pillowcases and various hangings. In Mangghuer embroidery, the stitches are sewn extremely tightly with a single strand of thread (F11). When worked with lustrous cotton, the embroidery is very attractive. Making it was very laborious and time consuming and it thus fairly soon went out of use when another new technique appeared.



Figure 11. Example of subtle *woke* technique on a pillowcase for a flat pillow (Puba Village, author's collection).



### *Duoke* Technique

The *duoke* technique is a fast and very impressive embroidery technique that is also known as punch stitchery or Russian punch needle stitch (F12). It was introduced to the Mangghuer in the 1980s. I was unaware of this technique in 2002, as were the textile lecturers at Helsinki University whom I consulted. I later found Punch Needle Marketplace on the Internet,<sup>3</sup> and learned of its popularity in the USA.

The *duoke* tool featured on Punch Needle Marketplace consists of a needle and a handle. The Mangghuer, however, worked with only a needle that is very different from an ordinary sewing needle. The *duoke* needle is hollow and the eye is at the tip of the needle, as in a sewing machine needle. The thread passes through the hollow needle, and sewing work is done from the reverse side of the work following the pattern. The surface is thus filled so that the needle is 'topstitched' through the fabric, with each injection leaving a small loop beneath the fabric. The loops of about one millimeter in length are very close together, producing a soft, terry-like surface. As already mentioned, the Mangghuer used a needle without a handle and also an electric punch machine with batteries, which also are available online. In the early 2000s, *duoke* had replaced both antecedent techniques.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.punchneedlemarketplace.com>.

Figure 12. Example of *duoke* technique and a *duoke* needle (Puba Village, author's collection).



### *Khuleghsi ganger* Technique

*Khuleghsi ganger* technique is another modern technique used by the Mangghuer, similar to Core-wrapping Embroidery (Wang 1987). Instead, however, of thick thread for 'padding' the Mangghuer use a thin sliver of bamboo, which is closely covered by small stitches in horizontal rows (F13). The stitches must be worked tightly together and can be seen on the reverse side of the item. When a row is finished the bamboo sliver is removed and placed closely adjacent to the earlier row, and another row is started. The result of the *khuleghsi ganger* technique is a soft surface of loops resembling the *duoke* technique. This technique is only used in insoles.

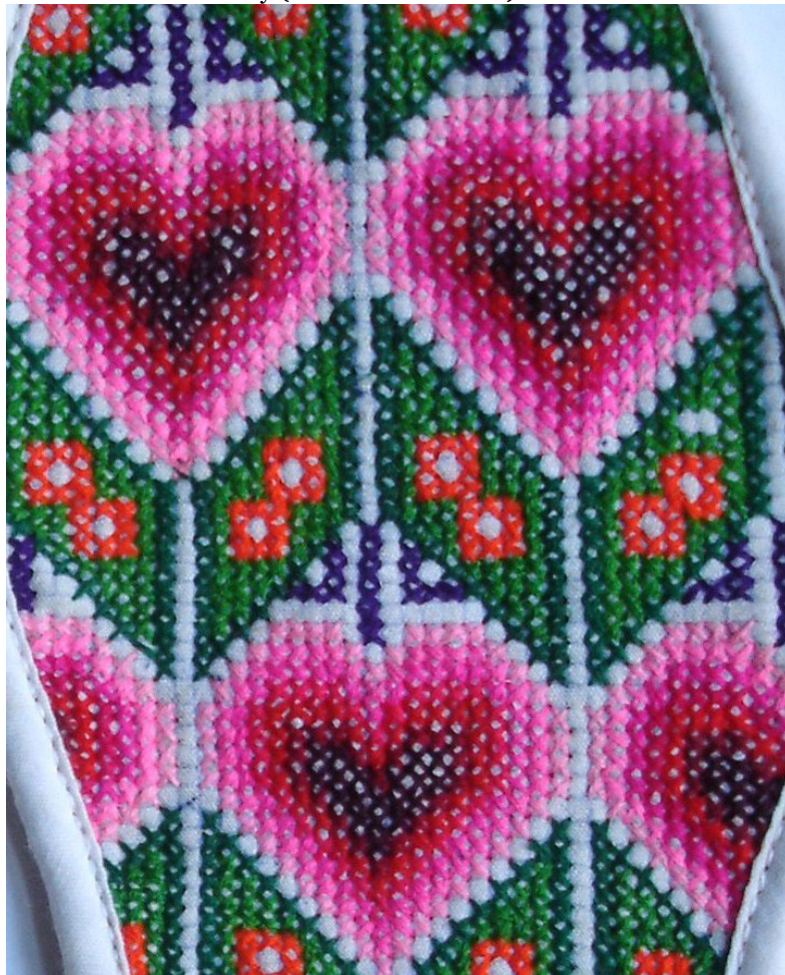
Figure 13. Example of *khuleghsi ganger* technique. The stitches are sewn over a bamboo sliver in horizontal rows (Nongchang Village, author's collection).



### Cross-stitch Technique

Cross-stitch embroidery is currently popular among the Mangghuer, especially in sewing insoles (F14). The Mangghuer do not use a fabric where the threads are 'pre-calculated' (e.g., canvas). Instead, the fabric is drawn into two-three millimeter squares with a ballpoint pen and then the pattern is sewn on it. I have photos from more than fifty cross-stitch insoles and the patterns are all different.

Figure 14. Example of cross-stitch embroidery (author's collection).



#### LIFE OF MANGGHUER WOMEN AND EMBROIDERY IN DIFFERENT LIFE STAGES

Mangghuer women did embroidery throughout their lives until a few decades ago. Young girls learned to make and embroider clothes and shoes, followed by preparing wedding gifts and items for her trousseau, and then made clothes for her family and in-laws. When a daughter-in-law gradually began doing the heaviest chores, her mother-in-law concentrated on caring for the grandchildren and, finally finished her last embroidery, the burial clothes for herself and her husband.

#### Childhood – Learning to Embroider

Learning embroidery skills began at the age of five to fifteen, but the most common starting age was twelve. Lü Jinlianmei told me that she was a skilled embroiderer by the age of eight, even though she had started sewing at the age of seven. The girl's first teacher was usually the mother, or if the mother had died when the daughter was very young, a grandmother, aunts, older siblings, or friends advised her. If there was no guide, others were observed.

The brightness and warmth of summer encouraged sewing. Poverty meant oil was not burnt in the evening for sewing work.

I could sew only during the daytime. We had just a little oil, and we could not make shoes or other clothing accessories under lamplight. Sometimes my mother made shoes in the moonlight (Lü Jinlianmei).

The first embroidered articles were made for oneself, "because they were not yet very good." One woman told me she made a pillow for herself, and another said she made an embroidered collar for a dress. If the mother had died, the girl made her own shoes, thus her first embroidered articles were often shoes for bound feet,<sup>4</sup> which were very demanding to make. (F15)

First, I made a pair of shoes for myself. Some girls embroidered collars, but I did not because my family was very poor. It was not easy to find cotton fabric to make shoes. Most families in our village were poor; there were just a few wealthy ones (Nuo Shuangxihua, b. 1931).

Figure 15. Ma Tianxi's shoes for bound feet. The vamp's size is about fifteen centimeters and made of black cotton with black ties and embroidered in silk showing motifs of butterfly and begonia. The sole, which is about two centimeters high, is made of densely layered, stitched cotton.



The Han Chinese tradition of binding women's feet to resemble 'lotus buds' probably started after the fall of the Tang Dynasty (618-907). The style was introduced at the court quickly and spread gradually until it was prevalent throughout the country. During the Qing Dynasty an attempt was made to stop foot binding – the feet of Manchu women were not bound – but it was not until the late 1800s that the custom began to fall into disuse and was eventually banned in 1912 by the new Nationalist Government. However, actual attempts were not made to ban foot binding in Sanchuan until the

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<sup>4</sup> Dr. Stuart said (summer 2001) that, to his knowledge, the Mangghuer were the only Mongol-related people who bound girls' feet.

1930s-1940s by Zhu Haishan.<sup>5</sup> The old tradition, however, did not change overnight, and continued in remote Mangghuer areas. Mothers worried that a daughter with unbound feet would remain unmarried.

My feet were bound when I was six years old. My parents helped bind them. If I did not bind them tightly enough, my mother scolded me. After my mother's death, I bound them myself. My feet were already very small when my mother died (Ku Yingchunlan, b. 1920).

## Youth – Trousseau and Wedding Gifts

After the basics of embroidery skills were mastered, girls began preparing trousseau and wedding gifts, regardless of whether or not a marriage had been arranged. The trousseau consisted of clothes or fabrics for the bride's own use, sometimes for her entire lifetime, or at least for the first few years of marriage – "for eating", as one interviewee said, i.e., without putting a strain on her husband's family's economy.

Some girls began preparing their trousseau at the age of twelve, because it often required three to five years. Female family members contributed to this work, because the eventual bride required a wide range of embroidered items for her own use and for gifts to be given at the wedding to the groom and his relatives. These works demonstrated the bride's needlework dexterity and worthiness as a bride to her future groom and his mother.

The apron was an important item in the bride's trousseau in the early twentieth century. Interviewees reported that a girl could not marry without it (F16). Other articles included pillows with embroidered ends, clothes, shoes, and a wedding dress, if the family could afford it. None of the interviewees I consulted had a wedding dress; however, a woman's outfit reproduced according to an old Mangghuer festival costume was on display at the Guanting Culture Center.

Interviewees prepared up to several tens of embroidered items as gifts to be distributed at the wedding to the groom and his family. Decorative items of this type included pillows with embroidered ends, clothes, boots, and soles. Wallets and festive sashes were less common. A bride from a poor family brought only fabric to the groom's home, and used it to make clothes for herself.

The trousseau items and the wedding gifts were completed and stored in a wooden trousseau chest until the bride went to the groom's home (F17).

An Liumei (b. 1941) said that most brides had a trousseau chest and stated that her father gave her such a chest when she was twelve. Some interviewees borrowed a chest because they lacked one of their own. The chests were painted red or black, and decorated with paintings of various colorful floral motifs. Rich girls usually had two chests while poor brides had only one chest, or none. The chests and the items inside were displayed to wedding guests during the wedding ritual, and the bride was not present at this time.

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<sup>5</sup> Zhu Haishan was a Tibetan Buddhist monk from Sanchuan's Puba Valley. He had close ties to the Republican government and its representatives, including the ninth Panchen Lama, and carried out a series of modernizing reforms in Sanchuan that included building schools and a library, anti-Japanese propaganda, and anti-footbinding campaigns. He was born sometime in the late nineteenth century and died sometime in the mid-twentieth century. See Zhu and Stuart (1996) and Roche and Wen (2013) for more.

Figure 16. Apron with a detachable pocket. The designs depicting auspicious symbols of peonies, butterflies, peaches, pomegranates, and Buddha's hand, have been finely embroidered in *sa* technique (K. Stuart's collection).



Figure 17. Trousseau chest from Minzhu Village.



I had only one trousseau chest, where I put my clothes, shoes, and long pillows. I could not show them to the guests myself, but I heard guests saying that some of the items were good; some of the items were not so good (Zhu Guobao, b. 1929).

When I visited, many interviewees told me that they had given their chests to relatives when they married, or had discarded them. Ku Yingchunlan said that she had refused an offer to sell her chest.

The interviewees' reports revealed that their parents arranged their marriages, and spouses were generally from other villages. Potanin mentions that the girl was definitely from another village, because the natal village belonged to a single extended family. However, marriage within the same large village is acceptable when the bride and groom are unrelated or not closely related.<sup>6</sup> Historically, the girl had to have small feet and had to know how to embroider. A beautiful face was unimportant.

Generally, a rich man married a rich girl and poor married poor. Parents helped their children find a spouse. They could not see each other before the wedding (Nuo Shuangxihua, b. 1931).

The interviewees remembered the arrival of the bridal entourage at the groom's home. It was an important moment for the future daughter-in-law because the trousseau chests were opened and all the contents displayed for the wedding guests, who then rated her skills. Exquisite embroidery helped to gain the mother-in-law's approval.

When the gifts made by the bride were distributed, the groom usually received a pair of boots with embroidered soles and heel supports, and often clothes, and sometimes a wallet or a sash. In-laws were given pillow ends, clothes, or boots. Pillow ends were given to the uncles and other guests.

In the late 1880s, the groom's relatives gave gifts of fabrics and pillows decorated with embroidered ends to the bride's relatives. This custom was discontinued between that time and the time when my interviewees married.

## Adulthood – Embroidered Gifts for the Family

Some interviewees told me that after marrying, and if time allowed, they continued making embroidered sock soles, heel supports, pillow ends, and pockets for aprons or vests. They also helped their husband's sisters make embroidered items, because a beautiful trousseau of a relative was also an honor for the daughter-in-law.

Some of the items that I found most attractive were the hats mothers embroidered for their sons. The Mangghuer traditionally highly value sons, who represent the future of the family, and bear responsibility for parents and ancestors. Giving birth to a son also gave new power and prestige to the mother in her husband's home. Without sons, a woman was considered primarily an economic burden. It is thus understandable that embroidered hats made for the boys were labor intensive and beautiful.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, Zhu Yongzhong (personal communication, 2012) quotes a male resident of Xiakou Village: "My father's younger sister married a man and moved into his home in the Xie Family group. He lives about a half kilometer from her natal home in the same village. She is from the Laozhuang group."



## Old Age – Burial Clothing

At the age of about sixty, a woman gradually begins preparing coffin clothing for herself and her husband. She may be helped by her daughters or daughter-in-law. I hesitated at first to ask interviewees about articles related to funerals. However, death is not a sensitive subject. As Stuart and Hu (1992b:68) note, "Death for the Minhe Tu is not an end but merely the conclusion of one revolution of an endlessly spinning wheel of existence." All the interviewed women were delighted to show me their beautiful funeral clothing. This clothing was usually wrapped in a scarf and stored in a locked cupboard on the *kang*. They also put on the costumes so that I was able to take photographs.

Xin Youfang (b. 1940) said that embroidered coffin accessories were used only after 1950, and earlier, she said, ordinary clothes and pillows were used. Only embroidered shoes, pillow ends or pillow covers, and chin rests are used today, in the 2000s.

## EMBROIDERED ITEMS OF THE MANGGHUER

### Footwear

A Mangghuer woman traditionally made footwear for herself and for her husband. Shoes for women were for bound feet and men's shoes were short boots with thin cotton soles. In 2001, buying shoes was widespread among the Mangghuer, although hand-made shoes were common in mountain villages.<sup>7</sup>

### *Shoes for Bound Feet*

Women, born 1920 to 1940, used *khuzhutai hai* 'hook shoes' for bound feet. Mangghuer shoes for bound feet differ from the 'lotus shoes' of Chinese women in model and size. The ideal shoe size of Chinese women was seven to thirteen centimeters measured from tip to heel, and the shoe tip often tapered downward. The sole of the Mangghuer women's shoes ranged from twelve centimeters upwards, depending on how tightly the feet were bound in childhood, and the shoe tip curled upwards, hence the term 'hook shoes' (F18).

Chinese lotus shoes, Manchu women's platform shoes, and Mongol women's shoes with an upturned tip (as can be seen in the Museum of Mongolian Costumes in Ulaan Baatar in Mongolia) all seem to have influenced Mangghuer shoes. Jackson notes (2000:49) that Manchu women were not permitted to adopt the Chinese custom of foot binding, thus the platform shoe was a Manchu woman's unique response to foot binding. Feet elevated on platforms made it appear that the wearer had bound feet when she walked, wobbling a bit, in her long gown.

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<sup>7</sup> There were traditionally plains and mountain villages, and mountain villages were both poorer and more conservative.

Figure 18. Shoes for bound feet embroidered with silk on cotton fabric. The thick sole is stitched by hand with hemp yarn (Chenjia Village).



A Mangghuer shoe's thick platform sole was made by pasting several layers of cotton fabric and stitching them together with thread. The soles were 1.5 to two centimeters thick. The uppers were usually made of black cotton fabric and embroidered in different colors with silk thread. A heel flap facilitated pulling the shoe on the foot and the shoe could be strapped around the ankle with ribbons.

Normally, we used left-over cotton from trousers to make footwear. The cloth was poor quality and the cotton was from another place. Sometimes we dyed the fabric green, and then used it to make shoes. We bought dye from peddlers. Sunflowers were also used for dyeing (Lü Jinlianmei).

The hook shoes – also made for the coffin – were usually embroidered with colorful flowers. However, I noticed an embroidered spider on one grandmother's shoes. When I asked her why she had chosen a spider motif, she replied, "I think it's so beautiful!"

### *Ankle Covers*

The *shanghai jier* 'ankle cover' is an embroidered item that is tied above the mouth of Mangghuer women's little shoes for bound feet to cover the white cloth wrapped around the ankle (F19). This embroidery should have a strip for tying.

Figure 19. Ankle covers by Zhu Changminghua. Embroidery with black thread on blue cotton is framed with black edging. The design shows tiny butterflies and a pattern, reminiscent of an endless knot.



### *Boots and Socks*

I saw only one pair of old fabric boots still in use in a village in Puba. The lady of the house brushed most of the mud off the boots, to allow me to study them in more detail. The boots were about twenty-five centimeters tall, made from black cotton, and had cotton lining. The sole and the heelpiece were embroidered (F20).

Figure 20. Short boots in black cotton with a thin sole, from Puba Village. The sole and the heel pieces are embroidered with floral designs in back stitch.



The boot soles consisted of three or four layers of fabric. The top black cotton cloth was embroidered in green thread with floral motif (F21), and the heel, as well, with a flower, a Chinese cabbage, a gourd, and so on. Sometimes the heel pieces were made of white cloth and the embroidery thread was either green or colorful cotton thread (F22).

Figure 21. Embroidered soles made by Nuo Shuangxihua. The floral design is finely embroidered in green thread with tiny back stitches, barely visible to the naked eye.



Lü Jinlianmei told me that they used white cloth when making socks, but did not know how to knit them from thread. Only a few people knew how to do that. Nowadays, socks bought from shops are strengthened with leftover embroidered soles and heel pieces (F23).

Figure 22. Three heel pieces embroidered in *sa* technique with multicolored or green thread with floral designs and another three with monochrome thread in Pekinese stitch with gourd and butterfly designs (K. Stuart's collection).



Figure 23. Modern utilization of leftover embroidered soles and heel pieces (K. Stuart's collection).



## *Homemade Shoes*

In the early 2000s, men, women, and children have flat shoes. The women's and children's shoes are strapped with a ribbon and button, or are buckled. Such shoes were made entirely of fabric and embroidered in earlier times (F24 and F25). Nowadays, it is possible to buy a white plastic sole and attach an embroidered fabric cover. Such shoes feature very little embroidery and only a small floral motif in satin stitches is embroidered on the upper edge (F26). Men's black canvas shoes lack embroidery.

Figure 24. Homemade woman's shoes with full cotton soles stitched with hemp thread (Minzhu Village).



Figure 25. Homemade child's shoes with fully embroidered soles (Chenjia Village).

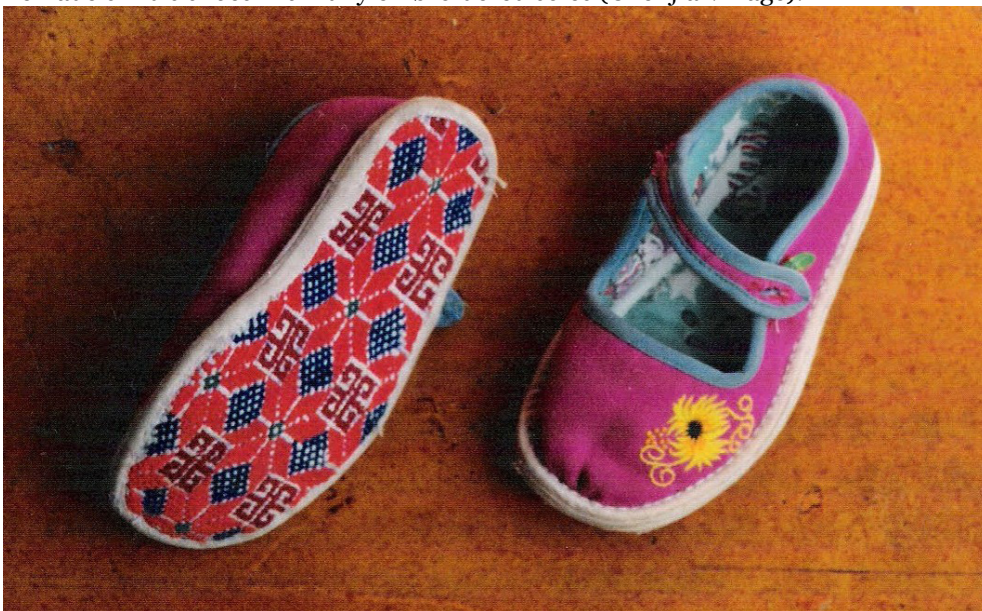


Figure 26. Plastic sole attached to a homemade upper with small embroidery in *sa* technique (Nongchang Village).



### *Insoles*

Insoles are commonly used in shoes with a hard plastic bottom, which were previously used as outer soles. Women prepare insoles when they have leisure time. The insoles consist of three or four layers of fabric that are combined either by embroidering through the fabric layers, or the top fabric is first embroidered and fixed to the layers and finished with a lining fabric, for example, with a sewing machine. The edges are finished with a fabric strip, which is attached either by hand or by machine. While embroidering insoles, *duoke* technique (F27) and cross stitches (F28) are currently used, but I also saw some pairs of beautiful insoles embroidered with satin stitches (F29) and with *khuleghsi ganger* technique (F30).

Figure 27. Eye-catching floral designs on insoles embroidered in *duoke* technique (Puba Village, author's collection).



Figure 28. Insoles with different patterns executed in cross-stitch (Zhuji Village, author's collection).





Figure 29. Insoles with refined figures and colors, worked in *sa* technique (Jingning Village).



Figure 30. Two pairs of colorful insoles in *khuleghsi ganger* technique (Nongchang Village).



## Pillows and Pillow Ends

The old fashion pillow or 'long pillow', is about forty centimeters long, tube-shaped, and has square-shaped ends of about eighteen centimeters. The pillow itself is made of simple cotton fabric but the ends are beautifully embroidered. Long pillows are still used in some homes (F31).

Figure 31. Long pillow in cotton with an embroidered end panel depicting a crane and a butterfly among lotus flowers (Minzhu Village).



I saw many embroidered long pillow end panels, because they have been traditional wedding gifts. A pair of ends with complementary motifs is usually attached with a thread and when needed, may be fixed to a pillow.

Foundation cloth was cotton or silk, while the embroidery thread was almost always silk. The color of the base fabric was unimportant and might be black, red, green, or bright yellow. The color of the fabric should, however, highlight the colors of the embroidered pattern. In pillow ends only the *sa* technique is used (F32).

The embroidery designs were usually large, colorful flowers, birds, and butterflies, which most women mentioned as favorites. The peony was by far the most popular of the flowers.

When the pattern is completed, it is framed, generally by black, but sometimes with red cotton cloth. The frame is a three to four centimeter wide fabric strip adorned with dog's-tooth stitching, which combines the pattern and the border. The back is covered with glossy red paper. As some of the pillow ends were several decades old and passed in a family from one bride to another, the red backing paper of some pillow ends was torn.

Figure 32. Pillow end depicting a flower and a butterfly embroidered in *sa* technique with refined colors. The embroidered silk end panel and the black cotton frame are combined with cross-stitches and beautiful dog's-tooth stitches (Puba Village, author's collection).



Modern pillows are flat, and their ruffle-edged uppers are purchased or manufactured in white fabric. They are also embroidered: the earlier ones with *woke* technique (F33), but solely with *duoke* technique more recently (F34).

Figure 33. Modern flat pillow case embroidered in *woke* technique (Puba Village, author's collection).



Figure 34. Modern flat pillow case embroidered in *duoke* technique. Made by Ma Xiuying.



### Aprons and Apron Pockets

The Mangghuer apron was historically commonly worn. It was diamond-shaped and covered the chest and stomach (F35). Garret (1977) suggests that this model is developed from accessories of the Ming Dynasty, such as Chinese women used into the early twentieth century. The apron has a narrow top, slightly less than ten centimeters in width, and widens at the base to a semi-circular bottom. Fabric strings are tied around the neck and the waist.

Figure 35. Apron with detachable pocket, made by Zhao Xiulan.



A striking detail of the Mangghuer apron is a large pocket on the lower part, beautifully embroidered with various-colored threads. The model is usually a huge flower with butterflies, but there may also be geometric patterns, or mice, cats, or rabbits in the edging fabric. When the pocket was worn out from everyday use, it was removed and discarded and a new pocket was sewn on it. Such aprons are now rarely used, although I saw a few aprons and about ten old pockets.

### Pockets for Sleeveless Jackets

Instead of the traditional apron, women may wear a sleeveless jacket or vest covering the chest and back, reaching to the waist and buttoned on the right side (F36). An embroidered pocket is sewn on the jacket and can be removed when necessary and replaced with a new one. A pincushion often hangs from the jacket button. Because the use of jackets has decreased, I saw many exquisitely embroidered, unfinished pockets (F37, F38, and F39).

Figure 36. Vest/Sleeveless jacket with a detachable embroidered pocket and a pincushion (Chenjia Village).



Figure 37. Pocket for a sleeveless jacket made by Nuo Shuangxihua. Exquisite embroidery depicting a phoenix and a peacock with peony and lotus flowers. The bottom piece features four small designs outlined with gold thread in Pekinese stitch. The motifs include (1) Buddha's hand and pomegranates, (2) butterfly and peony, (3) butterfly and lotus, and (4) begonia and cat.



Figures 38 (left) and 39 (right). (Left) detail from an unfinished vest pocket with embroidered phoenix and goldfish surrounded by flowers and butterflies. (Right) The reverse side of the pocket, showing the backing with small leftover pieces of cotton fabric (K. Stuart's collection).



## Pincushions

A pincushion consists of a soft, padded cushion for the needles, and a pull-on hood (F40). The hood is covered with silk and embroidered, with a different motif on both sides. There is a long loop at the top of the interior part that passes through the hood, which is pulled down to cover the needles so they do not prick the carrier.

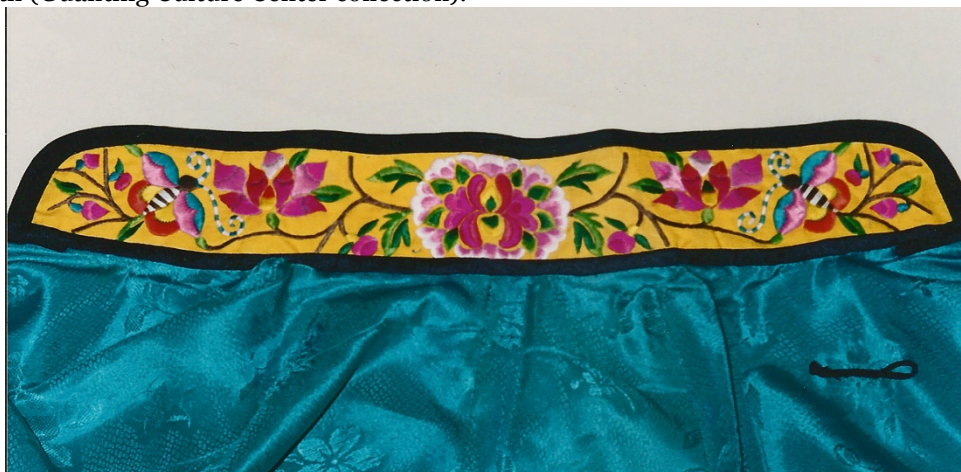
Figure 40. Pincushion made by La Neia.



## Collars

A collar was a luxury item that daughters of poor families did not make. It was attached to either a short festive jacket or to a vest. A vest collar was made of simple cotton fabric or embroidered. The collar of a festive jacket was always embroidered (F41).

Figure 41. The collar of a festive jacket is made of yellow silk, embroidered in silk with floral motifs and lined with black cotton cloth (Guanting Culture Center collection).



## Sleeve Decorations

Until the 1950s, women sewed 'fake sleeves' to their dresses. The sleeves were sewn of six to seven strips of different colors, giving the illusion that several gowns were worn. A wider strip in the middle was beautifully embroidered. I did not see any old 'fake sleeves' while interviewing, but in the Guanting Culture Center I saw new ones, made after old models (F42).

Figure 42. 'Fake sleeves' in a woman's dress, one pair decorated with embroidery (Guanting Culture Center collection).



## Head Ornaments

Embroidered and bead-embellished head ornaments were worn on the forehead during weddings and on special occasions. I saw such a head ornament in the exhibition room in the Guanting Culture Center (F43), and another was introduced to me by Xin Youfang (b. 1940) in Baojia Village, who had prepared it a week before her wedding.

Figure 43. Head ornament (Guanting Culture Center collection).





## Wallets

Wallets were usually wedding gifts, prepared by the bride. A wallet is about seven by twenty centimeters and has three folds (F44 and F45). The upper material is usually plain cotton fabric, and occasionally corduroy. Phoenixes, flowers, Chinese cabbages, and other themes were embroidered on the surface with back stitches using, commonly, green single core thread, although other colors were also used. The three inside pockets were embroidered in silk with motifs of flowers, Buddha's hand (fingered citron), butterflies, mice, and so on. The pocket mouths were finished with impressive dogteeth stitches and the edgings of the whole wallet were usually lined with a separate fabric strip sewn in back stitches or cross stitches.

Figures 44 (left) and 45 (right). (Left) an old wallet with three folds is closed with press-studs. The motifs of the wallet made by Li Baoshou include peonies on both sides and a pomegranate in the center. (Right) a wallet with three folds is decorated with narcissus, Buddha's hand, and a cat. The pocket is lined in dog's-tooth stitch and the edges with zigzag stitch (K. Stuart's collection).



## Sashes

A long sash worn by men on ceremonial occasions was also an important wedding gift to the groom. It was about ten by 180 centimeters and made of plain cotton cloth with intricately embroidered ends featuring different patterns on both sides. An embroidered bag might also be attached to the sash (F46).

Figure 46. A man's festive sash. The ends of the sash are embroidered, with different patterns on both sides. The detachable pocket reflects the same flower motifs (Guanting Culture Center collection).



## Caps

Caps made by mothers for their sons were very similar to caps used by Chinese emperors in ancient times (F47). The domed part of the hat is made of six pieces, and two red ribbons hang from the top, instead of a silk tassel used in an emperor's cap. The Mangghuer used to place an old Chinese coin on the top of the hat under the knot.

Figure 47. An exquisitely worked boy's hat with six segments at the dome, each containing an embroidered flower. Made by Xin Youfang.



Xin Youfang described making and decorating the hat:

First you cut six pieces and fix them together with small sticks. Then you make an edging strip and cut the models for flowers. Then you take a needle and thread and sew the flowers. Putting a coin above the hat under the knot is an old custom. Only this kind of coin can be used. Around the coin there are zigzag stitches. The knot above the coin brings health; it is some sort of prayer to the gods. The two ribbons hanging from the hat are purely decorative, as well as the sequins. Hats were made for children three years of age and older, and could be used as long as you wanted, even in old age. Hats, of course, were different in size. It took me about five days to make a hat.

### Fan Holders

Fans are used in some villages during Nadun festivals in summer and Yanguo Festivals in winter. Men dance during Nadun for many hours and emphasize their steps by moving fans to the rhythm of drumbeats. When resting, the fan is slipped into the fan holder that hangs from the button of the costume. The fan holder is embroidered in silk thread on cotton fabric with different motifs on both sides (48).

Figure 48. E Shuping's fan holder, made by his wife.



### Covers and Wall Hangings

Modern embroidery is represented by covers and wall hangings, embroidered using *duoke* technique. Quilts and pillows are folded on the *kang* neatly against the wall, and covered with an embroidered cloth when not in use. There may be three or four such bundles side by side, depending on how many people sleep on the *kang* (F49). Covers can also be used in front of an open shelf of a kitchen cabinet or on the TV to protect it from dust. The Mangghuer do not use tablecloths.

Figure 49. Modern embroidery is represented in the house of La Neia by covers and wall hangings, embroidered using *duoke* technique. The motifs from left to right: goldfish and flowers, tiger with peaches, and phoenix and peacock with flowers.



If the family has a young daughter-in-law, the back wall of the *kang* might be decorated with a long embroidered hanging, about one meter high and 2.5 meters long, made by the daughter-in-law for her trousseau and brought into her new home (F50 and F51).

Figure 50. Wall hanging in *duoke* technique featuring numerous auspicious symbols in the center pattern: Mandarin ducks, peonies, lotus, and Chinese characters stating *xingfu* (happiness) in the center, and *ronghuafugui* (prosperity) on the sides.<sup>8</sup> Made by Jinzimei.



The material of covers and wall hangings is white cotton cloth and the embroidery thread is single unmercerized cotton thread with luminescent colors. The designs are larger and more diverse than in objects embroidered with the traditional *sa* technique, which consists mostly of flowers, birds, and butterflies. The covers and the hangings are often decorated with a variety of such longevity symbols as cranes and pine trees, with big flowers and goldfishes. More modern designs include panda bears and Disney-style fawns *a la* Bambi. There were also Chinese characters wishing good luck and long life.

Figure 51. A multicolored cover made in Chenjia Village, featuring many auspicious symbols embroidered in *duoke* technique: cranes, bats, butterflies, different flowers and the character *shuang xi* 'double happiness'.



<sup>8</sup> While examining Mangghuer embroidery motifs, I realized that there were many patterns such as pomegranates, lotuses, peaches, mandarin ducks, cranes, pines, bamboo, and so on that are symbols of fertility, prosperity, harmonious marriage, and longevity in the Chinese context. However, when I asked the women who made such embroidery, they told me they did them because they regarded them as beautiful.

## Burial Clothing

The coffin clothing (F52) includes long and short jackets, a pillow, shoes, possibly a chin rest, a hat for men, and a black headscarf for women.

Figure 52. Burial set for Zhu Changminghua: shoes for bound feet, a chin rest, and a long pillow with end panels with flower motif, all embroidered in *sa* technique with silk.



The deceased might be dressed in more than one gown, e.g., Nuo Shuangxihua showed me two long and three short funeral gowns, one of which was padded, because it is believed the deceased may become cold on the way to the afterlife. The colors of the gowns are blue, brown, black, bright red, or pink. An Liumei said the gown material should be valuable silk from "a good silk area," preferably from Sichuan (F53).

Figure 53. A couple from Heyan Village dressed in their funeral attire: short and long gowns of silk brocade. The woman's shoes are embroidered with a floral motif on the tip. The man's shoes are plain and black. The woman wears a black scarf and the man a felt hat.



The coffin pillow was a long pillow with embroidered ends, if the interviewees themselves made it (F54). If young daughters-in-law prepared the pillow, it was flat with an embroidered cover (F55). According to the Mangghuer, the coffin pillow must not include images of animals, birds, or butterflies. Generally, there were only flowers or a flower vase – a Chinese pictorial symbol for peace – with a boy on one side and a girl on the other, who escort the deceased to the afterlife. One holds a teapot, and the other holds a bowl or a tray with a big loaf of bread or steamed buns. The long pillow's fabric is cotton or silk and the colors are black, blue, brown, bright red, or yellow. The flat pillowcase is plain white cotton.

Figure 54. Nuo Shuangxihua's long burial pillow with a design of a flower vase – a symbol of peace – and a boy on one side and a girl on the other, who escort the deceased to the afterlife. One holds a teapot, and the other holds a bowl or a tray with a big loaf of bread or steamed buns.



Figure 55. A flat pillowcase for a funeral, worked in *duoke* technique by Ma Xiuying.





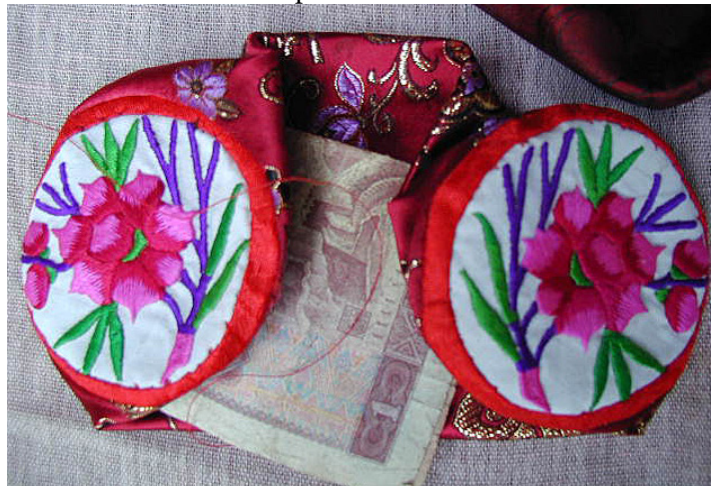
Among the flat shoes for the coffin, only one large flower was embroidered on the tip of the shoe. Men's funeral shoes are not embroidered (F56). A one or two *yuan* banknote was put into empty shoes, because it is believed empty shoes bring bad luck. Those who dress the deceased then took the money.

Figure 56. Black funeral shoes for men and two pairs of shoes for women with feet that were bound in the 1940s and then unbound in the 1950s. Heyan Village.



The funeral items in some villages include a small cushion to be put under the chin of the deceased to keep the mouth closed (F57). The chin rest is a small cylindrical cushion with a diameter of five to six centimeters. It will be put under the chin of the deceased to keep the mouth closed. The cushion itself is made of silk, and attached to round ends embroidered with flower patterns. A one *yuan* banknote was also put in the chin rest.

Figure 57. A chin rest – a small cylindrical cushion – is put under the chin of the deceased to keep the mouth closed. The material is silk brocade and the end panels are embroidered with a flower motif. Made by An Liumei.



## STORING EMBROIDERED ITEMS

Old, embroidered articles prepared for the coffin were kept in a large cupboard standing on the *kang*, the modern 'trousseau chest'. The upper cabinets often had glass doors, through which beautifully folded thick silk quilts, often received as a wedding gift, were visible. The lower part of the cabinet was locked, but from this stash the women took out a bundle, which included beautiful ends of old long pillows, unfinished apron pockets and clothes made for their funeral. I photographed them and then these items were folded, carefully wrapped in a large scarf that was tied, and then the bundle was returned to the closet and locked up.

## EMBROIDERY'S SIGNIFICANCE

In many traditional communities, craftsmanship and particularly sewing skills are part of a woman's virtue in addition to skills related to the household. Crafts provide practical benefit to the maker and a way to creatively express experiences enriching everyday life. The skill to sew and embroider among the Mangghuer has also had a particularly important role from the point of view of the community as well as of women. If a girl could not do embroidery it was difficult for her to find a husband who was considered an appropriate match based on the families' social position and economic condition.

While girls were instructed from childhood in the making of handicrafts, not all were equally adept. If a girl's embroidery work was poor and her family could afford it, skilled embroiders were hired. In the community, however, this was not viewed favorably because it meant a waste of resources. "In this case, one had to give thread and fabric to the maker, which meant the cost was twice as much thread and fabric as doing it yourself," recalled Lü Jinlianmei.

It was very important that the girl could embroider, because she had to prepare gifts for her wedding. If she could not, her parents were forced to buy embroidered items for the wedding, which was a waste of money. But if she had small feet, and she could make beautiful embroidery, then when the girl reached her groom's home the guests said, "Oh, that's a decent girl." If she did not know how to embroider, it was very difficult for her to find a husband (Zhu Guobao).

Skilled embroiderers were etched in the mind of other women so deeply that they were remembered after death. While admiring Li Baoshou's (b. 1936) embroidery I commented that she must be the best embroiderer in the village, to which Li Baoshou replied, "No, I'm not the best in this village. The best one was another grandmother, but she is dead."

## A VANISHING TRADITION

The embroidered Mangghuer items were not only necessities – and thus economically important – but also significant demonstrations of a woman's virtue, which gave her higher status in her local community. These embroidered items acquired value and were transferred from generation to generation, from bride to bride. However, in the late twentieth century, when the articles for the wedding became something very different – flat pillows, covers and wall hangings – embroidered pillow ends lost their value. Mangghuer embroidery adapted to new challenges with new embroidery

techniques, such as *woke*, *duoke*, and *khuleghsi ganger*. Cross-stitch embroidery also gained new use in insoles.

Along with social and economic changes, girls have little time or interest in embroidery because of the time they spend watching TV, doing household chores, and doing school homework. However, in 2001 and 2002 in mountain villages, girls who had finished schooling still prepared *duoke*-embroidered items for their wedding, even though embroidered fabrics and other items were available in local shops. And whenever women had time, they prepared embroidered insoles and fabric shoes.

Embroidery has, for good reason, been the pride of Mangghuer culture and, in being passed through generations, has continued social relevance, reinforcing Mangghuer identity. Modernization, however, is progressing so rapidly that many of these traditional items and skills will soon vanish.

Take this pillow end (F58), so that it will remain, far away in your country, because nobody here among us cares about it anymore. After we are gone, it will be discarded (Bao Sibeihua, b. 1919).

Figure 58. Bao Sibeihua's pillow ends.



APPENDIX ONE: CONSULTANTS<sup>9</sup>

- An Liumei, Guanting Village, b. 1941 in Anjia Village.  
Bao Shiyuemei, b. 1932, Chenjia Village.  
Bao Sibeihua, b. 1919, Nongchang Village, started embroidery at the age of seven.  
Deng Sangmei, Wushi Village, b. 1924 in Dengjia Village.  
Deng Xinzhuangmei, b. 1941, Nanjiaterghai Village.  
Dou Guanbaonuer, Wanzi Village, b. 1921 in Doujia Village.  
Du Jinbaohua, b. 1929, Chenjiaola Village.  
Hai Tao (male), b. 1946, Chenjia Village.  
Jinzimei, b. 1983, Puba Village.  
Ku Yingchunlan, Guanzhong Village, b. 1920 in Xiakou Village.  
La Neia, Lijia Village, b. 1923 in Jingning Village. Han nationality.  
Li Baoshou, b. 1936, Xiela Village.  
Lü Jinlianmei, b. 1922, Nongchang Village, started embroidery at the age of seven.  
Lü Yingqing, b. 1920, Wangjia Village.  
Ma Fanglan, b. 1945, Damajia Village. Hui nationality.  
Ma Hanme, Jingning Village, b. 1920 in Kemuchuer Ling Village, started embroidery at the age of five.  
Hui nationality.  
Ma Luguya, b. 1941, Heyan Village. Hui nationality, spoke Chinese.  
Ma Tianxi, b. 1930, Nongchang Village.  
Ma Xiuying, b. 1964, Puba Village.  
Nuo Shuangxihua, Zhujia Village, b. 1931 in Nuoqia Village. Gave me a ring and "adopted" me as her little sister.  
Qi Wenlan, b. ?, Chenjia Village.  
Qiao Dongmei,<sup>10</sup> b. 1916, Minzhu Village, started embroidery at the age of seven.  
Wang Dongmeihua, b. 1919, Wenjia Village.  
Wen Xiping, b. 1981, Wenjia Village.  
Wu Lanyou, b. 1919, Qianjin Village.  
Xie Yongshouhua, b. 1931, Luantashi Village.  
Xin Youfang, Baojia Village, b. 1940 in Xinjia Village.  
Ying Zihua, b. 1935, Baojia Village.  
Zan Yulan, b. 1920, Luantashi Village.  
Zhang Chongsunhua, b. 1942 (in Keiximian Village in Gansu province), Heyan Village, started embroidery at the age of eight.  
Zhang Xihua, b. 1982, Heyan Village.  
Zhang Yinghua, Chenjiaola Village, b. 1944 in Keiximian, Gansu Province.  
Zhao Guilan, b. 1962, Xiela Village.  
Zhao Jinzihua, b. 1936, Shanzhaojia Village.  
Zhao Xiuhua, b. 1949, Baojia Village, started embroidery at the age of eight.  
Zhao Xiulan, b. 1936, Guanting Village.  
Zhong [Zhang] Shumi, b. 1936, Luantashi Village.  
Zhu Changminghua, b. 1920, Heyan Village.

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<sup>9</sup> All consultants are Mangghuer and female unless otherwise indicated.

<sup>10</sup> I am now uncertain if this is the name of the mother (b. 1916) or her daughter.

Zhu Ernuer, b. 1965, Wushi Village, started embroidery at the age of eight.  
Zhu Guobao, Wanzi Village, b. 1929 in Jielun Village.  
Zhu Jinxiu, b. 1941, Puba Village.

## APPENDIX TWO: MOTIFS

### Animals

bat - cover/ hanging  
bird - sole, insole, hat, wallet, pillowcase, pillow ends  
butterfly - apron pocket, cover/ hanging, pincushion, fan holder, collar, sole, insole, heel piece, shoes,  
head ornament, hat, wallet, pillowcase, sash, vest pocket, pillow ends  
cat - vest pocket, pillow ends  
caterpillar - vest pocket  
crane - apron pocket, cover/ hanging  
deer - apron pocket, cover/ hanging, wallet, vest pocket  
dragon - hanging, hat, wallet, pillow ends for funeral, pillow ends  
dragonfly - vest pocket, pillowcase  
duck - vest pocket, pillow ends  
fawn - cover/ hanging  
fish - apron pocket, shoes, sash ends, vest pocket, pillow ends  
goldfishes - cover/ hanging  
lion - vest pocket, pillow ends  
magpie - cover/ hanging  
Mandarin ducks - cover/ hanging, pillowcase  
monkey - pillow ends  
mouse - wallet  
panda - cover  
peacock - cover/ hanging, pillowcase  
peacock's tail - shoes for bound feet  
pheasant - cover/ hanging, wallet, vest pocket, pillow ends  
phoenix - cover/ hanging, insoles, wallet, vest pocket, pillowcase, pillow ends  
rabbit - apron pocket  
spider - shoes for bound feet  
tiger - cover/ hanging  
toad - apron pocket

### Plants

bamboo - cover/ hanging, pillow end  
Buddha's hand<sup>11</sup> - apron pocket, fan holder, shoes for bound feet, wallet, pillow ends for funeral, sash,

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<sup>11</sup> This is also known as 'finger lemon flower' (<http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/collection/database/?irn=379850>, accessed 14 March 2012).

vest pocket, pillow ends  
 cherry blossom - cover/ hanging, pillow ends  
 Chinese cabbage - apron pocket, heel pieces  
 chrysanthemum - cover/ hanging, pincushion, fan holder, heel pieces, shoes, shoes for bound feet, sash, hat, pillow ends for funeral, pillow case, sash, vest pocket, pillow ends  
 flower - boot heel pieces, insole, wallet, vest pocket, pillowcase  
 grape - cover/ hanging, pillow cover, pincushion, fan holder, pillowcase  
 lily - pillow ends  
 lotus - apron pocket, cover/ hanging, collar, sole, heel pieces, shoes, shoes for bound feet, hat, wallet, pillow ends for funeral, chin rest, pillowcase, sash pocket, vest pocket, pillow ends  
 narcissus - cover/ hanging, heel pieces, shoes for bound feet, wallet, pillowcase, vest pocket, pillow ends  
 carnation - vest pocket, pillowcase  
 peach - apron pocket, cover/ hanging, insoles, vest pocket, pillow ends  
 peony - apron pocket, cover/ hanging, pincushion, collar, sole, insoles, heel pieces, shoes, shoes for bound feet, head ornament, wallet, hat, pillow ends for funeral, chin rest, pillowcase, vest pocket, pillow ends  
 pine - cover/ hanging  
 plum blossom - cover/ hanging, pincushion, fan holder, heel pieces, shoes, shoes for bound feet, hat, pillowcase, vest pocket, pillow ends  
 plum tree - pillowcase, sash, cover/ hanging  
 pomegranate - pincushion, fan holder, shoes for bound feet hat, wallet, sash, vest pocket, pillow ends  
 rose - pillow case, sash pocket, vest pocket, pillow ends

#### Others

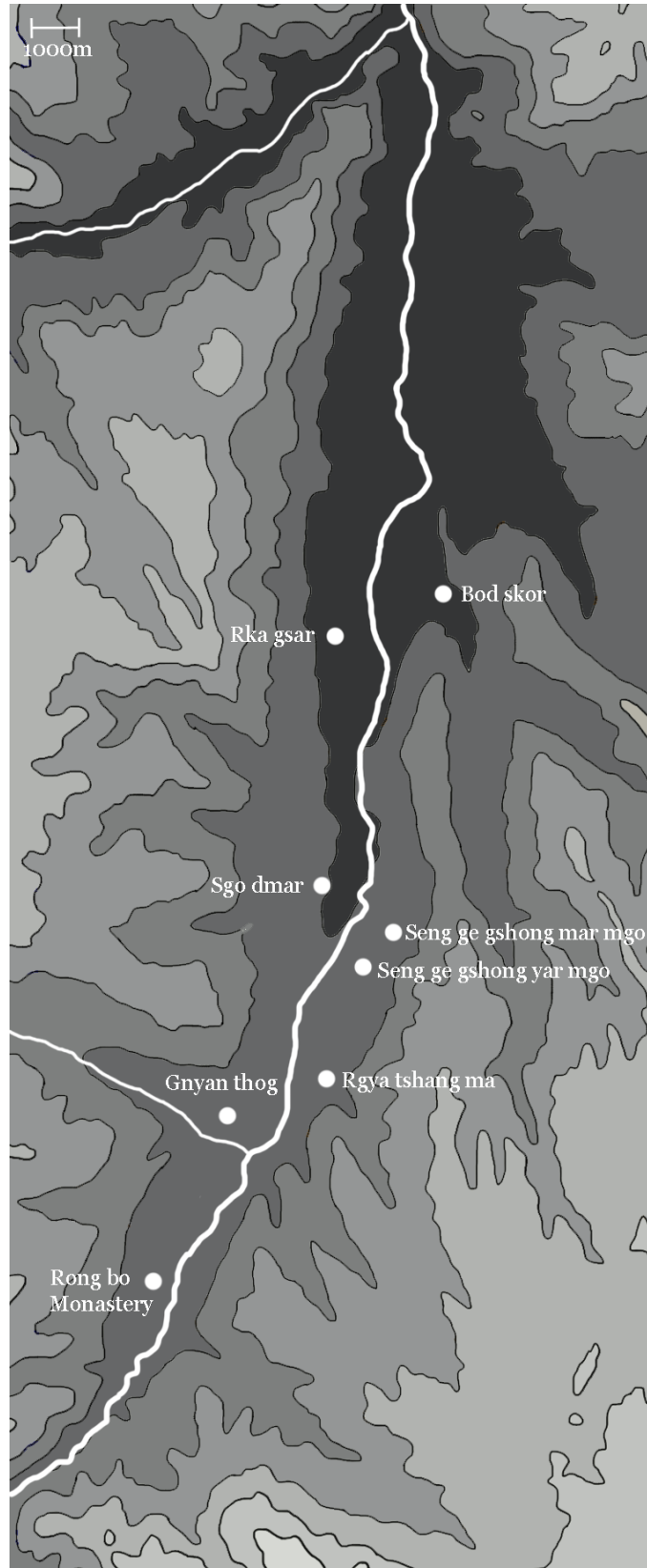
bamboo tube with rods - heel pieces  
 boy and girl carrying tea and bread - pillow ends and pillowcases for funeral  
 cash - apron pocket, vest pocket, pillow ends  
 clouds - cover/ hanging  
 endless knot - shoes for bound feet  
 flower basket/ vase - cover/ hanging, pillow cover  
 Gold Mountain - pillow end  
 gourd - heel pieces  
 heart - apron pocket, insoles  
 lozenge - insoles in *khuleghsi ganger* stitching  
 mountain - cover/ hanging  
*ruyi* scepter - heel pieces  
 scrolls - wallet, heel pieces  
 Silver Mountain - pillow end  
 sun - cover/ hanging  
 vajra - vest pocket, pillow ends



**KHRE TSE BZHI**  
**'THE FOUR ESTATES'**



The valley of the Dgu chu 'River Nine' is the site of the Khre tse Bzhi, the Four Estates. The Four Estates now includes the seven villages shown on the map below. Rong bo Monastery (bottom left) is also the site of the prefectural and county seats. Altitude ranges from 2,400m (darker) to 3,600m, with each shade representing a change of 200m in altitude.



# THE ORIGIN OF GNYAN THOG VILLAGE AND THE HISTORY OF ITS CHIEFTAINS

Blo bzang snyan grags;  
translated by Lcags mo tshe ring (Independent Scholar)

## ABSTRACT

This text, translated from Tibetan, details the migration of Mongol soldiers from the southern banks of the Yellow River to their descendants' current residence in Gnyan thog Village (Gnyan thog Township, Reb gong County, Rma lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province) and also gives details of the hereditary succession of their leaders.

## KEYWORDS

Gnyan thog, history, Mongol, Monguor, Reb gong

## ORIGINAL TEXT

Blo bzang snyan grags ལྷོ་བཟང་སྤྱན་གྲགས་. 2000. *Gnyan thog byams pa gling gi lo rgyus* གཞན་ཐོག་བྱམས་པ་གླིང་གི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ [History of Gnyan thog Monastery]. Zi ling ཟི་ལིང་: Mtsho sgnon zi ling par khang མཚོ་སྤྱན་ཟི་ལིང་པར་ཁང་ [Mtsho sgnon, Zi ling Publishers].

## EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

In their text on the Gnyan thog Wutu festival, Skal bzang nor bu et al. (1999) summarize available Chinese language literature related to the origins of the inhabitants of Gnyan thog Village. They also provide a local oral account of villagers' origins. The Chinese sources provide diverse and often-conflicting origins of Gnyan thog residents, whereas the local oral source cited states that villagers' ancestors were Mongols.

The Tibetan text translated here provides a detailed chronology suggesting that at least certain Gnyan thog residents' ancestors were Mongol soldiers stationed in the region during the reign of Kublai Khan (1215-1294, r. 1260-1294). Originally stationed in the grasslands south of the Yellow River, these male troops with their local (Tibetan) wives then relocated briefly to grasslands north of the Yellow River before moving to the contemporary Gnyan thog location. A more detailed history of individual tribes and households in the village would undoubtedly contribute much to this overwhelmingly patrilineal history. Nonetheless, the current text is valuable for the specificity it lends discussions of the history of this unique population. It also provides valuable details on how local leaders dealt with the transition from the Yuan (1271-1368) to the Ming (1368-1644) dynasties, and negotiated the cultural terrain of this complex region.

Also included is a table listing the lineage of Gnyan thog chieftains, as well as a timeline, list of locations, and several images from locations mentioned in the text. All footnotes were provided by the editors, working closely with the translator. The translation omits and re-orders certain passages in order to increase the text's readability.

When Kublai Khan<sup>1</sup> ruled China, he commanded a powerful soldier named Hor dor rta nag po, who not only learned thunder magic from a Daoist teacher, but could also make fire leap from the tip of his sword, reverse the flow of rivers, and create powerful winds. Hor dor rta nag po always wore a black coat and a red skirt. He was sent by Kublai Khan as an officer to Rab kha gru gtong, also known as Rma chu'i rab kha dngul ri'i sa bzang gri spyod rab kha,<sup>2</sup> south of the Yellow River in northern A mdo.<sup>3</sup>

In 1269, Hor dor rta nag po promised not to harm the Tibetan residents of Rab kha gru gtong. Local Tibetans called him Gnyan po smad cha dmar can,<sup>4</sup> and the area he protected became known as Gnyan po'i sgar thog. Over time, the names Gnyan thog,<sup>5</sup> Sgar thog,<sup>6</sup> and Gru kha'i<sup>7</sup> came to be used. One thousand soldiers were stationed there, married Rab kha women, and had children.

From this base, Hor dor rta nag po used his Daoist powers to attack in the east to Mchod rten dkar po,<sup>8</sup> in the south to 'Gag rdo rtags,<sup>9</sup> in the west beyond Nag chu'i kha,<sup>10</sup> and in the north beyond Tshwa mtsho.<sup>11</sup> At an unknown time, Hor dor rta married a woman named Gling bza' thar mdo skyid and they had a son named Hor gnyan po mung khe gan, who later married two wives: a Mongolian, Ci si khe, and a Tibetan, Ka dar skyid. Ka dar skyid bore no children, whereas Ci si khe had five sons: Dor tis, Gol su, Ye su khe, Bu su he, and O chi go bu me thu me lun.

Hor dor rta nag po's troops were divided into six groups in 1292. Five of them stayed in Rab kha, while one group moved to a place named Gser chen gzhung<sup>12</sup> in Reb gong rgan rgya, between the Bsang and Dgu rivers. There they built Gyan po'i sgar thog Castle in the area beneath the La and Dge mountains in 1309. The village was known as Gnyan thog or Gnyan thog mkhar. Hor dor rta nag po's grandson, O chi go bu me thu me lun, was twenty-three years old at that time.

In 1321, Hor o chi go bu me thu me lun attended the coronation of Suddhipala Gege'en, the fifth

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<sup>1</sup> Hor se chen.

<sup>2</sup> The present location of Rma chu'i rab kha dngul ri'i sa bzang gri spyod rab kha is unknown. It is likely to have been in the vicinity of present day Dngul rwa Township in Rma chu County, Kan lho (Gannan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province. This township is located in grasslands south of the Yellow River.

<sup>3</sup> 'A mdo' refers to the vaguely defined territory that comprises the northeastern portion of the Tibetan cultural realm.

<sup>4</sup> The name literally means 'the powerful one with the red lower [body]' and refers to the fact that Hor dor rta nag po commonly wore a red skirt. The term *gnyan* means powerful but usually with the negative connotations of fierce, cruel, or severe (see [http://dictionary.thlib.org/internal\\_definitions/public\\_term/%208262?mode=search](http://dictionary.thlib.org/internal_definitions/public_term/%208262?mode=search), accessed 28 January 2015). Alternative names used in the text include Hor dor nag po, Hor tho lung, and Hor dor rta nag po gnyan po smad char dmar can.

<sup>5</sup> 'Powerful thunder'. *Thog* literally means, thunder/ lightning ([http://dictionary.thlib.org/internal\\_definitions/public\\_term/9719?list\\_view=true&mode=browse](http://dictionary.thlib.org/internal_definitions/public_term/9719?list_view=true&mode=browse)), accessed 28 January 2015). Skal bzang nor bu et al. (1999:200, n1) give an alternative translation: "Gnyan thog Village is said to be above (*thog*) the dwelling place of a *gnyan*, which is a deity that lives underground and is capable of causing disease to humans."

<sup>6</sup> 'Thunder camp'. *Sgar* means camp ([http://dictionary.thlib.org/internal\\_definitions/public\\_term/6192?mode=search](http://dictionary.thlib.org/internal_definitions/public_term/6192?mode=search)), accessed 28 January 2015.

<sup>7</sup> The names Gru kha'i and Gru gtong suggest that there was a ferry crossing at this site on the Yellow River.

<sup>8</sup> The name Mchod rten dkar po 'White Stupa' applies to numerous locations throughout the Tibetan Plateau. One prominent Mchod rten dkar po is found in Bsang chu (Xiahe) County, Kan lho Prefecture. Given that Mchod rten dkar po marked the eastern-most extent of the conquered territory, this is a likely, though not definite, site.

<sup>9</sup> This is a dyke on the 'Bri (Yangzi) River that originates in Yul shul Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.

<sup>10</sup> In the vicinity of Nag chu Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region.

<sup>11</sup> Tshwa mtsho literally translates as 'Salt Lake' and may refer to any of the numerous salt lakes that are scattered across the Tibetan Plateau.

<sup>12</sup> In present day Rgan rgya Township, Bsang chu (Xiahe) County.

Yuan Emperor (r. 1321-1323) and received the title To'u pa tsi. He was conferred the right of military control over the areas of Dme, Ra, and Lo.<sup>13</sup> Hor o chi go bu me thu me lun was afterwards invited to Inner Mongolia<sup>14</sup> and became sworn brothers with local leaders, who gave him much jewelry and livestock. Upon returning home, Hor o chi go bu me thu me lun distributed gifts among the people and paid respect to high officials. He became well-respected by everyone and his reputation spread like a flame.

At that time, a Daoist geomancer<sup>15</sup> told the Gnyan thog To'u pa tsi that Gser chen gzhung's location was unsuitable and that he should move to Reb gong, which was more prosperous. Several households remained in Rgan rgya, which is now called Pastoral Gnyan thog<sup>16</sup> by Reb gong Gnyan thog residents. Many terraced ridges on the mountain, like deep wrinkles on an old man's face, can now be seen there.<sup>17</sup> In 1352, the majority of households moved with Hor o chi go bu me thu me lun to the northern reaches of the Dgu River, at its confluence with the Bse River, the site of contemporary Gnyan thog. Among the eight Gnyan thog tribes that relocated there, Shing bza', Hor, and Gyang bzhi are currently located above Gnyan thog Village and are therefore called Upper Gnyan thog.<sup>18</sup> Kublai Khan referred to the village as Dor sde in memory of Hor dor rta nag po,<sup>19</sup> and locals therefore nowadays refer to its inhabitants as Dor rdo<sup>20</sup> and the language they speak as Dor skad.

When he was eighty years old, Hor o chi go bu me thu me lun dreamed of three men who were afraid of the Han Chinese. One of the men told him that he would like to serve him, while simultaneously taking a sword and stabbing it into the To'u pa tsi's chest. Hor o chi go bu me thu me lun then woke up frightened and found a square stone on his head on which were written eight Chinese characters. The To'u pa tsi took the stone to a Daoist sage, Krang co hrin, to interpret the characters. The Daoist explained the meaning of the characters as follows: if the people could continue living in Reb gong Gnyan thog then many auspicious things would occur – men would become officials and the people would be happy and prosperous. When the To'u pa tsi offered this special square stone to Yesün-Temür, the sixth Yuan Emperor (r. 1323-1328), the king replied that the stone was very precious and allowed the To'u pa tsi to keep it in Gnyan thog Temple. This temple is now located on a mountain behind the present village.

The first Gnyan thog To'u pa tsi died in 1408. He and his wife, Hor bza' hu sun khrin, had eight sons: O chi hu sun, Go bu me khrin, Thu me lun, Dor bhi tis bang, Hu su ho, Lun hu khrin, O hu me tu, and Go bu me tu hu sun khrin. These sons married Hor, Tibetan, and Chinese women, and are the ancestors of all Gnyan thog residents.

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<sup>13</sup> *Dme* likely refers to Dme shul, a tribal confederation settled primarily in Stob ldan Township, Rtse khog County, Rma lho Prefecture, and adjacent areas of Reb gong County. *Ra* likely refers to a tribal confederation currently residing in Hor Township, Rtse khog County. *Lo* may refer to the Klu'i tribal confederation in Hor Township, Rtse khog County.

<sup>14</sup> Nang sog.

<sup>15</sup> *sa dpyad pa*.

<sup>16</sup> Gnyan thog 'brog.

<sup>17</sup> Locals in contemporary Gser chen gzhung claim that these ridges, visible on hills on the eastern and western sides of the region's central plain, result from the repeated tethering of livestock in lines on these slopes during the summer.

<sup>18</sup> Gnyan thog la kha, literally, 'on top of/ above Gnyan thog'.

<sup>19</sup> Kublai Khan died in 1294, fifty-eight years before the founding of the village. 'Village' must here refer to the original colony of soldiers.

<sup>20</sup> The term 'Dor rdo' is derived from Hor dor rta nag po's name. It is considered offensive when use by non-Gnyan thog residents, however, residents of Gnyan thog commonly use this term to refer to themselves and each other.

The eight Gnyan thog tribes<sup>21</sup> are:

1. Bang rgya (containing the Nye sring sub-tribe<sup>22</sup> in which the first Gnyan thog To'u pa tsi originated)
2. Sog rgya (containing the Lo brgya sub-tribe)
3. Tsong kha (containing the Lha pa sub-tribe)
4. Ma gzhi dmag

These four tribes collectively constitute the Four Ministerial Families.<sup>23</sup> The remaining tribes are:

5. Shing bza' (with the Gyang bzhi and Hor tshang sub-tribes)
6. Cin ci dmag
7. Yun ci dmag
8. Hor rgya

In addition, Gnyan thog was also home to an indigenous Tibetan tribe called Tsho kha. Descendants of this tribe today belong to the Tsho sub-tribe.<sup>24</sup>

Hor o chi go bu me thu me lun's youngest son, Go bu me tu hu sun khrin, was born in 1348. In 1363, he replaced his father as Gnyan thog To'u pa tsi. In 1365, he married Sgo dmar G.yang mo tshe ring. They had four children: Dri med yon tan, Byams pa nor bu, and two daughters whose names were not recorded.

In 1374, Go bu me tu hu sun khrin took much jewelry, musk, and pilose antlers to submit himself and his people to the Ming Hongwu Emperor (r. 1368-1398). Go bu me tu hu sun khrin reported to the Emperor, "Although I am the descendant of the powerful Hor soldier, Hor dor rta nag po, my people's customs,<sup>25</sup> kin system,<sup>26</sup> and distinguishing features<sup>27</sup> are no different from Tibetans. I was also an honest minister<sup>28</sup> for the Rong bo nang so<sup>29</sup> and paid honor to the Gong sa rin po che."

The Emperor listened and said, "You can follow Tibetan law<sup>30</sup> and do whatever Tibetans do." Then the Emperor conferred upon him many precious gifts of gold, silver, and jewelry. The Emperor also reinstated the title, To'u pa tsi, and forbade others from attacking the To'u pa tsi.

At the coronation of the Ming Jianwen Emperor (r. 1398-1402) in 1399, the Gnyan thog To'u pa tsi befriended Tshe hrin yan, Minister of Internal Affairs. As a result, the Gnyan thog Pe hu<sup>31</sup> assumed control of both religious and political affairs in Gnyan thog and was once again given the title of To'u pa tsi. When the Pe hu returned to Gnyan thog, he met a Daoist practitioner<sup>32</sup> and invited him to stay in Gnyan thog. In 1401, the Pe hu was planning to build a monastery for the Daoist scholar, but the scholar died suddenly and the monastery was not built.

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<sup>21</sup> *tsho ba*.

<sup>22</sup> *tshang*.

<sup>23</sup> Zhang blon bzhi.

<sup>24</sup> For more on Gnyan thog's tribes, see Roche and Lcags mo tshe ring (2013).

<sup>25</sup> *yul srol*.

<sup>26</sup> *nye 'brel*.

<sup>27</sup> *khyad chos*.

<sup>28</sup> *blon po*.

<sup>29</sup> The Rong bo nang so was a hereditary rulership centered on Rong bo Monastery. For details see Tuttle (2011) and Weiner (2012).

<sup>30</sup> *lugs srol*.

<sup>31</sup> Pe hu is presumably a rendering of the Chinese title *baihu* 'leader of 100 households'.

<sup>32</sup> *chos lugs pa*.

At the coronation of the Ming Yongle Emperor (r. 1403-1424) in 1403, the Emperor permitted the Gnyan thog To'u pa tsi to administer Gnyan thog's religious, military, and political affairs. After the To'u pa tsi returned to Gnyan thog, the Rong bo nang so and the other Pe hu were not pleased with this situation, and thus the To'u pa tsi returned to Beijing and reported to the Yongle Emperor that his people were unfamiliar with the laws of the country. He requested and was given instructions on how to administer the military. After the Emperor gave him the title to administer the military, Gnyan thog villagers also obeyed the To'u pa tsi's command.

In 1411, when the To'u pa tsi was sixty-four years old, he conferred his title onto his oldest son, Dri med yon tan, also known as G.yang can rdo rje, and retired. Go bu me tu hu sun khrin passed away five years later.

#### APPENDIX ONE: TIMELINE

- 1269 - Kublai Khan commands Hor dor rta nag po (HDRNP) to guard Ma chu'i rab dngul ri'i sa bzang gri spyod bab kha.
- 1292 - HDRNP 's soldiers are divided into six groups. Five remain near the Yellow River, while one group moves to Gser chen gzhung in Rgan rgya.
- 1309 - Gnyan po'i sgar thog Castle built in Rgan rgya.
- 1321 - O chi go bu me thu me lun (OCGB, HDRNP 's grandson) pays tribute to the fifth Yuan Emperor, Suddhipala Gege'en, and receives the title To'u pa tsi.
- 1323-1328 - OCGB pays tribute to the sixth Yuan Emperor, Yesün Temür.
- 1348 - Go bu me tu hu sun khrin (GBMH, OCGB's son) born.
- 1352 - Households relocate from Rgan rgya Gnyan thog to present-day Gnyan thog.
- 1363 - GBMH becomes To'u pa tsi.
- 1365 - GBMH marries Sgor dmar G.yang mo tshe ring.
- 1374 - GBMH formally submits to the first Ming Emperor.
- 1399 - Ming Jianwen Emperor enthroned. GBMH befriends Tshe hrin yan, Minister of Internal Affairs.
- 1403 - Ming Yongle Emperor enthroned and confers GBMH with control over military, civil, and religious affairs.
- 1408 - OCGB dies.
- 1411 - Dri med yon tan (GBMH's son), becomes To'u pa tsi.
- 1416 - GBMH dies.

#### APPENDIX TWO: GNYAN THOG TO'U PA TSI: 1320-1702

Names	Birth	Years as Chieftain	Death
Hor o chi go bu me thu me lun	1320	43	1408
Go bu mi thu hu sun khrin	1348	48	1416
Dri med yon tan	1387	38	1504
Nor lda bkra shis	1417	37	?
Bstan pa chos 'byor	1455	31	1532
Rab brtan rdor rje	1486	29	1560

Ma ling yis	1511	20	1580
Bsod nams mgon po	1526	38	1588
Yon tan rgya mtsho	1551	26	1613
Kun dga' bkra shis	1586	39	1654
Dkon mchog dar rgyas	1622	11	1700
Dpal chen stobs rgyas	1647		1702

### APPENDIX THREE: LOCATIONS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT

'Gag rdo rtags. A location on the 'Bri (Yangzi) River in Yul shul Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.

Bsang River. This river runs through present day Bla brang County, Kan lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Gansu Province. Also known as the Xia River (Xiahe).

Bse River. One of the tributaries of the Dgu River (see below). Gnyan thog Village is situated at the confluence of these two rivers.

Dge. This mountain is in the vicinity of Gser chen gzhung on the Rgan rgya grasslands.

Dgu River. This river's name literally means 'Nine Rivers'. It runs through the vale of Reb gong. See Snying bo rgyal and Rino (2009) for details.

Dme. A region over which the Gnyan thog To'u pa tsi had dominion.

Gnyan thog. Gnyan thog Village, Gnyan thog Township, Reb gong County, Rma lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province.

Gnyan thog 'brog. Pastoral Gnyan thog, in Rgan rgya.

Gser chen gzhung. A valley on the Rgan rgya grassland and site of Gser chen gzhung gi gnyan thog mkhar.

Gser chen gzhung gi gnyan thog mkhar. The fortress built in the Rgan rgya grasslands.

La. This mountain is in the vicinity of Gser chen gzhung in the Rgan rgya grasslands.

Lo. A tribe that the Gnyan thog To'u pa tsi had dominion over.

Mchod rten dkar po. White Stupa. Possibly in the vicinity of contemporary Bla brang County.

Nag chu'i kha. In the vicinity of Nag chu Prefecture, Tibet Autonomous Region.

Nang sog. Inner Mongolia.

Ra. A tribe that the Gnyan thog To'u pa tsi had dominion over.

Rab kha. Site south of the Yellow River where Kublai Khan's soldiers originally settled before moving to Gnyan thog.

Rab kha gru gton. See Rab kha.

Reb gong. May refer to the area of present day Reb gong County, Rma lho Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province; the capital of the prefecture; or the vale (geographic sub-region) where this town and nearby communities are located.

Rgan rgya. A grassland region between Bla brang and Reb gong.

Rma chu'i rab kha dngul ri'i sa bzang gri spyod rab kha. Site south of the Yellow River where Kublai Khan's soldiers originally settled before moving to Gnyan thog.

Sgar thog. See Rab kha.

Tshwa mtsho. Salt Lake. Location unknown.

FIGURES

Figure 1. Overlooking Gnyan thog Monastery (center left) and village (surrounding the monastery).



Figure 2. Name board above the doorway to Gnyan thog Village's temple.





Figures 3 and 4. Ridges on the hills above Gser chen gzhung.



Figure 5. A possible location of Rab kha. The Yellow River is the boundary between Henan County, Qinghai Province (left), and Dngul rwa Township, Rma chu County, Gansu Province (foreground and right). The location is suitable for a ferry crossing.



# RKA GSAR, A MONGUOR (TU) VILLAGE IN REB GONG (TONGREN): COMMUNAL RITUALS AND EVERYDAY LIFE

Tshe ring skyid (Independent Scholar)

## ABSTRACT

This article introduces Rka gsar, one of four villages in Reb gong (Rma lho [Huangnan] Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon [Qinghai] Province) where the Mongolic Bonan (aka Bao'an, Manikacha, Dor skad) language is spoken. The text provides information on the village's location and population; language; livelihood; clothing; and religion and communal festivals, focusing particularly on elements that distinguish Rka gsar from nearby Tibetan-speaking communities. The final section provides information about a significant event in recent local history – a landslide that occurred in 2009. A map and twenty-seven images are provided.

## KEYWORDS

Bao'an, Bonan, Monguor, Qinghai, Reb gong, Tongren, Tuzu

## LOCATION AND POPULATION

Rka gsar Village is a Monguor community located in Gnyan thog (Nianduhu) Township, Reb gong (Tongren) County, Rma lho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Province, PR China. Rma lho is situated southeast of Zi ling (Xining) City, the provincial capital of Mtsho sngon Province. Rma lho has four counties: Rtse khog (Zeku), Sog rdzong (Henan), Gcan tsha (Jianzha), and Reb gong. The capital of Rma lho Prefecture is in Reb gong County, which has twelve townships, one municipality (the capital), and seventy-five villages under its administration. Among the twelve townships, the prefectural government classifies four as pastoral, three as agricultural, and six as agro-pastoral. Gnyan thog Township is classified as an agricultural community.<sup>1</sup>

The population of Rma lho Prefecture was 225,773 in 2008, including Tibetans (65.32 percent), Han (8.4 percent), Mongol (fourteen percent), Tu/ Monguor (4.5 percent, i.e., 10,159 people), Hui (7.3 percent), Bao'an (0.12 percent), and Salar (0.6 percent). Reb gong County's 2008 population was 73,400, while Gnyan thog Township had approximately 6,000 residents.

Rka gsar Village is located north of the Gnyan thog Township seat, at the foot of Rta 'gying Mountain and west of the Dgu chu (Longwu) River. In 2014, there were approximately 1,100 people in Rka gsar Village in 199 households; the majority are classified as Tu/ Monguor by the local government.

*Rka* (T)<sup>2</sup> means 'irrigation ditch', and *gsar* (T) means 'new'. Local lore describes how, at an unknown time in the past, Rka gsar Village was the site of a *pho brang* (T) 'palace' for a local leader.<sup>3</sup> An irrigation ditch was built to water the fields around the palace. With new land available for cultivation, settlers came to the area. The village then became known as Rka gsar, 'New Irrigation

<sup>1</sup> Information in this and the following paragraph are from *Huangnan zangzu zizhizhou tongjiju* (2008).

<sup>2</sup> [Tibetan and Dor skad terms are distinguished at first usage by (D) for Dor skad and (T) for Tibetan. Words of uncertain or mixed provenance are marked (?). Language of origin is not provided for proper nouns.]

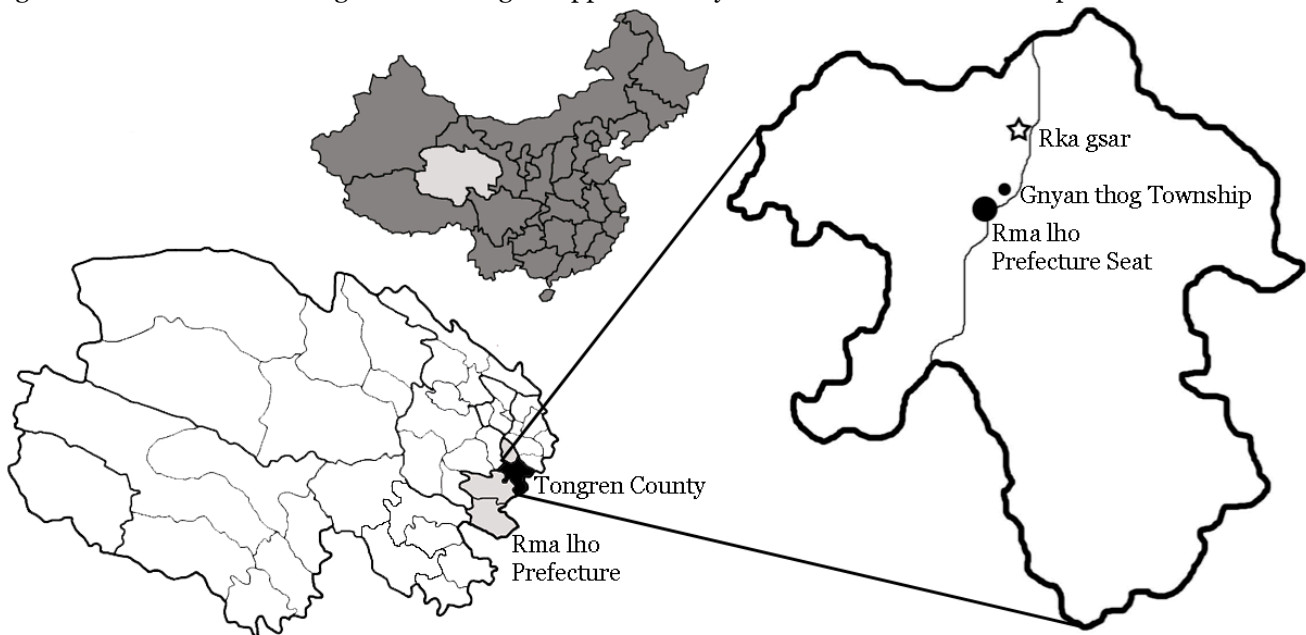
<sup>3</sup> [Detailed information about this palace and leader could not be found, though 'Brug thar and Sangs rgyas tshe ring (2005) states that the palace was called Gyi ling mkhar.]

Ditch'.

The population of Rka gsar Village is divided among three *tsho ba* (T) 'clans': Yar sko tsho ba (seventy families), Yang lji tsho ba (fifty families), and Mgo 'dug tsho ba (forty families). Clans function as mutual aid groups during weddings, funerals, and girls' coming of age rituals (see below). These times require much assistance in preparing food and drinks for representatives of each village household who visit the home holding the ritual. The clans are non-territorial units, and marriage within the clan is permitted.

The village has a *da das* (D) 'village leader' who is responsible for coordinating collective labor, such as irrigation ditch repair and planting trees around the village. The *da das* is elected by the villagers and changes every few years, though there is no fixed schedule for this. The *da das* may retire or villagers may decide to select a new *da das*, who oversees six people known as *chu bdag* (T) or *phas thi* (D). Two *phas ti* are chosen annually from each village clan and supervise the annual agricultural cycle. Their main tasks are to punish villagers whose livestock eat crops in others' fields, and to oversee villagers' activities during harvest. In particular, they ensure that villagers do not collect *sho ma* (D), a bush that grows on hills around the village and is used to make brooms, before crops are harvested. *Sho ma* is thought to somehow protect crops and thus, collecting it harms the unharvested crops.<sup>4</sup>

Figure 1. The location of Rka gsar. The village is approximately twelve kilometers from the prefectural seat.<sup>5</sup>



<sup>4</sup> [*Sho ma* may be an alternative food source for crop pests, and thus reduces crop destruction.]

<sup>5</sup> This map is modified from [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fo/Location\\_of\\_Tongren\\_within\\_Qinghai\\_%28China%29.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/fo/Location_of_Tongren_within_Qinghai_%28China%29.png), accessed 29 December 2014.

In the recent past, most villagers were monolingual in a language they call Ma ni skad ci (D), meaning 'Our Language'. In this essay, I refer to this language by the name used by local Tibetans: Dor skad.<sup>6</sup> This language is also spoken in the nearby villages of Gnyan thog, Sgo dmar, and Bod skor.

In 2013, most Rka gsar residents spoke both Dor skad and Tibetan, for example, my family members speak both A mdo Tibetan and Dor skad. In the 1950s, nearly all villagers spoke only Dor skad. At that time, monks from the village could read and communicate in spoken Tibetan, and some local traders could understand and speak some Tibetan, but could not read or write. A few women who married into Tibetan households in other villages could also speak Tibetan.

In the 1970s, villagers began using Tibetan to make purchases in recently established township centers. My mother is a Tibetan from neighboring Ri stag Village, and she did not understand Dor skad when she married and moved into my father's home in Rka gsar Village. Therefore, my grandparents and father learned some Tibetan in order to better communicate with her. This is one reason that they now speak Tibetan well. However, they speak only a little Tibetan at home, and when they shop in nearby township centers. They speak Dor skad during their daily life in the community. My mother now speaks Dor skad fluently. I learned Tibetan from my mother and I could speak it well by the time I began primary school. I speak Dor skad to my grandparents, parents, and brothers, and speak Tibetan to my sisters-in-law, nieces, and nephews, because my sisters-in-law are all Tibetan and their children prefer to speak Tibetan rather than Dor skad. Otherwise, I speak Dor skad inside the village, outside the home.

Generally, Tibetan women who marry and move into a husband's home in Rka gsar speak Tibetan to their children. Conversely, if a woman from Rka gsar marries into a Tibetan-speaking village, she typically speaks Dor skad to her children, who then frequently acquire only passive competence in the language, in that they understand but do not speak Dor skad. Often, this is because their Tibetan family members do not want them to learn Dor skad, as they worry it will negatively influence the children's ability to learn, read, and speak Tibetan, which they consider a practical and prestigious language. Therefore, if a Tibetan-speaking woman marries a Dor skad-speaking man, then she and her children speak Dor skad. If a Dor skad-speaking woman marries into a Tibetan-speaking village, she speaks Dor skad and her children speak Tibetan.

Adults, but not most elders, can now understand and speak Tibetan. There are several reasons for this. First, when Rka gsar villagers travel locally, most people speak Tibetan. Consequently, Tibetan is a local *lingua franca*, especially for commerce. Another significant factor leading Dor skad speakers to learn Tibetan is the official education system. Local schooling is done primarily in Tibetan. Even teachers who speak Dor skad as their first language use Tibetan in the classroom. Village children thus begin learning to read, write, speak, and understand Tibetan from the age of around seven. They also learn Tibetan from TV and other broadcast media. There is no local media in Dor skad.<sup>7</sup> Five Tibetan TV stations are available locally: the Qinghai, Huangnan, and Reb gong stations broadcast in A mdo Tibetan, whereas the Sichuan Tibetan station broadcasts in Khams dialect, and the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) station uses the Central Tibetan dialect. Most adult villagers prefer to watch the Qinghai Tibetan station because they do not understand the Tibetan spoken on the Sichuan and TAR stations.

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<sup>6</sup> Local Tibetans also use the term 'Dor rdo' to refer to the language.

<sup>7</sup> Although some village families make DVDs of weddings and other parties to distribute to other villagers, these DVDs typically feature Tibetan in the narration and any text that appears in the video.

Meanwhile, young people typically prefer to watch TV in Chinese, as they consider it more entertaining. Another factor promoting the use of Tibetan in Rka gсар is that its association with Tibetan Buddhism gives it prestige.

Rka gсар villagers typically speak Tibetan in a way that indicates they are not native speakers. For example, verb tenses are often confused: Tibetan terms for 'go' *'gro* (present) and *song* (past) are often used incorrectly, as in "*Khyod gang la song rgyu\** Where will you went?\*" Local Monguor also often speak Tibetan with an accent, for example, they pronounce both *sa* and *tsha* as *sa*, and often do not distinguish these two sounds when listening to native Tibetan speakers. Local Tibetans often ridicule Dor skad speakers' accents and grammatical errors.

Some local Han and Tibetans speak Dor skad, for example, in nearby Ri stag Village, which has around sixteen households. Administratively, Ri stag is considered part of Rka gсар and children attend Rka gсар Primary School and learn Dor skad from other children in the school. Tibetan children from Ri stag quickly learn to speak Dor skad to their classmates from Rka gсар, and speak Tibetan in their own home and village. However, their competency remains limited and typically does not improve into adulthood. Also, if a Han man marries and moves into Rka gсар Village, he generally learns to speak Dor skad within four or five years. Tibetan men who marry into the village sometimes learn Dor skad, but sometimes do not. The difference between Han and Tibetan men's language learning decisions is mostly due to the prestige associated with Tibetan in the local context.

Rka gсар residents use Dor skad to communicate with other villagers, and people from nearby villages where Dor skad is also spoken: Gnyan thog, Sgo dmar, and Bod skor. Though there are slight differences between the language spoken in these villages, villagers communicate easily. My personal perception is that the dialects cluster in two groups: one is spoken in Sgo dmar and Rka gсар, the other in Gnyan thog and Bod skor.

Presently, about fifty percent of villagers can understand Chinese. Students speak Modern Standard Chinese, which they learn in school, while other villagers speak the local Chinese dialect when they interact with Han and Hui.

Local oral traditions are largely performed in Tibetan. Folksongs, including lullabies, courtship songs, and so on, are all sung in Tibetan. There are no songs in Dor skad. Though folktales are told in Dor skad, the content is translated from Tibetan. There appear to be no folktales unique to the village. Wedding speeches are given in Tibetan and, though speeches given to summon fortune (*g.yang 'bod*) during the lunar New Year period are delivered in Dor skad, they also appear to be translated from Tibetan. Chanting and invocations to local mountain deities (*bsang mchod*, see below) are done in Tibetan. Villagers pepper their speech with elements of Tibetan oral tradition, for example, *gtam dpe* 'proverbs'. There are no riddles or other oral games in Dor skad, though some students learn Tibetan riddles and other oral games in primary school.

Young people increasingly use Tibetan and Chinese loanwords when they speak Dor skad, for example, *dkar yol* (Tibetan for 'bowl') and *lanhua* (Chinese for 'washbasin').

## LIVELIHOOD

Villager's main source of income is from the sale of *thang ka* – Buddhist icons painted or applied on cloth. Rka gsar males create *thang ka* of various sizes.<sup>8</sup> Usually, the smallest *thang ka* are 130 centimeters long and thirty-five centimeters wide. The largest *thang ka* are more than two meters long and 150 centimeters wide. *Thang ka* are sold to middlemen. In 2013, the maximum price of a small *thang ka* was about 2,500 RMB, and the maximum price for a large *thang ka* was ~35,000 RMB.

Rka gsar villagers cultivate barley, wheat, potatoes, and oil-bearing plants. One *mu*<sup>9</sup> of irrigated land can produce 500-600 kilograms of wheat. Wealthy families have ten to thirteen *mu* of land and can sell excess wheat for about 5,000 RMB per year. Most families have eight to nine *mu* of land and can sell excess wheat for about 2,000 RMB.

Villagers also earn cash income by collecting and selling caterpillar fungus. In early spring, villagers go to Mgo log Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and high altitude places in Reb gong County to collect this medicinal substance. Each person earned 2,000-3,000 RMB through sale of caterpillar fungus in 2013.

In total, a wealthy family typically earned about 110,000 RMB per year in 2013, while poorer families earned about 50,000 RMB per year.

### Planting Project and Gravel Factory

The village's large territory includes fields, orchards, and woodlands. A large area of uncultivated land surrounds the orchards and woodlands. All Rka gsar families have fields, but not all have orchards and woodlands.

In 2008, the village leader divided the uncultivated land among households that had not previously had orchards or woodlands. Some villagers planted pear trees on their newly acquired land and asked the local government to provide saplings and other necessary materials. The government approved this project in 2010 and, in 2013, villagers were still planting pear trees and expanding the scale of the project.

Rka gsar Village is located near the Dgu chu River, which has many trees growing along its banks. The village leader and villagers claim that the trees and part of the Dgu chu River belong to Rka gsar Village, including the stones and gravel in the river. Villagers historically used stone and gravel from the Dgu chu River whenever they wished. However, though this area is owned by Rka gsar Village, it is controlled by leaders of the local monastery (see below).

In 2009, some Han came to Rka gar and asked to build a gravel plant by the river. Villagers disagreed, but local monastery leaders agreed because the Han said they would pay 5,000 RMB to the monastery per year for ten years.

A stone, gravel, and sand production plant was then built by the river, and began operating day and night. After three years, all the useable stone and gravel near Rka gsar had had been removed. However, the factory did not close, but continued to work by crushing stones taken from the river in order to produce gravel and sand. Nowadays, if villagers need sand, stone, or gravel, they must buy them from the processing plant.

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<sup>8</sup> Such people are locally called *lha bzo ba* (T) – literally, 'deity creators'.

<sup>9</sup> One *mu* = 0.067 a hectare.

Figure 2. Pears trees planted as part of a government project.<sup>10</sup>



Figure 3. Stones and gravel at the local processing plant.



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<sup>10</sup> All photographs were taken between 2012 and 2014 by the author.



## CLOTHING

All villagers wear modern clothing in daily life. Females wear either Tibetan or Monguor robes on special occasions, such as Lo sar (New Year) and Na thong (the annual post-harvest festival, described below). All males wear Tibetan robes on special days, including Lo sar and Na thong, and whenever they visit a monastery. There are no distinctively Monguor robes for males.

In the pre-Liberation era, all females in Rka gсар wore Monguor robes year-round. Monguor robes have shorter sleeves than Tibetan robes, and the overall length is also shorter than local Tibetan robes. Both sides of the robe are slit, as with the Chinese cheongsam. Monguor robes also have distinctive, wide collars.

In the early 1990s, Tibetan robes started becoming popular in Rka gсар and, within a few years, about half the local women regularly wore Tibetan robes. Nowadays, approximately three quarters of village females have Tibetan robes and wear them at festivals and on special days. Only Rka gсар females over the age of fifty don Monguor robes on special days. Girls and young women from Rka gсар wear Tibetan robes on special occasions, but never wear Monguor robes, because they consider them unfashionable. Parents do not encourage them to wear Monguor robes.

Figure 4. Women from Rka gсар wear winter robes. The woman on the left wears a Tibetan robe, while the others wear Monguor robes. Summer robes are of similar design, but lack lamb-wool lining.



Village women wear *po tho* (D), an embroidered coral and silver headdress (see below). Up until the 1950s, this headdress was first worn at a girl's coming-of-age ritual, and then again at her marriage, during special festivals such as Lo sar and Na thong, and when *bla ma* visited to give religious teachings. The headdress was not worn during daily life. In the late 1990s, my older female cousins wore *po tho* during their hair changing rituals and weddings, but never wore them afterwards. Currently, only a few girls and young women wear *po tho* during their hair changing rituals and

weddings. A hair ornament called *skor ru* (see below) is now often worn, rather than *po tho*. This ornament is similar to that worn by Tibetan women living in the nearby villages of Smad pa, Hor nag, and Go'u sde. The *skor ru* is made from silver and coral. Monguor women in Rka gсар Village adopted this headdress after women from pastoral areas married into the village. They thought the *skor ru* was more convenient to wear and more attractive than the *po tho*. Some women even destroyed their *po tho* to make their new headdress.

Figures 5 and 6. The *po tho* (left) and *skor ru* (right).



I held my hair changing ritual in 2005, at the age of seventeen. Though I was shorter than other girls my age, my hair was long, and so my family decided I should hold the ritual. By that time, Tibetan robes had become popular among women in Rka gсар Village. Before I held the hair changing ritual, my parents asked me what type of robe I preferred. I chose a Tibetan robe, because my mother is Tibetan and always wore Tibetan robes. I considered them more beautiful than Monguor robes, and felt more accustomed to them. I was also influenced by many girls my age who were wearing Tibetan robes. For similar reasons, I also chose to wear a Tibetan *skor ru* instead of the Monguor *po tho* headdress.

In 1975, Rka gсар villager, Lha mo skyid, was fifteen and held her hair changing ritual. The situation at that time was very different. The five other girls in the village who also held the ritual that year were all seventeen. Although Lha mo skyid was younger than the other girls, she was taller and her hair was longer. This led her parents to decide it was time for her to hold the ritual.

Lha mo skyid held her hair changing ritual on the first day of Lo sar. Without giving it prior thought, her family selected Monguor robes and a *po tho* for her to wear at the ritual. After dressing

her hair and donning her robe early in the morning, Lha mo skyid went to visit her relatives, where she enjoyed fine food and received small gifts.

On the way home, Lha mo skyid saw many people gathered at a village crossroad. They were all looking at Sgrol ma, one of the other girls who had held her hair changing ritual that year. Sgrol ma was wearing a Tibetan robe. Everyone was surprised, because no village girl had worn such clothing at her hair changing ritual before. Some onlookers thought that her Tibetan robe was beautiful and fashionable, while others disagreed. They argued loudly about the woman's robe. When Snying mo, one of the gathered women, shouted an insult at her, Sgrol ma replied, "*Yan thug lo'u mo a go'u go ras, chi me di rgyu gi sas. I ni yag sa ce da?* What a stupid woman you are. Don't you see that this robe is beautiful?"

Snying mo replied, "*Ho ho yas, chi di lu mo 'ba ya. Go rgyu ni mir go'u ni mar di rgyo.* Hey! What a stupid woman you are. You forgot your own clothes." And then the argument continued.

Sgrol ma said, "*Yang pha yas song? E gang yag sa yis su pi mir go* What does it matter? I'll wear what I like."

"*Chi ce di lu gi nu'u? Ma ni mir go'u li ni ha mes yang mes su ri song.* Aren't you ashamed? Our ancestors wore *our* robes."

"*Go rgyu sem khang so'u da, na di pha gas.* It's none of your business. I don't care about such things!"

"*Khel gu nab di ci lu gu chong go, da go ci me di.* What a crazy woman! OK, whatever..."

Sgrol ma finished with, "*O le, go ci nga mi di cor ci so'u ya.* All right, you stay in your old-fashioned world."

## RELIGION AND COMMUNITY FESTIVALS

### Dge lugs Buddhism

Rka gsar villagers follow the Dge lugs Sect of Tibetan Buddhism. The village monastery, known locally as Rka gsar Monastery, but more formally as Rka gsar dgon dga' ldan 'dus bzang chos gling, is located above the village, and is home to approximately forty monks. The majority of monks are from Rka gsar, but a few are from Ri stag. Villagers often visit the monastery to worship and circumambulate. Rka gsar Monastery is a branch of Rong bo Monastery<sup>11</sup> but, in contrast to the mother monastery, Rka gsar Monastery is a *sgrub sde* 'meditation retreat' and does not hold such public rituals as the Smon lam 'Great Prayer Festival'. Originally built in 1787 (Rdo rje rgyal 2011), the monastery was rebuilt by an incarnate *bla ma*, Bis ba mi pham ngag dbang lza ba, in around 1976 after it was destroyed in 1958. Villagers respected the *bla ma* because he was well-known and considered capable of predicting the future, as the following account illustrates:<sup>12</sup>

Long ago, when the *bla ma* was staying in Rka gsar Monastery, the same monk from the monastery always served the *bla ma* food and drink. One day, the servant fell in love with a woman from Rka gsar Village, but the *bla ma* disapproved of their relationship because Buddhist monks are prohibited from having romantic relationships with women. Then, the monk and the woman

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<sup>11</sup> Rong bo Monastery is the largest and most important monastery in Reb gong County. It has thirty-five branch monasteries throughout Reb gong County, one of which is Rka gsar Monastery.

<sup>12</sup> This account was provided by Mchog sgrub mtsho (female, born 1965).

conspired to make the *bla ma* drink poisoned tea. When the *bla ma* tasted the tea, he knew something was wrong, and spat it out.

Though the *bla ma* said nothing to the monk, the monk and the woman had a miserable life from then on. Pockmarks appeared all over their skin, disfiguring their faces. Villagers were afraid of them. They were marginalized and became pariahs.

Bad things have happened to that woman's descendants, even though she has passed away. For example, in 2012, her family prepared to donate food to villagers and monks. They needed to provide a meal for all the villagers in the monastery but, as they were cooking the meal, the large pot in the monastery kitchen broke, just as it had when their grandfather had tried to donate a meal for the village. People said this was because that woman's bad karma angered the monastery's deities.

Villagers participate in Buddhist communal rituals that are held throughout the year. The most important activity, the annual Smon lam, which is held in large Dge lugs monasteries throughout the Tibetan region, is held from the ninth to the sixteenth days of the first lunar month. From the thirteenth day until the sixteenth day of the first lunar month, many visitors go to Rong bo Monastery to attend the Great Prayer Festival. Most elders also observe *smyung gnas*<sup>13</sup> on *dus chen* 'auspicious days', such as the fifteenth day of the fourth lunar month and the twenty-fifth day of the tenth lunar month.

Figure 7. Rkar gsar Monastery.



<sup>13</sup> *Smyung gnas* is a fast during which participants do not speak to others, drink, or eat. Instead, they chant mantras or listen to religious teachings.

Chos skor and Lnga mchod are two important village rituals. Chos skor takes place on a variable annual date chosen by the village leader during the fourth or fifth lunar month, according to when most villagers will have time to join the ritual. Villagers carry scriptures from Rka gsar Monastery and circumambulate local fields to protect the crops and ensure a good harvest. Lnga mchod is held on the twenty-fifth day of the tenth lunar month to commemorate the death of Tsong kha pa, the founder of the Dge lugs Sect. Monks and laymen chant scriptures and butter lamps are lit in home shrines.

There are ten stupas in Rka gsar Village. The eight stupas in front of Rka gsar Monastery were built around 1999 by villagers and signify Buddha's eight significant achievements: Pad spungs (the Buddha's birth), Byang chub (his enlightenment), Bkra shis sgo mang (the first teaching of the Four Noble Truths), Lha babs (the first three years of the Buddha's enlightenment), Cho 'phrul (the defeat of impermanence), Dbyen bsdums (the defeat of a powerful demon), Rnam rgyal (the Buddha's immortality), and Myang 'das (the Buddha's death).

Rnam rgyal Stupa is located in a valley above the village. It was built in 2004 by the Yar sko Clan, who reside near the valley, in which there is a cave. Before the stupa was built, many clan people died. A *mo ba* (T) 'fortune-teller' advised building a stupa in the valley to protect the clan. Villagers followed this advice and misfortune ceased befalling the Yar sko Clan.

Byang chub Stupa is situated in the center of the village fields. No villager remembers when it was built. I often went there with friends to play when I was a child. When we climbed on the stupa, we were scolded by those circumambulating it. After we climbed down, they would then explain that, many years ago, numerous ghosts harmed our villagers and put our fields under floodwaters. When villagers asked a *bla ma* to solve these problems, he told villagers to build a stupa for protection, and afterwards, the problems stopped.

Rka gsar villagers often circumambulate the eight stupas at the monastery, but they seldom circumambulate the other two stupas, except on auspicious days when they have time, because these two stupas are a several minute walk from the village, whereas the monastery stupas are next to the village.

Figure 8. The eight stupas at Rka gsar Monastery.



Figure 9. Rnam rgyal Stupa.



Figure 10. Byang chub Stupa



## Temples, Mountain Deities, and *Lha pa*

*Tshi me* is a Dor skad term for a temple enshrining mountain deities. There are three such temples in Rka gsar Village: Sko tshi me, Ge sar tshi me, and Pin rkya tshi me. Sko tshi me belongs to the Yang lji Clan, Pin rkya tshi me belongs to Mgo 'dug Clan, and Ge sar tshi me belongs to Yar sko Clan.

The largest temple is Sko tshi me 'Big Temple'. A representative of each family visits this temple every morning to offer *bsang* 'incense'. The village Na thong festival (see below) is performed in the temple courtyard. Many mountain deities are enshrined in the main temple, including Gnyan chen, Bya khyung, Tso ri ri lang, and Gza' mchog. The most important deity is Tso ri ri lang, who is considered one of the Ri lang bcu gnyis 'Twelve Ri lang Deities'.<sup>14</sup>

In the past, there were *lha pa* 'spirit mediums' who embodied each of the village deities. Gnyan chen, a powerful, high-ranking deity, possessed an important *lha pa* in Rka gsar Village in the past. Nowadays, however, there is no Gnyan chen *lha pa*. The Na thong of 1957 was the last time this deity incarnated in the village. In that year, the *lha pa* behaved somewhat strangely, appearing as if his legs were tied together. He told villagers at the end of the day, "It's time to wear beautiful clothes and eat delicious food." Afterwards, the Gnyan chen *lha pa* was never again possessed by the deity. Locals suggest that this was perhaps because Gnyan chen was suppressed by the Chinese government, or possibly because in the past, villagers sacrificed a sheep, removed its heart, and gave it to Gnyan chen every year at the Na thong festival, however, in recent years, people have stopped this practice. Instead, they make a substitute sheep from *rtsam pa* and burn it in *bsang*. It is thought that Gnyan chen may be displeased with villagers' new, non-meat, offerings.

Another deity in the main temple is Gza' mchog, who belongs to a group of deities known as the Gza' brgyad 'Eight Gza'.<sup>15</sup> All villagers respect the Gza' mchog *lha pa*. In the 1950s, locals said that Gza' mchog was bad for villagers, because he belonged to a group of deities who help those who venerate them and punish those who do not. Consequently, villagers worshiped Gza' mchog because they were afraid of him. Currently, however, Gza' mchog is considered to be good to villagers because he protects them and makes helpful rules. For example, one day, the *lha pa* gathered the villagers and told them to make a large *bsang* offering in the main temple. Next, he told villagers not to go out at night, because something bad would happen. Villagers obeyed and stayed indoors at night. Several days later, three Sgo dmar villagers were possessed by ghosts.<sup>16</sup> One said, "I was trying to stay in Rka gsar Village, but Gza' mchog hit me with a long yellow *kha btags*<sup>17</sup> and drove me away." Villagers then believed that Gza' mchog was protecting them from harmful ghosts.

The deity Tsi tsong is enshrined in Pin rkya tshi me; Tsi tsong is a female deity who protects only Rka gsar Village. Locals say that if evil makes the slightest sound, Tsi tsong immediately comes, even if she is combing her hair. She mounts her black horse rapidly and, without pausing to even don

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<sup>14</sup> Regarding these deities, Snying bo rgyal and Rino (2009:227) state: "We are aware of the names *Ba rdzong ri lang*, *Dpung nge ri lang*, *Sa bdag sog po ri lang*, *Ko'u mol ri lang*, *Pe dpa' ri lang*, *Dar rgya ri lang*, *Tso shi ri lang*, *Dmag dpon pi tsi ri lang* and *Gyen 'dzi ri lang*."

<sup>15</sup> The Gza' brgyad are Rar du pa sang, Lhor phur bu (Gza' mchog), Nub du lza ba, Byang du lhag pa, Rar lhor mig dmar, Lho nub du skra gcan, Nub byang du nyi ma, and Byang rar du spen pa.

<sup>16</sup> Ghosts are the spirits of deceased people that linger in the world, rather than going on to be reincarnated. Those who are possessed by a ghost may or may not remember what they do when possessed. They are lethargic and lack strength. Medicine does not help. Those possessed by ghosts want to consume dairy foods such as milk, butter, cheese, and yogurt, which they should be prevented from having. The ghost will not leave if allowed to eat such foods. The ghost speaks through the possessed person.

<sup>17</sup> *Kha btags* are strips of silk offered to people and deities as tokens of respect.

her shoes or put down her comb, goes to defeat evils.

The Ge sar<sup>18</sup> Temple houses an image of Ge sar, who is considered an efficacious protector deity who cares for the whole world.

Figures 11 and 12. Sko tshi me.



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<sup>18</sup> Ge sar is an important Tibetan folk hero – a warrior and leader who defeated several neighboring kingdoms and also facilitated the propagation of Buddhism.



Figure 13. Pin rkya tshi me.



Figure 14. Ge sar tshi me.



The Na thong is an annual, post-harvest festival held in numerous communities in Reb gong County, by both Tibetans and Monguor.<sup>20</sup> In Rka gsar, the festival takes place mostly from the nineteenth to the twenty-fourth days of the sixth lunar month. The three main types of Na thong performances in Reb gong are *klu rtsed* 'naga performance', *lha rtsed* 'deity performance', and *dmag rtsed* 'military performance'.

In Rka gsar, local men perform Na thong for six days, from the nineteenth to the twenty-fourth days of the sixth lunar month. Rka gsar performs *dmag rtsed*. Traditionally, one man from each household performed in Na thong, but nowadays, all males aged eight to forty must participate. Performers carry a baton and wear Tibetan robes, white shirts, and white shoes during the performance. They also cover their head with a piece of cloth – often a hand towel. Performers assemble on the village threshing ground in front of Rko tshi me, the main temple of Rka gsar Village. People from other villages come watch. Villagers attach importance to the Na thong, as they believe that many deities gather at the performance ground during Na thong to enjoy the entertainment.

The nineteenth is the first day of Na thong. Throughout Na thong, the deity, Tso ri ri lang, is enshrined in a sedan, and is the focal deity of the ritual. On the afternoon of the first day, the *lha pa*, who is not possessed, leads all the village males from the main temple to the banks of the Dgu chu River, where children play in the river shallows. Elder men splash water on the *klu'u ri* (D) 'sedan', symbolically purifying the sedan and deities. Next, they all go to the *na re* (D),<sup>21</sup> which are two households who act as temple caretakers that year. Each household prepares a big meal, and gives cash and other snacks to the guests. At about six p.m., all Na thong performers go to the Na thong ground to perform. The *na re* give each performer a loaf of bread called *gab zhags* (?).<sup>22</sup> This day is called *gab zhags na thong*.

On the twentieth day, males go to perform in Ri stag Village in the morning and return to Rka gsar and perform after lunch. This day is called Ri stag na thong.

The twenty-first day is called *ther gang nyi wi na thong*, after Ther gang nyi wi, the name of a location above the temple where the communal *lab rtse*<sup>23</sup> is located. While village males perform there, spectators come from surrounding villages. This is an important time because a new *lha pa* may be selected on this day, though this rarely happens. During this afternoon, four men carry the sedan to each village household and place it on a table in the household's courtyard. Various food offerings are burnt as *bsang*. Meanwhile, young village males perform *lha rtsed*. Each household performance lasts approximately five minutes.

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<sup>19</sup> The description offered here is a brief outline of the ritual. [For more detailed descriptions of similar rituals in nearby communities, see Buffetrille (2008), Snying bo rgyal and Rino (2009), Stuart et al. (1995), Dpal ldan bkra shis and Stuart (1998), Epstein and Peng (1998), Nagano (2000), and Xing 1998].

<sup>20</sup> Tibetan communities in Reb gong refer to this ritual as Klu rol or Glu rol. [The term *na thong* appears etymologically related to the Mongolian *naadam*, which means 'game, play; stage play; amusement, entertainment; festival, celebration' (Leissig 1960). Na thong has a cognate in the Mangghuer term *nadu*, 'to play or joke', and to Nadun, the Mangghuer annual harvest festival, see Roche (2011) and Stuart and Hu (1993).]

<sup>21</sup> Each of the *na re* families protects and maintains all three temples throughout the year. During this year, these family members are forbidden to eat food from other households, and also should not eat garlic or onion. They sweep the temple regularly and clean everything inside during Na thong. One family is chosen from Yar sko Clan each year, and another from Yang lji Clan or Mdo 'dug Clan, in alternating years. Each clan family fulfills this role in turn, thus, every family has the chance to be a *na re*.

<sup>22</sup> These steamed, square breads vary in size.

<sup>23</sup> [A *lab rtse* is a cairn dedicated to a local territorial deity.]

On the twenty-second day, Sgo dmar villagers perform in Rka gсар Village. On the morning of this day, all the Rka gсар performers and the sedan welcome the Sgo dmar performers. Villagers burn *bsang* when the Sgo dmar performers and sedan reach Rka gсар Village to welcome the villagers and deity.<sup>24</sup> Rka gсар and Sgo dmar performers go to Sgo dmar Village to perform again in the afternoon.

The twenty-third day is Sgo dmar Village's main day for Na thong. All able-bodied Rka gсар and Sgo dmar males perform in Sgo dmar throughout the day. At around eight p.m., they return to their own village with their sedans.

The twenty-fourth is another significant day in Rka gсар's Na thong. Many visitors come. The most significant activity is making a large *bsang* with contributions from each village household.

On the fourth day of Na thong, four men carry the sedan on their shoulders to each village household, as mentioned earlier. This visit is important because families regard this as the deity visiting them. When the sedan visits a household, family members burn *bsang* that includes offerings of fruit and bread. Villagers believe that the deity exorcises evil and protects family members.

Figure 15. The *Na thong* performance in Rka gсар Village.



The manifest function of Na thong is to make offering to deities, whom villagers believe protect them, their crops, and their livestock. Sincere belief in the deities means that Na thong is performed carefully, with generous *bsang* offerings that include a sheep made from *rtsam pa*. Na thong also attracts visitors, who help the economy when they make purchases from village shops and temporary stalls set up by villagers. The festival is held during hot summer weather and some performers do not wish to perform. However, they may be fined if they are absent from the performances.

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<sup>24</sup> Tso shi ri lang, Rka gсар's main mountain deity, has two brothers: Pen hwa ri lang of Sgo dmar Village and A myes Ba rdzong of Gar rtse sdong Village. A myes Ba rdzong is the oldest brother, Tso shi ri lang is the second-eldest, and Pen hwa ri lang is the youngest. Locals consider the welcome offered to Sgo dmar villagers and their deity to be the visit of an elder brother to his younger brother.

Conflicts may occur during Na thong, for example, between rich and poor families. During Na thong, rich families spend much money on various foods and drinks, which they offer their guests, and also buy expensive clothes for their own family members. They also give their children cash. In contrast, poor families cannot buy expensive clothes and food. Their children have almost no money during Na thong. As a result, rich families' children may insult and bully poor family's children.

Na thong also demonstrates aspects of gender inequality. For example, men are allowed to enter the temple and view the deity images, while women cannot, though they may enter the temple courtyard to offer *bsang*. After men finish performing Na thong, they eat excellent food, and enjoy beverages including beer and liquor. In contrast, women cannot enjoy such treats and cannot wear beautiful clothes for a time because they must cook, serve guests, and clean during Na thong. On the whole, women enjoy Na thong less than men.

### Lo sar 'New Year'

Villagers visit elder relatives on the first day of Lo sar. On the second day, family members sit together in their home, and enjoy a special meal. They avoid doing any work and just enjoy themselves. On the third day of Lo sar, children who married and moved out of the home return to visit their parents and spend three to five days in their natal home. On the fifth day of Lo sar, a *gos sku* (T) 'large cloth deity image' is displayed on the hillside above the village monastery. From the sixth day on, villagers visit their relatives and friends, and invite them to their homes. From the tenth to fifteenth days, villagers visit Rong bo Monastery and other local monasteries. Weddings are frequently held on the third, thirteenth, and eighth days of Lo sar.

Lu ba go go (D) is unique in the local area.<sup>25</sup> It is part of Lo sar preparations held on the eighth day of the twelfth lunar month. On the seventh day of the twelfth lunar month, village women put a basket on their back, go to the Dgu chu River, collect pieces of ice, and bring them home. They need two large pieces and many small pieces of ice. They put the ice in the courtyard where it is not to be touched until the next morning. On the eighth day, villagers get up early. After a man in each household offers *bsang*, women put the two large pieces of ice on either side of the courtyard gate, the most important door of the family compound. Then, they take the many small pieces of ice and put them near the walls, under trees, and in the fields.

After villagers have had breakfast, women cook *go thang* (?) in a big pot (see Figure 17). Several centimeters of water are poured into a pot, the water is boiled, seven or eight scoops of bean flour are added, and the mixture is stirred. The cooked *go thang* is eaten with chili, salt, and garlic. Then, at around eleven a.m., villagers take *go thang* to families who had a death in the previous year. *Go thang* is also given to relatives, especially elders. This activity continues until night. Villagers do not cook at this time but instead eat *go thang* with family members.

Residents from nearby villages believe Lu ba go go is a Han tradition. However, I disagree with this suggestion, because in my understanding, it is only held in Rka gсар Village. Han, Tibetans, and other Monguor in Reb gong County do not practice this custom. Furthermore, Lu ba go go is similar to Tibetan customs. For example, villagers put ice on either side of the courtyard gate in the belief that ice expels evil from the home, as is done in many nearby Tibetan communities.

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<sup>25</sup> [In addition to being held in Rka gсар, Lu ba go go is also held in Gnyan thog Village, where it is called Lowagaotang (Rdo rje bkra shis, personal communication, November 2014).]

Figure 16. Ice placed by the gate for Lu ba go go.



Figure 17. *Go thang*.



Zo wi ne ni (?), held on the twenty-fourth day of the twelfth lunar month, is another Rka gsar custom. Women make small baked breads and give them to monks, families that have had a death in the previous year, and to relatives, especially elders. While women prepare to cook, men make a frame (Figure 18) of cypress wood and put it at the stove opening. A small loaf of bread, topped with *bsang*, is placed on the wood framework. Two plates, each containing six breads, are placed on the stove, symbolizing the twelve animals of the zodiac (rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig). Meanwhile, a man makes a large *bsang* offering in the courtyard, and children set off firecrackers. All family members prostrate toward the stove at this time. Family members then gather for a meal. Zo wi ne ni is celebrated for the stove deity and to welcome the New Year. Zo wi ne ni is the name for both the stove deity and this celebration. The stove deity is believed capable of protecting the family from evil.

Figure 18 (left). A wooden construction built before the stove as part of Zo wi ne ni. Figure 19 (right). Twelve breads representing the twelve zodiac animals.



On the thirteenth day of the first lunar month, all villagers go to Cha yas Hill behind the village. Males make a large *bsang* offering as females watch. 'Dzam gling spyi bsang 'Bsang for all the World' is offered to a group of deities known as Dgra lha bcu gsum, the Thirteen Warrior Deities. After offering *bsang*, villagers chant the Skyabs 'gro, Mdo, Gdugs dkar, and Sgrol ma scriptures together. The village's *lha pa* are possessed by the deities Gza' mchog and Ge sar, who advise the villagers about what must be done to ensure peace and prosperity in the coming year. The suggestion is typically that they continue to chant the same scriptures.

Figures 20-22. Offering *bsang* on the thirteenth day of the New Year.



The fifteenth day of Lo sar is the last day of the New Year festivities. In the morning, villagers visit Rong bo Monastery, where they stay all day, visiting *bla ma* in the monastery, especially Shar Bla ma,<sup>26</sup> and then return home in the afternoon. Once home, villagers dress in robes and go to Sko tshi

<sup>26</sup> Shar Bla ma is considered the highest Dge lugs *bla ma* in Reb gong County, and is the main *bla ma* of Rong bo Monastery, which was established by the first Shar Bla ma. The current incarnation is the eighth Shar Bla ma.

me, the main temple in Rka gсар Village. They gather on the threshing ground in front of the temple compound, where a *sen chugs* (D) 'large swing' has been constructed beforehand by the *phas thi*. The swing is made from five strong pillars and a long yak-hide rope. The frame is made from two pairs of crossed poles, atop which the fifth pillar rests. The long rope hangs from the crossbeam. Villagers sit around the swing, perform circle dances, and sing folk songs.

Figure 23-25. A large swing built in Rka gсар Village.





At dusk, villagers set off firecrackers near the swing. Men swing in turn, doing summersaults, twisting around the rope. Villagers watch carefully and count how many summersaults each man does. Men compete to do the most. After some time, two men from different clans quickly climb up the large swing, crawl on the pillars, break the tree branches binding the two intersecting pillars, and throw the branches towards villagers, who scramble to grab them. The branches are then placed anywhere in the home, and are considered to bring good luck in the coming year. After the swing has been dismantled, villagers go home.

Villagers have various explanations for the swing. Some say that it is just for fun. When my parents and grandparents were children, for example, they had few things to play with. One line of explanation says that village leaders then built a large swing that children could play on. In contrast, others said that the large swing symbolizes auspiciousness, because it is only constructed during Lo sar and thus symbolizes villagers' hopes and brings good fortune in the coming year.<sup>27</sup>

At around nine-thirty that evening, all families leave their homes, gather in groups of five or six families at crossroads throughout the village, and set small piles of straw on fire at the intersections of roads and paths. Those who are able jump over the fire three times.

Figures 26-27. Jumping over the fire at the end of New Year celebrations.



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<sup>27</sup> [Photographs taken by Zhuang Xueben in the late 1930s (Zhuang 2009), show similar swings in use in Duluun Lunkuang and Sanchuan.]

Villagers pay attention to the cardinal direction towards which they jump over the fire, as it must be the same direction as that in which they harvested that year. The direction of the harvest is changed immediately prior to the harvest every year. This is determined by a book which is in the local monastery and outlines the annual movements of Lo lha, the Crop Deity. For example, villagers may harvest from east to west one year, and then should jump over the fires in an easterly direction at the conclusion of the next Lo sar. When jumping, they say, "*Na tsha go bkal mtshams gcod*" (T).<sup>28</sup> Next, the women from each family give money to the children, who dance and sing. An adult organizes this for the children. Then, the children leave to play with their friends. Elders eat snacks and fruits while men drink beer and liquor, chat, make jokes, and sing.

After midnight, all elders go to bed. Children gather with other children from their clan. Each group of children chooses an eloquent child to be the leader of the group. The children collect baked bread made many days earlier from each household in the clan. In addition to bread, the household gives the children fruits, candies, and other treats. The previously selected eloquent child then speaks in Monguor, beckoning fortune to the family:

1. ཙོ་ནི་ཉ་ནས་སིན་ཟེ་སིན་ནང་ཉ་ཉི་རེ་གེ་འམ
2. ཁང་སར་ཉ་ནས་ཐ་རང་ཐོ་སུང་ཉ་ཉི་རེ་གེ་འམ
3. ཀོ་ཀུལ་ཉ་ནས་མོ་རི་མི་སུང་ཉ་ཉི་རེ་གེ་འམ
4. པ་ཡང་པ་དུ་དུ་རིམ

1. *tso hi ha nas sin zi sin nang ha li dir ge 'am*
2. *khang sar ha nas tha rang tho sung ha li dir ge 'am*
3. *ko kul ha nas mo ri mi sung ha li dir ge 'am*
4. *pa yang pa du du rim*

1. Your winter house will be full of descendants.
2. Your storehouse will be full of cheese and butter.
3. Your livestock enclosure will be full of horses.
4. Your family will become extremely rich.

The bread is collected and taken to the clan temple. For example, I am from Mgo 'dug Clan. I collected bread, candy, and so on from other households in my clan when I was a child, and then took it to Pin rkya tshi me. What we collected was then distributed evenly among the children. We ate the candy and other food, except for the bread, which I took home. The bread was then kept in the house as a symbol of auspiciousness and good luck until the next year. When the bread was replaced the following year, some families throw the old bread away, while others eat it.

LANDSLIDE

At around seven-thirty p.m., 25 July 2009, a large section of the upper eastern slope of Rta 'gying Mountain behind Rka gсар subsided. Villagers, including my family, were at home at that time preparing supper. We heard a loud noise like an explosion, from outside. My father ran out and saw a

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<sup>28</sup> "Prevent all illness and evil."

black cloud billowing in the blue sky. He had no time to think, ran inside the house, and brought all of us outside. We encountered other families running through the village lanes. We ran south to a field about 500 meters from the village. We looked back and saw that part of the mountain had collapsed. The black cloud was dust from the mountain. The landslide frightened us all because it was near the monastery and the village. Afraid that there might be another landslide, we lived in government-provided tents for nearly three months. The tents were pitched in fields far from the foot of the mountain, about one kilometer from the monastery.

The landslide killed one monk from Rka gsar Monastery who had been watching television and thus did not hear the landslide and had no time to escape. Villagers gathered on fields near the tents, and chanted scriptures in the hope of avoiding further calamity.

Nowadays, life in Rka gsar Village has returned to normal.

Figure 28. The section of Rta 'gying Mountain that subsided.



# AN INTRODUCTION TO RGYA TSHANG MA, A MONGUOR (TU) VILLAGE IN REB GONG (TONGREN)

Tshe ring skyid (Independent Scholar)

## ABSTRACT

This article provides basic background information on Rgya tshang ma Village, one of three villages where the Ngandehua (Wutun) language is spoken in Reb gong (Rma lho [Huangnan] Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon [Qinghai] Province). Information presented includes population and location; housing; language; subsistence and income, focusing on the annual agricultural cycle; and religion and rituals, focusing particularly on communal rites. The text also includes one table, twenty photographs, and a narrative in Ngandehua, transcribed in Pinyin and translated into English.

## KEYWORDS

Monguor, Ngandehua, Reb gong, Tongren, Tu, Wutun

## LOCATION AND POPULATION

Rgya tshang ma is an agricultural village located in Rong bo (Longwu) Township, Reb gong (Tongren) County, Rma lho (Huangnan) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Mtsho sngon (Qinghai) Province. Reb gong County, where the prefectural capital of Rma lho Prefecture is located, has two towns, twelve townships, and seventy-five villages.<sup>1</sup> Rgya tshang ma Village is five kilometers northeast of the county town (five minutes by motorcycle) and 181 kilometers southeast of Zi ling (Xining), the capital of Mtsho sngon Province.

Rgya tshang ma is located on the right bank of the Dgu chu (Longwu) River, and is surrounded by poplar plantations. Beyond these woods are village fields, on the bank of the Longwu River. There are two large, unnamed mountains behind the village, to the east. Two kilometers to the south of the village is Hor rgya, a Tibetan village with which Rgya tshang ma shares a primary school. Fields and woods are west of the village. The Dgu chu River runs through the center of the valley, west of the fields. Gnyan thog Village is opposite Rgya tshang ma, on the west side of the valley. North of the village is Upper Seng ge gshong (Baojia)<sup>2</sup> and Lower Seng ge gshong (Hamian) villages, each of which has a monastery. Upper Seng ge gshong is two kilometers from Rgya tshang ma Village. These two villages have a close relationship: monks from Rgya tshang ma Village study in Upper Seng ge gshong's monastery, residents of the two villages intermarry, and the two villages perform the annual Lekyaihe festival together (see below). Lower Seng ge gshong is three kilometers from Rgya tshang ma Village.

The village had 110 households and approximately 660 people in 2012. All households are divided into four *kunzan*;<sup>3</sup> membership in these non-territorial groups is by patrilineal descent. Members of a *kunzan* provide assistance to other members during important household rituals, such

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.huangnan.gov.cn/>, accessed 4 August 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Tibetan names for the villages are followed by the Ngandehua names used by Rgya tshang ma villagers.

<sup>3</sup> Most villagers agree that there are four, but some claim there are five *kunzan* in the village. Danyan, Baji, and Bza' ri tshang are the names of three *kunzan*. I could not find names of the other *kunzan*.

as weddings and funerals, which are times when many guests must be hosted. Marriage within the *kunzan* is permitted.

Another important local social group is the *qing'geya*, which consists of several households whose members are all siblings, and the parental household. Members of the same *qing'geya* help each other with everyday work.

Figure 1. Overlooking Rgya tshang ma Village, towards the west.<sup>4</sup>



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<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all photographs were taken by the author from 2012 to 2014.

Figures 2 and 3. Lower Seng ge gshong Monastery.



## HOUSING

Rgya tshang ma villagers typically live in one-story, flat-roofed houses made of adobe, concrete, sun-dried bricks, and wood pillars and beams. Eight families in the village live in two-story, flat-roofed houses. Firewood is often stored on the flat roof. Nowadays, many villagers cover their roofs with plastic and asphalt to prevent water leaking into their house after rain or snow.

Every house has a rectangular courtyard with a small flower plot in the middle and, usually, a shrine room, a living room, a kitchen, several bedrooms, a storehouse, and a toilet. The shrine room is commonly located in the middle of the house and is well-decorated compared to other rooms. Rgya tshang ma villagers usually celebrate Lo sar 'New Year' in their living room, which they consider to be the most comfortable and splendid room. This room is only used on such special occasions. In contrast, most local Tibetans celebrate Lo sar in their *ja khang* 'kitchen' and sleep on heated sleeping platforms in their living rooms.

In around 2008, villagers in Rgya tshang ma began to enclose their patios with glass panels to warm their houses during cold weather and to protect the house from dust.

Most homes house two to three generations.

Figure 4. A contemporary home in Rgya tshang ma.



## LANGUAGE

Rgya tshang ma villagers speak a unique language that they refer to as Ngandehua 'Our Language' and which local Tibetans call Dor skad 'Dor Language'.<sup>5</sup> Villagers think their language is a Chinese-based language mixed with Mongolian and Tibetan. Ngandehua is only spoken in three villages: Rgya tshang ma, Upper Seng ge gshong, and Lower Seng ge gshong. Rgya tshang ma Village neighbors Tibetan-speaking Hor rgya Village and, due to frequent communication with monolingual Tibetans, most Rgya tshang ma villagers understand and can have basic conversations in A mdo Tibetan. Furthermore, most Hor rgya villagers understand some Ngandehua, but do not speak it beyond the capacity to have simple, formulaic conversations. Many Rgya tshang ma villagers speak Tibetan imperfectly, as illustrated by the following short dialogue between a Tibetan and a Rgya tshang ma villager (marked as Monguor):

Tibetan: *Khyod kha sang gang du song.* (Where did you go yesterday?)

Monguor: *Nga a khu tshang la 'gro nas.* (I go-ed to my brother's home)\* Should be, *Nga a khu tshang la song nas.* (I went to my brother's home).

Tibetan: *Ci byed du song.* (Why did you go there?)

Monguor: *Tsha lu ma byin gi song.* ([I] give oranges).\* Should be, *Tsha lu ma ster gi song.* (I gave oranges).

Seven villages in Reb gong are classified as Tu by the government: Gnyan thog (Jijia), Rka gsar (Manyan), Sgo dmar (Hela), Bod skor (Tuoja), Rgya tshang ma, Upper Seng ge gshong (Baojia), and Lower Seng ge gshong (Hamian). Among these seven villages, the residents of Gnyan thog, Rka gsar, Sgo dmar, and Bod skor speak Mongolic Dor skad. Residents of the other three villages speak Sinitic Dor skad – Ngandehua. No writing system is used locally for either Mongolic or Sinitic Dor skad. Speakers of these two languages cannot communicate using their mother tongues. Rgya tshang ma villagers refer to Mongolic Dor skad as Helahua; *hua* refers to language, and Hela (Sgo dmar) is the name of one of the villages where Helahua is spoken.

A woman in her forties (b. ~1970) gave the following narrative in Ngandehua. She married in 1986 and moved into the home of her husband, who had several sisters, one of whom fell from a cliff while herding, and injured her head. Afterwards, she was often confused and frequently fainted. She went to work in the fields one day, fainted, and tumbled into a river. She was dead by the time her relatives found her. The English translation follows the Ngandehua text.

<sup>1</sup>qian mian she de zuokuo li he di de-ri.

<sup>2</sup>zuokuo li he de ku li ge-jie na wen di mi li.

<sup>3</sup>mi wen ma

<sup>4</sup>ngu kan liao-ra wen di mi de jedo gu liao de-ri jian liao de-ri.

<sup>5</sup>gu da-ra ge-jie ha qhi gu liao de-ri ti li.

<sup>6</sup>naizi cha yi dian huo ti shi ma mang-mao yi ga da bi tik li he-e shi ma cha yi dian huo ti shi ma shang huan gang zi li shang huan guang zi li lai lio huan de shang huan yi guang zi duan shi ma ha qhi gu lio de-ri bi tik bi shi ma.

<sup>7</sup>qi tian de cao yi da zi te ye ha de zuo ma tian ning de zuo ma shai gu mi zai ma hong zi shi dao shi ma

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<sup>5</sup> Linguists refer to the language as Wutun, see Janhunuan et al. (2008).



de-ri qian mian she de.  
<sup>8</sup> gu yi da zi yi ba ba zha shi ma de gu ge da dou-ruo jing ma jiu la de-ri.  
<sup>9</sup> gu yi da zi yi ba ba gai ma gu yi da zi yi ba ba shai ma zea hong zi zi ma shai gu ma ha qhi lio ra.  
<sup>10</sup> le dong ngai ma de gu ti lian tai li pa di de-ri.  
<sup>11</sup> qhi lio-ra mi li.  
<sup>12</sup> zu pa lio de gu kan chuo men zai yo li.  
<sup>13</sup> gu da-ra qhi xiao qhi ngai ma da ti lian ge yo de-ri.  
<sup>14</sup> gu da xi dong wa li qhi liao-ra  
<sup>15</sup> nin de Suo nan a-guo gu da tian pa di li.  
<sup>16</sup> yi ge wen liao-ra mi jian sho li.  
<sup>17</sup> mi jian sho ma da ngu qhi jian na xin li xin li ha qhi liao ra da.  
<sup>18</sup> wu li qhi li gang ta lai ma da ra ba yi da zi chan xian ma men zai zuo shi ma hui zuo shi ma je ge kan  
 jia de niu ko yi da zi gai kai ma li.  
<sup>19</sup> gu da yi tiao lian ge hai pa gu ma ze nin de Suonan a-guo lai ya sho ra ma ge zi gu liao sho ma mi lai  
 de-ri.  
<sup>20</sup> gu da ra kan liao-ra a yi ge yo li bao jia de a yi ge.  
<sup>21</sup> a yi e-a pa ge zi.  
<sup>22</sup> e-an de a-jie da gang ta lai ma li.  
<sup>23</sup> a neng neng.  
<sup>24</sup> ngu de-ra xin zang be hao yo sho ma ze.  
<sup>25</sup> ge-jie e-a la de pa zi ma ze e-a men liang ge du la ma ze.  
<sup>26</sup> Suonan cuo lai de bai yo ma a-jie da gang ta lai ma li lai de bai yo ma.  
<sup>27</sup> a neng ni lai de bai yo ma tang li lai ya sho liao-ra ze.  
<sup>28</sup> tang li lai ma ze  
<sup>29</sup> a li gang ta lai ma li a li gang ta lai ma li sho ma pai hai liang ge diao la ma ze.  
<sup>30</sup> Niang mao xian lao shi da gu-jgege Ji He Mao xiao qhi dia zao zhi chang de mo-he-jgege nian di li  
 sho ma.  
<sup>31</sup> zao zhi chang de mo-he duo-ro Ji He Mao-a xiao qhi dia nian kai ma li sho ma ze gu-jgege sa-a ta lai  
 ma ze.  
<sup>32</sup> gu da ra da.  
<sup>33</sup> gu-jgege lai ma da a neng mo-he nian liao de-ri bai li ma mo-he nian liao de bai li je de a-jie xhui li  
 dao shi ma  
<sup>34</sup> xhui li yen dao ma dao shi ma gang ta lai liao de-ri.  
<sup>35</sup> ze Suo nan cuo de rao dao shi he-en shi ma.  
<sup>36</sup> zao zhi chang li man-ba ge yo de-ri zao chi chang de gu ga man-ba de wu li qhi sho liao ra da.  
<sup>37</sup> ngu a li ke ma qhi sho ma shi-en-ge ti ga jan de zuo ma nuo te mi gu liao de-ri.  
<sup>38</sup> nuo te mi gu ma da Xiawu jiabu de Zhuo ga cuo sa ta lai ma lai ngu bi shi dai sho ma ze bi shi ge liao  
 de-ri.  
<sup>39</sup> e-a cai lu da ma a-na sho qhi sho ma ngu cai lu da ma tang li sho lai liao de-ri.  
<sup>40</sup> ge-jie ji ge yi da zi huan li huan li gu-a bi shi ge ma da ge-ra shang lai liao de-ri.  
<sup>41</sup> da ge ra shang lai ma ze gu da ma ga ga ti li lai liao ra.  
<sup>42</sup> nin de ni-nie ngu men shi qhi liao ra nin de ni-nie da yi ge jua shi ma men shi chua di li.  
<sup>43</sup> gu da ra qun zai ra yi tou zuan shi ma.  
<sup>44</sup> lai ya

<sup>45</sup>ni de nian yi cha yi hen zi gu ma li ni de nian ma ge zi gu liao.  
<sup>46</sup>a-jie xhui li dao shi ma Suo nan cuo da Zhou ga cuo da gu-jgege huan li huan li bi ma lai di yo Niang  
 mao xian lao shi da gu-jgege.  
<sup>47</sup>ze e-a guo tang li qhi sho ma ze ngu lai liao.  
<sup>48</sup>ze a neng jho mi yo lai ya ngu tang li da yi ge jua shi ma tang li ye lai dai dong shi ma de-ri sho ma ze.  
<sup>49</sup>ge-jie si guo ma de zhi dao di mi li.  
<sup>50</sup>chang de gu da ye la liao ra da ge-jie jgege ma ga ga ti li lai gu ma li.  
<sup>51</sup>jian ba shi yi ge ta liao-ra da jian ba bing gu ma li sho li.  
<sup>52</sup>da mi de ge kuo de li da qian mian she li ke ma be qhi yi tou she li ke ma qhi sho li.  
<sup>53</sup>yi tou she wu zai zai nin de a-ba ngu liang ge cuo di de-ri.  
<sup>54</sup>ze yi tou she li ke ma qhi liao de-ri.  
<sup>55</sup>jin gan cao de de qi ma man gu ge ma yo de-ri.  
<sup>56</sup>qian ma yi da zi jin qing cao hai de-ri.

<sup>1</sup>We were eating in the kitchen in the front house.<sup>6</sup>  
<sup>2</sup>When we were eating in the kitchen, she was feeling uncomfortable.  
<sup>3</sup>Feeling uncomfortable.  
<sup>4</sup>I knew she was feeling uncomfortable, I saw it.  
<sup>5</sup>Then she went to the field.  
<sup>6</sup>(She took) a thermos of milk tea and threw a loaf of bread in the basket and a bowl of *lailio* noodles<sup>7</sup>  
 (for lunch).  
<sup>7</sup>Grass (gathered over) seven days was not dried because of rain and cloudiness so the grass remained  
 on the roof of the front house.  
<sup>8</sup>The grass was bound tightly.  
<sup>9</sup>I untied the grass and dried all the grass on the roof (and) then I went to the field.  
<sup>10</sup>(She was supposed) to hoe in the field near the woods.  
<sup>11</sup>(But) she was gone when I got there.  
<sup>12</sup>The field was just like it had been the day before – it had not been hoed.  
<sup>13</sup>Then there were two other big fields near the small river.  
<sup>14</sup>I went down there.  
<sup>15</sup>Your Aunt Suonan, was hoeing there.  
<sup>16</sup>I asked her (Suonan) where she was (and) she said she hadn't seen her.  
<sup>17</sup>She said she hadn't seen her, and then I looked for her by the river.  
<sup>18</sup>She was floating in the water with her hair disheveled and her shirt unbuttoned.  
<sup>19</sup>Then I was terrified and I called your aunt to come, but she just asked, "What happened?" and didn't  
 come.  
<sup>20</sup>Then I looked and saw a woman there – a woman from Baojia Village was there.  
<sup>21</sup>(I said,) "Aunty please help me!"  
<sup>22</sup>"My sister is here in the water."  
<sup>23</sup>"Oh!" (she said).  
<sup>24</sup>She said, "I'm so afraid!"<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> The family has two houses, each with several rooms and a courtyard, one in front of the other.

<sup>7</sup> These noodles are made from pea flour.

<sup>8</sup> Literally, "My heart is not good," which implies that she easily becomes nervous and easily falls ill.

<sup>25</sup> She helped me pull her – we both pulled her together.  
<sup>26</sup> (I called,) "Suonan Cuo<sup>9</sup> come quickly, our sister is in the water – come quickly!"  
<sup>27</sup> "Oh my! Come quickly," I said and then she came.  
<sup>28</sup> Then she quickly came.  
<sup>29</sup> (Suonan Cuo shouted), "Where is she? Where is she?"  
<sup>30</sup> Teacher Niang Maoxian and others thought soldiers were chasing me.<sup>10</sup>  
<sup>31</sup> They thought soldiers were chasing me, so they came to me quickly.  
<sup>32</sup> Then,  
<sup>33</sup> They came and asked, "Oh – she wasn't chased by soldiers, was she?" "No, she was not chased by soldiers, it was her sister who fell into water."  
<sup>34</sup> She fainted (and fell) into the water.  
<sup>35</sup> Then we put her on Suonan Cuo's back.  
<sup>36</sup> There was a doctor in the military base – we told her to go there.  
<sup>37</sup> (She said), "Where should I go? Where should I go?" Her legs were shaking and she didn't move at all.  
<sup>38</sup> Because she didn't move, Xiawu Jiabu's (wife), Zhuoga Cuo, ran to us and carried her.  
<sup>39</sup> (They) told me to take a shortcut and tell Mother – then I ran home.  
<sup>40</sup> They took turns carrying her and came home from the big valley.  
<sup>41</sup> (They) came up from the big valley (and) when they arrived at Magagati.<sup>11</sup>  
<sup>42</sup> When I arrived at the gate I saw that your grandmother was holding a jacket and was coming out of the gate.  
<sup>43</sup> Then she went back into the house.  
<sup>44</sup> (She said,) "Come."  
<sup>45</sup> "Your face looks terrible, what happened?"  
<sup>46</sup> (I said,) "Sister fell into the water and Suonan Cuo and Zhuoga Cuo and Teacher Niang Maoxian were taking turns to carry her home."  
<sup>47</sup> "(They told) me to go first, so I came."  
<sup>48</sup> Then she said, "Come, it doesn't matter. She must be feeling very cold, so I will take a jacket and go there."  
<sup>49</sup> She didn't know that Sister was dead.  
<sup>50</sup> (We) ran to Chang and saw they were coming to Magagati.  
<sup>51</sup> (Mother) touched her cheeks, but they were cold.  
<sup>52</sup> (Mother said), "She is definitely dead. Don't take her to the front house - carry her to the house behind it."<sup>12</sup>  
<sup>53</sup> At that time your father and I were living in the house behind.  
<sup>54</sup> Then we went to the house.  
<sup>55</sup> Dried grass was filling (the house).  
<sup>56</sup> Dried grass was filling the entire hall.

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<sup>9</sup> Suonan Cuo is Suonan's full name.

<sup>10</sup> At that time, women often worked on the local military base's fields. They sometimes stole crops or fruit while working and soldiers chased them if they learned this.

<sup>11</sup> A place in the village center.

<sup>12</sup> The corpse was taken to the other house because this was the family's main and original residence where important rituals were held.

A number of factors are currently threatening Ngandehua. As described further below, a kindergarten has been established in the village by Snying rje tshogs pa, an organization of villagers from both Rgya tshang ma and Upper Seng ge gshong. A main objective of the kindergarten is to teach Tibetan. Villagers want their children to begin learning Tibetan before they enter primary school. Another issue facing the language is the increasing number of loanwords entering the language from Chinese and Tibetan.

#### LITERACY AND FORMAL EDUCATION

Most adult females in Rgya tshang ma Village are illiterate. Literate adult villagers are mostly male. Ngandehua speakers use Tibetan when required to write for matters within the village, for example, when recording gifts at a wedding, or recording donations to the local temple. However, they need to write Chinese in all dealings with the government. Important speeches<sup>13</sup> are given in Tibetan by men and Tibetan scripture books are used by male villagers. Therefore, most male villagers read and write Tibetan and some Chinese, but their Tibetan is typically much better than their Chinese.

Mobile phones have been popular in the village since 2009, to the point that, in 2014, almost every male villager had one. Using mobile phones has improved locals' Chinese, since they cannot send text messages in Tibetan, due to the fact that many mobile phones they use lack Tibetan software (though Tibetan software and operating systems are becoming increasingly common).

Table 1. Number of Students in 2012.

School Level	Female	Male	Total
University	8	2	10
Senior middle school	10	0	10
Junior middle school	17	8	25
Primary school	38	40	78
Kindergarten	16	6	22

A village kindergarten was established in the summer of 2012 with money donated by all villagers from Rgya tshang ma and Upper Seng ge gshong. Two monks, A khu Blo gros<sup>14</sup> and A khu 'Jigs med, also made significant donations. A khu Blo gros is also the headmaster. The kindergarten was established so that children could begin learning Tibetan before they enter primary school in Hor rgya, where they are taught in Tibetan. Students from both Rgya tshang ma and Upper Seng ge gshong attend and pay no tuition at the kindergarten. They are mainly taught the Tibetan syllabary, but also begin learning to speak Tibetan at this time. Although the language of instruction is mostly Ngandehua, A khu Blo gros teaches simple Tibetan conversation to the students, and encourages them to gradually speak Tibetan more often.

Most families resist sending their boys for further schooling after they graduate from primary school, because boys can earn a lucrative income producing *thang ka*. Although government policy stipulates nine years of compulsory education, this policy is not locally enforced. If education officials

<sup>13</sup> On special occasions such as weddings, an older man typically gives a short speech in Tibetan for good luck.

<sup>14</sup> He is a monk in Upper Seng ge gshong Monastery. He studied Tibetan scriptures for six years in India. Villagers say he is very kind and always helps others.

come to inspect the school to count the number of students, school-age children are taken from their homes and asked to attend school until the officials leave.

## SUBSISTENCE AND INCOME

Villagers in Rgya tshang ma practice agriculture, with each household having an average of six *mu*<sup>15</sup> of farmland. Villagers begin planting crops on the eleventh day of the second lunar month. During this time male and female villagers are very busy. Planting is hard work and requires help from outside the household. Such help is usually provided by relatives in the village.

The process of planting begins with scattering manure and chemical fertilizer. Seeds are planted using a planting tractor, which most village families own. Finally, the field is irrigated. Two to three families generally cooperate to plant crops, taking around six days to complete the work for each family. Once planting is finished, there is no field work to do until the fifteenth day of the third lunar month, when female villagers start weeding. During this time, villagers cooperate with their friends and enjoy working, chatting, and laughing together in the warm sunshine. Usually a field is weeded with a hoe three times. Only women do such work. If a man weeds, villagers gossip about the family, saying the housewife is incapable and lazy.

Fields are irrigated during the fourth lunar month by men or women, depending on who has time. Irrigation water is limited in Rgya tshang ma because it comes from a common irrigation channel (originating in the Dgu chu River) that is shared with Hor rgya, Upper Seng ge gshong, and Lower Seng ge gshong. Rgya tshang ma residents draw lots to decide the order in which they will irrigate fields. Sometimes irrigation is done at night. In such cases, men are generally responsible. In the fifth lunar month, fields are irrigated a third time and pesticides and herbicides are applied.

All harvest work is done in the sixth and seventh lunar months. This is both an exciting and tiring time for farmers. Most fields are harvested using combine harvesters, which are hired from local businessmen. However, some fields are too small, or their shape is too irregular, for combine harvesters, and must be harvested by hand. Women do all such harvesting work. Some families may hire laborers from nearby mountain villages to assist them, because the harvest in mountain villages comes earlier than in the valley. Such women are each paid one hundred RMB per *mu*. Men transport the harvested crops on tractors to a large empty field where all villagers store their crops until they are threshed. Family elders cook for those harvesting. Children carry the food to the fields. Nobody relaxes. After crops are harvested, the fields must be plowed and prepared for planting the next spring.

Villagers keep barley in their granaries. None is sold, but excess straw is sold to soldiers in a military base near the village, where it is used as fodder for horses. One tractor-load of dried straw fetched fifteen RMB in 2012. In recent years, the number of horses at the military base has been declining, and the number of families who sell straw is thus also declining.

Winter is the most relaxed season for female villagers because they only need to do housework. Meanwhile, men concentrate on producing *thang ka*, the most important economic activity in Rgya tshang ma. Most families have at least one *thang ka* artisan. Both monks and laymen make *thang ka*, which are sold both within China and internationally. Each artisan typically has a relationship with a middleman to whom they sell all their work. The middlemen typically dictate what should be painted, pay a deposit, and set the time for the *thang ka* to be finished. The painter decides the price, and if they

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<sup>15</sup> One *mu* = 0.067 a hectare. It takes about two minutes to walk around one *mu*.

find someone willing to pay a higher price, they sell the completed *thang ka* to them, but still need to complete the original order within the agreed time. Most middlemen are from Reb gong, and sell the *thang ka* they purchase in galleries in the prefecture capital, or sell them to other middlemen, who may sell them elsewhere in China or abroad. The maximum income of a household with *thang ka* artisan was 150,000 RMB per year in 2013, while that of an average family was around 80,000 RMB.

Figure 5. A local *thang ka* painter at work.



Most Rgya tshang ma families have an orchard where they grow *chang ba lu*, a local pear variety. A family that owns two to three *mu* of orchard can earn 1,000 RMB per year selling pears in the county town. In 2013, one kilogram sold for four *yuan* in summer and five *yuan* in winter.

In around 2006, some famers began spending less time in their fields, in the belief that farming requires much energy but earns little income. They started small businesses in the county town. For example, some women sell fruit and other women sell bread. Some fields are rented to Han people, who pile lumber there to sell for construction. Below is an account from Sems mtsho, who started a small business.

My name is Sems mtsho. I am thirty-five years old (in 2012) and there are five people in my family. I am a farmer and my husband makes *thang ka*. I consider my family's current economic condition to be average.

Since chemical fertilizers are very expensive (a forty kilogram bag is 185 RMB) people gain little income from their fields. So I started to sell fruit in the county town in my free time to earn income. I have been selling fruit for three years. Some of my friends do migrant labor in the County Town, but I think working for a boss is very hard. Sometimes a boss might fire you if they are

dissatisfied with your work.

It was difficult to set up a business because I don't have a shop. I put my fruit out on a board by the street. Policemen often come and chase me away and sometimes even confiscate my belongings. However, compared to farming, I can earn much more. My average yearly income from selling fruit is 10,000 RMB.

Figure 6. A *chang ba lu* tree.



In 2011, the government implemented a project to plant pear trees in the fields so that locals could earn income selling fruit in the county town. The government promised to pay eighty RMB per *mu* of land annually, but only did so for one year.

The government also built a house for a watchman to protect the fruit trees from animals. A villager, Stag lha rgyal, is in charge of this and receives 5,000 RMB from the government per year.

Villagers in Rgya tshang ma are critical of this project. If they use pesticides on crops in the fields, most trees die. Fruit trees in the fields also block the reaping machines, so villagers must harvest by hand, which is much more difficult. Furthermore, it takes six to seven years for the trees to begin producing fruit. Villagers generally believe that the planting project is a waste of land and brings no real benefits.

## RELIGION AND RITUALS

Rgya tshang ma villagers profess adherence to the Dge lugs Sect of Tibetan Buddhism. There are three temples and one stupa in the village. Village elders frequently circumambulate the stupa, which is located in the village center, and was built in 2007 with money donated by a Shanghai donor.

Figure 7. The stupa in the center of Rgya tshang ma Village.



Two of the temples – a Buddhist shrine and a mountain deity temple – are old,<sup>16</sup> but the third, a Buddhist shrine, was built in the summer of 2012 at a cost of nearly three million RMB. This money was donated by all village households, with each family contributing more than 10,000 RMB.

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<sup>16</sup> Villagers are unsure how old these temples are, other than they were built before 1958.



Figure 8. The mountain deity temple in Rgya tshang ma.



Villagers venerate the mountain deity, A myes Btsan rgod, and offer *bsang*<sup>17</sup> to him every morning in his temple. The following account provides more information about this deity:

A myes Btsan rgod has seven brothers, who are the mountain deities of neighboring villages.<sup>18</sup> A myes Btsan rgod is the youngest brother and also the strictest. He wants every villager to respect him and offer *bsang* to him every morning in his temple. He also wants every male villager to perform dances and pierce their cheeks with skewers during the annual Lekyaihe ritual.<sup>19</sup> Villagers say that A myes Btsan rgod is both stern and helpful.

A villager from Upper Seng ge gshong once killed a man from Rgya tshang ma Village during a battle between the two villages. A myes Btsan rgod was enraged and rode his horse to the home of those who killed his villager, climbed onto their roof, and noisily paced back and forth to frighten them.

Before 1989, villagers rode horses to the county town. They often wore *phrug*<sup>20</sup> hats and leather boots when they rode horses. If they failed to remove their hats when they entered the

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<sup>17</sup> *Bsang* is an offering burned for deities. *Bsang* offered on a daily basis includes flour and cypress. On special occasions such as Lekyaihe, flowers, candy, tea leaves, fruit, *gtor ma* 'dough effigies', and liquor are offered to mountain deities.

<sup>18</sup> A myes Gnyan chen (Hor rgya Village), Bu'u hrin (Seng se gshong – upper and lower), Dar rgya (Lower Seng ge gshong), Cu'u hrin (Lower Seng ge gshong), Ge ser (Rgya tshang ma), Ba bzang (Bka' rtse stong), and Btsan rgod (Rgya tshang ma).

<sup>19</sup> Lekyaihe is the Ngandehua name for an annual festival known as Klu rol in local Tibetan villages, and Na thong in Mongolic Dor skad villages. Lekyaihe entertains mountain deities who are beseeched to protect village crops.

<sup>20</sup> *Phrug* is a Tibetan fabric made of dense, dark red wool.

village gate, they were thrown from their horse.<sup>21</sup> Villagers believe this was punishment from the mountain deity for not removing their hats as a sign of respect.

Because A myes Btsan rgod was so stern, villagers invited the *bla ma*, A lags Brag dkar tshang, a manifestation of the deity Gsang bdag, from Lower Seng ge gshong Monastery. Gsang bdag wears a tiger pelt on the lower part of his body and it is said that A lags Brag dkar tshang has the pattern of a tiger's pelt on his legs. A lags Brag dkar tshang came and placed an image of Padmasambhava above the statue of A myes Btsan rgod to reduce his pride. A myes Btsan rgod became a kind mountain god afterwards.

Figure 9. These prayer flags are on the mountain behind the village. Locals offer *bsang* here to local deities on auspicious days and before important undertakings.



Each household in Rgya tshang ma has a shrine room where pictures of *bla ma* are displayed. A deity statue is usually in the center of the shrine's rear wall. Households have statues of various deities. There are also *thang ka* on the shrine walls. Various scriptures are placed on the upper part of the back wall. The *thang ka* and statues are all made in the village. Male members of one village family are all professional clay sculptors and most *thang ka* painters can make statues when required for their shrine. A water libation is offered in the shrine every morning by men or women – whoever has time.

Villagers in Rgya tshang ma visit both Upper and Lower Seng ge gshong monasteries at least once a year during 'cham 'masked monastic dances'. Such dances are held in Upper Seng ge gshong Monastery on the seventh day of the first lunar month and on the tenth day of the first lunar month in Lower Seng ge gshong Monastery. Visitors typically go to the Reb gong or Sgo dmar stupas after visiting Lower Seng ge gshong Monastery. Reb gong Stupa, one of the most famous local stupas, is

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<sup>21</sup> This village gate no longer stands. Its former location was occupied by a gasoline station in 2014.

located in the Smad pa area of Reb gong, and is cared for by nuns. Sgo dmar Stupa has eight stories and is located in front of Sgo dmar Monastery, across the valley from Rgya tshang ma.

Figure 10. The Sgo dmar stupa.



Villagers sometimes visit Rong bo Monastery in the prefecture seat. Usually ill and elderly people circumambulate the monastery's Rta mgrin Temple, and even healthy adults will circumambulate this temple when they visit the monastery, unless a *bla ma* tells them to circumambulate another temple. They believe that the deity of the temple, Rta mgrin, helps those who pray to him, and hope that he will destroy the harmful forces that affect their lives. For example, if someone is repeatedly possessed by a ghost, they circumambulate Rta mgrin Temple to rid themselves of the ghost.

Villagers believe that Buddha can protect them from illness and difficulties, and circumambulate temples whenever they have time. Those who are elderly or who live in Rong bo Monastery, for example, if they are sick and have come seeking a cure, are especially likely to circumambulate every day. Villagers especially make an effort to visit Rong bo Monastery during the Smon lam 'Great Prayer Festival', from the eleventh to the sixteenth days of the first lunar month.

Figure 11. Rong bo Monastery.



Figure 12. This statue of Sgrol ma is opposite Rong bo Monastery. Locals often circumambulate the statue when they visit the monastery.



All villagers are familiar with the story of the extraordinary monk, Dpal rtse rgyal Adia (1955-2013),<sup>22</sup> who cured people by chanting scripture. He was especially good at helping those possessed by evils. Once, my younger sister (b. 1996) contracted a strange sickness. Her mouth twisted to the right, and it was believed that she was possessed by a malevolent spirit. My family invited Dpal rtse rgyal Adia, who chanted for seven days, after which my sister was cured. The scripture he chanted was unique. I heard the scripture twice. Most of it was in Chinese. People say Dpal rtsi rgyal Adia was the only person in Reb gong who could chant that scripture.

When he chanted the scripture, Dpal rtse rgyal Adia needed a kettleful of spring water, five pieces of white paper, slender sticks of a local plant,<sup>23</sup> pickled vegetables, some oil, and a basin of wheat grain. Typically, when villagers fetch spring water, they must go silently, as malevolent spirits may follow them if they talk, and this prohibition was also observed when fetching water on this occasion. Firstly, Dpal rtsi rgya Adia cut the papers into the shape of a type of protector deity called *srung ma* in Tibetan and *huazhi* in Ngandehua.<sup>24</sup> Next, he attached one paper to each stick, which he then inserted into the basin of wheat grain. Dpal rtse rgyal Adia poured the pickled vegetables and oil in the kettle and chanted the scripture as the patient knelt in front of him. He finished chanting after about ten minutes and then a family member emptied the kettle outside the family gate.

Figure 13. This hail and storm-preventing effigy, called *chaben*, is on the mountain behind the village. It is rebuilt annually in spring.



<sup>22</sup> *Adia* is a Ngandehua term of address for monks.

<sup>23</sup> This bush is locally called *shangmu* and has long, thin straight branches that are used to make brooms. It grows on mountains behind the village.

<sup>24</sup> Villagers also stick these small papers on their courtyard gate on Lo sar Eve. Households in which a death has occurred do not affix *huazhi* to their courtyard gate.

## Hair Changing Ritual

Local women's hair ornaments are called *skra ka* in Tibetan and *xupa* in Ngandehua. They are made of coral and pieces of stiff, beautiful silk. Coral beads are threaded onto the cloth to make it stable and easy to wear. Such decorations are valuable and rarely seen in Rgya tshang ma Village. Both men and women could make such headdresses in Rgya tshang ma, however, people no longer make them, because they are very expensive, costing approximately 40,000 RMB in 2014.

Villagers say that girls must wear hair decorations on two important occasions in their lives – once during their *skra phab* 'hair changing ritual', a coming of age ritual for girls, and then again at their wedding. A hair changing ritual is held at the age of fifteen or seventeen on an auspicious day, often during the New Year. Holding this rite of passage signifies that the girl has become an adult and can now marry. The girl wears two different Monguor robes without a sash on the day of her hair changing ritual. The outer robe is called *phrug*, while the inner layer is known as *tsha ri*, and is lined with lamb wool.

Figure 14 (left). *Phrug* robe. Figure 15 (right). *Xupa* headdress.



After the girl finishes dressing up and has had breakfast in her home, she goes to her paternal grandmother's home for another breakfast. Relatives who come to visit the girl give her small sums of money as gifts. Guests should not leave a home empty-handed on any occasion, but especially during a girl's hair changing ritual – to do so would be inauspicious. After having breakfast at her grandmother's home, the girl goes to other relatives' homes, and each household she visits gives her thirty to fifty RMB.

Girls and women traditionally wore hair decorations at the Lekyaihe festival. However, from around 1999 until 2010, they did not wear them because they found them inconvenient. This changed in 2010, when women began wearing headdresses at Lekyaihe in Rgya tshang ma, because they had become prouder of this distinctive tradition and were thus more motivated to maintain this custom. Unmarried women who have had their hair-changing ritual, and young married mothers, should wear their hair decorations and perform *bei*, a dance that pleases A myes Btsan rgod, who will then be more inclined to help them and protect their crops.

Figure 16. Women wear *xupa* during Lekyaihe (photograph by Tshe ring don 'grub, 2013).



## Wudaiyang

Wudaiyang is an annual festival held from the fifth to ninth days of the fifth lunar month. It is also celebrated by Upper Seng ge gshong and Lower Seng ge gshong, but not by any other communities in Reb gong. This festival is considered important enough that rich families may spend 1,000 RMB for food and 2,000 RMB for clothing, whereas poor families may spend 300 RMB for food, but cannot buy new clothing.

Late in the fourth lunar month, villagers select places in the village woods to pitch tents. A day before the festival, bedding, tableware, food, and a tent are brought to the grove. Some families also take portable stoves, while others construct temporary stoves among the trees. During Wudaiyang, the grove is noisy and dotted with white tents. It is a time for villagers to relax, hold song and dance competitions between groups, eat, and enjoy themselves. Men rest from busy *thang ka* production and women rest from fieldwork.

Villagers cooperate during the festival, which encourages communal unity. Joining the song and dance competitions requires prior preparation and good skill, and the festival thus improves dancing and singing skills.

Negative aspects of this festival include widespread littering. Furthermore, the Dgu chu River is near where the festival is held. Boys enjoy swimming in the river, though it is dangerous, because the river is deep and runs swiftly. Villagers also compete to have the most elaborately decorated tents, which increases tent expenses, creating a financial burden for village households.

Local gender roles are apparent during Wudaiyang. For example, women cook at least three different dishes for each meal, which occupies much of their time. In contrast, men eat and socialize with their friends and spend much more money than women during the festival, because they often go to the county town and drink beer with their friends, leaving women to care for children in the tents. Finally, on the last day of the festival, men take the tent home while women are responsible for bringing back everything else.

## New Year (Nianha/ Lo sar)

On the seventh day of the twelfth lunar month, female villagers go to the Dgu chu River with a shovel to cut ice and a basket to carry it back home. One big piece of ice and several small pieces are cut. Early the next morning, chunks of ice are placed at the corners of household gates and gardens. The large piece is put on the ground to one side of the household compound gate – either side is fine – and the small pieces are put in the garden, fields, and orchards. Since around 2009, most villagers have ceased going to the river to cut ice. Instead, they construct a brick frame, two bricks high and about a meter square, place a plastic sheet over the frame, pour water inside, and let it freeze for two to three days before Layeba – the eighth day of the twelfth lunar month. Families in which a death has happened do not prepare or display ice.

On the day of Layeba, villagers make cold noodles for lunch. They also send a dishful of cold noodles to families who experienced a death in the past year. Recipient families give candy in return. On this day, children who are married and not living with their parents return to their natal home and have breakfast and lunch with their parents, who give them two big loaves of bread when they leave.

After Layeba, villagers begin cleaning their houses, though there is no special date on which



they must do this – the date is decided depending on when the family has time. Because house cleaning is a huge task, relatives usually help each other. Smaller items are moved out of rooms while larger furniture remains in the rooms and is covered with sheets. Children clean the smaller items in the courtyard while elders sweep the ceilings and walls using mops and brooms. Villagers ask a *bla ma* in which direction they should sweep the ceilings and walls each year. After all the rooms are cleaned, the refuse is thrown in the direction the *bla ma* told them. After the house has been cleaned, a male member of the household prints *rlung rta* (see images below) and hangs them on the veranda of the house.

Figures 17-19. Making *rlung rta*.





Relatives work together to fry bread five or six days before Lo sar. Most bread is made in round and rectangular shapes. Four round breads are sent to families that experienced a death in the previous year. Rectangular breads are put in plates as table decorations during Lo sar. Fried bread is also needed to serve guests.

Villagers visit their ancestors' graves at dawn on Lo sar Eve – this visit is called *didie ninie tikeqiediyo*. Graves are made in fields and at the foot of mountains around the village. Corpses are cremated and the remaining bones and ashes are buried in a hole that is then covered with earth. On every grave sweeping day (Qingming, the fourth day of the fourth lunar month) villagers visit their ancestors' graves to sweep and restore them. On Lo sar Eve, fathers and children carry New Year's gifts to the graves early in the morning. They bring a selection of the different foods they have prepared for the New Year celebrations, and also liquor for deceased male ancestors. Villagers believe ancestors stay in their graves and wait for their descendants on the morning of Lo sar Eve. Meanwhile, mothers stay at home and do housework and prepare breakfast. Every family eats steamed stuffed buns that morning.

Households in which a death has occurred in the past year visit the grave of the deceased earlier than other villagers. They offer *rtsam pa* and other foods, burn *bsang*, and chant scriptures in front of the new grave. Women sob. For older graves, villagers offer *bsang*, set off firecrackers, and do three prostrations.

After visiting the graves, families prepare for the coming New Year and make table decorations, though some families have prepared their decorations earlier. Those who have already made table decorations sweep their houses and begin making steamed stuffed buns for their guests.

At midnight, villagers set off firecrackers and then eat a meal, typically of steamed stuffed buns. They also place a little roasted barley flour in a bowl, add milk, and drink it. Fathers give each family member cash, according to the family's condition; wealthy families give 100-200 RMB whereas poor families may only give fifty RMB. After the meal, family members dress in their best clothes and go to their paternal parents' home with gifts. Grandchildren prostrate three times to their grandparents. Gifts are given for the household and the visited family gives five to ten RMB to each visitor.

After visiting their closest relatives, a family visits elderly relatives. The hosts also give money to the guests. When all relatives have been visited, parents return home and children may visit all the households in the village. Friends or cousins go together to visit. After entering a house, the hosts urge them to eat. People sing and dance and men drink liquor.

In the early twenty-first century, villagers gave children one or two *mao*, though some poor families gave only a pear to guests. However, by 2013 people commonly gave one *yuan* to all guests, regardless of age. When I was younger, my sisters and I liked to count our 'income' as soon as we got home. If one had more than the other, we would get angry and beg our parents to give us more. We always woke early and went outside because we could find some money that drunken men had dropped in the dark.

Families that cannot celebrate Lo sar because they are in mourning close their family gates and stay in their house. Nobody visits them, but they take four pieces of fried bread to the family the next morning. Since 2010, villagers have not visited each other at night nor worn Tibetan robes during Lo sar, because of the large number of deaths that have occurred in the region.

On the first day of Lo sar, villagers visit their closest relatives and serve the best food to guests. Villagers do not sweep after guests leave because sweeping on the first day of Lo sar is considered to sweep away luck and prosperity.

Villagers continue to visit their relatives in other villages from the second to the sixth day of Lo sar. From the seventh to fourteenth days, villagers visit monasteries in other villages and watch '*cham*.'

On the morning of the fifteenth day, villagers remove table decorations, because this is the last day of Lo sar. After having lunch with their family, they go to the old Buddhist shrine to sing and dance. Males drink beer and liquor, while females eat sunflower seeds and peanuts, as women do not typically drink at such public events. Children set off firecrackers and play. Humorous men make jokes to entertain others, and there is much laughter. Households in mourning do not join this or any other celebratory activities that whole year.

Villagers stay in the village temple for two to three hours, and then go home to prepare the next activity, which is to smear ash and ink on others' faces. Villagers pour black ink and smear ash on gloves to participate in this activity. In the village lanes, male villagers smear female villagers' faces and vice versa.<sup>25</sup> People in groups do this. If a group of females hides in a home and locks the door, males knock on the door until they open it. Once they enter, they gently smear the women's faces. However, if the females refuse to open the door, the males use ladders and climb over the courtyard walls and then smear the women's faces roughly. Females do the same to males. Women do not smear each other's faces, nor do men smear other men's faces.

After about an hour of this, villagers return to the village temple again. It is difficult to recognize who is who, because all the faces are black. People dance and sing again, and men and

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<sup>25</sup> Villagers in Upper Seng ge shong do the same as in Rgya tshang ma. In the hamlet of Lijia in Lower Seng ge gshong, they put handfuls of dirt in each other's clothing instead, i.e., in a pocket or inside the trousers. Other hamlets in Lower Seng ge gshong observe no special custom on this day.

women have a tug-of-war contest. Afterwards, people mill about in the temple courtyard. If a group of men catch a woman, they throw her in the air three times, and groups of women do the same to men.

Before darkness falls, villagers return home, wash off the ink, and eat a dinner that usually features meat. After dinner, the family makes three small fires with straw in front of their courtyard gate. All family members jump over the fires to remove bad luck and bad fortune. Washing the ink and ash away is also said to wash away all the past year's bad luck.

Next, villagers go to the fields where village leaders make a bonfire. People sing and dance again. Four men dress in sheepskin robes with the wool side turned out, and pretend to be yaks and herders. The yak carries a round loaf of bread, large enough to share with all villagers, that was baked three days earlier in hot earth. After the four men circle the bonfire three times, the bread is broken into pieces and given to each villager. The biggest part of the bread is made into a disc, representing the sun, which is nestled in a crescent moon. A knowledgeable elderly man holds it and gives a speech in Tibetan, beckoning fortune to the community. At around midnight the party is over, and this also signals the end of Lo sar.

Figure 20. Men throw a woman in the air during the gathering at the temple on the final day of the New Year celebrations (photograph by Klu 'bum tshe ring, 2014).



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<sup>2</sup> The title is actually a journal name and the original French article gives both 1891 and 1896 for years.



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*bka' rgya ma* བཀའ་རྒྱུ་མ  
*Bka' rtse stong* བཀའ་རྩེ་སྟོང་  
*Bkra shis 'bum 'khyil* ལྷ་བླང་བཀྲ་ཤེས་འབྲུམ་འབྲིལ་  
*Bkra shis lhun po* བཀྲ་ཤེས་ལྷུན་པོ་  
*Bkra shis sgo mang* བཀྲ་ཤེས་སྒོ་མང་  
*Bla brang* ལྷ་བླང་  
*Bla brang bkra shis 'khyil* ལྷ་བླང་བཀྲ་ཤེས་འབྲིལ་  
*bla ma* ལྷ་མ  
*bla ma dge skos rnams nyis thad ka thad ka'i*  
*rgyug len pa dang / gsar du 'jog pa*  
*sogs being bskul gyi do dam gang drag*  
*byed* ལྷ་མ་དགོས་སྒོས་རྣམས་ཉིས་ཐད་ཀ་ཐད་ཀའི་རྒྱུག་ལེན་པ་  
 དང་། གསར་དུ་འཛོག་པ་སོགས་བཅིང་བསྐྱལ་གྱི་དོ་དམ་གང་དག  
 ཟློན།  
*bla ma gzhung las pa* ལྷ་མ་གཞུང་ལས་པ་  
*bla ma khri pa* ལྷ་མ་ཁྲི་པ་  
*bla spyi sogs khag bzhi* ལྷ་སྤྱི་སོགས་ཁག་བཞི་  
*blo* ལྷོ་  
*Blo brtan rdo rje* ལྷོ་བརྟན་རྡོ་རྗེ་  
*Blo bzang 'jam pa'i tshul khrim, Wang*  
 Khutugtu ལྷང་རུ་ཐོག་ལྷུ་ལྷོ་བཟང་འཇམ་པའི་རྩུལ་ཁྲིམས་  
*Blo bzang bstan 'dzin* ལྷོ་བཟང་བསྟན་འཛིན་  
*Blo bzang dar rgyas rgya mtsho* ལྷོ་བཟང་དར་རྒྱས་རྒྱ་མཚོ་  
*Blo bzang snyan grags* ལྷོ་བཟང་སྟན་གྲགས་  
*Blo bzang tshul khrim dar rgyas rgya mtsho*  
 ལྷོ་བཟང་རྩུལ་ཁྲིམས་དར་རྒྱས་རྒྱ་མཚོ་  
*Blo bzang ye shes rgya mtsho* ལྷོ་བཟང་ཡེ་ཤེས་རྒྱ་མཚོ་  
*Blo bzang ye shes rgya mtsho, Lcang skya IV*  
 ལྷང་སྐྱུ་ལྷོ་བཟང་ཡེ་ཤེས་རྒྱ་མཚོ་  
*blo rigs* ལྷོ་རིགས་  
*blo rtags gnyis* ལྷོ་རྟགས་གཉིས་  
*blon po* ལྷོན་པོ་  
*Bod ljongs spyi tshogs tshan rig khang chos*  
 lugs zhib 'jug tshan pa'i 'bras spungs  
 dgon dkar chag rtsom sgrig tshogs  
 chung བོད་ལྷོངས་སྤྱི་ཚོགས་ཚན་རིག་ཁང་ཚོས་ལུགས་ཞིབ་

འཇུག་ཚན་པའི་འབྲས་སྐྱུངས་དགོན་དཀར་ཆག་ཚོམ་རྒྱིག་ཚོགས་  
 རྒྱུང་  
*Bod skor* བོད་སྐོར་  
*Bon* བོན་  
*bong gu* བོང་གུ་  
*Brag dgon zhabs drung* འབྲག་དགོན་ཞབས་དུང་  
*brtsi bzhag* བརྩི་བཞག་  
*bsam 'byed* བསམ་འབྲེད་  
*Bsam blo khang tshan* བསམ་བློ་ཁང་ཚན་  
*Bsam gtan sbyin pa* བསམ་གཏན་སྤྱིན་པ་  
*bsang* བསང་  
*bsang mchod* བསང་མཚོད་  
*bsdus 'bring* བསྐྱུས་འབྲིང་  
*bsdus chung* བསྐྱུས་རྒྱུང་  
*bsdus grwa* བསྐྱུས་གྲུ་  
*bsdus grwa che chung* བསྐྱུས་གྲུ་ཆེ་རྒྱུང་  
 བསེ་  
*bsgro gleng* བསྐྱོ་གླིང་  
*bshad grwa* བཤད་གྲུ་  
*bshad sgrub bstan pa'i byung gnas*  
 བཤད་རྒྱུབ་བསྟན་པའི་བྱུང་གནས་  
*bskang gso* བསྐྱང་གསོ་  
*bsod btags legs pa* བསོད་བཏགས་ལེགས་པ་  
*Bsod noms mgon po* བསོད་ནམས་མགོན་པོ་  
*Bstan pa chos 'byor* བསྟན་པ་ཚོས་འབྱོར་  
*Bstan pa chos 'phel* བསྟན་པ་ཚོས་འཕེལ་  
*Bstan pa rgya mtsho* བསྟན་པ་རྒྱ་མཚོ་  
*btsan khang* བཅོན་ཁང་  
*btsan par ma* བཅོན་པར་མ་  
*btsan po* བཅོན་པོ་  
*Btsan po Don grub rgya mtsho* བཅོན་པོ་དོན་གྲུབ་རྒྱ་མཚོ་  
*Btsan po no mon han/ Btsan po no min han*  
 བཅོན་པོ་ཚོ་མིན་ཏན/ བཅོན་པོ་ཚོ་མིན་ཏན་  
*Btsan rgod* བཅོན་རྟོན་  
*Bu su he* བུ་སུ་ཧེ་  
*Bu'u hrin* བུ་འུ་མིན་  
*Bya khyung* བྱ་ལྷུང་

Byams pa nor bu བྱམས་པ་ནོར་བུ  
 Byang chub བྱང་ཚུབ  
 Byang chub lam gyi rim pa'i dmar khrid thams  
     cad mkhyen par bgrod pa'i bde lam  
     བྱང་ཚུབ་ལམ་གྱི་རིམ་པའི་དམར་ཁྲིད་ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པར་བ  
     སྐྱོད་པའི་བདེ་ལམ  
 Byang du lhag pa བྱང་དུ་ལྷག་པ  
 Byang rar du spen pa བྱང་རར་དུ་སྤྲོན་པ  
 Byang thang བྱང་ཐང  
 Bza' ri tshang བཟའ་རི་ཚང  
 bzlog pa བསྐྱོག་པ  
 Cai Jingping 蔡金萍  
 Cai Yong'e 蔡永峨  
 Cha yas ཆ་ཡས  
 chab ril pa ཆབ་རིལ་པ  
 Cháhǎnménggǔ'ér 察罕蒙古尔  
 chang ba lu ཆང་བ་ལུ  
 Chang Ping 常平  
 Chang'an 长安  
 Chen Mei 陈镁  
 chen po hor gyi yul ཆེན་པོ་རྫོང་གི་ཡུལ  
 Chengde 承德  
 Chenjia 陈家  
 Chenjiaola 陈交拉  
 Chileb, Chile 赤列  
 Chinan Dewen Zanpu 赤南德温赞普  
 Chinan Dewen 赤南德温  
 Cho 'phrul ཆོ་འཕྲུལ  
 Chongli 崇礼  
 chos grwa ཆོས་གྲུ  
 chos grwa ba/ pa ཆོས་གྲུ་བ/ པ  
 chos lugs pa ཆོས་ལུགས་པ  
 chos mtshams ཆོས་མཚམས  
 chos r(w)a ཆོས་ར ཆོས་རྒྱ  
 chos rje ཆོས་རྗེ  
 Chos skor ཆོས་སྐོར  
 chos thog ཆོས་ཐོག

chos thog snga ma'i rtsis bzhag gi rgyugs chos  
     thog rjes mar dka' ram ma gtog pa  
     thams cad la len zhing ཆོས་ཐོགས་སུ་མའི་རྗེས་  
     བཞག་གི་རྒྱགས་ཆོས་ཐོག་རྗེས་མར་དཀའ་རམ་མ་གཏོག་པ་ཐམ  
     ས་ཅད་ལ་ལོན་ཞིང  
 chu bdag ཚུ་བདག  
 Chu bzang ཚུ་བཟང  
 Chuanhuang Erlang 川黄二郎  
 Chuankou 川口  
 Ci byed du song ཅི་བྱེད་དུ་སོང  
 Ci si khe ཅི་སི་ཁེ  
 Cin ci dmag ཅིན་ཅི་དམག  
 Co ne ཅོ་ནེ  
 Cu'u hrin ཅུ་ལུ་ཁྲིན  
 Cuī Yǒnghóng 崔永红  
 d+ha rma bu ti lba rta ལྷ་མ་བུ་ཏི་ལ་ར་རྟ  
 da das ད་དས  
 Daban 达坂  
 Dádá 达达  
 Daihai 岱海  
 Dala 达拉  
 dam bca' དམ་བཟའ  
 dam bca' chen mo དམ་བཟའ་ཆེན་མོ  
 Damajia 大马家  
 Dámín 达民  
 Dan tig དན་ཏིག  
 dang po དང་པོ  
 Danma 丹麻  
 Danyan, Luoergou 洛儿沟  
 daoren 道人  
 Dar rgya དར་རྒྱ  
 Dar rgya ri lang དར་རྒྱ་རི་ལང  
 Darkhan, dar han དར་ནན  
 Dasi 大寺  
 Dàtóng 大同  
 Dàtōng, Datong 大通  
 Datong he 大通河

Datongping 大墩坪  
*dbu mdzad* དབུ་མཛད  
*dbus gtsang* དབུས་གཙང་  
Dbyen bsdums དབྱེན་བསྐྱམས  
*de'i 'phror gang len zhig tu long dgos babs la*  
*ltas nas longs* དེའི་འཕྱོར་གང་ལེན་ཞིག་ཏུ་ལོང་དགོས་  
 བབས་ལ་ལྟས་ནས་ལོངས་  
Deng Sangmei 邓桑梅  
Deng Xinzhuangmei 邓新庄花  
Dengjia 邓家  
Dga' ldan དགའ་ལྷན  
Dga' ldan byams pa gling  
 དགོན་སྐྱུངས་དགའ་ལྷན་བྱམས་པ་གླིང་  
Dga' ldan pho brang དགའ་ལྷན་ཕོ་བླང་  
*dge ldan bstan 'bar ma'i dbu bskul*  
*ba* དགེ་ལྷན་བསྐྱུང་འབར་མའི་དབུ་བསྐྱུལ་བ་  
Dge དགེ  
Dge ldan དགེ་ལྷན  
Dge lugs དགེ་ལུགས་  
*dge skos* དགེ་སྐོས་  
*dge skul* དགེ་སྐུལ་  
Dgon lung དགོན་ལུང་ (Rgulang, Guolongsi 郭隆寺,  
 Erh-ku-lung, Yu-ning, Youning 佑宁)  
Dgon lung bca' yig chen mo དགོན་ལུང་བཙའ་ཡིག་ཆེན་མོ་  
Dgon lung byams pa gling དགོན་ལུང་བྱམས་པ་གླིང་  
*dgon pa spyi* དགོན་པ་སྤྱི་  
*dgon pa'i sgrigs 'og tu yod do cog* དགོན་པའི་  
 སྤྱིགས་འགྲུ་ཡོད་དོ་ཅོག་  
Dgra lha bcu gsum དག་ལྷ་བརྒྱ་གསུམ་  
Dgu དགུ  
Dgu chu དགུ་ཚུ  
*dīdī* ཇི་ཇི  
*dka' bcu rab 'byams pa* དཀའ་བརྒྱ་རབ་འབྱམས་པ་  
*dka' bcu* དཀའ་བརྒྱ་  
*dka' rab 'byams* དཀའ་རབ་འབྱམས་  
*dka' ram* དཀའ་རམ་  
*dka' rams* དཀའ་རམས་

*dkar yol* དཀར་ཡོལ་  
Dkon mchog bstan pa rab  
 rgyas དཀོན་མཚོག་བསྐྱེད་པ་རབ་རྒྱས་  
Dkon mchog dar rgyas དཀོན་མཚོག་དར་རྒྱས་  
Dkon mchog skyabs དཀོན་མཚོག་སྐྱབས་  
*dkyus* དཀྱུས་  
Dmag dpon pi tsi ri lang དམག་དཔོན་པི་ཙི་རི་ལང་  
*dmag rtsed* དམག་རྩེད་  
Dmar gtsang དམར་གཙང་  
Dmar gtsang brag དམར་གཙང་བྲག་  
Dmar gtsang rta chen po དམར་གཙང་རྟ་ཆེན་པོ་  
Dme དམེ  
Dme shul དམེ་ཤུལ་  
Dngul rwa དངུལ་རྩ་  
Don 'grub དོན་འགྲུབ་  
*don rtogs pa* དོན་རྟོགས་པ་  
Don yod chos kyi rgya mtsho དོན་ཡོད་ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱ་མཚོ་  
Dong Yongxue 东永学  
Dongdanma 东丹麻  
Donggou 东沟  
Donghe 东和  
Dongshan 东山  
Dongxiang 东乡  
Dor bhi tis bang དོར་བྱི་རིས་བང་  
Dor rdo དོར་རྩོ་  
Dor sde དོར་སྡེ་  
Dor skad དོར་སྐད་  
Dor tis དོར་རིས་  
Dou Guanbaonuer 窦官保女儿  
Dòu Wényǔ 窦文语  
*dou* 斗  
Doujia 窦家  
Dpa' ris དཔའ་རིས་  
Dpa' ris ba དཔའ་རིས་བ་  
Dpa' ris tshe ring don 'grub དཔའ་རིས་ཚེ་རིང་དོན་འགྲུབ་  
Dpal chen stobs rgyas དཔལ་ཆེན་སྐྱབས་རྒྱས་  
Dpal ldan bkra shis དཔལ་ལྷན་བཀ་ཤིས་

Dpal ldan dar rgyas དཔལ་ལྷན་དར་རྒྱས  
 Dpal rtse rgyal དཔལ་རྩེ་རྒྱས  
 Dpal snar thang gi bca' yig 'dul khrims dngos  
   brgya 'bar ba'i gzi 'od [dang / rwa  
   sgreng / dgon lung byams pa gling  
   dgon ma lag bcas kyi bca' yig]  
 དཔལ་སྐྱར་ཐང་གི་བཅའ་ཡིག་འདུལ་ཁྲིམས་དངོས་བརྒྱུ་འབར་བ  
 འི་གཟི་འོད་དང་། རུ་སྐྱོད། དགོན་ལུང་བྱམས་པ་སྐྱིད་དགོན་མ་  
 ལག་བཅས་ཀྱི་བཅའ་ཡིག་།  
 Dpung nge ri lang དཔུང་ངེ་རི་ལང  
 Dri med yon tan འི་མེད་ཡོན་ཏན  
 drug ba འུག་བ  
 Dū Chángshùn འུ་ཚང་ཤུན  
 Du Jinbaohua འུ་ཇིན་པོ་མཁའ་  
 Duluun, Baiya འུ་ལུན་, འའི་ཡ  
 Dung dkar འུང་དཀར  
 Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las  
   འུང་དཀར་བློ་བཟང་འཕྲིན་ལས  
 dur mchod འུར་མཚོད  
 Durishidii, Duoshidai འུ་རི་ཤི་དཀྱི་, འུ་ཤི་དཀྱི་  
 dus chen འུ་ས་ཚེན  
 Duwa, Duowa འུ་ཡ  
 Dwags po འུ་གས་པོ་  
 E Shuangxihua, Nuo Shuangxihua འུ་ཤུང་མི་ཁུ་  
 E'érdān འུ་ེ་ར་དཀྱི་  
 Ershisanhao འུ་རི་ཤི་ས་མའོ་  
 fala འུ་ལ  
 fan འུ་ན  
 Fangtuu, Qianbangou འུ་ན་ཏུ་, འུ་ན་བཟང་འུ་  
 Farishidin, Xingjia འུ་རི་ཤི་དཀྱི་, འུ་ཇི་ཁུ་  
 Faxian འུ་ཤི་ན  
 Fojiao འུ་ཇི་འུ་  
 Foorijang, Huoerjun འུ་འུ་རི་ཇི་ན་, འུ་ེ་ར་ཇུན་  
 Fujia, Hulijia འུ་ཇི་ཁུ་, འུ་ལི་ཇི་ཁུ་  
 g.yang འུ་ཡང  
 g.yang 'bod འུ་ཡང་འུ་བོད  
 G.yang can rdo rje འུ་ཡང་ཚན་རྫོང་།

g.yo sgyu'i sbyor ba འུ་ཡོ་སྐུ་འི་སྐྱོར་བ  
 gab gzhags འུ་བ་གཞགས  
 gab gzhags na thong འུ་བ་གཞགས་ན་ཐོང  
 Gamaka འུ་མ་ཀ  
 Gan'gou, Gangou འུ་ན་འུ་  
 ganda འུ་དཀ  
 Ganjia འུ་ཇི་ཁུ་  
 Gannan འུ་ན་ནའུ་  
 Gānsù, Gansu འུ་ན་སུ་, འུ་ན་སུ་  
 Gansu xin tongzhi འུ་ན་སུ་མིན་ཐོང་ཚིག་  
 Gānsù-Qīnghǎi-Níngxià འུ་ན་སུ་-འུ་ཇི་མེ་-འུ་ཇི་ཁུ་  
 Ganzhou འུ་ན་འུ་  
 Gaochang འུ་ཚང་ཤུན  
 Gaodian འུ་དཀ  
 Gāozǔ འུ་ཚུ་  
 Gar rtse sdong འུ་རྩེ་སྐྱོད  
 Gashari འུ་ཤ་རི་  
 Gcan tsha འུ་ཚན་ཚུ་  
 Gcan tsha འུ་ཚན་ཚུ་, Jianzha འུ་ཇི་ཁུ་  
 Gdugs dkar འུ་དུགས་དཀར  
 Ge sar འུ་སར་  
 Ge sar dmag gi rgyal po འུ་སར་དམག་གི་རྒྱལ་པོ་  
 Ge sar tshi me འུ་སར་ཚི་མེ་  
 Gélètè འུ་ཇི་ལེ་ཏེ་  
 Gèrìlètú འུ་ཇི་ལེ་ཏུ་  
 Glang dar ma འུ་ནང་དར་མ  
 gling bsres འུ་ནང་བསྐྱེས  
 gling bsres ba འུ་ནང་བསྐྱེས་བ  
 gling bsres dka' bcu འུ་ནང་བསྐྱེས་དཀའ་བཅུ་  
 Gling bza' thar mdo skyid འུ་ནང་བཟའ་ཐར་མདོ་སྐྱིད་  
 glo འུ་  
 Glu rol འུ་རོ་ལ  
 gnas bdag འུ་ནས་བདག  
 gnyan འུ་ནན  
 Gnyan chen འུ་ནན་ཚེན  
 Gnyan po smad cha dmar can འུ་ནན་པོ་སྐྱོད་ཚུ་དམར་ཚན་  
 Gnyan po'i sgar thog འུ་ནན་པོ་འི་སྐར་ཐོག་

Gnyan thog གཡན་ཐོག  
 Gnyan thog 'brog གཡན་ཐོག་འབྲོག  
 Gnyan thog la kha གཡན་ཐོག་ལ་ཁ  
 Gnyan thog mkhar གཡན་ཐོག་མཁར  
 Go bu me khrin གོ་བུ་མེ་རྩ་ལྷན་ཁྲིན  
 Go bu me tu hu sun khrin གོ་བུ་མེ་རྩ་ལྷན་ཁྲིན  
 go thang གོ་ཐང  
 Go'u sde གོ་ལུ་སྡེ  
 Gol su གོ་སུ་སྤུ  
 Gong sa rin po che གོང་ས་རིན་པོ་ཆེ  
 gos sku གོས་སྐུ  
 Gru kha'i གུ་ཁ་འི  
 grwa 'gyed གུ་འགྲེད  
 grwa rgyun གུ་རྒྱུན  
 grwa skor གུ་སྐོར  
 grwa tshang bla ma གུ་ཚང་བླ་མ  
 Gsang bdag གསང་བདག  
 Gsang phu གསང་ཕུ  
 gsar གསར  
 Gser chen gzhung གསེར་ཆེན་གཞུང  
 Gser khog གསེར་ཁོག  
 gser yig གསེར་ཡིག  
 gser yig chen mo'i mtshan byang  
 གསེར་ཡིག་ཆེན་མོའི་མཚན་བྱང  
 gtam dpe གཏམ་དཔེ  
 gtor ma གོར་མ  
 Guan Laoye ཀུའ་ལོ་པེ  
 Guangdong ཀུ་ཤོང  
 Guanting ཀུའ་ཐིང་གི་ཐོག  
 Guanyin Pusa ཀུའ་ཡིན་པུ་སཱ་ཤཱ  
 Guanzhong ཀུའ་མཚོ་གི་ཐོག  
 Guide ཀུའ་ལྡོ་ལོ་ལོ་ལོ  
 Guihuacheng ཀུའ་ཁྱེད་ཀྱི་ཐོག  
 Guishe erjiang ཀུའ་ཤེ་ལྷོ་རྩེ་གི་ཐོག  
 Guisui-Suiyuan ཀུའ་སྤྱི་ལྷོ་རྩེ་གི་ཐོག  
 Guō'érduǒ ཀུའ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ  
 Guō'érduǒ dīdī' ཀུའ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ

Guōlóng 郭隆  
 Guomari 郭麻日  
 Gushan 古鄯  
 Gusiluo 隴厮囉  
 Gyang bzhi གྱུང་བཞི  
 Gyen 'dzi ri lang གྱེན་འཛི་རི་ལང  
 Gyi ling mkhar གྱི་ལིང་མཁར  
 Gza' brgyad གཙུ་འབྲུད  
 Gza' mchog གཙུ་མཚོག  
 gzhung las pa གཞུང་ལས་པ  
 Ha Mingzong 哈明宗  
 Hai Tao 海濤  
 Haidong 海東  
 Hainan 海南  
 Haixi 海西  
 Haja, Hajia 哈家  
 Halazhigou 哈拉直沟  
 Hami 哈密  
 Hàn, Han 汉  
 Handi, Hantai 旱台  
 Hanyu Pinyin 汉语拼音  
 Haomen he 浩門河  
 Har gdong khang tshan ཧར་གདོང་ཁང་ཚན  
 Hara Bulog, Heiguan 黑泉  
 Hé-Huáng 河湟  
 Hé'ér 合儿  
 Hè'ér 贺尔  
 Hebei 河北  
 Heidinggou 黑顶沟  
 Heihu Linggunang 黑虎灵光  
 Heima Zushi 黑马祖師  
 Heishui 黑水  
 Hejia 何家  
 Helang Yexian 何朗业贤<sup>1</sup>  
 Henan 河南

<sup>1</sup> [A Tibetan name, thus the Chinese characters are conjectural.]



Heqing 合庆  
 Heyan 河沿  
 Hézhōu 河州  
 Hgarilang, Huangcaogou 黄草沟  
 Hgunbin, Kumbum, Sku 'bum Byams pa gling  
     སྐུ་འབྲུམ་བྱམས་པ་སྒྲིང་, Ta'er 塔尔  
 honghua 宏化  
 Hongnai 红崖  
 Hóngwǔ, Hongwu 洪武  
 Hóngyá 红崖  
 Hongyazigou 红崖子沟  
 hor, Hor ཧོར  
 Hor bza' hu sun khrin ཧོར་བཟའ་ལྷ་སྐྱམ་མིན  
 hor chen ཧོར་ཆེན  
 Hor dor nag po ཧོར་དོར་ནག་པོ་  
 Hor dor rta ཧོར་དོར་རྟ་  
 Hor dor rta nag po gnyan po smad char dmar  
     can ཧོར་དོར་རྟ་ནག་པོ་གཉན་པོ་སྐྱད་ཆར་དམར་ཅན  
 Hor gnyan po mung khe gan ཧོར་གཉན་པོ་མུང་ཁེ་གན  
 Hor nag ཧོར་ནག  
 Hor o chi go bu me thu me lun  
     ཧོར་ཨོ་ཆི་གོ་བུ་མེ་ཐུ་མེ་ལུང་  
 Hor rgya ཧོར་རྒྱ  
 hor rgyal ཧོར་རྒྱལ  
 Hor se chen ཧོར་སེ་ཆེན  
 Hor spun zla ཧོར་སྐུན་བླ་  
 Hor tho lung ཧོར་ཐོ་ལུང་  
 Hu Fang 胡芳  
 Hu su ho ལུ་སུ་ཧོ་  
 Hu Yanhong 胡艳红  
 Huáng 皇  
 Huangdi 皇帝  
 Huangfan 黄番  
 Huangnan 黄南  
 Huangnan zangzu zizhizhou tongjiju 黄南藏族  
     自治州统计局  
 Huangshui 湟水

Huangsi 黄寺  
 Huangyuan 湟源  
 Huangzhong 湟中  
 Huárè 华热  
 Huarin, Hualin 桦林  
 Huhehaote 呼和浩特  
 Hui 回  
 Hulijia 胡李家  
 Hún 浑  
 Hunan 湖南  
 Huolu Jiangjun 火炉将军  
 Húsījǐng 胡斯井  
 Hùzhù, Huzhu 互助  
 Huzhu Tuzu zizhi xian 互助土族自治县  
 Hxin, Hashi 哈什  
 ja khang རྟ་ཁང་  
 Janba, Wangjia 汪家  
 Janba Taiga, Zhanjiatai 湛家台  
 Jangja, Zhangjia 张家  
 Jangwarima, Yatou 崖头  
 Jí 吉  
 Jiading 加定  
 Jajia 贾加  
 Jiang Kexin 姜可欣  
 Jiangsu 江苏  
 Jianwen 建文  
 Jianzha 尖扎  
 jiashen 家神  
 Jidi Majia 吉狄马加  
 Jielong 结龙  
 Jihua shengyu 计划生育  
 jihua shengyu bangongshi 计划生育办公室  
 Jiirinbuqii, Tsong kha pa ཙོང་ཁ་པ་, Zongkaba 宗喀  
     巴  
 Jilog, Jiaoluo 角落  
 jin 市斤  
 Jīn Yù 金玉

Jinbu, Junbu 军部  
 Jindan dao 金丹道  
 Jingning 静宁  
 Jinzimei 金子梅  
 Jishi 积石  
 Jiutian Shengmu Niangniang 九天圣母娘娘  
 jo bo ཇོ་བོ  
 juan 卷  
 Jughuari, Zhuoke 桌科  
 ka bcu ཀ་བཙུ  
 Ka dar skyid ཀ་དར་སྐྱིད  
 ka par nas bshad pa ཀ་པར་ནས་བཤད་པ  
 Ka rab ཀ་རབ  
 Kaile meiyou 开了没有  
 Kailu Jiangjun 开路将军  
 Kan lho ཀན་ལྷོ  
 Kanchow, Ganzhou 赣州  
 kang 炕  
 Kāngxī, Kangxi 康熙  
 Kemuchuer Ling, Kemuchu Ling 克木楚岭  
 kha btags ཁ་བཏགས།, hada 哈达  
 Khams ཁམས  
 Khenpo Ngawang Dorjee མཁན་པོ་དགའ་དབང་དོ་རྗེ  
 khri ba bla brang ཁྲི་བ་བླ་བྲང  
 khrid ཁྲིད  
 Khu lung ཁུ་ལུང  
 khyad chos ཁུད་ཚོས  
 Khyod gang la song rgyu ཁྲོད་གང་ལ་སོང་རྒྱུ  
 Khyod kha sang gang du song ཁྲོད་ཁ་སང་གང་དུ་སོང  
 kla glo ལྷ་ལྷོ  
 kla klo ལྷ་ལྷོ  
 Klu 'bum tshe ring ལུ་བུམ་ཚེ་རིང  
 Klu rol ལུ་རོལ  
 klu rtsed ལུ་རེད  
 Klu'i ལུ་འི  
 klu'u ri ལུ་འུ་རི  
 Ko'u mol ri lang ཀོ་འུ་མོལ་རི་ལང

Kong Lingling 孔林林  
 Krang co hrin ཀྲང་ཙོ་མྱིན  
 Ku Yingchunlan 库迎春兰  
 Kun dga' bkra shis ཀུན་དགའ་བཀྲ་ཤིས  
 kun slong ཀུན་སྲོང  
 Kuòduān 阔端  
 Kuxin, Huzichang 胡子场  
 kyus ཀུས  
 La ལ  
 La Erhua 喇二花  
 La Nuer, Ernü 喇二女  
 lab rtse ལབ་རེ  
 Lailiao meiyou 来了没有  
 Lajia 喇家  
 Lama Tangseng, Xuanzang 玄奘  
 Lamaguan 喇嘛官  
 Langja, Langjia 浪加  
 Lanzhou 兰州  
 Lǎoyā 老鸦  
 Laoyeshan 老爷山  
 laozher 老者  
 Laozhuang 老庄  
 Lashizi Kayari (Heidinggou 黑沟顶)  
 Lawa 拉哇  
 lba ལཔ  
 Lcags mo tshe ring ལུགས་མོ་ཚེ་རིང  
 Lcang skya ལུང་སྐུ  
 Lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje ལུང་སྐུ་རོལ་པའི་དོ་རྗེ  
 Ledu 乐都  
 Lha babs ལྷ་བབས  
 Lha btsun Mthu stobs nyi ma ལྷ་བཙུན་མཐུ་སྐྱོབས་ཉི་མ  
 lha bzo ba ལྷ་བཙོ་བ  
 Lha mo skyid ལྷ་མོ་སྐྱིད  
 lha pa, Lha pa ལྷ་པ  
 lha rams pa ལྷ་རམས་པ  
 lha rams pa dge bshes ལྷ་རམས་པ་དགེ་བཤེས  
 lha rtsed ལྷ་རེད

Lha sa ལ་ས  
*lha'i sgrub thabs* ལྷའི་སྐྱུང་ཐབས  
 Lho nub du skra gcan ལྷོ་ལུང་དུ་སྐྱ་གཅན  
 Lhor phur bu ལྷོར་ཕུར་བུ  
 Lǐ 李  
*li* 里  
 Li Baoshou 李保寿  
 Li Cunxiao 李存孝  
 Li Dechun 李得春  
 Li Fumei 李富梅  
 Li Jinwang 李晋王 AKA, Li Keyong 李克用  
 Li Jinwang 李晋王  
 Li Lizong 李立遵  
 Li Peng 李鹏  
 Li Qingchuan 李青川  
 Li Xiande 李贤德  
 Li Xinghua 李兴花  
 Li Yaozu 李耀祖  
 Li Yuanhao 李元昊  
 Li yul ལེ་ཡུལ  
 Li Zhanguo 李占国  
 Li Zhanzhong 李占忠  
 Li Zhonglin 李钟霖  
 Li Zhuoma 李卓玛  
*liang* 兩  
 Liangcheng 凉成  
 Liángzhōu, Liangzhou 凉州  
 Liǎodōng 辽东  
 Liaoning 辽宁, 遼寧  
*libai si* 礼拜寺  
 Lijia 李家  
 Limusishiden, Li Dechun 李得春  
 Lingle Huangdi 领乐皇帝  
 Lintao 临洮  
 Liu Daxian 刘大先  
 Liuja, Liujia 柳家  
 Lizong 立遵

*lkugs pa* ལུགས་པ  
*lnga* ལྷ  
 Lnga mchod ལྷ་མཚོད  
 Lo brgya ལོ་བརྒྱ  
 Lo lha ལོ་ལྷ  
 Lo ལོ  
 Lo sar ལོ་སར  
*long* ལོང  
 Long Deli 隆德里  
*longhu* 龙壶  
 Lóngshuò 龙朔  
 Longwang 龙王  
 Longwang duo de difang Hezhou, Niangniang  
 duo de difang Xining 龙王多的地方河州,  
 娘娘多的地方西宁  
 Lóngwù 隆务  
 Longwu 隆吾  
*lta-tchinbu* Лта-чинбу  
 Lǔ 鲁  
 Lu ba go go ལུ་བ་གོ་གོ  
 Lu Biansheng, Luban Shengren 鲁班圣人  
 Lü Jinlianmei 吕金莲梅  
 Lü Shengshou 吕生寿  
 Lü Yingqing 吕英青  
 Lu Zhankui 鲁占奎  
 Luantashi, Luanshitou 乱石头  
*lugs srol* ལུགས་སྐོལ  
 Lun hu khrin ལུན་ཀུ་ཁྲིན  
*lung rigs* ལུང་རིགས  
 Lǔshījiā 鲁失夹  
 Ma Fanglan 马芳兰  
 Ma Guangxing 马光星  
 Ma Guorui 马国瑞  
 Ma gzhi dmag མ་གཞི་དམག  
 Ma Hanme, Ma Hanmo 马罕莫  
 Ma Jun 马钧  
 Ma ling yis མ་ལིང་ཡིས

Ma Luguya 马录古亚  
 Ma ni skad ci, Manikacha མ་ནི་སྐད་ཅི  
 Ma Qiuchen 马秋晨  
*ma song* མ་སོང་  
 Ma Taohua 马桃花  
 Ma Tianxi 马天喜  
 Ma Wei 马伟  
 Ma Xiaochen 马晓晨  
 Ma Xiuying 马秀英  
 Ma Youyi 马有义  
 Ma Yulan 马玉澜  
 Ma Zhan'ao 马占鳌  
 Majia 马家  
 Majiazi 马家子  
*man ngag* མན་ངག  
*mao* 毛  
 Mao Qiaohui 毛巧晖  
 Maohebu 毛荷堡  
 Maqang Tugun, Baiya 白崖  
*mchod pa* མཚོད་པ  
 Mchod rten dkar po མཚོད་རྟེན་དཀར་པོ་  
 Mchog sgrub mtsho མཚོག་སྐྱུབ་མཚོ་  
 Mdo མདོ་  
 Mdo smad མདོ་སྐད་  
*Mdo smad chos byung* མདོ་སྐད་ཚོས་འབྱུང་  
 mdo smad kyi bshad grwa yongs kyi gtso bo  
     dgon lung gi chos sde chen po མདོ་སྐད་རྒྱ་  
     བཤད་གྲུ་ཡོངས་ཀྱི་གཙོ་བོ་དཔོན་ལྷུང་གི་ཚོས་སྡེ་ཆེན་པོ་  
*mdzod btags* མཛོད་བཏགས་  
*mdzod thag* མཛོད་ཐག  
 Ménggǔ'ér 蒙 古 尔  
 Mengudzhu Менгү, джу, möngke zuu,  
     muivggae jiu  
 Menyuan 门源  
 Mgar stong rtsan མགར་སྟོང་རྩ་རྒྱ  
 Mgar stong rtsan yul zung མགར་སྟོང་རྩ་རྒྱལ་ལུང་  
 Mgo 'dug tsho ba མགོ་འདུག་ཚོ་བ་

Mgo log མགོ་ལོག  
*mi tshan* མི་ཚན  
*miao* 庙  
 Miaochuan 邈川  
 Mín 岷  
*ming btags byed mi* མིང་བཏགས་བྱེད་མི  
*ming btags pa* མིང་བཏགས་པ་  
*ming btags zur pa* མིང་བཏགས་ལུར་པ་  
 Míng, Ming 明  
 Míng-Qīng 明清  
 Mínhé, Minhe 民和  
 Minzhu 民主  
*minzu* 民族  
*mjug gi 'bul dar* མཇུག་གི་འབུལ་དར་  
*mngon rtogs rgyan* མངོན་རྟོགས་རྒྱན་  
*mnyam med rje btsun tsong kha pa chen pos*  
     *mdzad pa'i byang chub lam rim chen*  
     *mo'i dka' ba'i gnad rnams mchan bu*  
     *bzhi'i sgo nas legs par bshad pa theg*  
     *chen lam gyi gsal sgron* མཉམ་མེད་རྗེ་བཙུན་  
     ཚོན་ལ་པ་ཆེན་པོས་མཛད་པའི་བྱང་ཆུབ་ལམ་རིམ་ཆེན་མོའི་དཀ  
     འ་བའི་གནད་རྣམས་མཚན་བྱ་བཞིའི་སློ་ནས་ལེགས་པར་བཤད་  
     པ་ཐེག་ཆེན་ལམ་གྱི་གསལ་  
*mo ba* མོ་བ་  
 Mo Fangxia 莫芳霞  
 Mo Zicai 莫自才  
*modaya* 猫大爷  
*mtshan nyid bshad pa'i grwa* མཚན་ཉིད་བཤད་པའི་གྲུ་  
 Mtsho sngon མཚོ་སྟོན་  
 Mtsho sngon po མཚོ་སྟོན་པོ་  
 Mtsho snying མཚོ་སྟིང་  
*mu* 亩  
 Myang 'dus མུང་འདུས་  
 Na Chaoqing 那朝庆  
*na re* ན་རེ་  
 Na thong ན་ཐོང་

Na tsha go bkal mtshams gcod

ན་ཚ་གོ་བསྐལ་མཚམས་གཅོད

Nag chu ནག་ཚུ,

Nag chu'i kha ནག་ཚུའི་ཁ

nag po [spyod pa] skor gsum

ནག་པོ་སྐྱོད་པ་སྐོར་གསུམ

Nag po skor gsum ནག་པོ་སྐོར་གསུམ

nang chen ནང་ཚེན

nang so ནང་སོ

Nang sog ནང་སོག

Nanjia, Anjia 安家

Nanjiaterghai, Anjiatou 安家头

Nanmengxia 南门峡

Nanmuge 南木哥

Nansan, Nanshan 南山

Nanshan 南山

nenjengui, yanjiangui 眼见鬼

Nga a khu tshang la 'gro nas ང་ཨ་ཁུ་ཚང་ལ་འགོ་ནས

Nga a khu tshang la song nas ང་ཨ་ཁུ་ཚང་ལ་སོང་ནས

Ngag dbang legs bshad rgya

mtsho ངག་དབང་ལེགས་བཤད་རྒྱ་མཚོ

Ngag dbang mkhyen rab rgya mtsho

ངག་དབང་མཁྱེན་རབ་རྒྱ་མཚོ

Nian Gengyao 年羹尧

Nianbo 碾伯

Nianduhu 年都乎

Niangniang 娘娘

Nijia 吕家

Ningbo fu qianhu shouyu 宁波副千户守禦

Níngxià, Ningxia 宁夏

Niuqi, Liushuigou 流水沟

Niutou Wang 牛头王

no mon han མོ་མོན་ཧན

Nongchang 农场

Nongcun hezuo yiliao baoxian 农村合作医疗保

险

Nor lda bkra shis རོར་ལྷ་བག་ཤེས

Nub byang du nyi ma ལུབ་བྱང་དུ་ཉི་མ

Nub du zla ba ལུབ་དུ་ཟླ་བ

Nuo Shuangxihua, E Shuangxihua 鄂双喜花

Nuojia, Ejia 鄂家

nye 'brel ཉེ་འབྲེལ

Nye sring ཉེ་སྲིང

Nyi ma 'dzin ཉི་མ་འཛིན

Nyi ma 'dzin Ngag dbang legs bshad rgya

mtsho ཉི་མ་འཛིན་དག་དབང་ལེགས་བཤད་རྒྱ་མཚོ

O chi go bu me thu me lun ཨོ་ཚི་གོ་བུ་མེ་ཐུ་མེ་ལུན

O chi hu sun ཨོ་ཚི་ཁུ་སུན

O hu me tu ཨོ་ཁུ་མེ་ཏུ

pA ren པཱ་རེན

Pad spungs པད་སྤུངས

Pe dpa' ri lang པེ་དཔའ་རི་ལང

Pe hu པེ་ཁུ

Pen hwa ri lang པེན་ཁུ་རི་ལང

Per nyi ma 'dzin པེར་ཉི་མ་འཛིན

Per nyi ma 'dzin Ngag dbang legs bshad rgya

mtsho པེར་ཉི་མ་འཛིན་དག་དབང་ལེགས་བཤད་རྒྱ་མཚོ

pha rol bdud sde'i dpung tshogs

ཕ་རོལ་བདུད་སྡེའི་དཔུང་ཚོགས

phan theb ཕན་ཐེབ

phas thi ཕས་ཐི

pho brang ཕོ་བྲང

phrug ཕུག

phug tshangs kyi gtam ཕུག་ཚངས་ཀྱི་གཏམ

Phun tshogs ཕུན་ཚོགས

phyag ཕུག

phying ཕྱིང

Phyug rtse chos rje ཕུག་རེ་ཚོས་རྗེ

Pin rkya tshi me པིན་རྒྱ་ཚེ་མེ

Ping'an 平安

Pinyin 汉语

po tho པོ་ཐོ

po ti lnga པོ་ཏི་ལྷ

Pochu mixin 破除迷信

Potala པོ་ཏ་ལ  
 Puba 普巴  
 Pudang, Pudonggou 普洞沟  
 Pudong 浦东  
 Qaghuali, Chaergou 岔儿沟  
 Qangsa, Chunsha 春沙  
 Qazi, Qiazi 卡子  
 Qi 祁  
 Qi Huimin 祁慧民  
 Qi Jianqing 祁建青  
 Qi Tusi 祁土司  
 Qi Wenlan 祁文兰  
 Qi Zhengxian 祁正贤  
 Qianhe 前河  
 qiānhùsuǒ 千户所  
 Qianjin 前进  
 Qiānlóng, Qianlong 乾隆  
 Qiao Dongmei 乔冬梅  
 Qiao Shenghua 乔生华  
 Qighaan Dawa, Baiyahe 白牙合  
 Qijia 祁家  
 Qijia Laoye 祁家老爷  
 Qílián, Qilian 祁连  
 Qiliao! Sanliao! 去了! 散了!  
 Qín 秦  
 Qīng, Qing 清  
 Qingdao 青岛  
 Qinghai yiyao weishengzhi 青海医药卫生志  
 Qīnghǎi, Qinghai 青海  
 Qinghaihua 青海话  
 Qinghaisheng Fangyizhan 青海省防疫站  
 qingkuo 青稞  
 Qinglong Tianzi 青龙天子  
 Qingming 清明  
 Qingyun 庆云  
 Quurisang Srishiji, Huayuansi 花园寺  
 Ra 𠵼

rab 'byams རབ་འབྲུམས  
 rab 'byams pa རབ་འབྲུམས་པ  
 Rab brtan rdo rje རབ་བརྟན་རྡོ་རྗེ  
 Rab kha རབ་ཁ  
 Rab kha gru gtong རབ་ཁ་གུ་གཏོང  
 rang bzhin gnas rigs རང་བཞིན་གནས་རིགས  
 rang nyid rgyal ba རང་ཉིད་རྒྱལ་བ  
 Rangdin, Longdong 龙东  
 Rangghuali, Longyi 龙一  
 rangpi, niangpi 酿皮  
 Rar du pa sang རར་དུ་པ་སང  
 Rar lhor mig dmar རར་ལྷོ་ར་མིག་དམར  
 rdo ram pa རྡོ་རམ་པ  
 Rdo rje 'jigs byed རྡོ་རྗེ་འཇིགས་བྱེད  
 Rdo rje gdan རྡོ་རྗེ་གདན  
 rdung rgyug རུང་རྒྱུག  
 Reb gong རེབ་གོང  
 Reb gong gnyan thog རེབ་གོང་གཉན་ཐོག  
 Reb gong rgan rgya རེབ་གོང་རྒྱ་རྒྱ  
 ren po che, rnbuqii, renboqie 仁波切  
 ren 人  
 Renminbi 人民币  
 Rgan rgya རྒྱ་རྒྱ  
 Rgulang, Dgon lung རགོན་ལུང, Erh-ku-lung,  
 Guolong 郭隆, Yu-ning, Youning 佑宁  
 rgya རྒྱ  
 Rgya bza' kong jo རྒྱ་བཟའ་ཀོང་རྫོ  
 Rgya gar rdo rje gdan རྒྱ་གར་རྡོ་རྗེ་གདན  
 Rgya hor རྒྱ་ཧོར  
 Rgya tshang ma རྒྱ་ཚང་མ  
 Rgyal sras རྒྱལ་སྲས  
 Rgyal sras 'Jigs med ye shes grags  
 pa རྒྱལ་སྲས་འཇིགས་མེད་ཡེ་ཤེས་གྲགས་པ  
 Rgyal sras Don yod chos kyi rgya mtsho  
 རྒྱལ་སྲས་དོན་ཡོད་ཚོས་ཀྱི་རྒྱ་མཚོ  
 Rgyal sras rin po che རྒྱལ་སྲས་རིན་པོ་ཆེ  
 rgyug རྒྱུག

*rgyugs* རྒྱལ་སྐད་  
*rgyugs len pa* རྒྱལ་སྐད་ལེན་པ་  
 Ri lang རི་ལང་  
 Ri lang bcu gnyis རི་ལང་བརྒྱ་གཉིས་  
 Ri stag རི་སྟག་  
*rigs* རིགས་  
*rigs lam pa* རིགས་ལམ་པ་  
*rigs lung byed mkhan* རིགས་ལུང་བྱེད་མཁན་  
 Rin chen sgröl ma རིན་ཆེན་སྒྲོལ་མ་  
*ris med* རིས་མེད་  
 Riyue Dalang རི་ཡུལ་དཔལ་ལྷན་  
*rjes gnang* རྗེས་གནད་  
*rka* རྐ་  
 Rka gsar རྐ་གསར་  
 Rka gsar dgon dga' ldan 'dus bzang chos gling  
     རྐ་གསར་དགོན་དགའ་ལྷན་འདུས་བཟང་ཚེས་གྲིང་  
*rlung rta* རླུང་རྟ་  
 Rma chu རྩ་ཆུ་  
 Rma chu'i rab kha dngul ri'i sa bzang gri spyod  
     རྩ་ཆུའི་རབ་ཁ་དངུལ་རིའི་ས་བཟང་གྲི་སྦྱོང་རབ་ཁ་  
 Rma lho རྩ་ལྷོ་  
 RMB, Renminbi རྩ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་  
*rnam 'grel* རྩ་མ་འགྲེལ་  
*rnam gzhang* རྩ་མ་གཞན་  
 Rnam rgyal རྩ་མ་རྒྱལ་  
*rnbuqii, rin po che* རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ *ren po che, renboqie*  
     仁波切  
 Rong bo རོང་བོ་  
 Rong bo nang so རོང་བོ་ནང་སོ་  
 Rong zom རོང་ཟོམ་  
*ronghuafugui* རོང་ལུང་ལུང་ལྷོ་  
 Rta 'gying རྟ་འགྲིང་  
*rta chen po* རྟ་ཆེན་པོ་  
 Rta mgrin རྟ་མགྲིན་  
*rtag gsal khyab* རྟག་གསལ་ལྲོལ་  
*rtsam pa* རྩམ་པ་  
 Rtse khog རྩེ་ཁོག་

*rtsis bzhag gi rgyugs* རྩེས་བཞག་གི་རྒྱལ་སྐད་  
*rtsod grwa* རྩོད་གྲུ་  
*rtsod zla* རྩོད་རླ་  
*sa* ས་  
*sa bdag* ས་བདག་  
*Sa bdag sog po ri lang* ས་བདག་སོག་པོ་རི་ལང་  
*sa dpyad pa* ས་དཔྱད་པ་  
 Salar, Sala སལ་ར་  
 San'erjia ས་ཨ་རི་ཇི་  
 Sānchuān, Sanchuan ས་ཅུ་ཁྱེན་  
 Sānchuān Tüzú ས་ཅུ་ཁྱེན་ཏུ་ཅུ་  
 Sānchuānsìlǐ ས་ཅུ་ཁྱེན་སེལ་ལྷོ་  
 Sandaohe ས་དལ་འཛེག་  
 Sangjie Renqian ས་གྲེ་རེན་ཅིན་  
 Sde ba chos rje སྡེ་བ་ཚེས་རྗེ་  
*Sde srid* Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho  
     སྡེ་སྡོད་སངས་རྒྱས་རྒྱལ་མཚོ་  
 Se ra སེ་ར་  
 Sems mtsho སེམས་མཚོ་  
 Sems nyid, *sems nyid* སེམས་ཉིད་  
 Sems nyid sprul sku bstan 'dzin 'phrin las rgya  
     mtsho སེམས་ཉིད་སྤྲུལ་སྤྱོད་བསྟན་འཛིན་འཕྲིན་ལས་རྒྱལ་མཚོ་  
*sen chugs* སེན་ཆུགས་  
 Seng ge gshong སེང་གེ་གཤོང་  
*sgar* སྐར་  
 Sgar thog སྐར་ཐོག་  
 Sgo dmar སྐོ་དམར་  
 Sgo dmar G.yang mo tshe ring སྐོ་དམར་གཡང་མོ་ཚེ་རིང་  
 Sgo mang སྐོ་མང་  
 Sgo mang grwa tshang སྐོ་མང་གྲུ་ཚང་  
 Sgröl ma སྐྲོལ་མ་  
*sgrub sde* སྐྱབ་སྡེ་  
 Sha bar chos rje ས་བར་ཚེས་རྗེ་  
 Sha bar nang so ས་བར་ནང་སོ་  
 Sha Delin ས་ཏེ་ལིན་  
 Sha Heshang ས་ཨེ་ཤ་ཤང་  
 Shaanxi, Shǎnxī ས་ཤམ་ཁྱི་

*shags ngan* འགས་ངན  
 Shahai 沙海  
 Shānběi 陕北  
 Shancheng 山城  
 Shandong 山东  
 Shanghai 上海  
 Shangzhai 上寨  
 Shānxī, Shanxi 山西  
 Shanzhaojia 山赵家  
 Shanzhou 鄯州  
 Shao Yundong 邵雲東  
 Shaowa 勺哇  
 Shar Bla ma འར་བླ་མ  
*shar* འར  
 Shatangchuan 沙塘川  
 Shdanbasang, Shijiamoni 释迦摩尼  
 Shdangja, Dongjia 东家  
 Shdara Tang, Dalantan 达拉滩  
*shen jian* 神剑  
*shenfu* 神甫  
*sheng* 升  
 Shenjiao 教神  
*sheqi* 蛇旗  
 Shgeayili, Dazhuang 大庄  
 Shi Cunwu 师存武  
 Shi'er Wei Zushi 十二位祖師  
*shibei* 石碑  
 Shina 史纳  
 Shing bza' ཤིང་བཟའ  
 Shíyá 石崖  
*sho ma* ཤོ་མ  
*shor ba* ཤོར་བ  
*shuang xi* 双喜  
 Shuangma Tongzi 双马童子  
 Shuangshu 双树  
 Shuilian Dong 水帘洞  
 Shuimogou 水磨沟

Sichuan 四川  
*skabs bzhi pa* སྐབས་བཞི་པ  
 Skal bzang thub bstan 'phrin las rgya mtsho  
 སྐལ་བཟང་ཐུབ་བསྟན་འཕྲིན་ལས་རྒྱ་མཚོ  
 Skal bzang ye shes dar rgyas སྐལ་བཟང་ཡེ་ཤེས་དར་རྒྱས  
 Skal ldan rgya mtsho སྐལ་ལྷན་རྒྱ་མཚོ  
 Sko tshi me སྐོ་ཚེ་མེ  
*skor ru* སྐོར་རུ  
*skra ka* སྐྱ་ཀ  
*skra phab* སྐྱ་ཕབ  
 Sku 'bum སྐུ་འབུམ  
 Sku 'bum byams pa gling སྐུ་འབུམ་བྱམས་པ་གླིང  
 Skya rgya, Jiajia 贾加  
 Skyabs 'gro སྐལ་བས་འགོ  
 Skyid shod sprul sku སྐུ་ཤོད་སྐྱུ་སྐུ  
*skyor* སྐྱོར  
*skyor dpon* སྐྱོར་དཔོན  
 Smad pa སྐད་པ  
*smad phyogs* སྐད་ཕྱོགས  
*smeen, Sier* 寺尔  
 Smeen, Ximi 西米  
 Smin grol སྐྱིན་གྲོལ  
 Smin grol no min han སྐྱིན་གྲོལ་ནོ་མིན་ཉན  
 Smon lam, smon lam སྐྱིན་ལམ  
*smyung gnas* སྐྱུང་གནས  
*sna tshogs 'di* སྐྱ་ཚོགས་འདི  
*sngags 'chang* སྐགས་འཚང  
*sngags pa* སྐགས་པ  
 Snying bo rgyal སྐྱིང་བོ་རྒྱལ  
 Snying mo སྐྱིང་མོ  
 Snying rje tshogs pa སྐྱིང་རྗེ་ཚོགས་པ  
 Sog སོག  
 Sog rdzong སོག་རྫོང  
 Sog rgya སོག་རྒྱ  
*sog yul* སོག་ཡུལ  
 Song Ying 宋颖  
*song* སོང



Songchang Suzhun (Sizhun?) 耸昌厮均  
 Songduo 松多  
 Songjia 宋家  
 Songpan 松潘  
 Songrang, Xunrang 逊让  
 Spun zla hor gyi rgyal po སུན་ལྷ་ཉོར་གྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་  
*spyi 'jog* སྤྱི་འཛོག  
*spyi rdzas* སྤྱི་རྩམ  
*srang* སྲང  
*srol* སྲོལ  
 Srong btsan sgam po སྲོང་བཙན་སྐམ་པོ་  
*srung ma* སྲུང་མ  
 Stag gzig nor gyi rgyal po སྲག་གཟིག་ཉོར་གྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་  
 Stag lha rgyal སྲག་ལྷ་རྒྱལ  
 Stobs ldan སྲོབ་ལ་ལྷན  
 Su Shan 苏珊  
 Sughuangghuali, Suobugou 索卜沟  
*suitou* 岁头  
 Suiyuan 綏遠  
 Sum pa སུམ་པ  
 Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor  
 སུམ་པ་མཁན་པོ་ཡེ་ཤེས་དཔལ་འབྱོར  
 Sun Wukong 孙悟空  
 Sunbu, Songbu 松布  
 Suojie Longwang 锁脚龙王  
 Suojie Ye 锁脚爷  
 Suonan 索南  
 Suonan Cuo 索南措  
 Suzhou 苏州  
 Suzhou Xinzhi 苏州新志  
 tA si ཏཱ་སི  
 Ta'er si 塔尔寺  
 Taishan 泰山  
 Taizi 台子  
 Tang Xiaoqing 汤晓青  
 Táng, Tang 唐  
*tangka* 唐卡, *thang ka* ཐང་ཀ

Tangraa, Tangla 塘拉  
 Tangseng 唐僧  
*thal 'phen* ཐལ་འཕེན  
*thal 'phreng* ཐལ་འཕྲེང  
*thal srog* ཐལ་སྲོག  
*thal zlog* ཐལ་རྫོག  
*thang ka* ཐང་ཀ  
*theb* ཐེབ  
 Ther gang nyi wi ཐེར་གང་ཉི་མི  
*ther gang nyi wi na thong* ཐེར་གང་ཉི་མི་ན་ཐོང  
 Thu me lun ཐུ་མེ་ལུན  
 Thu'u bkwan ཐུ་འུ་བཀྱན  
 Thu'u bkwan blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma  
 ཐུ་འུ་བཀྱན་བློ་བཟང་ཚོས་ཀྱི་ཉི་མ  
*thun mong ma yin pa* ཐུན་མོང་མ་ཡིན་པ  
*thun mong pa* ཐུན་མོང་པ  
 Tianjia 田家  
 Tianjin 天津  
*tianqi* 天旗  
 Tiantang 天堂  
 Tianyoude 天佑德  
 Tiānzhù, Tianzhu 天助  
 To'u pa tsi ཏོ་འུ་པ་ཙི  
 Tongren 同仁  
*tongzi* 筒子  
*tsakra bcu gsum gyi sngags blzog*  
 ཙཀ་བརྩ་གསུམ་གྱི་སྐྱགས་བལ་བོག  
*tsampa, rtsam pa* ཙམ་པ  
*tsha bzhed* ཙམ་བཞེད  
*tsha gad* ཙམ་གད  
*tsha gra* ཙམ་གྲ  
*Tsha lu ma byin gi song* ཙམ་ལུ་མ་བྱིན་གི་སོང  
*Tsha lu ma ster gi song* ཙམ་ལུ་མ་སྟེར་གི་སོང  
*tsha ri* ཙམ་རི  
*tsha* ཙམ  
*tsha rting* ཙམ་རྟིང  
*tshab grwa* ཙམ་གྲུ

*tshad ma sde bdun* ཚད་མ་སྡེ་བདུན  
*tshang* ཚང  
 Tshe hrin yan ཚེ་མྱིན་ཡན  
 Tshe ring ཚེ་རིང  
 Tshe ring don 'grub ཚེ་རིང་དོན་འགྲུབ  
 Tshe ring skyid ཚེ་རིང་སྦྱིད  
*tshi me* ཚེ་མེ  
*tshig nyen* ཚེག་ཉེན  
*tshig sgra rgyas pa* ཚེག་སྐྱ་རྒྱས་པ  
*tsho ba* ཚོ་བ  
 Tsho ཚོ  
 Tsho kha ཚོ་ཁ  
*tshogs* ཚོགས  
*tshogs lang* ཚོགས་ལང  
*tshogs langs lugs bzhin* ཚོགས་ལངས་ལུགས་བཞིན  
 Tshwa mtsho ཚྭ་མཚོ  
 Tsi tsong ཚཱ་ཙོང  
 Tso ri ri lang ཚོ་རི་རི་ལང  
 Tso shi ri lang ཚོ་ཤི་རི་ལང  
 Tsong kha ཚོང་ཁ  
 Tsong kha pa ཚོང་ཁ་པ།, Zongkaba ཚོང་ཁ་པ།  
*tsurhaitchi* цзурхайчи  
 Tū, Tu 土  
 Tūdá 土达  
 Tūfān, Tufan 吐蕃  
 Tughuan, Tuguan 土官  
 Tughuan Nengneng, Tuguan Niangniang 土官  
 娘娘  
 Tughuangang, Tuguanshan 土官山  
 Tūhún 吐浑  
 Tuihún 退浑  
 Tūmín, Tumin 土民  
 Tuoba Yuanhao 拓跋元昊  
 Tūrén, Turen 土人  
*tūsī, tusi* 土司  
 Tutai 土台 (Sujia 苏家?)  
 Tūyùhún, Tuyuhun 吐谷浑

Tüzú, Tuzu 土族  
 Tuzuyu 土族语  
 Walighuan (Bagushan 巴古山)  
 Wang, wang 王  
 Wang chen khri བང་ཚེན་ཁྲི  
 Wang Dongmeihua 王冬梅花  
 Wang skyA བང་སྐྱུ  
 Wang Tusi 汪土司  
 Wang Wenyan 王文艳  
 Wang Yanzhang 王彦章  
 Wang Yongqing 王永庆  
 Wáng Yúnfēng 王云凤  
 Wangjia 王家  
 Wànli 万历  
 Wanzi 湾子  
 Wǎqúsìlǐ 瓦渠四里  
 Weisheng jihuashengyuju 卫生计划生育局  
 Wēiyuǎn, Weiyuan 威远  
 Wen Xiangcheng 文祥呈  
 Wen Xiping 文喜萍  
 Wenbu 温逋  
 Wencheng Gongzhu 文成公主  
 Wenjia 文家  
*Wentan Liaowang* 文坛瞭望  
 Wu Jiexun 吴解勋  
 Wu Lanyou 吴兰友  
 Wughuang, Bahong 巴洪  
 Wujia 吴家  
 Wulan 乌兰  
 Wushi 五十  
 Wushi 梧释  
 Wushi xiang 五十乡  
 Wutun 吾屯  
 Wutun 五屯  
 Wuyangbu 威远堡  
 Wuyue Dangwu 五月端午  
 Wuyue Duanwu 五月端午

Xanjang, *xanjang*, Shancheng, *shancheng* 山城  
Xi'an 西安  
Xia 夏  
Xia Guo 夏国  
Xiahe 夏河  
Xiakou 峡口  
Xianbei 鲜卑  
*Xianrenmin weishengyuan* 县人民医院  
*Xianrenmin yiyuan* 县人民医院  
Xiaosi 小寺  
Xibu dakaifa 西部大开发  
Xie 谢  
Xie Yongshouhua 谢永寿花  
Xiejia 谢家  
Xiela 协拉  
Xiera, Xiela 协拉  
Xifan 西番  
Xikouwai 西口外  
Xin 辛  
Xin Youfang 辛有芳  
Xing Haiyan 邢海燕  
Xing Quancheng 星全成  
Xing Yonggui 邢永贵  
Xing'er 杏儿  
*xingfu* 幸福  
Xīníng, Xining 西宁, 西寧  
Xining Zhi 西宁志  
Xinjia 辛家  
Xinxia 辛峡  
Xiu Lianhua 绣莲花  
Xiwanzi 西灣子  
Xiyingzi 西营子  
Xu Xiufu 徐秀福  
Xuangua, Beizhuang 北庄  
Xuanhua 宣化  
Xuanzang 玄奘  
Xuānzōng 宣宗

Xue Wenhua 薛文华  
Xunhua 循化  
Yá'ér 崖尔  
Yan Guoliang 闫国良  
Yáng 杨  
Yang Chun 杨春  
Yang lji tsho ba ཡང་ལྷི་ཚོ་བ་  
Yang Xia 杨霞  
Yangda, Changshoufo 长寿佛  
Yangja, Yangjia 杨家  
Yangjia 杨家  
Yangtou Huhua 羊头护化  
Yangzi, Changjiang 长江  
Yar klung tsang po ཡར་ལུང་གཙང་པོ་  
Yar sko tsho ba ཡར་སྐོ་ཚོ་བ་  
Yar sko ཡར་སྐོ་  
Ye su khe ཡེ་སུ་མེ་  
Yí 夷  
Yi Lang 衣郎  
*yig cha gsar ba* ཡིག་ཇ་གསར་བ་  
*yig rgyugs* ཡིག་རྒྱུགས་  
Yigongcheng 移公城  
Ying Zhongyu 应忠瑜  
Ying Zihua 英子花  
Yīngzōng 英宗  
*yinyang* 阴阳  
Yomajaa, Yaomajia 姚麻家  
Yon tan 'od ཡོན་ཏན་འོད་  
Yon tan rgya mtsho ཡོན་ཏན་རྒྱ་མཚོ་  
Yǒngchàng 永昌  
Yǒngdèng 永登  
Yǒnglè, Yongle 永乐, 永樂  
Yongning 永宁  
Yongzheng 雍正  
Yòuníng 佑宁  
Youning si 佑寧寺  
Yuan, *yuan* 元

*yue* 月  
*Yul shul* ཡུལ་སྐལ་  
*yul srol* ཡུལ་སྲོལ་  
*Yun ci dmag* ཡུན་ཅི་དམག  
*Zan Yulan* 簪玉兰  
*Zanza* 簪扎  
*zao* 枣  
*zaoren* 枣仁  
*Zeku* 泽库  
*Zelin* 泽林  
*zha ngo* ཇཱ་ངོ་  
*zhal ngo* ཇཱ་ལ་ངོ་  
*Zhalute* 扎鲁特  
*Zhang blon bzhi* ཇཱ་བློན་བཞི་  
*Zhang Chongsunhua* 张重孙花  
*Zhāng Dézǔ* 张得祖  
*Zhang Xiang* 张翔  
*Zhang Xihua* 张喜花  
*Zhang Yinghua* 张英花  
*Zhang Yongjun* 张永俊  
*Zhangjiakou* 张家口  
*Zhao Guilan* 赵桂兰  
*Zhao Jinzihua* 赵金子花  
*Zhao Xiuhua* 赵秀花  
*Zhao Xiulan* 赵秀兰  
*Zhao Yongxiang* 赵永祥  
*Zhaomuchuan* 赵木川  
*Zhejiang* 浙江  
*zhihui qianshi* 指挥僉事

*Zhili* 直隶  
*Zhong Jingwen* 钟进文  
*Zhong Shumi, Zhang Shumei* 张淑梅  
*zhongdouju* 种痘局  
*Zhu Bajie* 猪八戒  
*Zhu Changminghua* 朱长命花  
*Zhu Chunhua* 朱春花  
*zhu dar* ཇཱ་དར་  
*Zhu Ernuer, Ernü* 朱二女  
*Zhu Guobao* 朱国宝  
*Zhu Haishan* 朱海山  
*Zhu Jinxiu* 朱金秀  
*Zhu Xiangfeng* 朱向峰  
*Zhu Yongzhong* 朱永忠  
*Zhuang Xueben* 庄学本  
*Zhuānglàng* 庄浪  
*Zhujia* 朱家  
*Zhuoni* 卓尼  
*Zi ling* ཇི་ལིང་  
*zla ba dang po'i drug ba gnyis kyi nyin gsum*  
*gyi ring la* ཇཱ་བ་དང་པའི་དུག་བ་གཉིས་ཀྱི་ཉིན་གསུམ་  
 ཇཱི་རིང་ལ་  
*zla po byed* ཇཱ་པོ་བྱེད་  
*Zo wi ne ni* ཇོ་ཡི་འཇི་ཇི་  
*Zongge* 宗哥  
*Zonggecheng* 宗哥城  
*zongjia* 天子  
*zur skol* ཇུར་སྐོལ་  
*Zushi* 祖師

## INDEX

- 'Bras spungs Monastery 84, 87, 91, 98  
 'Bri River, see Yangzi  
 'Brug thar 251  
 'cham 290, 299  
 'Dul ba'i mdo tsa ba 96  
 'Dzam gling spyi bsang 270  
 'Gag rdo rtags 243, 247  
 'Jam dpal dbyangs, see Mañjuśrī  
 'Jigs med ye shes grags pa 85, 98, 102, 103, 104, 156  
 'Ju lag River, see Julak River  
 A Chaoyang 23  
 A Jinlu 26  
 A khu 'Jigs med 284  
 A khu Blo gros 284  
 A lags Brag dkar tshang 290  
 A myes Ba rdzong 263n4, 267n4  
 A myes Btsan rgod 289-90, 295  
 A myes Gnyan chen 263, 289n18  
 A Rong 26  
 Āchái 22  
 agriculture 146, 154-5, 255, 285-8  
 Ahmad, Zahiruddhin 301, 90n32, 141n10  
 ahong 89n20, 157  
 Alai 24  
 Alashan 158  
 alocohol 38, 49, 50, 54n76, 60, 76, 145, 153, 155, 163, 165-70, 172, 173, 174, 176, 191, 268, 274, 289n17, 296, 298, 299  
 An Liumei 193, 206, 230, 233, 236  
 animals  
   chicken 37, 50, 55, 155, 161, 167-8, 170  
   cow 19, 20, 40, 54n76, 126, 131, 135, 144, 155, 172, 180-1  
   dog 38, 45, 150, 161, 174  
   donkey 36, 38, 75, 102, 154, 155, 156, 176  
   duck 155, 229, 237  
   horse 19, 45, 71, 75, 124, 132, 155, 161, 167, 172, 183, 186-7, 263, 274, 285, 289-90  
   monkey 40, 41, 270  
   mule 19, 51, 71, 75, 124, 149, 150, 154, 155, 175, 177  
   ox 36, 75  
   pig 36, 50, 56, 60, 75, 144, 155, 172  
   rabbit 106-14, 221  
   sheep 19, 155, 172, 177, 186, 187, 192, 263, 274, 285, 289-90  
   snake 40, 161, 162  
   tiger 45, 161, 186, 187-8, 228  
   wolf 36, 186  
   yak 155, 300  
 Anjia 236  
 Aohan Prince 89, 91, 93  
 Aral River 142  
 architecture 278, 149-50  
 Atwood, Christopher 90n32, 92n49, 94n54, 301  
 Āxià, see Āchái  
 Ba bOng chos rje 94n63  
 Ba bzang 289n18  
 Ba rdzong (ri lang) 263n14  
 Ba yan rdzong (Hualong County) 148  
 Baarin 89  
 Badaola Mountains 142-3  
 Badaoshan, see Badaola  
 Baghari, see Zankang Purghan  
 baihu 245-6  
 Baima Si, see Dmar gtsang Monastery  
 Baima Tianjiang 160  
 Ban de rgyal 85n15  
 Ban Guo 25  
 Bang rgya 245  
 Bao Shiyuemei 236  
 Bao Sibeihua 235, 236  
 Bao Yizhi 23, 24, 25  
 Bao'an, see Manikacha  
 Baojia River 142  
 Baojia Village 142, 143, 148, 224, 236  
 barley 43, 60, 68, 70, 71, 72, 73, 76, 154-5, 165, 166, 255, 285, 299  
 Bazangou 69  
 Bazhou 19  
 Bazhou River 141, 146  
 Bcu ba'i lnga mchod, see Lnga mchod  
 beer, see alcohol  
 Beijing 9, 23, 66, 85n7, 116, 146n49, 182, 187, 246  
 Belgium 116, 130  
 bell 48, 163, 167, 174  
 Bellezza, John 301, 141n10  
 Ben Chengfang 62  
 Bertin-Guest, Josiane 189, 302  
 Beyer, Stephan 85, 301  
 Bi Yanjun 27  
 Bingling Si 158, 172  
 Binkangghuali, Benkanggou 74  
 Bis ba mi pham ngag dbang zla ba 259  
 Bka' rtse stong 289n18, see also Gar rtse sdong  
 Bkra shis 'bum 'khyil 93  
 Bkra shis lhun po Monastery 97n92  
 Bkra shis sgo mang stupa 261  
 Bla brang Monastery 87n16, 89, 247  
 Blo brtan rdo rje 64, 301  
 Blo bzang 'jam pa'i tshul khrim, Wang Khutugtu 89, 99, 302  
 Blo bzang bstan 'dzin, see Lubsang-Denzin  
 Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma 88, 94n63, 97n92, 302  
 Blo bzang dar rgyas rgya mtsho 96  
 Blo bzang snyan grags 242, 302  
 Bod skor Village 11, 13, 254, 280

- Bodhgaya, see Rdo rje gdan  
 Bog 49-50  
*bog* 49-50, see also *huashi*  
 Bonan, see Manikacha  
 Borjigin, Burensain 89, 302  
 Brag dgon *zhabs drung* 97n95  
 Brown, Melissa 140n5, 302  
 Bsam blo khang tshan 87n15  
 Bsam gtan spyin pa, see Samt'andjimba  
 Bsang (Xia) River 243, 247  
 Bse River 244, 247  
 Bsod nams mgon po 247  
 Bstan pa bstan 'dzin 302  
 Bstan pa chos 'byor 246  
 Bstan pa rgya mtsho 93  
 Bstan rgod 289-90, 295  
 Bu su he 243  
 Bu'u hrin 289n18  
 Buddhist tantrins (*snags pa, hquandii*) 47, 48, 85n5  
 Buffettrille, Katia 266n19, 302  
 Bulag, Uradyn E 105, 302  
 Bya khyung (deity) 263  
 Bya khyung Monastery 158  
 Byams pa nor bu 245  
 Byang chub stupa 261  
 Byang du lhag pa 263n15  
 Byang rar du spen pa 263n15  
 Byang thang Village 146, 187  
 Bza' ri tshang 276n3
- Cabezón, José Ignacio 85n5, 86, 87, 302  
 Cai Jingping 27  
 Cai Yong'e 26  
 caterpillar fungus 255  
 Cech, Krystyna 303, 85n5  
 Cha yas 270  
 Cháhänménggü'ér 18  
 Chang Ping 25  
 Chang'an 185, 187  
 Changshoufo, see Longevity Buddha  
*chapai/ chaben* 171-2, 293  
 Charleux, Isabelle 46, 89n25, 91n39, 92n49, 303  
 Chen Mei 26  
 Chengde 129n83  
 Chenjia Village 190, 210, 214, 221, 229, 236  
 Chenjiaola Village 236  
 chicken 37, 50, 55, 155, 161, 167-8, 170  
 Chileb Mountain 31n4, 42  
 Chinan Dewen Zanpu 147-8  
 Chinese (language) 59n85, 106, 144, 171, 172, 175, 177, 190, 236, 242, 254, 284, 293  
 Cho 'phrul stupa 261  
 Chongli 116n2  
 Chos skor (ritual) 261  
 Christianity 10, 85-6, 116-138  
 Chu bzang Lama 90  
 Chuanhuang Erlang 161  
 Chuankou 146-7, 172, 187  
 Chung Young Yang 189, 303  
 Ci si khe 243  
 Cin ci dmag 245  
 clothing 31, 47, 124, 152, 155-6, 167, 189, 209-17, 220-7, 230-3, 257-9, 266, 294-5, 300  
 Co ne County 158  
 communal incense offering 270  
 Confucianism 86, 157n85  
 cow 19, 20, 40, 54n76, 126, 131, 135, 144, 155, 172, 180-1  
 Cu'u hrin 289n18  
 Cūi Yǒnghóng 18, 303  
 cultural change 63, 74-5, 234-5, 245, 257-9  
 cultural mapping 5-7  
 customary (*bca' yig*) 9, 84-105  
 cymbals 68, 73
- Daban Mountain 93  
 Dádá 18  
 Daihai 130  
 Dala Township 29, 65, 66, 74, 82, 106  
 Dalai Lama 84n4, 94n60, 96n89, 97n93, 98n100, 100, 120n24, 159, 182,  
 Damajia Village 236  
 Dámín 18, 19, 20  
 Dan tig Mountain 183  
 Danma Town 29, 30-1, 35, 38, 39, 45, 47, 48, 49, 62, 70  
 Danyan (Luoergou) Village 45  
 Daoism 157, 243, 244, 245  
 Daoist tantrins 160n95  
 Dar rgya ri lang 263n14, 289n18  
 Dasi 90n31  
 Datong 6, 8, 20, 22, 29, 143  
 Datong River, see Julak  
 Datongping 143  
 David-Neel, Alexandra 147n53, 303  
 David, Armand 78n128, 128, 303  
 Dbyen bsdums stupa 261  
 de Deken, Constant 118n4, 127n68, 303  
 de Rochechouart, Comte 118n4, 131n99, 303  
 Deal, David 140n5, 303  
 debate 84-7, 94, 95-104  
 Dede, Keith 7, 14, 144n33, 18, 106, 303  
 degrees  
     *dka' bcu* 96-7, 100, 103  
     honorary 103-4  
     *lha rams pa dge bshes* 88, 91, 100  
     *rdo ram(s) pa* 95-7, 100, 103
- deities  
 'Jam dpal dbyangs, see Mañjuśrī  
 Ba bzang 289n18  
 Ba rdzong 263n14  
 Baghari, see Zankang Purghan  
 Baima Tianjiang 160  
 Bstan rgod 289-90, 295  
 Bu'u hrin 289n18  
 Bya khyung 263

Byang du lhag pa 263n15  
 Byang rar du spen pa 263n15  
 Changshoufo, see Longevity Buddha  
 Chuanhuang Erlang 161  
 Cu'u hrin 189n18  
 Dar rgya ri lang 263n14, 289n18  
 Dgra lha bcu gsum 270  
 Dmag dpon pi tsi ri lang 263n14  
 Dpung nge ri lang 263n14  
 Ge sar 264-5  
 Gelete 21  
 Gnyan chen 289n18, 263  
 Guan Laoye 161  
 Guanyin Pusa 172-3  
 Guo'erduo, see Gelete  
 Gyen 'dzi ri lang 236n14  
 Gza' mchog 263, 270  
 Heihu Linggunang 161  
 Heima Zushi 160  
 Huolu Jiangjun 161  
 Jade Emperor 185  
 Jiutian Shengmu Niangniang 161  
 Kailu Jiangjun 161  
 Ko'u mol ri lang 263n14  
 Lho nub du skra can 263n15  
 Lhor phur bu 263n15  
 Lingle Huangdi 161  
 Lo lha (Crop Deity) 274  
 Longevity Buddha 67  
 Longwang 157, 160, 172-3  
 Mañjuśrī 86, 95, 96  
 Niangniang 160-1, 172  
 Niutou Wang 183-4  
 Nub byang du nyi ma 263n15  
 Nub du zla ba 263n15  
 Pe dpa' ri lang 263n14  
 Qinglong Tianzi 161  
 Qurixiang 38  
 Rar du pa sang 263n15  
 Rar lhor mig dmar 263n15  
 Rdo rje 'jigs byed, see Yamāntanka  
 Riyue Dalang 161  
 Rta mgrin 291  
 Sa bdag sog po ri lang 263n14  
 Shdanbasang 67  
 Shuangma Tongzi 161  
 Suojie Ye 160, 184  
 Tara (Sgrol ma) 178-9, 292  
 Tsi tsong 263  
 Tso ri ri lang 263, 266  
 Tso shi ri lang 263n14, 267n24  
 Walighuansang 67, 69-70, 73, 79-81  
 Xruu Aadee (Earth God) 41  
 Yamāntanka 89  
 Yangda, see Longevity Buddha  
 Yangtou Huhua 160n94  
 Zankang Purghan 38, 70  
 Zhahgu 67, 79  
 Zooya Aanee (Kitchen Granny) 43  
 Zushi 160-70  
 Demick, Barbara 189, 304  
 demography 66, 143, 251-2, 276  
 Deng Sangmei 192, 236  
 Deng Xinzhuangmei 236  
 Dengjia Village 236  
 Dga' ldan Monastery 180-1  
 Dga' ldan pho brang 94  
 Dge lugs Buddhism 9, 11, 64, 84-105, 158-60, 180-3, 259-62, 288-93  
 Dge Mountain 243  
 Dgon lung Monastery, see Rgulang Monastery  
 Dgra lha bcu gsum 270  
 Dgu (Longwu) River (River Nine) 11-2, 141, 241, 251, 255, 266, 268, 276, 285, 296  
 dharma sessions 98, 99, 100, 102  
 Dharmatāla, Damchö Gyatsho 89n25, 91n46, 304  
 Diemberger, Hildegard 105, 302  
*dka' bcu* degree 96-7, 100, 103  
 Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas 88, 91, 93, 94n63, 97, 304, 314  
 Dkon mchog dar rgyas 247  
 Dkon mchog skyabs 93  
 Dmag dpon pi tsi ri lang 263n14  
 Dmar gtsang Monastery 11, 158, 183  
 Dme 244, 247  
 Dme shul 244n13  
 Dngul rwa Township 243n2, 250  
 dog 38, 45, 150, 161, 174  
 Don yod chos kyi rgya mtsho 97  
 Dong Yongxue 24  
 Dongdanma Village 49  
 Donggou Township 8, 29, 40, 41, 45, 46, 49, 59, 70, 74  
 Donghe Township 62  
 Dongshan Township 8, 40, 62  
 Dongxiang 141, 142, 143, 157  
 donkey 36, 38, 75, 102, 154, 155, 156, 176  
 Dor bhi tis bang 244  
 Dor rdo 140n6, 244, 253n6  
 Dor sde 244  
 Dor skad 253-4, 280  
 Dor skad, see Manikacha  
 Dor tis 243  
 Dou Guanbaonuer 236  
 Dòu Wényǔ 19  
 Doujia Village 236  
 Dpa' ris 84, 104, 152n72  
 Dpal chen stobs rgyas 247  
 Dpal ldan bkra shis 266n19, 304  
 Dpal rtse rgyal 293  
 Dpung nge ri lang 263n14  
 Dreyfus, Georges 87, 96, 97, 100, 101, 103, 304  
 Dri med yon tan 245, 248  
 drums 67, 73, 161-70, 171, 227  
 Dū Chángshùn 18, 303

- Du Jinbaohua 236  
duck 155, 229, 237  
*duduna* 40-1  
Duluun (Baiya) Village 74  
Duluun Lunkuang 8-9, 29-113  
Dung dkar 148  
Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las 88n17, 97n92, 304  
Duo Zang 89n27, 90n31, 93, 94, 304  
Durishidii (Duoshidai) Village 74  
Duwa (Duowa) Village 74  
Dwags po Colleege 100  
Dwyer, Arienne 144n33, 304
- E Shuangxihua, Nuo Shuangxihua 192, 205, 208, 212, 222, 230, 232, 236  
E'érdān 21  
economy 63, 75, 155-6, 255-6, 285-7  
education 60, 62-3, 253-4, 284-5  
Ellingson, Ter 85m5, 304  
embroidery 189-240  
embroidery techniques 199-204  
embroidery tools 191-8  
Emperors  
    Glang dar ma 181, 183  
    Hongwu 20, 245  
    Jianwen 245, 246  
    Kangxi 18, 20, 88  
    Kublai Khan 242-4, 246  
    Qianlong 91, 99  
    Srong btsan sgam po 11, 141n9, 159, 178, 179n6  
    Suddhipala Gege'en 244, 246  
    Taizong 178-9  
    Wanli 18  
    Xuanzong 20  
    Yesün-Temür 244, 246  
    Yingzong 19  
    Yongle 20, 245-6  
    Yongzheng 88  
Epstein, Lawrence 266n19, 304  
Eren Monastery 9, 84, 89, 94, 95, 98, 99-105  
Erh-ku-lung, see Rgulang  
Ershisanhao 128, 130, 132  
ethnicity, see *minzu*
- Faehndrich, Bergel Maria 8, 106, 151n71, 304  
*fala*, see *hguriden*  
Fangtuu (Qianbangou) Village 66, 70  
Farishidin (Xingjia) Village 69  
farming tools 154-5, 285  
farming, see agriculture  
*fashi*, see *bog* and *huashi*  
Faxian 159  
Feng Lide 158n91, 204  
*fengshui*, see geomancy  
fertilizer 150, 154, 156, 285, 286  
firecrackers 150, 176, 270, 273, 298-9  
Fischer, Andrew 5, 304
- folktales 23, 178-88, 254  
food 36, 43, 45, 46, 47, 49, 57, 67, 68, 70, 71, 72, 73, 94, 126, 163, 165, 169, 170, 174, 177, 187, 231, 266, 267, 270, 274, 282, 286, 296, 298, 299, 300  
Foorijang (Huoerjun) Village 74  
Fried, Mary Heather 141n18, 305  
Fried, Robert 11, 141n18, 305  
Fu Heng 90n37, 305  
Fujia (Hulijia) Village 142  
Fulaan Nara 8, 9, 29, 76, 106-13  
funeral 35, 54-5, 71, 177, 209, 230-3, 252, 277
- G.yang can rdo rje 248  
Gamaka Village 142n22  
Gan'gou, see Gangou  
Gangou 10n7, 142, 143, 190  
Gangou River 142, 143  
Ganjia Village 160, 169, 175  
Gannan Prefecture 243n2  
Gansu Province 2, 5, 18, 19, 20, 26, 38n2, 89, 106, 119, 126, 127, 134, 243n2, 250  
Gansu xin tongzhi 90n36, 30  
Gānsù-Qīnghǎi-Níngxià 18  
Ganzhou 141n10, 143, 147  
Gaochang 147  
Gaodian Town 66  
Gāozǔ 18  
Gar rtse sdong 267n24, see also Bka' rtse stong  
Garrett, Valery 194, 305  
Gcan tsha County 64, 251  
Gdugs dkar 270  
Ge sar 38n32, 140, 147, 148, 173, 178, 263-5  
Gelete 21  
gender 13, 59-60, 155-6, 268, 296  
Genghis Khan 21, 38, 119, 132, 145, 159  
geomancy 41-2, 244  
Gérilétú 21  
Ghada Monastery 21, 158, 174  
ghosts 33, 36-8, 43, 44, 45-6, 47, 51, 55, 58, 261, 263  
Glang dar ma (Emperor) 181, 183  
Gling bza' thar mdo skyid 243  
glottonyms, see languages  
Glu rol, see Na thong  
Gnyan chen 289n18, 263  
Gnyan po smad cha dmar can 243  
Gnyan po'i sgar thog 243, 246  
Gnyan thog 'brog 244, 247  
Gnyan thog la kha 244  
Gnyan thog Monastery 248  
Gnyan thog Village 11, 12, 64, 241, 242-50, 253, 254, 276, 280  
Go bu me khrin 244  
Go bu me tu hu sun khrin 245-6  
Go'u sde 258  
Gol su 243  
Gong sa rin po che 245  
Goodman, David 148n60, 305



Gorski, Philip 88, 305  
 grave 30, 34, 36, 37, 41-2, 56, 124, 136, 177, 298  
 Great Prayer Festival, see Smon lam  
 Grootaers, William 160n96, 305  
 Gru kha'i 243  
 Gruschke, Andreas 70n16, 305  
 Gsang bdag 290  
 Gsang phu Monastery, see Sangphu Monastery  
 Gser chen gzhung 244, 246, 249  
 Gser khog Monastery 93  
 Guan Laoye 161  
 Guangdong Province 74, 156n83, 189  
 Guanting Town/ Basin 10, 141n13, 142n20, 191, 194  
 Guanyin Pusa 172-3  
 Guanzhong Village 236  
 Guide County 148  
 Guihuacheng 131, 133, 134, 159  
 Guisui-Suiyuan (Hohhot) 121, 129  
 Guō'érduǒ, see Gelete  
 Guo'erduo, see Gelete  
 Guolongsī, see Rgulang Monastery  
 Gushan 148  
 Gusiluo 147-8  
 Gyang bzhi 244, 245  
 Gyen 'dzi ri lang 263n14  
 Gyi ling mkhar 251n3  
 Gza' brgyad 263  
 Gza' mchog 263, 270

Ha Mingzong 7, 13, 23, 306  
 Hahn, Reinhard 148n16, 305  
 Hai Tao 236  
 Hainan Prefecture 45  
 Haixi Prefecture 69  
 Halazhigou Township 48  
 Hami 153, 159  
 Han (people) 10, 11, 22, 31, 40n38, 47, 62n96, 74, 140n4,  
 143n29, 205, 236, 244, 251, 254, 255, 268, 286  
 Handi (Hantai) Village 66, 67  
 Haomen he, see Julak River  
 Har gdong khang tshan 87n15  
 Hara Bulog (Heiguan) Village 41  
 Hé'ér 22  
 Hè'ér 22  
 healing 30-63  
 Hebei Province 129n83/87, 187n32  
 Heihu Linggunang 161  
 Heima Zushi 160  
 Heishui 122  
 Hejia Village 160, 171  
 Helang Yexian 147  
 Henan County 250, 251  
 Heqing Town 74n21  
 Heyan Village 231, 233, 236  
 Hezhou 20, 89, 141, 143, 147, 160  
 Hgarilang (Huangcaogou) Village 45  
 Hgunbin Monastery, see Sku 'bum Monastery

*hguriden (sku rten)* 47-8  
 Hongnai 142n26  
 Hongwu Emperor 20, 245  
 Hóngyá 19  
 Hongyazigou Township 8, 29, 38, 65, 66, 69, 79, 106  
 honorary degree 103-4  
 Hor 21, 90, 93, 245  
 Hor bza' hu sun khrin 244  
 Hor dor rta 243-246  
 Hor gnyan po mung khe gan 243  
 Hor nag 258  
 Hor o chi go bu me thu me lun 244  
 Hor rgya 280, 284, 285  
 Hor se chen, see Kublai Khan  
 Hor spun zla 140n8  
 Hor tho lung, see Hor dor rta  
 horse 19, 45, 71, 75, 124, 132, 155, 161, 167, 172, 183, 186-7,  
 263, 274, 285, 289-90  
 Hostetler, Laura 140n5, 303  
 Hu Fang 27  
 Hu Jun 107, 173n119, 174n126, 177n30, 191, 209, 305, 312  
 Hu su ho 244  
 Hu Yanhong 26  
 Hu, Alex, see Hu Jun  
 Huang River 20, 22, 24, 29, 141, 143, 146, 148, 158, 171,  
 173, 141n14, 148n58, 149n64, 183n16, 186n29  
 Huangchojia 312  
 Huangfan 143, 148  
 Huangnan Prefecture 6, 241-300  
 Huangshui, see Huang River  
 Huang Si 120  
 Huangyuan 148  
 Huangzhong County 120n21  
 Huárè, see Dpa' ris  
*huashi* 160-70  
 Huayuan Si, see Qurisang Srishiji  
 Huc, Régis Evariste 10, 116, 118-128, 305  
 Huhehaote, see Guisui-Suiyuan  
 Hui 107, 131, 236, 251, see also Islam  
 Hulijia Village 142  
 Hún 22  
 Hunan Province 189  
 Huolu Jiangjun 161  
 Húsījǐng 22  
 Huzhu County 5-9, 29-113  
 Huzhu Tuzu zizhi xian 61n88, 90, 305  
 Hxin (Hashi) Village 74

icon 67, 71n17, 162-70, 196, 255, 285-6,  
 icon consecration ritual 162-71  
 illness 51-2, 63, 67, 158, 174, 291  
 Inner Mongolia 84, 89, 90, 94, 105, 244, 247  
 inoculation 53  
 Islam 89n20, 107, 131, 157, 148, 153, 236, 251  
 Isono, Fujiko 92n49, 306

Jackson, Beverley 209, 305  
 Jade Emperor 185  
 Janba Taiga Village 38, 39  
 Janba Village 39  
 Jangja (Zhangjia) Village 74  
 Jangwarima Village 49  
 Janhunene, Juha 5, 11, 14, 139, 144n32, 179n6, 305-6  
 Jansen, Berthe 85n5, 306  
 Jiading Township 62  
 Jiajia Village 64  
 Jiang Kexin 26  
 Jiangsu Handicraft Art Society 189, 306  
 Jiangsu Province 74  
 Jianwen Emperor 245, 246  
 Jianzha, see Gcan tsha  
 Jiao Ping 189, 308  
*jiashen* (household deities) 150n68  
 Jidi Majia 25  
 Jiirinbuqii, see Tsong kha pa  
 Jilog (Jiaoluo) Village 42, 60  
 Jin Yù 20  
 Jinbu (Junbu) Valley 45  
 Jindan dao 89n29  
 Jingning Village 190, 217, 236  
 Jinzimei 229, 236  
 Jishi Gorge 141, 142, 148  
 Jiutian Shengmu Niangniang 161  
 Jughuari (Zhuoke) Village 74  
 Jugui 139n1, 141n16, 307  
 Julak River 20, 22, 93, 141, 143, 146, 149, 186, 187  
 Jun Jing 85m157, 306  
  
 Ka dar skyid 243  
 Ka rab 100  
 Kadiga (Kadi Kawa) Monastery 158  
 Kailu Jiangjun 161  
 Kan lho, see Gannan  
 Kanchow, see Ganzhou  
 Kangxi Emperor 18, 20, 88  
 Karmay Samten 147n53, 306, 308  
 Kemuchuer Ling Village 236  
 Khams 253  
 Kharachin 90-2  
 Khenpo Ngawang Dorjee 84n1, 86n10, 95n72, 101n130, 104n52  
 Khre tshe Bzhi 2, 6, 11-2, 241-300  
 Khu lung 93  
 Kim, Stephen 141n18, 206  
 kinship 34n19, 41-2, 146, 148-9, 252, 263, 276-7, 245  
 Klaproth, M 182n15, 306  
 Klu 'bum tshe ring 300  
 Klu rol, see Na thong  
 Klu'i 244  
 Ko'u mol ri lang 236n14  
 Kokonor, see Mtsho sngon po  
 Koten 20  
 Krang co hrin 244

Ku Yingchunlan 206, 208, 236  
 Kublai Khan (Emperor) 242-4, 246  
 Kumbum Monastery, see Sku 'bum Monastery  
 Kun dga' bkra shis 247  
 Kuòduān, see Koten  
 Kuxin (Huzichang) Village 66  
  
 La Erhua 192n2  
 La Mountains 243  
 La Nuer, see La Erhua  
 Lajia Village 142  
 Lama Tangseng 184  
 Lama Yongden 147n53, 303  
 Lamaguan Village 40  
 landslide 274-5  
 Langja (Langjia) Village 48  
 languages  
     Bao'an, Bonan, see Manikacha  
     Chinese 59n85, 106, 144, 171, 172, 175, 177, 190, 236, 242, 254, 284, 293  
     Dor skad, see Manikacha  
     Mangghuer 5, 144-5  
     Manikacha 5, 11, 12, 253-4  
     Mongghul 5, 50-3, 106-13  
     Ngandehua 5, 280-2  
     Tibetan 106-7, 253-4, 280-2  
     Tuyu, see Manikacha, Mangghuer, Mongghul  
     Wutun, see Ngandehua  
 language shift 254  
 Lanzhou 140, 141, 142, 143, 147, 148, 155, 159  
 Lǎoyā 19  
 Laoyeshan 26  
 Laozhuang 208n6  
 Lashizi Kayari (Heidinggou) Village 66  
 Lattimore, Owen 89n27, 92n49, 90, 306  
 Lawa Village 48  
 Lcags mo tshe ring 12, 13, 64, 141n18, 242, 245n24  
 Lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje 88, 91, 182  
 leadership 10, 68-9, 90, 119, 146, 149, 154, 171-2, 252  
 Ledu County 6, 8, 29, 64-83, 106, 185, 119  
 Legerton, Colin 141n18, 307  
 Lekyaihe, see Na thong  
 Lempert, Michael 87, 100n126, 102, 127, 307  
 Lessing, Ferdinand 179n6, 307  
 Lha babs stupa 261  
*Lha btsun* Mthu stobs nyi ma 91  
*lha rams pa dge bshes* degree 88, 91, 100  
 Lha sa 9, 66, 94, 97, 103, 122, 124-7, 158, 159, 179-82  
 Lho nub du skra gcan 263n15  
 Lhor phur bu 263n15  
 Li Baoshou 198, 225, 234, 236  
 Li Cunxiao 11, 186-9  
 Li Dechun, see Limusishiden  
 Li Fumei 26  
 Li Jinwang 11, 58, 146-7, 148, 186-9  
 Li Keyong, see Li Jinwang  
 Li Keyu 108, 307

- Li Lianrong 147n53, 307  
 Li Lizong 147  
 Li Peng 26  
 Li Qingchuan 25  
 Li Xiande 26  
 Li Xinghua 197  
 Li Xuewei 141n18, 307  
 Li Yaozu 26  
 Li Yuanhao 147n57  
 Li yul 146n48  
 Li Zhanguo 25  
 Li Zhanzhong 26  
 Li Zhonglin 25  
 Li Zhuoma 24  
 Liangcheng 149  
 Liangzhou 149  
 Liǎodōng 22  
 Liaoning 90, 182n13  
 Lijia 236  
 Limusishiden 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 23, 30, 32, 34, 42n44, 44n54, 62n98, 64, 65, 65n6, 67n11, 69, 69n12/15, 70, 74, 75, 76, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 107, 139n1, 141n16, 307, 309, 310, 312  
 Lingle Huangdi 161  
 Lintao 153  
 liquor, see alcohol  
 literature 23-27  
 Liu Daxian 26  
 Liu Shengqi 101, 307  
 Liuja (Liuja) Village 30  
 livestock, see animals  
 Lizong, see Li Lizong  
 Lnga mchod (ritual) 64-83, 261  
 Lo 244  
 Lo brgya 245  
 Lo lha (Crop Deity) 274  
 Lo sar, see New Year  
 Lobzang Danzin, see Lubsang-Danzin  
 Longevity Buddha 67  
 Lóngshuò 22  
 Longwang 157, 160, 172-3  
 Longwu, see Reb gong  
 Lower Seng ge gshong Monastery 276, 278, 190  
 Lu ba go go 268-9  
 Lu Biansheng 172n117  
 Lü Jinlianmei 191, 192, 193, 194, 205, 210, 213, 234, 236  
 Lü Shengshou 26  
 Lü Yingqing 236  
 Lu Zhankui 26  
 Luantashi (Luanshitout) Village 236  
 Lubsang-Danzin 88  
 Lun hu khrin 244  
 Lūshǐjiā 19  
  
 Ma Fanglan 236  
 Ma Guangxing 24, 25  
 Ma Guorui 106n3  
  
 Ma gzhi dmag 245  
 Ma Hanme/ Ma Hanmo 236  
 Ma Jianzhong 148n61, 308  
 Ma Jun 25  
 Ma ling yis 247  
 Ma Luguya 236  
 Ma Qiuchen 26  
 Ma Quanlin 148n60, 308  
 Ma Taohua 190  
 Ma Tianxi 205, 236  
 Ma Wanxiang 148n60, 308  
 Ma Wei 148n60, 308  
 Ma Xiaochen 26  
 Ma Xiuying 220, 232, 236  
 Ma Youyi 25  
 Ma Yulan 25  
 Ma Zhan'ao 89  
 Ma Zhicheng 148n60, 308  
 Mackerras, Colin 5, 308  
 Majia Village 142, 157, 160  
 Majiazi 124  
 Manchuria 146  
 Mangghuer (language) 5, 144-5  
 Manikacha (language) 5, 11, 12, 253-4  
 Mañjuśrī 86, 95, 96  
 Mao Qiaohui 26  
 Maohebu 48  
 maps 6, 8, 10, 12, 29, 115, 241  
 Maqang Tugun (Baiya) Village 66, 82  
 Mchod rten dkar po 243, 247  
 Mchog sgrub mtsho 259n12  
 McKhann, Charles F 140n5, 303  
*Mdo smad chos byung* 88, 91, 93, 94n63, 97n95/92/97, 304, 314  
 measles 31-3  
 Mengudzhu, see Lhasa  
 mental illness 50, 59-60  
 Menyuan County 31n4, 93  
 Mgar stong rtsan 178-80  
 Mgo 'dug tsho ba 252, 263, 274  
 Mgo log Prefecture 255  
 Miaochuan 147  
 migration 18-22, 32, 146-7, 243-4  
 millet 133, 155, 162-3, 168  
 Ming Dynasty 7, 11, 18-22, 90, 220, 242, 245-6  
 Minhe County 6, 11, 24, 25-6, 115-239  
 Minick, Scott 189, 308  
 Minzhu Valley 207, 214, 218, 236  
*minzu* 5, 7, 251, 280  
 missionaries 7, 10, 89, 116-38  
 Mo Fangxia 25  
 Mo Zicai 26  
*modaya* 34, 38-9  
 Molè, Gabriells 147n51, 308  
 Molnár, Ádám 5, 308  
 Molto River 142  
 monasteries (Buddhist)

- 'Bras spungs 84, 87, 91, 98  
 Baimasi, see Dmar gtsang  
 Bingling Si 158, 172  
 Bkra shis lhun po 97n92  
 Bla brang (bkra shis 'khyil) 87n16, 89, 247  
 Dga' ldan 180-1  
 Dgon lung, see Rgulang  
 Dmar gtsang 11, 158, 183  
 Eren 9, 84, 89, 94, 95, 98, 99-105  
 Ghada 21, 158, 174  
 Gnyan thog 248  
 Gser khog 93  
 Hgunbin, see Sku 'bum  
 Huangsi 120  
 Huayuansi, see Quurisang Srishiji  
 Kadiga (Kadi Kawa) 158  
 Lower Seng ge gshong 276, 278, 190  
 Rgulang 7, 8, 9, 23, 29, 32, 33, 36, 39, 40, 46, 51, 54, 70, 74-5, 84-105  
 Rka gsar (dgon dga' ldan 'dus bzang chos gling) 259-60  
 Rong bo 241, 259-60, 268, 291-2  
 Sangphu 96n1  
 Se ra 178n1  
 Sems nyid 93, 97  
 Sgo dmar 291  
 Sku 'bum 33, 70, 119n21, 154n80, 156, 158  
 Quurisang Srishiji 65, 70  
 Ta'ersi, see Sku 'bum  
 Upper Seng ge gshong 276, 284n14, 290  
 Wenjia 157, 158, 178n1  
 Wushi 158  
 Youningsi, see Rgulang
- monasteries (Daoist) 157  
 monastic dance 290, 299  
 Mongghul 5, 50-3, 106-13  
 Mongol Theory 7, 12, 18-21  
 Mongols 5, 7, 11, 12, 18-22, 69, 88, 89, 120-1, 123, 127, 135, 140, 144, 242-5  
 monkey 40, 41, 270  
 monks 10, 32, 36, 39, 40, 44, 46, 54-5, 65, 67-76, 86-104, 120, 157, 158-9, 173, 179-83, 199, 253, 259-61, 270, 275, 276, 284, 285, 293  
 Mostaert, Antoine 118n4, 119n16, 128n76, 132n76, 132n105, 136n123, 144n32, 308  
 mountains  
 Badaola 142-3  
 Chileb 31n4, 42  
 Daban 93  
 Dan tig 183  
 Dge 243  
 La 243  
 Nansan 48, 69  
 Nanshan, see Nansan  
 Qilian, see Chileb  
 Rta 'gying 251, 275  
 Suoke 172n118  
 Walighuan 69-70  
 Mtsho sngon po 118n5, 147, 179-80  
 Mtsho snying 180  
 mule 19, 51, 71, 75, 124, 149, 150, 154, 155, 175, 177  
 music 9, 63, 69, 93, 106-113, 162-71, 176, 191, 254, 272, 296  
 musical instruments  
 bell 48, 163, 167, 174  
 cymbals 68, 73  
 drum 67, 73, 161-70, 171, 227  
 shawm 47, 67  
 Muslims, see Islam
- Na Chaoqing 24, 26  
 Na thong 266-7, 276, 289  
 Nadun 173, 227  
 Nag chu 243, 247  
 Nag po skor gsum 86n10  
 Nagano, Sadako 266n19, 308  
 nang so 94n63 245, 246  
 Nanjia Village 160  
 Nanjiaterghai (Anjiatou) Village 236  
 Nanmengxia Town 8, 29, 62  
 Nanmuge 90  
 Nansan Mountains 48, 69  
 Nanshan Mountains, see Nansan  
 nationality, see *minzu*  
 natural disaster 8, 43, 50, 56, 57, 75, 171-3, 274-5  
 nenjengui (seers) 45-6  
 New Year 58, 60, 103, 174, 189, 254, 257, 268-74, 279, 294, 296-300  
 Ngag dbang legs bshad rgya mtsho 88, 90, 308  
 Ngag dbang mkhyen rab rgya mtsho 89, 91, 93, 94, 309  
 Ngandehua 5, 280-2  
 Nian Gengyao 181n11  
 Nianbo, see Ledu  
 Nianduhu, see Gnyan thog  
 Niangniang 160-1, 172  
 Nietupski, Paul 89, 309  
 Nijia Village 142, 143, 148, 171, 177  
 Ningxia 119n19, 132n105, 147  
 Niuqi Village 38  
 Niutou Wang 183-4  
 nomads, see pastoralism  
 Nongchang Village 203, 215, 217, 236  
 Nor lda bkra shis 246  
 Nornang, Nawang 94n6, 100, 309  
 Nub byang du nyi ma 263n15  
 Nub du zla ba 236n15  
 Nuo Shuangxihua 192, 205, 208, 212, 222, 230, 232, 236  
 Nuoqia Village 236  
 Nye sring 245
- O chi go bu me thu me lun 243-6  
 O chi hu sun 244  
 O hu me tu 244  
 omens 58-9

- oral traditions  
 folktales 23, 178-88, 254  
 song 9, 63, 69, 93, 106-113, 162-71, 176, 191, 254, 272, 296  
 speeches/ oratory 176, 254, 284, 300
- Ordos 131-6, 145-6, 156, 158, 159, 175  
 origins 7, 11, 18-22, 145, 242-250  
 ox 36, 75
- pA ren, see Baarin  
 Pad spungs stupa 261  
 pallenqin 34, 44, 67, 266-7  
 Panchen Lama 206n5  
 pastoralism 32, 69, 120, 131, 135, 139, 244, 251, 300  
 Pe dpa' ri lang 263n14  
*pe hu*, see *baihu*  
 Peltomaa, Marja 11, 14, 306  
 Pen hwa ri lang 263n14  
 Peng Wenbin 266n19, 304  
 Phun tshogs 178n1  
 Phyug rtse chos rje 94n63  
 pig 36, 50, 56, 60, 75, 144, 155, 172  
 Pin rkya tshi me 263, 265, 274  
 Ping'an 65n2, 69, 274  
 Pochu mixin (Eradicating Superstition) 65  
 Poppe, Nicolas 148n60, 309  
 Poston, Dudley 5, 309  
 Potala Palace 11, 178, 179n6, 182  
 Potanin, Grigorij 11, 135n120, 139, 178, 208  
 potatoes 13, 72, 154  
 Prjevalski, Nikolai 118n4/9, 309  
 Prunner, Gernot 189, 309  
 Pu Wencheng 89n27, 90n31, 93, 94, 304  
 Puba Village/ Valley 142n25, 172n118, 201, 202, 206n5, 211, 216, 219, 236  
 Pudang Village 35, 38n34  
 Pudong New District (Shanghai) 74n21
- Qaghuali Village 49n68  
 Qangsa Village 74  
 Qazi Village 59  
 Qi Huimin 106, 107, 113, 309  
 Qi Jianqing 23, 24, 25  
 Qi Tusi 119, 149  
 Qi Wenlan 236  
 Qi Zhengxian 25  
 Qian Xiong 5, 309  
 Qianhe Township 10n7, 141n3  
 Qianjin Village 236  
 Qianlong Emperor 91, 99  
 Qiao Dongmei 236  
 Qiao Shenghua 26  
 Qighaan Dawa Village 8, 40, 41  
 Qijia Laoye, see Suojie Ye  
 Qijia Village 142, 149, 154, 160, 162, 169, 171, 173, 175  
 Qilian Mountains, see Chileb  
 Qilian, see Chileb
- Qing Dynasty 7, 18-20, 88, 90, 94, 205  
 Qinglong Tianzi 161  
 Qingming (ritual) 298  
 Qingyun Temple 74n21  
 Qurixjang 38  
 Quurisang Srishiji Monastery 65, 70
- Ra 244  
 Rab kha 243, 247, 250  
 rabbit 106-14, 221  
 Rangdin (Longdong) Village 70  
 Rangghuali (Longyi) Village 46  
 Rar du pa sang 263n15  
 Rar lhor mig dmar 263n15  
 Rawson, Jacob 141n18, 305  
*rdo ram(s) pa degree* 95-7, 100, 103  
 Rdo rje 'jigs byed, see Yamāntanka  
 Rdo rje gdan 180-1  
 Rdo rje rgyal 259, 308  
 Reb gong 5, 12-13, 241-300  
 Reb gong rgan rgya 143  
 reincarnation 33n1, 36, 53, 65n4, 69, 94, 263n16  
 religious specialists  
*bog* 49-50, see also *huashi*  
 Buddhist tantrins (*snags pa, hguandii*) 47, 48, 85n5  
*fala*, see *hguriden*  
*fashi*, see *bog* and *huashi*  
*hguriden (sku rten)* 47-8  
*huashi* 160-70  
 monks 10, 32, 36, 39, 40, 44, 46, 54-5, 65, 67-76, 86-104, 120, 157, 158-9, 173, 179-83, 199, 253, 259-61, 270, 275, 276, 284, 285, 293  
*nenjengui* (seers) 45-6  
*yinyang* (Daoist tantrins) 160n95
- Rgan rgya 244, 247, 249  
 Rgulang Monastery 7, 8, 9, 23, 29, 32, 33, 36, 39, 40, 46, 51, 54, 70, 74-5, 84-105  
 Rgya bza' kong jo 178-80  
 Rgya hor 119-20, 141, see also Hor  
 Rgya tshang ma Village 11, 13, 276-300  
 Rgyal sras 'Jigs med ye shes grags pa, see 'Jigs med ye shes grags pa  
 Rgyal sras Don yod chos kyi rgya mtsho, see Don yod chos kyi rgya mtsho
- Ri lang bcu gnyis 263  
 Ri stag Village 253-4, 259, 266  
 Rin chen sgrol ma 85n7  
 Rino, Solomon 263n14, 266n19, 247, 312
- ritual  
 Bog 49-50  
 Chos skor 61  
 communal incense offering 270  
 funeral 35, 54-5, 71, 177, 209, 230-3, 252, 277  
 Glu rol, see Na thong  
 Great Prayer Festival, see Smon lam  
 icon consecration 162-71

- Klu rol, see Na thong  
 Lekyaihe, see Na thong  
 Lnga mchod 64-83, 261  
 Lu ba go go 268-9  
 monastic dance 290, 299  
 Nadun 173, 227  
 Na thong 266-7, 276, 289  
 New Year 58, 60, 103, 174, 189, 254, 257, 268-74,  
 279, 294, 296-300  
 Qingming 298  
 Smon lam (Great Prayer Festival) 102, 259-60,  
 291  
 weather 171-3  
 wedding 55, 58, 106, 107, 147, 174-7, 190-1, 206-  
 8, 224, 234-5, 252, 254, 257, 268, 284, 294  
 Wutu 242  
 Wudaiyang/ Wuyue Dangwu 174, 295  
 Zo wi ne ni 270
- rivers
- 'Bri, see Yangzi  
 Aral 142  
 Baojia 142  
 Bazhou 141, 146  
 Bsang (Xia) 243, 247  
 Bse 244, 247  
 Datong, see Julak  
 Dgu chu (Longwu, River Nine) 11-2, 141, 241,  
 251, 255, 266, 268, 276, 285, 296  
 Gangou 142, 143  
 Huang 20, 22, 24, 29, 141, 143, 146, 148, 158, 171,  
 173, 141n14, 148n58, 149n64, 183n16, 186n29  
 Julak 20, 22, 93, 141, 143, 146, 149, 186, 187  
 Molto 142  
 Rma chu, see Yellow River  
 Sangbura 142  
 Shdazi 65, 66  
 Wenjia 142, 143  
 Xing'er 142  
 Yangzi 247  
 Yar klung tsang po 159  
 Yellow 10, 12, 22, 115, 133, 140, 141-3, 145, 146,  
 148, 154, 158, 159, 172, 183, 242-3, 247  
 Zongge 148
- Riyue Dalang 161  
 Rka gсар (dgon dga' ldan 'dus bzang chos gling)  
 Monastery 259-60  
 Rka gсар Village 11-2, 251-75, 280  
 Rma chu, see Yellow River  
 Rma chu'i rab kha dngul ri'i sa bzang gri spyod rab kha,  
 see Rab kha  
 Rma lho 6, 241-300  
 Rnam rgyal stupa 261  
 Roche, Gerald 10, 13, 64, 310  
 Rockhill, William 118n4, 135n121, 310  
 Roerich, Nicholas 147n53, 310  
 Rong bo Monastery 241, 259-60, 268, 291-2  
 Rong bo nang so 245, 246
- Rong zom 85n5  
 Ronis, Jann 85n5, 310  
 Rta 'gying Mountain 251, 275  
 Rta mgrin 291  
 Rtse khog 244n13, 251
- Sa bdag sog po ri lang 236n14  
 Salar 106n3, 148, 152, 153, 159, 251  
 Samt'andjimba 10, 11, 116-137, 140, 154, 162, 166, 176,  
 182n14, 183n17, 187n31  
 Samuel, Geoffrey 147n53, 310  
 San'erjia Village 143n29  
 Sanchuan 6, 10, 115-239  
 Sānchūānsīlǐ 19  
 Sandman, Erika 11, 14, 306  
 Sangbura River 142  
 Sangjie Renqian 26  
 Sangphu Monastery 96n1  
 Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 86, 88, 310  
 Sangs rgyas tshe ring 251n3, 301  
 scholasticism 85-7, 90, 104-5  
 Schram, Louis 49n67, 89, 90, 94n63, 98n109, 139n1,  
 141n6, 145n45, 148n59, 191, 310-1, 306  
 Sde ba chos rje 88n19, 311  
 Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, see Sang rgyas rgya  
 mtsho  
 Se ra Monastery 178n1  
 sedan, see pallenquin  
 Sems mtsho 286  
 Sems nyid Monastery 93, 97  
 Sems nyid sprul sku bstan 'dzin 'phrin las rgya mtsho 88,  
 97n92  
 Seng ge gshong Village 11, 276, 280, 284, 285, 289, 296  
 Sgar thog 243, 246  
 Sgo dmar G.yang mo tshe ring 245  
 Sgo dmar Monastery 291  
 Sgo dmar Village 11, 245, 253, 254, 263, 267, 280, 290,  
 291  
 Sgo mang College, see 'Bras spungs  
 Sgrol ma, see Tara  
 Sha bar chos rje 94n63  
 Sha bar nang so 94n63  
 Sha Delin 25  
 Sha Heshang 184  
 Shaanxi 18, 19, 22, 119n19, 132n105  
 Shapai 182n13  
 shaman, see religious specialists  
 Shānběi 22  
 Shanghai 74, 288  
 Shanxi 22, 74, 132n105  
 Shanzhaojia Village 236  
 Shanzhou 148  
 Shaowa Tuzu 5  
 Shar Bla ma 271  
 Shatangchuan 62  
 shawm 47, 67  
 Shdanbasang (Shakyamuni) 67

Shdangja (Dongjia) Village 30, 31  
 Shdara Tang (Dalatan) Village 66  
 Shdazi River 65, 66  
 sheep 19, 155, 172, 177, 186, 187, 192, 263, 274, 285, 289-90  
 Shenjiao 159-70  
 Shgeayili (Dazhuang) Village 8, 29, 49, 65, 66, 74, 75  
 Shi Cunwu 25  
 Shina Village 141, 171, 172, 173  
 Shing bza' 244, 245  
 Shíyá 21  
 shrine 34-5, 39, 70, 261, 279, 290,  
 Shuangma Tongzi 161  
 Shuangshu Township 49n68, 62  
 Shuilian Dong 172-3  
 Shuimogou Valley 65  
 Sichuan Province 119, 155, 189, 230, 253  
 Skal bzang nor bu 141n18, 242, 243n5, 311  
 Skal bzang thub bstan 'phrin las rgya mtsho 93  
 Skal bzang ye shes dar rgyas 90  
 Skal ldan rgya mtsho 88, 98n100, 311  
 Sko tshi me 263-4  
 Sku 'bum Monastery 33, 70, 119n21, 154n80, 156, 158  
 Skya rgya (Jiajia) Village 64  
 Skyabs 'gro 270  
 Skyid shod sprul sku 88n19  
 Slater, Keith 10, 14, 15, 90n32, 144n32, 311  
 Smad pa 258, 291  
 small pox 31-3  
 Smeen Village 39, 49n68  
 Smin grol no min han 93  
 Smon lam (Great Prayer Festival) 102, 103, 259-60, 291  
 snake 40, 161, 162  
 Snying bo rgyal 263n14, 266n19, 247, 312  
 Snying rje tshogs pa 284  
 Sog rdzong, see Henan County  
 Sog rgya 141n11, 245  
 song 9, 63, 69, 93, 106-113, 162-71, 176, 191, 254, 272, 296  
 Song Ying 26  
 Songchang Suzhun 147  
 Songduo Township 8n6, 65, 66, 74  
 Songjia Shan Village 142  
 Songpan 147  
 speeches/ oratory 176, 254, 284, 300  
 Spun zla hor gyi rgyal po 178  
 Srong btsan sgam po (Emperor) 11, 141n9, 159, 178, 179n6  
 Stag gzig nor gyi rgyal po 178  
 Stag lha rgyal 287  
 Steenackers, Jean-Baptiste 135, 312  
 Stuart, Kevin 9, 13, 34, 64, 107, 190, 191, 195, 199, 200, 207, 209, 213, 222, 225, 301, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312  
 stupa 182, 243, 247, 261-2, 288, 290-1  
 Su Shan 26  
 Suddhipala Gege'en 244, 246  
 Sughuangghuali (Subugou) Village 49n69  
 Sullivan, Brenton 9, 84, 85, 86, 89, 312  
 Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor 88  
 Sun Wukong 184-5  
 Sunbu (Songbu) Lama 74  
 Suojie Ye 160, 184  
 Suke Mountain 172n118  
 Suzhou 143, 189  
 Suzhou Xinzhi 143, 148  
 swing 272-3  
  
 Ta'er Si, see Sku 'bum  
 Taishan 106n1  
 Taizi Township 26  
 Taizong Emperor 178-9  
 Tang Dynasty 11, 22, 146, 178, 187, 205  
 Tang Xiaoqing 23, 24  
 Tangraa Village/ Valley 8, 40, 41, 45, 46, 74, 75  
 Tara (Sgrol ma) 178-9, 292  
 Tarab Tulku 97n91, 312  
 temple 10, 38, 48, 49, 50, 56, 57, 67, 69-70, 74, 75, 79-81, 91, 157, 160, 171, 172-3, 174, 179, 183-4, 244, 248, 263-4, 266, 268, 272, 274, 284, 288-9, 291, 299-300  
*thang ka*, see icon  
 Ther gang nyi wi 266  
 Thomas, A 128n78, 312  
 Thu me lun 244  
 Thu'u bkwan Lama 88, 89, 90, 91, 93, 302  
 Tianjia Village 160  
 Tianjin 121n29, 127n72  
 Tiantang 38n33  
 Tianyoude Hotel 23  
 Tianzhu County 5, 8, 26, 38n33, 93, 152n72  
 Tibetan 106-7 253-4, 280-2  
 tiger 45, 161, 186, 187-8, 228  
 To'u pa tsi 244-7  
 Tongren, see Rebg gong  
 tools  
     embroidery 191-8  
     farming 154-5, 285  
 Tshe dpag rnam rgyal 5, 306  
 Tshe hrin yan 245, 246  
 Tshe ring skyid 12, 13, 14, 251, 276  
 Tsho kha 245  
 Tshwa mtsho 243, 247  
 Tsi tsong 263  
 Tso ri ri lang 263, 266  
 Tso shi ri lang 236n14, 267n24  
 Tsong kha pa 9, 11, 64-83, 91, 98, 158, 159, 178, 180-1, 261  
 Tüdá 18-20  
 Tufan 147  
 Tughuan (Tuguan) Village 32n7, 42n43/44, 58, 61, 75  
 Tughuangang Village 30n1  
 Tühún 22  
 Tuìhún 22  
 Tuoba Yuanhao 147  
*tusi* 10, 90, 119, 146, 148, 149, 154, see also *nang so*  
 Tuttle, Gray 87n15m 245n29, 312

- Tuyu, see Manikacha, Mangghuer, Mongghul  
Tuyuhun 7, 22, 145n45, 146-7  
Tuyuhun Theory 7, 18-22
- Upper Seng ge gshong Monastery 276, 284n14, 290  
Uyghur 189
- vaccination 34, 61  
van Hecken, Joseph 118n6, 119n19, 121n30, 122n39,  
128n75/78, 129n85, 131n97/98/99,  
132n100/103, 133n107/108, 134n117, 312  
van Oss, Martin 122n43/44, 124n55, 127n70, 129n85, 312
- Walighuan Mountain 69-70  
Walighuansang 67, 69-70, 73, 79-81  
Wallace, Zara 147n53, 313  
Wang chen khri 90  
Wang Dongmeihua 236  
Wang Guoming 38n33, 313  
Wang skyA 90n32  
Wang Tusi 90, 149  
Wang Wenyan 26  
Wang Xiangyun 5, 313  
Wang Xianzheng 176n128, 313  
Wang Yanzhang 187  
Wang Yarong 189, 313  
Wang Yongqing 27  
Wáng Yúnfēng 18  
Wangjia Village 142, 236  
Wanli Emperor 18  
Wanzi 236  
Wāqúsīlī 18  
weather management rituals 171-3, 293  
Webb, Mary 200, 313  
Weber, Max 88, 313  
wedding 55, 58, 106, 107, 147, 174-7, 190-1, 206-8, 224,  
234-5, 252, 254, 257, 268, 284, 294  
Weiner, Benno Ryan 245n29, 313  
Weiyuan Town 7, 23, 24, 29, 31, 35, 48, 49n68, 74, 90,  
141, 143, 144, 149, 151-2  
Wen Xiangcheng 13, 107, 139, 190  
Wen Xiping 236  
Wenbu 147  
Wencheng Gongzhu, see Rgya bza' kong jo  
Wenjia Monastery 178n1, 157, 158  
Wenjia River 142, 143  
Wenjia Village 140n4, 171, 236  
wheat 8, 39, 42, 44, 51, 68, 70, 72, 154, 155, 173, 194, 255,  
293  
wolf 36, 186  
Wu Jiexun 25  
Wu Lanyou 236  
Wudaiyang/ Wuyue Dangwu 174, 295  
Wughuang (Bahong) Village 74  
Wujia Village 142  
Wulan County 69  
Wushi Monastery 158
- Wushi Village 236, 237  
Wutu 242  
Wutun (language), see Ngandehua  
Wuyangbu, see Weiyuan  
Wuyue Dangwu 174, 295
- Xanjang 47  
Xi'an 146, 185, 187  
Xia Guo 147  
Xiahe 243n8, 247  
Xiakou 108n6, 236  
Xianbei 146-7  
Xiaosi 90n31  
Xiawu Dongzhou 11, 14, 306  
Xie Yongshouhua 236  
Xiela 236  
Xifan 119-20n21  
Xikouwai 129-31, 132n104  
Xin Tusi 149  
Xin Youfang 209, 224, 227, 236  
Xing Haiyan 26  
Xing Quancheng 266, 313  
Xing Yonggui 26  
Xing'er River 142  
Xing'er Township 10n7, 141n13, 142n22  
Xining 6, 9, 30, 33n15, 35, 59-61, 63, 65, 70n16, 75, 94,  
119, 141, 146, 148, 149, 152, 160, 181, 183n16, 251,  
276  
Xining Zhi 148, 149n64  
Xinjia Village 142, 149, 160, 171, 172n118, 236  
Xinxia Lake 158  
Xiwanzi 116, 121, 122, 127-9, 133, 134n116  
Xiyngzi 130  
Xruu Aadee (Earth God) 41  
Xu Xiufu 26  
Xuangua (Beizhuang) Village 74  
Xuanhua 187  
Xuanzang, see Lama Tangseng  
Xuanzong Emperor 20  
Xue Wenhua 27  
Xunhua County 148, 177
- Yá'ér Monastery, see Ghada Monastery  
yak 155, 300  
Yamāntanka 89  
Yan Guoliang 26  
Yang Chun 23, 24, 25  
Yang Enghong 147n53, 313  
Yang lji tsho ba 252, 263, 266n21  
Yang Xia 26  
Yang Yingju 88, 90, 313  
Yangda, see Longevity Buddha  
Yangja (Yangjia) Village 8, 65, 66, 69, 70  
Yangjia Village 171, 187n30  
Yangtou Huhua 160n94  
Yangzi River 247  
Yar klung River 159



Yar sko tsho ba 252, 261, 263, 266n21  
 Ye su khe 243  
 Yellow River 10, 12, 22, 115, 133, 140, 141-3, 145, 146, 148,  
 154, 158, 159, 172, 183, 242-3, 247  
 Yesün-Temür (Emperor) 244, 246  
 Yi Lang 26  
 Yi, Jongbok 95n72, 313  
 Yigongcheng 147  
 Ying Zhongyu 27  
 Ying Zihua 236  
 Yingzong Emperor 19  
*yinyang* (Daoist tantrins) 160n95  
 Yomajaa (Yaomajia) 46, 49  
 Yon tan 'od 96n85  
 Yon tan rgya mtsho 247  
 Yǒngchàng 20  
 Yǒngdèng County 19  
 Yongle Emperor 20, 245-6  
 Yongzheng Emperor 88  
 Youning Si, see Rgulang Monastery  
 Yu-ning, see Rgulang Monastery  
 Yughur 143-4, 147, 148  
 Yul shul Prefecture 243n9, 247  
 Yun ci dmag 245  
  
*zan* (*btsan*) 39-40  
 Zan Yulan 236  
 Zankang Purghan 70, 38  
 Zanza Township 107  
 Zeku, see Rtse khog  
 Zelin Village 49  
 Zhahgu 67, 79  
 Zhang blon bzhi (Four Ministerial Families) 245  
 Zhang Chongsunhua 236  
 Zhāng Dézù 18, 303  
  
 Zhang Xiang 26  
 Zhang Xihua 197, 236  
 Zhang Yinghua 236  
 Zhang Yisun 103-4n152, 313  
 Zhang Yongjun 26  
 Zhangjiakou 116n2, 129n83/87, 187n32  
 Zhao Guilan 236  
 Zhao Jinzihua 236  
 Zhao Xiuhua 236  
 Zhao Xiulan 220, 236  
 Zhao Yongxiang 25  
 Zhaomuchuan 142, 143  
 Zhejiang 74  
 Zhiguanba, see Dkon mchog bstan pa rab rgyas  
 Zhili 187  
 Zhong Jingwen 23, 24  
 Zhu Bajie 184  
 Zhu Changminghua 211, 230, 236  
 Zhu Chunhua 190  
 Zhu Ernuer 237  
 Zhu Guobao 192, 208, 234, 237  
 Zhu Haishan 206  
 Zhu Jinxiu 237  
 Zhu Xiangfeng 25  
 Zhu Yongzhong 13, 15, 139, 190, 209, 311, 313  
 Zhuang Xueben 273n27, 314  
 Zhuānglàng County/ Commandery 19, 20  
 Zhujia Village 142, 216, 236  
 Zi ling, see Xining  
 Zo wi ne ni 270  
 Zongge River 148  
 Zonggecheng, see Ping'an  
 Zongkaba, see Tsong kha pa  
 Zooya Aanee (Kitchen Granny) 34, 43  
 Zushi 160-70