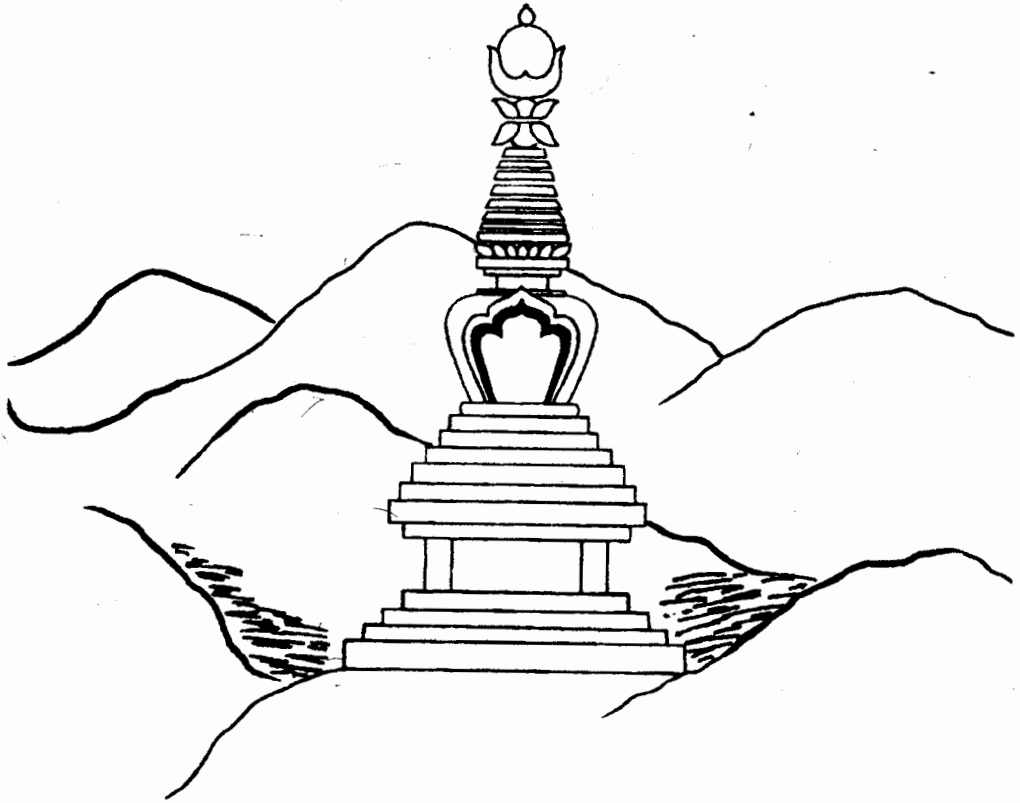


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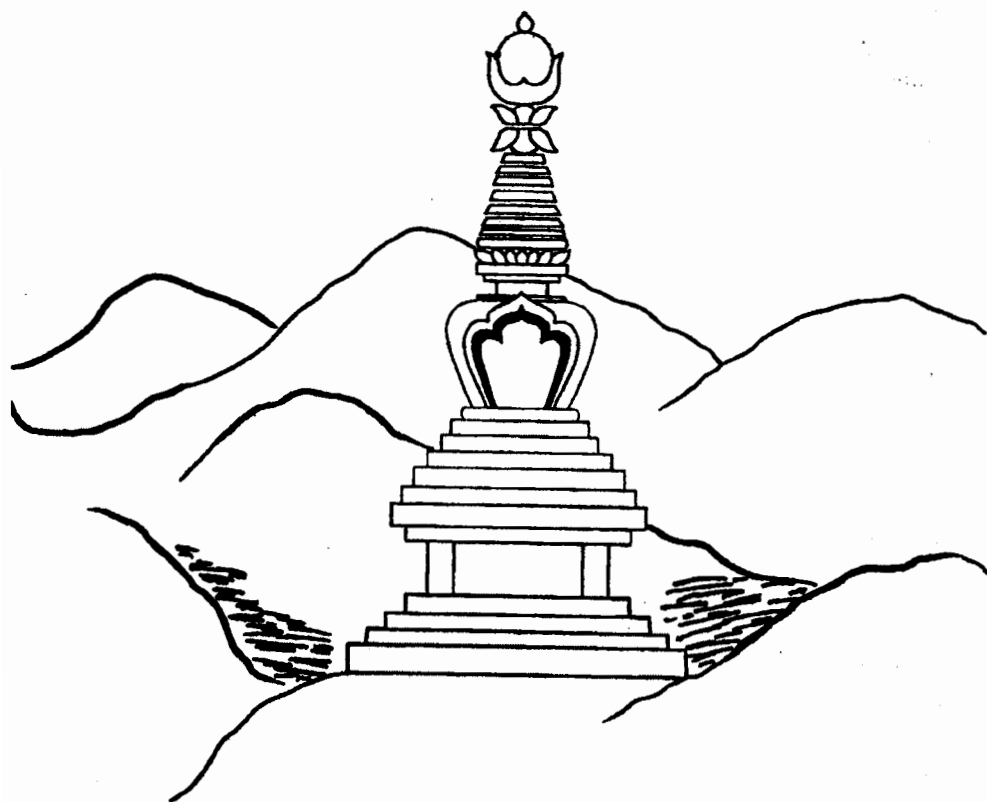
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MAY 2003

NAMGYAL INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY
GANGTOK, SIKKIM

The Bulletin of Tibetology seeks to serve the specialist as well as the general reader with an interest in the field of study. The motif portraying the Stupa on the mountains suggests the dimensions of the field.

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NAMGYAL INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY
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Submission guidelines. We welcome submission of articles on any subject of the history, language, art, culture and religion of the people of the Tibetan cultural area although we would particularly welcome articles focusing on Sikkim, Bhutan and the Eastern Himalayas. Articles should be in English or Tibetan, submitted by email or on floppy disk along with a hard copy and should not exceed 5000 words in length.

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BULLETIN OF TIBETOLOGY

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SACRED SIKKIM

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PRAISE TO THE LINEAGE OF H.E. YANGTHANG RINPOCHE:
MDO MANG GTER STON OF KHAM

GOS. PEMA GYALTSEN

The late Gos. Pema Gyaltsen, received the highest Dzogchen teaching, the Ati Yoga Tantra (*KHrid yig ye shes bla ma*) from H.E. Yanthang Rinpoche at his retreat house in Pelling, West Sikkim, in 1991. While receiving the initiation, Pema Gyaltsen compiled the following praise about the lineage and qualities of H.E. Yangthang Rinpoche, the third incarnation of Lha tsun jigs med dpa' wo (1682-1717) who is himself considered an incarnation of lHa btsun chen po nam mkha' 'jigs med (1597-1650), the Dzogchen master regarded as the chief propagator of Buddhism in Sikkim.

༄༄༄། །རྗེ་སྤྲོ་མ་མདོ་མང་གཏེར་ཚེན་མཚོག་ལ་གསོལ་འདེབས་

མོས་གྲུས་གདུང་ཤུགས་བཞུགས་སོ།།

༄༄༄། །སྤོང་ཚེན་ཡངས་པའི་རབ་འབྱུངས་ལྟ་བུ་རྟོགས།	
འཛིགས་མེད་སྤོབས་པའི་གཏེར་གྱི་སྤྲིང་བུ་གང།	
སེམས་ཉིད་ཡེ་སངས་རྒྱས་པའི་ཀ་དག་དང།	
ཡེ་ཤེས་རང་སྣང་ཐོད་ཀྱི་སྤོན་ལ་འདུད།	
ཀ་དག་ཚོས་སྤྲིའི་རང་ལལ་སྤོན་པའི་རྗེ།	
ཀུན་མཁུན་ཡབ་སྐུས་གཉིས་པའི་སྤོས་གར་ཅན།	

ལྷན་གྲུབ་སྣང་བཞིའི་ཙུལ་རྫོགས་གདོད་མའི་མགོན།

བདེ་ཆེན་རལ་བའི་ནགས་སུ་རྟག་ཏུ་མཛེས།

ཁྲིགས་ཚོད་ལྟ་བའི་ལྷན་པོ་འགྱུར་མེད་ཅེས།

ནམ་ཀུན་བརྗིད་པའི་རྫོགས་ཚེན་རྟོགས་པའི་རྒྱལ།

མོད་ཀྱལ་སྣང་བཞིའི་བང་རིམ་གཤེས་སུ་གནས།

སྐྱེ་འབྱུལ་འོད་ལུས་ཚེན་པོའི་ལྷ་བསལ་ལ་འདུད།

རིག་པའི་རོ་བོ་ཡེ་ནས་བསལ་ཐོབ་བྲལ།

སྐྱེ་གསུམ་ལྷན་རྫོགས་ཡེ་གྲོལ་གདོད་མའི་གཤེས།

རེ་དྲོགས་སྤངས་པས་ཡེ་དག་རྟོགས་པའི་རྒྱལ།

སྐྱེ་བསམ་བརྗོད་གྲོལ་ཡེ་གཤེས་སྤྲེལ་ལ་འདུད།

མདོ་རྒྱད་རབ་འབྱམས་རྒྱ་མཚོར་མངའ་དབང་བསྐྱུར།

མདུང་རབ་མཁའ་གྲུབ་དུ་མའི་གཙུག་ན་མཛེས།

གཏེར་ཚོས་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་དབྱིངས་མཚོད་གདམ་པའི་བརྟུང།

སྟོན་མཁའ་བདག་གི་འདྲེན་མཚོག་གཏན་གྱི་སྐྱབས།

བརྒྱན་གསུམ་རིག་འཛིན་ཞལ་ལུང་འདུས་པའི་མདོ། |

བཀའ་གཏེར་དག་སྣང་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གདམ་པ་མུང། |

སློན་གྲོལ་ཀ་དག་ཁྲིགས་ཚོད་དཔྱིས་ཕྱིན་གཏེར། |

གང་འདུལ་ཁམས་ལྟར་མཐའ་ཡས་ཟབ་དོན་སྟོན། |

མདོ་ལྡེ་ལ་སོགས་ལེགས་གསུངས་ཚོས་གྱི་མདོ། |

མུང་བོའི་ལུང་རིགས་དང་སྐྱར་མཁུན་དཔྱོད་མུང། |

གཏེར་ཚོས་ལ་སོགས་མདོ་རྒྱད་མན་དག་གཏེར། |

སྟོན་པ་གཉིས་པའི་འཕྲིན་ལས་འགྲོ་ལ་སྟོན། |

སྐྱང་སྲིད་གཞིར་བཞེངས་གཞི་ལས་འཕགས་པའི་ཐབས། |

སློན་གྲོལ་བོགས་འདོན་དབང་སྐྱར་རྒྱད་བཤད་དང། |

མན་དག་གཏེར་བྱེ་བྱེར་སོ་གསུམ་གྱི་གནད། |

སྟོན་མཛད་བཀའ་དྲིན་གསུམ་ལྟར་རིགས་གྱི་བདག |

སྐྱ་གསུམ་སྐྱ་མིང་འབྱུང་བཞིའི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་དང་། |

དེག་པའི་སྐྱ་མིང་འཁོར་འདས་ཅུ་གན་དཔེ། |

སེམས་ཀྱི་སྐྱ་མིང་སྐོ་གསུམ་སྐྱོང་ཚུལ་སྟོན། |

དོ་སྐྱོད་ལུགས་ཀྱི་གདམ་པའི་སྟོན་འགྲོ་ཟབ། |

སྐྱ་བཞིའི་ས་བོན་འདེབས་ཕྱེད་སྒྲིབ་ཕྱེད་དབང་། |

དེས་ཚིག་སྐོ་ནས་ལྟ་སྐོམ་དོ་སྐྱོད་པའི། |

རང་བཞིན་འོད་གསལ་རྗོགས་ཚེན་སྒྲིང་ཐིག་གིས། |

ལྟ་སྐོམ་མངོན་སུམ་སྟོན་པའི་གདམ་པ་བསྐྱབས། |

དབང་ཚོན་སྐོམ་ཚེན་ལ་བརྒྱ་ཁྲིགས་ཚོད་དང་། |

བརྩོན་འགྲུས་ཚེན་པོ་སྐྱ་གསུམ་ལམ་སྐྱང་སྟོན། |

ཐོད་གྲལ་བྱུང་གི་གདམ་པའི་བྱུང་ཚོས་རྣམས། |

མན་ངག་སྟེ་ཡི་ལུགས་འདི་གདམ་པའི་མཚོག། |

ཁྲིགས་ཚོད་དབང་པོའི་བྱུང་གི་ཐུན་མོང་པ། |

སྐྱང་བ་སེམས་དང་སེམས་ནི་སྐྱོང་བ་དང་། |

སྒྲོང་པ་རིག་པར་ངོ་སྤྲོད་ལྟོག་ལྟར་ལ། |

དབྱིངས་རིག་གཉིས་མེད་ཚོས་སྐྱོན་ལ་བསྟགས། |

ཐུན་མིན་མངོན་སུམ་ཅར་ཐོག་ཅོག་བཞག་བཞིས། |

གད་མོ་བཅུ་གཉིས་ཚིག་དོན་བརྒྱད་ཀྱི་དོན། |

སེམས་ཀྱི་ངོ་བོ་ཡི་ནས་རང་གོ་ལ་བ། |

རིག་པའི་ངོ་སྤྲོད་དང་པོར་སྐྱོན་ལ་བསྟགས། |

འོད་གསལ་ཚེན་པོ་ཐོད་ཀྱི་ལ་ལམ་མཚོག་ནི། |

ཁྲེགས་ཚོད་ལས་འཕགས་ཁྱུང་ཚོས་བདུན་བཞེད་པས། |

བསྐོམས་ན་འོད་ལུས་སྐྱོ་གོ་ལ་གནད་ཡོད་པས། |

མན་ངག་སྡེ་ལས་སྡིང་ཐིག་ལུགས་འདི་བསྟགས། |

རྒྱུང་སེམས་ཉོན་མོངས་སྐྱེད་པའི་ལས་བྱེད་པས། |

དག་བྱེད་དགུ་ལྷག་རྒྱུང་འབྱུང་ལ་སོགས་ཀྱི། |

འབྱུང་བཞིའི་ལས་རྒྱུང་དག་ས་ཡེ་ཤེས་རྒྱུང་། |

སྐྱོན་མ་བཞིར་སྐྱིན་སྣང་བཞི་ཅུ་ལ་རྫོགས་བསྟགས། |

གང་བྱུང་བརྟགས་པས་གཞི་མེད་ཅུ་བྲལ་གཤིས། |

གར་གནས་བརྟགས་པས་གནས་བྲལ་འགག་མེད་འཆར། |

གར་འགོ་བརྟགས་པས་རིག་སྟོང་འགོ་ལོང་བྲལ། |

འཁོར་འདས་དབྱེར་མེད་གདོད་མའི་གཞི་ཡི་དབྱིངས། |

མདོར་ན་ལྷ་བ་ཀ་དག་ཁྲིགས་ཚོད་དང་། |

སྒོམ་པ་ལྷན་གྲུབ་ཐོད་ཀྱི་སྣང་བཞིའི་ཁྲིད། |

སྡེ་གསུམ་གྲོང་དགའའི་སྡིང་པོ་སྡིང་ཐིག་གི། |

ཉམས་ལེན་ཟབ་རྒྱས་བསྐྱབ་ལ་གཞོལ་པར་ཤོག། |

དབང་རྩོན་རྒྱ་སྟོབས་གདོད་དབྱིངས་ཚོ་འདྲིར་གྲོལ། |

དབང་རྩལ་བར་དོར་འཚང་རྒྱ་གདམས་དག་དང་། |

ཐ་མའི་དབང་པོ་རང་བཞིན་སྐྱུལ་ཞིང་ལྡར། |

དབྱགས་འབྱེན་གདམ་པའི་ཅུལ་ཀུན་རྩོགས་པར་ཤོག། |

ད་དུང་གང་གི་རྩལ་སྟེད་བྱགས་དམ་མཐིལ། |

བྱང་ཚེན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་དོགས་སུ་འཇུག་པའི་ཚོས། |

བདག་སོགས་དད་གྲུས་མོས་ལྡན་མཁའ་མཉམ་འགོར། |

རྗེས་ཚགས་སྒྲིང་རྗེའི་མཛོད་ཁྱོད་སྐྱུལ་དུ་གསོལ། |

མུང་མུང་འགོ་བའི་གཉེན་གཅིག་དྲིན་ཅན་རྗེ། |

ཡང་ཡང་ཐུགས་རྗེ་རྒྱ་མཚོས་རྗེས་དགོངས་ཏེ། |

མཛོད་མཛོད་གཙུག་རྒྱན་སྤྲོ་བར་རྟག་ཏུ་ལྷམ། |

དུང་དུང་སྒྲིང་བའི་མཐར་ཡང་ཐུགས་བརྩུད་སྐྱོལ། |

ཅེས་མན་ངག་སྒྲིང་ཐིག་གི་བསྟན་པའི་སྐོག་གིང་བཏ་ཚེན་བིམལམིའུའི་སྐུལ་པ་འབྲས་མོ་ལྗོངས་ཀྱི་
 བསྟན་པའི་སྐོག་འབྲེད་འབྲས་ལྗོངས་རྗོགས་ཚེན་པ་ཏེ་རུ་ཀ་པ་ལྷ་བརྩུན་ནམ་མཁའ་འཇིགས་མེད་ཀྱི་
 རྣམ་རྣམ་རྗེ་མདོ་མང་གཏེར་ཚེན་ཁག་འབྲུང་འཇིགས་མེད་དཔའ་བོའི་སྐྱེ་ལྗོངས་གསུམ་པ་ཐོས་གྲོལ་
 མཚན་གྱི་སྐོར་ནས་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་ན་རྗེ་རྗེ་བདེ་ཚེན་གླིང་པ་ལྷ་སྐབས་རྗེ་གྲུབ་དབང་གཡང་ཐང་འིན་པོ་
 ཚེ་ཀུན་བཟང་རྗོ་རྗེ་འཆང་ཚེན་དང་ལལ་མི་གཉིས་པའི་ལལ་སྤྲན་སྤྲན་གྱིས་རྗོགས་ཚེན་གྱི་ཁྲིད་ཡིག་
 ཀུན་གྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་གདོད་མའི་རྒྱལ་པོའི་གདམ་པའི་མཐིལ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་དབྱིངས་མཛོད་ཚེན་མོ་རྗོགས་
 པ་ཚེན་པོ་སྐོང་ཚེན་སྒྲིང་ཐིག་གི་གདོད་མའི་མགོན་པོའི་ལམ་གྱི་རིམ་པའི་ཁྲིད་ཡིག་ཡེ་ཤེས་བྲམ་
 སྐུལ་བའི་དད་དམ་འགྱུར་མེད་འཆང་བ་གང་གི་སྐོབ་མའི་ཡང་ཐ་མང་དུ་ཐོས་པའི་བརྩུན་པ་འགོས་
 པ་དུ་རྒྱལ་མཚན་དུ་བོས་པས་ཡབ་རྗེ་བདུ་ཀུར་འི་སྤྲས་གནས་འབྲས་མོ་ལྗོངས་ཀྱི་གནས་མཚོག་རྣལ་
 འབྱོར་མཚེད་བཞིས་ལཔས་གྱིས་བཅགས་གིང་། གཏེར་ཚེན་བདུ་གླིང་པ་ཐུག་ལེབས་ནས་སྐབ་

གནས་བཏབ་པ་ལས་གནས་ཀྱི་མིང་པད་སྒྲིང་དུ་གྲགས་པའི་རང་ཉིད་རེ་ཞིག་བསྟེ་བའི་གནས་སུ་
 ཟེན་བྱ་ཞེས་པ་འབྱུང་བ་གསུམ་ལྟན། ལུགས་མོ་ལྷག་ལོ། བྱི་ལྷའི་དམར་ཕྱོགས་བཟང་པོ་གསུམ་
 པའི་རེས་གཟའ་སྲིད་པའི་མིག་གི་སྒྲོའི་ཉེ་དྲོས་ཕྱི་ཆའི་བདུད་ཅི་ཐུན་མཚམས་སུ་ཐུན་མཚམས་ཀྱི་
 རྣལ་འབྱོར་ལ་གཞོལ་བའི་བར་གསེང་ལ་མཐོལ་བྱུང་དུ་དད་འདོད་ཡིད་ཆེས་ཀྱིས་གསོལ་འདེབས་སུ་
 བཀྱིས་པ་སྒྲིང་རྩུ། །།

ལྷ་སྐབས་རྗེ་དོ་རྗེ་འཆང་གཡང་ཐང་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་མཚོག་ལ་སླ་མའི་གསོལ་འདེབས་ཤིག་སྒྱི་སྒྱུལ་དགོས་
 པའི་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་པའི་ངོར། ཨེ་མ་རྟོ། །བདེ་གཤེགས་སྣིང་པོའི་རང་གཟུགས་སླ་མ་རྗེ།
 །འཕོ་བྲལ་རྟག་པ་དམ་པའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་སྐྱ། །འབྲལ་མེད་སྣིང་གི་ཐིག་ལེར་རྟག་བཞུགས་ནས།
 །ཐུགས་ཡིད་དབྱེར་མེད་འདེས་པར་བྱིན་གྱིས་སློབས། །ཞེས་པའི་གསོལ་འདེབས་འདི་རྫོགས་ཆེན་
 ཀྱི་ཁྲིད་ཡིག་ཀུན་གྱི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཡེ་ཤེས་སླ་མ་ལུ་དུས་གནང་བ་ལགས།།

BRAG DKAR BKRA SHIS SDINGS KYI SKU 'BUM:¹
 THE TEXT, THE AUTHOR, THE STUPA AND ITS
 IMPORTANCE IN THE FORMATION OF RELIGIOUS POLITICS
 IN SIKKIM

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Historical introduction to the author and text

As is well known, lHa btsun chen po nam mkha' 'jigs med (1597-1650)² is accredited with the introduction of rdzogs chen into Sikkim³ and is also recognized as the key figure in the consecration of Phun tshogs rnam rgyal as the first Chos rgyal.⁴ In order to shed light on his later religious and political work in Sikkim, it is important first to sketch out a brief history of his studies and the monasteries he was connected with in Tibet and the implications of these connections for his later work in Sikkim. Therefore, in this introduction to the text of *Brag dkar bkra shis sdings kyi sku 'bum*, I will start with a brief

¹ The full title of this text is: *Brag dkar bkra shis sdings kyi sku 'bum mthong ba rang grol gyi dkar chag mdor bsdus don gsal me long zhes bya ba bzhugs so*. I would like to thank Sonam Thinley (Tibetan librarian at the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok) for locating this text, Anna Balikci-Denjongpa for a copy of this text in U-chen and her continued support during my time in Gangtok, Tashi Densapa for his help and advice and Dangsang Namgyal for his help with some of the more difficult passages in the text.

² Tibetan texts = Italics and initial capitalized. Names = no italics and capitalized initial.

³ For further information on rdzogs chen in Sikkim see '*Bras ljongs rdzogs chen pa'i ring lugs* (the tradition of Sikkimese rdzogs chen).

⁴ The precise date of the coronation of Phuntsog Namgyal is an issue of some dispute. In '*Bras ljongs rgyal rabs* the date 1642 is given. However, the work of Dudjom Rinpoche (1991: 820) indicates the date of lHa btsun chen po's arrival in Sikkim to be 1646. The date of 1642 seems at first glance to be a date fixed retrospectively in order to make the formation of Sikkim contemporaneous with the establishment of the Ganden Phodrang under the Fifth Dalai Lama. It is, therefore, hypothetical to suggest that the differences in these dates could stem from the desire of the Sikkimese Chos rgyals to associate themselves more closely with the government of Lhasa. My own research into the formation of the Sikkimese state in the seventeenth century has not, as of yet, revealed any concrete evidence to suggest the reliability of either of these dates.

biography of lHa btsun in order to contextualize the later summaries and selected translations that follow.

lHa btsun nam mkha' 'jigs med was born in 1597 into a family who were the descendants of the lHa dynasty of sByar yul btsad po (southern Tibet). 'O rgyan dpal 'byor, a lama from the Bon po monastery of Mi nub dgon, in the hermitage of gSung snyan (1607) officiated when he took his first vows (dge bsnyan).⁵ Mi nub monastery, probably of dPal ldan mi nub g.yung drung gling, which is mentioned in Karmay and Nagano (2003: 441-45), is located in Nyag rong County, Khams (eastern Tibet).⁶ It was at this time that lHa btsun nam mkha' jigs med received the name Kun bzang rnam rgyal. It is said that he studied rdzogs chen under the renowned teacher bSod rnam dbang po, of Brag dben monastery⁷ for seventeen years. He also received key teachings from 'Brug sgra bzang po, bKra shis snying po, the Nyingma scholar sNa tshogs rang grol (born 1608), and the non-sectarian 'Ja tshon snying po (1585-1656) who is credited with sending of lHa btsun to open the sbas yul of Sikkim.⁸

This link between Bon scholars of rdzogs chen and lHa btsun chen po during the seventeenth century is an interesting one, given the later link between the Sikkimese Chos rgyal[s] and the central Tibetan state.⁹ As is well known, the political and religious environment was undergoing a radical change during the seventeenth century, with different religious traditions vying with each other for political power, authority and support in central Tibet. What is also well known is that, with the development of the dGe lugs pa authority aided by Mongolian military support, large communities of Bon pos in eastern Tibet, Khams, were severely weakened as a result of warfare between

⁵ Dudjom Rinpoche: 1991: 820. Further information about 'O rgyan dpal 'byor and his lineage can be found on-line in the TBRC (Tibetan Buddhist Research Centre) archives.

⁶ Samten Karmay and Yasuhiko Nagano: 2003: 441.

⁷ This is also a Bon po monastery, like the monastic seat of 'O rgyan dPal 'byor: Mi nub dgon, and like Mi nub monastery, it is located in Nyag rong County (currently in Sichuan province) at a distance of 28 km from Ri snang, the county town of Nyag rong (*Ibid*: 439).

⁸ 'Bras ljongs rgyal rabs 1908: 15 (English edition) and 2003: 38 (re-published in Tibetan from the palace documents of Yeshe Dolma).

⁹ Later Sikkimese history is characterized by an alliance of sorts (and even a state of vassalage) between the Chos rgyal[s] of Sikkim and the government in Lhasa. One particular example is the exchange of two government ministers between Sikkim and Tibet during the early eighteenth century. The descendants of the Tibetan minister still reside in Sikkim. (S. Mullard, *Yang t'hang rdzong: an example of Tibetan and Sikkimese alliances*, forthcoming).

different political groups. This general religious and political environment, together with lHa btsun chen po's links with Bon teachers, provide a context to the formation and the uncovering of the hidden land of Sikkim, which has been overlooked in the past. While it is evidently clear from the literature which was authored by lHa btsun chen po that he is clearly a Nyingmapa it is also clear that the boundaries between different religious traditions, especially Bon and Nyingma, was more fluid during the seventeenth century than they are today. Furthermore, the sharing of religious teachers associated with religious practices that transcend religious sectarianism seems to be a common phenomena during times of political upheaval. As groups with common bonds are more likely to unite against other religious and political groups in order to protect religious teachings and traditions.

Therefore, one could at least tentatively suggest a more complex position for the formation of Sikkim, a context which maybe is lacking in Tibetan historical sources. Furthermore, this context becomes crucial when translating texts relating to Sikkim during this period of Tibetan and Sikkimese history. For this reason it is important to mention wider politico-religious developments when looking at this particular text, especially when one takes into account the perceived role of lHa btsun chen po in the founding of Sikkim.

This role is further illustrated by the fact that one of his principal teachers requested him to go to open the sbas yul, leading to believe that this request centered upon the need, during a period of violence and religious rivalry and hostility in Tibetan history, to escape the politico-religious context of central Tibet by establishing a haven for Buddhist practitioners in general, and especially for those who were beginning to experience difficulties in Tibet.

In the 1640s lHa btsun chen po entered Sikkim and proceeded towards Brag dkar bkra shis sdings (above the present west Sikkimese village of Tashiding) where, according to the Tibetan documents, he is said to have resided.¹⁰ While meditating in the cave of lHa ri rin chen snying phug in that locality, he received the *Rig 'dzin srog sgrub* in a pure vision. This particular text is considered of great importance in a number of key Sikkimese monasteries.

¹⁰ Full details of lHa btsun chen po's life can be found in '*Bras ljongs rgyal rabs* 1908 and its later Tibetan 2003 re-publication; it is important to mention both these editions as some differences exist between them. Also '*Bras ljongs rdzogs chen pa'i ring lugs, mkha' spyod 'bras mo ljongs kyi gtsug nor sprul pa'i rnal 'byor mched bzhi*, by Khenpo Lha Tshering: 2002: 65-75, and more specifically relating to Tashiding (pp. 118-123) – *Brag dkar bkra shis sdings su zhabs pad bskyod pa*, and Dudjom Rinpoche 1991: 818-820.

Summary and selected translations

Title: *Contained within is the mirror which is the clear meaning of the collected contents of the stupa of Dagkar Tashiding, which brings liberation upon sight.*¹¹

The first part (folio 1-6) of the text starts with a reference from the *dGongs 'dus bka' rgya* in which is mentioned that Tashiding is a palace of deities and that in the centre of Tashiding is the palace or mandala of Guru Rinpoche. And so the scene of the text is set, by associating the physical site of Tashiding with the dwellings of many accomplished masters and divinities. The text then describes the physical environment of Tashiding. For example it states on line 2 (folio 2) that 'the eastern mountain has the appearance of a heap of many precious jewels' and explains the benefits which can be obtained here by making reference to the easy accomplishment of the four actions from any of the four directions. The therapeutic qualities of the water if drunk when nearing death are documented, which adds to the perception of Tashiding as a pure land endowed with innumerable physical and spiritual benefits. This is further stressed by the statement that Tashiding is the seat of Guru Rinpoche and thus carries his blessings.

In the three valleys of the hidden country, there is a place called Gro mo khud, where there is a stone stupa which appeared of its own accord and has a spring belonging to the *nagas*. Also in this place are foot and hand imprints of Guru Rinpoche. The text then describes Tashiding as a site of celestial wonder, stating that its environment is made from spontaneously occurring qualities and physical features

¹¹ The idea of attaining liberation from samsara upon sight is linked with other concepts of instantaneous liberation such as through hearing (*The Tibetan book of the Dead*). However, in this context it almost acts as an invitation to the devout to perform religious activities at this stupa. Furthermore, in order to understand why this can bring instantaneous liberation one needs to read the section of this text which details the relics contained within this stupa. Andy Rotman (2003), in his article *The Erotics of Practice: Objects and Agency in Buddhist Avadhana Literature*, discusses the nature of the arousal of *Prasada* (Skt. Pali: Pasaada; this is very close to *Prasad*, a word in common usage in India, which means offering) – faith, graciousness, serene joy – at the sight of certain shrines, temples, external objects, etc., which are endowed with certain powers (p. 556). Rotman goes on to state that the sight of such external phenomena, whether they be animate (e.g. a Buddha) or inanimate, arouse *Prasada* in the individual, a feeling that incites to make offerings. (p. 557.) Like *Prasada*, liberation on seeing this stupa is achieved through an outside agency, i.e. the object itself.

such as self-emerging mountains, stupas, lakes, clouds, etc. Furthermore, there is the association of people, dwellings and physical landscapes with the dwelling places of gods, and the belief that the people there are similar to gods, free of desire and selfishness. lHa btsun chen po then goes on to associate Tashiding with the teachings and proclamations of Guru Rinpoche by mentioning the visions and the setting and stating that it is the place Guru Rinpoche was referring to when he spoke of the hidden or pure lands as places for the specific practice of the Dharma.¹²

The text then proceeds to discuss the nature of the stupa itself and its contents. It mentions that while it was being built, rocks, stones and earth were brought there from many holy places in Tibet and India such as Bodhgaya, La phyi chu bar, bSam yas, lHa sa, and Kailash (folio 7). The text further states that honouring this stupa by making circumambulations and performing prostrations will confer the same benefits as performed on the sites where the stones and earth originated.

The text then describes the 'real' contents of the stupa, as follows:¹³

In the beginning was the form body, which spontaneously emerged from the unchanging and pure nature of emptiness and [is as] illusory as a dance.¹⁴ It is the depths of the non-existent [lit. untrue] *khechara* pure realm,¹⁵

¹² This association of Tashiding with the teachings of Guru Rinpoche is important if one wishes to understand the political changes that took place in seventeenth century Sikkim. Not only does this text bring religious reasons for the importance of Tashiding as a focus for the Dharma, its religious benefits convey an undertone of political and religious aspirations. Furthermore, the importance given to the association of respected figures from a past time lends weight to political formations of statehood (see Tosh: 2000: 63-75 for an explanation of this idea of historical legitimacy). For further details relating to the seventeenth century political situation in Tibet, see Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, vol I; Richardson, 1984: 28-43; Shakapa, 1988: 91-99; and most importantly Petech, 1950.

¹³ Tib. *Gdod nas rang bzhin rnam dag chos dbyings ngang / lhun grub rnam rol gzugs sku sgyu ma 'I gar / bde chen 'og min dag pa mka' spyod mthil / sna tsogs rin chen las grub khyon yangs mdzes / bedur sa gzhir ljon shing skied tshal dang / me tog 'bar ma rmos 'bru yis gang / brag khang gzhai med nor bu 'I ba gam brtsegs / 'khor yug rab mdzes zla ba 'I khang bzang rtser / gzhai yas rdo rje chos dbyings 'khor lo 'I gtsug* // This section of the text is written in verse, and in the process of translation I have attempted to convey its meaning rather than remain tied to the grammatical forms of the Tibetan language.

¹⁴ This refers to the form body, which in essence is empty.

¹⁵ It may be interesting to note that Lake Khetchopari in western Sikkim, is probably named after this pure realm. The Khechara pure land is the pure land of Vajrayogini,

which is unsurpassable. Which is created from the beautiful attainments of many various jewels and on a base of lapis lazuli a grove of generated trees, flowers which shine and a harvest which is produced without ploughing;¹⁶ and on this base is a stone house, the stories of which are built of priceless jewels, and upon the peak of an extensively beautiful lunar mansion is an exquisite environment, and the crown of this mandala is the *vajra dhatu*.¹⁷

The text then goes on to describe (folio 7-14) the main objects that were placed within the stupa, which I will now briefly explain. In the top part (*bre la*) of the stupa is a collection of tantric mantras and invocations of *Maha anu yoga* and *Ati yoga*. In the bell of the stupa (*bum*) are collections of mantras and invocations of the *Kriya*, *Carya* and *Yoga* tantras. Throughout the stupa are other important texts such as the *gsungs* 'bum by the great scholars of Sha lu monastery. Inside the stupa there is also the important text (*Gu ru thang yig*)¹⁸ which was discovered by the gTer ston Sangs rgyas gling pa (1340-1396), besides many other important religious texts by different authors.

who is the consort of Heruka Chakrasamvara, of the Chakrasamvara Tantra, in which her practice is described. What is particularly interesting about the reference to this pure land in the Tashiding text is that this practice of Vajrayogini and her pure realm is generally associated with the lineage of Naropa teachings (Kagyü-pa). What also is interesting is the way in which the religious concept of pure lands has been transferred into a physical dimension and this transference has implications for the understanding of the association of Sikkim as a sbas yul. Therefore the sbas yul or hidden land, in its physical form, becomes synonymous with religious formations and concepts, such as pure lands, and these religious notions are transformed into physical entities.

¹⁶ Lit. 'grain which is not plowed'. This implies that the physical location in which the grain grows does not require tilling nor harvesting, etc; rather, it is wild and bountiful. This refers to one of Aalokiteshvara's gifts to the proto-human descendants of the demon and the monkey. It is said in many rgyal rabs of Tibet that the Tibetans descended from a rock demoness and a monkey.

¹⁷ This passage is quite difficult to translate into English. However, what is being conveyed is the construction of the mandala out of the void and the stressing of the idea that in essence it is empty.

¹⁸ Literally this title means 'The religious history and biography of the Guru' (*Thang yig* refers to a genre of Tibetan writing which is basically gter mas of religious history and biography). *Gu ru thang yig* probably refers to 'O rgyan gu ru padma 'byung gnas kyi rnam thar rgyas pa gser gyi 'phreng ba thar lam gsal byed which is often shortened to *Padma'i bka' thang gser gyi 'phreng ba* (lit. 'the golden rosary of the biography of the lotus', i.e., Guru Rinpoche) which was 'discovered' by Sangs rgyas gling pa in the late fourteenth century (Martin: 1997: 55).

There are also fifteen pure relics of the Buddha, the teeth of Shariputra and further relics of Sangs rgyas gling pa. In the bell of the stupa there are relics from the white stupa of bSam yas, the great stupa of rGyal rtse and rTse la sgang. Self-emanated relics of dGa' rab rdo rje are documented as being amongst the contents of the stupa.¹⁹ The forearm bones of rGyal ba mchog dbyangs (one member of the first group of seven monks in Tibet and one of the twenty-five main disciples of Guru Rinpoche) are kept there as relics of religious significance. More relics of renowned teachers and practitioners, such as Nam mkha'i snying po, Sangs rgyas ye shes,²⁰ sKa ba dpal brtsegs, 'O bran dbang phyug, Dran pa nam mkha'²¹ and rMa thog rin chen, are there as well. There are also relics of Khri srong lde btsan, Santarakshita, rDzogs chen bSod mams rin chen and other important religious scholars and saints.

The text then describes the various sacred pills and locks of hair of well-established Buddhist practitioners that are kept within the stupa. For example on folio eleven, references are made to the sacred pills of the Sa skya pa and the hair of Thang stong rgyal po:

[contained within...] are locks of hair of the spiritual master Nam mkhai snying po, the wise and accomplished Virochana and so forth.... [also to be found within] is the flesh of Padma dbang chen, gTer ston Ratna gling pa, the clothing of the smyon pa[s] of U and Tsang and the meditation mat and clothing of Tilopa,²² the bones of Gampopa, the bones of the Thatagatas of

¹⁹ It is said that Dga' rab rdo rje was the son of King Upparaja of Uddiyana and the one who passed on the teachings of rdzogs chen to Padmasambhava. (Dudjom Rinpoche: 1991: 490-494.)

²⁰ This probably refers to Sangs rgyas ye shes, born in 832 into the nub clan rnying ma pa, who is the author of *bDud rtsi me long*. (*Ibid*: 607-614.)

²¹ The eighth century translator who is associated with both Nyingma and Bon traditions. For example, in mKhar sna Bon monastery, prayers are said to this figure on the tenth day of the second month. One can find many images and statues of this teacher and his twin sons in a number of Bon-po monasteries, such as 'Om bu bsam gtan gling. It is said that Dga' rab rdo rje was the son of King Upparaja of Uddiyana and the one who passed on the teachings of rdzogs chen to Padmasambhava. (Dudjom Rinpoche: 1991: 490-494.)

²¹ This probably refers to Sangs rgyas ye shes, born in 832 into the nub clan rnying ma pa, w in Nyi ma rdzong (western Tibet), dGa' ri monastery in 'Bri ru rdzongs, and Phug leb monastery in north-eastern Tibet (see Karmay and Yasuhiko Nagano 2003: 101, 112, 180, and index entries p. 806).

²² sMyon pa refers in this case to spiritual practitioners that break with orthodox religious conventions and practice Buddhism in ways which may at times seem to

Nyang,²³ the clothing of Vikramashila and the clothing of Milarepa (folio 13).

The text then goes on to list various other relics of lamas and practitioners from both India and Tibet. These include bones, flesh, locks of hair, blood from noses and items of religious clothing.²⁴ The amount and importance of the relics cited in this text give the construction of the stupa and its physical form a place within established religious conventions and serves as a tool to generate faith amongst the inhabitants of Sikkim.²⁵

Conclusion and Summary: the importance of sacred spaces in early Sikkimese history

Earlier in this paper I alluded to the importance of the establishment of sacred spaces during the early history of the Chos rgyal[s] in Sikkim, because of the nature of the religious and political institutions that were created during these early years. This period was not only a time of radical political change and organization, but also of the introduction of

contradict the established teachings. The most famous and recognizable of this group of practitioners is Milarepa. SMyon pa literally means mad or insane.

²³ Nyang is a region in Tsang, central Tibet.

²⁴ For example there are many relics from the lineage of the Karmapas and Shamarpas, which include locks of hair, bones and flesh. The descriptions of the contents of the stupa is contained within nineteen folios from page bdun (7) to page bcu bzhi (14). I have just listed the relics contained within the stupa of Tashiding. However, other interesting relics associated with the Kagyu lineages included in this section on the contents include such things as the third Karmapa's hair, Karmapa Chos dbyings rdo rje's clothing (the tenth Karmapa and a contemporary of lHa btsun chen po), Karmapa Chos grags rgya mtso's hair, flesh and clothing (the seventh Karmapa 1450-1506), and Karmapa dBang phyug rdo rje's hair and clothing (the ninth Karmapa 1556-1603). The contents of the Tashiding stupa come mainly from three sources: Indian masters and saints, Nyingma gter ston[s] and masters and high ranking Kagyu-lamas (more specifically Karma Kagyu, although there are references to articles associated with 'Brug pa Kagyu) with only a few articles from the Sakya and Geluk schools. This might suggest that the Nyingma School had better relations with the Kagyu. This is in marked contrast with later politico-religious relations in Sikkimese history, which were characterized by close ties between the Chos rgyal[s] of Sikkim and the dGe lugs pas of the central Tibetan state.

²⁵ While it is almost certain that access to the written text was by no means available for public consumption in the seventeenth century, there are people today who understand its importance and religious significance, suggesting the existence of an oral tradition pertaining to the text and the stupa.

institutionalised religious practices and lineages. It is therefore all the more important to contextualize the text, despite the fact that it deals almost exclusively with religion. Moreover, religious and political concepts were not perceived as diametrically opposed, but rather as part of an integrated system of thought (hence the terms *chos srid lugs gnyis*, the dual system of religion and politics, and *mchod yon*, the relationship between a spiritual practitioner and a secular sponsor).²⁶

With this in mind, the construction of Tashiding and the rest of Sikkim as not only a *sbas yul* but also a pure land (in the tantric sense), provided the dedicated practitioner with tools and benefits to further his (or her) practice and conferred religious legitimacy to political changes, physical domains and institutions. Therefore, when the context is based upon the desire to establish a new politico-religious state, it becomes important to formalize notions of religion and politics as a physical entity. Whether lHa btsun chen po endeavoured to do this in *Brag dkar bKra shis sdings kyi sku 'bum*, cannot and probably will never be established by evidence. However, in order to understand political and religious institutions within the Tibetan sphere, it is important to consider the need (on the part of those wishing to establish a politico-religious state) to elaborate and construct physical places as a focus for religious devotion.

In connection with the politico-religious dimension of Tashiding stupa in view of the creation of an integrated political state, there are other dimensions which need to be highlighted. Stupas have a social and cultural dimension, as by nature they are a focus point for religious practice on an individual as well as a communal level (festivals, rituals, etc.) and, as other sacred spaces, they are therefore also used for social meetings and activities. Thus the construction of a sacred space is also the construction of a social one, destined to unite individuals and groups around a physical edifice as well as a politico-religious ideology. Tashiding stupa not only combines the establishment of a unified community around a physical structure with religious, political and social dimensions, but is also a symbol of Nyingma nationalism, its construction being associated with the changing political environment

²⁶ Seyfort Ruegg quite rightly traces this to the early history of Indian Buddhism and the requirement for political interaction between communities of Buddhist monks and Indian political patrons. Furthermore, it was this requirement that led to the construction of such terms as *dharmaraja* and its Tibetan equivalent *chos rgyal*. (*Mchod Yon, Yon Mchod and mchod gnas / yon gnas: On the historiography and semantics of a Tibetan religio-social and religio-political concept* (1991), and *Ordre spirituel et ordre temporel dans la pensée bouddhique de l'Inde et du Tibet*, (1995).

in which the Nyingma tradition is dominant. Furthermore, the Tibetan and Indian origins of the relics contained in the stupa as well as their sheer volume legitimate the existence of the Nyingma religious authority in Sikkim.

While this text deals primarily with religious issues, it also touches upon a wide variety of related ones and, perhaps, seeks to legitimate the opening of the sbas yul to primarily Nyingma practitioners. Furthermore the construction of the Tashiding stupa represented a focus point for religious practitioners who felt under threat in a geographical location which was somewhat removed from the political tensions of central Tibet in the seventeenth century. Therefore, when this text is placed within its complex context, such as the importance of safe havens during a period of political upheaval in central Tibet and the need to establish and justify such havens for weaker religious groups (the founding of Bhutan is also interesting in this respect), its religious nature (characterized by its constant references to Buddhist saints of Indian and Tibetan origins) also carries various important connotations for the political developments in Sikkim.

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ORIGINS OF THE BUMCHU (BUM CHU)¹ OF DRAKAR
TASHIDING (BRAG DKAR BKRA SHIS SDINGS)²

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According to Sikkimese cultural and religious history as related in old anecdotal accounts, Buddhism was introduced in Sikkim in the eighth century AD. The land was then blessed by Padmasambhava (Guru Rinpoche), who personally consecrated many of Sikkim's sacred landmarks and blessed Drakar Tashiding as the land's spiritual centre.

The present article seeks to provide a brief historical and legendary account of the Bumchu, the blessed water vase ritual of Tashiding, and its meaning. The Bumchu celebration is held on the 15th day of the first lunar month and is one of Sikkim's most important events, annually attracting thousands of pilgrims from Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal and abroad wishing to participate in the rituals.

Introduction to Sikkim as a sacred hidden land

Before we discuss the Bumchu itself, it is necessary to provide some background information about Sikkim as a sacred hidden land or beyul (sbaṣ yul) and the establishment of Tashiding as its spiritual centre. During the first dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet in the eighth century, Guru Rinpoche and his twenty-five disciples (rje 'bngas nyer lnga) are said to have visited and blessed this land known as Beyul Demojong (sbaṣ yul 'bras mo ljongs) or 'the hidden fruitful valley'. Thereafter, they tamed all malevolent beings and evil forces which infested the country, selected and blessed the sites of some of Sikkim's future monasteries and erected a number of stupas.

¹ 'Bum chu' means water vase.

² 'Brag dkar' means white rock and 'bKra shis sdings' means auspicious centre.

³ An earlier version of this article was published in the *Bulletin of Tibetology* (1992, No. 3). We thought it important to republish an expanded and corrected version of the same article because of its relevance to the theme of this issue and the importance the ritual holds in Sikkim (the Editor).

According to the *'Bras ljongs gnas yig* (guide book to the sacred places of Sikkim), Beyul Demojong had five great (gnas chen) and six minor sacred sites (gnas chung) which protected all living beings. Guru Rinpoche concealed innumerable scriptures (chos), wealth (nor) and sacred objects (dbang rten) in those sacred places and performed prayers for the benefit of all sentient beings, thereby entrusting the preservation of these treasures to the Dharma protectors and tutelary deities. He blessed and consecrated this land which thus became as sacred as his own heaven known as Urgyen Zangdogpalri (O rgyan zangs mdog dpal ri) and Kanchopalgiriwo (mKha' spyod dpal gyi ri bo), the divine vision of heaven, both realms of unlimited happiness where female divinities (ma mo mkha' 'gro) assembled like clouds and took up their abode. Likewise, innumerable Buddhas and the Bhodisattavas of ten directions blessed the land.

In the four cardinal directions of Tashiding are four sacred caves. To the east is Shar chok be phuk (Shar phyogs sbas phug), the hidden cave of the east; to the south is Lho khandro sang phuk (Lho mha' 'gro gsang phug), the womb of the celestial female deity; to the west is Nub dechen phuk (Nub bde chen phug), the cave of great happiness; and to the north is Byang Lhari rinchen nying phuk (Byang lha ri rin chen snying phug), the cave of god's precious heart. At the centre, Drakar Tashiding is considered the spiritual heart or navel of Sikkim. Indeed, Guru Rinpoche is said to have given teachings at Tashiding and to have blessed the area as the mandala of the Lama Gongdu (*bLa ma dgongs 'dus*), one of the three main Nyingma texts.

Later, in the fourteenth century, the great tertön (gter ston)⁴ Rigzin Godemchen (Rig 'dzin rgod ldem chen, 1337-1408) came to Sikkim and established monasteries and meditation centres at Tashiding and nearby Pawo Hungri. Following this, the reincarnation of Rigzin Godemchen, tertön Ngari Rigzin Chenpo Lagden Dorje (mNga' ris rig 'dzin legs ldan rdo rje (1512-1625), discovered the sublime *mKHa' 'gro'i mkha' lang ma'i rgyud* tantra or the sadhana (sgrub thabs, method of accomplishment) of Amitayus in the northern cave of Lhari rinchen nying phuk in 1568.

The seventeenth century was a turning point in the history of Sikkim. The kingdom was founded when the first Chogyal Phuntshog Namgyal (chos rgyal Phun tshoks rnam rgyal) was enthroned at Yuksum in 1642 by three great lamas of Tibet: Lhatsun Namkha

⁴ 'gter ston' means revealer of hidden treasures.

Jigme⁵ (lHa btsun nam mkha' jigs med, 1597-1650), Ngadag Sempa Chenpo Phuntshog Rigzin (mNga' bdag sems dpa' chen po phun tshoks rig 'dzin, 1591(?) - 1656) and Kathog Rigzin Chenpo (Ka brog rig 'dzin chen po). Under the patronage of Chogyal Phuntshog Namgyal, monasteries, hermitages and stupas were built and Buddhism was proclaimed the state religion. Following the revelation of the *Rig 'dzin srog sgrub* text to Lhatsun Namkha Jigme at Tashiding, Sikkim became the main centre of Dzogchen (rdzogs chen) teaching and meditation practice in the Tibetan world. Its followers came to be known as Denjong Dzogchenpa ('bras ljongs rdzogs chen pa).

Ngadag Sempa Chenpo, one of three lamas who had consecrated the first Chogyal, was a great scholar from Central Tibet. Together with his grandson Ngadag Rinchen Gon (mNga' bdag rin chen mgon), he established the monastery at Drakar Tashiding and consecrated it as the main seat of the followers of the Nyingma northern treasure (Byang ter) tradition, which was brought to Sikkim from the Tibetan monastery of Dorje Drak (rdo rje brag) by Rigzin Godemchen.

Origins of the Bumchu

In the eighth century, Tibet's religious king Trisong Deutsen (Khri srong lde'u btsan) requested Guru Rinpoche to teach him a meditation practice that would allow him to reach enlightenment in his present life. He explained that due to his administrative responsibilities as head of state, he had little time left for meditation and was anxious to learn a short but effective practice. Guru Rinpoche agreed to initiate King Trisong Deutsen in a practice which would help him gain emancipation from the cycle of mundane existence, known as the *THugs rje chen po 'khor wa las grol*. However, in order to perform the initiation, Guru Rinpoche asked for a vase made of special earth, water and five kinds of gems (rin chen sna lnga) collected from all over the world. When Trisong Deutsen explained that he was unable to produce such a vase, Guru Rinpoche agreed to collect the precious materials from India, Odiyana and Zahor and instructed the wrathful Dharmapala Damchen Garnag (Dam chen mgar nag) to fashion the object. When the wrathful Dharmapala presented the finished vase to Guru Rinpoche, he invoked Chenresig's (sphyan ras gzigs) blessing and empowerment to hold the

⁵ Lhatsun Namkha Jigme is known as the embodiment of compassion and the incarnation of Indian Maha Pandita Vimalamitra and Tibetan omniscient Kunkhyen Longchenpa Dema Ozer (Kun mkhyen klong chen pa dri med 'od zer).

initiation. While he initiated King Trisong Deutsen and his son, Prince Murub Tsenpo, Yeshe Tsogyal and disciple Verotsana, Guru Rinpoche consecrated the Bumchu, or sacred vase, which is the very same one that is preserved in Tashiding monastery to this day.

According to the works of the great tertön Chokyi Gyalpo Garwang Rigzin Zhigpo Lingpa (gter ston Chos kyi rgyal po gar dbang rig 'dzin zhig po gling pa, 1524-1588)⁶ while Guru Rinpoche performed the sadhana of Yidam Chuchig Zhal (yi dam bcu gcig zhal) as part of the initiation, the Yidam and the entire retinue of deities appeared in the sky and immersed in the water contained in the vase. This caused the sacred water to overflow and spread in all directions in the form of rays. That very moment, as a good omen, there was an earthquake and the four Dharma protectors and gods of thirty-three heavens showered flowers from the sky. This spectacular event was witnessed by the people who were assembled there who were overjoyed, and sacred water from the vase was distributed to all. Yet it was found that the water in the vase never decreased. Inspired by this, the sinful became virtuous, the pious realized lofty divine qualities and all benefited spiritually. Finally, Guru Rinpoche concealed the Bumchu as a sublime hidden treasure and entrusted it to the protective deities.

In the sixteenth century, Zhigpo Lingpa, the reincarnation of Prince Murub Tsenpo who had attended the first initiation, unearthed the initiation text and the Bumchu for the sake of all sentient beings from a monastery in Lhasa (ra sa 'phrul snang gi gtsaug lha khang). After the vase's discovery, tertön Zhigpo Lingpa adopted Chenresig, the deity of the same sadhana as his tutelary deity (thugs dam rten). During the latter part of his life, he offered it to tertön Tagshamchen (sTag gsham can 1556-?) of Ngari with special instructions. Tertön Tagshamchen then entrusted the Bumchu to his grandson Ngadag Sempa Chenpo

⁶ Zhigpo Lingpa is the reincarnation of Prince Murub Tsenpo who attended the initiation performed by Guru Rinpoche for King Trisong Deutsen in the eighth century. Prior to the initiation, Guru Rinpoche had instructed all present and his minister guarding the door that no one would be permitted to enter the room while he gave the empowerment. Prince Murub Tsenpo arrived late and being refused entry, drew his sword, killed the minister, entered the room and made a very precious offering to Guru Rinpoche for receiving the initiation. After confessing his murder, the Prince was judged by a council of ministers and sent into exile as punishment. However, during the initiation, Guru Rinpoche told him that the initiation text and the Bumchu would be kept hidden in a monastery. Later, Guru Rinpoche prophesized that Prince Murub Tsenpo would be reborn as Zhigpo Lingpa and would discover the Bumchu in a monastery in Lhasa.

Phungtsog Rigzin instructing him to install it at Drakar Tashiding, where it was to be kept in the heart of the most blessed hidden land of Guru Rinpoche. Thus, Ngadag Sempa Chenpo brought the Bumchu to Tashiding and installed it in the main temple known as the Tashi Geleg Gon (bkra shis dge legs dgon). He then conducted a special recitation of 13 million syllables 'om mani padme hung' following the same *THugs rje chen po 'khor wa las grol* text. At that time many unprecedented and auspicious signs appeared in the sky.

The Bumchu and its sacred water are kept in a miniature mansion (mchod bsham) under lock and seal of the Chogyal of Sikkim and the lama committee of Tashiding. Every year, a special recitation is conducted and the seal is checked by the high officials and lamas before the Bumchu is taken out of its mansion. The Bumchu is opened during the night of the 14th day of the first month of the lunar calendar, and three cups of water are taken from it. The first cup is for the royal family, the second for the lamas and the third is distributed among the pilgrims on the day of the full moon. The three cups are replaced with water brought from Rathong Chukha, which is also considered to be a blessed river.

In some years, the Bumchu's sacred water increases by 21 cups while in others it decreases or remains at the same level. It may also be found to be clear or cloudy, states that are interpreted as predictions for the country. When the water level increases, it is a sign of prosperity and when it decreases, it predicts a bad year of drought and disease. Cloudy water indicates conflict and unrest.

It is said that the seed of enlightenment may be obtained by drinking a mere drop of the Bumchu water. By this action, all distress, malevolent beings and untoward happenings are removed, prosperity and fulfillment are awarded in this life, and one may attain Buddhahood or be born in the Riwo Potala (ri bo po ta la), the heaven of Chenresig or Zangdopalri (zangs mdog dpal ri), the heaven of Guru Rinpoche, in the following life.

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A PILGRIM'S GUIDE TO THE HIDDEN LAND OF SIKKIM¹
 PROCLAIMED AS A TREASURE BY RIG 'DZIN RGOD KYI
 LDEM 'PHRU CAN

with English translation and introduction by
 MARTIN J BOORD

Introduction

The text presented hereunder lists the sacred topological features encountered as one reaches the gateway from Tibet into the 'Hidden Land' (*sbas yul*) of Sikkim. Revealed as a symbolic treasure text (*gter ma*) in Sikkim itself by a descendant of the story's main protagonist, it was transcribed into human language and propagated by the *gter ston* dNgos grub rgyal mtshan (1337-1408), one of the great masters of the rNying ma tradition of *guhyanmantra* and founder of the Byang gter (Northern Treasures) school of Tibet. Said to be the reincarnation of sNa nam rdo rje bdud 'joms, a close disciple of the Indian tantric master Padmasambhava and uncle of the 8th century Tibetan emperor Khri Srong lde'u btsan, dNgos grub rgyal mtshan was born in northern La stod as the son of a tantric *yogin*. Upon his body were seen many auspicious marks including sacred seed-syllables and black and white moles upon his head. When he was just 11 years old, three feathery growths appeared on the top of his head and when he was 23 there were five. Because these growths looked like the feathers of a vulture he became known as rGod kyi ldem 'phru can, 'the One with Vulture's Feathers'. Being a master of Buddhist Dharma, he also rose to prominence as *rig 'dzin chen po* (*mahāvīdydhara*), and this is the title which has been held ever since by each of his successive incarnations.²

Rig 'dzin rgod ldem is furthermore famed for his discovery of the 'Seven Hidden Lands', earthly paradises in which people could live happily in the peaceful pursuit of Dharma.³ Having opened the door to Sikkim, he is said to have worked countless miracles here and blessed

¹ Edited from a blockprint produced at Hüh ri dgon, obtained in Sikkim in 1994. Work on this project was carried out thanks to a generous award from the Stein-Arnold Exploration Fund administered by The British Academy (1993).

² For a biographical outline of Rig 'dzin rgod ldem and an account of his lineage, see M. Boord, *The Cult of the Deity Vajrakīla*, Tring, 1993.

³ In his article *Khembalung, the hidden valley*, Johan Reinhard lists the Seven Hidden Lands as: Khumbu, Helambu, Rongshar, Lapchi, Dolpo, Nubri and Sikkim.

dPa' bo hūm ri and the White Rock Cave of bKra shis lding as powerful places for meditation. In later years, his reincarnation also took out a treasure text from the cave at Lha ri snying po, to the north of bKra shis lding. The Chronicle of the rulers of Sikkim describes a local cult dedicated to the holy mountain Gangs chen mdzod lnga as contained in the work of a later Byang gter *gter ston*, Shes rab me 'bar. Sacred dances in honour of the deities residing on the five peaks of that mountain are annually performed by royal command on the full moon day of the seventh Tibetan month, and Rig 'dzin rgod ldem himself recovered further *gter ma* from the central peak. This secondary revelation was in the form of images: one of Padmasambhava in wrathful guise and one of the goddess mThing kha. Letters announcing these discoveries were dispatched to Tibet suspended from the necks of vultures.

Apart from the *gter ma* which he himself revealed, Rig 'dzin rgod ldem held the key to other lists of hiding places, and was thus instrumental in the unearthing of many more texts and powerful cult objects. According to the text below, one such treasure, which encapsulates the message of all 84,000 doors of Dharma, is revealed to be hidden on the mountain of Maitreya behind Guru bla mtsho, the oracular lake of Padmasambhava in the area of Chorten Nyima.

Rig 'dzin rgod ldem attained the rainbow body, passing away at the age of 71 in Zil gnon, on the neighbouring ridge to bKra shis lding, in male earth mouse year 1408.

Presented here is one of the texts propagated by Rig 'dzin rgod ldem which deals with the gateway area from Tibet into the Hidden Land of northwest Sikkim, an area of unrivalled scenic beauty and richly fertile soil known nowadays as Chorten Nyima. This name also refers to a mountain range of 14 peaks, to the highest peak along that range, to the general area and to a particular monastery. Chorten Nyima is an extremely active pilgrimage centre, with up to 100 pilgrims or more arriving from Tibet per day, and there is a retreat hermitage for one dozen or so nuns to the west. The three cliff-top *stūpas* mentioned in the text are the pilgrims' focal point, but of almost equal importance are the three sky-burial sites and the medicinal springs renowned for their eight attributes of pure water, which are now bottled and marketed in Tibet as 'Chorten Nyima Mineral Water'. The upper storey of the assembly hall in the local temple contains images of Hayagrīva and Mañjughoṣa, as well as a small spontaneously manifest *phur pa* engraved with an image of Hayagrīva. The rTa mgrin lha khang (Hayagrīva Temple) encloses the meditation cave of Padmasambhava

in which are to be found four highly revered sacred stones, one of which is known as the Stomach of the Mother Goddess and another which bears the imprint of the guru's foot, supposedly impressed into the rock when he was just eight years old. Popular folklore cites Chorten Nyima as the destination for all those who need to be purified of the sin of incest. A two-day circumambulation route of the area comprises the glacial oracular life-spirit lakes of the great guru and his consort. Our text speaks of a lake 'of the trinity of Gold, Coral and Conch' which may be three local spirits, or may be a reference to treasures held within the lake's gift. Its companion lake is unequivocally identified in our text as possessing oracular qualities. Most of the events related in our text are well-known to the pilgrims who visit the place, although in somewhat naive form. Our text makes explicit, for example, that the central player in the historical drama of the site was a simple yak herder recognized as the 'genuine embodiment' (sku dngos) or reincarnation of the famous monk Nam mkha'i snying po. Local tradition, however, believes Nam mkha'i snying po himself to have meditated here. The numerous springs of the area are known locally as Phyag phreng brgya dang brgyad, 'The 108 Rosary [Beads],' and are believed to have sprung from the actual beads of the guru's rosary, not from his words as stated in our text.

The three sky-burial grounds that overlook the monastery do, indeed, contain the extraordinary features of an unusual rock formation, etc., mentioned in the text. Pilgrims climb up on to the ridge to the east of the monastery where they throw themselves down upon the sacred earth in order to mimic their own death and connect themselves bodily with the promise of higher rebirth spoken of in our text. They then leave behind them some token pieces of clothing, hair, fingernail cuttings and drops of blood, with which these sites abound.

On top of the opposite ridge, to the west of the monastery, is a large rock bearing the ubiquitous inscription OM MANI PADME HŪM, beneath which is a short tunnel with a narrow opening. Known as the sDig pa dkar nag, it indicates a black, through shades of grey, to white scale of sins, and it is believed that the degree of difficulty experienced by attempting to crawl through this passage is an indication of the state of one's karma. Could this be the rock of Samantabhadra that is mentioned in our text?

Just a short distance south of this, marked by a grove of prayer-flags, is Gu ru sman chu, the spring of healing water created by Padmasambhava when he thrust his *khaṭvāṅga* staff into the ground.

Iconographic and mythological details of the various local gods and spirits mentioned in the text are to be found in the prayer books used in monasteries throughout Sikkim.

༄། | རྗེ་རྗེ་ཉི་མའི་གནས་ཡིག་གསང་བའི་དཀར་ཆག་བཞུགས་སོ། |

Herein is contained the guide to rDo rje nyi ma, a secret inventory

༄། བུ་མོ་ལོ་གེ་གུ་རྩ་ཡེ། བུ་གསུམ་རྗེ་རྗེ་འཛིན་པའི་ས་ཆེན་ཐོབ་པེ། བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་
 པའི་ཞིང་མཚོག་དམ་པ་འདིར། དབྱེར་མེད་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་འབྲས་ལྗོངས་ཀྱི་མཚོག་གྱུར་པེ།
 འཕགས་མཚོག་སྤྱན་རས་གཟིགས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་མཚོག་ལྟ་ཡི་དབང་པོ་བརྒྱ་བྱེན་དང་། རྗེ་བཙུན་འཕགས་
 མ་སྐྱོལ་མས་ལུང་བསྟན། པད་འབྲུང་ལན་བརྒྱར་མངའ་གསོལ་མཛད་པའི་ཞིང་མཚོག་དམ་པེ།
 ཐོག་མར་རྒྱལ་བ་གཉིས་པ་ཨོ་རྒྱན་གྱི་སྐོབ་དཔོན་ཆེན་པོ་ཉིད། ལྷོ་རྩུབ་སྤྱན་ལུལ་དུ་བྱོན་ཉེ་ཅམ་གྱི་
 དུས། ལྷོན་ཆེ་ལས་སྐོན་མཐུ་ལས་གྲུབ་པའི། འབྲས་ལྗོངས་རྩྱུ་རིའི་གཏུང་འཛིན་དུ་བྱོན་རྒྱུའི།
 ཡམ་རིག་འཛིན་མཐོང་མཚོག་མཐོང་གོལ་གྱི་སྤྲུལ་བྱི་ལྟར་རྗེ་བོའི་མཚན་ཅན། བད་ལྟར་གསང་
 ལྷགས་རྟེང་མའི་སྤྲ་མེ། ཡི་དམ་ཐུགས་རྗེ་ཆེན་པོའི་ལྷགས་བསྟེན་ལ་དུས་རྟག་ཏུ་བཙོན་པ་ཞིག་⁵

ཡོད་པ་དེ།

Homage to the Lord of the World (Lokesvara). In the beginning, here, in this holy supreme field of those gone to bliss (*sugata*) who have attained the great stage of Vajradhara on the thirteenth *bhūmi*, inseparable from the hidden land of 'Bras ljongs (Fruitful Valley),⁶ the best of all [places], the preminent field of the supremely noble

⁴ Blockprint reads *ra'i*.
⁵ Blockprint reads *brtsun*.
⁶ 'Bras ljongs is also a proper name for the land of Sikkim.

Avalokiteśvara, prophesied by the venerable Ārya Tārā and Indra, king of the gods, the holy supreme field in which Padmasambhava demonstrated his sovereignty on a hundred occasions, just before the time when the second buddha, the great *ācārya* of Oḍḍiāyṇa himself, departed to the land of the *rākṣasas* (cannibal demons) in the southwest, a son was born through the power of former aspirations into the family of Hūm ri in Sikkim, and his father was the *vidyādhara* mThong mchog mthong grol. Outwardly he exhibited the characteristics of a herdsman. Inwardly he was a master of the Old School of *guhyanmantra*, and at all times he continuously exerted himself reciting the propitiatory prayers of his chosen deity (*iṣṭadevatā*), Avalokiteśvara Mahākāruṇā.

གཡག་ལུག་གཅིག་ལྷོགས་གྱི་རྗེ་པོར་ལེབས་ཏེ་ལོ་ངོ་གསུམ་ཙམ་གྱི་རིང་ལུགས་བསྟེན་ཁོན་མཛད་
 ཅིང་། གཡག་ལུག་རྣམས་ཉིན་མོ་ཟས་ཁར་སོ་སོར་རང་མགོ་ཐོན་པ་དང་། དགོང་མོ་རྗེས་འདིད་
 མེད་པར་རང་ལོག་གིས་ཡོང་བ་སོགས་། ཡ་མཚན་གྱི་མཛད་པ་སྟར་ཆགས་སུ་ཡོད་པ་ལས་། ལྷ་བ་
 དང་པོའི་ཚེས་བཅོ་བརྒྱད་ཉིན་གྲུབ་པའི་རྟགས་སུ་། འཕགས་པ་ལྷགས་རྗེ་ཚེན་པོའི་ལྷགས་རྗེ་ཚེན་
 པོའི་ལྷགས་ཀ་ནས་ཏྲ་མགྲིན་དམར་པོའི་སྐྱ་གཟི་བཞིན་དང་ལྷན་པ་ཞིག་སྟོས་ཏེ་རྟ་སྐད་ལན་གསུམ་
 འཛེར་ཞིང་རྗེ་ཁང་སྐོ་མོ་འདི་ང་ལ་དགོས་། ཞེས་གསུངས་པས་། ⁷ རྗེ་པོས་དད་ལྷག་དང་བཅས་
 ཚོགས་གྱི་འཁོར་ལོ་རྒྱ་ཚེར་འབུལ་ཏེ་།

Going forth as a herdsman, responsible for both yaks and sheep for a period of about three years, he engaged himself solely in the recitation of *mantra*. During the day all the cattle and sheep would go off on their own to their grazing sites, and in the evening they would return by themselves without anyone herding them. In ways such as this he performed a whole series of wondrous deeds and then, on the 18th day of the first month, as a sign of his accomplishment, from the heart of the Ārya Mahākāruṇikā there emanated the blazing bright red form of Hayagrīva. Neighing three times with the cry of a horse, he declared: 'I need this delightful shepherd's hut.' Full of faith, the shepherd

⁷ Blockprint reads *bzung*s.

prostrated himself, and presenting him with an abundant array of offerings (*gaṇacakra*), said:

སྟིགས་མའི་དུས་ཀྱི་འགྲོ་བ་སེམས་ཅན་རྣམས་སྐྱིབ་པ་སྦྱོང་བའི་ཕྱིར། བྱེད་རང་བཞུགས་གནས་
 རང་སྐྱོར་གང་ཤར་གྱི་མཚོན་རྟེན་ཞིག་སྐྱབ་ཚོག་པ། ཞེས་གསོལ་བས། ཏྲ་མཚོག་གིས་བཀའ་
 ལྷུལ་པ། མཚོན་རྟེན་བཞེངས་ཀྱང་རུང་གཟུངས་ཞུགས་མེད་དུ་མེད་རུང་བས། ང་དང་དབྱེར་མེད་
 རྒྱགས་བསེལ་ང་ཚལ་གྱི་དུར་ཁྲོད་དུ་བྱ་བུ་སྤྲུག་ལ་ང་ཡི་རང་བྱོན་ཡོད་པ་དེ་ཁྲོད་ལ་སྟེར་གསུངས།

In order to purify the defilements of sentient beings in this degenerate age, I am prepared to build a *stūpa* as your place of residence, just as it appears in my mind.' Having been prayed to like this, Paramāśva⁸ replied, 'Although it is proper to erect a *stūpa*, it would be unsuitable for it not to contain any relics.'⁹ In India, in the charnel ground of Śītavana, there is a self-arisen image of myself in red coral, one cubit tall. [This image] is inseparable from myself and I shall give it to you.' Thus he spoke.

མཚོན་རྟེན་བཞེངས་ཏེ་བུམ་ལྗེར་ལོངས་པ་དང་། གོང་དུ་གསུངས་པའི་བྱ་བུ་རུའི་ཏྲ་མགིན་རང་བྱོན་དེ་
 བམ་མཁའ་ནས་ཐུགས་གཟུངས་སུ་ཤེབས་པ་དང་། མཚོན་རྟེན་གྲུབ་ནས་རབ་གནས་སྐབས་ཏྲ་སྐད་
 ལན་གསུམ་དུ་འཚོར་ཞིང་། ལྷུལ་ལྡན་ལས་འཕྲོ་ཅན་ཕྱིན་ན་སྟིགས་དུས་ཀྱང་ཏྲ་སྐད་འཚོར་བ་ཡོད།
 ཅེས་གསུངས་ཤིང་། མཚན་ཡང་ཏྲ་མགིན་ཞི་བའི་མཚོན་རྟེན་དུ་གྲགས་ཤིང་།

During the construction of the *stūpa*, while the dome ('treasury-vase') was being erected, that previously mentioned self-arisen coral image of Hayagrīva came down from the sky as the heart relic.¹⁰ When the *stūpa* was complete, at the time of its consecration (*pratisthā*), the sound of a horse neighing three times [was heard], and it is said that, even in this degenerate age, when fortunate beings with the right karmic connection go there, a horse's neigh can be heard. As for its

⁸ 'Supreme Horse', an epithet of Hayagrīva.

⁹ *gzungs zhugs*, lit: 'inserted support (*dhāraṇī*)'.

¹⁰ *thugs gzungs*, 'mental support'.

name, it is known as the 'Hayagrīva's *Stūpa* of Peace' (rTa mgrin zhi ba'i mchod rten).

གཞན་ཡང་རྟ་མཚོག་གིས་ལུང་བསྟན་བཀའ་སྩལ་བམ། ཨོ་རྒྱུ་ཚེན་པོ་ལྟོ་རྒྱབ་དུ་ཕེབས་པའི་དུས་ཉེ་
བར་ཡོད་དོ། བྱོད་ཀྱང་གསོལ་བ་ཡང་ཡང་ཐོབ། ཅེས་གསུངས་སོ།

Furthermore, Paramāśva uttered this prophecy: 'Now the time is approaching when the great [guru of] Oḍḍiāyṅa (Padmasambhava) will go to the southwest and all your prayers, too, will be fulfilled over and over again.' Thus he spoke.

དེ་ནས་ས་ག་རྩེ་བའི་ཚེས་བརྒྱ་ཉིན་ཕྱི་ལྟར་ན་གྲང་ཕུ་ཅེ་ལུ། རང་ལྟར་ན་བསམ་ཡས་དཔལ་ལྷོག་
རྒྱལ་ཚེན་སྐུ་ལུ། གསང་བ་ལྟར་ན་གངས་ཚེན་མཚོད་ལཱི་གཟུངས་གཡག་ཞོལ་པོ་ཞིག་ཡོད་པ་དེ།
སྤྱགས་རྩུབ་ཆེ་བར་རྗེ་བོ་ཡང་སྤྱགས་རྒྱལ་ལྟ་བུའི་ཕྱག་ལའར་ལན་གསུམ་བརྒྱན་པས། ཞོལ་པོ་དེ་
ཡང་སྤྱགས་པམས་ཉེ་གངས་རིའི་ལྗོངས་སུ་བྱོན་པ་དང་མཉམ་དུ་གཡག་ལྷག་བྱིངས་ཀྱང་ལུར་བས།

Some time later, during the tenth day of the month of Vaiśākha, there came a yak with a hairy underbelly which was outwardly the support of the mountain deities Glang phu rtse Inga. inwardly the support of the rGyal chen sku Inga of bSam yas dpal lcog monastery and, secretly, the support of Gangs chen mdzod Inga. The herdsman, being of a very violent disposition and full of arrogant pride, struck it with his staff three times. Thereupon, its spirit downcast, the hairy yak ran off to the land of the snowy mountains while all the ordinary cattle and sheep took fright and bolted as well.

རྗེ་བོའི་རྗེས་འདེད་ཕེབས་པ་དང་འོད་ཟེར་ཚེན་པོ་ཞིག་གཟིགས་སྐྱང་¹¹ དུ་བྱུང་བ་དང་། གཡག་
ལྷག་རྣམས་ཀྱང་སྒོ་དལ་ཞིང་ལྷིང་ཆགས་པ་བྱུང་བ་དང་། ཟ་ཉོར་མའི་བྲི་ཚེན་པོ་ཞིག་གི་སྟེང་དུ།

¹¹ Blockprint reads *gnang*.

ཨ་རྒྱུན་ཚེན་པོ་སྐྱ་དངོས་སྐྱམ་¹² པའི་གཡས་སུ་ལྷ་ལྷ་མ་མན་དྲ་ར་བམ། གཡོན་དུ་ཡེ་གེས་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་
 དང་། མཐའ་འཁོར་དུ་རིག་འཛིན་གྲུབ་ཚེན་པོ་མོ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཚོགས་དང་བཅས་པམ། མངོན་སྐྱམ་
 དུ་བཞུགས་པ་ཞལ་མཇལ་བསམ། དད་གུས་དག་པོས་བྱག་དང་བཅས་སྐྱ་མ་རིན་པོ་ཚེ་ལུལ་གང་ནས་
 ཐེབསམ། ད་གང་དུ་བཞུགས་དོན་ཅིའི་བྱིར་བྱོན། ཞེས་གསོལ་བསམ། ལྷ་རུས་བཀའ་སྐུལ་པམ། ཉོ་
 ར་ནི་པདྨ་འབྲུང་གནས་ཡིན་སྲིན་པོ་རྣམས་འདུལ་བའི་བྱིར་ལྷོ་རྒྱབ་བྱོགས་སུ་བཞུད་དོ། ཞེས་
 བཀའ་སྐུལ་པསམ།

When the herdsman set off in their pursuit, there arose a vision of a great beam of light, and the cattle and sheep calmed down and became peaceful. Then he saw what he took to be the genuine presence of Padmasambhava, the great master of Oḍḍiāyana, clearly manifest and seated upon a great throne of Zahor with the princess Mandāravā on his right, Ye shes mtsho rgyal on his left and with a retinue of male and female *vidyādhara*s, *mahāsiddha*s and *ḍākinī*s assembled all around. With fervent faith and devotion, [the herdsman] prostrated himself and asked: 'Oh, precious *guru*, from where have you come? Where are you staying now? What is the purpose of your journey?' The *guru* replied: 'Ho! I am the Lotus-born, and in order to subjugate the *raḥṣasas* I am departing now for the southwest.' Thus he spoke.

ཡང་རྗེ་པོས་དད་གུས་དག་པོས་སྐྱོན་རྒྱ་གར་མི་ཉིས་¹³ ལུལ་བསམ་ཡི་རྒྱ་ལྷོ་ལའི་བྱག་ཐེང་ཞེག་དང་། ཀེ་
 ཀེ་རུའི་ཉོག་གཅིག་ཡིད་པ་དེ་མཇུལ་གི་རྟེན་དུ་ལུལ་ནསམ། འདི་སྐད་ལྷུས་སོམ། ལྷ་བརྒྱའི་མཐའ་
 མར་¹⁴ མི་རྣམས་ཚོ་སྐྱུང་ནད་གདོན་རྒྱུན་ངན་མང་། ལྷད་བར་མི་དགོ་བརྒྱ་དང་མཚམས་མེད་ལྷོ་
 དེ་དང་ཉེ་བ་ལྷོ་སོགས་ལས་ངན་མང་དུ་གསོག་པའི་དུས་སུ། གཡུལ་བྱའི་གནས་འདིར་འདུལ་བྱེད་

¹² Blockprint reads *mnyams*.
¹³ Blockprint reads *mi tris*.
¹⁴ Blockprint reads *snga brgya'i mthar ma*.

ལྷན་པར་ཅན་ཞིག་དང་། གཞན་ཡང་ཕྱོགས་དང་ཕྱོགས་མཚམས་རྣམས་སུ་བྲག་རིར་ལྷས་ཇི་ལྷས་
 ཇི་ལྷར་ལགས་། ཨོ་རྒྱན་དུས་གསུམ་མཁུན་པས་བཀའ་སྤྱུལ་བྲགས་རྗེས་སྤངས་ཤིག་། ཅེས་
 གསོལ་བས་།

Once again with fervent faith and devotion the herdsman prostrated himself and, having presented a rosary of sapphire that had formerly been offered by the Indian *mahāsiddha* Maitrīpa and a top ornament of precious white stone which he happened to have, as the meditative support for a *maṇḍala*, he made this request: 'During the period of the final 500 years, the lifespan of humans is short and there are many diseases, demons and evil circumstances. In particular, the ten non-virtues¹⁵ [abound], as well as the five heinous crimes¹⁶ and the five that are nearly as bad,¹⁷ and so on. During this time, when much evil karma is accumulated, what special means of taming [living beings] can be found in this place of subjugation? What signs, furthermore, are to be seen in the rocky mountains all around this place? What do they represent? May the [teacher from] Oḍḍiāyana, you who know the past, present and future, please hold me with your compassion and explain these things to me.' Thus he asked.

གྲུ་རུས་གསུང་གཏོར་མཛད་པས་བྲག་ཕྱོང་དེ་འཕོར་བའི་རྒྱལ་གྱིས་། དེ་མ་ཐག་ཁྲི་ཞབས་ནས་ཡན་
 ལག་བརྒྱད་ལྟན་གྱི་བདུད་ཅིའི་རྒྱ་མིག་རྣོལ་ཞིང་གཞུང་རྒྱན་འབབ་བ་དང་།

The *guru* then made a scattering of words just as if he had scattered [the beads of] that rosary and immediately there gushed forth a spring of nectar with eight good qualities,¹⁸ and a stream like that of the river Ganges flowed down from the foot of his throne.

¹⁵ Killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, slander, harsh speech, frivolous talk, covetousness, malice, preaching false doctrines.
¹⁶ The murder of one's mother, father, or an *arhat*, the shedding of the blood of a buddha or causing a division among the *saṅgha*.
¹⁷ The rape of a female adept (*arhat*), the destruction of the root of *bodhicitta*, the killing of a monk or nun in training, the theft of the property of the *saṅgha*, and the destruction of a *stūpa*.
¹⁸ The eight good qualities of pure water are that it is cool, sweet, light, soft, clear, soothing, pleasant and wholesome.

ཨ་མ་ནོ་ ཏུས་གསུམ་སངས་རྒྱས་འདུས་པའི་བྲི་ཞབས་ནས་བདུད་ཅིའི་ཚུ་མིག་བརྒྱ་ཅུ་མཆིས་པ་
 ལས། ལྷས་བྱས་ན་¹⁹ བད་གདོན་བར་ཆད་ཞི་ཞིང་བཏུང་བས་ལས་དང་སྦྱིབ་པ་དག། ལྷད་བར་
 མི་དགོ་བཅུ་དང་མཚམས་མེད་ལྗེའི་ལས་ལ་སྦྱོད། ལྷིགས་ཏུས་སྦྱན་ལྷོ་མིང་སྦྱིང་འཛོལ་བའི་ལྷས་
 ལྷ་²⁰ དེ་ཏུས་ས་བཅུད་ཉམས་པའི་རླུང་གིས་²¹ ཁ་གོར་ཏེ། རོ་རྗེ་དམུལ་བར་འགོ་བར་གདོན་མི་
 ཟེ། རིགས་ངན་ལུས་འབྲེལ་གི་བའི་རོ་ལུར་བས་ཤེས་རབ་རིག་པ་འགག་དང་བྱང་སེམས་རྩ་རྣམས་
 བསྐྱམས་པའི་རིགས། མེ་ལོང་གཡའ་འཕྱིས་པ་བཞིན་དུ་གསལ་བ་ཡོད། འོན་ཀྱང་ཉེ་བ་ལྷ་
 སོགས་ཉེས་བྱས་ཐམས་ཅད་དག་པའོ། ཉེ་མའི་འོག་དང་ས་གཞིའི་སྤྲོང་རོ་རྗེ་གདན་གྱི་དབུས་བྱས་
 པའི་བསྐྱང་འཕྱི་ཕྱགས་མཛོད་མ་ལུས་བཀྲུས་²² བྱས་པའི་འདི་འདྲའི་གཞུང་ལྷ་རྒྱུན་ཡོད་མི་སྦིད།

Wonderful! From the foot of the throne where the buddhas of the three times are gathered, there come into being 100 springs of nectar. By washing [with this water], all diseases, demons and obstacles become pacified and, by drinking it, all *karma* and sins become pure. One should use this water particularly for the purification of the ten non-virtuous acts and the five heinous crimes. As a sign of the confused (incestuous) relationships between siblings, brothers and sisters, in the degenerate age, the wind of the element earth, which at that time has lost its vitality, causes harelip and it is certain that beings are bound for the *vajra* hells. Due to bodily contact with all manner of evil and the carrying of corpses of the dead, wisdom and awareness are curtailed and the channels of *bodhicitta* dry up. Even though such things appear as clearly as in a mirror wiped free of grime,²³ all these sinful acts, the five terrible deeds and so on, are purified. This [sacred spring] is the entire treasury of my, Padmasambhava's, mind and it performs an ablution just like the flow of the river Ganges which is unequalled

¹⁹ Blockprint omits *na*.
²⁰ Blockprint omits *su*.
²¹ Blockprint reads *gi*.
²² Blockprint reads *krug*.
²³ The text says 'a mirror wiped free of rust' due to the use of metal mirrors in Tibet.

[anywhere in the world] with Vajrāsana at its centre, beneath the sun or above the earth.

གཞན་ཡང་རྒྱབ་ཕྱོགས་ཀྱི་བྲག་རི་ལ་དོ་རྗེ་རྣམ་འཛམས་ཀྱི་གཟུགས་སྐྱ་དང་། དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་གྱི་རང་
 ཕྱོན་ཡོད་། དབུས་རི་གཟུང་རྒྱུད་སྟེན་གཞིའི་གནས་རི་། དེའི་རྒྱབ་ཕྱོགས་ན་གསེར་གཡུ་དུང་
 གསུམ་གྱི་མཚོ་ཡོད་པས་། མ་འོངས་ཇི་བོའི་གདུང་འཛིན་གྱིས་ཞལ་བྱས་པའི་ལུང་ཟེན་། འདིར་
 ཞིབ་རྒྱས་མ་སྦྱོས་སོ།

Furthermore, on the rocky mountain to the back [of this place] is an image of Vajravīdāraṇa and the natural manifestation of his *maṇḍala*. The central mountain is the sacred mountain throne ('base seat') of the planet Rāhu and, behind that, there is the lake of the trinity of Gold, Coral and Conch which is destined to be opened by a future heir of the herdsman, but I will not elaborate on the details of this just now.

དེ་ནས་ཤར་ཕྱོགས་སུ་རྒྱང་གཞགས་ཀྱི་ས་ན་བུམས་པ་གདན་གཞུགས་ཀྱི་བྲག་རིར་ཚོས་སྒོ་བརྒྱད་ཁྱི་
 བཞི་སྟོང་དོན་བསྐྱུས་གཏེར་ཁ་ཡོད་པ་། མ་འོངས་ཇི་བོའི་གདུང་འཛིན་གྱིས་ལེན་པའི་ལུང་བསྟན་།
 མཚན་ལོ་ཞིབ་གསལ་གནང་བ་ད་ལྟའི་རིག་འཛིན་འཇམ་དབྱངས་རྗེ་རི་རྟོགས་ལྡན་དཔའ་བོ་ནས་།
 བརྒྱད་ཐོག་གསུམ་ཚན་²⁴ ཀྱི་སྐབས་འདོན་པའི་དུས་རིགས་པ་འདིར་ཞིབ་རྒྱས་མ་སྦྱོས་སོ།

At a spot within earshot²⁵ to the east of that place, on a rocky mountain which is the abode of the buddha Maitreya, is the site of a treasure which encapsulates the meaning of all the 84,000 doors of Dharma. It is prophesied that [this treasure] will be taken out by a future heir of the herdsman. To be precise concerning his name and birth-year: it will be extracted at the time of the third generation from the present rTogs ldan dpa' bo of the Rig 'dzin 'jam dbyangs Hūrñ ri family, but I will not elaborate here on all the details of the family and time.

²⁴ Blockprint reads *tsan*.
²⁵ A distance of one *krośa* (*rgyang grags*), about 500 yards. Blockprint reads *rgyangs grags*.

དེའི་མདུན་ན་མཚོ་ཡོད་པ་དེ་ལ་ལྷ་ས་ན་སེམས་ཅན་སོ་སོའི་ལས་དང་སྐྱིབ་པ་ཅི་²⁶ ཡང་གི་དབང་ལས་
 བྱིས་འབྱུང་སྐྱེས་སྐྱར་བརྟག་པ་སོགས་གཤིན་རྗེའི་ལག་གི་མེ་ཡོང་ལྟར་རི་བཞིན་གསལ་བ་ཡོད་དོ།

In front of that there is a lake, and if one looks into it, questions are clarified concerning the future birth-stars and so on of individual beings that will arise due to the influence of whatever *karma* and sins they may have, just like [looking into] the hand mirror of Yama, Lord of Death.

དེའི་ཤར་ཕྱོགས་སུ་ཡོད་པའི་བྲག་རིར་སངས་རྒྱས་བྱང་སེམས་ཀྱི་སྣང་བརྟན་རང་བྱོན་དཔག་མེད་
 ཡོད་དོ།

On the rocky mountain that lies to the east of there are countless naturally produced images of buddhas and bodhisattvas.

དེའི་བྱང་ཕྱོགས་སུ་ཐེབས་པ་དང་མཁའ་འགོ་ཡེ་ཤེས་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་གྱིས་ཚོགས་གྱི་མརྟལ་རྒྱ་ཚེར་ལུལ་
 ཉི། འདི་སྐད་ཅེས་ཞུས་སོ། ལྷ་བརྒྱའི་མཐར་ལྷག་པའི་དུས་བཟང་དུག་སྣན་གྱིས་ནད་མི་གསོས།
 སྣན་པ་མཁས་པས་ནད་དོ་མི་སྦྱོད་སྣགས་འཚང་དམ་པས་དག་བགེགས་ཚར་མི་ཚོད་པ་སོགས་གྱི་
 དུས། ལྷ་རྒྱའི་འདུལ་བྱེད་ལྷན་པར་ཅན་ཞིག། ཅེས་ཞུས་པས། ཡོ་རྒྱན་གྱི་བྲག་མཁར་ས་དེར་
 བརྟགས་པའི་ལུལ་དུ་བདུད་ཅི་ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱད་ལྟན་གྱི་སྣན་རྒྱ་འབབ་པ་དང་། ལྷ་རྒྱས་བཀའ་རྒྱལ་
 པ། ཡེ་མ་རྟོ་འདི་ནི་ལྷ་བརྒྱའི་དུས་སུ་བཟང་དུག་སྣན་ལས་ཀྱང་རྣམས་པ་ལྷག་པའོ། ལྷོ་བྱང་ཡེ་
 འགོག་སྣམ་བརྒྱ་དུག་ཅུ་དང་ནད་རིམས་བཞི་བརྒྱ་ཅུ་བཞི་ལྷན་པར་གཟའ་དང་ལྷ་ནད་མཛེ་ནད་ཀུན་

²⁶ Blockprint reads *spyi*.

དེ་དུས་འབྲུང་པོ་འབྲུག་གྲུར་ཉེ་གདོན་དུ་སྡེ་བརྒྱད་ཁ་དར་བས་དེ་ལ་ཕན་ཐབས་གཞིའི་ཚུ་རྒྱན་ནོ།
 རྗེན་གྱི་ལས་²⁷ རྣམ་པར་སྣོན་པ་ནི་གང་ལ་ཡང་མ་གཏོགས་སོ། ཞེས་གསུངས་སོ།

Travelling to the north of that place, the *dākinī* Ye shes mtsho rgyal presented a vast *maṅḍala* of assembled offerings and made this request: 'During the final period of 500 years, when the six auspicious medicines²⁸ do not cure disease, when skilled doctors cannot diagnose illnesses, when holy *mantra*-holders fail to eradicate enemies and obstructors, and so on, for such a time as this [may the *guru* please bestow] his special means of subjugation.' When she had made this request, from the spot where [Padmasambhava of] Oḍḍiāyṅa had planted his staff, there flowed out a healing stream of nectar possessed of eight virtues, and the *guru* said: 'Ema ho! During the period of the [last] 500 [years], this [stream] here will be more effective than even the six auspicious medicines. It is a river Ganges, beneficial when the elemental sprites (*bhūta*) are in turmoil, spreading [everywhere] in the guise of the eight classes of demons, [an antidote] to the 360 suddenly-arising mental injuries and the 404 contagious diseases – especially to all leprous diseases caused by the demon Rāhu and *nāgas*. [It is an antidote to] any [problem] whatsoever except the maturation of former deeds.' Thus he spoke.

འདི་ནས་བྱང་ཚོས་སུ་ཁྲོ་པོའི་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཀུན་རྒྱ་བཟང་པོ་ཆེ་མཚོག་ཏེ་རུ་ག། ཡབ་ཡུམ་སྙིང་རྩེ་²⁹ རྗེན་
 ཉིད་ཐབས་ཤེས་མཛད་པའི་ཞབས་འོག་རྒྱ། ལན་ཅིག་འཇུལ་ན་ངན་སོང་གསུམ་གྱི་སྡིག་སྦྱིབ་དག།

To the north of this, should one enter just once beneath the feet of the supreme *heruka* Samantabhadra, king of wrath, who enacts emptiness and compassion, wisdom and skilful means, in union with his consort, the sins and obscurations of the three lower realms will be purified.

གཞན་ཡང་རྒྱང་³⁰ བྲག་ས་གཅིག་བཤོད་པའི་བྱང་ཤར་མཚམས་སུ། རྒྱ་གར་དུར་ཁྲོད་བསིལ་བ་
 ཚལ་འམ་ལྟན་བརྟེན་གས་པ་³¹ དང་མཚུངས་པའི་དུར་ཁྲོད་ཕྱི་ནང་གསང་གསུམ་ཡོད་པ་ལས། གསང་

²⁷ Blockprint omits *las*.
²⁸ Nutmeg, cloves, camphor, sandalwood, saffron and cardamom.
²⁹ Blockprint omits snying rje.

བའི་དུར་ཁྲོད་ན་མཁའ་འགོ་ཉེར་ལྷའི་སྐྱལ་པ་རྒྱ་བསྐྱེད་པ་དང་། མི་ལྷགས་གཡང་གཞི་³² ལ་
 སོགས་པ་རྫོལ་རང་བྱོན་དུ་ཡོད་དོ། གནས་འདིར་མི་རོ་དགོང་ཁར་བཞག་ཀྱང་སྡོོ་³³ བྱི་སྐྱེད་དང་
 མཁའ་ལྷིང་གིས་བཟོས་གྲུབ་པོ། ཚེ་འདས་དེ་ཡང་ཡུལ་ཉེར་བཞིའི་མཁའ་འགོའི་གནས་དང་མཐོ་
 རིས་སྐྱེས་བའི་ཞལ་བཞེས།

Furthermore, travelling one *krośa* towards the northeastern corner, there are the three charnel grounds, outer, inner and secret, which are commensurate with Śītavana or Lañkakūta in India. Among these, in the secret charnel ground, arise elaborate emanations of the twenty-five *ḍākinīs*, with hides of human skin and so forth, spontaneously appearing on the boulders.³⁴ At this sacred site, when one places a corpse there in the evening, by early morning it will be completely gone, devoured by jackals and vultures. And it is promised, furthermore, that those deceased will be reborn in the sacred sites of the *dākinīs* of the twenty-four *pītha*³⁵ and in the upper realms.

འདི་ནས་ལྷུ་བྱང་ངོས་རྒྱང་གྲགས་གཅིག་འདས་པའི་ས་ན། གད་ས་ཞལ་ཟས་འདྲ་བའི་རང་བྱོན་
 བྱི་རྒྱལ་བ་སྐྱེས་བཅས་མཉེས་པའི་འདོད་ཡོན་སྐྱ་ལྷའི་མཚོད་སྒྲིན་ཅོ།

To the northwest of this, at a distance of one *krośa*, there is a precipitous gorge, self-arising in the form of food for the gods (*naivedya*), a cloud of offerings of the five sensory types that bring delight to the *jinas* and their sons (buddhas and bodhisattvas).

³⁰ Blockprint reads rgyangs grags.

³¹ Blockprint reads *lang ka brtsigs pa*.

³² Blockprint reads *g.yang bzhi*.

³³ Blockprint reads *gro*.

³⁴ These hides of human skin are the seats of the goddesses.

³⁵ For a description of the 24 sacred places, see M. Boord, 'Buddhism', in, J. Holm and J. Bowker (eds.), *Sacred Places*, Pinter Publishers, London and New York, 1994, pp. 8-32.

རྒྱལ་བའི་ཞིང་མཚོག་རང་བྱོན་མཚོད་རྟེན་རྣམ་གསུམ་གྱི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་³⁶ ནི། མཚོ་རྒྱལ་དང་རྗེ་བོ་གཉིས་
 གིས་ཚོགས་མཚོད་རྒྱ་ཚེར་སུལ་ཏེ། འདི་སྐད་ཅེས་ཞུས་སོ། གནས་འདིའི་མཚན་རི་ལྟར་ལགས་
 གནས་མཇལ་ཕྱག་བསྐོར་བྱས་པ་ཕན་ཡོན་རི་ལྟར་ཡོད། གྲུ་རུ་དུས་གསུམ་མཁུན་པས་གབ་སྐྱིལ་
 མེད་པར་གསུང་དུ་གསོལ། ཞེས་ཞུས་པས།

With regard to the history of the three self-arisen *stūpas* of this supreme buddha-field, Ye shes mtsho rgyal and the herdsman made a request in these words as they both presented a vast array of assembled offerings: 'What are the characteristics of this place and what are the benefits of making pilgrimage, prostrations and circumambulations? May the guru who knows the past, present and future please tell us without concealing or keeping anything back.' Thus they requested.

ལོ་རྒྱུན་ཚེན་བོས་བཀའ་སྐུལ་པ། རྩོད་གཉིས་གྱི་སྒོར་གང་ཤར་བའི་མཚོད་རྟེན་རེ་རེ་དང་ཐུན་མོང་
 དུ་གཅིག་བཞེངས་དང་། དེའི་གཟུངས་གཞུག་ཏུ་ཤེལ་བྱ་གང་ལ་འཕགས་པ་སྐྱུན་རས་གཟིགས་རང་
 བྱོན་ལ་བྱངས་པ་ཞིག་གཡུ་ལོ་བཞོད་པའི་ཞིང་མཚོག་ནས་སྐྱུན་བྲངས་ལ། དེ་ལ་བསུ་བ་དང་མེར་
 རྐྱེངས་³⁷ མཚོད་པ་སོགས་གྱིས་ཤིག་གསུངས།

And the great [master of] Oḍḍiāyṅa said in reply: 'The two of you must each construct a *stūpa* as it arises in your mind and one [built by both of you] together. For the relic to be inserted in the latter you must invite from the heaven 'Arrayed in Turquoise Leaves' (the paradise of Tārā), the one-cubit-high, self-begotten crystal image of the noble Avalokiteśvara for which you must prepare a welcoming party with a ritual procession of monks in yellow robes, offerings and so forth.'

³⁶ Blockprint reads *lo brgyud*.
³⁷ Blockprint reads *ser sbreng*.

ཡང་ཇི་བོས་མེད་ཅེས་ཞུས་པ་ལ་ བདག་ལ་བུ་སྐྱོད་པོ་མོ་སོགས་གཅིག་ཀྱང་མེད་པས་ཇི་ལྟར་
 དྲག་ཞུས་པ་མས་ གཏུ་རུས་བཀའ་སྐྱུལ་པ་ ཡིད་སྐྱུལ་གྱི་མཚོན་པ་དབག་མེད་ལུལ་ ཞེས་
 གསུངས་སོ།

Again, the herdsman questioned him crossly with the words: 'How can this be done? For I have not a single disciple, either male or female.' To which the guru replied: 'You must present boundless offerings emanated by your mind.' Thus he spoke.

དེ་དུས་ཇི་བོས་དང་གུས་དྲག་པོས་གཡས་སུ་ཕོ་རྒྱུད་དང་ གཡོན་དུ་མོ་རྒྱུད་བཅས་བྱན་དུ་བསྐྱུལ་
 བས་མཛུགས་དུ་འདོད་ཡོན་སྣ་ལཱེ་མཚོན་པ་དབག་མེད་ལུལ་གསུངས་པ་མས་ དེའི་སྐབས་ཉི་མ་ཤར་
 ཅོམ་དུ་ཇི་བོའི་³⁸ གཟིགས་སྒྲུང་དུ་ཤར་བྱོགས་གྱི་ནམ་མཁའ་གསེར་གྱི་དོ་རྩེ་ལྷ་པ་ཞིག་བྱུང་བ་
 དགའ་སྐྱོད་དབག་མེད་མཚན་པ་དང་མཉམ་ཉི་མ་ཤར་བ་དང་གཤེལ་གྱི་མཚོན་རྟེན་གོང་དུ་གསུངས་པ་ཇི་
 བཞིན་ནམ་མཁའ་ནས་བྱོན་ གསུངས་སུ་བཞུགས་ནས་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་དང་ཇི་བོས་སྐྱོན་མོང་དུ་
 བཞེངས་པ་

It is said that then the herdsman, with fervent faith and devotion, summoned assistants and arranged groups of males to his right and females to his left, and then presented boundless offerings of the five sensual qualities set out in front. On that occasion, just as the sun was rising, a golden five-pronged *vajra* appeared in the eastern sky in sight of the herdsman and, while he experienced boundless happiness and joy, the sun rose and the crystal 'basis of offerings' (i.e. the heart of the *stūpa*) came forth from the sky so that everything took place just as spoken of above. When they had positioned it as a relic, Ye shes mtsho rgyal and the herdsman together erected [the *stūpa*].

³⁸ Blockprint reads *rdzi bos*.

རང་བྱོན་ཤེལ་གྱི་མཚོན་རྟེན་འདི་ཉིད་དང་། རྗེ་བོ་བཞེངས་པ་རྗེ་བོའི་མཚོན་རྟེན་དང་། མཚོ་རྒྱལ་
 བཞེངས་པ་འབྲོག་མོ་མཚོན་རྟེན་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་། བྱུག་ནས་³⁹ མངའ་གསོལ་རྒྱས་པར་མཇུག་སྐབས་
 གྲུང་མེ་ཉོག་གི་ཚར་བབས་ཅིང་། མཚན་ནི་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་གོང་གསལ་གྱི་དབང་གིས་རྗོ་རྗོ་ཉི་མ་མཚོན་
 རྟེན་ཞེས་དབྱར་རྩ་ལྟར་གྲགས་སོ།

Moreover, when it came to the time of throwing grains in the air during the elaborate consecration ceremonies of that particular 'Stūpa of the Self-originated Crystal [image]' and the 'Stūpa of the Herdsman' constructed by the herdsman and the so-called 'Stūpa of the Nomad Woman' erected by Ye shes mtsho rgyal, a shower of flowers came down and, due to the auspicious circumstances made clear above, the names of the *stūpas* at the place called Vajra Sun (rDo rje nyi ma) came to resound [everywhere] like thunder.

དེ་ནས་ཨོ་རྒྱན་ཚེན་པོས་རྒྱ་མིག་བརྒྱ་ཙུ་ཕེབས་ཏེ་མཚོན་རྟེན་འདི་རྣམས་ལ་བྱུག་བསྐྱར་མཚོན་པ་
 བྱས་པའི་ཕན་ཡོན་ནི། གོང་གི་རྒྱ་མིག་འདིའི་ཕན་ཡོན་དང་མཚུངས་ཤིང་། དགེ་བ་ཅི་བྱས་འབྲུམ་
 འགྱུར་ངོ་མཚར་བརྗོད་པའི་མཐའ་ལས་འདས་པའོ། རྗེ་ག་པ་བསམགས་པ་དེ་བཞིན་ནོ། ལྷག་པར་
 སྤང་མེད་སྤང་འདོད་པ་ལ་མཚོག་ཏུ་འགྱུར་རོ། ལྷོན་ལམ་སྣ་རེ་བཏབ་ན་དེ་ཉིད་ཐོགས་མེད་འགྲུབ་བོ།

Following that, the great [master of] Odḍiāyṅa went to the place of the Hundred Springs and said: 'As for the benefits of making prostrations, circumambulations and offerings to these [three] *stūpas*, they are as was stated before with regard to these springs. The virtue of whatever deeds are performed here is increased 100,000 times, a marvel that goes beyond the limits of speech. And the same is true for the accumulation of sins. In particular, [this place is] supremely beneficial for a woman who wishes for a son. If even the beginning of a prayer is uttered here, it will immediately be fulfilled without impediment.'

³⁹ Blockprint reads *phyag gnas*.

ཞེས་གསུངས་པའི་སྐབས་སུ། བོད་ཁ་བའི་ལྗོངས་ཀྱི་གནས་མཚོག་ནས། ལྷོ་རྒྱབ་ཏུ་སྐྱོན་འབྲེན་
 པའི་བསུ་བ་མ་དང་མཁའ་འགོས་བར་སྐྱོད་གང་བས། རྗེ་འབངས་རྣམས་ལ་ཞལ་གདམས་མི་གྲུབ་
 པའི་ཐུགས་བྲེལ་སྐབས་ཀྱི་ངང་། ཡན་ལག་བརྒྱད་ལྡན་གྱི་མདུན་ངོས་དོ་སྙེད་དུ་ཞབས་རྗེས་ཞིག་
 བྱེན་རྒྱབས་ཀྱི་རྟེན་དུ་འཛོག་གནང་མཛད་། ཞལ་ལྷོ་རྒྱབ་ཏུ་གཟིགས་ཏེ་ཨི་ཏི་ས་མ་ཡ་རྒྱ་རྒྱུ་།

While he was uttering these words, the sky became filled with mother goddesses and *dākinīs* who arrived from the holy land of Tibet, the realm of snow, welcoming him with an invitation to the southwest. His mind engaged with thoughts of not having finished instructing the king and subjects [of Tibet], he stamped with his foot upon a boulder in front of [the spring] with eight qualities, leaving his footprint as the support of blessings. Turning his face and gazing towards the southwest, he said: 'ITI SAMAYA. Seal! Seal!'

དེའི་དུས་ཀྱི་རྗེ་བོ་དེ་ནི་སྐུ་གཅིག་ལ་མཚན་གསུམ་དང་ལྡན་བ་དེ། དཔལ་ཏྲ་མགིན་དང་འཛིག་རྟེན་
 ཐུན་མོང་དུ་རྗེ་བོ་ཞེས་བ་དང་། ཨོ་རྒྱན་ཚེན་བོས་འབྲེན་མཚོག་པ་དུ་ཚོས་འཕེལ་དུ་མཚན་གསོལ་
 གནང་ཞིང་། བྱང་ལུག་རྗེ་བོ་གསུང་བྱོན་གྱིས་མཚན་གསོལ་བ་གྲུབ་ཚེན་ནག་པོ་སྐྱོད་བ་མཐུ་སྟོབས་
 ཞེས་གསུངས་པ། དོན་དུ་ངོ་བོ་དག་སྟོང་ནམ་མཁའི་སྟིང་བོ་སྐྱུ་དངོས་ཏེ། དགུང་གངས་ཀྱང་བརྒྱ་
 བམ་པ་བཞུགས་ཤིང་དེ་ལ་སློ་གསུམ་གྱིས་གསོལ་བ་བཏབ་ན་ཚེ་སྐུ་བ་བརྒྱ་རེ་རེས་བྱིན་མཐུའོ།

As for the herdsman of that period, he was one man with three names. To the glorious Hayagrīva and to the world in general, he was known as 'the herdsman'. The great [guru of] Oḍḍiāyṅa gave him the name Padma chos 'phel, the supreme leader, and the speaking statue of the crowned buddha in Byang phug gave him the name mThu thobs and declared him the [incarnation of the] *mahāsiddha* Kṛṣṇacārī.⁴⁰ In reality he was the genuine embodiment of the monk Nam mkha'i snying po who lived to be 100 years old, and if one prays to him with

⁴⁰ Also known as Kāṅhapāda, one of the 84 *mahāsiddhas*. See: David Templeman, *Tāranātha's Life of Kṛṣṇācārya/Kāṅha*, LTWA Dharamsala, 1989.

body, speech and mind, it has the blessing power of 100 individual rites of longevity.

མཐར་སྐྱེ་འཇའ་ལྟམ་གྲུབ་སྟེ་བདེ་བ་ཅན་གྱི་ཞིང་དུ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་ཚོགས་དཔོན་མཛད། ལུགས་
 མཚོན་རྟེན་རྣམ་གསུམ་དང་འབྲས་སྐྱེའི་སྣང་བརྟན་ལ་བཞུགས་པ། གསུང་བརྟན་པ་དང་འགྲོ་བའི་
 དོན་དུ་སྐྱེ་བའི་ཐེང་བ་ལ་བྱོན་པ་སོགས་ཞལ་གྱིས་བཞེས་པའོ།

At the end [of his life], his body attained the form of a rainbow ('realized the rainbow body'), and he became the recipient of offerings for an assembly of *dākinīs* in the buddhfield of Sukhāvātī. His mind took up residence in the three *stūpas* and within images in his likeness, and when he spoke he promised to return in a succession of births for the benefit of the doctrine and sentient beings, and so on.

དེ་ཡང་རང་བྱུང་མཚོན་རྟེན་རྣམ་གསུམ་ལ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་བསྐྱོར་བ་བྱེད་པ་ཡིན། མི་མ་ཡིན་གྱིས་
 མཚོན་དབྱུངས་སུལ་བའོ། གཏེར་ཁ་དགའ་རིའི་བྲག་ནས་བཞེས་པའི་གནས་ཡིག་ལྟར་གསལ།

It is said, furthermore, that circumambulations of *dākinīs* are made around the three self-arisen *stūpas*, and that non-human spirits offer songs of worship. [Such things] are made clear in the pilgrim's guide taken from the treasure site of dGa' ri'i brag (Rock of the Mountain of Joy).

གཞན་དག་མ་འོངས་ལུང་བསྟན་སོགས་རྒྱ་ཆེར་གསུངས་པའི་མ་དཔེ་སྐས་ལུལ་འབྲས་མོ་ལྗོངས་སུ་
 གསང་བའི་གནས་ཡིག་ཏུ་བཀའ་གསལ།

Apart from this, the words of the original manuscript, which speak extensively of prophesies and so on, are clarified in the Secret Guide to the Holy Places of the Hidden Land of Sikkim (*sBas yul 'bras mo ljong su gsang ba'i gnas yig*).⁴¹

⁴¹ By Lha btsun 'jigs med dpa' bo, one of the three religious preceptors responsible for the enthronement of the first king of Sikkim at Yuk bsam.

གནས་གྱི་ལྷོ་བ་བྲག་དཀར་བཟུ་གིས་སྤོང་། ཤར་ཕྱོགས་སྤྲུལ་ཕྱུག་མ་མོ་མཁའ་འགོ་སྤྱིན་ལྷར་
 འདུས་པ་མཁའ་འགོ་གསང་བའི་ཕྱག་པམ་། འཆི་མེད་ཆོ་ལྷར་སྐྱབ་པ་རུབ་བདེ་ཆེན་ཕྱག་། མཛོད་
 ལྷའི་གཏེར་ཁ་མང་དུ་བྱེ་རྒྱུའི་བྱང་ལྷ་རི་རིན་ཆེན་སྤྱིང་གི་ཕྱག་པམ་། དེའི་མཚམས་བརྒྱད་གྱི་གནས་
 གསང་སྤྲུགས་ཚོས་གྲིང་། བསྐྱ་གཡང་རྩེ་། རབ་ལྷན་རྩེ་མོ་། རྣལ་འབྱོར་ཆོ་བཞིའི་བསྐྱར་བའི་
 གཞི་མ་ཡུག་བསམ་ཐང་དང་རུར་གང་མཚོད་རྟེན་། ལྷོན་གིང་རྒྱལ་པོ་ཙན་དན་གྱི་རི་རྒྱལ་། བར་གྱི་
 གཞི་བདག་དབའ་བོ་རྫོ་རི་དང་། བཟུ་མོ་རོང་དང་ཁྲག་འཕུང་རོང་། རོ་རྩེ་འབྲེང་དང་ལྷགས་སྤྱོག་
 འབྲེང་། མཚོ་ཆེན་བརྒྱ་དང་དགུ་ལ་སོགས་། དེ་ཡི་བཀའ་འཁོར་གངས་ཆེན་མཛོད་ལྷས་དུ་⁴² །

The navel of the sacred land is Brag dkar bKra shis sding. To the east is the concealed cave called the Secret Cavern of the *Dākinī* where *ma mo* goddesses and *dākinīs* gather like clouds. In the west is the Cave of Great Happiness [which is a place for] the accomplishment of a lifespan free of death. To the north is the Heart Cave of lHa ri rin chen (Precious Peak of the Gods) where many treasure sites of the five treasures⁴³ are destined to be opened. The sacred places in eight directions from there are: gSang sngags chos gling (Dharma Isle of *Guhyamantra*), Padma g.yang rtse (Peak of Lotus Happiness), Rab ldan rtse mo (Peak of the Supreme Seat),⁴⁴ the plain of Yuk bsam and the *stūpa* of Nur gang which are twin sites of the doctrine of the four great yogas, Ri rgyal (Mountain King) [covered with] sandalwood, the king of trees, dPa' bo Hūrñ ri (Warrior Mountain Hūrñ), the protecting lord of the intermediate area, Phag mo rong (Ravine of Vajravārāhī) and Khrag 'thung rong (Ravine of Heruka), rDo rje 'threng (Vajra Garland) and lCags sgrog 'threng (Garland of Iron Fetters), the 109 great lakes and so on, and all of those comprise the servants headed by Gangs chen mdzod lnga (the Great Snow Mountain of Five Treasures, the most sacred site in Sikkim).

⁴² Blockprint reads *dbus*.

⁴³ This may refer to the 'five treasures' of Rig 'dzin rgod ldem. See M. Boord, *The Cult of the Deity Vajrakīla*, pp. 25-26, for details.

⁴⁴ Site of the palace of the earliest kings of Sikkim.

གངས་ལྗང་བརྒྱ་དང་བརྒྱ་དང་སྟོང་སྟོང་གཅིག་སྐྱུ་ལྔ་ལྔ་སྟོན་གཤོ་བཅས་པའི། རྡོ་རྗེ་ཉི་མ་འདི་ནི་
སྐྱུ་ལྔ་ལྔ་འབྲས་ལྗོངས་ཀྱང་གྲི་བྱང་སྒྲིབ་མཚོར་ཡིན་པའི་ཕྱིར་རོ།

This hidden land of a hundred and a thousand lesser peaks of snow, together with lHo nag po (Black South) and the one called rDo rje nyi ma,⁴⁵ comprise the portico of the northern entrance to the entire hidden land of Sikkim.

ཚོས་བདག་ཕྱི་ནང་གསང་གསུམ་དང་། གཟའ་མཚོག་རྩ་ཏུ་དང་། འབར་བ་སྐྱུན་བདུན་རོ་མོ་ཚོ་
རིང་མ་བཅས་ལ་དབང་ངོ་། འགོ་དོན་ཉི་ཟླ་ལྟར་སྟོན་པར་འགྱུར་རོ། ས་མ་ཡ་རྒྱ་རྒྱུ།

May the three, the outer, inner and secret protectors of the Dharma – Rāhu the supreme planet and the Seven Blazing Brothers ('Bar ba spun bdun) and the Goddess of Long Life (Jo mo tshe ring ma) – be powerful! May they be like the sun and moon bringing benefit to sentient beings! SAMAYA rGYA rGYA!

གྲ་རུའི་བཀའ་བཞེན་མཚོ་རྒྱལ་གྱིས་ཡི་གེར་བཏབ་ནས་གཏེར་དུ་སྐྱུ་སོ། ཕྱི་གཏེར་རྗེ་བོའི་གསུང་
སྐུལ་གདུང་རིག་འཛིན་ཚོ་དབང་གཉིས་པས་། ལྷོ་རི་བྲག་སེལ་འབྲུ་བའི་གཡས་ལུང་ནས་སྐྱུན་བདུངས་
པས་། ཞིང་ཁམས་མཐིང་ཤོག་ལ་ཚལ་གྱི་བརྡུང་ཡིག་ཏུ་བྲིས་འདུག་ཞེས་། སྟོན་ལམ་ལས་འཕྲོ་
རྟེན་འབྲེལ་འཛོམ་པའི་དུས་མཚམས་སུ། བཀའ་བབས་ལུང་ཟེན་རིག་འཛིན་ཚོད་གྱི་ལྗེ་འཕྲུ་ཅན་
སྟོ་བོད་མཚམས་གྱི་རྡོ་རྗེ་ཉི་མའི་བྱང་སྟོ་བརྒྱུད་ནས་འབྲས་ལྗོངས་གནས་སྟོ་ཞལ་བྱེ་སྐབས་སུ།
བརྡུང་ཡིག་རྣམས་བོད་ཡིག་ཏུ་བཀའ་མཐོང་དེ་དབང་བསྐྱུར་མན་ངག་ཟབ་པར་གནང་སྟེ།

⁴⁵ The two tallest peaks in this area (Lhonak and Chorten Nyima) are seen as the gateposts to the pass which does not, however, run between them, but is situated further east along the ridge.

གཏེར་གྱི་མངའ་གསོལ་རྒྱལ་པར་མཛད་སྐབས་ཀྱང་། རྣམ་མཁའ་གཡའ་དག་ངང་ནས་མེ་ཏོག་གི་
 ཆར་ཡང་བབས་སོ། ར་ག་ཏི་མདྲའི།

This having been written down by Ye shes mtsho rgyal in accordance with the pronouncements of the *guru*, it was concealed as treasure. Later, this treasure was taken from the right-hand side of a rock shaped like a lion on Hūm ri [mountain] by Rig 'dzin tsho dbang II, a descendant of the herdsman and the incarnation of his speech. It is said to have existed in the form of writing in symbolic characters in vermilion ink on sky blue paper. Then, at a time when the auspices of former prayers and the continuity of *karma* came together, the teachings came down, as prophesied, to the *vidyādhara* rGod kyi ldem 'phru can. Approaching by way of rDo rje nyi ma, the northern gateway between Tibet and the south, at the time when he opened the mouth of that passage to the holy land of Sikkim, he transcribed the symbolic letters into Tibetan script. Then, having bestowed in profound form the empowerments and oral instructions whilst performing an elaborate consecration of the treasures, a rain of flowers came down from the space of a clear sky. May it be auspicious for the world!

དེ་ལྟར་རྗེ་ཡི་གཏུང་བརྒྱུད་གནས་འཛིན་པ་རིག་འཛིན་རྟོགས་ལྡན་དཔའ་བོས་པར་གསར་བསྐྱར་
 མཛད་པ།

This new print was published by Rig 'dzin rtogs ldan dpa' bo, the encumbent heir to the seat of Hūm ri.

། དཔལ་ལྡན་སྐྱེ་མའི་སྐྱེ་ཚེ་བརྟན་པ་དང་།
 མཁའ་མཉམ་ཡོངས་ལ་བདེ་སྲིད་འབྱུང་བ་དང་།
 བདག་གཞན་མ་ལུས་ཚོགས་བསགས་སྦྱིབ་སྦྱངས་ནས།
 ལྷུང་དུ་སངས་རྒྱལ་ཐོབ་པར་བྱིན་གྱིས་རྫོབས། །དགེའོ།

May the lives of the glorious *gurus* be stable,
May happiness arise everywhere reaching to the sky,
May I and all others without exception gather an accumulation [of
merit] and may our sins be purified.
Thus may we quickly be blessed with the attainment of buddhahood.
Let virtue abound!

SECULARISM AND THE BUDDHIST MONASTERY OF
PEMAYANGTSE IN SIKKIM¹

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Thutob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma's² account of the founding of the kingdom of Sikkim, shows us a politico-religious system in line with the concept of separate spiritual and temporal domains such as encountered in Tibet.³ However, this concept is very distinct from the Indian notion of secularism, which can be formulated as a privatisation of the religious sphere.⁴ Indeed, the absolute separation of the lay and religious domains appears to be equally problematic in both Sikkim and Tibet.⁵ The functioning of the royal monastery of Pemayangtse in Sikkim clearly demonstrates that there can be many interpenetrations of these two domains (that we can also refer to as conjugation), and which are not at variance with certain Buddhist concepts. The relationship that existed between Pemayangtse monastery and the kingdom of Sikkim represents one of the forms of this interpenetration in the Tibetan cultural area.

When considering the functioning of Pemayangtse today and in the past, I will examine the relationship between the monastery and the

¹ This paper is adapted from my doctoral thesis entitled: *Le monastère bouddhique de Pemayangtse au Sikkim (Himalaya oriental, Inde) : un monastère dans le monde*. This thesis is the result of two years of fieldwork in India (1996-1997 and 1998-1999), financed by an Indo-French grant from the French Department of Foreign Affairs and the ICCR, Delhi. My long stay in Sikkim was made possible thanks to the Home Ministry of Sikkim and the Institute of Higher Nyingma Studies, Gangtok.

² *History of Sikkim* (Namgyal: 1908). This text can be considered as a hagiography (Steinmann: 1998). It has the twofold interest to be based on ancient sources and to be written by witnesses of more recent, related events. Its hagiographic character is also interesting because it shows the ideology which determines its authors' reading of history. Its context must be taken into account: it was the end of the nineteenth century, while Sikkim was a British protectorate and its authors, the king and the queen of Sikkim, were under house arrest. The threat to the Sikkimese monarchical power is probably one of the determining factors of the conception of the Sikkimese ancient history which appears in this text.

³ See D. S. Ruegg: 1995.

⁴ On this notion, see for instance T.N. Madan: 1991.

⁵ *Op. cit.*: 11.

political power. First, I will focus on Pemayangtse as a monastery of royal lamas, then on its role as an institution, and finally on its relationship to the land itself.

Pemayangtse: a monastery of royal lamas

In the account of the founding of the kingdom of Sikkim, the spiritual and temporal domains are presented as separate, but also closely interrelated. According to it, the first king of Sikkim, Phuntsok Namgyal was enthroned by three Tibetan religious men of the Nyingmapa school (Tib. *rnying ma pa*)⁶, the school of the old tantras: Lhatsun Namka Jigme (1597-1654?), or Lhatsun Chenpo, Kathog Kuntu Zangpo and Ngadak Sempa Phuntsok Rigzin⁷, who consecrated him 'ruler according to the *dharma* principles' (*chogyal*, Tib. *chos rgyal*). The coronation of the Sikkimese Chogyal remained a religious ceremony (Tib. *gser khri mnga' gsol*, literally 'the installation on the power of the golden throne') until the fall of the monarchy in 1975. Moreover, the Buddhist populations of Sikkim regard their country as a holy place, and the joining together of the political and religious domains is made manifest in the Tibetan name of Sikkim, Denjong (Tib. *'bras ljongs*), which designates at the same time the kingdom and the holy place.

The story of the founding of the kingdom of Sikkim as told by Thutob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma supports Chie Nakane's analysis according to which 'The establishment of *gonpa* has been part of the political scheme of the central government from the beginning of Sikkim history.'⁸ Phuntsok Namgyal and the three Tibetan religious men are said to have jointly founded the first political and religious

⁶ The terms preceded by the mention 'Tib.' are Tibetan terms transliterated according to the Wylie system (1959). The transliteration is indicated only at the first occurrence of the term.

⁷ Lhatsun Chenpo was a Dzogchen (Tib. *rdzogs chen*) master. He is regarded as the chief propagator of Buddhism in Sikkim (A. Balikci-Denjongpa, 2002: 22). His dates of birth and death differ in the sources. See *Gazetteer of Sikkim* ([1894] 1989: 248), Tulku Thondup Rinpoche (1986: 90), R. A. Stein 1981: 54, and Thudob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma (1908: 34). Kathog Kuntu Zangpo belonged to the Kathogpa lineage (Tib. *ka' thog pa*) of Kathog Dorje Den monastery in East Tibet. Neither L. A. Waddell (*Gazetteer of Sikkim*) nor Thutob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma give his dates of birth and death. Ngadak Sempa Phuntsok Rigzin came from the Dorjeta monastery (Tib. *rdo rje brag*) in Central Tibet. He introduced the North Terma (Tib. *byang gter*) in Sikkim.

⁸ 1966: 219.

institutions in Yoksam after the enthronement of the Chogyal, the latter taking care of the construction of the royal palace, and the religious men of one monastery each. This account probably refers to the role of the religious institutions in the centralisation of Lhopo's political power in Sikkim.⁹ Indeed, after settling in Sikkim, the Lhopo converted the local populations, such as the Lepcha, to Buddhism and dominated them.¹⁰ These conversions were simultaneous to the establishment of the centralised political power,¹¹ and probably even served it.

However, the notion of separation of the temporal and the religious domains¹² appears on several occasions in the descriptions of this time. To begin with, the three Tibetan religious men choose a 'layman' or 'donor' (Tib. *sbyin bdag*, literally 'the owner of the donation')¹³ to rule the kingdom. The relations between the king and the Buddhist religious men, and generally between the lay population and the religious men, as revealed in the account can be found in the entire Tibetan cultural area: the religious men furnish the religious services for which the laymen make donations to accumulate 'merits' (Tib. *bsod nams*) in order to increase the fruit of their actions in a future life.¹⁴ The Sikkimese Chogyal is the donor *par excellence*, as were the kings of ancient Tibet or of Zanskar.¹⁵ Theoretically, he cannot be a religious

⁹ The name 'Lhopo' is the one more often assumed by the ethnic group that migrated from Tibet and Bhutan to Sikkim, probably from the thirteenth century onwards. The Chogyal of Sikkim belong to this group. The Lhopo are generally referred to as Bhutia, but this term is problematic because it designates all the Himalayan groups originally from Tibet and because, according to its definition given in the Census of India 1991, this category includes some ethnic groups with which the Lhopo do not identify. A. Balikci-Denjongpa justifies her use of the term 'Lhopo' by the fact that the name 'Sikkimese', also given to the Bhutia, may be confusing in a context where they now represent a minority of the total population of Sikkim (2002: 5). I will consequently refer to them as 'Lhopo', this term being more precise than 'Bhutia'.

¹⁰ B. Steinmann, 1998 and 1996. See also C. Nakane, 1966: 215.

¹¹ B. Steinmann, 1996: 186.

¹² According to Tibetan literary sources (twelfth century onward) retrospectively dealing with the royal Tibetan period, the temporal and religious orders were clearly distinguished ideologically: the king was in charge of the political, economical and juridical affairs while the monks dealt with the supra-mundane sphere (D. S. Ruegg, 1991 and 1995, I. Riaboff, 1997: 307). This literature is not contemporary with the period that it describes and is coloured by Buddhism. It may have been used as a model of kingship by the authors of the account of the founding of the Sikkimese kingdom.

¹³ *Gazetteer of Sikkim*, 1989: 249 and Thudob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma, 1908: 27.

¹⁴ R. A. Stein 1981: 152.

¹⁵ I. Riaboff, 1997: 108.

man¹⁶ and does not have any spiritual power although the support and the protection of the religious community and the promotion of Buddhism are a part of his charges. He is indeed the protector of the doctrine, which, in turn, guides his political actions as the term 'chogyal' indicates. By saying that Phuntsok Namgyal took care of the construction of the royal palace while the religious men built the monasteries, Thutob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma actually meant that the religious and temporal functions were separated.

However, Phuntsok Namgyal and Lhatsun Chenpo would have together chosen the locations of Pemayangtse monastery¹⁷ and of Rabdentse, the second capital of the kingdom, on a hill situated to the south of Yoksam. Pemayangtse was only erected as a durable institution in 1705, under the third Chogyal's rule, Chagdor Namgyal (1686-1717). It was built on a peak (as its name indicates: Tib. *pad ma g.yang rtse*, 'the happy lotus peak') dominating Rabdentse a few hundred metres below, and was obviously the royal chapel of the palace (Tib. *gtsug lag khang*).

Phuntsok Namgyal and Lhatsun Chenpo would have set the functioning principles of Pemayangtse. The monastery was intended to play a unique role in the kingdom: its lamas would be the king's spiritual masters (literally 'root master', Tib. *rtsa ba'i bla ma*). Thus, while founding the monastery, the first Chogyal and its religious master institutionalised the relation of chaplain and donor by which they were already linked.

However, according to Thutob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma's History of Sikkim, it seems that the functioning principles of Pemayangtse were only set during the third Chogyal Chagdor Namgyal's reign once the institution was in a position to perpetuate itself. The authors relate that after Jigme Pawo's (1682- ?) departure (the incarnation of the third Lhatsun Chenpo and Chagdor Namgyal's spiritual master):

Raja Chagdor Namgyal and Khanchen Rolpai Dorji [the Pemayangtse abbot] founded the present Pemionchi monastery, about an arrow's flight to the east of the site of

¹⁶ Two Sikkimese Chogyals were however lamas (Sikyong Namgyal, 1819-1874, and Sikyong Tulku, 1879-1914). However, they acceded to the throne because their elder brothers had died.

¹⁷ Thudob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma wrote: '*Lha-bTsun and the Maharaja, together selected the sites of the Rabdentse palace, the Pemiongchi monastery, besides building several other places of worship [...]*' (1908: 34).

the old monastery, founded in the time of Lha-tsun. Raising a conscription of the middling son of every three sons in a house from amongst the Bhutea community of the subjects, they were enrolled amongst the priesthood in the monastery, which thus became an influential body of priesthood.¹⁸ They established the schools of exposition and devotional rituals. They borrowed from Mindol-Ling monastery in Tibet, all the forms of psalm chanting, Mandala inscribing and dancing.¹⁹ They also had a book of priestly discipline framed in accordance to the requirements of the Vinaya part of the Kah-gyur [Tib. *bka' 'gyur*]. Henceforth the Pemionchi Lamas were to be the chief spiritual guides of every succeeding Raja. [...] He endowed the Pemionchi monastery with external and internal ornamentations, requirements etc., on a large scale. Then he framed the laws and rules for them. Next he enforced an importance upon the 108 Trapas [lamas]²⁰ of the Ta-Tsang ['pure lamas'], and appointed 108 families as their chief laymen, for supporting the 108 Lamas, called Garnas, who bound themselves by oath and on bond to be faithful. Thus did the Raja purely fulfil the duties of a really righteous Ruler, whose aim was to rule according to the dictates of religion.²¹

The Pemayangtse lamas attribute their 'code of conduct' (*chayig*, Tib. *chad yig*) to Jigme Pawo²² even though the above shows that a code of discipline in accordance with the *vinaya sūtra* was implemented by the king only after the lama's departure. If the 'code of conduct' of the Sikkimese religious community considered as the

¹⁸ The second son's conscription system secure the human reproduction for a religious institution, and thus makes it durable. The appointment of donors had the same function. According to the text, it was the conscription system which made Pemayangtse as an 'influential body of priesthood'.

¹⁹ The introduction of the Nyingma teachings from the monastery of Mindoling (Tib. *smin grol gling*) was most probably initiated by Jigme Pawo since it was his affiliation monastery. Mindoling, located in the East of Central Tibet, transmits the teachings of the Drukpa (Tib. '*brug pa*) and Dzogchen (Tib. *rdzogs chen*) sub-schools.

²⁰ The term 'lama' designates in Sikkim all Buddhist religious men, being or not a spiritual master. I will hereafter use it to refer to different types of Buddhist religious men, as it is in use in Sikkim.

²¹ 1908: 42-43.

²² This text would be part of a political history written by Jigme Pawo.

oldest in Sikkim had been composed by Lhatsun Chenpo, another one (Tib. *'bras ljongs chad yig*) was written in 1870²³ by Chogyal Sikyong Namgyal, a lama who acceded to the throne because his eldest brother had died. The above quotation shows that the composition of a religious 'code of conduct' is a part of the actions that a 'righteous ruler' has to carry out for the development of Buddhism. It is part of the framework that permits a religious institution to perpetuate itself. The Pemayangtse lamas' idea of their *chayig's* composer might reflect an actual need to emphasise the separation between the religious and political domains, as we will see below. According to them, the measures described by Thutob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma are indeed part of the Chogyal's role although the latter cannot interfere on the spiritual aspect of monastic life.

The notion of '*Ta-Tsang*' which appears in the above quotation also illustrates the interpenetration of the spiritual and temporal domains. The term of *ta-tsang* can have two meanings: the 'nest of lamas' (Tib. *grva tshang*)²⁴, which designates the study section of an important monastery, or the 'pure lama' (Tib. *grva gtsang*). The second meaning refers to the Pemayangtse lamas' nobility: a man's father and mother should both be descendants of the founding ancestor of the Lhopo's original group of noble clans (Khye Bumsa, the first mythical migrant who came from Tibet to Sikkim in the thirteenth century) to be allowed into the monastic community of Pemayangtse. He is consequently referred to as '*ta-tsang*'. Purity is a religious notion²⁵ used in this context to symbolise Pemayangtse lamas' social status, and to describe the relations that permit its acquisition.²⁶

The same descent rule determines the status of Khye Bumsa's lay Lhopo descendants within the Pemayangtse area. Khye Bumsa is regarded as a common ancestor to the Chogyal's family and to the Lhopo descent groups called 'the twelve major Lhopo clans' (Tib. *lho rigs rus chen bcu gnyis*). The number twelve is ideal; these clans are in reality more numerous. When a Lhopo descends from Khye Bumsa through his father and mother, he is a member of a 'pure clan' (Tib. *rus gtsang*, *rus* literally means 'bone') and thus belongs to the social strata

²³ This text, that I read in English, was translated by Khenpo Chowang Acharya of the Institute of Higher Nyingma Studies, Gangtok, from the original Tibetan text kept in the royal library.

²⁴ In Tibetan, *grva pa* refers to novices. In Sikkim, it is regarded as equivalent to 'lama'.

²⁵ During rituals, lamas purify (Tib. *sangs*) the offerings that were touched by 'pollution' (Tib. *sgrib*).

²⁶ As it is in Dolpo: C. Jest, 1975: 257.

called 'yarip' (Tib. *ya rigs*, literally the 'above strata'), which distinguishes itself from the 'ourip' strata (Tib. 'og rigs) or 'low people'. Thus, the Pemayangtse lamas and lay Lhopo from high clans belong to the same social strata. The first bear the title of 'yab', a term which can mean 'father' but can also be a contraction of the Tibetan word 'yar pa', equivalent to *yarip*. The Pemayangtse lamas share the title 'yab' with the Sikkimese landlords known as *kazi*.

In the Pemayangtse area today, this rule of status acquisition still determines the choice of husband and wife, and the 'above strata' is almost endogamous. Some high status young Lhopo still pretend to marry women from the same status as themselves so that their son may become a lama of Pemayangtse. While the clan organisation is losing its importance in other parts of Sikkim, the admission rule to Pemayangtse has led to the preservation of the social organisation and hierarchy of the area. The monastery is in this way again implicated in the temporal domain.

If Chagdor Namgyal 'enforced an importance upon the 108 Trapas of the Ta-Tsang', as Thutob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma explained, the formulation of this rule is attributed to Lhatsun Chenpo. The Pemayangtse lamas descent rule was probably related to their close association with the Chogyal. These lamas were not only the Chogyal's spiritual guides, they were the sole lamas entitled to hold the rituals for the king and his family: the coronation, the funerals and the marriages of the royal family. They were also the only Sikkimese lamas empowered to perform the three major public annual ceremonies at the royal chapel: Panglhasol (Tib. *dpang lha gsol*) on the seventh month, Dupchen Kagye (Tib. *sgrub chen bka' brgyad*) on the tenth month, and Guru Tamar (Tib. *gu ru drag dmar*) on the twelfth month.²⁷ Moreover, one of the Pemayangtse lamas had a political function: he was nominated by his head lamas to sit in the Royal Council. He was later referred to as 'councillor' or 'executive councillor'.²⁸

Being the only Sikkimese lamas empowered to enthrone the Chogyal, the Pemayangtse lamas had the monopoly on the legitimisation of royal power. Thus, the admission rule to Pemayangtse permitted to confer this task to the king's close kin. Access to the royal lamas' functions was restricted to a small group of clans which already had access to political power and who monopolised the highest religious and political functions. The founding of Pemayangtse might

²⁷ These three ceremonies were the occasion of ritual masked dances (Tib. 'cham).

²⁸ Pemayangtse has not been the only Sikkimese monastery to send such a representative. See Thudub Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma, 1908.

indeed have been done with the intention to surround the king with his most faithful Lhupo subjects who could help him reinforce his power on ethnic groups reluctant to political centralisation. The functioning rules of Pemayangtse can perhaps be explained in the light of ethnic conflict, as one of my informants, a lama from Gangtok, suggests:

The Pemayangtse lamas are the only ones entitled to give initiation (Tib. *dbang*) to members of the royal family. When this rule was established, there were some Limbu and Lepcha. Pemayangtse was then built to protect the royal lamas' lineages. If members of other ethnic groups could enter Pemayangtse's religious community, and thus be in position to initiate the king, this would have brought misfortune.

Pemayangtse monastery did not cease to exist with the fall of the monarchy in 1975. Since then, a seat in Sikkim's Legislative Assembly has been reserved to a representative of Sikkim's religious community (referred to by its Sanskrit name *saṅgha*), and the entire lama population of the State elects this member. Apart from this important change, the admission rule to Pemayangtse has remained unchanged, and the Pemayangtse lamas continued to perform the three annual ceremonies in the royal chapel until the early 1990s.²⁹ This is an indicator that the royal lamas' role is perhaps more concerned with the whole state rather than with the king's person. Moreover, the royal lamas' training is not the only reason for Pemayangtse to be, the monastery is also the lamas' religious institution.

The Pemayangtse lamas' ways of life: between religious life and life in the world

Nowadays, none of the Pemayangtse lamas have been ordained into celibacy (Tib. *dge slong*). They relate however that Lhatsun Chenpo initially conceived Pemayangtse as a celibate monastery. We have also seen that, according to Thutob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma, Chagdor Namgyal implemented a code of conduct in Pemayangtse in accordance with the *vinaya* (Tib. '*dul ba*) *sūtra*. It is more precisely in

²⁹ The reasons for the suspension of Panglhasol at the royal chapel will be discussed below.

accordance with the *vinaya sūtra*'s section called *prātimokṣa* (Tib. *so sor thar pa*).

But if most of the Tibetan Buddhist schools consider the *dge slong* ordination in accordance with the prescriptions of *prātimokṣa* as necessary in order to engage upon the two paths opened to a lama (the way of Enlightenment and the way of *tantra*), it is however not considered a necessity among the Nyingmapa.³⁰ Chagdor Namgyal might have been led to introduce the *prātimokṣa* prescriptions in Pemayangtse after his journey to Tibet where he became close to the sixth Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyamtso (1683-1705 or 1706).³¹

Rather than following the *sūtra* tradition, the Pemayangtse lamas explain that they follow the *tantra* tradition upon which the Nyingmapa school particularly insists. The system of ritual actions combined with meditation practices that constitute what is called *tantra*³² has both supra-mundane and mundane purposes, the former to access the state of Buddha, and the latter to bring prosperity, fertility, healing, abundant harvests, etc.³³ The Pemayangtse lamas consider the seniors of the monastery as 'tantric masters' (Tib. *sngags pa*) independent from monasteries – which is not the case of the Pemayangtse lamas as we will see – who are tantric ritual specialists and often householders.³⁴

We can differentiate here between two types of religious men who are theoretically in opposition³⁵: the religious man living 'in the world', which means living in society with other men (he is married and householder); and the celibate lama, a religious man living 'out of the world', detached from society, and whose life is entirely devoted to religion. In Pemayangtse, these two types of religious men coexisted diachronically and synchronically.

The possibility the Pemayangtse lamas have of getting married is however seen as a recent one. And according to my informants within the Pemayangtse area, a lama is a non-married man who shares his life between meditation and ritual practices. The survival of this religious man could mean that there were still some celibate lamas in Pemayangtse until recent times, a fact that was confirmed by my eldest informants. But these accounts also reveal that all the ancient lamas were not necessarily celibate. Some Families in the area do actually

³⁰ G. Tucci and W. Heissig, 1973: 149.

³¹ R. A. Stein, 1981: 56-57.

³² R. Gombrich, 1984: 14 and 86, D. L. Snellgrove, 1987: 173.

³³ *Op. cit.*: 235.

³⁴ P. Kvaerne, 1984: 262, R. A. Stein, 1981, and G. Tucci and W. Heissig, 1973: 152-153.

³⁵ See L. Dumont, 1966.

descend from Pemayangtse lamas. Rather, it means that the prescription of celibacy could be avoided. This possibility of getting married does not contradict Nyingma notions of religious life. They give more importance than other schools to the dogma according to which 'everything is in the mind' (Tib. *sems tsam*, 'nothing but thought')³⁶, which means that the illusory character of what we perceive can be better experimented while being in contact with society. As Pemayangtse lama told me: 'It's more important to be a good practitioner than a non-married man.' Thus, it seems that even in the past, various ways of life coexisted between the two 'out of the world' and 'in the world' extremes. But the 'out of the world' way of life of the lama still needs to be explained. Some retreats are still practised in Pemayangtse today, but it is said that in the past, the lamas lived almost all year in the retreat houses (*tasha*, Tib. *grva zhag*) surrounding Pemayangtse's main temple until old age or a health problem prevented them to live within the cold of the height and the lack of comfort of the *tasha*. They also devoted more time than today to meditation.³⁷

The location of Pemayangtse itself reveals its early function as an institution for lamas living in retreat from the world: it was an 'isolated place', the first meaning of the word '*gonpu*' (Tib. *dgon pa*) now being translated by 'monastery'. Apart from Rabdentse, the closest buildings to Pemayangtse are recent: the village of Pelling as the highest part of Nako were built in the 1960s; Tikjuk, developed with the settlement of administrative offices, is even more recent. In the past, almost one and a half hour walk was required to reach Pemayangtse from its closest village, Chumbung.

Some constructions around the monastery are a reminder of rules that are no longer followed. Below the monastery is located Jetsun Mingyur Palden's throne (Tib. *khri*), the wife of a Mindoling abbot who came to seek refuge in Sikkim during the eighteenth century. She gave religious teachings to the Pemayangtse lamas on this throne because women were not allowed into the monastery. The monastery's border

³⁶ G. Tucci and W. Heissig, 1973: 57.

³⁷ They are four forms of meditation practised during retreats in the *tasha*: the '100, 000 prostrations' (Tib. *phyag 'bum*), the '100, 000 long *mantra*' (Tib. *yi dam brgya ring* ou *yid kyi phyag rgya*, 'concentration on the deities' attributes'), the '100, 000 long *mantra* with offering of *mandala*', and the '*yoga guru*' (Tib. *bla ma'i rnal 'byor*). Each form requires a two month retreat, eight months being necessary to complete the whole cycle. It is said that nowadays, all the lamas have to practice at least once a year the '100, 000 prostrations' and the '100, 000 long *mantra*'. It takes four months, usually practised during the summer.

was marked by a *chorten* (Tib. *mchod rten*) called *tabab chorten* (Tib. *rita 'bab mchod rten*), 'to get off the horse'. The visitors had to walk from this point, deaden their animal's bell with a cloth and remain quiet.

Between 1996 and 1999, the period during which I was residing in Sikkim, the number of candidates to the ceremony of integration (Tib. *sgrig chug*, literally 'to enter into the rule') into Pemayangtse's religious community was increasing.³⁸ This ceremony is generally held during childhood and initiated by the family. Today, only part of the adult lamas lead a way of life comparable to those of the past, while an important section leads a lay life-style.³⁹ However, an intermediary category composed of lamas who went through religious studies does exist. These were earning their life teaching the Lhopo dialect (Tib. *lho skad*) or iconography (Tib. *lha 'bri pa*). Some of my informants in the area jokingly referred to these three categories as 'full time lama', 'part time lama' and 'modern lama'. These expressions are descriptive enough to be taken seriously. These categories did not previously exist as the use of English highlights it.

Concerning the 'full time lama', if they devote less time to the monastery and to meditation than in the past, they are still considered officiants of tantric practices. Their studies in Pemayangtse trained them in the performance of ritual.⁴⁰ In addition to the regular monastic ceremonies, the Pemayangtse lamas hold rituals with both supra-mundane and mundane purposes, the latter generally being sponsored by lay donors, for instance in the case of exorcistic rituals (Tib. *zlog thabs*).

A lama can deepen its first training by asking an elder lama the 'speech' (Tib. *lung*) and initiation (Tib. *dbang*) to a text to be able to meditate (Tib. *sgrub*, literally, 'accomplish' or 'achieve'). He can also

³⁸ During this ceremony, the boy takes some lay practitioner's vows (Tib. *dge bsnyen*). Even in the past, the fully ordained celibate lama's vows could only be taken from the age of fifteen with the family's consent.

³⁹ The study of the 'State of Sikkim, electoral roll 1995, Assembly constituency - 32 Sangha, block: Pemayangtse Gonpa', made with the help of Lupon Chungpo of Pemayangtse, reveals that of 111 adult lamas, 31 % led a religious life, 15 % were studying in a monastic university, 21 % were teachers, and 33 % led a lay life-style. Thus, lamas involved into the religious life were still the most majority.

⁴⁰ They first learn Tibetan writing and then memorise some religious texts. This course of study is called *chos rgyud* or the 'transmission of religious tradition' and takes several years. This is followed by liturgical practices (Tib. *cho ga phyag len*) accompanied by religious acts (Tib. *mchod*).

continue his studies in a monastic college.⁴¹ The specialisation he will acquire will help him be more in demand as a lama by laymen or to become a teacher. The men who went through the ordination ceremony in Pemayangtse but did not receive a religious education do not officiate at rituals. However, as the other lamas, they have to fulfil a series of functions or service for the community known as ranks (Tib. *go gnas*).⁴² Today, these ranks link each lama to the monastic community as they did in the past. Thus, there are no independent lamas attached to the monastery. These 'modern lamas' however cannot reach the highest positions in the monastic hierarchy or fulfil the permanent ranks. But they have to take part in the annual ceremonies where the whole religious community gathers (Tib. *tshogs 'dzoms byed*, literally 'to meet in assembly'). Nowadays, Guru Tamar ceremony is the only ritual fulfilling this gathering function for the reason that it takes place during winter vacations.

The Pemayangtse lamas' way of life has obviously changed in the recent past. We can recognise a gradation between the 'out' and 'in the world' way of life that was already existing in the past. But recently, this gradation has become closer to the worldly way of life with the 'full time lamas' no longer being celibate and the 'modern lamas' leading complete lay lives.⁴³

Several reasons can explain the choice made by some men to teach or to lead a lay life after they took religious vows. First amongst them, according to my informants, is economical: it is difficult for a lama to properly earn his life by performing rituals and a certain area can only support a limited number of lamas. Indeed, while the donors' numbers have decreased, they also involve themselves less in religious activities and rarely support lamas undergoing retreats. Nowadays, only the most

⁴¹ There are two in Gangtok: the Sikkim Institute of Higher Nyingma Studies, a government institute, and Prince Wangchuk Namgyal's college (Tib. *bshad grva gtsug lag khang*). In these institutes, the lamas study canonical Buddhist texts (Tib. *bka' 'gyur* and *bstan 'gyur*). Some of the Pemayangtse lamas also studied in Siliguri, Sarnath, South India and Nepal. In the past, Pemayangtse lamas went at least once in their life to Mindoling to complete their training. Political conflicts between Tibet and Sikkim due to British intervention at the end of the nineteenth century might have caused the end of these travels.

⁴² For the detail of these ranks, see *Gazetteer of Sikkim*, 1989.

⁴³ The expression 'lay lama' seems contradictory. The title 'yab' is usually attributed to the men who went through the ordination ceremony, whatever life they may now lead. The use of this title reveals that belonging to Pemayangtse's religious community, if only formally, conveys a certain social status. However, most of these 'modern lamas' do not consider themselves as lamas.

experimented lamas, which also means the eldest, are enough in demand by lay donors to earn their life performing rituals.

Concerning the decreasing number of donors, it might be due to a change of values: the distance from the world a lama has to maintain is no longer considered an important value. The lama's family life is another reason that prevents him from leading a religious life. And the lama's religious life is often considered as a remnant of the past; the use of the expression 'modern lama' to designate laymen who took religious vows indicates that the 'normal' lamas are 'not modern'.

The change in the Pemayangtse lamas' way of life is however deplored and is considered to result from the fall of the Sikkimese monarchy. With the Chogyal, the monasteries have indeed lost their protector and main donor. The integration of Sikkim in the Indian Union has opened the doors of Sikkim to a market economy in which money is an essential value. It has also introduced the Indian notion of secularism, which leads to a privatisation of religious institutions, thus a loss of resources and prestige for the monasteries as we will see below. The following section, describing Pemayangtse's relations with the land over time, will also illustrate the possible depth of the relations between the religious and temporal domains.

Pemayangtse and the land

Pemayangtse is a part of the group of Sikkimese monasteries called *gyen chen* (Tib. *dgon chen*) or 'major monastery', a status which partly comes from their possession of lands. The regular income of a monastery is referred to as 'support of *dharma*' (Tib. *chos gzhi*)⁴⁴, its product being devoted to religious activities.

According to Thutob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma, in the past, Sikkimese monasteries did not possess lands given by the Chogyal, but each were authorised to collect contributions from certain villages named to support them. They could also possess lands given by donors. Monasteries and lamas were exempted from labour services to the king and did not have to pay any contribution to him, as it was in ancient Tibet.⁴⁵

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, a piece of land in the Plains which had first been given to a celibate lama by Chogyal

⁴⁴ S. C. Das translates this term 'endowment for the support of a religious institution' (1989: 433). In Tibet, the *chos gzhi* were the religious estates (P. Carrasco, 1959: 86).

⁴⁵ See P. Carrasco, 1959.

Gyurme Namgyal for services rendered to the State was later transferred in perpetuity to Pemayangtse monastery, with the agreement of the king 'On the condition of their performing a periodical ceremony for the sake of the deceased's and the Ruler's future welfare'.⁴⁶

In the course of time, Pemayangtse was given the right to collect some taxes on the territory situated between the four rivers Khale-chu, Rigne-chu (Rangit), Rathong-chu and Rimbik. The date of this donation does not win unanimous support. It would be during Chagdor Namgyal's rule for some informants, after the departure of Gurkha forces in the beginning of the nineteenth century for Thutob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma, or in 1888 according to a letter written by Chogyal Sikyong Tulku (1879-1914) that I could read in Pemayangtse.

Within the framework of the British's Land Settlement Program implemented from 1889 onward⁴⁷, five Sikkimese monasteries⁴⁸ acquired a function similar to those of the landlords or managers of landed estates. The monasteries could collect taxes on their respective estates, pay back the house tax (Tib. *khyim skyed*, Nep.⁴⁹ *duri khazana*) to the government, but unlike the landlords, could keep the whole collected land revenue for religious activities. Their other rights and duties were equal to those of the landlords: collection of sharecropping (Nep. *adhiya*) and farm rent (*kutiya*) on private lands (as it might have been before British intervention); water tax (Tib. *chu skyed*), in addition to land (Tib. *sa skyed*) and house taxes on small landowners; market and trade taxes; cardamom tax; wood and pasture taxes on non-cultivated monastic lands. They also had the right on tenants' labour services.

Monasteries also had to implement justice. On the Pemayangtse estate, as in any other monastic estate I suppose, the leading head was a group formed by the three head lamas of the monastery, the 'ritual master' (Tib. *rdo rje slob dpon*), the 'prior' (Tib. *dbu mdzed*) and the 'discipline master' (Tib. *chos 'khrims pa*) collectively referred to as *udorchosum* (Tib. *dbu rdor chos gsum*). The tax collection was carried out by 'tax collectors' (*mandal*) entitled by the *udorchosum*, and the management of the estate was supervised by the monastery's secretary (Tib. *drung yig*) also referred to as 'adda lama' from the name of his

⁴⁶ Thutob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma, 1908.

⁴⁷ This date is indicated by Thutob Namgyal and Yeshe Dolma (1908, annexe: 37). L. E. Rose dates the British reforms in Sikkim after 1890 (1978: 214).

⁴⁸ It was the five *gyen chen*: Pemayangtse, Ralang, Rumtek, Phodang, and Phensang.

⁴⁹ 'Nep' means 'Nepalese'.

office in Gyalshing (*adda* means 'gathering place' or 'justice court')⁵⁰. Indeed, according to different informants, justice was either dispensed by the secretary, the *mandals* or the *udorchosum*. The disagreement on this matter perhaps indicates that this function is nowadays considered to contradict the lamas' role while it was probably not the case in the nineteenth century.

The monastic estates were maintained after the abolition of the Sikkimese landlord system in the early 1950s. The Pemayangtse estate remained under the direction of the *udorchosum* while other monastic estates were transferred to the Chogyal's Private Estate Ministry. As in the case of others, the monastery kept the land revenue following a governmental program of subsidies for religious institutions.⁵¹

Between the 1950s and 1973, the monasteries' rights over their landed estates were gradually transferred to the Ecclesiastical Affairs Department. As far as Pemayangtse is concerned, the Department paid back to the monastery part of the taxes it had collected till the 1980s. At the end of the 1990s, a group of Pemayangtse lamas was claiming back the taxes collected from this date onward and the right to collect taxes themselves. As other monasteries, Pemayangtse has few donated private lands, the revenue of which is devoted to a specific regular monastic ceremony.

My informants in the Pemayangtse area explain each right the monastery had since the nineteenth century according to a Buddhist framework: a group of lamas was directing the area rather than individual lamas; the collected revenues were devoted to religious activities and never for personal benefit or justice was implemented through intermediaries. They nevertheless agree to say that Pemayangtse had been the government of the area. The monastery thus had some political power (in the ancient Greek sense of the term 'politic' or city management). It could have been considered as a branch of the Chogyal's government while Gangtok was, at the time, a very distant place.

But the necessity to justify the political role the monastery had seem to me a recent one. This power had been conferred by the British and not by the Chogyal, but we can suppose that this was not in contradiction with the Buddhist conception of the lama/king relation at this time. The question of an absolute separation between the spiritual and temporal domains might have arisen only recently and the introduction of this question into Sikkim might lead my informants to

⁵⁰ A. C. Sinha, 1975: 24.

⁵¹ L. E. Rose: 221.

justify each right Pemayangtse monastery had. The question that remains is, following G. Tucci and W. Heissig⁵², whether the secularisation of the monastery has led to reduce the distance between the lamas and the world.

Conclusion

The question of separation of the spiritual and temporal domains arose recently in Sikkim with a polemic concerning the restoration of the performance of Panglhasol at the royal chapel. In an article published in the weekly *Sikkim Observer* in July 1997⁵³, Prince Wangchuk Namgyal gave his opinion explaining why Panglhasol could not yet be restored: 'These ceremonies [for the public good] should, whenever possible, be performed by monks who have achieved a certain level of practice, a state which our younger monks will take quite a few years to achieve through qualified guidance.' In this article, the Prince conveyed his desire to enhance the Sikkimese lamas' training and level of practice.⁵⁴ However, this article also implied that Sikkimese lamas, including Pemayangtse's, were more village lamas than tantric practitioners, and were thus too much involved 'in the world'.

The Prince's viewpoint and its expression is in line with a Chogyal's role and his royal ancestors' actions towards Sikkim's religious life and institutions. He defends an orthodox vision of Buddhism and this vision is not necessarily in line with some Sikkimese lamas' way of life. In the area I studied, Buddhist practice is indeed very much in demand to intervene in worldly matters.

These different concepts of religious practice may be ancient ones. There is indeed an important difference between the Sikkimese Chogyal, close to Tibet by tradition and kinship, and some Sikkimese lamas who might have had to deal with non-Buddhist religious practices and whose relation with Tibet had been cut decades ago. But these differences are also probably exacerbated by the political context: following its integration within India, Sikkim had to adopt the Indian Constitution in which 'secularism' is inscribed. We have seen that this notion could be understood as a privatisation of the religious sphere or

⁵² 1973: 150.

⁵³ Entitled 'Pang Lhasol pujas should be performed by qualified monks and organised by the public', 5th of July 1997, first page.

⁵⁴ Prince Wangchuk Namgyal devoted himself to years of meditation before founding a monastic college in Gangtok along with a meditation centre.

'The process by which sectors of society and culture are removed from the domination of religious institutions and symbols'.⁵⁵ If the Indian Constitution also guarantees to all citizens the right to choose, practice and propagate his religion, and secularism is in this way defined as a 'inter-religious understanding',⁵⁶ this concept of society is very different from the Sikkimese one. In addition to this, the implementation of secularism has led to the loss of economic rights and resources for the monasteries. Consequently, if the secularisation of Pemayangtse monastery in the nineteenth century has probably led to a sliding of the lamas' way of life toward the world, it seems that the secularisation of Sikkimese society since the 1970s has but contributed to the same movement.

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⁵⁵ Peter Berger, 1973 quoted by T.N. Madan, 1991: 394.

⁵⁶ *Op. cit.*: 409.

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SBAS YUL 'BRAS MO LJONGS:
THE HIDDEN VALLEY OF SIKKIM¹

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In the land of snow, the great master Padmasambhava said to his twenty-five disciples (Rje 'bangs nyer lnga), the king and his subjects and other predestined blessed persons: 'In future times, following the disappearance of the noble doctrine of Buddha, when the evil practices will be disseminated, great misfortunes and obstacles will come to all the countries. Lawlessness and disruptive activities will prevail all over China, Tibet and among the hordes of Mongolia. Disease, famine and war will prolong the difficult times affecting the people due to past karma. Although unfortunate, this will be unavoidable.

Where the mind dwells on spirituality, happiness will follow. Otherwise, whatever one's efforts to obtain temporal necessities, they will be in vain, and the wind will blow away future happiness, sending its growing sprout into oblivion. In spite of the difficulties they might encounter time and again, the sentient beings of this unfortunate degenerate era, oppressed by karmic activities, will not be inclined to follow the teachings.

With the advent of these difficult times, the practitioner and the fortunate man and woman should, for their own benefit and that of other devout followers, proceed to the four great hidden lands in the four directions of Tibet, with their four small states at the four junctions, twenty mountains, four gorges, small valleys, ravines and such places as the rocky hill where one is free from the fear of harm.

Together with his instructions in the proper methods of practicing, the master Padmasambhava blessed many large and small hidden lands of great significance, among which is the hidden land of sBas yul 'bras

¹ The Tibetan version of this article was previously published in the *Bulletin of Tibetology* (1998 no. 1) and is thus not reproduced here. It has been translated for the benefit of those Sikkimese who can't read Tibetan but who nevertheless wish to learn more about the qualities of Sikkim as a hidden land. Although the Tibetan sources from which this compilation was prepared are provided at the end, regrettably, the exact quotes have not been precisely indicated (the Editor).

mo ljongs. The lam yig (guide-book) informs us of various skilful means to overcome obstacles encountered on the way, how to settle upon arrival, which eating and drinking habits and farming and planting practices to follow, and how to make offerings to the guardian spirits and local deities of the land. Among these, instructions are also given concerning our own hidden land called sBas yul 'bras mo ljongs. It is the fountainhead of the water flowing towards India. Because it lies between Bhutan to the east and Nepal to the west, it is called 'the intermediate land' (bar yul). Situated in front of mdZod lnga stag rtse, the land embodies auspiciousness and fascination.

Rectangular shape, its higher grounds are flat and spacious, inhabited by playful deer, musk deer, rna ba [?], pheasants, peacocks, tigers, leopards and bears. The mountains resemble the Buddha family. The hills in the lower regions are dark. In the east they resemble the brocade decorations of the monastery. In the north they resemble the spread-out fingers of a hand. All the rocky hills below the mountains are celestial palaces. The sloping meadows below offer a beautiful sight of a variety of medicinal plants and fragrant flowers. Even lower down is the forest that resembles the majestic stance of a Bengal tiger (rgya stag), its young, as well as leopards, playing happily in the jungle. In short, there is not a single known species of bird, fish or animal that is not to be found here. The vegetation covering the countryside resembles the spread-out skin of the black bear. The spurs of the hills are like young leopards in motion, and the splendid hills themselves resemble kings sitting on their thrones. The verdant lands and the forests stand alongside one another. The upper waters of the streams cascade like swords and swirl like iron chains. The hollows of the land are like golden bowls with a thick layer of golden butter at the bottom. On higher ground grow various medicinal herbs, white mustard plants and fragrant rhododendrons. In the lower regions there are red creeping plants, whereas in the middle regions, all types of crops are grown. Because it is such a happy place, the land is like the celestial Pad ma can palace. Tashiding, the spiritual centre of the land is as sacred as Bodh Gaya, the centre of the whole world. Inherently kind and compassionate, the people of the land rank along those of the heaven of Chenresig (Ri bo po ta la pa), and as it is favourable to spontaneous growth of knowledge, its people compare with those of the heaven of Manjushri (Ri bo stse lnga). Whoever undertakes spiritual practice here will acquire great supernatural powers comparable to those inhabiting the heaven of Vajrapani (lCang lo can). Because the Dakinis actually assembled in this sacred land, it is comparable to the heaven of

Padmasambhava (O rgyan zangs mdog dpal ri). As a repository of abundant wealth, it resembles the celestial mansion of rNam par rgyal ba'i khang bzang. As a land of great rejoicing, it resembles the western paradise, the heaven of Amitabha.

There are twenty-seven main sacred caves blessed by Guru Padmasambhava. Descending from the snow mountains, the river waters endowed with the eight attributes² have formed several large lakes: Rab dkar ho ma can gyi mtsho lies to the east, Rin chen hod 'bar nor bu'i mtsho to the south, bDe chen pad ma can gyi mtsho to the west, and gYu mtsho mu li mthing gi mtsho to the north. Apart from these main lakes, there are four hundred and four lesser ones. From them small streams gently flow and form the Rathong Chu (Ra thong chu), the Rangeet (Ri rnyed) and the Teesta (bKra shis brag) rivers. Then there are seven famous medicinal springs that will cure different types of diseases. There also grow many types of medicinal plants used to cure phlegm (bad can), wind (rlung) and bile (mkris pa) disorders. In the higher regions are found medicinal plants to cure fevers, and in the lower regions there are others for colds. Also found are various fruits, 360 varieties of edible green plants, many kinds of mushrooms, and numerous varieties of root crops like do ba³, ke'u, la khag, ko sag and lo bhe ke'u [?]. There are pigments for painting the sacred images: black, white, yellow, red and green, representing the body, speech and mind, and other types of colour such as gold, silver, copper, iron and others, precious minerals being available here in large quantities. The five great mountain ranges called mdZod lnga, for example, are repositories of salt, gold and turquoise, religious texts and gems, weapons, seeds and medicines which were buried by Padmasambhava for the benefit of posterity. The great master entrusted this hidden land of great sanctity to: the twelve bsTan ma protectors of Tibet; Thang lha; rNam sras the lord of mdZod lnga; the seven lHa btsan brothers; the seven bDud and bTsan brothers; the lower region's guardian Ma bdud lcam dral; the Ttsho sman sman mo of the middle region; the middle region's guardian dPa' bo hum ri; and the upper region's guardian Gangs chen mdzod lnga. All the protective deities of the snow mountains, rocks, lakes, streams and forests, in accordance with the command of Guru Padmasambhava, are fiercely protecting the land. Whoever destroys these, would put themselves in great danger.

² Like those of the river Ganges, the eight attributes are: coolness, sweetness, lightness (digestive), softness, clearness, freedom from impurities, on drinking soothing to the stomach, and makes the throat clear and free.

³ Alocacia and calocasia.

It is because, in the past, the great master along with his 25 disciples, the king and his subjects, subdued and declared the above local deities as the guardians of the treasures and the masters of the land. As he set foot in Tashiding, he blessed it as the centre of the sacred land. Seen from Tashiding, on the horizon is a chain of mountains that resembles a hundred thousand moons overlooking an area entirely covered with rolling hills. This region with its beautiful trees and meadows alongside wooded areas and majestic hills resembles a divine elephant taking delight in entering the lotus pond. With doors at its four corners, its sky like a wheel with eight spokes, its earth like a lotus with eight petals, with three regions at its four boundaries, with only one door in the lower region, and four gently flowing rivers, such is Brag dkar bkra shis sding, a heavenly mansion eulogized by the victorious Maha Guru Padmasambhava. This represents the centre point of the great sanctuary, which when looked upon from the heavens above, resembles the centre of a shining wheel with eight spokes; when seen from the earth below, it resembles the centre of a blooming lotus flower with eight petals; and when looking towards the rivers from its middle, one sees the merging point of the four great rivers flowing through a large valley. Its unchanging northern gate faces the sacred place in the south. Square in shape, it has the width of six horizontal extensions of one's arms ('dom drug) and the length of six times the distance covered by a stone thrown from a sling. Its summit is flat and sparkling like a mirror. At its four corners, there are four sandalwood trees. Seven treasures were hidden in succession at this sacred site.

The face of the hill opposite this sacred place resembles a sleeping pig. The hill at its back resembles a mother and child in an embrace. The outer landscape of the site is made up of rocky hills, and the inner shines like luster from a hundred different kinds of bright 'wish granting jewels' (yid bshin nor bu) of the celestial realm of O rgyan dakini; esoterically, it is like the actual presence of the entire pantheon of deities of *bDe gshegs sgrub pa bka' brgyad*, *Bla ma dgongs pa 'dus pa* (text discovered by Sangay Lingpa), and such as Rab 'byams theg dgu who all appeared as rainbow bodies. All its stumps are as indestructible as Vajra, all its water gives immortality, and all its trees are wish-granting trees (dpag bsam 'khri shing). In short, whoever comes into contact with the wind blowing from that hill will be entirely cleansed, even of the defilement from sins accumulated in thousands of kalpas. The central area of this sacred place is a miraculously created sacred place, and therefore the four meritorious activities can be carried

out here without impediment. Because it is the source of the tantric teachings, Atiyoga tenets (rDzogs chen kun bzang thugs kyi bstan pa) will flourish there. Any earnest practice here will bring forth a rainbow body (hod skur) devoid of any residual remains of the gross physical body (phung po lhag ma med pa). Moreover, bsTan gnyis gling pa'i gter byang said:

Tashiding, the central sacred place,
is like a mound descending from the sky.
The eastern hill resembles the
drawn curtain of a tent.
The western hill is like a
sleeping scorpion and an elephant.
The distant hills resemble a leaping
tiger, lion, bear and a bear like hairy animal.
The hills of the upper region
resemble glass stupas lined up in succession.
The hills of the lower region
resemble the lama's gesturing hands.

In the four directions are the four sacred caves dedicated to the four meritorious acts.

Shar phyogs sbas phyug: the eastern cave

Shar phyogs sbas phyug in the east is the abode of Shi ba kha gdong dkar ba, the peaceful white deity. It has an infinite number of self-arisen figures. The southern section of the cave is a heaven with a figure of rDo rje sems pa (Vajrasattva). Above the entrance of the cave are inscriptions in the codified language of Dakini (mkha' 'gro'i brda yig), and on the right are the volumes of *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan gyur*. Upon entering the cave, one sees, on the right, the figures of 42 peaceful deities, and on the left, the figures of 69 wrathful deities. The seat of Guru Padmasambhava occupies the threshold. Below, one hears the constant musical murmur of the flowing nectar of milky water. Then, after walking a distance of about four lengths of the arms, one sees the figure of a demoness spontaneously emitting pills of the elixir of life from her heart. Then, after a distance of about seven lengths of the arms, there is the shrine hall of the Dakini and Vajrasattva. Vajrasattva and a large number of Dakini reside there. On the east side

is located the pantheon of deities associated with Vajrasattva, and on the south side is the shrine hall of Rin chen 'byung ldan (Ratnasambhava). Then, after a distance of about five horizontal extensions of one's arms, is the Mandala circle of Chos sku snang ba mtha' yas (Amitabha Buddha) with numerous Dakinis and other figures. On the north side is located the shrine hall of Don yod grub pa (Amogasiddhi), and rNam par snang mdzad (Vairocana) resides in the centre. On the right side of the cave, one sees the self-arisen figure of Garuda, which when seen by the local spirits and nagas, will disappear and depart to their own abode. Above it resides Padmasambhava. Just being told of his presence will cause all one's wishes to be fulfilled. Below resides Phyang na rdo rje (Vajrapani) who conquered the three realms (khams gsum) and subdued the three existences (srid gsum) thanks to his brilliance. Padamsambhava promised that when lepers see him, they would be instantly cured. The eastern side is the abode of peaceful deities where whoever makes an effort to cleanse their sins, will overcome all illnesses caused by malignant spirits, the defilement of sins and other obstacles. Making a pilgrimage to this sacred place just once will lead without fail to the path of 'the five families of Buddha' (rGyal wa rigs lnga).

Lho mkha 'gro gsang phug: the southern cave

Lho mkha 'gro gsang phug is the cave of longevity and increased knowledge. There all wishes for longevity, virtue and abundance will swiftly be fulfilled. When seen from Rin chen spungs, the hill on the eastern side looks like a black spider in motion. The base of the hill, called Me 'bar phug, has a naturally evolved shape resembling a shoe, with an entrance. Inside on a huge rock stands the sha ma ri tree. On the left is the figure of dPal rdo rje gshon nu, and on the right are the figures of 'the five families of Dakinis' (mKha 'gro sde lnga) which have formed naturally on the rock. On the ceiling of the cave are the lungs and heart of the demoness emitting the nectar of longevity, and below is the vase of longevity surrounded by about seven ritual offerings. Under the vase lie the remains of the demoness, complete with head, arms and other parts. On their right are figures of animals, such as snakes. Then with the help of a lit candle, at a distance of about one length of an arm, one comes to twelve narrow obstacles. Passing over the first, one reaches the shrine hall of Guru Padmasambhava containing his whole body, its imprint, his headgear,

and the imprint of his hands, which can be seen clearly. On the right is the figure of Ye shes mtsho rgyal, and behind this is the pill of longevity made from the marble stone ka ma ru pa bearing the self-arisen figure of a lion. Inside it is a large sacred treasure of the Dakinis. Then, proceeding downward, one comes upon the secret passage concealed by the Dakinis. Simply being told of this will generate enlightened thought. Likewise, it is stated that making a pilgrimage to this sacred place and going round it will cleanse the defilement of all sins accumulated during many past lives and cause to be born in the land of O rgyan mKha' 'gro gling in the future.

Nub bde chen phyug: the western cave

When seen from Tashiding, the hill of Nub bde chen phyug looks like a sleeping pig. Looking upwards from the side of this hill, one sees a place called Bar yul rin chen gshongs, a cave facing southwest. It is as high as a three-storied house and covers an area similar to the one with twelve pillars. At the centre of the cave, is a square Mandala, one length of an arm across, made from precious materials, within which is the yang dag Mandala circle ris ma yal, which is clearly visible with its distinctive features. Here is seen the Nor bu bsam 'phel vase filled with a precious substance. Just from looking at it, 'common attainments' (thun mong gi dngos grub) may be acquired, and by touching it on its body, 'supreme higher attainments' (mchog gi dngos grub) may be obtained. On the four sides of the Mandala are four skulls filled with nectar. Also found here are the relics and skull of sKye bdun gram ze filled with nectar, and Guru Padmasambhava's mystic dagger (Srid gsum kun 'dul) called the subduer of the three lokhas. By simply brandishing the Phurpa, all hindrances and obstacles will vanish.

In short, Nub bde chen phyug contains the sacred images representing body, speech and mind, ritual objects, and the complete sutras and tantras translated in Tibet. Treasured stores that could feed almost half the population of the world are also hidden here. Just by going to this cave, 'the Mahamudra's supreme higher attainment' (phyag rgya chen po mchog gi dngos grub) will be acquired.

At the main cave are located two lesser caves of 'supreme higher attainments' and three lesser caves of 'common attainments'. Moreover, in this 'intermediate land' of Bar yul 'bras mo ljongs, there are nine caves of 'supreme higher attainments', 13 caves of 'common attainments' and 27 large and small caves where enlightenment has

been attained. On the right of the cave known as O rgyan bde chen phyug, grows a fragrant medicinal tree bearing many kinds of flowers and fruits which can cure diseases associated with wind, bile and phlegm disorders.

Byang lha ris snying phug: the northern cave

Byang lha ris snying phug is the northern field for the application of wrathful activities. So, embarking on the mystical tasks of putting an end to, of summoning and of liberating from the ten heinous crimes will defend the doctrine so it might achieve its purpose unhindered. It has three caves facing eastward. The cave in the south has the self-arisen golden figures of the Chos sku yum chen mo (Dharmakaya Prajnaparamita) surrounded by the Bodhisattvas of the ten quarters. The cave in the centre has the figure of Tshe dpag med (Amitayus) surrounded by a pantheon of longevity deities. The cave to the north has rDo rje gshon nu surrounded by the ten wrathful deities in their fearsome costumes and the four fearsome southern deities in their hereditary order. The eastern cave has rGyal chen nam sras surrounded by the eight fabulous horses of wealth. Going there will produce favorable signs of enhancing the might and the meritorious affairs of the Tibetan king and his ministers. To the west of this is located the self-arisen rDo rje phag mo with the five families of Dakinis (mKha' 'gro sde Inga). Going there will produce signs favorable to the growth of spiritual realization of Tibetan men and women. Should a layman not have any sons, he will be given seven. To the west of this is located the goddess of wealth Vasundhara (Lha mo nor rgyun ma) with the three goddesses of bountiful harvests. Even further west of this is located the lord of death, gShin rje (Yama), with the assembled messengers of death. Below this is the triangular hom pit. If the names of the powerful demonic clans of Tibet are written down and thrown in the hom pit during the annual casting off of evil, the messengers of death will flee to their own abode. Nearby are three stone charm boxes containing seven paper scrolls inscribed with the names of the ten wrathful deities. If the wrathful mantras are recited three times when the powerful and prosperous life threatening enemies of the earlier and later periods have assembled, there will appear a sign within seven days. In the compound is a rock as big as a mountain. If upon arriving here, one makes offerings and says prayers, there will be a favorable sign indicating the diffusion of the Buddha's teachings in Tibet. For

example, prayers requesting that the Buddha's teachings and their practice might flourish in all places, as well in this particular location, and if they are put down in writing and secured to the rock, they will be answered.

When in the eighth century the Upadhayaya Shantarakshita, master Padmasambhava and King Khri srong lde btsan and his subjects actually set foot here, they blessed the land as the sacred hidden land. In the fourteenth century, one of the three supreme incarnate treasure discoverers, the great treasure holder Rig 'dzin rgos ldem (1337-1408), had begun to open the gate to the sacred land. He brought with him many profound texts. Native guardians and local deities were bound by oath to reside there, and he undertook the bestowal of blessings to transform it into a sacred land. He built many monasteries, the foremost of which was dPa' bo hum ri, and spread the teachings. During that time, the 'early dissemination of teachings' (sNga 'gyur bstan pa) was carried out by a number of central figures like Ka thog rDo rje gdan, Ka thog pa Ye shes 'bum shar and Ka thog pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan who came for that purpose. After them, at the end of the sixteenth century, came mNga' ris Rig 'dzin chen po, an incarnation of Rig 'dzin rgod ldem. He set foot on the land, and having placed the local deities under strict oath of loyalty, he discovered many profound teachings in the hidden treasures of Nub bde chen phug.

In the middle of the seventeenth century, according to the prophesy of Guru Padmasambhava, the incarnates rNal 'byor mched bshi further opened the gate of this hidden land as a pilgrimage centre. The most eminent of all the erudite masters of Tibet, embodying both Pan chen vi ma la and rGyal wa Klong chen, was rGyal wa Lha btsun chen po, who came from Kong po and entered Sikkim from the northern gate, arriving at Yok bsam nor bu sgang. Then came mNga' bdag sems dpa' chen po Phun tshogs rig 'dzin⁴, an unblemished descendant of the Dharma Raja of the land of snow and an incarnation born of Avalokitesvara's intended wish, who entered the hidden land from Gu ge and mNga' ris and arrived at Nor bu sgang. Another of the most eminent of great masters, who came from Ka thog rDo rje gdan, the eastern centre that produced all the eminent masters of the land of snow, was Ka thog Kun tu bzang po. He opened the northern gate of the hidden land and arrived at Yok bsam. Phun tshogs rnam rgyal, the

⁴ Some sources mention that mNga' bdag sems dpa' chen po phun tshogs rig 'dzin arrived in Sikkim in 1642, a few years before rGyal wa Lha btsun chen po's arrival around 1646.

king who, in accordance with the prophesy of Guru Padmasambhava, represents both spiritual and temporal affairs of this region and is king Indrabodhi's direct descendant, came to the kingdom from the east. The three incarnates rNal 'byor mched gsum enthroned him in Yok bsam nor bu sgang as the great Dharma Raja endowed with both spiritual and temporal power over the region. A charter was promulgated to rule over the kingdom in accordance with the tenets of Buddha, for the benefit of the doctrine and all sentient beings.

The lamas also decided to lay the foundations of the Buddha's teachings on three different elevated sites. Lha btsun chen po chose the sites of Pad ma yang rtse, Theg mchog yang rtse, and Lhan rtse. mNg'a bdag Sems dpa' chen po decided upon rNam rtse, bSam 'grub rtse and rNam rgyal rtse. Ka thog Kun tu bzang po chose the elevated site where brag tog dgon was erected. Chos rgyal Phun tshogs rnam rgyal's choice fell on the sites of Rab brtan rtsea, sGrub sde, and dBang 'dus rtse (Gangtok) which became the main sites. The three lamas and the king promised to first establish these monasteries, palace, meditation centres, mani lhakhangs, etc. Then, they established the bKra shis hod 'bar mchod rten in Nor bu sgang for the blessing of the country, mThong ba rang grol in bKra shis sdings (Tashiding stupa), and in many more dangerous sites, antagonistic and malignant spirits were vanquished. Tsha khang, man ldang and many sacred monuments which bring deliverance if merely looked upon, have multiplied. Up to this day, the six main monasteries which are known to all are Pemayantse (Pad ma yang rtse), Tashiding (bKra shis sdings), Ralang (Ra lang), Rumtek (Rum btegs), Phensang (Phan bzang) and Phodong (Pho gdong). In addition to these there are many lesser monasteries and also mani lhakhangs, which altogether amount to more than one thousand. These monasteries and mani lhakhangs follow the fine traditions of their previous masters. For example, Nyingma monasteries follow the tradition of sMan gling, Byang gter and Ka thog. In Kargyu monasteries, it is the bKa' brgyud traditions that are fundamentally followed. In the mani lhakhangs, dkar po cha brgyad fasts are undertaken on sacred occasions along with religious ceremonies and other meritorious acts such as the reciting of hundred thousand million Vajra Guru Amideva. On the 10th and 25th days of the month, local deities are invoked by burning juniper branches and sprinkling water. On the 15th day of the 7th month, Gangs can mdzod lnga, the chief of all the guardian deities of 'Bras mo ljons, dPa' bo hum ri, Yab bdud, as well as other guardians of the upper, lower and middle regions are worshipped by burning juniper branches and offering of libation (gser

skyem), accompanied by great festivities and religious dance performances. Every year, a series of religious services of general importance – such as sGrub chen bka' brgyad, Bla ma dgongs 'dus, Gu ru drag dmar, 'Jam dpal gshin rje'i gtor bzlog, bDe gshegs kun 'dus kyi sgrub mchod, Rig 'dzin sgrub mchod, rDor sems sgrub mchod – and other important propitiation services are conducted in different monasteries on a grand scale.

Whenever the mountains, rocky hills, lakes and small streams of such a sacred land are polluted, its native guardians spirits and local deities will become agitated. When mdZod lnga becomes agitated, there will be harm from a tiger. When it is Thang lha, there will be harm from the yeti (mi rgod). When bdud becomes restless, there will be harm from a wild bear. The nagas will send harm by a poisonous snake, btsan will cause harm through a wolf or a wild dog. In short, whenever the native guardians spirits and local deities are not honoured, rain will not come on time, human and animal diseases will occur as well as internal unrest and famine, causing all kinds of hardship and suffering.

Because the guardian spirits and local deities inhabiting the region are extremely fierce, it is important to refrain from acts of disrespect caused by insanity and the misuse of the fireplace such as burning animal skins on outside fires. Favourable actions that bring happiness comparable to that of bde skyid rdzogs ldan would be: erecting stupas and mani lhakhangs in the centre of the town and at the intersection of three roads; invoking the native guardians spirits and local deities by burning juniper branches and sprinkling water; making offerings to the guardian deity of the land; and refraining from harming the wild animals. Likewise, the benefits acquired from undertaking a pilgrimage to such a sacred land is that by coming into contact with its grass, water and plants and eating them will remove all misfortunes and obstacles. Disease, malignant influences and defilement caused by sin will disappear. Whoever makes a single meritorious act in the sacred land will attain the rank of Vidyadhara. Those who do accordingly will attain the rainbow body (phung po lhag med) and will go to the land of Dakini (mKha' spyod kyi gnas), as cited in large volumes of the treasured texts belonging to Jo mo mTsho rgyal, Acharya Sa le and the master Nam mkha'i snying po. Therefore, showing reverence, offering worship, rendering service and paying homage are not devoid of results. He who obtains the 'common higher attainments' (Thun mong gi dngos grub) in this life will be established in the omniscient state of

the most perfect Buddhahood (rNam mkhyen rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas kyi go 'phang) in the next life, as it was stated.

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BOOK REVIEW

FRANÇOISE POMMARET

CNRS/EPHE, Langues et cultures de l'aire tibétaine (UMR 8047) Paris

mKha' spyod 'Bras mo ljongs kyi gtsug nor sprul pa'i rnal 'byor mched bzhi brgyud 'dzin dang bcas pa'i byung ba brjod pa blo gсар gzhon nu' i dga' ston.

Khenpo Lha Tshering, *A Saga of Sikkim's supremely revered four pioneer Nyingmapa reincarnates and their torchbearers*, Khenpo L. Tshering, Gangtok, 2002, 263 pp., language: Tibetan. Only the cover carries a title in English.

This book is a welcome contribution to the knowledge of the history of Sikkim ('Bras mo ljongs), and to the links between the rNying ma pa religious school and the kings of Sikkim, called *chos rgyal*, dharmaraja, like the Tibetan kings; thus this term underlines the religious component of their function.

The knowledge about the ancient history of Sikkim is scanty so far, and it is hoped that the forthcoming publication of Per Sorensen and John Ardussi, presenting the text and the translation of the famous '*Bras ljongs rgyal rabs dvangs shel me long* (1908) by lHa lcam Ye shes sgrol ma, will come out soon. This publication is under the patronage of Her Majesty Ashi Kesang Dorji Wangchuck, Queen Mother of Bhutan and lHa lcam Ye shes sgrol ma's granddaughter.

Khenpo Lha Tshering uses this text as one of his primary sources, but it is not the only one. In fact, he lists more than 45 sources (pp. 1-5), including Tibetan and Bhutanese sources, and says in his introduction that the writing of this work took him seven years. There is no doubt that Khenpo Lha Tshering possesses great knowledge and has done extensive research. He compares sources and discusses their validity either in his notes or in the text itself. For example, in the chapter on the Ka thog pa lamas in Sikkim, he does not hesitate to state that the history is not clear (pp.19-22). It must be regretted, however, that the exact sources for certain chapters are not mentioned more often in the notes.

As the author intended, the book is divided into six chapters (*le'u*), with an introduction and a bibliography of the sources preceding each

chapter. However, the numbering of sections in Roman numerals – probably done at the time of the lay-out – , is very confusing as it divides the work into sections without clearly indicating which are the chapters and which are the sub-sections. Not only does this blur the chapter divisions but it also makes the sub-sections of a chapter look like independent chapters.

Khenpo Lha Tshering's book would have benefited from some additional, careful proofreading and a layout following more closely the author's intentions. The table of contents appears to indicate a juxtaposition of small chapters, whereas the author had set up a very logical sequence throughout – which also explains the title.

According to Khenpo Lha Tshering's indications in Tibetan, the contents of his work are as follows:

CHAPTER ONE (pp. 1-11): Prophecies concerning Sikkim as a hidden land and the advent of the monarchy.

CHAPTER TWO (pp. 12-26) includes: The history of the famous saint Rig 'dzin rgod ldem and his 'opening of the door' of Sikkim as a sacred land (*gnas*). Rig 'dzin rgod ldem (1337-1408) is the initiator of the Rediscovered texts of the North (Byang gter) and the founder of the monastery of rDo rje brag in gTsang, which was relocated on the left bank of the gTsang po in Central Tibet in the 17th century. He is thus considered as the first holder of the Byang gter teachings of rDor rje brag. Next comes the history of Ka thog pa bzhag bla Ye shes 'bum and Mon Ka thog pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan, followed by the history of the second Rig 'dzin rgod ldem, mNga' ris Rig 'dzin legs ldan rje (1512-1625), and his activity at lHa ri snying phug in Sikkim. Rig 'dzin legs ldan rje was the brother of the great mNga' ris Pan chen Padma dbang rgyal (1487-1543) and the second holder of the Byang gter teachings of rDor rje brag.

CHAPTER THREE (pp. 27-64) is devoted to mNga' bdag sems dpa' chen po Phun tshogs rig 'dzin (born in 1591/2 -1654) and his lineage. He was the founder of the monastery of Brag dkar bKra shis lding (Tashiding) in Sikkim, and his lineage was known in Sikkim as the mNga' bdag pa (cf. *Gazetteer of Sikkim*, 1894). He claimed to belong to the lineage of the great Treasure discoverer mNga' bdag nyang ral Nyima 'od zer.

CHAPTER FOUR (pp. 65-190), the longest of the six chapters, is devoted to the life of the famous rNyingma pa saint lHa btsun nam mkha'i 'jigs med, also known as lHa btsun chen po, and the two reincarnations of his lineage. Born in southern Tibet in 1597, lHa btsun chen po arrived in Sikkim in 1641 and meditated at several places

including Yoksum (Yug bsam) Tashiding and Pemayangtse. The life of lHa btsun nam mkha'i 'jigs med is covered from p. 65 to p.142. The life of his second reincarnation, lHa btsun ngag dbang kun bzang 'jigs med, is the shortest (born in Bumthang, Bhutan, in 1656, died in 1675, pp. 143-147), while the life of the third, the great lHa btsun 'jigs med dpa' bo (1682- ?), and his deeds and achievements are dealt with extensively from p. 147-195. This lineage was affiliated to sMin grol gling, the other famous rNying ma pa monastery on the right bank of the gTsang po in Central Tibet, where lHa btsun 'jigs med dpa' bo spent his early years. lHa btsun 'jigs med dpa' bo and the king Phyag rdor nam rgyal (1686-1717) of Sikkim built Pemayangtse (Padma yang rtse) monastery on the model of sMin grol gling.

CHAPTER FIVE (pp. 196-229) deals with the early history of Sikkim before the 17th century and the lives of the kings of Sikkim until the 6th King rNam rgyal phun tshogs (1733-1780). This chapter is a logical follow-up to Chapters Two, Three and Four, as it is said that the three lamas (lHa btsun chen po, mNga' bdag sems dpa' chen po Phun tshogs rigs 'dzin and Ka thog mTshungs med chos rje kun tu bzang po) from the three different rNyingma pa lineages who were in Sikkim in 1642, met at Yug bsam and chose Phun tshogs nam rgyal as the first king of Sikkim.

CHAPTER SIX (pp. 230-263) is devoted to some rNying ma pa lineage holders of the early translation of Tantra, such as the Ka thog pa, as well as to other lamas such as rDor rje glingpa (1346-1405). However, if this editorial choice makes sense in a purely religious context, it might have been better, from a chronological point of view, to place the lives of the two Ka thog pa lamas – Dam pa bde gshegs (1134-1204 or 1122-1192), founder of Ka thog monastery in Khams, and mTshungs med chos rje kun tu bzang po (17th century) –, in Chapter Two, before the chapter on the kings.

In spite of its editorial shortcomings, this work is a very useful and well-researched history of Sikkim, providing a wealth of information previously only to be obtained from various, widely scattered sources. The text also allows the reader a glimpse of the interactions between Sikkim and its neighbours Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal, during the course of its history.

As is the case with many historians, Khenpo Lha Tshering wrote his work with an underlying ideology in mind, and this makes it all the more interesting. He emphasizes the pre-eminence of the rNyingma pa school in the history of the country, and more particularly of the lineages upheld at Tashiding (bKra shis lding) monastery – from where

he is originally. It also reaffirms, in a subtle way, the legitimacy of the rNam rgyal dynasty because it was created by religious figures.

To conclude one could say that beyond the historical and religious facts it offers, this book represents a quest for the identity and roots of Sikkim in light of the fact that it is now an Indian state.

This book can be ordered from:

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Soft cover Rs 225, hard cover Rs 310, postage and handling charges (international) Rs 200. Please send your currency's equivalent by postal money order.

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Bhutan, Odyssey Guides: Hong Kong (reprint 2002); *Bhutan: mountain fortress of the gods*, Serindia: London, 1997 (ed. with C. Schicklgruber); *Lhasa in the 17th century: the capital of the Dalai-Lamas*, Brill: Leiden, 2002; and *Tibet: turning the wheel of time*, Thames & Hudson, London, 2003.

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