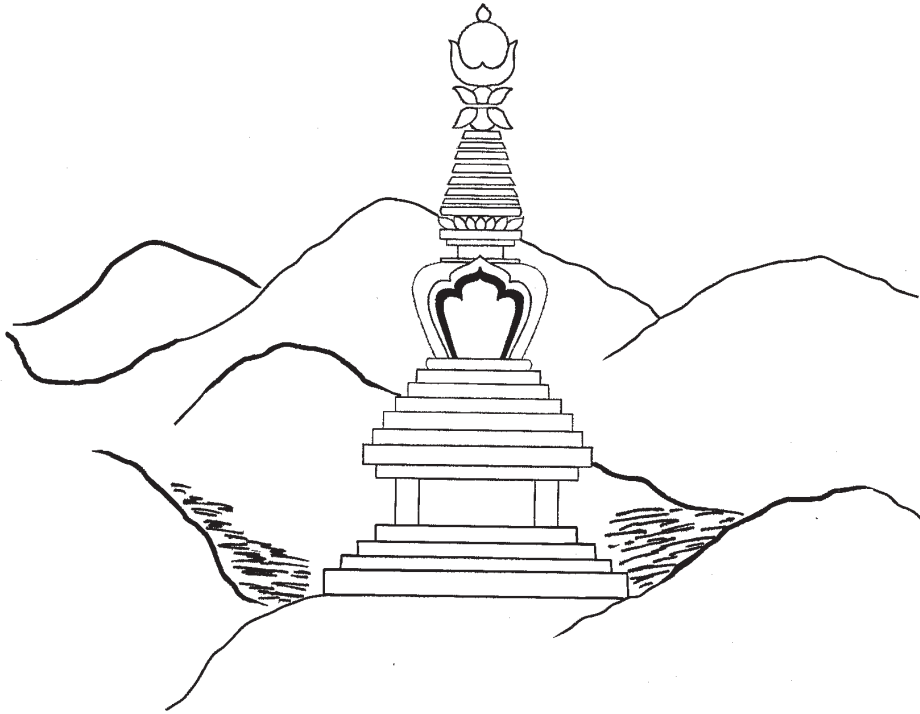




Bulletin of Tibetology



VOLUME 48

No. 2

2012

NAMGYAL INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY
GANGTOK, SIKKIM





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Typesetting:

GYAMTSO (AMI, DHARAMSHALA)

The Bulletin of Tibetology is published bi-annually by the Director, Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok, Sikkim.

Annual subscription rates: South Asia Rs 150, Oversea \$20.

Correspondence concerning Bulletin subscriptions, changes of address, missing issues etc. to: Administrative Officer, Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok 737102, Sikkim, India (directornitsikkim@gmail.com). Editorial correspondence should be sent to the Editor at the same address.

Submission guidelines. We welcome submission of articles on any subject on the religion, history, language, art and culture of the people of the Tibetan cultural area and the Buddhist Himalaya. Articles should be in English or Tibetan, submitted by email or on CD along with a hard copy and should not exceed 5,000 words in length.

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PRINTED IN INDIA AT ARCHANA ADVERTISING Pvt. Ltd., NEW DELHI





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ROBERTO VITALI

Dharamshala







A WORD FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

When in November 2011 I was asked to be guest editor of the *Bulletin of Tibetology*, this was an opportunity for me to continue a work I had happily accepted in the past for other journals from the Himalayan region. I have always been of the opinion that the local journals should play an important role as a source for the study of the cultures they represent. Although important places of learning in the west or other countries of Asia have structures and facilities to do very well, the material coming from the indigenous regions, despite many difficulties, keeps on inspiring research and writing.

To pursue this line of thinking I planned to ask a few authors who hang around the place in the Himalaya where I have been living for a good number of years to take out from their drawers some of their writings and contribute to this issue of the *Bulletin* I was asked to take care of. They are voices of the Himalaya for a Himalayan journal. I am grateful to them for answering to my call for papers. This issue of the *Bulletin of Tibetology* focuses on various topics relevant to Tibetology that somewhat exemplify the spectrum into which the studies are progressively expanding.

Bellezza steps in little known territory, for he sets the performance of a spirit-medium, hitherto unrecorded in anthropological studies, into the context of traditions that go back to time immemorial by finding parallels in documents of remarkable antiquity. He analyses the liturgy of the performance and identifies classes of spirits associated with it.

Blancke's work, besides dealing with the depiction on a wall of a theme that hardly appears elsewhere in murals with similar completeness, is refreshing because it deals with visuals but, for once, not from an art historical perspective. She opts for a study on how the painter has chosen to represent the steps the soul goes through in the Bar do state, in a combination of pictorial solutions and doctrinal requirements.

Stacey Van Vleet provides a preliminary insight into one aspect of Brag dkar rTa so sprul sku Chos kyi dbang phyug (1775-1837)'s multifaceted expertise, the medical one. Her introduction to his work *Drang srong kun tu dgyes pa'i rol mo* is meant to shed light on his personality and studies, the context in which he worked, and to look into some of his main doctrinal points in relation with the scholasticism of earlier periods.

Tashi Tsering pays homage to Gene Smith, the doyen of Tibetan literature. He refrains in the most from recollections of his past interactions with him but focuses on the significance of Gene's life activity and the heritage he has left

