

THE CREMATION CEREMONY ACCORDING TO THE BYANG-GTER TRADITION

Tadeusz Skorupski

Tring

Since funeral ceremonies form one of the most important group of all Tibetan ritual performances, there are many different ritual texts according to which they are performed. Out of several different established traditions, the funeral rites based on the Tantra Elimination of all Evil Rebirths¹ seem to be the oldest ones. Two other popular and well known traditions which are frequently followed by Tibetan lamas are the *byang-gter* tradition and the cycles of rituals written by *Rāgāśya* in the 18th century and known as the *bde-chen-zhing*. The *maṇḍala* which is used for the funeral ritual in the Tantra Elimination of All Evil Rebirths has *Sarvavit Vairocana* as the chief deity, the one in the *byang-gter* tradition has *Avalokiteśvara* and the *bde-chen-zhing*² cycle has *Amitābha*. The basic structure of these three different funeral ceremonies is fundamentally the same. Although the two latter ceremonies have their distinct peculiarities, they basically follow the structure outlined in the Tantra Elimination of All Evil Rebirths. Furthermore, one finds in them a number of invocations and *mantras* which are taken from the above mentioned Tantra.

Out of many different rituals which can be performed for the dead, four are the most important and performed whenever possible. They are: reading the *pho-ba* (transference of consciousness) to the dead person, reading the *bar-do thos-grol*³ (liberation through hearing in the intermediate state between death and new rebirth), the ritual with an effigy card (*byang-chog*), and the cremation ceremony (*ro-sreg*).

¹ The Sanskrit title of this Tantra is *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana*. I have translated it into English and it has been published by Motilal Benarsi Dass, Delhi, 1983. The description of the different rites for the dead will be found on page 81 ff.

² The funeral ceremonies of this cycle will be published in my book on Rituals which I am at present completing and preparing for publication.

³ One will find the explanations and partial translations of those texts in *W.Y. Evans-Wentz's The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, of which there are many repeated editions, or in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, translated by F. Fremantle and Chogyam Trungpa, Shambhala publication, Berkeley and London, 1975.

In the ritual with an effigy card, one uses a piece of paper on which is drawn a small figure of the dead person with his name written on it. Sometimes one simply writes the syllable NRI. One places the bones, hair, clothes or any other article which belonged to the deceased together with the effigy card on a prepared altar in the room in which the ritual is to be performed. The consciousness (*rnamshe*s) of the dead person is then summoned to reside in the effigy card. Once it is summoned, the remainder or the bulk of the ritual consists of leading the dead person out from the evil places of rebirth and guiding it to a better rebirth or, if possible, to a total liberation. An elaborate ritual with an effigy card includes the liberation from the Six Spheres of Existence, the guidance through the Ten Stages of the *Bodhisattva's* Career, the different stages of becoming a *Buddha*, the gaining of enlightenment and the final liberation and passing into *nirvāna*. At the end of the ritual one reads the 'pho-ba and then the card is burnt and a *tsha-tsha*⁴ is made. This ritual can be performed many times before and after the cremation of the corpse. It is also performed as a replacement or substitute for the funeral ceremonies in the absence of the body or when the person has died far away from home. The cremation ceremony consists of the preparation of the dead body, purification and preparation of the ground for the cremation, the cremation of the corpse and the disposal of the ashes.

The manner in which the dead body should be disposed is determined by an astrologer. If the water element prevails and is found to be the most beneficial for the deceased, then the corpse should be thrown into a river or a lake; if the air element prevails, then the corpse should be fed to the vultures; if it is the soil element, it should be buried; if the fire element, it should be cremated. I am not aware of any textual ritual for disposing of the corpse in water. Whenever it is done, the presiding lama recites prayers and invocations for the happy rebirth of the dead person. If it is fed to the vultures, then the lama recites a particular prayer. In some traditions it is an elaborate performance where the *dakinis* are summoned in the form of vultures but I have not, as yet, had time to examine those texts. Whichever form of disposal is followed, the presiding lama should normally, in the first instance, offer the corpse to the appropriate element. Thus if the body is to be thrown into a river, the lama should first sprinkle the corpse with water before it is cremated. Similar ritual tokens are performed for the other elements.

The cremation ceremonies, interesting as they are, are very repetitive especially when it comes to offering many times over a whole series of articles over which, apart from their individual *mantras*, are recited the same invocations and prayers.

⁴ The descriptions of different kinds of *tsha-tsha* are given in G. Tucci's *Indo-Tibetica*.

To avoid too much repetition, I give here below a description of the different stages of the cremation ritual and translate only the more interesting and the most important passages. In doing so, the ritual itself remains still clearly outlined and indeed, on the whole, very little is left out. For the description of the cremation ceremony according to the *byang-gter* tradition I make use of the text written by *rDo-rje-brag Rig'dzin Padma'phrin-las* and entitled *Byang-gter ro-sreg lag-len* (The practice of the cremation according to the Northern Terma).⁵

At the site where the cremation is to take place, a short ritual should first be performed in order to request the soil deity to grant permission to use the ground and to avert all evil influences. For the benign, or so-called 'deities of the white quarter' (*dkar-phyogs*)⁶, a white torma (*gtor-ma*) is prepared and offered to them with a request to grant permission to use the site. The torma is sprinkled with water and OM AH HUM and an appropriate *mantra* is recited over it. In order to pacify and dispel the deities of the 'black quarter' (*nag-phyogs*), the fierce *mantra* of *Hayagriva* (=OM HAYAGRIVA HUM PHAT) is recited. Next the performing lama prepares the ground. He does this by envisaging himself as *Avalokiteśvara* and sprinkling water on the ground from the ritual vase in order to purify it. Then he draws the *maṇḍala* of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities (*zhi-khros*)⁷, followed by the six petalled *maṇḍala* of *Avalokiteśvara*. The hearth (*sreg-khang*) is drawn in the centre of these two *maṇḍalas*. It should have a *vajra* at the centre and half-moons and half-*vajras* in the four corners. On the top of it he should arrange the firewood (*bud-shing*) and build a square wall around it with an opening for adding more wood. Above the arranged wood is fixed a metal tripod for holding up the corpse. This section of the cremation kiln is called (*ro-khang*) and it should be enclosed by a round wall. Then the upper part of the cremation kiln should be built in the shape of a *stūpa* (*chos-rten*).

The dead body is washed with scented water while the *mantra* for purification is recited over it: 'May the sins and impurities become purified.' This *mantra* is written down and attached to the dead body, summoning first the consciousness (*rnam-shes*) of the deceased and dissolving it into the inscribed *mantra*. The Protectors

⁵ The full title of the text is : *byang-gter spyang-ras-gzigs kyi sreg-sbyang lag-len gsal-bar bkod-pa snang-byed nyi-ma*. I make the use of the block-prints reproduced by T. 'Jam-dbyangs, Leh 1977.

⁶ For the deities of the white and black quarters see *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, by René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, OUP and Mouton & Co, London 1956, page 4.

⁷ For the description of the Peaceful and Wrathful Deities see the books mentioned in footnote No. 3 above; also *Secret Doctrines of the Tibetan Books of the Dead*, by Detlef Ingo Lauf, Shambhala, Boulder and London 1977.

of the Buddhist religion (*chos-skyong*) are offered a tormā and the obstructive spirits (*bgegs*) are dispersed by reciting the fierce *mantra* of *Hayagrīva*. The corpse is consecrated and placed in the cremation kiln.

On some occasions when it is considered appropriate a special ritual is performed to evoke the consciousness of the dead person from the Six Spheres of Existence. This is performed in the following manner. To evoke the consciousness from the realm of hell (*dmyal-ba*) the presiding lama should recite :

‘OM Destroy, destroy all the causes which lead to hell HUM PHAT.
 O you whose name is . . . , who have departed from this life,
 May all your *karma*, sins and the obstructions which induce
 Rebirth in hell, caused by the power of hatred, become purified.’

It should be recited twice, written down and glued, with honey or treacle, to the soles of the dead person’s feet. To evoke the consciousness from the remaining five spheres of existence similar *mantras* and invocations are recited and written down for each one with the modification of the cardinal sin or impediment which induces rebirth in those places: for the realm of the hungry ghosts (*yi-dvags*) it is avarice (*ser-sna*) and it is glued to the private part; for the animal realm (*byol-song*), stupidity (*gti-mug*), glued to the navel; for the world of men (*mi*), passion (*’dod-chag*), glued on the heart; for the world of the titans (*lha-min*), envy (*phra-dog*), glued to the throat; for the world of gods (*lha*), pride (*nga-rgyal*), glued to the forehead. Then the corpse is incensed, placed in a wooden box or wrapped in a piece of cloth and carried to the cremation ground.

Near the cremation place the presiding lama or his attendant should prepare and arrange in the proper order the implements and various items required for the performance of the cremation rite. To the left and right of the presiding lama should be arranged the items of worship (*mchod-rdzas*) and the items for burning (*sreg-rdzas*). In front of the presiding lama should be placed the ladle (*blugs-gzar*) and the spoon (*dgang-gzar*), the two ritual implements used for offering the items for burning into the hearth. The practice of arranging the different items varies from place to place. According to some people, the items of worship and those for burning should be arranged on the right side of the performer and the usual items or offerings and the vase with water for sprinkling on the left side.

The principal items used for burning are the sacrificial wood (*yam-shing*), and liquid butter (*mar-khu*). The sacrificial wood should be dipped in milk because, in the past, *udumbhara*, *āsvata* or *nyogra* wood which have a milk sap were used. Some texts say that since it is the wood used for worship it should have branches and fruit. Sometimes it is used dry, sometimes wet. As for the length some peopler ecommend pieces twelve fingers long, others eight fingers long. When it is offered to the lord

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of the knowledge-deities (*ye-shes-pa*), it should be offered one hundred times; to the fire-god (*me-lha*), twenty-one times, to the Buddhas (*thub-pa*) of the Six Spheres of Existence and the Four Guardian Goddesses (*sgo-mo bzhi*) of the four gates of the *maṇḍala*, also twenty-one times. Other items used for burning are: liquid butter, rice pap, beans, three white and three sweet things mixed with different kinds of food, barley, rice, wheat and the like. Between the hearth and the presiding lama, there should be built a fire-partition (*me-yol*) for protection against the obstructive spirits. The presiding lama should sit with crossed legs, holding the *vajra* and bell.

The items for worship and for burning should be incensed to purify them and then blessed by pronouncing the appropriate invocations and *mantras*, three times. They are first blessed and purified collectively (*spyi*) and then individually (*bye-brag*). The general purification is accomplished by reciting as follows :

‘From the nature of Voidness there come forth the large vessels
Inside which, by melting into light of OM ĀḤ HUM, come into existence

The divine items (*lha-rdzas*) and from them the perfect offerings :
The water for the face, incense, scent, flowers, music etc.’

Similarly are blessed the items for burning which become endowed with ambrosia. In particular the flesh, blood and bones of the deceased which are offered for burning acquire the nature of ambrosia.

Individual blessing of the items is achieved by reciting an appropriate *mantra* over each one. For example, over the water for the face one recites: ‘OM VAJRA-ARGHAM ĀḤ HUM.’

Once the blessing of all the items has been completed the presiding lama kindles the fire and recites :

‘By dispersion of light from OM ĀḤ HUM, the sins and hindrances
Of this dead person called . . . , become purified:
The sins and the three poisons of the creatures
Of the threefold world become purified.
By dispersion of this white fire from RAM
May it become a blaze of a peaceful nature.’

If the dead person was a lama or someone who was a good man, the lama does not recite the above verses but says instead :

‘Pacifying the oberstacles on the path
Leading to the peaceful *Tathāgatas*
And perfecting the profound meditation,
By dispersion of this white fire,
May it become a blaze of a peaceful nature.’

He scatters incense and recites the fierce *mantra* of *Hayagrīva* to protect the fire. Then he consecrates it by saying: OM PURE BY NATURE ARE ALL ELEMENTS, PURE BY NATURE AM I, and blesses it with OM MAṆI PADME HUM. For a lama or a good man he simply recites the *mantra* for kindling the fire: OM VAJRA-BLAZE RAM RAM HUM PHAT. For ordinary people, however, he should recite :

‘RAM I kindle the fire of the Noble One’s Body, Speech and Mind
Under the corpse of this dead person
With his sins and the three poisons.
I kindle this fire of the five Wisdoms of the Noble Ones
Under the corpse of this deceased with his sins and the five poisons.
To the corpse of this deceased with his sixfold consciousness
I set this fire of the Six Buddha Manifestations.
To this firewood and the four elements of the corpse
I set this fire of the four Wisdoms.
OM VAJRA-BLAZE RAM RAM HUM PHAT.’

On completion of the above recitation, he kindles the fire in the hearth. The main part of the funeral ritual which now follows consists of presenting offerings to and worshipping the lesser or worldly deities (*jig-rten-pa’i lha*) and the deities of the highest spheres (*jig-rten-las ‘das-pa’i lha*). First he generates the fire-god (*me-lha*) together with his female partner (*yum*). He does it by envisaging the syllable RAM in the centre of the hearth. The syllable RAM disperses into light and then reemerging it transforms itself, assuming the form of *Agni* called *Sāvaka* together with his female partner. Then he summons the knowledge-deity (*ye-shes-pa*) of the fire-god of this world. Reciting the three syllables OM ĀḤ HUM, he envisages them on the forehead, throat and heart of *Agni*. Rays of light disperse from the syllables into space and bring down the knowledge-deity and the host of *drang srong* (hermits). He makes an appropriate gesture of summoning saying :

‘HUM By means of faith and your pledge
Come here, come here O excellent *drang-srong*.
In accordance with the nature of your pledge
I invite you to come and reside in these flames.
O *Agnideva* come, come O great compassionate one.’
JAḤ HUM VAM HOḤ.

He makes the knowledge-deity enter and take a seat inside the burning flames. Then taking eight handfuls of *kusha* grass and arranging it ready for burning he recites :

‘Having emerged from HUM, may this *kusha*, blue-green,
With its tops and bottoms undamaged

And with its stalks and leaves, become pure.
OM this *kusha* grass, pure and virtuous,
The best 'essence' grown on earth,
Brings purity to the holy deities
And delights the Three Precious Jewels.
May it destroy and pacify the evil spirits
For us together with our entourage.
OM VAJRASATTVA.
May this *kusha* acquire the nature of perfection
And become a resting place for the *Drang-srong*.

Next he should recite the verses of praise :

HRIH O virtuous and excellent *Drang-srong* of *Agni*,
Mindful of your pledge for the living beings,
Radiant with the mass of light and endowed with compassion,
I prostrate myself before you with devotion.

After this, he performs a ritual ablution whereby he bathes the dead body in the reflection of the fire-god by holding up a mirror to the fire and pouring water from the ritual vase into a basin, saying :

HRIH In order to purify in the body of *Agni*
The sins, weaknesses and the obstructions of the deceased,
May the impurities of sins and all evil become eliminated
By means of this cleansing water of his Body, Speech and Mind.
OM HOMAGE TO AGNI, THE PURIFICATION-PLEDGE OF
AGNI HUM.

Then he offers the items of worship. The ordinary items are offered with the following recitation : 'HRIH I offer in worship these flowers, incense, scent, lamps, food, music etc. OM VAJRA -FLOWER, OM VAJRA-INCENSE etc.

The items for burning are offered with the spoon and the ladle. One envisages the syllable HUM on the spoon and the syllable JA on the ladle, symbolizing Wisdom and Means respectively. Making the appropriate gesture called 'the gesture of enlightenment' and holding the *vajra* and bell, he takes the ladle in the right hand and the spoon in the left, holding them above each other. He envisages himself as offering the items for burning on the fire-god's tongue marked with the syllable RAM, saying : OM HOMAGE TO AGNI.

Taking the liquid butter he pours it seven times with the ladle over the spoon and then making a gesture in a clockwise direction three times, he should offer it to the fire-god saying : OM HOMAGE TO AGNI, PACIFY ALL THE SINS AND OBSTRUCTIONS OF THIS DECEASED WHOSE NAME IS . . . SVĀHĀ.

Next holding the sacrificial wood with the left hand and making the appropriate gesture, he offers it saying :

OM O GOD AGNI HRĪH

OM Homage to the essence of the *vajra*-knowledge.

Hail, Pacify all the sins and obstructions

Of this dead person whose name is . . .

For someone who was a holy person the following should be recited instead :

Hail, May all the obstructions on the path

Of this *Tathāgata* called . . . become purified

And may his deep meditation become perfect.

Usually, he presents the individual offerings three times but they can also be offered five, seven or more times; twenty-one times is considered very good. The remaining items for burning are offered with their appropriate *mantras* and similar recitations to the ones above. When they have all been offered, he presents once more the articles of worship : flowers, incense etc., and recites the verses of praise.

Next he summons the knowledge-deity of *Agni* (*ye-shes me-lha*). Placing the *kusha* grass in the heart three times he recites the *mantra* for summoning and makes the summoning-gesture. He presents the items of worship and recites praises. The method of summoning and envisaging the knowledge-deity of *Agni* differ. Some people envisage him as coming from space, others as a transformation of the already burning fire-god. Whichever method is used he makes the summoning-gesture and recites this :

‘O *Agni* please come,

O knowledge-deity of the fire-god come

And take residence on the large navel

Of the pledge-fire-god.’

Next inside the blazing flames he generates the palace (*maṇḍala*) of *Mahākaraṇika Avalokiteśvara* whom he summons together with his entourage and offers worship and praises.

HRĪH Out of concern for the sake of living beings,

Out of compassion as vast as the sky and the Absolute Sphere

Arises this self-born, self-known and self-arisen Body.

This world composed of the five elements

Becomes a self-radiant and passion-free palace.

It is square and has four portals on the four sides.

It has excellent walls and different enclosures,

Half-enclosures and ornamented railings.

It is beautifully adorned with arches.

Together with the *dharma*-wheel and umbrella.

Outside it is surrounded by a mountain of *vajra*-flames.
I envisage it clearly as the palace made of jewels.
HRĪḤ At the centre of this created *maṇḍala*
On a throne of lotus, sun and moon
Sits the noble *Avalokiteśvara* born from HRĪḤ,
White, with one face and four hands.
The first two hands are folded together,
The lower right hand holds a rosary made of glass
And the lower left hand holds a lotus.
He is beautifully adorned with peaceful ornaments
And sits with his two legs evenly crossed.
In due order of the lotus petals of the *maṇḍala*
With the syllables HUM resting on the top of them are:
To the east, white *Indra*, the master of the gods,
Manifested in a bodily form and wearing monkish robes.
With his two hands he holds a beautiful *viṇā*.
He is overwhelmed with compassion for the gods.
To-the south-east, yellow *Śākya-Seng-ge*,
Manifested in a bodily form and wearing monkish robes.
With his two hands he holds a mendicant's staff.
He is overwhelmed with compassion for mankind.
To the south-west, red *Nam-mkha*, 'mdzod',
Manifested in a bodily form and wearing monkish robes,
With his two hands he holds a jewel box,
He is overwhelmed with compassion for the hungry ghosts.
To the west, purple-brown *Seng-ge-dam*,
Manifested in a bodily form and wearing monkish robes,
With his two hands he holds a book,
He is overwhelmed with compassion for the animals.
To the north-west, blue *Thag-bzang-ris*,
Manifested in a bodily form and wearing monkish robes,
With his two hands he holds a protective armour,
He is overwhelmed with compassion for the titans.
To the north-east, dark blue *Chos-kyi-rgyal-po*,
Manifested in a bodily form and wearing monkish robes,
With his two hands he holds the purificatory fire-water,
He is overwhelmed with compassion for the beings of hell.

From JAH HUM VAM HOH at the four portals, arise:
 At the eastern portal, White-One holding a hook,
 At the southern portal, Yellow-One holding a noose,
 At the western portal, Red-One holding a fetter,
 At the northern portal, Green-One holding a bell.
 All of them hold glass rosaries in their left hands,
 And are beautifully adorned with different ornaments.
 On the outer circumference of the *maṇḍala*
 Reside holy people, noble protectors and defenders,
 Gathered like the clouds of limitless expanse,
 Performing the work of protecting the Teachers.

Next he performs the consecration of the *maṇḍala* in the Absolute Spheres and summons the knowledge-deities. This is done in accordance with the general rules of evocation by pronouncing the appropriate verses and dispersing and converging light. He invites the summoned deities to enter the *maṇḍala* of the pledge-deities to form one union, and then one recites the verses of praise: 'HRĪH O great compassionate *Avalokiteśvara*, in order to purify the sorrow of the Six Spheres of Existence and to fulfil our wishes, I invite you to take your seat firmly and to be happy. HRĪH I salute with the devotion of my body, speech and mind, all the deities of this victorious *maṇḍala*: the great compassionate *Avalokiteśvara*, the great powerful deity and rescuer of living beings, who manifests different transformed forms of his Body; his spiritual Sons, the Six Buddhas (*thub-pa*), born from lotuses, who subdue in their appropriate realms; the Four Powerful Guardians of the *maṇḍala* portals.'

Next the deities are offered a welcoming libation with the ladle and spoon and the following praises are recited: 'HRĪH I offer in worship this pure water for the face, free of impurities, gratifying and clean. I offer in worship this fragrant and sweet scent mixed with sandal wood and the rest. I offer in worship these lustrous and beautiful flowers endowed with the splendour of lotuses and lilies. I offer in worship these bright lamps which like the sun and moon disperse darkness. I offer in worship this scented and pure water, cooling and free of filth. I offer this tormā, the food for the deities, adorned with the excellent three white and three sweet things which contain the essence of all grain and juices. I offer in worship this pleasing music, sounding the musical instruments: conch shell, cymbals, big drum, *vīṇā*, and flute. OM ĀH HUM.'

Next he performs the presentation of the burnt offerings to the chief deity. Holding the sacrificial wood he should recite: 'OM MANI PADME HUM HRĪH. OM THE ESSENCE OF THE VAJRA-KNOWLEDGE SVĀHĀ. Pacify all the sins and obstructions of the dead person SVĀHĀ.'

For a man who was endowed with excellent qualities he should recite: 'Pacify all the obstructions on the path of this peaceful *Tathāgata* whose name is . . . , and may his profound meditation become perfect SVĀHĀ.' He recites this together with the *mantras* of all the remaining deities of the *maṇḍala*, together with the words of benediction. In a similar manner he should offer all the other burnt offerings with the same recitations except for their appropriate *mantras*. The remaining burnt offerings are the same as those offered at the beginning to the fire-god: liquid butter, rice pap, sesame, *dūrvā* grass, unhusked barley, *kusha* grass, rice, boiled barley, boiled rice, boiled wheat, and a piece of cloth. At the end of each round of offerings he should recite the verses of praise. Beginning with *Avalokiteśvara* at the centre of the *maṇḍala* the verses of praise are as follows: Centre:

'OM O NOBLE *LOKEŚVARA* TOGETHER WITH YOUR ENTOURAGE RECEIVE THIS WATER FOR THE FACE.' Similarly, he offers all the other items of worship and then recites the praises: 'HRĪH I salute and praise the noble *Avalokiteśvara*, who looks with great compassion upon all living beings, applies his thought with love and kindness to all creatures and generates innumerable *Sugatas* of the three times. I offer to the noble *Mahākārunika* these true offerings of worship produced mentally. I ask you to purify the sins and obstructions of the evil *karma* of the body, speech and mind of this dead person. I ask you to free him from the precipice of *samsāra*. I ask you to destroy for him the entries which lead into rebirth in the Six Spheres of Existence.'

After the presentation of the burnt offerings to the Six Buddhas with their *mantra* OM SAGE SVĀHĀ and all the other recitations one pronounces their verse of praise:

North-east:

HRĪH I salute and praise the Buddha in the realm of hell. In order to subdue the creatures of hell he assumed a bodily manifestation. Since he is free of hatred, he liberates by means of compassion and teaching that life is the reflection of one's *karma*. HRĪH I present this true worship produced mentally to the noble *Chos-kyi-rgyal-po* and ask him to eliminate the sorrow of hell induced by the *karmic* power of the dead person.'

South-west :

HRĪH I salute and praise the Buddha in the realm of hungry ghosts who has the power over vast possessions and desired wealth. In order to subdue the hungry ghosts he assumed a bodily form. Since he is free from avarice he fulfils desires and hopes. HRĪH I present this true worship produced mentally to the great *Nam-mkha'-mdzod* and ask him to eliminate the sorrow of the hungry ghosts induced by the *karmic* power of the dead person's avarice.'

West : 'HRĪH I salute and praise the Buddha in the realm of animals. In order to subdue the realm of animals he assumed a bodily manifestation as the king of animals. Since he is free of stupidity, he is radiant with wisdom and knowledge, holding the lamp (=book) which dispels the obscurities of ignorance.

HRĪH I present this true worship mentally to the noble *Seng-ge-dam*, firm and steadfast, and ask him to eliminate the sorrow of the animal realm induced by the *karmic* power of the dead person's stupidity.'

South-east :

HRĪH I salute and praise the Buddha of the realm of men who acquired the power of proclaiming the Holy Doctrine. In order to subdue men, he assumed a bodily manifestation as the king of men. Since he is free of passion, he eliminates sorrow by means of austerities.

HRĪH I present this true worship produced mentally to the noble *Śākya-Seng-ge* and ask him to eliminate the sorrow of men induced by the *karmic* power of the dead person's passions.'

North-west :

'HRĪH I salute and praise the Buddha-Body in the realm of titans who acquired the power to pacify the boisterous weapons of hatred. In order to subdue the titans, he assumed a bodily manifestation as the king of titans. Since he is free of envy, he eliminates sorrow by combat.

HRĪH I present this true worship produced mentally to the noble *Thag-bzang-ris*, blue in colour, and ask him to eliminate the sorrow in the realm of titans induced by the *karmic* power of the dead person's envy.'

East :

HRĪH I salute and praise the Buddha in the realm of gods who acquired the power (to teach) the Doctrine of detachment and non-desire. In order to subdue the gods, he assumed a bodily manifestation as the king of gods. Since he is free of pride, he bestows the desired wealth and possession.

HRĪH I present this true worship produced mentally to the noble *brGya-byin*, the lord of gods and ask him to eliminate the sorrow in the realm of gods (who know the time) of their death and fall induced by the *karmic* power of the dead person's pride.'

Next after offering the burnt items to the Four Guardian Goddesses of the *maṇḍala* portals with their *mantra* JAH HUM VAM HOH and the recitations, he should pronounce the following verses of praise :

'HRĪH I salute and praise the Four Knowledge-Guardians who reside at the four portals of the palace (= *maṇḍala*) : to the east, south, west and north. They are white, yellow, red and green in colour respectively, adorned with jewel ornaments

and performing the Four Rites (*phrin-las-bzhi*) : the rite of pacifying, enriching, subduing and destroying.

HRĪḤ I present this true worship produced mentally to the Four Guardians and ask them to purify the sorrow of birth, old age, illness and death.

Next he offers the farewell offerings to the chief deity and his entourage. He should offer such items as a head ornament, crystal, upper and lower garments, umbrella, banner of victory, the seven emblems of royalty, and the five gifts for the gratification of the five senses. Having completed the presentation of the above offerings accompanied by their appropriate recitations, he should recite the following verses of praise.

HRĪḤ I salute and praise you noble *Avalokiteśvara* who having first raised the highest thought of enlightenment, liberate from all sorrow by means of your sight, hearing and memory, acting for the benefit of living beings by means of your prayer.

Through the emanation of light from the syllable HRĪḤ in your heart, from the vast Expense which is like an ocean without foundation or cause, the Victorious Sons are born as the transformed manifestations of your Body. I salute the Lotus-born Body.

You behold with compassion the sorrow of the Six Spheres of Existence and in order to eliminate the evil rebirths, you who know the means, out of compassion, manifest yourself in your transformed Body to convert the creatures according to each individual situation. I salute and praise the Six Lord Buddhas.

You guide through different paths according to the *karma* of living beings, acting on their behalf by means of the Four Immeasurables : kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity. I salute and praise the Four Goddesses who protect the portals of the *maṇḍala*.

HRĪḤ From the seed-syllable in the heart of *Mahākāruṅka* there emanates a light which pervades the Buddha-Sphere of the ten directions and, collecting the essence of the *Tathāgatas'* Mind, it assumes the form of syllables—the Six Syllables which appear like a sky-dragon. I salute and praise the Six Syllables of his essence. By means of hearing, seeing and touching with this *mantra* all living beings become liberated from the places of evil rebirths. I salute and praise the Six Syllables which contain the essence of *Mahākārunika's* Mind.

I salute and praise the best meditation of his Mind, the state of equanimity in which he applies his great compassion without any partiality to all living beings, manifesting himself through his *Vidyā* (= *Tārā*), the great rescuer, adhering with joy to all without abandoning anyone.'

At the end of completing the recitations of praises, he should pronounce a short prayer for pacifying the evil rebirths and the accomplishment of the wished-for

effects of the performed ritual. Finally, he invites the knowledge-deities to depart to their appropriate places; he snaps the fingers and says : OM VAJRA MUH. The pledge-deities are absorbed within himself.

Next assuming the ego (*nga-rgyal*) of the noble *Mahākārunika* he summons the Protectors of the Ten Directions (*phyogs-skyong bcu-pa*) and envisages them together with their attendants, seated around the *maṇḍala* at their appropriate quarters. Dispensing a light from the syllable HRĪH in *Avalokiteśvara*'s heart, he envisages it pervading the space and reemerging and transforming itself into the bodily forms of the Ten Protectors. Making the gesture for bringing them together he says: O PROTECTORS OF THE TEN DIRECTIONS TOGETHER WITH YOUR ENTOURAGE COME HERE COME HERE. He offers them their appropriate seats on the fire-god's stomach saying: LOTUSES FOR YOUR SEATS. Then he worships them by presenting them with the eight offerings of worship with the same recitations as for the deities of the *maṇḍala*. He also offers them the sacrificial wood and the other burnt offerings in the same way as it was done before. Then he recites the verses of praise:

'I worship, praise and salute *Indra*, the god who holds a *vajra*, the lord of gods and master of demons, together with the host of his attendant demons of the eastern direction.

I worship, praise and salute *Agni*, the god who consumes the offerings and sustains the fire, the king of *drang-srong* and master of demons, together with the host of his attendant demons of the south-eastern direction.

I worship, praise and salute *Yama*, the god who holds a club, the king of the *Ma-mo* and master of demons, together with the host of his attendant demons of the southern direction.

I worship, praise and salute *Nair̥ti*, the god who is well disposed, the god of the *Srin-po* and master of demons, together with the host of his attendant demons of the south-western direction.

I worship, praise and salute *Varuṇa* who holds a noose, the king of the *Nāyas* and master of demons, together with the host of his attendant demons of the western direction.

I worship, praise and salute *Vāyu* the god who holds the wind-bag of life, the king of the *Rig-dzin* and master of demons, together with the host of his attendant demons of the north-western direction.

I worship, praise and salute *Kubera* who holds a stick, the king of the wealth protectors (*nor-skyong*) and master of demons, together with the host of his attendant demons of the northern direction.

I worship, praise and salute *Īsana*, the god who guides, the king of the *bGegs* and

master of demons, together with the host of his attendant demons of the north-eastern direction.

I worship *Brahmā*, the god of the zenith together with the Sun (*sūrya*), Moon (*candra*) Great Planets (*mahāgraha*), and Lunar Mansions (*nakṣatra*).

I worship, praise and salute *Pṛthivī*, the sovereign of the earth below (= the nadir), the queen of the snakes, together with the host of the powerful earth-holders and the oath-knowing *Yakṣas*.

I extol them all in an appropriate manner. I praise them and prostrate myself before them with fervent faith, bowing my body in all directions as many times as there are particles of dust in the fields.

HUM O Protectors of the Ten Directions who abandon the ten unvirtuous acts, O Defenders who perform the ten virtuous acts, accept this worship which I offer and lead this dead person on the path of liberation. I ask you to lead the dead person away from the places of evil rebirths and show him the path of liberation leading to heaven.'

Next he asks the Ten Protectors pardon for any deficiencies in the performance of the ritual and requests them to take their leave.

The remainder of the articles for burning is offered as a worship to the knowledge-deity of the fire-god. Then he offers the deity a farewell libation. Reciting verses of benediction and praise, he invites the knowledge-deity to take his leave and the pledge-deity of the fire-god is absorbed into his heart.

Next the ashes and bones of the cremated corpse are collected and made into *tsha-tsha*. If the dead body was that of a lama or some other holy person, the cremation kiln (*spur-khang*) should be left undisturbed for three days. If the person was an ordinary man, the ashes and bones should be collected immediately after extinguishing the fire and the cremation kiln should be demolished.

The ashes are taken and purified with water. One generates *Amitāyus* (*tshe-bdag*), snaps the fingers and collects the bones saying : OM VAJRA-GATHERING JAḤ HUM VAM HOḤ, and one purifies them with the water consecrated as ambrosia. While washing the bones one recites : 'From the letter A which rests on a lunar disc above the bones is produced the water of ambrosia which purifies the sins and obstructions of the dead person. OM MAṆI PADME HUM. OM HOMAGE TO SARVADUGATI-PARIŚODHĀNARAJA, THE TATHĀGATA, THE ARHAT, THE PERFECT BUDDHA; and again : OM PURIFIER PURIFIER, PURIFIER OF ALL SINS, PURE PURE, MOST PURE IN RESPECT OF THE OBSTRUCTIONS OF ALL KARMA SVĀHĀ. OM VAJRA-DESTRUCTION SVĀHĀ.

One mixes the bones with scented water and soil and places the mixture in the casting form for making *tsha-tsha*. The *tsha-tsha* are consecrated by reciting : OM

WHATEVER EVENTS ARISE FROM A CAUSE, THE *TATHĀGATA* HAS FORETOLD THEIR CAUSE; THE GREAT HERMIT HAS ALSO TAUGHT THEIR CESSATION. One recites many times the Six Syllables and other prayers, presents offerings and scatters flowers. Except for a lama or a holy person, the *tsha-tsha* should not be placed in a *stūpa*. Some people say that it may bring adverse effects on the dead person. The *tsha-tsha* of ordinary people should be deposited in a place which is quiet and free from the disturbances caused by different demons and local deities.