


# Straddling the Millennial Divide

A case study of persistence and change in the Tibetan ritual tradition based on the *Gnag rabs* of Gathang Bumpa and Eternal Bon documents, circa 900–1100 CE<sup>1</sup>

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## The *Gnag rabs* of Gathang Bumpa

### Introduction

he main focus of this paper is a remarkably diverse ancient ritual text called *Gnag rabs zhes bya ba* (*So Styled the Origins Tales of the Intended Retaliation*). This rare and complete circa 10<sup>th</sup> century CE document contains a series of invocations and techniques for destroying enemies. This untitled text was assigned its name by the Tibetan team of scholars who first studied it after its chance discovery in the Lho-kha region. In 2006, *Gnag rabs* (abbr.) and several other Old Tibetan ritual texts were recovered from the Dga'-thang bum-pa (Gathang Bumpa) religious monument (*mchod-rten*) during its reconstruction by local devotees. Facsimiles as well as transcriptions of these texts were published in 2007.<sup>2</sup> Much credit is due the chief editors of this volume, Pa-tshab pa-sangs dbang-'dus and Glang-ru nor-bu tshe-ring, for having so quickly made these highly valuable sources for the study of early Tibetan culture and religion available to others.

*Gnag rabs* traces the origins of eliminating enemies through the use of violent ritual means.<sup>3</sup> It features instructions to ritualists in the

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<sup>2</sup> See *Gtam shul dga' thang 'bum pa che nas gсар du rnyed pa'i bon gyi gna' dpe bdams bsgrigs* (eds. Pa-tshab pa-sangs dbang-'dus (Pasang Wangdui) and Glang-ru nor-bu tshe-ring). For information on the discovery of the Gathang Bumpa collection of texts, see Bellezza 2010, p. 32, Karmay 2009, pp. 55–63.

<sup>3</sup> For the facsimile of this text, see *Gtam shul dga' thang 'bum pa che*, pp. 85–100; for the transcription, *ibid.*, pp. 1–12. My translation of the *Gnag rabs* and the Eternal Bon documents of this study were made in consultation with Dge-bshes Smon-

proper methods of slaughtering inimical forces. There is no mistaking the strident and brutal tone of this store of allied rituals, for they have one main purpose in mind: killing the enemy. This is readily communicated through graphic descriptions of the brute force wrought by helping spirits of the rituals, many of which reoccur in *Gnag rabs* as a standard refrain.

The Old Tibetan term *gnag-pa*, as illustrated by its application in the text, is best glossed as 'retaliation intended against enemies', be they of human or supernatural origin. One Classical Tibetan word derived from this term is *brnags* (past tense) / *brnag* (present tense), which means 'to cogitate', 'to ponder', 'to reflect' or 'to harbor [in the mind]'. Thus, the current lexical usage of *brnags* carries only one part of the meaning of *gnag-pa* as expressed in the *Gnag rabs*. While *gnag-pa* also describes a process of cognition, it is one accompanied by a definite desire for redress or revenge. To fully appreciate the semantic range of this ritual term, it is necessary to present another closely related Old Tibetan word: *gnag* (black; Classical Tibetan = *nag*), as in the expression *sems nag-po* (black-hearted, evil-intentioned, sinful).

*Gnag rabs* is an exceptionally important document, as it furnishes material for understanding the formation of the Tibetan ritual tradition in the period before the Lamaist religions (G.yung-drung Bon and Buddhism) achieved dominance over the religious landscape of Tibet. Thus its ritual structure, pantheon of helping spirits and underlying philosophical orientation contrast with those adopted by Lamaism.<sup>4</sup> The *Gnag rabs* dates to a period when the

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lam dbang-rgyal of the Spu-rgyal gangs-ri region in Steng-chen. Our medium of communication was spoken Tibetan. Spu-rgyal gangs-ri / Spu-rgyal gangs-dkar is the name of a large snowy massif (6323 m in elevation) that straddles the Sbrachen and Steng-chen county lines (traditionally this mountain lay entirely in Steng-chen). The two other Bon savants I have relied upon most for textual consultations in recent years, G.yung-drung bstan-'dzin and Rin-chen bstan-'dzin, also hail from Spu-rgyal gangs-ri. While linguistic archaisms have been preserved to varying degrees in all dialects of northern Tibet, that of Spu-rgyal gangs-ri (Spu-rgyal bod-skad) is most noteworthy in this regard. According to the oral tradition of the region, Spu-rgyal bod-skad originated with the ancient kings of Tibet (hence its name Spu-rgyal). Traditionally, the area around Spu-rgyal gangs-ri was hard to access because of high passes in most directions. It is said that the Spu-rgyal gangs-ri region has been long settled by the current clans and family lineages, probably explaining its retention of a Hor dialect with many archaic and obsolete words and phrases. For more information on the sacred geography, lore and history of Spu-rgyal gangs-dkar, see Khyung-gangs dkar-po and G.yung-drung rnam-dag 2011. On the special vocabulary of this region, see Bstan-'dzin rnam-rgyal (n.d.).

<sup>4</sup> For a review of the fundamental differences characterizing archaic and Lamaist ritual structures, see Karmay 1998, pp. 288–290; Karmay 2010, pp. 54–56; Cantwell and Mayer 2008a, pp. 292–294. For a general discussion of ritual in

establishment of Buddhism was already well underway, so it cannot be termed pre-Buddhist in any chronological sense. Nonetheless, it appears to have been largely founded on preexisting cultural and religious traditions that circulated around Tibet, which do not owe their existence to Buddhism. I employ the term 'archaic' to broadly designate these traditions and to set them apart from Lamaism and its Buddhist underpinnings.

*Gnag rabs*, however, is not a cultural fossil; it bears the marks of interaction with Buddhist ritual structures emerging at the time it was composed. Although materials of Buddhist origin are nominal and of marginal significance in the text, *Gnag rabs* can be viewed as a fledging stage in the great Lamaist project to systematically amalgamate archaic religious traditions to those coming from India, which was mostly completed by the 11<sup>th</sup> century CE. The first and most conspicuous concession to Lamaism in *Gnag rabs* is the third line of the text, part of its introduction: "In the Dharma Language of India" (*Rgya-gar chos kyi skad du /*). This is direct reference to Sanskrit, the main liturgical language in which Buddhist teachings were introduced to Tibet during the imperial period (circa 650–850 CE). This is resounding acknowledgment on the part of the *Gnag rabs* author(s) of the ascendant religion. Nevertheless, Buddhist traditions openly propagated in the text are isolated to the use of magical spells (some syllables of which have a Sanskritic phonological quality) and mention of three of the 'five mental poisons' of ignorance (*dug-lnga*).

With so little overt Buddhist content it is curious that India's noble religion was even mentioned by name in *Gnag rabs*. It appears that the author(s) and users of the text wanted to optimize the position of their work in the Tibetan religious milieu of that time. Presumably, by invoking Buddhism the text attempted to co-opt or reflect this religion's growing legitimacy and influence in Tibet. The *Gnag rabs*' relatively copious usage of spells is derived from the Indian ritual tradition of mystic formulae (*dhāraṇī*).<sup>5</sup> Clearly, the perceived power of magical spells coming from India was recognized and welcome by the author(s) and performers of the text. Archaic ritual texts from Dunhuang rely very little on spells and

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Tibetan religious life, see Cabezon 2010. On the broader historical and doctrinal dimensions of the adoption of Buddhism by Tibetans, see Kapstein 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Buddhist handbooks of spells written in Tibetan may well predate *Gnag rabs*. For example, one such book of spells from Dunhuang composed for a variety of ritual purposes (including the pacification of malicious people and subjugation of demons), composed circa the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century CE, was discovered in Dunhuang. For a review of this work, see van Schaik 2009.

incantations.<sup>6</sup> *Gnag rabs*, then, might be viewed as a first tentative step in non-Buddhist ritualists adopting aspects of the tantricism that would become an essential part of G.yung-drung (Eternal) Bon. Similarly, reference to the afflicted mental conditions of anger, pride and envy indicates that adherents of older ritual traditions were beginning to accept Buddhist ideas pertaining to the etiology of misfortune in the human condition.

*Gnag rabs* has very specific practical and rather modest aims: eradicating enemies such as thieves and those who threaten the personal protective deities.<sup>7</sup> No provision is made for furthering sectarian and institutional objectives, nor does the text enshrine articles of faith or the profession of a certain belief system or philosophy. In this regard, *Gnag rabs* is typical of Old Tibetan ritual literature. The wider cultural and religious background in which this literature was set was taken for granted and did not merit a written exposition or any kind of advocacy beyond its purported efficacy in ancient times. The contrast with the Classical Tibetan ritual literature of Lamaism is self-evident; it is replete with sectarian endorsements and the Vajrayāna view (*lta-ba*) of things.

*Gnag rabs* boasts a large armory of tutelary deities and ritual procedures for realizing its objectives. The language employed is particularly vehement and violent in character. No attempt was made to soften the cruel tone of the text with noble sentiments, as is often found in Lamaist ritual literature. Like other Old Tibetan ritual texts in general, *Gnag rabs* is a highly utilitarian affair. That enemies (both spiritual and mortal) threaten the ritualists and their beneficiaries is reason in itself for the harsh actions taken against

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<sup>6</sup> However, the use of spells is found in the *Byol rabs* ritual text of Gathang Bumpa: "three words of the father (*gshen*) spells and three words of the *bon* spells were cast" (*pha sngags tshigs gsum dang / bon sngags tshigs gsum btab*). See Bellezza 2010, p. 62; also see *ibid.*, pp. 90, 92, 93, 95. For the use of spells in two other texts of the Gathang Bumpa collection, *Rnel dri 'dul ba'i thabs sogs* and *Sha ru shul ston rabs la sogs pa*, see Bellezza 2013a, pp. 155, 175, 192, 252. Although the spells cited in these three texts occur within an indigenous narrative context, the inspiration for their use may have in part come from Indic tradition. If so, this could explain why older archaic funerary texts from Dunhuang hardly resort to such ritual provisions.

<sup>7</sup> For a general survey of destructive magic rites, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956, pp. 481–502. For an account of ritual measures taken against sorcery and the ire of deities found in the 14<sup>th</sup> century CE Eternal Bon text *Gzi brjid*, see Norbu 1995, pp. 125–132. In this account (*ibid.*, 125) four types of sorcery are noted: 1) *byad-ka* (use of spells), 2) *phur-ka* (use of a ritual dagger), 3) *rbod-gtong* (use of one's personal protective deities), and 4) *mnan-gtad* (use of baleful objects that are buried). All four types of sorcery listed above are represented in the narratives and ritual performances of *Gnag rabs*.

them. Murder is justified by killing, attack by assault, threats by provocation, and so forth.

As *Gnag rabs* is comprised of various destructive magic practices conducted to repulse and slay enemies,<sup>8</sup> it presages the full formation of the Lamaist cult of protective deities. In the text, all divinities whether they are elemental spirits, such as the *klu* and *btsan*, or tutelary deities cited by name and endowed with a relatively complex iconography are presented as of equal ritual worth and utility. This contrasts with Lamaist texts and their complex hierarchical schemes, which tend to minimize the power and functions of the elemental spirits while extolling the virtues of special tutelary deities attached to the various sects. The presentation of the status of deities in *Gnag rabs* belongs to an era in the development of Tibetan religion predating full acceptance of the notion of worldly (lesser) and otherworldly (greater) deities.<sup>9</sup>

The ritual activities of *Gnag rabs* are presented in an abbreviated manner, presupposing much specialized and practical knowledge as a prerequisite to their comprehension and execution. This suggests that the text was utilized exclusively by members of the priestly class, the *gshen* and *bon*, the two types of priests noted in it. In fact, the *gshen* and *bon* are the sacerdotal pillars of many Old Tibetan ritual documents. They were both the ancestral and contemporaneous propagators and defenders of a complex ritual system, which includes funerary, curative and destructive rites. This ritual system is sometimes referred to in Old Tibetan texts, directly or indirectly, as *bon*.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> As regards all-purpose magic rites in the Buddhist text *Be'u bum*, Cuevas (2010: 170) notes that their efficacy is primarily attributed to the laws of sympathy and the system of correlations, explaining one Tibetan term for magic: *las-sbyor* (correspondent action). The same observation is valid for the magic of *Gnag rabs*: it is seen as operating through correspondent actions and objects carried out and deployed by the ritualists.

<sup>9</sup> Soteriology in Old Tibetan (O.T.) funerary literature is closely bound to the concept of parallel worlds of the living and the dead. On the other hand, Lamaist soteriology is based on the attainment of liberation from the world, which is seen as inherently fraught with ignorance and its bitter fruits, pain and suffering. On soteriology in the Tibetan archaic funerary tradition, see Bellezza 2008.

<sup>10</sup> For a summary of the signification of the term *bon* in Old Tibetan ritual literature, see Bellezza 2013a, p. 232. Van Schaik (2013) assesses the meaning of the word *bon* / *bon-po* in the wooden-slips of Miran and other Old Tibetan documents. It is worthwhile to note that the *gshen* and *bon* of Old Tibetan literature are not unlike the contemporary *bon* and *lha-bon* of the Himalaya, religious functionaries that Samuel (2013) calls 'invoker-priests', those involved in animal sacrifice. Parallels in practice between these ritualists a thousand years removed from one another is no mere coincidence. Nevertheless, while historical and cultural continuities are certainly indicated in the Tibetan-Himalayan

This *bon* is best defined as a significant part of, if not the sum total, of archaic ritual traditions; those that developed or were redeveloped indigenously in Tibet. This body of traditions contains ideological, procedural and material elements that are in no way dependent on Buddhist thought or practice. The origins of ritual traditions associated with the term *bon* or *bon-po* are ascribed to native Tibetan figures of ancient and primordial times, not to the Buddha or other omniscient gods and saints. Although Eternal Bon has preserved Old Tibetan shades of meaning connected to the word *bon*, it has done so in a religious context that owes much to Buddhism. Eternal Bon and the indigenous or archaic *bon* are indeed part of a historical continuum, however, they cannot be viewed as designating the one and same religion. They do not.<sup>11</sup>

*Gnag rabs* belongs to a ritual genre of Tibetan literature written in a form of the Old Tibetan language, which appears to constitute an intermediate stage in its literary development. In previous studies of other ritual texts of Gathang Bumpa, I attribute their composition to circa 850–1000 CE. This estimate of age is based on an appraisal of the grammatical, paleographic and lexical characteristics of the literature.<sup>12</sup> This chronological attribution is also derived from a preliminary evaluation of the linguistic development of Old Tibetan and the transition to Classical Tibetan as pertains to a group of funerary texts.<sup>13</sup>

*Gnag rabs* is one of three ritual texts borne in a single booklet, all of which appear to have been written by the same hand. The other two texts are *Byol rabs* and *Gser skyems gyi rabs*.<sup>14</sup> There are three other booklets comprising the early documents of the Gathang Bumpa collection (later Buddhists texts were also recovered from the same *mchod-rten*), which have been assigned the titles *Rnel dri 'dul*

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sacerdotal tradition, to posit these in a rigorous manner would require a great deal of research and analysis.

<sup>11</sup> Stein (2010), Snellgrove (1967) and Kværne (1995; 2009) all make this point clearly.

<sup>12</sup> See Bellezza 2010, p. 46; 2013a, pp. 117–120, 177–180. Karmay (2009: 63) also recognizes that the early ritual texts of Gathang Bumpa predate the 11th century CE.

<sup>13</sup> See Bellezza 2013a. Also see Bellezza 2008; 2010. Old Tibetan ritual texts generally exhibit higher frequencies of the *rdzogs-tshig* than their Classical Tibetan (C.T.) counterparts. The *rdzogs-tshig* is a final syllable derived from the last letter of the preceding word and ending in *o* (*sna-ro*), which designates the completion of a thought or action (e.g., *bsrid do*, *bsam mo*). In C.T. literature, the use of the *rdzogs-tshig* is more restricted to marking the end of a section of text or chapter.

<sup>14</sup> These texts are the subject of in-depth treatment in Bellezza 2010; 2011.

*ba'i thabs sogs*, *Sha ru shul ston gyi rabs* and *Sman dpyad*.<sup>15</sup> Based on the paleography and format of the folios, I have observed that the booklet containing the *Byol rabs* may somewhat postdate the other three Old Tibetan booklets of the Gathang Bumpa collection.<sup>16</sup> A study of the contents of *Gnag rabs* bound in the same booklet as the *Byol rabs* seems to support this observation, for it is the only Old Tibetan text of Gathang Bumpa to manifest religious materials directly inspired by Buddhism. Weighing this evidence together encourages me to now assign a 10<sup>th</sup> century CE date to *Gnag rabs* and to the other texts of the same booklet. Nevertheless, the establishment of precise dates for the Gathang Bumpa manuscripts will only come with further codicological study and analysis.

The folios of *Gnag rabs* are squarer than the most common *dpe-cha* format, following an old custom of bookmaking in Tibet. Each folio has between nine and eleven lines of text. The calligraphy is a form of *dbu-can* (letters with heads) but with the heads minimized and the strokes of the characters rounded, anticipating the fully evolved *dbu-med* (headless letters) handwriting that developed at a somewhat later date. To my knowledge, no study of the paper, ink or binding used to produce the *Gnag rabs* has yet been undertaken.<sup>17</sup>

In this study, the narrative and ritual components of *Gnag rabs* are divided into eight interrelated sections as follows:

- Section I: Destructive magic rituals using a variety of personal protective spirits (1.1–3.6)<sup>18</sup>
- Section II: The theogony, iconography and ritual exploitation of the nine *zi-ma* sisters (3.6–6.9)
- Section III: Destructive magic rituals connected to the *btsan* and *bdud* spirits (6.10–7.7)

<sup>15</sup> All the aforementioned Gathang Bumpa texts have been published together in the *Gtam shul dga' thang 'bum pa che* volume. The funerary texts *Rnel dri 'dul ba'i thabs sogs* and *Sha ru shul ston gyi rabs* are studied in detail in Bellezza 2013a. I am not aware of any published study of the third booklet, a therapeutic tract.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117, 118.

<sup>17</sup> Microscopic study of paper fibers from Dunhuang texts has determined that *Thymelaeaceae* family plants such as *Daphne* or *Edgeworthia* sp. were used in paper making in Tibet during the imperial and post-imperial periods. For this study, see Helman-Ważny and van Schaik 2012. It would be useful to subject documents of the Gathang Bumpa collection to such an analysis to ascertain whether the composition of the paper matches that made in Tibet and used in the production of documents bound for Dunhuang.

<sup>18</sup> Folio 1, line 1 to folio 3, line 6. This system of abbreviation is used throughout this paper. The numerical designations follow those in *Gtam shul dga' thang 'bum pa che*.

- Section IV: More elaborate destructive magic ritual using receptacles for the soul (7.7–9.1)
- Section V: The theogony, iconography and activities of a sisterhood of seven goddesses (9.1–11.1)
- Section VI: Narrative and ritual elements mostly associated with the divinity and demon of birth (11.1–15.2)
- Section VII: Ritual protection from the *g.yen* spirits (15.2–15.7)
- Section VIII: Concluding remarks and recommendations concerning the rituals of the text (15.8–16.1)

### Section I

The first section of *Gnag rabs* gets right down to the business of ritually killing enemies without furnishing a rationale or justification. Section I invokes a variety of personal protective deities entrusted with the slaughter of unspecified enemies.

On thematic, narrative and grammatical grounds, this first section of the text can be divided into nine paragraphs:

- Ia: Setting loose the destructive power of the *klu* water spirits with spells
- Ib: Execution of the enemy by the *klu* through the use of a tablet and effigy
- Ic: Visualization and deployment of a nine-headed wolf
- Id: Description and commands to the tutelary god Rgod-gsas kham-pa
- Ie: Genealogy, description and commands to the tutelary goddess Mthu-mchu sdïgs-chen-mo
- If: Description of the destructive power of the crow helping spirit
- Ig: The sequestration of the *pho-lha* (god of males)
- Ih: Genealogy, offerings, and a command to the *gra-bla* (warrior god)
- Ii: Genealogy, and a command to the *gra'-dpa'* (related class of warrior spirits)

#### *Paragraph Ia (1.1–1.3)*

The text begins its assault on enemies by calling upon the wrath of the *klu*, the ubiquitous class of Tibetan water spirits. Although they



eventually came to be assimilated to the *nāga* of Indic tradition, the *klu* and *klu-mo* are of indigenous origins and appear to long predate the arrival of Buddhism in Tibet. They play a prominent role in many kinds of ritual and narrative traditions as both ally and opponent (elemental spirits often have ambivalent personalities). The *klu* are important wealth and fertility bestowing spirits, and are frequently propitiated through the use of vases filled with offerings of medicines and other precious substances. They are common albeit minor supernatural figures in the various curative rites of Tibetan spirit-mediums. Conversely, when angered the *klu* are implicated in skin diseases and a loss of wealth and good fortune. The *klu* are also ancestral figures particularly for women.

In *Gnag rabs*, the *klu* are dispatched with the clear aim of doing grievous harm to those considered enemies. This sending of the *klu* to do the bidding of the ritualists is articulated using the word *gtad*, which in this context means ‘to set upon’, ‘to incite’, ‘to unleash’ or ‘to attack’. There is little elaboration or ceremonial dross: the *klu* go about their work with only the casting of a few spells (*sngags*). These incantations are designed to call, empower and depute the *klu* in order that they subjugate the enemy. For good measure, more extensive ritual provisions follow in Section I of the text. Nevertheless, the ritualists appear to be on such familiar terms with the water spirits that little exertion is required on their part. In Classical Tibetan ritual texts, a more extensive preamble almost always precedes the signaling and dispatching of deities, especially at the very beginning of a performance:

In the language of Spu-rgyal Tibet, it is so styled salt and blood.<sup>19</sup>  
In the Dharma language of India, it is so styled origins tales of the  
intended retribution (*gnag-pa'i rabs*). The spells of inciting the *klu*:<sup>20</sup>  
Thus spoken [the *klu*] are incited.

*spu rgyal bod kyī skad du // tsha khrag zhes bya' (C.T. = bya) // rgya  
gar chos kyī skad du / gnag pa'i rabs zhes bya'o (C.T. = bya) // klu la  
gtad pa'i sngags la // mog shang / rum yang / spa tshum / thil phor  
me re / sibs kha na dul dul // byas de brjod la gtad do //*

<sup>19</sup> This title of the text ‘in the language of imperial Tibet’ (*spu-rgyal bod skad du*) is a metaphor endorsing the great effectiveness of the ritual dispensations described throughout its length. It appears to communicate that, as when salt is added to a wound there is much pain, the ritual activities have an unfailingly palpable effect on the enemies to which they are directed.

<sup>20</sup> For these five lines of spells, see transliteration. The wording of these spells of subjugation suggests that they were recited in a dark enclosed space over a vessel containing ritual ingredients.

*Paragraph Ib (1.3–1.6)*

The first section of *Gnag rabs* also relies on two other major methods of slaughter: the writing on a tablet and the making of effigies. Both types of objects when properly deployed are believed to imprison the soul (*bla*) or vital principle (*srog*) of the enemy. Tablets and effigies are still used in Tibetan destructive magic rites to this day (known as ransom rites, *glud*). The tablets are called *byang-[bu]* and were probably made of wood or hardened animal skin (as they still are today). Typically, the name and clan of the offending agent is written on the tablet. It may also include a drawing or symbolic diagram of the enemy.<sup>21</sup> The sculpted effigy of the enemy, simply known as the 'form' or 'body' (*gzugs*), is made with edible ingredients. These likenesses of foes in the Tibetan ritual tradition are often called *ling-ga*.<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, the simulacra employed in this section of *Gnag rabs*, the *chu-srin* (a crocodiloid creature) and *sbrul* (snake), are considered chthonic creatures, as are the *klu* themselves. This suggests that the enemy the text has in mind is of a terrestrial or subterranean character. After the effigies are set up the ritualists go around them nine times while intoning spells (as written in paragraph Ia) and making wrathful hand gestures:

[*Klu*], from the gums, uproot the teeth [of the enemy] with your knife (sharp) spread<sup>23</sup> claws!<sup>24</sup> Set forth (*gzhug*) [the name and likeness] of the enemy on a tablet. [*Klu*], tear out their fingernails from the roots, and take [the enemy] from the sides and pull out [their organs] from the roots. To slaughter the enemy:<sup>25</sup> meal of small black peas and the milk of the red cow and white female goat are mixed together (*sbrus*) to fashion the form of a *chu-srin* and the form of a black snake with nine heads. The curse (*rmod*) is

<sup>21</sup> For the ritual use of *byang-bu*, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956, p. 359; Norbu 1995, pp. 92, 93; Bellezza 2005, p. 370. For *byang-bu* in the funerary ritual context, see Namkhai Norbu 1995, pp. 98, 99; Bellezza 2008; 2013a. For illustrations of wooden *byang-bu* used for men and women in a *glud* ritual, see Tucci 1980, p. 178.

<sup>22</sup> The *ling-ga* effigy is a key part of the well-known ransom ritual tradition known as *glud*. Significant studies of the *glud* include Karmay 1998, pp. 339–379; Snellgrove 1967, pp. 77–97; Namkhai Norbu 1995, pp. 77–86; Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956, pp. 359–362; Bellezza 2010.

<sup>23</sup> *Sul*. This word literally means 'ravine' or 'furrow'. It is used to vividly impart that the metaphorical claws of the *klu* are arrayed like a series of ravines on a mountainside or like a row of furrows in a field.

<sup>24</sup> Although this sentence ends in *gsol* (to ask, to beseech) I present it and several other sentences ending in the same way in the text in the imperative form. This seems to be more in keeping with the forthright spirit of the ritual.

<sup>25</sup> *Gra'* (also in text: *gra*). This spelling gives the word a softer pronunciation (as still spoken in the dialect of 'Bri-ru) than the Classical Tibetan *dgra*.

put upon the form of the enemy. It is circumambulated nine times.

*sen mo dri* (C.T. = *gri*) *sul nas / so rnyil rtsa nas byung* (C.T. = *phyung*) // *du gsol lo // dra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo byang du gzhus* (C.T. = 'jug) *pa dang / sen mo rtsa nas 'byung* (C.T. = *phyung*) *ba dang // mchan lan rtsa nas byung* (C.T. = *phyung*) *ba dang / gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo gsad* (C.T. = *bsad*) *pa ning (= ni) / sran chung gyi phyé la / ba dmar mo dang / ra dkar mo'i 'o ma dang sbrus la / chu srin gyi gzugs dang // sbrul nag po 'go* (C.T. = *mgo*) *rgu* (C.T. = *dgu*) *bo'i gzugs byas la // gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i gzug* (C.T. = *gzugs*) *la rmod* (C.T. = *dmod*) *btsugs la // lan rgur bo rkor* (C.T. = *skor*) *la gzhas* (C.T. = *bzhas*) *go //*

### Paragraph Ic (1.6–1.9)

Now that the *klu* have been directed against the enemy and the culprit captured in the effigies made for that purpose, the text instructs the ritualists to visualize themselves as an enemy-destroying animal of fantastic appearance. This is an effulgent wolf with nine heads and nine legs who with its formidable powers seizes and slays the enemy.<sup>26</sup> This imagined or manifested wolf is made of iron, a metal commonly associated with dark colors, wrathfulness and prodigious power. Iron occurs in similar contexts throughout the text, as it does in many other ritual documents. This personification of zoomorphic spirits has archaic origins, as chronicled in many literary and oral traditions of Tibet. However, visualization of multi-headed wrathful deities is also part of tantric tradition, calling into question the cultural sources of the iron wolf god. It may therefore have evolved as a syncretic figure:

Thereafter, visualize yourself as an iron wolf with nine heads and nine legs. With your tongue emitting many iron hooks, like the spreading radiance of the sun and moon, tear out the heart of the enemy! With your fur like a whirlwind of tongues of fire and arrayed claws,<sup>27</sup> the sprung claws of copper with eight points, tear

<sup>26</sup> A nine-headed inauspicious wolf is mentioned in *Byol rabs*, a text found in the same booklet as *Gnag rabs* (Bellezza 2010: 66). There are infernal varieties of the same creature in the Gathang Bumpa funerary text *Rnel dri 'dul ba'i thabs sogs* (Bellezza 2013a: pp. 121, 125). There are also remedial spirits in the form of nine-headed wolves among the spirit-mediums (*lha-pa*) of Upper Tibet (Bellezza 2005: 105, 153).

<sup>27</sup> *Sder-mong*. This term shows that the claws form a parallel array, as when a wolf is about to spring into action. Compare with *so-mang* (comb), the different vowel

out the heart of the enemy! With your arms possessed of wings and iron claws like flaming hooks and a beak like the raised battleaxe (*gra-sta*) with the removed heart of the enemy, bring my enemy here!

*de nas rang nyid lcags kyi spyang po* (C.T. = *khu*) 'go (C.T. = *mgo*) rgu (C.T. = *dgu*) bor la / lag pa rgu (C.T. = *dgu*) po gcig du bsams la // lce lcags skyu mang por 'phro ba // nyis (C.T. = *nyi*) zla'i zer ltar 'phro // gra (C.T. = *dgra*) bo'i snying phyung cġg // spu thog gi me<sup>28</sup> lce rlung gyis bskor pa dra' // sder mong zangs kyi sder mo lce (= *rtse*) brgyad 'phen // gra' (C.T. = *dgra*) bo'i snying phyung cġg // lag pa du kyġ gshog pa can // sder mo lcags skyu 'bar ba 'dra' (C.T. = 'dra) // mchu snying 'byin gra (C.T. = *dgra*) sta 'phyar (C.T. = *phyar*) ba 'gra (C.T. = 'dra) // bdag kyi gra (C.T. = *dgra*) bo khrid la shog //

#### Paragraph Id (2.1–2.5)

Thus far, the ritual for executing enemies has been based on two major facilities: the wrath of the water spirits and the ritualist transformed into a fierce and grotesque animal. The next part of the performance introduces a third means of dispatching inimical forces, the tutelary deity (*yi-dam*). This particular god of celestial origins belongs to the *gsas* class, which is analogous to the better known *lha*. The close relationship between these two classes of gods can be traced to the Dunhuang manuscripts.<sup>29</sup>

The text furnishes a vibrant description of the *gsas* Rgod-gsas kham-pa (Tawny Wild / Brave / Savage God). He is enrobed in an overcoat of vulture skin and feathers (*bya-rgod slag-pa*), a form of dress worn by many ancient deities and sages of the Eternal Bon tradition.<sup>30</sup> As with tantric *yi-dam* of Eternal Bon, such as Ge-khod and Lha-rgod thog-pa, Rgod-gsas kham-pa controls the movements of the heavenly bodies. Nevertheless, no attempt was made by the

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in the second syllable merely a matter pronunciation corresponding to that of the Hor dialect.

<sup>28</sup> In the transcript of the text furnished in *Gtam shul dga' thang 'bum pa che*, this word is mistranscribed as *mi*. In general though, the transcribing of texts in this work was accomplished with a high degree of accuracy.

<sup>29</sup> As in the Eternal Bon tradition, the *lha* and *gsas* gods are paired with one another in the Dunhuang texts ITJ 734 (nine *lha*, nine *gsas*; *lha* masters (*dag*, C.T. = *bdag*), *gsas* masters) and Pt 1194 (*lha* and *gsas*), as well as in *Rnel drġ 'dul ba'i thabs sogs* (the two *lha* and *gsas*). For more information on the entwined *lha* and *gsas*, see Bellezza 2008; 2010; 2013a.

<sup>30</sup> Also, in the Gathing Bumpa text *Rnel drġ 'dul ba'i thabs sogs*, two ancestral funerary ritual figures, Brgyu-she-lcags and Zhang-zhung mu-lto-ba, are attired in vulture greatcoats (Bellezza 2013a: 173, 174).

author to incorporate clearly defined iconographic and conceptual elements derived from Buddhism into his personality. In *Gnag rabs*, Rgod-gsas kham-pa is presented as just one locus of ritual power and legitimacy.<sup>31</sup> In the Lamaist religions, the *yi-dam* takes precedence over other spirits and mystic empowerments; these being seen as derived (directly or indirectly) from the tutelary deity associated with the ritual being practiced. Such Lamaist *yi-dam* are considered to be representations of the nature of reality itself (*chos-nyid* / *bon-nyid*). The appearance and functions assigned tutelary deities in *Gnag rabs* underscore the nominal influence of Indic religion in the text:

Now, Rgod-gsas kham-pa, bring the enemy and thief here! What clothes does [Rgod-gsas kham-pa] wear on his body? He wears a greatcoat of the vulture. On his head he wears a striped tiger-skin hat.<sup>32</sup> He has the braided (*tshom tshom*) beard (*smang-ra*) of the tiger. His copper body hair (*ba-spu*) gently sways (*zhwa la la*). From his mouth sparking (*tsha tsha*) iron is emitted. He holds a red battle mallet (*thu-lum*) in his hands. The shifting of his eyes overturns the sky and earth. The snapping of his fingers (*se'ol brdabs*) turns the sun, moon, planets and stars of the heavens upside down upon the plain. The stomping of his feet agitates the lake of the earth from its depths. With fingernails and claws along with other [weapons] trophies (*rtags*), bring the heart and [organs of] the sides of the body [of the enemy] here!

*da ni rgod gsas kham* (C.T. = *khams*) *pa 'is* // *gra* (C.T. = *dgra*) *dang*  
*rkun ma khrid la shog* // *sku la ci gsol na* / *bya rgod slag pa gsol* //

<sup>31</sup> Like many other Tibetan deities, Rgod-gsas kham-pa survived the historical transition from the archaic to the Lamaist religious setting. He belongs to a group of four Eternal Bon gods known as Gsas-chen ru-bzhi (Pasar Tsultrim Tenzin, *et al.*, p. 279). In a 13<sup>th</sup> century CE Eternal Bon ritual text attributed to Bru-ston rgyal-ba, Rgod-gsas kham-pa is one of four gods of the cardinal directions responsible for originating the support or receptacle (*rtan*) used in augmenting the good fortune potential (*g.yang*) of individuals (Bellezza 2005: 458). In the Eternal Bon funerary tradition known as the Mu-cho'i khrom'dur, Rgod-gsas khams-pa (*sic*) is one of the main gods who defeats demons that interfere with the liberation of the deceased from the intermediate state (*bar-do*) or intermediate place (*bar-sa*; Bellezza 2008: 446). Both of these ritual contexts (pacific and wrathful) citing Rgod-gsas kham-pa have a strong indigenous character with scant Lamaist intrusion. This is readily understandable in light of *Gnag rabs* and the god's archaic religious identity.

<sup>32</sup> A *gsas* god in *Byol rabs*, Gnam-gsas phyi-rum (probably identical with Gnam-gsas dbyings-rum of Eternal Bon), is also clad in tiger-skin headgear (Bellezza 2010: 78–80). The mythic origins of the tiger-skin hat, as a sign of great bravery (*che-rtags*), is recounted in the Eternal Bon text *G.yung drung bon gyi rgyud 'bum* (see Bellezza 2008: 229). It is one of many types of headgear said to have been worn by the ancient *gshen* priests (*ibid.*, 239).

stag zhu khra bo dbu la gsol // stag kyi smang ra tshom tshom can //  
 zangs kyi ba spu zhwa la la // zhal nas lcags kyi tsha tsha phro / phyag  
 na thu lum mar (C.T. = dmar) po 'bsnams (C.T. = bsnams) // spyan  
 myig (C.T. = mig) bzlog (C.T. = zlog) pas gnam sa khrug (C.T. =  
 'khrug) par byed / se 'ol (C.T. = gol) brdabs pas gnam gyi nyi zla gza'  
 skar thang la klog (C.T. = slog) par byed // rkang pa brdabs pas sa'i  
 mtsho mo gtŕng nas krug (C.T. = 'khrug) par byed // gra (C.T. = dgra)  
 bo'i snyŕng dang mchan lan (C.T. = len) / sen mo mche ba yan cad  
 (C.T. = chad) rtags su khyer la shog /O/

### Paragraph 1e (2.5–2.8)

*Gnag rabs* continues by introducing a female deity in ornithic form, who also wrecks destruction on enemies. Her name is Mthu-mchu sdŕgs-chen-mo (Beak of Magical Power Great Tormentor Female). The text does not specify any offerings to entice her to carry out her mission. This suggests that Mthu-mchu sdŕgs-chen-mo, like Rgod-gsas kham-pa, is a tutelary deity on intimate terms with ritualists of the text. Such deities may have formed a bedrock of protection and action in certain Old Tibetan ritual traditions.

The text supplies a short account of Mthu-mchu sdŕgs-chen-mo's parentage. This type of genealogy is an integral part of Old Tibetan and Eternal Bon 'proclamations of origins' (*smrang*), which often preface ritual activities. *Smrang*, as historical or mythic professions, are designed to legitimize and promote ritual praxis, furnishing a customary and conceptual basis for their discharge. By temporally positioning and advertising their lines of transmission through human and divine luminaries, *smrang* endorse ritual efficacy in the most direct of ways (in this case the destruction of adversaries):

Mthu-mchu sdŕgs-chen-mo: The name of her father and patriarch was Skal-pa'i gdug-pa-can (He of the Savage Epoch). The name of her mother and matriarch was Srŕd-pa'i gor-'byed-ma. The daughter of their mating and seasonal activity, Mthu-mchu sdŕgs-chen-mo, was born (*bltam*).<sup>33</sup> With her file [beak] she files away at the enemy. With her file beak she files away at its heart. Bring the heart and [organs] taken from the side of the body [of the enemy] as well as its fangs along with other [body part] trophies here!

mthu mchu sdŕgs (C.T. = sdig) chen mo // pha dang yab kyi mtshan  
 skal (C.T. = bskal) pa'i gdug pa can // ma dang yum gyi mtshan //  
 srŕd pa'i gor 'byed ma // bshos dang nams kyi sras // mthu mchu sgigs

<sup>33</sup> For a discussion of the structure and vocabulary of this type of genealogy, see Bellezza 2013a, p. 134 (n. 181).

(= *sdigs*, C.T. = *sdig*) *chen mor bltam // bdar* (C.T. = *brdar*) *ro gra'*  
 (C.T. = *dgra*) *la bdar // mchu bdar* (C.T. = *brdar*) *snying la bdar //*  
*snying dang mchan lan* (C.T. = *len*) *mche ba yan cad* (C.T. = *chad*)  
*rtags su kyer* (C.T. = *khyer*) *la shog /O/*

*Paragraph If (2.8–2.10)*

The next textual passage is dedicated to the thaumaturgic crow, which by its placement in the ritual progression appears to be in the retinue of the tutelary deity Mthu-mchu *sdigs-chen-mo*. In a description of the prowess of the crow there is reference to the white sunny mountain (*gdags-rī*) and black shady mountain (*srib-rī*). Applied to a variety of deities, demons and priests, this formula is well known in Old Tibetan ritual literature. In the cultural context of *Gnag rabs*, the binary nature of white sunny and black shady mountains presupposes a cosmological wholeness or universality demonstrating the tremendous ritual effectiveness of the crow. This interpretation is supported by dualism in archaic Tibetan cosmogonies and their preoccupation with parallel white (positive) and black (negative) realms of existence.<sup>34</sup>

The beating (*brdabs*) right wing of the black crow of iron collapses the sunny white mountain. The beating of the left wing of the crow [collapses the shady black mountain]. The crow is commissioned<sup>35</sup> with the casting<sup>36</sup> of these spells.<sup>37</sup>

*lcags kyi pho rog nag po 'dis // gshog pa g.yas brdabs* (C.T. = *rdeb*) *pas*  
*/ gdags rī dkar po 'dzoms par byed / bya rog gshog pa g.yon brdabs*  
 (C.T. = *rdeb*) *pas // (+ srib ri nag po 'dzoms par byed /)*<sup>38</sup> *sngags 'dis*  
*bdab* (C.T. = *btab*) *la mngag go / I yu A sa / ma yang ling shar //*  
*thibs thib yang nge sod //*

<sup>34</sup> The binary nature of sunny white and shady black topography has also been preserved in the sacred geographic tradition. A particularly spectacular example is the thirteen or eighteen *nyin la do-chen* (sunny great headlands and islands) and the thirteen or eighteen *srib la gdong-chen* (shady great mountain faces) of Gnam-mtsho. See Bellezza 1997, pp. 120–123.

<sup>35</sup> *Mngag*. This important operative term can also be defined as 'to dispatch', 'to delegate', 'to order', or 'to entrust'.

<sup>36</sup> *Bdab* (C.T. = *btab*). When used to denote the pronouncing of a spell, this Old Tibetan verb has been frequently replaced by the word *bzlas*, as is also found in this text.

<sup>37</sup> For these three lines of spells, see the transliteration.

<sup>38</sup> This entire grammatical line was omitted from the text. The parallelism of the passage allows it to be reinstated confidently. For a discussion of this formula, see Chayet 2008; Dotson 2008, pp. 48, 49; Bellezza 2010, p. 91.

*Paragraph Ig (2.10)*

Next, the ritual turns to the *pho-lha* (god of males), another important protector against harm and evil. The *pho-lha* is still very much part of the Tibetan cultural environment, the counterpoint to the *mo-lha* (goddess of females). By virtue of being found in the archaic cultural setting of an Old Tibetan text buttresses the commonly held view among Tibetans that the *pho-lha* is of pre-Buddhist origins. Thus far, however, I have not unearthed explicit references to the *pho-lha* in the Dunhuang manuscripts. This spirit is intimately related to those it guides and guards, with the right armpit being his bodily seat. The *pho-lha* can either be in generic form or endowed with a specific name and appearance, depending on family tradition. Generally speaking, they are resplendent white deities in the form of a noble or ancestral male figure. Given its paternal associations, the *pho-lha* is also called *A-pha'i lha* (god of the father) in Upper Tibet. The draped arrow is the most common object of supplication for the *pho-lha* and the receptacle or support (*rten*) for this god on the household altar.<sup>39</sup>

*Gnag rabs* cautions the ritualist to keep the *pho-lha*, referred to as the 'object of reliance' (*rgyab-rten*), well away. This is an allusion to the still expressed belief that personal protectors are limpid spirits that must not be sullied by household activities such as cooking and childbirth, for this is thought to anger or weaken them. Although *pho-lha* are bodily connected to males their chief residence lies in the natural environment, holy trees and mountains being common abodes.<sup>40</sup> Thus the *pho-lha* are believed to exercise their power from afar or from on high. The text begins with an example (*dpe*) of counterpoise citing human beings:

Also, the male and female, these two, do not resemble each other,  
[thus] the methods of placing apart (*dgar-ba*) the object of reliance  
of the male: *pho-lha* do not be nearby!

<sup>39</sup> Tucci (1980: 188) describes a tabernacle for this class of deity called *pho-lha mkhar* or *gsas-mkhar*, which was installed on or near the roof. Also see Tucci 1966, p. 188. In Upper Tibet, when a *pho-lha* (male protective deity) is implicated in creating disturbances for an individual, he may patronize a spirit-medium. In the trance ceremony the possessing deity will typically conduct a *lha-gsol* (propitiation and offerings) ritual. The patient is made to offer white-colored livestock with superior qualities to the *pho-lha*, which are then set free to live the remainder of their lives unmolested. For general information on the *pho-lha*, see Stein 1972, pp. 222, 223; Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956, p. 327. For *pho-lha* lore and ritual practices, see Bellezza 2005; 2008.

<sup>40</sup> On personal spirits having dual residences on the body and in the environment, cf. Stein 1972, p. 227.



*pho mo gnyis yang myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *dra' ste* // *pho 'i rgyab rten dgar*  
*ba'i thabs la* // *pho lha ma nye cig* //

*Paragraph lh* (3.1–3.4)

After the *pho-lha*, the *gra-bla* / *gra'-bla* (C.T. = *dgra-lha* / *sgra-bla*: warrior spirits) are invoked, another popular genre of deities invested with apotropaic faculties. Divination texts of the Dunhuang manuscripts (Pt 1043, Pt 1047, Pt 1051, ITJ 738) constitute the oldest literary references to the *dgra-bla* (*sic*), where their advent signals a positive prognosis.<sup>41</sup> The *dgra-lha* is closely related to the *pho-lha*, and to the *phugs-lha* (household protector), *rus-lha* (clan god) and *yul-lha* (territorial god). The *dgra-lha* belongs to a well-known pentad of personal gods called '*go-ba'i lha-lnga*.<sup>42</sup> The *gra-bla* of *Gnag rabs* includes one in the form of the divine white yak, a zoomorphic warrior spirit still propitiated by Tibetans. Called G.yag-gsas dkar-po (White Gsas Yak), his parentage and his offspring are named in the text.<sup>43</sup> As with the *pho-lha*, in order to execute their protective role unhindered, the *gra-bla* are requested to keep a safe distance from the polluting influences of human activities:

The name of the father and patriarch of that G.yag-gsas dkar-po was Khri-rje rol-po thang<sup>44</sup> and the name of his mother and

<sup>41</sup> Also see Stein 2010 (Antiqua V), p. 267; Stein 2003, p. 605. On the *dgra-lha* more generally, consult, for example, Waddell 1895, p. 375; Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956; Stein 1972, pp. 222, 223. For the *sgra-bla* in the Eternal Bon ritual tradition, see Snellgrove 1967; Gibson 1985; Norbu 1995; Clemente 1994; Bellezza 2005; 2008. On *sgra-bla* in archaic funerary ritual performances, see Bellezza 2013a; 2008. For the cult of the *dgra-lha* in the liturgies of the spirit-mediums of Upper Tibet, see Bellezza 2005; 2013b.

<sup>42</sup> The *mo-lha* (god of females), *pho-lha* (god of males), *thab-lha* (god of the hearth), *zhang-lha* (god of the maternal uncle) and *dgra-lha* (god [against] the enemy). For a description of this divine group, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956, pp. 327, 328.

<sup>43</sup> G.yag-gsas dkar-po is the equivalent of the *sgra-bla* Lha-g.yag dkar-po (White Yak of the Lha), the clan god of the 'Gru. For this zoomorphic deity, see Bellezza 2005, pp. 403–408. Note the transposition of *lha* and *gsas* in the respective names of these gods, which is more indicative of the fluid syntax concerning modifiers (especially in Old Tibetan) than it is of semantic variability. As a cosmogonic spirit (Srid kyi g.yag-po dkar-po, 'White Yak of Existence'), see Tucci 1980, pp. 219, 220. On the mythic origins of divine yaks and cattle in the funerary text Pt 1068, see Bellezza 2008, pp. 540, 541. For divine yaks, female and male (*lha-'bri zal-mo* and *lha-g.yag sham-po*), as offering objects in Pt 126, see Bellezza 2005, pp. 341, 342.

<sup>44</sup> In an origins myth of *Rlangs kyi po ti bse ru* describing the divine descent of the six major clans of Tibet (Bod mi'u gdung-drug), one of the major cosmogonic gods is called Khri-rje thang-snyan (Bellezza 2008: 350–352). Although they are

matriarch was Khri-bdag btsun-mo, these two. The son of their mating and seasonal activity, was the boy G.yag-sras dkar-po. His boy was G.ya-rba dmar-po-can. Do not stay nearby on this side! The living creature (*kye-bo*) ox will gore (*brdungs*) you.<sup>45</sup> Mightily,<sup>46</sup> again and again, we make offerings. We offer to you with a pair of *dkar-mo*<sup>47</sup> and one *ban* of libations.<sup>48</sup> *Gra-bla* do not stay nearby!

*g.yag gsas dkar po 'dīs // pha dang yab kyi mtshan / khri rje rol po thang / ma dang yum gyi mtshan // khri bdag btsun mo gnyis / bshos dang nams kyi sras // bu g.yag gsas dkar po la // bu g.ya (C.T. = g.ya') / rba dmar po can / tshur tshur ma nye cig // kye (C.T. = skye) bo glang gyis brdungs (C.T. = rdung) sa re (C.T. = red) /<sup>49</sup> gnyan kyis mchod yang mchod / dkar mo cha gcig dang / gser skyems ban cig kyis gsol lo // gra (C.T. = dgra) bla ma nye cig /*

#### Paragraph Ii (3.4–3.6)

The final portion of the first ritual to eradicate enemies is devoted to the *gra'-dpa'* ('enemy hero'), another type of *dgra-lha*. *Dgra-lha* often carry the epithet 'hero' in Classical Tibetan literature, as they do here. The text provides a short *smrang* of the *gra'-dpa'*. Being stalwart allies of human beings, it is of paramount concern that these spirits remain uncontaminated:

*Gra'-dpa'* do not stay nearby! The name of the father and patriarch of the *gra-dpa'*<sup>50</sup> was Lhe'u-rje zin-dags<sup>51</sup> and [the mother was]

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both generative gods with similar names, a close functional relationship between Khri-rje thang-snyan and Khri-rje rol-po thang is uncertain.

<sup>45</sup> In Tibetan folklore and common practice, oxen and yaks are said to be inherently opposed to each other and must reside separately. This metaphor is used to drive home the message to the *gra-bla* that their well-being is endangered by ordinary human activities.

<sup>46</sup> *Gnyan kyis*. This indicates that the offerings are of much importance and made with a strong sense of commitment and urgency.

<sup>47</sup> White rice and white barley meal or other grains in this context, not white ewes.

<sup>48</sup> A *ban* is a unit of measure for beer. It is still used today in Hor and Khams, where one *ban* is equivalent to the amount of beer made from nine measures (*bre*) of grain. As is customary, the libations (*gser-skyems*) cited in the text is almost certainly beer.

<sup>49</sup> The particle *sa* added to *re* (C.T. = *red*) is a lyrical flourish (*tshigs-rgyan*), as still spoken in dialects of Nag-chu, Hor and Khams.

<sup>50</sup> *Sic*. The text has *gra-dpal* and this might possibly be a valid alternative name of the *gra'-dpa'*. In any case, in C.T. texts, we find *dpal-mgon*, an epithet for classes of minor protective deities.

<sup>51</sup> The deity Lhe'u-rje zin-dags / *zin-tags*, as the mouthpiece of positive prognoses, is found in the Dunhuang manuscripts Pt 1046B and ITJ 740. Also see Stein 2010 (*Antiqua* III), pp. 150 (n. 50), 176, 177. Stein (*ibid.*, 176) equates this god with

Dbal-bdag btsun-mo, these two. The son of their mating and seasonal activity was the boy *gra'-dpa'*, yes, Thong-nam gcig. Do not stay nearby on this side!

*gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *dpa'* *ma nye cig* // *gra* (C.T. = *dgra*) *dpal* (= *dpa'*)  
*pha dang yab kyi mtshan* // *lhe'u rje zin dags dang* // *dbal bdag btsun*  
*mo gnyis* // *bshos dang nams kyi sras* // *bu gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *dpal* (= *dpa'*)  
*ni thong nam gcig* // *tshur tshur ni ma nye gcig* (= *cig*) // O/

## Section II

Section II of *Gnag rabs* is given over to the nine *zi-ma*, ferocious goddess who defend the interests of their supplicants with much vigor. Generally known as the nine *gze-ma* in Eternal Bon,<sup>52</sup> this ennead of goddesses has retained an important place in the ritual architecture of that religion. There are however major differences in the identity and iconography of the *zi-ma* and *gze-ma*, reflecting the great transition from archaic to Lamaist religious traditions. These momentous changes, as reflected in this sisterhood of goddesses, are explored in depth in Part Two of this paper.

As with the spelling *gra* / *gra'* for enemy, the rendering *zi-ma* may reflect a localized pronunciation as spoken by the author(s), as much as being representative of Old Tibetan orthography. Like in Section I of *Gnag rabs*, these goddesses do away with enemies in the most pitiless of fashions. In this text they are coldblooded killers pure and simple, whatever other functions they might have once had.

The structure of Section II of *Gnag rabs*, as demonstrated by its thematic, narrative and grammatical qualities, can be outlined as follows:

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Le'u-rje zing-po of Pt 1043. On the signification of the term *lhe'u* ('little god'), see Bellezza 2013a, p. 17.

<sup>52</sup> *Gze-ma* seems to mean 'swift females', a reference to their rapid response to ritual entreaties to destroy enemies (cf. Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956: 312). However, in the Eternal Bon text *Sgra 'grel*, this group of nine goddesses is called *gzi-ma* (Norbu 2009: 56 [n. 81]). This spelling variant is of course closer to the rendering in *Gnag rabs*. Since the completion of this paper, the distinguished scholar Samten G. Karmay (2013) has published independently a translation of the portion of *Gnag rabs* pertaining to the nine *zi-ma* goddesses, briefly comparing its contents with Eternal Bon materials. As a side note, Karmay's characterization of the manuscript as, "...so full of spelling errors, omissions, incoherence and inconsistencies that it might just be nothing but an old faulty copy", is not particularly helpful. The abstruse nature of the *Gnag rabs* manuscript stems largely from its linguistic structure, archaic cultural orientation and the brevity of the various ritual operations, not from defects in composition.

- IIa: The theogony of the *zi-ma*  
 IIb–IIj: A description of each of the nine *zi-ma*  
 IIk: The invitation and deputation of the nine *zi-ma*

*Paragraph IIa (3.6–4.1)*

The origins myth of the nine *zi-ma* begins by first announcing an alternative name for this sisterhood: *byad-gsas* ('enemy god'). This is an epithet that refers to their ability to vanquish enemies. The *zi-ma* are of the *dbal* in nature, a term that connotes such qualities as great wrath, conflagrative intensity and extreme sharpness. These goddesses were the offspring of three *lha-rgod* brothers. The word *rgod* denotes the wildness, bravery or raw power of these gods. Their mother was the famous goddess Gnam-phyi gung-rgyal (Celestial Grandmother Queen of the Heavens), who in the Eternal Bon tradition is tantamount to the greatest protectress, Srid-pa'i rgyal-mo (Queen of Existence).<sup>53</sup> It appears that Gnam-phyi gung-rgyal had entered into a polyandrous relationship; perhaps with each *lha-rgod* as the sire of three *zi-ma* sisters. These powerful deities coupled in Lha-yul gung-dang (Country of the Gods Vault of the Heavens), the storied celestial sphere.<sup>54</sup> Augmenting the heavenly nature of their genesis, the mother and father of the nine *zi-ma* mated amidst thunder and lightening. Gnam-phyi gung-rgyal goes on to declaim the same basic admonition articulated in Section I of the text: humans and gods are not to reside in the same place (*gdan*), nor are

<sup>53</sup> Probably the oldest literary reference to Gnam-phyi gung-rgyal-mo (*sic*) is found in ITJ 731v, where in the celestial world she receives a young girl savagely pursued by homicidal demons. For this tale, see Bellezza 2008, pp. 514–517. Also see Thomas 1957 pp. 16–19, 29–32. In Eternal Bon, Gnam-phyi gung-rgyal is primarily a cosmogonic and good fortune-bestowing goddess, who is sometimes identified with sacred lakes such as Gnam-mtsho, Dang-ra g.yu-mtsho and Ma-pang g.yu-mtsho. In Eternal Bon cosmogonies, she is the senior-most member of the 'Nine Females of Existence' (Srid-pa mo-dgu) and the ancestress of living beings and deities (Norbu 1995: 166; Norbu 2009: 40, 41, 50, 53, 56; Stein 1972: 242). For Gnam-phyi gung-rgyal (Mo-btsun gung-rgyal / Spu-yul mo-btsun gung-rgyal) as the progenitor of both the *the'u-brang* (a group of ancestral spirits) and King gNya'-khri btsan-po, see Haahr 1969, pp. 221–226, 230; Tucci 1949, p. 733. Also, see Tucci 1980; p. 219; Stein 2010 (*Antiqua* V), p. 261. For numerous other references to this goddess, see Bellezza 1997; 2005; 2008.

<sup>54</sup> For a description of Lha-yul gung-thang taken from *Ti se'i dkar chag*, see Norbu 2009, p. 28. Also, see Haahr 1969, pp. 141, 221, 231. In ITJ 731r, Lha-yul gung-dang (*sic*) is one of the heavenly countries in which the maternal ancestor of the *do-ma* (psychopomp horse) lived. See Bellezza 2008, pp 530, 533; also see Haahr 1969, p. 223.

they to consort (*bshos*) with one another. If they were to mix in such ways the existence of both would suffer:

A *gnag-pa* origins tale: Also, the ones known as the *byad-gsas* nine sisters. The ones further known as the *dbal zi-ma* of the nine eggs. In Lha-yul gung-dang, the three *lha-rgod* brothers sought (*btsal*) a wife and mate. It was Gnam-phyi gung-rgyal. Gnam-phyi announced, 'no one is larger or more mighty than me. The humans and progeny of the *lha* are not to stay in the same spot and mate/consort. The sons of the dragon and *khyung* are not to be in competition (*dran kyi do*) with one another.' The progeny of their mating between the thunder and the lightning appeared (*bsrid*) as the nine white eggs as large as all the bones (*rus kyi 'go*) of a yak [piled together].

*gnag pa rabs gc̄g la // byad gsas spun rgu* (C.T. = *dgu*) *zhes yang* (C.T. = *kyang*) *bya // dbal zi ma sgong* (C.T. = *sgo nga*) *rgu* (C.T. = *dgu*) *zhes yang* (C.T. = *kyang*) *bya // lha yul gung dang* (C.T. = *thang*) *na // lha rgod mched gsum bo // khab dang byal (= dbyal) btsal ba // gnam phyi gung rgyal lags // gnam phyi'i zhal na re // nga las che myed* (C.T. = *med*) *par btsan myed* (C.T. = *med*) *par / myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *dang lha'i bu gdan du myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *bshos so // 'brug dang khyung gyi bu dran* (C.T. = *'gran*) *kyi* (C.T. = *gyi*) *do ma lags // thog dang glog kyi bar du bshos pa'i bu / sgong* (C.T. = *sgo*) *nga dkar po g.yag rus kyi 'go* (C.T. = *mgo*) *tsam ba rgu* (C.T. = *dgu*) *bsrid* (C.T. = *srid*) *do //*

### Paragraph IIb (4.1–4.6)

The text now proceeds to describe the appearance and activities of the first and eldest *zi-ma* sister. As with all the group, she appeared from an egg that hatched in the most awe-inspiring ways. This dragon-headed goddess is portrayed as a ruthless killer of enemies. In the last portion of the passage, the ritualists are instructed to visualize (*bsam*) the body and 'soul foundation' (*brla-bzhi*, C.T. = *bla-gzhi*) of the enemy as being summoned to the ritual venue. The *brla-bzhi* refers either to a mystic location in the body or to the external vessel of the *brla* (C.T. = *bla*, the animating aspect of consciousness and seat of the personality). These receptacles are typically in the form of an arrow (males), spindle (females) and precious stones. This tabernacular object is usually erected on an altar but it is transportable should its owner travel:

The [first] *dbal zi-ma* egg opened by the sound of the roaring dragon. [From it appeared the one] with the body of the human and having the head of the dragon. She possessed wings of the

scimitar (*chu-dri*). She possessed feet of the sword (*ral-gri*). With her flashing (*'bar-ba*) nine [upper] and nine [lower] fangs of iron, the eighteen, she consumes the flesh of the enemies *ljibs se ljibs*.<sup>55</sup> She drinks the blood of the enemies *rngubs se rngubs*.<sup>56</sup> She agitates (*krug*) the royal realm (*rgyal-mkhams*) of the enemy. By the striking arms (wings) of the scimitar she cuts the seven lineages of the enemy.<sup>57</sup> By stomping her sword feet, she cuts from the root and soul the heart organ of the enemy. The spells for that are...<sup>58</sup> It is thus spoken. The soul foundation and the human body [of the enemy] are visualized as coming [to the ritual venue].

*dbal zī ma sgong* (C.T. = *sgo nga*) *cig nī // 'brug ngur ba'i sgra las*  
*brtol* (C.T. = *brdol*) // *myi* (C.T. = *mi*) 'i *lus po la / 'brug kyi 'go* (C.T.  
 = *mgo*) *bo can // chu dri'i* (C.T. = *gri'i*) *gshog pa can // ral gyi'i* (= *gri'i*)  
*rkang pa can / lcags kyi mche ba rgu* (C.T. = *dgu*) *gnyis bcwo*  
 (C.T. = *bco*) *brgyad 'bar bas // gra* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i sha za ljibs se ljibs*  
 // *gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i khrag 'thung rngubs se rngubs // gra'* (C.T.  
 = *dgra*) *bo'i rgyal mkhams* (C.T. = *khams*) *krug* (C.T. = *'khrug*) *par*  
*byed / chu dri* (C.T. = *gri*) 'i *lag brdabs pas / gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i*  
*bdun rgyud gcod par byed // ral gyi'i* (= *gri'i*) *rkang brdabs* (C.T. =  
*rdeb*) *pas // gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i don snying brla* (C.T. = *bla*) *dang*  
*rtsa nas gcod / de 'i sngags la / du yu nan sen mo sbrul // nī ti shing*  
*/ zhes brjod do // brla bzhi* (C.T. = *gzhi*) *dang myi* (C.T. = *mi*) 'i *lus po*  
*'ongs* (C.T. = *yongs*) *par bsam mo / Ō /*

#### Paragraph IIc (4.6–4.10)

The type of head of the second goddess is not explicitly recorded in the text. In the Eternal Bon tradition, each of the *gze-ma* has a different animal head, but no such iconographic tradition exists in *Gnag rabs*. It merely states that the second member of the ennead has the mane of a dragon (*'brug kyi ral-pa*). An association with the *klu* is implicit here, as the egg she came from hatched through sound of the *klu*. Of course both dragons and *klu* are connected to the watery element. The imagery of how the goddess goes about her grisly task

<sup>55</sup> These three non-lexical syllables vividly convey a gobbling action and sound. For the use of this trisyllabic indicator to convey a somewhat different action, see Bellezza 2005, p. 385.

<sup>56</sup> An onomatopoeic trisyllabic indicator conveying a slurping action. This poetic construction is etymologically related to the word *rngub-pa* (to inhale). Also see *rngubs gyis blud* (to given a sip [of water]) in Pt 1134 (Bellezza 2008: 503). In Pt 1194, blood drunk with the same slurping action is described using an alternative trisyllabic indicator (*khrag pas 'thungs ni chab ma chib*; Bellezza 2013a: 115 [n. 129]).

<sup>57</sup> Their original bloodlines.

<sup>58</sup> For these two maledictory lines, see the transliteration.

of dispatching enemies has already been established in the preceding paragraph:

Another *zi-ma* of the *dbal* egg opened from the sound of the roaring *klu*. [From it appeared the one] with the body of the human and having the mane of the dragon. She possessed the wings of the scimitar. With her flashing nine [upper] and nine [lower] fangs of conch, the eighteen, she consumes the flesh and blood of the enemies *ljibs se ljibs*. She drinks the blood of the enemies *rngubs se rngubs*. She successively<sup>59</sup> takes into her mouth (*zhal du bstobs*) the fresh heart blood of the enemy. She has bulging eyes. She stamps with her feet. The spells are recited.<sup>60</sup>

*yang dbal gyi zi ma sgong* (C.T. = *sgo nga*) *gcig ni // klu ngur ba'i sgra las brtol* (C.T. = *brdol*) // *myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *'i lus po la 'brug kyi ral pa can / chu dri'i* (C.T. = *gri'i*) *gshog pa can (+ /) dung gyi* (C.T. = *gi*) *mche ba rgu* (C.T. = *dgu*) *gnyis bcwo* (C.T. = *bco*) *brgyad 'bar bas // gra* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i sha za'* (C.T. = *za*) *ljibs se ljibs // gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i khrag 'thung rngubs se rngubs // gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i snying khrag rlon pa la // tsho tsho byed cing zhal du bstobs* (C.T. = *stob*) // *myig* (C.T. = *mig*) *grad do // rkang pa brdabs* (C.T. = *rdeb*) *so sngags bzlas so /O/*

#### Paragraph IId (4.10–5.3)

The third *zi-ma* goddess is black in color, of the *dbal* in nature, and dressed in a tiger-skin greatcoat (*stag kyi slag-pa*), as were many sages of prehistoric and protohistoric Tibet, according to Eternal Bon sources. She brandishes the circle of the sky (*gnam gyi 'khor-lo*), an instrument symbolizing sovereignty over the heavens.<sup>61</sup> Not only does this *zi-ma* slay enemies, she is ordered too overthrow their ancestral spirits (*mtshun*) associated with the tomb (*dur*).<sup>62</sup> There can be no greater harm done to an adversary than this action. With the establishment of the doctrine of transmigration in Lamaist religion, such imagery alluding to an afterlife disappears in Classical Tibetan ritual literature. This order to attack the *mtshun* is one of a number of commands given to the *zi-ma* in the text:

<sup>59</sup> *Tsho tsho byed*. This phrase denotes that one portion after another of food is taken up by the goddess.

<sup>60</sup> As above in the transliteration of paragraph IId.

<sup>61</sup> For an illustration of a god (Gshen-rgyal lhe'u-mgon rje) holding the discs of the sky and earth in a circa 11<sup>th</sup> century CE funerary text, see Bellezza 2013a, p. 108.

<sup>62</sup> On the *mtshun*, see Bellezza 2008, 2013a; Stein 2010 (*Antiqua* I), pp. 22, 62, 63, 74; Haarh 1969, pp. 112, 226.

Another *zi-ma* egg of the *dbal* opened from the sound of the queen of winter.<sup>63</sup> [From it appeared] the black human of *dbal* with the scimitar fangs. Her red copper hair<sup>64</sup> *shed de shad*.<sup>65</sup> On her body she wears a tiger-skin greatcoat. Around her waist a sash (*skarags*) of the snake is tied. In her hand she holds the circle of the sky. Upset the *mtshun* of the tomb of the enemies! Also, with her scimitar fangs she files (chews) to consume the flesh of the enemies *ljibs se ljibs*. She drinks the blood of the enemies *rngubs se rngubs*.

*yang dbal gyi zi ma sgong* (C.T. = *sgo nga*) *cig* (C.T. = *gcig*) *nř* // *rgun* (C.T. = *dgun*) *gyi rgyal mo'i sgra las brtol* (C.T. = *brdol*) // *dbal gyi myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *nag po la / chu dri'i* (C.T. = *gri'i*) *mche ba can / zangs sra* (C.T. = *skra*) *dmar po shed de shad / stag kyi slag pa sku la gsol* // *sbrul kyi ska* (C.T. = *sked*) *rag* (C.T. = *rags*) *rked la bcings* // *gnam gyi 'khor lo phyag na msnams (= bsnams)* // *gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i dur gyi mtshun khruqs cig / chu dri'i* (C.T. = *gri'i*) *mche ba bdar pas yang / gra* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i sha za ljibs se ljibs* // *gra* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i khrag 'thung rngubs se rngubs / O*

#### Paragraph IIe (5.3–5.6)

The fourth *zi-ma* figure is red in color and appeared from a castle with a skylight (*gnam-sgo*), a symbol of her link to the heavens. This *zi-ma* is the leader of the *the'u-brang* (C.T. = *the'u-rang*), a well-known ancient class of demons and demigods.<sup>66</sup> She, too, is a willing killer of foes:

Another *zi-ma* egg of the *dbal* opened in the *dbal* castle with the skylight. From inside it [appeared] the red woman of the *dbal* with the iron mane brushing (*bshal*) the ground,<sup>67</sup> with the flayed tiger

<sup>63</sup> *Rgun* (C.T. = *dgun*) *gyi rgyal mo'i sgra*. This appears to signify the howling sound of a strong winter wind.

<sup>64</sup> *Sra* (C.T. = *skra*). The O.T. spelling of hair in the text corresponds to its pronunciation in the Hor dialects. When seen in aggregate, the words of Hor dialects reflecting O.T. spellings is persuasive evidence for this regional idiom having preserved an archaic phonology.

<sup>65</sup> This trisyllabic indicator conveys that her hair is long, flowing and windblown.

<sup>66</sup> On the *the'u-rang* and their ancestral functions and often problematic nature, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956, pp. 282, 283; Norbu 2009, pp. 61, 172; Norbu 1995, pp. 14–16; Tucci 1949, pp. 718, 719; Blondeau 2008, pp. 207–215; Haahr 1969, pp. 217–221.

<sup>67</sup> This meaning of the polysemous O.T. verb *bshal* is established through the context of the sentence. For other possible glosses of *bshal*, see Bellezza 2010, p. 49 (n. 55, 56); 2013a, p. 155 (n. 248).



skin carried over her shoulder.<sup>68</sup> She leads the nine *the'u-brang* brother servants. Snatch (*phrog*s) [the organs] torn from the taken flanks of the enemies!

*yang dbal gyi zī ma sgong* (C.T. = *sgo nga*) *gcīg nī* // *dbal mkhar gnam sgo can nas brtol* (C.T. = *brdol*) // *de 'i nang na* // *dbal gyi myi bo* (C.T. = *mī*) *dmar po la* // *lcags kyi ral pa sa la bshal* // *stag kyi g.yang bzhī* (C.T. = *gzhi*) *phrag la gzad* // *the'u brang* (C.T. = *rang*) *spun rgu* (C.T. = *dgu*) '*bangs su khrid* // *gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i mchan lan* (C.T. = *len*) *nas phyung phrog*s *cīg* /O/

### Paragraph If (5.6–5.7)

The fifth *zi-ma* goddess is said to emerge from the egg of the *dbal* (as do all her sisters), that implacable destructive and consuming force. This wolf-headed figure appears from the starry band (*gzhung*) of the Milky Way (Rgu-tshigs), underscoring the celestial origins of the *zi-ma*.<sup>69</sup> In Eternal Bon and Buddhism, it is understood that invoking deities in destructive magic rites is done in order to eradicate demonic entities and keep them from harming the doctrine and its followers.<sup>70</sup> These enemies often carry the epithet of 'heretic' (*lta-log-*

<sup>68</sup> This carrying of something over the shoulder is denoted by the phrase *phrag la gzad*. This expression is still used in Hor dialects. The C.T. equivalent is *phrag la khur*.

<sup>69</sup> According to an Eternal Bon text describing the origins of the drum, the primordial *gshen* Gsang-ba 'dus-pa is said to have hung the tail or streamer of his drum (*rnga-ma*) from the Milky Way (Rgu-tshig skya-mo (*sic*; Bellezza 2008: 425).

<sup>70</sup> Moreover, in the destructive magical rites of Lamaism, the consciousness principle of the enemy is 'liberated' (*sgrol*) in the *chos-dbyings* or *bon-dbyings* (sphere of reality; cf. Tucci 1980: 186). The idealism of orthodox Buddhism and Eternal Bon notwithstanding, practitioners of Lamaism appear to not infrequently indulge in black magic. For example, Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1956: 481) writes, "The *sngags pa* and the magicians of the "black Bon" are renowned for their knowledge of "black magic", and they are said to derive a considerable income from performing ceremonies for customers who desire for one or another reason the misfortune or even death of some enemy." Tucci (1980: 186) reports that spells were used against personal enemies and in war by famous Buddhist masters. Perhaps the most celebrated case of sorcery involves the 11<sup>th</sup> century CE saint Mi-la ras-pa, after he and his immediate family suffered grievously at the hands of their own kinfolk. Mi-la-ras-pa took revenge against them using black magic, slaughtering many people. For an account of this episode in the life of Mi-la-ras-pa taken from a text written by Rgyal thang-ba bde-chen rdo-rje in the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE, see Tiso 2010, pp. 173–178. In this biography, Mi-la ras-pa learns his trade from sorcerers belonging to both the Buddhist and Eternal Bon religions. Cantwell (1997) notes that Buddhist *sgrol-ba* rites, which originated in India, were sometimes used to slay actual human enemies (*dgra-bo*). Cantwell (*ibid.*) discusses the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna views on such killings and how they are justified by the need to protect others or even to benefit the enemy themselves

*pa*), 'oath-breaker' (*dam-nyams*) or 'enemy of religion' (*ru-tra*). The adversary here, however, is referred to as the 'enemy man' (*dra-bo'i myi*), suggesting that the rituals contain herein were used against human beings. In Lamaism, resorting to ritual means to murder people is ordinarily considered very sinful. In any but the most extraordinary of circumstances, this would amount to sorcery, an illegitimate practice. The *Gnag rabs* does not appear to have such scruples. It seems to belong to a morality reflected in archaic customs and traditions, whereby the slaying of one's enemy could be justified on certain grounds as reciprocity for the commission of heinous acts. In this instance, the demise of enemies is brought about by forcefully separating them from their personal protective spirit:<sup>71</sup>

Another *dbal zi-ma* egg opened from the middle of the Milky Way. [From it appeared the one] with the human body and having the head of the wolf. She possessed arms of the scimitar. She possessed wings of the sword. Separate the enemy man from his *lha!*

*yang dbal gyi zi ma sgong* (C.T. = *sgo nga*) *gcig n̄ // rgu tshigs*  
*gzhung las brtol* (C.T. = *brdol*) // *myi* (C.T. = *mi*) 'i *lus po la spyang*  
*khu'i 'go* (C.T. = *mgo*) *bo can / chu dr̄'i* (C.T. = *gri'i*) *lag pa can // ral*  
*gyi'i* (= *gri'i*) *gshog pa can // gra* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i myi* (C.T. = *mi*)  
*dang lhar phrol c̄ig //*

### Paragraph IIg (5.6–5.10)

The sixth *zi-ma* egg cracked open from the roar of a conflagration. This tiger-headed goddess is bestowed with a name in the text, the only member of the group to be so endowed. She is also referred to by the epithet *pho-nya-ma*, which means a female attendant or messenger. The text persuades the goddess to believe that the flesh of the enemy is more desirable than *zan*, cakes made of parched barley meal:

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(i.e., to prevent them from acquiring more negative karma). Zorin (forthcoming: 125–128), in addition to delineating the compassionate motive, stresses that the legitimate use of fierce tantric rites (such as those designed to slay or render insane) in Buddhism is limited to the initiated, those who have achieved a high degree of spiritual development.

<sup>71</sup> The loss of the *pho-lha*, *mō-lha* or another intimate guardian deity is still believed to have very serious repercussions. On the grave implications of the loss of the protective spirit in an archaic funerary ritual text of the Gathang Bumpa collection, see Bellezza 2013a, pp. 143–145.

Another *dbal zi-ma* egg opened from the sound of the blaze. [From it appeared the one] with the body of the human and having the head of the tiger. The name and appellation bestowed upon her was Byad-gsas sha-zan-bo (Meat-Eater Enemy Gsas). The flesh of the enemy is more delicious than *zan*. Female attendant, reach out to eat (*mnabs*) the [enemy], consuming it bite after bite!<sup>72</sup> The blood of the enemy is more delicious (*shĭm*) than beer. The leg bone marrow (*lha-rkang*)<sup>73</sup> of the enemy is more delicious than butter.

*yang dbal zĭ ma sgong* (C.T. = *sgo nga*) *cig* (= *gcig*) *nĭ* // *mye* (C.T. = *me*) *'bar ba'ĭ sgra las brtol* (C.T. = *brdol*) // *myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *'i lus po la / stag kyi 'go* (C.T. = *mgo*) *bo can / mying* (C.T. = *ming*) *dang mtshan btags pa* // *byad gsas sha zan* (C.T. = *gzan*) *bo* // *gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i sha nĭ zan bas shĭm* // *kham kham mnabs* (C.T. = *brnabs*) *cĭg pho nya ma* // *gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i khrag nĭ chang bas zhĭn* (= *zhĭm*) // *gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i lha rkang mar bas zhĭm* /

### Paragraph IIIh (5.10–6.2)

The egg of the seventh *zĭ-ma* goddess hatched through the beating and ringing (*krol*) of a drum (*rnga*) and flat-bell (*gshang*), ancient musical instruments that have retained much significance in Eternal Bon. A reference to the drum and flat-bell of the archetypal *gshen* priest Gshen-rab myi-bo is found in another text of the Gathang Bumpa collection.<sup>74</sup> Like many of the Zhang-zhung priests and kings of yore, this goddess with the horned eagle head (*khyung*) and black bear body (*dom*) wears a crown of bird horns (*bya-ru*). The fabled *bya-ru* in Eternal Bon literature was the province of kings, high priests and gods of the dead while in the archaic funerary tradition it was erected on the heads of horses that ritually transported the dead to the afterlife. The seventh *zĭ-ma* goddess is also associated with the Milky Way, which is indicative of her extremely high status and prowess. Her battle cry is *bso* (C.T. = *bswo*), a word with which many

<sup>72</sup> *Kham kham*. The sense of this word has been ascertained through context and by comparison to an expression in the Hor dialect: *khem khan zo*, which exhorts someone to keep on eating.

<sup>73</sup> Also *bla-rkang*, a ritual support of the soul (Tucci 1980: 191).

<sup>74</sup> See Bellezza 2010, pp. 84, 85. The *gshang* of Gshen-rabs kyi myi-bo (*sic*) is also mentioned in Pt 1289 (*ibid.*, 85 [n. 216]). According to Lopon Tenzin Namdak (in personal communication), the copper alloy *gshang* was first produced in Zhang-zhung. He states that Zhang-zhung examples are much flatter than those made later in eastern Tibet. While there are indeed *gshang* of 'Zhang-zhung style' of significant age, their precise periodization remains to be formulated.

ritual operations are initiated. Of ancient origins, its occurrence in *Gnag rabs* indicates an Old Tibetan etymology.<sup>75</sup>

Another *dbal zī-ma* egg opened from the thumping and tolling sound of the drum and flat-bell. [From it appeared the one] with the body of the black bear and having the head of the *khyung*. The bird horns on top of her head are as [high] as the Milky Way of the heavens. Eat as your barley cakes the flesh and bones of the enemies! [Set upon] the stealers of the males and the abusers of females [calling out] *bsō!*

*yang dbal zī ma / sgong* (C.T. = *sgo nga*) *gcig nī // rnga gshang krol*  
(C.T. = *dkrol*) *pa'i sgra las brtol* (C.T. = *brdol*) // *dom gyi lus po la //*  
*khyung gyi* (C.T. = *gi*) *'go* (C.T. = *mgo*) *bo can / glad kyī bya ru gnam*  
*gyi rgu tshigs tsam // gra* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i sha rus zan du zo / pho*  
*rku* (C.T. = *rkun*) *byed la // mo byad byed la bso // O /*

#### Paragraph Iii (6.2–6.5)

The eighth *zi-ma* goddess of eight ravenous mouths is closely associated with that most powerful and ferocious of birds, the mythical *khyung*.<sup>76</sup> Her killing range is one thousand *dpag-tshad* or roughly seven thousand kilometers, vividly illustrating her formidable powers. She is commanded to kidnap the children of the enemy and to cut all of their lineages, effectively eradicating them from the face of the earth. The text mentions seven lineages: seven lines of descent or seven households being a common numerical arrangement in Tibetan myths relating the foundation of regions and clans:

From [another] *dbal zī-ma* egg: The wings of the extremely fierce *khyung*, the flapping of the *khyung*, is the [mark] of its swiftness.<sup>77</sup> She has eight gaping (*gdengs*) mouths of insatiability (*chog myi*)

<sup>75</sup> This word also appears to be represented in the first line of Pt 239, exalting the *rīng-gur*, a kind of funerary tent. In Classical Tibetan, *bswo* is often used to invoke all manner of deities, especially those of lower ranking.

<sup>76</sup> The terrific and vengeful nature of the *khyung* in *Gnag rabs* carried over into tantric traditions recorded in the *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum*, as part of ritual structures associated with Mahāyoga. A study of references to the *khyung* in the *Rnying ma'i rgyud 'bum*, including its source in enlightened gods such as the Buddha and Phag-na rdo-rje, has been made by Hillis 2002. Hillis (*ibid.*, 331) opines that the Mahāyoga of the Rnying-ma-pa drew on indigenous as well as Indic concepts and motifs in its presentation of the *khyung*.

<sup>77</sup> This rapidity is the conjectural connotation of the expression *sbrul-rlung*. Snakes are commonly conceived by Tibetans to be able to move at great speed especially under the cover of vegetation.

*shes*). Her fangs arrive at a distance of one thousand *dpag-tshad*.<sup>78</sup> When dispatched at midnight (*nam gyi gung*), the *lha* of the enemy is made deeply afraid (*sngangs*). Snatch the child of the enemy from his side! Consume as much as (*tshun-chad*) [all] seven lineages of the enemy!

*dbal zī ma sgong* (C.T. = *sgo nga*) *gcīg la / rngam chen khyung gyi gshog pa la // sbrul rlung khyung gyi g.yab mos 'debs // chog myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *shes kyi zhal brgyad gdengs* (C.T. = *gdangs*) // *mche ba dpag tshad stong slebs ma // nam gyi gung la mngags pa'i tshe // gra* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i lha sngangs par byed // gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i mchan nas bu phrogs cīg // gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i bdun rgyud tshun chad / zas su gsol //*

### Paragraph IIj (6.5–6.8)

The ninth and final *zi-ma* is called the 'accessory', 'associate' or 'accomplice' (*phyag-brnyan*, C.T. equivalent = *phyag-rogs*) of the eighth member of the sororal group. This goddess goes in the four cardinal directions in pursuit of enemies. Among her servants are the nine *glog-srīn*, carnivorous spirits associated with the destructive power of lightning:

Her ally is the [one] with the *phung-srin*<sup>79</sup> body and the head of the scorpion. From the east she is dispatched [by the eighth *zi-ma*] to run to the west. From the west she is dispatched to run to the north. From the north she is dispatched to run to the south. With her four feet [she treads] upon the top of the summit (*kha la rtse*) of the four sovereigns [of the World Mountain]. In the night (*nub-mo*), the middle of the night (*rgung gyi dbus*), she orders (*bka'-mdzad*) the *phywa*.<sup>80</sup> She leads the *glog-srīn* nine brothers servants ('*bangs*). Also, for their enjoyment (*gyes*) they savor (*gyes*) the flesh

<sup>78</sup> One *dpag-tshad* is equal to eight *rgyang-grag*. One *rgyang-grag* is equal to five hundred spans. See *op. cit.* Blo-gros rab-gsal, 2010, p. 227; *Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo* 2002, p. 1275. Therefore one *dpag-tshad* is roughly seven kilometers in length.

<sup>79</sup> The *phung-srin* / *dphung-srin* is also mentioned in the Dunhuang divination texts Pt 1043 (lns. 32, 49, 79, 82) and IIJ 740 (ln. 186), where they figure in prognoses of a wrathful or negative nature. Also see Stein 2010 (*Antiqua III*), p. 268. In *Eternal Bon and Buddhism*, there is the closely related *phung-sri*, a demon of utter destruction, disaster and doom. On this Lamaist demon, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956, pp. 302, 393, 517, 518; Norbu 1995, p. 175; Stein 2010 (*Antiqua III*), p. 268; Huo Wei 2009, p. 44.

<sup>80</sup> A famous class of ancestral gods somewhat akin to the *lha*. See, for example, Stein 2010; Haahr 1969.

of the enemies. Also, for the taking (*mnabs*) they reach out (*mnabs*) for the flesh of the enemy.

*de 'i phyag brnyan ni // phung srin lus la sdig pa'i 'go* (C.T. = *mgo*)  
 // *shar nas mngags la nub du rgyug // nub nas mngags nas (= na)*  
*byang du rgyug // byang nas mngags na lho ru rgyug // rkang pa*  
*bzhi ni rgyal po bzhi 'i kha la rtse // nub mo rgung* (C.T. = *dgung*) *gyi*  
 (C.T. = *gi*) *dbus na / phywa dang bka' mdzad // glog srin spun rgu*  
 (C.T. = *dgu*) *'bangs su khrid // gyes* (C.T. = *dgyes*) *yang gra'* (C.T. =  
*dgra*) *bo'i sha la gyes* (C.T. = *dgyes*) // *mnabs* (C.T. = *brnab*) *yang gra*  
 (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i sha la mnabs* (C.T. = *brnabs*) //

### Paragraph IIk (6.8–6.9)

In this final stage of the ritual the entire circle of *zi-ma* spirits is released against the enemy who threatens *bon*. The word *bon* here refers to the practices and practitioners of *Gnag rabs* and other archaic ritual traditions to a greater or lesser extent. This Old Tibetan usage of the word *bon* is represented in other texts of Gathang Bumpa and those of Dunhuang. As I have explained in previous publications, in the archaic ritual context, this term should not be construed as denoting the doctrinal and institutional basis of a monolithic religion such as Eternal Bon, which succeeded it. In the text the ritual priests are also called the 'fathers' (*pha*), a title of endearment and respect.<sup>81</sup> Their benefactors and acolytes are styled the big brothers (*pho-bo*) and younger brothers (*nu-bo*).

The text makes an appeal for aid on behalf of the patrilineage of the ritualists, which is homely in tone. In the last line the *zi-ma* goddesses are invited to the ritual venue. While certainly due them, in this section of the text they are not singled out for offerings:

Tonight (*do-mod*), on the last day of the month (*gnam-gong*), search for the enemies opposing *bon*. Search for the competitors of the fathers. That the big brothers and younger brothers do not go wrong, bring [these enemies] here without expending an entire month! Summoned by their names: [the nine *zi-ma*] are invited (*spyang-drang*).

<sup>81</sup> See *pha-bon* in paragraph VIc. In the Dunhuang documents (Pt 1134, Pt 1136, ITJ 731v), *Mu-cho'i khrom-'dur* and *Klu 'bum nag-po*, the agnomen *pha* (father) is primarily (but not exclusively) appended to the names of two funerary priests: *Dur-gshen rma-da* and *Gshen-rab myi-bo* (Bellezza 2008: 379, 381–383, 480, 512, 528, 529, 537; 2013a: 216, 217). In addition to conferring dignity and authority on the *bon* and *gshen* priests, this word appears to call attention to the ancestral or precedential nature of the priesthood in the origins tales; those ritualists reading and using them are regarded as spiritual sons.

*do mod gnam gong la / bon la gra' (C.T. = dgra) tshol ba / pha la do  
'tshol (C.T. = tshol) ba' // pho bo nu bo ma nor bar // zla bar ma 'gor  
bar khrid la shog cig // mying (C.T. = ming) nas phyung la spyang  
drang (C.T. = 'dren) ngo /*

### Section III

The third section of *Gnag rabs* capitalizes on the murderous tendencies of the *btsan* and *bdud*, two common classes of elemental spirits. Most of the ritual proceedings involve specific *btsan* figures, who exhibit the same gusto for meat eating as do other deities of *Gnag rabs*.

This shorter ritual can be divided into three parts:

- IIIa: Rallying the *btsan* and *bdud* to action
- IIIb: Allotting the body parts of the enemy to the *btsan* of the four cardinal directions
- IIIc: The deputation of the *btsan* Btsan thar-che-re

#### *Paragraph IIIa (6.10–7.1)*

Although called an origins tale (*rabs*), no history of this ritual is provided in the text. *Rabs* here is probably better understood as the [ritual] pedigree, one no doubt involving an 'ancient' source. The *btsan* and *bdud* as well as two other famous classes of elemental spirits, the *gnyan* and *sri*, are told that enemies are hampering their affairs. This is obviously done to provoke the spirits to retaliate against the adversaries of the ritualists. This is made perfectly clear when the text states that these enemies have intruded upon the big brothers (*gcan*), probably a reference to the senior holders or priests of such ritual traditions. In the conventional mode, the ritualists entice their spirit allies with the flesh and blood of the enemies:

The origins tale of entrusting the *btsan* and *bdud* with the enemies: These enemies imprecate<sup>82</sup> the *bdud*. They interfere (*lag-rings*) with the *btsan*. They insult the *btsan*. They interfere with the *gnyan*. They insult the *sri*. They interfere with the big brothers. The flesh of those enemies is greatly edible. There is much blood to drink.

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<sup>82</sup> *Khas-ches*. The C.T. equivalent is *kha-dma' 'bebs* (to imprecate, to insult).

*gra* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo btsan dang bdud la gtad pa'i rabs la // gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo 'di bdud la khas ches // btsan la lag rings / btsan la khas ches / gnyan la lag rings // sri la khas ches / gcan la lag rings // gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo 'di la bza'i sha re che // btung gyi khrag mangs* (C.T. = *mang*) //

Paragraph IIIb (7.1–7.6)

With the elemental spirits adequately aroused, the second part of the ritual turns to the *btsan* minions of the four compass points. Three of these deities have zoomorphic traits. The *btsan* of the west has a head and body of different creatures just like the seventh *zi-ma* goddess with her black bear body and *khyung* head. Deities of composite zoomorphic form flourish in Eternal Bon, their grotesque iconography greatly elaborated upon in ritual texts. Like the first, fifth and sixth *zi-ma* goddess, the *btsan* of the east and of the north have human bodies and animal heads,<sup>83</sup> anticipating future iconographic developments. In Classical Tibetan ritual literature among the most famous animal-headed deities belong to the *zhi-khro* cycle of the Rnying-ma funerary ritual tradition.<sup>84</sup> As always, the helping deities are given the flesh of the enemies to devour:

*Btsan* of the sunset (west) with the body of the aquatic bird and having the head of the dragon, in your hand, receive the offered (*dbul*) head and right arm of this enemy! The *btsan* of the south, the iron man with an iron horse, and with the copper armor<sup>85</sup> and

<sup>83</sup> The oldest known figures in Tibet depicted with human bodies and animal heads or masks are found in the prehistoric rock art of Stod and the Byang-thang. These figures may variously represent priestly, heroic, mythic or supernatural entities. For dramatic images belonging to this genre of rock art, dated to the protohistoric period (circa 100 BCE to 600 CE), see Bellezza 2013c.

<sup>84</sup> For a description of these deities, see Evans-Wentz 1927, pp. 141–146; Blezer 1997, pp. 39–66. According to Blezer (*ibid.*, 39, 40), the *zhi-khro* of the *bar-do* (postmortem state of existence) can probably be traced to the Gsang-ba snying-po (Guhyagarbha), a tantra that Tibetan tradition indicates was orally transmitted through Vimalamitra in the 8<sup>th</sup> century CE). As such, the Indian originals should predate the 8<sup>th</sup> century CE. An imperial-period Buddhist source such as Gsang-ba snying-po likewise may possibly have had an influence on the animal-headed deities of *Gnag rabs*, their fundamental native character, by virtue of belonging to indigenous classes of elemental spirits (*dbal*, *btsan*, etc.), notwithstanding. If so, this demonstrates that the infiltration of Indic traditions into the zoomorphic representation of Tibetan deities predates Rnying-ma *bar-do* literature.

<sup>85</sup> A metaphorical term for armor is used here: '*tsher*. That '*tsher* refers to a protective covering is seen, for example, in the words *dgun-'tsher* (winter



helmet, in your hand, receive the offered two arms and one leg<sup>86</sup> of the enemy! The *btsan* of the east, the man of crystal with the head of the tiger, in your hand, receive the offered heart organ and five organs<sup>87</sup> of the enemy! The *btsan* of the north, with the body of the man and the head of the dog, in your hand, receive the offered twelve joints,<sup>88</sup> along with the head of the enemy, these thirteen.

*nyī ma nub kyi btsan / chu bya'i lus po la / 'brug kyi 'go* (C.T. = *mgo*)  
*bo can gyī phyag du // gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo 'dī'i 'go* (C.T. = *mgo*)  
*dang lag pa g.yas dbul* (C.T. = 'bul) *gyis bzhes cīg* (C.T. = *shig*) // *nyī*  
*ma lho 'i btsan / myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *lcags rta lcags la // zangs kyi 'tsher*  
*zhu can gyi phyag du // gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i sha gzugs* (C.T. =  
*gzugs*) *gsum 'bul gyis bzhes cīg* (C.T. = *shig*) // *nyī ma shar kyi btsan*  
*// shel gyi myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *la stag kyi 'go* (C.T. = *mgo*) *bo can gyi*  
*phyag du // gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i don snying smad lnga dbul* (C.T. =  
*'bul*) *gyis bzhes cīg* (C.T. = *shig*) // *nyī ma byang gyi* (C.T. = *gi*) *btsan*  
*// myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *'i lus po la / kyī* (C.T. = *khyi*) *'i 'go* (C.T. = *mgo*)  
*can gyi phyag du // gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i lhu bcu gnyīs 'go* (C.T. =  
*mgo*) *dang bcu gsum 'bul gyis bzhes cīg* (C.T. = *shig*) //

### Paragraph IIIc (7.6–7.7)

The third and final part of Section III is devoted to the enemy-apprehending qualities of the nocturnal *btsan* Btsan thar-che-re. The text states that engaging in such ritual effort will not be in vain:

Thereafter, Btsan thar-che-re, before and after midnight, if he knows<sup>89</sup> the enemy, he will be sent in that direction. Doing in that way your efforts will not be wasted.

*de nas btsan thar che re dang / nam phar phyed tshur phyed na // gra'*  
 (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo cha yod na phyogs der gtang / de ltar byas na chud myi*  
 (C.T. = *mi*) *za 'o / O /*

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residence) and *dbyar-'tsher* (summer residence). That *'tsher* denotes armor in the text is confirmed by it being paired with *zhu* (helmet, hat).

<sup>86</sup> *Sha-gzugs gsum*. As a term for the butchered parts of a yak, this expression is still commonly found in the dialects of Hor and among the A-pha hor of the Byang-thang: *sha-gzugs gcig* (one leg of yak), *sha-gzugs gnyis* (two legs of yak), *sha-gzugs gsum* (three legs of yak), and *sha-gzugs bzhi* (four legs of yak).

<sup>87</sup> *Smad-lnga*: lungs, liver, kidney, stomach, and spleen.

<sup>88</sup> *Lhu bcu-gnyīs*: ankles, knees, hips, wrists, elbows, and shoulders.

<sup>89</sup> *Cha-yod*. This word meaning 'to understand or 'to know' is found in the dialects of Dol-po and a large portion of the Byang-thang. In the Spu-rgyal bod dialect of Hor, it is rendered *cha-rgyus*. Also, more formally, *cha-yod rgyus-yod* (*ha-go-ba*).

### Section IV

Sections I, II and III invoke a large variety of deities, enticing them with the flesh and blood of enemies for their consumption. In Section IV, the assault on enemies is consummated through more elaborate ritual methods. These ritual measures were probably conceived as being executed with the assistance of any and all of the helping deities previously called upon in *Gnag rabs*. In practice, however, officiants are likely to have relied on those they felt would be most effective and those with whom they had the most affinity. The prime aim of this ritual is to first capture and then slaughter or otherwise render the enemy innocuous. Some notable procedural and conceptual differences notwithstanding, this type of destructive magical rite is still practiced in Lamaism.

Section IV can be divided into five interrelated parts:

- IVa: The use of a wing, tablet and receptacle to capture the soul of the enemy
- IVb: Four winged attendants who harry the enemy
- IVc: The subjugation of the enemy
- IVd: The dividing and conquering of enemies
- IVe: Proclaiming the benefits of the ritual

#### *Paragraph IVa (7.7–8.1)*

The main implement in this ritual is the wing of the crow, the awe-inspiring power of which is described in paragraph If. A main function of the bird wing in the archaic tradition is to signal the soul. The use of a black wing in *Gnag rabs* signifies baneful ritual actions.<sup>90</sup> The ritualists are instructed to paint the right side of their face with blood. The type of blood is not specified; it could possibly be that of a sacrificial animal or that of the enemy. The custom of painting the face with blood was not retained in Lamaist ritual practice, presumably because it was a salient reminder of the sacrificial rites regularly featured in archaic ritual literature. While the right half of the face is covered in blood, the left side is tinted red with *sre-mog*, an herb still used to impart a red color to votive cakes (*gtor-ma*). This application of a blood substitute may have been a concession to the Buddhist ethic that was engulfing Tibet at the time *Gnag rabs* was

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<sup>90</sup> On the mythic origins and functions of the funerary hand-tool (*phyag-mtshan*) wing in Pt 1194 and the Mu-cho'i khrom-'dur, see Bellezza 2010 p. 85 (n. 216); 2008, pp. 386, 429–432, 432–435, 493, 506–510.

written. 'Red-faced Ones' (*gdong-dmar-can*) was an imperial period epithet for Tibetans, referring to the practice of painting the face red (with red ochre?), a mark of kingship and the warrior. Among female pastoralists in Upper Tibet, the practice of applying a dark red lotion made from whey on the face continues to the present day.

As in paragraph Ib, a tablet is used as one instrument for capturing the soul of the enemy. A special enclosure (*sri-khung*) and soul stone (*brla-rdo*) are also employed for this purpose in the ritual. The *sri-khung* consists of a pit in which various objects are deposited; it is used to ritually slay demons and other malefic forces.<sup>91</sup> The object deployed in conjunction with *sri-khung* in the text is the 'soul stone' (*brla-rdo*), a rock used to enshrine the animating force of an individual for custodial purposes, as well as for ritual functions in which the anima of a patient or victim is required.<sup>92</sup> In addition to these ritual tools, spells, and a mixture of seeds, herbs, and grains are used to defeat the enemies. Among the ingredients in this mixture is ephedra (*mtshe*) and mustard seeds (*nyungs-dkar*), exorcistic agents paired in various archaic ritual contexts:<sup>93</sup>

The wing of the crow is clenched. The right side of the face is painted with blood and the left side of the face is painted with *sre-mog*. The right hair [braid] is opened.<sup>94</sup> The name of the enemy is written on a tablet. The male and female children grasp their black clothing, waving it and focusing their attention (*thugs bab-bo*) [on the enemy].<sup>95</sup> The soul stone of the enemy is also placed in the mouth of the *sri-khung*. If the spells are cast without error [the enemy] is not lost. The attendants are sent to the enemy and spells

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<sup>91</sup> On the use of the *sri-khung* in the funerary ritual context, see Bellezza 2013a, p. 164; 2008, pp. 470–473, 484.

<sup>92</sup> The functions and ritual applications of the *bla-rdo* (*sic*) are described in Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956, pp. 174, 347, 491; Tucci 1980, pp. 191, 203, 204; Gibson 1985, p. 71 (n. 15); Norbu 1995, pp. 5, 225 (n. 26), 246 (n. 51); Bellezza 2005; 2008; 2013a. On the soul stone of King Srong-btsan sgam-po, see Sørensen and Hazod 2005, p. 277.

<sup>93</sup> For the joint use of ephedra and mustard seeds (often with bird wings) in the funerary and ransom rituals of Old Tibetan and Eternal Bon texts, see Bellezza 2008, pp. 376, 379, 381, 382, 402, 410, 437, 523 (n. 584); 2010, p. 53 (n. 68), 57, 58, 63, 67, 83; 2013a, p. 44 (n. 65). On the ritual usage of ephedra, also see Karmay 1998, pp. 387, 388; Thomas 1957, *Texts, Translations and Notes*, pp. 56, 57; Stein 1971, pp. 507–509.

<sup>94</sup> *Bshig*. This verb is still used in the dialects of the eastern Byang-thang and Hor to denote the untying of braids.

<sup>95</sup> These male and female children (*bu sr̄ing*) probably belonged either to the ritualists or the benefactors, the purity of youth needed in this particular ritual operation.

are cast on the wing. In a sack of black brocade<sup>96</sup> and black silk, ephedra, mustard seeds, *glas-gangs*,<sup>97</sup> and white barley [meal] are mixed together (*gsal*). It is [then] scattered in the four directions and four intermediate directions.

*bya rog gshog pa thogs la // gdong g.yas pa khrag kyis* (C.T. = *gis*)  
*byugs la // g.yon pa sre mog kyis* (C.T. = *gis*) *byugs la // sra* (C.T. =  
*skra*) *g.yas pa bshig la // gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *'i mying* (C.T. = *ming*)  
*byang bris la // bu sr̄ng gyi gos nag thogs la / brdab* (C.T. = *rdeb*)  
*cing thugs bab po // gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i brla* (C.T. = *bla*) *rdo yang*  
*sri khung khar gzhag* (C.T. = *bzhag*) *go // sngags ma nor bar byas na*  
*myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *'chor ro / gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo la pho nya gtang ba*  
*dang / gshog pa la sngags gdab pa dang // za bug* (C.T. = *'og*) *nag po*  
*dang / dar nag po'i khug mar / mtshe dang nyungs dkar dang / glas*  
 (C.T. = *gla*) *gangs* (C.T. = *sgang*) *dang / nas dkar mo gsal* (C.T. =  
*bsres*) *de / phyogs bzhi mtshams brgyad du gtor ro //*

#### Paragraph IVb (8.2–8.3)

The text proceeds to introduce four different colored attendants (*phyag-brnyan*) of the cardinal directions. This quadripartite arrangement of deities is a common scheme in both indigenous and Indic ritual traditions (and more broadly worldwide). The quartet of spirits noted in the text help subdue enemies with their wings:

The attendant of the realm of black in the west, [the attendant] of the realm of white in the east, [the attendant] of the realm of green in the south, [and the attendant] of the realm of red in the north: with their wings they beat down (*brdab*) upon the mouth of the *sri-khung*.

*nub phyogs phyag brnyan nag po'i mkhams* (C.T. = *khams*) // *shar*  
*phyogs dkar po'i mkhams* (C.T. = *khams*) // *lho phyogs ljang khu'i*  
*mkhams* (C.T. = *khams*) // *byang phyogs dmar po'i mkhams* (C.T. =  
*khams*) // *sri khung khar gshog pas brdab po //*

<sup>96</sup> *Za-bug* (C.T. = *za-'og*). 'Brocade' is rendered *za-bog* and *zab* in an illuminated funerary manuscript, as *za-'ug-ma* in *Rnel dri 'dul ba'i thabs sogs*, while the same spelling (*za-bug*) is found in *Sha ru shul ston rabs* (Bellezza 2013a: 79, 113, 207). These latter two sources are funerary texts of Gathang Bumpa already noted. The spellings *za-bog*, *za-'ug* and *za-bug* reflect pronunciations of the word as would be spoken in Tibetan dialects of peripheral regions.

<sup>97</sup> A medicinal root (C.T. = *gla-sgang*).

## Paragraph IVc (8.3–8.7)

The text furnishes more details about the ritual procedures to be instituted. In order to make the soul stone effective, the likeness of the enemy must be drawn on it. The performer of the ritual is instructed to collect earth near his client's abode, presumably to be deposited with the rest of the deadly ritual construction at the conclusion of the performance. The ritual weapon is the crow wing, which is brandished on the chest of the priest while hand gestures are made and spells intoned. This wing is envisioned as claws made of celestial metal (*gnam-lcags*), a commonplace material and attribute in the Tibetan ritual tradition. This extremely hard, lustrous iron is popularly conceived of as having demon-suppressing qualities. The presiding deity in this ritual sequence is merely referred to as the 'emanation' (*sprul-pa*). This may be the *zi-ma* goddess with the *phung-srin* body of paragraph III, or other spirits already invoked in the text:

The body of [the enemy] is drawn on the receptible soul stone and its soul is called. Seven steps [from the beneficiary's house] are taken and earth is collected. Also, from your own home seven steps are taken presenting yourself facing east.<sup>98</sup> With the base (*gding*) of the [crow] wing on the chest, it is stood upright with its tip displayed in the sky. The emanation sets upon (*bsbad*) [the enemy]. The wing is visualized as meteoric iron claws (*spar-mo*). The arrayed tips<sup>99</sup> [of the claws] are visualized as piercing (*gzong*) and driving (*'phen*). The spells to incite are uttered [while] waving the wing.<sup>100</sup> The fists (*khu-tshur*) are clenched (*bcang*). The spells are accurately and thoroughly (*zhib du*) pronounced.

*brla* (C.T. = *bla*) *rdo la rten bcas la / gzugs bris la // brla* (C.T. = *bla*)  
*ggug* (= *gug*, C.T. = *bkug*) *ko // gom pa bdun bor ba'i sa blangs la //*  
*rang yang khyim nas gom pa bdun bor la // kha shar phyogs su bstan*  
*de // gshog pa'i gding* (C.T. = *rting*) *pa thugs kar glan de // shog*  
 (C.T. = *gshog*) *pa'i rtse mo gnam du bstan de // sprul pa bsbad* (C.T. =  
*rbad*) *do // gshog pa gnam lcags spar mor bsam // rtse mong gzong*  
*'phen bar bsam / sbad* (C.T. = *rbad*) *pa'i sngags la // sed phud phud*  
*// kyis brjed do // gshog pa brdab* (C.T. = *rdeb*) *po / khu tshur bcang*  
*ngo / sngags zhib du* (C.T. = *tu*) *bzlas so //*

<sup>98</sup> The phrase 'your own home' (*rang... khyim*) actually refers to the home of the beneficiary of the ritual, not the home of the priests conducting the ritual. This is made clear in the last paragraph of *Gnag rabs*. See paragraph VIII.

<sup>99</sup> *Rtse-mong*. On this word conveying that the tips of the claws are arrayed in a row, also see paragraph Ic.

<sup>100</sup> One line of spells is provided in the text. See the transliteration.

## Paragraph IVd (8.7–8.11)

Once again *Gnag rabs* gives us an indication that its baneful rites were indeed used against mortal opponents. Special ritual provisions for separating 'two men' are given, thus eliminating their combined power. These entail the use of bird clavicles, a tablet and the wing of the crow all bundled together. This ritual construction is buried at a road junction with the recitation of incantations:

If two men come acting as the enemy towards you yourself, the methods of separating (*bral-ba*) the two are: The right clavicle (*dang-ru*) of the crow and the left clavicle of the owl, these two, [are required].<sup>101</sup> The name and clan [of the enemy] are written on a tablet. [The collarbones are placed] back to back (*rgyab-sprad*) against that tablet, and together with (*bcang-sprag*) the wing of the black small crow ('*khar*) are bound (*bcings*) and buried (*gnan*) at the junction of three roads. These heart syllables (*snying-po*) are spoken.<sup>102</sup> They are recited (*bzlas*) either one hundred and eight or one thousand and eight times.<sup>103</sup> [With these] it is buried.<sup>104</sup>

*bdag la myi gnyis gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *byed du 'ong* (C.T. = *yong*) *na / de gnyis bral* (C.T. = *phral*) *ba'i thabs la / bya rog dang ru g.yas pa dang / 'ug pa'i dang ru g.yon pa gnyis / mying* (C.T. = *ming*) *rus byang bu la bris la / byang bu rgyab sprad de / 'gkhar* (= '*khar*, C.T. = *khwa-ta*) *nag kyis* (= *gi*) *gshog pa dang bcang sprag* (C.T. = *sbrag*) *du bcings la / lam gsum gyi mdor gnan* (C.T. = *mnan*) */ snying po 'di brjod do / Om dza' / ma ta si 'i / kha ra hung de / brgya rtsa brgyad dam / stong rtsa brgyad bzas* (= *bzlas*) *la / / brub bo / /*

## Paragraph IVe (8.11–9.1)

The text affirms that the enemies thus separated will not be able to rejoin forces for an aeon. This seems to suggest that this sorcery was

<sup>101</sup> In popular Tibetan conception, these two birds are always antagonistic to one another. In a funerary ritual to win back the soul of a dead woman from the '*dre* performed by Pha dam-pa sangs-rgyas (died 1105 CE), a composite ritual structure including the clavicle of a lammergeyer was employed (Martin forthcoming).

<sup>102</sup> For the three lines of spells, see the transliteration. These spells begin with *Om* and have other phonetic traits of Sanskrit *dhāraṇī* as well, indicating Indic religious influences. Reference to the 'essence mantras' (*snying-po*) also recalls Buddhist tantric practice.

<sup>103</sup> The numbers chosen for the amount of mantras is clearly another feature of Indic religious tradition.

<sup>104</sup> *Brup-bo*. This word also denotes the sealing and complete sequestration of the ritual construction.

wielded against a collective enemy such as bandits or an army. The text declares that the power of the ritualists' *lha* (personal protectors) is enhanced. This also indicates that the enemies spoken of in the text are of supernatural origins. In conclusion, the text informs users that palpable signs of their success against enemies will become visible:

There cannot exist a friendship (*mdza'*) between these two enemies for an epoch (*skal-pa*). The magical power of the [protecting] *lha* is increased (*bskyed*). Visible signs are dispersed (*gye*) in the four directions [from the site of ritual burial].

*gra* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo de gnyis skal* (C.T. = *bskal*) *par mdza' myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *srid do // lha mthu bskyed* (C.T. = *skyed*) *do // mngon kha bzhir*  
*gye* (C.T. = *gyes*) 'o // O/

### Section V

The fifth ritual of *Gnag rabs* centers around seven goddesses who annihilate foemen. This section of the text also includes the parentage and brother of the divine septet. In this performance some of the figures are endowed with names. These appellations are not unlike those given to certain female spirits belonging to the vast retinues of the great patronal goddesses Dpal-ldan lha-mo (Buddhist) and Srid-pa'i rgyal-mo (Eternal Bon). Two of the goddesses in this section of *Gnag rabs* have a head and body of different animals (paragraphs Vg and Vh). As noted, this grafting of one animal head on the body of another finds full expression in Lamaist religion, an example of tantric iconography. While deities of composite zoomorphic composition may have been known in the archaic religious and mythological traditions of Tibet, the creation of sets of these figures bears the mark of an emerging tantricism among those maintaining a non-Buddhist religious affiliation. As we shall see, the ritual also exhibits iconographic, mythic and material elements of archaic religious traditions.

Section V can be divided into eight parts:

- Va: The parents of the divine sisters and the traits and activities of their elder brother
- Vb–Vh: A description of the appearance and activities of the seven goddesses

*Paragraph Va (9.1–9.6)*

The parents of the seven goddesses in Section V have names best attributed to cosmogonic or theogonic traditions. They are styled 'lord' (*rje*) and 'lady' (*btsun*), as are many divine and royal couples in Tibetan mythology. Their son, Stong-phrag bdud-'dul-bo, the subjugator of the *bdud*, has hair that spirals upwards (*gyen du 'khyil*), an attribute inherited by tutelary gods of Eternal Bon (found also in Buddhist tradition). On the whole, the attributes of this god and his retinue appear to be of archaic cultural origins. In his left hand he grasps the seven 'hawks of the mind' (*yid kyi khra*), a name signifying that these birds can fly as fast as the mind can conceive something:

In a *gnag-pa* origins tale the father is Rdzu-'phrul 'od-ldan rje and the mother is Thog-za' dpal-mo btsun. The son of their mating and seasonal activity was the big brother (*mying-po*), the elder brother<sup>105</sup> Stong-phrag bdud-'dul-bo. The tree-leaf (*lcang-lo*) hair on his head curls upwards. He has ninety thousand fingers on his hand layered nine-fold.<sup>106</sup> As the right hand implement,<sup>107</sup> he holds an extremely sharp (*stong-chod*) copper sword of magical power. As the left hand implement, he holds the seven hawks of the mind. With your extremely sharp magical sword of copper that cuts, cut! By the seven hawks of the mind [the enemy] is captured and not lost. His accessories that capture (*zung*s), the seven dogs of crystal, are set loose.<sup>108</sup> For their food they eat the flesh of the enemy For their thirst they drink the blood of the enemy. For his (Stong-phrag bdud-'dul-bo) wood (fuel), he feeds ('*bud*) [the fire] the bones of the enemy.

*gnag pa rabs gcig la / yab rdzu 'phrul 'od ldan rje / / yum thog za' dpal mo btsun / / bshos dang nams kyi sras / / mying (C.T. = ming) po dral po ba stong phrag bdud 'dul bo / / dbu sras (C.T. = skra) lcang (C.T. = ljang) lo gyen du 'khyil / phyag sor rgu (C.T. = dgu) khri rgu (C.T. = dgu) brtsags (C.T. = rtseg) can / / phyag le g.yas na / sprul pa'i zangs dri (C.T. = gri) stong chod bsnams / / phyag le g.yon pa na / yid kyi*

<sup>105</sup> *Dral-po-ba*. This is an O.T. construction of a type that was retained in the prosody of Classical Tibetan. In poetry and lyrical ritual verses structured around a set number of syllables per line, if an additional syllable is required, it can be added to words in conformance with grammatical and metrical conventions. This is called a 'supplemental word particle' (*tshig-lhad*). Thus, the C.T. *dral-po* (big brother) would become *dral-po-ba*. Also see *ra-rdzi* (goatherd) rendered *ra-rdzi-ba* (Bellezza 2005, p. 195 [paragraph x]).

<sup>106</sup> *Brtsags* (C.T. = *rtseg*) can be glossed 'to layer' 'to pile up', 'to superimpose'. The pronunciation of the O.T. spelling of this word has been retained in the Hor dialects.

<sup>107</sup> *Phyag-le*. The C.T. equivalent is *phyag-mtshan*.

<sup>108</sup> '*Gyed*. This verb also means 'to order', 'to command', 'to set forth'.



*khra bdun bsnams // sprul pa'i zangs dri* (C.T. = *gri*) *stong chod kyis*  
 // *bcad de chod cig / ma mchis yid kyi khra bdun gyis // bzung ste*  
*shor ma mchis // phyag brnyan zungs* (C.T. = *bzung*) *pa ni / shel kyi*  
*kyi* (C.T. = *khyi*) *bdun 'gyed // zas su gra* (C.T. = *dgra*) *sha za'* (C.T. =  
*za*) // *skom du gra* (C.T. = *dgra*) *khrag 'thung // shing du gra* (C.T. =  
*dgra*) *rus 'bud* (C.T. = *bud*) /

Paragraph Vb (9.6–9.8)

This paragraph is dedicated to the eldest sister of the seven goddesses and her helper. Other goddesses of the septet also have attendants that do their bidding. The elder goddess, Thog-za dpa'-mo thang, controls the 'sky kings' (*gnam-rgyal*) and 'earth kings' (*sa-rgyal*), archaic epithets of deities of which little is known:

His sister (*sring-mo*), the sister (*lcam-mo*) Thog-za dpa'-mo thang, holds pincers (*gze-ma*) of copper in her hand that grasp precisely (*gzi-chod*). She holds the accessory that captures, Ma-byams rgyal-mo, who is set loose upon [the enemy]. She leads one hundred thousand *bye-ma* servants (*g.yog*). She sets loose the thirteen sky king attendants. She sends the thirteen earth king attendants. With one thousand blazes she incinerates<sup>109</sup> the eight enemies.

*de 'i sring mo lcam mo ba // // thog za* (C.T. = *bza'*) *dpa' mo thang //*  
*phyag na zangs kyi gze ma gzi chod bsnams // phyag brnyan zungs*  
 (C.T. = *bzung*) *par / ma byams rgyal mo bsnams de 'gyed // bye* (= *byad*)  
*ma 'bum phrag g.yog du khrid // gnam rgyal bcu gsum pho nyar*  
*'gyed / sa rgyal bcu gsum pho nyar gtong / me dpung stong phrag gra'*  
 (C.T. = *dgra*) *brgyad srag* (C.T. = *sreg*) /

Paragraph Vc (9.8–10.1)

The second goddess in the sisterhood is He-ma'i shing spre'u, who appears to have the head or body of an ape. The tree trunk (*sdong-po*) she carries may possibly be that of the uprooted soul tree or clan emblem of the enemies. She approaches the dying (*shī-ka*) but suddenly turns away. This seems to signify that she does not render assistance to enemies at the time of their death, leaving them stranded in the postmortem hell. The helpers of He-ma'i shing spre'u are called the 'thirteen queens' (*rgyal-mo bcu-gsum*), an archaic group of spirits of unknown composition:

<sup>109</sup> *Srag* (C.T. = *sreg*). The pronunciation of the O.T. spelling of this word has been retained in the Hor dialects.

The younger sister coming after her<sup>110</sup> is He-ma'i shing spre'u 'go-ma. Gifted (*byin*) a tree trunk, she carries it over her shoulder. Walking towards the dying [enemy] she suddenly turns around and leaves (*thod-chen gtong*). Her accessories that capture, the thirteen queens, are set loose. She leads the one thousand *lha* armies servants. She brandishes many different types of malicious weapons. She decapitates the enemies and thieves above chest.<sup>111</sup>

'on kyi gcung mo ba' (C.T. = ba) / he ma'i spre'u (C.T. = spre) 'go  
(C.T. = mgo) ma / sdong po byin (C.T. = sbyin) zhñg phrag la gzod (= gzad) // shi kha 'grim zhñg thod chen gtong // phyag brnyan zungs  
par rgyal mo bcu gsum 'gyed // lha dpung stong phrag g.yog du khrid  
// phyag na gdug pa'i mtshon mtshon cha sna rgu (C.T. = dgu) bsnam  
/ gra' (C.T. = dgra) dang rkun ma'i brang ze zhñ gsum gcod par byed  
//

#### Paragraph Vd (10.1–10.4)

The third sister is not mentioned by name. She wears a hat of the blue yak on her head. Yaks with bluish fur are commonly associated with the *klu* and *klu-mo*. After citing this goddess and her attendant, a number of commands are given to them:

The next younger sister is the amazing (*yam-mtshan*) and marvelous (*rmad*) lady of blue who wears the hat of the blue yak on her head. Her attendant that captures carries the red copper *khrol-tshags*.<sup>112</sup> Drop (*gtigs*) seven drops (*thigs*) of the blood of the body cavity of the enemy in it! Tear out the middle [teeth] of his/her thirty-two teeth! Chop into pieces (*dum-bur gtong*), separating (*'brel*) [the enemy] from its body! Put into your mouth the flesh and bones that are separating!

'on kyi gcung mo ba' (C.T. = ba) // yam (C.T. = ya) mtshan rmad kyi  
bud med sngon mo la // g.yag zhu sngon mo dbu la gsol // phyag  
brnyan zungs (C.T. = bzung) par / zangs kyñ khrol tshags dmar mo  
khyer // gra' (C.T. = dgra) 'i khong khrag thigs bdun gtigs la shog / so  
sum bcu rtsa gnyis dbus nas phyung la shog // 'go (C.T. = mgo) lus

<sup>110</sup> 'On kyi gcung-mo-ba'. In the Spu-rgyal bod dialect of Hor, 'on denotes a person or thing that comes after someone else or some other thing has first arrived; e.g. 'on kho rtsib (Lhasa dialect = slebs) gda' / (He/she arrived after [that one]). This is precisely how the word is used in *Gnag rabs*. 'On is etymologically related to 'on-kyang (furthermore).

<sup>111</sup> This is the general import of the line: Gra' (C.T. = dgra) dang rkun ma'i brang ze zhñ gsum gcod par byed //.

<sup>112</sup> A strainer for blood, a ritual implement not used in Lamaist religions. This word is related to *ja-tshags* (tea strainer).

*'brel* (C.T. = *phral*) *zhǐng dum bur gtong* (C.T. = *thong*) // *sha rus*  
*'brel* (C.T. = *phral*) *zhing zhal du bstob* (C.T. = *stobs*) //

Paragraph Ve (10.4–10.6)

The fourth sister has a name associated with telluric spirits (Great Holder of the Earth) and resides in a castle made of clavicles. However, so big and powerful is she that the stars of the Big Dipper (Smre-bdun) spin around her head.<sup>113</sup>

The next younger sister is called Sa-'dzin chen-mo. She resides inside Mkhār dang-ru lag-pa. The stars of the Big Dipper revolve around the top of her head. The accessory who captures, Sṛin-zungs sto-bo shol-cig, is set loose. The enemies are suddenly (*glo-bur*) made dead.

*'on kyi gcung mo ba'* (C.T. = *ba*) // *sa 'dzin chen mos bya'* (C.T. = *bya*)  
 // *mkhar dang ru* (C.T. = *rus*) *lag pa'i nang na bzhuks* // *skar ma*  
*smre bdun glad la 'khor* // *phyag brnyan zungs* (C.T. = *bzung*) *par* //  
*sṛin zungs* (C.T. = *bzung*) *sto bo shol cig 'gyed* // *gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo*  
*glo bur du 'chi bar byed* //

Paragraph Vf (10.6–10.7)

The fifth sister is a *sṛin* spirit and her helper is a female ape with nine heads. She too dispatches the enemy in savage ways:

The next younger sister is called Sṛin-byin de-ma. Her accessory who captures, the female ape with nine heads, is set loose. She cuts with her fingernails the ripped out (*'byin*) heart of the enemy.

*'on kyi gcung mo ba'* (C.T. = *ba*) // *sṛin byin de mas bya'* (C.T. = *bya*)  
 // *phyag brnyan zungs par spra mo 'go* (C.T. = *mgo*) *rgu* (C.T. = *dgu*)  
*'gyed* // *gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i snying 'byin sen mo gcod* // O/

Paragraph Vg (10.7–10.9)

The sixth divine sister has a name (if we read Rig-'dzin for Rigs-'dzin) and a fantastic zoomorphic guise that recalls Lamaist tantric deities. However, her epithet, 'She that also Surveils the Enemy'

<sup>113</sup> For lore about the Big Dipper as a geographical marker contained in another ritual text of the Gathang Bumpa collection, see Bellezza 2013a, p. 208.

(Gyim kyang gra'), retains the unabashed directness of the archaic tradition. Indeed, this epithet suggests that the word *rigs* (C.T. = *rig*) in her appellation pertains to perception more than knowledge, diminishing it would seem any Lamaist influence:

The attendant of the northern direction is Rïgs-'dzin rgyal-mo with the snake body and lion head. She possesses the wings of the dragon. She is thus called Gyim kyang gra'. Drop (*gtïgs*) seven drops (*thïgs*) of the blood of the removed (*dren*) heart of the body cavity of the enemy [into the blood strainer]!

*nyï ma byang gyi pho nya ste // rïgs 'dzin rgyal mo ste // sbrul gyi lus po la // seng ge'i 'go* (C.T. = *mgo*) *bo can // 'brug kyi gshog pa can // gyim kyang gra' zhes brjod // gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i snying dren* (C.T. = *'dren*) *gyi khong khrag thïgs bdun gtïgs la shog /O/*

#### Paragraph Vh (10.9–11.1)

The seventh and final sister is the 'holder of the ocean' (*rgya-mtsho 'dzin*), a grand epithet. This goddess is also called 'She that Continually Surveils the Enemy' (Gyim-gyim gra'). After killing the enemy she sends its life-force, soul and flesh to three different types of spirits for their consumption:

The attendant of the southern direction is the attendant of Rgya-mtsho 'dzin (Holder of the Ocean) with the body of the tiger and the head of the snake. She is thus called Gyim-gyim gra'. Pull out the heart from the body cavity of the enemy! The life-force of the enemy is sent to the *bdud*. Its soul is sent to Gshïn-rje smrigs-pa.<sup>114</sup> Its flesh is sent to the *srin-po*.

*nyï ma lho 'i* (C.T. = *yi*) *pho nya ma // rgya mtsho 'dzin kyi pho nya ste // stag kyi* (C.T. = *gyi*) *lus po la // 'brul gyi 'go* (C.T. = *mgo*) *bo can // gyim gyim gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *zhes brjod // gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i khong nas snying phyung cig // gra* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i srog nï bdud la gtad // brla* (C.T. = *bla*) *nï gshïn rje smrigs pa la gtad // sha nï srin po la gtad / do /O/*

<sup>114</sup> This king of the underworld spirits, Gshin-rje smrig-pa (*sic*), is noted in an Eternal Bon funerary ritual text dedicated to the psychopomp horse. See Bellezza 2008, p. 457.

## Section VI

This is the single longest section of *Gnag rabs*. It constitutes an elaboration of many of the narrative and ritual constructs already introduced in the text. Although Section VI is marked by a combination of fairly disparate origins myths and ritual practices, it is dominated by a single theme: the innate deity and demon that are simultaneously born with each person. The storyline is rather obscure and the textual progression not very coherent, but this does not detract from its great cultural value. To my knowledge, no other Old Tibetan literary source lavishes as much attention on the divine and demonic entities intrinsically associated with the birth of each individual. Nor am I aware of Classical Tibetan sources that dwell on this religious theme in as much detail as *Gnag rabs*.<sup>115</sup>

Section VI has been divided into twelve parts, which can be summarized as follows:

- VIa: The parents and birth of Ye-shes kyi rgyal-po
- VIb: The appearance of the archetypal natal god and demon of humans
- VIc: The *dbal-gshen* La-brag gar-bu 'i skyol and the theft of seven horses
- VI d: The pursuit of the horse thief and initial ritual measures against him
- VIe: The *dbal-gshen* conjures his spirit helper, destroying the horse thief
- VI f: Instructions for separating the enemy from his protective spirit
- VI g: Further instructions for permanently divesting the enemy's guardian spirit
- VI h: Ritual for summoning the natal *dre* (*sic*) demon
- VI i: Ritual means for reconciling the innate *dre* demon
- VI j: Ritual means for subduing the enemy
- VI k: Commissioning deities at night for the defeat of the enemy
- VII: The ritual slaughter of the enemy in the morning

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<sup>115</sup> The theme of a *lha* and '*dre* born at the same time as each human is represented in Tibetan archaic eschatological tradition. See Bellezza 2008, p. 365; 2013a, pp. 144, 145. Also, see Tucci 1980, pp. 194, 195; Evans-Wentz 1927, pp. 35, 36, 165, 166. In Eternal Bon, these spirit entities became assimilated to the concepts of karma and innate understanding and ignorance (Karmay 1998: 132; Snellgrove 1967: 117, 259 [n. 37]). As regards archaic tradition, Karmay (*ibid.*) observes that the natal *lha* and '*dre*, as opposing forces, were seen as responsible for positive and negative human actions. His observations on the ancient functions of the innate *lha* and '*dre* are confirmed in this section of *Gnag rabs*.

*Paragraph VIa (11.1–11.3)*

This section of *Gnag rabs* opens by stating its ritual function, which is to force the innate personal protector of the enemy to abandon his charge. The text then launches into a *smrang* set in very ancient times, which describes the origins of the inherent *lha* and *dre* that accompanies all human beings. It begins by giving the parentage of a boy named Ye-shes kyi rgyal-po (King of Wisdom). Although this semi-divine figure has a name reminiscent of epithet's conferred on the high gods of Lamaism, he belonged to the *srin* lineage, as did his mother,<sup>116</sup> suggesting that the text is recounting a matrilineal tradition:

Another part of the *gnag-pa*: The separation of the enemy and its protector: At Snang-yul phyod, inside Snang-mkhar rtse-rgu (Shining Castle Nine Peaks), the name of the father and patriarch was Lord Drang-nam skyol-po and the mother was Srin-za' 'phrul-mo chen. The son of their mating and seasonal activity, the son of the *srin*, Ye-shes kyi rgyal-po, was born.

*yang gnag pa rnam gcig la // gra (C.T. = dgra) bo srungs (C.T. = srung) ma dang bral (C.T. = phral) ba la // snang yul phyod kyi nang na // snang mkhar rtse rgu'i (C.T. = dgu'i) nang na // pha dang yab kyi mtshan / rje drang nam skyol po dang // ma srin za' 'phrul mo chen // bshos dang nams kyi sras // srin gyi bu ye shes kyi rgyal por bltam mo //*

*Paragraph VIb (11.3–11.7)*

The origins myth states that Ye-shes kyi rgyal-po was of a good birth (*skye-ma yags*). There are no negative connotations associated with him being of the *srin*, as is often found in Lamaist tradition where *srin* are mostly demonic in nature.<sup>117</sup> Ye-shes kyi rgyal-po appears to have been so named because of his ability to master the speech of humans at a very young age. This child had a dual nature in that he possessed a mind that intrinsically belonged to both humans and *lha*. The human mind (*sems*) was characterized by anger (*zhe-sdang*), pride (*nga-rgyal*) and envy (*phrag-dog*). The text employs the term (*sems*) rather than *thugs* or *yid* of other Old Tibetan ritual documents to describe the mind or cognitive principle, as well as citing three

<sup>116</sup> On funerary priests being the nephews (*tsha/tsha'*) of the *srin* (a matrilineal deity) in Pt 1134 see, Bellezza 2008, p. 384; 2013a, pp. 168 (n. 291), 224, 225, 231.

<sup>117</sup> On the *srin* and their inherent opposition to the *lha* in Lamaist tradition, see Karmay 2003, pp. 75–77.

of the 'five poisons' (*dug-lnga*) or root causes of human suffering in Lamaism. This is cogent evidence of how *Gnag rabs* came under direct influence of Buddhist thought (unlike other Old Tibetan ritual texts of Gathang Bumpa).<sup>118</sup> When not in his human mode, Ye-shes kyi rgyal-po generated or produced (*bskyed*) a *lha*. The text unambiguously informs us that along with this *lha* a *dre* (*sic*) was born (*skyes*). The narrative implies that as humans are poisoned by afflictive emotions and thoughts, a *dre* accompanies them throughout life. This understanding is in conformity with Lamaist concepts of the intrinsic *lha* and 'dre (see fn. 115). The natal *lha* of Ye-shes kyi rgyal-po was called La-gur-bya dgar-bo, his 'life-force support' (*srog-rten*) god. On the other hand, his natal *dre*, Kha-'dar mar-po, is the inherent cause of sin:

He was a boy of good birth. His speech was equal (*bnyam*) to that of humans. When small he perfected knowledge. The body brought forth of the father and mother was the first (infant's) body (*gong gyi lus*), with which he perfected speech. When not generating speech, he generated the *lha*. Generating the mind of humans, he produced anger, pride and envy. When not generating the speech of humans, he generated a *lha*. The name of this *lha* was that styled La-gur-bya dgar-po of the life-force support. When a *lha* is born, a *dre* is born. The name of the *dre* was the boy of inner sin, that known as Kha-'dar mar-po. They are born at the same time as humans.

*bu cġg skye ma yags* (C.T. = *yag*) // *smra myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *dang bnyam* (C.T. = *mnyam*) / *shes pa chung nas rdzogs* // *lus bskyed kyi pha ma nġ* // *smra gong gyi lus la rdzogs* // *smra myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *bskyed tsam na* // *lha yang bskyed do* / *myi* (C.T. = *mi*) 'i *sems bskyed pas* // *zhe sdang nga rgyal phrag dog bskyed do* // *smra myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *ma bskyed tsam na* // *lha cġg bskyed do* // *lha de* 'i *mying* (C.T. = *ming*) *nġ* / *srog rten gyi la gur bya dgar po zhes bya 'o* // *lha cġg skyes tsam na* // *dre* (C.T. = 'dre) *cġg skyes so* / *dre'i* (C.T. = 'dre'i) *mying* (C.T. = *ming*) *nġ nang gyi sdig pa'i bu* / *kha 'dar mar* (C.T. = *dmar*) *po zhes bya ste* // *myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *dang lhan cġg skyes so* /

<sup>118</sup> This reference to the *dug-lnga* within a largely archaic narrative context is a hallmark of ritual literature of circa 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century CE authorship, as seen in the *Klu-'bum*, *Mu-cho'i khrom-'dur* and *Mu ye pra phud phywa'i mthur thug*, etc.

## Paragraph VIc (11.7–12.2)

Now that the origins of the intrinsic positive and negative spiritual forces buffeting human beings have been recorded, the text turns to the *dbal-gshen* La-brag gar-bu'i skyol. The *dbal-gshen* are those priests who propitiate and exploit the *dbal* class of wrathful deities and control the *dbal* ritual traditions.<sup>119</sup> It appears that La-brag gar-bu'i skyol was the priest of Lord Drang-nam skyol-po (the father of Ye-shes kyi rgyal-po), but nowhere is this made explicit in the text. La-brag gar-bu'i skyol had authority over nine *lha-shñg*, trees of great age and importance such as sacred junipers that are used as tabernacles for deities and as external supports for the soul (*bla-gnas*). This priest also controlled nine *lha-chab*, rivers or other bodies of water that enshrine deities and the souls of the living. This trope of divine trees and waters establishes the exalted standing of La-brag gar-bu 'i skyol, for he is the controller of instruments through which sacerdotal power is manifested. This priest is said to have overseen seven 'horses of the mind of the *gshen*' (*gshen gyi yid kyi rta*). This phrase refers to the great speed and efficacy of the horses in carrying out tasks assigned them by the *dbal-gshen*.<sup>120</sup> These horses roamed freely in a rich pasture until one night they were discovered missing by the 'father *bon*' (*pha-bon*). In the narrative it is not clear who this figure is. It seems to refer to the archetypal sire Drang-nam skyol-po (father of Ye-shes kyi rgyal-po):

Inside G.yung-drung gyi dpal-mkhar rtse-rgu (Nine-Peaked Castle of Magnificence of the Swastika) stayed the *dbal-gshen* La-brag gar-bu 'i skyol. What did he exercise control over? The nine paired (*dor*) *lha-shñg*. The nine miraculous *lha-chab*. He exercised control over them. What belongings did he have control over? He had control over the seven horses of the mind of the *gshen*. The unbound horses (*rta-yan*) moved freely in a broad area.<sup>121</sup> In the

<sup>119</sup> According to Eternal Bon tradition, *dbal-gshen* / *dbal-bon* such as Gsang-ba 'dus-pa, Stag-la me-'bar and Mu-cho Idem-drug were tantric ritualists of very ancient times. The *dbal-bon* were specialized in funerary rituals as well. For various examples, see Bellezza 2008; 2013a. The *dbal-bon* also appear in other Old Tibetan ritual texts. In Pt 1285, the *bal-bon* (*sic*) Rum / Rom-po performs the *gto* and *dpyad* rites to cure disease (cf. Stein 2010 [Antiqua V], p. 259). In the Gathang Bumpa text *Sha ru shul ston rabs*, the *dbal-bon* Rum-po collaborates with other priests to conduct a funerary ritual (Bellezza 2013a: 203, 204).

<sup>120</sup> In Pt 1134, as applied to horses, we find the expression *yid-mgyogs* (fast as thought). See *ibid.*, pp. 168 (n. 291), 225.

<sup>121</sup> In the Eternal Bon Rdzogs-chen tradition, *kha-yan chen-po* describes the quality of the mind distinguished by total openness, ease and contentment. In the dialects of the A-pha hor and Hor, the word *yan-pa* denotes the action of livestock roaming freely.



*gshen* county G.yug-'brang there was a garden ('*tshal-zhing*) of verdant grain. In the middle of that night, the father *bon* said, 'the horses, the steeds, have been lost.' That was spoken.

*g.yung drung gyi dpal mkhar rtse rgu'i* (C.T. = *dgu'i*) *nang na / dbal gshen la brag gar bu 'i skyol bzhugs so // de mnga' cǐ la mdzad na // lha shǐng dor rgu* (C.T. = *dgu*) *dang / lha chab 'phrul rgu* (C.T. = *dgu*) *la / mnga' mdzad do // dkor du cǐ mnga' na / gshen gyi yid kyi rta bdun mnga' // rta yan g.yang (= yangs) du yan // gshen yul g.yug 'brang na // 'bras kyi ljang pa 'tshal* (C.T. = *tshal*) *zhing mchis na // do mod gdugs bas na / pha bon gyi zhal nas / sta (= rta) rmang stor skad //*

### Paragraph VI<sub>d</sub> (12.2–12.5)

The next morning a figure called Gshǐn-khri thang-brgyad (apparently the horse keeper) followed the footprints of the missing horses, which led him to those of a man as well, confirming that the horses had been stolen. On behalf of the father *bon* (Lord Drang-nam skyol-po?), the *dbal-gshen* La-brag gar-bu'i skyol commenced a destructive magic ritual, which entailed removing earth from the footprint of the thief:<sup>122</sup>

Early the next morning at dawn,<sup>123</sup> Gshǐn-khri thang-brgyad went to pursue<sup>124</sup> the hoofprints of the horses, the hoofprints of the steeds. In the midmorning (*nyi-ma 'dros*) he spotted a footprint of a man. At noon (*nyi-ma phyed*) he spotted a horse hoofprint. The *gshen* [La-brag gar-bu 'i skyol] said, the father's [horses] have been stolen. The enemy has risen up against the *bon*. At Ze'u-smyug bye'u-gling, [La-brag gar-bu 'i skyol] took [earth] from the footprint of the man. He recited the spells upon it. They were spoken thus:<sup>125</sup> That speech was made as [earth from the footprint] was twice taken from the east, south, west and north.

*sang nam nangs rgung* (C.T. = *dgung*) *sangs na // gshǐn khri thang brgyad nǐ / rta rjes rmang rjes gcod du gshags // nyi ma dros tsam na // myi 'i rjes cig byung // nyi ma phye tsam na rta 'i rjes cig byung*

<sup>122</sup> A destructive magic ritual with structural similarities to this one including the use of earth from the footprint of the enemy is described in Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956, pp. 488–490. This sorcery is dependent on a Buddhist god, the four-armed Mgon-po (*ibid.*).

<sup>123</sup> This is the general import of the grammatical line: *sang nam nangs rgung* (C.T. = *dgung*) *sangs na //*.

<sup>124</sup> *Gcod*. In Hor dialects such as Spu-rgyal bod, this term is used to denote the action of following a trail of footprints: *rjes-gcod*.

<sup>125</sup> For these three lines of spells see the transliteration.

// gshen gyi zhal na re // pha la rku (= rkun) byung ngo // bon la gra' (C.T. = dgra) dar ro // ze'u smyug bye'u gling gyis // myi (C.T. = mi) 'i rjes blangs la // sngags 'di skad zhes brjod do // zug du khug la non / zug la sod / na ga thal / de skad shar lho nub byang du lan bzhi bzhi byas la blang ngo (+ /)

Paragraph VIe (12.6–12.8)

The ritual continues in a castle or temple (*gsas-mkhar*), bringing about the demise of the thief with the aid of a zoomorphic spirit helper. Here, once again, the enemy appears to be a human being, not a demonic impediment to religious practice. The text informs us that the *dbal-gshen* La-brag gar-bu 'i skyol forged a pact (*chad do byas*)<sup>126</sup> with a lion-headed *khyung*. Unlike the oaths of Lamaism with their profession of a higher good, this one is purely utilitarian in nature: the helping spirit is rewarded with a feast in return for prying away the protective spirit of the thief. This is done in conjunction with a hawk spirit. The two commands or requests at the end of this paragraph mark the transition from the *smrang* to the actual ritual performed by users of the text.

At that time, the owner of the body (La-brag gar-bu 'i skyol), in the middle (*kyil*) of the *gsas-mkhar* Brgya-khri bzhi-stong,<sup>127</sup> the residing occupant (*snying-bo*), visualized [the protector of the ritual]. The protector was the winged *khyung* bird having the head of the lion with whom he made a pact. [The *gshen*] offered all kinds of food to the [protector]. Great carnivorous (*zan*) hawk protector, work allied [with the *khyung*]! Now, the enemy and his protector separate!

de tsam na bdag kyi lus po ni // gsas mkhar brgya khri bzhi stong gyi kyil (C.T. = dkyil) na / snying bor 'dug par bsam mo // srungs (C.T. = srung) ma ni bya khyung gyi zhags (= shogs, C.T. = shog) pa can dang // seng ge'i 'go (C.T. = mgo) bo can du chad do byas ste // ci'i zhal nas zhal du bstab (C.T. = stabs) // khra chen sha zan (C.T. = gzan) srungs (C.T. = srung) ma dang // dril de mdzad du gsol // da ni gra (C.T. = dgra) bo dang srungs (C.T. = srung) mar bral (C.T. = phral) du gsol /

<sup>126</sup> The C.T. equivalent is more or less: *Kha-chad byas-pa* (to enter into a pact, to avow).

<sup>127</sup> In Eternal Bon sources: Brgyad-khri bzhi-stong.

Paragraph VI<sub>f</sub> (12.9–13.1)

The text continues with ritual instructions for cleaving the *lha* protector from the enemy, an unequivocal sign of victory. Although it is not explicitly stated, this spirit is the successor to the horse thief's personal protector in the above origins tale. The ritual measures taken are derived from those carried out by the *dbal-gshen* La-brag gar-bu 'i skyol. A black tent with a birch pole is erected for this purpose. Inside the tent the ritualists sit facing the altar on which 'brang-rgyas (a type of *gtor-ma* or edible sculpture),<sup>128</sup> beer, barley cakes (*zan*), and barley meal have been placed. These barley cakes are made with water rather than butter. Poor tasting *gtor-ma*, etc. are still customarily offered to 'dre and other adversarial spirits:

For the friend of that very same [enemy] who has come: The striated (*srubs*) birch is cut by striking<sup>129</sup> with the sharp iron (ax). The black tent is erected [with this birch pole]. In front of [the ritualists'] forehead, the 'brang-rgyas of which half are white and half are black, undepleted (*ma-nyams*) first offering of beer, barley cakes with water, barley meal (*bye*) cakes with barley meal, and barley meal [with] water are made.

*de dang grogs de 'ong* (C.T. = *yong*) *ba la* // *shñg stag pa'i srubs su*  
// *rno lcags gar kyis bcad de* // *gur nag po phub la* // *dpral gyi gdong*  
*sngur* (C.T. = *sngun*) *du* / 'brang rgyas phyed dkar phyed gnag (C.T. =  
*nag*) *dang* / *chang phud ma nyams pa dang* / *chu zan dang* / *bye* (C.T.  
= *phye*) *gyis bye* (C.T. = *phye*) *zan* / *bye* (C.T. = *phye*) *chu bya* /

Paragraph VI<sub>g</sub> (13.1–13.4)

The estranged personal *lha* of the enemy must now be dealt with in order that it does not reattach itself to its owner. The ritualists symbolically remove it from the tent while clapping and snapping their hands, a sign of contempt for and subjugation of the spirit protector of the enemy. In a procession, the guardian deity of the enemy is banished far from the sphere of the ritualists and their

<sup>128</sup> The use of 'brang-rgyas in rituals colored by indigenous traditions and carried out by Buddhist masters of the 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries CE is studied in Martin forthcoming. I put forward that 'brang-rgyas literally means something to the effect of 'spacious abode', in cognizance of the ease or facility in which this object can accommodate the spiritual entities of rituals.

<sup>129</sup> [*Khro-bo'i*] *gar*. This figure of speech for the striking of the ax alludes to a highly energetic dance form. In Eternal Bon, *khro-bo'i gar* is one of the *gar gyi nyams dgu*, the nine styles of dancing (*gar-stabs*). For this classification, see Blo-gros rab-gsal, 2010, p. 50.

clients, a process executed through the raising of a pillar or pile of stones (*mtho*) and the scattering (*gtor*) of edible offerings. The *mtho* (C.T. = *tho*) is a register or marker used to record a solemn action such as the taking of an oath, the issuing of a decree, or the discharge of a momentous ritual act as is the case here.<sup>130</sup> To ensure that the enemy *lha* cannot return to his owner or cause harm to the priests, the road back to its abode is ritually barricaded with noxious water and meat:

At that time, supplicating (*ltar-zhing*) your own protector, the protector and female attendants are being unleashed [on the enemy]. Thereafter, his (the enemy's) *lha* is carried away (*bskyal*) [from the tent] followed by (*phyi-bzhin*) [the officiants] snapping their fingers and clapping [repeatedly].<sup>131</sup> With a distance of seven steps taken, the *mtho* is erected (*gzugs*). The [*lha* of the enemy] is pushed far away. Jaggery, rock sugar, different types of sweets, and grain beer are scattered. The road is cut (*gcad*) with poisonous water and many types of meat.

*de tsam na / rang gyi srungs* (C.T. = *srung*) *ma ltar* (C.T. = *bdar*)  
*zhing srungs* (C.T. = *srung*) *ma dang // pho nya ma sbad* (C.T. = *rbad*)  
*cñg gtang ngo / de nas kho 'i lha bskyal ba'i phyi bzhin du // se lcag*  
*gyis brdab // gom pa bdun bor bar mtho* (C.T. = *tho*) *gzugs* (C.T. =  
 'dzugs) *so // rgyang gyis gcad* (C.T. = *bcad*) *// bu ram dang / kha*  
 (C.T. = *ka*) *ra dang // mngar sna tshogs dang // 'bras kyi chang gyis*  
*gtor ro // dug chu dang sha sna mang pos lam gcad* (C.T. = *bcad*) *do*  
 //

#### Paragraph VIh (13.4–13.6)

The text now returns to the internal adversary of each person, the natal *dre*. The *lha* (intrinsic agent of auspiciousness) and *bdud* (intrinsic agent of inauspiciousness) are definitively separated through a ritual that includes an effigy of the natal *dre*, meat and blood offerings. This ritual ensemble is designed to summon the innate *dre* to the venue of practice:

<sup>130</sup> Also see Bellezza 2013a, pp. 225, 226. In the Gathang Bumpa manuscripts *Rnel drī 'dul ba'i thabs sogs* and *Sha ru shul ston rabs*, *mtho* are erected to subdue spirit foes (*ibid.*, pp. 148, 204).

<sup>131</sup> In the text this snapping of the fingers (*se-gol*) and clapping of the hands (*thal-mo brdebs*) is denoted by *se-lcag*, a term still used in the Eternal Bon liturgical tradition.

At this time, the *lha* and *bdud* are cut from the root: In an upright (*kha-gyen*) black cauldron (*slug-ma*) is the black *gshin-chad*,<sup>132</sup> in which a *dre* [effigy] is grasped by the neck. It is mixed (*sbyar*) with the black meat of the brown bear, and [with] the *khras-sha*<sup>133</sup> of that brown bear (*dred-mo*) it is put [inside the cauldron]. The name of the enemy is cast out (*phyung*) to land upon the meat [inside the cauldron], and that *dre* of the earth [born] at the same time comes.

*de tsam na lha bdud gcod pa'i rtsa ba la // slug ma* (C.T. = *sla nga*) *nag po kha gyen du // gshin chad nag po'i nang nas // dre* (C.T. = '*dre*') *shig pa 'gul* (C.T. = *mgul*) *nas bzung nas / dre (= dred) sha nag po dang sbyar la // dred mo'i khras sha yang der bcug la // gra* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i mying* (C.T. = *ming*) *phyung la // de'i sha thebs pa dang // de lhan cig sa pa'i dre* (C.T. = '*dre*') *ong* (C.T. = *yong*) *ngo //*

Paragraph VII (13.6–14.1)

Now that the natal *dre* has been summoned, this spirit is ritually acted upon to reconcile it with its human associate. This is accomplished through presenting the *dre* with lavish food offerings. The *dre* is also given the 'profound instructions of the swastika *gshen*' (*g.yung-drung gshen gyi man-ngag*),<sup>134</sup> exhorting it to be a cooperative partner. These are not moral teachings per se as found in the Lamaist religions, but practical guidelines probably in the form of a series of injunctions. The next step in the ritual is directed against the 'enemy', which may possibly be the natal *dre* itself but more probably its ally. This enemy is disparaged by being compared to the size of an ant. As this enemy is the natal *dre* or a closely related spirit entity, it is not eradicated but only tamed. The priests attempt to assuage the *dre* probably by partially releasing it from ritual thralldom. The text however adds an admonition, warning this enemy that should it prove uncooperative, it will be pushed down to wander blindly. The *dre* is threatened with retribution: savory food

<sup>132</sup> An unidentified ritual construction used to take punitive action against an enemy. It may possibly be related to the *sri-khung*, a structure used to imprison noxious spirits.

<sup>133</sup> This appears to be identical or similar to *khrag-sha*, a food preparation of Hor and the eastern Byang-thang. It consists of blood collected from the neck of yaks in the summertime, which is mixed with butter, parched barley meal, dried yak blood and salt. These ingredients are allowed to set for a little while before being boiled.

<sup>134</sup> A similar use of 'swastika' to define a body of religious teachings (Buddhist in this case) is found in a probable imperial period-text, IOL Tib J 1746: *g.yung drung gyi chos*. See *op. cit.*, van Schaik forthcoming. In the context of *Gnag rabs*, *man-ngag* can also mean 'essential teachings' or 'advice'.

offerings mixed with 'three types of poison' (*dug sna gsum*). The three poisons are rice beer (*'bras-chang*), barley beer (*'bru-chang*), and legume beer (*sran-chang*). It is thought by Tibetans that when these three alcoholic beverages are mixed together they cause a severe form of intoxication:

At that time, the *dre* born at the same time as yourself is made agreeable,<sup>135</sup> and that [*dre*] is served all kinds of foods. The profound teachings of the swastika *gshen* are given (*bcug*): The enemy, as large as an ant (*grog-ma*), come here! That body of [the enemy] be conciliated (*dum du gsol*)! [If you do not befriend me] downward blindly (*thur du long*) your feet [will go]! Whichever *gshen* you act as an enemy towards, you will suffer retribution (*la yogs bdar*). The method for suffering retribution is nine (many) types of delicious food mixed with three types of poison gifted [to the enemy].

*de tsam na / bdag dang lhan cig skyes pa'i dre* (C.T. = '*dre*) *cha don byas la // de ci'i zhal zas gsol lo / g.yung drung gshen gyi man ngag bcug la // gra* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i grog ma tsam cig yod pa der shog cig // des phung po dum* (C.T. = *sdum*) *du sol (= gsol) cig // rkang pa thur du long cig / gshen gang la gra* (C.T. = *dgra*) *byed pa la / la yogs bdar ro / la yogs bdar ba'i thabs ni // zhal zas zhim rgu* (C.T. = *dgu*) *dang // dug sna gsum sbyar la sbyin no //*

#### Paragraph VIj (14.1–14.4)

The transition between this paragraph and the last one is not very smooth and the object of the offensive measures employed is somewhat ambiguous. The harsher nature of the punitive ritual actions indicates that this paragraph and the two that follow in this section of *Gnag rabs* are focused on a more pernicious opponent than the natal *dre*. Nevertheless, the aim is still the personal well being of the ritualists or those for whom the ritual is being discharged. This paragraph begins with the 'secret time arrow' (*gsang-ba'i dus mda'*), the receptacle for the protective personal deities of males.<sup>136</sup> It is

<sup>135</sup> *Cha-don*. The C.T. equivalent is *kha-cad*.

<sup>136</sup> The counterpart for females is the 'time spindle' (*dus-'phang*). These ritual objects were established at birth and were enshrined on the family altar when the owner was in residence. According to the Mu-cho'i khrom-'dur, at the time of death they constituted one of the seven 'soul circles' (*bla-'khor*) or soul signs (*bla-rtags*), which were used to contain and protect the soul of the deceased during the evocation rites. The word 'time' appended to the arrow and spindle indicates that this holy object was maintained for the entire length of an individual's lifespan. See Bellezza 2008, pp. 407, 426, 428, 429. Also see Bellezza 2013a, p. 239.

located in the most sheltered and cleanest part of the home. The text briefly describes this tabernacle, saying that good articles of the *gsas* gods (*gsas-cha bzang*) are placed together with it. This ritual structure probably consisted of a tray of grain, in which the draped time arrow was erected possibly along with sacred stones, one or more copper alloy ritual mirrors (*me-long*), animal figurines, and other items. The text seems to mention the time arrow tabernacle because its proper maintenance was believed essential if an individual was to experience good fortune. There would be no point in carrying out aggressive exorcistic actions otherwise, for they would be in vain.

The ritual described in this paragraph consists of installing the skulls of three birds-of-prey and an arrow in a deep hole dug in the vicinity of the ritual venue. The text states that these objects must be deposited precisely on time (*dus gdab*). This implies that elaborate and very careful ritual functions were involved, the text only providing a review of the major procedures. For example, the skulls may have had the name or likeness of the enemy drawn on them. This use of skulls in destructive magic is reminiscent of the *sri-gnon*, a well-known rite for eliminating harm wrought by homicidal demons. Like the *gnag-pa*, the *sri-gnon* is of ancient origins:<sup>137</sup>

The secret time arrow is in your own house in the divine (high) position. Good articles of the *gsas* are nicely arranged (*bstar*) with it. Then from your own home<sup>138</sup> go a distance of seven steps and dig a deep hole.<sup>139</sup> On its east side the skull (*thod-pa*) of the *khra hor-pa*<sup>140</sup> is placed. On its west side the skull of an owl (*srin-bya*) is placed exactly on time.<sup>141</sup> On its south side the skull of the magpie (*skyugs-pa*) is placed exactly on time. On its north side the owl arrow<sup>142</sup> is placed exactly on time.

*gsang ba'i dus mda' la // rang gyi khyim du / gsas dral // gsas cha  
bzang du bstar la // rang gyi khyim nas (= na) gom pa bdun tsam bor  
la // dong rings (C.T. = ring) mtshul pa gang brkos la // shar phyogs  
nas khra hor pa'i thod pa la dus gdab // nub phyogs nas / srin bya'i  
thod pa la dus gdab // lhogs nas skyugs (C.T. = skyags) pa'i thod pa la  
dus gdab // byang phyogs nas mda' 'ug pa ma la dus 'dab (C.T. = gdab)  
//*

<sup>137</sup> On archaeological evidence for the antiquity of the *sri-gnon* rite, see Bellezza 2008, p. 394 (n. 123); Huo Wei 2009; Heller 2006, p. 268.

<sup>138</sup> The phrase 'your own home' (*rang gyi khyim*) here and above refers to the abode of the beneficiaries of the ritual, not the ritualists themselves. This is made clear in the very last paragraph of *Gnag rabs*. See paragraph VIII.

<sup>139</sup> This line includes the phrase *mtshul-pa gang*, which is of unknown meaning.

<sup>140</sup> The largest species of hawk found in Tibet.

<sup>141</sup> *La dus gdab*. This could also be translated as 'buried exactly on time'.

<sup>142</sup> *Mda' 'ug-pa-ma*. This is probably an arrow fledged with owl feathers.

## Paragraph VIk (14.4–14.8)

With the ritual structure in place for slaying the enemy, the officiants proceed to invoke their tutelary deity, the human flesh-eating Khri rgyal-ba. He is unleashed to insure the successful completion of the ritual. Also aiding the priests is a three-headed black snake, a youthful child (*skyes-phran gzhon-nu*) *bdud*, and a *btsan* named Re-btsan phyag-gda'-bo. The white hearth god (*thab-lha*) and hearth goddess (*thab-sman*) are also called upon to eradicate the unnamed enemy.<sup>143</sup> Reliance upon the hearth deities indicates that the intended enemy was one affecting the integrity of the personal or household deities:

At midnight, Khri rgyal-ba, he with the brown hair curling upwards and who holds an iron hook in his hand, is set loose. After midnight in the early hours,<sup>144</sup> a coiled black snake with three mouths is the eater of human flesh. The youthful child *bdud* is set loose [to protect]. At the very first light of day (*nam-chung dang-mo*), the killer (*gshed*) of all the twitching mouths (the demons), Re-btsan phyag-gda'-bo, was served 'glog meat.<sup>145</sup> Since ancient times he was the killer of enemies. Still he is the killer of enemies. He has been so commissioned. The white hearth god has been so commissioned. The white hearth goddess has been so commissioned. Separate (*phrol*) from the root, the arms and legs (*sug*) and heart and lungs [of the enemy]!

*nam gung la khri rgyal ba'i / dbu sra* (C.T. = *skra*) *kham nag gyen du khyil* (C.T. = 'khyil) // *phyag na lcags skyu bsnam pa la gtad do / nam phyed na / shul kyī mdo na // sbrul nag po khyil* (C.T. = 'khyil) *pa'* (C.T. = *pa*) // *kha gsum myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *sha za ba // skyes phran gzhon nu'i bdud la gtad do // nam chung dang mo la // kha 'dar kun kyi gshed // re btsan phyag gda' bo // zhal du 'glog sha gsol / gna' nas gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i gshed // da rung gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo'i gshed // de la gtad do // thab lha dkar po la gtad do // thab sman dkar mo la gtad do / sug glo snying rtsa nas phrol cig //*

<sup>143</sup> As Tucci notes (1980: 188), the *thab-lha* resides in the hearth, the hub of the household.

<sup>144</sup> *Nam phyed na / shul kyī mdo na //*. This is around 2:30 AM.

<sup>145</sup> *Glang* (ox) meat?



## Paragraph VII (14.8–15.2)

In addition to the slaughter of the enemy by the tutelary spirits specified in the last paragraph, it is put to death through animal sacrifice. The flesh and blood of an ox and horse appear to be cooked in a large vessel. This is the last ritual procedure in this section of *Gnag rabs*:

When the sun first rises, the liver of the black ox and the blood and flesh of the horse with the black chest (*byang-gnag*) are kneaded together (*sor mor sbyar*), [set in the] four directions [of the vessel], and cooked (*bstso*) in the *dbal* of the enemy.<sup>146</sup> Now, exactly at the appointed time without deviation (*ma-yo*), cook the contents of the *dbal* three times. The [enemy] is slaughtered like that.<sup>147</sup>

*nyĩ ma rtse tsam na byung na / glang nag po'i mchin pa dang // rta byang gnag* (C.T. = *nag*) *kyi sha khrag dang // sor mor sbyar de // gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *dbal phyog bzhir bstso* (C.T. = *btso*) // *da cĩ dus btab pa las ma yo* (C.T. = *g.yo*) *gcig // dpal (= dbal) lan gsum bstso* (C.T. = *btso*) // *de ltar bsad nas (= do) /*

<sup>146</sup> This appears to refer to a vessel not unlike the *dbal-zangs*, which is used for preparing the *dbal-chu*, a liquid used in Eternal Bon purificatory rites.

<sup>147</sup> The ritual structure of the *Gnag rabs* (especially Section VI) is reflected in contemporary religious practices of the *sngags-pa* (lay priests) of the village of Chos-khor in Glo-smad, Nepal. In Autumn, *sri-gnon* (suppressing the *sri*) and *lha-mchod* (propitiating the protective deities) rituals are performed in tandem. As in *Gnag rabs*, the *sri-gnon* of Glo-smad is practiced at night and includes a metal pan with effigies, which are bombarded with poisonous substances in order to separate the enemies from their protective deities before they are slain. Moreover, the effigies are buried at the junction of three roads and the hole is ritually sealed. As in the *Gnag rabs*, this ritual is conducted to eliminate both demons and mortal enemies. The morning after the *sri-gnon* the *lha-mchod* is performed, which includes fumigation, *gtor-ma* (sacrificial cakes) offerings to the household gods, and renewal of the shrines for the *pho-lha* and *tshe-lha* (god of long life). For these twin rituals of Glo-smad, see *op. cit.* Sihlé 2000. Not only are the actual activities of the Glo-smad and *Gnag rabs* performances comparable, so is the twining of a very violent ritual with a pacific type dedicated to personal gods of the household. This indicates that the *sngags-pa* of Glo-smad have preserved ritual elements of considerable antiquity, which are fundamentally non-Buddhist in origin. The hereditary nature of their profession appears to be the mechanism by which this conservation of an archaic tradition was effected. Interestingly, Sihlé (*ibid.*, 202, 203) observes that while monastic rites have made huge inroads into the village of Chos-khor, they are not seen as fully complementary as the twin rituals of the *sngags-pa*.

## Section VII

This, the penultimate section of *Gnag rabs*, is dedicated to protecting people from the predations of the classes of spirits known as *g.yen*. This is accomplished through ritual implements, offerings and a special tutelary deity. In addition to animal parts, the flesh and blood of human beings is used to appease the offending spirits.

Section VII has two main parts:

VIIa: Narrative of an ancestral priest of the *g.yen* and their ritual subjugation

VIIb: Substitute meat offerings given to the *g.yen*

### *Paragraph VIIa (15.2–15.6)*

The semi-divine group of elemental spirits known as *g.yen* are customarily divided into thirty-three classes (*g.yen-khams sum-curtsa-gsum*), which reside in the upper, middle and lower realms of existence.<sup>148</sup> The name of the priest specialized in the ritual for the *g.yen*, Srin-pa'i 'phrul-gshen (Priest of Magical Power of the Srin), seems unattested in other sources. Perhaps the text really intended his name to be Srid-pa'i 'phrul-gshen (Priest of Magical Power of Existence). Like the third vehicle of Eternal Bon teachings ('Phrul-gshen theg-pa), his focus is ireful ritual techniques. The cord (*rmu-dag*, C.T. = *dmu-thag*) connecting his life (*tshe*) and life-force (*srog*) to the celestial realm of the *rmu* gods was protected by a jeweled wall (*rin-po-che'i ra-ba*). By analogy this indicates that august personages such as the lineage of priests who wrote and used *Gnag rabs* also possessed a celestial cord.<sup>149</sup> These ritualists warded off harmful

<sup>148</sup> On the general composition of the *g.yen*, see Norbu 1995, p. 252 (n. 2); Norbu 2009, p. 81. On the role of the *g.yen* in the funerary rituals of the Mu-cho'i khrom-'dur, see Bellezza 2008. On the celestial *g.yen* in ITJ 731r and the two funerary manuscripts of Gathang Bumpa, see Bellezza 2013a.

<sup>149</sup> The Mu-cho'i khrom-'dur indicates that the mythic *dmu-thag* was the birthright of commoners as well. See Bellezza 2008, pp. 392, 405; 2013a, p. 144 (n. 218). The *dmu-thag*, represented by a multicolored cord, was essential in life-cycle rituals such as birth and marriage, where it was attached to the sinciput to symbolize humanity's divine and celestial links (Karmay 1998: 252). Tucci (1949: 714, 734) interprets reference in the *dkar-chag* of Bsam-yas (attributed to the minister Mgar) to the tombs of the Tibetan kings being made according to the Rmu-lugs (tradition / lineage of the Rmu [*sic*]) to indicate that Rmu were the chief class of priests or clan in charge of funerary rituals, which included regulation of the *dmu-thag* and *dmu-skas* (stairs of the *dmu*). As a major lineage of cosmogonic figures and archetypal ritualists, the Dmu were indeed important funerary specialists, nevertheless, their functions were paralleled by that other important

*g.yen* with a dagger (*phur-pa*) and incantations,<sup>150</sup> safe in the knowledge that their vital energy was harbored in the ‘life-force wooden pillar’ (*srog-shing*). Thus all their desires were fulfilled. For helping the priests and their beneficiaries in this manner, Srin-pa’i ‘phrul-gshen is entreated according to the words spoken in this paragraph:

The methods of keeping the *g.yen* that are opposed to yourself from rising (*ldang*): At the swastika *gsas-mkhar* of the miraculous swastika was Srin-pa’i ‘phrul-gshen, he of great magical power and mesmerizing ferocity. The *rmu-dag* of the *gshen* was surrounded by a jeweled wall. By the *phur-pa* of the swastika<sup>151</sup> and the *srog-shing* of the *gshen*, the *lha* is supported by the *phyag-bam*.<sup>152</sup> Whatever *g.yen* are in opposition to yourself, the spells of purification.<sup>153</sup> These are thus spoken. Do not harm (*sd̄ig*) [with] the harm [afflicting] the *gshen*! Any wishes [the beneficiaries] have are fulfilled (*drub-po*). This is the supplication to the miraculous son of the *gtsug-lag*.<sup>154</sup>

*rang la g.yen myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *ldang ba’i thabs la // g.yung drung*  
*‘phrul kyi gsas mkhar na / srin po’i ‘phrul gshen n̄ // mthu che la*  
*‘phrul drag / gshen gyi rmu* (C.T. = *dmu*) *dag* (C.T. = *thag*) *n̄ rin po*  
*che’i ra bar bskor // yung (= g.yung) drung gyi phur pa la // gshen*  
*gyi srog shing gyis // lha phyag bam la brten // bdag la g.yen ci mchis*

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prototypic lineage, the Phywa (C.T. = Phya). For example, the ‘father of the dead’ ‘Gon-bstun phywa, belonged to the Phwya tradition or lineage (Bellezza 2013a: 168).

<sup>150</sup> The *phur-pa* has much currency as a Lamaist ritual instrument. Its use can be traced to Buddhist Mahāyoga texts discovered in Dunhuang and dedicated to the eponymous god Phur-pa. In one such tantric text, Tib J 331, a destructive magic rite features the stabbing of an effigy in order to ritually slay or liberate it (*sgrol-ba*; Cantwell and Mayer 2010: 74). Also, for a *phur-pa* stabbing ritual in Tib J 447, see Cantwell and Mayer 2008b, pp. 199–201. The important place of the god Phur-pa and the *phur-pa* dagger in Tibetan religion since no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE may have informed the inclusion of the ritual dagger in the *Gnag rabs*. In the absence of definitive documentary evidence, however, other cultural and textual sources may also be indicated.

<sup>151</sup> *G.yung-drung gyi phur-pa*. The use of the word ‘swastika’ to describe the dagger distinguishes it as a seminal ritual implement and designates a non-Buddhist identity in this textual context.

<sup>152</sup> Probably a type of tabernacle for the personal deities. This term is etymologically related to *glegs-bam*, which can refer to a tiny encased scripture worn on the body or head as an amulet.

<sup>153</sup> For the five lines of spells, see the transliteration.

<sup>154</sup> The O.T. *gtsug-lag* denotes ritual techniques and the understanding and skill behind their execution. As a C.T. term, *gtsug-lag* denotes religious customs and traditions more generally. For a more complete definition of *gtsug-lag* and its political and legal applications, see Stein 2003. ‘Miraculous son’ (*‘phrul gyi bu*) refers to the specific ritual practices of the *gnag-pa*, an offshoot of the *gtsug-lag*.

*pa / sbyang ba'i sngags la // la yor // phywa lo / ye khyil / lho btsan  
za du // bra du de skad brjod do // gshen sd̄ig ma sd̄ig c̄ig // c̄is yang  
bsam ba drub (C.T. = grub) po (= bo) // gtsug lag 'phrul gyi bu la gsol  
lo //*

*Paragraph VIIb (15.6–15.7)*

The first half of this ritual sequence is centered on invoking the tutelary god, the second half on a special gift used to placate the enemy. This ransom ritual calls for human flesh and blood but makes no mention of how these were obtained. This corporeal conferment is given in lieu of the victim targeted by the *g.yen*. The text instructs the ritualists to use the flesh and blood from an individual not belonging to one's own clan (*rus myi gc̄ig-pa*). For those who believe that human sacrifice was practiced in ancient Tibet, the resorting to human flesh and blood in *Gnag rabs* might be used to justify their position. In my view, however, human flesh and blood cited in the text constitutes a kind of trophy or prize possibly procured from enemies fallen in battle. Be that as it may, the placement of human flesh and blood offerings at the end of *Gnag rabs* suggests that this was seen as the ultimate ritualistic statement.

As the final ritual act in *Gnag rabs*, human and animal meat offerings are cast away and along with them the troubles caused by their intended recipient. Before proclaiming the rituals of *Gnag rabs* completed (*rdzogs*), the text states that it is to be chanted (*bsgyer*).<sup>155</sup> It is understood that this recitation is to be made precisely as is written:

The flesh and blood belonging to another clan, the chest skin (*dpags*) of the *rgya-bya*<sup>156</sup> and the brain of the sparrow (*mthil*); these are mixed together [in] the bright bowl (*zhal-bur*) of banded agate (*phra-men*) [and cast away]. That is chanted. It is finished.

*rus myi (C.T. = mi) gc̄ig pa'i sha khrag dang // rgya bya'i brang dpags  
(C.T. = lpags) dang // mchil pa'i klad pa dang / sbyar de // phra  
(C.T. = khra) men gyi zhal bur (C.T. = phor) gsal de bsgyer ro //  
rdzogs s.ho //*

<sup>155</sup> This O.T. past tense verb has persisted in the present tense *gyer* of Eternal Bon and has retained the same semantic scope. It conveys not merely the act of chanting but the entire contents of what is chanted. Thus *gyer* as a noun has become a synonym for the full collection of Eternal Bon teachings as well as for the nature of reality itself.

<sup>156</sup> A type of pheasant.

## Section VIII

*Gnag rabs* concludes with advice to the ritualists. The text explains that the methods it advocates may not bear full results immediately and serves to reassure practitioners that this is not problematic, for the enemy is now firmly in their grip. The text conveys that signs beheld internally (*pra-rtags*), showing that these harm-inducing entities have been extirpated, will appear within three years. If for some reason these signs do not appear in that amount of time, the text advises the ritualists to simply forget about the enemy. Presumably, if the enemy is not causing problems after such a long time one need not worry about it. While this seems to be eminently practical counsel, it is out of tune with analogous Lamaist rituals, which are more apt to trumpet their undeviating efficacy.

The text reminds its users to enthusiastically supplicate the tutelary deities, the various *lha-gsas* of the ritual (and others to whom they may be bound). Likewise, the instruments used in their propitiation (*gsas-cha*) and the ritual gear (*ya-stags*, C.T. = *yas-stags*) must be well maintained and skillfully deployed. This is done to ensure that the enemies are well and truly annihilated. Assuming a paternal tone the text exhorts the ritualists to act with caution (*gzab 'tshal lo*). In the last instance, the text announces that the provisions for the *gnag-pa* and origins tales of the nine *zi-ma* goddesses are completed. By singling out the *zi-ma*, the text highlights their salience among the many other deities of the ritual performances:

If you grip [the enemy as shown above] it is impossible for it to slip away (*'chor*). In three months [the signs] will surely come to you. If they do not appear like that, they will surely come in three years. If they do not come like that, in the course of things forget (*rjed*) the enemy. It is not appropriate to do [this ritual] in your own home. The *lha-gsas* is fervently propitiated (*drag du bdar*) and the *gsas* articles are assiduously prepared. The ritual articles are assembled. If you do not quickly [kill the enemy] it will transpire that misfortune (*rkyen*) will come to you. Proceed with caution. The *gnag-pa* provisions and the origins tales of the nine *zi-ma* eggs are finished.

*zid na 'chor* (C.T. = *shor*) *myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *srid do // zla ba gsum na 'ong* (C.T. = *yong*) *nges so // de ltar ma byung na lo gsum na 'ong* (C.T. = *yong*) *nges so / de ltar ma byung na / gra'* (C.T. = *dgra*) *bo rjed* (C.T. = *brjed*) *tsam na bya 'o // rang gyi khyim du byar myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *rung ngo // lha gsas drag du bdar la // gsas cha drag du bsar la // ya* (C.T. = *yas*) *stags 'tshogs par byas la // zid nas ma byas par gyur na // rang rkyen 'ong* (C.T. = *yong*) *ngo // gzab 'tshal lo //*

*gnag pa bca' ba dang // zi ma sgong* (C.T. = *sgo nga*) *rgu* (C.T. = *dgu*)  
*'i rabs rdzogs s.ho.*

Also on folio no. 16, two lines of handwriting were scrawled at a later date perpendicular to the actual text. These later lines accompany a crude mandala (*dkyil-'khor*). Although the invasive position of the handwriting demonstrates that it was composed after the original text was made, its paleographic and orthographic traits indicate that it is of significant antiquity. These supplemental lines of text and the mandala were made by an individual called Zhang. This seems to be reference either to his clan name or his Zhang-zhung homeland. The opening part of Zhang's lines read: *bag-ma she*; this may possibly designate the name or function of the mandala:

Make the established *bag-ma she*, the mandala (*rkyil-'khor*). Made from the tradition. Drawn by the noble Zhang.

*bag ma she ste rkyil* (C.T. = *dkyil*) *'khor de bzheng su gsol / gsol (= srol)*  
*nas byed pa yin no zhang btsun gyi bris pa ya (= yin) no /*

The depicted mandala was rather roughly drawn in an idiosyncratic manner. Its creation must have been inspired by Lamaist practice of Indian origin of making mandalas for the deities of rituals. It may have functioned as magical diagram for validating and bringing to fruition the various rituals enumerated in *Gnag rabs*.

In consonance with tantric tradition, each of the four outer sides of the mandala carry a different symbol and syllable. These may represent the four continents (*gling-bzhi*), four orders of deities (*rigs-bzhi*) and/or the four modes of activities (*'phrin-las bzhi*). They are as follows:

East: half circle (*zla-gam*) and the syllable *bsra'*  
 South: triangle (*zur-gsum*) and the syllable *tsar*  
 West: circle (*zlum-po*) and the syllable *can*  
 North: square (*gru-bzhi*) and the syllable *tung*

On each corner of the outer square of the mandala two triangles were drawn, which might possibly represent mountains. The sacred syllable *Om'* of Indic tradition is in the inner circle of the mandala.

## Comparative Eternal Bon ritual materials

### Introduction

In the second part of this paper systematic comparisons will be drawn between a cognate ritual tradition of the *Gnag rabs* and Eternal Bon documents, in order to better illustrate fundamental differences between the archaic and Lamaist religions of Tibet. Section II of the *Gnag rabs* presented the nine *zi-ma* sisters. While other deities noted in this text have diminished in importance or have entirely disappeared from Lamaism, the nine *zi-ma* (rendered *gze-ma* / *gzi-ma* in Classical Tibetan) retain a prominent place in the Eternal Bon religion.<sup>157</sup> These goddesses have been elevated to the level of tantric protectors. So highly regarded are they that they appear for all to see in the Eternal Bon monastic dances (*'cham*) held annually.<sup>158</sup>

Undertaking a comparative exercise provides excellent insight into how Eternal Bon expurgated concepts and activities that could not be reconciled with its Buddhist-inspired ethics, doctrines and practices. When older traditions such as the iconography and basic protective functions of the nine *gze-ma* could be conserved, they were reinterpreted to fit within the philosophical and moral superstructure of Lamaism. This recreation of the archaic ritual tradition by Eternal Bon permitted the *gze-ma* to survive, albeit nominally, in a religious, political and economic environment dominated by Buddhist thought and institutions. We might expect

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<sup>157</sup> For an overview of the Eternal Bon tradition of the nine *gze-ma*, protectors of the religion (*bon-srung* / *bon-skyong*), see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956, p. 312. For a summary of two closely related enneads of Eternal Bon goddesses, the *gyad-ma dgu* and *byin-te dgu*, as well as reference to other *dbal* deities, see *ibid.*, pp. 313–317. Also see Haarh 1969, p. 225. Blezer (2000: 121) discusses the fierce nature of the *gze-ma dgu* and other *dbal-mo*. He (*ibid.*, 125, 126, 162) provides a list of the *gze-ma*, *gyad-mo* and *byin-te* from the text *Snyan brgyud bar do thos grol gsal sgron chen mo*, as well as another listing. The appearance and attributes of the *gze-ma* goddesses in these two texts are comparable to those presented in this paper.

<sup>158</sup> Instructions for performing the *'cham* of these nine goddesses is found in *Gze ma dgu rtags kyi bsgrub pa bzhugs* (nos. 677–695), a chapter in the text *Gsas mkhar rin po che spyi spungs khro bo dbang chen ngo mtshar rgyas pa'i gzhung gi phrin las bzhugs\** (nos. 40–695; discovered by Gshen-chen klu-dga' (Gshen-sgur klu-dga'), born 996 CE), no. 694, in the volume *Zhi khro phrin las* (nos. 1–994), vol. 235 of New Collection of the Bon *bka'-brten* (canonical commentaries and appended literature), published by Bstan-pa'i nyi-ma, Lhasa, 1998. On the practice of the *'cham* featuring *gze-ma* goddesses, also see Karmay 2013, pp. 19, 20.

\* This text contains four main branches of funerary ritual traditions: *pho-'dur* (for males), *mo-'dur* (for females), *chung-'dur* (for children), *gri-'dur* (for those who die through accidental or violent means).

that Gshen-chen klu-dga' and other Eternal Bon authors were under immense sociopolitical pressure to carry out this purging of the archaic tradition. Their own leanings towards Buddhist-inspired morality, tenets and mysticism must have also played a role in transforming the ancient. Seen from this perspective, the reconfiguration of the preexisting pantheon of spirits and system of rituals was but one facet of the civilizational makeover of Tibet.

The induction of the *gze-ma* goddess into the Eternal Bon pantheon can be traced as per tradition to the early 11<sup>th</sup> century CE and the 'discovery' of a 'revealed text' (*gter-ma*) by the great 'treasure revealer' (*gter-ston*) Gshen-chen klu-dga' (996–1035 CE). Eternal Bon dogma holds that he extracted this text from its hiding place and merely made a copy, being faithful to its wording and subject matter.<sup>159</sup> Ostensibly, this is the text that has been faithfully copied and reproduced by the Bon-po to this day. Nevertheless, the discovery of an archaic tradition of *zi-ma* goddesses in the Gathang Bumpa collection casts doubt on the claim that the *Gze ma dgu rtags kyi bsgrub pa* is an ancient text rediscovered by of Gshen-chen klu-dga'. It appears that Gshen-chen klu-dga' was the chief architect of the Eternal Bon tradition of the nine *gze-ma*, a man who disregarded older ritual materials deemed inappropriate, distasteful or disconcerting.<sup>160</sup>

That Gshen-chen klu-dga' or his contemporaries were indeed the author(s) of *Gze ma dgu rtags kyi bsgrub pa* is demonstrated by its paleographic and grammatical composition. It was written in Classical Tibetan using scripts still prevailing in Eternal Bon documents.

Only a century or so seem to separate the composing of the *Gnag rabs* (circa 10<sup>th</sup> century CE) and the text of Gshen-chen klu-dga' (first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century CE). Although they were probably written

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<sup>159</sup> *Gze ma dgu rtags kyi bsgrub pa*. The colophon (no. 695) of this text reads: "Written by the hand of Gshen-rgur (*sic*) as was written [in the mother text (*ma-dpe*)]" (*gshen rgur gyis phyag bris ci bzhin bris pa lags so*). For a general survey of Eternal Bon literature, including the origins and significance of *gter-ma* texts, see Kvaerne 1974.

<sup>160</sup> While this appears to be the case with the *gze-ma* tradition, this is not necessarily true of other texts Gshen-chen klu-dga' may have found. As Martin observes (2001: 209, 210), this *gter-ston* is attributed with revealing a wide range of texts catering to a variety of Eternal Bon practitioners, and it is conceivable that some of them may have been excavated by him. Nevertheless, Gshen-chen klu-dga' is at the center of an enduring controversy regarding the scriptural validity of the literature he was responsible for 'discovering'. Martin (*ibid.*, 41–43, 196, 197) traces this controversy to the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century CE and the 'Bri-gung-pa figures Rdo-rje shes-rab and 'Jig-rten mgon-po, who accused Gshen-chen klu-dga' of using Buddhist scriptures to compose those he claims to have found.



within a fairly short time of one another, they reveal very different approaches to understanding and exploiting the nine *gze-ma*. Gshen-chen klu-dga' must have been aware of the archaic tradition of *zi-ma* goddesses circulating around in texts such as *Gnag rabs* and possibly in the oral tradition as well. Otherwise, he or his associates would hardly have been able to write about them in *Gze ma dgu rtags kyi bsgrub pa*. However, Gshen-chen klu-dga' avoids all reference to the archaic *zi-ma* and their rather straightforward nature, brutal disposition and proclivity for receiving animal sacrifices. It appears, therefore, that he was not only intent on revamping the doctrinal framework supporting these goddesses but doing so in a manner that would help suppress or obliterate awkward bits of the archaic tradition.

As do other Eternal Bon authors, Gshen-chen klu-dga' connected the nine *gze-ma* to the three major tutelary gods (*yi-dam*) of the religion, calling them the attendants (*pho-nya*) of Dbal-gsas rngam-pa.<sup>161</sup> As we saw in Section IIg of *Gnag rabs*, the *zi-ma* are also referred to as attendants (using the Old Tibetan feminine form: *pho-nya-ma*). Nonetheless, there are fundamental differences in these two accounts of the same sisterhood of goddesses, reflecting the respective conceptual and procedural principles of the archaic and Lamaist religions. In *Gnag rabs*, the nine *zi-ma* are the attendants of the ritualists, alluding to the archaic concept of personal ownership or ritual control of deities (*lha-bdag*),<sup>162</sup> a tradition that persists among the spirit-mediums of Upper Tibet. Also in the *Gnag rabs*, these goddesses have a physical origin in the divine firmament (Lha-yul gung-thang), born through the coupling (*bshos*) of three brave *lha* brothers and the ancestress Gnam-phyi gung-rgyal. Gshen-chen klu-dga' does not address the source of the *gze-ma*, but in none of the Eternal Bon texts used in this study is it attributed to the ordinary biological action of two beings mating. Like Tibetan Buddhist ones, Eternal Bon deities of higher ranking have much more abstract origins, rising above the prosaic act of copulation.

As with other Eternal Bon authors who succeeded him, Gshen-chen klu-dga' does more or less conform to the basic iconography of the *zi-ma* goddesses of *Gnag rabs*. He also recognizes their appearance from eggs and their central apotropaic function. This is however where the similarities between the archaic and Lamaist enneads of goddesses end. Gshen-chen klu-dga' composed his

<sup>161</sup> *Gze ma dgu rtags kyi bsgrub pa*, no. 680. The three tutelary gods are 'Jigs-byed dbal-gsas rngam-pa (body), Mi-zad lha-rgod thog-pa (speech) and Thugs-rje mkha'-gying khro-bo (also known as Khro-bo dbang-chen, mind).

<sup>162</sup> For more on the ownership of spirits in the archaic ritual context, see Bellezza 2013a, pp. 22, 23.

account of *gze-ma* as a *smon-lam*, a style of devotional prayer borrowed directly from Buddhism. This prayer forms one component of a tantric *sadhāna*, which are typically performed by the class of Eternal Bon ritualists styled *sgrub-gshen*. His account of the *gze-ma* includes prostrations to them, signifying their full doctrinal transformation into otherworldly (*'jig-rten las 'das-pa*) tantric goddesses. The structure and tone *Gshen-chen klu-dga'* used for the first *gze-ma* sister carries on throughout the rest of the *smon-lam*. In keeping with the dignified and reserved tenor of the text, no mention of the sororal order of birth is made. Rather they are each given a proper name, as part of efforts to create a standardized coterie of goddesses. The storied Indic syllable *Om'* opens the passage:

*Om'*. At the *gsas-mkhar* of the sound of the glory spreading throughout visible existence, an [egg] hatched from the sound of the dragon king of sound. From it appeared the blue human body with the head of the dragon. The appearance of this lady with the body (*sku-lus*) of inexhaustible qualities is a sign of the manifestation of the sound of speech of [Ston-pa] *gshen-rab*. *Om'*. From his sound, may her manifestation be realized. The attached head of the dragon king of sound is a sign of her agitating the royal realm [of the enemies]. *Om'*. May this agitating be realized. Her blue-colored body, which has the fundamental nature of turquoise, is a sign of her abiding power over the sky. *Om'*. May her abiding power be realized. The waving of the *chu-srin* arm in her right [hand] and crying out loudly is a sound of her rapid conquering of enemies and obstructers. *Om'*. May her conquering of them be realized. Her iron fangs together with the *dbal* is a sign of her consuming the flesh of the enemy through filing. *Om'*. May her consuming of their flesh be realized. *Om'*. We prostrate to you 'Brug-lcam kun-grags ma (Dragon Lady Glorious Everywhere).<sup>163</sup>

*Om' snang srid kun grags sgra yi gsas mkhar na / sgra rgyal 'brug gi sgra las gcig brdol pa / mi lus sngon mo 'brug gi mgo can byung / sku lus mi bzad mi mor byung ba ni gshen rab gsung gi sgra las sprul pa'i rtags / Om'*

<sup>163</sup> See *Gze ma dgu rtags kyi bsgrub pa*, nos. 680, ln. 6 to 681, ln. 4. This style of description carries on for the remaining eight *gze-ma* (nos. 681–688). The text then provides an elaborate etymology for the name *gze-ma* derived from tantric and Rdzogs-chen traditions, which is entirely contrived (nos. 688–693). In the etymology of *Gshen-chen klu-dga'*, the two syllables of the name form an inseparable pair. For example, *gze* = *thabs* (method), *ma* = *shes-rab* (wisdom); *gze* = *mkha'* (empty quality of space), *ma* = *klong* (the expanse or vastness of space); *gze* = *ye-shes* (primordial wisdom), *ma* = *dbyings* (sphere of emptiness); *gze* = *'bras-bu* (fruit of activities), *ma* = *rgyud* (cause of activities). The text also features a *bskul-pa* (invoking and dispatching of deities ritual) with a strong Eternal Bon doctrinal and piestic overlay, calling the *gze-ma* by the epithet *gtso-mo* (female chiefs), a word of O.T. origins (nos. 693, 694).

*sgra las sprul par grub gyur cig / sgra rgyal 'brug gi mgo btags pa ni /  
 dgra bo'i rgyal khams 'khrug par byed pa'i rtags / Om' 'khrug par byed par  
 grub gyur cig / sku mdog sngon mo g.yu yi rang bzhin ni / nam mkha'  
 g.yu yi dbang dang ldan pa'i rtags / Om' dbang dang ldan pa grub gyur cig  
 / chu srin lag g.yas g.yab cing 'o dod 'bod pa ni / dgra bgegs myur du  
 dbang du sdud pa'i rtags / Om' dbang du sdud par grub gyur cig / lcags  
 kyi mche ba dbal dang chas pa ni / bdar zhing dgra bo'i sha la za ba'i rtags  
 / Om' sha la za bar grub gyur cig / Om' 'brug lcam kun grags ma la phyag  
 'tshal lo /*

Seemingly within decades of the prayer for attainment through the *gze-ma* of Gshen-chen klu-dga' appearing, another *gter-ma* dedicated to these goddesses was reportedly discovered in Bhutan by Khu-tsha zla-'od (born 1024 CE).<sup>164</sup> In this text, the Dbal-mo nyer-bdun are said to be manifestations of Thugs-rje mkha'-'gying khro-bo,<sup>165</sup> the Eternal Bon *yi-dam* of the mind. The text of Khu-tsha zla-'od was composed as a funerary *bskul-pa* (ritual for invoking and dispatching deities) for the *gze-ma*, with the purpose of separating the dead (*shi*) who die through accidental or violent means from the agent of death (*gshed*), in order to defeat these bringers of death and to summon the

<sup>164</sup> *Gsang phur nag po'i 'phrin las kyi dbu phyogs bzhugs pa dge*, nos. 63–162, in *Khro bo dbang chen gyi gshed 'dur dang gsang phur nag po'i 'phrin las 'gug bsgral gnas 'dren skor gyi gsung pod*, vol. 176, of the New Collection of the Bon *bka'-brten*, published by Bstan-pa'i nyi-ma, Lhasa, 1998. This volume is attributed to the great treasure [finder] (*gter-chen*) Khu-tsha zla-'od (born 1024 CE), discovered in Spa-gro, transmitted in succession to Gshen-ston nyi-ma rgyal-mtshan (born 1360 CE), and especially propagated by the thirty-nine *tsho* (divisions) of Hor (located in Steng-chen, Sbra-chen, 'Bri-ru, and Snyan-rong). The divine treasure protector (*gter-bdag*) of the text is Yum-sras sde-lnga (the goddess of Gnam-mtsho and four of her male mountain acolytes). The text was obtained in Dol-po and first printed in Delhi under the auspices of Lupon Tenzin Namdak. According to Eternal Bon tradition, it was first practiced by Stong-rgyung mthu-chen when he performed the funerary rites for King Gri-gum btсан-po. For biographical information on the *gter-ston* Khu-tsha zla-'od, whose lifetime Rnying-ma sources place in the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE, see Cantwell and Mayer forthcoming. On the *gze-ma* in the Phur-pa tradition (Ka-ba nag-po) of Eternal Bon, also see *ibid*.

<sup>165</sup> The Dbal-mo nyer-bdun (nyer-brgyad with Srid-pa'i rgyal-mo, their spiritual mother) include the Gze-ma dgu (the senior or elder group), Gyad-mo dgu, and the Byin-te dgu. These twenty-seven goddesses are classed as *dbal-mo*, tantric goddesses of great power and wealth, who serve as protectors (*srung-ma*) of intermediate ranking (otherworldly) of the Bon doctrine (*bstan-pa*). Also called the twenty-seven *sbar-mo*, they originated ultimately as the mind emanation of Ston-pa gshen-rab. Their primary function is to weigh the good and evil activities of sentient beings and act accordingly. A benevolent character and diligence as helpmates are their predominant qualities. On the twenty-seven *sbar-mo* goddesses, see *Dbal gsas rngam pa'i las rim*, nos. 127, lns. 1–5 (bibliography of text in fn. 172).

spirit of the dead to the ritual venue for the valedictory ritual operations to follow.<sup>166</sup>

The text of *Khu-tsha zla-'od* is in an abbreviated form, as the *gze-ma* are one among many classes of deities used in Eternal Bon funerary performances. *Gnag rabs* does not assign a funerary function to this divine sisterhood, but it is hinted at in the text for *He-ma'i shing spre'u*, one of a group of seven goddesses (see paragraph Vc). The *bskul-pa* of *Khu-tsha zla-'od* begins by introducing the nine *gze-ma* before describing the eldest sister. As in the *Gnag rabs* and *smon-lam* of *Gshen-chen klu-dga'*, this goddess is associated with the dragon. While also destroying enemies, the eldest sister does so by capturing the *yid* and *sems*, more abstract consciousness principles in this context than the soul (*bla*) of the *Gnag rabs*:

*Bswo!* The female workers of *Gtso-mchog mkha'-'gying*,<sup>167</sup> the nine *gze-ma*, go to work! Among these sisters (*phu-mo*), the oldest sister (*gcan-mo*) is *Dbal gyi gze-ma 'brug-mgo-ma* (Female Dragon-headed Gze-ma of the *Dbal*). She is blue in color and holds aloft the flayed skin of the *chu-srin*. Summon the *yid* and *sems* of the enemy! Defeat and reduce them to dust!<sup>168</sup>

*bswo gtso mchog mkha' 'gying las mkhan mo / gze ma dgu po las la chos / nang gi phu mo gcan mo ni dbal gyi gze ma 'brug mgo ma / sngon mo chu srin g.yang gzhi 'phyar / dgra bo'i yid sems khug la shog / dbang du bsdus la rdul du rlog / dbal gyi gze ma sbrul gyi mgo / ljang nag khyung gi g.yang gzhi 'phyar / dgra bgegs yid sems khug la shog / dbang bsdus rdul du rlog /*

The text continues in this manner with the other eight members of the *gze-ma* sisterhood. As with the text of *Gshen-chen klu-dga'*, each of the goddesses has been given a particular animal head and other attributes (their identities match in the two texts). In *Gnag rabs*, the descriptions of the *zi-ma*, while generally corresponding in terms of the animals cited, is more loosely structured. Only five members of the group have animal heads, while other goddesses seem to have human heads. The Eternal Bon authors took this rather amorphous iconographic tradition and imposed a rigorous order upon it. The resulting iconography bears much similarity to that of the *Rnying-ma zhi-khro* deities, which appear to have developed in the same

<sup>166</sup> *Gsang phur nag po'i 'phrin las*, nos. 143, ln. 4 to 145, ln. 2.

<sup>167</sup> For a description of *Khro-bo gtso-mchog mkha'-'gying* taken from a text said to have been discovered by *Gshen-chen klu-dga'*, see *Kværne* 1995, pp. 75–77.

<sup>168</sup> *Gsang phur nag po'i 'phrin las*, no. 143, lns. 4, 5.

period.<sup>169</sup> The main attributes of the nine *gze-ma* of Khu-tsha zla-'od are as follows:

<i>Placement in the Sisterhood</i>	<i>Head Type</i>	<i>Color</i>	<i>Primary Activity</i>
<b>first</b>	dragon	blue	holds aloft the flayed skin of the <i>chu-srin</i>
<b>second</b>	snake	dark green	holds aloft the flayed skin of the <i>khyung</i>
<b>third</b>	chough	black	brandishes a copper <i>sbar-[shad]</i>
<b>fourth</b>	lion	white	throws the noose of the <i>dbal</i>
<b>fifth</b>	brown bear	red	throws a <i>tho-lum</i> towards the sky <sup>170</sup>
<b>sixth</b>	wolf	dark red	waves the wing of a hawk
<b>seventh</b>	tiger	reddish brown	blows the conflagration of the <i>dbal</i>
<b>eighth</b>	<i>khyung</i>	yellow green	holds a black <i>khram-bam</i> <sup>171</sup>
<b>ninth</b>	<i>chu-srin</i>	dark blue	fans an epochal wind

Well over a century after Gshen-chen klu-dga' and Khu-tsha zla-'od disseminated their texts for the nine *gze-ma*, another celebrated Eternal Bon *gter-ston* also made his contribution. This was Khyung-rgod rtsal (born 1175 CE, according to the Eternal Bon tradition), who is supposed to have discovered an 8<sup>th</sup> century CE work written

<sup>169</sup> Blezer (2000) undertakes to compare the Dbal-mo gnyer-bdun with the Rnying-ma Dbang-phyug-ma (wrathful *yoginī* or *ma-mo* of Indian Buddhist and Hindu origins), both of which occupy similar positions in the *zhi-khro* mandalas. Blezer (*ibid.*, 137, 138 ) concludes that the Eternal Bon *zhi-khro* mandala is probably derived from that of the Rnying-ma-pa. However, unlike their Eternal Bon counterparts, the twenty-eight Dbang-phyug-ma are not directly connected to myths of origins (*ibid.*, 123).

<sup>170</sup> A kind of celestial metal stone.

<sup>171</sup> A corpse with an X cut across it.

by the famous saint Dran-pa nam-mkha'.<sup>172</sup> Here we have direct confirmation that the texts of the Eternal Bon *gze-ma* allegedly date to imperial times, which is only implied in the other two examples we have examined. This chronological attribution is of course apocryphal, as Khyung-rgod rtsal's text is written in Classical Tibetan, not in the Old Tibetan language of the early historic period (its Lamaist content notwithstanding). It does however preserve the theogony and spirit of the nine *gze-ma* sisters in *Gnag rabs* with more fidelity than the works of Gshen-chen klu-dga' and Khu-tsha zla-'od. This is somewhat curious because it was written in a period more distant from the archaic religious era than its counterparts.<sup>173</sup> This seems to indicate that Khyung-rgod rtsal was more of a traditionalist than either Gshen-chen klu-dga' or Khu-tsha zla-'od. It may also be that he required more ritual killing power than his predecessors, so he maintained the graphically violent language of the archaic tradition. Whatever his nostalgic or pragmatic proclivities, the wide spectrum of texts attributed to the finder Khyung-rgod rtsal show that he was in fact a profound Eternal Bon thinker and practitioner.

The significant doctrinal differences presented in the *gze-ma* texts of Khyung-rgod rtsal and those of the two earlier authors, apart from any personal motives represented, may reveal a glimmer of the process involved in the formation of Eternal Bon. If so much can be read into the *gze-ma* traditions of the respective authors, it suggests that this religion in the early centuries of the second millennium CE may not have been quite the great monolithic entity portrayed in more recent Eternal Bon literature.

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<sup>172</sup> *Spyi spungs skor gsum gyi yang bcud rtsod pa bzlog pa'i 'khor lo dbal gsas rngam pa'i las rim bzhuḡs so*, in *Dbal Gsas Las Rim Gyi Sgrub pa Dañ Las Tshogs Bcas*, nos. 69–186. A collection of Bonpo ritual texts for the propitiation of the tutelary *Dbal-gsas*, rediscovered from their place of concealment by Khyun-rgod-rtsal, Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Centre (Ochghat, India), 1973. According to the front-piece, it was reproduced by Mkhas-grub rgya-mtsho from a manuscript brought by the late G.yung-drung-gling mkhan rin-po-che from a monastery in Dolpo (northwestern Nepal). The text is attributed to Dran-pa nam-mkha' (8<sup>th</sup> century CE). The treasure finder was Sprul-sku mnyam-med dbyil-ston (Khyung-rgod rtsal), born circa 1175 CE (according to Eternal Bon tradition). The place this treasure was taken from (*gter len-sa*) is named Rgyung-srub brag, and the treasure protector (*gter-srung*) was Yum-sras sde-lnga. According to Eternal Bon reckonings, the ultimate source of this text was the *gshen* 'Chi-med gtsug-phud (a name of Ston-pa gshen-rab when disseminating tantric teachings). This tantric tradition is known as Ting-mur g.yu-rtse'i bsnyen-sgrub rtsa-ba'i rgyud.

<sup>173</sup> However, this is not as unusual as it might seem. Ritual texts preserving older lore and vocabulary are sometimes composed or compiled at a later date than more conventional Lamaist variants of the same subject. It seems to mostly depend on the motivations of individual authors (and on the availability of scriptural sources). See Bellezza 2005, p. 40.

The nine *gze-ma* are just one component of Khyung-rgod rtsal's text, *Dbal gsas rngam pa'i las rim*. This work contains a full set of tantric ritual practices dedicated to the *yi-dam* of the body, *Dbal-gsas rgnam-pa*.<sup>174</sup> These include dispelling evil forces from the ritual mandala (*'gegs-bskrad*), generation of the deity (*bskyed-rim*), visualization of deity (*rdzogs-rim*), invitation (*spyan-'dren*), prostrations (*phyag-'tshal*), confession (*bzhags-pa*), medicine offerings (*sman-mchod*), prayers and many other offerings (*mchod-pa*), mantra recitation (*'dzab*), praises (*sku-bstod*), and signs of attainment (*rtags-grub*, which includes a description of the deities), etc.

According to *Dbal gsas rngam pa'i las rim*, the *Dbal-mo nyer-bdun* are emanations of *Srid-pa'i rgyal-mo* and *Lha-rgod thog-pa*. In this text, the *Lha-rgod mched-gsum* of the archaic tradition have metamorphosed into the Eternal Bon tutelary god of speech. In Eternal Bon, *Srid-pa'i rgyal-mo* is considered tantamount to *Gnam-phyi gung-rgyal*, but she is endowed with a much wider set of functions, many of which are tantric in nature. Eternal Bon doctrine espouses that *Lha-rgod thog-pa* and *Srid-pa'i rgyal-mo* have the same essential nature, which is the 'nature of the mind itself' (*sems-nyid*) or the 'natural state of the mind' (*gnas-lugs*). Their many emanations such as the nine *gze-ma* have the same essential nature.

<sup>174</sup> This god and his mate are depicted in the florid iconography typical of tantric tradition. He has nine heads and eighteen arms, and is midnight blue in color (*nthing-nag*; a sign of his complete perfection). He has a main right head that is white, a main left head that is red, a lower middle head of the lion, a lower right head of the tiger, a lower left head of the leopard, an upper middle head of the *khyung*, an upper right head of the dragon, and an upper left head of the *chusrin*. *Dbal-gsas rngam-pa's* yellow-red mane curls upwards (*ral-pa dmar-ser gyen du 'khyil*; symbolizing that his activities are exalted to the highest degree: *dbu-'phang mtho*). His two middle arms hold a *dbal-phur* dagger at the chest (punctures *samsara* from the root). His other eight right and eight left hands have different implements (generally speaking, these embody the qualities of his essential character [*ngo-bo*]). *Dbal-gsas rngam-pa* has four legs, and wears a fresh skin over his back and a tiger-skin loincloth (*stag-sham*). All his attributes are used to subdue the anger (*she-sdang*), lust (*'dod-chags*), pride (*nga-rgyal*), envy (*phrag-dog*), and ignorance (*ma-rig*) of sentient beings. See *Dbal gsas rngam pa'i las rim*, nos. 100, 101. *Dbal-gsas rngam-pa's* consort is *Rngam-mo yum-chen dbyings kyi mtshan drug-ma* (Six Names of the Raging Woman Great Mother in Space, a composite of six key goddesses: *Sa-trig Er-sangs*, *Gnam-phyi gung-rgyal*, *Bzang-bza'i ring-btsun*, *Thugs-rje byams-ma*, *Srid-pa'i rgyal-mo*, *Mkha'-la gdug-mo*). She is dark green in color (*ljang-nag*) with one head, two arms and two legs. In her right hand is the sky-earth container (*gnam-sa'i ga'u*; signifies her dominion over existence) and in her left hand is a vase full of nectar (*bdud-rtsis bum-pa*; used to nourish and reduce the suffering of sentient beings). The sun and moon are bound to the top of her head (also symbolizes dominion over existence). See *Dbal gsas rngam pa'i las rim*, nos. 104–107. For a more extensive description of *Dbal-gsas rngam-pa*, see Kvaerne 1995, pp. 77–80.

In tantric practice, Lha-rgod thog-pa is the *yab* (method, *thabs*) and Srid-pa'i rgyal-mo is the *yum* (wisdom, *shes-rab*), prerequisites to enlightenment. Such tantric conceptions behind Lha-rgod thog-pa and Srid-pa'i rgyal-mo are a far cry from the notion of a celestial couple who produced the *gze-ma* goddesses in *Gnag rabs*. In that text, Gnam-phyi gung-rgyal is a matriarch of the heavens who gave birth to nine eggs and whose main function is to insure that the *lha* and humans maintain their respective spheres of existence.

Indeed, Khyung-rgod rtsal created a complex doctrinal and ritual edifice around the *gze-ma* goddesses, none of which existed in the archaic ritual tradition. This intricacy extends to the appearances of Lha-rgod thog-pa and Srid-pa'i rgyal-mo. While certain individual elements such as found among celestial imagery and zoomorphic objects may be attributable to indigenous Tibetan culture, taken as a whole this is clearly an iconography of tantric persuasion. Deeply buried is the wild *lha* sire of space.<sup>175</sup> According to the text, the Dbal-mo nyer-bdun belong to the extensive retinue of Lha-rgod thog-pa, once again skirting the procreative powers so crucial to the origins myths of archaic rituals. This super god of sorts is the master of the elemental spirits and is seen as having a far more august pedigree and abilities than them. In Eternal Bon, the physical universe was no longer viewed as of sufficient marvel in itself to explain the nature of divinity. As with Tibetan Buddhism, the focus had shifted to mental phenomena beyond the pale of empirical ratification. Nevertheless, like the older native gods, Lha-rgod thog-pa is the great vanquisher of enemies. As pain, sickness and death remain part of the human condition, so did the etiology of demonic misfortune, but now couched in the doctrine of Lamaism with its stress on karma and religious devotion.

According to Khyung-rgod rtsal, Lha-rgod thog-pa is an emanation of the speech of Ston-pa Gshen-rab.<sup>176</sup> His residence is called Thog-'brug bar-srang sgra yi gsas-mkhar (Gsas-mkhar of the Sound of the Thunder Dragon of the Intermediate Space). This god is sky blue (*mthon*) in color and has four heads, eight arms, and four legs. His middle head is sky blue, his right head white, his left head

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<sup>175</sup> Eternal Bon widely recognizes that tantric deities such as Yum-sras of Gnam-mtsho or Mi-dbud of Nam-ra have more primitive forms as elemental spirits. These 'lesser' forms are viewed as either an anachronism originating from the remote epoch before the appearance of Ston-pa gshen-rab, or as subsidiary facets of a tantric godhead. For example, a convoluted doctrinal apparatus is employed to explain the elemental and tantric forms of the tutelary god of beneficial qualities (*yon-tan*), Ge-khod. On Ge-khod, see Bellezza 2008, pp. 300–303.

<sup>176</sup> For a description of this god, see *Dbal gsas rngam pa'i las rim.*, nos. 108–110; for that of his consort, see nos. 110–112.



red, and his upper head is red in color. Over his upper body (*skustod*) he wears the great skin (*lpags-chen*) of the sky demons (*gnambdud*),<sup>177</sup> and on his lower body (*skusmad*) leopard and caracal skins. His sash is of fiery lightning. The eight planets (*gza'-brgyad*) are bound around the top of his head.<sup>178</sup> His topknot (*thor-gtsug*) is crowned with the sun and moon. Lha-rgod thog-pa's earrings are of dragons and he has a snake necklace. His feet are ornamented with the twenty-eight constellations (*rgyu-skar*). In his right hands are the sword (*ral-gri*), spear (*mdung*), battle-hammer (*tho-ba*), and battleaxe (*sta-re*), which cut, pierce, pound, and defeat respectively. In his left hands are the lasso (*zhags-pa*), iron chain (*lcags-sgrog*), pincers (*gze-ma*), and trident (*kha-rtse*), which bind, shackle, catch, and stab respectively. Lha-rgod thog-pa deposes the one hundred thousand brave *lha* of the sky (*gnam gyi lha-rgod*) from his body. He treads upon four *gnambdud*. By his side are the goddesses (*lha-mo*) of the four seasons. The attendants he dispatches (*mngag*) are the nine *dbal-mo*, the nine *gyad-mo* and the nine *thang-mo*, alternative names for the *Dbal-mo nyer-bdun*. The body hair (*ba-spu*) of Lha-rgod thog-pa emits sparks of molten meteoric iron (*gnam-lcags*), which frighten (*skrag*) the *sa-bdag*, *klu* and *gnyan*. From his earlobes are broadcast the great sound of the dragon. By his squinched nose an epochal black wind hurricane is released. With the click of his tongue he covers the mighty (*btsan*) and haughty ones (*dregs-pa*). With his stout and extremely powerful body he moves towards the enemy. With his voice he terrorizes the haughty ones. With his mind he quickly summons all [the enemies].

The consort of Lha-rgod thog-pa is called *Srid-pa'i rgyal-mo 'gran gyi zla-med-ma* (Incomparable Queen of Existence), a tantric goddess par excellence.<sup>179</sup> Her residence is *Srid-gsum dbang-du bsdud-pa'i gsas-mkhar* (*Gsas-mkhar* of She Who Has Conquered the Three Realms of Existence).<sup>180</sup> Her glory spreads throughout phenomenal existence (*snang-srid kun-grags*). She is the greatest power in existence (*srid-pa'i dbang-mo che*). Her great magical power (*mthu*) and prowess (*rtsal*) is wondrous (*rmad*) and cannot be contested by others. She is the miraculous supreme defender,

<sup>177</sup> A class of demons that causes bad weather and other negativities originating from the sky.

<sup>178</sup> Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and Ra-hu-la (a lunar node).

<sup>179</sup> For another description of *Srid-pa'i rgyal-mo*, a goddess made prominent by *Gshen-chen klu-dga'*, taken from the text *Ma mo 'dus pa'i yang snying gi rgyud*, see *Kværne* 1995, pp. 107, 108.

<sup>180</sup> *Srid-gsum* denotes either the vertically oriented worlds of *lha*, humans and *klu* (an indigenous tradition), or to the desire realm (*'dod-pa'i srid-pa*), form realm (*gzugs kyi srid-pa*) and formless realm (*gzugs-med-pa'i srid-pa*; an Indic tradition).

possessing great methods (*thabs-chen*) and beneficence (*thugs-rje*). She is the best of the *sgra-bla* of the three realms of excellence: brave, skillful and powerful. Her hundred heads terrorize [all negativities] in visible existence. Her one thousand hands possess miraculous methods and great strength (*stobs-chen*). She holds the marvelous (*yamtshan*) manifestations of armaments (*mtshon-cha*) in her one thousand hands. From the vastness of the womb<sup>181</sup> of the great mother<sup>182</sup> she dispatches ('gyed) the one hundred thousand wrathful females (*khro-mo*) of activities. She acts as the glorious defender (*dpal-mgon*) of all living beings. When her raging anger (*khros shing 'tshigs-pa*) knows no bounds (*nan-ltar*), an assembly of ninety thousand carnivorous *spar-ma* of the *dbal* are unleashed. The costume of her miraculous body is of unending varieties. In the evening she is dressed in black clothes and ornaments, at midnight in blue clothes and ornaments, before the first light of the day she is attired in white, at dawn in yellow, at noon in red, and around sunset she dons brownish red clothes and ornaments.

Khyung-rgod rtsal's text also describes the nine *gze-ma* in detail.<sup>183</sup> It begins by conferring a tantric mantle upon their existence, accounting for the appearance of the nine eggs:

Bswo! Lha-rgod thog-pa of the sky of inexhaustible [miraculous qualities] and the incomparable Srid-pa'i rgyal-mo, by their methods of inseparability within the sound of the intermediate space (between heaven and earth), made manifest,<sup>184</sup> thus the twenty-seven eggs of *dbal* appeared. They are the female attendants of the mind of *Dbal-gsas rnam-pa*. The first of the nine eggs of the *dbal* opened. The nine *gze-ma* eggs of the *dbal* of inexhaustible [miraculous qualities] appeared.

*bswo mi zad gnam gyi lha rgod thog pa dang / srid pa'i rgyal mo 'gran gyi zla med ma / bar snang sgra yi nang du gnyis med thabs kyis rol pas / dbal gyi sgo nga nyi shu rtsa bdun byung / dbal gsas rnam pa pho nya mo / dbal gyi sgo nga dang po dgu brdol pa / mi bzad dbal gyi gze ma ngo (= sgo) (+ nga) dgu byung /*

As with all texts for the *zi-ma* / *gze-ma* we have examined, the first goddess described is that of the dragon. Her iconography and basic homicidal tendencies appear to have been taken by Khyung-rgod rtsal's directly from the archaic tradition, not from the texts of

<sup>181</sup> *Bha-ga'i klong*; signifies the emptiness of all phenomena.

<sup>182</sup> *Yum-chen*; signifies the essential nature of the mind.

<sup>183</sup> See *Dbal gsas rnam pa'i las rim*, nos. 127, ln. 5 to 135, ln. 2.

<sup>184</sup> *Rol-pa (rol-ba)*. This word can also mean that they played or united, a roundabout way to say that they joined in a spiritual manner, not carnally.

Gshen-chen klu-dga' and Khu-tsha zla-'od with their more sanitized versions of the murderous propensities of the goddesses. Nevertheless, these three Eternal Bon texts are closer to one another in composition than they are to the *Gnag rabs*, for they each bind the *gze-ma* to a religious oath of historic dimensions. By doing so, they strove to create dutiful spirit allies with a strong sectarian bent from the erstwhile utilitarian and widely accessible goddesses of the archaic tradition. Also, as with the other Lamaist texts, Khyung-rgod rtsal imposed a regimen on the older tradition, providing systematic descriptions and appellations for each of the nine *gze-ma*.

Although Khyung-rgod rtsal recognizes the inherent violence of the nine *gze-ma*, he dwells less on their gruesome acts than does the *Gnag rabs*. Furthermore, his writing is decidedly less expressive and colorful than the *Gnag rabs*. Not only was the doctrinal identity of the *gze-ma* changed to fit the exigencies of Eternal Bon doctrine, but in doing so, none of its authors could quite attain the literary vitality of the Old Tibetan text. Khyung-rgod rtsal presents the dragon-headed goddess as follows:

From the sound of dragon, the king of sound, in expansive space [imbued with] the beneficent mind [of their mother and father], the mandala of space, one egg opened. [She was] 'Brug-lcam dar-ma kun-grags-ma ((Dragon Lady in the Prime of Her Life Glorious Everywhere). She has a blue human body with the head of the dragon. In her hand she is waving (*g.yab*) the arm of the *chu-srin* and crying out loudly ('*od dod 'bod*). Her fangs of iron together with the *dbal* are sharpened with *bsa*.<sup>185</sup> As you were set loose with the sound of the voice of the excellent *gshen*, bring the sound and speech of the oath-breaker ([*dam*]-*nyams*) here! Also, upset all the royal places of the enemy! From the manifestation of the mind of Gshen-rab came Stag-la me-'bar of ancient times, he who administered [the oath] from the sound of his speech,<sup>186</sup> thus accordingly you are the oath-holder (*tha-tshig can*) of [the Bon] he had practiced. Do not let it lapse (*ma-'da'*); you are entrusted with the [four] activities!<sup>187</sup> Conquer and reduce to dust the hating enemies and harming obstructers. Summon them from afar and quickly slaughter them.

<sup>185</sup> That the mystic syllable *bsa* in this context is a sharpening agent is confirmed in the text *Khro bo dbang chen*, p. 370 (see fn. 193 for bibliographic details).

<sup>186</sup> His speech is a kind of mandala. The bodily locations for the administration of the religious oath by the mythic priest Stag-la me-'bar vary with each of the nine goddesses. For a description of the sage-deity Stag-la me-'bar taken from an Eternal Bon text written in 1669 CE, see Kværne 1995, 117, 118.

<sup>187</sup> *Phrin-las-bzhi*, the four modalities of activity exercised by deities (pacific, expanding, empowering and wrathful).

*thugs rje mkha' yangs nam mkha' dkyil 'khor na / sgra rgyal 'brug gi sgra las gcig brdol ba / 'brug lcam dar ma kun grags ma / mi lus sngon mo 'brug gi mgo bo can / chu srin lag pa g.yab cing 'od dod 'bod / lcags kyi mche ba dbal dang chas (= bcas) ste bso / gshen rab gsung gi sgra las khyod 'gyed pas / nyams pa'i skad dang sgra las drongs la shog / dgra bo'i rgyal khams kun kyang 'khrugs par mdzod / gshen rab thugs kyi sprul pa las / sgnon kyang stag la me 'bar gyis / gsung gi sgra las bzhag nas kyang / ji ltar bsgrub pa'i tha tshig can / ma 'da' bcos ba'i phrin las mdzod / sdang pa'i dgra dang gnod pa'i bgegs / dbang du sdus la rdul du rlog / rings (= ring) par khug la myur du sgrol /*

As the structure and tone of the accounts of the other eight goddesses is the same as above, only salient variations in Khyung-god rtsal's text are summarized below. Readers are encouraged to make their own comparisons with *Gnag rabs* to pinpoint the specific analogies and contrasts between these two accounts.

### Second *gze-ma*

Agent of the hatching: Sound of the epochal wind (*bskal-rlung*).

Residence: *Gsas-mkhar* of the black epochal wind hurricane (*'tshubs-ma*).

Name: Sbrul-lcam 'khril-byed gdug-pa-mo (Snake Lady that Coils Cruel Woman).

Appearance: Dark green body human body with the head of a snake.

Emblematic activities: She sharpens her fangs of conch. She waves (*rlobs = rlabs*) a *khyung* wing overhead in the castle (sphere) of the intermediate space.

Actions commanded: Pull out (*drongs*) tongue organ of the senses of the oath-breaker! Pull out from its root the heart (*tsi-ta*) of the enemy!

Place of the administered oath: Tongue of Stag-la me-'bar.

### Third *gze-ma*

Agent of the hatching: Sound of the *ge-ta*<sup>188</sup> *bdud*.

Residence: *Gsas-mkhar* of the master of the death (*'chi-bdag*), the *bdud* that takes the life-force.

Name: Bdud-lcam rma-lo srog-bdag-mo.

Appearance: Black human body with the head of a chough (*skyung-ka*).

<sup>188</sup> A type of *bdud*. There are four *ge-ta* in the retinue of the king of the *bdud* (Tucci 1949: 718).

Emblematic activities: She sharpens the great dagger (*phur-chen*) of meteoric iron. She brandishes (*gdeng*) the copper *spar-shad*<sup>189</sup> in a manner to hold the enemy.

Actions commanded: Cut the back of the neck of the oath-breaker! Pull out from the base, the eyes and life-force of the enemy and obstructor!

Place of the administered oath: Back of the neck of Stag-la me-'bar.

#### Fourth *gze-ma*

Agent of the hatching: Sound of the extremely powerful (*rtsal-chen*) lion.

Residence: *Gsas-mkhar* of the very splendidous (*byin-chen*) Ri-rgyal lhun-po (the world mountain).

Name: Seng-lcam dar-ma gya-nom stabs-mo-che.

Appearance: White human body with the head of a lion. She wears a red coiled vermilion turban on her head.

Emblematic activity: She sharpens the bird horns of iron.

Actions commanded: Come here quickly with the body of the oath-breaker! Sow the seeds of disease in the country of the enemy!

Place of the administered oath: Upper body of Stag-la me-'bar.

#### Fifth *gze-ma*

Agent of the hatching: Sound of the sky portal (*gnam-sgo*) *dbal-khang* (house of *dbal* deities and practitioners).

Residence: *Gsas-mkhar* of the sky portal house of the *dbal*.

Name: Mi-mo za-byed rdzu-'phrul-chen (Great Miraculous Lady Eater).

Appearance: Red human body with the head of a brown bear. Her shaking (*sprug*) mane falls over her shoulders.

Emblematic activity: She sharpens the meteoric iron sword (*ral-kyu*).

Actions commanded: Bring the heart of the oath-breaker here! Separate the child from the side of the enemy!

Place of the administered oath: Center of the mind of Stag-la me-'bar.

#### Sixth *gze-ma*

Agent of the hatching: Sound of the middle of the Milky Way (*Dgu-tshigs*).

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<sup>189</sup> A weapon in the form of eagle claws.

Residence: *Gsas-mkhar* of the line traced across space (*thig-'dren nam-kha'*) *sgrom-dar* (?).

Name: Srin-mo za-byed 'jigs-pa'i spyang-ku bzhin (Srin-mo Eater Terrific Wolf Face).

Appearance: Dark red human body with the head of a wolf. She dispatches attendants with her hawk wings.

Emblematic activity: She sharpens the fangs of molten bronze.

Actions commanded: Pull off the skin on the back of the enemy starting from the head and come! Separate the bones and flesh of the enemy!

Place of the administered oath: Vertebrae in the middle of the back of Stag-la me-'bar.

#### Seventh *gze-ma*

Agent of the hatching: Sound of the blazing epochal conflagration (*me-dpung*).

Residence: *Gsas-mkhar* of the scorching, blazing conflagration.

Name: Stag-lcam 'bring-mthing kha-rngam sha-zan-ma.

Appearance: Reddish brown human body with the head of a tiger. She beats with the flayed skin of the brown bear and hangs it over her shoulders.

Emblematic activity: She sharpens the scimitar of her hand.

Actions commanded: Quickly pull out the body warmth of the enemy and come! Consume as your food the red flesh and blood of the enemy!

Place of the administered oath: Terminus (pit of the stomach) warmth of Stag-la me-'bar.

#### Eighth *gze-ma*

Agent of the hatching: Sound of the great flapping of [the wings of] the *khyung*.

Residence: *Gsas-mkhar* of the sound of the magical drum and flat bell.

Name: Khyung-lcam rlabs-chen legs-mos skor.

Appearance: Yellow-green human body with the head of a *khyung*. She dispatches the nine males (*pho*) and nine females (*mo*) concealed behind her.

Emblematic activity: She sharpens her miraculous fangs.

Actions commanded: Deafen the ears, deafening the enemy!  
Consume as your food the household of the enemy!

Place of the administered oath: Ears of Stag-la me-'bar.

#### Ninth *gze-ma*

Agent of the hatching: Sound of the swirling ocean.

Residence: *Gsas-mkhar* of the broad currents of the ocean.

Name: Klu-mo mi-bskyod kha-rngam gdug-po-mo (Unmoving Female Water Spirit Fierce Mouth Cruel Female).

Appearance: Blue-green human body with the head of a *chu-srin*. Through her fanning of the magical wind, [the wind ] throughout the three worlds is agitated.

Emblematic activity: She sharpens her fangs of crystal.

Actions commanded: Bring the body cavity blood and nerves of the enemy through sucking! Make the *lha* of the lap of the enemy afraid!

Place of the administered oath: Subtle energy channels of Stag-la me-'bar.

Khyung-rgod rtsal also provides a short *bskul-pa* in typical Lamaist form.<sup>190</sup> As with his descriptions of the nine *gze-ma*, this ritual is primarily concerned with the sectarian identity and activities of these goddesses. Hardly present are the practical aims of the *Gnag rabs* to eliminate palpable enemies imperiling the person and property of the priests and their benefactors. In its place are high-minded religious sentiments:

*Bsol*<sup>191</sup> Nine *gze-ma* of the *dbal* with inexhaustible [good qualities] that hold fast [enemies]. Come with the activities of the oath (*dam-tshig*) that was pledged. Come with the activities of the emanations of the beneficent mind. Come with activities of destroying the enemy force. Come with the activities of quelling the *bdud* force. Come with the activities of protecting on behalf on the [Eternal Bon] doctrine. Come possessing the miraculous methods [of subduing the enemies]. Come with your roaring sound and its [accoutrements]. Come away with the sharp-edged weapons and their *dbal*.<sup>192</sup>

*bso mi bzad 'dzin byed dbal gyi gze ma dgu / dam tshig bsnyen pa'i las la gshegs su gsol / thugs rje sprul pa'i las la gshegs su gsol / dgra dpung bshigs pa'i las gshegs su gsol / bdud dpung gzhom pa'i las la gshegs su gsol / bstan pa srung ba'i don la gshegs su gsol / rdzu 'phrul*

<sup>190</sup> See *Dbal gsas rngam pa'i las rim* no. 135, lns. 3–4.

<sup>191</sup> Used here in its ordinary sense as a word of invocation and declamation.

<sup>192</sup> This is followed by the mantras of *Srid-pa'i rgyal-mo* recited along with mudras, ten lines in total. See *ibid.*, no. 135, ln. 5 to 136, ln. 3. The spells recited here are longer and more complex than those of the *Gnag rabs*. Khyung-rgod rtsal's text represents a mature stage in development of mystic formulae for use in tantric rituals of protective deities. These spells are designed to empower and reinforce the commands of the *bskul-pa*. The incantations of Khyung-rgod rtsal's text are mainly attributed in Bon to the Zhang-zhung language, but they are probably somewhat Sanskritized.

*thabs dang ldan te gshegs su gsol / nga ro sgra dang chas te gshegs su  
gsol / rno mtshon dbal dang chas te gshegs su gsol /*

The final step in the recreation of the *gze-ma* goddesses was made in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century CE by the famed Eternal Bon scholar Skyabs-ston rin-chen 'od-zer. He composed a commentary (*'grel-bshad*) about the nine *gze-ma*, which elaborates at length upon the doctrinal framework in which these goddesses have been inserted.<sup>193</sup> Skyabs-ston rin-chen 'od-zer's work fully develops the qualities and functions of the nine *gze-ma* in the Eternal Bon tantric tradition, constituting the final act in their recasting as Lamaist-style deities. Their qualities are stated to be expressed in both samsara (*'khor*) and in the liberated state (*thar*), a stock Vajrayāna trope.<sup>194</sup> According to Skyabs-ston rin-chen 'od-zer, the fundamental identity of the nine *gze-ma* has three main facets: the primordial wisdom female (*ma-mo*;<sup>195</sup> accounts for their fundamental nature as the mind itself), the female of miracles (accounts for their grotesque physical appearance), and the female of activities (accounts for their full range of defeating and slaughtering functions):

The eggs of existence and the nine females are based upon the ancient lineage of the primordial wisdom (*ye-shes*) *ma-mo*. They are based upon the form of the *ma-mo* of miracles (*rdzu-'phrul*). Their precisely executed great strength (*stobs la gzer*) is that of the *ma-mo* of activities (*las*).<sup>196</sup>

*srid pa'i sgo nga dang mo dgu ni sngon ye shes kyi ma mo'i rgyud la  
brten no / rdzu 'phrul gyi ma mo'i sku la brten / las kyi ma mo stobs la  
gzer /*

## Conclusion

In addition to investigating the *Gnag rabs* text of Gathang Bumpa, this paper explores the historical continuation of its ritual motifs and activities in the Eternal Bon religion, particularly those connected to

<sup>193</sup> *Khro bo dbang chen ngo mtshar rgyas pa'i nram bshad gsal ba'i sgron me*, by Skyabs-ston rin-chen 'od-zer (born 1353 CE), pp. 363–391. Sangs-rgyas g.yung-drung bon kyi dpe-tshogs (Text Committee of Sang-rgyas G.yung-drung Bon): Si-khron mi-rigs dpe-skrun-khang (Sichuan Peoples Publishing House), 2008.

<sup>194</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 388.

<sup>195</sup> *Ma-mo* are female divinities of a wrathful nature associated with natural phenomena and the feminine principle in tantric tradition. On the Buddhist tantric underpinnings of the *ma-mo*, see Blondeau 2002.

<sup>196</sup> See *Khro bo dbang chen ngo mtshar rgyas pa*, p. 364.



the ennead of goddesses known as *zi-ma* / *gze-ma*. This case study demonstrates how the archaic ritual traditions of *Gnag rabs* were modified and adapted to the ethical and doctrinal demands of Lamaist religion. Although superficial aspects revolving around the iconography and wrathful functions of the *gze-ma* goddesses were largely preserved, the origins attributed to these personalities and the rationale for their propitiation were systematically altered.

This kind of textual reengineering appears to have been widely applied to the archaic ritual tradition to bring about the innovations that define Lamaist praxis to this day. The process of retaining nominal features of indigenous tradition while simultaneously transforming its intellectual foundation is also discernable in funerary and curative rituals, and in the narrative origins of the priest / buddha Gshen-rab mi-bo. This resetting of the ritual dynamic can be tracked through the *gto* (beneficial rites), *dpyad* (diagnostic rites) *mo* (divinatory rites) and *phya* (prognosticatory rites), mainstays of archaic and Eternal Bon therapeutic practice.

Generally speaking, Lamaist ritual texts are sectarian affairs preoccupied with defending specific ideological and institutional interests. They go to great lengths to highlight the value of the principles they foster and the need for protecting them from opponents. Lamaist rituals, like other genres of its literary tradition, promote a code of personal conduct exemplified by the Buddha archetype. Thus sanguinary rites were proscribed and a more equanimous view of enemies was idealized. Archaic ritual documents such as *Gnag rabs* conspicuously lack this sermonic and pietistic approach to the practice of rituals. Rather they are executed solely for pragmatic reasons; the very fact of there being an enemy or a threat is seen as sufficient justification for their performance.

While Lamaist texts of destructive magic have inherited the mercenary intent of actions and rewards propagated in Old Tibetan ritual literature, they do so within a theological superstructure that provides a lofty rationale for the violence meted out. That a greater good is being served mitigates the inherent harshness of the extirpation of enemies. This is often framed in the ennobling rhetoric of the holy dharma being threatened by heretics, the welfare of sentient beings, or some other well intended cause. The attribution of chivalrous motivations to aggressive ritual responses in Lamaism is readily understandable, for it is founded on the ethic of 'all-encompassing compassion' (*snying-rje*) and the 'ten virtues' (*dge-ba bcu*).

No such dignified pretext, however, was required in *Gnag rabs* or any other text of the archaic ritual tradition I have studied. They display a candidness both in their underlying motivations and

outward goals. Here violence against foes is sanctioned for practical reasons concerning human health and well-being. *Gnag rabs* and other archaic ritual texts stress the nature of relations between the executors of rituals and their beneficiaries and other human beings and entities. Rather than moral cultivation as an end in itself, the establishment of an accord between oneself and other people, animals and spirits is the means by which personal happiness is achieved.

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