

Birthplace of the Seventh Karma pa, Chos grags rgya mtsho (1454–1506): Description draws from Tibetan Geomancy and Pilgrimage Guidebooks

Dominik Dell
(Jagiellonian University, Krakow, and
International Institute for Tibetan and Asian Studies,
Vélez-Málaga)

1. Introduction¹

Reading the beginning part of the life story (*rnam thar*) of the Seventh Karma pa from the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, one comes across quite some interesting passages, such as an account of his intermediate state between his sixth and seventh incarnation (*bar do'i rnam thar*)², descriptions of visionary experiences of his parents and other people before his birth, miraculous events around and after his birth³, as well as a description of his birthplace. This description of the birthplace, at first sight, seems to be just a “nice poetical description”. However, when closely read, almost every detail appears to be imbued with meaning and belongs to an elaborate system, that of Tibetan geomancy (*sa dpyad*). Furthermore, this passage also exhibits similarities to descriptions found in pilgrimage guidebooks (*gnas yig*). In this paper, I would like to present these findings in more detail.

1-1. Tibetan Geomancy (*sa dpyad*)

The term *sa dpyad* literally means “examination of a place”. If one looks up the definition in *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, it is threefold:

1. Characteristics of the layout of a place;
2. how to discriminate the layout of a place into good and bad;
3. books about the analysis of the layout of a place.⁴

¹ I would like to thank Artur Przybysławski, who encouraged me to write this paper and who kindly provided some feedback on an earlier version.

² For an annotated translation and analysis of this *bar do'i rnam thar* and an overview on other extant representatives of this genre, see Dell 2020.

³ For an annotated translation and analysis, see Dell forthcoming a and forthcoming b.

⁴ “1) *sa cha'i bkod pa'i mtshan rtags/ 2) sa cha'i bkod pa legs nyes brtag dpyad byed tshul/ 3) sa cha'i bkod pa brtag dpyad kyi dpe cha!*”. See Yísün 1985, *sa dpyad*.

Thus, *sa dpyad* describes the characteristics of the (mostly) natural arrangement of a place or territory comparing the shape of natural formations (such as mountains, earth, valleys, rivers, vegetation) to both living beings and inanimate objects. According to this system, the appearance of a place has certain effects on its inhabitants – positive or negative. It is mainly used to determine, if a certain place is appropriate for erecting a building, such as a living house, temple, monastery, stupa, or to find such appropriate places in a given landscape⁵. Moreover, *sa dpyad* covers certain rituals to be done before and during the construction work. The term is usually rendered into English as “Tibetan geomancy”⁶. However, literally it just means an examination/analysis of a land.

The main source on *sa dpyad* available to us is the 32nd chapter of the *Vaidūrya dkar po*⁷ (“White Berry”) by Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705)⁸. Maurer provides an annotated translation of this difficult text⁹. The chapter can roughly be divided into three parts:

1. Avoidance of negative sites,
2. acceptance of positive sites,
3. rituals to be performed before and during construction work¹⁰.

The description of the Seventh Karma pa’s birthplace, which I will present in this paper, exhibits only the most positive geomantic characteristics of the landscape. Therefore, I only refer to the middle part of the geomantic work to identify the *sa dpyad* borrowings in the Karma pa’s birthplace description, which alone covers about 43 pages in translation¹¹.

⁵ For a brief definition, see also Maurer 2009b, p. 199, 2012, p. 67, for a more extensive definition and discussion see Maurer 2009a, pp. 9–12, Maurer 2019a, pp. 89–92, and Maurer 2019b, pp. 1–4.

⁶ This rendering is not unproblematic, as the Western term “geomancy” carries different meanings, which are not all covered by *sa dpyad* and vice versa. A discussion of this is found in all references mentioned in footnote 5.

⁷ Maurer (2009a, pp. 109–166) provides a text edition in her habilitation thesis based on three different block prints available.

⁸ The Fifth Dalai Lama appointed him as his regent in 1679. Some more biographical notes about him are found in Maurer 2012, p. 67, footnote 1 and more extensive in Maurer 2009a, pp. 80–83. See also BDRC, P421. (“BDRC” refers to the online database “Buddhist Digital Resource Center” at bdr.org. In the following, I will only use the acronym, when referring to it.)

⁹ According to Maurer, the text is especially difficult, as it is written in verse and contains lots of very specific vocabulary not found in any dictionary and Tibetan informants skilled in *sa dpyad* are difficult to find. The translation is into German. For the annotated translation, see Maurer 2009a, pp. 167–313.

¹⁰ See Maurer 2009a, p. 87.

¹¹ See Maurer 2009a, pp. 218–261.

Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho only lived in the second half of the 17th century. The Seventh Karma pa lived in the second half of the 15th century. His *rnam thar* is from the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, which has been written by dPa' bo gTsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1566) in the mid-16th century. Thus, the *rnam thar* of the Seventh Karma pa, which exhibits *sa dpyad* borrowings, has been composed more than 100 years before the *Vaidūrya dkar po*, the *sa dpyad* work I use to identify those borrowings. This is interesting, insofar as it shows that there must have been earlier works with the same content and that scholars at the time of gTsug lag 'phreng ba have been well aware of *sa dpyad* principles. Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho also mentions in his colophon some earlier texts his work is based on¹². However, it seems, none of those texts have come down to us. There is only a number of later texts on *sa dpyad* available, but those are less comprehensive. Therefore, the history of Tibetan geomancy and its development is difficult to trace back and the 32nd chapter of the *Vaidūrya dkar po* is clearly the main work on *sa dpyad*¹³. Hence, this work is the necessary point of reference for my undertaking to identify *sa dpyad* elements in the description of the Seventh Karma pa's birthplace¹⁴.

1-2. Pilgrimage Guidebooks (*gnas yig*)

Pilgrimage guidebooks is a genre of Tibetan Literature widely researched¹⁵. They provide directions to and information about Buddhist sacred places and are usually written by Buddhist masters¹⁶. Very often these sacred places are holy mountains (*gnas ri*)¹⁷ or lakes. However, it is not only about single topographic objects such as mountains.

¹² See Maurer 2009a, pp. 76–77, 312–313.

¹³ For an overview on existing sources and an attempt to trace back some of the history, see Maurer 2009a, pp. 71–83 and for a brief mentioning of further sources Maurer 2019a, pp. 91–92. In general, it can be stated that Tibetan geomancy has its roots in both Chinese geomancy (*feng shui*) and Indian geomancy, but developed its own focus and system over time. See Maurer 2009a, pp. 15–40.

¹⁴ I would like to thank Petra Maurer, who shared some thoughts with me on *sa dpyad* in relation to the birthplace description, which helped me to get deeper into the subject (e-mail communication in June 2020).

¹⁵ One of the first systematic mentions was probably in Wylie 1965, pp. 17–18. He uses the term *gnas bshad*, but *gnas yig* also appears in his paper as a synonym. In the well-known volume on different Tibetan literary genres by Cabezón and Jackson 1996, the closely related genre *lam yig* is represented with a separate essay; see Newman 1996. Many scholars have studied pilgrimage guides to Tibetan Buddhist sacred sites, e.g. De Rossi Filibeck 1988, and some of the essays in the edited volume of Macdonald (ed.) 1997, such as Buffetrille 1997 and Huber 1997; see also Huber 1999 and e.g. as a more recent publication Drolma 2019.

¹⁶ See Drolma 2019, pp. 170.

¹⁷ *gnas ri* is short for *lha gnas pa'i ri* which could be translated as “mountain where the deities abide”; see also Huber 1999, p. 41.

Usually, the whole environment of a sacred place is perceived as a *mandala* with a high peak in the center and the surrounding passes, rivers and valleys are gates to it. There are routes for inner, outer and secret circumambulation of the central peak with various sites on the path, which are imbued with religious meaning and blessing¹⁸. The narrative of such sacred geography usually involves Buddhist saints, who opened up the place (*gnas sgo*) through tantric practices, subduing local gods and spirits (*yul lha gzhi bdag*), turning them into dharma protectors and transforming the landscape by bestowing their blessing on it and hiding treasures etc.¹⁹. Padmasambhava (8th cent.) is most famous in taking this role of the tantric superhero²⁰, but there are also other examples such as Milarepa²¹ or the Third Karma pa²². Pilgrimage guidebooks are inspirational literature. Their descriptions are based on the visionary experience of the tantric meditator²³.

1-3. Putting it into the Context of the Life Story (*rnam thar*)

The descriptions found in representatives of the *gnas yig* genre themselves often borrow patterns from *sa dpyad*²⁴. However, while *sa dpyad* is rather a field of knowledge dealing with the ideal place of a building in a given landscape, *gnas yig* texts set out to inspire the practitioner or pilgrim on their journey and often promote a certain Buddhist school²⁵. Both of them are based on the idea of an animate landscape – inhabited by various kinds of gods and spirits²⁶, which are identified with certain natural formations such as rocks imbuing the landscape with positive and negative energies. Tibetan geomancy provides the knowledge, which patterns in the landscape are auspicious and which are less so

¹⁸ For a characterization of such mandalic layouts in landscape and examples of descriptions, see e.g. Stutchbury 1994, pp. 62–64, Huber 1999, pp. 49–52, and Drolma 2019, p. 173. Roche 2014 distinguishes between mandalic and geomantic “models of spatialisation”, which are used to different extents in different areas. However, his usage of the term “geomantic” cannot be identified with the *sa dpyad* principles, as these themselves strongly involve mandalic patterns.

¹⁹ See Drolma 2019, pp. 172–173, Huber 1999, p. 40, and Stutchbury 1994, p. 73.

²⁰ See e.g. Drolma 2019, pp. 172 and 175–176.

²¹ See e.g. Quintman 2008, pp. 363–364.

²² See translation and analysis section of the paper at hand.

²³ See Huber 1999, p. 48, and Stutchbury 1994, p. 73.

²⁴ For a study investigating both, aspects of *gnas yig* and *sa dpyad*, see e.g. Stutchbury 1994.

²⁵ See Drolma 2019, p. 172.

²⁶ Interestingly, the well-known myth of Tibet as a supine demoness, which had to be subdued, seems to be a prototype or blueprint for the taming of other local gods and spirits in the tradition of holy places as described in *gnas yig*, but at the same time is closely related to the introduction of geomantic principles into Tibet. See e.g. Mills 2007, Stutchbury 1994, pp. 84–85, and Maurer 2009a, pp. 45–47.

and how the latter can be avoided or transformed. Pilgrimage guidebooks focus very much on the positive, at times visionary, description of a sacred geography, but also contain narratives of their transformation.

The passage, to be discussed in this paper, is a description of the birthplace of the Seventh Karma pa from his life story. Features of *sa dpyad* and *gnas yig* are embedded into this passage of a *rnam thar*. This suggests that those embedded elements support the purpose of the *rnam thar*, rather than their own one. Literally, *rnam thar* translates as “[story of a person’s] complete liberation”. What is meant here is the “complete liberation from the two obscurations” (*sgrib pa gnyis las rnam par grol ba’o*²⁷). The two obscurations are the “afflictional obscurations” (*nyon mongs pa’i sgrib pa*) and the “cognitional obscurations” (*shes bya’i sgrib pa*). The former are the afflictions experienced by sentient beings within the cyclic existence, the latter are the subtle obscurations that prevent the omniscience of a buddha and are experienced by all beings, that have not reached the level of a buddha, yet²⁸. Thus, the concept of *rnam thar* clearly transcends the Western concept of biography, and likewise the Western or Christian concept of hagiography (as the concept of “complete liberation” is foreign to Christianity).

Classically, the genre of *rnam thar* has been classified into three levels – outer, inner and secret²⁹. Secret life stories (*gsang ba’i rnam thar*) contain mystic events experienced by the protagonist, such as miraculous dreams, visionary experiences, and supernatural phenomena – all of them representing realization of the nature of mind. Thus, the very concept of *rnam thar*, the features, which make it distinct from biography or hagiography, are most closely related to the secret level.

The description of the birthplace in the *rnam thar* at hand is preceded by visionary experiences of the Karma pa’s parents and other people, and followed by miraculous events, which happened around and after his birth. Hence, those passages belong to the secret level. Likewise, the description of the birthplace clearly has visionary traits and therefore fits in perfectly. From the Tibetan point of view, the landscape might not be perceived in this pure way by everybody, but this kind of perception is considered a result of meditative practice and visionary experience arising based on this practice. At the same time,

²⁷ See Yísūn 1985, “*rnam thar*” and “*rnam par grol ba*”.

²⁸ See Duff 2009, “*sgrib pa gnyis*”.

²⁹ See Vostrikov, 1994, pp. 186–187. This classification is ascribed to sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705), the same scholar, who also composed the *Vaiḍūrya dkar po*, the standard work on *sa dpyad*.

such descriptions are so commonly used, that they easily enter ordinary experience just by habituation³⁰.

In a nutshell, *rnam thar*, and especially its secret level, seeks to inspire the Buddhist practitioner by illustrating the protagonist's quest for complete liberation. To this end, the life of the tantric adept, and especially the circumstances he meets, are often pictured in the most positive and auspicious way. This also applies to the description of the birthplace. First, the most auspicious conditions according to Tibetan geomancy are described. Second, this is even exceeded by including visionary aspects into the description, similarly to how it is done in *gnas yig* literature.

2. Translation

2-1. Introduction to the Translation

The Seventh Karma pa's life story in the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* starts with his *bar do'i rnam thar* – his account of the intermediate state between his sixth and seventh incarnation³¹. It is followed by a section containing prophesies, visions, dreams and miraculous events that happened prior to the birth of the Seventh Karma pa³². Thereafter follows the description of the Seventh Karma pa's birthplace, of which an annotated translation is provided here. For easier reference, I inserted the page numbers of the three texts used for the critical edition into the translation – those of the original blockprint (A)³³, those of one of the book versions (B)³⁴ and those of Chandra's handwritten edition (C)³⁵. For an overview of all texts used, see the introduction to the edition in the appendix of this paper.

2-2. Annotated Translation³⁶

At that time, the great administrator of the 'Bri gung pa³⁷ dreamt that

³⁰ See Huber 1999, p. 48, and Stutchbury, 1994, p. 94.

³¹ See Dell 2020.

³² See Dell forthcoming a.

³³ See dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1564/1566) 1980, vol. 2, pp. 188–189.

³⁴ See dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1564/1566), 1986, vol. 2, pp. 1035–1036.

³⁵ See dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1564/1566), 1959–1965, vol. 2, pp. 539–540.

³⁶ I would like to thank Āchārya Choying Tendar for explaining to me various terms and phrases in the Tibetan text, which at first sight had remained obscure to me.

³⁷ Tib. 'bri gung pa'i sgom chen. Here, 'bri gung refers to the 'Bri gung bka' bgyud school, one of the so-called "eight lesser schools" of the bKa' bgyud tradition and *sgom chen* (or *sgom pa*) is the title of the secular ruler at 'Bri gung monastery (see e.g.

somebody, who was there³⁸, said that the dharma master, Karma pa, would be born from a couple of renunciants³⁹, who [were] inside the sPyi mda' fortress⁴⁰.

For the most part, laypeople and monks of that area [had] limitless dream omens, such as the coming of the dharma master. Since the valley was pervaded by fine fragrances, and since rainbow light and rains of flowers occurred constantly in the sky, all knew that the precious dharma master would be coming and [they] did prostrations and circumambulations⁴¹.

[B, p. 1036] This place [is] also a place of accomplishment, a hidden land⁴² of the ḍākiṇīs. A local deity, called sPyi lha⁴³, had previously

Smith 2001, p. 34; Kollmar-Paulenz 2006, p. 89), here rendered as “great administrator”.

³⁸ Tib. *de'i tshe 'bri gung pa'i sgom chen der yod pa zhig gis*. Here, *der yod pa* can either be an apposition to *sgom chen* or it can be the noun, to which the indefinite article *zhig* refers. I went for the latter option.

³⁹ Tib. *bya bral pho mo gnyis*. Literally *bya bral* means “free of activity”, or more freely “free of [worldly] occupations”, here rendered as “renunciant”.

⁴⁰ Tib. *spyi mda' mkhar*. At the beginning of the *rnam thar* the Seventh Karma pa's birthplace is mentioned as “sPyi lha in the Northern region of Tibet” (see dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1564/1566), 1986, p. 1032). Later, the parents have a prophecy to go to “sPyi mda' in the rNgod [area]” (see p. 1035). Then, shortly after, right before the section translated here, it is mentioned, that the parents stayed at the place from the dream, at “sPyi mda' mkhar”, which is mentioned again here in the *sgom chen's* dream. Hence, it seems to me that “sPyi lha” is the greater area, “sPyi mda'” is the town or village name and “sPyi mda' mkhar” refers to a “fortress” or another “large building” in this location.

⁴¹ The extraordinary dreams, fine fragrances and rains of flowers at his future place of birth, had already been mentioned before. See dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1564/1566), 1986, vol. 2, p. 1034, beginning of page.

⁴² Tib. *sbas yul*, lit. “hidden land”, paradisiacal lands considered as safe havens where enemies of the dharma cannot enter. They are similar to pure lands (*dag zhing*) in their description, but unlike those, they are considered to be located on earth (often in the Himalayan region). Hidden lands are especially associated with Padmasambhava, who is said to have left treasure texts (*gter ma*) there, converted the local gods and sealed the lands for future discovery, usually to be opened by a lama. He also left guidebooks to find these hidden lands. See Buswell and Lopez 2014, p. 790. In this way, hidden lands share similar features with sacred sites to which pilgrimage guidebooks lead and sometimes hidden lands are the subject of these guidebooks.

⁴³ Tib. *gzhi bdag spyi lha*. Here, *gzhi bdag*, lit. “locality owner”, is the name of a class of spirits belonging to the worldly gods (*'jig rten pa'i lha*) and are often mentioned together with *yul lha*, “country gods” (see Yisün, 1985, *'jig rten pa'i lha*). Those two seem not to be distinguished too clearly in literature. It seems that *yul lha* is a rather vague term under which many ancient local deities are classified (see de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996, p. 4), while *gzhi bdag* is a bit more concrete. They also belong to the class of *'khrungs lha*, “birth gods”, which “are the deities in whose area of influence one had been born” and which should be worshipped in order to avoid trouble in one's life (see de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1996, p. 305). The *gzhi bdag* are the “divine rulers of rivers, lakes or ridges, but most seem to be personifications of

asked the master Rang byung rDo rje⁴⁴ [the Third Karma pa] in mTshur pu for the lay practitioner's vows. [The local deity] asked [the third Karma pa] to come to that place and thus [he] visited [it]. [He⁴⁵] consecrated [it] as a place where [his] future emanation would arrive.

Furthermore, the valley resembled an opened treasury [full] of treasures. The mountain behind [looked like] a king who was dwelling on [his] throne and who wore a crest ornament of snow which was like a turban of white silk. The woody and grassy mountains of various shapes in [places] such as sPyi lha surrounded [this higher mountain] like subjects [under this king⁴⁶]. In those [mountains] there were many self-arisen [objects]⁴⁷ such as a self-arisen black crown. In front [of the birthplace], [there were] grasslands [which appeared] like a *maṇḍala* of turquoises. [They contained] a diversity of precious small mountains, 108 [of them] similar to the body of a hawk⁴⁸, between them 108 plains such as A rig thang⁴⁹, 108 lakes such as Sa mtsho khra ring⁵⁰, and fruit bearing woodlands. [A, p. 189] [It was] beautiful through various birds and herbivores [such as deer].

In the East [there was] Sha wa ra mgo⁵¹, in the South [there was]

mountains" (see de Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1996, p. 226). The second part, *spyi lha*, is both the name of the place where the Seventh Karma pa was born and the name of this local deity, which makes sense insofar as *gzhi bdag* are identified with certain places. On a list of names of different *gzhi bdag* provided by de Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1996, p. 227) appears the name sPyi yi brag la mda' brug. It contains the syllables *spyi* and *mda'* which are also contained in the place name sPyi mda'. Hence, it might be identified with the *gzhi bdag* mentioned here.

⁴⁴ Name of the Third Karma pa (1284–1339), see BDRC, P66. For more information on the Third Karma pa's life, see Seegers 2009, Gamble 2013 and 2018.

⁴⁵ Considering the context this should rather be the Third Karma pa than the gZhi bdag sPyi lha who consecrates the place.

⁴⁶ The king in this context would be the "mountain behind" (*rgyab ri*) from the previous sentence.

⁴⁷ The "objects" here could either be two-dimensional objects such as "images" or three-dimensional objects, as this is not clearly stated in the Tibetan text (*rang byon mang du yod pa*).

⁴⁸ Tib. *ne lé'i rkyal pa*, lit. "leather bag of a hawk", however it does not quite fit the context. Here *rkyal pa* rather seems to be a poetical way of referring to the body.

⁴⁹ In the *lo rgyus* (historical work) *dGa' ldan chos 'byung baiDU r+ya ser po* the place name rNgod A rig thang is found (see Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1989, p. 335), which fits, since as previously stated the Karma pa's parents were following a prophecy to go to the rNgod area.

⁵⁰ There is an estate called Khra ring gzhis ka or Khra ring gzim shag (see BDRC, G3CN303) which is said to be contained in Myang stod. This could be related to the name of this lake.

⁵¹ In a text called *dBus gtsang gnas yig* which is a "guidebook to pilgrimage sites and Buddhist shrines in Central Tibet" this place is mentioned with slightly different spelling: Sha ba ra mgo (see Chos kyī rgya mtsho 2001, p. 36).

brKyang lha⁵², in the West [there was] So ba stag rtse⁵³, and in the North [there was] Dzam bu lug ru⁵⁴. Therefore, sPyi nang⁵⁵ [was] a sacred site⁵⁶, which resembled the dwelling place⁵⁷ of four deities that [acted as] gatekeepers⁵⁸. Since it was situated straight North of gSa' phu⁵⁹, the place where the former master⁶⁰ died, it seems that once [the sixth Karma pa] proclaimed the beginning [of his song] *Ka bzhi seng chen ma byang nas*⁶¹ [at this place]. Besides, in accordance with the prophecy of Bla ma dBang brgya ba⁶² [the future place of birth, sPyi nang,] is situated straight to the East of mTsur phu.

3. Analysis

Having presented an annotated translation in the previous section, I would like to add to it by further analyzing the text by explaining its

⁵² There is a Bon monastery called brKyang lung dgon or lCangs lung dgon (BDRC, G3832), which could possibly identified with this place. According to Karmay and Samten (2008, pp. 406–408), it is located in the very North of dPal yul county and is known as lCang lung dgon (for a picture, see p. 414).

⁵³ In BDRC there are 56 places, mainly monasteries that contain *stag rtse* (lit. “tiger peak”) in their name. It is possible, that this place is related to any of these.

⁵⁴ No reference to this place found.

⁵⁵ According to the BDRC entry for the Seventh Karma pa, Chos grags rGya mtsho (BDRC, P821), his place of birth is called (*kham s rngod mda'*) *spyi nang*. The source indicated there is *Bod kyi gal che'i lo rgyus*—“History of what is important with respect to Tibet” (see Chab spel tshe brtan phun tshogs, and Mi 'gyur rdo rje 1991).

⁵⁶ Tib. *gnas chen*.

⁵⁷ Tib. *gnas pa*.

⁵⁸ The four place names in the four cardinal directions given in the previous sentence are most likely the names of four mountains surrounding sPyi nang. The “four deities that [acted as] gatekeepers” (*sgo srung gi lha bzhi*) might be identified with these four mountains that protected this site from the four directions.

⁵⁹ Lit. “the upper reaches of the snow-leopard [valley]”, no reference to this place found.

⁶⁰ Tib. *drung gong ma*. This term most likely refers to the Sixth Karma pa. *drung* refers to somebody who is “close” to a high person such as a lama or king (see Jäschke 1881, *drung*). *gong ma* refers to a high or superior person, but can also mean “the former” (see Jäschke 1881, *gong ma*). According to Duff (2009, *gong ma*) it is used “specifically to mean the previous spiritual masters of a spiritual tradition”. Given the context and the meanings of the constituent, I am quite sure that *drung gong ma* refers to the Sixth Karma pa and rendered it in English as “the former master”.

⁶¹ *Ka bzhi seng chen ma byang nas* is the title of a song (*mgur*) composed by the Sixth Karma pa in the period before his death (see dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba 1986, 1031). One might think, that the song title is only *Ka bzhi seng chen ma* without *byang nas* added to it, but in several different sources always the full phrase *Ka bzhi seng chen ma byang nas* appears (BDRC full text search). Therefore, I understand the whole phrase as the title. However, one might also argue for the other option.

⁶² Full name and title: Bla ma dBang brgya pa zhes ban rgan 'Jam dpal bzang po (see Karma rgyal mtshan 1997, pp. 51–52).

content against the background of other research or tradition, and relate it to other existing sources. The paragraph translated seeks to convey the extraordinariness of the Seventh Karma pa's birthplace, which, of course, is supposed to underline the extraordinariness of the Karma pa himself. For this end, it particularly draws from *sa dpyad* and *gnas yig* literature.

Just before this paragraph, the Karma pa's parents arrive at sPyi mda' fortress⁶³, which they recognize from their dream prophecies. Next, the great administrator of the 'Bri gung pa, also has a prophetic dream about the Karma pa's future place of birth and his parents. Most laypeople and monks in the area, as well, had countless dream omens. Further, fine fragrances, rainbow light and rain of flowers in the sky are ascribed to the future place of birth. The latter are typical signs of special events connected to high masters, which are already found in the Buddha's life story⁶⁴. If one views secret life stories as tantric texts, this means that the descriptions in them are not necessarily to be taken literally, they are full of symbolism and often try to convey a picture of a reality, which ultimately cannot be described⁶⁵. What is described in the passage at hand, can be considered as visions in dreams and reality. According to tradition, there are three types of visions: visions in reality (*dgnos*), meditation (*nyams*) and dream (*rmi lam*)⁶⁶. The path to come to such experiences is several levels of preparation and meditation training⁶⁷. Hence, usually, visionary experiences are a claim on the realization of the one who experiences those. However, in this case at hand, it is rather ordinary people, who experience those visions, just because they are at the future birthplace. It is the closeness of a high master, which causes visions in them. Thus, these visions can be considered as a sign of the realization of the Karma pa⁶⁸.

The future birthplace is also called a "hidden land" (*sbas yul*) – a Buddhist paradise located on earth⁶⁹. This is probably the most positive and auspicious attribute, which can be assigned to a given geography in the context of Tibetan Buddhism. It is called a "hidden land of the *ḍākiṇīs*". All meditation masters are said to have a special relationship with the *ḍākiṇīs*. This is even more true for the Karma pa, as there is a special story about how he received his black crown from the

⁶³ It might be a fortress or another kind of large building (*mkhar*). For discussion, see footnote 40.

⁶⁴ See e.g. Kieschnik 2004, p. 542.

⁶⁵ See Willis 1995, p. 20.

⁶⁶ Verhufen 1992, p. 50, and Gyatso 1981, p. 72.

⁶⁷ Ray provides extensive explanations on the different levels of training and on how they relate to such experiences. See Ray, 1980, pp. 3–9.

⁶⁸ See also Verhufen, 1992, p. 50, who detects similar situations.

⁶⁹ See also footnote 42.

dākinīs. The First Karma pa, Dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110–1193), is said to have attained enlightenment through dream yoga, after having been visited by fifteen wisdom *dākinīs*. According to legend, “[at] the moment of his enlightenment an ornate black crown [...] appeared above the Karma pa’s head, woven from the hair of hundred thousand *dākinīs*, symbolizing his knowing of the past, present and future”⁷⁰. This crown is said to be an energy-field, while the physical black crown was given only to the Fifth Karma pa, bDe bzhin gshegs pa (1384–1415), by the emperor of China. According to Simmer-Brown, the “hair is an intimate, personal aspect of the *dākinī*’s body, signifying the close experiential contact between disciple and teacher” and the surrender of the hair is a sign of renunciation similar to the cutting of a lock of hair at the Buddhist refuge ceremony⁷¹. Within this *rnam thar* at hand, preceding the description of the birthplace, there is an account of the intermediate state (*bar do’i rnam thar*) between the sixth and the seventh incarnation of the Karma pa, where he meets with the *dākinīs*, who confirm this already existing relationship and promise to accomplish the enlightened activity⁷².

The birthplace description continues by mentioning the local deity (*gzhi bdag*) called sPyi lha⁷³. The Third Karma pa had given Buddhist refuge to this deity and had consecrated the place of sPyi lha for the arrival of this future incarnation, when visiting the place. This story matches the typical narrative how a sacred geography (as described in pilgrimage guidebooks) comes into being. Usually a Buddhist saint, opens up the place through tantric practices, subdues local gods and spirits (*yul lha gzhi bdag*), turns them into dharma protectors and transforms the landscape by bestowing their blessing on it and hiding treasures etc.⁷⁴. This is exactly what the Third Karma pa did in this case. Since in the preceding sentence the hidden land, also being a type of sacred geography, was mentioned, one could also understand this passage as describing how this hidden land came into being. Creating hidden lands also involves converting local gods by a Buddhist saint and the like. After creation, the hidden land is sealed for future discovery and to be opened later by a lama⁷⁵. Thus, here the Third Karma pa could be considered as the one, who created and sealed the hidden land and the Seventh Karma pa would be the one, who opens it. In either case, it shows the Karma pa, across his incarnations, as a highly

⁷⁰ See Simmer-Brown 2001, p. 251.

⁷¹ See Simmer-Brown 2001, p. 251.

⁷² See Dell 2020, pp. 50–51.

⁷³ See also footnote 43.

⁷⁴ Mentioned in the introduction of this paper. See also Drolma 2019, pp. 172–173, Huber 1999, p. 40, and Stutchbury 1994, p. 73.

⁷⁵ See also footnote 42.

accomplished being – equating him with Padmasambhava, who is most well-known for creating hidden lands and other sacred landscapes. Looking at Tibetan geomancy, there are also some remarks to be made here. When Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho mentions the characteristics of a place, which is appropriate for meditation, one of the possible characteristics is a place, which was consecrated by an extraordinary person⁷⁶. Hence, the place at hand is appropriate for meditation. Admittedly, in the given context, it is not so much about meditation, but rather about the birthplace of the reincarnation of a meditation master. However, though not mentioned explicitly, this purpose might satisfy similar characteristics. Furthermore, according to Tibetan geomancy, before erecting a building or the like, a number of rituals and ceremonies has to be conducted. The most important ritual is for pleasing the so-called *sa bdag* – the “owner of the earth” – and for asking him for permission⁷⁷. Together with some others, both *sa bdag* and *gzhi bdag*, belong to the class of *'khrungs lha*, “birth gods”, which “are the deities in whose area of influence one had been born” and which should be worshipped in order to avoid trouble in one’s life⁷⁸. While the *sa bdag* are said to dwell in the earth, the *gzhi bdag* are said to dwell on meadow-covered mountains⁷⁹. When building a house, the earth is dug. That is why it is made sure, that the *sa bdag* – living in the earth – is not disturbed. Here, the Karma pa seems to be born in an already existing house, as sPyi mda’ mkhar most likely refers to a building⁸⁰. Thus, there are some parallels to *sa dpyad*, but it clearly goes beyond. Instead of the *sa bdag*, the *gzhi bdag* is not only appeased, but even converted to Buddhism.

In the subsequent passage, the valley is pictured as “an opened treasury [full] of treasures”. I could not find this image in the *sa dpyad* literature, but it is self-evident, that this is a very positive description, which gets more specific in what follows. The mountain behind the birthplace or building is described as a king who is dwelling on his throne. This is not just a poetical description of the landscape, but it has a very specific meaning in Tibetan geomancy. First of all, the “mountain behind” (*rgyab ri*) plays an important role, as behind a building there should be a mountain or hill⁸¹. These *rgyab ri* are categorized and ranked according to their shape, where the “king who is dwelling on a throne” (*rgyal po gdan la bzhugs pa*) is the supreme

⁷⁶ See Maurer 2009a, p. 251.

⁷⁷ See Maurer 2009b, pp. 203–204.

⁷⁸ See footnote 43 and de Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1996, p. 305.

⁷⁹ See de Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1996, p. 299.

⁸⁰ See footnote 40.

⁸¹ See Maurer 2009a, p. 68, or 2009b, p. 202.

shape⁸². In the description of the birthplace, it is also said, that this mountain in the shape of a king wears “a crest ornament of snow, which [is] like a turban of white silk”. Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho does not use the same picture, but content-wise this also matches his description. One of the characteristics of the king of the mountains is that it is rich of snow⁸³. Also the comparison with silk is found here, as it is said that in the upper part the mountain is covered by white silk curtains⁸⁴. When describing auspicious signs (*rten 'brel*) of areas for erecting a monastery or retreat place, the ideal mountain is divided into seven sections, where the summit is covered by permanent snow⁸⁵.

In the continuation of the birthplace description, it is said that the *rgyab ri* is surrounded by woody and grassy mountains of various shapes like subjects. Indeed, in the *sa dpyad* system, mountains of all directions bow down in front of the king of mountains and it is also described as being surrounded by thousands of small mountains⁸⁶. At another place, a mountain is defined as good, if it looks like a king sitting on a throne surrounded by subjects⁸⁷. Grassy mountains (*spangs ri*) are mentioned as positive⁸⁸, as well as woody areas in general, as they are equated to wish-fulfilling trees⁸⁹. Woody mountains (*nags ri*) with birds on them, in particular, are listed as one of the inner auspicious signs of an area⁹⁰.

The birthplace description continues saying that there were many self-arisen images or objects in those mountains such as the black crown. The significance of the black crown as a sign of the Karma pa's enlightenment has already been discussed in this paper. Self-arisen images or objects are rather not an element drawn from *sa dpyad*, but are typical for descriptions of sacred sites as found in *gnas yig* literature⁹¹.

Next, the description mentions grasslands in front of the future birthplace and compares them to “a *maṇḍala* of turquoises”. The *maṇḍala* as a spatial organization principle is very popular all over Asia and originates from India. Penetrating into Tibet, this model has also been applied to describe large-scale geographical structures. Espe-

⁸² See Maurer 2009a, pp. 219–220, for a drawing see pp. 220 and 223.

⁸³ See Maurer 2009a, p. 223.

⁸⁴ See Maurer 2009a, pp. 223, 255.

⁸⁵ See Maurer 2009a, p. 256.

⁸⁶ See Maurer 2009a, p. 223.

⁸⁷ See Maurer 2009a, p. 225.

⁸⁸ See Maurer 2009a, p. 227.

⁸⁹ See Maurer 2009a, p. 256.

⁹⁰ See Maurer 2009a, p. 257.

⁹¹ See e.g. Huber 1999, pp. 52, 63, 82.

cially, the surroundings of sacred mountains (*gnas ri*) are usually represented as *maṅḍalas* in the *gnas yig* literature⁹². The comparison to turquoises again uses a precious object to picture the scenery, similar to before, when the valley was described as “an opened treasury [full] of treasures”. The yogin, who performs tantric practices, is considered as transforming “ordinary geographical features such as rivers, caves, rocks and mountains [...] into ‘sacred’ places which constitute a ‘sacred’ geography conceptualized as a *maṅḍala*”⁹³. If we look at *sa dpyad*, the concept of *maṅḍala* also plays an important role. In many occasions, it compares areas and other geographical structures to *maṅḍalas* and attributes particularly positive properties to those⁹⁴. Also grasslands (*spang ljongs*) at the end of a valley are mentioned as a positive characteristic of an area⁹⁵.

The description goes on about the details of what is in front of the birthplace (or in front of the *rgyab ri*), in this *maṅḍala* of turquoises: various precious small mountains, 108 of them similar to the body of a hawk (*ne le'i rkyal pa*), between them 108 plains, 108 lakes, fruit-bearing woodlands, various birds and deer or similar herbivores (*ri dwags*). As already mentioned above, according to Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, the king of mountains is surrounded by thousands of small mountains⁹⁶ (being the subjects). A mountain in the shape of a hawk is not mentioned there, but it is said, that if a rock looks like a hawk, which pounces on his food from above (*khra yas mar gzan 'bebs*), this means that the ruler is righteous⁹⁷. The surroundings of the king of mountains are described as containing a big lake with small rivers around it, fruit-bearing trees and singing birds. Furthermore, deer and kiangs are mentioned⁹⁸. Hence, this matches the description provided in the birthplace text quite well. However, the birthplace description surpasses *sa dpyad* elements. For instance, when talking about 108 small mountains, 108 lakes and 108 plains, the use of the auspicious number 108 rather reminds of the visionary descriptions found in *gnas yig*. This also applies to this passage as a whole, as its language is more poetical

⁹² For an introduction into the use of *maṅḍalas* as spatial organization model with respect to sacred mountains, see Huber 1999, pp. 26–29. For an example of a sacred landscape described as a *maṅḍala* and further elaborations on it, see Huber 1999, pp. 50–51, and Stutchbury 1994, pp. 63–64.

⁹³ See Stutchbury 1994, p. 73.

⁹⁴ See Maurer 2009a, pp. 225, 233, 235, 239, 242, 243, and 260.

⁹⁵ See Maurer 2009a, p. 222.

⁹⁶ See Maurer 2009a, p. 223.

⁹⁷ See Maurer 2009a, p. 230. Note, that the words used for hawk differ between the birthplace description and the *sa dpyad* text (*ne le* versus *khra*). Therefore, it is not certain, if those can be equated.

⁹⁸ See Maurer 2009a, p. 223.

than one would expect from just a *sa dpyad* description. The fact, that lakes and small mountains are mentioned here in equal number is interesting. “In the ancient Tibetan worldview and the folk tradition, lakes – along with mountain peaks – are the most significant type of landscape feature, and the two are often considered together as a gendered pair (commonly male mountain, female lake) forming an ideal unit of sacred geography. They are a dwelling place of both the collective and personal vitality or life force principle (*la*), and their waters produce and provide both visionary and physical access to other dimensions of space and time.”⁹⁹

In the final paragraph, the names of the four mountains in the four cardinal directions are mentioned and it is said, that the birthplace, sPyi nang, was a sacred site, which resembled the dwelling place of four deities that acted as gatekeepers (*sgo srung gi lha bzhi*). These four deities play an important role in the *sa dpyad* tradition for evaluation, if a place is good or bad. They are animal deities, which originate from Chinese *fengshui*. Among other things, in *sa dpyad* each of them represents a cardinal direction and they are often identified with mountains. They are also called the four protectors (*srung bzhi*). According to the Chinese concept those animals and their directions are dragon (East), tiger (West), red bird (North) and turtle (South). In Tibet the same assignment is also found, but in some sources the directions are changed and in some traditions some animals are replaced by others¹⁰⁰. If one seeks to translate the mountains’ names, one gets a hint on the animals: “deer’s antlers” (*sha wa ra mgo*)¹⁰¹ in the East, “stretched out deity” (*brkyang lha*) in the South, “watching tiger peak” (*so ba stag rtse*) in the West and “rose-apple tree sheep section” (*dzam bu lug ru*) in the North. Hence, it seems, that in the tradition at hand, the tiger and its cardinal direction still match the original Chinese system. However, the other animals seem to be either replaced or they just do not appear in the mountain names as such. The main message here is that the four deities are complete, which is a good sign according to *sa dpyad* and one of the characteristics of the surroundings of the king of mountains¹⁰².

Besides, the song *Ka bzhi seng chen ma byang nas* by the Sixth Karma pa is mentioned¹⁰³. The title means “the four pillars, the great lionesses from the North”. Given the description of the place sPyi nang and given the meaning of the title, the four pillars and the four great lionesses can be identified with the four mountains and the four deities that act as gatekeepers. Hence, it is suggested in the text, that this song

⁹⁹ See Huber 1999, p. 51.

¹⁰⁰ See Maurer 2019b, pp. 5–15.

¹⁰¹ For this reading the spelling may be modified into *sha ba rwa mgo*.

¹⁰² See Maurer 2009a, p. 223.

¹⁰³ See also footnote 61.

refers to this very place and the Sixth Karma pa composed it inspired from this place. Finally, the very last sentence of the birthplace description confirms that a prophecy, made about the birthplace before, matches the location (“straight to the East of mTsur phu”).

4. Conclusion

Summing up, the birthplace of the Seventh Karma pa and its surroundings are described as a perfect sacred site suitable for a Karma pa to be born. The description draws from the tradition of Tibetan geomancy, where every single item of the landscape has its significance. Additionally, in some passages it also resembles the more visionary descriptions found in pilgrimage guidebooks. These traits of *sa dpyad* and *gnas yig* are embedded into a passage of a secret life story and therefore are meant to serve its purpose, that of inspiring the Buddhist practitioner by illustrating the protagonist's quest for complete liberation. To this end, the life of the tantric adept, and especially the circumstances he meets, tend to be pictured in the most positive and auspicious way. This also applies to the description of the birthplace.

There is lots of room for further investigation of the interrelations between *sa dpyad*, *gnas yig* and *rnam thar*. First of all, Tibetan geomancy itself is a field, which needs further research with respect to so far untranslated sources. Second, it would be interesting to further investigate in what way pilgrimage guidebooks draw from Tibetan geomancy in their descriptions. Third, by way of analyzing more birthplace descriptions from other life stories and comparing them to each other, one might get an even clearer picture on how elements of Tibetan geomancy and pilgrimage guidebooks are fused into life stories.

5. Appendix: Edition

5-1. Introduction to the Edition

All editions of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, which I could identify are based on the lHo brag printing blocks. According to Richardson¹⁰⁴, referring to the colophon of these blocks, they were originally stored in gNas bzhis, a bKa' brgyud monastery, in lHo brag, but later on were moved to lHa lung monastery, also in lHo brag, where he and Lokesh Chandra got some copies from¹⁰⁵. I could not find any evidence or hint for the existence of other printing blocks of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*.

¹⁰⁴ See Richardson 1959, p. x.

¹⁰⁵ Richardson (1959) or Chandra (1959), respectively, do not mention when that was, but it must have been before Chandra issued his edition, that is, before 1959. I have no information as to whether these blocks still exist today.

I could identify several textual witnesses of the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston*, of which the most interesting and original one is a reproduction of prints from the IHo brag blocks from Rumtek Monastery in two volumes from 1980¹⁰⁶. This reproduction is also available via BDRC, and I took this as the starting point for the edition I provide here. There are several other prints or reproductions of prints from those printing blocks available. However, all being produced from the same printing blocks, I do not expect any added value considering them, and therefore, neglected them for the critical edition. All other textual witnesses are derived from these printing blocks' text more recently.

Lokesh Chandra already published the *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* in four volumes from 1959 to 1965¹⁰⁷. This edition is based on a print from the IHo brag blocks he had made, and was copied in handwriting using *dbu can* script¹⁰⁸.

rDor je rgyal po made a modern edition in book format, which has been published by Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, first in 1986 in two volumes, then in 2006 in one volume, and again in 2015 in one volume¹⁰⁹. The first two are available via BDRC, while the third is subject to restricted access in BDRC¹¹⁰. Since all three editions are from the same publishing house and editor, I assume that the 2006 and 2015 editions do not add information to the 1986 edition. I found references to further modern book editions from other publishers, which seem rather difficult to take hold of. Therefore, apart from the reproduction of the original blockprint (A¹¹¹) and Chandra's handwritten version (C¹¹²), I only considered the 1986 edition (B¹¹³) for the critical edition provided here¹¹⁴. My impression is that Chandra's version is rather close to the blockprint reproduction, only showing a very few differences in spelling. However, it was also useful to consider rDo rje rgyal po's edition, since in many places the latter corrects spelling mistakes or non-standard spellings from the original. In some cases, text B corrects misspellings of text A, in other cases, it has new mis-spellings. If there are differences, I indicate in the apparatus, which variants there are in which text, and for which reading I decided. For instance "zhig B] cig A, C" means that I decided to read *zhig* according to text B, while texts A and C actually read *cig*. In one case I decided to emend the text to a variant that is found in neither of the texts, indicated by "em." for

¹⁰⁶ See dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1564/1566) 1980.

¹⁰⁷ See dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1564/1566), 1959–1965.

¹⁰⁸ See Chandra 1959, p. vii, and Richardson, 1959, p. x.

¹⁰⁹ See dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1564/1566) 1986, 2006, and 2015.

¹¹⁰ Buddhist Digital Resource Center, www.tbrc.org, accessed on 22 Dec 2019.

¹¹¹ See dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1564/1566) 1980, vol. 2, pp. 188–189.

¹¹² See dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1564/1566) 1959–1965, vol. 2, pp. 539–540.

¹¹³ See dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1564/1566) 1986, vol. 2, pp. 1035–1036.

¹¹⁴ These three editions are also mentioned in Martin and Bentor 1997, pp. 88–89.

emendatio, here “*'bri gung pa em.] 'bri khung pa A, C, 'bri khung ba B*”. Generally, there are no significant differences in the section I studied. The guiding theme of the critical edition is classical Tibetan grammar and orthography.

In the critical edition below, the page numbers of all three texts are indicated in brackets, if a new page starts.

5-2. Critical Edition

(A, vol. 2, p. 188, l. 3; B, vol. 2, p. 1035, l. 18; C, vol. 2, p. 539, l. 11)

*de'i tshe 'bri gung pa*¹¹⁵*'i sgom chen der yod pa zhi*¹¹⁶*gis spyi mda' mkhar nang gi bya bral pho mo gnyis las chos rje karma pa sku 'khrung bar yod zer ba rmis*¹¹⁷

*de skor gyi skya ser phal cher la chos rje phebs pa sogs rmi ltas mtha' yas/ lung pa dri bzang gis khyab cing mkhar de la 'ja' 'od dang me tog gi char rtag tu byung bas thams cad kyis chos rje rin po che der 'byon par shes shing*¹¹⁸*phyag dang bskor ba byed/*

*gnas 'di yang grub pa'i gnas mkha' 'gro'i sbas yul zhi*¹¹⁹*ste (B, p.1036) gzhi bdag spyi lha zhes bya ba sngon rje rang byung rdo rje la mtshur phur dge bsnyen zhus/*

yul der phebs par zhus te zhabs kyis bcags/ ma 'ongs pa sprul sku 'byon pa'i zhing du byin gyis brlabs/ de yang lung pa rin po che'i gter mdzod kha phye ba 'dra ba/ rgyab ri rgyal po gdan la bzhugs pa dang dar dkar gyi thod bcings pa lta bu'i gangs kyi rtse bran can/

spyi lha la sogs pa'i nags ri dang spang ri dbyibs sna tshogs pas 'bangs 'dug pa ltar bskor ba/

*de dag la zhwa nag rang byon sogs rang byon mang du yod pa/ mdun na spang ljongs g.yu'i maNDal lta bu la ri chung rin po che sna tshogs dang ne le'i rkyal pa lta bu brgya rtsa brgyad dang de'i bar bar du A rig thang la sogs thang brgya rtsa brgyad sa mtsho khra ring sogs (A, p.189) mtsho brgya rtsa brgyad dang nags tshal 'bras bu can gyis gang zhing bya dang ri dwags*¹¹⁹*sna tshogs pas mdzes pa/*

*shar du sha wa ra mgo lhor brkyang lha nub tu so ba*¹²⁰*stag rtse byang du dzam bu lug ru ste sgo srung gi lha bzhi gnas pa de lta bu'i gnas chen spyi nang 'di ni*¹²¹*drung gong ma zhi bar gshegs pa'i gnas gsa' phu'i byang drang*

¹¹⁵ *'bri gung pa em.] 'bri khung pa A, C, 'bri khung ba B.*

¹¹⁶ *zhig B] cig A, C.*

¹¹⁷ *rmis B] brmis A, C.*

¹¹⁸ *shing B] cing A, C.*

¹¹⁹ *ri dwags B, C] ri dags A.*

¹²⁰ *ba B] pa A, C.*

¹²¹ *ni A, C] na B.*

*por yod pas*¹²² *sngon ka bzhi seng chen ma byang nas dbu tshugs gsung bar snang zhing bla ma dbang brgya ba'i lung bstan ltar mtshur phu'i shar drang por* (C, p.540) *yod/*

Bibliography

Tibetan Literature

- Chab spel tshe brtan phun tshogs (b. 20th cent., ed.). n.d. Mi 'gyur rdo rje (b. 20th cent., ed.). *Bod kyi gal che'i lo rgyus yig cha bdams bsgrigs*. lHa sa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang. BDRC, W19220.
- Chos kyi rgya mtsho (1880–1923/1925). 2001. *KaH thog si tu'i dbus gtsang gnas yig*. Khreng tu'u: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang. BDRC: W27524.
- dPa' bo gtsug lag 'phreng ba (1504–1564/1566). 1980. *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston* (2 volumes). Reproduced from prints from lHo brag blocks from Rumtek Monastery. Dehli: Dehli Karmapa Chhodhey Gyalwae Sungrab Partun Khang. BDRC, W28792.
- . 1986. *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston* (2 volumes). Edited by rDo rje rgyal po. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang. BDRC, W7499.
- . 2006. *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston*. Edited by rDo rje rgyal po. Beijing: Mi rigs Dpe skrun khang. BDRC, W1PD96069.
- . 2015. *Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston*. Edited by rDo rje rgyal po. Beijing: Mi rigs Dpe skrun khang. BDRC, W8LS19006.
- . 1959–1965. *Mkhas pahi dgah ston by Dpah-bo-gtsug-lag 'phreng-ba* (4 volumes). Edited by Lokesh Chandra. Śatapiṭaka series no. 9[4]. New Dehli: International Academy of Indian Culture. BDRC, W1KG24245.
- Karma rgyal mtshan (b. 1953). 1997. *Kaṃ tshang yab sras dang dpal spungs dgon pa'i lo rgyus ngo mtshar dad pa'i pad+ma rgyas byed*. Khreng tu'u: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang. BDRC, W27303.
- Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705), 1989. *dGa' ldan chos 'byung baiDU r+ya ser po*. Beijing: Krung go bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang. BDRC, W8224.
- Yísūn, Zhāng 张怡菽 (ed.). 1985. *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo / Zàng-Hàn dà cídiǎn 藏汉大辞典* (3 volumes). Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

Western Literature

- Buffetrille, Katia. 1997. "The Great Pilgrimage of A myes rma chen: Written Traditions, Living Realities." In *Mandala and Landscapes*, edited

¹²² yod pas A, C] yod pa'i B.

- by Alexander W. Macdonald, pp. 75–132. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld.
- Buswell, Robert E. and Donald S. Lopez. 2014. *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Cabezón, José Ignacio, and Roger R. Jackson (eds). 1996. *Tibetan Literature—Studies in Genre*. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion.
- Chandra, Lokesh. 1959. "Preface." In *Mkhas pahi dgah ston by Dpah-bo-gtsug-lag 'phreng-ba* (4 volumes), edited by Lokesh Chandra, vol. 1, pp. vii–viii. Śatapīṭaka Series no. 9[4]. New Dehli: International Academy of Indian Culture.
- de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, René. 1996. *Oracles and Demons of Tibet—The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities*. Reprint. Dehli: Book Faith India. First published in 1956.
- De Rossi Filibeck, Elena. 1988. *Two Tibetan Guidebooks to Ti se and La phyi*. Bonn: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag.
- Dell, Dominik. 2020. "Tibetan Buddhist masters between two lives: a closer look at the genre of bar do'i rnam thar using the example of the Seventh Karma pa, Chos grags rgya mtsho (1454–1506)." *The Polish Journal of the Arts and Culture, New Series*, 11 (1/2020), 41–63. DOI: 10.4467/24506249PJ.20.002.12988.
- . Forthcoming a. "Birth of a Tibetan Buddhist master, part 1: visionary experiences prior to the birth of the Seventh Karma pa, Chos grags rgya mtsho (1454–1506)". *The Polish Journal of the Arts and Culture, New Series*, 12 (1/2021).
- . Forthcoming b. "Birth of a Tibetan Buddhist master, part 2: auspicious signs and events at the birth of the Seventh Karma pa, Chos grags rgya mtsho (1454–1506)". *The Polish Journal of the Arts and Culture, New Series*, 13 (2/2021).
- Drolma, Nakza. 2019. "Pilgrimage Guide of the Tibetan Buddhist Holy Mountain Brag dkar sprel rdzong." *Revue d'Études Tibétaines*, no. 48 (Avril 2019), pp. 170–183.
- Duff, Tony. 2009. *The Illuminator Tibetan-English Encyclopedic Dictionary* (5.17 ed.). Kathmandu: Padma Karpo Translation Committee.
- Gamble, Ruth. E. 2013. "The View From Nowhere: The Travels of the Third Karmapa, Rang byung rdo rje in Stories and Songs". PhD. diss. Canberra: The Australian National University.
- . 2018. *Reincarnation in Tibetan Buddhism. The Third Karmapa and the Invention of a Tradition*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Gyatso, Janet. 1981. "The Literary Transmission of the Traditions of Thang-stong rgyal-po: a Study of Visionary Buddhism in Tibet". PhD diss., University of California: Berkely.
- Huber, Toni. 1997. "A Guide to the La-phyi Mandala: History, Landscape and Ritual in South-Western Tibet." In *Mandala and Landscapes*, edited by Alexander W. Macdonald, pp. 233–286. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld.

- . 1999. *The Cult of Pure Crystal Mountain. Popular Pilgrimage and Visionary Landscape in Southeast Tibet*. New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jäschke, Heinrich August. 1881. *A Tibetan-English dictionary: with special reference to the prevailing dialects; to which is added an English-Tibetan vocabulary*. London: s.n. Reprint 1998. Dehli: Motilal Barnasidass Publisher.
- Karmay, Samten Gyaltzen and Yasuhiko Nagano. 2008. *A Survey of Bonpo monasteries*. Dehli: Saujanya Publications.
- Kieschnik, John. 2004. "Miracles." In *Encyclopedia of Buddhism, Volume 1, A–L*, edited by Robert E. Buswell, pp. 541–544. New York: Macmillan.
- Kollmar-Paulenz, Karénina. 2006. *Kleine Geschichte Tibets*. Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck.
- Macdonald, A.W. (ed.). 1997. *Mandala and Landscapes*. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld.
- Martin, Dan, and Yael Bentor. 1997. *Tibetan Histories: A Bibliography of Tibetan-language Historical Works*. London: Serindia Publications.
- Maurer, Petra. 2009a. *Die Grundlagen der tibetischen Geomantie dargestellt anhand des 32. Kapitels des Vaidurya dkar po von sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705)*. Halle (Saale): International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies GmbH.
- . 2009b. "Sa bdag and tortoise. A survey of the tradition of geomancy in Ladakh." In *Mountains, Monasteries and Mosques. Recent Research on Ladakh and the Western Himalaya. Proceedings of the 13th Colloquium of the International Association of Ladakh Studies*, edited by John Bray, and Elena de Rossi Filibeck, pp. 199–209. Supplement No. 2 to *Rivista degli Studi Orientali* 80 (New Series). Pisa & Rome: Sapienza, Università di Roma, Dipartimento di Studi Orientali.
- . 2012. "Sa dpyad and the concept of bla ri." In *This World and the Next: Contributions on Tibetan Religion, Science and Society*, edited by Charles Ramble, and Jil Sudbury, pp. 67–79. Andiast: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies.
- . 2019a. "Landscaping Time, Timing Landscapes: The Role of Time in the sa dpyad Tradition." In *Glimpses of Tibetan Divination: Past and Present*, edited by Petra Maurer, Donatella Rossi, Rolf Scheuermann, pp. 89–117. Series: Prognostication in History, vol. 2. Leiden & Boston: Brill.
- . 2019b. "When the tiger meets Yul 'khor srung, or how to protect a construction site." *Études mongoles et sibériennes, centrasiatiques et tibétaines*, issue title: "Animals in the religion and culture of the Tibetan Plateau", vol. 50, 2019, pp. 1–36.
- Maurer, Petra, Donatella Rossi and Rolf Scheuermann (eds.). 2019. *Glimpses of Tibetan Divination: Past and Present*. Series: Prognostication in History, vol. 2. Leiden & Boston: Brill.
- Mills, Martin. 2007. "Re-Assessing the Supine Demoness: Royal Buddhist

- Geomancy in the Srong btsan sgam po Mythology." *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, no. 3, (Dec 2007).
- Newman, John. 1996. "Itineraries to Shambala." In *Tibetan Literature—Studies in Genre*, edited by José Ignacio Cabezón, and Roger R. Jackson, pp. 485–499. Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion.
- Quintman, Andrew. 2008. "Toward a Geographic Biography: Mi la ras pa in the Tibetan Landscape." *Numen*, vol. 55, issue 4, pp. 363–410.
- Ray, Reginald. 1980. "Introduction." In *The History of the Sixteen Karmapas of Tibet* by Karma Thinley, pp. 1–20. Boulder: Prajña Press.
- Richardson, Hugh Edward. 1959. "Foreword." In *Mkhas pahi dgah ston by Dpah-bo-gtsug-lag 'phreng-ba* (4 volumes). Edited by Lokesh Chandra, vol. 1, ix–xi. Satapitaka Series no. 9[4]. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture.
- Roche, Gerald. 2014. "Flows and Frontiers: Landscape and Cultural Dynamics on the Northeast Tibetan Plateau." *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology*, vol. 15(1), pp. 1–25.
- Seegers, Manfred. 2009. "The Lord of Teachings. Life and works of the Third Karma pa Rang byung rdo rje (1284–1339)". MA diss. Canterbury: University of Kent at Canterbury.
- Simmer-Brown, Judith. 2001. *Dakini's Warm Breath: The Feminine Principle in Tibetan Buddhism*. Boston, London: Shambala Publications.
- Smith, Ellis Gene. 2001. *Among Tibetan Texts—History and Literature of the Himalayan Plateau*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Stutchbury, Elisabeth. 1994. "Perceptions of Landscape in Karzha: 'Sacred' Geography and the Tibetan System of 'Geomancy'." *The Tibet Journal*, vol. 19, no. 4, pp. 59–102.
- Vostrikov, Andrew Ivanovich. 1994. *Tibetan Historical Literature*. Abington, Oxon, UK: Routledge.
- Verhufen, Gregor. 1992. "Die Biographien des achten Karma-pa Mi-bskyod rdo-rje und seines Lehrers Sangs-rgyas mNyan-pa Rin-po-che. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Karma-bKa'-brgyud-pa-Schulrichtung des tibetischen Buddhismus." MA diss., University of Bonn, Germany.
- Willis, Janice Dean. 1995. *Enlightened Beings: Life Stories from the Ganden Oral Tradition*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Wylie, Turrel W. 1965. "The Tibetan Tradition of Geography." *Bulletin of Tibetology*, no. 2/1, pp. 17–25.

