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The Tibet Journal

A publication for the study of Tibet

Contributions to the History of Tibetan Art

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– Editors, *The Tibet Journal*

Tibetan Sculpture Inspired by Earlier Foreign Sculptural Styles

David Weldon

As a result of the introduction of Buddhism and Buddhist art to Tibet, Tibetan sanctuaries became repositories for great number of works of art from surrounding regions, particularly India and Nepal. Many such works, usually of the mediaeval period or earlier, were housed in Tibetan temples and monasteries until modern times.

Fig.1 shows a photograph taken in Sa skya monastery by Giuseppe Tucci in the 1930s. One sees rows of images: those in the front can be identified as three eastern Indian mediaeval statues, two depicting Buddhist subjects flanking a statue of the Hindu god, Viṣnu. Fig.2 shows a highly important ca. eighth century Kashmiri statue of Buddha that was presented to Emperor Qianlong in 1745 by the Seventh Dalai Lama, indicating the significance of such foreign sculptures to Tibetans.

In this essay, it will be argued that foreign sculptures, preserved and admired in Tibetan sanctuaries for centuries, became the inspiration for a significant number of Tibetan works that paid aesthetic homage to them by seeking to recreate these earlier foreign styles long after they had ceased to flourish in their native lands. As yet, we have little understanding of the motivations behind the commissioning of particular Tibetan copies of earlier foreign styles. While historians have begun to uncover literary references to the existence of later copies, this paper will concentrate on visual evidence for this phenomenon in the case of a number of Tibetan sculptures. In most cases, these Tibetan copies are (at this stage of research) virtually impossible to date precisely, and thus dates for only a few of these sculptures will be proffered.

The existence of Tibetan copies in the eastern Indian sculptural style was revealed by Gilles Beguin in 1977.[1] In 1981 Ulrich Von Schroeder published about 20 Tibetan sculptures in a mediaeval eastern Indian style, but not of the mediaeval period.[2]

In 1990, John Huntington published two 18th century Chinese images bearing Qianlong (1736-1795) reign marks.[3] These images are also inspired by eastern Indian mediaeval works. Huntington suggested that the sculptures are so close to works from the ancient site of Kurkihar in eastern India that the artist "must have had an actual Kurkihar piece to copy."[4]

Whereas previous scholars have noted that eastern Indian mediaeval period styles served as prototypes for later Tibetan works, it is apparent that other foreign traditions also served as inspiration for later Tibetan copies. A gilt copper Maitreya in the Nyingjei Lam Collection is one such example, Fig.3. The sculptor of this image, perhaps dating from about the 17th century, has followed the aesthetic canons of Licchavi period (c. 300-879) sculpture from Nepal, a style exemplified by a c. seventh century gilt copper Buddha in the Kimbell Museum, Fig.4. The outline of the head of the Maitreya, Fig.3, closely resembles that of the Kimbell Licchavi period Buddha. Note the way that the long earlobes curve outward in both cases and the distinctive way that the cranial protuberances rise up from the rounded heads and the almost identical way that the hairlines frame the faces. The shapes of both faces are similar, with a broad forehead coming down to a delicate, slightly protruding chin. Classic features of Licchavi sculpture include a prominent nose and

jutting lower lip as exemplified by a c. ninth century Nepalese seated figure in the British Museum, Fig.5. The profile of the Maitreya incorporates these distinctive Licchavi period Nepalese features, Fig.6. Another classic feature of Nepalese Licchavi and of course Indian Gupta period sculpture is webbing between the fingers. Although webbing is iconographically prescribed as one of the physical signs (*lakṣaṇa*) of an enlightened being, the representation of webbed fingers in works of art gradually disappears in post Licchavi Nepalese sculpture. Its presence in the Nyingjei Lam Maitreya is another clear indication of the sculptor's observance of Licchavi aesthetic ideals. Yet another classic feature of early Nepalese seated sculpture is the peculiar manner in which the crossed lower legs are drawn in close to the torso with the feet placed high up on the thighs, whereby the toes, heels and lower legs form an unbroken line. This treatment can be seen in a circa seventh century Nepalese Licchavi period Buddha formerly in the Pan Asian Collection, Fig.7. The treatment also appears in the later Tibetan Maitreya, Fig.3. Finally, the low curved platform that serves as a seat for the Maitreya is another reference to Licchavi models. A circa seventh century Nepalese Licchavi period seated Buddha is cast to include a low platform, which is designed to facilitate attachment to a separate lotus pedestal, Fig.8.

A ca. 13th century Nepalese sculpture illustrates the way in which such a platform is set into and attached to a lotus pedestal, often separately made and as in this case using repoussé rather than cast copper for the lotus, Fig.9. Because Licchavi and later images and their bases were often separately made, in the great majority of cases they became detached. The platform on which the Maitreya sits, however, was not designed to fit a pedestal. It was made with rounded edges, like a cushion. The platforms of Licchavi statues that have become separated from their bases were originally square edged, and can become rounded over time through handling, as can be seen in Fig.8. It is this effect that is observed by the sculptor of the Maitreya, in which the platform is treated as a cushion, and as a base for the figure in so far as it is sealed with a consecration plate. Tibetan sculptural conventions would require that a sacred figure be presented with an appropriate lotus seat or an associated architectural setting. Their absence here, together with the stylistic features observed, would lead one to conclude that the Maitreya was inspired by the idioms of Licchavi sculpture.

The Tibetan sculpture was inspired by Licchavi art, but was not identical with it. Thus, the face of the Maitreya, while beautiful, lacks the intense spiritual quality of Licchavi images, as exemplified in the Kimbell Buddha, Fig.4. Moreover, the hands of the Maitreya in Fig.3 are overly delicate, and their pose is mannered when compared with the powerfully rendered gestures typical of Licchavi works.[5] Moreover, the robe of the Maitreya cloaks the body in a manner unlike that of Licchavi prototypes as seen in the Kimbell Buddha, where folds of thin cloth offer only the faintest suggestion of covering the form beneath. Although we cannot know the precise circumstances in which the Maitreya was made or its precise date, the visual evidence alone would suggest that this Tibetan sculpture is an aesthetic homage to Licchavi period sculpture from Nepal.

An intriguing statue of another Maitreya, is a further example of a Tibetan interpretation of an earlier Nepalese style, Fig.10. However, unlike the Maitreya in Fig.3, this image of the *bodhisattva* exhibits considerable loss of gilding, an effect of age that was manufactured at the sculpture's inception, presumably to replicate wear observed on old statues that had lost their gilding through extensive handling. Before turning to the issue of the statue's wear, it is important to clarify its relationship with Licchavi and Transitional period (c. 879-1200) prototypes.

The Transitional period Mañjuśrī in the Norton Simon Museum, Fig.11, is an example of the Nepalese prototype that would have been the inspiration for the Tibetan work in Fig.10. Patterns of wear on old statues that would have been observed by Tibetan patrons and artists on works such as the circa tenth c. Bhairava figure in Fig.12, underlie the peculiar pattern of manufactured gilt loss in the later Tibetan statue in Fig.10. Note the wear on the abdomens of the two figures. With such extensive wear, similar in both cases, one would expect to see wear to adjacent areas. Adjacent areas are indeed worn in the Bhairava image, where gilding on the chest, the jewelry, and the face is worn away through handling. The Maitreya, Fig.10, has minimal wear to the jewelry and just the tip of the nose is worn through to the copper. The left forearm is extensively abraded yet the prominent animal skin just above it remains untouched. The lotus petals of both statues exhibit signs of wear. However, to create localised wear to the gilding at the centres of each lotus petal as one sees in the statue in Fig.10, one would have to repeatedly place one's fingers precisely at the centres of each petal when handling the statue, assiduously avoiding adjacent areas—an improbable scenario. The principles governing natural wear through handling apply to gilded images regardless of their age. A circa 15th century Virūpa perfectly illustrates this point, Fig.13. The pattern of wear is entirely consistent with the natural effects of handling. While the raised right knees of both this statue and the Maitreya in Fig.10 are worn through to the copper, the hands above the knee in each case are very differently worn. The hand of the Maitreya is virtually untouched, whereas the Virūpa has thoroughly convincing wear over the adjacent forearm and hand. The head of the Virūpa is worn exactly as you would expect, where gilding on the cheeks, the nose, the prominent eyes and the forehead is worn through to the copper. On the Maitreya, although there is extensive wear to the statue overall, the head is virtually untouched. No amount of natural handling will produce wear to the gilding as exhibited in this statue.

The immensely appealing style of the Licchavi or Transitional period prototype that inspired the Maitreya, Fig.10, was likewise the model for a silver image of Maitreya, Fig.14. These statues are virtually indistinguishable, except for the material which they are made of. Aside from these materials, the principal difference between them is in the left hands, where the silver image holds the water vessel with his two middle fingers, the index finger pointing down. The gilt example cups the water vessel with three fingers. In addition, there is what appears to be a rosary encircling the water bottle on the gilt figure, which is absent in the silver image. These minor differences would confirm that the two statues are not from a common mould. A work in the Metropolitan Museum of Art is another related example, very similar to these two figures of Maitreya, Fig.15. The Metropolitan Avalokiteśvara and the gilt Maitreya in Fig.10 represent different iconographies but are essentially of a type—one with manufactured wear to the surface, the other without. It is unlikely that these statues interpreting an earlier style were ever intended to deceive a patron into thinking that they were acquiring Licchavi or Transitional period sculptures. As noted earlier, it is well documented that some Tibetan patrons favoured particular early styles and it is likely that these works were made to satisfy this aesthetic preference.[6] It must be stressed that these statues are not modern forgeries. In modern forgeries, pains are taken to replicate wear and distress to the surface more convincingly than in the statue of Maitreya in Fig.10. Gilded statues such as the Metropolitan Bodhisattva would inevitably be given signs of age if intended to be a forgery, yet it is in pristine condition.

Another group of Tibetan statues, including the standing Buddha in Fig.16, bear the inscription bKra shis li ma, as shown in fig.17. The full significance of the inscription is not yet certain. In 1977, L. S. Dagyab noted that bKra shis li, an abbreviation for bKra shis li ma, refers to statues from bKra shis lhun po monastery in central Tibet.[7] As with previous examples, the Buddha draws inspiration from Licchavi or Transitional period sculpture such as the ca. seventh century Kimbell Buddha, Fig.4, but is not of this period. The Tārā, Fig.18, is inscribed De mo li ma, as shown in fig.19, perhaps referring to De mo bla brang, the seat of the De mo Rin po che, Regent to the Dalai Lama from the mid-17th century onwards.[8] An Uma-Maheśvara in the British Museum, Fig.20, is also inscribed De mo li ma, as shown in Fig.21, and like the Tārā in Fig.18, is a relatively late Tibetan copy of an eastern Indian mediaeval style. The two statues have similar lotus petal seats, jewelry and crown type, and the Umā and the Tārā have similarly over-extended arms. Unlike the Tārā, however, the iconography of the Uma-Maheśvara is quintessentially Hindu, and in this particular form serves no known function in the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon, making the reason for its creation particularly intriguing. Mediaeval Indian Hindu statues, such as the British Museum's Umā-Maheśvara, Fig.22, are known to have been housed in Tibetan monasteries, as shown earlier by *in situ* photographs such as that in Fig.1. The Tibetan interpretation, Fig.20, replicates mediaeval Indian throne design and iconography, even down to the inclusion of a donor figure, rendered in a typically Indian manner at the foot of the base. It does not, however, capture mediaeval Indian aesthetic idioms. The facial features are flat and cursorily rendered and do not capture the eccentric qualities of eastern Indian mediaeval sculpture, such as the circa 11th or 12th century eastern Indian Umā-Maheśvara example, Fig.22, where the eyes express an ecstatic state. In short, the sculptor of the Tibetan interpretation was not inherently familiar with the subtleties of the eastern Indian mediaeval sculptural tradition. It is unlikely, by virtue of its Hindu iconography, that the Tibetan Umā-Maheśvara would have been commissioned by a Tibetan Buddhist patron for any iconographic reason. It may therefore be surmised that the Tibetan statue was modeled, for whatever reason, on a particular eastern Indian mediaeval image housed in a collection with which the sculptor was familiar. On this basis, it may be argued that statues bearing the inscriptions De mo li ma and bKra shis li ma are copies of particular images in particular monastery collections.

The Tibetan practice of interpreting earlier styles may also explain such mysterious works as a sculpture of a female deity in the Aschmann Foundation in the Rietberg Museum, Fig.23. The author of the catalogue of the Aschmann collection described the statue as a 13th or 14th century Tibetan work, but offered no reasoning for this date and attribution.[9] Indeed the sculpture has, since its publication, been the subject of some debate. The sculpture exhibits no stylistic or iconographic features that would allow it to be ascribed to any Tibetan style group or particular phase of stylistic development.

The Tibetan copies, or interpretations, examined thus far have been based on Nepalese Licchavi and Transitional period styles, and eastern Indian mediaeval styles. This sculpture has roots in yet another Indian style, that associated with the Kashmir and Swat Valley region. The goddess wears two remarkably dissimilar earrings. Such dissimilar earrings are only rarely found in sculpture from Nepal and eastern India. Nepalese kneeling donor figures from the Licchavi period wear a tube like earring in the right ear and a much smaller scrolling ear piece in the left, but apart from this particular representation, the phenomenon is unusual in Nepal and even more unusual in eastern India.[10] It seems not to occur in Kashmir. However,

in sculptures from the Swat region perhaps as many as 20% of the surviving corpus display dissimilar and oversized earrings, as seen on a circa seventh century Swat Valley Avalokiteśvara, Fig.24, where the left ear bears a gigantic hoop in contrast to the small jeweled pendant on his right ear.[11]

The necklace of the Rietberg's goddess consists of a simple row of ungraduated beads—a necklace type that infrequently appears in Nepal and eastern India. It appears regularly in Kashmir, although here the beads are often graduated.[12] In the Swat valley, it is virtually ubiquitous, as seen in the Avalokiteśvara, Fig.24.[13]

The beaded band that decorates the hair of the Aschmann figure is one of its most unusual features and it appears to have no antecedent in Nepal or eastern India. It does however appear in the Kashmir/Swat region, as in a Kashmiri Mañjuśrī formerly in the Pan-Asian Collection, Fig.25.[14] The bells that hang from the belt of the Rietberg figure are not seen in sculpture from Nepal or eastern India, but they do occur in the Kashmir/Swat region—as seen on a Kashmiri figure of Tārā formerly in the Pan Asian Collection, Fig.26.

The garments of Nepalese deities are never depicted as they are in the Rietberg figure, as closely placed ribbed folds. Mediaeval eastern Indian sculpture does sometimes depict ribbed cloth. It is, however, the preferred representation of the lower garment on Swat valley sculpture, where the garments of the majority of the known corpus appear much the same as in the Metropolitan Museum's ca. ninth century Swat figure, Fig.27.

The hair drawn into a lobe on the right shoulder of the Rietberg figure, is a feature seen in some eastern Indian—and a few Nepalese sculptures. It also appears in Swat valley sculpture, such as in a ca. seventh century Swat Valley female deity in the Ashmolean Museum, Fig.28. Note that this Swat deity exhibits not only this particular hair arrangement, but also wears two distinctly dissimilar earrings and a ribbed lower garment. Significantly, the seated posture and hand gestures of this and the Rietberg sculpture are also remarkably similar. The flower stem in this ca. seventh century Swat Valley sculpture's left hand helps to explain the grasping gesture of the Rietberg figures' hand—an otherwise meaningless gesture. Nothing is lost from the hand of the goddess—there is no provision for an attribute; there are no signs that anything has broken off from the shoulder or the hand that might explain the gesture. Thus, these observations and other features such as the meaningless form on which the goddess sits, would suggest that the sculptor did not fully understand the Swat Valley or Kashmiri prototype that was clearly the inspiration for his sculpture.

Several other statues, all apparently Tibetan, exhibit remarkably similar stylistic and iconographic features to the sculpture in the Rietberg Museum, Fig.23. For example, the relatively late sculpture of a female deity in the Rum btegs monastery in Sikkim, Fig.29, is also shown clothed with a similarly ribbed garment, with similar necklace and beaded hair ornamentation and with similar posture and hand gestures as the Rietberg figure.[15] The two statues are clearly inspired by the same early foreign sculptural tradition.

Tibetan copies, therefore, are inspired not only by eastern Indian mediaeval sculpture, as Beguin and Von Schroeder had argued in their pioneering works of 1977 and 1981, but by early Nepalese and Kashmir/Swat Valley works as well.

The fuller meaning and the motivations behind the commissioning of these works will be clearer with future research. At this stage these commissions would appear to have involved a connoisseur's aesthetic appreciation of earlier foreign styles, perhaps prompted by specific examples in known monastery collections.[16]

Ian Alsop has with certainty identified the particular sacred icon from which numerous smaller, more or less faithful reproductions were made, and shown it to be an early sculpture, probably of Nepalese origin, housed in the Potala in Lhasa and known as 'Phags pa Lokeśvara.[17]

The Tibetan practice of making copies of statues of foreign cultures is clearly widespread, whether made purely for aesthetic reasons or as reproductions of particular sacred icons. For the time being, a familiarity with all aspects of works known to be of eastern Indian, Kashmiri, Swat or Nepalese manufacture enables the distinction to be made between works from these foreign traditions and Tibetan works which pay homage to them.

Notes

1. See Gilles Beguin, *Dieux et Demons de l'Himalaya,* Paris, 1977, pp.69-73.
2. See Von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, Hong Kong, 1981, figs 128A-130F.
3. See Susan, L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, *Leaves of the Bodhi Tree*, Seattle and London, 1990, pp.393-94.
4. See, Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, *Leaves of the Bodhi Tree,* p.393. See a circa 11th century Buddha from Kurkihar that exhibits many of the stylistic features of the Qianlong examples and is the type of Kurkihar image that may have inspired the later Chinese examples, in N. R. Ray, K. Khandalavala and S. Gorakshkar, *Eastern Indian Bronzes*, New Delhi, 1986, Fig.255a. The stepped bases and lotus supports, and the flaming halos with stupa finials and flying scarves are closely comparable, a few of the many parallels between the Chinese 18th century copy and the 11th century eastern Indian Kurkihar figure. Despite the many parallels with eastern Indian traditions, no one would mistake the Qianlong copies for eastern Indian mediaeval sculptures. A brief look at the faces of the two works makes this clear. The Chinese copy has transformed the eastern Indian mediaeval physiognomy into something more distinctively Chinese, and has none of the classic Indian features seen in the Kurkihar prototype.
5. See a seated Maitreya (?) in the British Museum, published in Wladimir Zwalf, (ed.), *Buddhism: Art and Faith,* London, 1985, Fig.161.
6. See Giuseppe Tucci, A Tibetan Classification of Buddhist Images according to Their Style, *Artibus Asiae* xxii, 1959 and Erberto Lo Bue, "Sculptural Styles According To Pema Karpo," in J. Casey Singer and P. Denwood (eds.), *Tibetan Art, Towards a Definition of Style,* London, 1997, pp.242-253.
7. L. S. Dagyab, *Tibetan Religious Art,* Vol.1, Wiesbaden, 1977, p.57. Future research may well offer further evidence for his interpretation.
8. See Marilyn Rhie and Robert Thurman, *Worlds of Transformation,* New York, 1999, pp.365-68.
9. See Helmut Uhlig, *On the Path to Enlightenment,* Zurich, 1995, pp.140, 141.
10. See Pratapaditya Pal, *Arts of Nepal: Sculpture,* Leiden, 1974, Figs.158-159.
11. See Von Schroeder, 1981, numbers: 6A, C, D, F and H. 7D and 11B.
12. See Von Schroeder, 1981, numbers: 13F.
13. See Von Schroeder, 1981, numbers: 5D, 6A, B, C, E, F and H. 7C, 9C, !0A etc.
14. Note that the tripartite pendant attached to this common necklace type seen in the circa ninth century Kashmiri Manjuśri reflects an iconographic requirement.
15. See Nik Douglas and Meryl White, *Karmapa: The Black Hat Lama of Tibet*, London, 1976, p.132
16. A treatise by the scholar and artist Pad ma dkar po (1526-92) indicates an awareness of foreign sculptural styles, see Giuseppe Tucci, A Tibetan Classification of Buddhist Images according to Their Style, *Artibus Asiae* xxii, 1959 and Erberto Lo Bue, Sculptural Styles According To Pad ma dkar po, in J. Casey Singer and P.Denwood (eds.), *Tibetan Art, Towards a Definition of Style,* London, 1997, pp.242-253.
17. See Ian Alsop, Copies in Tibetan Sacred Art: Two Examples, *Oriental Art,* Vol.XlVI No.2 (2000), pp.4-13.

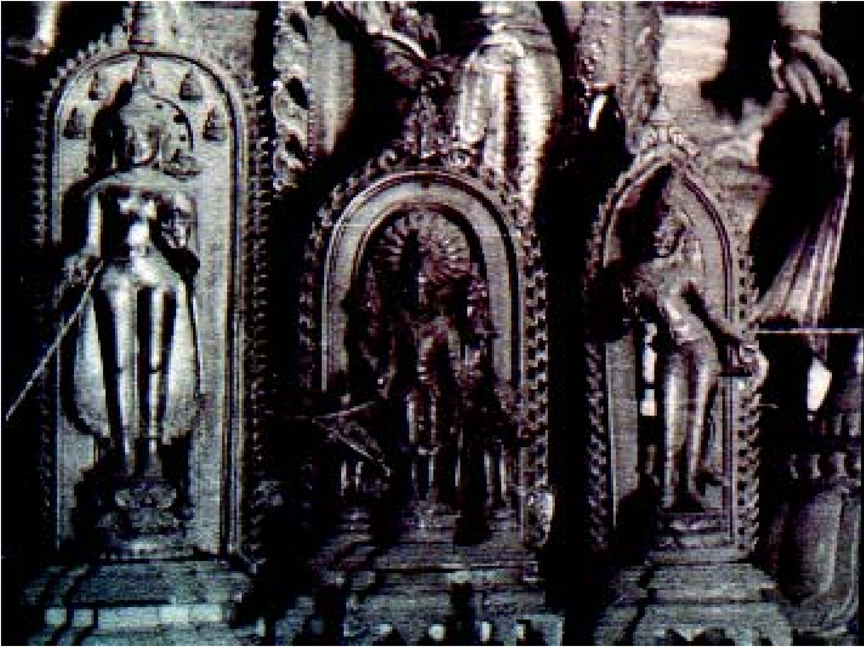

FIG.1 Images at Sa skya Monastery, of mediaeval eastern Indian origin, representing a *bodhisattva* and Buddha flanking the Hindu god Viṣṇu. Copper alloy. Ht: (?). Photographed during an expedition of Giuseppe Tucci before 1939

FIG.2 Buddha. Kashmir, *ca.* eighth century, copper alloy with silver and copper inlay (the gold and pigment relatively modern, and the wood throne and *prabhamaṇḍala* 18th century Chinese). Ht: 62cm. After *Priceless Treasures,* Beijing, 1999, no. 26.

FIG.3 Maitreya. Tibet, *ca.*17th century, gilt copper alloy with pigment. Ht: 23.7cm. Nyingjei Lam Collection.

FIG.4 Buddha Śākyamuni. Nepal, ca. seventh century, gilt copper. Ht: 50cm. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, Texas.

FIG.5 Avalokiteśvara(?), Nepal, ca. ninth century, copper. Ht: 29.8cm. British Museum, London.

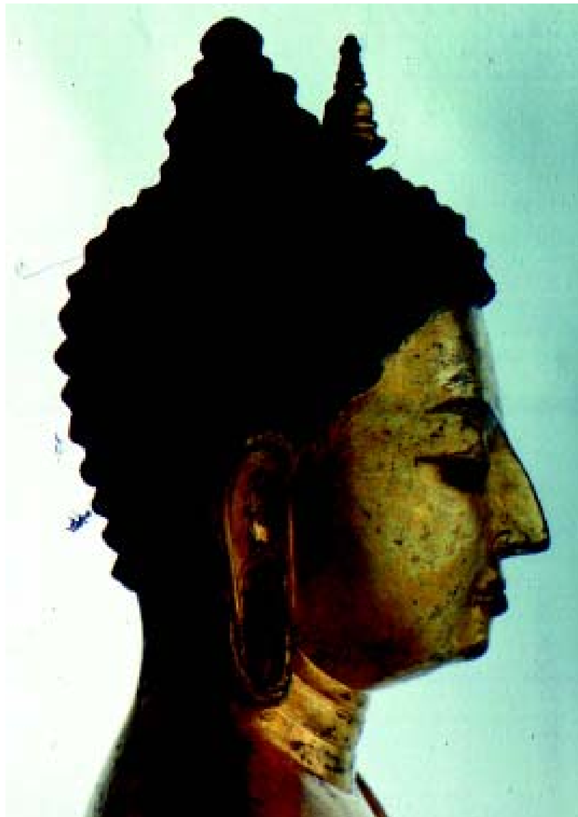

Fig.6 Profile of Fig.3.

FIG.7 Buddha Śākyamuni. Nepal, *ca.* seventh century, gilt copper. Ht: 7.8cm. Ex Pan-Asian Collection. After Ulrich Von Schroeder, 1981, 74B.

FIG.8 Buddha Śākyamuni. Nepal, *ca.* seventh century, gilt copper. Ht: 7.8cm. Private Collection. After Ulrich Von Schroeder, 1981, 74C.

FIG.9 Vajrapāṇi. Nepal, ca. 13th century, gilt copper on repousse gilt copper lotus base. Ht: 11.4cm. Private Collection. After Ulrich Von Schroeder, 1981, 93C.

FIG.10 Maitreya. Tibet, no date proposed, gilt copper. Ht: ca. 16cm.
Whereabouts unknown.

FIG.11 Mañjuśrī. Nepal, Transitional period (*ca*. 879-1200), gilt copper. Ht: 20.3 cm. Norton Simon Foundation, Pasadena, California.

FIG.12 Bhairava. Nepal, Transitional period (*ca*. 879-1200), gilt copper. Ht: 26cm. Private Collection.

FIG.13 Virūpa. Tibet, *ca.* 15th century, gilt copper. Ht: 14cm. Nyingjei Lam Collection.

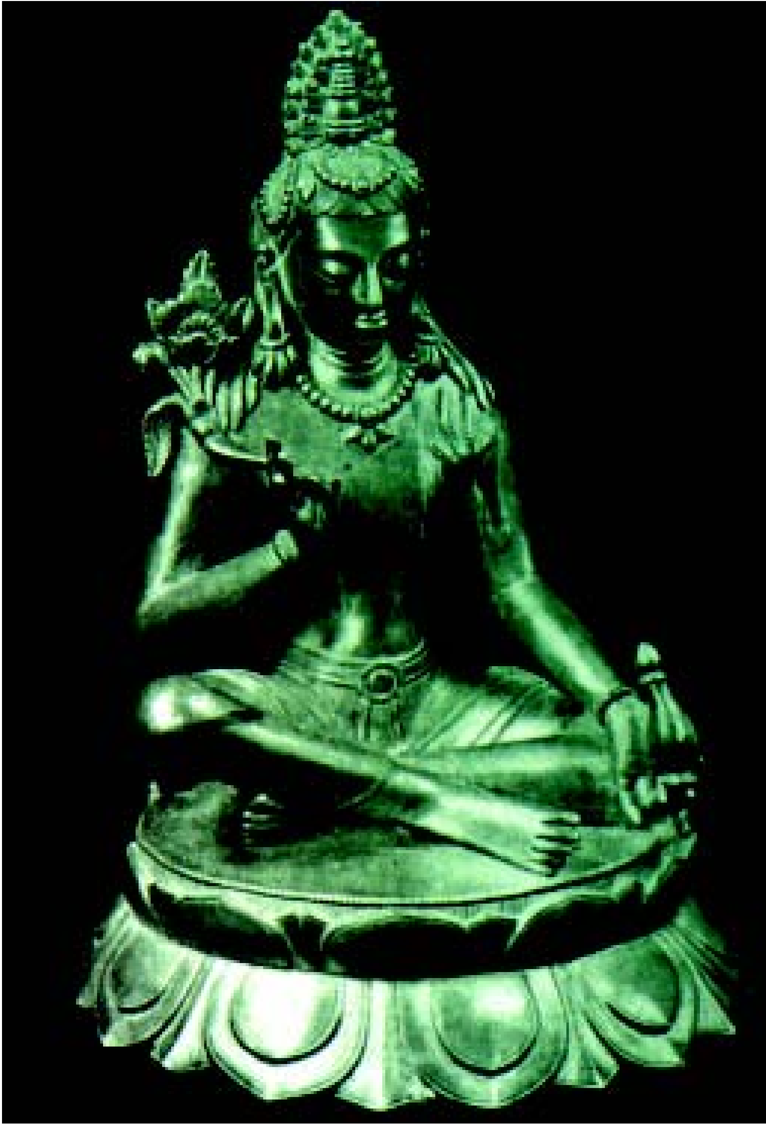

FIG.14 Maitreya. Tibet, no date proposed, silver. Nepal Museum.

FIG.15 Avalokiteśvara. Tibet, no date proposed, gilt copper. Ht: 21.5 cm.
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

FIG.16 Buddha Śākyamuni. Tibet, no date proposed, gilt copper. Ht: 27.9cm. Private Collection.

FIG.17 Inscription incised on the rear of the lotus base of Fig.16.

FIG.18 Sitatārā. Tibet, no date proposed, copper alloy. Ht: 11 cm. Private Collection

FIG.19 Inscription incised on the rear of the lotus base of Fig.18.

FIG.20 Umā-Maheśvara. Tibet, no date proposed, copper alloy and pigment. Ht: 20.3cm. British Museum, London.

FIG.21 Inscription incised on the rear of the lotus base of Fig.20.

FIG.22 Umā-Maheśvara. Eastern India, *ca*. 11th/12th century, copper alloy. Ht: *ca*. 20cm. British Museum, London.

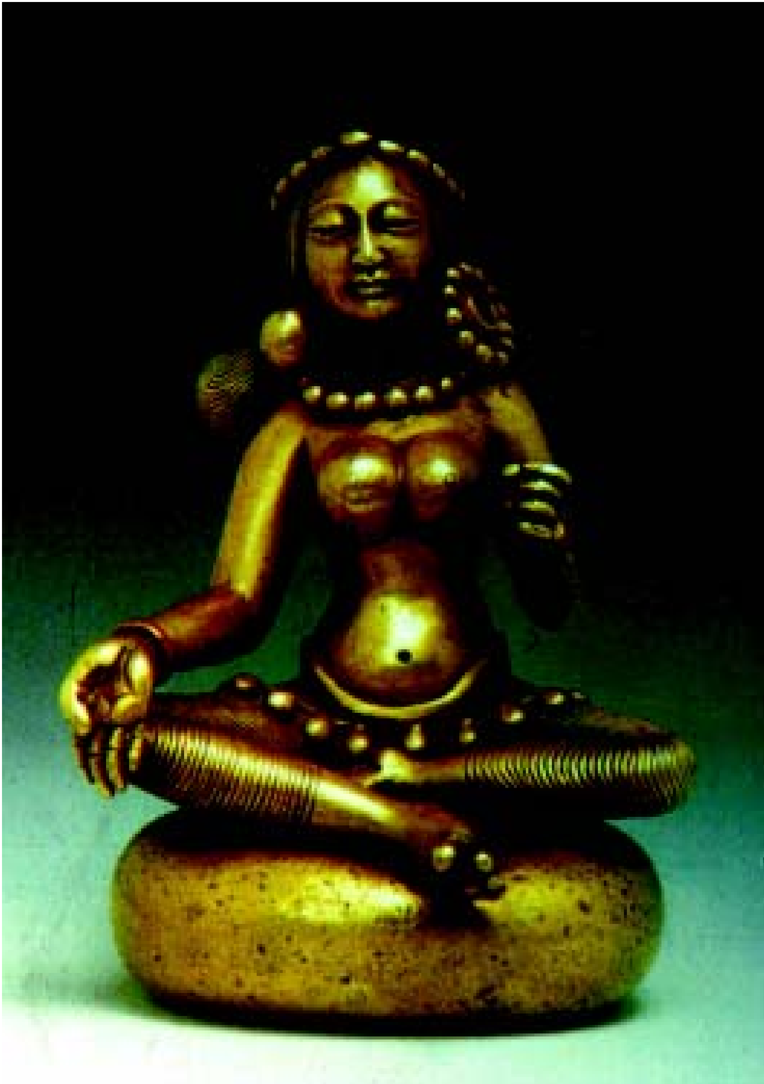

FIG.23 Female deity. Tibet, no date proposed, copper alloy. Ht: 9.5cm.
Rietberg Museum, Zurich.

FIG.24 Avalokiteśvara. Swat Valley, *ca*. seventh century, copper alloy. Ht: 12.9cm. Nyingjei Lam Collection.

FIG.25 Mañjuśrī. Kashmir, *ca*. eighth/ninth century, copper alloy with silver inlay. Ht: 14.3cm. Ex Pan-Asian Collection.

FIG.26 Tārā. Kashmir, *ca*. eighth/ninth century, copper alloy with silver and copper inlay. Ht: 27cm. Private Collection.

FIG.27 Vairocana. Swat Valley, *ca*. ninth century, copper alloy. Ht: 33.2cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

FIG.28 Tārā. Swat Valley, *ca*. seventh century, gilt copper alloy with silver inlay. Ht: 7.9cm. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

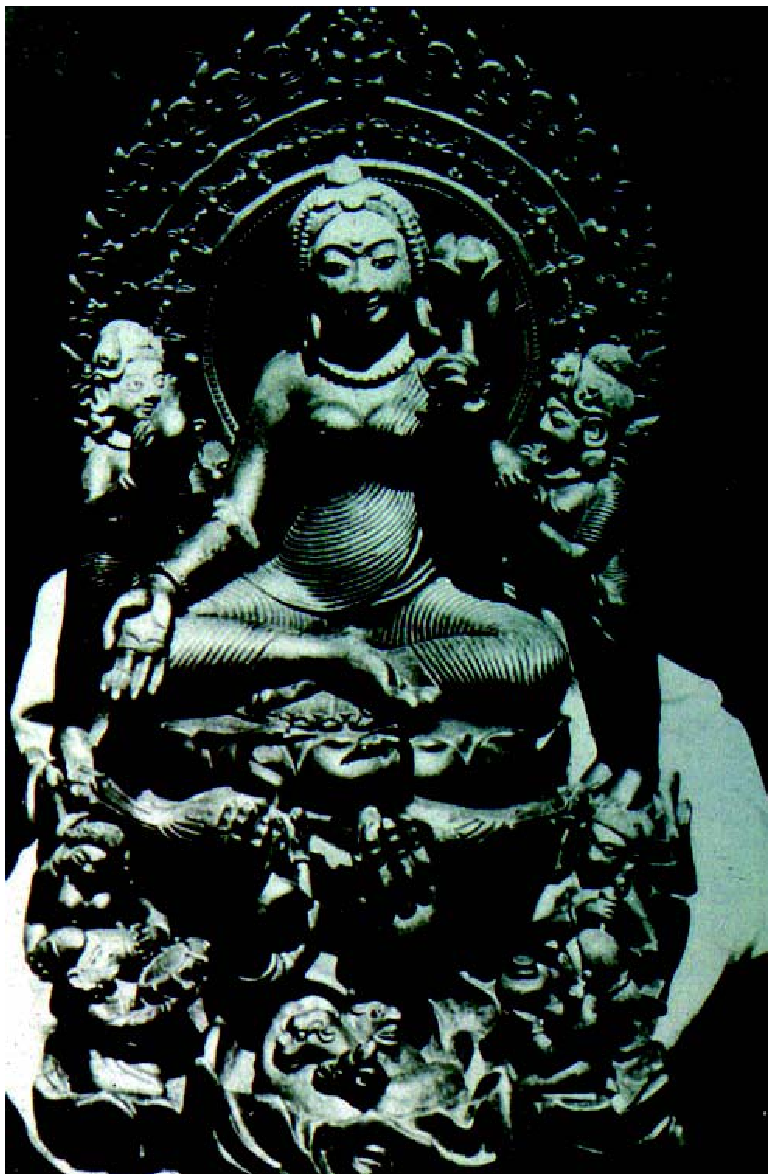

FIG.29 Tārā with entourage. Tibet or Sikkim, no date proposed, copper alloy with pigments. Ht: (?). Rumtek Monastery, Sikkim. After Douglas and White, 1976.

The Paintings of Gra thang: History and Iconography of an 11th century Tibetan Temple

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In Tibet today, the wall paintings of Gra thang monastery constitute the largest extant series of 11th century paintings, now covering the walls of a single chapel approximately 12 meters long by eight meters wide, ceiling height of 6.5 meters. Not only is this the largest extant series of ancient paintings, these paintings are breathtaking in their beauty and refinement, such as these examples (Figs.1-3 general composition, foliage detail, textile detail, jewelry detail, throne architecture). When first studied by Giuseppe Tucci and photographed by Pietro Mele in ca. 1948, Gra thang was very different from today, for in addition to the remarkable paintings, there were then clay statues of eight standing Bodhisattva about two meters high, surrounding a central Buddha seated on a throne.[1] Today only fragments remain of the Buddha's throne and the stucco halos of the Bodhisattva. In 1990, Roberto Vitali studied the history of the foundation of Gra thang and made a preliminary study of the art in his book *Early Temples of Central Tibet,* followed by Michael Henss who further studied the wall paintings in 1994.[2] In the Chinese language, Sonam Wangdu, Tibetan archeologist and art historian, had made a thorough survey of the chapel in 1986.[3] He invited my esteemed colleague, the Tibetologist and art historian Heather Stoddard to Gra thang in 1994 in the hope of a restoration project and I was mandated by the CNRS in 1995 to join her in a study of Gra thang. I visited Gra thang in 1995 and 1996 under the auspices of the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences, then returned in 1999 and 2000, where I benefited from many discussions with Ngag dbang phun tshogs, a resident scholar born in 1929. Here in the *Tibet Journal* issue on Tibetan art historical research, I will examine the 11th century mural paintings of Gra thang, exploring their relation with roughly contemporary paintings in Tibet (especially from Zha lu monastery). This article will be illustrated by my photographs as well as some by Lionel Fournier, and photographs of Zha lu by Jean-Michel Terrier. I have also studied photographs of Gra thang by Michael Henss, Ulrich von Schroeder and Tom Laird, as well as photographs of g.Ye dmar, Samada and gNas gsar by Fosco Maraini and Pietro Mele, which Tucci published. All have been important to formulate the visual parallels proposed during this article. In order to consider the iconography and stylistic basis of the extant paintings, I will first present a summary of their historic and conceptual context.[4]

Gra thang lies in a fertile plain on the south bank of the valley of the gTsang po river, a bit west of bSam yas which lies on the north bank of the river. The founder was Gra pa mngon shes (1012-1090) who had trained at the Tang po che monastery. Gra pa mngon shes was a scion of the mChims clan, one of the principal noble families during the sPu rgyal dynasty, who had donated part of the land for the construction of bSam yas founded in 779. Their clan site is so close to bSam yas that bSam yas is sometimes called bSam yas mChims phu.[5] Gra pa mngon shes

* I acknowledge Erberto Lo Bue, Françoise Pommaret and Lionel Fournier for their constructive criticism, here. Anne Chayet and Heather Stoddard reviewed earlier phases of this research. My thanks to all of them.

made very eclectic studies. Initially, he studied with his uncle, Zhang Chos 'bar, a master renowned for studies of Sūtra, Tantra, and Prajñāpāramitā.[6] Gra pa mngon shes then studied with the master Yam shud rGyal ba 'od, abbot of Tang po che in the Yar klung valley. Both Yam shud and Gra pa mngon shes' uncle had studied under the disciples of Klu mes of Khams.[7] Klu mes and his disciples had returned to bSam yas at the end of the tenth century and inspired the revival of Buddhism in central Tibet. What kind of Buddhism were they teaching? Where had they been in Khams?

Klu mes and his disciples were spreading teachings learned from the disciples of the master Bla chen dGongs pa rab gsal (832-915), who had inherited the *vinaya* teachings of the sBa family, the first abbots of bSam yas.[8] Bla chen lived for almost 40 years at lDan tig, the hermitage of Khri 'ga' monastery where the influential abbot sPug Ye shes dbyangs had formed a teaching system combining *sūtra* and esoteric *tantra* particularly on forms of Vairocana Buddha as well as monastic discipline, *vinaya*.[9] The Khri 'ga' abbot's artistic commissions of Vairocana images were noteworthy: 804 A.D.—'Bis mda' and 816 A.D.—lDan ma brag. (Fig.4 'Bis mda' Vairocana, Fig.5 lDan ma brag Vairocana) The Khri 'ga' teachings had been popular in central Tibet, where its use was documented at bSam yas, but also the Khri 'ga' texts circulated widely, during late eighth and early ninth century, because the monastery was situated at the junction of several trade routes linking central Tibet with Sichuan and the major axis of the Silk Routes and its unique combination of esoteric and Mahāyāna Buddhist teachings appealed to several different monastic schools.[10] In mid-ninth century, when there was the persecution of Buddhism in China, and the fall of the dynasty in central Tibet at the same time, Khri 'ga' was far away from both Lhasa and Chang'an for Buddhism to survive there unimpeded, for trade to prosper thus ensuring the livelihood of the monks, and for the traditions of artistic commission to be maintained. This is why many monks fleeing central Tibet found their way to Khri 'ga' and lDan tig, where they found teachings practiced similar to those used at bSam yas as well as Khri 'ga's special emphasis on Vairocana cycles. In this way, dGongs pa rab gsal and his disciples who taught Klu mes transmitted to Klu mes the teachings and some of the artistic models which had formerly been popular in central Tibet, which were then re-introduced to central Tibet as Klu mes and his disciples traveled.

In addition to the teachings of the lineage of Klu mes, Gra pa mngon shes also received the *tantra* teachings of the Vairocana *maṇḍala* of the mNga' ris kingdom as re-translated by Rin chen bzang po.[11] He also studied directly with two Indian teachers in Tibet, first Somanatha, and later Pha dam pa sangs rgyas (died ca. 1115), who were teaching texts and meditation techniques of diverse *tantric* tendencies. The famous Tibetan yoginī Ma cig lab sgron, who also studied with Pha dam pa, was a reader for the Prajñāpāramitā for Gra pa mngon shes prior to the construction of Gra thang.[12] Only one source discussed Gra pa mngon shes as abbot of bSam yas,[13] but he is said to have his initiation as a monk there. Certainly he knew bSam yas well by virtue of the geographic proximity of bSam yas to Gra thang, as well as from his family lineage and his teachers. It is sure that bSam yas served as a source of inspiration for the construction of Gra thang which followed the model of a central three story temple and satellite temples and three concentric rings, traces of which are visible today—this architectural model of a *maṇḍala* is similar to bSam yas.[14]

Construction of Gra thang began in 1081. It was completed in 1093, by the nephews of Gra pa mngon shes, who had died in 1091.

In this brief historical background, four distinct influences may be identified. Gra pa mngon shes as the spiritual descendent of the lineage of bSam yas and the doctrines which had flourished there, his affiliation with the disciples from eastern Tibet who restored Buddhism to central Tibet by renewing the transmission of the teachings translated into Tibetan during the late eighth and ninth century, Gra pa mngon shes' position as a direct disciple of Indian *tantric* masters, and his studies and transmission of the *tantric* teachings on Vairocana as re-translated in west Tibet under the impetus of Rin chen bzang po. In the construction of the monastery and the choice of the iconography of the chapels within Gra thang according to the data gathered here, it would seem that these four currents are all directly reflected.

The Physical Description

All that is left of Gra thang Monastery is one building, with only a ground floor, having three sections, the largest chapel being the main sanctuary. However, according to the history written by Ngag dbang phun tshogs, who observed Gra thang throughout the 20th century, the main building of Gra thang was originally constructed as a three storey palace, dBu rtse rigs/rim gsum, just like the main building of bSam yas. The Chronicle of the sBa' family, the *sBa' bzhed*, which traces the history of the foundation of bSam yas, informs us that the three floors of bSam yas correspond to a Tibetan ground floor, a Chinese intermediate level, and an Indian inspired upper level for styles of representation. According to an article written by Ngag dbang phun tshogs, Gra thang too had a Tibetan inspiration for ground floor, Chinese for intermediary level, and Indian inspiration for the upper level. Throughout history, unfortunately, there are very few descriptions of Gra thang. For example, Bu ston's visit to Gra thang was a highpoint in his biography but the monastery is not described.[15] Ngag dbang phun tshogs himself discussed restorations made in the 16th century, when the Sa skya monastic order took over the monastery, but gave no descriptions of what the restorations entailed.[16] In the early 20th century, when the eminent lama from Eastern Tibet named Kaḥ thog Si tu visited Gra thang, he listed abbreviated names of some of the major statues in metal and clay and described in general the ground floor as Chinese, the middle floor as Chinese forms according to Nepalese style (*bal po'i lugs ltar rgya nag bzo dbyibs* = Chinese iconography according to Nepalese methods?? could this possibly refer to the formal medium of copper *repoussé* for which Newari artists were renowned, rather than casting??) and the upper floor as Indian.[17] Kaḥ thog Si tu described the wall paintings of the ground floor as "ancient Nepalese style" (*logs bris sngon gyi rnying pa bal bris*). Interpretation of Kaḥ thog Bla ma's analysis of Gra thang is problematic. It is not clear what he is defining as Chinese, Indian or Nepalese—was he refering to liturgical cycles or methods of casting or painting or iconometric proportions according to Chinese models, etc?? In comparison with the actual remains and the description by Ngag dbang phun tshogs of the iconography, the description of Kaḥ thog Si tu seems idiosyncratic, using a self-defining terminology that remains hermetic.[18] A possible clue to understanding may be linked to the representation of the Vairocana liturgies, which we will discuss hereafter. For now, let us recall that today only the ground floor survives.

PLAN ACCORDING TO THE ARTICLE BY NGAG DBANG PHUN TSHOGS

Ngag dbang phun tshogs described what he personally saw, which he attributed to the original construction. But I think it is important to emphasize that there are no historic sources contemporary with the construction of the monastery to either contradict or confirm of his data, nor any description of the 16th century renovation. Nonetheless, his article remains a precious source of the state of Gra thang in the 20th century.

For the materials used, the roof was made of ceramic glazed tiles, turquoise in color (let us recall- this is also just like bSam yas), and the wood was juniper of excellent quality. The general iconographic schema followed the design of the *maṇḍala* of peaceful deities of the Vajradhātu cycle of Vairocana, that is, according to the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha*.

On the upper level, there was an interior temple with doors on four sides, the Five Tathāgata were seated on a throne in the middle of this temple, surrounded by the secondary deities of the *maṇḍala* of Sarvavid Vairocana (Kun rig rnam par snang mdzad), and on the ceiling, a painted *maṇḍala* of this same Kun rig cycle. These two cycles of Vairocana *maṇḍala* were tremendously important in western Tibet during the early *phyi dar*, and their representation on upper storey at Gra thang reflects that importance. There were no mural paintings on the upper floor.

On the intermediary level, clay statues of the Buddhas of the past, present and future, flanked by statues of the Buddhas of the ten directions, and two guardian statues.[19] Other statues, apparently of later creation, were described, as well as a chapel dedicated to a form of Pe har, apparently also a later construction.[20]

For the ground floor, which is our primary concern here, in his article Ngag dbang described the principal deity of the central chapel as Thub dbang, with eight *bodhisattva*s to right and left, and two guardians, Hayagrīva at left and Acala at right. The term "*thub dbang*" could be understood two ways, either as a short form for Śākya thub pa, a frequent epithet for Śākyamuni, or a short form of Thub pa gangs can mtsho, which is the name of an aspect of Vairocana represented as a *nirmanakāya,* that is, represented in the aspect of human body.[21] Ngag dbang described the costumes as Tibetan style (*na bza' bod lugs*) and described the statues in clay as very precious, hence these images were gilt, i.e. painted in gold paint. Clay is described as the typical Tibetan medium for sculptures in the earliest historical accounts of bSam yas, thus by the medium, and the costumes, these statues are Bod lugs , "Tibetan style."[22] Ngag dbang phun tshogs did not describe the mural paintings in his article. However, by their representation in Tibetan costume, these Buddha and Bodhisattva may correspond to "Tibetan style" in Ngag dbang phun tshogs vocabulary, while, for Kaḥ thog Si tu, the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* and the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana* may have been understood as cycles from India, while the Tibetans were aware that the Mahāvairocana cycle was known in China prior to introduction to Tibet, and in all likelihood, was introduced simultaneously to Tibet by Chinese monks and Indian monks in late eighth century. Thus, if indeed the basis of the ground floor is Thub pa gangs can rgya mtsho form of Vairocana, related to the Mahāvairocana liturgy, for Kaḥ thog Si tu, this form might be described as "Chinese."

Ngag dbang also described subsidiary chapels in his article on the history of Gra thang:

As for the subsidiary chapels:

- on the south, a *bla ma lha khang* (chapel of lamas)
- on the west, *sgrol ma lha khang* (chapel of Tārā)
- on the north-west: *dus kyi 'khor lo lha khang* (chapel of Kālacakra)
- on the north: *spyan ras gzigs lha khang* (chapel of Avalokiteśvara)
- on the east, on both sides of the principal doorway of the second and third concentric rings, there were three *maṇi lha khang*, prayer wheel chapels.
- again on the north, a chapel for the drawings of Ma cig related to Prajñā-pāramitā.[23]

CURRENT LAYOUT OF THE GROUND FLOOR SANCTUARY (DRI TSANG KHANG) OF GRA THANG

Today, on the ground floor (see Fig.12), there are only eight groups of mural paintings of Buddha, seated on thrones supported by lions, surrounded by the Śrāvaka, Bodhisattva, and pious layman. The eight surviving compositions are separated on the walls but all are surrounded by border of foliage, which replicates the palette of blues, greens and red of the foliage underneath and above the Buddhas' thrones. Similar deep colors and models of foliage as border and as an integral part of mural painting compositions are known today from the Indian inspired iconographies in caves of ca. 725 A.D. at Dunhuang, commissioned when Indian masters were teaching at Dunhuang and Xian, having traveled there via central Tibet due to the conflicts opposing the Arabs and Chinese further west on the Silk Route (cf. n.43 *infra*). Although in India no traces of mural paintings of this time survive, in late fifth century the mural paintings and sculptures of Ajanta frequently use horizontal or vertical registers of foliage as a compositional device to define sections within a mural or a doorway (Fig.6/Fig.7). The introduction of such compositions and foliage borders are attributed to the Indian presence at Dunhuang (cave 71) and persist thereafter. The compositions of Gra thang seem to draw their inspiration from such Indian iconographies. The upper assemblies of monks are in fact not simple monks but rather the Śrāvaka, those who were the first to hear (*śrut*) the words of the Buddha. Among the eight forms of Buddha, immediately one can recognize a representation of Śākyamuni, who is the only Buddha wearing a monastic robe, barefoot, while all the others wear Tibetan robes and boots. All of the lions supporting the lotus pedestals are white, except for the lions in the assembly immediately above Śākyamuni—these lions are blue. In the lower register beneath Śākyamuni, there are the two Bodhisattvas Maitreya and Mañjuśrī seated in mystic discourse, dressed in Indian garb and at the feet of Buddha No.1, a seated green Tārā is represented wearing Indian garments and jewelry (Fig.8) These paintings were conceived as the background for the group of statues of a central Buddha accompanied by the eight *bodhisattva*s and two guardians, all about 250-300 cm. in height. Today subsist only a few golden ovoid halos in stucco (Fig.9), and the elongated hour-glass form of the center of a giant throne surmounted by a *garuḍa* (Fig.10, Fig.11). The throne frame is terminated on both sides by a *makara* with a diminutive rider (Fig.12a).

However, contrary to what is visible today, previously there were ten painted panels of Buddha and their entourage. The disappearance of two panels corresponds

to the openings for windows made during a restoration ca. 1940 , photographed by Tucci's expedition.[24] (plate of photo by Mele ca. 1948, showing statues and window (Fig.12b).

The Iconographic Plan of Gra thang.

As we have seen the account by Ngag dbang emphasizes the liturgy of the Vajradhatu, which can be associated with the *Sarvatathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*, and there is emphasis on Sarvavid Vairocana *maṇḍala*, that is the *Sarvadurgati-pariśodhana* in which there is also a Vajradhatu *maṇḍala*. The intermediary floor with the ten Buddha of the ten directions can be associated with many cycles.[25] However, in the context of the Vairocana cycles, it is my hypothesis that at Gra thang, the Buddha of Ten Directions refer to the liturgy of the *Avataṃsaka*, better known in China as the Hua Yen, of which the last chapters are the *Gaṇḍavyūha-sūtra*, which conclude with one of the most famous prayers in Mahāyāna Buddhism, the *Bodhicarya-praṇidhāna* (*bZang spyod*) the vow of Bodhisattva practice. This prayer, which begins with invocations to the Buddha of the Ten directions, is precisely the vow carved on a rockface in 806 A.D. as part of the construction of a chapel dedicated to Vairocana situated at 'Bis mda' in east Tibet not far from sKye dgu mdo, commissioned by sPug Ye shes dbang of Khri 'ga' monastery. Vairocana and the bodhisattva are all represented here dressed in the robes and boots, which were garments of Tibetan royalty (see Fig.4). The group of Vairocana and the eight *bodhisattva*s correspond to liturgy identified in the P.T.7a and P.T.108, which appear related to the *Vairocana abhisambodhi tantra* rituals, where Vairocana may be represented in royal garments as Sambhogakāya.[26] However, as noted briefly above, Tibetan historians recently have identified this 'Bis mda' image of Vairocana as the Thub pa gangs can mtsho form of Vairocana.[27] In view of the fact that the Gra thang Buddha and Bodhisattva are represented in Tibetan robes and boots, the association at 'Bis mda' of the *Bodhicarya-praṇidhāna* vow for the Buddha of the Ten Directions and the Vairocana manifestations dressed as Tibetan royalty in their *maṇḍala* may help elucidate the context of Gra thang.

As for the identification of the group of statues of the ground floor, in view of the apparent contradictions in identification and styles of representations between the views of the present monks versus the remarks of the earlier and modern Tibetan historians, this leads us to refrain from any attempt at a definitive identification here. Perhaps there was modification of the iconography as a result of successive restorations over the centuries? For now we cannot tell. The question of identification may have liturgical antecedents—as far back as the end of the eighth century, among the rituals forming the cycle of the *Vairocana-abhisambodhi-tantra*, there is a textual assimilation between Vairocana, recognized as Dharmakāya/ Sambhogakāya, of golden body, wearing crown and princely garments, and Śākyamuni, who as the Nirmanakāya is recognized as the earthly manifestation in human body assumed by Vairocana.[28]

The Artistic and Iconographic Context of the 11th century in Tibet

Zha lu Monastery, founded in 1027, can help situate Gra thang in context. The Zha lu founder was linked to the disciples of Klu mes, yet after the initial foundation, he went to Nepal and India seeking "pure vows", i.e. a direct link with Indian orthodoxy.[29] His return to Zha lu ca. 1040 may be the period of the decoration of the

ground floor chapel where today four panels of mural paintings survive, each representing a Buddha seated on a throne inside a palace following the Indian model, "*pañcayatana*". (Fig.13) The height of the Zha lu chapel is 220 cm, which contrasts greatly with Gra thang at 660 cm height, nor had there ever been statues in front of the mural paintings at Zha lu. Thus the colors have faded from direct exposure to light and smoke of butter lamps while at Gra thang, the colors were preserved. At Zha lu, each Buddha is surrounded by Śrāvaka and Bodhisattva, and a few laymen, very close to the composition of the crowds in the Gra thang paintings.[30] There is a floral and leaf border which surrounds the entire composition, while a the boughs of trees show these *pañcayatana* palaces to be situated in a dense forest, populated by birds and monkeys. Also, on the ground floor, the north chapel (*byang khang*) shows halos just like those of Gra thang (Fig.14 Zha lu byang khang), while there are throne fragments and remains of the ceiling *garuḍa* in the Yum chen mo Prajñāpāramitā lha khang (Fig.15: *garuḍa* of ceiling of Yum chen mo chapel Zha lu) on Zha lu's upper floor. The ceiling medallions behind the Zha lu Garuḍa are the same vivid tones of green, blue and burgundy red which are characteristic of the palette of Gra thang.

Due to the clear parallels of the Zha lu stucco thrones with the archive photos taken by Maraini and Mele during Tucci's expeditions to g.Ye dmar, rKyang bu, gNas gsar and Gra thang, this archive photo of Zha lu's Prajñāpāramitā chapel provides yet one more element to further refine our understanding of the aesthetics governing the stucco statues popular in central and southern Tibet in mid-11th century[31] (Fig.16 Su Bai archive photo: Zha lu ca 1962**)** The medallion robes in thick brocade fabric worn by the Bodhisattva of Gra thang in clay are the slightly later echo of the brocades worn by the Bodhisattva of Zha lu's Prajñāpāramitā chapel. The medallion fabrics rendered in clay and the medallion fabrics rendered in the mural paintings are merely a transposition of medium, it may be said that the robes are virtually identical and these robes are the ancient Tibetan style of robe as documented in the 'Bis mda' Vairocana statues, the Dunhuang mural paintings of the Tibetan royalty (cf. Fig.4 'Bis mda'). Moreover, beside this Bodhisattva, the Buddha wears a robe made of heavy fabric with highly defined thin pleats, similar to those of g.Ye dmar (Fig.17 Zho nang Buddha photographed by Fosco Maraini). It is traditionally believed that Atiśa presided over the consecration of this Zha lu chapel in 1045, and it would seem that the use of the ancient Tibetan style of robe is to be understood as a reflection of the revival of the ancient teachings of the first diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet at the moment of their junction with the renewal of direct influence from India of which Atiśa is the prime example of the orthodoxy of Indian teachings in Tibet.

In order to consider the stylistic basis of Gra thang, we quote Tucci's from first description of Gra thang in 1956 from *To Lhasa and Beyond*:

> The eight Bodhisattvas, as dignified and majestic as kings, stood around the central Buddha statue in the main cell. …The Bodhisattvas were covered with broad draperies of obviously Persian pattern, wide robes embroidered with medallions enclosing lions and birds facing each other. …Around the abstracted, lofty Buddhas, hosts of saints, (and Bodhisattva) were ranged, as expressive as portraits, yet set in a hieratic collectedness remindful of Byzantine paintings. There might have been more than a casual coincidence of spiritual attitude to that resemblance. The Hellenistic-Roman painting school drove with slow waves into the heart of Central Asiad and left traces of its

> advance up to the threshold of China. The Dranang frescoes may be the last, indirect echo of that influence, which crossed Asia and tailed off in the land of Snows.[32]

Tucci qualified these remarks in 1973 in Tibet, where he stated that there was obvious Sassanian influence in the fabric design, of which examples were found in g.Ye dmar, rKyang bu, Bya sa, gNas gsar and Gra thang, and in his opinion "this proved that the fashion of Sassanian clothing or of Sassanian inspiration lasted long in Tibet, perhaps it was adopted by the nobles and passed from the nobility to the images of the Bodhisattva (which are known as *rgyal sras*, "Sons of Kings."[33] Thus Tucci recognized these as the medallion robes of the ancient Tibetan aristocracy, which was corroborated by studies of Fujieda and Stoddard who examined Tibetan sovereigns' portraits in Dunhuang murals.[34] To date, the earliest iconographic representation of Buddha and Bodhisattva wearing Tibetan robes is found in the 'Bis mda' chapel dated 806 A.D.[35] which we examined earlier. Although the pattern of the fabric has been overpainted as recently as 1992, 'Bis mda' Vairocana wears a robe of a Tibetan sovereign, of thick fabric, quilted, with a double lapel collar and the edge of long sleeves in contrasting fabric, quite similar to those painted in Dunhuang caves commissioned during the Tibetan Occupation. The conceptual super-imposing of Vairocana as universal sovereign with the almost deified supremacy and desire of legitimation of the Tibetan sovereign resulted in the representation of Vairocana in Tibetan royal garb in the ninth century. At the same time that Vitali considered that medallion robes were adopted by Tibetan culture through the prolonged cosmopolitan links with Central Asia during the sPu rgyal dynasty, he also noted that such fabrics were also found on eighth and ninth century Kashmiri sculptures. Vitali considered that the artists of Gra thang were consciously adopting the Tibetan royal or aristocratic robes for their art.[36] The broad geographic range of medallion fabric popularity has been further studied notably by Krishna Riboud, Evgeny Lubo-Lesnitchenko of the Hermitage, Valrae Reynolds of the Newark Museum and Karel Otavsky of Abegg- Stiftung,[37] while Roger Goepper studied it particularly in relation to west Tibet and A lci.

As for the robes of narrow pleated fabric, to my knowledge, the earliest representation of a similar fabric is a monk's robe in a cohort of mourners beside the Tibetan sovereign in Dunhuang cave 158, commissioned during the Tibetan occupation ca. 830 (Fig.18). Subsequently, similar robes with narrow pleats in cascade are painted at the Bezekliq grottoes late ninth to tenth century. These robes may be a somewhat misunderstood representation of monk's robes in a Kashmiri esthetic, of which sculptures and clay votive amulets *tsha tsha* were known in Khotan and along the Silk Road in the seventh to ninth century, as well as in the north-eastern provinces of Tibet.[38] The representation of such pleated robes as well as the medallion robe among the Tibetan paintings at Dunhuang implies that both models corresponded to a reflection of Tibetan taste at this time such as known from the very well known eighth century Kashmiri statue found in Tibet, now in the Asia Society, New York, where the Buddha is dressed in monastic robes of thin pleats, seated on a bolster with a medallion motif, and at his feet two lions frolic gaily, just as they do at the feet of several Buddha in Gra thang (cf. Fig.1). Krishna Riboud (Riboud 1981:140) has raised an important issue—in mural paintings of Afrasiab, or Dunhuang, some of the fabrics may be an artist's glorification, completely beyond the actual textile technology of the time and the question may be asked whether

such pleats—certainly used subsequently and even today—were part of the weaving and textile technology during the Tibetan ninth century occupation of Dunhuang?[39] (Note that the elongated nimbus for head and body of Gra thang is indeed a form seen in the Bezekliq murals of ninth-12th century, but just as the folds of the Bezekliq robes reflect Kashmir and ultimately Gupta models, so may the nimbus also reflect Indian prototypes as known from Kashmir and Nepal—cf. M. Henss 1997:163).

The Style and Iconography of Gra thang Ground Floor Paintings

The preceding remarks help to establish a context for the art of Gra thang. Except for the two distinctive scenes of Indian style representation for Tārā, Mañjuśrī and Maitreya, all the mural paintings have a uniform composition of a seated Buddha on a lion throne, surrounded by an eclectic crowd of faithful. All of the Buddha others are represented with loose robes of extraordinary fabrics, with borders in contrasting fabrics of either geometric or floral motifs, all of the Buddha wear Tibetan boots such as worn by the 'Bis mda' Buddha which may be compared to a woolen felt boot recovered from a Tibetan fort in Khotan, now conserved in the Stein collection, British Museum, inv. Mazar Tagh .0041). All of the Buddha wear an over garment held in place with a hook, which, although it was described in the Indian Vinaya, became a particular monks' emblem in China as of the sixth century. The hook *gouniou*, for which term I thank Dr. John Kieschnick of Academica Sinica in Taipei, is typical of the Chinese robe, whence it passed to Korea, then to Japan, as illustrated in this eighth century statue from Sokkuram, Korea (Fig.19).[40] However, except for Śākyamuni, the robes worn by the Gra thang Buddha are not monastic robes—not Tibetan monastic robes, nor Indian nor Chinese, but rather, the cut of the Buddhas' robes associates the long, wide sleeves and the thick fabrics of the Tibetan sovereigns with the drapery effect of a monks' robe emphasized by the hook which grasps the edge of the upper robe.

Already in Yulin cave 25, decorated during the Tibetan occupation of early ninth century, there are Buddha wearing monastic robes with the *gouniou* hook. Tibetans would have thus encountered such robes among the Chinese monks they met at Yulin and Dunhuang. In closer proximity to Gra thang, at bSam yas during the late eighth and early ninth century, there were Chinese monks. The first abbot of bSam yas studied in Sichuan with disciples of Master Kim, a Korean monk established in Sichuan, and he returned to Tibet translating and propagating teachings of Chinese Buddhist schools notably on Vairocana.[41] The representation of the hook of the Chinese monastic robe painted at Gra thang, and sculpted in clay at g.Ye dmar, Zho nang, as well, may be understood as (compare Fig. *supra*) an allusion to teachings of Chinese Buddhism, notably those centered on Vairocana, which were propagated in central and northeastern Tibet during late eighth-ninth century and which were part of the teachings re-emphasized during the revival of Buddhism in the tenth and 11th century. As transposition from this *gouinou* model hook, in a stroke of genius the Gra thang artist has painted Śākyamuni's robe with a clasp of the head of a *makara* (Fig.20).

Yet if we examine the faces of the painted Buddha of Gra thang, whether Śākyamuni or the others, in comparison to the faces of the painted Buddha at g.Ye dmar, identified by inscription in Tibetan language as "painted in the Indian manner", indeed the aesthetic is virtually identical for the conical *uṣṇīṣa* with jewel finial, tiny

curls, the slight widow's peak of the hairline, the arched eyebrows, the chromatic modeling of the face, the proportion of the earlobes, and the distinctive 'Pala' dip in the line of the upper eyelid.[42] All of these are Tibetan examples of the 11th century, yet the Buddha of the 1073 manuscript from Nalanda, now in the Asia Society, New York, do generally correspond to this aesthetic model, although there are some marked differences in line of the upper eyelid. There is clear definition in Tibet of this Indian style, which may appear in Gra thang, whether the figures wear Tibetan or Indian or monastic robes. Note also the Indian tiered crowns worn by several Bodhisattva of Gra thang (wearing Tibetan robes) and by Bodhisattva at Zha lu dressed in dhoti and scarves, which became very popular throughout the 12th and 13th centuries in Tibet, as documented by the 1998 exhibition *Sacred Visions*, curated by S. M. Kossak and J. C. Singer (1998).

The diversity of the entourage of the Buddha at Gra thang, as the Zha lu mural paintings, appears to be significant. One illumination of the 1073 Nalanda manuscript shows a Buddha flanked by two monks with green skin. Was this a fashion of the times? For now, the meaning is not clear. Yet, at Gra thang, and at Zha lu, it would appear that there are Bodhisattva recognizable not only by their brilliant color skins of green and blue or red, but also by their *urna*, the "third eye" in the middle of the forehead. The Gra thang Bodhisattva wear the Tibetan robes of medallion or floral or geometric patterns as well as crown and jewelry. Vitali and Henss both remarked the variety of crown types, sometimes with the turban typical of the Tibetan sovereigns of the sPu rgyal dynasty (see Fig.3). There are men wearing monastic robes, some quite prominently displaying the *gouniou* but what is striking in these figures, who may be identified as the Śrāvaka, those who first heard the doctrine, is the clear differentiation of facial features, not only for age, but also for beard, moustache and eyebrow forms, which do seem to be an allusion to a multiethnic or multicultural entourage of supporters. According to Shi Weixiang, of the Dunhuang Research Institute, this theme first became prominent in Dunhuang with the caves decorated during the Tibetan occupation.[43] However, already in Ajanta in cave 17, there is the scene of universal predication of the Buddha. The architectural similarity of the main chapel of the Lhasa Jokhang and several doorways to cave temples of Ajanta have been well documented as are the presence of Indian (and Nepalese) Buddhist masters in Tibet during the eighth century. While some remained in Tibet, some Indian masters transited via Tibet in order to reach the oasis of the silk road, such as Dunhuang, and further east to Xian, the then capital of the Tang empire.[44] Thus it is not impossible that Tibetans were influential in the introduction of the theme of the universal predication to Dunhuang. In Tabo, in the late tenth century mural paintings, this theme is again encountered. The presence of Chinese or central Asian or Indian monks in the multicultural entourage at Gra thang and at Zha lu may thus be understood as consistent with the Indian model of a crowd composed of several different nationalities and ethnic groups (cf. fig.136, Deborah Klimburg Salter, *Tabo A Lamp for the Kingdom*, 1998). While the Tibetan donor of Zha lu wears a "cloud collar" just like the attendant to the Tibetan sovereign depicted in cave 159, Dunhuang, the "Chinese" donor at Zha lu and the similar donor figures at Gra thang may be wearing on their head a slight misunderstanding of Chinese coiffures (cf. British Museum, Stein collection, Bodhisattva of glass bowl, from cave 17, ninth c., and the attendants surrounding Kṣitigarbha, cave 17, dated 963, pl.19, Whitfield and Farrer, *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas*, London, 1990).

The representations of Bodhisattva dressed according to Indian fashion in *dhoti* and scarves are distinct from the multicultural crowd. Beneath the first Buddha of the north wall, a Tārā is visible (see Fig.7). If the Bodhisattva in Tibetan robes already showed a tendency to chromatic modeling of the body and face, this is even more marked in the representation of the green Tārā. Her body proportions are voluptuous in accord with the Indian prescribed canons of proportion. She is seated on a lotus pedestal, so gracefully that she almost breathes. An attendant's head is visible beneath her elbow. According to the initial analyses of Singer, reaffirmed in the exhibit catalogue, the attendants are Bṛkuṭi and Succimukha,[45] whose blue face may just be glimpsed in the Gra thang mural. For Indian jewelry, Tārā's toe ring is indicated by the position of the foot. In comparison to the iconometry and modeling of Indian esthetic, whether from Ajanta or from manuscripts, the Gra thang Tārā is very faithful to the model, yet far too damaged to be really analysed. On the far east wall, at the feet of Śākyamuni are seated Mañjuśrī and Maitreya in metaphysical debate. They too wear Indian costumes, notably the multiple strands of seed pearls and the double set of earrings, viz. a disc earring suspended from the earlobe but a round gold band with floral ornament at the upper edge of the ear, approximately at the height of the temple. This model of earring is known from Ajanta.

The two pairs of earrings are intriguing, and may indicate yet another Tibetan transposition of iconography. In Ajanta, the double sets of earrings are worn by only females, while in Tabo, they are worn only by Bodhisattva. The same happens at Zha lu, where the Indian Bodhisattva wear such adornment, while at Gra thang, the double set of earring is worn by not only by Maitreya and Mañjuśrī, but as well, many of the Bodhisattva wearing Tibetan robes and Tibetan turban and hair ornaments. In terms of Gra thang iconographic scheme, the representation of the Green Tārā in Tibet is linked with the re-introduction of her cult by Atiśa, while the scene of Mañjuśrī and Maitreya in debate has been related to a dream by Atiśa, according to J. C. Singer and M. Henss,[46] and all are represented in a quintessentially Indian garments. From whom did the Gra thang artists learn these distinctly Indian elements? Were there Indian painters engaged in Tibet following the path of Atiśa and other Indian masters? Or, as known since the constructions of seventh and eighth century, the Lhasa Jokhang and bSam yas, were there Nepalese artists working then in central Tibet? Kaḥ thog Si tu considered that the wall paintings were rendered in the ancient Nepalese style. The closest parallel to Gra thang of extant paintings would appear to be Zha lu, where Newar painters were actively commissioned in the 14th century , but probably participated in the 11th century chapels as well. Already at Khojarnath, not far from Tabo, as of 996, Nepalese artists were working,[47] alongside Kashmiri artists. At Zha lu, it is important to recall that the founder of Zha lu was in a relation of patronage with Nepalese rulers,[48] that Atiśa arrived at Zha lu after his year in western Tibet, where he had traveled from Vikramaśila, yet en route Atiśa visited Nepal for close to two years and founded a monastery in Kathmandu.[49] The 11th century was a period of great interest in Kathmandu among Tibetans, who traveled there en route to India and stayed as disciples in the Valley.[50] Despite the Tibetan costumes of many figures and the multiple ethnic groups represented by some of the faces of the Śrāvaka, on the whole, there is a clear Indian matrix for the proportions of the body and the facial features. Still, rather than the Indian emphasis on outline, the painters adopted the

Nepalese techniques of painting which emphasize chromatic modeling and shading to render volume. Direct comparison to Indian manuscripts indicates sufficiently marked esthetic difference to consider that a direct transition from Indian esthetics was the choice adopted in the 11th century temples of central Tibet, and this model was also chosen for many portable works of art. Who were the artists of Gra thang, Zha lu, g.Ye dmar and the shrines and temples of this vicinity? Were these artists Tibetans? Or, perhaps, were the Tibetans the accomplished sculptors in clay working in tandem with Newar painters who followed the Indian and Nepalese Buddhist masters invited to Tibet to teach and translate in the revival of Indian Buddhism which characterized the *phyi dar*. For now, such questions remain unanswered, as does the question of the liturgies underlying the decoration of Gra thang. Even so, certainly this formative period left a strong imprint in both liturgy and aesthetics, as evidenced by the vast quantity of translations and transmissions of teachings by Indian and Nepalese masters in Tibet, and by those who admired their artistic heritage. The talent of the sculptors and painters of Gra thang may be recognized by their keen aesthetic sensitivity for form and color shown in the nuances of palette and the sense of volume and perspective which rhythm the compositions. This talent is combined with a remarkable capacity to absorb multiple foreign influences, skillfully integrated into a harmonious composition. The paintings of Gra thang provide valiant testimony to the genius of these 11th century artists.

Notes

1. G. Tucci, *To Lhasa and Beyond*, Roma, 1956.
2. R.Vitali, *Early Temples of Central Tibet*, London, 1990; Michael Henss, "A Unique Treasure of Early Tibetan Art: The Eleventh Century Wall paintings of Drathang Gonpa," *Orientations,* 1994: 48-53; and M. Henss in J. C. Singer and Phillip Denwood (eds.), *Tibetan Art*, London "The Eleventh century Murals of Drathang Gonpa" 1997: 160-169. H. Stoddard briefly discussed the life of Gra pa mngon shes and the style of the paintings in her article "Early Tibetan Paintings: Sources and Styles (11th -14th centuries A.D.)," *Archives of Asian Art*, 1996:26-50. R. Vitali also discussed Gra thang in a chapter of V. Chan, *Tibet Handbook*, 1994:393-399, "Dranang: Xixia Pala Murals Long Thought Lost to the World."
3. Wangdu in *Wenwu*, 1986, Vol.3, pp.68-87 cited by A. Chayet, *Art et Archéologie du Tibet*, Paris, 1994, pp.145-146.
4. Ngag dbang phun tshogs has recently written two articles on Gra thang, one discussing the history of the monastery, its appearance and iconography, and the other presenting the biography of the founder.: Ngag dbang phun tshogs (1994), "gTer ston Gra pa mngon shes kyi rnam thar rags bsdus bdud rtsi'i zegs ma," pp.21-26; et "Gra nang Gra thang dgon gyi byung ba brjod pa rnam dkar dge ba'i zhing sa," pp.47-53/63, *Bod ljongs nang bstan*, Lhasa. I thank him for giving me a copy of these articles, for hand-correcting all typographical errors, and for fruitful discussions during my visits to Gra thang.
5. H. E. Richardson personal communication 29/4/96; see H. E. Richardson "Ministers of the Tibetan Kingdom," *The Tibet Journal*, 1997, p.67.
6. The clan name became Zhang around 900 A.D., Ngag dbang, 1994b, p.22.
7. G. N. Roerich, *Blue Annals*, Delhi, 1979 (translation of *Deb sngon*, 1476, 'Gos lo tsa ba) henceforth *BA*: 95 (general biography of Gra pa mngon shes is 93-96 passim).
8. *BA:* 34, *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (1546, dPa' bo Rinpoche) (1979, Beijing) Vol.1, p.481 (henceforth *KPGT*) discusses the bSam yas *vinaya* and teaching transmissions to Bla chen then back to central Tibet. Bla chen's biography in *BA, pp.*63-67; his 35 year stay at lDan tig: *BA,* p.67. The chronology of Bla chen remains to be firmly estab-

lished. Tucci proposed 892-975 (*Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, 1949, p.83), while R. A. Stein (Tibetica Antiqua V, *BEFEO*, Vol.77, 1988, p.35 n.20) cited Samten Karmay's quotation of Bon po texts for 952 as his birth year (*Treasury of Good Sayings,* 1972, p.107, n.1). The dates 832-915 are those adapted by H. E. Richardson and H. Uebach (see H. Uebach, 1990), "On Dharma-colleges and their teachers in the ninth century Tibetan Empire" in P. Daffina, *Indo-Sino-Tibetica. Studi in Onore di Luciano Petech*, Roma, pp.393-417).

9. On sPug ye shes dbyangs, cf. A. Heller , "Early Ninth century images of Vairochana from Eastern Tibet", *Orientations,* 1994 (6), pp.74-79 and A. Heller, "Buddhist images and rock inscriptions from Eastern Tibet, Part IV" in E. Steinkellner, (ed.), *Tibetan Studies*, Wien, 1997, pp.385-403, which research is based on R. A. Stein, *Les Tribus des Marches Sino-Tibétaines*, 1959, p.76 (and n.214) and the Dunhuang manuscript of the Bibliothèque Nationale, PT 996, the lineage of Khri 'ga' monastery, previously studied by M. Lalou, "Document tibétain sur l'expansion du Dhyana chinois" *Journal Asiatique*, 1939, pp.505-523. I thank M. Kapstein for fruitful discussion of the translations of these Dunhuang manuscripts, and for his suggestions on corrections of the work by Lalou.
10. P. Demiéville, *Le Concile de Lhasa*, Paris, 1987, pp.14-15 (for discussion of PT 116 and 117); 283 for discussion of spread of teachings; for discussion of Sichuan and bSam yas relations, cf. J. Broughton "Early Chan Schools in Tibet" 1983, pp.1-69, in R. Gimello and P. Gregory, *Studies in Chan and Hua Yen*, Hawaii. The most complete study to date of sPug ye shes dbyangs and his work, Bun' ei Otokawa, "New Fragments of the *rnal 'byor chen por bsgom pa'i don* from Tabo" in C. A. Scherrer-Schaub and E. Steinkellner (eds.), *Tabo Studies II*, Roma, 1999, pp.99-161.
11. Vitali, 1990: 39, n.45 cites the *Myang ral chos 'byung* (13th cent.) for this information; he considers that the *vinaya* traditions of sTod 'dul (sTod mNga' ris) and sMad 'dul (mDo smad/, A mdo, east Tibet) found their point of intersection at the construction of rKyang bu, some 40 years prior to the construction of Gra thang (Vitali, 1990, pp.60-61, n.158).
12. Cf. Stoddard, 1996, p.37. This is confirmed in the *BA,* p.97 (biography of Gra pa mngon shes) but the biography of Ma gcig in *BA*: pp.221-226 does not mention this at all.
13. Vitali, 1990, p.49, n.68 cites the *Rin chen gter mdzod* (19th cen.) for this information, based on earlier sources. In personal communication, Ngag dbang phun tshogs repeatedly confirmed bSam yas' importance for Gra pa mngon shes.
14. Vitali, Henss and Chayet all indicated this marked similarity with bSam yas (op.cit.).
15. Cf. Ruegg, *The Life of Bu ston Rin po che,* Roma, 1966, p.131. This biography was written ca. 1370.
16. Ngag dbang, 1994, p.52.
17. P. Sorenson, *The Royal Mirror of Genealogies,* Wiesbaden, 1994, pp.494-496, n.8 first drew my attention to Kaḥ thog's description of icons inside Gra thang, cited by Henss 1997. See Kaḥ thog Si tu's *dBus gtsang gnas yig*, Lhasa, 1999, pp.123-124.
18. For example, Kaḥ thog Si tu refers to the statues of door protector/guardians on the ground floor and the middle level as "Kin kang" while Ngag dbang 1994 names the ground floor deities as Acala and Hayagrīva, which correspond to comparative cycles of statues at g.Ye dmar (cf. Vitali, 1990: pl.24, 26, 27). According to M. Henss (1997, p.20, n.18), Kaḥ thog's described Sras mkhar dgu thog as having "old Newar style murals" (M. Henss, "Milarepa's Tower" *Oriental Art*, 2/1997, pp.15-23).
19. R. A. Stein, *Dictionnaire des Mythologies*, III. Bouddhisme sino-japonais et tibétain, Paris, p.15, explains the representation and symbolic meaning of the door guardians called Kin-Kang, who are a doubling of Vajrapani in order to protect the 1000 Buddhas of the Bhadrakalpa.
20. H. Stoddard has recently studied the ancient mythology of Pe har, cf. Stoddard, 1997,

but her chronological attribution has been questioned by L. Van der Kuijp (1998, *Journal of Asian Studies*, review of *Les Habitants du Toit du Monde*). A few decades earlier than the construction of Gra thang, Atiśa was in Tibet, staying at sNye thang monastery and often visiting bSam yas, where he stayed in the dPe har dkor mdzod gling, probably to be understood as the "treasure chamber" (dkor.mdzod) of the vihāra (Pe har/ transcription for sanscrit vihār(a)). cf. H. E. Richardson, *A Corpus of Tibetan Inscriptions*, 1985, p.27 for the discussion Pe har/vihāra, and cf. H. Eimer (ed.), *rNam thar rgyas pa*, 1979: section 302 for Atiśa's stay at bSam yas.

21. In 2000, Ngag dbang phun tshogs confirmed that the central image had been Thub pa gangs can mtsho rgyal. Cf. P. Sorensen, 1994, p.495 on Vairocana Gangs can/chen mtsho. It is to be noted that the Tibetan description of the Vairocana of 'Bis mda' monastery refers to this aspect of Vairocana (wearing Tibetan robes and boots) by the name Thub pa Gangs chen mtsho: the aspect is described as a Chinese style (rgya lugs) (citation of Tibetan article is given hereafter in note 27) This attribution of "Chinese" may perhaps be used due to the introduction to Tibet of the *Mahāvairocana tantra* and the *Avataṃsaka* liturgy from China. This is how we understand the remarks of Kaḥ thog Si tu that the ground floor was of Chinese inspiration, insofar as the liturgy was imported from China. I thank Dan Martin for discussion on this topic.
22. The *sBa' bzhed,* 1980: 4 describes utilization of clay for statues in ancient times and *sBa' bzhed,* 1980, p.20 qualifies clay statues as the Tibetan medium and technique (*bod lugs*) during the sPu rgyal dynasty.
23. This hypothesis on the drawings of Ma cig is due to Heather Stoddard, whom I wish to thank for this information.
24. Lionel Fournier, letter of June 6, 1998, in accordance with the CD Rom on Gra thang, Zha lu and g.Ye dmar he compiled in 1997-1998.
25. Tucci is categoric that the Ten Buddha can relate to many cycles: Tucci (1940/1989) IV/1, p.120.
26. Heller, op.cit, 1994/1997a/b; See A. Heller, "P.T. 7a, P.T. 108, P.T. 240 and Beijing bsTan 'gyur 3489: ancient Tibetan rituals dedicated to Vairocana" in press in the E. Gene Smith felicitation volume, R. Prats (ed.), Wisdom Press.
27. gNya' gong dkon mchog and Padma 'bum, 1994, p.56: *de yi dbus su brten pa lha dgu'i gtso bo thub dbang gangs can mtsho rgyal khru nyer lnga pa seng khri pad zla'i gdan la rgya lugs longs sku'i cha byad kyis phyag gynis mnyam bzhag gis bzhugs shing/* in the center the principal one of the 9 gods (is) Thub dbang gangs can mtsho rgyal, 25 khru measures (in height) seated on a lion throne with lotus cushion, having the appearance of the *sambhogakāya* body of the Chinese system, his two hands in meditative equipoise. When S. Karmay visited 'Bis mda', his informants gave identification of the Vairocana of 'Bis mda' as the Gangs can mtsho form of Vairocana, cf. S. Karmay, "Inscriptions dating from the Reign of bTsan po Khri lde srong btsan," PIATS GRAZ, 1997, p.478. His informant gDugs dkar tshe ring has published a long article discussing the history of 'Bis mda', sPug Ye shes dbyangs and the icongraphy of the temple in *Zangzu Lishi Zongjian Yanjiu*, Beijing, 1996,pp.283-328. I thank Gregor Verhufen for the reference to this article.
28. The *Vairocanābhisambodhi tantra* is known in China and Japan as the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*. Jayaprabha (early 9th century) in a ritual among the Tibetan commentaries, Peking bsTan 'gyur, 3489, Vol.77, p.224, (fol.361b) stipulates that the Bhagavat Vairocana may be venerated either in the golden body and garments of royalty (crown, diadem, braid, upper and lower silk cloth garments) or in the appearance of Śākyamuni (*pad ma seng ge gdan de la sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnam par snang mdzad sger gyi kha dog thor tshugs dang dbu rgyan dang cod pan can dar la'i stod g.yogs dang smad g.yogs can nam/ shak ya thub pa'i cha byed dang kha dog dang dbyibs ji skad du grags par 'ang rung ste/*)
29. Cf, Vitali, 1990, p.92.

30. Vitali and Henss both indicated this parallel as well.
31. Lionel Fournier first drew attention to the stucco statues of Zha lu in his courses on Tibetan Art History at the Ecole du Louvre, 1996. I thank Heather Stoddard for calling this photograph to my attention, and Lionel Fournier who was able to localize it in Zha lu's Yum chen mo chapel due to his compilation of the CD archive on Zha lu, g.Ye dmar and Gra thang (personal communications of May 1998). The photograph of the statues of the Prajñāpāramitā chapel was published with the label "Zha lu" , pl.34, Su Bai, *Archeological Investigation of Monasteries of the Tibetan Buddhism*, 1996.
32. Tucci, 1956, pp.147-148.
33. Tucci, 1973, p.177 and note 153.
34. H. Karmay (née Stoddard), *Early Sino-Tibetan Art* 1975, p.15 and "Tibetan Costume: 7th to 11th centuries," Paris, 1977; A. Fujieda, 1964, was the first to read the Tibetan inscription identifying the ruler in Dunhuang cave 158, but Pelliot had already identified his Tibetan nationality.
35. Cf. Heller, 1994/Heller 1997 op.cit. and Karmay, 1997 op.cit.
36. Vitali, 1990, p.52, and notes 85-87.
37. K. Riboud and G. Vial, "Quelques considérations techniques concernant quatre soieries connues" in *Documenta textilia*, Munich, 1981, pp.129-155, V. Reynolds, "Luxury Textiles in Tibet" in J. C. Singer and P. Denwood, (eds.) *Tibetan Art*, London, 1997, pp.118-131; K. Otavsky, *Entlang der Seidenstrasse: Riggisberger Berichte*, Riggisberg 1998; R. Goepper, *Alchi*, London, 1996.
38. Plate 117, *The Ancient Art in Xinjiang China*, Urumqi, 1994, showing Kashmiri statue excavated at Domoko, with seventh-eighth cent. inscription, now preserved in Hotan Museum. This statue is also illustrated in D. Leidy, "Kashmir and China: a Note about Styles and Dates", *Orientations*, 1997, Vol.2, pp.66-70.
39. K. Riboud, "Quelques considérations techniques concernant quatre soieries connues" in *Documenta textilia,* Festschrift für Sigrid Müller-Christensen, Munchen, 1981, pp.129-142.
40. My thanks to R. Whitfield and Youngsook Pak, for these photographs from their personal archive.
41. J. Broughton "Early Chan Schools in Tibet" 1983, pp.1-69, in R. Gimello and P. Gregory, *Studies in Chan and Hua Yen*, Hawaii. I thank M. Kapstein who first drew my attention to the biography of Master Kim, the Korean who so influenced Tibetan Buddhism. See M. Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism,* Oxford, 2000.
42. Compare both paintings and several of the statues of Buddha as well: Lo Bue, 1998: *Tibet templi scomarsi fotografati da Fosco Maraini*, Torino, pl.72, pp.75, 86.
43. Shi Weixiang, 1989, p.32 "L'art Magnifique de la fresque de Dun Huang" in Duan Wenjie, (ed.) *5000 Years of Chinese Art, Les Fresques de Dunhuang (Tang-Yuan)*, Vol.15, Bruxelles, pp.16-40.
44. S. Hodge 1994, pp.57-83. "Considerations on the dating and geographical origins of the Mahavairocana-abhisambodhi-sutra" in T. Skorupski and U. Pagel, *The Buddhist Forum III*, Tring. Hodge discusses the itineraries of the Indian masters who reached Dunhuang and Xian by crossing Tibet in early eighth century.
45. J. C. Singer, "An Early Tibetan Painting revisited: the Astamahabhaya Tara in the Ford Collection" *Orientations,* 1998, Vol.9, pp.65-73.
46. Singer,1994, p.108, n.60 "Painting in Central Tibet, ca. 950-1400" *Artibus Asiae,* citing the dream according to later Tibetan historian's account of KPGT and Henss, 1997, p.167 citing Atiśa's biography in Tibetan and German summary by H. Eimer.
47. First discussed by Tucci, 1949, p.684, n.72, and more thoroughly by R. Vitali, *The Kingdom of Gu.ge Pu.hrang,* Dharamsala, 1996, p.270 passim.
48. Vitali, 1990, p.96, n.67; This data is further confirmed by a geneology of the Zha lu Founder which has just been located in a private collection, which is provisionally dated to early 15th century, but based on earlier sources. Jo bo lCe btsun gdung rabs (fol.22) specifies that the donors to Zha lu during the residence of Atiśa in the Ri phug

hermitage beside the monastery, were primarily Nepalese, Indian and Tibetans from dBus gTsang, yet the Nepalese were the most important of all. Cf. G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, Roma, 1949, pp.656-662.

49. H. Eimer (ed. & trans.), *rNam thar rgyas pa* (biography of Atiśa), sections 248-249, Vol.1 and Vol.2, Wiesbaden, 1979.
50. E. Lo Bue has thoroughly reviewed all of the pertinent literature of the colophons of the Tibetan canon and the Tibetan historical literature tracing the role of the Nepalese in the transmission of the Buddhist heritage to Tibet. cf. Lo Bue, 1997, "The role of Newar Scholars in transmitting the Indian Buddhist heritage to Tibet (c.750-1200), in S. Karmay and P. Sagant (eds.), *Les Habitants du Toit du Monde*, Nanterre, pp.629-658.

FIG.1 Gra thang, detail of enthroned Buddha surrounded by Bodhisattva and Śrāvaka, height of Buddha ca. 100 cm, 1083-90 A.D., photograph by A. Heller, 1999.

FIG.2 Gra thang, detail of seated Bodhisattva, foliage and sculpted halo, height of Bodhisattva ca. 55 cm, 1083-90 A.D photograph by A. Heller, 1995.

FIG.3 Gra thang, detail of seated Bodhisattva, height of Bodhisattva ca. 80 cm, 1083-90 A.D., photograph by A. Heller, 1999.

FIG.4 Vairocana (detail), 'Bis mda' lha khang, height ca. 150 cm, stone and clay infill, 804 A.D.after Liu I se.

FIG.5 Vairocana and Eight Bodhisattva, lDan ma brag, ca. 250 x 250 cm ,
stone, 816 A.D., photograph by Elizabeth Benard, 1990

FIG.6 Painted Foliage border from Ajanta doorway to cave 17, late fifth century, photograph by A. Heller, 1999.

FIG.7 Sculpted Foliage border from Ajanta doorway to cave 2, late fifth century, photograph by A. Heller, 1999.

FIG.8 Tārā, Gra thang, height ca. 55 cm., ca. 1083-90, photograph by A. Heller, 1999.

FIG.9 Sculpted clay halo of standing Bodhisattva, height ca. 60 cm, Gra thang, photograph by Lionel Fournier, 1993.

FIG.10 Sculpted clay halo of central Buddha, height ca. 75 cm, Gra thang, photograph by Lionel Fournier, 1993

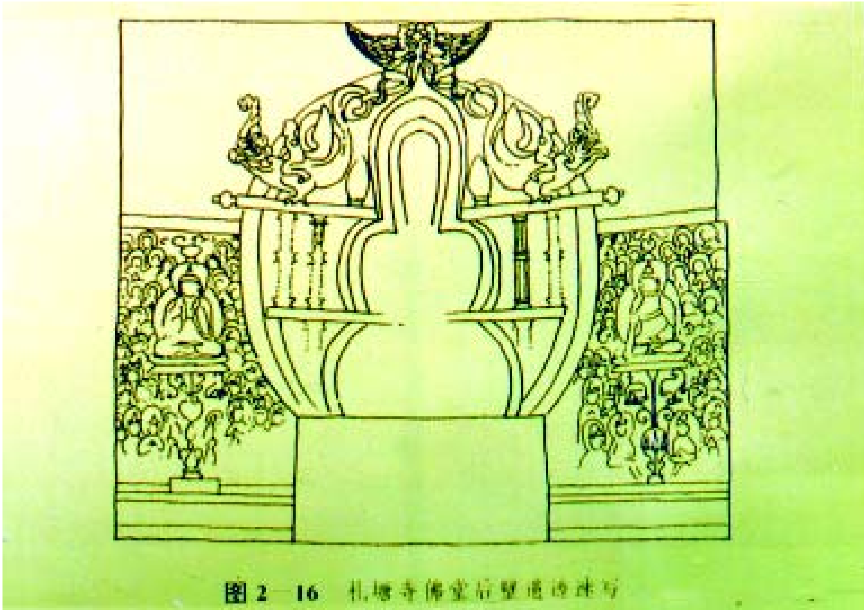

FIG.11 Plan of the throne of the central Buddha by Su Bai.

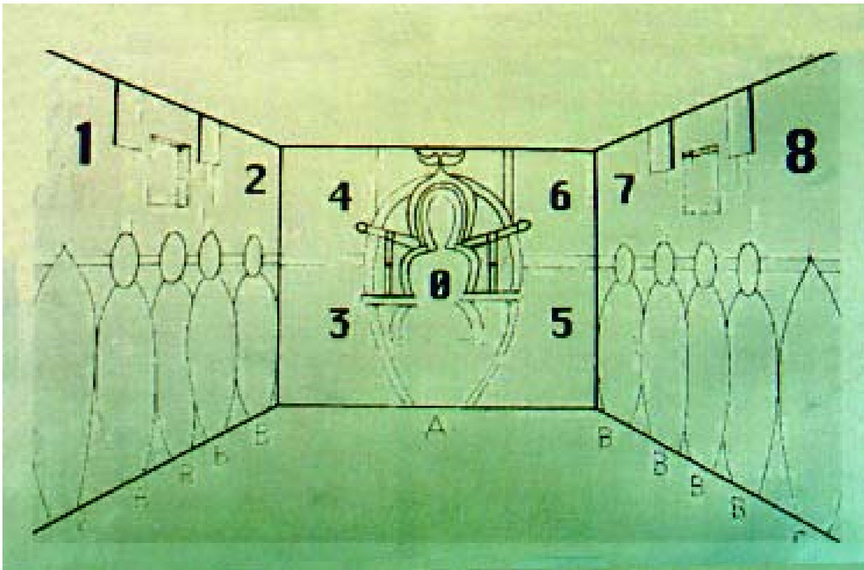

FIG.12 Plan of the layout of the Dri gtsang khang, Gra thang, by Lionel Fournier, 1994.

FIG.12a Detail of *makara* and rider, Gra thang, photograph by A. Heller, 1999

FIG.12b Archive photograph of Gra thang Bodhisattva statue by Pietro Mele, ca.1948.

FIG.13 Zha lu sgo khang, photograph by A. Heller, 1995.

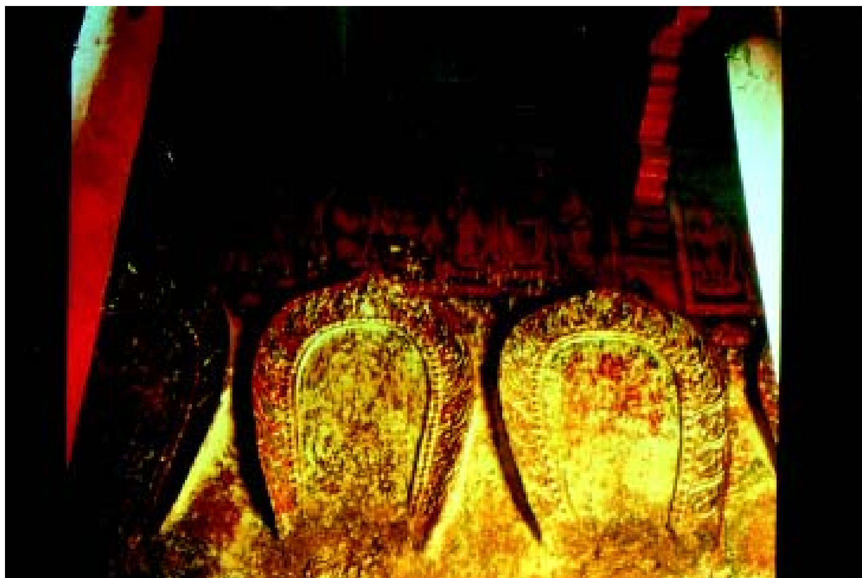

FIG.14 Detail of Zha lu byang khang, clay halo and mural paintings ca. 1045, photograph by Hugo Kreijger, 1992.

FIG.15 Garuḍa on ceiling in Yum chen mo chapel, Zha lu, photograph by Jean-Michel Terrier, 1998.

FIG.16 Yum chen mo clay statues, ca. 1045, archive photograph by Su Bai, ca. 1962.

FIG.17 Buddha (detail) Zho nang monastery, photography by Fosco Maraini.

FIG.18 Mural painting, detail of monks robes in cave 158, Dunhuang.

FIG.19 Buddha statue at Sokkuram, niche 7, Korea, eighth century, photograph by Roderick Whitfield

FIG.20 Śākyamuni, Gra thang, photograph by A. Heller 1999.

Early Tibetan Footprint Thang kas, 12-14th Century

Kathryn Selig Brown

*Thang ka*s displaying handprints and footprints have at least an 800 year history in Tibet. These unusual paintings can be categorized into four general types based on their composition, iconography, date, technique, and support material: footprints outlined in ink on silk supports, footprints flanking a deity and/or a *bla ma*, *bla ma*s or other historical personages with handprints and footprints, and handprints.[1] This article will address a group of eight *thang ka*s from the second category, footprints flanking a deity and/or a *bla ma*, all of which date from the 12th to the 14th century. Insight into the buddhological and historical contexts for these *thang ka*s will be provided by examining a collection of texts written by Phag mo gru pa (1110-1170), the influential bKa' brgyud *bla ma*, whose teachings describe the obtainment and use of footprints on cloth. A brief investigation into the connotations of footprints in other aspects of Tibetan Buddhist culture will add further to an understanding of the *thang ka*s' ritual functions.

The iconography and composition of the footprint *thang ka*s in this category, at the very least those that can be associated with the early bKa' brgyud pa, suggest that they were used as described by Phag mo gru pa: to impart teachings as powerful stand-ins for the *bla ma*. The link between the *thang ka*s and this esoteric function is most strongly suggested by the appearance of Phag mo gru pa and/or his students in a number of these *thang ka*s. In addition, the *thang ka*s' iconography reflects Phag mo gru pa's visualization instructions: the *bla ma*'s footprints and the student's *yi dam*, and in some cases, a portrait of the *bla ma*. In fact, all of the *thang ka*s in this category, save one, (Fig.7), show the footprints flanking a *yi dam*. That six of the eight *thang ka*s examined depict Sahaja Saṃvara and/or Vajravārāhī as the *gtso bo*, *yi dam* associated with the bKa' brgyud sect, are further links between these *thang kas* and Phag mo gru pa's writings.

Phag mo gru pa's "Requesting Footprints"

Phag mo gru pa's "Requesting Footprints" consists of five folios and addresses many aspects of early footprint *thang kas*. Discussions in the text range from how to ask for a *bla ma*'s prints to consecrating the prints and receiving teachings from them.[2] Phag mo gru pa begins with the history of the print-taking tradition. He states that the custom has existed since the time of the Buddha and notes that it was transmitted to Tibet via the Indian teacher Atiśa (982-1054). Although Phag mo gru pa's student 'Jig rten gsum mgon (1143-1217) also traces the footprint tradition back to the Buddha, 'Jig rten gsum mgon comments that the practice was not in the Buddha's teachings (*mdo lung*). And unlike Phag mo gru pa, who states that it was Atiśa who introduced the print-taking tradition to Tibet, 'Jig rten gsum mgon traces the tradition to Mar pa, whom he says brought the imprint of Nāropa's foot to Tibet, made from a crystal (*shel*) Nāropa had imprinted.[3] Because Nāropa was one of Atiśa's teachers, however, this disagreement regarding the exact provenance of footprint *thang ka*s is understandable.

Phag mo gru pa then addresses the question of why one would want the footprints of a teacher in the first place: "Although there are many reasons for this, the

principal purpose is said to be to receive authorization for teachings one has not received."[4] As noted elsewhere, footprints are multivalent symbols in Tibetan culture that signify, among other things, original contact, presence, blessings, and respect and devotion to the teacher,[5] all of which could be reason enough to ask for a teacher's prints. Yet Phag mo gru pa's emphasis on a footprint *thang ka*'s ability to serve as a substitute for the absent teacher indicates that this "principal purpose" imbued such *thang ka*s with a profound significance for those aware of this capability. It appears, however, that knowledge of a footprint *thang ka*'s extraordinary capabilities may have been lost at some point in the past as only one example of a later (i.e. post 14th century) *thang ka* displaying footprints flanking a *bla ma* has surfaced (Fig.10).[6] Furthermore, 17th century references to print *thang ka*s by the Fifth Dalai Lama Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617-1682) and his regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1652-1703) do not indicate that the *thang ka*s possessed any esoteric functions[7] In addition, none of the bKa' brgyud *bla ma*s interviewed for this dissertation revealed knowledge of a footprint *thang ka*'s remarkable abilities.[8] On the other hand, as Phag mo gru pa points out at the end of "Requesting Footprints," this text is "a secret commitment," and it is unlikely that such esoteric knowledge would be revealed to an uninitiated Western woman.

According to Phag mo gru pa, disciples must do certain things when asking for their teacher's footprints such as requesting the footprints three times and offering a flower. The teacher, "one who possesses love, compassion, and the aspiration to enlightenment," is supposed to remain silent for the first and second requests, accepting only on the third request.[9] These instructions suggest that only those who had continual and intimate contact with the *bla ma*, i.e. important disciples, were able to ask for prints.

Once the teacher agrees to make footprints, the student prepares a piece of cotton cloth, readies saffron, which provides the color[10] and gathers offerings such as flowers for the others present at this ceremony, "the yogins or the *sangha*." The saffron is applied to the teacher's feet and then the teacher is asked to put his feet on the cloth.[11] While preparing the cloth and taking the prints, both the teacher and the student should be meditating on the meaning of non-arising (*skye ba med pa*). The instruction to use a clean cloth is particularly interesting because it indicates that the prints were made before the other iconography and thus refutes the suggestion that prints on the front of early *thang ka*s are consecratory. If the prints were consecratory, they would have been applied after the *thang ka* was completed, as is done with handprints on the back of *thang ka*s. The negative reaction of many *bla ma*s (including the Dalai Lama, Tai Situ Rinpoche, and Khamtrul Rinpoche) to the thought of putting their feet on a finished *thang ka*, supports the conclusion that prints were the first items on a print *thang ka* (unless they were applied separately as on Fig.6 and on the McCormick *thang ka*).

Phag mo gru pa's next statement is particularly telling regarding the appearance and significance of footprint *thang ka*s. He states that once the prints have been taken, "Then, it is important to make a good drawing of lac and then conceal it."[12] Thus, both the prints and the *thang ka* are essentially hidden. The fact that Phag mo gru pa specifically instructs to add "drawing" (*ri mo*) to the prints may explain why the footprints appear so stylized—the actual print may be veiled by paint. The requirement to hide the print *thang ka* itself, which Phag mo gru pa repeats later in the text, is indicative of the latent power possessed by the footprints. A *bla ma* in

possession of such a powerful object would not want it to be used by simply anyone, especially anyone whom he might not want to obtain certain teachings.

This first section of the teachings therefore suggests that the basis for early print *thang ka*s associated with the bKa' brgyud pa were real footprints.[13] Because Phag mo gru pa specifies that the *bla ma* must grant permission for the footprints to be taken, it is assumed that the *bla ma* associated with the prints made them while he was alive. Thus, a print *thang ka* not only assumes the status of embodying a *bla ma*, but also serves as a relic of the *bla ma* because the *bla ma* touched the *thang ka* with his feet and/or his hands (*sku bal*, "clothing relics," generally, anything blessed by its connection with a *bla ma*'s body).[14]

In the second section of his teachings, Phag mo gru pa addresses the consecration of the footprint *thang ka*. After making the usual dedication of merit for the ceremony ("I will consecrate these footprints in order that all sentient beings may be endowed with happiness, free from suffering, and attain buddhahood"), the student is to think of himself[15] as a *yi dam* and set out offerings. Then, the student should display the footprints and, contemplating them as empty,[16] chant the *mantra* "*shunya ta dzanya na ta*" [*śūnyata jñānata*] three times. The desired result is that the student thinks of the footprints as the *bla ma*.[17] After more instructions on visualization, the *bla ma* is imagined as the *yi dam*.[18] Most of the early footprint *thang kas* in this category show a *bla ma* seated above a *yi dam* and between two footprints, a placement that may reflect this ritual. Three of these are clearly bKa' brgyud pa (Figs.1, 2 and 4), while it is unclear whether or not the two additional *thang ka*s (Figs.5 and 6) are associated with the order.

The consecration visualization, which describes a light shining out from the heart of the *yi dam* three times, brings "the heroes and heroines of the physical world" on the third attempt. They are surrounded by light and sink into the footprints.[19] The student then performs a "seven branch practice" (*yan lag bdun pa*),[20] asking tantric *bla ma*s (*bla ma rdo rje 'dzin pa*), buddhas, bodhisattvas, and heroes and heroines of all directions to listen and help in developing wisdom and insight.

At this point, Phag mo gru pa digresses to discuss what to do "if you think there is a problem in the commitment between you and your *bla ma*."[21] The student is to visualize himself as a *yi dam*, display the footprints, imagine that light rays shine forth and return to them, perform the "seven branch practice" as described above, and finally, repeat the "hundred syllable *mantra*" many times, "with the intention of revealing the weakening in your commitment."[22] After that, the student is to pray, requesting that his commitments be restored.[23]

Phag mo gru pa also counsels that if the student has doubts about his spiritual relationship with his *bla ma* and the *bla ma* is present, the student should visit his *bla ma*. If the *bla ma* is not present, then the student should confess (*bshags pa*) to a statue of the *bla ma*.[24] This section on faith in one's *bla ma* continues with a parable about a teacher named Elephant Skin (*glang po che'i ko bo can*) and the problems he had with a student who distrusted him. The parable ends with Elephant Skin telling his student to "Make a likeness of me and confess [about not believing in the teacher earlier] to it."[25] Phag mo gru pa remarks that this parable is said to be the source for the practice of confessing to the footprints. He concludes by noting that if you have a "mind of illusion," i.e. you realize nothing is real, it is not difficult to confess.[26] This tangential discussion makes one wonder whether it was Phag mo gru pa or an earlier teacher whose problems with a student's faith

caused this addition to the footprint teachings. It also suggests that another function of footprint *thang ka*s is their use as a confessional.

The next section addresses what to do if a *bla ma* did not give a student teachings and now that the *bla ma* is absent, the student still wants the teachings.[27] The answer to this question is brief. The student, using the aforementioned three minds, is to do the seven-branch practice and ask the buddhas, bodhisattvas, etc. for the master's teachings, "the transmission of this and that." The student is then to imagine that he was given the teachings he wants. Phag mo gru pa states that the support (*rten*) [the print *thang ka*] should be imagined as the *bla ma* and should be put in a place where people do not go.[28] This is the second reference to hiding the footprints. The fact that these *thang ka*s were accessible to only a selected few suggests that they were considered powerful objects.

Phag mo gru pa then returns to the topic of consecrating a footprint *thang ka*. He relates that to consecrate the *thang ka*, it should be displayed and the five different offerings placed in front of it.[29] Grain, saffron, and *gtor ma* should be placed on the altar.[30] The student is then to generate the aspiration to enlightenment (*sems bskyed*)[31] by thinking thoughts such as "May I and all sentient beings without limit be free from suffering, endowed with happiness, and attain enlightenment," and then both master and student are supposed to generate the mind of enlightenment, etc. Thereafter, "with divine pride" (*lha'i nga rgyal dang ldan par*), the student repeats the dependent origination prayer (*rten 'brel*), says the *mantra* "*sva bha va*" and imagines the footprints as the *bla ma*.[32] The visualization continues, beginning with the student visualizing his *yi dam* in the heart of the *bla ma*. The student then makes the five offerings again. Phag mo gru pa specifically notes that at this point there is no need to say the *mantra* "*ja hum bam hoh*."[33] After scattering the grain, the student has more visualizations and prayers and re-anoints the footprints (on the cloth) with saffron. The five types of offerings are dedicated again, and Phag mo gru pa notes that one *gtor ma* is offered to the local deity and the others to a *yi dam* and a *dharmapāla.* The consecration ends typically, with the good merit accrued by these acts dedicated to all sentient beings.[34]

In the last section, Phag mo gru pa describes how to receive teachings from the footprints. After displaying the footprints and arranging the usual offerings, the student needs to find someone to read the teachings he wants to receive from his teacher, i.e., the footprints. Phag mo gru pa states, interestingly enough, that any suitable person who has kept their vows—a monk, novice, or layman[35]—can read the teachings, and if someone like this cannot be found, then anyone can read the teachings. This person simply has to "take special refuge, bathe, and begin to read."[36] The student then imagines that the footprints become the *bla ma*. The student then presents offerings to the footprints/*bla ma* and asks for the teachings he desires. The student imagines that "the readings are being spoken from the *bla ma*'s mouth." These teachings are to be given three times and the student is to imagine his *bla ma* saying, "You should meditate on that teaching, explain it, and teach it."[37] Phag mo gru pa comments that this procedure of receiving teaching via the footprints is no different than hearing "whatever practice, explanation or teaching" from the real *bla ma*.

Phag mo gru pa ends his counsel on footprint *thang ka*s by remarking yet again that the footprints should be concealed, surely because of their unique powers, although he does not specify exactly how this should be done. There are many

ways in which a *thang ka* could be considered "hidden." For example, Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche recollected seeing an "old" *thang ka* of the *yi dam* Ni gu chos drag mkha' spyod dkar dmar with the footprints of mKhas grub Khyung po rnal 'byor (987-1079), the founder of the Shangs pa bKa' brgyud, in the collection of his teacher in Khra 'gu Monastery. He said that the *thang ka* was not shown publicly and usually had a cloth over it.[38] It is also possible that print *thang ka*s were kept in treasuries and the lists of the contents of these rooms will be another avenue of research.[39] Another possibility, apropos to a different group of early footprint *thang ka*s discussed elsewhere,[40] is that the prints were placed inside statues or *mchod rten* as a way to hide them. However, this method of concealment would render the prints inaccessible for teachings. Phag mo gru pa's continued emphasis on hiding the prints indicates that such *thang ka*s were thought to have a potent nature and were not to be seen by the ordinary layperson or monk. Indeed, those who had access to print *thang ka*s must have been considered powerful either in practice or in monastic hierarchy. Phag mo gru pa ends his teachings by noting that the teachings are an important secret vow, a remark that suggests that they were given only to a selected group of students.[41]

The Corpus

From the 12th to the 14th century, the bKa' brgyud pa appear to be the Tibetan Buddhist sect most closely affiliated with the tradition of footprint *thang ka*s.[42] This affinity is demonstrated by the fact that six of the eight footprint *thang ka*s discussed here can be associated with the bKa' brgyud sect on the basis of iconography and other identifying factors such as the black hat of the Karma pas.[43] The other two *thang ka*s cannot be conclusively identified with any sect due to a lack of inscriptions and the lack of markers such as a particular hat although, as will be discussed below, it is possible that both were also commissioned by bKa' brgyud *bla ma*s. The bKa' gdams pa is the other early sect of Tibetan Buddhism that might have been associated with this type of footprint *thang ka*. As noted above, Phag mo gru pa traces the introduction of print iconography in Tibet to the Indian Paṇḍita Atiśa and a *dkar chag* to Rwa sgreng monastery includes a passage describing a *thang ka* with Atiśa's footprints.[44] That such a *thang ka* was at Rwa sgreng is not surprising as the monastery was founded in 1056 by one of Atiśa's main disciples, 'Brom ston (1008-1064). With 'Brom ston's help, Atiśa's teachings eventually became the basis of the bKa' gdams sect, which was later transformed into the dGe lugs sect under Tsong kha pa's direction in the early 15th century. As virtually all later handprint and footprint *thang ka*s can be associated with either the bKa' brgyud pa or the dGe lugs pa, there seems to be a long history of connection between these two sects and print *thang ka*s.

Early bKa' brgyud iconography often includes the well-known lineage of Tilopa (c. 988-1069), Nāropa (956-1040), Mar pa (1012-1096), Mi la ras pa, (1040-1123), and sGam po pa (1079-1153), a lineage which appears on Figs.1, 2, 4, 7 and on the McCormick *thang ka*. Two of sGam po pa's disciples and the sub-sects they founded can be associated with footprint *thang ka*s and/or teachings: Phag mo gru pa and Dus gsum mkhyen pa. Phag mo gru pa, who wrote the text discussed above, also founded the monastery of gDan sa mthil in 1158 and the Phag gru bKa' brgyud subsect. Dus gsum mkhyen pa (1110-93), who appears in Fig.7, founded the monastery of mTshur phu in 1189 and is considered the first Karma pa.[45] A third disciple, sGom

pa (1116-69), founded the monasteries of Tshal in 1175 and Gung thang in 1187 and the Tshal pa bKa' brgyud with Bla ma zhang (1123-1193), who wrote a history of footprints in stone in the 12th century.[46] Two of Phag mo gru pa's students can also be associated with footprint *thang ka*s and/or teachings: 'Bri gung skyob pa 'Jig rten gsum mgon, who founded the monastery of 'Bri gung in 1179 and also wrote about the footprint *thang ka* tradition;[47] and sTag lung Thang pa chen po, who founded the monastery of sTag lung in 1180 and appears as the main subject of one of the footprint *thang ka*s discussed below (Fig.1). The lineages and central deities of the *thang ka*s in this category will be discussed below in order to highlight their connections with the bKa' brgyud sect and therefore to Phag mo gru pa's illuminating text.

Regarding the main iconography of the eight footprint *thang ka*s, seven of the eight show the footprints flanking a *bla ma* and/or a deity, an arrangement that parallels Phag mo gru pa's visualization instructions. Five of the *thang ka*s depict the footprints flanking Sahaja, a form of Cakrasaṃvara *yab yum* with Vajravārāhī (bDe mchog lhan skyes and rDo rje phag mo),[48] while a sixth shows the footprints flanking Vajravārāhī alone. Both Cakrasaṃvara and Vajravārāhī are principal meditative deities connected with the bKa' brgyud tradition.[49] A seventh *thang ka* has the footprints flanking Hevajra *yab yum*. The remaining *thang ka*, although it does not include a *yi dam*, surrounds the central footprints with a bKa' brgyud lineage.

The footprints are depicted resting on lotus pedestals in all the *thang kas*. In six of the eight *thang ka*s, they are the largest iconographic elements and are thus larger than the deities and/or *bla ma*s they flank.[50] In all of the *thang ka*s, the footprints are depicted more perfect than a human's actual prints, but less perfect than *buddhapāda*. The prints are clearly human in shape and size but have precise outlines instead of the imperfect marks left by actual prints. As noted above, however, the fact that the footprints are so stylized may be due to the instructions to cover the actual prints with a layer of "lac" or paint. Although many of the prints display the *cakra lakṣana* or other symbols that visually emphasize a teacher's identification with the Buddha, none of the prints in this category show the toes of equal length, a characteristic of most Indian *buddhapāda*. In spite of the footprints' perfected outlines, golden color, and *lakṣana*, however, many of the prints display "imperfect" characteristics such as bunions or a second toe that is longer than the first, features that clearly reveal some type of human basis.

The earliest identified Tibetan portrait known today, which depicts Sahaja Saṃvara and Vajravārāhī with Thangpa Chenpo and his footprints (Fig.1), is in the collection of the Musée Guimet. The *thang ka* can be dated to the late 12th-early 13th century by its iconography, style, and by an inscription.[51] Directly above Sahaja Saṃvara *yab yum* with Vajravārāhī sits sTag lung Thang pa chen po.[52] He is mentioned in the inscription on the back of the *thang ka*, "Homage to the revered teacher bKra shis dpal,[53] and is depicted almost as large as Sahaja Saṃvara. However, the exact physical center of the painting is the middle of the deity's chest which indicates that it is the *gtso bo*, the most important figure, and not Thang pa chen po.[54]

The lineage across the top appears to include the usual bKa' brgyud figures shown in chronological order beginning at the left with Vajradhara, the spiritual progenitor of the teachings. The lineage then continues with the earthly beings: the two Indian *mahāsiddha*s Tilopa and Nāropa, Mar pa, Mi la ras pa, sGam po pa and

Phag mo gru pa, Thang pa chen po's teacher, who is positioned directly above his student. Because Thang pa chen po was Phag mo gru pa's first student at gDan sa mthil in 1165,[55] and because Phag mo gru pa wrote about footprint *thang ka*s, Thang pa chen po's appearance with footprints suggests that he was a recipient of these teachings. The last figure on the right is a mustached two-armed white deity performing *dharmacakra mudrā*.[56] The identity of the two *bla ma*s flanking the heels of the footprints remains unknown.[57]

The footprints are human in size and measure 23 cm (8.97 inches).[58] They have a human form, but the form is perfected and does not show the individuality seen in some of the other footprint *thang ka*s. The footprints are a golden color and have small *cakra*s on the arch.

Another *thang ka* of Sahaja Saṃvara and Vajravārāhī with Footprints (Fig.2) is in a private collection and also dates to the late 12th-early 13th century.[59] A typical early bKa' brgyud lineage runs across the top register, flanked at either end by a buddha. The buddha on the left, in *dhyāna mudrā* and holding what looks like a vase, is likely to be Amitābha while the lotus-holding buddha on the right remains unidentifiable. The lineage begins with Vajradhara, and then proceeds with two *mahāsiddha*s, most likely Tilopa and Nāropa. At that point the lineage jumps around a bit and can perhaps best be expressed numerically:

Buddha	2	3	7	6	4	5	buddha
			8				

The lineage skips the central figure and the figure to the right (both *bla ma*s) and proceeds to Mar pa (4), dressed as usual in non-monastic robes, and Mi la ras pa (5) in his white robe. It then jumps back to the *bla ma* to the right of the central figure (6), who may be sGam po pa because of his placement,[60] then to the central figure (7), which may be Phag mo gru pa because of the characteristic beard or simply another of sGam po pa's many students. The lineage ends with No.8, who is in the middle of the second register, below No.7. This last and unidentifiable *bla ma* in the lineage is surely a close disciple of No.7 and it is certainly his footprints that are depicted below.[61] Not only is this *bla ma* the closest human in physical proximity to the central deity, but he is the only *bla ma* surrounded by a rainbow, just as a rainbow arches over the central *yab yum* deities and the footprints. On either side of this *bla ma* are identical sets of five deities which appear to be the Bodhisattva Mañjuvajra Mañjuśrī flanked by the *prajña* Māmakī, Paṇḍarā, Tārā, and Locanā, or Mañjuvajra Mañjuśrī flanked by four of his emanations.[62] There are also two small *bla ma*s below the second top register whose identity is unknown.[63]

The footprints in Sahaja Saṃvara and Vajravārāhī with footprints are life-size at roughly 24 cms (9.5 in) in length.[64]As the reproductions are not very good, it is difficult to discern what symbols were once painted on the footprints. However, on the left foot remain traces of a large lotus or wheel covering the bottom third of the foot with a smaller wheel in the center. The footprints themselves are very individualized and, rather than being completely idealized as in later hand- and footprint *thang ka*s, show humanity in their imperfection. In fact, the *bla ma* whose feet are represented may have had bunion problems (see Fig.9), as the big toes bend in at a sharp angle and the area around the ball of the foot bows outward. Despite their gold color and painted symbols, therefore, these footprints are unmistakably those of a human being.

Fig.2 has a "country cousin," a much rougher though exceedingly similar version in the Rubin collection which also depicts Sahaja Saṃvara and Vajravārāhī with footprints (Fig.3). The two *thang ka*s share many stylistic and compositional features including the general composition of Sahaja Saṃvara *yab yum* flanked by footprints on suspended lotuses, an arched dark red backdrop with a rainbow-like border, and details such as an animal-headed base for the lotus throne, a vase of plenty in the bottom center, and the fold of fabric above it. A major difference, however, is the small size of the footprints. Out of the entire corpus of more than 35 print *thang ka*s, only this *thang ka* displays footprints smaller than life-size. The feet in Fig.3 are only 10.6 cm (4 inches) in length. Because of their diminutive size, it is unclear whether they were made by a very petite *bla ma*, by a young *sprul ku* with bad feet,[65] or were simply small representations of a larger *bla ma*'s feet. Another difference is the iconography that accompanies the footprints and Sahaja Saṃvara, which is greatly simplified in Fig.3: 17 deities instead of the 41 which are in Fig.2. In addition, female deities appear instead of male ones in the vertical side registers, Vajravārāhī appears yellow instead of red, and *vyalas* hold up the lotus throne instead of *nāgas*. Yet in spite of these differences, the many correspondences between these two *thang ka*s makes one wonder whether the artist who created Fig.3 had seen Fig.2 or was following the sketch or even the memory of someone who had seen the *thang ka* since the two *thang ka*s are close in form but differ in iconography. If the artist who created Fig.3 had simply been following a text, there would be more iconographic similarities.

A fourth image of Sahaja Saṃvara and Vajravārāhī with footprints, in the collection of Michael and Beata McCormick, is dated to the late 12th century-early 13th century based on its style and the length of the lineage.[66] This *thang ka*, which is unpublished and not yet photographed, is very close in both style and iconography to Fig.2. It varies from Fig.2 in that it lacks an arching rainbow over the central images and around the *bla ma* above the footprints and does not have a vase in the center of the bottom register. The lineage begins on the top register and is most easily expressed numerically:

1	2	3	6	7	4	5	buddha	bodhisattva
				8				

Vajradhara (1) begins the lineage at the left and is followed by two *mahāsiddha*s, most likely Tilopa (2) and Nāropa (3). The lineage skips the next two figures and proceeds to Mar pa (4), dressed in non-monastic robes, and Mi la ras pa (5), clad in his usual white robe. The lineage then jumps back to the *bla ma* to the left of the central figure (6), who may be sGam po pa because of his placement after Mi la ras pa, then to the central figure (7), possibly one of sGam po pa's many students, and ends with No.8, who is in the middle of the second register, below No.7. Unfortunately, these three *bla ma*s (Nos.6, 7, and 8) can not be conclusively identified at this time, although further study of the *thang ka* with a magnifying glass may perhaps turn up some individualized characteristics such as a beard, white hair, etc. As in Fig.2, the footprints are undoubtedly those of the last *bla ma* in the lineage, No.8, whose position in the center of the second register identifies him both as a close disciple of No.7 and as the person whose *yi dam* is depicted directly below. As in Fig.2, on either side of this *bla ma* are identical sets of five deities which appear to be the bodhisattva Mañjuvajra Mañjuśrī flanked by the *prajñā* Māmakī, Paṇḍarā, Tārā, and Locanā or Mañjuvajra Mañjuśrī flanked by four of his

emanations. The buddha and bodhisattva at the end of the lineage are difficult to conclusively identify because of their condition. The buddha probably represents Bhaiṣajyaguru because it looks as though there is a bowl in his lap and his right hand is in *varadamudrā*.[67] The bodhisattva is two-armed and white but it is difficult to tell what attributes he holds.

The golden footprints on this *thang ka* are life-size at 21.6 cms (8.5 in) and are covered with a number of the Eight Symbols of Good Fortune (*bkra shis rtags brgyad*) drawn in red, including a vase, endless knot, *cakra*, conch, and a lotus on the heel. On both footprints, the symbols are sheltered by an umbrella, which stretches across the foot just below the toes.

A noteworthy point about this *thang ka* is that the footprints are on a piece of silk that is pasted to the rest of the *thang ka*.[68] The footprints were therefore created separately, a fact that strongly suggests that the imprints, despite their final stylized appearance, are based on real imprints. Fig.6, discussed below, has the same construction although it depicts Hevajra and Nairātmya with a *bla ma* and his footprints. Both *thang ka*s provide support for the argument that early print *thang ka*s were likely to have been based on actual imprints, or at the very least, on some type of contact between a *bla ma*'s feet and a piece of cloth. If these prints were not based on actual prints, then why would the process of attaching a separate piece of silk to the main support have been carried out when an artist could simply have created the prints on the support in the first place?

The fifth example of Sahaja Saṃvara and Vajravārāhī with footprints (Fig.4) has a unique support of golden silk with a repeat pattern of lotus roundels in squares. This *thang ka* dates to the late 12th-early 13th century based on its lineage and its stylistic and compositional resemblance to other *thang ka*s from this time. In addition, the fabric shows similarities to a piece of golden Chinese silk brocade from the 13th century (Fig.9).[69] The support may once have been part of a robe worn by a *bla ma* in the lineage depicted in the top register; possibly it is he who appears between the footprints. Material that has touched a revered *bla ma* possesses great resonance[70] and pieces of a *bla ma*'s robe are sometimes used as sacred consecration articles. They belong to the class of relics known as *sku 'bal ring bsrel*, "clothing relics."[71] The importance of contact and its relation to footprint *thang ka*s will be addressed in more detail below.

The iconography surrounding the central trio of Sahaja Saṃvara, the *bla ma* and his footprints, is virtually identical to that found on Fig.2, which also depicts Sahaja Saṃvara and Vajravārāhī with Footprints;[72] the main difference is that the buddha in the top left corner has been switched to the upper right corner and an unknown *siddha* has been added. The lineage can be expressed numerically as:

1 2 3 7 8 5 6 4? buddha
9

The lineage begins on the left with a blue Vajradhara (1) and then proceeds right to two *siddha*s, which are most likely Tilopa (2) and Nāropa (3). Next it skips two figures and continues with an unknown *siddha* (4),[73] the lay-robe-clad Mar pa (5), and the white robed Mi la ras pa (6). The lineage then jumps back to a white-haired *bla ma*, most likely sGam po pa (7), and then to a large bearded *bla ma* with a broad face, most likely Phag mo gru pa (8). It is typical for Phag mo gru pa to be depicted larger than other *bla ma*s and with both a beard and a broad face.[74] As it

seems possible that Phag mo gru pa is in the center of the top register and the *bla ma* in the rainbow-arch is placed directly beneath him, the rainbow-surrounded *bla ma* may therefore have been a disciple of Phag mo gru pa. This last *bla ma* in the lineage is differentiated from the others, not only by being isolated below with his footprints, but by his larger size, the rainbow-arch mentioned above, and his orange robe decorated with golden medallions.[75] This image is clearly a portrait as the *bla ma* is distinguished from the others by his receded hairline.

In addition to the iconographic similarities between Figs.2 and 4, it is noteworthy that the toes on both *thang ka*s bend strangely outwards, as if they were made by a *bla ma* who had some specific foot ailment such as bunions (see Fig.8). Although in both *thang ka*s the *bla ma*s associated with the footprints, i.e. those situated in closest proximity to the prints, have similarities such as receding hairlines, it is impossible to tell if the subject is the same person or whether such feet are simply one early bKa' brgyud convention for depicting feet.[76] In addition, the footprints are fairly similar in size: those on Fig.2. are 24 cms (9.5 inches) long, whereas those on Fig.4 are roughly 23 cms (9 inches) in length. It should also be noted that the McCormick *thang ka*, which also has iconography similar to that seen in Figs.2 and 4, has footprints with toes that bend outwards, although not to the same degree.

The footprints on Fig.4 are unique in that neither of them actually rests on the lotus pedestal; the right foot is even a few centimeters higher above the lotus than the left foot. This irregular placement, the adjustment of the halos, and the position of the figures around the toes suggest that the prints were created before the rest of the iconography was drawn in. The fact that the red arches behind the deities were shifted rather than the toes is physical evidence that corresponds with the manner of making footprints described by Phag mo gru pa. As noted, Phag mo gru pa directs that prints should be made on a clean cloth (*ras dri ma med pa*) and that the drawing should be done afterwards.[77]

A *thang ka* of Vajravārāhī with Footprints (Fig.5) is compositionally the simplest example in this category because it contains no lineage or attendant deities. The *thang ka* is reduced to the essentials: Vajravārāhī, a *bla ma* and his large 24.9 cms (9.8 inch) long footprints, and a setting in a rain of red flowers with a blue background. Although Vajravārāhī is traditionally a bKa' brgyud deity and is especially associated with sTag lung Monastery, it is impossible to affiliate this *thang ka* with a specific sect until the *bla ma* is identified. Though stylized, the footprints in this *thang ka* show some individuality. The toes are bent outward like the footprints in Figs.2 and 4. As noted earlier, a number of the Eight Symbols of Good Fortune on this *thang ka*, although difficult to see, cover the soles of the feet: a large lotus on the heel, a *cakra* in the center, a vase of plenty, and an endless knot. Although these footprints are larger than those on most footprint *thang ka*s, it is again unclear whether this is due to a *bla ma* having large feet or because the stylization of the footprints enlarged them.

A depiction of Hevajra and Nairātmya with a *bla ma* and his footprints (Fig.6) is another unpublished print *thang ka*. It dates to the late 12th-early 13th century and follows the typical composition of a central deity, flanked by footprints, with a *bla ma* seated above the central deity.[78] As in Figs.1, 4, and 5, the *bla ma* appears directly above the deity and completely separate from any other figures in the painting; he is clearly associated with the footprints. However, unlike all the other depictions, the *bla ma*, deity and footprints share an arched red background. In addition,

the *bla ma* in this *thang ka* is virtually the same size as Hevajra, unlike the depiction of Thang pa chen po in Fig.1 or the *bla ma* in Fig.5.

Unfortunately, there are no inscriptions under any of the six depicted *bla ma*s and it is impossible to assign a sectarian provenance to this *thang ka*. The *Hevajra Tantra* was important to both the early bKa' brgyud pas and Sa skya pas. Although Hevajra is often associated with the Sa skya pas because of the scholar 'Brog mi Shakya ye shes' (993-1050) "preoccupation with it"[79] and the fact that many Sa skya works of exegesis are devoted to it,[80] the bKa' brgyud scholar Ras chung pa made several trips to Nepal and brought back quite a few texts connected with the *Hevajra Tantra.* Dus gsum mkhyen pa, for example, was initiated into Hevajra's powers by none other than sGam po pa, "who manifested before him [Dus gsum mkhyen pa] in the form of Hevajra himself."[81]

The top register, which often displays the lineage, depicts, from left to right, a bodhisattva,[82] the five *tathāgatha*s, and Śākyamuni. Three of the *bla ma*s appear in the center of the next register, which is not representative of a complete lineage as there is no progenitor of the teachings, *siddha*s, etc., although it should be noted that Cakrasaṃvara *yab yum* with Vajravārāhī appears directly to the left of the *bla ma*s. Two other *bla ma*s are depicted in the register below the lotus pedestal, which is again not illustrative of a lineage because from left to right we see a wrathful deity, Acala, Green Tārā, Sāḍakṣarī Lokeśvara, the two *bla ma*s, and Vajravārāhī.

The footprints on this *thang ka* resemble those on a *thang ka* depicting Footprints with *bla ma* and deities (Fig.11), an early footprint *thang ka* that seems to belong in a different category because of its iconography.[83] Both pairs of footprints are elongated, are shown vertically rather than pointed outwards, and have a bump at the ball of the foot. Figs.6 and 11 also share much of their accompanying iconography and it is likely that they are to be associated with the same sect.[84] The main difference between the footprints is that those on Hevajra with Footprints (Fig.6) show a second toe that is longer than the big toe. The footprints on Fig.6 also exhibit the remnants of a variety of Buddhist symbols including large lotuses on the heels, *cakra* in the center, parasols arching under the toes and across the ball of the foot, and vases of plenty. There are traces of other emblems as well. As mentioned earlier, according to the dealer, Ian Alsop, the prints were on a gauze-like cloth that had been pasted to the rest of the *thang ka*, a technique also seen on the McCormick *thang ka* depicting Sahaja Saṃvara and footprints.

A slightly later *thang ka*, the footprints of Rang byung rdo rje, the Third Karma pa (Fig.7), is of considerable significance as very few of the early footprints can be identified with a particular person.[85] This *thang ka* depicts what are certainly the footprints of Rang byung rdo rje (1284-1339) as an inscription on the reverse reads "Probably the footprints of the Glorious Karma pa, the Victorious Rang 'byung ba."[86] Such an identification, however, could also be made from examining the *thang ka'*s iconography and composition. The footprints are clearly associated with the central figure who wears an early version of the black hat of the Karma pas and whose lotus seat rises from the pedestal between the footprints. His identification as Rang byung rdo rje is confirmed by the presence of two other black-hatted figures. As the *bla ma* to Rang byung rdo rje's right has a vaguely monkey-like face, it must be Dus gsum mkhyen pa, the First Karma pa, who is said to have had such a mien.[87] Logically, the Second Karma pa, Karma Pakshi, would also be

represented nearby and, indeed, the figure to Rang byung rdo rje's left appears to be Karma Pakshi because of the presence of his characteristic goatee.

Like many of the bKa' brgyud *thang ka*s examined previously, The footprints of Rang byung rdo rje also has a lineage that jumps around. As usual, it begins in the upper left hand corner with Vajradhara. The top register then continues with an image of Śākyamuni and the five *tathāgatha*s. The lineage, however, actually follows below Vajradhara (1), so that if we assign numbers to the chronological lineage we have:

1						
2	3	7	9	8	4	5
6?						6?
?						?

The numbers correspond with the images of the Karma pa lineage: Tilopa (2), Nāropa (3), Mar pa (4), Mi la ras pa (5), sGam po pa? (6), Dus gsum mkhyen pa (7), Karma Pakshi (8), and Rang byung rdo rje (9). There are two *bla ma*s with gray hair in the side registers. As sGam po pa is conventionally depicted this way, he may be one of these two *bla ma*s, but due to the lack of inscriptions, it is impossible to conclusively identify this figure or the other three *bla ma*s depicted in the side registers. Another *bla ma* appears in the lower right hand corner wielding a *vajra* and bell; this must be the consecrator/commissioner of the painting, most likely a student of Rang byung rdo rje.[88]

The multivalence of early footprint *thang ka*s

One problem facing the scholar of Tibetan art is that the original function of a *thang ka* is rarely known. Although I have been fortunate in finding texts that relate directly to the *thang ka*s discussed above, a simple equivalence between verbal texts and visual images cannot be assumed. Footprints occur in Tibetan culture in a variety of contexts, both monastic and secular, and are accompanied by innumerable textual references. Associations with footprints are likely to have shifted over time with different audiences and it has been shown elsewhere that print *thang kas* signified a variety of things to viewers in the past 800 plus years of the known history in Tibet.[89] However, it is assumed that the audience interacting with these early print *thang kas* was most likely the monastic population, what Schopen terms the "small, literate, almost exclusively male and certainly atypical professional subgroup," that is, the population which would have had access to a text like Phag mo gru pa's.[90] Therefore, then based on the information contained in Phag mo gru pa's "Requesting Footprints," this article suggests that the main function for this group of footprint *thang ka*s was to provide teachings in the absence of a teacher. What is not assumed is that providing teachings was the only function of a footprint *thang ka*. For example, Phag mo gru pa himself mentions that there are many reasons to obtain a footprint *thang ka* and his text later reveals that they can be used as a confessional.[91]

There is no need to prove that footprints are symbols charged with multiple meanings.[92] In semiotic terms, footprints, as indexes, refer to a number of things including original contact and presence. In Tibetan culture, the imprints and imprinting of feet appear in diverse situations and in addition to signifying touch, contact, and presence, seem to illustrate some type of power such as subduing the

forces of the physical world, serving as proof that one has reached a certain level of practice, and transferring positive energy and authority. As these associations are likely to have contributed to the meaning of the *thang ka*s, a few of them will be addressed below.

It was shown earlier that bKa' brgyud sources trace the origin of print *thang ka*s to India and it is assumed that some of the meanings signified by prints in Indian culture would have accompanied the transference of the print tradition to Tibet.[93] *buddhapāda* were popular objects of worship in India from roughly the 1st through the 13th centuries and were often the focus of veneration in and of themselves. The importance of *buddhapāda* in the Indian Buddhist tradition is attested to by a multitude of physical remains and by the many references to them in the writings of Chinese travelers to India such as Faxian (traveled c. 399-414), Xuanzang (traveled c. 629-45), and I Qing (traveled late 7th century).

As in many cultures, throughout Indian and Tibetan history, feet have represented the lowest rung of prestige in the realm of body hierarchy. To touch or point to someone with one's foot is an insult, just as worshipping or stooping to touch the feet of an elder or other revered person is a common secular expression of respect and humility. It is also a widespread religious custom to venerate the feet, footprints, or even sandals of a revered person or image of a deity; to perform "reverence to the Master's feet" is a common phrase in both Indian and Tibetan texts. This type of deference is also found at the beginning of texts, which often start with a refrain mentioning prostration to the feet of the Buddha, another deity, or a teacher, commonly phrased as, "I bow down to the feet of [insert name of revered figure here]."[94] By touching, washing, or venerating the feet of a deity or person, one humbles oneself, placing the self below the lowest place on the revered. The link between feet and low status goes at least as far back as the Vedas; when Puruṣa created the castes and gods from his limbs, the inferior caste and the earth issued from his feet.[95] Throughout *The Blue Annals*, 'Gos lo tsā ba also recounts many instances of bowing or touching the feet of a revered person; occasionally, a revered person will place his feet on a worshipper's head.[96]

Because of the low status of feet, all types of *pāda* and footprint *thang ka*s are to some extent strange phenomena because the sole of the foot, the lowest part of the body and something which is rarely seen, is emphasized and often placed in the foreground as central to a sculpture or to a painting. The reason is that while feet are attributed low status from one's own body, they also represent the presence and often power of a more prestigious person or deity. This low/high polarity can be found embedded in stories relating to the Buddha and to *buddhapāda*. For example, in the story of the Brahmin Māgaṇḍiya, Māgaṇḍiya, impressed with the Buddha's presence, offered him his daughter in marriage. The Buddha offered no reply to this offer, but as he left the house he left a footprint which Māgaṇḍiya's wife recognized as that of an exceptional ascetic. In spite of this identification, Māgaṇḍiya renewed his offer to the Buddha, who replied that nothing could overcome him with temptation, neither Māra nor his daughters, and that nothing would move him to touch Māgaṇḍiya's daughter, even with the sole of his foot.[97] Thus the Buddha's feet both reveal him as an exceptional being and also represent an area imbued with baseness. Although such symbolism may not be at the front of a viewer's mind when looking at a print *thang ka*, the polarity associated with feet is a concept intrinsic to any depiction of them. This polarity is also part of a print

thang ka's multivalency. By worshipping a footprint *thang ka*, a student bows at the feet of a revered teacher and worships traces left by the lowest part of the body. According to the Dalai Lama, print *thang ka*s show that every aspect of the teacher is good and is to be respected, even imprints of the soles of his feet.[98]

A travel account by Chag lo tsā ba Chos rje dpal (1197-1264), a Tibetan monk and pilgrim who visited Bodh Gaya in 1234, sets Indian *buddhapāda* in a Tibetan context. Chag lo tsā ba's account of this trip reveals that despite the dwindling support for Buddhism in 13th century India, Bodh Gaya was still a standard goal for Tibetan pilgrims. In addition, it was also a site that contained numerous *buddhapāda*.[99] Many of these *buddhapāda* were sculpted on the reverse of small *stupas*, known as *padācetiyas*, which enshrined the footprints as relics.[100] Other footprints appear on the base of miniature models of the Bodhi Temple which most likely functioned as souvenirs for those pilgrims who wanted a remembrance from this holy place, the site of the Buddha's enlightenment.[101]

Chag lo tsā ba's description of the main set of footprints at this famous site (Fig.12) is illuminating for its explanation of why the footprints were left by the Buddha, for its detail regarding the footprints' appearance, and for its account of how the *buddhapāda* were worshipped.

> *Regarding the Mahamuni [and] establishing his footprint in Bodh Gaya, in the past, the complete and perfect Buddha thought, "At a future time sentient beings with sharp faculties will know through seeing the scriptures. But, those of dull faculties will have doubt understanding whether a Buddha came to this world or not." In order to eliminate their doubt, he placed his two feet in the stone.*
>
> This stone exists even nowadays. The stone, which is flat and square in shape, is situated in front of the inner gate, on this side of the large offering lamp placed outside the eastern gate of the court-yard. On each of the four sides it is three cubits in width and one span in height, and five fingerwidth of the hand of the Dharmasvamin-lova. The foot-prints are four spans in length and four-finger-width (inches) in depth. The stone is very hard, of white color, and has a rough surface. Having made the two imprints, the Bodhisattva meditated on the Void in front of the Bodhi-tree and obtained Buddha-hood.
>
> Formerly it was intended to build a chapel over the footprints but learned Panditas were of the opinion that if a chapel was to be built, it would require a door and a sacristan who would ask remuneration (from worshippers), and the number of devotees (those who would come to see the foot-prints) would become less, and thus a chapel was not built.
>
> Further, the Dharmasvamin said, there were ruins of a stone gate, its upper part about two cubits in size, supported by two stone pillars erected by the Acharya Hayaghosha [Asvaghosha]. People going to fetch water for the ablution and anointing of the footprints with medicated perfumes, used to touch the gate with their foreheads, and thus secure blessing, and there was a mark left on the stones.[102]

The first part of this quotation reveals that the Buddha left his footprints at Bodh Gaya because he thought that "those of dull faculties" would not otherwise believe that a Buddha had once lived in their world. By imprinting his feet, the Buddha leaves clear and unmistakable evidence of his presence for such people, evidence that will persuade them to have faith in the Buddhist texts with which smart people are satisfied. In some ways, this reason is related to that offered by Phag mo gru pa in answer to the question of why Tibetan *bla ma*s leave their prints on cloth: to leave evidence of their presence, although in the case of the Tibetan footprints,

this presence is so strong that the footprints can provide teachings. The significance of the *buddhapāda* at Bodh Gaya is exemplified by the fact that a chapel (*mchod khang*) was to have been erected over them.[103] That the chapel was not built because "learned Paṇḍitas" wanted the *buddhapāda* to remain free to the public is further evidence of their popularity and renown, though this may be a *de post facto* explanation. Chag lo tsā ba mentions two different *buddhapāda*, one on the "empty stone throne of Śākyamuni" and another in front of the eastern gate of the courtyard.[104] The second imprint, which Chag lo tsā ba relates was made before Śākyamuni attained buddhahood, must also have been an important object of worship as the constant flock of worshippers left an impression of their foreheads in stone.

Although this article suggests that print *thang ka*s are based on the actual touch of the *bla ma*, I do believe that even the representation of a *bla ma*'s prints would confer a sense of presence, just as *buddhapāda* invoke the presence of the Buddha whether or not the prints were actually made by him. However, the importance of contact in Buddhism cannot be over-emphasized. It is illustrated, for instance, by all the pilgrimage sites in India that developed around places where the Buddha is known to have visited. Schopen has shown that at sites associated with his life or relics, the Buddha was in some sense still thought to be present. He traces this concept back to some of the earliest writings on Buddhism. Addressing inscriptions which characterized Śākyamuni's relics, Schopen writes, "...the relics themselves were thought to retain—to be "infused with," impregnated with—the qualities that animated and defined the living Buddha."[105] Relics, in fact, were thought to be so infused with the presence of the Buddha that "the presence of the relic was thought to be the same thing as the presence of the actual Buddha, that the two were religiously the same, and that the same behavior was required in regard to both."[106] Therefore, just as *buddhapāda* in the landscape such as those at Bodh Gaya and on Adam's Peak in Sri Lanka are the goal of pilgrims because they are infused with the Buddha's presence, the footprint *thang ka*s discussed here are also infused with the presence of their maker because the soles of the *bla ma*'s feet suggest contact.

Contact is an important concept in Buddhism because it is through contact with an object that some of the maker's (usually positive) presence is transferred to that object. The concept of transferring a residue of someone's blessings through contact is indicated by innumerable mentions in the literature. For example, a passage from *The Blue Annals* relates that when Phag mo gru pa was coming to visit an assembly hall, some monks spread their shirts and robes on the ground. A novice monk named dGyer spread his shirt on the side of the road and Phag mo gru pa made a special detour to step on it.[107] Huber has noted more recent examples of this phenomena, such as monks laying down their shawls for pilgrims to walk on in order "to get the empowerment of these purified persons" and of lay people and monks laying their clothes and shawls, respectively, for the Dalai Lama "to step upon and bless."[108]

The potency of touch and its transmission through the feet is also demonstrated by 'Gos lo tsā ba's account of the dying Sangs rgyas yar byon (1203-72), the Third sTag lung abbot, who asked his nephew Maṅgalaguru (1231-97) to take over the monastery.[109] He then placed his feet on Maṅgalaguru's head, effectively transferring his powers, a transmission emphasized by the next sentence of the passage which

records the date of Maṅgalaguru's ascendancy as sTag lung's abbot.[110]

The belief that footprint *thang kas* indicate presence is epitomized by Phag mo gru pa's text, although this is not the only reference to a print *thang ka* acting as a substitute for the teacher. Another reference to footprints on cloth performing this function comes from *The Blue Annals*. The passage in question recounts how the famed practitioner Ma gcig lab sgron (1062-1149) required certain items to cure her of ailments such as abscesses all over her body and "a daily discharge of sperm the size of a pea."[111] One of the items was a cloth with the footprints of her *mula-guru*, her principal teacher, Dam pa. Ma gcig was then to offer, among other things, "seven young girls who have attained puberty" to the footprints of the teacher. In this instance, the footprints on cloth are clearly a surrogate for her teacher, and therefore perform a symbolic substitution similar to that described by Phag mo gru pa.

As mentioned earlier, footprints on *thang ka*s evoke not only the presence of the *bla ma* but also the presence of the Buddha. The prints, though life-sized and human-shaped, resemble *buddhapāda* in their golden color and *lakṣaṇa* and thus visually equate the teacher with the Buddha. Regarding one's own teacher as the Buddha (*guru yoga*) is a practice basic to all Buddhist *tantra*. In some respects, the teacher is considered to be more important than the Buddha. Tibetans traditionally show utmost respect and devotion (*mos gus*) to their religious teachers and there are many Tibetan sayings regarding the importance of one's teacher. For example, a *ḍakiṇī* told sGam po pa: "To venerate a single hair of one's teacher (*slob dpon*) is a greater merit (*bsod nams*) than to venerate all the buddhas of the three times."[112] Prints on *thang ka*s, like *buddhapāda*, are an assurance that the *bla ma*/Buddha is really there and is still invisibly present.

A student also shows respect and devotion for the *bla ma* simply by asking for his prints. Although a student's devotion is understood and implicit in the context of Tibetan Buddhism, in asking for prints, students are expressing vocally that they would like traces of their teacher to be around them at all times. The Fifth Dalai Lama, in fact, referred to himself as lazy for not having asked for his teacher's prints in the past[113]

Print *thang ka*s express not only respect and devotion to the teacher but also blessings from the teacher, which in the Tibetan tradition can be passed through the feet in addition to the hands. 'Gos lo tsā ba, for example, makes numerous references to hands and feet transferring blessings and teachings[114] For example, in the following passage, both the *bla ma*'s hands and feet are used, with the hand's blessing indicated by an imprint:

> Whenever he [sNe'u zur pa, b. 1042] used to prostrate himself (in front of the teacher) and think: "If only he would bless me with his foot," the Teacher used to stretch out his foot towards him. On occasion, the Teacher blessed him by placing his three fingers on his head, and his three fingers made an imprint on his head which remained till his death.[115]

Print *thang ka*s, because they represent contact with the *bla ma*, are not just viewed as "merely passive and unresponsive objects of worship," but are actually thought to emit blessings (*byin rlabs*).[116] Thus, once a cloth has been touched, it also resonates with this type of empowerment[117]

Although the Dalai Lama joked that print *thang ka*s depict secondary *bla ma*s because the most powerful ones make prints in rock rather than on cloth,[118] I suggest

that because footprints are associated with a variety of powers such as the attainment of particular *siddhis*, their presence on *thang ka*s connotes these powers, at least on some level. For example, Bu ston (1290-1364), the influential Sa skya scholar, mentions in passing the power afforded footprints on cloth in his *History of Buddhism in India and Tibet*.[119] In the chapter concerning the biography of the brothers Asaṅga and Vasubandhu is the story of a garment "of very fine cloth" that the king of Central India sent to the King of Persia as a present.[120] Something resembling a footprint was on the part of the garment that covered the heart.[121] The Persian King believed that this cloth was therefore an evil charm sent to harm him, and he invaded central India and destroyed Buddhist temples. Passages such as this underline the power inherent in even a representation of a footprint; they also show that at least one facet of their inherent power was recognized outside Tibet.

The multivalent powers afforded footprints can also be gleaned from passages in *The Blue Annals*. For example, on one page, 'Gos lo tsā ba describes the ability of Phag mo gru pa's footprints to bless, subdue and sanctify the landscape. Phag mo gru pa is said to have "manifested 12 aspects of his body" near the time of his death. "With the help of one aspect of his body, he was able to cover with his foot the entire region controlled by sTag lung with his foot and bless it." Phag mo gru pa then proclaimed the safety of another particularly rugged region by noting, "I have trodden with my feet all the land, and subdued all the deities and demons, and made them into beings performing a labour of compassion."[122] Although it is unclear how early the tradition is, the concept of using footprints to subjugate malevolent forces and thereby sanctify a site also appears in connection with Tibetan ritual dance. Some dance manuals (*'cham yig*) explicitly state that "the ground is subdued by the thunderbolt-single step (*rdo rje rkyang 'gros kyis sa btul ba*)" and that Buddhist symbols such as the *vajra*, *visvavajra*, lotus, and *cakra* are first visualized on the soles of the feet, and then printed or stamped directly onto the ground in the four directions.[123] Mona Schrempf, in her article on Tibetan ritual dance, notes that "direct physical contact of the dancer's foot with the ground, in combination with his meditative state and the invoked and visualized power of wrathful deities seem to enable the transformation of the dance area into a specific ritual space."[124]

Judging from the rank of the *bla ma*s depicted in the extant corpus of print *thang ka*s, it seems that only the very highest, those who possessed spiritual prowess as well as wealth and political authority, were accorded the tribute of having a *thang ka* with their prints made. Although I do not want to be too reductionist, it could be argued that a depiction of a *bla ma* with his footprints evokes not only the presence of the *bla ma* but the power that can be wielded by him in the physical and the religious/political landscape. In addition, print *thang ka*s not only suggest the power of the printer, they also suggest the prestige and power of the person who received the print *thang ka*. By their very nature, print *thang ka*s embody an intimate relationship between the printer and the receiver of the *thang ka*; the small extant number of print *thang ka*s suggests that they were likely to have been revered symbols of honor. In this way, the *thang ka*s may have been employed to establish legitimacy for their owner as one's lineage appears to have been of great importance during the 12th-14th century, an importance evidenced by the lineages found across the top of most early *thang ka*s.[125]

Conclusion

The main purpose of this article was to introduce a group of early footprint *thang ka*s and their relevance to Phag mo gru pa's text, but there are two important points about the *thang ka*s that I would like to make. The first is that the prints in this category are associated with the person depicted either directly above them or between them.[126] Although this statement seems obvious, previous discussions of the *thang ka*s often omit this link. The second point is that the footprints on these *thang ka*s are likely to have been based on the actual touch of a *bla ma* to a piece of cloth. If this supposition is accurate, then a print *thang ka* would become an important stylistic benchmark to the just developing field of Tibetan art history. If the print-maker can be identified, then the *thang ka* can be dated to a relatively narrow stretch of time. Although few of the *bla ma*s in the early paintings discussed here can be conclusively identified, a number of *bla ma*s appearing in later examples have been identified and the *thang ka*s can be dated more precisely than before.[127]

The hypothesis that the *thang ka*s are based on the actual touch of the *bla ma* is based on both visual and textual evidence. To begin with, Phag mo gru pa specifically states that the teacher imprints the cloth with his feet and that this act is performed before the rest of the *thang ka* is painted. He also states specifically that the prints should be made on "clean cotton cloth" and that "it is important to make a good drawing with lac" once the prints are taken from the teacher. Of course, the result of this process of covering the prints is an appearance which suggests that the prints are representations of footprints rather than actual imprints. Indeed, many of the prints display unnatural characteristics such as individually delineated toes, filled-in arches, and completely even outlines.

There are a number of reasons, however, why an artist would manipulate an actual imprint in this way. First, the appearance of actual imprints with their jagged outlines, uneven color tone, and blank spaces is not harmonious with the heavy stylization of forms seen in Tibetan art. In addition, by perfecting and gilding the form and adding the *cakra lakṣaṇa* and/or other Buddhist symbols, the artists are able to visually equate the *bla ma*'s prints with those of the Buddha. Furthermore, some of the strangely shaped footprints may actually be due to the form of the original print; that is, if the *bla ma* who made the print had bunions, then his imprint would reflect this condition. As Tibetan art is not known for its realism, the fact that the shape of each set of prints is quite individualized is quite telling.

The theory that the prints were the first item on the support and that the iconography was created around them is upheld by visual evidence. For example, the composition of some of the *thang ka*s shows that the placement of the minor figures and details was adjusted around the footprints. If the prints had been created at the same time as the rest of the composition, these adjustments would not have been artistically required. In addition, considering how painstakingly a *thang ka* is constructed, the fact that the handprints and/or footprints are sometimes not level is also suggestive of the making of actual prints; fabricated prints could be placed at the artist's discretion, whereas imprinting actual feet in an exact spot can be difficult. In addition, on two of the *thang ka*s, the footprints were created on a separate piece of cloth which was then pasted to the main support.

Another indication that print *thang ka*s were based on the actual touch of a *bla ma* to cloth is the relatively small extant corpus of print *thang ka*s. Tibetans have produced a prodigious amount of religious art in the past 1000 years. As such,

there must be a reason for the paucity of print *thang ka*s given that Tibetan devotion to the teacher is so strong. If prints were simply represented on *thang ka*s rather than actually made from life, then one would expect many more print *thang ka*s to be in existence due to the demand of many disciples for such a remembrance. The reason why there are so few print *thang ka*s may be due to the fact that they are fairly difficult to produce. First, according to Phag mo gru pa's instructions, one must be a close disciple of one's teacher in order to ask him to participate in the making a print *thang ka*. Although the well-known teachers must have had hundreds of disciples, their closest students would not have been great in number. Second, the creation of prints on a *thang ka* is a messy prospect; one would likely be sure of one's closeness to the teacher before asking him to get his feet dirty. Despite my theories, however, there appears to be no scientific method by which to determine conclusively way to be certain whether even one of the footprint *thang ka*s discussed in this article was actually touched by a *bla ma*'s foot. Although infrared photography might be useful, it might not reveal the light imprint made by saffron-water-coated feet.

This article has attempted not only to illuminate a specific genre of iconography but to shed light on the significant religious functions associated with these powerful symbols in Tibetan culture. As more print *thang ka*s are discovered, and as more texts are translated, the more the study of Tibetan art will expand and develop. I hope this research will serve as a catalyst to provoke further analysis of the function of art in Tibetan Buddhism.

Notes

1. See Kathryn H. Selig Brown, "Handprints and Footprints in Tibetan Painting" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2000), pp.98-205.
2. I would like to thank Gene Smith, Tashi Tsering, and Dan Martin for procuring this text and Pema Bhum, Tashi Tsering, and Lamchen Gyalpo Rinpoche for their help in translating my initial version. I am also indebted to Donald Lopez's Tibetan class students (Winter 2000) for their retranslation, which is the version referred to here. The translation appears in full in Appendix B in Selig Brown 2000. There are at least two printed versions of this text known to me. They are the same except that one is written in *dbu med* and the other in *dbu chen*. The first is: Phag mo gru pa, "*Rin po che mtha' rtsa bas mdzad pa'i zhabs rjes zhu ba'o*," Phag mo gru pa rdo rje rgyal po'i gsung 'bum (Lhasa: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1997), pp.299-303. The reference for the latter is: Phag mo gru pa, *bKa'-'bum* ('Collected Works'), 1507: I 323v-326r. This is a photocopied version of a four volume 'golden manuscript' (written in gold ink). According to Martin, this manuscript was constructed under the patronage of 'Bri gung pa Kun dga' rin chen (1475-1527).
3 *Bla ma'i zhabs rjes mdo lung nas bshad pa med zer ta/ bKa' dang bstan chos nas bshad pa med kyang/ sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das zhal bzhugs pa'i du zhabs rjes 'byon pa dang/ zhabs rjes gdan 'dren pa yod pa yin la/ da lta nad rang gis rgud pa 'di'i dbang du byas na'ang/ rje na ro pa'i zhabs rjes mkhar sgong shel 'dra ba gcig la spu shad dang rnal ris ma nyams pa byon pa/ rje mar pas gzigs nas ras ga ta wa na cig la gdan drangs pas/* 'Bri gung skyob pa 'jig rten gsum mgon, *'Bri gung thel chos bdud rtsi'i thigs pa* (New Delhi: Tsering Dorma Gelek, 1975), p.525. I would like to thank Tashi Tsering for finding and sending me this text. A similar version of this story is recounted in Herbert Guenther, *The Life and Teaching of Naropa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1963), p.105.

4. *'Di la dgos pa mang du yod kyang gtso bor gyur pa'i dgos pa ni/ bla ma'i chos lung ma thob pa thob par byed pa'i dgos pa yin gsung/* (1v, line 3-4)
5. Selig Brown 2000, pp.59-97.
6. However, I have recently heard about a later footprint *thang ka* in a private collection that displays very large footprints, although these may represent *buddhapāda* rather than the footprints of a *bla ma* because of their size and the fact that they do not flank a *bla ma*.
7. Selig Brown 2000, pp.200-205.
8. bKa' brgyud *bla ma*s interviewed for this dissertation include Tai Situ Rinpoche, Lamchen Gyalpo Rinpoche, Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche, and Trungram Gyaltrul Rinpoche.
9. *Slob ma des kyang lan gsum gyi bar du slon dpon gyi zhabs rjes zhu zhes me tok dbul zhing zhu ba phul ba cig dgos gsung/ slob dpon gyis dang po'i zhu ba gnyis pa la zhul rog bzhugs shing gsung [gsum] pa'i dus su rlung [rung] zhes zhal gyis bzhes par by'o/* 1v. It should be noted that there is a tradition in Buddhism of making requests three times.
10. Although it is not explicitly expressed in the text, the saffron was probably ground up and mixed with water to form a liquid into which the *bla ma* would place his feet or perhaps, as Phag mo gru pa indicated, the liquid was applied (*byugs*) onto the *bla ma*'s feet for him.
11. *De nas slob ma des ras dri ma med pa dang dri bzang po sbyar nas tshags byas la/ ...de nas slob dpon gyi zhabs la dri bzang pos byugs la ras kyi steng du 'jog par zhuo/...* 1v - 2r. It is not known whether the perfume was colored.
12. *De nas rgya skegs kyi ri mo legs par byas la sba ba gal che/* last line of 2r. Note that *rgya skegs* should be spelled *rgya skyegs*.
13. As noted earlier, it is unclear whether this process was followed by all early sects, by the bKa' brgyud suborders, or by just the Phag gru bKa' brgyud.
14. See Dan Martin, "Pearls from Bones: Relics, Chortens, Tertons and the Signs of Saintly Death in Tibet," *Numen* 41 (1994), pp.303, 305.
15. I use references to the masculine when paraphrasing this text because I cannot imagine that there were many females who had access to such teachings.
16. That is, the prints do not yet completely embody the presence of the *bla ma*.
17. *Dang po sems can thams cad bde ba dang ldan sdug bsngal dang bral sangs rgyas thob par bya bai don du zhabs rjes rab gnas bya snyam pa'i rab gnas gsung dang mthun byang chub kyi sems gsum sgom/ rang skad cig yi dam gyi lhar bsgom la mdun du mchod pa bshams/ zhabs rjes bkram la de la dmigs nas shunya da dzanya na da'i sngags lan gsum brjod pa stong par bsam/ de'i ngang las zhabs rjes de bla mar bsam/* 2v.
18. *Bla ma'i thugs khar rang gi yi dam lha'i gdan dang sa bon bsam/ sa bon las 'od 'phros pas lus la khyab/ lus sha khrag sngig sgrib sbyangs nas bla ma yi dam lhar bsams/* 2v. The meditation instructions continue in the same vein for roughly a folio side, from a bit less than halfway down 2v to halfway down 3r.
19. *...yang 'od zer gsum pa 'phros pas 'jig rten gyi khams kyi dpa' bo dang dpa' mo rnam spyan drangs zhabs rjes la bstim nas/* 2v. According to Tsepak Rigdzin (*Tibetan-English Dictionary of Buddhist Terminology* (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1986, p.248), a hero (*dpa' bo*) is "a male celestial being residing in a Buddha-field, who protects those who practice the Dharma."
20. The seven branches of this practice—prostration, offering, confession, rejoicing, requesting, supplication and dedication—are delineated in Rigdzin 1986, p.378.
21. *Bla ma dang gnyis la dam tshig la khu 'khrigs sems la yod na/* 3r.
22. The "hundred syllable *mantra*" is Vajrasattva's and is a purification *maṇḍala*. See Patrul Rinpoche, *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* (*Kun bzang bla ma'i zhal lung*), trans. the Padmakara Translation Group (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1994), pp.276-280 for the importance of this *mantra.*
23. *Dang por sems gsum gyis bslang la rang skad cig gis yi dam lhar bsams la/ zhabs rjes bkram la 'od zer spro bsdu la sogs pa yin lag bdun pa yin chad sngar dang mthun/ de*

*nas rten bla ma'i sku la dmigs la dam tshig nyams pa bshags pa'i bsams pas yi ge brgya pa mang du bzlas la/ zin pa dang bla ma rdo rje 'dzin pa la sogs pa phyogs bcu na bzhugs pa'i sang rgyas dang byang chub sems dpa'a thams cad kyi bdag gis dam tshig nyams pa thams cad sor chud par mdzad du gsol/*3r.

24. *Dam tshig la sems 'phrig yod na bla ma zhal bzhags na dngos su bshams/ zhal mi bzhugs na sku 'bag bkram la bshags/* 3v.
25. Elephant Skin also says that it is possible to confess to another *bla ma* "with the awareness that the *dharmakaya* is one."
26. *sGyu ma'i blo cig yod na bshags pa tshigs med gsungs/*3v.
27. *Yang bla ma zhal bzhugs dus man ngag dang chos bshad pa la sogs pa'i long med nas bla ma zhal mi bzhugs pa'i dus su lung blangs pa ni...*3v - 4r.
28. *Sems gsum gyi kun nas blangs nas yan lags bdun pa yan chad sngar bzhin rgyas par byas la/ bla ma rdo rje 'dzin pa la sogs pa phyags bcu na bzhugs pa'i sang rgyas dang byang chub sems dpa'a thams cad dang dpa'a bo dang dpa'a mo thams cad kyis bdag la 'di dang 'di yi lung gnang bar mdzad du gsol/ zhes gsol ba lan gsum btab pas/ gang 'dod pa'i lung chin par bsams mo/ rten de bla ma'i no bor byas la mi gshegs par sar bzhag...*4r.
29. These five offerings are not specified.
30. *Zhabs rjes la rab gnas byed 'dod na/ zhabs rjes legs par bkram la mdun du mchod pa lnga bshams/ nas dang dri bzang po tshags byas la gtor ma cig gnyis bshams la bzhag par bya/* 4r.
31. According to Rigdzin (1986, p.440) *sems bskyed* is "the generation of the mind of enlightenment (*bodhicitta*), an altruistic mind qualified by a strong wish to attain enlightenment for the sake of other sentient beings."
32. *De nas yang rang nyid lha'i nga rgyal dang ldan par byas la nas dang dri la dmigs te rten 'brel bzla'o/ de nas yang lha'i nga rgyal dang ldan pas swa bha ba brjod pas zhabs rjes mi dmigs pa'i ngang las bla mar bsam/* 4v. The term *rten 'brel*, which here seems to refer to a ritual, is most typically used as an abbreviation of *rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba,* meaning interdependent origination. See Rigdzin 1986, pp.150-151 for a detailed explanation of this term.
33. *Bla ma'i thugs khar yi dam gang yin pa de bsam/ de'i thugs khar zla ba'i dkyil 'khor gyi steng du rten 'brel dgar sgor re bzhugs bsams/ de las 'od 'phros pas rang nzhin gyi gnas nas sang rgyas dang byang chub sems dpa'a rnams spyan drangs te/ mchod pa lnga phul la/ dza hum bam ho brjod mi dgos par byan pa tsam gyi tim gyi thim par bsams mo/*4v. This *mantra* is used to get a deity into an image.
34. *De la nas gtor/ chos sku la chos sku thim par bsam/ de nas dris byag bkra shis kyang brjod par bya'o/ mchod pa rnam pa lnga yang dbul bar bya'o/ de nas gtor ma cig dang po nas yul bdag la dbul bar bya'o/ gcig yi dam dang chos skyong dbyer med pa la dbul bar bya'o/ de nas wang gdod dge ba'i rtsa ba rnams nam mga' dang mnyam pa'i sems can thams cad kyi don du bsnga'o/* 4v-5r.
35. The monks are specified as follows: an ordained monk (*dge slong*), a novice monk (*dge tshul*) and an ordained lay person (*dge bsnyen*): *dge slong ngam dge tshul lam dge bsnyen gang yang rung ba dam tshig dang ldan pa gcig la chos de lan gsum du klog tu gzhug...*5r.
36. *Gal te dge slong ngam dge tshul dam tshig dang ldan pa ni ma rnyed/ skye ba klog mkhas pa ni yod/ chos de lung lon par 'dod na/ skye bo de la skyabs 'gro khyad par can byas la/ khrus kyang byed du bcug la chos kyang 'don du gzhug la/ khos klogs pa rnams bla ma'i zhal nas gsungs par bsam mo/ de ltar byas na bsgrab pa dang bshad pa dang bstan pa gang byas kyang bla ma la dngos su gsan pa dang khyad med gsung/* 5r-v.
37. *De'i rjes la yang bla ma des khyod kyis chos de sgom shig shod cig ston cig ces gsungs par yang bsam mo/*5r.
38. Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche recollected seeing this *thang ka*, another intriguing addition to the early bKa' brgyud corpus, in the retreat room (*kun rig sgrub khang*) of Khra 'gu

dgon in Khams (Interview by author at Karma Triyana Dharmachakra Center, Woodstock, NY, August 22, 1998). If the iconography is actually the *yi dam* Ni gu chos drug mKha' spyod dkar dmar and mKhas grub Khyung po rnal 'byor, then this print *thang ka* represents yet another link to the Indian *pāda* tradition because Khyung po rnal 'byor, although he learned an Indian system of yogas similar to those learned by Mar pa, did not have the same teachers. See Matthew Kapstein, "The Journey to the Golden Mountain," in *Religions of Tibet in Practice*, Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (ed.), Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997, p.180.

39. For example, Mr. Ghosh, the librarian at the Institute of Tibetology in Gangtok, remembers seeing print *thang ka*s in the treasury of Rumtek Monastery. However, guides to sacred places in Tibet such as Khyentse's Guide mention handprints and footprints (and other body-part prints) in stone rather than on cloth as the precious items found in these places. See for example, Alfonsa Ferrari, et al, *Mkhyen Brtse's Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet* (Rome: Istituto Italiano Peril Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1958), pp.40, 69 & 72 and Keith Dowman, *The Power Places of Central Tibet* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul LTD, 1988. Reprint, New Delhi: Timeless Books, 1996), pp.56, 75, 78, 102, 116, 145, 192, 223, 229, 230, 233, 251, and 259.
40. Selig Brown 2000, pp.68-84.
41. *De lta bu ma yin pa'i dus su zhabs rjes sba ba gal che gsungs/ gsang ba'i dam tshig yin gal che gsungs/* 5v.
42. For some possible reasons behind this affinity, see Selig Brown 2000, pp.104-106.
43. However, it should be noted that there are certainly other footprint *thang ka*s that belong in this category that have not been seen by the author.
44. This *thang ka* was consecrated by Atiśa and made for his disciple and translator Nag tso. *Jo wo'i zhabs rjes ma 'di ni dge bshes nag tsho lo tsa bas jo bo chen po'i zhabs rjes zhu nas bzhengs/ rab tu gnas pa jo bo nyid kyis mdzad/ lo tsa ba'i thugs dam gyi rten rong pa phyag sor ba'i phyag tu byon nas ra sgreng du phebs pa'i byin rlabs can no//* Lhun grub chos 'phel, *Rwa sgreng dgon pa'i dkar chag,* Chengdu: Si khron Mi rigs Dpe skrun khang, 1994, p.137.
45. He also appears on an early footprint *thang ka* dated to the mid-to-late 13th century from the 'footprints outlined in ink on silk supports' category discussed in Selig Brown 2000, pp.111-115.
46. This text, five folios in length, is listed a topic in his collected works (*gsung 'bum*). Bla ma zhang, *"Gdams pa gya'a lung 'brong bu ma rdo la zhabs rjes byung ba'i lo rgyus"* in *Bla ma zhang brtson 'grus grags pa'i gsung 'bum*, which is listed in *Bod gngas can gyi grub mtha'a ris med kyi mkhas dbang brgya dang brgyad cu lhag gi gsung 'bum so so'i dkar chag phyags gcig tu bsgrigs pa shes bya'i gter mdzod ces bya ba bzhugs so* (Lhasa: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1997), p.99. I have not yet been able to obtain this text.
47. More of his writings will be discussed in a forthcoming publication by this author.
48. Sahaja Saṃvara has one face, two arms and legs, and a garland of severed heads. For more detailed descriptions see Lokesh Chandra (ed.), *Buddhist Iconography, compact* (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 1991), p.223, No.565 and Frederick W. Bunce, *An Encyclopaedia of Buddhist Deities, Demigods, Godlings, Saints and Demons*. Vol.1 (New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 1993), p.467. For a description of Vajravārāhī, see Bunce 1993, Vol.1, pp.595-596. Interestingly, Vajravārāhī is usually depicted without her sow's head when shown *yab yum* with Sahaja Saṃvara.
49. For two early bKa' brgyud *thang ka*s that have Vajravārāhī as the central image see Steven Kossak and Jane Casey Singer, *Sacred Visions. Early Paintings from Central Tibet* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998), pp.96-101. David Jackson, *A History of Tibetan Painting. The Great Tibetan Painters and Their Traditions* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996), pp.271 & 340 for three later bKa' brgyud *thang ka*s that show Sahaja Saṃvara *yab yum* with Vajravārāhī as the *gtso bo*.

50. Interestingly, this size differential changes by the 16th century when the central portraits grow larger and are given more significance in the composition and the prints are placed above and below the central image, rather than flanking it. It has been suggested that this change in placement is linked with a change in the meaning of the *thang ka*s. See Selig Brown 2000, pp.209-211.
51. Amy Heller, *Tibetan Art* (Milan: Editoriale Jaca Book SpA, 1999), p.84. Singer dates this *thang ka* to c. 1200 and proposes that it was produced at sTag lung between its founding in 1180 and Thang pa chen po's death in 1210. Jane Casey Singer, "Taklung Painting," in *Tibetan Art: Towards a Definition of Style* Jane Singer and Philip Denwood (eds.), London: Laurence King Publishing, 1997, p.52.
52. Interestingly, *The Blue Annals* notes that one of the deities with which Thang pa chen po was identified in monks' visions was Sahaja Saṃvara; George Roerich (trans.) *The Blue Annals,* 2nd ed. Reprint (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976), p.619.
53. The inscription is in Sanskrit: *om ā namo guru ratna maṅgalaśri huṃ.* Singer (1997, p.52, and n.2) explains that Maṅgalaśrī is the Sanskrit equivalent of bKra shis dpal, which is another name for Thang pa chen po.
54. Following the "Principles of Composition in Individually Designed *Thang kas*" described in David Jackson and Janice A. Jackson, *Tibetan Thangka Painting: Methods and Materials*, 2nd ed. (London: Serindia Publications, 1988), p.40, the figure at the exact center of the *thang ka* is the most important, the *gtso bo*. Hence, the title I have given the painting includes the names of the deities, which were often omitted in past discussions.
55. Roerich 1979, p.561.
56. This deity is identified as Avalokiteśvara Saḍakṣari in Heller 1999, p.84, although this form of Avalokiteśvara usually has four arms rather than the two depicted (see Bunce 1993, Vol.1, p.463). Gilles Béguin discusses the iconography of the rest of the figures on this painting in *Les Peintures du Bouddhisme Tibétain*, (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1995), pp.227-229.
57. Although these two figures remain unknown, the *bla ma* on the left strongly resembles known portraits of Phag mo gru pa, in fact, much more so than the three-quarters view of him in the lineage at the top of painting (Steven Kossak, personal communication, February, 2000). For example, compare this figure with his broad face, goatee, and wide nose with a sculpture of Phag mo gru pa in Weldon and Singer 1999, p.135. However, if this is Phag mo gru pa, then is the figure in the lineage above simply a different view of him or someone else altogether? Singer (1997, p.52) proposed that the two figures flanking the heels may be two contemporaries of Thang pa chen po: Byang seng and his nephew, *sku yal ba*, who succeeded Thang pa chen po as the head of sTag lung.
58. Although Singer (1997, p.52) writes that this is small by modern standards, she means small by Western standards as two of the author's male Tibetan friends wear the American shoe sizes 5 1/2 and 6, both of which are smaller than 23 cm.
59. This *thang ka* has been published in P. Pal, *Tibetan Paintings: A Study of Tibetan Thankas 11th-19th Centuries* (London: Ravi Kumar/Sotheby Publications and Scranton, PA: Sotheby Publications, 1984), pl. 12 (where it is titled "Samvara and Nairatma") and Deborah E. Klimburg-Salter, *The Silk Route and the Diamond Path. Esoteric Buddhist Art on the Trans-Himalayan Trade Routes* (Los Angeles: UCLA Art Council, 1982), p.193, pl. 111. Erberto Lo Bue and Franco Ricca, *The Great Stupa of Gyantse* (London: Serindia Publications, 1993), p.85, note in reference to this *thang ka* that Pal's misidentification of Vajravārāhī as Nairātmya may have been due to the fact that Vajravārāhī is missing her usual boar's head (overlooking, of course, that Nairātmya is blue or black and this figure is red). However, Vajravārāhī's boar's head is not prescribed by the *sādhanās* in the *Niṣpannayogāvalī* and in the *Sādhanamāla* and it does not appear when she is *yab yum* with Saṃvara in any of the footprint *thang ka*s. The *thang ka* itself has, with two exceptions, the same accompanying iconography (*'khor*) as that

seen on *Buddhist Hierarch* (Kossak and Singer 1998, pp.89-90), another early bKa' brgyud *thang ka*. Although *Buddhist Hierarch* is a far more elaborate and slightly later painting, the similarities in the '*khor* suggests that they were created according to very similar, if not the same, texts. Kossak dates *Buddhist Hierarch* to the early 13th century, though I believe it dates as late as the mid-to-late 13th century, because of the length of the lineage.

60. sGam po pa is usually shown with white or graying hair, especially when his disciple and his disciple's disciple are shown. For example, in the depictions of sGam po pa in Kossak and Singer 1998, p.81, "Vairochana and Attendants," and on p.91, "Portrait of sTag lung Thangpa Chenpo," sGam po pa is in the far right of the top register, with graying hair and a receding hairline. However, in *Buddhist Hierarch*, mentioned above, as in this painting, he is as ageless as the other figures depicted. It is also possible that this early bKa' brgyud lineage skipped sGam po pa and this figure is one of his students.
61. One possible way to ascertain the *bla ma*'s identity would be to find a text listing the lineage of those who had received Sahaja Saṃvara initiation.
62. I would like to thank Eva Allinger for pointing me in the direction of Claudine Bautze-Picron's article, "Crying Leaves. Some Remarks on 'The Art of Pala India (8th-12th centuries) and Its International Legacy," *East and West* 43, (Dec. 1993): pp.290-291. Bautze-Picron notes that these depictions often contain such female and male forms. However, for an example of a later depiction, sTag lung-associated painting with five esoteric forms of Mañjuvajra Mañjuśrī that appear to all be male, see Kossak and Singer 1998, p.114, "Portrait of Two Monks [Phag mo gru pa and bKra shis dpal]," c. 1300. Unfortunately, the reproduction quality of Fig.13 is fairly low and it is unclear whether the figures flanking Mañjuvajra Mañjuśrī are male or female.
63. The rest of the iconography of this *thang ka* is discussed in Selig Brown 2000, pp.90-91.
64. Due to a misprint in Pal 1984, the dimensions of this *thang ka*, including the size of the footprints were mistakenly thought to be much smaller in Selig Brown 2000, 108 ff.
65. Children were discovered as *sprul ku* by the late 13th century. For example, Rang byung rdo rje, the Third Karma pa, is said to have been declared a Karma pa at age 5, in 1289 (Nik Douglas and Meryl White, *Karmapa: The Black Hat Lama of Tibet* (London: Luzac and Company LTD, 1976), p.47.
66. The *thang ka* has an inscription on the reverse, the common "patience creed." For a similar Tibetan inscription, see Singer's translation from the back of Fig.2, a bKa' brgyud footprint *thang ka* from the same time period (Singer 1997, p.293, n.2).
67. See Bunce 1993, p.54 for a description of Bhaiṣajyaguru that matches this figure.
68. Bruce-Gardner (in Kossak and Singer 1998, p.194) mentions this *thang ka* in passing, noting that silk (the support of the footprints) was sometimes "laminated onto more robust and durable supports, seen most notably in the genre depicting the footprints of significant lamas." This technique was used also in *Hevajra and Nairātmya with Footprints* (Fig.6).
69. This motif can also be seen on a silk panel dated to the 12th-13th century and illustrated in Valrae Reynolds, "Silk in Tibet. Luxury Textiles in Secular Life and Sacred Art," In *Asian Art. The Second Hali Annual*. London: Hali Publications Ltd., 1995), p.90. The pattern of roundels ultimately derives from the Sassanian medallion, and is a decorative motif that has been used in Tibet since at least the seventh century. It appears, for example, on a depiction of the Tibetan minister mGar sTong btsan at the Tang court. See Reynolds, p.89, for a depiction of mGar wearing this robe. I would like to thank Valrae Reynolds for bringing these silks to my attention.
70. There are innumerable mentions of the power of such material in the literature. See for example, Geoffrey Samuel, *Civilized Shamans. Buddhism in Tibetan Societies* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), p.136, for a story about the power of a relic, a piece of a 'Bri gung skyabs mgon's robe.

71. Dan Martin, "Tables of Contents (*dKar chag*)," in *Tibetan Literature. Studies in Genre*, José Ignacio Cabezón and Roger R. Jackson (eds.), Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1996, p.508.
72. As noted earlier, this *thang ka* also shares its *'khor* with *Buddhist Hierarch* (Kossak and Singer 1998, pp.89-80). *Buddhist Hierarch*, however, is one generation later than either Fig.2 or 4, based on the depicted lineage which shows not only Phag mo gru pa and his disciple, but Phag mo gru pa's disciple's student.
73. A *siddha* and a buddha are the two last figures in the right upper register. The identity of this third *siddha* is unknown as the traditional bKa' brgyud lineage usually depicted only contains two, Tilopa and Nāropa. However, if the *bla ma* depicted above Sahaja Saṃvara is 'Jig rten gsum mgon, one of Phag mo gru pa's foremost disciples, then it is possible that this siddha is Nāgārjuna as 'Jig rten gsum mgon was believed to be an incarnation of Nāgārjuna. Douglas and White 1976, p.24.
74. David Weldon and Jane Casey Singer, *The Sculptural Heritage of Tibet* (London: Laurence King in association with Weatherhill, 1999), p.139. Figs. 50 and 51 (p.135) in Weldon and Singer illustrate a circa 13th century portrait sculpture of Phag mo gru pa, which shows him with these features and a bulbous nose, features also common in sTag lung portraits of him.
75. Such a robe appears in many portraits of early bKa' brgyud pas. For example, see Kossak and Singer, 1998, "Portrait of Taklung Thangpa Chenpo," 91 and "Portrait of Two Monks [Phakmo Drupa and Tashipel]," p.114.
76. The last *bla ma* in this lineage, No.9, is probably not Thang pa Chen po because he is usually shown with a beard and this *bla ma* is clean-shaven. In addition, this *thang ka* is not in the sTag lung style (see Singer 1997, pp.52-67, for many examples of *thang ka*s from sTag lung monastery). Of course, one would like to speculate that this figure is 'Jig rten gsum mgon. 'Jig rten gsum mgon was one of Phag mo gru pa's foremost disciples and, like his teacher, wrote about the practice of taking footprints from *bla ma*s.
77. Phag mo gru pa, 1v.
78. This *thang ka* is now in an unknown private collection and I have been unable to examine it in person. I would like to thank Valrae Reynolds for introducing this piece to me.
79. David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet* (Boston: Shambhala, 1995), p.139.
80. David Snellgrove, *The Hevajra Tantra. A Critical Study*. Vol.1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p.10 and footnote 2.
81. Douglas and White 1976, p.34.
82. This may be Mañjuśrī as his upper left hand holds what appears to be a lotus with a book on top. The upper right hand appears empty. The lower two hands seem to be held in *dharmacakra mudrā*. The surface of this *thang ka* is very deteriorated and it is not completely clear what the attributes or *mudrā*s are for many of the deities.
83. See Selig Brown 2000, pp.103-119.
84. The only deity on Fig.11 that does not appear on Fig.6 is Vaiśravana. Unfortunately, I do not have the measurements for either *thang ka* so I cannot compare the size of the footprints.
85. See Jane Casey Singer, "Painting in Central Tibet, ca. 950-1400," *Artibus Asiae* LIV, No.1-2 (1994), pp.87-136, for the place of this *thang ka* in the development of central Tibetan painting.
86. *dPal karma pa rang byung rgyal ba chen po'i zhabs rjes yin pa 'dra/*. Singer 1994, p.135. This inscription was probably added later because of the word *'dra*, which indicates that the action "probably" happened.
87. See for example Figs. 4 and 8 in David Jackson, "Some Karma Kagyupa Paintings in the Rubin Collections," in Rhie and Thurman, *Worlds of Transformation. Tibetan Art of Wisdom and Compassion*, (New York: Tibet House, New York in association with The Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation, 1999), pp.80 and 90.

88. According to Douglas and White (1976, pp.51-52), Rang byung rdo rje had five prominent disciples: Yag de Paṇ chen (1284-1376), Kun mkyen Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1292-1361), Zhwa dmar Grags pa seng ge (1283-1349), rGyal ba Yung ston pa and sTag lung Kun spang Rin po che. However, he doubtless had countless other students as well, so the identity of this *bla ma* remains unknown.
89. Selig Brown 2000, pp.79-97.
90. Gregory Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks. Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), p.114.
91. The bKa' brgyud teacher Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche has related another practice connected to this type of footprint *thang ka* which he said was prevalent in Khams: when a *bla ma* imparts his knowledge by initiating a student into a particular *yi dam*, he makes a *thang ka* of the *yi dam* with his own footprints as blessings (*byin rlabs*) and gives it to the student to carry on the practice of that specific *yi dam.* Interview at Karma Triyana Dharmachakra Center, Woodstock, NY, August 22, 1998. Many of the rinpoches and *bla ma*s who were interviewed in the course of my research (the Dalai Lama, Khamtrul Rinpoche, Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche, Matthieu Ricard, etc.) echoed the idea of the prints standing for blessings, a topic which was discussed in Selig Brown 2000, pp.91-93.
92. For example, see George Elder, *An Encyclopedia of Archetypal Symbolism*, Vol II: *The Body* (Boston and London: Shambhala Publications, 1996), pp.201-238 and pp.353-394, and the bibliographic references therein.
93. It is difficult to prove how long the print *thang ka* tradition has existed in Tibet and whether or not it predates the influx of Buddhism and its *pāda* tradition. There are no clear traces, such as petroglyphs or paintings, of an early Tibetan connection with prints as there are in other cultures. Yet, the sheer amount and variety of both handprints and footprints present in Tibetan culture may be due to an indigenous or ancient preference for these symbols. Judging from visual and textual evidence, the Indian *pāda* tradition seems to have been the strongest influence on the development of the print *thang ka* tradition in Tibet. It is unlikely, however, that it was the only influence and thorough research will surely uncover others.
94. See for example Roerich 1979, p.1063 and Donald S. Lopez, Jr. "A Prayer to the Lama," in *Religions of Tibet in Practice*, Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (ed.), Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997, p.380.
95. Jeannine Auboyer, "A Note on 'the Feet' and Their Symbolism in Ancient India," in *Kusumanjali. New Interpretations of Indian Art and Culture,* M.S. Nāgarāja Rao (ed.), Vol.I, pp.125-127 (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1987) p.126, citing the Ṛg Veda, X, p.90.
96. See, for example, Roerich 1979, pp.758, 855 & 950.
97. *Dhammapadaṭṭhakatbā*, Vol.III (London: Pali Text Society), 1906, *b*193 ff. Quoted by E.F.C. Ludowyk, *The Footprint of the Buddha* (London: George Allen & Unwin, LTD, 1958), p.22.
98. Interview 17 December, 1997.
99. Debjani Paul, "Antiquity of the Vishnupada at Gaya. Tradition and Archeology" *East and West* 35, No.1-3 (Sept., 1985), pp.103-142, discusses some of the *buddhapāda* at Bodh Gaya.
100. See Anna Maria Quagliotti, *Buddhapadas. An essay on the representations of the footprints of the Buddha with a descriptive catalogue of the Indian specimens from the 2nd century B.C. to the 4th century A.D.* (Kamakura: Institute of the Silk Road Studies, 1998), Fig.41-48 for examples of these *pādacetiyas*, which are also addressed in Paul's 1985 study.
101. For example, see Figs. 52 and 53 in Quagliotti 1998, which show the east and west entrances of a model of the Mahabodhi Temple in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum (No.IS 21-1986). The footprints are beneath each entrance, in the center facing upwards.

102. The first paragraph of this translation was translated from the Tibetan by Donald Lopez. The rest is from George Roerich (trans.) *Biography of Dharmasvamin (Chag lo tsa ba Chos rje dpal). A Tibetan Monk Pilgrim* (Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1959), pp.71-72. The corresponding Tibetan is on pp.17 and 18 and is from folios 18a and b.
103. Even in Faxian's time (c. early fifth century), some *buddhapāda* had shrines or viharas associated with them (Giles 1959, p.48 and Legge 1886, pp.79-80, cited in Quagliotti 1998, p.114).
104. See also Quagliotti 1998, pp.117-118. Although Chag lo tsā ba mentions the stone as being square in shape, the *buddhapāda* in question is carved onto a round stone, which is typical of other examples from the site. As A.S. Altekar notes in his introduction to the text, there are many other discrepancies between Chag lo tsā ba's account and archaeological evidence, discrepancies which may be due to the fact that this account was given orally to a scribe.
105. Schopen 1997, p.127.
106. Schopen 1997, p.134.
107. Roerich 1979, p.891.
108. Toni Huber, "Putting the *gnas* Back into *gnas-skor*: Rethinking Tibetan Buddhist Pilgrimage Practice" *The Tibet Journal* XIX, No.2 (Summer, 1994), pp.45-46.
109. Sangs rgyas yar byon instructed Maṅgalaguru "to look after sTag lung, its supporters and monks, in the same manner as had been done by me. You will follow my example in the manner of monastic rules and practice." Roerich 1979, p.631.
110. Sangs rgyas yar byon's placement of his feet on Maṅgalaguru's head is an act with particular significance because c. 1273, there was a schism over the control of sTag lung monastery. There are different interpretations of the events, but it seems that Sangs rgyas yar byon may have promised the position to two nephews, dBon po bla ma rin po che (1251-1296) and Maṅgalaguru. Although dBon po bla ma actually ruled first, for less than a year, it was Maṅgalaguru who finally prevailed, probably because of Phags pa's support. dBon po bla ma fled to Khams where he founded the monastery Ri bo che in 1276. Roerich 1979, pp.650-52.
111. Roerich 1979, pp.222-223.
112. R.A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, Translated by J. E. Stapleton Driver, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972, p.176.
113. For a translation of this passage in English see Selig Brown 2000, pp.200-205. For a French translation see Ariane Macdonald with Dvags po Rin po che and Yon tan Rgya mtsho, "Un portrait du Cinquième Dalai-lama," in *Essais sur l'art du Tibet*, Ariane Macdonald and Yoshiro Imaeda (eds.), Paris: Librarie d'Amerique et d'Orient, 1977, pp.142-143.
114. See for example Roerich 1979, pp.165, 891, 946 and 950.
115. Roerich 1979, p.312.
116. As Martin (1994, pp.273-274) has pointed out in his commentary on the power of relics:

> Something palpable is given in return for their veneration, something we might call grace or blessing. What the Moroccan Maraboutist calls *baraka* and the early medieval Christian might have called *charis* ('gift') or *dynamis* ('force,' 'power'), a Tibetan would call *byin-rlabs.*
>
> *Byin-rlabs* is commonly glossed as 'gift wave,' but…its actual, or rather its philologically correct meaning is 'received by (way of) giving.' The believer receives a gift from the saint (in person or in vision), relic or consecrated article…. For the sake of definition it will be sufficient for our present purposes to say that, no matter what qualities we may wish to include in our concept of sanctity or spirituality, this 'gift' is intended to assist in the development of those same qualities in the receiving individual.

It should be noted that the above quotation is extensively footnoted in the original. See also Huber 1994, pp.41-45, who translates *byin gyis brlabs* as “flooded by power,” or “suffused with power,” and hence “empowerment.”

117. Virtually every (monastic) Tibetan I asked mentioned that print *thang ka*s give *byin rlabs*. Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche specifically noted that the gesture of giving *byin rlabs*, “is as if the person is warming their hands on a fire;” that is, with both hands up as depicted on *thang ka*s that show handprints in addition to the footprints. Interview, August 23, 1998.
118. Interview, Dec. 1997, Dharamsala, India.
119. Bu ston also refers several times to the washing or touching of feet, especially those of one’s teacher, as a sign of respect. See *The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet*, E. Obermiller (trans.), 2nd ed. (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1986, 1986), pp.44, 58 and 81.
120. Obermiller 1986, pp.136-7.
121. Roberto Vitali (personal communication, July 1998) mentioned that a more accurate translation of the Tibetan describes a brocade cloth with footprints in the pattern.
122. Roerich 1979, p.616.
123. Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1976, p.135, quoted in Mona Schrempf, “Tibetan Ritual Dances and the Transformation of Space,” *The Tibet Journal* XIX, No.2 (Summer, 1994), p.108. Brauen (1992, 72) also describes a ritual in which Buddhist symbols are visualized on the soles of the feet and then stamped onto the ground, thereby empowering it.
124. Schrempf 1994, p.108.
125. See Singer in Singer and Kossak 1998, pp.20-21 on the importance of lineages during this time period. Possession of a teacher’s footprints may have aided someone in their pursuit for succeeding in that teacher’s position.
126. It should be noted, however, that this association does not always hold true for later handprint and footprint *thang ka*s. For example, there are four *thang ka*s in the Guimet and two in Brussels that depict the Fifth Dalai Lama and his previous embodiments (*sku ’phreng*).
127. See Selig Brown 2000, pp.151-197.

The Tibetan Text

1r ༄༅། །རིན་པོ་ཆེ་མཐའ་རྩ་བས་མཛད་པའི་ཞབས་རྗེས་ཞུ་བའོ།

1v ༄༅། །བླ་མ་དམ་པ་རྣམས་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། ཞབས་རྗེས་བཞེངས་པའི་ལུགས་འདི་ཡང་དག་པར་རྫོགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས་ནས་ཡོད་པ་ཡིན་ཡང་། རྒྱུད་དུ་བཤད་པ་ནི་མེད་པ་ཡིན་སྐད། འདི་ཡི་བརྒྱུད་ལུགས་ནི་ཀུ་སུ་ལུ་ཆེན་པོ་ནས་ཀུ་སུ་ལུ་ཆུང་དུ་ལ་བརྒྱུད་པ་ཡིན། དེ་ནས་རྗེ་བོ་ཆེན་པོ་ནས་བརྒྱུད་པ་ཡིན་གསུང་། འདི་ལ་དགོས་པ་མང་དུ་ཡོད་ཀྱང་གཙོ་བོར་གྱུར་པའི་དགོས་པ་ནི། བླ་མའི་ཆོས་ལུང་མ་ཐོབ་པར་བྱེད་པའི་དགོས་པ་ཡིན་གསུང་། དེ་ཡང་སློབ་དཔོན་དེ་བྱམས་སྙིང་རྗེ་བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས་དང་ལྡན་པ་ཅིག་དགོས་པ་ཡིན་གསུང་། ཞབས་རྗེས་ཞུ་བའི་སློབ་མ་དེ་ཡང་མོས་གུས་མཐར་ཐུག་པ་དང་ལྡན་པ་ཅིག་དགོས་གསུང་། སློབ་མ་དེས་ཀྱང་ལན་གསུམ་གྱི་བར་དུ་སློབ་དཔོན་གྱི་ཞབས་རྗེས་ཞུ་ཞེས་མེ་ཏོག་དབུལ་ཞིང་ཞུ་བ་ཕུལ་བ་གཅིག་དགོས་གསུང་། སློབ་དཔོན་གྱིས་དང་པོའི་ཞུ་བ་གཉིས་པ་ལ་ཞལ་རོགས་བཞུགས་ཤིང་གསུང་ (གསུམ་) པའི་དུས་སུ་ཐུང་ (རུང་) ཞེས་ཞལ་གྱིས་བཞེས་པར་བྱའོ། དེ་ནས་སློབ་མ་དེས་རས་དྲི་མ་མེད་པ་དང་དྲི་བཟང་པོ་སྦྱར་ནས་ཚགས་བྱས་ལ། རྣལ་འབྱོར་པའམ་དགེ་འདུན་ལ་ཚོགས་བསགས། འབྱོར་ན་མེ་ཏོག་རེ་འབུལ། སློབ་དཔོན་ལ་མེ་ཏོག་ཅི་འབྱོར་པ་ཅིག་དང་མཎྜལ་དབུལ། སློབ་དཔོན་གྱིས་སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་སྡུག་བསྔལ་དང་བྲལ་བདེ་བ་དང་

2r ལྡན་བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་གོ་འཕང་ཐོབ་པར་བྱ་སྙམ་དུ་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་པར་བྱའོ། དེའི་དོན་དུ་ཞབས་རྗེས་འདི་ལ་དབུལ་བར་བྱ་དགོས་སྙམ་དུ་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་དོ། སློབ་མས་ཀྱང་སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་སྡུག་བསྔལ་དང་བྲལ་བདེ་བ་དང་ལྡན། བྱང་ཆུབ་ཐོབ་པར་བྱ་དེའི་དོན་དུ་ཞབས་རྗེ་ (རྗེས་) ཞུ་སྙམ་དུ་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་པར་བྱའོ། ཞབས་རྗེས་ལེན་པའི་དུས་སུ་ཤེས་ན་སྐྱེ་བ་མེད་པ་ཐུན་གཅིག་བསྒོམ་ན་ལེགས། མ་ཤེས་ཀྱང་དེའི་རིང་ལ་བྱམས་སྙིང་རྗེ་བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས་བསྒོམ་པ་གལ་ཆེ་གསུང་། དེ་ནས་སློབ་དཔོན་གྱི་ཞབས་ལ་དྲི་བཟང་པོས་བྱུགས་ལ་རས་ཀྱི་སྟེང་དུ་འཛོག་པར་ཞུའོ། དེའི་དུས་སུ་ཞབས་རྗེས་ལེན་མཁན་དེ་ཡང་བྱམས་སྙིང་རྗེ་དང་ལྡན་པ་མ་སྐྱེ་བ་མེད་པའི་དོན་བསྒོམ་པ་ཞིག་དགོས་གསུང་། དེ་ལྟ་བུ་མེད་ཀྱང་རྒྱུད་འཇམ་པ་ཅིག་དགོས་གསུང་རྩ་ན་བཞུགས་པ་ཀུན་ཀྱང་སྐྱེ་བ་མེད་པ་དང་བྱམས་སྙིང་རྗེ་བསྒོམ་པ་གལ་ཆེ་གསུང་། དེའི་དུས་སུ་དམ་ཚིག་མི་གཙང་པ་དང་ཚགས་སྟང་ཤས་ཆེ་བ་རྩར་མི་བཏང་བ་གལ་ཆེ་གསུང་། དེ་ནས་རྒྱ་སྐེགས་ཀྱི་རི་མོ་ལེགས་པར་བྱས་ལ་སྦྲ་བ་གལ་ཆེ། ཞབས་རྗེས་ལེན་པའི་མན་ངག ཡིཊ། (ཡིཐི) བླ་མ་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ།

2v དང་པོ། སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་བདེ་བ་དང་ལྡན་སྡུག་བསྔལ་དང་བྲལ་སངས་རྒྱས་ཐོབ་པར་བྱ་བའི་དོན་དུ་ཞབས་རྗེས་རབ་གནས་བྱ་སྙམ་པའི་རབ་གནས་གསུང་དང་མཐུན་ བྱང་ཆུབ་ཀྱི་སེམས་གསུམ་སྒོམ། རང་སྐད་ཅིག་ཡི་དམ་གྱི་ལྷར་བསྒོམ་ལ་མདུན་དུ་མཆོད་པ་བཤམས། ཞབས་རྗེས་བཀྲམ་ལ་དེ་ལ་དམིགས་ནས་ཤུནྱཏཱ་ཛྙཱ་ན་ཏའི་སྔགས་ལན་གསུམ་བརྗོད་པ་སྟོང་པར་བསམ། དེའི་ངང་ལས་ཞབས་རྗེས་དེ་བླ་མར་བསམ། བླ་མའི་ཐུགས་ཁར་རང་གི་ཡི་དམ་ལྷའི་གདན་དང་ས་བོན་བསམ། ས་བོན་ལས་འོད་འཕྲོས་པས་ལུས་ལ་ཁྲབ། ལུས་ཤ་ཁྲག སྡིག་སྒྲིབ་སྦྱངས་ནས་བླ་མ་ཡི་དམ་ལྷར་བསམ། དེ་ནས་ཡི་དམ་ལྷའི་ཐུགས་ཁའི་གདན་གྱི་ས་བོན་ལས་འོད་ཟེར་འཕྲོས་པས་སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་ཕོག ཤ་ཁྲག་དང་སྡིག་སྒྲིབ་སྦྱངས། ཐམས་ཅད་ཡི་དམ་ལྷར་གྱུར། ཚུར་འདུས་ནས་ཐུགས་ཁར་ཐིམ། ཡང་འོད་ཟེར་གཉིས་པ་ཕར་འཕྲོས་པས། སངས་རྒྱས་དང་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད་པ་སྤྱན་དྲངས་ནས་དེ་ལ་བསྟིམ། ཡང་འོད་ཟེར་གསུམ་པ་འཕྲོས་པས་འཇིག་རྟེན་གྱི་ཁམས་ཀྱི་དཔའ་བོ་དང་དཔའ་མོ་རྣམས་སྤྱན་དྲངས་ཞབས་རྗེས་ལ་བསྟིམ་ནས། དེ་ལ་ཡན་ལག་བདུན་པ་རྒྱས་པར་བྱ་སྟེ། བླ་མ་རྡོ་རྗེ་འཛིན་པ་ལ་

3r སོགས་པའི་ཕྱོགས་བཅུ་ན་བཞུགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས་དང་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཐམས་ཅད་དང་དཔའ་བོ་དང་དཔའ་མོ་ཐམས་ཅད་བདག་ལ་དགོངས་སུ་གསོལ། བདག་མིང་འདི་ཞེས་བགྱི་བ་ལ་ཏིང་ངེ་འཛིན་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་པ་བསྐྱེད་པར་མཛད་དུ་གསོལ། ཤེས་རབ་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་པ་བསྐྱེད་པར་མཛད་དུ་གསོལ། རྟོགས་པ་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་པ་བསྐྱེད་པར་བྱིན་གྱིས་བརླབས་པ་དམ་པ་མཛད་དུ་གསོལ། བསྟན་པའི་རིམ་པ་མཐའ་དག་རྒྱུད་ལ་སྐྱེ་བ་དང་། དེའི་མི་མཐུན་པའི་ཕྱོགས་མཐའ་དག་སྤང་ནུས་པར་བྱིན་གྱིས་བརླབས་པ་དམ་པ་མཛད་དུ་གསོལ། ཞེས་གསོལ་བ་ལན་གསུམ་གདབ་བོ། དེ་ནས་དགེ་བའི་རྩ་བ་བསྔོ། སྨོན་ལམ་གདབ། བླ་མ་དང་གཉིས་ལ་དམ་ཚིག་ལ་ཁུ་འཁྲིགས་སེམས་ལ་ཡོད་ན། དང་པོར་སེམས་གསུམ་གྱིས་བསླང་ལ་རང་སྐད་ཅིག་གིས་ཡི་དམ་ལྷར་བསམ་ལ། ཞབས་རྗེས་བཀྲམ་ལ་འོད་ཟེར་སྤྲོ་བསྡུ་ལ་སོགས་པ་ཡན་ལག་བདུན་པ་ཡན་ཆད་སྔར་དང་མཐུན། དེ་ནས་རྗེན་བླ་མའི་སྐུ་ལ་དམིགས་ལ་དམ་ཚིག་ཉམས་པ་བཤགས་པའི་བསམ་པས་ཡི་གེ་བརྒྱ་པ་མང་དུ་བཟླས་ལ། ཟིན་པ་དང་བླ་མ་རྡོ་རྗེ་འཛིན་པ་ལ་སོགས་པ་ཕྱོགས་བཅུ་ན་བཞུགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས་དང་བྱང་

3v ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་བདག་གིས་དམ་ཚིག་ཉམས་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་སོར་ཆུད་པར་མཛད་དུ་གསོལ། ཞེས་གསོལ་བ་གདབ་བོ། དམ་ཚིག་ལ་སེམས་འཕྲིག་ཡོད་ན་བླ་མ་ཞལ་བཞུགས་ན་དངོས་སུ་བཤམས། ཞལ་མི་བཞུགས་ན་སྐུ་འབག་བཀྲམ་ལ་བཤགས། སླང་པོ་ཆེའི་ཀོ་བ་ཅན་གྱི་གདམ་རྒྱུད། སླང་པོ་ཆེའི་ཀོ་བ་ཅན་ལ་ཆོས་མཉན་པས་སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་བསྟན་པས་དེ་ལ་ཡིད་མ་ཆེས་པར་སོང་པས། གཞན་ སྟོང་པ་ཉིད་བསྟན་པས་བཟོད་ཡིད་ཆེས་ནས་སྐད་ནས་བྱུས་པའི་གདམ་རྒྱུད་ཡོད་ ལ་མཉན་པས་བླ་མའི་ཟབ་པར་འདུག་པ་ལ་སྐམ་ནས་སྟར་སྡིག་པ་བསགས་པའི་དེས་ཧི་ལྟར་བྱ་སྐམ་ཅན། རྨི་ལམ་ནང་ང་ཡི་སྐུ་འབག་ཅིག་གྱིས་ལ་དེ་ལ་བཤམས་པ་གྱིས་གསུང་། ཡང་ན་བླ་མ་གཞན་ཅིག་ལ་ཆོས་སྐུ་གཅིག་པའི་བློས་བཤགས་ཀྱང་ཐུབཙ པས་ཞབས་རྗེས་ལ་བཤགས་པ་བྱེད་པའི་ཁུངས་གསུང་ དངོས་པོ་ཨ་ཐང་ཆད་པ་མེད། བཤགས་བྱ་བཤགས་བྱེད་བཤགས་པ་རྣམས། གང་ཚེ་རྣལ་འབྱོར་པས་མ་མཐོང་། རང་བཞིན་དག་པས་ཡང་དག་མཐོང་། དེ་ནས་བཤགས་པའི་མཆོག་ཡིན་ནོ། ཞེས་གསུངས་པས། སྨྱུ་མའི་བློ་ཅིག་ཡོད་ན་བཤགས་པ་ལ་ཚིགས་མེད་གསུང་། ཡང་བླ་མ་ཞལ་

4r བཞུགས་དུས་ན་མན་ངག་དང་ཆོས་བཤད་པ་ལ་སོགས་པའི་ལོང་མེད་ནས་བླ་མ་ཞལ་མི་བཞུགས་པའི་དུས་སུ་ལུང་བླངས་པ་ནི་སེམས་གསུམ་གྱི་ཀུན་ནས་བླངས་ནས་ཡན་ལག་བདུན་པ་ཡན་ཆད་སྟར་བཞིན་རྒྱས་པར་བྱས་ལ། བླ་མ་རྡོ་རྗེ་འཛིན་པ་ལ་སོགས་པ་ཕྱོགས་བཅུ་ན་བཞུགས་པའི་སངས་རྒྱས་དང་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་ཐམས་ཅད་དང་དཔའ་བོ་དང་དཔའ་མོ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱིས་བདག་ལ་འདི་དང་འདི་ཡི་ལུང་གནང་བར་མཛད་དུ་གསོལ། ཞེས་གསོལ་བ་ལན་གསུམ་བཏབ་པས། གང་འདོད་པའི་ལུང་བྱིན་པར་བསམ་མོ། རྟེན་དེ་བླ་མའི་ངོ་བོར་བྱས་ལ་མི་གཤེགས་པར་སར་བཞག་ཟིན་པར་དང་དགེ་བ་བསྔོ། སྨོན་ལམ་གདབ། ཞབས་རྗེས་ལ་རབ་གནས་ཡོད་ན་ལེགས། མེད་ཀྱང་བཏུབ་གསུང་། བླ་མ་དམ་པ་རྣམས་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ལོ། ཞབས་རྗེས་ལ་རབ་གནས་བྱེད་འདོད་ན། ཞབས་རྗེས་ལེགས་པར་བཀྲམ་ལ་མདུན་དུ་མཆོད་པ་ལྔ་བཤམས། ནས་དང་དྲི་བཟང་པོ་ཚགས་བྱས་ལ་གཏོར་མ་ཅིག་གཉིས་བཤམས་ལ་བཞག་པར་བྱ། དེ་ནས་དང་པོར་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་པར་བྱ་བ་ནི། བདག་དང་མཐའ་ཡས་པའི་སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་སྡུག་བསྔལ་དང་བྲལ་བདེ་བ་དང་ལྡན་བྱང་ཆུབ་

4v ཐོབ་པར་བྱ་སྙམ་དུ་བསམ་ལ། དེའི་དོན་དུ་ཞབས་རྗེས་ལ་རབ་གནས་བྱ་དགོས་སྙམ་དུ་དཔོན་སློབ་གཉིས་ཀས་སེམས་བསྐྱེད་པར་བྱའོ། དེ་ནས་ཡང་རང་ཉིད་ལྷའི་ང་རྒྱལ་དང་ལྡན་པར་བྱས་ལ་ནས་དང་དྲི་ལ་དམིགས་ཏེ་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་བཟླའོ། དེ་ནས་ཡང་ལྷའི་ང་རྒྱལ་དང་ལྡན་པས་སྭ་བྷཱ་བ་བརྗོད་པས་ཞབས་རྗེས་མི་དམིགས་པའི་ངང་ལས་བླ་མར་བསམ། བླ་མའི་ཐུགས་ཁར་ཡི་དམ་གང་ཡིན་པ་དེ་བསམ། དེའི་ཐུགས་ཁར་ཟླ་བའི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་གྱི་སྟེང་དུ་རྟེན་འབྲེལ་དཀར་སྔོར་རེ་བཞུགས་བསམ། དེ་ལས་འོད་འཕྲོས་པས་རང་བཞིན་གྱི་གནས་ནས་སངས་རྒྱས་དང་བྱང་ཆུབ་སེམས་དཔའ་རྣམས་སྤྱན་དྲངས་ཏེ། མཆོད་པ་ལྔ་ཕུལ་ལ། ཛཿཧཱུྃ་བཾ་ཧོ་བརྗོད་མི་དགོས་པར་ཐིམ་པ་ཙམ་གྱི་ཏིམ་གྱིས་ཐིམ་པར་བསམ་མོ། དེ་ལ་ནས་གཏོར། ཆོས་སྐུ་ལ་ཆོས་སྐུ་ཐིམ་པར་བསམ། དེ་ནས་དྲིས་བྱུགས་བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཀྱང་བརྗོད་པར་བྱའོ། མཆོད་པ་རྣམ་པ་ལྔ་ཡང་དབུལ་བར་བྱའོ། དེ་ནས་གཏོར་མ་ཅིག་དང་པོ་ནས་ཡུལ་བདག་ལ་དབུལ་བར་བྱའོ། གཅིག་ཡི་དམ་དང་ཆོས་སྐྱོང་དབྱེར་མེད་པ་ལ་དབུལ་བར་བྱའོ། དེ་ནས་ཡང་གཏོད་དགེ་བའི་རྩ་བ་རྣམས་ནམ་མཁའ་དང་མཉམ་པའི་

5r སེམས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱི་དོན་དུ་བསྔོའོ། ཞབས་རྗེས་རབ་གནས་བྱེད་པའི་མན་ངག ཞབས་རྗེས་ལ་ཆོས་ཞུ་བར་འདོད་ན། ཡང་ཞབས་རྗེས་བཀྲམ་ལ་མཎྜལ་ལེགས་ཕྱིས་ལ་མེ་ཏོག་བཀྲམ། མཆོད་པ་རྣམ་པ་ལྔ་བཤམས་ལ། དགེ་སློང་ངམ་དགེ་ཚུལ་ལམ་དགེ་བསྙེན་གང་ཡང་རུང་བ་དམ་ཚིག་དང་ལྡན་པ་གཅིག་ལ་ཆོས་དེ་ལན་གསུམ་དུ་ཀློག་ཏུ་གཞུག རང་གིས་ཞབས་རྗེས་བླ་མ་རང་དུ་བསྐྱེད་ལ་མཆོད་པ་རྣམས་ཕུལ་ལ་ཆོས་དེ་ཞུ་བར་ཡང་བསམ་ལ། ཆོས་དེ་ཡང་བླ་མའི་ཞལ་ནས་ལན་གསུམ་དུ་གསུངས་པར་བསམ་ལ། དེའི་རྗེས་ལ་ཡང་བླ་མ་དེས་ཁྱོད་ཀྱིས་ཆོས་དེ་སྒོམ་ཞིག་ཤོད་ཅིག་སྟོན་ཅིག་ཅེས་གསུངས་པར་ཡང་བསམ་མོ། གལ་ཏེ་དགེ་སློང་ངམ་དགེ་ཚུལ་དམ་ཚིག་དང་ལྡན་པ་ནི་མ་རྙེད། སྐྱེ་བ་ཀློག་མཁས་པ་ནི་ཡོད། ཆོས་དེ་ལུང་ཡོན་པར་འདོད་ན། སྐྱེ་བོ་དེ་ལ་སྐྱབས་འགྲོ་ཁྲིད་པར་ཅན་བྱས་ལ། ཁྲུས་ཀྱང་བྱེད་

5v དུ་བཅུག་ལ་ཆོས་ཀྱང་འདོན་དུ་གཞུག་ལ། ཁོས་ཀླགས་པ་རྣམས་བླ་མའི་ཞལ་ནས་གསུངས་པར་བསམ་མོ། དེ་ལྟར་བྱས་ན་བསྒྲུབ་པ་དང་བཤད་པ་དང་བསྟན་པ་གང་བྱས་ཀྱང་བླ་མ་ལ་དངོས་སུ་གསན་པ་དང་ཁྱད་མེད་གསུང་། དེ་ལྟར་བུ་མ་ཡིན་པའི་དུས་སུ་ཞབས་རྗེས་སྦ་བ་གལ་ཆེ་གསུངས། གསང་བའི་དམ་ཚིག་ཡིན་གལ་ཆེ་གསུངས། ཞབས་རྗེས་ལ་ཆོས་ལུང་མ་ཐོབ་པ་ཐོབ་པར་བྱེད་པའི་མན་ངག ཆོས་རྗེ་རིན་པོ་དཔལ་ཕག་མོ་གྲུ་པས་མཛད་པའི་ ཞབས་རྗེས་ལེན་པ་དང་རབ་གནས་དང་ཆོས་ལུང་ལེན་པའི་གདམས་པ་རྫོགས་སོ།།

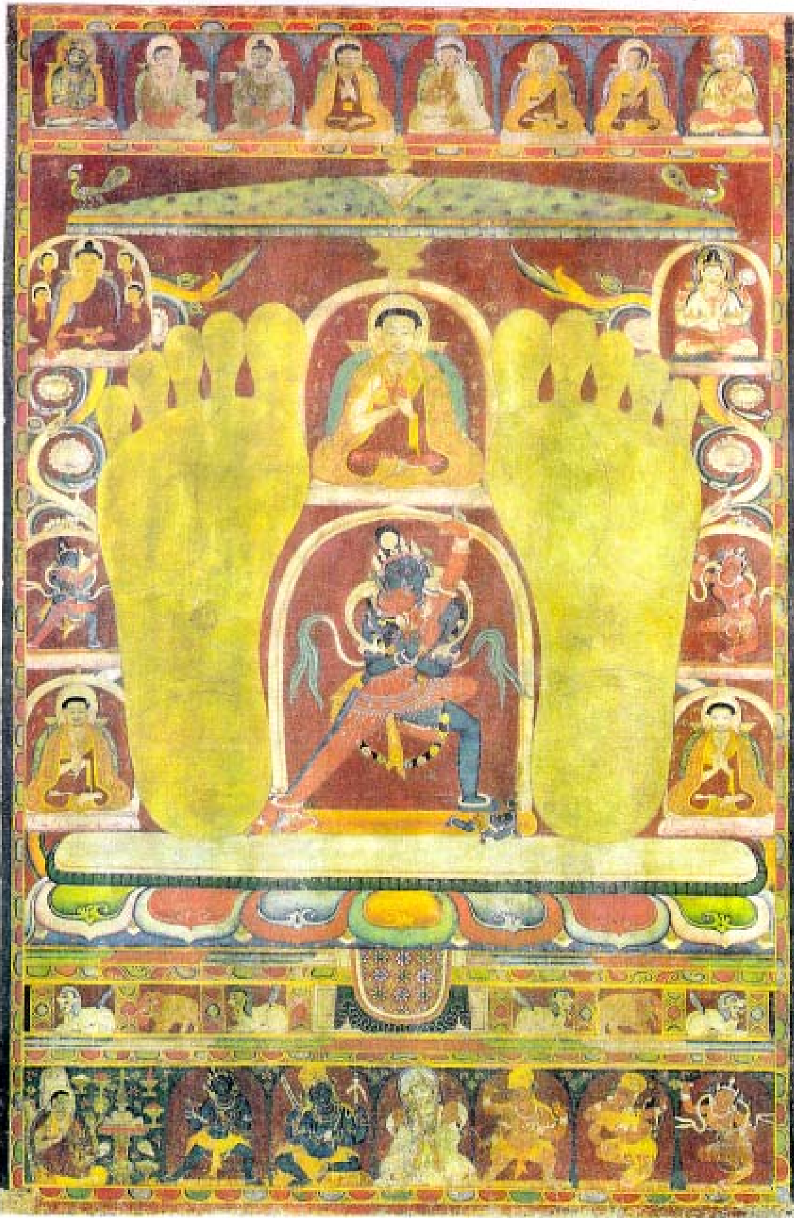

FIG.1 Sahaja Saṃvara and Vajravārāhi with Thang pa chen po and his Footprints; Tibet; c. 1200. Distemper on cloth; 52 x 34 cm (20.5 x 13. in); Musée Guimet, MA 5176. After: Béguin 1990, pl. 2.

FIG.2 Sahaja Saṃvara and Vajravārāhi with Footprints; Tibet; c. 1200.
Distemper on cloth; 78 x 64 cm (30.4 x 25 in); Private Collection.
After: Pal 1984, pl. 12.

FIG.3 Sahaja Saṃvara and Vajravārāhi with Footprints; Tibet; 13th century? Distemper on cloth; 53.3 x 33 cm (21 x 13 in). The Shelley and Donald Rubin Collection# 200038. Photo courtesy Shelley and Donald Rubin

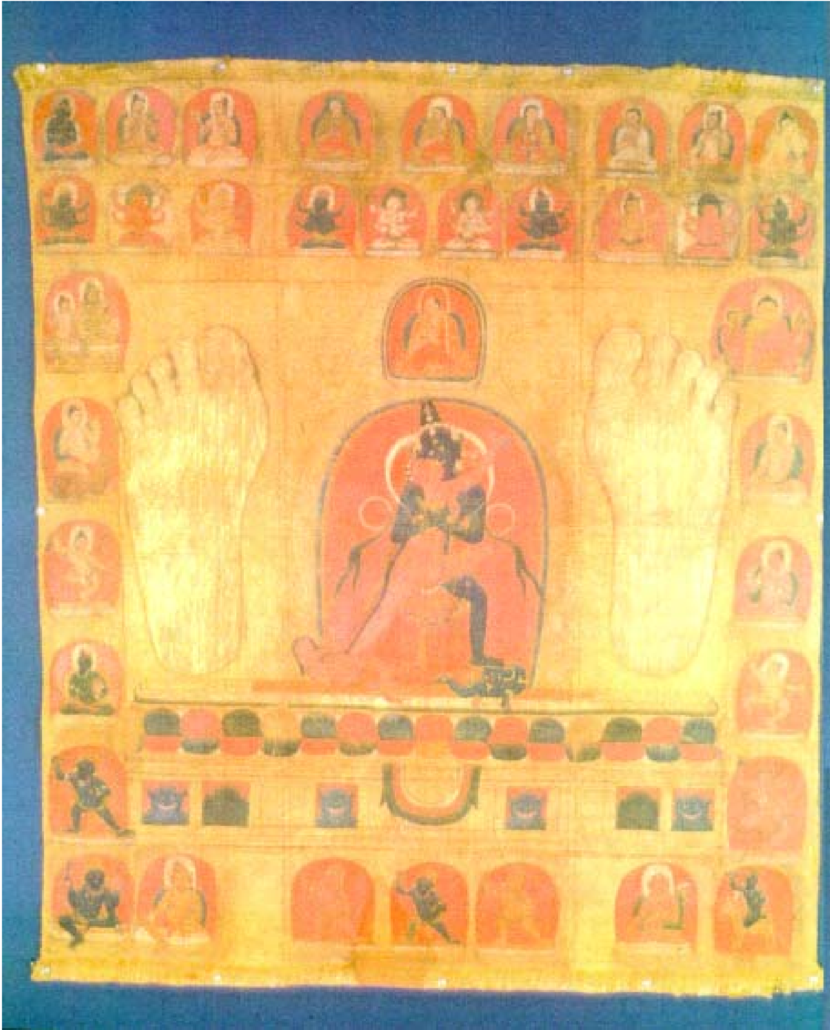

FIG.4 Sahaja Saṃvara and Vajravārāhi with Footprints; Tibet; late 12th-early 13th century. Distemper on silk brocade; 59.7 x 50.5 cm (23.5 x 19. 5 in). Private Collection. Photo courtesy of the owners.

FIG.5 Vajravārāhi with a *bla ma* and his Footprints; Tibet; 12th-13th century. Distemper on cloth; 41.25 x 36.2 cm (16.08 x 14.12 in). Navin Kumar. After: Rhie and Thurman 1998, 41.

FIG.6 Hevajra and Nairātmya with Lama and his Footprints; Tibet; late 12th-early 13th century. Distemper on cloth; dimensions and current location unknown. Photo courtesy of Ian Alsop

FIG.7 Footprints of Rang 'byung rdo rje, the Third Karma pa; Tibet; c. 14th century. Distemper on cloth; 58. 4 x 38 cm (23 x 15 in). Doris Weiner. Photo courtesy of Doris Weiner.

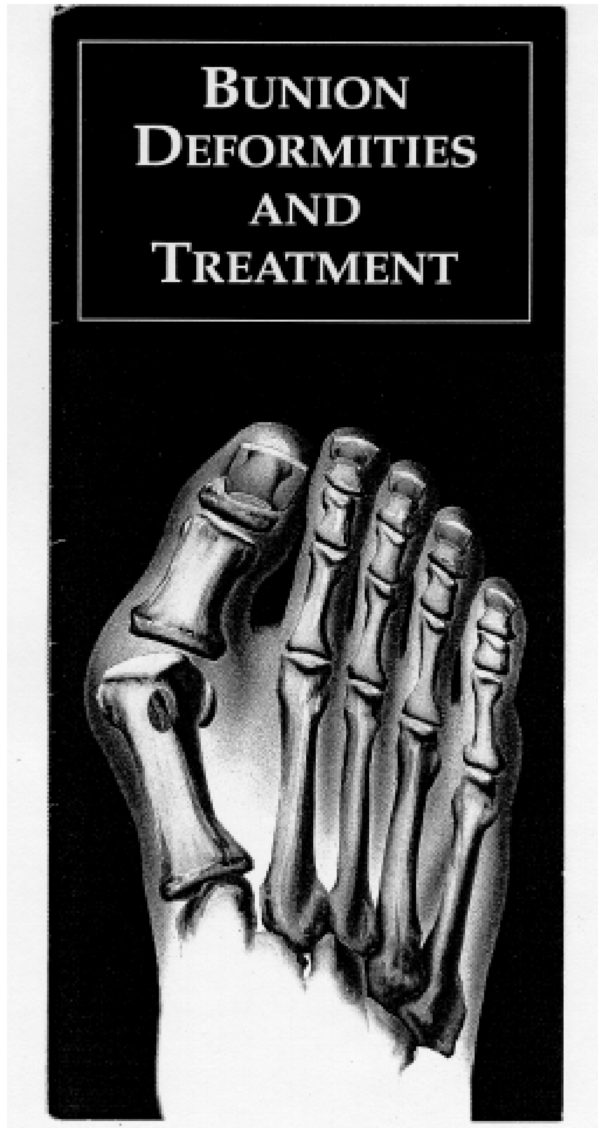

FIG.8 After: "Bunion Deformities and Treatment" a pamphlet published by the American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons, 1997.

FIG.9 Detail of Patchwork Altar Cloth; Central Asia or Tibet; 13th century; Silk brocade and *lampas* weave, embroidered edge; 71.1 x 73.7 cm (28 x 29 in). The Newark Museum, Purchase 1996 Estate of Gertrude Woodcock Simpson and Thomas L. Raymond Bequest Fund, 96.78. Photo courtesy of The Newark Museum.

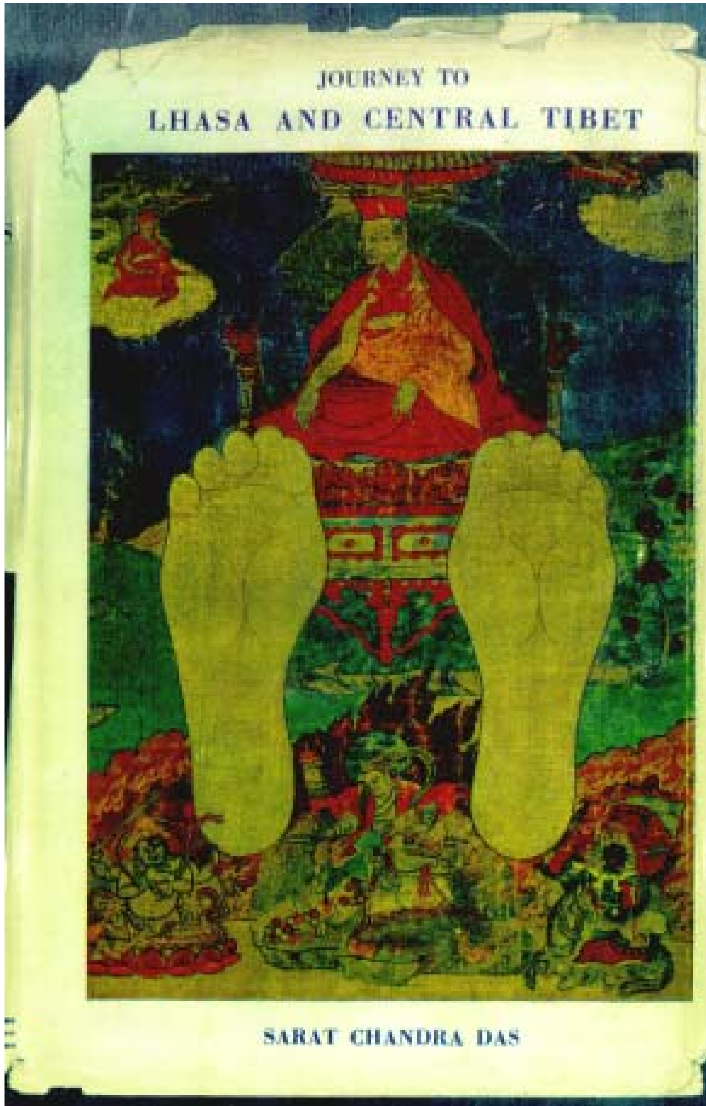

FIG.10 bKa' brgyud *bla ma* with his Footprints; Tibet; 18th-19th century. Distemper on cloth. After: Sarat Chandra Das, *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet* (cover).

FIG.11 Footprints with *Bla ma* and Deities; Tibet; late 13th-early 14th century. Colors on silk (?); dimensions unknown; Private Collection. Photo courtesy of Jane Casey Singer.

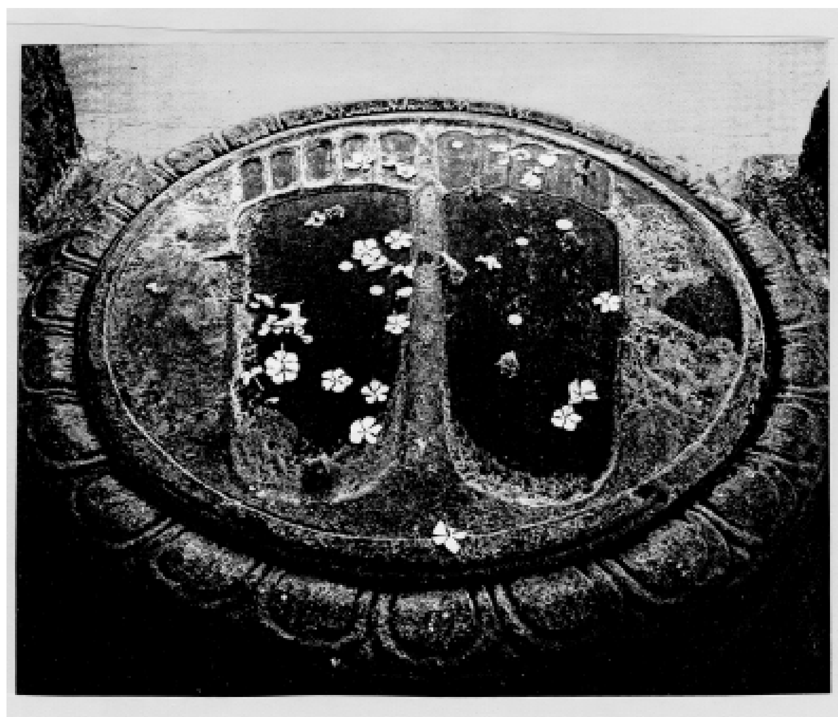

FIG.12 *Buddhapāda*, Bodh Gaya, India. After: Linda Connor in Leoshko, "Introduction" to *Marg*, Vol.XXXX, No.1, Fig.5.

Metalworking in dBus and gTsang 1930-1977

John Clarke

This paper, drawn from my PhD thesis on the subject of non-sculptural metalwork in Tibet,[1] relies heavily for its substance on interviews carried out with older Tibetan and Newar metalworkers. Additional information on the sculptural traditions of the regions has been included where possible. The temporal parameters reflect, on the one hand, the earliest working memories of the still living or recently deceased craftsmen who formed my informants. The end date reflects the drawing to a close of worst period of the Cultural Revolution and thus makes possible a brief examination of the disruption of the tradition which that event caused. At least some of the economic and social patterns that emerge are likely to have been in existence previously for several centuries but should not, in all cases, be thought of as supplying paradigms for more distant periods or geographical areas. One major feature of metalworking in dBus and gTsang for example, the *bzo khang* or craft guild system, was only set up during the reign of the Fifth Dalai Lama after 1642. Certain historical references point to the possibility of even more fundamental differences in the patterns of metalworking according to period and region. This is particularly true when the question of the involvement of monks in metalworking is examined.

In dBus and gTsang metalworkers, or even their sons, could not easily become monks and generally did not take up the craft.[2] The prohibition against metalworkers becoming monks was enshrined in the *so thar gyi sdom pa* oath in the *'dul ba* (Skt. *Vinaya*) section of the *bKa' 'gyur*.[3] The original regulation, traceable to the Indian *Vinaya* texts on which the Tibetan ordination vows were based, was specifically a prohibition against blacksmiths but seems, in Tibet, by extension, to have also applied to other metalworkers.[4] This vow was taken by every entrant to the monkhood and followed 40 questions the last of which was "are you of an inferior background" i.e. a member of the six deplored professions which included that of metalworker.[5] Although it was unofficially possible for the son of a metalworker to enter the monkhood in another area where his parentage was not known, in dBus and gTsang during the last few centuries, one never found monks directly engaged in metalworking. It may have been from the mid 17th century, when dGe lugs pa power was finally assured, that this strict prohibition became rigidly applied. There is, nevertheless, evidence of important religious figures overseeing the construction of images, or possibly actually being involved in the processes, in past centuries. A well known example is that of the Karma pa hierarch Karma Pakshi (1206-1283) who is recorded as having constructed a 55 foot high cast image of the Buddha.[6] But other evidence shows that the prohibition against monks becoming metalworkers was not adhered to even recently, by monks in eastern Tibet who were engaged in casting in Li thang[7] and sDe dge.[8] In 1891 Rockhill also described the monks of sKye rgu mdo as producing the best ritual silver and gold work and cast images in the town while[9] in Mongolia there were reports of monks casting ritual objects and making musical instruments.[10] Though a certain opprobrium was attached to all metalworkers in dBus and gTsang the prejudice was by no means applied equally to all types of workers. Those working in silver or gold and/or producing religious objects and especially those making images, were well thought of

compared to blacksmiths or coppersmiths.[11] Ironworkers, as the makers of knives and other instruments of killing, were certainly at the bottom of this hierarchy of acceptability. For monks to be ironworkers or the makers of weapons was therefore unthinkable. But the Ming statutes of 1587 mention Tibetan monks working as armourers for the Chinese court in designated monasteries of north-west Sichuan, corresponding with the region of rGyal rong, an area formerly in eastern Tibet.[12] The most that one can say of the patterns described here is that they probably held good in dBus and gTsang during at least the previous century or two. Some support for this may be drawn from comments made by European and Indian *paṇḍita* travellers in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

The Movement of Metalworkers and Questions of Style

One interesting facet of any discussion of craftworking in Tibet is the relationship of its organisation to questions of style as revealed in material culture, painting and sculpture. Scholarship makes it increasingly clear that regional styles existed in both painting and metalwork even in recent centuries.[13] In the field of non sculptural metalwork most craftsmen recognised the discrete regional styles of dBus/ gTsang, Khams, Bhutan, and the ethnically related Newari and Chinese sub-styles current in Central/southern Tibet and North China, Mongolia/A mdo respectively.[14] When substantial numbers of metalwork objects are examined a verification of these reported stylistic categories becomes possible. Minor variations in form and the handling of commonly found auspicious emblems reveal consistent stylistic groupings. Such styles appear to have rested on the substantial numbers of settled craftsmen of all types who lived and worked in major towns and near monasteries in order to be near sources of work. While there were only four major centres of metal image production in dBus and gTsang: rTse gdong, rTa nag, the monastery/ government workshop attached to bKra shis lhun po and the Government workshop at Lhasa,[15] both non-sculptural metalworkers and *thang ka* painters were settled widely throughout the regions. Simultaneously there also existed many truly peripatetic craftsmen, in particularly painters and carpenters, who travelled long distances living and working away from home, sometimes for as long as ten years at a time.[16]

My own research has however confirmed the findings of Veronika Ronge that in dBus and gTsang the majority of skilled metalworkers were settled where there existed sustainable sources of work. This effectively meant that they lived and worked close to large monasteries or in towns and villages, particularly those lying on important trade routes. It was metalworker farmers who had been deprived of land or pasturage, or who could not find work for some other reason, that were forced to travel.[17] Economic necessity rather than an innate love of travel therefore became their reason for undertaking long trips. Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje a master silversmith from rTse gdong estimated, for example, that during the period 1935-1955 there would be an average of only one or two truly itinerant metalworkers present at any one time in the town of 600 to 700 inhabitants served by around 25-50 settled metalworkers.[18] The nomadic metalworkers tended to be tinkers or *lo rog* who mainly sold horses but who also mended metalware. There were also the *phyogs sprang,* or vagabond beggars, who had mostly escaped from landlords in eastern Tibet and travelled with their families all over the country. Like the *lo rog* they mended agricultural implements, and pots and pans but received few orders for new objects.[19] Both groups were considered untrustworthy by the majority of the population.

One feature of the working practice of settled metalworkers, which at first sight confuses any discussion of the degree of craftsmen's movements, is their standard practice of travelling to a patron to carry out orders. As Ronge notes, the difference between truly itinerant and settled craftsman is often hardly visible at first sight, due to the fact that settled artisans normally travelled to the houses of patrons to carry out work. It is therefore important to distinguish between truly nomadic metalworkers, always more or less on the move, and the shorter but often frequent journeys made by settled craftsmen. A number of factors determined whether the last type of journey was made. The further the distance of the craftsman from the patron's residence and the larger the order, the more worthwhile it was for him to travel there to work on the spot. In this manner the difficulties of transporting large objects, or a quantity of smaller pieces over large distances, was overcome. Craftsmen might stay at their temporary homes from a week or two, which was common, or for much longer, even up to six months or more. Metalworkers also made repeat, and sometimes annual, trips to a patron or commissioning monastery. A recent example of this practice comes from Ladakh where until well into the 20th century the family of Rig'dzin rnam rgyal bKa' blon of Changs pa near Leh invited the most skilled metalworker of sPyi ling in Zangs dkar to execute orders at their house. During such visits both ritual and domestic vessels were made. These included both things for use and pieces to be stored against the necessity of paying local monks for their services at weddings and funerals.[20]

Settled craftsmen travelled within a relatively large but still circumscribed radius from their homes, visits normally being pre-arranged. Such journeys stand in contrast to long journeys on which services were randomly offered to prospective patrons.[21] A distance of seven days ride in any one direction from a metalworker's home appears to be around the average for such "local" journeys.[22] Using Sir Charles Bell's estimates of journey time by horse or mule, the fastest animals available in Tibet, as at around 20-25 miles a day, a seven day ride produces an approximate circle of between 140 and 175 miles around a centre such as Lhasa. This takes one to Dwags po in the south east and about half way to Nag chu the important staging post on the road to Khams, in the north east. To the south west gZhis ka rtse or rGyal rtse could be reached in six to eight days.[23] Such calculations help establish the point that most skilled and settled metalworkers did not generally travel from one region to another, for example from dBus and gTsang to Khams or mNga' ris, a fact which in turn provides insight into the existence of regional styles in metalwork. Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje of rTse gdong in the Shangs valley to the north of the gTsang po, stated that during his working life in gTsang he travelled within an area bounded on the south by Sa skya (about 50 miles) and to the north by Lhasa (about 200 miles). In this case the parameters of his working journeys form a shape corresponding to some of the most prosperous and settled areas of the gTsang po valley in central Tibet. This craftsmen actually said that he had been invited to Khams by both Brag gyab and rDzong sar dgon pa but had decided not to go because of the two to three month journey. The jeweller Tshe ring chos dpal spent most of his working life in his own Lhasa workshop. His furthest journey was to Rwa sgrengs (63 miles away) where he took seven months to make a hat ornament, *mog go*, for the Regent. The reputation of a master would also act as a magnet and bring him orders and, as this jeweller was one of only a handful capable of the best work, he was always in demand. Dan Bahadur, a Newar silversmith who worked with his brothers in the border town of sKyid grong intermittently from 1928

to 1958 pointed out that they seldom had to leave their workshop. Orders were brought from as far away as gZhis ka rtse by officials placing private commissions.

With the metalwork of Khams so renowned for its excellence one might have expected Khams pa craftsmen to have made frequent journeys to the capital. In fact such journeys were infrequent because, as in the case of dBus and gTsang, craftsmen received plentiful orders from within their home area. But Khams metalwork was frequently brought to Lhasa by government officials at the end of tours of duty for sale or as gifts and by pilgrims and traders to pay their expenses or make profit.[24] sPrul skus could also bring them as tribute gifts to the Lhasa government at the time of coming to Central Tibet for their higher studies. Typically, offerings made by the people of the *bla ma*s local area, which might be livestock, clothes and jewellery, would be sold and converted into coin and craft objects which were then transported to Lhasa. In 1953 the reincarnate *bla ma* of Brag gyab hired several hundred silversmiths who for six months cast and beat images and ritual objects for such a trip.[25] As Khams pa metalwork was so renowned, metalworkers from dBus or gTsang were sometimes asked to copy it (illustration 17) but this did not generally lead to them modifying their own style.[26] It was especially the ritual objects of eastern Tibet that were valued and that craftsmen were asked to reproduce.[27] A few of the best Khams pa metalworkers were also invited by the central government to work in the Government workshop, the Lhasa 'Dod zhol dpal 'khyil. sPen pa rdo rje of Brag gyab who spent the years 1945-1958 in the capital in just this capacity said that during these years only three of the 150 metalworkers there (himself included) were from Khams.[28] The movement of Newar craftsmen within dBus and gTsang is looked at more closely below (pages 10-12). While examples of them working in eastern Tibet certainly existed, their influence was relatively superficial compared to the substantial and continuous Newar impact on metalworking in dBus and gTsang.[29]

It was in fact only in north and northeast Tibet, including the Tshwa 'dam basin in Qinghai Province, that truly peripatetic craftsmen were important. These were predominantly Chinese. In the 1890s Rockhill noted that Chinese smiths supplied the nomads with saddles, swords, matchlocks and teapots and had a virtual monopoly in the Kokonor area.[30] In Mongolia, though settled immigrant Chinese metalworkers became important as suppliers of metalwork for monasteries from the late 17th century onwards,[31] the ancient pattern was for itinerant Mongol smiths to follow the movements of the peoples themselves.[32]

Metalworkers outside Lhasa

The following survey can in no way be presented as exhaustive and covers only the more significant centres. gZhis ka rtse, the second largest town in gTsang, was home to the largest number of metalworkers after Lhasa. One mile south of bKra shis lhun po monastery lay the craft-working settlement of bKra shis skyid tshal, largely inhabited by painters and metalworkers and their families. The settlement was visited in 1882 by Sarat Chandra Das.[33] Craftsmen here numbered about 100 and were divided into two main groups according to their employing body. Those paid by the government were organised as in the Lhasa government workshop into a guild or *bzo khang*. Their hierarchical organisation closely followed that of the artisans at Lhasa (see below) and so will not be described here. As in the 'Dod zhol dpal 'khyil, government workers were required to be available for a certain period each year, usually a minimum of three months, to complete official orders. In this case orders came from the district headquarters based at gZhis ka rtse rDzong. The

workers employed by the monastery received a small retaining fee at times when they were not completing commissions and could also undertake private work during those times. A working arrangement existed whereby if the central government required extra help it could also call on the monastic workers. If this occurred compensation was paid to the monastic authorities for the use of its craftsmen. There were also purely private workers, including Newars (see below) settled in bKra shis skyid tshal. The town was noted for its silverwork in the 20th century[34]and was also one of only four main centres of image production in dBus and gTsang (see above).[35] In 1800 Samuel Turner mentions the "Board of Works" established under the monastery as famous for its images[36] which were still being cast there in the early 20th century. Sven Hedin speaks of the Panchen Lama as commissioning the casting of 1500 small deities to be given away or sold at the time of the sMon lam festival in 1907.[37] But by the 1940s there was only one family of casters still in production working for the monastery. The head of this family, Gung khang, also acted as the quality controller, checking finished pieces as the Chen mo did in the government workshops. According to 'Jigs med gling pa (1729-1798) the images cast at bKra shis skyid tshal were well known and were similar to those cast in the Lhasa government workshop, being called *bKras li*.[38] The 28 metre high image of Maitreya made in 1914 for bKra shis lhun po monastery is according to one older silversmith informant the work of the monastery workers.[39] There was also a rivalry between bKra shis skyid tshal and the rTse gdong image makers, the craftsmen from the gZhis ka rtse village did not want any help in the construction of the figure from the rTse gdong artisans, though a joint scheme had been suggested. One source of income for bKra shis lhun po lay in the sale of *thang ka*s and metal objects made at bKra shis skyid tshal. These included statues, *ga 'u*s and other religious items. In 1900 the daily market also sold "pots, metal dishes, covers and saucers" made in the town.[40]

In gTsang, informants remembered skilled silversmiths at the villages of Lha rtse, Shangs, Rin spungs, Lha shub and rTa nag[41] while five worked in the border town of sKyid grong.[42] In these villages, and indeed throughout Tibet and Ladakh, it was common for metalworkers to operate on a part time basis. This meant that in most cases farming remained the main economic activity and metalworking or another craft was carried out during the winter months, after harvesting and before seeding, when there were few agricultural tasks.[43] Craft products would be bartered for other produce with their neighbours. When their landlords required their craft-working services they were generally paid for them. The metalworking village of sPyi ling in Zangs dkar is a present day Ladakhi example of this economic combination.[44] In Tibet such farmers were mostly small tenant agriculturists or *dud chung,* the "small smoke". The *dud chung* had more time to specialise in their craft than larger farmers with a greater tax obligation. The *khral pa* or government tax payers with much larger land holdings had to work hard to pay large taxes in agricultural produce. By contrast the *dud chung* had less tax to pay and smaller fields to work. Their tax consisted of statute labour, *rkang 'gor*, paid to their noble or clerical lords of the manor or to the government tax payers *khral pa,* who sub leased out land to them.[45] In a few places renowned for craftwork such as weaving, paper or dye production, the *dud chung* paid tax in the form of craftwork. But this was not general practice and with a few exceptions (for example Sa skya, see below) did not include metalwork.[46]

The fact that part time farmer/craftsmen were taxed primarily as farmers and not as craftsmen had important repercussions for the development of craft skills,

particularly in the case of metalworkers. In particular they were not liable to the "head tax" or *bogs ma* paid by full time craftsmen in towns wherever guilds or *bzo khang* were set up. Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje of rTse gdong (b.1922) (Fig.1) saw the high reputation of rTse gdong for both quality and diversity of metalworking skills as a product of the absence of this tax. In towns such as Lhasa or gZhis ka rtse any craftsman coming to settle and work was required to pay *bogs ma* to whichever *bzo khang* their skills related. This meant that if one was both a caster or *lugs pa* and a silversmith, *dngul bzo ba*, *bogs ma* had to be paid to two *bzo khang.* The tax was a form of compensation intended to compensate government workers for their lower wages.[47] His own skills bear witness to his statement as he is both a skilled copper and silversmith (Figs.8, 9, 10), a caster and a producer of beaten metal images (Figs.2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11). *Bogs ma* may also have been responsible for a greater specialisation of skills in large towns (see below). But there were other factors that may have been of equal significance both in relation to such specialisation and to the quality of work carried out. In rTse gdong there was a historic skill base stretching back several centuries. There was also the possibility for some members of a farming family to be full time metalworkers and build up a wide range of skills. While in many farming families the male members might be both agricultural workers and part time metal-workers, where a family was large enough to fulfil its agricultural and statute labour demands, by having two or more sons, one, or more, could be freed to specialise in metalworking. Help would only be required of the specialising son or sons during harvest time.[48] Within Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje's own extended family the two eldest brothers were full time farmers and the two youngest monks, making it possible for three, including himself, to specialise full time as metalworkers.

The skill for which rTse gdong was particularly famous was the production of large metal images.[49] According to Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje because of the lack of the *bogs ma* tax in rTse gdong the skills necessary to produce and finish an image could be concentrated in the hands of one man and thus image making became more cost effective. By contrast, wherever the tax was payable, in any of the larger centres where there were *bzo khang*s, the work of up to four individuals was required. The separate skills of the drawer of the design, the modeller, mould maker and the finisher were necessary. Image makers received the best remuneration of any metal-workers because there existed the belief that if the patron could please the crafts-man the deity would more fully occupy the image. Consequently in addition to daily wages and presents at the end, the meals provided were particularly good and special cooks might be hired. Customers were also careful to be courteous to gold and silversmiths because if they were offended their work would tend to be less good.[50] The reputation of rTse gdong for excellent craftsmanship developed during the restoration of bSam yas in 1850 in which metalworkers from the town were used.[51] By the 20th century the best craftsmen were paid at the level of *dbu chung,* the second in command in the *bzo khang* (see n.116).

sPen pa rdo rje is himself one of the few Tibetan metalworkers capable of making fine quality large scale religious images from beaten metal. During his working life in rTse gdong (1938-1958) there were eight fully competent masters with 16 pupil trainees in attendance. Ronge's informants gave the figure of 60 to 70 families of craftsmen in the town producing metalwork.[52] An interesting facet of the town's craft tradition is the story of its founding "eight generations ago" by a Newar master. As told by Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje the Sa skya hierarch at the time, who he

called bKra shis rin chen, wishing to improve the quality of his image makers, invited three masters from Nepal to Sa skya. Twenty metalworkers from rTse gdong the area most closely connected to Sa skya proper, were chosen to be his apprentices.[53] The Nepalese masters, however, refused to teach the full range of their skills to the 20 local pupils, who seemed doomed to remain at the level of servant assistants. But with the clandestine help of the Sa skya hierarch, who gave them textual instruction in iconometry and iconography at night, they succeeded in becoming fully qualified image makers.[54] We shall return to the theme of the founding of metalworking industries by Newar craftsmen later. This story fits with both folk and historical accounts of their activities in Tibet, especially during the 17th century.[55]

This craftsman, who today passes on his skills to Tibetan pupils at the Norbulingka Institute near Dharamsala, has produced many images for the Tibetan government in exile[56] (Figs.2-7, 11) and during the late 1980s made the crown for a newly recognised Nechung Oracle (Figs.8, 9, 10). The three main gilt brass images in the Theg chen chos gling temple at Mcleod Ganj in Dharamsala were made by him (Fig.2) and in 1986/8 he made a three metre high seated Śākyamuni Buddha which formed a gift from the Tibetan government in exile to the Indian government (Figs.3, 4, 5).[57]

It is worth commenting that although Ronge mentions part time craftsmen as producing everyday metal objects such as buckets[58] many were amongst the most skilled craftsmen in Tibet and included silversmiths and image makers amongst their number.[59] In rTse gdong high quality ritual and domestic objects were also made and several families were renowned for the production of musical instruments such as *rgya gling* and *dung chen* in copper and brass. rGyal rtse had no appreciable metalworking industry of its own and obtained its images and other metalwork objects from rTse gdong.[60] Near gZhis ka rtse also lay Nga ping and rTa nag, the latter already noted as a centre for silverwork, which Tucci called "a great centre" for image making until the 1950s.[61]

The semi-independent principality of Sa skya had its own government system or *gzhung*, taxes and labour obligations. Although there were two Sa skya areas in eastern Tibet, the area of Sa skya proper, under which a total of 16,000 people lived, was concentrated in southern Tibet.[62] Though drawing on the metalworkers of rTse gdong, Sa skya also possessed a significant metalworking industry itself. The organisation of its craftsmen to some extent paralleled that of the Lhasa government workshop. Each group of craftsmen were under the control of a minor official, *Jo lags*, roughly equivalent to the lowest grade of Lhasa officialdom.[63] Just as in Lhasa the 30 metalworkers (of all types) and the 20 image makers who lived in the capital Sa skya gdan sa had to be available to work for the government whenever required. This was generally for a period of 75 to 125 days per year. This requirement further tied them to the locality as, because of the obligation, they needed to obtain permission from the government to leave the capital.[64] Like their Lhasa counterparts they received food and a small monetary wage while working for the Sa skya authorities[65] and could work privately, earning higher wages, when not so employed.[66] But unlike the Lhasa craftsmen they did not receive a retaining wage at times when not employed by the Sa skya government. This difference is related to the fact that at Sa skya the craftsmen were also obliged to hold government land, which provided about half their income.[67] They were not liable to pay taxes in kind but were eligible for work levies.[68] These payments or "outer revenue" were reduced according to the number of days or weeks of "inner revenue" in the form of metalworking carried

out for the Sa skya government.[69] Craftsmen were concentrated in the capital where the North and South Palaces placed the heaviest demands on their time. At Chu 'dus there were copper, silver and goldsmiths and an iron foundry and knife making workshop employing four or five men, while near gDong dga' chos sde monastery there was a group of brass workers.[70]

Although to a large extent autonomous Sa skya fully recognised the Dalai Lama's political and religious leadership and was bound by various obligations such as that of providing 500 soldiers for the central government's army. There is however no evidence that the Lhasa government called on the Sa skya craftsmen, as it could call on any others throughout Tibet, to work for a limited period for it under the *lag khral* or "hand tax". But there is an instance of something close to the opposite of this happening, the Lhasa authorities donating the work of their own craftsmen to aid the rebuilding of a Sa skya temple. In 1945 a pillar of the Lha khang chen mo in the South Monastery collapsed, demolishing two stories above it. Lhasa gave an interest free loan and the labour of 275 workers for 45 months, the men working nine months a year for five years, in order to assist with its rebuilding.[71]

As we have seen metalwork did not usually form part of the tax requirements of the small farmer, or *dud chung,* to his noble/monastic, or governmental overlord. Although the nobility also directly hired and maintained on their estates groups of wool and carpet weavers none of my informants had heard of them maintaining metalworkers in central and southern Tibet in this way. There is also no mention of such an arrangement in Veronika Ronge's research on Tibetan craftsmen.[72]

Newar Metalworkers in the Central Regions

The Newar metalworkers of the Kathmandu Valley have been renowned in central Tibet since the seventh century. A full account of the long historical association of these craftsmen with Tibet, beginning at the time of the Tibetan monarchy, is provided in a thesis and two articles by Erberto Lo Bue.[73] Newar metalworkers came mostly from the great centres of metal production in Patan, Kathmandu and Bhatgaon and belonged mainly to the Buddhist Newar Vajrācārya or Śākya caste. As no Nepalese women travelled with their men folk to Tibet a mixed caste grew up in Tibet as the result of unions between Nepalese men and Tibetan women. The offspring were called Udas[74] in Newari and *kha tsha ra*, a term meaning "mule of mixed blood" in Tibetan.[75] Mostly these were engaged in trade or were coppersmiths, carpenters or undertook building work. The *kha tsha ra* were of minor importance in relation to metalworking in Tibet and most of the finer work such as gold or silversmithing remained in the hands of the high caste Śākyas.[76]

Ronge believes that the Buddhist Newar's presence in Tibet was the result of their poor economic position in Nepal compared to that of the coexisting Hindu Newar population.[77] Lack of commissions probably became a serious factor only after the Kot massacre of 1846 when the Rana family became the rulers of the kingdom and the level of royal patronage of craftsmen, already declining under the Gorkhas, now virtually ceased.[78] Lack of high level patronage in the Kathmandu Valley together with the continuing large demand for metalworking in Tibet probably combined to stimulate the movement of craftsmen into Tibet during the later 19th and early 20th centuries. The maintenance of the Newar tradition of metal image making owes much to commissions in Tibet during this period.[79] By this period Newar craftsmen and traders also enjoyed considerable commercial advantages as the result of a series of treaties signed with Tibet in 1590, 1789 and 1856.[80]

Most Newars who worked in Tibet also returned periodically to Nepal to attend important religious ceremonies and to look after the family home.[81] It was common to maintain two households, a main home in the Kathmandu Valley would typically be left in the care of a younger male member and the womenfolk while older male members set up a workshop in Tibet. The men working in Tibet would take it in turns to return to the main home to look after affairs there. The Bahadur family, who continue to live and work in Patan, provide a good example of how this worked. Each of the three brothers of the last generation manned a workshop in sKyid grong on a rotation basis from 1928-1958.[82] Each would return to the family home in Patan for two months or so at a time, leaving two of the brothers behind to work [83] The idea to go had come originally as the result of a Tibetan telling one of the family that there were no good silversmiths in the town. There was also a movement of craftsmen between towns to exploit new markets. Dev Ratna Sakya (b.1926) (Figs. 12,13) for example, travelled in 1938 with his father Bhaja Ratna Sakya to gZhis ka rtse to help him set up a silversmithing workshop. After spending four years with him there he went on to join his uncle[84] and his eldest brother who were already working in Lhasa. At this time (1941) his father returned to Nepal while he remained with his brother and uncle until his own return in 1946.[85] Newar craftsmen often travelled while quite young to Tibet. Bhim Raj Sakya (b.1933) joined his brothers and father in Lhasa at the age of 15 in 1947 while Dan Bahadur worked in sKyid grong from the age of 12, assisting his older brother. By the age of 25 Bhim Raj was running the Lhasa workshop producing domestic and ritual objects in gold, silver and copper. During this time the original family home in Patan was also maintained. A system of dual households and the fact that Nepalese men were without their wives in Tibet encouraged the not uncommon practice of taking another wife in Tibet.

It is surprising to learn that it could be economically viable for Newar craftsmen with existing workshops in Tibet to also import metalwork from Nepal. Thus Kul Bahadur (b.1927) the son of Tej Bahadur, whose workshop in sKyid grong has already been referred to, made up to five trips a year from Patan to the town (illustration 14). On each trip five porter loads of silverware were imported, the most common objects being *maṇḍala* rings, tea cups and butterlamps (Figs.15, 16, 17).[86] But during the same decades (1928-1958) the Bahadur's workshop in sKyid grong continued to produce metalwork and there was also another Newar workshop and several Tibetan silversmiths in the town. The trade in Nepalese metalwork to Tibet is traceable back to at least the 17th century and continued until 1959.[87] Imported silver tended to consist of smaller items which were disposed of both through workshops in Tibet and at daily markets and fairs held during festival times. Part of the trade consisted of the importation into Tibet of large beaten Nepalese copper water vessels, in Newari *khansi,* which continued until after the Second World War when aluminium vessels finally replaced them.

Although we know that during the first half of the 20th century there were considerable numbers of Newars and *kha tsha ra* in the larger cities of central and southern Tibet, the estimates given by both western and Tibetan sources usually make no differentiation between traders, shopkeepers and craftsmen.[88] As has been noted the *kha tsha ra* were mostly traders but it is clear that a percentage of the pure Nepalese in Tibet were also traders or shopkeepers. It would certainly be unsafe to assume that the majority of whatever figure is being given for Nepalese present in a town or city were metalworkers unless specified as such. In gZhis ka rtse, for example Hedin talks of 150 Nepalese traders whilst Ronge's informant says

there were 150 Nepalese families in the town.[89] But the Newar silversmith, Dev Ratna Sakya, who worked in the town between 1938 and 1941, remembered 15-20 Newar silversmiths as practising their craft there at that time.[90] In 1939 Tucci remarked on the fact that most female ornaments sold in gZhis ka rtse were made by Newars.[91] There were also small numbers of Newar silversmiths at gNya' lam[92], rTse gdong, Sa skya and Nepalese casters at sNar thang.[93] Other towns at which Newars were present, mostly as shopkeepers, but perhaps including in a few cases metalworkers, were rTse thang, Lha rtse, bSam yas and rGyal rtse.[94]

Government Metalworkers in Lhasa

The largest single market for metalwork in Tibet probably existed in Lhasa, the preeminent centre of pilgrimage, the seat of government and one of the largest centres for trade. Craftsmen of all types in Lhasa were organised into associations called *bzo khang* or "house of craftsmen".[95] Set up originally during the reign of the Fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682) they had the function of making the work of the best craftsmen available to the government. It is likely that their founding was connected to the large number of building projects undertaken during the "Great Fifths" rulership and particularly that of the Potala itself from 1642-1694.[96] Such associations existed only in the largest urban centres, outside Lhasa in gZhis ka rtse and in Khams at Chab mdo. Though the term *bzo khang* means "house of craftsmen" it referred primarily to the guild of organised labour and in a number of cases, such as the *bzo khang*s of the cobblers and leather workers, craftsmen worked from their own homes and were not gathered together in a single building.[97] The tailors and artists were housed together in the Shing ra'i sgo next to the Jo khang, while the metalworkers, carvers and clay statue makers were gathered in a single large building, the 'Dod dpal bzo khang or 'Dod zhol dpal 'khyil at Zhol, the village at the foot of the Potala.[98] The building was erected on the site of a former bKa' brgyud pa monastery destroyed in 1642.[99] There are several pieces of evidence that point to a heavy Newar involvement in 'Dod zhol dpal 'khyil prior to the time of the 13th Dalai Lama. Before its name was changed by the 13th Dalai Lama to 'Dod dpal khang "house of fulfilled wishes" it was called the sDod bal khang and included a guesthouse for Nepalese craftsmen.[100] At that time, according to one of Ronge's informants, the building was decorated with mural paintings of Buddhist deities in a Nepalese style. The commonly used names of silversmiths tools in Lhasa were also Nepalese up until the period 1920-1930.[101] The autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama records the names of Nepalese artists who made an image of him[102] while an inscription on the silver *torana* surrounding the Jo bo image in the Jo khang dated 1670 records the collaboration in its production of nine Tibetan with three Newar silversmiths.[103] This was almost certainly one of the early commissions of the government workshop. The large cast bells and monastic food and tea cauldrons or *khro* were also Newar productions and may have had a similar source.[104] The removal of Nepalese craftsmen, the change of names and the prohibition on Nepalese involvement thereafter may be seen as part of the 13th Dalai Lamas (1876-1933) conscious promotion of an independent Tibetan identity.

We have already seen that, according to the folk tradition, the inception of the rTse gdong sculpture industry during the mid 17th century was the result of a Newar master craftsman passing on his skills to Tibetans. The same process occurred in Bhutan where Newars were invited after the founding of the state in 1616, and later in 1681 and 1691, to execute specific commissions for temple roofs, images and

reliquaries.[105] Seng ge rnam rgyal (1570-1624), one of the greatest Kings of Ladakh, also invited skilled Nepalese metalworkers to his kingdom in order to erect large metal images and *mchod rten* during his reign[106] while they were also active in Gu ge at this time.[107] Lo Bue justifiably calls the early 17th century a "golden age" for Newari metalworkers and notes the heavy traffic between the two countries then.[108] From earlier, in 1604, comes the account of the first Panchen Lama witnessing a group of Newars casting an image of Maitreya.[109] It would be natural for the best makers of images in the Himalayas to be invited to all points of the Tibetan world during one of the most dynamic and expansive centuries of its history.

The 'Dod zhol dpal 'khyil, often shortened to Zhol dod dpal, housed the *bzo khang*s of the gold, silver/copper and iron smiths, the jewellers, casters, fine embossers and the drawers of preliminary designs. Within the same building were also found the *bzo khang*s of the clay statue makers and fine wood carvers.[110] At times when there was no government work the *bzo khang* members were free to undertake private commissions, but continued to receive a small subsistence wage or *phogs*. This consisted of money and foodstuffs: butter, *rtsam pa*, tea, meat and salt, but might also include cloth and fuel.[111] As highly skilled workers the chief craftsmen or *dbu chen* expected not only wages but good meals and presents on completion of their order. But generally the *bzo khang* craftsmen were paid a lower wage than freelance workers and the *bogs ma* tax paid by freelance workers helped make up the difference.[112] Entry to the workshop was, in theory, open to all from the age of 13 to 15, though there existed a type of right of entry to those whose fathers already worked there. In practice most entrants were drawn from Zhol[113] the area surrounding the workshop.

Extra workers of any type could be taken on if a large job required it, either being drawn from the *bzo khang* at gZhis ka rtse or from freelance workers via the "hand tax" or *lag khral* system. If a non *bzo khang* member was called but was unwilling, or unable to attend, he was required to make a payment to the *bzo khang*. Such a payment was in addition to the *bogs ma* (see above) that freelance craftsmen had already been required to make to the *bzo khang* in any town or city where a government workshop existed.[114] Government workers could also refuse to work for the government but similarly had to pay a substitute payment. The *bzo khang* members were required to be available for at least two to three months of every year for government work. But only on exceptional occasions were they expected to work for six months or more. An example of an exceptional project is the already mentioned restoration of the Sa skya monastery in 1945.[115]

The main structure of each *bzo khang* was essentially the same whatever the type of work that was being carried out. But there did exist a difference between the top-level officials in charge of particular *bzo khang*s. Two monk officials called *'Dod dpa'i do dam pa*,[116] who had the rank of the seventh or lowest government secretarial rank, were in charge of all the metalworkers, while the artists and tailors had only one.[117] Only these *bzo khang* had such officials because they worked with valuable raw materials and needed to maintain high standards of craftsmanship as their main patrons came from monasteries. Where *bzo khang*s worked with less valuable materials, such as in the stone, woodworkers and shoemakers workshops, there were no monk officials and orders were placed with the senior craftsman or *dbu chen.*[118] Although the monk officials were in overall charge of the metalworkers, in practice their duties were purely administrative. They obtained tools and raw materials from the relevant government offices, kept records, passed on new orders

to the master craftsmen and ensured that orders were delivered in time.[119] They were also responsible for taking on apprentices. At the times of particularly large commissions they would arrange for freelance metalworkers from outside to join *bzo khang* workers and also hired the master craftsmen, "the *dbu chen mo*."[120] The *'Dod dam pa* were appointed for three years. Although they could be of any rank the position was regarded as a governmental training post and was often the first position that such an official held.

Each group of metalworkers under these two officers was headed by a master craftsman with the title of *dbu chen mo* or "big head", a title granted for life.[121] In recognition of long service and high levels of skill a *dbu chen mo* could be given the official government rank of *drung gnas, drung thob* or *drung skor*, equivalent to the lowest government rank of *rtse las tshan pa*.[122] On attaining this rank they were entitled to wear the flat, yellow hat or *bog* and the single turquoise earring, *sog byil*. There was often more than one *dbu chen mo* in a large *bzo khang.* dBang rgyal and Dzam la rdo rje, the two masters of sPen pa rdo rje, were the two c*hen mos* of the silversmiths *bzo khang* during the 1930s and 1940s.[123] The requirements for becoming a *dbu chen* were that one should have already reached the grade of *dbu chung* or senior assistant, be able to read and write and, at least in theory, not consume alcohol.[124] The master craftsmen passed on the work order from the *'Dod dam pa* to their team of craftsmen, delegating and as the order progressed, checking on the quality of work produced. The most senior *dbu chen* with the rank of *rtse las tshan pa* also had the honour of cutting dies for the government's production of coins. The numbers of *dbu chung* or assistant masters also varied but was usually one or two. Under them were general less experienced workers, *spyi pa* and servant apprentices, *slob phrug*.[125] In the silversmiths' *bzo khang,* the general workers called *dbu chung phyag rogs* and the *spyi pa*s are described as servants and storekeepers.[126] Boys entering at the ages of 13 to 15 acted as servants before undergoing training, as they advanced in skill they could become *dbu chung* at the discretion of the *dbu chen mo*. A *dbu chen mo* was elected at a meeting of ordinary workers but his choice needed to be forwarded through the *'Dod dam pa* to the bKa' shag for ratification. *bZo khang* members usually joined voluntary welfare societies called *skyid sdug,* "happiness and sorrow". Small amounts of money paid by each craftsman financed an annual picnic and any ceremony required by its members such as funerals and marriages.[127]

The 'Dod zhol dpal 'khyil itself was a large two storied stone building arranged around a large courtyard (Fig.18) at the back of which stood a shrine to the protector of smiths Dam can mgar ba nag po.[128] Facing the two large doors of the entrance was the office of the *'Dod dam pa*s, who in practice, however, were often not present. Arranged around the ground floor were the separate workshops of the individual *bzo khang*s. The metalworkers families lived on the floor above. The doors were guarded by a gatekeeper who closed them at dusk. Numbers of workers fluctuated over time and ranged from 110-200 men, perhaps averaging 125-150 during the decades under discussion.[129] The silversmiths, *dngul bzo ba*[130] and fine embossers or *tsag pa* both averaged 30, casters, *lugs ba,* and goldsmiths, *gser bzo ba*, about 20 each, the jewellers, *phra bzo pa* 10, and the design drawers, *ri mo ba,* about five. There were also 15 blacksmiths, *mgar ba or lchags bzo ba,* around 10 *'jim bzo ba* or makers of clay images and five or six wood carvers, *dkrug pa.*

Within the metalworkers a rigid demarcation existed between the skills of the different *bzo khang* workers and no one was allowed to practice the work of another group of craftsmen. Thus the silversmiths were not allowed to work with gold

or jewellery or a goldsmith with silver. If an instance of this came to light the culprit would be brought before the *dbu chen* of their *bzo khang* and fined.[131] Despite this restriction it was normal and expected practice for workers to cooperate, combining skills to fulfil orders. Thus the *bzo khang*s of the gold and silversmiths worked in co-operation with that of the embossers or *tsag pa*s whose sole task was to execute all fine embossing in silver and gold.[132] The gold and silver/ coppersmiths *bzo khang*s were mainly responsible for raising basic shapes by beating or *rdung pa*, When a shape had been formed the *ri mo ba*s would draw the areas to be embossed onto its surface and then hand it over to the *tsag pa*s for embossing, chasing and engraving. Once this was complete the piece would be returned to the gold or silversmiths *bzo khang* where spouts and handles would be attached if required. The silversmiths, who could also work copper and brass if necessary, were often referred to by informants simply as *rdung pa*, the beaters (of shapes), but this did not mean they were incapable of embossing. But, as an informant put it, the only time that the silversmiths and goldsmiths executed fine embossed work was when they were undertaking private orders. Both gold and silver smiths undertook the fire gilding of objects.

The ironworkers or blacksmiths were employed making locks, keys, the corners of boxes and chests, door-knockers and other architectural ironwork.[133] By the period we are discussing pierced ironwork, *lchag bkrol*, was not undertaken though inlaying, *'jam tshag*, was still practised. When an inlaid or decorated piece of ironwork was to be produced the ironsmiths first made the blank shape, the *ri mo ba* drew the design to be followed and the *tsag pa*s then carried out the finer work of decoration. If gold was to be employed the piece had to first be quality checked by the *chen mo* of the *tsag pa*s. The jewellers or *phra bzo pa* did not produce jewellery for government officials except in a private capacity. Rather they were employed to set *mchod rten* and the hats of images with stones, similarly in concert with the silver or goldsmiths and the design drawers. In these cases the jewellers were responsible for the metal settings for the stones, *phra kung*, as well as for cutting, polishing and inserting the stones themselves.

The main customers of the 'Dod dpal 'khyil were the various government ministries who gave orders to the 'Do dam pa or monk officials. An exception to this procedure were very large orders requiring many man hours and large quantities of raw materials which needed the permission of the bKa' shag.[134]

In practice most work required was for the three largest monasteries; Se ra, 'Bras spungs and dGa' ldan in addition to the Potala (Figs.19, 20) and Norbulingka Palaces. All the sculpture needed by the government was made at the workshop and the 'Dod zhol dpal images were renowned for their quality and detail. The alloy composition, a type of *khro li*, a bronze with a high copper content, became known as *'dod li* after its place of origin.[135] The tradition extended from the setting up of the workshop at the time of the Fifth Dalai Lama down to1959.[136]

Freelance Craftsmen in Lhasa

As has already been discussed the government craftsmen were allowed to carry out private commissions in their free time. But informants found it impossible to make any real guess on the numbers of true freelance metalworkers in the capital. As the richest city in Tibet and as the seat of government, whose officials required jewellery to denote their rank, Lhasa was home to the greatest concentration of jewellers. In particular jewellers who worked in gold were concentrated in the capital, prompting

one western visitor to comment that "in Lhasa even the poor people wear gold".[137] According to an ex Lhasa jeweller[138] there were around 100 jewellers in the city during the decades 1939-1959 but of these only about 15 were capable of the finest quality work demanded for the ornaments of the nobility (Figs.21, 22). All the best jewellers worked exclusively in gold and often only began to work silver in exile. Gold and silversmiths lived in rented accommodation near the centre but often owned houses on the outskirts.[139] Their accommodation usually consisted of living quarters above a below street level workshop. They often worked in the street above and placed jewellery or small silver objects on windowsills to advertise themselves. By contrast copper and ironsmiths tended to live and work in the outer suburbs. Their products were brought into the centre of the city by their wives or children to be sold in the markets there.[140] A further reason for blacksmiths to work outside the centre was the poor status they enjoyed, on a par with butchers, tanners, ferrymen and corpse cutters. Metalworkers living in the city were mostly of *mi bogs* status, not tied to a landlord but paying a tax to the government on their earnings, a sum which was estimated every two to three years.[141]

Figures for "Nepalese" present in the capital range from 300 up to 5,000 with an average of 600-1,600 Nepalese and *kha tsha ra* combined. But within this the numbers of metalworkers were comparatively small, at least in the 20th century.[142] Ronge's informants believed there were 15 to 20 *kha tsha ras* and three pure Newar silversmiths during the period covered here.[143] My informants gave figures of three to five silversmiths in the period 1946-58, but added that there were other families producing only jewellery. Two informants including a Newar silversmith who worked in the city from 1941-46 believed that there were not more than 40 to 50 Nepalese metalworkers of all types present during those years.[144]

The Newar craftsman Bhim Bahadur commented that the Tibetan silver and goldsmith workshops in Lhasa were both more numerous and more specialised than the Newar ones.[145] Tibetan workshops were usually focussed on a single process, usually either *rdung pa* or *tsag pa* work and on a single metal such as gold or silver, whereas a Newar workshop more often worked on all the processes required to produce a finished object. This situation was the natural outcome of the *bogs ma* tax system to which Tibetans, but not Newars, were subject. As one paid a sum for each skill practised, to whichever *bzo khang* was relevant, there was a strong disincentive to specialise in more than one skill. To complete orders for decorated vessels Tibetan workshops were therefore often forced to combine with their colleagues possessing the needed complimentary skills, in a manner similar to that of the departments within the government workshop.

The importance of the Newars to metalworking in Lhasa has often been mentioned. Abbe Huc in the mid 19th century was among the first to draw attention to the fact that in Lhasa they were pre-eminent as ironsmiths, coppersmiths, goldsmiths, lead workers, tin platers, jewellers and casters.[146] Huc was speaking in 1845, significantly before the reforms of the 13th Dalai Lama (1876-1933) had ousted them from the government workshops and hence terminated their use in official orders. At that time he talks of them producing gold and silver ritual objects for the monasteries as well as the gilded copper roofs of temples, both aspects of work later taken over in central Tibet by government workers.[147] Huc describes the Newars as the only metalworkers in Lhasa, and even allowing for exaggeration, this suggests a near monopoly in the field of metalworking held by them at this time. In 1922

Montgomery MacGovern was still able to state that "most of the skilled metalworkers and craftsmen in Lhasa are Nepalese".[148]

Despite the lack of government commissions after the time of the 13th Dalai Lama Newar craftsmen maintained a lucrative private trade by producing objects for officials, monks and abbots in their private capacities. Officials ordered jewellery, *ga'us*, saddles and horse harnesses from them while the abbots of monasteries needed ritual vessels and *ga'us* to furnish their private shrine rooms. Ordinary monks up to the rank of *dge slong* patronised them for small personal *ga'us,* prayerwheels and *gser skyems* offering sets. These groups are of course additional to less wealthy secular patrons who formed a large market, ordering silverwork for their private shrines and also in particular the fashionable Lhasa square or star shaped women's *ga'u gru bzhi.*[149]

1959, THE TRADITION DISRUPTED

Until the Tibetan uprising of 1959 there was virtually no change to the systems of patronage described here but after the direct take over of power by the Chinese occupying forces the situation changed dramatically. A direct result of the assault on the feudal structure of Tibetan society was the targeting of any who could be seen as a member of the upper or official classes. This meant that any skilled craftsman who had worked as a jeweller, a gold or silversmith or had achieved official status, such as was the case with some *dbu chen mo,* became automatically "class enemies." Image makers were also particular objects of disapproval since they produced religious objects and at the same time were accused of misusing the income of ordinary persons by doing so. Most were arrested in the aftermath of the uprising, put in prison and many had their homes and possessions confiscated. Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje said that of the eight skilled image makers who had worked in rTse gdong before 1959 six died during this time from torture, malnutrition or by suicide.[150] Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje's own master Chen mo dBang rgyal, a *chen mo* of the Lhasa silversmith with the rank of *rtse las tshan pa,* was imprisoned and tortured, his house and possessions having been confiscated. He died in 1977, the year he was due to have been released. Dzam la rdo rje, who had also been an *dbu chen mo,* and who was the other main teacher of sPen pa rdo rje, spent six years in prison but on being released committed suicide by drowning himself. From 1966 when the Cultural Revolution reached Tibet, conditions became particularly severe. At this time gold and silver ornaments were forbidden as part of the "Four Olds".[151] Rich craftsmen were used as manual labour or, if they had worked in gold or silver, were forced to work in more "proletarian" iron as part of an ideological "reeducation". The situation eased after about 1977 when the main force of the Revolution had passed but working in silver and gold did not generally begin again until about 1980.

Several histories illustrate the typical patterns of repression and either return to the craft or flight. Tshe ring chos dpal the Lhasa jeweller, spent 28 days incarcerated in the Norbulingka Palace complex, which then acted as a prison. He was then sent with 600 others to Nga chen pang in east Lhasa to work on the construction of a dam. He escaped to India in 1960 and continues to live and work at Dharamsala. bSod nams, who in 1985 was running a silversmithing workshop in rGyal rtse, began working in 1958 when he was 30. He continued until the Cultural Revolution of 1966 when he was sent to work in the fields. He continued with agricultural work

until 1976 and only returned to silversmithing in 1980.[152] After the uprising of 1959 Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje was ordered to become a blacksmith but refused and was, consequently, kept with a group of other suspects under surveillance. After one year, during which he was forcibly trained in Marxism, he was given a job as a teacher of the Tibetan language, without pay, but three years later escaped to India.

Now aged between their late 60s and mid 80s, the generation represented by these craft informants are the last human link to former patterns of craftsmanship and patronage now largely destroyed in the wake of the events of 1959. Though metalworking has slowly revived within Tibet in the decades since 1980 and the end of the worst period of Chinese repression, with monasteries again commissioning work, the situation today is different from the past in a number of important respects. The strong and direct link between the Tibetan government and craftsmen of all types in Lhasa, and other major cities, formalised in the system of *bzo khangs* or guilds, no longer exists. The destruction of the nobility's power and wealth has removed a major source of patronage which in the past had been responsible for the production of some of the finest jewellery, domestic and ritual objects. The monasteries of Tibet, vastly reduced numerically, controlled by government, and with much smaller financial resources than in the past, are at present not in a position to offer the type of lavish patronage which was formerly possible. Less neatly definable is the loss through death and dispersal of older craftsmen, of much of what might be termed the "folk memory" of the crafts. This includes the knowledge of traditions surrounding the histories of individual industries, something generally not recorded in textual sources, and the practical knowledge of regional styles in both sculptural and non-sculptural metalwork.

Notes

1. The material gathered formed the basis for a PhD thesis entitled "A Regional survey and Stylistic Analysis of Tibetan Non-Sculptural Metalworking, c.1850-1959" awarded by the School of African and Oriental Studies in November 1995. I am also indebted to the pioneering work of Veronika Ronge, 1978, who was amongst the first to use oral evidence to throw light on craftsmanship in traditional Tibet.
2. Ekvall & Cassinelli, 1969, p.269, on blacksmiths not being allowed to become monks in Sa skya, Ronge, 1978, p.76.
3. Schweizer, 1976, pp.70-71, in book 1 the sixth volume called *so so thar pa'i mdo*, Rigzin, 1986, p.287, the Pratimokṣa Saṃvara vows of individual liberation from Saṃsāra.
4. I am grateful for this information from Dr. Tadeuz Skorupski and for his access to his translation of Gunaprabha's Ekottarasataka where the question "are you a blacksmith?" is asked?
5. Schweizer, 1976, pp.70-71, these were smith, fisherman, weaver, butcher, ferryman and corpse cutter.
6. Thinley, 1980, p.52.
7. Ronge, 1978, p.76, they also made shoes in Li thang.
8. Teague, 1990, p.12.
9. Rockhill, 1891, p.210.
10. Prejevalsky, 1876, p.53, Vol.1, *bla ma*s make cups of skulls mounted in silver, Cheney, 1968, pp.41, 79, describes the *bla ma*s as engaged in the casting of lamps and cups, making musical instruments, wood working, carving book covers, table making, dying, weaving and as the most important manufacturers of yurts.
11. Schweizer, 1976, pp.64-78 for a discussion of the social position of metalworkers in Tibet.
12. Moore, 1995:18 & footnote 6.

13. See Jackson, 1996, pp.317-361, on contemporary painting styles, Singer & Denwood, 1997, pp.262-277 on painting, pp.278-289 on metalwork.
14. Clarke in Singer & Denwood, 1997, pp.278-289, on styles, Clarke, 2001, pp.55-65 on style in *ga'us*.
15. Dagyab, 1977, Vol.1, p.57, Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, p.105, 111, Jackson, 2000, p.367, footnote 816.
16. Ronge, 1978, p.152.
17. Ronge, 1978, p.83.
18. Ronge, 1978, p.118 whose informants give 60-70 families of image makers. sPen ba rdo rje remembered 8 masters and 16 trainee metalworkers in the town during the years 1938-1958.
19. Schweizer, 1976, p.103, The *phyogs sprang* rented houses or lived in tents. They paid a rent in the 10th month to the landlord wherever they were staying.
20. Clarke, 1989, p.139, the craftsman would be given good meals, lodging and a final present in addition to payment.
21. Although there were some exceptions, such as long pilgrimages during which craftwork may have been undertaken.
22. My research in this respect confirms the findings of Veronika Ronge, see Ronge, 1978, p.52.
23. Bell, repr. 1991, p.114, gives the mule as making 20-25, the donkey 10-15, and yak 10 miles a day respectively. Any such calculation can be only very roughly accurate as the topography of Tibet is so variable, a journey traversing a number of difficult passes will obviously take more time than one following easy tracks along the course of a major valley such as the gTsang po. Seasonal differences in the weather could also change journey times. In the summer flooding could add 3 days to the 102 mile journey by donkey from rGyal rtse to Phari that took only 7 days in the winter, Bell, repr.1991, p.115.
24. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, p.39, mostly these were high quality "status objects" brought by merchants for sale though their main trade lay in another commodity, for personal use or as personal gifts by *bla ma*s or officials.
25. Williams, 1998, p.4.
26. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, pp.41-42 on copying of Khams metalwork, craftsmen from dBus and gTsang, including Newars, had sketches of Khams style pieces in their sketchbooks precisely because they were unusual and not usually encountered. Clarke, 1997, p.289 on the adoption of Khams style metalwork in Bhutan.
27. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, p.38 sPen pa rdo rje of rTse gdong for example spent two years making exact copies of a skull cup, *nang chos*, rice container, *brod phor*, and offering box, *tho snod* from a *gser skyems* set for the abbot of rTa nag monastery from Khams originals owned by the Ngor monastery.
28. At this time sPen pa rdo rje made a gilded throne for the 14th Dalai Lama which still exists in the Norbulingka Palace.
29. Heller, 1986, p.50.
30. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, pp.196-199, quoting Rockhill, 1891, p.81, and Rockhill, 1894, p.115.
31. Clarke, 1992, pp.65-75.
32. Boyer, 1952, pp.165-167.
33. Das, 1902, p.277, "The whole village is inhabited by clerks, copyists, painters and artisans from Tashilunpho, most of whom get allowances (pod) from Labrang."
34. MacDonald 1929, p.235.
35. Jackson, 1996, p.367, footnote 816.
36. Turner, 1800, p.274.
37. Hedin, 1910, Vol.1, p.367.
38. Dagyab, 1977, p.57.

39. Jackson, 1996, p.366, footnote 811, Chen mo Shi log see footnote 146 here. Lo Bue, 1985/86, p.413 for possibility of Newar involvement in the building of this image.
40. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, p.112.
41. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1. p 120, Jackson, 1996, p.367 for Lha shub pa near Ngam ring in gTsang.
42. Ronge, 1978, p.76.
43. In gTsang Dargay found for example (Dargay, 1982, p.77) that amongst part time craftworkers from three villages near rGyal rtse there were none who carried out their craft-working to the exclusion of farming.
44. Clarke, 1989, pp.128-141.
45. Schweizer, 1976, pp.45-47, this consisted of farm labour, road building, repairing irrigation canals, wood cutting, animal tending or in some cases carpet or cloth weaving. They also had to pay smaller amounts of *lag don* or tax in the form of agricultural produce.
46. Ronge, 1978, p.70.
47. Ronge, 1978, pp.101-102.
48. See Jackson, 1996, p.367, footnote 816, whose informant stated that in rTse gdong the women were responsible for tending the fields while the men carried out craftwork.
49. A number of other crafts such as woodcarving, carpentry and *thang ka* painting were also practised at rTse gdong.
50. Ekvall and Cassinelli, 1969, p.270.
51. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, 121, quoting Das, 1904, p.297, at this time the roof of the main temple fell in, repair work being carried out under government grants to the value of 175,000 ounces of silver. Monies were raised by public subscription. Other information from Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje of rTse gdong.
52. Ronge, 1978, p.118.
53. Ekvall and Cassinelli, 1969, p.362.
54. See Jackson, 1996, p.367, footnote 816 for another version of the story told by Shi log of rTse gdong who taught sPen pa rdo rje embossing for seven years.
55. If we take one generation (formerly) as roughly 50 years we are placed around the beginning of the 17th century. There was however a bKra shis rin chen who was the head of the order *khri chen* or "Great Throne", in the 19th century, dying about 1865, see Ekvall & Cassinelli, 1969, p.23.
56. Early commissions in exile included a 2.5 metre high Śākyamuni Buddha for Lumbini in 1972/73 and in circa 1975 three silver images of Je Tsongkhapa and his two main disciples for the Zangs dkar dgon pa in Zanskar, Ladakh. In 1979 he made a 1.5 metre high copper Śākyamuni for Ganden monastery (Mungod), a two metre high copper gilt Śākyamuni for Drepung (Mungod) and a 45 centimetre Śākyamuni for Sera, Mysore.
57. These are a 3 metre high brass gilt seated Śākyamuni, a 4 metre high brass gilt Padmasambhava and a 3 metre high thousand armed and eyed silver Avalokiteśvara.
58. Ronge, 1978, p.72.
59. Clarke, 1989, pp.129-131, for the village of sPyi ling in Zangs dkar, Ladakh and Clarke, 2001, p.59 for *ga'u* made by Karma rdo rje of sDe dge.
60. Markham, 1879, p.112, known only for the casting of small horse bells.
61. Tucci, 1949, p.181, Ronge, 1978, p.118.
62. Ekvall and Cassinelli, 1969, pp.32-33.
63. Ekvall and Cassinelli, 1969, p.366, indicators of rank included a long left earring, a long outer garment, a bowl bag hanging from the girdle over the left buttock and a knife with chopsticks in a case hanging over the right buttock. Chopsticks were not permitted to be worn by ordinary persons in this way. The *Jo lags* also wore a large yellow hat and a red cross band over the right shoulder. There were several grades of this level which were differentiated by colour of robe.
64. Ekvall and Cassinelli, 1969, pp.267-269.

65. Ekvall and Cassinelli, 1969, pp.267, 283.
66. Ekvall and Cassinelli, 1969, p.379.
67. Ekvall and Cassinelli, 1969 pp.268-269, most craftsmen except the higher paid gold and silver-workers were unable to earn more than half their living from their skills.
68. Ekvall and Cassinelli, 1969 pp.286,381, see pp.282-286 for the lifestyle of one *lha bzo pa*, caster, tangka and mural painter.
69. Ekvall and Cassinelli, 1969, p.268.
70. Ekvall and Cassinelli, 1969, p.268.
71. Ekvall and Cassinelli, 1969, pp.392-393.
72. Ronge, 1978, p.71.
73. Lo Bue, 1981 and 1985, pp.262-277, 1985/86, pp.409-420.
74. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, quoting Lo Bue, 1981, pp.26, 29.
75. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, quoting Lo Bue, 1981, pp.25-26, *kha tsha ra* is a Tibetan rendering of kaccara the Hindustani word meaning "marriage of forbidden castes."
76. For reference to the *kha tsha ra* see: Bell, 1924, p.233, who says there were large numbers at gZhis ka rtse, Lha rtse and rTse thang. According to Ekvall and Cassinelli, 1969, p.115, footnotes 30 and 65, there were 36 *kha tsha ra* families, a total of 180 people living and working at Sa skya.
77. Ronge, 1978, p.128.
78. Lo Bue, 1985, p.263.
79. Lo Bue, 1985, p.264.
80. Lo Bue, 1985/86, p.411.
81. Ronge, 1978, p.130.
82. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, p.124, Tej Bahadur (1903-1988), Harka Man Bahadur (1901-1977), Dan Bahadur (b.1916).
83. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, pp.120, 124.
84. Chandra Dev Sakya.
85. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, p.120.
86. Clarke, 1995,Vol.1, p.142, representing 12,000 *tola*s worth of silver annually.
87. Lo Bue, 1981(a), pp.48, 49, 52, 1985/86, p.412.
88. Ronge, 1978, p.142 for a collated list of figures from western and Tibetan sources.
89. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, p.122. Ronge, 1978, p.142, gives the figure of 100 Nepalese families. There were enough Nepalese in the town to justify a Consul to look after their interests.
90. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, p.122.
91. Tucci, 1978, pp.150-151.
92. Clarke, 2001, p.60 and illus.22 for a Nepalese ga'u type called *ga'u gnya' lam*.
93. Ronge, 1978, p.142, table of reported Newars in Tibet.
94. Ronge, 1978, p.142, table of reported Newars in Tibet.
95. Ronge, 1978, p.83, *bzo las khang* was also used.
96. Ronge, 1978, p.86.
97. Ronge, 1978, p.89.
98. Ronge, 1978, p.84.
99. Schweizer, 1976, p.96, the building took the name of the destroyed monastery according to Schweizer's informants, Ronge, 1978, p.86.
100. Ronge, 1978, p.87.
101. Ronge, 1978, p.129, Lo Bue, 1985/86, p.409.
102. Macdonald & Stahl, 1979, p.32.
103. Clarke, 1995,Vol.1, p.82, translation by Michael Henss, May 1994.
104. Waddell, 1906, p.173.
105. Lo Bue, 1985, p.272.
106. Clarke, 1989, pp.129-130, Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, pp.208-211, a metal plate on a large *mchod rten* at Shel states that it was made by two sPyi ling goldsmiths and one Man Sakiti during the reign of Seng ge rnam rgyal.

107. Lo Bue, 1981(a), p.70.
108. Lo Bue, 1985/86, p.409.
109. Macdonald & Stahl, 1979, p.32.
110. My main informants for the government workshop were: Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje of rTse gdong who worked in the government workshop for two periods between 1936-1950, Chos rgyal, a Khams pa silversmith who worked there continuously between 1944-1959 and sPen ba rdo rje of Brag gyab, who worked there between 1945-1958. sPyi mi dgon po, (b.1915) a former member of the bKa' shag also gave information.
111. Ronge, 1978, p.99, Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, p.108, Chos rgyal remembered receiving 80 kgs of *rtsam pa* per month as a subsistence payment. As a skilled freelance craftsman he received more than government workers normally did. Grain and flour was often old and craftsmen sold rather than consumed it.
112. Ronge, 1978, pp.91, 100, 101, *bzo khang* workers felt themselves discriminated against both financially and because they worked longer hours but at the same time they took pride in their government status.
113. Das, 1902 repr.1960, p.1077, *zhol* means literally a village below or belonging to a monastery.
114. Tshe ring Chos dpal, a Lhasa jeweller paid 70 *dngul srang* on such an occasion in the 1940s.
115. Ronge, 1978, p.99.
116. Also called *'Dod dam pa*.
117. Ronge, 1978, p.87, other official ranks of the monk officers in charge were *rTse las tshan pa* or *rTse drung*.
118. Ronge, 1978, p.88.
119. Ronge, 1978, p.98, the official making the order supplied materials from their own store or bought them on the open market.
120. Schweizer, 1976, p.97.
121. See Schweizer, 1976, p.98 for other slang expressions for the same position: *dbu mdzad lags*, *dbu lags, che mo lags*. Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje gave a slightly different account of the guild structure with below the *chen mo* the *chen mo pyag rogs* and under the *dbu chung* the *dbu chung pyag rogs*.
122. Ronge, 1978, p.87.
123. See Schweizer, 1976, p.97 on numbers of *dbu chen*. She says that each group of metalworkers had four to five *dbu chen* and 9/10 assistant masters or *dbu chung* but such figures evidently fluctuated.
124. Schweizer, 1976, p.97, Ronge, 1978, p.90.
125. Ronge, 1978, p.89, The terminology of these levels and the structures themselves varied between *bzo khang*s, in the tailors *bzo khang* for example, there were two elder general workers and four younger and four servants or *spyi gyog*.
126. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, p.105.
127. For a fuller account see Schweizer, 1976, p.99, Ronge, 1978, pp.112-116. These organisations could also be set up to finance particular religious ceremonies, charitable acts or even sports events.
128. Wojkowitz, 1975, p.155, the chief emanation of Dam can rdo rje legs pa, whose name means "the dark hued blacksmith". See Vira and Chandra, 1962, part 7, no.508 for this form of rDo rje legs pa, seated on a goat and holding a hammer and bellows in right and left hands respectively.
129. Schweizer, 1976, p.97 gives 150-200, Ronge, 1978, p.85 gives 170, Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, p.105, two informants gave 112 and 125.
130. For a glossary of the names of metalworkers see Schweizer, 1976, p.86, Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, 105 footnote 13.
131. Ronge, 1978, p.93, this was also the case for the tailors but not for the painters.
132. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, p.106 where I state that a division existed within the silversmiths and coppersmiths between *rdung pa* and *tsag pa*s. Further clarification has made it

obvious that this was not the case and that the *tsag pa*s were a separate group of workers.

133. They also repaired any damage caused to doors or windows during festival times.
134. Ronge, 1978, p.98.
135. Dagyab, 1977, p.57, mentioned by 'Jigs med gling pa (1729-1798).
136. Jackson, 1996, p.367 footnote 822, The Eighth Dalai Lama in 1797-8 is recorded as having commissioned many gilt images from the workshop.
137. Gill, 1883, p.136, Macdonald, 1929, p.243.
138. Clarke, 1995,Vol.1, pp.112-113, 127-130, Tshe ring chos dpal (b.1921).
139. Schweizer, 1976, p.93, mostly the rented houses belonged to the nobility who charged higher rent for smiths than for others because of the noise and disruption their trade entailed.
140. Schweizer, 1976, pp.93-94.
141. Schweizer, 1976, p.95.
142. Ronge, 1978, p.142 quoting Kawaguchi, 1909, pp.280-281 and Furer-Haimendorf, 1975, p.132.
143. Ronge, 1978, p.142.
144. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, pp.114-115, Dev Ratna Shakya, Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje of rTse gdong was the other informant.
145. Clarke, 1995, Vol.1, p.115.
146. Huc, 1928 repr.Vol.2, p.182.
147. Clarke, 1995,Vol.1. pp.116-118, for discussion of stylistic similarities between Tibetan roof ornamentation and Nepalese dragons/makaras on vessels and roofs in the Kathmandu Valley.
148. Mc Govern, 1924, p.337.
149. Clarke, 2001, pp.61-65, for a discussion of this *ga'u* and illustrated examples.
150. One of the craftsmen who survived was Che mo Shi log (1921-1992) a master painter (see Jackson, 1996, p.367) and silversmith who escaped to India and then moved to Nepal where he continued to live and work. He was recognised as one of the best embossers in rTse gdong and taught sPen pa rdo rje that skill.
151. Old customs, old habits, old culture, old thinking.
152. Surna, 1988, pp.29-33, also note here the propaganda aspects, the account dwells on how ordinary Tibetans are able to now afford ornaments only before worn by the aristocracy and how if formerly the work was not up to standard the craftsman would be beaten by nobles or monks.

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FIG.1 Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje of rTse gdong (b.1922)

FIG.2 Head (detail) of Seated Buddha Śākyamuni by Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje of rTse gdong. 3 metres high. In Theg chen chos gling monastery, Dharamsala, 1970s

Fig.3 Front part of Buddha Śākyamuni head, beaten copper, by Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje of rTse gdong. Approx. 60cms wide, Dharamsala, 1986.

FIG.4 Construction detail of beaten copper and wood Śākyamuni by Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje of rTse gdong, Dharamsala, 1986.

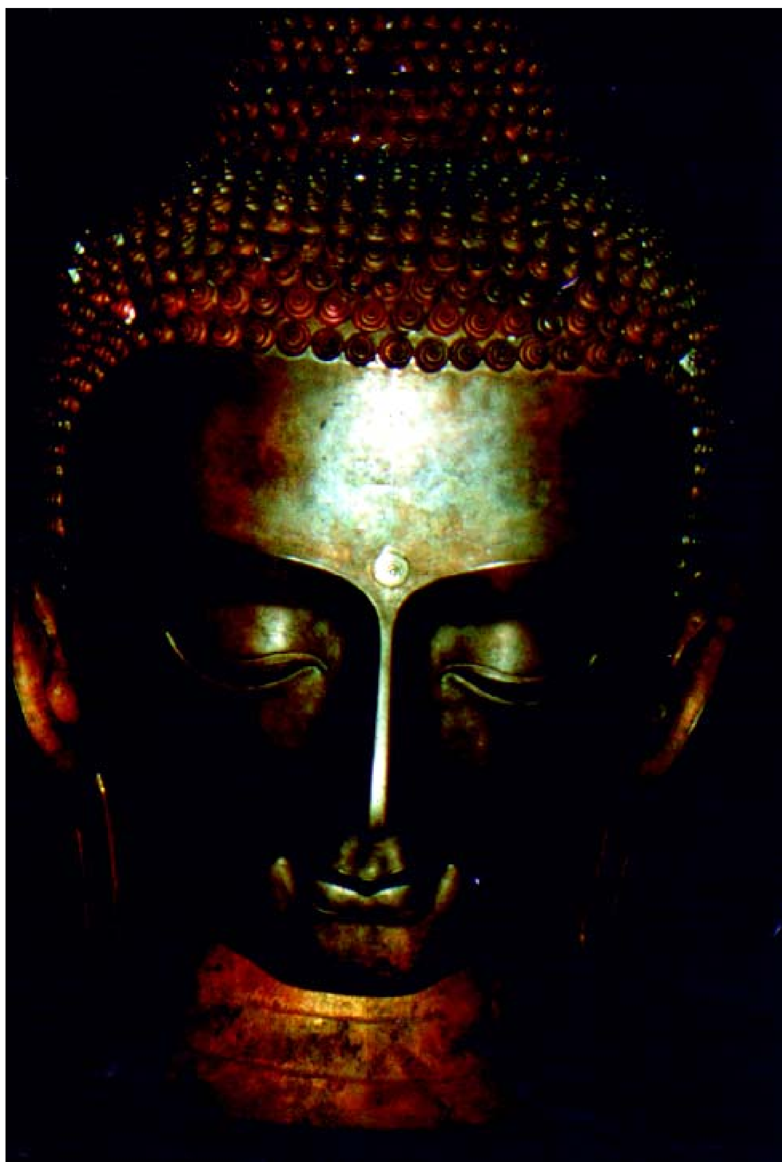

FIG.5 Complete Buddha Śākyamuni head, beaten copper, by Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje of rTse gdong. Approx. 90 cms high, Dharamsala, 1987.

FIG.6 Tārā, cast copper gilt, by Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje of rTse gdong. Approx.25cms high ,Dharamsala, 1980.

FIG.7 Head of sKyabs rje Ling Rinpoche, the late Senior Tutor of H. H. the Dalai Lama, beaten metal, by Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje of rTse gdong, 1987.

FIG.8 Crown of the Nechung State Oracle, by Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje of rTse gdong, Dharamsala, late 1980s.

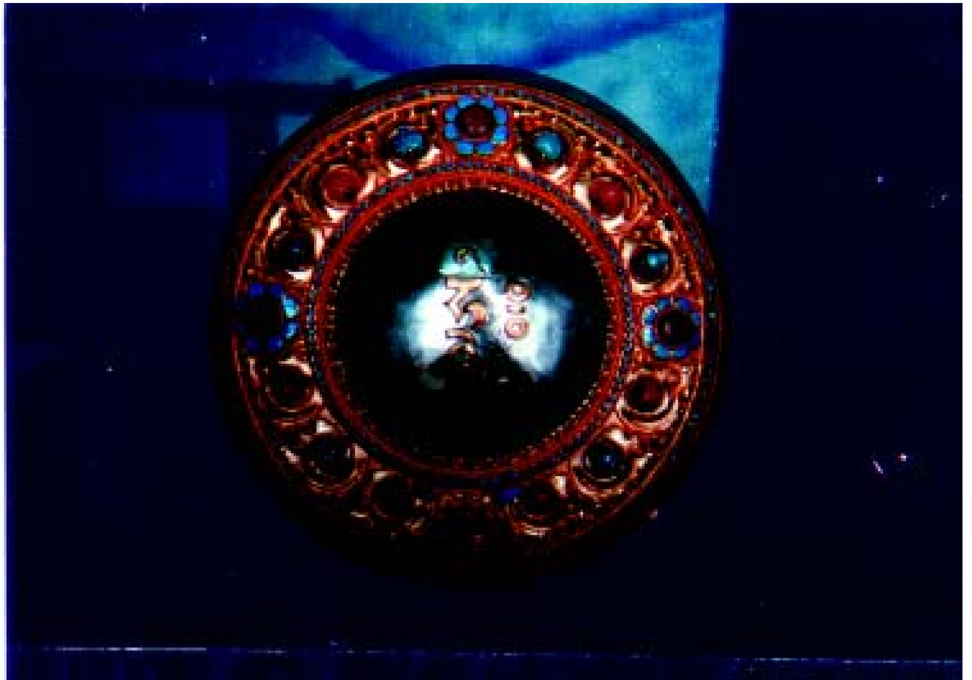

FIG.9 *Me long*, mirror of the Nechung State Oracle, by Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje of rTse gdong, Dharamsala, late 1980s.

FIG.10 *Kapāla*, skull cup of the Nechung State Oracle, by Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje of rTse gdong, Dharamsala late 1980s.

FIG.11 Ḍākinī, Nā ro mkha’ spyod ma, copper, by Chen mo sPen pa rdo rje of rTse gdong. Approx. 1.5 metres high ,Dharamsala late 1980s.

FIG.12 Dev Ratna Sakya, Patan, Nepal (b.1926, gZhis ka rtse 1938-41, Lhasa 1941-46).

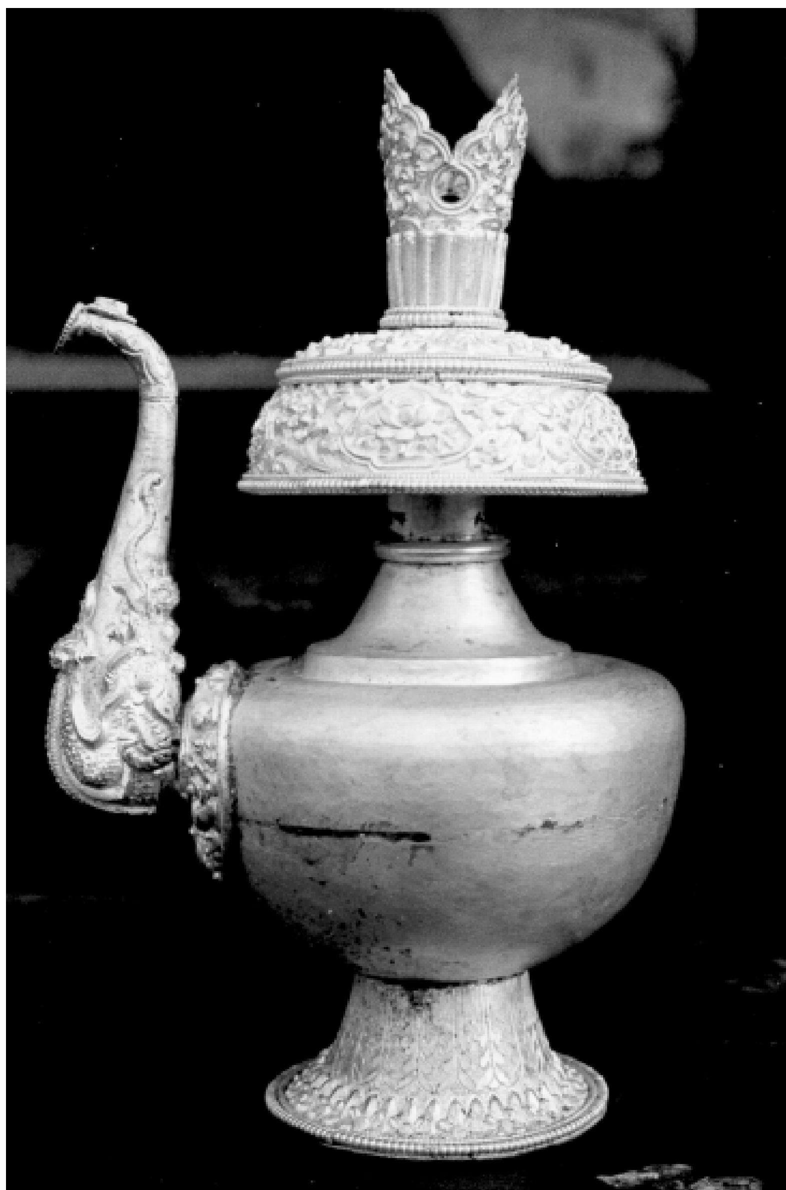

FIG.13 *Las bum pa*, silver 20 cms high, made for a Guhyasamāja ritual, 1987, by Dev Ratna Sakya of Patan, Nepal (b.1926).

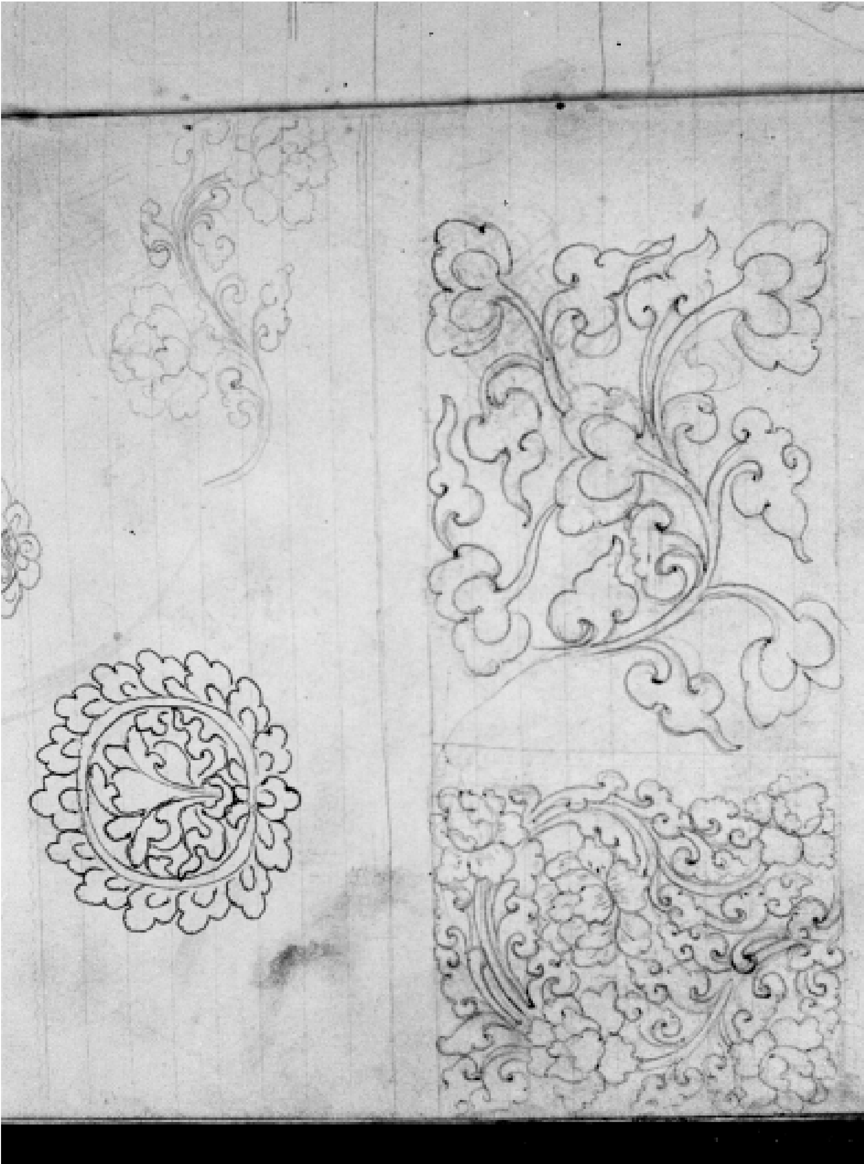

FIG.14 Page of scrollwork details from sketchbook of Kul Bahadur, Patan, Nepal (b.1927, Lhasa 1950-53, sKyid grong 1953-1959).

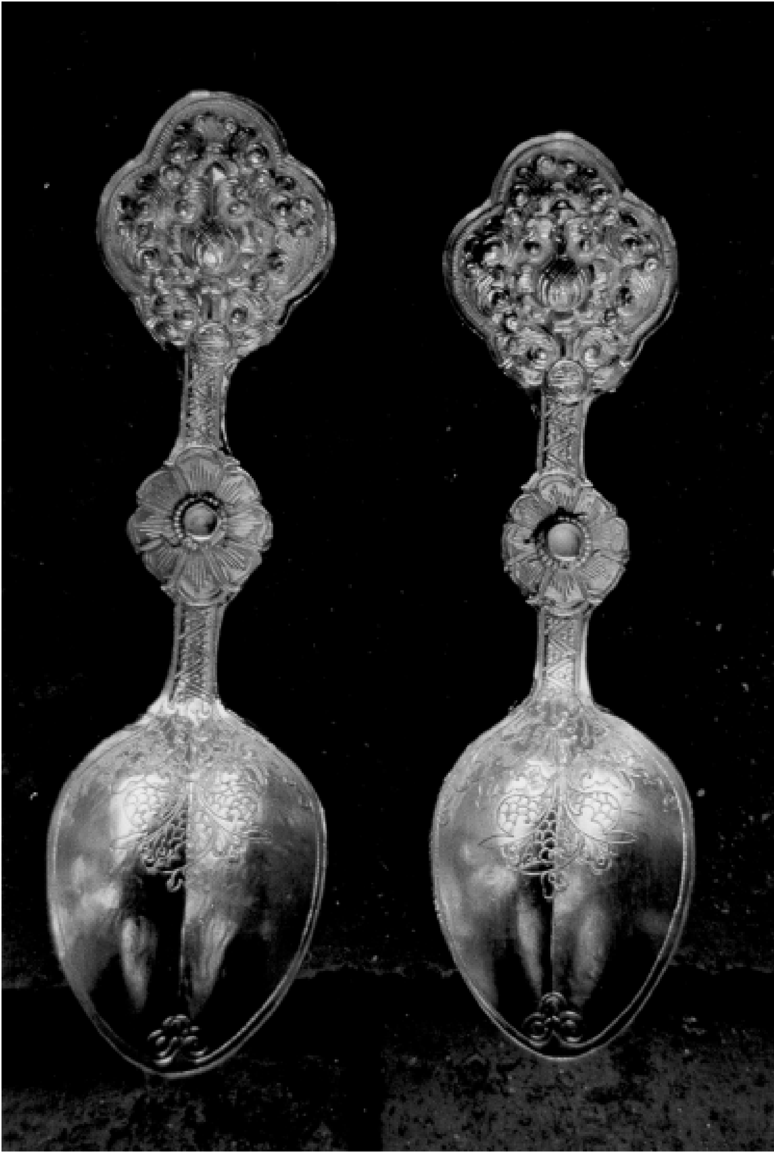

FIG.15 Pair of model women's spoons, silver, 1987 10 cms long, by Dan Bahadur (b.1915, sKyid grong 1928-58).

FIG.16 Sketch of *spyi blugs bum pa,* From sketchbook of Hira Ratna Sakya (b.1944), Patan.

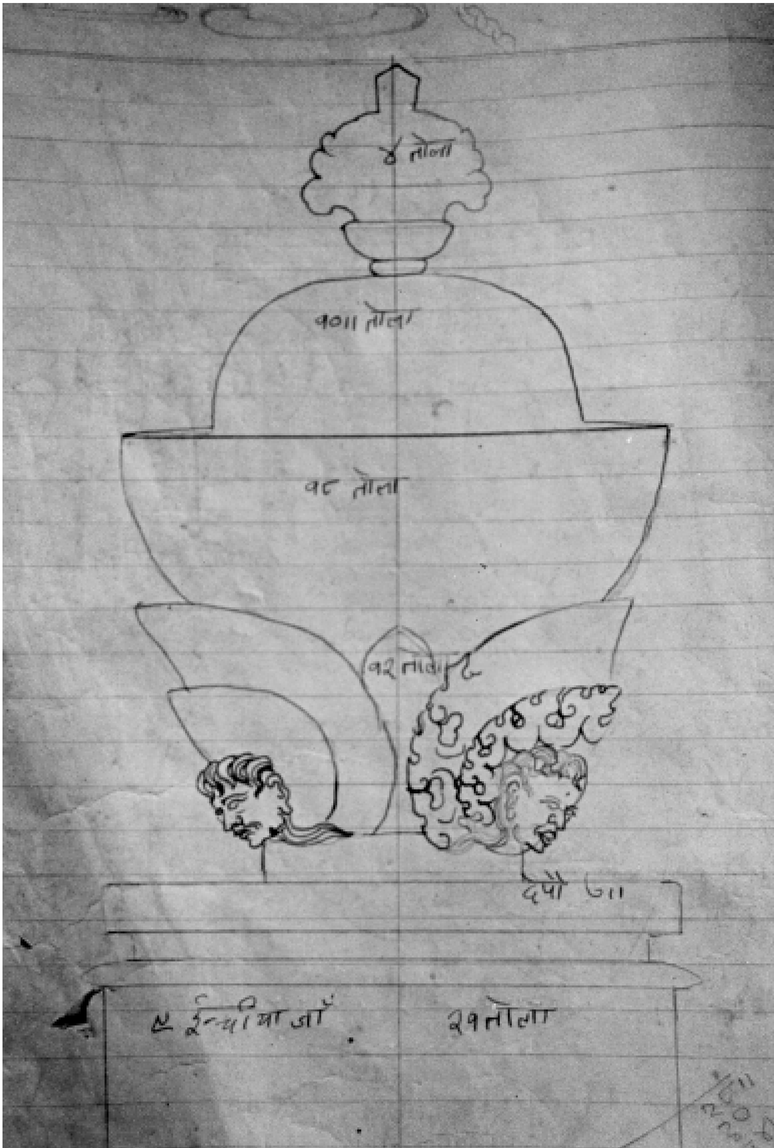

FIG.17 Eastern Tibetan style skull cup (*kāpala*). From sketchbook of Hira Ratna Sakya, (b.1944) Patan.

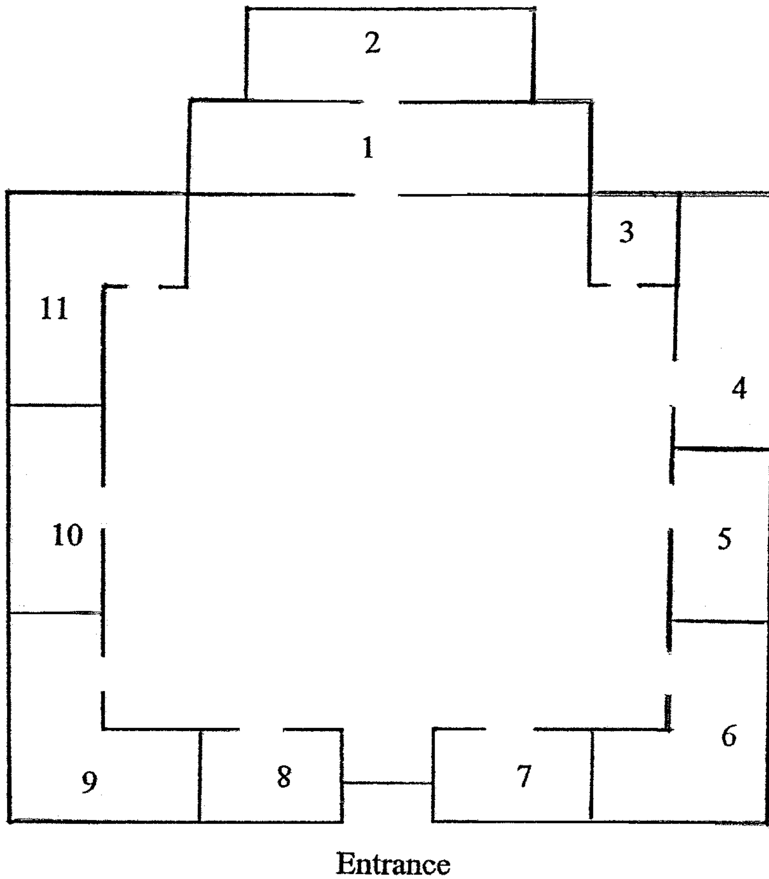

FIG.18 Ground plan of 'Dod zhol dpal 'khyil in Lhasa 1940-59 (not to scale). 1) Office of monk officials, the 'Dod pa'i do dam pa 2) Shrine to Dam can mGar ba nag po 3) Goldsmiths, gSer bzo ba 4) Embossers or Tsag pa 5) Design drawers, Ri mo ba 6) Wood carvers, dKrug pa 7) Jewellers, Phra bzo ba 8) Blacksmiths, mGar ba 9) Clay image makers, 'Jim bzo ba 10) Casters, Lugs pa 11) Silversmiths, dNgul bzo ba.

FIG.19 One of a pair of *rgya gling*, silver and silver gilt with inset turquoises, corals and lapis lazuli, made for the rNam rgyal grwa tshang in the Potala, circa 1910-20, probably by the 'Dod zhol dpal 'khyil, Liverpool City Museum, Accession no.50.31.79. Note 17 of Sir Charles Bell's notes of 1921 "as made by the government workshop in Lhasa for the monks in the Potala Palace". Height 59cms, circa late 19th or early 20th century

FIG.20 Detail of *rgya gling* in Fig.19.

FIG.21 Lhasa style woman's *ga'u,* gold, pearls, turquoise and glass,
by Phun tshogs (b.1932).

Lama Yeshe Jamyang of Nyurla, Ladakh: the Last Painter of the ’Bri gung Tradition

David Jackson

Although the history of Tibetan painting has progressed a lot in the last decades, little could be learned about the venerable painting tradition that once existed at the monastery of ’Bri gung, seat of the illustrious ’Jig rten mgon po (1143-1217) in central Tibet northeast of Lhasa. One of the last living representatives of the lineage still resides in his homeland, Ladakh: the monk-painter Yeshe Jamyang (Ye shes ’jam dbyangs, b. 1932), monk of Lamayuru (Bla ma g.yu ru).[1] In September, 1995, my colleague Nyurla Ngawang Tsering (Ngag bdang tshe ring) was kind enough to search him out and interview him at Leh.[2] When approached by his countryman and fellow ’Bri gung pa, the painter agreed—at age 63—to give his first such interview, speaking in Ladakhi dialect.[3] I would like to present that interview here, supplementing it with further historical information and descriptions of surviving paintings in the ’Bri gung style.[4]

Yeshe Jamyang’s account is important not only as a rare description of a practically unknown painting tradition, but also for what it tells us about other schools of Tibetan art. The ’Bri gung painting tradition, Yeshe Jamyang insisted, was unique: a style peculiar to ’Bri gung and not related to the other well-known traditions such as the sMan bris or sGar bris. To clarify its independent status, he repeated a traditional list of six main regional or local styles:[5]

1. *rGya ris*, the painting school of China
2. *Khams ris*, the painting school of Khams
3. ’*Bri ris*, the painting school of ’Bri gung
4. *mTshur ris*, the painting school of mTshur pu [mTshur pu monastery in Northeast dBus]
5. *E ris*, the painting school of E district [in southeast dBus province]
6. *gTsang ris*, the painting school of gTsang province [particularly at bKra shis lhun po]

Yeshe Jamyang repeats here an important traditional stylistic classification, no doubt learned in dBus province within the ’Bri gung tradition. dBus, gTsang and Khams provinces were each home to more than one school of painting, but Tibetan artists commonly spoke of the style of a given province (dBus bris, gTsang bris, or Khams bris), referring to the most widespread style. Accordingly, the list mentions a style of gTsang and one of Khams. But when it came to their own province, artists normally made more exact stylistic differentiations, and this is true of Yeshe Jamyang, who distinguished three different schools in dBus: those of ’Bri gung, mTshur phu and E.

One difficulty of modern stylistic studies is identifying exemplars of each style. Yeshe Jamyang, again repeating ’Bri gung oral tradition, differentiated regional styles on the basis of the relative darkness or lightness of their overall palette or color

schemes. He seems to be a unique oral source for this, enumerating four traditional descriptions of painting schools:[6]

1. "Chinese style was like a rainbow in the sky" (*rgya bris nam mkha'i 'ja' tshon 'dra*).
2. "The painting school from Khams was like the dusk of evening" (*khams ris mun pa rub pa 'dra*).
3. "The style of E district is like the dawn" (*e bris nam mkha' langs pa 'dra*).[7]
4. "The painting school from 'Bri gung is like after sunrise" (*'bri bris nyi ma shar ba 'dra*).

This traditional saying asserts that the colors of one non-dBus school, that of Khams, were comparatively dark and muted, as after dusk has fallen.[8] (The colors in the gTsang style were similarly dark, though that style is omitted here.) The styles of two dBus-district traditions were lighter. That of E (the g.Ye ris or E bris of dBus) was, however, relatively faint, like the colors at dawn, while those of his own 'Bri gung tradition (the 'Bri bris) were lighter (*skya ba*: "more whitish"), like after sunrise.

Thus Yeshe Jamyang's account illuminates not his own rare 'Bri gung tradition, but also modern stylistic studies in general. As a repository of certain crucial traditional sayings, he is a living treasure and has been cited in at least three publications on Tibetan painting and its history.[9]

In addition to the famous main painting styles of sMan bris and sGar bris, there may also have survived less-known but independent traditions in Tibet. Could the distinctive 'Bri gung painting school have been one of these? Yeshe Jamyang firmly believes so.

The Interview

Birth and Childhood

I will tell my story. My birthplace was a modest family of Nyurla, Ladakh. We were three brothers. Born in 1932, I was the youngest son. My older brother took charge of the family land and lived in the family house. My middle brother, who was eight years older than me, was ordained a monk of Likir (a dGe lugs pa monastery in western Ladakh),[10] and went to study at 'Bras spungs monastery in central Tibet.

When I was a child, my parents used to keep me very clean. They never mixed my cup with others or stepped over me. In my third year, my parents taught me the Tibetan alphabet. I had difficulty learning the alphabet because it was not taught properly. One day in spring I was left alone in bed while my parents went to work in the fields. I suddenly saw on the wall before me characters that someone had written, and I found I could read them, although I hadn't really learned them from others. While still in bed I felt very happy and proud. I got out of bed and searched for a text to read. Finding a small sutra text '*Bum chung*, I learned to read from this. I could read individual characters though not certain combinations. I was overjoyed.

That same year they opened for the first time a government school in the monastery of bCu gcig zhal (named after 11-headed Avalokiteśvara). At that time, which was in about 1935, bKra shis dbang rgyal from Tia village was appointed teacher. At this time I was given a small book with the Urdu alphabet to read. There were several children present about my age or a little older, and some had already begun learning in Timigang village. They included bSod nams rdo rje (who

later became a teacher, being Ngawang Tsering's first writing teacher), sTobs ldan and Tshe ring rnam rgyal.

When I was given this book I was overjoyed. I didn't like to be separated from the book, even taking it to bed with me. By learning the Urdu alphabet one time, I was able to read it. After one month, every child in school was given a little black wooden board to practice writing on. I was supposed to copy out the alphabet on mine, but I had some difficulty because in my book each character was shown in isolation, not in combination. An older student named Don grub who sat next to me could write, so by watching him I was able to pick it up quickly and my teacher was amazed. The teacher said I was a very active boy, and I felt proud of myself.

I did not go beyond the first class of school. But for whatever reason, I could learn it all after being shown a page just once or twice. In the middle of the year a school inspector came from Leh to inspect our school. He was not such an important person. He was a Ladakhi Muslim, and he gave us all a lecture. Then he asked the children: "What is the reason for your coming to school? Whoever can give the best answer will get this pencil as a prize."

Nobody could answer, and again he put the question to us. Finally I answered. I was shabbily dressed since I came from a poor family. I stood up and said with great composure, "The purpose of going to school is to understand with our minds important matters." The inspector said, "He's an active, intelligent boy!" But he never did give me that pencil.

This event had to do with my later going to 'Bri gung monastery. When the inspector was asking his question, bSod nams bkra shis of Nyurla, a respected village elder, was also present and he witnessed my response, as did a number of others from the locality. bSod nams bkra shis, whose elder brother was the 'Bri gung Bla ma bKra shis from Phar kha'i thang, may have taken notice of me then as an intelligent, active child. At that time Bla ma bKra shis had no disciple, so bSod nams bkra shis seems to have asked my parents at this time, "Could he not become a 'Bri gung monk and a student of my brother?"

Actually my family belonged to the dGe lugs pa religious tradition, but I was pulled into the 'Bri gung tradition because my parents were very poor, and Bla ma bKra shis was a lama and very rich with lots of barley. My parents borrowed grain from him and were financially dependent upon him. So they happily agreed, thinking it would benefit them (believing that they could get loans in the future). Then Bla ma bKra shis took me to make a little monk of me. In this way, I left school.

If I had been able to study further, I would have been able to learn more. When I went to be made a monk—at about age five—there was not much education for me. I could not learn Tibetan script as quickly as I had learned Urdu in school. I could learn about two or four words per day.

Since I stayed for a long time with Bla ma bKra shis, I learned rituals as I went with him to villagers' houses to perform religious ceremonies. I'm not sure whether Bla ma bKra shis knew how to make a powder *maṇḍala*, but he knew the proportionate line of *maṇḍala*s, and I learned those from him. I also learned how to make colored butter ornaments around *gtor ma* sacrificial cakes. In this way I learned how to make offerings and mainly how to perform rituals in villages. I could make gradual progress in my manual skills (but I didn't learn the main scriptures or scholastic texts).

In this way, later on I came to central Tibet. Before coming to Lhasa, I had a swelling in my legs in my 16th or 17th year (1947/1948). I stayed in Lhasa for one

year to treat my legs. My elder brother had been there (at ’Bras spungs) for eight years. I received a reading transmission for the bKa’ ’gyur, but at the time I wanted to learn painting and did not study much text while [in Lhasa].

Then I went to ’Bri gung. At that time during the first year or two, my manual skills improved though I didn’t learn much else. I had previously learned rituals in Ladakh, and ’Bri gung is excellent for all aspects of ritual practice. At that time a well-known lama of ’Bri gung was a certain lama Tshe brtan of Kyab sa phyug po family from Shar phyogs khul monastery in Lalog. He was famous for his *gtor ma* sacrificial cakes, butter offerings, etc. Sometimes he served as personal attendant and bodyguard of the ’Bri gung sKyabs mgon. At that time ’Bri gung monks had difficulty in ritual offerings. Monks who mastered this were rare. As my manual skills improved, the monks of ’Bri gung began to say I was skilled at such things.

Once I mustered my courage and took part in the making of colored butter offerings and decorations, and I managed to master it quite well. In such rituals I first took second position, but gradually I took over position number one. Once we had to fashion a huge A phyi *gtor ma* sacrificial cake with butter decorations three stories tall (at ’Bri gung rTse).[11] I made this and received a reward for good work.

After that I began to help with the personal shrine of the Che tshang Rin po che.[12] This shrine was very important, and only certain lamas could prepare offerings for it. Balo Rin po che was then in charge of it, and with him I helped make all the *gtor ma* sacrificial cakes and other offerings. I managed to do this well.

Then I studied ritual dance as a compulsory monastic duty (*khral*), and I mastered that. Then I stayed eight or nine years and learned all the prayers and rituals of ’Bri gung monastery. In all I stayed 11 years (1948-1959) and did well. The Chinese came to Lhasa, and I had to return to Ladakh.

Question: How did you come to study painting?
Answer: When I was making *gtor ma* sacrificial cakes at Yang ri sgang, people had made plans to renovate the Chung tshang Rin po che’s residence quarters of ’Bri gung Dzong.[13] Four or five painters from ’Bri gung mThil were there who said I was manually skilled. So I was sent to attend upon those painters.

At that time the painter Nor rgyas was famous. He was a layman from a family that originally came from Ladakh. He was chief of painters, and I stayed with him one month. From that time on I learned how to mix and apply colors, more or less. I requested that artist, “Please teach me for one or two winters, so that I can become a qualified artist (*dpon*).” He agreed, and accepting me as his student he taught me painting for a whole winter.

Master Nor rgyas was extremely skilled in ’Bri gung style. He was very intelligent, also leading a group which performed the A ce lha mo folk opera. He also understood texts very well.

It wasn’t possible for me to stay with Nor rgyas longer than a winter due to my responsibilities to my own “college” (*grwa tshang*) in the monastery. I usually had to go to the assembly. Every month I needed to take special permission to stay away, and this created some difficulty. In this way I finally did manage to study two full winters. Whenever the master was called to perform rituals for lay families, he would take me along. Through studying with him, I learned how to mix and apply colors.

The special characteristic of Nor rgyas was that he knew how to prepare Tibetan stone and earth colors (*bod tshon*), [especially azurite blue and malachite green]. This tradition had been maintained at 'Bri gung, though it seems not to have survived in complete form in either Lhasa or in gTsang (bKra shis lhun po).

During most of my stay at 'Bri gung I practiced painting. After learning to some extent under my teacher, I continued to practice by myself, for 10 or 11 years.

There were not so many statues in 'Bri gung—mostly paintings. Most statues were gilt copper, except the clay images of A phyi and mGon po (Mahākāla). Makers of sculpture mostly came to 'Bri gung from Lhasa.

Local central Tibetans considered family lineages who practiced crafts or techniques (*bzo*) to be low caste. Also artisans who made clay statues (*'jim bzo ba*) were viewed as low caste. But *thang ka* painters were considered better and shown high regard.

In 'Bri gung a painter was called a "*lha bris*," and not "*dpon*," as in Ladakh. In Ladakh, makers of images were also respected, unlike in dBus.

Question: What were some of the main paintings you executed in 'Bri gung?
Answer: I painted many *thang ka*s in 'Bri gung, not so many for the monastery, but for lay patrons in surrounding areas. I painted many *thang ka*s showing the 35 Buddhas of confession and depictions of the Pure Realm of Amitābha, many in large format. Though later in Ladakh I often painted many smaller *thang ka*s, while still in central Tibet I commonly was requested to paint larger *thang ka*s, some 20 or 30 in all, not just of the Pure Realm of Amitābha, but also "assembly fields" (*tshogs zhing*). Later I would paint in Ladakh not only large *thang ka*s for monasteries, but also smaller ones for lay patrons.

Then I arrived back in Ladakh. At Lamayuru monastery (in western Ladakh) I took responsibility as a monk for certain things. At that time the making of *gtor ma* and the performance of *maṇḍala* proportions, ritual dance, ritual chanting, ritual music, etc., were not so highly developed. Since I was a newly arrived well-trained monk from central Tibet, I could revive and improve those lacking aspects of ritual practice.

I continued to paint *thang ka*s when I found time. Some of the main works I painted included five big *thang ka*s of the Dharma-protectors (*chos srung*) of the 'Bri gung monastery in Mysore (Bylakuppe dKa' brgyud pa Monastery).[14] That was a large project. But all the time I was also painting one or two small *thang ka*s.

For dBon sprul Rin po che's monastery at mTsho padma ('Og min thub brtan bshad sgrub gling, Rewalsar, Mandi, H.P.), I painted *thang ka*s of the complete set of Dharma-protectors. These were detailed *thang ka*s with additional deities of the four tantric classes.

For the bZang po pa family of Timisgang I painted less detailed *thang ka*s of the same deities. But these *thang ka*s included the lama lineage of *Lam zab* and Cakrasaṃvara (bDe mchog).

After that I mainly painted, and was absorbed in that work. I also painted some murals in Ladakh, including some in Spithug, Lamayuru,[15] Shar phyogs khul, and Phyiang. Also at Byang chub gling, the 'Bri gung seat near Dehradun, I painted in the entrance the four protectors "great kings" (*rgyal chen bzhi*).

I mainly painted and did not make statues, though for Shar phyogs khul I made masks for the rNying ma dances. Since the time of the previous rTogs ldan Rin po che, this monastery had planned to establish a masked dance without success, but

they managed to do so on this occasion. A diligent monk named sTod pa Rab brtan, the business manager of the monastery, had already brought some drums, but could not establish the ceremony mainly due to a lack of masks. Afterward a monk named Tshe brtan came from Tibet and planned to establish it, but he died in an accident. After that some energetic monks of the monastery decided to establish it, and they invited me for that purpose. I accordingly went and made some 36 masks in all for rNying ma ritual dances. Although they had gSar ma pa (e.g. bKa' brgyud) dances from before, they wanted to start certain rNying ma dances and I also made masks for these.

Question: What is the lineage of the 'Bri gung painting tradition?
Answer: The lineage is an unbroken tradition that existed there at 'Bri gung, called the "Dridri" (*'bri bris*). In general, there exist painting traditions called:

1. *rGya ris*, the painting school of China
2. *Khams ris*, the painting school of Khams
3. *'Bri ris*, the painting school of 'Bri gung
4. *mtshur ris*, the painting school of Tsurpu [mTshur phu monastery in north-east dBus]
5. *E ris*, the painting school of E district [in southeast dBus province]
6. *gTsang ris*, the painting school of gTsang province [particularly at bKra shis lhun po]

Thus, 'Bri gung had its own tradition, too.

Question: What was your own lineage?
Answer: There is a lineage. The teacher of my teacher, Nor rgyas, was called dGe rgan Baba. He was very famous as a painter at 'Bri gung. He also served as secretary/scribe (drung yig) of 'Bri gung, being skilled at both writing and painting. Nor rgyas's father was also a good painter named Don grub.[16] But for some reason Nor rgyas could not learn much from his father and became chiefly Ba ba's disciple.

Question: What are the special characteristics of the 'Bri gung painting tradition?
Answer: Generally, all painting styles are similar, but the expression (nyams) and style (dbyings) of wrathful deities are special in the 'Bri gung painting tradition.

Color is another of its special characteristics. Skies are painted lighter or paler (skya bo). It used mainly "Tibetan stone colors" (*bod tshon*), more so than the other painting traditions. Some other traditions, such as in Lhasa, use "Tibetan stone colors" (*bod tshon*) but mix Indian colors in. They cannot distinguish the lighter shades of colors. In gTsang (bKra shis lhun po) it seems they do not have the tradition at all. We [at 'Bri gung] distinguish three shades of azurite blue, from dark to light:

1. *mthing tsho ba*
2. *mthing shun*
3. *mthing skya*

Similarly, we distinguish three shades of malachite green:

1. *spang tsho ba*
2. *spang shun*
3. *spang si*

This, I believe, is a special feature of the ’Bri gung tradition of painting. At the time of applying colors, too, there are some technical features that make it special. If you haven’t learned it in a lineage of practical experience, you cannot do anything.

Question: Was there any difference between *thang ka* painting and the painting of murals?
Answer: From the point of view of technique, they were mostly the same.

Question: If you have several *thang ka*s, how can you identify one as the ’Bri gung painting tradition?
Answer: You can identify it especially from the depictions of clouds (*sprin ris*), landscape (*yul ljongs*), and the form (*tshugs*) [of figures] also differs. The colors are also different.

The Lhasa tradition has its own style (*dbyings*). The gTsang tradition also has its own style (*dbyings*), and its colors are darker. Actually the painting of gTsang is very good, too. What we call “pictorial art” (*ri mo*) is a difference of artistic skill.

The ’Bri gung tradition has its own way of depicting tree leaves (*shing lo*) and flames (*me ris*). The ’Bri gung flame is said to be similar to the mouth of a blacksmith’s tongs (*’bri ris* [*kyi me ris*] *skam pa’i kha*). The style (*dbyings*) of male and female wrathful deities is special. The peaceful deities are similar to those of other styles.

Question: Is the ’Bri gung painting tradition related to the sMan ris or sGar bris painting styles?
Answer: It is not related to either; it is its own completely independent tradition. There is no history of linkage with other schools.

I, for example, am trained in the ’Bri gung painting tradition. Now I have been working together with painters from other traditions such as the gTsang ris, and there is a chance to be influenced by other traditions. It is also possible to take the good points of other traditions and use them in my own painting. One cannot say that ’Bri gung tradition is the best and there is no need for other traditions.

In ’Bri gung itself the tradition was so strongly established that there was no possibility of mixing it with other traditions. In ’Bri gung they only patronized their local tradition and had no tradition of leaving to learn other traditions such as the Tshur ris [i.e. Karma sGar bris]. A painter learned there and didn’t go elsewhere.

I came back [to Ladakh] from ’Bri gung and, after being away for a long time, came in contact with other [painters]. (But most normal painters would have stayed there in ’Bri gung.)

Question: Does the ’Bri gung painting tradition possesses a tradition of painting the lamas of its dKa’ brgyud lineage (*bka’ brgyud gser phreng*)?
Answer: Yes, it does. Also depicted in series are the *Sa gsum ma’i* biography of the Chung tshang Rin po che, which shows the series of his previous rebirths. Likewise, the series of previous rebirths of the Che tshang Rin po che is shown, from Atiśa onward. These were done on a large scale.

In the time of ’Bri gung Rig ’dzin Chos grags (1595-1659, 23rd abbot of ’Bri gung) many one-day *thang ka*s (*nyin thang*) were made—almost miraculously—[at ’Bri gung]. In particular, during the time of dKon mchog phrin las bzang po (1656-1719) the painting traditions of ’Bri gung flourished greatly. In the time of bsTan ’dzin pad ma’i rgyal mtshan (1770-1826) there was a great increase in the

practice of painting and ritual music. During the times of those three lamas, painting flourished at ’Bri gung. After that, the tradition did not flourish to the same extent.

[Concerning earlier painting,] in Limi [in northwest Nepal, near sPu hren] *thang ka*s survive from the time of the Bla ma Nyer gnyis Chos kyi rgyal po (tenth ’Bri gung abbot, 1335-1407, a senior contemporary and guru of Tsong kha pa). I haven’t seen these, except for photos. There probably existed painting at ’Bri gung already in the time of the great founder, sKyob pa ’Jig rten gsum mgon (1143-1217). In that great master’s writings it is stated that every (Buddha) statue should have a six-part backrest. So you can infer that there was an artistic tradition in his period.

dKon mchog phrin las bzang po (1656-1719) painted a set of *thang ka*s depicting his own life story. It was only displayed in two years of the 12 year animal cycle: the snake (*sbrul*) and pig (*phag*).[17] There were about 12 or 13 *thang ka*s in the whole set. These were really amazing, wonderful paintings, which I examined in great detail. They bore many inscriptions.

There was also a set depicting the life of Rig ’dzin Chos grags, though not by his hand. These *thang ka*s, too, bear many inscriptions by the same lama. One also finds many inscriptions on *thang ka*s from Che tshang bsTan ’dzin pad ma’i rgyal mtshan [1770-1826]. Many good paintings existed from his time, known as the time of the two lamas named “rGyal mtshan” (*rgyal mtshan rnam gnyis*), since his contemporary lama in the Chung tshang lama-palace was Chos kyi rgyal mtshan, son of ’Jigs med gling pa [1729/30-1798].

Question: Did sTag lung monastery have its own painting tradition?
Answer: I have never heard of one.[18] The only [other bKa’ brgyud] one I heard of was the tradition of mTshur phu monastery, the mTshur bris.

Question: Where did you get your colors?[19]
Answer: In previous times, the best blue came from rGyal mo rong [in the Chinese borderlands], and it was called “Chinese deep blue” (*rgya mthing*). But only in early times. Mineral green (*spang ma*) was similarly *spang kha rug* from rGyal rong.

Vermilion red (*rgya mtshal*) and cinnabar (*lcog la*) were produced in many places in China and India.

Later “Tibetan stone colors” (*bod tshon*)—azurite blue (*mthing*) and malachite green (*spang*)—were used. They were made into lighter colors (*skya tshon*) by grinding. People said that *bod tshon* (“colors of Bod”) were so called because they came from Bod yul, a district in central Tibet. When these deposits were exhausted, a source was eventually found at sNye mo in gTsang.

The malachite green and azurite blue of sNye mo (*snye mo spang mthing*) are produced even today. The central Tibetan government used to tax it, and the sNye mo mDo bzhi district (mDo bzhi rdzong) had to pay taxes in mineral colors. Because of this, these colors were used down to the present. Much pigment was stored in the Potala, but it was difficult for us painters to get. Some sweepers used to steal a little and sell it outside (to painters). In gTsang, if you knew the right people you could somehow buy it, but it was very expensive. The practice of working with such mineral colors was highly developed at ’Bri gung from earlier times, too.

White color we made from the pigment called *rin spungs ka rag*, a hard white stone [from Rin spungs in eastern gTsang]. Most pigments came from rocks. You sometimes had to remove sand impurities.

Malachite green and azurite blue were two distinct colors. There was also a mixed color between the two called “turquoise color” (*gyu' kha*), making three types to buy, in all. We had to pound them into powder and make paint. After pounding we would pour water and stir. The deeper color would settle at the bottom, and the lighter would float on top.

At the time of painting, you had to apply azurite blue and malachite green in several layers. First one application, then wait, then apply another coat after the first was dry, and so on. Then you had to polish it to make it smooth. Other people do not know how to apply colors in this way. They are polished (or burnished) with a *gzi*-stone.

Other traditions first apply blue to the sky and then green to the landscape. But we do the reverse, starting with green and followed by blue. Because one needs to burnish the azurite blue, it is applied later in the process. The sequence was: first deep green and deep blue, then paler (*skya bo*) shades of those. Afterward came outlining (*bcad*) as the next step, and then shading (*mdangs*) as the last step.

There is a saying about which colors are to be shaded with which dye: Azurite blue and malachite green are shaded with indigo. Minium, red and yellow, are shaded with lac dye.

Indigo had two kinds: dye indigo (*tshod rams*) and pigment indigo (*tshon rams*). The first was used for outlining and the second for shading.

Lac dye came from such southern border regions as Bhutan, Sikkim or Darjeeling, and it had its own method of preparation. To prepare it, one needed the Simplocos *(zhu mkhan*) leaf from India. There were sayings:

Without the Simplocos *(zhu mkhan)* leaf, the color will not come.

And also without the Simplocos leaf, the lac-dye (*rgya skyegs*) would go astray. Lac dye was used for shading and outlining orpiment yellow (*bab bla*), vermilion and minium orange.

I do not use black (i.e., black carbon ink) for outlining, even nowadays, unlike the practice of some recent (*thang ka*) painters.

Question: What is the difficult part of ’Bri gung painting technique?
Answer: Preparing the colors is not so difficult but applying them is. It takes a long time, and they must be applied repeatedly. Finally one burnishes the thick coats to make them smooth.

’Bri gung has its own calendar/prognostication (*rtsis*), and also its own arts manuals (*bzo [rig bstan bcos]*), some texts by Rig ’dzin Chos grags. Its script is also special: the ’Bri gung *lcags kya ma* (a kind of *’khyugs* cursive script). There is even a certain kind of wall-construction with many small flat stones that is a typical specialty of ’Bri gung, the “*’bri gung lcob la ma*.” People say that many walls behind the Potala palace are of this type.

Rig ’dzin Chos grags saw deities in visions, and therefore the iconography (of ’Bri gung *thang ka*s) may slightly differ when deities are shown as seen in the visions (and not according to their standard iconography). The face and body forms may be different on each *thang ka*, according to these different visions.

One used to say about the 'Bri gung style that its shading was fine and its outlining, detailed. As the general saying goes:

1. "Chinese style was like a rainbow in the sky" (*rgya bris nam mkha'i 'ja' tshon 'dra*).
2. "The painting school from Khams was like the dusk of evening" (*khams bris mun pa rub pa 'dra*).
3. "The style of E district [of dBus] is like the dawn" (*e bris nam mkha' langs pa 'dra*)
4. The painting school from 'Bri gung is like after the sun has risen (*'bri bris nyi ma shar ba 'dra*).

The style of E district was the painting tradition of the Lhasa government (*lha sa'i gzhung gi ri mo*).

Thus the 'Bri gung style was clear and bright, with much shading and detailed outlining. The way of drawing is mostly the same among all the schools of painting; the styles differ mainly in coloration. Each district had a different tradition of coloring, and this was true of 'Bri gung, too. The preference for lighter (more whitish) colors in 'Bri gung extended even to the preparation of ritual offerings, where the *gtor ma* sacrificial cakes and other offerings were colored with pale (*skya bo*) colors. They never used plain, full colors, but always made them fainter and paler. This made the colors clear and clean (*khams dwangs po*).
[End of interview.]

Conclusion

Yeshe Jamyang is correct to claim a special origin for his painting tradition. The histories of the 'Bri gung pa reveal that a branch of the rare mKhyen ris tradition continued at 'Bri gung from the early or mid-18th century until at least the early 19th century, transmitted by students of the religious master dKon mchog phrin las bzang po (1656-1719), 24th abbot of 'Bri gung, who was an exceptionally skilled painter.[20] Thus, 18th-century 'Bri gung was home to a later offshoot of the mKhyen ris, and not the sMan ris.[21]

The 'Bri gung abbatial history also confirms that a branch of the mKhyen ris continued to exist at 'Bri gung until at least the early 19th century, the period of bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan (1770-1826).[22] The distinctive recent 'Bri gung style is believed to have descended from that tradition,[23] and thus the modern 'Bri gung style was a late variety of one of Tibet's rarest styles, the mKhyen ris. Its connection with the old 'Bri gung style or styles (*'bri bris rnying pa*), whose existence has also been reported, is as yet unknown.[24]

Outsiders can be forgiven for not noticing the existence of the 'Bri gung painting tradition, for it was also not widely known even inside Tibet. The well informed and widely travelled Khams pa scholar Kaḥ thog Si tu (1880-1925), when newly arrived at the main monastery of 'Bri gung mthil in 1918, noted seeing in a reliquary chapel of 18th and 19th-century masters, many *thang ka*s with exquisite golden brocade mountings, including paintings of the eight manifestations of Padmasambhava, portraits of the successive main 'dKa' brgyud lineage masters (*bka' brgyud gser phreng*), the 16 Arhats, and of the Avadāna collection *dPag bsam 'khri shing*. Concerning their style, he commented: "Between the New and Old sMan bris styles, these seemed to resemble more the Old sMan bris."[25] I assume he was struggling to find the right classification for what were most probably

*thang ka*s in the 'Bri gung style. Later at Yang ri sgar, the summer residence of the 'Bri gung pa high lamas, he noted seeing works that he did specify are of the 'Bri gung tradition or style (*'bri gung lugs* or *'bri bris*): in a temple dedicated to the bKa' brgyud lineage masters (*bka' brgyud gser 'phreng lha khang*); 15 *thang ka* boxes (*thang sgam*) contained paintings by previous artists of the 'Bri gung art tradition "whose color and shading would be difficult to duplicate."[26]

Although the 'Bri gung painting tradition has only now begun to be explored historically in any detail, it was one of the first living traditions of painting to be investigated on the spot by a Westerner. In 1936 when Marco Pallis travelled to Ladakh and stayed at the 'Bri gung monastery of Phyiang ("P'hiyang"), he took painting and religious lessons from the 'Bri gung dKa' brgyud pa monk-painter dKon mchog rgyal mtshan. In the perceptive chronicle of his journey, *Peaks and Lamas*, Pallis described meeting and studying under this painter, who came from the Phyiang valley and had worked with the Ladakhi painter (Lingshed Tshe dbang) Rig 'dzin in painting some murals at Phyiang in the late 1920s.[27] dKon mchog rgyal mtshan is pictured at work opposite p.334, and his proportions of the Buddha are presented opposite p.338.

Pallis and his two travelling companions each commissioned *thang ka*s from dKon mchog rgyal mtshan. One day the painter suddenly asked Pallis:[28]

> "Do you wish me to put in ordinary clouds or dKa' brgyud pa clouds?" "What are they?" we asked. "Why should there be two sorts of clouds?" "But there are," said the lama; "from ancient times the artists of the dKa' brgyud pa have their own special convention for portraying clouds, and also certain plants. No other order draws them as we do. We are of course permitted to use the ordinary methods, too, but we prefer our own tradition."
>
> We, of course, ordered dKa' brgyud pa clouds for our *thang ka*s; they can be seen on the photograph opposite page 404, where one of rGyal mtshan's works has been reproduced.

dKon mchog rgyal mtshan was thus proficient in both 'Bri gung and non-'Bri gung styles. (One should understand "'"Bri gung Kargyudpa" whenever Pallis speaks of "Kargyudpa" clouds). Indeed, the 'Bri gung-style clouds can just be made out in the tiny black and white reproduction (facing p.404). dKon mchog rgyal mtshan, too, had a traditional preference for whitish (*skya bo*) colors, something that Pallis considered an aesthetic defect: "His chief fault lay in a tendency to mix in too much white with his paintings, which made his colors, especially blues, rather milky."[29]

Yeshe Jamyang and his paintings were already documented to some extent 20 years ago. When researching the painters of 20th-century Ladakh, Erberto Lo Bue never could interview Yeshe Jamyang, but he did mention his 'Bri gung religious affiliation and his painting activities in a settlement monastery in south India, where five of his large *thang ka*s hung in 1981. Lo Bue also documented Yeshe Jamyang's painting of the four great guardian kings at Lamayuru in collaboration with Ngag dbang chos 'phel (b. 1938), a Ladakhi monk and painter who had studied at 'Bras spungs for four years.[30]

There is no need to repeat the great interest of this venerable painting tradition or the importance of its last adherent, Yeshe Jamyang. Let us hope that he will not prove to be the final chapter of this story and that younger painters will take up the 'Bri gung style, both in Ladakh and at the ancient seat, 'Bri gung.

APPENDIX: SURVIVING 'BRI GUNG PAINTINGS

A few paintings have been attributed to the "'Bri gung style" or 'Bri bris in published catalogues, but one should not be overhasty in identifying all paintings produced by a certain religious tradition to a single style. Nevertheless, more than 20 'Bri gung pa *thang ka*s dating from about the 18th century onward can be identified, which form a single stylistic group. By examining them, it should be possible to confirm some of the features traditionally ascribed to the 'Bri gung style by Yeshe Jamyang and others.[31]

A. WALL-PAINTINGS

(1) 'Jig rten gsum mgon and His Lineage in an A lchi Mural

A portrayal of 'Jig rten gsum mgon and his lineage in a mural of the gSum brtsegs temple of A lchi in western Ladakh is one of the earliest examples of 'Bri gung portraiture. See Roger Goepper and Jaroslav Poncar 1996, p.216. The series of masters portrayed is a lineage of sorts, but it includes three of sGam po pa's disciples.

1. Vajradhara
2. Te lo pa
3. Nā ro pa
4. Mar pa
6. Mi la ras pa
7. Dwags po chen po [sGam po pa 1079-1153]
8. Dwags po dBon [sGom pa Tshul khrims snying po 1116-1169]
9. Dwags po dBon chung [sGom chung or dBon sgom Shes rab byang chub]
10. Phag mo gru pa
11. 'Bri gung pa ('Jig rten mgon po)

For No.8, the *dwags po on* in the inscription is a misspelling for *dwags po dbon* "The Dwags po nephew," referring to sGam po pa's nephew and monastic successor, sGom pa Tshul khrims snying po. The spelling *on* for *dbon* in Ladakh in this period might be of phonetic interest to linguists. Similarly for No.9, the *dwags po on chung* of the inscription is a misspelling of *dwags po dbon chung* "The lesser Dwags po nephew," referring to another of sGam po pa's nephews, Tshul khrims snying po's younger brother sGom chung [or dBon sgom] Shes rab byang chub. It is impossible that the two rNying ma masters Dwags po rgya ras and Dwags chung ba of the *Blue Annals* (p.132) could be meant here, since both names lack the crucial element *on* or *dbon*, "nephew," and anyway were not masters of this lineage.

(2) Early Murals in Phyiang, Ladakh, based on a 13th Century Original in sPu hreng

When 'Bri gung gling pa dBon Shes rab 'byung gnas (1187-1255) visited western Tibet in 1219, he stayed for a while at the Kho char temple of sPu hreng in western Tibet and sketched a mural representation of the life of his master, 'Jig rten gsum mgon. This corresponded to the versified life-story he had composed, the *Phyogs bcu dus gsum ma*, which later formed part of the 'Bri gung liturgy.[32] Afterward the tradition of painting the biography in this way spread eastward to the 'Bri gung mother monastery in dBus Province of central Tibet and further westward to Ladakh.[33] An illustrated modern commentary of this biography has been published by the present 'Bri gung sKyabs mgon Che tshang Rin po che.[34] For illustrations, he used later wall-paintings dating to ca. the 14th century from Phyiang Monastery of central Ladakh.[35]

A few decades earlier (late 12th or early 13th century) the great 'Bri gung founder 'Jig rten gsum mgon (1143-1217) in his record of the building of a bKra shis sgo mang stūpa mentioned the main Tibetan artist by name: dPon chen po Tshul rin (=Tshul khrims rin chen?), and also the great Newar artist Māṇibhadra, perfect in his knowledge of religious art and famed as an "art emanation" (*bzo'i sprul pa*), who had come to Tibet from Nepal.[36]

(3) Details from Lamayuru Murals
Three figures in M. Pallis's book (Pallis 1939) illustrate what is probably 'Bri gung art in Ladakh. All three photographs were taken by Prof. Dr. G. O. Dyhrenfurth:

a. facing p.249: "Paintings at Yuru."
b. facing p.317, bottom: "Ladakh temple decoration."
c. facing p.421: "Celestial beings, from a temple at Yuru in Ladakh."

(4) Two Great Guardian Kings, Lamayuru
Part of a mural by Yeshe Jamyang at Lamayuru in Ladakh has been pictured in C. Harris 1997, p.268, Fig.304. The mural in the entrance porch to the assembly hall shows two of the four Great Guardian Kings (*rgyal chen bzhi*). Harris 1997, p.268, describes: "… Strong contrasting colors are placed in front of the blue ground and the whole composition is dramatized by a rich and vibrant palette." A detail of perhaps the same murals was published in E. Lo Bue 1983, p.61, plate 50, photographed by N. Rollier in 1975.

(5) Lamayuru Mural Details
Some details of murals at Lamayuru are illustrated in the book by Prem Singh Jina and Konchok Namgyal 1999, *Lamayuru Monastery of Ladakh Himalaya*, plates 1, 5, 8, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21 and 25. No doubt other 'Bri gung pa murals at Lamayuru or Phyiang have been published in books on Ladakh.

B. *Thang ka*s
Here are more than 30 *thang ka*s that can be identified confidently as belonging to the 'Bri gung pa religious tradition or the 'Bri gung painting style.[37] (Only one, No.28, portrays a non-'Bri gung pa subject matter.)

(1) Mi la ras pa with Episodes from His Life
An early life of Mi la ras pa in the Los Angeles County Museum is described and illustrated in P. Pal 1983, plate 19, p.14. This large painting (130.8 x 105.4 cm.) was previously said to be 'Brug pa, but the inscriptions read by Hugh Richardson (p.260) identify it as certainly 'Bri gung pa. The lineage of gurus is unusual for showing an even number on one line:

11 9 7 5 3 1 2 4 6 8 10 12

1. rDo rje 'chang (Vajradhara)
2. sTon pa Sangs rgyas (Buddha [Śākyamuni])
3. Te lo pa
4. Nā ro pa
5. Mar pa
6. sGam po pa [Mi la Ras pa,is the main figure]
7. Phag mo gru pa
8. 'Jig rten mgon po (1143-1217)

9. dBon Rin bSod nams grags [dBon Rin po che bSod nams grags pa 1187-1234]
10. Cung Rin po che [lCung rDo rje grags pa, 1210-1278]
11. Rin chen (?chos rgyal) dpal bzang po
12. [dBon?] dPon Rin po che

Small figures seated to the right and left of Mi la's head: bSod nams lha'i dbang po (right) and Dus zhabs pa Blo gros (left).

(2) An Old Series of 'Bri gung Masters Preserved at Limi.
An undated series of 'Bri gung masters preserved in Limi in the northwestern borderlands of Nepal (near the border with sPu hreng) may date to the 15th or 16th century.[38] Four were published as black and white figures in Jackson 1996, p.341, Figs. 190A, B, C and D.

Mr. Ngawang Tsering showed me photographs of 17 paintings from the set, including ca. 62 *siddha*s, which works out to an average of 3.6 *siddha*s per painting. The set as photographed was not complete: presumably six paintings were missing (6 x 3.5 = 21), making a total of 23 paintings in the original set. Ngawang Tsering believed the lineage came down to the 17th century, to the time of Rig 'dzin Chos grags (1595-1659). Yeshe Jamyang, who had never seen it, in his interview dated the set much earlier (to ca. the early 15th century).

(3) Mañjuśrī Yamāntaka with Guru Lineage
A black *thang ka* of "Mañjuśrī Yamāntaka" (*'jam dpal gshin rje gshed*) was published in Essen and Thingo 1989, II-331. This painting, whose dimensions are stated to be 48.5 x 40 cm. [sic] and which was dated to the 19th century, was not identified by Essen and Thingo as 'Bri gung pa, though they noted the rNying ma origin of this lineage. The painting may have been commissioned by a disciple of Chos kyi nyi ma (27th abbot, 1755-1792), i.e. two or three generations earlier than Essen and Thingo II-330.

The order of the lamas in the lineage is:

10	8	6	4	2	1	3	5	7	9	11
18	16	14	12				13	15	17	19
22	20								21	23
24										25

The last 14 lamas are:

12. gTsug lag dpal dge
13. Slob dpon chen po [Padmasambhava]
14. Ba su dha ra
15. sNub Sangs rgyas ye shes
16. rGyal dbang Ratna [? rGyal dbang Rin chen phun tshogs 1509-1557?]
17. Chos rgyal phun tshogs (1547-1602)
18. bKra shis phun tshogs (1574-1628)
19. [Rig 'dzin] Chos kyi grag[s] pa (1595-1659) [first Chung tshang]
20. Don grub chos rgyal (1704-1754)
21. Phrin las bzang po (1656-1718) [out of order]
22. dPal gyi rgya mtsho
23. bsTan 'dzin 'gro 'dul (1724-1766)
24. dPal ldan mGar chen pa
25. Chos kyi nyi ma (27th abbot, 1755-1792)

(4) Sahaja-saṃvara with ’Bri gung Lineage
A *thang ka* depicting Saṃvara (bDe mchog) in two armed form (Sahaja-saṃvara, Lhan skyes bde mchog) with four other deities (*bDe mchog lha lnga*) accompanied by a lineage of ’Bri gung pa lineage masters may have been commissioned by a disciple of the abbot Phrin las rnam rgyal (b. 1770). This painting has been published in D. Jackson 1996, p.343, pl. 60. Preserved in a private collection, Cologne, it was described as “Central Tibet (’Bri gung?), ca. late 18th or early 19th c.,” dimensions: 58 x 40 cm.

10 8 6 4 2 1 3 5 7 9 11
21 19 17 15 13 12 14 16 18 20 22
31 29 27 25 23 24 26 28 30 32
33 34

1. rDo rje ’chang
2. Klu sgrub
3. Dril bu pa
4. Dzalendhara
5. Nag po spyod pa
6. Te lo pa
7. Nā ro pa
8. Karṇaripa
9. Bla ma rDo rje gdan pa
10. Paṇ chen Abhaya
11. [rTa mi?] Sangs rgyas grags
12. sKyob pa ’Jig rten mgon po [Here not in order, because of his importance to the lineage; his place in the chronological succession should be after No.14]
13. dPal chen rGa Lo tsā ba
14. Phag mo gru pa [1110-1170]
15. sPyan snga Grags pa ’byung gnas (1175-1255)
16. Rin chen rdo rje
17. dBang phyug bsod nams
18. Grags pa shes rab
19. Kun mkhyen Tshul rgyal grags [=Tshul khrims rgyal po]
20. Grags pa rdo rje
21. gTsang pa [Blo gros] bzang po
22. mKhan chen Rin chen bzang po
23. rJe btsun bSod nams mtshan can
24. rJe btsun sNa tshogs rang grol [rGod tshang Ras pa]
25. Chos rgyal phun tshogs (1547-1602)
26. bKra shis phun tshogs (1574-1628)
27. dKon mchog ratna [dKon mchog rin chen, 1590-1654, 1st Che tshang]
28. Rig ’dzin Chos kyi grags pa [23rd abbot of ’Bri gung] (1595 1659)
29. dKon mchog phrin las bzang po [24th abbot, 1656-1719]
30. bsKur ma ra dza [Dharmarāja? Don grub chos rgyal?]
31. Ngag dbang phrin las
32. dPal ldan ’Gar chen pa
33. dKon mchog ting [=bstan!] ’dzin chos kyi nyi ma (27th abbot, 1755-1792), i.e. Chos kyi nyi ma, for short.
34. dKon mchog ting [=bstan!] ’dzin phrin las rnam rgyal (28th abbot, b. 1770), i.e. Phrin las rnam rgyal, for short.

(5) Sahaja-saṃvara with Eight 'Bri gung Masters

A *thang ka* depicting Saṃvara (bDe mchog) in two armed form (Sahaja-saṃvara, Lhan skyes bde mchog) with four other deities (*bDe mchog lha lnga*) and a series of eight 'Bri gung pa lineage masters in the sky was published in the Christie's Amsterdam catalogue *Indian, Himalayan and Southeast Asian Art* (13 April 1999), p.27, No.71. The *thang ka* was 48 x 32 cm. in size, and some inscriptions were found under the figures. (Reference courtesy of Prof. M. Driesch.) The lamas are arranged:

```
3   1   2        4
7  5           6     8
```

(6) and (7) Two Recent Paintings of Sahaja-saṃvara

Two more paintings of Sahaja-saṃvara (Lhan skyes bde mchog) with four other deities (*bDe mchog lha lnga*) have been published in Jackson 1996, p.340, Figs. 188 and 189. These are probably early 20th century *thang ka*s, both surviving in 'Bri gung pa monasteries or household shrines of 'Bri gung lay adherents in Ladakh. *Thang ka*s depicting the same cycle are attested from other bKa' brgyud pa schools, such as the sKar ma bKa' brgyud. One such example from Khams was painted in a typical later sKar ma sGar bris style, though it has some iconographic similarities with these indisputably 'Bri gung pa paintings.[39]

(8) and (9.) Golden *Thang ka*s of Mañjuśrī and Vajrasattva.

Two golden *thang ka*s (*gser thang*) are preserved at Phyiang monastery in central Ladakh and are attributed to the 'Bri gung style ('Bri bris) by Ngag dbang bsam gtan 1986, pp.16 and 18. The *thang ka*s portray (p.16) Mañjuśrī with four lineage lamas and (p.18) Vajrasattva and four bKa' brgyud gurus. No dimensions are given for either *thang ka*.

(10) Golden *Thang ka* of Buddha Śākyamuni.

A similar golden *thang ka*, this one showing of Buddha Śākyamuni, has been published in Pal 1984, p.154 and pl. 84. It is described as "Eastern Tibet (Khams), 17th century," and its dimensions are 78.5 x 58.5 cm.

(11) Mañjuśrī-Yamāntaka with Lineage.

A color painting of Mañjuśrī-Yamāntaka (*'jam dpal gshin rje gshed*) with a 'Bri gung pa lineage is found in Essen and Thingo 1989, No.I-109 (II-330). Its dimensions are 54 x 43 cm., and it was dated to the early 18th century, though the lineage indicates the late 19th century. Essen and Thingo identified it as "Nyingma," though here an originally rNying ma tradition was practiced in a gSar-ma school, the 'Bri gung pa. The inscriptions have been carefully recorded (II 330), and a possible ordering of the lineage masters is:

```
14  12  10   8  6  4  2  1  3  5  7  9  11  13  15
24  22  20  18  16         17  19  21  23  25
32  30  28  26               27  29  31  33
36  34                           35  37
38                                 39
```

The final 14 masters are:

26. Chos kyi grag[s] pa (1595-1659)
27. Nā ro pa [Nā ro pa gnyis pa bKra shis phun tshogs] (1574-1628)

28. Phrin las bzang po (1656-1718)
29. Don grub chos rgyal (1704-1754)
30. bsTan ’dzin ’gro ’dul (1724-1766)
31. dPal ldan mGar chen pa
32. Padma rgyal mtshan (1770-1826)
33. Chos kyi rgyal mtshan
34. Chos kyi nyi ma (1755-1792)
35. Chos nyid nor bu (1827-1865)
36. ’sGar chen Byang chub dbang po
37. [missing]
38. Thugs rje’i nyi ma (1828-1881)
39. Chos kyi blo gros (dKon mchog bstan ’dzin chos kyi blo gros, 1868-1906)

(12) The Lion headed Ḍākiṇī

A *thang ka* of the Lion headed Ḍākiṇī (Seng gdong can ma) published earlier may have been commissioned by a student of the abbot Chos kyi blo gros (1868-1906). This painting was reproduced in P. Pal 1984, p.152 and pl. 76. The *thang ka* is 48.1 x 32.9 cm. in size and was wrongly said to be "eastern Tibet, late 17th century." Seven gurus are pictured above, most of whose names could be read from the inscriptions on the plate:

2	1	3
4		5
6		7

1. rDo rje ratna pa? rJe ratna pa? (dKon mchog rin chen, 1590-1654)
2. ’Phrin las bzang po (1656-1719)
3. [hatless lama]
4. Don grub chos rgyal (1704-1754)
5. Padma rgyal mtshan? (1770-1826)
6. Chos kyi rgyal mtshan
7. Chos kyi blo gros (=dKon mchog bstan ’dzin chos kyi blo gros, 1868-1906)

Cf. Pal 1984, p.152, who identified the third lama on the right wrongly as "Shākya blo gros, who was a member of the Khon family and disciple of Atīśa."

(13) The Lion-headed Ḍākiṇī

Another black *thang ka* of the Lion-headed Ḍākiṇī (Seng gdong can ma) with four other manifestations was published in Essen and Thingo 1989, Vol.2, p.161, No.II-343. Its dimensions are 31 x 23.5 cm., and dated 17th century. The three lamas above are Padmasambhava, Ba ri Lo tsā ba, and (’Bri gung Rig ’dzin) Chos grags.

(14) Padmasambhava Refuge Tree

The *thang ka* "Padmasambhava Refuge Host Field Tree," Rubin collection catalogue No.193 (Ru 413), is from the ’Bri gung tradition.[40] The *thang ka* may have been commissioned in the mid or late 19th century by a student of Chos kyi blo gros (1868-1906). Its dimensions are 52 x 35.5 cm. Although not in a typical dBus-province sMan ris style, it is not "Eastern Tibetan."[41] Note the shaded outer edges of the clouds and the regular bumps on the rocks.

The catalogue attribution as "non-sectarian" is problematic. According to the ’Bri gung master sGar chen Rin po che, it shows a refuge tree for *Yang zab* practice from a Rin chen phun tshogs *gter ma* tradition of Hayagrīva practiced among the ’Bri gung pa. The buildings shown below are, to the right, ’Bri gung mthil and, to

the left, a place associated with Rin chen phun tshogs (1509-1557), the discoverer. The presence of the protector-goddess A phyi and the inscriptions further identify this as a ’Bri gung lineage:

9	7	5	3	1	2	4	6	8	10
13	11							12	14

1. Padma’i mtshan can [=the one named “Padma”]
2. dKon mchog ratna [dKon mchog rin chen, 1590-1654, 1st Che tshang, 21st abbot of ’Bri gung, 1591-1654]
3. Chos grags (Rig ’dzin Chos kyi grags pa, 23rd abbot of ’Bri gung, 1595-1659)
4. Phrin las rnam rgyal
5. Phrin las bzang po (=dKon mchog phrin las bzang po, 24th abbot, 1656-1718?)
6. Don grub chos rgyal (1704-1754)
7. bsTan ’dzin ’gro ’dul (1724-1766)
8. Dharma [Chos kyi…?]
9. Chos kyi (nyi ma?) (=dKon mchog bstan ’dzin chos kyi nyi ma, 27th abbot, 1755-1792?)
10. Pad [ma rgyal mtshan? 1770-1826]
11. Chos kyi rgyal mchog (=Chos kyi rgyal mtshan?)
12. Phra chen/Phri chen (=’Gar chen?)
13. Chos kyi blo gros (1868-1906)
14. Chos nyid nor bu (1827-1865) [not in order]

(15) Mañjuśrī Yamāntaka with Lineage.
Rubin collection No.661, “Manjushri Yamari” (’*Jam dpal gshin rje*). 78 x 55 cm. Black *thang ka* (*nag thang*). The expected lineage order does not agree in places with the dates of the masters.

12	10	8	6	4	2	1	3	5	7	9	11	13
18	16	14							15	17		19
20										21		
22										23		

1. bsDud mdzad phyag rdor
2. ’Jam dpal ye shes
3. ’Jam dpal bshes gnyen
4. bsDud mdzad rDo rje rnon po
5. Ye shes snying po
6. dGa’ rab rdo rje
7. Khrag thung nag po
8. Shanti garbha
9. gTer ston Lha snubs brgyud
10. Nam mkha’i snying po
11. Vasudhara
12. gTer ston rGya shang grom
13. gTsug lag dpal dge
14. Padma ’byung gnas (Padmasambhava)
15. sNub Sangs rgyas ye shes

16. Rig ’dzin Chos kyi grags pa (23rd abbot of ’Bri gung, 1595-1659)
17. rJe bKra shis phun tshogs (1574-1628)
18. Rin chen phun tshogs (1509-1557)
19. Paṇ chen dKon mchog lhun grub
20. dKon mchog phrin las don grub chos kyi rgyal po (1704-1754)
21. Chos rgyal phun tshogs (? 1547-1602)
22. dKon mchog phrin las bzang po, 24th abbot, 1656-1719].
23. dKon mchog bstan ’dzin ’gro ’dul (1724-1766)

(16) Mañjuśrī Yamāntaka with Lineage.
Rubin collection No.79, “Manjushri Yamari” (’*Jam dpal gshin rje*). 52 x 33 cm. Black *thang ka* (*nag thang*). This painting has a full lama lineage, though it lacks any identifying inscriptions.

(17) Mañjuśrī
This is the *thang ka* commissioned by Marco Pallis in Ladakh in 1936 from the ’Bri gung bKa’ brgyud pa monk-painter dKon mchog rgyal mtshan at Phyiang (“P’hiyang”) monastery. A small black and white reproduction of the painting, whose clouds were intentionally rendered in [’Bri gung] “Kagyupa” style, appears in M. Pallis 1939, facing p.404.

(18) Hayagrīva with Aspects of Padmasambhava.
About ten *thang ka*s in a ’Bri gung pa style have been noticed and compared by Prof. M. Driesch, who was the first to remark the stylistic similarities of this group. The first *thang ka* of the corpus to have been published is a portrayal of Hayagrīva with consort (*rTa mgrin yab yum*) presented in G. Tucci 1949, p.548, *thang ka* No.115, plates (black and white) 149 and 150. Tucci noticed the importance of Padmasambhava in the cycle portrayed, describing the small scenes around the main image in which Padmasambhava appears with different types of deities. The mountains and clouds are typical of the style.

(19) Padmapāṇi Refuge Tree.
Another painting with at least some similarities is an Assembly Field (*tshogs zhing*) with the bodhisattva Padmapāṇi as central figure. It has been published in Essen and Thingo 1989, p.243f., I 151. Its dimensions are 56 x 40.5 cm. This “refuge tree” is unusual for the three-part arrangement of its branches. The *thang ka* was previously published in the Schneeloewe Thangka-Kalender, July, 1980 (Hamburg, Papyrus Verlag), text G.-W. Essen.[42]

(20) Padmapāṇi Refuge Tree.
Another painting is known to possess the same iconography of the Padmapāṇi Assembly Field. It has been published in the catalogue of Schoettle Asiatica, Joachim Baader, No.1-82, painting No.3, “Baum des kostbaren Jewels.” The sky looks eastern-Tibetan, and hence it is described as “Osttibet, 18. Jahrhundert.” Its dimensions are 53 x 38 cm. This “refuge tree” too has the unusual three-part arrangement.

(21) Portrait of Rig ’dzin Chos grags
A large *thang ka* showing Rig ’dzin Chos grags (1595-1659) surrounded by a ’Bri gung lama lineage has been published in the catalogue of Schoettle Tibetica, No.17 (20 Oct. 1971), painting No.6115. Its dimensions are 83 x 55.5 cm. The lamas were wrongly stated in the catalogue to be of the rNying ma school (the lineage indeed begins so). The main figure can be identified through the inscription: “*bla*

ma dbang bsgyur chos kyi grags pa." This portrait shows many typical 'Bri gung stylistic features. See also Schoettle Tibetica, No.22, painting No.7074. The lineage:

2 1 3
6 4 5 7

8
13 11 9 10 12

16? 14? 13? 15? 17?

No.8 may be rGod tshang Ras pa sNa tshogs rang grol (fl. 16th century). The lineage comes down to at least the mid-18th century.

(22) Hayagrīva with 'Bri gung Lineage.
A *thang ka* of Hayagrīva with 'Bri gung Lineage was published in the catalogue of Schoettle Asiatica, Joachim Baader, No.25 (10 Oct. 1973), painting No.8145. Its dimensions are 57 x 39 cm., and it is dated "ca. 18-19th century." It was wrongly said to portray lamas of the 'Brug pa sect. It portrays eight Tibetan lamas at the end of the Padmasambhava lineage.

8 6 4 2 1 3 5 7 9
12 10 11 13

(23) Mañjuśrī with 'Bri gung Lamas.
A *thang ka* of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī and 'Bri gung Lamas was published in the catalogue of Schoettle Asiatica, Joachim Baader, No.29 (5 Feb. 1979), painting No.6530. Its dimensions are 55 x 38 cm., and the dating ca. 18th or 19th century. Its mountains and clouds are typical of the 'Bri gung painting tradition, and there can be little doubt that the red-hat lamas belong to the same sect.

(24) 35 Buddhas of Confession.
A *thang ka* of the 35 Buddhas of Confession was published in the Schneeloewe Thangka-Kalender, July, 1983 (Hamburg, Papyrus Verlag). *Thang ka* from collection of Sammlung Schoettle, Joachim Baader. Three 'Bri gung pa lamas are pictured above with inscriptions:

2 1 3

1. 'Jig rten mgon po
2. Thugs rje'i nyi ma (1828-1881)
3. Chos nyid nor bu (1827-1865)

(25) Guru drag po.
In a private collection in Cologne another stylistically similar *thang ka* survives, portraying Padmasambhava in wrathful form (Guru drag po). Once part of the Pan-Asian Collection. Size: 74.5 x 55 cm. Above left are shown Vajradhara and the lamas gTer ston Padma gling pa (1450-1521) and dKon mchog phrin las [=dKon mchog phrin las bzang po? 24th abbot, 1656-1719].[43]

(26) 'Jig rten mgon po Assembly Field.
A large *thang ka* showing a 'Jig rten mgon po Assembly Field was held previously by a private collection in Cologne, though its present location is unknown. Its estimated size is ca. 100 x 70 cm. About 54 lineage lamas are shown in the topmost section of the tree.

(27) Padmasambhava.
A *thang ka* of Padmasambhava appeared in the catalogue Schoettle Asiatica, Joachim Baader, No.16 (28 July 1971), painting No.6006. Size: 53 x 37 cm. "Central-Tibetan painting of the eighteenth century." Here the inner part of the auras of minor figures possess light-rays typical of the sMan ris.

(28) Maṇḍala of Vajrabhairava.
One of the few *maṇḍala*s attested for the style is a 13-deity *maṇḍala* of Vajrabhairava in the Rwa lugs that appeared in the catalogue Schoettle Asiatica, Joachim Baader, No.33 (26 May 1976), painting No.9471. Size: 63 x 47 cm. "Eastern Tibet, ca. eighteenth century." Though portraying a *maṇḍala* of a typically dGe-lugs pa tantric cycle and possessing yellow-hatted lineage masters above (note also six-handed Mahākāla below), this painting is clearly in the 'Bri gung style, proof that the painters of the school did at times cross sectarian boundaries.

(29) Another stylistically similar *thang ka* noted by Prof. Driesch is Schoettle Asiatica, Joachim Baader, No.30, painting No.8696.

STYLISTIC SUMMARY

Prof. Driesch was kind enough to share his preliminary list of some of the main stylistic features of this 'Bri gung pa painting corpus:[44]

a. Mountains shown as series of pointed, almost conical peaks, shaded darker towards the peaks.
b. Clouds often painted in double, almost oval concentric rings, with relatively less contrast through shading.
c. Lotus seats: when the points of the petals point downward, the petals are especially broad.
d. Rocky cliffs: Vertical lines of the rocky crags are stressed through tree-bark-like lines. In addition, regular series of rounded bumps occur on both horizontal and vertical lines.
e. Auras: minor figures have double auras. The inner aura is smooth, the outer light rays strongly contrasted (often with a broader gold line). [The outer auras of *tantri*c divinities appearing as minor figures sometimes have complicated gold "*patra*" designs.]
f. Flames: The outer lines of the flames meandering, sometimes flickering almost horizontally.

Notes

1. Yeshe Jamyang was a monk of the ancient 'Bri gung Lamayuru monastery in western Ladakh, on which see D. Snellgrove and T. Skorupski 1977, p.20f.
2. I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to my friend Ngawang Tsering, who inspired and helped my interest in 'Bri gung painting and was instrumental in helping document the life of Yeshe Jamyang. My thanks also go to Prof. M. Driesch of Cologne for kindly sharing many identifications and stylistic observations. Dr. Jan Sobisch also helped by consulting sGar chen Rin po che on several points.
3. Ngawang Tsering later translated his tape-recording orally into Central Tibetan, enabling me to translate it into English.
4. Remarks within parentheses are explanations of Ngawang Tsering. I have slightly rearranged some topics and added dates from other sources, giving more substantial additions of my own within square brackets.

5. See below, the interview of Yeshe Jamyang. Clare Harris 1999, p.68, has presented this listing in translation or paraphrase, without the original Tibetan wording.
6. See below, the interview of Yeshe Jamyang. Cf. D. Jackson 1996, p.364, n. 761, where the *'bri bris* and *g.ye bris* seem to be inverted. Cf. also Clare Harris 1997, p.268. C. Harris 1999, p.68, mentioned two of the four styles, paraphrasing: "the Driri should also have brilliant colors radiating 'the full light of day', with an all pervasive blue in the background of each composition."
7. Yeshe Jamyang explained in an aside that the style of E district was the painting tradition of the Lhasa government (*lha sa'i gzhung gi ri mo*). Cf. C. Harris 1999, p.69, who seems to have not understood "*e ris*," but only its gloss, "*dbus ris*."
8. In the above list, "Khams style" does not refer to the sKar ma sgar bris, which was listed above separately as the mTshur ris and possessed a light palette. Instead, it refers to a darker sMan ris/sGar bris synthesis that predominated in many parts of Khams by the early 20th century (presumably the style of such 19th-century painters as Chab mdo Phur bu tsher ring and his followers). I was not aware of this in D. Jackson 1996, p.364, n. 761, and suggested instead that the similarly "dark" *gTsang bris* should be understood instead of *Khams bris*.
9. D. Jackson 1996, pp.338 and 342, where I had parts of his sayings second-hand. See also Clare Harris 1997, p.268, and 1999, p.68. In D. Jackson 1996, Fig.191, I reproduced a drawing of Rig 'dzin Chos kyi grags pa by Yeshe Jamyang. In addition, E. Lo Bue 1983, p.60f., documented to some extent the career of Yeshe Jamyang in his study of 20th-century Tibetan painting in Ladakh.
10. On Likir (Klu dkyil) monastery, see D. Snellgrove and T. Skorupski 1977, p.119.
11. A *gtor ma* for the protective goddess A phyi.
12. Then the very young dKon mchog bstan 'dzin kun bzang phrin las lhun grub (b. 1946).
13. The Chung tsang Rin po che was then the young bsTan 'dzin chos kyi snang ba (b. 1942).
14. These five paintings were, according to E. Lo Bue 1983, p.60, painted in 1978 and 1979 by Yeshe Jamyang at Thub bstan bshad sgrub byang chub gling.
15. For part of one Lamayuru mural by Yeshe Jamyang, see C. Harris 1997, p.268, Fig.304. See also E. Lo Bue 1983, p.60, who states that this work was done in 1975.
16. 'Bri gung sKyabs mgon Che tshang Rin po che, Hamburg, 1994, graciously enumerated several other noteworthy painters who flourished at 'Bri gung in the mid-20th century: Lha bris Zla ba, Chos bzang and Chos rje.
17. Presumably the years of his birth and death. 1719 was a *phag* "pig" year, but 1656 was a *sprel* "monkey."
18. A series of dKa' brgyud pa portraits has been attributed to the sTag ung tradition in P. Pal 1983, p.164, P27, pl. 30, following the erroneous suggestion of D. Lauf. This is a 'Brug pa lineage, and the main figure portrayed in P27 is probably the Tibetan master Gling Ras pa (1128-1188), not an Indian siddha. It may be a 16th- or 17th-century mKhyen ris painting; on the contacts between the great Rwa lung 'Brug pa hierarchs and mKhyen ris painters in those centuries, see D. Jackson 1996, pp.142 and 159.
19. On the pigments and dyes of Tibetan painting, see D. Jackson 1984.
20. bsTan 'dzin pad ma rgyal mtshan, *Nges don* (composed in 1808-9), p.401: *lha bris la sbyangs pa mdzad pas shin tu mkhas shing da lta 'bri gung 'dir mkhyen lugs kyi ri mo rje 'dis* [='*di' i*] *zhal slob kyi rgyun yin*. I owe this crucial reference to Mr. Tashi Tsering. According to 'Bri gung sKyabs mgon Che tshang Rin po che, interview Hamburg, 7 December 1994, dKon mchog phrin las bzang po painted a small one-day *thang ka* (*nyin thang*) of 'Jig rten gsum mgon that survives until this day in Ladakh.
21. Cf. C. Harris 1999, p.69, who considered Yeshe Jamyang's 'Bri ris or 'Bri gung style to be a regional version of the sMan ris perpetuated in Ladakh.
22. bsTan 'dzin padma rgyal mtshan, *Nges don*, p.401.
23. 'Bri gung sKyabs mgon Che tshang Rin po che, Hamburg, 1994.
24. Kaḥ thog Si tu, p.70.6 (35b), mentioned seeing at the Sra brtan rdo rje pho brang, the 'Bri gung rTse estate, a wonderful *thang ka* painting or paintings of the *dPag bsam 'khri shing* cycle in an "old 'Bri gung painting style" (*'bri bris rnying pa*).

25. Ibid., p.53-53 (27a-b): *sman gsar rnying las sman rnying cung 'dra bar snang/.*
26. Ibid., p.62.5 (31a), *bka' brgyud gser 'phreng lha khang du thang sgam bco lnga nang 'bri gung lugs sngon gyi lha bzo phul gyur tshon mdangs da* [=*de*] *'dra 'ong dka' ba'i gras/*.
27. M. Pallis 1939, *Peaks and Lamas*, p.316ff. On Tshe dbang rig 'dzin of Lingshed (d. 1968 or 1970), who was also a noted sculptor, see also E. Lo Bue 1983, p.61.
28. M. Pallis 1939, p.336.
29. M. Pallis 1939, p.338.
30. E. Lo Bue 1983, p.60f.
31. According to 'Bri gung sKyabs mgon Che tshang Rin po che, Hamburg, 1994, special characteristics of the (recent) 'Bri gung pa style included mountains with peaks that possessed a particular pointed shape resembling the mountain peaks in the vicinity of 'Bri gung. Since the rivers near 'Bri gung are normally quite turbulent, the rivers depicted in paintings too were often shown as roiled with large waves. Flowers in the background landscape were likewise said to have been gentian flowers (*spang rgyan*), similar to their actual appearance in the meadows of 'Bri gung.
32. See 'Jig rten gsum mgon, Collected Writings, Vol.1, pp.123-179, for the text of this biography.
33. Rin chen phun tshogs, *sPyan snga 'bri gung gling pa'i rnam thar*, 7b.3: *de nas spu rangs kho char du bzhugs pa'i dus/ rnam thar phyogs bcu dus gsum ma'i lha bris thugs la 'khrungs pas gtsug lag khang gi gyang logs la skya bris su btab nas bzhag pa phyis 'bri gung du yang dar ro//.* Shes rab 'byung gnas made other paintings too; see *ibid.,* pp.10a.4-7 and 13a.6-7. The "Dus gsum sangs rgyas ma" biographical paintings are also mentioned twice in Kaḥ thog Si tu, p.62.5-6, who saw them in 'Bri gung, though the references are a little unclear.
34. The publication: *sKyob pa'i rnam thar phyogs bcu dus gsum ma*, 'Bri gung bka' brgyud [Series], Vol.1 (Dehra Dun, Drikung Kagyu Institute, 1995). Che tshang Rin po che paid much attention to the murals depicting this biography in the old assembly hall of Phyiang monastery in Ladakh, saying that they were similar to the ancient original paintings. (Mr. Ngawang Tsering of Nyurla, Ladakh, oral communication, Hamburg, 1994.)
35. On Phyiang or Phiyang (Phyi dbang) monastery, see D. Snellgrove and T. Skorupski 1977, p.123. G. Beguin 1995, p.386, refers to murals of the dgon khang at Phyiang (founded ca. 1555-1575).
36. 'Jig rten gsum mgon, Collected Writings, Vol.4, p.44 (*nga* 22b.6): *dpon chen po tshul rin gyis bdag mdzad/.* And on the Newar artist: *lho bal gyi lha bzo rig pa'i yon tan phul du phyin pa/ bzo'i sprul par grags pa/ dpon chen po ma ṇi bha dra zhes bya ba spyan drangs nas/*. One can see that here the title *dpon chen po* was given to both great artists (later the form was sometimes *dpon mo che*). The author goes on to mention (p.12) even smiths and metal-working, and at one point he respectfully addresses contemporaneous master artists (*dpon lha bzo rnams la zhu*).
37. Some previous identification of 'Bri gung scroll paintings have been doubtful or wrong. For instance, the identification "Drigung Kagyu Lama Chetshang Rin po che" in Rhie and Thurman 1991, pp.60 and 250, pl. 87, is erroneous. See Jackson 1999, p.84. Similarly, Rhie and Thurman 1999, p.332f., incorrectly identified a 'Brug pa lama with his lineage as a 'Bri gung dKa' brgyud lama. Inscriptions are more trustworthy evidence than similar hats. The oft-cited dating (Rhie 1999, p.55; Liu 1957, figs. 22 and 24) of 'Bri gung *thang ka*s to the late 14th or early 15th century seems too early. On what basis can Liu have made this dating in the 1950s?
38. Jackson 1996, p.341.
39. Cf. K. Tanaka 2001, p.127, No.55. One must clearly distinguish style from iconographic content.
40. Cf. M. Rhie and R. Thurman 1999, p.476f.
41. Cf. *ibid*.

42. These and the following references are courtesy of Prof. M. Driesch.
43. gTer ston Padma gling pa's life is studied in M. V. Aris 1989, *Hidden Treasures and Secret Lives.*
44. Prof. M. Driesch, letter, February 1997.

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Weaving Hidden Threads: Some Ethno-historical Clues on the Artistic Affinities between Eastern Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh

Françoise Pommaret

Arunachal Pradesh (formerly NEFA: North East Frontier Agency) in India presents a kaleidoscope of populations speaking languages that belong to different groups (Tai, Tibeto-Burmese, Indo-European). However, almost all these groups practise a form of art that have striking similarities from one group to another—weaving. These resemblances extend beyond the confines of present-day Arunachal Pradesh and can be observed in Northern Thailand and Laos, as well as Bhutan. Migration from western China or eastern Tibet to southeast Asia and northeast India, started at the proto-historical period, never really stopped and partly explains these similarities.

In this paper, I will attempt to explore a minute part of this subject by examining the ways in which weaving is related between two areas: eastern Bhutan and the West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh.

The large majority of eastern Bhutan's population is known as "the Easterners" (Shar phyogs pa), and the women are famous for the textiles they weave. A minority group, generally called Mon pa, which considers itself a separate ethnic entity, also lives in eastern Bhutan in the twin high valleys of Me rag and Sag steng. Both these eastern Bhutanese groups—the Easterners and the Mon pas—have relations with different groups living in the west of the present-day Kameng district in Arunachal Pradesh.

While similarities in weaving are obvious between these two contiguous regions, the textile art is part of a much broader context and should be placed in a perspective that includes linguistic, historical and trade links. Covering the whole breadth of the topic is impossible in the framework of a short article, and only some clues will be provided here for further research.

The Twin Valleys of Me rag and Sag steng in Eastern Bhutan and rTa wang (or rTa dbang) in Arunachal Pradesh

The area of rTa wang, seldom visited by Westerners due to political constraints, is today included in the Kameng district of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh which was known during the British colonization as the NEFA. It is contiguous to the valleys of Me rag and Sag steng which form a specific cultural and ethnic entity in Eastern Bhutan.

The region of rTa wang, previously known as La 'og yul gsum, took this name after an important Buddhist monastery (rTa wang dGa' ldan rNam rgyal lha rtse) was established there in the second half of the 17th century by a dGe lugs pa Bla ma Blo gros rgya mtsho, a disciple of the Fifth Dalai Lama, who had links with eastern Bhutan.

This region was under the direct jurisdiction of the Dalai Lamas until the 1914 Simla Conference, although rights over certain tracts of land had been already ceded

to the British in 1844 in return for an annual subsidy.[1] Amar Kaur Jasbir Singh in *Himalayan Triangle* describes how rTa wang was included into British territory:[2]

> rTa wang in 1910 was recognised as being Tibetan territory, administered as such, and Minto accordingly did not consider its inclusion as part of the new Indian boundary. However, by the time McMahon had come to submit his final border alignments to the India Office in February 1914, the region around rTa wang monastery had been included in British India. McMahon, after studying various official reports on the demarcation of the frontier line around rTa wang, agreed with General Staff's recommendation that the much used trade route between the Miri country and Bhutan would enable the Chinese to exert their influence.

This region is populated by a particular ethnic group called the Mon pas. This generic term was used by the Tibetans to designate all the non-Buddhist people living on the southern slopes of the Himalayas, but in modern-day usage it has come to refer to specific ethnic groups, which is rather confusing, as several groups located as far away geographically as Ladakh and Bhutan, are called Mon pas. In the case of Arunachal Pradesh where the Mon pas are now Buddhist, Michael Aris explains that: "The blanket term Mon pa covers three distinct groups which may be conveniently divided into Northern, Central, and Southern."[3]

The Mon pas from rTa wang, which are the northern Mon pas, are very similar to the ethnic group who lives on the other side of the Bhutanese border, in the twin valleys of Me rag and Sag steng, and they speak the same language, which belongs to the "East Bodish" group. Both groups are sometimes called Dagpas (Tib. Dag pa) or Bramis, Brami being the colloquial name in Shar phyogs kha/Tshangs la, the language of eastern Bhutan. In rDzong kha, the national language of Bhutan, the people of Me rag and Sag steng are also called by the other confusing term of Brokpas/Bjops (Tib. *'brog pa* Dz. Bjop) which is the generic term for all semi-nomadic people. However, on the basis of his linguistic survey, van Driem argues that Dagpas and Brokpas from Me rag and Sag steng are two different people, speaking different languages, which makes the issue still more confusing.[4]

In their outlook and dress, the Mon pas of rTa wang and the people of Me rag and Sag steng valleys cannot be distinguished: Both men and women wear a characteristic yak-hair felt hat with protruding tassels to channel away the rain and carry in the back a sort of hard small cushion suspended at the waist. Men wear a short red woollen jacket, fastened at the waist, sometimes worn under a deer-skin cut like a poncho, breeches or trousers, and boots. Women wear a knee-length cotton or raw silk dress red with white stripes, cut like a poncho and fastened at the waist, a red, patterned jacket and boots. The dress is called *shing kha*, a name which—interestingly enough—is also used in the central regions of Bhutan, Bum thang and sKur stod/sKu ri stod to designate a cut-alike garment, worn nowadays only for religious festivals dedicated to mountain deities.[5] As for the jacket, it is very distinctive and, as we will see, also worn by different groups in the Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh such as the Mon pas, the Sherdukpens and the Akas. Made of raw silk, the jacket usually shows rows of supplementary-weft patterns representing star-like flowers, geometric motives, stylized animals, and even human beings.[6]

Their jewellery is made of embossed silver, turquoises and coral beads. As the regions of Me rag and Sag steng and rTa wang are in easy reach of each other, trade has always been flourishing and, for historical reasons, the people of Me rag and

Sag steng had pastures rights in the rTa wang region, which implied a constant flow of people, animals and goods between the two border regions.

Links between rTa wang and the Bhutanese region of Me rag and Sag steng are not only ethnic and commercial but these two areas also have historical connections. It is known from the Bhutanese source called the *rGyal rigs*[7] that in the ninth century, Khri mi lha'i dbang phyug, the elder son of Prince gTsang ma, left eastern Bhutan to settle in La 'og yul gsum, as the rTa wang region was then known, and is the ancestor of the Jo bo clan. Prince gTsang ma is believed to be the son of the Tibetan king Kri lde srong btsan Sad na legs and to have been banished from Tibet, most probably in the first half of the ninth century. He came to Bhutan, where he is considered as the ancestor of all the eastern Bhutanese clans.

The relations between La 'og yul gsum, also called Mon yul, and Bhutan must have continued during the following centuries as we know that[8] in the 15th century, U rgyan bzang po, the youngest brother of the famous rNying ma pa saint Pad ma gling pa (1450-1521) left Bum thang to establish three temples—Sangs rgyas gling, mTsho rgyal gling, and U rgyan gling—in La 'og yul gsum where he married a local girl. Pad ma gling pa himself travelled to this region for the wedding in 1489, but he had already visited La 'og yul gsum in 1487 on his way to the court of his patron, bKras shis dar rgyas, the lord of the Tibetan myriarchy of Bya, north of La 'og yul gsum.[9] Bya is part of the present day mTsho sna county in southern Tibet.

It is interesting to note at this point that recent researches[10] seem to show mythic, ritualistic and even clothing affinities between the people of the central Bhutanese region of Bum thang and sKu stod/sKu ri stod, and the rTa wang and Me rag and Sag steng people.

M. Aris[11] suggested that the Bum thang and Me rag and Sag steng people belonged originally to a same group of people called *gdung* divided into "Southern *gdung*" and "Eastern *gdung*," against which a military campaign was carried out in the 14th century. He based his study on data found in the Tibetan *Gyantse Chronicles*, which dates from the end of the 15th century. More research will have to be done before reaching a conclusion, but this cultural affinity might explain the establishment of Pad ma gling pa's brother in the Mon yul region.

U rgyan bzang po's descendants kept their ties with Bum thang and travelled back there to receive teachings. The Sixth Dalai Lama, who was a descendant of U rgyan bzang po—Pad ma gling pa's brother—was born in this region at Ber mkhar, his matrilineal birthplace.

In the early 17th century,[12] Thugs dam pad dkar, a natural son of bsTan pa'i nyi ma—bsTan pa'i nyi ma was also the father of the Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal (1594-1651)—settled in La 'og yul gsum. Thugs dam pad dkar's elder son, Bla ma rNam sras would play an important role in the conquest of eastern Bhutan by the 'Brug pas on the order of Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal who was in fact his cousin.

In the middle of the 17th century, the history of these regions took a new turn: on one hand in 1642 with the accession to power in Tibet of the Fifth Dalai Lama and therefore of the dGe lugs pa school; and on the other hand, with the constitution of Bhutan as a 'Brug pa state under the leadership of the Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal, both these religious and political powers were to vie for influence in the rTa wang region and eastern Bhutan. In the 1650s, the 'Brug pas conducted

a military campaign which led to the conquest of central and eastern Bhutan. The campaign is said to have had its origin in a dispute between two rulers of eastern Bhutan over theirs rights on lands in the Duars, the flat border areas of southern Bhutan. The dispute was referred to a mediator, the Tibetan government, which sent two envoys. As the envoys needed interpreters, one of them was Bla ma rNam sras, the son of the 'Brug pa Bla ma Thugs dam pad dkar who had settled in La 'og yul gsum and was the relative of the Zhabs drung Ngag dbang rnam rgyal. During a brawl, Bla ma rNam rsas stabbed the Tibetan envoy; and frightened by what he had done, he fled to Krong gsar from where he was sent to the Zhabs drung's court in sPu sna kha. The Zhabs drung told him to be ready to serve him when the time would be right. Therefore, when the 'Brug pa military expedition against eastern Bhutan started, Bla ma rNam sras acted as its guide and, one after another, all the regions of eastern Bhutan fell under the 'Brug pa hegemony.

In the meantime, the dGe lugs pa power had not been inactive and had started to take control over the rTa wang region. This move had been facilitated by the fact that dGe lugs pa establishments already existed there since the 16th century. At that time, bsTan pa'i sgron me, a dGe lugs pa monk of the Jo bo clan of this region and a disciple of the Second Dalai Lama (1475-1542), had come back after studying in Lhasa, and established a number of temples in the region.[13] He also built two temples in the valleys of Me rag and Sag steng, at a time when the state of Bhutan ('Brug gzhung) did not exist and were part of "Mon yul." This monk came to be known as the "Me rag Bla ma." His fourth incarnation, Blo gros rgya mtsho, had to flee Me rag due to the advance of the 'Brug pa armies in the mid-17th century, and settled on the other side of the new border where he found that the bKa' brgyud and rNying ma religious schools were encroaching on dGe lugs pa establishments. He decided to appeal to the Fifth Dalai Lama to annex permanently the region under dGe lugs pa authority. The Fifth Dalai Lama, who was consolidating his political power in Tibet and who did not look kindly on the 'Brug pa expansion to the east and especially in Me rag and Sag steng, seized the occasion to bring the rich region of Mon yul into the dGe lugs pa fold. Tibetans imported from Mon yul, rice, medicinal herbs, bamboo wares, skins of wild animals, rice and the paper made from the *Daphne* and *Edgeworthia* shrubs, which did not grow in central Tibet. In 1680 the Fifth Dalai Lama issued an edict which placed the region under the responsibility of the Me rag Bla ma, Blo gros rgya mtsho, with the higher authority being the governor of mTsho sna rdzong. The construction of rTa wang monastery was then completed and it became the most important monastic institution and the stronghold of the dGe lugs pa influence in the eastern Himalayas. It was from rTa wang that in 1714 an armed campaign against Bhutan was launched unsuccessfully.

From this historical survey it is obvious that the emergence of two strong and conflicting religious and political powers in Tibet and Bhutan in the middle of the 17th century upsetted the whole physionomy of the region. A border was established to the east of the Me rag and Sag steng region. However although frictions occured at government levels—attempts at invasions by the dGe lugs pas on pasture rights among others—in the following centuries, the people of Me rag and Sag steng, by then under the jurisdiction of the bKra shis sgang District Administrator appointed by the 'Brug pa power, kept their old connection with the rTa wang region, especially in commercial exchanges.

In the early 18th century, the monk Ngag dbang writes somehow emphatically in the *Lo rgyus*,[14] the most important Bhutanese source—to date—retracing the history of Eastern Bhutan of that period, about the new political order in this region :[15]

> Trade routes having been opened in all four directions, each person (is now able to) obtain spontaneously as if (by means of) a wish-fulfilling gem, without difficulty or exertion, his heart's desire of whatever goods he wants (after having searched) easily for the rich abundance of whatever articles he should desire without theft or banditry wherever he goes, to India or Tibet, to the east or west.

This remark confirms that eastern Bhutan had well-established trade patterns with Tibet and India in the middle of the 17th century.[16]

The Chinese take-over of Tibet followed by the 1962 Indian-Chinese war really changed the economic pattern of these valleys as all accesses to Tibet were severed, restrictions of movement were enforced and the lucrative exports to Tibet stopped. The only open market for the rTa wang region were now the Indian plains which did not need the same raw items as the Tibetans.

The Me rag and Sag steng people, because they were part of Bhutan, had more trading opportunities first with the eastern Bhutan region which started to be developed, and then in the 1980s with the completion of the "lateral route" to the capital Thimphu and Western Bhutan. Their yak meat, butter, fabrics and bentwood boxes are in great demand all over Bhutan and fetch good prices. Moreover, a small amount of trade continues today with rTa wang. The women's red raw silk jacket called *"stod thung*" supplementary-weft patterned with geometric and zoomorphic designs, which is an important element of the traditional Mon pa costume both sides of the border, is exported to the rTa wang region. However in Bhutan, this jacket is today woven not in Me rag and Sag steng villages, but in the lowland villages of Ra ti/Ra 'di, Phongs mad/mi, and Bar mtshams located between bKra shis sgang and Sag steng, the people of Me rag and Sag steng concentrating on weaving fabrics from sheep wool and yak hair. An interesting trade pattern had been developed in these regions for a long time. The eastern Bhutanese from the villages of Bar mtshams, Ra ti/Ra 'di and Ram 'byar go to Assam to buy silk and cotton. They then weave the jackets in their villages and take them to rTa wang, where they sell them or exchange the garments against ordinary rice, tools and aluminium wares which are cheaper there than in Bhutan.

Despite occasional difficulties due to political circumstances, the age-old commercial links, if not very important in terms of bulk, has remain active. This is reinforced by the attendance of the Mon pas of rTa wang to Buddhist festivals of eastern Bhutan especially mChod rten skor ra and sGom skor ra, and, in return, of the Mon pas of Me rag and Sag steng to festivals in the rTa wang region, where goods are also bartered or sold.

Eastern Bhutan and West Kameng

Besides rTa wang, the question of the links between eastern Bhutan and the Kameng district in Arunachal Pradesh, is difficult to tackle as no documented historical sources have surfaced to date. We have to rely on ethnographic and photographic observations as well as on oral testimonies and more researches will have to be carried out in these regions before reaching conclusions. However, eastern Bhutanese themselves underline the affinities between the material culture of some of the tribal

people of Northeast India with theirs: Agricultural practices such as burn-and-slash cultivation, importance of the maize in the diet and millet for alcohol production, respect due to the local bull, the *mithun* (*bos frontalis*; Tib. *ba men*),[17] bamboo houses built on stilts, similar bamboo and wooden wares, backstrap loom as well as an obvious similarity in weaving techniques, patterns of the fabrics and sometimes styles. Among others, these traits tend to point out to what could be a common origin although the importance of reciprocal cultural influences and loan factors should not be underestimated.

Bhutanese historical sources do not record a date for the arrival in Bhutan of the Shar phyogs pa, the "Easterners" This lack of record tend to imply a date which would be earlier than the seventh century A.D.

The Shar phyogs pas themselves claim they are the first inhabitants of Bhutan. It is established[18] that their language, the Tshangs la is similar to the language spoken in the 'Di rang/sDe rang area of the Kameng district in Arunachal Pradesh. It is also the language of the Tibetan regions of Pad ma bkod situated in southeast Tibet where the Brahmaputra forms a sharp curve before entering Arunachal Pradesh through spectacular gorges. The Tshangs la speakers of Tibet seem to have migrated from Bhutan to these remote areas in the 19th century in order to escape taxes.[19] The Tshangs la language still eludes exact linguistic classification but is a Tibeto-Burman language. G. van Driem writes that

> Although at our present stage of knowledge, Tshangs la appears to constitute a linguistic group in itself, future research in the mountainous areas to the east of Bhutan may shed more light on the genetic position of Tshangs la within the Tibeto-Burman family.[20]

It is likely that the Easterners/Shar phyogs pas of eastern Bhutan belong to a large group, comprising different populations, which came in separate waves in the eastern Himalayas ever since the proto-historic period from regions located in the Salween and Mekong regions at the border of eastern Tibet and western China.[21] These populations settled along the way at different places and slowly shifted until the eastern Himalayas. The earlier migrants might have been pushed to the limits of the plains by later arrivals.

Groups that have close affinities with the eastern Bhutanese are the 'Di rang/sDe rang and Khalakthang Mon pas, and the Sherdukpens.

The 'Di rang/sDe rang and Khalakthang Mon pas, also sometimes called central Mon pas, are the immediate neighbours of the Shar phyogs pas of Bhutan and belong to the same Tshangs la speaking ethnic group. Like them, they claim to be the original inhabitants of the region.[22] In the middle of the 17th century, a border was delimitated for the first time between groups who had close cultural, ethnic and historical affinities, but this border was hardly considered as a barrier between these groups who found themselves belonging to different political entities: Bhutan, Tibet and British India.

Their way of life is very similar: They are primarily agriculturists, practicing permanent cultivation whenever land is available, but they also do burn-and-slash cultivation on a wide scale. The main agricultural produces are maize, millet, foxtail millet and some paddy. They drink little tea, preferring *bang chang*, a light rice or millet-beer or *a rag*, a distilled rice or millet liquor. They eat pounded maize, rice, sometimes both combined and a lot of chillies. Houses are built on the hill slopes so one side of their house remains in touch with the ground while the other side rests

on stone pillars, thus a space is automatically created below the house and used as stable. Also like the Shar phyogs pas, they are patrilineal; sororate polygamy is practised and the favoured traditional form of marriage was with the cross-cousin.[23]

However, these Mon pas weaving practices and dress style are much more akin to that of the Mon pas of rTa wang and to the Me rag and Sag steng people than to the Shar phyogs pas who today wear the Bhutanese *go* (Dz. *Gos* Tsh. *Khamung*) and kira (Dz. *dkyis ras* Tsh. *thara* -Tib. *thag ras*?). It is known from the *Lo rgyus*[24] that in the 17th century, at the time of the 'Brug pa conquest, the Shar phyogs pas wore a different type of dress than the western Bhutanese. Although a description is not given, it could have been at that time close to that of all the other Mon pas.

The 'Di rang/sDe rang and Khalakthang Mon pas wear a hat, used by both sexes, made of yak-hair with the characteristic four to five protruding tassels to channel away the rain. Both sexes go barefooted or wear rubber slippers. The men wear a heavy maroon woollen garment crosswise over the chest and knee-length trousers made of raw silk. They carry a colourful cotton side-bag, slung over the chest. The women wear the knee-length, poncho-like gown, called *shing ka* and woven of white wild silk. It is tied at the waist by a large and long cummerbund. The distinctive red, patterned silk jacket is worn on top of the poncho which they weave themselves.

They have a well-developed system of barter with their neighbours including the eastern Bhutanese. To the town of Udalguri, in Assam, they bring agricultural products, liquor, pepper, meat, and take back utensils, silk yarn, cotton yarn and clothings. They also have a flourishing trade with their northern neighbours of rTa wang. They take tobacco leaves and home-woven cotton bags, silkcloth and deer-skin, and buy there incense sticks, sieves, bamboo mats, wooden containers and clothes. They also travel to Me rag and Sag steng valleys and the rest of eastern Bhutan, where they bring the same items as to the rTa wang region. These are bartered or sold against the woollen maroon coat for men, heavy blankets, yak-hair hats and all kinds of yak products. These ethnic and commercial links between the 'Di rang/sDe rang region and eastern Bhutan are also reinforced by ancient historical ties.

According to the r*Gyal rigs*, after the arrival of Prince gTsang ma from Tibet to eastern Bhutan (early ninth century), his descendants formed the four main clans of eastern Bhutan and spread as lords all over the region, not only in what is now eastern Bhutan, but also in what is today the Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh.[25]

Pad ma gling pa visited the 'Di rang/sDe rang region in 1507. At that time, the ruler of the region, Jo 'phag Dar ma had his palace at Shar Dong kha/Dom kha, three kms from Mur shing. This ruler is believed to be a descendant of a member of the sByar clan of eastern Bhutan but members of another eastern Bhutanese clan, the Wang ma, also settled in the 'Di rang/sDe rang region at Them spang.

Jo 'phag had himself travelled to Bum thang where he met Pad ma gling pa in 1504. Jo 'phag bestowed his patronage on him and became one of his faithful followers. During his return visit to Jo 'phag in Dongkha, Pad ma gling pa received different gifts including textiles and in particular a length of silk with white and red stripes (*dkar dmar khra gsum*).[26] This cloth might have been very similar to the fabric used for the dress of the Mon pas women.

Next to the 'Di rang/sDe rang Mon pas also in the Kameng district are settled the Sherdukpens, who live in the Charduar area in the villages of Rupa, Jigaon and Shergaon, and take their name from the two villages of Sher (Shar ?) and Dukpen

(= Rupa)[27] They are often also called Mon pas because they resemble the 'Di rang/ sDe rang Mon pas, speak a language close to the central Mon pa, and are Buddhist at least since the 18th century. They are a small group (population 2100) who might be representing early migrants pushed south by later waves, or a breakaway group from the other Mon pas. They used to be traders not only with rTa wang and Tibet, but also with eastern Bhutan where they sold cattle, in particular *mithuns*. They might be the "Seven Rajas" (Sath Raja), also called "Bapus" or the "Bhutias of Charduar" by the Assamese, and they say they had historical links with Bhutan but documents are still lacking to substantiate this claim.[28]

The Sherdukpens' weaving with red, black and yellow geometrical patterns resembles the supplementary-warp fabrics of eastern Bhutan, and not surpringly, if they belong to the same linguistic group, the names of the designs and the names of the textiles are very close.

The Sherdukpens usually obtain yarns from the plains and weave cotton, silk but also a kind of stinging nettles, the fiber of which is obtained by the same process as in eastern Bhutan and also used to make strong bags. Both sexes wear yak-hair hats with tassels or small round embroidered caps. While the dress (the collarless, sleeveless poncho reaching the knee and the patterned red jacket) of women is very similar to that of the other Mon pas, the men's dress called "*sapey*" is quite different. It consists of a white piece of cloth made of cotton or raw silk, worn diagonally over the upper part of the body as far as the knees: the two ends of the cloth are secured to the shoulders. The lower part of the body was traditionally covered by a loin-cloth, but trousers are nowadays common. A full-sleeve jacket is worn over the first garment. A thick patterned sash makes the waistband.

Although costumes are very fragile clues because they may change according to trade opportunities and the influence of a stronger culture, and they do not leave any testimony in a humid environment, the similarity of certain Bhutanese costumes with some of the tribal populations should be mentioned.

From oral testimonies, old pictures and costumes,[29] one may assume that at one time in their history, a large part of the Bhutanese villagers wore a garment very similar to the one of the Sherdukpen men, that is a knee-length unstitched piece of cloth crossing over the breast, fastened at the shoulders and at the waist by a large belt. The same outfit is worn by the men of the Akas, Daflas (Nishis) and Khowas (Buguns) groups. They live in the Kameng district east of the Sherdukpens with whom they have a lot of relations, including the purchase of cloth. As for the Aka women, they wear a dress which is akin to the Bhutanese *kira* that is a large ankle-length piece of cloth wrapped around the body and held round the waist by a sash. On top, they wear a jacket which can be plain, or in the patterned Mon pa/Sherdukpen style. In 1867, it was reported that the Akas traded with the Assamese but "had constant intercourse with their Bhutan neighbours."[30]

The silver headband with a large silver cameo worn by the Mon pa, Aka and Bugun women is similar to that of the ancient jewellery of eastern Bhutan, now rarely worn in this region.

During their travels and pilgrimages,[31] Bhutanese came in contact with some of these peoples, or at least with the products they exhanged in the market towns of Assam. The Nagas brought cotton and silk clothes to the market towns of Assam, but the other groups also traded their products: Thus the Miris and the Daflas (Nishi) brought plants for the dyeing process, especially the madder (Rubia Mungista),

and cotton clothes from Arunachal Pradesh. In the 18th century, this trade must have been important enough for the East India Company to seek commercial relations with Assam in the prospect of trade with the highlanders and maybe with China. Carried by the way of barter from one group to another, the products from the confines of present-day Arunachal Pradesh reached market towns, where the Bhutanese could see and buy them.

Correlating these trading relations and the costume similarities, weaving which is a true form of art in eastern Bhutan, is a cultural feature shared by many of the groups of this region. Weaving by itself would not be a strong enough trait to demonstrate the artistic relationship between the populations of eastern Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh, but it is the combination of geographical proximity, as well as linguistic, cultural and technical features. For instance, the single-heddle tension or backstrap loom, the supplementary-warp and weft techniques, and the geometric and zoomorphic patterns make these artistic relations meaningful. One can always object that people living in a similar ecological environment are bound to use the same materials and obtain the same results. However, given this specific context, the resemblances of the patterns and motives cannot be here purely coincidental.

The importance of weaving in these regions is emphasized by the very rich vocabulary attached to it, every pattern, design and combination having a different name and the pieces of the loom as well as all the process of dyeing and weaving being minutely described.

Contrary to many parts of India where much of the weaving is in the hands of men belonging to a socio-professional category or a caste, in Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh weavers are women who do not form a specialized social class but are highly regarded.[32] In Arunachal Pradesh like in Bhutan, dyeing is done by women themselves from plants found in the forest and it is a semi-secret process with taboos attached to it. The most common colours are black, red, yellow and green, and the designs are woven either by supplementary warp or supplementary-weft techniques. They often have a meaning related to parts of animals, vegetation or natural phenomena such as rivers, clouds, stars or mountains. The most common are simple straight lines, lozenges, zigzags, triangles, fret and grid patterns, and diamonds.

There is an almost inexhaustible variety of geometric patterns and different populations favor one or the other combination of patterns. While the various groups which make up the Adis (Abors) of the Siang district and the Apa Tanis of the Subansiri district weave mostly straight bands, the Mishmis of the Lohit and Siang districts favor the diamond pattern. Single or multiple bands of different width are easy to weave and, like in Bhutan, can be used either to serve as a border for more complicated designs or to form the entire pattern. Zoomorphic and human designs are rarer and found mostly amongst the Mon pas and the Sherdukpens. These designs are highly stylized and represent birds, horses, men or men standing or riding horses. Among the Buddhist people such as the Mon pas, the Sherdukpens and the eastern Bhutanese one finds stylized Buddhist motifs which do not appear among the other non-Buddhist populations: *swastika*, simple or double *vajra, stūpa*.

As for the interpretation of the motives, their meaning can also vary according to different cultural influences. While the popular broken line is called "Chinese fence" or "great wall of China" among the eastern Bhutanese, Sherdukpens and Mon pas, the Akas think it represents a special flower which grew from a king's palace. Verrier Elwin, the foremost anthropologist of the region, wrote about the weaving

of Arunachal Pradesh: "Even now simple and straightforward lines, stripes and bands are the most common motifs, the effect being gained by varying their size, colour and arrangement. Contrasts and combinations of colour are often made very expertly."[33]

Because of their geographical proximity to Bhutan, their historical and commercial relations, their cultural affinities, as well as the practice of the same form of Buddhism, the Mon pas of rTa wang, the Mon pas of 'Di rang/sDe rang and Khalakthang, and the Sherdukpens of Rupa—all located in the western part of the Kameng district in Arunachal Pradesh—present strong affinities with the peoples of eastern Bhutan: Mon pas from Me rag and Sag steng as well as Shar phyogs pas. Moreover, these groups of west Kameng exhibit similarities in weaving, costumes and jewellery among themselves as well as with the peoples of eastern Bhutan. The idea of a common cultural background or origin is therefore tempting, but more research in linguistics have to be done and there is, as well, a corollary question that cannot be eluded: Could a dominant culture have become the reference and the model for all the groups at a certain time in history ?

Whatever the answer to these questions may be, a suggestion can be made on the basis of the data presented here: In the context of the eastern Himalayas and irrespective of present-day political entities, these groups (including those of Pad ma bkod in Tibet, which have not been discussed here) form a cultural entity that one may be inclined to call "Mon pa." However, given the complexity in the use of this name in Bhutan and other Himalayan regions,[34] one needs to be cautious in applying it to this entity.

Supported by historical and other ethnographic data, textile art and costumes provide some hidden threads in the study of affinities between eastern Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh. As is the case for all the other art forms, textile cannot be separated from the culture and people who weave it, and the fabric will not be complete without a thorough study of the myths, the eponyms and the ethnonyms.

Notes

[Tshangs la, the major language of eastern Bhutan, is not a written language, but Tshangs la terms and names will be given in transcription. For some of the place-names in Arunachal Pradesh, it was impossible to find the exact transliteration.]

1. Michael Aris, *Hidden Treasures and Secret lives*, Shimla-Delhi: Institute of Advanced Studies, 1988, p.121.
2. Amar Kaur Jasbir Singh, *Himalayan Triangle: a historical survey of British India's relations with Tibet*, Sikkim and Bhutan 1765-1950, London: The British Library, 1988, pp.78-79.
3. Michael Aris, "Notes on the history of the Mon-yul corridor" in *Tibetan studies in honour of Hugh Richardson*, M. Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi (eds.), Warminster: Aris and Philips, 1980, p.10; Michael Aris, "Some considerations of the early history of Bhutan," in *Tibetan Studies*, M. Brauen and P. Kvaerne (eds.), Zürich, 1978, pp.5-38.
4. George van Driem, *Languages of the Greater Himalayan Region, vol I Dzongkha*, Leiden: CNWS, 1998: pp.15,24.
5. Diana K. Myers and Françoise Pommaret, "Bhutan and its neighbors," in *From the Land of the Thunder Dragon: Textiles arts of Bhutan*, S. Bean & D.K. Myers (eds.), London-Salem: Serindia - Peabody Essex Museum, 1994, pp.47-70; Diana K. Myers "Warp and Weft: Garments, coverings and containers," in *From the Land of the Thunder Dragon: Textiles arts of Bhutan*, S. Bean & D.K. Myers (eds.), London-Salem:

Serindia-Peabody Essex Museum, 1994, pp.112-117; and Françoise Pommaret, "Les fètes aux divinités-montagnes Phyva au Bhoutan de l'Est," in *Tibetan studies: Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International association for Tibetan Studies Fagernes1992*, Per Kvaerne (ed.), Oslo: The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994, Vol.2, pp.660-669.

6. Diana K. Myers and Françoise Pommaret, "Bhutan and its neighbors," in *From the Land of the Thunder Dragon: Textiles arts of Bhutan*, S. Bean & D.K. Myers (eds.), London - Salem: Serindia - Peabody Essex Museum, 1994, pp.48-49.
7. Folio 14a, Ngawang, *Sa skyong rgyal po'i gdung rabs'byung khungs dang 'bangs kyi mi rabs chad tshul nges par gsal ba'i me long*, known by its short title as the *rGyal rigs*. 54 folios. Dated 1728.
8. Michael Aris, *Hidden Treasures and Secret lives*, 1988, pp.111-112.
9. bKra shis dar rgyas is famous, in particular, for having been the sponsor of the woodblocks for the 485 folios edition of *The Blue Annal* written by 'Gos gZhon nu dpal. bKra shis dar gyas's son, 'Jam dbyang Chos kyi grags pa; 1478-1523), was recognised by Pad ma gling pa as the incarnation of the great 'Brug pa Bla ma rGyal dbang chos rje; 1428-1476). Cf. Aris, Hidden Treasures, 1988: p.74.
10. Michael Aris, *Bhutan: The early history of a Himalayan Kingdom*, Warminster: Aris and Philips, 1979, pp.121-122.
11. M. Aris, *Bhutan*, 1979: pp.119-121.
12. Yoshiro Imaeda, *La constitution de la théocratie 'Brug pa au 17ème siècle et les problèmes de succession du premier Zhabs drung,* unpublished PhD, Université Paris VII, 1987, p.195.
13. Niranjan Sarkar, *Monastery*, Shillong: Directorate of Research, Govt of Arunachal Pradesh, 1981, pp.4-10; and M. Aris, 1979: p.80.
14. The text known by its short title as *Lo rgyus*, is *dPal 'Brug pa Ra lung lha'i gdung brgyud kyi bstan pa'i ring lugs lHo mon kha bzhi las nyi ma shar phyogs su byung zhing rgyas pa'i lo rgyus gsal ba'i me long*. 24 folios. Author: Ngag dbang. No date.
15. Michael Aris, *Sources for the History of Bhutan*, Wien: Arbeitkreis für Tibetishe und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien, 1986, 112 quoting the *Lo rgyus* written by Ngag dbang in the early 18th century, folio 23a.
16. On the trade links with Assam and Bengal, see Françoise Pommaret, "Ancient Trade Partners: Bhutan, Cooch Bihar and Assam (17th to 19th centuries)," in *Journal of Bhutan Studies*, Vol.2, No.1, Thimphu: Centre for Bhutan Studies, Summer 2000, pp.30-53.
17. In 1789, the great saint 'Jigs med gling pa commented on the mithun in his *lHo phyogs rgya gar gyi gtam brtag pa brgyad kyi me long*, translated and annotated by M. Aris in *'Jigs med gling pa's "discourse on India*" of 1789, Tokyo: the International Institute for Buddhist Studies, 1995. The people south of the border with Tibet are described as using "the mithun as their principal object of wealth and subsistance," pp.18-19; 'Jigs med gling pa also records the myth of origin of the *mithun*, pp.20-21.
18. M. Aris, *Bhutan*., 1979, 122; Y. Imaeda et F. Pommaret, "Note sur la situation linguistique du Bhoutan et étude préliminaire des termes de parenté," in *Indo-Tibetan studies*, London, 1990, pp.115-127; and G. van Driem, *Languages of the Greater Himalayan Region, vol I Dzongkha*, Leiden: CNWS, 1998, pp.27-29.
19. van Driem, 1998: pp.26-27.
20. van Driem, 1998: p.27.
21. S. Karotemprel, (ed.) *The tribes of Northeast India*, Calcutta: Firma KLM, 1984. Proceedings of a seminar of the same title held in Shillong in 1980, and J.N. Chowdhury, *The tribal culture and history of Arunachal Pradesh,* Delhi: Daya Publishing house, 1990, pp.16-18.
22. The information concerning the Tshangs las of Arunachal Pradesh come from B. Dhar, "The Monpas of Khalengthang area, alias the Tsanglas" in *The tribes of Northeast India*, Calcutta, 1984, pp.295-306.

23. For a study of alliance among the Shar phyogs pas, cf. Y. Imaeda and F. Pommaret “Note sur la situation linguistique du Bhoutan et étude préliminaire des termes de parenté” in *Indo-Tibetan studies*, London, 1990.
24. M. Aris, 1986: pp.106-107.
25. M. Aris, 1986: pp.29-47.
26. M. Aris, *Hidden Treasures* 1988: p.76 and *Bhutan*, 1979: pp.103-104.
27. Niranjan Sarkar, *Buddhism among the Monpas and the Sherdukpens*, Shillong: Directorate of Research, Gvt of Arunachal Pradesh, 1980.
28. M. Aris, *Bhutan*, 1979: p.107. Extended field research in Arunachal Pradesh is impossible for foreigners, and the historical documents which could be there are not known.
29. M. Aris, “Textiles, Text and Context: the Cloth and Clothing of Bhutan in Historical Perspective,” *From the Land of the Thunder Dragon: Textiles arts of Bhutan*, S. Bean & D.K. Myers (eds.), London-Salem: Serindia - Peabody Essex Museum, 1994, pp.23-45.
30. Verrier Elwin (ed.), *India's north-east frontier in the nineteenth century*, Madras: Oxford University Press, 1959, pp.445-446, quoting Hesselmeyer 1867 *A missionary's view of the Akas*.
31. F. Pommaret, *Journal of Bhutan Studies*, Vol.2, No.1, 2000, pp.30-53.
32. Diana K. Myers, “Textiles in Bhutan: cloth, gender and society,” in *Bhutan: aspects of culture & development*, M. Aris & M. Hutt (eds.), Gartmore: Kiscadale Asia Research Series No.5, 1994, pp.191-199; Françoise Pommaret, “Textiles of Bhutan: way of life and symbol of identity” in *Bhutan: aspects of culture and development*, M. Hutt & M. Aris (eds.), Gartmore: Kiscadale Asia Research Series No.5, 1994, pp.173-189.
33. Verrier Elwin, *The Art of the North-East Frontier of India*, Shillong: North-East Frontier Agency, 1959, p.36.
34. Françoise Pommaret, “‘Entrance-keepers of a hidden country’: Preliminary notes on the Mon pa of south-central Bhutan,” in *Tibet Journal*, Special issue*: Powerful places and spaces in Tibetan religious culture*, T. Huber (ed.), Vol.19, No.3, 1994, New-Delhi, pp.46-62.

MAP 1 Sketch map of Kameng district

MAP 2 (from Myers & Bean *From the Land of the Thunder Dragon: Textiles Art of Bhutan*)

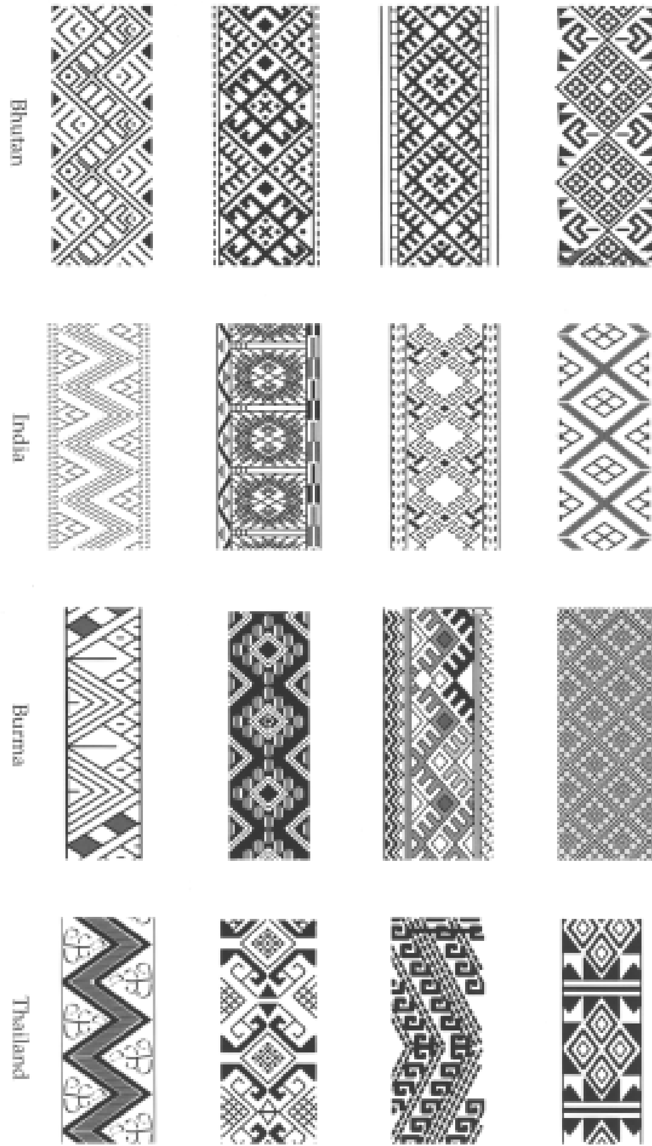


FIG.1 Textile motifs (from Myers & Bean *From the Land of the Thunder Dragon: Textiles Art of Bhutan*)

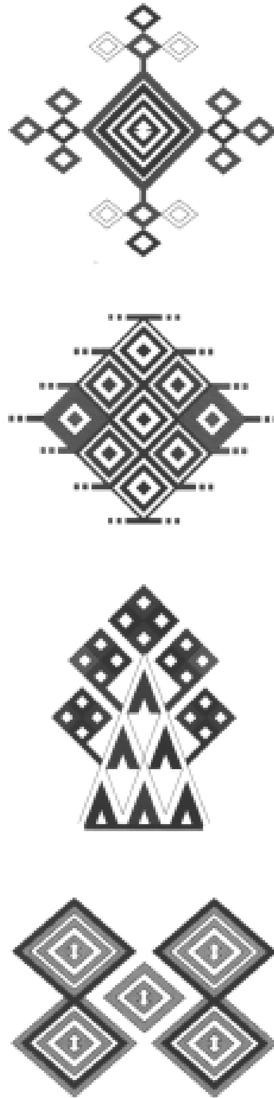
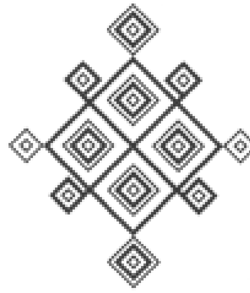
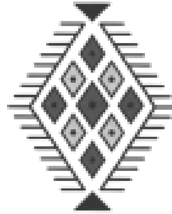
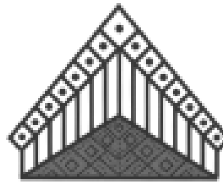


FIG.2a Sherdukpens motifs (from Myers & Bean *From the Land of the Thunder Dragon: Textiles Art of Bhutan*)







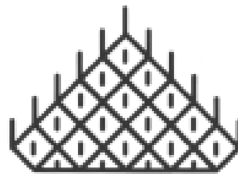


FIG.2b Bhutanese motifs (from Myers & Bean *From the Land of the Thunder Dragon: Textiles Art of Bhutan*)

PHOTO 1 A woman from Sag steng valley (Eastern Bhutan) in traditional dress.

PHOTO 2 A man from Sag steng valley (Eastern Bhutan) in traditional attire

PHOTO 3 A woman weaving a cloth for a Sag steng woman's jacket on a backstrap loom (Radi, Eastern Bhutan)

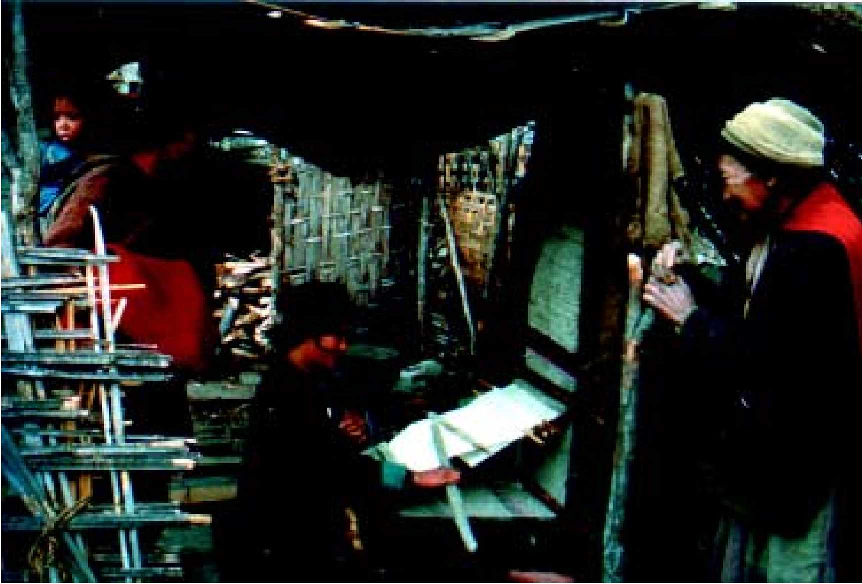


PHOTO 4 Sag steng woman weaving a high pile blanket on a backstrap loom (Eastern Bhutan).

PHOTO 5 Family from Sag steng in traditional attire (Eastern Bhutan).

*An Introduction to Zan par**

Zara Fleming

The purpose of this paper is to examine in some detail, the Tibetan wooden moulds known as *zan par*. My first introduction to such a mould was at the 1973 Kālacakra ceremony at Bodh Gaya. Knowing little about Tibetan culture at that time, I came across one being sold by a newly-arrived Tibetan refugee. A rectangular block of wood, beautifully carved with intricate symbols, pleasing to touch and a visual delight. My curiosity was aroused and I purchased the *zan par*, which has since inspired me to explore in more depth the profound nature of Tibet's spiritual tradition. (Fig.1)

Although trained as an art historian, I have not approached this study in a conventional manner. I have dispensed with the critique of provenance, date, style and cultural influences and have concentrated instead on the rich iconography and symbolism found on these moulds. Over the years I have seen many *zan par* in both public[1] and private collections and I am indebted in this article to one collector in particular, Franco Bellino.[2] His enthusiasm for the subject matter is infectious and he has generously contributed both photographs and knowledge to this study.

The term *zan par* means food mould, but a more correct description would perhaps be *glud par shing* (wooden mould for ritual ransom). The *zan par* is used to create small effigies of dough as scapegoats (*glud)* to propitiate evil spirits or as offerings to the deities. The idea of transferring evil to another being or scapegoat is common in many cultures throughout the world. In Tibet, the concept of *glud* stems from the earlier pre-Buddhist faith, the indigenous folk traditions and the Bon religion, where sacrifice formed an essential part of their rituals. It was later adopted and used in the *tantri*c rituals of both the Tibetan and Sino-Tibetan traditions.

Textual evidence for sacrifice is found in the Dunhuang manuscipts (the earliest surviving example of eighth/ninth century Tibetan literature). Various Bonpo funeral rites are described in which sacrificial animals not only serve as a ransom for the deceased, but are also placed in the tomb itself.[3] Further reference is made in the annals of the Tang dynasty, when repeated sacrificial offerings of horses and dogs are mentioned on the occasion of Tibetans swearing an oath of loyalty towards the king. Nor are human beings exempted, the Bonpo text of *gZer myig* cites an example of a cure for a sick prince. One of his royal subjects is sacrificed and the flesh scattered to the four corners of the universe.[4]

Such rituals were of course, anathema to Buddhism, which held all forms of life sacred. And when Buddhism gained the upper hand and obtained state recognition, the defeated Bonpos were forbidden to indulge further in such practices. The use of effigies as substitute scapegoat is believed to date from this time, as is the introduction of the *zan par*. Effigies come in a variety of sizes, from life-size representations (sometimes containing nail clippings and hair of the afflicted victim) down to the miniature impressions created by a wooden mould. But because sacrifice is so deeply rooted in Tibetan beliefs, it has never been completely eradicated.

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From Milarepa's songs,[5] we learn that when an important Bonpo fell ill in the 11th century, his physicians *(sman pa*) ordered the sacrifice of a hundred yaks, a hundred goats and a hundred sheep as a ransom to bring about a cure for the suffering man. Scapegoat rituals which do not involve the taking of life have always been commonplace in Tibet. Hugh Richardson mentions several examples which he witnessed personally[6]. One of these was the annual *glud gong* ceremony which took place in Lhasa at the end of the second month. Two men dressed in shaggy goatskins and with their faces painted half black and half white were paid guilt money and then driven out of the city, in order to symbolically carry away the sins and afflictions of the Lhasa people.

Despite Tibet's adoption of the highly evolved Indian philosophical tradition, symbolic rituals like the *glud gong* illustrate on a more mundane level, the Tibetans' own way of coping with the various natural and supernatural forces at work in their hostile environment. As does their daily manipulation and use of objects such as prayer wheels, prayer flags, amulet boxes, charms and *mantra* in order to protect the individual and contribute towards his or her spiritual advancement. Their belief in the power and efficacy of effigies (including those made by a *zan par*) also fall into this category.

The *zan par* are usually 20-30 cms in length, but there are shorter and longer varieties (Figs.8 & 9*)*. Some are flat wooden boards carved on two sides, whilst others are four, six or eight sided and carved all over. The flat boards often come in a set attached by a string or leather thong, which can then be fanned out. (Fig.10) The wood is usually birch as this is considered the easiest for carving, but hazel, walnut and other hard woods are occasionally used. There does not seem to be any stipulation as to the choice of wood for the making of these moulds, unlike in certain Buddhist tantric practises where male-orientated rituals require birch and those for the female, a thorny wood. Over years of handling, the wood acquires a well-polished patina which further adds to the *zan par'*s charm.

The use of *zan par* appears to be widespread throughout the Tibetan cultural and spiritual domain. Stretching from Ladakh in the west to Bhutan and the Chinese provinces of Szechuan and Yunnan in the east; from the Himalayas in the south to the Mongolian steppes in the north. The use of these moulds is common amongst the Bonpo and in all the major Buddhist traditions in Tibet, and in particular the rNying ma. However, the *zan par* is not exclusively utilised by religious practitioners. A selection of *zan par* is kept in the monasteries, but also carried from village to village by both lay and religious practitioners in order to cure sickness and deal with various misfortunes.

The mould itself is lightly coated with butter, then a mixture of barley flour (*rtsam pa)* and water (or sometimes milk and further butter) is pressed into the mould, in order to create a miniature impression. The votive image of dough is then applied to the surface of an offering cake *(gtor ma*), although sometimes they remain free-standing. A diverse wealth of forms is found on these boards (Figs.2 and 8)—animals, birds, humans, instruments, weapons, auspicious signs and magical symbols. Together they comprise the retinues and assemblies of the most complex *gtor ma*s used in rituals of ransom or exorcism *(glud tshab)*; but many of the forms are also used in *maṇḍala* and threadcross *(mdos)* constructions.

The *rtsam pa* flour is consecrated before use, auspicious ingredients (sweet substances, medicine, alcohol, etc) often being added to please the deity being propitiated. It may also be coloured, depending on the particular ritual and on the nature

of the specific deity. Many *zan par* have a small file *(zong)* attached and a piece of metal called *rin chen bdar* consisting of an alloy of the five precious metals *(rin chen lnga)*—gold, silver, copper, brass and iron. During the preparation of the dough, a little powder is filed off the *rin chen bdar* into the *rtsam pa* mixture, in order to represent the treasures being offered to the deity in whose honour the ceremony is being performed. (Fig.3).

The forms that are represented on the *zan par* are exceedingly diverse, but I would now like to examine some of the usual motifs. Chief amongst these are the representations of the animal kingdom—birds, beasts, reptiles, insects and fish. (Figs.11, 12 & 13) These are divided according to the general tripartite cosmological division of the realm—those that fly in the sky, those that dwell on the land and those that live underground or in the water. A veritable Noah's ark is depicted, but mention must also be made of the mythological, magical and hybrid animals included. Many of these serve as mounts or vehicles for the wrathful protective deities *(dgra lha).*

There are countless representations of deities (*lha)* and demons *(bdud)*. These are usually divided (as above) into three categories—those that rule the sky (*lha),* those that reign over the land (*sa bdag)* and those that control the underworld *(klu)*. The list of subdivisions is too expansive to detail, but includes *dgra lha, dregs, btsan ma, the'u brang* and *gnyan*; common among all is that they are venerated and feared as real powers. The Tibetans believe that they are imbued with a relative existence within the phenomenal world, such as human beings are. The figures are represented as human, animal-headed or bird-headed (Figs.14 & 15), standing astride on foot or mounted on various animals. Many of these belong to the pre-Buddhist mythological world and its pantheon, later absorbed by both the Bon and Buddhist traditions.

There are specific groups of protective deities who repel hostile or inimical forces *(dgra lha*) for each different community. For example the nomads (*'brog pa)* worship a group of nine '*brog mo*, whilst the farming population venerate the gods of the fields *(zhing lha)* and those that live in the mountains propitiate the gods of the rocks *(brag lha)*. The dress and mounts of these deities indicate the pastoral and warlike nature of their corresponding social strata. They ride antelopes, yaks, wild asses, wild dogs, etc and wear armour including a helmet with feathers and often hold a mirror or other shamanic equipment. Fig.16 shows such a figure riding a cross between an antelope and a wolf, surrounded by his retinue of birds, animals, deities and demons.

Frequently represented are the demons *(bdud*) connected with the four cardinal directions (Figs.17 & 18) holding their respective symbols of sword, flower, jewel and wheel *(bdud bzhi)*. Variations on this theme include demons who hold a snare in their right hand, whilst those in their left differ but often include the Bon tambourine *(gshang)*, knife, sword, lance with triangular pennant and the magic notched stick of the Bonpos. (Fig.4) The various attributes of arms, armour, ritual implements and musical instruments are often depicted separately on the *zan par* (Fig.19). Mention must also be made of the occasional use of minute inscriptions which accompany these images, identifying the name or type of obstacle to be overcome and the cardinal direction governing where the image is to be placed.

Dough effigies of human beings are made for rituals of exorcism or for averting sickness and other misfortunes. Representations of men, women, children, monks and nuns are shown dressed in traditional Tibetan costume. An arrow *(mda bkra)*

is normally placed next to the man *(pho gdong)* symbolic of a man's work; and a spindle *('phang bkra*) next to the woman *(mo gdong*). Fig.20 represents a family of a mother, father and child, flanked by the spindle and arrow also *gtor ma* and a ceremonial staff. Above is the Figure of a monk or lama surrounded by thread-crosses. Many of these figures illustrate the dexterity of carving found on these moulds, note the dGe lugs pa hat and robes (Fig.21) and the voluminous monastic costume of the nun (Fig.22) surrounded by symbols of the elements (water, earth, fire, air). Occasionally the elements are represented in both formal and abstract form (Fig.23).

If a member of the family was sick, a dough figure of that person would be made as a substitute ritual ransom *(glud)*. The *bla ma* or practitioner would then perform a ritual to encourage the disease to enter the scapegoat. A *gtor ma* offering including the figure would then be burnt, buried or taken away from the house, thus symbolically removing all sickness. Similar in idea to this are the wooden ritual sticks *(shing ri)* decorated with pictures of the family and household, often found hung above Tibetan doorways as auspicious protective symbols. Comparable also are the woodblock prints of the same theme, pasted on the outer walls of houses.

The impressive shackled figure (Fig.24) with hair standing on end and prominent penis represents a male demon, chained and immovable. The male figure of this type is known as a "king spirit" or *rgyal po* and the female as *btsan ma.* Various powerful seed syllables *(Skt. bija)* surround this figure and his body is also marked at vital points with syllables and mantras *(dza, nri, yam etc)*. All negativity and illness is projected onto this figure, thus releasing the actual sufferer from his inner demons. An alternative name is *ling ga*, meaning the effigy of an enemy. The *ling ga* can be used for two different rituals—one for ransom *(glud)* and the other for destruction. In the case of the latter, the shaman or *snags pa* employs a special ritual to destroy a particular enemy.

In Fig.25 a *ling ga* is depicted, above him are representations of a *nāgā*, a horned beast riding an animal and a scorpion. The *nāgā*s are the serpent spirits (*klu)* which inhabit water and rule the underworld, whose origins lie in the ancient Indian snake cults. They guard the treasures and hidden teachings and can be depicted as serpent or half-human form. This peaceful *nāgā* king has a canopy of seven snakes above his head and clasps the jewel of the teachings in his hands. *Nāgā*s are propitiated in countless rituals, including those which involve the weather and *nāgā*-related diseases (i.e. leprosy, dropsy, cancer and skin problems). The scorpion (*sdig pa*) is of great importance as a powerful protective charm.

Beneath the *ling ga* are the five offerings of the senses *('dod yon sna lnga)*. The mirror for sight, the cymbals for sound, the incense-laden conch for odorant and the bowl of fruit draped with a silk cloth for taste and touch. Images of these are presented as offerings to the deities, symbolising not only gratitude but also sensual renunciation on the part of the donor. To the right are the eight auspicious Buddhist emblems *(bkra shis rtags brgyad*) (Figs.26 & 5) and the seven precious gems (*nor bu cha bdun)* of the Indian Buddhist tradition. Auspicious symbols are frequently found on *zan par*, other motifs include the sun-moon motif *(nyi zla*), the three jewels *(dkon mchog gsum)*, the stūpa *(mchod rten*), the swastika *(gyung drung)* and sacrificial cakes *(gtor ma)*. (Figs.27, 28 & 29)

A Tibetan proverb states that the Tibetans received their religion *(chos)* from India and their astrology *(rtsis)* from China. Thus most of the religious symbols

found on these moulds are of Indian origin, whereas many of those pertaining to astrology, derive from China. Chinese texts on astrology, mathematics and geomancy entered Tibet during the reign of the Emperor, Srong btsan sgam po (617-650), following his marriage to the Chinese princess, W'en Cheng. Although astrological *tantra*s from India were known in Tibet at that time, it is not until the 11th century that further Indian influence came to the fore. In A.D. 1024, the Kālacakra Tantra is introduced into Tibet, this system essentially synthesizes the Indian and Chinese principles of astrology.

There is a wealth of astrological and cosmological symbols found on *zan par*. The 12 animals of the zodiac which form the 12 yearly cycle of Tibetan astrology—mouse, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, bird, dog and pig (which when combined with the five elements make up the 60 year cycle). The symbols of the planets which rule the seven days of the week (Fig.31)—the disc of the sun, the crescent of the moon, the red eye of Mars, the hand of Mercury, the dagger of Jupiter, the arrowhead of Venus and the bundle of Saturn, together with the raven's head of the eclipse planet, Rahu. (Fig.6) Further to these are representations of Mount Meru *(ri rab)*, the astrological tortoise, the eight Chinese divination trigrams (Fig.30) formed of *yin* and *yang* lines *(spar kha)* and the magic square *(sme ba*). (Fig.7) The latter is divided into nine sections, each containing a number (1-9) in Tibetan script. In this example, the number five is in the central square, the other numbers are then arranged around it, so that the digits add up to 15—horizontally, vertically and diagonally. All the above symbols are crucial to rituals of both offering and ransom and are of profound importance for astrological calculations.

The profusion of designs found on these *zan par* remind me of the offering *thang ka* paintings found in Tibetan monasteries. Both the *rgyan tshogs* (set of ornaments) and the *bskang rdzas* (sacraments for the reparation) illustrate in a similar way, everything which one can possibly offer to a deity. In the paintings, the offerings are visualised and created in the mind; but through the *zan par* actual three-dimensional representations are created which not only serve as offerings but also as ritual substitutes *(glud)* when rites of exorcism are employed. To hold such a wealth of symbolism in the palm of one's hand is truly remarkable, and brings to mind the multitude of rituals for which these *zan par* are instrumental.

The effigies created are normally used in *maṇḍala* rituals and in conjunction with a threadcross *(mdos*). The use of the latter is common in both Bon and Buddhist traditions and is believed to have been introduced into Tibet by Padmasambhava in the eighth century. These constructions of coloured thread form a web, into which evil spirits are enticed by the specific offerings and then become entangled in the maze of threads; thus restricting their negative power. The colour of the threads is dependent on the ritual being performed, and up to six colours may be used. The construction of a threadcross is an extremely elaborate procedure, involving the ritual preparation of *gtor ma*, offerings and *zan par* effigies to make up the whole.[7] A simple threadcross is just two pieces of wood tied into the shape of a cross, around which are strung a diamond shape arrangement of coloured threads. In a complex ritual everything is more elaborate. An altar is set up and on top of this a multi-tiered structure of threads representing Mount Meru, crowned by a further threadcross mansion which houses an effigy of the person or deity for whom the ritual is being performed. Dough images of animals, birds, humans, weapons and a

multitude of other *glud* offerings are carefully arranged on the tiers. The officiating *bla ma* then performs the ritual, invoking the various deities to enter into the images and threadcross mountain. Finally, the whole structure is burnt or cast away at a crossroad, thus symbolically removing all negativity.[8]

The *zan par* is therefore a vital tool in preparing a whole assembly of offerings, to venerate or placate a specific deity and in repelling all evil influences. Nebesky-Wojkowitz mentions two specific types of *zan par*, the *bra brngan lha bsangs gi zan par* applied to the *lha bsangs* rituals of the rNying ma tradition and the *stang rgyas lha bsangs gi zan par* of the Bon. He also refers to a special board used for making clay impressions of *'jim bzo'i bcha' lag.* These are small representations of Buddhas and auspicious signs which are sometimes glued by an officiating *bla ma* to his temples, in order to influence a ceremony in an auspicious way.

In this introduction to *zan par*, I have merely scratched at the surface of this fascinating subject matter. There is clearly much more research that remains to be done, not least a catalogue of the different types of *zan par* and for which specific rituals they are used. But I have endeavoured to provide an insight into the rich Buddhist and Bon symbolism so lovingly and intricately carved on these moulds and to convey a feeling of their aesthetic appeal. I trust and hope that I have inspired a few more *zan par* enthusiasts.

Notes

1. *Zan par* are found in many public collections including the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, the Musee de l'Homme in Paris, the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden and the Newark Museum in the USA.
2. Franco Bellino. "Ritual Moulds" in *Himalaya Magica*, CREO, Bologna, 1999.
3. M. Lalou. "Ritual Bon po des funérailles royales", *Journal Asiatique*, 1952.
4. R. A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*.
5. Biography of Mi la ras pa by gTsang smyon Heruka (late 15th century)
6. H. E. Richardson. *Ceremonies of the Lhasa Year*. London, 1993.
7. Nebesky-Wojkowitz devotes a whole chapter to *mdos* in *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*.
8. For further information on *mdos* and the preparation of *gtor ma* see Stephen Beyer's *The Cult of Tara* and David Snellgrove's *Nine Ways of Bon* (*excerpts from the text gzi-brjid*), edited and translated).

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Figure 1

Figure 2

Figure 3

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7

Figure 8

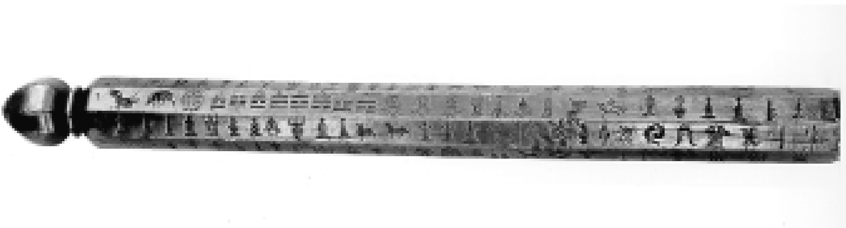

Figure 9

Figure 10

Figure 11

Figure 12

Fig.13

Figure 14

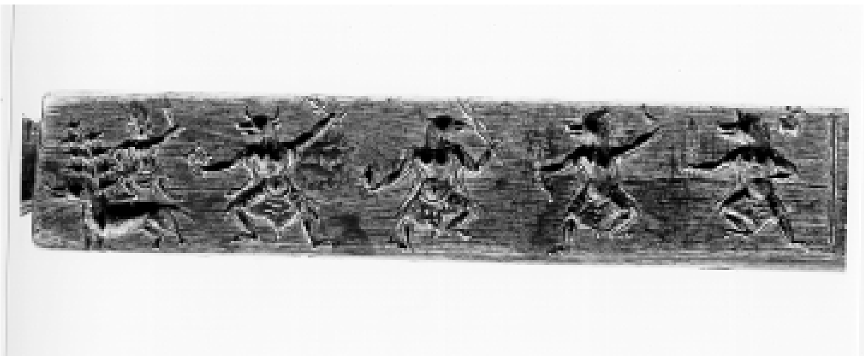

Figure 15

Figure 16

Figure 17

Figure 18

Figure 19

Figure 20

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Figure 25

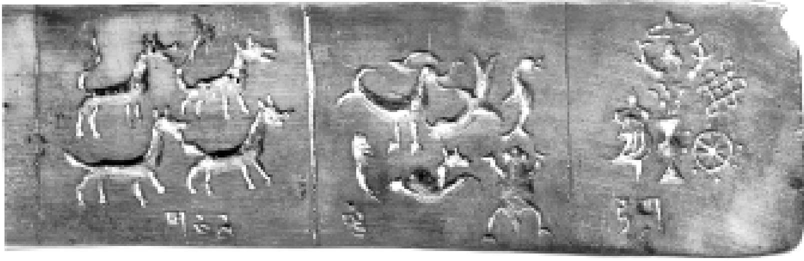

Fig.26

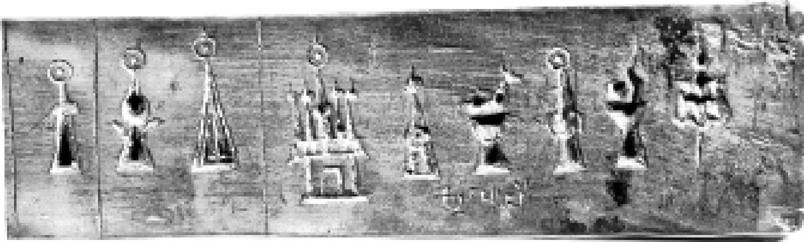

Figure 27

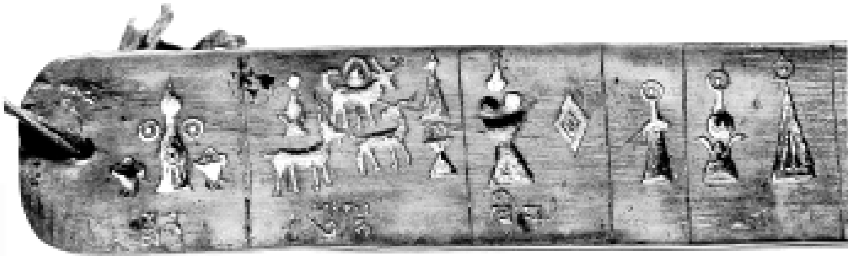

Figure 28

Figure 29

Figure 30

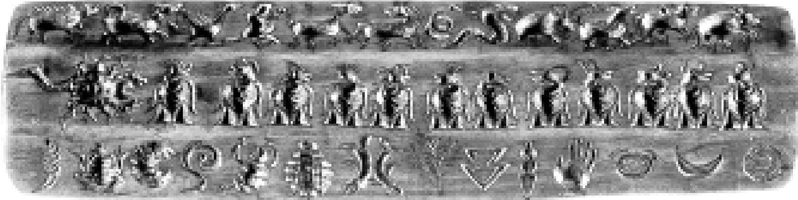

Figure 31

Modern Artists in Lhasa

Elke Hessel

> All of a sudden it seemed to him as though the garden street, the cars driving here and there, the foreign tourists with their hairy legs and their rucksacks, the wild dogs lying on one side of the shady street, the great buildings of the city, the monks with their flowered nylon parasols, as if all these were merely images emerging from a mirror, unreal hallucinations.
>
> An excerpt from a short story by Tashi Dawa[1]

In Autumn 1999 a Chinese acquaintance of mine in Lhasa drew my attention to an exhibition of modern art, which was held on the property of the Lhasa Artists' Association. As we entered the exhibition hall, we immediately came upon a huge oil painting, positioned in the "politically correct" manner right opposite the main entrance. It showed a scene which I had already seen in dozens of variations; a group portrait in a picturesque landscape. A smiling nomad woman washing clothes (from the color a military jacket) in the river, other smiling nomads watching her, a smiling Peoples' Liberation Army soldier holding a bowl of butter tea in his hand, and a smiling female PLA soldier patting a lamb. (Fig.1) But right around the next corner I made an amazing discovery: A small gouache in dark tones, almost abstract and very poetic. Just a few fantastic beings were shadowly hinted at; the overall impression was very poetic.

It reminded me somewhat of a mixture of Max Ernst and Miro. Now I was curious; was there really such a thing as independent modern art in Lhasa? Yes; I discovered a few more interesting paintings among the inevitable Socialist Realism and Tibetan calligraphies (an example: "The Four Modernizations"). All were stylistically very different from each other, but all were headstrong, modern and free. The same atmosphere dominated in the entire exhibition that I remembered from exhibitions in the Eastern bloc countries in the '1980's: State-sponsored art—often stiff and bad-quality— and independent art matter-of-factly placed next to each other. A type of presentation that would be unthinkable in the West, where every exhibition is planned according to preconceived concepts of marketing strategy. The art market in China's major cities now follows the same rules as in Singapore, Bangkok or Tokyo.

Lhasa, on the other hand, is still isolated. So, where were these artists who had singlemindedly developed their own style here in Tibet? How do they live and work? In the following weeks I went in search of them and spoke with them about their life and work situations, and their approaches to art.

In order to understand contemporary Tibetan art, it is of immense importance to glance at the history of modern Chinese art since a majority of Tibetan artists have studied and exhibited in China. I visited one of the first modern art exhibits of the "Post-Mao Era" in 1982 in Chungching (this exhibition was grotesquely placed in a hall next to the notorious travelling exhibition with realistic life-sized clay figures, "The Wrath of the Serfs, The Struggle of the Serfs in Tibet"). At a glance it was clear that this new generation of modern Chinese art did not have much in common with the effusive propaganda-art of the Mao-era: Large oil paintings, primarily in earth-tones, showing the portraits of individuals; mostly worn farmers with serious expressions; reflective, lonely people in wide-open landscapes. The first works of the romantic realism that marked the art of the '80's in China. At this time a kind of Chinese "Tibet nostalgia" began. Many painters travelled to Tibetan border areas in order to make portraits of lonely nomads (often in the form of photos, which were later reworked) in wide-open landscapes.

As is so often the case in the history of art (in Europe the “scale of quality” extends from Gauguin’s Tahiti-paintings to the ghastly “Gypsy” in German living-rooms) the cliche of the “Noble Savage” is repeated here, as well. This prototype is the carrier of erotic and occasional spiritual projection; and such motifs were and are very popular in China’s industrialized urban areas. (Fig.2; the monk with the modern version of a Tibetan rosary with only about 70 beads!)

But there were also Chinese artists who developed beyond this beginning stage and sought a genuine engagement with the (to put the matter more precisely) Indo-Tibetan culture; who immersed themselves in it and remained in it. One of the foremost of these Chinese artists is Han Suli, who went to Lhasa in connection with a travel scholarship, stayed there and soon became a foster father of decisive importance for the first modern Tibetan artists. I shall say more about him later.

During this time there developed a kind of “counter-movement” from Tibet to China, since Tibetan art students were increasingly sent to art academies in China. Their fundamental prerequisites were as disadvantageous as possible; the engagement with modern forms of art had not yet taken place within Tibetan society. The few scattered Tibetan artists such as dGe ’dun chos ’phel, A mdo ’Jam pa or ’Jam dbyangs tshe brtan, who had involved themselves with western painting were regarded with the deepest mistrust (more on this point by Clare Harris enlightening book *In the Image of Tibet*[2]). Born and raised during the Cultural Revolution, in which the religious art of Tibet was condemned and only socialist workers’ art in the form of colored woodcuts and poster painting was tolerated, Tibet’s art students were more or less homeless and without identity. In addition, in the Chinese art academies they sat next to fellow students who had, at least within modest dimensions, developed an independent form of modern art at least since the beginning of the 20th century.

In Eastern Tibet, in parallel, a new, modern style developed with extraordinary speed; the so-called “Kantze Style”, which formally suggested origins in *thang ka* painting, but which under closer scrutiny revealed a mixture of Surrealism, comic/strip books style and traditional elements. (Fig.3)

At the same time many Tibetans were trained in areas such as the applied decorative arts and in “modern folk art” —both purely Chinese and finding application primarily in printing and in advertising. Both forms of artistic expression were and are beloved by the Tibetan population. In contrast, the young Tibetan art students searched for something completely new. They arose like the phoenix from the ashes: In the portfolios from old student days that were shown to me in Lhasa there are many free portrait and nude drawings, still lives, experiments with colors, forms and styles. Typical examples which are also often found in western art academies: a playful approach, a search for one’s own style. Tibet seemed to be far away during the student years. At the end of their studies, most of them had more or less found their own style, which they accomplished after their return to Tibet. Since the middle of the 1980s it was also possible to study art at the Tibet University in Lhasa.

To return to China briefly: In the 1990s art simply “exploded.” Many Chinese artists were able to study in Europe and America in the wake of the general liberalization. Exhibitions of contemporary western art were offered—primarily in major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai. The first professors for modern, western painting were given tenured positions and chairs. At this point the self-consciousness of many Chinese artists manifested itself. They did not simply copy western art, but they developed their own styles. Their paintings were and still are daring and fresh, and they take ironic aim at social processes such as western influence in China. (Fig.4) Video art, Installations and Happenings are also well-received by the Chinese public.

The artists in far-off Lhasa do not go so far. Most of them are painters. Modern sculpture or even photography has not yet achieved independent standing as art forms. Instead, Buddhist and traditional folk themes dominate.

Some of them tread an entirely new path: Especially those who for the most part have studied at the University of Tibet are discovering Tibet's ancient art for themselves. They have gazed in wonder at the frescoes of the 11th to the 15th centuries on excursions to rTsa hrang and rGyal rtse. Here they discover—despite all iconographic delimitation—elements of a free art, unburdened by any stuffiness, which also reveals "modern" elements in its own fashion.

Even though it may not be easy to accept it at first, one of the most important "founding fathers" of modern art in Tibet is Chinese!

Over 15 years ago, a Chinese fellow-student of mine enthusiastically told me about a friend of his in the "old days" in Beijing named Han Suli, who had gone to Tibet and lived among Tibetans, had learned their language and had become a Buddhist. He had become a "true Tibetan" who did not even consider returning to China. This almost legendary figure was born in 1948 in Beijing and had studied there at the Academy of Fine Arts. At the end of the 1970s he obtained a travel-scholarship to go to Lhasa. He did not return to China. In the course of the following decades, he developed a unique style: a combination of "Chinese ink wash", modern Chinese folk art, the early fresco-painting of western Tibet and abstract elements. He has been teaching for a long time at the University of Lhasa, is Chairman of the Tibetan Artists' Association and lives and works in deep seclusion in Lhasa to this day.

I would like to discuss his painting, "Bodhisattva of Purity", as an example of his syncretistic painting style, in which several factors flow together to compose the contents.(Fig.5) The form of the Buddha is clearly influenced by the world-renowned, unique giant clay sculptures of gSum brtsegs in A lci (Ladakh), whose garments are covered with painted figures and ornaments. In all likelihood, Han Suli only had a photograph of them as his model. The story is to be found in the Pāli Canon of how the Buddha once answered a question by silently holding up a flower. The head, framed by an aureole, is shown in profile and the extreme length of the nose and the frontal positioning of the eyes are typical for Han Suli. This characteristic feature has been adopted by his students, incidentally. When one looks closely, these extreme eye and nose forms are neither to be found in western Tibetan frescoes, nor in ancient Indian frescoes. Or on the rare occasions in which Han Suli uses the profile form, he adopts the anatomically correct side view of the eyes. I would speculate that this unique feature is due to the influence of modern western sources such as Picasso or Gauguin (who in turn made use of Egyptian sources).

Many Tibetan artists who in the meantime have themselves become instructors at the University of Lhasa, and who work in their own ateliers in their free time, have studied with him and are deeply influenced by him in their styles of work.

Han Suli's most intensive teacher-student relationship has been with the Tibetan Pad ma bkra shis, born in 1961. Pad ma bkra shis had been a truck-driver in the army, but had used every moment of free time to draw. This led to a truly fateful meeting when Han Suli asked the young Tibetan to be his driver on his many excursions into the countryside. He quickly discovered his driver's uncommon talent and taught him his own technique of "ink washing", without giving him any guidelines with regard to content.

"He taught me how to paint, not what to paint", Pad ma bkra shis told me in a conversation. He has since advanced to being one of the most successful, internationally recognized Tibetan artists today. This may be in part due to the fact that

he has not lost the artistic innocence of an autodidact through academic studies. His paintings are accordingly free of any possibility of stylistic categorization. At best one could compare his work with the later paintings of Max Ernst; they have the same mysterious, dreamlike radiance. They remind me of the technique of Surrealists' "automatism." The paintings are not planned, but rather are spontaneous "manifestations" which arise out of the unconscious. Pad ma bkra shis often uses prints from woodblock for making prayer-flags as a background (which is reminiscent once again on Max Ernst's frottage technique).

On this background arise fantasy landscapes or surfaces that remind the viewer of fragments of old wall-patinings, populated with floating mythical figures, animals, Buddhas, tantric deities or female figures. The colored surfaces are washed clear and repainted over and over again during the process of composition, so that a multileveled, transparent structure emerges. Pad ma bkra shis has already held several exhibitions outside Tibet and China, and is quite likely the only artist in Tibet today to have his own catalog. (Fig.6)

Another former student of Han Suli is Kadyi, who was born in Lhasa in 1967, and who now teaches painting at the Tibet University. He is the only Tibetan artist known to me who systematically works with the traditional paints made of gemstones which are being produced in a kind of experimental laboratory at the University of Lhasa. His mostly huge canvases are painted in earth and rust-tones, from which malachite and azurite shine forth. In addition to clear influences of the Caves of Ajanta (Fig.7) to dPal 'khor chos sde stupa in rGyal rtse, which he has confirmed, influences of European masters are to be found. His painting "skar ma 'dos pa" shows a scene from the traditional Tibetan bathing festival. (Fig.8) The bathing women with halos remind one strongly of the women in Gauguin's Tahiti paintings; the "hidden" male viewer at the right edge of the painting takes up again the "Susanna bathing" —motif, cherished by many European painters. His paintings are often interrupted and fragmentary. In this connection Kadyi says he was inspired by the patched-together boats made of yak-skins, which he saw on the banks of the Tsangpo river. Often images arise in these paintings that are as plastic as if they were free-standing painted sculptures. (Fig.9)

During one of my last visits to Kadyi's atelier I also discovered one of his first forays in the direction of pursuing this idea into three-dimensionality. He was working on some large wall-reliefs, made of thick wood which he had painted with mineral pigments. The motive of Buddha's *parinirvāṇa* (Fig.10) and a fragmentary *maṇḍala* have emerged from this technique to date. Kadyi is therefore the first Tibetan to seek his own approach to modern sculpture, and one is eager to see what course his further artistic development will take.

Another artist who has dealt with Buddhist themes on the level of content, although less so in the formal sense, is Shes rab rgyal mtshan (b.1960), who studied at the Tianjing Academy of Fine Arts and at Nanjing University. Nowadays he is Professor at the "Art and Education Research Centre" of the University of Tibet. In turn, he has developed yet another completely different painting style, which can best be compared with that of Francis Bacon or Neo-Expressionism. There is nothing in his paintings that would suggest Tibetan sources of inspiration, but his contents unmistakeably reveal a most intensive involvement with the themes of Tibetan Buddhism.

One of his main sources was the Chinese edition of Sogyal Rinpoche's book *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, which is well-known in the West. Through its simplicity, this bestseller makes the Buddhist ethics of the process of dying accessible

to non-Buddhist westerners as well; by means of stories and anecdotes, for example. In his painting “The Torments of the Soul” (Fig.11) Shes rab rgayl mtshan has taken up the *bar do* theme by means of very profound images. He deals with the theme of “Compassion” in “The Lamb Released from Death” and in “Universal Compassion—Origin of the Purified Mind.” And there he makes use of a completely new, modern imagistic language; traditional “*bar do* beings” never appear in his works. These traditional images in all likelihood do not correspond at all to his own inner images, which are those of a modern human being in search of a spiritual orientation.

’Jigs med bDe legs, born in Lhasa in 1961, has developed yet another completely different style, which draws only on purely Tibetan motifs. He studied at the University of Tibet and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. His paintings are characterized by a radical reduction of the motifs to single surfaces, sharply separated from each other. In this manner he surrounds or overlays representations of persons, mostly women wearing patterned aprons or black *chu pa*s with woven crosshatched edgings with monotonal planes which often can be interpreted in several ways as a length of cloth, a mountain, a wall or a field. Red, black, white and yellow colors predominate. He is clearly influenced by Chinese “modern folk art” and also by artists such as Han Suli, but he has created his own unique artistic profile through the dynamism, headstrong independence and autonomy of the individual surfaces within his paintings. (Fig.12)

Also Tshe ring rdo rje’s approach to painting is very independent. He is the oldest of the Tibetan painters known to me, and his life story is remarkable. Born in Lhasa in 1948, he attended school as a child in the Zhol village at the foot of the Potala. Even at an early age he drew enthusiastically. Later he worked as an electrician, but after the end of the Cultural Revolution he received training as a stage designer at the Drama Institute in Shanghai. His favorite motif, which he paints again and again, is without question the Potala. (Fig.13)

> As a child I passed by the Potala every morning, noon and evening, at school I saw it through the window, and later too, during work. I have always been close to it and have been able to observe it in all possible light conditions. It looked different each time, possessed different contours and colors.

In this way Tshe ring rdo rje explains his deeply personal affinity for this building. Contrary to the usual representations of the Potala—both in exile and in Tibet—which are always frontal and seen from a “worm’s eye view” which makes the palace seem more majestic and fraught with significance, Tshe ring rdo rje’s Potala is mostly painted from a “bird’s eye” perspective or from the side. Often, during the process of painting, he practically dissolves it into countless, shimmering multicolored brushstrokes.

Then the Potala almost melts into its environment, into the sky, into its rocky foundation and into the Zhol hamlet lying below. Tshe ring rdo rje’s house and atelier on the edge of the Old City of Lhasa practically “overflows” with such oil paintings in a powerfully expressive painting style. They reflect the intensely aware, passionate perception of the world by a man whose outward appearance is very quiet and modest. But this seeming contrast is only superficial. Artistic freedom—and therefore freedom of the mind and spirit—demand that one treats one’s own inner images and one’s subjective understanding of the outer world with great respect and at the same time that one recognizes their relativity and impermanence, working and acting in accordance with this freedom in order to represent it authentically.

The fascination with light and color characterizes the oil paintings of the 36-year old Tshe ring don grub, born close to the monastery of Bla brang bKra shis 'khyil at eastern Tibet. He studied art and stage-setting in Lanzhou and Beijing and is active in the Lhasa Artist Association. Just as in Tshe ring rdo rje's case, his motifs are the historically significant architectural structures of Tibet, such as the rGyal rtse sKu 'bum or the Temples of Tsa pa rang. However, his style is by no means expressive; he does not interpret his subject, but rather remains at a loving distance, gently observing the coloration of the walls, roofs and skies.

Finally I would like to introduce the 31-year old Pad chung, who teaches Design at the University of Tibet. His frequently large paintings of individuals and groups of people in which earth- and gold-tones predominate reveal Han Suli's influence, but his works have a "tenderness" and transparency which are completely his own. It was most revealing for me to examine his sketchbooks, which are filled with precise pencil drawings of people in every-day situations; sometimes just heads or hands in particular positions. His eye for the uniqueness of the moment and for the individual quality of each person is penetrating and thorough-going. Pad chung is in my estimation the only Tibetan artist who transcends what one might term the "iconic" level, the level of idealized form, in his representations of human beings. One senses his search for the "human" within the human being, especially in his sketches and preliminary drawings. (Fig.14)

There is one striking fact about my description of the most well-known artists in Lhasa. They are all men. The only modern woman painter who has the potential to become an independent artist is the 23-year-old Didrön, who studied with Kadyi at the University of Tibet. Even though she is very gifted, I fear that she will become a victim of her socialization. She grew up in an artistic environment in which women could only be conceived of as at best carrying out the role of teacher or of activity within the limits of applied arts; performing an attitude which was still very prevalent in Europe, too, until only a few decades ago.

But gaining the recognition of society is no easy task for her male colleagues, either. Only very few dare to work outside the State art establishment. They then find themselves in a comparable situation with that of western artists, because they must constantly search for jobs to finance their activity as artists, or they have to depend on support from their families. The great majority of artists work as school teachers or as university instructors, or hold posts in the State-sponsored Lhasa Artist Association, which offers them a basic salary, often an atelier, inexpensive meals in the cafeteria, and which also guarantees the purchase of their paintings.

This starting point, which sounds heavenly to western artists, naturally has its disadvantages, too. Artists can be called upon at any time to take part in work projects for State purposes of whatever kind; to make posters, stage-settings or banners for official events. Sometimes they even have to plant trees outside of Lhasa (by the way, Josef Beuys regarded such activities as action art, as well).

The State salary is naturally not sufficient to cover the considerable costs of an artist's materials. Oil paints, good-quality brushes, cleaning materials, canvas, all these must be imported from within China. Galleries as they are known in the West or in Asian metropolis do not exist in Lhasa to date. There are however, a number of tourists' galleries, for example at the Summer Palace, at the foot of the Potala, or in big hotels. And it is here that the misery of many Tibetan artists takes its start, a misery that they share with many of their colleagues in other major Asian tourist centers; they must build up an artistic "double identity" inasmuch as they begin to paint "tourist pictures."

They industriously produce images of monks, nomads, monasteries and yaks in the tried-and-true, often technically perfect, naturalistic style, using photographs as their models. Almost all of the paintings that I have seen in the tourist galleries are characterized by great distance and lack of emotion. The artists behind these paintings, whether Tibetan or Chinese, men or women, is in fact unimportant or interchangeable. They spend their days producing suitcase-sized oil paintings. They hope that they thereby will have enough spare time to create their "own" art.

It is surely no mystery what will happen in the course of time: A kind of creeping depression spreads and they become unable to develop their own styles further.

An Austrian artist colleague of mine, with whom I was staying in Lhasa, and I attempted to convince them in many conversations that it is entirely possible to paint pictures for tourists without denying their artistic identities. The first step, in our opinion, would be to stop copying photographs, to draw *in situ*, or to use live models in their studios.

The artists also should be more selective in their choice of motifs, and not repeat the usual Tibet-cliches such as the toothless old man demonstratively holding a prayer wheel (Fig.15) or a smiling nomad girl over and over again. Otherwise they insult not only the tourists' intelligence, but also their own. The attempt on the part of a few Lhasa artists to rent rooms together in or near tourist hotels and to draw attention to themselves with flyers is a step in the right direction, but this has little or no effect on their technique or on the contents of their oil paintings. Their art remains purely and simply artistic merchandise, which is produced fast and in whatever amounts demanded by the tourist market by these skilled and talented artists.

But during my last visit in February 2001 some of the artists formulated the idea of renting a house together, in which they would both paint and exhibit. In their own gallery they would show only their "own" modern art and also the works of respected friends, including Chinese and westerners. Such a house would be open to all, for the educated and for the simple people of Lhasa and also to tourists; it would thereby be the first exhibitors' gallery in Tibet with international standing. Such a plan is realistic and welcome.

Another problem which many artists have mentioned is Lhasa's isolation; the lack of opportunity to become acquainted with avant-garde directions in art with the corresponding literature and media. However, Tibetan artists are in no way inclined to blindly imitate new currents in art. The following story, mischievously told to me, is typical of their attitude.

Some time ago a few artists from Chengdu arrived in Lhasa. They met with members of the Lhasa Artist Association and announced a kind of "happening" with the title, "Art Action for the Environment." This was to take place on the bank of the sKyid chu river. The environmental artists, filmed the entire time by a cameraman who accompanied them, drove to the river and stuck hundreds of twigs and sticks in the sand, and then hung plastic bags, filled with water, on them. After completing this considerable opus, they had themselves and their objects photographed and then left! Now both the people of Lhasa and also the Lhasa artists stood there and shook their heads: What should be done with the Art Objects for the Protection of the Environment which had been left behind here? Now they had burst and were flapping merrily in the wind until they would sooner or later join the hundreds of thousands of other plastic bags lying around on the periphery of Lhasa. Such actions have nothing to do with art; that was the unanimous opinion of the Tibetan artists.

We Western artists were asked again and again about our views and opinions on modern art. Often we were also asked for our honest opinion about the works of the artists in Lhasa. This embarrassed us at first, because we were very much aware of the famous Asian views about courtesy. It also seemed to us to be well-nigh reckless even to attempt really constructive criticism because of the great differences in areas of artistic experience. We have no intention whatsoever of persuading Tibetan artists that they should produce western art. As I have suggested above, it is essential for an artist, wherever he or she comes from, to understand that modern art is simply the expression and concretizaton of a particular state of mind. Traditional art, in the West as elsewhere, served the interests of society; modern art, in contrast, serves as its mirror.

In this context we held some very interesting conversations with art students training to become art teachers (a training program for professional artists is still in the planning-stages) at the University of Tibet. The Art Department of the University of Tibet was founded in 1985 and covers two main areas: Painting and Music. At the present 135 students are studying there in five basic courses of study and in two master degrees. There are 40 professors, instructors and assistants; i.e. far more per student compared with European universities!

The painting students had invited us and asked us to prepare a talk on a topic of our choosing. So we picked two topics: The first was the history of modern art and the interaction between modern art and society, with special emphasis on influences from non-European art and from psychology. In this we saw an opportunity to convey the insight that European artists at the beginning of the 20th century sought a completely new imagistic language and wanted to free themselves from Eurocentric thinking.

We also wanted to convey to the students the notion that those works which they regard as purely European masterpieces also have non-European sources; that artistic creation is a living, constantly changing process, which truly recognizes no borders.

Our second topic was the process of artistic creation and how it should be conceived. Here we wished to emphasize that a young artist should regard his or her inner process, the mental images and feelings, furthermore the field of tension between subject, i.e. the artist as an observer, and the object to be painted, should be regarded as being of equal importance with the finished product.

In our view this insight is important for those students who will be art teachers in schools in the future. We wished to make it clear to them that they were in a position to contribute a great deal towards encouraging the children's inner riches.

Our meetings with modern artists in Lhasa was really just a first step. Personally, I would like to see something like an art academy arise on the Roof of the World, in its very special atmosphere and in spite of political circumstances, where different cultures could meet; Asian and Western. Let us begin this task gently; without (high) expectations and without fear.

Notes

1. Grünfelder, Alice (ed.), *An den Lederriemen geknotete Seele, Erzähler aus Tibet.* (translated from Chinese into German), Unionsverlag, Zürich 1997
2. Harris,Clare, *In the Image of Tibet, Tibetan Painting after 1959*. Reaktion Books Ltd., London 1999

FIG.1 Photo from an exhibition in Lhasa 1999

FIG.2 Dongfang Tenghong, Chengdu, published in the magazine *Eagle*
October 1999

FIG.3 Tshe ring, 1983, published in dKar mdzes Bod ris (“Kantze Images of Tibet”) Chengdu 1986

FIG.4 Yua Wen, 1996, published in the magazine *Fine Arts Literature*, Hubei Fine Arts Publishing House 1998

FIG.5 Han Suli, "Bodhisattva of Purity", photo from a post card, published by Shanghai's Peoples Fine Arts Publishing House

FIG.6 Pad ma bkra shis, published in a catalogue of the Overseas Chinese Painting and Calligraphy Society in Canada, 1994

FIG.7 Kadyi, 2000, photo taken in his studio

FIG.8 Kadyi, “sKar ma ’dos pa”, 1999, photo taken in the artist’s studio

FIG.9 Kadyi, "Spirit Beings on Yak Skin Boat", published in the catalogue *Shining Pearl of the Snowland*, China Tibetan Cultural Exhibition, 1998

FIG.10 Kadyi, "Buddha Parinirvana", 2001, photo taken in the artist's studio

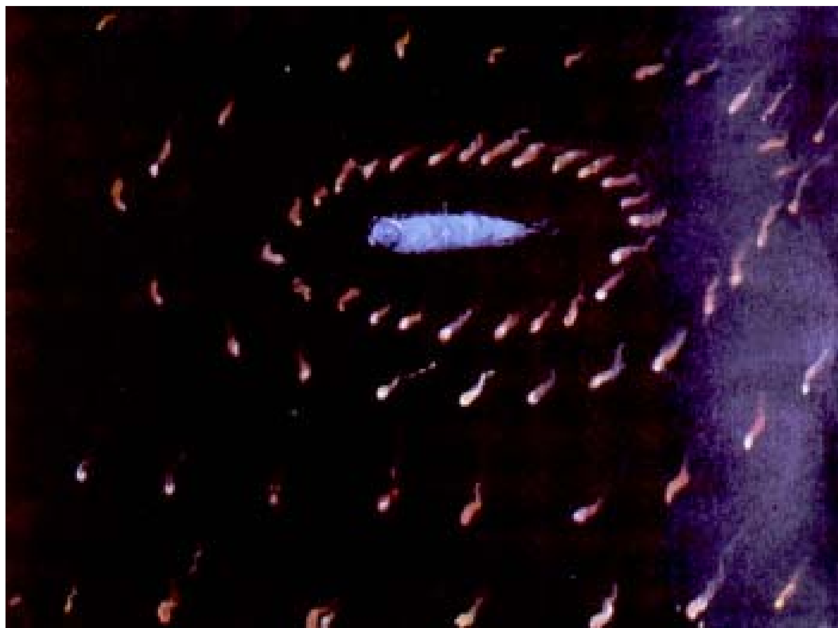

FIG.11 Shes rab rgyal mtshan, “The Torments of the Soul”, published in the catalogue “Shining Pearl of the Snow Land”, China Tibetan Cultural Exhibition, 1998

FIG.12 ’Jigs med bDe legs, 1995, photo taken in his studio

FIG.13 Tshe ring rdo rje, photo taken in his studio

FIG.14 Pad chung, unfinished painting, 2001, photo taken in his studio

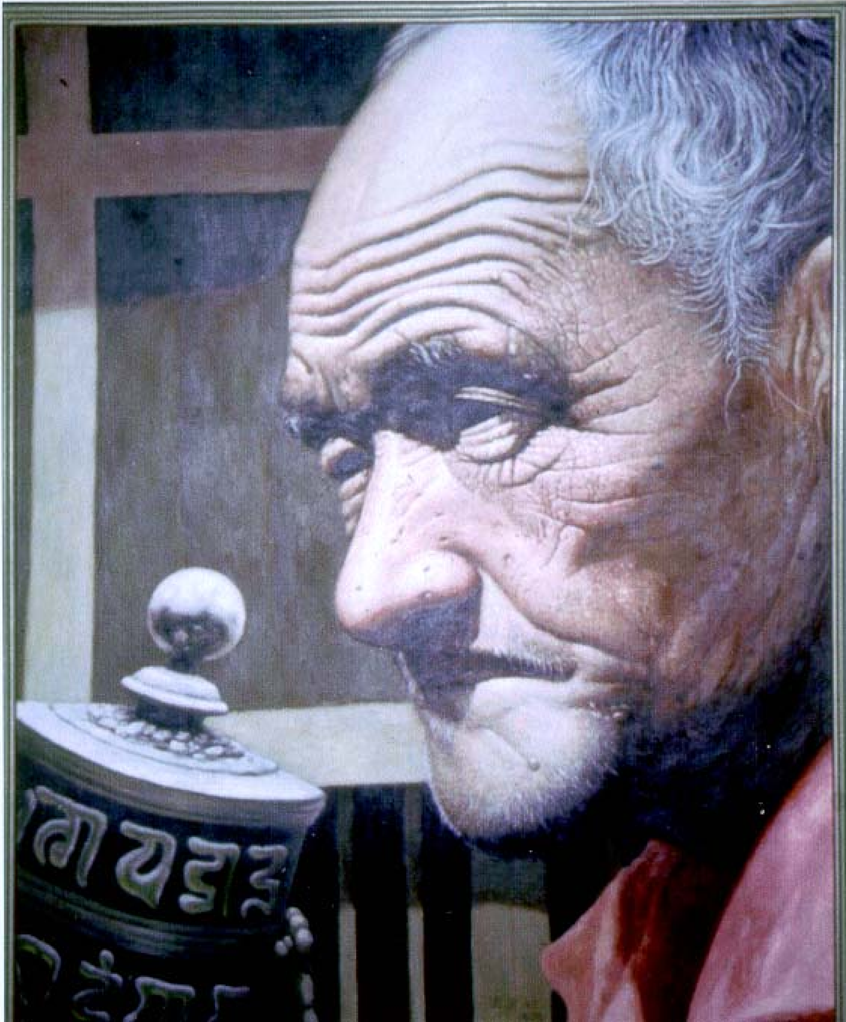

FIG.15 Photo taken in an art gallery in Lhasa, 1999

Bhutan, Mountain Fortress of the Gods **(1997), edited by Christian Schicklgruber and Françoise Pommaret, published in London by Serindia Publications and in Vienna by the Museum für Völkerkunde.**

BHUTAN, ALPINE RETREAT OF DEITIES

George van Driem

The first thing that will strike any casual observer about this truly valuable book on Bhutan is the photography. There are already a number of books providing excellent photographic documentation of Bhutan: *Bhutan, A Kingdom of the Eastern Himalayas* by Guy van Strydonck (1984), *The Dragon Kingdom, Images of Bhutan* by Blanche Christine Olschak (1988) and *Bhutan, Land of the Thunder Dragon* by Tom Owen Edmunds (1988) are just a few of the more prominent specimens in that genre. To be sure, Bhutan is an exceptionally photogenic country, but this volume is far from being a glossy coffee table book. *Bhutan, Mountain Fortress of the Gods* is a valuable resource. The photographs are quite relevant to the articles written by the two editors and the seven other authors. Yet the photographs are splendid none the less, for they capture the atmosphere of the country. My first perusal of the book at once evoked a sweet pang of homesickness for Bhutan even though I had only been outside of the country for just several months. The photographs of Bhutan are by Robert Dompnier, Gerald Navara, Guy van Strydonk and Jon Warren. The photographs of ritual objects are by Erich Lessing. Their excellent work furnishes the décor for the articles which are the substance of the book.

The book opens with a prefatory letter by His Majesty the King, followed by a page of Acknowledgments written by the two editors, Françoise Pommaret of the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique at Paris and Christian Schicklgruber of the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna. The main body of the book begins with a brief well-written Introduction by Christian Schicklgruber. The remainder of the book is divided into four sections. The First Section about Bhutan and the country's natural and cultural heritage contains five chapters. The next three sections contain two chapters each. Section Two is about Bhutanese Buddhism, Section Three about Bhutanese History, and Section Four about modern Bhutan.

The First Chapter of the book, entitled 'Lay of the Land', is by Viennese botanist Gerald Navara and provides a fleeting impression of Bhutanese fauna, flora and ecotypes. I sometimes traipse through the wildest parts of Bhutan to get to the remotest language communities, so I cannot help but be awestruck by the beauty, grandeur and majesty of the Great Bhutanese Outdoors. Navara stresses the diversity of ecotypes due to the rugged topography, but somehow I would have expected something a bit more captivating, like vivid descriptions of the extremely different natural senses of place that one can experience in Bhutan. Here the exquisite photographs come to our aid, some of which were provided by Navara himself. Navara's chapter is pleasantly written, but it is my feeling that the editors could have allowed him to write more generously and present more facts. For example, the two paragraphs on birds cannot begin to give an idea of the hundreds of variegated

bird species in the kingdom. The six paragraphs on mammals do comparatively more justice to the mammalian fauna, and here again the photographs help out quite a bit. Somewhat disappointing is the brevity of the section on agriculture, where it is clear that the author, who is a botanist, neglected to indulge himself. Navara mentions 'the impressive array of fruit and vegetables' available at local Bhutanese produce markets, the existence of 'many different crops' and the cultivation of rice. Rice is not the only food grass to be cultivated in Bhutan, and in terms of the country's prehistory it may not the most important or most interesting crop. Rice was first domesticated along the middle Yangtze about 10,000 years ago, but this cultivar is first attested in South Asia only millennia later. Navara makes no mention of Bhutanese red and white rice varieties, nor does he mention any other more traditional staples still cultivated in remoter parts of the kingdom. Broomcorn millet *Panicum mileaceum* and foxtail millet *Setaria italica* have been cultivated in the Himalayas at least since the middle of the third millennium B.C. Both crops were first domesticated by the early neolithic civilisations along the Yellow River on the North China Plain. The former is known as *khe* in Dzongkha and as *chera* in Tshangla or 'Sharchop', whereas the latter is known as *'yangre* in Dzongkha and as *yangra* in Tshangla. Another grass species, finger millet *Eleusine coracana*, has also been grown in the Himalayas for many centuries, but this cultivar ultimately originates from Africa. Pearl millet or *Pennisetum typhoides* is only cultivated in parts of eastern Bhutan, where it is known by the Tshangla name *pshinang*. A species of amaranth with black seeds is known in Dzongkha as *z'imtsi 'nap*, and there is an amaranth species with white seeds which, quite logically, goes by the name of *z'imtsi kâp*. These and other interesting facts about agriculture in Bhutan are left untold.

The Second Chapter deals with the ethnolinguistic composition of the Bhutanese population and is by far the most important part of the First Section. Françoise Pommaret excels in this splendid, sensitive and detailed account of the language and dialect diversity of the country. Her exposition presents an accurate, well-informed and balanced picture of the ethnic mosaic of this Himalayan kingdom. There is one small misunderstanding on page 54. The Brokpas or 'Bjop' of eastern Bhutan speak a Central Bodish language, which is more closely related to South Bodish languages like Dzongkha than either are to Dakpa. Dakpa is spoken in a part of eastern Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh which is contiguous to that of the Brokpas. Some Dakpa speakers lead the same lifestyle as the Brokpa of Mera and Sakteng, and so essentially also qualify to be called Brokpas. The Dakpa speaking community is called 'Northern Mönpa' in some sources, although the latter term is misleading. Dakpa is an East Bodish language. Other East Bodish languages include the Bumthang, Kheng and Kurtöp dialects and the Dzala and Mangde languages. Pommaret thinks that Aris, Michailovsky and I differ on this point, and I believe that we all say the same thing. If Pommaret has misread me, which appears to be the case, then this is perhaps due to a lack of clarity on my part in the relevant passage of the first edition of my Dzongkha grammar. At any rate, since Pommaret points out the linguistic distinction between the Brokpas of Mera and Sakteng and the Dakpa speaking Brokpas, the reader is not given incorrect information about the ethnolinguistic situation of Bhutan. In fact, this wonderful chapter by Françoise Pommaret is one of the most valuable parts of the book as a whole, and must be recommended as essential reading.

The next three chapters of Section One deal with Bhutanese architecture, village life and traditional crafts. In Chapter Three, Belgian architect Marc Dujardin explains traditional spatial notions in Bhutanese architecture and shows how there is an unbroken continuity of quintessentially Bhutanese perceptions and building conventions, even where these are adapted to modern times. Bhutanese architecture is a defining trait of the nation with particularly high visibility. In Chapter Four, Swiss ethnographer Martin Brauen gives an insightful account of village life. Quite fashionably, though not inappropriately, Brauen zooms in on the role of women in society, traditional divisions of labour and their local economic ramifications. In Chapter Five, Australian economist Barry Ison gives a highly detailed account of Bhutanese traditional crafts and of the lives of those who practise these artisanal skills. To my knowledge Ison's chapter is the most detailed and informative factual account of this aspect of Bhutanese culture in existence.

Section Two opens with a substantive introduction to Bhutanese Buddhism by His Holiness the Mynak Trülku, a highly learned and respected cleric in Bhutan. Chapter Six is a marvellous factual exposition which, like Chapter Two, constitutes essential reading. Both the main body of the text and the wealth of information presented in readily accessible tabular form by the Mynak Trülku in his notes constitute a handy reference and valuable resource for those wishing to familiarise themselves with Buddhism in general or with Bhutanese religious practice in particular. Chapter Seven is a lucid exposition by Christian Schicklgruber on alpine deities. Deities of the soil are a conventional topic in Western scholarly writings about Mahāyāna Buddhism, but it is fair to say that holy mountains and sacred landscapes in Central Asian Buddhism were a hot topic during the past decade. Two of the more prominent books are *The Mountain Cult and Buddhism in Buryatia* by Ljubov' Lubsanovna Abaeva, published in Moscow in 1991, later followed in 1996 by the anthology *Reflections of the Mountain: Essays on the History and Social Meaning of the Mountain Cult in Tibet and the Himalayas,* edited by Anne-Marie Blondeau and Ernst Steinkellner. Schicklgruber provides an informative and well-written treatment of this theme in the Bhutanese context.

The two chapters of Section Three are both written by the eminent Bhutan specialist Françoise Pommaret. The first is lengthy and deals with the entire history of Bhutan, the second with the rise of the hereditary monarchy. Like Chapter Two by the same author, Chapters Eight and Nine are brilliant expositions of a vast amount of facts woven into a beautiful and easily digestible tapestry. Pommaret does a great service to Bhutan and to the readers of this book by presenting the history of the country in such elaborate detail and with such succinct lucidity. These two chapters, together with Pommaret's earlier chapter on the ethnolinguistic mosaic of the country and the lovely chapter on Bhutanese Buddhism by the Mynak Trülku, elevate the book to the level of a valuable scholarly resource on Bhutan for both the specialist and the general reader. The breadth and the scope of the other excellent contributions complement this meaty core.

Section Four deals with modern Bhutan and consists of two chapters. Chapter Ten is entitled 'Tradition and Development', and the title is an accurate reflection of the content of the piece. The winds of change which blow through Bhutan are discussed by Karma 'Ura in terms of generalities as well as numerous specifics. In

Section One, Dujardin used the phrase ‘in search of an urban identity’, but he was referring to innovative interpretations of traditionalist architectural styles. It would have been interesting if Karma ’Ura were to have addressed this topic more directly, for a subset of the new urban youth seems to lack a sense of direction. This is something new which Bhutan now shares with other supposedly ‘more developed’ nations. The roots of the problem can be found, however, in the economic and other facts which Karma ’Ura details. Writing in 1943 in the Netherlands during the German occupation at the height of the Second World War, Simon Vestdijk foresaw a global supermarket of religions in which science would prevail. Vestdijk predicted that most major religions would peter out, whilst intensified cultural exchange would lead to a unified global culture. With the advance of science, the ultimate enduring global religion would essentially be a rarefied form of Buddhism. If Vestdijk was right, Bhutan may now already be better equipped than some societies to face the challenges of the future. I must agree with Karma ’Ura, however, when he concludes that attempts to sustain traditional Bhutanese spiritual values in the face of change ‘are so far quite encouraging, but also hang in the balance.’

The last chapter by Künzang Chöden is an accurate portrayal of Bhutanese urban women. This chapter continues a theme already broached by Martin Brauen in Chapter Four. Although the focus of Brauen’s chapter lay at the village level, the two chapters complement each other in terms of what they say about the position of women in Bhutanese society. Both the traditional position of women and the many roles which urban women fulfil in Bhutan today reflect favourably upon Bhutanese culture and society in the broad context of extant and historically attested cultures and civilisations. Finally, the publishers deserve to be complimented for producing yet another exquisite book in terms of technical execution. It is exhilarating to see books still produced in a way that shows that publishing can be a fine art.

***Mythos Tibet,* Wahrnehmungen, Projektionen, Phantasien. Hrsg. von der Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland GmbH, Bonn, in Zusammenarbeit mit Thierry Dodin und Heinz Räther. Köln: DuMont, 1997, 384pp. ISBN 3-7701-4044-3** (Now published in English as *Imagining Tibet, Perceptions, Projections and Fantasies*, Thierry Dodin and Heinz Räther (eds.) Wisdom Publications, Boston, 2001, 465pp. US$ 28.95 ISBN 0-86171-191-2)

Hartmut Buescher

The present publication under review, *Mythos Tibet*, is based on a symposium, which had the same title and the task of investigating "Tibet" as horizon of manifold projections, perceptions and fantasies both in diachronic and synchronic perspectives. The symposium took place in May 1996 in the Forum of the Art- and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany in Bonn. Preceded by formal introductory remarks, the body of the book consists of 20 articles, all of which appear as German versions. These have been related to three thematic sections (I: Missionaries and Scholars, II: From the Perspective of the "Other," III: Standpoints) and rounded off by a concluding synthesising review. There follow a glossary correlating popularized phonetic spellings (as used in the book) to proper transcriptions, a bibliography comprising more than 30 pages and a short section providing data related to the authors.

This volume has been conceived in a way that it is not primarily addressing the scholar as one who is specialized in Tibetan studies, but also those numerous non-specialists interested in qualified information about Tibet as presented by specialists.

While other "oriental" disciplines have likewise started questioning and investigating cultural prestructures of understanding efficiency in their fields not only in the sense of being responsible for popular imaginations, but also by way of actively informing the ideological basis of research, and the nature of changes in histories of research, as underlying hermeneutic patterns, the present volume has been the first multi-authorial and thematically rather comprehensive production taking up that thread with regard to the Tibetan culture.[1] As it is nevertheless questionable whether the book as a whole will ever be translated into English,[2] it may be opportune to let a topical presentation of the contents be followed by a short impressionistic reflection related to each contribution.

The following themes have been treated: I: Rudolf Kaschewsky: The Image of Tibet in the West prior to the 20th Century (pp.16-30); John Bray: The Missionaries' image of Tibet in the 19th and the early 20th Century (pp.31-50); Per Kværne: The Image of Tibet of the Tibetologists (pp.51-66); II: Alex C. McKay: "Truth," Perception and Politics: the British Construction of an Image of Tibet (pp.68-86); Peter M. Hansen: The Tibetan Horizon. Tibet in the Cinema of the Early 20th Century (pp.87-103); Reinhard Greve: The Image of Tibet of the Nazis (pp.104-113); Thomas Heberer: The Old Tibet has been Hell on Earth. The Myth of Tibet in Chinese Art and Propaganda (pp.114-149); Oskar Weggel: The Political Right and Left in the Chaos of Opinions about the Tibet Problem (pp.150-164); Poul Pedersen: Tibet, Theosophy and the Psychologization of Buddhism (pp.165-177); Frank J. Korom: Tibet and the New Age-Movement (pp.178-192); Donald S. Lopez: The Strange Case of the Englishman with Three Eyes (pp.193-207); Peter Bishop: Not Only Shangri-La: Images of Tibet in Western Literature (pp.208-225); Heather Stoddard: From Golden Idols

to the Ultimate Truth. On the Development of the Perception of Tibetan Art (pp.226-251); III: P. Jeffrey Hopkins: Tibetan Monastic Colleges: On the Tension between Rationality and Collective Compulsiveness (pp.254-263); Elliot Sperling: "Orientalism" and Aspects of Violence in the Tibetan Tradition (pp.264-73); Helena Norberg-Hodge: The Tibetan Culture as Example of Ecological Maintenance (pp.274-280); Graham E. Clarke: Tradition, Modernity and Environmental Changes in Tibet (pp.281-299); Toni Huber: Shangri-La in Exile: Expositions of Tibetan Identity and Transnational Culture (pp.300-312); Jamyang Norbu: Behind the Lost Horizon: On the Necessity of Demystifying Tibet (pp.313-317); Loden Sherab Dagyab: On the Problem of Employing the Image of Tibet for Spreading Buddhism in the West (pp.318-325); IV: Thierry Dodin & Heinz Räther: The Myth of Tibet: Between Shangri-La and Feudalism. Attempting to Synthesize (pp.328-345).

Many of these contributions have been embellished with black & white illustrations.

In spite of its title "The Image of Tibet in the West prior to the 20th Century," the account of Rudolf Kaschewsky does actually only reach up to Antonius Georgius and his *Alphabetum Tibetanum* (Rome, 1763). The 19th century in which the crucial transition towards a scientific tibetology occurred has not been considered in this essay (and neither have the efforts and imaginations of, for example, Csoma de Körös (1784-1842) been investigated, or referred to, anywhere else in this volume).[3] Kaschewsky's concise, yet truly informative, outline focuses especially upon António de Andrade (born 1580) and Ippolito Desideri (1684-1733) before providing an overview of Georgius' above-mentioned *magnum opus*.

Against the historical background of the period between 1850 and 1950 that has seen the culmination of Christian missionary activities in Asia, Africa, America and the Pacific regions, John Bray investigates the missionaries' picture of Tibet in the 19th and the early 20th century. Being successfully refused entry into Tibet, the only alternative the various missionary societies (such as the Christian and Missionary Alliance seated in America, the German Herrnhuter Missionaries, the Church of Scotland, the China Inland Mission, etc.) had was to establish settlements along the southern border of Tibet (in Ladakh, Lahul, Kinnaur, Kalimpong) and in the Chinese-Tibetan border regions…and to wait—not only for the coming of the Christ, but also—for the day when Tibet would open up.[4] This day would never come. However, as it does not infrequently happen in cases of libidinous obsession, the refusal of Tibet to let them enter only strengthened the missionaries' attraction to her. Still, their attraction did not entail a vision of Tibet as Shangri-la, but rather of themselves as romantic heroes, soldiers of Christ, whose task was to save the Tibetans from their immoral style of life. Frequently, they criticized the Tibetan sexual moral, in particular the custom of polyandry. Only in the 1930s, the French missionary Fr. Goré analyzed the economical and social factors necessitating such phenomena as polyandry and polygamy, and he condemned the practice of judging Tibetan customs on basis of the narrow principles of a European mentality. Bray does likewise reflect—though necessarily in an abridged and incomplete manner[5]—on the fact that a few missionaries (such as H. A. Jäschke, A. H. Francke, Robert Ekvall, Matthias Hermanns, etc.) invested a considerable quantum of their time and energies in linguistic, historical, anthropological and literary researches, often in close scientific contact with scholars in the relevant fields.

The task of Prof. Per Kværne to provide within the space of 15 pages a panorama of the *images of Tibet* as cherished by past and present tibetologists has certainly

not been an easy one. Indeed, while being presently in a phase of what appears as a remarkable evolution, tibetology seems traditionally to have compensated its relatively minor status and size as an academic discipline at universities by a fairly heterogeneous assembly of individuals (scholars, semi-scholars, would-be-scholars, popularizers, idiosyncratics, Bon- and dGe lugs pa-apologists, practitioners, post-scholastic hermeneuticians—to name but a few, and sometimes overlapping, types), who, up to now, have found it impossible to agree upon even such a general basis as a common system of transcription for the Tibetan script. From Georgi's *Alphabetum Tibetanum* to Beyer's *Classical Tibetan Language* it has been a delightful fancy of members of our academic community to keep especially the fresh students in the Tibetan departments entertained by devising ever new riddles of reading Tibetan in transcription.

Yet, it is true that, on the other hand, a much too large number of tibetologists went into the other extreme of non-academic oversimplification by using a system of transcription (devised at a time when tibetology stepped out of its infancy) and, in an act of emancipation from mother Indology, started to pretend being able to transcribe Tibetan texts without the outdated, somewhat "exotic" use of diacritical signs.[6] As if transporting the Western society's generation-conflicts of the 60s and 70s into Tibetan Studies, the Indian heritage of both the Tibetan script and the Tibetan classical culture (however strongly emphasized by the Tibetan culture itself) came to be treated with denial—with the consequence that those intending to employ a system of transliteration that dispenses with diacritical signs cannot even start or finish a canonical text, or quote the most essential parts of a ritual or tantric text (and Tibetan Buddhism, more than any other regional variety of Buddhism, is basically ritualistic and tantric!), without running into gross inconsistencies and incoherent attempts of bridging the system's incapacity.

Fortunately, there is the sonorous quality of institutions traditionally engaged in preserving the best: apart from a slowly growing number of scholars, the scientific libraries in countries such as Germany, Austria, Denmark, etc., as well as the leading American Library of Congress, have wisely adopted the integrative capacity of an academic system of transliteration that non-reductionistically fulfils the fundamental need of simple inherent consistency.

In view of such a heap of industrious diversities even at the level of what should be the most common denominator of a branch of studies, it would naturally be a rather misconceived idea to expect anything like a representative and comprehensive overview of the projections that guided leading tibetologists. Accordingly, it is likewise acceptable when Prof. Kværne indicates that he will not consider his Indian, Chinese and Japanese colleagues (apparently he has no Tibetan colleagues). And it is neither unusual to exclude those scholars to whom one feels personally indebted from being critically portrayed by oneself. However, the reason Kværne provides for excluding R. A. Stein and D. L. Snellgrove from his considerations—because they were, in Kværne's opinion, not influenced in their work by values or attitudes outside the field of their research—might at best amuse other tibetologists, even those unfamiliar with the post-modern discourse. Now, while those two Western tibetologists (and J. Bacot) are explicitly excluded, if not any of the names such as Csoma de Körös, Cordier, Jäschke, Foucaux, Filchner, Rock, Rockhill, Toussaint, Ekvall, Bernard, Poucha, Roerich, Laufer, Thomas, Simon, Róna-Tas, Simonsson, Richardson, Kaschewsky, Uray, Francke, Grünwedel, Lessing, Schiefner, Waddell, Weller, Obermiller, Vostrikov, Wayman, Pelliot, Beckh, Blondeau, Neumaier-Dargyay,

Herrmann-Pfandt, Kollmar-Paulenz, Scherrer-Schaub, Aziz, Bentor, Helffer, Dietz, Uebach, Lauf, Kolmaš, Petech, Conze, Haarh, Taube, Schubert, La Vallée-Poussin, Lamotte, Frauwallner, de Jong, Smith, Kapstein, Tillemans, Jackson, van der Kuijp, Seyfort-Ruegg, Schmithausen, Guenther, Schwieger, Schuh, Stoddard, Vogel, Szerb, Eimer, Nebesky-Wojkowitz, Sagaster, Broido, Williams, Goldstein, Hahn, Emmerick, Miller, Wylie, Meisezahl, Hamm, Oetke, Tauscher, Steinkellner, Krasser, Hartmann, Braarvig, Davidson, Harrison, Hopkins, Thurman, Aris, MacDonald, Samuel, Martin, Heller, Beyer, Dreyfus, Mullin, Templeman, Gyatso, Klein, Cabezón, Erb, Ehrhard, Cüppers, Prats, Lo Bue, Orofino, Torricelli, Germano, Skorupsky, Verhagen, Sørensen, Sperling, etc. etc. is even mentioned—who then is left to constitute the Western scholars upon whom Kværne wishes to concentrate as representative types working in one or other way with Tibetan materials?

Ah yes, of course, there are Monsieur Grenard and Captain William Henry Knight, Father Herrmanns and Dr Hummel!

No critical attitudes, then?

Well, some slabs left and right, criticizing Marcelle Lalou and Helmut Hoffmann for the fact that the New Age glasses had not yet been invented at their time, so that the picture they developed of the early Tibetan Bon religion has not been "always definitely positive" (p.54). Instead, they perceived ritualistic and—I hardly dare to repeat it—shamanistic elements in Bon. As well known to tibetologists, this situation has been elegantly up-dated by Prof. Kværne, in the meantime, not least in his recent Serindia publication illustrating his "positiveness" with many beautiful pictures.[7]

Next, employing Benavides' recent (1995)[8] portrait, Guiseppe Tucci's attitude to Tibet is caricatured as the correlative product of his fickle-minded character with pronounced pro-fascistic ambivalences. And right afterwards, we are almost moved to tears by Kværne when being introduced to the colourful picture of a neo-romantic heroism, which, as a sort of autobiographic confession, he asserts as his own true motivational state of mind when taking up Tibetan studies guided by a sense of urgency and under the weight of feeling personally addressed, something he states to have shared with a new generation of tibetologists whose youth fell in the 60s and 70s. The passage Kværne quotes to identify his state of mind as a student stems from Lopez (1995)[9] and constitutes a passage in which Lopez, anachronistically mixing temporally disparate elements together, constructs apocalyptic horizons as the unavoidable fate of the Tibetan tradition unless the heroic efforts of American graduate students would save them.[10] With some remarks on the works of respectively the historian C. I. Beckwith, the anthropologist G. Samuels, the sociologist R. D. Schwartz and the scientist of religions H. Havnevik, Prof. Kværne concludes his contribution, which, to say the least, is certainly thought-provoking.

From 1904 to 1947, there were constantly British officers in Tibet—in a Tibet which in the period from 1913 to 1950 *de facto* functioned as an independent state. Alex C. McKay's important contribution[11] investigates the dynamics of the almost absolute British control of the informations about Tibet in most of the first half of the 20th century. While the officers actually working in Tibet strongly supported (and even guided) the 13th Dalai Lama's efforts to receive the international recognition of Tibet's independent status as a national state, they could not openly contradict their government's policy, which, unwilling to threaten their commercial interests in China, did stubbornly refuse to recognize Tibet's national independence from China.[12]

Concentrating on the topic of cinematography and covering roughly the first half of the 20th century, Peter H. Hansen has researched both "Tibet as represented

in Western cinemas" and "the reception of the cinema in Tibet." After an initial embarrassment felt by Tibetan officials about scenes in films that had been created in the early 1920s by the British Mt. Everest expedition headed by General C. G. Bruce and had contained extended ethnographic passages documenting the Tibetan daily life, the Tibetans became rather fond of this new medium, in course of time. Especially the diplomat Sir Basil Gould and his secretary Spencer Chapman produced many films in and around Lhasa (usually avoiding scenes that could be felt as embarrassing) throughout the 30s. Supplemented by Western products like Rin tin tin in *The Night Cry* and various Charlie Chaplin films, they frequently showed these to officials, monks and Lhasa families on exceedingly successful film-parties. Though the parties came to an end in the 40s, their impact continued to reverberate so much that the Dalai Lama not only requested Heinrich Harrer, his Austrian friend, to produce some films (with a camera given to Harrer by the Dalai Lama specifically for this purpose), but also to construct a cinema in the Nor bu gling ka, His Holiness' summer residence. The cinema was opened in 1950 and very soon indeed—as what was to become one of the last film-shows in the Nor bu gling ka before the Chinese invasion later in the same year—His Holiness showed the film he had recently produced himself.

Due to other preoccupations (as a note of the editors informs us), Reinhard Greve's elaborations of the German Nazis' imagination of Tibet could not be completed in due time, but have nevertheless been included in their preliminary state because of their intrinsic value for a German readership. Greve focuses mainly on the ambivalent pictures of the Tibetan people in view of their racial appurtenance (mixed with some morbidly speculative and exotic ideas about the Tibetan culture) as propounded by two researchers, who were likewise associated with the foundation of a Sven Hedin-Institute (*Sven Hedin Reichsinstitut für Innerasien*) in Munich, in January 1943: Ernst Schäfer and Bruno Beger. As a previous member of two American-German expeditions to Eastern Tibet (in 1931/32 and 1934/36), Schäfer organized his own Tibet-expedition in 1938/39, which included Beger as a participant. Both were SS members and necessarily associated with Heinrich Himmler, yet their research interests were different. As a pupil of the Jenaer professor for racial research H. F. K. Günther, Beger's interest has been more restricted to locating remnants of the "Nordic race" in Tibet and Asia; less obsessed with racial occultism and rather interested in synthesizing anthropological, zoological, botanical and geological researches, Schäfer was more enthusiastic about Tibet as key-region and home of rare species for his studies of flora and fauna. Excited new plans to enter Tibet via Russia, however, came to an unexpectedly sudden end, already in February 1943, with the capitulation of the German army at Stalingrad.

Against the general background of a preceding investigation of the various ambivalent attitudes that are nourished by the Han-Chinese in representations of ethnic "minorities" on Chinese territory (e.g., the exotic-erotic versus the uncultured barbarian), Thomas Heberer comes to focus upon the different Tibet images generated in Han propaganda, especially in connection with legitimizing China's assumed role of superiority in relation to Tibet.

The struggle of political opinions between Western pro-Chinese and pro-Tibetan positions in the second half of the 20th century has been analysed (and furnished with anecdotal materials illustrating its dynamics) by Oskar Weggel, who ends up introducing the Dalai Lama's Five-Point Plan from September 1987 as a sort of middle path.

H. P. Blavatsky, the Russian (later American) occultist and co-founder of the Theosophical Society, and her specific appropriation of mystified Tibetan horizons of connotations, form the substance of the first part of Poul Pedersen's elaborations. Leaving theosophical mysticism behind, Pedersen recognizes what he calls a psychologization of (Tibetan) Buddhism as the subsequent paradigm for the appropriation of Tibetan cultural products. Though initiated already by Blavatsky, C. G. Jung is said to have effected the greatest influence in this phase by propagating Asian thought, including Buddhism, in terms of psychological notions with therapeutic ends.[13] Due not least to Jung's success, the receptive ground of understanding was soon specifically prestructured so that, when the first Tibetan teachers such as Tarthang Tulku and Chögyam Trungpa arrived in America, these reincarnated lamas skilfully responded to their often psychologically trained clientele with training programmes refining the clientele's notions about the possibility of such, while adding a pragmatic basis for forms of application.[14]

The aim of Frank J. Korom's article "Tibet and the New-Age Movement" has apparently been to sketch the development of creative imaginations featuring Tibet in the minds of New Age protagonists.[15] Unfortunately, Korom's notion of "New Age" is so blurred that, on the one hand, he can deride the psychologist C. G. Jung and the historian of religions Mircea Eliade as "popular scientists" and enlist them as supporters of the concerns of the New Age movement, while he is, on the other hand, able to regard the mass-media as New Age agents efficiently promoting simultaneously popularised and trivialized imaginations of Tibet. Due to his failure of providing useful differentiations,[16] Korom merely succeeds in conjuring up a construct of a New Age crowd from which he can easily distance himself with smiling contempt—while, in fact, the caption he placed at the beginning of his essay does certainly not exclude his own contribution: "I dare to assert that this country suffers from a sickness which I would like to designate as hypertrophic eclecticism."[17]

Donald S. Lopez had originally been requested, as he says, to provide a contribution on the four "great mystificators" Nicholas Roerich, Alexandra David-Neel, Lama Govinda (alias Ernst Hoffmann) and Lobsang T. Rampa (alias Cyril Hoskin). Assessing this task to be one beyond his capacities, Lopez is certainly right when he states that Rampa may by no means be placed on equal footing with the first three personalities. But he appears to be almost too self-denigrating when, apparently to prove his point, he concentrates exclusively on Rampa and slowly adopts his level of pointless reflections, in front of the bored reader (speaking for myself), to that of his investigated subject. Though it is true that it is not easy to juxtapose Rampa with either Roerich, David-Neel or Govinda, the introduction of a contrastive tension would no doubt have benefited Lopez's presentation.[18]

Peter Bishop provides a fascinating sequence of impressions about how suggestive images of Tibet have been used in Western novels since Balsac's *Père Gonot* (1835) up to the present. This contribution is a very useful deconstruction of the modern (and post-modern) demystificators' possible disposition to the myth that, before them, Tibet had been portrayed in "nothing but Shangri-La images" only.

Proceeding from reflections on the travelling exhibition *Wisdom & Compassion* as contributing something one might designate as a new paradigm of Tibetological perception, or as a new Tibet-Myth, within the historical development of the scholarly field of Tibetan History of Art, Heather Stoddard pointedly highlights various stages of perceiving Tibetan art, from the earliest available Western sources to the

20th century, and she contrasts these with impressions of the ways of how their art is seen by Tibetans themselves.

Providing a résumé of 33 years of collaboration with mainly dGe lugs pa scholars, Jeffrey Hopkins draws a vivid picture of what he describes as a fairly pathological nature of the traditional educational system for monks in dGe lugs pa monasteries. Identified, through heavy indoctrination, with a particular college in terms of dogmatic attachment to the views of its divinized textbook-authors, while nourishing hateful contempt for the views of the neighbouring college's textbooks, it is this type of fractional narrow-mindedness which then comes to impress itself on the Tibetan society as a whole, to endow it with its characteristic problems of authentic internal communication. Relaxingly free from *Hobginz*-isms, this is a surprisingly authentic and insightful contribution.

The essence of Elliot Sperling's contribution is a critique of the attitude that naively glorifies and identifies the dogma of strict non-violence *(ahiṃsā*) with the institution of the Dalai Lama as such. Whereas it is convenient enough for the present Dalai Lama to proclaim his ideal while sitting in a cosy distance from the factual events and people concerned, while preaching to his New-Age and Hollywood admirers or parading with shrewd politicians and institutional heads as their public good conscience, when directly confronted with, and actually involved in, dangerous situations of life-threatening character it may also for him be less easy to really practise non-violence (as well-known from his own honest report, in historical reality he had, understandably enough, not been able to advise those Khampas, who saved his life and freedom, to drop their weapons and face the brutal cynicism of China in an attitude of non-violence).

And exemplifying the factual reality of the attitudes which Dalai Lamas have historically been able to develop with regard to their adversaries, Sperling quotes the Fifth (the so-called "Great Fifth") Dalai Lama's instructions for the treatment of his political enemies—instructions, many genocidal tyrants would have felt to be the very ones written in their own hearts!

At least for the present reader, Sperling has succeeded in demonstrating that, similar to his endless repetition of stating to be merely a simple monk, the present Dalai Lama's proclamation of non-violence may rather constitute a case of empty idolatry without any real grounding in factual politically efficient actions.[19] Without wishing to question the seriousness of his identification with an elevated ideal of *ahiṃsā*, one cannot avoid to consider the Dalai Lama's self-comparison with Mahatma Gandhi as fairly misconceived, since, after all, Gandhi was a real man living a factual existence engaged in a fight for freedom at the very bottom level, he was authentic in his strongly down-to-earth style of practically applying what he was saying, while being himself always there where he wanted it to be applied—at the very risk of his own life. Going beyond Sperling, on basis of the evidence adduced by other researchers (including some of the contributors to the volume under review; cf. below) one might even fear that, quite contrary to Gandhi's modes of advising and performing actions in immediate harmony with his people, the Dalai Lama's demand from his people to artificially identify with his newest New Age ideas may actually have harmful consequences: it may introduce inner conflicts and a sense of self-alienation into his people, thus add another neurotic layer to their already wounded collective psyche.

Based on first-hand observations spanning a time of more than 20 years,[20] Helena Norberg-Hodge is able to demonstrate that, far from being profitable, the introduction of cultural changes among the Tibetans in Ladakh motivated by Western rhetorics of progress has led to unprecedented ecological and sociological problems which, if not reversed, will result into a decay of the indigenous culture. Contrasting the traditional holistic integrity of the Ladakhis with their natural surroundings to the largely unhealthy patterns of functioning of Western societies, whose reflective awareness of their own arrogance is successfully prevented by collectively compensatory dream & illusion fabrication activities of their mass media, Norberg-Hodge drastically deconstructs the Western myth of its own superiority and recalls the fact that it is really the Western civilization that is globally responsible for untold damages on all levels.

In his sagaciously differentiated article Graham E. Clarke convincingly steers clear of the ideologically polarized forms of discussion so commonly dominating contemporary reflections concerning the development of Tibet's ecosystem. Identifying both the misplaced idealisations of Western environment-groups and supporters-of-Tibet, on the one hand, the narrowly one-sided visions of economic, technological and material progress adopted and implemented by the Chinese government, on the other hand, he scrutinizes the very specific conditions of the ecology of Tibet as a mountainous highland region in an irreversible process of transition from a traditional to a modern culture. Particular vulnerabilities of the biological balance in face of a deficit of an efficiently institutionalized control based on adequate modes of understanding these factors are descriptively illustrated with a variety of examples highlighting the tension of ecological changes vis-à-vis policies of economic and related growth (e.g., growing towns as subventionized centres of novel norms of consuming standards generate ever higher demands of energy both for immediate use and for the production of goods for the local market; renewable sources of energy are scarce; excessive use of non-renewable biological resources is a regular phenomenon; heavy environmental pollution is strongly reinforced by the fact that the Tibetan and Han-Chinese population is little aware of its self-destructive behaviour as a problem, as yet; etc.).

As Clarke concludes,[21] both the Tibetans and the Chinese participate in accentuating the priority of these economic changes, which, after all, have to be placed within the larger framework of global transformations whose original intellectual foundations can easily be located within the history of Western civilization.

Though he is very conscious of the fact that it is impossible to do justice to the whole context relevant to his theme within the limits of a short article, Toni Huber—choosing some of the Tibetan exile government's recent favourite leitmotifs, viz. "ecological balance" and "ecological protection"—tries to illustrate how a small political elite controlling Dharamsala's "industry of identity" produces images in, and about, the Tibetans rather in terms of strategic marketing techniques serving to address the grass-root and New Age values of an international scene of contemporary Western Tibet-sympathizers.[22]

Also Jamyang Norbu recognizes the dangerous superficiality of the attention the Tibetans are invested with, while being hyper-exposed to projections generating a Tibet of a dreamlike Shangri-La quality. Usually compensating the hard-core existential and material realities of the West, the Western wish to protect the "cultural purity" of such "Shangri-La societies" (Tibet being not the only one) seems often to entail the imagination of having to guard these against the realities of the

world, especially against politics, commerce and technologies. However well-meant such considerations might be, it does certainly by-pass the historical situation of those to whom such protective care is meant to have to be extended, as well as their geopolitical role and the wish of the people themselves. *En passant* Jamyang Norbu unmasks, for example, the American anthropologist Melvyn Goldstein as an unconscious victim of exactly this pattern of well-meaning Western care for cultural preservation, when (perhaps inspired by the way the American Indians have been treated in the USA) the latter in his controversial essay "The Dragon and the Snow Lion"[23] had suggested as a solution for the Tibet-question that China might retain the political, military and economic control, whereas the freedom to live in cultural reservations should be granted to the Tibetans—factual world to the Chinese, Shangri-La dream world to the Tibetans!

Yet indeed, as Jamyang Norbu elucidates, though the Shangri-La version of Tibet is originally a Western imaginative product, in a subtle way it is more and more also informing the imagination of exile Tibetans creating the construct of their lost country. This process is being actively supported by the political elite of the Tibetan exile society, who considers it as a central task to propagate a utopian picture of Tibet before 1959 as a land of peace, harmony and spirituality. Eager to maintain a positive image in the eyes of Western enthusiasts, the political decisions of the exile government during more than a decade do likewise reflect what is basically a New Age attitude (cf. also Toni Huber's contribution). The national fight for an independent Tibet has been replaced by a hollow agenda filled with ecological, pacifistic, spiritual and "universal" considerations which often have very little to do with Tibet's actual problems. And if the Dalai Lama, as Jamyang Norbu points out, recently asserted the independence of Tibet to be less important than the preservation of the Tibetan Buddhist culture, he may have been sure of the applause of many of his Western disciples primarily perhaps interested, not in the survival of a Tibetan Nation, but in Tibetan teachings of wisdom to save them from the ruins of self-destructive occidental civilization.[24]

Starting with imaginations articulated in the 18th century, Loden Sherab Dagyab provides, in broad strokes, an impressionistic sketch of the changing patterns of projecting Tibet in the West: from Johann Gottfried Herder's conception of the Tibetans as a rough mountain people—still caught in the "delusion of Buddhism," but being already on the way towards humanity—to the utopia of a romantic myth of Tibet, addictively clung to by numerous modern Westerners for reasons of compulsively compensating the common barrenness of souls growing up under typically self-alienating conditions in bureaucratic industrialized societies. And now within concrete reach since a few decades, the lama more often than not comes to function as both the catalytic agent for, and the subject of, undeserved aggrandizement of projected images within contexts of exploitative lama-disciple relationships. Loden Sherab Dagyab exposes and criticises this pervasive perversion of an intrinsically most precious type of human intersubjectivity and demands the continued radical investigation of also those damaging resonances spreading from the core of a naively romanticized "Tibet" as harmful effects into forms of contemporary Western engagement with Tibetan Buddhism. Indeed, he goes so far as to conclude that, reviewing the past 30 years, the so-called positive aspects of the transmitted Tibet-imagination has, in the long run, proved as rather disadvantageous for the spread of Buddhism, whereas the negative aspects had at least the

advantage of provoking Tibetan lamas and Western disciples to perform critical and finally fruitful self-investigations.

In the full awareness of the potentially provocative nature of some of the articles included, Thierry Dodin and Heinz Räther conclude their synthetic attempt of finally reviewing and accentuating the various perspectives presented in this volume with a statement duly underlining the significance of investigating the "Myth of Tibet" to be that of contributing to a fact-oriented discussion of Tibet for the sake of supporting a realization of the rightful cause of the Tibetans.[25]

Notes

1. Books related to the present context are, e.g., Peter Bishop, *The Myth of Shangri-La: Tibet, Travel Writing, and the Western Creation of Sacred Landscape*, London/Berkeley, 1989; idem, *Dreams of Power: Tibetan Buddhism & the Western Imagination*, London 1993; *Constructing Tibetan Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, (ed.) Frank J. Korom, Quebec, 1997; *Tibetan Culture in the Diaspora: Papers presented at a Panel of the 7th Seminar of the IATS, Graz 1995*, (ed.) Frank J. Korom, Wien 1997; Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West*, Chicago/London, 1998. Lopez's book had a rather provocative effect on the American tibetological scene: based on a panel at the 1999 AAR Annual Meeting in Boston, three review essays and a response appeared in the *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol.69/1 (March 2001).
2. According to the publisher DuMont, some of the papers appearing in *Mythos Tibet* have in fact already appeared at different places and in various shapes—in either preliminary, enlarged or verbally very similar shapes—as English versions.
3. In case of Csoma de Körös this is, however, quite understandable, since literature on this pioneer in Tibetan studies is not lacking. It is most convenient here to refer to Donald S. Lopez's article "Foreigner at the Lama's Feet" in the volume *Curators of the Buddha* (1995) edited by himself; there he contrasts—as a background to set off his own autobiographical projections—Csoma de Körös (cf. p.290 for references to earlier studies on him) with L. Austin Waddell.
4. Though referring to the opinion of the missionaries, who took the powerful Buddhist monasteries as the main obstacle, Bray does not seriously discuss the political motivations for the refusal, nor the aspect of foreign (Chinese, British) involvement in this decision.
5. However, Bray's present contribution is only one in a sequence of specialized studies in this field (since 1983) and his other publications do certainly serve to provide a more complete picture.
6. Actually, Wylie's (HJAS 22 [1959]) arguments for practical simplification represent a very particular stage of technical development: they were related to the problems of writing diacritical signs with a standard typewriter. Nowadays, nobody uses typewriters any longer; scholars use computers without having Wylie's problems with those letters that regularly require additional signs.
7. Per Kværne, *The Bon Religion of Tibet. The Iconography of a Living Tradition,* Serindia Publications, London, 1995.
8. Gustavo Benavides, "Giuseppe Tucci, or Buddhology in the Age of Fascism," in: Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (ed.), *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*. Chicago and London, 1995, pp.161-196.
9. Op. cit., p.268.
10. To come down to earth again: the memory of Maurice Frydman (1894-1976), however, a remarkably charismatic character, who, born in the Jewish ghetto of Krakaw, had already been a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi and then played a most crucial role as the man who first fought successfully for the official refugee status of the Tibetans in 1959 and thereafter for land and money to settle them in India, seems to have faded a bit.
11. See also Alex McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj: The Frontier Cadre 1904-1947,* Curzon Press, Richmond, 1997.

12. The political games that occurred apart, the very notion of a "national entity" is not at all one that can historically be easily defined in juridical terms; cf. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso 1983 (rev. ed. 1991). The notes (ns. 29ff.) to Lopez's few reflections in his *Prisoners of Shangri-La* (pp.196ff.) conveniently draw attention to recent Tibetan studies reflecting this question.
13. On Jung's role in this respect, see also L. O. Gomez, "Oriental Wisdom and the Cure of Souls: Jung and the Indian East," in: D. S. Lopez (ed.), *Curators of the Buddha: The Study of Buddhism under Colonialism*. Chicago and London, 1995, pp.97-250. The notion of psychologizing Tibetan themes has also been taken up by Lopez in chapter 2, "The Book," of his *Prisoners of Shangri-La*.
14. Pedersen's considerably simplified outline does not consider the works commented upon (by Jung) as such (e.g., several books by the team Kazi Dawa-Samdup/Evans-Wentz), nor the works by e.g., Lama Anagarika Govinda or the early Herbert V. Guenther—not to mention the later Guenther. Indeed, for anybody really interested in investigating the subtle influences of hermeneutic models applied to Tibetan thought in the latter half of the 20th century, the work of H. V. Guenther is indispensable: throughout the last four decades his books have almost seismographically registered and appropriated changes of philosophically toned semi-popular attitudes, the existence of which had usually not even been noticed by most of the other tibetological scholars.
15. A slightly different and expanded version of his paper is found in Korom (ed.), *Constructing Tibetan Culture: Contemporary Perspectives* (cf. note.1) under the title "Old Age Tibet in New Age America."
16. Necessary are differentiation not only with regard to possible paradigmatic horizons the participants of identifiable groups have adopted as their referential framework, but also, e.g., the roles (ideological, sociological, etc.) of Tibetan teachers vis-à-vis their Western students as nourishers of fantastic projections in the latter. As regards the question of defining and thematizing the New Age movement, a foundation has recently been laid by Wouter J. Hanegraff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture, Esoterism in the Mirror of Secular Thought*, Brill, Leiden-New York-Köln, 1996.
17. Without access to the original wording, this quotation has been retranslated from the available German into English. Apparently speaking at the Naropa Institute, Agehananda Bharati was obviously addressing a young American audience.
18. Probably constituting a preliminary version, Lopez's presentation in *Mythos Tibet* is closely related to chapter 3, "The Eye," in his *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, 1998. "The Eye" is a clearly improved version.
19. This raises of course the general question concerning the active role a monk is supposed to play in politics, the core arena of deluded samsaric engagement. In case of the Dalai Lama, invoking the historical Janus-role of his institution, the distinctions seem to have become irrecoverably blurred. Anyway, sincere purists will have a very difficult stand when engaging with this dGe lugs pa head, who, ironically enough, naturally takes a great pride in representing the purist tradition of Tsoṃ kha pa. Tibetology still looks for her Bernard Faure.
20. Cf. also Helena Norberg-Hodge, *Ancient Future, Learning from Ladakh*, San Francisco, 1991.
21. For detailed and more extensive elaboration of the larger context, see Graham E. Clarke (ed.), *Development, Society, and Environment in Tibet: Papers Presented at a Panel of the 7th Seminar of the IATS, Graz 1995,* Wien, 1998.
22. See hereto also Toni Huber, "Green Tibetans: A Brief Social History" in: Frank J. Korom (ed.) *Tibetan Culture in the Diaspora: Papers presented at a Panel of the 7th Seminar of the IATS, Graz 1995,* (cf. above note.1).
23. M. Goldstein, "The Dragon and the Snow Lion: The Tibetan Question in the 20th Century," in *Tibetan Review*, XXVI, 4 (1991), pp.9-26.

24. Also Lopez, in chapter 7, "The Prisoner," of his *The Prisoners of Shangri-La* is taking up the tragi-comical dream-world of a Dalai Lama, who, in my view, certainly deserves all the applause for his consummate actorship admirably demonstrating his capacities as an embodiment of magical creativity (*sprul sku*), yet who, at the same time, serves only too willingly as the most welcome receptor of the "gratitude" of so many Western institutions and cultural societies bestowing upon him heaps of honorary titles as an alibi attesting to their "goodness," while they shamelessly continue to let the reality standards on the political level of hard-core socio-economics be prescribed to their governments by the Chinese. Whereas there can be no doubt that Lopez's work on demystifying Tibetan horizons is generally quite in line with what the contributors to *Mythos Tibet* have evidently considered as a task that is most pertinent, Lopez's stand among American tibetologists seems not to be an easy one. This is perhaps not surprising, given the genesis of the field of Tibetan studies in America as analyzed by Lopez, op. cit., chapter 6, himself (though a deeper analysis with greater detail is clearly still a desideratum). What is surprising, however, is the degree of fundamentalist identification encumbering even persons of supposedly considerable academic acumen, such as the American Je Tsong Khapa "throne-holder" at Columbia University: being one of the most active and influential contemporary *promoters* of the "Myth of Tibet" on various levels, he may have failed to recognize, when recently assaulting Lopez's *Prisoners* (JAAR 69/1; cf. above note.1), that the grossly angry display of his insubstantial attack did actually only highlight its nature.
25. By way of congratulating Thierry Dodin and Heinz Räther for successfully co-ordinating such an enlightening wealth of critical reflections, let me add a few pertinent reflections concentrating on the fact that the answer to the political question of what "the rightful cause of the Tibetans" entails does rather directly depend on how the traditional Tibetan-Chinese relationship is getting translated into the modern notion of "national state."

    The intentional misinterpretation of this historical relationship by the communist Chinese is rendered fairly obvious by the brutal violence it needed (and still needs) to enforce it upon—also according to pre-communist Chinese own accounts—a foreign people of distinct linguistic and cultural identity. The easy international acceptance of the Chinese interpretation has to be understood within the framework of an equally brutal, dehumanizing capitalistic globalization against which a steadily growing number of diverse groups of people with pro-humanistic inclinations are protesting and have already staged various massive demonstrations (Seattle, Nice, Quebec, Genoa, etc.).

    Nevertheless, and this is a basic point about which there is little span for disagreement with the Dalai Lama, a constructive dialogue is possible only between reasonable humans mutually not devilizing each other. In fact, the Dalai Lama's vision of a future Tibet as a well-functioning democracy can actually be seen as an implicit defense of China's presence in Tibet. Democracy as a thoroughly secular system of political decision requiring individual capacities of awareness made available for collective planning is dependent on a well-organized infrastructure—and nobody can deny that the Chinese have enormously contributed to the development of these two factors in Tibet: secular political awareness and infrastructure.

    The Dalai Lama's conception of an "autonomous region of Tibet," however, comes close to Goldstein's suggested solution for the Tibetans, which has been legitimately rejected by Jamyang Norbu and others. Such a conception is a compromise out of despair, not based on a sober assessment of the proper right of Tibet to throw off colonialist tutelage just as former colonies have been granted freedom from European rulership. Like those many states that regained their individual political self-determinacy on the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Tibet has to regain her capacity of diplomatically relating in friendly and mutually respectful terms with China on basis of a status that translates best into the modern notion of a "national state." Time is precious, much may depend on the new exile government's efficiency of co-operating with international juridical organs; there is a new Court of Human Rights in The Hague, an important deadline is 2008.

Conference Report

L'opera tibetana—Un teatro vivente (*Tibetan Opera—A Living Theatre*)
Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia, May, 5-8th 2001

Spotlights on the Tibetan Theatre

Walter Church

The event organized by the Cini Foundation, with the Biennale Teatro, the contribution of Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (Rome), of the East Asia Studies and the Arts Departments of the Venetia University Ca' Foscari and the Fundação Oriente of Lisbon, has been widely recognized as the first authoritative meeting, on a world level, on the subject of the Tibetan theatre *A ce lha mo*. To organize it, a long and patient work has been carried out by the "Venezia e l'Oriente" Institute of the foundation, under the scientific guidance of Antonio Attisani and Ramon N. Prats, and the direction of the Sinologists Alfredo Cadonna and Ester Bianchi.

The Tibetan Opera—A Living Theatre was the title of the event, held in Venice from May 5th to 8th 2001.

On the first day, there was the official opening of the exhibit of *a ce lha mo* masks and costumes from the Jacques Pimpaneau's collection, which has been acquired by the Fundação Oriente, and the presentation of a short documentary *On the traces of a lost theatre*, by A. and R. Attisani, which shows, among others, some historical pictures of *lha mo* performers taken decades ago by Fosco Maraini (also interviewed on his memories, as well as Luciano Petech), Giuseppe Tucci and others. The afternoon was scheduled for a successful conference of Ven. Thubten Wangchen, Director of the Tibet House in Barcelona, while in the evening there was the performance of some Tibetan artists in exile: Nelung Tsering Topten and Lodroi Seykejhang are living in Switzerland, where they try to keep alive the memory of the Tibetan opera and folk culture, while Tenzin Gönpo is a well-known actor and singer, trained at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA) and currently living in Paris. The two executed several chants from various operas, while Gönpo gave a short play showing the various aspects of the *lha mo* performance. With them on the stage were the Master Norbu Tsering and Lobsang Samten, the Artistic Director of TIPA. That performance has been recorded and a CD made available by the Biennale (e-mail: dtmpress@labiennale.com).

The following day was devoted to a practical seminar. The Belgian Anthropologist Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy introduced the actors. In the first part, Norbu Tsering and Lobsang Samten explained how they learned the art of *lha mo.* Norbu Tsering deeply impressed the audience with the souvenirs of his first steps, in Tibet previous 1959. After that, 20 Italian actors and actresses were guided by Tibetan colleagues in learning a full *lha mo* sequence. By this, everybody could understand how difficult it is to obtain that sort of naturalness and lightness, that is the first characteristic of the *lha mo* as perceived by foreign observers, and how skilled in vocal and choreography are the Tibetan interpreters. Unfortunately, in this session and in the followings two other Tibetan actors from Lhasa: Dorje Damdul and Tseten Dorje, the last being the younger brother of Master Norbu Tsering and the two having taken different ways at the very beginning of the 1960s could not take part.

The Lhasan artists were officially invited by the Italian institutions and had obtained their visa, but some weeks before the date, the Chinese embassy in Rome ceased to answer and it was impossible to obtain any news of them. The Chinese arrogance manifested itself, this time, with the silence, but the Italian and international press, as well as some international television channels, have covered the fact and underlined the further violation of human and cultural rights. As a matter of fact, among the participants of the symposium started a very interesting discussion on "cultural crimes" in Tibet, a subject for future meetings.

On May 7th, the symposium started with the first session, *A theatre beyond history*. A. Attisani briefly introduced the topic, explaining how in the last decade the *lha mo* has emerged again in the cultural scene, why it is an important theatrical tradition to be known in all the world, which is the state of the studies and what should and will be done, from today further on. The first speaker was Rakra Tethong Rinpoche and immediately the atmosphere was very attentive, both for his special personality and for the things that he was going to tell. As a young monk of Drepung Monastery, Rakra Tethong did know and was especially fond of the *Gyang khar wa* (Gyangara) theatre troupe. His remarks on that topic will remain in the annals, also due to the lacking of other sources. But one must underline his "revelation", that is the explanation that the famous *Zho ston* (Shotön) festival, told by everybody since today being the "Yogurt festival" was in reality a "Celebration of the Morning", as *Zho ston* is a short form of *Zhog gas kyi dga' ston*.

Following to him, Erberto Lo Bue has given a very interesting speech on an apparently strange topic. He has studied the *Srid pa'i bar do'i dge sdig rang gzugs bstan pa'i gdams pa srid pa bar do rang grol* (*The Yama's Judgement*), an ancient text included in the *Bar do thos grol* volume, and suggested that it may well represent one of the earliest religious drama performed in Tibet. It appears as a mystery play rather than a religious ceremony. Of Indian background, it has reached Central Tibet during the eighth century and spread in the rest of the country in the 15th century.

As Tashi Tsering—the Amnye Machen's Director who provided considerable help in organization of the event—could not arrive personally in Venice, his paper was read by somebody else. The Tibetan scholar has gone through five biographies of Thang stong rgyal po (Thangtong Gyalpo) and tried to single out elements where we could hope to find references about *a ce lha mo*, but could not find any mention. The same happened with the related written sources. Going deeper and deeper with investigations, passing from the oral traditions and the text recited by the Hunters (*rngon pa'i don*), Tashi Tsering lined up a few arguments which throw some doubts as to the paternity of the *a ce lha mo* tradition. The term seems to be first used for a performance at Dga' ldan pho brang (Ganden Monastery) ceremonies in 1691, while in 1755 we find a list of 17 *a ce lha mo* troupes from various places, aristocratic estates and monasteries from Central Tibet. Tashi Tsering has finally proposed his personal view of the *a ce lha mo* as it is known today.

In the afternoon, Jamyang Norbu and Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy gave their speeches on the situation of the Tibetan theatre after the Fifties, both in exile and in occupied Tibet. The first had been for some years the TIPA's director. He knows very well the situation of the crucial beginnings and that of today, and could relate as well on the diaspora artists that are currently operating in different countries. His point of view on the Tibetan cultural politics in exile is very severe, but his analysis is not superficial and his criticism to the present underestimation of the lay culture is motivated and respectful of the traditional heritage. The Belgian scholar, who lived more than two years in Tibet, gave an account divided in four analytical themes. She retraced the state of the performing arts in the region over the last 50 years and showed how the historical events have affected *lha mo*; she described the most important troupes of the actual Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) and pointed out the significance of the renewed Shotön festival; finally, she compared the production of the state *lha mo* troupe and that of one of the most prominent amateur troupes, which consider itself to hold "the" genuine traditional style.

The following session was supposed to be dedicated to Dorje Damdul and Tseten Dorje, who should have met the audience for a conference on "Being actors in Lhasa today", but—as we told—they were forbidden to come. A video shot by the Sinologist Jacques Pimpaneau in 1997 was showed and commented by the author. The documentary is about the Shotön festival in Lhasa and one can see both the changes due to the vulgar Chinese ideology about the real "life of the people", and some of those non-professional artists that keep at least the right voices and movements.

On May 8th, Ramon Prats was the president of the important session devoted at first to the operatic aspect of the *a ce lha mo*. Again, Isabelle Henrion-Dourcy, this time with the

essential collaboration of Tenzin Gönpo, one of the most prominent *lhamo* singers of the younger generation, gave a speech on *Characterisation, ornamentation, glottalisation: explorations of the art of the lha mo singer*. Here, many artistic skills are necessary for the narration in prose, *lha mo* solo songs, chorus, dance, folk songs uttered on the slow dances and comic improvisations, all aspects of an unique performing art, that some young Tibetan artists—unfortunately scattered in the entire world—represents at its best.

The session continued with Anne-Marie Blondeau. The French Tibetologist has been the first to consider the *thang ka* (painted scrolls) as a source for invaluable information concerning also the *lha mo* tradition. This time she focused on a neglected but non-secondary aspect of the Tibetan performing customs: the *bla ma ma ni* (story singers). Showing many slides of some of these storytellers in activity today, Blondeau offered some more information on the way they recite and on the actual revival of the tradition.

In the last session, the Indologist Alessandro Grossato spoke about the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the ancient Hindu treatise that has influenced also the performing arts of the Tibetan plateau, while the Sinologist Isabella Falaschi presented the only surviving mural painting of a Yuan age's performance, in which one can retrace some Tibetan influences, or traces, and finally Bonaventura Ruperti gave his speech on the narrating voice in Japanese puppet theatre.

But the most touching moment was yet to come. Norbu Tsering, Lobsang Samten, Tenzin Gönpo, and Jamyang Norbu exceptionally as a cymbal player, have improvised a show. It was one of the last public performances of the great Master Norbu Tsering, who gave his blessing to the younger generation. Everybody in the audience could perceive the extraordinary occasion and the touching singing and dancing of the Master, who was finally submerged and embraced by the applause of some hundred persons that filled up the solemn main hall of the Cini Foundation, on the San Giorgio island. The Master was happy and for a while looked tired, after days and nights of working and talking, specially with his colleagues. All the guests signed and offered him a letter of thanks, in which he is defined *A Jewel of the Tibetan Culture*.

We could stop the report on this touching note, but it is useful also to emphasize the work which is continuing. For an example, one should remind that a recording has been made of some opera songs chanted by Norbu Tsering and Tenzin Gönpo, and this will constitute an important document of their non-common and different skills (contact@tibetanmusic.com); one must remember also that the Cini will provide the proceedings of the symposium in 2002 (most of the texts will be published in English. For information e-mail: iveo@cini.it); and finally that A. Attisani has just published two books on *A ce lha mo*, the first regarding its ancient roots and history (*A ce lha mo—Studio sulle forme della teatralità tibetana*, Firenze: Olschki, 2001), and the second concerning its life after the Chinese take-over (*Uno strano teatro*, Torino: Legenda, 2001). As for the moment, they are available only in Italian edition (e-mail: legenda @tin.it).

As one sees, once again something of such an importance to Tibetan culture did not happen in Tibet, but on the other side of the world, some pages will appear in the Tibetan cultural annals have been written in Venice. Anyway, if we consider that Venice has always been a bridge between West and East, we can be optimistic, at least symbolically, and tell: next time in Lhasa!

Book Reviews

Ajanta. Handbook of the Paintings by Dieter Schlingloff, Harrassowitz, Verlag, Wiesbaden, 2000, 3 vols., b/w drawings, introd., bibl., ind. ISBN 3-447-04248-6; paperback. Euros 101.24

Professor Dieter Schlingloff is a well-known specialist in the study of the most famous Buddhist paintings in India: fifteen years ago he had already made a significant contribution to the subject with his *Studies in Ajanta Paintings. Identifications and Interpretations* (Ajanta Publications, Delhi, 1998).

This new work of his consists of three volumes: the first one, *Narrative Wall-paintings* (517pp.) is devoted to the iconographic interpretation of the subjects depicted in the caves. In particular, pp. 6-18 illustrate the plans of relevant caves (pp.6-8) and affords a table of concordance of the cave, plate and subject numbers published in the third volume with the numbering adopted in the first volume (pp.9-10), as well as an introduction, "Preliminary Remarks on the Formal Aspects" (pp.11-14), explaining the methodology adopted in the organization of the material and introducing some important abbreviations. The paintings are divided into two main groups: those attributed to the second century B. C. (pp.17-73) and those dated to the fifth century A. D. (pp.76-517). The former is subdivided into three sections: "The Buddha in Former Existences" (pp.17-38); "The Superhuman Events of the Buddha's Life" (pp.39-71); and "Episodes from the Life of the Buddha" (pp.71-73). The paintings attributed to the fifth century are subdivided into five sections: "The Buddha in Former Existences" (pp.76-293); "Birth and Youth of the Bodhisattva" (pp.294-380); "Episodes from the Life of the Buddha" (pp.381-451); "Central Events in Buddha's Life as Devotional Pictures" (pp.452-514); and "Fragments of Undetermined Content" (pp.515-517). These two parts and their eight sections are preceded by introductory essays in English, while the descriptions of the individual scenes are in German only, which is the limit of this publication; the latter are followed by extensive bibliographic references of relevant literature.

The second volume, *Supplement* (327pp), is divided into three sections. The first one, "Parallels in Reliefs and Paintings", affords a number of drawings by Matthias Helmdach, Waldtraut Schlingloff and Monika Zin illustrating relevant iconographic parallels of reliefs and wall paintings at various other sites in the Indian subcontinent and Central Asia (pp.4-106). The drawing in the second section (pp.106-155), "Index of Pictorial Elements" — which is preceded by one page of preliminary remarks in English—, illustrate three subjects: "The environment of Man", including natural subjects in all their manifestations, from clouds to trees, from water animals to deities (pp.108-122); "The Manifestation of Man", including Buddhas, *bodhisattvas*, monks, kings, warriors and other classes of human beings, as well as royal activities, stages in human life and forms of bodily expressions (pp.123-137); and "The Creations of Man", ranging from various types of buildings of house equipment, from transport of goods and people to music (pp.138-155). Each drawing is accompanied by reference numbers. The third section (pp.156-327) corresponds to the bibliography, which is divided into four groups of titles subdivided into various subjects: "Paintings in Ancient India" (pp.159-202), including eight headings, ranging from sites preserving fragments of paintings corresponding to Ajanta (further subdivided into 23 groups) to Sanskrit art manuals (for a total of ten); "Painting in Ajanta" (pp.203-239), subdivided into six subjects ranging from travellers' accounts to studies of themes related to Ajanta paintings; "Buddhist Narrative Literature" (pp.240-274), including bibliographies, collections and studies, literature in connection with the paintings (further subdivided into six headings) and studies of narrations depicted in Ajanta; and "Ancient Indian Reliefs" (pp.275-308), ranging

from publications reproducing relevant reliefs of different origin to studies of themes in reliefs and paintings which may be related to Ajanta paintings. This second volume ends with the authors' index (pp.309-327).

The third volume, *Plates*, includes not only the drawings of the paintings, but also a small plan of each cave with the indication of the walls where the various scenes are found; it is slim, when compared to the previous two, and its pages are unnumbered.

The value of this work lies in the strength of its twofold methodological approach—both art historical and literary—adopted by its author: the subjects of the paintings are identified and their iconography is analysed in the light of the relevant Buddhist literature. Furthermore its bibliography, perhaps the most extensive so far published on the subject, is impressive. Such features make of these three volumes a very useful tool of research not only for scholars dealing with Indian art and iconography, but also for students of Buddhist art at large, including Tibetan art, bearing in mind that the influence of Indian Buddhist iconographic themes, as well as of Indian aesthetics via the artists of the Nepal valley, was felt from the outset in Tibetan Buddhist art, for instance in the earliest wood carvings in the Lhasa Jo khang.

—Erberto Lo Bue

Tantra In Practice, (*Princeton Readings In Religions*), David Gordon White (ed.), Donald S. Lopez Jr. (Series ed.), Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2000. 640 +xviii pp.

This volume is the eighth in the series of Princeton Readings In Religions and upholds the high standards set by the previous volumes. The series is intended to form what Dr Don Lopez the general editor, refers to as works which look at "the ways in which texts have been used in diverse contexts" rather than the "canonical works model" so common in the study of religion until recently. The series achieves this aim by employing never before translated selections, encouraging an enhanced level of interest for the reader who sees not only the textual form which a religious belief may adopt, but also its actual mode of performance. This becomes especially important in the study of Tantra, which is above all else, a variety of soteriological performance employing the widest possible range of performance-skills, a veritable *tour de force* of skillful means.

The book may seem large to some, weighing in at just under one kilo. However, when one considers the extraordinarily wide range the book covers, its size seems rather modest if anything. Initially the reader might also be concerned by the lack of scholarly "apparatus" such as footnotes etc. but the introductory essays to each contribution make such "add-ons" rather unnecessary. Instead the reader has been served rather well by the inclusion of carefully planned and extremely tightly written introductions which ensure maximum understanding with minimum apparatus, most of which is subtly incorporated within the introduction to each piece. At its most basic level this allows for smoother reading of the texts themselves, an important point to consider with such difficult works.

Before discussing a selection of the contributions, it is necessary to describe the contents overall. The first few pages list the contributions in terms of the traditions they represent and the countries from which they originate so the neophyte reader is clear as to where that particular reading fits in. Then follows David White's Introduction followed by the 36 contributions themselves. The essays have been divided into categories according to criteria such as the Masters of the traditions; the patrons of Tantrism; the conditions under which Tantrism finds itself practiced; transition, harmony and conflict with other traditions; the variety of Tantric paths; Tantric ritual and finally its employment as part of a range of meditation techniques.

When one considers that the book deals *inter alia* with Tantrism as found in India, Tibet, China, Japan and Nepal it becomes clear that the book covers a vast amount of ground.

David White's Introduction makes a series of points which are assiduously followed up in one or other of the essays. He accents the links between the traditions of Tantric practice and follows themes such as that of royal patronage and the *maṇḍala* layout, not only of cities but of societal structures themselves and the internal relations of such a *polis*. He regards the "person and office of the Tantric ruler (as) the glue that holds together all three levels or types of Tantric practice."(p.24) Further to this he notes and comments further on the premise that the "idealised 'constructed kingdom' of the *maṇḍala* is the mesocosmic template between real landscapes, both geographical and political (the protocosm) and the heavenly kingdom of the godhead (metacosm) with the person of the king as god on earth constituting the idealized microcosm."(p.25)

White also tracks the apparent "differences" between various Tantric traditions and suggests the types of permutations they might have gone through as well as various transitional processes, to reach their present-day, apparently inimical positions. In several cases these apparent differences are clearly shown to be extended variations on a theme and while not propounding a theoretical union of tantric paths, White does point out more fundamental types of unity between them than their overt presentation modes would suggest.(pp.14-15)

At other places he demonstrates almost parallel processes within apparently different traditions, for example when he discusses the development of the Yogatantras and the Anuttarayogatantras within Vajrayāna Buddhism.(pp.22-23)

White's clearly draws on much that he has written in his work *The Alchemical Body; Siddha Traditions in Medieval India*, (University of Chicago Press, 1996) and the Introduction allows him to extend some of those ideas into a far wider ranging discussion. Although there is no ground-breaking new work in the Introduction (would one expect there to be such things in an Introduction anyway?) this is a concise, neatly structured and widely sourced piece of writing which serves to introduce the vast range of the book itself.

Clearly this review cannot deal with all 36 contributions so I will briefly discuss a selection of those essays which are based within what may be loosely called the "Tibetan tantric tradition" as well as a few from outside it.

Matthew Kapstein's contribution, "King Kuñji's Banquet" deals with the teachings of the siddha-yogins of India, particularly those of Lūipa, Virūpa, Saraha, Mīnapa, two Ḍākinīs and Tilopa. The setting for the story is contextualized and Kapstein notes that in some cases the songs do not always fit in with the narrative events of the siddha's lives as we may know them from other sources. This of course poses some questions such as, "Are the songs and the lives from different sources?"; "Do the songs exist independently of the lives?"; "Are there biographies in which the songs relate directly and consistently to the events of the narrative?" etc. The essay is not the place for such discussion but the issue raised is certainly one to be discussed elsewhere with some profit. I note that the word *jñāna* is now increasingly being translated as *gnostic* as Kapstein appears to do in the phrase *gnostic ḍākin*īs (p.57) but I wonder whether that word is not already too loaded with meaning from the Western traditions for satisfactory use in the Indic context.

David Germano and Janet Gyatso's essay, "Longchenpa and the Possession of the *Ḍākinīs*" deals with a description of the empowerment of Tibetan yogiṇs and yoginīs by Longchenpa (1308-1363 c. e.). The essay deals with what the authors refer to as "early tantric communities", particularly lay communities, and recalls their vital importance in the formation of Tibetan understandings of Buddhism in the Tibet of the 11th-14th centuries. Of course the same type of community as Longchenpa's is still a force in contemporary eastern Tibet (see David Germano "Re-membering the Dismembered Body of Tibet: Contemporary Tibetan Visionary Movements in the People's Republic of China" in Goldstein, M. and Kapstein, M. (eds.) *Buddhism in Contemporary Tibet*, Univ. of California Press, 1998) and present day events of 2001 have seen the closure of such "encampments" due to fear of their rising popularity in the face of China's indecision on how to handle mass spiritual activities. The essay discusses the tradition of "Treasure" discovery and its uniquely Tibetan developments as well as the role it played in the so-called "Seminal-Heart" (*sNying thig*) teachings.

Germano and Gyatso briefly discuss the doubts prevalent (then and now) concerning the genuine-ness of such recovered teachings (p.241) and in the translation the *Ḍākinī* is asked "Won't people come to see me as a charlatan?" to which the *Ḍākinī* replies in a sound common sense tone, "What's the point in those people's gossip? The fortunate ones will gather (around you) out of faith, while those without the fortune wouldn't show up even if no one at all slandered you. They would slander even the Buddha himself." (p.254) As well as profound teachings there are some entirely irrelevant but rather charming details which "humanize" the account somewhat. These concern the tantric community engaging in affable social drunkenness as well as the easily offended deity, Namdru Remati, Mistress of the Desire Realm, and her wild, abandoned and rather malicious behaviour towards the flocks of the nomads.(pp.262-264).

One of the most positive points about this volume is the thoughtful level of detail and explication found in the introductions to the translated pieces. Several of them take the reader step by step through the text they are about to read. Yael Bentor's contribution titled, "The Tibetan Practice of the Mantra Path According to Lce-sgom-pa" is a case in point. The relative complexity of the text requires a detailed introductory section which in itself becomes one of the best introductions to Buddhist tantric practice I have recently seen. lCe sgom pa's understanding of the fundamentals of Buddhist tantric practice appears to be remarkably "modern" in its structure and its overall approach, and this is remarkable as the text dates to about the 12-13th centuries. Perhaps as modern research increasingly demonstrates, this was after all, one of the most fruitful periods of Tibetan religious thought and one on which much of later developments in Tibetan praxis depends. Certainly Bentor's selection is of great interest as both a Tibetan understanding of the teachings of the great Indian siddha Nāropa, and as a stylistic formulation in itself.

Giacomella Orofino's essay, "The Great Wisdom Mother and the Gcod Tradition" is yet another masterful piece from the author. She treats gCod as a purely Tibetan development of the 11th century and proceeds to examine it from the standpoint of who or what exactly is being cut off from what. She examines the taxonomy of the concept of the "demon" as well as presenting a wide-ranging discussion on "pre-Buddhist and shamanistic elements of death and resurrection, exorcism, and decontamination."(p.397) She goes on to examines Ma gcig's life and adduces as her translated piece, a poem attributed to the "Sole Mother" herself. In spite of the relative brevity of the essay and translation (21 pages) and given the vast task she has set herself, Orofino has done a wonderful job of conveying not only the details of the gCod practices themselves, their origins and their function, but also the mood of the times in which they developed in Tibet. To accomplish this she draws on a wide range of texts to create a thorough picture of both the process and the milieu it developed in. She stresses the autonomy of the Tibetan gCod system and briefly refers to the downplaying of the role of the Indian siddha Pha Dam pa hitherto regarded as Ma gcig's "teacher." Moreover she posits that according to tradition, gCod, "…spread rapidly in India as well. According to tradition, this was the first Buddhist teaching originating in Tibet to be promulgated in the Indian subcontinent."(p.410) Given the exciting ferment that was occurring in Tibet in this era, such a claim may not be necessarily dismissed out of hand and we should hope that Giacomella Orofino follows up this study with a more substantial work.

Michael Walter's contribution, "Cheating Death" is one of those provocative essays one expects from the author. Drawing on a wide fund of expertise in Buddhist and Tibetan *arcana*, he describes the ritual of how one should be aware of the signs of impending death and to take appropriate steps to avoid them. The author of Walter's selected text, Vāgīśvarakīrti, was Atiśa's predecessor as abbot of Nālandā monastic university and much of the text itself stretches one's preconceptions as to what types of knowledge such abbots actually embodied, let alone where they derived them from. This selection seems to fly in the face of commonly accepted Buddhist norms, discussing as it does topics of apparently little interest to what we imagine as the interests of "mainstream" Buddhism. Indeed there seems to be in Vāgīśvarakīrti's text only a relatively routine statement as to why one should want

to cheat death at all. Walter translates it as; "…one will live as long as he wishes in samsāra; for that long one accumulates merit and so on. Acting so as to cultivate the thought of enlightenment, it will truly arise."(p.610) Perhaps it is the case that such knowledge was in fact relatively commonplace among tantric practitioners but was not overtly part of the curriculum at such places.

Walter gives an extremely clear overview of the internal and external cosmology and thereby offers perhaps the clearest summation of the concordance between microcosm and macrocosm and how they may be used to influence each other. The basis for Vāgīśvarakīrti's text is summed up by Walter in these words; "In terms of dying, a yogin must know how to overcome his internal "time" mechanism, what we call aging, by controlling it in the same way that Buddhism and Hinduism believe that external time can be stopped: by stopping the motion of the sun and the moon. The yogin does this internally…by meditating on deities who represent the reality behind the internal sun and moon…"(p.606)

Walter goes on to discuss the psycho-cosmological structure of the body, the internal zodiac and the use of elixirs and siddhi powers.

The translation of Vāgīśvarakīrti's text reminds me of several siddha-alchemical texts referred to in David White's *The Alchemical Body* (referred to above) inasmuch as the world we enter is dark and apparently "un-Buddhist." Here is a world of demons requiring pacification, alarming signs of impending death (some of which many people seem to have managed to live through and which yet in their very descriptions still contain palpable elements of real threat) and bodily aberrations bordering on the genetically bizarre. And yet, drawing purpose out of negativity, we are told by Vāgīśvarakīrti that the various categories of proximate death and the accompanying suffering implicit in them are *all* that we seem to have to work with in this world. We read near the colophon, the following lines, on why we *must* practice these teachings, in verses almost typically Tibetan in their direct and vernacular style;

> …do not shirk in your effort for something that is precious. In time, even slabs of stone are perforated by the gentle, constant fall of water…Human beings in the mouth of the Lord of Death are like boats in the mouth of a sea monster; if their religious actions are not perfect, they will fall into the waves of his realm. In a like way, any means of cheating death is taught to be an enemy of the Lord of Death…(then) the complete deception of the Lord of Death will have been explained, with loving care, for future generations. (p.623)

Intending no disrespect to other contributors, space permits me only to refer briefly to a few of the other sections I found of immediate use. No doubt all the others maintain the extremely high standard of the few I can report on here. June McDaniel's "Interviews with a Tantric Kālī Priest" a poignant interview with a present-day tantrika who lives only to ritually feed the skulls at pīṭhas but does not want his son to follow this tradition which is fast becoming an irrelevance in modern Bengal; the hugely funny "A Parody of the Kāpālikas in the *Mattavilāsa*" by David Lorenzen, in which both Buddhist and Jain are shown up as rather pompous, knowing and quite worldly; Bronwen Bledsoe's analysis of the unique relationship between deity and royalty in "The Goddess Taleju and the King of Kathmandu"; "Conversation between Guru Hasan Kabīruddin and Jogī Kāniphā: Tantra Revisited by the Isma'ili Preachers" by Dominique-Sila Khan in which the closeness between apparently diverse teachings is resolved; Donald Lopez Jr's "A Tantric Meditation on Emptiness" in which a text by Tsong kha pa dealing with *zhi gnas* and *lhag mthong*, visualization on form, sound and mind of the Buddha and the final stages of perfecting the mind; John Newman's "Vajrayoga in the Kālacakra Tantra" in which he translates and comments upon a small excerpt from the *Vimalaprabhā*, a commentary on the Tantra itself.

Needless to say the level of each and every contribution seems to be uniformly very high and the book provides much thought-provoking reading. The sheer variety of material and the breadth of the tantric modes discussed will assure that this volume will be a much quoted and frequently referred to source work for a long time.

—David Templeman

Buddhist Ethics, by Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé, translated and edited by The International Translation Committee founded by the V. V. Kalu Rinpoché. Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca, New York, 1998, 564pp. Paperback.

This is an important book: a translation of the great 'Jam mgon Kong sprul's (1813-1899) work on ethics, including the root verses from his *Shes bya kun khyab* and their explanation in the fifth volume of his *Shes bya mtha' yas pa'i rgya mtsho*. It presents lists of the various sets of precepts entailed in different formulations of the three codes of personal liberation, bodhisattva and tantric commitments, together with alternative interpretations of them and discussion of how they are to be maintained and lapses repaired. The book represents a thorough, perhaps almost an exhaustive treatment of codes of discipline in the Tibetan Buddhist traditions, and the translation will be an important resource for scholars as well as for the Buddhist practitioners who appear to be the main target audience.

In a book entitled, *Buddhist Ethics*, published in a contemporary context, one might expect to find some discussion of the philosophical bases for ethical injunctions in the Buddhist tradition and of their historical development. If so, one would be disappointed: here we have a straightforward translation of Kong sprul's work, composed in an entirely Buddhist environment, no doubt for an exclusively Tibetan Buddhist readership, which would principally have been made up of full-time monastics and retreatants. Thus, in the second chapter, we launch straight into the specifics of Vaibhāṣika as opposed to Sautrāntika and Cittamātra understandings of the personal liberation (*prātimokṣa*) vows, with very little consideration of what they are intended to do and why, other than a simple statement that they are aimed at bringing about freedom from cyclic existence (p.84), and we find even less on the background or context for the particular formulations of the precepts. The book is almost entirely concerned with presenting doctrine: the vows and various understandings of them. There is virtually no elaboration of their practical application in life, not even of the kinds of conflicts or problems which might have faced a 19th century Tibetan practitioner. In this respect, *Buddhist Ethics* is very different from the translation of *Jamgon Kongtrul's Retreat Manual*, also by a student of Ka lu Rin po che (Ngawang Zangpo, Snow Lion, 1994), which supplies some insight into Tibetan life in meditative retreat along with its religious instructions. Even the excellent informative notes provided by the translation team elaborate on points purely from the doctrinal point of view. They are based primarily on Kong sprul's own works, and secondarily on those of other traditional commentators, mostly those relied upon by Kong sprul himself, such as 'Brug pa Pad ma dkar po's *sDom gsum rgya cher 'grel pa* and Lo chen Dharma Śrī's *sDom pa gsum rnam par nges pa'i 'grel pa*.

Yet for what the book is, a painstakingly detailed elaboration of Tibetan Buddhist understandings of the three systems of vows, the exposition is masterful and of much interest to the scholar of Tibetan culture. It is more of an encyclopaedic work of reference than a book designed for reading through in one session. It also assumes a good deal of familiarity with different Buddhist perspectives and schools, so that a relative newcomer to Tibetan Buddhism would be likely to find it challenging reading. By the same token, those who do have a background in Tibetan Buddhist materials will appreciate the attention to detail and the elaboration of minor points of doctrine.

After a short foreword by 'Bo dkar Rin po che, there is an Introduction to Kong sprul's work summarising some of the main themes, by H. H. Sa skya khri 'dzin. This is followed by the Translator's Introduction, which concludes with a rather moving section on the team's own motivations in their labours, in which they point out (p.32) the pressing need to salvage the, "vanishing…ancient knowledge" represented by such great Tibetan scholars as Kong sprul. They make it clear that the translation was a response to Ka lu Rin po che's own wishes and that the project received his blessing, as well as the help of a number of well qualified contemporary Tibetan lamas.

Kong sprul begins with the qualities of the teacher and the student, while the rest of the work consists of extensive chapters on the Personal Liberation, Bodhisattva and Secret Mantra vows respectively. The first has an interesting discussion of the nature of the vows: how far they constrain mental as well as physical and verbal acts, and whether the vows themselves have some kind of subtle form within the practitioner's continuum. There are sections on lay and novice monks' conduct, with the longest discussion reserved for the monks' code. The procedures for ordaining nuns are given a relatively brief and theoretical treatment since it is noted that these traditions were not introduced into Tibet. The slightly shorter chapter on the bodhisattva commitments contains separate sections on the approaches of the two traditions associated with Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga, and a section on the training which they share in common. The chapter on the Secret Mantra vows is divided into the presentation given in the *gSar ma* and that given in the *rNying ma* tantras, and each section is subdivided, with consideration of each of the four tantras in the *gSar ma* division and of the three inner tantras in the *rNying ma* division. This final chapter and Kong sprul's commentary is concluded with a discussion of how the three sets of commitments can be combined with each other. We are then supplied with a translation of the root verses from the *Shes bya kun khyab*, followed by 180 pages of copious explanatory notes given by the translators, a bibliography of works cited by Kong sprul and a further reference bibliography.

Despite the translators' apology (32-3) that their work has sprung from devotion and noble intentions rather than scholarship, the translation reads well and the notes reflect a thoroughness in seeking to clarify any obscure points, inspiring confidence in the translation's accuracy. Scholars and Buddhist practitioners who read Tibetan might appreciate the Tibetan text, if only of the root verses, and it is to be hoped that the translators and publishers will consider this addition for future editions of the book. A glossary of terms with Tibetan (and in some cases Sanskrit) equivalents would also have been useful: the omission of any such list is especially problematic since the translators give English translations for many Tibetan or Sanskrit terms which are well-known even in the West, and are not always obvious from the English terms used. Translations such as, "Awakening Mind" (for *bodhicitta*), are easy enough to fathom, but when we read of the Analysts and the Traditionalists, we may be hard-pressed to equate them with the Vaibhāṣika and Sautrāntika schools, since the equivalents are only given on their first occurrence in the book.

An especially striking feature of Kong sprul's presentation is his non-sectarian (*ris med*) emphasis throughout: differences in approach are not glossed over, but they are acknowledged and outlined without favouring one over the other. This non-partisan perspective, however, does not *altogether* apply in considering the relative merits of Mahāyāna as opposed to non-Mahāyāna Buddhist paths, where the bodhisattva motivation is clearly preferred, although the views of the non-Mahāyāna schools on the nature of the vows and how they should be assumed are generally presented without criticism. The perspective does not seem to extend to non-Buddhist traditions: the first chapter begins (p.40) with the reflection that the Buddha's teaching uniquely leads to liberation and this path is not found in non-Buddhist traditions. Nonetheless, considering that this was a text composed in a premodern Buddhist environment, the non-sectarian approach towards all the Tibetan Buddhist religious traditions and their exemplars is interesting. It is particularly noticeable in the final discussion of the ways in which the three systems of precepts are to be combined, a topic which had led to heated polemical debate in Tibetan scholastic circles. Kong sprul presents three different approaches, one represented by sGam po pa and his followers, one by Grags pa rgyal mtshan's tradition, as well as by Rin chen bzang po, Klong chen pa and Rong zom, and a third by the dGe lugs tradition. Kong sprul makes it clear that all three have good basis in sound reasoning and in scriptural authority, and he does not judge between them.

Overall, the translation of this work is to be welcomed as a significant contribution to Tibetan studies.

—Cathy Cantwell

Boundless Heart. The Cultivation of the Four Immeasurables, B. Alan Wallace, edited by Zara Houshmand, Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca, 1999. US$ 14.95.

The author of this wonderful book has devoted himself to the study and practice of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy, psychology and meditation. For more than ten years, he trained in traditional Buddhist sciences in Buddhist monasteries in India and Switzerland, and later studied physics at Amherst College. In 1995, he completed a doctorate in religious studies at Stanford University. Currently, B. Alan Wallace holds a teaching position at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

This unique combination of traditional Buddhist knowledge and modern psychology allows the author to present teachings of the Four Immeasurables (catvāryapramāṇi) and instruction on quiescence (śamatha) in the most appreciable way. His teachings on the Four Immeasurables are mainly based on Buddhagośa's *Path of Purification* and address the cultivation of loving kindness, compassion, equanimity, and empathetic joy. The book presents a rich suite of practices that open the heart, counter the distortions in our relationship to ourselves, and deepen our relationships to others. The authors confesses that the idea to write such a book was born during a one-week retreat led by him for a small group of friends in the summer of 1992 in the Eastern Sierra Nevada Mountains. The very teachings were shaped based on informal talks, as it was said already, on passages from Buddhagośa's fifth-century compendium called The *Path of Purification*.

In his book, Alan Wallace has given special attention to definition of Practice itself. He acquaints readers with the Foundations of Buddhist Ethics making a parallel with Christian Ethics, describes the Affirmation of Intuitive Wisdom, and so on. As a real Buddhist Teacher, he listens to questions and gives answers. Each chapter finishes with questions and answers. Here I see a wonderful similarity with the book of H.H. the XIV Dalai Lama *Cultivating A Daily Meditation,* published by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, India in 1991. The general discourse is the same!

First, the author focuses on Śamatha Practice itself through giving valuable explanations of relaxation, stability, and vividness. After that, he leads the readers through the Path to Śamatha. General description of the nine stages of the path, the achievements of Śamatha, and prerequisites for achieving Śamatha are also available. The next four chapters are focused on Loving-Kindness, Compassion, Empathetic Joy and Equanimity. The last chapter deals with the empowerment of Insight.

I really enjoyed this book thanks to its unique style of presentation, which is very vivid, on the one hand, and absolutely analytic and profound, on the other hand. Discussions with hearers (readers) make the book even more interesting for everybody who would like to cultivate Boundless Heart.

—Alexander Fedotoff

Under the Painted Eyes. A Story about Nepal by Ferd Mahler, Motilal Banarsidas Publishers Private Limited, Delhi, 1999, 426 pp. Rs. 350.

Nepal is a unique country. For many people Nepal still remains a dream, a land to come, a place to explore, a wind to breathe. Distanced so far from the rest part of the world, Nepal still remains unknown. I am one of those who had a chance to see this country and to stay therein for some time. In my mind, Nepal resembles a small hermitage—a narrow valley hidden amidst mountain peaks and slopes. Beautiful and evergreen, this Himalayan country has an old history and very rich cultural and spiritual heritage. Nepal shocks all visitors into penetrating deeply into local traditions and habits in order to understand its people, to feel

"the Nepalese soul." One can notice in Nepal so many and so different faces, so many different eyes—but all smiling and greeting you in the most sincere way.

Even after one has left Nepal, great memories are kept in one's soul forever. Nepalese impressions are unforgettable. The author of the book, Ferd Mahler, has transformed his memories and impressions into three wonderful novels (*The Gurkha King*; *The Great Mountain Weep*; *The Rising Mist*). Let me say that Ferd Mahler himself is an Australian. As economist, he worked during a long period for the International Labour Office, a United Nation's Agency. In the 1980s he stayed in Nepal during which he traveled much and met many Nepalese people, the most valuable treasure of the Himalayan country.

It seems that Ferd Mahler succeeded in understanding the people of Nepal, both of towns and villages. He succeeded in demolishing all the barriers between him and the locals. Otherwise, his novels would not be so truthful and sincere.

The title that he has chosen for the book, is more than mere emblematic: *Under the Painted Eyes*. These eyes of Adi Buddha, are painted on the walls of the Swayambhunath one of the most famous Nepalese Buddhist temples. The three novels go about simple things: love and passion, feelings and emotions. All the characters are located in the exotic atmosphere of the Himalayan kingdom—Nepal with its ancient temples, which present different religions and the mankind's will to live in peace together, with its local merry festivals and severe clashes.

The main object of the author is Nepal, an ancient nation, which even now, after the last bloody events in Kathmandu, is still looking forward to become a real democratic modern country.

For me it was a pleasure to read this book—to acquaint with these fictional impressions of Ferd Mahler.

—Alexander Fedotoff

In the Service of His Country: The Biography of Dasang Damdul Tsarong, Commander General of Tibet **by Dundul Namgyal Tsarong, Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca, 2000. US$ 14.95**

The *sku drag* (aristocracy) in Tibet have enjoyed a controversial position in the Tibetan society. To a certain extent this class of people was the microcosm of Tibetan society; some *sku drag* representing the best of Tibet in terms of culture, outlook and way of life, while some others of the same class representing the worst in terms of inter-clan rivalry, intrigue driven by political ambitions, and attitude towards the ordinary Tibetans. The *sku drag* are credited for being the backbone of the *sde pa gzhung* (Tibetan Government) as well as for the promotion of such arts as Tibetan music, literature and performing arts while the Chinese charged them with being "Upper Class Reactionaries" and one of their reasons for "liberating" Tibet.

How does a person become a *sku drag* and what does becoming a member of the class entail? In recent times, Rinchen Dolma Taring's book *Daughter of Tibet* and Dorje Yuthok's *House of the Turquoise Roof* gave us one of the first glimpses as insiders since both of them were *sku drag*. *In the Service of His Country* is a very good addition to this field of study. The life of Tsarong Dasang Damdul encapsulates the story of the *sku drag*. From being an ordinary Tibetan to being one of the most powerful leaders of Tibet, his is the story of a Tibetan dream come true. We learn of the transformation of a 17-year-old lad from Phenpo who successfully confronted brigands to a top-notch soldier who became the Hero of Chaksam for successfully confronting the invading Chinese forces who were going after the 13th Dalai Lama in 1910. Tsarong rose high up becoming the Commander in Chief of the Tibetan Army and a Kalon and also suffered on account of political intrigues for becoming too successful.

Tsarong's experience was typical of Tibetan mindset concerning leadership, the basic assumption being that if you are a leader, you are expected to be jack of all trades. Thus,

Tsarong served in posts as diverse as being the head of the mint (a job requiring technical skill) to head of the army (a job requiring strategic acumen) to a minister (a job requiring political skill). To his credit Tsarong seemed to have succeeded in whichever field he was placed in.

The book deals with that period of Tibetan history, which is of great importance in understanding the modern history of Tibet, namely the transition period between the 13th and the 14th Dalai Lama. Tsarong served both the 13th and the 14th Dalai Lama. He accompanied the 13th Dalai Lama when he first fled to Mongolia and China in 1904 (in the wake of the Younghusband invasion) and then to India in 1910 (in the wake of the Chinese invasion). While the 13th Dalai Lama spent a considerable amount of time in Mongolia and China, we don't have much information on the political interaction that he had with the leaders of these countries as well as those of others. What did the Dalai Lama and his officials do in addition to the Buddhist teachings that were given in these countries? Tsarong does not dwell much on this aspect of the issue in the book.

The fact that Tsarong's son is the author of his biography is both the book's strength and weakness. Being in close encounter with his father, the author is able to provide a deeper insight into Tsarong's life, which no other biographer can do. However, at the same time, it is natural that being the son will not enable the author to do an unbiased study, as a normal biography should, of the life of an important political figure as Tsarong Dasang Damdul. Nevertheless, in the final paragraph of the book, the author does give an indication about the existence of more than one perspective on the life of Tsarong. He says, "Many things have subsequently been written about my Father" but then defends Tsarong as a "loyal Tibetan until the end." Tsarong had died mysteriously after being imprisoned by the Chinese communists in 1959.

Tsarong was among those Tibetan leaders who provided a glimmer of hope to Tibet during the most trying period of its modern existence. This book will be particularly interesting to young Tibetans who are in the process of trying to understand who, why and how Tibet was lost to the Chinese communists. *In the Service of His Country* provokes us to take a broader perspective of the modern history of Tibet.

—Bhuchung K. Tsering

***Sacred Visions: Early Paintings from Central Tibet*, by Steven M. Kossak and Jane Casey Singer, with essay by Robert Bruce-Gardner. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1998. Paperback and hardcover. 225 pages, 150 illustrations, 136 in color.**

***Desire and Devotion: Art from India, Nepal, and Tibet in the John and Berthe Ford Collection* by Pratapaditya Pal, with essay by Hiram Woodward. London: Philip Wilson Publishers, Ltd., for Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, 2001. Paperback and hardcover. 348 pages, 200 color illustrations.**

In recent years several scholarly, beautiful books presenting treasures of Tibetan (and other Himalayan) art have been published.

Some, such as the *Buddhist Sculptures of Tibet*, written by Ulrich von Schroeder and published in a two-volume set in 2001 in Zurich, are unaffordable (apart from a very few fortunate buyers, since the volumes sell for over U.S. $1,400!) for even the most devoted student of Tibetan art, though they certainly belong in a university library, where their discoveries, photographs and essays can be made available to interested readers.

Others, such as the two books to be reviewed here, have the dual advantage of being more affordable and very rewarding both in the quality of their essays and in the works of art portrayed.

Both books are based on museum exhibitions which have been critically acclaimed in major Asian art journals. Both depart from the standard general introduction to Himalayan art to explore specific aspects of that art. They take differing approaches to the works examined in detail in the catalogue sections, however, and differ also in that the Metropolitan Museum exhibition borrowed from many museum and private collections (including the Fords), while the Walters exhibition is devoted to a single collection, that of John and Berthe Ford. Furthermore, the Metropolitan's exhibit is devoted to paintings, whereas the Ford exhibition at the Walters (and other tour venues) is more diverse in terms of media.

The two exhibitions further differ in that, as Philippe de Montebello (Director of The Metropolitan Museum of Art) states in his Foreword, "The paintings were chosen primarily for their aesthetic qualities and condition. Their iconography was considered only secondarily" (p.7), whereas John and Berthe Ford's Preface to the Walters catalogue writes of the "marriage expressing desire and devotion" which drove the creation of the present collection. This passion, which has personally bonded the Fords for decades, has also driven their collecting agenda, adding a personal touch to their selection of works beyond considerations of aesthetic qualities and condition (though those too have been rigorously examined when adding a work to the collection). It has caused them to select works which they perceived as fitting into the theme of "desire and devotion."

The earlier of the two volumes, the *Sacred Visions: Early Paintings from Central Tibet*, is based on an exhibition held at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York from October 6, 1998 through January 17, 1999. Montebello's Foreword proclaims that this is the "first exhibition devoted solely to early paintings from Central Tibet" and is an "historic event" (p.7).

The exhibition, and the catalogue, examine the many pre-15th century central Tibetan paintings which have come to light in recent years. The paintings, dating from the mid-11th to the mid-15th centuries, are primarily in *thang ka* form but both exhibition and catalogue include painted book covers from Tibet, India and Nepal.

Several essays detail the ramifications of this early art, not only to later Tibetan tradition but also—as it was diffused—to the art of India and Central Asia. The active interchange between Indian Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism is particularly well-defined. The significant role of India and Nepal on Tibetan painting of the *phyi dar* (The Second Diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet) period, which occurred in the early 11th century, is well-documented. Conversely, the importance of these Tibetan paintings for our understanding of large-scale paintings of mid-11th to 14th century India and Nepal is crucial, since so few of these survive.

The essay by Jane Casey Singer, titled "The Cultural Roots of Early Central Tibetan Painting" explores this particular aspect of Central Tibetan art. Singer, an art historian, traces the earliest influential artistic contact between Tibet and outside, namely the world of Eastern Indian art, which was one of the two major influences between the 11th and 15th centuries, and the Kathmandu Valley, which was particularly important for the formation of Sakya monastic order art from the 13th century onwards. Her chapter examines topics such as Esoteric imagery, Indian *pāla* painting, portraiture and the consecration of paintings. She states that "Throughout the *phyi dar*, painting seems to have functioned in Tibet much as it did in India: for use in visualization practice, as icons through which a devotee communicated with the divine, and as aesthetic adornments in religious sanctuaries" (p.15).

Later Tibetan art strongly reflects the interests of the *phyi dar* period, and Steven M. Kossak's essay, "The Development of Style in Early Central Tibetan Painting", explores the arena of immediate post-*phyi dar* era painting, including the influence of East Indian, Bengali, Nepalese and Chinese styles. Kossak, an Associate Curator of Art at the Metropolitan, notes that the origin and dating of paintings from this period, as well as the nationality of their painters, usually is impossible to document, though it is often possible to discern for which school the painting was produced.

The essay by Robert Bruce-Gardner, "Realization: Reflections on the Technique in Early Tibetan Painting", which follows the catalogue section of the volume, reflects a mini-trend in

Asian art volumes today, namely the inclusion of a section presenting the types of materials and methods of their applications as relevant to the discussion of the works which are the focus of the book. Such chapters can be very helpful (as here) or overwhelming, mind-numbingly statistical. Since this exhibition is the first scholarly exploration of early Tibetan paintings, the well-written and accessible Bruce-Gardner section is certainly an appropriate and attractive addition to the other chapters which are more closely concerned with art historical issues of cultural context and style. Stating that "Descriptions and definitions of style are essentially the concern of the art historian; technique is the means by which the appearance, and thus the style, of any particular painting is achieved" (p.193), the author then proceeds to discuss supports, grounds, grids and drawings, pigments and paintings, the paintings, and inscriptions. Apart from the volume's many other merits, this valuable contribution to our understanding of early Tibetan painting makes the acquisition of *Sacred Visions* for a personal library highly recommended.

One final note on *Sacred Visions*: it should be pointed out that, following the opening of the exhibition, publication of the catalogue, and related articles in *Orientations* magazine of October, 1998, some of the sixty-odd works chosen for the exhibition have been the subject of controversy expressed in open and often vitriolic printed form (*Orientations* magazine, June, 1999 [pp.108-10], with response in *Orientations* magazine, September, 1999, pp.120-21). Such controversy, when based on sound scholarship, can be a most valuable contribution to a field in the stage of developing conoisseurship, since no one—dealers, curators, professors, other scholars—can possibly know everything, particularly when the focus is remote, and access to further, and unquestioned examples, is difficult. In this case, the potential contribution of Newari painters (as opposed to Indian) to the field is hampered by the lack of examples. That a work of art should cause such controversy speaks strongly to the compelling quality of the Central Tibetan tradition of Buddhist painting.

The second book to be reviewed, *Desire and Devotion*, has the same merits of excellent scholarship, clear writing, and fine illustrations which distinguish the Metropolitan's catalogue. It reflects, in addition, the very personal vision of John and Berthe Ford, which drove the selection of the works purchased following their marriage; their association and its significance to the world of Tibetan art was detailed in a recent interview with the Fords conducted by Valerie C. Doran in *Orientations* magazine (September, 2001, pp.81-8).

The book covers a more diverse group of materials, as reflected in the catalogue section which is divided into four topics, "Sculpture from the Indian Subcontinent", "Indian Paintings", "Nepal" and "Tibet." Many of the works are known from other publications, and through the Ford's generous loans and donations of outstanding examples to major museums. The main author of the catalogue, Pratapaditya Pal, was also responsible for the first Ford collection exhibition catalogue. Coincidentally, it was during the opening reception for that exhibition, held at the Walters in 1971, that John Ford met Berthe Hanover, who was to become his wife. In his interesting introduction to this catalogue, titled *Introduction: Desire and Devotion*, Pal states that "The sublimation of sexual desire into spiritual power through meditation and yogic praxis is common to all three religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, and Janinism" (p.14).

Hiram Woodward's essay on "Artistic Production, Religious Practice" opens with a most interesting examination of the ways in which images contain potentially many selves, including their ambient surrounding, the identification of companion works of art, the knowledge and imaginative power of the viewer, the images' use as "objects of worship and instruments of ritual" (p.25), and even before that, their presence in the studios where they were produced. In his essay he addresses the "nature of the materials used to create works of art, attitudes about these materials, and the relationship of both materials and beliefs to the final products" (p.25). Most of the works examined are the paintings on cotton. He finds that Tibetan works are driven by rules and prescriptions but also invention, and he delves into color correlations, a subject which has interested many recent scholars.

One of the outstanding features of this volume is the "Inscriptions section", which presents texts on works of art in the catalogue, both in transcription and in English translation format,

with commentaries and alternative readings. The intensive examination of inscriptions, with the inherent linguistic and interpretative difficulties, is seldom attempted in exhibition catalogues, and readers devoted to Tibetan art studies must be grateful that such time-consuming labor was supported by the Fords and then shared with the public.

Both these books are highly recommended; they present cogent art historical essays, helpful technical sections, and include fine (and in the Ford catalogue, superb) illustrations. The Metropolitan's is closely focused on a single point in art historical time and place, the Ford's on a single passionate viewpoint which informed the selection of works for the collection. Though possessing disparate intents, both catalogues are fascinating and valuable contributions to the field of Himalayan art history and belong in both private and university library collections.

–Daphne Lange Rosenzweig, Ph.D

***The Philosophical View of the Great Perfection in the Tibetan Bon Religion*, Donatella Rossi, Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca, New York, 1999, 315 pp., Bibliography, Indexed Glossary, Indices of Names.**

As indicated by its title Donatella Rossi's book is dedicated to the presentation of the View (*lta ba*) of the Great Perfection (rDzogs chen) according to the Tibetan tradition of Bon. This tradition which claims to go back to pre-Buddhist Tibet, together with that of the rNying ma pa, is one of the two religious schools of Tibet upholding the famed teachings of the Great Perfection.

D. Rossi's work is divided into three main parts. The first one is the Introduction in which the author addresses five themes. First to be treated are some general preliminary remarks on Bon itself and the tradition of rDzogs chen. In this section, the author discusses briefly the ancient history of Bon and gives a short historical account of the Great Perfection tradition in which she seems to accept the now controversial theory of rDzogs chen presented as evolving from Mahāyoga *tantra*s (p.22). This theory is denied in rDzogs chen texts and modern scientific researches tend to demonstrate that the tradition is right in this domain.

The second theme is concerned with a presentation of the most important rDzogs chen cycles of the Bon tradition while the third deals with western (academic and non-academic) studies of the Great Perfection tradition of Bon (this section is more or less presented in a chronological order). The fourth theme describes the methodology used by the author throughout her work. To be noted is the deliberate avoidance of Sanskrit words to translate *bon po* texts. We have felt this to be a remarkable initiative since so many English translations of *bon po* texts (whether pertaining to the system of the Great Perfection or not) resort to the artificial solution of using expressions like *dharmakāya* (*bon sku*), etc. Obviously several Sanskrit words such as Samsāra, Nirvāna, etc., have already found their way in modern English and are liable to be used in Bon context, but this is not the case with most of the Great Perfection's technical vocabulary. It is definitely important to preserve this vocabulary from any contamination, in order to keep the real flavor of the original texts. So such an initiative from the author appears to be more than pertinent.

The fifth theme of the Introduction is certainly one of the most interesting parts of the book. In this, the author discusses six issues, namely: 1. the View (*lta ba*) itself, as the doctrinal foundation of rDzogs chen teachings and practices; 2. the Basis of All (*kun gzhi*) which is the base of conditioned cyclic existence (*'khor ba*) and of unconditioned transcendence (*'das pa*); 3. the Pure and Perfect Mind (*byang chub kyi sems*) which is in rDzogs chen context identical with Awareness (*rig pa*) or Self-Arisen Wisdom (*rang byung ye shes*); 4. Space (*dbyings*, which the author styles as dimension) and Wisdom (*ye shes*); 5. the beginning of Transmigration explaining the reason for going astray and misunderstanding the Natural State (*gnas lugs*); and 6. the turning back to the source, explaining how the individual can reverse the process of transmigration and integrate the dynamism (*rtsal*) of Awareness displays as natural visions (*rang snang*).

The second division of the book contains the edition and translation of the 12 Little Tantras (rGyud bu chung bcu gnyis), a short work belonging to the tradition of the Zhang zhung snyan rgyud. This cycle was first taught by a lineage of Nine Enlightened Beings, each patriarch giving his transmission through the sole means of his Contemplation (*dgongs pa*). Then, the teachings were transmitted to the gShen of Gods, Men and Nāgas. The first 24 sages of this new line of transmission are all known to have reached Rainbow Body (*'ja' lus*) as a sign of their full realization of rDzogs chen. Later during the eighth century A. D., two masters played a key role in the organization of the cycle into a written form which until then was only transmitted orally from one master to a single disciple (*gcig brgyud*): the first one was Tapihritsa, known as the 25th *'ja' lus pa* of the lineage who reached the Body of the Great Transfer (*'pho ba chen po'i sku*) and appeared in the guise of a wise young boy to the second individual, his disciple sNang gzher lod po. After several meetings, which were sometimes marked by Tapihritsa's humorous teasing of his disciple, the master authorized sNang gzher lod po to write down the teachings with blue ink on white paper. According to the tradition, the language used was that of Zhang zhung. The texts were later translated into Tibetan language by dPon chen bstan po, sometimes around the end of the ninth or the beginning of the tenth century. If the chronology of events is relatively clear, the individual dating of these events demands still deeper studies. In terms of their belonging to one of the three Series of rDzogs chen, the texts of the Zhang zhung snyan rgyud collection pertain to the Man ngag sde, although such a terminology is never used in this corpus. One of the most striking characteristic of this cycle is that it does not make use of the expressions *khregs chod* and *thod rgal*: the main reason is that both stages are presented together in the teachings. This is especially clear in the Bru rgyal ba'i phyag khrid, a collection of short works by Bru rGyal ba gYung drung (1242-1290), based on the Zhang zhung snyan rgyud corpus. In this collection, the practice of *khregs chod* is described as the "stabilization of what was not stable" (the mind), while that of *thod rgal* is styled as "clarifying what was not clear." There are several other distinctive elements in the Zhang zhung snyan rgyud tradition but these are not dealt within *The Philosophical View*.

The third part of the book contains the edition and translation of the View which is Like the Lion's Roar (*lta ba seng ge sgra bsgrogs*). Unlike the preceding text which belongs to the uninterrupted Oral Transmission (*snyan rgyud*), this Lion's Roar pertains to the category of rediscovered treasure texts (*gter ma*) and was revealed by bZhod ston dngos grub in the 12th century. The text differs from the preceding one in its absence of a setting (*gleng gzhi*) and dialogue structure. In her short introduction to the text (p.41), D. Rossi tends to present the work less as an inspired piece enunciated by an enlightened being *(kun bzang gshen lha*) and more as a human composition directed towards a non-erudite audience. This idea is supposedly based on the lack of exposition of Bodies (*sku*) and Wisdoms (*ye shes*), etc., which the author styles as pertaining to dogmatic speculations, whereas both Bodies and Wisdoms are not notions, ideas, ideations of something, but are rather direct visionary experiences of the Natural State (*gnas lugs*) of the individual. The visionary appearances of these two in contemplative states by rDzogs chen *yogin*s place them beyond the limited and discursive scope of speculations.

The Lion's Roar belongs to a collection known as the rDzogs chen bsgrags pa skor gsum. This collection is completed by another set of texts known as the rDzogs chen yang rtse klong chen whose compilation was apparently made in the eighth century by the celebrated master Li shu stag ring. The rDzogs chen bsgrags pa skor gsum is composed of three main parts: the first one—styled as developed (*rgyas pa*)—was taught to gods (*lha*); the second one—considered of medium length (*'bring po*)—was transmitted to men; and the last one—known as condensed (*bsdus pa*)—was transmitted to the Nāgas. The Lion's Roar is considered as one of the two root *man ngag* of the last division (the second *man ngag* being the 'Khor ba dong sprug). Its teachings constitute a short inner cycle or subdivision composed of the text itself, a table of contents (*sa gcod*) and a detailed commentary (*'grel pa*).

Both Tibetan texts of 12 Little Tantras and of the Lion's Roar have been edited in transliteration so as to face the translation on the opposite page. This choice has obvious

advantages for Tibetologists and especially translators who can check the accuracy of the translations and the vocabulary used by the author. However, there are few fascinating notes and this is probably a major weakness in a work which is otherwise very interesting and which should attract the attention not only of specialists in this fields but also of non-Tibetologist readers. It is to be remarked that most of the notes to the translations do not recourse to the traditional textual commentaries associated with the root texts but are mainly based on the oral explanations by one of the foremost rDzogs chen masters of the Bon tradition, dPon slob 'Phrin las nyi ma.

—Jean-Luc Achard

***The Practice of Mahamudra: The Teachings of His Holiness the Drikung Kyabgon, Chetsang Rinpoche*, by Drikung Kyabgon Chetsang Rinpoche, edited by Ani K. Trinlay Chodron. Snow Lion Publications, Ithaca, New York, 1999. 134 pp.**

This book is compiled from transcripts of lectures given during the Spring and Summer of 1994 on the Drikung tradition of the practice of Mahāmūdra. The teachings were given in Tibetan and translated at that time by Khenpo Konchog Gyaltsen. His Holiness Chetsang Rinpoche was born in Tibet in 1946 and was given the hair cutting and naming ceremonies by H.H. the Dalai Lama in 1950, just before the invasion of the PLA into Tibet. Rinpoche was able to pursue a traditional education until the beginning of the Cultural Revolution, during which time he was forced into labor as many Tibetan were. In 1975, Rinpoche escaped by foot to Kathmandu and then to Dharamsala. Soon thereafter, Rinpoche came to the United States to be reunited with members of his family who had taken up residence there. In 1987 Chetsang Rinpoche began teaching and in 1992 he inaugurated the Drikung Kargyu Institute in Dehradun. Since that time Rinpoche has been instrumental in establishing centers across the world, re-establishing the Drikung Kargyu monasteries and nunneries in Tibet, and teaching.

Chetsang Rinpoche is the current head of the Drikung Kargyu lineage, begun by Jigten Sumgon (1143-1217). The basic teaching of Mahāmūdra in Tibet found its classic formulation in the writings of Gampopa (1079-1153) who combined the teachings of the great yogi Milarepa (1040-1123) with the more monastically inclined system of the Kadam, in which Gampopa had first been trained. Each of the sub-schools of the Kagyu sect have their own unique formulation of Mahāmūdra teachings, and the subject in this book is the five-fold system first formulated by Phagmo Drupa (1110-70). These five aspects are held by the Drikung Kargyu tradition to contain the entire Buddhist path that leads to full awakening. According to this system, the five parts of this path are: generation of Bodhicitta, generation of the tantric deity (*yi dam*), guru yoga, the actual practice of Mahāmūdra and dedication. These subjects are traditionally studied and practiced intensively in the first two years of the three-year retreat, and this book is intended as "an overview of these so as to enable us to enter into this practice and to perfect it in the future." It should not come as a surprise then that if one is looking for a thorough discussion of the Five-fold Mahāmūdra system, this book is probably not the place to look.

The structure of the book does not follow this division into the five aspects of Mahāmūdra. The book begins with a three-page chapter on the preliminaries to Mahāmūdra practice, followed by a brief chapter in which the five aspects of this system of Mahāmūdra are laid out. The first three of these elements are not treated further, except in response to specific questions in one of the three chapters formed by transcripts of question and answer sessions. Chapter Three is a discussion of the meaning behind the term "Mahamudra", working from the Tibetan and Sanskrit terms according to traditional etymologies. The book then moves to a treatment of general meditation techniques before moving to specifically Mahāmūdra-based śamatha and vipaśyana practice.

The Vipaśyana chapter is particularly good, and is the second longest chapter in the book, running thirteen pages. Here one gets a better sense of the Mahāmūdra method and doctrine than in the material leading up to this. Rinpoche discusses the techniques for investigating the mind, utilizing Jigten Sumgon's three-fold method of analysis. These three approaches inquire into the substance, nature and defining characteristics of mind. The relationship between conceptual thought (*kalpana*) and mind is another method of investigation demonstrated. In this chapter, Rinpoche guides the reader through these kinds of analysis, urging one to vigorously and uncompromisingly strive to understand mind, as this is the heart of the practice of Mahāmūdra. One gains an appreciation here for the rigorousness of these meditative techniques. This is followed by a brief description of an apparently auxiliary meditative technique.

The three chapters that follow are more expressly explanatory. These three are entitled: "The attainment of Non-Attainment," "Tilopa's Pith Instructions," and "Dharma Lord Gampopa's Advice." Taken together, these chapters form the core of the book's explanation of the view of Mahāmūdra. These are also among the longest chapters, providing the space to describe and explain the Mahāmūdra system in some detail. Some of the most distinctive features of Mahāmūdra are dealt with here, especially in "The attainment of Non-Attainment." "Tilopa's Pith Instructions" is a commentary on a text by the great Indian Siddha Tilopa who lived in the tenth century CE. "Dharma Lord Gampopa's Advice" recounts some of the pitfalls that one can encounter on the path of Mahāmūdra along with strategies for avoiding these. There is also a discussion of the various states of realization attained by practitioners of different capacities. The book comes to a close with another question and answer chapter, one on Vajrasattva purification meditation, a formal conclusion and a short biography of Chetsang Rinpoche.

Particularly in the Vipaśyana chapter and in the three longer chapters toward the end just mentioned, Rinpoche demonstrates a clear and thoughtful teaching style. His use of everyday examples helps the reader gain access to the often difficult concepts presented. Most of the other chapters, however, are too brief to be very helpful, especially to anyone unfamiliar with the subject matter. Many of the chapters are five pages in length, or shorter, and aren't arranged in such a way that allows the reader to develop her understanding through the course of the book. This is often encountered in books that are culled from a number of talks by one teacher, and one suspects the compiling and editing are the problem rather than the content of the teachings. Still, there is much to be gained in reading this book if one is grappling with the meaning and practice of Mahāmūdra. His Holiness Chetsang Rinpoche shines in the several chapters that have been singled out, and the book is worthwhile for these sections alone. There are relatively few books on Mahāmūdra available to a non-specialist English-speaking audience, and this book is welcome addition to what one hopes will be a growing body of work.

—Paul Donnelly

***The Tibetan Iconography of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and other Deities, Unique Pantheon, (Emerging Perceptions in Buddhist Studies, No.14)*, Lokesh Chandra & Fredrick W. Bunce, D. K. Printworlds, New Delhi, 2002, xxiii, 784pp., 360 b/w images, bibliography, index. ISBN 81-246-0178-X. Rs.5600.**

When two scholars of international standing team up to bring before us the *Chou Fo p'u-sa Shêng Hsiang Tsan* (the original Chinese title) in all its brilliance and aesthetic integrity, the result is nothing but ecstatic raptures of joy from all those who are interested in Buddhist art and iconography. With 360 b/w images, enhanced and enlarged without doing injustice to the originals, the book presents a visual feast of Indo-Tibetan pantheon, along with their eulogies in English. The names of the depicted figures are presented in five different languages: Sanskrit, Chinese, Manchu, Mongolian, and Tibetan.

This wonderful pantheon was authored by the Third lCang skya sPrul sku Rol pa'i rdo rje (1717-1786), the Imperial Preceptor of Manchu Emperor Qianlong. A childhood friend of the Emperor, lCang skya sPrul sku was a distinguished scholar and fluent in Tibetan, Chinese, Mongolian and Manchu. He oversaw the translation of the voluminous Kanjur into Mongolian and Manchu and further authored 199 works on philosophy, orthography, iconography etc.

The book has a preface by Lokesh Chandra and an introduction by Fredrick W. Bunce. The 360 icons are categorized into Teachers (prajña, guhya, and bodhimārga lam rim teachers), Buddhas (mahāguhya, various guhya, five Buddhas, thirty-five Buddhas of Confession, ten Buddhas of the Directions, six Buddhas of the Past, seven Buddhas of Medicine, and various Buddhas), Bodhisattvas (manifestations of Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva, manifestations of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva, sixteen Bodhisattvas of Vairocana Buddha, and various Bodhisattvas), Goddesses (Pañcarakṣā, twenty-two Tārās, and various goddesses), Arhats (18 Arhats, and various Arhats), and Protective Deities (twenty-one manifestations of Mahākāla, Vaiśravana, and various Dharmapālas). Fredrick W. Bunce states that *Chou Fo p'u-sa Shêng Hsiang Tsan* is unique not only for having the usual distinctive characteristics like a particular author, a fixed place of origin, etc but primarily because of four reasons. They are "the inclusion of a number of deities that do not appear in other extant pantheons, the unusual ethnicity of images, the preference of calm images, and the use of different landscape background."

Whether the images were printed by a traditional wood-cut is questioned in the introduction since it is strongly pointed out that the value shift (shading-relative lightness or darkness of a colour, based on a gray scale-from white to black, but not including either) that enhances the dimensional quality of the icons, cannot be done by a traditional wood-cut. Most likely, the owner of the original copy of this work had by himself or employed someone else, to apply the value shift to make his personal copy special.

In comparing *Chou Fo p'u-sa Shêng Hsiang Tsan* with other extant pantheons like *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Pantheon*, *Bhadrakalpika-Sūtra*, *sKu-brNyan brGya Pantheon*, *Mongolian Kanjur Pantheon*, and the *Narthang Pantheon*, it is known that the author had used a yet-to-be identified written source. Interestingly the same author was involved in one of the works cited above, *sKu-brNyan brGya Pantheon* and they exhibit obvious similarities. The images in this particular work are rendered in a Chinese style with the "design of the pedestal, the background landscapes, the proportions of the figure and the Chinese countenance, and finally in typically Chinese attributes like dragon instead of a serpent held by the white Jambhala."

Somewhat different from the other pantheons, particularly the *Narthang Pantheon* where 53.4 per cent of the icons are wrathful deities, the present title has only 21.9 per cent angry deities. Obviously calm deities were preferred in this work. *sKu-brNyan brGya Pantheon* also include more peaceful deities i.e., 74.4 per cent.

A major distinguishing feature of this work is the varied treatment of the background, the vegetal forms all symmetrically arranged behind the body and head nimbus of the images. While the celestial deities have received rudimentary background landscape treatment, the teachers including Nagarjuna, Luipa, Naropa, Atiśa, Dromtonpa etc are depicted with fully developed mountains, stylized rocks, leafs and gnarled trees. The figure of Gyaltsab Je (icon#22) has a solitary shriveled and twisted tree stretching from the left side of his halo, above the body nimbus, to the other side. Here in the different landscapes and flowers and leaf-forms behind the nimbuses, the artists have given free reign to their creativity and skill. Not only here, but in the Bodhisattva section, the stoles fluttering around each images are rendered in a variety of energetic and vibrant ways. It provides a sense of motion to the otherwise calm and serene figures.

Chou Fo p'u-sa Shêng Hsiang Tsan also contains some hand-held attributes that couldn't be identified at all. For instance, Vajragāndhārī in icon # 262 in his second and fifth left hand and Caturvimśatibhuja-Ekajaṭa (devi) in icon # 237 in her fourth right hand, hold attributes that cannot be identified.

The Tibetan Iconography of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and other Deities, A Unique Pantheon, holds a wealth of information and possibilities for anyone interested in Tibetan iconography. All the icons and their accompanying eulogies make a fascinating journey of discovery. This valuable work is a rich source for studying Tibetan iconography in China. The subtle changes that are found in this volume gives a special insight into how the Tibetan deities were adapted so that the Chinese culture and society could more easily identify with it. It must have been exactly how Buddhist art and architecture developed its own unique qualities, while maintaining their common purpose, all over Asia.

—Dhondup Tsering

Memoirs of Keutsang Lama (Life in Tibet After the Chinese 'Liberation'), **Keutsang Trulku Jampel Yeshe, Paljor Publications, Delhi, 2001, 258pp. IRs. 195. ISBN 81-86230-38-6**

Since the early 1990s, a number of books in Tibetan by former officials, aristocrats, political prisoners, guerillas etc who were intimately involved with the modern history of Tibet, have appeared in the exile Tibetan community. Encouraged mostly by H. H. the Dalai Lama, they wrote about their experiences in Tibet and in exile for the future generation of Tibetans. Particularly quite a few books by former political prisoners have been published in the last four or five years. Some of the above books have been translated into English and some are being translated. This latest book is a meticulous translated version of the Tibetan original by Pema Thinley, the present editor of *Tibetan Review.*

As written in the foreword, the present Dalai Lama feels a special relationship with the Keutsang Lama, for it was his predecessor who led the search party to Amdo and identified and recognized the present XIVth Dalai Lama. The former Keutsang Lama passed away at the age of 54 not long after the enthronement of the greatest Dalai Lama of all times.

The present Keutsang Trulku Jampel Yeshe was born in 1944 near Samye, southeast of Lhasa in central Tibet. Recognised as an incarnate lama at the age of two, he left his birthplace for Lhasa and later joined Sera Monastery. The tragic events of 1959 changed everything for the young trulku. Accused of being a 'criminal' and a 'counter-revolutionary' in September 1960, he was sentenced for the next twenty years in prison. Surviving numerous policies, confessions, interrogations, stool pigeon, hunger, hard labour etc he was finally released in 1980. Five years later, he crossed the high Himalayas into exile and freedom.

Memoirs of Keutsang Lama is a harrowing and poignant story of a man who was born a *rinpoche* 'the precious one'. In ordinary times, he could have received the best traditional education and led a comfortable, if not exciting, life. The 1959 Chinese invasion changed everything. An image which older generations of Tibetan could not even imagine became real: that of a high incarnate lama repairing bicycles!

—Dhondup Tsering

Contributors

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Amy Heller holds a doctorate in Tibetan history and Philology at La Sorbonne, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, France. To date, she has traveled eight times to Tibet. In 1995 part of team evaluating restoration of monasteries of Gra thang and Zha lu and its subsequent research resulted in her book *Tibetan Art* published in English, French, Italian and Spanish. She is currently working on the cultural history of Dolpo to study the Pijor illuminated bKa' 'gyur manuscripts.

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David Jackson has been since 1992 Professor of Tibetan Studies at Hamburg University. His books on Tibetan Buddhist art and culture include *A History of Tibetan Painting,* and *Tibetan Thangka Painting: Methods and Materials*. His most recent book, a biography of Dezhung Rinpoche, is forthcoming from Wisdom Publications.

David Templeman is a "private" Tibetanist attached to no University. His current works nearing completion are Künga Drolchog's "alternative" *Life of Kṛṣṇācārya* and Tārānātha's *Life of Buddhaguptanātha*, his Indian Guru, both to be LTWA publications. His current interest is early Iranian influences on Tibetan culture.

David Weldon is the author of *The Perfect Image: The Speelman Collection of Yongle and Xuande Buddhist Icons,* Arts of Asia, May-June 1996 and co-author (with Robert A.F. Thurman) of *Sacred Symbols, The Ritual Art of Tibet* and (with Jane Casey Singer) *The Sculptural Heritage of Tibet, Buddhist Art in the Nyingjei Lam Collection*. His present article in this issue is a revised version of one that appeared in the Magazine "Oriental Art" Vol.XLVI, No.2, 2000.

Dhondup Tsering works as an assistant editor of the Tibet Journal.

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Erberto Lo Bue obtained a Ph. D. in Tibetan studies at SOAS, University of London, with a thesis on 20th century Himalayan sculpture, in 1981. From 1983 he taught Tibetan language, culture and art at CeSMEO and at the universities of Turin, Milan and Bologna. Since 1999, he has been teaching history of Indian and Central Asian Art at the Department

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George van Driem is the Director of Himalayan Languages Research Project, Leiden University, the Netherlands.

Hartmut Buescher has worked as Tibetological research librarian at the Royal Library of Copenhagen and produced the Catalogue of Tibetan Manuscripts and Xylographs (Curzon Press) in the COMDC series (together with Tarab Tulku N. Losang); he is currently working in the field of Yogacārā-Vijñānavāda.

Jean-Luc Achard, PhD, is a researcher at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France. He has specialized over the years in philological and historical study of the diverse rDzogs chen traditions and is now engaged in the final completion of the translations and commentaries of the Zhang zhung snyan rgyud and Nyams rgyud traditions of Bon. He has published *L'Essence Perlée du Secret—Recherches philologiques et historiques sur l'origine de la Grande Perfection dans la tradition rNying ma pa.*

John Clarke completed a doctorate on the regional metalworking industries of traditional Tibet in 1995, a degree awarded by the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. He is currently Assistant Curator in the Indian and South East Asian Department in the Victoria and Albert Museum where he curates the collection of Tibetan art. His forthcoming *Jewellery of the Himalayas: Highlights from the Victoria and Albert Museum and other British collections,* will be published by the Victoria and Albert in late 2002.

Kathryn Selig Brown is an independent scholar specializing in Tibetan art. She received her doctorate in Asian art history from the University of Michigan in 2000 for a dissertation on handprints and footprints in Tibetan painting and is currently Managing Editor of The Asia Society's "Collection in Context" website and an Adjunct Lecturer at New York University.

Paul Donnelly is a doctoral candidate in the Buddhist studies program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He spent the 1995-96 academic year in India on a Fulbright grant during which time he studied at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath and also in Dharamsala. He is working on Tsong kha pa's commentary on Nagarjuna's *Mulamadhyamakakarika*, the *Rig pa'i rgya mtsho*.

Walter Church is the nickname of a person who attended the conference of L'opera tibetana—Un teatro vivente (Tibetan Opera—A Living Theatre) organized by Fondazione Giorgio Cini at Venezia from 5-8 May 2001.

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New Books Received for Review

1. The Life and Times of a True Son of Tibet Gergan Dorje Tharchin, Vol.1, H. Louis Fader, Tibet Mirror Press, 2002, 534pp.
2. Introduction to the Middle Way, Chandrakirti's Madhyamakavatara with commentary by Jamgon Mipham, Padmakara Translation Group (ed.), Shambhala Publications, 2002, 412pp.
3. Reflections on Reality, The Three Natures and Non-Natures in the Mind-Only School, Jeffrey Hopkins, University of California Press, 2002, 598pp.
4. The Dalai Lamas, The Institution and Its History, Ardy Verhaugen, D. K. Printworld (P) Ltd. 2002, 203pp.
5. Tibet-o-Rama, P. Christiaan Klieger, Green Arrow Press, 2002, 202pp.
6. The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism, H. Eimer & D. Germano (eds.), Brill, 2002, 376pp.
7. Tibet, Past and Present, H. Blezer (ed.), Brill, 2002, 495pp.
8. Territory and Identity in Tibet and the Himalayas, K. Buffetrille & H. Diemberger (eds.), Brill, 2002, 351pp.
9. Religion and Secular Culture in Tibet, H. Blezer (ed.), Brill, 2002, 470pp.
10. Impressions of Bhutan and Tibetan Art, John Ardussi & Henk Blezer (eds.), Brill, 2002, 150pp.
11. The Dzogchen Primer, compiled and edited by Marcia Binder Schmidt, Shambhala Publications, 2002, 310pp.
12. Buddhism with an Attitude, The Tibetan Seven-Point Mind Training, B. Alan Wallace, Snow Lion, 2001, 288pp.
13. Rules for nuns according to the Dharmaguptakavinaya, Part I, II, III, Ann Heirmann Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2002, 1211pp.
14. Everyday Consciousness and Buddha-Awakening, Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, Susanne Schefczyk (trans. & ed.), Snow Lion Publications, 2002, 124pp.
15. The Five Wisdom Energies, A Buddhist Way of Understanding Personalities, Emotions, and Relationships, Irini Rockwell, Shambhala Publications, 2002, 217pp.
16. Buddhist Critical Spirituality, Prajna and Sunyata, Shohei Ichimura, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2001, 435pp.
17. The Vimalakirti Sutra, Burton Watson, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1999, 168pp., Samyuktabhidharmahrdaya, Bart Dessein, Part I, II, III, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1999, 779+568+583pp.
18. A Millennium of Buddhist Logic, Alex Wayman, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 1999, 349pp.
19. The Supreme Source, The Fundamental Tantra of the Dzogchen Semde, Chogyal Namkhai Norbu and Adriano Clemente, Snow Lion Publications, 1999, 292pp.
20. Die Dreifache Schulung (Siksa) im Fruhen Yogacara, Der 7. Band des Hsien-yang sheng-chiao lun, von Jong-nam choi, Franz Steiner Verlag Stuttgart, 2001, 372pp.
21. Song of the Spirit...the World of Sacred Music, Sudhamati Regunathan (ed.), Tibet House, New Delhi, 2000, 204pp.

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