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Edited by

Amy Heller and Giacomella Orofino

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PREFACE

The present volume is the result of a panel at the International Association for Tibetan Studies Oxford seminar, September 2003.

The raison d'être of this panel was to encourage an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Mnga' ris skor gsum and adjacent regions.

Although they were integrated into the zone of the Tibetan empire since the seventh century, the geography of these regions led over time to distinct patterns of trade and cross-influences with the polities of central Asia, Nepal and India.

By their diversity, the participant's research covers a very broad time range from the Zhang zhung period to the 20th century, in order to offer as complete an outline as possible of the state of research in this area and to illustrate the rich terrain of information which it provides. In addition to specific topics linked to the political history of the kingdoms of Gu ge and Pu hrang, the contributions focussed on religious and secular art, architecture, and literature produced in or for western Tibet and the western Himalayas.

This particular field of studies has begun to attract ever increasing interest on the part of scholars, mainly since it has proved to be of seminal importance for the definition of the historical and cultural processes of the entire Indo-Tibetan civilisation, especially after the recent archaeological discoveries which have produced highly significant scientific results.

The panel was scheduled on the last morning of the Oxford seminar, which precluded a general discussion of all participants as several were obliged to depart before the conclusion of the entire session. In addition, two panellists were obliged to publish separately within the context of their university: Renate Ponweiser, University of Vienna, who presented a paper on narrative composition in the ambulatory of the cella in the *'du khang* of Ta bo, and Zhang Changhong, Sichuan University Institute for Tibetan Studies, who presented her findings on typology of stūpa in the vicinity of Tho gling and Dung dkar. Geshe Wangyal, a Bonpo lama from Dolpo district, northwest Nepal, unfortunately died a few weeks before the Oxford Seminar. His presence was sorely missed. The abstract of his paper is included in the present vol-

ume as a testimony to his achievement and as a salient reminder of the scholars of western Himalaya, who increasingly are analysing their history, religions, and societies. Enrico dell' Angelo, director of the Khor chags restoration project, had proposed a study of the history of Khor chags monastery, but was unable to attend. Giacomella Orofino, who participated in the same restoration project with dell'Angelo, presented the results of the ASIA restoration project and her research on a specific text recovered in Khor chags (see below). Huo Wei, director of the Sichuan University Institute for Tibetan Studies, was prevented from attending the Oxford seminar due to unforeseen visa problems, and his paper has been included in the present volume. His student Zhang Changhong represented their institute at the Oxford seminar.

In terms of content, the volume begins with archaeology, secular and religious. Aldenderfer and Huo Wei present here the first archeological reports in the history of the International Association for Tibetan Studies. Aldenderfer has done in-situ excavations at Dindun, a site located on a high terrace overlooking the river between the modern villages of Phyi yang and Dung dkar in Mnga' ris. Testing in 1999 and more extensive excavation in 2001 revealed the presence of residential architecture dating to approximately 85 BC. This excavation revealed several residences and differentiated living environments. Huo Wei, after initial archeological investigations of Tibetan tombs in central Tibet and the Lha rtse district, has recently concentrated his efforts on excavations and site-reports of Tibetan caves and mchod rten in the vicinity of Dung dkar, in Mnga' ris. He discusses here the recently rediscovered wall paintings of the caves of Byang rtse Mkhar phug, north of Dung dkar, which may be dated to the flourishing of Buddhism in Mnga' ris during the bstan pa phyi dar due to the content of the mural paintings and maṇḍala of the liturgical cycles of Vairocana.

The volume proceeds with two articles on architecture. Kozicz investigated with Prof. Heusgen of Graz and measured several sites, including Nyar ma in Ladakh, whose foundation is attributed to Rin chen bzang po, according to his biography written shortly after his death in 1055. As the results of their measurements illustrate some basic aspects of the architectural practices, Kozicz has studied the architecture of this former monastic enclave, working towards a comparison with A lci (Ladakh) and Ta bo (Spiti) and the analysis of the criteria for the architectural design of Nyar ma. Di Mattia does not

study the entire architecture of monastic buildings, but instead concentrates on the development and differentiated usage of architectural frames in the facades and interior decoration of monasteries in western Himalaya and Tibet.

The analysis of religious literature, in the context of the historical development of these regions, is the focus of the studies of Orofino, Heller and De Rossi Filibeck.

Orofino presents here the background of the Khor chags restoration project with the finding of a collection of manuscript texts, hidden in three walled hollow rooms in the *'du khang*. One of the buried manuscripts, the well known canonical text, *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgiti* has proved to be, on the base of critical textual analysis, very near to the Rin chen bzang po's translation archetype, tracing back, with great probability, to the first phases of the foundation of the Khor chags settlement, before the 12th century. The critical analysis of the text proves, once again, the importance of the western Tibet literary collections in the study of the formation of the Tibetan canons.

Heller and De Rossi Filibeck both analyse the prefaces of manuscript copies of volumes of the Tibetan Buddhist canon. In the context of a restoration project in a village of Dolpo, Nepal, Heller discusses here the history of Gnas sar dgon pa and analyses the prefaces of several manuscripts from a corpus of more than 600 volumes conserved in this Dolpo temple. These prefaces range from mid-14th to late 15th century, corresponding respectively to periods of Khas Malla and Glo bo patronage of Buddhism in Dolpo. The Gnas gsar prefaces show literary and organisational similarities with those analysed by De Rossi Filibeck in her previous studies of several prefaces of 17th century manuscripts, collected by Giuseppe Tucci in his travels near Ta bo and Tho gling and now preserved in the IsIAO library. Here De Rossi Filibeck presents a new study on the contents and the formal aspects of this very interesting literary material.

The history of the monastery is the topic of Lo Bue who here presents his study of Guru lha khang in Ladakh. Lo Bue reviews previous analysis of the chronology and content of this monastery's mural paintings as a prelude to a new analyis and definitive dating for Guru lha khang to the 15th century. Geshe Wangyal's abstract on Bsam gling, the principal Bonpo monastery in Dolpo, is a useful summary of the history of this monastic foundation. The history of a Bonpo pilgrimage in Dolpo and the synchronic development of its sacred geography is pre-

sented in the research by Kind. Jahoda also studies the history of a monastery, however his study of the Ta bo monastery is specific to the economic history of Ta bo village and monastery brought to light by documents pertaining to the economic relationships between the monastery and the lay population of Ta bo and other villages in Spiti valley during the third quarter of the 20th century, and examined through the 19th century antecedents of these relations.

Spanning secular, religious and economic history, literature, art and archaeology from pre-historical period to the 20th century, the articles presented here show the importance of research on west Tibet and western Himalaya and demonstrate the fruitful exchange of interdisciplinary research within this geographical context. The editors wish to thank all of the contributors for their patience and cooperative attitude. We are grateful to Dr Charles Ramble, as convenor of the conference, for his hospitality, congeniality and encouragement of this publication, and Mr Anthony Aris, of the Aris Trust, which facilitated the organisation of the Oxford IATS seminar and publication of this volume. To honour the memory of our dear friend and colleague Dr Michael Aris, historian of Tibet and of the Himalayas, this volume is humbly dedicated.

Amy Heller and Giacomella Orofino

Part One: Archaeology and Art

'JAG 'DUL—A BON MOUNTAIN PILGRIMAGE IN DOLPO, NEPAL

MARIETTA KIND (ZURICH)

INTRODUCTION

This brief study of a specific mountain pilgrimage describes the process involved in its commencement and gives a short summary of the pilgrimage guide (*dkar chag*). The 'opening of the door' (*sgo phye ba*) to 'Jag 'dul is an example that illustrates the promotion of Bon in the area of Dolpo.

Dolpo is a northwestern district of Nepal that borders Tibet and is said to have once belonged to the ancient kingdom of Zhang zhung.[1] Later, jointly with the kingdom of Lo, it fell under the rule of Spu hrang, one of the principalities of the western Tibetan kingdom of Mnga' ris.[2] For several centuries Dolpo remained in a pivotal position between the kingdoms of Ya tse (with the Khasa malla) and those of western Tibet.[3] At the end of the 18th century the Gorkha gained power over Kathmandu Valley and Kali Gandaki Valley, including Lo. Dolpo as its dependency fell under their authority. After the unification of Nepal in the 19th century, the ties with Lo were broken and a new border was established between Nepal and Tibet. The new fiscal authorities of Dolpo were accordingly based in Tripurakot (Tibrikot), in Jumla and today in Dunai.[4]

DESERTED VILLAGE IN THE HIDDEN VALLEY OF 'JAG 'DUL

The secluded valley of 'Jag 'dul is located in a remote side-valley in the westernmost part of Dolpo. In the early days, before the valley was

[1] Namgyal Nyima Dagkar (1997: 693) in his article on Zhang zhung according to Bon sources and as told in oral accounts in Dolpo.

[2] Jackson 1984: 10; Vitali 1996: 159ff.

[3] Heller forthcoming.

[4] Kind 2002: 12ff.

deserted, it used to be the location of a whole village comprising several houses, a small Bon dgon pa and some fields. Now all that remains are ruins left from the dgon pa and the village along with some stones carved with Bon and Buddhist sacred syllables.

According to oral sources, the founder of the Bon *dgon pa* was Nya sgom Blo gros rgyal mtshan, a descendant of the Nya rong lineage who had meditated on those meadows for over three years. Blo gros rgyal mtshan was the teacher of Tre ston Tshe dbang tshul khrims, an important person in the subsequent expansion of Bon in Dolpo. He not only stopped in 'Jag 'dul, he visited Smer phu, a small mountain retreat near the valley of Mdo rta rab, Srib phyogs, Shel ri hermitage and Spung mo,[5] where he paused for some time to teach disciples. Later he left for Kongpo Bonri in Tibet and never returned.

In those early days a trail winding through the high mountains connected 'Jag 'dul directly with the Bon monastery of Bsam gling[6] in upper Dolpo. Strong ties were maintained and the lamas responsible for 'Jag 'dul dgon pa all came from Bsam gling. This major centre of Bon in Dolpo was established by Yang ston Rgyal mtshan rin chen in the 13th century.[7]

According to the lamas of Bsam gling he also built a meditation chapel in 'Jag 'dul. His footprint imprinted on a rock is one of the sacred sites on the pilgrimage. To illustrate how close Bsam gling was in those days I was often told how the fresh buckwheat bread did not even cool down on the way from 'Jag 'dul to Bsam gling.

As a result of landslides that wiped out the main bridge and the boulder on which it was fixed, the trail to Bsam gling became inaccessible. Direct communication and trade between the two monasteries and villages grew difficult. The 'Jag 'dul village moved southwards to the village now known as Yul ri skor (or 'Ur bkod, Nep. Hurikot) while the deserted valley of 'Jag 'dul became a place for meditation and summer pastures. The villagers of Yul ri skor still used to maintain close links with Bsam gling, but there was no lama who could support the local Bonpo community full time. So they applied to the village Spung mo and to the main monastery in India to send a lama.

[5] Different spellings exist in local texts: Spung mo and Spud mo, pronounced *Pungmo*.

[6] Bsam gtan gling is locally called by its short form Bsam gling, pronounced *Samling*.

[7] Snellgrove 1967: 4 and Karmay 1998: 49–50.

About ten years ago *dge bshes* Bstan 'dzin nyi ma 'od zer from Spung mo was chosen. He moved to Yul ri skor and built G.yung drung 'gro 'dul gling dgon, which is popularly referred to as Duli *dgon pa*, the replacement of the ancient 'Jag 'dul *dgon pa*. Besides stimulating a number of Bonpo ceremonial activities and ritual dances (*'cham*), Nyi ma 'od zer also intensified the pilgrimage activities to 'Jag 'dul.

At present, different religious traditions are practised in the area of Bkag Yul ri skor, which includes the villages Bkag rgyal (Nep. Kaigaun), Yul ri skor (Nep. Hurikot) and Rimi. Shamanism is widespread.[8] Ethnically the inhabitants of Bkag Yul ri skor and its neighbourhood are on the cusp between Bodic groups speaking Tibetan dialects and the Magar, as well as a few hill castes (Chhetri, Bahun). The Valley of 'Jag 'dul is a major place of pilgrimage for all these groups: the shamans travel to the sacred lake where they fall into a trance and enter a dialogue with deities and spirits. The Hindus call the place 'Jagdulla Baikunta' (Skr. Vaikuṇṭha), the heaven where Viṣṇu lives. They search for traces of their gods Viṣṇu and Mahādeva. If they perform a pilgrimage and visit the sacred places it will take them to Indraloka, the heaven of Indra (the heaven of all the gods).[9] For the Bonpo the hidden land of 'Jag 'dul is a sacred place of Zhang zhung Me ri, a major tutelary deity closely associated with Zhang zhung. A visit to this sacred place of Me ri bestows many blessings and benefits. This will be described later in more detail. While the Bon po and the shamans still make yearly visits to the pilgrimage sites, no Hindu or Buddhist activities are currently to be found there.

Early Visitor to 'Jag 'dul

How was the hidden land of 'Jag 'dul opened up as a place of pilgrimage to the followers of the Bon tradition? Apart from a few hermits who meditated in the caves of 'Jag 'dul from very early times, the first main impetus for opening the area to pilgrimage came with the visit of Ka ru

[8] The *dhami* control some of the most powerful local deities. The growth of shamanism was particularly marked during the long periods in which there was no Bon lama. However, the Bon tradition has remained active, above all in Bkag Yul ri skor, and although shamanism and Hindu beliefs also exist these are mainly observed in the neighbouring village of Rimi and beyond.

[9] Cf. Nepali translation of the pilgrimage text by Lama and Thakali (1968).

Grub dbang Bstan 'dzin rin chen to Dolpo. The following description is based on oral accounts.

Ka ru Grub dbang of the Rgyal rmog sog po lineage was born in western Tibet in the vicinity of Ti se (Mount Kailash) in 1801.[10] He travelled to many different places and spent time in Glo, Se rib, Rgya rong, and Dol po, where he promulgated a new doctrinal system, the *Dmar khrid dug lnga rang grol*. Among the many different teachers who visited Dolpo, Ka ru Grub dbang Bstan 'dzin rin chen made a lasting impression on the spiritual life of Dolpo. Stories about him are rife. He visited many places in Tibet, not least his birthplace in western Tibet near Ti se, for which he wrote a well-known pilgrimage guidebook. Later his travels led him to Klu brag, a Bon community in Glo (Mustang). He remained in the village for a lengthy duration and founded the village temple, Phun tshogs gling.[11]

During his stay he encountered a poor woman with a young boy whose father had died. They were struggling to survive. Ka ru Grub dbang grew fond of them and decided to take care of the boy. The boy became his student and later turned into a renowned lama named 'Gro mgon Bstan 'dzin nyi ma.[12] Taking his young disciple by the hand, Ka ru Grub dbang left to journey to Dolpo. The two of them passed through Tshar kha, Srib phyogs, Smer phu, Par gle, Dung nyal (Nep. Dunai), 'Tibtu' (Nep. Tripurakot or Tibrikot) and Tsha lung before reaching Yul ri skor. All of the villages received them gladly and honored them with great hospitality. Ka ru Grub dbang performed rituals in exchange for turquoise, coral, *gzi* stones and silver. In one village he successfully tamed a very powerful and ill-tempered local deity that had caused illness and bad harvests.

On finally arriving at Yul ri skor and visiting 'Jag 'dul, Ka ru Grub dbang had a revelation concerning the Hidden Valley of 'Jag 'dul. He recognised it as a highly sacred place and predicted that his student Bstan 'dzin nyi ma would return at the age of fifty to formally inaugurate the pilgrimage (*sgo phye ba*) and write the pilgrimage guide (*dkar chag*).

[10] A written biography of Dkar ru Grub dbang Bstan 'dzin rin chen exists but I have not had a chance to get hold of it yet (see bibliography).

[11] Ramble and Kind 2003: 671.

[12] This account describing the early life of Bstan 'dzin nyi ma seems to be an amalgamation with the biography of Yang ston Bkra shis rgyal mtshan, also called 'Gro mgon Klu brag pa (Ramble and Kind 2003: 675 and Ramble 1984: 95ff).

Thereafter they continued their travels to Spung mo, where they bestowed a blessing on the new statues at Rnam rgyal *lha khang* founded by Tre ston Tshe dbang tshul khrims. Soon after they paid a visit to Mtsho (Nep. *Ringmo*). To this day, the belt of Ka ru Grub dbang is kept as a relic in the Phiuwä house at Mtsho village. The two lamas proceeded to Bsam gling, to Byi gcer.[13]

Opening 'Jag 'dul Pilgrimage

The following account of the 'opening' (*sgo phye ba*) of 'Jag 'dul is mainly based on the *dkar chag* of the hidden land *sbas yul* 'Jag 'dul gzha 'tshon 'od bar gling, written by 'Gro mgon Bstan 'dzin nyi ma in the year of the Earth Snake 1869. The guidebook consists of twelve folios with a missing first page and several corners damaged by vermin. In addition, local villagers from Bkag Yul ri skor have done a translation of this *dkar chag* into Nepali.[14] This offers complementary information on the missing introduction page of the Tibetan text. The Nepali version is interesting as it translates some of the Bon concepts into Hindu concepts and gives part of the Hindu view of the sacred place. Oral accounts supplement the description.

Bstan 'dzin nyi ma received his main spiritual education over a period of eight years from the age of five to the age of thirteen. Thereafter he practiced, studied the dharma, and meditated. Between the ages of 32 and 41 he remained in solitude meditating in a mountain cave and experienced several visions and revelations. When he finally reached the age of 50 the village elders of Bkag Yul ri skor sent for him to come and fulfill the prophecy of Ka ru Grub dbang. They reminded him that this powerful master had arrived there before and had a revelation: the local guardian, G.yung drung drag ldan, had given Ka ru Grub dbang an insight into the hidden place of shining rainbows (*sbas yul* Gzha' tshon 'od bar gling) with its many high gods, wisdom deities, *ḍākas* and *ḍākiṇīs*, local deities and protectors.

Now the villagers requested Bstan 'dzin nyi ma to open up the pilgrimage route and write a short history of the sacred place of 'Jag 'dul.

[13] Several spellings exist: Byi gcer, Phyi mtsher, Byi cher, Bi cher, local pronunciation is Bicher.

[14] Cf. Sherab Lama and Shantaram Thakali, Kaigaun-Hurikot 1968.

Bstan 'dzin nyi ma was inspired by a feeling of great devotion and devised a plan to open up the place on the 15th day of the Monkey month (7th month) in the year of the Earth Snake (1869).

Revelations and Introduction into the Hidden Place

On the 14th day Bstan 'dzin nyi ma began his journey from Yul ri skor and spent the night at Brag po che, the great cliff entry gate to 'Jag 'dul. In his dream, a frog as big as a male goat appeared and jumped at him. Bstan 'dzin nyi ma started to chase the frog with a big stick, when suddenly it spoke with a powerful human voice:

> Listen to me, practitioner, instead of presenting me with offerings you are chasing me away with a stick. Are you aware of who I am? I am the guardian of this sacred place (*gnas kyi zhing skyong*), my name is G.yung drung drag ldan, and I do not think that you are a genuine practitioner and know the true story of this place. How do you think you can write a *dkar chag*?

Having spoken thus, the frog disappeared into the rock cliff. Shortly afterwards, Bstan 'dzin nyi ma had another dream. The white woman Ral pa can appeared to him with her long hair and said:

> Listen! You are a very smart being, if you wish to write a *dkar chag* about this sacred place and want to receive the initiation you first need to make offerings to all the wisdom deities (*ye shes lha rnams*), gods (*lha*) and *nāga*s (*klu*), *ḍāka*s and *ḍākiṇī*s (*dpa' bo mkha' 'gro*), 'owners of the place' (*gzhi bdag*), and to the eight classes of violent deities (*sde brgyad*). You need to show devotion and become of one heart with the deities. You have to ask them not to beset your work with obstacles, harm or anger. Only then you can ask them to give you a revelation and reveal this sacred place to you. For seven days you should pay devotion to all the *ḍāka*s and *ḍākiṇī*s with your body, speech and mind altogether in single pointed concentration. You should meditate very hard and very carefully.

Then she disappeared and he woke up. He set out on his pilgrimage straight away so that no evil nightmare could follow on from this marvellous dream. At the place called Brag po che, the frog left a footprint in a big rock. It is honoured during the pilgrimage in the form of offerings and prayers to G.yung drung drag ldan and the account of the first revelation.

Bstan 'dzin nyi ma continued his journey and arrived at the 'joyful meadow of mankind' (*mi yul skyid thang*). There he honoured all of the deities, uttered the sacred syllables without interruption, made generous esoteric and mundane offerings, and stayed in single pointed meditation for seven days. All kinds of animals came to observe him: a bear, a snake, a tortoise, dogs, and even human beings tried to disturb his meditation. They were all manifestations of G.yung drung drag ldan, the guardian of the place, but despite the taunting, Bstan 'dzin nyi ma did not interrupt his meditation.

On the morning of the 21st day, another vision came. A very beautiful red woman with long braided hair appeared. She was adorned with a crown, a necklace and numerous bone ornaments. She was holding a *ḍamaru* drum and a Bon po bell (*rdar bsil rnams*). While she studied him from the corners of her eyes she said:

> Listen! You are a saint in the times of the evil era that is weighed down by negative emotions and misery. People burn forests, they hunt and kill animals using hunting dogs and poisoned arrows, making great noise and causing thunderous roars. The animals are forced to flee from this holy place. All the *nāga*s and *sa bdag* are angry and cause trouble for the human beings who are incapable of stopping their sinful behaviour. They are unable to accumulate merit by performing good deeds. But you, despite these evil times, have tried very hard and with great devotion. You bestowed great hopes on us, so we should help you, otherwise you will have to return empty-handed. Thus we will describe this holy place to you and you should listen with attention!

The red *ḍākiṇī* began to describe the place called 'Jag 'dul gzha 'tshon gling, the pacified area of shining rainbows. The chief mountain is called Me ri ral ba can. Me ri is a tutelary deity of the Bonpo. He is also often referred to as Dbal chen ge khod. Like Ge khod,[15] he is closely associated with the kingdom of Zhang zhung and thus he is frequently referred to simply as Zhang zhung Me ri. The principal mountain is around 7000m high and is referred to on Nepali Maps as 'Kanjiroba', a distortion of the local name Gangs chen Me ri ral ba.[16] The connecting lake is called Ting nam Ne slas mtsho, the lake of Dbal chen ge khod's wife Ting nam Ne slas rgyal mo.

[15] The word *ge khod* designates an old class of ancient Tibetan gods who are said to reside on Mount Ti se, the sacred mountain of Zhang zhung. The tutelary deity Dbal chen ge khod is also believed to reside on Mount Ti se (Kvaerne 1995: 80–84).

[16] Amy Heller heard yet another etymology of the mountains name in upper Dolpo: Gangs chen ras pa, 'the cotton-clad yogin of the glaciers'. This name exemplifies the Buddhist interpretation of the mountain probably pointing to the cotton-clad Mila, the famous yogi Mi la ras pa of the *Bka' rgyud* order.

There are four 'cosmic maṇḍala meadows' (*ma 'dal srid pa'i thang*): the 'blissful meadow', the 'joyful meadow of mankind', the meadow of the *nāgas*, and the meadow of the gods. There are also four snow mountains and four lakes. Their water can cleanse all diseases and the four streams will eliminate contamination, poison and defilement. Concealed in four different crags are hidden treasures (*gter ma*). One of them holds gold that will be discovered after 500 years and will be used to build seven Bon monasteries. Leading to the four meadows are four steep slopes, which are stairways to paradise and to a favourable rebirth.

Anyone who meditates at one of the four sacred meditation places of accomplished masters can achieve spiritual realisation very swiftly. One can find four sacred imprints (*zhabs rjes*)—signs of powerful meditation, as well as four very perfect naturally formed images (*rang byon*). There are four bone reliquaries (*gdung rten*)—shrines containing relics of former masters. From the time of the past Buddha to the time of the present Buddha Gshen rab mi bo, many teachers and practitioners have abided in 'Jag 'dul and bestowed their blessings on this sacred place.

The main masters who have left their traces at 'Jag 'dul are Dran pa nam mkha', 'Od ldan 'bar ma, Klu grub Ye shes nying po, Stang chen mu tsa, a student of Dran pa nam mkha, and Ha ra ci par. Later practitioners were Lta'u Nyi ma rgyal mtshan, Nya sgom Smon lam rgyal mtshan, Yang ston Rgyal mtshan rin chen, and Tre ston Tshe dbang tshul khrims who has established several Bon monasteries in Dolpo.[17] Whoever visits the sacred sites of these former masters will encounter unlimited purity and will be granted success in their work. The past, present and future Buddhas, known locally as Ha ri ston pa, Mar khu ston pa and 'Gyi'u (?) ston pa, dwell in three eternal mountains for all time.

Having climbed all four steep slopes and visited the different meadows, one will reach the base of the great mountain Gangs chen Me ri ral ba, the dwelling place of Me ri the subduer of demons. He is the majestic manifestation of the deity, surrounded by flames and causing demons to declare their submission. On his left is the beautiful high mountain of his great consort E las rgyal mo, the queen of liberation, while at the base of the mountain we find the lake of his second consort, the great Ne slas rgyal mo, the queen of mystic union. She is also sometimes referred to as the 'queen of the created world' Srid pa'i rgyal mo, the chief among the protectors of Bon.[18]

[17] Kind 2002: 13–16.

The turquoise lake of Ne slas rgyal mo assumes three different colours during the course of one day. In the morning it is white. Whoever drinks of it and washes at that time can eliminate all sins, contamination and harming spirits. Whoever drinks of it and washes at noontime when it turns green will attain longevity and good fortune. In the evening the lake turns black. Whoever drinks at that time can pacify all evil beings and eliminate obstacles. The lake is the main aim of the pilgrimage. People gather at the shore, prostrate themselves towards Gangs chen Me ri ral ba and his two consorts, say prayers and drink the purifying water. They fill bottles with the sacred water to bring home to the family members and friends who could not undertake the pilgrimage themselves.

Besides listing all of the sacred sites in 'Jag 'dul, the red *ḍākiṇī* also gave a description of each, explaining what specific benefits can be gained at each site if the right actions and offerings are performed. During the pilgrimage, the lay people stop at each site, make offerings of flowers, food and water, and circumambulate it while uttering their prayers.

After her detailed portrait, the red *ḍākiṇī* concluded by saying:

> This is the wonderful hidden land of rainbows, the high holy place of the past, present and future time where all the deities, *ḍākas* and *ḍākiṇīs*, guardians and *nāgas* reside and where the joyful ones have reached enlightenment. Whoever meditates here with great devotion can reach the western lotus flower paradise (*pad ma rgyas pa'i zhing khams*) and meet all the *ḍākas* and *ḍākiṇīs* there. It is a great, miraculous and holy site that is equal to the holy places of Gangs Ti se and Mtsho Ma pham (Mt Kailash and Lake Manasarovar).

Having thus spoken, she disappeared like a bird without a trace. After that Bstan 'dzin nyi ma wrote down the description of the sacred place for the benefit of the future generations.

[18] In a thangka of Me ri described by Kvaerne (1995: 100ff) two consorts are shown, which Kvaerne identifies as the queens Nam mkha'i o slas and Ne slas srid pa'i rgyal mo. In his description of Zhang zhung Me ri (1995: 86) translated from the *Me ri gsang ba dpa' bo gyad phur gyi sgrub thabs mngon par rtogs pa zab lam gnad kyi 'khor lo* it says: "On his right is the Mother of 'liberation', Namkhé Wölé, of dark red color,

Pilgrimage Activities Today

To this day the pilgrimage is highly popular among the Bon community in Dolpo. Each summer the villagers set out to circumambulate the sacred sites. Usually the local lama will lead the pilgrim group. He reads from the *dkar chag* at the main sites along the pilgrimage route and explains the history of the places according to the text—supplemented with the knowledge transmitted by oral tradition. The group climbs the four steep slopes, rests and makes offerings at the four meadows, and drinks the water of the four lakes and the four streams. All the local deities dwelling in the area, the wisdom deities, and the traces of the great lamas who have meditated here are honoured with different offerings, sacred syllables and incense. Finally, after cleansing their sins at the different sites and squeezing their way through purificatory rock formations, the villagers pay homage to the great Zhang zhung Me ri and his two consorts.

> A local informant describes why this is such a holy place: "It is a very sacred place because all the Buddhas reside here. At night there are many stars in the sky, they are the eyes of the *nāgas*. The wisdom deities, *ḍākas* and *ḍākiṇīs* all dwell in the snow mountains and in the rocky hill areas, just like the fog and the clouds on the mountains. The grass hill area is covered with medicinal flowers, which radiate like illuminating and bright clarifying blossoms. Here at this peaceful place offerings can be made to all those beings, and these will help to eliminate one's obstacles. 'Jag 'dul is a place of pilgrimage as great as Mount Kailash that also is a sacred place of Me ri. The same benefits can be attained, so one does not actually need to go to Kailash.

Especially in the snake years (last time in 2001) people set out from the various villages to visit the hidden valley of 'Jag 'dul.

adorned with tresses of a hundred thousand 'fire-crystals'. She holds a dagger in her hand and has a conch-white tortoise as her throne. On his left is the Mother of 'union', Nelé Sipé Gyalmo, of dark yellow colour, adorned with tresses of blazing golden light. She offers a skull filled with blood to the Father. They are locked in embrace so that they are one. She has a fierce black bear as her throne".

Conclusion

This example of the founding of a pilgrimage route illustrates a process that can be seen in different parts of Dolpo, in which a valley is transformed into a meaningful place for the followers of Bon. It also shows how lamas from Tibet travelling via Lubra played an important role in promulgating Bon in the area. Yang ston Rgyal mtshan rin chen,[19] who came to Dolpo via Lubra, was the first important lama to promulgate Bon and have a long-lasting influence. It was he who established Bsam gling dgon pa, the major centre of Bon in Dolpo. Ka ru Grub dbang, who was originally from Tibet, also stayed in Lubra for a lengthy period of time before he travelled through Dolpo, where he left a strong impression. Several important teachers of Bon in Dolpo originally came from Tibet or Lubra. The history of many places in Dolpo seems to indicate that the Bon tradition was introduced via Lubra in the east of the district, which also makes sense in terms of the historical connection between the two areas. Even if the political dependence shifted to Jumla and Dunai in the course of history, the religious relationship of the Bonpo in Dolpo remained for a long time with Tibet and Lubra. Only recently the religious orientation shifted towards the newly established Bon monasteries in the Tibetan exile in India and in Kathmandu. However, many questions, especially the timing of events, remain unanswered and it will need some more research to date events and discover the settling patterns of Dolpo.

[19] Karmay 1998:49–50.

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Plate 1: Ruins of old 'Jag 'dul *dgon pa*

Plate 2: Dge bshes Nyi ma 'od zer reading and explaining from the *'Jag 'dul dkar chag*; Mt Gangs chen Me ri ral ba is in the background

Plate 3: Dge bshes Nyi ma 'od zer and Marietta Kind on 'Jag 'dul pilgrimage with Gangs chen Me ri ral ba in the background

Plate 4: Dge bshes Nyi ma 'od zer clearing leaves from rock imprint of sTang chen Mu tsha gyer med's body

Plate 5: *'Jag 'dul dkar chag* by 'Gro mgon Bstan 'dzin nyi ma

SOCIO-ECONOMIC ORGANISATION OF VILLAGE COMMUNITIES AND MONASTERIES IN SPITI, H.P., INDIA: THE CASE OF A RELIGIOUS ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT (*CHOS GZHIS*)*

CHRISTIAN JAHODA (VIENNA)

Buddhist monks and monastic communities from the earliest time onwards have always depended on material support by lay people, yet this has rarely been investigated by social anthropologists.[1] Historically, different models have been developed to organise this support on a regular and steady basis.[2]

Based on the example of Tabo in lower Spiti valley (see Map) I here attempt to reconstruct the local system of support which seems to have been practised since the foundation of the monastery in the late 10th century until the second half of the 20th century. Due to limitations of space I concentrate here mainly on the period from the mid-19th to mid-20th century. Introductory remarks on Tabo village and monastery are followed by a short historical outline of the area beginning with the Buddhist transformation of western Tibet in the late 10th century and its implications for the socio-economic organisation of village communities and monasteries during later periods.

Since the middle of the 19th century, the existence of a special administrative unit in Spiti named *chos gzhis* is known which provided the framework for the economic relationship between major monaster-

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[1] Major works contributing to the formulation of new concepts in this field have been Goldstein 1968, 1971a, 1971b and 1971c, Clarke 1980, Grimshaw 1983 and Tsarong 1987.

[2] Fundamental studies of these models as practised in ancient India and China have been made by Bareau 1961 and Gernet 1956, respectively, complemented by Miller 1961 for spheres under Tibetan influence. More recently, editions of Tibetan historiographical texts (e.g. *Dba' bzhed, Mnga' ris rgyal rabs*) have provided scholars with additional accounts regarding the socio-economic organisation of important Tibetan Buddhist monasteries such as Bsam yas and Tho gling at the time of their foundation (cf. Wangdu and Diemberger 2000, Vitali 1996).