

Dorje Lingpa and His Rediscovery of the “Gold Needle” in Bhutan

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Introduction

Among the Buddhist ritual traditions that are still preserved and carried out as the central religious constituents of the annual festivals in Bhutan today those of Dorje Lingpa (1346-1405) stand out strikingly. This is particularly so in Bumthang area, Central Bhutan.

In 1998 and 1999, I have had the good fortune to witness these spectacular festivals in Ogyen chöling and, in 1999, at Jampa Lhakhang in Bumthang itself.

Dorje Lingpa is considered as one of the five great “treasure revealers” (*tertön*) among the *Nyingmapa* and an important *Dzogchen* master by the *Bonpo* tradition. He was thus an exceptional figure who clearly adopted an impartial approach to both Buddhist practices and the *Bon*, the non-Buddhist religious tradition in Tibet, in his spiritual quest. His approach therefore made him the precursor of what is later known as the “eclectic” (*rime*) movement of the nineteenth century (Smith 1970).

Like many other Tibetan men of religion, Dorje Lingpa never settled himself in one place. He travelled around incessantly carried away by the motivation of disclosing hidden manuscripts and it was mainly because of this urge in him that he travelled to Bhutan, then known as Mönyul or Lhomön (Cf. Pommaret 1999), where he flourished particularly. He had left in Bhutan not only his ritual legacy but also his family descendants.

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Due to the studies of Michael Aris (1979: 158) and Françoise Pommaret (1997: 408, 414), the accounts of Dorje Lingpa's descendants who established themselves there as well as those of his reincarnations are now relatively well known. In a study of the *Dzogchen* of the *Nyingmapa* tradition, I myself had the occasion to deal very briefly with his revelation of *Bonpo Dzogchen* manuscripts from one of the caves of Tagtshang in Paro (Karmay 1988: 216-219).

In this article I therefore intend to take up the account of Dorje Lingpa's visit to Bhutan focusing on the question of his connection with a *Bonpo* religious establishment in Bhutan which then existed, and this, within a wider perspective of his activities in Bhutan based on my own field observations and more importantly Dorje Lingpa's own writings now available in 22 volumes. They were not all accessible to me while I was carrying out research into the *Dzogchen* tradition in the 1970s.

The Early Life of Dorje Lingpa

Dorje Lingpa was born in 1346 in the district of Dra, south of the Tsangpo river in Lhokha, Central Tibet. He lost his mother, Karmogyen, at the age of 3 and father, Sonam Gyaltshen, at 7. He was brought up by an aunt. His childhood name was Ogyen Zangpo. At the age of 8 he was symbolically ordained as a novice at Lharikha. At 13 he rediscovered for the first time hidden manuscripts from the ancient temple of Tradrug. Among the manuscripts he found there were the *khachang* "guides" that indicated the existence of manuscripts concealed in other places. At 15, he disclosed a large number of manuscripts at Namchagdrag amongst which he found the text Tawa Longyang. It became the basis of his *Dzogchen* teachings in later life. In this work he held some radical views on the main *Dzogchen* theories that aroused a good deal of interest amongst his followers as well as eliciting severe criticisms from the *Gelugpa* dialecticians (Karmay 1988: 186). From the same place he also revealed the Lama Kadu amongst other ritual cycles.¹ The Lama Kadu is the ritual component of the annual festivals in several places in Bhutan today.

In 1362 aged 17, he became known as Dorje Lingpa for the first time and is said to have revealed more manuscripts in four volumes that contained texts on such subjects as medicine, the *Bon* religion, astrology and the *dö* rituals,² but these have not found their way into the collected writings. He continued to engage in similar ventures in various places before he made his first visit to Bhutan. His rediscovery of hidden manuscripts of texts were so numerous that Sogdogpa Lodrö Gyaltshen describes them as “the mad treasures”(ternyön)³ and most of these Dorje Lingpa claims to have already achieved before the age of twenty - incredible as it may sound.

Pilgrimage of Dorje Lingpa to Bhutan

In 1369 aged 24, Dorje Lingpa was staying in the hermitage of Chuwori in Yartö, Central Tibet. In this place he claimed to have obtained a “guide” to the “concealed manuscripts” by Vairocana. In a dream a monk gave him a flat bell (*shang*) and a thunderbolt (*dorje*) pointing with his finger toward the south and said “O! your wealth portion (*norkal*) and your would-be converts are down there, that way!”

Vairocana was an eighth century Tibetan Buddhist monk believed to have practised Buddhism and *Bon*, the flat bell being a symbol of the *Bon* religion and *vajra* that of tantric Buddhism. Dorje Lingpa believed himself to be an embodiment of the monk and took the dream as an indication for finding hidden manuscripts in Tagtshang Sengge Samdrub in Paro.⁴ He therefore set out on a pilgrimage with the hope of divulging hidden manuscripts. On the way he stopped in various places such as Ralung and Phagri in Dromo from where he entered Mönnyul. When he saw Paro Chagkhar from a distance he was moved by its sight. He composed a song expressing that although he now found himself in a country that he did not know he felt very happy about everything that he could see.⁵

In 1370, Dorje Lingpa stopped at Paro Tagtshang and revealed for the first time a certain number of hidden manuscripts that contained religious texts of Buddhist tantras and *Bonpo Dzogchen* meditation. I shall deal with these findings below.

He continued his journey down to Changyul at the confluence of the Phochu and Mochu rivers in the Punakha valley where he met a certain number of nuns who asked him to give religious instructions (*dampa*), and he felt very sorry for them since they did not know much about Buddhism. On this occasion he improvised a song that expresses his sad feelings for the fishermen spending their lives fishing in the place.⁶

In the same year he was in Khothang samten rinchenling (today Kothangka) in Shar, one of the eight establishments of Longchen Rabjam (1308-1363). Dorje Lingpa describes this place like the opening of a flower and where he wrote a song whose theme is the main ventures in his own life.⁷ He continued to search for more manuscripts and found some in Namthang Langdrag in Tang, but he did not disclose them till 1374.⁸

In 1371, Dorje Lingpa performed what is known as the “public revelation” (*tromter*) in at least two places: at Ugyen Yiblung Dekyiling,⁹ accompanied by three hundred people, and at Pungthang Dewa Dhenpo (Punakha).¹⁰ He seems to be the first among the *Nyingmapa tertön* to initiate this tradition. It consisted in disclosing manuscripts and other sacred objects from a hidden place with the public witnessing the action of disclosure.¹¹

When he was at Punakha he was again asked to give religious instructions by a group of nuns and on this occasion he composed a eulogy to the place as being pleasant and appropriate for practising Buddhism.¹²

Departure for Bumthang from Western Bhutan

In 1374 he set out to go to Bumthang and tried to cross over two high passes covered with snow, but he suffered from snow-blindness and was obliged to retreat. He finally arrived at Bumthang. In the same year he revealed more hidden manuscripts from the cave Nganlung situated near the lake Durtsho nagmo located in the Upper Chökhör, Bumthang.¹³

Bumthang became the main seat of his activities in Bhutan. There is an old house reputed to have been his residence. In 1999, it was occupied by the Chagkhar *Lama*, a *Nyingmapa* adept.¹⁴

Dorje Lingpa spent less than three years in Bumthang. Towards the end of 1376, in which year he returned to Tibet, he went into retreat at Yangdzong Shelgyi Dragphug (probably today Shebrag in Tang, Bumthang) for seven days in the second month of the year.¹⁵ In the fifth month, he gave teachings on *Dzogchen* based on the Tawa Longyang. One night he had a dream of a woman who appeared to be in Lhasa. She gave him long religious instructions and the next morning he wrote them down.¹⁶ During the seventh month of the same year he again gave teachings on *Dzogchen* and this seems to have been the last teaching he delivered in Bumthang.¹⁷ In the eighth month he returned to Tibet taking the ancient route of Mönla karchung from Bumthang to Lhodrag. On the way he stopped in a place called Kampotshol where again he wrote down a dream he had there. He arrived in Lhodrag in 1376.

The Question of Dates of Dorje Lingpa

The dates of Dorje Lingpa have been a subject of discussion among the *Nyingmapa*¹⁸ and *Bonpo* chroniclers. All the dates in this article are based on the dating 1346-1405. These dates are mainly based on *TTGL* (pp.210, 549) where fire-dog (*me khyi*, 1346) of the 6th sexagenary cycle is given as the year of his birth. The same source states that he lived till the age of sixty, hence 1405 as the year in which he died. These dates fit in with those of his contemporaries such as Karmapa Rolpai Dorje (1340-1383) and Miwang Dragpa Gyaltsan (1374-1432) and the *Bonpo Lama* Dru Sonam Lodrö (1337-1401) whom Dorje Lingpa met. Moreover, 1346-1405 perfectly corresponds to the accounts of his life given in his own writings. Some of his songs, however, give years that are inconsistent. For instance, he states that he was in Mön Dangchu (in Shar) and wrote a song in a horse year.¹⁹ In the period considered, the horse year has to be earth-horse, 1378 when he was aged 33 and this is contradicted by the letter in which he says he wrote it in 1378 when he was in

Rinpung in Tibet.²⁰ In another song he gives a sheep year and says that he was in the place called Benanglung in Thed when he was 34.²¹ The sheep would be earth-sheep, 1379 and Thed refers to the Punakha district, often known as Thelung in written sources. These dates contradict other statements in for example the song in which he says that he returned to Tibet when he was 31 (1376).²²

As mentioned I intend to focus here only on the activities of Dorje Lingpa in Bhutan. In 1378 when he was 33 he revealed more hidden manuscripts and on this occasion he began to have the name Padma Lingpa, which name he often, uses thereafter.²³

There is a cryptic suggestion that he returned to Paro in a monkey year which is probably 1380,²⁴ but this remains ambiguous. However, he certainly returned to Bumthang in 1388, aged 42. In this year he was in a place near Mount Kula Khari in Lhodrag from where he came down to Bumthang. He initiated a restoration of Jampa Lhakhang and assigned a person to recite the *mani* mantra at Kujedrag. During this time the chief of the people who received him were Tshomo Dorje (probably a woman) and the ruler (*tsepo*) of the four tribes in Bumthang.²⁵ The four tribes (*tshozhi*) in Bumthang are Chökhör, Tang, Chume and Ura.²⁶

Dorje Lingpa wrote at least two letters to his people in Bhutan in his later years. One, dated 1381, was sent when he was at Rinpung in Tsang. It is addressed to Kunzanggyal who lived in the “Cypress wood forest of the South”.²⁷ This person is described as “the little boy” (*buchung*), possibly one of his own sons.²⁸

The other letter was written in 1384 at Chuwori. A nun called Togden Sonamgyal paid a visit to him and offered to take the letter as she was leaving for Bhutan. It is addressed to all his disciples and benefactors in Paro, Thimphu, Thed, Sharchog (here it means the Shar district), Khothang (in Shar), Phurig (?) Dangchu (in Shar) and Gönyul in Thed (Punakha). In this letter he mentioned that he intended to come to Bhutan in the summer of the current year, but was worried that he might be accompanied by too many followers and that it would be too hot for them in Bhutan. He indicated that he might stay for two months if he managed to travel during the winter instead and wanted

to build a “gate” for the Khothang temple as well as to meet all his disciples.²⁹ However, it does not seem that he managed to make the visit. At any rate, there are no records of travelling after 1384 in the Collected Works.

Kubum, the *Bonpo* Establishment in Bhutan in the Fourteenth Century

Kubum was the place where Dorje Lingpa spent some time when he was in Bhutan. As I mentioned above, one of the principal reasons for visiting Paro was to reveal some hidden manuscripts in one of the caves of Tagtshang. The “Gold Needle”³⁰ is the main work of the manuscript collection. It contains a remarkably original exposition of the *Dzogchen* doctrine, which he claims to be in accordance with the *Bon* tradition. In the colophon of this work he signed with the name Bonzhig Lingpa and gives the year pig, which corresponds to 1371, as we shall see.³⁰ In another work he provides a more detailed account of his finding of the “Gold Needle” and its supplementary texts. Here is a summary of the account:

“On the third of the 7th month, earth-bird year (1369) I, Bonzhig Lingpa, was 24 and was at Yartö Chuwori where in a dream I received prophetic indications of finding manuscripts of the *Bonpo* and *Nyingmapa* traditions in Tagtshang, Paro. On the 10th of the 1st month, iron-dog year (1370) I, accompanied by Togden Gyabum, went to look for the manuscripts. We found a copper box in the Dzutrul cave which is at Kyangring Chenpo near Orgyen Drubchu. From the box emerged the texts that were concerned with the Chipung tantric teachings³¹ and *Dzogchen* texts, such as the *Serthur* (the “Gold Needle”).³²

In the 7th month, iron-pig year (1371) I gave teachings based on my own text the *Damtshig Dorje Sempai Nyingthig* at the behest of the *Lama Kön-gyal* at Kubum. It was there that my disciple Rinchen Gyaltshen urged me to reveal the *Dzogchen* texts of the *Bon* tradition that I rediscovered at Tagtshang, but I hesitated since the *Bon* manuscripts were in sixteen different scripts. In a dream, I then had a vision of Padmasambhava with a swastika swirling about his crown. I thought, “this is not Padmasambhava”. At that moment the figure

said: “I am Padmasambhava. I am Tshewang Rigdzin.³³ I am Shakya Thubpa. I am Shenrab Miwo.... Many texts were concealed in the box that you found. The *Bon* texts are like the heart... It is now high time that you reveal them to others....” To this I replied: “From my childhood I learned only Buddhism. I have no knowledge of *Bon* and will be unable to propagate it.” The figure gave a philosophical explanation emphasizing the importance of the *Bon* and finally said: “There is nothing that you cannot know about *Bon*. The time has come. If you do not remove the cataract of ignorance from the lens of the eye, what is the use of the “Gold Needle”?”³⁴

On the 21st of the 10th month at Samling, just below Kubum, the seat of the precious *Lama* Dulwa, whilst I was giving teachings my disciples Tönpa Tsöndru Gyaltshen and Rinchen Gyaltshen urged me again to reveal the manuscripts which were in the Tibetan language, but written in sixteen different “scripts” contained in two scrolls. When I transcribed them all they came to thirty-nine sections (*Bontshen*) and a list of the sections (*themyig*).³⁵

It is hard to know what kind of scripts they were. In fact Dorje Lingpa does enumerate them (p. 428) including Indian, Chinese and Zhangzhung scripts. I do not mean here to demystify a *terma* tradition, such as the present one. However, what is certain is that we do have a volume entitled the *Dzogchen Serthur* and it is dated 1371 and as such there is no doubt that it contains genuine writings of Dorje Lingpa.

The *Lama* Dulwa Rinpoche is well known in the *Bonpo* sources. He was known as Tshanden Dulwa Rinpoche and his full name was Dru Tshanden Dulwa Gyaltshen (1239-1293) He was born to the sacred *Bonpo* family called Dru.³⁶ A member of this family founded Bagor Wensakha monastery and it was the tradition that male members of the family often became its abbots. Bagor is the name of the district in which the area called Wensakha is located. It is to the north of the Tsangpo river and east of Shigatse.

Dru Dulwa Gyaltshen was first an abbot of the monastery. In his later life he is said to have abandoned his monastic community in order to become a recluse and pursue his spiritual quest in solitude. He took up residence in the hermitage of Kharchu in Lhodrag, and also travelled down to Bumthang and Lhoma Ngönlung in Mönyul.³⁷

The place-name Lhoma is a misreading for Lhomön and Ngönlung corresponds to Nganlung³⁸ which is the name of a valley in Shar. The place where the temple complex is located is in a valley called Phobjikha (Pho-sbis-kha in written sources).

Dorje Lingpa enjoyed a good relationship with the Bru family whose seat was at Bagor near Wensakha monastery.³⁹ At a feast Dru Sonam Lodrö (1337-1401) sang a song on the theme of the “Nine Vehicles of *Bon*”.⁴⁰ Where upon in reply Dorje Lingpa sang a song called “The Buddhist song of the Nine Vehicles”⁴¹ in which he proclaimed that he was also called Yungdrung Lingpa.⁴²

On another occasion Dorje Lingpa gave teachings at Bagor Wensakha based on his *Dzogchen* text, the “Gold Needle” to eighty-seven people including Drutön Kyawa and Togden Namkha Sengge. At the completion of the teaching a feast was organised and the *Lama* Nyima of Dru said to him: “Please give religious instructions to our young disciples, instructions that are an introduction to their spiritual practices, so that they can discuss them in the public and rejoice for all of us!” The master sang a song which is in its gist a praise to *Dzogchen* doctrine.⁴³ All this indicates that in the fourteenth century there was mutual appreciation between the two religious traditions. The “Impartial Way” (*rime*) which Dorje Lingpa declared that he pursued is further proved by yet another song entitled “The mystical song of the realization of the oneness of the *Bon* religion and (Tibetan) Buddhism”.⁴⁴

In another contemporary source Pa Ten-gyal Zangpo states: “this Yungdrung Lingpa of our time is said to be a descendant of a tantrist family in the vicinity of Samye. When he was twenty-three he received prophecies and went to Tagtshang in Paro from which he

extracted manuscripts of the *Dzogchen Serkyi Thurma* that had been concealed by Vairocana....”⁴⁵

To the findings at Tagtshang, I should add the volume of the Tsewang Pöyul Ma which the *Bon* tradition maintains to be the *terma* of Yungdrung Lingpa. As mentioned above the most odd thing about this work is that it contains the story of Dranpa Namkha, the *Bonpo* sage, as the father of the twin sons who are Tshewang Rigdzin and Padma Thongdrol (=Padmasambhava).⁴⁶ However, it does not seem to be mentioned anywhere in the collected works of Dorje Lingpa so far published. The chief deity of the Tshewang Pöyul Ma ritual cycle is Tshewang Rigdzin which name, as we have seen, appeared in his dream. The ritual cycle is very popular among the *Bonpo* and it is performed with the chanting and music that has no parallel among the *Bonpo* ritual traditions.

Where is Kubum Then?

It was Michael Aris (1979: 151) who mentioned Kubum for the first time in his work, but did not elaborate on it.⁴⁷ Researching into Dzogchen, I, in the 1980s became aware of the considerable importance of the role Dorje Lingpa had played in the development of *Dzogchen* thought. I therefore made a résumé of the “Gold Needle” and discussed the singular way in which the author has presented *Dzogchen* in accordance with what he considered as the *Bon* tradition (Karmay 1988: 216-219).

As seen, Dorje Lingpa claimed that he revealed the manuscript of the work in question and its supplementary texts from one of the caves of Tagtshang in Paro and later edited it at Samling near Kubum.

In 1999, while travelling in Bhutan, I literally stumbled over what looked like a *Drukpa Kagyupa* temple. Once inside I found the usual figures of the *Drukpa* and *Nyingmapa* orders in the form of images and wall paintings which looked to be of recent origin. The ground floor was still under renovation. On the wall high up on the right-hand side as one enters the temple, a monk is painted in the flying position in the sky with an inscription mentioning Tshanden Dulwa Gyaltzen.

On the first floor, the only storey of the building, at the west side there was a room that had the appearance of an ordinary *gönkhang*. In it an ancient drum stood beside a seat; in front of the seat there was a small table covered with thick dirt over which lay a much used manuscript of *poti* format. On the walls of the left-hand side were affixed as decoration what is known as *tsakali*, miniature paintings, normally used in initiation rites; on the wall of the right-hand side was hung with helmets, swords and shields. The room had also an inner sanctuary with wall paintings and inside it was totally dark.

I picked up the dilapidated manuscript just out of curiosity. To my great surprise it contained a long prayer to Tshanden Dulwa Gyaltzen and the main text of the *Bonpo* ritual cycle known as *Walsei*⁴⁸ It was then clear to me that I found myself in a building which was formerly a *Bonpo* establishment. For some reasons the *gönkhang* was kept for the propitiation of *Bonpo* deities despite the fact that everything else has changed.

The temple complex is situated up in the valley of Phobjikha on the edge of a small village called Phobjithang and hidden away by the low ridge of a green mountain so that it cannot be seen from the distance below, but from its own position up in the valley it has a magnificent view over the whole valley with its fertile basin where there are marshes and in Bhutan it is one of the home of the black-necked cranes coming from Tibet for the winter period. It is about four kilometers to the north-west of Gangteng monastery.

Below the temple, there was the ruin of what looked like a trace of a burned temple. A half destroyed stupa still stood inside the torn and half standing walls. In the accounts of Dorje Lingpa the complex of the temple buildings had consisted of two separate establishments, one was Kubum and the other was Samling which was situated just below Kubum and that was where he said he stayed.⁴⁹ Perhaps the ruin is the trace of the establishment called Samling.

Modern Bhutanese Sources Concerning Dorje Lingpa and Kubum

Among the well known modern Bhutanese historians, Lopön Nado (1986: 73) in his exceedingly interesting work has mentioned Dorje Lingpa, but makes no remark about Kubum. Lopön Pema, who is also considered as an authority on the history of Bhutan, passes it in silence altogether. However, Gedün Rinchen, better known as Geshe Dragphupa, the 69th *Je Khenpo*, i.e. the head of the *Drukpa Kagyu*, the state religion in Bhutan, has in passing devoted a short passage to Kubum in his *BN*. It is written in the traditional style of the *chöjung* type of work and was completed in 1972, a truly monumental work on the historical development of Buddhist institutions in Bhutan. Here is a translation of the passage on Kubum:

“As the *Bon* religion was established in Tibet before Buddhism flourished there, so it was also established in Bhutan during the period of the later diffusion of the Doctrine. From the seat of Yungdrungling (monastery) in Ralag where was upheld the religious system of Shenrab, the Master of *Bon* from Zhangzhung, the *Zhabdrung* Tshanden Dewa came to this country. He gradually established his seats by founding Kubum monastery in Shar and (another seat) in Sewagang, etc. and so the religion spread (in this country). To this day, performing of the atonement rite according to the *Bon* tradition and the propitiation rite to Sri Gyalmo have continued (at these establishments).”⁵⁰

Yungdrungling is one of the three *Bonpo* monastic establishments in Central Tibet. It was founded only in 1834 and is situated above the village Ralag to the north of the Tsangpo river on a plateau just across the river where the well-known ferry Tagdrukha is located. The name Tshanden Dewa is certainly a deformation of Tshanden Dulwa. In this case the term *bde ba* is simply an onomatopoeic mispronunciation of *'dul ba*. It is about Dru Dulwa Gyaltshen (1239-1293) who was often called Tshanden Dulwa and whom I have already mentioned above. The term *tshanden* (*mtshan dang ldan pa*, lit. “one who possesses marks”) is often used as a title for a master considered highly qualified. In a song Dorje Lingpa applies it to Padmasambhava as “father, the *Lama* who possesses all the marks”.⁵¹ It is interesting to note that the *Je Khenpo* uses the title *Zhabdrung* for this *Bonpo Lama*

even though it is not often used among the *Bonpo* themselves and in any case never for the *Lama* in question.

Sri Gyalmo is of course Ma Sripa Gyalmo, the *Bonpo* religious protectress whose image is painted on the wall in the inner sanctuary of the *gönkhang* in Kubum. I have not been able to find any information with regard to Sewagang, obviously the name of a place.

The passage written by the *Je Khenpo* which I came to analyse suggests that Kubum would seem to have been founded by Tshanden Dulwa Gyaltsen and this agrees with the words of Dorje Lingpa who clearly stated “Kubum, the seat of *Lama Rinpoche Dulwa*”. Kubum therefore was founded in the thirteenth century by Tshanden Dulwa. The passage also suggests that the transformation of Kubum into a Buddhist temple might have been of a recent date. The *Je Khenpo* was writing his work in 1972 and he emphatically stated “to this day” implying that the place was still a *Bonpo* establishment.

The Songs of Dorje Lingpa

There are no real detailed accounts of Dorje Lingpa’s life. No “biography” of the *namthar* genre exists except a sketch account called *namthar* included in the collected works.⁵²

Apart from the bulk of the ritual texts of *terma* origin, which make up the whole of the collected works, Dorje Lingpa wrote a number of songs in verse. In this enterprise he seemed to have formed a habit of writing down as soon as the daybreak began what he could remember of religious instructions and prophecies that he believed to have received from the sages in his dreams during the night. There are other types of songs containing didactic verses. A certain number of these songs are dated. I call them simply song, but in fact they are mostly what is known as *gur*, “mystical utterance”, a connotation of the term that developed later in the Tibetan religious tradition. They are improvisations and often given on the spur of the moment when one of the faithful asked for them. While he was in Bhutan he wrote a number of them. One of these was specially aimed at the monks and

nuns for whom he seems to have developed a profound attachment,
but comments on the behaviour of some of them in the following
terms:

“Investigating well about the *Dharma*
How few in fact there are here among the learned *Lamas* and monks!
Outwardly they look like monks, but they deceive the people!
I, Dorje Lingpa depart to meditate in solitude.

Food and wealth are offered in faith
A prayer is said for them, but in reality they are used to feed one’s
own family
Blind leads the blind!
I, Dorje Lingpa depart to meditate in solitude.

Enormous pride, but knowing little
Great passions, but with little vision
Called “virtuous friend”, but they undermine the Faith!
I, Dorje Lingpa depart to meditate in solitude.

No interest in salvation from the *Samsara*,
All they hope is for solving the immediate problem, such as illness.
They are the benefactors who have no thoughts of hereafter!
I, Dorje Lingpa depart to meditate in solitude.....

Learning how to write and read
When hoping to be a learned person
One sees them carried away by the demonic girls!
I, Dorje Lingpa depart to meditate in solitude.

Learning and taking “refuge”
When hoping one day to expound classics and philosophy
One sees them sinking in the impure mud of women!
I, Dorje Lingpa depart to meditate in solitude.

Starting to learn how to meditate
When hoping to become a spiritual master
Their minds are seized by the lap of women

I, Dorje Lingpa depart to meditate in solitude.....”⁵³

Not long after his return to Tibet, he is said to have paid a visit to Chöje Barawa, a friend of his, in Shang. This is probably Barawa Gyaltshen Pelzang (1310-1391) who is known to have made visits to Bhutan on two occasions. There is an interesting story that tells how Dorje Lingpa was received by a conventional establishment after his roving about in such a country as Mönyul in the fourteenth century.

When Dorje Lingpa arrived at the Shang valley in Tibet, Barawa came to meet him bringing a pot of *chang*, a carcass of mutton and a roll of white *nambu* cloth as gifts. He said to Dorje Lingpa: “our country Shang is a place where Buddhism flourishes. You have been for too long in Lhomön, “the unlit land”. Your clothes are worn out. Tomorrow morning when you come up, the monks and nuns will pay you their respects. You must dress yourself properly. Otherwise our people will be shocked. I request you and your entourage all to come well dressed.” Barawa went home. The next morning a procession came along with the chief ladies wearing tiger and leopard masks led by *Lamas* and learned monks. Thereupon, Dorje Lingpa said: “All the Samsaric and Nirvanic elements are much alike, but men of religion here have taken the notion of acceptance and rejection as their main religion. Today I shall sing a song. Each man must hold the hands of a woman in chain fashion!” He led the *Lamas* by holding the hands of *Lama* Tongdenpa with his right hand and the hands of the chief lady wearing a mask with his left hand. The lap parts of their dresses were trussed up on their right and left hand sides and they began to dance. He started to sing a song called “The brewing of the *chang* ale using the annual provision”:

“Say that Dorje Lingpa, the chief of impostors, has come to this land.
Say that all the (barley), the provision to last all the year round is now
being used for brewing the *chang*.
Say that those who have faith in him are performing the rite of the
sacrificial cake.
Say that those who gather here are joyous in singing and dancing
Say that those who regard him as heretical are vexed (by the presence
of him)”.⁵⁴

This song suggests that Dorje Lingpa's behaviour must have looked scandalous especially since his friend Barawa warned him to be decent, but there is no record of what happened after the public meeting between the two. However, Barawa himself is known to have made visits to Bhutan so that they must have had a common interest in the meeting.

Dorje Lingpa has tried different poetic styles which witnesses to his being a fine writer. In a short poetic verse he gives instructions to himself in a self-deprecating tone:

“You claim to be a recluse, but you do more than anybody else;
You claim that you do not need much, but you need more things than anybody else;
You claim that you do not want to have a fixed place of abode, but you have more than anybody else;
You wished to have no enemies, but you have more than anybody else....”⁵⁵

The author again writes verses in six syllables on much the same theme as the previous poem, but this time he was suffering from an illness which inspired him to write a long poem. Here are five lines from it:

“You, small minded and naive,
From the beginningless
Up till now
However much you suffer (being in the Samsara).
Nothing that wearies you!”⁵⁶

The texts of the songs are found in the collected works, Vols. 18 and 19 in *ume* scripts, each in a different hand. They are reproductions of a manuscript set preserved at Ogyen Chöling. These are beautifully executed manuscripts in the ancient style, common among the Dunhuang documents. The words, for instance, ending in a vowel have often the 'a' as suffix, e.g. *bsngo'a*. Another characteristic is the *shad* in the form of two dots one on the top of the other often found in Dunhuang manuscripts. They are called *tershe* and this is invariably

maintained throughout of the two volumes although the texts of the songs are not, properly speaking, of the *terma* revelation. The texts of the songs are again included in Vol. 21 in the *uchen* script, but this time they are arranged in a better order. This last version is reproduced in another collection.

These poetic writings certainly raise the status of Dorje Lingpa as a literary figure, a fact that so far has not been recognized. The dominant theme in his songs is of course the melancholic Buddhist detachment from the worldly life, but within this they often echo the socio-economic problems of the real life in the society.

The Lama Kadu and its Pre-eminence in Bhutanese Buddhist Ritual Traditions

The rituals of Kangso and of the Lama kadu, which were formerly carried out separately on different dates, were performed as a combined ritual in the annual festival at Ogyen Chöling from the 16 to 19, October 1999. I acknowledge the gracious kindness of Ashi Kunzang Chodron and her brother *Dasho* Ugyen Rigdzin for having me there during the festival and allowing me free access to their amazing library in 1999 and 2000.

The annual festival of Jampa Lhakang at Chökhör in the Bumthang valley was held from 23 to 27, October 1999. As stated this festival also had the Lama Kadu, as its basic ritual.

The estate of Ogyen Chöling is situated on a hilltop overlooking the Tang valley with a magnificent view. The basin of the valley is fairly level and made of green fields surrounded by mountains covered with dark forests and dense foliage. The estate itself consists of two imposing edifices with the buildings of the living quarters on three sides. It has to the north-east small village with ancient houses in a scattered layout. It is to the north-east of Jakar, the district capital of Bumthang at a distance of about twenty-five kilometers. The family which runs the estate traces its ancestry back directly to Dorje Lingpa and Ogyen Chöling is therefore considered as one of the main centres where Dorje Lingpa's religious tradition is fearlessly upheld. There

are other places such as Ling Mukha and Layag where his descendants are known to have survived and also the series of his reincarnations who established themselves in Shar Lungtsib. His religious tradition is also maintained at Chakar Lhakang in Bumthang and Khothang in Shar.⁵⁷

I do not mean to study here the ritual significance of the festivals at Ogyen Chöling and that of Jampa Lhakang which would be out-side of the scope of the present article. Nevertheless, I should at least point out the preponderance of the Lama Kadu ritual cycle on whose pivot revolves the rituals of the festivals.

At the age of 15 Dorje Lingpa is believed to have rediscovered hidden manuscripts from Namchagdrag in Tibet. Among these revelations, there were what was known as the “four embodiments” (*dupazhi*). However, only two seem to have survived: the Lama Kadu and the Yidam Kadu.⁵⁸ The term Kadu is simply a contraction of Kagye Dupa. The title Lama Kadu therefore means “the *Lama* in whom the eight deities of the *Drubpa Kagye* cycles are united”.⁵⁹ The term *Lama* in this case refers to an aspect of Padmasambhava as is the case in many other *Nyingmapa* rituals.

According to *TR* (p.43) the practice of this ritual cycle flourished in Tibet especially in Kongpo and Khams. However, Kongtrul Yonten Gyatsho (1811-1899) observed that the tradition of the ritual cycle in fact had come to be almost extinguished in Tibet and that it was finally revived by Jamyang Khentse (1820-1892) in the nineteenth century.⁶⁰ Contrary to what had happened then in Tibet, the ritual practice seems to have been kept very much alive throughout the centuries in Bhutan ever since its inception. Its texts are found in Vols. 7-9 of the Collected Works of Dorje Lingpa.

Conclusion

From very early times Bhutan was known as Mönnyul in the Tibetan world, “country of the Mönpa”, populations who inhabit some parts of the southern Himalayan confines. In spite of the founding of Buddhist temples in the seventh century A.D. such as Kyichu Lhakang in Paro

and Jampa Lhakhang in Bumthang, the country as a whole was often described as the “unlit land” implying no light of Buddhism had ever penetrated there. This notion of the “unlit land” gave rise to the impression of its being mysterious hence a hidden land, therefore appropriate for hiding sacred “treasures”. Indeed Bhutan had been rich in legends of places impregnated with such “treasures”.

This double image of the country had a strong fascination for the Tibetan mystics who professed in one instance to go on pilgrimage and in another to reveal “treasures” hidden there and preach them to the native people. Bhutan was therefore one of the chosen places of Tibetan religious figures who travelled there from the twelfth century onwards. A number of these mystics not only left their religious imprint on the country’s cultural heritage but also their descendants who facilitated the preservation of their traditions. Dorje Lingpa was one of them.

The particularity of Dorje Lingpa is that he was the earliest who clearly formulated the theory of the “oneness of *Bon* and Buddhism” (*Bonchö Yerme*). This concept was born anew with his revelation of the “Gold Needle” in Bhutan and later was taken up by the nineteenth century “eclectic movement” in Khams as its principal attitude. It had a direct effect on the need to observe religious tolerance in Tibet whose reputation as being a country of religious tolerance was in fact a myth in all respects.

It is a long time since Bhutan was the “unlit land”. On the contrary, today it has become a shining example of a country that keeps ancient tradition and modernity in equilibrium. It is now the sole repository of the Lamaist culture that enjoys an unparalleled freedom of expression.

Appendix I

*de yang bod du dam pa'i chos ma dar gong du Bon chos dar ba bzhin
'dir yang bod kyi bstan pa phyi dar gyi skabs tsam na Bon gyi ston pa
gshen rabs (rab) kyi ring lugs 'dzin pa'i gdan sa ra la (lag) g-yung
drung (83b) gling nas/ zhabs drung mtshan ldan bde ba zhes bya ba
de nyid ljongs 'dir byon te shar sku 'bum dgon dang se ba sgang sogs
la gdan sa rim par btab ste dar ba las/ Bon lugs kyi bskang gso dang
srid rgyal mo'i gsol kha'i rgyun da lta'i bar du snang/ (BN fol. 83a5)*

Appendix II

*myang 'das chos la legs bzhigs (gzhigs) pas:
bla ma mkhas btsun re re tsam:
ming gzugs bzung ste 'gro ba blu (slu):
rdor gling dben par bsgom du 'gro:
gshin gson dad pa'i zas nor kyang:
bsngo'a bas rgyas gtab bu smad gso'a:
long pas long khrid byed pa mthong:
rdor gling dben par bsgom du 'gro:
nga rgyal che la yon tan (185) med:
chags sdang che la dag snang chung:
dge shes (bshes) ming gzugs bstan bshig mthong:
rdor gling dben par bsgom du 'gro:
'khor ba sgrol ba'i chos mi 'dod:
nad gdon thar ba'i rkyen bzlog re:
phyi thag med pa'i yon bdag mthong:
rdor gling dben par bsgom du 'gro:.....
'bri klog tsam nas rab sbyangs nas:
mkhas pa rtsug (gtsug) brgyan (rgyan) yong re dus:
bdud kyi bu mos sad khyer mthong:
rdor gling dben par bsgom du 'gro:
(188) skyabs 'gro tsam nas rab sbyangs ste:
lung rig 'chad pas (pa'i) yong re dus:
mi rtsang (gtsang) bu mo'i 'dam tshud mthong:
rdor gling dben par bsgom du 'gro:
mnyam bzhag tsam nas rab rlabs (slob) ste:
rtogs par ldan pas (pa'i) yong re dus:
bdud mo'i spang (pang) du sems rig shor:
rdor gling dben par bsgom du 'gro:..... (ZhD p. 184)*

Appendix III

*lo rgyags chang 'tshod mazog po'i dpon por do rje gling pas (pa) sa
phyogs 'di na sleb 'dug gyi:
dad pa can la chos kyi 'khor lo bskor gyi 'dug go gyis:
nyams dga'i chos bzhas bro mo che 'khrab kyi 'dug go gyis:
log lta can tsho snying rlung glong (long) gyi 'dug go gyis/ (ZhD p.
424)*

Appendix IV

*byar med yin par go yang bya rgyu su bas mang:
dgos med yin par go yang dgos cha su bas bsog:
gzhi med byed par 'dod kyang gzhi rten su bas mang:
dgra med byed par 'dod kyang ya (dgra) bo su bas
mang:....(ZhD p. 269)*

Appendix V

*sems chung col chung khyod kyang:
thog ma med pa'i dus nas:
da lta'i dus 'di yan chad:
ji tsam sdug bsngal myong yang:
sun pa gcig kyang m' 'dug: (ZhD p. 75)*

Abbreviations and Tibetan Sources

- BN* *Blo gsar rna ba'i rgyan, dPal ldan 'brug pa'i gdul zhing lho phyogs nags mo'i ljongs kyi chos 'byung blo gsar rna ba'i rgyan* by the rJe mkhan po dGe 'dun rin chen, composed in 1972. Xyl. edition of sGrub sde nges don zung 'jug grub pa'i dga'tshal. n.d.
- DS* *Dar rgyas gsal sgron, bTsan pa'i rnam bshad dar rgyas gsal ba'i sgron me* by sPa bsTan rgyal bzang po, Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1991.
- ML* *rMi lam lung bstan, rDzogs chen ger gyi thur ma, ST 419-432.*
- RPh* *Rin chen phreng ba, rTogs ldan nyams brgyud kyi rnam thar rin chen phreng ba* (anonymous), in *A-tri thun-tsham cho-na dan cha-lak che shuk-so* (*A khrid thun mtshams bco lnga dang cha lag ces bzhugs so*), Delhi: The Tibetan Bonpo Foundation, 1967, 5-64.
- SG* *gSung sgros, rGyal ba'i sras mchog thugs rje chen po'i rnam sprul/ rdo rje gling pa'i gsung sgros/* (Cover title: *gSung mgur sna tshogs*), *Texts of the rDo-rje gling-pa Tradition from Bhutan*, Thimphu: Kunsang Tobgeyl, Druk Sherig Press, 1984, Vol.18.
- ST* *gSer thur, rDzogs chen gser gyi thur ma.* Reproduced from a rare manuscript from Dolpo in Northwestern Nepal. Tibetan Bonpo Monastic Community, Dolanji, H.P.: Tshul khriims bkra shis, 1977. *ST* is included in the *Bonpo Tenjur* (Kvaerne 1974: T 275) and is also in the new edition of the *Tenjur*, Lhasa 1998. It is Vol. 260 of the new catalogue which is being compiled in Tritan Norbutse monastery, Kathmandu.
- ThG* *Thar pa'i rgyun lam, Nyon mongs dug lnga 'jom(s) pa'i thar pa'i rgyun lam, rDo rje gling pa'i bka' 'bum* (*The*

Collected gter ma rediscoveries of gter chen rdo rje gling pa, Vol. IV, Paro, Ngodrup and Sherab Drimay 1980).

- TNy *bsTan pa'i nyi ma*, *Chos 'byung bstan pa'i nyi ma* by sMin gling mkhan chen O rgyan chos grags composed in 1671. MS, Tibetan Buddhist Resource Centre, Cambridge, USA; L. 1676.
- TR *gTer rabs rgya mtsho*, *sNgags 'chang pa rdo rje gling pas (pa'i) zab gter rnams dang mjal ba'i gter byang rnam thar gter rabs rgya mtsho* (Cover title: *rDor rje gling pa'i zab gter rnams dang mjal ba'i rnam thar dang gsung thor bu*), *Texts of the rDo-rje gling-pa Tradition from Bhutan*, Thimphu: Kunsang Tobgeyl, Druk Sherig Press, 1984, Vol. 21, 1-146.
- TRTSh *gTam gyi rol mtsho*, *bsTan pa'i snying po gsang chen snga 'gyur nges don zab mo'i chos kyi byung ba gsal bar byed pa'i legs bshad mkhas pa dga' byed ngo mtshar gtam gyi rol mtsho* (Cover title: *rNying ma chos 'byung*) by Ngag dbang blo gros, completed in 1813 (Vol. 2, p.875). Vols. I-II. Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 1992. In this new edition the work is mistakenly attributed to Thub bstan 'od gsal bstan pa'i nyi ma who has simply provided the *par byang* for the wood block print (pp. 877-879)
- TTGL *Zab mo'i gter dang gter ston grub thob ji ltar byung ba'i lo rgyus mdor bsdus bkod pa pa rin chen vaidurya'i phreng ba* by Kong sprul Yon tan rgya mtsho, Arunachal Pradesh, Tezu: Tibetan Nyingmapa Monastery, 1973.
- YM *Yid kyi mun sel*, *Slob dpon sangs rgyas gnyis pa padma 'byung gnas kyi rnam par thar pa yid kyi mun sel* by Sog zlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1552-1624), Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Literature Series, Vol. 108, n.d.
- ZhD *Zhal gdams*, *rDo rje gling pa'i rnam thar dang zhal gdams*, *Texts of the rDo-rje gling-pa Tradition from Bhutan*,

Thimphu: Kunsang Tobgeyl, Druk Sherig Press, 1984,
Vol.19.

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Index of Terms and Proper Names

Transcriptions of terms and proper names that are used in the main body of the article. They are followed by transliteration.

Bagor: Ba gor
Bagor Wensakha: Ba gor dBen sa kha
Barawa: 'Ba' ra ba
Barawa Gyaltshen Pelzang: 'Ba' ra wa rGyal mtshan dpal bzang
Benanglung: Be nang lung
Bonchös Yerme: Bon chos dbyer med
Bontshen: Bon tshan
Bonzhig Lingpa: Bon zhig gling pa
buchung: bu chung
Chagkhar: lCags mkhar/kha
Chakar Lhakang: Bya dkar lha khang
Jampa Lhakang: Byams pa lha khang
Changyul: lCang yul
Chipung: sPyi spungs
Chöje Barawa: Chos rje 'Ba' ra ba
chöjung: chos 'byung
Chume: Chu smad
Chuwori: Chu bo ri
Damtshig Doje Sempai Nyingthig: Dam tshig rdo rje sems dpa'i
snying thig
dö: mdos
dorje: rdo rje
Dorje Lingpa: rDo rje gling pa
Dra: Gra
Dragpa: Grags pa
Dragphupa: Brag phug pa
Dranpa Namkha: Dran pa nam mkha'
Dromo: Gro mo
Dru: Bru
Dru Sonam Lodrö: Bru bSod nams blo gros
Drubpa Kagye: sGrub pa bka' brgyad
Drukpa Kagyupa: 'Brug pa bka' brgyud pa
Drutön Kyawa: Bru ston sKya ba

Dulwa: 'Dul ba
Dulwa Rinpoche: 'Dul ba Rin po che
dupazhi: dus pa bzhi
Durtsho Nagmo: Dur mtsho nag mo
Dzogchen: rDzogs chen
Gangteng: sGang steng
Gedün Rinchen: dGe 'dun rin chen
Geshe Dragphupa: dGe bshes Brag phug pa
gönkhang: mgon khang
gur: mgur
Gyabum: rGya 'bum
Gyaltshen Pelzang: rGyal mtshan dpal bzang
Jakar: Bya dkar
Je Khenpo: rJe mkhan po
kadu: bka' 'dus
Kampotshol: sKam po 'tshol
Kangso: bskang gso
Karmogyen: dKar mo rgyan
khachang: kha byang
Khari: mKha' ri
Khothang Samten Rinchenling: mKho thang bsam gtan rin chen gling
Kongpo: rKong po
Kongtrul Yönten Gyatsho: Kong sprul Yon tan rgya mtsho
Köngyal: dKon rgyal
Kubum: sKu 'bum
Kula Khari: sKu bla mKha' ri
Kunzanggyal: Kun bzang rgyal
Kunzang Chodron: Kun bzang chos sgron
Kurjedrag: sKu rjes brag
Kyangring Chenmo: sKyang ring chen mo
Kyerchu Lhakhang: sKyer chu lha khang
Lama Kadu: Bla ma bka' 'dus
Layag: La yag
Lharikha: lHa ri kha
Lhodrag: lHo brag
Lhokha: lHo kha
Lhoma Ngonlung: lHo ma ngon lung
Lhomön: lHo mon

Ling Mukha: Gling Mu kha
Longchen Rabjam: Klong chen rab 'byams
Lopön Nado: Slob dpon gNag 'dog
Lopön Pema : Slob dpon Padma
Lungtsib: Lung rtsibs
Miwang Dragpa Gyaltshen: Mi dbang Grags pa rgyal mtshan
Mochu: Mo chu
Mönla Karchung: Mon la dkar chung
Mönpa: Mon pa
Mönyul: Mon yul
namthar: rnam thar
nambu: rnam bu
Namchagdrag: gNam lcags brag
Namkha Sengge: Nam mkha' seng ge
Namthang Langdrag: gNam thang glang brag
Nganlung: Ngan lung
norkal: nor skal
Nyingmapa: rNying ma pa
Ogyen Chöling: O rgyan chos gling
Ogyen Drubchu: O rgyan sgrub chu
Ogyen Yiblung dekyiling: O rgyan yib lung bde skyid gling
Ogyen Zangpo: O rgyan bzang po
Pa Ten-gyal Zangpo: sPa bsTan rgyal bzang po
Paro Chagkhar: sPa gro lcags mkhar or kha
Pema Lingpa: Padma gling pa
Pema Thongdrol: Padma mthong grol
Phagri: Phag ri
Phobjikha: Pho sbis kha
Phochu: Pho chu
poti: po ti
Punghang Deba Chenpo: sPung thang bde ba chen po
Punakha: sPur na kha
Ralag: Ra lag
Ralung: Ra lung
Rinchen Gyaltshen: Rin chen rgyal ltshan
Rinspung: Rin spungs
Rolpa'i Dorje: Rol pa'i rdo rje
Samling: bSam gling

Samye: bSam yas
Serthur: gSer thur
Sewagang: Se ba sgang
Shakya Thubpa: Sakya Thub pa
shang: gshang
Shang: Shangs
Sharchog: Shar phyogs
she: shad
Shenrab Miwo: gShen rab Mi bo
Sonam Gyaltshen: bSod nams rgyam mtshan
Sonam Lodrö: bSod nams blo gros
Sonamgyal: bSod nams rgyal
Sri Gyalmo: Srid rgyal mo
Tagdrukha: sTag gru kha
Tagtshang Sengge Samdrub: sTag tshang seng ge bsam 'grub
Tang: sTang/lTang
Tawa longyang: lTa ba klong yangs
Tengyal Zangpo: bsTan rgyal bzang po
terma: gter ma
ternyön: gter myon
tershe: gter shad
tertön: gter ston
The: Thed
Thelung: Thed lung
themyig: them yig
Thimphu: Thim phu
Togden Sonamgyal: rTogs ldan bSod nams rgyal
Togden Gyabum: rTogs ldan rGya 'bum
Togden Namkha Sengge: rTogs ldan Nam mkha' seng ge
Tongdenpa: sTong ldan pa
Tönpa Tsöndru Gyaltshen: sTon pa brTson 'grus rgyal mtshan
Tradrug: Khra 'brug
tromter: khrom gter
Tsangpo: gTsang po
Tsangtrang: gTsang 'phrang
tsepo: btsad po
Tsöndru Gyaltshen: brTson 'grus rgyal mtshan
tshanden: mthsan ldan (mtshan dang ldan pa)

Tshanden Dewa: mTshan ldan bDe ba
Tshanden Dulwa: mThsan ldan 'Dul ba
Tshe wang Pö Yul Ma: Tshe dbang bod yul ma
Tshewang Rigdzin: Tshe dbang rig 'dzin
Tshomo Dorje: mTsho mo rdo rje
Tshozhi: Tsho bzhi
uchen: dbu can
Ugyen Rigdzin: U rgyan rig 'dzin
ume: dbu med
Walse: dBal gsas
Wangduephodrang: dBang 'dus pho brang
Wensakha: dBen sa kha
Yangdzong Shelgyi Dragphug: Yang rdzong shel gyi brag phug
Yartö: Yar stod
Yidam Kadu: Yi dam bka' 'dus
Yöntan Gyatsho: Yon tan rgya mtsho
Yungdrung Lingpa: gYung drung gling pa
Yungdrungling: gYung drung gling

Notes

¹ *TR* pp. 7-43.

² *Ibid.*, p. 52.

³ *YM* p. 127.

⁴ For a detailed geographical discription of the sacred area of Tagtshang, see Pommaret 1997: 124-218.

⁵ *SG* pp. 5-10.

⁶ *SG* p. 352-53.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 433-449.

⁸ *TR* p. 81.

⁹ *ZhD* pp. 70, 389.

¹⁰ *SG* p. 170.

¹¹ *TR* pp. 84-86.

¹² *SG* pp. 356-58.

¹³ *TR* pp. 88-89.

¹⁴ On Chagkar Lama, cf. Pommaret 1997: 396.

¹⁵ *TR* pp. 99-103.

¹⁶ *TR* pp. 107-124.

¹⁷ *ThG* pp. 124-128.

¹⁸ *TRTSh* (Vol.I, p. 682) gives the birth year as a water-dog (*chu-khyi*) which would be 1382.

¹⁹ *SG* p. 64.

²⁰ *SG* p. 30.

²¹ *SG* p. 235.

²² *SG* p. 118. *TR* (p.90) states that he returned to Tibet in 1375.

²³ *SG* p. 118.

²⁴ *ThG* p. 322; *SG* p. 241.

²⁵ *TR* p. 134.

²⁶ *BN* mentions Chos 'khor and sTang, but not the other two names (f. 78a, 128a2).

²⁷ *lho phyogs tsan dan nags kyi khrod*.

²⁸ *ThG* pp. 244-249; *ZhD* pp. 37-42.

²⁹ *ThG* pp. 249-254; *ZhD* pp. 218-224.

³⁰ The term *spyi spungs* normally designates a group of *Bonpo* tantras (Karmay 1972: 45, n. 2) and I have not noted if this term was ever used by other *Nyingmapa* masters.

³¹ *ST* p. 182: 'khor 'das rgya grol bon zhig gling pa ngas/ phag los (lo'i) zla ba bcu gcig pa'i tshes gsum nyin par/ bairo'i phyag yig shog ser mthong ba don ldan/ srog yig chen mo la (las)/ bla ma rin po che 'dul ba'i sku 'bum la dga par phab po (phabs pa'o). The *gSer thur* volume itself is not included in the collection of Dorje Lingpa's works that were published under the title: *Texts of the rDo-rje gling-pa Tradition from Bhutan*, Thimphu 1984. This collection has 22 volumes.

³² This title must not be confused with *the gSer zhun* as is the case in certain *Nyingmapa* works such as *TNy* Vol. 2., f.264b5. The *gSer zhun* is another *Bonpo Dzogchen* text, cf. Karmay 1972: xxxii, n. 4; Blondeau 1985: 122-131.

³³ A *Bonpo* sage, one of "the twin sons" of Dran-pa nam-mkha', cf. Karmay 1972, p.xxxii, n. 4; Blondeau 1985:123.

³⁴ This refers to the title of the main text, the *gSer thur (ST)*.

³⁵ *ML* pp. 420-32. *ML* is also found in *SG* pp. 386-398 and again under the title *Bon rdzogs pa chen po gser thur dang mjal tshul* in *SG* pp. 402-411.

³⁶ Karmay 1988 :217; Dondrup Lhagyal 2000: 448-452.

³⁷ *RPh* p. 38.

³⁸ *SG* p. 231: *lho mon sngan long (lung)*; *BN* f. 73a4: *sngan lung pho sbis kha*; also 79a4.

³⁹ *SG* p.119: *spa khor*.

⁴⁰ Cf. Snellgrove 1967: 24 *et seq.*

⁴¹ *Theg pa rim dgu'i chos glu*. For the “Nine Vehicles” of the *Nyingmapa* tradition, see Karmay 1988: 172.

⁴² *SG* pp. 119-121.

⁴³ *SG* pp. 206-212; another song written at dBen-sa-kha *SG* ff. 422-24.

⁴⁴ *ban bon gnyis med du rtogs pa'i 'gur* (*SG* pp. 208-209).

⁴⁵ *DS* p. 249.

⁴⁶ *Tshe dbang snyan rgyud kyi lo rgyus gsal byed (Tshe dbang bod yul ma, Bonpo rten 'gyur)*, Lhasa: Sog sde bsTan pa'i nyi ma, 1998, Vol. 259, ff. 159-190.

⁴⁷ Ugyen Pelgen has also mentioned in a recent article (2000: 673, n. 6). Both M. Aris and Pelgen have derived their information from *BN*.

⁴⁸ Karmay 1977: No.32, 22.

⁴⁹ *bla ma rin po che 'dul ba'i gdan sa sku 'bum gyi 'dabs bsam gling du...*(*ML* f. 423).

⁵⁰ For the Tibetan text see Appendix I. Michael Aris (1979: 151) has also referred to the same passage.

⁵¹ *SG* pp. 70, 260: *pha mtshan ldan bla ma*.

⁵² Vol. 19, pp. 1-33.

⁵³ The title of the song is: *lho mon gyi btsun pa pho mo rnams la gdams pa*. For the Tibetan text see Appendix II.

⁵⁴ For the Tibetan text see Appendix III.

⁵⁵ For the Tibetan text see Appendix IV.

⁵⁶ For the Tibetan text see Appendix V.

⁵⁷ *BN* f.75a-b.

⁵⁸ *TR* ff. 35-44.

⁵⁹ For the eight deities, cf. Karmay 1998: 19.

⁶⁰ *TTGL* p. 215.