

Mongolo-Tibetica Pragensia '14

Ethnolinguistics, Sociolinguistics,
Religion and Culture
Volume 7, No. 2

Special Issue
Indigenous Elements in Tibetan Religions



Publication of Charles University in Prague
Faculty of Arts, Institute of South and Central Asia
Seminar of Mongolian and Tibetan Studies
Prague 2014

ISSN 1803-5647

This journal is published as a part of the Programme for the Development of Fields of Study at Charles University, *Oriental Studies*, sub-programme “The process of transformation in the language and cultural differentness of the countries of South and Central Asia”, a project of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague.

The publication of this Special Issue was supported by the Embassy of the Mongolian Republic in Prague and by the TRITON Publishing House.

Mongolo-Tibetica Pragensia '14
Linguistics, Ethnolinguistics, Religion and Culture
Volume 7, No. 2 (2014)

Special Issue
Indigenous Elements in Tibetan Religions

Edited by Daniel Berounský

© Editors

Editors-in-chief: Jaroslav Vacek and Alena Oberfalzerová

Editorial Board:

Daniel Berounský (Charles University in Prague, Czech Republic)

Agata Bareja-Starzyńska (University of Warsaw, Poland)

Katia Buffettrille (École pratique des Hautes-Études, Paris, France)

J. Lubsangdorji (Charles University Prague, Czech Republic)

Marie-Dominique Even (Centre National des Recherches Scientifiques, Paris, France)

Marek Mejer (University of Warsaw, Poland)

Tsevel Shagdarsurung (National University of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia)

Domiin Tömörtogoo (National University of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia)

English correction: Dr. Mark Corner (HUB University, Brussels)
Institute of South and Central Asia, Seminar of Mongolian and Tibetan Studies
Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague
Celetná 20, 116 42 Praha 1, Czech Republic
<http://mongolistika.ff.cuni.cz/?page=home>

Publisher: Stanislav Juhaňák – TRITON

<http://www.triton-books.cz>

Vykáňská 5, 100 00 Praha 10

IČ 18433499

Praha (Prague) 2014

Cover Renata Brtnická

Typeset Studio Marvil

Printed by Sprint

Publication periodicity: twice a year
Registration number of MK ČR E 18436

ISSN 1803-5647

CONTENTS

Preface

7–11

CHARLES RAMBLE

Real and imaginary Tibetan chimeras and their special powers

13–33

ROBERT MAYER

Indigenous elements in Tibetan tantric religion

35–53

DANIEL BEROUNSKÝ

Tibetan myths on “good fortune” (*phya*) and “well-being” (*g.yang*)

55–77

DAN MARTIN

The Gold Drink rite. Indigenous, but not *simply* indigenous

79–95

ROBERTO VITALI

“Indigenous” vis-à-vis “foreign”: in the genesis of Tibet’s ancestral culture

97–121

Indigenous elements in Tibetan tantric religion

ROBERT MAYER, University of Oxford

Summary: This paper is an attempt at an overview of the still only partially understood topic of indigenous elements within Tibetan tantric religion, with particular focus on the underlying historical and cultural dynamics. Drawing on the research Cathy Cantwell and I have done together in recent years, and above all greatly indebted to the discoveries of many other scholars, it was inspired by the need to communicate the topic to non-specialist academic colleagues, on the one hand avoiding excessive technical obscurantism, but on the other hand utilising up to date research.

Tibetan culture is the world's most intensely tantric. All Tibetan religious traditions prize tantrism as their highest and most advanced form of religion, and there is no significant Tibetan religious tradition that is not primarily oriented towards tantrism.

Few other cultures can compare. In India for example, only some religions can properly be described as tantric, while in China, Korea and Japan, tantrism has historically been quite restricted, in part as a result of state policy. Many among the Theravāda cultures of Sri Lanka and South East Asia to this day maintain a largely hostile discourse regarding tantrism, despite the historical presence of tantric elements within those societies in the past, and even some probable residues in the present.

In its origins, tantrism was an Indian cultural product with complex and multifarious historical roots. Tantrism was of course not a specific religion in itself, but can rather be seen as a style of religiosity, or a religious tendency, emergent in medieval India. It is probably true to say that tantrism had its most substantial manifestations in the Śaiva religions of India, from where its ritual and iconographical influences spread through many other traditions, notably Vaiṣṇavism, Buddhism, and Jainism. However, influences were undoubtedly mutual. For example, some of the most important types of Buddhist tantrism, the Mahāyoga, Yoginī, and Yoganiruttara tantras, absorbed a great many Śaiva ritual methods and iconographical features (Sanderson 2009, pp. 124–240). Yet it is equally true that one of the most prestigious of Śaiva tantric philosophies, the Kashmiri *Pratyabhijñā* system taught by Utpaladeva and Abhinavagupta, was quite explicitly dependent on Buddhist

philosophy, notably the Buddhist school of logicians founded by Dharmakīrti (Ratié 2010, pp. 437–478). In recent years, increasing numbers of scholars have arrived at the conclusion that the mutual borrowings between Śaivism and Buddhism were, in several respects, conscious, deliberate, and explicit.

Buddhist tantrism became arguably the most productive tantric tradition in India next to Śaivism. It eventually came to be known as Vajrayāna, the Indestructible Vehicle, and was usually seen as a further extension of Mahāyāna Buddhism, one that employed special skilful methods to enable the much more rapid achievement of enlightenment. This was the kind of Buddhism that became so influential in Tibet.

Indian society was often densely populated, and included many urban centres. It was highly cosmopolitan, and thoroughly plural. In terms of religion, Indian society has been characterised as ‘polytropic’. The term was popularised by the anthropologist Michael Carrithers (Carrithers 2000), to describe the propensity amongst South Asian populations for individuals, families, and communities, to offer varying degrees of reverence to all or most of the differing religious traditions manifest within their environment, including those ostensibly quite other than their own. For example, persons born to Jain castes and families would quite naturally also offer varying degrees of reverence to local Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva deities or gurus as well as their own Jaina deities and gurus, if they encountered them in the course of their lives. And vice versa too, Hindus might offer reverence to Jain deities and gurus. In many cases, it can actually become difficult to classify ordinary South Asian people as belonging to any one particular religion, along the western exclusivist model. Polytropic tendencies were also reflected at the more formal level, with deities, temples, sacred places, and even passages of religious text, becoming shared by religious traditions to varying degrees.

A particular feature of much Indian religion, perhaps facilitated by polytropicism, was its capacity for assimilating local religious forms to more universal canonical forms. For example, local deities specific to a particular region or village could become assimilated to the more universally accepted canonical deities found in Sanskrit scriptures. Local sacred places could likewise become identified with categories from classical Sanskrit texts. Thus a local deity might, for example, become identified as a specialised form of Śiva or Kālī, and its holy places developed as Śiva or Kālī sacred sites.

Indian tantrism, including the Buddhist Vajrayāna, was extremely prolific for several centuries in its output of sacred scriptural texts. On the whole we do not yet know in very much detail just how these anonymous scriptures attributed to the Buddhas actually appeared, nor exactly who produced

them. However, what we can already be certain of is that Indian Vajrayāna was highly productive of new scriptures for several centuries.

By contrast with India, Tibet was not densely populated, and had virtually no urban centres. It was neither so cosmopolitan, plural, nor religiously so varied, as India. Religious polytrophy was not such a prominent feature in Tibet, and it could even be suggested that some countervailing tendencies were apparent. These included the closed exclusivity of indigenous local deity cults, the eventual emergence of a widespread shunning of Chinese Buddhism, and the universal requirement that Madhyamaka philosophy alone be regarded as the highest doctrine. Of course Tibet was no cultural monolith, and many regions had their own local and historical variations. And even if some areas closer to Nepal, India and China might differ in religious attitudes to polytrophy, perhaps reflecting those neighbouring cultures to varying degrees, nevertheless, on aggregate, we still think it is true to say that in Tibet, maintaining strict purity of lineage was a more predominant and evident cultural theme in regard to religion.

When Buddhist tantrism first entered Tibet from India, it initially brought with it some of its Indian cultural patterns. For the first few hundred years, especially from the 8th to the 11th centuries, very much in the spirit of Indian Vajrayāna, Tibetan Buddhists strove to localise and indigenise their new religion, to produce a tantric Buddhism that was specifically assimilated to Tibetan culture and geography. Indigenous deities were redefined as Buddhist protective deities, existing sacred sites co-opted for Buddhist usage, and Indian tantric ritual was subtly tweaked to better suit Tibetan cultural preferences (Cantwell and Mayer 2013).

While a quantity of Sanskrit tantric scriptures and commentaries were indeed translated into Tibetan in this early period, an even greater number of new ones were exuberantly compiled within Tibet. Although largely composed of recombinations of existing Indian textual and ritual modules, these were now newly put together within Tibet in a manner that better addressed Tibetan cultural expectations. This was achieved by accentuating different ritual emphases, and sometimes also by including a few indigenous ritual categories. To give an example, one of the most striking forms of indigenisation was the adoption of distinctively Tibetan styles of integrating narrative with ritual. Of course, ritual all over the world is accompanied by narrative, but in Tibet, a highly distinctive style of doing so had evolved, with its own technical language and conventions. Elements of this, still keeping its technical language, were now integrated into Buddhist tantrism (Cantwell and Mayer 2008a).

Such tantric scriptures, produced in Tibet with local adaptation but largely along the Indian model, are nowadays known as the rNying ma Tantras, or the Ancient Tantras. We do not yet know the degrees to which they were redacted by Indians working in a Tibetan environment, or by Tibetans working alone. The contributions of both Indians and Tibetans were necessary to produce such a literature, since it draws so massively and in such a detailed and complex manner on Indian tantric sources, yet can also localise them to Tibetan cultural conditions. Textual evidence can be found amongst the archaeologically recovered mainly 10th century Dunhuang texts. To give one example, PT44 mentions an important redaction of the *Vajrakīlaya* tantras by the Indian siddha Padmasambhava, when he integrates for the first time four indigenously Himalayan *bSe* goddesses into the Indian Buddhist *Vajrakīlaya* maṇḍala, to serve there as protectors. These Himalayan *bSe* goddesses then continue to appear within canonical rNying ma tantras, for example, they are referred to in Chapters 13, 15 and 19 of the important and influential *Phur pa bcu gnyis* (Mayer 1996, pp.128–132). According to PT44, Padmasambhava enacted their integration into the divine maṇḍala partly within a Himalayan geographical context while attended by his Tibetan and Nepali disciples. Of course, PT44 is primarily a ritual narrative, so its strictly historical value is unclear (Cantwell and Mayer 2008b, pp. 41–67). What is more clear is that in very general terms, the modes of adaptation to local conditions that the rNying ma tantras reveal, broadly resemble the modes of local adaptations found more widely within South Asian ritual literatures.

The political and social conditions under which the rNying ma tantras began to proliferate more widely were anything but normal. The great Tibetan Empire, a highly centralised regime that had dominated the Silk Road and defeated its neighbours for so long, collapsed irrevocably in the mid-ninth century, never to rise again. During the Empire, tantric teachings had been restricted and controlled by state policy, as in China. But with the collapse of the Empire and the ensuing anarchy and civil disorder, tantric teachings began to proliferate. It was from this period that numerous rNying ma tantras first come into our view. However we have little direct evidence of who propagated them, or how, because in this anarchic time, the historical record was substantially reduced, so that fewer surviving historical sources of the usual kind remain available for us to examine. It is interesting to observe that the Pāla Empire in North East India suffered a period of political instability at a similar time, likewise resulting in a lessening of state control over Buddhist affairs. As in Tibet, this Pāla period of instability also witnessed the first emergence of what were destined to become a seminal

tranche of Indian tantric Buddhist scriptures, including, for example, the *Hevajra*, the *Herukābhīdhāna* (the main text for the *Cakrasaṃvara* system), and the *Catuṣpīṭha*.

It is important to note that for those who first compiled the rNying ma tantras, we think mainly between the 9th and 11th centuries, their Tibetan localisation seems far more likely to have been considered an asset, than a liability. We see this in early authors such as Rong zom (Wangchug 2002) and above all from the testimony of the early texts themselves. Using popular narratives still ubiquitous throughout the rNying ma liturgical tradition, Dunhuang texts like PT44 and PT307 describe the triumphant conversion and induction of named local indigenous deities into the Buddhist pantheon. As described above, these local deities soon featured within canonical rNying ma tantras and their associated rituals, often accompanied, in the style of indigenous Tibetan ritual, by the narratives (*smrang*, *rabs*) of their conversion and induction into Buddhism (Mayer 1996, pp.128–132, Cantwell and Mayer 2008a, 2013). Together with other incorporations of indigenous elements, such as the presence of the indigenously Tibetan *'go ba'i lha* within Chapter 9 of the Buddhist canonical *Phur pa bcu gnyis* (Mayer 1996, p. 132), or the increasingly widespread attachment of wings to the rNying ma forms of the Buddhist heruka,¹ this represented the successful grafting of the tree of tantric Buddhism onto the rootstock of Tibetan culture, and probably makes most sense if understood as the successful outcome of an often conscious and deliberate indigenising program. Moreover the continuous, ongoing production of ever new scriptures by the creative recombination (with a few additions) of existing ritual and textual modules into new permutations, was already the example set by the Indian tantric masters, who had themselves done exactly this for centuries. Nor did the Buddhist texts declare definitively that Indian soil was the only legitimate geographical ground of Dharma.

1) As far as I am aware, if winged Buddhist herukas were attested in India, they are yet to be reported by modern Indological scholarship. This could imply either that they did not exist in India at all, or that they were a minority tradition there. The fact that they became so ubiquitous in the rNying ma form of heruka that emerged in Tibet, might reflect a skillful Buddhist accommodation to local ritual preferences, since wings (along with most things avian) were very prominently featured within indigenous Tibetan ritual symbolism. Cathy Cantwell and I currently have a paper on this topic in press, examining it more specifically in terms of the indigenous binary categories of the Winged and the Fanged. The closest we have so far come to a possible Indian occurrence of a winged Buddhist heruka is a form of *Cakrasaṃvara* merged with *Garuda* as practiced in some Jo nang pa and dGe lugs circles; yet here the wings are not inherent to the heruka as in the rNying ma tradition, but only present because of heruka's merging with *Garuda*.

But by the end of the 12th century, the intellectual climate in Tibet changed significantly. From the late 10th century onwards, there had already been a two hundred year period of new translations of late Indian tantric scriptures previously unknown in Tibet (most notably, the above mentioned texts produced during the 9th century Pāla eclipse such as the *Hevajra* and *Herukābhīdhāna*), and the establishment of new lineages promoting them. These new lineages liked to assert their novel styles, and their pure Indian origins, as selling points.

Then, with the accelerating decline of Buddhism in India at the end of the 12th century, the traumatic destruction of its great centres like Bodhgaya, and the flight of learned Indian Buddhist refugees to Tibet, new attitudes began to harden. The Tibetan quest for inspired indigenisation was increasingly displaced by a growing concern to preserve the now fast-disappearing Indian tradition exactly as it had been.

Thirdly, new criteria for scriptural orthodoxy began to predominate, criteria unheard of in India, but standard and officially enforced by the state in China; and with them began the anathematisation of any scriptural productions on Tibetan soil, whether past, present or future. For China in the guise of the Yuan or Mongol dynasty at that time took power in Tibet through its Tibetan allies, the learned lamas of Sa skya, who were already active promoters of the new Indian tantras, and at whose monastery several learned Indian refugees had gathered. The new criteria for scriptural orthodoxy required exclusively Indian origins, with no indigenous Tibetan admixtures or redactions whatsoever, not even the slightest. In many ways, these new criteria resonated with traditional Tibetan concerns for purity of lineage. Yet ironically, although enforced in the name of a purer Indian lineage, they were not actually very Indian in spirit, because India had always accepted polytrophy, inter-religious intertextuality, and the ongoing production of new scriptures.

Since nearly all their most beloved and important tantras were redacted in Tibet, and therefore now vulnerable to being denounced as forgeries, the rNying ma tradition found itself under pressure. Any degree of visible Tibetan input to their scriptures became a potential embarrassment that could be exploited by opponents. And we can still see from two well-known rNying ma pa tantras which we shall here use as examples, how some of their indigenous elements have attracted redactional anxiety over the centuries. Chapter 19 of the *Phur pa bcu gnyis* has a very long and important *mantroddhāra* (*sngags btu ba*) which, like other similar rNying ma examples, shows certain signs of Tibetan composition (Mayer 1996, pp. 132–147), a fact which was seized upon by anti-rNying ma polemicists (Sog-bzlog-pa 1975, p. 302). A *mantroddhāra*

is a standard Indic convention in which mantras are reduced to a simple code mainly consisting of the ascription of a fixed number to each series (*varga*) of the Sanskrit alphabet. To illustrate, the series *ka kha ga gha ṅa* is called ‘the first’, the series *ca cha ja jha ṅa* is called ‘the second’, and so on. Thus the letter *ka* is indicated by the statement ‘the first of the first’, while the letter *ṅa* is indicated by the statement ‘the fifth of the second’. This system works excellently, as intended, to preserve intact the exact spelling and pronunciation of the mantras from the vagaries of scribal transmission over long periods of time. But in the *Phur pa bcu gnyis*, the *mantroddhāra*, when decoded, does not yield Sanskrit as it should. Rather, it yields the corrupted phonetics typical of the very early renderings of Sanskrit into Tibetan, before a rationalised transliteration had been established: a sure sign that this *mantroddhāra* was composed in Tibet, using an old Tibetan manuscript as its basis (Mayer 1996, pp. 132–147). In response to the long standing polemical critique, many centuries later, the 18th century sDe dge re-edition of the rNying ma canon still felt the need to add a marginal note to the chapter, which implies, a little defensively, that although the *mantroddhāra* looks like it could still benefit from further investigation, it should be left as given (*sngags btu ‘di la dpyad bya mang yang sor bzhag byas*) (Mayer 1996, p. 146).

In the year 1094, another rNying ma tantric scripture, the *Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra*, had the dubious honour of being placed by the polemicist Pho brang Shi ba’i ‘od at the very top of his list of heretical tantras to be shunned (Karmay 1980, pp. 14–15 and 1998, pp. 135–6). The surviving text of that name has a passage in its Chapter 19 which is by now so scrambled in transmission that it has so far remained incomprehensible to the most learned lamas of any tradition. Yet it nevertheless might be mistaken as belonging to the indigenous Bon religion of Tibet rather than to Buddhism, because it appears to describe the rites and activities of the *gze ma* (Cantwell & Mayer 2007, pp. 27–28 and 196–203). The *gze ma* as a type of wrathful goddess are ubiquitous in the Bon tradition, found in numerous sources, yet quite unknown in Buddhism, and as far as we are currently aware, occur in no Buddhist scripture other than here. If the redactors of the *Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra* had assumed that the *gze ma* were amongst the indigenous deities tamed by and incorporated into Buddhism, the redactors of other Buddhist tantras had not necessarily agreed with them. We surmise the chapter might have subsequently become garbled as a result of editorial or scribal hypercorrections, attempting to interpret or reinterpret the word *gze ma* in various different ways.

By the end of this period, right across the gamut of rNying ma tantric scriptures, colophons had appeared in considerable numbers, accompanied

by apologetic historiographical narratives, that tried belatedly to identify the numerous rNying ma tantras as unadulterated straight translations from Sanskrit originals with no Tibetan redaction. But this was perceived by rival scholars as an attempt at distracting attention away from the real truth of their actual redaction or compilation in Tibet.

One of the problems in this apologetic and defensive approach is that it entails the denial of what might well have been one of the major achievements in Tibetan history. Later Tibetans came to believe that there was a single towering achievement in the rNying ma period: the famous state-sponsored program that oversaw the translation of hundreds of Indian Buddhist monastic, doctrinal, philosophical, and exoteric sūtra scriptures into Tibetan, and the concomitant founding of many learned Buddhist institutions. Yet they came to distrust the other great rNying ma achievement that followed in subsequent decades, which was the successful localisation of esoteric Indian tantrism to Tibetan conditions, which facilitated the consequent conversion of the greater part of the Tibetan population to tantric Buddhism. The scores of anonymous rNying ma tantric scriptures, the many authored commentaries, and the ritual systems emerging from them, that made it possible, proved culturally so well adjusted, ritually so effective, and intellectually so coherent, that through their agency, an often sophisticated understanding of Buddhism seems to have been able to pervade through much of Tibetan society in a surprisingly short time.

In this adaptation, a tendency to systematise soteriological approaches became apparent, accompanied by a parallel tendency to soteriologise pragmatic magic. As is already apparent in the Dunhuang texts, overarching doxographical structures such as the Nine Vehicles (*theg pa dgu*), or universal ritual structures expressive of a doctrinal normalisation, such as the Three Concentrations (Tib. *gting 'dzin gsum*, Sans. *trisaṃādhi*), and perhaps also the Three Characteristics of the Continuum of the Path of Mahāyoga (*mtshan nyid gsum*), seem to have been applied across a range of otherwise diverse deity systems, introducing a degree of doctrinal uniformity across the ritual profusion. Rather ingeniously, complex Buddhist doctrine was at the same time enabled to penetrate agricultural village and pastoral encampment alike through an encoding of advanced Buddhist doctrines within pragmatic tantric ritual. Most fundamentally, the very capacity effectively to perform pragmatic magic and prognostication became defined as the natural outcome of the successful accomplishment of a Buddhist *yi dam* deity, which was at the same time the central soteriological method of tantric Buddhism, conferring wisdom and compassion. Thus pragmatic ritual magic per se was

constructed as the skilful means to benefit others through the powers conferred by Buddhist realisation.

Doctrinal penetration also occurred within numerous particular, individual pragmatic rituals. For example, more than half of all the chapters of the Dunhuang commentary on the *Thabs zhags* tantra (from Chapter Eighteen all the way through to Chapter Forty), were dedicated specifically to the encoding of mainstream abstract Buddhist doctrines within a wide range of quotidian pragmatic rituals, so that the rehearsal of those doctrines was rendered inseparable from and integral to the performance of such rituals (Cantwell and Mayer 2012, pp. 78–82). A similar concern closely to integrate abstract Buddhist doctrine within pragmatic ritual is shown in the *Phur bu myang 'das*, a concern which is expressed in that text repeatedly and explicitly (Cantwell and Mayer 2007, pp. 22–31).

Such a concern explicitly to incorporate mainstream Buddhist view into pragmatic ritual magic perhaps occurs to a rather greater degree within these early rNying ma tantras than is generally found in the later *Yoganiruttara* tantras propagated in the *Phyi dar*. A parallel factor is that some influential early rNying ma Mahāyoga tantras, including the *Thabs zhags* and the *Phur pa bcu gnyis*, retained slightly closer continuities with the earlier, more moderate strata of Yogatantra than did the more radically antinomian *Yoganiruttara* tantras produced almost contemporaneously in India during the Pāla decline. In this way, these sometimes Tibet-redacted rNying ma tantras remained more obviously congruent with orthodox Buddhist doctrine, and thus less in need of complex exegesis, than their contemporaneous Indic counterparts. By contrast, some of the *Yoganiruttara* tantras, for example the famous *Herukābhīdhāna*, could through much of their content at face value appear barely Buddhist at all (Sanderson 2009), and paid less explicit, systematic attention to integrating pragmatic ritual with Buddhist doctrine.

The rNying ma style of seamlessly integrating advanced doctrinal meanings with quotidian pragmatic ritual, served also to reduce the degree of dumbing down of Buddhism entailed in its propagation amongst its main target audience, the hereditary tantric laity (Tib. *sngags pa*, Sans. *mantrin*). For example, as we find in the Dunhuang *Thabs zhags* manuscript and other early sources, the Mahāyāna doctrine of the Three Bodies of the Buddha (*trikāya*) was introduced as the sole point of departure for every Mahāyoga ritual, via the ubiquitous Three Concentrations. Advanced ideas such as Emptiness, the *dharmadhātu*, and Non-dual Wisdom, could likewise be woven into the very fabric of every kind of pragmatic magic. At the same time, as we will describe below, the target audience of hereditary tantric laity were

typically influential or even dominant members of their communities, frequently drawn from the power elites of grand aristocratic families, nomad chiefs, village headmen, and perhaps also priestly lineages, and such people typically commanded a higher degree of access to learning than most Tibetans. Indian tantrism does not seem to have had this calculated quality of fostering a high degree of tantric learning amidst a lay elite in quite the same way. These were remarkable rNying ma period Tibetan innovations, and as far as we are aware, no other Asian society achieved anything quite like it.

Perhaps the brilliance of this achievement is why the criticism of the rNying ma pa was only seldom deadly. Not even their worst enemies amongst the later neo-orthodoxy tried to completely deny that the rNying ma adaptation had supplied the historical bedrock of the entirety of later Tibetan Buddhist culture; and even their fiercest critics, including the Sa skya school, despite all their anti-indigenous rhetoric, continued to use a quantity of rNying ma tantra on a regular basis. Likewise, most of Tibetan Buddhism relied for many centuries (half of it still does!) on rNying ma institutional innovations in areas such as hereditary modes of religious authority. Nevertheless, it is regrettable that Tibetan lamas to this day continue to feel embarrassment about scriptural texts that might have any degree of Tibetan creative input, however valuable. More often than not, they either seek to downplay the Tibetan component of such texts, or they deprecate them as apocryphal.

Associated with Tibetan Buddhism, and especially with the rNying ma school, are a number of advanced arts and sciences and other ancillary practices that are not directly soteriological, but which are believed to be capable of improving conditions for the practice of Buddhism, if correctly applied. Several of these seem to originate in the later Imperial period, perhaps even before the large scale triumph of Buddhism, and they show a distinctively international and syncretic nature (F. Meyer, in Parfionovitch, Dorje & Meyer 1992, p. 3). These include Tibetan medicine, 'Chinese astrology' (or *nag rtsi*), and a range of practices for the enhancement of good fortune and vitality, for example, those known as 'wind horse' or *rlung rta*. These systems can be very complex, and in some cases, notably medicine and astrology, their practitioners might require an advanced level of education. What is striking about them is that they often include a highly syncretic mix of international cultural elements. The medical tradition integrates Western, Indian, Chinese and indigenous medical elements, all of which becomes conceptually encompassed by the cult and doctrines of the Mahāyāna Buddhist Bhaiṣajyaguru, the blue Buddha of Healing (F. Meyer, in Parfionovitch, Dorje & Meyer 1992, p. 3). In Tibet, tantric rites were developed for this Buddha, associated with

the practice of medicine, and an important set of paracanonical medical tantras eventually appeared. In addition, a set of tantric practices were developed specifically for physicians. These, and much of the medical tradition, are often particularly associated with the rNying ma school.

Similarly, in the 'Wind Horse' and suchlike practices one finds Indian Budhas and Bodhisattvas juxtaposed with Chinese trigrams alongside indigenous Tibetan categories such as the *sgra bla* deities (Berounsky 2004, bDud 'joms Rin po che 1979–85, Shen-Yu Lin 2005). Overlapping with the 'Wind Horse' are other practices for good fortune, vitality and prosperity, and especially in the rNying ma, some categories from these areas of indigenous Tibetan thinking became integrated into the Indian-derived longevity rites connected with Amitāyus, the Buddha of Limitless Life.

The Chinese Astrology or *Nag rtsi* primarily mixes Chinese with Tibetan ideas, and although it is described as 'Chinese astrology', the system is in fact quite unknown in China (Schuh 2013).

The syncretism shown in each of these complex systems is in contrast with the emphasis on purity of lineage found elsewhere in Tibetan religion. There have been relatively few examples of avowed syncretism in Tibetan religion. On the contrary, the famous *Ris med* or non sectarian movement in 19th century East Tibet was vehemently anti-syncretic and anti-eclectic, advocating mutual understanding and cooperation, but placing emphatic value on the preservation of purity of each separate lineage (Ringu 2007). A possible exception to the rule might be the New Bon or *Bon gsar* movement of the 18th century, which could be seen as a less covert syncretism between Buddhism and Bon.

No review of indigenous elements within Tibetan Tantric religion can be complete without a discussion of the Bon religion. If the rNying ma represented Indian Buddhism adapted to Tibetan conditions, the Bon represented indigenous Tibetan religion adapted to Buddhist conditions. Yet our understanding of Bon is by no means clear. Since it came to resemble Buddhism so very closely, some scholars deny it was ever an independent religion at all, and see it more as an artificial construction *ex nihilo* that followed the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet, rather than as a survival from pre-Buddhist times with genuine continuities from the past. As ever, the truth is quite complex, and can best be understood by a consideration of the historical dynamics involved.

So let us start with a few words about indigenous Tibetan ritual. We don't have many surviving texts representing the pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet, and we have reason to suspect that some of its tradition was oral rather than

written. Our main textual sources are ancient manuscripts from Dunhuang in north west China, and those more recently found in the Gathang Bumpa in Lhobrag in South Tibet. Despite their comparative paucity, these few surviving texts are nevertheless sufficient to indicate that pre-Buddhist Tibet had a highly complex and reasonably consistent ritual tradition. Even if not monastically organised like Buddhism, it seems to have formed a coherent enough universe of practice and belief, rather like Brahmanic religion in India, or Ancient Greek religion. As we already mentioned, a notable feature of indigenous Tibetan ritual was its very particular signature style of integrating narrative and ritual.

We can also learn something from archaeology. Much of the Tibetan Empire's considerable surplus wealth seems to have been lavished on an extravagant funerary cult. Recent excavations reveal its vast scale, magnificent splendour, and conceptual sophistication. Guntram Hazod (2007, 2009, 2010, 2013) has so far charted around 380 burial fields in Central Tibet. Each of these fields can hold up to 800 individual tumuli in various shapes. In the royal burial fields at 'Phyong rgyas in Central Tibet, the tumuli are around 130 metres long, and elsewhere in Central Tibet, aristocratic tumuli are up to 70 metres long. Tao Tong's PhD from Tübingen (Tao Tong 2008) similarly estimated that there are over 10,000 more yet to be surveyed along the course of Central Tibet's Yarlung River system alone. Some tumuli can be so big that they are mistaken for naturally occurring hills. Chinese archeologists have now excavated some dozens of the many hundreds around Dulan and Ulan in far North Eastern Tibet. Even bigger than the royal tombs at 'Phyong rgyas, the largest are 160 metres long and 35 metres high, within massive enclosing walls of 350 metres by 280 metres. All had complex internal structures and most had auxiliary out-buildings. Two of the smallest tumuli retained a residue of their grave goods, which reveal a level of artistic and material culture every bit the equal of later, Buddhist Tibet, even at its very finest. Although from a comparatively minor tomb, Dulan's beautifully painted coffin panels show dignitaries from foreign lands, rituals, tents, music making, Sogdian-style dancing, hunting scenes, Chinese-style astrological symbols, abstract art forms, and so on. Written inventories of the originally multifarious grave goods are preserved on silken sheets (Heller 2013a, 2013b). The conception of these burials is extremely complex, and according to surviving textual sources, their execution and upkeep demanded a major logistical exercise spanning decades.

Like their counterparts in Central Asia and China, these grand Tibetan burial cults were also quite definitely sacrificial. The bones of hundreds of

animals were found neatly laid out in rows around the Dulan coffins, many of them ritually dismembered, very much as described in Tang Chinese accounts of Tibetan funerals (Bushell 1880, Xu Xingao 1996).

But imported Indian Buddhism reserved its very deepest contempt for blood sacrifice of any kind, and soon mounted an aggressive polemic against traditional burials. This culminated in some famous debates that figure prominently in traditional historiography (Wangdu and Diemberger 2000). The indigenous Bon and gShen priests lost the argument, and consequently, the followers of their traditions, by then politically vulnerable within a Tibet in which Buddhism was politically dominant, were forced to repudiate tumulus burial and its associated blood sacrifice.²

The politically enforced banning of the funerary tumulus cult was made irrevocable by the major economic collapse of the mid-ninth century. It was a pivotal moment in Tibetan history, a watershed. No longer did people go to worship at the tombs of their ancestors, and no longer were the various classes of traditional priesthoods employed to manage the great tumuli. This moment marked the beginning of an entirely new religious economy, in which prolific monastery and temple building were to displace prolific tumulus building, and in which Buddhist-model monks and lay tantric practitioners (whether Buddhist or Bon) were to displace the various classes of traditional priesthoods as the predominant form of religious specialist. The new Indian-inspired monasteries and temples came to be known generically as *dgon pa*, a term which encompasses both monastery and temple, and the Buddhist-model religious practitioners came to be known as lamas, a term which encompasses both monks and lay tantric practitioners.

It used to be thought that Buddhist monasticism and scholasticism simply disappeared in the chaotic conditions following the collapse of Empire, but more modern research suggests this narrative includes a degree of traditional historiographical hyperbole: we now know that the monastic Dharma colleges founded during empire persisted throughout the post-Imperial period, albeit on a more modest scale (Uebach 1990; Iuchi 2013), and moreover, religion continued to flourish in the east of Tibet. More prominent in this period were the lay tantric practitioners, who were often aristocratic and hereditary through the male line, and whose wealth, leisure and power could afford them

2) If Buddhism enjoyed a high degree of Imperial and elite support through much of the late Empire, the question still remains, when did Buddhism actually penetrate the wider Tibetan populations? This is a very complex question indeed, which no one has yet addressed systematically. My thanks to Guntram Hazod, Roberto Vitali, Sam van Schaik and Ulrike Roesler for their stimulating (and highly contrasting!) comments on this issue.

privileged access to the learning of the surviving dharma colleges. Known as *sngags pa* or *mantrin*, they were to a considerable extent a Tibetan innovation, for nothing quite like them is known from India. For several centuries, they were to supply a great deal of religious authority in Tibet, so that even communities of monks came under their control. From the start, their role was as much political as religious, since evidence suggests that some of the old martial aristocracy, along with other ambitious families, reinvented themselves as hereditary holders of tantric Buddhist lineages.

The perceived connection between holding a tantric Buddhist lineage and wielding political power is culturally understandable. From pre-Buddhist times, power and prosperity had often been seen as the gift of a type of powerful ancestral male mountain deity (*yul lha*, *gzhi bdag*). It was believed that the source of the political power of local chieftains derived from the special favour conferred by the local mountain deity upon one of his local human descendants; while the Emperor himself was related to and favoured by all the major mountain deities. In the early Buddhist period, there seems to have been a degree of shift from mountain deity to tantric Buddhist wrathful male deity or *heruka* as a source of power. Even better than depending on the mountain deity, or in addition to doing so, powerful people could now also claim as a source of authority the hereditary ownership of the secret initiatory rites of a wrathful tantric Buddhist *heruka*.

In short, the entire religious economy began to change, notably the manner in which the new religious professionals provided services to their laity, and were supported or served by them in turn. And since the *dgong pa* with its lamas had emerged so triumphantly as the most viable religious institutions throughout the region, the Bon po too, if they wanted to continue to participate fully in society and in religious life, had little option other than to build their own *dgong pas* and fill them with their own lamas, both monks and hereditary *sngags pas*.

Once the Bon po had for the first time in their history, *dgong pas* filled with lamas, an acute need arose for rituals and texts for the newly emergent Bon po lamas to perform for their laity, since their previous ritual tradition, much of it probably orally transmitted, was not entirely suited to the new Lamaistic ritual economy. It was precisely to provide such texts and rituals within the Bon idiom that the Bon tantras seem to have been written, and they proliferated in tandem with the expansion of Bon po *dgong pas* and lamas.

Some scholars have argued that the Bon tantras newly produced at this time were created *ex nihilo* entirely by copying Buddhist prototypes, in the period after the 11th century, and retained no continuities whatsoever with

the pre-Buddhist religion. Yet Bon literature is vast, and very little of it has been studied in depth, so that such conclusions remain inadequately tested. If we are to come to firm conclusions, we must first study many more Bon texts with very great care. For exactly these reasons, we recently subjected an important and lengthy early (probably 11th or 12th century) Bon tantra called the *Black Pillar* (*Ka ba nag po man ngag rtsa ba'i rgyud*) to a detailed examination, to see what it was made of.

Analysing the *Black Pillar* from the perspective of literary composition, we came to the conclusion that its manner of combining indigenous Tibetan with Indian Buddhist elements, suggested that pre-existing indigenous ritual structures had been disassembled into their component elements, and then these same indigenous component elements reassembled into entirely new structures that accorded with Buddhist tantric templates. Or, to use an architectural analogy, it seemed as though various indigenous buildings had been carefully disassembled, and their individual units of construction, such as pillars, doors, timbers, and stones, now reconstructed into a new edifice called the *Black Pillar*, that was closely modeled on tantric Buddhist architectural principles.

It is an interesting fact that if indexed by weight of numbers, a rather high proportion of the numerous deities in the *Black Pillar* are in fact indigenous to varying degrees. The *Black Pillar* describes exceptionally long lists of retinue deities around its main deity, more than most comparable tantras, and it is noteworthy that they are generally described as already enlightened, with no mention being made of any need to tame or convert them before they can take their places in the enlightened *mandala*. Some of these retinue deities are independently witnessed in other very early textual sources that pre-date the pervasive dominance of Buddhism in Tibet, such as Tibetan Imperial Army administrative woodslips from Miran in Central Asia, which suggests their indigenous nature. Judging by the absence of similar deities in Indian texts, many of the other *Black Pillar* retinue deities also seem predominantly indigenous, both by name and by nature. Here we find categories which can occur also in the *gNag rabs* text from Gathang (*dGa' thang bum pa*) (which also shows only limited Buddhist influence, Bellezza 2013), such as the *gZe ma* goddesses, the many kinds of *Klu* deities, various classes of male and female *bDud* deities, and various classes of *bTsan* deities. In addition there are also the *Khra sPyang*, the Hawks and Wolves that play such a prominent ritual role, the *mTsho sman* or Lake Enchantresses, and so on. The list is actually quite long and complex, and since we will be producing it in full elsewhere, there is perhaps little point in going through it all here.

There are also numerous indigenous elements over and above the retinue deities: references to birds and feathers, eggs, landscape features, and so on and so forth.

Yet any calculation of how indigenous these deities actually are is greatly complicated by the propensity of Bon deities increasingly to begin to resemble Indian deities in appearance, as the Bon religion became increasingly Lamaised. Nevertheless, throughout this Lamaising process, Bon deities might still retain an older indigenous name, and varying degrees of original mythic identity. We think we might see this happening, for example, with the important category of *gZe ma* goddesses, who although appearing in non-Indic and indigenously Tibetan iconographical forms in the earlier texts from Gathang (circa 900–1100 CE), come to resemble a set of tantric Buddhist goddesses in the slightly later *Black Pillar*.

It should be noted that the *Black Pillar* placed these numerous groupings of probably indigenous retinue deities around a major central deity who was unmistakably a direct calque on a tantric Buddhist heruka deity, called Vajrakīla. Nevertheless, the indigenous retinue deities are still portrayed as primordially enlightened in precisely the Buddhist sense, like the main deity himself, which we find interesting.

In fact, many of the most important items in the *Black Pillar* are quite closely modelled on originally Indian tantric antecedents. These include its literary structure and conventions, the main central deities, many standard tantric ritual categories, and the central soteriological program. Its chapters describes various Indian-style maṇḍalas, and a central deity who now closely resembles Vajrakīla from the Buddhist *Guhyasamāja* cycle. While the Bon version of this deity still retains a name evocative of indigenous symbolism, *mKha' gying*, 'Hovering in the Sky', his female consort is called *sTong khyab ma*, 'Pervasive Emptiness', a very Buddhist sounding name indeed. The main interlocutor of the tantra is *Thugs rje byams ma*, who resembles the Indian Goddess Tārā. Above all, the *Black Pillar* teaches the very same enlightenment and the very same ethics as do the rNying ma tantras, and it reflects the same ontology of the Three Buddha Bodies of *dharmakāya*, *sambhogakāya*, and *nirmāṇakāya*. It structures its visualisation meditations around the Three Concentrations (*gting nge' dzin gsum*) shared with rNying ma Buddhism, and its central rite of forcible liberation (*sgrol ba*) is also modelled on Indian or rNying ma precedents, as are many subsidiary rituals.

It remains to be seen what will be found after more Bon tantras have been scrutinised. For now, all we can say with certainty is that at least one seminal Bon tantra contains both indigenous and imported Buddhist features.

Finally, we should mention briefly the other schools of Tibetan Buddhism, such as the Sa skya pa, the bKa' brgyud pa, the dGe lugs pa, the Jo nang pa, and so on. Unlike the rNying ma, it was much rarer for them to rely on major scriptural tantras that were not of completely Indic origins, straightforward translations from Sanskrit into Tibetan. The main exception would be when they were self-consciously using rNying ma pa ritual, which all of them did to varying degrees. So if we are to talk of indigenous Tibetan tantras, in the sense of scriptural tantras for major meditational deities written or compiled in Tibet, then we are largely talking about the rNying ma and Bon traditions, with comparatively fewer other exceptions.

Nevertheless, all of Tibetan Buddhism, not only the rNying ma and Bon, introduced major developments and new ways of doing tantrism that had been unknown in India. This might include adopting indigenous ritual elements in various ways. A notable example was the Tibetan cult of protector deities, who made up a vast and hugely varied pantheon that included numerous indigenous and local deities adopted as Buddhist protectors. Some were heavily assimilated to Indian tantric categories, and for some their indigenous nature might even have been partly invented traditions, developed to fill a conceptual niche, but many others do seem to have been more closely based on actual indigenous religious traditions.

Over and above that, all of Tibetan Buddhism introduced numerous developments and new ways of doing tantrism that had been unknown in India. The production of lengthy guru yoga *sādhana* texts or the widespread establishment of concatenated lines of reincarnated lamas are just two prominent examples amongst many available. But Buddhist developments of that kind that incorporate few if any indigenous ritual categories are not the subject of this paper.

References

- BELLEZZA, John, 2013, *Death and Beyond in Ancient Tibet*. The Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, Vienna.
- BEROUNSKY, Daniel, 2004, Wind-horse galloping: On a Tibetan symbol connected with nature. In: *Pandanus 04*, Charles University, Prague, pp. 185–203.
- BUSHELL, S. W., 1880, The Early History of Tibet. From Chinese Sources. In: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 12, pp. 435–541.
- CANTWELL, Cathy, and MAYER, Robert, 2007, *The Kīlaya Nirvāṇa Tantra and the Vajra Wrath Tantra: two texts from the Ancient Tantra Collection*. The Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, Vienna.
- CANTWELL, Cathy, and MAYER, Robert, 2008a, Enduring myths: smrang, rabs and ritual in the Dunhuang texts on Padmasambhava. In: Pommaret, Françoise and Jean-Luc Achard, eds.,

- Tibetan Studies in Honor of Samten Karmay*, *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines*, Vol.15, November 2008, Langues et Cultures de l'Aire Tibétaines, CNRS, Paris, pp. 289–312.
- CANTWELL, Cathy, and MAYER, Robert, 2008b, *Early Tibetan Documents on Phur pa from Dunhuang*. The Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, Vienna.
- CANTWELL, Cathy, and MAYER, Robert, 2008c, The Dunhuang Phur pa Corpus: A Survey. In: Almogi, Orna, ed., *Contributions to Tibetan Buddhist Literature. PIATS 2006: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Eleventh Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Königswinter 2006*. Beiträge zur Zentralasienforschung 14, International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, Halle, pp. 248–276.
- CANTWELL, Cathy, and MAYER, Robert, 2012, *A Noble Noose of Methods, the Lotus Garland Synopsis: A Mahāyoga Tantra and its Commentary*, The Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, Vienna.
- CANTWELL, Cathy and MAYER, Robert, 2013, Representations of Padmasambhava in early post-Imperial Tibet. In: Christoph Cüppers, Robert Mayer and Michael Walter, eds., *Tibet after Empire Culture, Society and Religion between 850–1000*, Lumbini International Research Institute, Lumbini, pp. 19–50.
- CARRITHERS, M., 2000, On Polytrophy: Or the Natural Condition of Spiritual Cosmopolitanism in India: The Digambar Jain Case. In: *Modern Asian Studies*, 34 (4), pp. 831–61.
- BDUD 'JOMS RIN PO CHE, 'JIGS BRAL YE SHES RDO RJE, 1979–1985, *rLung rta'i rten mkhar 'dzug pa'i cho ga dge legs kun 'byung bkra shis gter gyi bum bzang zhes bya ba bzhugs so*. In: *The collected writings and revelations of H. H. bDud-'joms Rin-po-che 'Jigs bral ye shes rdo rje*, Volume Tsha, Dupjung Lama, Kalimpong, pp. 453–472.
- HAZOD, Guntram, 2007, The grave on the 'cool plain'. On the identification of 'Tibet's first tomb' in Nga-ra-thang of 'Phyong-po. In: Kellner, B., H. Krasser, H. Lasic, M.T. Much, and H. Tauscher (eds.), *Pramāṇakīrtiḥ. Papers Dedicated to Ernst Steinkellner on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday*. Part 1. Wien, pp. 259–283.
- HAZOD, Guntram, 2009, Imperial Central Tibet – An annotated cartographical survey of its territorial divisions and key political sites. In: Dotson, Brandon, *The Old Tibetan Annals*. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien, pp. 161–231.
- HAZOD, Guntram, 2010, Geschichte in der Landschaft. Zur Methode der historisch-anthropologischen Forschung in Tibet. In: *Working papers in Social Anthropology*, Vol. 12, pp. 1–12 (www.oeww.ac.at/sozant).
- HAZOD, Guntram, 2013, The Plundering Of The Tibetan Royal Tombs. An Analysis of the Event in the Context of the Uprisings in Central Tibet of the 9th/10th Century. In: Christoph Cüppers, Robert Mayer and Michael Walter, eds., *Tibet after Empire: Culture, Society and Religion between 850–1000*, LIRI, Lumbini, pp. 85–116.
- HELLER, Amy, 2013a, Preliminary remarks on Painted Coffin Panels from Tibetan tombs. In: Dotson, Brandon; Iwao, Kazushi and Takeuchi, Tsuguhito eds., *Scribes, Texts, and Rituals in Early Tibet and Dunhuang, Proceedings of the 12th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*. Reichert Verlag, Wiesbaden, pp. 11–24.
- HELLER, Amy, 2013b, Observations on Painted Coffin Panels of the Tibetan Empire. In: Christoph Cüppers, Robert Mayer and Michael Walter, eds., *Tibet after Empire Culture, Society and Religion between 850–1000*, Lumbini International Research Institute, Lumbini, pp. 117–168.
- IUCHI, Maho, 2013, Early bKa' gdams pa masters and Khams 'Dan ma. In: Christoph Cüppers, Robert Mayer and Michael Walter, eds., *Tibet after Empire: Culture, Society and Religion between 850–1000*, LIRI, Lumbini, pp. 215–228.
- KARMAY, S. G., 1980, An Open Letter by Pho-brang Zhi-ba-'od to the Buddhists in Tibet. In: *The Tibet Journal*, Vol.V, no.3, pp. 3–28.

- KARMA, S. G., 1998, *The Arrow and the Spindle: Studies in History, Myths, Rituals and Beliefs in Tibet*. Mandala Book Point, Kathmandu.
- LIN SHEN-YU, 2005, Tibetan Magic for Daily Life: Mi pham's Texts on gTo-rituals. In: *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie*, Vol. 15, 2005. pp. 107–125.
- MAYER, Robert, 1996. *A Scripture of the Ancient Tantra Collection: the Phur pa bcu gnyis*. Kiscadale Publications, Oxford.
- PARFIONOVITCH, Y., G. DORJE & F. MEYER, 1992, *Tibetan Medical Paintings*. Serindia, London.
- RATIÉ, Isabelle. 2010, The Dreamer and the Yogin: On the relationship between Buddhist and Śaiva Idealisms. In: *Bulletin of SOAS*, 73, 3 (2010), pp. 437–478.
- RINGU TULKU, 2007, *The Ri-me Philosophy of Jamgon Kongtrul the Great: A Study of the Buddhist Lineages of Tibet*. Shambhala, Boston and London.
- SANDERSON, A., 2009, “The Śaiva Age — The Rise and Dominance of Śaivism during the Early Medieval Period”. In: S. Einoo, ed., *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*. Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo, Tokyo, pp. 41–349.
- SCHUH, Dieter, 2013, Zwischen Großreich und Phyi-Dar. In: Christoph Cüppers, Robert Mayer and Michael Walter, eds., *Tibet after Empire: Culture, Society and Religion between 850–1000*. LIRI, Lumbini, pp. 313–342.
- SOG-BZLOG-PA BLO-GROS RGYAL-MTSHAN, 1975, *Collected Writings of Sog-bzlog-pa Blo-gros-rgyal-mtshan*. Vol. 1. Reproduced from a ms. from the library of Ven. Bdud-'joms Rin-poche by Sanje Dorji. New Delhi.
- TAO TONG, 2008, *The Silk Roads Of The Northern Tibetan Plateau During The Early Middle Ages (From The Han To Tang Dynasty) As Reconstructed From Archaeological And Written Sources*. PhD Dissertation, The Eberhard-Karls University of Tübingen.
- UEBACH, Helga, 1990, On Dharma Colleges and their Teachers in the Ninth Century Tibetan Empire. In: Paolo Daffina, ed., *Indo-Sino-Tibetica. Studi in onore di Luciano Petech*, Bardi Editore, Rome, pp. 393–418.
- WANGCHUK, D., 2002, An Eleventh-Century Defence of the Authenticity of the *Guhyagarbha Tantra*. In: D. Germano & H. Eimer, eds., *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism*, Brill, Leiden, pp. 265–291.
- WANGDU, Pasang and DIEMBERGER, Hildegard, 2000, *dBa' bzhed. The Royal Narrative Concerning the Bringing of the Buddha's Doctrine to Tibet*. Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien.
- XU XINGUO, 1996, A Silver Casket from a Dulan Sacrificial Horse Trench. In: *China Art and Archeology Digest* 1.3, (translated by Bruce Doar), pp. 37–49.
- YOELI-LTALIM, Ronit, 2013, Central Asian Mélange: Early Tibetan Medicine from Dunhuang. In: Takeuchi, Dotson, and Iwao, eds., *Scribes, Texts, and Rituals in Early Tibet and Dunhuang*. Reichert-Verlag, Wiesbaden, pp. 53–60.

