

Tibetan Medicine/ Sowa Rigpa as Intangible Cultural Heritage

– developments and conundrums

Mona Schrempf

Since several years China is actively promoting specific Tibetan medicine(s) and techniques by certain institutions and physicians as part of their national heritage drugs. In 2016, China will receive the globally recognised UNESCO intangible cultural heritage status for Tibetan medicine. As both an academic doing research on and as an activist for the recognition of Tibetan medicine as a medical system, including certification etc., via the European Association for Traditional Tibetan Medicine, I will summarise the major developments, problems and conundrums involving different interest groups surrounding Sowa Rigpa and international stake holders in the present application process for Tibetan medicine alias Sowa Rigpa as Intangible Cultural Heritage. Questions of how 'cultural heritage' as well as Tibetan medicine alias 'Sowa Rigpa' is understood and practiced by different agents and interested parties will be examined, including the requirements for ICH applications set by UNESCO. Looking beyond questions of medial and political identities, I will discuss what is at stake, and can be gained—or possibly lost—through such a global recognition of Tibetan medicine as ICH.

Tibetan Traditional Veterinary Medicine- Animal healing practices in texts and society

Catherine Schuetze

This paper will give an overview of the state of research into Veterinary Medicine in the Tibetan cultural sphere and reflects my attempts to build on this knowledge. Animals are integral to the lives of most rural Tibetans. Historically the state was dependent on animals for transport and trade, both domestic and international, for their cavalry, for pack animals, and for food production. In neighbouring countries of India and China, regions also dependent on animals for survival, a vast literary corpus of traditional veterinary medicine developed over the last three millennia. This was motivated by the need to maintain the health of their animals and demonstrated strong theoretical and practical relationships to each region's systems of medicine for humans. Traditional Tibetan medicine (gso ba rig pa) is well-known and well-documented. The tradition contains thousands of texts, a thriving contemporary practice, an associated industry and an international market. Given the prominent place animals occupy in Tibetan life, the reliance on animals and their products for survival, and the extensive practical and textual tradition of veterinary medicine from India and China, texts or a record of practice of traditional veterinary medicine in Tibet could be expected. The first documented reference to veterinary medicine is found during the time of king Srong brtsan Sgam po when a Persian text was translated into Tibetan. Sha le ho tra's works on horses were translated from Sanskrit to Tibetan by Rin chen bzang po and are found in the bstan 'gyur. The collection of Tibetan documents found in the Dunhuang library contained manuscripts commenting on the care and healing of horses in the King's army. Several other scholars have reported on texts found in Nepal on the treatment of horses. I have collected several texts from both inside Tibet and from international libraries. These are modern reproductions of texts or collections of texts, printed in bound book format within the last 30 years. I have additionally sourced three handwritten texts on the treatment of horses from Indian libraries. However, the total number of documented texts is relatively few, as are references to the contemporary practice of traditional Tibetan veterinary medicine in the English language academic literature. The traditional Tibetan veterinary medicine association of Dzoge is the only formalised group of traditional Tibetan veterinary medical practitioners that I could locate. It is also the only instance of formally using and producing traditional veterinary medicine according to gso ba rig pa theory and principles that I have encountered. Their numbers have diminished alarmingly over the decades, and the remaining 20 practitioners are now all older than 50 years. The dwindling of ethno-veterinary

medicine is a global trend and well recorded in other countries. Forces of modernity, including rural-urban migration of the youth and the encroachment of state sponsored biomedicine, lead to a break in the intergenerational transfer of traditional knowledge and practice. This is also happening in Bhutan where I have conducting research on the same subject. My research suggests that many farmers and herders in the Tibetan cultural area rely on magico-religious rituals for the diagnosis and treatment of animal and human illness. Illness narratives commonly ascribe a spiritual cause for disease and ritual cures are prescribed and applied. The reason this is effective is that according to Buddhist cosmology, humans and animals both exist within the six realms of cyclic existence, and are composed of the same five cosmo-physical elements. Thus both can be affected by the same spirit harm and healed by the same ritual means. This medical theory, combined with the cultural paradigm of animals being understood as kin through rebirth, demonstrate the unique way these communities relate to animals in their environment. They are part of the same extended family unit and *subject to the same effects from* the spiritual landscape.

Tracing the Life and Intellectual Agenda of a Twentieth Century Bhutanese Scholar and Yogin, the Sixty-Ninth rJe mKhan-po dGe-'dun-rin-chen (1926–1997)

Dagmar Schwerk

The current paper provides an analysis of the remarkable life and literary production of a twentieth-century Bhutanese scholar and yogin from the 'Brug-pa-bka'-brgyud school in Bhutan, the sixty-ninth rJe mKhan-po dGe-'dun-rin-chen (1926–1997). His significance in Bhutan is exemplified not only by the appointment to the rJe mKhan-po position (tenure: 1990–1996), post of the highest abbot of the 'Brug-pa-bka'-brgyud school in Bhutan, but also by the institution of his own sprul sku lineage, which nowadays resides at Shri Na-landā monastery near sPu-na-kha. Among the Bhutanese, rJe dGe-'dun-rin-chen is revered under his moniker "dGe-bshes Brag-phug-pa" (rDzong-kha: Bya-phugp). "dGe-bshes" due to his erudition and "Brag-phug-pa" because of his birth in a "miraculously arisen cave" at sTag-tshang near sPa-(s)gro and his meditative realization, which he developed during meditation retreats. Some of rJe dGe-'dun-rin-chen's works, in particular, his history of the 'Brug-pa-bka'-brgyud school, the lHo'i chos 'byung blo gsar rna ba'i rgyan, and hagiography of the renowned "divine madman" 'Brug-smyon Kun-dga'-legs-pa (1455–1529), the Chos rje kun dga' legs pa'i rnam thar grub pa'i rtogs brjod, have also been widely appreciated outside of Bhutan. rJe dGe-'dun-rin-chen's motivation to compose and transfer his knowledge was certainly focused on his disciples within Bhutan, in a mostly traditional monastic setting. This is well documented by his activities as head of the rTa-mgo-bshad-grwa from 1970 to 1980 and the establishment of a new bShad-grwa at the Pha-jo-sdings monastery in 1981. His gSung 'bum consists of ten volumes with one hundred and twenty-eight works and covers all relevant topics of Tibetan scholasticism, debate and meditative practices. Thus, it provides the opportunity to trace his intellectual agenda on the basis of several of his lesser-known works. In particular, the textual analysis focuses on the Phyag rgya chen po las brtsams pa'i dri tshig grub pa'i mdung rnon zhes bya ba'i gsung lan dus kyi pho nya, a commentary on the basic text of verses on the Mahāmudrā doctrine and controversy, composed by the ninth rJe mKhan-po Shākya-rin-chen (1710–1759); as well as other works, for instance, a synopsis of the Madhyamaka philosophy, the dBu ma'i bsdus don lta ba'i me long and smaller works (mainly of a doxographical or systematizing nature), such as the gSang sngags dris tshig gnam gyi nga ro, the Phyag rdzogs gnyis kyi dmigs khrid tshigs bcad ma and the sNgags kyi spyi don rgyud sde'i rnam bzhag. In addition, another rich textual source with important data about rJe dGe-'dun-rin-chen's life and thought is included in the textual analysis: His hagiography rTogs brjod mdor bsdus dwangs shel me long, which was composed by his direct

disciple rDo-rje-slob-dpon Kun-legs and discovered during my field research in Bhutan. The work: includes direct instructions to disciples, poems of realization and short biographical notes by rJe dGe-'dun-rin-chen, which are not recorded in his *gSung 'bum*; documents his non-sectarian education, which took place not only in Bhutan, but also during his stay in Tibet from 1952 to 1956. With the sponsorship of the second King of Bhutan's wife, Phun-tshogs-chos-sgron (1911–2003), who supported his religious activities throughout his life, rJe dGe-'dun-rin-chen was able to travel to Tibet. While there, he studied, practiced and received teachings, mainly from rNying-ma masters, such as bDud-'joms 'Jigs-bral-ye-shes-rdo-rje (1904–1987) and second-generation disciples of the great rNying-ma scholar 'Ju Mi-pham-rgya-mtsho (1846–1912). Other teachers in his biography include Kaḥ-thog-bla-ma Ngag-dbang-phrin-las (b. 19th century), Bla-ma bSod-nams-bzang-po (1888–1982) and Dil-mgo-mkhyen-brtse (1910–1991). Therefore, it is possible to reconstruct the record of teachings he received (*gsan yig*). Also the work provides the context and dating of the composition of several works, which are given in the respective colophons in his *gSung 'bum*. The different textual sources help to systematically reconstruct rJe dGe-'dunrin-chen's intellectual agenda, which was influenced by the Ris-med movement and scholars, evident, for example, in his attempt to harmonize the teachings of the “Second and Third Turning of the Wheel of the Dharma.” Additionally, rJe dGe-'dun-rin-chen's style of composition, and the adoption and use of certain technical terms, remarkably resemble 'Ju Mi-pham-rgya-mtsho's works. As a result, this leads to the questions, whether or not 'Ju Mi-pham-rgya-mtsho acted as a role model for rJe dGe-'dun-rin-chen in his attempt to develop an innovative and well-reasoned interpretation of his own school, and how the latter thus influenced the religious landscape of twentieth-century Bhutan.

mna' kha 'dra la kha'i shwa bas khyer or “How to Do Things with Words”

Peter Schwieger

Oaths have a central function in Tibet's legal proceedings. However, the proverb quoted above illustrates that also people in Tibet were aware that oaths are actually fugacious words. How then was it possible to endow mere words with a binding force? The question touches of course the philosophy of language as examined by John L. Austin (*How to Do Things with Words*) and John R. Searle (*Speech Acts*). This paper analyses what made Tibetans believe in the potency of oaths. Starting from Tibetan folk tales and stories from the religious context, the paper focuses in particular on the function of oaths in Tibetan legal proceedings, the efforts that were made to ensure the binding

character of oaths in legal contexts, and why religion became important. The paper will be based mainly on Tibetan law texts and legal documents.

Stūpas in Eastern Tibet after 1959

Eva Seegers

When traveling through Eastern Tibet (Khams), a striking number of stūpas catch one's eye. The stūpa is a visual representation of Buddhism said to express the dharmakāya (chos sku), the ultimate state of enlightenment. The 'Eight Great Location Caityas' (Bagchi 1941), commemorating central events in the life of Buddha Śākyamuni, became very popular in Tibet. Fact is, that most of these ancient stūpas have deteriorated over the centuries and that the Chinese Cultural Revolution led to massive depredation and loss of religious architecture. After 1959 only a fractional amount of stūpas remained. Today, Eastern Tibet is again very rich in stūpas in various sizes and forms. They stand alone or in groups alongside of streets, on mountain passes, within or close to monasteries. The majority had most likely not been erected before the 1980s, when the Chinese government started its efforts to support the rebuilding and expanding of religious venues. The paper provides a stylistic analysis of these newly built Buddhist monuments and aims to answer the questions if they create merely a fantasy of the past or is it likely that they still follow the required key-principles of stūpa construction? These are measurement, filling and consecration rituals, which make a stūpa into a proper object of worship. To what extent might contemporary building materials and construction techniques modify the traditional methods? The paper includes a general survey of Tibetan stūpas built after 1959 in the Tibetan cultural area and the countries where the Tibetans took up residence after their diaspora. In this presentation unpublished new data collected by field-work and textual sources will blend together.

Amnye Machen's 2014 Horse Year Pilgrimage: a Powerful Deity or a National Geopark?

Anna Sehnalová

My paper focuses on one of the most sacred mountains of Tibet, Amnye Machen (Amnyes rma chen, Golog Prefecture, Qinghai Province, PRC), and the contemporary changes the holy site undergoes in the state planned modernisation and development of tourism. I particularly focus on the recent big pilgrimage, performed once in twelve years, in the Horse year of Tibetan calendar. I base my research on long term fieldwork and textual analysis. The mountain of Amnye Machen has traditionally been an important sacred place, venerated and visited for at least several centuries by Tibetans (both Buddhists and Bonpos) and other ethnic groups adopting Tibetan Buddhism from far and wide. The figures involved include the highest religious masters and political authorities, for instance Tsongkhapa, 5th Dalailama, Panchenlamas, Jamyang Zhadpas, Zhabkarba, Karmapas, Nyammed Sherab Gyaltshan, Bongya Rinpoche, Jumipham, Dudjom Dorje, Manchu Emperors of the Chinese Qing dynasty. Amnye Machen and its deity, usually referred to as Machen Pomra (often spelled rMa chen spom ra), seems to be the most reflected local deity (gzhi bdag, sa dbag, yul lha) of Tibet throughout her history. By the Tibetans themselves the earliest records of the place and texts dedicated to the mountain deity are ascribed to the great Buddhist translator, Vairocana (8th century). Be it the case or not, the mountain appears in the most common list of the so called Nine Wordly Deities, srid pa'i lha dgu, closely associated with Tibetan early kings, their origin and Empire. Historically, the group's geographical location is said to reflect the actual territories falling under the btsan po's reign. Amnye Machen as its only site outside of the Empire's main domain, Central Tibet, is viewed as a supernatural guardian of eastern borders. All denominations of Tibetan Buddhism as well as Bon have incorporated the cult of the deity into its teachings and practices in various forms, ranging from a (most commonly) powerful but still worldly spirit ('jig rten pa'i lha) to an enlightened deity of higher rank ('jig rten las 'das pa'i lha) as a yi dam, an important deity of the Buddhist pantheon (for instance Kuntu Zangpo of g.yung drung Bon) or a buddha (sangs rgyas). As for Bon, Machen Pomra is pivotal for both g.yung drung Bon and the traceable pre-g.yung drung Bon (as for instance in certain texts of the gNyan 'bum and the recently discovered texts from Thewo). Although usually understood as a local deity, Machen Pomra's at least assumed antiquity, ascribed power and universal functions it fulfils have lead to a wide spread of its diverse cult. Machen Pomra is almost omnipresent in eastern Tibet, but also commonly seen in Central Tibet and occasionally in western Tibet (not mentioning Tibetan exile communities in India, Nepal and the

West). Thus, the pilgrimage draws devotees from across Tibet and denominations. The largest number arrives during the most auspicious Horse year to perform the circumambulation (*gnas skor*). The pilgrimage of 2014 is likely the last performed mostly in the traditional way on foot, and at the same time probably the so far most massive in the history due to modern means of transport (bicycle, motorcycle, car) widely used. Also, for the first time this auspicious occasion has attracted visible Chinese presence, i.e. followers of Tibetan lamas and construction workers. Moreover, the site of Amnye Machen has been declared the 'National Geopark of China' (Zhongguo guojia dizhi gongyuan), a national level (*guojia ji, rgyal khab rim pa*) tourist attraction, planned to be officially open in 2016 along with the new highway and airport. This step is aimed at bringing domestic tourists and income for the region, and together with other development projects to transform the whole of Golog Prefecture by economic growth, modernisation, urbanisation, influx of job seekers and, in short, by incorporating the so far quite isolated Golog more effectively into the state and its policies. These happenings inevitably lead to a reinterpretation, secularisation and commodification of the holy site. In the presentation I will provide an overview of Amnye Machen's history and cult. Then I will focus on how these perceptions of the sacred place and its deity are changing in the present situation. I will discuss pilgrims' and local people's understandings and views, their behavioural changes and reactions. I will also show how the one place can be perceived in many different ways by various cultural and interest groups. I will tackle the question why Amnye Machen alias Machen Pomra has been such a powerful deity and important place in Tibet and how it has preserved this role and reputation up until the present.

The Legacy of Yang dgon pa in 16th. c. Western Tibet

Marta Sernesi

Yang dgon pa rGyal mtshan dpal bzang po (1213–58) was a pupil of Ko brag pa bSod nams rgyal mtshan and rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje, and is best known for his Mountain Doctrines (Ri chos), and for his teachings on the Great Seal (Phyag rgya chen po) and the Intermediate State (Bar do). Collections of his instructions, sayings, and songs, also exist, in both manuscript and printed form. In particular, two volumes of Collected Sayings (bKa' 'bum) and Collected Songs (mGur 'bum) of Yang dgon pa were printed in 1524 in Mang yul Gung thang, while an extensive life story of the master was composed and printed in La stod lHo shortly afterwards. These endeavours may be understood within a prolific printing production devoted to the lives and teachings of religious forefathers of local importance, including Mi la ras pa and Atiśa. The present paper will consider the genesis and significance of these sources in the local religious landscape, and survey the transmission of Yang dgon pa's teachings in the Western Tibetan regions of La stod and Mang yul Gung thang.

Becoming a modern Bhutanese: the continuing development of civil society and social media in a time of change 1972–2015

Brian Shaw

Bhutan has been in the throes of change for the past 100 years and more, but that change was accelerated by events in Tibet. The third king saw the clear need to “modernise” for survival of the state, and the fourth king refined and strengthened this process through clear pragmatic vision of what was possible. The fifth (present) king is at the apex of “democratic Bhutan” and assists (some might say supervises) the development of “democracy with Bhutanese characteristics”. This paper attempts to review the relevance, forms, and changing content of “modernisation” for Bhutan, both from the viewpoint of the monarchs, and from the popular base (with access to the internet after 2 June 1999). The development of “social media” (including the growing list of “bloggers”, as well as Twitter and FaceBook comments) in recent years is reviewed, to see whether contemporary social, economic and political issues are being assessed with increasing sophistication: and if so, what might be some major consequences for public policy. Similarly, the development of “civil society” since 1972 is examined, both in the generic sense of the body politic (with a possible form of “social contract”) and in the more particular gathering together of like-minded people into civil (and religious) societies or organizations for formal registration from 2007, to see what the obstacles, goals and achievements have been or remain. Overall, the paper assesses the contemporary state of “democracy with Bhutan characteristics” in the light of obstacles and achievements, first from 1972 to 2008, then from 2008 to 2015.

The National Library & Archives of Bhutan: from literary repository to guardian of collective memory

Felicity Shaw

Originally established to collect and conserve written heritage, in recent years the National Library & Archives of Bhutan (NLAB) has been increasingly taking on the role of a major research institution and archival repository, preserving traditional culture in the form of written records, documenting the history of the country, and recording traditional cultural practices and sites across the country before they are lost. Bhutan's National Library was established in 1967 as part of a government program to collect and preserve literary and religious heritage. Forward planning for a library development project dates from late 1993, culminating in the January 1996 launching of a long-term twinning project between the National Library and the Royal Library, Denmark. The project was later extended to construct and equip an Archives building and send nominated staff for formal training in archives work. A database for the collections was compiled, a countrywide scriptural documentation survey was carried out, joint research and translation activities took place, and training and mentoring activities were undertaken through workshops within Bhutan, selected short term staff placements at the Royal Library in Denmark and sponsoring of staff attendance at regional training courses in work-related skills. Bhutan signed the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the 2003 ICH Convention in 2001 and 2005 respectively, laying the groundwork for cultural heritage identification and preservation activities. Within the Department of Culture (under the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs) the NLAB is closely involved. With the October, 2010 closure of the twinning project, the library's original remit has broadened in scope. In the last five years the Republic of Korea has come to assume a major role in supporting and collaborating in NLAB heritage-related activities, culminating in the July, 2015 publication of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Bhutan (the result of a four-year collaborative effort between the NLAB and the International Information and Networking Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IHCAP), a UNESCO category II centre in Jeonju, Korea). Additionally, over this period NLAB staff have attended training programs at the National Library of Korea and the National Archives of Korea. In November, 2015 the NLAB ICH survey research team visited Korea to meet their IHCAP counterparts and see the UNESCO office. Further cooperative heritage-related activities will likely ensue. In mid-2015 a 3-year project was launched to research and document the traditional calligraphic, xylographic and print culture of the country. This project was made possible through personal ties established with a German consultant Tibetologist and

computer expert who participated in phases 1-3 (1996-2006) of the twinning project; the Bhutan German Himalaya Society has agreed to fund the first phase of the new print project. Even without specifically earmarked funding, literary survey teams and archives sensitisation and documentation teams manage to make field tours of one to three weeks' duration several times a year. Literary survey teams seek out and selectively digitize rare manuscripts not already held in the NLAB. Archival survey teams visit groups of villages to introduce people to the work of the National Archives as well as to archives keeping and its importance. They also gather information on locally held ancient manuscripts and cultural heritage matters, and digitize any rare and valuable manuscripts they come across. The Chief Archivist mounts preservation workshops at least annually, to train monastics and lay people alike on the proper care and handling of written documents preserved in private homes, dzongs and religious complexes. Currently six research officers of the NLAB are researching the festivals of Bumthang. The project is being carried out by the Research and Media Division at the behest of the Department of Tourism, which is keen for the NLAB to research and publish a book on the festivals of each region of the country, starting with the book on Bumthang festivals. In March, 2015 the new Research and Documentation of Cultural Heritage of Bhutan website was uploaded to the internet with the URL <http://www.bhutanculture.bt/>. This project was initiated by the Research and Media Division and funded through the Royal Government of Bhutan (which has also funded purchase of a new server to host the database). It is envisaged that initial data input will probably take several years. Good work is being done by resourceful, competent and committed staff, but were funds forthcoming, and the staff establishment added to, much more could be achieved. The normal work of collection maintenance and development continues at the NLAB complex, with survey visits and so forth fitted in as and when the budget and time permit. These constraints notwithstanding, the National Library is fulfilling its mission as memory-keeper of the nation admirably.

Jo nang pa Networks in A mdo, 1425–1901

Michael Sheehy

This paper gives attention to the history of the Jo nang order in the northeastern cultural domain of A mdo, from their institutional presence starting in the year 1425 to the establishment of the Jo nang hermitage at Dza 'go in 1901. The Jo nang were thought by many to be a fringe movement who made their mark on Tibet's early history, but who were vanquished in the 17th century as a consequence of their demise under the Dga' ldan pho brang centralized government. Reconsidering such popular narratives that have come to dominate perceptions of the Jo nang pa, we examine the history of this marginalized Buddhist tradition in A mdo from their post-Taranatha (1575-1635) era up to the late 19th century. Special attention is given to select histories and biographies of several major figures who contributed to the institutional formation of the tradition in A mdo. We are interested particularly in the literary histories that record the gradual migration of the Jo nang throughout A mdo, their social and institutional networks, and the intellectual developments of Jo nang authors during this period. By so doing, we map the social, geographic and intellectual trajectories of this marginalized Buddhist tradition on the periphery of the Tibetan cultural world. In the year 1425, a generation after Dol po pa Shes rab rgyal mtshan, one of Phyogs las rnam rgyal's disciples, Ratnaśrī (1350-1435) established Chos rje Monastery in 'Dzam thang. Under the imperial patronage of the Ming Court of China and outside the political and military influence of the central Tibetan government in Lha sa, the Jo nang began to make their home in the vast countryside of A mdo. Though new evidence suggests that there were other Jo nang monasteries in Khams by the 16th century, the institutional presence of the Jo nang did not take root until Tāranātha passed away in the year 1635. After a period of turmoil at Rtag brtan gling monastery in Gtsang, Tāranātha's close disciple Blo gros rnam rgyal (1618-1683) traveled from Gtsang to 'Dzam thang where he lived and taught for twelve years, establishing Gtsang ba Monastery —the central seat (gdan sa) of the Jo nang pa. With the establishment of monastic seats at Chos rje and Gtsang ba monasteries, the Jo nang gradually diffused beyond 'Dzam thang, and by the mid-18th century consolidated their monastic complexes in the areas of Mgo log, Rnga ba and Rgyal rong. Gtsang ba monastery in 'Dzam thang began to branch out into satellite affiliate monasteries (dgon lag), and independent monasteries such as 'Broge and Bswe monasteries in Rnga ba and A skyong Yar thang Monastery in Mgo log had established their own curriculums and distinct lines of esoteric transmission for the six-fold vajrayoga. Over the next one hundred and fifty years, from the early 18th to the mid-19th century, the Jo nang pa

continued to establish monastic institutions, sometimes displacing Bon or Rnying ma monasteries, under the patronage of local rulers or the Qing Court. With a gradual diffusion beyond the borders of 'Dzam thang, via satellite monasteries, the Jo nang undertook a systematic establishment of a complex nexus of monastic institutions throughout southern and central A mdo. Compared with the twenty-four Jo nang monasteries that existed in Gtsang up to the mid-17th century, this paper tracks the networks that built or converted approximately thirty-five Jo nang monasteries in A mdo up to the late 19th century.

**Thang stong rGyal po as a mental emanation (*thugs sprul*) of Guru
Padmasaṃbhava.**

Kanakan Shinga

This paper focuses on Thang stongrGyalpo (fl ca 14–15c; TBRC #P2778) seen as a mental emanation (*thugs sprul*) of Guru Padmasaṃbhava. According to the tradition, the adept (*grub chen*; *mahāśiddha*) took birth for the benefit of others over hundreds of thousands of lifetimes in countless ephemeral *rūpakāya* manifestations combining the emanations of Avalokiteśvara and the glorious Hayagrīva. In the *Ocean of Marvels* (*Ngo mtsharrGyamtsho*), a key hagiographical source composed by his disciple Shesrabdpalldan (TBRC #P7844), Thang stongrGyalpo is described as a second Padmasaṃbhava returning in the degenerate age in order to reveal the hidden treasures (*gter ma*) left by the Guru himself.

My paper first discusses the background of Thang stongrGyalpo's practices, studies, empowerments, service to the lamas, etc. thus bringing more light on the nebulous figure of the adept. I shall then focus on the Northern Treasures (*Byanggter*) tradition directly bestowed upon him by rGodkyilDem'phru can (1337–1408; TBRC #P5254) through his teacher, the anchorite Don yodrGyalmtshan.

The local/regional emergence of an almost new category of Tibetan Buddhist religious actors: female non-monastic tantric practitioners (ngakma) in Repkong

Nicolas Sihlé

Historically, apart from isolated exceptions, Tibetan Buddhist as well as Bönpo non-monastic religious specialists have constituted a masculine clergy of tantric specialists, organized most often in family lineages, from father to son. Commonly called ngakpa (literally, specialists of mantras), they specialize in tantric rituals, often including powerful exorcisms. The ngakpa category is unambiguously masculine, and the term has never had a feminine equivalent in common language use... until the last decade. In the Repkong district of the northeastern Amdo province, locals and ethnographers are witnessing the powerful emergence of a virtually new category of religious actors: female non-monastic tantric practitioners. After a few generations of modest beginnings (the roots of the phenomenon go back at least to the first half of the 20th century), support by male clerics is now building up, the numbers of female practitioners are exploding, and the term ngakma is increasingly becoming used. Some first research based on the in-depth case study of the ngakma of one Repkong village (by Hyytiäinen) has already been made public, but this phenomenon, so far still restricted to the northeastern rim of the Tibetan cultural area (although limited parallels can be observed in monastic contexts in Kham and lay contexts in Bhutan), is still largely unknown in other Tibetan areas. Basing myself on long-term (2003-2015) and multi-sited ethnographic work in the Repkong district, I propose to give a broader, more differentiated view of this emergent phenomenon, and of its place within the larger Repkong/eastern Amdo religious field. I will show how the Repkong ngakma phenomenon, beyond striking specificities, reflects also structures and tensions underlying the ngakpa side of the religious field.

Constructing local identity in Lhagang village in Kham Minyag

Sonam Wangmo (Silangwengmu)

Lhagang village is located in the Kandze Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province. This village is currently promoted as 'the nearest authentic pastoral area to Chengdu' by the provincial authorities. In fact, Lhagang village does have its own unique local culture compared with other surrounding communities. Especially, the inhabitants of this village share the same identity: to be called *lhagangwa* ('native of Lhagang'), sets the villagers off from other Tibetans in the region who have gradually moved in and settled close to Lhagang due to social changes and economic opportunities since 2004. Therefore, the year 2004 is a turning point for Lhagang village. First, due to a new urban plan for the village, entitled 'The New Rural Construction' (*xin nong cun jian she*), most houses in Lhagang were rebuilt. At the same time, many pastoralists were relocated to Lhagang by the government. Second, tourism has been expanding and became the main source of income in Lhagang. People started to earn money from tourists, for example, by renting out their horses to visitors. Third, the original Lhagang village used to be a pastoral settlement with only 13 households in 1930, and local people still call it Lhagang Rawa Jusum (Lha sgang Ra ba bCu gsum, 'Lhagang Thirteen Households'), but with the population increase and tourism development from 2004 onwards, job opportunities in Lhagang diversified, and many pastoralists from neighboring villages chose to sell their herds and settled in Lhagang village. Subsequently, the new inhabitants, who come from different villages, are attempting to share the local identity, that of being 'Lhagangwa'. Consequently, the original community of Lhagang village felt threatened by the newcomers, so they began to impose a set of new rules which tended to discriminate against the newcomers. For example, the village made a rule to the effect that only those who have moved in before 1999 can be considered villagers of Lhagang, unless they buy land in order to build a house. Moreover, in 2004 the 'original' villagers organized themselves into four groups, each group, consisting of 35-39 households, having to work in the tourist sector one day in turn and divide the income equally. This paper discusses the context of the original Lhagang community's construction of local identity. Since all villagers in Lhagang agree that they are Tibetan, I am not going to discussing the Lhagang villagers' assertion of ethnic identity, i.e. their identity as 'Tibetans' as opposed to other ethnic groups (e.g. Han Chinese), but rather their construction of a local identity distinguishing them from newcomers who come from other villages in the area. It is in this connection that the fact that they claim they are the main patrons of the local monastery with its prestigious Jowo statue, is of crucial

importance, for Lhagang monastery is the crucial element in constructing local identity. An important element in constructing this identity are two texts which record the origin of the monastery and how it came about that the place was named 'Lhagang'; they also explain where the important statue of the Buddha, the Jowo, came from. It is said that Lama Sangye, the abbot of the monastery between 1976 and 1987, handed these two texts out to every monk around 1990 as a basic text for recitation, but because the monks were mainly concerned with reciting ritual texts, they had little interest in historical texts. However, under the impact of social changes as well as tourism from 2004, monks realized the importance of these texts for local culture and identity, so they started to reprint and disseminate them again. These texts are now seen as an important element in the validation of their identity. Another reason is that the monastery preserves a statue of Buddha Śākyamuni, which many believe equals the Jowo statue in Lhasa in importance. Local oral legend also narrates how the Chinese princess Wencheng Gongjo brought the statue to Lhagang and built a temple to house it. Therefore, these two texts together with the Jowo Statue are authoritative among monks and fundamental to the disputed issue of who can claim to belong to the original Lhagang community. The historical narratives, written as well as oral, of the foundation of the monastery and the presence of the Jowo statue are crucial to the expanding tourist industry in Lhagang, and are hence a question of considerable economic importance. Through analyzing the monastic texts and oral legends of the founding of Lhagang Monastery, I hope to reach a better understanding of how the narratives contained in these sources are understood, utilized and appropriated for the construction of a local identity in a context of social changes and economic opportunities.

The Paradigm of the Black Disease and Its Cures: A Critical Survey of Selected Sections from the Vase of Amrita of Immortality ('Chi med bdud rtsi bum pa).

Carmela Simioli

“ [...] During the five hundred aeons of degeneration, extremely atrocious and horrific diseases [will appear], [they are all] named the poisonous all-encompassing oblivion or the untimely death that befalls unexpected, baring its teeth with a sardonic laugh. Trying to dispel it is like [facing] a raging fire. It is the death coming under the conditions conducive to the epidemic infection and it is difficult to cure. Since it arises randomly, there is not the certainty of where and when it will befall, but the mere sound of it will strike terror. [...]” -The Auspicious Nectar to Cure the All-Encompassing Oblivion (Cod 'gyel bcos thabs bdud rtsi shi, CBB [71v/1-3]) The Vase of Amrita of Immortality ('Chi med bdud rtsi bum pa, henceforth CBB) is part of the gter ma cycle entitled the Great Vase of Amrita of Curative Methods (Gso thab bdud rtsi bum chen), which is ascribed to Padmasambhava, the renowned root master of the Nyingma tradition. According to the colophon, the CBB was “rediscovered” around the eleventh century by Dorbum Chökyi Drakpa (Rdor 'bum Chos kyi grags pa). It is included in the Treasury of Rediscovered Teachings (Rin chen gter mdzod), an eighteenth century collection of gter ma teachings that was compiled by Jamgon Kontrul ('Jam mgon kon sprul Blo sgros mtha' yas, 1813-1899) and Jamyang Khyentse Wang po ('Jam dbyang Mkhyen brtse'i Dbang po, 1820-1892). The study of the CBB can offer interesting clues to understand the history of ideas of Tibetan traditional nosology. The interrelation of medical and magical methods within this literary corpus mirrors a lore of believes and medical theories that can be analogously found in other ancient and medieval Eurasian systems of healing such as the Babylonian ancient medicine, a complex system that combines therapies with incantations (Geller, 2010). Being embedded into a prophetic frame, the CBB describes specific diagnostic methods, numerous recipes and exorcisms to dispel a particular category of diseases classified as rims or gnyan rims. Generally speaking, this category subsumes infective, epidemic and malignant diseases of demonic nature: according to the CBB, human arrogance and misbehaviours outrage demons and gods that in turns exhale venomous (dug can) miasmas disseminating pestilences, war, famine and cataclysms. The virulent and demonic essence of this kind of pathologies is accentuated by using an imaginative (eidolopoios) and codified language. These diseases come under the category of the black poisonous all encompassing oblivion (ha la cog 'gyel nag po), a concept by which ha la is either synonymous of virulent or black aconitum and cog 'gyel vividly portrays the image of a multitude of falling corpses claimed by the deadly disease that steals their life supporting breath (lus srog dbugs 'jags par byed pa). Those

diseases are defined as the union of three black elements (nag po sum sgril) because are characterised by the conjunct action of gnyan, fever (tshad) and wind (rlung). The term gnyan corresponds to the final stadium of eighteen pathologies determining fever and that spread by riding quickly the subtle energy. According to the diagnostic tantra entitled the Union of Sun and Moon, Mañjuśrī's Hearth Essence ('Jam dbyangs kyi thug gi bcud nyi zla kha sbyor), the initial sings of contagion or maturation (skya rims) manifest through a demonic influence (gdon) and are followed by confused dreams and physical signs, and the final phase corresponding to the injury of vital organs. Another crucial topic is the preparation of efficacious antidotes called irreversible countermeasures (log gnon). The *Scroll 33 of the Countermeasure Antidotes* (CBB [96v/1-6]) describes those substances as the "heroes that defeat Yama the lord of Death" ('Chi dag 'joms pa'i dpa' bo) or " powerful countermeasure against the mortal oblivion, that prolong the lifespan and even the Death itself cannot deceive them" (mi bzang nad cog 'gyel la log non dpa' rgyod sbyor ba yis 'di yis ma sos tshe tshad yin log non'chi sos bslus med yin). The *Five Extraordinary Sons* (Ma pas lhag pa'i bu lnga'i gyad) identifies purified mercury with the perfect or authentic irreversible countermeasure of all diseases (kun gyi log gnon yan dag pa). Entire passages of the CBB, especially those dealing with mercurial procedures, return in some of the most authoritative twelfth, fourteenth and fifteenth century pharmacological collections, giving glimpses of the probable influence of this Nyingma source on later classical medical corpora. Outlining the contents and the terminology of selected sections of the CBB, I aim to trace the history of this source and its possible relations with other medical and tantric sources.

Valency derivations system in Salar

Camille Simon

Salar is a Turkic, Oghuz language (Dwyer 2007: 33, 68) and the mother language of ca. 90 000 Salar people in Eastern Amdo. The great majority of the Salar speakers still live in the region where they settled down in the fourteenth century: Yardzi/Xunhua Salar Autonomous County and Bayan/Hualong Hui Autonomous County of Qinghai Province. As a member of the Amdo Sprachbund (Dwyer 1995; Janhunen 2007), the Salar language shares a long history of contact with its neighbouring languages, including the local variety of Amdo-Tibetan. Thus, this language presents many divergences from the other Turkic languages in the domains of phonology, lexicon, as well as its syntactic organisation, or the semantic properties of the grammaticalized categories. There are also clear evidences of the influence of the neighbouring languages on the grammar of the Salar language (Dwyer 2001, Dwyer 2007: 303-304). In this presentation, we will focus on some linguistic changes in the domain of syntax, triggered by the contact with Amdo-Tibetan. In fact, the Salar verb phrase has developed from a syntactically oriented organisation, having a personal agreement with the subject, toward a semantic-pragmatic organisation, in which the Tibetan type of evidential categories play the predominant role in the grammar (Dwyer 2000, Dwyer 2014: 265). The Salar language has also completely lost its verbal agreement, as a result of the contact with sinic and tibetic languages (see, e.g. Johanson & Csato 1998: 52-53). Crucially, the evidential, egophoric category has been copied in Salar (as well as in several other languages of the region, see e.g. Slater 2003 in Mangghuer, Fried 2010 in Bao'an Tu, Sandmann (forthcoming) in Wutun). Such a development makes the notion of semantic roles and discourse participants central to the description of the categories indexed on the salar verb phrase, to the detriment of the concept of syntactic roles. This presentation will focus on the effects of this development on the valency derivation system of the Salar language. In fact, the importance of the notions of semantic and discourse participant as central descriptive concepts for the verb phrase rises the question of the relevance of a strictly defined notion of syntactic valency and grammatical roles in the description of Salar. Valency derivation processes and grammatical voices are still attested in Salar, as well as in Amdo-Tibetan, although they are not central to the grammar. This indicates that the idea of syntactic valency should not been abandoned, but its importance should be weighed. The concept of valency derivation processes is defined as follows: a modification of the number and/or the morpho-syntactic realisation of the participants. This category is further divided into two subcategories, depending on its morphological

realisation: voices are such valency derivations explicitly marked on the verb phrase by a specific morpheme, whereas diatheses are unmarked and correspond to phenomenon of ambitransitivity (Creissels 2006: 5-6). Thus, we will first inventory and compare the different valency derivation processes attested in Salar and Amdo-Tibetan : What voices exist in each languages? What types of valency modifications are left unmarked? What valency changing processes are absent both in Salar and in Amdo Tibetan? The study of Salar shows that two Turkic voices (passive and reflexive morphemes) have disappeared as productive units. The Turkic reciprocal and causative morphemes have been conserved. Conversely, a new derivation process, otherwise unattested in the Turkic languages, has developed: an applicative/benefactive voice, in the form of a serial verb construction with the verb 'to give'. We will show that similar voices are found in Tibetan, but they are realised by different kind of morphosyntactic means. In a second part, we will try to explain the evolution of the Salar system in the light of the increased importance of the semantic-pragmatic dimension in the grammar. We will argue that the loss of certain voice categories, as well as the conservation and the development of others can be explained by this shift from a strict syntactically oriented system to a more semantic-pragmatic oriented one.

Chinese Civilizing Projects in Tibetan Gansu, 1936–1941

Jomo Smith

The Sino-British Committee was commissioned in 1936 to set aside funds for improving education in China's northwest. It was a time of warfare and Chinese elites intended to mobilize every region and ethnic group in the anti-Japanese cause. Led by the preeminent historian Gu Jiegang, the first mission to set out from Beijing to Labrang was actually preceded by the geographer Li Shijin and officials from Lanzhou. Following in their wake was a veritable bevy of scholars and officials who sought to improve not only education standards, but also Tibetan health and hygiene practices. Disease was an affront to the modern Chinese gaze and steps were taken to eradicate diseases that were even endemic among the animal population. Schools were set up for Tibetan girls with the assistance of anthropologist Yu Shiyu while her husband, Li Anzhai, garnered extensive details on Labrang's monastic education system. Although these projects were carried out by people who had genuine interest in Tibetan and Tibetan people, they were often unwitting agents in the sinofying project that sought to have Tibetans speak Chinese, farm as the Chinese do and even procreate as the Chinese do. Those Tibetan elites who participated in this project may very well have done what Emily Yeh said about a much later time: participated in the territorialisation of Tibet and thus, slowly, relinquished their sovereignty.

'Jig-rten-gsum-mgon's dGongs gcig on the relation between Mahamudra and the Six Yogas of Naropa

Jan-Ulrich Sobisch

I have already made elsewhere some remarks on the ritual practice and the role of devotion in the “Fivefold Path” (Inga ldan) of 'Jig-rten-gsum-mgon (1143-1217). In the present paper I would like to investigate another aspect of how this path is presented in 'Jig-rten-gsum-mgon's Single Intention (dGongs gcig), which is a systematic presentation of bKa'-brgyud-pa view, practise, and conduct. In chapter six of that treatise, one of the vajra-statements (rdo rje'i tshig) says that “for the possessor of realisation the path of means and so forth is all the more necessary.” Here, “path of means” refers to the Six Yogas of Naropa. The vital point of this statement is that the yogas are necessary as a means to produce certain qualities that are necessary to guide other beings on the path. Without these qualities and with realisation alone, such guiding is impossible. On the other hand, these yogas are not perceived here as a means of realising Mahamudra. They are, in fact, seen as practices the Buddhists have in common with the Non-Buddhists. What renders these means a special path for Buddhist yogis is that they are practised based on a preceding realisation of Mahamudra. Hence, Mahamudra is taught here to be a special (tantric) path that continues the practices of dhyana and samadhi and culminates in the realisation of the dharmakaya for one's own sake, whereas the yogas are practised to realise the qualities of the form kayas for the sake of others.

The Poṣadha ritual and its Performance according to the Ritual Manuals of the Tibetan Buddhist Tradition

Ekaterina Sobkovyak

The poṣadha ritual (Tib. gso sbyong) is one of the most important internal rituals in the life of the Buddhist saṃgha. It includes the recitation of the Prātimokṣasūtra (Tib. So sor thar pa'i mdo), that is, the enumeration of actions that are considered to be transgressions if committed by a Buddhist monk or nun. The ritual's original performance implied a confession to the transgressions listed by the text. In the course of time the recitation became ritualized guaranteeing not so much the purity of the monastic community, but its unity and authenticity. It turned into an instrument that gave any group of Buddhist monastics conducting the ritual properly full rights to operate as a legitimate saṃgha. The information on the procedures comprising the ritual can be obtained from particular Buddhist treatises. The Poṣadhavastu (Tib. gso sbyong gi gzhi) which is a part of the Vinayavastu included in the Vinayapiṭaka contains a canonical description of the ritual performance. The text has been translated into Tibetan and included in the Tibetan Kanjur' Vinaya section. Numerous ritual manuals composed by Tibetan authors also contain detailed accounts of the ritual characterized as one of the three 'vows purifying foundations' (Tib. bslab pa yongs su sbyong ba'i gzhi gsum). The paper examines the tradition of the poṣadha performance as presented in the Tibetan original manuals belonging to the dge lugs pa and rnying ma pa lineages and practiced in different Tibetan monasteries. The analysis of the Tibetan tradition includes also a comparison with the canonical prescriptions.

Longchenpa's Reception and Transmission of Machik Labdrön's Chöd Teachings

Michelle Sorensen

As part of an ongoing project to trace the development of Chöd teachings, my paper will elaborate the importance of Longchen Rabjampa Drimé Özer (1308-1364) in the transmission of Nyingma Chöd. Longchenpa's Collected Works contains twenty-six texts on Buddhist Chöd, including his commentary on The Great Speech Chapter, the textual tradition of the oral instructions of the profound Chöd of Prajñāpāramitā, a text attributed to Machik Labdrön (ca. 1055-1153). In addition to this important commentary, Longchenpa's collection contains a variety of Vajrayāna techniques for self-transformation, all described within the context of gcod yul, the system of Chöd. I will explore how Longchenpa's interpretation of Chöd was pivotal in adapting a predominantly Prajñāpāramitā-based tradition to its contemporary Nyingma praxis. My analysis of these texts will also contribute to our understanding of the transmission from Longchenpa, literally and figuratively, to later figures such as Jigmé Lingpa (1729-1798). Jigmé Lingpa received a gongter called The Laughter of the Dakinis as a mind transmission from Longchenpa. Not only is The Laughter of the Dākinīs, included in the Longchen Nyingthig, currently one of the most well known and widely practiced Buddhist Chöd liturgies, it was the first Chöd text published in English: it was translated by Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdup and included in W. Y. Evans-Wentz's 1935 Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines. Considering the contemporary popularity of The Laughter of the Dākinīs as a representative Nyingma Chöd text, a critical understanding of Longchenpa's contributions to the development of the Nyingma lineage of Chöd is much needed.

Mi-dbang Pho-lha under the Manchu Order

Elliot Sperling

This paper will examine some of the important issues relating to Tibetan governance during the era of Mi-dbang Pho-lha within the context of the Qing Empire. Utilizing the well-known biography of Pho-lha-nas and other relevant sources the paper will elucidate the details—beyond the information provided by Prof. Luciano Petech in his important study of the era—of how the regime of Mi-dbang Pho-lha functioned within the Manchu-Mongol world to which it was linked at the time. Specific incidents and information culled from the documentary record, including reports from Qing representatives in Tibet, accounts of contemporary Tibetan figures, and Qing court records, etc., will be used to flesh out and fill in what we know of the political and administrative picture of the era, including the extent of the sphere of governance open to the Mi-dbang Pho-lha.

Observational studies of biologically effective UV radiation on land surfaces in Tibet

Jakob Stamnes

Solar ultraviolet (UV) radiation has a wide range of effects on terrestrial ecosystems, but there are currently few data records regarding the status of UV radiation on the Tibetan Plateau related to stratospheric ozone depletion. In this work, continual measurements of UV radiation data in the 280-400 nm spectral range are analyzed for the period between July 2008 and October 2014. These measurements were carried out at five stations in Tibet, i.e. Lhasa, Nyingchi, Nagchu, Tingri, and Xigaze. The interannual variability of plant-action-spectra-weighted (CLW) and erythemally-weighted (CIE) UV radiation are examined together with variations of ozone and cloud transmission. No statistically significant trend is found in the CLW UV radiation related to the change in the total ozone column during the measurement period. Although the total ozone column for the whole measurement period appears to be stable, a significant reduction is observed for 2009-2010, followed by a noticeable growth after 2011 that made up for the reduction. For the CIE UV radiation, extremely high values of the UV index (UVI) are found more and more frequently during the observation period, the number of days with UVI values exceeding 20 for Lhasa, Nagchu, Tingri, and Xigaze being 16, 59, 90, and 42, respectively. Extremely high UVI values and corresponding atmospheric conditions are of particular concern. It is found that these extremely high values are mostly recorded in the presence of broken clouds. The highest UVI value in Nyingchi was measured to be 18.26 2011.07.28, and the highest one of among all four stations was measured to be 28.48 in Nagchu on 2013.07.3.

Struggles with Religion and Secularism in post-Maoist Nepal: an anthropological analysis of the ancient and new forms of social mobilizations of the Tibeto-Burman and Buddhist minorities in Nepal

Brigitte Steinmann

This presentation will discuss some major milestones in the long history of the integration and the political domination of small populations of Tibeto-Burman languages and Buddhist religion of Nepal (especially the Tamangs): since the ancient political reforms of the caste and the gradual integration of the "Hindu-Buddhist" populations in the various reforms in Hindu law codes (brahmanical dharmashastras, reforms of the Muluki Ain), up to the contemporary forms of their political and religious positions through the secularization of the ancient Hindu kingdom of Nepal (particularly the revolutionary political struggles of Maoist type). We propose to analyze their understanding of policy and the share that these populations have taken in the nationalist and federalist claims through different historical forms of conflict, cooperation and competition with / by the Indo-Nepalese populations. Will be reviewed, in particular, the notions developed by the Buddhist Tamangs around the State, the discussions on ethnonyms, some commitment movements in Maoism and the possible political consequences on their Buddhist religion, especially some recent trends to doctrinal opening and internationalization of their beliefs and practices following some Tibetan models.

A 17th-Century Siddha and Scholar's Conversations with Insects: Two Playful Dialogues Illustrating Animals Regarded as Teachers

Victoria Sujata

I seek to further our understanding of the complex relationships Tibetans have with animals by investigating two very powerful dialogues with insects written by the 17th-century siddha and scholar, Skäl Idan rgya mtsho (1607–77). I illustrate my points with excerpts of updated translations of my critical edition of two mgur cycles found in the various editions of Skäl Idan rgya mtsho's collected mgur, such as Shar skäl Idan rgya mtsho'i mgur 'bum (Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1999). To investigate the multifaceted animal-human relationships in these two mgur cycles, I build upon my stylistic analysis of the cycles in *Tibetan Songs of Realization* (Leiden: Brill, 2005) by looking at the relationships within broader contexts. Briefly, Skäl Idan rgya mtsho left behind numerous disciples and the philosophical school he had founded, in order to live as a hermit and focus on his own spiritual practices. Though he lived largely apart from other humans, there were inevitably many insects and other animals around him. In these mgur, he unexpectedly depicts bees, fleas, lice, and lice eggs as his teachers, and depicts himself as an inferior student who requires a lot of coaxing before finally following their advice. Skäl Idan rgya mtsho uses the relationship between insects and himself to best communicate that of a master and disciple. Animals as teachers is a theme that I expect will be found in many religious and cultural contexts, as we better understand the ever-intriguing ways Tibetans relate with animals.

How to Survive in Town? New Economic Strategies of Town-Dwelling Pastoralists in Golok, Qinghai, China

Emilia R. Sulek

The pastoral region of Golok is subject, to some extent, to a progressive urbanization process. Given the low population density in Golok, the scale of this process is not measured by a sharp increase of the number of urban centers, but rather by an expansion of the existing ones, numbers of inhabitants, importance of lifestyle and forms of economic subsistence which towns have to offer. Apart from pastoralists who moved to towns within state resettlement programs, also others, on an entirely voluntary basis, moved to town or purchased properties with the plan to move in the future. Already in 2010, inhabitants of Dawu, prefectural capital of Golok, joked that they will soon become outnumbered by pastoralists, who frantically buy apartments in town. This was made possible by their commercial success in the caterpillar fungus business which brought them prosperity and economic empowerment. One of these groups moved to town in a process normally described as involuntary. Another made this move precisely because it had the power of decision making and money to support it. However, both face the same question: how to survive in town? Facing a decrease of revenues from caterpillar fungus, they have to find new sources of income to survive or maintain their standard of life in an environment in which cash is a necessity and drawing support from pastoral production limited. This paper analyses economic strategies that emerged in Golok after 2012 and asks how they assist pastoralists in establishing themselves in an urban environment.

Innovators and Imitators of Monastic Culture in Amdo and Inner Mongolia in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

Brenton Sullivan

This paper looks at the monastic charters (bca' yig) composed by hierarchs of the growing Geluk establishment for monasteries in Amdo and Mongolia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Heterodoxy and especially heteropraxy loomed large for these figures, and so their charters reflect their concern to standardize the administrative procedures, ritual practices, scholastic regimens, and even the financial arrangements of monasteries across Amdo and Mongolia. Their efforts helped tie monasteries in these areas into the growing network of Geluk monasteries and helped to solidify Geluk power more generally. This paper also gives attention to the differences in the content and deployment of monastic charters of other sects (particularly Sakya and Nyingma) and explains how these differences played to the advantage of the Geluk sect.

The Metamorphoses of the Testimony of Ba: Notes on the Padmasambhava Episode in the Dbā'/Sba/Rba bzhed

Penghao Sun

As the earliest elaborate history of Buddhism in Tibet, the Testimony of Ba (Dbā'/Sba/Rba bzhed) has been one of the most important works to which scholars take reference concerning the history of Tibetan empire. But some basic questions around the Testimony of Ba such as its authorship and editorial history are still open to speculation for its having been heavily adapted and emanated many divergent recensions all under the same name. Moreover, as the earliest elaborate narrative of Padmasambhava who later became the great culture hero in Tibetan Buddhism, this work has become controversial between the Old School (Rnying ma) and the New Schools (Gsar ma) in their historical recounts. This paper starts with a connection between the colophon of the Sba bzhed Zhabs btags ma and Sog bzlog pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan's (1552-1624) polemical treatises. The editor of the Sba bzhed Zhabs btags ma and Sog bzlog pa, as in his Thunder of Definitive Meaning (Nges don 'brug sgra) and Dispelling Mental Darkness (Yid kyi mun sel), share one very similar concern—the hostility from Sba Gsal snang towards Padmasambhava. This paper will argue that this concern, together with the factional tension it represents, constitutes one major momentum behind the development and the adaptations of the Testimony of Ba. The paper first looks at the episode of Padmasambhava from the perspective of name distribution, that is, the distribution of specific personal names in different versions of the testimony. For example, from this point of view, we can simply observe that Dbā' Gsas snang engages all the major narrative episodes except the genealogy of previous kings and the Padmasambhava part. The chart clearly shows that Dbā' Gsas snang, together with most specific names, disappear when Padmasambhava comes to the stage, and reappear right after Padmasambhava leaves—the substantial contact between Padmasambhava and Dbā' Gsas snang is next to nothing. This statistical fact indicates that the poor relationship between the Ba clan and the foreign master is not without textual traces. Further more, other Tibetan ministers' appearances are almost always in collective nouns, hardly giving their individual names, which is not normal in other parts of the text. This idiosyncrasy of the Padmasambhava episode is more or less mitigated in other versions of the testimony. I further analyze Sog bzlog pa's ambiguous attitude towards the Testimony of Ba and his approaches in reconciling the conflicting narratives in the Testimony of Ba and other biographical works of Padmasambhava. Based on the standard that manifest in Sog bzlog pa's arguments, we can roughly draw a typological line among the five versions we are reading: 1) the Dbā' bzhed, 2) the Sba

bzhed (Mgon po rgyal mtshan) and the Rba bzhed (as reproduced in Dpa' bo Gtsug lag 'phreng ba's Mkhas pa'i dga' ston), and 3) the Sba bzhed zhabs btags ma and the Chos 'byung gi yi ge zhib mo (in Rba bzhed phyogs bsgrigs edited by Bde skyid). The third group is most welcomed by Rnying ma School in the sense that it is in best accordance with the tendencies such as to vindicate the king, to mitigate the idiosyncrasy of Padmasambhava episode, to oppose the exclusion of Padmasambhava into the hall of fame, and to add another Rnying ma patriarch Vimalamitra into the narrative. And the Dba' bzhed alone in the first group is the least desirable for being the opposite of the Sba bzhed zhabs btags ma. These recognized patterns mentioned above are comparable to what we find in different versions of the *Bka' thang Zangs gling ma*. Thanks to Lewis Doney's recent monograph on the *Zangs gling ma*, we now have a better sense of the relationship between different recessions of the *Zangs gling ma*. In the two recessions Doney regards as the earliest, the aforementioned tendencies in the textual development of the Testimony of Ba are the scantiest, which suggests that there seems to be an across-the-board pattern that is present among different works. This comparison would help us to further chart the changing depiction of Padmasambhava. This paper examines how these texts, including the *Zangs gling ma* and the *Dba' bzhed*, deal with the trope of homage paying (*phyag 'tshal*) and the story of Vairocana, in order to appreciate this across-work pattern. In conclusion, I suggest that the sectarian tension has been a major factor in the adaptations of the *Testimony of Ba* and this tension can be better understood through the comparison with other Rnying-ma-related works such as the *Zangs gling ma*.

Re-Imagining the Frame: Some reflections on contemporary photography in Spiti

Patrick Sutherland

I have been photographing in Spiti, a culturally Tibetan community in Himachal Pradesh, India, since 1993. A few years ago I was told that my reportage photographs were so awful that when I leave people tear them up and put them in the fire. This wonderful provocation launched a new body of work. But I was too respectful at the time to reply that I held similar feelings towards their idea of photography, especially the new genre of photographs that Spiti villagers were displaying on their walls. These computer modified images seemed heavily influenced by recent Indian studio photography: static, expressionless portraits layered upon generic internet-sourced domestic interiors or “landscapes” montaged together from separate images of non-Himalayan mountains, parks and dense flowerbeds. But I started to examine the spectrum of photographic images displayed in prayer rooms and domestic spaces. This revealed quite an established history of modifying images and re-imagining the individual static photographic frame: images rephotographed and hand coloured; images montaged/collaged on to other images in a pre-Photoshop era; and especially images clustered and grouped together in a multitude of ways. These images and image clusters challenge the limitations and stasis of straight photography. Unmodified photographs cannot express the subtleties of affiliation and association that Spiti people to desire from their photographic imagery. The specificity of the unmodified documentary photography is what I held dear: descriptions of actual people in real places at particular moments in time. This specificity is what these modified Spiti photographs resist: by bringing people together within the frame who are separated by time, politics and geography; by expressing connections between ordinary humans, religious elites and deities; and by compressing or collapsing the past, present and future, Spiti photographs transcend the limitations of the straight document.

When the 'brog-skad, rong-skad, and logs-skad meet: Describing Lhagang Tibetan of Minyag Rabgang

Hiroyuki Suzuki

Lhagang Village, located at the easternmost Tibetosphere traditionally called Minyag Rabgang, is an area where intense language contact among Khams Tibetan, Amdo Tibetan, and non-Tibetic languages is ongoing because of various factors. Recent research has revealed multi-stratum characteristics of Lhagang Tibetan, belonging to Minyag Rabgang Khams, which has received long-term influence from Amdo Tibetan spoken in the surrounding areas of Lhagang Village. However, there are at least three kinds of Amdo Tibetan spoken in Lhagang, one of which has not been reported and just described. The speech community of this variety of Amdo Tibetan is so small that we generally pay less attention to it. In addition, it has developed in a different way from other Amdo varieties in Lhagang through long-term language contacts with Minyag Rabgang Khams and Lhagang Choyu, a newly discovered non-Tibetic language. This paper will describe the present language situation of Lhagang Village and its surroundings, focusing on three newly described varieties called Shingnyag Amdo (principally spoken in Shingnyag Hamlet), Thamkhas Khams (principally spoken in Thamkhas Hamlet), and Lhagang Choyu (previously spoken in Thamkhas Hamlet). It will include a linguistic description of prominent features attested in these languages and sociolinguistic background of them, as well as suggestions how we face such a multilingual situation where frequent and intense language contact occurs. Language endangerment of minor languages in the minority is also enlightened by describing Lhagang Choyu, which has no more users and is remembered by limited elder inhabitants coming from Thamkhas Hamlet of Lhagang Village.

Cultivation of Grain for the Tibetan Army in the South-western Tarim (8th–9th Century)

Gertraud Taenzer

Cultivation of Grain for the Tibetan Army in the South-western Tarim (8th–9th Century)

The south-western Tarim was one of the areas which the Tibetan Empire dominated during the late 8th and first half of the 9th century. At the beginning of the 20th century Sir Aurel Stein discovered there in the vicinity of Miran a fort dating to the Tibetan period. He excavated from it a number of Tibetan paper manuscripts and even a greater number of woodslips. A selection was published in transcription and translation by Thomas in the early fifties. All paper manuscripts were published in facsimile and transcription (Takeuchi 1997/98) and all woodslips are reproduced on the website of the International Dunhuang Project. In the late fifties and early seventies the Xinjiang Museum re-examined the fort and found a number of woodslips. Of these only a selection was published in transcription and Chinese translation (Wang Yao, Chen Jian 1986). The fort was only in use during the time of Tibetan domination. It was not only used as a military base but also as an administrative centre. The manuscripts give information from which area of the empire the soldiers stationed in the region came from, how they were organised and provisioned. For this purpose cereals were grown in the area. The main focus of this paper is to analyse the manuscripts concerning field registration, field allocation and cultivation and demonstrate under which circumstances this apparently quite elaborate system of field administration and management of personnel could have worked.

Historical Traces of Early Bon Religion in Amdo

Tsering Thar

1. Bon Religion in Archaeological Fines Rock paintings and archaeological sites are found in Amdo area in many places in recent decades, plenty of data in early religious beliefs of Tibetan ancestors are found out, and they are providing more and more material for early religious beliefs of Tibetan people in Amdo area. 2. Bon Religion in Folk Beliefs Amnye Machen played a more prominent role in Amdo than in other areas in Datsang manuscripts, gtod vbum, gNyan vbum, Bya rdang, and other old documents of Bon po rituals are found newly in Amdo, how we can find connection between these documents and folk beliefs in nowadays in the same area? 3. Bon Religion in History of Early Bonpo Vinaya Bonpo historians in later history tried to connect Bonpo Vinaya tradition to Shenrab Miwo to become more orthodox and reasonable, a vGog snyoms pa, a special Yogi of Bonpo tradition, and Gongpa Rabsal in Amdo played a very important role for historical connection of Bonpo Vinaya's orthodoxy.

Tibetan Woodslips revisited

Tsuguhito Takeuchi

The number of Tibetan woodslips excavated from the ruins in Central Asia (Miran and Mazar Tagh) amount to nearly 3,000, of which 2,300 are housed in the Stein Collection of the British Library. I am presently in a final stage of cataloguing them. In the meantime, there have been several new findings regarding their usages and contents. In this presentation, I will try to present the overall view of the woodlips together with some of these new findings. I will also discuss the relationship with woodlips in other languages, especially Chinese, Kharosthi, Khotanese, Bactrian and Aramaic.

Worldly beings, smoke-purification rituals and ontological complexities: a case study of bZhag bra lha rtse

Gillian Tan

Works in the literature have comprehensively focused on healing elements and their place within the cosmology of Tibetan Buddhism (see, for example, Craig 2013, Gerke 2007, Millard 2005/6, Samuel 2013, 2007). From these works, valuable insights have been afforded into local conceptions of bodily essences, and what constitutes illness or lack of wellbeing. In particular, the role of the bla is doubly important, not only for complicating our understanding of everyday “religion” but also for deepening our appreciation of consciousness and personhood. Statements about microcosmic and macrocosmic bla forge connections between person and environment, the human body and entities of the land, that breakdown any dichotomy between individual and environment, or between “nature” and “spirit”. Nevertheless, it remains to be examined how precisely the human body is amalgamated with entities of the land. Moreover, what are the ritualised contexts that are often tied in with practices of raising one’s own or community’s wellbeing? Drawing on ethnography conducted in Eastern Tibet, this paper will present original materials relating to a smoke-purification ritual (bSangs) of one worldly deity (‘jig rten pa) in the Minyag area. It will examine specifically a chant (bSangs yig) relating to bZhag bra lha rtse, a mountain deity that is mentioned in one of the “twenty five great sites of Khams” (Mdo khams gnas chen nyer lnga). In addition to being a gnas ri, and part of a wider sacred geography of the Tibetan plateau, bZhag bra lha rtse is a bla ri for the communities living in its proximity and line of vision. Therefore, the paper will also examine the ritual interaction among the mountain and its spirit-medium and larger community. What new insights can be gained to further our understanding of mountain deities and their cults (Berounsky and Slobodnik 2003, Blondeau 1998, Diemberger 2005, Karmay 1998)?

The Tashigomang- Portable Shrines of Bhutan

Tashi Tshering

Tashigomang are unique to Bhutan and a national treasure. Until recently they were a common sight in Bhutan. Quasi monks carried these portable shrines on their backs and travelled from one village to another reciting mantras and sharing stories with the villagers. Today, there are only two Lam Manips left; one is 75 years old and the other is 88 years old and the unique cultural heritage is at the brink of extinction. In Dzongkha, Tashigomang simply means auspicious multiple doors. These multiple doors that open and shut are the salient feature of the portable shrine. The number of doors varies depending on the type of the shrine. Some of the intricate ones can have as many as 108 doors but each portable shrine has a minimum of 16 doors. It is said that the multiple doors signify that the teachings of the Buddha will spread far and wide. When the doors of these miniature shrines open, they unveil multiple miniature doors and windows and show various miniature statues and paintings of saints and deities. It is believed that a Tashigomang contains a number of statues and images equivalent to at least one hundred temples. The Tashigomang are traditionally built in the shapes of miniature stupas mostly modeled after the Zangtopalri or the Copper Light Palace of the 8th century Buddhist saint, Guru Padmasambhava. Lam Manips The quasi monks known as Lam Manips (manip: he who chants prayers) were the main custodians of the miniature shrines. Although they did not own them, they carried these portable shrines on their backs. Traditionally, the Lam Manips used to carry the Tashigomangs from one village to another for the benefit of the public. Like the gomchens the Lam Manips also wore dark red gho and during formal occasions wore the white with a ceremonial red shawl and the red pointed hat. The travelling monks would travel from one village to the other and explain the Buddhist teachings. As these travelling monks chanted mani dharim which contains Buddhist teachings, they would open and close the appropriate doors of the shrine. The Lam Manips usually travelled after the harvest season. In return for their teachings, farmers would offer grains to the elderly Lam. As part of the custom, farmers would carry the sacks of grains to the monk's monastery. Over time, with development of the country, the traveling quasi monks found it more convenient to set up their Tashigomangs in the places of congregations. Today there are only two Lam Manips (age 73 and 80 years old) and the cultural heritage is at the brink of extinction.

A Small Disagreement: the 3rd Panchen Lama (1738–1780) and Taranatha (1575–1634)

David R. Templeman

This paper will examine the background and the denouement of a disagreement which never actually took place in person. In the Panchen's work the Shambhala'i lam yig he found cause on two occasions at least within the text to cast serious doubt on Taranatha's authenticity and authority. This opinion of the Panchen was both extremely bluntly expressed and open to considerable shades of interpretation neither of which were discussed. This paper will examine the background to the Panchen's claims as well as discussing the possible reasons for his casting such serious aspersions. Despite his concerns about him the Panchen still found no cause to dismiss what Taranatha had written and used much of his writing without acknowledgement. The basic theme I wish to examine in the paper is that of literary feuding and the level to which it often descends. In my current research I find personal animosity not to be the main cause of this literary disagreement but rather the Panchen's sense of needing to remedy a major slight by Taranatha's patron at the time towards his lineal primogenitor the 1st Panchen. The paper will partially rely on the pioneering works of Grünwedel (1915) and Bernbaum (1985) and are supplemented by several of my translations taken from Taranatha's writings including his autobiography, secret autobiography, his translation of the Kalapavatara and several other works including the De nyid bdun as well as the Panchen's famous Shambhala'i lam yig.

A Normative Tibet issue in China's Foreign Relation

Tenzin Lhadon

The Tibet issue for China has long been a contentious issue, internally and externally. Numerous scholars have looked into the Tibet issue from various perspectives in lieu of comprehending and explaining the much disputed and complex nature of the Sino-Tibet issue. Although not much has been explored in terms of Tibet issue as a normative issue in China's foreign relation, yet this paper tries to bring a new analysis placing Tibet issue in the core International Relations debate. How is Tibet issue discussed in the international relations debate? Can we understand Tibet issue in terms of normative contestations in China's foreign relation? How can we place Tibet issue in China's foreign relation in terms of its soft power? Can we understand Tibet issue through a constructivist perspective? These are some of the questions that this paper ponders upon and it tries to answer these questions in three sections. The first section provides the overview of basic definitions of norms and normative understanding of general issues. This section also discusses constructivism and how it can be applied and understood with Tibet issue in China's foreign relation. Significant studies have found that norms really matter in international politics because they guide politics and law in the international realm in distinct ways. In a real politik dominated international system, norms and value has not been given much importance yet many events around the world have challenged the domination of realism and liberalism which are the two dominant international relations theory. Discussion and debates on norms has become a popular intellectual field of area recently because norms are identified as standards of appropriate behavior for international actors, international organizations and those bound by the international norms. It is especially considered an important area of study in International Relations because norms are identified in guiding behaviour by providing motivations for action. It is more or less accepted that norms do matter and that it has taken a social constructivist turn. Academicians have observed that the role of norms and culture in international relations has posed direct challenges to realist and liberal theories which are the two dominant theory of International Relations. Alexander Wendt, Martha Finnemore, Antje Wiener, Nicholas Onuf discussion on Constructivism and norms noted that the interstate interaction and international societies define policies of a state. The second section provides an overview of Tibet in China's soft power. Since China continues to rise as a global power, it naturally becomes necessary for China to accumulate and produce its own soft powers of ideas, values and norms. China certainly comes out to be a global player and is likely to be accepted as one of the

most important international actor. However, the vital question this paper tries to answer is what kind of world power will China be? China asserts that it has its own definition and understanding of norms quite different from international definition of norms through which China can fashion its own soft power. However, China's statist notion of norms can be found in its historical discourse. The idea of norms in China can be found in historical discourses of the ancient Chinese thinkers like in Mencius thought, Confucianism and Chinese idea of mandate of heaven. Some scholars like Zhou Qi, Chung-ying Cheng, Wenwen Shen has extensively discussed the Chinese understanding of norms and how it can be comparatively study with western notion of norms and values. And most importantly this paper discusses how China with its own notion and understanding of norms will accommodate itself to the existing systems and norms; or how Chinese soft power accommodate international norms. The paper will also analyse Tibet as a normative issue in China's soft power. The third section provides an overview of how Tibet is an issue of normative contestation between China and the West. There is a strong believe that the western understanding of Tibet issue and its notion of human rights are quite inter related. China has always argued how Eurocentricism or western oriented human rights approach has undermined China's handling of the human rights issue and particularly the Tibet issue. But western nations like US and EU for example, are one of the leading actors who promote distinctive norms, values, sustainable peace, democracy, freedom, human rights and rule of law. Infact, promotion of human rights is one of the main foreign policy objectives of most western nations who stands for the protection of human value and dignity. Scholars like Ian Manners , Emilian Kavalski, Alan M Wachman, Giuseppe Balducci, Mark Langan, Yiwei Wang, Wenwen Shen studies the contentious normative issue between China and the West. The paper will take both the perspective into consideration and analyse the Tibet issue using argument from both, from western interpretation and Chinese understanding of the issue.

Interpreting the Sexual Yogas in the Esoteric Community Literature

Robert A. F. Thurman

The meditations involving sexual consorts taught in the GST literature have raised eyebrows if not frissons of horripilation for centuries if not millennia. What are we to make of “spiritual” male (or female) virtuosi taking 25, 16, 12, and even 8 year-old girls (or boys), pampering them and flattering them with “goddess” (“god”) treatment, and then having protracted intercourse with them in sanctimonious ritual settings? Is this not a travesty of religious practice, a self-indulgent, unethical, even criminal activity masquerading as a “transgressive but sacred” performance aiming to open minds, break taboos, and shatter conventions? This paper will examine some passages in the Esoteric Community Tantra, Chandrakīrti’s Illuminating Lamp commentary, and Tsong Khapa’s Annotations of them to try to understand what is really going on in the historical settings concerned. My thesis is, I think, that this sort of practice should be considered a kind of highly specialized sort of athleticism, a yogic discipline aiming to achieve specific neurological effects connected to altered states of consciousness, explored with the aim of achieving transformative understandings and embodiments of supernormal potentials. The general secrecy of the tradition until present times, and perhaps necessarily ongoing, was essential, not to hide any shameful flagrancy and harmful exploitation from the larger society, as no abuse or harm was perpetrated in the proper performance of these practices, but because the emotional reaction of the general populace can be expected to interfere violently with the “esoteric community” devoted to their realization. Unfortunately I cannot prove this thesis from personal experience, not having the pre-requisite skills and understandings, but can only argue from specific statements in the texts.

La rgya, language, and Cultural Authority in Post-Mao A mdo

Timothy Thurston

Since the 1980s, la rgya, 'pride' has played an important role in conversations among Tibet's cultural elite. In a society in which literacy and both temporal and cultural authority had long been associated with the religious establishment, pride became the primary criterion for establishing a secular cultural production that was also insulated from accusations of collaboration with the state with the Chinese state. As the discourse of pride grew beyond intellectual circles, authority to speak publicly and influentially on topics of cultural concern hinged upon perceptions of the speaker's ethnic pride. In recent years, the discourse of la rgya with its implicit discussion of language has given way to more explicit discourses of language purity and language preservation. In this paper, I introduce la rgya as a scalar phenomenon operating at various levels of society, and then focus on specifically 'ethnic pride' as defined by linguistic criteria. Drawing on interview data, public statements of famous scholars and religious leaders, and examples from Amdo Tibetan kha shags 'comedies,' I argue that, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, an individual's ethnic pride was indexed most clearly through their use of Tibetan language. Although la rgya had largely disappeared from public discourse by the twenty-first century, Tibetans from a variety of backgrounds almost uniformly linked it to "good" Tibetan cultural production, which was, in turn, always Tibetophone cultural production.

Collapsing cancer: An hermeneutical and praxis-based comparative analysis of cancer and Tibetan medical etiological categories

Tawni Tidwell

This paper provides an hermeneutical and praxis-based comparative analysis mapping cancer into the appropriate Tibetan medical etiological categories. Recent Tibetan medical clinical practice, scholarly work and public forums refer to cancer as 'dras-nad or dras-skran as a simple short hand. This paper analyzes the etiological and diagnostic bases for such a categorical collapse and argues for a more complex mapping that draws upon the additional categories of surya and me-dbal, as well as distinguishing non-cancer 'dras-nad and skran. Interest in providing a one-to-one categorical mapping between Western medical and Tibetan medical illness categories aims to garner recognition and legitimacy amidst the broader biomedical and scientific context in which Tibetan medicine is practiced and in dialogue. However, such categorical collapse threatens to entangle Tibetan medical paradigms with those of Western medicine ignoring historical, theoretical, etiological and practical distinctions of each system and how each approaches disease and health. Although both approach a single body and human experience, each accesses salient concerns of the body and experience differentially, thus, applying a different set of diagnostics and treatments to enact healing and wellness. Comparisons of Western and Tibetan medical categories related to cancer and other neoplasms, 'dras-nad, skran and so forth are instructive in that they provide fertile ground to compare, relate and distinguish Western and Tibetan medical understandings and approaches. Likewise, the severity of disease, conspicuous disease products and importance of differential diagnostics for effective treatment incite an urgency to understand such distinctions.

The activities of V.P.Vassiliev in promotion of Tibetan culture in Russia in XIX Century.

Eugenia Tikhonova

Being one of the most outstanding Tibetologists in Russia in XIX century, V.P. Vassiliev was completely forgotten in the XX century. His works proved to be far ahead of the development of oriental studies at that time, and yet most of them still remain unpublished and unknown to the vast community of scholars because of the lack of the necessary scientific base. Unfortunately, the works of V.P.Vassiliev that were published can only be evaluated as a foreword to his main works and researches. In the beginning of the XX century there was some particular interest to his work, but at that time V.P.Vassiliev himself neither had forces, nor intention to continue his researches or to publish its' results. Many of his works still remain actual and up-to-date, others set the direction of the future research. V.P.Vassiliev wrote his books while working with facts obtained directly from the sources. Some of his books were written in collaboration with S.Oldenburger and F.Scherbatskoy, the famous Russian scholars, and relate to literature, religious traditions, geography and the culture of Tibet. His contribution to the Russian and the world's studies of Tibetan Buddhism are difficult to overestimate. In spite of numerous recent researches of scholars all over the world, the works of V.P.Vassiliev cannot be regarded only as a monument to the history of science. The most outstanding books of V.P. Vassiliev, especially "The Buddhism. Its tenets, history and literature", contain a lot of very interesting material, which require further development, and some very interesting ideas for fruitful research in our days.

The significance of Chocha-ngachakha for the classification of Tibetic languages

Nicolas Tournadre

Chocha-ngachakha is one of the seven Tibetic languages derived from Old Tibetan spoken in Eastern Bhutan and has about 20,000 speakers (van Driem, 1998). It is the second Tibetic language of Bhutan in number of speakers after Dzongkha, the national language. Chocha-ngachakha essentially in Mongar and Lhuentse districts but also in Trashi Yangtse and Trashigang. This language was documented only very recently and a first paper devoted to this language appeared in 2015 (Tournadre and Karma Rigzin, 2015). Chocha-ngachakha has some dialectal variation. Tsakaling and Tsamang which are the main dialects allow a good mutual intelligibility, but the dialectal variation is stronger in the upper valley of the Kuri river in Lhuentse district probably because of contact with Kurtoepkha, an East Bodish language. The isolated dialects spoken in Trashi Yangtse and Trashigang probably present more specific features, but data is needed for the dialectal classification. The Chocha-ngacha language is very significant for the classification of the Tibetic language family because it has preserved some rare archaic features. The linguistic conservatism of Chocha-ngachakha, particularly the Tsamang dialect, is not confined to phonology but extends to grammar and vocabulary. Some of these archaic features have essentially been preserved in Balti, Purik and Amdo i.e respectively spoken in the northwestern and northeastern Tibetic areas. This extraordinary conservatism may be explained because of the location of the Chocha-ngachakha-speaking community and its isolation from Tibetic speaking groups of Bhutan. The dialectal variation of the Chocha-ngacha language needs further research but one can already note that it has intriguing discrepancies. For example, the reflexes of the Classical Tibetan bilabial *by* are pronounced /by/ in Tsamang while they turn into a fricative /sh/ in the dialect spoken in Minje gewog. Thus the Chocha-ngachakha language could provide crucial clues for the classification of Tibetic languages not only because of its archaic features but also because of its inner dialectal variations.

The Buxaduars in West Bengal – Christianity’s gateway to Bhutan

Azade Toygar

Prior to the Anglo-Bhutanese wars in the 18th and 19th century, the sparse population of the Buxa hills was ethnically and culturally appurtenant to Bhutan. This changed with the Treaty of Sinchula in 1865: Britain annexed the Bengal Duars and as a result the Buxa Duars were incorporated into British-India. Workers from Nepal were hired by the growing tea plantations in the fertile Duars, slowly affecting the ethnic, cultural and religious landscape of the region. Very few hamlets remained predominantly Dukpa Bhutanese, including ongoing relations into Bhutan.

In the late 19th century, the Buxa Duars were identified by Christian missionaries as a potential gateway into Bhutan. In 1895, the Scandinavian Alliance Mission established their “Bhutan” mission station in the Buxa Duars. From that day until 1987, Scandinavian missionaries have kept a continuous presence in the Buxaduars, expecting to one day be allowed into Bhutan. In the meantime, the missionaries undertook great efforts to evangelise the Dukpa of the Buxa Duars. With the lacking permission to enter Bhutan, the strategies of the missionaries were adapted to utilise converted Dukpas to introduce the gospel to Bhutan: The first Dukpa Christians from the Buxa Duars were trained to act as evangelists in Bhutan. Colporteurs were hired to bring and distribute mission material in Bhutan. Today, Western missionaries systematically seek support from evangelical Dukpas from the Buxa hills: Often youth, they are first converted and then provided some education through Christian facilities, led to understand preaching as their Christian duty. The intricate network of missions and churches in Northern Bengal is facilitating a growing number of Christian workshops, teachings and conferences in the Indo-Bhutanese border town of Jaigaon. Christians from Bhutan are invited to attend these biblical lessons and encouraged to share the message in Bhutan. Finally, growing touristic interest towards Bhutan and the border region is creating business opportunities that are leveraged or supported by Christian missionaries, with the purpose to spread the gospel. The lure of the “closed land” Bhutan, the Buxa hills and passes and the Dukpa hamlets on the Indian side of the border have contributed to the “promotion” of North Bengal’s Dukpa’s from mere subjects of the elongated arm of the missionaries. This paper draws on extensive fieldwork I have conducted in the Buxa hills from October 2014 through May 2015. It tells five stories of how the gospel has been seeping into Bhutan through the Buxa Duars over the last century.

A first Study of the mDzod sgra 'grel, an old text of the Bon Tradition

Tri Yungdrung (Tenzin Gyamtso)

In my paper I have undertaken a study of the mDzod sgra 'grel which is an old text of the Bon tradition. It is a commentary of the well known Srid pa'i mdzod phugs, a bilingual text in the language of Zhang Zhung and Tibetan, regarded as scripture of sTonpa gShen rabv (it content is similar to that of the Bhuddhist Abhidharmakosa). It is said to have been translated from the language of Zhang Zhung into Tibetan by sTong rgyung mthu chen, a scholar from Zhang Zhung and Sha ri U chen a scholar from Tibet. There are several commentaries of this scripture and the mDzod sgra 'grel is regarded as the most important one. It is attributed to Dran pa Nam mKha', an 8th century master from Zhang Zhung, but the historical identity of this master is much debated. The Bon tradition maintains that the commentary was excavated by rMa ston Jo Lcam in the 12th century A.D. There is only one and unique manuscript copy of the mDzod sgra 'grel preserved at the library of the Abbatial residence of the Menri Monastery, Himachal Pradesh, India. My study of the commentary is therefore based on this copy. The main subject of this text is about how the world came into existence. In my view it is certainly an old text that contains indigenous concepts of the origin myth of the world. It is very much evident that in its approach to the archetypal exposition it is mostly free from the influence of the Indic exegesis. The way in which it is composed clearly also shows the autochthonic character of the Tibetan exposition. In my paper I made efforts to analyze its background, vocabulary, arguments, particularities and influences on the later works on the Bon Cosmology.