

A Polymath from Amdo:

The Many Hats of Sumpa Khenpo Yeshe Paljor (1704–1788)



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Abstract

The eighteenth century is a key period for Amdo, a region which sits at the crossroads between Tibetan, Mongolian, and Chinese cultural and political spheres of influence. Due to the shifting geo-political landscape of this period, studies have frequently focused on the many historic events, overlooking more localised and personal accounts. This thesis will add to the growing trend of studying personal histories by focusing on the experiences and perspectives of one individual; Sumpa Khenpo Yeshe Paljor (Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor; 1704–1788). An influential and respected incarnate lama, research on this figure in the West has shown him to be an important diplomat in these tripartite relations and he is often labelled as an interlocutor between the Tibetan, Mongolian, and Chinese cultural spheres.

The main text investigated in this thesis is the autobiography of Sumpa Khenpo titled *A Description of the Activities of the Khenpo Known as Erdeni Paṇḍita, [which is like] Nectar for the Ear (mKhan po erte ni Paṇḍi tar grags pa'i spyod tshul brjod pa sgra 'dzin bcud len)*. As a starting point for my investigation, I translated and analysed the work in its historical, religious and political context. During the research, it became clear that Sumpa Khenpo's role as diplomat was only one of the many roles he assumed. The most interesting facet of his writings, and a key contribution of this thesis, is how he blends all these many roles – or, as the title of this thesis suggests, wears his many hats – and can switch between them as required across the networks he develops.

This thesis will highlight three important roles that feature prominently in Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography. The first aspect studied in this thesis is his influence as a pilgrim; while the main aims of his travels were religious, these journeys also opened and developed networks to further religious, institutional and economic goals as it was expected of the head of monastic institutions. The second aspect is his use of rhetoric to further his roles as a peacekeeper, teacher, and abbot, and to encourage virtue and build his own reputation. The final aspect is more practical in nature, focusing on the use of medicine in his role as healer, teacher, and writer of medical literature, which is still in use today.

Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography bears witness to the fact that he was a true polymath; a frontier cosmopolitan scholar whose many skills, knowledge, and prominence allowed him to comfortably navigate across cultural boundaries and build a reputation to spread the *dharma* across the region and across time, through his autobiography.

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In memory of ‘Gen la’, Tsering Dhondup Gonkatsang.

A wise, compassionate, and much-loved teacher.

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Notes on Dates and Pronunciation

Unless otherwise noted, dates are given according to the Western calendar and are in the Common Era (CE). The Tibetan calendar is a lunar calendar and so there is some misalignment between it and the Western calendar, or ‘Gregorian calendar’, which is solar.¹

I have adopted the following typographical criteria and transliterating standards: Common Tibetan terms or expressions follow the phonetic transcription of the Library of Congress (LOC).² For proper names, I have rendered the pronunciation and given the Wylie only when the name first occurs. Capitalisation of root letters is used for proper names and titles of written works. Due to the multiplicity of Mongolian romanisation systems, I follow the spellings given by John Powers and David Templeman to remain consistent throughout my work.³ I have chosen to use Jerry Norman’s system for transliterating Manchu.⁴ All Chinese romanisations are given in Pinyin. For some foreign titles and place names that have entered English language academic literature, I have not included the transliteration in brackets e.g. Dalai Lama, Genghis Khan, Lhasa, and Beijing. A glossary of names and places mentioned in this thesis can be found in the appendix.

¹ The different start dates of the year within the Tibetan calendar can also lead to ambiguous year datings unless the month is provided. A conversion program for Tibetan dates and an overview of the system has been created by Edward Henning see, Henning, E. (2016) ‘Kālacakra Calendar’, *Kālacakra*. <http://www.kalacakra.org/calendar/kcal.htm> (accessed March 24, 2020).

² ‘Tibetan’ *Library of Congress*. <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsoromanization/tibetan.pdf> (accessed December 02, 2019).

³ Powers, J. and Templeman, D. (2012) *Historical Dictionary of Tibet*. Lanham: The Scarecrow Press.

⁴ Norman, J. (2013) *A Comprehensive Manchu-English Dictionary*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Where appropriate, Tibetan, Mongolian, Sanskrit, Chinese, and Manchu names and terms are provided in transliteration, with the respective language indicated: for example, “Wutai Shan (Tib. Ri bo rtse lnga; Mong. Utai Uula; Ch. 五台山 Wūtái shān).”

Abbreviations

Ch.	Chinese
Fl.	Floruit (‘flourished’)
Man.	Manchu
Mong.	Mongolian
Skt.	Sanskrit
Tib.	Tibetan
PSJZ	<i>The Auspicious Wish-Fulfilling Tree</i> (Tib. <i>dPag bsam ljon bzang</i>)
TshNg	<i>The Annals of Kokonor</i> (Tib. <i>mTsho sngon gyi lo rgyus sogs bkod pa'i tshangs glu gsar snyan</i>)
SK-Ch	Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor. (1975) <i>Collected Works of Sum-pa Mkhan-po</i> (9 vols), edited by L. Chandra. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture.
SK-CASS	A copy of <i>Paṇḍi ta sum pa ye shes dpal 'byor mchog gi spyod tshul brjod pa sgra 'dzin bcud len</i> housed at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (Ch. 中国社会科学院 Zhōngguó Shèhuì Kēxuéyuàn) in Beijing.

Introduction

The Many Hats of Sumpa Khenpo⁵

In the northeastern corner of the Tibetan plateau lies Amdo, a region frequently described as the crossroads or “middle ground”⁶ between the Tibetan, Mongolian, and Chinese worlds. The borders of Amdo are far from fixed, but it is generally considered to border China to the east, Central Tibet and the inner Asian deserts to the west, and the province of Kham (Tib. Khams) and the Yangtze River (Tib. 'Bri chu; Ch. 揚子江 Yángzǐ jiāng) to the south. It is a territorially large realm that is occupied by a wide range of ethnicities, including Tibetans, Hui, Monguors, Salars, and Mongols.⁷ Consequently, the distinctive characteristic of Amdo is its high linguistic, cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity. Politically, control over Amdo has often been disputed. Indeed, territorial dispute has long been a mainstay of cultural life

⁵ This is based on the English idiom ‘wear many hats’ in reference to Sumpa Khenpo’s many roles and does not allude to his religious affiliation. Hats are a key part of Tibetan monastic dress and in identifying one’s religious tradition, which are differentiated by the colour of the hat. Sumpa Khenpo was a staunch Gelugpa (Tib. *dge lugs pa*), also known as the yellow hat tradition. However, interestingly, I have seen images of Sumpa Khenpo wearing different hats; a sculpture housed at Gonlung depicts him in traditional monastic dress with a yellow fan-like hat, and in contemporary paintings at Hulunbuir Medical Hospital he is seen wearing traditional Mongolian clothing, a black deel and a red hat, perhaps highlighting his Mongolian identity. The function and importance of these identities will be explored in more detail in this thesis.

⁶ This is borrowed from Gray Tuttle’s current research project on economic and cultural relations between China and Tibet in the early modern period (sixteenth to nineteenth centuries) entitled, “Amdo Tibet, Middle Ground Between Lhasa and Beijing (1578–1865).”

⁷ There is a growing body of research into Amdo’s other population groups and their interaction with Tibetans, such as Hille, M. et al. (eds.) (2015) *Muslims in Amdo Tibetan Society: Multidisciplinary Approaches*. London; Lanham: Lexington Books; Lipman, J. (1998) *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China*. Seattle: University of Washington Press; Wallenböck, U. (2016) ‘Marginalisation at China’s Multi-Ethnic Frontier: The Mongols of Henan Mongolian Autonomous County in Qinghai Province,’ *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 45, pp. 149–182; and Roche, G. and Stuart, C. K. (eds.) (2015) *Asian Highlands Perspectives* 36: *Mapping the Monguor*.

in Amdo, as reflected for example in the Gesar (Tib. Ge sar; Ch. 格萨尔王 Gesa'er wang) epic which is traditionally strongly associated with the Amdo region of Golog (Tib. mGo log).⁸ An overview of the turbulent history of this region will be provided in Chapter two.

Amdo was traditionally a place of great learning and scholarship and is renowned for producing high-calibre scholars, such as the celebrated Tsongkhapa (Tib. Tsong kha pa; 1357–1419) and Changkya Rolpé Dorje (Tib. lCang skya Rol pa'i rdo rje; 1717–1786).⁹ During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in particular, Amdo experienced what Hanung Kim refers to as a “renaissance” – a period marked by increased literary activity, the establishment and flourishing of monasteries, and the development of sophisticated incarnation systems.¹⁰ Due to the authority these figures held on account of their education, monastic affiliation, and heritage, many had an impact on their social, political, and religious environments in the larger constellation of Tibet, Mongolia, and the Qing dynasty (1644–1911).

⁸ For more on Gesar, see FitzHerbert, S. G. (2007) *The Birth of Gesar: Narrative Diversity and Social Resonance in the Tibetan Epic Tradition*. PhD Thesis. University of Oxford; Stein, R. A. (1959) *Recherches sur l'Épopée et le Barde au Tibet*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France; and Stein, R. A. (1981)

'Introduction to the Gesar Epic.' *Tibet Journal* 6.1, pp. 3–14.

⁹ For more on Tsongkhapa, see Ary, E. (2015) *Authorized Lives: Biography and the Early Formation of Geluk Identity*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications; Falls, E. R. (2010) *Tsong kha pa and the Foundations of Rationality*. PhD Thesis. Emory University. Literature regarding Changkya Rolpé Dorje can be found in footnote 19.

¹⁰ Kim, H. (2018) *Renaissance Man from Amdo: The Life and Scholarship of the Eighteenth-Century Amdo Scholar Sum pa Mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor (1704-1788)*. PhD Thesis. Harvard University, pp. 22–50. For more on the expansion and development of Gelugpa institutions and literary activity in Amdo and Mongolia, see King, M. W. (2019) “Unbiased Scholars’ and ‘Superficial Intellectuals’: Was There a Public Culture between Europe and Inner Asia in the Long 19th Century?’, *Working Paper Series of HCAS “Multiple Secularities – Beyond the West, Beyond Modernities”* 11, Leipzig University; and Nietupski, P. K. (1999) *Labrang Monastery: A Tibetan Buddhist Community on the Inner Asian Borderlands, 1709–1958*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

One such individual was Sumpa Khenpo (Tib. Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor; Mon. Sumba Hambo Ishibaljur; 1704–1788), the subject of this thesis; an influential Buddhist monk, abbot, physician, and prolific author who wrote on a wide range of topics, including medicine, astrology, epistemology, poetics, and history. Equipped with education and his reincarnation status (discussed in more detail in Chapter two), he became a prominent and influential frontier Gelugpa (Tib. dGe lugs pa) lama.¹¹ As this thesis will show, his work and activities were not confined to his homeland of Amdo, but extended as far as Lhasa, Hohhot and Beijing, covering large swathes of the Qing Empire – providing us with a distinctive insight into the wider networks of the Qing Empire and how individuals operated within it. His status as a reincarnate lama enhanced his other roles, some of which will be considered in this thesis, and the reputation he accrued in those activities enhanced his general standing both at home in Amdo and further afield.

Research on Qing interlocutors who engaged in and assisted with Sino-Tibetan-Mongolian relations is still relatively new and developing.¹² Historians of these tripartite relations in the eighteenth century, such as Luciano Petech, have tended to focus on the

¹¹ King, M. W. (2016) 'Knowing King Gésar Between Buddhist Monastery and Socialist Academy, Or the Practices of Secularism in Inner Asia,' *Himalaya: The Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*, 36(1), p.49.

¹² Recent scholarship includes, Dewey, W. K. (2017) *A Union of Religion and Politics: Ngawang Tsültrim as Tibetan Regent and Imperial Preceptor*. PhD Thesis. University of California, Santa Barbara; Erhard, F. X. (2019) 'Aspects of Social Status in the Biography of Doring Paṅḍita', *Revue d'Études Tibétaines*, 49, pp. 93–121; Li, R. (2002) *A Tibetan Aristocratic Family in Eighteenth Century Tibet: A Study of Qing-Tibetan Contact*. PhD Thesis. Harvard University; Oidtmann, M. (2014) *Between Patron and Priest: Amdo Tibet Under Qing Rule 1792–1911*. PhD Thesis. Harvard University; Uspensky, V. (2008) 'Gombojab—A Tibetan Buddhist in the Capital of the Qing Empire', in Elverskog, J. (ed.) *Biographies of Eminent Mongol Buddhists*. Halle: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, pp. 59–70; Wang-Toutain, F. (2005) 'Circulation du savoir entre la Chine, la Mongolie et le Tibet au XVIII^e siècle. Le prince mGon-po skyabs', *Études Chinoises*, 24, pp. 57–112.

political events of the time.¹³ Due to the crucial impact many of these events (such as the Dzungar invasion of 1717 and the Civil War of 1727–1728) had on the socio-political makeup of Tibet and its relationship with its neighbours at this time, it is unsurprising that other factors have so far received less attention.¹⁴ The importance of cosmopolitan polyglots, such as Sumpa Khenpo, within the social, cultural, economic, and political landscape of the period, however, should not be underestimated. Discussing a new framework within which the history of the Qing is being written and understood, Mark Elliott draws attention to the need for “people, languages, beliefs, and material culture of the imperial frontiers [to be brought into] the stories we tell.”¹⁵ This thesis aims to contribute to the field of new Qing history¹⁶ through the examination and discussion of one local agent on the periphery and his

¹³ Petech, L. (1950) *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century: History of the Establishment of Chinese Protectorate in Tibet*. Leiden: Brill.

Other examples include, Dai, Y. (2009) *The Sichuan Frontier and Tibet: Imperial Strategy in the Early Qing*. Seattle: University of Washington Press; and Perdue, P. (2005) *China Marches West: The Qing Conquest of Central Eurasia*. Cambridge; London: Harvard University Press.

¹⁴ This is not to say that research does not exist outside of political spheres. The Qing’s relationship with Inner Asia is currently a very lively field of scholarship, examples include; Elverskog, J. (2006) *Our Great Qing. The Mongols, Buddhism and the State in Late Imperial China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press; Greenwood, K. R. (2013) *Yonghegong: Imperial Universalism and the Art and Architecture of Beijing’s “Lama Temple”*. PhD Thesis. University of Kansas; Millward, J. et al. (eds.) (2004) *The New Qing Imperial History: The Making of Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde*. London: Routledge Curzon; Wang-Toutain, F. (2017) *Le décor de la tombe de Qianlong (r. 1735-1796). Un empereur mandchou et le bouddhisme tibétain*. 2 vols. Paris: Launay.

¹⁵ Elliott, M. (2014) ‘Frontier Stories: Periphery as Center in Qing History,’ *Frontiers of History in China* 9(3), p. 351.

¹⁶ New Qing History is a historiographical school, which developed in the early 2000s, that moves away from the earlier emphasis of the Qing Empire as just another Chinese dynasty – a power that became Chinese in thought and institutions. The focus, instead, is on a more ‘Manchu-cantered’ Qing; highlighting the diverse range of peoples within the Qing Empire and how relations were forged and strengthened between the Manchus and their subjects (in China and Inner Asia). Prominent scholars within this field include Evelyn Rawski, Mark Elliott, Peter Perdue, and Pamela Crossley.

See Crossley, P. (1999) *A Translucent Mirror: History and Identity in Qing Imperial Ideology*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Elliott, M. C. (2001) *The Manchu Way: The Eight Banners and Ethnic Identity in Late Imperial China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press; Perdue (2005); Rawski, E. S. (1998) *The Last Emperors: A Social History of Qing Institutions*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

role within the transregional networks of his time, which I hope will both inform and develop the narratives of eighteenth-century Amdo, and expand our understanding of themes, exchanges, and changes taking place in the Sino-Tibetan-Mongolian borderlands at this time. This complements and enhances the growing body of scholarship engaged with Qing imperial projects and governance away from the imperial centre, and how the Qing were internalised and understood by its subjects on its fringes. In particular, this thesis offers a valuable perspective into the dynamics of community, religion (i.e. Buddhism), and political authority in eighteenth-century Inner Asia; and the overlapping aims of Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs (especially those from Amdo) and the Qing Empire.

Although several researchers in Tibetan studies have taken single historical figures as their subjects, few have concentrated on eighteenth-century Amdowas (Tib. *A mdo ba*).¹⁷ Jamyang Zhepé Konchog Jigme Wangpo (Tib. 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po; 1728–1791) and Thuken Lobsang Chökyi Nyima (Tib. Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma; 1737–1802) – celebrated scholars and religious teachers – have both been the focus of a handful of publications, but these have mostly focused on presenting an overview of their life and works.¹⁸ Changkya Rolpé Dorje, on the other hand, has been the

¹⁷ A term used to describe a person from Amdo.

¹⁸ See FitzHerbert, S. G. (2020) 'Guan Di, the Chinese God of War, in Tibetan Buddhism from the 18th to 20th Centuries', in FitzHerbert, S. G. and Travers, A. (eds.) *Asian Influences on Tibetan Military History between the 17th and 20th Centuries*, special edition of *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* (53), pp. 178–266; dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po and 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa II. (1987) *Kun mkyen 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa 'i rnam thar*. Lanzhou: Gansu minzu chubanshe (TBRC ID W21693); Loo, M. (1970) *The Biography of the III Panchen Lama, Blo-bzang-dpal-Ldan-ye-shes-dpal-bzang-po, Examined in the Light of Sino-Tibetan Relations during the Late Eighteenth-Century*. PhD Thesis. University of Washington; Maher, D. (2006) 'The Lives and time of 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa,' in Schaeffer, K. R. and Cuevas, B. (eds.) *Power, Politics and the Reinvention of Tradition in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Tibet: Proceedings of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Xth Seminar, Oxford University, 2003*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, pp. 129–144; Smith, G. E. (2001) [1969] 'Philosophical, Biographical, and Historical Works of Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang

focus of a number of comprehensive publications due to his close association with the Qianlong Emperor (Tib. Lha skyong rgyal po; Man. Abkai Wehiyehe Hūwangdi; 1711–1799) and his role as *National Preceptor* (Tib. *Gur gyi slob dpon*; Ch. 國師 *Guóshī*),¹⁹ thus providing us with an insight into the place of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism at the Qing court. Consequently, the religious, social, and political infrastructure of Amdo and those who operated within it is still relatively unknown. The aim of this thesis is to contribute to this lacuna with a close evaluation of another famous Amdowa, Sumpa Khenpo.

Previous Studies of Sumpa Khenpo

Sumpa Khenpo is best known for two works; *The History of Kokonor* (Tib. *mTsho sngon gyi lo rgyus sogs bkod pa'i tshangs glu gsar snyan*)²⁰ and *The Auspicious Wish-Fulfilling Tree* (Tib. *dPag bsam ljon bzang*).²¹ In the West, V.P Vasil'ev was the first scholar to analyse his works, translating sections on the political history of Tibet (Tib. *rgyal rabs*) from PSJZ in the mid-nineteenth century.²² In 1889, S.C. Das published a translation of Sumpa Khenpo's

chos kyi nyi ma,' in Smith, E. G. and Schaeffer, K. R. (eds.) *Among Tibetan Texts: History and Literature of the Himalayan Plateau*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, pp. 147–170; and Sopa, G. L. and Jackson, R. R. (eds.) (trans.) (2009) *The Crystal Mirror of Philosophical Systems: A Tibetan Study of Asian Religious Thought*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

¹⁹ Examples of studies on Changkya Rolpé Dorje include, Ilich, M. (2006) *Selections from the Life of a Tibetan Buddhist Polymath: Chankya Rolpai Dorje (Lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje)*, 1717-1786. PhD Thesis. Columbia University; Kämpfe, H. R. (1974) *Die soziale Rolle des zweiten Pekinger Lcang Skya-Qutuqtu Rol Pa'i Rdo Rje (1717-1786)*. PhD Thesis. Bonn University; and Wang, X. (1995) *Tibetan Buddhism at the Court of Qing: The Life and Work of lCang-Skya Rol- Pa'i-Rdo-Rje, 1717-86*. PhD Thesis. Harvard University.

²⁰ For the remainder of this thesis, this will be referred to as TshNg.

²¹ For the remainder of this thesis, this will be referred to as PSJZ.

²² Unfortunately, this was never published, but is referred to as a manuscript entitled *Perevod khronologicheskoi tablitsy Sum-pa-khutukhty (Sum-pa-mkhan-po)*; rukopis in Vostrikov's *Tibetan Historical Literature*. See Vostrikov, A. I. (1994) [1962] *Tibetan Historical Literature*, translated into English by H. Chandra Gupta. Calcutta: R.D. Press.

Chronological Table (Tib. *Re'u mig*).²³ However, numerous errors have been pointed out in Das' work by scholars such as de Jong²⁴ and Vostrikov - citing incorrect dates, with some events occurring two years after the date given by Das.²⁵ Nevertheless, the *Chronological Table* continues to be consulted by scholars, as it provides a detailed chronology of Tibet and invaluable information on dates and names.

Only three of his works have been edited to date; PSJZ by Das²⁶ and by Chandra,²⁷ TshNg by Yang,²⁸ and *On Horse Medicine* (Tib. *rTa dpyad dpal g'yang*) also by Chandra.²⁹ Passages of his writings have been examined and translated by scholars such as Tucci,³⁰ Bira,³¹ and FitzHerbert,³² representing the wide variety of topics covered by Sumpa Khenpo. In recent years there has been a particular interest in Sumpa Khenpo's medical treatises,

²³ Das, S. C. (1889) 'Life of Sum-pa mKhan-po, also styled Ye-ses dpal-'byor, the author of Rehumig (Chronological Table)', *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. 57, pp. 37–84.

²⁴ de Jong, J. W. (1967) 'Sum-pa mKhan-po (1704-1788) and His Works', *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 27, pp. 208–216.

²⁵ One example of this is Sumpa Khenpo's date of birth. In the chronological table produced by Das, he states Sumpa Khenpo's date of birth as 1702–1703. However, further research has shown that Sumpa Khenpo was born in 1704. See Vostrikov (1994); 137.

²⁶ This text was edited by Das with a list of contents and an analytical index in English, and contains a foreword and preface by Giuseppe Tucci and Luciano Petech. Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor. (1908) *Pag Sam Jon Zang*, translated and edited by S. C. Das. Calcutta: The Presidency Jail Press.

²⁷ This text was a facsimile reproduction by Chandra. Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor. (1959) *Dpag-bsam-ljon-bzañ of Sum-pa-mkhan-po Ye-ses-dpal-hbyor: Part III, containing a history of Buddhism in China and Mongolia, preceded by the rehu-mig or chronological tables*, edited by L. Chandra. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture (TBRC ID W1KG16754).

²⁸ This text was edited and translated into English by Yang. Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor. (1970) *The Annals of Kokonor*, translated and edited by H. C. Yang. Bloomington: Indiana University Publications.

²⁹ Chandra, L. (1964) *Contents of Two Classical Hippological Treatises*. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture.

³⁰ Tucci, G. (1980) [1948] *Tibetan Painted Scrolls II*, translated by V. Vacca. Kyoto: Rinsen. pp. 651–656.

³¹ Bira, S. (1970) *Mongolian Historical Literature of the XVII-XIX Centuries Written in Tibetan*, translated into English by S. Frye. Bloomington: Mongolia Society. p.75–77.

³² FitzHerbert, S. G. (2015) 'On the Tibetan Ge-sar Epic in the Late 18th Century: Sum-pa mkhan-po's Letters to the 6th Pan-chen Lama', *Études Mongoles et Sibériennes, Centrasiatique et Tibétaines*, 46. <http://emscat.revues.org/2602> (accessed June 25, 2019).

which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter five. His astrological works have also received attention and were extensively used by Sokhyo Jo in his recent doctoral research.³³

Outside Western academia, the works of Sumpa Khenpo continue to appeal to Chinese,³⁴ Tibetan, and Mongolian scholars. Since the 1980s there has been a revival of Mongolian culture and Sumpa Khenpo has come to be an important figure within this movement. This revival is nourished by academic research and publications. The Mongolian scholar Erdenibayar, for example, has researched Sumpa Khenpo's writings on poetry and his role in the literary connection between Tibetans and Mongolians,³⁵ while researchers at the Ach Medical University in Ulaanbaatar have been investigating his medical writings and their impact on Mongolian medicine.³⁶ However, this interest is far from new, with Mongolian translations of his works dating back to roughly the time of his death. PSJZ was the first of his works to be translated into Mongolian; the block prints have been dated to the

³³ See Hobbs, J. (2012) *When the "Milkbird" comes: Amdo-Tibetan constructions of time in Qinghai and Gansu provinces, the People's Republic of China*. PhD Thesis. University of Cambridge; and Sokhyo Jo (2016) *Topics on the History of Tibetan Astronomy with a Focus on Background Knowledge of Eclipse Calculations in the 18th Century*. PhD Thesis. Harvard University.

³⁴ Thank you to Darig Thokmay, who has been instrumental in assisting me to locate Chinese-language scholarship on Sumpa Khenpo. Recent publications include, Bao, Y. and Zhao, B. (2014) 松巴堪布·伊喜巴拉珠尔出生地及其族源新考 (New Research on the Birthplace and Clan of Sumpa Khenpo), *Journal of Inner Mongolia University for Nationalities*, 2, pp. 54–57; Gong, C. et al. (2005) 蒙医厌恶疗法与伊喜巴拉珠尔的贡献 (Aversion Therapy in Mongolian Medicine and the Contributions of Yeshe Paljor), *Chinese National Folk Medicine Journal*, 3, pp. 134–135; Suriya. (2004) 蒙医伊希巴拉珠尔及《甘露四部》(Yeshe Paljor's 'Four Elixirs'), *Chinese Journal of Medical History*, 2, pp. 97–98; Tenzin Tashi. (2015) 18世纪造像量度文献《佛像、佛经、佛塔量度经注疏花鬘》与作者松巴·益西班觉 (The 18th Century text 'The Beautiful Garland of Flowers; A Commentary of Objects of Body, Speech and Mind' by Sumpa Khenpo), *Tibet Art Research*, 4, pp. 37–47.

³⁵ Erdenibayar. (2002) 译注评松巴堪布诗论著作二种 *Yizhu ping Songba kanbu shilun zhuzuo erzhong*. PhD Thesis. Inner Mongolia University.

³⁶ Oyun-Erdene, B. et al. (2014) 'Publication Overview of Sumbe Khamba Ishbaljir and Wonder of his Mindset,' *Mongolian Medical Science Journal* 170(4), pp. 68–72.

late eighteenth or early nineteenth century and are currently housed at the Library of Inner Mongolia in Hohhot.³⁷ In 1993 PSJZ was published by the People's Publishing House of Inner Mongolia,³⁸ and in 2017 a Mongolian translation was published in Ulaanbaatar.³⁹ Many of his writings, especially those on astrology and medicine, have also been translated into Mongolian.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, I have yet to find a complete Mongolian translation of his *Collected Works* (Tib. *gSung 'bum*). Besides a Mongolian translation of PSJZ, this work was also translated into Chinese in 1994,⁴¹ and has been published numerous times in Tibetan.⁴²

Sumpa Khenpo also occupies an important place in contemporary Tibet, especially in the northeast.⁴³ A short biographical sketch of Sumpa Khenpo can be found in several Tibetan texts, such as *Collection of the Biographies of Tibetan Doctors* (Tib. *Bod gyi sman*

³⁷ The date of the translation is unknown. Erdenibayar. (2007) 'Sumpa Khenpo Ishibaljur: A Great Figure in Mongolian and Tibetan Cultures', Diemberger, H. and Bulag, U. E. (eds.) *The Mongolia-Tibet Interface: Opening New Research Terrains in Inner Asia*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, p. 311.

³⁸ Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor. (1993) *益西班觉佛教史 Yixibanjue Fojaoshi*, translated by Qinggele and Mo Baozhu. Hohhot: Neimenggu Renmin Chubanshe.

³⁹ Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor. (2017) *Galbarvas Mod*, translated into Mongolian by Besud Perenlei Nyamochir. Ulaanbaatar: Amžiltyn Garc.

⁴⁰ Erdenibayar (2007); 312.

⁴¹ Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor. (1994) *如意宝树史 Ruyi baoshu shi*, translated into Chinese by Pu Wencheng. Lanzhou: Gansu minzu chubanshe.

⁴² The earliest modern print version is a two-volume edition that was published in 1965 by Mongolian Lama Gurudeva. Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor. (1965) *Phags yul rgya nag chen po bod dang sog yul mams su dam pa'i chos byung tshul dpag bsam ljon bzang*. Sarnath, Varanasi: Mongolian Lama Gurudeva (TBRC ID W1KG20788).

A more recent edition was published in 1992. Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor. (1992) *Chos 'byung dPag bsam ljon bzang*. Lanzhou: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang (TBRC ID W7667).

⁴³ Tibetan scholarship tends to focus on biographical accounts of Sumpa Khenpo and an overview of his works (or a particular genre of works), such as; Byams phrug. (2015) *Sum pa mkhan po'i 'snyan ngag me long' dang 'brel ba'i brtsams chos skor gyi dpyad zhib*. <https://www.tibetcm.com/specialist/shamphruk/2015-04-20/7552.html> (accessed August 02, 2020); rDo rje tshe brtan. (2013) *Sum pa ye shes dpal 'byor gyi gso rig brtsams chos khag lnga pa'i par gzhi dang bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun gyi brjod don mdor bsodus*. <http://ti.kbcmw.com/Item/Show.asp?m=1&d=5429> (accessed August 02, 2020); and 'Ching rgyal rabs dus kyi bod yig dpe nying 'Sum pa mkhan chen ye shes dpal 'byor gyi gsung 'bum' led sgrig zin nas 'don nyer yod pa', *Mi dmangs dra ba*. <http://tibet.people.com.cn/15555402.html> (accessed August 02, 2020).

pa rim byon gyi rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs), which contains biographies of famous individuals in the transmission of the Tibetan medical system,⁴⁴ and *Select Famous Persons in Tibetan History* (Tib. *Gangs ljongs lo rgyus thog gi grags can mi sna*); a biographical reference work published in 1993.⁴⁵ This text contains around 700 biographies that are arranged chronologically, up to the time of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso (Tib. Thub bstan rgya mtsho; 1876–1933).⁴⁶ Some of Sumpa Khenpo’s writings have been published in modern book form (in Tibetan); mostly published by state funded provincial level Publishing Houses (Tib. *Mi rigs dpe skrun khang*). One of the first pieces to be published in modern print was TshNg, which was published by Qinghai Publishing House (Tib. *mTsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang*) in 1982.

Aside from his works, there is a growing interest in Sumpa Khenpo’s role within Sino-Tibetan-Mongolian relations.⁴⁷ Hanung Kim’s doctoral research presents his life and scholarship as indicators of new cultural developments in eighteenth-century Amdo.⁴⁸ Kim posits that this period is an era of great social and religious activity, located within the larger process of the expansion of Gelugpa institutions to the east (i.e. Amdo and Kham) and north

⁴⁴ Byams pa phrin las. (2000) *Bod gyi sman pa rim byon gyi rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs*. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, pp. 378–380. Available on TBRC (ID W17722).

⁴⁵ Don rdor and bsTan 'dzin chos grags (1993) *Gangs ljongs lo rgyus thog gi grags can mi sna*. Lhasa: Bod ljongs Mi dmangs dpe skrun khang (TBRC ID W19803).

⁴⁶ Sumpa Khenpo can also be found in standard reference works, such as *Dungkar Rinpoche’s Encyclopedia* (Tib. *Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo*) and in the *Tibetan-Chinese Encyclopedia* (Tib. *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*). Dung dkar bla bzang 'phrin las. (2002) *Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo*. Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang (TBRC ID W26372), and Zhang, Y. (1984) *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*. Lhasa: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang.

⁴⁷ See Kim, H. (2013) “Sum-pa Ye-shes-dpal-'byor and the Civil War of Eighteenth Century Tibet: A Preliminary Essay on Ye-shes-dpal-'byor’s Many Roles in Tibetan Civilization”, in Takeuchi, T. et al. (eds.) *Current Issues and Progress in Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Third International Seminar of Young Tibetologists, Kobe 2012*. Kobe: Kobe City University of Foreign Studies, pp. 165–182.

⁴⁸ Kim (2018).

(i.e. Mongolia), and the establishment of ‘mother monasteries’ (Tib. *ma dgon*).⁴⁹ These institutions and their extensive webs of monastic colleges, and subordinate and allied monasteries, spread across Inner Asia and became the primary sites of education, literary production, medical practice, and ritual activity – ushering in what Kim labels a “renaissance period” in these regions. Sumpa Khenpo, a formidable Buddhist scholar who primarily operated within Gonlung’s substantial network of over 100 branch monasteries, is regarded as a contributor to and beneficiary of this cultural phenomenon.

This thesis aims to build on Kim’s research through looking at what these networks can also tell us about Qing governance of Inner Asia in the eighteenth century and the role of Sumpa Khenpo and Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs within this process. Matthew King has rightly remarked that monastic estates “were inextricable from the projection of Qing [...] power into Inner Asia”,⁵⁰ and were patronised by the Qing to secure and maintain harmony on the politically unstable frontier regions (which will be discussed in Chapter two). In this way, “Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs were, in principle, no different than any other lords whose power had to be incorporated into the emperor’s sovereign sphere”⁵¹ and could be employed to expand and consolidate Qing power at its fringes. Gonlung Monastery belonged to vast networks of patronage and associated monastic institutions across Inner Asia, which could be utilised by the Qing to consolidate a shared sense of community among the Qing’s diverse

⁴⁹ The hierarchical relationship between dominant monasteries and its branch monasteries are usually described as ‘mother monasteries’ and ‘son monasteries’ (Tib. *bu dgon*). This ‘mother and son’ relationship (Tib. *ma dgon bu dgon*) with regards to Gonlung and its branch monasteries is a recurring theme in this thesis. For background reading on Gonlung as a mother monastery, see Sullivan, B. (2013) *The Mother of All Monasteries: Gönlung Jampa Ling and the Rise of Mega Monasteries in Northeastern Tibet*. PhD Thesis. University of Virginia.

⁵⁰ King (2019); 6.

⁵¹ Schwieger, P. (2015) *The Dalai Lama and the Emperor of China: A Political History of the Tibetan Institution of Reincarnation*. Chichester: Columbia University Press, p. 165.

imperial subjects. And so, figures such as Sumpa Khenpo, who were not Beijing *qutuqtu* like other influential scions of Gonlung in the eighteenth century,⁵² but were more concerned with local maintenance and the promotion of the Gelugpa, had their own part to play in Qing state building. This thesis will explore Sumpa Khenpo's own reflections and experiences of these processes and events as catalogued in his autobiography, noting how he contributed to local and regional governance and culture across his multifaceted roles. In particular, I will focus on his pilgrimages, his rhetoric, and his medicine as vehicles for such influence.

In doing so, I also build on and expand upon Brenton Sullivan's article on Sumpa Khenpo's pilgrimage to Wutai Shan, which throws light on these wider Qing networks and the way in which Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs formed interlocking associations, demonstrating a robust connection of ties between influential lamas in Tibet and Mongolian and Qing patrons.⁵³ Sullivan's paper provides an extremely insightful and comprehensive look at his motivations for fostering these associations, with an emphasis on Sumpa Khenpo's (and other Amdowa and Mongolian lamas') interest in Inner Asian affairs; in particular, the promotion of a Gelugpa orthopraxy and the advancement of Gonlung. This thesis broadens the focus on pilgrimage – taking examples from his travels to Tsari, Wutai Shan, and Alasha – to draw wider conclusions on the function(s) of pilgrimage; both in terms

⁵² *qutuqtu* (Tibetan spelling *ho thog thu*) is the Mongolian word for incarnation or *tulku* (Tib. *sprul sku*). Both the Second Changkya and Third Thukun, who are two of the 'five great lamas' of Gonlung, were influential figures at the Qing court. See footnotes 18 and 19 for more on these individuals. Sullivan provides an overview of the major and minor incarnation lineages at Gonlung, see Sullivan (2013); 27–30.

⁵³ Sullivan first presented this paper at the XVIIth Congress of the International Association of Buddhist Studies, University of Vienna, Friday, August 22. It was later published, see Sullivan, B. (2018) 'The Manner in which I went to Worship Mañjuśrī's Realm, The Five-Peaked Mountain (Wutai), by Sumba Kanbo (1704–1788): Introduction and Translation', *Inner Asia*, 21(1), pp. 64–106.

of personal attainment and as part of a state endorsed process of reconstructing space and integrating communities.

While it would be unreasonable to suggest that promotion of the *dharma* was not a key consideration, I note in this thesis that Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography is primarily concerned with the religious roles and spiritual experiences of the subject (as are most Tibetan autobiographies). His status as political is less explicit, necessitating a view of his actions and interactions within the context of the time. His ingratiation within different communities entailed a fusion of the religious and the secular sphere, embodying the ideals of *lugnyi* (Tib. *lugs gnyis*; Mong. *qoyar yosun*; the two systems).⁵⁴ This ideal form of governance and administration gained widespread currency during the reign of the Fifth Dalai Lama, and was adopted by Tibet's Manchu and Mongolian neighbours. The Qing's commitment to Buddhist governance had the potential to unify its diverse populations and solidify the foundations of the state; cementing alliances through a shared religious identity and common purpose.

The scholarship discussed above has broadened the scope of research on Sumpa Khenpo – moving beyond his scholarly profile and instead throwing light on his role and function as a cosmopolitan polymath, his relationships with other high-profile lamas and Mongol and Manchu patrons, and the implications of his everyday activities and movements.

⁵⁴ *lugs gnyis* is the abbreviated form of *chos srid gnyis ldan* (the two systems of religion and politics/worldly affairs). For more information on *lugnyi*, see Grupper, S. (1984) 'Manchu Patronage and Tibetan Buddhism during the First Half of the Ch'ing Dynasty: A Review Article', *The Journal of the Tibetan Society* 4, pp. 47–75; Ishihama, Y. (2005) 'The Notion of "Buddhist Government" (*chos srid*) Shared by Tibet, Mongol and Manchu in Early 17th Century', in Cüppers, C. (ed.) *The Relationship Between Religion and State (*chos srid zung 'brel*) in Traditional Tibet: Proceedings of a Seminar Held in Lumbini, Nepal, March 2000* (LIRI seminar proceeding series; 1). Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, pp. 15–33; Sperling, E. (2003) 'Tibet's Foreign Relations During the Epoch of the Fifth Dalai Lama', in Pommaret, F. (ed.) *Lhasa in the Seventeenth Century: The Capital of the Dalai Lamas*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 119–132.

The depth, sophistication, and intricacy of his actions and relations, however, deserves more attention; this present work is an attempt to contribute to a better understanding of this multifaceted figure through translation and analysis of his autobiography. This thesis proposes that Sumpa Khenpo should be considered a ‘normal exception’; both a normal example of an eighteenth-century Gelugpa lama and an example of an exceptional and celebrated individual.

In many respects, Sumpa Khenpo’s life was normal. As we will see, his early years involved the standard training in Central Tibet undertaken by many of his Eastern Tibetan contemporaries. Returning to Amdo in his twenties, he dedicates his life to advancing Gonlung and promoting the Gelugpa in the geopolitical triangle of Tibet, Mongolia, and Qing China. He partakes in the activities one would expect of a Tibetan Buddhist lama and abbot; going on pilgrimages, performing a wide variety of rituals, and giving teachings. While these typical or normal aspects of his life dominate, there are parts which I consider to be exceptional, such as his rationalist views with regards to scholarship and medicine (which Kim, also, noted), and his stark criticism of the reincarnation system. Much of these exceptionalisms of his life, however, can be seen retrospectively in the continued importance of his writings; as we will see in Chapter five, his medical works are now highly regarded for their practical implications. The importance of his life was recognised by his patrons and contemporaries, who encouraged him to write his autobiography, perhaps as an exemplar of *lugnyi* (see Chapter one). I believe this blending of the ‘normal’ and the ‘exception’ allowed Sumpa Khenpo to successfully engage and establish networks across Inner Asia for the benefit of Gonlung and the *dharma*. These same networks were able to flourish, precisely because they were also viewed as beneficial by the Qing as part of their state making policies

in Inner Asia; facilitating the process of buddhicization and legitimising their power. While Sumpa Khenpo should not be viewed as a tool of the Qing, his role as a stakeholder in the success of Gonlung and the Gelugpa in Inner Asia can clearly be seen as an overlapping interest in the wider aims of the Qing Empire in the region.

Thesis Structure

The original intent of this research was to focus on Sumpa Khenpo's role in Sino-Tibetan-Mongolian relations. As my research progressed, I became more interested in *how* Sumpa Khenpo operated within the multi-ethnic Qing state and the power relations that were built into everyday life; his role appeared to be multifaceted as he donned different hats (or sometimes multiple hats at the same time) for different occasions and audiences. This research will be carried out through examining sections of his skilfully written autobiography, *A Description of the Activities of the Khenpo Known as Erdeni Paṇḍita, [which is like] Nectar for the Ear (mKhan po erte ni Paṇḍi tar grags pa'i spyod tshul brjod pa sgra 'dzin bcud len)*, which can be found in volume eight (Tib. *nya*) of his *Collected Works*. Its content will be analysed and contextualised within the Gelugpa dominated religio-historical and socio-political setting of eighteenth-century Tibet with regards to his personal experiences, education, abbotships, and activities. In doing so, I hope to position him in a larger context as an important figure in the religio-political landscape of Inner Asia during this period.

The first two chapters set the scene, presenting the main sources used for this thesis as well as giving a historical overview of Sumpa Khenpo's home region and outlining

significant details and moments of his life. Chapter one provides an overview of his *Collected Works* and his autobiography *A Description of the Activities of the Khenpo Known as Erdeni Paṅḍita*, [which is like] *Nectar for the Ear*, examining its composition, intended audience, and how it was perceived after its completion. The chapter then looks at the genre of life writing in Tibet more closely and positions the text in the literary history of the genre.

The next chapter focuses on the history of Amdo, providing context for the understanding of the importance of Gonlung Monastery (Tib. dGon lung 'byams pa gling; Ch. 佑宁寺 Yòuníng sì), Sumpa Khenpo's home monastery, and the importance of Amdo reincarnate lamas both locally and further afield. The second half of the chapter then outlines the life of the protagonist – covering his early years, education, travels, abbotships, and final years – which the subsequent chapters will examine in more detail.

Chapters three to five constitute the core of this thesis, analysing some of the key roles that Sumpa Khenpo assumes during his lifetime – these roles were, in many ways, interlinked. As we will see, Sumpa Khenpo often combined pilgrimage trips with visits to patrons; stopping at towns and settlements en route to provide teachings and/or empowerments; to perform much-needed rain-making rituals; to meet with peers and other prominent Gelugpa figures etc. Although each chapter is centred around a particular role he held, it is impossible to keep them totally separate – a fact demonstrating the ease with which Sumpa Khenpo adopted and carried out these multiple functions, and shifted between them. Three central themes that emerged while reading his autobiography are Sumpa Khenpo's extended travels and pilgrimages, his role as a physician, and his public interactions as an orator. These will be analysed and contextualised in the main chapters of this thesis, and the

analysis will show that in all three areas the religious, social, and political roles of the protagonist are intimately connected.

The third chapter introduces some examples of journeys and pilgrimages undertaken by Sumpa Khenpo, examining some of the reasons and motivations for his travels. Academic literature to date has explored how pilgrimage can allow an individual to put down strong roots in local networks of cooperation and competition; build on local memories; and celebrate their religious and ethnic identity. This chapter seeks to build on these multifarious ideas of pilgrimage, applying them to the experiences formulated in Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography. It focuses on the meaning and function of particular sites visited by the author, the importance of the choice of the route taken to reach his destination, and also on his personal, religious, financial, and political agendas while undertaking these journeys. In doing so, I will explore how pilgrimage is often set against and influenced by an ever-changing backdrop of political and religious authority, competition, and co-existence.

Chapter four looks at examples of rhetoric used by Sumpa Khenpo; namely speeches and stories touching on aspects of ethical conduct, 'correct' practice, scriptural authority, and collective memory. Through placing them within the circumstances in which they were delivered and received, this chapter aims to contribute towards an understanding of the methods and motives for creating a highly performative religious and literary discourse which preaches, praises, narrates, advises, consoles, accuses, memorialises, warns, and above all inspires students and patrons.

The fifth chapter explores Sumpa Khenpo's role as a physician and expert in medical science through analysing case studies of treatments recorded within his autobiography. His engagement with medicine was part and parcel of his role as a Tibetan Buddhist lama,

combining Buddhist and medical knowledge, embodying the bodhisattva ideal,⁵⁵ and directing donations for his transactions back to his home monastery. Through a discussion of Sumpa Khenpo's treatments, this chapter seeks to assess the demand for Buddhist medicine and medical rituals in this period and the geographical range of these requests.

A final section offers some concluding remarks, as well as a discussion of the limitations of the thesis and possible avenues for future research.

⁵⁵ "The ideal [of a Bodhisattva] is inspired by the lengthy career of the Buddhis before he became enlightened, as described in the Jātakas." Keown, D. (2003) *A Dictionary of Buddhism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 38. For more on the bodhisattva ideal, see Harvey, P. (2013) *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and Practices*. 2nd edn. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 151–160; Oldmeadow, H. (2008) 'Delivering the Last Blade of Grass: Aspects of the *Bodhisattva* Ideal in the Mahāyāna', *Asian Philosophy* 7(3), pp. 181–194; and Schaeffer, K. R. (2003) 'Textual Scholarship, Medical Tradition, and Mahāyāna Buddhist Ideals in Tibet', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 31:5/6, pp. 621–641.

Chapter One

Sumpa Khenpo's Collected Works

While a handful of Sumpa Khenpo's works have received some scholarly attention, as touched on briefly in the Introduction, his expansive literary production is still relatively underexplored. The following chapter introduces his *Collected Works*, which reveal Sumpa Khenpo's interests, responsibilities, and skills. The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were a seminal moment for the literary arts, and this can be gleaned in the wide range of works he produced. As Kurtis Schaeffer has shown, writing formed an essential part of the Tibetan scholarly world, demonstrating one's learning and intellectual ability.⁵⁶ For the context of this thesis, writing also provides us with insight into the character and position of Sumpa Khenpo.

Sumpa Khenpo's works, written in the Tibetan language, are contained in an eight-volume collection which spans over 3,000 block print folios.⁵⁷ The location where these texts were edited and printed is currently unknown – previous research on the possible site

⁵⁶ Schaeffer, K. R. (2009) *The Culture of the Book in Tibet*. New York; Chichester: Columbia University Press.

⁵⁷ Each volume consists of a varying number of folios, between 318 (Vol. *ka*) and 529 (Vol. *nya*). Some volumes are a single text (*ka*, *ca*, and *cha*), while others are made up of a mixture of works. Title pages usually contain the title of the work and the volume number, which is located above the title. However, some title pages render the title in Lantsa first, with a Tibetan transliteration underneath and then the Tibetan title. This appears to only be used for more substantial works (i.e. the volumes which are a single text and his autobiography in volume *nya*).

In the main body of each work, folios have seven lines on each side. A reference to the work (e.g. 'chos byung' for PSJZ in volume *ka*; 'rnam thar' for his autobiography; 'chos spyod' for his work on *dharma* activities in volume *ca*) and folio number (numbering in words) can be found in the left-hand margin of the *recto*.

of its publication will be discussed later in this chapter. These writings incorporate a wide range of traditional scholarship from medicine to geography to history. In both structure and outline of thought, Sumpa Khenpo's works display the influence of Indic formulations of knowledge, known as the five major and five minor disciplines.⁵⁸ The five major disciplines, known as the 'five fields of knowledge' (Tib. *rig gnas che ba lnga*; Skt. *pañcavidyā*) are: inner science (Tib. *nang rig pa*; Skt. *abhyātmavidyā*), logic (Tib. *gtan tshig rig pa*; Skt. *hetuvidyā*), language and grammar (Tib. *sgra rig pa*; Skt. *śabdavidyā*), medicine (Tib. *gso ba'i rig pa*; Skt. *cikitsāvidyā*), and art (Tib. *bzo rig pa*; Skt. *śilpakarmasthāna*). According to a famous verse from the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*, these are the essential components of a bodhisattva's education: "if (the bodhisattva) does not endeavor in the five forms of knowledge, even a supreme noble will not obtain omniscience. Therefore, in order to refute and to lead others, and to become omniscient oneself, endeavor in these."⁵⁹

This scholarship was incorporated into Buddhist education in Mahāyāna universities and monasteries and was later adopted as a formal division of knowledge systems in Tibet. This was then extended by the Tibetan scholar, Sakya Paṇḍita (Tib. Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan; 1182–1251) to also include five minor disciplines (Tib. *rig gnas chung ba lnga*); poetry (Tib. *snyan ngag*), metrics (Tib. *sdeb sbyor*), etymology (Tib. *mngon brjod*), drama (Tib. *zlos gar*), and astrology (Tib. *skar rtsis*). The five major and five minor

⁵⁸ For an overview of the five major and five minor topics in Buddhist education, see Dreyfus, G. (2003) *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping: The Education of a Tibetan Buddhist Monk*. Berkley: University of California Press; 101–102.

⁵⁹ Verse 11.60 from the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* (*Ornament for the Sūtras of the Great Way*) (*sDe dge bsTan 'gyur*, *Sems tsam*, Vol. Phi, fol. 15(b); 4-5). The translation is quoted from Kurtis Schaeffer. Schaeffer, K. R. (2011a) 'New Scholarship in Tibet, 1650–1700', in Pollock, S. (ed.) *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500–1800*. London: Duke University Press, p. 292.

disciplines came to be the most influential scheme of scholarly disciplines in Tibet, even forming the underlying structure of numerous collected works of Tibetan Buddhist scholars, including Sumpa Khenpo's.⁶⁰

The first volume (Tib. *ka*) of his *Collected Works* is made up of one text, *The Auspicious Wish-Fulfilling Tree*. This text is 318 folios in length; tracing the origins and spread of Buddhism, beginning with the Buddha. This work is often regarded as one of the first Tibetan attempts to bridge traditional Buddhist scholarship with a modern geographical understanding, which was introduced to East Asia via Jesuit works on geography.⁶¹ The remaining volumes present the Buddhist doctrine with its subdivisions, followed by various disciplines of the fields of knowledge, and ending with works on monastic discipline, questions and answers (Tib. *dri lan*), a rain-making spell, an account of his life, and a table of contents (Tib. *dkar chag*) at the end of volume eight (Tib. *nya*).⁶² Sumpa Khenpo summarises his works as follows:⁶³

⁶⁰ In her article on genre classification in Tibetan literature, Ulrike Roesler suggests that the structure of some collected works may correspond to the five major and five minor disciplines, with variations depending on the interests of the author. I believe Sumpa Khenpo's *Collected Works* possess a similar structure. Of course, this does not represent the entire genre, and comparisons with other collected works would need to be made to verify this. Roesler, U. (2015) 'Classifying Literature or Organizing Knowledge? Some Considerations on Genre Classifications in Tibetan Literature', in Rheingans, J. (ed.) *Tibetan Literary Genres, Texts, and Text Types*. Leiden: Brill, p. 38.

⁶¹ For an in-depth account of the Jesuit's impact on Asian cosmological discourses, see Zhang, Q. (2015) *Making the New World Their Own: Chinese Encounters with Jesuit Science in the Age of Discovery*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 148–202. See also Yongdan, L. (2014). *Geographical Conceptualizations in Nineteenth-century Tibetan Text: The Creation of and Responses to the 'Dzam gling rgyas bshad' ('The Detailed Description of the World')*. PhD Thesis. Cambridge University.

⁶² Hanung Kim has compiled a table of contents for Sumpa Khenpo's *Collected Works*. Kim (2018); 282–283.

⁶³ According to his autobiography, Sumpa Khenpo penned the table of contents for his *Collected Works* in the Fire Bird year (1777), the year after he began composing his autobiography. Unfortunately, the table of contents does contain a colophon to verify this information. SK-CASS, folio 275(a).

Volume one (Tib. *ka*): first engenders faith in [the three] precious jewels, so that one will truly engage in the Buddha’s teaching. Volume two (Tib. *kha*): once this [faith] has been engendered, [the *Collected Works* present] the main works that generate learning, those that are generally needed when listening to the scriptures with belief, and those that are like summaries, needed for specific [purposes] when aiming at vast learning, and those that concern the conduct that is shared [between Śrāvākayāna and Mahāyāna], and those about the view, meditation, and such of the Mahāyāna, and those that generate an understanding of the profound and vast paths and fruit.

Volume three (Tib. *ga*): works that make one practice, reflect on, and meditate from the perspective of *sūtra* on topics that have been studied [namely, in the previous volume]. Volume four (Tib. *nga*): works on topics that generate learning and that need to be practiced (Tib. *nyams len bya ba*) from the perspectives of mantra.

Chapters five (Tib. *ca*) and six (Tib. *cha*): two texts that condense the stages of the practice of *sūtra* and tantra into a single day’s *dharma* practice. Volume seven (Tib. *ja*): [enables one] to care for others using conventional sciences.

Volume eight (Tib. *nya*): [enables one] to teach and practice no matter according to the place and conduct [at the respective place], explains how even I established good habits, and is ornamented at the end with a text on rain-making, the basis for good fortune and wellbeing, along with the catalogue.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ After the translation of Kim (2018); 188. (*ka*) *bstan par snying thag pa nas 'jug phyir thog mar dkon mchog la dad pa bskyed byed* / (*kha*) *de skyes te yid ches kyi sgo nas lung la thos pa byed pa la dang po nyid du spyir mkho ba dang / thos pa rgya chen byed pa la sngon du nye bar mkho ba'i bsdus don lta bu dang / thun mong gi spyod pa dang theg pa chen po'i lta sgom sogs dang zab rgyas lam 'bras la go ba chags byed du thos pa byed gzhung gi gtso bo* / (*ga*) *thos pa byas pa'i nang don mdo phyogs la nyams len sems sgom byed gzhung* / (*nga*) *nang don sngags phyogs la thos pa byed cing nyams len bya ba'i gzhung* / (*ca*) (*cha*) *mdo sngags kyi nyams len gyi rim pa rnams nyin zhag gcig gi chos spyod du bsdus pa gnyis* / (*ja*) *tha snyad rig gnas la brten nas gzhan rjes su 'dzin byed* / (*nya*) *gnas gang du kun spyod ji 'dras bshad sgrub bgyid pa*

The contents of these eight volumes cannot be considered in any detail in this thesis, but will occasionally be referred to in relation to certain aspects of his autobiography.

A copy of Sumpa Khenpo's *Collected Works* was reprinted by the Indian scholar, Lokesh Chandra in 1975. This reprint contained a ninth volume in block print,⁶⁵ which includes a text on the generation stage (Tib. *bskyed rim*; Skt. *utpattikrama*) of Mahāvajrabhairava (Tib. rDo rje 'jigs byed),⁶⁶ and commentaries in seventeen parts on the medical preparations and practices found in the principal text on Tibetan medicine titled *Four Medical Tantras* (Tib. *rGyud bzhi*).⁶⁷ Hanung Kim examines the colophons of these works in his PhD thesis, concluding that neither were authored by Sumpa Khenpo. Both works were completed by Lobsang Wangyal (Tib. Blo bzang dbang rgyal) in the Earth Bird year (1789).⁶⁸ According to the Buddhist Digital Resource Centre (formerly known as the Tibetan Buddhist Resource Centre (TBRC)), Lobsang Wangyal was a noted physician and

dang / ngos kyis kyang bag chags bzang po bzhang tshul dang / mjug bkra shis bde skyid kyi gzhi char 'bab gzhung gis brgyan ba/ dkar chag bcas pa'o ||

Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor (d.u.) 'Sum pa mkhan po dznya' na shri bhu ti bas gzhung chen po du ma las btus pa nram gyi dkar chag dwangs mtsho'i gzugs brnyan', in Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor. (1975), pp. 1043–1044. Available on TBRC (ID W29227).

⁶⁵ Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor. (1975).

⁶⁶ A wrathful aspect of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. Mahāvajrabhairava was known in earlier iconographic form as Yamāntaka, destroyer of death, who was designated as the protector of the Gelugpa order by Tsongkhapa. A brief overview, along with early paintings of Mahāvajrabhairava, can be found in Kossak S. M. and Singer, J. C. (1998) *Sacred Visions: Early Paintings from Central Tibet*. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, pp. 158–160.

⁶⁷ The *rGyud bzhi* was arguably compiled by the Tibetan doctor Yuthok Yonten Gonpo (Tib. G'yu thog Yontan mgon po; 1126–1202) in the twelfth century. It is often considered the root text of Tibetan medicine, and numerous commentaries have been produced in Tibetan. For an overview of the *rGyud bzhi*, see Fenner, T. (1996) 'The Origin of the rGyud bzhi: A Tibetan Medical Tantra', in Cabezón, J. I. et al. (eds.) *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*. Ithaca: Snow Lion, pp. 458–469. This text and its impact on Tibetan medicine will also be examined in Chapter five.

⁶⁸ The colophon of the work on the generation stage of the Mahāvajrabhairava notes that Lobsang Wangyal consulted Sumpa Khenpo during its compilation, while the commentaries on medicine are, according to its colophon, a collection of teachings and compositions given by Sumpa Khenpo. Kim (2018); 215.

student of Sumpa Khenpo.⁶⁹ Perhaps, then, these texts were added by Lobsang Wangyal in honour of his teacher – more research is needed on this.

Gadjin Nagao, a Japanese scholar, saw two or three additional volumes while visiting Usutu juu,⁷⁰ located around ten kilometres northwest of Hohhot; these additional texts were stored alongside the eight volumes of Sumpa Khenpo's collected works and had *lhan thabs*, which translates as 'supplement', written in the margins.⁷¹ Unfortunately, Nagao gave no additional information as he was unable to examine these volumes. Moreover, they were not noted on the list of the complete works that was sent to Nagao after his visit;⁷² therefore, we are unable to compare these works with those in Chandra's reprint. No mention of a ninth volume, or any supplementary texts, are found in the table of contents in volume eight, which suggest that they were not intended to be included when the *Collected Works* were originally compiled. Apart from Chandra and Nagao, I have found no mention of these additional volumes in any other works on Sumpa Khenpo.⁷³ Interestingly, in 2015 his entire *Collected*

⁶⁹ TBRC ID P4992.

⁷⁰ Usutu juu (Ch. 烏素圖召 Wūsùtú zhào) is the name of a complex outside of Hohhot that is made up of five temples. Its name does not appear in Powers and Templeman (2012), and so I have adopted the spelling used by Caroline Humphrey and Hurelbaatar Ujeed. Humphrey, C. and Ujeed, H. (2013) *A Monastery in Time: The Making of Mongolian Buddhism*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, p. 31.

The oldest, Qingyuan Temple (Ch. 慶緣寺 Qīngyuán sì), was built in 1606 by Mongol craftsmen. Up until the 1960s, the woodblocks of Sumpa Khenpo's *Collected Works* were housed here. According to Hanung Kim, these were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution (Kim (2018); 105). However, Chandra's online biography notes that the woodblocks fell into the possession of his father, Raghu Vira.

Chandra, L. (2004) 'Bio-Data of Prof. Lokesh Chandra', *Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies*. <https://www.sanchiuniv.edu.in/pdf/Lokesh%20Chandra%20CV.pdf> (accessed November 12, 2019).

Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to ascertain the whereabouts of the printing blocks.

⁷¹ I would like to thank Prof. Jonathan Silk for providing me with a copy of this unpublished translation. Nagao, G. (1947) *Mōko Gakumonji*. Kyoto: Zekoku Shobō. Translated into English by Iwao Mitsushita, unpublished, p. 120.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ In an online biography of Sumpa Khenpo written by Samten Chhospel, it is mentioned that Sumpa Khenpo's *Collected Works* were made up of nine volumes in total. However, Chhospel does not indicate his

Works were published in modern typeset by the Qinghai Publishing House.⁷⁴ This edition ignores the original arrangement of the *Collected Works* – spanning 20 volumes instead – and includes the works found in volume nine of Chandra’s reprints, along with a short autobiography not included in the original *Collected Works*.⁷⁵ Disappointingly, the editors did not include any explanation for their departure from the original arrangement or on the inclusion of the additional works.

To date, Sumpa Khenpo’s *Collected Works* have been catalogued six times. Nagao was the first scholar to catalogue Sumpa Khenpo’s works after his visit to Usutu juu.⁷⁶ The second catalogue was compiled by Chandra in 1959 and is said to be based on a nine-volume block print edition of the *Collected Works* belonging to his father, the prominent Indian

sources or provide a more detailed account of these volumes. Chhosphe, S. (2010) ‘Sumpa Khenpo Yeshe Peljor’, *Treasury of Lives*. <http://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Sumpa-Khenpo-Yeshe-Peljor/5729> (accessed January 19, 2020). Chhosphe notes that he has come across texts that refer to both eight and nine volumes. The decision to write that there are nine volumes was made by the editor of *Treasury of Lives*. Chhosphe believes that in some editions, supplementary texts were placed in volume nine instead of being placed after their respective main texts or in the eighth volume. (personal communication, October 20, 2016). If this is the case, it suggests that multiple editions of Sumpa Khenpo’s *Collected Works* exist. This requires more research.

⁷⁴ Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor. (2015) *Sum pa pandi ta ye shes dpal 'byor gyi gsung 'bum*. Xining: mTsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang. This is, unfortunately, not currently available on TBRC. However, there is a record of this edition (TBRC ID W3CN7697) so they may be in the process of scanning the texts.

⁷⁵ The short autobiography is said to have been written by Sumpa Khenpo, however the whereabouts of the original manuscript is unknown, and we find no mention of this text elsewhere. The Translation Bureau at Qinghai Provincial Government claim to have once housed the autobiography, but it is now filed as lost. Hanung Kim has seen images of a photocopy of the original, noting that the double duplication makes it difficult to survey and draw any firm conclusion. Kim (2018); 15–16.

This short autobiography was published in 1997 in modern typeset, entitled *The Autobiography of Sumpa Yeshe Paljor* (Tib. *Sum pa ye shes dpal 'byor gyi rnam thar nyid kyis mdzad pa*). Unfortunately, this edition sheds no further lights on the origin of the original text or its current location. The 1997 edition is included in the 2015 publication of Sumpa Khenpo’s *Collected Works*. Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor. (1997) *Sum pa ye shes dpal 'byor gyi rnam thar nyid kyis mdzad pa*. Lanzhou: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang. Available on TBRC (ID W7732).

⁷⁶ Nagao (1947). This includes the eight-volume *Collected Works* and notes on the additional volumes he saw on his visit to Usutu juu.

scholar and politician, Raghu Vira, which Chandra reprinted almost two decades later.⁷⁷ According to Chandra's biography, the xylographs came from Usutu juu.⁷⁸ The catalogue gives every title in three forms: the full form given on the first folio, its abbreviation given in the left-hand margin, and the short form given in the table of contents. In 1963, Chandra published a further list in his work *Materials for the History of Tibetan Literature*.⁷⁹ This list refers to the same block print edition and contains the full titles of the works along with a short description of their contents. The fourth catalogue was compiled by Bidia Dandaron and is based on the *Collected Works* in eight volumes and a handwritten catalogue entitled *The Catalogue of Sumpa Khenpo Yeshe Paljor's Collected Works from the Library of Labrang* (Tib. *Bla brang mdzod dpe las sum pa mkhan po ye shes dpal 'byor gyi gsum 'bum dkar chag bzugs so*) that is located at the Buryat Research Institute.⁸⁰ His catalogue contains the full titles of each work, a Russian translation of these titles, and a brief description of their contents.

The fifth catalogue can be found in *Catalogue of the Collected Works [of Tibetan Buddhist Masters] Preserved in the Peoples' Library* (Tib. *Mi rigs dpe mdzod khang gi dpe tho las gsung 'bum skor gyi dkar chag shes bya'i gter mdzod*),⁸¹ which contains a catalogue of Sumpa Khenpo's *Collected Works* in eight volumes and a short biographical account.

⁷⁷ Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor (1959).

⁷⁸ See Chandra, L. (2004) 'Bio-Data of Prof. Lokesh Chandra', *Sanchi University of Buddhist-Indic Studies*. <https://www.sanchiuniv.edu.in/pdf/Lokesh%20Chandra%20CV.pdf> (accessed November 12, 2019).

⁷⁹ Chandra, L. (1963) *Materials for a History of Tibetan Literature*, Part 2. New Delhi: The International Academy of Indian Culture.

⁸⁰ Dandaron, B. (1965) *Opisanie tibetskikh rukopisei i ksilografov burjatskogo kompleksnogo nauchno-issledovatel'skogo instituta*, vyp. II. Moskva: Izd-vo Vostochnoi Lit-ry.

⁸¹ mGon po rgyal mtshan et al. (1997) *Mi rigs dpe mdzod khang gi dpe tho las gsung 'bum skor gyi dkar chag shes bya'i gter mdzod*, Vol. 3. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, pp. 478–487. Available on TBRC (ID W19837).

This catalogue contains the full title of each work and a Chinese translation. Finally, there is a copy of the *Collected Works* in eight volumes which resides at the Potala Palace. Its catalogue was published as part of a hefty compilation of Gelugpa catalogues titled *Catalogue of the Collected Works of Gelugpa Scholars Housed at the Potala* (Tib. *Po ta lar bzhugs pa'i dge lugs gsung 'bum gyi dkar chag*).⁸² This list contains the full title of each work in Tibetan and concludes with a short biography of Sumpa Khenpo. All the catalogues mentioned above list the same works in the same order, which suggests that they refer to the same eight-volume block print edition. Aside from these catalogues, Sumpa Khenpo's *Collected Works* have not yet been extensively examined and little is known regarding the origins of these works.⁸³

The original production site of Sumpa Khenpo's *Collected Works* has yet to be determined but has generated significant deliberation. As mentioned previously, Chandra reproduced works from xylographs obtained from Usutu juu. Further, the colophon of Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography notes that the scribe who produced the written matrix for the block print was Lobsang Konchog (Tib. Blo bzang dkon mchog) from Usutu juu (Tib. Ur tu su pa).⁸⁴ I cannot locate this name in other colophons of the *Collected Works*, but most are difficult to read due to the poor quality of the reprints. Erdenibayar claims, however, that

⁸² Bod rang skyong ljongs rig dngos do dam u yon lhan khang gi po ta la rig dngos srung skyob do dam so'o. (1990) *Po ta lar bzhugs pa'i dge lugs gsung 'bum gyi dkar chag*. Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, pp. 346–350. Available on TBRC (ID W19836).

⁸³ Some work has been done to change this: in his PhD thesis, Hanung Kim discusses the arrangement of Sumpa Khenpo's *Collected Works* and provides a breakdown of each volume and the works contained within them. He has also produced a table of locations that currently house a copy of the *Collected Works* to better understand its dissemination. See Kim (2018); 184–217.

⁸⁴ SK-CASS, folio 294(a); 6.

the xylographs used by Chandra were not identical with the original wood blocks.⁸⁵ Erdenibayar adds that following Sumpa Khenpo's death in 1788, his works were published at Gonlung Monastery, the seat of the Sumpa incarnation lineage, and later republished in Usutu juu.⁸⁶ In Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography, he writes that his *Collected Works* were shelved in 1786, and that he was presented with a new xylograph copy of his *Collected Works* in 1788. It also notes that his students completed the autobiography posthumously in 1794.⁸⁷ All this suggests that there could have been multiple editions of his *Collected Works*; possibly an original Gonlung block print edition in eight volumes and a nine-volume edition at Usutu juu, which later came into Raghu Vira's possession. Unfortunately, Erdenibayar does not state when these works were republished or from where he obtained this information.

In 1943, Nagao and his expedition team visited Usutu juu and saw the woodblocks of Sumpa Khenpo's *Collected Works*.⁸⁸ Nagao subsequently concluded that Sumpa Khenpo most likely passed away at this monastery which resulted in the production and publication of his works at that location.⁸⁹ However, his autobiography gives the location of his death as Lungkar Tashi Tse Monastery (Tib. Lung dkar bkra shis rtse; Ch. 逊布寺 Xùnbù sì) in Amdo, which can be seen on Map 3. Several other scholars, including Andrei Vostrikov,⁹⁰ have reiterated that Sumpa Khenpo's works were published in Hohhot; this city is located close-

⁸⁵ This would support Hanung Kim's claim that the original wood blocks were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. Erdenibayar (2007); 308.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ SK-CASS, folio 258(b); 5.

⁸⁸ Nagao (1947).

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Vostrikov (1970); 17.

by and is better known than Usutu juu, which would explain why Hohhot has often been cited as the place of publication. Additionally, *An Encyclopedia of the Learned Scholars of Tibet* (Tib. *Gangs can mkhas grub rim byon ming mdzod*), a biographical dictionary of prominent Tibetan scholars and political figures, also notes that the xylographs were stored at the capital of Inner Mongolia; “it is said today that the mould of the block prints [are located] at a monastery near the Yellow River (Tib. rMa chu; Mong. ᠬᠠᠲᠠᠨ ᠭᠣᠯ; Ch. 黄河 Huáng hé). In Mongolian, it (i.e. the monastery) is known as; Hu hong ham the, in Tibetan; Khar Ngonpo (Tib. mKhar sngon po).”⁹¹

However, the Russian scholar, Boris Vladimirovič Semičov, believed the works to have originally been published at Labrang Monastery (Tib. Bla brang bkra shis 'khyil; founded in 1709).⁹² This claim is based on the handwritten catalogue found in the Buryat Research Institute, which Dandaron used in his 1965 catalogue. It is likely that the copy found at the Buryat Research Institute once belonged to Labrang Monastery, but it is unlikely that it was published there as Gonlung Monastery possessed its own publishing house and currently there is no evidence to suggest that Sumpa Khenpo had a strong affiliation with Labrang Monastery. Furthermore, Gene Smith believed there existed only one block print edition of this *Collected Works*, which was printed in Dolonnor (Tib. Do lon no 'ur; Mong. Doloon nuur; Ch. 多倫淖爾 Duōlún nà'ěr); a city in present-day Inner Mongolia (155 miles north of Beijing) that was once a Mongol summer residence and was later developed as a

⁹¹ ... *sog skad du hu hong ham the ste bod skad du mkhar sngon po zhes pa'i nye 'dabs chu 'go ser po'i dgon par shing par brkos yod pa da lta bzhugs so skad* | Ko zhul Grags pa 'byung gnas and rGyal ba Blo bzang mkhas grub. (1992) *Gangs can mkhas grub rim byon ming mdzod*. Lanzhou: Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang, p. 1768. Available on TBRC (ID W19801).

Interestingly, Usutu means ‘near to water’ in Mongolian.

⁹² Dandaron (1965); 4.

religious centre by the Qing in the seventeenth century.⁹³ To make the situation even more complex, there exist three yet-to-be-examined block print copies of his *Collected Works* in Beijing which, according to their respective library catalogues, are all said to have been produced at different sites.⁹⁴ One set was allegedly produced at Gonlung Monastery, the second text is purportedly from Usutu juu, and the third was supposedly printed in the Imperial Temple in Beijing. Scholars such as Hanung Kim have proposed an examination of these works,⁹⁵ however much remains to be done regarding a more thorough analysis of the original production and publication of Sumpa Khenpo's corpus.

Nevertheless, what is clear is that Sumpa Khenpo's works appealed to a broad audience within Inner Asia. In a paper given at the fourteenth seminar of the IATS in 2016, Hanung Kim traced the spread of Sumpa Khenpo's *Collected Works*, locating copies in Beijing, Hohhot, Gansu, Xining, Lhasa, Ulaanbaatar, and Ulan-Ude (Mong. Ulaan üd),⁹⁶ which suggests that his works were distributed throughout the Qing Empire – especially in important religious centres – in the form of xylographic prints.⁹⁷ Printing was an expensive undertaking initiated by wealthy patrons, both locally and further afield. The ongoing political turmoil of the eighteenth century,⁹⁸ combined with the rise of willing and affluent

⁹³ FitzHerbert (2015).

⁹⁴ Hanung Kim discussed these copies in a paper given at the 14th IATS in 2016. Kim, H. "Following Footsteps of Master's Anthology: Analysis of Trans-Ethnic Dissemination of Collected Works by Sumpa Yéshé Penjor". (Paper given on June 24, 2016 at the 14th IATS, Bergen).

⁹⁵ Kim (2018); 184–188.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ See footnote 83 for Hanung Kim's table of locations.

⁹⁸ Although the period after the 1750s is generally characterised as the beginning of the apex period of the *pax manjurica* with relative domestic stability, Max Oidtmann's recent research has drawn attention to raids and growing instability in Amdo in the latter half of the eighteenth century resulting in frequent clashes and population flight. This period also marks the beginning of Muslim uprisings in Amdo. See Hille, M. et al. (2015) 'Introduction', in *Muslims in Amdo Tibetan Society: Multidisciplinary Approaches*.

patrons in China and Mongolia, motivated members of the Gelugpa school to look beyond local sponsors for patronage. Printing, like building and preserving religious edifices, functioned as a powerful way for leaders and the elite to maintain their influence and image as protectors of Buddhism.⁹⁹ With several emerging powers seeking to establish their virtue and authority through patronage, the publishing of a wide range of texts increased rapidly throughout the eighteenth century. The spread of Sumpa Khenpo's *Collected Works* suggests that he, or at least Gonlung Monastery, had secured the sponsorship of numerous patrons across the Qing Empire, and that the printing and promotion of this text was considered a worthy investment.¹⁰⁰ Aspects of this patronage will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography, the work that is the main focus of this thesis, has also been edited and reprinted several times. It can be found in volume eight of the block print of Sumpa Khenpo's *Collected Works* and consists of 294 folios in total. An outline of the autobiography can be found in the appendix. An edition titled *A Description of the Activities of the Excellent Paṅḍita Sumpa Yeshe Paljor, [which is like] Nectar for the Ear* (Tib. *Paṅḍi ta sum pa ye shes dpal 'byor mchog gi spyod tshul brjod pa sgra 'dzin bcud len*)

London; Lanham: Lexington Books, pp. 1–20; Oidtmann, M. (2010) 'The Nineteenth-Century Crisis of the Mongol Banners in Amdo'. A presentation summary, May 2010.

https://www.academia.edu/2231340/_The_Nineteenth-Century_Crisis_of_the_Mongol_Banners_in_Amdo_ (accessed February 02, 2018); and Oidtmann, M. (2016) 'Overlapping Empires: Religion, Politics, and Ethnicity in Nineteenth-Century Qinghai', *Late Imperial China* 37, pp. 41–91.

⁹⁹ Scholarship on the sponsorship of printing Buddhist texts includes, Diemberger, H. (2014) 'Patronage and Printing Innovation in Fifteenth-Century Tibet', in Piliawsky, A. (ed.) *Patronage as Politics in South Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 336–356; Diemberger, H. et al. (2016) *Tibetan Printing: Comparisons, Continuities and Change*. Leiden: Brill; and Schaeffer (2009).

¹⁰⁰ Sumpa Khenpo's patrons were discussed in more detail in a paper given by the author titled "Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor: an interlocutor between the Tibetans, Mongols, and the Manchus". (Paper given on June 21, 2016 at the 14th IATS, Bergen). See also Sullivan (2013).

was published by the China Tibetology Publishing House (Tib. *Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang*) in 2001.¹⁰¹ A condensed version titled *An Autobiography of Sumpa Yeshe Paljor* (Tib. *Sum pa ye shes dpal 'byor gyi rnam thar nyid kyis mdzad pa*) was published by Gansu Publishing House in 1997.¹⁰² These publications reflect the continuing interest in Sumpa Khenpo and his works, as discussed in the Introduction. The next section will look at Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography in more detail, and the genre of life writing in general.

The Autobiography of Sumpa Khenpo

The colophon of the autobiography states that it was composed in the Fire Monkey year (1776), the seventy-third year of Sumpa Khenpo's life.¹⁰³ In this thesis, I am relying mostly on photographs of a copy of the autobiography held at the Chinese Academy of Social

¹⁰¹ Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor. (2001) *Pañdi ta sum pa ye shes dpal 'byor mchog gi spyod tshul brjod pa sgra 'dzin bcud len*. Beijing: Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang. Available on TBRC (ID W25006).

¹⁰² Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor (1997). More information about this shorter autobiography can be found in footnote 75.

¹⁰³ SK-CASS, folio 292(b); 2.

I had considered adopting the term auto/biography in reference to this text as Sumpa Khenpo passed away before its completion, resulting in two of his disciples - Piligtu Chöjé Lobsang Geleg (Tib. Pi lig thu chos rje Blo bzang dge legs) and Rabjampa Geleg Samdrup (Tib. Rab 'byams pa dGe legs bsam 'grub) - writing the remainder in the Wood Tiger year (1794). SK-CASS, folio 258(b); 5.

However, the majority of the autobiography is written by the author and as will be shown, the genre of life-writing is both complex and fluid with labels being used interchangeably. For example, many modern autobiographies are penned by ghostwriters on behalf of the subject. Parallels could also be drawn with Mozart's *Requiem*, which is still attributed to Mozart despite much of the composition being completed following his death.

Sumpa Khenpo continued to write until the eleventh day of the first month of Earth Monkey year (1788), fifteen days before his death. His personal accounts are found in folios 1(a)–240(b). Folios 240(b)–258(b) were composed by his disciples. A topical summary of Sumpa Khenpo's life, written by the author, can be found in folios 259(a)–291(b), followed by the colophon in folios 291(b)–294(a).

Sciences (CASS) in Beijing,¹⁰⁴ along with Chandra's facsimile reproduction,¹⁰⁵ and a modern typeset publication from 2001, which all represent the same block print edition. There is currently no evidence to suggest that a separate version, which is different from the block print edition, exists. I am consulting all three, as each copy has its own difficulties; Chandra's reproduction is difficult to read in places, the modern edition is missing small sections of text,¹⁰⁶ and some of the images of the copy held in Beijing (SK-CASS) are blurred which makes it difficult to read. I will refer mainly to SK-CASS as it is generally clear and easily accessible, comparing entries with the other copies when the print is unclear. I believe this will give me the most accurate readings.

In the opening pages of his autobiography, Sumpa Khenpo explains to the reader why he is writing his life story and the aims of his work. He follows the conventional pattern of a modest introduction, explaining that this project was undertaken in response to the request of his disciples; Piligtu Chöjé Lobsang Geleg and *Nangso Geleg Lhundrup* (Tib. Nang so dGe legs lhun grub),¹⁰⁷ who had also asked Thuken Lobsang Chökyi Nyima for his

¹⁰⁴ I would like to thank Hanung Kim for providing me with these images, which have been invaluable in my research. According to the CASS, this text is said to have been published in Usutu juu, and as far as I can tell matches the copy reprinted by Lokesh Chandra. Referred to as SK-CASS from here on. Available on TBRC (ID W4CZ315250).

¹⁰⁵ Referred to as SK-Ch from here on.

¹⁰⁶ These sections are usually no more than a line long, which I believe is due to the editors missing lines. For example, the modern reprint skips a line regarding Sumpa Khenpo's mother (in bold): *rus kyang rigs de ma nyams pa'i o'i rod kyi tsho bzhi'i nang gi p'a thun kyi tha'i ji'i rgyud pa yang mes zhe shen gsum gyi gcig yin | pha rdo rje bkra shis zhes ba rang bzhin bzang la bod yig shes shing kha ton dge spyod la dga' ba dang | ma ju'un ghar pa bkra shis mtsho zhes pa sems rgyud ngang ngag 'jam pa nye 'gyad kun la phan sems ldan zhing 'jig rten yul lugs la mkhas pas tsho sde de'i don chen skabs su bgros dgri yul zhig yin zhes yul mi dag gis mthun par gleng ba thos | cho 'brang zhes pa'i cho yang zhang po ju'un g'ar dpon rigs kyi khung dang ldan pa'o* || SK-CASS, folio 10(a); 3–5.

¹⁰⁷ Piligtu Chöjé Lobsang Geleg is named as one of the students who helped complete the autobiography after Sumpa Khenpo's death, he is also referred to in Sumpa Khenpo's writings as Sumpa Chöjé Lobsang Geleg. According to Kim, Sumpa Chöjé Lobsang Geleg was a close protégé of Sumpa Khenpo and the eleventh abbot of Gonlung's tantric college. See SK-CASS, folio 258(b); 6, and Kim (2018); 84.

endorsement.¹⁰⁸ The author also refers to an Oirad (Tib. 'O rod; 瓦刺 Wǎcì) patron from Alasha (Tib. A la sha; Ch. 阿拉善 Ālāshàn), a Mongol settlement bordering present-day Gansu in the west and neighbouring Ordos (Ch. 鄂尔多斯 È'ěrdūōsī) in the southeast, who bestowed many gifts upon him, including a silver statue of Avalokiteśvara (Tib. sPyan ras gzigs), and encouraged him to produce this work.¹⁰⁹

[I was] previously encouraged by the great Oirad *Qinwang* (Tib. *Chin wang*).¹¹⁰ Later on, he gave [me] fifty silver coins and repeated [his request] with urgency, and [I was] unable to decline. And because other circles of my own students and many whose devotion is no less asked me again and again with urgency, I wrote it down.¹¹¹

This suggests that the autobiography was written based both on the devotion of his students and political patronage that went high up within the Gelug-Qing establishment. The value of Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography, to his students and to senior authorities of the day,¹¹² lies in its benefit to future generations; not only as a didactic model for others but also as an example of an exemplary figure who epitomised the ideals of *lugnyi* (discussed

The title *Nangso* has several meanings, which Yangdon Dhondup explores in her paper on identity formation and mobilisation at Rebkong. In this case, I believe it refers to a Tibetan or Mongolian official. See Dhondup, T. Y. (2011) 'Reb kong: Religion, History and Identity of a Sino-Tibetan borderland town,' *Revue d'Etudes Tibétaines* 20, pp. 33–59.

¹⁰⁸ SK-CASS, folio 2(b); 1–2.

¹⁰⁹ SK-CASS, folio 6(b); 4–5.

¹¹⁰ *Qinwang* (Ch. 親王 *Qīnwáng*) translates as 'Prince' or 'Prince of the First Rank'; it is the highest honorary title bestowed on nobility by the Qing dynasty.

¹¹¹ *sa skyong ho sho'i chin wang chen pos sngar nas bskul zhing phyis su'ang dngul dkar srang bcu phrag lnga gnang nas yang skyar nan tan mdzad pa'i gsung bzlog ma nus pa dang | gzhan rang gi slob 'khor dang dad 'dun mi dman pa mang pos kyang skyar bskul nan tan che ngor bris pa'o* // SK-CASS, folio 293(b);7 – folio 294(a);1.

¹¹² That is the *Qinwang* of Alasha, Lobsang Dorje (Tib. Blo bzang rdo rje) – whose relationship with Sumpa Khenpo is discussed in Chapter three – and Thuken Lobsang Chökyi Nyima. The latter was well-received in the Qing court and highly regarded in Amdo and Lhasa. For more on Thuken Lobsang Chökyi Nyima, see footnote 18.

briefly in the Introduction). As the following chapters will show, Sumpa Khenpo engaged in both secular and religious spheres; through his practice and promotion of the *dharma*, tantric rituals, and secular fields of knowledge (Tib. *rig gnas*); through his dialogues on warfare, corruption within the *tulku* (Tib. *sprul sku*) system, and monastic discipline; and through his activities and associations with patrons and communities across the larger framework of the Qing Empire. In different ways, these activities promoted the Gelugpa school whilst also facilitating the process of buddhization and further incorporating Inner Asia into the Buddhist Qing. To high-ranking figures of the day, Sumpa Khenpo was a paradigm of strong Buddhist governance in Inner Asia, and his autobiography would showcase this.

Following his motives for writing his autobiography, Sumpa Khenpo continues with the rhetorical formula of modesty, stating that his life, which he compares to that of an ordinary householder, could have been summarised in a handful of pages. However, he was encouraged by Zangkor Shabdrung Palden Ozer (Tib. bZang skor zhabs drung dPal ldan 'od zer) to write a thorough account in order to benefit future disciples.¹¹³ Sumpa Khenpo declares that his writings, therefore, are an attempt to repay the kindness of his teachers, show respect for the *dharma*, and to benefit all sentient beings.¹¹⁴ These formulas of humility and self-critical references to his shortcomings form an important part of this text, steering him away from the impression that his writings are an attempt at self-promotion. However, this is not unique to Sumpa Khenpo, for example Lodrag Khenchen (Tib. Lho brag mkhan

¹¹³ SK-CASS, folio 6(b); 2.

¹¹⁴ SK-CASS, folio 6(b); 3.

chen Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan; 1326–1401) engages in similar self-critical remarks.¹¹⁵ Ulrike Roesler draws attention to the recurring rhetoric of apology and diffidence that can be found in the introductions and post-scripts of Tibetan autobiographical works. Common tropes include the unworthiness of the author, either due to lack of skill or a life not worth being recorded; justification of its production, through being urged by disciples, patrons etc. and/or writing it for the benefit of others; and noting that writing an autobiography is in accordance with the Buddhist tradition, as it follows the Buddhist tradition of biographical writing.¹¹⁶ As we can see, most of these tropes can be found in the opening folios of Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography. Interestingly, it can also be seen in countless religious auto/biographies outside of Tibet, such as the well-known autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila (1515–1582).¹¹⁷ Life writing, then, highlights the communal customs for narrating one's own life story, which will be analysed in more detail below.

Tibetan Buddhist Biographical Writing

Multiple terms are used in the West to describe life writing, from 'autobiography' and 'memoir' if composed in the first person to 'biography' and 'hagiography' if in the third person. There are distinct differences between these designations - particularly as they

¹¹⁵ Kurtis Schaeffer briefly discusses the self-critical remarks of the Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (Tib. Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho; 1617–1682), and Lodrang Khenchen in, Schaeffer, K. R. (2010) 'Tibetan Biography: Growth and Criticism', in Chayet, A. et al. (eds.) *Edition, Éditions: l'écrit au Tibet, évolution et devenir*. Munich: Indus Verlag, pp. 273–275.

¹¹⁶ Roesler, U. (2019) 'Between Self-Expression and Convention: Tibetan Reflections on Autobiographical Writing,' *Life Writing*. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14484528.2019.1620581> (accessed November 11, 2019).

¹¹⁷ See St. Teresa of Avila. (2010) [1960] *The Autobiography of St Teresa of Avila*, translated and edited by A. E. Peers. New York: Dover Publications.

represent varied subgenres and movements throughout history. The same is true of Tibetan life writing. One of the most common titles is *namthar* (Tib. *rnam thar*) or spiritual biography, which typically traces the protagonist’s journey from childhood, through their spiritual development and complete liberation, to their death. Tibetan biographies are closely connected to autobiographies or *rangnam* (Tib. *rang rnam*), sharing form, content and purpose. Disciples would often draw on autobiographical accounts when writing the biography of their teacher, and Buddhist lamas were known to dictate their life story to their students; blurring the lines between biography and autobiography. Despite the overlapping of these genres, one of the clear distinctions is the *rangnam*’s self-referential elements.¹¹⁸ In many cases autobiographies do not contain the expression *rangnam* in the title but use other designations, such as the humbler *rang gi lo rgyus* (story of oneself)¹¹⁹ or the honorific title *rnam thar zhal gsung ma* (*namthar* told by [one’s own] mouth).¹²⁰ Others use descriptive phrases like *spyod tshul brjod pa* (description of the deeds), which can be applied to both autobiographical and biographical forms of writing. The latter can be found in the title of Sumpa Khenpo’s work, *mKhan po erte ni Paṅḍi ta tar grags pa’i spyod tshul brjod pa sgra ’dzin bcud len*. With this in mind, and given the focus on the religious roles and spiritual experiences of the subject, I believe ‘spiritual life writing’ to be an appropriate term for spiritual auto/biographies in general. Spiritual life writing is an inclusive term that broadens

¹¹⁸ Gyatso, J. (1998) *Apparitions of the Self: The Secret Autobiographies of a Tibetan Visionary*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 251.

¹¹⁹ For example: ‘Gyur med bsod nams stobs rgyal. (1990) *Rang gi lo rgyus lhad med rang byung zangs*. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (TBRC ID W8LS26567).

¹²⁰ For example; Thang stong rgyal po. (1976) ‘Bya btang nor bu rgya mtsho’i rnam thar zhal gsung ma’, in *The Collected Works (Gsung ‘bum) of Thang-stong rgyal-po*. Thimphu: Kunsang Topgey, pp. 117–123. Available on TBRC (ID W23919).

the parameters of this genre and accommodates texts such as Sumpa Khenpo's, which combines both biography and autobiography; two distinct forms of life writing.

Spiritual life writing varies in both type and scope, ranging from complete life accounts, rich in historical detail, to descriptions of day-to-day life, to travelogues, to biographical accounts of masters and other prominent figures, and more. However, predominantly they form a narrative genre, both fictional and factual, like life writing in other cultures and religions. Within Tibetan spiritual autobiographies, common themes include miraculous signs before the birth of the individual, advanced learning abilities, and pilgrimage.¹²¹ While autobiography was considered by some Western academics to be an exclusively Western genre,¹²² Tibetan life writing arose and developed independently of Western, Chinese, and Indian literary traditions.¹²³ In a preliminary study on Tibetan biography, Kurtis Schaeffer found 1225 biographies listed on the TBRC database. Of these works, only 161 were classified as autobiographies.¹²⁴ Most of these texts were composed by male Buddhist practitioners who received a formal Tibetan education, like Sumpa Khenpo himself. These writings provide us with an understanding of religious life in its full spectrum; from everyday rituals to scholastic education to experiences of realisation, and a

¹²¹ For typical patterns in Tibetan auto/biographical literature, see Ramble, C. (2010) 'The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly: The Circumscription of Saintly Evil in Tibetan Biography', in Covill, L. et al. (eds.) *Lives Lived, Lives Imagined*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, pp. 299–300.

¹²² Many Western autobiographical theorists, such as Georges Gusdorf, note that autobiographical writings are only found in Western culture as these works focus on the idea of the 'self', which Gusdorf identifies as a solely Western phenomenon. See Gusdorf, G. (1980) [1958] 'Conditions and Limits of Autobiography', in Olney, J. (ed.) *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 28–48.

¹²³ Gyatso (1998).

¹²⁴ Schaeffer (2010); 296.

unique lens through which we can observe not only the religious, but also the socio-cultural and political climate of the period in which they wrote.

Spiritual life writing in Tibet can be traced back to at least the thirteenth century, with early examples including the autobiography of the Second Karmapa, Karma Pakshi (Tib. Karma Pakṣi; 1204–1283).¹²⁵ However, it was during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that the literary tradition began developing to unparalleled heights. Coinciding with the expansion of the Qing and the incorporation of Tibetan and Mongolian regions into the empire, sponsored literary production came to play an important role during this politically chaotic period. As such, Buddhist teachers and their disciples were expected to write auto/biographical accounts.¹²⁶ Tibetans in the seventeenth and eighteenth century “found themselves caught up in the tides of political turmoil and forced into the centre of a much larger Central Eurasian struggle for power and territorial control between the Manchu rulers of the Qing Empire and the Mongols of the north. The Tibetans, speaking with multiple voices and with allegiances to varied local religious and social groups, were compelled to make sense of their changing world and their place within it while still maintaining their ties to the great tradition of Tibet's past.”¹²⁷

The increase of autobiographical and biographical writing around the seventeenth century can be better understood in the context of the shifting political landscape of this period. Tibetans have often placed an emphasis on the succession of an authentic line for

¹²⁵ Karma Pakshi. (1978) *Karma Pakṣi'i rang rnam dang spyi lan ring mo*. Gangtok: Gonpo Tseten (TBRC ID W27319).

¹²⁶ Gyatso (1998); 112.

¹²⁷ Schaeffer, K. R. and Cuevas, B. (2006) ‘Introduction’, in Schaeffer, K. R. and Cuevas, B. (eds.) *Power, Politics and the Reinvention of Tradition in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Tibet: Proceedings of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Xth Seminar, Oxford University, 2003*. Leiden: Brill, p.4.

both legitimation and power - politically and religiously - which reflects a long tradition of record keeping, be it written or oral.¹²⁸ Authors of Buddhist texts would lay authority to established traditions in order to promote shifts in doctrine and/or practices. These practices and changes are usually presented as part of an uninterrupted ancient tradition, which they can trace from the beginning (often the Buddha, or at least an authoritative Indian master).¹²⁹ Through asserting the religious achievements of both themselves and their lineage, the author hoped to assert their superiority (or the superiority of their monastery) when compared with other traditions. Socio-historical conditions in Tibet had often included institutional competition, for example between the Tibetan lamas of the Tselpa (Tib. *mTshal pa bKa' brgyud*) and Drigungpa (Tib. *'Bri gung bKa' brgyud*) schools who became embroiled in Mongol factionalism during the expansion of the Mongolian empire. Comparisons can be drawn with Christian autobiographers whose authors had been motivated to write in response to religious oppression or persecution, particularly in Britain in the seventeenth century, when numerous Catholic autobiographies were published in response to severe harassment and persecution.¹³⁰ With the rise of a new power in the form of the Qing Empire, monasteries found themselves contending for imperial and regional patronage through asserting their spiritual authority and superiority.

While some scholars argue that there is currently little historical evidence for a direct Qing influence on Tibetan life-writing, scholars such as Matthew King and Janet Gyatso believe the substantial shift in the style and content of life writings produced by Buddhist

¹²⁸ As we will see in Chapter five, lineage also plays an important role in Tibetan medicine and authenticating physicians/medical practitioners.

¹²⁹ Schaeffer and Cuevas (2006); 1.

¹³⁰ Delany, P. (2015) *British Autobiography in the Seventeenth Century*. London: Routledge, p.38.

scholars residing in the Qing courts suggests otherwise.¹³¹ Schaeffer has also researched this area through examining the development and increasing popularity of biographies during the early Qing period.¹³² With a series of tables and charts, Schaeffer shows how biographies expanded not only in number but also in length, comparing twelfth century Tibetan spiritual biographies which were made up of tens of folios with seventeenth and eighteenth-century biographies that went into the hundreds, such as Sumpa Khenpo's.¹³³ These developments suggest a growing awareness in the form and purpose of autobiographical writings, with an increasing number of lineage holders and teachers compiling autobiographies to document exemplary lives and to show strength, unity, and authority within their own tradition; both for their rivals and for their disciples and patrons, the future of the tradition.

Spiritual autobiographies are generally didactic in nature, focusing on the accomplishments and miracles of their heroes, and using their life stories to inspire and set an example.¹³⁴ This is true not only for the Tibetan context, but for religious autobiographical writing in general. Thomas Heffernan considers this to be their key function; “The primary social function of sacred biography, understood in the broadest of terms, is to teach (docere) the truth of the faith through the principle of individual example. The catechetical imperative is the most fundamental of the shared anticipation between author and audience.”¹³⁵ If we take a cross-cultural perspective, St. Augustine (354–430)

¹³¹ See Gyatso (1998); 115; and King, M. W. (2014) *Writing True Places in the Twilight of Empire and the Dawn of Revolution: The Buddhist Historiography of the Mongol Zawa Damdin Luwsandamdin* (1867-1937). PhD Thesis. University of Toronto, p. 74.

¹³² Schaeffer (2010).

¹³³ Ibid; 263.

¹³⁴ See Willis, J. D. (1995) *Enlightened Beings, Life Stories from the Ganden Oral Tradition*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.

¹³⁵ Heffernan, T. J. (1988) *Sacred Biography: Saints and Their Biographers in the Middle Ages*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.19.

and St. Teresa of Avila are prime examples of authors of spiritual autobiographies who offered their experiences as a model for their readers.¹³⁶

However, in the Tibetan context, life writing also demonstrates distinctly Tibetan attributes. The constant interplay between humility and self-assertion, for example, is prevalent in Tibetan autobiographies, including the autobiographies of Jigme Lingpa (Tib. 'Jigs med gling pa; 1729–1798) and the Fifth Dalai Lama as for example in the following line from the latter: “I sit on the seat of my predecessor like a donkey clothed in leopard’s skin”.¹³⁷ As discussed above, downplaying one’s status is a highly regarded virtue, and this interaction is echoed in the writing of Sumpa Khenpo. He opens his work doubting the value of his own account:

Although my inner mind is as hard and untamed as a horn and I have no learning, I pretend to possess it; [it is as insubstantial as] a worn-out robe stitched with fine thread. [I am like] a parrot that advocates the *dharma* orally in large gatherings and through playful pretence [I am like] a glass bead that is called a jewel. My life account is similar to a rocky cliff; no matter how many strong winds or verses of flattery are propelled [at it], no sweet fragrance will rise.¹³⁸

Yet alongside this is an author’s compulsion to narrate truthfully with no over-exaggeration or self-praise. Sumpa Khenpo criticises others who have written

¹³⁶ For a detailed study on the rise of autobiographical literature in the West, see Anderson, L. (2001) *Autobiography*. London: Routledge.

¹³⁷ Karmay, S. G. (2014) *The Illusive Play: The Autobiography of the Fifth Dalai Lama*. Chicago: Serindia Publications, p.17. The image is an allusion to an Indian story from the *Pañcatantra* that also became popular in Tibet.

¹³⁸ *nang sems rwa ltar gyong zhing yon tan med kyang yod brdzu'i skud pa phra mos btsem pa'i gos rul ral sla lta bu'i ngang tshul can / 'du 'dzi'i tshang tshing khrod du kha nas chos smra ba' ne tso pho tshod dang zob kyis rsted 'jo byed pa rdo'i 'ching bu la rin po che'i ming btags 'dra'i lo rgyus brag ri la gcam bu'i ngag gi snyan dngags kyi lam nas drangs pa'i 'thor rlung gis ji tsam bskul [...]* | SK-CASS, folio 2(b); 6–7.

autobiographies, suggesting that whatever they compose is likely to magnify their life and deeds beyond the limits of truth:

Wandering the country, scholars send for hundreds of blank pages and are supposedly conquering enemies and supporting their companions, I am disgusted by these proclamations. In this way, if someone writes about their non-dharmic behaviour, they are ridiculed by all. [However], reasons to write about truly superior qualities is [non-existent] like the horn of the rabbit. Envy towards those who are superior, competing with one's equals, and despising inferior ones, praising oneself and denigrating others – these contradict the right manners. When [people] proclaim with meaningless noise how they convert the poison water of their vices into the nectar of virtue, they should fear the karmic results! Shame on those who keep their ordinary features completely hidden and hide them behind the veil of lies.¹³⁹

Although the author is hesitant to compose a work on his life – a point he mentions multiple times – he undertakes this task reluctantly due to the petitioning of his masters, disciples, and patrons. Sumpa Khenpo's work presents itself rhetorically as an antidote to the dishonesty inherent in other autobiographical texts:

I do not want to compose an autobiography that invokes superficial illusions, as false as the seductions of a harlot [or] a golden inkpot [filled with] ink. Ordinary beings endowed with the shackles of self-view cannot understand

¹³⁹ *yul myul brgya shog stong 'gug la mkhas dang // dgra 'dul gnyen bskyongs tshul brjod mkhas pas khrel // de bzhin chos min spyad bris kun gyis 'phya // khyad 'phags yon tan brjod rgyu ri bong rwa // mtho la phrag dog mnyam 'gran dman sdang tshul // bdag stod gzhad smod smras na lugs zung 'gal // nyes mang dug chu yon tan a smri tar // bsgyur ba'i stong 'ur sgrogs la las 'bras 'jigs // rang gi mtshan nyid phal la lkog gyur gang // rdzun gyis yol ba'i phag sbas ngo re tsha // SK-CASS, folio 1(b); 5–6.*

how previous births [affect] later events. Therefore, it contradicts the holy *dharma* if one conceals flaws and talks [only] about one's good qualities.¹⁴⁰

Interestingly this passage echoes almost verbatim what the Fifth Dalai Lama writes at the beginning of his own autobiography,¹⁴¹ which suggests that both came from the same scholarly tradition and were familiar with the same literary conventions. Remarks such as these successfully drape autobiographical writings in its obligatory shroud of humility, while also publicising the work's commitment to authenticity. The opening of the autobiography reflects Sumpa Khenpo's literary and rhetorical skill, a feature that can be observed throughout the work. His use of rhetoric to establish authority and trustworthiness, both in his writing and in his speeches recorded in the autobiography, will be further examined in Chapter four.

Sumpa Khenpo's Literary Style

Together with following as well as setting stylistic norms, the opening of a literary work is also a place where the author can display their literary skills. One of the most notable features of Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography is his use of *kāvya* (Tib. *snyan ngag*), an Indian literary style that involves the use of metaphors, similes, and ornate language. As Sumpa Khenpo himself remarks, “Scholars of India have led the way with the poetry of the *Avadānas* of the teacher (i.e. the Buddha) and other stories. Likewise, this is [my] attempt at poetic

¹⁴⁰ 'phyon ma'i bslu brid gser gyi snag bum spun // sgyu ma'i phrul 'gran rnam thar mol mi phod // bdag lta'i 'ching ba kun ldan so skye la // skye sngon phyis byung yid yul mi 'gyur phyir // skyon sbed yon tan brjod na dam chos 'gal // SK-CASS, folio 2(a); 5–6.

¹⁴¹ Karmay (2014); 17–21.

diction; this poetry gives respite to the weary one who reads it.”¹⁴² *Kāvya* generally refers to poetry itself, but as Siegfried Lienhard demonstrates in his work on classical Indian poetry, it is far more complex with *kāvya* being classified into numerous different categories.¹⁴³ These classifications were usually based on language, literary form, and whether it was in verse (Tib. *tshig bcad*; Skt. *padya*), prose (Tib. *lhug*; Skt. *gadya*), or a mixture of both (Tib. *tshig bcad lhug spel ma*; Skt. *campū*).¹⁴⁴ It was first employed in Indian court epics and involved reciting or narrating these before a large audience. Early *kāvya* theorists such as Daṇḍin (fl. seventh century) state that the aims of composing poetry were for the glory (Skt. *kīrti*) and fame of the individual poems, and the enjoyment (Skt. *prīti*) of the audience.¹⁴⁵ A third aim was sometimes included, which may be linked to the increased use of *kāvya* among religious authors; poems should aim to give instruction (Skt. *upadeśa*) in a gentle and melodious voice. At the end of the *Saundarananda*, a *kāvya* poem on the conversion of Nanda composed by the Indian poet Aśvaghoṣa (fl. second century), the author gives a detailed explanation for his decision to write in verse:

Thus, this work, which has liberation at its theme, has been composed for tranquillity, not for pleasure, with the intention of capturing through the use of poetry hearers/pupils whose minds are fixed on other things. For [the fact] that I have dealt with something other than liberation here has been done

¹⁴² 'phags yul mkhas pas ston pa'i rtogs brjod dang / lo rgyus gzhan pa'ang snyan dngags lam du 'dren / de bzhin 'dir yang tshig rgyan bcing khul 'di / skyo ngal can 'gas bltas tshe ngal gso phyir / SK-CASS, folio 292(a); 5–6.

¹⁴³ Lienhard, S. (1984) *A History of Classical Poetry: Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit*. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.

¹⁴⁴ Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography is made up of a combination of prose and verse (*campū*).

¹⁴⁵ Lienhard (1984); 4. For more on the aims of Sanskrit poetry, see Keith, A. B. (1993) *A History of Sanskrit Literature*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, pp. 338–352, and Monius, A. (2014) “‘And We Shall Compose a Poem to Establish These Truths’”: The Power of Narrative Art in South Asian Literary Cultures,” in Speigh, A. (ed.) *Narrative, Philosophy and Life*. New York: Springer, pp. 151–168.

because of the laws of poetry, having thought about how it could become agreeable, as bitter medicine is mixed with honey to make it drinkable.¹⁴⁶

Jain narratives in particular would combine didactic material with ornate poetry in the *campū* style.¹⁴⁷ This combination of prose and verse allowed the author greater ease of expression and displayed his mastery of both styles of writing. Although *campū* literature took many forms, including religious texts, epics, and romantic tales, it was also used in life writing, for example, the *Jātakamālā* (*The Garland of Birth Stories*) by Āryaśūra (fl. fourth century),¹⁴⁸ which recounts thirty four stories of the Buddha's previous births, is made up of prose and verse in sequence.¹⁴⁹ This work, together with Kṣemendra's (fl. eleventh century) *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā*, became particularly influential as models of *kāvya* poetry in Tibet.¹⁵⁰

As early as the seventh century, Buddhist Sanskrit texts began to be translated into Tibetan. Some of the texts translated in the early translation period employed *kāvya* and this

¹⁴⁶ *Saundarananda* 18.63-64. Translation is quoted from Roland Steiner. Steiner, R. (2010) 'Truth Under the Guise of Poetry: Aśvaghōṣa's "Life of the Buddha"', in Covill, L. et al. (eds.) *Lives Lived, Lives Imagined: Biographies of Awakening*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, p.94.

¹⁴⁷ Lienhard (1984); 268.

¹⁴⁸ An English translation of this text can be found online: Speyer, J. S. (2010) [1895] 'Jatakamala: Garland of Birth Stories', *Ancient Buddhist Texts*. <http://www.ancient-buddhist-texts.net/English-Texts/Garland-of-Birth-Stories/> (accessed November 24, 2016).

¹⁴⁹ The *Jātakamālā* (Tib. *sKyes rabs 'phreng ba*) was translated into Tibetan circa 1270 and was incorporated into the Tibetan Buddhist canon. Tibetan tradition holds that Āryaśūra had intended to write 100 stories, ten to illustrate each of the ten perfections (Tib. *pha rol tu phyin pa bcu*; Skt. *daśa pāramitā*) but left his work unfinished. The Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (Tib. Rang 'byung rdo rje; 1284–1339) wrote several works on the text, including an expansion from thirty four to 100 stories. For an overview of the Buddha's biographies in Tibet, including the *Jātakamālā*, see Lin, N. G. (2011) *Adapting the Buddha's Biographies: A Cultural History of the Wish-Fulfilling Vine in Tibet, Seventeenth to Eighteenth Centuries*. PhD Thesis. University of California.

¹⁵⁰ Lin's doctoral research also examines the reception and dissemination of the *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā* in Tibet. Lin (2011). See also, van der Kuijp, L. W. J. (1996) 'Tibetan Belles-Lettres: The Influence of Daṇḍin and Kṣemendra', in Cabezón, J. I. et al. (eds.) *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*. Ithaca: Snow Lion, pp. 393–410.

form began to influence literature in Tibet. However, it was during the thirteenth century that this form of poetry started to make its mark. During this period Sakya Paṇḍita and the circle of scholars around him began translating Indian poetry and rules of poetry, including Daṇḍin’s *Kāvyaḍarśa* (*Mirror of Poetry*; Tib. *sNyan ngag me long*). As the monastic system took hold in Tibet, scholars and those with an academic background began composing works in this style and wrote commentaries on the *Kāvyaḍarśa*.¹⁵¹ The study of classical poetry and its reinterpretation by Tibetan and Mongolian scholars came to be regarded as one of the five minor disciplines mentioned above, playing an important part in monastic education. Poetry was regarded highly by illustrious scholars of Buddhism, such as Tsongkhapa, the Fifth Dalai Lama, and *Desi* Sangye Gyatso (Tib. *sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho*; 1653–1705): “If you know poetics, you will not be confused in verbal ornamentation. If you know synonyms, you will not be confused regarding names. If you know dramaturgy, you will not be confused regarding languages. If you know divination, you will not be confused regarding mathematics.”¹⁵² Thus by the time of Sumpa Khenpo, poetry was regularly studied in the Tibetan monastic curriculum, and one was not considered highly educated if they did not possess knowledge of metrics, synonymy, and dramaturgy.

Tibetan ornate poetry and literature employed imagery that was largely borrowed from Indian models, often including Sanskrit terminology, and using images of Hindu deities, Indian flowers (such as the lotus flower, Skt. *padma*), animals (such as parrots), and so on. Matthew Kapstein perfectly sums up this trend: “India was now very much in vogue,

¹⁵¹ The Fifth Dalai Lama, for example, wrote a commentary on the *Kāvyaḍarśa* titled *Commentary on Difficult Points in Poetry’s Mirror; the Song of Sarasvati* (Tib. *sNyan ngag me long gi dka’ ’grel dbyangs can dgyes pa’i glu dbyangs*). For more on the influence of Daṇḍin’s *Kāvyaḍarśa*, see van der Kuijp (1996).

¹⁵² Sang rgyas rgya mtsho, *bsTan bcos baiḍūr dkar po las dris lan ’khrul snang g’ya’ sel*, folio 261(b); 4, translation quoted from Kurtis Schaeffer. Schaeffer (2011a); 293.

and tokens of connections to the south were greatly prized”.¹⁵³ However, the differences between the Sanskrit and Tibetan languages limited the types of ornamentation that could be transmitted transculturally, especially when used in sound based poetic forms such as alliteration and word play. And so, between the thirteenth and seventeenth century traditional Tibetan elements such as snow-capped mountains, lakes, and flowers were combined with Indic *kāvya*.¹⁵⁴ This combination of Indian and Tibetan imagery is also seen in Sumpa Khenpo’s life writing:

When I was born, my excellent human body was like the excellent [wish-fulfilling] tree, like Indra looking with a 1,000 wide-eyes.¹⁵⁵ Moreover, due to the fragrant wind of faith [and] previous virtue [that is like] the sandalwood of Malaya (Tib. Ma la ya),¹⁵⁶ [I acquired an] auspicious re-birth, and hastily took a share of aphoristic wisdom. It is dubious that [such] miraculous emanations have been created by [our] ancestors. The ability to obtain the essence, [namely] the precious human body, which is the peak of glory of the inanimate and animate world, the source of virtue and goodness, which is comparable with the wish-fulfilling jewel, like the Garuda who eats the snake

¹⁵³ Kapstein, M. (2003) ‘The Indian Literary Identity in Tibet’, in Pollock, S. (ed.) *Literary Cultures in History: Reconstructions from South Asia*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p.769.

¹⁵⁴ Schaeffer, K. et al. (2013) *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*. New York: Columbia University Press, p.425.

¹⁵⁵ According to Indian mythology, Indra has 1,000 eyes covering his body due to a curse. The use of Indra can be seen as the intertwining of Indian and Tibetan elements. Indra, the leader of the Devas, originates in Hinduism, but also features in Buddhist legends that spread from India to Tibet. Indra has come to be a stock character in Tibetan *kāvya* poetry.

¹⁵⁶ A beautiful mountain range that appears in Hindu mythology. Riika Virtanen highlights the common pairing of the wind and the Malaya mountains in classical Indian literature in her PhD thesis. See Virtanen, R. (2011) *A Study of Imagery in the Writings of Dhondup Gyal*. PhD Thesis. University of Helsinki, p.88.

of ignorance,¹⁵⁷ must be due to the blessings of the Victorious One (i.e. the Buddha).¹⁵⁸

Many of these verses have twenty lines and follow a classical metrical scheme comprising of nine syllables; unsurprising for an author who regularly displays his literary skills! Sumpa Khenpo also follows a well-established literary pattern by using a more elaborate meter at the end of sections. These short poems serve as closing poems (Tib. *mjug rtsom*) that conclude each chapter within the text except for chapter four.

Chapter four, however, is noticeably different from the other chapters in his autobiography, both in content and style; it provides the reader with an overview of prominent *dharma* practitioners and lamas, and significant events in Tibetan history. The account begins in the tenth sexagenary cycle (Tib. *rab byung*) with the birth of the Fourth Panchen Lama, Lobsang Chökyi Gyaltsen (Tib. Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan; 1570–1662) and concludes in the thirteenth sexagenary cycle with the defeat of the Raptan (Tib. Rab brtan; Ch. 金川 Jīnchūān)¹⁵⁹ principality by the Qing army in 1776, the year Sumpa

¹⁵⁷ The Garuda (Tib. *khyung*; Skt. *garuḍa*), a large mythical bird, is another example of the intertwining of Indian and Tibetan elements. The Garuda appears in both Hindu and Tibetan Buddhist mythology, and is known as the enemy of snakes (Skt. *nāgas*). In Buddhist paintings and sculptures, it is often seen with a snake in its beak. For more on Garuda, see Beer, R. (2003) *The Handbook for Tibetan Buddhist Symbols*. London; Chicago: Serindia, pp. 74–77; Coulter, C. R. and Turner, P. (2012) *Encyclopedia of Ancient Deities*. New York; Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 187–188; and Williams, G. M. (2003) *Handbook of Hindu Mythology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 138–139.

¹⁵⁸ *phun tshogs mi lus ljong bzang 'khrungs pa'i tshe // brgya byin mthong byed stong bgrad blta ba bzhin // de yang sngon dge'i ma la yar skyes pa'i // dge legs sprul snying dri ngad dad rlung gis // legs bshad bgo skal len la rings 'di ni // mes pos gsar du sprul snyam 'phyang mo nyug // brtan g'yo'i dpal gyi rtse mo dal 'byor rten // dge legs 'byung gnas yid bzhin nor 'gran gang // rmongs pa'i lto 'gro za ba'i mkha' lding snying // len nus 'di ko rgyal bas byin min ci // sngon rabs mtho ris lus zla mang shar kyang // 'dod chang gis myos nub ri'i phag 'gyel mang // SK-CASS, folio 11(a); 3–4.*

¹⁵⁹ Raptan is one of the eighteen principalities of Gyelrong (Tib. rGyal rong).

Khenpo begins composing his autobiography.¹⁶⁰ Sumpa Khenpo uses a simple and straightforward narrative in prose to recount important figures and events in Tibetan history, which may suggest that this chapter was intended for a more general audience, unlike the rest of the text, or that it was an independent text that was later incorporated into the autobiography.

As noted by Kapstein, the understanding of *kāvya* required a special education in Sanskrit literature, using Indian sources for inspiration.¹⁶¹ The use of complex and flowery language suggests that this autobiography was composed with a specific audience in mind. Edwin Gerow, who has written extensively on Indian *kāvya* suggests that “in its developed form it was far too complicated and polished to be enjoyed only *viva voce*; it’s audience was more abstract; the learned, often an assemblage of poets”.¹⁶² Composing his autobiography in a complex literature style suggests that Sumpa Khenpo was targeting an audience of educated religious individuals who would use his life story as an inspiration and as a set of religious instructions. Yet, as Elijah Ary observes, autobiographies may serve purposes beyond historical and inspirational models, such as drumming up economic support and establishing the authority of a lineage or institution.¹⁶³ I believe that through employing a sophisticated literary style of writing, Sumpa Khenpo was also addressing the educated lay aristocracy who encouraged this form of literary learning and, as discussed above, may have seen value in Sumpa Khenpo as an exponent of *lugnyi*; the ideal union between religious and

¹⁶⁰ The date given in the text is the Earth Monkey year (1788), however I believe this to be a mistake as the Raptan were defeated in the Fire Monkey year (1776) which corresponds with the date that Sumpa Khenpo is said to have written this text. SK-CASS, folio 28(a); 6.

¹⁶¹ Kapstein, M. (2006). *The Tibetans*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, p.76.

¹⁶² Gerow, E. (1971) *A Glossary of Indian Figures of Speech*. The Hague; Paris: Mouton, p.75.

¹⁶³ Ary (2015); 3.

worldly affairs.¹⁶⁴ His work demonstrates a skill in the literary arts which may have appealed to his patrons, enabling him to gain financial support and attain a high status, and to display authority; not only for himself, but for Gonlung and the Gelugpa school in general.

As the examples above have shown, autobiographies make choices between existing norms such as humility and confidence, apology and self-assertion, simplicity and learning. As such, the literary devices that an author employs can provide us with an understanding of their personal preferences and aims. The style is partly determined by the role the authors assume in their work; in the case of a highly educated lama such as Sumpa Khenpo one would expect his autobiography to be written in an ornate and scholarly fashion, highlight his advanced level of schooling and limitless capabilities. Literary preferences can also be influenced by the purpose of the work, which might explain why the style of Sumpa Khenpo's writing changes when discussing the history of Tibet.

Although autobiographies provide us with a wealth of information on a variety of subjects, one autobiography cannot represent an entire region, school, or period of time. Thus, Sumpa Khenpo's writings are not a representation of life in eighteenth-century eastern Tibet. Nevertheless, this text is informative in so far as Sumpa Khenpo's own social and religious world, providing us with a record of the many dimensions of Tibetan life during the eighteenth century. The author's remarks on patronage, pilgrimage, education, medicine, and politics, all contribute to our understanding of this period. Given the information presented in the work, this thesis presumes spiritual life writing to have a multidimensional function, providing us with a historical record, religious instructions, and acting as a vehicle

¹⁶⁴ Kapstein (2003); 785–786.

for cultural, political, and religious identity. Before exploring these layers and dimensions, the next chapter will provide a contextual backdrop and an overview of the authors life to help us better understand these different elements.

Chapter Two

The Life and Times of Sumpa Khenpo Yeshe Paljor

Sumpa Khenpo hailed from the Tsongon region (Tib. mTsho sngon; Mon. Kokonor; Ch. 青海 Qīnghǎi) of Amdo, a crucial area throughout Sino-Tibetan-Mongolian history. Amdo is home to some of the greatest Tibetan scholars and institutions – including the major monastery built at Tsongkhapa’s birthplace, Kumbum (Tib. sKu 'bum); Labrang Monastery, the major cultural centre of Rebkong; and the holy mountain Amnye Machen or Magyel Pomra (Tib. rMa rgyal spom ra). In political terms the territory has often been disputed. I will briefly describe the events that took place in this region from the thirteenth century onwards, which I believe highlight the patterns of interaction between various groups, the interplays of power that took place, and why Amdo has been a strategically important place for numerous dynasties.¹⁶⁵ I have chosen the thirteenth century as the starting point in this overview as it is during the period that Tibetan Buddhism assumes the role of facilitator in foreign relations.

¹⁶⁵ This brief historical overview is based on the author’s MPhil dissertation, see Griffiths, R. (2015) *Sum pa mKhan poYe shes dPal ‘Byor and his role in eighteenth century Sino-Tibetan-Mongolian cultural relations*. MPhil Dissertation. University of Oxford. I also draw on key secondary literature regarding the history of these periods, including Atwood. C. P. (2015) ‘The First Mongol Contacts with The Tibetans’, *Revue d’Etudes Tibétaines* 31, pp. 21–45; Petech (1950); Petech, L. (1983) ‘Tibetan Relations with Sung China and with the Mongols’, in Rossabi, M. (ed.) *China among Equals. The Middle Kingdom and its Neighbors, 10th-14th Centuries*. Berkeley: University of California Press, pp. 173–203; and Sperling, E. (2012) ‘Pho-lha-nas, Khang-chen-nas, and the Last Era of Mongol Domination in Tibet’, *Rocznik Orientalistyczny/Yearbook of Oriental Studies*, pp. 195–211.

Particular emphasis will be placed on events relating to Mongolian leaders and Tibetan hierarchs, the ‘priest-patron’ relationship (Tib. *mchod yon*, Ch. 檀越关系 *tányuè guānxi*) and its impact on exchanges that took place between different groups, and the development of Tibetan Buddhism in both Tibet and Mongolia.¹⁶⁶ As we edge closer to the beginnings of the Qing Empire, the role of Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs in Manchu state building, and its implications for later Sino-Tibetan-Mongolian relations, will be addressed. In order to best understand and interpret the message(s) relayed by the author, it is necessary to explore the cultural, religious, and political aspects of the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Gelugpa dominated Tibetan Buddhist world.

The Mongol Era

Tibetan accounts, such as Sumpa Khenpo’s *Chronological Table* assert that the Mongols and Tibet first came into contact in 1206, when Genghis Khan (Tib. *Jing gir rgyal po*; Ch. 成吉思汗 *Chéngjísī Hán*; 1162–1227) marched to Ü (Tib. *dBus*) in Central Tibet. It is said that the Tibetans submitted, recognising Genghis Khan as the lord of all Tibet.¹⁶⁷ However, as noted by Petech, the figures referred to in this account lived at very different times and so

¹⁶⁶ A symbolic relationship between religious figures/institutions and lay patrons. The patron offers support and protection and in return, the priest offers spiritual guidance and legitimisation of the ruler through religious consent. For more on the priest-patron relationship, see Cüppers, C. (2005) *The Relationship Between Religion and State (chos srid zung 'brel) in Traditional Tibet: Proceedings of a Seminar Held in Lumbini, Nepal, March 2000* (LIRI seminar proceeding series; 1). Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute; and Seyfort Rugg, D. (2003) ‘Mchod yon, yon mchod and mchod gnas/yon gnas: on the Historiography and Semantics of a Tibetan Religio-social and Religio-political Concept’, in McKay, A. (ed.) *The History of Tibet*, Vol. 2. London: Routledge Curzon, pp. 362–372.

¹⁶⁷ Tyrrell Wylie gives the translation, “Chinggis came to Tibet and exercised power over all central Tibet, with the exception of Mi-nyag” from Sumpa Khenpo’s *Chronological Tables*. Wylie, T. (1977) ‘The First Mongol Conquest of Tibet Reinterpreted’, *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 37(1), pp. 105.

“the whole account is a tissue of chronological and historical absurdities.”¹⁶⁸ Nevertheless, recent scholarship has shown that the Mongols had come into contact with, and were aware of, Amdo Tibetans at this time through their links to the Xi Xia Empire (982–1227; Tib. Mi nyag; Ch. 西夏 Xī Xià), located in Northwest China,¹⁶⁹ suggesting that some relationship between the two existed in the early thirteenth century.

The earliest records of the Mongol’s extension of their political control and settlement in Amdo dates to 1236. Ögödei Khan (Tib. U ge ta han; Ch. 窩闊台 Wōkuòtái 1186–1241), the third son of Genghis Khan, continued the expansion of the empire that his father had begun, and launched a series of campaigns during his rule. These campaigns stretched from modern day Iran and Central Asia to China, where a series of attacks on the Song dynasty (960–1279) took place. Ögödei assigned to his elder sons a series of

¹⁶⁸ Petech (1983); 180.

Interestingly, Sumpa Khenpo’s *Chronological Table* and PSJZ assert a stronger historical link between Tibetans and Mongolians than had been acknowledged by previous scholars. Given the period in which Sumpa Khenpo was writing and his commitment to the spread of Gelugpa hegemony (which is discussed throughout this thesis), these assertions tell us something about Sumpa Khenpo’s place within the process of tying the Mongols to Tibet (and Tibetan Buddhism) as part of a larger process of Mongol assimilation into the Qing imperium. While this thesis is primarily concerned with the nature of his role in certain circumstances, it is important to note that the incorporation of Inner Asia into the Buddhist Qing took place on multiple fronts, many of which have been overlooked due to the constraints of time and general scope of a doctoral thesis. For more on Manchu state building, Mongols, and Buddhism, see Elverskog (2006); 90–126; Sperling (2012); Ujeed, U. B. (2013) ‘A Mongolian Source on the Manchu Manipulation of Mongolian Buddhism in the Seventeenth Century: The Biography of the Second Neichi Toyin’, *Inner Asia* 15(2), pp. 225–242.

¹⁶⁹ For more on the relationship between the Mongols, Tibetans and Xi Xia, see Dunnell, R. W. (2009) ‘Translating History from Tangut Buddhist Texts’, *Asia Major*, Third Series, 22. 1, pp. 41–108; Haw, S. G. (2014) ‘The Mongol Conquest of Tibet’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 24.1, pp. 37–49; Khokhlov, Y. (2016) ‘The Xi Xia Legacy in Sino-Tibetan Art of the Yuan Dynasty’, *Asian Art*. <http://asianart.com/articlesxi-xia/> (accessed April 03, 2019); and Sperling, E. (1994) ‘Rtsa-mi lo-tsā-ba Sangs-rgyas grags-pa and the Tangut Background to Early Mongol-Tibetan Relations’, in Kværne, P. (ed.) *Tibetan Studies. Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*. Oslo: Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, pp. 801–824.

campaigns, and it was Köten Khan (Tib. Go dan han; Ch. 闊端 Kuòduān; 1206–1251)¹⁷⁰ who led the attack against the Song dynasty in Gansu. In 1236, Köten Khan's main army invaded Sichuan, while another force under the Mongol general Alchur (1195–1263),¹⁷¹ cut through the Tibetan regions to the west.¹⁷² While passing through the Song dynasty's border towns of Jiezhou (Ch. 階州 Jiēzhōu), Dangchang (Ch. 宕昌 Dàng chāng), and Wenzhou (Ch. 溫州 Wēnzhōu), Alchur successfully secured the allegiance of the Tibetan chieftain Kantuomengjia.¹⁷³ The extent of this allegiance is disputed, nevertheless it is the first known instance of a Tibetan chieftain swearing loyalty to the Mongols.¹⁷⁴

It is the descendants of these Mongols that came to play pivotal roles in Amdo and the Gonlung community.¹⁷⁵ An important event at this time was the relationship that was established between the Sakyapa (Tib. Sa skya pa) school and the Mongols. During another expedition into Tibet, the Mongol party instructed the defeated Tibetans to send a delegate to the Mongol court. Sakya Paṇḍita, the head of the Sakyapas, was chosen and was later

¹⁷⁰ I have not used the spelling given by John Powers and David Templeman in this instance (Powers and Templeman (2012); 257). Köton ignores the vowel harmony, which divides vowels into two arranged sets – velar (u; o; a) and palatal (ü; ö; e). The vowel of the initial syllable, in this case ö (palatal), determines which vowels can follow, in this case ü, ö, and e. Therefore, I have chosen to use Köten instead. For more on vowel harmony in Mongolian, see Janhunen, J. (2012) *Mongolian*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 78–82.

¹⁷¹ A number of different names have been used for this general. Many scholars use Aljur, while Tuttle (2011) and K'uan-Chung use Anjur. See K'uan-Chung, H. (2000) 'Mountain Fortress Defence: The Experience of the Southern Song and Korea in Resisting the Mongol Invasions', in van Derven, H. J. (ed.) *Warfare in Chinese History*. Leiden; Boston: Brill. pp. 222–251.

¹⁷² Atwood (2015); 37.

¹⁷³ The chieftain's Tibetan name, or additional information regarding this figure, could not be located by the author. However, with the help of Dr Hannah Theaker at the University of Oxford, we found a reference to Kantuomengjia in Volume 121 of the *Yuán Shǐ* (*The Official History of the Yuan*). This passage, in Classical Chinese, can be found in the appendix. It was typed by Hannah Theaker.

¹⁷⁴ Atwood (2015); 37.

¹⁷⁵ For scholarship on Mongol settlement in Amdo during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, see Atwood (2005); Karmay, S. (2005) 'The Thirty-Nine Tribes of Hor: A Historical Perspective', in Karmay, S. *The Arrow and the Spindle: Studies in History, Myths, Rituals and Beliefs in Tibet*. Vol. II. Kathmandu: Mandala Publications, pp. 181–211; and Ryavec, K. E. (2015) *Historical Atlas of Tibet*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, p. 100.

summoned to the Mongol court in 1244. According to traditional accounts, Sakya Paṇḍita's meeting with Köten Khan resulted in the former sending a letter which acknowledged that authority in Tibet was dependent on Mongol consent, and that all clan leaders must submit to Mongol rule.¹⁷⁶ This letter is generally considered pseudepigraphic, and was likely written sometime after Sakya Paṇḍita's death when the Mongol alliance with the Sakyapas was being consolidated, perhaps as a way of strengthening and legitimising the foundations of the alliance.¹⁷⁷ This is not to say, however, that Sakya Paṇḍita's visit was fruitless – following his stay, some members of the Mongol court requested the involvement of the Sakyapa in Tibetan religious affairs, endorsing their authority, and Köten Khan showed great favour and respect towards the Sakyapa school.¹⁷⁸

On the death of Möngke Khan (Ch. 蒙哥 Ménggē; 1209–1259), the fourth Great Khan and grandson of Genghis Khan, the succession was disputed between his brothers Ariq Böke (Ch. 阿里不哥 Alībùgē; 1219–1266) and Khubilai Khan (Tib. Hu bi le han; Ch. 忽必烈 Hūbìliè; 1260–1294). Khubilai emerged victorious and established the Yuan dynasty (1271–1368), which controlled Mongolia, Eastern Turkestan, Northern China, parts of Western China, and bordering regions at the time.¹⁷⁹ Khubilai had already established a close relationship with Phagpa (Tib. 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan; 1235–1280), the nephew of Sakya Paṇḍita, who had spent his formative years at the Mongol court. In 1264, Khubilai named Phagpa 'State Preceptor' (Ch. 國師 Guóshī) establishing a priest-patron relationship. This relationship was not unique to either party; Tibetan Buddhist monks gained the

¹⁷⁶ van Schaik, S. (2011) *Tibet: A History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, p.77.

¹⁷⁷ For example, see Jackson, R. R. (1986) 'Sa-skyapa Paṇḍita's Letter to the Tibetans: A Late and Dubious Addition to His Collected Works', *Journal of Tibetan Society* 6, pp. 17–23.

¹⁷⁸ Kapstein (2006); 103; and van Schaik (2011); 77.

¹⁷⁹ Powers and Templeman (2012); 371.

patronage of Xi Xia rulers who sponsored translations and teachings on behalf of the state,¹⁸⁰ and the Mongols had strategically created similar relationships across Eurasia. This relationship was later adopted by the Qing Empire, who saw Buddhism's embedded power of creating and sustaining communities as a useful instrument of state building, and it came to mark Tibet's affiliation with its neighbouring countries with Tibetan Buddhist masters such as Sumpa Khenpo forming alliances with multiple patrons. Phagpa recognised the Mongol rulers to be *Cakravartins* (Tib. '*Khor los bsgyur ba'i rgyal po*'), or universal Buddhist kings, and so the Khan became the sponsor and military protector of Tibet. In return, Khubilai gave the thirteen myriarchies of western and central Tibet to Phagpa and requested further spiritual guidance.¹⁸¹ The historical accuracy and context of their relationship has been much debated by scholars, who have discredited Tibetan accounts as later fabrications.¹⁸² Nevertheless, this relationship established between the two came to be the idealised form of Mongol-Tibetan relations and later of Mongol-Tibetan-Qing relations.

During this period, the administration of Tibet remained in Tibetan hands with the Sakyapa hierarchy possessing the authority of 'Kings of Tibet'.¹⁸³ On observing the prestige given to the Sakyapa lamas, the lamas of other monasteries followed suit – finding patrons

¹⁸⁰ Dunnell, R. W. (1992) 'The Hsia Origins of the Yuan Institution of Imperial Preceptor', *Asia Major*, Third Series, 5:1, p. 101.

¹⁸¹ van Schaik (2011); 78.

¹⁸² See Everding, K. H. (2002) 'The Mongol States and their Struggle for Dominance over Tibet in the 13th Century', in Blezer, H. (ed.) *Tibet, Past and Present. Tibetan Studies 1: PIATS 2000: Tibetan studies, Proceedings of the 9th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 109–128; Petech, L. (1990) *Central Tibet and the Mongols: The Yüan Sa-skyä Period of Tibetan History*. Rome: ISMEO, pp. 16–32; and Tenzin Choephak Ringpapontsang. (2016) *Conquering the Conqueror: Reassessing the Relationship between Qubilai Khan and 'Phags pa Lama*. PhD Thesis. Australian National University.

¹⁸³ Snellgrove, D. L. and Richard, H. E. (1968) *A Cultural History of Tibet*. New York: F.A. Praeger, p.149.

among the Mongol chiefs.¹⁸⁴ The ‘priest-patron’ relationship created a political situation in which the various schools of Tibetan Buddhism had to forge alliances with Mongol nobility in order to strengthen their dominance in Tibet. Under this system, Amdo witnessed a significant increase in the construction of Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, mostly associated with the Sakyapa and Nyingma schools which appear to have been the most active in Amdo at the time; a testament to the prestige that Tibetan Buddhism enjoyed under its Mongol patrons.¹⁸⁵ And so, the politics of the day were based upon furthering one’s influence and power – be it in Tibet, Mongolia, or China – and this was done through forging successful alliances and maintaining them. As we will see, Sumpa Khenpo, through his location in Amdo and his affiliation with Gonlung Monastery, successfully forged relationships with Mongol patrons and with the Qing Empire that became essential in underpinning his role as a teacher, scholar, abbot, and physician.

The Ming, the Mongols, and Tibet

In 1370, Amdo’s political history took an important turn when the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) sent an army to the region, seized Hezhou (Ch. 贺州 Hézōu), and secured the allegiance of the leaders of northeastern Tibet.¹⁸⁶ The Ming maintained military posts in Amdo in an attempt to secure the region and conquer Mongolia proper, and the inner Asian

¹⁸⁴ For more on the establishment of ‘priest-patron’ relationship during the Yuan dynasty, see Everding (2002); 109–128.

¹⁸⁵ Ryavec (2015); 100.

¹⁸⁶ Tuttle, G. (2011) ‘An Overview of Amdo (Northeastern Tibet) Historical Politics’, *The Tibetan and Himalayan Library*.

<http://www.thlib.org/places/polities/about/wiki/An%20Overview%20Of%20Amdo%20%28northeastern%20Tibet%29%20Historical%20Polities.html> (accessed March 07, 2020).

Mongols. Despite the presence of the Ming in Amdo, the relationship between groups of resident Mongols and monastic institutions continued. Relationships between Tibet and the Ming dynasty slowly evolved and strengthened, with the Ming offering Tibetan Buddhist institutions lavish support.¹⁸⁷

The Mongol intervention in Tibetan affairs was renewed in 1577, when the chief of the Tümed Mongols (Tib. Thu med), Altan Khan (Tib. Al than han; Ch. 俺答 Ḃndá; 1507–1582), invited the Third Dalai Lama, Sonam Gyatso (Tib. bSod nams rgya mtsho; 1543–1588), to meet with him near Tsongon Lake. This meeting produced a similar situation to that which had existed under the Sakyapa rule, discussed above. The two great figures met in 1578, and it is recorded that both displayed much respect and devotion. They exchanged honorific titles; Sonam Gyatso was bestowed the title of ‘Dalai Lama’ and Altan Khan received the title ‘King of Religion, Divine Pure One’ (Tib. *Chos kyi rgyal po lha’i tshang pa*). Altan Khan continued to show his patronage through donating generous gifts to the Gelugpa monasteries and the lay nobles who supported the Dalai Lama. After the death of the Dalai Lama, his reincarnation was discovered in the great-grandson of Altan Khan, Yonten Gyatso (Tib. Yon tan rgya mtsho; 1589–1617), which further strengthened the ties between the Tibetans and Mongols, and the Gelugpas successfully gained the support of Mongol nobility.

With the death of Altan Khan, the Mongol factions split and were no longer under the leadership of a single ruler. The factions of Mongols that continued to visit Tibet, which consisted of a mixture of Oirad and Genghizide tribes, came to show support to the Dalai

¹⁸⁷ Nietupski (1999); 5.

Lama. This then became the pretext used for all Mongol excursions into Tibet. The Khoshud (Tib. Ho shod; 和硕特 Heshuote) branch of the Oirads took advantage of the unrest among the Genghizides and formed a strong government in the Tsongon region.¹⁸⁸ The Khoshud could claim no historical connection to Tibet but their leader Gūshri Khan (Tib. Gu shri han; Ch. 固始汗 Gùshǐ hàn; 1582–1655) had made a secret pilgrimage to Lhasa in 1638 and had met with the Fifth Dalai Lama, who had left a favourable impression on the Khan.¹⁸⁹ Gūshri Khan sought to legitimise his rule and thwart the advance of Mongol rivals through forging alliances with the Gelugpa school, while the Dalai Lama sought the support and protection of a powerful patron amid conflict and competition among rival Tibetan Buddhist traditions such as the Karma Kagyü (Tib. Karma bka' brgyud). And so, the relationships established between Mongolian ruling elites and Tibetan lamas at this time continued to be based on the priest-patron model established in the thirteenth century and worked to bring Mongols and Tibetans even closer together.

Gūshri Khan made an alliance with the Gelugpas who were keen to overthrow the King of Tsang, Karma Tenkyong (Tib. Kar ma bstan skyong; 1606–1642), and claim

¹⁸⁸ For an overview of the Mongol factions and their ties with Buddhism, see Ujeed, U. B. (2009) *Indigenous Efforts and Dimensions of Mongolian Buddhism – Exemplified by the Mergen Tradition*. PhD Thesis. School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), pp. 18–59. Richard Taupier's doctoral research sheds light on the Oirads' investment in building alliances and establishing a new Buddhist state in the seventeenth century. Taupier, R. T. (2014) *The Oirad of the Early 17th Century: Statehood and Political Ideology*. PhD Thesis. University of Massachusetts – Amherst.

It is also worth noting that many Mongol inhabitants of present-day Amdo can be traced back to Gūshri Khan, who settled in the region during the seventeenth century. Sumpa Khenpo also traces his family tree back to this (discussed later in this chapter). See Borjigidai, U. (2002) 'The Hoshuud Polity in Khökhnuur (Kokonor)', *Inner Asia*, 4(2), pp. 181–195; Kitinov, B. (1996) 'Kalmyks in Tibetan History', *The Tibetan Journal* 21(3), pp. 35–46; Roche, G. (2015) 'The Tibetanization of Henan's Mongols: Ethnicity and Assimilation on the Sino-Tibetan Frontier', *Asian Ethnicity*, 17, pp. 128–149; Wallenböck (2016).

¹⁸⁹ Karmay, S. G. (2003) 'The Fifth Dalai Lama and His Reunification of Tibet', in Pommaret, F. (ed.) *Lhasa in the Seventeenth Century: The Capital of the Dalai Lamas*. Leiden: Brill, p.71.

political domination. Politics in Central Tibet at this time were tense and marked by a deep division between the Karma Kagyü of Tsang and their Rinpungpa (Tib. Rin spungs pa) patrons,¹⁹⁰ and the Gelugpas in Ü. With Güshri Khan's army and a weak King of Tsang, the Gelugpas emerged victorious. Subsequently, the Dalai Lama was granted full rule over Tibet and the Khan acted as military protector.¹⁹¹ On the fifteenth day of the fourth month in 1642, the Dalai Lama declared Lhasa the capital of Tibet and the Ganden Phodrang (Tib. dGa' ldan pho brang) Tibet's official government. He then started the long process of establishing new political and religious infrastructures, and monastic structures at Gelugpa institutions across Tibet.¹⁹²

The Ming had shown no interest in these recent events, as they were faced with bigger problems; the Manchus, a new power that had successfully united many of the Mongol tribes around them, appeared on the northwestern borders and were claiming the title of 'Emperor'. In 1664, the Manchus successfully overthrew the Ming and established the Qing dynasty. And so, the inner Asian borderland allegiances entered its next chapter.

The Qing

The relationship between the Qing and Tibet primarily took the form of diplomatic contacts, usually involving political and religious elites. After the creation of the Qing Empire, the

¹⁹⁰ For a brief overview of the Rinpungpa and their relationship with the Karma Kagyü, see Larsson, S. (2012) *Crazy for Wisdom: The Making of a Mad Yogin in Fifteenth-Century Tibet*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, pp. 25–30.

¹⁹¹ Van Schaik (2011); 125.

¹⁹² Karmay (2003); 65–80; Van Schaik (2011); 114–124; and Shakabpa, T. W. D. (2009) *One Hundred Thousand Moons: An Advanced Political History of Tibet* (Vol. 1), translated by D. Maher. Leiden; Boston: Brill, pp. 111–115.

Qing Emperor, Shunzhi (Ch. 順治 Shùnzhì; 1638–1661), turned his attention to winning over Tibet and those Mongols who were still hostile. Gūshri Khan persuaded the Fifth Dalai Lama to make a state visit to Beijing in 1652.¹⁹³ The intention of this visit was to establish good political relations, and as noted by Richardson and Snellgrove, “whatever interpretation was placed upon this afterwards by the Chinese, it was clearly a meeting between equals”.¹⁹⁴ The Emperor disregarded Chinese political protocol and under the encouragement of Manchu ministers went to the borders to meet with the Dalai Lama.¹⁹⁵ Chinese political theory did not accept the possibility of equal diplomatic relations, to the extent that the Emperor’s Chinese advisor attempted to prevent this act, which would show excessive respect for a foreign relation. Far from being treated as a subordinate, the Dalai Lama received special courtesies. It was thought that this gesture would ensure the allegiance of the Mongols through forging a pan-Buddhist identity and shared respect of the Dalai Lama.¹⁹⁶ The Khoshud Khans of Tsongon entered into various alliances with the Qing court, and remained the dominant power in Amdo until 1724, when the Qing intervened in Tibetan affairs with a military response (discussed later in this section and in Chapter four). The Qing Emperor “seized the occasion for establishing solidly his sovereignty in Kukuror, which became from that time onwards an integrant part of the Chinese dominion.”¹⁹⁷

In Tibet however, the Tibetans and Mongols were embroiled in constant internal warfare over military and political dominance. Petech’s study on Sino-Tibetan-Mongolian

¹⁹³ Powers and Templeman (2012); 477.

¹⁹⁴ Snellgrove and Richards (1968); 198.

¹⁹⁵ Karmay (2003); 74.

¹⁹⁶ Changching, C. (1998) ‘Independence: The Tibetan People’s Right,’ in Changching, C. and Seymour, J. *Tibet Through Dissident Chinese Eyes: Essays on Self-Determinations*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, p.10.

¹⁹⁷ Petech (1950); 85.

relations at the beginning of the eighteenth century has made a considerable contribution towards a subject that has otherwise received little scholarly attention.¹⁹⁸ Lhazang Khan (Tib. Lha bzang; d. 1717), the grandson of Gūshri Khan, assumed leadership of the Khoshud Mongols in 1697 and hoped to unify Amdo and bring Tibet under his control. However, his forceful and rash manner led to an increasing animosity between the Khan and the Tibetans.¹⁹⁹ Lhazang Khan initially shared power with *Desi* Sangye Gyatso – it was reported to be an unamicable relationship – but this was brought to an end when the *Desi* agreed to resign in 1703 following clashes between the two, which had resulted in Lhazang Khan mounting an expedition on Lhasa.²⁰⁰ This brought only temporary peace, and in 1705 *Desi* Sangye Gyatso plotted to assassinate the Khan during the Great Prayer Festival in Lhasa.²⁰¹

The plot was unsuccessful, and a conference was held in 1705 to discuss the situation, which was attended by the Sixth Dalai Lama, Tsangyang Gyatso (Tib. Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho; 1683–1706), the representatives of the Pañchen Lama, and the abbots of the three great monasteries; Drepung (Tib. 'Bras spungs), Sera (Tib. Se ra) and Ganden (Tib. dGa' ldan).²⁰² It was decided that despite wanting to continue amicable relations with Lhazang Khan, he should be told to leave Lhasa and return to the Tsongon region.²⁰³ While en route to Tsongon, Lhazang Khan travelled to Nakchukha (Tib. Nag chu kha), where he recruited a sizeable Mongol army and returned to Lhasa. *Desi* Sangye Gyatso was soon after captured

¹⁹⁸ Darig Thokmay, a DPhil student at the University of Oxford, is currently researching the social, cultural and political relations between Tibet, the Manchus and the Mongols in the early eighteenth century. The provisional title of his thesis is, 'Tibet's Relations with the Mongols and Manchus in the early 18th Century'.

¹⁹⁹ Kapstein, M. (2009) *Buddhism Between Tibet and China*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, p. 184.

²⁰⁰ Dai (2009); 75.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Chitkara, M. G. (1998) *Buddhism, Reincarnation, and Dalai Lamas of Tibet*. New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation. p.118

²⁰³ Ibid; 110.

and executed by Tsering Tashi (Tib. Tshe ring bkra shis), Lhazang Khan's wife. The following year, the Khan announced that the Sixth Dalai Lama had been misidentified and ordered his removal from Lhasa. The young Dalai Lama died on the way to Beijing later that year.²⁰⁴

With the removal of both *Desi Sangye Gyatso* and the Sixth Dalai Lama, Lhazang Khan was able to combine political and military rule.²⁰⁵ The Qing Emperor, Kangxi (Ch. 康熙帝 Kāngxīdi; 1654–1722), who was concerned with the increasing power of the Dzungars (Tib. Jung har) at the time, subsequently allied himself with Lhazang Khan. As Kaplonski observes, “starting from the early 17th century, the Dzungars grew to be serious contenders for power in the region, establishing what was known as Dzungaria, and posing substantial challenges to the influence of the Qing.”²⁰⁶ Tibetan Buddhist monks reacted to the situation by sending envoys to the Dzungars requesting help.²⁰⁷ In 1717, the Dzungars responded to the request and marched into Lhasa, killing Lhazang Khan and unleashing a chaotic reign of looting and murder.²⁰⁸ In 1720, the Qing reacted with military response and successfully drove out the Dzungars, supported by Pholhane (Tib. Pho lha nas bSod nams stobs rgyal;

²⁰⁴ Dai (2009); 77–78; and Pomplun, T. R. (2010) *Jesuit of the Roof of the World: Ippolito Desideri's Mission to Tibet*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 109–110.

²⁰⁵ Kitinov, B. (2015) ‘Shakur Lama: The Last Attempt to Build the Buddhist State,’ in Wallace, V. (ed.) *Buddhism in Mongolian History, Culture, and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.43.

²⁰⁶ Kaplonski, C. (2010) ‘Introduction’, in Sneath, D. and Kaplonski, C. (eds.) *The History of Mongolia Volume II: Yuan and Late Medieval Period*. Folkestone: Global Oriental, p. 637.

²⁰⁷ van Schaik (2011); 138.

²⁰⁸ Desideri, I. (2005) [1932] *An Account of Tibet: The Travels of Ippolito Desideri of Pistoia, S. J. 1712–1727*, translated and edited by F. de Filippi. London: Routledge Curzon, p. 46–47.

1689–1747),²⁰⁹ the governor of Tsang, and Khangchene (Tib. Khang chen nas bSod nams rgyal po; d. 1727), the governor of Western Tibet.²¹⁰

Within a few years, another conflict erupted in Tibet. In 1723, Lobsang Tenzin (Tib. Blo bzang bstan 'dzin; Ch. 罗卜藏丹津 Luóbǔzàng dānjīn), the grandson of Gūshri Khan, attempted to unite the Khoshud Mongols and restore their control over Tibet. In the following year, the rebellion suffered a crushing defeat with thousands of people killed. Among those killed was a teacher of Sumpa Khenpo, Chubsang Lobsang Tenpé Gyaltzen (Tib. Chu bzang Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan; 1652–1723). The death of his teacher and the destruction of many monasteries in the Tsongon region, including Gonlung, had a long-lasting effect on Sumpa Khenpo as we shall see in Chapter four. Petech has produced a detailed account of the rebellion and believes it to be the “most important turning point in the history of Qinghai.”²¹¹ The aftermath of the rebellion greatly influenced Mongolian-Tibetan relations and Qing’s rule of foreigners.

A new system of government was established in which territorial expansion was accompanied by military occupation and a new administrative structure. This began with the establishment of the Xining *amban* (Tib. *am ban*; Ch. 昂邦 *ángbāng*) in 1724, establishing a solid presence in the Tsongon region and strengthening the Qing’s direct rule over the area.²¹² The Qing also developed minor military outposts in the settled regions of

²⁰⁹ A brief biography can be found in Powers and Templeman (2012); 524–525. A more comprehensive account of Pholhane’s life is given in Petech’s work on eighteenth century Tibet. See Petech (1950); 122–197.

²¹⁰ Chitkara (1998); 221. Sumpa Khenpo provides an overview of the Civil War in his autobiography, which is presented in Chapter four.

²¹¹ Petech, L. (1966) ‘Notes on a Tibetan History in the 18th Century’, *T’oung Pao* 52(4–5): 276–292.

²¹² Tuttle (2011).

northeastern Amdo, but the extent of their power was fairly limited.²¹³ They were mostly concerned with securing peace on the borderlands, which they hoped to achieve through supporting local Gelugpa monasteries and local Tibetan hierarchs. Monasteries such as Labrang and Gonlung received patronage from the empire; the Yongzheng Emperor (Tib. Gong ma Yung ting; Ch. 雍正帝 Yōngzhèngdì; 1678–1735), for example, ordered that Gonlung, among other monasteries, be rebuilt with imperial funds, after suffering substantial damage during the rebellion of 1723.²¹⁴ The Qing’s involvement in Tibetan Buddhism was a political expediency, they believed they would benefit from the situation by maintaining control over the population surrounding the monastery and integrating these regions into the new Qing Buddhist state. Despite the questions surrounding the Qing emperors’ real commitment to Buddhism, it is well established that the “court’s patronage and promotion of Tibetan Buddhism was a pillar of the dynasty’s legitimacy in Inner Asia.”²¹⁵ This relationship worked both ways, as the monasteries in the area viewed the Qing as patrons who would financially back and protect them, especially in the aftermath of the 1723 rebellion.

In spite of the strong interest of the Qing in the region, Amdo should not be seen as part of a centralised Manchu state. Kapstein, following Lattimore and others, have described the Qing’s policy towards the borderlands as a “second stage feudalism” in which border cultures provided a military buffer and medium for communication between the imperial

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Sullivan (2013); 343–348; and Nietupski (1999); 9.

²¹⁵ Oidtmann, M. (2010) ‘The Nineteenth-Century Crisis of the Mongol Banners in Amdo’. A presentation summary, May 2010.

https://www.academia.edu/2231340/_The_Nineteenth-Century_Crisis_of_the_Mongol_Banners_in_Amdo_ (accessed February 02, 2018).

court and foreign cultures.²¹⁶ The emperors were motivated by the need to use ethnically Mongolian Gelugpas to mediate between the empire and its Mongolian subjects, aiding in the creation of a pan-Buddhist identity. The stage for these complex interactions was Amdo, especially around the Tsongon Lake, where many Gelugpa monasteries such as Gonlung could be found. As such, priest-patron relationships, which had already been established between local Mongols and Tibetan Buddhists, were now being formed between the Qing Empire and Tibetan Buddhists. Figures such as Thuken Lobsang Chökyi Nyima and Sumpa Khenpo, both of which were associated with Gonlung Monastery, came to be priests to two patrons. Within this context I will examine Sumpa Khenpo's life and his ability to operate in this complex political landscape, engaging in activities that promoted the ideal union between secular and religious spheres.

The Biography of Sumpa Khenpo

Sumpa Khenpo was born on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of the Wood Monkey year (1704) in Toli (Tib. Tho li); an area to the south of the Tsongon Lake. It is said that he had an auspicious birth, being born “at the dragon time in the early morning on the day of a full moon.”²¹⁷ The region of Toli, famous for its rich pastures, is where the Khoshud Mongols first settled following their conquest of the region in the 1630s, and is often referred to as

²¹⁶ Kapstein (2009); 188; and Lattimore, O. (1955) *Nationalism and Revolution in Mongolia*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 31–35.

²¹⁷ *zla ba nya gang ba'i nyin gza' skar 'phrod sbyor dge ba'i snga dro'i 'brug gi dus su skyes zer* | SK-CASS, folio 10(a); 7.

the ‘Right Wing’ of the Oirad Mongols.²¹⁸ Sumpa Khenpo describes the region with great affection, comparing its beauty to the famous mountains of Malaya;

In that place (i.e. Toli) there are no rough cliffs, deep ravines or poisonous and prickly thorns. The earth is flat and smooth like the palm of the hand, covered with emerald green grass and all sorts of flowers [that] compete with the rainbow. Fruit trees loaded with fruit are scattered all around. Rivers adorned with garlands of foam gently flow, and [there are] swarms of lovely bees and melodious birds; beautiful in every way. [It is] a piece of heaven on earth.²¹⁹

Due to the size of the region to the south of the Tsongon Lake, the exact location of Toli has remained unclear.²²⁰ Hanung Kim located two potential locations; Tholi bulay (Ch. Tuoli bulake) and Tholi dabayan (Ch. Tuoli dabahan) on an imperially sponsored map published in 1760. Both lie on the northern banks of the Yellow River (see map below),²²¹ which

²¹⁸ Borjigidai (2002); 183-184.

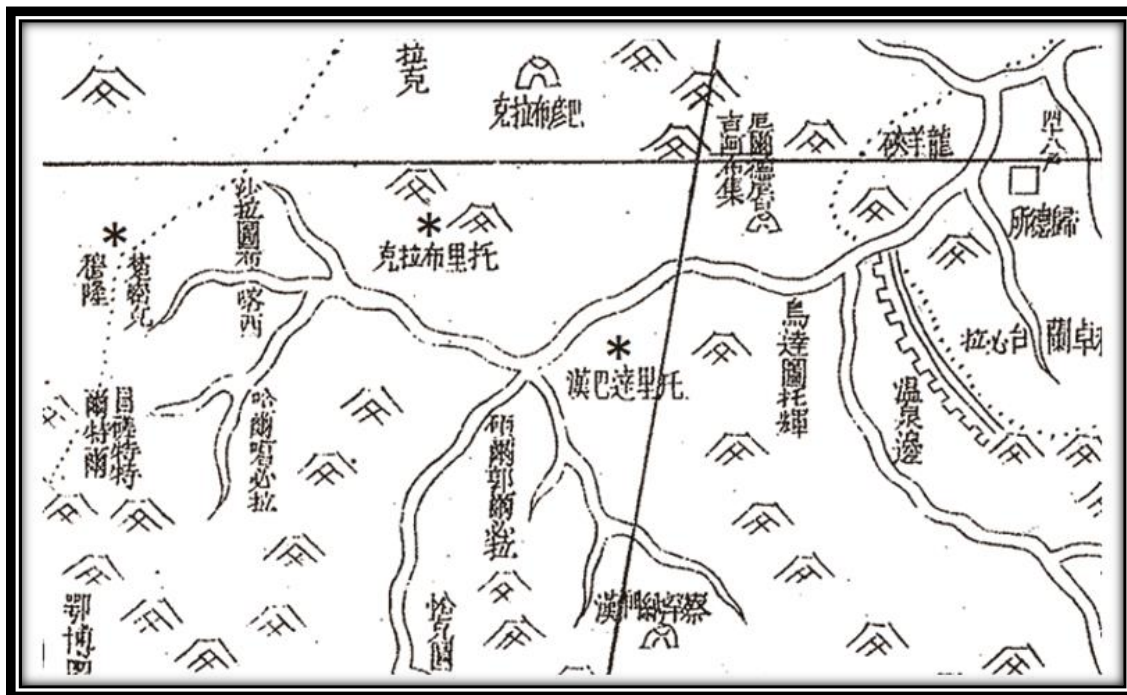
Damcho Gyatsho Dharmatāla also refers to this, “The lineages of his (Gushri Khan) other sons became the leaders of Do-Kham Koko Nor and the original source of Tholi on the banks of the Yellow River. These leaders, together with their subjects, are known as the Right Oilods.” Damcho Gyatsho Dharmatāla. (1987) *Rosary of White Lotus, Being the Clear Account of How the Precious Teaching of Buddha Appeared and Spread in the Great Hor Country*, translated into English by P. Klafkowski. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, p.138.

²¹⁹ *gang der mi bde ba'i brag rtsub gcong rong ngam grog gseg ma dug tsher mi dmigs shing / sa gzhi lag mthil ltar 'jam la khod mnyam pa / ma rgad mdangs ldan rtsa ljang gis khebs par sna tshogs me tog dbang gzhur 'gran pas khyab cing kho ra khor yug tu bza' shing 'bras bu'i khur gyis dud pa / wu ba'i phreng bas brgyan pa'i chu rgyun dal bus 'bab cing skad snyan byi'u rkang drug rab sdug tshogs kyis kun nas mdzes par byas pa ste lha gnas dum bu sa la babs [...]* / SK-CASS, folio 9(a); 5–7.

²²⁰ This is not to say that scholars have not attempted to pinpoint the exact location of Toli. For a detailed discussion, see Kim, H. (2017) ‘Introduction to the New publication of Sum pa Ye shes dpal 'byor's *Collected Works*,’ *Zangzue xuekan* 17, pp. 275–291.

²²¹ This has been taken from the Qinghai section of *Qingdai yitong ditu (Unified Map of the Qing Dynasty; Ch. 清代一統地圖)*, which roughly corresponds to present Hainan Prefecture (1760: row 9 and west 2). Asterisks were added by Hanung Kim (2017) to indicate Tholi dabayan, Tholi bulay, and Chumig Melong from right to left.

corresponds to the description given by Sumpa Khenpo in his autobiography. However, Kim could not postulate anything beyond this.



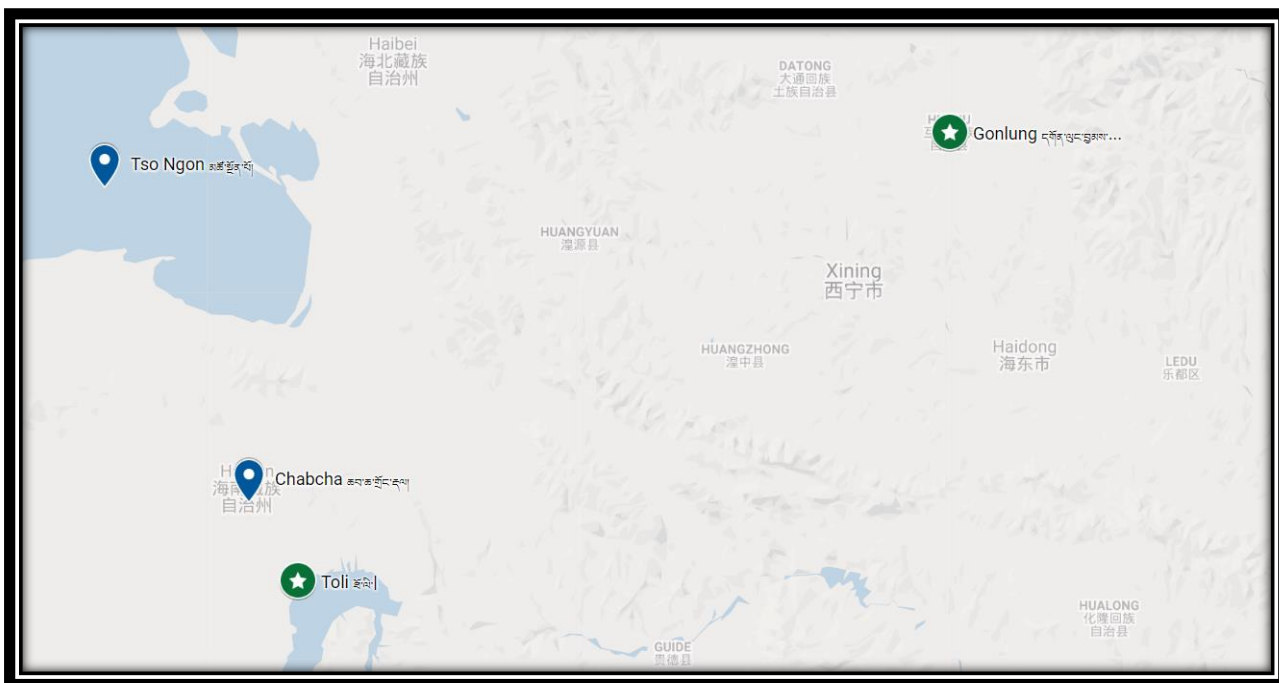
Map 1. Location of Tholi bulay and Tholi dabayan
Source: Kim (2017); 280.

I would like to propose a third possible location; I have located a village named Toli just to the northwest of the Longyangxia Dam (Tib. Tshal rnga 'gag; Ch. 龙羊峡 Lóng yáng xiá) in present day Gonghe County (Tib. gSer chen rdzong; Ch. 共和县 Gònghé xiàn), Qinghai Province (see map below). According to the online Tibetan encyclopaedia *baike.yongdzin.com*, Toli is a Mongolian name given to the region due to an abundance of rabbits (Mong. *tuulai*) that once dwelt there.²²² It was previously part of Khilkhu township

²²² 'Tho li', *Baidu Encyclopedia*.

<http://baike.yongdzin.com/word/viewWord.do?id=000000005409b63e01540ebc1936526a> (accessed March 26, 2019)

(Tib. 'Khyil khug) but was later transferred to Tege township (Tib. The ge) after the construction of the Longyangxia Dam at the entrance of the Longyangxia Canyon on the Yellow River; placing the village of Toli on its banks. This is simply speculation at the moment, and further research needs to be done to verify this location.



Map 2. Location of Toli village in Gonghe County.
Source: ©GoogleMaps. Locations in blue and green added by author.

Inspired by the Tibetan Proverb; “if you don’t know your [patri]lineage, you are no better than a monkey in a forest. If you don’t know your maternal lineage, you are like a fake turquoise dragon”,²²³ Sumpa Khenpo demonstrates the importance of lineage to his sense of self and wider Tibetan culture. His family were Mongols, although Sumpa Khenpo was

²²³ rang gi skyes rgyud ma shes na nags kyi spre'u dang 'dra cho 'brang ma shes na g'yu 'brug zol ma dang 'dra skad | SK-CASS, folio 9(b); 5.

educated in Tibetan.²²⁴ He was the fourth son of Dorje Tashi (Tib. rDo rje bkra shis) and Tashi Tso (Tib. bKra shis mtsho); his father was a *Taiji* (Tib. *Tha'i ji*) within the Baatud (Tib. Pā thud), one of the four Oirad groups.²²⁵ *Taiji* was a title used among Oirad princes and aristocracy, implying he was from Mongolian nobility. Sumpa Khenpo elaborates further;

Furthermore, it is said that there are the four categories of kings, lords, high-class brahmans, and ordinary beings, and also the category of outcasts. Assuming that, my lineage is that of the lords. According to the legal system of the Oirad Mongols, red sticks were arranged around the tents of lama's and chiefs, and our own tent [too]. It was not permissible for others [to do this]. Furthermore, all my relatives were permitted to erect [these red fences], and so it's easy to see that I come from a lineage of lords.²²⁶

Sumpa Khenpo's mother was Dzungar and his maternal uncle is said to have descended from a lineage of Dzungar chiefs. Unfortunately, Sumpa Khenpo provides no additional information regarding his maternal lineage. He had three elder brothers, one young brother, and two younger sisters. Sumpa Khenpo tells us very little about his siblings, only that his younger brother was a monk. He states that his parents were “very devout, very respectful,

²²⁴ His ethnicity has already received a wide range of attention and requires little discussion here. For an overview of the scholarship regarding Sumpa Khenpo's ethnic identity, see Kim (2013).

²²⁵ Historical sources from the fifteenth century list the Baatud and Khoid as forming one of the Four Oirad groups, however due to a series of campaigns against the Baatud in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries they declined. Kaplonski (2010); 524.

By the time of Sumpa Khenpo, the majority of the Baatud had been absorbed by the Khoshud and Torgut in the Tshongon region. Yet, as we can see, Sumpa Khenpo maintains that the Baatud were still prominent in this period.

²²⁶ *yang de la rgyal po dang dpon rje'u dang bram ze gtsang ma dang phal ba dmangs rigs bzhi dang gdol ba'i rigs kyang yod par bshad | de'i dbang du btang na bdag gi rigs ni dpon rje'u'i rigs te | sog po o'i rod kyi khirms lugs la gur mtha' lcug phran dmar po bsgrigs pas bskor ba bla ma lha dpon gyi gur las gzhan pas 'then mi chog kyang | nged kyi nye rigs kun gyis 'then chog pas kyang dpon rgyud yin par shes sla | SK-CASS, folio9(b); 7 – folio10(a); 2.*

pure hearted and took delight in the ten virtues and sixteen pure human norms”²²⁷ and having recognised that their son enjoyed role playing as a lama, they began teaching the young Sumpa Khenpo written Tibetan and parts of the Pañchen Lama’s prayer (Tib. *gsol 'debs*).²²⁸

Identification as the Third Sumpa Lama

In the Fire Pig year (1707), Sumpa Khenpo was escorted to Drakar Melong Ling Monastery (Tib. Brag dkar me long gling), located in present day Trika (T. Khri ka; Ch. 贵德 Guìdé).

There, he became the student of Sogpo Chohor Gelong (Tib. Sog po Cho hor dge slong) and spent the next few years studying recitations and *dharma* practices under his guidance.

During this period, the search for the reincarnation of the Second Sumpa Lama, Shabdrung Lobsang Tenpé Gyaltzen (Tib. Sum pa Zhabs drung Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan; 1652–1703) had already begun. The lineage of the Sumpa incarnations is charted in figure

2. The Second Changkya Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Chöden (Tib. lCang skya Ngag dbang blo bzang chos ldan; 1642–1714) – another influential incarnation at Gonlung Monastery – had entrusted Jamyang Zhepé Dorje (Tib. 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje; 1648–1721/22) with the task of locating him. With the help of Erdeni *Taiji* Tsangwa Kyab (Tib. Er ti ni tha'i ji Tshang ba skyabs), a descendent of Güshri Khan,²²⁹ messengers were sent in all directions

²²⁷ *pha ma gnyis ka dang gus ldan zhing sems dkar ba mi chos gtsang ma bcu drug dang dge bcu la spro ba yin* / SK-CASS, folio10(a); 5.

²²⁸ *pañ chen rin po che'i gsol 'debs kyi mgo'i dge legs yon tan ma sho lo ka gcig bslab skad* / SK-CASS, folio11(a); 7. It is unclear what text or prayer this is referring to.

²²⁹ Sumpa Khenpo compiled Güshri Khan’s genealogical table in PSJZ, in which Erdeni *Taiji* Tsangwa Kyab is listed as a grandson of Güshri Khan’s sixth son, Dorje Dalai Hungtaiji (Tib. rDo rje Dalai Hung tha'i ji). Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor (1965); 310. The role of Mongol nobility in locating the incarnation of the Sumpa Lama is interesting and clearly demonstrates the role of Mongol patrons in religious affairs.

in search of the boy.²³⁰ After his parents mentioned that he was a gifted monk, Sumpa Khenpo had an audience with several prominent lamas, monks, and chieftains, and was questioned rigorously by Jamyang Zhepé Dorje – who later confirmed that he was, in fact, the reincarnation of the Sumpa Lama. He was then escorted to Tarshul Monastery (Tib. Thar shul) where he studied under Tarshul Chokyong Gyatso (Tib. Thar shul dPon slob Chos skyong rgya mtsho). In the Iron Tiger year (1710), Sumpa Khenpo received the vows of a ‘fully perfected lay Buddhist’ (Tib. *yongs rdzogs dge bsnyen*)²³¹ and was given the name Lobsang Chokyong (Tib. Blo bzang chos skyong).

Sumpa Khenpo describes various auspicious signs and coincidences from his childhood which continue to confirm his status as the Third Sumpa Lama, including one encounter with Lobsang Rabten (Tib. Blo bzang rab brtan), a *gelong* (‘fully ordained monastic’; Tib. *dge slong*) sent by Sumpa Chöjé Phuntsog Namgyal (Tib. Sum pa chos rje Phun tshogs rnam rgyal; d. 1740)²³² for further authentication;

One morning, that monk (i.e. Lobsang Rabten) arrived at the home of the young boy (i.e. Sumpa Khenpo), and the child claimed; “Today, someone will bring my books.” [Lobsang Rabten] had just arrived, and [the young boy] came to welcome him, clutching robes. Tears and rejoicing competed within

²³⁰ For more on the politics of reincarnation, see Oidtmann, M. (2018) *Forging the Golden Urn: The Qing Empire and the Politics of Reincarnation in Tibet*. New York: Columbia University Press; Schwieger (2015); Tuttle, G. (2016) ‘The Role of Mongol Elite and Educational Degrees in the Advent of Reincarnation Lineages in Seventeenth Century Amdo’, in Debreczeny, K. and Tuttle, G. (eds.) *The Tenth Karmapa and Tibet’s Turbulent Seventeenth Century*. Chicago: Serindia, pp. 235–262; Yongdan, L. (2019) ‘The Invention of a Tibetan Lama General: A Biographical Account of Bla ma dkar po (1835–1895)’, *Revue d’Etudes Tibétaines* 49, pp. 67–92.

²³¹ An individual who keeps all five of the upāsaka vows: not to kill, steal, lie, or commit adultery, and refrain from alcohol. For more on this, see Sobisch, J. U. (2002) *Three-vow Theories in Tibetan Buddhism: A Comparative Study of Major Traditions from the Twelfth through Nineteenth Centuries*. Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, pp. 276–277.

²³² For a brief biography, see Hor tshang ‘jigs med. (2009) *mDo smad lo rgyus chen mo*. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, p. 619. Available on TBRC (ID W2CZ7959).

him. When [the monk] showed him books and so forth, the child took the old ones and said, “These are mine”. The lama [also] asked, “What is your house like?” and the boy is reported to have babbled “It is a red house with many trees in front of it”.²³³

Sumpa Khenpo ends the story by suggesting that the red house he had mentioned as a child was most likely Gonlung Hermitage (Tib. dGon lung ri khrod), further supporting his status as a reincarnated lama and his association with the monastery.

Following confirmation that the reincarnation of the Sumpa Lama had been found among the community of Erdeni *Taiji* Tsangwa Kyab in Machuka (Tib. rMa chu ka), an envoy was dispatched from Gonlung Monastery to fetch the boy. In the Water Dragon year (1712), Sumpa Khenpo moved to Gonlung Monastery. He arrived on the eighth day of the third month and was received by 3,000 members of the *saṅgha* (Tib. *dge 'dun*; Skt. *saṅgha*; Ch. 僧伽 *sēngjiā*). It is said that Jamyang Zhepé Dorje delayed the escorting of the young Sumpa Lama to Gonlung Monastery so that he would arrive and meet the *saṅgha* on the dragon day in the dragon month in the year of the dragon – a truly auspicious occurrence!

Early Education and Monastic Experience

After arriving at Gonlung Monastery, he studied under the Second Chubsang Lama, Lobsang Tenpé Gyaltzen, who had become the abbot (Tib. *khri pa*) of Gonlung Monastery

²³³ *bu chung gi pha khyim du dge slong de slebs pa'i snga dro byis pa des de ring nga rang gi dpe cha khyer yong gin yod zer ba dang | slebs ma thag bsu bar 'ong nas gos la 'jus te ngu ba dang dga' ba 'gran ltar gyur te po ti sogs bstans pas rnying pa rnams bzung nas nga'i yin zer nas len pa dang | khyod la khang pa ji 'dra yod ces dris pas khang pa dmar po mdun du sdong po mang po yod pa zhig yin zhes byis pa'i rang bzhin ngom pa'i bab col smras skad | SK-CASS, folio 11(b).*

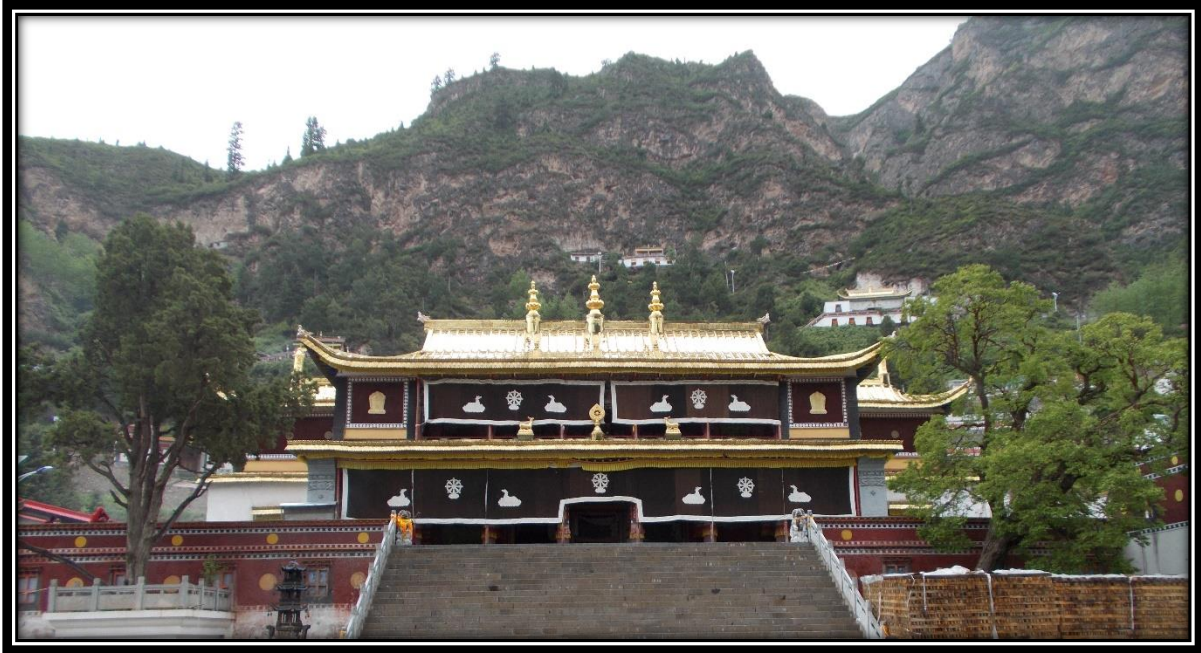


Figure 1. The main hall of Gonlung Monastery.
 Source: Author (photograph taken in 2017).

in 1711. Sumpa Khenpo discusses his teachers at Gonlung with praise and gratitude, asserting that they “fulfilled the role of both presenting and teaching the range of the *dharmā* through their brilliant clear minds and the blazing tongue of flames²³⁴ of memorisation, learning, and wisdom.”²³⁵ As for his monastic education, it began with listening (Tib. *thos*) and memorisation; the first steps in the traditional Tibetan monastic career.²³⁶ Some of the subjects and texts covered in his initial years of study include the *Tripitaka* (Tib. *sDe snod gsum*), the thirty-four jātakas of Āryasūra’s *Jātakamālā* (Tib. *'Khrungs rabs so bzhi pa*), the Extensive *Prajñāpāramitā* (Tib. *Yum rgyas pa*), and *Abhisamayalānkara* (Tib. *mNgon rtogs*

²³⁴ Kapstein translated *me lce 'bar ba* as ‘blazing tongue of flames’ in Kapstein, M. (2007) ‘The Tibetan Yulanpen Jing’, *Contributions to the Cultural History of Early Tibet* 14, p. 236.

²³⁵ *shes rab dang spobs pa dang gzungs kyi me lce 'bar ba'i blo gsal du mas chos kyi ra bar ston pa dang bstan pa gnyis ka'i go chod* / SK-CASS, folio 20(a); 7 – folio 20(b); 1.

²³⁶ For more on a Tibetan Buddhist education, see Dreyfus (2003).

rgyan). In the Earth Dog (1718) and Earth Pig (1719) years, in order to “infuse the mind with the good habits of arts and crafts”, he devoted himself thoroughly to the arts.²³⁷

The Wood Sheep year (1715) was the first of Sumpa Khenpo’s ‘obstacle years’ (Tib. *lo skeg*); a period at twelve-year intervals where one will experience loss, difficulty, and suffering. In this year, Sumpa Khenpo became sick at the sight of a monk’s corpse. After recounting the situation to the abbot of Gonlung’s tantric college, Drubchen Ngawang Tenzin Trinlé (Tib. Grub chen Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin 'phrin las; 1666–1723),²³⁸ he received an oral transmission of the Kriyātantra of Vajrapāṇi (Tib. *bya rgyud kyi phyag rdor gtum chung*) and was encouraged to recite mantras for around two months. Sumpa Khenpo describes these mantras as “a powerful scattering wind driving out these [negativities]; just like a hawk chasing a small bird.”²³⁹ As we will see in Chapter five, this experience shaped his opinion on the efficacy of applying mantric rituals for healing purposes. Furthermore, in order to cleanse his obstructions, Sumpa Khenpo claims to have recited the *Bodhisattva's Confession of Downfalls* (Tib. *Byang chub ltung bshags*) more than fifty times a day until he left for Central Tibet in 1723.

Following the receipt of his novice vows (Tib. *dge tshul gyi sdom pa*) in the Fire Monkey year (1716) from Chubsang Lobsang Tenpé Gyaltzen, Sumpa Khenpo continued his education as he developed monastic relationships and a growing exposure to Tibetan spiritual authorities. This is evident in his autobiography when he describes his sadness at

²³⁷ *rnam 'phyang sa khyi dang | sgyur byed sa phag lo nas dbus gtsang du 'gro ba'i bar la bzo ba rig pa'i phyogs la bag chags bzang po sems la bsgo ched du gar yig dbyangs bslab pa* / SK-CASS, folio 24(a); 5.

²³⁸ Drubchen Ngawang Tenzin Trinlé was the 26th abbot of Gonlung Monastery.

²³⁹ *bsgom bzlas sngags mthu bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i 'thor rlung shugs drag gis khra yis byi'u bzhin du bdas pa na* / SK-CASS, folio 22(a); 5.

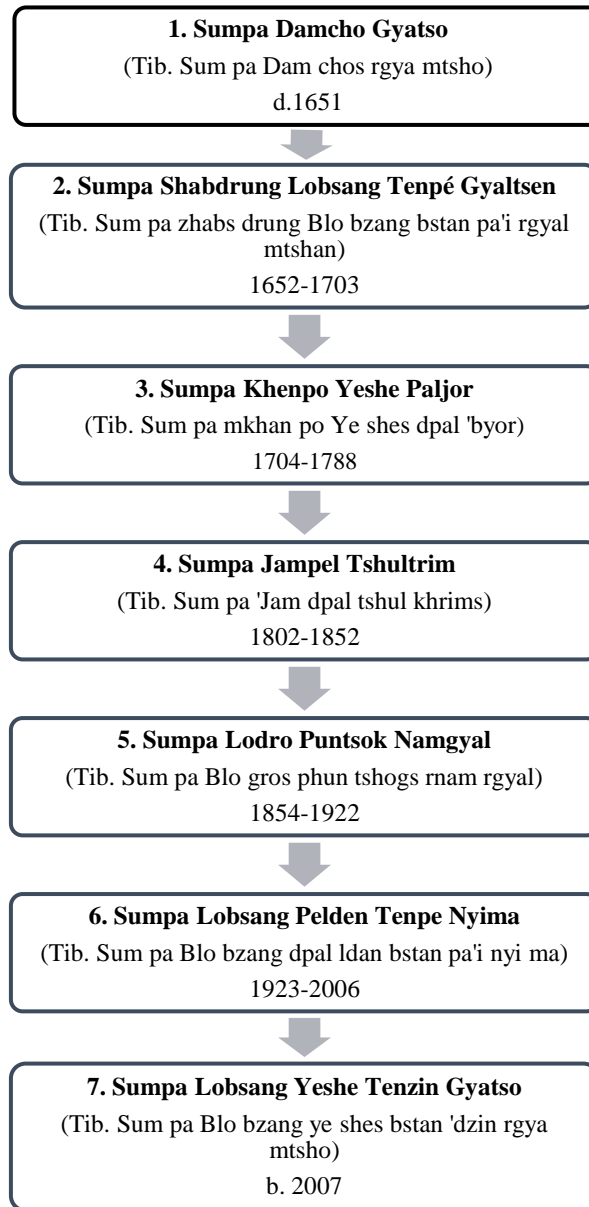


Figure 2. The Sumpa incarnation lineage.
Created by author.

the Second Thukén Lama, Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso (Thu'u bkwan Ngag dbang chos kyi rgya mtsho; 1680–1736) returning to Beijing in 1716, the auspicious signs that appeared in 1717 signifying the re-birth of the Changkya Lama, as well as an audience with the Seventh Dalai Lama, Kelzang Gyatso (Tib. bsKal bzang rgya mtsho; 1708–1757), at Kumbum Monastery in the same year. The following year, the Kangxi Emperor ordered that the

Seventh Dalai Lama return to Lhasa. According to Sumpa Khenpo, the young Dalai Lama was first escorted by Prince Yinti (Tib. Cang jun si zhi wang; Ch. 允禵 Yǔntí; 1688–1756) and later by a series of lamas and patrons, including Thuken Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso and Lobsang Tenzin. Sumpa Khenpo was briefly reunited with Thuken Rinpoche, as he passed through Gonlung Monastery, and travelled with him for one day – it is unclear if Thuken Rinpoche was escorting the Seventh Dalai Lama at this time – suggesting that he was well-connected with influential lamas and patrons at a young age.

Having been encouraged by his friends to go to Central Tibet, Sumpa Khenpo developed a strong desire to travel and study there. Recounting being told stories about the wonderful monasteries, teachers, and sacred places in Central Tibet, he says that “as soon as each drop fell into my ear, my mind was robbed of concentration.”²⁴⁰ In the Iron Ox year (1721), he asked Sumpa Chöjé Phuntsog Namgyal to include him in the envoy party that would invite the Fourth Gyalse Lama, Jigme Yeshe Dragpa (Tib. rGyal sras 'Jigs med ye shes grags pa; 1696–1740) from Central Tibet, but his request was rejected. Sumpa Khenpo does not write if a reason was given as to why he could not go. Instead, however, Sumpa Chöjé asked Chubsang Rinpoche to bestow the *lingse* degree (Tib. *gling bsre*) on Sumpa Khenpo – a high academic degree for philosophical studies²⁴¹ – which suggests that his teachers considered him sharp and skilled.

Nonetheless, he rejected the degree and, instead, sought an oracle (Tib. *chos skyong*) named Droga Ratsa (Tib. 'Brog pa ra tsa). Sumpa Khenpo, who was wholly determined to

²⁴⁰ *thig pa re re yang rna ba'i bu gar lhung ba tsam gyis yid kyi brtan pa 'phrog ste* / SK-CASS, folio 29(b); 1.

²⁴¹ Tulku, T. (2000) *A Brief History of Tibetan Academic Degrees in Buddhist Philosophy* (NIAS reports; no. 43). Copenhagen: NIAS, in association with the Royal Library, p. 17.

go to Central Tibet, requested that they support him in his endeavours, pleading with the oracle; “even if a sign of going to Ü does not emerge [or it says] do not send me, [please] do not obstruct me.”²⁴² Sumpa Khenpo was subsequently given permission to go Central Tibet. It wasn’t just his teachers who tried to obstruct his journey to the south – according to Sumpa Khenpo, the chiefs of Sumpa, along with several members of their retinue, spread rumours about him,²⁴³ which he describes as being like “an iron nail struck [through] my heart. I will never forget it.”²⁴⁴ He adds, however, that in hindsight it was a blessing in disguise; as the attempted obstructions to his journey further fuelled his motivation to travel and study, which would come to define his life’s work and practises.

Life in Central Tibet

In the Water Hare year (1723), Sumpa Khenpo began his journey to Central Tibet in the company of the Fourth Gyalse Lama’s brother, the Gomshi incarnation (Tib. sGom zhi),²⁴⁵ and their retinue. Before setting off, he had asked a diviner at Gonlung to confirm which dates were auspicious to travel on. It was predicted that inauspicious incidences were on the horizon, prompting Sumpa Khenpo to leave as soon as possible. This prediction proved to

²⁴² *yang 'brog pa ra tsa mo pa la 'dri dgos zer ba na de la sngon du mi btang nas dbus su 'gro a'i phywa gal te ma bab kyang ma 'gog ces smras sogs thabs mkhas du mas 'gog mi thub par bgyis* | SK-CASS, folio 29(b); 5–6.

²⁴³ The nature of the rumours is not clear; however, the author discusses his increased motivation to study after hearing about the gossip, which suggests that there may have been some talk of his academic ability and/or his dedication to his studies.

²⁴⁴ *thos pa na snying la lcags gzer btab ltar gyur te nam yang mi brjed la* | SK-CASS, folio 30(a); 1–2.

²⁴⁵ According to Hanung Kim, Gomshi is one of the minor incarnation lineages at Gonlung. Kim (2018); 65.

be true, as a civil war erupted in the area in the days following Sumpa Khenpo's departure.²⁴⁶ When they reached Shalatu (Tib. Sha la thu), Lobsang Tenzin dispatched an envoy to escort the travellers as far as Solomo (Tib. So lo mo). They then travelled via Drigung Monastery (Tib. 'Bri gung) and Kharkya Monastery (Tib. mKhar skya), arriving at Ganden Choding (Tib. dGa' ldan chos sdings), the residence of the Gyalse incarnations, in the ninth month. There, he had an audience with the Fourth Gyalse Lama, exchanging gifts.

He then travelled along the Yarlung Tsanpo River (Tib. Yar klung gtsang po; Ch. 雅鲁藏布江 Yǎlǔ zàngbù jiāng) towards Shigatse visiting venerated sites, including Ngari Dratshang (Tib. mNga' ris grwa tshang), Tsethang Monastery (Tib. rTse thang), Gongkar (Tib. Gong dkar), and Zhalu Monastery (Tib. Zha lu). On the eighth day of the eleventh month, he arrived at Tashilhunpo (Tib. bKra shis lhun po) and had an audience with the Fifth Panchen Lama, Lobsang Yeshe (Tib. Blo bzang ye shes; 1663–1737). After two days of circumambulation and making offerings, Sumpa Khenpo had another meeting with the Panchen Lama, who bestowed on him the vows of a 'fully ordained monk' (Tib. *bsnyen rdzogs dge slong*) and a new name, Ye shes dpal 'byor.

Sumpa Khenpo returned to Ganden Choding, and Gyalse Rinpoche suggested that he go to Rato Monastery (Tib. Rwa stod), providing him with provisions and an envoy. On the way to Rato, Sumpa Khenpo visited Samye Monastery (Tib. bSam yas), Tsel Gungtang Monastery (Tib. Tshal gung thang), and Lhasa; where he stopped at the Jokhang (Tib. Ra sa 'phrul snang) to pay his respects to the Jowo Śākyamuni (Tib. Jo bo Shākya mu ni), and the

²⁴⁶ For more on the rebellion of Lobsang Tenzin, see Soloshcheva, M. (2004) 'The 'Conquest of Qinghai' Stele of 1725 and the Aftermath of Lobsang Danjin's Rebellion in 1723-1724', *National Research University Higher School of Economics*. http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2522885 (accessed May 12, 2016); and Perdue (2005); 243–248.

Potala Palace. While staying in Lhasa, he also had an audience with the Seventh Dalai Lama. After arriving at Rato Monastery, he spent five days studying Jamyang Zhepe Dorje's work on logic and epistemology, *tshema* (Tib. *tshad ma*; Skt. *pramāṇa*). From there he entered Samlo Khamtshan (Tib. bSam blo kham tshan), one of the residential houses of Gomang College (Tib. sGo mang grwa tshang) at Drepung Monastery. Having been urged to stay at Samlo Khamtshan by the master of Gomang, Lamo Ngawang Namkha Rinpoche (Tib. La mo Ngag dbang nam mkha'), Sumpa Khenpo remained at the monastery and became a *chodze* (Tib. *chos mdzad*).²⁴⁷ He portrays his time at Gomang with affection, calling it the second Chösang Lha Dunsang (Tib. Chos bzang lha'i 'dun sa).²⁴⁸ He recounts regular meetings with the Seventh Dalai Lama, outstanding and melodious teachings from the community based there, and inspiring debating sessions. Sumpa Khenpo studied the *Prajñāpāramitā* (Tib. *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa*) and several scriptures under Lubum Khamtsang's Mogcha Jamyang Gyatso (Tib. Klu 'bum khams tshan Mog ca 'Jam dbyangs rgya mtsho; 1688–1761).²⁴⁹

In the spring of the Wood Dragon year (1724), a Mongol messenger brought news of war in the Tsongon region, the destruction of monasteries and villages there, and the death of many monks including his teacher Chubsang Rinpoche. Sumpa Khenpo was suddenly

²⁴⁷ Upon entering the monastery, certain privileges could be bought for monks through paying additional 'fees' – often through making offerings to the whole community at the monastery – these monks were sometimes called *chodze*. They were usually exempt from the basic chores expected of junior monks, such as sweeping. For more on the role and privileges of the *chodze*, see Jensen, B. (2018) *The Monastery Rules: Buddhist Monastic Organization in Pre-Modern Tibet*. Oakland: University of California Press, pp. 61–64.

²⁴⁸ I believe this is a misspelling and should be 'dun sa, not *mdun pa* as is found in the text. Chos bzang lha'i 'dun sa is a dome located on Mount Meru where Indra teaches the *dharma*.

²⁴⁹ I believe this is Mog kya mkhan po 'Jam dbyangs rgya mtsho, who served as abbot of Palkhor Chöde (Tib. dPal 'khor chos sde) and established Ngangrong Tashi Chökhörling (Tib. Ngang rong bkra shis chos 'khor gling) in Amdo. Hor tshang 'jigs med. (2009); 121.

taken ill and sought medical attention in the form of tantric practice. As we will see in Chapter five, this incident strengthened his conviction regarding the medical efficacy of tantric rituals, which he regularly prescribed.

With the aim of establishing and strengthening his religious network, Sumpa Khenpo spent a large part of the Wood Snake year (1725) visiting as many monasteries as possible in the region, including Ganden Monastery, Gyuto and Gyumé (Tib. rGyud stod smad), and Sera Monastery and met with many lamas. While visiting Gyumé and Gyuto Colleges, he met Jakhyung Nomonhan Rinpoche (Tib. Bya khyung ba No mon han),²⁵⁰ who rebuked Sumpa Khenpo's arrogance, which shaped his future behaviour and teaching on the subjects of pride and the importance of heeding advice and instruction; "Due to the scolding [from my teacher] and being hit with [his] *mālā*, the demons that entered my heart were expelled, and the demon's arrows that bestow pride were driven out. Having received true blessings through guidance and the patting [of my head], from that time onwards my arrogance has been cleared."²⁵¹ So powerful was this experience that Sumpa Khenpo spends the following five folios further expanding on the need for disciples to dispel their pride and listen to the advice and critiques of their teachers, providing us with a clear example of how autobiographical writings can be used to instruct the reader, as discussed in Chapter one.

²⁵⁰ This could be Lobsang Gyaltzen (Tib. Blo bzang rgyal mtshan; 1700–1785), the nineteenth abbot of Jakhyung Monastery (Tib. Bya khyung) in Amdo. Jakhyung Monastery is a branch monastery of Gonlung. Sullivan (2018); 417. According to the *Succession of Abbots of Jakhyung* (Tib. *Bya khyung gdan rabs*) he was bestowed the Mongolian title Nomonhan ('dharma king'; Mong. Nomun qan). See Hor tshang 'jigs med (2009); 133; and Tshe tan zhabs drung. (1984) *Bya khyung gdan rabs*. Xining: mTsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, p. 126. Available on TBRC (ID W20846).

²⁵¹ *de ltar bka' bkyon mdzad pa dang phyag phreng gis brdabs pas 'dre rgyal gdon snying la zhugs pa dang bdud kyi mda' dregs byed phog pa'ng bskrad | zhal ta gnang ba dang phyag gis byung pas byin rlabs dngos su zhugs nas de phyin chad nga rgyal khengs pa sangs song* / SK-CASS, folio 39(b); 4–5.

In the Fire Horse year (1726), Sumpa Khenpo was bestowed the title of *lingse* at Gomang College – a title that he had turned down five years earlier. He later partook in an extensive three-day debate with two other *geshes* (Tib. *dge bshes*; Skt. *kalyāṇamitra*),²⁵² Sangye Dorje (Tib. Sangs rgyas rdo rje)²⁵³ and Ngawang Lobsang (Tib. Ngag dbang blo bzang).²⁵⁴ Sumpa Khenpo was commended for his debating ability and was given a *khatag* (Tib. *kha btags*), a traditional ceremonial scarf, by Rabjampa Sogpo Chodrag (Tib. Rab 'byams pa Sog po Chos grags). When he debated again the following year, he impressed the lamas of Lingse, and subsequently became utterly devoted to improving his debating skills; “From the third year of arriving in Central Tibet onwards, in the presence of scholars and the masses on the Monlam (Tib. sMon lam) courtyards of Lhasa, I debated again and again.”²⁵⁵

Around this time, he attempted to enter Gyumé College, having been invited by Gyumé Rinpoche, but was prevented by the illness of his kitchen servant Sumpa Phuntsog Dondrup (Tib. Sum pa Rab 'byams pa Phun tshogs don grub).²⁵⁶ After this incident, his kitchen servant was given his remaining provisions and sent away. Sumpa Khenpo was left with very few possessions, surviving on *tsampa* soup and food donations. He admits that

²⁵² The highest degree awarded by Tibetan monastic institutions. For more on this, see Dreyfus (2003).

²⁵³ I believe this is Sangye Dorje (1708–1757), the thirty-eighth abbot of Gomang College. He was born amongst the right wing of the Mongols. Hor tshang 'jigs med. (2009); 650; and bsTan pa bstan 'dzin. (2003) *Chos sde chen po dpal ldan 'bras spungs bkra shis sgo mang grwa tshang gi chos 'byung dung g'yas su 'khyil ba'i sgra dbyangs*. Lhasa: dPal ldan 'bras spungs bkra shis sgo mang dpe mdzod khang, p. 92. Available on TBRC (ID W28810).

²⁵⁴ This could be Ngawang Lobsang Nyima (1698–1778), a Mongol from Tsongon who studied under Jamyang Zhepé, although more research needs to be done. Mi nyag mgon pos brstams. (1996) *Gangs can mkhas dbang rim byon gyi rnam thar mdor bsud* (Vol. 1). Beijing: Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, pp. 449–451. Available on TBRC (ID W25268).

²⁵⁵ *bod du song ba'i lo gsum pa nas bzung ste lha sa'i 'khyam ra'i smon lam gyi dam bca'i skabs su mkhas mang tshogs pa'i mdun sar kho bos gro gleng yang yang btang* / SK-CASS, folio 42(b); 6–7.

²⁵⁶ It is unclear as to why his kitchen servant's illness prevented him from entering Gyumé.

reflecting on this incident, even some fifty years later, results in anxiety, *nyinlung* (Tib. *snying rlung*) arising within him. However, he also considers it a positive experience for his faith, quoting Sakya Paṇḍita; “A scholar, at the time of learning, is miserable. It is impossible to become a scholar and remain cheerful.”²⁵⁷ Despite living in poverty, he studied with a wealth of eminent teachers; for example, with the Seventh Dalai Lama he studied the *Concise Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (Tib. *Lam rim bsduṣ don*), he learnt the basic treaties on Tibetan grammar with Kumbum Samlo Mithung (Tib. sKu 'bum pa bSam blo mi'u thung),²⁵⁸ and studied the tantras with Namkha Zangpo (Tib. Nam mkha' bzang po; 1690–1750).²⁵⁹

While studying in Central Tibet, the Civil War of 1727–1728 broke out. In the third month of the Earth Monkey year (1728), as Ü and Tsang (Tib. gTsang) became the battlefields of the Civil War, Sumpa Khenpo went on a pilgrimage to Tsari Tsagong (Tib. Tsa ri tsa gong). This pilgrimage is discussed in detail in Chapter three. After returning to Drepung Monastery later that year, the ministers of the Ü faction tried to mobilise monks to join in the fighting. The monastic communities of Central Tibetan institutions gathered to deliberate, and Sumpa Khenpo gave a speech to dissuade monks taking up arms; the speech itself and its rhetorical devices are discussed in Chapter four. Sumpa Khenpo was poisoned in retribution, but fortunately survived. According to the author, in recognition of his courage and allegiance, he was appointed abbot of Dreyul Khyetshal (Tib. 'Bras yul skyid tshal)²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ *mkhas pa slob pa'i dus na sdug // bde bar sdod pa mkhas mi srid //* SK-CASS, folio 43(b); 1.

²⁵⁸ An influential figure from Tsongkha in Amdo, see bsTan pa bstan 'dzin. (2003); 627–630.

²⁵⁹ The fifty-fifth abbot of Ganden Monastery and another renowned Amdowa, see bsTan pa bstan 'dzin. (2003); 327–338, and Ko zhul Grags pa 'byung gnas and rGyal ba Blo bzang mkhas grub (1992); 1513–1514.

²⁶⁰ Dreyul Khyetsal was a Sakyapa Monastery that was founded in 1449. According to David Jackson, the monastery remained a Sakyapa institution until the early twentieth century. It is unclear why Sumpa Khenpo

in the province of Tsang by Pholhane and the Seventh Dalai Lama. However, it could also be interpreted as an attempt to get Sumpa Khenpo out of the way of those who were dissatisfied with his role in the defeat of the Ü and who may have then sought retribution. He initially turned down this position but claims that he had no choice other than to accept, due to the strong insistence from both Pholhane and the Seventh Dalai Lama.

In the Earth Bird year (1729), a *Jasag* Lama (Tib. *Ja sag*) came to Lhasa from Amdo as a messenger of the Yongzheng Emperor.²⁶¹ One of his requests was that Sumpa Khenpo tender his resignation as abbot and return to Gonlung – no reason is given for this. He obliged and returned to Gonlung in the Iron Pig year (1731).

Invitations and Travels

Even though Sumpa Khenpo was still less than thirty years old, it appears that his fame had spread, as the next few years were marked by invitations to teach, consecrate, and give empowerments across Tibet and Mongolia. The number of invitations extended to Sumpa Khenpo, both at this time and later in life, suggests that his empowerments and teachings were in high demand.²⁶² Sumpa Khenpo frequently emphasises that he assumed important offices or gave teachings due to the insistence of powerful individuals or at the behest of the community. This may be due to the norm of humility, as discussed in Chapter one, and

was appointed the abbot of a Sakyapa monastery. Jackson, D. (1997) 'A Reviver of Sa-skyapa Scriptural Studies in 20th Century Central Tibet', in Karmay, S. and Sagant, P. (eds.) *Les Habitants du Toit du Monde, Recherches sur la haute Asie 12*. Nanterre: Société d'ethnologie, pp. 139–153.

²⁶¹ *Jasag* Lama is a rank of Tibetan Buddhist monk established during the Qing dynasty. It was an administrative position and was generally given to Tibetan Buddhist monks who resided in Beijing and its surrounding areas.

²⁶² Due to the large geographical area covered and the sheer number of places visited by Sumpa Khenpo, I have created three maps that highlight some of the locations he travelled to. See maps 3, 4, and 6.

should therefore not be taken at full face value – it is likely to be a rhetoric flourish rather than an autobiographical fact.

In the spring of 1731, after receiving numerous requests from practitioners and students, he taught Tsongkhapa's *Treatises on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (Tib. *Byang chub lam gyi rim pa*). He then set out for Lamo Dechen Monastery (Tib. La mo bde chen) travelling via Jakhyung Monastery, Gur Monastery (Tib. mGur), and Anchung Namdzong Monastery (Tib. An chung gnam rdzong). There, Sumpa Khenpo met with the Second Lamo Sertri, Lobsang Tenpé Nyima (Tib. La mo gser khri Blo bzang bstan pa'i nyi ma; 1689–1762/72),²⁶³ under whose strong exhortation he taught at the monastery for two and a half months. He then moved on to Gongwa Monastery (Tib. Gong ba) in Chika (Tib. Chi ka), where he made offerings to lamas and the *saṅgha* and bestowed a series of empowerments including the Mitra Gyatsa (Tib. *mi tra brgya rtsa*), a tantric cycle ascribed to the *Mahāsiddha* Mitra.²⁶⁴ In the spring and summer of the Water Ox year (1733), Sumpa Khenpo performed the Mitra Gyatsa empowerment at Ganden Rinchen Ling Monastery (Tib. dGa' ldan rin chen gling; Ch. 宝贝寺 Bǎobèi sì) to an audience of over 500 lay and clergy.

In the same year, Sumpa Khenpo visited Shakog (Tib. Zhwa khog)²⁶⁵ at the invitation of its people, where, at their request, he established a hermitage called Shedrub

²⁶³ Another prominent Amdowa who was active at the imperial court. See Mi nyag mgon pos brstams (1996); 192–197.

²⁶⁴ A biography of Mitra can be found on the *Himalayan Art Resources*. See 'Indian Adept: Mitra Yogin', *Himalayan Art Resources* <https://www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setID=1590> (accessed December 03, 2019).

²⁶⁵ Hanung Kim notes that the name may stem from an old Chinese name for the river that ran through the region, Xiakou 峡口. See Kim (2018); 73.

Ling (Tib. bShad sgrub gling; Ch. 平安寺 Píngān sì) having performed a geomancy ritual to decide its location and a restoration and purification of the vows ceremony (Tib. *bkra shis gso sbyong*).²⁶⁶ That autumn, the people of Tashi Chöling (Tib. bKra shis chos gling) asked Sumpa Khenpo to assume the abbacy there, which he accepted in the eighth month. During his time at Tashi Chöling, Sumpa Khenpo gave teachings to the *saṅgha*, commissioned religious objects (Tib. *rtan*), and composed a ritual text for them. He continued travelling to other monasteries, bestowing a variety of empowerments on 1,000 people at Tashi Chöling, 800 at Druglung Ganden Shedrup Ling Monastery (Tib. 'Brug lung Dga' ldan bshad sgrub gling; Ch. 龙沟寺 Lónggōu sì),²⁶⁷ and clergy and laity at Drotsang Monastery (Tib. Gro tshang).

In the Wood Hare year (1735), he returned to Gonlung and bestowed the Mitra Gyatsa empowerment on 1,000 clergy and laity, including Thuken Rinpoche; the Second Likya Lama, Phuntsog Dragpa Tenzin (Tib. Li kya Phun tshogs grags pa bstan 'dzin);²⁶⁸ and Ulshri Phuntsog Tenzin Namgyal (Tib. Ul shri Phun tshogs bstan 'dzin rnam rgyal).²⁶⁹ Having heard that the abbot of Kumbum Monastery, Gendun Dondrup (Tib. dGe 'dun don grub; 1668–1741), was to give empowerments, he decided to travel there. While at Kumbum, a messenger from Sera Lung Ganden Damchö Ling Monastery (Tib. Se ra lung dga' ldan dam chos gling; Ch. 塞隆寺 Sāilóng sì)²⁷⁰ arrived with the request that Sumpa Khenpo assume the abbacy of the monastery. In order to “fulfil all the wishes of the most eminent

²⁶⁶ SK-CASS, folio 69(a) – folio 69(b).

²⁶⁷ This is one of Gonlung’s branch monasteries, located in present-day Ledu County, Qinghai. Sullivan (2013); 408.

²⁶⁸ One of the minor incarnation lineages at Gonlung Monastery, see Sullivan (2013); 30.

²⁶⁹ Another minor incarnation lineage at Gonlung. Ibid.

²⁷⁰ A branch monastery of Gonlung, located in present day Gansu province. Ibid; 408.

saṅgha and, at the same time, the faithful patrons”²⁷¹ he accepted the request. Before moving to Sera Lung Monastery, he was asked by the *saṅgha* and monasterial manor (Tib. *lha sde*) at Kumbum to perform a rain-making ritual for them. Sumpa Khenpo notes that the success of this ritual marked the beginning of his rain-making practices, which came to form one of the core activities undertaken by him. His reputation for rain-making is discussed in more detail in Chapter three.

Sumpa Khenpo was enthroned as abbot of Sera Lung Monastery on the twenty-fifth day of the fifth month. Following this, local chieftains offered him an old fort which had once sheltered villagers during violent clashes. Formerly known as Srogkar (Tib. Srog mkhar), Changkya Rinpoche is said to have recognised that it was an auspicious place. As such, on the twenty-second day of the ninth month, Sumpa Khenpo performed a purification ritual and re-named it Ganden Chodzung Hermitage (Tib. dGa' ldan chos rdzong; Ch. 紅卡寺 Hóngkǎ sì). He adds that the hermitage became the pinnacle of *dharma* practice in Pari (Tib. dPa' ris).²⁷² Sumpa Khenpo hoped to remain in Srogkar to continue his practice but his plans were disrupted by a series of unexpected events.

On the fifth day of the second month in the Fire Dragon year (1736), the Second Thuken Lama passed away at Gonlung Monastery. Sumpa Khenpo returned to his home monastery to preside over his funeral. While the Thuken Lama's body was being cleansed, he saw a small, thumb-sized piece of melted fat near the body and ate it, viewing this as a sign that he would later accumulate a small measure of prosperity. The following month, he

²⁷¹ *tshogs kyi mchog dge 'dun gyi bzhed dgu 'grub pa'i slad du dang sbyin bdag dad ldan thams cad kyi bsam pa rdzogs ched du de'i mod la gnas kyi bla ma byed par khas blangs* / SK-CASS, folio 75(a); 6.

²⁷² SK-CASS, folio 76(b) – folio 77(a).

resigned the abbacies of Sera Lung and Tashi Chöling – no reasons are given for these decisions in his autobiography.

That autumn, Sumpa Khenpo was invited to Xining by the regional *amban*, where he was probed about his academic ability and competence. Having been told by the *amban* to return to Gonlung and wait, which he considered a bad omen, Sumpa Khenpo travelled to Srogkar Hermitage to perform some rituals. Spotting a faint streak of smoke above his *damaru* drum (Tib. *ta ma ru*), he understood this to be a sign that he would be invited to Beijing but would not have to reside there for long.²⁷³ As predicted, he received an invitation to Beijing by the Qianlong Emperor later that year.

On the twenty-third day of the first month in the Fire Snake year (1737), Sumpa Khenpo began his journey to Beijing – arriving at the walls of the Capital on the fifteenth day of the third month. The following day, he entered the Yellow Temple in northern Beijing and two days later, he entered the palace, where he had an audience with the Qianlong Emperor and Changkya Rolpé Dorje. Due to the relatively young age of the Emperor, Sumpa Khenpo also met with Yunli, the Prince Guo (Ch. 允礼 Yǔnlǐ; 1687–1738), who was said to be a patron and scholar of Tibetan Buddhism.²⁷⁴ The Prince Guo questioned Sumpa Khenpo on his knowledge of the Nyingma tradition and was left unimpressed when Sumpa Khenpo

²⁷³ SK-CASS, folio 79(a); 6 – folio 79(b); 1. Smoke divination is a predictive technique used to interpret the future course of events. The shape and direction of a plume of smoke (Tib. *spos kyi dud pa*) can forecast the right time for an undertaking and predict the outcome a situation, guiding individuals to avoid unfavourable incidents and avert disease and danger. Mauer, P. (2019) ‘Landscaping Time, Time Landscapes: The Role of Time in the *sa dpyad* Tradition’, in Mauer, P. (ed.) *Glimpses of Tibetan Divination: Past and Present*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, p. 94.

I am unsure of the significance of the *damaru* drum in this anecdote.

²⁷⁴ Prince Guo (Man. Hošoi kengse cin wang; Ch. 和硕果亲王 Héshuò guǒ qīnwáng) was a hereditary title used by the Qing. Yunli, the seventeenth son of the Kangxi Emperor, was the first bearer of this title.

turned down his proposal to study Nyingma texts. The Prince Guo asked to meet with him on three other occasions and became irritated with the continued refusal of his suggestions. As a result, Sumpa Khenpo was bestowed the lower status of *Da Lama* (Tib. *Ta bla ma*)²⁷⁵ and received fewer provisions than he had previously been given by the Emperor – the same salary as Sertri Rinpoche (Tib. gSer khri) along with five *Da Lamas* and 30 monks – which offended his retinue. However, Sumpa Khenpo comments that he saw this as a blessing and was delighted; believing that his lower status would make it easier for him to take his leave.

On the first day of the Earth Horse year (1738), Sumpa Khenpo had an audience with the Qianlong Emperor and they exchanged *khatags*. He notes that this was one of many instances where an exchange of *khatags* and other gifts between the two took place, indicating Sumpa Khenpo's high standing. In the spring of 1738, due to issues with his legs, he requested permission to leave Beijing and moved to the banks of the Luan River (Tib. Shan 'du).²⁷⁶ Suspecting that the Dzungar army might come to the region, he met with the Second Jetsun Dampa, Lobsang Tenpé Dronme (Tib. rJe btsun dam pa Blo bzang bstan pa'i sgron me; 1724–1757). Curiously, Sumpa Khenpo does not elaborate any further on why the potential arrival of the Dzungars prompted his meeting with the young Jetsun Dampa – but it is likely linked to the Second Jetsun Dampa's exile to Dolonnor by the Qing in 1731, who feared he would be captured and used as a political figurehead by the Dzungars during their

²⁷⁵ Sumpa Khenpo calls it *t'a wang se*. SK-CASS, folio 81(a); 3.

According to Charleux, *Da Lamas* usually assist *Jasag Lamas* and preside over administrative affairs. Charleux, I. (2015) *Nomads on Pilgrimage: Mongols on Wutaishan (China), 1800-1940*. Leiden: Brill, p. 107.

²⁷⁶ The river is also known as Shangdu River (Ch. 上渡河 Shàng dùhé) as it passes north of the old Mongol capital of Shangdu. See 'Luan River', *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Luan-River> (accessed April 14, 2019).

invasion of Khalkha in 1732.²⁷⁷ Nevertheless, this meeting with an influential Mongolian lama gives us yet another glimpse of his connections and wider-circle of peers and masters.

After returning to Gonlung Monastery in the second month of the Earth Sheep year (1739), he made donations to the *saṅgha* of tea (Tib. *mang ja*), silver, yogurt etc. of particular significance given the impacts of the recent famine, which Sumpa Khenpo claims killed many people.²⁷⁸ Between 1739 and 1742, he also sponsored the construction of *stūpas*, repairs to some of the temples and assembly halls (at Gonlung, Tashi Chöling, and Shedrub Ling), and the construction of a Maitreya statue – suggesting that he acquired some degree of capital while in Beijing. In the Iron Monkey year (1740), he reluctantly accepted once more the abbacy of Sera Lung and Tashi Chöling, composing a customary (Tib. *bca' yig*) for the former.²⁷⁹

In the Water Dog year (1742), the Third Thuken Lama was invited to Gonlung and was granted the Buddhist refuge, lay, and primary vows by Sumpa Khenpo, who later became one of his main teachers. In the same year, he received another imperial edict calling him back to the Qing court. On the fifth day of the tenth month, he had an audience with the Qianlong Emperor. While in Beijing, he stayed at ‘the temple known as [the] five peaked *stūpas*’ (Tib. *mChos rten rtse lngar grags pa'i lha khang*) – most likely referring to the Five Pagoda Temple (Ch. 五塔寺 Wǔ tǎ sì).²⁸⁰ However, his stay was brief. After falling critically ill in the first month of the Water Pig year (1743), noting pain in his joints (Tib. *tshigs pa*)

²⁷⁷ A more in-depth history of these events can be found in, Bawden, C. R. (2009) *The Modern History of Mongolia*. Abingdon; New York: Routledge, pp. 112–115.

²⁷⁸ SK-CASS, folio 83(a); 4–5.

²⁷⁹ SK-CASS, folio 95(a); 6 – folio 95(b); 1. For more on the genre of customaries, see Jensen (2018); 14–31.

²⁸⁰ It is also known as the ‘Temple of the Great Righteous Awakening’ (Ch. 大真觉寺 Dà zhēnjué sì).

and sores on his hips (Tib. *dpyi mgo'i pags pa brdol ba*), Changkya Rolpé Dorje provided ritual texts for his recovery and he was granted sick leave.²⁸¹ He left Beijing on the twenty-fifth day of the fourth month and arrived at Tashi Chöling Monastery on the fifth day of the second fifth month, where he spent three months recovering from his illness.

Abbacy at Gonlung

In the Wood Mouse year (1744), Sumpa Khenpo established Lungkar Hermitage (Tib. Lungdkar) where he hoped he would be able to continue his practice away from mundane affairs. In the Fire Tiger year (1746), Sumpa Khenpo was enthroned as abbot of Gonlung. This was the first of three terms as abbot of the monastery. He spent much of the year travelling; giving empowerments at Shakhog Hermitage and Ganden Chökhöring (Tib. dGa' ldan chos 'khor gling) and bestowing the 108 empowerments of the Mitra Gyatsa on 2,000 clergy and laity at Taklung Monastery (Tib. sTag lung; Ch. 达隆寺 Dálóng sì).²⁸²

At the recommendation of Changkya Rolpé Dorje, Sumpa Khenpo expanded the curriculum of Gonlung Monastery beyond exoteric Buddhist studies (Tib. *mtshan nyid*); teaching conventional sciences (Tib. *tha snyad*) including, Sanskrit grammar, poetry, astrology, and medicine.²⁸³ He also composed works on astrology and medicine, and completed his celebrated history of Buddhism, *The Auspicious Wish-Fulfilling Tree*. In the Earth Snake year (1749), Sumpa Khenpo handed in his resignation as abbot of Gonlung, agreeing to stay until Changkya Rolpé Dorje visited later in the year. While there, Changkya

²⁸¹ SK-CASS, folio 101(b); 2–7.

²⁸² A branch monastery of Gonlung located in present day Gansu Province. Sullivan (2013); 408.

²⁸³ SK-CASS, folio 106(b); 4 – folio 107(a); 4.

made offerings, gave teachings, and developed a strong personal friendship with Sumpa Khenpo; bestowing on him the title ‘Erdeni Paṇḍita’.²⁸⁴ Changkya Rolpé Dorje asked Sumpa Khenpo to remain as abbot of Gonlung, but Sumpa Khenpo declined his request and stepped down after Changkya’s departure.

In 1750, he travelled to Wutai Shan (Tib. Ri bo rtse lnga; Mong. Utai Uula; Ch. 五台山 Wǔtái shān),²⁸⁵ passing through Alasha and Ordos. He arrived at Wutai Shan on the twenty-seventh day of the seventh month but departed after only a week’s stay because some of his retinue were suffering with diarrhoea (Tib. *tsha 'khru*). On his way back, Sumpa Khenpo brought some monks from Ordos to Gonlung. According to his autobiography, this was the first group of monks from Lower Mongolia (Tib. sMad Sog) to settle at the monastery.²⁸⁶

In the Water Monkey year (1752), he accepted the invitation of Dulwa Shedrup Dargye Ling Monastery (Tib. 'Dul ba Bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling; Ch. 都哇寺 Dōuwā sì)²⁸⁷ to assume abbacy there throughout the period of its refurbishment. To once again clear the obstacles of the monkey year, Sumpa Khenpo set out on a journey to the mountain of the ‘Prophecy of Gośṛṅga’ (Tib. Ri glang ru lung bstan pa; Skt. Gośṛṅgavyākaraṇa).²⁸⁸ En route,

²⁸⁴ This is an imperial title which was bestowed upon high incarnate lamas. Erdeni is a Mongolian word meaning ‘treasure’ or ‘precious’. Paṇḍita is a Sanskrit word meaning ‘learned one’ or ‘master’; it was traditionally awarded to scholars who had mastered the five sciences (discussed in Chapter one).

²⁸⁵ The Mongolian name for Wutai Shan is not given in Powers and Templeman (2012), and so I have taken this spelling from Charleux (2015); 1.

²⁸⁶ SK-CASS, folio 114(b); 6–7.

²⁸⁷ A branch monastery of Gonlung located in present day Datong County. Sullivan (2013); 411.

²⁸⁸ Unknown location. Thank you to Prof. Roesler who has pointed out that this is usually the name of a canonical text. I have found references to Mount Gośṛṅga, but none in Tibet. Nevertheless, it does suggest that the name was given to mountains. See Beal, S. (2000) [1884] *Si-Yu-Ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World* (Vol. 2). London: Routledge, pp. 312–313; Deeg, M. (2020) ‘Looking from the Periphery: Some Additional Thoughts on Yulin Cave 3’, in Meinert, C. and Sørensen, H. (eds.) *Buddhism in Central Asia I*.

he visited Taklung Monastery, where he met and studied with a student of the Fifth Dalai Lama's doctor, Nyima Gyaltzen (Tib. Nyi ma rgyal mtshan), which will be discussed in Chapter five. Sumpa Khenpo then moved to Shamar Monastery (Tib. Zhwa dmar; Ch. 夏玛尔寺 Xiàmǎěr sì)²⁸⁹ and assumed its abbacy for three years.

Beise Namgyal Dorje (Tib. rNam rgyal rdo rje),²⁹⁰ a descendant of Genghis Khan, of the Dalad Banner (Tib. Tā lad) in Ordos invited Sumpa Khenpo to his domain. Sumpa Khenpo accepted and spent the first half of the Water Bird year (1753) teaching exoteric Buddhist topics and conventional sciences to the monastic community of Dalad and bestowing empowerments on around 5,000 of their clergy and laity. He brought many monks from Dalad back with him to Gonlung, suggesting that he developed and promoted scholastic networks on his travels. This will be explored further in Chapter three.

In the Wood Dog year (1754), he sponsored the construction of Kunga Rawa Temple (Tib. Kun dga' ra ba) at Gonlung. He then accepted the invitation to give the Kālacakra tantra empowerment at Teyan Ganden Rinchen Ling (Tib. Tha yan chi dga' ldan rin chen gling; Ch. 塔雁小寺具喜宝洲 Tǎyànxiǎo sì jùxǐ bǎozhōu), another branch monastery of Gonlung.²⁹¹ In the Wood Pig year (1755), the Third Thuken Lama received his *gelong* vows

Leiden: Brill, p. 241; and Elikhina, Y. I. (2008) 'Buddhist Monuments from Khotan in the Collection of the Hermitage', in Popova, I. F. (ed.) *Russian Expeditions to Central Asia at the Turn of the 20th Century*. St Petersburg: Slavia Publishers, p. 80.

²⁸⁹ Another branch monastery of Gonlung, which is located in present day Gansu Province. Sullivan (2003); 407.

²⁹⁰ *Beise* (Ch. 貝子 Bèizǐ) is a Qing title, which translates as "Prince of the Fourth Rank". It is one of the many titles given to the nobility of the Qing dynasty.

Kim notes that Namgyal Dorje is recorded in the *Menggu Hui bu wanggong biozhuan* as an Ordos prince. He was granted the title *Beise* in 1740. Kim (2018); 90.

²⁹¹ Sullivan gives a different spelling, Te yan chi dga' ldan rin chen gling. Sullivan (2013); 411.

from Sumpa Khenpo before going to Ü to study. After hearing that Changkya Rolpé Dorje was suffering with an eye condition (Tib. *spyan bsnyung*), Sumpa Khenpo travelled to Beijing to treat it, despite the turmoil along the road that had been caused by the Oirad Prince Amursana (1723–1757).²⁹² He was able to successfully cure Changkya, receiving an abundance of gifts and instructions in return.²⁹³ In the Fire Bird year (1756), Sumpa Khenpo was enthroned as abbot of Gonlung for the second time. During his tenure, he turned his attention to monastic discipline, which he believed was in decline; “Every once in a while, [I] gently urged the longstanding rules of discipline (Tib. *sgrig lam*): commitment (Tib. *thugs dam*) to the individual [practices of] reciting from memory, assembly recitations (Tib. *tshogs 'don*), teachings, debates, and so on.”²⁹⁴

During his second abbacy, he continued his extra-monastic activities; establishing Lungkar Tashi Tse Monastery (Tib. Lung dkar bkra shis rtse; Ch. 逊布寺 Xùnbù sì) in 1757, another branch monastery of Gonlung;²⁹⁵ “inviting” (i.e. bringing) the *Yongzheng Tengyur* (Tib. *bstan 'gyur*) to the Sumpa residence;²⁹⁶ and offering a substantial donation to Central Tibetan institutions via Sumpa Chöjé Lobsang Geleg, who travelled to Central Tibet on his behalf. He also continued his visits to other institutions in Amdo and Kham to give teachings and empowerments, including the Vajra Garland (Skt. *Vajrāvalī*) empowerment and

²⁹² Prince Amursana unsuccessfully attempted to install himself as head of Dzungaria after the death of Ganden Tsering (Tib. dGa' ldan tshe ring; d.1745) in 1745. For more on Amursana, see Perdue (2005); 272–289.

²⁹³ SK-CASS, folio 119(b); 4 – folio 120(a); 4.

²⁹⁴ [...] *skyor sbyangs tshogs don 'chad nyan rtsod pa so so'i gshag chung du thugs dam mdzad sogs sngar rgyun bzhin gyi sgrig lam skor la rting skul 'jam po cung zad re zhus te [...]* / SK-CASS, folio 130(a); 6–7.

²⁹⁵ Brenton Sullivan believes Lungkar Tashi Tse and Thayan Tashi Tse (Tib. mTha' yang bkra shis rtse) are the same monastery. Sullivan (2013); 412. It's Chinese name, Xunbu si, refers to its founder, Sum pa. Kim (2018); 92.

²⁹⁶ For more on the *Yongzheng Tengyur*, see Nourse, B. (2014) *Canons in Context: A History of the Tibetan Buddhist Canon in the Eighteenth Century*. PhD Thesis. University of Virginia.

Kālacakra empowerments to over 1,000 clergy and laity at Poshoktu (Tib. Po shog thu). He resigned as abbot of Gonlung in the Iron Snake year (1761), returning to Lungkar Tashi Tse to devote himself thoroughly to Buddhist practice.

For the first two months of the Water Horse year (1762), he continued to focus on recitation practices. Sumpa Khenpo then travelled to Serkhog Monastery (Tib. gSer khog)²⁹⁷ and Sera Lung Monastery, funding repairs at the latter. That winter, the Third Jetsun Dampa, Yeshe Tenpé Nyima (Tib. rJe btsun dam pa Ye shes bstan pa'i nyi ma; 1758–1773) came to Gonlung to give offerings and performed a long-life ritual for Sumpa Khenpo.²⁹⁸ In the Water-Sheep year (1763), Jamyang Zhepé Konchog Jigme Wangpo was appointed abbot of Gonlung Monastery but quickly left for Labrang; entrusting two monastic disciplinarians (Tib. *dge skos*) with the affairs of the monastery. Given the circumstances, Sumpa Khenpo assumed the abbot's duties for some time. Later that year, Changkya Rolpé Dorje came to Amdo to attend his father's funeral, during which time he stayed at his residence at Gonlung. In the Wood Monkey year (1764), Changkya bestowed some empowerments on Sumpa Khenpo and gave him the tantric name 'Rol pa'i rdo rje'.²⁹⁹ With Jamyang Zhepé still at Labrang, Sumpa Khenpo implored him to step down as abbot and successfully encouraged Changkya to take his place instead, displaying the influence and authority which Sumpa Khenpo commanded at the monastery.

²⁹⁷ Also known as Tsenpo Gon (Tib. bTsan po dgon); it is an important and powerful Gelugpa monastery in Amdo, and neighbours Gonlung. According to Brenton Sullivan, Gonlung and Serkhog were rivals. Sullivan (2013); 290 and 410.

²⁹⁸ SK-CASS, folio 136(b); 6–7.

²⁹⁹ SK-CASS, folio 140(b); 3–4.

Rain-making and Rituals in Mongolia and Beyond

In the Fire Pig year (1767), Sumpa Khenpo visited Wutai Shan for the second time. While there he met with Changkya Rolpé Dorje. On his return journey, he bestowed a series of empowerments to those in Tümed, Dalad, Ordos, and the Qanggin banner. While at Dalad, he heard news that many people had fallen ill in the Chahar area of Hohhot and so he travelled there to provide medical help. This marks the beginning of his increased engagement and travelling in Mongolia – suggesting that Sumpa Khenpo, in this period, invested his time and energy in establishing and consolidating intellectual and economically beneficial networks. After returning to Gonlung Monastery, he established ritual regulations for its tantric college.³⁰⁰ In the Earth Bird year (1768), Sumpa Khenpo established a temple at Gonlung to accommodate the monastery's many objects of veneration.

In the Earth Ox year (1769) he continued his travels, setting out for Jampa Bumling (Tib. Byams pa 'bum gling; Ch. 炳靈寺 Bǐnglíng sì)³⁰¹ and stopping at numerous locations en route, including Dzomo Fort (Tib. mDzo mo mkhar; Ch. 宏化寺 Hónghuà sì), Kamalog (Tib. Ka ma log),³⁰² and Kati Kawa Monastery (Tib. Kha ti kha ba).³⁰³ He then visited Drotsang Monastery, where he inoculated members of the community against smallpox – his treatment of smallpox will be discussed in Chapter five. A severe drought in Upper

³⁰⁰ SK-CASS, folio 144(a); 7 – folio 144(b); 3.

³⁰¹ Located to the south of Lanzhou, Jampa Bumling is famous for its grottoes and images of Maitreya. It is rumoured to have been visited by the Chinese princess, Wengchen, on her way to Lhasa, who reportedly commissioned a large Maitreya statue to be built there. Ricard, M. et al. (1994) *The Life of Shabkar: The Autobiography of a Tibetan Yogi*. New York: State University of New York Press, p. 35.

³⁰² This could be bKa' ma log (Ch. 民和县 Mínhé xiàn), which is currently known as the Minhe Hui and Tu Autonomous County in Qinghai.

³⁰³ Also known as Khwa ta'i kha'i (Ch. 卡地喀寺 Kǎdekā sì) – the monastery is located in the Minhe Hui and Tu Autonomous County.

Tsongon and Yugur resulted in Sumpa Khenpo being invited to perform several rain-making rituals across Amdo and Mongolia.

The Iron Hare year (1771) was another year that involved much travelling. He visited Alasha from Gonlung; where he had been invited to perform death rituals for a local chieftain. He then visited Shamar Lungkar Prati Monastery (Tib. Zhwa dmar lung dkar prati) bestowing empowerments on 500 people there. The following year he travelled to Dalad, where he performed recitation with 500 people. After hearing that Changkya Rolpé Dorje would be visiting Dolonnor, Sumpa Khenpo decided to travel there, and met with him in the fifth month. During their encounter, Changkya suggested that they should have a longer meeting at Wutai Shan the following year. As we will see in Chapter three, Sumpa Khenpo takes him up on this offer and returns to Wutai Shan for the third time. When his meeting with Changkya Rinpoche had concluded, he left Dolonnor travelling via Dorbod, Khalkha, the Muuminggan Banner, Ordos, and Alasha, arriving back at Gonlung on the eleventh day of the eleventh month.

After giving teachings to Khalkha monks at Gonlung in the third month of the Water Snake year (1773), he resumed his travels. In the sixth month he arrived in Rutog (Tib. Ru thog) where he performed a rain-making ritual and bestowed a Kurukullā empowerment (Tib. *Lha mo rig byed ma*) on a *Qinwang* whose wife was the daughter of the Prince Guo.³⁰⁴ The remainder of his time at Alasha is discussed in Chapter three. In the spring of the following year, Sumpa Khenpo gave teachings on conventional sciences to students from Kumbum Monastery. He also sponsored the painting of a mural at Gonlung's tantric college

³⁰⁴ SK-CASS, folio 162(b); 5–7. Most likely a daughter of Prince Yongtu (Ch. 永璿 Yǒngtú; 1752–1789), the third bearer of the Prince Guo peerage.

and provided medical attention to around sixty people in Upper Tsongon. At the invitation of the *Qinwang* of Alasha, Lobsang Dorje (Tib. Blo bzang rdo rje), Sumpa Khenpo paid a visit to the region once more. On the road, he briefly visited Gonlung where he met with Thuken Rinpoche and Sonam Dragpa (Tib. bSod noms grags pa; 1723–1789),³⁰⁵ and he stopped at the residence of a Mongol *Tusalagchi* (Mong. *Tusalayci*) and performed some rituals there.³⁰⁶ When he arrived in Alasha, the *Qinwang* requested that he write an autobiography – it is the first time, at least according to his autobiography, that he is requested to do so.³⁰⁷

Sumpa Khenpo visited Ordos at the beginning of the Wood Sheep year (1775), where he bestowed permission rituals (Skt. *anujñā*; Tib. *rjes gnang*),³⁰⁸ provided medical treatments, and gave oral transmissions to local people. After this he travelled to a region under the control of the Ushin *Beise* (Tib. U'u shin; Mong. *Üüsin*) and gave a Kālacakra tantra empowerment. On the tenth day of the fourth month, Sumpa Khenpo left for Wutai Shan; arriving there on the twenty-first day of the fourth month. While at Wutai Shan he met again with Changkya Rolpé Dorje; they discussed finding the new Sumpa Shabdrung and the abbotship at Gonlung. The autobiography reports that Changkya was eager for Sumpa Khenpo to resume his role as abbot, however upon returning to Gonlung, key individuals at

³⁰⁵ Sonam Dragpa was born to a Mongol family in Amdo. In 1779 he became the 17th abbot of Labrang Monastery and was posthumously identified as the First Sodrag (Tib. bSod grags) Tulku. For a short biography of Sonam Dragpa, see Ko zhul Grags pa 'byung gnas and rGyal ba Blo bzang mkhas grub. (1992); 1823–1825.

³⁰⁶ *Tusalgachi* is a Mongolian title given to a lord or administrator of a *hoshun* (banner).

³⁰⁷ SK-CASS, folio 165(b); 7.

³⁰⁸ A tantric ritual that authorizes the performance of simple practices within a cycle of tantric instructions, such as recitation of mantras. Powers, J. (2000) *A Concise Encyclopedia of Buddhism*. London: Oneworld Publications, p. 16.

the monastery ignored Changkya Rinpoche's instructions and installed Degu Dulzin Dargye Gyatso (Tib. bDe rgu 'dul 'dzin dar rgyas rgya mtsho) as abbot instead.³⁰⁹

Disappointed with the situation at Gonlung, he travelled extensively around Mongolia; bestowing empowerments and permission rituals at Tashi Migyur Ling (Tib. bKra shis mi 'gyur gling); Kālacakra empowerments to 2,000 people in Hohhot; and receiving vast offerings from the Tümed and Dorbod. He returned to Gonlung, arriving in the tenth month by way of Dalad, Qanggin, Alasha, and Dronglan (Tib. Grong lang). In the Fire Bird year (1777), he held an offering ceremony at Lungkar Tashi Tse with the *saṅgha* for ornamentation of his *Collected Works*. According to his autobiography, Sumpa Khenpo penned the table of contents for his *Collected Works* around the same time.³¹⁰

In the same year, a descendent of Genghis Khan in Ordos sent a messenger to urgently request that Sumpa Khenpo perform a rain-making ritual there. The Ganden Phodrang estate in Tsongon also requested a rain-making ritual. The drought appears to have been widespread as he was later invited to Alasha and the Qanggin banner in Ordos to perform rain-making rituals, which according to his autobiography were successful. The evident efficacy of his rituals silenced his critics and, as we will see in Chapter three, Sumpa Khenpo claims that his rain-making rituals were celebrated and in high-demand across Tibet, Mongolia, and China. After returning to Gonlung, he co-sponsored paintings at Gonlung and Srogkar with Sumpa Chöjé and, fulfilling the prophecies of Changkya Rolpé Dorje and a guardian deity, he requested that Lobsang Gyaltzen (Tib. Blo bzang rgyal mtshan) of Shamar be brought to the Sumpa residence, where he was recognised as an incarnation of Sumpa

³⁰⁹ SK-CASS, folio 213(b); 1 – folio 214(a); 4.

³¹⁰ SK-CASS, folio 225(a).

Ngawang Chojor (Tib. Sum pa Ngag dbang chos 'byor).³¹¹ Later, he brought a partial copy of the *Dege Tengyur* to Lungkar hermitage.

Sumpa Khenpo again resumed his travels around Mongolia in the third month of the Earth Dog year (1778). He began his journey in Alasha, where he bestowed a permission ritual on the *Qinwang*, Lobsang Dorje. In the fourth month, he arrived at the Qanggin banner and then moved on to the Uxin banner and Bayannuur (Tib. Pā' yan no'ur; Ch. 巴彦淖尔 Bāyànnàoěr),³¹² where he bestowed many permission rituals and successfully performed a rain-making ritual. While at the Uxin banner, around 800 clergy and laity offered him a long-life ceremony. The next stop on his journey was Ordos – the region under the control of Tsering Dorje *Ta Wang* (Tib. Tshe ring rdo rje) - where he gave teachings to 1,500 people.³¹³ His travels concluded with the Qanggin banner and Alasha where he gave teachings to around 10,000 people, suggesting that his popularity increased each time he visited Mongolia.

In the Earth Pig year (1779), Sumpa Khenpo met with the Sixth Paṅchen Lama, Lobsang Palden Yeshe (Tib. Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes; 1738–1780) on several occasions. They first met at Shalatu and Sumpa Khenpo was invited to his tents in Ulan-Bulag (Tib. U lan pu lag, Mong. Ulaan bulag).³¹⁴ They met once again at Gonlung where the Sixth Paṅchen Lama taught the *Three Main Points of the Path* (Tib. *Lam gyi gtso bo rnam gsum*) by

³¹¹ SK-CASS, folio 186(a); 2–7. I cannot find much on this individual, however Sullivan lists a ‘Sumpa Zhamar Zhapdrung Lozang Gyelsten’ (Tib. Sum pa zha dmar zhabs drung blo bzang rgyal mtshan) as the fifty-third abbot of Gonlung Monastery. I suspect these are the same person. Sullivan (2013); 398.

³¹² Formerly Bayannuur League, it became a municipality in 2004. See Bulag, U. E. (2010) ‘Alter/native Mongolian Identity: From Nationality to Ethnic Group,’ in Perry, E. J. and Selden, M. (eds.) *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*. 3rd edn. Abingdon: Routledge, p. 279.

³¹³ *Ta Wang* is a title, meaning ‘Great Prince’.

³¹⁴ Located near a spring in present-day Gobi-Altai province, Mongolia.

Tsongkhapa. During a personal meeting, the Pañchen Lama asked him about comets and about Gesar, and requested that he compose works on these subjects and bring them to Kumbum Monastery. Sumpa Khenpo insisted that he was incapable of doing so and returned to Tashi Tse. Nevertheless, he visited the Pañchen Lama at Kumbum Monastery in the eleventh month, bringing his *Collected Works* (only seven volumes at the time) with him. During this visit, the Pañchen Lama sought further information on the topics they had discussed at Gonlung and via letters.³¹⁵ Sumpa Khenpo returned to Kumbum in the Iron Mouse Year (1780); where he made offerings to the Pañchen Lama and discussed his new astrology. These encounters imply that Sumpa Khenpo was considered an outstanding and highly respected scholar by his peers at this time.³¹⁶

Having received an invitation from the Qanggin banner asking for his help to expand the monastic curriculum beyond exoteric topics, Sumpa Khenpo left once more for Mongolia. Arriving in the ninth month, he gave teachings on the ten sciences to their monastic community. Tsering Dorje *Ta Wang* passed away during this visit, and so Sumpa Khenpo travelled to Ordos to perform a death ritual for him and gave several teachings while he was there. In the Iron Ox year (1781), Sumpa Khenpo was enthroned as abbot of Gonlung Monastery for the third (and final) time. During his abbacy, he restored the monastic charter tradition and ordination process.

³¹⁵ George FitzHerbert analyses these letters and their historical context in his article, ‘On the Tibetan Ge-sar Epic in the Late 18th Century: Sum-pa mkhan-po’s Letters to the 6th Pan-chen Lama’. FitzHerbert (2015).

³¹⁶ Sumpa Khenpo’s meetings with the Pañchen Lama are discussed over several folios, see SK-CASS, folio 190(b) – folio 197(a).

Later Years

Sumpa Khenpo writes that the Monlam Festival of the Water Tiger (1782) was sponsored by the people of Alasha; signifying that Gonlung Monastery had a strong patronage network across Tsongon and Mongolia at this time. The following year, the Monlam Festival was sponsored by a combination of Mongols including Tümed, Uxin banner, and Dorbod banner. The people of Alasha and Dorbod sponsored the Monlam Festival of the Wood Dragon year (1784).³¹⁷ In the fifth month, the Sumpa residence sponsored mural paintings in the newly constructed assembly hall of Tashi Tse. Sumpa Khenpo then spent the remainder of the year visiting monasteries in and around Tsongon; at Ganden Chodzong Hermitage he bestowed permission rituals and oral transmissions, at Srogkar he sponsored the construction of a new assembly hall, and at Sera Lung he gave oral transmissions and teachings to 800 people. He also visited Tharpa Ling (Tib. Thar pa gling)³¹⁸ and Tashi Chöling.

The Monlam Festival of the Wood Snake year (1785) was sponsored by the Ordos Wang and others.³¹⁹ After the festival, he resigned as abbot of Gonlung for the final time. Once again, he is said to have received many invitations from Mongol nobility. However, his travels were impeded by a broken collar bone which he sustained after falling from a horse en route to Shouling Monastery (Mong. Mayidari-yin süme, Ch. 壽靈寺 Shòulíng sì) near Hohhot.³²⁰ Following ten days of sick leave, he travelled briefly to Alasha, after which

³¹⁷ Details of the Monlam Festivals can be found in SK-CASS, folio 216(b); 4, folio 220(a); 4–6, and folio 227(a); 1–7.

³¹⁸ I believe this is Kanchen Monastery (Tib. Kan chen dgon theg chen thar pa gling; Ch. 甘禪寺大乘解脱洲 Gānchán sì dàchéng jiě tuōzhōu) in Qinghai; a branch monastery of Gonlung.

³¹⁹ Sumpa Khenpo does not name the other sponsors.

³²⁰ More information about Shouling Monastery can be found in Charleux, I. (2003) ‘Buddhist Monasteries in Southern Mongolia,’ in Pichard, P. and Lagirade, F. (eds.) *The Buddhist Monastery: A Cross-Cultural Survey*. Paris: École Française d'Extrême-Orient, pp. 351–390.

he returned to Tashi Tse to recuperate. On his birthday, 100 clergy, laity, and Mongols held a great ceremony on his behalf. In the following year, a ritual ceremony was held to shelve Sumpa Khenpo's eight-volume *Collected Works*. This was followed by a long-life ceremony from Dorbod *Nangso* and *Mergen*.³²¹ At Gonlung, he gave teachings on both Buddhism and conventional sciences to the *saṅgha* from Kumbum and Serkhog Monastery.

In the Fire Sheep year (1787), Sumpa Khenpo appointed monastic disciplinarians at Shedrup Ling due to its increasing size. He gave empowerments throughout the year including, the Thirteen Deity Vajrabhairava empowerment at Tashi Tse and Shedrup Ling, and a Vairocana (Tib. rNam par snang mdzad) empowerment for 500 monks at Dulwa Shedrup Dargye Ling. At the request of the people of Gonlung, Sumpa Khenpo performed a rain-making ritual, which was successful. He also travelled to Sheropo (Tib. Shas ro po)³²² in Tsongon to cure Kunga *Jasag* (Tib. dKun dga'), an Oirad chief,³²³ and to Nomchi Monastery (Tib. dGa' ldan bde chen gling; Ch. 奴木齊寺 Nómùqí sì),³²⁴ where a long-life ceremony was performed for him on his birthday. The autobiography records that from the end of the twelfth month, Sumpa Khenpo's body grew tiresome, but he continued to

³²¹ For more on the title of *Nangso* see footnote 107.

Mergen is a traditional Mongolian title meaning 'wise' or 'sharpshooter'. Buell, P. D. (2003) *Historical Dictionary of the Mongol World Empire*. Lanham; Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, Inc, p. 193.

³²² Unknown location.

³²³ Kim has identified this individual as the Third *Jasag Yideng Taiji* of Tsongon. Kim (2008); 113.

Jasag Yideng Taiji is a Manchu title which was bestowed on the sons of Princesses of the First Rank (Man. Guruni gungju; Ch. 固伦公主 Gùlún gōngzhǔ), Princesses of the Second Rank (Man. Hošoi gungju; Ch. 和硕公主 Héshuò gōngzhǔ), and Princes of the First Rank (Man. Hošoi cin wang; Ch. 和硕亲王 Héshuò qīnwáng). Tsai, W. (2017) *Mongolization of Han Chinese and Manchu Settlers in Qing Mongolia, 1700–1911*. PhD Thesis. Indiana University, p. 131.

³²⁴ A branch monastery of Gonlung, located in present-day Datong County. Sullivan (2013); 416.

practice.³²⁵ In the same month, he was visited by a minister of the *Qinwang* of Alasha, *Tusalagchi* Tsedang Dorje (Tib. Tshe dang rdo rje), and his family.

For the first three days of the Earth Monkey year (1788), Sumpa Khenpo circumambulated Tashi Tse Hermitage. The people of Tümed arranged a long-life ceremony for him and offered him a silver maṇḍala and a new copy of his eight-volume *Collected Works*. *Tusalagchi* Tsedang Dorje and Zangkor Shabdrung also offered long-life ceremonies.³²⁶ Sumpa Chöjé was sent to make an offering to the newly recognised Fourth Changkya Lama, Yeshe Tenpé Gyaltzen (Tib. Ye shes bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan; 1787–1846) – possibly because Sumpa Khenpo was too frail to do so. On the tenth day of the first month, Sumpa Khenpo lost his appetite. He wrote his final verse in his autobiography the following day and passed away two weeks later.³²⁷

Conclusion

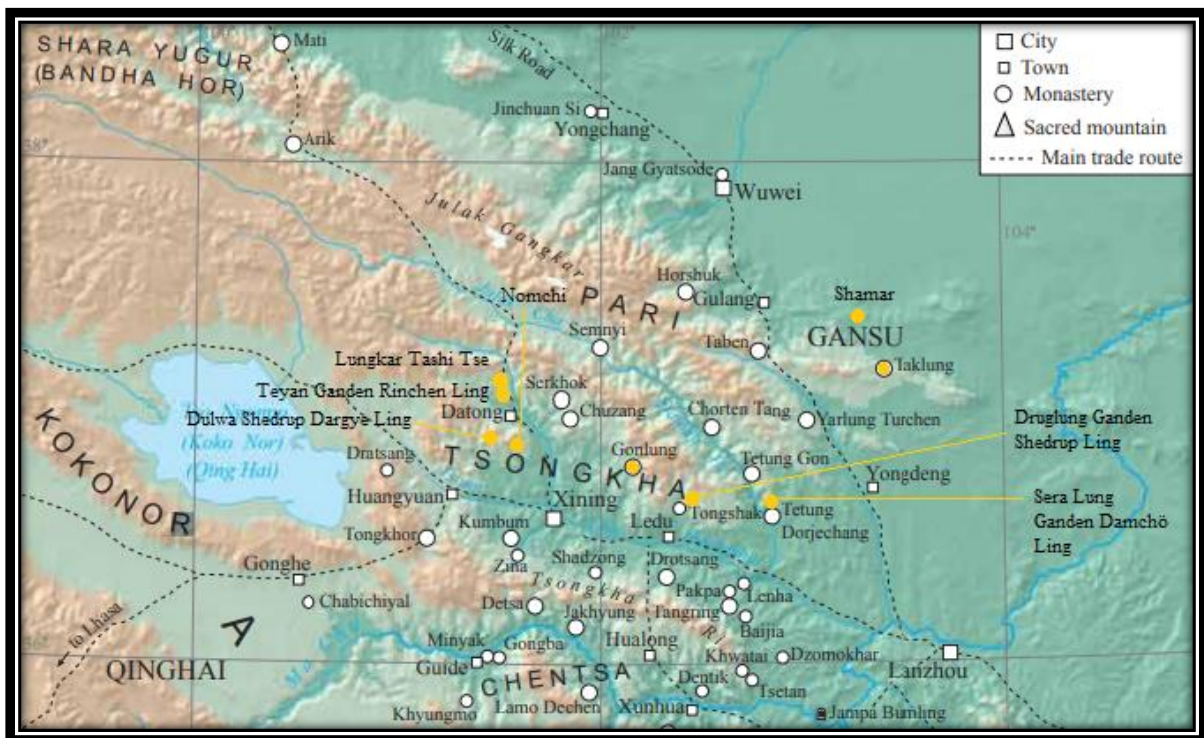
Sumpa Khenpo's life seems clearly divided into his time in Central Tibet, which fits the mould of traditional academic culture; his time in the Gonlung area and the connections he developed and maintained with local monasteries – many of which were branch monasteries of Gonlung; and his travels and influence in Mongolia. The most striking themes that emanate from his autobiography are his extensive travels and interactions, which are displayed in the map below, and interest in the conventional sciences such as astrology and

³²⁵ SK-CASS, folio 238(b); 5–6.

³²⁶ I believe this is Zangkor Shabdrung Palden Ozer – mentioned briefly in Chapter one – who is said to have encouraged Sumpa Khenpo to write his autobiography for the benefit of future generations of students.

³²⁷ SK-CASS, folio 239(b); 2–4. It's important to remember that Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography was finished by his students posthumously. See footnote 103.

medicine. The latter, which is one of the areas where he can be viewed as exceptional, will be examined in more detail in Chapter five. As a mature Buddhist master, Sumpa Khenpo gave many empowerments to large numbers of people, but it appears that he also placed great emphasis on the non-religious sciences in his teachings. As an established reincarnate lama, he was able to travel far and wide under the guises of pilgrimage, teaching, and rituals, to spread the influence of Buddhism (specifically the Gelugpa tradition, in the manner that had been established and embodied by the Fifth Dalai Lama), and create and maintain networks of influence and knowledge across an extensive geographical area, which can be seen as directly overlapping with the aims of the Qing Empire to establish a pan-Buddhist state (as discussed in the Introduction). The intersection of these many activities and Sumpa Khenpo's ability to deploy them will form the main focus of the following chapters.



Map 3. Some of Gonlung's branch monasteries (in orange) which were visited by Sumpa Khenpo.
Source: Author and ©Treasury of Lives.

Chapter Three

The Itinerant Teacher, Rain-maker, and Pilgrim: Forms, themes, and meanings of journeys and pilgrimages undertaken by Sumpa Khenpo

“From early on to the present day, I travelled the land of China, Tibet, and Mongolia.
Tormented by thirst, I returned, for the sake of the *dharma*.”³²⁸

As seen in the previous chapter, Sumpa Khenpo’s autobiography is filled with details of travels undertaken by the author – locally and further afield – throughout his lifetime. As Ian Reader notes,³²⁹ pilgrimages and journeys are diverse and incorporate a multiplicity of actions, depending on an individual’s motivations, constraints, and expectations. And so, it is unsurprising that pilgrimages and journeys undertaken by Sumpa Khenpo are diverse and distinct – fuelled by multiple intentions (including religious, economic, and political) and carried out in a multitude of ways. Some of these will be explored in this chapter, which aims to underscore the plethora of roles taken on by Sumpa Khenpo, often during a single pilgrimage or journey, while also giving us a unique glimpse and personal account of the nature, forms, and practices of pilgrimages and journeys in the eighteenth century.

As stated in the Introduction, Sumpa Khenpo’s autobiography is first and foremost concerned with religious affairs and it would be negligent to overlook the religious elements and motivations of his journeys. As such, the instances introduced in this chapter are framed

³²⁸ *snga gong nas da lta'i bar du rgya bod hor yul nas skom pas gdung 'gran chos phyir tshur 'ongs* | SKCSS, folio 165(a); 2.

³²⁹ Reader, I. (2015a) *A Very Short Introduction to Pilgrimage*. Oxford: University of Oxford Press.

as pilgrimages – that is, journeys to destinations of religious significance to the author (and the Gelugpa school more generally) – which can be seen as a normal, traditionally-validated aspect of Tibetan autobiographical narratives. And so, I will begin this chapter with a discussion on the field of pilgrimage, both more generally and in Tibetan studies, with a focus on the tensions that exist between religious and secular motivations for pilgrimage and journeying. I will then explore these tensions first-hand through analysing Sumpa Khenpo’s accounts of his journeys to Wutai Shan via Alasha, and Tsari. As we will see, as a pilgrim, Sumpa Khenpo engages in both religious and secular activities, once again embodying the ideals of *lugnyi*. These anecdotes also suggest the political benefits of pilgrimage for the state; for example, the process of buddhicization is echoed throughout his travels and can be understood as furthering the nation building aims of both the Ganden Phodrang (in the case of Tsari) and the Qing imperium (in the case of Wutai Shan and Alasha). In this way, pilgrimage encompasses a wide variety of themes, motivations, and meanings that continually adapt to the circumstances, needs, and wishes of the time, those who endorse them, and the individuals who undertake them.

Pilgrimage, as an integral part of life in Tibet and can tell us a lot about the politics, economics, religious life, and cultural geography of the period. All space is organised: whether cities and settlements, wilderness, or sacred terrain. Space, although it may appear neutral and natural, is an integral part of the society that organises and occupies it.³³⁰ Scholars such as James Duncan speak of ‘reading’ a landscape to uncover the symbols by

³³⁰ Axel Michaels, for example, looks at the use of ‘up’ and ‘down’ within landscape – in a mundane context it is simply directional, and yet within religious circles ‘up’ becomes a sacred potency of direction – and the symbolic organisation of space. See Michaels, A. (2003) ‘The Sacredness of (Himalayan) Landscapes’, in Gutschow, N. et al. (eds.) *Sacred Landscape in the Himalayas*. Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences Press, pp. 13–18.

which it mimics power, the myths and legends the symbols evoke, the interests and motives of those who assign and prescribe to them, and the ways these symbols are accepted, interpreted, and rejected by those who visit or live there. Duncan labels landscape a “pervasive and surprisingly disingenuous cultural production” whose social, economic, and political importance is often overlooked.³³¹

Traditionally in academia there is a tendency to simplify the motivation and benefit of pilgrimage to purely religious reasons, such as merit accumulation and purifying defilements. As we will see later in this chapter, these undoubtedly present an incentive for pilgrims, yet pilgrimage is a more complex phenomenon; it allows individuals to put down strong roots in local networks of cooperation and competition; reinforce and build on local memories; and forge and celebrate their religious and ethnic identity.³³² In such ways, pilgrimage encompasses a wide variety of themes and meanings, frequently dependent on individual interpretation and volition, which are sometimes contradictory. In order to see the plurality of perspectives on a pilgrimage route or a single location, as discussed by Charles Ramble in his paper on the complexities of pilgrimage, one must consult a variety of inter-related genres in the context of pilgrimage.³³³ These include the more obvious guide books (Tib. *gnas bshad*) and travelogues (Tib. *lam yig*), but also tantric literature, travelogues, and

³³¹ Duncan, J. S. (1990) *The City as Text: The Politics of Landscape Interpretation in the Kandyan Kingdom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 3.

³³² For literature on these themes, see Coleman, S. and Eade, J. (eds.) (2004) *Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures in Motion*. London; New York: Routledge; Eade, J. and Katić, M. (2014) *Pilgrimage, Politics and Place-making in Eastern Europe: Crossing the Borders*. London: Routledge; Reader (2015a); and Yamba, C. (1995) *Permanent Pilgrims: The Role of Pilgrimage in the Lives of West African Muslims in Sudan*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute.

³³³ Ramble, C. (2013) ‘The Complexity of Tibetan Pilgrimage’, in Cüppers, C. and Deeg, M. (eds.) *Searching for the Dharma, Finding Salvation – Buddhist Pilgrimage in Time and Space. Proceedings of the Workshop “Buddhist Pilgrimage in History and Present Times” at the Lumbini International Research Institute (LIRI), Lumbini, 11 - 13 January 2010*. Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, pp. 179–198.

biographies. Life writing must be considered an important genre in research into pilgrimage and travel as it can provide valuable information about the circumstances in which journeys are made, the authors' motivations for undertaking them, and an individual's perception and experience of the journey and destination.

The Field of Pilgrimage Studies

The study of pilgrimage in the West has been greatly shaped by Victor and Edith Turner's *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*,³³⁴ a highly influential anthropological work that fused with the couple's own conversion to Roman Catholicism.³³⁵ The enduring significance of this work rests on its development and exemplification of *communitas*, an anti-structuralist approach that describes the individual pilgrim's temporary transition away from mundane structures into an unstructured state in which all members of the community share a common experience and are, subsequently, equal. The Turners' approach continues to underpin pilgrimage studies in the West with scholars either supporting or disproving the anti-structure model, even when the focus of their research is on non-Christian societies.³³⁶

Arguing against the *communitas* paradigm, Eade and Sallnow stress the multiplicity of different meanings that are present within pilgrimage:

Pilgrimage is an arena for competing religious and secular discourses, for both official co-optation and the non-official recovery of religious meanings,

³³⁴ Turner, V. W. and Turner, E. L. B. (1978) *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives, Lectures on the History of Religions*; 11. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

³³⁵ *Ibid*; xxiv.

³³⁶ Eade and Sallnow (1991) and Yamba (1995) have reflected on the importance and value of *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (1978).

for conflicts between orthodoxies, sects and confessional groups, for drives towards consensus and *communitas*, and for counter-movements towards separateness and division. The essential heterogeneity of the pilgrimage process, which was marginalized or suppressed in the Turnerian paradigm, is pushed centre-stage and rendered problematic.³³⁷

The experiences of Sumpa Khenpo are more closely aligned with Eade and Sallnow's theory, which recognises the diversity and variability of pilgrimage. However, their iconoclastic volume fails to acknowledge the importance of 'movement' or 'journeying' in the agenda of pilgrimage.³³⁸ As this chapter will show, a pilgrim's journey can be just as significant as the destination.

Another criticism of *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* is its implication that pilgrimage could (or should) be detached from more everyday processes. Morinis argues that this has resulted in the view of pilgrimage among scholars as 'extraordinary', thus removing it from academic purview: "Anthropologists have tended to neglect pilgrimages because they were, by definition, exceptional practices, irregular journeys outside habitual social realms."³³⁹ Reader, too, notes that the wish to draw lines between what is considered sacred and everyday behaviour continues to influence academic literature and our attempts to define and categorise pilgrimage.³⁴⁰ For instance, Barber has defined pilgrimage as: "A

³³⁷ Eade, J. and Sallnow, M. (1991) *Contesting the Sacred: The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*. London: Routledge, p. 5.

³³⁸ There is a growing body of literature investigating motion and movement within pilgrimage, see Costantino, I. (2013) *Becoming Urban: Space and Mobility Amongst Tibetan Migrant Youths in Lhasa*. PhD Thesis. University of Oxford; Eade, J. and Albera, D. (2017) *New Pathways in Pilgrimage Studies: Global Perspectives*. London: Routledge; Eade and Katić (2014); and Scriven, R. (2014) 'Geographies of Pilgrimage: Meaningful Movements and Embodied Mobilities', *Geography Compass* 8.4, pp. 249–261.

³³⁹ Morinis, E. A. (ed.) (1992) *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage, Contributions to the study of Anthropology*. London: Greenwood Press, p. 2.

³⁴⁰ Reader, I. (2014) *Pilgrimage in the Marketplace*. New York; Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 12–13.

journey resulting from religious causes, externally to a holy site, and internally for spiritual purposes and internal understanding,”³⁴¹ while Peter Jan Margry describes it as:

a journey undertaken by individuals or groups, based on a religious or spiritual inspiration, to a place that is regarded as more sacred or salutary than the environment of everyday life, to seek a transcendental encounter with a specific cult object, for the purpose of acquiring spiritual, emotional or physical healing or benefit. A pilgrimage must therefore entail interaction between the sacred or the religious, an element of personal transition, and the existence of a cult object.³⁴²

Not all studies of pilgrimage have focused so explicitly on notions of separating pilgrimage from everyday life. With an increasing interest in human mobility, the diversity and complexity of pilgrimage has attracted interest from various disciplines such as geography, tourism studies, history, economics, and gender studies. As such, studies have flourished encompassing a wide range of topics from the economics of pilgrimage³⁴³ to the role of narratives and stories in the construction of pilgrimage sites,³⁴⁴ and the relationship between pilgrimage and other forms of travel.³⁴⁵ This chapter aims to follow in the footsteps of scholars such as Reader and Tanabe³⁴⁶ in portraying how pilgrimages are shaped and understood through a set of social, economic, political, and cultural themes that are, in the

³⁴¹ Barber, R. (1991) *Pilgrimages*. Woodbridge: Boydell, p. 1

³⁴² Margry, P. J. (2008) *Shrines and Pilgrimage in the Modern World: New Itineraries into the Sacred*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, p. 36.

³⁴³ See Eade and Sallnow (1991); and Reader (2014).

³⁴⁴ See Smith, M. (2008) *Religion, Culture, and Sacred Space*. New York; Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

³⁴⁵ See Cohen, E. (1992) ‘Pilgrimage and Tourism: Convergence and Divergence’, in Morinis, E. A. (ed.) *Sacred Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*. New York: Greenwood Press, pp. 47–61; and Reader, I. (2005) *Making Pilgrimages: Meaning and Practice in Shikoku*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press.

³⁴⁶ Reader, I. and Tanabe, G. (1998) *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press.

context of Tibetan pilgrimage, crucially bound together with the sacred.³⁴⁷ Using Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography as a unique lens, my intention is to look at some of the (religious and non-religious) motives and meanings that pilgrimage can have for pilgrims, how places were publicised, represented and captured, and what purpose these narratives may have served.

Pilgrimage in Tibet

In the English language, 'pilgrimage' derives from the French word *pèlerinage*, which is based on the Latin terms *peregrinus* (foreigner/traveller) and *per ager* (going through fields).³⁴⁸ As recent literature on secular places has implied, pilgrimage could embrace broader (and non-religious) meanings such as traveller, exile, and newcomer, and should be used to describe one's journey to a place of particular interest or significance, often in unknown or distant lands.³⁴⁹ As indicated in the Tibetan words *gnas* (sacred place) and *skor* (circle around),³⁵⁰ pilgrimage in a Tibetan context often involves the practice of

³⁴⁷ Other examples of scholars following this trend can be found in Bax, M. (1995) *Medjugorje: Religion, Politics, and Violence in Rural Bosnia*. Amsterdam: VU University Press; Kaufman, S. (2004) *Consuming Visions: Mass Culture and the Lourdes Shrine, Choice: Current Reviews for Academic Libraries*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; and Lochtefeld, J. (2010) *God's Gateway: Identity and Meaning in A Hindu Pilgrimage Place, God's Gateway: Identity and Meaning in A Hindu Pilgrimage Place*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

³⁴⁸ Reader (2015a); 20.

³⁴⁹ Collins-Kreiner, N. (2010) 'Researching pilgrimage: Continuity and transformations', *Annals of Tourism Research*, 37(2), p. 442.

³⁵⁰ Huber has pointed out that *gnas* in the context of *gnas skor* carries a double meaning; a physical place and the abode of deities. Huber, T. (1999a) 'Putting the *gnas* Back Into *gnas-skor*: Rethinking Tibetan Buddhist Pilgrimage Practice', in Huber, T. (ed.) *Sacred Spaces and Powerful places in Tibetan Culture: A collection of Essays*. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, pp. 82–83.

circumambulation (Tib. *skor ba*).³⁵¹ A pilgrim is commonly referred to as a *gnas skor ba* (one who goes around a sacred place), defining them by the rite performed as part of their journey whilst further emphasising the importance of circumambulation.³⁵² Other terms for pilgrimage are *gnas mjal* (to meet a sacred site/being) and *mchod mjal* (to pay respect with an offering).

Pilgrimage is an important component in the life of the Buddhist community, with the Buddha travelling over a large area spreading his teachings, and it was a well-established pattern by the time of his death. According to the Buddhist tradition, in the final discourse before his death, the Buddha and Ānanda (fl. fifth or fourth centuries BCE) discussed what his followers should do after his physical death. As detailed in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, the Buddha prescribed four places of pilgrimage:

Ānanda, there are four places the sight of which should arouse emotion in the faithful. Which are they? “Here the Tathāgata was born” is the first. “Here the Tathāgata attained supreme enlightenment” is the second. “Here the Tathāgata set in motion the Wheel of Dhamma” is the third. “Here the Tathāgata attained the Nibbāna-element without remainder” is the fourth. And, Ānanda, the faithful monks and nuns, male and female lay-followers will visit those places.³⁵³

³⁵¹ Sumpa Khenpo only uses the word *gnas skor* once in his autobiography – when referring to his pilgrimage to Tsari – often using *mjal* (to visit) instead. I believe Sumpa Khenpo still views the other journeys discussed in this chapter as pilgrimage as *mjal* is often used interchangeably with *gnas skor*, and *mjal mi* is used to denote a pilgrim.

³⁵² Buffetrille, K. (1998) ‘Reflections on Pilgrimages to Sacred Mountains, Lakes and Caves’, in McKay, A. (ed.) *Pilgrimage in Tibet*. Richmond: Curzon Press, pp. 18–34.

³⁵³ Walshe, M. (1995) *The Long Discourses of the Buddha: A Translation of the Dīga Nikāya*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, pp. 263–264.

These sites are Lumbinī,³⁵⁴ Bodh Gayā,³⁵⁵ Sārnāth,³⁵⁶ and Kuśinagara,³⁵⁷ and remain equally important to Buddhists today.³⁵⁸ Through encouraging journeys to these sites, the Buddha enshrined the activity of pilgrimage as an important act of a Buddhist's life – an act sanctioned by scriptural endorsement. The original Buddhist pilgrimage sites were tied specifically to the events of his life, and a further four sites associated with the Buddha's superhuman abilities were later added; Rajgir, where the Buddha subdued an angry elephant;³⁵⁹ Śrāvastī, where he performed miracles; Sānkāśya, where he descended to earth from Tuśita heaven; and Vaiśālī, where he was offered honey from a monkey. This group of eight locations came to be known as *Aṭṭhamahathanani*, or the eight sacred sites, and refer to places that have come into direct contact with the Buddha during his lifetime.³⁶⁰ Toni Huber, an influential scholar in the topics of Buddhist pilgrimage and sacred geography, has argued that there is no historical basis for the grouping of these eight sites, noting that they

³⁵⁴ For more information on Lumbinī, see Deeg, M. (2003) *The Places Where Siddhartha Trod: Lumbini and Kapilavastu*. Bhairahawa: Lumbini International Research Institute; Falk, H. (1998) *The Discovery of Lumbinī*, Lumbini International Research Institute Occasional Papers 1. Kathmandu: Lumbini International Research Institute; and Weise, K. (ed.) (2013) *The Sacred Garden of Lumbini – Perceptions of Buddha's Birthplace*. Paris: UNESCO.

³⁵⁵ For a history of Bodh Gayā, its importance within Buddhism, and contestation over this site, see Geary, D. et al. (eds.) (2012) *Cross-disciplinary Perspectives on a Contested Buddhist Site: Bodh Gaya Jataka*. London; New York: Routledge; and Geary, D. (2017) *The Rebirth of Bodh Gaya: Buddhism and the Making of a World Heritage Site*. Washington: University of Washington Press.

³⁵⁶ For an archaeological survey and history of Sārnāth, see Sahni, D. R. (1933) *Guide to the Buddhist Ruins of Sarnath*. 5th edn. Delhi: Manager of Publications; and Singh, A. (2014) *Buddhism at Sārnāth*. Delhi: Primus Books.

³⁵⁷ For an archaeological survey and brief overview of Kuśinagara, see Patil, D. R. (1981) *Kuśinagara*. 2nd edn. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey India.

³⁵⁸ On the continued importance of these sites, see Aitken, M. E. (ed.) (1995) *Meeting the Buddha: On Pilgrimage in Buddhist India*. New York: Riverhead Books; Geary (2017); and Huber, T. (2008) *The Holy Land Reborn: Pilgrimage and the Tibetan Reinvention of Buddhist India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

³⁵⁹ See Davidson, L. K. and Gitlitz, D. M. (eds.) (2002) *Pilgrimage: From the Ganges to Graceland: an Encyclopedia*, Vol. 1. Santa Barbara: ABC Clío, pp. 511–512.

³⁶⁰ Huber (2008); 28–29.

did not come into wider circulation until around the post-Gupta era period (c. 600–750), appearing as a distinctive pilgrimage cult long after the first accounts of Buddhist pilgrimage.³⁶¹

During the period of Emperor Aśoka (304–232 BCE) we find more systematised literary accounts of an extensive pilgrimage network in northern India. The *Aśokāvadāna*, the narrative of the life of Aśoka, dates from about the second century. Part of the narrative describes a pilgrimage undertaken by Aśoka in which he visits thirty-two sites of the Buddha's life, led by his monk guide Upagupta.³⁶² At each location Aśoka is said to have built a commemorative monument. Two pillar inscriptions attributed to Aśoka have been found at these sites; the first is in Rummundei, identified as Lumbinī, the Buddha's birthplace. The second is located at Nigālī Sāgar where there is a *stūpa* which holds the ashes of Konākamana, a former Buddha.³⁶³

Huber notes the importance of sites that are believed to house the physical remains or relics (Skt. *śarīra*) of the Buddha, which are often encased in funerary monuments. The contents of these *stūpas* are regarded as having the status of living entities, and so visiting and worshipping these sites allows pilgrims to come into direct contact with the Buddha and offers the chance of a transformative and highly spiritual experience.³⁶⁴ The *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* relates the narrative of an eightfold division of the Buddha's bodily relics, his funerary urn, and the ashes from his crematory fire, with the subsequent erection

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² As Huber notes, there is a striking analogy between the thirty-two sites related to the life of the Buddha and the Indian scheme of the thirty-two marks of a 'Great Man' (Skt. Mahāpuruṣa), which are also attributed to the Buddha. And so, pilgrimage to the thirty-two sites could be seen as a symbolic representation of the body of the Buddha. Huber (2008); 21.

³⁶³ Ibid; 17–18.

³⁶⁴ Ibid; 20.

of a total of ten *stūpas*. The eight different locations of these *stūpas* are listed in the text as Kuśinagarī, Pāpā, Calakalpā, Rāmagrāma, Viṣṇudvīpa, Vaiśālī, Kapilavastu, and Magadha, while the funerary urn *stūpa* was erected at Droṇagrāma, and the crematory ashes *stūpa* at Pippalavatī.³⁶⁵ These ten *stūpas*, the eight sacred sites, and the pilgrimage to thirty-two sites, indicate a ritual network for early Buddhist pilgrims throughout the Middle Ganges region.³⁶⁶ Yet, there is evidence that early Buddhist sites of pilgrimage did not remain confined to this region. For example, the writings of the Chinese Buddhist Faxian (Ch. 法显, Fǎxiǎn; 337–422) narrate various sites in northwestern India that were marked by *stūpas* and were said to be associated with both the Buddha’s life and his relics.³⁶⁷ These additional sites likely spawned from an ever-increasing corpus of narratives surrounding the life of the Buddha and his previous rebirths.

In many narrative traditions concerning Aśoka, including the *Aśokāvadāna*, it is said that he took the relics of the Buddha from the ten *stūpas* and redistributed them in minute portions between 84,000 *stūpas* across Jambudvīpa in an attempt to spread the Buddhist religion.³⁶⁸ Furthermore, he is said to have shown great respect towards the relics of the Buddha’s chief disciples, making various offerings at their *stūpas*. The *Aśokāvadāna* has been subsequently translated into other languages such as Chinese and Tibetan,³⁶⁹ and presents a model of the ideal pilgrim which others have endeavoured to follow.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Ibid; 21.

³⁶⁷ Strong, J. S. (2004) *Relics of the Buddha*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 186.

³⁶⁸ Ibid; 46.

³⁶⁹ There is no full translation in Tibetan, however, a chapter on Kunāla was translated into Tibetan in the eleventh century, Strong, J. S. (1989) *The Legend of King Aśoka: A Study and Translation of the Aśokāvadāna*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p.171.

Pilgrimage has long been an important religious practice in Tibet and Tibetan cultural regions across Asia, and in the last few decades a good range of scholarly studies of Tibetan pilgrimage and pilgrimage sites has been produced. According to Buffetrille,³⁷⁰ destinations of pilgrimage take three forms: man-made places such as temples and *stūpas*; natural features such as mountains and lakes - although these are often also marked out by physical buildings that have been constructed on or near the sacred landscape; and hidden lands (Tib. *sbas yul*).³⁷¹ The most important sites and objects of pilgrimage are referred to as *gnas chen* (great abode) and *gnas ri* (sacred mountains), and can include the forms of pilgrimage mentioned above.³⁷² Sites are often associated with specific ritual activities and religious teachings, and studying these can encompass sociological, geographical, economic, political, and cultural components.

Literature on pilgrimage and travel in Tibet is still relatively new, having developed rapidly from the late 1980s onwards with the opening of the region to tourism.³⁷³ Although

³⁷⁰ Buffetrille, K. (2013) 'Pilgrimage in Tibet', *Oxford Bibliographies*.

<http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195393521/obo-9780195393521-0122.xml#firstMatch> (accessed June 24, 2018).

³⁷¹ For literature on *sbas yul*, see Aris, M. (1975) 'Report on the University of California Expedition to Kutang and Nubri in Northern Nepal in Autumn 1973', *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, 2(2), pp. 45–87; Bernbaum, E. (1980) *The Way to Shambhala*. New York: Anchor Books; Diemberger, H. (1997) 'Beyul Khenbalung, the Hidden Valley of the Artemisia: On Himalayan Communities and their Sacred Landscape', in Macdonald, A. (ed.) *Mandala and Landscape*. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, pp. 287–334; Ehrhard, F. (1997) 'A Hidden Land in the Tibetan-Nepalese Borderlands', in Macdonald, A. (ed.) *Mandala and Landscape*. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, pp. 335–364; and Sadar-Afkhami, A. (1996) *The Buddha's Secret Garden: End Times and Hidden-Lands in Tibetan Imagination*. PhD Thesis. Harvard University.

³⁷² Huber, T. (1999c) *The Cult of Pure Crystal Mountain: Popular Pilgrimage and Visionary Landscape in Southeastern Tibet*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 13–14.

³⁷³ See Buffetrille (1998); Dak-pa, N. (1987) 'Les Pèlerinage Bouddhiques', in Chélini, J. and Branthomme, H. (eds.) *Histoire de Pèlerinage Non-Chrétiens-Entre Magique et Sacré: Le Chemin Des Dieux*. Paris: Hachette, pp. 264–277; Diemberger (1997); Huber (1999c); Kapstein (2006); and Macdonald, A. (1997) *Mandala and Landscape*. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld.

Literature on pilgrimage was written prior to this by the few who had been able to travel in Tibet such as Ekvall and Tucci, see Ekvall, R. (1964) *Religious Observances in Tibet: Patterns and Function*. Chicago:

predominantly anthropological in focus, a limited number of works relating to pilgrimage have examined and/or translated accounts found in guidebooks (Tib. *gnas yig*, *lam yig*) and ritual texts (such as *bsang yig*), and touched upon topics such as the economics of pilgrimage and the history of a particular, often local, pilgrimage destination.³⁷⁴ Huber notes that there are three distinct trends to be found within the bulk of literature relating to Tibetan pilgrimage which impose certain limitations: a heavy emphasis on Buddhist doctrine and models, a focus on small-scale traditions and events, and a failure to acknowledge and apply prominent theoretical frameworks, issues, and perspectives within the field of pilgrimage study.³⁷⁵ Although there has been a shift in the direction of research on Tibetan pilgrimage with works focusing on larger and more popular sites,³⁷⁶ mass pilgrimage³⁷⁷, and the broader social, political, economic, and cultural aspects of pilgrimage³⁷⁸, there are still considerable gaps in the study of Tibetan pilgrims and pilgrimage sites. This chapter aims to break away from the trends highlighted by Huber through analysing textual representations of

University of Chicago Press; and Tucci, G. (1971) ‘Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims in the Swat Valley’, in Tucci, G. (ed.) *Opera Minora, Part II*. Roma: Dott, pp. 369–418. While Ferrari and Blondeau relied on the limited sources available at the time, see Ferrari, A. (1958) *Mk’yen Brtse’s Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet*. Roma: ISMEO; and Blondeau, A. (1960) ‘Les Pèlerinages Tibétains’, *Sources Orientales*, Vol III, pp. 203–245.

³⁷⁴ Huber (1999a); 7.

³⁷⁵ Ibid; 8.

³⁷⁶ See Buffetrille (1997); Chou, W. S. (2011) *The Visionary Landscape of Wutai Shan in Tibetan Buddhism from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century*. University of California, Berkeley; and Huber (1999a) and (2006d) ‘Tibetan Buddhism at Ri bo rtse Inga/Wutai shan in Modern Times’, *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, 2, pp. 1–35.

³⁷⁷ See Huber (1999a and 2008).

³⁷⁸ See Galli, L. (2017) *The Accidental Pilgrimage of a Rich Beggar: The Account of tshong dpon Kha stag ‘Dzam yag’s travels through Tibet, Nepal, and India (1944-1956)*. PhD Thesis. University of Oxford; Schaeffer, K. R. (2006) ‘Ritual, Festival and Authority Under the Fifth Dalai Lama’, in Schaeffer, K. R. and Cuevas, B. (eds.) *Power, Politics and the Reinvention of Tradition in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Tibet: Proceedings of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Xth Seminar, Oxford University, 2003*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, pp. 187–202; and van Spengen, W. (1998) ‘On the Geographical and Material Contextuality of Tibetan Pilgrimage’, in McKay, A. (ed.) *Pilgrimage in Tibet*. Richmond: Curzon Press, pp. 35–51.

pilgrimage sites in Tibet, Mongolia, and China to reveal how sites were established and authenticated, and the social, ritual, and economic activities that took place along these routes. Furthermore, it presents a personal narrative which discloses some of the motivations and experiences of pilgrims, thus bringing the emic perspective into the picture. Sumpa Khenpo's practices and activities are but one drop in an ocean of tradition, but I hope it will shed some light on the dynamic and influential role of pilgrims and pilgrimage in eighteenth-century Tibet.

Pilgrimage, for example, offered a critical point of contact between spiritual and economic spheres. This chapter explores this through Sumpa Khenpo's own experience and practice of pilgrimage as described in his own words. It begins by exploring the economic endeavours and benefits of pilgrimage for the individual, focusing on Sumpa Khenpo's journeys to Wutai Shan. The chapter then goes on to explore the socio-political influence that pilgrimage could provide, examining Sumpa Khenpo's use of poetry to generate income, facilitate place-making and buddhicization, and foster influence. Whilst emphasising some of the different factors imbued in pilgrimage,³⁷⁹ this chapter does not seek to underplay the role of religious motivations and influences in Tibetan pilgrimage and journeying. This chapter therefore concludes with Sumpa Khenpo's pilgrimage to Tsari, which best captures his religious incentives and experiences.

³⁷⁹ Due to the scope of this chapter, I am unable to give a thorough and complete survey of the diverse roles of pilgrimage in Tibet. However, some additional meanings and functions include bringing about more rapid realisation, an established pattern of travelling as part of a young lama's education, journeying from afar in order to mediate between communities in confrontation, following nomadic instinct, and travelling as a legitimate and well used escape route from the trials of this world of samsara.

The Economy of Pilgrimage

The high mobility of people and the vast distances covered by many contribute to the potential for trade and the exchange of goods within the context of pilgrimage. Commercial involvement and the infrastructure that pilgrimage provides – from accommodation to markets to guides (or package tours, in contemporary society) – are key factors in the establishment, maintenance, growth, and even decline of pilgrimage. Although, perhaps, more visible nowadays with the increasing commercialisation of pilgrimage,³⁸⁰ it is by no means a product of contemporary society.³⁸¹ Pilgrims to Konkōin in seventeenth century Japan, for example, could incorporate entertainment such as *sumō* wrestling, theatrical performances, brothels, and bars into their journeys,³⁸² while many religious sites have established entire economies (and many still do), such as Santiago de Compostela, Lourdes, and Mecca. In Tibet, too, pilgrims “generally managed to combine religion with a little business and the shops of Lhasa and the fairs of Kailash definitely felt their presence.”³⁸³

Pilgrimage across many religions and cultures can be seen as a transactional process: pilgrims acquire religious merit in the currency that they deem valuable. These benefits may

³⁸⁰ For more on the connection between pilgrimage and tourism, especially with regards to contemporary pilgrimage, see Badone, E. and Roseman, S. (2004) *Intersecting Journeys: The Anthropology of Pilgrimage and Tourism*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press; Bauman, Z. (1996) ‘From Pilgrim to Tourist: A Short History of Identity’, in Hall, S. and Du Gay, P. (eds.) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: SAGE Publications, pp. 18–35; and Collins-Kreiner, N. and Gattrell, J. (2006) ‘Tourism, Heritage, and Pilgrimage: The Case of Haifa’s Baha’i Gardens’, *Journal of Heritage Tourism*, 1(1), pp. 32–50.

³⁸¹ Reader, I. (2015b) ‘Japanese Studies of Pilgrimage’, in Eade, J. and Albera, D. (eds.) *International Perspectives on Pilgrimage Studies: Itineraries, Gaps and Obstacles*. London: Routledge, p. 14.

³⁸² Thal, S. (2005) *Rearranging the Landscape of the Gods: The Politics of a Pilgrimage Site in Japan, 1573-1912*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, p. 74.

³⁸³ van Spengen, W. (2000) *Tibetan Border Worlds: A Geohistorical Analysis of Trade and Traders*. London: Kegan Paul International, p. 124. Janet Rizvi has also written on trader-pilgrims travelling from Ladakh to Lhasa, see Rizvi, J. (1999) *Trans-Himalayan Caravans: Merchant Princes and Peasant Traders in Ladakh*. Oxford; New Delhi; New York: Oxford University Press.

be spiritual or mundane and require the pilgrim to offer something in return – either material resources such as money or donations, spiritual offerings such as one’s devotion or prayers, or both. For example, Tibetan pilgrims visiting monasteries during their journey might offer *khatags* and tea (Tib. *mang ja*) in return for blessings, empowerments, and teachings. Those who could afford it might present an abundance of offerings including *tsampa* flour (Tib. *rtsam pa*), gold, horses, yaks, and silk. Nevertheless, despite the clear correlation between economic and pilgrimage networks, academic research on this topic is still in its infancy.³⁸⁴ This section examines this relationship; investigating the economic importance of pilgrimage and the relationship between the lay and clerical sectors of Tibetan society through analysing economic exchanges that took place during Sumpa Khenpo’s pilgrimages to Wutai Shan. Such transactions reveal the power wielded by religious communities, the financial implications of pilgrimage, and the different aims and intentions of pilgrims.

Wutai Shan

Wutai Shan is a sacred mountain in present-day Shanxi province (Ch. 山西 Shānxī) that is believed to be the earthly abode of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī (Tib. 'Jam dpal; Ch. 文殊菩薩 Wénshū Púsà). From the seventeenth century onwards, Wutai Shan has been an important place of pilgrimage for Tibetans, Mongols, and Manchus. However, as observed by Elverskog and Charleux, Wutai Shan’s connection with Mañjuśrī among Mongols and Tibetans predates the influence of the Qing Empire.³⁸⁵ The cult of Mañjuśrī developed

³⁸⁴ Examples of scholarship on this topic include; Clarke, J. (1998) ‘Hindu Trading Pilgrims’, in McKay, A. (ed.) *Pilgrimage in Tibet*. Richmond: Curzon Press, pp. 52–70; Galli (2017); and van Spengen (2000).

³⁸⁵ Charleux (2015); and Elverskog, J. (2011) ‘Wutai Shan, Qing Cosmopolitanism, and the Mongols’, *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 6, pp. 243–274.

within Tibet and Mongolia during the Yuan period, and it appears that the association between the bodhisattva and Wutai Shan was also established during this period. A prayer found within the manuscripts at Kharbukhyn Balgas in Mongolia, which date from the late sixteenth to early seventeenth century, reads: “On China’s Wutaishan mountain dwells the victorious youth Holy Mañjuśrī”.³⁸⁶ Yet it has also attracted Chinese Buddhists since the fourth century, and pilgrims from further afield including Japan and Nepal.³⁸⁷ As such, Wutai Shan has functioned as a major site for Buddhist pilgrimage, and during the Qing dynasty it became a place of Qing ‘cosmopolitanism’ where various ethnic groups met, competed, and interacted.³⁸⁸

We now know a great deal about the history and religious life of Wutai Shan thanks to a growing number of scholars who work with relevant sources in Tibetan, Mongolian, Chinese, and Manchu, and also with visual representations of the mountain.³⁸⁹ However, the focus has frequently been directed at Qing investment in the mountain or visits to Wutai Shan by prominent (and often Gelugpa) figures.³⁹⁰ Little attention has been paid to the motivations of those visiting Wutai Shan or how pilgrims made their way there.³⁹¹

³⁸⁶ Translation quoted from Isabelle Charleux. Charleux (2015); 161.

³⁸⁷ Debreczeny, K. (2011) ‘Wutai Shan: Pilgrimage to Five Peak Mountain’. *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 6 (December 2011), p. 1.

³⁸⁸ Johan Elverskog makes a strong case for Wutai Shan as a site of Qing Cosmopolitanism, see Elverskog (2011).

³⁸⁹ Examples include Stevenson, D. (1996) ‘Visions of Mañjuśrī on Mount Wutai’, in Lopez, D. (ed.) *Religions of Tibet in Practice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 203–222; Sullivan (2018); and Issue 6 of the *Journal of The International Association of Tibetan Studies* (JIATS, 2011), which deals exclusively with Wutai Shan.

³⁹⁰ This is not always the case – Charleux (2015) and Elverskog (2011) have written extensively on Mongol pilgrimages to Wutai Shan, and Chou (2011) has analysed maps of the mountain.

³⁹¹ There are, of course, some exceptions. See Charleux, I. (2011) ‘Mongol Pilgrimages to Wutai Shan in the Late Qing Dynasty’, *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies*, (6), pp. 275–326; Elverskog (2011); and Sullivan (2018).

Sumpa Khenpo journeyed to Wutai Shan with his entourage on three occasions; in 1750,³⁹² 1767,³⁹³ and 1774,³⁹⁴ travelling each time via Mongolia and visiting powerful patrons on the way. The presence of wealthy and prestigious Mongol patrons in the northeast – including those among the Oirad, Tümed, and Uyghurs – who were said to be both generous and benevolent, was sufficient to draw lamas such as Sumpa Khenpo to undertake journeys there.³⁹⁵ This was the case even more so towards the latter half of the eighteenth century following the major geo-political changes discussed in Chapter two. With the gradual weakening of their traditional Mongol sponsors, travel became a professional necessity. And so, lamas such as Sumpa Khenpo turned their focus to the East and set out in search of new patrons; offering a combination of rituals, teachings, and empowerments in exchange for economic support and political alliances. Comparisons can be drawn here with the *shanren* (Ch. 山人 *shānrén*) of sixteenth and seventeenth century China, a distinctive group of literati who made their living through seeking patronage – travelling between the doors of powerful sponsors, offering literary or artistic talents in return for material

³⁹² Departing Gonlung on the fourth day of the fourth month of the Iron Horse year (1750) and arriving at Wutai Shan on the twenty seventh day of the seventh month. Sumpa Khenpo was forced to leave Wutai Shan after a week due to illness among his retinue, leaving for Gonlung on the third day of the eighth month. SK-CASS, folio 113(a); 4 – folio 114(b); 7.

³⁹³ Sumpa Khenpo departed Gonlung on the fourth day of the fifth month of the Fire Pig year (1767) and reached Wutai Shan on the fifth day of the seventh month. He resided at Wutai Shan for a month, and then spent several months travelling through Mongolia visiting patrons, bestowing empowerments, and providing medical help, before arriving back at Gonlung in the twelfth month of that year. SK-CASS, folio 143(a); 1 – folio 144(b); 3.

³⁹⁴ In the first month of the Wood Sheep year (1775), Sumpa Khenpo left Gonlung for Wutai Shan via Ordos. He arrived at Wutai Shan on the twenty first day of the fourth month. In the fifth month of the same year he left Wutai Shan, travelling extensively through Mongolia and arriving at Gonlung on the twenty first day of the tenth month. SK-CASS, folio 166(a); 3 – folio 175(a); 2.

³⁹⁵ In Paul Nietupski's article on Labrang lamas travelling to Wutai Shan, he mentions that some travelled through Mongolia en route to Wutai Shan including the Third Detri, Jamyang Tupten Nyima (Tib. 'Jam dbyangs thub bstan rdo rje; 1779-1862) and Jigme Tenpé Nyima (Tib. 'Jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma; 1816 – ca. 1861). Nietupski, P. K. (2011) 'Bla brang Monastery and Wutai Shan', *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* 6, pp.334–338.

sponsorship and social connections.³⁹⁶ To analyse each of Sumpa Khenpo's accounts of his pilgrimages to Wutai Shan in detail would be a thesis in its own right, and so I will focus mainly on Sumpa Khenpo's final trip to the mountain as it is the most comprehensive account, spanning twenty one folios in length.³⁹⁷ Brenton Sullivan has already translated and written on this travelogue, however little attention has been paid to the transactional components of his journey, focusing instead on the political relationships established and Sumpa Khenpo's intention to promote Gelugpa orthopraxy in Mongolia.³⁹⁸

In the Water Dragon year (1772) Sumpa Khenpo was travelling through Mongolia when he received word that Changkya Rolpé Dorje would soon be visiting Dolonnor. Subsequently, Sumpa Khenpo journeyed to Dolonnor, and from the fourth to the tenth day of the seventh month the two met daily. According to Sumpa Khenpo's account, Changkya Rolpé Dorje gave instructions and advice, and they discussed both religious and mundane affairs. During these conversations, Changkya Rolpé Dorje is said to have invited Sumpa Khenpo to visit him at Wutai Shan:

At that time, straying [from our] conversation, on two [separate] occasions he said, "our time right now is short, sometime in the future you must come to Wutai Shan and stay a few months."

I excused myself from [the invitation], offering an extensive explanation: "Although it would be good to accept [your invitation], I am old and my body is frail, and so I am unable [to go]. Furthermore, as I would have to travel through Mongolia, many other faithless types would say accusingly, 'He's

³⁹⁶ For more on *shanren* see Fu Fu, L. F. (2009) *Framing Famous Mountains: Grand Tour and Mingshan Paintings in Sixteenth-Century China*. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, pp. 66–68.

³⁹⁷ SK-CASS, folio 161(b) – folio 171(b).

³⁹⁸ Sullivan (2018).

[only] going to collect material goods along the way,' and so forth. So, it would be inappropriate to go.”³⁹⁹

The final line is suggestive: clearly Sumpa Khenpo had established a reputation for acquiring wealth on his travels through Mongolia, and he was conscious of this reputation. Furthermore, it suggests that meeting with wealthy Mongol patrons may have weighed heavily on the minds of those who hailed from the same region as him, and that competition for patronage occurred. The accusations of the various “faithless types” was not merely gossip; Sumpa Khenpo’s accounts indicate that he sought out and received elaborate offerings en route to Wutai Shan.

Running a monastery is an expensive endeavour and includes providing the supplies for the multiple buildings and its many monks. Sumpa Khenpo, who served three times as the abbot of Gonlung Monastery, would have been very aware of this reality. Apart from the monastery’s local estates, Mongols were the traditional patrons of Gonlung and of many other monasteries in the region, such as Labrang.⁴⁰⁰ And so, monks and lamas would regularly return from Mongolia laden with goods to provide for the upkeep of their monastery.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁹ After the translation of Sullivan (2018); 72.

de'i tshe na gsung 'phros kyi lhongs la nged cag da lam 'dir 'dug yun thung bas lo phyi ma zhig la ri bo rtse lngar 'ongs nas zla shas 'dug dgos zhes snga phyir lan gnyis gsungs | de la bka' dang du len 'os na yang nga rang na so rgas shing gzugs phung gcong nad can yin pas mi lcogs tshul dang sog yul brgyud de yong dgos pas gzhan dad med du mas kho rang zhor la zang zing sdud phyir yong ba yin zhes 'phyu dogs sogs kyis kyang yong mi bde zhes snyan sgron rgyas par gsol ba'i sgo nas dgongs pa zhus kyang | SK-CASS, folio162(a); 2–4.

⁴⁰⁰ Nietupski (1999).

⁴⁰¹ Brenton Sullivan discusses the journeys undertaken by the Wang incarnations to Mongolia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to secure patronage for Gonlung Monastery, see Sullivan (2013); 251–275.

To the east of Gonlung, Alasha in Western Inner Mongolia was the closest Mongol settlement, and the first stop along the route to China where one would encounter a major Buddhist patron. The Alasha nobility were also supporters of the Qing and had fostered a close relationship through inter-marriage and aiding in the Qing's campaigns against the Dzungars. In return, they received the protection of the Qing and were bestowed imperial titles and ranks which reinforced their local authority.⁴⁰² Lobsang Dorje, who was the leading figure in Alasha for most of Sumpa Khenpo's life, first received the title of *Beile* in 1740,⁴⁰³ was bestowed the title of *Junwang* in 1758, and finally *Qinwang* in 1765, signifying his increased importance and loyalty to the Qing.⁴⁰⁴ Elverskog calls attention to the cultural dynamics involved in submission to the Qing, particularly the buddhization of political authority and the sacred nature of the emperor.⁴⁰⁵ This process of buddhization and incorporation of Mongols into the Buddhist Qing Empire was ongoing and relied on regular interaction with Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs such as Sumpa Khenpo, who fostered the intertwining of 'being Mongol' and 'being Buddhist'. While Sumpa Khenpo understood this as promoting Gelugpa hegemony, it also transformed communal boundaries and was fundamental in forging a new Qing Buddhist identity that spanned Inner Asia.

⁴⁰² For more on the relationship between Alasha and the Qing, see Guang, Q. (2014) 'Submission of Qosot Mongols in Alashan and the Qing Dynast's Northwest Frontier Situation', *China's Borderland History and Geography Studies*, 1; Jiaji, D. (2001) 'On the Intermarriage Between the Alashan Mongols and the Royal Court', *Etho-national Studies*, 5; and Liang L. (2003) 'On Alashan Mongols During the Process of Dispatching Troops in the Northwest in the Early Qing Dynasty', *Heilongjiang National Series*, 5. Elverskog analyses the importance of seals and titles in the Qing's creation and maintenance of multi-ethnic elites across its empire. Of particular importance here is that the Manchu emperor was the only medium through which local power was bestowed and recognised, and so those with imperial titles were acknowledged as loyal supporters of the Qing. Elverskog (2006); 63–89.

⁴⁰³ *Beile* is a Qing title which translates as 'Prince of the Third Rank'.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid*; 64.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid*; 63–89.

Lobsang Dorje, and his minister, Tsewang Dorje (Tib. Tshe dbang rdo rje), helped fund all three of Sumpa Khenpo's trips to Wutai Shan between 1750 and 1775, and regularly invited him to the region to carry out a number of responsibilities, including healing, giving empowerments and teachings, and performing rain-making rituals (Tib. *char 'beb*; Ch. 求雨 *qiú yǔ*). This suggests that the relationship between the two developed, and was reinforced, over time as a result of Sumpa Khenpo's trips through the region. In fact, in the year before Sumpa Khenpo set out to Wutai Shan for the final time, Lobsang Dorje dispatched a messenger, doctor, and pack of camels to Gonlung to request Sumpa Khenpo travel to Alasha to perform much needed rain-making rituals.⁴⁰⁶

As Pierre-Etienne Will notes, a drought was a “progressive calamity”,⁴⁰⁷ and so alongside practical measures to alleviate food shortages, rain-making rituals were highly sought after. The early Qing Emperors conducted prayers for rain during times of crisis, and ten such rituals were carried out by the Shunzhi and Kangxi Emperors.⁴⁰⁸ However, in 1742 it became an annual first-rank ritual,⁴⁰⁹ and Buddhist, Daoist, and even Muslim clerics were frequently summoned to invoke rain through prayers and rituals, highlighting its perceived significance.⁴¹⁰ It appears that Mongolian nobility, too, turned to Buddhist lamas for rain-making rituals. Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography, for example, is filled with instances of invitations to perform his well-known ritual, claiming that:

⁴⁰⁶ SK-CASS, folio 162(b); 3–6.

⁴⁰⁷ Will, P. E. (1990) *Bureaucracy and Famine in Eighteenth-century China*, translated by E. Forster. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

⁴⁰⁸ For the exact dates of these rituals, see Rawski (1998); 222.

⁴⁰⁹ First-rank rituals were an imperial duty. They were usually undertaken by the Emperor, although during the period of full mourning an official would take the Emperor's place. For more on first-rank rituals as a primary duty of the Emperor, see Rawski (1998); 228–253.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid*; 225.

Wherever I went in China, Tibet, and Mongolia where rainfall was difficult, easy, or intermediate (Tib. *dka' sla bar ma*), if I performed a rain-making [ritual] within five or six days rain falls and without postponement of the improvement. In every region where I have performed a rain-making [ritual], everyone knows this [...] In all directions [they] say, “The famed one known as Sumpa Khenpo, the excellent rain-maker, wherever he goes due to drought, when he arrives [there] the rain arrives, too.”⁴¹¹

He elaborates on the effective components of his rituals, firstly criticising “heretical systems” such as the Chinese Waterwheel (Tib. *rgya nag chu 'khor*)⁴¹² for inflicting harm on the *klu* (subterranean spirits; Skt. *nāgas*)⁴¹³ and the *sa bdags* (lords of the earth). Instead, Sumpa Khenpo exclusively combines the offerings of ‘stargazing’ water (Tib. *chu skar*),⁴¹⁴ *klu tormas* (Tib. *klu gtor*), *klu* medicine (Tib. *klu sman*), and smoke offering (Tib. *bsang*);⁴¹⁵ appealing to the *klu* for assistance.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹¹ *rgya bod hor gsum gyi yul grur char 'bebs dka' sla bar ma gang du phyin nas char 'bebs byas na zhag lnga drug las phan mi 'gyang bar 'bab pa ni | gang dang gang du char 'bebs byas pa'i yul de dang de'i kun gyis shes bzhin pa yin | [...] phyogs kun tu sum pa mkhan po char 'bebs la bzang ba zhes pa'i grags skam la brten nas gang du phyin kyang khong slebs pa na char ba yang slebs pa yin zhes | SK-CASS, folio 72(b); 2–4.*

⁴¹² I am unable to find any information about this ritual. Rain-making rituals were many and widespread during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in China – local variations, different performers (e.g. Buddhist monks; local officials; emperors) etc. The multiplicity and variation of rituals presents a particular acute challenge for scholars in identifying specific examples.

⁴¹³ *klu* are often regarded as serpent spirits due, in part, to their origin in the ancient snake cults of India. They are believed to reside underground (while *lha*, for example, are believed to dwell in the sky and heavens. See footnote 446) and are usually associated with water, especially natural springs and lakes. For more on the *klu* see, Beer (2003); 72–74; and Luodanduojie. (2013) *Klu in Tibet: Beliefs and Practices*. Master’s Thesis. University of Oslo.

⁴¹⁴ Water that is collected in the early hours of the morning, when stars are said to shine brightly, see Arya, P. Y. (2014) ‘External Therapies in Tibetan Medicine: The *Four Tantras*, Contemporary Practice, and a Preliminary History of Surgery’, in Hofer, T. (ed.) *Bodies in Balance: The Art of Tibetan Medicine*. New York; Seattle: Rubin Museum of Art and University of Washington Press, p. 65.

⁴¹⁵ A type of incense that typically consists of barley grain, juniper leaves, and butter, see Dowman, K. (1988) *The Power-places of Central Tibet: The Pilgrim’s Guide*. London: Routledge, p. 7.

⁴¹⁶ SK-CASS, folio 72(b); 5. Sumpa Khenpo refers to other practices that do not harm the *klu* and *sa bdag*, such as *char rdo* (lit. rain [making] stone). SK-CASS, folio 72(b); 6–7.

While stopping in Alasha en route to Wutai Shan in 1750, Sumpa Khenpo writes that he responded to the angst of the *Qinwang* by summoning rain three times. Such acts endeared Sumpa Khenpo to the Mongol ruler and his subjects and earned him generous rewards. After bringing the much-needed rain, he was supplied with numerous provisions, including camels and horses for his journey.⁴¹⁷ Stories such as this suggest that his services were much sought-after (and lavishly rewarded); providing an air of authenticity for Sumpa Khenpo, whilst further elevating his status as an authority on ritual practices and religious rites.

Alongside rituals, Sumpa Khenpo regularly gave teachings, and performed rites (Tib. *rim gro*) and various tantric rituals on behalf of his patrons. After Alasha, the next major stop along the way to Wutai Shan was Ordos, another supporter of the Qing following their submission to the Manchus in 1635.⁴¹⁸ While visiting in the Wood Sheep year (1775), Sumpa Khenpo carried out some of the most extensive ritual performances for his Mongol patrons; reciting permission rituals, giving transmissions, and performing Kālacakra rituals:⁴¹⁹

On the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth [day] of the waxing moon of the third month, together with my physician Rabjampa Geleg Samdrup,⁴²⁰ whose mind is turned to [both] the true meaning and conventional knowledge, and Gushri Chöjé Lobsang Nyima (Tib. Gu shris chos rje Blo bzang nyi ma) of the Khanggin [Banner] (Tib. Hang gin), who has an expansive grasp of the sciences and others; we served as preceptor and assistant preceptors, and

⁴¹⁷ SK-CASS, folio 91(a); 3–5.

⁴¹⁸ Elverskog (2006); 153.

⁴¹⁹ The Kālacakra achieved prominence and popularity in Mongolia, becoming the protective deity of the Mongol nation, see Wallace, V. (2001) *The Inner Kālacakratantra: A Buddhist Tantric View of the Individual*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.5. Many Mongolian monasteries had a temple for studying Kālacakra and there was demand for Kālacakra teachings and rituals. Vesna Wallace is currently researching the popularity of the Kālacakra tradition in Mongolia.

⁴²⁰ One of the two disciples who completed Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography. See footnote 103.

constructed an earthen platform two arm spans high, atop which we [performed] an earth-rite accompanied by dance in accordance with the coloured *maṇḍala* of the Kālacakra ritual. On the fourteenth [day] we performed the disciple preliminary ritual (Tib. *slob ma sta gon*).

The following day we [carried out] the great ritual of the Victorious One preaching the Kālacakra and,⁴²¹ in accordance with this, on the full moon of the third month, the seven empowerments of entering [like] a child (Tib. *byis pa 'jug pa'i dbang bdun*).⁴²² On the sixteenth [day], to more than 700 clergy and lay disciples, we gave each of the four conventional and ultimate empowerments as well as the Great Vajra-master Lord empowerment (Tib. *rdo rje slob dpon bdag po chen ma'i dbang*).⁴²³

After completing these rituals, “limitless quantities of the most supreme offerings fell like rain”⁴²⁴ – a glimpse of what the wealthy sponsors were able and willing to bestow. Sumpa Khenpo also performed Kālacakra rituals for the *Jasag* Banner,⁴²⁵ constructing a *maṇḍala*

⁴²¹ I cannot find any information on this ritual.

⁴²² An empowerment for those holding the lower initiations. Hatchell, C. (2014) *Naked Seeing: The Great Perfection, the Wheel of Time, and Visionary Buddhism in Renaissance Tibet*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 32 and 355.

⁴²³ The Vajra-master Lord empowerment is often considered the twelfth Kālacakra empowerment. Hatchell, C. *Materials on the Life of Yumo Mikyo Dorjé: Two Translations and a Discussion of Sources*. <http://www.thlib.org/encyclopedias/literary/pdf/hatchell-yumo-mikyo-dorje.pdf> (accessed July 28, 2020). After the translation of Sullivan (2018); 87.

10 11 12 gsum pa'i yar tshes | nang don tha snyad la blo kha phyogs pa'i nged kyi em chi rab 'byams pa dge legs bsam 'grub dang rig gnas la rnam dpyod yangs pa'i hang gin gyi gu shri chos rje blo bzang nyi ma sogs dang bcas pa'i rang re slob dpon las slob kyi sa stegs 'dom do'i tshad kyi steng du dus 'khor rdul tshon dkyil 'khor cho ga ltar sa chog gar dang bcas pas bzhegs nas bcu bzhi la slob ma sta gon bgyis te | phyi nyin rgyal bas dus 'khor gsungs pa'i dus chen dang mthun par nag zla'i nya la byis pa ltar 'jug pa'i dbang bdun dang | bcu drug la kun rdzob dang don dam pa'i dbang bzhi re rdo rje slob dpon bdag po chen ma'i dbang bcas pa ser skya bdun brgya brgal bar bskur | SK-CASS, folio 166(a); 5 – folio 166(b); 1.

⁴²⁴ *bdog pa'i 'bul ba dpag med kyi bla na yod pa'i mchod pa char du bsnyil | SK-CASS, folio 166(b); 7.*

⁴²⁵ Established in 1736, it was part of the right wing of the Ordos. Not to be confused with *Jasag*, the Mongolian word for ‘Banner Prince’. Elverskog (2006); 182.

and offering empowerments to over 700 lamas and members of the nobility.⁴²⁶ Once again, crowds gathered in his presence and offered donations:

There arrived every day faithful monastics and laity, 5,000, 6,000, and even more than 10,000. They congregated here in this land without having been called, shrouding the sky, like the boisterous clouds (lit. ‘wind chariots’) that cover the gods' roads during a rainstorm. [...] When I granted audiences, I made thoroughly pure prayers to the lamas, the Precious Jewels, and the protectors for empowerments, and, in my mind, I made prayers that I might be able to benefit all of these and lead them along the path to liberation in accordance with the *dharma* and for all future lifetimes.⁴²⁷

One is here reminded of the account given by the Fifth Dalai Lama, who travelled to Beijing a century earlier, in which he records giving teachings, rituals, and empowerments to vast crowds en route:

I scattered flowers to the old and new *thangka* paintings that Zhingkyong Nangso had made and the new silver manuscript of the Kagyur which Chakhyung Chöjé had newly made. [...] I gave the *wang* of longevity according to the Drubgyal tradition, and the *jenang* of Chagdrupa, based on the *Bar chad kun sel*, to Lama Tsenpo and Erteni Daichin. I gave the *jenang* of Metseg and Dzambhala Serpo to about 200 people including Dogyu Gyatsho, the Tongkhor Trulku, Kubum Chöjé, *Mergen* Jinong, Erteni Daichin, Aka Getshul and Zhingkyong Nangso. About 300 people led by

⁴²⁶ SK-CASS, folio 167(a); 1–2. For more on Ordos nobility, see Veit, V. (1999) ‘The Ordos Banner according to the Iledkil Sastir of 1795’, in Sagaster, K. (ed.) *Antoine Mostaert (1881–1971) C.I.C.M Missionary and Scholar*, Vol. 1. Leuven: Ferdinand Verbeist Foundation, pp. 185–204.

⁴²⁷ *skya ser nyin re bzhin du lnga stong drug stong khri brgal ba char dus kyi rlung gi shing rta lang long gis lha lam khyab pa dang mtshungs par nam mkha'i gos can du sus bos pa med par ljongs 'dir shong min lta bur 'dus te | [...] mjal kha gtong skabs su ngag nas bla ma dkon mchog srung mas byin gyis rlobs shig dang | yid kyis bdag gis tshe rabs kun tu chos mthun kyi sgo nas 'di kun la phan pa sgrub cing smin grol lam la 'dren nus par gyur cig gi smon lam rnam par dag pa btab | SK-CASS, folio 167(a); 4–6.*

Thang Ngagring Kukye and his monks arrived, bringing 12 *srang* of gold and about a hundred horses as gifts.⁴²⁸

The Fifth Dalai Lama also discusses the economic benefit of his journey, listing large donations given to him.⁴²⁹ Indeed, a part of Sumpa Khenpo's efforts in these areas must be seen as a continuation of earlier Gelugpa figures, especially the Fifth Dalai Lama, in these regions. However, by the time of Sumpa Khenpo these relations had become well-established and a recurrent part of the Qing's state building policy through fostering a pan-Buddhist identity across Inner Asia. These were not spontaneous encounters between the travelling encampment of a Tibetan Buddhist hierarch en route to Beijing, but a deep-rooted association that was cultivated and maintained through numerous invitations and visits over the years.



Map 4. Some of the places mentioned in Sumpa Khenpo's account of his pilgrimage to Wutai Shan.
Source: Author and ©Treasury of Lives.

⁴²⁸ Translation quoted from Samten Karmay. Karmay (2014); 281.

⁴²⁹ Ibid; 277–281.

The various offerings bestowed not only provided Sumpa Khenpo with the supplies he needed to complete his journey, but they also allowed him to make lavish gifts to monasteries both at home and at Wutai Shan itself. He recalls giving offerings to Shouning Monastery (Tib. Shu ning; Ch. 壽寧寺 Shòuníng sì), constructing a *stūpa* three arm-spans high to house the relics of his nephew who had died on the mountain, and offering gifts to Changkya Rolpé Dorje.⁴³⁰ As well as the economic and political motivations of Sumpa Khenpo and others to travel to Wutai Shan, the religious importance of the area cannot and should not be discounted, and should be considered a significant factor in Sumpa Khenpo's decision to travel to the mountain. Pilgrimages incorporate a multitude of themes, and the spiritual significance of pilgrimage will be further considered later in this chapter. As mentioned previously, Sumpa Khenpo did engage in religious activities at Wutai Shan and claims to have visited all the major sites on the mountain, including the top of the Eastern Peak, Bodhisattva Peak (Tib. Byang chub sems dpa'i spor; Ch. 菩薩頂 Púsàdǐng), and the statue of the Mañjuśrī, and the Aśoka *stūpa*.⁴³¹

Nevertheless, the primary motivation behind the journeys of many Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs from the Tibetan Plateau to Wutai Shan — including, perhaps, those trips made to the mountain as a detour on one's return from visiting the imperial court — was not pilgrimage for the sole sake of spiritual accomplishment but rather maintaining and

⁴³⁰ SK-CASS, folio 169(b); 4–5.

⁴³¹ SK-CASS, folio 169(a) – folio 169(b).

The Aśoka *stūpa* is based on legends reported in Chinese, Tibetan, and Mongolian guidebooks. They claim that two Indian monks visited Wutai Shan in 68 CE and discovered the abode of Mañjuśrī, which contained a *stūpa* erected by Aśoka. The Great Faith Numinous Vulture Peak Monastery (Ch. 大孚灵鹫寺 Dàfúlíngjiù sì) was built on its site and is believed to be the most ancient Buddhist monastery in China. Charleux (2015); 91. A list of monasteries at Wutai Shan can be found in Charleux (2015); 395–404. A map of Wutai Shan that marks major sites (key in Tibetan) can be found in Debreczeny (2011); 4.

articulating established networks of patronage with Mongol nobility in Inner Mongolia. As we have seen, part of what inspired Sumpa Khenpo's pilgrimages to Wutai Shan were the relationships he fostered along the way with patrons, devotees, and lamas, particularly Changkya Rolpé Dorje and Lobsang Dorje, and the economic and political benefit of these relationships. This is not an attempt to diminish the status or religious importance of the region, nor to downplay the activities of Tibetan Buddhists that visited Wutai Shan. However, it is important that we take a more holistic view of the causes and consequences of pilgrimage in this time and place.

Sumpa Khenpo finishes the recounting of his third trip to Wutai Shan with a poem dedicated to the mountain and the limitless merit contained there, which shall be rendered in full below. It reveals his skill in writing *kāvya* style poetry, and such poetry plays an important role in his autobiography. As the summary of his life above has shown, he placed great emphasis on scholarly knowledge in various disciplines (Tib. *rig gnas*), including ornate poetry, and displaying his skill as a poet may have been part of his self-understanding as a scholar. However, as we shall see in the following section, poetry also served a variety of additional purposes; from generating income to fostering influences to establishing and legitimising pilgrimage sites in Tibet, Mongolia, and China.

Power Places and Place-Making

Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography is interspersed with poems concerning important teachers, auspicious instances, and deities. Yet, there are also several poems about places visited by the author, including Wutai Shan:

Lo! It is the site that provides respite to the weary of *samsāra*,
The gathering point of all the cores of the three levels (Tib. *sa gsum*),⁴³²
Which has manifested from the display of incomparable wisdom,
Due to its great blessings and aspirations.

The many ordinary ones who have the [good] fortune of seeing this pure land
of the Omniscient One,
Those who reach here, they are wandering beings burdened by the drought of
mental afflictions,
The cool breeze of the fan of virtue quenches their desires,
In the forests of Mount Malaya, they are given rest.⁴³³
The ravine of 100 faults remains only in name,
The country of the gods of completely pacified, supreme liberation;
It surpasses by far in each aspect
[Even] the best of countless lands.

The riches in that land spread and reach throughout,
The various mountains seem to me like multicoloured rainbows,
The canopies of its wandering clouds (lit. wind chariots) above are beautiful,

⁴³² Also known as the three realms of conventional existence, it refers to the realm of the gods and spirits above, the world of humans and animals inhabiting earth, and the kingdom of the *nāgas* below. Beer (2003); 259.

⁴³³ Malaya is a sacred mountain (Skt. *kulaparvata*) within both Hindu and Buddhist traditions, and its precise location depends on which textual system one consults. In the *Purāṇa*, it is one of the seven holy mountains located to the south of Mount Meru (Tib. *Ri rab*; Skt. *Sumeruparvata*) and is noted for its sandalwood, hence it is famous for its fragrance. McHugh, J. (2012) *Sandalwood and Carrion: Smell in Indian Religion and Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 173; and Ramachandra Dikshitar, V. R. (1995) *The Purana Index: From T to M*. 2nd edn. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, p. 644.

It is also equated with the sacred mountain Sumanakūṭa in Sri Lanka, where it is said that the Buddha descended from heaven and left the mark of his footprint on the mountain. Furthermore, the mountain is considered the most important sacred place associated with the Secret Mantra (Vajrayāna). It is believed to be the place where these teachings originated and were taught by Vajrapāṇi (Tib. *Phyag na rdo rje*). Cabezón, J. I. (2013) *The Buddha's Doctrine and the Nine Vehicles: Rog Bande Sherab's Lamp of the Teachings*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 84–85; and Dalton, J. P. (2016) *The Gathering of Intentions: A History of Tibetan Tantra*. Chichester; New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 26–29.

Its mountainous valleys are famous, and its rivers run swiftly.⁴³⁴

Wild animals of beautiful forms and flocks of birds roam without fear,
Immeasurable fortunate ones gather here swiftly with happiness,
From all places like bees (lit. six-legged one) in a lotus grove,
Traveling the auspicious path, many are those who reach everlasting
happiness.

Acclaimed as the celestial road for those who bear the burden,
Exceedingly heavy with a heap-like [collection] of the auspicious signs of
saṃsāra and *nirvāṇa*,
Suspecting that it compares with the wind *maṇḍala* resting on the void [at the
base of the world] or the great, golden earth foundation;
Who would be able to express its virtues?

For one who arrives in this realm, it is no different than
Seeing the true wisdom body,
Obtaining exactly this good fortune [of seeing Wutai Shan];
Have you seen or heard of anyone who had achieved this through striving for
hundreds of aeons?
Is it not [like] the fruition of the essence of obtaining the precious human
body?!⁴³⁵

⁴³⁴ Mountains in conjunction with clouds, auspicious forests, high summits, rainbows, and the sun are standard forms of poetical ornamentation. In particular, these symbols are associated with sacred mountains such as Mount Meru and Mount Malaya. Sharma, R. K. (1988) *Elements of Poetry in the Mahābhārata*. 2nd edn. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, p. 58.

⁴³⁵ *e ma gang gi rlabs chen thugs smon mthus || gzhal du med pa'i ye shes rang snang gi || zlos gar 'phrul las sa gsum snying po kun || bzlums pa'i rjes 'gro srid dub dbugs 'byin gnas || kun gzigs dag zhing phal mang mthong skal du || 'dir lhags nyon mongs than pas gdung ba'i 'gro || dge legs rlung g'yab kyis bsil 'dod pa 'jo || ma la ya yi tshal la ngal gso byin || nyes brgya'i gcong rong ming yang lhag mar gyur || nyer zhi'i thar ma mchog gi legs bris ljongs || rab 'byams zhing gi phun tshogs mtha' dag las || gang gi cha shas re yang ring du 'gongs || de yi sa gzhi rin chen bye bdal snyegs || ri rnams sna tshogs dbang gzhu bkra ba snyam || steng du rlung gi shing rta'i bla bre mdzes || ri sul snyan sgrog chu rgyun rings par 'bab ||*

In this poem, Sumpa Khenpo refers to both the natural and supernatural wonders of Wutai Shan, stressing the spiritual intensity of the place and the benefits that could be accumulated by those who visit. Such portrayals are commonplace, with mountains often being regarded as vehicles for renewal, self-realisation, and clarity.⁴³⁶ Sumpa Khenpo was well versed in poetics, one of the five minor Buddhist sciences. As seen in Chapter two, his training included the study of the *locus classicus* of Tibetan poetry, Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaḍarśa*, which had been translated from Sanskrit to Tibetan in the thirteenth century. Poetry was regarded highly by illustrious scholars of Buddhism such as Tsongkhapa, the Fifth Dalai Lama, and *Desi* Sangye Gyatso.⁴³⁷ And so, Sumpa Khenpo's use of poetry reflects his education and language skills, thus implicitly reminding his audience that he also possesses these cultural credentials.

As mentioned above (Chapter one), Tibetan ornate poetry employed imagery that was largely borrowed from Indian models, often including Sanskrit terminology, elements of Indian mythology such as Hindu deities, and standard metaphors of Sanskrit origin, such as:

the six-legged one (Tib. *rkang drug pa*) = bee

water holder (Tib. *chu 'dzin*) / wind chariots (Tib. *rlung gi shing rta*) = clouds

*gzugs mdzes ri dwags bya tshogs 'jigs med rgyu || pad tshal rkang drug bzhin du phyogs kun nas || skal ldan
grangs 'das dga' spros rings bzhin 'du || legs lam bgrod de gtan bder son pa'ang mang ||
srid zhi'i dge mtshan spungs mtshungs rab lei ba'i || khur bzod lha lam stong par chags pa yi || rlung dkyil
gser gyi sa chen gnyis gang sar || 'gran dogs 'di yi yon tan brjod nus su ||
zhing 'dir slebs gang shes rab sku dngos dang || mjal dang khyad med skal bzang thob 'di ko || bskal brgyar
'bad pas btsal rnyed mthong thos sam || dal rten thob pa'i snying po smin min ci || SK-CASS, folio 171(b); 1–6.*

⁴³⁶ On these themes within poetry related to Wutai Shan, see Cartelli, M. A. (2013) *The Five-colored Clouds of Mount Wutai: Poems from Dunhuang*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, p. 14–22. For a brief overview of the symbolism of Mountains within pilgrimage (inside and outside of Asia), see Reader (2015a); 6–9.

⁴³⁷ The prominence of poetry and poetic theory in Tibet, especially within the monastic curriculum, has already been discussed in Chapter one.

jewel of the sky (Tib. *nam mkha'i nor bu*) = sun

As noted by Schaeffer,⁴³⁸ who has written on the Tibetan poetry of Wutai Shan, skilled poets such as Sumpa Khenpo used verbal ornamentation to appeal to the senses and enhance aesthetic experience – e.g. “the cool breeze of the fan of virtue quenches their desires” and “fortunate ones gather here [...] from all places like bees (lit. six-legged one) in a lotus grove” – to illustrate the immense power and allure of the mountain. Relying heavily on visual themes, Sumpa Khenpo describes an area filled with rivers, mountainous valleys, and wild animals; a place of refuge and solitude (Tib. *gnas dben pa*) away from worldly affairs, where one can generate tremendous merit and wisdom. This idea of a place away from worldly affairs provides an interesting contrast with the journey to Wutai Shan itself, described in this chapter, which encompassed economic and political affairs. This contrast could be an attempt by the author to further emphasise the religious motivation(s) for undertaking the journey, and the tranquillity of the location. The topic of poetic aesthetics incorporates verbal ornamentation with the cultivation of the flavour (Skt. *rasa*) of the nine emotions (Tib. *nyams*; Skt. *bhāvas*).⁴³⁹

Within the framework of poetical theory, poetry which describes places and appearances is usually associated with passion, as Sakya Paṇḍita notes:

⁴³⁸ Schaeffer, K. R. (2011b) ‘Tibetan Poetry on Wutai Shan’, *Journal of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, 6 (December), pp. 215–242.

⁴³⁹ The nine emotions are; passion (Tib. *sgeg*; Skt. *śṛṅgāra*), heroism (Tib. *dpa' ba*; Skt. *vīra*), repulsiveness (Tib. *mi sdug pa*; Skt. *bibhatsa*), comedy (Tib. *dgod*; Skt. *hāsyā*), violence (Tib. *drag shul*; Skt. *raudra*), horror (Tib. *'jigs su rung*; Skt. *bhayānaka*), compassion (Tib. *snying rje*; Skt. *karuṇa*), awesomeness (Tib. *ngam*; Skt. *adbhuta*), and tranquility (Tib. *zhi ba*; Skt. *śānta*). Gold, J. C. (2008) *The Dharma's Gatekeepers: Sakya Paṇḍita on Buddhist Scholarship in Tibet*. Albany: State University of New York Press, pp. 173.

Passion, being beautiful, is an appearance that arrests the mind. Suppose we divide it into parts: Inner passion has the distinction of (*khyad par can*) beautifying the demeanor of body and speech. Outer erotic passion arises out of the place, etc. Such things as the village and the park, things like flowers, fruit, water, clouds, mountains, meadows, pleasant plains, birds and animals [...] etc., [all] please the body and mind. And, by [bringing about] amazement (*ngo mtshar*) they become examples which show the meaning (*dpe don 'byor*). And words that generate this amazement foster passion.⁴⁴⁰

The imagery evoked can be seen as an attempt to generate delight and devotion in the mind, and to shape and re-affirm the unparalleled status of Wutai Shan; adding a dynamic element to the stable and self-contained image of the mountain. The imagery enables readers to engage with the place; to generate it in their mind. After all, “If we grant a formative power to poetry” Schaeffer explains, “the Tibetan poetry on Five-Peaked Mountain is not simply about the place, it is the place.”⁴⁴¹

Wutai Shan was not the only place to receive verses of praise by Sumpa Khenpo. In his account of his journey to Wutai Shan in 1774, we find a thirty-six-line verse admiring the region of Alasha. This poem is nearly twice as long as his verse on Wutai Shan, suggesting that the region held importance to him.⁴⁴² As seen in Chapter two, Sumpa Khenpo regularly visited Alasha and appeared to have a close relationship with the *Qinwang*, who repeatedly invited him to the region to perform rituals and give teachings. He describes the place and its people as follows:

Its rain is limitless, exceeding that of the aeon of creation,

⁴⁴⁰ Translation quoted from Jonathan Gold. *Ibid*; 173-174.

⁴⁴¹ Schaeffer (2011b); 230.

⁴⁴² The poem about Wutai Shan is twenty-four lines long, the poem about Alasha is thirty-six.

The place of power in this region of Brahma's world;
Its name, Alasha, stretches beyond the Milky Way,
Its fame, like scattered stars, seems to saturate the sky.

The land there is utterly vast, enticing the mind;
Its green plains are like emeralds,
And its pure sand mountains are like mounds of numerous, tiny pearls,
Its great mountain is [covered with] lustrous, lapis lazuli forests.

Belittling arrogance founded in being the highest Mount Meru (Tib. Lhun
po),⁴⁴³
At its centre is Bayanghol,⁴⁴⁴ where all auspicious things accumulate;
[Here] gathers harmonious agreement [on the] virtues of the world,
It is as if a piece of the Pure Land of Bliss descended here,
Where limitless auspicious signs exist.

Mountains, valleys, trees, and streams cover the land,
There are numerous jewels like those of Vaiśravaṇa's jewel-spouting
mongoose;⁴⁴⁵
Just glimpsing [it], captivates the mind – birds large and small soar there,
There are the most beautiful animals, such as vultures, wild asses, camels,
and horses,
Who run like lightning and play among the grass and trees,
Given this glorious feast of all desires;
Am I not dreaming? Is this the aeon of poverty?

⁴⁴³ Thank you to Dr Heather Stoddard and Prof. Stefano Zachetti for pointing out that *dmad* is a poetic device that is used to arouse emotion and shock the reader.

⁴⁴⁴ A city located in the northeastern corner of Alasha, it was once the site of a Chinese merchant outpost in the trade with the Mongols. Hyer, P. and Jaḡcidsecen (1983) *A Mongolian Living Buddha: Biography of the Kanjurwa Khutughtu*. Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 43.

⁴⁴⁵ The mongoose (Tib. *ne'u le*) is usually associated with wealth deities such as Vaiśravaṇa. For more on the mongoose, see Beer (2003); 196.

The master of this land, the lord of the highest glory of the four groups
abides here,
[And] adorns the crowns of all subjects (i.e. they bow at his feet),
One who follows the life of Sarasvatī;
Born into a truly high lineage and possessing an enlightened mind.

Resembling the dawn of a new moon,
Engaged in blooming like an *utpala* lotus flower in a garden lake,
It is also known as ‘the Hiding Place of the Powerless’,
Marvellous clouds regularly circle there like good omens.

The tent made of the variegated branches of the spiritual and secular
traditions has been pitched there,
In the cool shade of the fluttering leaves,
Where everyone relinquishes their suffering from the oppressive heat and
breathes in relief,
It is the beginning of the glorious aeon of perfection, where all pleasures
and happiness are enjoyed.

It is a good place replete with hundreds of thousands of auspicious things,
Through the power of this supreme land where the authority of the *lha*, *klu*,
and *gnas bdag* is great,⁴⁴⁶
For great and small, [their] power, illumination, and skill are great, and their
resources are abundant;

⁴⁴⁶ This is a conventional trilogy in Amdo, although *gnyan* (mountain deities) is more commonly used than *gnas bdag*. The three-tiered vertical world features heavily in the Gesar epic, see FitzHerbert, S. G. (2016) ‘An Early Tibetan Gesar bsang Text’, *Archiv Orientalní* 84(3), pp. 1–60; FitzHerbert, S. G. (2016) ‘Constitutional Mythologies and Entangled Cultures in the Tibeto-Mongolian Gesar Epic: The Motif of Gesar’s Celestial Descent’, *Journal of American Folklore*, 129(513), pp. 297–336; Forgues, G. (2011) *Materials for the Study of Gesar Practices*. Mag.phil Thesis. University of Vienna. They are arranged in vertical realms: the *lha* (gods) dwell in the upper realm i.e. the sky or heaven; the *gnyan* or *gnas bdag* (local deities) in the ‘middle’ i.e. on earth and the space between the sky and the earth, and the *klu* are in water and underground. For more on these deities, see Karmay, S. G. (2003) ‘Une note sur l’origine du concept des huit catégories d’ésprits’, *Revue d’études tibétaines* 2, pp. 67–80.

It is as if the wealth of the three times is summoned—[Everyone] is satisfied with all manner of pleasures.

These verses were composed upon the request of the numerous [people of Alasha].⁴⁴⁷

These verses incorporate similar themes and imagery such as coolness, respite, and the lotus pond, which are stock imageries favoured by classical *kāvya*-inspired poetry.⁴⁴⁸ These are mixed with some Tibetan elements such as the wild ass (Tib. *rkyang*), that one finds on the Tibetan plateau, these motifs are masterfully integrated helping to bring the poem to life. Again, the verses touch on the senses; from hearing streams and wild animals playing to feeling the rain fall and the cool shade of the trees, using vivid language to articulate the remarkable qualities found there. With its lyrical beauty and poetic imagery,

⁴⁴⁷ *chags bskal char grangs las 'gongs rab 'byams zhing || nang tshan tshangs pa'i 'jig rten 'di'i dbang phyogs || a la shar grags ming yang dgu tshigs brgal || snyan pa'i skar tshogs thor bas mkha' khyab snyam || de yi sa khyon rab yangs yid 'phrog der || rin chen ma rgad co 'dri spang ljongs dang || mu tig phran mang spungs 'dra'i bye gtsang ri || mu men mdangs ldan nags kyi sa 'dzin che || dpangs mthos lhun po'i khengs pa dmad kyis dogs || de dbus phun tshogs kun 'joms pā yan gwol || 'jig rten dge legs bgros mihun 'tshogs rjes bsnyegs || bde ldan dag zhing dum bu 'dir 'phos 'dra'i || bkra shis dge mtshan du mas rab bkra mchis || ljongs de'i ri klung rtsi shing chu yis khyab || rnam sras ne'u le skyug mtshungs rin chen mod || mthong tsam yid 'phrog bya dang byi'u lding || rab mdzes rgo rkyang rnga rta sogs ri dwags || glog 'gyu co 'dri rtswa shing khrod rgyug rtse || de lta'i 'dod dgu'i dpal gyi dga' ston gyis || dbul phongs bskal bar gnyid la khur min ci || yul 'dir mnga' mdzad sde bzhi'i dpal mtho ba'i || mi dbang 'bangs mi kun gyi btsug tu mdzes || tshangs pa'i sras mo rnam thar 'dzin pa gang || rigs rus mngon mtho byang chub sems ldan bzhugs || gang dag shar rir nya rgyas shar dus mtshungs || skyed tshal mtsho ru utpal bzhad bzhin brel || gzhan gyi grags pa dbang med phag tu yib || chu 'dzin ngo mtshar yang yang 'khor blta 'dra || lugs zung sna tshogs yal ga'i gur phub ste || lo 'dab g'yo ba'i lo ma'i grib bsil du || mtha' dag tsha gdung dal spang dbugs dbyung ste || rdzogs ldan dpal bsu bde skyid ci 'dod rol || phyogs de'i phun tshogs 'bum ldan sa bzang dang || lha klu gnas bdag stobs chen mchog gnas mthus || che phran dbang gsal rtsal che longs spyod tshogs || skabs gsum dpal 'byor 'gug 'gran bde dags tshim || tshigs bcad 'di dag mang gis bskul ltar bkod pa'o || SK-CASS, folio 163(b); 7 – folio 164(a); 6.*

⁴⁴⁸ For more on classical Indian imagery, metaphors, similes etc. and its use in Tibetan literature, see Jabb, L. (2015) *Oral and Literary Continuities in Modern Tibetan Literature: The Inescapable Nation*. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Sumpa Khenpo conveys a visual and aural beauty that rivals other well-established sacred sites.

Sumpa Khenpo's exaltation could be interpreted as an attempt to flatter the *Qinwang*; after all he is described as an "enlightened mind" and a follower of the life of Sarasvatī (Tib. dByangs can ma), who is typically celebrated as a goddess of wisdom, music, and fine art, and is praised throughout Tibetan literary history. This association suggests that the *Qinwang* has been bestowed supreme intelligence and is a powerful master of speech – favourable qualities in a leader. Furthermore, Sarasvatī is associated with Tsongkhapa, who regarded her as his *yidam* (Tib. *yi dam*), or 'tutelary deity'.⁴⁴⁹ Thus, Sumpa Khenpo also draws attention to the *Qinwang*'s religious disposition, affiliating him with the famed founder of the Gelugpa school. Such acclaims would no doubt enhance the relationship between the *Qinwang* and Sumpa Khenpo, and could also result in additional financial support and offerings as a show of gratitude.⁴⁵⁰

This poem could also be seen as an attempt to draw attention to the region, and/or establish a surrogate or proxy pilgrimage site, serving as an alternative destination to sites located further away (such as Wutai Shan).⁴⁵¹ The final sentence of the poem could be

⁴⁴⁹ See Thupten Jinpa (2019) *Tsongkhapa: A Buddha in the Land of Snows*. Boulder: Shambhala, pp. 53–55; and Thurman, R. A. F. (ed.) (2018) *The Life and Teachings of Tsongkhapa*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications, pp. 17–18 and 21–23.

⁴⁵⁰ This is not made clear in this particular recollection of his journey to Alasha. However, when writing about other visits Sumpa Khenpo has noted the generosity of the *Qinwang* and the abundance of gifts bestowed on him, which is suggestive.

⁴⁵¹ Very little has been published on surrogate pilgrimage sites – often literature focuses on alternative sites for women and the sick who were not permitted to travel to certain locations, see Craig, L. A. (2009) *Wandering Women and Holy Matrons: Women as Pilgrims in the Later Middle Ages*. Leiden; Boston: Brill; and Morrison, S. S. (2002) *Women Pilgrims in Late Medieval England: Private Piety as Public Performance*. London; New York: Routledge. Chou briefly discusses surrogate Mount Wutai Shans "in far-flung places,

interpreted as this being the wish of the people of Alasha. Through his evocative verses Sumpa Khenpo shapes and encodes the landscape, enabling the region to act as a proxy destination – actualising and emplacing a sacred site – in Mongolia; perhaps for those who were unable to undertake a pilgrimage to Tibet, Wutai Shan, and so forth. Comparisons could be drawn here with Chengde (Mong. Khaluun Gol; Ma. Erdemu Be Aliha; Ch. 承德 Chéngdé), the summer residence of the Qing emperors, which lies roughly halfway between Beijing and the Manchus’ favourite hunting grounds at Mulan (Ma. Muran). The landscape of Chengde was crafted under the Kangxi Emperor’s orders to reflect and celebrate the expansion of the Qing Empire, bringing together key cultural monuments of China, Tibet, and Central Asia.⁴⁵² This was further developed under the Qianlong Emperor, and between 1767–1771 a replica of the Potala Palace was built with the aim of providing paralleled legitimacy and religious power for Mongol princes and other prominent Buddhists who visited.⁴⁵³ Throughout Sumpa Khenpo’s verses, readers are encouraged to visit this extraordinary place; a “Pure Land of Bliss” filled with auspicious signs and joy, where one

such as monumental wall paintings in the desert oasis of Dunhuang and temple replicas in Japan.” Chou (2011); 4.

More research is available on the transferability of pilgrimage sites. For example, Huber discusses the Indian pilgrimage sites being transferred to Tibet (Huber (2008); 118–121), while Walter Slaje has written about Kashmir as a mini-cosmos that is said to contain all the important sites of India, see Slaje, W. (2012) ‘Kashmir Minimundus: India’s Sacred Geography En Miniature’ in Steiner, R. (ed.) *Highland Philology. Results of a Text-Related Kashmir Panel at the 31st DOT, Marburg 2010*. Halle: Universitätsverlag Halle-Wittenberg, pp. 9–32. Reader notes that this transferability has taken on a new meaning with virtual pilgrimages providing people with the opportunity to visit pilgrimage sites on the internet. Reader (2015a); 11.

⁴⁵² Fôret, P. (2000) *Mapping Chengde: The Qing Landscape as Enterprise*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, p. 23. See also, Chayet, A. (1985) *Les Temples de Jehol et leurs Modeles Tibetains*. Paris: Éditions Recherche sur les Civilisations.

⁴⁵³ Chayet, A. (2004) ‘Architectural Wonderland: An Empire of Fictions’, in Millward, J. A. et al. (eds.) *The New Qing Imperial History: The Making of Inner Asian Empire at Qing Chengde*. London: Routledge Curzon, p. 40.

can abandon “their suffering from the oppressive heat” and benefit from the “power of this supreme land.”

Similarly, in a narrative preceding the verses, Sumpa Khenpo once again references Indian sacred geography through stating that the region rivals Kuśinagara (Tib. rTsa mchog grong), one of the *Four Great Wonders* (Skt. *Caturmahāpratihārya*) and the famous pilgrimage site associated with the Buddha’s death.⁴⁵⁴ Thus, the spiritual value of pilgrimage to Alasha is deemed as significant and worthwhile as a pilgrimage to a site that’s directly connected to the Buddha’s life. This sacralisation of the landscape in a Buddhist register could also be interpreted as Sumpa Khenpo’s attempt at buddhization as part and parcel of his role in propagating the *dharma* across Inner Asia, imposing Indic Buddhist sacred geography on the landscape; a common phenomenon used to transform and/or convert indigenous mountain cults in Tibet and Mongolia.⁴⁵⁵ In this period, Alasha appears to already be a Buddhist region closely associated with the Qing. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Qing would have benefitted from this ongoing process of buddhization, with the transformation of the landscape and, perhaps, the establishment of surrogate places of religious significance, being an active tool used by the Qing Empire and its lamas to legitimise new social and political systems, which in themselves were inherently Buddhist.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁴ Reader (2015a); 25.

⁴⁵⁵ For more on this phenomenon see footnote 497.

⁴⁵⁶ Elverskog discusses the spatial embodiment of the Buddhist Qing as being a key part of the imperial process. Elverskog (2006); 117–119.

For more on the importance of transforming landscapes to legitimise new political systems, see Eaton, R. (2000) ‘Temple Desecration and Indo-Muslim States’, in Eaton, R. (ed.) *Essays on Islam and Indian History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 94–132.

Alongside this, Sumpa Khenpo lists flora, medicines, and precious stones that were said to be in abundance, which Cartelli suggests is one of the five factors that shape a sacred place in this part of the world.⁴⁵⁷ The landscape, then, is entangled with human presence and purpose. Through the application of familiar tropes such as *kāvya* imagery and a list of precious substances available in the region, Alasha is aligned with other significant sacred places – its potential power and prestige is communicated to an audience imaginatively. Through reinscribing the landscape, Alasha and its inhabitants were ritualised as a member of the Buddhist Qing.

Sumpa Khenpo also recounts his visions while at Alasha, not unlike the visions typical of Wutai Shan's pilgrimage literature.⁴⁵⁸ During his visit in 1774, the *Qinwang* is said to have asked Sumpa Khenpo for a suitable place to erect a shrine, a site for a meditation retreat, and a site for placing the remains of his father and other nobility. A protector deity appears to Sumpa Khenpo, revealing the ideal locations:

I had a dream in which there was a Tibetan layman who appeared like an emanation of a *dharma* protector, an illusory apparition. He took me there and explained, "On this mountain there are supreme, middling, and inferior holy sites to visit." Later, having gone looking for appropriate sites, I found a place just as it had been in the dream, and I firmly felt that there must be two other [sites] there. [...] It is a supreme site where birds, large and small,

⁴⁵⁷ Cartelli (2013); 195.

⁴⁵⁸ On the importance of visions at Wutai Shan, see Birnbaum, R. (1986) 'The Manifestation of a Monastery: Shen-ying's Experiences on Mount Wu-t'ai in T'ang Context', *JAOS*, 106.1, pp. 119–137; Gimello, R. (1992) 'Chang Shang-ying on Wu-t'ai Shan', in Naquin, S. and Yu, C. (eds.) *Pilgrims and Sacred Sites in China*. Berkeley: University of California Press; and Stevenson (1996).

and wild animals play, where one transcends the pointless seething swamp
[of *saṃsāra*].⁴⁵⁹

Through embodying and articulating particular ideas and visions of the region, the landscape of Alasha was reinvented with a particular Buddhist flavour, and its status elevated among Sumpa Khenpo's readers. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the verses were written at the behest of the people of Alasha, most likely the *Qinwang* and other nobility, suggesting that they may have hoped to aggrandise the region and, perhaps, attract pilgrims and/or visitors. This is not unusual; in fact, the celebrated *Annals of Kokonor* was written at the request of Mongolian nobility living around Gonlung Monastery at that time in order to consolidate their power and status in the region.⁴⁶⁰ Likewise, just as Alasha's landscape becomes authenticated by Sumpa Khenpo's visions and poetry, his own authority and prestige is validated through his recounting of sacred places visited and his affiliation with influential Mongol nobility.

Austerity, Experience, and Veneration

This chapter, so far, has focused primarily on the political, economic, and socio-spatial aspects of pilgrimage in Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography. However, it would be unreasonable to suggest that wealth, esteem and status, and personal advancement were his sole motivations for travelling to sacred places – his religious incentives and experiences are

⁴⁵⁹ *ngos la ma smras gong gi tho rangs shig la rmang lam sgyu ma lta bu'i snang ngor chos skyong zhig gi 'phrul 'dra'i bod kyi mi skya zhig gis bdag khrid de ri 'di na yong pa'i gnas bzang po'i mchog 'bring tha ma gsum po 'di yin zhes bstan pa rmis | phyis su gnas bzang po 'tshol bar phyin pas rmi lam gyi ji lta ba bzhin zhig rnyed cing gzhan gnyis kyang der mchis shas che snyam pa byung | [...] snying po med pa'i lang long gi 'dam las brgal zhing bya byi'u ri dwags kyi rtsed 'jo'i gnas mchog ste | SK-CASS, folio 163(b); 2–4.*

⁴⁶⁰ See de Jong (1967); 53–54.

also carefully recorded and will be the subject of this section. This should not be seen as an attempt to create divisions of ‘real’, ‘false’, or ‘pure’ motivations; a topic that has received attention from anthropologists, medieval historians, and scholars from the field of pilgrimage studies, who have discussed motivations surrounding faith, tourism, and pilgrimage.⁴⁶¹ These dichotomies are static and limiting, as a pilgrim’s motivations are often multifaceted (as discussed earlier in this chapter) – perhaps without the pilgrim being fully aware of this. Instead I hope to further emphasise the range of impetuses driving pilgrims, which often occur in combination. In particular, I will focus on the scope for personalised practice in how one interprets their journey and what they seek from it.

Scholars who take an interest in pilgrimage have alluded to two elements of religious pilgrimage; the external journey and the internal journey.⁴⁶² While the former refers to the journey one physically takes, the latter represents the spiritual transformation felt during one’s journey. These two elements are interlinked – the aspiration to undergo a spiritual transformation inspires and motivates pilgrims on their travels, while the (often demanding) physical journey tests one’s faith and devotion, providing impetus for spiritual advancement.⁴⁶³ As the opening quotation of this chapter suggests, the idea of austerity for

⁴⁶¹ Digance examines the motives of both ‘religious’ and ‘secular’ pilgrims, suggesting that ‘pure’ motivations may be the ideal and not the norm, see Digance, J. (2006) ‘Religious and Secular Pilgrimage: Journeys Redolent with Meaning’, in Timothy, D. J. and Olsen, D. H. (eds.) *Tourism, Religion and Spiritual Journeys*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 36–48.

⁴⁶² Such as Barber (1991); Mack, A. (2001) *Spiritual Journey, Imperial City: Pilgrimage to the Temples of Vijayanagara*. New Delhi: Vedams; and Reader (2015a and 2015b).

⁴⁶³ For scholarship on the connection between the hardship of pilgrimage and spiritual transformation, see Bhardwaj, S. (1997) ‘Geography and Pilgrimage: A Review’, in Stoddard, R. and Morinis, A. (eds.) *Sacred Places, Sacred Spaces: The Geography of Pilgrimages*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, pp. 1–23; Daniel, V. (1984) *Fluid Signs: Being a Person the Tamil Way*. Berkeley: California University Press; Hollander, P. (2016) ‘Heaven on Earth: Political Pilgrimages and the Pursuit of Meaning and Self-Transcendence’, in Pazos, A. (ed.) *Redefining Pilgrimage: New Perspectives on Historical and*

the sake of the *dharma* is a common trope in Buddhism in general, and is not exclusively associated with pilgrimage.⁴⁶⁴ Still, pilgrimage can be seen as an intense physical experience leading to an inner transformation. This twofold component is not unique to Tibetan pilgrimage but is found across pilgrimage cultures, for example “Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem has traditionally been seen not merely as a physical journey to a distant land but as a spiritual journey to another realm, while Hindu pilgrimages to sacred crossing places may be full of images and symbolic themes of transition from one realm to another, and of renewal and reinvigoration for those who return to their homes afterwards.”⁴⁶⁵ In Buddhism, too, physical landscape can provide symbols of a spiritual journey or place; the mountainous Kumano, about sixty miles south of Osaka, is considered a gateway to Kannon’s Pure Land.⁴⁶⁶ Within his recollection of pilgrimages, Sumpa Khenpo recurrently refers to both the hardship endured and the spiritual features and benefits of his journey: from accumulating merit (Tib. *bsod nams*) and purifying defilements (Tib. *sgrib*) to empowerments (Tib. *byin brlabs*) and visions, drawing from a collective pool of symbols and meanings in accordance with the context he operated in.⁴⁶⁷

Contemporary Pilgrimages. 2nd edn. London: Routledge, pp. 71–86; Nolan, M. L. (1991) ‘The European roots of Latin American Pilgrimage’, in Crumrine, N. and Morinis, E. (eds.) *Pilgrimage in Latin America*. New York: Greenwood Press, pp. 19–49; and Westwood, J. (2003) *On Pilgrimage: Sacred Journeys Around the World*. 2nd edn. Mahwah: HiddenSpring.

⁴⁶⁴ For examples of practices involving austerity and hardship in Buddhism, see Deegalle, M. (2003) ‘Austerity as a Virtue: Spiritual Practices in Japanese and South Asian Buddhist Traditions’, in Lakshman, W. (ed.) *The Distant Neighbours: Fifty Years of Japan-Sri Lanka Relations*. Colombo: University of Colombo, pp. 164–190; and Thapar, R. (1981) ‘The Householder and the Renouncer in the Brahmanical and Buddhist Traditions’, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 15(1–2), pp. 273–298.

⁴⁶⁵ Reader (2015a); 26–27.

⁴⁶⁶ ten Grotenhuis, E. (1999) *Japanese Mandalas: Representations of Sacred Geography*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, pp. 166–177.

⁴⁶⁷ Huber introduces these concepts, and other vocabulary associated with the ritual practice, and their role in interpreting and understanding pilgrimage. See Huber (1999c); 10–20.

Pilgrimage invariably means going to and being at specific places that resonate with the pilgrim, where it is believed that spiritual powers and deities can be encountered and venerated, requests can be made for both spiritual and mundane benefits, and/or where pilgrims can follow the footsteps of earlier significant (and often religious) figures.⁴⁶⁸ This is most obvious in the case of Tibet's so-called 'hidden lands' (Tib. *sbas yul*), which need to be 'opened' by a Buddhist lama, and in the case of 'treasure revealers' (Tib. *gter ston*) that add meaning and significance to a sacred place when they extract 'treasure'. The same is true for pilgrimage circuits, that also gain importance when a famous religious teacher 'opens' them or ascribes particular importance to them in their writings and teachings.

As such, the sites chosen by individuals convey and validate the importance of these locations within a particular period and context. In the following paragraphs, passages from Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography regarding his travels through southeastern Tibet to Tsari Tsagong will be presented and discussed,⁴⁶⁹ expanding on and giving examples of the themes discussed above. Tsari was, and still is, famous throughout Tibet as an opportunity to satisfy common spiritual goals such as accumulation of merit and purification of defilements. Its high status was directly linked to the intense physical hardship one endured while circumambulating the area⁴⁷⁰ - all of which is captured in Sumpa Khenpo's account.

⁴⁶⁸ Huber, T. (1997) 'Guidebook to Lapchi', in Lopez, D. (ed.) *Religions of Tibet in Practice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, p. 121.

⁴⁶⁹ The name Tsari Tsagong is frequently used to refer to the region of Tsari and can be dated back as far as Sakya Paṇḍita. Huber (1999c); 244.

⁴⁷⁰ Blackwell, R. (2014) 'Motivation for Pilgrimage: Using Theory to Explore Motivations', in Ahlback, T. (ed.) *Pilgrimages Today*. Åbo: Scripta Instituti Donneriani Aboensis, p. 25.

Tsari

Located in southeastern Tibet on the border with northeastern India, Tsari is an important pilgrimage destination that is renowned for being one of the most challenging and perilous in Tibet.⁴⁷¹ Comprised of the sacred mountain Dagma Sheri (Tib. Dag pa shrī, also known as Dag pa shel ri)⁴⁷² and its surrounding areas,⁴⁷³ it stands together with Amnye Machen (Tib. A myes rma chen), Lapchi (Tib. La phyi) and Kailash (Tib. Ti se) as one of the most important mountains in Tibet.

Tsari is closely associated with the Drukpa Kagyü tradition (Tib. 'Brug pa bka' brgyud), which credits their own lineage with having first opened the mountain.⁴⁷⁴ However, many other Tibetan Buddhist schools also maintained communities around the mountain, with several enjoying sponsorships from influential nobility and parent monasteries.⁴⁷⁵ Although regular pilgrimage routes had been established around Tsari by the sixteenth century,⁴⁷⁶ its popularity increased in the eighteenth century with the establishment and promotion of the twelve-yearly Rongkor Chenmo (Tib. *rong skor chen mo*) or 'Great Ravine

⁴⁷¹ Huber (1999c); 4.

⁴⁷² Thank you to Prof. Per Kværne for pointing out that *shrī* is the Sanskrit for crystal (Tib. *shel*) and that this was likely Sumpa Khenpo displaying his customary literary skill. I have not been able to find many instances of Dagma Shrī being used, however Toni Huber quotes the biography of a Tibetan visiting the mountain in 1794 who does use this title. Huber, T. (1993) *What is a Mountain? An Ethnohistory of Representation and Ritual at Pure Crystal Mountain in Tibet*. PhD Thesis. University of Canterbury, p. 58.

⁴⁷³ For detailed descriptions of this mountain and the surrounding area, see Huber (1993 and 1999c); Martin, D. (1988) 'For Love or Religion? Another Look at a "Love Song" by the Sixth Dalai Lama', *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 138(2), pp. 349–363; and Sørensen, P. K. (1990) *Divinity Secularized. An Inquiry into the Nature and Form of the Songs Ascribed to the Sixth Dalai Lama*. PhD Thesis. Vienna: Arbeitskreis für Tibetische und Buddhistische Studien Universität Wien.

⁴⁷⁴ For a history of Tsari, see Dowman, K. (1997) *The Sacred Life of Tibet*. London: Harper Collins, pp. 176–188; and Huber (1999c); 3–36.

⁴⁷⁵ *Ibid*; 84–85.

⁴⁷⁶ *Ibid*; 29.

Circuit' by leading lamas, nobility, and members of the Ganden Phodrang.⁴⁷⁷ As Huber notes, there is no single reason as to why Tsari was endorsed by the elite and state at the time⁴⁷⁸ – the mountain is linked with the sacred sites of the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra (Tib. 'Khor lo bde mchog) and was a place of leading Tibetan protective deities and was highly regarded by Tantric Buddhist *yogins* whose rituals interacted with the powerful deities residing there.⁴⁷⁹ It is also associated with Tsongkhapa, whose biography records him visiting the mountain in 1395, and whose cult was influential in Gelugpa circles in the eighteenth century.⁴⁸⁰ Further, it was well-known as a region where powerful alchemical and medicinal herbs and substances could be obtained for the purpose of rituals and healing – like Sumpa Khenpo reports of Alasha.⁴⁸¹ Finally, the region around Tsari was a contested territory; with Tibetans residing to the north and Tibeto-Burman speaking tribal groups to the south.⁴⁸² And so, at a time when leading figures of the Ganden Phodrang government were attempting to consolidate their power, the promotion of rituals and pilgrimage could also be seen as an attempt to ascertain religiopolitical dominance in the area through the process of buddicization.

With the direct patronage and support of the Ganden Phodrang and powerful aristocrats and lamas, Tsari's popularity increased and it began to attract large numbers of

⁴⁷⁷ The exact date of its establishment is unknown, but Huber places it somewhere before the mid-eighteenth century, Huber (1999a); 129. Unlike the other pilgrimage routes around the mountain, the Rongkor Chenmo was open to men and women from all social and religious backgrounds which increased its popularity and attracted up to 20,000 people, Huber (1999c); 4. For more information on the Rongkor Chenmo see Huber (1999c).

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid; 156.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid; 4.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid; 157.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid; 4.

⁴⁸² Ibid; 5.

pilgrims, including Sumpa Khenpo. In the third month of the Earth Monkey year (1728), Sumpa Khenpo and two anonymous companions set off on their journey to Tsari, making a comprehensive pilgrimage to monasteries, hermitages, lakes, and mountains in southern Tibet.⁴⁸³ Most of the places visited by Sumpa Khenpo are mentioned only briefly; the narrative consisting of a list of sites visited, important figures and deities associated with these locations, and, occasionally, a few words on the spiritual value of visiting these places. Although sparse, these descriptions are invaluable as they mark the pilgrimage sites that were considered important by the author and his companions at the time, and most likely other Gelugpa pilgrims as pilgrimages can have a specific significance to a particular time, culture, and/or religious group. Moreover, the recording of these remarkable and significant places was done with his audience in mind; Sumpa Khenpo upgrades both the place, though describing its religious merits and significance, and himself, through the fact that he went there. This serves to instil devotion in his readers and enhance his own status, highlighting once more the reputation and sacredness of these sites in the eighteenth century. Narratives such as this also help us plot and identify the routes pilgrims took. As we will see below, through listing toponyms we are able to approximately trace Sumpa Khenpo's journey from Drepung Monastery, where he was studying at the time, to Tsari (see Map 5).

As mentioned above, traditional pilgrimage commonly incorporated elements of danger and hardship, and this journey is no exception. Sumpa Khenpo begins his account by mentioning that he and his companions travelled like “religious mendicants” (Tib. *ldom bu*),⁴⁸⁴ placing themselves within the tradition of the wandering pilgrim who had given up

⁴⁸³ Unfortunately, Sumpa Khenpo does not give the date that he arrives at or leaves Tsari, or the date that he returns to Drepung.

⁴⁸⁴ SK-CASS, folio 52(b); 3.

all worldly power and possessions. While this fits with the anti-structuralist approach taken by the Turners (discussed above), as we have seen, this is only one aspect of their journey highlighting the deficiency of this approach. Further instances of extreme adversity will be examined later in this section.

Sumpa Khenpo then lists the places he and his companions visited. This list (provided below) spans half a folio in length and gives no dates beyond that of the initial departure date, the third month of the Earth Monkey year (1728). Some details are included alongside the toponyms: Samye; Sangri Kharmar (Tib. Zangs ri mkhar dmar);⁴⁸⁵ the Maitreya statue at Dzingchi (Tib. rDzing phyi) that had been restored by Tsongkhapa;⁴⁸⁶ Olkha Cholung (Tib. 'Ol kha chos lung), the famous meditation place of Tsongkhapa; Chokorgyal (Tib. Chos 'khor rgyal),⁴⁸⁷ where they met an abbot who had mastered the practice of Lhamo Shramana (Tib. *lha mo shra ma na*);⁴⁸⁸ the lake of Lhamo Remati (Tib. Lha mo re ma ti),⁴⁸⁹ which Sumpa Khenpo names Muleting Lake (Tib. Mu le ting)⁴⁹⁰ and

⁴⁸⁵ A Phagmodrupa (Tib. *Phag mo gru pa*) monastery that is famed for its connection to Machig Labdron (Tib. Ma gcig lab sgron ma; 1055–1149), a Tibetan *yoginī*. For more information on Machig Labdron and her association with Sangri Kharmar, see Edou, J. (1996) *Machig Labdron and the Foundations of Chod*. Ithaca: Snow Lion.

⁴⁸⁶ For more on Dzingchi, see Venturi, F. (trans.) (2002) *Guide to the Rdzing phyi Monastery*. Roma: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente.

⁴⁸⁷ A Gelugpa monastery founded by the Second Dalai Lama, Gendun Gyatso (Tib. dGe 'dun rgya mtsho; 1475–1542). It was destroyed by the Dzungars in 1718 but had been rebuilt by the time Sumpa Khenpo visited a decade later. For a brief overview of the monastery, see Dowman (1988); 257–259.

⁴⁸⁸ I believe this is the goddess Devī Śramaṇā. Himalayan Art Resources includes an image, apparently from a set of oracle cards, see 'Item No. 40423', *Himalayan Art Resources*.

<https://www.himalayanart.org/items/40423> (accessed March 01, 2020).

⁴⁸⁹ Also known as Lhamo Latso (Tib Lha mo Bla mtsho), it is a sacred lake where the Dalai Lamas and Pañchen Lamas went to see the manner of their death and the next rebirth. For the history and importance of the lake, see Dowman (1988); 255–263.

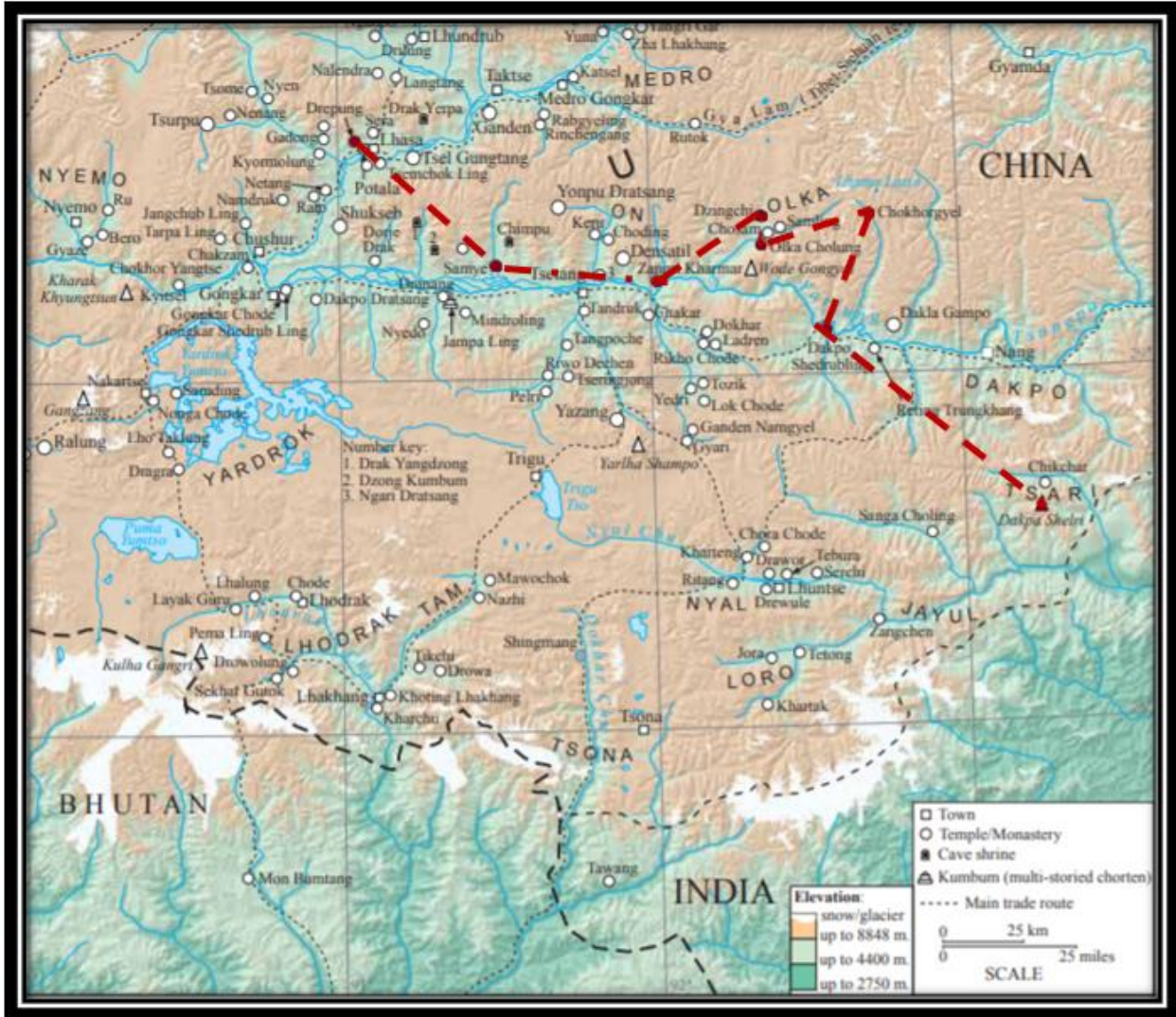
⁴⁹⁰ According to Gruschke, Muleting Lake is a large body of water that is found on the mythical island of Chamara. Gruschke, A. (2000) 'Symbolic Architecture in Pema: The Lotus Land of the Tibetan Ngolok Nomads', *Oriental Art*, 46(1), p. 63.

quotes Nāgārjuna (Tib. Klu sgrub; c. 150–250) saying “its beauty robs you of words.”⁴⁹¹ Sumpa Khenpo claims to have seen various reflections and vision in the lake but does not elaborate on these; the last place en route mentioned is Dagpo Shedrup Ling (Tib. Dwags po bshad sgrub gling), an important Gelugpa monastery in southeastern Tibet that, according to Sumpa Khenpo has preserved the “utmost bond between religion and politics”.⁴⁹² Following this the pilgrims reached Tsari Tsagong.

In comparison to the brief overview of locations listed above, Sumpa Khenpo’s account of his time at Tsari is more elaborate and spans over three folios, signifying its importance and providing the reader with a more detailed narrative of the divine qualities and deities present. Sumpa Khenpo begins his description of Tsari by layering different levels of meaning on top of one another. These levels correspond to different levels of perception, depending on the abilities of the perceiver, a trope that is common in Tibetan Buddhist descriptions of sacred places. It is in line with the general belief that the perception of the world around us is shaped by our own mind, determined by habitual tendencies acquired over many lifetimes. However, the Buddhist practitioner can work towards gaining a deeper perception of the place, and accomplished meditation masters and *yogins* are able to perceive elements that an ordinary person would not. Thus, to an ordinary pilgrim, Tsari

⁴⁹¹ *gsungs pa'i 'phrog pa'i zla ba* | SK-CASS, folio 52(b); 4

⁴⁹² *chos dang srid kyi 'byor ba rab tu* | SK-CASS, folio 52(b); 5



Map 5. Route taken by Sumpa Khenpo from Drepung to Tsari in 1728.
Source: Author and ©Treasury of Lives. Route demarcation added by author.

appears like a mountain formed of precious jewels “shining with lustre and brilliance”,⁴⁹³ however this is only the most superficial level. He notes that Tsari is known as both Devikoti

⁴⁹³ *brjid cing lhun chags la snum pa* | SK-CASS, folio 52(b); 7

(Tib. De wi ko Ti)⁴⁹⁴ and Malawa (Tib. Ma la ba),⁴⁹⁵ and claims it is one of the twenty-four tantric sacred sites (Skt. *pīṭhā*).⁴⁹⁶ I have not found any other literature that links Tsari with Malawa so far, however the area is commonly associated with Devīkoṭa and Cāritra, another one of the twenty-four sacred sites. This Buddhicization was part of a wider process of imposing Indic Buddhist sacred geography on the Tibetan landscape, which commonly involved the superimposition of a *maṇḍala* onto the site.⁴⁹⁷ In the case of Tsari, the *maṇḍala* of the Tantric deity Cakrasaṃvara is commonly used, and so it would seem that Sumpa Khenpo was aware of, and actively drew on, well-known and deep-rooted tropes in his depiction of the mountain.

Tsari is described by Sumpa Khenpo as one of the abodes of Heruka (Tib. He ru ka); although this term is used as a generic term for a wrathful Tantric deity it is also another name for Cakrasaṃvara, thus this description follows the standard view of the region.⁴⁹⁸ His subordinate deities inhabit the smaller mountains nearby – beginning with forested mountains (Tib. *nags ri*), grass covered mountains (Tib. *spang ri*), stony mountains (Tib.

⁴⁹⁴ This is most likely referring to Devīkoṭa, one of the twenty-four *pīṭhas*, or sacred sites of the world. It was also a real place, the ancient capital of Koṭivarṣa in the northern Bengal. Huber, T. (1990) ‘Where Exactly Are Cāritra, Devikoṭa and Himavat? A Sacred Geography Controversy and the Development of Tantric Buddhist Pilgrimage Sites in Tibet’, *Kailash: A Journal of Himalayan Studies*, 16(3–4), p. 144.

⁴⁹⁵ This could be referring to Mālava, another of the twenty-four sacred sites. Zangpo, N. (2001) *Sacred Ground: Jamgon Kongtrul On Pilgrimage and Sacred Geography*. Ithaca: Snow Lion, p. 66.

⁴⁹⁶ Willis (1995); 27–28. Huber also provides a good overview of the *pīṭhas*, see Huber (2008); 85–124.

⁴⁹⁷ On the origin and significance of the *maṇḍala* model, see Macdonald (1997) and McKay, A. (2015) *Kailas Histories: Renunciate Traditions and the Construction of Himalayan Sacred Geography*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 308–312.

Buffetrille (1998) and Macdonald have explored the process of Buddhicization, and how the maṇḍalisation of mountains was endorsed by the Buddhist elite in an attempt to transform indigenous mountain cults (Tib. *yul lha*) into sacred mountains. See Macdonald, A. (1990) ‘Hindu-isation, Buddha-isation, then Lama-isation or: What Happened at La-phyi?’, in Skorupski, T. (ed.) *Indo-Tibetan Studies: Papers in Honour and Appreciation of Professor David L. Snellgrove’s Contributions to Indo-Tibetan Studies*. Tring: Institute of Buddhist Studies, pp. 1998–208. For more on the maṇḍalisation of Tsari, see Huber (1999c).

⁴⁹⁸ DiValerio, D. (2016) *The Life of the Madman of Ü*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 27.

brag ri), slate mountains (Tib. *g'ya' ri*), and finishing with snowy mountains (Tib. *kai la sha*) at the top.⁴⁹⁹ These are described as servant mountains (Tib. *bran rnams*) bowing down in respect to Dagpa Sheri and stacked one on top of another, structured like a *maṇḍala*.⁵⁰⁰ Tsari also appeared to Sumpa Khenpo as Khecara (Tib. *mKha' spyod*) – a piece of heaven on earth.⁵⁰¹ He further remarks that apart from the name, it could well be the palace of the Buddha Vajradhara (Tib. *rDo rje 'chang*),⁵⁰² a celestial paradise to the northeast of Mount Meru where it is said that all tantras were written.⁵⁰³ Thus, he also describes the tantric aspects and appeal of the mountain.⁵⁰⁴ These layers of meaning ascribed to Tsari by the author define the magnitude of the mountain and warrants ritually journeying long distances to visit it. Although these representations are generally understood by all social groups, Huber, who has worked with a range of literature on Tsari, notes that the descriptions given by Buddhist lamas and *yogins* are generally more sophisticated in their expression than the accounts of ordinary pilgrims,⁵⁰⁵ and this is certainly the case with regards to Sumpa Khenpo's account. The author carefully records the different levels of meaning ascribed to Tsari, reconfirming and reinforcing the frames of meaning and interpretive schemas imposed on the mountain.

⁴⁹⁹ This list has a clear special structure as it describes the landscape from the bottom up. For more on the use and meanings of directions (i.e. up and down) in landscape, see Michaels (2003).

Sumpa Khenpo uses the Sanskrit *kailāsa* (Tib. *kai la sha*) for snowy mountain instead of the Tibetan *gangs ri*, further displaying his literary skill.

⁵⁰⁰ SK-CASS, folio 53(a); 1–2.

⁵⁰¹ SK-CASS, folio 53(a); 7.

⁵⁰² The palace is known as lCang lo can in Tibetan, and Alakāvati in Sanskrit.

⁵⁰³ Roberts, P. A. (2011) *Mahāmudrā and Related Instructions: Core Teachings of the Kagyü Schools*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, p. 415.

⁵⁰⁴ For more on tantric imagery associated with Tsari, see Tshe ring dpal 'byor (1995) *Bod kyi gnas yig bdams bsgrigs*. Lhasa: Bod ljongs bod yig dpe rnying dpe skrun khang, pp. 99–105. Available on TBRC (ID W22019).

⁵⁰⁵ Huber (1999c); 40.

A triple world-space is commonly used to describe Tsari which “implies a strong vertical ontological gradient from gross at the bottom to more refined or pure above.”⁵⁰⁶ This system is evident in Sumpa Khenpo’s description of the physical environment and inhabitants of the area;

Amid the great and lively forest of various trees formed of palm trees, pine trees, bamboo, and fruit trees, variations of bears and wild dogs roam, troops of monkeys’ play, and various birds, big and small, sing melodious, resonating songs. Deer, does, and spotted deer on the meadow hills are busy playing and enjoying [themselves]. The leopards, snow leopards, and musk deer on the slate mountains flash like lightening. From all directions, brooks trickle, as if [they are] competing with a dangling string of pearls.

In the snow-covered mountain of the upper central river, which resemble a crystal, resides a form of Cakrasaṃvara in union [with his consort]. At that place, for those possessing pure vision, within the precious celestial palace resides Cakrasaṃvara together with his consort, *ḍākas*, and *ḍākinīs*. Even with the subtlest defilement of doubt, everyone can gain visualisation.⁵⁰⁷

Before embarking on his pilgrimage around the mountain, Sumpa Khenpo recites a variation of a well-known prayer to the mountain:

Dagpa Shrī, the rockface of Tsari,
I pray to the Kagyü masters, tutelary deities, *ḍākinīs* and *dharma* protectors,
Bless [us] through purifying obscurations,

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid; 45.

⁵⁰⁷ *shing ta la dang thang shing dang sba smyug dang bza' shing sna tshogs kyi nags tshal rab tu 'khrigs pa'i khrod na dom dred nags khyi rgyu zhing sprā spre'u'i tshogs kyis gar bsgyur la bya byi'u sna tshogs pas skad snyan lhang lhang sgrogs pa | spang rir sha ba yu mo kha sha sogs rtsed 'jos brel ba | g'ya' brag la gzig dang gsa' gla ba sogs glog ltar rgyug pa | phyogs kun nas chu phran rnams mu tig gi do shal 'phyang ba la 'gran par babs pa | steng gi dbus chu shel lta bu'i gangs ri bde mchog yab yum gyi rnam pa mchis pa | gnas de na dag snang can gi ngor rin po che'i gzhā yas khang gi nang du 'khor lo sdom pa yab yum dpa' bo mkha' 'gro dang bcas pa bzhugs pa la the tshom gyi dri ma phra mo tsam yang tshang mas dmigs pa'i go skabs sus rnyed | SK-CASS, folio 53(a); 2–4.*

Bless [us] through dispelling adversities and calamities,
And grant us supreme and mundane powers.⁵⁰⁸

According to Huber, the main aim of this prayer is to generate faith in the mountain through acknowledging those who are present – “beings that liberate, beings that protect, and a place (Tib. *né*) that purifies”⁵⁰⁹ – and through requesting the results of rituals motivated by faith and devotion, namely purification, protection, and enlightenment. Thus, through reciting this prayer, Sumpa Khenpo recognises and verifies the extreme dangers and powers present at Tsari; further confirming its status as one of the most treacherous mountains in Tibet. This was not the only prayer recited by Sumpa Khenpo: he writes that he recited a host of other prayers and *sūtras*, including the *Heart Sūtra* (Tib. *Shes rab snying po*) and the Cakrasaṃvara mantra; accentuating his own unwavering devotion, commitment, and practice.

He then begins his circumambulation, which took around twenty days to complete. He lists key places visited during the pilgrimage, namely the Turquoise Lake Palace (Tib. Pho brang g'yu mtsho)⁵¹⁰ and “the meditative college of the accomplished ones with the gilded copper roof called Chigchar (Tib. Cig char or Cig car).”⁵¹¹ Both locations are

⁵⁰⁸ *dag pa shrī dpal gyi tsa ri brag || bka' brgyud bla ma rnams dang yi dam lha || mkha' 'gro chos skyong rnams la gsol ba 'debs || las ngan sdig sgrib 'dag par byin gyis rlobs || rkyen ngan bar chad zhi bar byin gyis rlobs || mchog thun mong gnyis kyi dngos grub stsal du gsol ||* SK-CASS, folio 53(b); 1–2.

There appears to be a syllable missing in the first line of this prayer. Having compared this with an almost identical version of this prayer, which is found in Huber’s book on Tsari, I believe the first line should read: *gnas dag pa shrī dpal gyi tsa ri brag*. See Huber (1999c); 250.

⁵⁰⁹ Huber (1999c); 109.

⁵¹⁰ According to Huber, this is the most important *maṇḍala* lake at Tsari - the waters it contains have a high ritual status, Huber (1999c); 52. Keith Dowman also lists the Turquoise lake as one of the four sacred lakes of Tsari, see Dowman (1997); 178.

⁵¹¹ *grub pa dag gi sgrub sde gser gyi rgya phibs can cig car zhes pa* | SK-CASS, folio 53(b); 2.

According to Huber, Chigchar is one of Tsari’s most important temples and meditation centres, Huber (1999c); 48.

associated with Tibetan Tantric *yogins* – the lake is said to be a *maṇḍala*, a source of supernatural power, and an initiatory site,⁵¹² while Chigchar houses the main community of Tantric *yogins* in retreat.⁵¹³ From the Tārā Pass (Tib. sGrol ma la) they circled the mountain for seven days, passing the Takma Pass (Tib. sTag ma la) and Protector Ravine (Tib. mGon po rong). Sumpa Khenpo writes about the dangers of the journey including the changeable weather and the local Lhopa tribe (Tib. Glo kha kra) who were renowned for attacking pilgrims with poisonous arrows and whose sight “makes hairs stand on end.”⁵¹⁴ For five days in the middle of the pilgrimage, Sumpa Khenpo writes that they were travelling through snow and so there was the risk of avalanches, a common hazard at Tsari.⁵¹⁵ As such, the group travelled overnight, most likely to avoid trekking when the temperature was milder and the risk of avalanches was higher. “From dusk until dawn we meandered slowly through many passes and valleys [filled] with just snow. At that time, I trembled at the thought of dying.”⁵¹⁶ Despite the fear, Sumpa Khenpo employs a typical Buddhist reflection on the necessity to engage in pious activities when one can, noting that, “although [we] faced hardships, it is noble to die there. Therefore, with the thought of purifying karmic obscurations in mind, I performed the medium circumambulation (Tib. *bar bskor*) with conviction and enthusiasm, disregarding the cold, hunger, thirst, and fatigue.”⁵¹⁷ This is reminiscent of a similar attitude expressed in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, mentioned earlier

⁵¹² Ibid; 52.

⁵¹³ Ibid; 86.

⁵¹⁴ *skyi g'ya ba* | SK-CASS, folio 53(a); 1.

For more on tribal attacks and other mortal dangers at Tsari, see Huber (1999c); 143–146.

⁵¹⁵ Ibid; 122.

⁵¹⁶ *mtshan mo sa sros nas nam langs bar du kha ba kho na'i nang du la lung mang po brgyud de bags kyis phyin tshe srog dang 'bral ba 'dra snyam du skrag* | SK-CASS, folio 53(b); 3–4.

⁵¹⁷ *dka' las myong ba na'ang 'dir shi yang bla | de las sgrib nges par 'dag snyam nas yid ches shing grang ba bkres skom ngal ba khyad du bsad de lhag par spro bas bar bskor byas* | SK-CASS, folio 53(b); 4.

in this chapter. After outlining the four places of pilgrimage, the Buddha is reported to have concluded that “any who die while making the pilgrimage to these shrines with a devout heart will, at the breaking-up of the body after death, be reborn in a heavenly world.”⁵¹⁸

Sumpa Khenpo finishes his account with a twenty-one-verse poem that describes his impression of Tsari and reminds his readers of the importance of visiting powerful and sacred places such as this:

Up there, on Mount Kailash in the snowy region of West Tibet,
The *sthavira* Aṅgaja, the arhats (Tib. *dgra bcom*), and Īśvara and his wife
reside.

In the middle, in Kongpo (Tib. rKong po) is the sacred, snowy place of Tsari;
The palace of Cakrasaṃvara where the *ḍākinīs* of the three places assemble.
Down there, in the valleys of Kham, is the snowy Khawa Karpo (Tib. Kha ba
dkar po);⁵¹⁹

It is the abode of the three protectors where the assembly of the noble ones
gathers.⁵²⁰

The benefit of visiting the place directly, [and even] if you hear or think about
it,

⁵¹⁸ Translation quoted from Walshe. Walshe (1995); 264.

⁵¹⁹ This is an unusual grouping of mountains. Usually Kailash, Tsari, and Lapchi constitute a well-known trio associated with the body, speech, and mind of Cakrasaṃvara. I am uncertain of the significance of the three mountains described by Sumpa Khenpo, but interestingly Ruth Gamble, in her PhD thesis, discusses the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje’s re-visioning of Kawa Karpo as one of the twenty-four sacred sites mentioned in the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra. The Third Karmapa composed two guidebooks and a song of praise about the site, which aimed at establishing its position and promoting the mountain to a wider audience. Perhaps this had a long-term effect on the perception and importance of Khawa Karpo? Gamble, R. E. (2013) *The View From Nowhere: The Travels of the Third Karmapa, Rang byung rdo rje in Stories and Songs*. PhD Thesis. Australian National University, pp. 201–214.

On pilgrimage at Khawa Karpo, see Buffetrille, K. (2014) ‘The Pilgrimage to Mount Kha Ba Dkar Po: A Metaphor for *Bar do*’, in Cüppers, C. and Deeg, M. (eds.) *Searching for the Dharma, Finding Salvation – Buddhist Pilgrimage in Time and Space. Proceedings of the Workshop “Buddhist Pilgrimage in History and Present Times” at the Lumbini International Research Institute (LIRI), Lumbini, 11 - 13 January 2010*. Lumbini: Lumbini Research Institute, pp. 206–215.

⁵²⁰ The three protector deities of Tibet are Avalokiteśvara (Tib. sPyan ras gzigs), Mañjuśrī (Tib. 'Jam dpal), and Vajrapāṇi (Tib. Phyang na rdo rje).

Cannot be explained verbally even in 100 aeons.

On this splendid mountain, which is as if

All the perfection of the various pure lands and oceans had been gathered into one,

The major marks of the Buddha,⁵²¹ the seven precious items of the *Cakravartin*,

And the [eight] auspicious signs have spontaneously arisen.

Gods, *dākas*, and *dākinīs* assemble like clouds,

Seeing this [place] is not different from meeting Vajradhara himself.

Therefore, when this pure realm of Cakrasaṃvara becomes an object of mindfulness, [and an object for the] eyes and ears,

The merit cannot be illustrated [even] by the sky-treasure.

Who can see any supreme attainment that would not be grasped

by the hook of prostration, circumambulation, and offerings to this [mountain]?

It is a great wonder that this wondrous earth carries such splendour!⁵²²

Akin to the verses he composed on Wutai Shan and Alasha, Sumpa Khenpo appeals to the senses to accentuate the intensity and magnitude of the region. As discussed earlier in this chapter, poetry is one of the key forms in which sacred places such as Tsari were

⁵²¹ This suggests that Tsari is conceptualised as the body of the Buddha. Although I have not yet come across this elsewhere, there are other instances of inscribing the Buddha or Buddhist deities into the local geography, for example the thirty-two characteristics of a ‘Great Man’ discussed in footnote 330 and Wutai Shan as the body of Mañjuśrī. Chou (2011); 71.

⁵²² *kha ba can stod mnga' ri'i gangs te ser || gnas brtan yan lag 'byung dgra bcom dbang phyug yab yum bzhugs || bar gyi rkong yul tsa ri gnas chen gangs || bde mchog pho brang gnas gsum mkha' 'gro 'du || smad kyi khams rong kha ba dkar po'i gangs || rigs gsum mgon po'i zhing yin 'phags tshogs 'du || de dag dngos mjal lta ci thos dran tsam || phan yon lce brgyas bskal brgyar brjod mi ldang || bye brag dag zhing rgya mtsho'i phun tshogs kun || gcig tu bsodus mtshungs rab brjid ri bo 'dir || rgyal ba'i mtshan bzang 'khor bsgyur rin chen bdun || rnam pa dge mtshan bkra shis rang grub mchis || lha dang dpa' bo dpa' mo sprin bzhin 'tshogs || 'di mthong rdo rje 'chang dngos mjal gzhan min || de phyir 'khor lo sdom pa'i zhing khams 'di || mig dang rna ba dran pa'i yul gyur tsam || bsod nams nam mkha' mdzod kyis mtshon nus min || 'di la phyag bskor mchod sogs lcags kyo yis || mi khug mchog gi dngos grub gang sus mthong || de lta'i dpal chen sa chen 'dis theg mtshar || SK-CASS, folio 53(b); 7 – folio 54(a); 3.*

remembered, evoked, and embodied throughout the Tibetan Buddhist world. Like oral legends, guidebooks, and even autobiographical accounts, poetry ensured that prescribed narratives and frameworks of the landscape were constantly maintained; “for is poetry not, by virtue of its vivid language, intricate phrasing, rhythm, and repetition, one of the principle forms of expression by which place is brought before the senses, including and especially if one is not presently in the place, but rather the place is in oneself, in one’s mind, in one’s imagination?”⁵²³

Conclusion

In this chapter I have sought to highlight some of the key aspects of pilgrimage and journeying: travel and movement, forms of veneration, and visiting a place of spiritual and religious significance, as well as economic and socio-political aspects of such journeys. The journey, which can carry as much weight as, if not more than, the destination itself, can have both a real and symbolic meaning; movement to a physical place and a metaphorical journey to a spiritual destination. In Tsari, for example, Sumpa Khenpo notes that he has arrived at the palace of Heruka, where spiritual benefits (such as visualisation and purification of the mind) can be gained. As such, pilgrimage can be universal in meaning as well as highly localised and personal – with individuals choosing to embark on their travels for countless different reasons. Within this framework pilgrimage can provide the setting for economic exchange, enlightenment, the foundations for place-making, expressions of self-awareness, and so forth.

⁵²³ Schaeffer (2011b); 239.

The examples used in this chapter, although brief, highlight some of these areas. For example, Sumpa Khenpo's journey to Alasha was more political, while his pilgrimage to Tsari was undertaken for more personal and spiritual fulfilment. The verses we find embedded in these accounts further echo the diverse meanings and motivations ascribed to pilgrimage and travel; sometimes his poetry is triggered by people asking for it, possibly serving a political and/or economical purpose, and sometimes it is the conclusion of a spiritual experience, and religiously motivated. It would be unreasonable to suggest that one's motivations were so clear cut and, as I hope this chapter has shown, Sumpa Khenpo's journeys allowed him to fulfil several motivations and aims at the same time. Pilgrimage is neither separate from the mundane lives of its pilgrims nor transitory in nature, in the same way, the journey to a *Qinwang*'s residence in Mongolia is not solely concerned with material affairs. The recurrence with which Sumpa Khenpo travels shows that pilgrimage need not be an exceptional activity that happens rarely or once in a lifetime, in fact his habit of travelling is quite typical for Tibetans. His autobiography is filled with details of journeys undertaken to sacred mountains,⁵²⁴ monasteries,⁵²⁵ and other man-made structures⁵²⁶ - often en route to a patron.

As the opening quotation of this chapter suggests, for Sumpa Khenpo travelling for the sake of the *dharma* was a habitus – a mode of being. While it involves leaving one's home or monastery to journey to places where something spiritually potent and empowering

⁵²⁴ For example, Tsari (1728), Yarlha Shampo (Tib. Yar lha sham bu; 1728), Chumar (Tib. Chu dmar; 1748), and Wutai Shan (1750; 1767; 1774).

⁵²⁵ For example, Tashilhunpo (1723), Lamo Dechen (1732), and Choten Thang (Tib. mChod rten thang; 1768).

⁵²⁶ For example, the Jokhang (Tib. Jo khang; 1723), Kamalaśīla's stūpa (1734), Gomasalaganda stūpa (1751), and Sakya Paṇḍita's remains (1760).

may be encountered, it is also closely linked with the community at home, and its material needs – in the case of Sumpa Khenpo one example can be seen through the accumulation of donations received, some of which were intended to financially support the restoration and upkeep of Gonlung.

And so, pilgrimage encompasses a wide variety of themes, motivations, and meanings that continually adapt to the circumstances, needs, and wishes of the time and the individuals who undertake them. For our purposes, it has provided us with a glimpse of the environment in which Sumpa Khenpo operated, and some of the affairs and necessities that occupied the minds of lamas at this time. It has also further displayed Sumpa Khenpo's literary skills through drawing attention to some of the verbal ornamentation, symbolisms, and narrative styles used by the author. His effective and extraordinary rhetorical and literary technique will be analysed further in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

Twisting Tongues and Twisting Arms: the rhetoric of Sumpa Khenpo

ཁ་བདེ་བོས་བཤད་ན་རི་བོ་མགོ་ཚྭ་ཚྭ།
ཁ་ངན་པས་བཤད་ན་རི་མགོ་ཡང་ངར་སྒྲང་སྒྲང་། །

If one is eloquent in speech
Even the hills nod in agreement
If one is harsh in words
Even the hills grimace in anger

Tibetan Proverb⁵²⁷

In his discussion of rhetoric, Richard Toye describes language as an “ideological fingerprint” that can give the author away.⁵²⁸ Such “fingerprints” can be found in a variety of literary forms, and different types of speech. Stories, debates, and speeches are often immersed in claims about the past, appeals to morals and integrity, and the positive or negative characterisation of groups, people, and/or events, which can reveal a lot about the individual identity of the narrator and the society within which one operates, as well as the aims of the author. This chapter will take this further through examining the rhetoric used by Sumpa Khenpo; namely speeches and narratives touching on aspects of ethical conduct, religious hypocrisy, scriptural authority, and collective memory. Through placing them within the

⁵²⁷ Lhamo Pemba (ed.) (1996) *Tibetan Proverbs - Bod kyi gtam dpe*. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, p. 17.

⁵²⁸ Toye, R. (2013) *Rhetoric: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.2.

circumstances in which they were delivered and received, I hope to contribute towards an understanding of some of the functions that these forms of expression, as used by Sumpa Khenpo, can have.

This chapter analyses examples of Sumpa Khenpo's oratory and narrative style – including an anti-war speech given during the 1727–1728 Civil War – in order to observe some of the rhetorical devices employed by the author, such as his use of performative ethical truth-telling, collective memory, and Buddhist scripture in consolidating his claims. The latter is used to validate and support his statements, similar to the use of the phrase “Thus have I heard” (Tib. *'di skad bdag gis thos pa*; Skt. *evaṃ mayā śrutam*); the first line of the standard introduction of Buddhist discourses which serves to confirm and guarantee the authenticity of the text. Additionally, his oratory and narrative style draw on a sense of humour as well as sharp critique as they work to reveal Sumpa Khenpo's temperament and that of his peers.

This chapter equally considers the intended reader who is moulded and influenced as a result of reading this autobiography. Unsurprisingly, a key feature of Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography is that he is persistently engaged in a conscious process of identity, or character, construction. As Bruner summarises, one becomes “the autobiographical narratives by which we “tell about” our lives.”⁵²⁹ This process is enacted through a literary practice of engagement: writing about, responding to, and reflecting on one's experiences and interactions with others. In the case of Sumpa Khenpo, he illuminates and balances different aspects of his persona, presenting himself as an example for others to follow. The

⁵²⁹ Bruner, J. (1987) ‘Life as Narrative’, *Social Research*, 54(1), p.15.

narrator himself – as he is created within the text – constitutes a model for moral living: the exemplary lama. This overlaps with the didactic aspects of autobiographical writing discussed in Chapter one. And so, through his narrative strategies, this chapter will also enquire into who Sumpa Khenpo envisions his audience to be.

Studying Speeches: A Brief History of the Study of Rhetoric

Scholars of rhetoric have generally assumed that though persuasion and argumentation are universally shared, no other culture elevated the study of them in such an articulated manner as the Greeks and Romans. Broadly, the discipline of rhetoric in the western world has focused on Sophistic rhetoric made famous by the philosophers Aristotle (384–322 BCE) and Plato (428 – ca. 347 BCE). However, recent scholarship recognises the need to extend the scope of study and generate an understanding of rhetoric beyond the Athenian-based tradition, taking into account other rhetorics, such as non-western rhetorics and rhetorics that are often overlooked or marginalised in contemporary culture.⁵³⁰ Of the alternative rhetorics addressed, biblical rhetoric has received the most scholarly attention, in part due to the cultural influence of the Bible on the West. A substantial portion of this literature is intended to inform and influence Christian pedagogy, however there is some scholarship that

⁵³⁰ Examples of scholarship moving away from the more ‘traditional’ study of rhetoric include, Anderl, C. (ed.) (2012) *Zen Buddhist Rhetoric in China, Korea, and Japan*. Leiden: Brill; Blake, C. (2009) *The African Origins of Rhetoric*. New York: London; Routledge; Borrowman, A. et al. (eds.) (2010) *Rhetoric in the Rest of the West*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing; Cortez, J. M. (2018) ‘Of Exterior and Exception: Latin American Rhetoric, Subalternity, and the Politics of Cultural Difference’, *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 51(2), pp. 124–150; Lipson, C. S. and Binkley, R. A. (eds.) (2004) *Rhetoric Before and Beyond the Greeks*. Albany: State University of New York Press; Poole, A. (2019) *Democracy, Rights and Rhetoric in Southeast Asia*. Carlton: Palgrave Macmillan; and Richards, J. and Thorne, A. (ed.) (2007) *Rhetoric, Women and Politics in Early Modern England*. London: New York; Routledge.

examines the application of biblical rhetoric to achieve wider goals across political, social, and economic spheres. Some noteworthy examples will be examined below.

Notable scholarship relevant to this thesis has analysed the use of biblical rhetoric in the speeches and writings of Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968).⁵³¹ Selby, in particular, illustrates how King used the Exodus narrative to motivate African Americans in their struggle for civil rights, offering his audience a framework that explained their present circumstances and provided the conviction that the Civil Rights Movement would succeed. Within this structure, King came to embrace the role of Moses guiding an Exodus, placing himself atop the figurative mountain from where he could see the Promised Land.⁵³² The use of religious narratives in public speaking underlines the role certain tropes and symbols can play in forming relationships between the speaker and their listeners.⁵³³

King’s rhetoric relies heavily on religious anecdotes and imagery to achieve his goal of persuading others and establishing authority.⁵³⁴ The use of religious language can enhance the persuasive power of one’s words and “stirs an audience’s “religious imagination,” often appealing as much to emotion as to reason.”⁵³⁵ The combined role of emotion and reason to

⁵³¹ For examples, see Mieder, W. (2010) *“Making a Way Out of No Way”*: Martin Luther King’s Sermonic Proverbial Rhetoric. New York: Peter Lang; Miller, K. D. (2007) ‘Second Isaiah Lands in Washington, DC: Martin Luther King, Jr.’s ‘I have a Dream’ as Biblical Narrative and biblical Hermeneutic’, *Rhetoric Review* 26, pp. 405–424; Selby, G. (2008) *Martin Luther King and the Rhetoric of Freedom: Exodus Narrative in America’s Struggle for Civil Rights*. Waco: Baylor University Press. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press.

⁵³² Miller (2007); 408; and Selby (2008); 31–35.

⁵³³ Such as Farra, H. E. (1970) *The Rhetoric of Reverend Clarence Edward Macartney: A Man Under Authority*. PhD Thesis. Pennsylvania State University; Kurtz, A. A. (1966) *A Rhetorical Analysis of the Preaching of Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney, Twentieth Century Exponent of the Traditional Orthodoxy*. PhD Thesis. Michigan State University; and Miller, K. D. (2012) *Martin Luther King’s Biblical Epic: His Final, Great Speech*. New York: University Press of Mississippi.

⁵³⁴ The main goal is generally to convince others; however, it could be argued here that one needs to establish authority and credibility first in order to effectively sway one’s audience.

⁵³⁵ Dreisbach, D. L. (2017) *Reading the Bible with the Founding Fathers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.78.

enhance the power and authority of one's performance, promoted by Aristotle, will be discussed in more detail shortly.

Sumpa Khenpo, too, constructs his authority through his use of religious rhetoric; accentuating his own moral character through reference to religious ideals such as pacifism. Like King, Sumpa Khenpo recurrently adopts a persona that positions himself as authoritative, trustworthy, and knowledgeable – both through his use of humility, a traditional feature of Tibetan autobiographical literature, and through highlighting his reputation and the esteem in which he was held. The latter is often achieved through quoting those who have laid praise upon him, removing any ego or pride that would contradict his modest persona. For example, when discussing his rain-making abilities, Sumpa Khenpo declares that “in all directions [they] said, “The famed one known as Sumpa Khenpo, the excellent rain-maker – wherever he goes due to dry [weather], when he arrives [there] the rain arrives, too.””⁵³⁶ Such acclamations provide a stark contrast to the less-than-savoury deeds of his peers – details of which are dotted throughout his autobiography and will be discussed later in this chapter.

Other studies of importance to this thesis can be found within Mark Jordan's exploration on how Christians approach and talk about homosexuality,⁵³⁷ which provide insightful analysis of the way a particular role or character is shaped and defined rhetorically. Jordan is especially interested in the way that ‘characters’ – that is, personas and identities used in Christian literature and sermons around queer love and sex – are formed and used in

⁵³⁶ *phyogs kun tu sum pa mkhan po char 'bebs la bzang ba zhes pa'i grags skam la brten nas gang du phyin kyang khong slebs pa na char ba yang slebs pa yin zhes [...]* | SK-CASS, folio 75(b); 4.

⁵³⁷ Jordan, M. (2005) *Blessing Same-Sex Unions: The Perils of Queer Romance and the Confusion of Christian Marriage*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

persuasive discourse.⁵³⁸ He notes that “the influence of rhetoric is located not in particular remembered sources, but in the characters that shape speech. [...] clustered categories, images, metaphors that pointed in turn to characters who enacted purposes or plots.”⁵³⁹ Although Jordan specifically focuses on the staging of characters in debates around homosexuality, his discussion on the contrast of characters “between the knowledgeable, concerned, responsible speaker and [...] ignorant and irresponsible”⁵⁴⁰ speaker, ties back to the point raised in the previous paragraph regarding Sumpa Khenpo’s frequent use of contrast between his own virtue and the failings and corruption of others. The narrator’s implied character, in this case a trustworthy and reliable individual, provides the standard against which other characters presented can be judged. Further, the influence of the character on rhetoric encourages us to examine the author as he appears within his own autobiography. As this chapter will show, Sumpa Khenpo is a character created through his own narratives and rhetoric.

In his writings, Sumpa Khenpo appears as the tireless teacher, the eloquent orator, the humble itinerant, the famed rain-maker; an ever-changing character in his own writings. His character is not only established but is modelled through the actions documented in his autobiography. Similarities can be drawn here with Martin Luther King Jr. as Moses, discussed above. A rhetor does not merely use words to convey information. They appeal to the audience, request its support, and present them with evidence and reasoning. They do not rely solely on words either; their actions are also part of a broader persuasive

⁵³⁸ Ibid; 187.

⁵³⁹ Jordan, M. (2011) *Recruiting Young Love: How Christians Talk About Homosexuality*. Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, xv.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid: 38.

performance. In this way, Sumpa Khenpo dedicates himself – both in practice and in his writings – to shaping his relationship with his audience; to project his character as an accomplished, well-educated, and truthful role model, worthy of being their teacher and beneficiary.

A provocative case study on the creation of a ‘character’ through religious rhetoric can be found in Susan Harding’s work on the biblical language of the Baptist pastor and televangelist Jerry Falwell Sr. (1933–2007) and his co-pastors.⁵⁴¹ Falwell’s life is presented as a narrative created by Falwell himself, which is interspersed with biblical tropes and scripture, for example, he draws parallels between his financial Jericho (unfinished buildings as a result of cash problems) and the story of Joshua.⁵⁴² Harding explains:

Falwell’s speech is not like secular speech. He inhabits a world generated by Bible-based stories, and as a “man of God”, his speech partakes of the generative quality of the Bible itself. He incessantly frames his life, if only lightly, in biblical terms, and his faithful followers read him as they read the Bible – not as already true, but as always coming true.⁵⁴³

While their motivations may be antithetical, both Falwell and Sumpa Khenpo use scripture as a point of reference in their narratives. Falwell used the bible to generate a stylised self-image and as a source of absolute authority in his sermons, while Sumpa Khenpo quotes from Buddhist scriptures to make and/or support his points – for example, as we will see

⁵⁴¹ Harding, S. (2000) *The Book of Jerry Falwell: Fundamentalist Language and Politics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

⁵⁴² *Ibid*; 105–125.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid*; 27.

later in this chapter, Sumpa Khenpo references the massacre of the Śākya clan in his pacifist speech in order to emphasise Buddhist principles and the absolute rejection of war.

Harding also seeks to understand the ‘real’ Falwell behind the rhetoric; unpicking his rewritten personal narrative and reading it within the context of fundamentalist speech communities. While I am not trying to compare Jerry Falwell Sr. with Sumpa Khenpo, this case provides an important reminder that the use of scripture can have many different uses, not wholly spiritual in nature, to understand the person we need to review both the purpose and the effect. The balance between ‘character’ and ‘reality’ is important in analysing Sumpa Khenpo’s narrative and should be kept in mind. While this chapter is concerned with the productive effects of his rhetoric as it appears in his autobiography, the thesis also addresses Sumpa Khenpo the human being. They are two sides of the same coin.

In his work on rhetoric, Aristotle highlights the importance and efficacy of *ethos*; convincing the audience of the performers credibility and character, and *pathos*; appealing to the audience’s emotions and/or sensibilities. These two terms, along with *logos*; enhancing authority through structure and logic, were used by Aristotle to explain the functions of rhetoric.⁵⁴⁴ A combination of these devices was promoted by Aristotle to better persuade an audience. Applying this framework to Sumpa Khenpo’s rhetoric enables us to appreciate his use of rhetoric and verbal ornamentation without the need to separate his motivations (i.e. was he trying to win over his audience, show off his literary skills, enhance his authority and reputation etc.). In this way, his speeches and narratives can be seen as

⁵⁴⁴ Aristotle. (2018) *The Art of Rhetoric*, translated by R. Waterfield. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

servicing multiple aims – similarly to his undertaking of pilgrimages, as discussed in Chapter three – and allowing him to connect with different audiences in different ways.⁵⁴⁵

Buddhist rhetoric has received limited scholarly attention, with only very few exceptions, and has tended to centre around rhetoric in literature. For example, the transformative impact of Buddhist literature has been discussed by Charles Hallisey and Anne Hansen,⁵⁴⁶ and Joshua Schapiro.⁵⁴⁷ While Ralph Flores' book on the rhetoric of Buddhist scriptures,⁵⁴⁸ and Reiko Ohnuma's work on the Buddha's bodily self-sacrifice,⁵⁴⁹ both investigate how language and imagery work in shaping the reader's mind and providing an important cultural resource for Buddhists. Alan Cole's research has examined the role of fathers and legitimacy in the rhetoric used across a range of Buddhist literature, including Mahāyāna texts and Chan literature.⁵⁵⁰ Bernard Faure's analysis of the rhetoric of immediacy within Chan Buddhism and its ideological underpinnings has had significant influence, particularly in studies of Chan and Zen writings and practices,⁵⁵¹ as has Christoph Anderl's edited volume on Zen Buddhist rhetoric.⁵⁵² Contemporary Buddhist rhetoric has

⁵⁴⁵ This builds on a point raised in chapter one, where I briefly discuss how a change in Sumpa Khenpo's style in chapter four of his autobiography suggests that he adapted his literary style to suit his audience.

⁵⁴⁶ Hallisey, C. and Hansen, A. (1996) 'Narrative, Sub-Ethics, and the Moral Life: Some Evidence from Theravāda Buddhism', *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 24(2), pp. 305–328.

⁵⁴⁷ Schapiro, J. (2012) *Patrul Rinpoche on Self-Cultivation: The Rhetoric of Nineteenth Century Tibetan Buddhist Life-Advice*. PhD Thesis. Harvard University.

⁵⁴⁸ Flores, R. (2009) *Buddhist Scriptures as Literature: Sacred Rhetoric and the Uses of Theory*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

⁵⁴⁹ Ohnuma, R. (2006) *Head, Eyes, Flesh, Bloody: Giving Away the Body in Indian Buddhist Literature*. Columbia: Columbia University Press.

⁵⁵⁰ Cole, A. (2005) *Text as Father: Paternal Seductions in Early Mahāyāna Buddhist Literature*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Cole, A. (2009) *Fathering Your Father: The Zen fabrication in Tang China*. Berkeley: University of California Press; and Cole, A. (2016) *Patriarchs on Paper: A Critical History of Medieval Chan Literature*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

⁵⁵¹ Faure, B. (1994) *The Rhetoric of Immediacy: A Cultural Critique of Chan/Zen Buddhism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. See also, Anderl (2012); and Heine, S. (2016) *Uncertainty in the Blue Cliff Record: Sharpening a Sword at the Dragon Gate*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁵⁵² Anderl (2012).

been the subject of some study, namely the works of Stephen McCarthy⁵⁵³ and John Whalen-Bridge.⁵⁵⁴ While more research on Buddhist rhetoric, both in theory and practice, is needed; an important area for this thesis to consider is the influence of Indian and Tibetan rhetoric theory and epistemology on Sumpa Khenpo's performances. We know from his autobiography that the study of these subjects had been an important part of his education, and so in order to contextualise the frameworks studied and embraced by him, the following section will focus on the developments of rhetoric in Indian and Tibetan literature.

Rhetoric in Indian and Tibetan Literature

Due to the notable Indian influence on literary forms in Tibet - which has been examined by scholars such as Lin, Kapstein, and van der Kuijp - a brief overview of Indian rhetoric and its impact on Tibetan discourse and scholarship is necessary.⁵⁵⁵ Fortunately, a large body of Indian primary sources as well as academic studies on Indian poetics is available.⁵⁵⁶ Indian poetic devices also form part of Sumpa Khenpo's style as an educated writer, as became clear in the previous chapter;⁵⁵⁷ however, due to limitations of space, this section will not delve any further into the field of poetics, but primarily focus on formal argumentation and

⁵⁵³ McCarthy, S. (2004) 'The Buddhist Political Rhetoric of Aung San Suu Kyi', *Contemporary Buddhism* 5, pp. 67–81.

⁵⁵⁴ Whalen-Bridge, W. (2015) *Tibet on Fire: Buddhism, Protest, and the Rhetoric of Self-Immolation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

⁵⁵⁵ See Lin, N. G. (2008) 'Döndrup Gyel and the Remaking of the Tibetan Ramayana', in Hartley, L. R. and Schiaffini-Vedani, P. (eds.) (2008) *Modern Tibetan Literature and Social Change*. Durham: Duke University Press, pp. 86–111; Kapstein (2003); and van der Kuijp (1996).

⁵⁵⁶ See De, S. K. (1959) *Aspects of Sanskrit Literature*. Calcutta: Firma KLM Private Ltd; Gerow, E. (1977) *Indian Poetics*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz; and Kane, P. V. (1961) *History of Sanskrit Poetics*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

⁵⁵⁷ Sumpa Khenpo's skill in writing *kāvya* style poetry is discussed in *Power Places and Place-Making* in Chapter three.

reason-based persuasion, which plays an important role in the rhetorical passages of Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography.

Ancient India developed its own methods of reasoned argument; it was not separated from the rest of scholarly knowledge as it was in the West but was treated as a constitutive part of the learning process. As such, there is no specific body of literature that focuses exclusively on the principles of ancient Indian communication strategies and rhetorical devices.⁵⁵⁸ There are some texts, however, that have heavily influenced much of Indian rhetoric, such as the *Nyāyasūtra*, which though comparable in influence to Aristotle, differs in structure, emphasis, and motivation, from much of Western rhetoric.⁵⁵⁹ The text, which is the oldest extant text of the Nyāya school (Tib. *rigs can pa*), is attributed to Akṣapāda Gautama (Tib. Bram ze rKang mig), yet little is known about the author or which century he lived in. Scholarly estimates vary from the second century CE to as late as the fifth century CE, with some scholars theorising that the *Nyāyasūtra* was expanded over time by a multiplicity of authors.⁵⁶⁰ Fowler, however, postulates that the core ideas of the text regarding debate and epistemology stretch back into the Vedic era (1500–500 BCE) and were later refined and systematised by Akṣapāda Gautama.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁸ Lloyd, K. S. (2011) 'Culture and Rhetorical Patterns: Mining the Rich Relations Between Aristotle's Enthymeme and Example and India's Nyāya Method', *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric*, Vol. 29(1), pp. 76–105.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁰ For an overview of the Nyāya school, see Phillips, S. (2013) *Epistemology in Classical India: The Knowledge Sources of the Nyāya School*. London; New York: Routledge; Potter, K. H. (1977) *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies – Indian Metaphysics and Epistemology: The Tradition of Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika up to Gaṅgeśa*, Vol 2. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass; and Potter, K. H. (1981) *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies – Advaita Vedānta up to Śaṅkara and His Pupils*, Vol. 3. New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

⁵⁶¹ Fowler, J. (2002) *Perspectives of Reality: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Hinduism*. Portland: Sussex Academic Press, pp. 134–138.

The ancient traditions of debate and rules of reasoning (Skt. *vādaśāstra*) form the foundations of the Nyāya school. The term *nyāya*, meaning ‘right method’ or ‘rule’, refers to the ‘science of right and wrong reasoning’.⁵⁶² The *Nyāyasūtra* consists of five books, which cover sixteen items that can be grouped into four categories; epistemology, metaphysics, reason, and debate. The philosopher Vātsyāyana (fl. third century) draws attention to the Nyāya’s focus on the uses of evidence, doubts, and objects of knowledge or valid cognition, which separates it from other Hindu schools. He adds that their method is centered on the examination of a subject by means of *pramāṇas*,⁵⁶³ the four *pramāṇas* being perception (Tib. *mngon sum*; Skt. *pratyakṣa*), inference (Tib. *rjes dpag*; Skt. *anumāna*), analogical reasoning (Tib. *nyer 'jal*; Skt. *upamāna*), and testimony (Tib. *sgra*; Skt. *śabda*).⁵⁶⁴ The *pramāṇas* were later used by Buddhist philosophers such as Dharmakīrti (Tib. Chos kyi grags pa; fl. seventh century), and treatises on logic would have been known to a well-trained Buddhist monk such as Sumpa Khenpo. The scope of this chapter restricts a thorough analysis of the *pramāṇas*, but I will briefly discuss inference and reasoning as these are common features within Sumpa Khenpo’s writing.

Inference “depends on previous perception and is threefold: from something prior, something later, and through experience of a common characteristic”⁵⁶⁵ – it is a kind of knowledge (Skt. *māna*) that one can reach or deduce after reflecting on other knowledge of perception. In Nyāya thought, the perception of an inferential mark and the memory or

⁵⁶² Lloyd, K. S. (2007a) ‘Rethinking Rhetoric from an Indian Perspective: Implications in the *Nyaya Sutra*’, *Rhetoric Review*, 26:4, p. 365.

⁵⁶³ See Barbato, M. (2017) *Jain Approaches to Plurality: Identity as Dialogue*. Leiden: Brill, p. 38; and Dasti, M. and Phillips, S. (2017) *The Nyāya-sūtra: Selections with Early Commentaries*. Indianapolis; Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, pp. 48–49.

⁵⁶⁴ Dasti and Phillips (2017); 48.

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid; 28.

recollection of previous experience and what it means fall under the classification of inference.⁵⁶⁶ To instruct and guide its readers, Nyāya employs a formal five-step scheme (Skt. *avayavas*) which is illustrated by the following stock example:

There is fire on the hill (the thesis).

Because there is smoke on the hill (inference from something prior).

Wherever there is smoke, there is fire; like a kitchen hearth and unlike a lake (inference from common experience).

This hill is likewise smoky (reaffirmation through application).

Thus, there is fire on the hill (the conclusion).⁵⁶⁷

One can infer the existence of the fire after perceiving smoke and relating this to another experience – in this instance, one has previously witnessed smoke coming from a kitchen hearth – thus concluding that the appearance of smoke on the hill indicates that there is a fire, as smoke is always related to fire. It is a mental judgment which arises after something has been heard or observed through certain steps of reasoning based on the observed things. An inference could be for one's own self (Skt. *svārthānumāna*) or for the sake of convincing others (Skt. *parārthānumāna*).⁵⁶⁸ As we will see later this chapter, Sumpa Khenpo employs the latter; drawing on collective memory and shared tropes to reaffirm his anti-war stance.

Similar to common experiences and shared memory is analogy or similarity, which can be used to identify the subject as another subject which is already known. The standard example used by the Nyāya school is based on an individual being told that a gayal (also known as *mithun*) is like a cow. If the individual understands that the animal in question

⁵⁶⁶ Ibid; 31–32.

⁵⁶⁷ Lloyd, K. S. (2007b) 'A Rhetorical Tradition Lost in Translation: Implications for Rhetoric in the Ancient Indian *Nyaya Sutras*', *Advances in the History of Rhetoric*, 10:1, p. 23.

⁵⁶⁸ Dunne, J. D. (2004) *Foundations of Dharmakīrti's Philosophy*. Boston: Wisdom Publication, p. 146.

shares certain traits/features with a cow, when they see the creature they recognise that it is the animal they were told about.⁵⁶⁹ Thus, the function of an analogy is to transfer information or meaning from one subject to another. As Keith Lloyd summarises, “where in Western rhetoric the speaker utilizes language to move the audience toward the rhetor's ends, in the *Nyāya* both rhetor and audience enter into a status-neutral search for practical, sharable truth based in commonly held analogies.”⁵⁷⁰ Commonly held analogies are shared through quotations, imagery and metaphors, and anecdotes. In a Buddhist context, a prevalent example is the teaching of the *dharma*, which are usually taught using the metaphor of a doctor treating a patient; the Buddha is the doctor, the *dharma* is the medicine, and the student is the patient who needs to be healed. The latter approach is employed by Sumpa Khenpo, who uses a range of analogies in his autobiography to illustrate and teach in ways that are easily comprehensible to his intended audience.

The *Nyāyasūtra* influenced later Buddhist traditions of logic and epistemology, with Buddhist thinkers such as Dignāga (Tib. Phyogs kyi glang po; fl. sixth century) and Dharmakīrti addressing *pramāṇa*, argumentation, and inference. The beginnings of the Tibetan epistemological tradition dates back to the late tenth century, with Tibetan scholars producing translations of, and commentaries on, the works of these influential Indian thinkers. Tillemans remarks that there are two forms of *pramāṇa* literature in Tibet: works that are closely based on Indian texts, such as Sakya Paṇḍita's *Treasury of Valid Reasoning*

⁵⁶⁹ Dasti and Phillips (2017); 34.

⁵⁷⁰ Taken from a paper given by Keith Lloyd at a conference on *Rhetoric in Europe* (October 2013, University of Saarbrücken, Germany). Lloyd, K. (2013) *Identifying Coordinates for Intercultural Rhetoric: India's Nyāya and Sadharanikaran as Alternate Models of Rhetorical Delivery*. Conference Paper. https://www.uni-saarland.de/fileadmin/upload/institut/eir/Proceedings/Paper_Lloyd__Keith.pdf (accessed March 23, 2019).

(Tib. *Tshad ma rig gter*), which provides an introduction to Indian *pramāṇa*; and literature that incorporates and develops an indigenous system with specific terminology and formal features.⁵⁷¹ This system tackled issues that added to the themes inherited from the Indian tradition, and in some cases even challenged or countered their positions, for example Jamyang Chogla Ozer's (Tib. 'Jam dbyangs mchog lha 'od zer; 1429–1500) *Collected Topics [of] Ratö College* (Tib. *Ra bstod bsdus grwa*).⁵⁷² To facilitate the study of Buddhist epistemology (Tib. *blo rigs*), reason, and logic (Tib. *rtags rigs*), the didactic *Collected Topics* (Tib. *bsdus grwa*) were developed. This genre starts from the fifteenth century and is believed to be based on Chapa Chokyi Senge's (Tib. Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge; 1109–1169) epistemological works such as *Epistemology – The Dispeller of Mental Darkness* (Tib. *Tshad ma yid kyi mun sel*).⁵⁷³ Other authors have also contributed to this genre including, Jamyang Zhepé Dorje and Se Ngawang Trashi (Tib. bSe Ngag dbang bkra shis; 1678–1738).⁵⁷⁴

These *Collected Topics* play an important part in the initial years of training in Gelugpa monasteries; introducing students to basic theoretical schemas, developing the ability to reason correctly, and equipping them with the main philosophical notions in preparation for debate on the five great texts of the Gelugpa curriculum:⁵⁷⁵

⁵⁷¹ Tillemans, T. (forthcoming) 'Tibetan Developments in Buddhist Logic' in Fenrong, L. et al. (eds.) *A Handbook of Logic in China*. Berlin: Springer.

⁵⁷² Ibid.

⁵⁷³ For more on Chapa Chokyi Senge's works see Hugon, P. (2016) 'Phya pa Chos kyi seng ge and His Successors on the Classification of Arguments by Consequence (*thal 'gyur*) Based on the Type of the Logical Reason', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 44, pp. 883–938; and van der Kuijp, L. W. J. (1983) *Development of Tibetan Buddhist Epistemology*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner.

⁵⁷⁴ Se Ngawang Tashi was a student of Jamyang Zhepé and abbot of Labrang Monastery.

⁵⁷⁵ Liberman, K. (2004) *Dialectical Practice in Tibetan Philosophical Culture: An Ethnomethodological Inquiry into Formal Reasoning*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, p. 53.

Logic is studied to train the mind in subtle reasoning, enabling later appreciation of the great scriptures. After developing his intelligence and discriminatory powers in this way, the monk is able to apply as many as twenty logical arguments to just one point of teaching. Like monkeys that can run freely in and out through a dense forest, our minds must be very supple before we can comprehend the depth of the concepts presented in the texts. If our minds are rigid like antlers of a deer...we will never be able to reach this depth.⁵⁷⁶

Debates constitute the core educative method adopted by Gelugpa institutions. As such, Tibetan monastic education places a high importance on debate – it is not only considered a central part of Buddhist scholarship, but it is also the mark of an accomplished scholar. Tibetan scholarship inherited its tradition of debating from Indian Buddhism, where it was considered an important topic of study in renowned institutions such as Nālandā.⁵⁷⁷ Liberman writes that there is a common saying amongst Tibetan students; “If we didn’t base the debate upon texts and reasoning, we’d be forced to debate with sticks and stones” – accentuating that without a shared framework that rests on attested forms of knowledge, perception, and inference we would be required to resolve our conflicts through hostility and aggression.⁵⁷⁸ Although the Indian and Tibetan forms of debate and reason are similar, the main difference, according to Dreyfus, is the Tibetan use of consequences (Tib. *thal ba* or *thal 'gyur*); drawing consequences from previous statements “to make its point persuasively, [and] not prove a statement deductively.”⁵⁷⁹ In Indian debate and logic, on the other hand,

⁵⁷⁶ Dreyfus (2003); 229.

⁵⁷⁷ Ibid; 206.

⁵⁷⁸ Liberman (2004); 58.

⁵⁷⁹ Dreyfus (2003); 208.

the preferred method for argumentation is a statement of proof that is grounded in certainty (Tib. *nges pa*; Skt. *niścaya*). For example:

Whatever is produced is impermanent, just like a jar.

As for the sound, it is also produced.

Whereas consequence resembles a statement of proof, it contains no example and uses the set format of “it follows...because”:

It follows that the subject, the sound, is not permanent because it is produced.⁵⁸⁰

Both lead the audience or opponent to an inferential understanding, but the first example indicates the criteria of the relevant evidence for inference directly (i.e. anything that is produced, such as jars and sound, are impermanent), while the second example does so indirectly.⁵⁸¹

Sumpa Khenpo discusses his monastic education in detail, listing the topics and texts covered during his studies alongside the names of his teachers and their credentials. With regards to epistemology and debating; he began memorising and practicing literature associated with the *Collected Topics* around the age of nine, and apparently displayed exceptional debating and reasoning skills from a very young age.⁵⁸² In his autobiography he recalls an encounter with the abbot of Sertri Monastery in 1711:

Without any competition in the areas of explication, debating, and composition, that great master (i.e. the abbot of Sertri) had disciplined his body, speech, and mind, and possessed the outstanding qualities of a monk.

⁵⁸⁰ Ibid; 207–208.

⁵⁸¹ Ibid.

⁵⁸² For more on *bsdus grwa* logic, see Sithar, K. (2008) ‘Introduction to Tibetan *bsDus Grwa* Logic’, *The Tibet Journal*, 33(1), pp. 29–39.

His overwhelming presence [was] like the shining light of the glorious moon. Even now in the mirror of my memory, I see him clearly. About the event [mentioned above]; later, when Lamo Geshe Ngawang Trinlé (Tib. La mo dGe bshes Ngag dbang 'phrin las pa)⁵⁸³ was staying at Dechen, a conversation took place between Sertri Tulku Rinpoche and that very Geshe, [and] I [subsequently] heard the following:

“The day before then, when I met the child (i.e. Sumpa Khenpo) I asked him “who are you?” and he replied, “I am Lama Sempa”.

I asked him “Where have you come from?” He said, “I came from China.”

I asked, “Did you come on horse or by foot?” He replied, “None of those. It appears I have come in a different way.”

Because he had come through the *bardo* stages, I said, “Yes, that’s true”, and I prodded him with my finger.

Then I asked again, “If you are a lama, why are you wearing sheep’s skin?” He answered back, “Well in that case, why are you wearing your fur cloak?” I was speechless.

Again, I asked, “If you’re a lama, teach the *dharma*.” He replied, “Can’t one forget?” For the third time, I was speechless.

Because of this I said, “As you have boxed me in,⁵⁸⁴ in the future you will be a wise one. A tsa!” and patted him on the head.⁵⁸⁵

⁵⁸³ I believe this is the First Amdo Shamar (Tib. Zhwa dmar), Ngawang Trinlé (1661–1726), who was closely affiliated with Lamo Dechen Monastery.

⁵⁸⁴ A term that is used at the end of a debate, when the opponent has been defeated three times.

⁵⁸⁵ *'chad rtsod rtsom la do zlas dben pa'i mkhas chen yongs 'dzin de nyid sku gsung thugs dul zhing btsun pa'i spyod lam phun sum tshogs pa'i gzi byin nya rgyas zla ba'i dpal bzhin du gsal bar bzhugs pa'i zhal dbyibs sogs da ltar yang dran pa'i me long du gsal bar snang | de'i skabs kyi don skor phyis su la mo dge bshes ngag dbang 'phrin las pa de nyid bde chen du bzhugs skabs su gsung bgros phyas pa gser khri sprul sku rin po che dang de kha'i dge bshes ngag gis gsan pa ni | de'i tshe snga nyin byis pa de mjal tshe khyod su yin zhes dris pas nga bla ma sems pa yin zhes lan ttab | gang nas 'ong dris pas rgya nag nas 'ong zhes zhus tshe rkang thang ngam zhon pa zhon 'ongs gsungs pas de gang yang ma yin pa'i 'ong lugs snang zhus pa na bar do pa yin pas de bden gsungs nas phyag mdzub gcig mnan | yang bla ma yin na slog pa ci la gyin zhes pa na 'o na khyod kyes pags thul ci la gyon zhus tshe gnyis pa mnan | yang bla ma yin na chos shod thod gsungs tshe brjed pa med dam zhus pas gsum pa mnan nas nga la 'khor gsum gsum song bas phyis su shes rab can zhis 'ong a tsa ma gsung nas mgo la byug pa mdzad | SK-CASS, folio 12(b); 4 – folio 13(a); 1.*

Sumpa Khenpo continued to practice his debating and studied Jamyang Zhepé's work on valid cognition. In 1726, he received the *lingse* degree after attending the Great Prayer Festival monastic round (Tib. *sMon lam grwa skor*) and proving himself unbeatable during his debates.⁵⁸⁶ The following year, he held public debates (Tib. *tshogs lang*s) in the debating courtyards (Tib. *chos ra*) of Drepung Monastery on the topics of the three refuges and Tsongkhapa's *Differentiation of the Interpretable and the Definitive* (Tib. *Drang nges rnam 'byed*), attaining a pleasing result. He also composed his own works on valid cognition, entitled *A Concise Presentation of Tenets and the Essential Jewel of the Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition* (Tib. *Tshad ma sde bdun gyi snying nor dang grub mtha'i rnam bzhag nyung 'dus*), focusing on Dharmakīrti's *Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition* and providing an overview of philosophical schools. Sumpa Khenpo was well versed in argumentation, logic, and rhetoric – the latter being made a compulsory topic under the Fifth Dalai Lama – which undoubtedly influenced the way he communicated with his audience, both in written and verbal form.⁵⁸⁷ The following sections will examine some examples of the rhetoric used by Sumpa Khenpo in his autobiography, focusing not only on the tools and devices used, but also the effect he may have intended to have on his audience.

⁵⁸⁶ Debate exams that took place during the Great Prayer Festival in Lhasa. Cabezon and Dorjee have found a reference which suggests the custom of debate exams dates back to the early seventeenth century. See Cabezon, J. I. and Dorjee, P. (2019) *Sera Monastery*. Somerville: Wisdom Publications.

⁵⁸⁷ Lo Bue, E. (2003) 'Scholars, Artists and Feasts', in Pommaret, F. (ed.) *Lhasa in the Seventeenth Century: The Capital of the Dalai Lamas*. Leiden: Brill, p.197.

The Orator

Perusing the dialogues and public speeches embedded in the autobiography,⁵⁸⁸ Sumpa Khenpo emerges as an outspoken, critical, and sometimes satirical orator. Whether he responds to the questions or requests of patrons, peers, or disciples, or uses anecdotes to explain himself and his position in the world, issues of religious hypocrisy and decay frequently emerge in his writings.

In reading Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography, we encounter a speaker who is engaged in truthfully representing the world around him, himself, and others and, as we have seen in Chapter one, who intends his life and writings to be of benefit to others.⁵⁸⁹ Sumpa Khenpo's investment in telling the truth can be compared with the ancient Greek *parrhesiastes*, the ethical truth-teller. Foucault sums up the concept of *parrhesia* as:

[...] parrhesia is a kind of verbal activity where the speaker has a specific relation to truth through frankness, a certain relationship to his own life through danger, a certain type of relation to himself or other people through criticism (self-criticism or criticism of other people), and a specific relation to moral law through freedom and duty. More precisely, parrhesia is a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth, and risks his life because he recognizes truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself). In parrhesia, the speaker uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or

⁵⁸⁸ David Jackson notes that Sumpa Khenpo's *Collected Works* are also filled with different forms of speechmaking, including a speech that should be recited by the reader during a long-life ceremony. Jackson proceeds with an overview of speechmaking in Tibet. Jackson, D. (1984) *The Mollas of Mustang: Historical, Religious and Oratorical Traditions of the Nepalese-Tibetan Borderland*. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, pp. 58–75.

⁵⁸⁹ Sumpa Khenpo writes that his works are an attempt to repay the kindness of his teachers, show respect for the Buddhist *dharma*, and to benefit all sentient beings. See *The Autobiography of Sumpa Khenpo* in Chapter one.

silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy.⁵⁹⁰

Sumpa Khenpo speaks with *parrhesia*, without holding back or concealing anything – traits that he links with ‘false lamas’ who are “full of pride, jealousy, lies, pretence, and so forth like a heap of faults.”⁵⁹¹ Foucault notes that in telling the truth, the *parrhesiastes* is at risk of death – not only literal death, but also personal loss such as one’s professional reputation – and endures the criticism of others.⁵⁹² As we will see in this chapter, Sumpa Khenpo, too, claims to have risked his life to tell the truth, and he discusses the consistent criticism he received from his peers.

Although *parrhesia* and rhetoric were understood to be in opposition to each other in ancient Greece, I believe that *parrhesia* can make use of methods of rhetoric to cement the argument and, similarly, rhetoric can draw on the figure of the *parrhesiastes* to bind the speaker to the content of the statement. That is, the individual presents themselves as a responsible and trustworthy person. The individual “aims to convince the listener or the audience by stating: ‘I tell the truth, and I truly think that it is true, and I truly think that I am telling the truth when I say it’, and that ‘I who am speaking am the person who judges these thoughts to be really true and I am also the person for whom they are true’.”⁵⁹³ This representation reinforces the relationship between truth and power and, more significant for

⁵⁹⁰ Foucault, M. (2001) *Michel Foucault: Fearless Speech*, edited by J. Pearson. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), pp. 19–20.

⁵⁹¹ *nga rgyal phrag dog zob rdzu sogs skyon gyi gong bur song ltar gyur* | SK-CASS, folio 4(a); 4.

⁵⁹² Foucault (2001); 20.

⁵⁹³ Dyrberg, T. (2014) *Foucault on the Politics of Parrhesia*. Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p.88.

us, enables Sumpa Khenpo to emphasise his morality, good character, and accomplishments, thus, gaining the respect of his audience and patrons.

This section will analyse Sumpa Khenpo's account of the 1727–1728 Civil War and his powerfully emotive anti-war speech as examples of his rhetoric, including his use of *parrhesia*. His retrospective account of the Civil War opens with:

Although they are certainly the fruit of shared as well as individual karma of sentient beings, sometimes the increase and decrease of the doctrine in a [certain] place and the happiness and suffering of the people is not only influenced by the words and deeds of the region's king and his ministers. It also depends on the words of some great individuals, such as very meritorious lamas, kings, and chiefs.⁵⁹⁴

This statement serves as a caution for his readers: the interests and security of the community or region do not fall solely into the domain of one person. It is a shared role between politicians, such as the king or a local chieftain, and religious figures, namely monks and lamas. This, he says, is “in accordance with histories of every kind” and he refers back to the glorious yesteryears “when the former *dharma* kings of India and Tibet steered [the way] with auspicious words [and] took care of religious and secular affairs in a righteous way; those places were filled with glorious virtue and happiness”.⁵⁹⁵ And so, from the beginning of his account, Sumpa Khenpo establishes a firm bond between religion and

⁵⁹⁴ *sems can spyi'i thun mong dang rang rang so so'i thun mong ma yin pa'i las kyi 'bras bu yin mod kyang / gnas skabs su sa phyogs gang de'i rgyal bstan gyi 'phel 'grib dang sems can gyi bde sdug ni yul phyogs gang de'i rgyal blon chen po dag gi gsung dang spyod pa'i rjes su 'brang bar ma zad | bsod nams chen po ldan pa'i bla ma rgyal dpon dang mi chen 'ga' zhig gi kha'i la nye la'ang rag las pa ni mngon sum nyid du 'grub ste | SK-CASS, folio 51(a); 4-6.*

⁵⁹⁵ *sngon gyi rgya gar dang bod kyi chos rgyal rnam kyis bkra shis pa'i gsung gis sngun bsus te bstan srid kyi bya ba drang por bskyangs tshe ljongs der dge legs bde skyid kyis khyab par gyur pa | SK-CASS, folio 51(a); 6.*

politics, promoting the ideals of *lugnyi* that were advocated during the reign of the Fifth Dalai Lama. The influence of religious figures in the political domain, according to Sumpa Khenpo, could be understood as an effective mechanism for translating spiritual authority into secular power. Further, he reminds his readers of the power of words. This is of particular importance here; later in this account he recalls a discussion which would determine whether the monks of the three great monasteries in Central Tibet would partake in the war. Sumpa Khenpo recounts a speech that he gave during this meeting, which he suggests heavily influenced the decision of those present. Before examining this speech in detail, a brief overview of the civil war and the circumstances in which the speech was given will be presented.

In August 1727, Khangchene, who had led the Tibetan cabinet, or Kashag (Tib. *bka' shag*), since 1721, was brutally stabbed to death by ministers of the Ü faction; mainly Lumpane (Tib. Lum pa nas bKra shis rgyal po), Ngaphopa (Tib. Nga phod pa rDo rje rgyal po), and Charrawa (Tib. sByar ra nas Blo gros rgyal po). The Ü ministers intended to inflict the same fate on Pholhane, another member of the Kashag and ally of Khangchene; sending soldiers towards Pholha (Tib. Pho lha) where the minister was residing at the time with his sick wife. Pholhane was able to flee before the soldiers arrived and went to form armies in Ngari, Tsang and Ladakh, instigating a civil war that lasted a year.⁵⁹⁶ The following months were marked by short-lived clashes across Tsang. High-ranking religious figures, such as the Seventh Dalai Lama, the Fifth Pañchen Lama, and the Thirtieth Sakya Tridzin (Tib. Sa

⁵⁹⁶ For detailed descriptions of the Civil War and its aftermath, see mDo mkhar ba Tshe ring rgyal dbang (2002) *Mi dbang rtogs brjod*. Khreng tu'u: Si khron mi rigs dpe skrun khang (TBRC ID W2DB25428), pp. 381–491; and Petech (1950); 111–157. Sumpa Khenpo also provides a brief account of the Civil War in his autobiography, see SK-CASS, folio 51(b) – folio 52(b) and folio 55(b) – folio 57(a).

skya khri 'dzin bSod nams rin chen; 1705–1741), sent letters, messengers, and gifts to both parties in an attempt to prevent further fighting – if not permanently, at least until the decision of the Yongzheng Emperor arrived. In April 1728, in part due to the devastating yet inconclusive warfare in Tsang, both parties reached an agreement of truce. This was short-lived; soon after an agreement had been reached, Pholhane declared that the truce had been breached by the Ü faction and wrote a letter to the Pañchen Lama stating that if he were to observe the agreement, the welfare of the people and the *dharma* would surely be harmed. He gathered his troops and headed for Lhasa.⁵⁹⁷

The arrival of Pholhane and his army at Yangpachen Monastery (Tib. Yangs pa can) to the northwest of Lhasa took the Ü ministers by surprise, and they recalled their troops to the city. It was during this period that the civil war was brought to the doorsteps of the monasteries near Lhasa, in which Sumpa Khenpo's account mainly takes place. According to Sumpa Khenpo, the Ü ministers were already in contact with monasteries in and around Lhasa, sending tea offerings to all the great monasteries and requesting that Pholhane's curses be averted, and that *tormas* (Tib. *gtor ma*), a symbolic ritual offering made from dough, and insults be thrown in his direction.⁵⁹⁸ This suggests that both sides had employed

⁵⁹⁷ Petech (1950); 135.

⁵⁹⁸ SK-CASS, folio 63(b). Tantric ritual 'war magic' involving mantras, charms, and sculptures became an important part of political legitimacy in Tibet. See Cuevas, B. (2019) 'The Politics of Magical Warfare', in Debreczeny, K. (ed.) *Faith and Empire: Art, Politics and Tibetan Buddhism*. New York: Rubin Museum of Art; Dalton, J. P. (2011) *The Taming of the Demons: Violence and Liberation in Tibetan Buddhism*. New Haven: Yale University Press; Gentry, J. D. (2010) 'Representations of Efficacy: The Ritual Expulsion of Mongol Armies in the Consolidation and Expansion of the Tsang (Gtsang) Dynasty', in Cabezón, J. I. (ed.) *Tibetan Ritual*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 131–163; FitzHerbert, S. G. (2018) 'Rituals as War Propaganda in the Establishment of the Ganden Phodrang State', in Travers, A. and Venturi, F. (eds.) *Buddhism and the Military in Tibet During the Ganden Phodrang Period (1642–1959)*, special issue of *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 27(1), pp. 49–119; and Yamamoto, C. (2012) *Vision and Violence: Lama Zhang and the Politics of Charisma in Twelfth-Century Tibet*. Leiden: Brill.

Buddhist ritual experts during the civil war to perform rituals on their behalves. With the armies of Tsang, Ladakh, and Ngari approaching Lhasa, the ministers sent a messenger to Ganden Monastery encouraging its monks to take up arms, insisting that Pholhane and his troops would certainly harm the Seventh Dalai Lama if they reached Lhasa.⁵⁹⁹ Subsequently, the monks of the three great monasteries and the upper and lower tantric colleges met at Gomang College, in the presence of government officials and high lamas from other institutions, to discuss this issue further. What follows is a rousing speech by Sumpa Khenpo in which he states numerous reasons as to why monks should not participate in battle:

As I was young and foolish, I expressed the following words without fear, even if the Tibetan government would throw me into the river:

“We came here from the mighty Amdo via a long and empty road, having taken measure of the white clouds of the land of snow (i.e. Tibet) and gauging the dark earth with our footsteps. Thus, we met with the victorious one, father and son (i.e. the Dalai Lama and Pañchen Lama),⁶⁰⁰ extraordinary *geshes*, monasteries, meditation centers, and the three supports [of body, speech, and mind]. We have kept the precept vows and have studied thoroughly. Having

For more on ritual war magic outside of Tibet, see Davies, O. (2018) *A Supernatural War: Magic, Divination, and Faith During the First World War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Farrer, D. S. (ed.) (2016) *War Magic: Religion, Sorcery and Performance*. New York: Beghahn; Nicolini, B. (ed.) *Studies in Witchcraft, Magic, War and Peace in Africa: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. New York: Edwin Mellen Press; Walde, J. (2016) ‘Going Berserk: Battle Trance and Ecstatic Holy Warriors in the European War Magic Tradition’, *The International Journal of Transpersonal Studies* 38(1), pp. 21–38. In 2014, *The International Journal of Anthropology* published a volume entitled ‘War Magic and Warrior Religion: Sorcery, Cognition and Embodiment’, Vol. 58 (1).

⁵⁹⁹ SK-CASS, folio 54(b).

⁶⁰⁰ Thank you to Dr George Fitzherbert for pointing out that *rgyal ba rab sras* is often used in reference to the Dalai Lama and Pañchen Lama. The same expression is found in the biography of the First Jetsun Dampa concerning the recognition of both figures and is briefly discussed by Schwieger in his book, *The Dalai Lama and The Emperor of China*. Bareja-Starzyńska, A. (2010) ‘The Mongolian Incarnation of Jo nang pa Tāranātha Kun dga' snying po: Öndör Gegeen Zanabazar Bio bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1635-1723): A case study of the Tibeto-Mongolian Relationship’, in Vitali, R. (ed.) *The Earth Ox Papers: Proceedings on the International Seminar of Tibetan and Himalayan Studies*. Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, p. 243; and Schwieger (2015); 252–253.

thought how wonderful it would be if the seeds of liberation are sown with pure karma, I came here. I would not even dream of taking the life of a small insect, let alone go to battle. If we join the army now, we will become something similar to what the *Abhidharmakośa* said, “Because they are equal to the army, all the agents (i.e. the soldiers) possess the same [guilt].” Secondly, in ancient times when Śākyamuni lived, the army of King Udrāyaṇa once conquered the whole Śākya clan. At the time, even if they had a monk on their side that could throw an elephant with each arm, not a single monk of the Śākya clan went to fight.

Furthermore, is it possible to find [among] all the objects of knowledge (i.e. books), even if 100,000 omniscient individuals searched for many years, one who has harmed the highest master (i.e. the Dalai Lama); an emanation of Avalokiteśvara who is the most noble one in the three worlds, specifically the crown ornament of the land of snows (i.e. Tibet)? If at present in our common impure perception (Tib. *mthun snang*) such a person has certainly come, although it would lower our lives and spoil our vows, it would be appropriate for [us] all to go to war. But again, if Chinese people and troops come, [we] cannot determine if it will bring unhappiness or not, and consequently it will be a sin (Tib. *skyon*), even if we repent (Tib. *gyod*); we must think carefully while we have the power and the freedom.

As for the reason that we [should] fear the damage to come; previously, when the people of Amdo and China were in conflict, [there were] some so-called monks that gave the doctrine a bad name. At that time, the unwholesome seeds of [their] previous lives ripened into the fruit of hundreds of crimes that fell from the blooming tree of poisonous thorns, and [they] joined the war. Because of this, [those monks] said to Chubsang Rinpoche, who held the position of abbot of three great monasteries of Amdo, “Don’t stop the many monks from joining the army.” Then, [when] Chubsang Rinpoche, the teacher of Serkhog Monastery, and many elder monks climbed two flights of stairs in the Yamen building, [they were] offered to the fire (i.e. burnt alive).

This is what I heard. Therefore, I am unable to give approval to go to war, [something that is] against the *dharma*. If fighting as a soldier would not only not pollute the Dalai Lama with its crime, but would even be of service to him, and would not harm the reputation of great monasteries, but would be beneficial [to them], I myself would become a general.” Thus, I promised.⁶⁰¹

Sumpa Khenpo urged nonparticipation by addressing both ethical conduct and the prospect of an undesirable situation through argumentation and other rhetorical strategies. He begins by establishing a shared identity with members of the audience; speaking directly to those from Amdo who had traversed similar paths to reach Central Tibet. As Irvine points out, speech shares some of the characteristics of clothing styles; they can be put on and

⁶⁰¹ *kho bo lo na gzhon cing blun pas sde ba gzhung gis gtsang por skyur sogs la'ang ma 'dzem par 'di skad | rang res dbang phyogs a mdo'i khams nas shul lam ring mo brgyud de gangs can phyogs kyi sprin dkar por tshad bzung sa gzhi nag po gom 'gros kyis gzhali te 'dir sleb nas | rgyal ba yab sras dge ba'i bshes gnyen grwa sa sgrub sde rten gsum khyad par can la mjal te bslab sdom bsrung zhing slob gnyer dpyis phyin pa zhig byas nas rnam par dkar ba'i las kyis thar pa'i sa bon zhig bskrun na ci ma rung snyam nas 'ongs pa las gzhan g'yul 'gyed ma zad srin bu phra mo tsam gyi srog kyang gcod bsam pa rmi lam du'ang med cing | de res dmag la phyin na mdzod du dmag la sogs par don gcig phyir | thams cad byed pa po bzhin ldan | zhes pa ltar 'gyur ba dang | gnyis na sngon rgya gar du shākya thub dbang bzhugs dus su rgyal po u dra ya na'i dmag gis shākya pa thams cad bcom dus su shākya'i btsun pa glang chen lag pa re 'phen nus pa'i stobs rtsal che tshun chad gcig kyang dmag la ma byon mod |*
'on kyang sa gsum gyi rtse mor mngon par 'phags shing bye brag tu kha ba ri ba'i gtsug gi rgyan du gyur pa'i 'phags pa 'jig rten dbang phyug gi yang sprul sku gzhogs rtse la gnod pa byed mkhan rnam mkhyen 'bum gyis lo grangs mang la btsal kyang shes bya'i khyon las rnyed pa ga pa srid | de ltar na yang da res mthun snang ma dag pa'i ngor de lta'i rnam pa 'ong nges yin na srog la bab pa dang sdom pa nyams kyang kun dmag la 'gro 'os mod kyang |
slar rgya rgyal gyi mi sna dang dmag 'ong na mi bde ba 'ong mi 'ong da dus ma dpyad par bya byed thal nas slar 'gyod kyang 'phyi skyon yin pas da cha rang dbang dang long skabs su yangs dus mno bsam theng dgos te |
phyis su nye zho yong ngam snyam du dogs pa'i rgyu mtshan ni | sngar mtsho sngon po pa dang rgya 'khrugs dus su gna' dus mi dge'i sa bon grung bos bskyed pa'i nyes brgya'i snye ma da dus dar la babs pa las thon pa'i dug tsher rkang 'thung ches cher rgyas pa'i ser gzugs bstan pa'i zhabs 'dren 'ga' zhig dmag la song bar brten nas a mdo'i dgon chen gsum gyi mkhan po mdzad pa'i chu bzang rin po che la khyod kyis grwa pa tsho ma bkag par mang po dmag la song 'dug zer nas khong dang gser khog dgon gyi chos rje grwa rgan mang po ya mon grong go khang pa gnyis rim gyi steng du bskor nas me'i bzhud phul sogs thos pas | da res btsun dmag phyin chos mi chog gi zhu ba 'bul rgu'i rngo mi thogs | gal te phyin na phyis su sku zhabs rin po cher nyes pa'i dri mas mi gos par ma zad zhabs tog tu 'gyur ba dang grwa sa chen po mams kyi la rgyar mi gnod par phan pa'i nges pa 'drong na dmag dpon gcig la nga rang 'gro zhes khas blang | SK-CASS, folio 54(b); 4 – folio 55(b); 5.

changed to suit the occasion and the situation.⁶⁰² As such, speech becomes the embodiment of a person's identity by identifying the person's group membership – in this case an Amdowa. Similarities can be drawn here with Martin Luther King Jr. and Jerry Falwell Sr., who both employ biblical language when addressing their audience – namely Christians – creating a shared identity with their listeners. This interaction between audience and speaker determines the choice of words, metaphors, anecdotes, and so forth, employed by the speaker. His audience would have most likely witnessed or at least heard stories of the 1723–1724 rebellion in Amdo. The uprising resulted in the annexation of Tsongon by the Empire and is one of the most vital events to have impacted the distribution of power in the region in the first half of the eighteenth century. The suppression of the unrest, in which monks from Gonlung and other monasteries in the region partook, was accompanied by brutal massacres of Tibetan lamas and the destruction of several monasteries between 1723 and 1724. Sumpa Khenpo uses personal testimony - claiming that his teacher, Chubsang Rinpoche, was killed as a result of failing to prevent his monks from joining in the fighting. This poignant anecdote also resembles the Nyāya syllogisms:

It is wrong to fight (the thesis).

Chubsang Rinpoche was burnt alive for failing to prevent his monks from joining the war (inference from testimony/something prior).

Thus, I cannot give approval to go to war (the conclusion).

The audience are entrusted with drawing inference from this testimony, perhaps reflecting on their own experience or knowledge to form a conclusion. At the time of this speech, the

⁶⁰² Irvine, J. (2001) ‘‘Style’ as Distinctiveness. The Culture and Ideology of Linguistic Differentiation’, in Eckert, P. and Rickford, J. R. (eds.) *Style and Sociolinguistic Variation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 38.

reconstruction of Gonlung had not yet begun, and Sumpa Khenpo reflected on the true cost of the destruction in Amdo in his autobiography:

Many wise people, spiritual mentors, and members of the *saṅgha* were killed, the monastery, meditation colleges, and temples were destroyed, and many other blessed objects and scriptures were burnt at that place. Even if the monastery and meditation colleges are later revived, the splendour and power of this place will have deteriorated and it will become an inauspicious place. I thought that it had become difficult to generate faith, the aspiration to reach enlightenment, and true realisation etc. in the minds of those who live there; their minds were rough, they were reluctant to perform activities in conformity with the *dharmā*, and internal strife weakened their interest in the excellent doctrine. It was clear [to me] that the defilement of teachings and the weakening of people's merit in that area had taken place.⁶⁰³

The speech also emphasises the potential cost of the arrival of Qing troops; “[...] if Chinese people and troops come (i.e. Qing troops), [we] cannot determine if it will bring unhappiness or not, and consequently it will be a sin, even if we repent; we must think carefully while we have the power and the freedom.” This is not surprising: in a memorial sent by the Chinese military commander, Nian Gengyao (Ch. 年羹尧 Nián Gēngyáo; 1679–1726), to the Yongzheng Emperor following the rebellion, he wrote that the death toll of those linked with the uprising was 6,000, while the death toll of imperial troops was 27.⁶⁰⁴

⁶⁰³ *skyes bu dam pa dang dge ba'i bshes gnyen dang dge 'dun mang po bkrong ba dang dgon pa sgrub sde lha khang bshig ste rten gsum byin rlabs can gzhan mang po dang gsung rab mes bsregs sar slar dgon pa sgrub sde chags kyang gnas kyi gzi bying dang nus pa nyams shing bkra shis mi shis pa'i gnas su gyur nas / der gnas pa'i mi'i rgyud la dad pa byang sems sogs rtogs pa bzang po skye dka' ba dang sems rgyud rtsub pa dang chos mthun gyi bya byed la mi dga' ba dang nang mi mthun pa dang dam pa'i chos la mos pa zhan sogs dang / phyogs de'i bstan pa nyams shing 'gro ba'i bsod nams dman par gyur song 'dug snyam pa na / SK-CASS, folio 36(b); 5–7.*

⁶⁰⁴ Sullivan (2013); 339.

Although these statistics are somewhat dubious, Chinese and Tibetan sources agree that the severe losses were far from balanced. Thus, it is no surprise that Sumpa Khenpo would encourage his audience to reflect on the heavy cost of combat, evoking *pathos* in his audience. This first-hand experience of the consequences of conflict on monasteries and its inhabitants through engaging in violence had a lasting impression on Sumpa Khenpo and, most likely, others from the same region.

Through drawing on collective memories, social solidarity and shared identities are forged. Sumpa Khenpo takes this one step further by combining living memory with the recalling of the slaughter of the Śākya clan, in his emotive argument against joining the fighting this time.

[...] in ancient times when Śākyamuni lived, the army of King Udrāyaṇa once conquered the whole Śākya clan. At the time, even if they had a monk on their side that could throw an elephant with each arm, not a single monk of the Śākya clan went to fight.

In this story, Sumpa Khenpo emphasises Buddhist principles, ethical conduct, and the absolute rejection of war by projecting his audience back to the defeat of the Śākya clan.⁶⁰⁵ Firstly, this quote emphasises practical ethical concerns – even if one is on the winning side (or has the potential to win), they should not fight. Through carefully freeing the Śākya monks from charges of cowardice, Sumpa Khenpo obviates the objection of opposing violence out of fear of losing. This is similar to some of the conscientious objector rhetoric

⁶⁰⁵ Sumpa Khenpo names the king as Udrāyaṇa (Tib. u dray a na), however, it was king Virūdhaka of Kośala who is said to have massacred the Śākya clan. King Udrāyaṇa converted to Buddhism and commissioned the first sandalwood statue of the Buddha. See Berger, P. A. (2003) *Empire of Emptiness: Buddhist art and Political Authority in Qing China*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, p. 164; and Hirata, S. (1995) 'Zen Buddhist Attitudes to War', in Heisig, J. W. and Maraldo, J. C. (eds.) *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School and the Question of Nationalism*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, pp. 3–4.

from the First World War, where a good deal of stress was placed on defending oneself against accusations of cowardice, fear, and incompetence.⁶⁰⁶ The Śākya monks' refusal to act for the sake of their clan and country was rooted in their belief that the *dharma* transcends any political, emotive, and/or national concerns — an attitude that Sumpa Khenpo was keen to stress to his peers in hope that their own conviction would rise above regional ties or civic concerns. It is also worth emphasising here the weight of scriptural authority and religious histories, which plays an essential role in speechmaking both inside and outside Tibet. Drawing on religious history was considered one of the eight parts of speechmaking in the fifteenth century compendium, *The Treasury of Saying, The Wish-Fulfilling Gem* (Tib. *bShad mdzod yid bzhin nor bu*),⁶⁰⁷ and the significance of scripture in rhetoric more generally has already been discussed in this chapter. Drawing on a well-known narrative embedded in Buddhist history would have added gravitas to Sumpa Khenpo's statements.

This tale is juxtaposed with the activities of the monks during the Tsongon rebellion where “the unwholesome seeds of [their] previous lives ripened into the fruit of hundreds of crimes that fell from the blooming tree of poisonous thorns [...]” Thorns and sharp plants have been identified as a cross-cultural metaphor for unpleasant feelings and suffering.⁶⁰⁸ We need look no further than Christ's crown of thorns, which symbolises his

⁶⁰⁶ For more on the rhetoric of World War I Conscientious Objectors, see Adelsward, V. (1998) ‘Moral Dilemmas and Moral Rhetoric in Interviews with Conscientious Objectors’, *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 31:3-4, pp. 439–464; and Sayre, R. (1992) ‘Rhetorical Defenses: The Autobiographies of World War I Conscientious Objectors’, *Autobiography Studies* 7:1, pp. 62–81.

⁶⁰⁷ David Jackson discusses this text in more detail. See Jackson (1984); 63–64.

⁶⁰⁸ Becker, U. (1994) *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Symbols*. New York: Continuum Publishing, p. 300.

atonement and suffering on the cross.⁶⁰⁹ In a poem by the renowned Chinese poet and official, Bai Juyi (Ch. 白居易 Bájūyì; 772–846), entitled ‘Mother Leaving Her Children’, the abandoned wife of a general is described as a “thorn in his eye” symbolising the unhappy state of the marriage and, perhaps, her physical appearance which is in stark contrast with the general’s second wife who is likened to a water-lily.⁶¹⁰ Sumpa Khenpo frequently uses the image of thorns in his autobiography to describe unpleasant situations and places. As we saw in his description of Toli, his birthplace, the absence of thorns is used to indicate its beauty and serenity (see Chapter two).

Thorns can also be used to describe hurtful words and deceit. Virtanen, for example, notes that the writings of the Tibetan poet, Dhondup Gyal (Tib. Don grub rgyal; 1953–1985), are infused with tales of sharp, wounding words which are likened to a “poisonous thorn piercing the holes of the ears” (Tib. *rna ba'i bug a 'bigs pa'i dug tsher*).⁶¹¹ Sumpa Khenpo determines that the source of harm (i.e. the deaths of monks in Amdo) is due to “some so-called monks” who have abused their power and authority, employing the metaphor of the thorns as a tool for reinforcing and accentuating his thesis.

Sumpa Khenpo also contrasts their bad conduct with his own moral stance, stating that he “would not even dream of taking the life of a small insect, let alone go to battle”. This could be seen as an attempt to accentuate his expertise, trustworthiness, and authority in order to consolidate and validate his statements. It also serves to distinguish himself from

⁶⁰⁹ Ferguson, G. (1961) *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art*. New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 39

⁶¹⁰ Wong, Y. W. (1988) *Essays on Chinese Literature: A Comparative Approach*. Singapore: Singapore University Press, p. 155.

⁶¹¹ Virtanen (2011); 80.

the monks and lamas that he goes on to criticise – as briefly alluded to in Chapter one, Sumpa Khenpo’s writings about his own moral conduct can be seen as a rhetorical antidote to the immoral behaviour shown by others.

Before re-counting his speech, Sumpa Khenpo remarks; “as I was young and foolish, I expressed the following words without fear, even if the Tibetan government would throw me into the river”. He later recalls that he was poisoned by supporters of the Ü ministers. The poison caused convulsions, lack of consciousness, and heart palpitations, which the great physician Washul stated was difficult to cure.⁶¹² The inclusion of these details enhances his portrayal as an honest and dependable character who reasons wholeheartedly with conviction, conforming to the standards of Buddhist reasoning and in line with the role of the *parrhesiastes* who, as Foucault states, “uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy.”⁶¹³ It is also worth noting that Sumpa Khenpo offers conditions under which fighting would be acceptable: if it would not bring spiritual or reputational damage upon the Dalai Lama; or when the spiritual and reputational damage sustained in fighting would be less than that sustained in defeat. This kind of speechmaking is a vaunted rhetorical strategy because it emphasises the consideration to which a matter has been subject. Sumpa Khenpo is, in essence, saying; ‘I’ve thought really hard about this, and yes, there are instances when it’s appropriate to do what you’re advocating. However, the present situation is not one of those instances for these reasons...’.

⁶¹² SK-CASS, folio 55(b).

⁶¹³ Foucault (2001); 19–20.

The matter of mobilising troops was discussed for three days in total, which suggests that other monks also opposed the call to arms. According to his autobiography, his speech successfully persuaded the majority of monks not to join the war. Not everyone was moved by his speech: Sumpa Khenpo discusses how the Kongpo monks of Loseling College (Tib. Blo gsal gling), Deyang College (Tib. bDe yangs), and Ngagpa College (Tib. sNgags pa) supported the army through ritual activities and continued making *tormas*. The Ü army contained many Kongpo troops, so it seems that despite his speech, regional ties were still a strong motive for many.⁶¹⁴ However, with only a small number of monks joining the Ü army, it remained weak and weary. As such, when the Tsang army arrived, they “drove out the Ü soldiers like baby birds by a hawk and they vanished without a trace, and the Tsang army occupied Lhasa. Phola *Taiji* arrived and apprehended the evil ministers and others.”⁶¹⁵

A close examination of this speech permits a view on memories and identity, and how shared experiences can be produced and reproduced to fit certain agendas. In the case of Sumpa Khenpo’s opposition to monks joining in warfare, the author draws on recent violence in Amdo to remind his peers of the dire consequences of battle and the need to opt for a more passive approach to establish stability. Having witnessed the turmoil of the eighteenth century, and with the increasing tensions in Amdo following the migration of groups from south to the north of the Yellow River, it comes as no surprise that Sumpa Khenpo felt the need to accentuate both the devastation and misery caused by conflict, and

⁶¹⁴ Petech (1972); 123 and 132.

⁶¹⁵ *dbus pa'i dmag bya khras bye'u bdas pa ltar gar song cha med du btang nas lha sar bla ste pho la tha'i ji byon nas bdud blon sogs bzung* / SK-CASS, folio 56(a); 2–3.

the much-needed role of religious figures in mediating and, hopefully, limiting the damage caused.

Through referring to the tale of the Śākya clan's defeat, Sumpa Khenpo employs the obligatory Buddhist (and scriptural) justification to reinforce his audiences' shared Buddhist identity and their duty to uphold Buddhist principles; both of which also shape his writings. As we will see in the next section, the use of well-established stylistic convention is combined with Sumpa Khenpo's own individual style to create an autobiography and rhetorical techniques that are time-honoured and valued, whilst also being distinctive and striking, thus producing something conventional and memorable all at once.

The Virtuous Narrator

A frequent feature of Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography are the themes of virtue, ethical conduct and morality, which are often juxtaposed with the corruption he witnessed. For example, referring to the dishonesty and hypocrisy within the *tulku* system,⁶¹⁶ he makes comments such as:

[They] are deceiving like the rainbow, it might be beautiful to the eyes but no wise person whosoever would honour them. Shamelessly wearing the saffron robes of a lama; pretending to be a noble person who supposedly knows his past lives [...] Through appearing as high religious practitioners, they conceal

⁶¹⁶ Max Oidtmann's recent book on the origins and practice of the 'Golden Urn' sheds light on concerns in the late eighteenth century, when Sumpa Khenpo was writing his autobiography, displayed by the highest ranks of the Qing imperium regarding corruption among Gelugpa hierarchs. They were especially concerned with the processes for recognising the reincarnations of powerful lamas. This suggests that these concerns were shared between the Qing and leading Tibetan Buddhist hierarchs of the period. Oidtmann (2018).

[their interests in] the eight worldly *dharmas*. Although robed, they are empty of the stages and paths [of enlightenment].⁶¹⁷

Time and again, Sumpa Khenpo draws our attention to the complexities of the social and religious world around him, in which appearances and realities are rarely in accord. These criticisms are often presented in contrast to his own conduct:

When I grew up, due to past karmic footprints, I supposedly possessed the behaviour of a moral person; honest, gentle, disciplined, tolerant, and so on. After that, for my own sake I studied and reflected [on the teachings] extensively, not [just] partially or briefly, [like] bringing stone down on bone.⁶¹⁸ I meditated on and practiced the meaning of that, and then I achieved fruition. [My] resounding fame spread and, attaining a high throne, my activities for the sake of others increased, and the benefit for religion and state was immense.⁶¹⁹

Through contrast, Sumpa Khenpo lays emphasis on the importance and necessity of moral conduct, which he believed to be deteriorating at the time and which could have a considerable impact on the status and prosperity of monasteries such as Gonlung. It is also worth noting here that Sumpa Khenpo views his actions as benefitting the state and the *dharma*, recognising his own role in enacting *lugnyi* and suggesting that this is a requirement of a respectable lama. Moreover, the use of contrast could be seen as an attempt to accentuate

⁶¹⁷ *gzha' tshon rmongs man mig lam mdzes gyur kyang || blo ldan su zhig gtsug gi rgyan du re || bag med bla gos ngur smrig gis klubs te || skyes rabs mkhyen tshul dam par rlom 'ga' yis || [...] chos brgyad shun pa rim mang steng chos pa'i || SK-CASS, folio 6(b); 7 – folio 7(a); 2.*

⁶¹⁸ This is similar to a Welsh saying, 'dyfal donc a dyr y garreg', tapping persistently breaks the stone (i.e. if one works persistently and dedicates themselves, they will achieve their goal).

⁶¹⁹ *gzhon dus su sngon gyi bag chags dbang gis bya byed legs la yid gzhung ba des pa dul ba bzod pa la sogs pa'i skye bo ya rabs kyi spyod pa ldan tshul dang | de rjes rang don du gsung rab rgya chen por phyogs re ba dang rags sam min pa'i thos bsam rdo rus gtug par byas te de'i don la sgom sgrub bgyis nas de'i 'bras bu smin pa dang | snyan pa'i grags pa rgyas shing gdan sa mthon por son pa dang | gzhan don du 'phrin las brtas te spyir bstan srid la rgyar phan pa rgya chen po dang || SK-CASS, folio 5(a); 6–7.*

his own moral character and good qualities. As discussed in Chapter one, self-aggrandisement is a common trope in Tibetan autobiographical writing, often competing with the need for humility, which serves to legitimise his role as a role model or guide for readers and strengthens the claims made throughout his autobiography.⁶²⁰ Examples of the themes discussed above are presented in a selection of stories taken from his autobiography.

In the summer of the Wood Hare year (1734), Sumpa Khenpo was travelling back to Gonlung. He had spent a year at Sera Lung Monastery, where he had established a hermitage called Ganden Chodzong and bestowed a Vajramālā empowerment to the local devotees as well as sponsors from near and far, across Tibet, Mongolia, and China. En route, he visited a hot spring and stayed a few days with Mongolian families who suffered from sickness. Sumpa Khenpo gave protection-blessings and performed rituals to aid the ailing, and then continued on his way to Gonlung. He later heard that the households he had visited had perished, yet he and his retinue, who had also come into contact with the illness, had survived:

A hermit from Tiyanchi Monastery (Tib. Ti yan chi) called Habdar Kachu (Tib. Hab dar dka' bcu) who had performed a fasting practice (Tib. *smyung gnas*) of the 1,000-armed Avalokiteśvara ritual, told me that at the place we had stayed the night, the sickness had developed into bubonic plague (Tib. *'phyi nad*; lit. 'marmot disease').⁶²¹ All the members of more than ten families, along with the monks that recited auspicious funeral prayers, had

⁶²⁰ A discussion of the interplay between self-aggrandisement and humility can be found in *Tibetan Buddhist Biographical Writing* in Chapter one.

⁶²¹ Also known as marmot's plague. According to Orent; "The three explosive human-to-human epidemics in the last century, as well as many other smaller pneumonic bursts in Manchuria, in Tibet, in China, that for lack of further exposure did not spread, were caused by marmot plague [...]" Orent, W. (2004) *Plague: The Mysterious Past and Terrifying Future of the World's Most Dangerous Disease*. New York: Free Press, p. 205.

perished [...] I survived such an awful epidemic due to the protection of the three jewels, whose compassion is like the uncovered sunlight that passes each day. As such, having witnessed its protection we made extensive offerings and meditated on their permanent abiding (Tib. *gtan chags*) in the centre of our hearts.⁶²²

As we can see, Sumpa Khenpo attributes this marvel to a strong faith in the Buddhist *dharma*, stating that taking refuge in the Three Jewels had resulted in their protection.

At first glance, this anecdote appears to promote the power of *dharma* and the necessity of strong faith and devotion. However, when framed within the socio-political context of the period, the tale takes on additional meanings; such as the importance of the proliferation and maintenance of Gelugpa practice, scholasticism, and orthodoxy across Inner Asia. As we will see, this was one of Sumpa Khenpo's greatest concerns – he believed there to be corruption and deceit at Gonlung and other monasteries in the region, which not only impacted the quality of the *dharma* but could have a profound impact on the reputation and patronage of the monasteries. And so, Sumpa Khenpo is not only writing his autobiography as a champion of correct religious practice and an exemplar of *lugnyi*, but he uses this medium to leave a deep impression on the reader's mind regarding the importance of convention and commitment to propagating Buddhism. In many ways, he was upholding and advocating the principles and legacy of the Fifth Dalai Lama – a common thread throughout his autobiography, which can also be gleaned in the pilgrimages he took (see

⁶²² *ti yan chi dgon gyi ri khrod pa hab dar dka' bcu zhes pa spyen ras gzigs kyi cho ga'i sgo nas smyung gnas stong bsrung pa de byung nas sngar khyed rnams zhag bzhugs gnang sa'i nad pa tsho la 'phyi nad byung ba yin 'dug pas de'i yams chen mched de khyim bcu lhag gi mi kun dang shid dge 'don pa po ser mo pa dang bcas pa las gcig kyang ma lus par gum song / [...] de lta na yang nad yams de lta bu dpe zlas bral ba ma 'gos pa ni mchog gsum srung ma'i thugs rje de nyid rer nyi 'od spros pa yol ba med bzhin yin pas des rang re skyabs shing bsrung bar mthong nas gtang rag mchod pa rgya chen phul te snying ga'i ze'u 'brur gtan chags bsgom / SK-CASS, folio 77(b); 4–7.*

Chapter three) and the medicinal practices discussed in Chapter five. In his writings, we once again see Sumpa Khenpo as a ‘normal exception’. He incorporates traditional rhetorical devices and tropes with his own personal flair; adhering to convention yet also leaving his own stamp.

In 1775, not long before his third term as abbot of Gonlung, Sumpa Khenpo travelled to Wutai Shan, where he met with Changkya Rolpé Dorje, as discussed in Chapter three. At that time the tenure of the current abbot of Gonlung had come to an end, and the elders of the monastery wrote to Changkya Rolpé Dorje to inquire about what should be done. Sumpa Khenpo recalls his response to this letter:

His lordship (i.e. Changkya Rolpé Dorje) gave me a blessing scarf and instructed, “I have heard that at this time it is as though that great monastery (i.e. Gonlung) has many heads and that the discipline and teachings are in decline. You (i.e. Sumpa Khenpo) [should] serve as abbot for about a year. If you restore [things there], this will be beneficial to the teachings and beings of Amdo.”⁶²³

Changkya Rolpé Dorje’s evaluation of the situation suggests that standards of training and discipline at Gonlung had deteriorated. Sumpa Khenpo’s autobiography talks of philandering, consumption of alcohol, and theft at the monastery, and he saw the need to manage the discipline of the monastery and encourage the correct forms of conduct. Elisabeth Stutchbury discusses the trend of cyclical revival in Buddhism – often at times when the integrity of the doctrine has eroded – and the need for Buddhist communities to rejuvenate themselves inwardly to protect their tradition from disappearing and secure

⁶²³ *sku zhabs nas ngos la lha dar dkar po gnang nas bar skabs 'dir grwa sa de nyid mgo mang lta bur gyur nas sgrig lam 'chad nyan nyams dma' ba'i gam thos pas | khyed rang lo re tsam la gdan sa mdzad de nyams gsos byas na a mdo'i ljongs kyi bstan 'gror sman par 'dug ces bka' phab pa la | SK-CASS, folio 213(b); 6–7.*

patronage.⁶²⁴ This duality of the role of abbot – between upholding religious piety and discipline, and securing adequate patronage – is captured in Sumpa Khenpo’s metaphor of “a bat shows its teeth and wings but is never accepted by either rats nor birds.”⁶²⁵ Through embodying multiple roles, he is unable to focus entirely on any one aspect; by focusing on religious affairs in the monastery, he would ruffle the feathers of those with lax standards, while focusing on patronage would ruffle the feathers of the most pious. That is, no matter what he was to do as abbot, he would never garner the full support of his community. Comparison could be drawn with the role of Principal of an Oxford College, who has to balance the academic and research reputation of the college with its economic and financial standing, often causing conflict with members of the governing body favouring opposite sides. And so, sacrificing one’s own preferences and priorities for the sake of the *dharma* and the community can be seen as an attempt by Sumpa Khenpo to demonstrate his commitment and integrity and is repeated elsewhere in his autobiography.

However, the metaphor may have a deeper meaning: the bat is commonly used to describe those skilled at mediating and strategies of identity negation, linking themselves with multiple local and national networks.⁶²⁶ It is neither bird nor rat yet has the capacity to imitate both.⁶²⁷ As a lama hailing from Amdo, Sumpa Khenpo was accustomed to interacting

⁶²⁴ Stutchbury, E. (1991) *Rediscovering Western Tibet: Gonpa, Chorten and the Continuity of Practice with a Tibetan Buddhist Community in the Indian Himalaya*. PhD Thesis. Australian National University.

⁶²⁵ *pha wang gis so bstan nas byi ba dang gshog pa bstan nas byi'u'i khyur tshang na yang gang gi'ang gral du ma chud zer ba* [...] / SK-CASS, folio 103(b); 1.

⁶²⁶ Bats feature in myths across many cultures as mediators. For example, Anthony Jackson studies a Naxi ritual text in which the bat appears to be a messenger between gods and humans. See Jackson, A. (1979) *Na-khi Religion: An Analytical Appraisal of Na-Khi Ritual Texts*. The Hague: Mouton; and Virtanen (2011); 77.

⁶²⁷ Charles Ramble has translated a wonderful text that focuses on the ‘Capable Bat’. A section of the text deals exclusively with the perceived mish-mash of features; “[...] you have the body of a man and the head of a rat; this is the first omen signifying that you ought not to have been born; you have the wings of a bird and

with different groups, often acting as an interlocutor between the Tibetan, Mongolian, Manchu, and Han worlds. This metaphor may suggest, then, that Sumpa Khenpo considered the ability to imitate and connect with multiple networks a key skill of an abbot – especially within an area where there were different constellations of localised power – once again drawing attention to the importance of *lugnyi*. It could also be hinting at the difficulties associated with the perceived shared allegiances and identities, which Sumpa Khenpo had to carefully negotiate and balance as an intermediary.

Despite his hostile attitude towards the position, Sumpa Khenpo served as abbot of Gonlung for three terms, which is more than any other abbot prior to the twentieth century.⁶²⁸ Equally important is the fact that he served during Gonlung’s time of rebuilding, following its destruction during the Lobsang Tenzin rebellion, and he was therefore an important witness to the monastery’s many struggles during this period. The Lobsang Tenzin rebellion was a critical event in Amdo’s history: following the decision to intervene, the Qing were intent on implementing changes to prevent any future conflicts. Nian Gengyao, who was commander-in-chief of the Qing armies in Tsongon, presented a thirteen-point memorial in 1724, which suggested ways in which the local Mongol aristocrats and people of Amdo could be pacified.⁶²⁹ Among these was the suggestion of taking advantage of the empire’s military victory to expand its control over the region. As part of this process, the newly

the claws of a rat – the second omen signifying that you ought not to have been born; third, your avian body has the ears of a rat – the third omen etc.” Ramble, C. (2014) ‘Real and Imaginary Tibetan Chimeras and their Special Powers’, *Mongolo-Tibetica Pragensia* 7(2), p. 18. The intelligence and cunning of the bat is also illustrated in the popular Tibetan tale about how the bat won the daughter of the nightingale for his bride by tricking the birds, see Roesler, U. (2011) *Frühe Quellen zum Buddhistischen Stufenweg in Tibet: Indische und tibetische Traditionen im “dPe chos” des Po-to-ba Rin-chen-gsal*, Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, no. 8.2.8 and fn. 1256.

⁶²⁸ Sullivan (2013); 354.

⁶²⁹ Dai (2009); 95.

acquired territory was re-organised and surveyed. In 1726, the recently appointed governor of Tsongon visited each clan within the area and conducted a thorough survey; clearly defined land was allotted to each clan along with officially sealed deeds.⁶³⁰ Qing officials kept records that delimited the extent of each territory and set limits on the maximum number of men that one could mobilise in times of need. Furthermore, the system of local chieftains among Tibetan groups was re-established with the aim of decoupling the administration of Tibetans from that of the Mongols.⁶³¹ The Tibetans, in theory, were now subjects of the Qing, rather than the local Mongol aristocrats.

These policies had two effects; first, they reduced the power of the Mongols through reducing their influence, their territory and the number of people they ‘controlled’, and their finances. This also freed up land that the Qing could later sell on or gift to those who promoted peace or aided the empire. Secondly, following its rebuilding, Gonlung was racked by a lack of strong governance, social discipline, and finances, as well as the presence of new imperial oversight.⁶³² There was a great deal at stake at Gonlung – financially, spiritually, and politically – and Sumpa Khenpo identified the need for stability, structure, and appropriate conduct to counteract these matters and promote his monastery.

Due to Sumpa Khenpo’s stricter approach to morality and practice, he frequently aggravated other senior lamas at Gonlung. In response to the resentment shown to him, Sumpa Khenpo gave a brief speech in which he reminded his peers of his credentials:

⁶³⁰ Schram, L. M. J. and Stuart, C. K. (eds.) (2006) *The Monguors of the Kansu-Tibetan Frontier*. Xining: Plateau Publications, p. 612.

⁶³¹ Dai (2009); 95.

⁶³² The issues of Gonlung’s governance, finances, and patronage are examined in Brenton Sullivan’s doctoral thesis. Sullivan (2013).

Formerly, in Ü and Tsang in Upper [Tibet], I was made to sit upon a throne with a backrest/back curtain studded with stars before the Precious Pañchen and the Precious Lama (i.e. the Dalai Lama), whereupon boundless care was given to me. Later I was placed upon a great abbatial throne. In Eastern Tibet, the ruler (Tib. *rgyal po*) showed me great reverence and cared for me with great compassion as I have explained above. In addition, I have expounded the *dharma* in Mongolian lands as well as in other Tibetan regions, acting on behalf of wandering beings, acquiring an abundance of goods. I have served as abbot of several monasteries and meditation hermitages in Amdo, thus protecting the *dharma*. Therefore, as for serving in the position of abbot of Gonlung, it does not add anything to religion and politics or [add] more influence than in those [former roles].⁶³³

This somewhat dramatic passage comes as a stark contrast to the rhetorical formula of modesty that he employs elsewhere in his autobiography. For example, in the opening pages of his work Sumpa Khenpo states that his life, which he compares to that of an ordinary householder, is of little interest and could have been summarised in a handful of pages. As discussed in more detail above (Chapter one), downplaying one's status is a highly regarded virtue, giving the author credibility as a worthy teacher. In this case, Sumpa Khenpo reminds his audience that he is renowned for his teachings and activities across Tibet and further afield.

As such, Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography presents itself rhetorically as an antidote to the dishonesty and corruption inherent in this degenerate age. Autobiographies, which are

⁶³³ *sngar stod kyi dbus gtsang pañ chen rin po che dang bla ma rin po che sku mdun du rgyab yol kha dkar ma can gyi gdan khrir 'dug bcug nas spyang bskyangs dpag med mdzad cing phyis su mkhan sa chen por bzhang / smad du rgyal pos kyang mthong gzogs chen pos bka' drin ji ltar bskyangs pa sngar smos ltar dang / gzhan sog yul dang phyogs gzhan gyi bod yul du'ang chos 'chad cing 'gro don bgyis khul dang dngos po gya nom pa dpag tu med pa rnyed pa dang / a mdo'i dgon pa sgrub sde du ma'i khri bdag byas te bstan pa bskyangs pa yin pas / dgon lung bla ma'i go sar bsdad pas de dag las lhag pa'i bstan srid kyi bya ba dang grags 'byor 'ong rgyu gang yang ma mchis / SK-CASS, folio 102(b); 7 – folio 103(a); 2.*

often didactic in nature, set out a framework to guide their readers. With this in mind, Sumpa Khenpo writes that he was reluctant to accept the role of abbot for fear that he would succumb to the crookedness present in Tibet and Mongolia at this time:

Pleasant words like a waning moon are directed at lamas and abbots. As for this monastery, relying on a boat of material wealth in the ocean of accumulated merit [brings] danger [like] the open mouth of a water monster.⁶³⁴ Moreover, like the saying ‘a bird on a golden mountain is golden’,⁶³⁵ many people are akin to their surroundings. Like the deep and narrow valleys, craggy cliffs, and many boulders, their minds are narrow, their words are harsh, and their hearts [are made] of diamond. Yet their mouths are like new petals of a lotus flower, and their words like the notes of a lute. I fear that if I act slowly, in accordance with their behaviour, which is like a crooked ditch, I would transgress against the law of karma.⁶³⁶

This passage is packed with poetic metaphors and imagery – many of which are common Indic tropes known from Buddhist literature, such as lotus flowers and the notes of a lute, which are considered alluring and engrossing.⁶³⁷ Following convention not only provides the comfort of familiar forms and tradition in the face of political upheavals, but is also useful in conveying ideas and/or opinions through imagery set within the same culture as the audience it aims to address (as seen in Chapter three with regards to illustrating sacred

⁶³⁴ In Sumpa Khenpo’s autobiography we find the term *na kra*, which resulted in much confusion. Thank you to Prof. Per Kværne for suggesting that this may have been an error for *ma ka ra* (Skt. *makara*; Tib. *chu srin*), an Indian mythological, hybrid creature, formed from a mixture of mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. For more on *makara*, see Beer (2003); 77–78.

⁶³⁵ That is, living creatures are shaped by their environment or assume the same nature as their environment.

⁶³⁶ *bla ma khri pa'i phyogs la gtam 'jeps mar ngo'i ri bong 'dzin par co 'dri ba dang | grwa sa 'di la zang zing gi gru la brten nas tshogs gsog gi zla ba'i ma mar 'dug pa la na kra kha gdangs la nyam nga ba dang | yang gser ri'i bya gser mdangs ldan zer ltar du 'di'i lung ba zab dog dang brag rtsub pha bong mang ba dang mthun par nye 'khor gyi mi kha cig sems khong dog la ngag rtsub cing yid rdo rje pha lam dang zhal padma'i 'dab gzhon dang tshig pi wang sgra dang 'dra bas de'i rigs kyi bya spyod yur ba 'khyog po dang bstun nas bdag gi bya byed dal 'gro rgyu bar bgyis na las 'bras la 'gal bas 'jigs shing | SK-CASS, folio 103(a); 5–7.*

⁶³⁷ Virtanen (2011); 118.

spaces). Echoing the use of similarity and analogy in Nyāya literature, and the use of biblical tropes by Martin Luther King Jr. The narrative value of metaphors, and the reasons for their prevalence in literature, is their ability to bring to mind several images associated with an entity or event, and their subsequent persuasive force. Furthermore, such compositions can be seen as examples of Tibetan verbal ornamentation: they are displays of mastery for mastery's sake, examples of verbal art that bring both Sumpa Khenpo and his audience enjoyment. Sumpa Khenpo discusses this at the beginning of his autobiography, stating “if I am to write about past accounts, like the snow mountains and the eye of the peacock feather⁶³⁸ - it should be beautiful whether one looks from nearby or afar. And similar to the earth that is golden by the light of dawn, it should be continuous and beautiful.”⁶³⁹ Sumpa Khenpo's performances then are a combination of verbal and instructive techniques *and* aesthetic pleasure.

Sumpa Khenpo's concerns regarding corruption and depravity are also addressed in the opening pages of Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography, in which he laments the state of the *tulku* system and exposes hypocrisy within the monasteries of Amdo and further afield:

Some of those pretend to be a great *tulku* who has attained enlightenment without the need to study and train. Even though they boast to be learned scholars from the moment of birth, it is said; "If one could become a learned scholar without being taught, how can the law of cause and effect be valid?". However, when [one] sets out to teach wise sayings - if your tongue isn't cut

⁶³⁸ Thank you to Prof. Ulrike Roesler for drawing my attention to a similar proverb in Potowa's (Tib. Po to ba; c. 1031–1105) *Dharma Exemplified* (Tib. *dPe chos rin chen spungs pa*); “The further away you are from the snow mountain, there clearer you see it. The more the peacock's tail is lowered (i.e. the closer it is), the better you can see the eye of the peacock feather.” Personal correspondence. See Roesler (2011); no. 8.3 and 8.4.

⁶³⁹ *snga ma'i mnam thar bris na gangs ri dang rma bya'i mdongs ltar nye 'gyangs gang nas bltas kyang yid 'phrig cing gser gyi sa 'dzin la 'char kha'i 'od kyis byug pa ltar brtan cing mdzes la* | SK-CASS, folio 2(b); 7.

out (lit. if it doesn't shorten), it will be like the example of Śāntideva, how amazing!⁶⁴⁰ If this is not the case, as said in the *Guhya garbhatantra* (Tib. *dPal gsang ba*);⁶⁴¹ "as each day passes, your inner flaws are exposed on the outside." You will become a clear mirror demonstrating your own nature. [...] Although there are some exceptions, most people's motivations are not to benefit all sentient beings but rather a desire for worldly riches – [like a] poisonous snake who wishes to swallow small birds, mice etc., spinning the wheel of deception.

As for those widely believed to be the reincarnation of a certain past lama, some of them are [just] as the Fifth Dalai Lama said; "whosoever is learned in the worldly ways is enthroned as a wise holder of the teachings, [and] those who dedicate their lives to learning and knowledge are [placed] lowly. Those devoid of teachings are regarded as noble beings. This realm where gold and ink are mixed up, although it is called the Middle Country, is like a land of barbarism." And: "If a low caste boy is draped in fine silk and put on a high and beautifully decorated throne, posing in the midst of his foolish retinue, there is a risk (Tib. *dogs*) that the lotus flowers of the *dharma* will be destroyed by frost."⁶⁴²

⁶⁴⁰ I believe this is a reference to *The Training Anthology* (Skt. *Śikṣāsamuccaya*) by Śāntideva (Tib. Zhi ba lha; c. 650–750). In this text, when discussing lying, gossip and harsh speech, he tells the story of man whose tongue is pulled out by Yama's men – Yama being the 'Lord of the Dead'. The outcome differs slightly for each offense; for example, one who engages in gossip will be forced to consume their burning tongue, while the tongue of someone who engages in divisive speech will be cut out and fed to jackals. See Goodman, C. (ed.) (2016) *The Training Anthology of Śāntideva: A Translation of the Śikṣā-samuccaya*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 76–77.

⁶⁴¹ I believe this is a misspelling and should be *dPal gsang ba* and not *dPal sgang ba*.

⁶⁴² *de'i la la sprul sku chen po sangs rgyas zin lta bu'i khur bzung nas bslab sbyang bya mi dgos par skyes tsam nyid nas mkhas grub tu rloms kyang | ma slab pa la mkhas gyur na | rgyu 'bras bden pa ga la srid | ces gsungs | 'on kyang legs bshad 'chad par zhugs tshé 'dzin thung ngur ma song na zhi ba lha'i rnam thar gzung ba yin las ngo mtshar che la | gal te de min na dpal gsang bas | zhag re song gin nang skyon phyi nas rig ces par gyur te rang gi mtshan nyid gsal ba'i me long bstan pa'o | [...] de las 'ga' zhig ma nges kyang phal cher gyis bstan 'gor sman pa'i re ltos 'cha' ba min par de la brten nas srid pa'i phun tshogs la rom sems dug sbrul kha rlangs nang rngub kyis zang zing nor dzas kyi byi'u tsi tsi sogs 'gug 'dod re ba shas che ba'i rtog pa 'og 'gyu'i 'khor lo bskor ba'o | snga ma gang zhig gi skye ba bzhes par grags pa de'i la la ni thams cad mkhyen pa lnga pa chen pos kyang | jig rten su mkhas bstan 'dzin skyes bur 'jog ces dang | tshé 'dir sbyangs shing*

Once more, this passage is teeming with metaphors and imagery which are used to highlight the less-than-savoury characteristics of fake *tulkus*, such as a snake, often used to depict jealousy, treachery, and anger.⁶⁴³ Sumpa Khenpo also turns to tales and authoritative texts for support – through quoting the *Guhyagarbhatantra*, Sumpa Khenpo looks back at India, the unadulterated source of Buddhism for authentication – a potent weapon in his arsenal. Citing the words of the Fifth Dalai Lama can be seen as an appeal to precedent: crooked lamas and those who support them are, subsequently, confronted with the words of a powerful and respected figure, which serves to dismantle their prestige and authority. Sumpa Khenpo, then, executes a range of oratorical manoeuvres and uses multiple rhetorical devices in an effort to discredit some corrupt lamas and promote correct practice.

Sumpa Khenpo and his supporters attempted to establish new expectations of behaviour, with a focus on maintaining monastic regulations. The laxness of discipline is a recurrent theme in his autobiography, as is administrative mismanagement, both of which had financial and reputational implications. The steady financial support of the monastery by its patrons and lay parishioners, which had dwindled following the redistribution of land and power after Lobsang Tenzin's rebellion, was a continual source of concern for its abbots. There were often tensions between Sumpa Khenpo and other senior members of the monastery, who attempted to hinder his management and resisted his authority, and they spared no harsh words in their criticisms. Yet, Sumpa Khenpo rebukes these actions,

shes la tha mal zer | thos bral ma bslabs skyes bu dam par blta | gser dang snag tsha bsres pa'i rgyal khams 'di | yul dbus zer yang klu klu'i grong khyer 'dra | zhes dang | mi shes gdol ba'i phru gu dar zab kyis | phang phung mdzes par byas te mthon po'i khrir | blun po'i 'khor tshogs dbus na 'gying ba yi | ba mos thub bstan pad tshal bcom gyi dogs | SK-CASS, folio 4(a); 5 – folio 4(b); 7.

⁶⁴³ Virtanen (2011); 71. In Buddhism, anger is the main characteristic associated with snakes. At the centre of the *bhavacakra* (Tib. *srid pa'i 'khor lo*) – the symbolic representation of *samsāra* – are the pig, the snake, and the rooster, which stand for the three poisons of ignorance, anger, and greed.

reminding his readers, and those who spoke against him, of the advances seen at Gonlung during his time as abbot:

As the worldly adage goes, “if the law has been destroyed by the king, to whom can you bring the charge?” I myself worked to not transgress the rules of law (Tib. *sgrig khrims*). Everything I did, I did only as service to the clergy, for loyalty [towards the monastery], in the interest of the *dharma*, for patrons, etc., and to bring joy to all, near and far. All monastic communities far and wide came to know that I [and our] monastic judges (Tib. *khrims bdag*) did not do any deceptive actions and were not crooked or spiny like the sea buckthorn but [followed] the path of logic and were upstanding like the mulberry tree. Accordingly, no requests or plans concerning any [matter] were done without any forethought, and were diligently [carried out] with respect and consideration like an ill person taking medicine. [Our] recitations, religious practice, teachings, rules of discipline, and so forth were heard of far away, and [they] became the ornament of the eyes of those nearby, and therefore [this] thorough service on behalf of the *dharma* became famous everywhere. This place was a joy to hear about and pleasant to behold, and people’s desires and needs were [as non-existent] as the son of a barren woman.⁶⁴⁴

Successful monasteries had to maintain discipline and rigour in order to generate merit for their donors. Proper rituals, study, and conduct bears on the monastery’s reputation among

⁶⁴⁴ *jig rten pa'i dpe la yang khrims bdag pos bshig na gtug sher su la byed ces pa ltar du rang res kyang sgrig khrims dang mi 'gal bar byas bzhin du byed sgo gang dang gang dge 'dun gyi zhabs tog dang la rgya dang bstan pa'i mig rgyan dang sbyin bdag sogs nye ring kun gyis yid rangs par 'gyur ba'i thabs kho na la bstun pas / dge 'dun thams cad kyang nged khrims bdag rnams kyis g'yo sgyu'i bya byed 'khyog po tsher snon can gla shing ltar min par dar shing lta bu drang pos rigs pa'i lam dang rjes su mthun par gang zhus dang bkod pa gang byas pa las gang la yang ci mi snyam du mi 'jog bar gus 'dod kyis ji lta ba bzhin nan tan chen pos nad pas sman bzhin du nyams su bstar bas / 'don chos spyod 'chad han dang sgrigs lam sogs ring pa'i rna bar snyan cing nye ba'i mig gi rgyan du gyur nas bstan pa'i zhabs 'degs phun sum tshogs pa byung ba'i snyan pa'i grags pa phyogs kun tu khyab par gyur pas / rna thos kyi yul skyid skyid 'dra ba dang mig mthong gi yul sdug sdug 'dra bar gyur nas gzhan la smon dgos mo gshom gyi bur gyur to / SK-CASS, folio 104(a); 3–6.*

potential patrons, and so it is no surprise that Sumpa Khenpo focused his efforts on reviving good practices and morality at Gonlung. Among the metaphors and imagery used, Sumpa Khenpo uses the rhetoric device of repetition to drill in that the firmness of his abbotship was in the interest of the *dharma*. He also reminds the reader on three separate occasions within this passage that Gonlung became renowned all over for its “recitations, religious practice, teachings, rules of discipline” – beyond portraying that Gonlung had strengthened its status both locally and further afield, this also suggests that Gonlung had become known to patrons near and far. Sumpa Kenpo rounds off the passage with a poetical hyperbolic praise of the monastery, saying: ““these days, Gonlung Jampa Ling has become a second Gomang College!” thus goes the melodious song of the Gandharvas, 100,000 drums [play] which fills the whole wide earth like the great drum of the gods. This is not flattery composed of partial or contrived words.”⁶⁴⁵

Conclusion

Sumpa Khenpo mobilises a series of traditional themes and tropes such as Buddhist imagery, degenerate age rhetoric, and the use of authoritative texts and quotations, to not only inspire his readers but to remind them of the importance of orthodoxy and reputation in a time when the integrity of the doctrine and the support of Gonlung’s patrons was considered volatile. He skilfully blends Indic and Tibetan themes, weaving Indian Buddhist tropes amongst Tibetan proverbs to create highly ornamented and sophisticated narratives which superbly

⁶⁴⁵ *deng sang dgon lung byams pa gling ni sgo mang grwa tshang gnyis par gyur gda'o zhes grags pa'i dri za'i rgyud | nga 'bum gyi sgra dbyangs mgur du blangs pas ljongs 'di'i 'dzin ma'i khyon yangs por khyab pa lha'i nga bo che'i spun du gyur pa ni phyogs 'khyer dang gcam bu'i nga gis bstod tsam min no | SK-CASS, folio 132(b); 3–4.*

demonstrates his competence and ability. As such, he creates a highly performative religious and literary discourse in which he preaches, praises, narrates, advises, consoles, accuses, memorialises, warns, and above all inspires his students to follow in his footsteps. In this respect, Sumpa Khenpo employs *ethos*; constructing his own ideal subjectivity as a diligent, capable, strongminded, and trustworthy teacher, and exponent of the ideals of *lugnyi*. Therefore, his works can be likened to a doctoral thesis; where a graduate student attempts to establish authority and mastery of their subject. By projecting themselves as a meticulous researcher and scholar, they create the character to which they aspire to be. In this case, a DPhil scholar worthy of this title.

And so, Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography appears as much a work for his patrons as it is a didactic model for future monks, as he strives to create an image of a highly learned Buddhist master who was part of a strong and authoritative tradition. Alongside displaying his literary skill, Sumpa Khenpo provides us with cases that demonstrate particular skills or services, for example the success of his rain-making rituals discussed in Chapter three. In the following chapter his medical abilities will be discussed through an analysis of cases of illness and medical treatments described in his autobiography.

Chapter Five

The Preceptor and Practitioner:

Sumpa Khenpo's Medical Knowledge

As the proceeding chapters have shown; Sumpa Khenpo was a well-connected multidisciplinary. Another string to his ever-impressive bow is that he was an active student, teacher, and practitioner of Tibetan medicine.⁶⁴⁶ A major supporter and promoter of medical science (Tib. *gso ba rig pa*), he penned several important medical works and practiced medicine throughout his lifetime. His engagement with medicine was part and parcel of his role as a Tibetan Buddhist lama, combining Buddhist and medical knowledge, embodying the bodhisattva ideal, and directing donations received back to his home monastery. Understanding medical treatment as another interaction between the monastic community and the laity, as in the case of Sumpa Khenpo, supports Geoffrey Samuel's

⁶⁴⁶ As Schrempf highlights in the introductory chapter of her anthology on Tibetan Medicine, defining 'Tibetan Medicine' is no easy task – the overlap with religion and rituals, and the risk of overlooking the influence of modernity in favour of preserving 'traditional' Tibetan medicine are just some of the challenges within the field. As such, I will not attempt to give my own definition here. However, due to the nature of this chapter, my use of the term 'Tibetan Medicine' commonly aligns with 'Medical Science' - defined by *The Oxford Dictionary* as "the branch of science concerned with the study of the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of disease." See 'Medical Science', *The Oxford Dictionary*.

https://www.lexico.com/definition/medical_science (accessed June 03, 2019). This broad-ranging meaning can be used to encompass forms of knowledge and practice that aim to investigate and treat a variety of physical, mental, psychological, and spiritual illnesses.

For more on the challenges of defining 'Tibetan Medicine' and 'Science', see Gyatso, J. (2015) *Being Human in a Buddhist World: An Intellectual History of Medicine in Early Modern Tibet*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 4–7; and Schrempf, M. (2007a) 'Introduction,' in Schrempf, M. (ed.) *Soundings in Tibetan Medicine: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives. Proceedings of the 10th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies (PIATS), Oxford, 6–12 September 2003*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 1–8.

interpretation of Tibetan Buddhism as a ‘practical religion’, with the protection of its communities and the wellbeing and prosperity of its members at its core.⁶⁴⁷ It also demonstrates, once more, that the role of a lama often extended beyond purely religious lines; relying on a variety of skills and knowledge to foster and expand intellectually and economically beneficial networks across Inner Asia. This chapter will expand on these themes; beginning with a discussion of Sumpa Khenpo’s own experience with medical practice and the state of institutional and textual medicine in his day, and then examining treatments recorded in his autobiography. The latter provides us with a glimpse into the demand for Buddhist medicine and medical rituals in this period and where this demand extended to geographically, allowing us to further identify and understand the widespread networks established and maintained by Sumpa Khenpo.

Sumpa Khenpo is celebrated as an exceptional physician; composing five influential medicinal works that touch on a range of topics, including detailed information on medicinal plants native to Amdo.⁶⁴⁸ The final section of this chapter will give a brief overview of these texts and will examine the enduring legacy of Sumpa Khenpo’s medical knowledge and practice. Contemporary Mongolian medical historians consider Sumpa Khenpo as the progenitor of a unique Mongolian medical tradition. His medical works are considered to incorporate significant practical innovations, particularly in their concern with smallpox

⁶⁴⁷ Samuel, G. (2012) *Introducing Tibetan Buddhism*. Abingdon: Routledge, p. 185.

⁶⁴⁸ See his work on medicinal substances, Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor. (2007) ‘gSo dpyad bdud rtsi chu rgyun gyi cha lag gi nang tshan gyi sman so so'i mngon brjod dang ngos 'dzin shel dkar me long’, in *Sum pa'i sman yig phyogs bsgrigs*. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, pp. 75–125. Available on TBRC (ID W2DB13640).

(Tib. *'brum nad*) and sexually transmitted diseases.⁶⁴⁹ He is also credited with having commissioned the carving of the wood blocks of an edition of the *Four Tantras*, an essential Tibetan medical text,⁶⁵⁰ and contributing to a set of medical murals painted at the medical college of Labrang Monastery.⁶⁵¹ At present, research on Sumpa Khenpo's contributions to medicine are sporadic with a handful of papers briefly examining his achievements in the field, often alongside other Mongolian physicians.⁶⁵² I intend to contribute to this scarcely researched topic with a brief examination of the author's discussion of medicine and medical knowledge in his autobiography. In particular, this chapter will explore how he incorporated medicine into his everyday interactions with the community – both at home and further afield – in an attempt to reinforce his reputation and that of Gonlung, establish and strengthen networks across the Qing Empire, and fulfil his obligation to care for and protect all sentient beings.

⁶⁴⁹ See Norov, B. (2019) 'Mongolian Buddhist Scholars' Works on Infectious Diseases (late 17th Century to the Beginning of the 20th Century)', *Religions* 10(4); 229. <https://www.mdpi.com/2077-1444/10/4/229> (accessed April 18, 2020); and Oyun-Erdene et al. (2014).

⁶⁵⁰ According to Van Vleet, this edition of the *Four Tantras* was published at Phuning Monastery (Tib. Phunying). There is no mention of this in his autobiography. Van Vleet, S. (2015) *Medicine, Monasteries and Empire: Tibetan Buddhism and the Politics of Learning in Qing China*. PhD Thesis. Columbia University, p. 230.

⁶⁵¹ Similar to the footnote above, there is no mention of these paintings in his autobiography. See 'Jam dpal rdo rje. (1971) *An illustrated Tibeto-Mongolian Materia Medica of Ayurveda of 'Jam-dpal-rdo-rje of Mongolia*, edited by L. Chandra. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture.

⁶⁵² For example, Mongolian authors Jigmed and Norov have both included Sumpa Khenpo in their research on influential Mongolian physicians. See Jigmed, B. (1985) *Mongyol Anayaqu Uqayan-u Tobči Teüke*. Chifeng: Inner Mongolia Science and Technology Press, and Norov (2019).

Sumpa Khenpo's Formative Experiences

Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography records his lifelong interest with healing and gradual exposure to medical scholarship. Towards the beginning of his autobiography he narrates a story regarding his teacher, Washul Ngawang (Tib. Wa shul Ngag dbang) Rinpoche's,⁶⁵³ long life and good health:

Others [would] ask, "You have lived a long life and are old, so how is your eyesight still good?" He responded, "From the time I was a monk on my own in Tibet, I have never failed to offer a butter lamp each day. And when I was sick as a child, for my sake a Tantric practitioner slaughtered a she-goat. Apart from that, I have not experienced the slaughter of cattle, sheep, and so on, on my behalf. It is a consequence of these [actions], not only in future lives but, in this life, too."⁶⁵⁴

This passage introduces the osmotic boundary between the Tibetan medical and ritual systems – Washul Ngawang Rinpoche posits that the merit accumulated through the ritual offering of butter lamps and abstaining from consuming meat/inflicting harm on any sentient beings had increased his life span and ensured good health. Butter lamps feature in all Tibetan Buddhist temples and monasteries as part of an offering of light, which generates merit and therefore leads to positive karmic outcomes, such as a long and healthy life. Tibetans apply merit-related approaches to health and longevity in various ways; such as attending empowerments and ingesting ritual long-life pills (Tib. *ril bu*). As we will see,

⁶⁵³ Hanung Kim has indentified this individual as Jamyang Zhepé Dorje who came from the Pelshul (Tib. dpal shul) clan, and whose personal name was Ngawang Tsonдру (Tib. Ngag dbang brtson 'grus). Kim (2018); 192.

⁶⁵⁴ *gzhan gyis khyed rang sku tshe ring ba dang bgres kyang spyang gsal ba ci yin zhus tshe ngas bod du gra rkyang yin dus nas kyang nyid rer mchod me re re 'chad ma myong ba dang chung ngu'i dus bro 'tshal ba zhig gi skabs su sngags pa zhig gi nga'i don du ra ma gcig bsad pa las gzhan nga'i don du gnag lug sogs kyi srog gcod ma myong bas de'i 'bras bu tshe phyi ma ma zad 'dir yang de 'dra 'ong zhes skyes by dam pa'i gsungs byon pa thos / SK-CASS folio 14(b); 5–6.*

Sumpa Khenpo regularly imparted religious long-life blessings (Tib. *zhabs brtan*), performed public rituals – including long-life empowerment rituals – and distributed precious pills (Tib. *ril bu*), the consecrated medicinal products of tantric alchemy. The use of pharmaceuticals, then, is only one component in how monastic members, such as Sumpa Khenpo, treated (and still treat) patients.

Sumpa Khenpo himself appears to have been ill quite a few times during his life, which could have been one of the main motivations for his interest in studying and mastering medicine. In the Wood Sheep year (1715), for example, he recounts his reaction to the startling scene of a monk’s corpse when he was still a young boy:

The following year, I anticipated the obstacles of having reached thirteen years of age or another form of obstruction to a long life.⁶⁵⁵ When a monk at Gonlung called Dramlog (Tib. 'Gram log), who came from Shingru (Tib. Shing ru), passed away, I needed to remain somewhere near the charnel ground in order to pray for him. It was a hair-raising experience. Due to that, the black *visha* of corpse pollution,⁶⁵⁶ and the dark blue flowers, branches, and trees of inauspicious, poisonous vapours caused great harm to my youthful body, [which was] like a sapling of sandalwood. Disease rose in its flowers, leaves, and branches, and it lost its radiance. The branches of my mouth and nose were twisted, and when inside, the stain of utter sadness touched the core of the tree trunk; in the middle my tongue, the gateway for speech, made the sound of petals being blown by the upward wind, accompanied by a song of distress due to [my] fear.

⁶⁵⁵ According to Tibetan astrology, one faces obstacles every twelve years “when the natal year-sign coincides with the calendar year (*gcig pa rang keg*). During a *skag* year an individual can easily fall ill or even die an ‘untimely death’.” Gerke, B. (2012) *Long Lives and Untimely Deaths; Life-span concepts and Longevity Practices among Tibetans in the Darjeeling Hills, India*. Leiden: Brill, p. 303.

⁶⁵⁶ *visha* is the Sanskrit word for ‘poison’.

At that time, just as the bees of my mind were circling around the dead trees and flowers [of my body], I had nowhere to go in this corrupted place [of my body]. And when my body became restless, there was fog in the sky, on the ground there was strong wind, and the space between sky and earth was covered in darkness, vying with each other. Then, when I promptly arrived at the Lotus lake (Tib. Pad mtsho) in the presence of the abbot of the newly established tantric [college] at Gonlung, Drubchen Ngawang Tenzin Trinlé from Denma (Tib. 'Dan ma), I gave a full account of the situation without holding anything back. From his mouth, the smiling lotus, he gave an oral transmission of the Kriyātantra of the small wrathful Vajrapāṇi.⁶⁵⁷ Just like the overflowing of sweet nectar, the bees of my mind were satisfied. When I experienced that, it was like the sprouting of saplings in the spring season, my delight competing with the pleasant chirping of a flock of birds. Then, [I remained] in my bed for one and a half months. Roused by strong faith and devotion, I recited mantras proficiently and strove to make offerings and so on.

After a week had passed, as soon as I fell into a slumber, I had the feeling I was being carried away by a dark storm into the sky – I woke up terrified. As for it occurring again and again, I believe it was confusion due to evil spirits. A fortnight had passed and at dawn a bee with its wings flapping, not seeing the butter lamp flickering, nearly touched my nose and mouth, and I jumped up with fear. When the bee went out again, the lamp was still burning. Furthermore, I wondered if it had escaped to its own place due to the power of the mantra which is fragrant like the musk of the musk deer.

When I completed the one-week retreat at Ridrang (Tib. Ri grangs)⁶⁵⁸ in this way, [my] body, with its innate contaminated material form composed of the

⁶⁵⁷ Also referred to as the 'action tantra', it is concerned mainly with external conduct, the practices of ritual purification and cleanliness.

⁶⁵⁸ Unknown location.

four elements, the seven bodily constituents, the five objects, and the six hollow organs, had [before] been afflicted by the rough weapons of the army pursuing the karmic debt of past lives and the stain of illness making the eye medicine (i.e. cure/treatment) ineffective, like a gathering of dark clouds. Through the recitation of the mantras, a powerful scattering wind drove these [negativities] out, just like a hawk chasing a small bird. When these clouds of dark forces escaped into the empty space in the manner of an echo, a rainbow, a flash of lightening, and a hailstorm, I thought their potential harm was rendered ineffective like dust.

At that time, the joy of my heart was like the earth covered with the blooming flowers of summer. On the outside, [I was] radiant like the sky and in a clear state [of mind]. Amid this, I uttered ‘how fortunate I am’; it competed with the clear melodies of new cuckoos chipping back and forth.⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁹ *lo rjes mar bcu gsum lon rgyu'i lo skeg pho la sngun bsu'i tshul tu'am gzhan tshe yi bgegs gang yin kyang / dgon lung gi shing ru dge slong 'gram log zer ba zhig tshe dus byas pa la smon lam gdab phyir du phyin nas dur dang nye bar 'dug dgos byung tshe skyi g'ya' ba byung / de la brten nas rog rib kyi bi sha nag po'i sdong po lo 'dab me tog sngo nag gi dug rlangs mi bzad pa ngos kyi lus gzhon tsan dan ljon phran la nye bar sbags pas yal ga lo ma me tog bro tshabs chen po'i nyes pas mdangs 'phrog cing kha sna'i yal ga 'khyog sogs la nang gi yid gdung ba'i dri mas kyang sdong po'i snying po la regs na bar gyi ngag sgo'i ro 'dzin 'dab ma gyen rgyu'i rlung gis bskyod pa'i sgra dang lhan du sngangs pa 'dren pa las kye ma kyi lhud kyi shugs glu len / de'i tshe yid kyi bung ba dang de rkang 'thung me tog nyams pa der mi 'khor bar phyogs bsld de gar 'gro med par 'khyams pa na bdag gi lus kyang sdod mi tshugs par gyur pa'i tshe gnam la khug rna dang sa la 'tshub rlung dang bar snang la sa mun 'thib pa 'dom par co 'dri ba byung / de nas rings pa rings par dgon lung rgyud grwa gsar tshugs kyi khri pa bla ma 'dan ma grub chen ngag dbang bstan 'dzin 'phrin las kyi zhal snga nas kyi drung ga la ba'i pad mtshor nye bar phyin nas rgyu mtshan ma tshang ba med par zhus pas / gang gi zhal dkyil chu skyes 'dzum pa'i dbus kyi zhal sgo'i sar las bya rgyud kyi phyag rdor gtum chung gi rjes lung gi sbrang rtsi'i bdud rtsi' bcud bzang 'phyur ba bdag yid rkang drug gis ci 'dod myang tshe dpyid kyi my gu sngo ljong rtse mo grangs med gsar du thon cing byi'u'i tshogs kyis skad snyan ca co sgrog par 'gran / de nas rang mal du zla ba phyed gnyis lhag gi bar du nang gi dad pa shugs drag gis bskul te ro 'dzin dbang po'i lam bde mon bas sngags bzla zhing phyi'i lus kyis mchos 'bul sogs la 'grus par byas te bdun gcig song ban as bzung ste mtshan mo gnyid la yur ma thag tur lung nag 'tshub ma'i nang nas nam mkhar khyer ba'i snang ba byung nas dngangs te sad pa yang yang byung ba ni gza' gdon gyi 'phrul du nges pa 'drong / bdun phrag gnyis song mtshams su tho rangs kyi thun la sgron me phul yod pa mi mthong bar sgo nas bung ba zhig gshog sgra sgrog bzhin du 'ongs nas kha sna 'khyog phyogs kyi mig la reg la khad byung ba la skrag nas lus 'phar ba dang mnyam du bung ba phyir log tshe snang gsal 'bar bzhin du mchis / de yang sngags nus gla rtsi'i dri mchog gis gdon gyi brang 'gro rang gnas khung bur 'bros par chas sam snyam /*

The cause (Tib. *rkyen*) of the illness in this case was pollution (Tib. *grib*) from the monk's corpse,⁶⁶⁰ which resulted in the need for ritual intervention to directly address the negative influence. This is another powerful example of healing that is conceived as taking place purely on a religious level, utilising specialists (in this instance, Drubchen Ngawang Tenzin Trinlé) for health and ritual purposes in one's search for remedial solutions.

Harmful spirits, or pollution, is considered one of the four causes of illness, the others being: seasons, diet, and behaviour.⁶⁶¹ This paradigm is not a one-off occurrence; Sumpa Khenpo's writings feature numerous anecdotes referring to spirit possession, pollution, and harmful obstacles, which will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter. After consulting a specialist at Gonlung, a permission blessing and reading transmission (Tib. *lung*) were given in conjunction with the subsequent undertaking of a retreat and recitation of mantras by Sumpa Khenpo, presumably based on the transmission of the wrathful Vajrapāṇi he had received. The author also mentions a butter lamp, which he may have been lighting to generate merit to help in the healing process. The success of these rituals might have shaped his own views on the efficacy of tantric practices and mantras in healing, as he

de ltar bdun phrag ri grangs la bsnyen mtshams byas zin pa na | zag pa dang bcas pa'i nye bar len pa'i phung po 'byung bzhi zungs bdun don lnga snod drug ldan pa'i tshe 'di'i lhan skyes gzugs la glo bur sngon gyi lan chags bu lon bsnyegs pa'i gdon gyi 'tshe mtshon rtsub do zla dang nad kyi dri ma mig sman gyi snyems pa 'phrog pa'i rjes 'gro sprin stug 'thib pa gang dag lha'i bsgom bzlas sngags mthu bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i 'thor rlung shugs drag gis khra yis byi'u bzhin du bdas pa na | bro tshabs kyi chu 'dzin dang gdon gyi rdo char gnam lcags glog bcas 'ja' tshon brag ca'i ngang tshul bzung ste mkha' dbyings stong sangs kyi ngang du bros tshe de dag gi 'tshe ba thal ba bzhin du gyur tam snyam | de'i tshe na rang gi nang gi yid kyi dga' ba'i dbyar gyi me tog nor 'dzin khyab par bzhad cing phyi'i bzhin gyi nam mkha'i mdangs kyang gsal dwangs ngang bar gyi ngag gi e ma 'di 'dra'i skal ba bzang po zhes pa'i khu byug gsar ba'i sgra dbyangs lhang lhang sgrogs pa phan tshun 'gran par gyur | SK-CASS, folio 21(b); 2 – folio 22(a); 7.

⁶⁶⁰ Sumpa Khenpo calls it *bi sha nag po*, referring to the Sanskrit word for poison (*visha*).

⁶⁶¹ Millard, C. (2005) 'sMan and Glud: Standard Tibetan Medicine and Ritual Medicine in a Bon Medical School and Clinic in Nepal', *Tibet Journal*, 30/31(4/1), p. 17.

often prescribes these in cases discussed in his autobiography, which will be considered shortly.

Sumpa Khenpo was struck with illness once again in 1724 after receiving the news of Gonlung's destruction, discussed in Chapters two and four. His symptoms included feeling "completely empty within", being unable to eat or drink, and his heart felt as though it was "darkened by the eclipse of suffering".⁶⁶² He was subsequently diagnosed with *nyinlung*, similar to the modern Western concept of depression or anxiety,⁶⁶³ and was prescribed the practice of guru yoga.⁶⁶⁴ During a week-long retreat, Sumpa Khenpo dreamt of Tsongkhapa wreathed in a garland of lotuses and swiftly recovered from his illness. He also claims that from this moment on, he had the ability to gradually understand texts without the assistance of a teacher. And so, tantric practice had provided him with both mundane and supermundane benefits. A person, then, was not merely a body to be healed, but rather a whole person whose spiritual wellness was intrinsically tied to their physical wellness. This holistic approach to medicine is evident in Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography, where he often discusses both the physical and religious values of his treatments.

The everyday contribution of tantra to medicine has been explored by Janet Gyatso in her book *Being Human in a Buddhist World: An Intellectual History of Medicine in Tibet*, who describes tantra as "a medieval development across Indian religions that produced some

⁶⁶² SK-CASS, folio 36(b); 7.

⁶⁶³ Barbara Gerke refers to *soklung* (Tib. *srog rlung*), a type of illness where the life-wind blocks the heart area. This condition is related to mental stress and anxiety. Gerke (2012); 303. See also, Bassini, P. (2007) *Heart Distress on the Sino-Tibetan Frontier: History, Gender, Ecology and Ritual Practice in Tibetan Popular Perceptions and Experiences of Heart Distress (snying nad) and Other Illnesses in the Qinghai Part of Amdo*. PhD Thesis. University of Oxford.

⁶⁶⁴ Religious practices such as meditation and mantra healing are commonly used to treat *nyinlung*, see Holečko, A. (2015) 'Nying Lung Disorder, or Tibetan Medicine Perspective on Depression', *The Polish Journal of the Arts and Culture* (2), p. 38.

of the most outlandish practices, cosmologies, and mythologies in Asian history. This was so for tantra's Buddhist form too."⁶⁶⁵ Gyatso assesses the relationship between medicine and tantra, which appears to have strengthened under the patronage of the Fifth Dalai Lama and the newly established Ganden Phodrang government, which was itself deeply rooted in a tantric Buddhist worldview.⁶⁶⁶ The intersection of religion, medicine, and state, had an enduring legacy with the establishment of medical colleges such as Chakpori (Tib. lCags po ri), built by *Desi* Sangye Gyatso in Lhasa. Schools specialising in medical training were established as early as the twelfth century, for example Sakya Mendrong (Tib. Sa skya sman grong), which was a major medical centre at the time.⁶⁶⁷ However, by the seventeenth century monasteries were establishing colleges (Tib. *grwa tshang*) and rituals halls (Tib. *chog khang*) for medical and astral learning, including Gonlung, although currently little information is available on its medical college.⁶⁶⁸ By the end of the nineteenth century, a Gelugpa network of medical colleges covered around fifty percent of Qing territory, which suggests that medicine became an increasingly popular topic within the monastic curriculum. As Stacey Van Vleet persuasively summarises, medical colleges offered an important and beneficial connection between ritual and materiality, continuing "a long regional association between Buddhism, charitable medical activities, and state patronage".⁶⁶⁹ State patronage for Buddhist medical institutions suggests that a renowned and trustworthy physician would potentially have had prestige and political influence, just as a famous Buddhist lama or ritual

⁶⁶⁵ Gyatso (2015); 3.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁶⁷ Ibid; 84. For more on the history and development of Sakya Mendrong, see Van Vleet (2015); 67–70.

⁶⁶⁸ According to Brenton Sullivan, Jangchup Ling (Tib. Byang chub gling), a branch monastery of Gonlung, was converted into a medical college sometime before the eighteenth century and was associated with rituals focused on the Medicine Buddha. Sullivan (2013); 40–41.

⁶⁶⁹ Van Vleet (2015); 13.

specialist would have had.⁶⁷⁰ Medicine, then, can be understood as another means for Tibetan Buddhist institutions to shape the practices of everyday life.

These developments, including the significant number of new Gelugpa medical colleges established in Amdo and Mongolia throughout the Qing Empire, have received comparatively little attention, especially in the West where research on the history of Tibetan medicine is still fairly limited.⁶⁷¹ There have been edited volumes,⁶⁷² special journal issues,⁶⁷³ and substantial monographs in the last decade that have helped lay the foundation for future research.⁶⁷⁴ However, these are still few and far between, and many focus more on the theory of medical science (i.e. *gso ba rig pa*) or on current medical theory and practice, rather than on its history and institutions. Furthermore, Tibetan medicine has often been categorised as both a scientific method at the cost of its religious and ‘supernatural’ features, and as a static, unchanging tradition, feeding into the notion of a timeless and almost untouched Tibetan culture. This chapter aims to contribute to a more holistic view of Tibetan medicine through examining how Sumpa Khenpo engaged with and understood issues of illness and healing. His medical training, works, and practice advocated a blend of

⁶⁷⁰ James Gentry briefly discusses the power and influence wielded by celebrated ritual specialists, see Gentry, J. D. (2017) *Power Objects in Tibetan Buddhism: The Life, Writings, and Legacy of Sokdokpa Lodrö Gyeltsen*. Leiden: Brill, pp.43–46.

⁶⁷¹ See Hua, C. (2008) ‘The Diffusion of Tibetan Medicine in China: A Descriptive Panorama’, in Pordie, L. (ed.) *Global Politics of Medical Knowledge and Practice*. London: Routledge, pp. 91–102; and Van Vleet (2015).

⁶⁷² For example, Hofer, T. (ed.) (2014) *Bodies in Balance: The Art of Tibetan Medicine*. New York; Seattle: Rubin Museum of Art and University of Washington Press; and Schrempf, M. (ed.) (2007) *Soundings in Tibetan Medicine: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives. Proceedings of the 10th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies (PIATS), Oxford, 6–12 September 2003*. Leiden: Brill.

⁶⁷³ For example, Samuel, G. and Millard, C. (eds.) (2013) *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal* 7 (Special Issue).

⁶⁷⁴ Monographs include, Craig, S. (2012) *Healing Elements: Efficacy and the Social Ecologies of Tibetan Medicine*. Berkeley: University of California Press; and Gyatso, J. (2015).

Āyurvedic humoral theory, Buddhist epistemology, and practical therapeutic rationalism, which suggests that Sumpa Khenpo's prevailing concerns (and those for which he is remembered) were with material etiologies and treatments. We know from his autobiography that the study of, and exposure to, these subjects had been part of his education and formative experiences, and so in order to contextualise the topics studied and embraced by him, the following section will focus on the development and practice of Indian and Tibetan medicine.

The Origins of Tibetan Medicine

As Craig Janes succinctly explains, “Historically, Tibetan society has possessed a multi-layered medical system, ranging from local, community-level shamanic and folk Buddhist ritual practitioners to religious and secular practitioners of a professional and scholarly tradition of healthcare rooted in naturalistic ethnomedicines of Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.”⁶⁷⁵ Situated at the crossroads of Inner, East, and South Asia, it comes as little surprise that Tibetan medical science was influenced and shaped by Indian, Chinese, and Central Asian physicians.⁶⁷⁶ For most Tibetan historiographers, the spread and development of medical knowledge in Tibet dates back to the Tibetan Imperial period (seventh–ninth

⁶⁷⁵ Janes, C. (1995) ‘The Transformation of Tibetan Medicine’, *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 9(1), p. 10.

⁶⁷⁶ For example, Frances Garrett discusses foreign physicians at the time of the Tibetan Empire and Janet Gyatso's research briefly draws attention to the influence of foreign physicians invited to the courts of early Tibetan kings. See Garrett, F. (2007) ‘Critical Methods in Tibetan Medical Histories’, *The Journal of Asian Studies* 66(2); 363–387; and Gyatso (2015); 313–314.

centuries) with the borrowing of medical traditions from its neighbours.⁶⁷⁷ The patronage of medical learning continued after the fall of the Tibetan Empire (ninth century), with Tibetan scholars producing a profusion of Sanskrit translations and new Buddhist texts. For example, the Indian text, *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayasaṃhitā* (*The Heart of Medicine*), was translated into Tibetan by Rinchen Zangpo (Tib. Rin chen bzang po; 958–1055).⁶⁷⁸ This text became a major medical source, eventually being adopted within the Tibetan Buddhist canon and transforming the character of Tibetan medicine.⁶⁷⁹

With regards to the practice of medicine in India; material remains from the Indus Valley Civilisation (c. 2500–1500 BCE) provide us with the earliest instances of its use.⁶⁸⁰ However, it is from the Vedic period (c. 1500–500 BCE) that some of the earliest literature on medicine has survived. Vedic therapeutics was mostly magico-religious in nature, and it was only towards the end of the Vedic period that medicine progressed towards a more

⁶⁷⁷ Meyer, F. (1992) 'Introduction', in Parfionovitch, Y. et al. (eds.) *Tibetan Medical Paintings: Illustrations to the Blue Beryl Treatise of Sangye Gyamtso* (1653–1705) (Vol. 1). New York: H. N. Abrams, Inc., pp. 2–13.

For example, the Medicine Buddha *sūtra* was translated from Chinese to Tibetan during this period and incorporated into the Tibetan Buddhist canon. Birnbaum, R. (1989) *The Healing Buddha*. Boston: Shambhala, p. 36.

⁶⁷⁸ See Ga, Y. (2018) 'The Origins of the *Four Tantras* and an Account of Its Author, Yuthog Yinten Gonpo', in Hofer, R. (ed.) *Bodies in Balance: The Art of Tibetan Medicine*. New York; Seattle: Rubin Museum of Art and University of Washington Press, p. 164; Gerke (2012); 89; and Gyatso, J. (2011) 'Experience, Empiricism, and the Fortunes of Authority: Tibetan Medicine and Buddhism on the Eve of Modernity', in Pollock, S. (ed.) *Forms of Knowledge in Early Modern Asia: Explorations in the Intellectual History of India and Tibet, 1500–1800*. London: Duke University Press, p. 314.

⁶⁷⁹ Dan Martin, for example, argues that the *Heart of the Eightfold Science* had "the greatest influence until the *Four Medical Tantras* gradually gained center place during the course of the thirteenth century." Martin, D. (2007) 'An Early Tibetan History of Indian Medicine', in Schrempf, M. (ed.) *Soundings in Tibetan Medicine: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives. Proceedings of the 10th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies (PIATS), Oxford, 6–12 September 2003*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 307–325.

⁶⁸⁰ Zysk, K. G. (1993) *Religious Medicine: The History and Evolution of Indian Medicine*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers; pp. 3–4.

coherent and systemised nature.⁶⁸¹ This environment lay the fundamentals of medical theories and practices that developed into Āyurveda, the science (Skt. *veda*) of longevity (Skt. *āyus*). Passages from early Buddhist canons, such as the *Pāli Canon*, share some similarities with Āyurvedic tradition. For example, in the sermon of the Buddha on the cultivation of mindfulness (Pāli. *Satipaṭṭhānasuttam*) we find the following description of the human body:

Again, O monks, a monk contemplates on this same body [...] as being up to the skin full of many kinds of ugly impurity: “In this body occur hair of the head, hair of the body, nails, teeth, skin, muscle flesh, sinew, bone, bone marrow, the kidney, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, bowels, mesentery, stomach, excrement, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, grease, saliva, snot, serous fluid, and urine.” [...] Again, O monks, a monk reviews this same body, [...], as thus consisting of elements: “In this body there are the earth element, the water element, the fire element, and the air element.”⁶⁸²

Here, the human body is described as comprising of the four elements, which mirrors the foundational Āyurvedic concept that the universe is an interplay of the energies of the five elements (the four elements of the body *and* space) and, as such, all humans are made up of these elements. Sumpa Khenpo refers to some of these concepts in the passage earlier in this chapter regarding the monk’s corpse, “[my] body, with its innate contaminated material form composed of the four elements, the seven bodily constituents, the five objects, and the six hollow organs” which indicates that he was conscious of this kind of analysis of the body and used it in his own descriptions (and treatments).

⁶⁸¹ Mazars, G. (2006) *A Concise Introduction to Indian Medicine*, translated by T. K. Gopalan. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, pp. 4–6.

⁶⁸² Ñāṇamoli, B. and Bodhi, B. (1995) *The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha: A New Translation of the Majjhima Nikāya*. Boston: Wisdom Publications, p. 147.

However, Philipp Maas and Hartmut Scharfe, caution us against concluding that Āyurvedic theories were prevalent at the time of the Buddha.⁶⁸³ Both concur that the Āyurveda was still relatively new at this time and was not standardised until the publication of Vāgbhaṭa's (c. 600–650) *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayasaṃhitā* in the seventh century. In this text, the author summarises and organises previous medical works, producing a structured metrical composition. At the centre of the *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayasaṃhitā* is the concept of the five elements (discussed above) and their relationship to the three humors (wind *rlung*; bile *mkhris pa*; and phlegm *bad kan*), the vital substances of the body. These elements are responsible for the maintenance of bodily functions, and any disruption can lead to sickness and disease.

The tenth to twelfth centuries, known in traditional historiography as the 'Later Diffusion' (Tib. *phyi dar*), is regarded as a period of Buddhist revival in Tibet. It was during this period that Yuthok Yonten Gonpo and his students codified the influential medical text, the *Four Tantras*, an encyclopaedic treatise that has remained the core text for Tibetan physicians to this day. Despite its human authorship, the work is framed as the teaching of the Medicine Buddha (Tib. Sangs rgyas sman bla; Skt. Bhaiṣajyaguru), whose mantra is considered to be extremely powerful in healing.⁶⁸⁴ The powerful reputation of the Medicine Buddha, which was reinforced under the rule of the Fifth Dalai Lama, can be seen in the autobiography of Sumpa Khenpo – who recites prayers and mantras associated with the

⁶⁸³ Maas, P. (2008) 'The Concepts of the Human Body and Disease in Classical Yoga and Āyurveda', *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens* 51; 123–162; and Scharfe, H. (1999) 'The Doctrine of the Three Humors in Traditional Indian Medicine and the Alleged Antiquity of Tamil Siddha Medicine', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119(4); 609–629.

⁶⁸⁴ Schrempf, M. (2010) 'Between Mantra and Syringe: Healing and Health Seeking Behavior in Contemporary Amdo', in Adams, V. et al. (eds.) *Medicine Between Science and Religion: Explorations on Tibetan Grounds*. London: Berghahn Books, p.163.

Medicine Buddha.⁶⁸⁵ Interestingly, the *Four Tantras* incorporates non-Buddhist medical traditions into a Buddhist framework, declaring that manifestations of the Buddha taught medicine in different times and places for the benefit of all sentient beings.⁶⁸⁶ Medical practitioners, like Sumpa Khenpo, could subsequently draw on a wide range of medical knowledge and traditions when treating patients, based on Buddhist as well as non-Buddhist sources, presented within a Buddhist framework and understood through the lens of Mahāyāna ethics, i.e. as part of compassionate activity.

With regards to medical literature, aside from the *Four Tantras*, a vast amount of medical writing has been produced in Tibetan. Many of these works are medical commentaries on the *Four Tantras* or works based on these commentaries – Sumpa Khenpo, for example, composed two works that were based on a commentary on the second tantra.⁶⁸⁷ However, there are also texts which focus on pharmacy, astro-medicine, and *materia medica*, including works that incorporate ritual or religious healing. These texts are frequently made up of lists, descriptions, and/or classifications of diseases, medicines, and, perhaps, mantra recitations and objects of meditation. In addition to these genres, Janet Gyatso highlights the development of a particular approach to medical writing that seems to have arisen in the sixteenth century, *nyams yig* (treatment experience).⁶⁸⁸ Gyatso suggests that this genre may have surpassed the authority of the *Four Tantras*, containing irreplaceable material on

⁶⁸⁵ SK-CASS, folio 189(a).

⁶⁸⁶ For more on the buddhization of medicine in Tibet, see Van Vleet (2015).

⁶⁸⁷ These texts are: *gSo dpyad bdud rtsi chu rgyun gyi cha lag gi nang tshan gyi sman so so'i mngon brjod dang ngos 'dzin shel dkar me long* and *gSo dpyad bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun gyi cha lag las lag len nyung 'dus bdud rtsi zil dkar*. These were published in modern book form in 2007 as part of an anthology of his medical works. See Sum pa mkhan po ye shes dpal 'byor (2007).

⁶⁸⁸ Gyatso, J. (2004) 'The Authority of Empiricism and the Empiricism of Authority: Medicine and Buddhism in Tibet on the Eve of Modernity,' *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 24: 83–96.

methods of treatment, innovations, and knowledge acquired during travel. Gyatso's proposal could explain why Sumpa Khenpo discusses his hands-on experience of medicine more than his studies in his autobiography, which, as we will see in the following section, is scarcely mentioned.

Sumpa Khenpo's Medical Training

A central part of medical training in Tibet involved memorising and studying the *Four Tantras*, discussed above, which provides an intellectual framework for the practice of medicine. Sumpa Khenpo first mentions studying the *Four Tantras* in the Water Monkey year (1752), at the age of forty-nine, with Nyima Gyaltzen, a disciple of the Fifth Dalai Lama's physician. There is a sense here that Sumpa Khenpo is referring to being part of a medical lineage – that is, that he trained with a renowned physician who transmitted his knowledge to him – to validate his credentials. Medical lineages are regarded as an indicator of a respectable and trustworthy doctor, as is confirmed in the *Four Tantras*, “The physician without medical lineage, Like the fox who seized the royal throne, Is not able to gain everyone's respect, And even if respected, cannot hold the kingdom down.”⁶⁸⁹ This account, then, connects Sumpa Khenpo to a root teaching that comes from an unbroken lineage, thus

⁶⁸⁹ The ‘fox who seized the royal throne’ refers to a well-known Indian story that became popular in Tibet too. The fox falls into an ink pot, and due to his unusual blue body colour, the animals accept him as the king of animals. However, when the foxes raise their voice, he cannot help joining in and is thus exposed as an ordinary fox.

The translation is quoted from Mon Schrempf. Schrempf, M. (2007b) ‘Bon Lineage Doctors and the Local: Transmission of Knowing Medical Practice in Nagchu’, in Schrempf, M. (ed.) *Soundings in Tibetan Medicine: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives. Proceedings of the 10th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies (PIATS), Oxford, 6–12 September 2003*. Leiden: Brill Publishers, p. 91.

endorsing his medical knowledge. Mingji Cuomu has emphasised the importance of receiving empowerments, reading transmissions (of medical texts), and practical instructions (Tib. *khri*) in medical training, which accentuates the value and significance of having a good teacher.⁶⁹⁰ Similarities can be drawn here with the teaching of tantric Buddhist practices (including empowerments, reading transmissions, and practical instructions) and the importance both place on teaching lineages.⁶⁹¹ Aside from this passage, the only other account we have of his medical education is a brief note among the list of topics he studied. Here he notes that he studied medicine, poetry, and poetic metrics after returning to Amdo from Central Tibet. No dates or names of teachers or texts are given, nor does he discuss the extent of his studies.

Let us now examine what these fragments in his autobiography suggest. It appears that Sumpa Khenpo received some formal training in medicine; having studied the *Four Tantras* with a leading physician. As discussed earlier, the *Four Tantras* is considered the primary text for studying medical science, and this was further accentuated under the patronage of the Fifth Dalai Lama, who reinforced the view that the *Four Tantras* were the words of the Medicine Buddha. Studying this noteworthy text with a highly regarded teacher would undoubtedly strengthen his reputation within the medical field. It seems unlikely, however, that Sumpa Khenpo's medical education began at such a late date. In his

⁶⁹⁰ Dr Mingji Cuomu evaluated traditional teaching methods as part of her research on 'Textual initiation in Tibetan Medical education', funded by the Wellcome Trust. She presented a paper on the importance of empowerments, reading transmissions etc. titled 'Sacred Transmission: the concept and its significance' at the conference, 'The Transmission of Tibetan Medicine: Spiritual Growth, Questions of Method and Contemporary Practice' (Oxford; May 22–23, 2014).

⁶⁹¹ For the importance of lineage in tantric Buddhist teaching, see Dalton (2016); 78–96; and Rig'dzin Dorje (2001) *Dangerous Friend: The Teacher-Student Relationship in Vajrayana Buddhism*. Boston; London: Shambhala.

autobiography, he briefly writes that he taught medical theory to students at Gonlung in 1747, i.e. five years before his training with Nyima Gyaltzen. Furthermore, the colophon of one of his medical texts, *The Spring of Elixir: A Summary of the Treasure of the Ocean of Medicine* (Tib. *gSo dpyad rgya mtsho'i snying nor mdor bsdus bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*), states that this text was composed at Lungkar in 1751 – the year before he studied with Nyima Gyaltzen. Mongolian and Tibetan scholars have also stated that he studied medicine with an unknown Tibetan lama during his time in Central Tibet (sometime between 1723–1731), although this needs further investigation.⁶⁹² All this suggests that Sumpa Khenpo developed his medical knowledge over a prolonged period of time, but that his principal, or at least most renowned, teacher was connected to the Fifth Dalai Lama, thus constructing an impressive genealogy of medical predecessors.

As discussed in Chapter one, medicine was classified among the five major Buddhist fields of knowledge, and the Fifth Dalai Lama proposed that it was an essential component of a Buddhist education: “Bodhisattvas must pursue learning to achieve the welfare of other beings, [and] particularly the field of medicine.”⁶⁹³ The trend of studying non-Buddhist topics was also encouraged by Changkya Rolpé Dorje, who urged Sumpa Khenpo to consider its importance in 1746, stating that “at a great monastery, [one] cannot [solely] promote the teaching and learning of exoteric Buddhist studies. Let [them] study topics of

⁶⁹² For example, Byams pa phrin las. (2000). I would like to thank Batsaikhan Norov, who confirmed that Mongolian scholars have also written that Sumpa Khenpo was educated in the field of medicine during his studies in Central Tibet. Unfortunately, they do not cite their sources. Email correspondence, May 2019.

⁶⁹³ Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho. (2009) *Nyang smad bsam don lhun gyis grub pa'i rdzong chen du tsho'i rig byed gso ba rig pa'i grwa tshang drang srong 'dus pa'i gling gi bca' yig*. Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang. The translation is quoted from Stacey Van Vleet. Van Vleet (2015); 112.

conventional sciences [too], because they are [also] of great importance.”⁶⁹⁴ The same trend is clear in Sumpa Khenpo’s last instructions for Shedrub Ling, in which he encourages the monastic community to exert themselves to study medicine, astrology, and poetry. In support of his view he cites from the *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*; “Without becoming a scholar in the five sciences, not even the supreme sage can become omniscient,”⁶⁹⁵ underlining that the mastery of both conventional Buddhist sciences and worldly sciences is needed to elevate oneself to a truly high status. This suggests, then, that he too saw the necessity in mastering medical science – both through study and in practice.

A recent article by Stacey Van Vleet establishes that at the heart of the Fifth Dalai Lama’s monastic guidelines for the Tsarong (Tib. Tsha rong) Medical School, written in 1676, there is a fundamental claim that the *Four Tantras* should be studied within a ritual framework that drew on a wide range of tantric practices.⁶⁹⁶ The importance of practicing tantra for the sake of others was emphasised by the fifteenth-century physician Zurkhar Nyamnyi Dorje (Tib. Zur mkhar mNyam nyid rdo rje; 1439–1475)⁶⁹⁷ and later quoted by the Fifth Dalai Lama: “Surely the point of this existence is not only to attain the higher realms and liberation! If one does not rely on laws and the Tantric Vehicle (*Vajrayāna*) for the sake of others, there will not be attained.”⁶⁹⁸ The Fifth Dalai Lama endorsed a ritual

⁶⁹⁴ *dgon chen la mtshan nyid 'chad nyan rkyang bas mi chog par tha snyad rig gnas kyang gal che bas slob chug* / SK-CASS, folio 106(b); 3.

⁶⁹⁵ *rigs pa'i gnas lnga dal la brtson par ma byas na || 'phags mchog gis kyang thams cad mkhyen nyid ga la thob* || SK-CASS, folio 48(b); 4–5.

⁶⁹⁶ Van Vleet, S. (2016) ‘Medicine as impartial Knowledge: The Fifth Dalai Lama, the Tsarong School, and Debates of Tibetan Medical Orthodoxy’, in Debreczeny, K. and Tuttle, G. (eds.) *The Tenth Karmapa & Tibet's Turbulent Seventeenth Century*. Chicago: Serindia, pp. 263–291.

⁶⁹⁷ See Van Vleet (2015); 78–79.

⁶⁹⁸ Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (2009). The translation is quoted from Stacey Van Vleet. Van Vleet (2015); 117.

curriculum which comprised of prayers and tantric practices important to Tibetan medical tradition and to the monastic community more generally. Besides pharmacology, Sumpa Khenpo received and studied a wide range of empowerments (Tib. *dbang*), both in Central Tibet and Amdo, which he later performed for the lay population (as seen in Chapter three). Life-empowerment rituals (Tib. *tshe dbang*), such as the Amitāyus empowerment (Tib. *tshe dpag med dbang*),⁶⁹⁹ and rituals associated with the ‘Praises of the twenty-one manifestations of Tārā’ (Tib. *sGrol ma nyer gcig*), which were prescribed by the Fifth Dalai Lama,⁷⁰⁰ are detailed throughout his autobiography. The importance of empowerments and transmissions also echo the opinion of *Desi Sangye Gyatso*, who suggested that a physician’s contribution to the study of medicine included receiving transmissions and passing them on to others through bestowing empowerments.⁷⁰¹

Although Sumpa Khenpo provides us with limited information regarding his medical training, his writings suggest that his learning was very much influenced by the patronage and legacy of the Fifth Dalai Lama almost a century earlier. The study of medicine was not only seen as “useful knowledge within the mundane world, but as beneficial knowledge in the dual Buddhist sense of both mundane and ultimate benefit.”⁷⁰² In order to fully appreciate how this manifested in practice, let us now examine some case studies written by Sumpa Khenpo.

⁶⁹⁹ Stacey Van Vleet notes that Amitāyus, a deity associated with longevity practices of Pure Land Buddhism, features regularly in the Fifth Dalai Lama’s *Collected Works*. Van Vleet (2015); 141–144.

⁷⁰⁰ White Tārā is one of the three long-life deities along with Uṣṇīṣavijayā and Amitāyus.

⁷⁰¹ Van Vleet (2016); 239.

⁷⁰² Van Vleet (2016); 288.

A Plurality of Healing Methods

From time to time, merely in order to ward off and reverse sickness and negative influences, I needed to perform many types of empowerments, such as longevity empowerments. How could I not do this? ⁷⁰³

Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography portrays him as a doctor of many fields, whose ability and experiences encompasses a wide range of diagnostic and therapeutic practices, including methods more commonly used among tantric adepts, such as exorcisms. The intertwined socio-cultural, economic, and political influences in the practice of medicine and healing, combined with the particular illness of the patient, offers a variety of healing options. As Schrempf notes: "Within this medical pluralism one finds variations in the way in which 'religion' and 'medicine' are either treated separately, overlap or are combined."⁷⁰⁴ In the case of a lama or monk doctor, they often embody both in equal measures.

Ritual Healing

The transmission of power and blessings from deities to lamas and/or physicians, then on to the general lay population, is an important element within the practice of medicine. The medicinal efficacy of treatments does not rely solely on the substances prescribed, but is coupled with the divine influence attributed to a particular deity, such as the Medicine Buddha or White Tārā, who are both associated with driving away illness and suffering. The use of rituals in medicine is not a new phenomenon, however it became increasingly popular

⁷⁰³ *nad gdon bzlog ches tsam du'ang tshe dbang lta bu dang rjes gnang gi gzugs brnyan mang du byed dgos byung dus su de yang ji bzhin mi thub pa rung sems / SK-CASS, folio 123(a); 5.*

⁷⁰⁴ Schrempf (2010); 163.

within the Gelugpa tradition under the patronage of *Desi Sangye Gyatso* in his *Supplement Instructions [to the Third Tantra]* (Tib. *Man ngag lhan thabs*), a corpus of mantras and tantric rituals which have influenced the conceptualisation of Tibetan medicine.⁷⁰⁵ Tantric ritual practices are also associated with the production of precious pills – an example of which will be studied later in this chapter. Of particular interest to us is the discussion of illness caused by demons (Tib. *gdon nad*) and spirits which, according to *Desi Sangye Gyatso*, should be treated with consecrated medicines.⁷⁰⁶

In Tibetan and Mongolian medicine, some causes of disease are identified as malevolent spirits. These spirits can cause sickness in three ways; through disrupting the three humours from the outside, through possessing an individual, or through capturing the individual's *bla* ('subtle life essence').⁷⁰⁷ Spirit possession is a familiar theme in popular culture worldwide; demonic possession, for example, is prevalent within Abrahamic scriptures and faiths. It is also features in various Asian cultures: Barend ter Haar argues that spirit possession forms the basis of traditional Chinese religious culture,⁷⁰⁸ while the *Bhūta Tantras*, found among early Indian medical texts, are dedicated almost exclusively to treating illnesses associated with ghosts and demonic influences.⁷⁰⁹ In contemporary Western culture, due, in part, to the success of *The Exorcist* franchise, possession usually invokes

⁷⁰⁵ Van Vleet (2015); 37–42.

⁷⁰⁶ Czaja, O. (2013) 'On the History of Refining Mercury in Tibetan Medicine,' *Asian Medicine* (8), pp. 75–105.

⁷⁰⁷ Millard, C. (2007) 'Tibetan Medicine and the Classification and Treatment of Mental Illness', in Schrempf, M. (ed.) *Soundings in Tibetan Medicine: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives. Proceedings of the 10th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies (PIATS)*, Oxford, 6–12 September 2003, Leiden: Brill, p. 273.

⁷⁰⁸ ter Haar, B. (2006) *Telling Stories: Witchcraft and Scapegoating in Chinese History*. Leiden: Brill.

⁷⁰⁹ Slouber, M. (2017) *Early Tantric Medicine: Snakebite, Mantras, and Healing in the Garuda Tantras*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.8.

images of an individual unwillingly controlled by a demonic force. Yet, within Tibetan medicine, it is far more complex; the possession of *klu* can result in afflictions such as leprosy and oedema, the possession of some ghosts can cause premature death,⁷¹⁰ while others may induce more dramatic performances.

The treatment of possession also varies, depending on the individual, the cause of the possession, and the symptoms. These rituals are usually separated into two types: peaceful (Tib. *zhi*) and fierce (Tib. *drag*) rituals. These are two of the four forms of tantric activity: peaceful (white), expanding (Tib. *rgyas*; yellow), magnetising (Tib. *dbang*; red), and fierce (black). The former is usually prescribed first and typically includes *torma* offerings in the hope of appeasing the spirits: “To heal disorders caused by spirits, make *torma* offerings and chant the mantra of the Five Guardians.”⁷¹¹ If this is ineffective, a fierce ritual involving fire offerings (Tib. *sbyin sreg*; Skt. *homa*) and more powerful mantras are performed. In one example given by Sumpa Khenpo, both mantras and consecrated pills are used to treat a spirit in the region of Tsongon who brought about disease and harm within the community:

Once upon a time, there was a bandit who was deceived by the lies of a crow [and] foolishly killed a hermit. In the same vein as this example: previously in Tsongon, the false prophecies of a possessed individual misinformed an ill-fated official [called] Chagdor (Tib. Phyag rdor) who killed an innocent and unfortunate [man]. Although [he] later realised that this was a mistake, it

⁷¹⁰ Wellens, K. (2010) *Religious Revival in the Tibetan Borderland: The Premi of Southwest China*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, p. 4.

⁷¹¹ The translation is quoted from Batsaikhan Norov. Norov (2019). I have not been able to find any information on the ‘mantra of the five guardians’.

was like in this worldly adage: “if one realises at the beginning, they are wise. Feeling remorse afterwards is foolish.”

After this individual passed away, he was reborn as a ghost. In all directions [he] caused injury and harm and in the Iron Snake year, when I acted as before, the malevolence was pacified. He [then] possessed one of those people and these [words] came from his mouth, “Some lamas said they were going to burn and expel me, yet it brought me no harm, but the harm affected others. Later, Sumpa Khenpo showed me a place and said [to me], ‘Stay there and continuously recite the *maṇi* [mantra].’ I followed [this] accordingly.”

While I was preparing pills endowed with the *maṇi* [mantra] at Talang,⁷¹² the pot was [suddenly] overflowing with pills, and beyond the retreat boundary large quantities of pills were found.⁷¹³

In this episode, the ghost first discusses the failed attempts of lamas to expel him with fire: suggesting that the patient(s) had resorted to ritual healing and a fierce fire offering had been carried out on their behalf. In Tibet, China, and Mongolia, it is believed that fire can purify impure objects and clear away malevolent spirits. Purification rituals can range from simple mantra recitation to more elaborate and multifaceted ceremonies. Waddell, for example, gives a detailed overview of a complex fire ritual, which he calls “burnt offering”, that was used to exorcise ghosts. The ritual described by Waddell required at least eight

⁷¹² This is possibly a misspelling of Tā lad, a banner within the Ordos of Inner Mongolia.

⁷¹³ *sngon kha twa'i rdzun gyis rkun ma bslus te don med du ri khrod pa bcom pa'i dpe dang mtshungs par sngar mtsho sngon du sku rten zhig gi lung rdzus dpon chen phyag rdor mi bzang bcas pa zhig bslus te nyes med mi bzang zhig bkum nas phyis su de nor ba shes kyang 'jig rten pa'i dpe la thog mar shes na mkhas pa yin phyis su 'gyod pa blun po yin zhes pa kho nar gyur / de nas mi de shi nas 'dre ru skyes te phyogs der gnod 'tshe byas pa la'ang 'byung lcags sbrul lor snga ma ltar byas pas de'i gnod sems zhi nas kho rang tsho'i mi zhig la khog zhugs byas te bla ma kha cig gis kho bo bsreg skad dang bskred zer yang nga la ma gnod par phar la 'tshe ba yin / phyis su sum pa mkhan pos gnas shig bstan nas der ma ni 'don gyin sdod zer ltar bsdad yod ces kha la babs pa byung ngo / tā lang der ma ṅi ril sgrub tshad ldan byas dus bum pa'i nang nas ril bu 'phyur ba dang mtshams tho'i phyi nang nas ril bu rnyed pa mang du byung / SK-CASS, folio 117(a); 7 – 117(b); 3.*

lamas who construct a pyre from wood, leaves, and offerings; recite mantras, and write the name of the ghost on paper and offer it to the fire.⁷¹⁴ Other rituals involving exorcism and/or fire, such as ransom rituals (Tib. *glud*),⁷¹⁵ can be carried out by individuals. Equipped with a plurality of healing methods, lamas were capable of treating all and any members of the community. However, as this passage suggests, some lamas were more effectual than others and Sumpa Khenpo was, according to his autobiography, amongst the most effective.

Sumpa Khenpo is credited with pacifying the ghost and curing the patient(s) affected by its presence through prescribing the *maṇi* mantra – an invocation of Avalokiteśvara, the bodhisattva of compassion – which is endowed with the capacity to purify and bestow compassion. The use of mantras to diagnose and treat illnesses caused by evil spirits and demons is common in Asian medicine and an example can be found in the Āyurveda with mantras being recited “to destroy or to drive away demonic diseases, to ward off further attacks from them, and to consecrate various medicines.”⁷¹⁶ The efficacy of rituals and mantras in treating various illnesses, including those associated with spirits, are also discussed in the *Four Tantras*, which employs some of the same principles as the Āyurveda.⁷¹⁷ Spirits, demons, and deities occupy an important place in the everyday lives of Tibetans – affecting one’s environment, one’s interactions (socially, economically, and politically) and one’s health. As such, interacting with and treating disorders associated with

⁷¹⁴ Waddell, L. A. (1972) *The Buddhism of Tibet: or Lamaism with Its Mystic Cults, Symbolism and Mythology, And in Its Relation to Indian Buddhism*. New York: Dover, p. 498.

⁷¹⁵ For more on ransom rituals, see Millard, C. (2002) *Learning Processes in a Tibetan Medical School*. PhD Thesis. University of Edinburgh, pp. 256–260; and Millard (2005).

⁷¹⁶ Zysk, K. G. (1989) ‘Mantras in Āyurveda: A Study of the Use of Magico-religious Speech in Ancient Indian Medicine’, in Alper, H. P. (ed.) *Understanding Mantras*. Albany: State University of New York Press, p. 133

⁷¹⁷ Czaja, O. (2019) ‘Mantras and Rituals in Tibetan Medicine’, *Asian Medicine* (14), pp. 283–285.

these spirits would be a key tool in the arsenal of a physician. Examples such as this draw attention to the integral part mantras and other ritual techniques played in medical knowledge, diagnosis and treatments at the time.

The power of the *maṇi* mantra not only pacifies the ghost but also makes the pills Sumpa Khenpo prepared overflow the pot. Precious pills can be blessed by a variety of different mantras, endowing them with additional therapeutic powers. These consecrated medicinal products gained popularity in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, however the earliest reference to *maṇi* pills dates to the Seventh Dalai Lama's reign (c. 1720–1750).⁷¹⁸ The benefits of pills are diverse, they can cure mundane illnesses, enhance the effects of other medicines, and bring blessings to the community. *Maṇi* pills, which Sumpa Khenpo produces in this instance, are usually small medicinal pills whose name derives from the fact that they are blessed through countless mantra recitations.⁷¹⁹ The compassion that is generated through reciting the mantra is subsequently transferred into the pills. Stephan Kloos notes that in one practice, the *maṇi* mantra is recited exactly 100 million times, without interruption over the course of a week. This is usually carried out by eight monks who work

⁷¹⁸ Kloos, S. (2010) *Tibetan Medicine in Exile: The Ethics, Politics and Science of Cultural Survival*. PhD Thesis. University of California, p. 113.

⁷¹⁹ For more on *mendrup* (Tib. *sMan grub*), the complex ritual preparation of medical substances, see Czaja, O. (2015) 'The Administration of Tibetan Precious Pills: Efficacy in Historical and Ritual Contexts,' *Asian Medicine* (10), pp. 36–89; Garrett, F. (2009) 'The Alchemy of Accomplishing Medicine (*sman sgrub*): Situating the *Yuthok Heart Essence* (*G.yu thog snying thig*) in Literature and History', *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 37, pp. 207–230; Pordie, L. (2008) 'Reformulating Ingredients: Outlines of a Contemporary Ritual for the Consecration of Medicines in Ladakh', in van Beek, M. and Pirie, F. (eds.) *Modern Ladakh: Anthropological Perspectives on Continuity and Change*. Leiden: Brill, pp. 152–174; Sehnalova, A. (2015) 'Inviting Medicine Mendrub (*Sman sgrub*) Healing for Everyone and Everything', in Ramble, C. and Roesler, U. (eds.) *Tibetan and Himalayan Healing: An Anthology for Anthony Aris*. Kathmandu: Vajra Books, pp. 633–649; Sehnalova, A. (2019) 'Medicinal Mandala: Potency in Spatiality', *Himalaya, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*: 39(1), pp. 164–188.

in shifts.⁷²⁰ Like the mantra, *mani* pills are said to purify negative emotions and help an individual develop compassion. Once created, these pills would have been distributed to others, serving as ingestible sources of tantric energy, blessings, and compassion – bestowing health, long life, and protection to all.

In addition to the successful pacification of the ghost, this passage touches upon the benefit that Sumpa Khenpo's treatment had on the welfare of others. As Olaf Czaja has illustrated, pills were, and still are, administered to both the sick and the healthy. The latter can choose to wear pills as amulets, which would protect them from spirits, sickness, and poison.⁷²¹ This is echoed by *Desi Sangye Gyatso*; “Merely by wearing them on the body, you are protected from violent storms, hail and weapons, and from the eight types of spirits. When made use of, they close the door to birth in the lower realms. Therefore, gem pills have great benefits.”⁷²² As such, the demand for pills was, and still is, high. In fact, they are so valued that Sumpa Khenpo presented precious pills as a gift, among other objects, on the occasion of meeting with Changkya in Dolonnor in 1772.⁷²³

Emphasising the benefits of precious pills specifically for the healthy enlarged the group of beneficiaries and allowed lamas, such as Sumpa Khenpo, to foster a connection with the wider population. And so, through empowering medicinal substances, Sumpa Khenpo blessed the community, alchemically transformed impurity into purity, and drove away harmful forces. Using his medical activities to demonstrate the ideal ‘bodhisattva conduct’, Sumpa Khenpo successfully enhances his own reputation as an individual driven

⁷²⁰ Kloos (2010); 113–114.

⁷²¹ Czaja (2015); 49–50.

⁷²² The translation is quoted from Stacey Van Vleet. Van Vleet (2015); 153.

⁷²³ SK-CASS, folio 161(b) – folio 162(a).

to promote the wellbeing of the community through various means. The making of precious pills was often sponsored by Buddhist patrons – both as an appeal to legitimacy and for the benefit that precious pills provide⁷²⁴ – and so cultivating his reputation as an effective, ethical, and generous physician would stand him in good stead. These joint material and tantric aspects, which combine benefit to the practitioner and the community, might explain the motives of lamas in becoming medical scholar-practitioners, as well as the perceived role of medicine within monastic institutions during this period.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, one is often confronted with the constructed dichotomy of ‘medical’ and ‘ritualistic’ practices within Asian medical traditions. So far, this chapter has focused primarily on the latter, however Sumpa Khenpo’s medical treatments extended beyond rituals and blessings, employing medical therapeutics to diagnose and treat a range of illness including diminishing eyesight (Tib. *spyang snyung*),⁷²⁵ syphilis,⁷²⁶ bubonic plague, and smallpox. The latter will be the focus of the following section.

Preventative and Therapeutic Medicine

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, one of the major health threats in Tibet was smallpox. Many visitors to the region wrote about the risk of smallpox and the fear it inspired

⁷²⁴ Czaja (2015); 37.

⁷²⁵ In the Wood Pig year (1755), Sumpa Khenpo travels to Beijing to treat Changkya’s eyesight. Unfortunately, he does not give more detail on the nature of the disease but does report that he successfully treated the problem.

⁷²⁶ From early modern times, syphilis was a serious problem in parts of Tibet and Mongolia, see Norov (2019).

in the local population. According to Desideri, there were large epidemics of smallpox with significant mortality rates in Lhasa about once a decade.⁷²⁷ Such epidemics were not restricted to Tibet but were a pan-Asian phenomenon; Serruys and Atwood have both drawn attention to smallpox epidemics in Mongolia between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.⁷²⁸ The Qing emperors were wary of smallpox following the death of the Shunzhi Emperor in 1661. As such, smallpox prevention became state policy with the ruling family being routinely sent to ‘smallpox shelters’ (Ch. 避痘所 *bìdòusuǒ*) to protect themselves from infection.⁷²⁹ One tragic result of these epidemics among the Mongols was that one third of the Oirad population, including the Prince Galdan Tseren (Tib. dGa' ldan tshe ring), died of smallpox in 1745.⁷³⁰ Likewise, the epidemic had a devastating effect on the Khalkha population, killing among others the Second Jetsun Dampa, Lobsang Tenpé Dronme.⁷³¹ And so smallpox was an enduring concern and risk for many communities across the Qing Empire in the eighteenth century.

Smallpox is categorised in Tibetan medicine as a *nyen* disease (Tib. *gnyan nad*) of epidemic proportions, meaning that it is a ‘spreading,’ ‘contagious’ or ‘epidemic’ (Tib. *rim*) condition caused by *nyen* spirits.⁷³² It is discussed in numerous Tibetan medical texts; the

⁷²⁷ Desideri (2005); 187

⁷²⁸ Atwood, C. P. (2004) *Encyclopedia of Mongolia and the Mongol Empire*. New York: Facts on File, Inc., p. 103 and p. 268; and Serruys, H. (1980) ‘Smallpox in Mongolia During the Ming and Ching Dynasties’, *Zentralasiatische Studien* 14, pp. 41–43.

⁷²⁹ Chang, C. (2002) ‘Disease and its Impact on Politics, Diplomacy, and the Military: The Case of Smallpox and the Manchus (1613–1795)’, *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 57 (2), pp. 177–97.

⁷³⁰ Perdue (2005); 48.

⁷³¹ Bareja-Starzyńska, A. (2018) ‘Jebtsundamba Khutugtus of Mongolia’, in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*. Oxford: University of Oxford.
<https://oxfordre.com/religion/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780199340378.001.0001/acrefore-9780199340378-e-615> (accessed May 21, 2019).

⁷³² Garrett, F. (2013) ‘Mercury, Mad Dogs, and Smallpox: Medicine in the Si tu Paṅ chen Tradition’, *JlATS* 7, pp. 289–290.

Four Tantras gives details on the causes and treatments of smallpox but does not discuss any preventive measures,⁷³³ while *Supplement Instructions [to the Third Tantra]*, composed by *Desi Sangye Gyatso* in 1691, mentions a ‘secret’ medicine for smallpox, which consists of the application of scabs caused by the infection to stimulate the production of antibodies.⁷³⁴ A highly sophisticated medical technique, it involved collecting the dry scabs from a patient with smallpox and then either inhaling the scabs or rubbing them into an incision made in the skin (often an incision on the wrist).⁷³⁵ The resulting smallpox was usually mild and later immunised the individual against the disease. The practice was not without risks – a positive outcome was by no means insured. Therefore, a skilled and trusted physician was required to administer this form of treatment. Because of the dangers involved, inoculation was used most often when smallpox was epidemic and known to be circulating nearby or when individuals were travelling to ‘high-risk’ areas, namely China.

The form of smallpox inoculation mentioned above was already in practice in Tibet and Mongolia in the eighteenth century, however *Sumpa Khenpo*’s writings suggest that his particular treatment was well-received and effective, spreading across Tibet and Mongolia, and saving countless lives. In 1760 there was an epidemic of smallpox in Amdo, *Sumpa Khenpo* writes “in Tsongon there was white smallpox,⁷³⁶ so I sent people to collect smallpox scabs (Tib. *lha thor*). Then I inoculated (Tib. *bgos*) my head cook *Zhidar* (Tib. *Zhi dar* on

⁷³³ Wallace, V. et al. (2019) ‘An Eighteenth-Century Mongolian Treatise on Smallpox Inoculation: Lobsang Tsültrim’s “The Practice of Preparing Medicine for the Planting of Heaven’s White Flower” (1785)’, in Salguero, C. P. (ed.) *Buddhism and Medicine: An Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Sources*. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 33.

⁷³⁴ *Ibid*, p. 34.

⁷³⁵ For a brief overview of smallpox inoculation, see Kotar, S. L. and Gessler, J. E. (2013) *Smallpox: A History*. Jefferson: McFarland & Company, pp. 1–23.

⁷³⁶ Tibetan medicine classifies six different types of smallpox, of which white smallpox is one.

po) and [this technique] spread in Tibet, China, and Mongolia, and this way I generated as much merit as one gains from saving more than 10,000 lives, and I am still practicing [this treatment] now.”⁷³⁷ He used the same technique again in 1769 when he was asked to treat a smallpox epidemic at Drotsang Monastery,⁷³⁸ suggesting his expertise was in demand.

Inoculation had become a medical speciality, and physicians developed specific techniques. Some used smallpox lymph, the liquid substance contained in the smallpox pustules, as the infecting agent;⁷³⁹ while others such as Sumpa Khenpo used dried smallpox scabs. The latter, if collected and stored correctly, kept the virus viable for longer than in the smallpox lymph; if kept in a cool and dark place, smallpox scabs could be effective for several weeks. It was essential to preserve the vitality of the virus, because if the virus died, immunisation against smallpox would fail. The scabs were then usually ground into a powder and combined with other potent ingredients, such as camphor (Tib. *ga bur*) and/or other cooling substances. In the case of Sumpa Khenpo, he recommended that the scabs were mixed with goats’ blood (Tib. *ra khrag*).⁷⁴⁰ This passage implies that Sumpa Khenpo had

⁷³⁷ *mtsho sngon du 'brum pa dkar po lha thor du grags pa byung tshe de rgyun kho bos mi mngags nas blang ste rang gi gsol dpon zhi dar on po la bgos pa las spel rgyun hor bod rgya sog yul du khyab nas khri lhag la srog byin dang mtshungs pa 'i dge ba 'ng bgyis shing da dung yang de ltar du byed bzhin pa yin* || SK-CASS, folio 285(a); 7 – 285(b); 1.

⁷³⁸ SK-CASS, folio 148(b).

⁷³⁹ Barnes, E. (2005) *Diseases and Human Evolution*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, p. 231.

⁷⁴⁰ Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor (2007); 292. Goats’ blood is considered cooling, which counters the heat of smallpox. The use of goats’ blood to treat smallpox can be found in the *Four Tantras*, see Ven. Rechung Rinpoche Jampal Kunzang (ed.) (trans.) (1976) *Tibetan Medicine: Illustrated in Original Texts*. Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 72.

In his writings on treating smallpox, Sumpa Khenpo recommends a range of substances commonly used in Tibetan medicine to treat bile disorders and/or hot diseases, such as the ‘three cooling ones’ (Tib. *sil sum*); cloves (Tib. *li shi*), saffron (Tib. *gur gum*) and cardamom (Tib. *sug smel*); moonseed (Tib. *sle tres*); rubus niveus (Tib. *kaṇḍa ka ri*); and gall bladder bezoars (Tib. *gi wang*). These are also listed in the third tantra’s treatment of epidemic fevers, suggesting that Sumpa Khenpo was well-versed in, and agreed with, the importance and necessity of specific medicinal substances. The translation of parts of the third tantra can be found in, Hakim, C. and Gyatso, T. (2010) *Essentials of Tibetan Traditional Medicine*. Berkeley: North

also learned and developed techniques for successfully collecting, storing, and utilising smallpox scabs, and that these had been successfully passed on to other practitioners in Tibet and Mongolia.

His ideas around preventing infectious diseases, which Norov describes as being “the most advanced of his time”,⁷⁴¹ were widespread throughout Tibet and Mongolia, and some continue to be practiced in contemporary Mongolian medicine. Sumpa Khenpo considered prevention to be a key part of medical treatment. He believed the prevention of disease was made up of two components; the protection of the physician and the protection of others. A core ingredient in protecting both groups was garlic (Tib. *sgog skya*), which is said to be a tonic and prophylactic medical substance against a number of infectious diseases.⁷⁴² Sumpa Khenpo recommended that garlic cloves be rubbed around the nasal area of the physician, and on problematic areas such as the neck (with regards to breathing) and limbs of patients to prevent the infection from spreading further.⁷⁴³ Garlic is also prescribed for the prevention against the bubonic plague, which he has witnessed in 1734. The garlic should be added to

Atlantic Books, pp. 19–110. Sumpa Khenpo’s recommendations for treating smallpox can be found in, Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor (2007); 291–293.

⁷⁴¹ Norov (2009).

⁷⁴² Dymock writes that Hindus considered garlic to be a tonic, hot and digestive; often used to treat fevers, gonorrhoea, worms, and colic. While Paul O’Brien discusses the practical use of garlic in Chinese medicine, which is used to treat infections and cleans the body of pathogens. It is likely that both traditions influenced the use of garlic in Tibetan and Mongolian medical treatments. Dymock, W. et al. (1890) *Pharmacographia Indica. A History of the Principal Drugs of Vegetable Origin, Met with in British India*. London: K. Paul Trench Trübner & Co., p. 55; and O’Brien, P. (2007) ‘Garlic in Traditional Chinese Medicine’, *Spezzatino*, Vol. 9, *Garlic and Health*, pp. 26–29.

In Tibetan medicine, garlic is frequently used to treat wind illnesses. Millard (2002); Table 5.7.

⁷⁴³ This is taken from Norov’s article on the topic of infectious diseases among Mongolian scholars, in which he summarises key medical ideas from Sumpa Khenpo’s *Durben Rašiyān* (‘*Four Elixirs*’), amongst others. Norov (2009).

alcohol (Tib. *chang*) and consumed in the morning.⁷⁴⁴ These significant contributions by Sumpa Khenpo were not only important for his peers and patients at the time but, as we will see later in this chapter, were highly influential in the areas of preventive and therapeutic medicine for future generations.

Although Sumpa Khenpo recurrently receives generous compensation for his medical and ritual treatments, he also writes that carrying out his medical duties was a matter of principle and did not depend on one's financial standing:

From [when] I had only briefly studied medicine to this day, preparing medicines by day and mixing correct compounds during intervals, [I] visualise the Medicine Buddha. Whether I am at home, on the road, spending the night in a foreign place, at a rest house etc., and whether Mongolian, Tibetan, Chinese, or Western, [I] give alms of medicine to [those who are] sick, unceasingly healing the ailing, bringing them under [my] protection, and so on – in the past, present, and future.⁷⁴⁵

This echoes the conclusion of Gonlung Monastery's customary, which reminds the monastic community that members of the community should be cared for, regardless of their wealth.

When someone is sick, the disciplinarian inspects to see that the patient himself has the requisite provisions for [the performance of] healing rites. If he does not, then [the provisions] are to come from the 'common possessions'

⁷⁴⁴ Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor (2007); 451–452. Norov (2019) notes that Sumpa Khenpo prescribes vodka and garlic – this may be a modern interpretation which is currently used in Mongolia. *Chang* usually refers to fermented barley beer, a commonly used medical substance. For instance, “*chang* [Tibetan roasted barley beer], garlic, meat, and butter have the quality “smooth” (*jams pa*); they “tame” the “adherent poison” [...].” Gerke, B. (2017) ‘Buddhist Healing and Taming in Tibet’, in Jerryson, M. K. (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Buddhism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 586.

⁷⁴⁵ *rang gi gso rig cung zad sbyangs pa nas da lta'i bar du bdud rtsi sbyor nyin dang bdud rtsi'i thun mtshams la sman sbyor tshad ldan sbyar te sangs rgyas sman blar bskyed bzhu byas te | gzhi la gnas dus dang 'gro lam du dang byes su zhag sdod dang bcag mal byas sogs ci rigs la hor bod rgya dang mgo dkar gang bro tshabs can la sman gyi sbyin pa btang ba dang | nang par rim gro dang skyabs 'og tu bcug sogs rgyun mi 'chad par bgyis pa dang bgyid bzhin pa dang bgyi 'gyur te | SK-CASS, folio 284(a); 1–3.*

(Tib. *spyi rdzas*) of the monastic community. If there still are not [enough], then, do as it is written: even the statues [lit. body] of the Buddha should be used. After the patient's illness has improved, if he has wealth, since he has partaken of the possessions of the [Three] Jewels, he should pay reimbursement. [Nevertheless,] no matter whether he has [wealth] or not, the monks belonging to that place are to congregate and exert themselves at reciting as many healing rites as possible.⁷⁴⁶

Both passages bind the ideal monastic community with key Buddhist virtues, such as compassion and wisdom, creating an authoritative Buddhist framework of governance. This harks back to the patronage of medicine under the Fifth Dalai Lama, discussed earlier in this chapter, who sought to tie the provision of medicine to the benevolence of the newly established Ganden Phodrang government and extend the influence of the Gelugpa tradition. The principles of *lugnyi* in cultivating prestige and the enduring influence of the Fifth Dalai Lama have been echoed throughout this thesis, so it is unsurprising that his promotion and view of medicine impacted the rhetoric and stance of Sumpa Khenpo and other Gelugpa lamas.

The relationship between medicine and reputation is not unique to Tibet - philanthropy and status or authority have enjoyed remarkable longevity within society, as Cicero observed, “most people are generous in their gifts not so much by natural inclination as by reason of the lure of honor – they simply want to be seen as beneficent.”⁷⁴⁷ Medicine, then, was considered an important and powerful means of shaping and influencing everyday

⁷⁴⁶ rGyal sras 'Jigs med ye shes grags pa. *dGon lung byams pa gling gi mtshon dgon ma lag dang bcas pa'i bca' khrims phan bde'i dab rgya bzhad pa'i snang* byed. The translation is quoted from Brenton Sullivan. Sullivan (2013); 154.

⁷⁴⁷ Smith, J. A. and Borgmann, K. (2001) ‘Foundations in Europe: The Historical Context’, in Schluet, A. et al. (eds.) *Foundations in Europe: Society, Management and Law*. London: Directory of Social Change, p. 4.

life – both inside and outside the monastery. In the case of Sumpa Khenpo, medicine was a way of meeting the practical needs of his audience; preserving important networks, promoting the Gelugpa tradition, and securing reputational and material benefit for Gonlung and associated institutions. This being said we should not discount Sumpa Khenpo’s humanity, compassion, and desire to help other people, which would have also influenced his actions. As we have seen elsewhere in this thesis, Sumpa Khenpo’s motivations and aims were often multifaceted and intertwined. And so, it is not possible to separate his religious, material, and personal spheres.



Map 6. Some of the places mentioned in Sumpa Khenpo’s accounts of medical treatment and rituals.

Source: Author and ©Treasury of Lives.

Literature and Legacy

The preceding chapters have been concerned with Sumpa Khenpo’s activities and the promotion of a Buddhist infrastructure and governance by means of rituals, teachings, and pilgrimage. Engaging in these activities brought a multiplicity of benefits to both priest and

patron; promoting Gelugpa orthodoxy, securing much-needed patronage, mundane and supermundane assistance, and community-building. His writings, however, also had a much more extensive spatial and temporal influence; enduring to this day. As Sumpa Khenpo states time and again, his works were composed for the benefit of all beings and to promote the *dharma* and the ten fields of knowledge, thus leaving a lasting legacy in Tibet and Mongolia.

Sumpa Khenpo composed five medical texts, which can be found in volume seven (*ja*) of his *Collected Works*. The table of contents, penned by the author, states that this particular volume contains texts that will enable one “to care for others using conventional sciences.”⁷⁴⁸ Aside from medical texts, there are works on astrology, letter writing, and divination. The first of the medical works is *The Spring of Elixir: A Summary of the Treasure of the Ocean of Medicine* (Tib. *gSo dpyad rgya mtsho'i snying nor mdor bsdus bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun*). Composed at Lungkar in 1751, this twenty-folio work summarises the essentials of medical science. The following year, Sumpa Khenpo composed *The White Dew of Elixir: An Assemblage of Selected Practices from the Supplementary Text on the Stream of Medicinal Elixir* (Tib. *gSo dpyad bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun gyi cha lag las lag len nyung 'dus bdud rtsi zil dkar*) at Lungkar. In 1763, he composed a thirty-eight-folio work on medicine entitled *Drop of Elixir: A Very Brief Summary of Medicine* (Tib. *gSo ba rig pa'i man ngag shin tu nyung 'dus bdud rtsi thig pa*). A seven-folio summary of medical treatments entitled *A Feast of Elixir: A Very Brief Assemblage of Medical Treatments* (Tib. *sMan dpyad shin tu nyung bsdus bdud rtsi dga' ston*) was written in 1784. Collectively, these four works are

⁷⁴⁸ *tha snyad rig gnas la brten nas gzhan rjes su 'dzin byed* / Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor (1975); 1043.

known as the *Four Elixirs* and, as we will see, have been highly influential in Tibet and Mongolia. The fifth text, *The White Crystal Mirror: Introducing and Identifying Medicines in the Supplementary [Text] on the Stream of Medicinal Elixir* (Tib. *gSo dpyad bdud rtsi chu rgyun gyi cha lag gi nang tshan gyi sman so so'i mngon brjod dang ngos 'dzin shel dkar me long*), was produced at Gonlung, however no date is given. It details the identification, habitat, taste, quality, and uses of over 800 medicinal substances, and examines moxibustion and bloodletting therapies.

All five works have been translated into Mongolian and have provided the foundational basis for many other Tibetan and Mongolian language medical works. For example, Lobsang Chöpel and Yeshe Tenpé Gyaltzen both acknowledge that their medical writings were based on the treatises of Sumpa Khenpo.⁷⁴⁹ His influence extends beyond literature into the practical realm. According to Batsaikhan Norov, Sumpa Khenpo's treatment for local inflammation of female genitalia was a significant contribution to medical practice and was “uncommon in the Tibetan Buddhist medical system until it was mentioned by him.”⁷⁵⁰ Prior to the works of Sumpa Khenpo, medicines to treat sexually transmitted diseases were usually ingested and rarely applied locally. And so, prescribing a mixture of antimicrobial ingredients, which were poured into an animal pericardium and pumped into the vagina, proved to be a more effective remedy and became more widespread following Sumpa Khenpo's discussion of this treatment.⁷⁵¹ Furthermore, researchers at the Ach

⁷⁴⁹ See Blo bzang chos 'phel (2008) *gCes bsdus snying nor*. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang (TBRC ID W1KG14622); and Ye shes bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan (1971) *Dri med shel phreng nas bshad pa'i sman gyi 'khrungs dpe mdzes mtshar mig rgyan*, edited by L. Chandra. New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture (TBRC ID W30452).

⁷⁵⁰ Norov (2019).

⁷⁵¹ Ibid.

Medical University in Ulaanbaatar have credited Sumpa Khenpo with a number of novel theoretical and practical concepts that were seldom, if ever, discussed in the *Four Tantras*, such as the expansion of common diseases from three to six and his discussions on stomach bacteria.⁷⁵² Sumpa Khenpo’s contributions to medicine continue to be celebrated; a statue of him was erected at the Inner Mongolia College for Mongolian Medicine (recently renamed Inner Mongolia Medical College) in 1987 (see below), and an award in his name was established in recognition of great achievements in the field of Mongolian Medicine.⁷⁵³ Furthermore, Sumpa Khenpo was named among the most influential Mongolians in the 2011 publication, *The 100 Most Influential People in Mongolian History* (Mon. *Mongolyn 100 suut xün*), due to his scientific and philosophical contributions. As Erdenibayar rightly summarises, Sumpa Khenpo “is not just a great scholar of the past: he is very much part of the living present of Mongolian and Tibetan cultures.”⁷⁵⁴



Figure 3. Statue of Sumpa Khenpo at the Inner Mongolia Medical College
Source: © Dr Dawaa-Ochir Ganzorig

⁷⁵² Oyun-Erdene et al. (2014); 72.

⁷⁵³ Erdenibayar (2007); 313.

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid.

Conclusion

A Polymath from Amdo

The focus of this thesis has been the autobiography of Sumpa Khenpo, but I have ended up traversing the fields of social and political history, and religious and literary studies to better understand the author and his work. My examination of the autobiography is twofold; it provides a window into the real-life events of Sumpa Khenpo and a glimpse of the world in which he was operating, while also bringing the author and his motivations and intentions into view. The latter hints at the idea that the autobiography was more than a straightforward recording of his life as he himself understood it, and that he was writing to/for a specific audience. Although it could be interpreted as just another display of humility, Sumpa Khenpo's references to repeated requests to produce an autobiography by disciples and patrons alike (see Chapter one) suggests an intended readership which would likely impact what he wrote; that is the topics and themes he chose to cover and the way he expressed them. Similar to the personage of the author, the writing self cannot be understood as a fixed self; through recounting his education, religious experiences, travels etc. he presents a didactic model for his students (and future generations of students), while discussions of his integrity, abilities in rainmaking and healing etc. give the impression that he was trying to impress on his readers the notion of himself as a capable and trustworthy authority, suited to lead a monastic community. Regardless of the original intended audience, Sumpa Khenpo's writings have reached a broad readership both geographically and temporally, who will apply their own understandings and biases (including myself) in

their interpretation and reading of Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography. This is no doubt due to the fascinating and multifaceted content, and the writing skills of the author.

Sumpa Khenpo skilfully blends the many tropes of Buddhist life-writing, such as humility and self-aggrandisement, with his own individual preferences, including his predilection for *kāvya* style (see Chapter three) and his occasional sarcasm and critical nature (see Chapter four). His ornate style of writing poses many challenges to the reader, in particular I found extracting the true meaning from complex imagery embedded within historical and geographic schemas challenging (and at times, infuriating!). I hope to have captured the essence of his intentions and stylistic skill in my translations and analysis, and that his writing brings the same delight and humour to the reader of this thesis that it brought to me on occasion (!).

Having surveyed Sumpa Khenpo's life and deeds, I return to the question of *how* he operated within the multi-ethnic Qing state. This thesis has, I hope, provided some insight into some of the many hats he donned for different occasions and audiences. In particular, I have sought to highlight the part played by Sumpa Khenpo within the communities he served. To some extent, the ubiquity of the reincarnate lamas in Amdo, and Tibet and Mongolia more generally, guaranteed them a place in any community. However, what this thesis has shown is the extent to which Sumpa Khenpo was immersed within communities, both local and further afield. This immersion occurred in almost every sphere of community life – from providing teaching and spiritual guidance, to performing much-needed rituals, and treating the sick. The spatial range of his activities suggests that Gonlung and its community were part of a large network which extended across northeastern Tibet through its branch monasteries – many of which enthroned Sumpa Khenpo as their abbot – and into

Mongolia and China to groups of sponsors and disciples. These networks were formed, maintained, and reproduced using Buddhist archetypical frameworks of patrons, lay devotees, and religious experts. His frequent journeys and engagement with these communities enabled him to maintain his role(s) in the wider landscape and diversify social relationships and networks, which translated into patronage and connections for Gonlung. In his autobiography, Gonlung appears at the heart of his networks and activities. It would be unreasonable to suggest that furthering the monastery's causes was Sumpa Khenpo's sole aim in his manifold activities, however, his affiliation with the monastery through his status as an incarnate lama entwined their fates.

Sumpa Khenpo took his place within the community, remaining conscious of his distinctiveness, while also belonging to a community of elite Gelugpa lamas. In this respect, Sumpa Khenpo used his position and authority to focus on implementing changes at Gonlung, mainly tightening up discipline and promoting ethical conduct, as we could see in Chapter four. Yet at the same time, his integration within different communities entailed a fusion of the religious and the secular sphere in almost every aspect of his involvement in community life. Politically, for example, Sumpa Khenpo's close alliance with other reincarnate lamas, such as Changkya Rolpé Dorje, and nobility across Tibet, Mongolia, and Qing China, gave him an important position within the local, and indeed, wider political community. An example of his involvement in political affairs is the anti-war speech discussed in Chapter four, which was delivered to members of the monastic community and lay officials, and, according to Sumpa Khenpo, had bearing on the outcome of the 1727–1728 Civil War. Furthermore, his economic links with patrons, in the sense that the fortunes of Sumpa Khenpo and his patrons were tied intimately together, also create bonds across the

wider community. Examples of an economy of exchange, which remains at the core of Buddhist economics, are dotted throughout this thesis through case studies of rituals, teachings, and medical treatments given by Sumpa Khenpo. These could be seen as purely commercial activities; however, such a view is one dimensional and fails to acknowledge the importance of generating (and transferring) merit, and the profound social and religious implications of conferring titles and status on one another.

Of course, this is not to say that Sumpa Khenpo was universally respected and liked. Conflict occurred, as demonstrated in the tense relationship between Sumpa Khenpo and other members of Gonlung during his second term as abbot, and he was not always a welcome member of the monastic community (see Chapter four). In fact, these struggles and tensions shed light on the complexity of his associations and roles and serves as a reminder of the challenging and constantly shifting socio-political climate that he was navigating. There existed significant differences from community to community, person to person, and one of Sumpa Khenpo's distinguishing features is the way he carefully donned the most appropriate hat for each audience and/or occasion. As seen in Chapter five, he frequently adopted the role of healer on his travels – irrespective of the purpose of his journey or the group to which he was administrating these skills (i.e. he could be called upon as a doctor at any time by anyone).

Sumpa Khenpo's skills and actions helped to build complex networks of patrons and communities across Amdo, Mongolia and Qing China. These networks strengthened the economic and reputational standing of Gonlung and served to spread the *dharma* across a wide area. While previous discourse focused on Sumpa Khenpo's active role as an interlocutor between Tibet, Mongolia, and the Qing, this thesis also postulates that Sumpa

Khenpo's role in such relations was in the mutual benefit of building and maintaining these networks. As well as furthering his personal aims, which have been discussed throughout this thesis, they furthered the Qing's aims of incorporating Inner Asia into the Buddhist Qing and subsequently consolidating their power. How conscious he was of his part in Qing state building is up for debate, and he certainly does not discuss it candidly in his autobiography. Nevertheless, it is clear that both had stakes in Inner Asia's Gelugpa transformation.

This thesis has approached Sumpa Khenpo's writings on his life as 'normal exception' – 'normal' in the sense that he can be seen as a typical representation of a Gelugpa lama of his time. Like many of his Eastern Tibetan contemporaries, he was trained in the Central Tibetan monastic context, yet he was active mostly in the geopolitical triangle of Tibet, Mongolia, and Qing China. In treating him as an 'exception', this thesis has highlighted some of the distinctive aspects of his life and writing, and his specific roles as an individual. In this sense, it has reinterpreted Sumpa Khenpo both as a source of information concerning the vast networks between monasteries and the community, as well as a crucial figure within it. This is not to suggest that his life is representative of a frontier Gelugpa lama, but he is an indispensable guide through those frontiers.

Future Research

If nothing else, I hope that this study brings Sumpa Khenpo's life and scholarship to a wider audience, and perhaps also suggests the promise of a more holistic perspective on the networks within which Tibetan monks and lamas operated. With regards to the man himself, there were many avenues left unexplored due to the constraints of time and general scope of

a doctoral thesis. Sumpa Khenpo's role and affiliation with other monasteries (excluding Gonlung) were touched upon in this thesis but not thoroughly investigated. As a 'mega monastery' with over 100 branch monasteries in Amdo and Mongolia, it would be especially interesting, and no doubt fruitful, to assess Sumpa Khenpo's interactions and relationships with these institutions. His autobiography certainly suggests that he travelled regularly to some of these monasteries, especially Lungkar Tashi Tse Monastery and Sera Lung Monastery, however a deeper investigation of the nature and frequency of his visits could shine light on how 'mega monasteries' such as Gonlung established, developed, and maintained relationships with their branches, and what this looked like on a day-to-day level. Similarly, more research should be done on the exchange of ideas, teachings, and people between these institutions.

Following his visits to Mongolia, Sumpa Khenpo regularly invited monks from Ordos and Alasha to return with him to Gonlung to train. Research on the interactions between Tibetan and Mongolian institutions is still in its infancy with a tendency to focus on the influx of knowledge, rituals, texts etc. from Central Tibet into Mongolia. However, as Sumpa Khenpo's autobiography suggests, monasteries in Amdo also played a role in this exchange of ideas and customs, especially with the establishment of powerful Gelugpa monasteries in the region such as Labrang and Gonlung. Thus, this research fits into the wider range of frontier studies that are more and more emerging as an important part of Tibetan Studies – an example of which is the Amdo Research Network (ARN) which organises workshops on different aspects of, and approaches to, studies on this region.

My discussion of Sumpa Khenpo's 'hats' were centred around the roles that I found to best demonstrate his versatility and influence. There were other strings to his bow which

were not discussed in detail, such as his rain-making rituals, which I touched upon only briefly. These rituals were highly sought after during the droughts that plagued Amdo, Mongolia, and northwestern China in the mid-eighteenth century. Other areas of interest are; his accomplishments as abbot, his role in various Prayer Festivals, and his astrological knowledge. Each of these aspects deserves further attention as they give insight into the development of eighteenth-century scholarship and culture, and also highlight locally specialised topics through the eyes of a practitioner. Furthermore, the influence of the Fifth Dalai Lama and the Ganden Phodrang on the topics addressed in this thesis as well as those listed above deserve further attention. This legacy clearly shines through all of Sumpa Khenpo's work suggesting a long-lasting impact on the training and career of Gelugpa monks and lamas.

While this thesis has hinted at the importance of networks as an extension of the community and as sources of influence and authority, the study of such networks is a field that has been scarcely touched in Tibetan studies (and Mongolian studies) and deserves exploration. Other disciplines have developed prosopography – the historical investigation of shared features of specific groups of people and their relationship – as a fruitful approach in analysing networks and reconstructing their 'collective biography'. The study of networks including social, political, monastic, and economic ones – many of which intersect and overlap – will shed more light onto how society operated in the period and the multifaceted relationship between monastic communities and donors. While the lives of individuals, like Sumpa Khenpo, are an important lens for viewing everyday life, connectivity is needed for a greater understanding of social interactions and their scale, scope, and level.

To fully understand the complex interactions that took place in the Tibetan borderlands, as I hope this thesis has shown, there needs to be a focus on the personal experiences of those figures who played a central role in maintaining, and to an extent promoting, Sino-Tibetan-Mongolian relations. Given the social, political, economic, and religious importance that is placed on the shoulder of lamas such as Sumpa Khenpo, it is vital that we make every attempt possible to better understand them.

Appendix One

Outline of Sumpa Khenpo's Autobiography

Early Years and Identification

Year(s)	Folios	Notable Events and/or Details
–	Folio 1(b) – Folio 7(a)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sumpa Khenpo's reasons for writing his autobiography 2. Sumpa Khenpo discusses the corruption within the <i>tulku</i> system and 'fake' lamas
–	Folio 7(a) – Folio 10(a)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. History of the Sumpa clan and lineage 2. Family history
1704 – 1707	Folio 10(a) – Folio 11(b)	
1707 – 1712	Folio 11(b) – Folio 19(b)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identification process 2. Receives the vows of fully perfected lay Buddhist 3. Travels to Gonlung Monastery

Early Education and Life in Central Tibet

Year(s)	Folios	Notable Events and/or Details
1713 – 1722	Folio 19(b) – Folio 29(b)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education and teachers at Gonlung 2. Sumpa Khenpo's first obstacle year and his illness 3. Receives his novice vows
1723 – 1724	Folio 29(b) – Folio 37(a)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Travels to Central Tibet 2. Receives the vows of a fully ordained monk from the Pañchen Lama 3. Enters Gomang College 4. Learns of the Lobsang Tenzin rebellion and falls ill
1725 – 1727	Folio 37(a) – Folio 52(b)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Travels around Ü and Tsang 2. Education at Gomang College and his skill as a debater 3. Receives the title of <i>lingse</i> 4. Origins of the Civil War (1727–1728)

1728 – 1731	Folio 52(b) – Folio 62(b)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pilgrimage to Tsari 2. Speech given at Drepung Monastery regarding the Civil War 3. First abbotship at Dreyul Khyetshal Monastery 4. Returns to Gonlung Monastery
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Life in Amdo: Invitations and Travels

Year(s)	Folios	Notable Events and/or Details
1732 – 1736	Folio 62(b) – Folio 79(b)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establishes Shedrub Ling in Shakog 2. Abbotship at Tashi Chöling and Sera Lung 3. The beginnings of Sumpa Khenpo's rain-making career 4. Establishes Ganden Chödzung Hermitage 5. Encounters an <i>Amban</i> in Xining, receives an invitation to Beijing
1737 – 1739	Folio 79(b) – Folio 95(a)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Travels to Beijing 2. Meetings with Changkya, Qianlong Emperor, and Prince Guo 3. Granted early leave due to illness, returns to Gonlung 4. Sponsors donations, repairs, and construction at Gonlung and other associated monasteries
1740 – 1743	Folio 95(a) – Folio 102(a)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Second abbotship at Tashi Chöling and Sera Lung 2. Bestows vows on Third Thuken 3. Accepts another invitation to Beijing 4. Becomes critically ill and granted early leave by the Emperor

Life in Amdo: Abbacy at Gonlung

Year(s)	Folios	Notable Events and/or Details
1744 – 1748	Folio 102(a) – Folio 109(a)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Established Lungkar Hermitage 2. Abbotship at Gonlung 3. Writes <i>The Auspicious Wish-Fulfilling Tree</i>
1749 – 1752	Folio 109(a) – Folio 116(b)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Receives the title Erdeni Paṇḍita from Third Changkya 2. Pilgrimage to Wutai Shan 3. Brings first group of monks from Lower Mongolia to Gonlung 4. Abbotship at Dulwa Shedrup Dargye Ling 5. Studied with the physician, Nyima Gyaltzen

1753 – 1761	Folio 116(b) – Folio 134(a)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bestows <i>gelong</i> vows on Third Thukun 2. Travels to Beijing to treat Third Changkya’s eye condition 3. Second abbotship at Gonlung 4. Sends Sumpa Chöjé Lobsang Geleg to Central Tibet to make donations on his behalf
1761 - 1766	Folio 134(a) – 143(a)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Takes temporary control of Gonlung while Jamyang Zhepé is at Labrang 2. Given tantric name Rol pa'i rdo rje by Third Changkya

Later Years

Year(s)	Folios	Notable Events and/or Details
1767 – 1774	Folio 143(a) – 166(a)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Second pilgrimage to Wutai Shan 2. Treats a smallpox epidemic at Drotsang Monastery 3. Severe drought in Amdo and Mongolia results in high-demand for rain-making rituals 4. Meets Third Changkya in Dolonnor 5. Sumpa Khenpo is asked for the first time to write his autobiography
1775 – 1778	Folio 166(a) – Folio 190(b)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Third pilgrimage to Wutai Shan 2. Another severe drought in Amdo and Mongolia 3. Extensive travels around Mongolia giving teachings, performing rituals etc. 4. Recognises Lobsang Gyaltsen as the reincarnation of Sumpa Ngawang Chojor
1779 – 1782	Folio 190(b) – Folio 220(a)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meetings with the Sixth Pañchen Lama 2. Third abbotship at Gonlung 3. Extensive travels around Amdo
1783 – 1788	Folio 220(a) – 240(b)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sumpa Khenpo’s <i>Collected Works</i> are shelved at Gonlung 2. Long-life ceremonies performed by a range of patrons and disciples 3. Sumpa Chöje is sent on Sumpa Khenpo’s behalf to make offerings to the newly recognised Fourth Changkya 4. Passes away in 1788

Appendix Two

Glossary of Names

Name	Wylie transliteration and Mongolian, Manchu and Chinese equivalents	Type	Location in Thesis
Akṣapāda Gautama	Bram ze rKang mig	Person	Chapter 1
Alasha	A la sha Ch. 阿拉善 Ālāshàn	Place	Chapter 1; Chapter 2; Chapter 3; Conclusion
Altan Khan	Al than han Ch. 俺答 Āndá	Person	Chapter 2
Amursana		Person	Chapter 2
Anchung Namdzong Monastery	An chung gnam rdzong	Place	Chapter 2
Ariq Böke	Ch. 阿里不哥 Alībùgē	Person	Chapter 2
Aśoka		Person	Chapter 3
Aśvaghōṣa		Person	Chapter 1
Avalokiteśvara	sPyan ras gzigs	Deity	Chapter 2; Chapter 3; Chapter 4
Bai Juyi	Ch. 白居易 Báijūyì	Person	Chapter 4
Bayannuur	Pā' yan no'ur Ch. 巴彦淖尔 Bāyànnàoěr	Place	Chapter 2
Bodhisattva Peak	Byang chub sems dpa'i spor Ch. 菩萨顶 Púsàdǐng	Place	Chapter 3
Cakrasaṃvara		Deity	Chapter 3
<i>Cakravartin</i>	'Khor los bsgyur ba'i rgyal po	Title	Chapter 2; Chapter 4

Chakpori	lCags po ri	Place	Chapter 5
Changkya Rolpé Dorje	lCang skya role pa'i rdo rje	Person	Introduction; Chapter 2; Chapter 3; Chapter 4; Chapter 5
Chapa Chokyi Senge	Phya pa Chos kyī seng ge	Person	Chapter 4
Charrawa	sByar ra nas Blo gros rgyal po	Person	Chapter 4
Chengde	Mong. Khaluun Gol Ma. Erdemu Be Aliha Ch. 承德 Chéngdé	Place	Chapter 3
Chigchar	Cig char or Cig car	Place	Chapter 3
Chika	Chi ka	Place	Chapter 2
Chokorgyal	Chos 'khor rgyal	Place	Chapter 3
Chösang Lha Dunsā	Chos bzang lha'i 'dun sa	Place	Chapter 2
Choten Tang Monastery	mChod rten thang	Place	Chapter 3
Chubsang Lobsang Tenpé Gyaltzen	Chu bzang Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan	Person	Chapter 2; Chapter 4
Chumar	Chu dmar	Place	Chapter 3
Dagpa Sheri	Dag pa shrī or Dag pa shel ri	Place	Chapter 3
Dagpo Shedrup Ling Monastery	Dwags po bshad sgrub gling	Place	Chapter 3
Daṇḍin		Person	Chapter 1; Chapter 3
Dangchang	Ch. 宕昌 Dàng chāng	Place	Chapter 2
Degu Dulzin Dargye Gyatso	bDe rgu 'dul 'dzin dar rgyas rgya mtsho	Person	Chapter 2
Denma	'Dan ma	Place	Chapter 5
Desi Sangye Gyatso	sDe srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho	Person	Chapter 1; Chapter 2; Chapter 3; Chapter 5
Devīkoṭa or Devikoti	De wi ko Ti	Place	Chapter 3
Devī Śramaṇā		Deity	Chapter 3
Deyang College	bDe yangs	Place	Chapter 4

Dharmakīrti	Chos kyi grags pa	Person	Chapter 4
Dhondup Gyal	Don grub rgyal	Person	Chapter 4
Dignāga	Phyogs kyi glang po	Person	Chapter 4
Dolonnor	Tib. Do lon no 'ur Mong. Doloon nuur Ch. 多倫淖爾 Duōlún Nào'ěr	Place	Introduction; Chapter 3; Chapter 5
Dorje Tashi	rDo rje bkra shis	Person	Chapter 2
Drakar Melong Ling Monastery	Brag dkar me long gling	Place	Chapter 2
Dramlog	'Gram log	Person	Chapter 5
Drepung Monastery	'Bras spungs	Place	Chapter 1; Chapter 2; Chapter 3; Chapter 4
Dreyul Khyetshal Monastery	'Bras yul skyid tshal	Place	Chapter 2
Drigung Monastery	'Bri gung	Place	Chapter 2
Drogsa Ratsa	'Brog pa ra tsa	Person	Chapter 2
Dronglan	Grong lang	Place	Chapter 2
Drotsang Monastery	Gro tshang	Place	Chapter 2; Chapter 5
Drubchen Ngawang Tenzin Trinlé	Grub chen Ngag dbang bstan 'dzin 'phrin las	Person	Chapter 5
Druglung Ganden Shedrup Ling Monastery	'Brug lung Dga' Idan bshad sgrub gling Ch. 龙沟寺 Lónggōu sì	Place	Chapter 2
Dulwa Shedrup Dargye Ling Monastery	'Dul ba Bshad sgrub dar rgyas gling Ch. 都哇寺 Dōuwā sì	Place	Chapter 2
Dzingchi	rDzing phyi	Place	Chapter 3
Dzomo Fort	mDzo mo mkhar Ch. 宏化寺 Hónghuà sì	Place	Chapter 2
Erdeni <i>Taiji</i> Tsangwa Kyab	Er ti ni tha'i ji Tshang ba skyabs	Person	Chapter 2
Faxian	Ch. 法显 Fǎxiǎn	Person	Chapter 3

Five Pagoda Temple	mChos rten rtse lngar grags pa'i lha khang Ch. 五塔寺 Wǔ tǎ sì	Place	Chapter 2
Galdan Tseren	dGa' ldan tshe ring	Person	Chapter 5
Ganden Monastery	dGa' ldan	Place	Chapter 1; Chapter 2; Chapter 4
Ganden Choding Monastery	dGa' ldan chos sdings	Place	Chapter 2
Ganden Chodzong Hermitage	dGa' ldan chos rdzong Ch. 红卡寺 Hóngkǎ sì	Place	Chapter 2; Chapter 4
Ganden Chökhörling	dGa' ldan chos 'khor gling	Place	Chapter 2
Ganden Rinchen Ling Monastery	dGa' ldan rin chen gling Ch. 宝贝寺 Bǎobèi sì	Place	Chapter 2
Ganden Tsering	dGa' ldan tshe ring	Person	Chapter 2
Gendun Dondrup	dGe 'dun don grub	Person	Chapter 2
Gendun Gyatso, Second Dalai Lama	dGe 'dun rgya mtsho	Person	Chapter 3
Genghis Khan	Jing gir rgyal po Ch. 成吉思汗 Chéngjísī Hán	Person	Chapter 2
Gesar	Ge sar Ch. 格萨尔王 Gesa'er wang	Deity	Introduction; Chapter 2
Golog	mGo log	Place	Introduction
Gomang College	sGo mang grwa tshang	Place	Chapter 2; Chapter 4
Gonghe County	gSer chen rdzong Ch. 共和县 Gònghé xiàn	Place	Chapter 2
Gongkar	Gong dkar	Place	Chapter 2
Gongwa Monastery	Gong ba	Place	Chapter 2
Gonlung Monastery	dGon lung 'byams pa gling Ch. 佑宁寺 Yòuníng sì	Place	Introduction; Chapter 1; Chapter 2; Chapter 3; Chapter 4; Chapter 5

Great Faith Numinous Vulture Peak Monastery	Ch. 大孚灵鹫寺 Dàfúlíngjiù sì	Place	Chapter 3
Gur Monastery	mGur	Place	Chapter 2
Gushri Chöjé Lobsang Nyima	Gu shris chos rje Blo bzang nyi ma	Person	Chapter 3
Güshri Khan	Gu shri han Ch. 固始汗 Gùshǐ hàn	Person	Chapter 2
Gyelrong	rGyal rong	Place	Chapter 1
Gyumé College	rGyud smad	Place	Chapter 2
Gyuto College	rGyud stod	Place	Chapter 2
Habdar Kachu	Hab dar dka' bcu	Person	Chapter 4
Heruka	He ru ka	Deity	Chapter 3
Hezhou	Ch. 贺州 Hézhōu	Place	Chapter 1
Jakhyung Monastery	Bya khyung	Place	Chapter 2
Jakhyung Nomonhan	Bya khyung ba No mon han	Person	Chapter 2
Jampabum Ling	Byams pa 'bum gling Ch. 炳靈寺 Bǐnglíng sì	Place	Chapter 2
Jamyang Chogla Ozer	'Jam dbyangs mchog lha 'od zer	Person	Chapter 4
Jamyang Tupten Nyima	'Jam dbyangs thub bstan rdo rje	Person	Chapter 3
Jamyang Zhepé Dorje	'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa'i rdo rje	Person	Chapter 2
Jamyang Zhepé Konchog Jigme Wangpo	'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa dKon mchog 'jigs med dbang po	Person	Introduction; Chapter 2
Jangchup Ling Monastery	Byang chub gling	Place	Chapter 5
<i>Jasag Yideng Taiji</i>		Title	Chapter 2
Jiezhou	Ch. 階州 Jiēzhōu	Place	Chapter 2
Jigme Lingpa	'Jigs med gling pa	Person	Chapter 1; Chapter 4

Jigme Tenpé Nyima	'Jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma	Person	Chapter 3
Jigme Yeshe Dragpa, Fourth Gyalse Lama	'Jigs med ye shes grags pa	Person	Chapter 2
Jokhang or Rasa Trulnang	Jo khang or Ra sa 'phrul snang	Place	Chapter 2; Chapter 3
Jowo Śākyamuni	Jo bo Sh'akya mu ni	Person	Chapter 2
Kailash	Ti se	Place	Chapter 3
Kamalog	bKa' ma log and Ka ma log Ch. 民和县 Mínhé xiàn	Place	Chapter 2
Kanchen Monastery see also Tharpa Ling Monastery	Kan chen dgon theg chen thar pa gling Ch. 甘禪寺大乘解脫洲 Gānchán sì dàchéng jiě tuōzhōu	Place	Chapter 2
Kati Kawa Monastery	Kha ti kha ba and Khwa ta'i kha'i Ch. 卡地喀寺 Kǎdekā sì	Place	Chapter 2
Kangxi Emperor	Ch. 康熙帝 Kāngxīdì	Person	Chapter 1; Chapter 3; Chapter 5
Karma Pakshi	Karma Pakṣi	Person	Chapter 1
Karma Tenkyong	Kar ma bstan skyong	Person	Chapter 2
Kelzang Gyatso, Seventh Dalai Lama	bsKal bzang rgya mtsho	Person	Chapter 2
Khangchene	Khang chen nas bSod nams rgyal	Person	Chapter 2; Chapter 4
Kharkya Monastery	mKhar skya	Place	Chapter 2
Khawa Karpo	Kha ba dkar po	Place	Chapter 3
Khilkhu township	'Khyil khug	Place	Chapter 2
Khubilai Khan	Hu bi le han Ch. 忽必烈 Hūbìliè	Person	Chapter 2
<i>King of Religion, Divine Pure One</i>	Chos kyi rgyal po lha'i tshang pa	Title	Chapter 2
Kongpo	rKong po	Place	Chapter 3; Chapter 4

Köten Khan	Go dan han Ch. 闊端 Kuòduān	Person	Chapter 2
Kṣemendra		Person	Chapter 1
Kumbum Monastery	sKu 'bum	Place	Chapter 2
Kumbum Samlo Mithung	sKu 'bum pa bSam blo mi'u thung	Person	Chapter 2
Kunga Rawa Temple	Kun dga' ra ba	Place	Chapter 2
Kuśinagara	rTsa mchog grong	Place	Chapter 3
Labrang Monastery	Bla brang bkra shis 'khyil	Place	Chapter 1; Chapter 2
Lamo Dechen Monastery	La mo bde chen	Place	Chapter 2; Chapter 3; Chapter 4
Lamo Geshe Ngawang Trinlé	La mo dGe bshes Ngag dbang 'phrin las pa	Person	Chapter 4
Lamo Ngawang Namkha Rinpoche	La mo Ngag dbang nam mkha'	Person	Chapter 2
Lhamo Latso Lake	Lha mo Bla mtsho	Place	Chapter 3
Lhamo Remati Lake	Lha mo re ma ti	Place	Chapter 3
Lhazang Khan	Lha bzang	Person	Chapter 2
Lobsang Chökyi Gyaltzen, Fourth Paṅchen Lama	Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan	Person	Chapter 1
Lobsang Dorje	Blo bzang rdo rje	Person	Chapter 3
Lobsang Gyaltzen	Blo bzang rgyal mtshan	Person	Chapter 2
Lobsang Konchog	Blo bzang dkon mchog	Person	Chapter 1
Lobsang Palden Yeshe, Sixth Paṅchen Lama	Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes	Person	Chapter 2
Lobsang Rabten	Blo bzang rab brtan	Person	Chapter 2
Lobsang Tenpé Dronme, Second Jetsun Dampa	Blo bzang bstan pa'i sgron me	Person	Chapter 2; Chapter 5
Lobsang Tenpé Nyima, Second Lamo Sertri	Blo bzang bstan pa'i nyi ma	Person	Chapter 2
Lobsang Tenzin	Blo bzang bstan 'dzin	Person	Chapter 2

	Ch. 罗卜藏丹津 Luóbǔzàng dānjīn		
Lobsang Wangyal	Blo bzang dbang rgyal	Person	Chapter 1
Lobsang Yeshe, Fifth Pañchen Lama	Blo bzang ye shes	Person	Chapter 2
Lodrang Khenchen	Lho brag Mkhan chen Nam mkha' rgyal mtshan	Person	Chapter 1
Longyangxia Dam	Tshal rnga 'gag Ch. 龙羊峡 Lóng yáng xiá	Place	Chapter 2
Loseling College	Blo gsal gling	Place	Chapter 4
Luan River or Shangdu River	Shan 'du Ch. 上渡河 Shàng dùhé	Place	Chapter 2
Lumpane	Lum pa nas bKra shis rgyal po	Person	Chapter 4
Lungkar Hermitage	Lung dkar	Place	Chapter 2; Chapter 5
Lungkar Tashi Tse Monastery	Lung dkar bkra shis rtse Ch. 逊布寺 Xùnbù sì	Place	Chapter 2
Machig Labdron	Ma gcig lab sgron ma	Person	Chapter 3
Machuka	rMa chu ka	Place	Chapter 2
Magyel Pomra or Amnye Machen	rMa rgyal spom ra	Place	Chapter 2
Mālava or Malawa	Ma la ba	Place	Chapter 3
Mañjuśrī	'Jam dpal Ch. 文殊菩薩 Wénshū Púsà	Deity	Chapter 3
Medicine Buddha	Sangs rgyas sman bla Skt. Bhaiṣajyaguru	Deity	Chapter 5
<i>Mergen</i>	Mong. Mergen	Title	Chapter 2; Chapter 3
Mogcha Jamyang Gyatso	Mog ca 'Jam dbyangs rgya mtsho	Person	Chapter 2

Möngke Khan	Ch. 蒙哥 Ménggē	Person	Chapter 2
Mount Malaya	Ma la ya	Place	Chapter 1; Chapter 2; Chapter 3
Mount Meru	Ri rab and Lhun po Skt. Sumeruparvata	Place	Chapter 3
Mount Sumanakūṭa		Place	Chapter 3
Muleting Lake	Mu le ting	Place	Chapter 3
Nāgārjuna	Klu sgrub	Person	Chapter 3
Nakchukha	Nag chu kha	Place	Chapter 1
Namkha Zangpo	Nam mkha' bzang po	Person	Chapter 2
<i>Nangso</i>		Title	Chapter 2; Chapter 3
<i>Nangso Geleg Lhundrup</i>	Nang so dGe legs lhun grub	Person	Chapter 1
<i>National Preceptor and State Preceptor</i>	Gur gyi slob dpon Ch. 國師 Guóshī	Title	Introduction
Ngagpa College	sNgags pa	Place	Chapter 4
Ngangrong Tashi Chökhörling	Ngang rong bkra shis chos 'khor gling	Place	Chapter 2
Ngaphopa	Nga phod pa rDo rje rgyal po	Person	Chapter 4
Ngari Dratshang	mNga' ris grwa tshang	Place	Chapter 2
Ngawang Lobsang	Ngag dbang blo bzang	Person	Chapter 2
Ngawang Lobsang Chöden, Second Changkya Lama	lCang skya Ngag dbang blo bzang chos ldan	Person	Chapter 2; Chapter 3
Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso, Fifth Dalai Lama	Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho	Person	Chapter 1; Chapter 2; Chapter 3; Chapter 4; Chapter 5
Nian Gengyao	Ch. 年羹尧 Nián Gēngyáo	Person	Chapter 4
Nomchi Monastery	dGa' ldan bde chen gling Ch. 奴木齊寺 Nómùqí sì	Place	Chapter 2
Nyima Gyaltsen	Nyi ma rgyal mtshan	Person	Chapter 2; Chapter 5

Ögödei Khan	U ge ta han Ch. 窩闊台 Wōkuòtái	Person	Chapter 2
Olkha Cholung	'Ol kha chos lung	Place	Chapter 3
Ordos	Ch. 鄂尔多斯 Èěrdūōsī	Place	Chapter 1; Chapter 2; Chapter 3; Conclusion
Palkhor Chöde	dPal 'khor chos sde	Place	Chapter 2
Pari	dPa' ris	Place	Chapter 2
Phagpa Lodrö Gyaltzen	'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan	Person	Chapter 2
Pholha	Pho lha	Place	Chapter 4
Pholhane	Pho lha nas bSod nams stobs rgyal	Person	Chapter 2; Chapter 4
Phuning Monastery	Phu nying	Place	Chapter 5
Phuntsog Dragpa Tenzin, Second Likya Lama	Phun tshogs grags pa bstan 'dzin	Person	Chapter 2
Piligtu Chöjé Lobsang Geleg	Pi lig thu chos rje Blo bzang dge legs	Person	Introduction; Chapter 1; Chapter 2
Poshoktu	Po shog thu	Place	Chapter 2
Potowa	Po to ba	Person	Chapter 4
<i>Prince Guo</i>	Man. Hošoi kengse cin wang Ch. 和碩果亲王 Héshuò guǒ qīnwáng	Title	Chapter 2
<i>Prince of the First Rank</i>	Man. Hošoi cin wang Ch. 和硕亲王 Héshuò qīnwáng	Title	Chapter 2
<i>Prince of the Third Rank</i>	Man. Beile	Title	Chapter 3.
<i>Prince of the Fourth Rank</i>	Man. Beise Ch. 貝子 Bèizǐ	Title	Chapter 2
<i>Princess of the First Rank</i>	Man. Guruni gungju Ch. 固伦公主 Bùlún gōngzhǔ	Title	Chapter 2
<i>Princess of the Second Rank</i>	Man. Hošoi gungju Ch. 和硕公主 Héshuò gōngzhǔ	Title	Chapter 2

Protector Ravine	mGon po rong	Place	Chapter 3
Qianlong Emperor	Lha skyong rgyal po Man. Abkai Wehiyehe Hūwangdi	Person	Introduction; Chapter 2
Qingyuan Temple	Ch. 慶緣寺 Qìngyuán sì	Place	Chapter 1
<i>Qinwang</i>	Chin wang Ch. 親王 Qīnwáng	Title	Chapter 2; Chapter 3
Rabjampa Geleg Samdrup	Rab 'byams pa dGe legs bsam 'grub	Person	Introduction; Chapter 3
Rabjampa Sogpo Chodrag	Rab 'byams pa Sog po Chos grags	Person	Chapter 2
Rangjung Dorje, Third Karmapa	Rang 'byung rdo rje	Person	Chapter 1; Chapter 3
Rapten	Rab brtan Ch. 金川 Jīnchuān	Person	Chapter 1
Rato Monastery	Rwa stod	Place	Chapter 2
Ridrang	Ri grangs	Place	Chapter 5
Rinchen Zangpo	Rin chen bzang po	Person	Chapter 5
Rutog	Ru thog	Place	Chapter 2
Sakya Mendrong	Sa skya sman grong	Place	Chapter 5
Sakya Paṇḍita	Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan	Person	Chapter 1; Chapter 2
Samlo Khamtshan	bSam blo kham tshan	Place	Chapter 2
Samye Monastery	bSam yas	Place	Chapter 2
Sangri Kharmar	Zangs ri mkhar dmar	Place	Chapter 3
Sangye Dorje	Sangs rgyas rdo rje	Person	Chapter 2
Śāntideva	Zhi ba lha	Person	Chapter 4
Se Ngawang Trashi	bSe Ngag dbang bkra shis	Person	Chapter 4
Sera Monastery	Se ra	Place	Chapter 1

Sera Lung Ganden Damchö Ling Monastery	Se ra lung dga' ldan dam chos gling Ch. 塞隆寺 Sāilóng sì	Place	Chapter 2
Serkhog Monastery see also Tsenpo Gon Monastery	gSer khog	Place	Chapter 2; Chapter 4
Shabdrung Lobsang Tenpé Gyaltzen, Second Sumpa Lama	Sum pa zhabs drung Blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan	Person	Chapter 2
Shakog	Zhwa khog	Place	Chapter 2; Chapter 5
Shalatu	Sha la thu	Place	Chapter 2
Shamar Monastery	Zhwa dmar Ch. 夏玛尔寺 Xiàmǎěr sì	Place	Chapter 2
Shamar Lungkar Prati Monastery	Zhwa dmar lung dkar prati	Place	Chapter 2
Shedrub Ling Hermitage	bShad sgrub gling Ch. 平安寺 Píngān sì	Place	Chapter 2
Sheropo	Shas ro po	Place	Chapter 2
Shigatse	gZhis ka rtse	Place	Chapter 2
Shingru	Shing ru	Place	Chapter 5
Shouling Monastery	Mong. Mayidari-yin sūme Ch. 壽靈寺 Shòulíng sì	Place	Chapter 2
Shouning Monastery	Shu ning Ch. 壽寧寺 Shòuníng sì	Place	Chapter 3
Shunzhi Emperor	Ch. 順治 Shùnzhì	Person	Chapter 2; Chapter 3; Chapter 5
Sogpo Chohor Gelong	Sog po Cho hor dge slong	Person	Chapter 2
Solomo	So lo mo	Place	Chapter 2
Sonam Dragpa	bSod nams grags pa	Person	Chapter 2
Sonam Gyatso, Third Dalai Lama	bSod nams rGya mtsho	Person	Chapter 2

Sonam Rinchen, Thirtieth Sakya Tridzin	Sa skya khri 'dzin bSod nams rin chen	Person	Chapter 4
Srogkar	Srog mkhar	Place	Chapter 2
Sumpa Chöjé Phuntsog Namgyal	Sum pa chos rje Phun tshogs nam rgyal	Person	Chapter 2
Sumpa Ngawang Chojor	Sum pa Ngag dbang chos 'byor	Person	Chapter 2
Sumpa Phuntsog Dondrup	Sum pa Phun tshogs don grub	Person	Chapter 2
<i>Taiji</i>	<i>tha'i ji</i>	Title	Chapter 2; Chapter 4
Taklung Monastery	sTag lung Ch. 达隆寺 Dálóng sì	Place	Chapter 2
Takma Pass	sTag ma la	Place	Chapter 3
Tārā Pass	sGrol ma la	Place	Chapter 3
Tarshul Monastery	Thar shul	Place	Chapter 2
Tarshul Chokyong Gyatso	Thar shul dPon slob Chos skyong rgya mtsho	Person	Chapter 2
Tashi Chöling Monastery	bKra shis chos gling	Place	Chapter 2
Tashi Migyur Ling Monastery	bKra shis mi 'gyur gling	Place	Chapter 2
Tashi Tso	bKra shis mtsho	Person	Chapter 2
Tashilhunpo Monastery	bKra shis lhun po	Place	Chapter 2; Chapter 3
<i>Ta Wang</i>		Title	Chapter 2
Tege township	The ge	Place	Chapter 2
Teyan Ganden Rinchen Ling Monastery	Tha yan chi dga' ldan rin chen gling Ch. 塔雁小寺具喜宝洲 Tǎyànxiǎo sì jùxǐ bǎozhōu	Place	Chapter 2
Tharpa Ling Monastery See also Kanchen Monastery	Thar pa gling	Place	Chapter 2

Thayan Tashi Tse Monastery	mTha' yang bkra shis rtse	Place	Chapter 2
Thubten Gyatso, Thirteenth Dalai Lama	Thub bstan rgya mtsho	Person	Introduction
Thuken Lobsang Chökyi Nyima	Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma	Person	Introduction; Chapter 2
Thuken Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso	Thu'u bkwan Ngag dbang chos kyi rgya mtsho	Person	Chapter 2
Tiyanchi Monastery	Ti yan chi	Place	Chapter 4
Toli	Tho li	Place	Chapter 1; Chapter 2
Trika	Khri ka Ch. 贵德 Guìdé	Place	Chapter 2
Tsangyang Gyatso, Sixth Dalai Lama	Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho	Person	Chapter 1
Tsari Tsagong	Tsa ri tsa gong	Place	Chapter 2; Chapter 3
Tsarong Medical College	Tsha rong	Place	Chapter 5
Tsedang Dorje	Tshe dang rdo rje	Person	Chapter 2
Tsel Gungtang Monastery	Tshal gung thang	Place	Chapter 2
Tsenpo Gon Monastery see also Serkhog Monastery	bTsan po dgon	Place	Chapter 2; Chapter 4
Tsering Dorje	Tshe ring rdo rje	Person	Chapter 2
Tsering Tashi	Tshe ring bkra shis	Person	Chapter 2
Tsethang Monastery	rTse thang	Place	Chapter 2
Tsewang Dorje	Tshe dbang rdo rje	Person	Chapter 3
Tsongkhapa	Tsong kha pa	Person	Introduction; Chapter 3; Chapter 4
Tsongon Lake	mTsho sngon Mong. Kokonor Ch. 青海 Qīnghǎi	Place	Chapter 2
Turquoise Lake Palace	Pho brang g'yu mtsho	Place	Chapter 3
<i>Tusalagchi</i>	Mong. <i>Tusalayci</i>	Title	Chapter 2

Ü	dBus	Place	Chapter 2; Chapter 4
Ulan-Bulag	Tib. U lan pu lag Mong. Ulaan bulag	Place	Chapter 2
Ulan-Ude	Mong. Ulaan üd	Place	Introduction
Ulshri Phuntsog Tenzin Namgyal	Ul shri Phun tshogs bstan 'dzin rnam rgyal	Person	Chapter 2
Upagupta		Person	Chapter 3
Usutu juu	Ch. 烏素圖召 Wūsùtú zhào	Place	Chapter 1
Vāgbhaṭa		Person	Chapter 5
Vajradhara	rDo rje 'chang	Deity	Chapter 3
Vajrapāṇi	Phyag na rdo rje	Deity	Chapter 3
Wenzhou	Ch. 溫州 Wēnzhōu	Place	Chapter 2
Wutai Shan	Ri bo rtse lnga Mong. Utai Uula Ch. 五台山 Wútái shān	Place	Chapter 2; Chapter 3
Yangpachen Monastery	Yangs pa can	Place	Chapter 4
Yangtze River	'Bri chu Ch. 揚子江 Yángzǐ jiāng	Place	Introduction
Yarlha Shampo	Yar lha sham bu	Place	Chapter 3
Yarlung Tsanpo River	Yar klung gtsang po Ch. 雅魯藏布江 Yǎlǔ zàngbù jiāng	Place	Chapter 2
Yellow River	rMa chu Ch. 黃河 Huáng hé Mong. Ĥatan gol	Place	Introduction
Yeshe Tenpé Nyima, Third Jetsun Dampa	Ye shes bstan pa'i nyi ma	Person	Chapter 2
Yeshe Tenpé Gyaltzen, Fourth Changkya Lama	Ye shes bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan	Person	Chapter 2; Chapter 5
Yinti	Cang jun si zhi wang	Person	Chapter 2

	Ch. 允禔 Yǔntí		
Yongtu	Ch. 永璿 Yǒngtú	Person	Chapter 3
Yongzheng Emperor	Gong ma Yung ting Ch. 雍正帝 Yōngzhèngdì	Person	Chapter 2; Chapter 4
Yonten Gyatso, Fourth Dalai Lama	Yon tan rgya mtsho	Person	Chapter 1
Yunli	Ch. 允礼 Yǔnlǐ	Person	Chapter 2
Yuthok Yonten Gonpo	G'yu thog Yon tan mgon po	Person	Chapter 1
Zangkor Shabdrung Palden Ozer	bZang skor zhabs drung dPal ldan 'od zer	Person	Chapter 1; Chapter 2
Zhalu Monastery	Zha lu	Place	Chapter 2
Zhidar	Zhi dar on po	Person	Chapter 5
Zurkhar Nyamnyi Dorje	Zur mkhar mNyam nyid rdo rje	Person	Chapter 5

Appendix Three

Yuán Shǐ

(*The Official History of the Yuan*), Volume 121.

Typed by Dr Hannah Theaker.

國寶一名黑梓，少擊劍學書，倜儻好義，有謀略。父為元帥，軍務悉以委之，故所至多捷。從攻重慶，降宋都統張實，並掠合州以歸。中統元年，從攻阿藍答兒有功。阿藍答兒叛將火都據吐蕃之點西嶺。國寶攝帥事，討之。眾欲速戰，國寶曰：「此窮寇也，宜少緩，以計破之。」遂以精兵襲其後。火都欲西走，國寶據險要之，挑戰則斂兵自固。相持兩月，潛兵出其不意，擒殺之。捷聞，賜弓矢、金綺。初，按竺邇之告老，制命徹理襲征行元帥。徹理以病不視事，國寶乃謂諸弟曰：「昔我先人，耀兵西陲，大功既集，關隴雖寧，而西戎未靖，此吾輩立功之秋也。」乃遣謝鼎與弟國能，持金帛說降吐蕃，酋長勘陀孟迦從國寶入覲。國寶奏曰：「文州山川險厄，控庸蜀，拒吐蕃，宜城文州，屯兵鎮之。」從之，授國寶三品印，為蒙古漢軍元帥，兼文州吐蕃萬戶府達魯花赤，與勘陀孟迦皆賜金符。時扶州諸羌未附，國寶宣上威德，於是呵哩禪波哩揭諸酋長皆歸款，從國寶入覲。國寶圖山川形勢以獻，詔授呵哩禪波哩揭為萬戶，賜金虎符，諸酋長為千戶，皆賜金符。賜國寶金幣。國寶治文州有善政。至元四年卒。延祐元年，贈推誠佐理功臣、光祿大夫、平章政事、柱國，封梁國公，諡忠定。

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