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**ROWS OF AUSPICIOUS SEATS:
The Role of *bzbugs gral phun sum tshogs pa'i rten 'brel* Ritual in
the Founding of the First Bhutanese State in the 17th
Century***

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Abstract

*This paper analyses centuries-old Bhutanese ritual, *bzbugs gral phun sum tshogs pa'i rten 'brel*. Literally translated as 'auspicious seating row', its performance is believed to bring auspiciousness, and as such any significant public function in Bhutan compulsorily begins with performance of this ritual. That the ritual brings auspiciousness is ingrained in the Bhutanese psyche.*

The paper discusses the significance of the ritual in context of 'invented tradition' as posited by Hobsbawm and in light of Foucault's 'governmentality' to generate alternative understanding of the ritual, and explore its role in the founding of first Bhutanese state in the 17th century. It argues that the ritual is not a novel invention but rather a reinvented tradition with antecedent in monastic institution, which was then modified, ritualised, and institutionalised to establish and legitimise a new Bhutanese state. Further, an analysis of its concurrent religious, political, economic, socio-cultural roles is offered:

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consolidation and perpetuation of Drukpa Kagyu ('brug pa bka' brgyud) authority; securing loyalty to the dual system of governance (chos srid lugs gnyis); imposition of a pseudo-monastic discipline (sgrigs lam rnam bzhag) on the people; and the replacement of a highly decentralised social structure with hierarchal and centralised social order.

Introduction

bzbugs gral phun sum tshogs pa'i rten 'brel ritual (hereafter *zhugdral*) is compulsorily performed at the beginning of any significant public function in Bhutan. The belief that this ritual brings auspiciousness is deeply ingrained in the Bhutanese psyche. Like other Bhutanese rituals, it too has religious roots and as such is full of religious, political, and socio-cultural significance. Believed to have been 'invented' in the late 1630s by the Zhabdrung¹ Ngawang Namgyal (*zhabs drung ngag dbang rnam rgyal*, 1594-1651), the founder of the first Bhutanese state, and it is still performed more than three centuries later. In November 2008, Bhutan witnessed a large-scale and elaborate series of *zhugdral* ceremonies during the coronation of the fifth king. The ritual has even secured a hallowed place in *The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan* (*'brug gi rtsa khrims chen mo*), which requires the parliament (*spyi tshogs*) to begin each session with a *zhugdral* ceremony.² In the Constitution, *zhugdral* is defined as a "traditional ceremony for the acquisition of the triple attributes of grace, glory and wealth during a formal and auspicious occasion." *bzbugs gral* translates as 'a row of seated people', from *bzbugs* – to sit or a seat, and *gral* – a

¹ Zhabdrung (*zhabs drung*) is the title, meaning 'Before Whose Feet One Submits', and all his reincarnations assumed this title.

² The National Council (*rgyal yongs tshogs sde*) and the National Assembly (*rgyal yongs tshogs 'du*).

row. *phun sum tshogs* is the “triple attributes of grace, glory and wealth”, also meaning abundance, prosperity, glory, perfection, auspiciousness, or everything that is desired, while *rten 'brel*, generally understood as auspicious, more precisely means interdependence.

The Origin of *zhugdral*

Dorji Gyaltshen (1999) writes that in the process of unifying the country, the Zhabdrung was visiting Punakha (*thed yul*) in 1637 when spiritual teachers and disciples (*bla slob*), ministers (*lhan rgyas*), representatives (*thus mi*) of the Bhutanese people, and emissaries from Nepal (*bal pa*) and other neighbouring kingdoms, said to equal in number the stars in the sky, flocked towards him for an audience and pledged their loyalty. They made immeasurable offerings (*bul ba*), which gradually accumulated into a heap (*spungs*). After witnessing this auspicious gathering of people and offerings, he named the place *spungs thang kha* (Opening to Plain of Heap). The Zhabdrung then organized them in rows according to their ranks and distributed the offerings, and recited auspicious verses and prayers dedicated to the lineage and hierarchs of the Drukpa Kagyu (*'brug pa bka' brgyud*) School, the religious tradition that would become the state religion in Bhutan. This series of events in 1637 is considered the beginning of *zhugdral*.

According to Ministry of Health and Education (1994), during the consecration (*rab gnas*) of the Punakha Dzong in 1640, representatives of different regions and valleys in Bhutan and neighbouring kingdoms attended the events. They not only paid tribute and pledged their support and loyalty to the Zhabdrung, but also presented various goods as offerings. The Zhabdrung, impressed by the gathering of people, drawn from all parts of Bhutan, and by the diversity of their gifts, concluded the occasion

to be auspicious or good *rten 'drel* (interdependence). He then asked those present to be seated in rows and distributed the offerings amongst the guests. Thus, *bzbugs gral* refers to the origin of the Bhutanese state, the “coming together and seating in rows of all the good things” or “coming together and seating in rows of all the valleys in Bhutan” (MHE, 1994). The old capital Punakha (spungs thang kha) and the dzong, Pungthang Dewa Chenpoi Phodrang (*spungs thang bde ba chen po'i pho drang*, meaning the Great Peace Palace of Plain of Heap) completed in 1639, were named after this event.

This paper refers to the *zhugdral* performed in 1637 and 1640 as the “first *zhugdral*” in order to distinguish it from the modern, more institutionalised performance seen today.

The Ritual

The *zhugdral* ritual consists of two main elements:

First, participants are seated in ‘rows of auspicious seats’ depending on their religious, political, bureaucratic, and social positions. The auspicious (*rten 'drel*) fragrance, foods, drinks, fruits, money and sacred symbols are offered first to the Buddha, the Dharma, the Sangha, and the hosts of bodhisattvas, guardian deities, and gods and goddesses, followed by the participants who are all seated according to their statuses.

The second component is the recitation of prayers, which invoke the Zhabdrung, his lineage, and the hierarchs of Drukpa Kagyu School. Further, prayers of aspiration and auspiciousness are made.

The first brings prosperity and wealth while the second brings merit (*dge ba*) and blessings (*sbyin rlabs*). So *zhugdral* brings wealth

and prosperity (the material), and merit and blessing (the spiritual); the former for the present life and the latter for the life after death.

Zhugdral precedes the beginning of any important public or private functions, and thus by default it is performed only on auspicious days, as all important events in Bhutan are scheduled for astrologically auspicious days. The *zhugdral* ritual is therefore synonymous with auspiciousness. *Zhugdral* is performed at the time of receiving promotion, both secular and religious, during marriages, foundation laying (*sa lhang*) and consecration (*rab gnas*) of religious monuments and houses, and enthronement of lamas. It is also performed for welcoming lamas and high dignitaries (Yonten Dargye & Sorensen, 2009).³

Today, three versions of *zhugdral* – comprehensive, medium and short – are performed depending on nature and significance of events and functions, and economic means of hosts or organisers (NLAB, 1999). The list of items served in three types of *zhugdral* varies according to its level of execution. A comprehensive *zhugdral* was performed during the coronation of the fifth king in 2008.

³ The arrival of Jamgon Ngawang Gyaltshen (1647-1732) at Paro from Ladakh in 1712 was greeted by the religious dignitaries, head lama (*spyi bla*), and a crowd of people with *zhugdral* feast. Jamgon was returning after serving his tenure as the head lama (*sgang ri bla ma*) at the court of King Nyima Namgyal (*nyi ma rnam rgyal*, r.1694-1729) of Ladakh. Bhutan appointed monk-representatives to administer the monastic estates donated to the Drukpa government and to assume the position of a head lama at Takna monastery in Ladakh. The king Singye Namgyal (*seng ge rnam rgyal*, r.1616-23, 1624-1642) is said to have invited the Zhabdrung to become his court priest and sent a messenger to Bhutan. The latter sent Choje Mukzinpa as his representative. That was the beginning of a long relationship between Ladakh and Bhutan.

Participants can be broken into two groups: the host(s) and the guests. The Zhabdrung was the host of the first *zhugdral*, while the guests were the people's representatives of different valleys and emissaries of neighbouring kingdoms.

Further, there are two types of guests, human and non-human beings. Non-human beings are higher beings who received offerings first. These are: The Three Jewels (*dkon mchog gsum*) – The Buddha (*sangs rgyas*), the Dharma (*chos*) and the Sangha (*dge 'dun*); The Three Roots (*rtsa ba gsum*) – lama (*bla ma*), meditation deity (*gid dam*), and mystic consort (*mkha 'gro*); the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas (*sangs rgyas, byang chub sems dpa'*), and finally, the dharma protecting deities (*chos skyong*). Thus *zhugdral* includes innumerable beings, all of which partake in the offering. The chief guest presides over the ceremony. The chief guest could be Druk Gyalpo (*'brug rgyal po*), the Je Khenpo (*rje mkhen po*, the Chief Abbot of Drukpa Kagyu School in Bhutan), or any one of a number of secular or religious individuals, such as dignitaries or lamas.

Zhugdral is generally held inside a large hall or a room inbuilt with a religious shrine (*mchod gsham*), containing statues and thangkas of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and deities. Spaces are considered sacred as an altar and monk participants form integral parts of the ritual. Different auspicious food items are offered to synchronise with chanting and recitation of prayers composed for each particular item. During the ecclesiocratic period (1651-1907), almost all participants occupying the higher seats were monks, and unlike today there was no need to have separate monk participants for reciting *zhugdral* verses.

Key components of *zhugdral*

Three things are considered important in *zhugdral*.

The first is the display of hierarchy—the seating order of participants. It is important for the host to ensure that the seating order is correct. There should be a perfect understanding of who should occupy which seats, starting from the head of state/government to common people. A small mistake has the potential to render the event inauspicious, as misplacing a person sows inauspicious seeds that will later grow into enmity, discord, and quarrel. With chief guest at the head of rows, the rest must be seated such that their rank should be apparent based on their proximity to the chief guest— the closer the seat, the higher the rank. Persons who have broken vows should not be invited, as the ritual is an exclusive space meant for like-minded people.

The second key element is the particular order of offering and serving food items. The offering items are arranged according to their auspicious nature, and must be presented in that order. However, the order served during marriage celebrations differ from those honouring a promotion. Different foods are considered invested with an auspicious nature through their association with life events of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, the Zhabdrung and the hierarchs of the Drukpa Kagyu School lineage. Participants must bring their own wooden cup (*phor ba*) and *lto ras* (piece of cloth for receiving food, akin to today's plate).

The third crucial component is the unfailing observance of the Bhutanese code of etiquette, or *driglam namzha* (*sgrigs lam rnam*

bzhag).⁴ Participants as well as food servers must behave according to this protocol as they are under the direct gaze of the chief guest (king or lama), the Triple Jewel, protective deities, and a host of other spirits. Offerings are first made to these entities. Except for the chanting of *zhugdral* verses and sounds of movement of servers and serving, there is silence.

The Offerings

The items and order of offered in a comprehensive *zhugdral* ceremony (NLAB, 1999) are as follows:

#	Dzongkha	English (or equivalent)
1.	<i>dro ma</i>	Kaser
2.	<i>drib zang</i>	Saffron fragrance
3.	<i>drib zang gi bzhes rtsam (mdzar phyi)</i>	Snack with saffron fragrance
4.	<i>gzhung ja</i>	Official tea
5.	<i>bzhes rtsam sbon 'bras lto</i>	Snack made from local Bondey rice
6.	<i>ja nag po</i>	Tea sponsored by the public
7.	<i>bzhes rtsam dmar srob lto</i>	Snack made of refined rice
8.	<i>bsod nams mchod ja</i>	Holy tea sponsored by Zhabdrung
9.	<i>bzhes rtsam 'bras ser</i>	Snack – yellow texture rice
10.	<i>mar chang</i>	Wine
11.	<i>dar cung</i>	Flag
12.	<i>phyi mar</i>	Wheat flour and butter
13.	<i>phyag 'gyedpa</i>	Ceremonial money
14.	<i>rdoq ma pa ni</i>	Betel nuts and leaf

⁴ *sgrigs lam rnam bzhag* has been defined differently: “system of ordered and cultured behaviour” (Karma Phuntsho, 2004, 572); “the way of conscious harmony” (Karma Ura, 1997, 247); “An elaborate choreography of deference” (Aris, NA).

Zhugdral - Rows of Auspicious Seats

15. <i>khareg mo ze</i>	Water melon
16. <i>ngang lag</i>	Banana
17. <i>hum pa</i>	Lemon
18. <i>tsbul lu</i>	Orange
19. <i>sbra mze</i>	Jack fruit
20. <i>aa 'bras</i>	Persimmon
21. <i>gon</i>	Cucumber
22. <i>bal pa bse'u</i>	Guava
23. <i>gun cha</i>	Sugar cane
24. <i>gun 'brum</i>	Grapes
25. <i>sin 'bru</i>	Pomegranate
26. <i>kham</i>	Peach
27. <i>gli</i>	Pear
28. <i>aepa'al</i>	Apple
29. <i>am chug u li</i>	Mango
30. <i>skam tshogs</i>	Mixed dry fruits
29. <i>rgya gar gling skam</i>	Dried Indian pear
32. <i>sgu ram byiril</i>	Sweets
33. <i>phyur go</i>	Dried cheese
34. <i>star go</i>	Walnut

Not all the offerings made to the Zhabdrung became part of *zhugdral*; only those invested with auspiciousness through their direct association with the Buddha, bodhisattvas, saints, and the Zhabdrung himself were selected. All of the above items were offered in the *zhugdral* ceremony performed during the consecration (*rab gnas*) of Punakha in 1640 (Dorji Gyaltshen, 1999).

The items can be classified into two categories. The first category of foods is those items available in western Bhutan, particularly from Punakha. The second category is composed of imports from friendly neighbouring regions and nations, mostly from Cooch Behar, Bengal, Nepal, Sikkim, and Ladakh.

While each component offers a specific benefit and was selected for a particular reason, I will highlight only some of the most relevant.

Auspicious Grains

For example, no millet crops have been included due to their association with the degenerate age (*dus snon snyigs ma*): “Oleander and millet, which have become the best foods, will be eaten” (Douglas & Bays , 1978). Maize, a staple in eastern Bhutan is culturally regarded as an inferior food, in spite of its superior nutrition value. In contrast, three types of *zhugdral* foods are made of rice: *bzhes rtsam sbon 'bras lto*, *bzhes rtsam dmar srob lto*, and *bzhes rtsam 'bras ser*. Similarly, wheat is included as an auspicious grain: *phyi mar* made of wheat flour (*phyi*), which symbolises the essence of grain, and butter (*mar*) symbolising the essence of milk, is offered. The offering of the essence of drinking and eating brings prosperity in food, wealth, resource, long life, and freedom from disease.

The first food *kaser (dro ma)* is considered an auspicious food through its association with the Tibetan origin myth and the event in life of the Zhabdrung,⁵ and accordingly, it was served as the first offering during the *zhugdral* ceremony performed at the time of

⁵ According to the Tibetan creation myth, a monkey (*spre'u*) – the emanation of Avalokiteshvara (*spyen ras gzigs*)— and a demoness (*brag srin mo*)—the emanation of Tara (*sgrol ma*)—begot thousands of monkeys. Unable to feed their children, the monkey prayed to Avalokiteshvara, and the latter answered the prayer by providing *dro ma* seeds. The seeds multiplied and the couple were able to feed their children. This is why it is considered as auspicious food. When the Zhabdrung arrived at the Bhutan border in 1616 after fleeing Tibet at the age of 23, *dro ma* was the first food served by the people of Laya. After taking this delicious, tasty and nutritious food which could be grown without much effort, the Zhabdrung experienced a comfortable stomach.

consecrating (*rab gnas*) Punakha Dzong. The second food, saffron fragrance (*dri bzang*) was offered to the Zhabdrung by the king of Ladakh. Similarly, the offering of ceremonial money (*phyag gyedpa*) symbolises the offerings of textile and grains, gold and silver etc., during the consecration and their distribution to the devotees and people.

Auspicious fruits

Including sugar cane—considered a fruit in Bhutan—15 varieties of fruits are offered: watermelon, banana, lemon, orange, jackfruit, persimmon, cucumber, guava, grape, pomegranate, peach, pear, apple, mango, walnut, and sugarcane. Most of the fruits can be grown in the sub-tropical Punakha valley. Banana symbolises long life and is therefore the first fruit offered/distributed during coronation of king, enthronement of a Je Khenpo or a promotion. Lemon (*hum pa*) is served during the New Year (*lo gsar*). The fruits from the topmost branches have good smell, sweet taste, and white flesh, and the wishes for one year will fruition like a lemon. Orange (*tshul lu*) is served first during marriage ceremony since the fruit symbolises accumulation and sacred bond.

The basic guideline for serving fruit is thus: fruits that are found on higher branches and possess sweet taste and smell are served first, followed by those found in the middle branches. Those fruits found near the ground are served last.

Zhugdral and the Founding of the Bhutanese State

The formation of *dpal ldan 'brug gzhung* (the state of the glorious Drukpa) involved four processes: the promulgation of the founding seal known as the Sixteen I's (*nga chu drug ma*) in 1622; proclamation of the government in 1626; establishment of the capital at Punakha Dzong, which was completed in 1639; and the

recognition of the state by the neighbouring countries in 1640 (Sonam Kinga, 2009). While these may have been the main events acknowledged in national narratives, there are other factors, such as the institutionalisation and performance of *zhugdral*, which contributed to the founding of the state.

In the Himalayan Tibetan cultural regions, the relationship between the ecclesiocratic state and its subjects can be understood through *mchod yon* (priest-patron) dyad, a socio-political concept which is a part of broader *sbyin bdag* (client-patron) institution (Ruegg, 1989; Klieger, 1989). In this reciprocal relationship, common people (patron) provided material support to priests (lama) in return for spiritual support. In the conventional giver-receiver equation, the receiver is subservient to the giver. However, this relationship is inverted in the Tibetan ideological context. The lama is the dominant component, and acknowledged as such by lay patrons, even if the donor was a king or emperor.

It was Gyalwa Lhanangpa Sangay Rinchen⁶ who introduced the political institution of *bla dpon* (priest-lord) diarchy in western Bhutan. In this diarchic rule, the Lhapa lamas provided spiritual protections to local people in return for their material support and allegiance and loyalty to their school, out of many competing schools then scrambling for patronage and followings (Yonten Dargye & Sorensen, 2001). This is likely the earliest expression of Bhutanese statehood to exist at the village and regional levels, especially in western Bhutan. The Zhabdrung established the dual system (*chos srid lugs gnyis*) by expanding the scope of client-patron relationship originally introduced by Lhapa lamas and later

⁶ *rgyal bal lha nang pa sangs rgyas rin chen*, 1164-1224; Lhanangpa was the founder of Lhapa Kagyu (*lha pa bka' brgyud*), one of the first Tibetan Buddhism schools to arrive western Bhutan.

elaborated up by a Drukpa Kagyu pioneer, Phajo Drugom Zhigpo and his sons.⁷

It is within this gift-giving and gift-receiving ideological context that the offerings made to the Zhabdrung should be understood. After his arrival at Gasa in 1616, Drukpa Kagyu patrons and the local people made offerings and paid homage in return for his teachings and blessings. This pattern was continued for rest of his lifetime in western Bhutan as he moved between villages and patrons (Aris, 1979). The gift offering during his 1637 Punakha visit and the 1640 consecration of Punakha Dzong can be considered larger scales of the same. In a Maussian understanding of the gift, the gift-receiver (i.e., the Zhabdrung) should have been obligated to the gift-givers—the people. But what was unique about this gift offering was that the receiver (the Zhabdrung) returned the gifts to the givers. This is unique because in the first place, people were subservient to the Zhabdrung under *mchod yon* institution. His benevolence in distributing the offerings made the relationship more unequal, in that the people thus became doubly indebted to him.⁸

⁷ phajo 'brug sgom zhig po, 1184-1251.

⁸ Some 400 years earlier, the people of Lingzhi offered the Vulture Dzong (*bya rgod rdzong*) and all surrounding villages together with people and pasturelands to Phajo Drugom Zhigpo in return for his religious service. Phajo benevolently refused to accept the offerings and in stead requested them to carry, without interruption, personal belongings of the Drukpa Kagyu followers and pilgrims travelling via Lingzhi. Thus the people of Lingzhi began to bear the burden of fulfilling this load-carrying obligation for many years.

Alternative Interpretive Frameworks

Now I will shift to discuss the functions of *zbugdral*—both symbolic and real—by positing it in the context of alternative frameworks.

Hobsbawn (1983) introduced the term ‘invented tradition’ and defined it as “a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past” (p.1). He argues that traditions that claim to be old are often of recent origin, and sometimes invented, and these traditions are modified, ritualized, and institutionalized to serve particular national ends. Invented traditions, according to Hobsbawn, establish continuity with a specific past through repeated performances.

Zbugdral in some ways is an ‘invented tradition’ since there are antecedents in both monastic and secular institutions. Its origin can be traced to *bkra shis sgor mo* (auspicious circle), a kind of auspicious seating arrangement, or to *rten 'brel mdzad sgo*, a secular ceremony where food is distributed to a close retinue in order to cultivate auspiciousness. The term also references rank-based seating during rituals or dance applied to the monk community. *Zbugdral* seating hierarchy is similar to those of monks during the rituals: the head lama’s seat is located at the centre facing the shrine flanked on its right and left by rows of seats, whose relative importance decreases with increased proximity to head lama. The highest seat is located opposite the entrance door, or closest to the altar. Chogyam Trungpa (1966)⁹ described his sitting room where

⁹ chos rgyam drung pa rin po che, 1939-1987.

meals were served and formal visits received: “My raised throne was beside the door and a row of seats ran lengthwise down each side of the room; those nearest the throne had thick cushions for the more important guests but their size gradually diminished until the end of the rows, when they became merely rugs on the floor” (pp. 43-44). In that sense, the ritual is not a novel invention, but an existing tradition adapted to serve the political, religious and social ends.

Hobsbawn further discusses three overlapping types of invented traditions: “a) those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities, b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority, and c) those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour” (Hobsbawn, 1983, p.9).

Bhutan now—as well as then—is not as homogenous as it seems. Populations were as diverse as the gifts offered to the Zhabdrung, and the participants themselves as different as the Zhabdrung—himself a Tibetan refugee—was from the rest. The first *zhugdral* provided an opportunity for him to unify diverse ethnic groups, represented in surrogate by the diversity of regionally-specific offerings. *Zhugdral* was useful in forging religious and political unity among diverse people scattered over diverse geographical zones, from subtropical foothills to alpine mountains. This unity was crucial in founding a new state. The performance of *zhugdral* ritual helped orient the consciousness of its participants towards cultivating a new state, one in which they played a part. While this might have initially indoctrinated local elites alone, winning over them was crucial to consolidate the rule in their villages, the patronage of which was highly sought after by many. In other words, through its repeated performance during high-profile events, *zhugdral* indoctrinated people to accept the new political

system and authority founded on the Drukpa Kagyu School ideology. The ritual helped establish the Drukpa Kagyu as the dominant school to the exclusion of local competitors.¹⁰

Since the ritual is performed based on *driglam namzha*, believed to have been developed and instituted by the Zhabdrung, it helped inculcate value system and impose new behavioural conventions based on the emerging ideology. The very blending of monastic and lay participants in order to follow one discipline symbolised the unification and ordering of a previously order-less society. *Zhugdral* also inculcated Buddhist values.

In a series of lectures, Foucault (Inda, 2005) presented a genealogy-based analysis of the art of modern government, in which he coined the concept of ‘governmentality’, which he defined as a ‘conduct of conduct’ – all the systematic ways of shaping, regulating, or managing the conduct of individuals or groups towards specific ends. According to him, regulating conduct is not only the governmental matter but involves many actors, organisations, and agencies, all of which are concerned with rationally and effectively exercising authority over the conduct of the human beings.

How can *zhugdral* be understood within Foucault’s governmentality framework? The performance, ritualization and institutionalization of *zhugdral* can be understood as a Foucauldian

¹⁰ Competitors are best represented by the so-called Five Groups of Lamas (*bla ma khag nga*), who were the Lhapa (*lha pa*) founded by Gyalwa Lhanangpa (*rgyal ba lha snang pa*, 1164-1221); Nay Nyingpa (*gnas rnying pa* of the Gelug school); Barawa (*ba’ ra ba*) founded by Barawa Gyaltshen Pelzang, an offshoot of the Toedruk (*stod ’brug*); Khathogpa (*ka thog pa*) of the Nyingma school founded by Sherab Sengye (*shes rab seng ge*, 1122-1192); and Chagzampa (*lcag zam pa*) founded by Thangtong Gyalpo (*thang stong rgyal po*, 1385-1464).

performative act, in that it helped indoctrinate *zhugdral* participants and observers with the state ideology, the principal among it being the dual system of governance (*chos srid lugs gnyis*). In fact, the reasons for the Zhabdrung's exile in Bhutan were political as much as it was religious. He had had a dual role as hereditary leader of Drukpa Kagyu and an incarnation of a master scholar, Kunkhyen Pema Karpo.¹¹ Yet he was considered a threat to the central Tibetan state under the Tsang Desi. The Zhabdrung best understood the danger of unmanaged or mismanaged diversity through inter-school conflicts and rivalry back in Tibet. People, if properly managed, can be a boon rather than a threat to the state. Imposing hierarchy over anarchy was one way of managing the diversity.

In a true Foucauldian understanding of power, *zhugdral* ritual served as a technology to create hierarchy and order out of a largely chaotic society— not necessarily chaotic in a negative sense, but rather as an opposite of hierarchy— by replicating the seating order of the monastic system where hierarchy was constructed based on monks' learning or seniority.

People and their representatives who had come to pay their respect, pledge loyalty and made offerings were made to sit in hierarchical seats, and blessed it as being auspicious. This rigid and hierarchical sitting arrangement orchestrated in the closed space of a *zhugdral* hall served as the prototype of what was later replicated in other 'spaces'; in houses, villages and communities. This was the beginning of a shift of the state's responsibility of protecting territory and providing security to its subjects (from Tibetan invaders) to governing them in a more efficient ways to meet a particular end.

¹¹ kun mkhyen pad ma dkar po, 1527-1592.

Let me now turn to the religious, political, economic and social significance of the ritual.

Religious

At the end of a three-year retreat, the Zhabdrung chose to establish a new state in Bhutan (Sangay Dorji, 2008).¹² If a new state was to be established, it had to be an ecclesiocracy founded on Drukpa Kagyu teachings and ideology.¹³ The first, and most difficult, task he faced was to consolidate Drukpa Kagyu as the dominant school to the exclusion of other schools. The so-called a group of five lamas stood on his way, posing not only the biggest political, but ideological and doctrinal challenges as well. They not only competed for patronage and influence, but also invited and encouraged Tibetan invasions against the Zhabdrung.

Religious control was then the key to acquiring other forms of control. The very idea of offering gifts first to the primordial Buddha followed by lineage holders and hierarchs of Drukpa Kagyu School and its protecting deities made these entities more familiar to the people, bringing them closer to this tradition. It established interdependence (*rten 'drel*) between the gift-giver

¹² The founding of a state in *lho mon* was prophesised by Guru Padmasambhava, Tsangpa Gyare Yeshe Dorji (*gtsang pa rgya ras ye shes rdo rje*, 1161–1211), his father Tenpai Nyima (*bstan pa'i nyi ma*, 1567–1619) and Gonpo Chamdrelsum (*mgon po lcam dral gsum*)— Mahakala (*gnag po chen po*), Mahakali (*dpal ldan lha mo*) and Jarog Dongchan (*bya rog gdong can*).

¹³ The consolidation of Drukpa Kagyu began after the arrival of Phajo Drugom Zhigpo in western Bhutan in 1222. By then Lhapa School had established itself in western Bhutan with Chelkha (*gchal ka*) in the upper Paro Valley as the main seat. Albeit a dominant power, they were short of unifying the western Bhutan and providing a stable rule. At the time of Phajo's death in 1251, the Drukpa Kagyu had supplanted the Lhapa as the dominant force, but it too fell short of unifying the region and providing stability.

(people) and the receiver (the Zhabdrung), and also between the gift-giver and the Drukpa Kagyu masters and protective deities. *Zhugdral* rituals and their accompanying verses helped to propagate the Drukpa Kagyu teachings, its lineage and hierarchs among the people.¹⁴

Political

Western Bhutan, modern Paro, Thimphu (*wang*), Wangdi (*sha*), and Punakha (*tbed*) were largely autonomous before unification, despite being under strict religious laws of different traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, particularly that of the Lhasa. Lamas were content with people's spiritual loyalty and patronage to support and perpetuate their respective teachings, and lamas did not interfere in day-to-day secular matters. Thus, anarchy, rather than hierarchy, was the defining characteristic of the political and social milieu. In this scenario, *zhugdral* served as today's equivalent of a national anthem.

The first *zhugdral* and its subsequent repetition provided an avenue for people of different regions to unite together and experience a sense of fraternity, which cultivated a feeling of belonging to a state that was then in the making. It symbolised

¹⁴ The offerings are first made starting from primordial Buddha Vajradhara (*rdorje 'chang*); Tilopa (*ti lo pa*, 988–1069); Naropa (*naro pa*, 956-1041); Marpa Choki Lodro (*mar pa, chos kyi blo gros*, 1012-1097); Milarepa (*mi la ras pa*, 1052-1135); Gampopa (*sgom po pa, sod nams rin chen*, also known as *dwags po lha rje*, 1079-1153); Thasapa (*tha tsa pa*, also known as Phamo Drupa Dorji Gyalpo, *phag mo gru pa rdo rje rgyal po*, 1110-1170); Naphupa (*sna phug pa*, also known as Lingrepa Pema Dorji, *gling ras pa pad ma rdo rje*, 1128-1188), and all the Kagyu lamas – Tsangpa Gyare Yeshe Dorji (*gtsang pa rgya ras ye shes rdo rje*, 1161–1211), Kunga Paljor (*kun dga' dpal 'byor*, 1428-1476), Jamyang Chodra, (*'jam dbyangs chos grags*, 1478-1513) and Kunkhyen Pema Karpo (*kun mkhyen pad ma dkar po*, 1527-1592) and the Zhabdrung himself.

nascent Bhutanese nationhood and unity among different valleys, which endures to this day. According to Anderson (1983), a nation larger than the primordial face-to-face contact of a village is an imagined political community, imagined because the while the members of that nation will not know all of their fellow members they live the images of their communion. Thus, *zhugdral* helped participants imagine in an Andersonian spirit, a new nation conceived and founded on Drukpa Kagyu ideology and teachings.

Despite hierarchical nature of society and residual forms of exploitation, people were participating in a horizontal comradeship, and this fraternity made it possible for the Bhutanese to unify against the Tibetans and Mongols in numerous skirmishes between 1618 and 1780, and then additional battles with British India between 1772 and 1865.¹⁵ Performance of the *zhugdral* ritual thus helped cultivate support and offer legitimacy among the people for the *lugs gnyis* (the dual system of religious and temporal) or *chos srid zung 'brel* (“relationship between the spiritual and temporal orders”) (Cüppers, 2004).

Economic

As discussed earlier, the socio-political institution of *mchod yon* ideally served spiritual ends for the laities, and material ends for the lamas. The common people who could not pursue spiritual life accumulated positive merit by providing material base for the religious specialists who themselves could not engage in worldly activities, particularly farming, due to their involvement in spiritual pursuits. One had what the other lacked, and was thus interdependent. It was these areas of specialisation and

¹⁵ The first Anglo-Bhutanese war was fought from 1773 to 1774, and the last one, the Duar War in 1865.

interdependence that sustained society. The offerings made to the Zhabdrung were fulfilment of a *mchod yon* contract. The Zhabdrung understood the diversities of people, places, crops, and climates of his state-in-the-making by moving from one patron to another, from one valley to another teaching the people, who in turn reciprocated with offerings.

The diversity of offerings reflected the economic specialisation based on the agro-climatic and physical zones and the skills of the people.¹⁶ The list of items was a microcosm of economy or material base of Bhutan, with exclusion of some farm products considered inauspicious. As coercive power of the state increased, the offerings, initially made as a reciprocal gesture for receiving his teachings, were later converted to a tax obligation that a particular village or valley had to fulfil. The patrons (*sbyin bdag*) of the *mchod yon* slowly became taxpayers or citizenry of a new state. The actual need for *zhugdral* ritual was meagre; most offerings went in support of ecclesiocratic institutions and bureaucracy. Documents revealing the existence of a category of tax called *dbang yon* (lit. blessing offering) testify the point. *dbang yon* was initially a voluntary offering of agricultural produces made to the

¹⁶ According to government-published history textbooks, representatives from different valleys of Bhutan, including the southern Duars—a stretch of Bhutanese territories ceded to the British India after the Duar War of 1865, which Bhutan lost—offered agricultural produces cultivated in their respective valleys to the Zhabdrung. The products offered by different regions based on agro-climatic conditions and farm specialisation were: rice, other cereals and varieties of fruits came from Wangdue, Thimphu and Paro (west); woven fabrics and other products came from Lhuntse, Mongar, Trashiyangtse and Trashigang (east); cheese, butter and other animal products were from Haa, Lingzhi, Lunana, Bumthang, and Merak-Sakten (nomadic population of the north); walnut and other fruits from Dagana and Trongsa (central); betel nuts and leaf from Dungsam (Samdrup Jongkhar and Pemagatshal) and Duars (South); and sugar cane and molasses from Wamrong and Kheng regions (MHE, 1994).

Zhabdrung or to the monk body in return for spiritual services. Later, it was institutionalised into a fixed yearly tax obligation totally unrelated to its original purpose (Ardussi & Karma Ura, 2000).

Social and cultural

An act of making people sit in rows according to hierarchy during the first *zhugdral* can be said to be the beginning of a social stratification, the process continued to this day. The ritual created new as well as legitimised the old hierarchy, as the support of the local leaders was crucial in consolidating Drukpa Kagyu authority and implanting the dual system. It formally affirmed the existing hierarchy and invested the participants with new status. The Bhutanese society was more egalitarian than the ‘civilised’ Tibet.¹⁷ One reason why the Tibetans called Bhutan and other southern frontier regions by a pejorative name *monyul* (land of darkness, i.e., absence of the Buddha’s teachings), similar to the anthropological ‘other’, was the absence of hierarchy between the ruler and the subjects.

As explained earlier, all *zhugdral* participants – the servers and the served – must act and behave according to a code of conduct. As such it is a performative act of discipline. The code of conduct when imposed outside the sacred walls of the *zhugdral* hall to the common people helped in disciplining the general population who hitherto had experienced anarchy (*gong ‘og nor*, out of order). Its

¹⁷ Following the assassination of Langdarma (838-841 circa) by Lhalung Pelki Dorji, three of his six brothers who fled Tibet arrived at Bumthang. Because of their descent from Tibetan chief families, three brothers expected the local people in Bumthang to give them honour and respect, but none was given since “from previous times [in Bumthang] there had been no high and low graders between a lord and his subject” (Aris, 1986, 57).

far-reaching implications lay in institutionalising *driglam namzha* first to the participants, particularly in public spaces while interacting with rulers and high officials, and the rest of the population followed. The code of conduct originally designed for monks in monastic institutions became *driglam namzha* when applied to the common people in secular spaces.

Sitting in rows according to position during *zhugdral* is a dramatization of the rigid hierarchy created by the dual system: disciplining the individual towards the collective cause of the state; flattening the local or regional vernacular leaders to join and support the Drukpa Kagyu tradition; replacing the chaos of the many systems with the order of one system; and most importantly, binding people to the dual system of religious laws that is as firm as a soft silken knot, or *chos kbrim dar gyi bdud pa*, and civil laws that are as firm as a golden yoke, or *rgyal kbrim gser gyi gnya' shing*.

One main complaint of the chiefs of Thimphu against the Lhapa lamas was heavy taxation (Yonten Dargye & Sorensen, 2009). The benevolent rule of Phajo and later of his four sons, and much later the Zhabdrung's generosity in returning the gifts, should be understood in the light of the Lhapa ruler's excesses. The Zhabdrung's gesture of returning gifts demonstrated his generosity and benevolence, and hence a sign that the dual system in contrasted starkly with the then-current socio-political milieu. In absence of any precedence for a ruler or superior to return the offerings (mainly taxes) made by subjects or subordinates, this particular generosity won him the loyalty and support of key people in establishing a new state.¹⁸ Similarly, distributing gifts,

¹⁸ This ritual of returning the offerings is a Bhutanese equivalent of the Kwakiutl Indian potlatch in which blankets and valuables are flamboyantly destroyed.

instead of hoarding them, was effective in communicating the Zhabdrung's claims of superiority through his generosity over the rest. It was not a secularised distribution of goods, but a ritualised distribution, oriented toward religious people in religious terms.

Conclusion

This paper does not describe *zhugdral* as such, for that has been done extensively elsewhere (Dorji Gyaltshen, 1999), but rather explores its alternative meanings and the role it played in forming the Bhutanese state in the 17th century. That it is practiced today some 375 years later is not an accident, for other similar rituals are practiced with equal rigour and relevance. In Bhutan, culture has progressively become a badge of the country's national identity and therefore, of the country's sovereignty. But not all rituals have outlived the purpose, place and time for which they were invented. If there is one reason for the continued endurance and relevance of *zhugdral*, it is the universal human aspiration for auspiciousness and avoidance of inauspicious forces. Similar to what Geoffrey Samuel (1995) calls a 'pragmatic Buddhism', this ritual helps practitioners/participants fulfil pragmatic individual goals, namely to render the occasion auspicious through coming together and cultivation of auspicious forces.

The offerings, their acceptance and the consumption of auspicious offerings, and participation in the *zhugdral*, which are inextricably woven with the prayers invoking the Drukpa Kagyu lineage and dharma protectors, psychologically transform the participants. Just as *zhugdral* indoctrinated the participants with Drukpa Kagyu teachings and a dual system founded on Drukpa Kagyu doctrine, and its ultimate ritualization and institutionalisation legitimized

the state of the glorious Drukpa (*dpal ldan 'brug gzhung*)¹⁹ at a much larger systemic level, the repeated performance of the ritual perpetuates the *status quo* and creates a new hierarchy.

What originally began as the distribution of offerings made to the Zhabdrung, *zhugdral* was systematically ritualised as an auspicious ceremony which narrate the Zhabdrung's state formation story, starting from prophecies for him to leave Tibet for Bhutan (*lho mon*), his arrival at Laya, the receptions given by local Drukpa Kagyu patrons and followers, the offerings made by the local people, the consecration of the Punakha Dzong as the capital of his new government, and the institutionalisation of the dual system, all of which were laden with auspicious forces. Just as these auspicious events coalesced to form what is now the state of Bhutan, a mere dramatization of these events in the *zhugdral* ceremony is enough to render any events auspicious, and thus successful.

¹⁹ Glorious because it overcame several invasion attempts by Tibetans and Mongols.

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Appendix One: Offerings made in all three types of *zhugdral*

Comprehensive	Medium	Brief
1. <i>dro ma</i> (kaser)	1. Kaser	1. Kaser
2. <i>dri bzang</i> (saffron fragrance)	2. Saffron fragrance	2. Saffron fragrance
3. <i>dri bzang gi bzhes rtsam (mdzar phyi)</i> (snack with saffron fragrance):		
4. <i>gzhung ja</i> (official tea)	3. Official tea	3. Official tea
5. <i>bzhes rtsam sbon 'bras lto</i> (snack made from Bondey rice)		
6. <i>ja nag po</i> (tea sponsored by the public)		
7. <i>bzhes rtsam dmar srob lto</i> (snack made of refined rice)	4. <i>bzhes rtsam lto dkar dmar gang rung</i> (snack made of red and white rice whichever is available)	4. <i>bzhes rtsam lto dkar</i> (snack made of white rice)
8. <i>bsod nams mchod ja</i> (holy tea sponsored by Zhabdrung)		
9. <i>bzhes rtsam 'bras ser</i> (snack – yellow texture rice)		
10. <i>mar chang</i> (wine)	5. Ceremonial wine	5. Ceremonial wine
11. <i>dar cung</i> (flag)	6. Ceremonial flag	6. Ceremonial flag
12. <i>phyi mar</i> (wheat flour and butter)	7. Ceremonial wheat flour and butter	7. Ceremonial wheat flour and butter
13. <i>phyag 'gyedpa</i> (money)	8. Ceremonial money	8. Ceremonial money

14. <i>rdog ma pa ni</i> (betel nuts and leaf)	9. betel nuts and leaf	9. betel nuts and leaf
15. <i>kha reg mo ze</i> (water melon)		
16. <i>ngang lag</i> (banana)	10. Banana	10. Banana
17. <i>hum pa</i> (lemon)	11. Lemon	
18. <i>tshul lu</i> (orange)	12. Orange	11. Orange
19. <i>sbram ze</i> (jack fruit)	13. Jack fruit	
20. <i>aa 'bras</i> (persimmon)	14. Persimmon or pomegranate	
21. <i>gon</i> (cucumber)	15. Cucumber	12. Cucumber
22. <i>bal pa bse'u</i> (guava)	17. Guava/mango	13. Guava
23. <i>gun cha</i> (sugar cane)	16. Sugar cane	14. Sugar cane
24. <i>rgun 'brum</i> (grapes)	18. Grapes	
25. <i>sin 'bru</i> (pomegranate)		
26. <i>kham</i> (peach)	19. Peach/pear	15. Peach/pear
27. <i>gli</i> (pear)		
28. <i>ae pa'al</i> (apple)		16. Apple
29. <i>am chug u li</i> (mango)		
30. <i>skam tshogs</i> (mixed dry fruits)	21. <i>hing 'bras skam</i> (dry fruits)	
31. <i>rgya gar gling skam</i> (dried Indian pear)		
32. <i>sgu ram byi ril</i> (sweets)	20. Sweets	17. Sweets
33. <i>phyur go</i> (dried cheese)	23. <i>phyur go / star go</i> (dried cheese/walnut)	19. Dried cheese/walnut
34. <i>star go</i> (walnut)		
	22. <i>rgya zas bod zas</i> (Indian and Tibetan snacks)	18. <i>rgya zas kha zas</i> - Indian snacks

Appendix Two: The *Zhugdral* Verses*

The Verses of Kaser offering

The chief saviour of the world, Amitayus
The glory that has destroyed all untimely deaths without
exception
The refuge for those who are helplessly suffering
I make offering to the Buddha Amitayus.

The glorious goddess with an autumn moon complexion
Extremely beautiful and calm with three faces and eight hands
The bestower of ultimate attainments of immeasurable
wisdom and long life
I make offering to the Goddess Vijaya.

The goddess that I have been practicing throughout my
successive rebirths
The executioner of enlightened activity of the Buddhas of the
three times
Who has a blue-green face, two hands, and brings swift
calmness
I make offering to the Mother Tara and all her forms.

This food possessing hundreds of captivating tastes
Carefully prepared for the Buddhas, including their sons,
As they are offered with deep faith

* The verses were translated by Thinley Jamtsho, researcher of the Centre for Bhutan Studies. See *Verses of Zhugdral Phunsum Tshogpa, Tea and Food Offering* (forthcoming, 2011).

May it cause sentient beings to sustain with the yogic
sustenance of concentration!

The Verses of Saffron Fragrance Offering

To Vajradhara I offer; to Tilopa, Naropa, and
Marpa Lotsawa, Milarepa, Gampopa, Thatsapa;
Naphupa and other hierarchs of Palden Drukpa
I make offering to all gurus of the Kagyu lineage.

Being skilful in method and compassion, you took rebirth
among the Shakya clan
Being undefeatable, you subdued forces of devils
Your body is as magnificent like a mountain of gold
I make offering to you, the king of Shakyas.

The actual embodiment of Buddhas of the three times and the
lord of the hundred families
The spinner of wheel of the four enlightened activities;
Powerful conqueror of the appearance and existence;
I make offering to Padma Jungney.

[Arisen] from the grasping-and-grasper-free state of
Dharmakya
[Their] rainbow-like Sambhogakaya forms;
Are adorned with the major and minor marks of excellence
and the five-fold gestures;
I make offering to all tutelary deities.

The Verses of tea offering

In the centre of the Avalokiteshvara's continuing waves of
compassion is
The fully developed lotus of knowledge and affection of the
Buddhas
You are the sun that causes to emit all sorts of fragrances of
peace and happiness,
I make offering to Ngawang Namgyal.

In the past, before the presence of the Buddha
Those persons who practiced according to the Dharma
You promised to rear them like a mother to her son;
I make offering to all the Dharma protectors and guardians.

The powerful guardians of the residences including your
retinues
As I offer you all, this delightful Chinese tea
May you accomplish our aspirations of teachers and students,
And execute the enlightened activity of spreading the Buddha
Dharma!

By the blessing of making offerings to the glorious Gurus
In the places wherever we live
May there be no diseases, evil spirits, poverty and disputes;
And the Dharma and good fortunes ever increase.

The Verses for Alcohol Offering

Om Ah Hung! (Three times)

To the Lord who has sovereignty over partaking the first
portion of offering—

The king of all enlightened families

The chief of all Mandalas

[the one] the wisdom essence that is indivisible from the
enlightened body, speech and minds of the Buddhas of the
three times—

To the most venerable and glorious Gurus, without
exception;

I make offering! *pan tsa am ri ta pu za kha hi!*

To the assembly of tutelary deities of the Mandalas of the
Kriya Tantra, Charya, Tantra, Yoga Tantra and
Aunutarayoga Tantras, without exception,

I make offering of *pan tsa am ri ta pu za kha hi!*

To the male and female sky-farers of the three places

To the female sky-farers residing at the eight great charnel
grounds guarding the directions and regions, without
exception

I make offering of *pan tsa am ri ta pu za kha hi!*

The glorious Mahakala, the king of Herukas

The warrior-god of Yogis

The physician of the three poisons

The mighty guardian of monasteries and Mandalas

The bearer of the name raven, including his entourage of
servants, and so forth

To all the sublime Dharma protectors, without exception, I
make offering of *pan tsa am ri ta pu za kha hi!*
Furthermore, to those who are stationed in this region such as
the eight classes of gods and demons
The beings of the six states of rebirths
And all sentient beings that are bound through the four
mediums of rebirths
I offer! *pan tsa am ri ta pu za kha hi!*

The Verses of Zhugdral Phunsum Tshogpa Ceremony

All the motherly sentient beings as immeasurable as the space
Go for refuge in the Guru Buddha's Dharmakaya
Go for refuge in the Guru's Sambhogakaya
Go for refuge in the Guru's Nirmanakaya
Go for refuge in the Guru, the precious Buddha (*recite three
times*)

At the centre of the Avalokiteshvara's continuing waves of
compassion
Is the fully developed lotus of knowledge and affection of the
Buddhas
You are the sun that causes to emit all sorts of fragrances of
peace and happiness
To Ngawang Namgyal I offer!

Conquered the darkness of ignorance by omniscience
Never discarded the purposes of others through compassion
And subjugated evil forces by power, the god of gods
To Ngawang Namgyal, I supplicate.

To free the sentient beings from the three realms of Samsara
You achieved the sublime body of the immortal Vajra

And as long you perform the migrators' purposes through the
four enlightened activities
May you too live long!
I pray for the sound health of my Guru!
I pray him to live supremely long!
I pray his four enlightened activities to flourish!
And may I be blessed never to be separate from the Guru!

To the Buddha, Dharma and the most supreme of the
assemblies
Until the enlightenment, I go for refuge
By the merits of my generosity and so forth
May I attain the Buddhahood to benefit sentient beings!

May all the sentient beings be endowed with happiness and
the causes of happiness!
May all the sentient beings be liberated from suffering and the
causes of suffering!
May all the sentient beings never be separated from the
supreme bliss which is free from afflictions!
And may all sentient beings abide in the great equanimity
which is free from passion to the close ones and hatred
towards the distant persons (enemies)! (*three times*)

You who have become the protector of all sentient beings;
You, the deity who destroy intolerable evils and their armies
And you who know all things as they are;
O the Buddha including your retinues, I entreat you to come
here!

It is so nice that the lord has come here
We are virtuously fortunate
Having accepted our offering
I pray that you may stay here only!

Om guru sar wa ta tha ga ta tra bar sed ka ra ma ha sed ka ra!
Ma ha ar gham tis tsha sowa ha!

Just so when [the Budha Sakyamuni] was born;
All gods offered him a shower
With the pure water of the gods
I too, bathe your enlightened body!

Om guru sar wa ta tha ga ta tra bar sed ka ra ma ha sed ka ra!
Ma ha ar gham tis tsha sowa ha!

As you are compassionate to me and sentient beings
By your miraculous power
As long as I make offering; I pray you, the Buddha too, to
stay long!

Om guru sar wa ta tha ga ta tra bar sed ka ra ma ha sed ka ra!
Ma ha ar gham tis tsha sowa ha!

With oceans of completely perfect manifestations
You the boon-giver of peace and happiness to all sentient
beings
You, the chief son of the Buddha Amitayus
O Avalokiteshvara, to you, I supplicate!

On the lion-throne in the country of Shambhala
As the extensive commentator of the glorious Kalachakra
Tantra
You beheld the white lotus-like prophecy of the king
Suddhodhana's son (Buddha Sakyamuni)
To you, the second Rigden King, I supplicate!

Out of love towards the subjects of Tibet
The tradition of the Mahamuni worshiped by gods and
humans
Was initiated [in Tibet] for the first time, for which we owe
immeasurable gratitude

To the miraculous Dharma king [Trisong Deutsen], I
supplicate!

With the profound view, you arose as the sea of calmness
And [from this sea] flowed millions of rivers of the vast and
profound Dharma heaps

Which made you a terminator of the inner sufferings of the
red faced [Tibetans]

To the Shantarakshita, I supplicate!

The entire inner and outer knowables, without exception

As you perfectly spun them with the wheel of your non-
forgetting memory

You achieved complete victory from all opposing groups

O the great Pandit Narotapa, I supplicate!

As an executioner of the Buddhas's enlightened activities of
the three times

To whom the Buddha himself presaged

O The pure hermit of the mountain ranges of Shanti,

To the Jetsun Da-od Zhonu, I supplicate!

Setting a Vajra mat on the slope of a mountain

You, an emanation of a thousand Buddhas, practiced,

And uplifted the fortunes of all body-bearers

To the Drowai Gonpo Drukpa [Rinpoche], I supplicate!

In the eastern paradise of the Manifest Joy

On the apex of the boundless visions of Mayajvala Vajra;

The displayer of ocean of enlightened conducts;

To the Bodhisattva, whose vision is free from afflictions, I
supplicate!

The concealed cycles of the eighty-four thousand Dharma
Heaps
To the fortunate beings to be tamed, you Kunga Peljor
According to their preferences, unfolded [the meanings of the
84,000 Dharma Heaps]
O you, the matchless translator, the faculty of all
Conquerors, I supplicate!

Flawlessly got renowned as the treasurer, and in this time of
the degenerate age
You stood as the only sublime guide of the noble path
To you, the former
Lord of Accomplishment, I supplicate!

The Jamgon's pair of legs, the sun, its nectar (rays)
Having drunk a hundred times, evolved into the garland of
white lotus
And became the crown ornament of all haughty scholars
To the matchless and supreme Guru, I supplicate!

The basis of emanation for the bygone Buddhas; The source
of the Buddhas yet to appear
And indivisible one from the present saviors
May the Dharma King's lotus-feet remain firm!

At the centre of the Avalokiteshvara's continuing waves of
compassion
Is the fully developed lotus of knowledge and affection of the
Buddhas
You are the sun that causes to emit all sorts of fragrances of
peace and happiness
To Ngawang Namgyal I offer!

Conquered the darkness of ignorance by omniscience
Never discarded the purposes of others through compassion
And subjugated evil forces by power, the god of gods
To Ngawang Namgyal, I supplicate.
To free the sentient beings from the three realms of Samsara
You achieved the sublime body of the immortal Vajra
And as long you perform the migrators' purposes through the
four enlightened activities
May you too live long!

May by the strength of having supplicated in these verses,
I and all the infinite migrators, without exception;
Please you, O the Protector!
And by your tradition
May we swiftly obtain the complete enlightenment!

I pray for the sound health of my Guru!
I pray him to live supremely long!
I pray his four enlightened activities to flourish!
And may I be blessed never to be separate from the Guru!

May the only source of peace and happiness
The Buddha Dharma last forever!
And may the upholders of the Buddha Dharma
Have their victory banner of life hoisted forever!

May the sound of the great Dharma drum
Liberate all the suffering-stricken sentient beings!
And for countless millions of eons
May you live preaching the Dharma!

The Verses of Aspiration

Homage to the Bhagavan who is the King Accomplisher of
aspirations!

May those karmic or adventitiously conditioned occurrences
Such as demons, harms of the elemental spirits, and so forth
And all ailments that discomfort the minds of being
Never occur in this sphere of world!

Like a victim dragged by a murderer
Whose body and mind are split within an instant
As many soul snatching sickness and sufferings as are there
May none of them occur in this sphere of world!

Just like one has fallen into the mouth of the Lord of Death
Those ailments, which bring terror just upon hearing their
neames
The epidemics that last for a short time and other chronic
ailments, and so forth
May they never harm the sentient beings!

May the class of 80,000 harm-inflicting obstacles
The 360 adventitious obstacle makers
The 404 ailments and so forth
Never harm all body bearers (sentient beings)!

The peace snatcher of body and mind without exception
As many sufferings from the disruption of the four elements
as are there
Having pacified all of them without exception and being
possessed of glowering might
May all live a disease-free long life, have peace and happiness!

The compassion of the Guru and the Three Jewels
The power of the Dakinis and the Dharma protectors
And by the power of the undeceiving law of cause and effect
Whatever dedications or aspirations are made, may all be
accomplished!

The Auspicious Verses of Conclusion

May the Sugata teacher's sea of supreme teaching
With its cloud heap-like fame of resounding dragon's roar
Increasingly rain the rain of study and practice, with each
passing day
And fill up every nook and corner of the country!

Always accompanying the sun rays of the three vows;
The quintessential upholder of the aroma of hearing,
contemplation and practice
May the chief lotus-like Dharma upholders, whosoever may
be
Fill up every nook and corner of the country!

May [the place] where the rivers of gain and esteem flow;
Where gems of peace and happiness are available
With the ocean of fresh glory of the fresh Dharma Wheel;
Fill up every nook and corner of the country!

The teacher has appeared on this Earth surface
His teachings, where upon, became as bright as the sun rays.
And with upholders of the teachings living harmoniously like
a teacher and a student
May there be an auspicious durability of the Dharma!