

THE WHITE AND RED RONG-BTSAN OF MATHO MONASTERY (LADAKH)

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The present contribution will discuss the legends, rituals, and ceremonies related to a pair of oracle gods (the White and Red Rong-btsan) in Ladakh. These facts will be correlated with data derived from textual studies, information obtained from some Ladakhis, and on-sight observations with the purpose of recovering some data relevant to the history of the Tibetan conquest of Ladakh.¹

First, a description will be given of Matho monastery as situated in the countryside, its sacred buildings, and the activities related to the oracle gods. Secondly, other Tibetan sources which mention the oracle gods will be examined. Finally, other evidence pertinent to them and their history will be introduced. In the conclusion I shall attempt to synthesize the diverse data and set them in relationship to each other.

MATHO MONASTERY AND THE RONG-BTSAN DKAR-DMAR

Mang-spro (Ladakhis pronounce the name as "Matho"²) monastery is built on a commanding hill overlooking the desert-like southern shore of the Indus river, ca. 16 miles southeast of Leh, Ladakh's capital. In contrast to the southern shore, the northern shore has fertile land used for agriculture. Within many miles of the monastery there is no other human settlement. Despite the barren and arid nature of its environment, the area at the foot of the hill abounds in water. Beneath many boulders water oozes out and meanders through patches of luscious meadows — a rare sight in Ladakh. Although obviously fertile, the land is not used for agriculture.

Walking up to the monastery, which hovered above me like a castle in the air, I enjoyed the various shades of yellow, brown, and red that characterize the Ladakhi landscape. The monastery is built on the flat top of a moraine stretching north from the Zaskar Range toward the Indus. The assembly hall (*du khang*), the Kanjur temple (so called because it houses the Buddhist canon in Tibetan), and the chapel of the protective gods (*mgon khang*) are spaced around a central courtyard which is set off against the cliff with a stone wall that is sometimes integrated into the walls of the buildings. Except for the chapel of the protective gods, the buildings have undergone some recent renovations. This may have resulted in the loss of some ancient art work, but it has given the monastery a pleasant, well-groomed appearance. I also found a class of novices sitting under the portico of the assembly hall

and memorizing some Buddhist texts as part of their basic education. This, along with other facts, gave me the impression that the monastery was under efficient leadership.

At the time, the chapel of the protective gods was of utmost interest to me as I hoped to find there some evidence regarding the development of Ladakhi culture which would supplement the scarce information on the subject in Tibetan historiographical texts. When I requested permission from the acting abbot (the actual abbot is supposed to have died during the Chinese conquest of Tibet where he had been staying in order to further his education) to visit the chapel, he told me that women are not allowed to enter it. But he generously agreed that I may peek through the door without setting my foot into the chapel. I saw a windowless room with images of the two oracle gods, the White and Red Rong-btsan, looming in the dark at the opposite wall. In the centre was a wooden pillar crudely hewn from a log, which was draped with white ceremonial scarves (*kathag*). Ancient weapons (bows, arrows, spears, etc.) were hanging from pegs. I was told that these weapons belong to the White and Red Rong-btsan. The floor was covered with grain brought there right after the harvest, where it remains until the following spring, when a part of it is used as seed for the fields of the Ladakh king. The rest is filled into "treasure vases" (*gter bum*) which are commonly found in the *lha tho*, little shrines devoted to the ancestral and village gods.

The White and Red Rong-btsan animate the chapel, as well as a hermitage build higher up in the mountains. They take possession of two monks during the celebration of the Ladakhi New Year, a festive season known in Ladakhi as *naghrang*. The preparations which lead up to the trance and possession take up most of the year. Luding Mkhan Rinpoche, the acting abbot, spent much time explaining these elaborate preparations to me. Every five years the two monks who will serve as oracles are elected from among the monastic congregation. Slips with names of the monks are put in a bowl which is slowly whirled until two rolled up slips fall out. The monks whose names are on these paper slips are chosen to act as the Rong-btsan's oracles for the coming five years. Usually the selection of the oracles is scheduled for the 15th day of the tenth month according to the Tibetan calendar. This date coincides approximately with the winter solstice, which is the beginning of the New Year in many places of Ladakh. During the procedure of selecting the oracles the majority of the monks perform the Mahākāla pūjā.

To develop their spiritual ability, the two chosen oracles have to undergo a one-year retreat during which time they live at an isolated place not too far from the main monastery. During this period they propitiate Hevajra, one of the main tantric deities of the Sa-skyā tradi-

tion. Part of the oracles' spiritual training program is repeatedly to offer sacrificial cakes (*gtor ma*) to the various Protectors of the Doctrine. Beginning with the 14th day of the eleventh month, the oracles have to remain in strict isolation, exclusively devoted to their meditations which focus on Hevajra and the Rong-btsan gods. During this retreat they have to observe several regulations governing their ritual purity — including a weekly bath and ablutions with scented water, which are performed by the tantric master of the monastery (*rdo rje slob dpon*). This strict retreat is terminated on the 10th day of the first month and the monks then return to the main monastery after a year in isolation. When they enter their own rooms after so many months of living in the hermitage, they immediately fall into a trance and the White and Red Rong-btsan enter their bodies.

At this moment, the human personality of the two chosen oracle monks vanishes and their bodies serve as "support" for the two Rong-btsan who seize the monastery and rule it for a month. Embodied in the two oracle monks, the Rong-btsan first visit the monastery's main temple and then the Mahākāla chapel. While the two monks are still in a trance, the Rong-btsan allow people to address them and submit questions, which they then answer. When approaching another Mahākāla chapel, the Rong-btsan will take a seat on the platform in front of the shrine room. They address the assembled crowds and predict various events which will occur in Ladakh during the following year. From the crowd the Rong-btsan select four men to bring seven high piles of juniper shrubs from Hemi Shukpachen (the place name indicates that juniper profusely grows there), a place in the interior valley. The boughs will be used to redecorate the chapel of the Rong-btsan. The four men receive the gods' blessings and *gzungs bdud* (sacred threads) for their individual protection. When the four men are sent off, the Rong-btsan withdraw from the oracle monks.

On the next day, the eleventh, the Rong-btsan again enter the oracle monks' bodies while the latter stay in their rooms. In a trance, the monks leave their rooms and visit the assembly hall and chapels. Later they receive spiritual and secular dignitaries in an audience. The oracle gods give their old clothes and other personal articles as a token of their appreciation to the officials who, in turn, donate new clothes and other gifts to the oracle gods. During the next two days, i.e., the 12th and 13th of the first month, the gods again enter the monks' bodies and respond to various questions from the public by forecasting future events.

On the 14th and 15th days, the entire ceremony is culminated. On the 14th, both oracle monks carefully prepare themselves for the gods' entry into their bodies. At this time the congregation of monks chants a text which evokes the vision of the Rong-btsan. The monks participate in making the Rong-btsan manifest by meditating on the gods emerg-

ing from their heart with a flood of light. At this moment the gods become manifest in the oracle monks and they join in a religious mask dance (*cham*) in the courtyard of the monastery. Mahākāla, his entourage, and two deer (portrayal in masks) participate in the dance, along with the Rong-btsan celebrates a special ritual. During the ceremonies the Rong-btsan occasionally hurry over the walls and roofs of the monastery, drawing their weapons against the devotees as a sign of their divine grace. According to M. Brauen, the oracles have an iron cross attached to their backs, because this alleviates the painful penetration of the gods into the oracles' bodies.³ Every movement of the Rong-btsan is loaded with ominous significance pointing at future events related to crops, livestock, and the general prosperity of the Ladakhi people.

On the following day, the 15th of the first month, the monks bathe and then the four previously appointed men paint a wrathful face on the monks' chests and backs. It is believed that during possession the oracle monks see by means of the eyes of the face painted upon their chests. At this moment the oracle monks change their attire from that suitable for a *rgyal po* (spirits who have the appearance of a king) to that suitable for a tantric one. Over a loincloth they put on a tiger skin. They are adorned with an apron of bones, which is part of the traditional tantric costume, and with many charm boxes offered to them in the past by a Ladakhi queen. Their heads are covered with a cloth bag which has only an opening at the nose; its top is decorated with hair, ribbons, and ceremonial scarfs. Both oracle monks hold a small drum and a *gandi*,⁴ a piece of wood used to summon the monks, in their hands. As before, an iron cross is attached to their backs. After an ablution offered to the Rong-btsan the two oracle monks, who have already entered into trance, receive the upper garment of Rdo-rje dpal-bzang, the founder of the monastery. They hold the cloth above their heads and enter the main temple. It is said that in ancient times the oracles flew to the temple while holding on to the cloth. In the temple they receive the blessings of the Vajra master, and then they proceed on their inspection tour through the monastery and its sacred premises. Along their route hundreds of people flock, eager to catch a sight of the oracle monks or to ask them about the future. People faithfully offer locally brewed beer as well as incense to the Rong-btsan, who walk along the hill on which the monastery is built. After returning to the monastery court they run over walls, roofs, and railings, although their heads are still covered with the cloth mask they are said never to fall or stumble. Back in the courtyard, they throw roasted barley flour in the four directions to learn in which part of the country the harvest will be good. Finally they invoke a prosperous future for the Buddha Doctrine. At this moment the oracle monks withdraw from their trance and recover gradually.

The last performance of the Rong-btsan oracle monks occurs on the 8th day of the second month (since the 15th day of the first month they have not entered into a trance). Early in the morning the monastery of Hemis and the Ladakhi king, now residing at Stok, send horses and servants to Matho. The oracle monks take a bath, perform their morning prayers, and leave the monastery on horseback. At a certain place along the way (which leads to the upper part of the valley where the Rong-btsan's original shrine, built from juniper boughs, is) the monks fall again into a trance. In the shrine is a "treasure vase" (*gter bum*) which contains samples of grain. The Rong-btsan oracle monks examine the grain and then predict whether or not the harvest in the coming year will be good. Later the Rong-btsan gods leave the bodies of their oracles and get absorbed into the juniper boughs. That concludes the oracles' activity for that year. The two monks retreat to their hermitage and prepare themselves for the next appearance of the Rong-btsan.

THE RONG-BTSAN IN TIBETAN LITERATURE

The Rong-btsan have the attribute *dkar dmar*, white and red, or *kha ba dkar po*, which means "white like snow."⁵ Under these or similar names the Rong-btsan appear in a number of Tibetan texts. Nebesky-Wojkowitz mentions in his monumental work *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*⁶ Rong-btsan Gang ("Rong-btsan the Glacier"), a mountain god belonging to a group of 21 "lay disciples" (*dge bsnyen*) whose names usually incorporate parts of the place names associated with their residences. For instance, the god Jo-mo Gangs is residing in the mountain Jo-mo Lha-ri, also known as Jo-mo Gangs-dkar, which Westerners prefer to call Mt. Everest. Thus, the White and Red Rong-btsan supposedly resided in a country ("Rong") and were associated with a locality known as *kha ba dkar po*.

A country with the name Rong is documented in several sources. It is primarily mentioned in the Gesar epic in varying contexts. R. A. Stein surmises some relationship with Stag-rong,⁷ but it is difficult to locate the country Rong from the information in the Gesar Epic. Various indications support the opinion that it was related to the district of Lta'u.⁸ Several figures in the epic are either born in Rong or their proper names incorporate the syllable *rong*, which usually means that the person's activity was centered at that place.⁹ There is, for instance, the petty ruler Rong-tsha'i Khra rgan, Gesar's elder brother and an incarnation of the mahāsiddha Kukuripa.¹⁰ Others whose names include the place name Rong are Rong-sras Lha-rgod 'bum-lu and Stag-rong Rong-tsha.¹¹

Outside the Epic there is a chief of the Rong tribe documented as living in 1089. Reportedly he was married to a princess from Kuchea, the

well-known oasis state located at the northern branch of the Silk Road.¹²

From these sources, scanty as they may be, we may nevertheless conclude that the Rong-btsan were originally residing in the country of Rong, somewhere far off in eastern Tibet.

The next problem to solve is whether there exists a mountain with the attribute "white red" (*dkar dmar*) or "white like snow" (*kha ba dkar po*). A mountain with the name Kha-ba dkar-po is mentioned in a manuscript of the Gesar Epic housed in G. Tucci's collection of Tibetan manuscripts. In the colophon it is said that the author, a patron of the Sa-skya School, travelled to Kha-ba dkar-po where he stayed for some time.¹³ In the Bacot Collection there is a manuscript with the title *The Merit of Circumambulating the Kha-ba dkar-po (Kha ba dkar po'i bskor ra gyi pha yon)*.¹⁴ This text describes the mountain commonly known as Kha-ba dkar-po as a sacred abode of the Btsan¹⁵ and the wildlife living on the mountain sides as the Btsan's livestock. For this reason the animals are spared from being hunted. But the wise will know the mountain as being essentially a *Cakrasamvara mandala*, a symbolic representation of the numinous. From the perspective of the history of religions, we may conclude that the author of the text tries to incorporate into Buddhism a cult which, until then, had been outside of it. This mountain must have been a well-known sacred site, as it is mentioned in the *Description of Sacred Sites (Gnas yig)* by Rang-byung rdo-rje, the third Karma-pa hierarch, and in the *Route Description (Lam yig)* by Karma Pakshi.¹⁶ R.A. Stein identifies the mountain Kha-ba dkar-po with Dokerla, located not far from the Yu-nan border in the old country of Rong Tsa-ba-rong.¹⁷

When we correlate textual evidence with empirical observations, we are puzzled by the fact that two oracle gods are residing in Ladakh, the furthestmost western outpost of Tibetan civilization, while a number of texts document their existence in the furthestmost eastern part of Tibet. We have to ask ourselves: are we dealing with two different sets of gods who — due to some odd coincidence — share the same name and attributes? Or, can we justifiably assume a relationship between the Btsan living on the mountain Kha-ba dkar-po in the country of Rong and the Rong-btsan Kha-ba dkar-po worshipped in Ladakh?

In the remarks that follow I shall refer to several facts which may serve as a bridge between the Btsan of Rong and the Rong-btsan of Ladakh. Above all we have to ask who was the founder of Matho monastery. His name is given as Rdo-rje dpal-bzang, but nothing so far is known of him, except for a single reference in Mi-pham's *Collected Works*.¹⁸ There Mi-pham mentions Rdo-rje dpal-bzang, also known as Smad Dbang-phug, a name which explicitly shows that he was a native of the "lowland," i.e., Eastern Tibet, where the mountain Kha-ba dkar-

po and the country of Rong are. Furthermore, Mi-pham relates Rdo-rje dpal-bzang to Rab-rgyas, a native from Western Tibet, thus indicating that the founder of Matho monastery had indeed some contacts with people from Western Tibet before he set out on his journey to Ladakh. Moreover, one page before mentioning Rdo-rje dpal-bzang, Mi-pham refers to Bzhad-pa rdo-rje, a famous yogi of Zanskar (southern Ladakh) who shares this name with Gesar.¹⁹ This is another indication of Rdo-rje dpal-bzang-po's Ladakh connections. Later we shall see that there are further traces of the Rong-btsan's movement across Tibet.

OTHER EVIDENCE PERTINENT TO THE WHITE AND RED RONG-BTSAN

This part of my contribution will provide further evidence of the significance of the Rong-btsan within the traditional fabric of Ladakhi civilization, and will combine the evidence which we have examined so far in order to construe a plausible hypothesis.

The paramount importance of the Rong-btsan decreased to some extent after the Ladakh monarchy lost its power to the Sikh ruler of Jammu in 1842, who was then succeeded by the Sultan of Kashmir and ultimately by the British Raj. Many ceremonies enforcing the king's responsibility for the country and its inhabitants' prosperity lost their relevance after the king was no longer the center of secular and sacred power. Nevertheless, certain traits and elements associated with these ceremonies survived. In the description of the Rong-btsan's chapel I said that the floor is covered with grain which remains there until the next spring, at which time part of it is used as seed for the king's fields. Lha-dbang dar-rgyas, the current priest of the royal family, disclosed that the king would consult the Rong-btsan to find out what the prospects for the harvest were. He also said that the grain to fill the "treasure vases" in the royal *lha tho* were taken from the grain in the Matho chapel. My informant assured me that there had been many more ceremonies and rituals which strengthened the bond between the Rong-btsan and the king. Some of them may even suggest that the Rong-btsan functioned as protectors of the king, but at present, Lha-dbang dar-rgyas said, things are in a state of disorder and decay: the king is a boy without power and the country is controlled by foreigners.

This intimate relationship between the Rong-btsan and the king seems to emulate the intimate relationship between a king and his court priest. From my studies of the Zanskar *pha spun* (ancestral clans) and their *pha lha* (ancestral gods), I have learned that wandering yogis and tantrics were frequently accompanied by their tutelary deities when travelling through Tibetan lands. When the yogi was invited by

a ruler to become his court priest he usually enthroned his tutelary deity near his new residence. According to Luding Mkhan Rinpoche, the acting abbot of Matho monastery, this is exactly what happened when Rdo-rje dpal-bzang-po wandered through the upper Indus valley, about 500 years ago. The Rong-btsan were travelling along with him. Their fierce nature required that a place far from human settlement be found for them. The southern shore of the Indus was an ideal location — remote, yet close enough to the capital so that one could reach it in a day. Furthermore, the location chosen as the future residence of the Rong-btsan was already recognized as a sacred place. This is evidenced through my discovery of a stone carrying graffiti of an Ibex on one side and of the Buddhist mantra *Om mani padme hum* on the other side. The Ibex, a kind of big horn mountain sheep, is regarded as sacred animal in Ladakh; for example substitutes in dough are offered during the funeral rites and the New Year celebration; graffiti of Ibex are found near Alchi and at many other sacred places of Ladakh. Many Ladakhis pointed out to me that the graffiti identify sacred places which are haunted by ghosts and spirits. In order to please the sometimes moody spirits, people engraved stupas or Buddhist mantras on the same rock. When the Rong-btsan were still at the mountain Kha-ba dkar-po in southeast Tibet, they had wild animals there as their livestock. Thus, the place chosen for them on the shore of the Indus suited them well, as it was a sanctuary of the sacred Ibex.

The Rong-btsan left traces when they crossed Tibet. They are mentioned as guardian gods of Spo-bo,²⁰ and are worshipped by the Tamang in Nepal.²¹ These are only a few incidentally known cases, but I assume that references to the Rong-btsan may be found in a variety of contexts.

CONCLUSION

Let me summarize the various references to the Rong-btsan:

1. Various statements in the Gesar Epic relate the country and tribe of Rong to Gesar and his family.
 2. In, or nearby, the country Rong today in the Khams-Amdo border area, is the sacred mountain Kha-ba dkar-po, an abode of the Btsan.
 3. A monk Rdo-rje dpal-bzang, a native of eastern Tibet, was in contact with natives of western Tibet, when he propagated the Gesar Epic.
 4. Ladakh is another center where the Gesar Epic flourished.
 5. The Rong-btsan who have the title Kha-ba dkar-po, "white like snow," reside at the Matho monastery in Ladakh, which was founded by Rdo-rje dpal-bzang-po who is said to have come from eastern Tibet. The Rong-btsan travelled with him to Ladakh.
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6. Because of their fierce character, Rdo-rje dpal-bzang-po had to relocate the Rong-btsan at an isolated place; a formerly sacred site was found to be suitable.
7. Rdo-rje dpal-bzang-po became the court priest of the Ladakhi king and the Rong-btsan became the king's protectors, (as the king was, in a certain way, a representative of Gesar).

These facts may be interpreted in the following way. In the country of Rong in Eastern Tibet, the monk and tantric master Rdo-rje dpal-bzang was a devotee of the Btsan, who resided there on the sacred mountain Kha-ba dkar-po. The spiritual climate of the place at that time was shaped by the worship of mountain gods and the imagery of the Gesar Epic, although I am still unsure as to how much this involves the Epic. At the moment it is difficult to specify the nature of the Rong-btsan's relationship with the Gesar Epic. Later, Rdo-rje dpal-bzang met with natives from Ladakh before he set out on his own journey to the far west of the Tibetan world. His bonds with the Btsan gods from the sacred mountain Kha-ba dkar-po were so strong that the gods accompanied him to Ladakh. Rdo-rje dpal-bzang was of some service there to the Ladakh king who invited him to stay. He found a new abode for "his" Rong-btsan at a remote site with an established religious reputation, i.e., Matho, where sacred animals, Ibex, haunted the mountain slopes. The Btsan regained some of their domestic animals which they had lost when they moved to the west. Near the Rong-btsan's shrine Rdo-rje dpal-bzang build a monastery and entrusted the worship of his beloved Rong-btsan to the future monastic community.

It is not certain when Rdo-rje dpal-bzang travelled to Ladakh because a date is not indicated by any textual source. Considering the general situation, however, we may assume that he travelled there after the 15th century. In the liturgical text of the Rong-btsan, the *sangha* of Sa-skya and Ngor is mentioned. Evam Chos-ldan, the great Ngor monastery, was founded by Kun-dga bzang-po, who lived from 1382-1444. It was only during the following years that the Ngor tradition spread to other territories. This supports the view of the local tradition which holds that Matho was founded about the late 15th century.

In this account of relations between gods and kings several religious phenomena are interwoven. There are mountain gods, who are intimately associated with the land as well as with the yogi who evokes them and transforms himself into their personalities. There is the geographical relocation of people and gods and the fact that, at their new home, the gods rebuild their ominous relationship with the king, who epitomizes fertility and prosperity. Each religious phenomenon taken individually does not disclose anything remarkable, but when put together they tell a coherent story of gods epitomizing the fertile land

with its abundant wildlife whose supreme guardian and lord is the king.

It seems that as long as the Rong-btsan stayed in southeastern Tibet they were linked with Gesar. I am inclined to speculate that Gesar was *the* king with whom the gods were associated. Later, when the gods had been moved to Ladakh it well suited them to find in the Ladakh king a descendant of Gesar. Despite their physical move to another locality, the gods predict the most crucial seasonal events: the right time for seeding, the quality of the harvest, and the state of health of men and livestock. Locality and king changed because of the historical journey of a Buddhist yogi who had a special relationship with the Btsan. In other words, historical, individual, and other arbitrary facts overrule the structural ones in the first instance. But then the structural elements gain momentum and shape the new environment in a way that matches the original one. Historical development and innate structure are not mutually exclusive, but supplementary.

NOTES

1. I visited Matho monastery in July 1978 during an expedition to Ladakh and Zaskar as part of the Ladakh Project financed through the *Stiftung Volkswagenwerk*, Hannover, Germany, and co-sponsored by the University of Munich, Germany.

2. Maps show the place also as "Matho" which is my reason for preferring the phonetic form of the name over the written. Snellgrove and Skorupski spell the name Ma-tro; cf. *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh* vol. 1. Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1977, p. 133. A short description of the monastery is given by A. and P. Keilhauer, *Ladakh and Zaskar* (DuMont Kunst-Reisefuehrer). Cologne: DuMont 1980, p. 304.

3. M. Brauen, *Feste in Ladakh*. Graz, Austria: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1980, p. 138f. On p. 138 the object is called a wrench, while on the next page Brauen calls the same item a cross.

4. *Gandi* is a kind of wooden gong used to summon the monks to congregate for the purpose of celebrating events prescribed in the Vinaya, cf. Franklin Edgerton, *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1977, p. 208.

5. So they are called in the text which is recited during the oracle gods' annual appearance and which I shall publish elsewhere.

6. R. de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: the Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities*. London: Oxford University Press, 1956, p. 222.

7. R.A. Stein, *Recherches sur l'épopée et le barde au Tibet* (Bibliothèque de l'Institut des Hautes Etudes Chinoises 13). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1959, p. 187 f.

8. R.A. Stein, *Recherches*, p. 188.
 9. See R.A. Stein, *Recherches*, index p. 613.
 10. See R.A. Stein, *L'épopée tibétaine de Gesar, dans sa version lamaïque de Ling* (Annales du Musée Guimet 61). Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1956, fol. 14b. Kukuripa was an exponent of the *ma rgyud* ("mother tantra") tradition and a teacher of Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas (*Deb ther sngon po*, tr. by George N. Roerich, *The Blue Annals*. 1949, rpt. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1976, p. 860).
 11. R.A. Stein, *Recherches*, p. 207, n. 14.
 12. R.A. Stein, *Recherches*, p. 233.
 13. R.A. Stein, *Recherches*, p. 86.
 14. Professor R.A. Stein generously provided me with a copy of this text for which I am much indebted.
 15. The Btsan are gods closely associated with the cult of rulers, chieftains, and kings. They ride on different mounts (horses, mules, goats, camels, yaks, etc.) through clouds and in thunderstorms. Through blood sacrifices, or appropriate substitutes, they are appeased so that they do not harm humanity.
 16. Professor Stein brought these texts to my attention, but unfortunately, both are unavailable to me.
 17. R.A. Stein, *Recherches*, p. 105, n. 118.
 18. *Gsung 'bum*, vol. Nga, according to R.A. Stein, *Recherches*, p. 74.
 19. R.A. Stein, *Recherches*, p. 74.
 20. R. de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, *Oracles*, p. 227.
 21. Verbal communication by A. Macdonald.
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