

KHEMBALUNG: THE HIDDEN VALLEY

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Kathmandu

PART I

THE LEGEND AND THE JOURNEY

There are few people in the West who have not heard of Shangri-la, the peaceful and prosperous valley hidden from the outside world among snow-capped peaks high in the Himalayas¹. The book *Lost Horizon*² first brought it to the public's attention, and since then movies have been made about Sangri-la and everything from hotels to pin-ball machines named after it. Not many people, however, are aware that the story of Shangri-la is based upon a tradition centuries old among the people of Tibet and bordering regions³. One of the most famous of these "hidden valleys", Shambhala, almost exactly fits the conception of Shangri-la held by so many westerners. Recently, even Shambhala has been written about in the popular literature as, for example, in Tomas' sensationalized account⁴.

Much less well known, however, is the fact that Guru Rinpoche, the Indian Buddhist yogin accredited with firmly establishing Buddhism in Tibet⁵ is thought

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- 1 Research in Nepal was supported by grants from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research and the Social Science Research Council, American Council of Learned Societies. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to these organizations. I would also like to thank the Thyangboche Rinpoche and Norbu Lama of Shedua for kindly allowing me to make copies of texts in their possession.
 - 2 James Hilton, *Lost Horizon*, New York: Macmillan, 1933.
 - 3 This brief report is based upon the quite limited data collected during only a few days spent in the area of Khembalung. In addition none of us were scholars of Tibetan Buddhism, and thus this report should by no means be considered the final word on the topic. The subject is, however, one which is bound to interest many people, nothing has yet appeared in the western literature about Khemblaung, and if it stimulates scholars to do more detailed research on the topic, or publish material they have already collected, it will have more than served its purpose. In addition, the text might also prove of value to Tibetan scholars since such documents are not easily obtainable.
 - 4 Andrew Tomas, *Shambhala: Oasis of Light*, London: Sphere Books, 1977.
 - 5 Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) is renowned in Tibet for establishing Buddhism there in the eight century A. D. He overcame the resistance of Bon, the pre-Buddhist religion, and is thought to have been largely responsible for the founding of Samye temple and monastery, the first in Tibet (see the text). He became deified and is closely identified with Chenrezig (Avalokitesvara),

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to have established several "hidden valleys" (beyul)⁶ while he traveled through the Himalayas. It is believed that when war and evil envelop mankind these valleys will serve as refuges for Buddhist doctrine and followers of Buddhism.

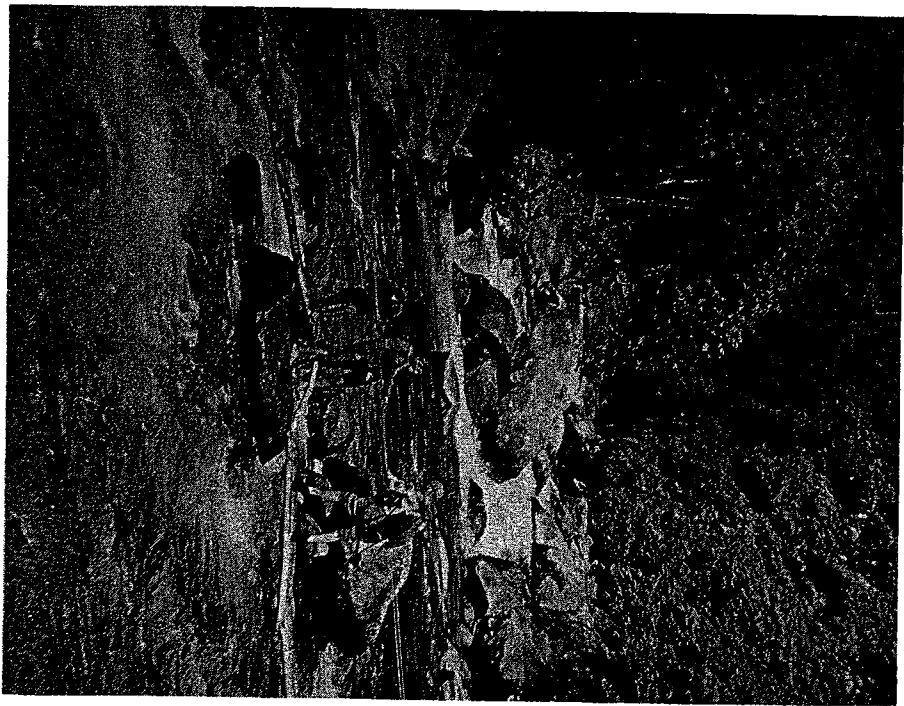
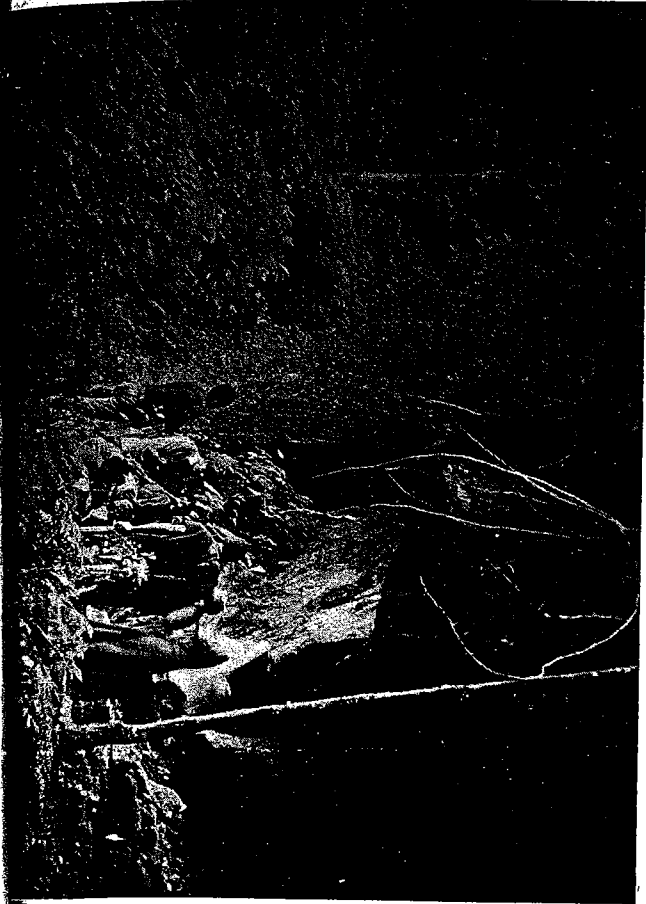
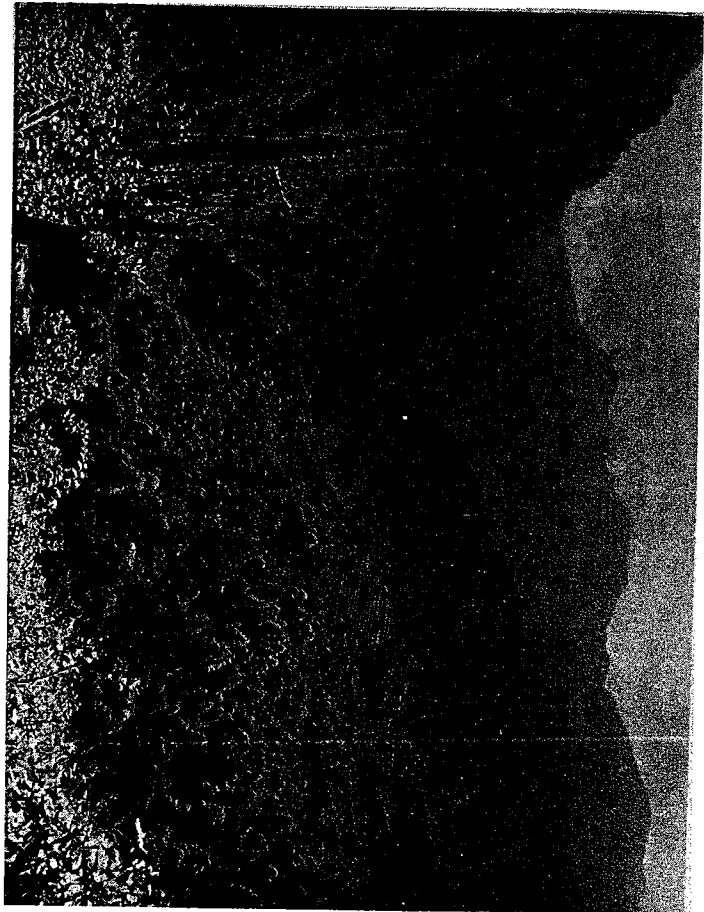
The number of these beyul is uncertain. One anthropologist, Janice Sacherer, heard of seven beyul, which were said to be located in Khumbu, Helambu, Rongshar, Lapchi, Dolpo, Nubri and Sikkim. Bhutan is thought to contain several. The Rinpoche of Thyangboche Monastery (near Mt. Everest) felt that there might be as many as twenty beyul scattered through the Himalayas. Furthermore, the possibility exists that some beyul have not as yet been revealed as such⁷, while in some regions there may be several contenders to the appellation of beyul, as we will see later.

Few beyul have become widely known outside the area in which they are located⁸. Pema (Padma) Kod is one of the more famous of these and is said to be located in southern Tibet near the Assam border.

Of those beyul thought to exist in Nepal, Khembalung must be one of the best known among Buddhists, although few people familiar with its legend could determine its exact location. Indeed, Khembalung has not to our knowledge been mentioned in the Western literature, nor were we aware of any Westerner who had managed to locate it⁹. However, rumors that Khem-

the great protector deity of Tibet. He is the only major tantric divinity to have a semblance of historical reality in a definite period. (See David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet*, London: G. Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1968, pp. 171-2.) In his various divine manifestations he is the center of a number of tantric rituals. Many household shrines contain an image of Guru Rinpoche and the miracles described in his popular biographies are well known. (See Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibet: Land of Snows*, London: Elek Books, 1967, p. 78.)

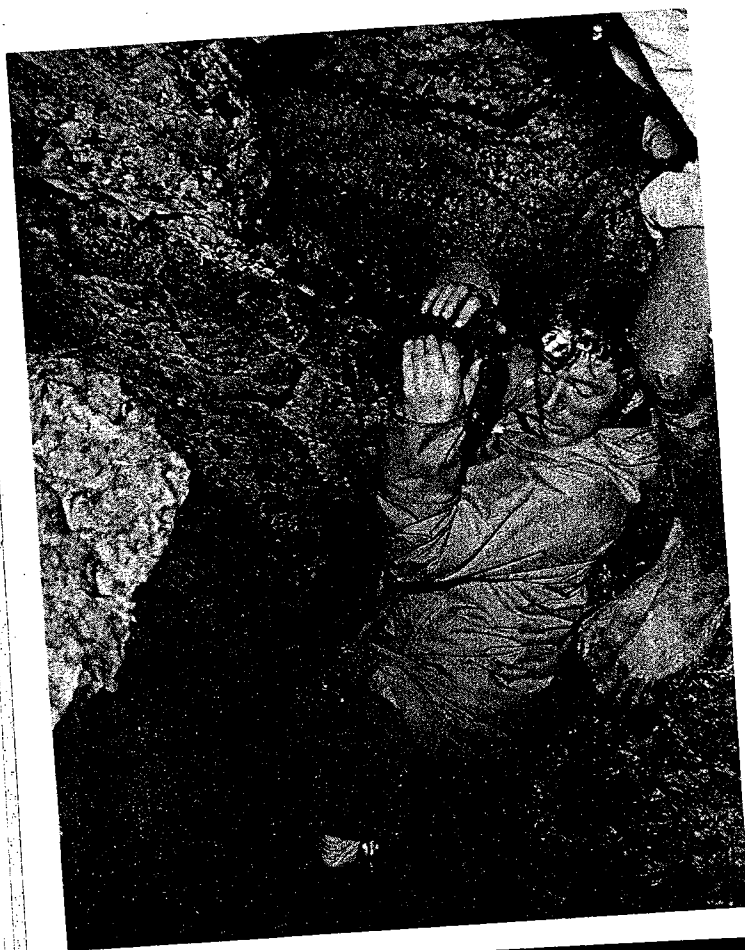
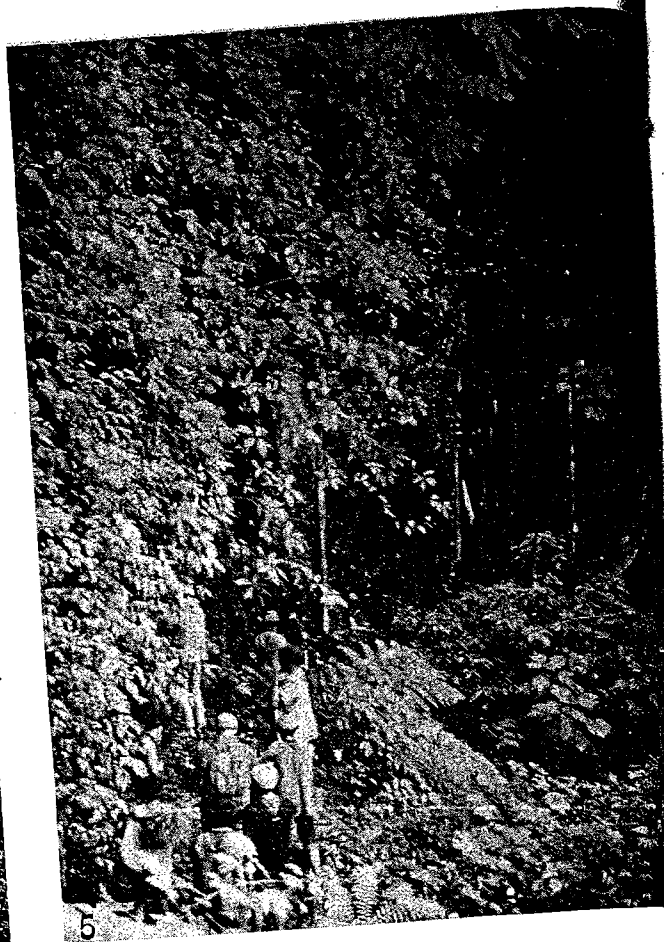
- 6 Tibetan words have been written in broad phonetic renderings. The reader more knowledgeable in Tibetan can refer to the text for the Tibetan spellings.
- 7 For example, Beyer notes that a protector deity might hold on to a text for several hundred years before passing it on to a "text revealer". See Stephen Beyer, *The Cult of Tara: Magic and Ritual in Tibet*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973, p. 399.
- 8 A beyul was recently discovered in north-central Nepal. See Michael Aris, "Report on the University of California Expedition to Kutang and Nubri in Northern Nepal in Autumn 1973", in *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, II, 2: 45-87, 1975.
- 9 Even after having heard at Khembalung of people who had been in the area in the past (the Slick/Johnson expedition in the late 1950's and a Japanese expedition in the 1970's), it was still unclear whether any of them had been to the cave and were aware of the hidden valley legend. However, upon returning from Khembalung to Kathmandu, we found that Michael Aris, Alexander Macdonald, and Michael Oppitz were planning to jointly publish material on beyul and that one of these scholars, Michael Oppitz had visited Khem-



- 1-Dobatak and the Choyang River gorge.
View to the southeast.
- 2-Overhand under which pilgrims prepare
to enter the cave.
- 3-Crossing the Choyang River below
Dobatak.

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4-Retreat houses for lamas above Helangkharka.

5-Poles with prayer flags (right centre of photo) mark the entrance of the Khembalung cave.

6-Passages in the cave are often narrow.

balung might be found along one of the tributaries of the Arun River in East Nepal were occasionally heard in Kathmandu. In the course of research in that area in October—November, 1977 we decided to gather information concerning this hidden valley and locate it if at all possible¹⁰.

We soon found that Khembalung certainly deserved that designation "hidden valley"¹¹. The most sacred place is a cave located at about 2,210m. (ca. 7,251'). This lies about six miles upstream from the confluence of the Arun and Chhoyang Rivers¹². The site of the cave is nearly 420 m. (ca. 1,378') above the river on the west side of the gorge. Due to a bend in the river, the section of the river valley in which the cave is located cannot be fully seen from the main north-south trail which runs along a ridge above the east bank of the Arun. One must go off main trails and on to ridges on either side of the Chhoyang in order to obtain an unobstructed view.

This is assuming good weather, something found all too infrequently in this region. Often one finds the valleys shrouded in grey mist. The great massif of Chamlang (7,317m. or 24,006') stands as a major weather break, with the result that there is considerable precipitation south of the mountain. The river valleys, such as the Chhoyang, which extend down from the south and southeastern slopes of Chamlang have a wide variety of vegetation including dense subtropical forests. We discovered all too late that a much easier trail to Khembalung existed along the ridge on the west side of the river. Instead, we found it necessary to cut a trail down to the river once we had ascended the ridge on the east

balung with the anthropologist Charlotte Hardman. Mr. Oppitz has gathered information of considerable interest regarding the role that Khembalung plays in the religious beliefs of the Rai and its importance to the Hindus who also visit the cave on pilgrimage. Edward Bernbaum has also gathered information on beyul, particularly Khembalung. Hopefully the information collected by these scholars will soon be made available.

¹⁰ Members of our party included: Joe Brown, Robin Chalmers, Yvon Chouinard, Andrew Dunn, Gordon Forsyth, Peter Hackett, Hamish MacInnes, Elizabeth Rogers, Bal Krishna Sharma, Adolphe de Spoelberch, and Cynthia Williamson.

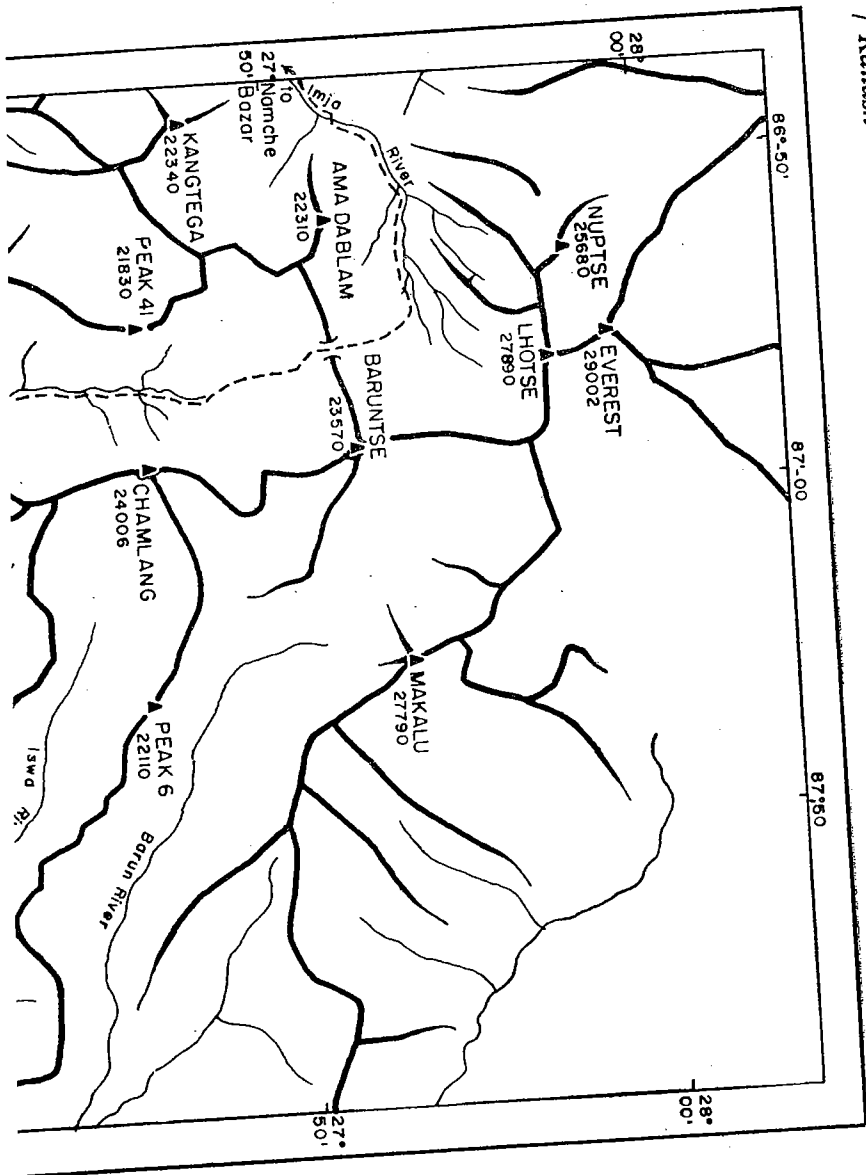
¹¹ Khembalung (or Khambalung—the terms are used interchangeably in the area) is the pronunciation of the word spelled "Khenpa lung" in Tibetan. The Tibetan translator of the Text that follows, Chopel Namgyal, thought that the word "khenpa" might refer to a type of grass (which may be used in making incense) found in the hidden valley. People in Khembalung were certain that the term did not refer to "Khambas" (Tibetans in a general sense, or more specifically Tibetans from the province of Kham). "Lung" simply means valley. "Be" means hidden and "yul" means country.

¹² The Chhoyang River, as it is listed on some maps, is called the Apshuwa or Khembalung River in this area.

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side of the gorge. We then had to construct a bridge across the river at about 1,790m. (ca. 5,873') before ascending directly up to village of Dobatak. Khembalung had proven itself, to us at least, to be well hidden indeed.

Dobatak is the closest village to the cave and consists of only a few Sherpa families. These Sherpas claim to be decedents of those who migrated into this area several generations ago from Solu, a region to the south of Everest. We were told that members of the Thakto, Paldorje and Chewa (Chiawa) clans (all found in Solu-Khumbu)¹³ lived in Khembalung and the nearby village of Helangkharka. The villagers here are agriculturalists and maintain some livestock.

There are a few lamas at Dobatak, and although there is no monastery in the area, fine altars and collections of Buddhist texts can be seen in the homes of two of the lamas, Lakpa Gelu and Da Tshering. We were told that Lakpa Gelu (referred to often as the Kancha Lama) is the man most concerned with Khembalung and worship at the cave, but unfortunately he was not present when we arrived. This was especially to be regretted as he is said to have a Khembalung text in his possession. Da Tshering is a lhawa, i. e. shaman, and he not only assisted us in our visit to the cave, but also held a seance to find the cause of the illness of one of our members. Although prior to reaching Dobatak some people claimed that the lamas of Dobatak went to worship at the cave at every full and new moon, we found worship there to be more on an *an hoc* basis, taking place only occasionally when people came on pilgrimage.

Pilgrims may go to the cave simply to gain merit, but many are said to go to have their wishes granted. For example, women may go with the hope that their fertility will be increased. It is thought by some that by having made the pilgrimage, obstacles, which might have otherwise blocked the journey of their souls after death, will be removed.

Lamas may also go to the cave to meditate or will meditate in special retreat houses built near the village of Helangkharka. This village lies about two hours walk beyond Dobatak and is the last permanent settlement on the way towards Chamlang. Lamas come here for meditation primarily in the summer months, none being present when we arrived in November.

We were told before reaching Khemblaung that there were two trails leading to the cave. Sinners would take the difficult one until they eventually would fall into a lake, while the trail for non-sinners was said to be easy. The path leading from Dobatak to the cave proved to be both easy and short. After passing by a small unkept *chorten* (sacred tower) and wall of *mani* stones

13. See Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf, *The Sherpas of Nepal: Buddhist Highlanders*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964, p. 19.

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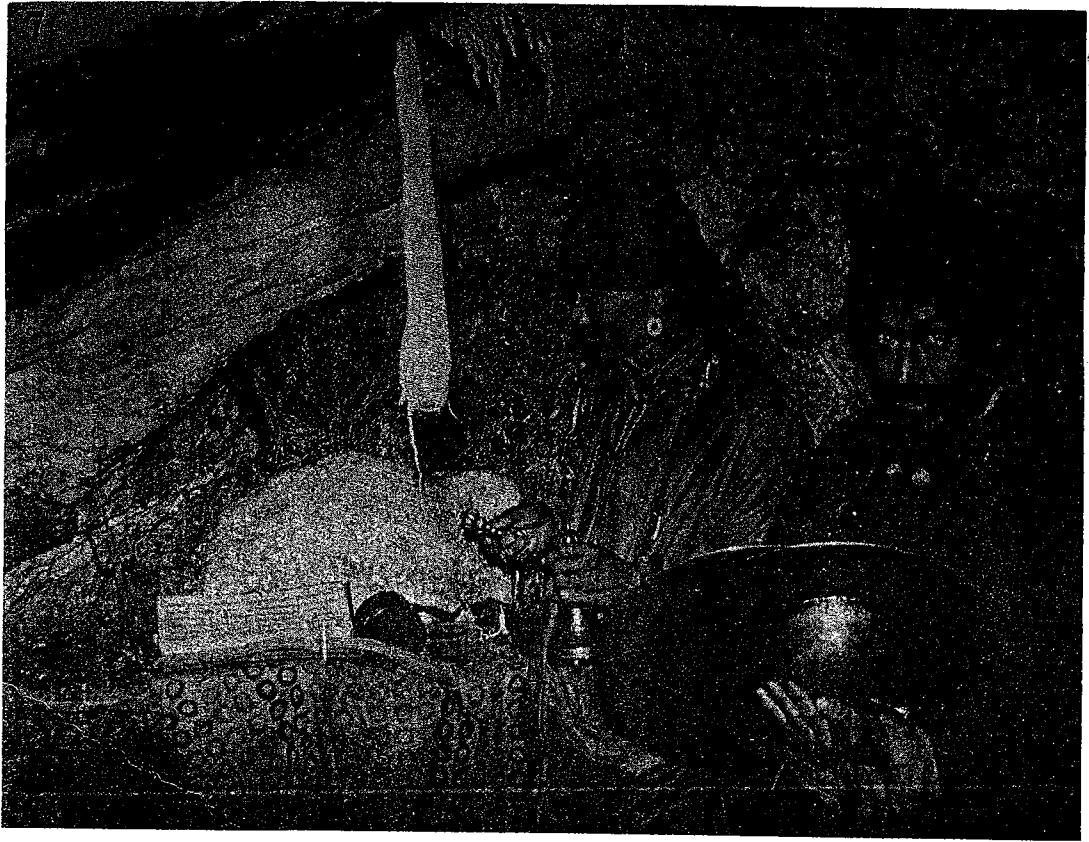
(stones with prayers inscribed on them) at the edge of the village, we continued for a short distance uphill where the trail then levelled out. People picked juniper along the way and placed flowers on a cairn. A further ten minute walk brought us in front of the cave entrance where there is an overhang with an inscription in Tibetan. It is at this point that people remove their shoes before entering the sacred place. A small stream is crossed and one passes between a number of poles with prayer flags and enters the mouth of the cave. There is room here for perhaps twenty people before the cave begins to descend and become considerably narrower.

Worship at the cave often consists of simply lighting a lamp, making offerings of incense, rice, and cloth, making prostrations, and chanting a prayer. Occasionally lamas from Dobatak may go with pilgrims and a more elaborate ceremony will be held, with texts being recited along with the accompaniment of ritual musical instruments (cymbals, conch shell, horns, and drums). The presence of the lamas is certainly not mandatory, however, and anyone knowledgeable in a ceremony may conduct it. Rituals at the cave vary depending upon the wishes and skills of the participants and are said not to have specific names. The common element is the respect shown to Guru Rinpoche before one continues on into the cavern. When we went to the cave, a lama from Shedua (a village two days walk from Dobatak) accompanied our party and performed the ritual.

A small shelf has been constructed to the side of the cave's entrance room, and it is here that rituals are performed. A Tibetan inscription is carved in stone above the shelf, and two small tridents are set to one side. Norbu, the lama from Shedua, placed a cloth on the shelf, then opened two texts (one relating to Khembalung and the other to prayers to Guru Rinpoche) on it. The usual lighting of a butter lamp, offering of incense, etc., followed. Norbu held a dorje-bell and dorje-sceptre¹⁴ while men chanted and traditional musical instruments were played. Villagers prostrated themselves before the altar, after which they began to descend into the cave.

A short distance into the cave is a large trident with a bell which pilgrims ring as they continue by. Although we had been told before reaching Khembalung that natural stone formations in the cave had been molded by deities to represent themselves or animals, we found only one such figure in the cave. This is located near the trident in a recess in the rock and is thought to resemble the udder of a cow.

¹⁴ The dorje-bell and dorje-sceptre together symbolize skilful means and the wisdom with which Enlightenment is won. The bell is held in the left hand and the sceptre in the right while performing various mudras (symbolic gestures made with hands and fingers) which form a part of most rituals. See John Blofeld, *The Tantric Mysticism of Tibet*, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1970 p. 118.

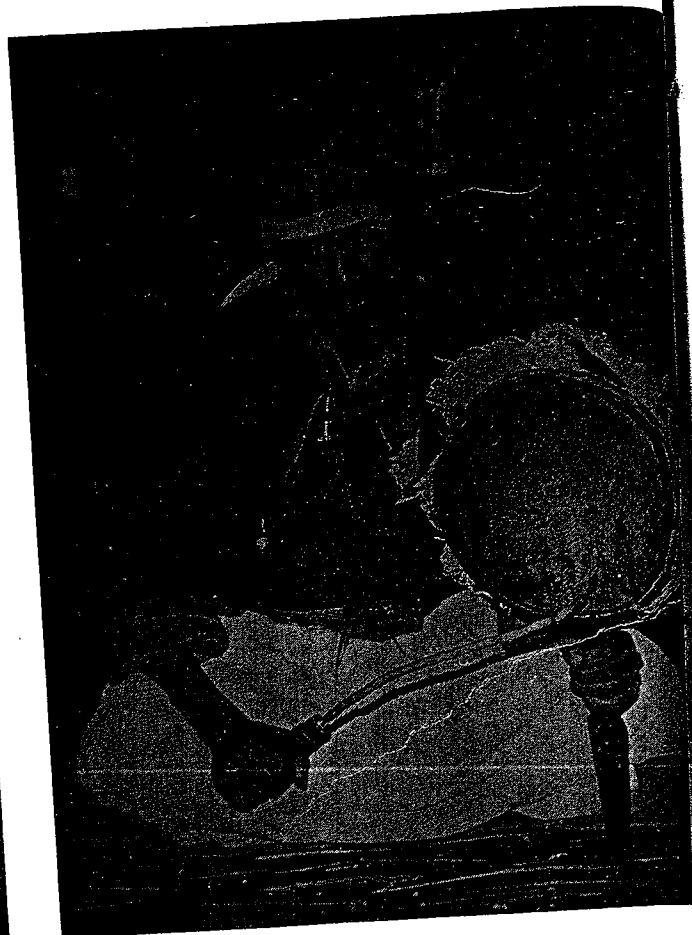


7-Lamas performing a ritual at the altar in the cave of Khembalung. (Left: Norbu Lama, Right: Da Tsering)



8-Lamas and villagers during a ritual at the entrance of the Khembalung cave.

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9-Wood statue in Norbu
Lama's house of Guru
Rinpoche, the founder
of Khembalung.

10-The shaman Da Tshering
Dobatak during a seance

11-Chamlang, the mountain which dominates the
Chhoyang River Valley.

The pilgrims take burning torches and move quickly through the cave to its exit, located a few hundred feet downhill from the entrance. After moving by the trident, there is a passage off to the side through which sinners are said to be unable to pass. The opening is divided into two sections by a rock, and it is thought that the size changes to block even the thinnest of sinners who might try to squeeze through. Fortunately, it was not necessary for us to go through this side passage and we continued on a short way to a point where a small stream begins flowing through the cave. This stream continues on for some distance before once again disappearing out of sight. As we made our way through the cave, we repeatedly asked if there were any features of religious significance, only to receive negative replies. However, just before the exit of the cave there is a moderately large chamber. As pilgrims crawl out the exit opening, they often take some of the white clay found there. We were told that this may be eaten as a medicine or kept on one's person to protect him from danger.

One climbs from here up a path to the entrance of the cave. While crossing back over the stream mentioned earlier, the water is drunk and tossed over the head, as it is thought to have great purifying properties. Upon returning to Dobatak, a further simple ceremony was held in the home of Da Tshering at his altar for Guru Rinpoche.

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Passing through the length of the cave is seen as being like a circumambulation of a holy place, and thus whoever completes it gains merit. The cave is not of great length, perhaps taking ten minutes or less for one who has completed the journey previously and knows the way. We looked for side passages, but discovered none that continued for any great distance. However, some people we met believe that learned lamas can enter the cave and, depending on which passage they take, come out at Gaya in India (where Buddha gained Enlightenment) at Bodnath in Kathmandu, at a lake, or at a cave in the upper Chhoyang basin.

We were also told that people live underground in the cave, but cannot be seen. They were placed there by Guru Rinpoche and will only appear when disaster strikes the outside world and the hidden valley is needed. In the event that all mankind in the outside world is destroyed, these people will come forth to perpetuate the human race. Until then they simply bide their time, but one man said that their voices can occasionally be heard by pilgrims while they are passing through the cave.

Several people informed us of a large "cave" (overhang) near the headwaters of the Chhoyang River at the foot of Mt. Chamlang. One man even thought that this was part of Khembalung. Most, however, denied this, but

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did feel it was connected to the cave at Dobatak via a secret tunnel. A common story has it that 1,000 Tibetans once hid in this cave from Nepali soldiers during a war between Nepal and Tibet. They were said to have been kept alive by provisions given to them by lamas from Dobatak, who went to the upper Choyang cave through the connecting tunnel. Lamas are said to have visited this cave often in the past and used it as a place of meditation.

A common belief about beyul is that only a special, learned lama can "open" these valleys to allow people in, and even then only when it is the right historical time as can be deduced from signs noted in the texts. Without this happening, however, the real beyul cannot be seen with all its treasures. Thus what we and most pilgrims see is not the hidden valley described as it is in the texts, but only a few holy places associated with it¹⁵.

This aspect of the hidden valley belief is one that can give rise to doubts as to which place is the "real" one. Doubtless local tradition plays a role in some cases in identifying a beyul, as inhabitants of an area find caves, oddly shaped stones, etc., which may be attributed to the work of beings with supernatural powers and tied to descriptions of a hidden valley noted in a text. Thus it is conceivable that there may be several candidates for the designation of beyul.

This may help explain why we heard reports of Khembalung existing in the Ishwa and Barun River valleys. Another explanation came from the lama of Shedua who told us that three places together make up Khembalung. One is the cave we visited near Dobatak, one is a cave called Dubitar along the Ishwa River and the third one consists of two caves (called Shengi Duka and Shechi Duka) along the Barun River, about a days walk below Makalu Base Camp. He explained that, just as a person is made up of speech, mind, and body yet remains one person, so too is Khembalung made up of three parts.

According to the lama, the caves along the Barun are especially important. One of the caves is said to be large enough to hold 1,000 people. We were told that a clear imprint can be seen where Guru Rinpoche laid back. When he raised his arms he created the remainder of the cave as it now exists. Many people go there on pilgrimage in the monsoon months.

Most people we talked to, however, felt that Khembalung was only located in the Chhoyang River Valley, the other places being holy, indeed, but unasso-

15 One western scholar thought that a beyul might lose its status as such if it became inundated with tourists, people fought each other, animals were hunted, etc. Buddhists we talked to did not believe this could happen, as beyul have not been "opened" yet, and thus such acts could not effect them. These Buddhists did feel, however, that protector deities of an area in which a beyul might open could become angry if misdeeds occurred there. For the names of the protector deities of Khembalung, see the text.

ciated with it. The Thyangboche Rinpoche believed that Khembalung was really one valley, but that just like a small town near a city may come to be called by the city's name, adjacent valleys may come to be called Khembalung.

He did think, however, that we would probably never know if the Khembalung we visited was the real one or not, for it will only fully materialize in a time of need when disaster strikes mankind. Nonetheless, the journey to "Khembalung" still provides one with a glimpse into one of the more fascinating topics of Tibetan Buddhism. The physical terrain, with its sacred places, its mountains, mists, and lush, subtropical forests leads one to easily understand how it came to be imbued with legends and chosen as a sanctuary for lamas seeking seclusion. Whether this is the "real" Khembalung or not, we left the area feeling that it well deserved its claim to be a "hidden valley".



PART II

TRANSLATION OF TIBETAN TEXT CONCERNING KHEMBALUNG

The following text is actually the combination of two texts (A and B) which appear to have been copied from the same original manuscript. They were written in two different scripts, text B is in khanyig (employed in eastern Tibet) and text A in uchen (used throughout Tibet). Text B was more complete than the other, but in only one place do they seriously disagree, and basically it seems to be a simple case of the copier of the shorter text (A) having omitted some passages.

In presenting the combined text, additional words and passages from text B have been inserted in square brackets [] in the English and in parenthesis () in the Tibetan version. The margin numbers match the English and Tibetan versions and refer to the pages of the original text A. The Tibetan words in the English translation are only very rough phonetic renderings which we feel the majority of readers will find better suited to their needs than the complicated transliteration system employed by specialists. Since the Tibetan text is included, scholars can refer to it for exact spellings.

It should be noted that both texts were full of spelling mistakes and grammatical errors which have been retained in the text presented here. In some cases the translator was unable to understand the meaning of a word due to poor spelling. Occasionally, the sense of an entire sentence was lost. Where this has occurred, it has been noted with the letters NT, "not translated". A single word, for which the meaning is not known, is noted by a question mark. In the English version, brief explanatory notes have occasionally been inserted in the text in parenthesis ().

The translation provided here is not a laboriously exact one, but is intended to provide the non-specialist reader with the gist of the text. It is hoped that eventually a Tibetan specialist will provide a more exact translation with detailed explanatory notes. This text can then be compared with others, and this will doubtless solve some of the translation difficulties we encountered. For the time being, it is hoped that this rough translation will provide some insight into a subject which has captivated the imagination of so many.

- A *A Description of the Route to the Beyul (Hidden Valley) of Khembalung, Which is Called Thongwa Tunden (Meaningful to See) is Contained (herein).*
- B *The Key of Orgyan's (Guru Rinpoche's) Beyul Khembalung, Which is Called Thongwa Rekhpa (Seeing, Hearing and Touching), is Contained (herein).*

Translation by Chopel Namgyal

2 Namu Guru ! (Prostration to the Guru)

At the time that Guru Rinpoche was staying in the middle room of the top floor of Samye temple (in Tibet) his King (Thisong Detsen) had a dream. At the time of the Tshog (food offering) in Chimphu (a small valley near Samye), the King prostrated himself before Guru Rinpoche and said, "The images and Chorten (stupa, sacred towers) and work on the monastery are already finished, but I have had a dream that all of these will be

- 3 destroyed soon. Please tell me what will happen in the future."

Guru Rinpoche said, "If there will be major changes in the Tenba (doctrine), that is because we could not defeat the inauspicious signs (from appearing) on this earth. You, O King, should not worry about the future. The increasing or decreasing of the doctrine is dependent upon the merit of human

- 4 beings. If you think about this, you will become very sad."

Then the King offered him a turquoise Garuda's (sacred eagle's) head (?) and Dorje Thatari (a kind of dress). He then asked about the increasing and decreasing of the doctrine, and the happiness and sadness of beings. So he (Guru Rinpoche) offered three different pieces of advice, "large, medium and small". Most especially he gave three (pieces of advice) about the destruction of Tibet by foreign soldiers and prophecies concerning the happiness and sadness of beings.

- 5 "At the time when the happiness of beings is nearly finished and Tibet is about to be destroyed by foreign soldiers, then it is better to escape to a hidden place which is (located) on the border of southern Tibet.

"Thubpa (Buddha) hid many places. So at that time pray to me, Pemajungne (Guru Rinpoche). [Renounce (your) country, fields, wealth, servants and all people like a wheel of stone that breaks (i. e. something which can never be repaired). If you strenuously strive to reach this place, then you will arrive there." (The King said) "Please tell me at what time people should go there, and at what time it will open." (Guru Rinpoche replied) "At the year of the Water-horse....." (Remainder of sentence and next two sentences NT) "Beyond eight Paktset (4,000 arm-spans), there is a hidden valley called Khembalung, which is similar to Dewachen (the land where Amitaba resides)

- 6 and to Potala (the land where Avalokitesvara lives). (Next sentence NT). To the west of Demet Snow Mountain and to the east of Khumbu Snow Mountain lies

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(this hidden valley)". This is the first chapter showing the directions to the hidden valley. Again (the King) asked, 'Great Guru Rinpoche, when in the future beings go there, what is the time that they should go and what is the sign for the opening of its doors?'

7 The Guru said, "The sign of the time for the opening of the door is when the large and small mountains of Tise (Kailash) are destroyed. This is the sign. The six great holy places of Tibet will become washrooms. That is the sign. If the Rasa temple falls apart, if the Samye temple becomes old and falls down from old age, and if the offerings of the three kinds of images (to Avalokitesvara, Manjusri and Vajrapani) on the top floor of Samye are not made, then this is the time to open (the hidden valley). [When the laws within the country have been broken this is an indication that the hidden place will open]. When fighting breaks out in the area near Shrirri, that is the time of opening (the Beyul). If Tin Tsang (in West-Central Tibet) the general law is destroyed (and its provinces secede) then this is the time to open (the Beyul).

8 If the lineage members of the King of Mangyul (province in west Tibet) are killed by a knife, then it is time to open. If there is fighting within the border of Din (then it is time to open)."

"These are outer signs. The inner sign is when in the last and worst 500 year period people lose their teeth at 50 years of age. This is the inner sign. [In Tibet there will be no king and the subjects will fight among themselves. In the country there will be monks who do not keep their vows. There will be tantric yogis caring nothing for virtue or sin, who will go about the town like dogs. There will be people with no shame (Next sentence NT). The false Bonpos will get money and food by Nangsem (deception ?) and they will become careless about the preciousness of their own lives]. At that time the people from upper Tsang in particular should go there (to the Beyul). When they go there, they should depart at the time of Yurma (when crops are weeded) in the summer."

9 At the time of the harvest after the full moon when there was a clear sky Guru Rinpoche spoke again, "Listen carefully, O King. At the time when people go to this place (the Beyul). you should practise the meditation of Dorje Namjom (name of a deity) for one month on Kamchung Mountain. You will see a snow mountain to the south, called Mentsum Yutilpuchen. To the west of that mountain you will see a rock mountain (i. e. not covered with snow) pointing to the sky. On the other side of this rock mountain
10 there is a deep and narrow valley, filled with jungle. You should do the Sang (incense) offering for half a month and then you should perform a

Dod (string) offering for the eight groups of protector deities. You should also offer food for Mentsun (female protectors), set seven red Gyangbu (sticks used in worship) and offer seven black chickens.

- 11 "In that cave there is a female Lu (serpent-deity), so you should do a Lu Tor (Puja, i. e. act of worship, for Lu) and Chu Tor (water puja), and offer Danggye (a type of Torma-figure made of butter and dough) Put Turru (?) of black sheep and say a prayer (of the type which is used for witnessing a truth), 'You should not make obstacles for yogis who are going to search for the (hidden) place.' Then offer Serkyem (a liquid offering to protector deities)."

"Next follow the river, praying to me, Pemajungne. A river runs against a rock mountain. There are three brothers of Traktsen (a protector deity) living on a rock which looks like a Torma of the protectors. Offer them red Torma and red Gyangbu. Place also the Turru of red sheep.

- 12 "At the time of the opening of this land (i. e. hidden valley), this rock mountain will collapse and will form a bridge across the river. If you go across this bridge, the first rock door is three arm-spans wide. When you arrive there, pray and offer Serkyem and say, 'Do not make obstacles', and then continue on. You climb up to a jungle covered pass and come to a wide valley filled with jungle. The outer part of this is wide and the inner part is narrow.

- 13 "In that valley are many wrathful Lu and Nyen (demons). Therefore, you should do the Sidpa Khanyom ritual (making equal offerings to all beings in Samsara). You should also do the Lama Drupa (Guru devotion) puja for seven days, offer the Lu puja, and do the offering puja for Mamo (a female protector deity).

- 14 "In the center of this valley is a boulder, which looks like a Torma, with a large evergreen tree (covered with) thousands of lotuses. From that (tree) if you go to the southeast, there is a valley of medicine (i.e. medicinal plants grow there) which looks like a dancing area (flat, cleared land). If you cross this meadow on the west side, (you will find) a river and a rock joined such that you cannot cross. There is a blue rock mountain which looks like a snow lion leaping towards the sky. On this rock there are Sa and Du (types of demons) with Tramen (female deities) and the spirit Surarakye, who is the gatekeeper (protector deity of Khembalung). Thus you should do the Tekpa Wangdu puja (a puja to control the power of wrathful deities) for three days. Then you should take Lado (an object consecrated for a deity.)

- 15 "Offer the Torma to the protector deities. Offer three red and three black Torma and also place red and black Gyangbu. Also put the Turru of

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red and black sheep. Offer Serkyem and pray to me, Guru Rinpoche. Then ask the protectors, 'Do not create obstacles (for me) to go to the holy places'. Then you will get prophecies (signs) from the Shidea (protector deities of the land.)

16 "There is no direct route to take when crossing rivers and rocks. You should explore the route exactly (carefully). There is no access due to a rock face which is like a curtain. There is a rock where there are many Penma (a kind of tree). If you search the road for this, (you will see) a rock which looks like a stairway. If you climb that, then (you will find) a very narrow red rock, (which looks) like a Kampa (fire thongs).

If you go through this narrow rock for half an arm-span, you will be able to pass through. On top of this rock, there is a clump of trees.
17 After passing by this clump of trees, there is a rock which looks like an unrolled length of cloth. This rock is long and flat. It is as long as you can throw a lasso. You will arrive there.

"If you look from the top of this rock, will you see a pattern of valleys and trails, and there is the sound of water falling on rocks. The shape (i. e. central depression) on this valley faces southwest and is dark green. The face (higher, back portion of the valley) is turned (towards) the northeast. Inside the valley it is wide, like an upside-down frying pan. Surrounding the valley of the outside there is a narrow gorge that looks like the root of the Upala flower. It also looks like the hand-crossing mudra.

18 "The mountain inside the valley resembles a king sitting on a throne. The mountain behind the valley looks like a tree-pointed Dorje (stylized), ritual thunderbolt) pointing towards the sky. The mountain south of this valley looks like it is bowing down to the mountain of the three-pointed Dorje. The northern mountains look like hanging curtains. The eastern mountain looks like a king sitting on his throne. The rock mountains look like a curtain hanging from the sky.

"The floor of this valley looks like a sea of blue Bendruya (a kind of jewel). The grass is nutritious, therefore the livestock survive. The green vegetation is healthy also for wild animals who come to eat. There is also Kuktse (?) of brown sugar. A great variety of crops proliferate. There is Khenpa (a kind of grass) which has a strong essence. Also there is the treasure of five different kinds of precious gems.

"If you arrive in this place of 300 villages, it is like arriving in Dewachen. All people who arrive there have long lives, are free from illness, and have all wishes fulfilled, as if one is holding a wish-fulfilling gem in one's hand. The beings
20 who live in this place will all be born in Dewachen (in their next lives).

“Because Chenrezig (Avalokitesvara) blessed this valley, it is purified. The crops grow without anyone planting and tending them. There are many fruits: Ranbu, Rupa. Towa, etc. The inside of the valley is wide and smooth. There is a river running through the northeast section which looks like a straight line.

“You will attain the level of Changchub Sempa (Bodhisattva, an Enlightened Being) as soon as you arrive there.

- 21 If you stay in this place for three years, you will be born in Dewachen in the next life. [In the next life you will be born inside a lotus. People who doubt this, do so for these reasons: Long ago in the Ganden (one realm of the gods) there were Chenrezig (Avalokitesvara) and Tronyerma Dolma (one of 21 Tara, female deities). At this time the king of the gods, Gyajin (Indra) offered 500 Upala flowers to the “heart-centers” of the (two) Phakpa (Arya, literally ‘nobles’ here referring to Avalokitesvara and Tronyerma Tara). One flower landed on the heart and the remainder went south (to Khembalung). These flowers went through the sky. At that time Gyajin asked the Phakpa, ‘Why did my flowers go through the sky?’ The Phakpa replied, ‘Listen, Gyajin, flowers will land in Dzambuling (earth). Wherever these flowers fall there will be my manifestation and disciples. One flower will land on a place which will be (in the future) the stepping-stone for going to Dewachen.’

“Thus that flower fell down onto a large rock on the border of Palyal (Nepal), Pu (Tibet) and Gyakar (India). This flower adhered to the rock, and the rock became like an Upala flower. At that time the Phakpa made a prophecy: ‘At the end of the Kalpa (vast time period) called Tsutden (the current Kalpa), everything will be destroyed in the snow-country (which has been) covered by the teachings of Chenrezig. At that time all the disciples of the Phakpa (Chenrezig) will run away wherever they like to be safe from those demons. Gyajin offered pure flowers. This (Khembalung) is the place of the gods. This is the place of pure prayers. This is the natural Dorje Den (‘Dorje realm,’ the name of Bodh Gaya, here indicating Khembalung is as important as the place where Buddha gained Enlightenment).

“This is surrounded by a natural fortress of snow and rock mountains. This is called Khembalung. All beings will go to Dewachen simply because they came to this place. This also is the prayer of the Phakpa. The people who do Dharma practise in this place will attain Enlightenment in Ogmin (the highest level of the Dharmakaya). All these (people who came) are Dharma students’. At that time (when the flowers were offered) the Phakpa told Gyajin these statements (i. e. those above). Again Gyajin prostrated

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to the Phakpa and prayed to them in this way, 'By the compassion of the Phakpa and by this prayer, may many sentient beings be liberated from the demons who create conflict at the end of time (i. e. the end of the Kalpa)'.

"At the time of the middle Kalpa, Dolma blessed this place and made prophecies. There is no deception concerning the prophecies made by the Phakpa. The Tibetans should not go to this place until Buddhism vanishes (from the earth.)] When you are searching for this area, then 40,000 pure (unsinful) people should go there. Those people should be friendly with one another and keep pure vows with each other. These people should also not fight with each other. You should make laws for Rig-gya (prohibiting hunting) within the (upper portion of the) valley. Lower down the valley there should be laws of Nya-gya (prohibiting fishing).

22 "Build temples, in the center of the valley and do auspicious pujas for the temples. Then offer (pujas) to the white land protectors. There are black and red protectors who have blood-matted hair, so offer Torma ornamented by flesh and blood. And make offerings to the gate protectors whose names are Surarakye and Dorje Legpa. If one does this, the livestock will increase. In the lower part of the valley there is a female Lu called Karchyam. Do the Lu puja called Pan Gom. If you do these, the livestock will increase.

23 "This valley is the place of Chenrezig (Avalokitesvara), so you should increase white (good) Dharma. You should not annoy the spirits who live in the jungle and rocks. Within this valley there is another valley which looks like an open lotus. You should do the Pema Wangdu puja. You should also build a Pema Bumpa (style) Chorten. If you do this, your Bodhicitta (state of mind of an Enlightened Being) will naturally increase. In the next life you will attain the level of a Chimi-Dogpa ("Nonreturner").

24 "In this way I have told my Tampa Nyingtam ('holy heart speech'), but you should not be lazy. If you say I will go next year or after next year (i. e. keep putting it off), then you will be oppressed by a load of suffering and will lose your life of happiness. Because of these conditions, not many people (will) get to this place (Khembalung). The Dharma person becomes attached to his books. Small-minded people are attached to Titi (Samsara, the round of birth and death). That is sad. But the few people who have good Karma might heed my 'heart speech' and possibly they will apply themselves. This path should be written down and kept."

25 Guru Rinpoche said this. When Guru Rinpoche returned to Uryyan (Uddiyana, the kingdom in Swat, Pakistan where he was born), he hid (the book) in the rock of Sangsang Lhotak (?). Then the Ter ("treasure", here a book hidden for discovery at a later appointed time) was removed by (the lama,

“text-revealer”) Rinzing Godki Demtrukchen. Samaya Gya Gya Gya (“The vow is stamped”, referring to the conclusion of this section of the text.)

Namo Guru! *The Key to the West Door [of the Hidden Land of Khembalung.]* The place which is a half month distant from (the country) Lhatod Gelgi Shiri.

26 “There is a valley called Khumbu Khangirawa (Khumbu ‘ringed by snow mountains’), which looks like the body of a horse. The head of the horse is turned to the west and the tail faces east. The valley is divided into two or three different valleys. If you go in a western direction, there is a valley called Khandro Rolpalung. If you go through the eastern exit of the valley, there is a snow mountain that looks like the saddle of a horse. If you go past the mountain, inside of the valley there is a Gelmo Mentsun (Queen protector goddess) called Meyu Losangma.

27 “On the east side (of the valley) there is a small pass. After crossing this pass you (should) make offerings to the five Tsering Chetnga (five sister protectors) and to Shida. Do an incense puja for Dege (Degyed, eight groups of protectors) and pray to Guru Rinpoche.

28 “The eastern border of this valley is (made of) rock and slate. Northeast of that valley there is a snow mountain that resembles the saddle of a horse. On the upper part of the mountain is a red peak. On top of this mountain you should offer Torma to the Dharma and land protector deities. Make offerings to Dorje Legpa diligently. Then continue walking along the snowline. This valley is like the outer curtain which one hangs on a door. If you go on the other side of the mountain to the northeast, you will see a black slate mountain that resembles black hair hanging free. There is snow both outside and inside (?). If you look from there you will see a small pass.

29 “This snow pass is very important. If you look from the top of this pass you will see the valley of Khembalung like looking in a mirror (i. e. very clearly). Pray to Guru Rinpoche, offer white Torma to the Khandro (protector goddesses) and make offerings to the Shida. After that you will arrive in Khembalung. Generally this is inside Munyul Kulung (name of a valley). You should be skilful (in following) the directions of the valleys. (Guru Rinpoche) commanded the Tenmachuni (twelve protector goddesses), Nyenchen Thangla (a protector deity) and Dorje Legpa to protect the valley. That is the reason why making offerings to them is very important.

30 “The path of the West Door alternates between having stones and black rocks. This Khembalung is difficult to open but easy to keep (i. e. difficult to find, but easy to stay). All of the outer valleys are facing towards Mon (the southern, middle hills). Getting accustomed (skilled) to the directions is important. This completes the key to the West Door.”

31 Namu Guru ! "I, Pemajungne, hid the Khembalung of King Kikaratu (possibly the king who ruled the area at the time Guru Rinpoche arrived) with (his) palace, servants, friends and 'sons and mothers', because it is a natural fortress. This valley is like the wish-fulfilling gems. This (valley) is more special than all the other valleys. During the time of the decline (of Buddhism), the soldiers of Hor (China or Mongolia) will come to the center of Tibet. They will destroy all Tibetans. At this time, may we find this valley". Guru Rinpoche said this and presented the Lamyik (guide book).

32 "The design of Khembalung is roughly like a bearskin spread on the ground. The east looks like an iron chain. The south looks like Sogpo Tagthi (a style of drawing). The western mountains are like white drapes. The northern mountains look like a king sitting on his throne. In the center it resembles a large basin filled with melted butter. [The four doors look like Gyatang Kyongmo (?). The King's palace is like an iron fortress. The four corners are like a golden Mandala (sacred circle, i. e. a ritual design used in meditation)]. The land protector deity is Surarakyé, and there are also seven blood sisters of Mamo (female protector deity). [It looks like a wolf lying in wait for a sheep.] The floor of the valley is like Danggye (a kind of Torma). Inside the valley it looks like the face of a peacock. Outside the valley it looks like Hung Khun (a triangular shaped vessel used in rituals) used by tantric practitioners. [The inner valleys look like they are turning in upon themselves.] The center of the valley looks like a wooden tea bowl set in the earth.

33 "(Within the valley) one could house a family of 500 people. There are the ruins of 300 houses. Northeast of that valley there is a triangular shaped valley that resembles a collar-bone. This valley is surrounded by rock mountains. In this valley the walls of the King's palace and some walls of old brick (can be seen). Between them there is a boulder of Zangkar (?), which looks like a tortoise. Behind that (there is) a stone like Cholong (?). In
34 the center of the stone is my handprint. Receive blessings from this ! Prostrate (yourself) before this and think, 'I receive these blessings.' Then no obstacles can harm you.

"In the four directions radiating from this stone there is mud. The water which has moistened the mud is Dudtzi (nectar). Dig into the mud with an iron stake and inside of this you will find some of my favorite Terma
35. (hidden documents): 'The Teaching of the Six Nyelphen and Pergukhen (?) and the Four Treasures of Wealth and the Essence of the Heart Terma'. All of these collected into one (volume) may be found there. Use them.

"Outside of that palace there is a field which yields approximately 300
36 Tok (?). (Next four sentences NT). There are four fields which previously

belonged to the King. The grains that you can grow in this country are: barley, wheat, millet, Indian beans, small and large beans, Te (?), sesame seeds, rice, and soyabeans. The time of planting the crops is at the same time (as that) of Bumthang (name of a valley). [The vegetables will grow on the mountain and in the valley.]

37 "On the west [east] side of the palace there is a Chungsi (crystal or quartz) mountain. The water falling from this mountain freezes in the winter and becomes medicinal water in the summer. Drinking the water maintains one's youthful appearance and has healthful effects upon the growth of young children. All people will be healthy. The water purifies all diseases.

"On the west side of this valley lies another valley called Sangbulungba. In this valley there are many hot springs and medicinal waters. The animals which can live there are: male and female yaks, cows and oxen, goats, sheep, chickens, pigs, horses, Dzo (cross-breeds of cattle and yaks), and Tule (calves of Dzo).

38 "(In) this valley is the King's palace which is called Yangze. The people of this valley are in the Bumthang Chambalung (valley) (i. e. they moved from this valley to Bhumthang Chambalung). [They are the kings and ministers of that place. At the center of that valley there are 300 villages with 500 inhabitants apiece. Inside the valley go towards the Bumthang Chungkor country.] On the northwest of this valley there is a small valley. In the center of this valley is the handprint of Guru Rinpoche and the treasure of the King of Taktsang. This valley can hold 300 houses and 5,000 animals.

39 Yaks, goats, and sheep can live in this valley. This valley is surrounded by slate and snow mountains which are jagged and peaked.

"At the edge of the valley there is a rock in the shape of a bucket. [If you look at that, there is a hidden place that has two levels.] On this rock is a red spring. Steam issues forth days and nights from this spring. Torma and medicinal plants are offered to this spring. Place Lugchi Karten(?) and then offer three kinds of white food and three kind of sweets to the Throma (female deity) of Khembalung.

40 "This valley is the way one goes to Tibet. Through the upper southern part near hot springs, snow-mountains are found to the right and left sides of this road. On the right side of the valley there is a stretch of mountains. Following the south road beyond the stretch of mountains, there is a valley called Tsho.

41 To the left of the valley is a road (remainder of sentence NT). On the other side of the road there is a rock that looks like Lachak(?), that is used to place on the roof of a house. Another rock is in the shape of a fireplace. There is a road which resembles Kidengyatrang (?). After crossing this road, a stone's throw away is a road composed of mixed rocks and dirt. The

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road goes in the direction of a lake of melted snow water. You should go to the east side of the lake.

42. "Following the snow lake to another valley, there is a throne and a footprint of Guru Rinpoche's. The next valley you will come to is Sangphug Valley. Here there are many hot springs and medicinal waters. The guide book of Khembalung is finished".

[Namo Guru. "I, Pemajungne, will reveal to you the secret guide to the Beyul and (you should) write it down." This guide book was given to Karchenza (a consort of Guru Rinpoche) and Nanglon (a close adviser to King Thisong Detsen). One should understand the meaning of these 'treasure books'. "May people who have good Karma receive (these books) at the end of the Kalpa. Go to the secret place without remaining attached to one's own country.] If you cannot go there because of rain or avalanches, then you (should) make smoke of black dog dung and the hardened sap of a tree (i. e. these will have the power to stop the rain and avalanches). At the same time you (should) say mantras of the Trochu (ten wrathful deities) which will destroy all wrathful (demons). You (should) also make incense of sulphur.

43. "Pray to Guru Rinpoche. [This road is similar to the route to Yolmo Kangri (Helambu). I prostrate (myself) before the boundless Ku (bodies).] This (hidden place) is called Gyelki Khembalung. You should have a guide from the lineage of a king to lead you into the valley. You need lineage holders (i. e. people who continuously practise the teaching) of Guru Rinpoche; the yogi (who does) Mahamudra, who completely (uses all) the images of Dorje Phurba; the lineage holders of Bon; people who can make offerings to the old protectors of this valley; lineage holders of doctors; lineage holders of knowledge; and you also need all kinds of tools.

44. "You need seven Norkyongden (?), seven tantric yogis who have kept good vows, seven monks who have kept vows, seven skilful men, household items, Dharma ceremonial and ritual items, carpentry tools, farming equipment, and Dharma-offering medicine.

"First pray to the lama, then (go) in the winter or spring months of any year on Thursday on the Go star day. This is the most favorable day.

45. On this day, guided by a man descended from a king, go along the upper road that is Chuklam (one on which domestic animals can travel). Otherwise take the middle road Pharmawa Tragpo(?) or take the lower road called Golchung (?). Any road taken will lead you to the valley called Monkhareng. Then pray. Do the water puja and Serkyem and offer Danggye to the seven
46. Menstsun. The Di Khammo (?) (of Khembalung) is the female diety, Gomakha. Offer Danggye to her and one black chicken decorated by five colored

ribbons around (its) neck. Its (the offering's) effect is to prevent rain and snow.

"Continuing upward there is a pass called Sateg Tangkila or also Lagod. Continuing beyond this (pass), there is a Tom (?) on the Yarola (name of a pass), Going further upwards, there are three wide valleys called Kothang, Lungthang, and Dathang. These are as far wide as one can see.

47 "After crossing to the other side of these areas, look in the direction that water runs. Then go towards the left side of the water. You (should) go towards Chekarlung (name of a valley). Look from the left side of the top (of the valley?). There is a (rock ?) which looks like a Lachak of a protector deity that was placed there. Above this area there is a pass called Pho Ropola. Climb up to the summit of this mountain.

48 "On top of that (mountain) there is rock (which looks) like a horse's saddle. If you go (towards) the horse's saddle, there is a pass. That is the pass of Tromen (?). You should not take this pass, but (rather should) go to the left three arrow-shots (i. e. as far as an arrow can be shot three times). There is a lake called Dudscho. After you arrive at the lake offer Chang (beer) and the blood of a human being, dog and horse. (Also offer) jewels and three brown goats decorated with colored ribbons to Surarakye.

49 "You should then follow the left side of the river from that lake as far as three Gabge (?). You will find a path. On the right side of the road only human beings, goats and sheep may pass. If you go as far as three Gabge, then there is a jungle path. If you go as far as an arm-span (?), the road comes to an end in a waterfall. That is Dipshing (magically hidden). Between the rock and the water people can walk single file. If you go through that, go down the mountain path three rope lengths, then there are two paths. Take the path that goes up as far as ten rope lengths, and (there) this river turns into another rock. There is Pama (a kind of tree), evergreens, and Langma (another kind of tree). If you go through that you will arrive inside Khembalung.

51 "In Khembalung there is a white boulder as big as a yak. The route past this boulder goes by a tree with a thousand branches. If you go through that, there is a lake. If you go past the left side of the lake, then turn right, and there is a Mepak (?). That is a lower treasure place, (where there is) the 'treasure of barley'. You can grow five types of grains (in this valley). You can eat this barley (i. e. the treasure) for two years and feed 10,000 people. In order to mitigate the danger of becoming ill from the grain, add salt, eat it hot and in small amounts. Most of these grains are very solid (packed with essence). [In this valley you will have a long life and you will attain many good qualities.]

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“On the right side of this valley, it (a mountain ?) looks like piles of jewels. In the center of the upper side of this valley there is a boulder that looks like a yak. Underneath that stone there is a treasure of water as big as Tsha Ngar (?). If you dig seven arm-spans you will strike water. This
53 water is called Tsunmo Jangchu (Well-mannered Queen). If you drink that, you will become well-mannered and able to cure diseases.

“If you continue down the watercourse, there is a place with three rivers joined together. If you go down through this valley as far as seven arrow-shots, you (will see) a mountain that resembles a turquoise snake heading downwards. This mountain is to the left of the river and to the right of the valley. On the route there is a big, blue boulder. Under that (boulder) there
54 is a mud-puddle three arm-spans deep. If you dig in the center of that you will get a blue Kham (?). Underneath that you will find a yellow rug approximately two feet long. If you continue to dig, you will find water which rises up to the neck. Do one hundred water pujas. Then the water will come continuously (like a spring). This water is called Gyaling Tegobchu. If this water is drunk by a man, then his body will become healthy, strong and
55 capable. If drunk by a woman, she will become pregnant. If drunk by a horse, it becomes Gyaling Thogchok (a kind of horse ?).

“If you proceed down, there are Khenpa bushes, Palu bushes, Langma bushes, bushes, and Tagma bushes. If you cross these, then there is a rock that looks like the nose of Senmo (a female spirit). In this area there are many goats, female yaks, and yaks which have turned white. The animals are fat and they will not get Sheldu (a kind of disease), because there are thousands of medicinal plants growing there. People also will not catch diseases in this
56 land. If you settle there, your livestock will greatly multiply. (Next sentence NT).

“If you go outside the valley, there is (another) valley called Lumen Jongtsel which is surrounded by Langma and Kherpa (Khyelpa) bushes. This area is as big as two arrow-shots. At this place there is a country which is called Togma Luyul. If the Bonpos stay there, they will be wealthy. If Ngapas (tantric practitioners) stay there, they will obtain all realizations and great power. Their wishes will be fulfilled according to their desires.

57 “Then there is another valley, the floor (of which) resembles a wash-basin right side up and has a great expanse of sky. The sun shines for a long time. The water in the river looks as if it is flowing upstream. The center of this valley has a blue cave which looks like a female tiger that is 3-dimensional.
58. The upper side of that (cave?) there is three tiered rock. (In this rock) there are 18 different Ter (hidden ‘treasures’ or documents) with a detailed Karchag (guide book). There are also four famous turquoises. There is on full bag of Zhi (long back stones with white markings). The Karchag is in the upper

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cave. Inside the center of the cave is a puja room which contains my (i. e. 59 Guru Rinpoche's) hat, necklace, Dorje and bell, brown cloth, golden Dorje, Yeshe Tshogyal's (a consort of Guru Rinpoche) bracelet and necklace, a turquoise called Odbar ('shining bright') and a drum of Singdin (a kind of wood). All these are on the Mandala inside the tent of Se (?). This Karchag is in Monkanareng (name of a valley). This is under the boulder that looks like a horse's saddle.

60 "Inside the upper cave there are particularly profound Dharma treasures. Firstly, (there are) the profound meditation teachings, which enable you to attain Enlightenment in this life, and the nine iron stakes of the protector deities. There are also mantras for repelling the advances of enemy armies from other countries. The Ter will be removed by people born in the year of the Sheep or Monkey. The time of removal of the Ter will correspond with the year when Kunting temple (in Tibet) will be destroyed by enemy soldiers.

61 "If you wish to remove these Ter, then you must remain in this country. If you stay in this valley, then you can take out this Ter and the Pukiter (treasure of Tibet). May this door of Khembalung be opened again and again. This is the end of the Karchag.
Samaya Gya Gya Gya.
Sarwa Mangalam.

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