

The Bem-chag Village Record and The Early History of Mustang District

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Introduction

In the past three decades Mustang District in Western Nepal has been subject to numerous anthropological and historical studies.¹

Situated between the main Himalayan Range to the south and the Tibetan Plateau to the north, Mustang District is heavily influenced by Tibetan civilisation, and the main source for historical studies is a variety of Tibetan texts, including biographies, registers and pilgrimage guides.

Besides Tibetan texts, Nepali documents comprise another important source. Most of these date from the period after the foundation of modern Nepal in the late 18th century and relate to administrative matters such as taxation.²

The Thakalis do not have their own script, but Thakali texts have been written using Tibetan and Devanagari script.³ The most important example is the four clanhistories of the Tamang Thakalis which deal with the origin of the clan ancestors and gods, and how they established themselves in Thak Khola.⁴

Finally, the local oral tradition is also an important source for historical studies, especially in Thak Khola where textual material provides little information on the early history.⁵ Even where the oral tradition deals with events described in texts, it includes details which are not found in the written sources.

One of the most important sources for the study of the history of the Thak Khola are the village records (*bem-chang*)⁶ kept in the five original villages of Yhulngha (N., Pācgañ), i.e. Thini, Syang, Marpha, Chairo and Cimang. Pācgañ was once ruled by the king of Sum (or Sumpo) Garabdzong (near present-day Thini) and the *bem-chag* deal mainly with the foundation and boundaries of that kingdom.

The Thini *bem-chag* is said to be the original from which the others were copied. The original *bem-chag*, however, is no longer in Thini since, according to locals, it was stolen and brought to Marpha. In Thini there are two copies of the *bem-chag*, but these appear to have been written down after the original disappeared. In 1977 M. Vinding obtained copies of the two Thini *bem-chag*, but only minor sections have been published (Jackson 1979 and Ramble 1983 and 1984). The Syang and Chairo *bem-chag*, have not been seen by any Western

scholars. The Marpha *bem-chag*, has been copied by several persons (including A.W. Macdonald, C. Jest, T. Skorupski, and K.L. Thakali), but still remains unpublished. The Cimang *bem-chag*, has been copied by Omkar Gauchan and M. Vinding. A Nepali translation of the document is presented in Gauchan (1980), but the translation is not entirely accurate and the article does not reproduce the original text.

The purpose of the present article is to present the first English translation of the *bem-chag*, village record of Sum Garabdzong. Among the several versions of this text we have used the Cimang *bem-chag*, (henceforth CB), a facsimile of which is presented in Appendix I.

The Cimang *bem-chag*, is about 3 metres long and 0.5 metres wide (Photo 1). The text is rolled up and kept in a small bamboo container (Photo 2) which is placed in a box containing other village documents. This box is kept with the village headman, but the key is held by another person to prevent theft and misuse of the documents. The village documents are taken out and read at major village meetings, for example ad hoc gatherings convened in connection with border disputes involving other villages.

Translation of the CB presents a number of difficulties. First, while it is written in Tibetan script, it includes local orthographical features which are not found in standard Tibetan. Second, the language makes extensive use of idioms from the local Western Tibetan dialect, which is quite different from both Central colloquial and standard literary Tibetan. Third, the spelling (especially of personal and place names) is inconsistent. And fourth, the grammar is poor and the meaning not always clear. In the translation of obscure and difficult passages, we have consulted the Marpha *bem-chag*, (MB), the so called Old Thini *bem-chag*, (OTB) and New Thini *bem-chag*, (NTB), as well as the local oral tradition. The most important variations and passages in the MB, OTB and NTB which are not found in the CB are included and translated in the notes.

The CB is written by the monks (*dge-slong*) Ogyan Chozang and Kacen Legkye. After the main text are four paragraphs which have been added by Tshewang Rinchen and Legshe Kacen. Unfortunately, nothing is known about these persons. They (or their patrons) seem, however, to have been followers of the Bon tradition because the swastikas found in the text all run anticlockwise.

It is impossible to date the text accurately. The text includes a reference to the Central Government of Tibet (Ganden Phodrang) which was established only in the 17th century and the text cannot therefore be earlier than that date. Furthermore, the text mentions that the Dru King (Grain King) altered the boundary between Pačgañ and Thaksatsae. The Dru King may very well be the king of Parbat which controlled Thak Khola in the 18th Century. If this assumption is correct, the text may tentatively be dated to the 18th century.

The *bem-chag* is a local account of the history of the kingdom of Sumbo Garabdzong. It consists of 16 separate events, some of which are centuries apart. The text mentions only two kings of Sum Garabdzong, namely Gyal Thokarcen and Gyal Tangmicen. It is not clear whether Gyal Thokarcen and Gyal Tangmicen are actually different persons. The text twice mentions an incident between the king of Sumbo Garabdzong and a king called Punari, but in the first version the king of Sum Garabdzong is Gyal Thokarcen, while in the second he is Gyal Tangmicen. This could indicate that Gyal Tangmicen and Gyal Thokarcen are one and the same person. On the other hand, the text mentions that Lubra was founded during the reign of Gyal Tangmicen, while Gyal Thokarcen wished to seize Ganden Phodrang (the Central Government of Tibet). If this information is correct Gyal Tangmicen could not have been earlier than the 17th century, unless of course the writer's reference to the Lhasa Government as Ganden Phodrang is an anachronistic usage. Beside the *bem-chag* and the local oral tradition, nothing is known about these kings, and their identity and dates remain unknown.

The main topic in the *bem-chag* is the issue of boundaries between the political entities in Thak Khola. The text mentions several border disputes between the present Pācgañ and Thaksatsai. As in the past the border is presently disputed. On the eastern side of the valley the border originally followed the Marshyang river, but today the de facto border is at Cimang river further north. The situation is unclear on the western side of the valley. Originally, the border was at Dhocho (or Dotsam) Gang opposite Marshyang River. At present, the people of Pācgañ claim it to be at Dhocho Gang, while the people of Thaksatsae maintain that it is at the Dhon river further north. The question remains unsolved, and the disputed area is a no-man's-land where nobody is allowed to build and settle.

For readers unfamiliar with the area, a short resume of the history of Mustang District is presented below.

A Resume of the History of Mustang District ⁷

In former times the present Mustang District comprised two separate lands, namely Lo in the north and Serib in the south. Lo⁸ included the area from the border down to Gilling⁹, while Serib covered the present Pācgañ¹⁰. Baragau¹¹ originally belonged to Serib, but later came under the influence of Lo. It is uncertain whether Thaksatse¹² was a part of Serib.

Lo and Serib are referred to in the Dunhuang Annals, the earliest surviving Tibetan historical records. According to these documents, the great Tibetan king Srong-btsan sgam-po (d.649/50) conquered Zhang-zhung (Western Tibet) which was then a separate kingdom with its own language and culture. The conquest also included Lo and Serib. In 705 Serib revolted, but in 709 its king was captured and it again came under Tibetan rule.

Under Srong-btsan sgam-po's descendants Tibet continued to be a dominant power in Central Asia, but in 842 the kingdom came to an end when king Glang-dar-ma was murdered by the Buddhist monk dPal-Kyi rdo-rje.

Following the fall of the Yarlung Kingdom, the centre of Tibetan civilization shifted to the old Zhang-zhung which by the 10th century had been Tibetanized. The area was now known as Ngari and consisted of two main kingdoms, Purang and Guge. The kings of these kingdoms were strong supporters of Buddhism, and Indian Buddhist teachers were invited to Ngari in the 11th century. Following these visits, Buddhism again flourished in Tibet, and Tibetan missionaries went to Lo and Serib to convert the local population to various Buddhist sects, including the reformed Bon. One of the Bon missionaries was Klu-brag-patbKra-shis rgyal-mtshan who founded a monastery at Lubra (Klu-brag, in Baragau) around 1160.

In the 12th century three important powers emerged around Lo and Serib. One of these was Ladakh which in the early 12th century invaded Lo and Serib. Another was Gungthang at Dzongkha northeast of Lo. Finally, around year 1200 a powerful kingdom was established in Jumla in Western Nepal. In the early 13th century the Jumla kings conquered parts of Ngari and Gungthang, and its influence probably also included Lo and Serib.

In 1252 Gungthang had regained sufficient strength to send an army against Jumla and to conquer Lo and Serib. To consolidate its power in the area, Gungthang established a fort near Muktinath. In the 13th century the people of Lo spoke a Tibetan dialect while the population in the present Baragañ and Thak Khola spoke *Se-skad*, a language akin to the present-day Thakali. In connection with the Gungthang expansion, Tibetan nobles were established as leaders in the newly built forts in Baragau. In the following centuries the Tibetan language was adopted by sections of the local population, and while the people of the upper part of Baragau (Chusang, Tangbe, Tetang, Gyaka and Cheli) and Thak Khola have retained their original *Se-skad* language, the people of the Kagbeni and Muktinath area speak a West Tibetan dialect.

In the middle 14th century the power of Gungthang weakened and Lo was conquered by Jumla. Towards the end of the 14th century Gungthang once more became a dominant power, and the Gungthang general Shes-rab bla-ma conquered Lo. Shes-rab bla-ma's descendants established themselves in Lo, and his grandson A-me-dpal was the founder of the Lo royal house from whom the present Lo (Mustang) Maharajas are descended.

The 16th century was a difficult one for Lo. Gungthang, the protector of Lo, lost its power and never regained it. In addition, Lo was plagued by internal conflicts. The biography of a 16th century lama from Lo mentions conflicts between the leading families in the area, and that the harvest was lost to the Mon (i.e. southern people) in 1544. In the late 16th century Jumla seems to have played a major role in the affairs of Lo, because the biography of another lama states that the Jumla king in 1580 requested him to travel to Lo to mediate in an internal conflict.

A new chapter in the history of Lo came in the end of the 16th century when the army of king Tshe-dbang rnam-rgyal of Ladakh (1555-75) invaded Purang, Jumla and Lo. Although Lo came under Ladakhi supremacy, affinal ties between the royal houses created a close relationship between the kingdoms, and Ladakhi influence in Lo was limited to the payment of tribute against protection.

While under Ladakhi supremacy Lo held control over the Kagbeni-Muktinath area. The nobles in this area tried, however, to free themselves from Lo's influences, and in 1652 a fight broke out between the king of Lo and his minister in Dzong. The king had his minister beaten at Kagbeni, but Jumla intervened on the side of the minister and many people died in the following war between Jumla and Lo. Even the clergy became involved in this conflict, and in 1682 monks from Lo and Serib fought at a monastery in Central Tibet.

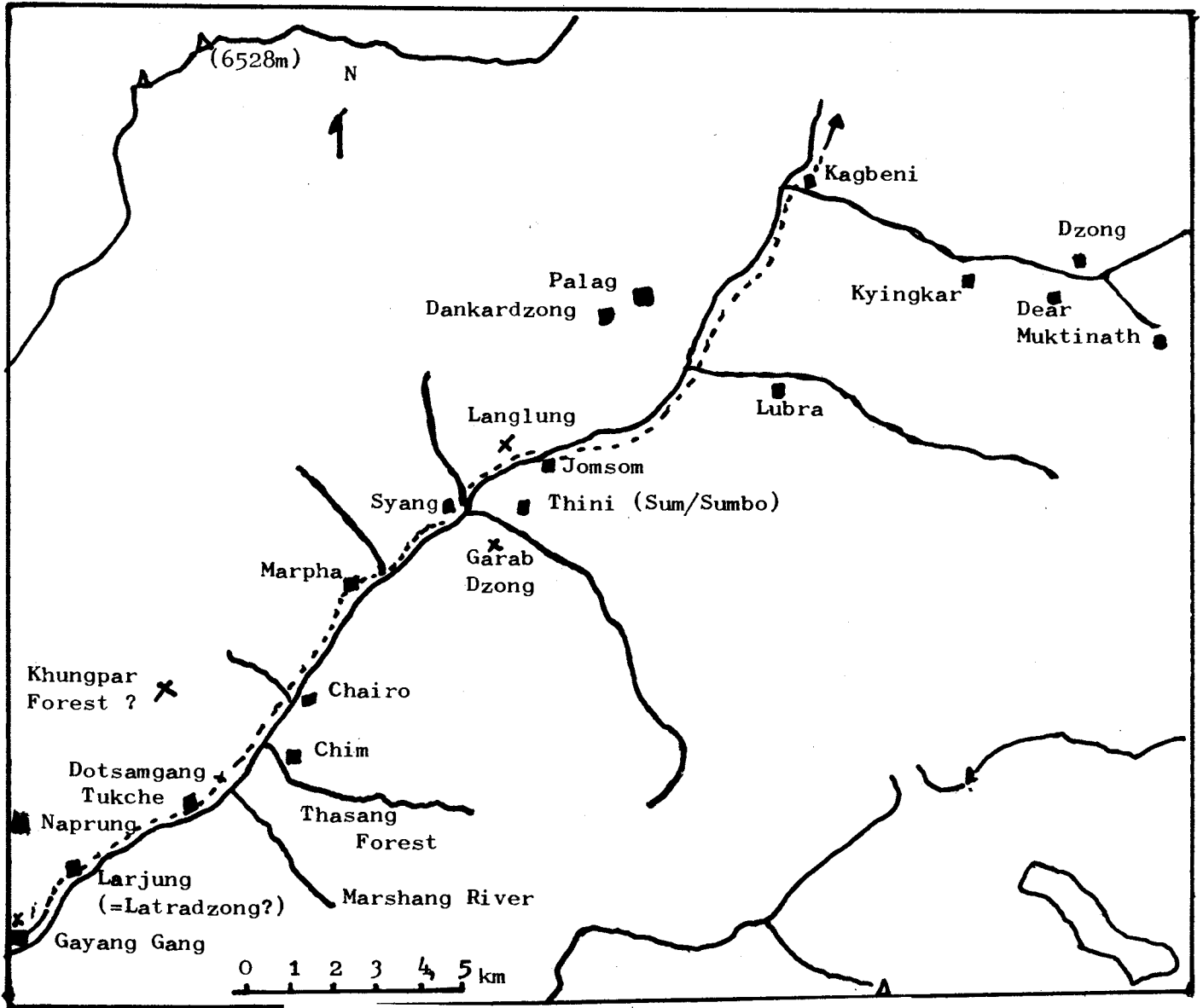
The wars between Jumla and Lo continued. In 1719 the king of Lo married a Ladakhi princess (whose own mother was from Lo). On her way to Lo the princess was captured and imprisoned at Kagbeni by the Jumla army, but was later freed when help arrived from Ladakh and Parbat¹³.

A few decades later Jumla again attacked Lo. At this time Ladakh had lost its former power (and later ceased to exist as an independent kingdom) and was unable to help Lo which subsequently came under Jumla supremacy. While Jumla in the 18th century controlled Lo, Parbat must have had some influence in Thak Khola, because in 1774 King Kirti Bam Malla of Parbat confirmed the rules for conduct of the monks and nuns of sMad-kyi lha-khang at Kobang.

In the second half of the 18th century King Prithivi Narayan Shah of Gorkha conquered the numerous small kingdoms comprising contemporary Nepal. Parbat fell to Gorkha in 1768. In 1788 the Gorkhas fought a war with Tibet, and Jumla used the occasion to invade Lo and some villages further south. The war between the Gorkhas and Tibet, however, soon came to an end, and in 1789 Gorkha conquered Jumla. Since that time the present Mustang District has been under the Shah kings of Nepal.

To conclude, the recorded history of the present Mustang District dates from as far back as the 7th century. Situated along an important trade route, neighbouring powers have through the past millennium controlled the area: Tibet from the 7th to the 9th century; Gungthang from the 13th through the 14th century; Jumla in the 16th century; Ladakh in the 17th century; Jumla in the 18th century; and Gorkha from the end of the 18th century. The rise of new powers and the decline of the old - both within and outside the area - caused numerous wars and invasions.

It is against this background, and the constant border conflicts between various political entities within the area that the *bem-chag* originates.



Map of the Mustang Area

Notes

1. The main contributions on the history of Mustang District include C. von Furer-Haimendorf's *Himalayan Traders* (1975); O.P. Gauchan's 'Hansa rajako thakma sasanthiyo bhame ullekh bhayeko kagaj' (Document proving the Reign of Hansa Raja in Thak) (1980); D. Jackson's 'The Early History of Lo (Mustang) and Ngari' (1976), 'Notes on the History of Serib and Nearby Places in the Upper Kali Gandaki' (1979), 'A Genealogy of the Kings of Lo Mustang' (1980), and *The Mollas of Mustang* (1984); A. W. Macdonald's 'A Tibetan Guide to Some Holy Places of the Dhaulagiri-Maktinath Area in Nepal' (1979); D.A. Messerschmidt's 'Parallel Trade and Innovation in Central Nepal: The Case of the Gurung and The Thakali Subbas Compared' (1974, with N.J. Gurung) and 'The Thakali of Nepal: Historical Continuity and Socio-Cultural Changed': (1981); C. Ramble's 'The Founding of a Tibetan Village: The Popular Transformation of History' (1983) and *The Lamas of Lubra: Tibetan Banpo Householders Priests in Western Nepal* (1984); T. B. Shrestha's 'Parvataka Kehi tamrapatra' (Copper Letters from Parbat) (1976); D. L. Snellgrove's *Himalayan Pilgrimage* (1961), *Four Lamas of Dolpa* (1969), and 'Places of Pilgrimage in Thag (Thakkhola)' (1979); G. Tucci's *Tra Guingle e Pagode* (1956); and M. Vinding's 'The History of the Thakaali according to the Thakaali Tradition' (1977, with S. Gauchan) and 'The Local Oral Tradition about the Kingdom of Thin Garab Dzong' (1978).

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2. D. R. Regmi has published translations of several documents relating mainly to the taxation in Mustang District. For a list, see Bhattachan and Vinding 1985.
3. The Thakalis' homeland is Thak Khola in the southern part of Mustang District. The Thakalis comprise three separate groups, namely the Tamang Thakalis of Thaksatsae, the Mowatan Thakalis of Marpha, and the Yhulkasompaimhi Thakalis of Thini, Syang and Cimag. For a bibliography, see Bhattachan and Vinding 1985.
4. For a retelling of these clanhistories, see Gauchan and Vinding 1977.
5. For examples of the oral tradition in Mustang District, see Ramble 1983 and 1984, and Vinding 1978.
6. According to Das, *bem-chag* is a synonym for *dkar-chag*, "list of contents". In the Baragau region however *dkar-chag* is the usual word for a historical text, so *bem-chag* presumably also has this meaning.

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7. This resume is based on the sources listed in note 1 above, but in particular on David Jackson's research.
8. The present-day Lo comprises the area from the Nepal-China border down to Gilling. The people are called Lopa and speak a language (*Gol-skad*) which is related to West Tibetan.
9. Gilling village traditionally paid tax to the Central Government in Kathmandu separately from Lo in the north and Baragau in the south. The people of Gilling are culturally similar to the Lopa.
10. Pācgaũ (Tha., Yhuln̄gha, "Five Villages") includes the area from Jomsom to Cimang inclusive. The people consist mainly of Yhulkasompaimhi Thakalis (in Thini, Syang and Cimang) and Mowatan Thakalis (in Marpha).
11. Baragau (N., Twelve Villages) is subdivided into a northern and a southern part. The northern part includes the villages Chusang, Tangbe, Testang, Gyaga and Cheli, and the people speak various Tibeto-Burman dialects related to Thakali. The southern part comprises the Kagbeni-Muktinath area where the people speak a language related to Glo-skad.
12. Thaksatsae covers the area between Tukche and Ghasa inclusive. The people of this area are mainly Tamang Thakalis.
13. Parbat was until 1786 an independent kingdom at Beni south of Thak Khola.

A TRANSLATION OF THE CIMANG BEM-CHAG

Introduction:

With my body, speech and mind I make obeisance to and take refuge in the Vajra who produces the assembly of the wise ones of the three times, causing the light-rays of his compassion to flash like lightning for all sentient beings - gods, men, demons, sprites - in the southern continent, the land of conversion by the Victorious One who is the assembled power of all the Buddhas.

The following is the chronicle which relates in brief the manner in which events occurred, in a previous time, in the history of King Thokarcen¹ and the two places Sum Garabdzong² and Thakgubtsen.³ Obeisance to Gyalpo Rinpoche,⁴ the mirror-like protector of the land and our refuge! Obeisance to the excellent and distinguished land!

(How King Thokrcen became King of Thini)

The birthplace of Gyalpo Rinpoche was Mindroling in To⁵ and he was king Thokarcen, whose mind pervades Earth, Water, Fire and Wind. He thought, "I shall seize the Ganden Phodrang."⁶

"But the Zhung Ganden Phodrang's King⁷ has already taken it," replied his daughter, Yalipo Karpo,⁸ and he did not fulfill his intention of besieging the town. "It does not matter that it is impossible", he said. "I shall achieve my aim," and he went to Dzong Latagling.⁹ He thought, "I shall seize Dzonglangling,¹⁰ but Dzonglangling had also been taken by King Surtipa.¹¹ Then he thought, "I shall seize the (Position of) King of Lo. He¹² reached the capital of Lo and there were six kings who contested¹³ (the throne:) Kara Dewa; Khashe Dewa; Dradzung Dewa; Urdzung Dewa; King Thokarcen and Ngatro Kyawa.¹⁴ But King Aka Samdrup¹⁵ had already taken it.

He also thought, "I shall seize Mugha Tarwa",¹⁶ but Mugha Tharwa had already been occupied by Trokyab.¹⁷ Then King Thokarcen questioned three of the kings, saying "What shall we (or you) five do?" Then King Kara Dewa said, "I think I should be lord of the salt" (while) king Dradzung Dewa said, "I think I should be lord of the wool. "King Urdzung Dewa said, "For my part, I think I should be lord of the grain".¹⁸ When the three kings had made this request, King Thokarcen said, "I shall now cast dice after praying to the Three Precious Ones.¹⁹ If it falls to your lot to have salt do not be dismayed (if you did not want the salt). If you are allotted the wool do not be dismayed, and if you are allotted the grain do not be dismayed. (The decision shall be upheld) until the earth is on top and the sky is below.²⁰ If I am king, I, King Thokarcen shall win Mount Gepoche.²¹ I shall win Gyal Thaglhe Khobling, Khyunglhas Ludzung and Mount Gepoche.²² What will the people of Konglibu Rogard²³ say?", he said.

"We (people of) Mabu Sumpo²⁴ should hold a discussion and petition Gyalpo Rinpoche." To the people of Dokhe²⁵ he said, "Mount Gepoche belongs to me. "What will you say?"²⁶ I shall remain at Bumtshe, and you all come to Bumtshe.²⁷ What will the three headmen of Bumtshe's frontiers say?²⁸ I have got Mount Gepoche: will you three fraternal headmen accept me (as your king) or will you not?"²⁹

"Very well, Gyalpo Rinpoche, I shall discuss the matter with Mabusum³⁰ and with other fellow-villagers."³¹

"Very well, hold your discussion." In the daytime both men and gods assembled, and in the night gods, demons and goblins met.³² They (lit: we) met at Mapangcen and held the discussion.³³ "(Even)³⁴ if King Thokarcen flies in the air we³⁵ shall accept him."³⁶

(Those who reached the agreement) were: Srane Thing, Drukor Thing, Tabor Thing, Tsagyu Thing, Drencen Thing, and Langlung Thing.³⁷ "Very well, he has been accepted," they said. "If anyone (does not)³⁸ obey King Thokarcen, there will be a fine of one gold *zho*".³⁹ "If I am king, many enemies will emerge in the realm. If any wars break out against (me), the king, and you do not stand behind me, you will pay one gold *zho*."

(The Ritual Specialists of King Thokarcen)

After becoming king, he (king Thokarchen) said, "Take out from your community an performers of astrology and offer me those astrologers, and after extracting from among yourselves *dbon-po* and *bon-poyo*⁴⁰ offer me these *dbon-po* and *bon-po* from among you. Because I intend to perform a *tshe-grub*⁴¹ (ritual), I need a man to carry out a *tshe-grub*, so take a *tshe-grub* performer from amongst you and offer him to me. Offer these to me from among you," he said and asked the community, "who will be the *tshe-grub* performer, who will act as the *bon-po*, and who will act as my astrologer?" The astrologer was Tsagyu Thing, the Lord of Ugpoling.⁴² "If you do not perform Indian and Chinese astrology properly," he said, "you will be fined one gold *zho*." To the *bon-po* he said, "If you do not light incense for the gods and the serpent-spirits and make sacrificial offerings to thee serpent-spirits properly, you will be fined one gold *zho*. You four have become my household priests. So be it. You four priests may not perform one another's duties, those which have not been apportioned you. If you interchange your duties you shall pay me, your king, one gold *zho*.⁴³ My subjects shall receive one silver *zho*."

(The Sons of King Thokarcen)

"At that time, a son was born to me,⁴⁴ the king. A son born while I am wishing (*dran*) shall be called Drensumpal.⁴⁵ One born to me on a day when I am worshipping the gods (*lha*) shall be called Lhasumpal. A son born to me in a time of rejoicing (*kyis* for *skyid*) shall be called Kyisumpal. After being given good advice by everyone (I called them) Drensum (and the other two), the thrice (or three) glorious youths.⁴⁶ It shall be forbidden to harm the three sons⁴⁷ who are born to me, the thrice-glorious youths. O gods, we have all reached an agreement."

(The Establishing of Garabdzong)

Now the fort was an old one, and he said, "It seems as if we should build a new fort,⁴⁸ "and he consulted the inhabitants of the fort. "Well, to build it from earth and stone let the astrologers make their computations properly, and the diviners make their projections well. The earth-and stone-diggers shall fall to the responsibility of Tshewang Palden, the lord of the fort".⁴⁹ Eventually they finished building the fort.

(The Boundaries of Old Thini)

When the agreement between King Hansa and Queen Nyima⁵⁰ and everyone was written down (it went as follows): the boundary above the Marshang River, Dotshamgang and Khyungpangdrong was (the southern border of) Sum's territory."⁵¹ Above that, clearly below the temple Chuchulung Menpuntrong, below Gyela and the Pentag⁵² River, that would be (the northern border of) Sum's land. After reaching an agreement with the people of Manang, the land below Tilicho would be (the eastern boundary of) Sum's territory, the land of the common people.⁵³ (It was further agreed that) if the territorial (borders) were not properly observed there would be a fine of one gold *zho*.

(King Punari) 54

Gyalpo Rinpoche was told that there was someone lighting a fire on Mount Gepoche,⁵⁵ so he said, "Well, go and investigate it." On Mount Gepo(che) there was *ma-gsum*.⁵⁶ "After thinking about Mount Gepoche I came here, " said (King Punari). "You, Gyalpo Rinpoche, have won the land; I control the water." King Thokarcen and King Punari made an agreement. They said that King Punari should become the father-in-law.⁵⁷ "Because none is more powerful than you, I shall not give my daughter to another."⁵⁸

And also, if the villagers perform any disloyal acts⁵⁹ they shall pay one silver *zho*. Following their agreement, King Thokarcen and King Punari erected a pile of stones at Tagtsamsam. (Anticlockwise Swastika)⁶⁰ *bKra-shis shog*.

(The Foundation of Tsherog)

Om Swasti. Concerning the past boundaries of Yulkhanga: the land of Sum Garabdzong was given to Meme Pempar Sonam.⁶¹ As for the way in which Tsherog was first built,⁶² in a Female Water-Bird Year⁶³ (Pempar Sonam) came to Sum from Kagbeni and in a Female Fire-Rat Year⁶⁴ (our) Grandfather settled in the village of Tsherog. After he had been given the land and was living there, the headmen were Marcang and Pema Tshering,⁶⁵ and afterwards the headmen paid a fee of one tamka to Meme Pempar Sonam for the (use of the) watermill.⁶⁶ This practice of giving (continued until?) the time of the headman Pema Ram.⁶⁷ In a Female Earth-Pig Year the headman of Sum, Tshang Lhadru, decided to donate (the land) below Tshartar Hill, below Zur Crag and above Papa Chorten.⁶⁸

(The Border between Old Thini and Thag)

The following deals with series of events leading to the establishment of the boundary between⁶⁹ the two places Thakhubtsen and Sumpa Mapudrung 70. In the past, whatever King Thangmigcen⁷¹ could see was Sum Garabdzong's land, and whatever Hansa Raja,⁷² the king of Thagyul,⁷³ could see was the territory of Thakhubtsen. After an agreement between the two kings the following was decided: the king of Sum Garabdzong looked out from Sum and saw Khyungpardrong and the Marshang River. The king of Thakhubtsen looked up from Latradzong⁷⁴ and saw Butsuben⁷⁵ and Thasangdrong.⁷⁶ Then those (lit: we) two kings fixed the boundary above Dotshamgang, above the Marshang River and above Khyungpardrong. And on the basis of there being no clouds in the sky or dust on the ground and red changing colour, and sediment not being raised from the deep,⁷⁷ the two kings agreed thus on the earth and stone boundaries that were to be honoured for eternity.⁷⁸ The verbal agreement by the two kings concerning the earth and stone boundaries was sealed.⁷⁹

(King Punari)

Then several years passed after the king of Sum Garabdzong, King Thangmicen, ascended to the throne. After King Punari had arrived at Wangpang,⁸⁰ (King Thangmigcen) saw at dawn someone making smoke from a fire. He asked, "Who is that making smoke up on Wangpang drong?"⁸¹ Go and look," ordered the king, and one of his subjects accordingly went to find out. It was King Punari, and the King's subject said, "It is the King's command that you may not stay here."

"Although you may be the lord of the land," (he answered), "I am the lord of the water, and if you say I am not allowed to remain on the land, I shall not send even one drop of water." He spoke decisively and clearly to the subject, and displayed alarming behaviour from the middle of the river.⁸² King Thangmigcen thought concernedly, in accordance with his being a bodhisattva, "If there is no water in this land, how will the water mills be turned, how will the fields be

irrigated, and what can we drink?" Later, the king and his subjects held a discussion, and after sending someone to call Punari said, "Let us two kings have a discussion, (the outcome of which will be that) I shall take your daughter (as daughter-in-law). I shall give you (lit: him) my daughter."⁸³ The two of them agreed that he, King Thangmigcen, would become lord of the land, and he gave King Punari lordship of the water. They agreed to give the bridegroom land to the value of one gold zho⁸⁴ and one silver zho, and they agreed that the bridegroom also should give one gold zho's worth of water to his father-in-law (lit: to you, my father-in-law), the king. In this way the two kings increased their families (by becoming in-laws).

(The Death of King Thangmicen)

After that several years passed. King Thangmigcen, while sitting watching the sun, said, "Remove that high hill⁸⁵ that is in the way of the sunrise." His subjects (set about) levelling the hill, but they become exasperated with their work since the hill was naturally indestructable. After five or six men had gone to the mountain and were felling trees, King Thangmigcen got his hands caught in the cleft of a trunk and he, the king, fell to his death from the crag.⁸⁶ Such events comprise the story of Sum Garabdzong.

(The Border between Old Thini and Thag)

The boundaries between Sum and Thag that were traditionally observed by the previous kings Thangmigcen and Hansa Raja were later altered by the Dru King.⁸⁷ Sasangpal⁸⁸ of the royal lineage took into his family a Marpha girl who was a nun. Her son was called Harkumal.⁸⁹ Harkumal's son was Sangmal,⁹⁰ and in his time there was a meeting, (like a cluster of) stars, of Sum and the people of Thagyul. Ramemal⁹¹ of the royal lineage sat on a great rock at Dotshamgang and put forward his opinion, saying, "The decree of the former Kings Thangmigcen and Hansa Raja should not be violated," and from the Marpha side he set up a pillar at Dotshamgang. From the Sum side they set the boundary above the Marshang River and above Khyungpardrong. Below the Pentag River, below Gyela and below Chochuling, the land of Pundrung temple, was the territory of Yulkhanga. Below the Marshang River lay the territory of Thakhubtsen, they said, and established (the boundary) according to this decision. Thereafter, because a disagreement arose concerning the decreed boundary between Sum and Thag, Kyirtipal⁹² of the royal lineage was called by the people of Thag and was taken to them. They held a discussion but could not agree. Later a member of the royal line of Sum, called Pirtipal,⁹³ was summoned and he spoke. Sitting on a big flat rock at Dotshamgang he said, "Now the boundary of you (people of) Sumpo Mapudrub and Thakhubtsen shall be as before, that is, the centre of the Marshang River and this flat rock and above Khyungpardrong shall be established as the boundary for you, Sum and Yulkhanga." So he spoke, making a decisive speech, and then added, "None shall change this". In order to keep Thag and Sum separate (?), if any householder or servant comes to Thag and Sum he must be fined one tamka. Also if a horse is found, one tamka shall be paid, and if a male or a female yak is found, or a cow, two chickens shall be given. If a householder or servant of Sum goes to Thag, the same rule shall pertain. The witnesses were the headman of Thag, Sangla Chokyab, and from Marpha the headman Tsukali.⁹⁴

(The Foundation of Lubra)

Previously, in the time of King Thangmigcen, below the Pentag River, below Gyela and below the land of Pundrung temple, from the Pharkang River⁹⁵ and below Gyadrogang⁹⁶ was the territory of Sum. The following deals with the manner in which the boundary of Yulkhanga and Chochulung⁹⁷ was established. Previously the village of Lubra did not exist. The Bonpo lama Yangton⁹⁸ came from Doplo and asked the headman of Sum Garabdzong, Pema Tshering, to give him, the lama, a piece of land. The headmen Tshering and Lhatardrub gave him the land of Lubra.⁹⁹ The Bonpo lama Yangton settled there, and each year gave a small quantity of *babli* berries¹⁰⁰ and *dzimbu* ¹⁰¹ and two *bo-khal* of barley¹⁰² in Lubra's *zo-ba* (-sized baskets),¹⁰³ and (Lubra) became a dwelling-place for lamas.¹⁰⁴ This happened during the reign of King Thangmigcen.

(Relations with Jumla)

After that, during the time of the Dru King, when the daughter of the Dru King¹⁰⁵ was given in marriage to the King's son of Jumla, the Dru King said to (members of) Yangton Lama's lineage, "Perform *lha-tse*¹⁰⁶ for the King of Jumla. There are also twenty-one soldiers, so perform (*lha-tse*) for my daughter's soldiers.¹⁰⁷ " The Dru King gave the King of Jumla some land."

(Relations between Thini, Marpha and Thag ¹⁰⁸

Obeisance to the gods who fulfil our wishes for good fortune! The following is a clear account¹⁰⁹ of the three places Thakhubtsen, Thini Mabudrug and Pundri Ong,¹¹⁰ an account written by agreement between the headmen of Yulgosam and the *mkhar-dpon* ¹¹¹ in a Female Fire-Ox Year, on the third day of the Monkey Month.¹¹²

Should a treacherous man arise among the inhabitants of Sum, the people of Thag and of Pungdri shall give their support. Also, if there should be a treacherous person in Thag, the people of Sum and of Pungdri shall give their support. If there should be a treacherous person in Pungdri, the people of both Thag and Sum shall give their support. Whoever puts a petition before the king because he has some grievance¹¹³ shall plead publicly and shall not speak any calumny. If a harmful person with slanderous intent arises in any of three villages, the three villages must support one another, and also one village of the three should not calumniate another.

If a servant from (one of) the three villages comes to anyone's house (in another place) he shall pay one tamka, and for animals large or small, that are found, one *zo-ba* of barley shall be paid. If more than that is demanded and (the animal) is not returned the fine need not be paid and the headman shall take it and return it. If someone finds it and says that he has not found it, whoever keeping it should be deemed a thief, and the headmen of the three villages shall fine him, and the property shall be returned to its owner. If a goat or a sheep is found and ten days elapse without anyone coming to claim it, it may be kept, and nothing more may be done about it. If there is anyone who does not abide by the

conduct prescribed in this agreement, let him be punished severely by the witnesses to this oath: the guardian deities of Buddhism and the guardian deities of Bon; the gods, serpent-spirits and local genii of the world, and the man-gods and foe-gods¹¹⁴ of Tibet.¹¹⁵ May they bless those who abide by it.

When a document to this effect had been written, the four headmen of Thag: Ngetecang, Galbu Trashi, Bethecang, Gyaldzeram; and various other people: Markhucang, Ngethe Drubshing, Kyimo Tshering, and Darma Tshering set their seal.¹¹⁶ (Anticlockwise swastika).

The three headmen of Sum: Ngethe Trashi, Pema Trashi, Sumthe Lhadrung; and various others: Aya Hrisab,¹¹⁷ Lhasab, Trashi, Tsheten Kunzang Rinchen, Gyatsho Trashi, Tshedhar Chukyab, Tshogdrung Gara Chukyab, Chogyu Sunteh and Rinchen Tshewang set their seal¹¹⁸ (Anticlockwise swastika).

The four headmen of Pundri: Trowo Yungdrung, Punpo Saptan, Dorje Tshering, Gatsulha; and various other: Gara Trashi, Tshangbuchang, Gu Tshering, Lhanam Trashi and Ga sonam set their seal¹¹⁹ (Anticlockwise swastika).

The above was written by the *dge-slong* Ogyan Chuzang and the *dge-slong* Kachen Legkye¹²⁰

(Chairo's Tax to Thini)

Previously, in the presence of the headmen of Sum, Tshangdru and Lhatardrung, and the headmen of Tsherong, Kyirparam and Sonam Drushing,¹²¹ Tshrog and Cimang gave Sum Garabdzong fifty rupees¹²² in payment for grass, water and mountain (pasture) in Sum's territory, and ten rupees to the people of Cimang.

Afterwards, when Garabdzong and Tsherog had made an agreement, they wrote a document the substance of which was as follows: "Below the Pentag River and Gyela, they should confiscate and share whatever animals there might be and they should help each other. If anyone does not comply with this document, he shall pay a fine of two hundred rupees without further ado. The people of Tserog shall not abuse or quarrel with Garabdzong, and the people of Sum shall not abuse or quarrel with Tshrog. Each year the people of Tsherog shall swear an oath at Dzang-gog."¹²³

This was written before the 4 headmen of Sum, Tshangpa Lhadrug, Lhatardrung, Oser Tshering the great *mkhar-dpon*, and the headmen Pema Sonam; and from Tsherog, the headmen Kyirparam, Sonam Drugshing, Jungshing and Serkyi.¹²⁴

The people of Tsherog may do nothing against Musithang.¹²⁵ If they do anything they will be fined one hundred rupees.

The writers of this are Tshewang Rinchen and Legshe Kacen Sarva Mangalam.
bKra-shis shog

... The fourth day of the sixth month in the Earth-Horse Year.

CIMANG BEMCHAG NOTES

1. The spelling rGyal Thod-dkar-can might mean "The king with the white turban," recalling the royal head dress which Tibetan kings such as Srong-btsan sgam-po are often represented as wearing. According to the Bon tradition, when the teacher Shen-rab mi-be came to earth to spread the Bon doctrine he descended in the form of a cuckoo, and took human form by being born into the royal family of 'Ol-mo lung-ring. His father's name was rGyal-bon thod-dkar (Tenzin Nomdak 1971, Vol II:720). King Thokarchen is not mentioned in other sources besides the *bem-chag* and his dates remain unknown.
2. Sum Garab dzong (dGa-rab-rdzong lit 'Joyous Fort' was the main fort and the 'capital' of Sum (Thini) and probably also of Serib (see Introduction). The fort was situated on a summit half a mile southwest of the present Thini. There remain extensive ruins of the fort, but it is not known when the fort was destroyed.
3. Thakgubtsen refers to the people of Thag which originally covered the area south of Marshang river and north of Ghayang Ghang.
4. Gyalpo Rinpoche (lit: "Precious King" : this is still the title by which the king of Lo is properly addressed.
5. bsTod sMin-'grol-gling is probably the name of some unidentified location in sTod (Western Tibet); alternatively, it may be a reference to the great rNying-ma-pa monastery of sMin-gröl-gling, which is not, however, in sTod but near bSam-yas monastery in the province of dBus. According to oral tradition (Vinding 1978) the King's birthplace was Kham-sung which may be a reference to Zhang-zhung (Western Tibet).
6. As Jackson (1978) points out, the term bZhung sGal-ldan pho 'brenng dates the text to the seventeenth century at the earliest since the Ganden Phodrang government (*gZhung-sa-dGa'-ldan pho-brang*) was established only in 1642. Since there are grounds for supposing that King Thokarchen lived earlier, the writer's use of the name is clearly anachronistic. The sequence of the places which the king vainly considers occupying is given in order of diminishing distance from the Thak Khola: Lhasa, Ladakh, Jumla, Lo and Dzar-dzong. The historical basis of these aspirations is obviously open to doubt, and this list is almost certainly the writer's way of creating an impressive geographical and political context for his account.
7. Of course the Ganden Phodrang government was not presided over by kings but by the Dalai Lama and his administrative machinery. However, in Baragau Tibetan as well as Thakali, the terms for 'king' (*rgyal-po* and *pompar*, respectively) carry the broader meaning of 'head of state'.
8. Yalipo Karpo. Meaning unknown.
9. rDzongs La-ltags-gling is a reference to Ladakh (La-dwags).

10. rDong-glang-gling is Jumla ('Dzum-glang), which, as mentioned in the Introduction, made its presence felt in the Upper Kali Gandaki at various times.
11. Nothing is known about King Surtipa.
12. The narrative unaccountably seems to switch into the first person at this point (if, as seems to be the case both here and elsewhere, *nges* stands for *nged*), but the third person has been retained in the translation.
13. The verb *sdur-ba*, which usually means "to compare" has the primary meaning "to compete" (as in a horse-race) in Baragau Tibetan.
14. Nothing is known about the kings Kara Dewa, Khashe Dewa Dradzung Dewa, Urdzong Dewa and Ngatro Kyawa.
15. Nothing is known about King Aka Samdrup (A-ka bsam-grub).
16. "Mukha" is the name by which *Se-skad* speakers of Tetang, Chusang, Cheli and Gyaka in northern Baragan refer to Dzar-rDzong, the Tibetan-speaking villages of the Muktinath Valley in Baragau. Exctly what *thar-ba* signifies is not clear, but NTB has himply sMo-dka'.
17. Trokyabs ('Khro-skyabs) may be the same as (Nga-) khro kya-ba, if, for example, *nga* were a family name or even a scribal error for *lnga* (*five*), to be appended to the name of the preceding king, Thokarcen, who appears fifth in the list (*rgyal thod dkar spyan dang lnga / khro kya ba* etc.). Moreover, the term '*u-rang*' is rarely used in Baragau to mean "you", as it may in other parts of Tibet, but is the usual term for the first person plural when all included are present.
18. Salt, wool and grain were the three main commodities which constituted the North-South commerce along the Kali Gandaki. Grain was carried North and the other two were transported down from Tibet. The wealth of the Thak Khola was based principally on trade in these commodities, hence the Kings' interest in gaining control over these commodities.
19. Three precious ones: the Buddha, the Doctrine and the monastic Community.
20. This obscure phrase is a votive formula binding the kings' agreement. If *thig-pa* is an error for *theg-pa*, which may be a synonym for earth, the phrase could be an abbreviation for some expression to the effect that the agreement should be binding until the earth and sky change places. For a similar promissory formula, and concerning the use of such oaths in general, see note. 77.
21. Gangs rGad-pho (or-po) -che, "Great Old Man Snow-Mountain" is the local name for Nilgiri North, which rises impressively on the East side of the Thak Khola above Thini.

22. Or, "King Thagha will win Kyobling, Khyunglha will win Ludzong, and I shall win Mount Gepoche."
23. *Bu rog rog* may stand for *bu rogs-rogs*, the "sons and friends" of Kongli. *Rog-rog* in Central Tibet means "jet black", supporting the possibility that the entire expression may be a place name. OTB has *dkung li bdrug* (meaning unclear) later in the account, while NTB has nothing recognisably similar. MB is identical to CB here.
24. It is not clear what *ma bu gsum po* means. It may be a metonym for family ("mother, son [and self], those three"), as one local informant has suggested. OTB has the corresponding sentence as: *thing ma* (later *mi*) *bu drug gi mi nyin cig gros byed shog zer te....*, and NTB's version is much the same in more garbled form. It is quite likely that *ma bu sum* is one of several obsolete names for Thini which in Tibetan is known as Sum. On the basis of the existing documents we can merely speculate that there may be some connection between the terms *skong li bu rog rog* (CB & MB), *dkung li bdrug* (OTB), *thing ma bu drug* (OTB and NTB) and *ma bu gsum po* (CB & MB). See also notes 37 and 70.
25. Dokhe. Location unknown.
26. *gSu* is almost certainly a contraction, intentional or otherwise, of *gang, gsung*, since this structure occurs in the sentences immediately before and after it. MB actually has *gang gsung* at this point.
27. According to the oral tradition (Vinding 1978), king Punari (see note 54) lived at Bumja Ghang a little below the present Thini. Bumtshe and Bumja Ghang are almost certainly synonyms.
28. The translation takes *brgyan* to be an error for *rgan*. The epithet "fraternal" recalls a maxim current in the Baragaon villages. *tog-tog yul-kyi rgan-pa / rgan-pa e-gü spun*; , "the best are the villages headmen, the headmen are our brothers". In some villages (particularly Tetang) the *rganpa* (of whom there are three serving by annual rotation, above five lesser officials called *rol-po*) wield considerable power, and this aphorism is a reminder to everyone that the officers are essentially no different from ordinary villages. For a short introduction to the present political system in Thini and surrounding villages, see Vinding (1981).
29.*nga sems rgyu yin na*: the primary meaning of the verb *sems-pa* in Baragaon is "to regard as" or "consider", and hence "to accept". It is used in such formal expressions as 'pisa' *sems-pa*, "to regard as a son", i.e. to adopt.
30. *Ma bu gsum*: see note 24.
31. *Nang-mi* is never used in Baragaon to mean "relatives", as it does in General Tibet (the term *mes-mes*, lit "grandfather", is used instead), but always denotes members of one's own village. (In Thakali the term *momae* (cf *mes-mes*) means "relatives").

32. (seems to be contracted from (*bsdus-yig*) for *lha-dresrin*.)
33. Mapagcen. Meaning unknown.
34. MB is the same as CB at this point, but OTB actually has "even": *rgyal po rin po che mams la phur na yang bsams gyu yin*.
35. *Nyid* as a pronoun would normally mean "you", but in this context the first person is almost certainly intended. Cf. the expression *nyed* for "I" in Snellgrove (1967, Vol II: 21 *passim*).
36. One informant interpreted Thokarcen's hypothetical flight into the sky and entry into the earth to mean that his subjects would accept him for better or for worse, that is, whether he acted in a divine or a subhuman manner. However, it seems more likely to be votive formula, characteristic of the region, in which the inviolability of an oath is expressed in terms of the occurrence of impossible circumstances (see note 53.)
37. *Thing* refers to the inhabitants of Thini, who are also known as Thin or Sum Makdug (Vinding 1978). According to the oral tradition, the six *thing* are: Srane Thin, Dho Thin, Om Thin (the people of Phalyak), Chaki Thin (present Bam clan from which the Villager astrologer is recruited), Mhathang Thin, and Langlung Thin. (Langlung is a plain above Jomsom Airport.) (Vinding 1978).
38. The negative particle *mi* has evidently been omitted from this text and also from MB.
39. The *zho* was a Tibetan unit of currency which remained in circulation until the recent introduction of the Chinese Yuan. However, this cannot be taken as evidence that Tibetan coinage was used in the Upper Kali Gandaki, since the term *zho* was also a measure of weight equal to about one tenth of an ounce. Later in the text there is a reference to a silver *zho* (or "one *zho* of silver"), which supports the latter possibility. It is conceivable that *zho* may have been the local word for some quite different coin in much the same way that the term *a-las*, which properly denotes an obsolete Nepalese coin, is now used colloquially in Baragaon Tibetan as well as Thakali to mean "rupee" and also money in general.
40. An *dbon-po* is a kind of married priest who specialises in certain kinds of household rituals. *Bon-po* here seems to have its more archaic connotation of a ritual specialist, rather than a follower of the systematised Bon religion. The king is clearly interested in engaging not merely someone who is an exponent of Bon doctrine but an expert in the control of certain forces. In Baragau and Thak Khola, *bon-po* are considered to be particularly efficacious in propitiating the serpent-spirits (*klu*). For a detailed study of these ritual specialists, see Ramble (1984).

41. *Tshe-grub*, which may be glossed as "life fortification", is a ritual which patrons commission privately for the sake of health and prosperity.
42. '*Ug po gling*:: this is probably a variant of 'Ug-pa-lung (-ung and -gling are often interchangeable, as in the case of Gillung/Gilling north of Baragaon). 'Ug-pa-lung appears in mKhyen-brtse's *Guide*:

In the upper part of sPan t'ag ma of this region (near Shigatse) there is the place called Zur 'Ug pa lung, which was formerly a great residence (*grwa-tshang*) of the rNin ma pa of the earlier period. Although today it is merely a village, there are still some chapels and blessing-bestowing sacred objects (1958:70).

The editor remarks that "sPan t'ag ma (perhaps a valley) is unknown; 'Ug pa lun was founded by Zur po c'e (Sakya 'byunggnas, alias 'Ug-pa-lung-pa, who lived in the eleventh century) It cannot be located on the maps" (1958:162). According to Waddell, the rNying -ma-pa subset of the rDorje brag-pa had an important monastery at "Hug-pa-glin" (1939:73).

The name Tsagyü Thing occurs above in the list of those who accepted Thokarcen as king. In Ramble 1984 a connection is suggested between this individual and Tsabkye Lama, the founder of Chongkhor, who is said to have come from a place called Ugpaling. The married priests of Chongkhor, who claim descent from Tsabkye Lama, describe themselves as *dbon-po*.

However, according to the oral tradition Chaki (=Tsagyü) Thing is the Bam clan of Thini from where the village astrologer is recruited (Vinding 1978).

43. The text actually states: "I, the king, shall pay one gold *zho*", but this makes no sense in the context. It is also possible that *nges kyis*, rather than being an agentive form of the first person, may be a rendering of the general term for the first person plural, 'egi', in the Baragau dialect.
44. It is worth noting the possibility that this *nga*, which has been taken throughout the translation to be the first person pronoun, may signify "five" (*lnga*). The frequently-occurring expression *rgyal-po nga* may therefore be a term similar to the royal *Srī pāc* of Nepal, from which it may have been borrowed.
45. According to the oral tradition the king's second son was so called 'because he came after a wish from his heart' (Vinding 1978:186), suggesting that the spelling *dran* ('to remember', or 'to wish for') in CB is correct. However, it is worth considering the possibility that this oral version has arisen from an uncritical acceptance of the text itself, since the homophone *dran* (an alternative spelling for, *gran*), having the meaning 'to contend', or 'to strive', would suggest an activity more typical of mediaeval royalty than introspection would.

The basis on which the king names his three sons, i.e. according to the activity he happens to be engaged in at the time of their birth, recalls one story behind the origin of the dynastic name Malla. According to this version king Vijayakamadeva was taking exercise when he received news that a son had been born to him; "Consequently he conferred the title Malla on the child, and thus was (the) family name changed from Deva to Malla" (Slusser 1982:54, quoting Hasrat 1970). *Malla* may mean 'athlete' in Sanskrit, and the son in question was Arimalla, who was born in 1200.

46. The meaning of this sentence is unclear, and the other *ben-chag* are of no help. According to Vinding (1978:186-7), the oral tradition gives the king a fourth son, Sya-gsum-dpal. This probably corresponds to the *zhon-gsum-dpal* of CB, and this translation has taken *zhon* to mean 'youth'. As in the case of the name Drensum (see n.45), it is uncertain whether the oral tradition should be regarded as a useful guide to understanding the text or is itself based on a (possibly erroneous) interpretation of it.
- The ambiguous section which is here interpreted as the king 'being given good advice from everyone' may relate to the episode in the oral tradition where the king is given 'good news' (i.e. a warning) *by* his own son Sya-sum-pal concerning a plot against his life (Vinding 1978:187).
- But for this reference to three sons, the text could be taken to mean that the king had only one son (as stated on line 45) who had three different names, with all the activities on which the names are based occurring on the same day. It is nevertheless possibly that *sras gsum* does not mean "three sons" but is a kind of honorific title, such as "thrice-named son" or "Thrice-noble son." It is tempting to draw the inference that such a title may have had a basis in the Nepalese *Śrī tīn*; unlike *Śrī pāc*, however (see note 35), this title was never used of royalty.
48. It is hoped that clearer dates for this settlement will be established following the Carbon-14 dating of samples carried out by the 1985-86 expedition to Muktinath of Dieter Schuh, Christoph Cuppers et.al.
49. The term *rdzong-dpon* usually designates a provincial governor of a central authority, such as the Lhasa government. In the present case, however, *dpon* is more likely to signify that Tshewang Palden was a local aristocrat, or else merely that he was in charge of building operations.
50. Concerning Hansa Raja and Nyima Rani, see Gauchan and Vinding (1977).
51. Marshang River is a little south of Cimang (see Map). Dotshamgang is opposite Marshang River. There is a chorten at this place. Khyungpangdrong is a forest (*drong* in Thakali) above Dotshamgang. Sum is Thini.
52. The temple Chuchulung Menpuntrog and Gyela are unknown to us. Pentag (sPan-tag) Chu is the Lubra River. The similarity between the names sPan-tag (the Lubra Valley) and sPan-thag ma, the valley in which 'Ug-pa-lung is said to be located (see note 33), is presumably coincidental.
53. Tilicho (Ti-ri-mtsho) is a large high altitude lake between Thini and Manag. OTB claims that, in spite of the territorial definition, Manang (Nyeshand) had to pay annual taxes to Garabdzong, although the precise nature of these taxes is not clear. Part of the obligation entailed 'eighteen *ma-gyang*', which may refer to some kind of bread (*gyang*). While this may seem unlikely in view of the relatively insignificant amount, it is consistent in this respect with the second item, four pairs of boot-garters (*lham-sgro*) of which incidentally NTB makes no mention). The relevant passages from both OTB and NTB are quoted by Jackson (1978:209-10, n.54). In the local dialect the word for boot-garter is 'lham-drol', hence the

- spelling of the syllable as *bro*. These taxes were actually to be paid by "gNye-shang chur-skyibs," We are unable to offer an explanation for *chur-skyibs*, but if, as Jackson suggests, it is a corruption of *chu-mig*, the villages in question would probably not be those of Manang (Nyeshang) but those of Muktinath (Chu-mig brgya-rtsa).
54. King Punari is the King of Water. He is the ancestor of Jisin Phobe (see Vinding 1978).
 55. See note 21.
 56. *Ma gsum* (MB has *ma bu gsum*): the problem of the meaning of this expression (see note 24) remains. The speaker in the next sentence is clearly King Punari.
 57. In the kinship terminology of Baragaon *a-zhang* means both mother's brother and father-in-law.
 58. If *nyid* were taken to mean "I" (see note 23) the sentence would just as easily read: "Since none is more powerful than I, you should not give your daughter to another". In neither case is it evident who is speaking. The significant thing is that the two kings forged an alliance by arranging a marriage between their offspring. OTB is equally ambiguous, and seems to suggest that there was an exchange of daughters: *rGyal po sdong rmig spyan kyi rtsun mo cung ba la 'phul pas / rgyal spu na srid kyis sras mo tsam byung zer na / rgyal sdong smig can kyis 'dung gyud phul gyu yin* According to the oral tradition the kings agreed to exchange daughters to cement their agreement. The establishment of affinal links to strengthen political ties between royal houses was common in Tibet and Nepal. The oral tradition has it that Punari gave his daughter to Thokarcen's son.
 59. Lit: "If the villagers do non-king-acknowledging and so on".
 60. The swastikas marking the end of this passage, as elsewhere in the document, are drawn anticlockwise, that is, in the Bonpo manner. While this may indicate that Bon was more widespread in the Thak Khola than at the present time, it may simply be that the scribe was a Bonpo. In Thak Khola, there are Bonpo temples in Thini, Jomsom and Naprung Khung (Naprungekot).
 61. *Mes-mes* (here spelt *med-med*) means "grandfather", or a male of any ascending generation above the first, in the Baragau dialect, and is used as an honorific term of address or reference for anyone of comparable age. In Thakali language *pempar* (or *pompar*) means "king" (cf Tib. *dpon-po*, "lord"). In Tsherok there is a lineage of the Serchan clan called Pompar gyupa.
 62. The meaning of the term *chag/chags*, which occurs three times in this passage, is not clear. In the first case (*tshe rogs chags tshul*) *chags*, meaning "to arise, originate" etc. is implied. The second and third instances (*tshe rogs yul la chags / sa bzhi snang nas chags 'dus*) seem to have Pempar Sonam as the subject and may represent 'cha', a contraction of *gdan-cha'*, which is the usual male honorific term for to sit or remain.

(But the more literary *bshugs*, used colloquially only as a female honorific in Baragau, is frequently applied to men in the text, e.g. line 121). The translation has been based on this reasoning, in the knowledge that *chag/chags* may have an altogether different meaning. For example, the primary meaning of 'cha-ba is to construct, and the second phrase may be rendered "when he had built Tsherog as a village

63. Gauchan (1980) has 1622 B.S. (1565 AD.). It is not clear on what basis he arrived at this date.
64. Gauchan (1980) has 1618 BS (1561 AD).
65. Nothing is known about the headmen Marcang and Pema Tsering.
66. *Tam-ka* (Hindi *tanga*: for a variety of Tibetan spellings see Jaschke). According to Jäschke, this coin was valued at two fifths of a rupee in Central Tibet. At the present time in the Baragau dialect it is used for the Nepali *mohar*, i.e. half a Nepalese rupee, but it is not known whether this is either the currency or the denomination intended in the text.
67. Or perhaps: "(The money from) this customary donation was collected by the headman Pemaram."
68. Nothing is known about Tshang Lhadru, and the places Tshartar Hill and Zur Crag. Papa Chorten is located in Tsherog. However, it is clear that the headman of Thini donated an area of land to Meme Pempar Sonam of Tsherog.
69. This passage may be taken to mean: " the manner in which the landmarks were established to designate the boundary between"
70. In the following passage Khyung-par-drong (MTB has both khyung-dkar-'grong and Khyung par-'grong) is a forest near Marpha. Thakhubtsen and Sunpa Mapudrug are not place names, but names of the people of Thag and Pacgaü respectively (Vinding 1978).
71. Concerning King Thangmigcen, see Introduction.
72. Concerning Hansa Raja, see Gauchan and Vinding (1977).
73. Thayul, lit: "the land of Thag".
74. Latradzong may be Larjung.
75. Butsuben: location unknown.
76. Thasangdrong (MB: sTags-gsang-'grong): the forest of Thasang, located east of Tukche and south of Cimang.

77. Although the text does not give the wording of the oath with which the two kings sealed their agreement, we may imagine that it was something to the following effect: "Until there should no longer be clouds in the sky or dust on the ground, until the colour red changes (to another hue) and until sediment has ceased to rise from deep water, the boundaries shall be observed." This would be typical of an archaic category of Tibetan votive formulae, which require that an impossible set of criteria be met for the agreement in question to be annulled. The implication is clearly that the conditions are hypothetical and that the agreement should be binding for eternity. This system came to be replaced in most parts of Tibet after the fourteenth century under Mongol influence, when the wording of such agreements began to stipulate finite conditions, as a specific length of time or the failure of one of the parties to abide by the terms. (The authors are grateful to Dieter Schuh for this information.)

The archaic forms nevertheless still occur in the wording of local documents in Baragaon, such as resolutions of land disputes and water rights.

More explicit examples of such formulae than those in CB are to be found in OTB. Near the beginning of this document, after his subjects have deliberated whether or not King Thangmigen (sDong-mid-spyan) should become their ruler, they decide to accept him as king "until the sky falls to earth, until the earth rises up to the sky, until *rtsam-pa* reverts to unroasted grain, until the crow turns white" (*...mams sa la ma'dig bar du / sa mams la ma long bar / rtsang spa brgyan du ma log bar 'du / kho rogs dkar po ma gyur bar 'du ...*)

Similar expressions are of course well known in the European popular tradition, and the last sentence in particular recalls part of the) Somersetshire folk song "The Turtle Dove":

The crow that's black, my little turtle dove,
Shall change its colour white,
Before I'm false to the maiden I love.
The noonday shall be the night.

There is an interesting legend from Baragau which illustrates the fallibility of such formulae when the conditions invoked are not as impossible as intended. The story may be summarised here for the sake of the contract, without discussing its historical context.

In brief, the ruling family of Dzung were originally nobles who were administering what is now Baragau on behalf of the king of Lo. The king suspected that they were conspiring with Jumla against him and took the precaution of flogging his chief minister in Dzung and making him swear an oath of allegiance. The wording of the oath was as follows:

Until the blood of a bird soaks into the ground,
Until the feathers of a bird fly in the sky,
Until (my) white skull breaks on the ground
I shall not wage war on the king of Lo.

*Bya-khrag sa-la ma thim bar-la/
bya-spu nam-la ma phur bar-la/
thod-pa dkar-po sa-la ma chag bar-la/
nga lo rgyal-la dmag mi-rgyab//*

The minister learned in advance about the wording of the oath, and appeared at the appointed place wearing a ritual skull cup beneath his turban and with a pigeon concealed in the folds of his robe. As soon as he had spoken the lines required of him and his adversaries had departed, he killed the pigeon, sprinkling its blood on the ground and throwing a handful of its feathers into the air. He then removed the skull-cup from beneath his turban and smashed it on the ground. Having thus been released from the letter of his oath by the fulfilment of these conditions he immediately despatched riders to raise the forces of the king of Jumla against Lo, so initiating the bloody war between the two kingdoms and the beginning of Jumlas's oppressive dominion over the Muktinath villages.

78. The expression 'kalwar' (*bskal-bar*), when used colloquially, does not mean literally "for an age" but simply "for ever" in the broadest possible sense. Thus even the duration of an individual's terms in village office may be described as *bskal-par*, i.e. until his death.
79. Gauchan (1980): "The boundary of the two kings was settled at Dhochamdung (a rock) verbally and with signature (by hand) once again."
80. Wangpang is Omang, some forest fields at the base of Niligiri (Vinding 1978:184).
81. *Drong* means "Forest" in Thakali
82. We are unaware of the meaning of "from the middle of the river".
83. The following episode may be a variant of the incident earlier attributed to Thokarcen, arising from the blurred distinction (mentioned in the Introduction) between the Kings Thokarcen and Thangmigcen. Alternatively it may refer to some revival of the dispute with King Punari by an immediate successor of Thokarcen called Thangmigcen. The former seems more likely, however, since the nature of the dispute and its resolution are very similar to those described in section VI. If this is so, this account sheds some light on the agreement reached by Thokarcen/Thangmigcen and Punari. The two kings apparently exchange daughters, but the context would suggest that it is only Punari's son, i.e. Thokarcen's son-in-law/Thangmigcen, who receives the land from the latter and gives him water in return, since he possesses no land but has water in abundance.
84. *gSer zho* (deleted) *zo gang*. etc: presumably the denominations *zo*, *zhong* and *bzhung* are all scribal variations of *zho* (see note 28). In the first case in fact *zho* has been deleted and *zo* inserted. *Zo* is a common abbreviation in local tax documents for *zo-ba* a dry measure equivalent to approximately half a Nepalese *pathi*, and therefore a somewhat unlikely quantity of gold.

85. According to the oral tradition, this is a torma shaped hill close to the pass (Meso Kantu; Kantu = torma) to Tilicho and were the sun rises.

86. The death of King Thangmigcen: the description given here is terse enough to obscure the intended meaning, that the king's death was not an accident but a dramatic assassination. The oral tradition predictably elaborates this episode. According to this version the workers split a tree-trunk and held the cleft open with wedges. The king was somehow induced to put his hands into the crack and the wedges were swiftly removed, trapping him. The trunk was then rolled down the hill to achieve the desired result (see Vinding 1978:189).

The possibility of disposing of one's enemies in this way evidently captured the imagination of the Thakalis. There is another story current in the Thak Khola according to which the Tulachan clan was all but annihilated after its members had been persuaded simultaneously to put their hands into the fissure of a similarly prepared log (see Vinding and Gauchan 1977). Also, a headman in Marpha was killed in the same way (Vinding 1978).

Miss Sonam Wangmo reports a strikingly similar story from the oral and literary history of the Brokpas, a nomadic Bhutanese group. According to Brokpa tradition, during the seventh century their ancestors were subjects of a local ruler who commanded them to remove the peak of a mountain which was preventing the sun from shining on his castle. The subjects persevered with this irksome labour for several years until they reached the conclusion that it would be "better to chop off the wet head of a man than the dry head of a mountain," and duly beheaded him while he was drunk. (Sonam Wangmo, personal communication.)

It is impossible to say if there is any direct link between this account and the story of Thangmigcen. While it is certainly not likely that there was ever any commercial interaction between the Brokpas and Serib, it may be that itinerant members of the literate monastic community acted as vectors of the story. The text of the Brokpas' written history dates from the late seventeenth century (Michael Aris, personal communication), and is therefore probably contemporary with CB. Alternatively, the theme of a king being killed by his subjects for ordering them to level an obstructive mountain may be a recurrent motif in legends of southern Tibet, a possibility that can only be examined with future research.

87. The Dru king is probably king of Parbat.

88. Ssangpal is unknown.

89. *Tsha'u* in Central Tibet, means "son's son" or "brother's son", but does not occur in the kinship terminology of the Baragau Tibetans. Among the Thakalis, however, it stands for "son", and this is almost certainly its meaning in the present context. Harkumal is unknown.

90. Unknown
91. Unknown
92. Unknown
93. Unknown
94. Unknown
95. Unknown
96. Unknown
97. Chochulung is probably an old name for Baragaon.
98. *Yang-don* is a mis-spelling of Yang-ston, an abbreviation for Ya-ngal ston-pa, the "Teacher from the Ya-ngal clan". The lama in question is almost certainly bKra-shis rgyal-mtshan, who was probably born in the first half of the twelfth century (see Snellgrove, *The Nine Ways of Bon* 1967:4-5 note 4, and Jackson, 1978:202-206).
Some of the literary and oral sources concerning his establishment of Lubra, and the erroneous belief that he came from Dolpa (he was educated in Tsang and probably born in Lo) are discussed in Ramble 1983. The *Ya-ngal gdung-rabs*, which contains biographical details on some seventeen generations of the ya-ngal clan, is translated and discussed in Ramble 1984.
99. Other sources imply that the valley through which the Pentag River (Panda Khola) runs was called Lubra before a settlement existed there. The name, which means "Crag of Serpent-Spirits", is derived from a group of pale striations along a rock face on the northern side. The village was originally known as Samling (bSam (-gtan) - gling) after the monastery which was first built there and which was subsequently destroyed by flood.
100. *Babs-li* (Coll. 'bumphali') is a wild berry.
101. *Dzimbu* (*dzam-bu*) is a species of garlic-scented herb.
102. A *zo-ba*, as stated earlier, is approximately half a Nepalese *Pāthī*, and *bo-kahl* contains twenty *zo-ba*.
103. According to OTB, the rulers of Sum declared that Lubra "does not have to pay any taxes, but each year shall give three *zo-ba* of berries from Sum's Latag Hill as well as three bundles (?) of silver birch bark and a small basket of 'dzimbu". (*Phral phri yang mi za shogs bsung pas / gsum pa'i ri ga la tags la lo re re la bu bo li zo ba sum mang gsungs so / stags pa'i lags 'drus ka les gsum dang dzum bu bags dang gang snang ngo/*).

This is a very mild tax compared with the burdensome tribute which, according to OTB, some of the neighbouring villages were obliged to pay, and the Lubragpas cite this as evidence of the prestige which Yangston Lama was accorded by the rulers of Garabdzong. OTB claims that the two villages of Phelag and Dangkardzong, on the opposite side of the Kali Gandaki from Lubra, had to pay Garabdzong nine large baskets of meat annually, while nearby Sangdag provided eight buck goats in their second year.

Gillung (or Gilling: dGe-gling), which was an independent entity between Lo and Serib, had to make an annual payment of one adult bull yak and one yak calf on its second year.

The unedited text reads:

*pha leg dang' dang dkar dzong vi mi la lo sha 'khal dgu
thob / 'gyi ling de ba la re reng la g.yag ci la dung ma ci thobs / bsang ta
yul nas lo re re la ra 'dra pho rgyad
rgyad thob/*

NTB agrees with OTB concerning these tax obligations, with the exception that in Gillung each person or each household - the account does not specify - had to pay one small basket of meat annually: *Gyi lung nas lo sha re la pag dung ma 11 thob*. Marpha evidently had to pay its taxes in the form of corvee labour:

For the people of Marpha to plough the fields of King Thangmigcen, ten young men shall come bringing their own oxen and bringing their own ploughs, yokes and implements, and ten women shall come to do the weeding. Ten young men shall come for the harvest time:

*Mar pa pa'i rgyal posdong rmitg spyen kyis zhing mod be la rang gi
glang rang gi khyer de rang gis thongs pa dang nya shing rang gi
ca la rang khyer de khyogs tong cu yong gyu yin /d yur ma yur pa'i
bu med cu 'ong gyu yin / ton thag byed pa'i dus gsu khyogs tong cu
'ong gyu yin no /*

104. The inhabitants of Lubra traditionally belong to clans of hereditary Bonpo priests.
105. See note 87.
106. *Lha-tse* probably refers to the expression *lha-gsol*, the act of making offerings to the gods.
107. See Vinding 1978:191-192 for the parallel version of the oral tradition.
108. This section has probably been written by new authors. Certain words are consistently mis-spelled in a different way and the name Thini is now used instead of the earlier Sum.

109. *Chod-yig* (for *chos-yig*) does not necessarily mean a religious account, but is probably a pleonasm, since *chos* is the usual term in Baragaon for literature of any sort.
110. Pundari Ong refers to Marpha.
111. *mKhar-dpon* was the title of a provincial governor of the Lhasa administration, but in this case it almost certainly means literally a "lord (or the lords) of the castle". It is roughly synonymous with *rdzong-dpon* (see note 39.).
112. Gauchan (1980) has 1768, baisak, Sudi 3.
113. Lit: "Whoever goes before the king to address him, whoever arrives for evil".
114. The *pho-lha* and the *dgra-lha* are the protective deities of places, such as homes and villages, as in the case of present-day Syong.
115. *Gangs-rten* may be a synonym for *gangs-can*, (The place) which has snow mountains", i.e. Tibet, or it may simply refer to the snow mountains themselves ("snow supports").
116. Nothing known about these persons.
117. Aya is the Aya Lama, or *dhom*.
118. Nothing known about these persons.
119. Nothing known about these persons.
120. *dGe-slong* are fully-ordained monks. Otherwise nothing known about these persons.
121. Nothing known about these persons.
122. *dNgul* is the usual word in Baragau documents to signify the Nepalese rupee, whereas the colloquial *a-las* (see note 28) only rarely appears in writing.
123. Dzong-gog is unknown to us.
124. These persons are unknown.
125. Mu-si-thang probably refers to Dzor-dzong and the lesser villages in the Muktinath Valley (see note 9).

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