Exploring Himalayan Cultural and Textual Heritage

The Legacy and Impact of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz



Edited by Uwe Niebuhr, Martin Gaenszle, Markus Viehbeck and Verena Widorn

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Cover Image ~ René Nebesky-Wojkowitz in conversation with Buddhist monks at Svayambhunath in Kathmandu. Christine Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1958. Himalaya Archive Vienna. Gifted to CIRDIS by Wolfgang Lorenz.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

The present volume developed from a symposium which was held in November 2019 at the Weltmuseum Wien. At the time, the research project on "The Scientific Legacy of René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz," funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), was still in its initial phase (it ran from October 2018 until December 2023). The papers presented on the occasion also reflected the state of the art at that moment. However, as the volume took shape and papers were revised, several of the contributions benefited from the project's progress during which more and more of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's wide-ranging collections became accessible. At the same time, it also became clear that the in-depth study of these materials was just at the beginning.

A major question raised by the project concerned the significance of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's contribution to Himalayan Studies. Though it may still be too early for a comprehensive answer, the present volume gives us a suitable idea about the broad scope of his interests, the impressive amount of material collected and the value of the studies published during his short life. But there is more to it: We also get an impression of his innovative impact on modern Himalayan scholarship in methodological and historical terms.

Two points may be highlighted in this connection. For one, Nebesky-Wojkowitz was situated between two disciplines. On the one hand, he was an anthropologist, an ethnographic fieldworker, with a strong focus on material culture. But on the other hand, he was a philologist, trained in Tibetan and Mongolian. In fact, the "major subject" of his doctoral degree was "Philology and Ethnology of Central Asia" (see the contributions by Gingrich and Niebuhr in this volume). Therefore, he may be called the first "Ethno-Tibetologist," i.e., a scholar with an interdisciplinary approach, aligning methods of ethnography and Tibetan philology. Though in most of his published output these two interests remained side by side rather than closely intertwined (as emphasized by Charles Ramble in a presentation during the Nebesky-Wojkowitz Centenary Birth Anniversary Symposium in December 2023), it is clear that this multidisciplinary expertise set a precedent and raised questions that had a considerable impact on later scholars. Especially in the 1980s and subsequent decades, ever more students of Tibetan language also were trained in anthropology and undertook long-term fieldwork in Himalayan cultures, thus studying not only texts but also the use of the texts in local contexts. It is thus not a coincidence that in Vienna in

particular important work on mountain goddesses and political rituals flourished, carried out by ethnographers in conjunction with Tibetologists (see Blondeau and Steinkellner 1996, Blondeau 1998). Also many other studies on everyday religious practice (e.g., in the context of shamanism, pilgrimage, or civil religion) contributed to a new emergent and fertile field of Himalayan Studies that draws on the combination of textual and anthropological approaches (e.g., Samuel 1993, Huber 1999, Ramble 2008).

A second point about the innovative influence of Nebesky-Wojkowitz is linked to another interstitial position of his work and person: He was situated between two periods of scholarship. The period of his most intensive productivity—based on various fieldwork trips in the Indian and Nepal Himalayas (all in the 1950s)—fell at the time of transition from colonialism, i.e., British rule in South Asia, to the early period of independent India. In other words, Nebesky-Wojkowitz was conducting his research at a time of fundamental change, right after the end of two centuries of foreign domination on the subcontinent.

In this perspective it is important to note that Kalimpong, his first major field site and starting point for other Himalayan ventures, has been conceptualized as a "contact zone" where the production of knowledge is not only predicated on larger colonial and postcolonial power asymmetries, but also shaped by complex personal interactions (see Viehbeck 2017: 1–22). When Nebesky-Wojkowitz arrived there in the autumn of 1950, multiple pathways of academic interest had been already prepared. He began his work as the secretary to Joseph F. Rock, a towering figure in the botanical and linguistic exploration of the Tibetan-Chinese borderlands (and whose relationships with local informants are addressed by Mueggler 2011). While Rock provided crucial contacts by introducing him to the high society of the Himalayan Hotel (see the epilogue by Michael Oppitz in this volume), a personal rupture with his employer left Nebesky-Wojkowitz without income. Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, another well-connected researcher, also known in the town for his extravagant aristocratic lifestyle (hence referred to as "Prince Charming" in De 2018: 192–199), took this opportunity to hire him as an assistant. Both learned to speak Tibetan through close contact with Tibetans, many of whom were fleeing from the impending Chinese occupation of the Tibetan plateau. A station set up next to the refugee registration point at the local police office provided Prince Peter with direct access to Tibetans from different areas, who would share not only personal information but sometimes also items of their material culture. The access to knowledge and material objects that both scholars had under these specific circumstances must also be reflected upon, as must their conceptual approaches to fieldwork and analysis in general. For Prince Peter's work, a "salvage paradigm" (see Koktvedgaard Zeitzen and Brox 2022: 1721), i.e., an impetus to preserve a culture under threat, has been pointed out as a driving force. To what degree the same can be argued for Nebesky-Wojkowitz remains to be evaluated. In general, he is known for sympathetic relations with his local interlocutors, a situation that may have been shaped by his relatively modest lifestyle as a house guest of a local family, where he was remembered rather fondly as the "White Mouse" (De 2018: 200–205). In any case, local sources are crucial for assessing his personal relationships, in particular for evaluating the claim of unequal attitudes towards Tibetan and Lepcha interlocutors (as raised by Jenny Bentley in this volume). It was part of the project to explore the traces that Nebesky-Wojkowitz left in the field loca-

tions of his studies in India and Nepal. In order to gauge the impact his studies had and how indigenous people see them, we met representatives of some communities where he carried out research (like the heads of the Lepcha Association and the Lepcha Museum in Kalimpong, relatives of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's Tibetan consultants etc.). However, though some of his publications are still well known (especially, of course, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*), we found few memories of his personality or his local activities. Significantly, there is a memorial inscription in the Himalayan Hotel in Kalimpong, amid a list of famous guests ("iconic personalities"), where he is mentioned as "Prince Nebinski of Denmark," apparently confounding his memory with that of Prince Peter (who is also listed). The only eyewitness we encountered who had personal memories was Monila De (mentioned above). Given this meagre knowledge, it was of great interest to learn that a large collection of ethnographic objects, documents, and recordings are stored in Vienna and other European museums. It remains to be seen what use will be made of these archived materials by local, Indigenous scholars, as the process of reconnoitering and critical evaluation, in line with the project of "decolonising methodology" (Smith 2021), has only just begun. Without doubt, local initiatives, such as the multimedia storytelling of The Confluence Collective as an attempt to highlight the cultural histories of the Darjeeling-Sikkim Himalayas through local archives,[1] will be crucial in this regard.

In this broader perspective, engagement with researchers such as Nebesky-Wojkowitz and their local interlocuters certainly allows for valuable contributions to an emerging body of literature that investigates the development of Himalayan and Tibetan Studies as shaped by local colonial and early postcolonial dynamics (see, e.g., contributions in Harris et al. 2016, Viehbeck 2017). The conditions and contingencies outlined here were all conducive to the unique standing of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's scholarship. With the present volume we hope to prepare the ground for an adequate evaluation of his work and to contribute more generally to the intellectual history of Himalayan Studies.

The head of the project and the co-editors of the volume wish to thank the FWF for financing the project, including the symposium in 2019 and the concluding symposium in 2023, which celebrated the 100th anniversary of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's birth. Moreover, we wish to express our gratitude to the Weltmuseum Wien for the ongoing cooperation, in particular the Director Jonathan Fine and the Deputy Director and Curator for South-, Southeast Asian and Himalayan Collections, Christian Schicklgruber. Further, we are grateful to the Austrian Academy of Sciences for considering the publication of this volume in its series. We thank all the contributors to the volume for their careful revisions of the original papers. And last but not least, we are grateful to Sarah Teetor for copy-editing the papers.

Martin Gaenszle, Uwe Niebuhr, Markus Viehbeck, Verena Widorn

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1 www.theconfluencecollective.com (accessed 23.04.2024).

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INTRODUCTION
René Nebesky-Wojkowitz – Exploring Himalayan Cultural and Textual Heritage

Uwe Niebuhr

Tibetologist, ethnologist, curator, and university lecturer – René Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1923–1959) achieved international fame with his ground-breaking studies *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities*[1] and *Tibetan Religious Dances: Tibetan Text and Annotated Translation of the 'Cham yig*.[2] Both of these works on Tibetan religious life were the result of intensive philological and ethnological field research in the Indo-Sikkimese border region, specifically West Bengal, where Nebesky-Wojkowitz spent more than 36 months on three separate research trips. But Nebesky-Wojkowitz was pioneering not only for his work in the field of Tibetan iconography and rituals. Already in his 1949 dissertation thesis, he focussed on the diversity of Tibetan writing styles, provided insights into traditional paper-making and discussed book production using wooden printing blocks.[3] From early on, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's broad interest in Tibetan culture was evident in three essays he published as a student, exploring what he referred to as the pre-Buddhist Bon religion,[4] the Tibetan state oracle, and Tibetan grammatical works.[5] In his subsequent research, Nebesky-Wojkowitz devoted himself to the full spectrum of Tibetological studies, encompassing the history and politics of Tibet, Tibetan medicine, and even ethnopharmacology, among other areas.

Yet despite his reputation and breadth of research, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's studies on Nepal and numerous other projects, some unpublished, remain less well known. This body of work went long unnoticed due to the scholar's premature death at the age of 36 while at the height of his scientific career; it subsequently fell into oblivion, as did the man himself and his working methods. At the same time, Nebesky-Wojkowitz left behind extensive

1 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a. Cf. Bell and Berounský in this volume on the topicality of the book and its significance for contemporary scholarship.

2 Nebesky-Wojkowitz† and Fürer-Haimendorf 1976. On the state of research on Tibetan religious dances and the relevance of the book, see Oppitz's comments in this volume.

3 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1949b.

4 For a more detailed analysis of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's understanding or non-understanding of the term and some of his other views, see Kvaerne 1975 and Bjerken 2004. For a detailed assessment of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's first article, see Gurung in this volume.

5 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1947; 1948; 1949a.



Fig. 1. René Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1956.

collections for the Viennese Museum für Völkerkunde (now Weltmuseum Wien) on Tibetan culture, the Lepcha, the Newar and the Yolmowa, which he had acquired on his research trips in 1950–1953 (Kashmir, West Bengal, and Sikkim), 1956/57 (West Bengal, Sikkim, and Nepal) and 1958/59 (Nepal and West Bengal). In addition, his unfinished research projects and documentation such as photographs, films and tape recordings are now scattered among a multitude of libraries, archives and estates. The project "The Scientific Legacy of René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz" (FWF P–31570; 10/2018–12/2023), led by Martin Gaenszle and based at the University of Vienna in cooperation with the Weltmuseum Wien, aimed to reunite this scientific body of work completely digitally after more than 65 years.[6] Nebesky-Wojkowitz's multimedia documents have hitherto hardly been explored despite their great potential for further research. The project also looked at his public relations work, which began in the early 1950s with articles in Austrian newspapers. Following his first research trip in 1953, Nebesky-Wojkowitz went on multiple lecture tours in various parts of Europe and produced numerous radio broadcasts and popular science books. His 1957 Nepal exhibition at the Viennese Museum für Völkerkunde was only the second of its kind in Europe, after the first held in Geneva in 1953, and met with great public interest. Although these various activities have been largely forgotten over the years, they testify to Nebesky-Wojkowitz's media presence during his lifetime.

At the Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, only a portrait photo in a classroom (fig. 1) serves as a reminder of the eminent Tibetologist, who, nevertheless, remains unmentioned in the official history of the institute.[7] A similar trend is evident at the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology, where Nebesky-Wojkowitz regularly taught "Ethnology with special reference to Central Asia and its peripheral regions" from

6 Further project members are Aleksandra Apic, Tsering Drongshar, Uwe Niebuhr (principal investigator) and Verena Widorn. I am grateful to the co-editors for their critical comments on this article and to Sarah Teetor for editing the English version. I would also like to thank the descendants of Nebesky-Wojkowitz, the Bauer family and the Lorenz family, who generously supported our research with valuable private information, documents, and materials from the Nebesky-Wojkowitz estate. Thanks are also due to all the individuals, colleagues and friends who have responded to our research by providing valuable information and advice on the 2019 and 2022 journeys in the footsteps of Nebesky-Wojkowitz to India (West Bengal, Sikkim) and Nepal. I would also like to thank the staff of the numerous museums and archives for their kind assistance.

7 In the 1950s Tibetology was still part of Oriental Philology, while Indology was established as an independent department in 1955 through the initiative of Erich Frauwallner. It was not until 1973 that the present Department of Tibetology and Buddhist Studies was established in Vienna under the leadership of Ernst Steinkellner. In particular, Steinkellner supported several of his students, including Guntram Hazod, Hildegard Diemberger and Christian Schicklgruber, who in various ways continued the tradition of ethnological Tibetology in the sense of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz (cf. Blondeau and Steinkellner 1996).

1955 onwards. In the institute's history,[8] he is merely mentioned as one of the "future experts and intellectual leaders" who received their foundational ethnological training there during the post-war period.

The question arises as to why Nebesky-Wojkowitz has faded into obscurity over the years. Naturally, his early death, which cut short a potential long-term academic career at the University of Vienna, played a significant role. However, there was also a crucial lack of advocates to keep the memory of his outstanding work alive. Typically, it is students and colleagues who, in retrospect, honor a life's work at the end of a career. Instead, only a few obituaries were written.[9] But family circumstances also played a part. The early death of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz and his wife Christine's decision not to outlive him tragically led to his unfinished career being forgotten. With no children or siblings, his scientific legacy was entrusted to his grieving parents,[10] who tried to preserve it within their means and contacts. A significant part of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's material legacy from his fieldwork was donated to the Weltmuseum Wien in Austria. In addition, his father entrusted the substantial part of his son's written legacy to Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf (1909–1995) for further scholarly research and potential publication. However, it took sixteen years until Fürer-Haimendorf's retirement for Nebesky-Wojkowitz's manuscript *Tibetan Religious Dances* to be published posthumously. After Fürer-Haimendorf's death in 1995, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's papers were incorporated into Fürer-Haimendorf's estate and eventually included in the Archives and Special Collections at SOAS University of London.

The international symposium "Exploring Himalayan Textual Heritage" on 14–15 November 2019 at the Weltmuseum Wien was the first event dedicated to René Nebesky-Wojkowitz's life, working methods, research interests and influence. Two further international workshops at the XV and XVI Seminars of the International Association for Tibetan Studies addressed Nebesky-Wojkowitz's philological work (Paris, 2019) and his anthropological activities (Prague, 2022). Yet, these two disciplines cannot in principle be separated in his research, as that would run counter to his interdisciplinary approach which combined philological studies of Tibetan textual sources with ethnological fieldwork. The present volume therefore focusses for the first time on Nebesky-Wojkowitz's working methods and his pioneering role in the post-war period as an "Ethno-Tibetologist" thanks to his ability to conduct extensive field research and his training in both disciplines.[11] As emphasised in the preface, this book is also intended to provide the basis for a first in-depth and critical examination of the scholar Nebesky-Wojkowitz, his academic contributions, and his network of international colleagues and local interlocuters.[12]

This introduction begins with an overview of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's career and briefly outlines his biography with remarks on his collecting practice for the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna. The next two sections deal with his Tibetological studies after 1950

8 ksa.univie.ac.at/en/department/history (accessed 23.04.2024).

9 Becker-Donner 1959; De Jong 1959; Haekel 1959; Heine-Geldern 1959.

10 His father Gottlieb died in early 1966 and his mother Emmy two years later.

11 For a detailed discussion see Gaenszle and Gingrich in this volume.

12 The detailed analysis of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's working methods and the years of his first field research in West Bengal and Sikkim are the subject of my current dissertation at the Department of South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies at the University of Vienna, which is being supervised by Martin Gaenszle.

and his research on the Lepcha in West Bengal, while the fourth section sketches his ethnographic studies on other ethnic groups in West Bengal and Nepal. This is followed by an introduction to the structure and content of the present volume.

Biographical overview

Born on 29 June 1923 in Velké Hoštice (Groß-Hoschütz) in the eastern part of the current Czech Republic, Nebesky-Wojkowitz came to Austria at the age of 22 following the end of World War II. It was there, in Salzburg, that he was introduced to the Tibetan language by an "English Tibetologist," which prompted him to enrol in this area of study.[13] In October 1946 he began his official studies at the University of Vienna, initially pursuing concurrently Oriental philology with a focus on the Tibetan language and Buddhism, and pharmacy. From the third semester onwards, Nebesky-Wojkowitz expanded his philological studies to include other "Central Asian" languages – Mongolian, Georgian, Russian, Sanskrit – as well as ethnology of Central Asian peoples. He also studied "general" ethnology in parallel and took courses in psychology and philosophy as supplementary subjects. At the Department of Oriental Philology, Nebesky-Wojkowitz most often took courses with Professor Robert Bleichsteiner (1891–1954), who also offered this ambitious student the opportunity to work with him steadily at the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna from the beginning of his studies. At the Department of Ethnology, Professor Wilhelm Koppers (1886–1961) was the authoritative figure whose courses Nebesky-Wojkowitz chose predominantly for his ethnological training. In November 1949, Nebesky-Wojkowitz received his doctorate in "Central Asian philology and ethnology in connection with ethnology."[14]

In the same year that he completed his doctorate, Nebesky-Wojkowitz began working as a secretary for the Austrian-American botanist and linguist Joseph F. Rock (1884–1962), which gave him deep insight into the literature and customs of the Naxi ethnic group living in the former Tibetan-Chinese border region (today's province of Yunnan) and their unique form of pictographic writing.[15] This exposure motivated Nebesky-Wojkowitz to study more intensively the pre-Buddhist Bon religion,[16] in which Rock saw strong parallels[17] to Naxi traditions. For seventeen months from the end of 1949, Nebesky-Wojkowitz was intensively involved in Rock's publication and research activities.[18] During this period, a three-month fellowship spent in London with Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf and Raymond Firth (1901–2002) expanded Nebesky-Wojkowitz's horizons in the direction of Tibeto-Burman phonetics and Indology and allowed him to work with the Tibetan collection at the British Museum.[19]

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13 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1949b: 110. Nebesky-Wojkowitz does not provide any information about this Tibetologist or his name, although hypothetically it could have been Theodor(e) Illion (1898–1984). For a discussion of this topic, see Niebuhr 2022: 41–42.

14 In German: "Zentralasiatischer Philologie und Ethnologie in Verbindung mit Ethnologie." See also Gingrich in this volume.

15 During this time, among other tasks, Nebesky-Wojkowitz worked on Rock's *The Na-khi Nāga Cult and Related Ceremonies* (Rock 1952).

16 Taube 2008: 134.

17 See Walravens 2002: 358.

18 For more information, see Niebuhr 2022: 47.

19 Weltmuseum Wien, Archive, Partial Estate of Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 18 July 1957, curriculum vitae.

In summer 1950, Nebesky-Wojkowitz undertook his first trip to Asia; as Rock's assistant he travelled with him to India, first to Kashmir and then to Darjeeling and Kalimpong in West Bengal, where he eventually began his own research and laid the foundations for a number of future research pursuits. There is no doubt that Nebesky-Wojkowitz's work for Rock in West Bengal inspired many of his later activities, as Rock provided him with insights into Tibetan texts; it was then that Rock acquired a manuscript on the Tibetan Gesar epic and uncovered basic works on Buddhist iconography.[20] Being close to Rock and his contacts was also certainly a boon for the young researcher since he had a large network of informants, was well known in scientific circles and resided in the Himalayan Hotel in Kalimpong, a known meeting place for Western and Tibetan expats.[21] This enabled Nebesky-Wojkowitz to quickly gain a foothold in Kalimpong and introduced him to many important persons early into his stay.[22] A quarrel with Rock in autumn 1950, their final break in April 1951 and Rock's subsequent return to Europe[23] left Nebesky-Wojkowitz independent and responsible for his own expenses. Nebesky-Wojkowitz was almost penniless at the time and would not have been able to finance a return trip without Rock. In December 1948, he was nominated by Dean Herbert W. Duda (1900–1975) of the University of Vienna as the neediest student at the Oriental Institute for the support programme of the Cooperative for American Remittances to Europe (C.A.R.E.) – a situation that was unlikely to have improved by the time he left for India. From Kalimpong, Nebesky-Wojkowitz asked his mentor Bleichsteiner for help and received a small grant in early 1951 to cover his initial expenses. But he also had to use it to acquire a small collection of artefacts for the museum in Vienna.[24] As a positive outcome of the dispute with Rock, Nebesky-Wojkowitz stayed in the Indo-Sikkimese border area for two more years, which had a decisive influence on his scientific career, as it was there that he collected a wealth of research materials from which he would draw for years to come. From mid-1951, he accepted a position as secretary to Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark (1908–1980), for whom he worked until his departure in spring 1953.[25] During this time, Nebesky-Wojkowitz devoted himself intensively to Tibetan

20 See also Niebuhr 2022: 45, 47–48.

21 On the significance of this hotel, see Oppitz in this volume.

22 These included Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark (1908–1980), George Nicholas Roerich (1902–1960), and Sangharakshita (1925–2018). See Niebuhr 2022: 46.

23 Walravens 2002: 391.

24 For a critical discussion of these financial circumstances and his collecting policy for the museum in Vienna, see Niebuhr and Widorn 2019. When assessing the relationship with his local informants in view of power inequalities, this financial situation without Rock's support and the resulting suddenly low social status in his environment in Kalimpong must also be taken into account. But Nebesky-Wojkowitz also liked to play on his presumed aristocratic origins, with which he tried to position himself in higher circles again. This finally worked out with the employment by Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark. See also Oppitz in this volume.

25 An analysis of the collaboration between Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark and Nebesky-Wojkowitz will be part of my dissertation thesis, as very little has been researched to date. It is known that he was involved in Prince Peter's extensive anthropometric study of 3,000 Tibetans (see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1954a: 38; see also Koktvedgaard Zeitzen and Brox 2022). The Weltmuseum Wien possesses around 90 photographs by Nebesky-Wojkowitz showing Tibetans on the grounds of the former Kalimong police station (see Himalaya Archive Vienna: hav.univie.ac.at/collections/nebesky/node/337, accessed 23.04.2024). For an overview of Prince Peter's stay in Kalimpong and critical assessment, see Brox and Koktvedgaard Zeitzen 2017. For more personal insights into Nebesky-Wojkowitz's time in Kalimpong, see the eyewitness accounts by Monila De (2018: 200–205) and Sangharakshita (1991).

Studies, travelling to the Lepcha settlement areas south of Kalimpong and researching various ethnic groups in the Indo-Sikkimese border area. In a research report on this period, Nebesky-Wojkowitz summarises his activities as follows:

> The main aim of the research I carried out in the area of the Sikkim Himalayas in the period from September 1950 till February 1953 was the study of early Tibetan religious beliefs and their relation to the beliefs of some of the Himalayan tribes, especially the Lepchas.[26]

Upon his return to Europe in March 1953, Nebesky-Wojkowitz began actively marketing his stay in India in popular science lecture tours and radio broadcasts that financially supported himself and his future research. At the same time, he was preparing his post-doctoral thesis for which he worked in the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde in Leiden (today's Wereldmuseum Leiden, Netherlands) for seven months in 1953 and 1954. Nebesky-Wojkowitz unsuccessfully applied for a position as curator at the Viennese Museum für Völkerkunde in January 1954; shortly thereafter, his mentor Robert Bleichsteiner died.[27] The following year Nebesky-Wojkowitz published his popular book *Wo Berge Götter sind*[28] and submitted his "habilitation" thesis *Der Kult und die Ikonographie der tibetischen Schutzgottheiten*[29] to the University of Vienna. On 23 August 1955, he received his teaching credentials (*Venia Docendi*) in "Ethnology with special reference to Central Asia and its peripheral regions"[30] and began teaching regularly at the Department of Ethnology in the winter semester.

In August 1956, Nebesky-Wojkowitz set off on his second research trip to the Himalayas, again first to West Bengal with two side trips to Gangtok in Sikkim. In November he spent a four-week break in New Delhi due to his participation in the 9th UNESCO General Conference. At the end of December, he travelled to Nepal for the first time, where he immediately began to assemble a collection for the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna, acquiring objects in Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur. Scouting trips by plane to Pokhara (Kaski District) in the west and on foot to Charikot (Dolakha District) in the east were to serve later research. In contrast to his first visit to West Bengal, Nebesky-Wojkowitz was financially very well equipped for his second trip, as he was able to draw on his own funds and various grants from Vienna as well as the support of the Wenner-Gren Foundation in New York, which made it much easier for him to purchase artefacts from Nepal. He aquired his first 'Nepal collection' for the museum in the Kathmandu valley, buying most of the objects at markets and shops within three weeks. The majority are 'new' market goods that do not yet show any signs of use. However, there are also some valuable antiquities and used ritual artefacts whose provenance is unknown, but some of which bear export stamps from the Nepalese

26 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1954a: 33.

27 Niebuhr 2022: 55.

28 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b.

29 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955a. The thesis was submitted in English with a twenty-four-page German abstract.

30 In German: "Völkerkunde unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Zentralasiens und seiner Randgebiete."

authorities.[31] Some of the artefacts had to remain in the country for the time being and could only be exported to Vienna in 1959.

On the other hand, there was a change in the way Nebesky-Wojkowitz's fieldwork was conducted during the two preliminary exploration trips, and also later in 1958, which should be viewed more critically in terms of power constellations and their impact on his knowledge production, as he was now accompanied by an official liaison officer of the Nepalese government and a group of military porters. At the end of April 1957, Nebesky-Wojkowitz returned to Europe and, in addition to an extensive lecture tour of Germany and further radio broadcasts, he planned a special exhibition on Nepal at the Museum für Völkerkunde, which opened in Vienna in mid-November 1957.[32]

Further professional and personal successes continued. In February 1958, Nebesky-Wojkowitz successfully applied for the position of curator at the Museum für Völkerkunde, and in April he married his fiancée Christine Bauer (1930–1959), who was to accompany him on his next research trip. In September, Nebesky-Wojkowitz travelled to Nepal for the second time, at first alone, and continued his collecting activities for the Viennese museum. While Nebesky-Wojkowitz had brought more ethnographic artefacts on his first trip, in central Nepal he now concentrated on his earlier research interests – objects pertaining to Nepalese and Tibetan iconography and rituals. Rarer artefacts were obtained through members of the now established local network, such as the 3rd Chini Lama Punya Vajra (1886–1982) of Baudhanath, who assisted Nebesky-Wojkowitz in his collecting activities. The Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna asked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kathmandu for support of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's travelling and collecting plans, which was forthcoming.

In the Kathmandu valley he documented the annual religious celebrations and worked in Svayambhunath and Baudhanath until the end of the year. From October to mid-November, he undertook a three-week round trip on foot to the northeast of Kathmandu to Helambu and visited the villages of Melamchi Ghyang, Tarkeyghyang and Sermathang, where he acquired a collection of objects from around these places. This trip was also significantly supported by the 3rd Chini Lama of Baudhanath. The notes from this journey, which are kept at the SOAS University of London, contain the names of the sellers as well as the prices Nebesky-Wojkowitz paid for the objects, making it possible for the first time to trace the provenances of one of his collections back to its origins. He then travelled from Kathmandu to Manakamana via Nawakot, Trishuli Bazar, and Gorkha. In early December, his wife arrived in Kathmandu and they both travelled to Kalimpong before Christmas. In Pedong, on the border with Bhutan, he procured more Buddhist objects and again visited the Lepcha settlement areas.[33] In March 1959, after his return, he presented his research results at

31 The export of cultural artefacts from Nepal has been prohibited by law since 1956. In that year, Nepal enacted the 'Antiquities Act,' which prohibited the export of antiquities and culturally significant artefacts. The aim of this regulation was to curb the illegal trade in artefacts and protect the country's cultural heritage.

32 For more information on his collecting activities and the Vienna exhibition, see Niebuhr and Widorn 2022.

33 As early as 1952, Nebesky-Wojkowitz was able to document Tibetan religious dances in the Sangchen Dorje Gompa Monastery in Pedong. It can therefore be assumed that he acquired his Tibetan dance robes and other Buddhist artefacts in this monastery or through contacts there. The monastery is still famous in the region for its annual religious dances.

the Museum für Völkerkunde and was awarded the Austrian *Theodor Körner Preis* for his "research in the field of lamaism" (Forschungen auf dem Gebiet des Lamaismus) in April.

His rising, promising career ended abruptly with his sudden death on 9 July in Vienna, due to a pulmonary embolism caused by venous thrombosis. It has been repeatedly claimed that Nebesky-Wojkowitz died from the curse of the very wrathful deities he studied without authorisation. This speculation shows how, even if only in exceptional cases, his magnum opus, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, raises concerns and fears about the danger of the material it examines and how such rumours could arise.[34] In fact, however, it was rather his restlessness and zeal for his scientific work that was detrimental to his health. In early 1958 he contracted a severe case of pneumonia and six months later returned to Nepal for fieldwork, where he initially complained of health problems. Nebesky-Wojkowitz suffered from a family history of blood clotting disorders, which eventually led to blockages in both leg veins. If one wants to speak of a curse in connection with the death of Nebesky-Wojkowitz, it is more likely the rumours about his cause of death, which are repeatedly spread on the Internet and which can still be regarded as the real, seemingly inescapable curse of Nebesky-Wojkowitz to this day. Yet, despite his early death, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's achievements in the field of academic research as well as popular scientific works are quite considerable and must be discussed in the context of his time.

Tibetan Studies after 1950

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's 1950 arrival in Kalimpong coincided with a time of great upheaval in Tibet. Fleeing the invasion of Red China into the Tibetan highlands, many Tibetans were arriving in the Indian border regions, yet Western foreigners were not permitted to cross into Nepal, Sikkim, Tibet or Bhutan. Therefore, Nebesky-Wojkowitz concentrated on research opportunities in and around the hill towns of Kalimpong and Darjeeling. After arriving in the region, he began working with Tibetan interlocutors and scholars, some of whom had lived there for some time and others who had recently arrived. In return for their help in translating and interpreting Tibetan texts, Nebesky-Wojkowitz offered them English lessons.[35] Three reincarnated masters (*sprul sku*) – Dar mdo Thub bstan lhun grub legs bzang Rin po che (1917–1990), 'Chi med rig 'dzin Rin po che (1922–2002), and bKras mthong Thub bstan chos dar Rin po che (1925–2012) – became Nebesky-Wojkowitz's most important teachers;[36] in addition to their knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism, they possessed extensive stocks of original Tibetan texts which Nebesky-Wojkowitz was allowed to study in detail. Some such texts were given to him as gifts, others were available for purchase in the border region, and it is due to these collecting activities that an extensive collection of texts is preserved today in the Weltmuseum Wien.[37]

34 See the comments by Bell and Gurung in this volume; see also Bjerken 2004: 38. In this context, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's extensive research into the *Dharmapāla* rDo rje shugs ldan, whose worship the current Dalai Lama has restrictively spoken out against as posing great dangers, should not be forgotten. During our fieldwork in Kalimpong in 2019, we were strongly advised by local Tibetans not to make contact with the daughter of the oracle priest lHag pa don grub studied by Nebesky-Wojkowitz.

35 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 88, 202–203; For the English version, see 1956b: 85, 191.

36 All three teachers were around Nebesky-Wojkowitz's age, which certainly favoured the collaboration.

37 The catalogue of the collection and information on the provenance of the texts will be published as a project result at the University of Vienna. See Drongshar, Fermer and Niebuhr (forthcoming).

Nebesky-Wojkowitz translated selected texts together with a Tibetan named Kusho Nyima, whom Joseph F. Rock knew from his time in Lijiang, China. He became Nebesky-Wojkowitz's most important local reference person and friend, with whom he worked for many hours almost daily. The main fruit of this time is the book *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. The first part of the book deals with the iconography and myths of the Tibetan protective deities,[38] while the second part deals with their cult based on personal observations as well as narratives of his informants in Kalimpong. In his 1954 travelogue Nebesky-Wojkowitz described the genesis of the book as follows:

> By the help of the abovenamed Tibetans I succeeded in collecting, analysing and partly translating some 180 Tibetan blockprints and manuscripts refering to this subject [...] I later added the material extracted from some thirty Tibetan works [...] in possession of the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde in Leiden, Holland [...].[39]

In fact, Nebesky-Wojkowitz would not have been able to write this book without the help of his Tibetan collaborators, for the subject of tutelary deities is a restricted field, accessible only to initiated clerics of the respective Tibetan religious tradition. Nebesky-Wojkowitz therefore had to assume the position of a disciple, dependent on the interpretations of these senior Tibetan scholars. Both in *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* and in his report on the results of the first expedition, his respect for all of his local interlocuters, who are mentioned prominently at the beginning, is clear.[40] It was also important to Nebesky-Wojkowitz to draw a kind of line of transmission of this knowledge by sketching the biographies of his Tibetan teachers in detail and with respect.[41] His teachers, in turn, were able to recognise Nebesky-Wojkowitz's deep interest and eagerness as a student who, shortly after his arrival in Kalimpong, used the spare time alongside his work for Rock to pursue these studies.[42] It should also not be forgotten, however, that the initial distance between teacher and student developed into friendships of equals over the course of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's long stay in Kalimpong.

During the years 1950 to 1953, Nebesky-Wojkowitz also published numerous articles on various Tibetan topics in local and international journals.[43] In addition, from Kalimpong he took part in a Viennese encyclopaedia project on world literature edited by Erich Frauwallner (1898–1974), to which Nebesky-Wojkowitz contributed the main entries on "Tibetan literature" and "Bon literature" as well as thirteen partial entries.[44] At the same time, he wrote numerous reviews[45] and composed a bibliography[46] on current Tibetan secondary

38 See Berounský in this volume.

39 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1954a: 35.

40 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1954a: 33–34; 1956a: VIII–X. See also Viehbeck (2017: 283–284) on Nebesky-Wojkowitz's later collaboration with Rig 'dzin dbang po (1920–1985).

41 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 197–207; 1956b: 187–196.

42 See Niebuhr 2022: 47–48.

43 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1950a; 1950b; 1950c; 1951b; 1951d; 1951e; 1952c; 1952d; 1952e; 1952f; 1952g.

44 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1951h; 1953f; 1954c.

45 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1951a (Tucci); 1951c (Hoffmann); 1953a (Nobel). In later years, more reviews by Nebesky-Wojkowitz were written: 1955d (Hummel); 1956d (Korvin-Krasinski); 1959a (Snellgrove).

46 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1951f; 1951g.

literature. Nebesky-Wojkowitz was also active as a journalist and wrote articles on various Tibet-related topics for local newspapers in Kalimpong as well as for newspapers in Austria.[47] Concerning his Tibetan language skills, he expanded his academic training in Classical Tibetan to include colloquial Tibetan and collected Tibetan language courses in book form and on long-playing records.[48] His Tibetan handwriting improved from an initially awkward Tibetan block letter "headed" script (*dbu can*) to a fluent Tibetan "headless" handwriting (*dbu med*).

Manuscripts acquired during Nebesky-Wojkowitz's first trip supplied other subjects for his further Tibetological studies. While in Kalimpong, Nebesky-Wojkowitz translated in full a Tibetan manual on dance rituals and complemented this text with observations from his fieldwork in West Bengal (Kalimpong, Darjeeling, Pedong), Sikkim (Gangtok) and Nepal (Pokhara, Baudhanath). As already mentioned, the results of this work were published only posthumously by Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf in 1976. In addition, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's extensive field research on Tibetan musical notation, some of which is also included in that publication, has been often overlooked.[49] In fact, Nebesky-Wojkowitz made numerous tape recordings concerning Tibetan music and Tibetan musical notation that have not been published to date.[50] In another area, Nebesky-Wojkowitz also translated and evaluated a medical compendium that he had acquired as part of his ethnopharmacological research and intended to publish it in his planned book "An Introduction to Tibetan Pharmacology."[51] In addition, a German-language volume by Nebesky-Wojkowitz with the working title "Tibet" was to be published in the "Orient-Okzident" series of the Austrian UNESCO Commission as part of the East-West Major Project (1957–1966).[52] The preparation of these extensive book projects probably explains why Nebesky-Wojkowitz did not publish any further Tibetological studies after *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. However, he worked intensively up until his death on the systematic recording of Tibetan text collections in European museums, and between 1953 and 1955, while in Leiden, he composed the first detailed catalogue[53] of the collection of Johan van Manen (1877–1943) and in 1958 an article[54] on the collection of Tibetan blockprints and manuscripts held at the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna.

An even lesser-known contribution of Nebesky-Wojkowitz to Tibetology was the 1956 publication of his Tibetan transcription system,[55] which served as the basis for the Wylie

47 Kalimpong: *Abominable Snowman*. Himalayan Times, February 3, 1952: 2, 6, 9 (doi.org/10.11588/diglit.22459#0042); Austria: *Gyejum Tschenmo – die Königliche Große Mutter*. Oberösterreichische Nachrichten, October 31, 1952: 24 (anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=oon&datum=19521031&seite=24, accessed 23.04.2024).

48 See Sawerthal in this volume. The records are now stored in the archives of the Weltmuseum Wien, AS/V 136–142.

49 See Walter Graf's appendix in Nebesky-Wojkowitz† and Fürer-Haimendorf 1976: 281–295. See also Nebesky-Wojkowitz's comments on Tibetan musical notation in the report on his second journey (1956c: 214).

50 Phonogrammarchiv, Austrian Academy of Sciences, 195812.N003, *Singing of individual characters of the Lama notation*, B 3270–3272 (catalog.phonogrammarchiv.at/session/10182, accessed 23.04.2024).

51 See Eidam-Weber and Sabernig in this volume.

52 See Manndorff 1958: 179 for a reference to this publication.

53 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955c.

54 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1958.

55 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a: Transcription.

transliteration system widely used today.[56] Nebesky-Wojkowitz was engaged to teach Tibetan at the University of Vienna from the winter semester of 1959/60, but that never came to be due to his sudden death; Tibetan was not taught there again until after the founding of the Department of Tibetology and Buddhist Studies in 1973.

The significance of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's activities in the public dissemination of knowledge about Tibetan culture has not yet been conclusively evaluated, but the University of Vienna research team is putting forth a first attempt with the present volume. The multitude of lectures and radio broadcasts identified so far suggests that Nebesky-Wojkowitz played a pioneering role in this respect as well. The media—photo, film and audio—produced by Nebesky-Wojkowitz as part of his anthropological Tibet studies have been digitised and published in an online database.[57] In addition, the indexing of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's collection of Tibetan artefacts for the Weltmuseum Wien has revealed that his acquisition strategy focussed in part on specific aspects of his research and that the collection was intended for study purposes as well as to serve his public relations and educational mission. These efforts resulted, among other things, in the long-playing record "Tibet–Lieder aus dem Land der Götter" (Songs from the Land of the Gods),[58] which was completed posthumously, and the educational film "Tibetische Tänze" (Tibetan Dances),[59] which was set to music also after his death. Nebesky-Wojkowitz's unpublished recordings of Tibetan language samples in the Lhasa dialect, religious chants, folk songs and dances, the Gesar epic, Tibetan opera, ritual music and sung musical notation and legend songs still await evaluation.[60]

Lepcha studies in West Bengal

As early as March 1950, Joseph F. Rock had indicated that he wanted to explore comparisons between the Lepcha in Kalimpong and the Naxi people.[61] During his time in London, Nebesky-Wojkowitz had been introduced by Fürer-Haimendorf to Geoffrey Gorer (1905–1985),[62] who provided him with some of his research documentation of the Lepcha recorded in Sikkim in 1937.[63] What originally motivated Nebesky-Wojkowitz to undertake his own Lepcha studies is not entirely clear, though he later outlined it in his 1954 report:

> The study of early Tibetan beliefs induced me to do research on the original Lepcha religion and its alleged relation to the Bon faith of Tibet.[64]

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56 See Balk in this volume.

57 For a detailed description of the work on this material, see Apic and Widorn 2020.

58 The long-playing record (catalogue no. 53134G) was published by Athena, Ariola Schallplatten GmbH, Gütersloh.

59 A copy of the 23-minute colour film is today in the possession of the archive of the Österreichischen Mediathek in Vienna. The whereabouts of the original film reel are currently unknown.

60 Among the names of the Tibetan interlocutors recorded on tape are Byams pa gsang bdag, Rin po che Dar mdo Thub bstan lhun grub legs bzang, "Ta bla ma," and probably the 3rd Chini Lama Punya Vajra.

61 Taube 2008: 155.

62 Gorer conducted research among the Lepchas in Sikkim in 1937. He published his findings in 1938 (*Himalayan Village: An Account of the Lepchas of Sikkim*. London: Michael Joseph).

63 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1954a: 36.

64 Ibid.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz began his own fieldwork on the Lepcha in April 1951 after his final break with Rock.[65] With the small grant from Vienna mentioned above, he travelled for a month through the settlement areas of Gitdubling, Gitbeong and Nim southeast of Kalimpong, accompanied by Jean-Marie Brahier (1914–1993),[66] a priest of the Swiss Catholic Mission who served as his translator. As Nebesky-Wojkowitz did not initially speak the Lepcha language, he was dependent on the Christian intermediaries whom he accompanied on their missionary work in the various valleys and villages, a consideration that must be borne in mind when assessing the information he collected, as these were mostly Christianised Lepchas.[67] On this occasion and numerous subsequent excursions to the region,[68] Nebesky-Wojkowitz collected ethnographic material on Lepcha religious beliefs, burial rites, agriculture, written culture, fishing and hunting customs, and singing traditions and recorded his observations in a field diary. The notebook *Lepcha Studies: Gid, 15 April–15 May 1951*, which is kept at SOAS University in London and which Nebesky-Wojkowitz typed up after his research and provided with additional information, is in chronological order and gives the names of the respective interlocutors.[69] However, the book goes beyond the period mentioned in the title and also contains research notes up to July 1951. It is not yet sufficiently known whether Nebesky-Wojkowitz, as with his Tibetan interlocutors, provided any reciprocal services.[70] However, letters in connection with his ethnopharmacological Lepcha studies show that he was ultimately unable to pay a Lepcha healer for the service he promised.[71]

In the Lepcha villages, Nebesky-Wojkowitz amassed a collection of their material culture for the Museum für Völkerkunde, mainly objects made of bamboo, some specially constructed for him and others obtained through middlemen from Sikkim.[72] On his two subsequent research trips in 1956 and 1959, Nebesky-Wojkowitz returned to these regions (fig. 2) and extended his research area to south of Kalimpong, where he produced numerous photographs and film footage, which are now in the possession of the Weltmuseum Wien. After 1953, however, no further items were acquired for his Lepcha collection in Vienna. Nebesky-Wojkowitz's film footage gives an insight into the daily life of the Lepchas, showing them at work, fetching water or performing rituals. They also document the Lepchas' environment, showing their terraced fields, irrigation systems and traditional house construction. The sound recordings, which are stored in the Phonogrammarchiv of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, were mainly made in Gitdubling and Kalimpong and bear witness to his interest in the Lepcha singing tradition. The tapes also include his language

65 For more information, see Niebuhr 2022: 49.

66 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1954a: 37.

67 Cf. Bentley's critical consideration of Fr. Brahier's influence as a sort of 'gatekeeper' who influenced "how Lepcha Indigenous knowledge and other cultural materials entered academia, museum collections and archives."

68 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1954a: 37.

69 Git: Ongdi (former *búngthíng*), Saliang (hunter, son of Ongdi); Kapher: G. Kabo (teacher and folk singer); "Longshol:" Kaila Donge Karbari (hunter); Nim: Renbu Badschi; Kalimpong: Mrs. Mohan (Rebecca Namchu Lepcha), K.P. Tamsang ("Mandal of Bong Basti"). Furthermore: Labu Karbari (*búngthíng* and *pawo*); Cheche (fisherman); Kanyemu (*mun* and *nejum*).

70 For the first discussion of this, see Bentley in this volume.

71 See Eidam-Weber in this volume.

72 See Niebuhr and Widorn 2019: 3 and Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1953e: 269–271.



Fig. 2. Lepcha community and interlocutors from Tanyang village, with Jean-Marie Brahier in the background.

studies and an extensive language course. His recordings of a Catholic Christmas celebration[73] in 1958, which includes an originally Lepcha melody with new Catholic lyrics,[74] are important contemporary documents that provide insight into the missionary work among the Lepchas.

Nevertheless, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's Lepcha studies are known only through a handful of articles[75] that were published between 1951 and 1953 in journals such as *Anthropos*, *Asiatische Studien*, *Ethnos*, *The Aryan Path*, and *The Eastern Anthropologist*. In late 1951, he co-authored an article with Geoffrey Gorer on the use of thread crosses.[76] Originally, his Lepcha studies were intended as a further, third chapter of *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, but Nebesky-Wojkowitz instead decided to make them into a separate book entitled *Lepcha Studies: The Religion and Literature of the Lepchas (Sikkimese Himalaya)*.[77] He worked on this yet unpublished book, which was to contain eight chapters[78] and his extensive translations of numerous Lepcha texts, up to his death. To this end, Nebesky-Wojkowitz travelled Europe from 1954 onwards in search of Lepcha primary sources and compiled catalogues of the collec-

73 Recorded in St. Augustin, the mission church of the Swiss Catholic Mission in Kalimpong. Phonogrammarchiv, Austrian Academy of Sciences, 19581224.N001, *Christmas Mass in St. Augustin*, B 3273 (catalog.phonogrammarchiv.at/session/10183, accessed 23.04.2024).

74 Phonogrammarchiv, Austrian Academy of Sciences, 1950CA.N001, *Lepcha song*, B 2518 and B2519.

75 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1952a; 1952b; 1953b; 1953c; 1953d.

76 Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer 1951.

77 Weltmuseum Wien, Archive, Partial Estate of Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 28 July 1958, letter, Zl.294/3/58.

78 The planned eight chapters were: 1. The Lepcha Pantheon, 2. The Lepcha Priesthood, 3. Religious ceremonies, 4. Lepcha songs and dances, 5. Lepcha collection of the Museum für Völkerkunde, 6. List of Lepcha books in the van Manen Collection, 7. Texts and translations of Lepcha Manuscripts, 8. Vocabulary. See Archives and Special Collections, SOAS Library, MS 380882.

tions of Johan van Manen (Leiden), SOAS University (London) and Brian Houghton Hodgson (1800–1894; British Library, London).[79] In addition, Nebesky-Wojkowitz had acquired four Lepcha manuscripts for the Vienna museum on his first research trip.

The handwritten notebooks on Lepcha grammar and textbooks acquired in Kalimpong, as well as the Lepcha language course[80] he recorded, suggest that Nebesky-Wojkowitz learned the Lepcha language autodidactically over time. His transcripts of Lepcha texts, now kept in the Archives and Special Collections (SOAS), show that he could read and write the language fluently. If it had been completed, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's *Lepcha Studies* book would have appeared years before Halfdan Siiger's major ethnographical work *The Lepchas: Culture and Religion of a Himalayan People*,[81] which at the time was considered the most comprehensive anthropological study on the Lepchas. In it, Siiger refers to twelve publications by Nebesky-Wojkowitz and highlights the latter's anthropological fieldwork, which he considers a "return" to anthropological research on the Lepchas since Gorer's work in 1938.[82] Halfdan Siiger (1911–1999) also gives Nebesky-Wojkowitz credit for his ability to describe many "obscure Lepcha words and religious customs" based on his "intimate knowledge of the Tibetan language and religion."[83] There is no question that had Nebesky-Wojkowitz published such a comprehensive book in 1960, it would have had a great impact on subsequent Lepcha research. However, Jenny Bentley's article highlights the subsequent ambivalent attitude of Lepcha activists towards this legacy of (post-)colonial research, arguing that Nebesky-Wojkowitz's work is "still embedded in difficult power processes of (post)colonial knowledge production" up to today.[84] In my opinion, a future review of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's research material in collaboration with the Indigenous Lepcha communities would bring more clarity here, as most of his studies and materials are still unpublished.

Further ethnographic studies in West Bengal and Nepal

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's ethnographic studies of other ethnic groups began in connection with his Lepcha studies, as he explains in the report on his first research trip:

> Some further ethnographical material,–records of legends and notes on religious ceremonies, sound recordings and photographs–were collected also among the Sherpas, Bhutanese, Tamang and Gurkhas, m[a]inly in order to be able to supplement or analyse the Lepcha and Tibetan material.[85]

In West Bengal, he was confined to the Indian border area with Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. His studies of the Sherpas initially focussed on the area around Darjeeling and Kalim-

79 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1954b; 1957b; 1957c.

80 Phonogrammarchiv, Austrian Academy of Sciences, 195812.N007, *Lepcha language course*, B 3292 (catalog.phonogrammarchiv.at/session/10190, accessed 23.04.2024).

81 Siiger 1967.

82 Ibid.: 22.

83 Ibid.

84 See Bentley in this volume.

85 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1954a: 38.

pong, where he visited the Sherpa monastery of Guru Chhoki Gumba[86] north of Gitbeong in April 1951 while on his trip to the Lepchas, and again for interviews shortly before his departure in 1953. On his second research trip he came across more settlements in the Singalila Ridge on the border with Ilam in Nepal and again visited the Sherpa monastery for further research.[87] These studies were to be published under the title "The Sherpas of the Passang Pung Valley" in the British journal *Man*. An unfinished preliminary version of the article is now in his scholarly estate at the SOAS library. Nebesky-Wojkowitz popularised the material from West Bengal in the chapter "Sherpas and Snowmen" of his book *Where the Gods are Mountains*[88] and in numerous radio broadcasts. Nebesky-Wojkowitz was unable to reach the Nepalese core area of the Sherpas in the Solu-Khumbu District, although on his journey to Charikot in eastern Nepal he actually hoped to continue to the border settlement areas of the Sherpa, but then turned back.[89] Instead, on his second trip to Nepal in 1958, he travelled to the Helambu region where, as mentioned above, he began extensive studies of the Yolmowa ethnic group[90] living there and amassed for the Vienna museum a collection of traditional costumes, agricultural implements, and objects of daily use in their mountain villages. In Melamchi Ghyang, Nebesky-Wojkowitz continued his philological work, copying texts about the protective deities of the region, and he documented a "Bonpo" lama dancing as part of a ceremony dedicated to the local mountain deities.[91] He also visited the monasteries, villages and mountain pastures, and recorded their way of life, customs and religious life.[92] None of this material was ever scientifically evaluated or published. Only the radio manuscript "Das Land der Scherpas" (The Land of the Sherpas),[93] written for the Bayerischen Rundfunk in Munich in May 1959, provides an insight into the course of the journey and gives an impression of his extensive research.
According to Nebesky-Wojkowitz, the aim of the trips in 1957 and 1958 was:

> To examine the ethnographic realities of Nepal and to explore starting points for future in-depth research on some Nepali peoples related to Tibetans who have not been studied ethnographically before.[94]

In practice, this meant that Nebesky-Wojkowitz travelled to Bhurjung in the upper Seti valley, north of the city of Pokhara, where he conducted initial research on the Gurung ethnic

86 The monastery was completely renovated in 1996 and now bears this name.

87 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956c: 213.

88 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 161–172. For the English version, see 1956b: 151–161.

89 Phonogrammarchiv, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Donation Wolfgang Lorenz, *Report from Eastern Nepal*, Tape: NWoj_scotch.

90 According to Fürer-Haimendorf 1964: 3, the Yolmowa also identify themselves as Sherpas, although their dialect and many aspects of their material culture are very different from those of the Sherpas of eastern Nepal.

91 Nebesky-Wojkowitz† and Niebuhr 2019: 77.

92 Ibid.

93 Bayerische Rundfunk, Archives, HF/10404. Later published as Nebesky-Wojkowitz† 1959b: 19–40.

94 Author's translation. Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956c: 213: "Untersuchung der ethnographischen Verhältnisse Nepals und Erkundung von Ansatzpunkten für künftige eingehendere Erforschung einiger den Tibetern verwandter und bisher in ethnographischer Hinsicht nicht erforschten nepalesischen Völkerschaften."

group living there, specifically their customs, way of life and religious system, and was able to film folk dances. These remained his only studies of the Gurung. Nebesky-Wojkowitz's research on the Tamang began during his first trip to West Bengal, where he captured several sound recordings of their dance songs. He also visited the Tashi Dargyaling (*bkra shis dar rgyas gling*) Monastery of the Tamang Buddhist Association in Darjeeling for his studies. On an exploratory trip in 1957, he visited the Nepalese heartland of the Tamang as far as Charikot and the most important settlements and Buddhist shrines of the area. His written research notes on the Tamang have not been found to date, but his photographs and film recordings are housed at the Weltmuseum Wien in Vienna.

In 1958, Nebesky-Wojkowitz undertook another exploratory trip, this time to the Gorkha region with the aim of documenting the historical palaces and temples there, in addition to the existing ethnographic features. In the town of Gorkha, Nebesky-Wojkowitz gathered oral information about the Kusunda, an Indigenous hunter-gatherer people who at the time still lived in the hilly part of the Terai and came to Gorkha periodically to trade. On the way to Gorkha, Nebesky-Wojkowitz met a larger group of Chepang who came from the village of Upardang Ghari. His records of their way of life, economic circumstances and religious beliefs were published posthumously by Fürer-Haimendorf in 1959, as was information about the Kusunda.[95] Nebesky-Wojkowitz's photographs of the Chepang, however, have not been located.

During both later research trips, Nebesky-Wojkowitz spent time among the various inhabitants of the Kathmandu valley and documented, among other things, some major religious autumn festivals.[96] Near the village of Chabahil, he filmed people going about their daily lives working in the fields, making mud bricks, and harvesting grain. Nebesky-Wojkowitz also systematically recorded in still photographs and on film the buildings, temples and monuments of the three royal cities of Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur. He paid particular attention to the various areas of life of the Newar and to recording their beliefs and customs, which is also reflected in his museum collection.

The Weltmuseum Wien houses more than 600 black-and-white film sequences from this period, which are archived in the Himalaya Archive Vienna[97] at the University of Vienna. Nebesky-Wojkowitz was also working on the colour film "Weiße Berge–Goldene Pagoden" (White mountains–Golden pagodas),[98] which was ultimately not set to music due to his death. For the Museum für Völkerkunde Nebesky-Wojkowitz was also planning a photo exhibition entitled "Nepalesische Kunst" (Nepalese Art), which was to show the "most important art monuments" in the Kathmandu valley.[99] He also intended to publish a book entitled *Einführung in die materielle Kultur Nepals* (Introduction to the Material Culture of Nepal) in the Museum für Völkerkunde's publication series, based on his extensive museum collection and with new ethnographic research on the local designations of objects and their uses.[100] Although Nebesky-Wojkowitz was not able to realise all of these projects, part of his research was incorporated into the special exhibition "Nepal" at the Museum für Völk-

95 Nebesky-Wojkowitz† and Fürer-Haimendorf 1976.
96 Nebesky-Wojkowitz† and Niebuhr 2019: 75.
97 hav.univie.ac.at/collection/nebesky (accessed 23.04.2024).
98 www.mediathek.at/atom/1962A2C3-01E-001B7-00000E40-1961B1C5 (accessed 23.04.2024).
99 Nebesky-Wojkowitz† and Niebuhr 2019: 73.
100 Ibid.

erkunde, which in November 1957 was the first show to present the ethnic conditions of Nepal to a Viennese public.[101] The nineteen-page guide to the exhibition represents Nebesky-Wojkowitz's only scientific publication on the subject.[102] For German-language educational radio, Nebesky-Wojkowitz wrote general overviews of Nepal as well as of Sikkim, Tibet and Bhutan. His audio recordings from both trips are extensive and range from a course in the Nepali language to religious chants and recitations, and dance songs to recordings of poems by the Nepali poet Bālakṛṣṇa Sama (1903–1981). Following initial exploratory trips in 1957, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's anthropological research in Nepal began on a larger scale only during his third trip to the Himalayas: One can only guess where his scientific journey to explore the ethnic groups of the Himalayas might have led.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The present volume is thematically divided into three sections: the first part is devoted to the scholar Nebesky-Wojkowitz in terms of his importance, his research interests, and possible impacts on academia. The second part looks at Nebesky-Wojkowitz's time in India and Nepal and discusses his interactions and receptions in these places. The third part of the volume moves beyond Nebesky-Wojkowitz's own endeavours and discusses new research in his footsteps. The epilogue provides an overview of the scientific history of Himalayan research during Nebesky-Wojkowitz's lifetime and an outlook for the period thereafter.

The first section comprises five articles on *Nebesky-Wojkowitz as a Scholar: His Importance, Research Interests, and Influence*. Andre Gingrich's article, *Pathways Between Ethnography and Philology: The Anthropological Formation of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz in Vienna's Institutional Settings and Related Academic Influences*, focusses on Nebesky-Wojkowitz's philological and ethnological training at the University of Vienna and the institutional environment that shaped important dimensions of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's academic career. Gingrich begins by providing an institutional overview of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's two degrees from the University of Vienna (dissertation 1949, *Venia Docendi* 1955)[103] and places them in context with a brief survey of the theoretical and methodological influences from the Viennese school of socio-cultural anthropology (*Völkerkunde*). In the years between these two works, Gingrich notes a departure from prioritising philology over anthropology, though a simple shift would be an oversimplification as Nebesky-Wojkowitz moved in practice "between" the two disciplines, examining and interpreting texts in context. Gingrich further characterizes the influences of his advisors Robert Bleichsteiner (1891–1954) and Robert Heine-Geldern (1885–1968) for both career thresholds, each representing varieties of secular versions of historical diffusionism in German-speaking *Völkerkunde*. Gingrich sees Nebesky-Wojkowitz as rooted in this tradition but already concerned with the interrelationship between the written and the oral, seeing their interplay in a much more dialogic and at the same time systematic way, with an interest in the local as reflected in the written text and the scriptural as represented in the local and vernacular enactment. During his fieldwork visits, Nebesky-Wojkowitz further developed this approach into an innovative

101 Niebuhr and Widorn 2022.

102 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1957a.

103 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1949b and 1955a.

pattern of interactions between the fieldworker and his host, among whom spiritual leaders and well-informed lamas became his main partners in fieldwork as a learning process. In this sense, Nebesky-Wojkowitz became one of the few international pioneers who transformed the Malinowskian model of distanciated ethnographic fieldwork in local languages towards a new methodological phase in the history of ethnographic fieldwork, the "re-invention of the fieldworker" as a student of the hosts and through a deeply respectful acceptance of the local hosts as the "fieldworker's superior guides and spiritual instructors"[104] – a methodological paradigm shift in the 1950s.

In his *A Reassessment of Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, Christopher Bell undertakes a re-evaluation of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's most important work and post-doctoral thesis. After discussing the content, structure, and handling of the book, Bell looks at the numerous reviews from the time of its publication in 1956 and of the second edition in 1975. After offering a detailed assessment of the scholarly value of the work, Bell – for the first time – subjects the 204 Tibetan primary sources on which the book is based to an in-depth analysis with regard to religious origin, authorship and dating of the texts as well as the citation of the texts in the book itself. The two extensive tables in the appendix provide archival reference to the textual sources used by Nebesky-Wojkowitz in each case, offer cross-references to digitized texts in the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC) and the Leiden University Library, and provide listings in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's unpublished catalogue[105] to the text collection there. Bell also addresses Nebesky-Wojkowitz's methodology, explaining that his claims are not based solely on an evaluation of pure textual material, but that he substantiated them with a "number of anecdotes from oral traditions and legends" from his field research. Bell concludes with a critical evaluation of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's understanding of the concepts of shamanism and Bon and their relationship to pre-Buddhist Tibetan religion, discussing this 1950s view in the contemporary scholarly context.

Michael Balk's paper, *Wylie versus Wojkowitz*, is devoted to the widely used romanization system for the Tibetan language named after Turrell Verl Wylie. In doing so, Balk examines the romanization systems of Wylie and Nebesky-Wojkowitz and weighs which was the greater contribution. He begins with an analysis of Wylie's 1959 article,[106] which references Nebesky-Wojkowitz, and highlights the historical development of the transliteration system. Balk's related excursus on typography foregrounds the phonetic features of Tibetan letters and discusses how these have been understood and rendered historically by various authors including Nebesky-Wojkowitz, highlighting his expertise for distinguishing between apostrophe and aspiration mark used to romanise the twenty-third letter. Moreover, Balk notes that Nebesky-Wojkowitz did not see himself as the creator of a transliteration scheme but was merely looking for a method to maintain clarity without diacritical marks and still remain comprehensible. Balk further details the recognizable structures of the various transliterations using selected examples. In summary, Balk credits Wylie only for "capitalizing the initial letter instead of the root letter;" everything else was taken from *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*[107] by Nebesky-Wojkowitz.

104 On this aspect of his attitude towards working with local experts, see also Viehbeck 2017: 284.
105 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955c.
106 Wylie 1959.
107 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a.

The contribution by Florian Eidam-Weber, *René Nebesky-Wojkowitz's (1923–1959) Unpublished Work on Materia Medica of the Himalayas*, is devoted to a hitherto unknown aspect of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's work—his ethnopharmacological research. Eidam-Weber opens by discussing the scholar's school years and initial inclination towards the natural sciences and medicine as well as possible influences of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's collaboration with Joseph F. Rock. Moving through Nebesky-Wojkowitz's three research trips to the Himalayas, Eidam-Weber considers his studies of materia medica, which on the first trip initially focussed on collecting plant material from the Lepcha environment and acquiring Tibetan medical books for the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna. On the second trip, with sufficient financial backing, Nebesky-Wojkowitz expanded his research in the field, collecting on a larger scale plant material for laboratory evaluation and working more intensively on translating the previously acquired medicine books. Eidam-Weber incorporates unpublished correspondence and estate material from the archives of the Wenner-Gren Foundation (New York) and the SOAS Library (London), to trace both Nebesky-Wojkowitz's funding and motivation and a planned extensive publication on Tibetan pharmacology. Based on index cards kept at the SOAS Library, Eidam-Weber details Nebesky-Wojkowitz's methodology in translating his medical work and his evaluation of secondary literature; further research documents from the SOAS archives shed light on Nebesky-Wojkowitz's work on Lepcha medicine and Nepalese plant material. He concludes his reflections on the research trips with the acquisition of further Tibetan works from Nebesky-Wojkowitz's third and final trip and discusses the potential importance of his early ethnopharmacological book had it been completed.

The article by Kalsang Norbu Gurung, *Revisiting René Nebesky-Wojkowitz's Study of Bon Religion, the Introduction of the Two-Bon Theory and the Blue Bonpo*, deals with Nebesky-Wojkowitz's first article[108] on the Tibetan Bon religion, published while still a student. In it, based on Western secondary literature from 1832 to 1941, Nebesky-Wojkowitz provides an overview of the state of research, the history, pantheon, doctrine, canonical scriptures, priesthood, ritual devices, rites and ceremony, healing arts, weather makers and dissemination of Bon. Gurung delves into two examples of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's view, which, according to Gurung, are hardly found in the Tibetan primary literature: the "theory of two stages of Bon" and the "dress code of Bonpo monks." Concerning the two stages, Gurung discusses Nebesky-Wojkowitz's sources and shows his alignment with the views of Sarat Chandra Das (1849–1917), Berthold Laufer (1874–1934) and Helmut Hoffmann (1912–1992). Gurung summarises Nebesky-Wojkowitz's theory as: first, before the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet, there existed an "unorganized Bon" with shamanistic practices, and then came an "organized" or "developed Bon," which saw this pre-Buddhist tradition reshaped under the influence of Buddhism. Gurung highlights that this idea was in some ways new in 1947 making Nebesky-Wojkowitz a pioneering voice in this discussion with Hoffmann and later Samten G. Karmay (b. 1936), although this is not a traditional view found in Tibetan sources. The second example focusses on Nebesky-Wojkowitz's early claim that blue clothing was the "typical colour" of the Bonpos. To test this, Gurung analyses mentions of blue clothing in Tibetan primary sources from the 12th to the 15th centuries, but it does not seem to have been codified as part of the dress code until the 1970s.

108 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1947.

The second section, *Nebesky-Wojkowitz on the Ground: Interaction and Reception in the Field*, contains three contributions. Jenny Bentley's article, *Nebesky-Wojkowitz's Legacy and the Lepcha: On Knowledge Production and Power Relations*, is devoted to a critical examination of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's Lepcha research. The author focusses on how different forms of knowledge production interact, influence each other, and are co-created within an unequal field of power relations. Bentley notes that in the case of the Lepcha, there is no "unified corpus of knowledge" but rather a "knowledge network," with Nebesky-Wojkowitz's legacy encompassing manifestations of Lepcha Indigenous knowledge systems that have been "reproduced and adapted" through his lens, which, Bentley argues, produces a particular representation of the Lepcha as a community guided by "the interests and gaze of an 'outsider'." Using Nebesky-Wojkowitz as an example, Bentley traces the process of knowledge production from the collection of ethnographic material to its reception. She delves into the methods he employed to gather and process both tangible and intangible ethnographic data, examines how his research fits within the broader network and power dynamics of colonial and postcolonial knowledge production, and investigates how contemporary Lepcha activists engage with his and other researchers' representations and interpretations of their practices and knowledge systems. To this end, Bentley first recounts Nebesky-Wojkowitz's Lepcha research in the Kalimpong region and considers his informants and knowledge brokers as well as his interactions with them, and then describes the colonial and postcolonial power constellations and their impact on knowledge production. Bentley then traces his stay in Kalimpong in light of discourse on the need for protecting the Lepcha community, which she believes Nebesky-Wojkowitz stimulated, and presents the context in which he gathered information and produced scientific knowledge. In doing so, Bentley explores the notion of "rescue anthropology" and the colonial discourse on the "dying race" and shows how Nebesky-Wojkowitz moved within this framework. She then looks at Lepcha activists' reception of earlier research publications and how they deal with the legacy of Nebesky-Wojkowitz, also with the larger legacy of colonial and postcolonial knowledge production. Bentley concludes by articulating that materials in archives should be meaningfully classified in terms of their specific historicity, power processes, and impact, and that content should be determined in collaboration with Indigenous representatives. This approach, Bentley argues, would deconstruct harmful representations, bring in diverse Indigenous perspectives, and decolonize the way knowledge is curated.

Anna Sawerthal's article, *Passion for Print: René Nebesky-Wojkowitz and His Ties with the First Modern Tibetan-Language Publisher Babu Tharchin in Kalimpong*, focusses on Nebesky-Wojkowitz's involvement with modern Tibetan print culture. Beginning with an analysis of the chapter "Buchdruck" in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's 1949 dissertation,[109] Sawerthal demonstrates his early interest in the subject. After a glimpse into the history of Tibetan print culture, which underwent fundamental changes in the first half of the 20th century, Sawerthal discusses Babu Tharchin of the Kalimpong-based Tibet Mirror Press as a "driving force" in this process, with his publication of educational and popular literature as well as a Tibetan newspaper, the *Melong* or *Tibet Mirror*. Sawerthal describes Nebesky-Wojkowitz's contact with the publisher during his first trip to West Bengal, which is detailed in the

109 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1949b.

chapter "The City of Seven New Years"[110] in his popular book *Where the Gods Are Mountains*. Nebesky-Wojkowitz's personal and sometimes critical insights into early-1950s Kalimpong reveal useful background knowledge about Tharchin, his printing company and the newspaper itself. Sawerthal sees Tharchin as a printing pioneer who embraced contemporary trends and whose publishing house became one of the first commercial print publishers of Tibetan-language works. In doing so, Tharchin embedded new forms into existing cultural patterns, such as by maintaining the traditional Tibetan book format. Sawerthal speaks of the Tibet Mirror Press as a modern printing workshop that offered a wide range and appealed to different audiences, including Nebesky-Wojkowitz himself, who was granted access to the publishing house and thus brought back to Vienna a selection of printed products that are now kept in the Weltmuseum Wien.

The article by Martin Gaenszle, *Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Kiranti Studies*, is dedicated to the traces left by Nebesky-Wojkowitz in Himalayan Studies. While Nebesky-Wojkowitz can be considered one of the first scholars to combine Tibetology with anthropology and thus termed an "Ethno-Tibetologist" decades before it became mainstream, Gaenszle focusses here on the actual and potential influence of Nebesky-Wojkowitz on Kiranti Studies and research on Indigenous groups in the Eastern Himalayas in general. In doing so, he questions why Nebesky-Wojkowitz's research neglected the Rai and Limbu groups, even though he was aware of a certain kinship between the Lepcha and the Limbu. Gaenszle starts by reviewing Nebesky-Wojkowitz's ethnographic knowledge of the Limbus; in this context, he discusses two maps of population distribution in the Himalayan region prepared by Nebesky-Wojkowitz and evaluates his mentions in publications. In the second section, Gaenszle contrasts the Lepcha with the Kiranti and points out features that indicate a close relationship, aiming to show the great potential for ethnological comparison in both oral and performative tradition or ritual system. Moreover, Gaenszle notes that both groups were on the threshold from oral to written tradition, which must have been of particular interest to Nebesky-Wojkowitz. Accordingly, Nebesky-Wojkowitz was also aware of the oral character of the song tradition, which was lived as a performative practice. Gaenszle then focusses on the reception of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's ideas which have been taken up by modern anthropologists in direct reference. Gaenszle's concern is to show that Nebesky-Wojkowitz's detailed and careful observations and interpretations which he developed from his Lepcha studies, allow for a finer-grained comparison and typology that brings out key features of the Indigenous traditions in the region of eastern Himalaya. For Gaenszle, Nebesky-Wojkowitz was a "scholar with an eye on the larger picture, the cultural framework;" he drew larger comparisons to better understand the long-term cultural history of Himalayan societies.

The third section, *Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Beyond: New Research in the Footsteps of His Work*, concludes the main part of the volume with two contributions. In her article, *The Shel Gong Shel Phreng – a Treasure in the History of Tibetan Pharmacology*, Katharina Sabernig discusses the pharmacological treatise *Shel gong Shel phreng* kept in the Weltmuseum Wien which Nebesky-Wojkowitz acquired in Kalimpong during his first research trip. Sabernig characterises the Tibetan pharmacopoeia and its detailed commentary as a milestone in the history of the description of Tibetan medicinal substances, with record of the effectiveness of the

110 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956b: 55–82.

individual remedies, which was created during the development and reorganization of medical knowledge in the late 17th century. Sabernig's article provides insight into the nature and structure of the work and establishes connections with earlier and later pharmacological texts of the period. In the first section, Sabernig discusses the reception of the work in the West, highlighting its origins, authorship, content, significance, availability and scholarly reappraisal. In the next part, she contrasts this work with the most influential earlier and later pharmacological works in terms of their content and structure. Using an example, Sabernig discusses the application of pharmacodynamic considerations in the final part.

The article by Daniel Berounský, *From 'Supreme Enmity' (dgra bla) to 'Artemisia-Birds' (mkhan bya): 'Fighting Gods' (dgra lha) in Dunhuang Documents, juthig Divination Texts, and leu Manuscripts*, places a theme from Nebesky-Wojkowitz's work *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* in the context of contemporary scholarly research. In considering the "fighting gods" *dgra lha*, he addresses a textual tradition that is largely undiscussed and peripheral to or even outside the monastic community. In the first part, Berounský introduces the earliest mentions of this category found in divination manuals from Dunhuang and discusses the possibly high status of these gods in the context of the "wild spirits" *gnyan*. The second section deals with the *dgra lha* in texts on rope divination (*'ju thig*), where they also appear as high-status gods. According to Berounský, the *dgra lha* here can be divided into various categories, and their strong connection to the *gnyan* is seen at the mythical level. In the third part, Berounský discusses the lay tradition of *le'u* in northeastern Tibet, which preserves a strong cult of the *dgra lha*. Berounský explains the fusion of the *gnyan* with *dgra lha* through their connection with birds and attempts to show that this fusion has its roots already in the imperial period of Tibetan history.

The volume concludes with an *Epilogue* and outlook into the period after René Nebesky-Wojkowitz. The contribution, *Nebesky-Wojkowitz at the Himalayan Hotel, Kalimpong*, by Michael Oppitz reproduces in its basic structure the content of a keynote lecture he gave at the Weltmuseum Wien in November 2019. Oppitz provides personal insights into the historical context of Himalayan research in the 1950s, which directly or indirectly shaped Nebesky-Wojkowitz's scientific career. He describes the actors of the time who clashed at the Himalayan Hotel in Kalimpong with a wide variety of interests; events that steered Nebesky-Wojkowitz's fieldwork in a different direction; methods of scientific and popular publishing practices resulting from various encounters with various personalities like Joseph F. Rock, Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf and Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark. Building on this, Oppitz provides further insights into the history of research at that time and up to the present, and discusses the methods and working practices of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's colleagues: Rolf Alfred Stein (1911–1999), Alexander W. Macdonald (1923–2018), Philippe Sagant (1936–2015), Samten G. Karmay, Richard Kohn (1948–2000), etc. Oppitz concludes his outlook into the scientific history of Himalayan research with his personal impressions from Kalimpong in the mid-1960s. He outlines the shift of research focus from West Bengal to Nepal, which began with Nebesky-Wojkowitz, among others, as early as 1957 and finally became established for good in the mid-1970s.

PHOTO SOURCES

Fig. 1. Department for South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, University of Vienna.

Fig. 2. René Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1959, KHM-Museumsverband, Weltmuseum Wien, VF 32.891.

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111 The bibliography on Nebesky-Wojkowitz is presented chronologically and is not organised according to the varying spellings of his name found in different publications. To show these variations, the formatting has intentionally not been standardised here, in contrast to the rest of the book. His unpublished works are additionally listed with the year in which they were written.

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1

NEBESKY-WOJKOWITZ AS A SCHOLAR

His Importance, Research Interests, and Influence

PATHWAYS BETWEEN ETHNOGRAPHY AND PHILOLOGY

The Anthropological Formation of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz in Vienna's Institutional Settings and Related Academic Influences

Andre Gingrich

When René Nebesky-Wojkowitz[1] passed away in Vienna in July 1959 at the young age of 36, he was on his way to becoming a celebrity – not merely as perceived in academic circles at home and abroad, but also for a wider German-speaking public interested in his popular contributions to museum and media presentations. At the time, he was seen already as one of the most authoritative socio-cultural anthropological voices in Tibetan Studies from the German-speaking countries, and as a rising star among the academic staff of Vienna's Museum für Völkerkunde.[2]

The present text seeks to give an outline of the local intellectual and institutional aspects in Vienna's socio-cultural anthropology that contributed to shaping important dimensions in the academic career of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz.[3] Local institutional academic history, the intellectual records and biographical research insights from the history of German-speaking socio-cultural anthropology as well as pieces of oral tradition will be the four main methodological tools for pursuing this task. It will be carried out in three sections. The first gives an initial institutional overview of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's formal steps of career advance-

1 In this text, the spelling of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz's name follows legal conventions of the Second Austrian Republic, regardless of his birthplace in 1923 and related documents issued in what was then Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, the spelling of his name in certain other documents (e.g., as issued by the "Wehrmacht") is also ignored here, i.e., relating to the German citizenship imposed on families like his by the "Third Reich" between 1939 and 1945.

2 At that time Museum of Ethnology was the official English name, and the formal equivalent to its name in German, Museum für Völkerkunde. The museum was then a federal public (state) institution. In the early 21st century, it was transformed into a subdivision of the Museum of Art History complex (Kunsthistorisches Museum) with a semi-autonomous status, now re-baptized as the Weltmuseum Wien. By the quality and size of its collections, it is ranked among the top ten of continental Europe's socio-cultural anthropology museums.

3 The generous feedback of a number of experts and colleagues on earlier versions of this text is gratefully appreciated, in particular Hildegard Diemberger (University of Cambridge), Martin Gaenszle, Uwe Niebuhr (both: University of Vienna), Wolfgang Marschall (University of Bern), Barbara Plankensteiner (MARKK Hamburg), Peter Rohrbacher, Ernst Steinkellner (both: Austrian Academy of Sciences), Christian Schicklgruber (Weltmuseum Wien), as well as by Thomas Heine-Geldern and David Westacott (both: Vienna).

ment from his doctoral degree (1949) to his *Venia Docendi* (*Habilitation*)[4] (1955). This will then be combined with a characterization of main intellectual or, to put it more precisely, theoretical and methodological influences stemming from his local advisers in Vienna's socio-cultural anthropology institutions. The second section then will focus more closely on the processes that preceded and influenced his doctoral degree. The third section concludes the analysis with a detailed characterization of the institutional and methodological processes that helped to shape Nebesky-Wojkowitz's *Venia Docendi* thesis and its formal acceptance. It was subsequently published in a slightly revised version as his masterpiece, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*.[5]

Locating a biography

This section combines an overview of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's two degrees at the University of Vienna (1949, 1955) with a brief survey of main theoretical and methodological influences from local socio-cultural anthropology which inspired him to write the two associated works.

By the formal standards of the local Austrian academic landscape, in the summer of 1959 Nebesky-Wojkowitz had achieved the highest academic ranks available to him at his age. In early 1958 he took up a tenured federal academic position in the state Museum für Völkerkunde, which was socio-cultural anthropology's second major academic institution in Austria, after the University of Vienna's Institut für Völkerkunde. A few years earlier, Nebesky-Wojkowitz had obtained his *Venia Docendi* in 1955 at the University of Vienna in the same field, i.e., socio-cultural anthropology (*Völkerkunde*).[6]

Obtaining a *Venia Docendi* was no small accomplishment in German-speaking academia between the late 1940s and the late 1990s. From the outset, an applicant had to clearly specify the academic discipline or sub-discipline in which s/he intended to obtain the *Venia*. This submission included a second thesis (i.e., differing from the doctoral thesis), which was reviewed by a university committee established for that particular purpose. After a positive review and an ensuing hearing, the committee could then propose to higher authorities that the candidate's application should be accepted (with or without modifications.) If it was granted, the *Venia Docendi* then allowed the candidate to adopt a new academic title as part of his or her name, in addition to and higher than the doctoral title (Dr. phil.), and be addressed as "Dozent" (formally and abbreviated: "Univ.Doz." in Austria at the time).[7]

4 The term *Venia Docendi* is used throughout this text because it is more widely understood in English-speaking academia. In practice, the *Venia Legendi* and the *Venia Docendi* could differ across the German-speaking countries. Within post-WWII Austria as well, procedural rules and practices changed repeatedly.

5 As a published author, Nebesky-Wojkowitz often used a "de" before his family name, which was acceptable for an Austrian citizen only as a *nom d'artiste,* but not in any legal sense. Being a translation of the German "von," the "de" referred to his family's claims of aristocratic descent. While such a formal claim by a local citizen would have been illegal under Austrian Republican law at any rate after 1945, the family's corresponding claims had already been officially rejected under Imperial and Royal Habsburg rule before 1918 (see Nebeský 2006).

6 All references in this article to Nebesky-Wojkowitz's procedures for his doctoral degree (1949) and his *Venia Docendi* (1955) are based on the relevant files in the University of Vienna's archives (UAW), as specified in the section before this contribution's bibliography.

7 The title of Univ.-Doz. (literally, University Docent) may be translated as Associate Professor in the American sense.

The "Dozent" title before a scholar's name indicated that within the range covered by this *Venia*, s/he had the right to offer and hold any course at the relevant university. Moreover, this also included the scholar's academic right to responsibly supervise doctoral theses within the relevant fields, and last but not least, the *Venia* made a scholar formally eligible to respond to any public or private announcement for applications to open positions as a museum director or a full university professor.

These points must be specified in some detail to understand that by 1958, Nebesky-Wojkowitz had very clearly committed himself to an academic career in socio-cultural anthropology (*Völkerkunde*)[8] as an institutionalized baseline, which also included the kind of regional specialization that any professional socio-cultural anthropologist was expected to have. Nebesky-Wojkowitz had established himself thus as a socio-cultural anthropologist, both in an institutional professional sense (i.e., at the museum) as well as intellectually (i.e., through his *Venia*), with a Tibetan regional expertise. At the time of his death, Nebesky-Wojkowitz had therefore successfully passed an advanced twofold threshold, marked by the two events in 1955 (*Venia Docendi*) and 1958 (position as an academic staff member at the Museum für Völkerkunde). That threshold represented an "arrow of time" into an academic future and career that Nebesky-Wojkowitz would never be able to enact or experience. Yet the relevant "time arrow" into the future was based in a formalized potential that was institutionalized within academic socio-cultural anthropology during Nebesky-Wojkowitz's lifetime. This resulted from his intentional and successful application for the *Venia Docendi*, which certainly endorsed and facilitated his subsequent entry into the museum's academic staff.

In any regular academic career after World War II (WWII) in the west of the German-speaking areas eligiblity for a *Venia Docendi* had one decisive formal prerequisite: A candidate for the *Venia Docendi* normally first had to possess a corresponding doctoral degree in the same or related academic fields. Hence Nebesky-Wojkowitz's doctoral degree from 1949 was a necessary pre-condition for his passing the 1955/58 twofold threshold. This makes a second "time arrow" visible. Normally, it was impossible to cross threshold II without previously having crossed threshold I. After having received a doctoral degree, it was the researcher's choice whether s/he at some later point aspired towards a *Venia Docendi*, or whether the doctoral degree was sufficient. The *Venia Docendi* opened up a trajectory for even higher positions in academic life, but a majority refrained from this pursuit, or felt they were not encouraged enough to even try. In this specific sense of an optional pathway, a built-in procedural "time arrow" led by relative necessity from threshold I (1949) to threshold II (1955/58).

At this point it is important to observe that Nebesky-Wojkowitz formally obtained his doctoral degree at the University's Faculty of Philosophy "from," i.e., "*aus ZENTRALASIA-*

8 Until the 1960s, the field's name in German had been "Völkerkunde" with "Ethnologie" as its (etymologically Greek) synonym since the late 18th century. Originally, this featured some correspondence to the double designation for geography in German, i.e., "Erdkunde/Geographie." In view of how the term "Volk" had been abused before and during the Nazi years, the synonymous pair *Völkerkunde/Ethnologie* was eventually abandoned from the 1960s. Today, like current terminologies in Spanish or French, German equivalents to the prevailing term in English, "socio-cultural anthropology" (or variants thereof), have become most common. Like its equivalent in English, "Ethnographie" usually designated the more descriptive and fieldwork-based dimensions within socio-cultural anthropology (*Völkerkunde*).

TISCHER PHILOLOGIE UND ETHNOLOGIE in Verbindung mit ETHNOLOGIE," as the awkward German wording of the relevant document had it. This requires some translation and explanation. Literally, the phrase in German referred to a doctoral degree in the philology and ethnology of Central Asia, in combination with ethnology. The degree was basically a philosophy doctorate, acquired through a main discipline combined with a second qualification. This was based in a set of formal academic contexts. Any doctoral candidate in the University of Vienna's humanities and social sciences at the time was affiliated with the university's Faculty of Philosophy, hence s/he obtained a doctoral degree in philosophy. This in turn was always specified by a relevant main field (Hauptfach) (or: first "sub-field of philosophy") combined with a second (sub-)field (Nebenfach). In the case of Nebesky-Wojkowitz, that main ("philosophical" sub-) field was identified as "philology and ethnology of Central Asia," with (general) "ethnology" as his second (sub-) field.

It is therefore quite legitimate to argue that for his doctoral degree in 1949, Nebesky-Wojkowitz gave priority to Central Asian philology, which ranks first in the relevant assignment of his doctoral degree. By contrast, Central Asian ethnology ranks second after philology within his main field identification, while (general) ethnology is identified as his second field. In short, the formal ingredient of threshold I included a priority specification of (Central Asian) philology, which disappeared in any formal specifications for threshold II. In this narrow, formal sense of crucial degree specifications, the trajectories of Nebesky-Wojkowitz between 1949 and 1955/58 included a movement from a priority given to Central Asian philology (in combination with the ethnology/socio-cultural anthropology of Central Asia) to a priority given to general ethnology/socio-cultural anthropology (with Tibetan studies as his regional specialization). That shift comprised elements of institutional affiliations, as well as elements of intellectual academic accomplishments. In a strictly formal sense, that progression led from completing his studies at Vienna University with a doctoral degree (primarily in philology) to obtaining the *Venia Docendi* (primarily in socio-cultural anthropology) and entering the museum as a tenured staff member.

The present analysis aims to demonstrate that in practice, however, Nebesky-Wojkowitz moved "between" the ethnography and philology of his time. It would be inadequate and in fact misleading to interpret the biographical development of Nebesky-Wojkowitz from 1949 to 1955/58 as a movement "from" (e.g., an earlier stage of engaging with) philology "away towards" (e.g., a later stage of) engaging with ethnology/*Völkerkunde*/socio-cultural anthropology. This inadequate interpretation would erroneously substitute formal academic accomplishments, as real as they were, for a brilliant scholar's actual academic practices. In contrast to such an erroneous interpretation, the present endeavor sets out to show that socio-cultural anthropology remained one continuous crucial factor within a wider field in this academic career. In that wider field, philology was the other continuous crucial factor of orientation and inspiration in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's professional life. In this sense, he moved "between" philology and ethnography by examining and interpreting texts in contexts.

This initial overview of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's formal academic qualifications in Vienna can now be usefully combined with a brief survey of the methodological and theoretical influences for which his two main local advisers stood. They both represented varieties of

what has been designated as the secular version of historical diffusionism in German-speaking *Völkerkunde*.[9] Robert Bleichsteiner was the official first advisor to Nebesky-Wojkowitz's 1949 doctoral thesis, and Robert Heine-Geldern (1885–1968) was the main mentor[10] for his second thesis, submitted for his *Venia Docendi* in 1955. Both were leading representatives in Vienna's main *Völkerkunde* institutions (with regional specializations in different parts of Asia); hence both were seen as well qualified to teach and supervise in this field. At the same time, however, both had received some of their respective, early education in neighboring subjects – Bleichsteiner primarily in literary and linguistic fields, and Heine-Geldern in art history and archeology. The detailed reasons for choosing these advisors will be discussed in sections two and three. Here it is sufficient to emphasize that both combined an adherence to varieties of secular diffusionism within *Völkerkunde* with an explicit openness to, and familiarity with, wide ranges of neighboring fields.

Below the surface of their heterogeneity and diversity, the various directions of German-speaking *Völkerkunde* since the second half of the 19th century had emerged by largely sharing a basic paradigm. This conceived of local cultures as processual entities with interconnections to the outside world. Based on that premise local cultures were primarily seen as the interplay of their two main dimensions – i.e., mental (or: immaterial) and material culture (geistige und materielle Kultur),[11] [12] the interplay being mediated through language. This specific paradigmatic emphasis had much to do with the discipline's late 19th century institutional background in museums and in archives, and with a long prevalent history of "armchair anthropology" in which the experts at home received reports and collections of objects and documents from travelers and missionaries abroad. This research priority for language and through language on material and mental culture had its advantages – such as a particular, historicizing attention for local meanings, a special emphasis on local and regional values including religion, and some concern for local knowledge including technologies. During a post-imperial era of quasi-national legacies in socio-cultural anthropology, this particular paradigm indeed was characteristic for *Völkerkunde* roughly between 1910 and 1960. Yet by and large these concerns simultaneously implied some disregard for other topics that were not assigned the same kind of priority, e.g., most aspects of social relations including power. After World War I (WWI) a new concern for ethnographic fieldwork gradually emerged also among a minority of socio-cultural anthropologists in German-speaking anthropology. The rising interest in fieldwork interrelated with a growing concern for

9 Gingrich 2005 and 2010a.

10 A formally established first advisor was not required for this second thesis. On the contrary, it was expected that the candidate demonstrated through this second thesis his or her ability to envision and successfully execute a major academic project independently from, and without any substantial assistance by, others. Yet informally, it was indispensable to have at least one senior supporter in the higher echelons of academia who was competent in related regional and topical fields and could testify for the core qualities of such a thesis. For a sympathizer's early overview of Heine-Geldern's career, see the obituary by Jettmar (1969).

11 See Gingrich 2017.

12 Mental culture is the term most commonly used in English as the best academic disciplinary translation for "geistige Kultur." Possible alternatives – such as ideational or spiritual culture – have met little acceptance so far. In analogous efforts, the United Nations in its terminology has opted for the (negative) phrase of "intangible" (i.e., "immaterial," as distinguished from "tangible" or "material") heritage or culture.

contemporary matters and a gradual shrinking of the museums' influence as the discipline's main institutional sites. Yet despite these gradual changes, the paradigmatic emphasis upon language at the intersection between mental and material culture survived WWII to continue its now weakened dominance in German-speaking *Völkerkunde* outside the communist domain. That weakened paradigmatic emphasis had its most stable anchor among the diffusionist directions in the discipline.

In the western parts of German-speaking academic landscapes, research orientations other than diffusionism were also present in the major institutions of *Völkerkunde* during the first decade after 1945. German-speaking functionalism had a few followers elsewhere, but since Fürer-Haimendorf's 1939 departure from Europe[13] this direction was no longer represented in Vienna's disciplinary sites. Explicitly Marxist approaches in anthropology either had been destroyed or pushed into exile under the Nazi regime, while after 1945 some of them preferred a career in East Germany. Cultural morphology, a phenomenology-inspired research direction, had its main center in Frankfurt but had no followers of relevance in Vienna. By and large, one or the other variety of diffusionism thus prevailed in most sectors of Vienna's *Völkerkunde* during the late 1940s and into the early to mid-1950s. Basically, diffusionism was a historical methodological approach cutting across several fields of the humanities. It worked with the primary assumption that crucial innovations usually started from one or merely a few centers of origin, spreading from there by historical processes through wider circles (hence the term culture circles or *Kulturkreise*), into peripheries and more remote zones – like ripples on a pond that spread out after a stone has been thrown into the water. In one way or another, all three main varieties of diffusionism in the German language area agreed on the importance of culture circles – but they disagreed about the innermost circle (or the "stone" thrown into the water).

One variety claimed that superior "races" were at the center of cultural influences expanding across areas and periods. After 1945, that racist variety in Vienna's *Völkerkunde* was either shattered or it went into hiding. A second variety claimed God's original Creation as the innermost circle. This idea inspired the theological, Catholic variety of diffusionism, embodied in the so-called (Vienna) school of culture circle theory. Although gradually fading in the decade following WWII, this variety was still influential in several Catholic countries and had one of its main strongholds in and around Vienna. At the time of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's two career steps in 1949 and 1955, Wilhelm Koppers (1886–1961) led this theological variety as Full Professor and Director of the University of Vienna's Institut für Völkerkunde.[14] The third variety was secular diffusionism, represented most prominently in Vienna by Nebesky-Wojkowitz's mentors and advisors for his first and second academic qualification theses. They operated on the general thesis that complex civilizations functioned as the innermost circle of diffusion. In an implicit or explicit manner, followers of secular diffusionism thus advocated a model in which local cultural entities were seen as embedded either within wider landscapes of civilizational zones, or at their outer margins and by various distances beyond.

13 Gingrich 2021.

14 For the theological and academic career of Wilhelm Koppers, consult Brandewie 1990 and Blumauer 2021 along with Rohrbacher 2021a.

Any local ethnographic cultural setting in an empirical investigation carried out under these premises was seen as having interacted, and continuing to interact, through external links with influences from wider civilizational realms and other cultural areas. These interactions were adopted and locally integrated, and they were passed on to others. In practice, theological and secular diffusionists shared several empirical ambitions, especially with regard to distinguishing more ancient from more recent elements of local culture by means of a number of analytical criteria concerning quality, form, and quantity. This was partly related to the basic handbook on which both directions had built their respective records – Fritz Graebner's (1911) *Methode der Ethnologie*. Secular diffusionists sought to advance and elaborate Graebner's tradition as his direct intellectual successors. By contrast, theological diffusionists primarily relied on the *Handbuch der kulturhistorischen Methode der Ethnologie*, which Wilhelm Schmidt had published together with Wilhelm Koppers (1937) as an updated and theologically re-interpreted second continuation of Graebner's legacy. Theological diffusionists chose hunter-gatherer societies as primary hosts and sites for their fieldwork endeavors to pursue their overriding interests in identifying ancient cultural elements that would still feature traces of God's Creation. By contrast, secular diffusionists preferred sites that would reflect long-lasting impulses from ancient civilizations, together with local and regional factors. Both directions nevertheless shared a common interest in discovering relative local chronologies among more recent and more ancient cultural elements and layers in a given cultural setting.

For the kind of secular diffusionism represented by Nebesky-Wojkowitz's two mentors and advisors in his doctoral and *Venia Docendi* theses, an assessment of language, values, text, scripture, related beliefs in local and wider non-human beings, and ensuing practices of ritual and ceremonial bodily enactment represented the relevant spectrum of mental culture. These elements of mental culture were key topics for secular diffusionism in such a regional context. With regard to material culture, the elements that would more or less directly relate to mental culture (e.g., masks or drums) mattered more for the analysis than other aspects of material culture (such as interacting with certain environmental constraints). If a student first of Bleichsteiner and subsequently of Heine-Geldern chose to specialize in the anthropology of religion, then these main elements of mental culture and their material correlates would necessarily have to be primary topics in a Tibetan-speaking Buddhist context. Questions about these elements' relative historical age (including queries about their origins) would be central to the endeavor, and some of the elements chosen as topics were more promising than others for providing insights to answer these questions. Not only as a young Tibetan studies expert, but also as someone academically educated in the last period of German-speaking secular diffusionism (in philology as well as in "ethnology"), Nebesky-Wojkowitz had to be interested in language and text. Through describing and understanding language and text, the ethnographic focus would have to scrutinize how non-human beings interacted with humans and with each other. Among those non-human beings, local deities, spirits, demons and related popular beliefs were potentially more interesting for identifying relative chronologies (including the most ancient layers of local cultures) than superior and supreme non-human beings.

Local perceptions of High Gods would potentially embody traces of ancient legacies of God's Creation for theological diffusionists. By contrast, secular diffusionists like Nebesky-Wojkowitz tended to interpret elements of Superior God/desse/s as being more frequently associated with recent layers of scripturally induced imports through external influences. Hence secular diffusionists were primarily interested in identifying how High Gods were seen in texts and rituals through their relations to other non-human beings beneath them. What mattered for secular diffusionists was how superior forces were perceived as having subordinated (or "tamed") inferior forces, what they might have appropriated from and what they had left to them – in all of these beings' interactions with humans. In short, minor and lower deities and other beings or forces had to be a crucial topic of interest for a socio-cultural anthropologist with these institutional and intellectual backgrounds, combined with corresponding regional expertise that included an interest in vernacular systems of classification, e.g., worldly deities and deities "beyond the world."

Hierarchy as a structuring element in practiced cosmologies was therefore a methodological element in any sound analysis of a secular diffusionist investigation during the 1940s and 1950s. In certain ways, these approaches addressed a number of general ideas about ideological hierarchies that were beginning to become central in anthropological debates at the time. To an extent, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's reflections were not far from considering, or anticipating, core elements of Louis Dumont's responses and alternatives to Claude Lévi-Strauss's analyses of value systems in French anthropology – beginning at about the same time[15] but brought to the foreground about a decade later.[16] In another way, members of the last generation of young secular diffusionists like Nebesky-Wojkowitz were already addressing the interrelation between the written and the oral, a problem that would forcefully reemerge as a crucial theme of anthropological concern in British academia through Jack Goody's (e.g., 1968) and Ernest Gellner's (1959, 1969) works of the 1960s and thereafter. In several of Goody's and Gellner's early works on that theme, scripturalism and oral tradition often were seen in somewhat too rigid a dichotomy to each other, allegedly representing entirely distinct logics. It was only at a relatively late stage that the interface between both was recognized and appreciated in this British record of anthropology.

For secular diffusionists, written texts and manuscripts did not from the outset represent any exclusive manifestation of "Great Traditions," as early and simple interpretations on the topic often had it in British (and related) anthropological approaches. Instead, local traditions could be relevant in scriptural traditions just as much as "big" elements from distant civilizations could have become de-scripturalized elements integrated into local oral traditions. Hence it may be reasonably argued that some key methodological elements in works like those by Nebesky-Wojkowitz came close to already anticipating core elements of what Goody and Gellner discussed during a fairly advanced phase of their debates some twenty years later. In fact, Nebesky-Wojkowitz treated the interplay between the oral and the written in a much more dialogical and at the same time systematic manner. From the outset, his interests included the local as reflected in written text, and the scriptural as represented in local and vernacular enactment.

15 Dumont 1953.

16 Dumont 1966.

If we leave his two academic theses aside, these priority concerns also are reflected in the themes of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's published scholarly articles. Apart from two reports (a literary review and a research travel account), this list includes 18 articles between 1947 and 1959. Two early articles (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1947, 1949a) – typically, as has been shown – address grammar and poetry, and *bon po*, which Nebesky-Wojkowitz, like many authors before and after him, understood as a wide category including significant layers of pre-Buddhist and early Buddhist legacies. Subsequent articles (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1952a, 1952e, 1953) on the Lepchas, with their strong presence of pre-Buddhist legacies, addressed their "ancient funeral ceremonies," "marriage songs," and hunting and fishing practices. His articles in fairly prominent anthropological journals (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1952b, 1952c, 1952d) addressed themes of wider Tibetan significance, each with an emphasis on possibly ancient legacies – i.e., examples of a "protective deity," of "drum divination," and "prehistoric beads." In sum, this amounted to almost half of the author's relevant articles.

These articles' main themes and emphases visibly reflected the author's interest in identifying and analyzing topics that might relate less to recent, but instead to more ancient layers of Tibetan cultural history.[17] He very clearly situated these themes within their spoken and ritually enacted performance as well as within their textual representation and addressed them within local and wider regional contexts. These priorities in a substantial part of his articles also shed additional light on his main book publication: *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* focuses predominantly on lesser Tibetan divinities and related rituals, as well as on oracles and divination, weather-making, black magic, protective rites and – last but not least – shamanism. These were in fact not only classical priority topics of German-speaking secular diffusionism; simultaneously they were classical religious topics of socio-cultural anthropology in general. What was diffusionist in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's approach was not primarily these selections of topics per se, but some of the main questions by which he addressed them – i.e., the search for ancient layers of local cultures, and for relative chronologies in wider, external connections.[18] This was also reflected in the author's interest in vernacular narratives about the Buddhification of Tibetan landscapes (including issues such as mountain deities).

In that sense, Nebesky-Wojkowitz indeed followed some of the classical priorities of German-speaking secular diffusionism in the late phase of its *Völkerkunde* version. What made that volume, however, a fascinating challenge for philologists and other Tibetan studies experts – while for decades to come it remained an almost inaccessible riddle for general socio-cultural anthropology – were the author's very limited attempts to make the book comprehensible to anybody without Tibetan language expertise.[19] This also reflected his close collaboration with Tibetan scholars. In terms of terminological contents, it may well be argued that the author first and foremost addressed Tibetologists in his second thesis, while he cared little for any interests of other socio-cultural anthropologists (including his future University of Vienna committee members). His hermetic terminology was the

17 See also Gaenszle, this volume.

18 The point on Nebesky-Wojkowitz's specific interest in early and pre-Buddhist elements was rightfully observed by neutral contemporary reviewers such as Wayman 1957.

19 Snellgrove 1958; see also Bell, this volume.

primary reason why Nebesky-Wojkowitz's name would for a long time to come be much more widely appreciated among Tibetologists and Tibetan studies experts than among socio-cultural anthropologists of other regional and linguistic specializations.

A wider, more general remark seems to be appropriate to conclude this first section. In the post-war history of socio-cultural anthropology in Europe, many prominent cases of anthropologists who achieved wide recognition in one or several neighboring fields are known. Two prominent names have already been indicated. In the Francophone spheres and beyond, Claude Lévi-Strauss gained significant recognition from the 1960s in fields like literary studies and philosophy – whose representatives, in turn, were sometimes not even aware that Lévi-Strauss continued a career in socio-cultural anthropology. In the Anglophone world, Ernest Gellner's work on nationalism achieved substantial prominence in political sciences and history from the 1980s, while many actors in those fields were not quite sure which field Ernst Gellner was actually practicing. By and large socio-cultural anthropologists have tended to respond in serene and composed manners to such partial and provisional ignorance about their prominent representatives' professional background and institutional basis. What mattered more, after all, was that interesting anthropological ideas and innovations were in fact significant enough in their time to enter vibrant neighboring fields, promoting some cross-fertilization and introducing some innovation there as well. Similar crucial aspects also are relevant in assessing the biography and the works of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz with regard to the fascinating global field of Tibetan studies, and in particular to their philological and historical branches.

On these basic premises of interdisciplinary interactions in the humanities, which the present text seeks to share and to promote, the case of Nebesky-Wojkowitz still differs in some ways from the two just mentioned. Leaving differences in public and media awareness aside, the name of Nebesky-Wojkowitz and his work deserve better recognition inside socio-cultural anthropology, despite his hermetic tendencies concerning Tibetan language skills. His work may be due for re-reading and re-interpretation as an important pioneering voice from the German-speaking world, addressing core interests of general socio-cultural anthropology. Therefore, the present text not only is offered to readers from Tibetan studies to convince them that Nebesky-Wojkowitz was pursuing an interesting anthropological agenda that was useful in Tibetan studies. Closer to home, this text simultaneously addresses socio-cultural anthropologists with the aim of convincing them that Tibetan studies are valuable and interesting for socio-cultural anthropologists, and that Nebesky-Wojkowitz was indeed a fascinating representative of their own, entire field.

Academic institutional settings, up to 1949

The following section returns to the institutional settings framing Nebesky-Wojkowitz's 1949 doctoral degree through a closer assessment of his advisors' and examiners' main interests regarding his doctoral dissertation project.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's *Dissertationsschrift* or doctoral thesis[20] *Schriftwesen, Buchdruck und Papierherstellung bei den Tibetern*[21] (Scripture, Book Printing and Paper Production among the Tibetans) was written in German (as was still obligatory at the time). With this choice of topic, he indeed became a substantial precursor of wider interests in literary artefacts and technologies, in the sense that books in Asia, like elsewhere, were not only interesting as texts but also as material objects.[22] No commitment to publish the corresponding thesis was required to obtain a doctoral degree in Austria during the late 1940s, and during the author's lifetime he did not pursue such a book project. The very last paper he published before his untimely death, in English, however, picked up central themes and arguments from his dissertation, and further elaborated on them (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1958). Like that article, his 1949 thesis referred in part to Tibetan blockprints and manuscripts in the Museum für Völkerkunde's collections in Vienna. In fact, between 1947 and 1949 Nebesky-Wojkowitz had already submitted and published three early articles in German (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1947, 1948, 1949a) in the Museum für Völkerkunde's main scholarly journal (to this day), the *Archiv für Völkerkunde* (renamed as the *Archiv Weltmuseum Wien* in 2013). The publication formats of these three articles, together with some of their contents and related intersections with local museum collections, testify to the author's basic association with the Vienna Museum für Völkerkunde from his years as a doctoral student. Indeed, he had also repeatedly served as a part-time academic volunteer and student assistant at the museum before 1949.[23]

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's basic early association with the local Museum für Völkerkunde is substantiated and illustrated by the important fact that the first advisor and reviewer of his doctoral thesis and additionally the first examiner at his *Rigorosen* (doctoral exams) was the museum's director Robert Bleichsteiner (1891–1954). In many ways, Bleichsteiner was indeed Nebesky-Wojkowitz's local teacher.[24] Robert Bleichsteiner was in fact one of only a few available options in Vienna's academic landscape in the second half of the 1940s

20 In the German-speaking countries, the term "Ph.D. thesis" was officially introduced only as a consequence of the European Union's 1999 Bologna Declaration. Prior to that, academic degrees had their own terminologies in German and in English, whereby they were not always considered legitimate equivalents to a Ph.D. degree in the English-speaking world. In a historical study addressing German-speaking academia before 1999, it is therefore more precise to refer not to Ph.D., but to doctoral theses (or dissertations), to doctoral exams (*Rigorosen*) and degrees (*Doktorat*).

21 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1949b.

22 Diemberger et al. 2016.

23 Becker-Donner 1959: 1.

24 Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1954: 271) referred to Bleichsteiner *expressis verbis* as his "honored teacher." In her obituary for Nebesky-Wojkowitz, Etta Becker-Donner also stated (in German) that "he was a disciple of Prof. Robert Bleichsteiner" (Becker-Donner 1959: 1, my translation). Becker-Donner (1911–1975), a museum staff member since 1938, became Robert Bleichsteiner's successor as museum director in 1955, subsequently remaining in office for twenty years. She was the first woman in Austria to hold such a position at any federal museum (Plankensteiner 2021).

during Nebesky-Wojkowitz's initial search for a possible doctoral advisor in Tibetan studies. The philologist in Sanskrit and Buddhist studies Erich Frauwallner was still suspended from university service (until 1951) because of his previous affinities with the Nazi regime.[25] Besides, neither Frauwallner nor his temporary substitutes were sufficiently available or interested in Tibetan studies *strictu sensu* to promise the kind of inspiration Nebesky-Wojkowitz was looking for with a Tibetan doctoral topic in mind. Although he had attended quite a few philological (and wider linguistic) courses and seminars, no qualified first doctoral advisor emerged from these interactions with local comparative or regional philologists in Asian Studies. In his search for second-best alternatives elsewhere, Nebesky-Wojkowitz evidently encountered Bleichsteiner early during his doctoral studies.

Bleichsteiner's academic profile was not ideal for Nebesky-Wojkowitz's interests in engaging a competent academic advisor, but he did meet the basic prerequisites better than any alternatives that may have been in sight. Bleichsteiner had never been to Central Asia or the Tibetan-speaking areas, but at least he was actively interested in the region and in several aspects of its religious practices – as testified by one major popular book publication from more than a decade earlier,[26] in addition to several overview articles.[27] Moreover, in 1941, Bleichsteiner (with Walther Heissig and Wilhelm A. Unkrig) had also co-authored a German-Mongolian dictionary, including a short chapter on grammar and spoken-language examples (Bleichsteiner and Heissig 1941). For years he worked on translating (without ever publishing) the poems of the 6th Dalai Lama, which indicates that he did possess a certain competence in reading Tibetan.[28] Because of his role in the Austrian anti-Nazi resistance, in 1945 Bleichsteiner had been promoted from deputy to full director at the Museum für Völkerkunde, and for the same basic reason, he played a leading role in the Austrian-Soviet Society, which entertained good relations with the communist countries of Eastern Europe and Asia. It cannot be entirely excluded that initially, these political aspects also figured as indicators for future possibilities in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's choice of Bleichsteiner as his first advisor. With eastern Austria still largely under Red Army administration, except for Vienna which was under joint administration of the four allied powers, it was at least no disadvantage in post-1945 Vienna to have a prominent doctoral advisor whom many regarded as a pro-Soviet sympathizer.

Bleichsteiner had already been awarded his *Venia Docendi* in the early 1920s (in Caucasus Studies), and as acting museum director, he was also promoted to *professor extraordinarius* at the University of Vienna in 1947. On that basis, he regularly offered courses in Asian folklore and linguistics precisely during the years when Nebesky-Wojkowitz was studying.[29] With his *Venia Docendi* assignments and his *extraordinarius* contract, Bleichsteiner presented these courses for several study programs at the University of Vienna, covering those in *Orientalistik* ("oriental studies," including the philologies and cultural histories of several parts of Asia) and in *Völkerkunde*. Through his association with this doctoral supervisor,

25 Stuchlik 2009.

26 Bleichsteiner 1937.

27 The title of Bleichsteiner's 1937 popular book (later also published in French) can be translated as "The Yellow Church: Mysteries of Buddhist Monasteries in India, Tibet, Mongolia, and China."

28 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1953–1955: 270.

29 Mühlfried and Schweitzer 2021.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz thereby positioned himself even more explicitly "between" Asian philologies and ethnography *cum* socio-cultural anthropology – at this point, it has been indicated from the outset, in closer proximity to philological studies of Central Asia.

However, Bleichsteiner had very little experience in ethnographic fieldwork. His most substantial encounters in that regard had occurred among the Tsar's Caucasian and Central Asian army staff members in the Austro-Hungarian POW camps during WWI,[30] which inspired his life-long regional specialization in Caucasian languages, folklore, literature, and cultural history. Basically, however, Bleichsteiner was an "armchair anthropologist" who personally visited the Caucasian regions – unavoidably with Soviet sponsoring – only late in life, once in 1950. Together with his theoretical orientation, his limited familiarity with fieldwork largely excluded various alternative research priorities for topics such as kinship relations, gendered everyday interactions, or legal practices such as those related to inheritance or property rights.

With his additional regional interests in Central Asian and Tibetan matters, Bleichsteiner's topical emphasis as a doctoral advisor would indeed focus on language, and through language and literature, an explicit interest in a few other main fields such as religion and folklore, but also material culture. The dimension of material culture was near to Bleichsteiner despite his lack of fieldwork experience, due to his work as a museum director hosting huge collections of material objects, but in all likelihood also because of his – in fact, remarkably unstable – sympathies with Soviet and Marxian perspectives. In a wider sense, Bleichsteiner thereby represented the mildly materialist version within a general preponderance of diffusionism in German-speaking anthropology before and after the Nazi years. The general emphasis, it has been pointed out, primarily focussed on mental and material culture (geistige und materielle Kultur) as that widely shared paradigmatic consensus in the German-speaking parts of the discipline. From this vantage point, a dense correspondence does indeed become apparent between Nebesky-Wojkowitz's early association with the museum and his director. After all, his doctoral thesis focussed on language, on writing in print and its material prerequisites, and on the role of scripture in the mental sides of Tibetan culture.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's 1949 doctoral exams consisted of a major and a minor component. The minor part was in philosophy, since his field of doctoral qualification was classified as a subfield at the Faculty of Philosophy, and he passed this by mid-October with best grades. The major part of his *Rigorosen* had already taken place in late June.[31] Alongside his first examiner Robert Bleichsteiner, Nebesky-Wojkowitz also had to face separate partial exams with his second examiner, Wilhelm Czermak, and with Wilhelm Koppers as third examiner. Wilhelm Czermak (1889–1953) was at his core a comparative linguist with expertise in African and other non-European languages, and an Egyptologist. His linguistic fieldwork experience was also rooted in his WWI assignments in the Middle East, but then trans-

30 Lange 2021; Gingrich 2010b.

31 UAW, PH RA 17.172; Bleichsteiner, 17.6.1949; Czermak, 19.6.1949. The records register these three exams as being carried out within one day. Students' oral history (including that of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's junior fellow student Walter Dostal) relate different practices, meant to somewhat ease the pressure upon candidates. The "three partial exams in one day" record thereby could hide a common practice of those decades, i.e., actually spreading partial exams across several days but formally registering them on one single date.

cended those. During WWII he had continued to serve as a more or less loyal University of Vienna professor under Hitler, while occasionally maintaining some skeptical distance from the regime. This had led to his promotion to first Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy after 1945.[32] In this function, he had also been responsible for preparing Bleichsteiner's 1947 contract as *professor extraordinarius*. At the time of his death, Czermak was also serving as president (Rektor) of the University of Vienna, and as chair of the all-Austrian conference of university presidents (1952/53). Including Czermak as a second reviewer and second advisor in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's 1949 doctoral committee therefore served two purposes very well. First, it substantiated the academic legitimacy and quality regarding comparative linguistic standards in Nebesky-Wojkowitz doctoral thesis and his professional profile. Second, it offered the kind of institutional support at the University of Vienna by a Full Professor, Dean and upcoming "Rektor" which Bleichsteiner as an *Extraordinarius* from the Museum für Völkerkunde could not provide.

If Czermak backed the first dimension, the philological and linguistic qualifications, in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's doctoral degree, then Wilhelm Koppers substantiated its second dimension in general socio-cultural anthropology. Formally, Bleichsteiner and Czermak were "first and second examiners" in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's "Hauptfach" (main subject), i.e., the philology and ethnology of Central Asia. By contrast, Koppers was the only examiner in the candidate's "Nebenfach" (second subject), i.e., general ethnology. Although he too was approaching retirement, in 1955 Wilhelm Koppers (1886–1961) was the only one of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's doctoral examiners still alive and able to then serve in a crucial function for the candidate's *Venia Docendi* procedures.

Koppers was a widely known and respected, conservative celebrity in German-speaking academia and in Austrian society. In the second half of 1945, he had returned from exile in Switzerland to Vienna to re-assume the Full Professor position from which he had been dismissed by the Nazis after Austria's "Anschluss" in March 1938. As the founding director (1928/29) of Vienna University's Institut für Völkerkunde, Koppers continued to be widely appreciated in socio-cultural anthropology internationally, as one of only a few prominent non- and anti-Nazi voices among the German-speaking proponents of the discipline – regardless of growing criticism regarding the so-called Vienna school of culture circle theory. Koppers had emerged as the junior companion to Wilhelm Schmidt in academic *Völkerkunde* and in the Catholic *Societas Verbi Divini* (SVD) missionary order. As Catholic priests and scholars, Schmidt and Koppers had elaborated the Vienna school of culture circle theory (Wiener Schule der Kulturkreislehre), i.e., the theologically grounded version of historical diffusionist theories in German-language *Völkerkunde*.[33] Between 1928 and 1938, Koppers had still served as first examiner of almost any doctoral exam at "his" Institut für Völkerkunde. This reflected the rigid orientation of the *Kulturkreislehre* not only as a pro-Catholic doctrine, but also of the pro-Mussolini sympathies of some of its key representatives.[34] In 1949, however, Koppers was satisfied to serve as the "Nebenfach" examiner of a candidate whose qualifications did indeed intersect with his own field, while

32 Gütl 2015.

33 Brandewie 1990; Blumauer 2021.

34 Blumauer 2021.

obviously not pursuing his own theological version of the *Kulturkreislehre*. Not only did this correspond to the candidate's positioning "between" first, philology and second, ethnology with ethnography; it also corresponded to Koppers' own transformation during and after WWII towards more pluralist and dialogical orientations within socio-cultural anthropology and beyond. After 1945, as long as a candidate was sufficiently prepared to properly and intelligently answer Koppers' well-informed and precise questions in comparative and general ethnography *cum* socio-cultural anthropology, they would pass – regardless of whether the candidate did or did not accept the Vienna school of culture circle theory. Nebesky-Wojkowitz indeed passed each of his three partial exams with "excellence" as the best grading. In the case of Koppers, this was not self-evident since he was well-known as a meticulous and rigid examiner.

Considering Koppers' role also in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's 1955 *Venia Docendi* process, it is extremely unlikely that his support for and interest in the candidate's two theses was limited to institutional affairs. Koppers' academic and intellectual standing was such that his personal scrutiny was required in such matters. He did in fact himself read and properly assess any thesis that he might support with his word and signature as a scholarly achievement. Anticipation of this known fact implied a specific enhancement of certain aspects in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's doctoral thesis, especially with regard to the comparative anthropology of religion in Asia and to layers of relative chronologies in local and regional culture. In addition to these conceptual aspects, Koppers was also the only scholar among Nebesky-Wojkowitz's trio of doctoral examiners whose academic biography featured a fairly substantial record of ethnographic fieldwork. His major experiences in the field included investigations in Tierra del Fuego during the early 1920s and in Central India (1938/39). These fieldwork sojourns did not quite match the field's international standards as set by its US and UK representatives, but they were much more substantial than Bleichsteiner's.

Academic and institutional settings until the Venia Docendi (1955)

Once he had completed his doctoral degree, any further professional advancement apparently required Nebesky-Wojkowitz to establish, consolidate and promote his own field experience – both in its philological and linguistic, and in its ethnographic dimensions. Without adding conspicuously valid field experience he would forever remain an armchair philologist and an inexperienced ethnographer at a time when this was becoming less and less acceptable internationally for a professional career in both fields. His senior and junior colleagues in philological and linguistic studies had certainly convinced Nebesky-Wojkowitz of the need to master relevant skills in actual field speech practices as perfectly as possible as much as in manuscript interpretations and linguistic theorizing. Among his colleagues in *Völkerkunde*, it has been shown that with the exception of Koppers, any insistence upon improved ethnographic field experience was weaker and less explicit among his local senior mentors. It appears that in this field his junior colleagues from the same and adjacent generations of Viennese student cohorts represented the much more decisive voices arguing against the continuation of armchair anthropology, and instead for substantial ethnographic fieldwork. Ten years Nebesky-Wojkowitz's senior, Walther Heissig (1913–2005) had also been one of Bleichsteiner's mentees and a decisive co-author of the 1941 Mongolian dictio-

nary. Heissig's record at the time included an ample and heterogeneous range of known and clandestine field experience.[35] Nebesky-Wojkowitz certainly knew about some of this. Closer to his own generation of students, his junior colleague and personal friend Walter Dostal (1928–2011)[36] was already actively preparing for his own first field investigations in Arabia in 1956.[37] Nebesky-Wojkowitz was part of a generation of junior socio-cultural anthropologists who broke with earlier methodological legacies in German-speaking socio-cultural anthropology by clearly prioritizing ethnographic fieldwork for their postdoctoral qualification. They knew that, in the emerging international academic contexts of the western world during the incipient Cold War period, they would have no professional future without good fieldwork records, and without publishing at least some of those main results in English.

The period between threshold I (1949) and threshold II (1955/58) in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's professional biography is indeed marked by this necessity to increasingly transcend the manuscript archives, the university's lecture hall and the museum's collections. Several of his mentors were nearing retirement. In terms of leading staff members, the Museum für Völkerkunde and Vienna University's two relevant units, *Orientalistik* and *Völkerkunde*, were moving into transitional phases. It was foreseeable that sooner or later, vacancies would appear in either field – openings for which a young candidate's application had to feature exceptional qualifications, including masterful language expertise and a visible fieldwork record. Thus, Nebesky-Wojkowitz intensified relevant international contacts and spent some time in Rome with the leading expert in Tibetan studies, Giuseppe Tucci. He also first met Christoph Fürer-Haimendorf at the London SOAS in May 1950.[38] In July 1950, he accompanied the Austro-American botanist, explorer and linguist Joseph F. Rock (1884–1962)[39] as his assistant through Kashmir and West Bengal. This was followed by his extensive participation in Prince Peter's Royal Danish Central Asian expedition[40] and his crucial field sojourn in Kalimpong[41] and among the Lepcha close to the Sino-Tibetan border until 1953.[42]

35 At the end of WWII, Heissig (whose first examiner during the Nazi years had been Hermann Baumann, i.e., the Vienna *Völkerkunde* institute's director installed by the Nazis) was charged and sentenced in Shanghai 1946/47 by a US American military court for espionage. He was released early, returned to Europe and eventually became one of the West's leading experts in Mongolian studies (Dedryvère 2018). Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1954: 270) briefly mentioned the Mongolian dictionary in his obituary for Bleichsteiner.

36 Walter Dostal was this author's first doctoral advisor (until 1979). He was the second successor to Koppers as director of the University of Vienna's Institut für Völkerkunde (subsequently re-named as the Department of Social and Cultural Anthropology), where I served as his assistant (1980–1990), and he was my predecessor (until 1996) as Full Professor there.

37 Gingrich and Haas 2007.

38 "Dr. Nebesky ist hier & macht allgemein einen sehr guten Eindruck." (Letter by C. Fürer-Haimendorf to W. Koppers, May 10th 1950). I thank Peter Rohrbacher for this copy from the Koppers papers in the SVD's Rome archives. After a decade in India, Fürer-Haimendorf had taken on his first academic position in England during the preceding year (Gingrich 2021). In fact, Fürer-Haimendorf had been one of Heine-Geldern's first Vienna Ph.D. students before the war, and Nebesky-Wojkowitz would be one of his last post-Doc mentees after 1945.

39 Aris 1992.

40 Becker-Donner 1959: 1.

41 See Oppitz, this volume.

42 During our joint fieldwork sojourns of the early 1980s in Saudi Arabia, Walter Dostal repeatedly mentioned a field diary that Nebesky-Wojkowitz had frequently consulted in Dostal's presence during their casual professional conversations. Dostal spoke of it as an excellent example of how to carry out good

In 1953/54 he worked on Lepcha manuscripts at the Leiden Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde.[43]

Despite certain limitations regarding linguistic, social and regional diversity, the enduring significance of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's empirical and analytical results from his fieldwork seems to remain beyond doubt among most experts in Tibetan studies. In addition to that, however, the innovations introduced through his fieldwork methods also deserve wide recognition. To some extent, they emerged from his systematic and dialogical approach to interrelations between scriptural and oral legacies in the field. He elaborated that approach during his fieldwork sojourns into an innovative pattern of interactions between the fieldworker and his hosts, among whom spiritual leaders and well-informed lamas became his main partners in fieldwork as a learning process. In that sense, Nebesky-Wojkowitz became one among a few international pioneers who transformed the Malinowskian model of distanciated ethnographic fieldwork in local languages towards a new methodological phase in the history of ethnographic fieldwork. That new phase was characterized by the re-invention of the fieldworker as the hosts' disciple, and by a profoundly respectful acceptance of local hosts as the fieldworker's superior guides and spiritual instructors. This may appear as self-evident in the early 21st century, but it came close to a methodological paradigm shift during the 1950s. Nebesky-Wojkowitz's close field encounters with highly educated Tibetan spiritual masters had decisively contributed to these methodological innovations, because these masters with their own priorities would not have easily tolerated any half-hearted engagement with their central commitments. In this sense, an important methodological innovation within an academic field still largely dominated by European and American institutions received its main impetus and inspiration from the crucial Indigenous contributors to the process.

In the years before, during and immediately after his important first fieldwork stay, i.e., from 1950 to 1954, the period between receiving his doctorate and submitting his second thesis,[44] Nebesky-Wojkowitz published more than a dozen academic articles. A smaller part of these articles appeared in interdisciplinary journals with a focus on regional philological studies, such as *Stepping-Stones, Asiatische Studien* and the *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* (*WZKM*). The vast majority of these articles (at least ten), however, appeared in disciplinary journals of socio-cultural anthropology *strictu sensu*, such as *The Eastern Anthropologist, Ethnos, Man, Anthropos,* and the *Archiv für Völkerkunde.*[45] The decision to explicitly orientate his next formal professional qualifications in socio-cultural anthropology/*Völkerkunde* obviously emerged during these years of fieldwork, publishing, and writing. The main text of his second thesis was finalized in the course of 1954.

fieldwork records by following Malinowski's model. According to Dostal, Nebesky-Wojkowitz regularly entered notes and observations during his fieldwork sojourns into this thick paper notebook in a cover. To my knowledge, it is unknown whether and where that field diary may have been preserved.

43 Much 1999.

44 A number of important ethnographic film documentations also resulted from this and a later fieldwork period. Nebesky-Wojkowitz did not live long enough to complete all of these visual works – see, for instance, Film E261, which he recorded in 1957, but was finalized three years after his death and accompanied more than a decade later by a print publication under the name of his successor at the museum (Manndorff 1972).

45 For the relevant list of his academic publications, see the obituaries by Becker-Donner 1959 and De Jong 1959.

In early 1955, Nebesky-Wojkowitz applied for his *Venia Docendi* in *Völkerkunde* at the University of Vienna and submitted (in English) his second thesis (*Habilitationsschrift*), *Der Kult und die Ikonographie der tibetischen Schutzgottheiten*. Publication of a *Habilitationsschrift* (at least in the form of a credible publishing house's letter of acceptance) was a requirement for initiating formal procedures. With a new main title and certain other revisions and additions, this second thesis was published in English in 1956, becoming Nebesky-Wojkowitz's classic volume *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities*.[46]

The decision to increasingly publish in anthropological journals and to submit his application for a *Venia Docendi* in the field of *Völkerkunde*/socio-cultural anthropology, rather than in the philological fields, must have been primarily founded on Nebesky-Wojkowitz's fieldwork experience. On a wider Continental European level, a record of fieldwork had gradually acquired much more substantial relevance as a professional prerequisite in socio-cultural anthropology during the post-WWII years than it had before the war. Simultaneously, this increasing priority for ethnographic fieldwork tended to keep theoretical diffusionist orientations in check. Diffusionism and ethnographic fieldwork were not absolutely incompatible, as several examples had demonstrated in preceding generations. Yet in the *Völkerkunde* of the German-speaking countries of the late 1940s and early 1950s, the young generation, with good reason, tended to regard diffusionism as fading away and being a primary preoccupation of senior scholars and previous generations. By contrast, they regarded ethnographic fieldwork, again with very good reason, as the field's enduring, central methodological prerequisite which could be combined with elements from many other interesting theoretical paradigms of the field's present and future. In fact, a latent but obvious sympathy with elements of contemporary British and American theories can be detected in several early publications by both Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Dostal, especially those in English.[47] Considering the prioritization of ethnographic fieldwork in his *Venia Docendi* thesis and in the publications immediately preceding it, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's advanced works therefore represented a fairly light version of secular diffusionism, open to being eclectically combined with elements from other theories.[48]

46 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956.

47 By mid-1954, it also became a reliable prospect that the Allied Forces would sooner or later withdraw from Austria, and that the country would become a western-style democracy – with ensuing citizens' rights, including the right to freely travel abroad. Everything else set aside, such a prospect was also vital for local socio-cultural anthropologists with a fieldwork orientation.

48 In Dostal's perception, he owed that strong orientation on intense ethnographic fieldwork largely to the dialogues with, and the influence of his senior peer Nebesky-Wojkowitz. That personal gratitude, together with his appreciation of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's professional work and their mutual support at the museum, remained a crucial factor when from the late 1970s and early 1980s Dostal helped to promote a new local network of Tibetan studies in Vienna's socio-cultural anthropology, in close cooperation with Ernst Steinkellner. Although not an expert in Central Asian and Tibetan studies himself, Dostal served as first advisor to the doctoral theses of Hildegard Diemberger, Guntram Hazod, Christian Schicklgruber, and to the magister's theses of Christian Jahoda and Maria-Katharina Lang. As Dostal's assistant and subsequently, his successor, I had the privilege of participating in, and continuing Dostal's and Steinkellner's agenda in that regard to the extent it was welcomed for Jahoda's and Lang's doctoral theses, for Hazod's Venia Docendi, and more. In the long run, the main local host institutions of that network became the Museum für Völkerkunde and the Austrian Academy of Sciences. In Dostal's understanding, support for this network always had as a main inspirational dimension his tribute to the legacies of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz.

In the philological fields of Continental Europe, fieldwork also continued to be widely respected, but it was not a prerequisite for permanent academic positions. In addition to these fieldwork-related reasons, ongoing changes in Vienna's relevant institutional settings and senior staff positions also must have influenced Nebesky-Wojkowitz's decision to apply for his *Venia Docendi* in *Völkerkunde*. At the University's Institut für Orientalistik, Erich Frauwallner was again admitted to active service in 1951, while his part-time substitute Karl Ammer (1911–1970) had been granted a *Venia Docendi* (1950) for his second thesis on Nuristan languages. Ammer may indeed have been much more interested in supporting Nebesky-Wojkowitz's *Habilitationsschrift* than Frauwallner ever was. Yet Ammer soon left his home institute to become, first, the new director of the same university's institute for translation and interpreting (Institut für Übersetzen und Dolmetschen) in 1952, and then the new professor for "general linguistics and Indology" at the University of Halle-Wittenberg (GDR, i.e., in communist East Germany).[49] Thus, someone who might have been actively interested in supporting Nebesky-Wojkowitz's advancement at the local *Orientalistik* institute had already left by late 1954 when the candidate was ready to submit his second thesis. Simultaneously, the returning core figure in Vienna's *Orientalistik* of previous years displayed little active interest in the same matter during these years of his own re-establishment. While any active, supportive involvement in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's *Venia Docendi* procedures was lacking from the philological sides of Vienna's *Orientalistik*, things looked quite different for him in *Völkerkunde*. His old mentor Robert Bleichsteiner had retired in 1953 and died in 1954. Bleichsteiner's general poor health already in the preceding years had made it not advisable for Nebesky-Wojkowitz to continue considering him as an available, active mentor.

"During the 1950s, we were the 'Czech' group of fieldworkers among Heine-Geldern's boys" – this phrase and similar recollections by Walter Dostal[50] refer to elements of local oral history, in which one junior mentee of Robert Heine-Geldern repeatedly addressed his relationship to Nebesky-Wojkowitz as his senior colleague and friend, based on their common background in the multi-lingual regions of the Czech lands, their current affinity to a respected scholar and mentor in his advanced years, their joint enthusiasm for ethnographic

49 As mentioned elsewhere (Gingrich 2024: 168–172), Heinz Mode (1913–1992), an expert for Buddhist and other South Asian art history, was the Full Professor for *Orientalische Archäologie* at the Halle-Wittenberg university that hosted Karl Ammer. Mode had received his main academic education, including a substantial portion from socio-cultural anthropology, during his years of exile in British-administered Ceylon and in Switzerland. From his Halle professorship position Mode also entertained close academic relationships with other Asian studies experts in Vienna, including a correspondence with Nebesky-Wojkowitz to which some of Mode's Vienna papers refer (Gingrich family, private archives).

50 The verbal recollections above were communicated to me in the early 1980s during several joint Arabian fieldwork campaigns. In 1958/59, Walter Dostal (a museum custodian from 1954 to 1965) and René Nebesky-Wojkowitz were also both colleagues as full academic staff members at Vienna's Museum für Völkerkunde, where they continued to joke about being the museum's "Czech subsection." Both had mastered Czech language skills with some fluency. In fact, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's birthplace was situated in Czech Silesia, then a multi-lingual northern region in the Czech part of Czechoslovakia, with German-speaking parts in the upper and middle strata. Dostal had been raised in a bilingual Moravian carpenter's household in the Czech south, where his father developed clandestine pro-communist sympathies under Hitler. At the Museum für Völkerkunde, both Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Dostal posed as loose supporters of the Christian Democrats' federation of employees (ÖAAB). As Full Professor, Dostal eventually became a committed member of the Social Democratic Party.

fieldwork and corresponding language competencies, and to their personal intersections, first as students of *Völkerkunde* and later as museum staff members.

In 1949, when Nebesky-Wojkowitz submitted his doctoral thesis, Heine-Geldern had just returned to Vienna from exile in the United States.[51] Thus he had not been there to possibly assist in the candidate's doctoral project and procedures at that time (but soon came to know him in late 1949). Meanwhile, with strong and active support from Koppers, Heine-Geldern was re-established in 1954 at the University of Vienna, in fact, as the second professor at the *Völkerkunde* institute. Initially an associate professor and later a Full Professor as well as a member of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Heine-Geldern had excellent relations with international academic and political institutions, especially in the United States, as a renowned expert in Asian studies including Asian history.[52] Although he had very little fieldwork experience himself, he actively supported this crucial element of anthropological study among his student cohorts.[53]

The institutional settings that Nebesky-Wojkowitz and his colleagues were facing in late 1954 therefore indicated a changing situation in local *Völkerkunde*. This included strong factors for safer support and more promising opportunities than those at the *Orientalistik* institute. At the Museum für Völkerkunde, important vacancies were and would soon be opening after Robert Bleichsteiner's recent retirement and death. His in-coming successor as the new director, Etta Becker-Donner, displayed a good ability to acquire the budgets and permits for additional positions as well. This signified an emerging period of institutional growth and increasing diversity at the museum. At the University of Vienna, the two sen-

51 Heine-Geldern 1959; Neller 2021.

52 Heine-Geldern also facilitated the professional storage of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's important collection of Himalayan sound records at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, in addition to financial support from the American Anthropological Association and the Austrian Academy of Sciences for Nebesky-Wojkowitz's second field trip (1956/57). For the 1956 meeting of the UNESCO General Assembly in New Delhi, Heine-Geldern orchestrated Nebesky-Wojkowitz's inclusion in the Austrian delegation that lobbied for, and eventually accomplished a majority decision to establish UNESCO's Commission for Urgent Anthropological Research, which Heine-Geldern had been pursuing for some time (Heine-Geldern 1959).

53 Heine-Geldern's first student from before 1938, Christoph Fürer-Haimendorf, had already testified to this (Gingrich 2021). Fürer-Haimendorf (1939) also represented one of several precedents, with his popular book success *The Naked Nagas* (with many reprints in English and German before, during and after the war). Following that example of a popular book which had few overlaps with the author's first or second thesis, Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1955) published a similar attempt at that genre in German, *Wo Berge Götter sind*, which also appeared in Dutch (1956), English (1956) and French (1957). Another prominent example of a postdoctoral junior scholar from Vienna with a first degree from elsewhere was Karl Jettmar (1918–2002), who then became a mentee of Heine-Geldern inside *Völkerkunde* after that scholar's 1949 return to Vienna from exile. Five years his junior, Nebesky-Wojkowitz therefore followed a precedent in a narrow formal sense when he became Heine-Geldern's mentee. Jettmar had acquired his doctoral degree during the Nazi years at the University of Vienna's newly established institute for "Deutsch-Germanische Volkskunde" ("German-Germanic folklore studies"). After one year as Heine-Geldern's substitute following his mentor's retirement, Jettmar then became an influential figure in Heidelberg (Germany) and beyond as a *Völkerkunde* expert in Siberian and Central Asian studies. András Höfer (b. 1937) can be mentioned in these contexts as well. He studied in Vienna during Heine-Geldern's tenure there (also serving as his part-time student assistant) until the completion of his own doctoral degree (1964) before continuing his postdoctoral studies with Macdonald in Paris. From there, Jettmar then recruited him to Heidelberg. Later on in his career, Höfer advocated an "Ethno-Philologie." (My thanks are due to Martin Gaenszle for these indications on Höfer's biography.)

ior professors Koppers and Heine-Geldern were firmly established, and their joint support for Nebesky-Wojkowitz's *Venia Docendi* procedure was beyond doubt from the outset. The fact that the first formal deadline for both Koppers' and Heine-Geldern's retirement from university service was originally scheduled for late 1955, however, which might have exerted some additional pressure upon Nebesky-Wojkowitz to finish the writing process for his *Habilitationsschrift* in good time.[54] Eventually Koppers and Heine-Geldern were each granted an "Ehrenjahr" (honorary additional year of service) during these months, and hence they were invited to carry on until the academic year 1956/57.[55] In sum, during these last months of his active service as Full Professor, Koppers did not hesitate to take the formal academic lead in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's *Venia Docendi* procedures.

A simple division of labor between Koppers and Heine-Geldern with regard to Nebesky-Wojkowitz's *Venia Docendi* application and the relevant committee was thus the productive processual outcome of their interplay with each other and with the candidate. Koppers took over the formal institutional role of chairing the committee and delivering the report, while Heine-Geldern served as the candidate's informal main partner in content-related academic dialogues. Heine-Geldern's necessarily informal role as Nebesky-Wojkowitz's primary academic mentor since the early 1950s is testified not only by his basic topical and regional expertise for the main Buddhist areas of Asia, the only committee member from anthropology with this specialization. It also is confirmed by oral tradition as indicated above (see note 50), and by Heine-Geldern's (continuing) role as Nebesky-Wojkowitz's mentor after 1955 (see note 52).[56]

Koppers was indeed an ideal choice to serve as the leading representative from the discipline and reviewer for the relevant committee installed by the Faculty of Philosophy and chaired by its Deputy Dean. As the second representative from the discipline and the more specialized committee member, Heine-Geldern knew about details of academic contents if questions came up in the committee. Yet Koppers was crucial in an institutional sense. Not only was he the acting senior professor and institute's director of the relevant academic field, as well as a senior member of the entire faculty. Also through his academic reputation and public standing, alongside his connections within the Church and in conservative political circles, he was able to guide this *Venia Docendi* process in a largely smooth and hardly contested manner. If it became necessary, his authority could brush aside any skepticism among the other professors in charge, whether it concerned the pro-communist sympathies of the candidate's previous first doctoral adviser or any limitations in the candidate's philological portfolio. By his word and signature, he was the one person in Viennese *Völkerkunde* who

54 This may be one of several factors concerning time limitations that kept Nebesky-Wojkowitz from adding a more extensive introduction to his second thesis. In general, the speed with which Nebesky-Wojkowitz paced his various fieldwork activities, article publications, and book manuscripts between 1949 and 1955 is astounding, and almost certainly did not contribute to improving his general health situation.

55 Gedenkbuch für die Opfer des Nationalsozialismus an der Universität Wien 1938: gedenkbuch.univie.ac.at/index.php?person_single_id=33336 (accessed 13.02.2021).

56 Any extant personal correspondence between Heine-Geldern and Nebesky-Wojkowitz might further substantiate this point. Unfortunately, the privately stored, largest parts of Heine-Geldern's post-1949 papers were not accessible to me at the time of writing.

could convince a dean, a professors' plenary session and a university president from the outset and in the course of procedures – whereas without Koppers, these academic dignitaries may not have cared much about socio-cultural anthropology. Beyond academic acceptance, at the time the Federal Minister for Education was also required to have his representative's personal signature added to approve and finalize that the *Venia Docendi* was granted to the respective candidate at a state-sponsored Austrian university. The minister at the time was Dr. Heinrich Drimmel (1912–1991), a representative of the Christian-democratic Austrian People's Party (ÖVP), which led all federal governments in Austria between 1946 and 1969.[57]

In May 1955 the Faculty committee unanimously accepted Koppers' report (from 18 February) on Nebesky-Wojkowitz's second thesis and his application for a *Venia Docendi*, and accordingly invited the candidate to give his *Habilitation* lecture in June. On June 25, the faculty professors voted by an overwhelming majority (with only one *contra*, one abstention and 52 votes *pro*) to submit a positive recommendation to the Ministry. In late August 1955, the responsible official confirmed and effectuated for Dr. Heinrich Drimmel the *Venia Docendi* for René Nebesky-Wojkowitz as his *"Lehrbefugnis für Völkerkunde mit besonderer Berücksichtigung Zentralasiens und seiner Randgebiete"* (i.e., the *Venia* for *Völkerkunde*, with special consideration of Central Asia and its peripheries).[58]

With Bleichsteiner as the primary advisor to his first thesis, and through Heine-Geldern as the primary mentor for his second thesis, the crucial theoretical and methodological influences on Nebesky-Wojkowitz's anthropological formation in Vienna came through German-speaking secular diffusionism in its late period. This orientation intersected with, but differed from, the variety of theologically inspired diffusionism still advocated by Koppers during the early 1950s. Yet Koppers had matured, especially since his own previous mentor Wilhelm Schmidt had passed away in Switzerland in early 1954. No junior theologian *cum* anthropologist had emerged as a possible successor to sustain culture circle theory in Vienna's academic landscape. Shortly before his own retirement, Koppers was aware now more than ever that the theological Vienna school of culture circle theory had no substantial academic future in anthropology, in Vienna or elsewhere.

He had already understood during Nebesky-Wojkowitz's doctoral process that this was a truly excellent representative of his own academic field from a much younger generation, standing for fresh ideas and initiatives as is always befitting for a new generation. This appreciation of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's achievements and insights convinced him of what he had to do, despite his inner reservations concerning the absence of any theological orientation in the candidate's work. In fact, Koppers wrote in his report: "Taken all together, the overall impression emerging from Dr. Nebesky's academic production until now is an outstanding and delightful one. The further development of this young scholar justifies great expec-

57 Both Drimmel and Koppers were closely affiliated with conservative Catholicism. Yet since his years in Swiss exile, Koppers had developed a much more dialogical and pluralist attitude within this range, which had been backed by his and Schmidt's cooperation with British and Swiss Secret Service during the war (Rohrbacher 2021b). By contrast, Drimmel was known for friendly attitudes towards former Nazi supporters (Taschwer 2015) and enjoyed the fact that members of his own party nicknamed him an "old fascist" (of the pro-Franco and pro-Mussolini versions).

58 UAW, PH PA 2.722, fol. 36–41, Dekanat Philosophische Fakultät 28. Juni 1955; Bundeministerium für Unterricht Zl. 1442 (1954/55), 27. August 1955.

tations."[59] In one of his last academic missions, Koppers therefore consistently promoted and actively supported a unique work of fieldwork-based, world-class socio-cultural anthropology from Vienna.

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UAW PH (Archiv der Universität Wien, Philosophische Fakultät/ University of Vienna Archives, Faculty of Philosophy).

a) RA: Rigorosenakt (Doctoral Exams Records): 17.172/ René Nebesky-Wojkowitz (June–October 1949).
b) PA: Personalakt (Staff Records): 2.722/ René Nebesky (January 1955–October 1959).

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59 Author's translation: Original report by Koppers to the *Habilitationskommission* (in German), UAW PH 2.722, Kommissionsbericht W. Koppers, 18. February 1955.

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A REASSESSMENT OF *ORACLES AND DEMONS OF TIBET*

Christopher Bell

Although it was first published almost 70 years ago, René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz's *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities* continues to be "the" foundational resource for the study of Tibetan deity cults. Not including the front matter or plate images, the book is 666 pages long, 553 pages of which are the actual chaptered content. The last one hundred pages are just as valuable, however, because they include an impressively large list of 204 Tibetan texts that Nebesky-Wojkowitz cites methodically throughout his work. Beyond these works, he makes occasional references to texts recorded in the *Catalogue of the Tohoku University Collection of Tibetan Works on Buddhism*,[1] as well as those he had finished cataloguing the year prior at the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden.[2] Nebesky-Wojkowitz's 60-page index is also invaluable for it allows the reader to navigate the otherwise labyrinthine content of the book's 27 chapters. These chapters are divided more broadly into two overarching parts, "The Iconography of the Protective Deities" and "The Cult of the Protective Deities." The first part is in turn divided into three subsections: the first is a short but informative introductory chapter, the second concerns supramundane protective deities (*'jig rten las 'das pa'i srung ma*), and the third – and largest of the three sections by far – concerns mundane protective deities (*'jig rten pa'i srung ma*). The second part is not subdivided like the first, but it consists of ten chapters ranging in topics from thread crosses and Tibetan oracles to destructive magic and shamanism.

This description is based on the most recent edition of *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, published in 2002 by Paljor Publications in New Delhi; compared with the description provided in Alex Wayman's 1957 review of the book, one of the earliest in English, its content and numbering appear to be unchanged.[3] Including Wayman's, 22 book reviews of

1 See Yensho et al. 1953. In most instances, Nebesky-Wojkowitz was unable to peruse the cited work itself, though the titles are generally enough to support his observations.

2 Nebesky-Wojkowitz notes these texts with the abbreviation RvV, for Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde; see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b.

3 See Wayman 1957. In this brief review, Wayman does little more than praise the book for its solid scholarship while also criticizing Nebesky-Wojkowitz for excluding the class of tutelary deities (*yi dam*).

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's work were published – in English, German, French, and Italian – yet almost all of them were produced between 1956 and 1960,[4] and these are thus unable to illustrate the full impact that this work has had on Tibetan scholarship over the last half century. The two notable exceptions to this are Per Kvaerne's introduction to the 1975 edition of the book – which, while not technically a book review, still possesses the assessing tone and constructive critique of one – and Josef Kolmaš's 1977 review of that 19-year anniversary edition. Regardless, it seems an updated review has been long in coming, and this article is meant to act as such. Beyond simply reassessing the value of this work, however, I will end with some observations about Nebesky-Wojkowitz's sources, particularly the 204 Tibetan texts that he uses and what their provenance reveals about the potential slant in his representation of Tibetan deities.

Despite its age, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* continues to be unmatched in its scope and breadth. It has become the starting point for all serious excursions over the last several decades into Tibetan deity studies. Even works not centrally concerned with deities are still heavily informed by Nebesky-Wojkowitz's book.[5] Nevertheless, as is well-known in Tibetan Studies, the book is difficult to read and presents information more in the manner of an encyclopaedia. However, the chapters are quite compartmental in structure so that one can easily find the data needed on specific deities or practices without reading the rest of the book; the index in particular helps with this sort of selective culling, and it is clearly evident in practice among those scholars who have used this work as an important resource. Beyond the dry presentation, Tibetan transliterated terms are interspersed among the English in a very distracting way. At times, this is understandable, as many of the cited Tibetan texts contain terms of unknown or vague meaning. Given this, the extent to which Nebesky-Wojkowitz was able to translate and make sense of the numerous esoteric words he encountered is impressive. Yet there are many instances where he seems to arbitrarily, and unnecessarily, exchange English terms for their Tibetan counterparts. This impairs true cohesiveness in the text, which is compounded by a poor analytical tenor.

It is this almost non-existent analysis that is perhaps the weakest element in *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. Nebesky-Wojkowitz's approach is strictly synchronic, with rare instances of historical awareness. Each chapter in the first part focuses on a deity or group of deities and presents their iconographies and mythic origins, citing or quoting directly from among the Tibetan texts listed at the end of the work, which often forms a quilt of quotes. This is in many ways the richest content in the book, providing as it does impressive and previously unknown details about numerous Tibetan deities. However, the texts cited in these descriptions are, for the most part, removed from their historical context; only a handful are tied to specific Tibetan authors and time periods. Because of this, these deities are presented in a static fashion; they are given little historic placement, and the evolution and changing composition of their cults is not discussed. While Nebesky-Wojkowitz pro-

4 See Conze 1956, Petech 1956, Stein 1956, u.a. 1956a, u.a. 1956b, Gonda 1957, Mylius 1957, Pohl 1957, Richardson 1957, Schmid 1957, Strauß 1957, Taussig 1957, Wayman 1957, Drake 1957–1958, Schröder 1958, Snellgrove 1958, Tucci 1958, Lim 1959, Hamm 1960, Schulemann 1960, Kvaerne 1975, and Kolmaš 1977. I am grateful to Uwe Niebuhr for bringing my attention to half of these reviews, including Kvaerne's introduction, and for providing me with copies of many of them as well.

5 The most notable examples of this are the three dense and incredibly rich monographs produced by Per Sørensen, Guntram Hazod, and Tsering Gyalbo; see Sørensen et al. 2000, 2005, and 2007.

vides a few engrossing vignettes that hint at historical engagement with these deities,[6] they are few and far between.

Beyond citing copious textual materials to support his claims, Nebesky-Wojkowitz provides a number of anecdotes drawn from oral traditions and legends that he collected during his fieldwork, though he is ambiguous as to their origins. It is understood from the book's foreword that his four primary informants are likely the source of most of this data. These informants include three incarnate lamas (*sprul sku*): Dando Rinpoche (Dar mdo Rin po che) and Tretong Rinpoche (Bkras mthong Rin po che), who both belong to the Geluk (*dge lugs*) sect, as well as Chimé Rikzin ('Chi med rig 'dzin), who belongs to the Nyingma (*rnying ma*) sect. His fourth main informant was a layman named Nyima (Nyi ma), who was an agent for a former Tibetan Cabinet Minister. While these individuals are seldom, if at all, mentioned by name within the content of the book, one of his secondary informants is named directly and often as an important reference; this is Lozang Püntsok (Blo bzang phun tshogs), a secretary of the Dalai Lama and son of the Nechung (Gnas chung) Oracle active during the early- to mid-20th century. Other secondary informants include an oracle for the deity Dorjé Shukden (Rdo rje shugs ldan) named Lhakpa Döndrup (Lhag pa don grub), from whom he received most of his information on Tibetan oracular practices, as well as a Gesar (Ge sar) bard named Champa Sangdak (Byams pa gsang bdag), who had also been an attendant of Reting Rinpoche (Rwa sgreng Rin po che).[7] Because Nebesky-Wojkowitz seldom ascribes certain oral accounts to a specific individual, and freely uses ethnographically vague terms like "popular tradition," "oral tradition," "legend," and "popular belief," it is uncertain to what extent these stories are common knowledge geographically or demographically.[8]

Many of these sourceless stories provide valuable insights into the nature of deity cults. For instance, Nebesky-Wojkowitz states that, rather than a form of Pehar (Pe har), some "Tibetan priests are of the opinion that *rDo rje grags ldan* [Dorjé Drakden] is an 'emanation' of the war-god *lCam sring*."[9] Since Dorjé Drakden is the primary deity that possesses the Nechung Oracle, the divergent 'emanational' pedigrees ascribed to this deity could be indicative of the relationship between different and possibly conflicting ritual and iconographic lineages within even the same sect. Amy Heller has since fortunately delved further into the nuances and implications of these competing claims in her work.[10] Nebesky-Wojkowitz also states twice that the deity Dorjé Shukden will replace Pehar as head of the mundane protective deities once the latter has ascended to the status of a supramundane protector.[11] This is especially pertinent information today given the current controversy

6 For some specific examples, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: 104–106 (Pe har), 134–136 (Rdo rje shugs ldan), 144 (Nam mkha' sbar 'dzin), 162–165 (Phying dkar ba), 170 (Tsi'u dmar po), 233–234 (Drung yig chen mo), 239–241 ('Dam srang rgyal po), and particularly 449–454 (Nechung Oracle).

7 See Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: viii–x.

8 There are copious examples of this throughout the text, though the majority can be found on the following pages: 93, 98, 102, 104, 106, 125, 129, 131, 134–135, 144, 145, 156, 160, 162–164, 165, 167–168, 170, 177, 207, 217, 220, 223, 231, 233–234, 236, 237–239, 260, 278, 335, 358, 364, 401, 405, 422, 445, 447, 457, 461, 482, 493, 500, 506–507, 510, 541. Rare instances where Nebesky-Wojkowitz actually provides some degree of geographic indication can be found on pages 156, 239–241, and 507.

9 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: 125.

10 See Heller 1992.

11 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: 134.

surrounding Dorjé Shukden's ontological status.[12] Finally, regarding two groups of female deities known as the Five Long-Life Sisters (Tshe ring mched lnga), and the Twelve Tenma Goddesses (Bstan ma bcu gnyis), Nebesky-Wojkowitz makes the short but intriguing claim that while the Geluk school considers these deities to be mundane protectors, the Nyingma and Kagyü (*bka' brgyud*) schools consider them to be supramundane.[13] This has strong sectarian and even political implications about the uneven classification of deities within this important but hazy dichotomy.[14] Despite the significance of these three claims, as well as others, Nebesky-Wojkowitz states vaguely that all are part of oral tradition or popular beliefs, and so he lends us little with which to track them further.

To understand some of these pitfalls, it is important to be reminded of what the central thesis of *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* is. Having been trained in comparative phenomenology, Nebesky-Wojkowitz is concerned with illustrating the shamanic underpinnings of Tibetan Buddhism and what he presumes are its Bon (*bon*) antecedents. While the majority of the deities discussed in his book are drawn from Tibetan Buddhist pantheons, Bon deities figure prominently. He is aware that many of the Buddhist deities – especially among the supramundane class – are Indian in origin,[15] yet it is astute of him to note that these Indian parallels are only skin deep. He states that the Tibetan words used to translate the names of Indian deities, such as Gyajin (Brgya byin) for Indra and Tsangpa (Tshangs pa) for Brahmā, were likely drawn from Indigenous sources, and these deities have retained many if not most of their autochthonous characteristics.[16] It is these Indigenous terms, deities, and related practices that Nebesky-Wojkowitz considers to be part of the pre-Buddhist Tibetan religion, which he – like most scholars of his time – conflate with Bon and with shamanism more broadly.[17] In the very first paragraph of his foreword, Nebesky-Wojkowitz states quite explicitly the conclusion he arrived at in the course of his research:

> The exceedingly numerous class of protective divinities comprises many figures who originally belonged to the pantheon of the old Tibetan Bon faith. A study of the Tibetan protective deities and their cult, apart from giving an insight into a little known aspect of Lamaism, reveals new facts regarding the beliefs of pre-Buddhist Tibet and their relation to the early shamanistic stratum out of which the Bon religion developed.[18]

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12 See Dreyfus 1998.

13 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: 177.

14 As with his informants, that Nebesky-Wojkowitz accepts a specific representation of this dichotomy – as seen in his organization of chapters between mundane and supramundane headings – suggests a bias towards a Geluk orientation.

15 Some examples include Penden Lhamo (Dpal ldan lha mo; Skt. Śrī Devī), Gönpo (Mgon po; Skt. Mahākāla), Namtosé (Rnam thos sras; Skt. Vaiśravaṇa), Shinjé (Gshin rje; Skt. Yama), Tsangpa (Tshangs pa; Skt. Brahmā), and Tamdrin (Rta mgrin; Skt. Hayagrīva).

16 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: 99–100.

17 Kvaerne (1975, v–viii) was the first to rightly critique this conflation in his introduction to the 1975 edition of *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. He also provided extensive corrections that drew on previous reviews; see ibid, ix–xix. For examples of earlier corrections, see Petech 1956, Stein 1956, and Snellgrove 1958.

18 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: vii.

Oracles and Demons of Tibet is only secondarily focussed on illuminating the previously under-explored topic of Tibetan deity cults. The book is first and foremost intended to be a prolonged argument illustrating that despite their Buddhist clothing, Tibetan deities are shamanistic in nature and origin. This point is made more explicit when we consider that the very last chapter of the book is entitled "Some notes on Tibetan shamanism." This is the closest to a conclusion the book has to offer, and in it Nebesky-Wojkowitz draws on the works of the most notable scholars of shamanism at the time, such as Mircea Eliade, Uno Harva, Georgiĭ Nioradze, and Garma Sandschejew.[19]

The argument that non-Buddhist elements in Tibetan and other Asian religions are shamanistic is an old one and has proven to be a resilient theoretical position up until the turn of the 21st century.[20] However, recent scholarship has shown that this term is quite untenable in discussing pre-Buddhist Tibetan religions for a number of reasons. In his critical analysis of shamanistic language as it pertains to Tibetan Studies, Zeff Bjerken elaborates on the methodological errors that result when scholars attempt to distinguish between "proper" Buddhist elements and "shamanistic" elements within Tibetan culture.[21] Two of these methodological errors are apparent in *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. First, by relating deity cults to shamanism, Nebesky-Wojkowitz de-historicizes seemingly non-Buddhist practices, giving the impression that they have remained unchanged over the last 1,400 years, and have merely become hidden beneath the veneer of a monolithic Buddhism. Second, while his last chapter provides attempts to argue that these practices are Tibetan shamanism, he draws superficial parallels between other Asian cultural practices in order to indicate their shamanic character. Though Bjerken makes the following observation about Helmut Hoffmann's work, it applies equally well to Nebesky-Wojkowitz's final chapter:

> Hoffmann identifies two main forces in the formation of Tibetan religious culture: the dominant force of Indian Buddhism, and the indigenous Tibetan worldview of Bon, 'which, though outwardly defeated, has nevertheless filled all the spiritual and psychological channels of the country's national life.' One may well wonder what exactly this 'autochthonous' Tibetan tradition entails, since Hoffmann traces everything about it that is recognizable elsewhere in Asia Major.[22]

One distinction between Nebesky-Wojkowitz's and Hoffmann's approach is that the sheer breadth of content, textual sources, and practices described in *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* suggest that rather than Indian Buddhism being the dominant force in Tibetan religious culture, it is the ubiquitous and chimeric Indigenous Tibetan worldview that is dominant.[23] Regardless, Bjerken makes a strong case against the continued use of the term "shaman" to refer to seemingly non-Buddhist elements in Tibetan culture, and as a result, the last

19 See Eliade 1951, Harva 1938, Nioradze 1925, and Sandschejew 1928. See also Waddell 1895, a work Nebesky-Wojkowitz also cites and that makes similar claims; I am grateful to Markus Viehbeck for drawing attention to this connection.

20 See, for example, Gibson 1991 and Samuel 1993.

21 See Bjerken 2004.

22 Bjerken 2004: 39.

23 Along with Hoffmann and Eliade, Bjerken (2004: 37–38) does critique Nebesky-Wojkowitz's work more directly.

chapter of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's book has become fairly obsolete. This is certainly evident in the publications of those who continue to utilize his book; while they rely on the earlier chapters on deity iconography and myth, as well as some of the later chapters on oracles and Tibetan magic, few scholars have cited the final chapter to buttress their claims.[24]

The use of antiquated terminology such as "shamanism" and "Lamaism" is enough to date this work, but certainly not enough to make the whole of it obsolete. It is important to be aware of when the book was published and the political state of Tibet at the time. Nebesky-Wojkowitz conducted research for this work in West Bengal and Sikkim from 1950 to 1953, just as Chinese troops were beginning to occupy Tibet. While he never travelled directly into Tibet, this circumstance afforded Nebesky-Wojkowitz a degree of privileged access all the same, as numerous lamas, monks, and laity were making their way through the Indo-Sikkim borderlands, bringing texts and oral knowledge with them. He also completed his research before the annexation of Tibet by China – and the Dalai Lama's escape to India – in 1959, and well before the Cultural Revolution, which devastated Tibetan religious institutions in the 1960s and '70s. Despite the economic reform that followed, the landscape of religious expression in Tibet has changed drastically since *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* was first published. Many of the institutions discussed by Nebesky-Wojkowitz, such as the numerous monastic and oracle lineages, have either been discontinued or re-established in India along with the Dalai Lama's government-in-exile.

For this reason, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* requires the responsible 21st-century reader to recognize those historical vignettes presented in the work that are no longer extant. Beyond the oracle lineages previously noted, some other examples include geographically sacred sites and the deities or magical objects tied to them. In his chapter on Tsiu Mar-po (Tsi'u dmar po), Nebesky-Wojkowitz discusses the gruesome legend surrounding the lower-level chamber of a temple at Samyé Monastery called the Tsi'u dmar lcog dbug khang:

> According to popular belief this chamber is supposed to be the place where *Tsi'u dmar po* sits in judgement of the souls of men, an activity assigned otherwise by orthodox tradition to Yama, the ruler of the hells. The chamber is said to have only one extremely narrow window, and legends claim that through this fissure the souls of the dead have to squeeze through at night-time, in order to appear before *Tsi'u dmar po*. As some of them find it rather difficult to pass, one is able – as the legend tells – to see around this window numerous scratches which these unfortunate spirits had caused by their nails. Some people even allege that a strong smell of blood comes out of this window, as inside the chamber, after the judgement had been pronounced, the souls are cut to pieces by the acolytes of *Tsi'u dmar po*.[25]

I have personally visited this temple several times and observed that this chamber no longer exists, the temple having been destroyed during the Cultural Revolution and rebuilt after-

24 One exception is Gibson 1991: 64; this is not surprising given that shamanistic qualities are central to Gibson's thesis concerning ancient Tibetan kingship.

25 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: 167–168.

ward. However, there is a chamber potentially equivalent to this one on the bottom floor of the newly rebuilt temple, since it is likewise called the *dbug khang*, the "breath room." I was told by my own informant that this room houses the spirits of those soldiers killed by the protector deity Pehar during the sacking of Bhatahor in the 8th century.[26] The door to this chamber is locked, colored black – except for a wrathful face painted at its center – and has a small slot carved into it at eye level. According to my informant, if you stare through this thin slot into the dark room, you can see the spirits shifting about. I confess that, upon looking through the slot myself, I saw nothing but pitch darkness.

In the same chapter, Nebesky-Wojkowitz explains that seven *btsan khang* – small house-like structures built for *btsan* spirits – dedicated to Tsiu Marpo and his six emanated horsemen ('Bar ba spun bdun) had been built within the small town of Pelti (Dpal ti), along the shore of Lake Yamdrok (Yar 'brog mtsho).[27] When I visited this town in 2007, I asked about these *btsan khang*. No one could give me a straight answer until I spoke with an old nun who told me that they had likewise been destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.

Furthermore, in the chapter on destructive magic Nebesky-Wojkowitz describes a magic weapon known as the Gshin rje'i rang thag, "Yama's Millstone."[28] This powerful artifact is housed within Khardo (Mkhar rdo) Monastery on the northern outskirts of Lhasa near Sera (Se ra) Monastery. However, as José Cabezón discovered, this monastery has since been destroyed and all that remains are ruins.[29] This magical object – as well as many others – was likely destroyed, and if not, its current location is unknown.

Finally, as previously mentioned, the ontological status of the protector deity Dorjé Shukden is currently being hotly debated. However, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's portrayal shows none of this tension, as he presents the deity in the same kind of untroubled light as the others that he explores. Indeed, one of his lengthier descriptions of the trance stages that a Tibetan oracle goes through during possession is based on his observations of a Dorjé Shukden oracle.[30] This provides some historical context for the current controversy, illustrating its non-existence during the 1950s, but it understandably reveals nothing about the dispute as it stands today.

Despite the fact that these and other aural- and eye-witness reports are no longer current, they are still incredibly valuable descriptions of the state of deity cults and magical practices prior to the Cultural Revolution. *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* acts like a time capsule,

26 See ibid.: 100–103.

27 Ibid.: 174.

28 Nebesky-Wojkowitz (2002: 493) describes the weapon as follows: "It consists of two millstones. The lower stone is firmly fixed, the upper one can be turned with the help of a handle. Into the surface of the upper stone has been chiseled a number of powerful *mantras*. The gShin rje'i rang thag serves as an instrument to kill the leader of a hostile party, and it may be turned only by a learned, high-ranking priest specially nominated by the authorities. In the initial stage of this action the priest has to concentrate his thoughts upon a few seeds of white mustard, into which he tries to transfer the 'life-essence' (*srog snying*) of the enemies. As soon as certain secret signs indicate that this process has been successfully accomplished, he has to place the seeds between the millstones and grind them under the chanting of *mantras*. Tradition alleges that turning the gShin rje'i rang thag is a process dangerous even to the person who handles the mill, and several priests who have carried out this task are said to have died soon afterwards."

29 See Cabezón 2006.

30 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: 432–438.

preserving accurate observations of Tibetan religious culture as it existed during the mid-20th century, on the cusp of the upheaval that followed. So long as this kind of contextual data is not taken at face value, they are informative with regards to the myriad elements that have come to be associated with particular deities or magical items.

Its limitations aside, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* has stood the test of time as a landmark study. It is without a doubt the first of its kind and has consistently proven to be of great use to studies on Tibetan deities that have been published in the last seven decades. Because of the nature of its content, the book has even taken on an almost iconic and taboo status. Due to Nebesky-Wojkowitz's untimely death in 1959 at the age of 36, an urban legend has been circulating, within and without the academy, claiming that his demise was brought about by the very wrathful deities he studied. These deities are said to have lashed out in vindictive anger against him for trespassing into their domain and revealing it to the Western world. Bjerken has described his own experience with this seemingly widespread contention while conducting research at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala. Apparently, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* was not on the shelf with most other books but kept separate under lock and key, and he was only given access to it after offering his passport to the Tibetan librarian as collateral. He was also given a warning about its dangerous content.[31] This is not the only printed source to discuss this belief. In 1982 John Blofeld, a popular British writer on Asian religions, made the following morbidly droll statement: "Tibetans were not surprised when the distinguished author of *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* came to an untimely end soon after completing that monumental but dullish book. The subject of Guardians is one on which nothing detailed should be said; to write at length about demons is always held to be unwise; but his ultimate crime was to make them seem *boring*!"[32] Despite such reservations about the book, it continues to be reprinted in English and other languages.[33] The title of the work itself is so evocative that it was the inspiration for a documentary on Ladakhi spirit mediums, directed by Rob McGann and called *Oracles and Demons of Ladakh*.[34] This documentary, which contains interviews with such scholars as Robert Thurman and Geoffrey Samuel, illustrates the continued use of the Buddhist/shamanic dichotomy.

My final observations concern the 204 Tibetan texts from which Nebesky-Wojkowitz drew extensively to make the bulk of his claims.[35] Relying on valuable online archives, such as the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC), the Kern Institute Tibetan Text collection at Leiden University (I.KERN), and the Virtual International Authority File (VIAF),[36] I set out to uncover the provenance of these texts, specifically seeking out their authors so as to determine a date range for their composition as well as sectarian leanings.

31 Bjerken 2004: 38.

32 Blofeld 1982: 73.

33 There is even a Chinese edition of the book, as I came to discover in a Lhasa bookstore; see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1993. This edition appears to have far more color photographs than the original.

34 See McGann 2003.

35 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: 575–603.

36 See Buddhist Digital Resource Center 2017, Leiden University Libraries 2019, and OCLC 2021, respectively.

I also searched Nebesky-Wojkowitz's book for all instances in which each text was cited or quoted. Cross-references with Nebesky-Wojkowitz's 1955 catalogue for the Tibetan texts at the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden are also provided below when available.[37] While I was only able to retrieve the most information on 143 of the 204 texts, much can be gleaned from the available data. Moreover, although Nebesky-Wojkowitz lists 204 works, I account for 209, since text 12 of his list consists of six subtexts. The attached appendix is the result of this work. I have organized two tables of dated and undated texts, and catalogued the chronological order number, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's original catalog number (NW), the text title and original information from his list, author information and archive reference(s), if they are known, a list of indexed pages in which the text was cited, unless it is unmentioned (UM), and a note on any specific deities, spirit types, or related rites discussed in the text according to Nebesky-Wojkowitz. Drawing from this appended chronological database, several major observations can be gleaned, such as the date range for most of the texts:

Total dated texts: 143
Up to the 16th century: 27
17th–18th century: 59
18th–19th century: 49
20th century: 8

Total undated texts: 66 (not yet found in archives: 29)
Mentioned texts: 53
Unmentioned texts: 13

First, it is worth noting that Nebesky-Wojkowitz fails to cite 50 of the texts he lists; though, we can give him the benefit of the doubt since it is clear in many instances that he drew on their contents but simply did not reference them. Second, a fair amount of these texts were composed in the 16th century or earlier, and a handful are from the first half of the 20th century, but it is clear that the vast majority are 17th to 19th century compositions – at least half of the full collection in fact. This accords well with Kurtis Schaeffer's observation that the 18th century saw a massive increase in textual and bibliographic production.[38]

In terms of scholastic leanings, given Nebesky-Wojkowitz's informants, it is no surprise that the majority of his texts are Geluk, more than a third of the collection. However, he has a fairly ecumenical selection beyond that, with the near absence of Sakya (Sa skya) works being the most notable exception. The following list accounts for texts that are interscholastic as well, such as works that were both Nyingma and Kagyü, for instance:

37 See Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b. I am grateful to Uwe Niebuhr for not only providing me with a copy of this text but for seeking out and noting these cross-references; this database is more complete thanks to his diligence.

38 See Schaeffer 2009: 91–92.

Scholastic leanings
Geluk: 76
Nyingma: 59
Unknown lineage: 34
Bon: 20
Kagyü: 19
Rimé: 6
Sakya: 2

These scholastic attributions are based on the current understanding of these texts' leanings as presently understood by both the BDRC and Leiden databases and are often inferred from the author's religious orientation. In terms of authorship, while most of the writers of these texts were responsible for only one or two, nearly 20 figures composed multiple works. For the most frequent authors – judged as having composed or otherwise been involved with four or more texts – the top eleven figures chronologically listed below likewise make up more than a third of the collection and eight of them are Geluk, with a number of Dalai Lamas and Paṇchen Lamas being especially present:

11 most prolific authors (74 texts)
Ta la'i bla ma 02 Dge 'dun rgya mtsho (1476–1542) Geluk: 4
Rā ga a sya Karma chags med (1613–1678) Kagyü: 9
Ta la'i bla ma 05 Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682) Geluk: 5
'Jigs med gling pa Mkhyen brtse 'od zer (1729/1730–1798) Nyingma: 10
Pan chen 03 Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes (1738–1780) Geluk: 8
Gu ge yongs 'dzin Blo bzang bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho (1748–1813) Geluk: 7
Gung thang 03 Dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me (1762–1823) Geluk: 4
Dngul chu Dharmabhadra (Chos kyi bzang po, 1772–1851) Geluk: 4
Pan chen 04 Bstan pa'i nyi ma (1782–1853) Geluk: 13
Mchog gyur gling pa (1829–1870) Nyingma; Rimé: 4
Pan chen 05 Bstan pa'i dbang phyug (1854/1855–1882) Geluk: 6

However, of the next eight popular authors, who composed three texts each, five are Nyingma while the rest are Geluk:

8 secondary popular authors (24 texts)
Raksha gter ston Bsod nams rdo rje (12th cent.) Nyingma: 3
Mnga' bdag nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1136–1204) Nyingma: 3
Mnga' ris paṇ chen Padma dbang rgyal (1487–1542) Nyingma: 3
Pan chen 01 Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1570–1662) Geluk: 3
Gter bdag gling pa 'Gyur med rdo rje (1646–1714) Nyingma: 3
Tshe mchog gling yongs 'dzin sprul sku 01 Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1713–1793) Geluk: 3
'Dzi sgar 04 Rdo rje drag po rtsal (1740–1798) Nyingma: 3
Dngul chu Dbyangs can grub pa'i rdo rje (1809–1887) Geluk: 3

Together, these 19 most frequent authors are responsible for 98 of the texts that Nebesky-Wojkowitz relied upon – almost half the collection. Finally, I list as follows the ten texts Nebesky-Wojkowitz cited most frequently, understood as seven or more times, along with their scholastic leanings and author when available:

10 most frequently cited texts

NW	Tibetan Text	Cited
6	*Bka' brgyad kyi mngon par dregs pa'i dbu phyogs bzhugs so* Undated [Unknown Lineage]	27
143	*Gtsang ma klu 'bum dkar po bon rin po che 'phrul ngag bden pa theg pa chen po'i mdo* Undated [Bon]	20
70	*Bstan srung dam can rgya mtsho'i ming gi grangs* Klong rdol bla ma Ngag dbang blo bzang (1719–1794) [Geluk]	18
78	*Thub bstan e wam lcog sgar ba'i bstan srung rnams kyi bskang phrin rgyun khyer snying po bsdus pa rnams dkyus gcig tu bkod pa bstan bsrung dgyes pa'i mchod sprin rdo rje sgra dbyangs bzhugs so* Rdo rje brag rig 'dzin 07 Thub bstan chos dbang mnyam nyid rdo rje (1886–1932/1935) [Nyingma]	12
134	*Bla ma'i thugs sgrub bar chad kun sel las/ dngos grub rgya mtsho'i cha lag bsang brngan 'dod dgu'i rgya mtsho bzhugs* Mchog gyur gling pa (1829–1870; BDRC: P564) [Nyingma; Rimé]	11
77	*Thun mong rten 'brel sgrig byed pa'i lha rnams mnyes byed bsangs yig bzhugs so* Rgod kyi ldem 'phru can (1337–1409; BDRC: P5254) [Nyingma]	10
157	*Yi dam rgya mtsho'i sgrub thabs rin chen 'byung gnas kyi lhan thabs rin 'byung don gsal bzhugs so* Pan chen 04 Bstan pa'i nyi ma (1782–1853; BDRC: P285) [Geluk]	7
109	*Dpal ldan dmag zor rgyal mo'i gdams skor mkha' 'gro'i zhal lung las las bzhi spyi bsgril gsang sgrub dang bcas pa'i 'phrin las bklags chog tu bkod pa/ zhar byung a phyi/ dpal lha/ drag rgyal ma/ g.yu sgron ma/ de mo rnams kyi gsol mchod dang bcas pa rin chen nor bu'i do shal zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Pan chen 05 Bstan pa'i dbang phyug (1854/55–1882; BDRC: P190) [Geluk]	7
5	*Bka' rgyud lugs kyi lha bsangs rgyas pa bzhugs so* Rje mkha' spyod (1350–1405); Karma pa 07 chos grags rgya mtsho (1450/54–1506; BDRC: P821) [Kagyü]	7
16	*Khod spungs dran pa che'i rdzongs chen gyi sgrub pa lags so* Undated [Bon]	7

Overall, this illustrates that *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, while ecumenical in many ways, still skews heavily to Geluk iconographic and mythic representations, with secondary attention given predominantly to Nyingma. It is also notable that 25 of the texts – almost exclusively Nyingma – are found in the important 19th-century Rimé collection, the *Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo*. In his chapters, Nebesky-Wojkowitz highlights differences and discrepancies between scholastic representations when he can, but it is valuable to be cognizant of these inherent textual biases in order to amend and expand on his initial observations. Nevertheless, the great breadth and volume of the sources that he was able to procure at a time when such availability was rare is a testament to his dedication and attentiveness.

Regardless of the book's outmoded focus on shamanism, its historical limitations, and its textual and sectarian leanings, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* possesses an endurance that few other scholarly works on Tibetan religion have.[39] The vast majority of the data continues to be pertinent now that more scholars are looking earnestly at deity cults and their pervasiveness in Tibetan culture. I personally appreciate the impressively diverse iconographic descriptions and mythic variations that the book provides. Nebesky-Wojkowitz allows these contradictory descriptions and accounts to stand on their own without attempting to create an overarching narrative, which is incredibly valuable for approaching the mythic and ritual data on its own terms. Even Tibetan masters have attempted to explain away such seeming inconsistencies through Emptiness doctrine or other Mahāyāna concepts. For instance, the 18th-century Geluk hierarch Lelung Zhepé Dorjé (Sle lung bZhad pa'i rdo rje, 1697–1740) chalked up these differences to the skillful means of enlightened beings, saying, "Because the actions of the *tathāgatas* cannot be apprehended, I think they are revealed in different forms depending on the proclivities and character of the disciple."[40] Regardless, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* is part of René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz's legacy and a true testament to his status as the forefather of Tibetan deity studies.[41]

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39 Other works that were printed around the same time, have the same caliber of scholarship, and continue to be utilized often by scholars today include Giuseppe Tucci's three volume masterpiece *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* and George Roerich's translation of the classic 15th-century Tibetan history, *The Blue Annals*; see Tucci 1999 and Roerich 1996, respectively.

40 Tib. *de bzhin gshegs pa'i mdzad pa la tshad bzung med pa'i phyir gdul bya'i mos ngo la ltos nas rnam pa tha dad par bstan par sems so*; Sle lung rje drung 1976: 385.3.

41 Nebesky-Wojkowitz was responsible for a number of other works – some in English but most in German – that either provided the preliminary data later elaborated upon in *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, or which stand alone as valuable works in and of themselves, though perhaps not possessing the scope of this work. For examples of the former, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1948, 1951 (with Gorer), and 1952. Regarding the latter, there are only two: *Tibetan Religious Dances* (Nebesky-Wojkowitz† and Fürer-Haimendorf 1976), which was published posthumously and is itself quite a valuable work for being one of the first prolonged studies on Tibetan religious dance (*'chams*); and *Where the Gods are Mountains* (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1957), which is in a way the companion to *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, as it is a travelogue relating Nebesky-Wojkowitz's personal observations and experiences during his travels and research in the early 1950s. While lacking the same degree of scholastic rigor and textual citations, this latter work provides some photographs and data not found in *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* and offers extra nuance to the accounts in that work, such as the oracle trance sessions.

APPENDIX
Oracles and Demons of Tibet – Chronological Catalogue of Tibetan Texts

Dated Texts

	NW	NW Text Information	Author Info and Archive Location	Index	Deities Cited
Up to the 16th Century (27 Texts)					
1	85	*Bdud kyi zhags pa dgu grol bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 8 RvV	Lo tsā ba Bai ro tsa na (8th cent.) Nyingma I.KERN 2740/M382 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:331716 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 224)	286, 521	klu bdud
2	90	*Sde brgyad gser skyems bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 7	Gnubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes (9th cent.; BDRC: P2885) Nyingma Library of Congress: BQ7662.4.S26 1970 I.KERN 2740/M8 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:316921 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 227)	UM	
3	2	*Klu 'bum dkar po bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 114	Author unknown; possibly 10th cent. (see Martin 2001, 414–415) Nyingma BDRC: W2187, vol. 138 I.KERN 2740/H46 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:318678 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 1)	298, 303	
4	168	*Shin tu gnyan po* [sic: *pa*] *ma mo'i khrag mdos bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 5 From the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, volume *phi*	Gter ston Khyung po dpal dge (11th cent.) Nyingma BDRC: W20578, vol. 69, 465–474 I.KERN Br.79/H130 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:297688 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 184)	383–384	ma mo
5	21	*Mkhas pa zangs gling dbang phyug gis mdzad pa'i gtad zlog zab mo'i phyag len zab gnad du bkod pa bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 6 From the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, volume *yi*	Mkhas pa Zangs gling dbang phyug (11th–12th cent.?)[42] Compiled by:'Jam mgon kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1813–1899; BDRC: P264) Rimé BDRC: W20578, vol. 84, 91–102 I.KERN Br.79/H196 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:310954 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 27)	UM	

42 This suggested date is based on the fact that his name precedes 12th-century figures found in the loosely chronological indexical list in Martin 1991: 332, n. 11.

6	164	*Rākṣa dgra mdos sogs mdos bcu'i sogs yig smreng dang bcas pa bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 15 From the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, volume *pi*	Raksha gter ston Bsod nams rdo rje (12th cent.; BDRC: P7626) Nyingma BDRC: W20578, vol. 69, 149–178 I.KERN Br.79/H40 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:298260 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 179)	384, 385, 391	rākṣa mdos bcu, ma mo, ma mo'i glud mdos
7	174	*Srid pa ma mo'i las mtha' mdos bcu kun gyi phrin las don bsdems gsal bar bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 12 From the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, volume *phi*	Raksha gter ston Bsod nams rdo rje (12th cent.; BDRC: P7626) Nyingma BDRC: W20578, vol. 69, 179–202 I.KERN Br.79/H174 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:296570 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 187)	383	ma mo mdos
8	176	*Srog bdag rgyal po dkar po drug mdos ra shag gter byon gying ya* [sic: *gyi ngag*] *'don khrigs su brdebs pa bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 7 From the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, volume *pi*	Raksha gter ston Bsod nams rdo rje (12th cent.; BDRC: P7626) and Gra sgom Chos kyi rdo rje (12th cent.?) Nyingma BDRC: W20578, vol. 69, 381–393	98, 99, 116	pe har, rgyal mdos, gnam lha dkar po
9	32	*Rgyal mdos dkar po drug mdos kyi gzhung gshegs gsol dang bcas pa bzhugs pa'i dbu phyogs legs so* Blockprint, Fols. 20 From the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, volume *pi* This book is supposed to be a *gter ma*, which had been excavated at *Bsam yas byang chub gling* by the *gter ston Nyi ma 'od zer* from *Nyang*, who was believed to be the embodied emanation of the *dharmarāja Khri srong* (*lde'u btsan*).	Mnga' bdag nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1136–1204; BDRC: P364) Nyingma BDRC: W20578, vol. 69, 307–345 I.KERN Br.79/H81 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:296717 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 36)	96, 98, 113, 377–379	pe har
10	31	*Rgyal mdos dkar po drug mdos kyi bca' thabs mdun bskyed/ spyan 'dren rnams bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 17 From the *Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo*, volume *pi* [Partially transcribed as Text D, Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: 564–565]	Mnga' bdag nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1136–1204; BDRC: P364) Nyingma Edited by: Shwa ban Rgyal sras legs ldan (1290–1365; BDRC: P7625) BDRC: W20578, vol. 69, 347–380; see also BDRC: W23084 I.KERN Br.79/H85 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:294425 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 36)	96, 117, 120, 376	pe har

11	180	*Slob dpon padmas mdzad pa'i rgyal gsol 'phrin las don bcu bzhugs so* [= *Rgyal po chen po sku lnga'i gsol mchod 'phrin las don bcu ma*] Blockprint, Fols. 15 [sic: 12]	Mnga' bdag nyang ral Nyi ma 'od zer (1136–1204; BDRC: P364) Nyingma BDRC: W00EGS1016248, vol. 1, 53–75 I.KERN 2740/H485 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:316113 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 187)	129	pe har
12	135	*Dbal gsas drag po sku rdzogs kyi gzhung bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 31 Bon work RvV	Dbyil gyi bston pa (b. 1175) Bon I.KERN 2740/B2 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:312985 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 266)	317	rngam mo yum chen srid pa'i bde sgrol ma
13	188	*Bsrung 'bum rdo rje 'phreng ba zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 12 [sic: 21]	Sangs rgyas gling pa (1340–1396; BDRC: P5340) Nyingma BDRC: W18978, vol. 6, 689–730; also in *Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo*, vol. 67	504	srung 'khor
14	110	*Dpal ldan lha mo bu rdzi ma'i brten mdos bca' thabs zab mo zhig bzhugs so* [*lha mo'i rten mdos*] Manuscript, Fols. 5 [sic: 4] RvV [From the *Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo*, volume 81]	Rdo rje gling pa (1346–1405; BDRC: P6164) Nyingma BDRC: W20578, vol. 81, 845–851 I.KERN 2740/M384 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:328721 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 231)	390	dpal ldan lha mo
15	77	*Thun mong rten 'brel sgrig byed pa'i lha rnams mnyes byed bsangs yig bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 44 [sic: 49] Subchapter: *Gsang ba'i bdag pos gnang ba'i dgra lha dpangs stod ces bya ba bzhugs so* (fols. 36–44) A print from the *Sten* [sic: *Bstan*] *rgyas gling* monastery	Rgod kyi ldem 'phru can (1337–1409; BDRC: P5254) Nyingma BDRC: W00KG06, 79–98 I.KERN Br.79/H355 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:294435 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 87)	185, 207, 209, 265, 320, 324, 329, 332, 334, 336	
16	5	*Bka' rgyud lugs kyi lha bsangs rgyas pa bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 78 RvV	Rje mkha' spyod (1350–1405) Kagyü Additions by: Karma pa 07 chos grags rgya mtsho (1450/54–1506; BDRC: P821) I.KERN 2740/M35 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:350866 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 202)	185–186, 200, 211, 221, 304, 330	bstan ma bcu gnyis, rma chen spom ra, sman mo, dge bsnyen

17	63	*Stobs po che la brten pa'i char 'bebs rje'i man ngag zhal shes bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 4	Tsong kha pa Blo bzang grags pa (1357–1419; BDRC: P64) Geluk BDRC: W29193, vol. 11, 687–693 I.KERN 2740/H80 (Title page missing, subchapter r) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:306020 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 197)	478	
18	199	*A ya'i mdos kyi zin bris bkod pa legs so* Manuscript, Fols. 24 RvV	Rwa Chos dpal bzang po (1371–1439) Unknown Lineage [See Ramble 2007: 710] I.KERN 2740/M400 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:345622 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 263)	UM	
19	183	*Slob dpon padmas mdzad pa'i bstan ma'i gsang mdos bzhugs* Manuscript, Fols. 4 RvV	Ratna gling pa (1403–1479; BDRC: P470) Nyingma I.KERN 2740/M19 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:352065 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 257)	184, 387	bstan ma bcu gnyis, rdo rje kun tu bzang, bstan ma bcu gnyis kyi mdos
20	12a	*Sku lnga'i gsol mchod* (fols. 1b–10b) This work was composed by the second Dalai Lama (*thams cad mkhyen pa*) *Dge 'dun rgya mtsho* (1475–1542), using the material contained in the book *Bla ma'i las byang thugs sgrub yang snying 'dus pa* and upon the request of the treasurer (*phyag mdzod pa*) *Bsod nams rab brtan*. It remained unpublished and came into use only at the time of the fifth Dalai Lama, *Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho* (1617–1682), who made some additions. The complete text was then written down by the clerk *Ngag dbang dge legs*. [Subchapter of:] *Sku lnga'i gsol mchod rdo rje'i sgra dbyangs dang rdo rje grags ldan gnod sbyin tsi'u dmar po dang bse khrab pa tshangs pa bcas kyi gsol mchod rgyas pa rnams bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 30	Ta la'i bla ma 02 Dge 'dun rgya mtsho (1476–1542; BDRC: P84) Geluk Additions by: Ta la'i bla ma 05 Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682; BDRC: P37) BDRC: W294, vol. 11, 207–236 BDRC: W1CZ2857, vol. 6, 167–184[?]; see also BDRC: W212	111, 125	pe har

		Museum für Völkerkunde, Wien, Collection Nebesky-Wojkowitz [Inv. No. 134.481] [BDRC: W1PD53265, vol. 3, 289–347] [Partially transcribed as Text C, Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: 562–564]			
21	114	*Dpal lha bstan ma bcu gnyis sger gsol rdo rje g.yu sgron ma rdo rje drag rgyal ma bcas pa'i gsol mchod bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 7	Ta la'i bla ma 02 Dge 'dun rgya mtsho (1476–1542; BDRC: P84) Geluk BDRC: W1PD53265, vol. 3, 145–157 [Drawn from his writings]	192	rdo rje g.yu sgron ma
22	50	*Chos 'khor skyong ba'i bstan srung btsan rgod chen po'i phrin las che btsan dgyes pa'i rngam glu zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 10 From the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, volume *ti*	Mnga' ris pan chen Padma dbang rgyal (1487–1542; BDRC: P1699) Nyingma BDRC: W20578, vol. 62, 351–369 I.KERN Br.79/H107 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:327055 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 50)	171	tsi'u dmar po
23	102	*Gnod sbyin ya ba skya bdun gyi sgrub thabs srog gtad kyi cho ga 'dod pa'i re skong zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 9 From the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, volume *ti*	Mnga' ris pan chen Padma dbang rgyal (1487–1542; BDRC: P1699) Nyingma BDRC: W20578, vol. 62, 333–349 I.KERN Br.79/H101 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:295920 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 101)	171–173	tsi'u dmar po
24	116	*Spu gri dmar po snying gi rgyud le'u bdun pa/ dmag dpon gyi rgyud grub thabs dang bcas pa bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 17 From the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, volume *ti*	Mnga' ris pan chen Padma dbang rgyal (1487–1542; BDRC: P1699) Nyingma Annotations by: Mchog gyur gling pa (1829–1870; BDRC: P564) BDRC: W20578, vol. 62, 299–332 I.KERN Br.79/H14 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:294142 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 117)	174	tsi'u dmar po

25	153	*Zhing skyong chen po kun dga' gzhon nu'i mchod pa'i cho [ga] dpa' bo rnam par rol pa'i dga' ston zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 11	Zhwa dmar 05 Dkon mchog yan lag (1525–1583: BDRC: P1426) Kagyü Additions by: Zhwa dmar 07 Ye shes snying po (1631–1694; BDRC: P1386); Zhwa dmar 08 Dpal chen chos kyi don grub (1695–1732; BDRC: P955) BDRC: W3CN12210, vol. 2 I.KERN 2740/H362 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:323210 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 169)	66	stobs ldan pho nya sde brgyad, mgon po
26	35	*Brgya bzhi'i cho ga bklags pas don grub ces bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 10	Ta la'i bla ma 03 Bsod nams rgya mtsho (1543–1588; BDRC: P999) Geluk BDRC: W1CZ2856, 217–276 I.KERN 2740/H560 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:320951 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 39)	527	
27	184	*Bsangs dpe bkra shis re skong ma zhes bya ba bzhugs [so?]* Blockprint, Fols. 18 [sic: 13]	'Brug chen 04 Padma dkar po (1527–1592; BDRC: P825) Kagyü [NW calls it a Nyingma text] BDRC: W10736, vol. 19, 267–291 I.KERN 2740/H436 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:316082 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 190)	325	dgra lha
17th – 18th Century (59 Texts)					
28	148	*Tshe ring mched lnga'i mchod gtor gyi rim pa bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 12	Zhwa dmar 06 Chos kyi dbang phyug (1584–1630; BDRC: P1432) [Arranged by him, after being supplemented by Situ Rinpoche] Kagyü BDRC: W20876, vol. 6, 437–460 I.KERN 2740/H311 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:312599 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 162)	UM	
29	51	*'Chi med tshe sgrub gnam lcags rdo rje dngos grub kun 'dus las glud rabs lha'i gaṇḍe bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 6	Bang ri gter ston 'Ja tshon snying po (1585–1656; BDRC: P882) Nyingma BDRC: W1KG3655, vol. 2, 473–484	UM	
30	14	*Kha 'bar gtor chen gyi cho ga ngag 'don gyi rim pa chogs* [sic: *phyogs*] *gcig tu bsgrigs pa bzhugs* Blockprint, Fols. 7	Pan chen 01 Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1570–1662; BDRC: P719) Geluk BDRC: W23430, vol. 4, 895–907	308	*preta* goddess

31	36	*Brgya bzhi'i cho ga ji ltar bya ba'i tshul phan bde'i 'byung gnas zhes bya ba bzugs* [sic: *bzhugs*] *so* Blockprint Fols. 4	Pan chen 01 Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1570–1662; BDRC: P719) Geluk BDRC: W23430, vol. 4, 909–916; see also BDRC: W9835 I.KERN 2740/H558 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:322869 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 39)	523, 526	
32	144	*Gtsug tor bzlog chen gyi lag len snying por dril ba'i cho ga rgyas 'bring bsdus gsum bar chad kun sel zhes bya ba bzhugs* Blockprint, Fols. 12 [sic: 10]	Pan chen 01 Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1570–1662; BDRC: P719) Geluk BDRC: W23430, vol. 4, 875–894	UM	
33	96	*Gnam chos thugs kyi gter kha snyan brgyud zab mo'i skor las/* [*bka' srung ha sa garbha'i sgrub thabs shin tu bsdus pa rnal*] *'byor pa rang don rten 'brel ngan pa rnams bzlog pa'i gdams pa zab mo bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 9 From the *Rin chen gter mdzod,* volume *phi*	Gnam chos Mi 'gyur rdo rje (1645–1667; BDRC: P659) Nyingma BDRC: W20578, vol. 70, 63–80 I.KERN Br.79/H173 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:296540 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 100)	298	ha sa garbha
34	7	*Bka' brgyad zor las cha dgu ma'i don bsdus pa bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 3 RvV	Rā ga a sya Karma chags med (1613–1678; BDRC: P649) Kagyü VIAF: viaf.org/viaf/79140195 I.KERN 2740/M253 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:1647528 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 202)	302	
35	40	*Gcod kyi sgo nas ser ba bsrung ba'i gdams pa zab mo bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 5	Rā ga a sya Karma chags med (1613–1678; BDRC: P649) Kagyü Kawaguchi Collection of Tibetan Texts: Call No.49, Ref. No. 0749 I.KERN 2740/H6, /H27, /H30, /H105, /H107, /H128 (subchapter l) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:347042 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:351576 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:343557 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:343205 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:338748 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:348494 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 42–43)	469	

36	41	*Gcod lugs char 'bod snyan brgyud* [sic: *rgyud*] *yi ger bkod pa 'don bsgom phyag len dang bcas pa mthong bas don gsal bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 21	Rā ga a sya Karma chags med (1613–1678; BDRC: P649) Kagyü Kawaguchi Collection of Tibetan Texts: Call No.49, Ref. No. 0748 I.KERN 2740/H6, /H27, /H30, /H105, /H107, /H128 (subchapter k) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:347042 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:351576 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:343557 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:343205 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:338748 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:348494 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 42–43)	469	
37	42	*Gcod lugs phun sum tshogs pa'i me mchod bltas* [sic: *ltas*] *chog tu bkod pa bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 24	Rā ga a sya Karma chags med (1613–1678; BDRC: P649) Kagyü Kawaguchi Collection of Tibetan Texts: Call No.49, Ref. No. 0754 I.KERN 2740/H6, /H27, /H30, /H105, /H107, /H128 (subchapter q) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:347042 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:351576 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:343557 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:343205 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:338748 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:348494 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 42–43)	469, 531	
38	57	*Rje rang 'byung rdo rjes mdzad p'ai* [sic: *pa'i*] *gcod kyi tshogs las rin po che'i 'phreng ba 'don bsgrigs bltas chog tu bkod pa gcod kyi lugs sor bzhag bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 94	Karma pa 03 Rang byung rdo rje (1284–1339; BDRC: P66) Rā ga a sya Karma chags med (1613–1678; BDRC: P649) Kagyü BDRC: W22933, vol.25, 89–296; see also BDRC: W23756, 9–196 I.KERN Br.79/H313 and /H314; 2740/H31 and /H32 [sic.: /H143]; Br.79/H256 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:339166 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:340095 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:347017 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:346441 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:345413 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 77)	171, 199, 204, 208, 272, 299	btsan rgod 'bar ba spun bdun, sman btsun, sku la mkha' ri, zur phud lnga pa, ma mo, lha srin sde brgyad

39	58	*Gnyan chen mtha' la gtan* [sic: *gtad*] *pa dang/ mtha' gtad chu yi gzer bu gnyis bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 10	Rā ga a sya Karma chags med (1613–1678; BDRC: P649) Kagyü Kawaguchi Collection of Tibetan Texts: Call No.49, Ref. No. 0747	299	
40	97	*Gnam chos bdud rtsi 'khyil pa'i las tshogs* [*bse rag*] *lto* [sic: *ltogs*] *'gong dbul sri dkar ba'i man ngag zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 18 [sic: 11] RvV	Rā ga a sya Karma chags med (1613–1678; BDRC: P649) Kagyü BDRC: W1KG8321, vol. 38, 637–657 I.KERN 2740/M386 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:328711 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 228)	307	
41	137	*Ma cig gi gcod kyi cha lag/ bya 'bod snyan brgyud zab mo bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 3	Rā ga a sya Karma chags med (1613–1678; BDRC: P649) Kagyü BDRC: W1KG8321, vol. 53, 155–160	488	ḍākinīs
42	171	*Sa bdag bshags 'bum bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. [sic: 17]	Gter ston Nyi ma grags pa (1647–1710; BDRC: P425) Nyingma Edited by Rā ga a sya Karma chags med (1613–1678; BDRC: P649) Kagyü BDRC: W3CN2376 I.KERN 2740/H213, /H314, /H488, /H489, /H543m, /H563 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:344155 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:344186 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:350955 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:341977 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:342726 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:342151 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 186)	276, 292	bdud, sa bdag
43	12e	*Gnod sbyin chen po bse khrab can la mchod gtor sogs 'bul tshul bzhugs so* (fols. 21a–23b) This work was composed by the fifth Dalai Lama, *Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho*. [Subchapter of:] *Sku lnga'i gsol mchod rdo rje'i sgra dbyangs dang rdo rje grags ldan gnod sbyin tsi'u dmar po dang bse khrab pa tshangs pa bcas kyi gsol mchod rgyas pa rnams bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 30 Museum für Völkerkunde, Wien, Collection Nebesky-Wojkowitz [Inv. No. 134.481]	Ta la'i bla ma 05 Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682; BDRC: P37) Geluk BDRC: W1PD53265, vol. 3, 329–334	UM	

44	24	*Gong sa lnga pa chen po'i 'jags sgrig* [sic: *ljags bsgrigs*] *snang ba'i rta thugs dkar po bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 8 [sic: 3]	Ta la'i bla ma 05 Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682; BDRC: P37) Geluk [See Martin 2001: 412] BDRC: W1KG26281, vol. 123, 225–228 I.KERN 2740/H524, /H549 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:335558 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:349232 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 28)	329	rta thug dkar po
45	103	*Gnod sbyin bse'i khrab can la mchod gtor 'bul tshul* Manuscript, Fols. 7 [sic: 4] Museum für Völkerkunde, Wien, Collection Nebesky-Wojkowitz [Inv. No. 134.466]. …the fifth Dalai Lama (here addressed by his "secret name": *Za hor gyi benḍa*) composed this book during the summer retreat at *Gsang phu*.	Ta la'i bla ma 05 Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682; BDRC: P37) Geluk BDRC: W294, vol. 11, 361–367	UM	
46	129	*Byang gter phur pa'i sri mnan yi dam drag po gang la'ang sbyar du rung ba'i lag len 'don 'gregs dkyus gcig tu bsdebs pa 'bar ba'i brjid gnon thog brtsegs zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 16 [sic: 28] The work was composed by *Padma gar dbang rtsal* in the retreat *Rdo rje thugs kyi rdzong*	Padma gar dbang rtsal (1640–1685; BDRC: P656) Nyingma BDRC: W20578 (*Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo*), vol. 84, 505–559	300, 517	sri
47	119	*Phug lugs rtsis kyi legs bshad mkhas pa'i mgul rgyan vaiḍūr*[*y*]*a dkar po'i do shal dpyod ldan snying nor zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 633	Sde srid Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705; BDRC: P421) Geluk BDRC: W2CZ8040 I.KERN 2740/H89 (only references part 1) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:357359 part 1 (2740/H89a): hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:353098 part 2 (2740/H89b): hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:353319 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 118)	258, 264, 265, 291	sa bdag, khyung
48	95	*Gnam bskos pa'i* [sic: *sa'i*] *tshangs pa cing gi si'i* [sic: *sa'i*] *rigs rgyud kyi srung* [sic: *srungs*] *ma pho lha dung skyong* [sic: *skyongs*] *dkar po'i gsol mchod bde chen lhun grub ma bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 3 Bibliothèque National, Paris, Fonds Tibétain, no. 600	Lcang skya 02 Ngag dbang blo bzang chos ldan (1642–1714; BDRC: P209) Geluk BDRC: W1KG1321, vol. 7, 487–492	243	

49	19	*Khro bo sme brtsegs kyi khrus chog nag po 'gro shes bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 7 RvV	Gter bdag gling pa 'Gyur med rdo rje (1646–1714; BDRC: P7) Nyingma BDRC: W22096, vol. 16, 121a–128b I.KERN 2740/M223 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:336695 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 208)	UM	
50	38	*Brgya bzhi'i cho ga 'dod don lhun grub ces bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 11 From the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, volume *pi*	Gter bdag gling pa 'Gyur med rdo rje (1646–1714; BDRC: P7) Nyingma BDRC: W22096, vol. 8, 325–339; see also *Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo*; W1PD96185, vol. 43 I.KERN Br.79/H82 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:292772 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 39)	UM	
51	66	*Bstan pa skyong ba'i dam can [chen] po rnams gyi phrin las dngos grub kyi rol mtsho zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Manuscript [sic: Blockprint], Fols. 62 [sic: 53] [Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955a, 540: Fols. 44][43]	Gter bdag gling pa 'Gyur med rdo rje (1646–1714; BDRC: P7) Nyingma BDRC: W22096, vol. 10, 170a–230b I.KERN Br.79/H10 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:297894 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 83)	261	
52	30	*Rgyal chen rdo rje shugs ldan rtsal gyi gsol kha 'phrin las 'dod 'jo zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 5	Dre'u lhas pa (d.1720; see BDRC: P533 for comparison) Kagyü Rmor chen Kun dga' lhun grub (1654–1726; BDRC: P797) Sakya BDRC: W22128, vol. 1, 231–243	UM	
53	149	*Tsher gseb chos skyong chen po la mchod gtor 'bul ba'i tshul shin tu legs bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 4	Pan chen 02 Blo bzang ye shes (1663–1737; BDRC: P106) Geluk BDRC: W00EGS1016246, vol. 3, 147–154 I.KERN 2740/H267 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:330414 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 163)	UM	

43 This work, *Der Kult und die Ikonographie der Tibetischen Schutzgottheiten* (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955a) is Nebesky-Wojkowitz's habilitation thesis, which was the basis for *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, published the following year. I am grateful to Uwe Niebuhr for drawing my attention to this and other folio discrepancies, as well as for providing me with a copy of this work.

54	173	*Sri bzlog cakra bcu gsum pa bzhugs so* Manuscript [sic: Blockprint], Fols. 4 RvV	Rtsa gsum gling pa (1694–1738; BDRC: P680) Nyingma BDRC: W4CZ1042, vol. 1, 380–382 I.KERN 2740/H490 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:323723 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 187)	UM	
55	49	*Chos skyong bya khri mig gcig pa dpon slob gyi thugs dam bskul ba'i 'dod gsol bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 3	Rig pa 'dzin pa Padma bzhad pa'i rdo rje (1697–1740; BDRC: P675) [Based on his secret initiatory name, Padma bzhad pa'i rdo rje] Requested by Se ra byes dpon slob mkhan po Blo bzang nor bu (b. 17th cent.; BDRC: P3437) [See Cabezón and Penpa Dorjee 2019: 403, n. 871] Geluk I.KERN 2740/H271 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:298826 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 50)	UM	
56	166	*Rigs mtshun lha srung btsan* [sic: *gnyan po*] *rdo rje brag btsan gyi mchod bstod* [sic: *gsol mchod*] *'dod don lhun grub* Blockprint, Fols. 9 [sic: 5]	Kaḥ thog rig 'dzin Tshe dbang nor bu (1698–1755; BDRC: P676) Nyingma BDRC: W29688, vol. 5, 377–386 I.KERN 2740/H365 and /H547 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:315206 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:347034 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 180)	UM	
57	65	*Bstan skyong dbang mo'i gtor skyong dang mnga' gsol bya tshul bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 14 [Museum für Völkerkunde, Wien, Collection Nebesky-Wojkowitz; Inv. No. 140.866] The author of this book is the seventh Dalai Lama *Bskal bzang rgya mtsho* (1708–1757). His predecessor, the Dalai Lama *Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho* (1683–1706), and the teacher of the latter, *Yongs 'dzin paṇḍita*, had already made a draft of this work. Subchapters: a)*'Dir bstan skyong chen mo drag tu bskul ba'i tshul* This text was composed by the *rgyal ba Dge 'dun rgya mtsho* (1475–1542) in the *Dga' ldan pho brang* of Drepung monastery.	Ta la'i bla ma 02 Dge 'dun rgya mtsho (1476–1542; BDRC: P84) Ta la'i bla ma 06 Tshangs dbyangs rgya mtsho (1683–1706/1746; BDRC: P352) Pan chen 02 Blo bzang ye shes (1663–1737; BDRC: P106)[?] Ta la'i bla ma 07 Skal bzang rgya mtsho (1708–1757; BDRC: P179) Geluk	193–197	rdo rje grags mo rgyal, bstan ma bcu gnyis

		b) *Bstan skyong chen mo rdo rje grags mo rgyal gyi…tshogs 'khor 'bul tshul phun tshogs 'dod dgu'i char 'bebs bzhugs so* A text which was composed by the seventh Dalai Lama. – Received as a gift from *Rin po che Dar mdo sprul sku*.			
58	12d	*Gnod sbyin dgra lha'i rgyal po rtsi'u dmar po gsol mchod bya ba'i rim brdzogs ldan dga' ston zhes bya ba bzhugs so* (fols. 16b–21a) The author of this work is the third Panchen Lama *Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes* (1738–1780). [Subchapter of:] *Sku lnga'i gsol mchod rdo rje'i sgra dbyangs dang rdo rje grags ldan gnod sbyin tsi'u dmar po dang bse khrab pa tshangs pa bcas kyi gsol mchod rgyas pa rnams bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 30 Museum für Völkerkunde, Wien, Collection Nebesky-Wojkowitz [Inv. No. 134.481]	Pan chen 03 Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes (1738–1780: BDRC: P168) Geluk BDRC: W2046, vol. 5, 52–58 (within text: *Chos skyong rnams sgrub skor bskang ba bskul dang bcas pa*)	166–167	tsi'u dmar po
59	12f	*Lha mchog srid gsum gyi bdag po tshangs pa chen po'i gsol mchod gyi rim pa don yod 'phrul gyi zhags pa zhes bya ba* (fols. 23b–30b) *Tshangs pa dkar po* himself is supposed to have ordered this work to be composed: speaking through the mouth of an oracle-priest, he gave to the son of the medium, *'Chi med bdud 'joms dbang po*, the order to write a corresponding supplication in verse to the Panchen Lama *Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes*. The latter then composed this text, writing it with his own hand. [Subchapter of:] *Sku lnga'i gsol mchod rdo rje'i sgra dbyangs dang rdo rje grags ldan gnod sbyin tsi'u dmar po dang bse khrab pa tshangs pa bcas kyi gsol mchod rgyas pa rnams bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 30 Museum für Völkerkunde, Wien, Collection Nebesky-Wojkowitz [Inv. No. 134.481]	Pan chen 03 Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes (1738–1780: BDRC: P168) Geluk BDRC: W2046, vol. 5, 66–79 (within text: *Chos skyong rnams sgrub skor bskang ba bskul dang bcas pa*) [This is the same as text 193 below;[44] see also text 47]	146, 148	tshangs pa

44 I am grateful to Uwe Niebuhr for drawing my attention to this redundancy in the collection.

60	46	*Chos skyong lcam sring gi gtor chog bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 10	Pan chen 03 Dpal ldan ye shes (1738–1780; BDRC: P168) Geluk BDRC: W00EGS1016246, vol. 3, 107–126	UM	
61	47	*Chos skyong rnams sgrub skor bskang pa* [sic: *ba*] *bskul dang bcas pa bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 95	Pan chen 03 Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes (1738–1780: BDRC: P168) Geluk BDRC: W2046, vol. 10, 273–287 I.KERN 2740/H36 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:308700 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 47–49)	36, 147, 151, 245, 247	dpal ldan lha mo, tshangs pa dkar po, bse khrab
62	159	*Yul lha gzhi bdag 'khrungs lha sogs la mchod gtor 'bul tshul gyi skor bzhugs* Blockprint, Fols. 36	Pan chen 03 Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes (1738–1780: BDRC: P168) Geluk BDRC: W1KG9800, vol. 5, 719–788	147, 152–153, 246–248	tshangs pa dkar po, li byin ha ra, klu bdud g.yag mgo can, gzhi bdag, minor chos skyong
63	193	*Lha mchog srid gsum gyi bdag po tshangs pa chen po'i gsol mchod lon* [sic: *kyi rim pa don yod*] *'phrul gyi zhags pa zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 10	Pan chen 03 Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes (1738–1780; BDRC: P168) Geluk BDRC: W00EGS1016246, vol. 3, 127–142 [Composed in 1778] [This is the same as text 12f above]	UM	
64	195	*Lha sna tshogs kyi las bzhi'i sbyin steg* [sic: *sreg*] *gi cho ga bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 32	Pan chen 03 Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes (1738–1780; BDRC: P168) Geluk BDRC: W1KG9800, vol. 5, 605–667	UM	
65	197	*Lha mo rdo rje g.yu sgron ma'i gtor tshog* [sic: *chog*] *bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 10 [Partially transcribed as Text G, Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: 569–570]	Pan chen 03 Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes (1738–1780: BDRC: P168) Geluk BDRC: W2046, vol. 10, 357–375	191, 569–570	rdo rje g.yu sgron ma
66	122	*Pho lha dung skyong dkar po'i gsol mchod bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 9 [sic: 5] Collected works of *Lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje*, volume *ca*	Lcang skya 03 Rol pa'i rdo rje (1717–1786; BDRC: P182) Geluk BDRC: W28833, vol. 5, 385–393	UM	

67	141	*Rma chen spom ra'i gsol mchod bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 6 From the collected works of *Rdo rje 'chang lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje*, volume *ca*	Lcang skya 03 Rol pa'i rdo rje (1717–1786; BDRC: P182) Geluk BDRC: W28833, vol. 5, 373–384	211	rma chen spom ra
68	64	*Bstan skyong dbang mo rdo rje drag rgyal ma la mngon rtogs gsal btab ste mchod gtor 'bul ba'i cho ga bzhugs* Blockprint, Fols. 15 [Museum für Völkerkunde, Wien, Collection Nebesky-Wojkowitz; Inv. No. 140.865] The contents of this book are based upon previous works which were composed by the *rgyal ba Dge 'dun rgya mtsho* and by the fifth Dalal Lama. The book has been composed by the *dge slong Ye shes rgyal mtshan* in the room called *Bde ba can* in the Potala Palace at Lhasa, after the goddess *Rdo rje grags rgyal ma* had given through the mouth of her *sku rten pa* the order that a book for her worship should be written. – Received as a gift from *Rin po che Dar mdo sprul sku*.	Ta la'i bla ma 02 Dge 'dun rgya mtsho (1476–1542; BDRC: P84) Ta la'i bla ma 05 Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682; BDRC: P37) Tshe mchog gling yongs 'dzin Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1713–1793; BDRC: P105)[?] Geluk	193–194, 197	rdo rje drag rgyal ma
69	12b	*Sku lnga'i gser skyems* (fols. 10b–11b) [Subchapter of:] *Sku lnga'i gsol mchod rdo rje'i sgra dbyangs dang rdo rje grags ldan gnod sbyin tsi'u dmar po dang bse khrab pa tshangs pa bcas kyi gsol mchod rgyas pa rnams bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 30 Museum für Völkerkunde, Wien, Collection Nebesky-Wojkowitz [Inv. No. 134.481]	Tshe mchog gling yongs 'dzin sprul sku 01 Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1713–1793; BDRC: P105) Geluk [requested by 8th Dalai Lama (1758–1804; BDRC: P109)] BDRC: W00EGS1016248, vol. 1, 203–205	401	sku lnga'i gser skyems
70	12c	*Snang srid dregs pa'i sde dpon gnas chung chos skyong rdo rje grags ldan la mchod gtor 'bul ba'i cho ga 'dod dgu'i mchog sbyin zhes bya ba bzhugs so* (fols 11b–16b) This text was composed upon the order of the Dalai Lama'*Jam dpal rgya mtsho* by the dge slong *Ye shes rgyal mtshan*. The work [with 12b] was written down in the Potala Palace in Lhasa.	Tshe mchog gling yongs 'dzin sprul sku 01 Ye shes rgyal mtshan (1713–1793; BDRC: P105) Geluk [requested by 8th Dalai Lama (1758–1804; BDRC: P109)] BDRC: W1PD53265, vol. 3, 310–320	111	pe har

		[Subchapter of:] *Sku lnga'i gsol mchod rdo rje'i sgra dbyangs dang rdo rje grags ldan gnod sbyin tsi'u dmar po dang bse khrab pa tshangs pa bcas kyi gsol mchod rgyas pa rnams bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 30 Museum für Völkerkunde, Wien, Collection Nebesky-Wojkowitz [Inv. No. 134.481]			
71	8	*Bka' gdams pa dang dge lugs bla ma rag* [sic: *rags*] *rim gyi gsung 'bum mtshan tho bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 65 Tohoku Catalogue no. 6555 Vol. *ra* of the collected works of *Klong rdol bla ma ngag dbang blo bzang* An index to the most important works composed by prominent members of the *Bka' gdams pa* and *Dge lugs pa* sects.	Klong rdol bla ma Ngag dbang blo bzang (1719–1794; BDRC: P22) Geluk BDRC: W87, 1301–1430	UM	
72	70	*Bstan srung dam can rgya mtsho'i ming gi grangs* Blockprint, Fols. 16 Collected works of *Klong rdol bla ma ngag dbang blo bzang*, chapter *ya*	Klong rdol bla ma Ngag dbang blo bzang (1719–1794; BDRC: P22) Geluk BDRC: W87, 1253–1283	42, 51, 82, 124, 173, 183, 188–190, 209, 224, 264, 284, 299, 311, 328, 332–333	
73	3	*Klong chen snying gi thig le las/ bka' srung ma mgon lcam dral bzhugs* Blockprint, Fols. 25	'Jigs med gling pa Mkhyen brtse 'od zer (1729/1730–1798; BDRC: P314) Nyingma BDRC: W7477, vol. 11, 517–538 I.KERN 2740/H486 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:321230 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 1)	34–35	
74	4	*Klong chen snying gi thig le las/ bka' srung sman btsun mched lnga'i phrin las dpag bsam yangs* [sic: *yongs*] *'du bzhugs* Blockprint, Fols. 4	'Jigs med gling pa Mkhyen brtse 'od zer (1729/1730–1798; BDRC: P314) Nyingma BDRC: W7477, vol. 11, 631–636 I.KERN 2740/H111 (subchapter bb) part 1 (2740/H111a): hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:357350 part 27 (2740/H111v): hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:354719 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 2–3b)	178	tshe ring mched lnga

75	44	*Bcom ldan 'das rdo rje phur pa rgyud lugs las zor las gnam lcags 'bar ba bzhugs* Blockprint, Fols. 34 From the work *Phur pa rgyud lugs kyi mtshan byang bzhugs so*, chapter *la*	'Jigs med gling pa Mkhyen brtse 'od zer (1729/1730–1798; BDRC: P314) Nyingma BDRC: W7477, vol. 9, 619–701 I.KERN 2740/H88 (subchapter bb) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:326137 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 118–120)	175, 275, 277, 304, 517	Bstan mo, bdud kyi rgyal po ma rungs pa, bdud
76	87	*Rdo rje phur pa rgyud lugs kyi drag po'i sbyin sreg rta gdong brngams zhugs zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 10 From the work *Phur pa rgyud lugs kyi mtshan byang bzhugs so*, chapter *ra*	'Jigs med gling pa Mkhyen brtse 'od zer (1729/1730–1798; BDRC: P314) Nyingma BDRC: W7477, vol. 9, 591–617 I.KERN 2740/H88 (subchapter aa) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:326137 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 118–120)	235, 530	
77	89	*Rdo rje g.yu sgron ma'i gsol mchod sman btsun mgul rgyan bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 6	'Jigs med gling pa Mkhyen brtse 'od zer (1729/1730–1798; BDRC: P314) Nyingma BDRC: W27300, vol. 5, 633–639	UM	
78	120	*Phur pa rgyud lugs las/ dam can lcam dral gyi mchod bskul bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 3 From the work *Phur pa rgyud lugs kyi mtshan byang bzhugs so*	'Jigs med gling pa Mkhyen brtse 'od zer (1729/1730–1798; BDRC: P314) Nyingma BDRC: W27300, vol. 6, 475–479 I.KERN 2740/H88 (subchapter y) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:326137 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 118–120)	33, 273	rematī, ma mo
79	121	*Phur pa rgyud lugs las phan gnod las tshogs rdo rje pha lam bzhugs* Blockprint, Fols. 4 From the work *Phur pa rgyud lugs kyi mtshan byang bzhugs so* chapter *sa*	'Jigs med gling pa Mkhyen brtse 'od zer (1729/1730–1798; BDRC: P314) Nyingma BDRC: W27300, vol. 6, 597–603 I.KERN 2740/H88 (subchapter dd) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:326137 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 118–120)	UM	
80	154	*Zhing skyong dur khrod lha mo'i gsol mchod [kyi rim pa] bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 4	'Jigs med gling pa Mkhyen brtse 'od zer (1729/1730–1798; BDRC: P314) Nyingma BDRC: W27300, vol. 5, 625–632; (also in *Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo*: W20578, vol. 109)	UM	

81	165	*Rig 'dzin zhi drag gi sgo nas/ zhi ba'i sbyin sreg ye shes me lce bzhugs* Blockprint, Fols. 10 [sic: 6]	'Jigs med gling pa Mkhyen brtse 'od zer (1729/1730–1798; BDRC: P314) Nyingma BDRC: W27300, vol. 7, 749–760; (also in *Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo*: W20578, vol. 107) I.KERN 2740/H535 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:316105 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 179)	529	me lha
82	196	*Lha dbye'i bskul ba bzhugs* Blockprint, Fol. 1 From the work *Phur pa rgyud lugs kyi chos kyi mtshan byang bzhugs so*, chapter *zha*	'Jigs med gling pa Mkhyen brtse 'od zer (1729/1730–1798; BDRC: P314) Nyingma BDRC: W27300, vol. 6, 461–462 I.KERN 2740/H88 (subchapter w) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:326137 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 118–120)	469	nye 'byed chen mo phra ma mkhan
83	25	*Grib glud bsdus pa bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 2 From the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, volume *phi*	'Dzi sgar 04 Rdo rje drag po rtsal (1740–1798; BDRC: P691) Nyingma BDRC: W20578, vol. 70, 263–265 I.KERN Br.79/H86 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:326710 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 29)	307	
84	26	*Dgongs gter las gdon gsum mdos kyi lag len bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 3 From the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, volume *phi*	'Dzi sgar 04 Rdo rje drag po rtsal (1740–1798; BDRC: P691) Nyingma BDRC: W20578, vol. 70, 257–262 I.KERN Br.79/H175 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:298268 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 30)	394	
85	167	*Lo glud btang* [sic: *gtong*] *thabs 'gong po gru 'ded zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint [sic: Manuscript], Fols. 1	'Dzi sgar 04 Rdo rje drag po rtsal (1740–1798; BDRC: P691) Nyingma BDRC: W20578, vol. 81, 219–220 (*Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo*); see also W23446, vol. 5, 629–631) I.KERN 2740/M32 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:313022 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 253)	285	'gong po

86	53	*'Jam mgon rgyal ba'i bstan bsrung mthu ldan dgra lha'i rgyal chen yongs kyi gtso bo srid gsum skye 'gro kun gyi srog bdag sprul pa'i chos skyong rgyal chen rdo rje shugs ldan rab 'jigs khro bo sku lnga'i sger bskang rgyas pa dga' ldan bstan srung ldan* [sic: *ldang*] *dgra tshar gcod ma bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 21 This text was composed and written down by the *bla ma Djñānabhadra* of the *Smyung gnas* (*lha khang*) in Lhasa, upon the request of the head-priest of the *Bkra shis chos gling* monastery in *Lho brag* and the assembly of monks of this religious establishment, as well as upon the request of the *sde sras Bsod nams dpal 'byor* and many other devotees of this *srung ma*. The *mgron gnyer Blo bzang shes rab* of *Sbar kha* and *Dpal ldan don 'grub* of *Mdo sgar* donated the money for carving the printing blocks. [Partially transcribed as Text E, Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: 565–568]	Jñānabhadra Smyung gnas bla ma Ye shes bzang po (18th cent.; BDRC: P0RK390 [?]) [See Sørensen et al. 2007: vol. 2, 704] Geluk BDRC: W22128, vol. 1, 319–359	136–140, 143	rdo rje shugs ldan
18th – 19th Century (49 Texts)					
87	80	*Dam can rdo rje legs pa la mchod gtor 'bul tshul rngams pa'i pho nya zhes bya ba/ dam can rnam gsum gyi gtor chog rgyun 'khyer bcas bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 5 A work composed by the Panchen Lama [sic] *Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma* and based upon several older books. The text was written down by the *dge tshul Sangs rgyas skyabs*. [Partially transcribed as Text F, Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: 568–569]	Thu'u bkwan 03 Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1737–1802; BDRC: P170) Geluk BDRC: W21507, vol. 5, 749–764	156, 158	rdo rje legs pa
88	15	*Khal kha'i yul gyi chos bdag rnam snang la gsol mchod bya tshul dngos grub kyi sgo brgya 'byed pa'i lde mig ces bya ba sogs thor bu 'ga' bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 7	Gu ge yongs 'dzin Blo bzang bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho (1748–1813; BDRC: P308) Geluk BDRC: W23879, vol. 6, 208–220	244	
89	17	*Khyung nag gi las tshogs bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 8	Gu ge yongs 'dzin Blo bzang bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho (1748–1813; BDRC: P308) Geluk BDRC: W23879, vol. 3, 125–140	UM	

90	56	*'Jigs byed dmar po'i gser skyems/ lha mo rab brtan ma'i bskang gso/ phyag drug pa'i gtor 'bul/ sman bla bde gshegs brgyad kyi gsol 'debs bcas bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 7	Gu ge yongs 'dzin Blo bzang bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho (1748–1813; BDRC: P308) Geluk BDRC: W23879, vol. 3, 150–163	35	
91	84	*Drag btsan a shos dang btsan rgod me lce 'bar ba'i gsol mchod bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 3	Gu ge yongs 'dzin Blo bzang bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho (1748–1813; BDRC: P308) Geluk BDRC: W23879, vol. 6, 202–207	248	
92	99	*Gnod sbyin gyi rgyal po spu gri dmar po'i snying gi rgyud 'grel yid mun sel byed ces bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 14	Gu ge yongs 'dzin Blo bzang bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho (1748–1813; BDRC: P308) Geluk BDRC: W23879, vol. 3, 270–297	171	tsi'u dmar po
93	112	*Dpal ldan lha mo'i mdos chen gyis rdzas cha dang lag len man ngag skor bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 7	Gu ge yongs 'dzin Blo bzang bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho (1748–1813; BDRC: P308) Geluk BDRC: W23879, vol. 3, 229–241	390	dpal ldan lha mo
94	123	*Phyug gzhung yul gyi gnas bdag* [*gzhi bdag*] *bcas la bsangs dang gser skyems mchod gtor 'bul chu* [sic: *tshul*] *bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 4	Gu ge yongs 'dzin Blo bzang bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho (1748–1813; BDRC: P308) Geluk BDRC: W23879, vol. 3, 298–304	36	nor 'dzin rgyal mo rab brtan ma
95	34	*Rgyal ba'i bstan srung chen po dregs pa lcam sring bsnyen cing sgrub pa'i rim pa las bzhi'i 'phrin las lhun grub ces bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 18 From the collected works of *Dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me* of Amdo.	Gung thang 03 Dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me (1762–1823; BDRC: P298) Geluk BDRC: W22112, vol. 8, 159–194	89, 490	lcam sring
96	62	*Gtor 'bul bsangs mchod sogs kyi skor bstan srung dgyes pa'i mchod sprin zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 31 From the collected works of *Dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me* of Amdo	Gung thang 03 Dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me (1762–1823; BDRC: P298) Geluk BDRC: W22112, vol. 8, 195–256	90, 115	pe har
97	140	*Rma rgyal spom ra'i g.yang 'bod phur* [sic: *phun*] *tshogs 'dod dgu'i rol mtsho zhes bya ba dang rgyal gsol mjug tu sbyar rgyu'i g.yang 'bod bcas bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 6 [sic: 5] From the collected works of *Dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me* of Amdo, chapter 10	Gung thang 03 Dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me (1762–1823; BDRC: P298) Geluk BDRC: W22185, vol. 11, 457–466	212, 213	rma chen spom ra

98	194	*Lha gnyan chen po sngo la* [sic: *lha*] *g.yu rtse'i gsol mchod rgyas pa phyogs las rnam par rgyal ba'i ru mtshon zhes bya ba dang lha chen gnyan rje gung sngon gyi bsang mchod bcas bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 13 From the collected works of *Dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me* of Amdo, chapter 11	Gung thang 03 Dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me (1762–1823; BDRC: P298) Geluk BDRC: W22112, vol. 8, 269–293	213, 215–216, 530	sngo l[h]a g.yu rtse, ma zhingkhyung rtse, me lha, mountain gods
99	151	*'Dzam gling chen po'i rgyal* [sic: *rgyas*] *bshad snod bcud kun gsal me long zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 148 [sic: 168]	Smin grol no min han 04 'Jam dpal chos kyi bstan 'dzin 'phrin las (1789–1839; BDRC: P4994) Geluk BDRC: W00KG03991 [Composed in 1820]	9, 210	[Famous geography]
100	162	*G.yu thog snying thig gi bka' sdod zhang blon chen po sde dgu'i gsol mchod 'dod dgu'i mchog sbyin zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 4 RvV	Seng chen Blo bzang bstan 'dzin dpal 'byor (1784–1843; BDRC: P284) Geluk BDRC: W23880, 681–687	79	rdo rje bdud 'dul
101	37	*Brgya bzhi'i cho ga ji ltar bya tshul nag 'dros* [sic: *'gros*] *su bkod pa bzhugs* Blockprint, Fols. 8	Dngul chu Dharmabhadra (Chos kyi bzang po, 1772–1851; BDRC: P289) Geluk BDRC: W20548, vol. 5, 193–207 I.KERN 2740/H149 (subchapter aa) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:309235 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 63–64)	526	
102	55	*'Jig rten gyi lha srung 'ga'i gsol mchod phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs pa bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 20	Dngul chu Dharmabhadra (Chos kyi bzang po, 1772–1851; BDRC: P289) Geluk BDRC: W20548, vol. 5, 561–599 I.KERN 2740/H146 (subchapter z) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:305750 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 65–66)	97, 245–246, 248–249	pe har
103	106	*Dpal kyai rdo rje lha dgu'i zhi ba'i sbyin sreg gi cho ga sdig ces bya ba bzhugs* Blockprint, Fols. 17	Dngul chu Dharmabhadra (Chos kyi bzang po, 1772–1851; BDRC: P289) Geluk BDRC: W20548, vol. 1, 779–812 I.KERN 2740/H54 (subchapter s) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:313153 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 138–139)	529	hevajra, me lha

104	192	*Lha chen tshangs pa zhi drag dang ne ser jo bo chen po'i rjes gnang gtong tshul blo rmongs snying gi mun sel zhes bya ba bzhugs* Blockprint, Fols. 11	Dngul chu Dharmabhadra (1772–1851; BDRC: P289) Geluk BDRC: W20548, vol. 5, 101–121 I.KERN 2740/H149 (subchapter t) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:309235 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 63–64)	UM	
105	28	*'Go ba'i lha lnga'i gsol mchod kyi rim pa bya tshul bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 8	Pan chen 04 Bstan pa'i nyi ma (1782–1853; BDRC: P285) Geluk BDRC: W6205, vol. 9, 817–831 I.KERN 2740/H159 (subchapter u) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:306502 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 110–112)	327–328	
106	43	*Bcom ldan 'das khro bo bdud rtsi dkyil* [sic: *'khyil*] *pa lha bcu gsum gyi bdag bskyed rngul* [sic: *rdul*] *tshon la brten pa'i dkyil chog/ dbang chog/ sbyin sreg tshogs mchod bcas nag 'gros su bkod pa bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 76	Pan chen 04 Bstan pa'i nyi ma (1782–1853; BDRC: P285) Geluk BDRC: W6205, vol. 8, 159–309 I.KERN 2740/H74 (subchapter b) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:307419 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 15)	321–322	bdud rtsi 'khyil ba
107	48	*Chos skyong rnams sgrub cing mchod gtor 'bul zhing 'phrin las 'chol ba'i rim pa sogs phyogs gcig tu bsdebs pa bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 64	Pan chen 04 Bstan pa'i nyi ma (1782–1853; BDRC: P285) Geluk BDRC: W6205, vol. 7, 729–855 I.KERN 2740/H51 (subchapter x) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:329567 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 160–162)	91–92, 149, 166, 248	srog bdag dmar po, bse khrab, tsi'u dmar po
108	67	*Bstan ma bcu gnyis kyi nang tshan rdo rje khyung lung ma zhi drag gnyis kyi gtor chog bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 16	Pan chen 04 Bstan pa'i nyi ma (1782–1853; BDRC: P285) Geluk BDRC: W6205, vol. 6, 885–915 I.KERN 2740/H65 (subchapter x) part 1 (2740/H65a): hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:357344 part 25 (2740/H65x): hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:357241 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 17–19)	198	bstan ma bcu gnyis

109	73	*Bstan bsrung kun gyi rje bo chos skyong dregs pa lcam sring gi gtor bsgrub ji ltar bya ba'i tshul yid bzhin dbang gi rgyal po zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 11	Pan chen 04 Bstan pa'i nyi ma (1782–1853; BDRC: P285) Geluk BDRC: W6205, vol. 9, 783–803 I.KERN 2740/H159 (subchapter s) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:306502 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 110–112)	UM	
110	82	*Dam can gshin rje'i rgyal po ser po'i gtor tshogs spyan 'dren bshags pa bskang pa* [sic: *ba*] *bstod 'phrin 'chol bcas cha tshang bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 7	Pan chen 04 Bstan pa'i nyi ma (1782–1853; BDRC: P285) Geluk BDRC: W6205, vol. 9, 705–717 I.KERN 2740/H159 (subchapter o) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:306502 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 110–112)	85	gshin rje'i rgyal po
111	101	*Gnod sbyin 'bar ba'i mngon rtogs spyan 'dren bskang bshags bstod bskul mnga' gsol dang bcas pa bdud sde'i brag ri 'joms pa'i gnam lcags ces bya bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 6	Pan chen 04 Bstan pa'i nyi ma (1782–1853; BDRC: P285) Geluk BDRC: W6205, vol. 6, 965–975 I.KERN 2740/H65 (subchapter aa) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:357344 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 17–19)	247	
112	107	*Dpal mgon zhal bzhi pa'i gtor chen zor 'phen gyi cho ga ji ltar bya tshul dang gshegs gtor 'bul tshul bcas bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 12	Pan chen 04 Bstan pa'i nyi ma (1782–1853; BDRC: P285) Geluk BDRC: W6205, vol. 9, 759–781 I.KERN 2740/H159 (subchapter r) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:306502 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 110–112)	488	mgon po zhal bzhi pa
113	139	*Myur mdzad ye shes kyi mgon po la brten pa'i drag po'i sbyin sreg bya tshul mdor bsdus bzhugs* Blockprint, Fols. 7	Pan chen 04 Bstan pa'i nyi ma (1782–1853; BDRC: P285) Geluk BDRC: W6205, vol. 9, 647–660 I.KERN 2740/H159 (subchapter l) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:306502 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 110–112)	530	me lha

114	155	*Gzhi bdag khang ka'i rgyal po'i bskang gso cha lag tshang ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 8	Pan chen 04 Bstan pa'i nyi ma (1782–1853; BDRC: P285) Geluk BDRC: W6205, vol. 6, 949–964 I.KERN 2740/H65 (subchapter z) part 1 (2740/H65a): hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:357344 part 27 (2740/H65z): hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:354879 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 17–19)	245	gzhi bdag khang ka'i rgyal po
115	157	*Yi dam rgya mtsho'i sgrub thabs rin chen 'byung gnas kyi lhan thabs rin 'byung don gsal bzhugs so* Blockprint, Vol. I: fols. 519; vol. II: fols. 470 [Partially transcribed as Text B, Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: 561–562]	Pan chen 04 Bstan pa'i nyi ma (1782–1853; BDRC: P285) Geluk Based on the work of Tāranātha (1575–1634; BDRC: P1428) BDRC: W1KG10237, 2 vols. I.KERN 2740/H90 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:315233 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 176)	24, 38, 178, 257, 468, 561–562	dpal ldan lha mo, mgon po, tshe ring mched lnga, khyung, spyan ras gzigs kasarpani
116	161	*Yul lha gzhi bdag sogs kyi mchod 'phrin gyi rim pa rnams phyogs gcig tu bsdebs pa bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 40	Pan chen 04 Bstan pa'i nyi ma (1782–1853; BDRC: P285) Geluk BDRC: W6205, vol. 7, 857–936 I.KERN 2740/H51 (subchapter y) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:329567 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 160–162)	243, 244, 248	jing gir rgyal po, bde chen grags pa, yul lha rgyal po gzhon nu, minor chos skyong
117	191	*Lha chen gnod sbyin 'bar ba'i dbang drag gi sbyin sreg khams gsum dbang sdud ces bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 8	Pan chen 04 Bstan pa'i nyi ma (1782–1853: BDRC: P285) Geluk BDRC: W6205, vol. 6, 831–846 I.KERN 2740/H65 (subchapter u) part 1 (2740/H65a): hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:357344 part 22 (2740/H65u): hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:355937 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 17–19)	UM	
118	74	*Bstan bsrung chen po btsan rgod yam shud dmar po gtso 'khor gyi bskang chog dngos grub bdud rtsi 'khyil ba'i rin chen bum bzang zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 16	Stag phu yongs 'dzin Ye shes rgya mtsho (1789–1856; BDRC: P282) Geluk BDRC: W6113, 493–522 I.KERN 2740/H550 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:316635 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 83)	169, 250	yam shud dmar po

119	59	*[Zab pa skor bdun las/]Gter srung dregs pa sde lnga'i gtor chog bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 3	Mchog gyur gling pa (1829–1870; BDRC: P564) Nyingma; Rimé BDRC: W22642, vol. 19, 317–321 I.KERN 2740/H571 (subchapter b) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:324195 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 115)	UM	
120	132	*Bla ma'i thugs sgrub bar chad kun sel/ bka' srung tshe ring mched lnga'i sgrub thabs bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 11 [sic: 13] From the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, volume *pi* [sic: *ti* (63)]	Mchog gyur gling pa (1829–1870; BDRC: P564) Nyingma; Rimé BDRC: W8751, vol. 5, 291–315 I.KERN Br.79/H20, /H23, /H149, /H158, and /H209 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:352306 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:346966 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:341998 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:297878 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:349295 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 142)	179	tshe ring mched lnga
121	133	*Bla ma'i thugs sgrub bar chad kun sel gyi cha lag rig 'dzin rdo rje gro lod kyi sgrub thabs dam sri gdug pa char* [sic: *tshar*] *gcod ces bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 5	Mchog gyur gling pa (1829–1870; BDRC: P564) Nyingma; Rimé BDRC: W8751, vol. 7, 452–462; (see also *Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo*, vol. 20: W20578) I.KERN Br.79/H120 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:292678 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 140)	516	rdo rje gro lod
122	134	*Bla ma'i thugs sgrub bar chad kun sel las/ dngos grub rgya mtsho'i cha lag bsang brngan 'dod dgu'i rgya mtsho bzhugs* Blockprint, Fols. 22 [sic: 32] From the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, volume *pi* [69]	Mchog gyur gling pa (1829–1870; BDRC: P564) Nyingma; Rimé BDRC: W8751, vol. 5, 462–525 I.KERN Br.79/H83 and 2740/H504 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:340658 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:338700 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 142)	187, 213, 226, 228, 266, 273, 305, 308, 326, 328, 332	bstan ma bcu gnyis, skyog chen sdang ra, tsha ba'i brtan ma chen mo, gzhi bdag, dregs pa'i sde dpon, sngags bdag dregs chen bco brgyad, dngul chu'i dge bsnyen rdo rje dpal, rgyu skar, dgra lha, 'go ba'i lha lnga

123	109	*Dpal ldan dmag zor rgyal mo'i gdams skor mkha' 'gro'i zhal lung las las bzhi spyi bsgril gsang sgrub dang bcas pa'i 'phrin las bklags chog tu bkod pa/ zhar byung a phyi/ dpal lha/ drag rgyal ma/ g.yu sgron ma/ de mo rnams kyi gsol mchod dang bcas pa rin chen nor bu'i do shal zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 74 [sic: 64] [Partially transcribed as Text A, Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: 557–561]	Pan chen 05 Bstan pa'i dbang phyug (1854/1855–1882; BDRC: P190) Geluk BDRC: W2872, vol. 3, 7–133 I.KERN 2740/H174 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 113–114)	25, 31, 557–561	dpal ldan dmag zor rgyal mo, mkha' 'gro, a phyi, dpal ldan lha mo, rdo rje drag rgyal ma, rdo rje g.yu sgron ma, kong btsun de mo
124	113	*Dpal sa skya pa'i bstan srung mngon po che chung las mkhan lcam dral dur khrod bdag po dang bcas pa rnams la gtor ma 'bul ba'i cho ga 'phrin las myur mgyogs kyi pho nya zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 24	Pan chen 05 Bstan pa'i dbang phyug (1854/1855–1882; BDRC: P190) Geluk BDRC: W2872, vol. 3, 149–196 I.KERN 2740/H174 (subchapter c) (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 113–114)	UM	
125	146	*Rtsi dmar ba'i mchod sprin bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 9	Pan chen 05 Bstan pa'i dbang phyug (1854/1855–1882; BDRC: P190) Geluk BDRC: W2872, vol. 3, 277–293 I.KERN 2740/H174 (subchapter g) (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 113–114)	UM	
126	175	*Srid gsum bdag po lha chen tshangs pa chen po'i gtor chog bskang bskul tshogs mchod dang bcas pa dregs byed dgyes pa'i glu dbyangs zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 4 [sic: 6]	Pan chen 05 Bstan pa'i dbang phyug (1854/1855–1882; BDRC: P190) Geluk BDRC: W2872, vol. 3, 251–262 I.KERN 2740/H174 (subchapter e) (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 113–114)	146–147	tshangs pa dkar po
127	178	*Srog bdag 'od kyi rgyal po li byin ha ra'i gsol mchod bstod bskul tshogs mchod dong bcas pa 'phrin las rnam bzhi'i dga' ston zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 7	Pan chen 05 Bstan pa'i dbang phyug (1854/1855–1882; BDRC: P190) Geluk BDRC: W2872, vol. 3, 263–276 I.KERN 2740/H174 (subchapter f) (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 113–114)	UM	

128	189	*Hor chen shog yon tan sbu yin thu'i dgon gyi gzhi bdag btsan rgod dgra 'dul bstan skyong gi drag skul bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 7	Pan chen 05 Bstan pa'i dbang phyug (1854/1855–1882; BDRC: P190) Geluk BDRC: W2872, vol. 3, 295–307 I.KERN 2740/H174 (subchapter h) (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 113–114)	UM	
129	86	*Rdo rje khyung lung ma zhi drag dang/ rgyal po li byin ha ra gnyis la mchod gtor gser skyems mdor bsdus stabs gcig tu 'bul tshul sogs bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 7 Collected works of *Dbyangs can grub pa'i rdo rje*, volume *ga*. Tohoku Catalogue no. 6492	Dngul chu Dbyangs can grub pa'i rdo rje (1809–1887; BDRC: P268) Geluk BDRC: W22334, vol. 3, 455–471 I.KERN 2740/H142 (subchapter w) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:337350 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b, 60–62: Fols. 9)	198, 261	li byin ha ra, rdo rje khyung lung ma, rāhula
130	111	*Dpal ldan lha mo la brten nas sho mo 'debs tshul nor bu'i me long zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 24 Collected works of *Dbyangs can grub pa'i rdo rje*, volume *ga*. Tohoku Catalogue no. 6471	Dngul chu Dbyangs can grub pa'i rdo rje (1809–1887; BDRC: P268) Geluk BDRC: W22334, vol. 3, 83–129 [Composed in 1848] I.KERN 2740/H142 (subchapter e) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:337350 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 60–62)	UM	
131	172	*Sad srung ril bu bsgrub tshul bzhugs* Blockprint, Fols. 3 From the collected works of *Dbyangs can grub pa'i rdo rje*, Tohoku Catalogue no. 6487	Dngul chu Dbyangs can grub pa'i rdo rje (1809–1887; BDRC: P268) Geluk BDRC: W22334, vol. 3, 389–393 I.KERN 2740/H142 (subchapter r) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:337350 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 60–62)	480	[weather-making rites]
132	10	*Bka' srung sman btsun mched lnga'i phrin las dpag bsam yongs 'du dang 'brel ba'i tshogs cod pan* [sic: *mchod phan*] *bde'i rna cha zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 5	'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po (1820–1892; BDRC: P258) Sakya BDRC: W21807, vol. 16, 127–133 I.KERN 2740/H266 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:301637 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 8)	UM	

133	75	*Thugs sgrub bar chad kun sel las/ sde brgyad lengs* [sic: *khengs*] *mdos khol phungs* [sic: *phyungs*] *bltas chog tu bkod pa rtsub 'gyur rnyogs ma gting dvangs zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 20 From the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, volume *phi*	O rgyan mchog gyur bde chen Zhig po gling pa (1829–1870; BDRC: P564) Nyingma Compiled by: 'Jam mgon kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1813–1899; BDRC: P264) Nyingma; Kagyü; Rimé BDRC: W22642, vol. 6, 427–466; see also W20578, vol. 70, 169–208; and W27411, 153–200 I.KERN Br.79/H176 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:296282 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 84)	394–396	
134	92	*Nad bdag stobs chen gyi tsha dbal 'joms pa'i man ngag khrigs su bsdebs pa thugs rje'i sman chab ches* [sic: *ces*] *bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 13 From the *Rin chen gter mdzod*, volume *mi*	'Jam mgon kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1813–1899; BDRC: P264) Nyingma; Kagyü; Rimé BDRC: W20578, vol. 73, 207–231; see also W23092	177, 199	bstan ma bcu gnyis, sman btsun
135	88	*Rdo rje g.yu sgron ma'i phra* [sic: *pra*] *sgrub snang gsal me long ces bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 29 Museum für Völkerkunde, Wien, Collection Nebesky-Wojkowitz [Inv. No. 134.482]	'Ju Mi pham rnam rgyal rgya mtsho (1846–1912; BDRC: P252) Nyingma BDRC: W5030	UM	
20th Century (8 Texts)					
136	169	*Sa bdag klu gnyen gyi gdon grol rgyas pa gsal ba'i sgron* [sic: *mgron*] *me zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 18 RvV	Shes rgyal mtshan Geluk I.KERN 2740/M147 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:320278 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 255) [Composed in 1909]	523	glud
137	100	*Gnod sbyin rgyal chen sku lnga 'khor bcas [kyi 'khrul med zhal shes 'phrin las 'gugs byed]* Blockprint, Fols. 13	Tre hor gzig rgyab sngags zur Blo bzang dpal ldan chos kyi dbang phyug (born c. 1867; BDRC: P8LS3435) Geluk I.KERN Br.79/H191 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:298252 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 101) [Composed in 1914]	102, 121, 124, 132, 334	pe har

138	147	*Tshe ring mched lnga'i mnga' gsol phan bde'i pho nya bzhugs* Blockprint, Fols. 2 [sic: 1]	'Jigs med bstan pa'i nyi ma (1865–1926; BDRC: P248) Nyingma BDRC: W23627, vol. 3, 465–466 I.KERN 2740/H196 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:309473 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 162)	UM	
139	68	*Bstan srung gyang rje btsan po'i mchod cho 'dod don myur 'grub bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 5	Karma pa 15 Mkha' khyab rdo rje (1870–1921; BDRC: P563) (Alias: Karma ka kha spha ra ṇa badzra) Kagyü I.KERN 2740/H548 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:320649 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 83)	UM	
140	78	*Thub bstan a.e wam lcog sgar ba'i bstan srung rnams kyi bskang phrin rgyun khyer snying po bsdus pa rnams dkyus gcig tu bkod pa bstan bsrung dgyes pa'i mchod sprin rdo rje sgra dbyangs bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 65 A copy of the same work, but printed from different blocks, is preserved at the University Library, Oslo, Collection Th. Sörensen, no. 88. Same title except that instead of the passage…*bstan srung rnams kyi*…the title of the latter work reads…*bstan srung chos skyong rnams kyi* etc. Fols. 57 [Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955a, 541: Fols. 47]	Rdo rje brag rig 'dzin 07 Thub bstan chos dbang mnyam nyid rdo rje (1886–1932/1935; BDRC: P728) Nyingma [See 'Khor-gdoṅ Gter-sprul 1975: 1–83] I.KERN Br.79/H207 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:292790 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 87)	66, 158, 205, 220–221, 231, 259, 267–268, 271–272, 333	
141	94	*Ne ser jo bo chen po'i gtor chog bzhugs so* Blockprint [sic: Manuscript], Fols. 8	Pan chen 06 Blo bzang thub bstan chos kyi nyi ma (1883–1937; BDRC: P215) Geluk BDRC: W3572, vol. 5, 495–533 (this edition is 20 ff. long); see also W3486 I.KERN 2740/M380 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:333580 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 228)	305	

142	54	*'Jam mgon rgyal ba'i bstan srung sprul pa'i rgyal chen rdo rje shugs ldan rtsal gyi bskang chog 'bring bo las bzhi'i 'phrin las myur 'gugs zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 16 This book, a condensation of other works, was composed by the so-called *Pha bong kha pa sprul sku* (inhabiting the small *Pha bong kha ri khrod* near Sera monastery) upon the request of the *Mgar thar sprul sku Rin po che Thub bstan 'jigs med grags pa rnam rgyal* and his brother *Rdo rje rnam rgyal*. The text was written down by the clerk *Ngag ldan dpon lha thub bstan gsung rab*.	Pha bong kha pa Bde chen snying po (1878–1941; BDRC: P230) Geluk BDRC: W3834, vol. 7, 669–687	139–140	rdo rje shugs ldan
143	108	*Dpal rdo rje phur bu thugs kyi sgrub pa gsang ba'i rgya can bdud 'joms gnam lcags spu gri'i las byang khrag 'thung mngon par rol pa'i dga' ston ces bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, [Fols. 39] Subchapters: [sic] a) *Dpal rdo rje phur bu bdud 'joms gnam lcags spu gri'i sbyin sreg gi cho ga phrin las lhun gyis grub pa'i dga' ston ces bya ba bzhugs so* Fols. 14 b) *Dpal rdo rje phur bu bdud 'joms gnam lcags spu gri'i smad las dgra bgegs sgrol ba'i las rim khrag 'thung dga' ston ces bya ba bzhugs so* Fols. 52	Ddud 'joms 'Jigs bral ye shes rdo rje (1904–1987; BDRC: P736) Nyingma BDRC: W20869, vol. 10, 77–153; (a) W20869, vol. 10, 361–387; (b) W20869, vol. 10, 419–521	271, 323, 352, 531	rdo rje phur bu, dpal lden remati, ma mo, tshe ring mched lnga, me lha

Undated Texts

	NW	NW Text Information	Author Info and Archive Location	Index	Deities Cited
1	1	*Kun mkhyen rgyal dbang mchog gi mkhrung lha rnams la gsol mchod bya ba'i cho ga dregs pa'i sde dpon dpal du 'gugs pa'i lcags kyu zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 3 RvV	Nyingma I.KERN 2740/M257 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:328725 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 201)	UM	
2	6	*Bka' brgyad kyi mngon par dregs pa'i dbu phyogs bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 23 [RvV]	Unknown Lineage I.KERN 2740/M371 (subchapter r) hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:351684 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 203–204)	86, 152, 158, 169, 186, 191, 200, 203–204, 261–262, 268–269, 271, 274, 277–282, 285, 287, 304, 308–309, 469	keng rus dkar mo, li byin ha ra, lha chen dbang phyug, rdo rje legs pa, bstan ma bcu gnyis, rāhula, 'gong po
3	9	*Bka' rdzogs pa chen yang zab dkon mchog spyi 'dus las byang kyi/ bka' bsrung mchod thabs bzhugs so* Blockprint [sic: Manuscript], Fols. 12	Nyingma I.KERN 2740/M69 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:318265 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 206)	158, 197	rdo rje legs pa, kong btsun de mo
4	11	*Bka' bsrungs khro mo ra(g) gdong ma bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 13 RvV	Unknown Lineage	155, 315	rdo rje legs pa, byin te dgu
5	13	*Skyes bu chen po dam can rdo rje legs pa'i gshegs gtor bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 7 Royal Library, Copenhagen, M 4 Part no. 16	Unknown Lineage	UM	
6	16	*Khod spungs dran pa che'i rdzongs chen gyi sgrub pa lags so* Manuscript, Fols. 16 [RvV] Bon	[Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955a, 532: Fols. 21]	113, 254–256, 307, 426–427n.16	pe har, dregs pa sde brgyad, nad kyi bu mo spun lnga, khod spungs yab yum
7	18	*Khro bo dbang chen rgyas pa'i 'phrin las khrigs kha bzhugs pa'i dbus phyogs legs so* Manuscript, Fols. 127 RvV [Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955a, 532: Fols. 34] Bon	I.KERN 2740/B7 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:319394 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 265)	315–316	lhag ma bzhi

8	20	*Mkha' 'gro grib mdos kyi lag len 'khyer bde bar bkod pa bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 13	Unknown Lineage	388–389	
9	22	*Gu ru 'o rgyan gyi rgyal pos 'dzam gling bod yul kun gyi lha 'dre drag po btul nas bka' sgo dam bzhag mdzad pas rnam thar mdor bsdus zhig bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 15	Unknown Lineage	177	bstan ma bcu gnyis
10	23	*Ge sar dgra lha'i rgyal po'i mchod sprin dgyes pa bskyed byed du 'phrin las lha yi rnga bo che zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 10	Unknown Lineage	UM	
11	27	*Dgra lha ma bskul te* Manuscript, Fols. 1 RvV Bon	I.KERN Br.79/13L[?] (subchapter i) (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b, 265–266: Fols. 2)	329–330	
12	29	*'Grub rgyud karma kam tshang gis bsangs mchod bsdor 'dus bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 13 RvV	Pho mgon bkod nyer tshe ring dngos 'grub Kagyü I.KERN 2740/M256 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:1647444 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 213)	306, 333	
13	33	*Rgyal po sku lnga dang chos bdag bkra shis 'od 'bar gyi gtor mchog bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 5 This text was composed by *Bstan rgyan chos 'phel*, a lama-instructor at the *Lho pa khang tshan* of *Bkra shis lhun po* monastery. Its original printing-blocks having become nearly illegible, new blocks were prepared by the *chos rje Blo bzang mgon po* and the *dge slong Blo bzang tshul khrims* of *Dung dkar* monastery.	Unknown Lineage	114, 175	pe har, bkra shis 'od 'bar
14	39	*Cang seng lcam mo lam khrid bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 4 RvV Bon	I.KERN Br.79/13L[?] (subchapter e) (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 265–266)	334	
15	45	*Chos skyong sku 'bebs kyi man ngag zab mo nag gros bu bkod ye shes zla snang 'char pa'i rdzing 'u zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 6	Unknown Lineage	284	bse rag
16	52	*'Jab sngon gtor bskul bstan srung myur mgyogs can bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 2 RvV Bon	I.KERN Br.79/13L[?] (subchapter k) (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 265–266)	81	

17	60	*Gter bsrung rgyal ba thod dkar mchod thabs* Manuscript, Fols. 2 [RvV]	Unknown Lineage I.KERN 2740/M23 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:316016 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 221)	250	
18	61	*Gto nag po mgo gsum gyis bzlogs 'gyur shin tu brgyas pa bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 30 RvV	Bon I.KERN 2740/M31 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:322468 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 221)	UM	
19	69	*Bstan srung nyi pang sad kyi bstod bskul bka' bsgo bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 4 RvV Bon	I.KERN Br.79/13L[?] (subchapter g) (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 265–266)	147	tshangs pa
20	71	*Bstan srung rdo rje shugs ldan/ chos skyong bse khrab/ dge bsnyen 'phying dkar ba/ btsan rgod kha che dmar po/ dgra lha bkra shis 'od 'bar sogs kyi gsol rnams bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 40	Unknown Lineage	140, 143, 149, 161, 175	rdo rje shugs ldan, bse khrab, 'phying dkar ba, bkra shis 'od 'bar
21	72	*Bstan srung shel khrab kyi mchod bskang bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 2 RvV Bon	I.KERN Br.79/13L[?] (subchapter l) (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 265–266)	252	
22	76	*Thugs rje'i rnams sprul seng chen nor bu dgra 'dul gyis nor bdud bcom pa'i rnam thar mdor bsdus bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 23	Unknown Lineage	250, 482	
23	79	*Dam can rdo rje legs pa skyes bu chen po'i tshogs 'khor 'bul tshul bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 6 Royal Library, Copenhagen, M 4 Part no. 15	Unknown Lineage	UM	
24	81	*Dam can rdo rje legs pa la gsur gtong tshul dpa' bo dgyes bskyed zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 6 Royal Library, Copenhagen, M 4 Part no. 14	Unknown Lineage	157	rdo rje legs pa
25	83	*Dam can srung ma'i mnga' gsol/ dpag bsam ljon shing zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Manuscript In possession of *Bkra shis dgra 'dul gdan sa pa* (Burmiak Kazi) Gangtok	Unknown Lineage	218	
26	91	*Nag phyogs zil gnon gyi rgyal po nor dgra 'dul gyi ljang bdud bcom pa'i rnam thar snying po bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 9	Unknown Lineage	UM	

27	93	*Nam sang zhi ba'i mdzad pa'i zhi khro'i bskang bshags pa bzhugs so* [Manuscript], Fols. 10 RvV	Nag sang zhi ba Bon I.KERN 2740/B19 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:313502	213, 229, 274, 287	
28	98	*Gnod sbyin kṣetrapāla mchod gtor 'bul tshul yid re skong zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint The work was composed by the monk *Tikṣanti* and printed at *Bkra shis lhun po monastery* India Office Library, London	Unknown Lineage BDRC: W1KG26281, vol. 49, 1198–1205 [10 ff.] [Partially transcribed as Text I, Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: 571–572]	41–42, 499	kṣetrapāla
29	104	*Snang srid char 'bebs gser skyems chen mo dang/ mdos kyi rim pa zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 48 RvV	Nyingma I.KERN Br.79/M3 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:321606 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 229)	176, 275, 282–283, 373–374	btsan, bdud, dmu
30	105	*Snang srid dregs pa'i sde dpon bstan bsrung dpa' bo chen po thugs dam bskang pa'i rim pa mchog thun dngos grub 'gugs pa'i lcags kyu zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 6	Unknown Lineage	232	dpa' bo chen po
31	115	*Dpe dkar rgyal po'i mchod sprin dang btsan klu bcas kyi mchod sprin bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 14 Part of a work, preserved for several generations in the family of the *Rdzogs chen pa bla ma Nyi ma nor bu*, Head Lama of the Government High School in Darjeeling.	Unknown Lineage	115, 291	pe har, klu, btsan
32	117	[*'di nang*] *Spom ra/ thang lha/ rdor legs/ dang pa* [sic: *dpal*] *drag/ drag rgyal ma'i gsol mchod rgyas pa/ gser skyems dang bcas pa/ rgyal gsol dang/ btsan gsol le tshan/* [*'*]*khrung lha'i skor cha tshang/ gza' gsol/ 'bum ra/ klu/ jo bo rgyal mtshan/ gser skyems rigs kun khyab bdag/ 'phrin bcol le tshan/ gtor ma 'phen skor* [sic: *skong*]*/ chos srung spyi'i mnga' gsol rnams bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 46 [sic: 25]	Unknown Lineage BDRC: W1PD53265, vol. 3, 349–397 [Partially transcribed as Text H, Nebesky-Wojkowitz 2002: 570–571]	206, 207, 211, 570–571	
33	118	*Sprul pa'i chos rgyal chen po'i cho ga 'phrin las ri skor dgos kun 'byung bsal 'phel nor bu bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 7 A book in possession of a Lepcha priest at Git, said to be the copy of a work preserved at *Bkra shis lding* monastery in Sikkim.	Unknown Lineage	115	pe har

34	124	*Phyugs gta' bsdam pa'i lto dpyad bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 2	Unknown Lineage I.KERN 2740/M243 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:1648313 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 234)	306, 528	phyugs lha spun bdun
35	125	*'Phags pa brgya bzhi'i cho ga bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 14	Unknown Lineage Museum für Völkerkunde, Wien, Collection Nebesky-Wojkowitz [Inv. No. 134.468]	526	rematī, tshangs pa, ma mo, gshin rje, rgyal po, gnod sbyin, bdud, sa bdag, gza', btsan, the'u rang
36	126	*'Phrin bskul 'dod don myur 'gugs zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 4	Unknown Lineage	UM	
37	127	*Bod khams skyongs ba'i bstan ma bcu gnyis kyi gsol ka 'dod don lhun grub bzhugs* Manuscript, Fols. 8 RvV	Kagyü I.KERN 2740/M18 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:318217 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 237)	98, 183, 377	bstan ma bcu gnyis, pe har, rgyal mdos
38	128	*Bon po'i lha bsangs* Manuscript, Fols. 20 RvV Bon	I.KERN Br.79/13L[?] (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 265–266)	323	bon kun tu bzang po, lha rgod thog pa, sku gsum me lha, dbal chen ram pa, gsang mchog rgyal po, bskal pa bzang po, 'od zer dpag me, g.yung drung phyug mo, ma mo
39	130	*Brag btsan mchod bskang bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 10 RvV Bon	I.KERN Br.79/13L[?] (subchapter c) (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 265–266)	252	brag btsan
40	131	*Brag btsan dmar po'i gsol kha bzhugs par legs so* Manuscript, Fols. 7 RvV Bon	I.KERN Br.79/13L[?] (subchapter r) and 2740/B20 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:352912 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b, 265–266: Fols. 10)	176, 251, 377	btsan, brag btsan dmar po, btsan mdos

41	136	*Sbyin sreg phyag len kun 'jug don gsal sgron me zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 14 [Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955a, 550: Fols. 46]	Unknown Lineage	531	me lha
42	138	*Mi bdud zhal gzigs bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 4 RvV Bon	I.KERN Br.79/13L[?] (subchapter h) (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b, 265–266: Fols. 2)	274	mi bdud 'byams pa khrag mgo, bdud
43	142	*Rma gnyan spom ra'i bsangs mchod* Manuscript, Fol. 1 RvV Bon	I.KERN Br.79/13L[?] (subchapter f) (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 265–266)	210	rma chen spom ra, rma gnyan spom ra, dge bsnyen, dgra lha'i rgyal po, brag btsan, gzhi bdag
44	143	*Gtsang ma klu 'bum dkar po bon rin po che 'phrul ngag bden pa theg pa chen po'i mdo* Blockprint, Fols. 459 RvV [Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955a, 551: Fols. 26] Bon	BDRC: W4PD1207, vol. 87 I.KERN 2740/H67 and /H129 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:340413 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:348404 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 157)	6, 97–98, 100, 145, 154, 199–200, 202, 230, 273, 279, 283, 285, 289–292, 297–298	gnam the dkar po, klu'i rgyal po zur phud lnga pa, klu, rgyal po tshangs pa, rdo rje legs pa, klu sman, sman, ging chen bco brgyad, byang gi gangs dkar, ma mo, the'u rang, klu bdud, gnyan, sa bdag
45	145	*Btsan rgod nam mkha' sbar 'dzin gyi mchod gtor 'bul tshul bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 4 This work was composed by *'Dul 'dzin dregs pa'i ming can* at *Dung dkar* monastery upon command of the *rje btsun Gurukalpabhadra*	Unknown Lineage	144	nam mkha' sbar 'dzin

46	150	*Mtsho sman bsngo mdos zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 6 RvV	Unknown Lineage I.KERN 2740/M22 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:1647043 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 246)	201, 387	sman mo, mtsho sman
47	152	*Rdzogs chen lha bsangs bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 11 RvV	Nyingma I.KERN 2740/M151 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:314482 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 247)	UM	
48	156	*Zangs ri btsan rgod gsol ka bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 3 RvV	Kagyü I.KERN 2740/M20 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:1649418 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 249)	UM	
49	158	*Yi dam lha srung ma dang bcas pa'i sgrub thabs dang rjes gnang zur kha brgya rtsa dngos grub 'byung gnas zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 260	Unknown Lineage	38, 83, 84, 256, 263, 320	mgon po, las gshin dpa' gcig/ chos rgyal las kyi gshin rje mthing ga, las gshin lha bcu gsum, mkha' lding gser mig 'khyil ba, khyung, gza' thams cad kyi yum, yang dag thugs kyi lha tshogs/ khro bo bdud rtsi 'khyil ba
50	160	*Yul lha gzhi bdag rnam la mchod gtor 'bul tshul bzhugs so* Blockprint, Fols. 8	Unknown Lineage	201	klu mo, sman
51	163	*Rākṣa dgra mdos kyi cho ga 'o rgyan padmas mdzad pa bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 6 RvV	Padmasambhava (8th cent.) Nyingma I.KERN 2740/M383 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:326745 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 252)	391	rākṣa mdos
52	170	*Sa bdag klu gnyan gyi gdon grol bsdum chen mgo bzhi bzhes pa gtsang ma klu brgyad nas li'u zur khol mdzad pa bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 11 RvV Bon	Author: Mi 'gyur g.yung drung Composed in the Wood-Sheep year (1895?) Bon I.KERN 2740/B18 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:316701	202, 286–287, 309–310	klu sman, klu bdud nag po, klu btsan, klu srin

53	177	*Srog bdag rgyal po'i dkar po drug mdos zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 7	Unknown Lineage	99, 372, 382	pe har/shel ging dkar po, rgyal po'i dkar po drug mdos
54	179	*Slob dpon padma 'byung gnas kyis mdzad pa'i gnyan gyi zhi ba dkar po* Manuscript, Fols. 9 RvV	Padmasambhava (8th cent.) Nyingma BDRC: W1PD181160, vol. 1, 173–189	UM	
55	181	*Slob dpon padmas mdzad pa'i mdos kyi las byang mchod drug ma bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 10 Museum für Völkerkunde, Wien, Collection Nebesky-Wojkowitz [Inv. No. 134.467]	Unknown Lineage	UM	
56	182	*Slob dpon padmas mdzad pa'i dbang phyug zor mdos bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 4	Padmasambhava (8th cent.) Nyingma I.KERN 2740/M43 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:314037 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 258)	390	dbang phyug zor mdos
57	185	*Bsad las rin chen phreng ba bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 36 RvV Bon	I.KERN 2740/B6 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:321507 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 266)	328	'go ba'i lha lnga
58	186	*Bse rag skar mdos ces bya ba bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 5	Nyingma I.KERN 2740/M30 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:322464 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 260)	284, 373, 397	'gong po bse rag spun dgu
59	187	*Bser rag skag mdos dang gshin rje gshed mdos rgyal mdos btsan mdos* [*rgyal po dkar pos drug bcas bzhugs so*] Manuscript, Fols. 25 RvV	Nyingma I.KERN 2740/M222 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:321627 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 260)	284, 397	'gong po bse rag spun dgu
60	190	*Lha rgod yab yum sku stod bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 4 RvV Bon		UM	
61	198	[*'Di nang la*] *lha bzo mkhan po nye bar mkho ba'i rigs rnams bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 57 RvV	Unknown Lineage I.KERN 2740/M461 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:325110 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 225)	181, 188, 532	g.yu sgron mched lnga, bstan ma bcu gnyis, me lha
62	200	*A.u* [sic: *U*] *rgyan gu ru'i gter bsangs bzhugs so* Manuscript, Fols. 19	Nyingma I.KERN 2740/M228 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:332184 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b: 263)	312	stag lha me 'bar

63	201	*A.u* [sic: *U*] *rgyan padmas mdzad pa'i lha bsangs bar chad kun sel zhes bya ba bzhugs so* Manuscript In possession of *bKra shis dgra 'dul gdan sa pa* (Burmiak Kazi), Gangtok	Unknown Lineage	201, 218, 219	mtsho sman, gzhi bdag mdzod lnga, bdud btsan dpa' bo hum ri, yab bdud, brag btsan dmar po stong gi rje
64	202	A Bon manuscript without a title [*Khro bo spyi 'dul gyi cha lag 'khor lo bcas*?] [Manuscript?], RvV	Bon I.KERN 2740/B9 hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:1648492 (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b, 267: Fols. 62)[45]	23, 275–276, 469	gar dbang rta mgrin (Bon form of rta mgrin), bdud, tshe bdud nag po khrag med, rlung lha
65	203	A book of worship of the *dge bsnyen Rdo rje khro 'bar*, without a title Manuscript, Fols. 5	Unknown Lineage	175	dge bsnyen rdo rje khro 'bar
66	204	An old *Rnying ma pa* work, dealing with the worship of various *dharmapālas*, title illegible Manuscript, Fols. 81 In possession of *Dar mdo sprul sku*	Nyingma	UM	

45 Nebesky-Wojkowitz's Leiden catalog (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955b) strongly suggests that this is the title and reference information for this text; I am grateful to Uwe Niebuhr for drawing my attention to this.

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WYLIE VERSUS WOJKOWITZ

Michael Balk

The title of this paper could be misunderstood as the announcement of a football match. There is a town called Wylie in the American state of Texas, today a suburb of Dallas, and a locality called Vojkovice exists about half an hour's drive northwest of the Czech capital Prague. But the following is not about a soccer contest between teams from these places. Whether there is a winner and who that might be will be revealed at the end. To begin with, I will briefly introduce the contenders.

Vojkovice (German spelling: Wojkowitz) is the origin of the name extension adopted by the Nebeský family.[1] Born in 1923 in Velké Hoštice then in the Czechoslovak Republic, René Mario Nebesky von Wojkowitz[2] became an Austrian citizen in 1948 and could not bear a title of nobility ("von") due to the legal provisions of the Austrian Republic. Thus, he published in Austria as René Nebesky-Wojkowitz; his habilitation thesis was submitted under the name René Nebesky. Only outside the German-speaking realm do we encounter the French nobility predicate in René *de* Nebesky-Wojkowitz. In the Chinese translation of his magnum opus *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, published in Lhasa almost forty years after the 1956 debut edition, this distinguishing element also appears as 德 *de*.[3]

The slightly younger Turrell Verl Wylie (1927–1984) came from Colorado and held a chair for Tibetan Studies in the Department of Asian Languages and Literature in Seattle. His name is probably more widely known in Tibetology, being conferred nobility in academia

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1 Personal communication from Daniel Berounský who in an email to me on 6 November 2020 wrote the following: "The source is unfortunately in Czech, written by a member of wider Nebeský family. It says that the connection with Vojkovice is artificial. The family claimed connection with a noble man from there living in 16th century. It was firstly officially approved, but then declined in 1904 proving that the connection was artificially created. The source is here: www.heraldika.net/jjkn/heraldika/nebesky.pdf." For the bibliographical details of the article mentioned, see Nebeský 2006.

2 This is his real (in German "eigentlich") name according to the online version of the *Deutsche Biographie*, see Much 1999.

3 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1993. The title page of the Chinese translation published in the Tibetan People's Publishing House in Lhasa – which is the second-largest publisher of Tibetan-language books in China, cf. Balk 2018: 18 – has the following statement of authorship: (奥地利) 勒内·德·内贝斯基·沃杰科维茨 (Aodili) Leinei de Neibeisiji Wojiekeweici. In meaning, 奥地利 Aodili "Austria" and 德 (as in 德国 Deguo "Germany") may appear to the reader as contradiction in terms, but the pictograph 德 also implies standard transcription in modern Chinese for the phonetic value of the preposition *de* in French surnames.

due to a "ground-breaking article"[4] with the title "A Standard System of Tibetan Transcription" published in the *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*.[5] For the present publication, as often elsewhere, contributors were asked by the editors to use "the Wylie transliteration system." The question is whether this attribution is in fact correct in the sense of original creatorship; objections have occasionally been raised. While Wylie's essay went relatively unnoticed at the time,[6] it has been widely referred to since the 1980s. From then, it became one of the most cited Tibetan scholarly papers of all time.

In what follows, I will explore the question of who contributed the most creative input in developing the romanisation system now in widespread use outside of China. I will start with Wylie's 1959 essay and then gradually step backwards in time. This will involve a closer look at Nebesky-Wojkowitz' publications dating back to 1947. Both authors' romanisations are examined to elucidate which previous works or precedents they refer to and draw upon. Finally, structural considerations of a general nature will be made to assess which scholar might be entitled to greater credit.

It sometimes seems as if not everyone who cites Wylie's "Standard System of Tibetan Transcription" has actually read this essay. Its text of no more than seven pages is a manageable reading load and can be briefly summarised. Wylie begins by noting that a plethora of systems for transcribing Tibetan exists among scholars. He speaks of "transcription of the Tibetan language into Roman script" and "orthographic transcription," reflecting a common usage of his time that is no longer considered accurate today. But it is clear from the context that he means what is now called "transliteration" or "romanisation": his concern is about converting the script and not about reproducing the sounds of the language.

As evidence of the colourful diversity of systems used, he presents a set of samples ("publications by a dozen Tibetan scholars selected at random"). The different transliterations are given in a typewritten synoptic table following the basic thirty letters of the Tibetan alphabet. The twelve authors whom Wylie considers published their works between 1832 and 1958, namely Sándor Kőrösi Csoma (1832), Heinrich August Jäschke (1881), Sarat Chandra Das (1902), August Hermann Francke (1905), Herbert Bruce Hannah (1912), Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya (1939), George N. Roerich (Юрий Николаевич Рёрих, 1949–1953), Giuseppe Tucci (1950), Johannes Nobel (1944–1950), Yoshimura Shyuki (芳村修基, 1953), René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1956) and Alfonsa Ferrari (1958).

The selection covers over 120 years of published scholarship in Tibetology, but it is not intended to map the history of the romanisation of Tibetan script in its entirety. Wylie therefore does not go into the details of the selected schemes or their inherent interrelations. He does regret a "profusion of apostrophes, diacritical marks, Greek gammas, capital and italic letters" and identifies criteria for a "standard system." The crucial point for Wylie is the avoidance of diacritical marks in keeping with the limited mechanics of a typewriter. Following these general considerations, one specific point Wylie raises is whether

4 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turrell_V._Wylie (accessed 11.07.2023).

5 Wylie 1959.

6 An early follower of the "transcription by Professor Turrell V. Wylie" was Melvyn C. Goldstein 1964: 132. Yet the system was completely ignored by the Library of Congress (LC), which in 1977 – certainly with the significant participation of Gene Smith – stipulated a different convention that remained binding on libraries in the English-speaking world until 2015; for this schema see Tseng 1990: 211.

the twenty-third letter of the alphabet (འ) should be indicated when it appears at the end of a syllable. On this, he notes the following:

> The use of the apostrophe to indicate an *a-chung*[7] in final position, as in *mda'* (arrow), is excessive, since *mda*, even without the apostrophe, can be reconstructed in only one correct way, i. e., with an *a-chung* as final; however, this use of the apostrophe should be retained for consistency on a one-for-one transcriptional ratio, even though it exceeds the limit of minimal complexity.[8]

What has been covered so far comprises the main points of the first half of Wylie's essay. In the pages that follow, Wylie addresses mainly the question of whether one should capitalise the first letter of a transliterated syllable, the so-called root letter or the letter relevant for the pronunciation of a syllable if there is a reason to capitalise – for example, in the case of proper names or geographical designations. Wylie recommends not using internal capitalisation and always capitalising the first letter. He is of course aware that this is not a purely transcriptional issue: "In fact, such capitalization is a concession to Western practices, for there is no such thing as a capital letter in Tibetan."[9]

It is in this context that Wylie addresses the question of how to distinguish the Tibetan initials ཀྱ་ and གཡ་. He argues convincingly that internal capitalisation (*gY*) to mark the latter cannot be a viable basis for the distinction, because capitalisation will only be used in a few cases and by no means uniformly. And the hyphen (*g-y*) is not a good idea because it may also be placed between syllables to mark them, for example, as proper nouns. However, Wylie's preferred marking with a full stop (*g.y*) is arbitrary. From the perspective of data processing and catalogue management in libraries, a more appropriate solution would be something like an apostrophe (*g'y*),[10] were it not earmarked for a different purpose. To conclude, the diacritic-free scheme in fig. 1 is recommended as "standard for Tibetan orthographic transcription".

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7 Wylie's term for the letter (*a-chung*) seems to refer to an orthographic variant (ཨ་ཆུང་) of what is more commonly spelt འ་ཆུང་. On its incorrect use, see Hill 2012: 103. I fully agree with Hill's assessment that rendering the twenty-third letter (འ) with an apostrophe is a "bizarre practice" and I am grateful that reference is made to the long-established transliteration of the consonant by *v* in China, but it is not correct that the rendering of the thirtieth letter (ཨ) by *x* would also be part of a Chinese system. I made this suggestion, cf. Balk 2005: 3.

8 Wylie 1959: 264.

9 Ibid.: 265. As the librarian responsible for the Tibetan and Mongolian collection of the State Library in Berlin for over thirty years, I find that capitalisation is a matter of taste for which there is no real need for regulation. When I had to make the necessary decisions when computerised cataloguing was introduced at the beginning of the 1990s, I capitalised the first letter (བསྟན་འཛིན་ becomes *Bstan-vdzin* in the romanisation). When my subsequent successor to the job, Antje Ziemer, was introduced to cataloguing, she showed an inclination to capitalise the root letter (*bsTan-vdzin*). I took it for granted to give her the freedom to follow her own aesthetic sensibilities at this point. The Romanisation Table for Tibetan can be found here: staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/die-staatsbibliothek/abteilungen/ostasien/recherche-und-ressourcen/zentralasiatischer-katalog/transkription-tibetisch (accessed 24.01.2025).

10 Compare, for example, the new romanisation rules of the Library of Congress enacted in 2015: "When ཡ་ is preceded by ཀ་, it is romanized *g'ya* to distinguish it from ཀྱ་, which is romanized *gya*. This diacritical mark is the 'modified letter prime.' Note that the Wylie transliteration schema uses the period as a non-joiner (*g.ya*), but this can cause searching difficulties in local systems because it is read as a space." (www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romanization/tibetan.pdf, accessed 13.07.2021). The modifier (not "modified") letter prime (U+02B9) is also used in other romanisations, for example to render the "soft sign" of the Cyrillic script (ь).

ka	kha	ga	nga
ca	cha	ja	nya
ta	tha	da	na
pa	pha	ba	ma
tsa	tsha	dza	
wa	zha	za	'a
ya	ra	la	
sha	sa	ha	a

Fig. 1. Romanisation table: Turrel Wylie (1959: 267).

Wylie concludes his essay with the following words:

> This is the system devised years ago by members of the Inner Asia Project at the University of Washington, with a single alter[a]tion to be proposed: the substitution of a dot for a dash in transcribing an initial *y* with a prefix *g*. This substitution is made for the sake of visual continuity [...] The revised system is therefore identical to the one used by the late René de Nebesky-Wojkowitz, with the exception that he practiced "internal lexicographic capitalization," a practice not advocated in this paper for the reasons given earlier.[11]

From this phrasing it is very clear that Wylie does not claim to be the creator of a transliteration system himself. He refers to the members of the Inner Asia Project, though he does not offer their names. Since he makes no secret of the fact that Nebesky-Wojkowitz was already using this scheme three years before the publication of his own essay, one may assume that the Inner Asia Project's specifications were established before 1956 – otherwise it would seem that the Inner Asia Project had adopted it from Nebesky-Wojkowitz. In any case, it is evident that Wylie's scheme differs from Nebesky-Wojkowitz's in only one point – capitalisation. I will return to the Inner Asia Project after first taking a look at a work that Wylie had published one year earlier.

It makes sense to consider Wylie's recommendations for a standard transcription in light of his dissertation submitted in May 1958. In this work he already consistently implemented the capitalisation of the initial letter (for instance *Sku-lnga* instead of *sKu-lnga* and the like). How Wylie dealt with the other points raised so far is shown in the table in fig. 2, which precedes the "introduction" to his thesis.

Wylie does not say that this was the transcription scheme adopted by the Inner Asia Project. He used the hyphen to make the prefix discernible and dispensed with the notation of the twenty-third letter of the alphabet when it appears at the end of a syllable, as can be seen in *g-ya* (ག་ཡ་). These two points are in fact the only ones in which his "standard system" differs from the practice he already observed in his dissertation. However, as we shall see below, the two demands made by Wylie in 1959 (*g.ya'* to replace *g-ya*) are nothing new if compared to what Nebesky-Wojkowitz had already practised as early as 1947.

11 Wylie 1959: 267.

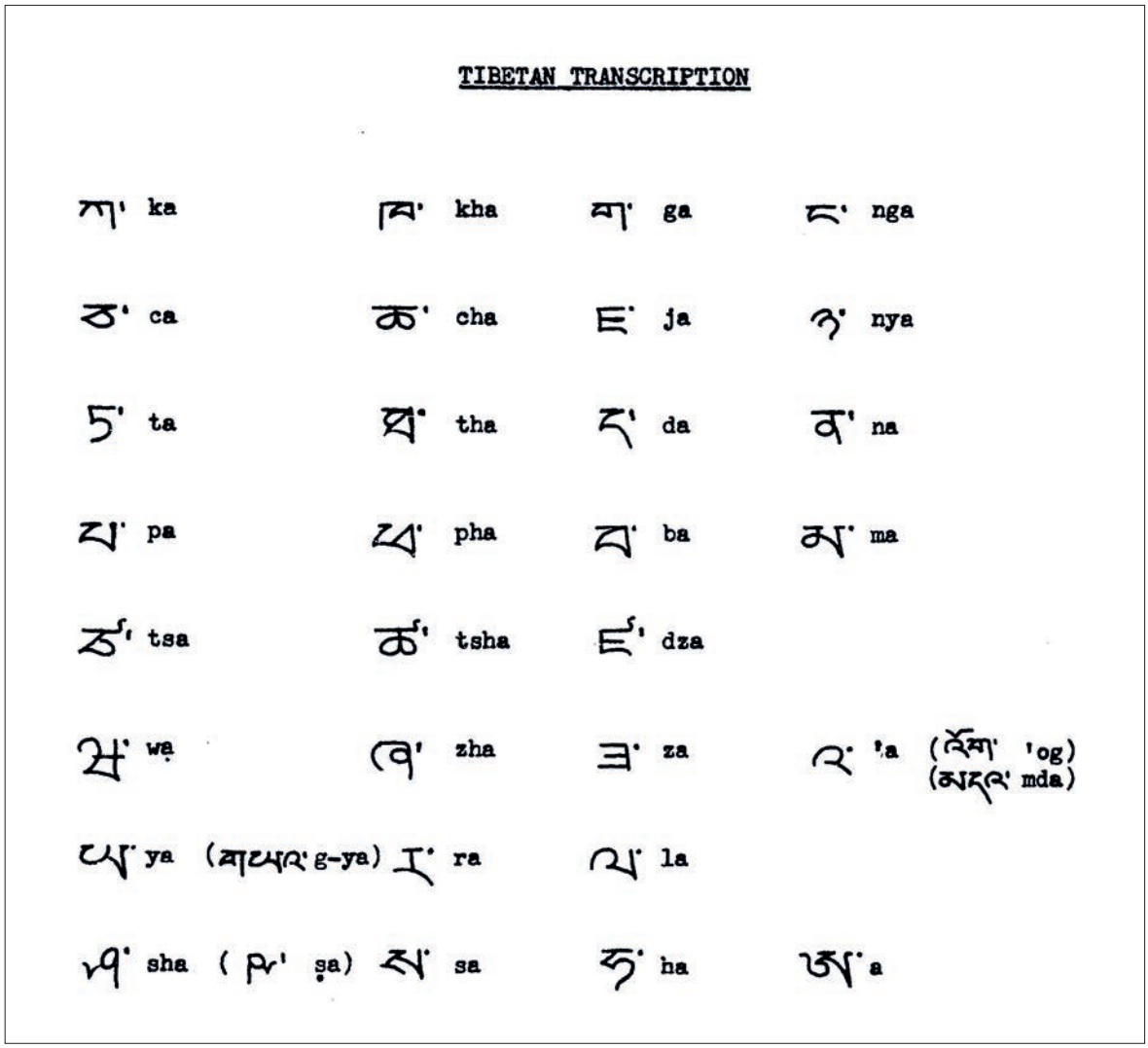


Fig. 2. Romanisation table: Turrel Wylie (1958: [vii]).

It should be added in passing that Wylie maintained a diacritic for the retroflex sibillant (*ṣ*), as is the norm for Sanskrit.

As noted, Wylie makes no reference to the romanisation system of the Inner Asia Project in his dissertation, although it is a key reference point in his 1959 essay. That naturally begs the question of what this project was all about. It is possible to trace that its origins date back to 1948, the early phase of the so-called Cold War (1947–1991). The following information can be found on a website of the Sinor Research Institute for Inner Asian Studies at Indiana University:

> Owen Lattimore, an American, began using 'Inner Asian Frontiers of China' as his research rubric in the late 1930s. A decade later, one of Lattimore's followers, George Taylor, built Asian studies at the University of Washington into a set of programs staffed in part by Orientalists who had recently fled the upheavals and war in Europe. In 1948, two of these scholars, the German Sinologists Hellmut Wilhelm and Franz Michael (a student of Lattimore's from Johns Hopkins),

> founded the Inner Asia Project for research and teaching, the first of its kind in the United States. They were soon joined in Seattle by the China-born Russian linguist Nicholas Poppe, who brought expertise in Altaic languages, particularly Mongolian.[12]

Nicholas Poppe (Николай Николаевич Поппе, 1897–1991) taught in Seattle from 1949 until his retirement in 1968. A passage in his autobiography reveals that the Far Eastern and Russian Institute received six-figure grants from the Carnegie Foundation, the Ford Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation.[13] The Inner Asia Project was assigned to this institute along with two other projects, as can be seen from a university bulletin covering the years 1955 to 1957:

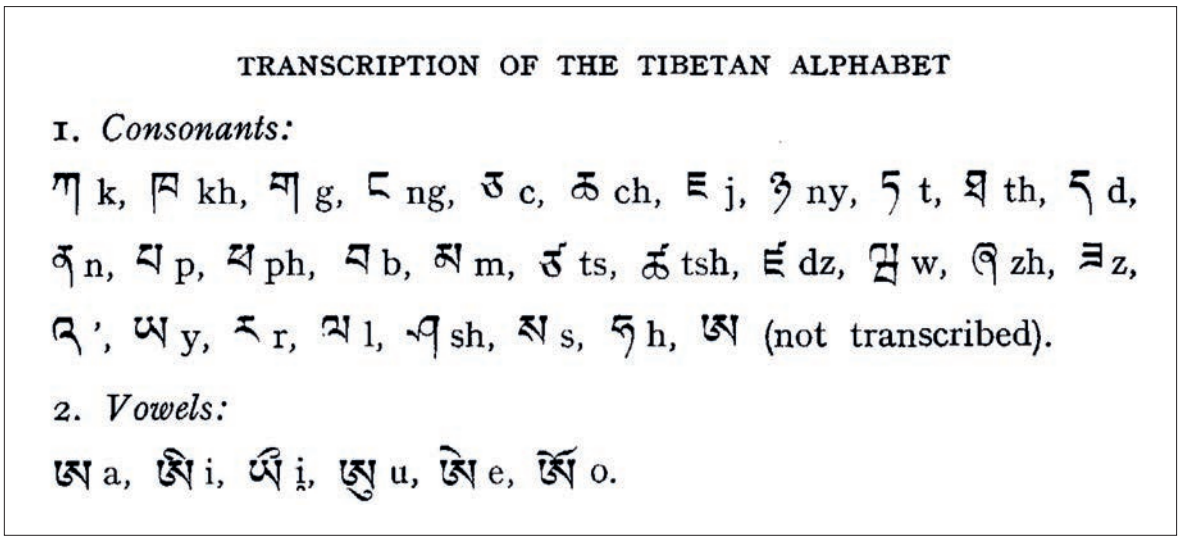
> The Far Eastern and Russian Institute has established three research projects: a Modern Chinese History project, which analyzes Chinese society in transformation from about 1800 to the present; an Inner Asia project, which studies the societies of Mongolia, Tibet, and Turkestan and the Chinese and Russian impact on these societies; and a Russia in Asia project, which studies the tsarist and Soviet development of Asiatic Russia and the Russian and Soviet impact on the Far East.[14]

Within the framework of the Inner Asia project, scholarships were awarded and colloquia were held, among other things. Regarding the events, a list of the talks covering the years 1951 to 1971 shows that on average about 14 to 15 such convocations took place per year. Wylie himself gave a dozen such lectures between 1953 and 1969.[15] As far as can be seen from the list of titles, the speakers seem to have largely followed the preferred Inner Asia Project transliteration, albeit with exceptions. For example, Robert Ekvall (1898–1978), who at Taylor's invitation joined the Inner Asia Project in 1958 and served as its chairman until 1960, spoke on "The practice of CHos aDon" (his spelling of ཆོས་འདོན་) in 1961, two years after Wylie's essay. Other titles in the list give the impression that the regime of rendering Tibetan words was not handled too rigidly.

The Inner Asia Project is mentioned in some publications where an author expresses gratitude for their support. One such example is Fang-Kuei Li (李方桂, 1902–1987), who wrote a contribution on the Sino-Tibetan treaty of 821–822 for the journal *T'oung Pao* in 1956. Following an acknowledgement to George Taylor, the Institute's director, and several others, the table in fig. 3 can be found in his article.

What is remarkable is the absence of vocalisation (*k* instead of *ka*) and the explicit reference that the thirtieth letter of the alphabet (ཨ) is "not transcribed." Li uses the hyphen for marking the prefix *g* before the root letter *y* (example: *g-yu* for གཡུ). Regarding the twenty-third letter at the end of a syllable, Li anticipates Wylie's plea of 1959 by marking it ex-

12 sinor.indiana.edu/about/history-of-the-srifias/index.html (accessed 11.07.2023).
13 Poppe 1983: 223.
14 *Bulletin [of the] College of Arts and Sciences* 1955: 92.
15 *Inner Asia Colloquium records* [no date and page count].


TRANSCRIPTION OF THE TIBETAN ALPHABET

1. *Consonants:*

ཀ k, ཁ kh, ག g, ང ng, ཅ c, ཆ ch, ཇ j, ཉ ny, ཏ t, ཐ th, ད d,
ན n, པ p, ཕ ph, བ b, མ m, ཙ ts, ཚ tsh, ཛ dz, ཝ w, ཞ zh, ཟ z,
འ ', ཡ y, ར r, ལ l, ཤ sh, ས s, ཧ h, ཨ (not transcribed).

2. *Vowels:*

ཨ a, ཨི i, ཨཱི ī, ཨུ u, ཨེ e, ཨོ o.

Fig. 3. Romanisation table: Fang-Kuei Li (1956: 2).

plicitly, as in *bka'* for བཀའ་. On the question of capitalisation, Li capitalised the root letter. Otherwise, there is no difference between the transcription schemes used by Li and Wylie.

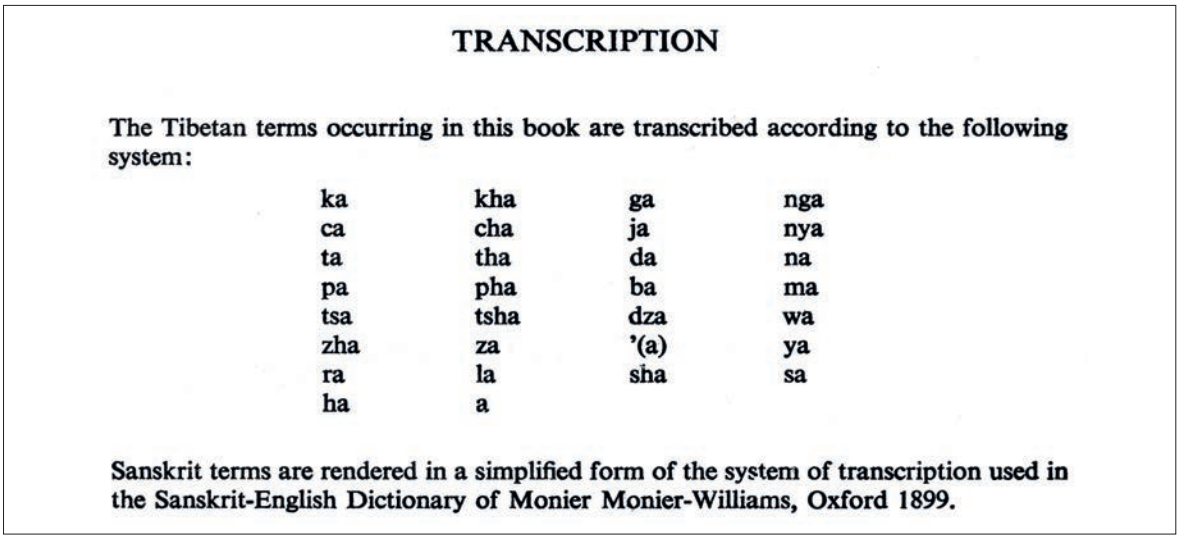
It is surprising that Wylie, who was trained in Sinology and knew the essay,[16] did not refer to Li, who, according to Poppe's memoirs, was a prominent member of the Institute and a full member of the Academia Sinica. Poppe regards him as a "brilliant linguist in Chinese, Tai, and Tibetan, and even some American Indian languages" who wrote "numerous first-rate scholarly works."[17] There is no question that Poppe and Wylie were closely connected within the framework of the project. In a directory of university centres with a foreign policy research agenda from 1968, Poppe is named as "Chairman" and Wylie as "Executive Secretary."[18] Apart from Wylie's, Li's 1956 table is the only transliteration chart for Tibetan I have been able to find related to the Inner Asia Project.

It seems imprudent to categorically rule out that Nebesky-Wojkowitz might have been aware of the emerging tendencies in Seattle though to my knowledge he makes no reference to it. When comparing the table (see fig. 4) in his magnum opus of 1956 with Wylie's proposal of 1959 (fig. 1), the system is similar right down to the form of presentation.

One difference between this and Wylie's scheme is that the vocalisation of the twenty-third letter is placed in round brackets, without explanation. The conventions Nebesky-Wojkowitz observes with regard to other issues can be seen from his transliteration of the syllable already referred to, *g.ya'* (གཡའ་).[19] The suggestions Wylie made in 1959 which diverge from the conventions he followed in his dissertation had thus already been anticipated by Nebesky-Wojkowitz three years earlier.

In the printed version of the *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, published in 's-Gravenhage (The Hague), Nebesky-Wojkowitz reveals nothing about the origin of the transcription

16 It is listed in the bibliography of his dissertation, see Wylie 1958: 326.
17 Poppe 1983: 227.
18 *University centers of foreign affairs research* 1968: 114.
19 As in *g.ya' brag* (གཡའ་བྲག་), Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a: 289. If the syllable was part of a name he wrote *g.Ya'*, capitalising the root letter after the dot by the same logic as in *rDo rje.*



TRANSCRIPTION

The Tibetan terms occurring in this book are transcribed according to the following system:

ka	kha	ga	nga
ca	cha	ja	nya
ta	tha	da	na
pa	pha	ba	ma
tsa	tsha	dza	wa
zha	za	'(a)	ya
ra	la	sha	sa
ha	a		

Sanskrit terms are rendered in a simplified form of the system of transcription used in the Sanskrit-English Dictionary of Monier Monier-Williams, Oxford 1899.

Fig. 4. Romanisation table: René Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1956a: [XV]).

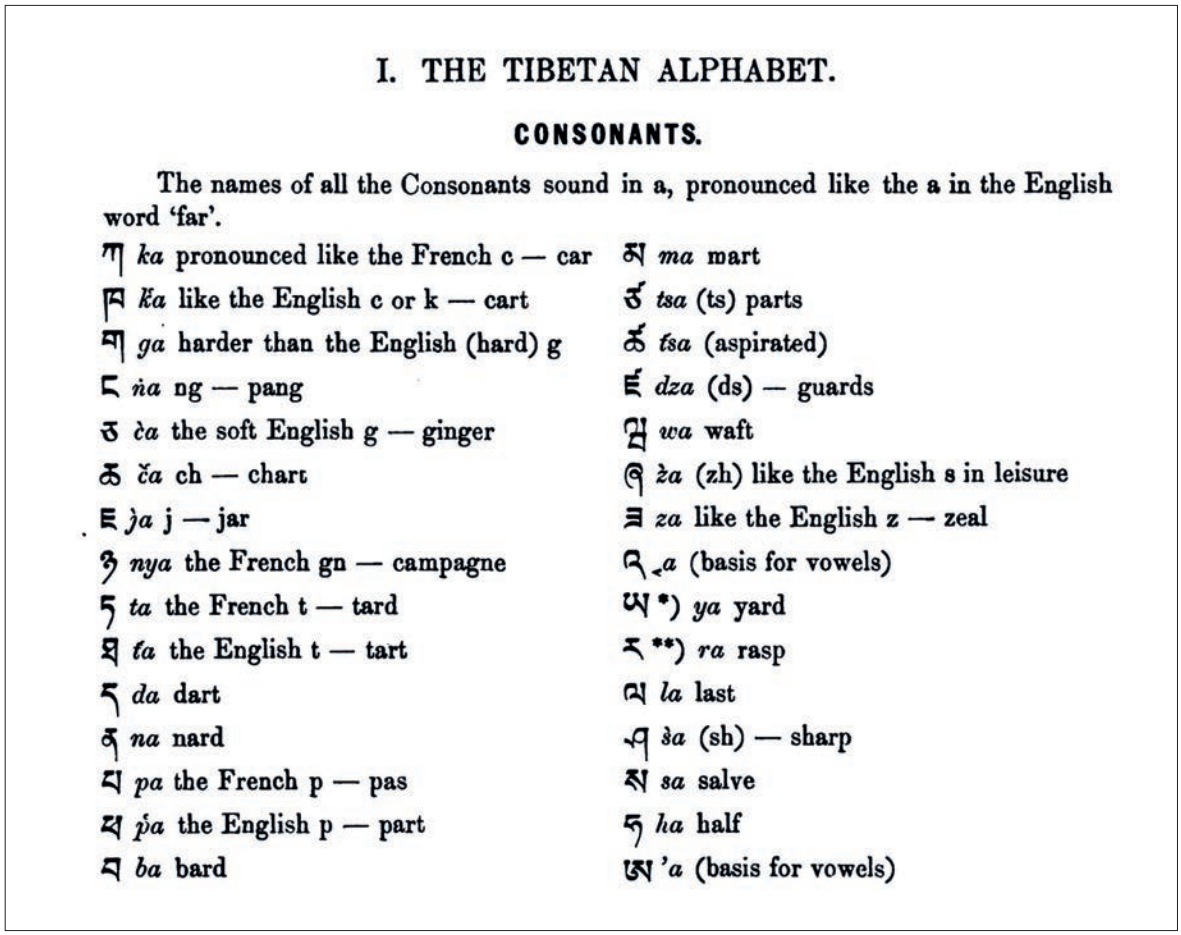
scheme he used: he does not explicitly say that it is his own, nor that he has adopted it from someone else's. However, the typewritten original of the book, his habilitation thesis submitted in Vienna in 1955, provides information about this. Although the title of the manuscript is in German ("Der Kult und die Ikonographie der tibetischen Schutzgottheiten [...] von Dr. René Nebesky eingereicht als Habilitationsschrift im Jänner 1955"), the work itself is written entirely in English and also bears an English title ("The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities"). The habilitation thesis is largely identical with the printed book. The manuscript is missing a transliteration table, but on an uncounted one-page "Introduction" following the table of contents, Nebesky reveals that:

> In transcribing Tibetan words occurring in this publication, a simplification of the system applied by Jäschke in his Tibetan-English Dictionary (London 1949) was used. Sanskrit words are rendered according to the transcription used in the Dictionary of English and Sanskrit of Monier Williams (Oxford 1872) and Lepcha words are reproduced in the way applied in the Lepcha-English Dictionary of Mainwaring-Grünwedel (Berlin 1898).[20]

This is followed by a note that the work is to be published by Mouton & Co in The Hague, Holland. It is possible that Nebesky-Wojkowitz agreed on the romanisation of the Tibetan alphabet with the publisher prior to publication, but I am not aware of any evidence of this. The habilitation was submitted in January 1955 and the habilitation procedure completed in August of that year. Only a few months later, the beautifully printed publisher's version appeared, with the "Introduction" revised into a substantially expanded "Foreword" dated February 1956. Following the table of contents, the publisher's edition included the transcription table reproduced above, but omitted the original reference to Jäschke.

It cannot be deduced from this that the specifications of the Inner Asia Project mentioned by Wylie might have been a guideline for Nebesky-Wojkowitz or the publisher.

20 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955a.



I. THE TIBETAN ALPHABET.

CONSONANTS.

The names of all the Consonants sound in a, pronounced like the a in the English word 'far'.

ཀ *ka* pronounced like the French c — car	མ *ma* mart
ཁ *ḱa* like the English c or k — cart	ཙ *tsa* (ts) parts
ག *ga* harder than the English (hard) g	ཚ *ćsa* (aspirated)
ང *ṅa* ng — pang	ཛ *dza* (ds) — guards
ཅ *ċa* the soft English g — ginger	ཝ *wa* waft
ཆ *ča* ch — chart	ཞ *ża* (zh) like the English s in leisure
ཇ *ja* j — jar	ཟ *za* like the English z — zeal
ཉ *nya* the French gn — campagne	འ *'a* (basis for vowels)
ཏ *ta* the French t — tard	ཡ *) *ya* yard
ཐ *ťa* the English t — tart	ར **) *ra* rasp
ད *da* dart	ལ *la* last
ན *na* nard	ཤ *ša* (sh) — sharp
པ *pa* the French p — pas	ས *sa* salve
ཕ *ṕa* the English p — part	ཧ *ha* half
བ *ba* bard	ཨ *'a* (basis for vowels)

Fig. 5. Romanisation table: Heinrich August Jäschke (1881: VIII).

However, it is understandable why the reference to Jäschke was dropped from the printed version. That Nebesky-Wojkowitz's transliteration is nothing more than a "simplification" of the one used by the well-known Herrnhut lexicographer comes as a surprise when one takes a closer look at the table in his dictionary (see fig. 5), first published in 1881, of which Nebesky-Wojkowitz used a reprint.

The transliteration systems of Jäschke and Nebesky-Wojkowitz are in agreement only with regard to 18 of the 30 letters. Concerning the remaining twelve – 40 percent of the alphabet – there is no correspondence. Discrepancies are found in the notation of the aspirate obstruents (ཁ་ཆ་ཐ་ཕ་ཚ་ཀྵ་), the velar nasal (ང་), the palatal affricates (ཅ་ཆ་ཇ་) and sibilants (ཤ་ཧ་), the twenty-third letter (ཪ་) and thirtieth letter of the alphabet (ཨ་). It is particularly noteworthy that the latter (ཨ་), certainly the most imposing representative of the Tibetan characters by size and otherwise, is explicitly marked by Jäschke; this stands out as a difference from most other systems. A closer characterisation of the particular sign he uses for this letter suggests looking at typography; it is by no means certain that Jäschke's "basis for vowels" is actually to be understood in the sense of an apostrophe, even though it may look like one at first sight.

Excursus on typography

The concept and content of typography today is the Unicode standard,[21] which since the 1990s has developed into the globally valid standard par excellence. The Unicode Consortium was originally established as a cooperation between American software companies that wanted to offer their products worldwide in all scripts and were therefore interested in a comprehensive technical standard. This standard, which has been constantly developed in international cooperation and now comprises hundreds of thousands of characters, is the type case of modern printing. Each character is defined by a code point. These unified encodings are expressed by technical identification numbers, which usually consist of a four-digit combination of numbers or letters indicated by preceding "U+" (for instance, U+0027 is a straightforward apostrophe). The characters are grouped in so-called "ranges," which correspond to thematic groups. Thus, the 128 elementary characters of the ASCII code will be found under the range "C0 Controls and Basic Latin" (starting with U+0000).

If one wants to examine texts digitally available that were created on the basis of the Unicode standard to find out which characters were used in the production of the document, it is possible to reliably identify every character it contains with the help of appropriate tools.[22] This is naturally not possible with books that were printed in earlier times using traditional methods. Even the best scanner can only detect the traces of the type used by the printer, which is not digitally tangible itself. A character that exists only in analogue form must therefore be interpreted if it is to be described in terms by the means of today's typographic nomenclature. So, one's interpretation of a certain character in a certain way is based on perception and assumption, which can be correct, but also incorrect.

Jäschke seems to have rendered the thirtieth letter (འ) with something like an apostrophe; at least Wylie understood it to be the apostrophe of a typewriter in his conspectus of the various transcriptions.[23] However, a whole phalanx of characters may be concealed behind the concept of an apostrophe. The "typewriter apostrophe" (U+0027) is not usually printed in letterpress, where the more elegant "typesetter's apostrophe" is traditionally used. In a Latin-script environment, the latter presents itself in two main variants, placed in the "general punctuation" section of the Unicode charts (U+2000 onwards).

When the apostrophe functions as an elision marker or as a sign with a similar or other function, a mark that looks like a superscript comma open to the left is commonly used: *don't, one's p's and q's, the fathers' sons*, and so on. Since this type of apostrophe hardly ever appears at the beginning of a word,[24] the "right single quotation mark" (U+2019), which would normally close a quotation, can be used for this purpose in typography. In addition, Unicode also provides a "left single quotation mark" (U+2018), which is used at the beginning of a quote. Since the "left" one will normally only appear after a space or at the beginning of a paragraph, software programmes routinely offer the possibility of automatically converting the typewriter apostrophe of the keyboard into the "left" or "right" quotation mark depending on the setting. This procedure gives good results in cases such as *'quote'*

21 www.unicode.org/charts (accessed 11.07.2023).

22 My tried and tested tool for this purpose is: www.babelstone.co.uk/Unicode/whatisit.html (accessed 11.07.2023).

23 Wylie 1959: 262, second column.

24 Exceptions such as *'s-Gravenhage* or *'Ndrangheta* are very rare in European writing traditions.

and *don't*, but when transliterating from Tibetan, it will routinely have the disquieting effect that in romanisations such as *bka'ʻgyur* (བཀའ་འགྱུར་) the first syllable closes with a coda that seems to mark the end of a quotation (U+2019), while the onset of the second looks as if another quote is about to begin (U+2018). Implications can be confusing: a sheep's "baa" (ཨཨ་) might be misheard as a nominal particle in quotes (*'ba'*). It is important to understand that this is not about the cosmetic design of the typeface, but about questions of typographic substance. Under the requirement of code clarity as enforced by Unicode, it is not enough to say that something should be romanised by an apostrophe: The character to be used must be described much more precisely – and for the purpose of transliterating a Tibetan letter neither the left nor the right quotation mark is suitable.

To remedy this shortcoming, Unicode provides a set of alternative characters that resemble an apostrophe but are not meant and do not function as elision or quotation marks. Such characters are called "spacing modifier letters." They are characterised by and get their name from the fact they occupy their own horizontal space in print and can be used adjacent to a neighbouring sign for the purpose of modifying it. There is a whole series of such letter-like characters: prime, turned comma, apostrophe, reversed comma, half rings, etc. In addition to these, Unicode also contains characters that exist in a fixed combination with another character, called "combining diacritical marks" (of which accents are a common example). Table 1 gives an overview of Unicode characters that are relevant in the context of these considerations.

Co Controls and Basic Latin (range 0000–007F)	
'	U+0027 : APOSTROPHE {APL quote}
General Punctuation (range 2000–206F)	
‘	U+2018 : LEFT SINGLE QUOTATION MARK {single turned comma quotation mark}
’	U+2019 : RIGHT SINGLE QUOTATION MARK {single comma quotation mark}
Spacing Modifier Letters (range 02B0–02FF)	
ʹ	U+02B9 : MODIFIER LETTER PRIME
ʼ	U+02BC : MODIFIER LETTER APOSTROPHE {apostrophe}
ʾ	U+02BE : MODIFIER LETTER RIGHT HALF RING
ʿ	U+02BF : MODIFIER LETTER LEFT HALF RING
˱	U+02F1 : MODIFIER LETTER LOW LEFT ARROWHEAD
˳	U+02F3 : MODIFIER LETTER LOW RING
Combining Diacritical Marks (range 0300–036F)	
à	U+0300 : COMBINING GRAVE ACCENT {Greek *varia*}
á	U+0301 : COMBINING ACUTE ACCENT {stress mark; Greek *oxia*, *tonos*}
ả	U+0313 : COMBINING COMMA ABOVE {Greek *psili*, smooth breathing mark}
ả	U+0314 : COMBINING REVERSED COMMA ABOVE {Greek *dasia*, rough breathing mark}
ả	U+0357 : COMBINING RIGHT HALF RING ABOVE
ả	U+0351 : COMBINING LEFT HALF RING ABOVE
ạ	U+0354 : COMBINING LEFT ARROWHEAD BELOW

Tab. 1. Unicode characters similar to or in the vicinity of an apostrophe.

Let us return to the thirtieth letter of the alphabet in the rendering chosen by Jäschke (ʾa). What at first glance looks like an apostrophe is certainly not meant as a mere typesetter's apostrophe as the table might suggest. Jäschke's benchmark for the rendering of the thirtieth Tibetan letter (ཨ) is the Hebrew *aleph* (א)[25] and the Greek *spiritus lenis* (smooth breathing mark).[26] The character intended for the romanisation of the latter – referred to in Unicode as "comma above" along with the Greek term *psili* (*ψιλή*) – is, however, not a "spacing modifier letter" but a "combining diacritical mark" (U+0313), which does not correspond to the visual impression of the sign that appears in Jäschke's dictionary. As the transliteration mark relevant for rendering *aleph*, one can quite reliably determine the "modifier letter right half ring" along Unicode lines (U+02BE), which is also common for rendering the Arabic *hamza* (ء). Both the reference to the Hebrew *aleph* and its visual appearance (*ȧ*) suggest that the sign Jäschke had in mind is best understood in terms of this right half ring, which has long been commonly used to represent the glottal stop in transliteration schemes for Semitic (and other) scripts.

With the Tibetan aspirated obstruents (ཁ་ཆ་ཐ་ཕ་ཚ་), the character used to mark aspiration in Jäschke's table seems to correspond to the "left half ring" in Unicode nomenclature, the mirror-inverted, complementary sign of the right half ring just mentioned. The aspiration mark, however, does not seem to appear as a spacing modifier letter (which would be U+02BF), but rather as a combining diacritical mark, namely the "combining left half ring above" (U+0351). It forms a typographical unit with the main letter as can be seen most clearly in the rendering of the labial aspirate, where the aspiration mark is placed directly above the simple letter: *p͑*. Jäschke specifically referred to the Greek "spiritus asper above the letter" in his remarks on aspiration.[27] The character provided in Unicode for romanising the *spiritus asper* would be the "combining reversed comma above" (U+0314), also known as *dasia* (*δασεῖα*). But like the *spiritus lenis*, it seems less plausible to refer to the Greek diacritic when interpreting the character according to the Unicode standard. If we were to transpose Jäschke's notation of aspiration along the lines of the modern International Phonetic Alphabet, k^h c^h t^h p^h t^hs would be the preferred choice.

Jäschke consistently marks the palatal obstruents (ཅ་ཆ་ཇ་) and sibilants (ཤ་ཧ་) by means of what is a "combining grave accent" (U+0300) in Unicode: *c̀ c̏h j̀ ź ś*. It is notable that he offers a digraphic alternative in brackets for the last two Tibetan letters: *zh sh*. The dental affricates (ཙ་ཚ་ཛ་) are substantially expressed by digraphs (*ts* etc.) whereby for the voiced one the variant *ds* is offered in addition to *dz*. The palatal nasal (ཉ་) is rendered solely digraphically as *ny*, in contrast to the diacritical rendering *ṅ* for its velar counterpart (ང་).

For the twenty-third letter (ཞ་) the table contains a subscript pointed bracket, which can be identified in Unicode as the "modifier letter low left arrowhead" (U+02F1), though this identification does not fully reflect Jäschke's practice. The said character is only used when it is the root letter, as in *ʶod* "shine" (འོད་). If the sign is in the position of a prefix, a low circle

25 For example: אוריאל "Uriel" (a personal name) showing an *aleph* in initial position (before ו *u* in consonantal function) and in medial position (after רי *ri* before ל *l*). On this and the following sign see Jäschke 1881: xiv.

26 For example: ἄλφα "alpha" (first letter of the Greek alphabet in classical orthography) showing a *spiritus lenis* followed by an acute accent on top of the initial vowel. An example for the corresponding *spiritus asper* is ἅπαξ "once" (as in *hapax legomenon*, "lonely word").

27 Jäschke 1881: xii.

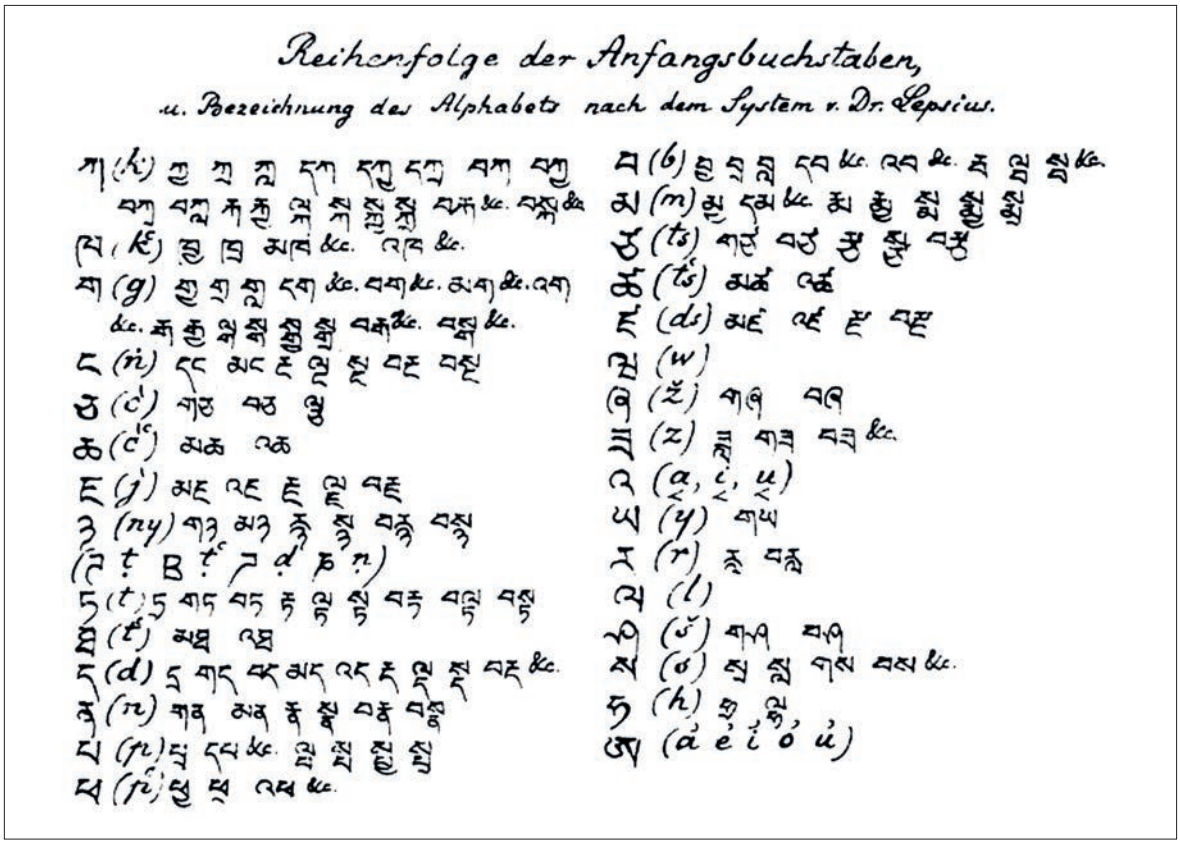


Fig. 6. Romanisation table: Heinrich August Jäschke (1871: IV).

is used, the "modifier letter low ring" (U+02F3), as in ˳*bras* "rice" (འབྲས་). When it appears at the end of the syllable or between two vowels, a third variant is not to render the letter at all, as in *mda* "arrow" (མདའ་) or *rdeu* "little stone" (རྡེའུ་).

These are the conventions in Jäschke's dictionary which Nebesky-Wojkowitz references. To better understand Jäschke's sophisticated use of special characters it helps to compare the table in the published edition with the preliminary handwritten version of Jäschke's dictionary, which appeared in German ten years earlier as "Handwörterbuch der tibetischen Sprache." This version contains the above "order of initial letters and designation of the alphabet according to the system [devised] by Dr Lepsius" (see fig. 6).

The transliteration largely corresponds to the printed version as regards the romanisation of the aspirates as well as the palatal and dental affricates; a smaller variance is shown by the voiced dental affricate, for which only *ds* is given. For the palatal sibilants, the caron (*ž* and *š*) is found instead of the grave (*ż* and *ṡ*), and these are presented without digraphic alternatives (*zh* and *sh*). The Latin equivalents for the twenty-third (ཪ་) and thirtieth Tibetan letters (ཨ་) are noted as characters clearly recognisable as combined ones, "combining left arrowhead below" (*a̲ i̲ u̲*) and "combining right half ring above" (*a̜ e̜ i̜ o̜ u̜*); in the print edition these marks are notated as independent units or "spacing modifier letters" placed before the vowel. How Jäschke would have romanised the twenty-third letter in positions other than the root position cannot be clarified as this table is the only place in the "Handwörterbuch" that contains transliterations at all.

Also considering the early version of his dictionary, it is clear that Jäschke attempted to express phonetic peculiarities of the Tibetan letters, when outside the natural inventory

of the Latin alphabet, through diacritical combinations. In both the German version of 1871[28] and the 1881 English edition[29] of his dictionary he explicitly recurs to Lepsius, which justifies following this reference.

Carl Richard Lepsius (1810–1884), who was appointed *Oberbibliothekar* (chief librarian) of the Royal Library in Berlin later in his career,[30] had developed a "universal linguistic alphabet" that may be considered a seminal harbinger of today's International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA). Jäschke refers to the second edition of Lepsius' work, published in English in 1863 as *Standard Alphabet for Reducing Unwritten Languages and Foreign Graphic Systems to a Uniform Orthography in European Letters*.[31] It seems, however, that Jäschke relies on Lepsius only to the extent that he follows some general principles (not further elaborated here). Lepsius had in fact made a concrete proposal for the Tibetan alphabet, which is quite different from Jäschke's (see fig. 7).

What is conspicuous about this table is the structured scheme of presentation, which does not follow the traditional layout of the Tibetan alphabet. This applies inter alia to the order of the obstruents with respect to the places of articulation – the palatal affricates (ཅ་ etc.) are immediately followed by their dental or alveolar equivalents (ཙ་ etc.) – and the internal presentation of the modes of articulation: first come the voiceless (ཀ་ཅ་ཙ་ཏ་པ་), then the voiced (ག་ཇ་ཛ་ད་བ་), and then the aspirates (ཁ་ཆ་ཚ་ཐ་ཕ་). Regarding the latter, the consistent use of Latin *h* to express aspiration is remarkable (*kh tšh tsh th ph*); it is not clear why Jäschke did not adopt this clear and simple way of expressing aspiration. The notation of palatality by a caron seems to be consistent as well, both for the affricates (*tš dž tšh*) and the two sibilants (*š ž*). The velar (ང་) and the palatal nasal (ཉ་) are marked by adding diacritical marks: *ṅ* and *ń*. The latter is reminiscent of a special character known mainly from Polish orthography, an acute in combination with the simple nasal. Lepsius, however, did not describe the diacritic as an acute, but simply as a "stroke" with the general function of expressing palatality, which can also be used with other consonants.[32] The twenty-third letter of the alphabet (ར་) is rendered in the same way that Jäschke transliterated the thirtieth (ཨ་), in the Unicode lexicon a "modifier letter right half ring" (U+02BE). Lepsius seems to have regarded the thirtieth letter as a vowel without assigning it an explicit mark.

To sum up, we have seen that Nebesky-Wojkowitz refers to Jäschke, and Jäschke in turn invokes Lepsius. But in both cases, the oath of allegiance seems to have been observed in a

28 In addition to his mention in the romanisation table, Jäschke includes the following praise of Lepsius: "Was die Art der Bezeichnung betrifft, so scheint mir das Lepsius'sche System, trotz dem was von manchen, auch gewichtigen Seiten dagegen eingewendet worden ist, wenigstens unter allen mir bekannten Versuchen in dieser Richtung so entschieden den Vorzug zu verdienen und allen Anforderungen so zu genügen, daß ich keinen Augenblick angestanden habe davon Gebrauch zu machen" (Jäschke 1871: XIV).

29 "In order to denote the pronunciation, I follow the scheme of Professor Lepsius" (Jäschke 1881: x).

30 The title bestowed on Johannes Raue, the first overseer of the book collection owned by the Great Elector of Prussia which was opened as a library in 1661, was *proto bibliothecarius* (first librarian). Today's heads of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin hold the office of *Generaldirektor* (director general).

31 The original German version (Lepsius 1854) appeared with the title "Das allgemeine linguistische Alphabet: Grundsätze der Übertragung fremder Schriftsysteme und bisher noch ungeschriebener Sprachen in europäische Buchstaben;" with 67 pages, it was considerably smaller than the English version published nine years later.

32 Cf. Lepsius 1863: 70.

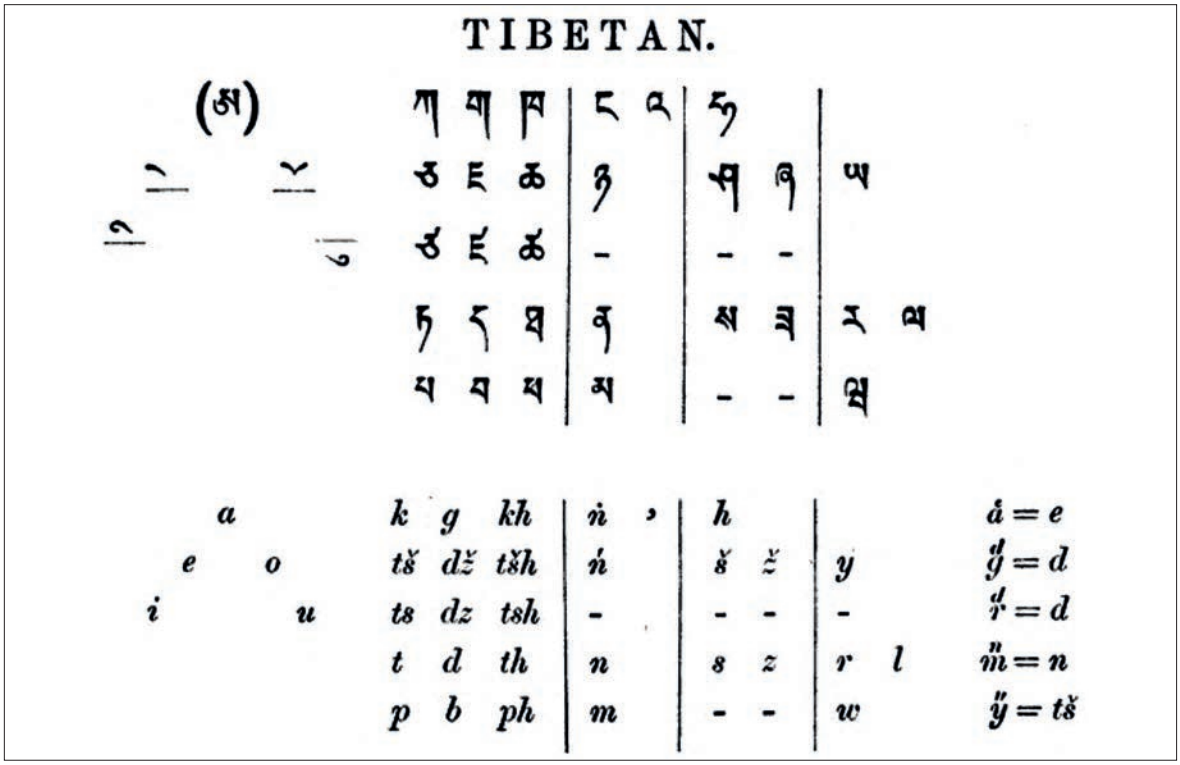


Fig. 7. Romanisation table: Carl Richard Lepsius (1863: 249).

laid-back manner – almost as if the appeal to a higher authority was a necessary display of respect rather than a directive that governed the details.

At least at first sight. Returning to Nebesky-Wojkowitz, his "simplification of the system applied by Jäschke" consists in noting the aspirates digraphically (*kh ch th ph*) or trigraphically (*tsh*) instead of using diacritics. But this is merely a more convenient way of expressing the aspiration that was not only used by Lepsius but also described by Jäschke himself in precisely this sense when he explicitly refers to the letter *h* to explain the phenomenon of aspiration as such.[33] A comparable case is the velar nasal, where the diacritical *ṅ* has been replaced by the digraphic spelling *ng*, for which Jäschke's romanisation of the palatal nasal *ny* appears to be a precedent. In the notation of the palatal sibilants, Nebesky-Wojkowitz did basically nothing more than use the alternative solutions *zh* and *sh*, already considered by Jäschke, in place of the diacritical combinations. For the thirtieth letter, he dispensed with a transliteration of the consonantal nucleus, thus reducing the notation *ʾa* (or *ȧ* in the earlier version of the dictionary) to its straightforward vocalisation. In doing so, Nebesky-Wojkowitz sided with a large majority; as pointed out, Jäschke's explicit spelling of the thirtieth letter is a rare exception. On closer examination, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's statement that his romanisation was merely a "simplification" becomes plausible.

So far, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's smooth adaption of Jäschke's system looks decidedly pragmatic. One sign that seems to have occupied Nebesky-Wojkowitz to a considerable extent is the twenty-third letter (ར་) of the alphabet – "occupied" in a double sense: mentally and manually. It seems that it was only when he began writing his habilitation thesis, after

33 "A further example of the combination of consonants is presented in what is known as *aspiration*, when the letter *h* is brought into more or less intimate connexion with another consonant" (Jäschke 1881: XII).

an experimental phase of several years, that he took to reproducing this character in all positions with the apostrophe available on his typewriter: as a root letter before vowels in *za 'og* "silk quilt" (ཟ་འོག་); in intervocalic position in *gSang ba'i* "secret" (གསང་བའི་); at the end of a syllable and in prefix position in *mkha' 'gro ma* "skywalker lady" (མཁའ་འགྲོ་མ་).[34] In the printed edition, the typewriter apostrophes were converted, as expected, into the typesetter's apostrophe, by today's standards probably the "right single quotation mark" (U+2019) or some modifier letter, which is difficult to judge from the mere appearance of the sign. However, there are some passages in the opening parts of the manuscript where Nebesky-Wojkowitz wrote in by hand a sign for the prefixed letter that looks quite like the "modifier letter right half ring":

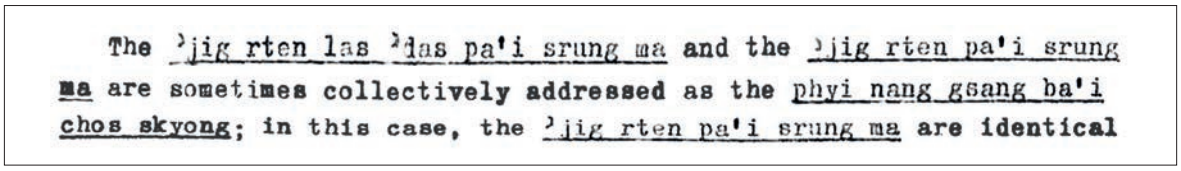

The ʾjig rten las ʾdas pa'i srung ma and the ʾjig rten pa'i srung ma are sometimes collectively addressed as the phyi nang gsang ba'i chos skyong; in this case, the ʾjig rten pa'i srung ma are identical

Fig. 8. René Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1955a: 2).

The impression is that an already typed character was covered up with the help of a correction strip (or in a similar fashion) and that the same sign we encountered in Lepsius' table as the transliteration of the twenty-third letter was subsequently added by hand. That this sign was also taken seriously by the publisher is seen in the fact that in these cases the printed edition faithfully does not use the typesetter's apostrophe as elsewhere, with the result that two different typographical variants appear side by side:

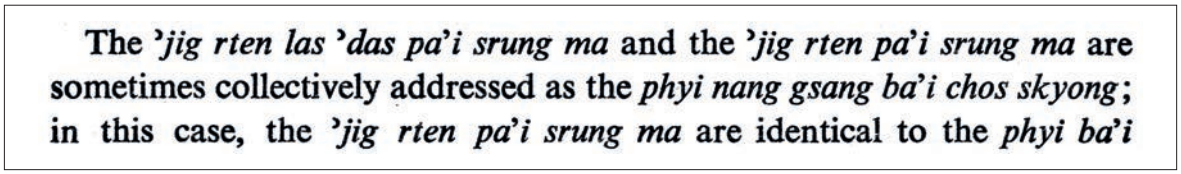

The *ʾjig rten las ʾdas pa'i srung ma* and the *ʾjig rten pa'i srung ma* are sometimes collectively addressed as the *phyi nang gsang ba'i chos skyong*; in this case, the *ʾjig rten pa'i srung ma* are identical to the *phyi ba'i*

Fig. 9. René Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1956a: 4).

It can be clearly seen that the signs before *jig* and *das* are different than the apostrophe appearing in the genitive of the nominal particles. It is not clear exactly which letter was corrected by hand in the typewritten template of the print edition above, but it could well be that Nebesky-Wojkowitz originally wrote *hjig* and *hdas*. In fact, in the manuscript a singular instance of *hdren* can be found – apparently an error that was overlooked, but fortunately preserved for us as a typographic residue:

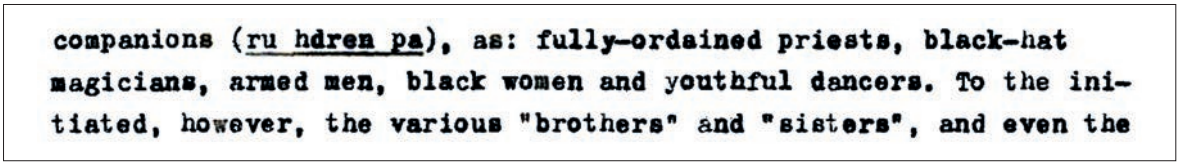

companions (ru hdren pa), as: fully-ordained priests, black-hat magicians, armed men, black women and youthful dancers. To the initiated, however, the various "brothers" and "sisters", and even the

Fig. 10. René Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1955a: 18).

34 Examples taken from Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955a: 48 and 50. For the corresponding passages in the print edition, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a: 52 and 54.

As we will see, Nebesky-Wojkowitz had the habit of romanising the twenty-third letter of the alphabet with *h* (except between vowels as in the genitive). In the printed edition, the typewritten *hdren* was corrected to *ʾdren,* with the "modifier letter right half ring."[35] In any case, Nebesky-Wojkowitz took the trouble of manually inserting a "right half ring," correcting the Latin representation of one particular letter only at the beginning of the typescript (about the first 20 pages). After that, he renders the twenty-third letter of the alphabet without exception using the apostrophe available on his typewriter.

The following section will deal with the five years preceding the submission of his habilitation thesis to the University of Vienna and will trace the stages of how Nebesky-Wojkowitz developed his way of transliterating the Tibetan script. In this period, as a young man in his late twenties to early thirties, it can be plausibly argued that a decisive impulse for his way of presenting Tibetan with Latin letters came from his stay in India.

In the summer of 1950, Nebesky-Wojkowitz left for a recently independent India on a research trip that became a three-year journey. After a short stay in Kashmir, he spent most of his time in Kalimpong in West Bengal. The first publication from this period is "Ein Beitrag zur tibetischen Ikonographie" written in German for the *Archiv für Völkerkunde* in Vienna.[36] It includes a lengthy passage transliterated from a Tibetan original source, the title of which reveals most of the elements of the transliteration practice that Nebesky-Wojkowitz used during this period: *Yi dam rgya mtshoi sgrub thabs rin chhen hbyung gnas kyi lhan thabs rin hbyung don gsal.*

Note the trigraphic rendering of the aspirated palatal obstruent in *rin chhen* "jewel" (རིན་ཆེན་), which is in line with the digraphic notation of the tenuis in *gchig* "one" (གཅིག་), which occurs several times in the text. It is evident that Nebesky-Wojkowitz followed a convention very common on the subcontinent, namely using *ch* and *chh* for the surd palatals.[37] None other than the founder of Tibetology, Kőrösi Csoma, who had lived in India for many years and died in Darjeeling, also followed this orthography aligned with the phonetic value of the English pronunciation of *ch*. The twenty-third letter is transliterated with *h,* both when it is used as a prefix in *hbyung gnas* "place of origin" (འབྱུང་གནས་) or *rin hbyung* "place of origin of jewels (i.e., Ratnasambhava)" (རིན་འབྱུང་), and in the coda of a syllable in *dgah ba* "to rejoice" (དགའ་བ་). In intervocalic position the sign in question is simply skipped, as in *rgya mtshoi* "of the ocean" (རྒྱ་མཚོའི་). Further reading reveals a surprise when the consonant in question assumes the role of the root letter: the following vowel is capitalised, as in *hOg tu* "below" (འོག་ཏུ་). This does not have much to do with the convention of capitalising a root consonant as in *mGon po* "protector" (མགོན་པོ་). The capitalisation of the vowel serves as an indicator to delimit the preceding consonant (འ་) from the twenty-ninth letter of the alphabet, which is also romanised *h* in *hrags pa* "vigorous" (ཧྲག་པ་).[38] Nebesky-Wojkowitz was looking for a way to find a non-diacritical substitute

35 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a: 21.

36 See Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1950.

37 For example, Hindi *acchā* "good" is romanised *achchha* in a widely used dictionary, Chaturvedi and Tiwari 1979: 13 s.v. अच्छा. Further evidence (if any is needed) is provided by the many Indian place names beginning with *chh-*, such as Chhattisgarh (छत्तीसगढ़).

38 This mode of differentiation is viable as long as the letter ཀ་ occurs only in root position. This is the case in genuine Tibetan words, but in loanwords and foreign names it can also be subscript or superscript, as in ཆོས་ཤྲཱི་ "Dharmaśrī" or ཨལ་ཕྲེད་པི་ "Alfred."

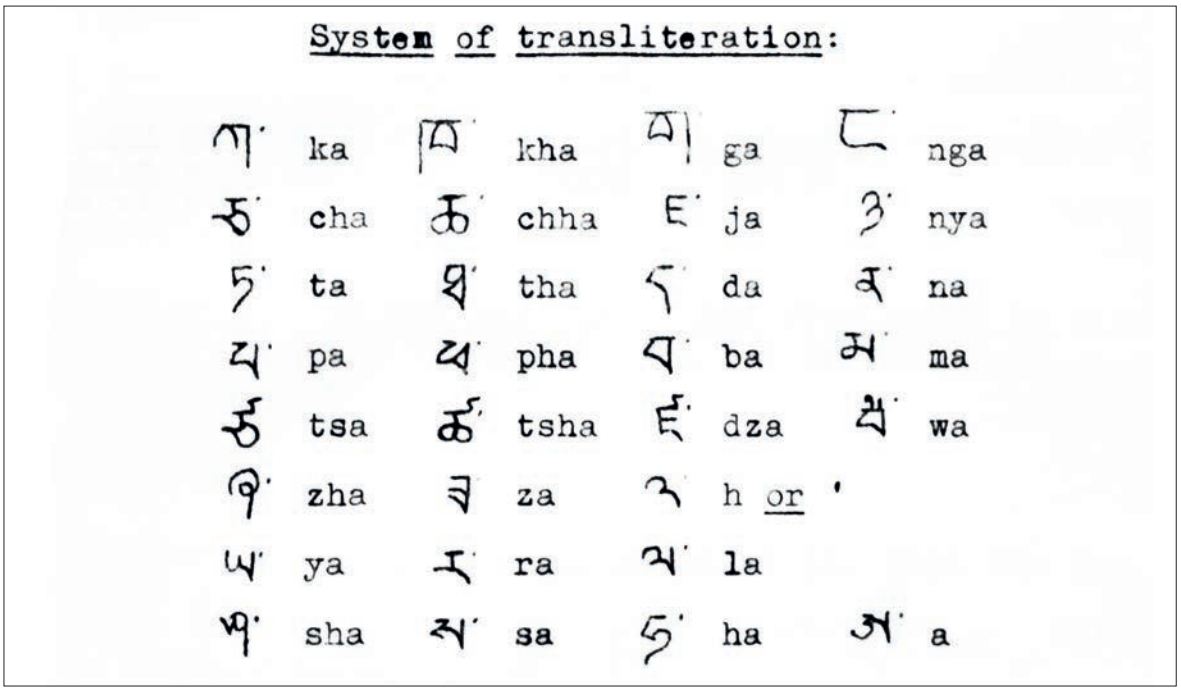


Fig. 11. Romanisation table: René Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1955b: [uncounted page after title page]).

that would correspond to the habit, not rare at the time and followed by some to this day, of representing the consonant in question by *ḥ* with a diacritical dot underneath the main letter.[39] The twists and turns through which he attempted to find a solution adequate to the letter are astonishing and certainly in the tradition of Jäschke, who also dissected the letter into its various functions when romanising it. However, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's recognisable aversion to the use of diacritics did not lead him to eschew them when rendering Sanskrit from Tibetan transcriptions, since he apparently had no principled problem with a dot under dentals where traditionally expected: *ḍa ma ru* "drum."

Nebesky-Wojkowitz remained in India until February 1953. From May to December of that year he resided in Leiden to study the Tibetan collection in the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde. The fruit of this work is an excellent catalogue entitled *Catalogue of the Collections of Tibetan Blockprints and Manuscripts in the National Museum of Ethnology (Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde), Leiden – Holland*, dated 1953 to 1955. Also in this work, the special spelling of the palatal affricates common in India was utilised: digraphic notation of the tenuis (*ch*) and trigraphic notation of the tenuis aspirata (*chh*). Nebesky-Wojkowitz included the following table (fig. 11).

Here there is no change in the romanisation of the alphabet since his 1950 contribution on iconography – except for the twenty-third letter. Nebesky-Wojkowitz indicates in the table to transliterate the character as either *h* or the (typewriter) apostrophe. In fact, he has further refined his system of romanisation to the extent that there are now a total of five different ways of rendering the letter. The first title recorded in the catalogue shows no less than three variants side by side: *Ka lā par hjug pai smon tshig mgyogs hgroi pho nya*.[40]

39 One example among many for the widespread use of this convention at that time is the edition of *Mkhas-paḥi-dgaḥ-ston* (མཁས་པའི་དགའ་སྟོན་) published in New Delhi, see Lokesh Chandra 1959–1962.
40 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955a: 1.

As a subscript, the sign in question is expressed by marking the vowel of the syllable diacritically as a long vowel: *Ka lā par* "into Kalapa" (ཀ་ལཱ་བར་). As can be seen both from *hjug pai* "entering" (འཇུག་པའི་) and *mgyogs hgroi* "going fast" (མགྱོགས་འགྲོའི་), the twenty-third consonant of the alphabet is rendered by a simple *h* if it is a prefix, but it is omitted in intervocalic position. A little further down on the same page are more examples. In *mkha′ hgroi* "of the skywalker" (མཁའ་འགྲོའི་) it can be seen that an apostrophe is placed at the end of the syllable, albeit "excessive."[41] The transliteration *h.od zer* "ray of light" (འོད་ཟེར་) shows that Nebesky-Wojkowitz writes a dot after *h* to discern the twenty-third (འ་) from the twenty-ninth (ཧ་) letter of the alphabet (hence deviating from *hOd* as he would have spelled in 1950). The dot with the sign in root letter position (*h.*) is, again, most probably a convenient substitute for *ḥ* with the dot below.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz seems to have struggled for an adequate solution to the issue of the twenty-third letter. Yet, it is clear that the transliteration he used between 1950 and 1955 was substantially inspired by his stay in India. What we see in his work of this period is the prototype of the romanisation he chose for his habilitation thesis.

To appreciate this point sufficiently, one should take another step back in time to Nebesky-Wojkowitz's dissertation, which he submitted to the University of Vienna in 1949 under the mentorship of the ethnologist and orientalist Robert Bleichsteiner (1891–1954) on the topic of writing, paper production and book printing among the Tibetans.[42] Bleichsteiner was also *Doktorvater* of Walther Heissig (1913–2005), who, like Bleichsteiner, was born in Vienna. Heissig later became a professor in Bonn and had a decisive influence on Mongolian and Tibetan studies in West Germany after World War II, and is furthermore considered one of the most important Mongolists of his time. Incidentally, one thing Bleichsteiner's disciples have in common is that their works were received and translated in the People's Republic of China: Nebesky-Wojkowitz's magnum opus was translated into Chinese in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (see above); and several of Heissig's works were translated into Mongolian in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.[43] Not many Western authors have been accorded such esteem.

In his dissertation, Nebesky-Wojkowitz shows an intimate familiarity with the Tibetan script in its many variants. He was able to draw the original characters impressively with his own hand and presented them in numerous tables. Concerning the Latin transliterations of the Tibetan letters, differences can occasionally be detected between the way he wrote the Latin characters by hand and the way he rendered them on his typewriter, the latter appearing more levelled. Nebesky-Wojkowitz handwrote the aspirated tenuis by employing a semicircle open to the right, which can safely be equated with the "modifier letter left half ring" in Unicode lingo (*kʿ* etc.). The corresponding "modifier letter right half ring" open to the left (ʾ) is used to represent the twenty-third letter of the alphabet. Below is a table (fig. 12) presenting the alphabet in "Utschen" (*dbu-can*).

41 Wylie 1959: 264, full quote above.

42 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1949.

43 His well-known work *Ein Volk sucht seine Geschichte* (A people in search of its history) has seen several editions. The earliest Mongol version of this book of which I am aware appeared in Hailar (Chinese 海拉尔), see Heissig 1998. To find more, visit stabikat.de (accessed 11.07.2023).

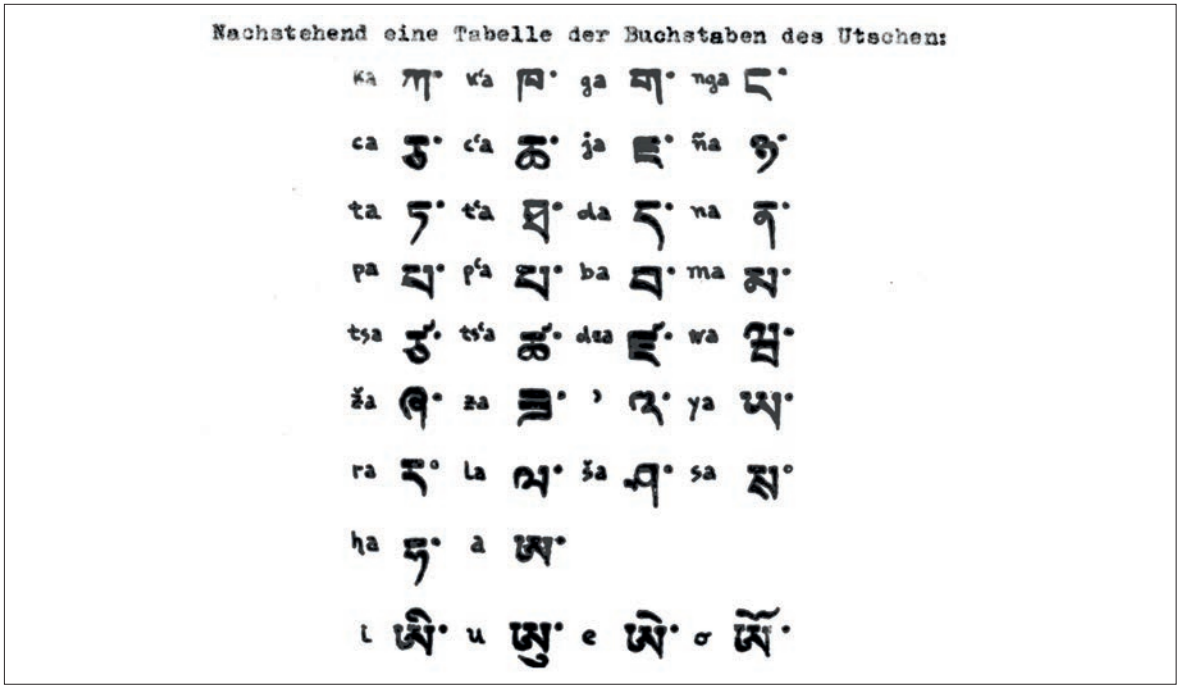


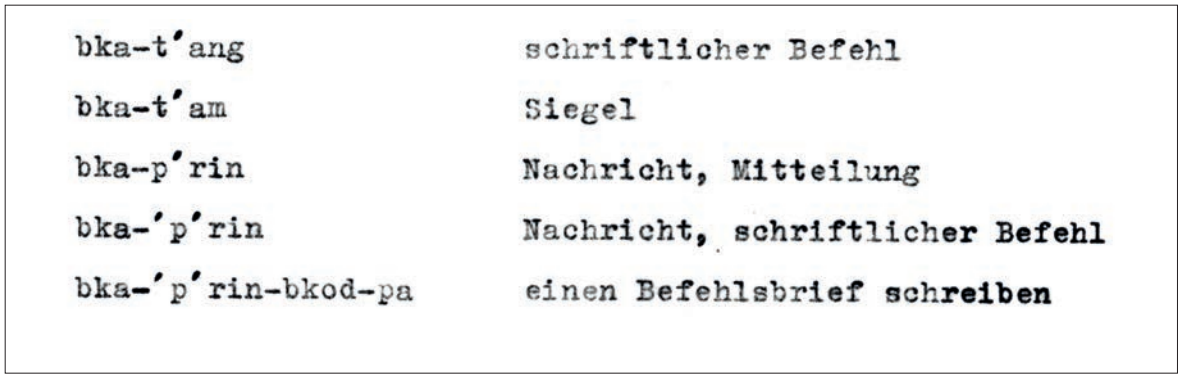
Fig. 12. Romanisation table: René Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1949: 26).

The scheme largely corresponds to the usage in Jäschke's dictionary, especially in view of the aspirated voiceless stops (ཁ་ཆ་ཐ་ཕ་ཚ་). With the velar and palatal nasals (ང་ཉ་) it is noticeable that the former is notated digraphically (*ng*) and the latter as a diacritic (*ñ*); in Jäschke's dictionary it is the other way round (*ṅ* and *ny*). The palatal sibilants (ཞ་ཤ་) appear with the caron already used by Lepsius, namely *ž* and *š*.

Apart from the signs for aspiration and for the twenty-third letter, to which I will return shortly, the table seems to follow the possibilities Nebesky-Wojkowitz would have found on his typewriter, even in the handwritten presentation, since he was naturally concerned with maintaining a consistent transliteration. The typewriter he used had an *n* with a tilde in the font (Spanish *eñe*) as well as the characters *ž* and *š* with a caron (Czech *háček*). But what his typewriter did not feature was an *n* with superscript dot (*ṅ*). Thus, one may assume that Nebesky-Wojkowitz used the digraphic substitute *ng* for purely practical reasons. His typewriter also did not have the German ligature *ß* (known as *Eszett* or *scharfes S*, with a broad arsenal of colloquial nicknames), normally included on a German keyboard. Nebesky-Wojkowitz substituted the character with the digraph *ss* in words such as *ausschliesslich* instead of *ausschließlich*. It can therefore be concluded that Nebesky-Wojkowitz did not write on a standard model, but I have not been able to find out whether he had a specially prepared typewriter or whether it was a regular model with a customary character set including the diacritics *háček* and *eñe*, but not *ß*.

The signs for the aspiration (in Unicode terms, the "modifier letter left half ring") and for the twenty-third letter (its "right" counterpart) are clearly distinguished by Nebesky-Wojkowitz in his handwriting. On the typewriter, Nebesky-Wojkowitz did not distinguish the characters, but he did not use the typewriter apostrophe, as one would expect. In fact, he employed an accent, the acute sign, in conjunction with a space. On a typewriter, this is

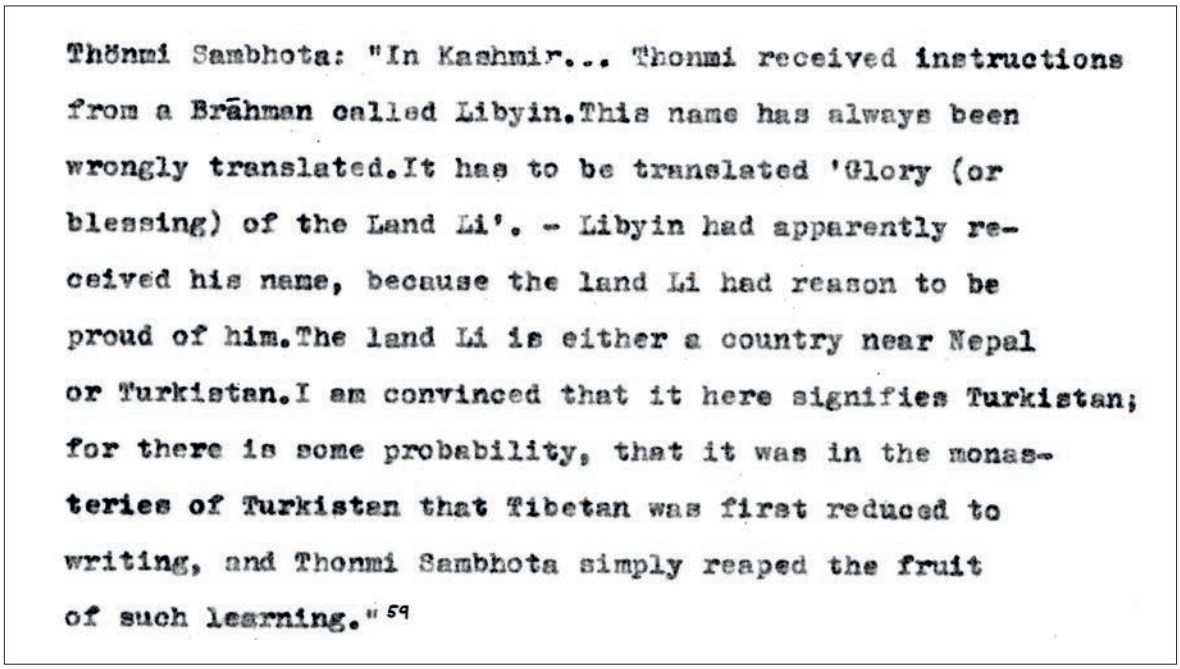
done by first pressing the accent key and then the space bar. This can be seen very clearly in the following lines from the index:



bka-t'ang	schriftlicher Befehl
bka-t'am	Siegel
bka-p'rin	Nachricht, Mitteilung
bka-'p'rin	Nachricht, schriftlicher Befehl
bka-'p'rin-bkod-pa	einen Befehlsbrief schreiben

Fig. 13. René Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1949: 83).

One may wonder why Nebesky-Wojkowitz did not simply type the apostrophe, which was of course present on his typewriter and was used for single quotes within a citation enclosed by double ones, as can be seen from the passage quoting August Hermann Francke:



Thönmi Sambhota: "In Kashmir... Thonmi received instructions from a Brāhman called Libyin. This name has always been wrongly translated. It has to be translated 'Glory (or blessing) of the Land Li'. - Libyin had apparently received his name, because the land Li had reason to be proud of him. The land Li is either a country near Nepal or Turkistan. I am convinced that it here signifies Turkistan; for there is some probability, that it was in the monasteries of Turkistan that Tibetan was first reduced to writing, and Thonmi Sambhota simply reaped the fruit of such learning." [59]

Fig. 14. René Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1949: 15).

These two excerpts from his dissertation plainly show that Nebesky-Wojkowitz deemed the apostrophe to be a quotation mark ('quote') or a sign of elision (don't) and clearly distinct from the aspiration mark or the mark used to romanise the twenty-third letter. For the latter two, he deliberately used an accent, never an apostrophe.

Let us look finally at Nebesky-Wojkowitz's earliest paper on record, published when he was only 24 years old. In an article on the Bon religion in the *Archiv für Völkerkunde*, the following scheme is found in the first footnote:

[1] Die im Text vorkommenden tibetischen Wörter sind der Aussprache von Lhassa angeglichen; die jeweils beigeschlossene Anmerkung ist eine Transskription der tibetischen orthographischen Schreibweise, zu deren Wiedergabe nachfolgendes Umschrift-System benutzt wurde:

ka	k'a	ga	nga
ca	c'a	ja	ña
ta	t'a	da	na
pa	p'a	ba	ma
tsa	ts'a	dza	wa
ža	za	'	ya
ra	la	ša	sa
a			

Abkürzungen: L. = Aussprache im Dialekt von Lhassa.
O. = in tibetischer Orthographie.

Fig. 15. Romanisation table: René Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1947: 26).

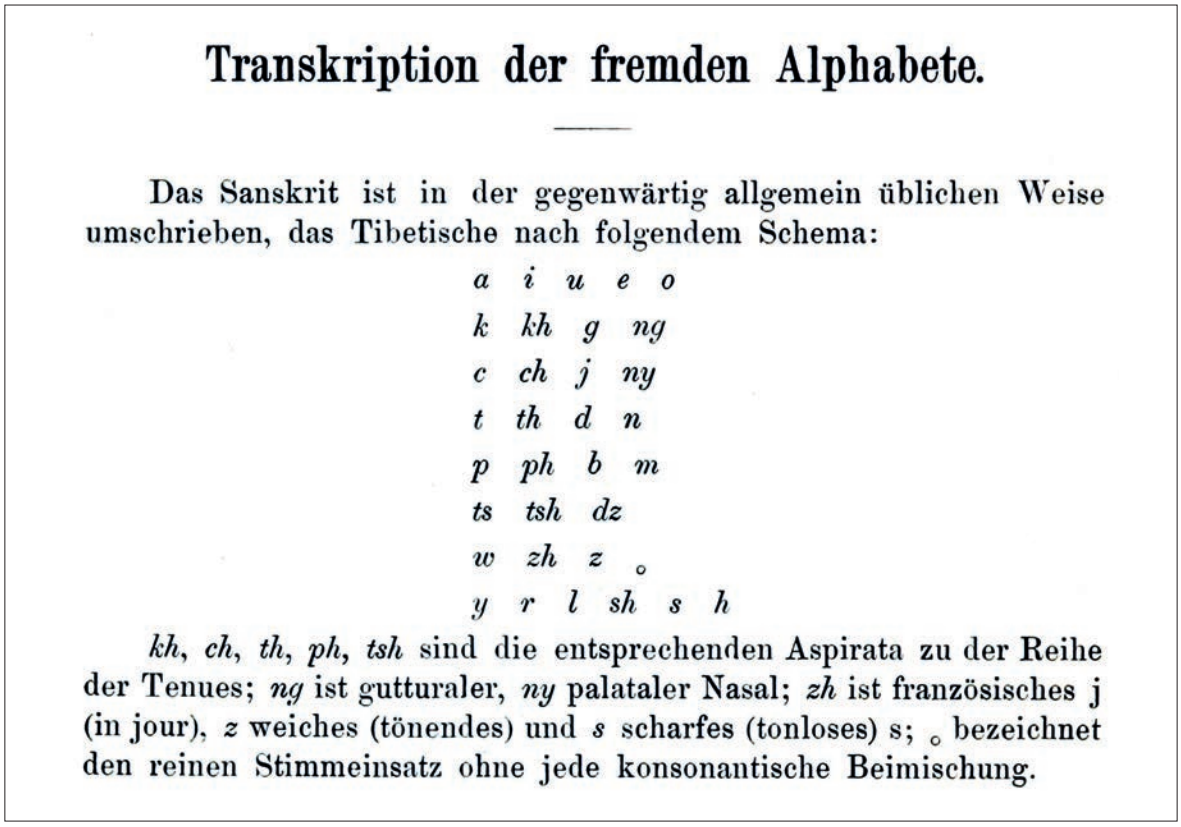
This scheme accords with the transliteration used by Nebesky-Wojkowitz in his dissertation two years later. The two characters used to denote aspiration and for the twenty-third letter were (unassumingly) realised in print as typesetter's apostrophes (apparently U+2018 for the aspiration and U+2019 for the letter). The following examples, which appear in various footnotes and are given here together with the author's translation, show that the twenty-third letter was omitted in the coda of a syllable and in intervocalic position: *bka-'gyur* "Kandschur" (བཀའ་འགྱུར་), *ži-bai-lha-ts'ogs* "milde Gottheiten" (ཞི་བའི་ལྷ་ཚོགས་). Note also the full stop between the prefix and root letter in *g.yung-drung-pa* (གཡུང་དྲུང་པ་) "Svastika-(Mann)."[44]

The gradual development of the transliteration systems used by Nebesky-Wojkowitz since 1947 makes the statement in his habilitation thesis from 1955 that he had merely simplified Jäschke's system seem quite reasonable. In the case of aspirates, he first followed Jäschke, who had added a diacritical aspiration mark to a plain letter. He soon switched to denoting aspiration as was common in India (*kh chh* etc.). This sensible decision seems to have emerged at the beginning of his stay on the subcontinent and was quite likely also motivated by the limited character set of the travel typewriter he used during his sojourn, a German "Princess" device[45] made by a manufacturer in Augsburg. That he departed from the Indian convention for the voiceless palatal affricates (*ch chh*) and adapted to the usages common in the West (*c ch*) for his habilitation thesis is merely a detail.

In the case of the palatal affricates, the diacritics with which Jäschke had expressed palatality were omitted already in his first academic work. Nebesky-Wojkowitz could easily do this because the accent is basically redundant; it serves no distinguishing function compared with letters without the accent (*c j*), as the dental affricates, which contrast with the palatal ones, were already noted digraphically by Jäschke by modifying the dental series (*ts dz*). By later replacing the signs initially notated as *ñ ž š* with *ny zh sh*, Nebesky-Wojkowitz took up something Jäschke either applied himself (*ny*) or had offered as an al-

44 The omission of the penultimate member of the alphabet (ཅ་) in the romanisation table was probably a mistake. Another unintentional error in this first paper seems to be *gšen-lha-od-dkar*, with *od* instead of *'od* (ཨོད་), Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1947: 38, note 55. The following year he published another article in the same journal with the same transliteration table, but this time including the twenty-ninth letter, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1948: 137.

45 Communication from Uwe Niebuhr in an email dated 21 July 2020.



Transkription der fremden Alphabete.

Das Sanskrit ist in der gegenwärtig allgemein üblichen Weise umschrieben, das Tibetische nach folgendem Schema:

a i u e o
k kh g ng
c ch j ny
t th d n
p ph b m
ts tsh dz
w zh z ˚
y r l sh s h

kh, *ch*, *th*, *ph*, *tsh* sind die entsprechenden Aspirata zu der Reihe der Tenues; *ng* ist gutturaler, *ny* palataler Nasal; *zh* ist französisches j (in jour), *z* weiches (tönendes) und *s* scharfes (tonloses) s; ˚ bezeichnet den reinen Stimmeinsatz ohne jede konsonantische Beimischung.

Fig. 16. Romanisation table: Heinrich Laufer (1900: 6).

ternative (*zh sh*). It has been hinted above that Jäschke himself did not use the diacritical spelling of the palatal nasal, while Nebesky-Wojkowitz, who did so initially, never used anything other than *ng* for the velar one. Taking this into account, the choice of *ng* over *ṅ* seems to be the only innovation that sets Nebesky-Wojkowitz apart from Jäschke, but this may easily pass as a technical simplification as well.

With regard to the twenty-third Tibetan letter (ར་), one gets the impression that Nebesky-Wojkowitz, after a series of attempts, finally settled on rendering it as an apostrophe in all essential positions, even though he probably did not originally consider the apostrophe a suitable sign to romanise a letter.[46] That he did not see the thirtieth letter (ཨ་) as a full consonant contradicts Jäschke's approach, but corresponds to the mainstream of almost all others. What Nebesky-Wojkowitz did was to adapt an existing standard to his needs in a remarkably pragmatic way.

He was not the first to do this. In a brief but impressive write-up of only two and a half pages entitled "A note on the history and future of the 'Wylie' system," Nathan Hill stated the following:

> Although Nebesky-Wojkowitz does not mention any antecedents to his system of transliteration, the responsibility for the diacriticless system of Tibetan trans-

46 The original implication of an apostrophe (Greek απόστροφος) is the idea of an accent (προσωδία) capable of marking where a letter has been omitted, derived from αποστρέφειν "to turn away," cf. Onions 1966: 43, s.v. *apostrophe*. While it is superb for rendering an *avagraha* in Sanskrit, the apostrophe is inherently not the perfect candidate for a suitable Latin substitute of a Tibetan consonant.

> literation, with anglocentric warts and all, rests not with Nebesky-Wojkowitz but rather Heinrich Laufer. In his 1900 inaugural dissertation *Beiräge zur Kenntnis der Tibetischen Medicin* Laufer employed a system which differs from that of Nebesky-Wojkowitz predictably only in the treatment of the twenty-third letter.[47]

That Nebesky-Wojkowitz did not refer to antecedents is, as we have seen, not quite accurate, but the rest of this statement must be given credence, as the table (fig. 16) shows.

Heinrich Laufer (1877–1935) was the younger brother of Berthold Laufer (1874–1934), an eminent scholar of East Asian studies of his time. In scientific publications, Berthold used diacritical marks for the transcription of Tibetan, as was the custom of the day. The younger Heinrich, who submitted his thesis for a doctorate in medicine and surgery in Berlin, explicitly writes in the preface that it was his brother Berthold whose work had drawn his attention to Tibetan medicine and who had contributed the transcription and translation of Tibetan and Mongolian expressions.[48] We can therefore assume that the transcription goes back to Berthold Laufer, who may have advised his brother not to irritate his medical examiners with difficult symbols and instead to adopt a more accessible form of presentation. The desire to keep printing costs low probably also played a role.

In all but one element, we see here the transliteration scheme attributed to Wylie almost 60 years before the publication of his famous article. According to Hill, one should therefore speak of a "Laufer-Nebesky-Wojkowitz-Wylie system." Only the rendering of the twenty-third letter differs, corresponding to the character Jäschke took for the Tibetan letter when used as a prefix. This small circle ("modifier letter low ring" in Unicode) is the very character that Berthold used in his dissertation for the letter: *Klu ˚bum bsdus pai sñiṅ po* (ཀླུ་འབུམ་བསྡུས་པའི་སྙིང་པོ་).[49]

It is likely that Nebesky-Wojkowitz knew Heinrich's "Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Tibetischen Medicin," though as far as I have seen he does not cite it explicitly as a reference. But it is certain that he could have consulted a copy of the dissertation in Vienna at the Austrian National Library, where Laufer's work is listed under the shelfmark 409606-B and has been accessible since the year of its publication.[50] It is well documented that Nebesky-Wojkowitz was interested in Tibetan medicine. In 1956 he published a review of a book by Cyrill von Korvin-Krasinski (1905–1992) entitled *Die tibetische Medizinphilosophie*[51] in the *American Anthropologist*.[52] This "remarkable work" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz

47 Hill 2012: 103–104.

48 "Meinem Bruder habe ich die Transcription und Übersetzung tibetischer und mongolischer Ausdrücke sowie manche wichtigen [sic] Literaturangaben zu verdanken," Laufer 1900: 5.

49 Laufer 1897.

50 Link: data.onb.ac.at/rec/AC10055115. Given the status of the Vienna *Hofbibliothek* at the time, it is not surprising that Laufer's dissertation was acquired. Wilma Buchinger of today's Austrian National Library was kind enough to uncover in the library's accession journal that the book entered the collection in October 1900. In an email dated 18 January 2021, she informed me of the following: "[...] zum Buch 'Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Tibetischen Medicin' darf ich Ihnen mitteilen, dass es schon 1900, also im Erscheinungsjahr, in die ehemalige Hofbibliothek gekommen ist. Dies geht aus unserem Einlaufsbuch (hschr. Inventarbuch) hervor, als 'Einlaufdatum' ist 24. X. 1900 angegeben." That Nebesky-Wojkowitz owned a private copy of Laufer's dissertation is not very probable: Laufer's work was not among the list of books acquired from his estate by the library of the Museum für Völkerkunde in October 1959.

51 Korvin-Krasinski 1953.

52 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956b.

on Krasinski) contains an introductory preface written by Wilhelm Alexander Unkrig (1883–1956), which concludes with a six-page bibliographical survey of the relevant literature on medicine.[53] Right at the beginning, Laufer's work is highlighted by Unkrig as the best work to date on the subject.

Two pages earlier, Unkrig's preface contains a paragraph on transliterations and the typographical problems associated with diacritics, which Nebesky-Wojkowitz must have been aware of: in a later publication, a catalogue of Tibetan blockprints and manuscripts in the Museum of Ethnology in Vienna, he happens to quote precisely this page (XXIV), albeit in a different context.[54] As Unkrig wrote, he oversaw Korvin-Krasinski's book for the printed version ("zur druckfertigen Gestaltung"), taking responsibility for the romanisation of Sanskrit, Tibetan and Mongolian. In doing so, he was concerned with finding a justifiable balance ("einen vertretbaren Ausgleich") between the diacritical marks, which are difficult to print, and linguistic meticulousness. He explicitly points out the consequences of the war, which has left many printers still without the special typefaces they previously had ("Ganz abgesehen davon, daß die Kriegsfolgen es vielen Druckereien auch heute noch nicht gestatten, die früher gebrauchten Sondertypensätze wieder herstellen zu lassen"). In light of the potentially prohibitive expensive of printing, after long discussions ("nach langen Erörterungen"), the following solution was reached:

> Die weitaus meisten der im Text vorkommenden fremden termini und Namen gehören dem Sanskrit an. Um hier ohne diakritische Zeichen auszukommen und doch verständlich zu bleiben, haben wir nach dem Vorbild von Prof. H. von Glasenapp [...] bei den Buchstaben *ṭ, ḍ, ñ, ṅ, ṇ, ṃ* die differenzierenden Zeichen ganz einfach fortgelassen und dafür t, d, n und m gesetzt; für *ś* und *ṣ* steht in beiden Fällen «sh» [...] sinngemäß gelangt das gleiche Verfahren auch für das Tibetische zur Anwendung; für *ñ* steht hier aber nur «ny» und für *ṅ* – «ng»; *ž* und *š* werden durch zh und sh repräsentiert. Bei im Text vorkommenden tibetischen Wörtern werden die für unser Sprachempfinden lautlose Vokalstütze und die Aspiration nach korrekter Manier mit ʾ bzw. ʿ angedeutet.[55]

This is a telling passage. Unkrig is concerned with making do without diacritics to the extent possible and still remaining comprehensible. In Sanskrit, this can be achieved by simply omitting diacritics from the retroflex stops (*ṭ ḍ*) and from all nasals (*ñ ṅ ṇ ṃ*). Palatal and retroflex sibilants (*ś ṣ*) are levelled to *sh*. For Tibetan, Unkrig advocates replacing diacritical combinations (*ñ ṅ ž š*) with digraphic spellings: *ny ng zh sh*. It seems worthy of attention that in the quotation, reproduced here typographically in the German original, the diacritical letters are italicised, while the simplified representations appear in normal typeface: they are presented as something different and graphically distinguished from each other.

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53 Unkrig 1953: XXVI–XXXI.
54 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1958: 196, n. 47.
55 Unkrig 1956: XXIV.

Concerning the "silent vowel support"[56] and the aspiration sign, in Unicode terms we seem to be dealing with the "modifier letter right half ring" (U+02BE) and the "modifier letter left half ring" (U+02BF) we have repeatedly addressed. In Korvin-Krasinski's book, the two different signs can be discerned distinctly in print, for example in words like *ʾdod cʿags* "passion" (འདོད་ཆགས་) or *ʾkʿor lo* "wheel" (འཁོར་ལོ་).[57] In other (non-Tibetan) transliteration schemes, the "right half ring," which Unkrig's recommends using for the twenty-third letter of the Tibetan alphabet, has the function of expressing the so-called glottal stop. In German usage, Unkrig's *Vokalstütze* ("vowel support") is less common than *Vokalträger* ("vowel carrier") when referring to characters such as the Hebrew *aleph* (א) or Arabic *hamza* (ء). The "left half ring," expressing aspiration in Tibetan, renders ʿayin (ע) in Hebrew and corresponds to ʿain (ع) in the Arabic alphabet.[58] From a comparative point of view, the two signs mentioned are all familiar participants in the colourful tournament of transliterations.

Structural considerations

Let us conclude by reviewing the structures that can be discerned in the various transliterations. Refraining from further discussion of the modes chosen to romanise the twenty-third and thirtieth letters of the alphabet, I shall limit myself to the aspirates, palatal and dental affricates, nasals and sibilants. After all, their romanisation can be easily typologised and assigned to certain basic forms.

The aspiration of voiceless obstruents can, for one thing, be marked diacritically by means of an additional symbol more or less similar to the apostrophe. The alternative is to combine one or more Latin letters with the letter *h*, whereby this combinatorial variant can be digraphic (*kh*) or trigraphic (*tsh*), depending on the total number of letters involved. This fundamental difference is clarified in the following table:

Tibetan	ཁ་	ཆ་	ཐ་	ཕ་	ཚ་
diacritic	kʿ	cʿ	tʿ	pʿ	tsʿ
combinatorial	kh	ch	th	ph	tsh

Table 2. Aspirates.

The diacritical method corresponds to the mode of marking aspirates that was dominant for Chinese before the triumph of Hanyu Pinyin (汉语拼音) in the second half of the 20th

56 What Unkrig describes as "lautlose Vokalstütze," Laufer called "den reinen Stimmeinsatz ohne jede konsonantische Beimischung," cf. above, Romanisation table in fig. 16, meaning the pure onset of a vowel without a preceding glottal stop or other consonant. The description is quite close to what can be heard today in the initial sounds of words like འོ་མ་ "milk." In the logic of the alphabet, the twenty-third letter is to be understood as a consonant, but the question of its original phonetic value in Old Tibetan remains outside the scope of this contribution, even though there are some new thoughts on the subject.

57 Examples taken from the index of the book, Korvin-Krasinski 1953: 344 and 347.

58 The Arabic *hamza* (ء) developed from an *ʿain* (ع) that was shortened, cf. Fischer 1972: 11. The latter (ع) is a voiced pharyngeal fricative expressed by ʕ in IPA. There is at least one convention of Latin orthography in which this sound is expressed by a true Latin letter, that is *c* in Somali. It is perhaps not suitable for expressing aspiration in Tibetan unless one is prepared to render the five aspirated obstruents (ཀ་ཆ་ཐ་པ་ཚ་) as *kc c*(*h*)*c tc pc tsc*. Yet it is noteworthy that the "left half ring" for *ʿain* and aspiration does look quite a bit like a small *c*.

century. In the transcription system traceable back to Thomas Wade (1818–1895) and Herbert Giles (1845–1935), unaspirated obstruents (*k p t ts ch*) are modified into aspirated consonants by the addition of an aspiration mark (*kʿ* etc.). In practice, printed books or digital forms of publication have used and will continue to use numerous typographical variants that look similar to the apostrophe, but are in essence neither elision nor quotation marks. As we have seen, they ultimately refer to the *spiritus asper* of Greek script. What is decisive is that a sign is used which is not itself a letter, but belongs to the family of special elements (accents, apostrophes, Greek *pneumata*). Wylie noted the non-letter lot for Jäschke, Hannah, Tucci, and Ferrari; it is also not uncommon elsewhere, for example in the works of Helmut Hoffmann or Walther Heissig. For an Indologist, this form of marking aspiration has an appeal that feels Sinological.

The second variant could be called the Indological one, since it has long been standard in Sanskrit transliteration to mark the aspirates by an *h* – in analogy to the Latin orthography of the Greek aspirates χ ϑ ϕ. This is followed by most of the authors considered by Wylie in his conspectus; furthermore, e.g., by Jacques Durr and David Snellgrove. The fact that various combinatorial variations can be observed – such as *tsh* versus *ths* – is not an essential point. Soon after his dissertation, Nebesky-Wojkowitz stepped out of Bleichsteiner's shadow and switched to the "Indological" side (*kh* etc.), at first following genuine Indian (rather than Indological) usages for the two voiceless palatals (*ch chh*). This step set the standard in Tibetology, which has since been firmly established as common practice.

Let us proceed to the systemic difference in the transliteration of the palatal and dental affricates. Omitting the aspirates for the sake of simplicity yields the following chart:

Tibetan	ཅ་	ཇ་	ཙ་	ཛ་
diacritic	č	ǰ	c	j
combinatorial	c (ch)	j	ts	dz

Table 3. Palatals and dentals.

In an archetypal form, the diacritical variant consists of distinguishing the palatal affricates from the dentals by a caron (*č*) or a similar element such as an accent (*ć ȼ*). The procedure has a substantial logic in that it reflects the ratio of the original script in a mirror-inverted way: in Tibetan, the simple letter (ཅ་) stands for the palatal consonant and the basic character extended by an element that looks like a small flag (ཙ་) is used for the dental.[59] Writing the dental affricate with a simple letter (*c*) and the palatal one diacritically (*č*) corresponds to the transliteration of the Cyrillic script that is common in Slavic

59 The "flag" (ཙ་འཕྲུ་ in Tibetan) is provided as a separate symbol encoded as U+0F39 and verbally referred to as "Tibetan mark tsa -phru" in the Unicode table for Tibetan. The romanisation of the prefix in འཕྲུ་ by means of a hyphen (*-phru*) is due to the simple circumstance that the internal rules of Unicode in the 1990s did not permit the use of an apostrophe in the transliteration of a letter. Other Latin-script solutions for U+0F60 such as the splendid and long-established letter *v* for *va-chung* in Chinese (and at times also Czech) academia were, most regrettably, unknown to the Unicode developers in the 1990s. The hyphen was simply introduced because none of them could think of anything better than a dash. In principle, the "flag" can be combined with all consonants, for example ཀ་ཕ་འཕ་ཡ་ (my suggestion for romanising: *kf bf vf xf*).

studies in continental Europe: ч=*č* and ц=*c*. This convention historically follows Czech orthography, but it is also found in other genuine Latin-script traditions. The diacritical combination *ǰ* for the sonant is formed in analogy to *č* of the surd side, but seldom used beyond Mongolian studies. What we find in the first row of the table could thus be called a "Slavic" or "Mongolistic" style of transcription (*č ǰ c j*).

The standard Anglo-Saxon equivalents in the romanisation of the Cyrillic letters ч and ц are the digraphs *ch* and *ts*.[60] Taking into account on the palatal side that the voiceless Tibetan obstruents feature an unaspirated (ཙ་) and an aspirated variety (ཚ་), one is easily led to a rendition *ch* and *chh* for these letters in Tibetan, with which Nebesky-Wojkowitz became acquainted in India. The use of *c* for the unaspirated and *ch* for the aspirated surd palatal affricate, applied by Nebesky-Wojkowitz in his habilitation thesis, are streamlined simplifications in line with the Western philological tradition of Indology, an influential branch in Oriental Studies. Though the second variant in the table (*c j ts dz*) is the most familiar, one should not overlook that it actually distorts the ratio of Tibetan. Lepsius' preferred way of contrasting palatals and dentals (*tš dž ts dz*) is closer to the first row and seems somewhat more logical. That the different types are sometimes mixed can be seen in the romanisation used by George Roerich in his edition of the "Blue Annals,"[61] in which the two are found side by side (*č ǰ ts dz*). The fact that there are different expressions of the types presented – in the case of the voiced dental affricate, the dichotomy of the digraphs *ds* and *dz* – is not an essential consideration here either.

The Tibetan alphabet offers a velar and palatal variety of nasals in addition to the basic dental (*n*) and labial (*m*) forms anchored in the Latin alphabet. In the case of Tibetan sibilants, the simple letters of the Latin alphabet refer to the voiced (*z*) and unvoiced dental sibilant (*s*), each of which has two palatal correspondences. These supplementary forms can be expressed either diacritically or digraphically in the various transliteration systems:

Tibetan	ང་	ཉ་	ཞ་	ཤ་
diacritic	ṅ	ñ	ž	š
combinatorial	ng	ny	zh	sh

Table 4. Nasals and sibilants.

When considering the diacritical notation of the nasals, it is natural to refer to the romanisation of Sanskrit, where the nasals are assigned to specific articulation classes they share with the obstruents: velar (*ṅ*), palatal (*ñ*), cerebral (*ṇ*), dental (*n*) and labial (*m*). In standard Sanskrit – setting aside certain formulas in Pāṇini's grammar or other peculiarities – the first three nasals occur only in the coda of a closed syllable as so-called class nasals preceding obstruents of the same articulation, implying that *ṅ ñ ṇ* will not normally appear at the onset of a syllable. In other words, the precise marking of the nasal as velar, palatal or cerebral is practically redundant in the transliteration: one can write *anga* "limb," *panca* "five" or even *aṇḍa* "egg" without any loss of information, even though,

60 See for instance the tables of the Library of Congress: www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/romanization/russian.pdf (accessed 25.05.2023).

61 Roerich 1949–1953.

strictly speaking, one would have to note *aṅga*, *pañca* and *aṇḍa* when transliterating from impeccable orthography. For Tibetan, however, marking the character of the nasal in this implicit way is not feasible, because velar and palatal nasals can also appear before vowels without being followed by a stop or an affricate of the same class. Viewed against the clear phonotactic rules of Sanskrit, the unpredictability in the occurrence of the velar and palatal nasals in Tibetan is disconcerting.

Sibilants in Sanskrit are divided into three voiceless classes: palatal (*ś*), cerebral (*ṣ*) and dental (*s*), all of which can occur in initial position before a vowel. As a diacritic, acute (*ś*) is far more common than caron (*š*) in Indology. In contrast, the Tibetan alphabet has only two voiceless sibilants (ཤ་ and ས་) and additionally a voiced variant for each (ཞ་ and ཟ་) which are not part of the Sanskrit system. For their romanisation a crucial division into dental sibilants, which are represented by simple Latin letters (*z s*), and palatal sibilants with a colourful array of variants (*ź ż ž ś ṡ š ç*) was made. While the use of an acute in the Latin rendering of the palatal sibilants seems to clearly refer to Indological conventions (*ś*), the spelling with caron (*ž š*) is reminiscent of the orthography of Czech, more precisely of the diacritical symbol called *háček* in that language, which has also become common in the transliteration of the Cyrillic characters ж and ш by *ž* and *š* in Slavic studies in Europe. In the diacritical marking of sibilants, one would expect an author to choose one variant, i.e., to use either the caron (*ž š*) or the acute (*ź ś*). However, this is not consistently the case. To single out just one scholar, Roerich uses *ž* and *ś* in parallel. It seems that he wanted to maintain the Indological convention for the latter (*ś*), but did not see that as binding for a purely Tibetan letter (*ž*). This wily scheme was strictly followed by Wylie in his index of place names in the "Blue Annals."[62]

While the diacritical rendering of the Tibetan nasals and sibilants, as seen in the first line of the table, tends to have more of an Indological or Slavic flavour, the non-diacritical digraphic variants in the second line seem more Sinological, albeit with limitations: the Wade-Giles transcription knows only *ng* and *sh*. In Hanyu Pinyin, there is a digraph *zh* in addition to *ng* and *sh*, but it does not denote a sibilant, rather an affricate, and is in this respect not parallel to the Tibetan ratio. The compound *ny* is not provided for in any of the more widely used transcription systems for Chinese. Thus, the digraph *ny* for the palatal nasal appears as a peculiarity that we can attribute to Jäschke who never used *ñ* despite his otherwise pronounced penchant for diacritical notations. In the case of nasals and sibilants, too, mixed arrays of diacritical and digraphic nature are observed in transliterations: while Jäschke notated the palatal nasal digraphically (*ṅ ny ż ṡ*), during his early years Nebesky-Wojkowitz used the digraph for the velar (*ng ñ ž š*).

Conclusion

One should assume that Nebesky-Wojkowitz was familiar with the transliteration of Sanskrit agreed upon at international conferences towards the end of the 19th century and applied largely unchallenged in scholarship since that time. In India he became acquainted with the more pragmatic Latin-script conventions that existed there and adapted them in

62 Wylie 1957.

his work. Likewise, he may have known of the basic features of the Wade-Giles transcription for Chinese, which was largely unrivalled in its time and favoured letter combinations for nasals and sibilants more than diacritic-prone Indology.

The idea that letter combinations can be used instead of diacritics must have been familiar to him in other respects as well. The immense diacritical richness of Czech orthography was well-known to him since his childhood. As a certified translator for English and Czech, he knew how to reliably substitute these special characters with digraphic combinations as was common in the Anglo-Saxon world, in particular: *č=ch, c=ts, š=sh, ž=zh*. Having graduated from a German-language school, it was self-evident to him that ligatures could be broken down into their components and expressed sequentially without any loss of information: umlauts *ä ö ü* are tantamount to *ae oe ue* and *ß* can be substituted by geminating *s*.

On the Tibetological side, one may assume that Nebesky-Wojkowitz knew Laufer's dissertation and may have felt affirmed by Unkrig's remark that one could easily "get by without diacritical marks and still remain comprehensible." It was merely the substitution of one thing for another. I do not think that Nebesky-Wojkowitz thought he was the creator of a transliteration scheme. He did not make this claim either, but explicitly referred to Jäschke. As has been pointed out, Jäschke for his part referred to Lepsius, who had already paved the way for a good standard for rendering aspiration in the mid-nineteenth century (*kh* etc.). In this respect, Tibetology is firmly rooted in Indology and keeps a sharp distance from Chinese studies. Concerning nasals and sibilants, the combinations *ng* and *sh* are recognisably close to Sinological conventions, while *ny* and *zh* appear to be genuine, homegrown Tibetological renderings in this particular function, both already featured in Jäschke's dictionary.

To return to the question posed at the outset of who won in the end, the cup should go to the Wojkowitz side. The only shot on goal that can be credited to the Wylie team was the capitalisation of the initial letter instead of the root letter. They have no title to anything else. In his world-famous book on oracles and demons, René Nebesky-Wojkowitz applied Jäschke's transcription in a contemporary manner as early as the beginning of the 1950s, being able to draw on tactical moves that had already been played by Lepsius, Jäschke, Laufer and Unkrig. His stay in India seems to have been particularly conducive in this regard. It was he who cleared the tangle over the twenty-third letter with a long shot into the field of typographers, who now have to cope with an apostrophe, perhaps not always amused. The same holds true for the question of how to distinguish *g.y* from *gy* (ཁྱ་ *versus* ཀྱ་): it was the Wojkowitz team who scored the point.

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RENÉ NEBESKY-WOJKOWITZ'S (1923–1959) UNPUBLISHED WORK ON MATERIA MEDICA OF THE HIMALAYAS

Florian Eidam-Weber

How might the course of history have taken different turns without the findings of Charles Marie de la Condamine (1701–1774)[1] and Charles Darwin (1809–1882),[2] or if South American cinchona bark[3] had never been identified and used as a febrifuge, becoming a potent remedy for malaria around the globe? Such cases as these exemplify how European explorers and their 'discoveries' have impacted everyday life and the natural sciences as we know them. During their travels to areas of the world that were little explored or completely unknown to Europeans, these travelers especially of the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries came across a multitude of traditional medicines that were new to Europeans and considered remarkable by some. In many cases, these encounters led to the subsequent introduction, cultivation, and medical application of such plants in their home countries.

The search for documentation of herbal medicines in historical records naturally leads to the records produced by pharmacists, physicians, and botanists, who are qualified by profession and driven by an innate interest in the subject. Yet because medicine and the understanding of health and disease is interwoven deeply into and unique to every cultural

1 From his journey to South America, which began in 1735, the French mathematician and chemist Charles Marie de la Condamine brought back to Europe the first sample of curare, a muscle relaxant used as an arrow poison by the Native peoples of Ecuador. Some years later, during his expedition to Amazonia, Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) described curare preparations from certain liana species. These findings laid the foundation for the development of a whole family of muscle relaxant drugs still in use today. See Embacher 1961: 79–80 and Plewe 1974: 33–43.

2 Charles Robert Darwin, a scholar of Christ's College, Cambridge, United Kingdom, spent five years aboard his ship, the HMS Beagle, collecting natural scientific data. Back in London, this research allowed him to establish his theory of evolution by natural selection which was published in 1859 as *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*. This revolutionary work paved the way for future scientists' understanding of evolutionary processes. See Desmond 2023.

3 Cinchona bark (lat. *Cinchonae cortex*) is the bark of several Cinchona species native to the tropical east Andes in South America containing antipyretic and antimalarial alkaloids of which quinine is best known for its use in tonic water. See Heilmann 2015: 903–908.

matrix, an ethnopharmaceutical[4] approach cannot be successful without ethnological insights. Thus, in addition to trained medical professionals, also missionaries, ethnologists, and anthropologists can be considered important observers of healthcare practices.[5]

One such case is that of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz. Well-known for his pioneering ethnological research in the Himalayas, he published no purely ethnopharmaceutical research. However, my own investigations into the work of this ethnologist and Tibetologist has revealed some unpublished notes and manuscripts written by Nebesky-Wojkowitz on traditional medicine in the Himalayas.[6] This unfinished work should have been published[7] as a book titled *An Introduction to Tibetan Pharmacology* in or shortly after 1959, which would have made it one of the few Western publications about the Tibetan materia medica[8] at the time. Thus, this article will uncover parts of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's unpublished work on the materia medica of Tibetan and other Himalayan peoples, which he compiled from Tibetan pharmacopeias[9] and in the field with the help of local informants. It should be mentioned in this introduction that further contextualisation regarding (post-)colonial aspects of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz's work and the discussion on intellectual property of traditional knowledge is still a desideratum but will not be specifically addressed in this article.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's education in natural sciences

A look at the earliest records of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's life reveals some first hints of the future scholar's inclination toward the sciences and medicine. After attending elementary school in the Czech city of Olomouc (German: Olmütz), he moved with his parents to Litoměřice (German: Leitmeritz) to continue his education. His grades were not good during the first terms in Litoměřice, but they had considerably improved by the time he entered secondary school. A school record from 1941 attests that he received the highest mark "excellent" in biology and chemistry among other subjects.[10] Because his family moved again, Nebesky-Wojkowitz again changed schools in December 1941, now attending secondary school in Prague, where he maintained good marks in the sciences.[11] The Second

4 Works in this particular field of research use a variety of different descriptors for this method, such as ethnobotany, ethnopharmacology, ethnomedicine and ethnobiology. Some were used interchangeable and without reflection. Because it encompasses every aspect of the ethnological natural sciences, I have chosen the most comprehensive term "ethnopharmacy", which incorporates the disciplines of systematic botany and morphology as parts of pharmacognosy (pharmaceutical biology), pathophysiology and pathology, pharmacology and toxicology, pharmaceutics (to identify and evaluate formulations), chemistry, and biochemistry.

5 Cf. Helmstädter 2016.

6 I uncovered these materials in the course of research for my doctoral dissertation in the history of pharmacy at the Institute of the History of Pharmacy and Medicine at the University of Marburg.

7 Letter from Nebesky-Wojkowitz to his colleague and friend Jan Willem de Jong, dated 08.06.1959, found in the *De Jong Collection* within the special collections of the Macmillan Brown Library at University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand.

8 Materia medica, derived from new Latin and literally meaning "medical matter", denotes in this particular case the predominantly herbal substances used in the composition of medical remedies.

9 See Katharina Sabernig's contribution in this volume for more on Tibetan pharmacopeias.

10 The school record of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz for his first trimester of the 6th grade at the Secondary School for Boys (Oberschule für Jungen) in Litoměřice, dated 20.12.1941, is located in the State District Archives of Litoměřice in Lovosice, Czech Republic.

11 From his completion certificate from the "Deutsche Oberschule für Jungen" (German Secondary School for Boys) in Prague, dated 24.03.1944, kept in the archive of the Weltmuseum Wien.

World War put a premature end to his school days, as Nebesky-Wojkowitz was called to serve in the medical service reserve unit of the German air force in Saalow, near Berlin, on 25 August 1943.[12] Despite the ongoing war, he was able to attend lectures in medicine at the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Berlin for one term in 1944.[13] After the end of the war and his release from Allied captivity, Nebesky-Wojkowitz began studying at the University of Vienna in 1946. He registered not only for lectures in philology and ethnology, but also for lectures and practical courses within the pharmaceutical curriculum, such as plant anatomy, systematic botany, practical courses for the identification of plants, organic and inorganic chemistry, and physics.[14] But after a few terms, he focussed fully on his philological and ethnological studies, which he successfully completed, earning a Dr. phil. in 1949.[15]

As is documented in the correspondence of the Austrian-American botanist Joseph F. Rock (1884–1962)[16] and his colleagues, the Italian orientalist Giuseppe Tucci (1894–1984)[17] and Harvard professors Wallace Brett Donham (1877–1954)[18] and Serge Elisséeff (1889–1975),[19] Nebesky-Wojkowitz worked as Rock's secretary in Rome, Genoa, and

12 From the curriculum vitae of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz from 1958, kept in the archive of the Weltmuseum Wien.

13 Entry from page 319 of the "Matrikelbuch Inländer (Registry of National Students), 11.01.1943–01.07.1946" of the Humboldt University, Berlin, dated 25.04.1946. This data was kindly provided by the archive of the Humboldt University.

14 From the "Nationale der Studierenden der Philosophischen Fakultät Wintersemester 1946–47. Männer Buchstaben Mr–O" (Inscription forms of students of the Philosophical Faculty, winter semester 1946–47. Men letters Mr–O) and "Nationale der Studierenden der Philosophischen Fakultät Sommersemester 1947. Männer Buchstaben Me–O" (Inscription forms of students of the Philosophical Faculty, summer semester 1947. Men letters Me–O), both in the Archive of the University of Vienna, 1946 and 1947.

15 From page 2 of the "Standesausweis mit Laufbahn" (Register with career path), undated (approximately February 1958), kept in the archive of the Weltmuseum Wien.

16 Joseph Francis Charles Rock (born Joseph Franz Karl Rock in Vienna, Austria) was a botanist, sinologist, and talented photographer. As a young adult, he ventured to Hawaii, gathering and describing plants. His studiousness brought him an appointment as Professor for Systematic Botany at the former College of Hawaii, where he published more than 40 scientific publications and founded the herbarium of the University of Hawai'i in Mānoa in 1910 (see The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa 2023) which was later named for him. Later, sponsored by several American institutions he continued his botany missions in China and brought several Chinese plant species to herbaria in the USA. One of his first tasks in Asia was to find the Chaulmoogra tree (*Hydnocarpus kurzii* (King) Warb) and return with seeds to Hawaii, because the oily seeds yield a remedy for leprosy which had been traditionally used in Asia for centuries (see Rock 1922 and Parascandola 2003). During his travels he encountered the Nakhi people of south-west China, whom he studied in detail. As a result, one of his greatest achievements as a sinologist was the completion of a Nakhi dictionary. For a comprehensive summary see Walravens 2002: 9–12 and Sutton 1992: 22–27.

17 Giuseppe Tucci taught Chinese language and literature at the University of Naples from 1930 to 1932. In 1932 he moved to Rome where he was appointed Professor for Religion and Philosophy in India and the Far East. Between 1929 and 1948 he went on eight expeditions to Tibet, and between 1950 and 1954 on six expeditions to Nepal. See Gnoli and Petech 1985: 45–46.

18 A lawyer, Donham graduated from Harvard College and helped to establish the Harvard-Yenching Institute in 1924. Its main missions were to strengthen higher education in China with an office at Yenching University in Peking and to establish a center devoted to the teaching and study of the Far East at Harvard University. Donham was personally most concerned with changes in Far Eastern cultures caused by the impact of the Western economic system and modern technology. See Elisséeff 1955.

19 Elisséeff was the first director of the Harvard-Yenching Institute and the first chairman of Harvard's Department of Far Eastern Languages. About him, the Harvard professor and diplomat Edwin O. Reinschauer (1910–1990) proclaimed in 1957 that, "Perhaps no one better deserves the title of Father of Far Eastern Studies in the United States." See Baxter 1975.

London from late 1949 to early 1950.[20] Though it seems that this job focussed purely on ethnology, it cannot be ruled out that botanical knowledge was transferred between Rock and Nebesky-Wojkowitz.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's sense for botanical science is obvious in the way he described plants in his publications. In naming the plants, he uses their Latin names according to Linnaeus' system of classification instead of their vernacular names so that their identification is scientifically sound. For example, in his article on the Tibetan Bon religion, published in 1947, he writes about "*Edgeworthia gardneri*"[21] as a source for paper, and "*Juniperus excelsus*" (juniper)[22] as an aromatic incense. In another article on the Tibetan state oracle, published in 1948, Nebesky-Wojkowitz assumed that one of the ingredients in the magic potions used by the oracles to pass into the trance state must be "*Cannabis sativa* varietas *indica*."[23] In *Hunting and Fishing among the Lepchas*, published in 1953, he described toxic effects of plants used by the Lepchas[24] for hunting and fishing. When hunting, they carry a root of an aconite species they call *pă kí* to prepare a fresh arrow poison.[25] Nebesky-Wojkowitz also observed them poison fish by throwing a mixture of "*Artemisia vulgaris*" (common mugwort) and a creeper called "*brŭng*" into an artificial pond containing fish.[26]

Studying the materia medica of the Himalayas

On his three extended expeditions in the Himalaya regions, René Nebesky-Wojkowitz collected a multitude of artifacts of daily life from various ethnic groups for the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna (today Weltmuseum Wien). His reports and inventory lists from his travels are archived in the museum and form the basis for the information in the following paragraphs, which has been complemented by additional findings in other archives and institutions.

First expedition to West Bengal and Sikkim, 1950–1953

a) Plant material

During Nebesky-Wojkowitz's first expedition to the Eastern Himalaya region he produced an inventory list of items collected for the museum from March to December 1951; this list includes 18 plants[27] used by the Lepcha people as medicines, poisons, and dyes.[28] The Weltmuseum Wien has in its stores 20 plant samples acquired during this expedition (see fig. 1).[29] Their exact place of origin and identification is unknown, and very little in-

20 Walravens 2002: 355, 369.

21 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1947: 45.

22 Ibid.: 55.

23 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1948: 138.

24 Lepchas, or "Róngkup" (short: "Róng") as they call themselves, are a small and endangered Indigenous population of about 85,000 people living in Sikkim, India. Further settlements are found in the neighboring district Darjeeling and in Ilam district in Nepal. See Plaisier 2005: 7–8; Plaisier 2007: 1–2; Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, India 2022.

25 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1953b: 22–23.

26 Ibid.: 30.

27 Initially, only 17 plants were taken into stock, but a revision of the document counted 18.

28 From the archive of the Weltmuseum Wien, "Verzeichnis der von Dr. R. Nebesky-Wojkowitz in der Zeit vom 15. März 1951 bis 15. Dezember 1951 mit Mitteln des Museums für Völkerkunde in Wien erworbenen Gegenstände," page 2.

29 The deviation between the list (18) and the current count (20) cannot yet be explained. Reasons might be either the later addition of two objects which were thought to be from Nebesky-Wojkowitz's collec-



Fig. 1 a–t. Plant species brought back from Nebesky-Wojkowitz's expeditions and stored in the depots of the Weltmuseum Wien in Vienna (inventory numbers – **A** 134.348, **B** 134.349, **C** 134.350, **D** 134.351, **E** 134.352, **F** 134.353, **G** 134.354, **H** 134.355, **I** 134.356, **J** 134.357, **K–L** 134.358, **M** 134.359, **N** 134.360, **O** 134.361, **P** 134.362, **Q** 134.363, **R** 134.364, **S** 134.365, **T** 140.831 a,b)

formation is given in the archives. Inventory cards in the boxes of the plant samples label some of them as "medicine used by the Lepcha."[30] The plant parts stored under inventory number 140.831a,b are labelled as "Nepalese tubers." In a letter to Paul Fejos (1897–1963)[31] of the Wenner-Gren Foundation in New York, Nebesky-Wojkowitz provides some further background information about these plants.[32] He collected 30 species while undertaking his studies with the Lepcha people. A proficient healer was willing to help by identifying them and offering information on their preparation into medicine and their indication. But the young ethnologist was unfortunately not able to pay the healer for the promised service. At the time the letter was written, Nebesky-Wojkowitz was already planning to return and continue his research on medicinal plants with sufficient funding.

tion, or plant parts from the same plant, considered one object in the list, were recorded as two objects during a later review, given two separate inventory numbers.

30 E.g., inventory card of object 134.350.

31 The Hungarian-born Paul Fejos was the president and director of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research and a former screenwriter of anthropological documentary films. See Solecki 1964.

32 Letter from Nebesky-Wojkowitz to Paul Fejos of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, dated 03.08.1956, found in the archive of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, New York.

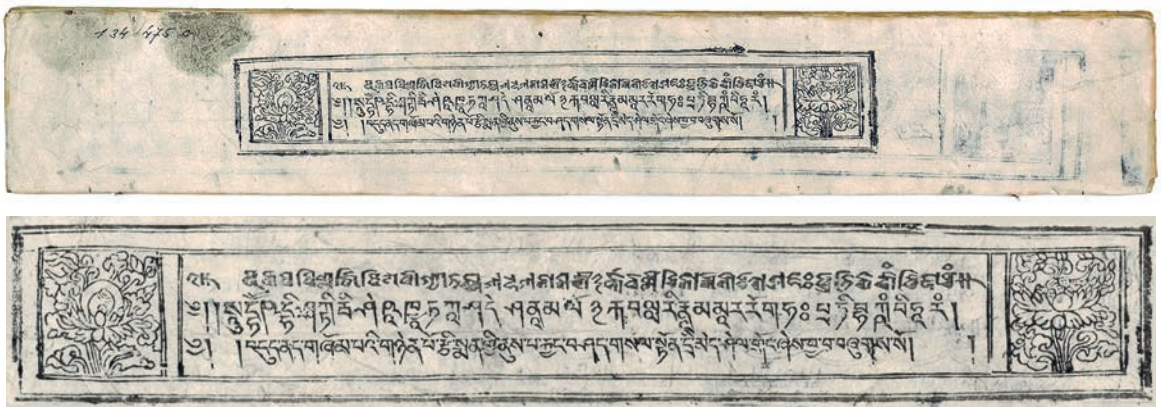


Fig. 2 a–b. Title page of the *Shel gong* located at the depot of the Weltmuseum Wien in Vienna (inventory number 134.475c).

b) Tibetan medicinal books

The final report of the expedition[33] lists the acquisition of six different medicinal books, all presented to the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna. One of them was the principle collection of Tibetan medicine, the printed edition of g.Yu thog Yon tan mgon po's (790–833) *rGyud bzhi* in four volumes (inventory numbers 134.474a–d),[34] also called the "Four Tantras." The author and dating of this text have been the topic of considerable discussion.[35]

Nebesky-Wojkowitz acquired two other particularly important texts about Tibetan medicine and pharmacology, written by the Tibetan physician and pharmacologist Deumar Geshe Tenzin Phuntshog (De'u dmar dGe bshes bsTan 'dzin phun tshog) (1672/73–1743?):[36] the *bdud nad gzhom pa'i gnyen po rtsi sman gyi nus pa rkyang bshad gsal ston dri med shel gong* (abbreviated: *Shel gong;* translated: *Crystal Globe;* inventory number 134.475c, fig. 2 a–b) and the *bdud rtsi sman gyi rnam dbye ngo bo nus ming rgyas par bshad pa dri med shel phreng* (abbreviated: *Shel phreng;* translated: *Crystal Rosary*; inventory number 134.475d, fig. 3 a–b).[37] Both books contain information about pharmacognosy and materia medica of the Tibetans including detailed information about medicinal properties, synonyms, taste, habitats of the plants, and their effects.[38]

SECOND EXPEDITION TO WEST BENGAL, SIKKIM AND NEPAL (1956–1957)

Three years later, Nebesky-Wojkowitz was back in the field in Kalimpong (West Bengal) resuming the research conducted on his first field trip. One of his key activities was the translation and evaluation of the medicinal text *Shel phreng* (*Crystal Rosary*), which he had acquired during his first stay. In his opinion it comprises information on over 400 Tibetan medicines.[39] For another project, he travelled to Lepcha settlements near Kalimpong to study their folkways and their medicinal practices. In early 1957, he proceeded to Nepal.

33 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1953a: 271.

34 Cf. Drongshar, Fermer and Niebuhr (forthcoming).

35 Aschoff 2016: 11; Pasang Yonten Arya 2001: 13; Sonam Dorje 2016.

36 Aschoff 2016: 14.

37 Sabernig 2014: 105.

38 Aschoff 2016: 27–28. For more on the nature and content of these books, see Katharina Sabernig's contribution in this volume.

39 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956: 214.

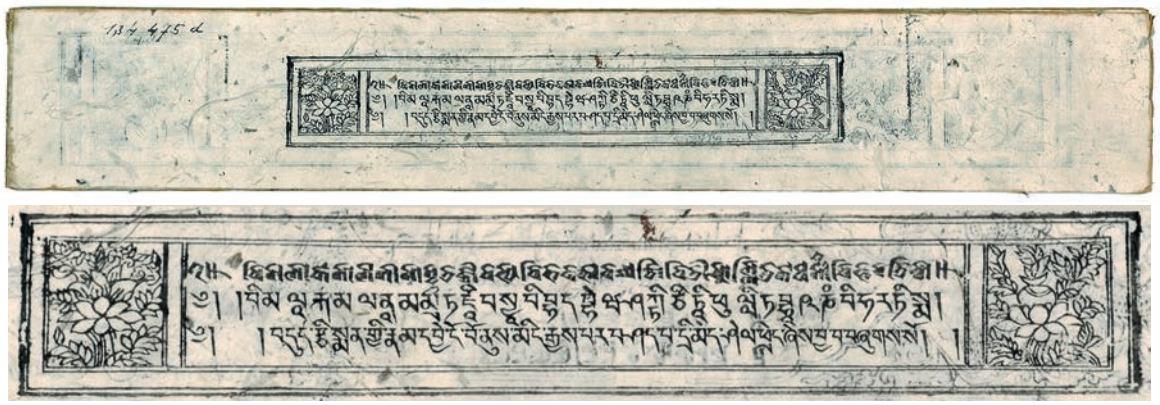


Fig. 3 a–b. Title page of the *Shel phreng* located at the depot of the Weltmuseum Wien in Vienna (inventory number 134.475d).

Supported by the American Anthropological Association (AAA) and the Wenner-Gren Foundation in New York, Nebesky-Wojkowitz collected herbal medicines and sent them to the Smith, Kline & French Laboratories (SK&F) in Philadelphia for further analysis.[40] In the postdoctoral fellowship grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation in New York, which funded his research together with the AAA and SK&F (amounting to $2,500 in 1956[41] and another $1,000 in 1957[42]), Nebesky-Wojkowitz defines the objectives of his second expedition thus: "The conclusion of my work of translating Tibetan blockprints on lamaistic mask-dances and Tibetan medicine would lay the foundation for future research in these two fields of Tibetan studies, in which scarcely any work had been done so far."[43] This statement shows that he was very aware of the urgent need for research in this field.

Among Nebesky-Wojkowitz's other possessions, his field notes from the above-mentioned medicinal plant project were found in the special collections of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, United Kingdom. After his untimely death on 9 July 1959, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's father Gottlieb Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1897–1966) was the sole heir and assumed all of his son's belongings. While the majority of his son's private collection passed into the possession of the Weltmuseum Wien, some of his estate remained with the family, and some yet unpublished notes, drafts, and manuscripts were given to the Austrian ethnologist and Nebesky-Wojkowitz's former professor at SOAS, Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf (1909–1995)[44] with the intention that the latter would edit and publish them. One resulting publication was the posthumously released

40 Ibid.: 215.

41 The grant awarded was the Richard Carley Hunt Memorial Fellowship, given to postdoctoral researchers by the Wenner-Gren Foundation. The "final grant analysis," dated 26.02.1959, was found in the archive of the Wenner-Gren Foundation in New York.

42 The grant was given through William S. Godfrey Jr. of the American Anthropological Association. Information is found in letters from Nebesky-Wojkowitz to Paul Fejos, dated 07.09.1956 and from Paul Fejos to Nebesky-Wojkowitz, dated 16.11.1956. Both letters are located in the archive of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, New York.

43 From page 2 of the abstract of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's grant application to the Wenner-Gren Foundation, dated 27.08.1956. This document was found in the archive of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, New York.

44 Born in Vienna, von Fürer-Haimendorf studied anthropology and archaeology at the University of Vienna and was later appointed Professor for Asian Anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. See Macfarlane and Turin 1996.

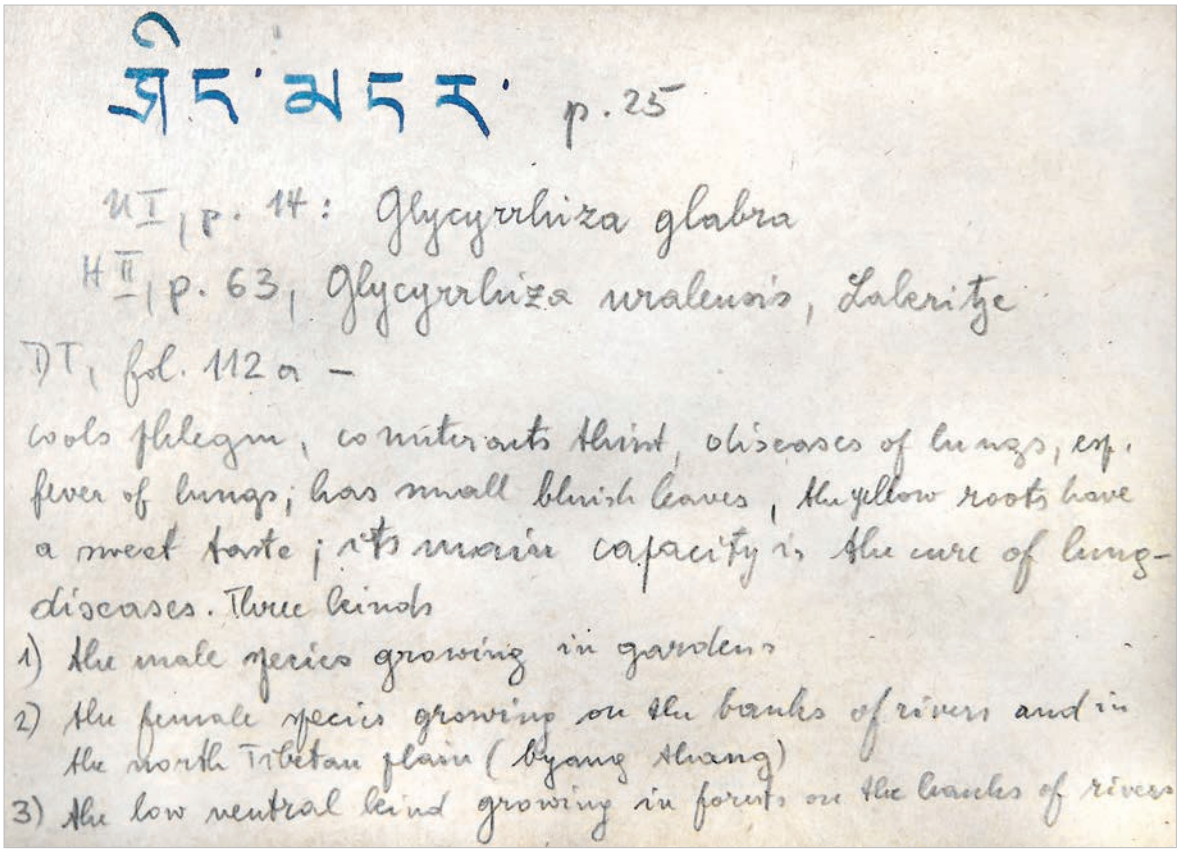


Fig. 4 a. Index card labelled *shing mngar* found among the papers of Nebesky-Wojkowitz in the archive of SOAS, London.

Tibetan Religious Dances: Tibetan Text and Annotated Translation of the 'Chams yig in 1976. However, von Fürer-Haimendorf did not publish all of the material sent to him, concluding that "[t]he book on Tibetan dances is the one most likely to be suitable for publication [...]."[45]

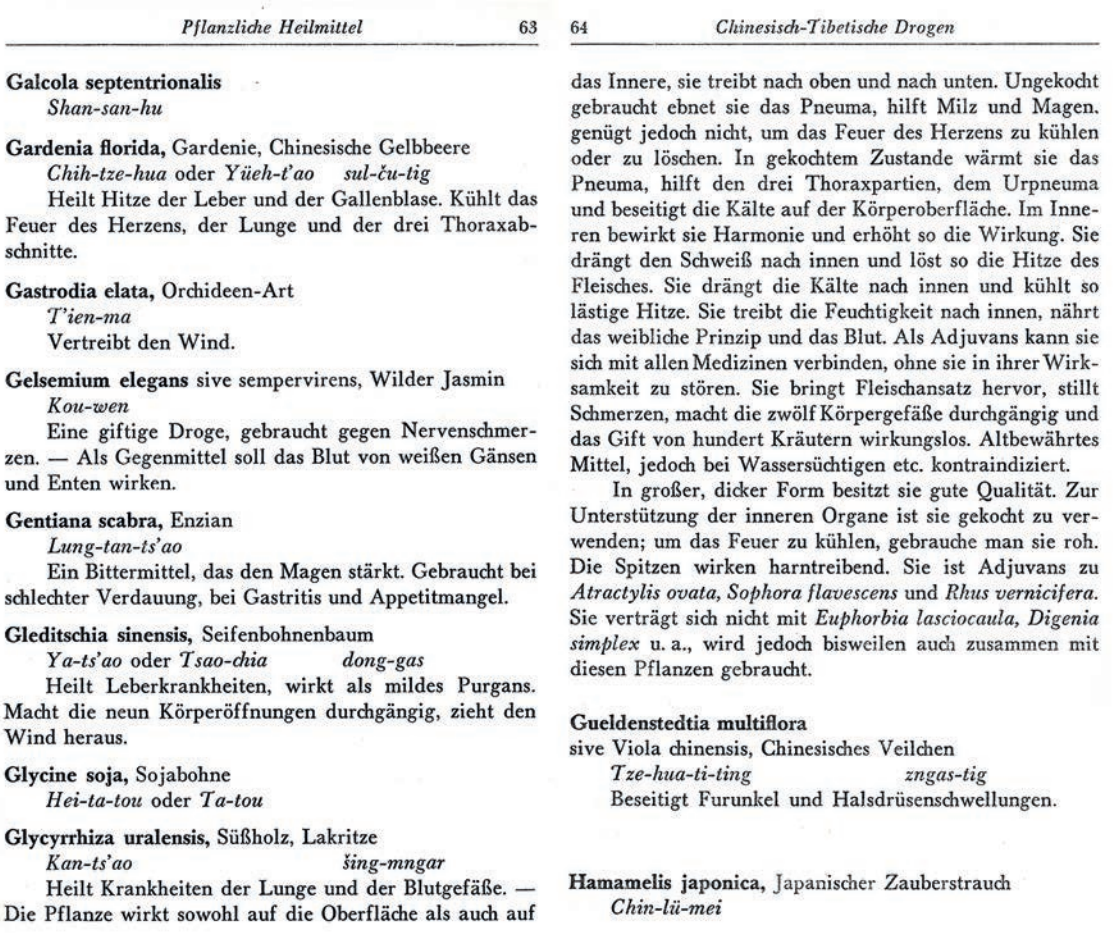
The packet of notes given to von Fürer-Haimendorf also contained both Nebesky-Wojkowitz's translation and evaluation of the *Shel phreng* and information about the Lepcha and Nepalese medicines he had collected. These remain unpublished.

a) Work on Tibetan medicinal books

Initially René Nebesky-Wojkowitz had in mind to study traditional herbal medicines in Tibet and to interview Tibetan physicians about the healing qualities of these plants. In a letter to Paul Fejos at the Wenner-Gren Foundation he felt very enthusiastic about finding three proficient Tibetan physicians who were willing to help him.[46] But ultimately, they decided to keep their knowledge secret and did not co-operate. Also, some of the plants came from across the Himalaya and were difficult to get. Nebesky-Wojkowitz was forced to pivot directions in his research and it was then that he started to translate the Tibetan medicinal

45 Letter from Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf to Jan Willem de Jong, dated 29.10.1959, found in the special collections of the Macmillan Brown Library at University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand.

46 Letter from Nebesky-Wojkowitz to Paul Fejos of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, dated 25.09.1956, kept in the archive of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, New York.



Pflanzliche Heilmittel 63

Galcola septentrionalis
Shan-san-hu

Gardenia florida, Gardenie, Chinesische Gelbbeere
Chih-tze-hua oder *Yüeh-t'ao sul-ču-tig*
Heilt Hitze der Leber und der Gallenblase. Kühlt das Feuer des Herzens, der Lunge und der drei Thoraxabschnitte.

Gastrodia elata, Orchideen-Art
T'ien-ma
Vertreibt den Wind.

Gelsemium elegans sive sempervirens, Wilder Jasmin
Kou-wen
Eine giftige Droge, gebraucht gegen Nervenschmerzen. — Als Gegenmittel soll das Blut von weißen Gänsen und Enten wirken.

Gentiana scabra, Enzian
Lung-tan-ts'ao
Ein Bittermittel, das den Magen stärkt. Gebraucht bei schlechter Verdauung, bei Gastritis und Appetitmangel.

Gleditschia sinensis, Seifenbohnenbaum
Ya-ts'ao oder *Tsao-chia dong-gas*
Heilt Leberkrankheiten, wirkt als mildes Purgans. Macht die neun Körperöffnungen durchgängig, zieht den Wind heraus.

Glycine soja, Sojabohne
Hei-ta-tou oder *Ta-tou*

Glycyrrhiza uralensis, Süßholz, Lakritze
Kan-ts'ao šing-mngar
Heilt Krankheiten der Lunge und der Blutgefäße. — Die Pflanze wirkt sowohl auf die Oberfläche als auch auf

64 *Chinesisch-Tibetische Drogen*

das Innere, sie treibt nach oben und nach unten. Ungekocht gebraucht ebnet sie das Pneuma, hilft Milz und Magen. genügt jedoch nicht, um das Feuer des Herzens zu kühlen oder zu löschen. In gekochtem Zustande wärmt sie das Pneuma, hilft den drei Thoraxpartien, dem Urpneuma und beseitigt die Kälte auf der Körperoberfläche. Im Inneren bewirkt sie Harmonie und erhöht so die Wirkung. Sie drängt den Schweiß nach innen und löst so die Hitze des Fleisches. Sie drängt die Kälte nach innen und kühlt so lästige Hitze. Sie treibt die Feuchtigkeit nach innen, nährt das weibliche Prinzip und das Blut. Als Adjuvans kann sie sich mit allen Medizinen verbinden, ohne sie in ihrer Wirksamkeit zu stören. Sie bringt Fleischansatz hervor, stillt Schmerzen, macht die zwölf Körpergefäße durchgängig und das Gift von hundert Kräutern wirkungslos. Altbewährtes Mittel, jedoch bei Wassersüchtigen etc. kontraindiziert.

In großer, dicker Form besitzt sie gute Qualität. Zur Unterstützung der inneren Organe ist sie gekocht zu verwenden; um das Feuer zu kühlen, gebrauche man sie roh. Die Spitzen wirken harntreibend. Sie ist Adjuvans zu *Atractylis ovata, Sophora flavescens* und *Rhus vernicifera.* Sie verträgt sich nicht mit *Euphorbia lasciocaula, Digenia simplex* u. a., wird jedoch bisweilen auch zusammen mit diesen Pflanzen gebraucht.

Gueldenstedtia multiflora
sive Viola chinensis, Chinesisches Veilchen
Tze-hua-ti-ting zngas-tig
Beseitigt Furunkel und Halsdrüsenschwellungen.

Hamamelis japonica, Japanischer Zauberstrauch
Chin-lü-mei

Fig. 4 b. Pages 63 and 64 of Hübotter's *Chinesisch-Tibetische Pharmakologie und Rezeptur* (1957).

blockprint *Shel phreng,* which he had acquired on his previous expedition. He concentrated on the plant material "[...] in the hope to find some whose officinal use might not be known yet."[47]

Within the collection of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's manuscripts at SOAS, I found a total of 205 Tibetan medical ingredients noted on handwritten index cards (see fig. 4 a). As mentioned above, by far the largest number of these are plants and some are of mineral origin. Notes about *animalia* seem to be lacking completely.[48]

The structure of all cards follows a very similar pattern. As a headline, the name of the medical compound is written across the top in Tibetan *Uchen* (Tib. དབུ་ཅན་; Wylie: *dbu can*) script in blue ink, followed by a yet unknown page reference, written in pencil, like the rest of the information on the index card. On the next line below, Nebesky-Wojkowitz noted down the sources consulted, marking each with an abbreviation: "U", "H" and "DT". The abbreviation "U" could not yet be identified. It is possible that this letter refers to a work by the renowned Tibetologist Wilhelm Alexander Unkrig (1883–1956) who was a keen translator of early Russian treatises on Tibetan and Mongolian medicine; but unfortunately,

47 Letter from Nebesky-Wojkowitz to Paul Fejos of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, dated 17.10.1956, kept in the archive of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, New York.

48 For animalia used in Tibetan Traditional Medicine, see Czaja 2019a and 2019b.

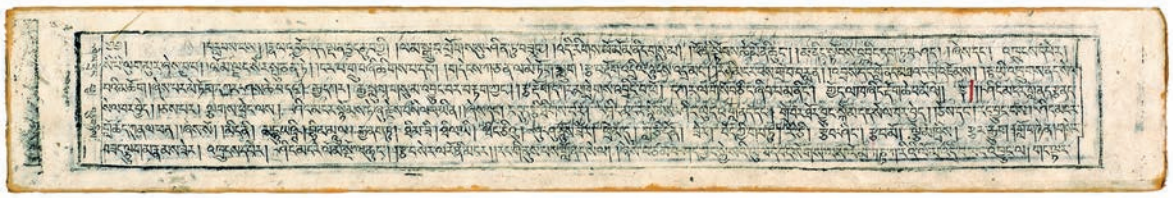


Fig. 4 c. Folio 112a of the *Shel phreng* in the Weltmuseum Wien (inventory number 134.475d). Beginning of the text passage *shing mngar,* highlighted with a red pencil probably by Nebesky-Wojkowitz.

some of Unkrig's translations are believed to be lost. The "H" corresponds to the book *Chinesisch-Tibetische Pharmakologie und Rezeptur*[49] (engl. *Chinese-Tibetan Pharmacology and Formulation*) by Franz Hübotter (1881–1967)[50] (see fig. 4 b).

The references to "DT" correspond with the pagination in the *Shel phreng* of the Weltmuseum Wien; thus, this abbreviation stands for the author of the work: Deumar Tendzin. The largest amount of information given on the index cards was taken from the *Shel phreng*. Nebesky-Wojkowitz noted down most information in English but some expressions concerning illnesses and cures are noted in Tibetan *Ume* (Tib. དབུ་མེད་; Wylie: *dbu med*) script. The transliteration of the *Ume* script is still a work in progress.

Because the cards include information from Hübotter's book, their date of creation can be placed in a narrow window between the publication of that book in 1957 and Nebesky-Wojkowitz death in July 1959. Nebesky-Wojkowitz method of work can only be assumed at this point: He might have begun with reading the *Shel phreng*, highlighting the Tibetan names of the drugs in the blockprint (see fig. 4 c), which shows highlighting marks with a red pencil, most probably by Nebesky-Wojkowitz's hand. Afterwards he might have created an index card for each medicinal compound he found. In a next step he probably began to search for cross references in the current scientific literature (Unkrig, Hübotter) and noted down their findings, thereby creating a summary of their findings to facilitate comparison with the *Shel phreng*.

An example of this data collection is presented in figs 4 a–c on the basis of *shing mngar* (*Glycyrrhiza uralensis* Fisch. ex DC.); Chinese licorice. In Tibetan Traditional Medicine, it is said to cure lung diseases, being an expectorant. It is also applied to treat belching, stomach disorders, excessive thirst, and against spots in the throat.[51] These indications match those known in European Traditional Medicine. Already the Greek physician Pedanios Dioscorides (ca. 40–ca. 90 AD) reported that the juice of the root was used as a medicine to treat burning sensations of the airways, heartburn, and "complaints of the chest." The contemporary Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder (23/24–79 AD) attests the same effects in his *Naturalis Historia*. Through medieval times and up to the 1980s, when modern gastroin-

49 Hübotter 1957.

50 Hübotter studied medicine as well as the Chinese and Manchurian languages. Alongside his further education as a physician, he sought to increase his skills as a Sinologist. In addition, he learned the Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Assyrian and Tibetan languages. In 1914 he received a habilitation in the history of medicine. After World War I, he moved to Japan and four years later to China, where he lived until 1953. He penned several publications on the history of Chinese medicine. See Rall 1972.

51 Pasang Yonten Arya 2001: 338.

testinal medicines were developed, licorice (and later the isolated compound glycyrrhetinic acid) was used as first-line treatment of gastric ulcers.[52]

The information on Nebesky-Wojkowitz's index card for this plant (see fig. 4 a) reads as follows:

> ཤེད་ཟངདར་[53] p. 25
> U I, p. 14: Glycyrrhiza glabra
> H II, p. 63, Glycyrrhiza uralensis, Lakritze
> DT, fol. 112 a –
> cools phlegm, counteracts thirst, diseases of lungs, esp.
> fever of lungs; has small bluish leaves, the yellow roots have
> a sweet taste; its main capacity is the cure of lung-
> diseases. Three kinds
> 1) the male species growing in gardens
> 2) the female species growing on the banks of rivers and in
> the north Tibetan plain (byang thang)
> 3) the low neutral kind growing in forests on the banks of rivers

b) Lepcha herbal medicines

From September to December 1956, Nebesky-Wojkowitz investigated the medicine of the Lepcha people in West Bengal with the help of a professional healer and his assistants. They assembled and collected the above-mentioned Lepcha medicines of vegetable origin that were used in the healer's work. Based on the collected plants and the information given by the healer, Nebesky-Wojkowitz created a list that comprised the plant's names in the local language, the indication of the medicinal plant, its formulation, and the natural habitat of the plant. The plant samples and this documentation were then sent for further analysis to the team, led by the organic chemists Robert Francis Raffauf (1916–2001) and Glenn Edgar Ullyot (1910–2002), at SK&F in Philadelphia.[54] The number of medicinal samples sent to SK&F varies between 80, 83, and 85 in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's correspondence with the Wenner-Gren Foundation and SK&F.[55]

Unlike the index cards created for the medicinal substances found in the *Shel phreng*, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's ethnopharmaceutical documentation of Lepcha herbal medicines

52 Wichtl et al. 2016: 383–384.

53 Transliteration according to Wylie: *shing mngar*. The unique form of the Tibetan letter *sha* will be discussed in my dissertation, including the possibility that the titles might have been noted in an early stage of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's reading of the *Shel phreng* while the rest of the content was added months or even years later.

54 The information about dispatching plant samples from the field to the laboratory of SK&F in Philadelphia is mentioned in the following letters and documents in the archive of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, New York: letters from René Nebesky-Wojkowitz to Paul Fejos (17.10.1956, 07.11.1956, 18.12.1956, and 20.05.1957), letter from Paul Fejos to René Nebesky Wojkowitz (07.11.1956), letter from Paul Fejos to William S. Godfrey Jr. (07.11.1956), letter from William S. Godfrey Jr. to Paul Fejos (08.11.1956), and the final grant analysis (26.02.1959).

55 In a letter to Paul Fejos of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, dated 07.11.1956, Nebesky-Wojkowitz mentions 83 plant samples sent; in a letter dated 18.12.1956, he mentions 85; and in a letter dated 20.05.1957, he mentions 80. The varying numbers cannot yet be explained.

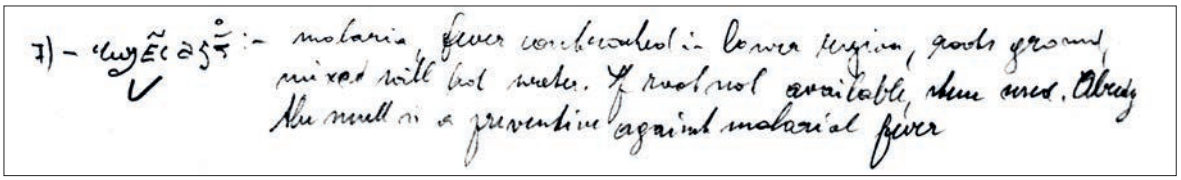


Fig. 5. Excerpt from the manuscript of Lepcha medicines found at SOAS.

contained additional valuable information about the formulation of the medicine and the plant parts of the plant used, which provides indications of the chemical compounds contained in the medicine (see fig. 5).[56]

He describes the plant "*sungkár taríp*"[57] being used for "malaria, fever in lower region, roots ground, mixed with hot water. If root not available, stem used. Already the smell is a preventive against malarial fever."

After analysis, SK&F confirmed the existence of sufficient alkaloid content in 12 of the plants collected from the Lepchas and sent to their laboratory by Nebesky-Wojkowitz (fig. 6).

The plant names in the letter from SK&F deviate from those in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's manuscripts in the archive of SOAS. For example, the Lepcha script for the plant filed "7)" in the manuscript (fig. 5), is transliterated as "*sungkár taríp*" but in the letter from SK&F it is rendered as "*sangkar tri*" (fig. 6). Current research indicates that the reason for the deviant names in the documents is the attempt to write them down phonetically. It is not yet possible to say at which level the error occurred, since corresponding sources have not yet been located. Current hypotheses are that either Nebesky-Wojkowitz's Lepcha transliteration abilities were insufficient when the document was created, or that Nebesky-Wojkowitz sent an audio tape together with the plants which was transcribed at SK&F, or that, as was common practice at the time, at SK&F the text of the letter was dictated to a secretary.

The phonetic rendering of the plant names in the SK&F letter makes it very difficult to trace further information about their identity and properties, without a proper transliteration of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's manuscript on Lepcha medicinal substances, which is a work in progress at the moment.

c) Nepalese herbal medicines

In January 1957, Nebesky-Wojkowitz travelled on to Kathmandu, Nepal, where he planned to study the medicine of the Limbu and Tamang peoples among others.[58] Building on his work on the plants he previously had catalogued in the Eastern Himalayas, he sent a further 220 medicinal samples that were collected during this stage of his trip to SK&F.[59]

56 Different plant parts of the same plant contain different substances. For example, the flesh of the fruit of *Taxus baccata* L. (European yew) is edible in contrast to the rest of the plant, which is highly toxic to humans and livestock. Also, an extract of the same plant part with different solvents (water, alcohol, etc.) contains a different spectrum of substances and their concentrations, depending on their solubility in the chosen solvent.

57 Transliteration kindly provided by Heleen Plaisier.

58 Information found in a document entitled "Petition for Grant-in-Aid," sent from Nebesky-Wojkowitz to Paul Fejos on 03.08.1956 and a letter from Nebesky-Wojkowitz to Paul Fejos on 25.09.1956. Both documents are preserved within the archive of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, New York.

59 Letter from René Nebesky-Wojkowitz to Paul Fejos, dated 20.05.1957, found at the archive of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, New York.

From your first group of plants the following listed by number and Nepalese name showed sufficient alkaloids to warrant further study:

7	Sangkar tri
9	Kjue ham book
11	Jer tambo buck
14	Saney kung
22	Toriya
23	Sanga kung
33	Chitle anok
37	Limmoan
48	Ganu Moan
50	Lablik
56	Neru mot kung
73	Khamari kung

Fig. 6. Excerpt from a letter from SK&F to Nebesky-Wojkowitz, dated 3 October 1957, p. 1.

From Group #2 we are interested in the following:

6	Kâphala bokhrâ
10	Brâmhi
24	Pâtha
35	Tangarâja
44	Kankola
45	Rup Kesara
56	Timura
57	Satavàri
64	Chasupu
65	Jethi madhu
69	Mungrelo
764	Chutro
78	Lasuna
83	Bahâpu
84	Kairuvâ
88A5	Pîpal
105	Pârijâta
124	Andelako pat
128	Haledo
131	Asagandha
134	Kâol haledo
151	Gunchola
154	Sasî
163	Asuro phul
173	Kuchitâ
184	
192	
203	

Of interest also for their microbiological activity are the following from the second group:

34	Chitu
40	Harrô
27	Padamchâla
15	Bojho
183	No name designated
214	No name designated

Fig. 7. Excerpt of a letter from SK&F to Nebesky-Wojkowitz, dated 3 October 1957, p. 2.

The scientists at the laboratory recommended for further studies 28 plants containing alkaloids plus an additional 6 plants for their antimicrobial effect (fig. 7).[60] Further information about the research at SK&F is yet unknown but might be uncovered in the scientific estate of Glenn E. Ullyot, Director of Chemical Laboratories and Director of Scientific Liaison at SK&F, kept at the Othmer Library of Chemical History in Philadelphia.

THIRD EXPEDITION TO WEST BENGAL AND NEPAL, 1958–1959

a) Purchase of further Tibetan medicinal books

During his third and last expedition to the Himalayas, Nebesky-Wojkowitz collected for the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna more than 100 objects in central Nepal and in the Indo-Sikkimese border region.[61] Among them was the rare Tibetan medicinal work *Vaiḍūrya sngon po* (translated: *Blue Beryl*),[62] a commentary on the previously mentioned *rGyud bzhi* (*the Four Tantras*), which was composed in 1687/88 by Sangye Gyatso (1653–1705).[63] This work, comprising 910 pages in four volumes, is kept in the depot of the Weltmuseum Wien.[64]

b) Nebesky-Wojkowitz's An Introduction to Tibetan Pharmacology

On 8 June 1959, just about one month before his untimely death, Nebesky-Wojkowitz wrote to his Dutch colleague and friend Jan Willem de Jong (1921–2000)[65] about his completed translation of the *Shel phreng* and his plan to produce a book on Tibetan pharmacology:

> […] the second book which is practically ready, and which will be called 'An introduction to TIBETAN PHARMACOLOGY'. Its center forms the translation (including the Tibetan text, as in case of the book on the Tibetan *'chams*) of a Tibetan pharmacological text, which I completed recently while in Kalimpong. Also, the comprehensive notes, based primarily on the *rGyud bzhi*, the *Vaiḍūrya sngon po*, etc., have been completed and there is not much more to be done than the mere typing.[66]

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60 Page 2 of a letter from Marilyn B. Flagler (SK&F) to René Nebesky-Wojkowitz, dated 03.10.1957, found at the archive of SOAS, London.

61 Nebesky-Wojkowitz's manuscript of the expedition report was edited and published posthumously by Uwe Niebuhr (Nebesky-Wojkowitz† and Niebuhr 2019).

62 In his expedition report, Nebesky-Wojkowitz erroneously wrote *Vaiḍūrya dkar po* (translated: *White Beryl;* see Nebesky-Wojkowitz† and Niebuhr 2019: 73), which is not a medicinal but an astronomical book (see Aschoff 2016: 14). But all his consecutive documents upon that book give its correct name *Vaiḍūrya sngon po* (see Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1958: 209; Letter from René Nebesky-Wojkowitz to Jan Willem de Jong, dated 08.06.1959, found in the *De Jong Collection* within the special collections of the Macmillan Brown Library at University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand).

63 Nebesky-Wojkowitz† and Niebuhr 2019: 73 and Aschoff 1996: X.

64 Weltmuseum Wien, inventory numbers 138.795a–b and 138.796a–b.

65 Jan Willem de Jong was formerly a professor at the University of Leiden and the Australian National University (ANU). He was founding editor of the *Indo-Iranian Journal* and a world expert on classical Tibetan. See Kauffmann 2000.

66 Letter from Nebesky-Wojkowitz to Jan Willem de Jong, dated 08.06.1959, found in the *De Jong Collection* within the special collections of the Macmillan Brown Library at University of Canterbury, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz continues:

> Would you be perhaps interested in bringing out this work as well?[67] It will comprise some 150–200 typewritten pages.

This letter and a separate comprehensive list of his publications[68] indicate that this book was intended to be published as part of the Indo-Iranian Journal, Leiden, Netherlands, of which Jan Willem de Jong was Editor in Chief.

Additional findings in the Weltmuseum Wien

In addition to the medical works already mentioned, the holdings of the library of the Weltmuseum Wien also include books from the private library of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz. Among these is a publication titled *Tibetan-Medical Word-Book* written by the British political officer in Sikkim Sir Basil John Gould (1883–1956) and the British diplomat and Tibetologist Hugh Edward Richardson (1905–2000); it might have been a gift from the two Brits to Nebesky-Wojkowitz during his time in the field. In form it is more like a preliminary, bound booklet than a well-crafted publication. Although it is noted on the last page that it was "Printed under the Superintendence of R.P. Alley at Sikkim Durbar Press, Gangtok, Sikkim, India" no publication date is recorded, which makes it difficult to place chronologically. In their comprehensive work *Bibliographies of Mongolian, Manchu-Tungus, and Tibetan Dictionaries*, Michael L. Walter and Hartmut Walravens mention a work by Gould and Richardson called *"Tibetan medical words"*, published in Kalimpong in 1949.[69] But they annotate this entry with the tag "[unseen]", which hints at the rarity of this booklet. Perhaps Nebesky-Wojkowitz was in the possession of a reprint from Sikkim. Unfortunately, not all of the books from Nebesky-Wojkowitz's private library that appear on the inventory list have been preserved in the museum.

Conclusion and prospect

So far, René Nebesky-Wojkowitz has been known chiefly for his extensive research in the field of ethnology with a special focus on the religious beliefs, dances, papermaking, and everyday customs of the people of the Himalaya. This is shown by his published works and his immense ethnological collection for the Weltmuseum Wien. Nebesky-Wojkowitz's reputation as a collector and a diligent scholar can, however, be expanded based on my investigations into a lesser-known side of his research: his yet unpublished works about the healing arts of the Himalayan people.

During the 19th century, European interest in the medicines and healing practices of the Himalayas began to grow; yet beside works in Mongolian and Russian, only very few publi-

67 The other work mentioned is *Tibetan Religious Dances: Tibetan Text and Annotated Translation of the 'Chams yig*, posthumously published by Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf (Nebesky-Wojkowitz† and Fürer-Haimendorf 1976).

68 Undated document (approximately 1959), bearing the title "Verzeichnis der von Univ. Doz. Dr. R. Nebesky-Wojkowitz verfassten wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten," kept in the archive of the Weltmuseum Wien.

69 Walravens et al. 2006: 214.

cations in English, French and German language existed. German publications about Tibetan medicine increased toward the end of the century, as exemplified by Heinrich Laufer's *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Tibetischen Medizin* [Contributions to the Knowledge of Tibetan Medicine] from 1900. Nevertheless, scholarly studies in Western European languages remained relatively few until the year of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's death in 1959.

As the authors are mostly from a Western tradition in terms of their social, cultural and educational background, it is important to be aware of the authors' possible Eurocentric prejudices and to clearly identify and discuss the shift of perspective from emic and etic points of view when working with these sources.

Although Nebesky-Wojkowitz's translation of the Tibetan medical treatise *Shel phreng* was born out of necessity due to local Himalayan healers' unwillingness to share their oral tradition of materia medica with him, the publication of a comprehensive English translation of this text around 1959 would have been a milestone in Western studies of Himalayan healing arts at that time. One can safely assume that this *Shel phreng* translation would have allowed Western research in the field of Tibetan materia medica to develop decades earlier than it actually did[70] – especially if Nebesky-Wojkowitz himself would have been able to continue his investigations in this area.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's work on the materia medica of the Lepcha can also be considered groundbreaking for the time. Early modern European works on the materia medica of India touched on the medicinal plants of the Lepcha in the east of the country[71] as did some British works of the colonial period.[72] *Common Medicinal Plants of Darjeeling and the Sikkim Himalayas*, published in 1956 by Kalipada Biswas, systematically lists 146 medicinal plants of these regions, but it is yet unclear whether Nebesky-Wojkowitz knew of this work while compiling his pharmacology book.

It is only in the past 30–40 years that specialized natural scientific research has focussed on the Lepcha people, and their medical and pharmaceutical traditions. Though not yet completely assessed, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's contributions would surely have given an early boost to this branch of science about the small Lepcha community.

The extent to which the plant samples collected by Nebesky-Wojkowitz in India and Nepal influenced alkaloid research at Western pharmaceutical companies in the 1960s cannot be judged at this time without further archival work and the conclusive identification of

70 Future comprehensive English translations of the contents of the *Shel gong* and the *Shel phreng* were published beginning in the 1980s, e.g., Vaidya Bhagwan Dash: *Illustrated Materia Medica of Indo-Tibetan Medicine* (1987); Pasang Yonten Arya: *Dictionary of Tibetan Materia Medica* (1998); Christa Kletter and Monika Kriechbaum (eds.): *Tibetan Medical Plants* (2001); Thinley Gyatso and Chris Hakim: *Essentials of Tibetan Traditional Medicine* (2010).

71 In 1563, Garcia da Orta's (ca. 1500–1568) *Colóquios dos simples e drogas he cousas medicinais da Índia* was published, the Dutch Hendrik Adriaan van Rheede's *Hortus Malabaricus* followed in the years 1678–1703 and Georg Eberhard Rumpf's (1627–1702; also known Latinized as Georgius Everhardus Rumphius) *Herbarium Amboinense* (syn. *Het Amboinsche kruidboek*) was published between 1741 and 1755. See Biswas 1956.

72 E.g., William Roxburgh (1751–1815), *Flora Indica; or Descriptions of Indian Plants*, posthumously edited and published in 1820 (vol. 1) and 1824 (vol. 2); Joseph Dalton Hooker (1817–1911), *Himalayan Journal* (1854), containing notes from Bengal, Sikkim and Nepal; Geoffrey Gorer (1905–1985), *Himalayan Village: An Account of the Lepchas of Sikkim* (1938) and John Morris (1895–1980), *Living with Lepcha: A Book about the Sikkim Himalayas* (1938).

the plants mentioned in their correspondence. The identification of the 18 plant specimens stored at the archive of Weltmuseum Wien in Vienna also poses a serious challenge, as, interestingly, no such notes have been found in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's papers. Moving forward, it may be possible to identify them based on their morphology by comparing these with herbarium species from the regions travelled by Nebesky-Wojkowitz and conducting field work and interviews with specialists in Himalayan botany; eventually DNA barcoding could yield definitive answers.

The search for documents pertaining to Nebesky-Wojkowitz's ethnopharmaceutical legacy in various archives around the world has already amassed a vast amount of archive material, contributing to a more complete picture of this groundbreaking scholar's life and scientific career. While René Nebesky-Wojkowitz was well aware of the innovative ethnopharmaceutical research he was undertaking, it is left to our imagination to consider how the course of medical research in the Himalayas and globally might have been different if this young, hard-working scientist had continued these studies into old age.

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Fig 1. a-t.	Clemens Radauer, KHM-Museumsverband, Weltmuseum Wien.
Fig 2. a-b, 3. a-b, 4. c.	Uwe Niebuhr, KHM-Museumsverband, Weltmuseum Wien.
Fig 4. a, 5, 6, 7.	Florian Eidam-Weber, SOAS, University of London, Archives and Special Collections.

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REVISITING RENÉ NEBESKY-WOJKOWITZ'S STUDY OF BON RELIGION, THE INTRODUCTION OF THE TWO-BON THEORY AND THE BLUE BONPO[1]

Kalsang Norbu Gurung

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's "Die tibetische Bön-Religion"

In 2003, I had the opportunity to work for a project cataloguing Tibetan blockprints and manuscripts collected by Johan van Manen (1877–1943) and kept in the library of the Kern Institute in Leiden. As one of the sources for my cataloguing work, I had access to an unpublished catalogue of the same collection by René Nebesky-Wojkowitz, which had been compiled between 1953 and 1955. Nebesky-Wojkowitz was the first cataloguer to register Johan van Manen's collection of very important Tibetan blockprints and manuscripts.[2] During my doctoral research project in Leiden, I found a reference to his first academic article, "Die tibetische Bön-Religion," published in 1947 in *Archiv für Völkerkunde*. Unfortunately, I was not able to read this German article then for my research on the founder of Bon, gShen rab mi bo. In this paper, I wish to present Nebesky-Wojkowitz's view and impressions of Bon religion by reviewing his very first academic publication, and chart how he might have influenced, although indirectly, the theory of two stages of Bon, as well as the dress code of Bonpo monks.

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1 This paper is written in memory of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1923–1959) and was presented at the conference "Exploring Himalayan Textual Heritage" in Vienna, November 2019. I am very grateful to have received funding from the organisers to participate in the conference. I would like to thank my colleague, Dr. Lewis Doney, for his kind help in proofreading my first draft.

2 Although two catalogues of this collection have been compiled, neither has been published so far. Nebesky-Wojkowitz compiled the first catalogue between 1953 and 1955 (*Catalogue of the Collections of Tibetan Blockprints and Manuscripts in the National Museum of Ethnology (Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde), Leiden–Holland*) and it contains basic entries on the titles and the number of folios in each work. Two Tibetan monks, Chongla N. Losang and Rechung J. Phunkhang compiled the second catalogue in Tibetan between 1961 and 1965, and they provided very detailed descriptions of the authors and subjects, and occasionally also transcribed the colophons of the Tibetan blockprints and manuscripts and filled several DIN A4 folders on them. Their catalogue is titled: *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Collection of Tibetan Printed Books Kept in the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde (National Museum for Ethnology) Kanjur Texts Excluded*, by Chongla N. Losang and Rechung J. Phunkhang, Leiden 1965. My colleague Tharphen Lingtsang and I catalogued most of the Tibetan blockprints and manuscripts as online resources between 2003 and 2005. They were digitised as part of the *Metamorfoze* project of Dory Heilijgers, and the collection guide is now available online (hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:1887199, accessed 23.04.2024).

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's "Die tibetische Bön-Religion" seems to be the result of his early-career studies on the history and practice of Bon religion. On over more than 40 pages, Nebesky-Wojkowitz reviews most, if not all, of the Western academic publications on Bon up to 1941. As is clear from the list of sources he used (see Appendix B), his knowledge of Bon was entirely drawn from Western sources including English translations and he did not have access to any original Tibetan sources. Nevertheless, his article covers various aspects of Bon religion and presents a complete picture of how the religion and practices of Bon were understood and interpreted in Western academia before the mid-20th century. This is also evident from the contents of his paper, which I will outline here. There are eleven sections: 1) previous research on the Bon religion, 2) Bon and its relations to the history of Tibet, 3) the Bonpo pantheon, 4) the Bon teachings, 5) the canonical writings of Bon religion, 6) the Bonpo priest, 7) the ritual objects of the Bonpos, 8) the rituals and ceremonies of the Bonpos, 9) the healing arts of the Bon priest, 10) the Bon priest as weather-maker, and 11) the contemporary spread of the Bon belief. Despite its broad scope, his work is rarely cited in later publications discussing the Bon religion of Tibet. It is not even cited in the well-known book by his contemporary Helmut Hoffmann, *The Religions of Tibet* published in 1956, even though the latter contains two separate chapters on Bon and many of the sources that Hoffmann used also appear in "Die tibetische Bön-Religion," published nine years earlier.[3] Thanks to the work of Dan Martin (Martin 2001) and Zeff Bjerken (Bjerken 2004),[4] I came to know of the interesting observations Nebesky-Wojkowitz presented in his first publication.

This long article contains many details about the ritual, literatures and practices of Bon, some of which are hardly to be found in Bonpo literature itself. This is evidently due to the fact that, on the one hand, a very limited amount of Bon sources were then available for research in the West, and on the other hand, most of the stories about Bon were based on Tibetan Buddhists' viewpoints. It would not be completely wrong to say that Nebesky-Wojkowitz's first publication acted as a point of departure for writing his most important contribution to Tibetan studies, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. Particularly, in the section on "Das Bön-Pantheon," he explains how many deities of the Tibetan Buddhist pantheon originally belonged to Bon. He might have been driven to study the ghosts and demons of Tibet in order to understand the original practice of Tibet before the introduction of Buddhism. This is also highlighted in the foreword of his book:

> The iconography of the deities worshiped by the Tibetans as protectors and guardians of Buddhism belongs to the least known field of Tibetan Studies. The exceedingly numerous class of protective divinities comprises many figures who

3 According to Per Kvaerne, Helmut Hoffmann had completed another manuscript on the history of the Bon religion (i.e., *Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Bon-Religion*. Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse Jahrgang 1950 (4), Wiesbaden, Mainz: Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur in Mainz) already in 1944, three years before the publication of "Die tibetische Bön-Religion" by Nebesky-Wojkowitz. This shows that Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Helmut Hoffmann were working on the same topic at the same time, and it is possible that they had been sharing their work with each other before publication.

4 Bjerken (2004) has reviewed the views of Nebesky-Wojkowitz on Bon religion in detail.

> originally belonged to the pantheon of the old Tibetan Bon faith. A study of the Tibetan protective deities and their cult, apart from giving an insight into a little-known aspect of Lamaism, reveals new facts regarding the beliefs of pre-Buddhist Tibet and their relation to the early shamanistic stratum out of which the Bon religion developed.[5]

The cause of his unexpected death at the very young age of 36 years also became an issue of speculation. It is thus noteworthy how Tibetans received his seminal book, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet,* and how his unexpected death was interpreted. Bjerken reports a situation that he encountered during a visit to the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala in India. He informs us that Nebesky-Wojkowitz's important publication was locked away separately from the general bookshelves of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.[6] Bjerken was permitted access to the book only after he deposited his passport as security – and with the librarian's warning of its "dangerous" content. Bjerken has also commented on this incident, adding in a footnote that, "debunking the Tibetan shaman and his magic may be hazardous to one's health."[7]

Returning to this first publication of Nebesky-Wojkowitz, "Die tibetische Bön-Religion" contains many stories about Bon which are not known elsewhere in Tibetan studies, nor does Nebesky-Wojkowitz mention the sources of these stories in his paper. We can trace some of them to the work of the Bengali Tibetologist Sarat Chandra Das (1849–1917), who translated the chapter on Bon (Das 1881) found in the *Thu'u bkwan grub mtha'*, which was written by an 18th-century Gelugpa scholar, Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma (1737–1802). Just to highlight some of the stories here, for example, he wrote that the Bonpos consider gShen rab mi bo to be the most important of the 18 great teachers and that he came from a noble family and enjoyed all the pleasures of an earthly life with his 336 women and numerous descendants.[8] Although Nebesky-Wojkowitz did not specify the source of this information, part of this story is from the above-mentioned translation of *Thu'u bkwan grub mtha'*. Bonpo sources, in fact, do not mention 18 great teachers but instead introduce nine great teachers, among whom gShen rab mi bo was considered to be the eighth teacher. Bonpo sources also do not mention 336 women in gShen rab mi bo's life, but he is mentioned as having married six women and had ten children.[9] Nebesky-Wojkowitz further wrote that gShen rab mi bo converted twelve countries to the Bon faith, including China where he had spent 25 years protecting a temple built by the Chinese emperor from repeated attacks by terrible demons and sea monsters.[10] It is not clear which source he is referring to, and this story is found nowhere in the life accounts of gShen rab mi bo. The only connection to which I could relate this story is the myth of gShen rab mi bo's connection with the Chinese king, Kong tse, the Tibetan image of Confucius. According to the Bon sources, King Kong tse built a castle in the middle of a sea, but the building was plagued

5 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956: vii.
6 Bjerken 2004: 38.
7 Ibid.: 38, n. 70.
8 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1947: 37.
9 For more details of his life, see my doctoral dissertation (Gurung 2011, ch. 5).
10 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1947: 38.

by demons and sea monsters who had initially been summoned to build the castle. When the castle was completed, gShen rab mi bo was invited to perform a consecration ritual to protect the castle from demon attacks.[11] However, there is no mention of gShen rab mi bo converting twelve countries to the Bon faith or spending 25 years in China. Of some relevance, perhaps, is one 15th-century Bon historical source which contains a reference suggesting that gShen rab mi bo was about to reach 25 years of age when he met King Kong tse and performed the consecration ritual.[12] Furthermore, Nebesky-Wojkowitz wrote that gShen rab mi bo died at the age of 92, his body dissolved into the air when he died, and his spirit re-entered a human body to be reborn on the Chinese peninsula named Shantung.[13] There is no mention of gShen rab mi bo living 92 years in any Bonpo sources, nor of his rebirth in any form in any place in this world. According to Bon sources, gShen rab mi bo lived only 82 years, he was cremated properly by his disciples' performance of funeral rituals, and he was never reborn in this world because he was considered to have completed his task of teaching this world.

Some details seem to be Nebesky-Wojkowitz's own conclusions based on his study of the available secondary publications that he reviews. He reviews and cites works by around 45 different authors, from the earliest publication in 1832 by Alexander Csoma de Kőrös to the most recent published in 1941 by Helmut Hoffmann. Nebesky-Wojkowitz is critical of them and expresses his disappointment with most of the previous scholars' works – stating that they were "spärlich und ungenau" (sparse and inaccurate). Yet he seems to agree with some scholars, which is clear from his comments on their works. I will mention here just a few briefly. The first comment is on Sarat Chandra Das,[14] whose stories received much consideration.[15] Nebesky-Wojkowitz seems to have been impressed by Sarat Chandra Das' vast knowledge of the Bon religion and Das also verifies its authenticity by mentioning his source and travel companion Lama Urgyen Gyamtso, whom he had met in Darjeeling before travelling to Tibet in 1881.[16] Another scholar Nebesky-Wojkowitz acknowledges is Berthold Laufer.[17] He evidently regarded Laufer as the pioneering scholar who developed the theory that the present Bon religion is not the original religion of the Tibetan people. Following Laufer's theory, he also identified the present Bon religion as having been organised and developed under the influence of Buddhism.[18] The third scholar to whom Nebesky-Wojkowitz refers is his contemporary, Helmut Hoffmann.[19] He writes that Hoffmann has also contributed to a clarification of questions surrounding Bon and that his works provide a good overview of the development and current status of Bon research. These comments on the above three scholars show that Nebesky-Wojkowitz agrees with their works, and that the stories about the Bon religion in his article somehow also reflect the views of those scholars.

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11 See Gurung (2009: 261–262) for more detail on this story.
12 *Dar rgyas gsal sgron*, p. 95.
13 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1947: 38.
14 See Appendix B for his works cited.
15 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1947: 27.
16 Das 1902.
17 See Appendix B for his works cited.
18 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1947: 27.
19 Ibid.: 28. See Appendix B for Hoffmann's works cited.

The two-Bon theory: un-organized Bon and organized Bon

As stated above, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's long article contains many details about Bon which were unknown to the Bonpo themselves. However, it is not my intention here to present all those details, which might or might not be traceable in the Bonpo literature. However, some details in his publication are important in order to understand how present Bonpo scholars rewrite the history and development of the Bon religion, and how they have assimilated some information, although indirectly, from Nebesky-Wojkowitz's work to explain their own history.

Firstly, following Laufer's theory, Nebesky-Wojkowitz suggests that the Bon then practiced is not the original form of Bon, but a religion organised and developed under the strong influence of both the shamanistic practice of ancient Tibetans and also Buddhism.[20] In the same way, he also suggests two stages of Bon. The first is "unorganized Bon," which he refers to as the shamanistic practices performed before the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet. The organisation of that pre-Buddhist tradition under the influence of Buddhism formed the so-called "organized" or "developed Bon."[21]

In 1947, this theory of two stages in which Bon developed in two separate periods was, to my knowledge, indeed novel and Nebesky-Wojkowitz was one of the pioneering scholars involved in this discussion, most likely along with his contemporary Helmut Hoffmann. This two-Bon theory, classified using different terms such as 1) old Bon of animism-shamanism (Hoffmann 1961) or the "original" Bon (Karmay 1998), and 2) the systematized or plagiarized Buddhist Bon (Hoffmann 1961) or g.Yung drung Bon (Karmay 1998),[22] has become the standard perspective on the history of Bon in Western academia. Most later publications follow this theory of two stages of Bon.

However, my intention in this paper is not to discuss what the original Bon was or which of the two is original, nor to explain whether or not the ancient Bon was shamanistic or animistic in nature. Instead, I wish to explain how Nebesky-Wojkowitz and his contemporary scholars' "two-Bon theory" concerning the history and development of Bon religion has influenced the Bonpo perspective on their own Bon history. That is to say, this theory has influenced contemporary Bonpo scholars to re-write the history of Bon by differentiating between the ancient Bon (*gdod ma'i bon,* today aka *srid pa'i bon*) and the later g.Yung drung Bon.[23] It is obvious that today's Bonpo scholars find it "safer" to adjust the history of Bon based on this known scholarly hypothesis, even though it contradicts the traditional view that there is only one Bon, i.e., g.Yung drung Bon – as taught by the founder, gShen rab mi bo. The Bonpos consider that the ancient Bon of Tibet was a sort of black-magic form of animistic and shamanistic practice, which they believe was replaced by the later Bon practice based on non-violence, love and peace – again taught by the founder, Buddha gShen rab mi bo.

A well-known Bonpo scholar, 'Go pa bsTan 'dzin 'brug grags wrote in 1991 that before gShen rab mi bo came into existence there were many Bonpos in Tibet, namely, *bdud bon*

20 Ibid.: 29.

21 Ibid.

22 In my doctoral dissertation (Gurung 2011, ch. 1), I discussed three perspectives on Bon espoused by Western academic scholars, of which two perspectives are adopted by Helmut Hoffmann and Samten Karmay.

23 Cf. Tsering Thar 1988, 'Go pa bsTan 'dzin 'brug grags 1991 and *sMan slob gsung rtsom* 2013.

(demonic Bon), *btsan bon* and others. They were not the followers of g.Yung drung Bon. When gShen rab mi bo visited Tibet, those Bonpos were not ready to accept the teaching of g.Yung drung Bon and therefore he could only pray that those Tibetans may have the opportunity to practice g.Yung drung Bon in the future.[24] To give another example, the views of sMan ri slob dpon (one of the few people granted the highest authority of the Tibetan Bon tradition today) also reflects the later influence of two-Bon theories.[25] In his answer to the question concerning a difference between the ancient Bon (*gna' bo'i bon*) and g.Yung drung Bon, he writes that there are many different ways to identify the ancient Bon. He points out that some scholars refer to the Bon that existed before the 7th century, and some refer to the Bon extant in Tibet before sTon pa gShen rab mi bo came there. Many scholars refer to the ancient Bon either as a form of ritual practice including animal sacrifices or as a shamanistic practice. And they refer to g.Yung drung Bon as the Bon taught by sTon pa gShen rab by modifying the old animistic practice, or as today's Bon which is similar to Tibetan Buddhism. However, sMan ri slob dpon rin po che clearly notes that the view of two different forms of Bon, ancient Bon and present Bon, is not a traditional perspective, since it is not mentioned in Bonpo sources (*bon gyi gzhung lugs khag nas gna' deng gi bon zhes mi 'dra ba gnyis su med*). According to him, the Bon taught by sTon pa gShen rab existed long before the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet; it is a native tradition of Tibet, and it is the religion primarily followed by the people of the Himalayan region. The ancient Bon spread throughout most of the Himalayan ranges and it is the source of religion practiced in both Tibet and Zhang zhung. From analysing the views of these two well-known Bonpo scholars, it is clear that many Bonpos today accept the "two-Bon theory" even though it is, as sMan ri slob dpon explicitly states, not a traditional perspective and no mention can be found in earlier Bonpo sources.

Within Tibetan society, this two-Bon theory has made it easier for some Bonpo scholars to counter their Buddhist colleagues, who often criticise the Bonpos as non-believers in the Buddha (*sangs rgyas*), and therefore as "outsiders" (*phyi pa*). The Bonpos can now claim that non-believers in the Buddha were followers of ancient Bon, while the present g.Yung drung Bonpos do believe in the Buddha. In this case, their founder gShen rab mi bo is considered to have achieved Buddhahood. Yet, this theory has also created a new problem by including "ancient Bon" within the wider category of Bon. The term "*bon*" cannot be distinguished from g.Yung drung Bon, since both the old Bon and the present Bon are categorised equally under the same name, "Bon."[26] This is to say that, if one talks negatively about the ancient Bon (*gna' bo'i bon* or *gdod ma'i bon*) and refers to it as comprising animistic or shamanistic practice, many of the followers of Bon religion could immediately understand it as offensive to their tradition. This semantic overlap shows that there is actually no strict dividing line between the ancient Bon and g.Yung drung Bon when it

24 Bon sgo 1991: 37.

25 *sMan slob gsung rtsom* 2013: 189–190.

26 For example many scholars, mostly Tibetan, consider the Dunhuang documents in which the word *bon* appears to be Bon texts. Based on the contents of those Dunhuang documents, as well as some newly revealed texts from eastern Tibet which are also labelled as ancient Bon texts, some Tibetans maintain that Bon was a practice of animism, without separating it from the later g.Yung drung Bon tradition. There is lots of discussion among Tibetans on social media, for instance at www.khabdha.org.

comes to the name "Bon" itself, even though the Bonpos accept the differences between them, as I have mentioned above.

Blue Bonpos wear blue dress

The second issue I wish to discuss here is the emphasis that Nebesky-Wojkowitz places in his article on the colour of the Bonpo priests' clothing. Nebesky-Wojkowitz writes that the Bonpos prefer blue and black fabrics for their robes, and that blue is the typical colour of the Bonpos.[27] Nebesky-Wojkowitz's primary source seems to be the translations and interpolations provided by Sarat Chandra Das and his references to the *Thu'u bkwan grub mtha'* and the *Mi la ras pa'i rnam mgur,* composed by a 15th-century Tibetan Yogi gTsang smyon he ru ka (1452–1507). First, the section on "translated Bon" (*bsgyur bon*) in the *Thu'u bkwan grub mtha'* mentions a *pandita* dressed in a blue lower robe (*sham thabs sngon po*). Sarat Chandra Das interpreted this person to be an Indian pandit who proclaimed himself a great teacher and who wrote several heretical works that he subsequently hid underground. This pandit later took them out publicly and pretended that they comprised a treasure-discovery (*gter ma*) text. As may be the intention of the *Thu'u bkwan*, Das also identified this pandit as a Bonpo priest, because he wore a blue robe, and his fake discovery as a Bonpo *gter ma* text. Another passage that Das translated is from the 15th-century hagiography of Mi la ras pa. It concerns a dispute between Mi la ras pa and a Bonpo named Na ro bon chung. According to this source,[28] Na ro bon chung was dressed in a blue fur skirt (*sngo thul*). In any case, both of these sources refer to an individual Bonpo wearing blue, and not to blue as the colour of Bonpo dress in general.

Furthermore, Nebesky-Wojkowitz even cites an example of the word *bon* with a seven- stacked vowel "o" (*na ro*), which he explains as an abbreviation of the phrase "*bon po sngon po gos sngon po*" meaning "the blue Bonpo [wears] blue dress" (see fig. 2). He suggests that this is proof of the Bonpos' fondness for wearing blue.[29] I could not find this abbreviation with a seven-stacked vowel "o" in any earlier Bonpo sources available. Nebesky-Wojkowitz borrowed this abbreviation from Jacques Bacot's work "Tibetan cursive writing" (Bacot 1912: 5–78, also see fig. 1). In fact, Bacot was listing and describing some 710 abbreviations of Tibetan words and phrases, possibly extracted from a Tibetan book of abbreviations though the potential source is not revealed. But one third of these abbreviations were extracted from the *Grammar of the Tibetan Language* by Alexander Csoma de Kőrös (1834), though the word *bon* with a seven-stacked vowel "o" was not taken from Csoma de Kőrös's work.

This abbreviation of *bon* with a seven-stacked vowel "o" has been modified as *bon* with a nine-stacked vowel "o." In order to explain the two extra "o"s, the phrase is expanded by specifying "upper" garment to read "*bon po sngon po stod gos sngon po gon*" meaning "the blue Bonpo wears blue upper dress" (see fig. 3). A commentary written on this expansion explains how and why Bonpos should prefer blue garments.[30] Coincidently perhaps,

27 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1947: 48.

28 *Mi la ras pa'i rnam mgur* 1981: 384.

29 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1947: 48, n. 147.

30 sDe dge ba g.Yung drung smon lam 2002.

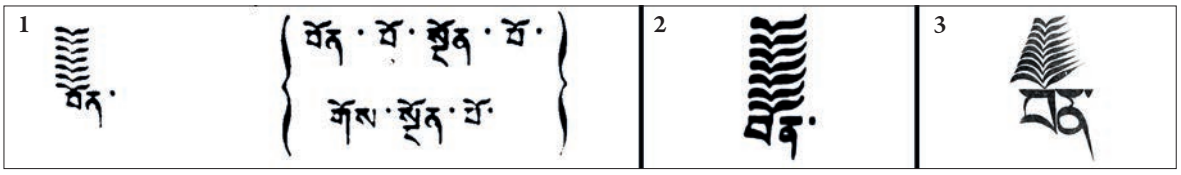


Fig. 1. *bon* with a seven-stacked vowel "o". Bacot 1912: 77.
Fig. 2. *bon* with a seven-stacked vowel "o". Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1947: 48.
Fig. 3. *bon* with a nine-stacked vowel "o". Bon sgo Journal 1991, cover page.

within a few decades of Nebesky-Wojkowitz writing that "blue is the typical colour of the Bonpo," Bonpo monks assimilated blue into their dress (see below for details), becoming one of their most important identification markers and a distinct feature that very clearly separates them from other Tibetan monks.

In fact, Nebesky-Wojkowitz was right in assuming that Bonpos were and are fond of the colour blue, since some relevant references can be found in older Bonpo sources. The early 12th-century *mDzod sgra 'grel*, the 14th-century *Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang*, and the late 14th- or the early 15th-century *Dri med gzi brjid* provide some references to blue dress. According to the *mDzod sgra 'grel*, Bonpos wear blue dress in order to ensure that Bon teachings will last forever and to remember the descent of its founder, gShen rab mi bo, from heaven in the form of blue cuckoo (*g.yu bya khu byug*).[31] According to the 14th-century *Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang*, Bonpo priests are allowed to wear a blue garment and a white hat as a sign of the prestige afforded them as royal priests during the Yarlung dynasty.[32] According the *Dri med gzi brjid*, gShen rab mi bo wore an ornamental helmet made of jewels, a turquoise blue upper garment and an orange shawl while he was teaching.[33]

However, none of these texts indicate that blue dress was obligatory for the monks in Bonpo monasteries, or even that it was compulsory for Bonpo priests. The founder of Menri Monastery, mNyam med Shes rab rgyal mtshan (1356–1415), explained in detail in his commentary *'Dul 'grel 'phrul sgron* which colours were permissible and which were impermissible at his monastery. His source for this commentary was the *'Dul ba kun btus* (see Appendix A) written by an earlier teacher of his lineage, Me ston Shes rab 'od zer (1058–1132). The same content from this earlier source was cited first in another text, and later elaborated in this commentary. This part of the commentary reads (see Appendix A for the Tibetan text):

> Fourth, there are three sections regarding the colour of clothing: permissible; impermissible; and how to adjust impermissible colour [if it is necessary to use it]. First, in general all scholars agree that the monk's robe and the Buddha's clothes must be either in blue, red or yellow. The red is the colour of ochre, the blue is

31 *mDzod sgra 'grel*, pp. 20–21, *"gshen rab rdzu 'phrul gyis sku g.yu bya khu byug tu sprul pas bon po'i gos lag sngon por byed pa yang g.yung drung gi bon dus gsum du mi 'gyur ba'i rtags su bzhag go/."*

32 *Srid pa rgyud kyi kha byang*, pp. 504–505, *"gos sngon po min pa gon dbang med/ zhwa dkar po min pa 'gro dbang med/ rgyal po yi bon la che thabs gnang/"*. The opening line *"gos sngon po min pa gon dbang med"* is also seen in another slightly earlier source, the *'Dul ba gling grags*.

33 *Dri med gzi brjid*, vol. Ca, p. 32, *"dbu la rin po che'i prog zhu ni gsol/ sku la g.yu mdangs sngon po yi stod g.yogs dang/ ngur smrig gi dpyang ral ni bnabs/."*

> of indigo, the yellow is the colour of yellow ducks. Reddish-yellow is the reddish eye-colour of yellow ducks. The red and yellow are necessary to cover other strong colours and that is done using the colours ochre, indigo and yellow-duck colour. Second, [impermissible colours] are vermilion (*mtshal*), Laccifer lacca kerr (*rgya skag* or *rgya skyegs*), madder (?) (*btsod*),[34] saffron (*gur gum*), copper sulphate (*mthing shun*), red lead (*li khri*), *rma* tree (unknown), red tree (*shing dmar po*), safflower (?) (*le brgan rtsi*)[35] and dark-red tree. Using the colour of these substances must be avoided, since it is against the ethic of the noble ones. Moreover, monks must avoid using high-quality brocades and the colourful, like-a-rainbow-coloured clothes, since they indicate the lifestyle of a householder. However, one should not dress up all in blue, which means one should not wear a robe that is completely blue inside and outside. Likewise, one should not wear a completely red or completely yellow robe either. White as well as mottled clothes are totally forbidden, since they are for lay people. Third [regarding how to adjust impermissible colour], if one needs to wear white, then this must be covered with yellow and another (red or blue) coloured garment. However, he is advised to avoid wearing [white dress] whatsoever during the congregation of monks.[36]

As is clear in this late 14th-century passage, Bonpo monks are given an exception in that they are allowed to use blue in addition to yellow and red for their garments. However, in contrast to the above references, no evidence can be found to support the assumption that Bonpo monks wore upper blue garments before the mid-20th century. The upper blue garment of Bonpo monks that we see today was introduced no earlier than the 1970s. It was the 33rd abbot of Menri Monastery who first wore a blue shawl (see fig. 4) over his red and yellow monk's shirt (*stod 'gag*) in the 1970s and 1980s – instead of the red shawl prescribed for an ordinary monk. It is also possible that the abbot adopted this idea of blue dress from eastern Tibet, which Nebesky-Wojkowitz mentions in his paper.[37] Alternatively, he introduced the blue shirt with a red collar and shoulder sleeve (see fig. 4), which was slowly adopted by the other monks in Menri Monastery. When this blue shirt was recognised as part of the identity of Bonpo monks, it gradually became the obligatory colour for shirts in Menri Monastery – at least during all formal events. The upper blue shawl that the abbot once wore almost every day disappeared some time ago, since he started to prefer red. However, it reappeared as a part of the dress for ritual priests during a special ritual in Menri Monastery, sometime in 2013 (see fig. 5).

Nebesky-Wojkowitz mentions in his article that the Bonpo monks in Rigyal Shendar Monastery were explicitly forbidden from wearing blue, white, green or black clothing in contrast to the Bon priests of other areas.[38] This Rigyal Shendar Monastery is identical

34 According to Tibetan Chinese dictionary (*Bod rgya tshig mdzod*), this is a medicinal plant of reddish colour.

35 Tibetan Chinese dictionary (ibid.) describes this as a name for ordinary saffron (*gur gum phal pa*).

36 See Appendix A: *'Dul 'grel 'phrul sgron* [191].

37 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1947: 48.

38 Ibid.



Fig. 4. The 33rd abbot of Menri Monastery (H.H. Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche, 1929–2017) on his throne wearing the white hat decorated with blue and red, a blue shirt with a red collar and shoulder sleeve, and a blue shawl.

Fig. 5. *sGrub gshen* priests wearing a blue shirt with red collar and shoulder sleeve, and a blue shawl during a *kun rig* ritual at Menri Monastery (Dolanji, India) in 2013.

with the Bonpo monastery named gShen dar sding, in Central Tibet, which has been the seat of the gShen lineage (the most important Bonpo family) since 1173 and which is said to have been expanded in 1360 and renamed Ri rgyal dgon Khri brtan nor bu rtse.[39]

Today, the blue shirt (see figs 4 and 5) is a regular part of the dress that all the monks in Menri Monastery in India should wear by rule; otherwise the monk will be penalized with disciplinary action. This regulation has also been encouraged for all other Bonpo monasteries inside and outside Tibet, but it is not strictly mandated as in Menri Monastery in India. For some decades now, this blue upper garment has become part of the identity of Bonpo monks, making it possible to identify Bonpo monks even from the distance and in the crowd.

Conclusion

As mentioned above, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's first publication forms a sort of review of all previous Western works related to studies of Bon history, religion and practices, as he discusses nearly all known publications that had appeared up to 1941 (see particularly the section "Previous research on the Bon religion"). Similar reviews have been published more recently by Per Kvaerne (2000) and Ri ki Thub bstan dkon mchog (2012–2013). In his study, "Bon in the West: Past, present, and future," Kvaerne (2000) reviews the publications of Helmut Hoffmann after 1950, Marcelle Lalou, Fosco Maraini, Rolf A. Stein, Matthias Hermanns, David L. Snellgrove, E. Gene Smith, Ariane Macdonald, Anne-Marie Blondeau, Samten G. Karmay, Stephen Batchelor, Geoffrey Samuel, Karl-Heinz Everding, Katsumi Mimaki, Namkhai Norbu and Gyurme Dorje up to 1996. As a closing

39 Karmay and Nagano 2003: 36, cf. also Das 1902: 206.



remark in his review, Kvaerne makes what I think is a very accurate observation on how Bon is understood in both Western and Tibetan communities:

> Bon has become an object of New Age economic and ideological exploitation, in which the Tibetans, ultimately, are the losers. To reinsert Bon into its real historical and cultural context is therefore not only a meaningful academic pursuit, but is also a way for us, as scholars, to practise solidarity with the Tibetan people.[40]

One of the few scholars to have acknowledged this first publication of Nebesky-Wojkowitz is Ri ki Thub bstan dkon mchog, whose review mainly covers the study of Bon from 1880 until 1947 by tracing the works of Schiefner, Das, Laufer, Francke, Hodgson, Schlagintweit, Rock, Bacot, Bell, and Waddell, which were also evaluated in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's publication. Ri ki Thub bstan dkon mchog reviews Nebesky-Wojkowitz's first publication itself and also the works of Johan van Manen and other scholars such as John Huston Edgar and Rewi Alley. With exception, Ri ki Thub bstan dkon mchog has reviewed a few later publications, namely, by Giuseppe Tucci, Géza Uray and Geoffrey Samuel, and refers readers to the review by Kvaerne (see above) for more publications on Bon studies after his period of focus (1880–1947). I must say that Ri ki Thub bstan dkon mchog has very fairly acknowledged René Nebesky-Wojkowitz's important study on Bon, even though some information in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's early work consists of misinterpretations of the history and religion of Bon as a result of using sources that were not only written by Tibetan Buddhist scholars but also contain polemical statements against the Bon religion.[41]

40 Kvaerne 2000: 18.
41 Cf. Martin 2001: 105–116.

As I have highlighted above, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's "two-Bon theory" has indeed influenced later perspectives on the history and development of the Bon religion in Tibet. Even Bonpo scholars today are attempting to rewrite the history of Bon religion by differentiating the ancient Bon (*gdod ma'i bon* or *srid pa'i bon*) from the later and organised g.Yung drung Bon. Together with his contemporary, the scholar Helmut Hoffmann, who has so far received credit for this theory (Kvaerne 2000: 7), Nebesky-Wojkowitz equally contributed to the advancement of this theory in Western academia with two important publications (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1947 and 1956). Furthermore, this theory has probably impacted native Bonpo scholars (e.g., 'Go pa bsTan 'dzin 'brug grags and sMan ri slob dpon) indirectly through their interaction with Western scholars – especially the ways in which their understanding of the history and development of the Bon religion in Tibet differs from the traditional Bonpo accounts.

Another impact that we may consider is the choice of colour for monks' dress in Bonpo monasteries. Even though the stories presented in the work by Nebesky-Wojkowitz are derived from Buddhist sources (*bsgyur bon* and *na ro bon chung*) and have no historical value, he was probably correct in concluding that "Bonpos were fond of blue." It is evident that Bonpos today prefer blue, along with red and yellow garments, and that blue has been permitted in Bonpo monasteries since at least the 14th century (see Appendix A). Unlike in the past, Bonpos since the 1970s have become more conscious of the colour of their monastic dress. As I mentioned above, Bonpo monks have assumed the blue shirt as one of their most important identification features in order to distinguish themselves from monks belonging to the other Tibetan Buddhist schools, and today it has even become obligatory for all monks to wear this uniform during formal events in Menri Monastery in India.

By presenting these two examples (the two-Bon theory and blue as the identifying colour of the Bonpo), I am not trying to prove that the attempts by Bonpo scholars to assimilate these views and revise their history or the blue shirt in Menri Monastery in India are direct consequences of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's very first publication. Nevertheless, we should not ignore his contribution to the discussion of these issues. I believe that his work, along with that of other Western scholars, have to some extent influenced how present Bonpos have come to reconsider the history of Bon religion in Tibet and also become more conscious of the colour of their monastic dress as a marker of their unique Bonpo identity. Hence, this paper also aims to acknowledge the important contribution made by René Nebesky-Wojkowitz to later studies of Bon in the West.

APPENDIX A
Bonpo 'Dul ba (Vinaya) sources

'Dul ba kun btus (11th–12th century)	*'Dul ba mdor bsdus kyi 'grel ba* (14th–15th century)	*'Dul 'grel 'phrul sgron* (14th–15th century)
[36] *btsag ram ngur smrig tshos kyis bsgyur/ mtshal dang rgya skag btsod dang ni/ /gur gum mthing shun li khri dang/ /rma shing leb rgan rtsi dang brgyad/ /tshos chen rnams kyi kha dog bsgyur/ /gzha' tshon bzhin du mdzes pa ni/ /khyim pa bzhin du mi bya'o/ /thams cad sngon po bcang mi bya/ /dmar ser de bzhin dkar mi rung/ dkar po phyi rol skyabs te bgo/*	[481] *gos kyi kha dog gi gnang dgag ni/ mtshal dang rgya skag btsod dang ni/ /gur gum mthing shun li khri dang/ /rma shing leb rgan rtsi dang brgyad/ /tshos chen rnams kyis kha dog bsgyur/ /gzha' tshon bzhin du mdzes pa ni/ /khyim pa bzhin du mi bya'o/ /thams cad sngon por cang mi bya'o/ /dmar ser de bzhin dkar mi rung/ /btsag ram ngur smrig tshos kyis bsgyur/ /zhes gsungs pa bzhin no/*	[191] *bzhi pa kha dog la gsum ba ste/ gnang ba dang/ bkag pa dang/ bkag pa'i spyad lugs so/ dang po ni/ spyir 'dul ba pa'am/ sangs rgyas kyi na bza' ni/ sngo nag*[42] *ser dang gsum mo/ zhes mkhas pa kun gyis bzhed do/ skabs 'dir dmar po'i tshad ni btsags tsam mo/ sngon po'i tshad ni ram tshod tsam mo/ ngur smrig ni ser po'i zhes mkhas pa dag gis gsungs so/ ngur smrig bya ngur ba'i mig ltar dmar ba dang/ dmar ser du 'dod pa ni/ tshos chen bkag pas khegs so/ des na btsags ram ngur smrig tshos kyis bsgyur ba'i don rigs par bya'o/ /gnyis pa ni/ mtshal dang/ rgya skag btsod dang ni/ gur gum dang/ mthing shun dang/ li khri dang/ rma shing dang shing dmar po la sogs dang/ leb rgan rtsi dar shing dmar nag la sogs dang brgyad de/ tshos chen* [192] *rnams kyi kha dog bsgyur ba ni/ dam pa'i tshul dang 'gal bas spang bar bya'o/ gzhan yang gzha' tshon bzhin du za 'og la sogs kyis mdzes par brgyan pa ni/ khyim pa'i spyod tshul bzhin du gyur pa ni/ rab tu byung bas spong zhing dang du blang bar mi bya'o/ gzhan yang thams cad sngon por bcang mi bya zhes pa/ gos phyi nang thams cad sngon po rkyang yang mi bya la/ phyi nang thams cad dmar ba dang/ phyi nang thams cad ser ba yang gong ma de bzhin du mi bya'o/ dkar po ni skya bo'i gos min pas shin tu mi rung ngo/ de bzhin du khra bo la sogs ma dag skya bo'i chas thams cad rab tu spangs so/ gsum pa ni/ dkar po la sogs gon dgos byung na/ phyi rol du ser po la sogs kyis skyabs shing bkab ste bgo'o/ de yang tsogs su rnam pa kun du bkag na legs gsungs so/*

42 The Dolanji edition reads here, "*nag*" (black) instead of "*dmar*" (red), which seems to be a scribal error, as no further detail for black colour is provided in this context. According to the same text published in *Gangs ti se bon gzhung*, vol. 13: 253, we can see the correction "*dmar*" instead of "*nag.*"

APPENDIX B

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Fig. 4. Collection of Geshe Nyima Woser Choekhortshang.

Fig. 5. Collection of Geshe Tri Yungdrung.

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2

NEBESKY-WOJKOWITZ ON THE GROUND

Interaction and Reception in the Field

NEBESKY-WOJKOWITZ'S LEGACY AND THE LEPCHA
On Knowledge Production and Power Relations

Jenny Bentley

Research on the Lepcha started as a side-project for the Tibetologist René Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1923–1959) motivated by his interest in the Bon religion and Tibetan Buddhism. He ultimately published several articles on the religion and practices of the Lepcha community, and his numerous notes and some additional article drafts can be found in the archive of the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.[1] Weltmuseum Wien in Austria houses many artefacts that Nebesky-Wojkowitz had collected, amongst others weapons, agricultural tools, instruments, religious objects, jewellery, and manuscripts written in the Lepcha language. Nebesky-Wojkowitz also made audio-visual recordings and took photographs. His untimely death prevented him from publishing more of his research on the Lepchas. According to Uwe Niebuhr, rumour has it that an entire book manuscript on Lepcha religious tradition and cultural practices existed. Furthermore, De mentions that Nebesky-Wojkowitz "wrote a very comprehensive book on the Lepchas."[2] To date it has not been found; possibly it was disposed of together with parts of his parents' estate.[3]

While Charisma Karthak Lepcha and Davide Torri explore the legacy of Siiger, an influential anthropologist who conducted fieldwork among the Lepcha community around the same time as Nebesky-Wojkowitz, by retracing his footsteps in contemporary Tingvong, the village in North Sikkim that he visited in 1949,[4] I examine Nebesky-Wojkowitz's texts, catalogues, and contemporary reception, placing them within the context of my own research and experience to gain insight into knowledge production and power. The described artefacts, written texts, photographs, sound recordings, and films comprise cultural expressions and Indigenous knowledge systems contributed by various Lepcha individuals in the Kalimpong region in the early 1950s. I do not use the term 'Indigenous knowledge' in opposition to Western scientific knowledge, but I am interested in analysing how different types of knowledge production interact, influence each other, and co-create within an unequal

1 GB 102 MS 380882.

2 De 2018: 200.

3 Uwe Niebuhr, personal conversation, 14 November 2019.

4 Lepcha and Torri 2016.

field of power relations.[5] I work with a definition of Indigenous knowledge as comprising the practices, experiences, and information systems that have been transmitted within a self-defined community from one generation to the next and are attached to land.[6] In the case of the Lepcha, it is not a unified corpus of knowledge, but a situated knowledge network characterised by diverse variations tied to specific individuals, other-than-human beings, localities, and moments in time.[7] At this point, it is important to situate myself as a researcher from a privileged European background, trained at a European university that – using Stein et al.'s social cartography – adopted an inclusive approach to engagement with Indigenous communities and science.[8] However, as students, we received minimal methodological preparation and were rarely encouraged to critically engage with these complexities. Since then, I have been learning and co-developing reparative engagements through collaboratively working and living within Indigenous communities, foremost the Lepcha community, in Sikkim and West Bengal, India.[9]

Nebesky-Wojkowitz collected tangible items of Lepcha material culture and texts produced by Lepcha individuals, some of which were made on his request, others not. Additionally, his legacy includes manifestations of Lepcha Indigenous knowledge systems that were reproduced and adapted through Nebesky-Wojkowitz's lens. Both types of manifestations contribute to formulating and defining a distinct representation of the Lepcha as a community, guided by the interests and gaze of an 'outsider.' In the case of audio-visual products and manuscripts, the ownership – via copyright laws – lies with the 'maker' or the institution that acquired the copyright, not the subjects 'captured.'[10] Similarly, the tangible items often legally 'belong' to the institution that purchased them via brokers such as Nebesky-Wojkowitz. Besides questions of legal ownership, I am interested in the debates among Lepcha activists that occur around the question of rightful authority over representation and knowledge production. Thereby, I specifically focus on the executive members of the Lepcha association in Kalimpong. The association was specifically founded to preserve and revive Lepcha culture and to improve the socio-economic situation of the Lepcha community. In this context, how do they deal with the legacy of what has been written about their community? How do they come to terms with the historical power disparities within which this historical legacy was produced?

As Derrida points out, power and control manifest in the etymology of the term 'archive.'[11] An archive is a place where knowledge production is stored, categorised, and 'managed', while the museum enhances the focus on the display of such curated content. Following Foucault's thought school, I do not conceptualise Nebesky-Wojkowitz as an agent of power but look into the processes and effects of power that constituted the subjects, such as Nebesky-Wojkowitz as an ethnographer or Lepcha individuals as 'informants', as well as the discourses, desires, and expectations such power constellations produce.[12]

5 Agarwal 1995.
6 Berkes 2009.
7 Bentley 2009; see Goody 2009; Finnegan 2007 on dynamics of orality.
8 Stein et al. 2024.
9 See for example Lepcha et al. (forthcoming 2025).
10 Anderson 2005a: 4.
11 Derrida 1999.
12 Foucault 1980: 98.

I specifically use the politically embedded term 'Indigenous' for two reasons. First, it is a self-identification chosen by many Lepcha people today and guides the activities of the Lepcha activists that I address in this article. Besides this, the term is used in the current administrative and political context of the state of West Bengal and Sikkim.[13] I specifically do not raise the question of "who is Indigenous?",[14] but unravel how depending on context, actors, and discourses the 'Indigenous' is conceptualised as "as a racial category, as a product of identity legislation, as an identity of a single and distinct community, or as an identity claimed by many communities."[15] Hence, and the second reason for using the concept, an analysis of these different perspectives on the 'Indigenous' allows an insight into the historical and present-day power processes in representing and governing 'the other.' In order to do this, I follow the process of knowledge production from the collection of ethnographic material to its reception along the example of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's research in the 1950s. How did he collect and process his ethnographic material, tangible and intangible, on the Lepcha community? How is his research embedded in the larger network and power relations of colonial and post-colonial knowledge production on the 'other'? And lastly, how do present-day Lepcha activists engage with his and other researchers' fixations and interpretations of their practices and knowledge systems?

This article is structured in five sections. First, I give insight into Nebesky-Wojkowitz's stay in the Kalimpong region with a special focus on his research among the Lepcha. I highlight where and from whom he received his information and who helped broker the knowledge. In the second section, the colonial and postcolonial power constellations and their effect on knowledge production, ethnic classification, and governance are elaborated. Here, I illustrate the entanglement of academic knowledge production in the (post)colonial Indian state's practice of categorising and cataloguing the culture, people, and resources of the lands that were to be governed.[16] While I focus on the problematic alliance of (post) colonial governance and measures to protect 'the native' institutionalised in the Indian reservation system, I anchor racial categorisation and justifications of inequality within previous regimes. In a third section I relook at Nebesky-Wojkowitz's activities in Kalimpong through the lens of the power relations in his encounters with members of the Lepcha community and the discourses on the Lepcha community's requirement for protection that Nebesky-Wojkowitz activates. The fourth section highlights the reception of the previous publications by researchers – academic and administrative alike – among Lepcha activists, especially highlighting the approach of the influential Lepcha scholar, co-founder of the Lepcha association, and contemporary of Nebesky-Wojkowitz: K.P. Tamsang (1915–1985). I discuss the tension between dependency on existent external knowledge production to achieve and sustain recognition in the Indian reservation system on the one hand, and the struggle to regain ownership over the knowledge produced about their ethnic group on the other. In the conclusion I address the need to rethink practices of co-managing public

13 For example, the Lepcha community was officially declared an 'Indigenous Primitive Tribe Group' on the state level in Sikkim in 2006 (Sikkim Government Gazette Notification No. 375).

14 Roy 2016: 10.

15 Bidwell 2014: 118.

16 Dirks 2001.

knowledge production of archival sources and museum collections together with members of the Indigenous communities from whom the knowledge was 'sourced' and push for a reparative approach.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's research among the Lepcha in Kalimpong

Nebesky-Wojkowitz came to the Darjeeling Sikkim Himalayas for the first time in 1950 and spent two and a half years there. According to his field report, the aim of his research was to study "early Tibetan religious beliefs and their relations to the beliefs of some of the Himalayan tribes, especially the Lepchas."[17] With regard to the Lepcha community, he was particularly interested in its traditional religion's "alleged relations to the bon faith of Tibet."[18] Nebesky-Wojkowitz specifies that in order to "supplement or analyse the Lepcha and Tibetan material,"[19] he also collected ethnographic material on other ethnic or national communities such as the Sherpa, Tamang, and the Bhutanese. He went into pains to "isolate the alien elements and form a picture of the original, ancient Lepcha religion."[20] As "alien elements" he predominantly names "Nepalese, Tibetan or Bhutanese legends."[21]

In his first trip, initially as the secretary of the botanist and linguist Joseph F. Rock (1884–1962), Nebesky-Wojkowitz visited Darjeeling and then set up base in Kalimpong, which he described as "the terminus of the great caravan route that leads from Lhasa to India."[22] With his research centring around Tibetan Buddhism, Nebesky-Wojkowitz seems to have been drawn to the town for the same reason as many before him: the town's positioning as a border and trading station at the frontier to Tibet, a closed country that had long captured the imagination of researchers, adventurers, missionaries, and colonial expansionists as the last "terra incognita."[23] Before the Sino-Indian war of 1962 and the subsequent permanent border closure, Kalimpong was a vibrant trading community with people of different socio-economic strata coming from and going to Tibet. Additionally, with the troubles in Tibet and the Dalai Lama residing in the Chumbi valley just across the mountain pass beyond Kalimpong, many Tibetan nobles and high-ranked Buddhist lamas frequented the town during Nebesky-Wojkowitz's stay there.[24] Here, the people and knowledge of the Tibetan highlands were approachable.

In order to conduct research on Lepcha traditional religion, Nebesky-Wojkowitz relied strongly on the Swiss Catholic Mission in Kalimpong. The Swiss father Jean-Marie Brahier had been working as a missionary in the Git valley, a region inhabited by the Lepcha around 30 kilometres northeast of Kalimpong, for more than a decade when the former reached there in 1951. Nebesky-Wojkowitz undertook several trips to Lepcha villages there; the longest was approximately six weeks.[25] Father Brahier accompanied him, introduced him to Lep-

17 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1954: 32.
18 Ibid.: 36.
19 Ibid.: 38.
20 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a: 133.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.: 55.
23 Risley [1894] 1973: xxii; see also Bray 2014; Graham 1897; Martin 2016.
24 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1954: 33; see also Viehbeck 2017a: 6.
25 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a: 128, ch. VII.

cha religious specialists, acted as his interpreter, and translated documents. The Catholic father was known to be an expert on the Lepcha community, especially due to his fluency in the Lepcha language, he was – as anthropologist Corneille Jest noted – "the best European speaker of Lepcha."[26] Generally, Father Brahier seems to have been the main contact person for anyone interested in knowing more about the Lepcha community and he had already helped other well-known researchers. Before guiding Nebesky-Wojkowitz, he had taken the anthropologist Halfdan Siiger and the linguist Richard Keith Sprigg around Git in February 1950.[27] Later, the Swiss missionary supported the anthropologists Corneille Jest who stayed in Tanyang, where Brahier set up a mission in 1952. Nebesky-Wojkowitz additionally relied on other members of the Swiss Catholic Mission, such as Fathers Pittet, Gex-Collect, and Eberhard. They accompanied him and shared their knowledge on the region and its inhabitants.[28] With regard to research on the Lepcha community in Kalimpong of the time, it is clear that the Swiss Catholic fathers, particularly Father Brahier, acted as gatekeepers, influencing how Lepcha Indigenous knowledge and other cultural materials entered academia, museum collections, and archives. This, in turn, has had lasting effects on the representation of the community to this day.

In his travel book *Where the Gods are Mountains* Nebesky-Wojkowitz describes his journey to Git. He could not begin with his research immediately due to a smallpox epidemic. In support of the Indian government officials, Father Brahier and Nebesky-Wojkowitz took on the additional duty of inoculating the villagers in the settlements they visited. His research was to begin only after the epidemic had passed its peak. Then, according to his own descriptions he walked from house to house "observing the Lepchas' modes of life and writing down their ancient legends."[29] Nebesky-Wojkowitz describes his interaction with the residents and the information he collected as follows:

> Old, blind Ongdi, once the head of all the magician-priests of the neighbourhood, told me about his people's good and evil gods; his son, Saliang, explained the hunting rites to me; and Cheche, the fisherman, showed me how to catch fish. Young Kabo sang sentimental-sounding folk songs into the microphone of the recording apparatus. After a few vain attempts, I learnt from the suspicious Labu Kabari how sickness demons could be placated by animal sacrifices; and the corpulent sorceress-priestess Kanyemu related to me all the things she experienced when the spirits took possession of her.[30]

Many of his key interlocutors were religious specialists of various kinds. Kanyemu was a *mun* as well as a *nejum* (Tib. *rnal 'byor ma*) and Labu Kabari was a búngthíng as well as a *pawo* (Tib. *dpa' bo*). The *nejum* and the *pawo* are religious specialists associated with the Lhopo, more commonly referred to as the Bhutia community of Sikkim and the Northern

26 Jest 1960: 124.
27 Plaisier 2007: 22.
28 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1954: 36–37.
29 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a: 132–133.
30 Ibid.: 133.

Bengal hills.[31] G. Kabo was a teacher and a folk singer from the village Kafer.[32] Together with Father Brahier and a Lepcha guide from Git, Nebesky-Wojkowitz also visited Nim, a village closer at the Bhutanese border, in May 1951. In Nim, Nebesky-Wojkowitz stayed in the former *mandal*'s house and interacted with a *búngthíng* he calls Renbu Badschi and his daughter. The former became one of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's most informative 'sources.' He was said to have been 104 years old and the oldest living Lepcha person at the time. Considering that Nebesky-Wojkowitz was guided by a Christian father and missionary, two of the religious specialists with whom he interacted were converts and had given up their former profession: Ongdi from Git, mentioned above in the quotation, and Saliman Lepcha from Tanyang.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's notes are an interesting mixture of, on the one hand, impersonal descriptions of knowledge on different subjects of Lepcha culture, social organisation, and religion that he had collected and written down without referring to the sources or locality of the information. On the other hand, they contain personalised accounts accredited to specific Lepcha individuals. For example, as his interest lay in the religious traditions of the Himalayan region, Nebesky-Wojkowitz made extensive lists of Lepcha supernatural beings, their qualities, and positionings in a pantheon. In these notes, the different voices of his interlocutors are documented and his discussions and interactions with specific individuals on the respective knowledge become apparent. Additionally, in some of his published articles, he makes it a point to mention his sources, even if not clearly stating which knowledge derives from which source.[33] For example, Nebesky-Wojkowitz mentions other influential Lepcha leaders and thinkers of the time, such as K.P. Tamsang or Mrs D. Mohan, as having "supplied" him "with valuable informations [sic]."[34] Behind the latter non-Lepcha name is none other than Rebecca Namchu Lepcha (1884–1958), the president of the Lepcha Association in the 1950s who played a crucial role in securing Scheduled Tribe status for the Lepcha community. At a very young age, she had been married to David Mohan, a wealthy Indian "Babu in the tea garden in Darjeeling" (1838–1919), and who thus locally known as David Babuni Mohan, as also indicated on her gravestone in the Scottish Mission Cemetery in Kalimpong.[35] From Nebesky-Wojkowitz's publications and his notes we do not learn anything about his relationship with either of them or about how he procured the information. He does not mention meeting them in his public account of his three-year stay in the region. This is a stark contrast to his descriptions of the European residents of Kalimpong, his Tibetan acquaintances, or even neighbours who he described vividly and fondly.[36] A colour photograph of Rebecca Namchu Lepcha, which is preserved in the Weltmuseum Wien (fig. 1), gives visual evidence of their meeting. I will return to K. P. Tamsang in a later section.

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31 Balikci 2008.

32 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1952b: 30.

33 See for example Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1952a: 37, n. 6; Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1952b: 30.

34 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1952a: 37, n. 6.

35 De 2018. She gives an intimate portray of Rebecca Namchu Lepcha's important position in the social and political life of Kalimpong; the chapter significantly titled *Queen of Hearts*. See also Namchu (forthcoming) on the life of Rebecca Namchu Lepcha.

36 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a: 75–82, 85, 88–89, 99–100.



Fig. 1.
Rebecca Namchu Lepcha
(1884–1958).

Besides collecting ethnographic material, Nebesky-Wojkowitz also acquired several material items from the Lepcha community for the Museum für Völkerkunde, now Weltmuseum Wien, in Vienna. The collection included "dresses, jewellery, household utensils, war and hunting weapons and musical instruments."[37] According to Nebesky-Wojkowitz the most important items in the collection were the ceremonial paraphernalia of the *mun*, which he considers so rare that merely two complete sets of attire still existed in Sikkim at the time, war-drums that were said to have been presented "by the 6th King of Sikkim (1769–1793) to the Lepcha chieftain of Sukmi" as well as several Lepcha manuscripts which Nebesky-Wojkowitz describes as ancient.[38] Additionally, Nebesky-Wojkowitz produced black and white as well as colour photos, sound recordings, and films, supported by Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, who was in Kalimpong leading the 'Third Danish Expedition to Central Asia.'

From September 1956 to January 1957 Nebesky-Wojkowitz returned to Kalimpong before heading to Nepal. His aim was to crosscheck his findings on the Lepcha from the previous trip and complete the collection of ethnographic material. He documented the life of the Lepcha in Git in photographs and film. Also, on this trip, he collected 85 samples of Lepcha Traditional Medicine for analysis on behalf of the American Anthropological Association.[39]

37 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1954: 37.
38 Ibid.
39 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956b: 214–215; see Eidam-Weber, this volume.

Knowledge production and hegemony, the written word, and racial categorisation

The academic knowledge production described in the above section requires contextualisation in the power relations of the broader Himalayan region and the (post)colonial setting of its time. In this section, I specifically focus on the power networks that produce written knowledge on the Indigenous 'other' and thereby transform the positioning as well as the articulations of oral Indigenous knowledge. The collection of knowledge on Indigenous people, lands, and resources, as well as the management of this knowledge were core interests of colonial projects and interlinked with governmentality. Knowing and categorising the people was about controlling the respective people, regions, and resources.[40] The characteristics, practices, and languages of the local populations were researched, reformulated within conceptualisations of the world that classified populations hierarchically according to notions of race and civilisation, and then strategically used by (colonial) states. The latter competed to establish what Said calls "flexible positional superiority"[41] over the 'new world', resulting in racial justifications for dominance, inequality, and social injustice.

It is within this context, the first 'Western' sources on 'the Lepcha' were produced by administrators within the colonial power regime. Famously, Darjeeling's first superintendent Archibald Campbell (1840–1862) compiled his *Notes on the Lepchas of Sikkim* in 1840 and published another article in *The Journal of the Ethnological Society of London* in 1869. The Indian civil service officer H.H. Risley, who compiled the influential *Gazetteer of Sikkim*, dedicated a section of his book *The Tribes and Castes of Bengal* to the Lepcha.[42] Colonel (later General) G.B. Mainwaring was appointed by the colonial administration to learn Lepcha and compile a dictionary,[43] knowledge on local languages being the ultimate tool of control and governance.[44]

The Lepcha were classified as peaceful and shy natives, docile in character, with a vast knowledge of the flora and fauna, but not inclined to any form of hard work. Stereotyped as *noble savages*, they were opposed to the 'industrious' and 'war-like' Nepali.[45] More than anything, the Lepcha were described as a 'dying race.'[46] As in other regions of the British Empire, administrators drafted to protect the peoples understood as 'native.' Hence, protection and control were closely intertwined in the colonial project.[47] Post-independence, the elaborate Indian reservation system – while designed as a provision to counter discrimination and structural inequality on basis of ascribed traits – perpetuated and fixated such a "bio-cultural"[48] classification of people into castes and tribes. It allocated access to rights and resources to members of specific scheduled groups, amongst others 'the'

40 Dirks 2001: 123; Mantena 2012: 151–177; Said 2001 [1978]; Smith 2012: ch. 3.
41 Said 2001 [1978]: 7.
42 Risley [1891] 1981.
43 Mainwaring 1898.
44 Mantena 2012: 151–177.
45 Kennedy 1991; Kent 1991; see A.P. Lepcha 2021.
46 Mainwaring [1876] 1971: xx, xii, xiii; Temple [1887] 1977: 12; Risley [1894] 1973: i–ii, xxi; Waddell [1899] 1978: 293; Gorer [1938] 1996: 36–37; Morris 1938: 285; Scherman 1926: 12.
47 Corbridge et al. 2005.
48 Gilroy 1987: 39.

Lepcha, but thereby also governed their modes of expression and empowerment, a process Middleton elaborates for the Darjeeling hills.[49]

This being said, power imperialism and processes of classifying people by racial categories also existed in the Himalayan borderlands before the 'Western' colonial powers set out to discover and 'conquer new worlds.' Nepal's Rana-era *Muluki Ain* legal code of 1854 institutionalised various ascribed statuses and categorised them within caste hierarchies, distinguishing between high-caste Hindus wearing the sacred thread (Nep. *tāgādhāri*) and the alcohol drinkers (Nep. *matwāli*). The latter were yet again classified as unenslavable and enslavable and were followed by the low and the untouchable castes – institutionalising ascribed justifications of exploitation.[50] In the Tibetan context, the population of the southern hills – such as the Lepcha – were understood as barbarians that were required to be civilised and 'tamed.'[51]

A recurring theme in Himalayan mythologies is the magical encounter or competition between a representative of the local community, often a religious specialist, and a Buddhist saint, depicting the ultimate process of taming.[52] One of the prominent consequences of the magical disputes is the loss of script. In some variations the local communities retrieve it again, in others it is forever lost.[53] The protagonists of the contest are prototypical keepers of different forms of knowledge. In Lepcha communities, the religious specialist is the keeper of oral Indigenous knowledge. The Lepcha term *búngthíng*, which refers to one of the two types of religious specialist, literally translates as 'the respected person with power over the mouth', symbolic for the power over speech and ultimately oral knowledge.[54] The Buddhist protagonist in the myth, on the other hand, is associated with power over the written word. The Lepcha term for Buddhist monk, *yuk mun*, translates as 'the religious specialist with power over letters or the written word.'[55]

While at present, the Lepcha, like many Indigenous groups in the Himalayas, practice their own shamanic religious traditions simultaneously with Buddhism despite certain frictions,[56] the myths of contest narrate a present-day perspective on the struggles between two different traditions during processes of conquest. As I have argued elsewhere, these religiously framed contestations in Lepcha mythology need to be thought of within the context of Sikkimese state formation, which influenced all of Sikkim as well as the Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and Ilam borderlands from the 17th century onwards.[57] Buddhism is framed as the religion

49 Middleton 2016.

50 Hangen 2010: 31; Höfer 1979: 45.

51 Huber 2011; Gyuot-Réchard 2016; Ortner 1978: 99; Samuel 1993: 220.

52 Bentley 2009; Holmberg 1989; Mumford 1989; Ortner 1995a, b; Oppitz 1968; Samuel 1993; Vinding 1998.

53 Oppitz 2006; Blackburn 2008.

54 In Lepcha *búng* means 'mouth' and *áthíng* is 'lord' (Tamsang [1980] 2009: 405). An alternative spelling of the word, *búngthíng* – based on *bóng* 'power' (Tamsang 2005: 119) or 'the original' (Foning [1987] 2003: 529) – emphasises the power of origin, instead of word, and is used by Plaisier (2005: 9) and Foning ([1987] 2003: 62).

55 The Lepcha word *yuk* means 'letter' (Tamsang [1980] 2009: 630), *mun* is the name of the other religious specialist in Lepcha; he or she is the spirit medium chosen by a female spirit.

56 See Bentley 2020, 2014, 2009; Erschbamer 2019.

57 Bentley 2009.

of the emergent state structure and the ruling dynasty that entered these lands from Tibet. It is no coincidence that script – the fixation of knowledge beyond the person and the context[58] – is associated with hegemonic powers and embedded in the process of 'taming', ergo subduing, the local deities and people. Consequently, these myths shed light on still on-going contestations between oral and written traditions and the power hierarchies they produced and still continue to produce.[59] Hence, the colonial and the postcolonial project fed into and reformulated power asymmetries, leading to the marginalisation of Indigenous people, their Indigenous knowledge systems, and ontologies.[60]

Anthropology as a discipline developed within this colonial setting. Until the 1970s the discipline was defined as the objective study of 'other' cultures, lastly of the colonial subjects. It thrived from this colonial need to understand the people and the places they intended to govern in order to access 'new' resources and riches.[61] Consequently, questions related to academic knowledge production and reception are embedded in historical, unequal global power structures as well as the very specific local histories and interpretations of the same. Through the colonial power imbalances, 'Western' knowledge as well as 'Western' methods of knowledge production and cataloguing became established as superior, erasing and dispossessing minority knowledge and people. As criticised in the early 1970s by Asad and Hymes,[62] this power context as well as the effect of their representation was completely ignored by anthropologists. Following these initial critiques, anthropology as a discipline went through a crisis of representation and several different approaches with their own methodologies and theories developed, such as gender, subaltern, and postcolonial studies, advocacy, action, and engaged anthropology.

Despite these developments within the discipline, the imbalance in value and scientific validity asserted to knowledge remains more than half a century after the official 'end' of the colonial era. As Po'dar, Subba, Wouters and others point out, Indian anthropology has perpetuated colonial stereotypes, as can be seen in the uncritical, often well-meaning reproduction of the imagery of the shy, conquered and dwindling Lepcha.[63] This goes hand in hand with discriminatory classification of Indigenous people in Northeast India as 'backward' and in need of assimilation into a Hindu-defined mainstream or as outsiders of dubious loyalty to the state.[64] For the North-American context, Indigenous scholars have pointed out that such politics of recognition[65] help to reproduce colonialism's negative effects and structural inequalities.[66] In India, the link between governmentality and anthropology is institutionalised through the role of several state sponsored com-

58 Finnegan 2007; Goody 2009.

59 This being said, there is a Lepcha script and a corpus of religious books called *námthár*. However, these manuscripts do not contain knowledge associated with the *búngthíng* and the *mun*, but are predominantly translations of Buddhist works with Lepcha characteristics.

60 Gergan 2020; Karak 2016; Middleton 2016.

61 Smith 2012.

62 Asad 1973; Hymes [1969] 1972.

63 Po'dar and Subba 1991; Subba and Wouters 2013; Das and Banerjee 1962: 4; Chakraborty 2001: 21–31; Nirash 1982; Thakur 1988: xi; see also R.P. Lepcha 2021.

64 Subba and Wouters 2013.

65 Taylor 1994.

66 Coulthard 2014; Simpson 2014.

missions[67] and fourteen Tribal Research Institutes. In West Bengal such an institute, the Cultural Research Institute (CRI), was founded in 1955. Amongst other, the CRI conducts ethnographic studies and "studies for recommendations for Identification of various SC/ST/OBC Communities."[68]

Within this field of knowledge production, hegemony, and inequality it seems fruitful to analyse the manner in which data was collected with special focus on the power constellations in which it was produced and reproduced and their effect. Before this backdrop, the next section relooks at Nebesky-Wojkowitz's stay in Kalimpong and highlights the context in which he collected information from 'the Lepcha' and produced academic knowledge on 'the Lepcha.' How did his positioning in the Kalimpong society influence the way he interacted with his Lepcha interlocutors? How are his works a reflection of the time? What makes them distinct?

Nebesky-Wojkowitz in the light of his time

Kalimpong has been conceptualised as a "contact zone" as defined by Pratt[69] in order to analyse processes and power relations of knowledge production in encounters between people with diverse social, economic, cultural, and political backgrounds.[70] Following this approach, I conceptualise the space Nebesky-Wojkowitz moved in as shaped by a complex network of different people with their own backgrounds, (transnational) relations and interactions, and divers power positionings,[71] instead of merely focussing on the interactions between the colonisers and the colonised, or the recently formed Indian government and the hill people.[72] It is within this network that power manifested itself – formulating and reformulating dominant discourses, agency, exploitation, or mutuality of knowledge production.

In this Himalayan town Nebesky-Wojkowitz moved within a specific circle.[73] One of his close contacts was Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, who had set out to "explore terra incognita and rescue the remnants of local cultures perceived to be under threat from the encroaching, modernizing world."[74] The two men enjoyed a close friendship. Nebesky-Wojkowitz also worked as his assistant after the work relationship with Rock disintegrated, with Prince Peter financially enabling Nebesky-Wojkowitz's research endeavours.[75] Nebesky-Wojkowitz's publications align with this assumption of cultural decay due to modernity and capitalism, also visible in his above-mentioned vein of separating what is 'originally Lepcha' from 'alien elements.' He shows concern about the survival of the Indigenous people,

67 See Subba 2013 for insights.

68 CRI webpage; see Middleton 2016: 141–161 on how the CRI works.

69 Pratt [1992] 2003: 6.

70 Viehbeck 2017a: 8.

71 Ibid.

72 One critique of the Subaltern Studies Collective was the stark focus on the dualism between the coloniser and the colonised, for discussion see Sengupta and Ali 2011.

73 See also Oppitz in this volume; De 2018.

74 Brox and Koktvedgaard Zeitzen 2017: 264. See Sahlins (1999; 2005) for a critique of this "missionary" approach of anthropology as a discipline searching for the unspoilt, pure Indigenous in order to save it.

75 De 2018: 201.

something explicitly voiced several times throughout his work, and clearly aligns with what Brox and Koktvedgaard Zeitzen call 'rescue anthropology' and the colonial discourse on the 'dying race.'[76]

An excerpt of his work indicates that Nebesky-Wojkowitz observed the consequences of colonial policies that exploited and dispossessed the Lepcha around Kalimpong. He highlighted the difficulties Lepcha people faced in accessing the necessary forest resources to build according to their traditional architectural style, because "[t]he forest has *ceased to belong to them*, and they have to pay dearly for the large amount of timber needed in the construction of their traditional houses."[77] However, while he is aware of the power asymmetries within which the Indigenous people struggled to exist, the reason why they are "doomed to perish"[78] is transported into specific stereotypical colonial and racialised characteristics of 'the Lepcha':

> As a people, the Lepchas are honest, peace-loving and unselfishly helpful. But their timidity and shyness, their naivety and tendency to individualism, have proved very poor weapons in the unequal struggle they have had to wage for four centuries against interlopers from the north, west and east.[79]

Clearly aligned with the colonial logic of governing and protecting, he refers to the established protective measures mentioned above as the only hope of survival, in his own words:

> The measures introduced to protect the Lepchas during the last decades have averted the danger of the tribe's extinction, at least for the immediate future.[80]

The colonial governmentality and mindset profoundly shaped how knowledge about the Lepcha was constructed and reproduced. Drawing on Reep Pandi Lepcha's critique[81] of British Political Officer Claude White's exoticized portrayal of Lepcha religious beliefs – where the Indigenous "principle of mutual respect and dependency of the people on the produce which nature has to offer" is marginalized – I want to point out that Nebesky-Wojkowitz's approach reflects a similar pattern. Here, a few examples can be given. First, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's aim to determine what is 'alien' to Lepcha culture and what is 'originally' Lepcha is not only presumptuous but also reflects colonial power dynamics that impose external definitions on Lepcha identity and belonging. By setting standards of 'authenticity' beyond the community's own reflections on their practices and knowledge systems – let alone without their consent – he reinforces an imposed framework. Such approaches to authenticity continue to shape applications for special status within the Indian reservation system to this day. Second, his meticulous construction of a Lepcha pantheon abstracts deities from the land, severing them from their intrinsic relationship with the environment.

76 Brox and Koktvedgaard Zeitzen 2017: 264.
77 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a: 141, emphasis added.
78 Ibid.: 143.
79 Ibid.: 142.
80 Ibid.: 143.
81 Lepcha 2017.

This detachment disrupts the fundamental interconnectedness of people, ancestors, and nature that forms the core of Lepcha belief system and world-making practices. As a result, the restructuring of Lepcha knowledge within academic and colonial frameworks constitutes a form of epistemological and ontological violence that remains reproduced until today. Third, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's lists of items he obtained read as a list of knowledge extractivism, such as the samples of traditional medicine. If any processes of informed consent or reciprocity did occur, we cannot find evidence of them in his notes.

Another aspect, I would like to scrutinise is the relations with 'sources' and the respect and reciprocity of these interactions. Nebesky-Wojkowitz is known to have had close and respectful corporations with the Tibetan scholars in Kalimpong. He was aware of his dependency on local informants and the important work they did as brokers between different knowledge systems and nations.[82] Consequently, he acknowledged their contributions and the forms of interactions he had with them. Furthermore, he offered them a knowledge exchange: English lessons for an insight into Tibetan religion and language. Significantly, this was something unheard of from other research scholars in the region.[83]

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's dealings with his Lepcha interlocutors were, however, slightly different. By this, I do not mean that he did not acknowledge certain individual contributions, as I have mentioned above. More importantly though, this knowledge production was not formulated within an exchange such as was the case with the Tibetan scholars and nobles he interacted with. We find no record of him having taught anyone English, or having offered any form of knowledge in exchange for the information he gathered. Also, there is no record of any financial compensation in return for the items he amassed for the Weltmuseum Wien or the medicinal specimens he collected at the behest of the American Anthropological Association. But what we do know is that any form of reciprocity was not worth mentioning in his notes and publications.

Moreover, the context of his interactions with Lepcha interlocutors was different than with his Tibetan sources. In contrast, in these interactions Nebesky-Wojkowitz clearly took a more superior position. In the encounters he describes the Lepcha individuals are the 'sources', while his broker or access to the community was predominantly the Catholic missionary Father Brahier. Nebesky-Wojkowitz's interactions with the Lepcha villagers in Git was 'authorised' in a two-fold manner: First, he came chaperoned by Father Brahier, amongst others, to meet newly converted members of his parish. This placed the latter in a specific power position, so that for example, he could persuade a Lepcha religious specialist to perform a religious ritual – an inherently dangerous act within Indigenous ontology – for the sole purpose of its documentation by foreign researchers, such described by Siiger.[84] Second, even if quite by chance, alongside the Catholic father, Nebesky-Wojkowitz helped implement a state-sponsored inoculation drive to stop a smallpox epidemic. From the perspective of a Lepcha villager, this White man would have been the extension of the Church and the state and thus a representative of the dominant. Moreover, by implementing protection against a deadly disease – aligning with Indigenous ontologies of religious power

82 For a discussion on brokers and local intellectuals see Szasz 2001 and Martin 2016.
83 Viehbeck 2017b: 284.
84 Plaisier 2007: 22.

and healing – the inoculation drive strengthened the position of the Catholic belief and the mission.

While it is hard to assess the agency of the Lepcha individuals with whom Nebesky-Wojkowitz interacted and we can merely read their voices through his lines, they clearly were less involved in the interplay of knowledge production and less acknowledged as scholarly equals and brokers than their Tibetan counterparts. The latter were considered research assistants with access to the culture of the hidden lands, as noted, placing him within a fold of dependency. While such brokers seldom received academic recognition, they often did profit by securing prestige, social standing within shifting political and economic times, and resources, especially from the colonial state.[85] Often, however, they remained caught in the lower ranks of colonial and postcolonial power hierarchies which, as Viehbeck highlights, enabled White men such as Sprigg, Prince Peter, and also Nebesky-Wojkowitz to be recognised as "towering authorities on Tibetan and Himalayan culture,"[86] not merely in academia but also in Kalimpong itself at the time of their residence there, as reflected in the contemporary local English and Tibetan newspaper reports.[87]

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's lack of recognition of 'his Lepcha sources' for scholars and knowledge keepers, such Rebecca Namchu Lepcha and K.P. Tamsang, the religious specialists Renbu Badschi, Ongdi, Labu Kabari, and Kanyemu, the singer Kabo, as well as the hunter Saliang and fisher Kebe, is particularly striking in two distinct ways. His failure to acknowledge Rebecca Namchu Lepcha's prominent role in the Lepcha community, her activism, and her contributions to knowledge production reflects the patriarchal and colonial hierarchies that have historically silenced women. Meanwhile, the disregard for Elders and knowledge practitioners as experts in their own right stems from the assumed superiority of Western academic knowledge over Indigenous knowledge.

Against this backdrop, how did and do Lepcha activists interact with Nebesky-Wojkowitz's legacy? How do they deal with the larger heritage of colonial and post-colonial knowledge production – especially while engaging in activities to obtain and preserve rights and access to resources in the current Indian reservation system?

Activists' interaction with written legacy on Lepcha culture

> The long string of foreign writers like Hooker, Mainwaring, Risley, Kalikumar Das, Waddell, Saratchandra Das, Stocks, Gorer, Morris, *Nebesky*, Siiger, Mackean, Forrest, Mathias, Shafer, Haarh, Graham, Sprigg, Macdonald, Pradhan and many others have written accounts of Lepcha life, social, economic, political, cultural conditions, religion and geographical datas, for which the Lepcha much appreciate and [are] thankful to all those innumerable generous scholars through whose interests and meticulous work, the Lepchas have been able to discover the richness of their own tradition, *but for them, the Lepchas would not have understood themselves*. But on the other hand, it is also most unfortunate that the foreign accounts suffer from

85 See Martins 2016: 93–94.
86 Viehbeck 2017b: 291.
87 Ibid.

> many inherent defects, that is, their inadequate knowledge about Lepcha language and their racial and religious prejudices. I studied all the voluminous books written on the Lepchas by different authors but very sad to say that *most of the facts I read therein are absolutely incorrect*. They are badly worded, open to misinterpretations and *dangerous to the interests of the Lepchas*.[88]

I introduce this section with an excerpt from a publication by K.P. Tamsang, whose list includes colonial administrators, anthropologists, linguists, Tibetologists, and other scholars. Amongst others, he names people with whom he himself had worked as a research assistant and broker of Indigenous knowledge, such as Siiger and Sprigg. The paragraph perfectly words the ambivalent positioning of Lepcha activists towards the legacy of (post)colonial research.

The first part of the quote recalls of the importance of the written word for the mere existence of the Indigenous people within a governance system that places them in the obligation to provide proof of their 'tribalness' from a 'recognised source' in order to attain rights and resources. For activists, prior publications or archival sources – texts written predominantly by non-community members such as ethnographic accounts, dictionaries, or administrative documents – function as early references to culture and practices in order to buttress the rightfulness of the demands. Such texts are "historical materialisations of the records from which histories are (re)constructed."[89] In this context historical records with some form of 'authority' or an air of 'being official' become central to build a case to legitimise and stake claims. The lack of such sources, as Shneiderman points out with regard to the Thangmi communities in Nepal and India, goes hand in hand with misrecognition and anxieties within the dominant paradigm of identity politics.[90]

As such, these previous entextualisations of what it means to be Lepcha influence the activists' and Lepcha association members' current articulations of Indigenous identity and belonging. While they do not necessarily all agree on the 'cultural content' and the specific framing of their Indigenous articulations, they all have reflected on, reproduced, and managed the said 'cultural content' in order to survive and prosper within the Indian reservation system for nearly a century. Summarised, they are all involved in the process of "turning ethnology on themselves."[91] Asserting 'backwardness' or a 'distinct culture' became paramount for community-based activists to claim access to the provisions within the reservation system.[92] Consequently, their activism works within categories of ethno-political practice – drawing on (post)colonial classification and anthropological thought. Therefore, the latter have strongly influenced the activists' way of seeing the world and themselves.[93] In order to 'work the system', they have internalised discourses of the 'West', such as a primordialist approach to culture, a process Smith describes as colonialism of the mind.[94] This

88 Tamsang 1983: Preface, emphasis added.
89 Anderson 2005b: 89.
90 Shneiderman 2015: 9–12.
91 Middleton 2016: 175.
92 Ibid.: 84; see R.P. Lepcha 2015 for a comprehensive evaluation of the Lepcha's demand for special status.
93 Middleton 2016; Karlsson 2011: 60.
94 Smith 2012: ch. 3.

process pushes activists to formulate their articulations along a damage narrative[95] that, albeit stressing previous injustice, continues to other the Indigenous people as 'primitive', broken, in need of repair, and significantly powerless. This is captured in the imagery of the vanishing Lepcha that has been internalised and has become a significant self-definition in the Lepcha community, as visualised in the Lepcha scholar Arthur Foning's book, *Lepchas: My Vanishing Tribe*.[96]

Simultaneously, other Lepcha activists also contest such a self-definition. Hence, Lepcha activists struggle for the authority to define how oral Indigenous knowledge becomes reframed in this process of obtaining protection and rights. The second part of the excerpt from K.P. Tamsang's book addresses specifically this core difficulty of the experience of being written about: the inability to control what the 'other' writes about oneself. To regain control over the discourse, K.P. Tamsang, his son Lyangsong Tamsang (1946–2023), an influential activist who has shaped the Lepcha association's work for several decades, and other current-day leaders have strongly promoted a narrative on Lepcha strength, significantly visualised in festivities surrounding the Lepcha chief Gyebú Áchok, who is celebrated as the last Lepcha king, warrior, and protector. Within this paradigm, regaining ownership over the discourse on their ethnic group is part and parcel of the struggle for survival.

A lot of the material published in academic journals and non-Indian academic publishing houses is not available locally or due to a pay wall. Nebesky-Wojkowitz's works are known to leading activists, but not quoted or publicly reproduced. This might change, as in 2019 his publications on the Lepcha have been uploaded online and are now available for anyone with internet access to read.[97] Other books or articles published or reprinted for the local market as well as administrative reports are and have been accessible for quite some time. Most influentially, Gorer's monograph *The Lepchas of Sikkim* [originally titled, *Himalayan Village: An Account of the Lepcha of Sikkim*] was republished in 1996 and became readily available in bookstores in Kalimpong, Darjeeling, and Gangtok. It was probably one of the most read books on the Lepcha by Lepcha activists when I first started my fieldwork in 2006 and controversially so. Several activists I interacted with pointed out that this work was specifically how they did not want their ethnic group to be represented, notably due to Gorer's focus on sexuality within his Freudian approach. This became accentuated when such a prejudiced colonial formulation of Indigenous people – especially women – as promiscuous that has been fixed through the written word was reproduced in the Environmental Impact Assessment Report of an upcoming and opposed dam project.[98] Such misrepresentations and exploitations of Indigenous practices and knowledge systems are deeply damaging, and constitute a "form of cognitive imperialism."[99]

As a consequence, activists and members of the Lepcha associations are increasingly sceptical about researchers and actively try to hold them accountable. They aim to revert

95 Tuck 2009.

96 Foning [1987] 2003.

97 A dossier named *Lepcha studies 1951–1953* that compiles Nebesky-Wojkowitz's publications on the Lepcha can be downloaded from the webpage *The Darjeeling un-limited* (www.darjeeling-unlimited.com/documents.html, accessed 11.07.2023).

98 WABCOS 2006: 5–16, 5–17.

99 Peters 2016: 38.

the power structures that placed them in the inferior position. This approach also influences their dealings with researchers. They are struggling to be rid of the function of being a 'source', merely delivering the raw information upon which academic researchers receive the recognition for being an 'expert'on the respective ethnic community. This reclaiming of the narrative strongly resonates in the next paragraph of K.P. Tamsang's publication, in which he names "competent authorities on Lepcha"[100] as contributing to the knowledge in this book, namely centenarians – including the "prominent Lepcha litterateur from Nim busty"[101] on whom Nebesky-Wojkowitz had also relied as a 'source.' K.P. Tamsang, however, adds what he defines as a crucial difference between his publication and the others: "I have been able to write this book with a Lepcha's eyes and judge with a Lepcha's heart."[102]

Here, I focussed on the Lepcha activists as brokers, because the majority of Lepcha individuals do not access academic knowledge directly, but rely on actors to translate the knowledge for them.[103] Until recently, Lepcha activists – and especially the members of the Lepcha associations – dominated the public discourse on Lepcha culture, heritage, and identity and thus also the reception and reframing of academic knowledge on their community. In public events they disseminate their versions to the people and into the popular press. They publish books, pamphlets, articles in local magazines, newspapers, and blogs, but also, they write reports for the Backward Classes Welfare Department and issue written demands to the government that are shaped by, but also have the potential to shape, policies on culture and preservation. Increasingly, however, new actors and channels of communication have emerged in the local discourse on Lepcha culture and ethnic politics. A young and vibrant generation of educated Lepchas has become more vocal about their communities' culture, narratives, and histories. Additionally, other mediums are used to consume and reproduce knowledge about the Lepcha community, such as social media sites, blogs, films, and music. With this new generation, new framings of Indigenous knowledge and alternative interpretations of culture, Indigeneity, and knowledge are surfacing. Importantly, from the perspective of academia and knowledge production, there is an increasing number of Lepcha scholars pursuing academic careers and teaching at universities, colleges, and schools. They are reclaiming the representational power and developing own frameworks to understand their communities' world-making practices and Indigenous knowledge as well as analysing their histories and positionings from an insider perspective, among them are Dr. Reep Pandi Lepcha, Minket Lepcha, Alyen Foning, Dr. Charisma Karthak Lepcha, Dr. Rongynoo Lepcha and Mongfing Lepcha, Dr. Anira Phipon Lepcha, Dr. Kachyo Lepcha, Dr. Mabel Denzin Gergan, and Jordan Kinchum Tshering Namchu.[104]

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100 Tamsang 1983: Preface.

101 Ibid.

102 Ibid.

103 Bentley 2024; Klosters and van Leynseele 2018; Collier and Ong 2005.

104 R.P. Lepcha, M. Lepcha and Foning 2024; C.K. Lepcha 2021, 2022; R. Lepcha and M. Lepcha 2021; A.P. Lepcha 2015, 2021; K. Lepcha 2020; R.P. Lepcha 2015, 2017, 2021; Gergan and Curley 2021, J.K.T. Namchu (forthcoming).

Concluding thoughts

In this article, I placed knowledge production within the power constellations of (post) colonial India and Kalimpong, and traced interactions of academics, local 'informants', Lepcha activists, and the state with a special focus on the works of Nebesky-Wojkowitz. While Nebesky-Wojkowitz's legacy shows his meticulousness and skills as an ethnographer, and thus potentially can be an important resource for giving insight into the history of the Lepcha community, his work is still embedded in difficult power processes of (post)colonial knowledge production.

The issues of knowledge production, ownership, power, and representation in relation to the legacies of researchers and museum collections are not new. Since the early 2000s, the establishment of Indigenous knowledge centres and discussions on the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives, as well as the decolonization of museums, have highlighted these concerns.[105] A growing approach to addressing the power dynamics embedded in archives is the digital opening of collections, making knowledge more accessible to a global audience. The open access movement, which seeks to dismantle knowledge injustices by eliminating paywalls and other barriers, is an example of this effort. However, this movement, originating primarily from universities in the United States and Europe, does not account for the place-based knowledge systems of Indigenous communities. As a result, it exposes implicit power asymmetries: Who decides which knowledge is made publicly available, and which remains restricted? Are the access regulations of Indigenous communities – particularly regarding sacred content and other-than-human entities – respected in these decision-making processes? Therefore, I argue that digitalisation projects need to be co-developed with Indigenous community members, in this specific case the Lepcha community, to dismantle knowledge exploitation and recontextualise the 'artefacts' within Indigenous epistemologies and lands. Such an approach moves beyond mere inclusion, but envisions reparation,[106] which can only be achieved in genuine partnership with the Indigenous communities who have been 'documented' and whose 'artefacts' are displayed.

Repatriation – be it digital or physical, creative, spiritual, or intellectual – entails acts of care and relationship building. Such reparative engagements require the establishment of trust, respect, reciprocity, consent, and accountability.[107] Moreover, engaging with these materials as historical sources – as is often crucial to Indigenous activists – necessitates critical decolonising. Dissecting the power dynamics at play when handling collections and ethnographic materials such as Nebesky-Wojkowitz's, as I have done in this article, is just the starting-point of the reparative work required. To dismantle the epistemic injustices that the 'artefacts' have been bound into, they must be consciously stripped of the colonial categories that shape their preservation. Instead, they should be resituated – as far as possible – within the place-based knowledge systems from which they had been removed, allowing them to become ensouled and 'living' again.

The premise that Indigenous people have ownership over their knowledge, 'artefacts', and data should be the baseline. However, copyright and ownership laws governing archives

105 Anderson 2005a, 2005b; Lonetree 2012; Onciul 2015.

106 Stein et al. 2024.

107 Ibid.; Whyte 2020.

and institutions do not necessarily validate this approach, making negotiations essential.[108] Furthermore, questions of representation are deeply complex in Indigenous communities such as the Lepcha, whose lands have been fragmented across multiple modern nation-states and who lack a single representative or council to speak in their behalf. 'The' Indigenous community cannot be understood as one actor, but as a diverse collective of individuals enmeshed in multi-layered networks and power relations. As I have only briefly touched upon here but elaborated elsewhere,[109] Lepcha activists themselves engage in ongoing debates regarding the 'cultural content' and its appropriate articulations. Additionally, new actors – such as Indigenous scholars, artists, bloggers, and others – are actively shaping public discourse by creating diverse representations of their traditional cultural expressions and Indigenous knowledge systems.

There is no clear-cut, ethically simple solution to these contentions involving different interest groups, power positionings, and legal complexities.[110] Such processes are messy; above all they require the honest intent to engage in a reparative process and the relational rigour of diverse actors[111] – including researchers, institutions, Indigenous activists, other members of the Indigenous communities, other-than-human beings, and the land. Furthermore, the interactions not only need to respect (onto)epistemological pluralism – something found in many Indigenous knowledge systems[112] – but also value it as an agent to shape futures.

108 Anderson 2005a, 2005b.
109 Bentley 2025.
110 Anderson 2005a, 2005b.
111 Stein et al. 2024.
112 Andreotti et al. 2011; Reid et al. 2021.

PHOTO SOURCE

Fig. 1. René Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1951–1953, KHM-Museumsverband, Weltmuseum Wien, VF 31.325.

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PASSION FOR PRINT

René Nebesky-Wojkowitz and His Ties with the First Modern Tibetan-Language Publisher Babu Tharchin in Kalimpong

Anna Sawerthal

The following paper introduces René Nebesky-Wojkowitz's engagement with and in modern Tibetan print culture. While not at the forefront of his scientific interest and legacy, from early on Nebesky-Wojkowitz showed a keen interest in Tibetan scribal, paper and print culture, as proven in his doctoral dissertation *Schriftwesen, Papierherstellung und Buchdruck bei den Tibetern* (Vienna, 1949). In the 1950s, he spent several years in the Indo-Sikkimese border town of Kalimpong – at that time a puzzling trading hub through which many Tibetologists aspired to gain access to Tibet. There, he became acquainted with the local mediator Babu Tharchin, a Christian convert, who had established himself as one of the first commercial print-publishers for the Tibetan language. Not only did Tharchin produce a newspaper, but he also published widely in the educational and popular literature sectors. In his book *Wo Berge Götter sind* (1955), Nebesky-Wojkowitz describes Tharchin and his publishing house in detail. The Austrian scholar also brought some of Tharchin's publications back to Vienna, where they are currently kept by the Weltmuseum Wien and the University of Vienna.

Print culture in Tibet dates back to at least the 15th century. In fact, the first printed texts in the Tibetan script can be traced to the 12th century, though it took at least another 200 to 300 years before the new technology was employed on a larger scale.[1] Subsequently, mostly powerful lamas, abbots and theocratic leaders utilised wood block printing to produce religious textual material. Even today when we think of Tibetan printing, the image that springs to mind is of red-robed monks seated in a print workshop within a monastery, printing black ink on long white sheets of paper by means of wood blocks. And indeed, the method of wood block printing for *pecha* (*dpe cha*), i.e., the traditional Tibetan loose-leaf book form, was the most widespread practice throughout the Tibetan plateau for centuries when it came quick dissemination. Nevertheless, Tibetan print culture has undergone smaller and greater changes over time. It was in fact only in the first half of the 20th century

1 For a history of Tibetan printing see Helman-Ważny 2014: 116–123, Diemberger et al. 2016, and especially Clemente 2016 and Ehrhard 2016.

that printing in Tibetan script substantially transformed. Rather than refining various techniques of printing with blocks, the ways of printing expanded altogether. New technologies such as lithography or moveable type printing reached the Tibetan plateau – and with that the plateau started to participate technologically in the globally used print methods of the modern age.

One of the driving forces behind the transition from traditional to modern print methods was Babu Tharchin (1890–1976) from the Indo-Sikkimese border town of Kalimpong. Tharchin was a Christian convert, who established himself as one of the first commercial print-publishers for the Tibetan language. Picking up on local trends of modern printing establishments in vernacular languages and scripts, his publishing oeuvre encompassed products such as a newspaper, daily calendars, maps and dictionaries – to a great extent, products which had hardly been produced for a Tibetan-language market before. For centuries, Tibetan-language printing had been organized, negotiated and reinvented through monasteries or monastic power alliances. The large bulk of the produced *pecha* were thus religious in nature – in all its forms and varieties. This in turn meant that printing was dominated and deeply entrenched in Buddhist soteriology. But Tharchin departed from this track. He widely published educational and popular literature, addressing not necessarily a wholly different audience with his books and the newspaper, while basing his endeavour on a very different conception of this audience. The foundation of the newspaper *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long*, in short "Melong" or "Tibet Mirror,"[2] in 1925, and consequently the print shop "Tibet Mirror Press" (in the following: TMP) is one the crystallization points of a "modern Tibet" as we know it.

Tharchin's life and work coincides with René Nebesky-Wojkowitz's travels and stays in Kalimpong. Unsurprisingly, the ardent and well-connected scholar knew Tharchin and maintained contact with the thriving publisher. Nebesky-Wojkowitz was intrigued by Tharchin's newspaper project, which he described as "the oddest newspaper in the world."[3] He also brought *pecha* and books from the TMP back to Vienna. Analyzing this literature and the connections with Tharchin opens a door onto a so far underexposed aspect of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's scientific legacy: His engagement with and in modern print culture. Print culture might not have been at the forefront of his scientific interests, but print and scriptural culture had been on Nebesky-Wojkowitz's agenda from very early on in his career.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's early interest in print culture

René Nebesky-Wojkowitz displayed a keen interest in Tibetan scribal, paper and print culture from early on, as proven by his dissertation on *Schriftwesen, Papierherstellung und Buchdruck bei den Tibetern* (Vienna, 1949), which he defended at the age of 26. In this study, he provides a brief and succinct summary of historical developments, technical fineries and cultural aspects of Tibetan-language printing. The main focus lies in the different developments of the Tibetan script, and along the way, he also introduces and explains the process of paper production in Tibet and describes the method of wood block-printing. Additional-

2 The full Tibetan title translates into "A Mirror of News from Various Regions." Most front pages also carry the English title "Tibet Mirror." In this paper I refer to the newspaper as "Melong" (mirror).

3 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956: 73.

ly, he provides an overview of how news was transported throughout the ages, and of the Tibetan culture of letter-writing. Unlike other authors who had studied books and *pecha*-production in Tibet, Nebesky-Wojkowitz pays particular attention to more popular forms of book culture. He makes a point in mentioning the rather informal sector of booksellers in Lhasa to show that there is in fact a book market addressing a general public besides and beyond the secluded walls of monasteries. In this respect, Nebesky-Wojkowitz showed keen interest in cultural aspects of the book. He also found it noteworthy to mention how "printing in red ink was considered to accumulate more merit than printing in black."[4] These are typical features of Tibetan print culture that live on even in today's newspaper productions – both in exile and in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) along with other Tibetan areas within the People's Republic of China.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's time in Kalimpong

In the summer of 1950, Nebesky-Wojkowitz travelled to the Indo-Sikkimese border town of Kalimpong in the Indian Himalayas. Kalimpong had developed into a hub of Tibetophiles, spiritual seekers, colonialists and others, who saw the small border town as a gateway to Tibet. Tibet itself was going through a period of turmoil: it was shortly before the Chinese Communists arrived in Lhasa, and the British had left only a few years earlier. Even though Tibet was never colonized, it had just experienced – especially in terms of foreign policy – a period of great dependency on the former British Government of India, which had kept a grip on Lhasa ever since the brutal Younghusband military "expedition" of 1904. This all quickly changed, once India gained its independence in 1947. The Ganden Phodrang government found itself in a power vacuum, fighting amongst each other on which direction to take. The new Chinese government under Mao Zedong seized this window of opportunity and occupied Tibet starting in 1950.

Kalimpong, located on the Indian side of where this drama was unfolding, became *the* hotspot for accessing information on Tibet. This hub of exchange became an outright "nest of spies,"[5] from whom information on developments in Tibet could be gained. But Kalimpong also continued to be a multi-cultural space were people from all different walks of life met and exchanged ideas. For both political and cultural reasons, Tibetan studies at that time, almost by definition, meant going to Kalimpong. Like many of his colleagues, Nebesky-Wojkowitz also found many informants for his studies of rituals and peoples in Kalimpong. His first trip there lasted from 1950 to 1953, and he returned both in 1956 and on his trips to the Himalayas in 1958/59.

In his classic *Where the Gods are Mountains*, Nebesky-Wojkowitz provides a detailed account of his first and longest trip to the border town.[6] A whole chapter is entitled *The City of the Seven New Years*, playing on the obvious diversity of the place, where Nepalis, Tibetans, British colonialists, Western adventurers, Marwari businessmen, Lepchas and so on assembled, all following a different calendar. He also devotes a few paragraphs to the influ-

4 See Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1949:74.

5 Himalayan Times, 27 September 1953: 5.

6 Originally published in German in 1955, it was translated into English in 1956 by Michael Bullock. See Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955 and Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956.

ential position of Christian missionaries in the town. Though he highlights how other missionaries are doing good work in the Himalayan region, his report on a "preacher of some obscure Christian sect" is quite critical. As he describes: "The man speaks very imperfect Tibetan, and the dense crowd of Tibetans gathered round him repeatedly roar with laughter at his bad pronunciation."[7] Nebesky-Wojkowitz concludes that the endeavor of Christian missionaries "to convince the Tibetans of the special advantages of his religion" is a "vain attempt, for Tibetans are almost completely immune to the influence of Christian missionaries."[8]

His observations concerning Christian missionaries are significant for the study of the history of the Tibetan press on two levels. At the local, contemporary level, the aforementioned "Tibet Mirror Press" grew out of the Scottish Mission in Kalimpong. On a broader general level, the entire project of Tibetan newspaper history is intimately connected to the history of Christian missionaries in the Himalayas.[9] Concerning the TMP, Tharchin was himself a Christian convert from the border region of the Western Himalayas, who originally relocated to Kalimpong as a Tibetan teacher at the Scottish Mission in 1917. Tharchin had grown up under the auspices of the Moravian missionaries in Poo, Khunu. The Moravians had been active in the Western Himalayas, and especially in Ladakh, for decades. One of their highlighted activities was producing printed material in the Tibetan language. As part of this venture, they created the very first printed Tibetan-language newspaper (1904–1910).[10] Their stated goal was to proselytize and to bring Christianity to the Tibetans by desacralizing the Tibetan script, in a sense that reading the newspaper does not provide "the option of earning religious merit,"[11] as editor August Hermann Francke once noted. Tharchin picked up on this development and became the first person who self-identified as Tibetan to publish a newspaper for the Plateau.

Supported first by the Scottish Mission and then financed through the British Government of India (GOI) before ultimately standing on independent footing,[12] the newspaper project developed from a small printing press that printed the Melong into a larger venture producing dozens of different titles. The TMP was known far beyond its surroundings, and the newspaper had subscribers all over the globe. Once in Kalimpong, Tharchin had established himself as a much sought and clever middleman between Tibetans and British, Buddhists and Christians. With his Tibetan background, yet Christian upbringing, and wearing Western clothes, he swiftly bridged and naturally navigated many different worlds.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz described this situation in his book *Where the Gods are Mountains*: "The editor is Kusho Tharchin, an affable Tibetan who prefers English clothes and has mastered English as thoroughly as the tortuous formulas of honorific Tibetan."[13] The TMP

7 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956: 71.

8 Ibid.

9 On the press history of the Moravian missionaries in the Western Himalayas see e.g., Bray 1988, Engelhardt 2010, Erhard and Römer 2007, Francke 1906 and Walravens 2002.

10 For a historical overview of early Tibetan newspapers see Erhard and Haoran 2018, Sawerthal 2018a: 63–92 and www.tibetannewspapers.org (accessed 11.07.2023).

11 Francke 1906, cited in Walravens 2002: 36.

12 For a detailed history of financing of the TMP see Sawerthal 2018a: 114–125.

13 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956: 73.

workshop made the following impression on Nebesky-Wojkowitz: "In the middle of the Tibetan quarter stands a corrugated-iron shed, from which a steep flight of steps runs up to a small stone building. The two buildings house the editorial offices and press of the oddest newspaper in the world. This is the Mirror of News from All Sides of the World, as its title means literally, some hundred and fifty copies of which appear monthly." Nebesky-Wojkowitz importantly notes how the newspaper is "an exception among Tibetan printed works: it is not printed with wood blocks, but with lead type […]."[14] On the following two pages, Nebesky-Wojkowitz aptly describes the colorful and diverse contents, the "wealth of absorbing news" of the "six or eight pages of print," describing world news, the transliteration of Western names into Tibetan, the frequent juxtaposition of world and local leaders and the Melong's contribution to market prices in the area.[15]

Tharchin as a print pioneer

Bringing together worlds and ideas which were previously separate was one of Tharchin's major qualities and accomplishments. With his upbringing in the Himalayan borderlands, this man from Khunu quite naturally slid between cultural identities often perceived distinct, separated along lines such as language, ethnicity or common practices. Having grown up in Christian missionary compounds to Tibetan-speaking parents, within the princely state of Bushahr under the British Raj, Tharchin was able to negotiate deftly between different cultural stakeholders. He was well acquainted with diverse cultural protocols, whether Tibetan forms of politeness or British etiquette. And as a schoolteacher, he was also familiar with English and Tibetan literature – in very different ways than traditional monastic scholars of the Tibetan plateau. While he might not have studied the Buddhist canon in depth, he was familiar with many styles of Tibetan writing and began to reproduce them for his own purposes, first as a teacher, and later as a publisher.

Especially as a publisher, he picked up on trends and borrowed from different cultural systems. He juxtaposed the practice of modern newspaper making with Tibetan forms of letter writing. As I have argued elsewhere, with his TMP, Tharchin established himself as one of the first commercial print-publishers for the Tibetan language, trying to earn money by publishing books and a newspaper. In Northern India in the early 20th century, commercial print publishing had become popular, the production of newspapers mushroomed.[16] Rather than relying on a traditional system of patronage for printing books, Tharchin picked up on this current and tried to do the same for the Tibetan language.[17] The following sections investigate what this endeavor entailed.

Tharchin's TMP at the edge of tradition and modernity

As described above, Tharchin was driven and inspired by modern newspaper making. Yet, when analyzing the TMP's innovations, we need to be careful not to disconnect it from

14 Ibid.

15 See ibid.

16 See Stark 2007 on the commercial print-publishers in Northern India, particularly in Bengal.

17 Only when Tharchin realized that he could not find enough customers for the newspaper did he increasingly turn to affluent sponsors.

preexistent communicative modes and formats. The TMP continued many features of Tibetan-language print culture that had been practiced for decades. Whenever Tharchin made use of new forms in the area of Tibetan-language print culture, he embedded them within, juxtaposed them with, and added them to certain extant cultural patterns. To put it simply, we can observe on every level of analysis how new forms complement rather than oust, overlap with rather than replace altogether older forms. The modern idea of commercial publishing blended into established modes of print culture.[18]

On the economic side, Tharchin tried to introduce a subscription model as we still know today: individual subscribers to a newspaper pay a rather low price for a single copy. The more subscribers a newspaper has, the less expensive the production of one issue becomes. Especially during the early years of the Melong's existence, Tharchin fervently tried to make this system understood to his readers. He employed methods used even today to court more subscribers, such as giving away gifts[19] – but with little effect.[20] Up to that point, *pecha*, books and print material were usually financed through some kind of patronage, such as commissions or donations.[21] This new subscription mode of selling a print product was utterly new and unheard-of in Tibet. When Tharchin saw how very few people subscribed to the newspaper, his appeals increasingly coincided with requests for donations, for which he used the terms *gsol ras* (donation, gift), *zhal 'debs* (contribution, donation) or *mthun rkyen* (provision, necessity to prosper). Echoing colophons of classical *pecha*-texts, Tharchin would also list the names of the donors in the newspaper.

The utterly new product of the newspaper itself was explained to readers in terms of advantages and benefits. On one hand, the newspaper was explained as a benefit to society by spreading knowledge of the world even to the Tibetan plateau.[22] At the same time, on the other hand, a very different argument for buying the paper was repeatedly explained according to traditional soteriological aims: Buying the newspaper was said to be a virtuous deed, because buyers would help the paper to survive. Just like "ransoming" (*srog bslu*) birds or fish, one could "ransom" the newspaper.[23] At one point, the newspaper was even styled as a small boy who needed help in the form of finances.[24] Thus, buying the newspaper would enhance a reader's karma and ultimately benefit the path to Buddhist enlightenment. In the same vein, later on, the newspaper was not only explained to hold good advice on how to lead a morally sound life for its readers, but to *be* one, namely a "*legs bshad.*"[25] It is instances

18 For the following section cf. Sawerthal 2018a: 133–149.

19 In the May 1932 issue, for example, the editor promises that any new subscriber would receive a modern flashlight and a copy of a TMP-book for free.

20 Cf. Sawerthal 2018a: 135 and 269ff.

21 While exceptions surely existed, the overall trend is clear. For a better understanding of the economics of print workshops in Tibet over the centuries, refer to Sernesi 2016 or Ehrhard 2016.

22 This "selling point" is repeatedly mentioned in various editorial notes scattered throughout the run of the Melong.

23 See e.g., Melong, January 1927.

24 See the front page of Melong, May 1937: A drawing of a small child is accompanied by a poem about the nine-year-old newspaper, composed in first person. For a translation see Sawerthal 2018a: 197–198.

25 A *legs bshad* is a common and popular format of moral instruction and usually comprises four verse lines of seven syllables each. It translates into "good explanation" or "elegant saying" and is popularly employed both in written and oral form to give moral advice in the Tibetan language.



Fig. 1a, b. A cartoon printed using wood block. Melong, June 1959, p. 6.

like these that reveal how the new product, the newspaper, was deeply connected to familiar forms and genres, not dissimilar from what potential readers knew and had known all their lives.

In terms of technology, it is also apparent that Tharchin's print publications existed at the crossroad between traditional printing and modern formats. Many TMP publications were produced in both modern book and *pecha* formats, to name just one such feature. The first edition (1936) of the *Lha sa dran glu* (Song of Lhasa Memories), for example, is printed in *pecha*-format. Its third edition of 1965 is printed in modern book format. Various methods of printing were employed for the production of TMP publications, including lithography, type-set and woodblock-printing. And these methods were mixed within one publication, as well. In later issues of the Melong, for instance, cartoons increasingly appeared and were employed as political commentary. While the texts of the newspaper were printed as lithography or type-set, the cartoons were printed using centuries-old methods: A cartoon criticizing the world's silence towards Mao Zedong's actions, for example, was printed using wood-block. (fig. 1).

On a cultural level, a number of features show how aspects of print culture were transported into the modern ages. The practice of post-coloring printed material is documented at least as early as the 16th century,[26] and the same practice can be found within the Melong, most prevalently in especially auspicious and important issues. The Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA) in Dharamsala, for example, stores three issues produced upon the enthronement ceremony of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in 1940. Each of them displays different post-coloring (fig. 2).[27] Another older practice, mentioned above, was printing with red ink. This is also found in the Melong, where red ink was employed for particularly important or auspicious events, headlines or news items. As Nebesky-Wojkowitz noted in his dissertation, this is a custom and practice that had been employed in Tibetan-language printing for centuries.[28]

TMP publications in focus

The history and development of the TMP reveals an innovative vision for a modern print workshop. From the beginning, the idea to start a newspaper using the Mission's press was accompanied by book publishing. It was a win-win-situation for both the Mission and

26 See Sernesi 2016: 339.
27 See Melong, February 1940.
28 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1949: 74.



Fig. 2. Three copies of the special issue on the enthronement ceremony of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. Melong, February 1940, p. 1.

Tharchin. The Mission could further its endeavors in publishing – if not Christian, then at least Non-Buddhist – literature. The book sales would at times co-finance the newspaper. And for Tharchin the books added to his overall vision of a modern print-publisher as contemporaries understood it.

During the course of my research, I have managed to collect 122 titles published, printed and/or advertised through the TMP.[29] This section will provide a brief overview of this collection with the aim of showing how, in terms of content, Tharchin's publishing activities aimed to address a general mass audience – in contrast to the Tibetan-language printing which hitherto had focussed on a specific educated elite. Most often, this had meant religiously educated people, such as scholar-monks within the compounds of the monasteries or high officials of a theocratic government. As we will see, this legacy lived on in the publications and activities of the TMP: Most publications were Buddhist in one way or another. But additionally, there is an overwhelming emphasis on educational and practical literature, targeting a more general audience.[30]

Evidently, the 122 collected titles do not represent a complete list of all publications ever published by the TMP. But the study of this vast collection does represent the range of different sectors in which the TMP published in, and in what quantitative relationship these sectors stand compared to each other.[31] In order to establish this, I inductively developed a rough categorization scheme comprising nine different "baskets." These categories might overlap to a certain degree, but the groupings allow us to gain insights into the distribu-

29 The collected titles were compiled in two different sets of data: first, data compiled through various archives around the world; and second, via the advertisement lists published within the pages of the Melong.

30 Cf. Sawerthal 2018a: 138–139.

31 The collected titles comprise three different types of publication: a) printed and published at TMP; b) published or commissioned by an outside source but printed at TMP; c) published and printed elsewhere, but sold through the TMP publishing house. At least seven TMP publications were authored by Tharchin himself, all of them schoolbooks and dictionaries.

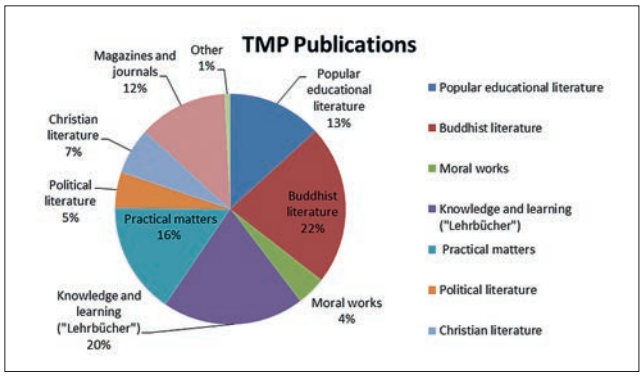


Fig. 3. The range of contents of TMP publications.

tion of themes, genres, and aims of the publications. The nine categories (plus two subcategories) are listed below; the number in brackets signals the number of publications found within this category:

1) Popular educational literature (16), (such as *'bel gtam*, operas, parables, tales; usually Buddhist in content and thus not entirely distinguishable from Buddhist literature),
2) Buddhist literature (27)
   a) classics (7), (such as *jātakas* and works by famous scholars)
   b) applied prayers (20), (such as *gsol 'debs, smon lam*, and longlife prayers),
3) Moral works (5), (such as The Five Hygienic Paths or a booklet on alcohol; connected to Buddhist literature),
4) Textbooks and books for learning (24), (e.g., schoolbooks, dictionaries),
5) Practical matters (19), (e.g., letter-writers, calendars, mathematical tables, maps),
6) Political literature (6),
7) Christian literature (8),
8) Magazines and journals (15),
9) Other (2).[32]

A diagram (fig. 3) helps up readily visualize the five largest categories: Buddhist literature (22%), closely followed by textbooks and books for learning (20%), further followed by practical matters (16%), popular educational literature (13%) and magazines and journals (12%).

Leaving the category of Buddhist literature aside for a moment, the evident focus on applied and practical literature is immediately striking. The majority of titles printed and produced by Tharchin were not meant to be used only by a restricted number of spiritually legit people, or as an object of veneration. The dictionaries, maps, textbooks and popular stories were meant to be used and read. The publications of a Christian nature were mostly produced while the TMP was still located within the compound of the Scottish Mission. Also within this category, we find a calendar, for example – a practical accessory for everyday life. Political literature increased from the 1950s and was exclusively commissioned: Various individuals used the TMP as a handy tool in their own service, commissioning the printing of certain texts in order to distribute them further. This trend reflects the influx of refugees arriving into exile from the Tibetan plateau.

32 These remaining publications include one Bon text and one unidentifiable text.

The same trend can be observed in the large category of "Buddhist literature." Most of the publications of this category represent works commissioned by outside sources. Just as with political literature, also here, the dates of publication reveal an increase starting from the 1950s. Of the 27 titles, seven constitute what I would term "classics." The great majority of the other 20 titles are practical prayer booklets, mostly in *pecha*-format. Thus, even within the category of Buddhist literature, we can observe a striking focus on the applied and practical dimensions of religious life. In short, the printing and publishing house TMP, at least in part commercial, made it a point to target a very wide, general audience, both with its newspaper and its books.[33]

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's TMP literature in Vienna

René Nebesky-Wojkowitz observed Tharchin's publishing activities while he was in Kalimpong. It is likely that he regularly visited the workshop to investigate new publications Tharchin was working on. Luckily, the Weltmuseum Wien holds a few publications that Nebesky-Wojkowitz brought back form Kalimpong. They provide us glimpses into Nebesky-Wojkowitz's interest in Tharchin's work and reflect his interests in Tibetan culture in general.[34]

In total, the Weltmuseum Wien holds twelve publications connected to the TMP. According to the documentation of the museum, Nebesky-Wojkowitz acquired the items on his first journey to Kalimpong, between 1950 and 1953.[35] Reflecting what I described above concerning the range of TMP publications, the collection encompasses publications both in *pecha*-format and in modern book format. Six publications are in Tibetan and six in English.

Applying the aforementioned categorization of TMP publications, six items fall into the category of text books and books for learning, four into Buddhist literature, one into magazines and journals, and one into Christian literature.[36] Hence, Nebesky-Wojkowitz was keen on picking up Tharchin's progressive work in the fields of school books and dictionaries – all six English-language publications fall into this category: there are two textbooks for learning the Lepcha language (fig. 4),[37] and a series of four publications on the Tibetan language by Basil Gould and Hugh Richardson. The series includes "Tibet Verb Roots," "Tibetan Syllables," "Tibetan Language Records" and the "Tibetan-Medical Word-Book," which were all published in 1949 and represent the second edition of the series.[38]

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33 Note that some of the 122 publications are Tibetan-language publications addressed at a Tibetan-speaking audience. Others, such as dictionaries or textbooks, cater mainly to a non-Tibetan-, but English-speaking audience.

34 I sincerely thank Uwe Niebuhr and the Weltmuseum Wien for making these publications available to me.

35 Also see Himalayan Times, 26 July 1959: 4: "He [Nebesky-Wojkowitz] revisited Nepal and Kalimpong last year studying and making collections for the Vienna museum."

36 The Christian publication was not printed at the TMP, nor was the TMP the official publisher. But there is a strong indication that Tharchin very likely distributed it through his shop: The same item is also stored in the Tharchin Collection of Columbia University, which comprises only items found at the TMP press house.

37 "The Lepcha First Primer" and "The Lepcha Second Primer," 1949, published by the General Lepcha Association, Darjeeling, printed at the TMP.

38 Weltmuseum Wien, inv. nos. Bibl. 12122 As. geh., Bibl. 12121 As. geh., Bibl. 12120 As. and Bibl. 13.578 As.

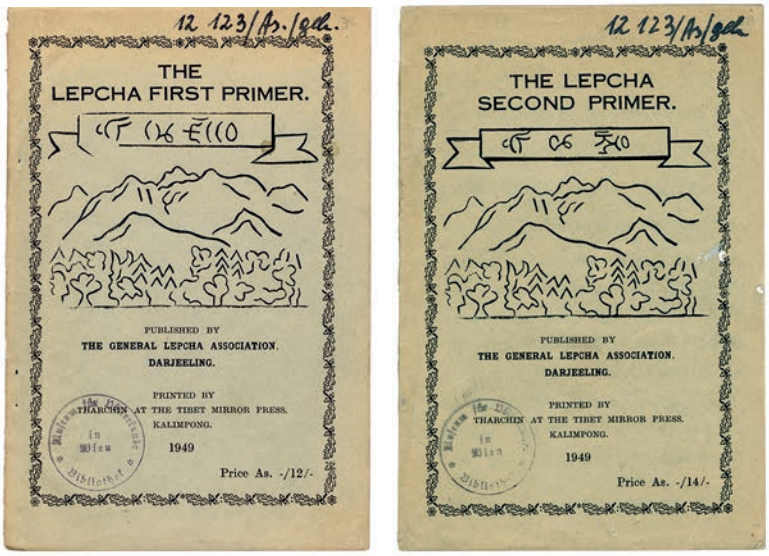


Fig. 4. The Lepcha First and Second Primers, published by the TMP.

The Tibetan-language publications that Nebesky-Wojkowitz brought to Vienna predominantly comprise Buddhist literature. One is about the lives of Shariputra and Maudgalyayana, two close disciples of the historical Buddha.[39] Another is a compilation of prophecies (*lung bstan*) by Padmasambhava, retrieved through the treasure revealer (*gter ston*) 'Jam dbyang mkhyen rtse 'od zer from Derge.[40] A further *pecha* contains a teaching on the Dharma in verse form by Patrul Rinpoche 'Jig med Chos kyi dbang po (1808–1887).[41] And another *pecha* presents a compilation of texts of Buddhist ritual practice: It includes prayer texts and a description of how to take refuge.[42]

Additionally, Nebesky-Wojkowitz brought one issue of the Melong back to Vienna, namely the "Silver Jubilee Number" dated December 1950/January 1951.[43] While he had evidentially read more issues of the Melong, he apparently only considered the jubilee-issue worth keeping – a problem that scholars of the ephemeral medium of newspaper often face. Given the items found at the Weltmuseum Wien, we can conclude that Nebesky-Wojkowitz was mainly interested in the language books and the Buddhist applied texts which the TMP produced. These were certainly the publications available at the time when he was in Kalimpong. But even allowing for some degree of random sampling, Nebesky-Wojkowitz did not bring back, for example, any of the political literature the TMP printed. Neither is there any calendar or map attested in the archives.

39 Published in 1951 with the full title: *Bdag cag gi ston pa mnyam med sha kyA thub pa'i nyan thos mchog gyur sha ri'i bu dang mo+o gola'i bu rnam gnyis kyi sku gdung ring bsrel byin can skor bshad pa mdor bsdus bzhugs so*. Weltmuseum Wien, inv. no. 140.870.

40 Published in 1958 with the full title*: Sde dge 'jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i 'od zer la snyan brgyud dwangs gsal me long gu ru bde ba chen pos gsungs pa'i lung bstan dus gsum gsal ston zhes bya ba bzhugs so.* Weltmuseum Wien, inv. no. 140.873.

41 Published in 1954 with the full title: *Lha chos dang mthun pa'i gtam pad ma'i tshal gyi zlos gar zhes bya ba bzhugs so.* Weltmuseum Wien, inv. no. 140.871.

42 Published in 1954 with the full title: *Mkhas grub rA ga a s+yas mdzad pa'i bde chen smon lam/ chos spyod mdor bsdus dang/ skyabs 'gro'i lo rgyus bcas pa bzhugs so*. Weltmuseum Wien, inv. no. 140.872.

43 Weltmuseum Wien, inv. no. 134.470.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's engagement with and in the public Print Culture of Kalimpong

In the introduction and the first part of this paper, I made a point of stressing the fact that the Melong, the TMP and Tharchin's innovative work did not completely break with established protocols. Rather, the publication activities were embedded within both existent communication patterns and an existing public culture. The latter was particularly fostered and driven by available public forms of mass communication thriving in West Bengal, Kolkata and Lucknow. This cultural practice swept into the hills of Kalimpong, where the Melong took form from 1925. In fact, quite a few newspapers in various languages were circulating in Kalimpong. And Nebesky-Wojkowitz took an active part in this public print culture.

He published at least two articles in the locally produced Buddhist magazine *Stepping-Stones*. The magazine was the monthly outlet of the YMBA, the Young Men's Buddhist Association, founded in Kalimpong by John Ryan in 1950. It was the Buddhist answer to the Christian YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), so to speak, and soon pooled an elaborate circle of Buddhist supporters and enthusiasts, including Marco Pallis and George Roerich, to name just a few. One of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's articles dealt with Mahāyāna iconography.[44] The other gave an overview of new publications dealing with Tibet.[45]

In 1952, Nebesky-Wojkowitz also published an article in the local English-language weekly "Himalayan Times," namely an anthropological essay on the "Abominable Snowman," the Yeti (fig. 5).[46] The Yeti, the ostensible beast of the Himalayas, myth and legend, had become the object of sensational writing in Western print media. In contrast to many contemporary commentators, the Austrian scholar was careful to differentiate between legends and real encounters, trying to locate possible explanations for yeti legends in human interactions with the natural world.[47] In another article from April 1952, the editor Suresh Candra Jain of the "Himalayan Times" relied on Nebesky-Wojkowitz as his informant, who updated him on a foreign mountain expedition led by German climbers.[48]

Shortly after Nebesky-Wojkowitz's untimely death on 9 July 1959, the "Himalayan Times" paid him his last respects with an obituary. It reads:

> The deaths under tragic circumstances of Dr. & Mrs Rene von Nebesky-Wojkowitz are announced in Vienna, Austria. Dr Nebesky who is well known as a Tibetan and Lepcha scholar is the author of WHERE GODS ARE MOUNTAINS and other popular and scholarly publications. At the time of death Dr Nebesky (33) [sic] was Assistant Professor at the Vienna University and held a good position in the Vienna Museum. He revisited Nepal and Kalimpong last year studying and making collections for the Vienna Museum.[49]

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44 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1951a.

45 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1951b, 1951c.

46 "Abominable Snowman," Himalayan Times, 3 February 1952: 2, 6, 9.

47 For an in-depth study of the Yeti-complex see Sawerthal and Torri 2017.

48 See Himalayan Times, 27 April 1952.

49 Himalayan Times, 26 July 1959.

Himalayan Times February 3, 1952

'ABOMINABLE SNOWMAN'

Dr. R. de NEBESKY – WOJKOWITZ

MR. E. Shipton's discovery of strange footprints in the snow of Mount Everest seems to have renewed the discussion on the existance and nature of the so-called "abominable snowman", in which question, as I take from press-reports, the Museum of Natural History is also taking some interest. To contribute towards a solution of this problem, I am transmitting herewith some observations and narratives, concerning the "snowman", which I recorded during the past sixteen months of ethnographical research in the Himalayas.

My Tibetan informants claim, that the 'snowman" of European mountaineers is probably identical with an animal which is known to the Tibetans, living in the Indo-Tibetan borderland, under the name Mi go (spelled *Mi rgod* in Tibetan) or "wild man", and which is also called Mi chhem po (spelled *Mi chhen po*), "big man", or Mibom po (*Mi sbom po*), "strong man" by the Tibetan speaking population of Sikkim and the adjoining Chumbi Valley; it is, however, quite possible, that this animal is known in various parts of Tibet also under other names, than those here mentioned. From identical statements of Tibetans, who have encountered the Mi go, the following description can be gathered: The Mi go when standing erect, is about 7–8 feet tall. He is strong-bodied, covered with dark-brown hair, with an egg-shaped head and a red-brown monkey face, which is hairless, except for long streaks of hair on the sides. Outside the forest, the Mi go walks on the hind legs, slightly bent forward, in a peculier slow trot. He leaves footprints about 10 to 12 inches long, which he nearly in one line. The Mi go is said to be rather longlived, some of the Tibetan informants even claiming, that he might live up to two hundred years. In support of this statement, the story about a Mi go was narrated to me who is said to have been wounded by men some three generations ago and became lame on one foot, but is still seen from time to time in the forests of the Mi go ri (*Mi rgod ri*) or "Wild-man Mountain", which lies near the border between the Chumbi Valley and Bhutan.

The abode of the Mi go are the highest tracts of the mountain forests, but he was sometimes encountered at still highest altitudes—feeding there on the moss which grows on rocks—and occasionally venturing even into regions, lying above the perpetual snow line. He seems to prefer to roam at night. In the mountain forests, the noise of breaking branches and the Mi go's peculiar whistling indicate his approach. He is frightened of fire and in spite of his great strength is regarded as a harmless creature, which will not attack men unless in selfdefence.

In the following, I am recording shortly three instances in which one of my Tibetan informants—a very reliable, western-educated former Tibetan official—had encountered a Mi go.—Some twenty years ago, my informant had stayed at the Dung kar Monastery in the Chumbi Valley. One night, the whistling of a Mi go was heard outside, greatly frightening the Lamas of the shrine. In the

(*Continued on page 6*)

Fig. 5. The first page of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's essay on the Yeti. Himalayan Times, 3 February 1952, p. 2.

The prominent placement of this piece in the Himalayan Times underlines once more Nebesky-Wojkowitz's influence and well-respected standing in Kalimpong where he had conducted the bulk of his career's field research.

To summarize, when René Nebesky-Wojkowitz visited Kalimpong, the border town was a hub of exchange – between different peoples and different ideas. This town along the trade route between India and Tibet functioned in particular as a focal point of information exchange. As we have seen, Nebesky-Wojkowitz played an active role in the emerging print life of Kalimpong. He not only engaged with the innovative TMP workshop, but it is due to his interests and his collecting spirit that some important works published by TMP are preserved in Vienna. The Tibetan-language printing establishment was only one amongst many in various languages. Nebesky-Wojkowitz both consumed these new print products and even used them himself as a vehicle to disseminate his own work within the local public spheres.

PHOTO SOURCES

Fig. 1a,b. Anna Sawerthal, Daniel Tharchin.
Fig. 2. Daniel Tharchin, The Library of Tibetan Works and Archives.
Fig. 3. Anna Sawerthal.
Fig. 4. Anna Sawerthal, KHM-Museumsverband, Weltmuseum Wien, inv. no. Bibl. 12123 As. geh.
Fig. 5. University of Heidelberg, Digital Library (digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/himalayan_times).

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NEBESKY-WOJKOWITZ AND KIRANTI STUDIES

Martin Gaenszle

Much of what Nebesky-Wojkowitz has achieved in his anthropological research was seminal in character: he pursued new questions, and even though he could only find preliminary answers, these questions opened new horizons and inspired later scholars. Conducting fieldwork in the Tibetan cultural area with solid language skills and having a doctoral degree in "Central Asian Philology and Ethnology," Nebesky-Wojkowitz can be considered one of the first scholars who combined Tibetan Studies and Anthropology, or, in other words, who was what can be called an "Ethno-Tibetologist."[1] This particular approach became mainstream and very fruitful a few decades later, so his contributions can be regarded truly as trail-blazing. The following observations deal less with specific results but rather with the scholarly potential of this new mode of enquiry – a potential which could not be realized due to Nebesky-Wojkowitz's tragic death, but which was taken up by others and thus had a lasting effect on Himalayan Studies.

My particular focus is on Nebesky-Wojkowitz's actual and potential influence on Kiranti Studies, and research on Indigenous groups in the Eastern Himalaya (Nepal and India) more generally. As a scholar of this new field, I have always been a bit puzzled by the fact that Nebesky-Wojkowitz did not seem to take much interest in groups like the Rai and Limbu, even though they are and historically were quite numerous in the region where he spent much of his time, i.e., in Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Gangtok. Why this apparent disregard?

It is well known that Nebesky-Wojkowitz was interested not only in Tibetan Buddhism, but as an ethnologist trained in Vienna especially in the older strata of culture, i.e., pre-Buddhist elements which he identified as shamanistic and related to (but not identical with) Bon.[2] He regarded these early on as partly "preserved" in Bhutia folk religion but especially in Lepcha "tribal" religion.

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1 I am grateful for the stimulating comments provided by participants of the conference and contributors to this volume. Above all, I would like to thank Uwe Niebuhr for numerous suggestions and information on sources. For a detailed and insightful account of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's institutional and disciplinary positioning in the university landscape of Vienna, see Gingrich, this volume.

2 See Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956, ch. XXVII "Some notes on Tibetan shamanism." From today's perspective this view is quite simplistic and has been rightly criticised, as pre-Buddhist religion or "ancient Bon" cannot be reconstructed on the basis of contemporary ethnography; see, for example, Bjerken 2004.

> The religious views of the Bhutias and Lepchas who settled on the southern slopes of the Himalayas have many similarities with the old form of Bon belief.[3]

> Though the Lepcha confess to the belief in Lamaism, there exist remnants of an original shamanistic tribal belief.[4]

Further, Nebesky-Wojkowitz was clearly aware of the close kinship of Limbu and Lepcha. Linguists have now established that the Kiranti languages and Lepcha are typologically distinct (belonging to different subbranches of "Himalayish" according to Matisoff),[5] and so there are good reasons to keep an eye on their differences. But there are also many common features, of which Nebesky-Wojkowitz was apparently aware.

Ethnographic knowledge

My first question concerns the limits of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's ethnographic understanding: What did he know about the Limbu? Some references indicate that he saw them as closely related to Tibetans: as he wrote in an exhibition booklet, they claim to have originated from Tibet and seem to have earlier made a living as yak-herders.[6] It is interesting that the Rai, though he was aware of their existence, are mentioned much less. But they, along with the Sunwar and Tamang, are also described as early Tibetan migrants.[7] Apparently he was not aware of their numerical size and internal cultural and linguistic variety, and regarded them as a relatively small and insignificant group.

This view is suggested, at least, when we look at a map that Nebesky-Wojkowitz drew up for the Nepal Exhibition in Vienna in 1957, which was intended to convey the ethnic diversity of Nepal to the Austrian public. On this map (fig. 1) the Limbu are correctly marked as residing east of the Arun around the Tamur river basin. As the map includes only the groups of Nepal, their extension into Sikkim is not represented here. But the Rai are reduced to settling around the confluence of the Saptakoshi rivers. The size of the Sunwar (a western ethnic group belonging to the Kiranti), located here along the western bank of the Arun, is somewhat overstated. This is obviously due to Nebesky-Wojkowitz's limited travels in the field, which brought him only as far as Charikot/Bhimeshwar on his second field expedition in early 1957. Though he visited Helambu during his third expedition in 1958, he never reached the Sherpa heartland, Solu Khumbu. Thus, he did not even come close to the core area of the Kiranti settlements around the Arun river.

In a second, more abstract coloured sketch-map of unclear origin (fig. 2),[8] we see that here likewise the Limbu are represented as a coherent group, settled in the north-eastern

3 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1947: 65, my translation.

4 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1957: 11, my translation.

5 Matisoff 2015: xxxii.

6 See the exhibition booklet Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1957: 10.

7 Nebesky-Wojkowitz speculates that these ethnic groups "are possibly descendants of Tibetan settlers and troops which came to Nepal during the time of the great Tibetan empire (7th to 9th century CE)" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1957: 10).

8 This map exists in the archived collection only as a photograph (colour slide). It cannot be assumed with certainty that Nebesky-Wojkowitz drew up the map himself, but as it looks like a sketch and corresponds to his writings, it seems most likely that he is its origin.

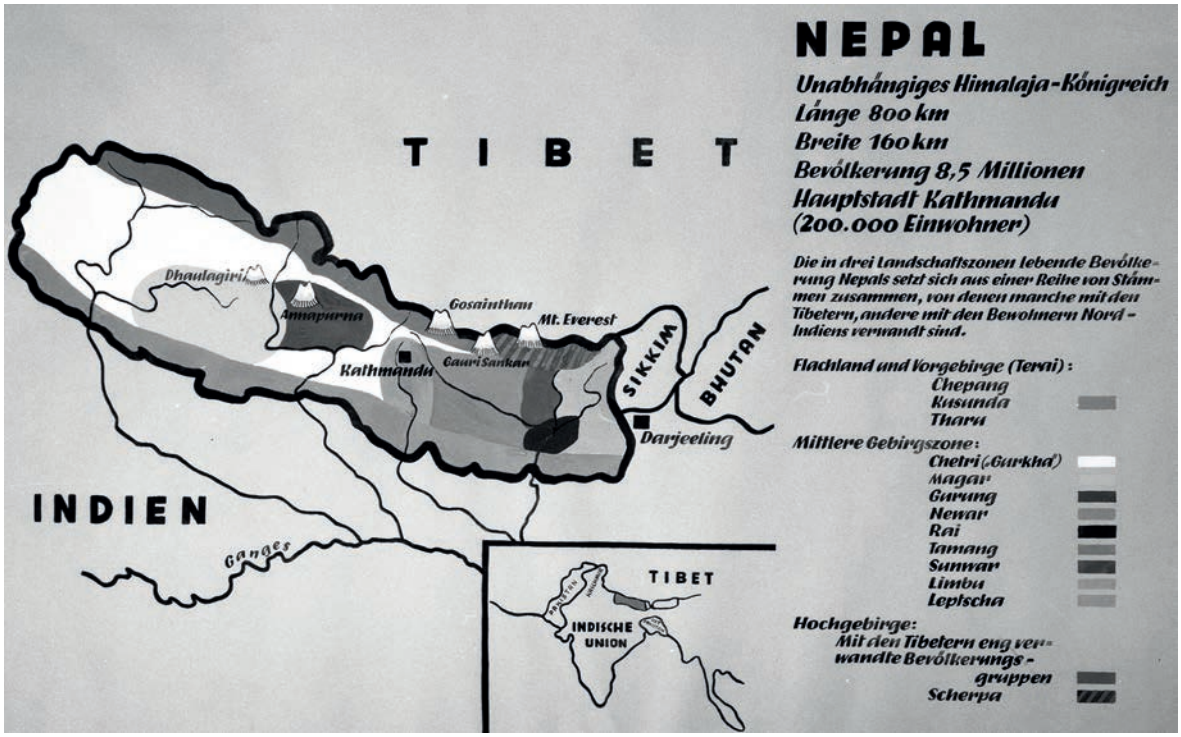


Fig. 1. Map of Nepal and its population.
Exhibition "Nepal – Expeditionssammlung Univ.-Doz. Dr. René Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956/57."



Fig. 2. Sketch-map of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and its population.

corner of Nepal, and in some pockets of Sikkim (though this is not entirely clear as the colour coding remains unexplained). The map also shows the Lepcha (in dark red) as a fragmented group found in the border areas of Nepal and Darjeeling/Sikkim and near the Sikkimese border with Bhutan. This circumstance may have been one reason for Nebesky-Wojkowitz's preference for the Lepcha, as in the reading of diffusionists such a fragmentation is a sign of longer settlement and thus an "older" stratum of populations.

Though he does not write much about the Limbu as such, Nebesky-Wojkowitz made some detailed references, such as the following in a long endnote in *Ancient funeral ceremonies of the Lepcha*.[9]

9 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1952a.

> The Limbus, who call themselves Yakthumba, are mentioned in the Tibetan Chronicles of the Maharaja of Sikkim, together with the Mangar tribe, under the collective name Tshong; the name 'Limbu' under which they are mostly known, is of Nepali origin. According to a doubtful oral tradition, they are supposed to have migrated into Sikkim from the neighbouring Tibetan province of Tshang. The Limbus, who were divided into ten clans, were living peacefully side by side with the Lepchas, who regarded them as distant relatives and even claimed, that the Lepcha and Limbu gods were related to each other. – The Chronicles mention, that Limbus sometimes occupied important positions in the administration of the Sikkim State, and a Limbu lady became one of the wives of the second Maharaja. At the beginning of the 18th century, under the rule of the fourth Maharaja, the majority of the Limbus left Sikkim in consequence of the heavy labour, which was being imposed on them, especially at times of the frequent raids of the neighbouring Nepalese and Bhutanese.[10]

First of all, it is interesting that Nebesky-Wojkowitz stresses that the Limbu are regarded as relatives (though distant) by the Lepcha: if their gods are kin, so are their descendants. This seems to be a prevalent view even today, as one Lepcha leader told me during fieldwork in 2019: "The Lepcha prefer to marry among themselves, but if they should marry outside, it could only be a Limbu." Another point of interest in this reference is the observation that the Limbu are long-standing settlers in Sikkim with links dating back to at least the 17th century when there was a documented intermarriage with the second Namgyal.[11] Clearly, the Limbu and Lepcha have been neighbours for many centuries and thus have forged a close relationship of social interaction and mutual influence. Thus Nebesky-Wojkowitz was aware that the Limbu were not merely recent immigrants to India (as many, particularly in Sikkim, see them today), but with good reason he saw the Lepcha as the major, and most ancient, Indigenous group of the area.[12]

As an ethnographer with historical interests, Nebesky-Wojkowitz had a fine perception of the rather close cultural links of the Limbu and the Lepcha. This is evident from one observation in the context of ritual specialists and the occurrence of Lepcha possession by Limbu spirits.

> A third group of Lepcha sorcerers, also of minor importance, are the *Ya ba* and *Ya ma*, who are male and female respectively. They are supposed to become possessed by Limbu spirits and they therefore bear these two names, under which the Limbu sorcerers are known. Their main instruments are metal gongs and divination balls, called Yak. Certain similarities between religious practices of the Lepcha sorcerers and some ancient Tibetan customs are the reason for frequently occuring [sic] statements in books on Tibet, that the old Lepcha faith is identical with the

10 Ibid.: 37, n. 3.

11 On the Lepcha and Limbu in the early history of Sikkim see McKay 2021: 18–19.

12 For an account of the historical situation of the Limbu in Sikkim up to the present see Vandenhelsken and Khamdak 2021.

> Boen religion of that country. A comparative study of both beliefs shows however, that the Lepcha faith is certainly not identical with that form of the Boen religion, which it assumed after the commencement of its struggle with Buddhism. It seems rather that it corresponds in many points to the old shamanistic stratum of Central Asia, out of which in Tibet the Boen developed to a religion.[13]

Though it is not explicitly stated here, Nebesky-Wojkowitz saw a common ancestry or certain cultural relatedness between Lepcha and Limbu through this "shamanistic stratum" which he saw as common to both. Therefore, considering Nebesky-Wojkowitz's strong interest in Lepcha culture, one could have expected him to have a similar interest in Limbu culture. Why did he not pursue this during the years in Darjeeling and Sikkim?

He must have met some Limbu in Kalimpong where he most likely had met with R.K. Sprigg, the major authority on Lepcha linguistics, who was also interested in the Limbu script. In 1957 Sprigg presented a report on *Limbu books in the Kiranti script* at the "Internationaler Orientalisten-Kongress" in Munich,[14] which Nebesky-Wojkowitz also attended. On this occasion Sprigg showed samples of the alphabet. We know that Nebesky-Wojkowitz had also compiled a list of characters of the Kiranti (Limbu) script which was displayed during the Nepal Exhibition in Vienna that same year – alongside the Lepcha script.[15] All this indicates that the two scholars may have been in contact on this matter. In fact, a list of characters titled "Kiranti script (modern-style)" is found in the Nebesky-Wojkowitz Papers at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London.[16] Apparently, this was the result of some international cooperation and exchange between London and Vienna. We do not know whether Nebesky-Wojkowitz ever met with the Limbu scholar and propagator of the script Iman Singh Chemjong, who was educated in a Christian school and active as a reformer in Kalimpong. Perhaps the Limbu he met in Kalimpong were too "modern" and christianized to arouse his interest.

Today, of course, we know much more about the Limbu and other Kiranti groups, a fairly distinct field of Kiranti Studies has developed (especially in linguistics), and certainly Nebesky-Wojkowitz cannot be blamed for the scant knowledge available to him. So his lack of interest was at least in part due to lack of information. The only scholarly source on Kiranti was about one hundred years old, authored by the former British Resident in Nepal Brian Houghton Hodgson, who had written several articles on the Kiranti "tribes" in the mid-19th century.[17]

Lepcha and Kiranti

In the following section I briefly will highlight some general features of Lepcha and Kiranti culture which indicate close relations and a certain "common ethos." I will only point

13 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1952a: 38, n.12.

14 Sprigg 1959.

15 The booklet for the 1957 Nepal Exhibition in Vienna also includes reference to a "specimen of tribal script used by the Limbu people." The reference is followed by the remark: "Books in Limbu-script are extremely rare" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1957: 14).

16 I am grateful to Florian Eidam-Weber for providing this information.

17 See Hodgson 1958.

to some examples of similarities and convergences in cultural features, illustrated by a few ethnographic images. What I would like to show is that there is a lot of potential for ethnological comparison, for which Nebesky-Wojkowitz already outlined some key domains and concepts. Such a "comparative ethnography in the Himalayas," as Michael Oppitz has called it, is still in its infancy.[18] But, in fact, it was such a large-scale enterprise that Nebesky-Wojkowitz was interested in throughout much of his work.

As in many ethnic religions in the Himalayas, the oral traditions among the Lepcha and among the Kiranti are very rich and prominent. They are fundamental to their ethnic identity and include both a complex narrative tradition (mythology) and a closely linked performative tradition of ritual recitations.[19] What is extraordinary in this case is that since roughly the 18th century the Lepcha and the Kiranti have each developed a script of their own (the Róng script and the Srijanga script, respectively). Due to this resource, for already more than two centuries, the oral traditions have been gradually transformed or complemented by written traditions, though orality remains a vital feature. For both ethnic groups today, the possession of a distinct script has turned into an important "badge" of identity.

Perhaps it was, among other things, this "imminent" scribal culture, an oral tradition on the verge of a book tradition, that fostered Nebesky-Wojkowitz's interest in the Lepcha. Considering his background as a philologist who had investigated Tibetan book culture, this relatively "young" tradition of writing and manuscripts must have fascinated him in particular. Similar observations of an emerging book culture can be made among the Kiranti, though here the process started somewhat later: it was only with the Limbu activist Iman Singh Chemjong (1904–1975) that the script was popularised for cultural and religious use.[20]

What Nebesky-Wojkowitz could observe among the Lepcha was a tradition of singers and bards who knew and sang their songs by heart but who were also able to write them down. Thus, for example, he collected weddings songs among the Lepcha, which he translated and published in an article.[21] Nebesky-Wojkowitz explains the method of his fieldwork in the following manner:

> The text of these songs was written down in Lepcha script by G. Kabu, a well-known folk singer from the village of Kafr, and translated with the kind help of P. Jean M. Brahier of the Catholic Mission of Git. The orthography of the Lepcha texts was later checked once more by the Lepcha priest P.S. Targain.[22]

One of the songs is presented in the original script (as written by G. Kabu, see fig. 3) along with a conventional transliteration, followed by the translation. Thus Nebesky-Wojkowitz documents the song tradition as he encountered it in the 1950s: a living oral tradition on the verge of becoming written. It seems that the Christian missionaries were well

18 Oppitz 2007.
19 For the Rai see Ebert and Gaenszle 2008, Gaenszle 2004.
20 Gaenszle 2021a.
21 See Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1952b.
22 Ibid.: 30, my translation.

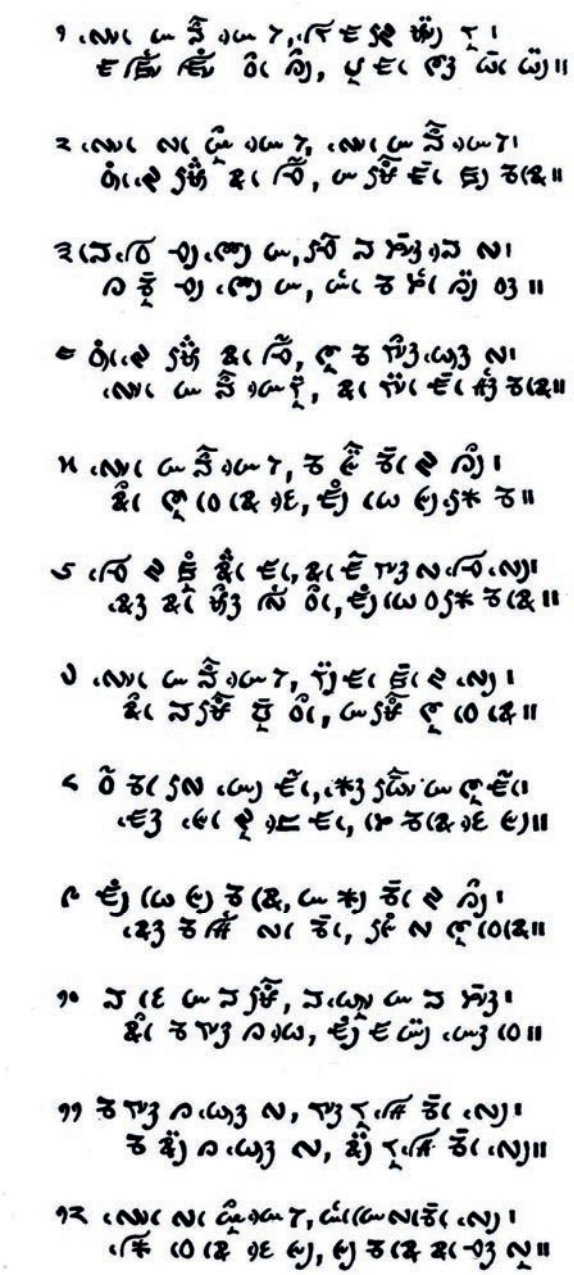


Fig. 3. Wedding song in Lepcha script.
Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1952b: 32.

aware of this and had some supporting influence on the process. But the scholarly interest had begun many decades before: the system of transliteration for the script goes back to the colonial ethnographer and Lepcha scholar George B. Mainwaring (1825–1893), who wrote the first comprehensive Lepcha grammar.

However, Nebesky-Wojkowitz was also well aware of the oral characteristics of the song tradition which is lived as performative practice. Thus he noted not only the musical instruments and ritual gestures that are part of the performance; he also showed himself to be an early ethnographer of speaking and a keen observer of the pragmatic conventions of this particular speech genre. For example, in the case of the third song he noted the characteristic style of turn-taking which marks this kind of speech event, a singing exchange between a boy and a girl.

> The following song, which belongs to the most popular wedding songs of the Lepcha, is performed in a singing exchange between young men and girls, and only the last verse is sung by all the persons present. The text of the song among other things alludes to the old legend of the Lepcha people which tells about the "wedding" of the main rivers of Sikkim, the Rangeet and the Teesta.[23]

Such a singing exchange between potential affines is also a common practice among various Kiranti groups that is performed during weddings and other festivities (known as *dhān nāc, juwāri*).[24] These singing exchanges express the initial tension and competition between potential marriage partners, which is eventually resolved through a legitimised union. In fact, among both Lepcha and Kiranti marriages in general require a good deal of speaking competence in ceremonial dialogues during which the bride is transferred to the groom and his family. Eloquent intermediaries excel in flowery speeches full of vivid metaphors, indulging in a play of polite requests, displays of modesty and unassumingness, reluctant rejections, outright refusal and eventual persuasion.[25]

For such a rich oral culture, where the art of speaking is an essential part of the social system, the impact of writing is far-reaching. It transforms the worldview and religious practice of an ethnic group in fundamental ways. When Nebesky-Wojkowitz was living in Kalimpong during the 1950s such developments were observable all around him. As noted above, Iman Singh Chemjong had begun to propagate the Srijanga script in the 1920s and this eventually led to a widespread movement aimed at writing down the ritual traditions of the Kiranti, the *Mundhum*. It is surprising that Nebesky-Wojkowitz apparently did not follow up on these developments, but during the 1950s shifted his focus to Nepal, which had just opened its borders after the fall of the Rana autocracy (1846–1951).

Another area in which there are evident "family resemblances" between Lepcha and Kiranti is the ritual system, which in both cases is quite elaborate, complex and rooted in long-time Indigenous practice. For example, ritual specialists are divided roughly into two general categories: ancestral priests (Lepcha *búngthíng*, Limbu *phedangma*), who can only be male and whose function is hereditary, and shamans (sorcerers: Lepcha *mun*, Limbu *yaba – yama*, or *samba*) who can be both male and female and who are chosen by a powerful possessing (and inflicting) spirit. Though other categories also exist in these traditions, there is a basic duality between ritual specialists based on the same principles: the priestly task of performing ordinary rituals, and the shamanic task of mediating with extraordinary, dangerous beings often associated with the "outside." Though the exact meaning of this opposition often remains vague, it is generally a gendered dualism.[26]

Rituals are numerous and all require specific altar constructions consisting mainly of offerings (food and drink) presented to ancestral beings. Here the use of objects of local material culture (such as bamboo) is of special importance in religious performances.

23 Ibid.: 36, my translation.

24 For the Limbu, see Chemjong 1966 (Vol. I): 94–95, Jones and Jones 1976: 79.

25 See Gaenszle 2010, Das 1978: 147.

26 Since N.J. Allen's work on the Thulung Rai, the use of the terms "tribal priest" and "shaman/shamaness" for the two categories has become common (see also Gaenszle 2002: 63–65). Though Nebesky-Wojkowitz's terminology is not systematic, he explicitly compares the Lepcha *mun* (Mön) with Siberian shamans (1955: 146, also see 1952a: 38, n. 12).



Fig. 4. *búngthíng* (Ongdi Buru?) in Git with beer offerings.



Fig. 5. Mewahang Rai "*dewa*" ritual with beer offerings in *tongba*s and gourds.

A prominent ritual tool is a bamboo container with a straw-like pipe which is used for drinking millet beer (Lepcha *patyut*, Limbu *tongba*): filled with newly drafted homebrew, it is the favourite offering for ancestors, just as it is a much-appreciated sign of hospitality and respect for elders. Typically, the priest presents a specific number of these vessels along with food on leaf plates in a symbolic order which constitutes an altar construction. As a token of the household member on whose behalf the ritual is being held, a piece of cloth is added to the setting. These rituals are performed during the daytime outside the house under open sky (figs 4 and 5).

Thus, as Nebesky-Wojkowitz was well aware, material culture has a direct impact on the domain of ritual symbolism. A further example for such ritual technology is the prominent case of "thread-crosses" (Tib. *mdos, dö*): these are weapon-like tools used in shamanic rituals to ward off evil spirits. They were studied in detail by Nebesky-Wojkowitz in an article written together with Geoffrey Gorer,[27] and they are also a major theme in the monograph *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*.[28] These "thread-crosses" (Lepcha *deu*) are typically used in Lepcha rituals,[29] as well as in certain Tibetan Buddhist rituals (and various other traditions) in order to catch and overpower demons (fig. 6).

Similar structures are widely used in shamanic rituals among the Kiranti groups, especially Rai and Limbu. For example, they are used in certain Limbu rituals, such as offerings for the forest deity Kudapmang (fig. 7). In Limbu such thread-crosses are known as *silam saklam*: they are meant to "block" the path of the evil spirits. In fact, these thread-crosses have now become much-reproduced symbols of Limbu cultural identity, frequently used as a logo for cultural organisations, such as the "Kirat Yakthung Chumlung" (fig. 8).

My last, and a bit more elaborate, example is the case of funeral rituals. Nebesky-Wojkowitz provides a study of the "ancient funeral ceremonies of the Lepcha" in an article published in 1952. It is partly based on his fieldwork in the Kalimpong area, but above all it is interesting for his analytic approach. First of all, Nebesky-Wojkowitz makes it clear that though the Lepcha have undergone various cultural influences, in particular through

27 Nebeksy-Wojkowitz and Gorer 1951.

28 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956: ch. XIX.

29 They are regarded as the "seat", "house", or even "palace" of the demon (Nebesky-Wojkowitz and Gorer 1951: 69).



Fig. 6. "Demon traps on the mountains protect the crops from hailstorms" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955: 160).

Tibetan Buddhism, but also Magar and Limbus, it is in the oral tradition that "early Lepcha customs" are "preserved."[30] In an endnote (note 6) Nebesky-Wojkowitz refers to his informants, two of whom are well-known today as the founders of the Indigenous Lepcha organisation in Kalimpong:[31] Mrs. Mohan and K.P. Tamsang. It may be that this circumstance has contributed to the rather clear-cut account of "ancient" concepts.

I will highlight some of the most prominent concepts Nebesky-Wojkowitz specifies in his analysis. First of all, he points out the significance of the notion of a soul, which is an agile entity that can leave the body of a living person. Due to this fleeting quality of the soul, it is prone to attacks by malignant supernatural beings who try to capture the soul and thus cause death. After death has occurred the soul of the deceased person leaves the body for good but wanders around the surrounding area for some time. Therefore, the funeral rites must make sure that the soul is admonished into going on its proper way. Here the second major notion comes into play: the idea of a land of the dead. Called Rum Lyang, it is the place where the ancestors dwell as shadows and keep an eye on the living. What is unique about this notion is that it is a place located in terrestrial space, in the vicinity of Mount Kangchenjunga. And an important part of the funeral rite consists of a ritual journey by the *mun* (shaman/ess) to guide the soul of the deceased to the land of the dead. This is done in two stages. First, the *mun*, by chanting long recitations describing the landscape and pathway, leads the soul down the river Teesta, finally reaching and crossing the plains in order to "show it the ocean."[32] From there they return to the house by retracing the same path up the river. Then the climax of the whole ritual follows: the *mun* is possessed by the spirit of the

30 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1952a: 27.

31 This organisation is known today as the "West Bengal Mayel Lyang Lepcha Development Board," headquartered in Kalimpong.

32 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1952a: 34.

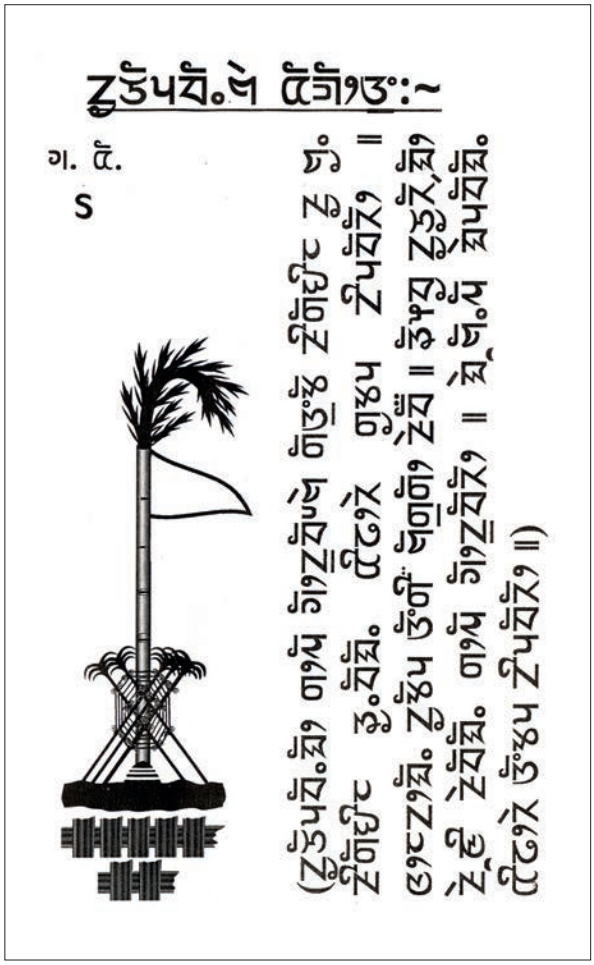


Fig. 7. Limbu Samjik Mundhum, altar for Kudapmang. Lingden 2007: i.



Fig. 8. Logo of the major Limbu ethnic association. Chemjong 1965: cover.

deceased and the latter now speaks through the *mun*'s mouth. It is at this point that the gathered family members ask questions, about the causes of death, about any grievances against the living, or about simple issues like the whereabouts of lost jewels. Only after remaining matters have been settled does the *mun* embark on another journey, now taking the soul to the "other world," the land of the dead (Rum Lyang) up in the mountains. Interestingly, the final route and "entrance" to this land differs according to clan-membership, as each clan is associated with a particular area (a mountain entered through a cave).

Very similar notions and practices can be found among various Kiranti groups. The idea of an ancestral land of the dead is very prominent, and though the exact location varies (in some cases it is in the plains but most often in the mountains), the ritual performance of elaborate soul guidance through the terrestrial landscape to a final destination is an important procedure among all groups.[33] But beyond this many correspondences in further details have been reported by ethnographers: the combination of upward and downward journey (Puma), the shaman being possessed by the spirit of the dead (Puma, Limbu),[34] the clan division of the land of the dead (Dumi, Limbu), and the imagery of an ocean in the plains (Mewahang). Though there are also many differences in other details, the general family resemblance is evident.

33 Allen 1974, Gaenszle 1999, 2002, 2012.

34 In the case of the Kiranti, the possession seems to occur mainly in cases of "bad death," i.e., when the death occurred through an inauspicious event such as accident, murder or suicide (Gaenszle 2021b).

To conclude this section, the similarities among Lepcha and Kiranti cultures are a standing invitation for comparison. Of course, one must be cautious, as many features are more widely distributed. The feature of psychopompic soul guidance, for example, exists in the wider region among various ethnic groups, such as the Magar, Gurung, and Tamang. But as noted above, the similarities often go beyond such general structures and are also present in details. Nebesky-Wojkowitz himself restricts his comparative reflections largely to the endnotes of the article. Especially the comparison of Lepcha and Bon is an important issue.[35] It can be assumed that a more systematic comparison was on his long-term agenda. But as long as not enough sound ethnography was available, this was only possible in preliminary sketches.

Nevertheless, Nebesky-Wojkowitz's detailed study of Lepcha religion and local Tibetan practices has inspired later scholars of Himalayan Studies and also Kiranti researchers. At the time of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's death in 1959, ethnographic studies in Nepal had just begun. This was particularly initiated by his early mentor Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf, under whose guidance Nebesky-Wojkowitz himself undertook several early studies.

Reception of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's ideas by modern ethnographers in east Nepal

In this final section I want take a preliminary look at the reception of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's ethnographic studies by Kiranti ethnographers. Without claiming to be exhaustive, I will just give a few examples of how Nebesky-Wojkowitz's ideas have been taken up by anthropologists who make explicit reference to him. Though early fieldwork in post-Rana Nepal focussed on providing basic descriptions and in-depth ethnographies of previously unknown Indigenous traditions, most of the anthropologists engaged in these endeavours also had a comparative outlook, at least as indicated in footnotes.

The first modern ethnographers of Rai and Limbu are N.J. Allen (Oxford) and Philippe Sagant (Paris). Allen, who eventually worked among the Thulung Rai, was guided by Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf and thus shared a "guru" with Nebesky-Wojkowitz. Sagant did his doctoral fieldwork among the Limbu of the Mewa Khola, supervised in Paris by Lucien Bernot, but significantly inspired by Alexander W. Macdonald and the latter's work in Kalimpong.[36] Both, Allen and Sagant began fieldwork in Nepal in the late 1960s, but I do not know whether the two young scholars ever met during this early phase.

In his doctoral dissertation and pioneering monograph on Thulung Rai mythology (1976, published in revised form 2012) N.J. Allen makes recurrent reference to Nebesky-Wojkowitz's *Oracles and Demons in Tibet* as well as his article on *Ancient funeral ceremonies of the Lepchas*. This is not surprising, as Allen's project is a comparative mythology "of the Bodic speakers," which looks at the similarities of narrative themes in linguistically related groups.[37] Thus, he highlights a number of motifs which are found in Thulung and in similar "Bodic" narratives (including mainly Tibetan Buddhist, Bon, Lepcha) by referencing Nebesky-Wojkowitz's work: e.g., the idea of flowers representing soul-concepts,[38] or the im-

35 See, e.g., Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1952a: 38, n. 12 which covers almost a full page.

36 See Oppitz, this volume.

37 Also see Allen 1980.

38 Allen 2012: 92.

agery of spinning and weaving as symbols of female power.[39] Allen also points out that the Thulung notion of a Primal Lake can be compared to Lepcha notions of space as reported by Nebesky-Wojkowitz. In his Lepcha funeral article (as we already noted above) the latter describes how the Lepcha shaman undertakes a ritual journey down the Teesta river to the "ocean" in the plains, guiding the soul of the deceased to see the endless waters.[40] Allen stresses in conclusion that the ritual journeys, though their routes are generally "on land," ultimately have a "watery destination," namely the direction taken by the rivers. This is indeed an important observation toward an understanding of the ritual journey among the Kiranti as a whole.[41]

Likewise, Philippe Sagant draws on Nebesky-Wojkowitz in some of his ethnographic studies of the Limbu to situate Indigenous notions in the larger cultural context. For example, in his article on the concepts of a vital "soul" (on the *sir uṭhāune* ritual – raising the "head") he refers to Nebesky-Wojkowitz in his discussion of an "external soul" among the Limbu.[42] The well-being of the body is directly linked to the landscape, such as high mountain lakes. Sagant compares the Limbu idea of the vital soul residing in Tokpe Lake, located above the settlement area, to the early Tibetan notion of a "life-power lake" (Tib. *bla mtsho*) as discussed by Nebesky-Wojkowitz. In his discussion, Sagant also relies on other sources on "ancient Tibet."[43] Clearly, Limbu tribal notions are seen as converging with pre-Buddhist concepts of the cultural area.

Such comparative references are found also among the younger generation of Kiranti ethnographers. In his study of Kulung Rai rituals, Martino Nicoletti points to Nebesky-Wojkowitz's work, e.g., in the context of the symbolic meaning of snake divinities ("ophidiomorphic deities"), which have many similarities with Tibetan *klu* as discussed in Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956.[44] Nicoletti also discusses Kulunge ideas of "prosperity" and the practice of ritual journeys upward to the river sources and sacred mountains.[45] Though Nebesky-Wojkowitz is only one of the sources cited, his work is regarded as seminal.

It is apparent then that Nebesky-Wojkowitz has been an inspiration to Kiranti ethnographers, both in his work on the Lepcha and more generally in his work on Tibetan rituals. To be sure, Nebesky-Wojkowitz was not the first and only scholar in search of an "original shamanistic tribal belief" (see above); this search for a "tribal" or pre-Buddhist substratum was a widespread concern at the time, especially in Tibetan Studies. Nor was his influence restricted to ethnographers of eastern Nepal; his ideas also affected ethnographies of other ethnic communities, such as the Gurung, Magar, and Tamang and thus left a mark on Himalayan studies at large.[46] My point is that Nebesky-Wojkowitz's detailed and attentive observations and interpretations developed from his Lepcha studies allow for a more fine-grained comparison and typology, bringing out key features of the Indigenous traditions in

39 Ibid.: 98.
40 Ibid.: 104.
41 Gaenszle 2012.
42 Sagant 1985: 175, n. 3; Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956: 482.
43 Especially Stein 1962.
44 Nicoletti 2006: 123.
45 Ibid.: 219.
46 See e.g., Höfer 1994, Samuel 1993, Ramble 2008, Mumford 1989, Huber 2020, Balikci 2008.

the region of eastern Nepal/Sikkim/Darjeeling. In the case of the Kiranti, his studies help to highlight, among other things, the specific constellation of notions concerning the landscape, the vertical dimension (mountains, rivers and the plains) in ritual practice, linked with soul-concepts and the significance of ancestral spirits.

Conclusions

This stimulating influence on modern ethnographers was possible because Nebesky-Wojkowitz himself was not only a dedicated ethnographer and documentarian but also a scholar with an eye on the larger picture, the cultural framework: he was interested in making wider comparisons in order to understand the long-term cultural history of Himalayan societies. After all, he was a scholar who grew up in the Viennese environment of historical anthropology, diffusionism and the theory of cultural areas ("Kulturkreislehre").[47]

As was pointed out by N.J. Allen, most Tibetologists start from the study of Tibetan society and look at its cultural impacts on traditionally non-literate societies (Tibetanization, Buddhaization, i.e., processes of diffusion).[48] Here he distinguishes three categories of "Bodic" speakers in the Himalayas: 1. Cultural Tibetans, 2. partially Tibetanized peoples (i.e., influenced by Tibetan Buddhism, such as the Lepcha), and 3. non-Tibetanized peoples who are traditionally non-literate (such as the Kiranti groups). Earlier Tibetologists (such as Stein and Tucci), he argues, have mainly looked at the relationship between 1. and 2., lacking sufficient knowledge of 3. But, as he stresses, one can also work the other way round and "look inward from the periphery," i.e., start from the margins. This, in fact, is the path which Nebesky-Wojkowitz took early on: he tried to carve out the underlying concepts of "tribal belief" at the margins of Tibetan culture to understand how these have been transformed or preserved in the process of cultural history.

Thus Nebesky-Wojkowitz's ultimate project was a historically oriented comparative study of the Himalayan cultures, of which he could only provide a rough outline or sketch. This project was taken up by various scholars: apart from N.J. Allen, these include ethnographers such as Michael Oppitz, and, more recently Toni Huber.[49] In a structuralist spirit, Oppitz takes his examples from kinship studies: as already noted by Lévi-Strauss, Bodic societes provide variations on the theme of elementary alliance systems: symmetrical (bilateral cross-cousin marriage, e.g., Tamang), and asymmetrical (matrilateral cross-cousin marriage, e.g., Kham Magar).[50] Looking at kinship terminologies and marriage practices, one can recognize a family resemblance in spite of overt differences. The same can be said about features of material culture: Oppitz' opus magnus deals with the shamanic drum in all its variations, from the extended Himalayas across the whole of Central Asia to Siberia. By looking at this larger framework of relations, transformations, variations, processes of "longue durée" can be recognized – and mapped. Similarly, a focus on narratives reveals recurring patterns

47 In Gingrich's terms, Nebesky-Wojkowitz was influenced by the "secular diffusionism" of his teachers, which operated on a model of "civilizational zones" (Gingrich, this volume).

48 Allen 1980.

49 His two-volume opus (2020) provides an in-depth study of a ritual culture with a "Bon" heritage in the Tibetan borderland. It touches on many comparative issues already raised by Nebesky-Wojkowitz.

50 Oppitz 2007.

in stories about ancestral origins, migrations and settlement histories, often accompanied by ritual practices of social memory and identity formation.[51]

Nebesky-Wojkowitz would have been happy to see these enterprises in comparative studies. Like Allen he was aware of the fact that linguistic relatedness did matter but also that it was only one aspect of culture. Traditions could also travel across language boundaries. Like Oppitz and Huber he was interested in material objects – such as ornaments (travelling objects), instruments, tools of everyday work and ritual paraphernalia. Such objects and their use preserved their history, told their story. Above all, he tried to understand the worldview underlying these cultural practices: the notions of the soul, the afterlife, the role of ritual experts and their contact with divine beings (be it ancestors, deities, ghosts or demons).

In view of these larger interests, it can be safely assumed that Nebesky-Wojkowitz would have taken more interest in Kiranti ethnography if he had lived longer. We know that his interests already shifted to Nepal after 1956, when it became clear that it would remain impossible to enter Tibet from Sikkim, and others had moved on to Nepal as a virgin field of anthropological studies. He already ventured into new territories, to the Thakali and Gurung in the West, to the Tamang and Helambu "Sherpa" (Yolmowa) in the East (all category 2 cultures in Allen's model). But he also began to look at non-Buddhicized ethnic groups (i.e., category 3 peoples). In fact, one of the last publications he wrote was a descriptive article on the Kusunda and Chepang. There is evidence that he planned to work more among the Tamang (since the Sherpa and Thakali were already the territory of his teacher Fürer-Haimendorf), thus continuing work on a partly Buddhist group, and also, ultimately, to study the Limbu.[52] He might have continued work on the Lepcha but as far as we know this was largely finished (though only a draft version of the book has been found). He had made a short trip to Ilam from Darjeeling to visit the Lepcha there, but they were small in number.[53] Though Nebesky-Wojkowitz never made it to the core of the Kiranti area, it is only logical that sooner or later he would have taken a closer look. This never happened, but nevertheless his observations and ideas have subsequently fertilized Kiranti Studies. And they still have a great potential to inspire further research.

51 Huber and Blackburn 2012.

52 This is clearly stated in his proposal submitted to the Wenner-Gren Foundation in which he details the research purpose: "To study the customs, religious beliefs, economy and social structure of the Sherpas of Sikkim and the so far unexplored Tamang and Limbu tribes of Central and Eastern Nepal." (27.08.1956, Archive of the Wenner-Gren Foundation, New York). I am grateful to Florian Eidam-Weber for this information and for showing me a copy of the proposal.

53 On the situation of the Lepcha in Ilam in comparison to those in India see Lepcha 2013.

PHOTO SOURCES

Fig. 1. Edeltraut Mandl, 1957, KHM-Museumsverband, Weltmuseum Wien, VF 28.178 (detail).

Fig. 2. René Nebesky-Wojkowitz, KHM-Museumsverband, Weltmuseum Wien, VF 32.725.

Fig. 4. René Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1956, KHM-Museumsverband, Weltmuseum Wien, Film NW56 20000118 97a,16, 00:00:41.

Fig. 5. Martin Gaenszle, 1984, Himalaya Archive Vienna.

Fig. 6. René Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1950–1953, KHM-Museumsverband, Weltmuseum Wien, VF 31.284.

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3

NEBESKY-WOJKOWITZ AND BEYOND

New Research in the Footsteps of His Work

THE *SHEL GONG SHEL PHRENG*
A Treasure in the History of Tibetan Pharmacology

Katharina Sabernig

Among the Tibetan texts René Nebesky-Wojkowitz collected for the Museum für Völkerkunde in Vienna (today the Weltmuseum Wien) are two related blockprints of an important pharmacological treatise known by the abbreviated name *Shel gong Shel phreng*, which was written and compiled by the scholar and medical practitioner bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs (1672–1743). At the time of Nebesky-Wojkowitz's expeditions, hardly anything was known about this major work in Europe. But Nebesky-Wojkowitz understood very well the particular significance of the text he acquired during his first stay (1950–1953) in Kalimpong. He started to translate both the pharmacopeia, the first section consisting of a short introduction called *Shel gong* (*Crystal Globe*; no. 134.475c, 25 folios), and the more detailed auto-commentary referred to as *Shel phreng* (*Crystal Rosary*; no. 134.475d, 206 folios). The second and longer text contains not only indications but also subtypes with their biological and pharmacognostical descriptions. Although regarded as a milestone in the history of describing Tibetan medical ingredients, the *Shel gong Shel phreng* was not created in isolation, independent of the developments that took place in Lhasa at the close of the 17th century. The following contribution provides insight into the nature and structure of the work and draws connections to preceding and subsequent pharmacological texts of the period.

The *Shel gong Shel phreng*: Western reception and preservation

The *Shel gong Shel phreng* as a whole is considered the most important historical Tibetan pharmacopoeia (*'khrungs dpe*) dealing with the classification of individual medicinal raw materials.[1] In light of the importance of the text, relatively little has been published on this extensive work in any European language. Unkrig mentioned the work in his introduction to Korvin-Krasinsky's book on Tibetan medicinal philosophy,[2] a publication René

1 Cf. Hofer translates the Tibetan term *'khrungs dpe* as "medical simple" (2014: 227). Literally it may be translated as "emerged patterns" or "book of emerged [materials]"; it is also translated as "formulary": dictionary.christian-steinert.de, s.v. *'khrungs dpe* (accessed 23.04.2024). See the title of the modern pharmacopoeia by dGa' ba'i rdo rje (1998).

2 Unkrig 1953: XXIV; Korvin-Krasinsky 1953.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz certainly knew of and even cited in his article *Tibetan blockprints and manuscripts in possession of the Museum of Ethnology in Vienna* (1958). He even wrote a review of it,[3] in which he analysed the structure of the blockprints and the main classification of the ingredients listed. It was more than another half century before the text was re-examined by scholars. For example, Theresia Hofer wrote an article on *Illustrated Materia Medica* which provides an overview of various prints, manuscripts and modern pharmacological texts.[4] Although many scholars of Tibetan medicine mention the *Shel gong Shel phreng* as *the* most outstanding or seminal work on Tibetan materia medica,[5] the majority of its content is unknown to a non-Tibetan reading public and knowledge of its contents remains limited to a small circle of specialists. So far, complete translations have only been made into Mongolian, Chinese and Lithuanian, the latter prepared by Donatas Butkus.[6] However, the translation of Pasang Yonten's Dictionary on Tibetan Medical Plants has made large parts of the text accessible.[7]

The abbreviated titles of the two blockprints kept in the Weltmuseum Wien, *Crystal Globe* and *Crystal Rosary,* perfectly reflect the structure of the treatises, as the *Shel gong Shel phreng* consists of a short and compact part (the globe) and a long elaborated pharmacopoeia (the rosary).[8] Both texts deal with the same key substances (with minor exceptions) but approach the materia medica from different perspectives. The full title of the *Crystal Globe*, completed in 1727, reads the *Flawless Crystal Globe: A Straightforward Explanation and Clear Demonstration of the Potency of the Remedies and Elixirs That Will Overcome Demons and Diseases.*[9] The full title of the *Crystal Rosary,* completed in 1737, translates as the *Flawless Crystal Rosary: An Extensive Explanation of the Classification, Nature, Potency and Names of the Ambrosial Medicines*.[10]

Considering the great importance of these texts, it is important to identify which libraries hold historical prints. The *Nationwide Collected Ancient Tibetan Medicine Bookname Catalogue* published in China lists xylographs stored in Labrang Monastery, Northwest Minzu University (西北民族大學) in Lanzhou, Aba autonomous prefecture (阿壩藏族自治州), Garzê autonomous prefecture (甘孜藏族自治州), Tibet Autonomous Region Tibetan Medicine Library, and the Chinese Ethnic Library (中國民族圖書館) in Beijing.[11] The catalogue of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala only lists printed modern editions and a reproduction of the prints from Lhasa Chakpori made by Tashigangpa.[12] Blockprints are available in Nepal, recorded on microfilm by the Nepal-German

3 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956.

4 Hofer 2014.

5 E.g., Boesi 2006: 81, 2007: 4; Sabernig 2014: 105; Czaja 2019a: 4.

6 Butkus 2014.

7 Pasang Yonten 1998.

8 For a longer discussion on the meaning of the name, see Sabernig 2014: 105.

9 *Bdud nad gzhoms pa'i gnyen po rtsi sman gyi nus pa rkyang bshad gsal ston dri med shel gong zhes bya ba bzhugs so*; bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs [1727].

10 *Bdud rtsi sman gyi rnam dbye ngo bo nus ming rgyas par bshad pa dri med shel phreng zhes bya ba bzhugs so;* bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs [1737].

11 Hpheng Ling 2015: 72, 76.

12 Lobsang Shastri 1995: 45, 64, 102; bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs 1970.

Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP).[13] However, the works are apparently rarely found in European libraries with Tibetan collections: Neither the *Catalogue of the Collection of Tibetan Blockprints and Manuscripts in the National Museum of Ethnology* in Leiden compiled by Nebesky-Wojkowitz[14] nor the registered holdings I have consulted in German libraries[15] contain this prestigious work. The London Wellcome Institute of the History of Medicine holds one incomplete manuscript.[16] The situation is different among the holdings of the respective libraries in countries formerly part of the Habsburg Monarchy. In addition to the Vienna prints, the *Prague Collection of Tibetan Prints from Derge,* which comprises a large compendium of Tibetan knowledge originating from the region where the author of the *Crystal Globe* and *Crystal Rosary* resided, holds a copy[17] as does the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in Budapest.[18]

Before delving deeper into the structure of the *Shel gong Shel phreng* or the meaning of the terms "classification, nature, potency and names" as the full title indicates, the most important Tibetan pharmacopoeias written between the 16th and 19th centuries shall be introduced briefly.

Crystal Globe and *Crystal Rosary* and their relation to the *Four Tantras* and its commentaries

To better assess the pharmacological achievement of bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs, the author of *Shel gong Shel phreng,* it is necessary to examine the contents of these texts and the differences compared with the most influential older and younger pharmacological works. There is no doubt that the *Four Tantras* (*rGyud bzhi*) is the most important root text of Tibetan medicine in general.[19] It consists of four parts (tantras), of which only select chapters are of interest to our investigation of the contents of the *Crystal Globe* and *Crystal Rosary*. The second part, the *Explanatory Tantra,* provides a preclinical foundation to physiology and pathology, therapy, diagnostics and the skills of a physician. The section on therapy covers advice regarding behaviour, nutrition, pharmacology and surgery.[20] As shown in table 1 below, two of the therapeutic chapters in the *Explanatory Tantra* (chapters 16 and 20) are directly related to the list of individual ingredients found in both the *Crystal Globe* and the *Crystal Rosary.* As Denise Glover, Theresia Hofer and Olaf Czaja have already pointed out, particular substances characterised in chapter sixteen on dietetics, "Knowledge of the type

13 Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project (NGMPP): 1986 No E 1872/10, 1873/1; 1988: L116/5, L106/8.

14 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1955.

15 Verzeichnis der Orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland: Tibetische Handschriften und Blockdrucke.

16 Winder 1989: 30.

17 Kolmaš 1971: 12.

18 Orosz 2009: 66–67 no. 558.2 and 626.5.

19 A critical edition was published by bsTan 'dzin don grub 2005; an English translation is provided in G.yu thog Yon tan mgon po 2008; a German translation is provided by Ploberger 2012.

20 The English term "surgery" is derived from the Greek word *kheirourgia* (*χειρουργία*) via Old French and Latin intermediate stages. The Greek term is a composition of *kheir* (*χείρ*) "hand" and *ergon* (*ἔργον*) "work" and originally referred to any manual work. In Tibetan medicine, the term for "surgery" refers to any kind of external application performed by hand including massage, moxibustion, bloodletting and excisions of haemorrhoids.

of food" (*zas kyi tshul shes pa*), are integrated into bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs' materia medica,[21] but the majority of the text is clearly an extension of the medicinal ingredients listed in the twentieth chapter of the *Explanatory Tantra* entitled "Effect of medicines" (*sman gyi nus pa*). Yang ga states that the lists of names of different types of substances in this chapter do not correspond to any known source and "might be created by the author of the *rGyud bzhi* or are based on another source unknown to us."[22] He found that the list of food and drink (related to chapter sixteen) is based on chapters five and six of the first section of the *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya-saṃhitā,* an influential Ayurvedic treatise composed by Vāgbhaṭa in the 7th century.[23]

The twentieth chapter of the *Explanatory Tantra* forms the structural core of Tibetan materia medica. Nevertheless, the information given in the *Four Tantras* is presented in a very condensed manner, and it remains incomprehensible in parts without the extensive commentaries. Such commentarial works, whether general commentaries on the *Four Tantras* or themselves specific pharmacopoeias, not only provide advanced knowledge on the therapeutic properties but also distinguish various subtypes and qualities of medicinal ingredients. As will be discussed in more detail below, the text in the *Crystal Globe* is almost identical to the corresponding passages in the twentieth chapter of the *Explanatory Tantra.* Nebesky-Wojkowitz stated: "The text [*Shel gong*], which is sometimes ambiguous on account of abbreviations necessitated by the metre, explains the way in which each medicine (or group of medicinal substances) acts."[24] Though ingredients are sometimes arranged in a different sequence than in the *Explanatory Tantra*, additional substances or respective parts of plants are described in the same condensed style and metre.

Considered *the* jewel in the history of Tibetan pharmacology, the *Shel phreng* is the result of fruitful developments in this area during the late 17th century. The most famous "pre-*Shel gong Shel phreng*" commentaries on Tibetan materia medica are the relevant passages contained in the 16th-century commentary *Transmission of the Elders* (*Mes po'i zhal lung*) attributed to Blo gros rgyal po[25] and the 17th-century commentary *Blue Beryl* (*Vaiḍūrya sngon po*) compiled by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho.[26] Although they are intended to elucidate the rudimentary information of the root text, the elaborated comments often remain unspecific and thus create a space for inner-Tibetan debates and criticism. In his historical account of Tibetan medicine, the Regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (1653–1705) mentions the criticism of Tibetan materia medica given in the *Transmission of the Elders* as expressed by lHun sdings rNam rgyal rdo rje, an eccentric representative of a rival medical school. Possibly motivated by the dispute between schools, the scholar, physician and surgeon Blo bzang chos grags, who was born in Dar mo (Dar mo sMan rams pa, 1638–1710?) and served as a personal physician of the 5th Dalai Lama, authored an extensive commentary on the twentieth chapter of the *Explanatory Tantra*,[27] which became another important source for the *Shel gong Shel phreng.* This work was written before the *Blue Beryl* commentary was com-

21 Glover 2005: 203; Hofer 2014: 228; Czaja 2019a: 5.
22 Yang ga 2010: 173.
23 Ibid.: 2010: 169; cf. Czaja 2019a: 5.
24 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1958: 196.
25 Blo gros rgyal po [Zur mkhar] 2005.
26 Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1973.
27 Blo bzang chos grags 2007.

pleted in 1688. It can also be regarded as a result of the productive late 17th-century period in Tibetan medicine but differs from the *Blue Beryl* in several respects. Even before studying eye-surgery under Manaho in 1675–1677, Blo bzang chos grags had been in close contact with the Indian scholar Godara and other Indian informants during the mid-1660s, and these connections allowed him to compose his pharmacological treatise.[28] As is the case in the *Shel gong Shel phreng,* the respective sections of Blo bzang chos grags's text are divided into an extensive part entitled "general meaning" (*spyi don*) and a shorter one entitled "literal sense" (*tshig don*), a didactically refined approach already applied rudimentarily in the *Transmission of the Elders*.[29] Blo bzang chos grags describes his work as offering a revised and clarified structure of the contents of the twentieth chapter of the *Explanatory Tantra*. Neither the sequence of ingredients nor the classes of medicines were changed. A closer look reveals that the text includes many synonyms and substitutes not only in Tibetan but also Sanskrit, Nepalese and Indian equivalents in use in the 17th century. Tibetan pharmacopoeias written in the 18th and 19th century are all based on the list of key substances found in the *Explanatory Tantra* and its respective commentaries.[30] It is on this basis that further classifications were created or existing ones modified, and a remarkable number of other substances were integrated or specified in subsequent Tibetan pharmacopoeias. As will be shown below, the classification of medicinal substances of animal origin underwent particularly strong revision.

Another outstanding premodern but "post-*Shel gong Shel phreng*" pharmacopeia is an illustrated materia medica by the Mongolian scholar 'Jam dpal rdo rje (1792–1855)[31] entitled *Beautifully Wondrous Eye Ornament* (*mDzes mtshar mig rgyan*). This work exists in different versions and is certainly based on the *Shel gong Shel phreng*, while it also refers to the earlier commentaries mentioned above. The most well-known blockprint edition is exceptional not only for the beautifully carved depictions of the medicinal ingredients but also because it includes glosses of the Tibetan substances in (mainly) Mongol, Manchu and Chinese as well as a phonetic transcription of the Chinese terms in Tibetan script. In the foreword to a reprint of this materia medica, Gene Smith wrote 50 years ago: "A complete index to this work is a desiderata of the first order of importance."[32] Such a multilingual index is still lacking, but all Tibetan pharmacological key-terms are already included in an online database of Tibetan medical terms that I have created.[33] Like bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs' *Crystal Globe and Crystal Rosary,* 'Jam dpal rdo rje's *Beautifully Wondrous Eye Ornament* combines in a chiastic structure categories for the classification of different types of food with pharmacological categories. Although his publication is very popular among contemporary scholars of Tibetan medicine, 'Jam dpal rdo rje's work was more important to the development of Mongolian medicine at the time of its creation than now.[34]

28 Schaeffer 2011: 296.

29 Cf. Sabernig 2014: 206 f.

30 Cf. Sabernig 2011a, 2014b and 2017a.

31 'Jam dpal rdo rje 1971. According to Olaf Czaja (2019a: 4) his monastic name is Ye shes don grub bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan.

32 Smith 1971.

33 crossasia.org/service/crossasia-lab/tibetische-medizin-termini (accessed 23.04.2024).

34 Cf. Czaja 2019a: 4.

In the period between these two works, a pharmacological text entitled *White Crystal Mirror* (*Shel dkar me long*) was written by the ethnic Mongolian incarnate Gelugpa Lama Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor.[35] Within the Tibetan pharmacological block print tradition, however, this text contains less medical knowledge with regard to its contents rather than offering more.[36] While medicine does not play a major role in Sum pa mkhan po's *Collected Works,*[37] the *White Crystal Mirror* is explicitly mentioned as a source for 'Jam dpal rdo rje's *Beautifully Wondrous Eye Ornament.*[38] Another multilingual source worth mentioning in the context of terminology is the 18th-century *Pentaglot Dictionary,* elaborately edited by Oliver Corff.[39] Based on Manchu terms that serve as headwords, the *Pentaglot Dictionary* contains Mongolian, Tibetan, Uyghur and Chinese translations of these terms arranged in subject groups. However, the work is intended as a reference glossary for trade and customs and terms for medicinal ingredients play a lesser role.

The pharmacological classes

In the twentieth chapter of the *Explanatory Tantra,* the list of medicinal ingredients contains 382 different items divided into eight classes, plus the class of three medicinal vehicles. Additionally chapter sixteen lists more than hundred foodstuffs of animal and plant origin. In compiling table 1, I found 930 chief ingredients in bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs's *Crystal Globe* and *Crystal Rosary*; compared with the number of names listed in the *Explanatory Tantra* this comprises more than twice the number of the materia medica in the twentieth chapter, however the inclusion of 73 foodstuffs is just a selection of the materials listed in the sixteenth chapter. Although new ingredients were added in the *Crystal Globe* and *Crystal Rosary*, one reason for the considerably larger number is the multiple categorisation of ingredients by their various parts: Roots (*rtsa ba*), leaves (*lo ma*), flowers (*me tog*), and fruits (*'bras bu*) of medicinal herbs and trees as well as certain body parts of animals appear separately, as the text is organised to provide detailed information on the use of particular parts. The catalogue entry of the London Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine mentions 2,294 chief ingredients.[40] The entry in the German edition of Wikipedia repeats the same number of 2,294 pharmaceuticals, with the additional information that they are divided into 1,176 classes.[41] It is not specified how this figure was obtained. It seems that the numerous subtypes and synonyms listed have been counted, but in my opinion one cannot speak of "chief ingredients."

It is evident that Nebesky-Wojkowitz studied the *Crystal Globe* and the *Crystal Rosary* in detail. In his article on blockprints in the Viennese Museum of Ethnology (Museum für Völkerkunde, now Weltmuseum Wien), after giving a general description of the *Crystal Globe* he states: "Then follows the enumeration of 915 different medicines classified in

35 Ye shes dpal 'byor [Sum pa mkhan po] 1979b; more details on his life are provided in De Jong 1967 and Kim 2018.

36 Cf. Sabernig 2014: 106.

37 Ye shes dpal 'byor [Sum pa mkhan po] 1979a.

38 Smith 1971.

39 Corff et al. 2013.

40 Winder 1989: 30.

41 de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deumar_Tendzin_Ph%C3%BCntshog (accessed 23.04.2024).

thirteen main groups, which in turn are subdivided in various subgroups."[42] I agree with his analysis of the medicinal classes, which is also compatible with the newest edition of this classical work which was published in Beijing; this recent edition also suggests biological identifications for the vegetal materials and subtypes.[43] However, it is not consistently clear in the text whether the substances listed are key substances or sub-terms, which explains minor deviations in the counts.

When Nebesky-Wojkowitz began his examination of the xylographs stored in today's Weltmuseum Wien hardly anything was known about the *Four Tantras*' medicinal classifications or those of other Tibetan medical works. He was familiar with Korvin-Krasinski's *Die Tibetische Medizinphilosophie,*[44] and even wrote a review of this book, identifying some important and in some cases still relevant points about the state of research in the field of "lamaistic medicine."[45] Just one year after this review, two further publications on Tibetan medicine appeared—Franz Hübotter's *Chinesisch-Tibetische Pharmakologie und Rezeptur* and Theodor Burang's *Tibetische Heilkunde*[46]—but it is unclear whether he knew of these books. In any case, these are not on the list of works that the library of the Weltmuseum Wien acquired from Nebesky-Wojkowitz's estate in October 1959.[47] He also had access to Heinrich Laufer's dissertation *Beiträge zur Kenntnis der Tibetischen Medicin*,[48] but none of these works are philological in their methods. In his article on the museum's blockprints, Nebesky-Wojkowitz does not elaborate much on details given in the *Crystal Rosary,* but he notes: "This commentary is a valuable help for reading the text of the Shel gong, since it explains in detail the various abbreviated terms found in the latter work. It gives, moreover, an extensive survey of Tibetan pharmacology, since it quotes in the case of each particular medicine the opinions on its efficacy expressed in the books of the foremost lama-physicians."[49] Eidam-Weber in this volume presents much more on the general pharmacological achievements and Nebesky-Wojkowitz's intention to translate the *Crystal Rosary.* Here I would just like to mention that it is obvious that Nebesky-Wojkowitz had seriously studied the manuscript as he marked every single key substance with a pink line, beginning with the first ingredient of the first class and continuing through the whole blockprint. However, he stopped marking at the beginning of the section listing the parts of animals. Nebesky-Wojkowitz not only identified most individual ingredients, but he also examined the pharmacological classes given in the text.

Though described in the *Crystal Globe,* the classes are equally applicable for the *Crystal Rosary*. Referring to Nebesky-Wojkowitz's translation and classifications, table 1 presents a comparison of these with the classes in the *Four Tantras* and the *Beautifully Wondrous Eye Ornament* by 'Jam dpal rdo rje. Nebesky-Wojkowitz also included the number of list-

42 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1958: 196.

43 bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs 2017.

44 Korvin-Krasinski 1953.

45 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956: 936–937.

46 Burang 1957; Hübotter 1957.

47 For more information on his library, see Florian Eidam-Weber in this volume.

48 Laufer 1900; for more details on the acquisition of Laufer's dissertation by the Austrian National Library see Balk in this volume.

49 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1958: 198.

ed substances as examples. Hence, it is obvious that 'Jam dpal rdo rje exactly followed the classification created by bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs, with the exception of the classes of parts of animals, but rearranged the sequence: Medicinal salts are assembled in the twentieth chapter of the *Explanatory Tantra* within a group of 99 medicinal materials which includes several classes such as tree medicines (*shing sman*), nectar medicines (*rtsi sman*) and medicines of stalked plants (*thang sman*).[50] Salts were classified by bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs as an individual group following the enumeration of "medicinal herbs." Sum pa mkhan po has maintained this order;[51] later on 'Jam dpal rdo rje rearranged the group of "medicinal salts" so that it came after "medicinal earths." The table clearly demonstrates that, regardless of the classification, compared to the *Explanatory Tantra,* the *Crystal Globe* and the *Crystal Rosary* contain a significantly greater number of individual components in each class, whereas some were eliminated in the later *Beautifully Wondrous Eye Ornament*. It is not within the scope of this article to list the names of all individual substances mentioned in these texts, but each key substance in these three works are recorded in my database on Tibetan medical terms.

Table 1. Ingredients/Substances mentioned in the *Shel gong Shel phreng*

Explanatory Tantra	***Crystal Globe & Crystal Rosary*** **Medicinal classes according to the translation by Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1958: 196 f.)**[52]		***Beautifully Wondrous Eye Ornament***
Ch. 20, no. 1; total 10	**1. Precious substances or jewels** (*rin po che*) a) the most excellent (*mchog*)[53] b) ordinary ones (*phal ba*) subdivided[54] into - non-meltable substances (*mi bzhu'i khams*) - meltable substances (*bzhu'i khams*)	total 59 42 17	total 38 25 13
Ch. 20, no. 2; total 36	**2. Medicinal stones** (*rdo sman*) subdivided into - meltable - non-meltable	total 64 15 49	total 43 11 32
Ch. 20, no. 3; total 11	**3. Medicinal earths** (*sa sman*) - of natural origin (*rang byung* "self sprung") - artificial ones (*bcos ma*)	total 20 14 6	total 11 7 4
Ch. 20, no. 4; The class is mentioned but the substances are not classified. Labrang mural (fig. 1): 20	**4. Medicinal juices** (*rtsi sman*) This group contains the most important medicinal juices of both vegetable and animal origin.	total 12	total 14

50 It is not in the scope of the article to discuss diverging opinions on the proper translation of these classes. For more details on this discussion, see Sabernig 2011: 87, 2012: 374–375, 2017: 348. The amounts 20 *rtsi sman,* 51 *shing sman*, and 28 *thang sman* are based on the tree mural in the Medical College of Labrang Monastery. These amounts are neither based on the *Explanatory Tantra* nor on Blo bzang chos grags's text and could not be found in any other pharmacological treatise. Possibly these are a contribution of the medical authorities at Labrang Monastery.

51 Ye shes dpal 'byor [Sum pa mkhan po] 1979b: 249.

52 The number of ingredients in the table counts key terms; synonyms, substitutes and sub-terms are not included.

53 No individual substances are listed in this category.

54 The sequence of non-meltable and meltable classes of jewels and stones listed in the table follows Nebesky-Wojkowitz's article (1958: 196) which is based on the sequence in the *Shel gong*; the materia medica by 'Jam dpal rdo rje has adopted these classes but changed the sequence.

Ch. 20, no. 5; The class is mentioned but the substances are not classified. No indication of which part is used. Labrang mural: 51	**5. Medicinal trees** (*shing sman*) - fruits (*'bras bu*) - flowers (*me tog*) - leaves (*lo ma*) - trunk (*sdong po*) - branches (*yal ga*)[55] - [whole plant (*dar ba*)] - [marrow (*rkang ba*)] - bark (*pags pa*) - viscosy [sic] fluids (*tshi ba*), to this subgroup also belong the gums (*thang chu*) and roots (*rtsa ba*)	total 103 51 9 5 8 11 - - 9 10	total 97 44 6 2 9 2 8 1 12 13
Ch. 20, no. 6; The class is mentioned but the substances are not classified. Labrang mural: 28	**6. Stalked plants** (*ldum bu*) [*ldum bu'am thang sman*] - roots, leaves, flowers, fruit [uncategorized]	total 76	total 65
Ch. 20, no. 7; total 118 No indication of which part is used.	**7. Herbs** (*sngo*)**:** - roots (*rtsa ba*) - leaves (*lo ma*) - flowers (*me tog*) - fruit (*'bras bu*) - whole plant (*dar ba*): [leaf, trunk, flower, fruit together] [root, leaf, flower, fruit together]	total 171 22 16 31 27 35 40	total 136 22 15 23 24 32 20
[part of group of 99, already included above in Ch. 20, nos. 4, 5, 6]	**8. Salts** (*lan tshwa*) - of natural origin (*rang byung*) - fabricated salt (*bzo tshwa*)	total 26 22 4	total 20 16 4 follows "medicinal earths"
Ch. 20, no. 8 and ch. 16; total 129 Ch. 20, no. 8.1: 9 Ch. 20, part of flesh, no. 8.3: (4) Ch. 20, part of flesh, no. 8.3: (1) Ch. 20, part of flesh, no. 8.3: (3) Ch. 20, part of flesh, no. 8.3: (4) Ch. 20, no. 8.5: 1 Ch. 20, part of flesh, no. 8.3: (1) Ch. 20, part of flesh, no. 8.3: (1) Ch. 20, part of flesh, no. 8.3: (1) Ch. 20, part of flesh, no. 8.3: (2) Ch. 20, no. 8.2: 15 Ch. 20, no. 8.7: 5 Ch. 20, no. 8.6: 4 Ch. 20, no. 8.4: 8 Ch. 20, no. 8.3: (9) 26	**9. Unguents** (*byung sman*) [**animal parts** *srog chags las byung ba'i sman*] - horns (*rwa*) - eyes (*mig*) - tongue (*lce*) - teeth (*so*) - throat (*gre ba*) - hearts (*snying*) - lungs (*glo ba*) - livers (*mchin pa*) - bile (*mkhris pa*) - spleen (*mcher*) - kidneys (*mkhal*) - stomach (*pho ba*) - bowels (*rgyu ma*) - genitals (*mtshan ma*) - bones (*rus pa*) - marrow (*rkang mar*) - brain (*klad pa*) - fat (*tshil bu*) - blood (*khrag*) - flesh (*sha*)	total 423 [394 + 29] 25 5 7 11 2 8 7 7 24 5 4 4 6 6 39 5 16 8 26 52	

55 In the *Crystal Globe* the class is named *yal phran* instead of *yal ga*, indicating that smaller branches are meant. (Bstan 'dzin phun tshogs 1727: 9r/4); but in 'Jam dpal rdo rje's materia medica the subclass is called *shing sman yal ga* ('Jam dpal rdo rje 1971: 109/1).

Ch. 20, no. 8.8: 4	- skin (*pags pa*)	8	
Ch. 20, no. 8.10: 6	- hair (*spu*)	30	
Ch. 20, part of 8.10: (3)	- feathers (*sgro*)	10	
Ch. 20, no. 8.9: 4	- nails (*sen mo*)	5	
Ch. 20, no. 8.12: -	- contents of the stomach (*slo*)	5	
Ch. 20, no. 8.11: 9	- excrements (*brun*)	30	
Ch. 20, no. 8.11: 2	- urine (*dri chu*)	16	
Ch. 16: 9	- milk (*'o ma*)	10	
Ch. 16: 6	[curd (*zho*)]	12	
Ch. 16: 11	[butter (*mar*)]	7	
Ch. 20, no. 8.13: 10	- whole body (*bub ril*)	23	
Ch. 16, vegetable origin; total 20	**10. Crops growing on fields** (*zhing skyes lo tog*)	total 41	total 23
Ch. 16: 7	[awned grains (*gra ma can*)]	20	8
Ch. 16: 7	[leguminous crops (*gang bu can gyi lo tog*)]	13	11
partly listed as aromatic vegetables 6	[harvested with roots (*rtsa ba can gyi lo tog*)]	5	4
categorised differently	[beer yeast etc. (*chang rtsi sogs*)]	3	
Ch. 16, animal origin; total 72			total 122
digging with claws (*khron gyis rko ba*): 5		-	8
digging with the beak (*mchus rko ba*): 6		-	14
herbivores (*ri dwags*): 16		-	17
carnivores (*gcan gzan*):10		-	14
birds of prey (*rtsal mthus za ba*): 7		-	9
domesticated animals (*mi yis bdag byed*): 13		-	14
living in caves (*khung gnas*): 8		-	26
living in water (*rlan gnas*): 7		-	20
Ch. 16; total 10	**11. Medicinal waters** (*sman chu*)	total 3	
Ch. 23	**12. Medicinal effects of fire** (*me*)		
Ch. 20; total 3	**13. Medicinal propensities of substances** (*gdus pa'i sman*)	total 5	
CHAPTER 20: 382	Related to CHAPTER 20	930	424
CHAPTER 16: 128	Related to CHAPTER 16	73	145
Total 510	**Total number of ingredients:**	**1003**	**569**

In recent years, several scholars have investigated the different types of classification found in Tibetan materia medica. Glover and Boesi independently compared the classes in the *Four Tantras* with those in the *Blue Beryl,* the *Crystal Rosary* and the contemporary pharmacopoeia the *Crystal Mirror*.[56] Hofer examined differences and similarities between the *Four Tantras,* the *Crystal Globe* and the *Crystal Rosary*,[57] and the *Beautifully Wondrous Eye Ornament*. Czaja has analysed the particular use of insects in Tibetan medicine considering a variety of historical pharmacological texts.[58] However, none of these studies mentions the thoroughly analytical subdivisions that Nebesky-Wojkowitz recorded already in 1958. His level of detail can be seen in table 1, in which both "precious substances or jewels" (*rin po che*) and "medicinal stones" (*rdo sman*) are subdivided into non-meltable substances (*mi bzhu'i khams*) and meltable substances (*bzhu'i khams*). Also, the classes "medicinal earths"

56 dGa' ba'i rdo rje 1998; Glover translates *Shel phreng* as "Crystal Garland" (2005: 183–194). Boesi translates *Shel gong Shel phreng* as "Crystal Block and Crystal Rosary," cf. Boesi 2006: 81.

57 Hofer translates the Tibetan title as "Stainless Crystal Garland," see Hofer 2014: 229 f.

58 Czaja translates the title as "Lumps of Crystal. A Rosary of Crystal," see Czaja 2019a: 4.



Fig. 1. The mural documented in the Medical College at Labrang Monastery in 2001 depicts the classification described in the twentieth chapter of the Explanatory Tantra entitled "Effect of medicines" (left tree) and "Knowledge of the type of food" (right tree).

(*sa sman*) and "salts" (*lan tshwa*) are both divided into the subdivisions of "natural origin" (*rang byung*) and "artificial ones" (*bcos ma*).

Pharmacodynamic concepts in the *Crystal Globe* and the *Crystal Rosary*

Nebesky-Wojkowitz stated that the shorter text, the *Crystal Globe*, "explains the way in which each medicine (or group of medicinal substances) acts." What kind of Tibetan concepts are hidden in this "pharmacological activity"? Tibetan pharmacodynamics involve, without doubt, an elaborate network of terms and mechanisms of action: The full titles of the two texts reveal that the *Crystal Globe* explains the individual *nus pa* of medicinal substances while the *Crystal Rosary* provides extensive information on the categories *dbye ba, ngo bo, nus pa* and *ming*. While these terms can be found in common dictionaries, frequently translated as "classification," "nature," "potency," and "names," respectively, they have been widely discussed among scholars of Tibetan medicine. Nevertheless, in particular pharmacological contexts certain terms have a specific meaning while in another context the same term may have another meaning, causing confusion.

The best example of this is the term *nus pa,* commonly translated as "effect," "efficacy" or "potency" of medicines.[59] In order to clarify its meaning I would like to delve deeper into

59 E.g., Glover 2005: 201 f., 2010: 258 f., 2018: 110; Boesi 2006: 65; Hofer 2014: 227; Sabernig 2017: 236–239.



Fig. 2. Organisation of different pharmacodynamic concepts. Detail of fig. 1.

the use of the term. In chapter twenty of the *Explanatory Tantra*, the term is used in a triplicate manner: first, as an umbrella term for the general "effect" of a substance, in the sense of the chapter's title. This involves hierarchically different pharmacodynamic concepts divided into I) general (*spyi*) and II) specific (*bye brag*) concepts. The general concept includes taste (*ro*) and a particular concept of *nus pa,* which are depicted as the left and middle trunk of a tree in the Labrang mural (figure 2).[60] In this context, the two general concepts remain theoretical as they are not connected to a specific medicinal substance. Chapter nineteen on the taste of medicines (*sman gyi ro*) describes various aspects of the six different tastes and gives examples of particular medicinal substances associated with each taste.[61] But in the twentieth chapter the concept of taste involves three more theoretical concepts of a substance's efficacy such as *nus pa, stobs* and *yon tan*. Hence, the umbrella term *nus pa* involves inter alia the homonymous specific concept of eight "potencies" (*nus pa*). In this case, it refers to the eight qualities of an ingredient which consist of four opposing pairs of characteristics.[62] One of these opposing pairs is thermodynamic in character, which leads to the concept of "strength" (*stobs*). This concept forms the basis of cooling and warming medicines and focuses on a superordinate polarity associated with the cooling Himalaya (*gangs can*) and the warming Vindhya mountains (*'bigs byed*). This also includes the polarity of the strength of the moon and the sun. Also the concept of 17 "attributes" (*yon tan*) is similar to

60 Fig. 2 shows the organisation of different pharmacodynamic concepts according to Blo bzang chos grags in the form of a hierarchical tree as depicted in Labrang Monastery (Blo bzang chos grags 2005: 85/21–23).

61 1) sweet (*mngar ba*), 2) sour (*skyur ba*), 3) salty (*lan tshwa*), 4) bitter (*kha ba*), 5) pungent (*tsha ba*), 6) astringent (*bska ba*).

62 1) heavy (*lci*), 2) oily (*snum pa*), 3) cool (*bsil ba*), 4) blunt (*rtul ba*) and their opposites 5) light (*yang*), 6) rough (*rtsub*), 7) hot (*tsha*) and 8) sharp (*rno ba*).

this particular concept of *nus pa* but more complex.[63] The third manner in which the term *nus* is used is in the very context of the efficacy of the six tastes (*ro*) in connection to these 17 attributes.[64]

The specific concept of the umbrella term *nus pa* denotes the nature (*ngo bo*) of a medicinal substance. In the *Explanatory Tantra,* this part constitutes about 90 percent of the chapter's length. This section is the most relevant to the *Crystal Globe* and *Crystal Rosary.* This part of the text forms the basis of Tibetan pharmacopoeia literature and lists the names organised into classes as presented in table 1. It gives indications in terms of particular signs, symptoms or syndromes.[65] In the *Explanatory Tantra,* the materials listed are not classified according to the taste or the second and third manner of *nus pa.* Thus, it seems evident that the *Crystal Rosary* was written with the claim to combine the different classes and concepts clearly and systematically.

Use of pharmacodynamic considerations for gur gum in comparison

In the following I will outline briefly how the pharmacodynamic concepts are applied in respective pharmacopoeias by focussing on the example of the popular ingredient *gur gum.* This medical term is another umbrella term for a variety of saffron-coloured herbal substances within the category of "nectar medicine" (*rtsi sman*). As we will see, it is worth paying attention to how the name is treated in the shorter versions compared to the longer commentaries. Taking as a basis the information provided in the category *ngo bo* ("nature") in the *Explanatory Tantra,* I compared these contents with the 16th-century commentary *Transmission of the Elders* by Blo gros rgyal po, the 17th-century commentary on the twentieth chapter of the *Explanatory Tantra* by Blo bzang chos grags, the 17th-century commentary *Blue Beryl* (*Vaiḍūrya sngon po*) compiled by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs's *Crystal Globe,* and the "post-*Shel gong Shel phreng*" pharmacopeia *Beautifully Wondrous Eye Ornament* by 'Jam dpal rdo rje (1792–1855),[66] as well as *White Crystal Mirror* authored by Sum pa mkhan po Ye shes dpal 'byor.[67] Most of these texts are divided in one or the other way into a shorter introductory section and an extensive explanatory part. In the case of *Beautifully Wondrous Eye Ornament*, the shorter version consists of the names of the materials and their illustrations, while the longer version consists of explanatory visuals and extensive text.

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63 1) smooth (*'jam pa*), 2) heavy (*lci ba*), 3) warm (*dro ba*), 4) oily (*snum pa*), 5) stable (*brtan pa*), 6) cold (*grang ba*), 7) blunt (*rtul ba*), 8) cool (*bsil ba*), 9) flexible (*mnyen pa*), 10) fluid (*sla ba*), 11) dry (*skam pa*), 12) parched (*skya ba*), 13) hot (*tsha ba*), 14) light (*yang ba*), 15) sharp (*rno ba*), 16) rough (*rtsub pa*) and 17) mobile (*g.yo ba*).

64 In this category, efficacy is constituted by means of the degree of effectiveness of a certain taste on the attribute. For example: The three—salty, astringent, and sweet—are heavier in order (*lan tshwa bska mngar rnam gsum rim bzhin lci*). Blo bzang chos grags and the earlier commentary *Transmission of the Elders* describe this connection in great detail (Blo bzang chos grags 2005: 84/16–85/20; Blo gros rgyal po [Zur mkhar] 2005: 686/20–687/6).

65 For more on signs, symptoms and syndromes in the context of Tibetan medicine, see: Sabernig 2021: 164 f.

66 'Jam dpal rdo rje 1971. According to Olaf Czaja (2019a: 4) his monastic name was Ye shes don grub bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan.

67 Compiled by Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1973.

The example of *gur gum* is representative of a general trend that emerged after my review of several commonly-used substances. *Gur gum* is a very common ingredient and is present in nearly half of all Tibetan medicinal recipes. It is associated with a variety of saffron-coloured plants and cannot be identified botanically without further specification.[68] With the exception of Sum pa mkhan po's work,[69] the condensed versions of the short text sections compared here provide neither a specification of subtypes nor a description of the morphology of the ingredient but they do mention its indication. The *Explanatory Tantra* and the *Crystal Globe* state: "*Gur gum* cures all liver diseases and closes openings of channels."[70] Blo bzang chos grags's "literal sense" includes its taste and *nus pa*: "*Gur gum* is of sweet taste and cool, blunt, smooth and flexible *nus pa,* it cures all liver diseases and closes openings of channels."[71] The sweet taste of *gur gum* is also recorded in the nineteenth chapter of the *Explanatory Tantra* in the lists of examples of ingredients connected to a certain taste.[72] It should be noted that Blo bzang chos grags uses the term *nus pa* in the sense of the 17 attributes, because "smooth" (*'jam pa*) and "flexible" (*mnyen pa*) do not belong to the eight potencies; all four properties mentioned are "attributes."

A completely different picture emerges in the commentaries and longer versions of Tibetan pharmacopoeias. In the *Transmission of the Elders* three subtypes are distinguished: *kha che gur gum* from Kashmir,[73] *bal po gur gum* from Nepal and a third species called *pri yang ku.*[74] This plant is usually listed as an individual ingredient, most commonly identified as *Dracocephalum tangutium* MAXIM. and is indicated to cure heat in the stomach and liver.[75] Later texts no longer reveal any association between *pri yang ku* with *gur gum*. Blo bzang chos grags's extensive "general meaning" (*spyi don*) is divided into substances of superior (*mchog*) and inferior (*dman*) qualities, and the text is loaded with synonyms as well as Nepalese and Sanskrit terms. In his view, the substance of superior quality is *kha che gur gum,* commonly identified as saffron from the *Crocus sativus* L. plant, and the extensive text passage reveals that in Sanskrit it is named *kungkuma* (*kuṅkuma*).[76] Nepalese *bal po gur gum,* commonly identified as *Carthamus tinctorius* L. and better known as safflower, is considered

68 Cf. Sabernig 2011: 88.

69 Sum pa mkhan po gives different subtypes of *gur gum* and a rudimentary description of their appearance in the introductory part of his treatise. Interestingly, in this case the purportedly more extensive part is even shorter; see Ye shes dpal 'byor [Sum pa mkhan po] 1979b: 235/3 + 263/1–2.

70 *gur gum mchin nad kun sel rtsa kha sdom.*

71 *gur gum ro mngar zhing nus pa bsil rtul 'jam mnyen brtag pas mchin pa'i nad kun sel zhing rtsa kha sdom.*

72 bsTan 'dzin don grub 2005: 63/7.

73 Blo bzang chos grags (2005: 84/15), bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs (2017: 269/17) and 'Jam dpal rdo rje (1971: plate 77/3: *rgya skad du/ ka smir zhes pa kha che yul du*) identify the land of *kha che* with *[s]ka smir,* similarly, *kha che* refers to the Muslim population of Kashmir. In the blockprint stored in the Weltmuseum Wien, 134.475d: 54/4.

74 Blo gros rgyal po [Zur mkhar] 2005: 703/14.

75 bsTan 'dzin don grub 2005: 70/17.

76 Both the Tibetan term *gur gum* and the Sanskrit term *kuṅkuma* invite speculation about whether there is an etymological connection to the German term for turmeric, *Kurkuma*, borrowed from the Arabic *kurkum*. This seems likely as the Sanskrit terms for saffron and turmeric hardly differ in the written word. Nevertheless, the fact that Tibetan has a separate term for turmeric and that the indications for the two materials are different speaks against this. Nevertheless, Roerich offers an orthographic variety, *kur-kum*, translated as "curcuma" (Roerich 1983, vol. 1: 69). In other cases, one finds *gur gum, gur kum* and *kur kum.*

inferior, as is *btsun mo gur gum* and *ldum ra gur gum*.[77] Although the appearance of some of the materials is described, Blo bzang chos grags's strength is his treatment of the terminology. The *Blue Beryl* commentary distinguishes between three subtypes, all elaborately depicted in Thangka 24 of *Tibetan Medical Paintings*,[78] a set of thangkas that accompanies the treatise: *kha che gur gum, bal po gur gum* and *bod gur gum,* from Tibet, which is possibly *Calendula officinalis* L.[79] Instead of adopting Nepalese and Sanskrit terms as compiled by Blo bzang chos grags, who opened his horizons towards the subcontinent, another Tibetan, regional subtype is added to the *Blue Beryl*. The differentiation of high and low quality is also incorporated in a rudimentary description of the plants' appearance. Though Blo bzang chos grags was a personal physician of the 5th Dalai Lama, it seems that there was some tension between him and the Regent: In his autobiography within the *Khog 'bugs* the Regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho stated that he had admired the practical skills of Blo bzang chos grags, but that he discovered by chance that his understanding of the text and knowledge of medicinal plants was only superficial.[80] We will probably never know the intention of this statement, but it can be assumed that the Regent made decisions not only based on medical but also on political considerations.

The *Crystal Rosary* by bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs is considered the most outstanding Tibetan materia medica following the fruitful period a few decades earlier. What makes this treatise so exceptional? There is no doubt that it is based on the development and reorganisation of medical knowledge that took place in Tibet during the late 17th century. Nevertheless, that productive dynamic came to an end with the death of the Regent Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho in 1705 and the ensuing unstable situation in Lhasa. Despite this circumstance, during his mission to Tibet (1712–1727) the Jesuit Ippolito Desideri noted that there were many and well-trained doctors in Tibet and described the medical practice he observed as professional.[81] Although there are not many reliable sources about his life, it is assumed that bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs was born in 1672 in Kham and his family was associated with a long medical tradition. According to Sonam Dorje, bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs experienced conflicts in Kham and went to India. After his return to Tibet, he resided in Lhasa and Derge and around 100 texts on various topics are attributed to him.[82] According to the *Nationwide Collected Ancient Tibetan Medicine Bookname Catalogue* more than 20 different texts in various versions are documented and stored in national libraries,[83] and the *Shel gong Shel phreng* is outstanding among them in its analysis of pharmacological achievements, its discussion of conflicting pharmacological treatises and its compilation of the most reasonable knowledge.

77 Blo bzang chos grags 2007: 80/10–81/3. The minor *btsun mo gur gum* was not adopted by the major pharmacopoeias but Sum pa mkhan po mentions it together with *kha che gur gum* and *bal po gur gum* (Ye shes dpal 'byor [Sum pa mkhan po] 1979b: 235/3).

78 The thangka series illustrating large parts of the *Blue Beryl* depicts the contents of some chapters extensively and others only rudimentarily. Concerning medicinal substances, thirteen thangkas are dedicated to the detailed representation of all key terms and various subtypes. See Meyer 1993; Sabernig 2013, 2017.

79 Parfionovitch et al. 1992: T24, no.: 42, 44, 45; Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho 1973: 416/3.

80 Kilty 2010: 333.

81 De Filippi 1932: 186.

82 Cf. Byams pa phrin las 2000: 381–385; Sonam Dorje 2016.

83 Hpheng Ling 2015.

It is obvious that bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs was impressed by the compilation of synonyms and Sanskrit terms he found in Blo bzang chos grags's pharmacopoeia because he adopted most of its non-Tibetan terminology while also integrated aspects of the *Blue Beryl* such as the Tibetan species of *gur gum.* Indeed, he mentions five species. However, in this specific case bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs did not agree with Blo bzang chos grags's consideration on the four attributes of *gur gum* but decided that *nus pa* must be heavy (*lci*) and cool (*bsil ba*). In other cases, the authors' allocations are in agreement with each other. For example, both texts agree on the *nus pa* of pomegranate (*se 'bru*) and list them in the same sequence: hot (*tsha*), sharp (*rno*), rough (*rtsub*), mobile (*g.yo*), oily (*snum*), dry (*skam*) and light (*yang*). Again, these *nus pa* are "attributes." It seems bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs wrote a kind of "best of" pharmacopoeia. While he integrated the best aspects of previous pharmacological texts, his major contribution is the extensive morphological description of the appearance and different subtypes of the ingredients.[84] Glover drew a broader connection to the development of natural sciences and noted that this text reflects a shift from the categorisation of *nus pa* to the consideration of physical characteristics in line with the principle of morphological classification as in Linnaean methodology.[85] It illustrates the clear shift from theoretical and ideal considerations to a more material approach. In earlier texts, the "nature" or *ngo bo* of a medicine was associated with its indication and this generally did not change over time. In the *Crystal Globe,* "nature" was not only enhanced in terms of morphological aspects but also in terms of its indication. For example, it was added that *gur gum* increases the bodily constituents (*lus zungs'phel bar byed*).

The 19th-century pharmacopoeia by 'Jam dpal rdo rje[86] adopted first and foremost the classification and description of the five different types or species of *gur gum*. While the description of its outward appearance, especially the definition of colours, was maintained or even refined, the synonyms from the subcontinent and indications are fewer. At the beginning of the section, *kuṅkuma* is mentioned as a second Sanskrit name for *gur gum,* but the extensive excurse on synonyms and the effect of increasing the bodily constituents has been eliminated. This seemingly reflects a shift away from the languages of the south and towards languages of the north-east: Manchu, Chinese, and Mongolian. This shift can also be observed in the depiction of the materials: While the thangka illustrations to the *Blue Beryl* were painted in the Tibetan style of the late 17th century, the blockprint contains images based on those in the *Bencao gangmu* by the famous Chinese physician Li Shizhen.[87] Another remarkable shift of priorities is evident: the differentiation according to superior and inferior quality was modified, as different qualities of saffron from Kashmir are distinguished with regard to their colour. Yellow is an indicator for high quality, while yellow-red is considered medium quality, and dark red and dry is described as low quality, but the different species were not distinguished according to the categories of superior or inferior quality. The blockprint presents different qualities of leaves but only one image of the plant *gur gum: bal po gur gum, Carthamus tinctorius* L. was selected to be most appropriate, though

84 Cf. Sabernig 2014: 107 f.
85 Glover 2018: 113.
86 'Jam dpal rdo rje 1971: plate 77.
87 Hofer 2014: 230; Czaja 2019a: 4.

traditionally regarded as inferior. This manifests not only a shift from an expensive form of *gur gum* to a cheaper form—or to a more available substitute—but also shift in priority from an ideal definition to a more pragmatic and practical approach.[88]

Animals in the *Crystal Globe* and the *Crystal Rosary*

In his overview on the *Crystal Globe,* Nebesky-Wojkowitz lists 29 classes of materials derived from animals. These 29 classes comprise 423 individual ingredients including 29 dairy products. The *Explanatory Tantra* divides 105 materials into only 13 classes, but more detailed itemizations explain the considerable increase in components and classes. A closer look reveals that this increase pertains largely to a subdivision of the internal organs whereas in the root text they are subsumed under the class "flesh." There is also an expansion within the classes: While the *Explanatory Tantra* mentions bile in general as one ingredient, the *Shel gong Shel phreng* lists 24 types of bile derived from different species. Also, the four types of feathers (*sgro*) mentioned in the *Explanatory Tantra* are listed within the group of hair (*spu*), whereas it becomes a new class in the *Shel gong Shel phreng.* Nebesky-Wojkowitz adds: "spu: this expression refers especially to the hair growing on the body: the chapter, however, also describes the medicinal qualities of skra, the hair growing on the head."[89] He mentions that some of the materials are prepared from human sources[90] and he also writes that the contents of the stomach (*slo*) and excrements (*brun*) are used mainly for medicinal baths.[91] Milk, another new class of materials derived from animals, is borrowed from the sixteenth chapter of the *Explanatory Tantra.*

Returning to the blockprint in the Weltmuseum Wien, the markings in this copy of the *Crystal Rosary* show that Nebesky-Wojkowitz was interested in the text far beyond merely cataloguing it. Up to the final section of whole plants within the class of herbs, he marked each and every single substance. The same is true for all 26 types of medicinal salts. However, when it comes to the section on animals his marks abruptly stop. The first subchapter deals "with the medicinal qualities of horns."[92] Notes on the text document that he started with the first substance called *bse ru,* commonly translated as rhino's horn. He also marked the white subspecies (*dkar po*) but omitted the multicoloured (*khra bo*) and the black (*nag*) one. He started to continue with horns of cervids but stopped suddenly.[93] The next and final mark appears in the section on medicinal waters. Why did he interrupt this work? Is it due to his premature death? Did he have any doubts about the use of protected animals? Was the sheer number of more than 400 animal ingredients an obstacle? Did sponsoring, limited to plant materia medica, play a decisive role? Was it just not worth the effort to examine them? As yet, there is no known explanation as to why Nebesky-Wojkowitz only touched upon animal ingredients so briefly. Nebesky-Wojkowitz's neglect of this class of ingredients seems to be in line with the brief treatment of animal parts in the original text, a fact also

88 Although this is a general tendency, an exception is the integration of the mythological phoenix into the pharmacopoeia (for more details see Czaja 2019a: 6).

89 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1958: 197.

90 Discussed in more detail in Czaja 2019b.

91 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1958: 197.

92 Ibid.

93 *Shel phreng* 171v (bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs [1737]).

noted by Czaja: "In contrast to his long descriptions of plants, however, Tendzin Püntsok[94] does not discuss the animals in any significant degree of detail. He usually just names them and neglects any further information regarding where they can be found, how they live, and so on."[95] In my own experience of documenting the animal-derived terms and possible translations for the Tibetan medicine database, it was apparent that the medicinal value of this portion of text is minimal; rather it appears to be more a prestigious compilation and presentation of the abundant Tibetan fauna. For many entries the text of the *Crystal Rosary* is simply a copy of the animal section of the *Crystal Globe.* Though Sum pa mkhan po maintained the differentiated classes of plant parts used he did not integrate bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs's extended section on animals, but he did adopt bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs's inclusion of food as medicine. 'Jam dpal rdo rje must have received a similar impression. Although he had adopted all other categories created by bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs, he refrained from integrating this part of the text into his *Beautifully Wondrous Eye Ornament* (see table 1). Instead, he gave precedence to and elaborated the animal ingredients in the chapter on dietetics.

Conclusion

Nebesky-Wojkowitz was a pioneer in investigating the classification of the materia medica in the *Crystal Globe* and *Crystal Rosary.* He devoted considerable work to the identification of Tibetan pharmacological terms and translations of medically exploitable information. Unfortunately, so far, only traces and puzzle pieces of his efforts are known. The discovery and examination of his pharmacological manuscript would be an enormous asset to the study of Tibetan medical history as well as the history of science. This would be also a valuable contribution to making the work accessible in a European language. Although today we know much more about the possible biological identification of the medicinal substances and their underlying pharmacodynamic concepts, the work in its entirety is accessible only to readers of Tibetan, Mongolian and Chinese.[96] The latest pharmacological works on Tibetan medicine published in China attempt to establish a biological standard for medicinal terms. This makes sense from a clinical point of view in terms of patient safety and evidence-based medicine, but from a medical historical point of view these standardized identifications are not tenable in many cases. In particular, the description of the morphological characteristics of the different subtypes mentioned in the *Crystal Rosary* could provide information on the use of regional varieties of plant material. Even if Nebesky-Wojkowitz had created only a rudimentary translation, it would be valuable to understand the work better than with the current state of knowledge allows.

The botanical part of the treatise can certainly be considered a treasure of historical Tibetan pharmacology. It is characterised by the fact that it incorporates the terminological findings compiled by Blo bzang chos grags and aspects distinctive to the *Blue Beryl*, making it arguably the most prestigious medical commentary of the highly productive late 17th century. This accords well with the biography of its eminent scholar-author who lived in

94 The simplified phonetic transcription of bsTan 'dzin phun tshogs.

95 Czaja 2019a: 4.

96 As mentioned above, the only translation of the work into a European language has been made into Lithuanian by Donatas Butkus; it has not reached a wide readership and is not commercially available.

India and Lhasa. Probably the strongest impact of the author's greatest contribution in this text is the classification according to the distinct parts of respective medicinal plants, the clear morphological descriptions of the individual ingredients and the differentiation of subtypes on the basis of appearance. The *Crystal Globe* and the *Crystal Rosary* is also characterised by the ambition to create a prestigious work of Tibetan culture that documents and showcases its rich flora and fauna. The work is both a turn to a morphological view of medicinal substances and a continuation of explanations based on orthodox and idealistic considerations on the mode of action. The clear description of different types of plants had a significant impact on the work of the later Mongolian scholar 'Jam dpal rdo rje. This is not the case with regard to animal-based materia medica, which were not taken up in any later pharmacopoeias. With the generally increasing political orientation towards Beijing during a time of internal instability, 'Jam dpal rdo rje's work shows the inclusion of terms in languages spoken northeast of Tibet while the use of terms derived from India were reduced. It is not only the languages and illustrations that indicate a shift towards Chinese culture but also an increasing pragmatism in identifying the ingredients. The *Shel gong Shel phreng* undoubtedly represents both a high point and a turning point and a treasure and jewel in the history of Tibetan pharmacology.

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PHOTO SOURCE

Fig. 1, 2. Katharina Sabernig.

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FROM 'SUPREME ENMITY' (*DGRA BLA*) TO 'ARTEMISIA-BIRDS' (*MKHAN BYA*)
'Fighting Gods' (*dgra lha*) in Dunhuang Documents, *juthig* Divination Texts, and *leu* Manuscripts[1]

Daniel Berounský

More than half a century has passed since the publication of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz's opus magnum *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities*.[2] Now the book has come of age, which in the case of an academic publication means that it has effectively reached retirement. Nevertheless, it continues to be the most popular reference book for any specialist studying the context and background of the various Tibetan spirits, demons, divinities, oracles, etc.

The academic life of René Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1923–1959) has a strong connection to Vienna. He accepted Austrian citizenship in 1948[3] despite having been born in 1923 in Velké Hoštice (Groß Hoschütz in German),[4] then part of the young nation of Czechoslovakia, which had been established in 1918. The family originated from the central part of Czechoslovakia: the name Wojkowitz is the Germanised rendering of the Czech name Vojkovice, a village near Mělník, less than 30 km from Prague.[5] 'Nebesky' also suggests a Czech family origin, as '*nebe*' means 'heaven' in Czech.

I would like to pay my respects to René Nebesky-Wojkowitz, an esteemed Tibetologist and to some degree my fellow countryman, with this paper. It will attempt to expand on his

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2 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1993.

3 See Niebuhr and Widorn 2019.

4 This area has a long history of being part of the medieval Czech Kingdom. Like the rest of the Czech Kingdom, it later became part of the Austrian Empire. The region surrounding Nebesky-Wojkowitz's place of birth was lost during the Silesian Wars of the mid-18th century to Prussia, whose territory it remained until 1918.

5 As has been shown recently, members of the family claimed noble descent at the end of the 19th century. Despite its original approval by the authorities, this claim was later disputed in 1904. Their connection with the noble family of Jan Nebeský, recorded as living in Vojkovice in the 16th century, was ultimately shown to have been fabricated (Nebeský 2006).

research on the *dgra lha* ('fighting gods', pronounced *drabla*), which constitute mainly the seventeenth chapter in his monumental *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*. As I find repetition inappropriate with a researcher of his standing, this paper will focus on sources outside those used by René Nebesky-Wojkowitz in order to broaden our understanding of the subject.

In the case of *drabla,* the information in *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* stemmed mostly from texts used in a monastic context. The associated ritual in that monograph is restricted to the description of a simple domestic chore performed by monks. Yet, the contexts of worshipping *drabla* in Tibet were and are undoubtedly much richer.

For example, one important but rarely explored area in which 'fighting gods' feature is their worship by Tibetan hunters. Though this aspect will not be further expanded in this paper, a brief description contained in a recent Tibetan ethnographical text gives an idea of their prominence (gCen tsha bkra bho 2008: 104–106):[6]

> *In general, it is well known that 'fighting gods' are present in Tibetan arrows (mda'). And thus, there is an annual offering to the 'fire-arrows' – guns (me mda').*
>
> *When performing the offering, the guns are bound to the upper part of the tent pole and the offering to 'fighting gods' and their appeasement are then presented.*
>
> *When 'fighting gods' are summoned for the communal performance of fumigation and wish-fulfilling rituals, all the guns are arranged together in the shape of a tent. This is called the 'tent-dome of fighting gods.' A red flag is tied to the gun rest and an elaborate fumigation ritual is performed. The owners [of the guns] ride horses in circles around it. A hair is pulled out from various kinds of wild animals and tied to the strap of the gun. Then they make [an effigy] in the shape of demons (gdon 'dre) and shoot at them. Hitting them is considered to be an auspicious sign, and those who do so are taken to be courageous heroes.*
>
> *When a gun is inaccurate, the fumigation is performed in a similar way and the blood and fat of the slain wild animals must be smeared on the gun rest. This is not only done in such a case. Immediately after shooting and killing a wild animal, the edge of the barrel and the wooden gun stock are smeared with the hot blood [of the animal] while pronouncing: 'I will eat the meat, you drink the blood!'*

This extract continues, stating that guns should not be touched by women. Having Buddhist books and the chanting of Buddhist texts should be avoided in their presence.

The text cited not only illustrates that there are still large gaps remaining in our knowledge about the cult of these interesting divinities. It also seems to illustrate an obvious fact that the worship of *drabla* does not seem to be primarily a concern of monks. The values asso-

6 The Tibetan text reads: *spyir bod mda' la dgra lha yod par grags/ des na lo ltar me mdar gsol kha byed kyi yod pa ni/ gsol mchod byed dus me mda' de sbra gur phu'i ka ba la sgrog cing/ dgra lha'i gsol mchod kyi bskang ba 'bul ba dang sbrags bsang gsol dang 'phrin bcol byed la/ dgra lha 'gugs dus me mda' tshang ma mnyam du gur dbyibs ltar sgrig par dgra lha'i gur khang zhes brjod/ ru la dar cog dmar po dkris/ bsang gsol rgyas po gtong/ bdag po tshang ma rta la bzhon nas der skor ba rgyag gi yod la/ ri dwags rigs mi 'dra ba'i spu tog tsam btog nas me mda'i lung thag la sgrog pa bcas byed/ de nas gdon 'dre'i gzugs shig la me mda' rgyag gi yod tshul byas nas sus der phog na rten 'brel legs shing dpa' bo blo stobs yod pa zhig la 'dzin gyi yod/ de bzhin me mda' kha log tshe bsang gtong zhing/ ri dwags bsad pa'i khrag dang tshil lu me mda'i ru la 'byug dgos par ma zad/ ri dwags gang zhig la me mda' brgyab kyang bsad ma thag khrag tsha bor me mda'i kha dang zhabs gzhug (mjug shing) la 'byung cing/ sha ngas za khrag khyod kyis 'thungs shig ces brjod/.*

ciated with them are alien to the Buddhist point of view, and the text even makes explicit mention that the 'fighting gods' present in the guns should be kept away from Buddhist books and the chanting of Buddhist texts. But monks in Tibet dominate the areas both of rituals and of written texts. Thus, (ironically) in such a case, even information on 'fighting gods' is made available through the media of texts written by monks, who are likely to have adjusted them to fit crucial Buddhist notions. The voices of lay communities remain silent, and the text cited above represents a rare instance of information about the cult of 'fighting gods' from outside the Buddhist environment.

René Nebesky-Wojkowitz states at the beginning of his study of 'fighting gods': "The title *dgra lha*, 'enemy-god', is usually given to those deities who are believed to be especially capable of protecting their worshipers against enemies [...]" (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1993: 318). This is then followed by a long list of divinities including Pehar, a large number of 'protectors of the Doctrine,' and also the legendary king Gesar. The list of the various categories continues until the end of the chapter, and gives the impression that there are *drabla* of virtually everything. Even in the Tibetan context, where long lists of various forms of divinities appear frequently, this is extremely broad.

In this light, this paper will attempt to provide a view of Tibetan 'fighting gods' based on a textual tradition that has been largely undiscussed and stands on the margins or even outside of the monastic community. The first part will investigate the obscure references to *drabla* in divination manuals from Dunhuang, some of their earliest mentions. These documents attest to their high status, reflected both in the written form containing the syllable *bla* (*dgra bla* instead of *dgra lha*, analogous to *sku bla* beings, where the syllable *bla* distinguishes them from beings referred to as *lha*) and their appearance alongside members of the upper strata of society. At the same time, references to these beings are found in proximity to the 'fierce spirits' known as *nyen* (*gnyan*).

The second part introduces information from texts dealing with the rope divination known as *juthig* (*ju thig*). These texts uniquely preserve both the orthography of their name known from Dunhuang documents (*dgra bla*) and clues to their high status associated with their essential role for divination. Suddenly, however, the 'fighting gods' begin to break down into a multitude of categories (such as *cangs se*, *wer ma*, *bshug mgon*), and again one finds on a mythic level their strong association with the *nyen*, 'fierce spirits.'

The last section approaches the milieu of a little-explored lay ritual tradition found in northeastern Tibet called *leu* (*le'u*). This tradition still maintains a strong cult of 'fierce spirits', who are associated primarily with birds (the term 'bird' serves as a synonym for the *nyen* spirits). Some texts of this tradition allow one to discern a gradual merging of *nyen* spirits with 'fighting gods', although the *nyen* were probably regionally worshipped spirits associated with the wild and volatile natural world. This contribution then provides evidence that this conflation of 'fighting gods' (*dgra lha/bla*) and 'fierce spirits' (*gnyan*) has its roots already in the Imperial period of Tibetan history (mid 7th–mid 9th century).

This background of 'fighting gods' is just one example of the possible shifts in meanings and changes that cannot be gleaned from the Buddhist ritual texts on which Nebesky-Wojkowitz relied. Accordingly, this paper also attempts to look, at least in part, beneath the opaque and articulated categories of deities and spirits associated with the idea of 'fighting gods' in Buddhist texts and into their wider significance in Tibetan culture.

The Dunhuang divination manuals

To my knowledge, 'fighting gods' are mentioned six times in the four Dunhuang documents that represent some of the oldest Tibetan sources known. All of these mentions appear in divination manuals. And in all cases, the written form *dgra bla* – taken as erroneous by Nebesky-Wojkowitz – is unanimously present. This early evidence would seem to contradict his note about the correct spelling: one can assume that the prevailing older written form was *dgra bla*, which in later Buddhist texts changed to *dgra lha*. Yet, a much more difficult question arises as to what was understood by *dgra bla* here.

Three of the four divination manuals describe divination by casting dice (IOL J 0738, PT 1043, PT 1051).[7] But one mention of *drabla* appears in PT 1047 in connection with another form of divination. This manuscript has been discussed by several scholars, who have expressed uncertainty concerning the content of the text (Macdonald 1971, Stein 2010). It has been suggested, for example, that it is a divination using boards (Macdonald 1971, Dotson 2019a). It was also identified as a *juthig* divination text by Namkhai Norbu in his not strictly academic text (2009), and Rossi has presented a convincing academic paper confirming such an identification while discussing her work on translating this Dunhuang manuscript (2019).[8] This manual on divination using knots tied on ropes contains a number of technical terms which were enigmatic to previous scholars. But when compared with terms designating specific combinations of knots in surviving *juthig* divination manuals, most are nearly identical. It is therefore beyond any doubt that this Dunhuang manuscript is a *juthig* divination manual.

It has been suggested by Macdonald (1971) that PT 1047 was composed during the very beginning of the Tibetan Empire. Nishida considers IOL J 0738 and PT 1051 to be good candidates for having been written during the Imperial period based on their palaeographic features (Nishida 2020), but these remain estimations.

Concerning the production of these manuals, one can summarise, as Nishida has, that the first stage in creating dice-divination manuals was most likely the "preparation of the drafts substantiating the divination results by means of prevalent verses, the names of effective divinities and well-known narratives or maxims. All of these [...] are supposed to be rooted in the cultural tradition of early Tibet or to reflect the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural *milieus* where local divinities particular to various districts, as well as the divinities derived from other cultural backgrounds, predominate [...] All of these preparations were probably accomplished not by a single professional but by a group of professionals" (Nishida 2020: 69). The comprehensive commentary explaining the practical implications of the divination was likely to have been added only afterward, according to Nishida, and as a last step, the die-marks were inserted into the text.

It should be stressed here that the divinities and various spirits that appear in the dice divination manuals cannot be seen as reflective of a local cult of spirits or divinities present in a particular region of the Tibetan Plateau. So far, the evidence shows that the compilers

7 PT 1051 does not contain the die marks, but its formal similarity with IOL J 0738 allows it also to be considered a dice divination text. It is likely that the text represents a stage of manuscript production and that the die marks had not added yet (cf. Nishida 2020: 54).

8 Donatella Rossi is currently working on a translation of the entire PT 1047 (Rossi 2019); I am indebted to her for sharing a draft of her work with me.

brought together divinities and spirits from various regions of the Tibetan Empire, for example Amdo, Zhangzhung, and central Tibet, as well as foreign ones from Turkic areas and China. One may suppose that there was a tendency to include powerful spirits and divinities of variable provenance for their relevance to the divination's oracular purposes.

The following section will introduce all six identified mentions of *drabla* in the noted documents from Dunhuang.

i) IOL J 0738 [9]

@@@@ @@@ @@@@
In Tshoro (mTsho ro), the country of turquoise,
the good turquoise is in the willow leaves.[10]
Arranging the turquoise, speaking playfully,
with melodious words all good is established.
Summoning it now is a means of joy.

If this divination is cast for the luck of the household and luck of the vital force, the previous state is protected. Being poor, one makes ready entire ***drabla (dgra bla)*** *and trichun (trI mchun). And if one was previously in a low position, he will now reach a high position. Eliminate obstacles and make offerings to the gods. It will turn to good. Striving, the goals will be reached. Doing business, one gains profit. Argument in dispute will work. When cast regarding the guests, [the guest] will come. Casting this divination for whatever is good is excellent.*

The *drabla* are mentioned here along with certain *trichun* (*trI mchun*).[11] The context makes it clear that in this case *drabla* should secure promotion to a wealthier and higher social position. It is striking that Nebesky-Wojkowitz mentions that, amongst other purposes, *drabla* are worshipped for their "aid to achieve a higher rank and social position" (1993: 319). This would suggest considerable continuity in ritual practice.

This extract is similar to another passage in Dunhuang document PT 1051 (l. 11–18). The first part in verse is analogous to a great degree. The text of PT 1051 then mentions 'making ready' (*'chos*) not *drabla*, but *lha yulsa* (*lha yul sa*, 'local spirits') and *män* (*sman*, 'female

9 Tib. text: *@@@@/ @@@/ @@@@/ mtsho ro nI g.yu yul na// g.yu bzangs ni lcang lo la/ g.yu byas nI bka' rtses dang (3v5) bka' snyan nI bzang dgur sbyar// deng bos ni skyId pa'I lugs// mo 'dI nI khyIm phya dang srog phya la btab na/ [sngar?] [sr?]ug cing (3v6) phongs te 'dug pa las// dgra bla dang trI mchun thams shad gyIs 'ches nas// sngar sa dma' ba la 'dug na yang/ da sa mthon (3v7) por phyIn bar 'ong// bgyegs sol lha mchod cIg/ bzang por 'ong/ don gnyer na grub/ tshong byas na khye phyin// gsol shags (3v8) byas na gnang// 'dron po la btab na 'ong// mo 'dI/ [ci] la btab kyang bzang 'o rab 'o/.*

10 This could also be a metaphorical expression for 'braids of hair.'

11 It is not clear what *trI mchun* means; it is not the name of a known divinity or spirit. The syllable *mchun* is with a high degree of probability identical with the more common *mtshun*, which in the old Tibetan sources designates a sort of 'soul' of the deceased which requires treatment through a funeral ritual. The syllable *trI* is not known at all. One can only speculate as to whether this is an alternative form of the better known *gri*. This word is used for 'untimely death' or 'violent death', as another meaning of *gri*, 'knife, sword' would be illustrative of the circumstances of that death. If this were true, here *dgra bla* would appear in the company of the spirit of the violently deceased person; but this remains mere speculation.

spirits of the wilderness').[12] Instead of attaining 'higher position' the result is the 'arrival of 'well-being' (*g.yang*) of the cattle' (*phyugs kyi g.yang zhig 'ong* [...]). The high social position guaranteed to people by *drabla* is here analogous to the well-being guaranteed to cattle by the spirits called *lha yulsa* (*lha yul sa*) and *män* (*sman*).

ii) PT 1043 [13]

(59) @@@ @ @@@@ *From the mouth of the* ***drabla (dgra bla)*** *[the following was announced]: Having attached the arrows and the bow, the son of a king departing for war will not gain victory.*

This passage reveals that *drabla* were consulted regarding the military campaign of an unknown royal son. It is interesting that it would seem to refer to a prince, and thus a member of a higher social stratum.

iii) PT 1051

This divination text contains three occurrences of the term *drabla*.

a) (lines 26–31)[14]

Kye! In the vast [space of] gold, on [its] good surface,
The turquoise is arranged at the lower part of the body (?),
Its appearance is greater than fine silk,
To choose, one searches at the bottom,
Instant joy is getting finer and floating,
At the face life is bestowed,
As for the kula (sku bla), it does not rebuke nyen (gnyan).

This fell as an omen of Thebla Nyen (Theb la Nyen).[15]

12 The names and categories of the various spirits or deities are largely unknown. In some cases they are known from much later texts and their meaning can be interpreted on that basis. However, such retrospective explanations can prove highly problematic. The meanings are thus only tentatively suggested for the convenience of non-specialists.

13 Tib. text: (59) *dgra bla'I zhal nas rgyal bu dgra byedu song song nas md(a') chags gzhi (=gzhu) chagste* (60) *rgyal du myi mchi 'o//.*

14 Tib. text: *kye gser yangs [ni] ngo bzang la// g.yu 'I ni sha smad 'brim/ 'phrul kyi nI ling las bzang/ bdam ni 'og du bstsal// (27) dgye mgyogs nI phrar zhing 'phyo// g.yar na nI tshe 'tshal ba sku bla nI gnyan myi bkyon// 'di nI theb la nyen gi mo la bab ste// (28) khyod kyis mo 'dI gnye drung bzang dang phrad nas snying dga' ba dang 'dra ste// ma'di ji la btab kyang mchog du bzang// don (29) gnyer na nor bzang po dang phrad de// bdag 'dod pa'I rnams grub shing thob pa lta// gnyan bya na yang gnyen dang byan mo bzang (30) mo phan thogs pa rnyad cing// srid thob bar 'ong 'o// nad myed/ sman dang lha yul sa dang dgra bla 'ches pa zhig yod gyis/ (31) mchod cig/ mo bzang rab bo//.*

15 This line poses serious problems. In most cases in the manuscript, a divinity from whom the prognosis was received is mentioned immediately after the introductory verse. Despite only a remote resemblance, this entry is still similar to IOL J 780, where *then dbang nyId* is mentioned at a similar place. It is thus assumed to be the name of a particular divinity.

This divination is similar to your joy at receiving a good message.
If this divination was cast for whatever, it is very good. When striving for a goal, one would receive good wealth. It is regarded that whatever you wish for will be achieved and gained. When done for marriage, the prognosis for the wedding and the bride is good; benefit will be brought and gained. No sickness. For having assurance of män (sman), lha yulsa (lha yul sa) and ***drabla (dgra bla)****, make offerings to them. The prognosis is excellent!*

This divination resembles the entry in IOL J 780 (3v18–3v22), although it is not identical. In the passage translated here, the *drabla* are mentioned along with the *män* ('female spirits of wilderness') and the *yulsa* ('local divinities'). The metaphorical verses could be an indication of a relationship between the 'fierce spirits' *nyen* (*gnyan*) and the *kula* (*sku bla*) (and in a similar sense in IOL J 780).

b) (lines 45–51)[16]

Kye! In Ngung Khar (rNgung mKhar) fortress of Khyung valley,[17]
The small bird Dul (rdul), white and free,
The small bird Dzul (dzul) has unrestrained wings.
To the height of the sky he departs,
Below his path of travel
Are six fruits and deep lakes.
When consumed in the body,
Hope arises – small bird Dzul (rdzul)!

This fell as the omen of Bog Apa Namkyi Zhing ('Bog A pa gNam gyi Zhing)[18] *As for this omen of yours, man, Lhapel (lHa dpal) divinity will grow like a womb in the summer. Demons dre ('dre) and chur (byur) will melt like snow in the spring. Lhapel (lHa dpal) protects and* ***drabla (dgra bla)*** *is fierce. Being provided with the powerful protection*[19] *of the Pel (dPal) [divinity] it is good. Having cast it for life-luck and enemy-luck, it is very good. One would have joyful talk with a man on the long journey and wealth will*

16 The Tibetan text reads: *kye kyung lung nI rngung mkhar na// rdul bye'u nI dkar yan pa// dzul bye'u [ni] gshogs re dag// dgung sngo nI mtho (46) la gshegs/ gshegs gI nI shul yog su// 'bras drug nI tsho mdams shing// gsol cing nI sku'i tshe// re skyed ni (47) rdzul gyi bye'u// 'di nI 'bog ^a pa gnam gyi zhing gi mo la bab ste// myI khyod kyi mo 'di nI lha dpal nI dbyar gyI lhum (48) [---] bzhin du skye/ /// 'dre dang byur nI dpyid kyi kha ba ltar zhu te/ /// lha dpal skyabs dgra bla nI gnyan// dpal byin po ches (49) [-]bs pas// bzang ngo// srog phya dang dgra phya la btab na bzang rab// lam ring por myi zhig dga' ba'I gtam (50) dang nor zhig dang myur du 'ong// 'dzIgs pa dang bag tsha ba ci yang myi 'ong te// lha dpal bzang po ches zhig yod (51) gyis// rim gro dang cho ga ma nor par gyis dang// mo bzang rab bo.*

17 The resemblance to Khyung lung dngul mkhar, the seat of the rulers of Zhangzhung, is evident.

18 The name of an unknown divinity.

19 The manuscript is torn at the edge and some letters are missing. What is visible on one line is *dpal byin po ches* then a gap and the final letters *bs*. It continues on the next line with *pas// bzang ngo//*. Searching in other Dunhuang documents for the expression *ches* followed by a word ending *bs* yields only one result in IOL J 0738 – *ches bskyabs nas* (3v134) – which is used in a very similar context and in a similar divination text, speaking also about the divinity lHa dpal.

quickly arrive. No fear or fright would approach. In order to have the intense goodness of Lhapel (lHa dpal), perform the ritual and worship him unerringly! The omen is very good.

The introductory verses greatly resemble those found in PT 1051 (lines r26–r42), where the bird appears as a 'silver bird' (*dngul bye'u*). The *drabla* appear in tandem with a certain Lhapel (lHa dpal).[20] The enigmatic Lhapel is named in several divination texts. Only IOL J 734 (5r188) contains a specific reference to this otherwise honorific and general name: Ode Lhapel Gung[gyal] ('O de lha dpal gung [rgyal]). It is thus somehow related to Ode Gungyal ('O de gung rgyal), who in later sources is considered to be the 'father' of mountain divinities in Tibet.[21]

c) (lines 59–64)[22]

At the height above,[23]
With ten horns, grown in multitude (?),[24]
It is surrounded by seven hunting dogs,[25]
It cannot escape, as if being tightly encircled,
the pure Män Geucigma (sMan dGe'u cig ma)[26]
is surrounded by a single hunter;
being surrounded where could she go?

This fell as the divination cast for Wild Män Dachen (sMan rGod Da chen).[27] *To you, man, bitten by a don (gdon) demon of the country, a male-demon*[28] *or other unfortunate events will arrive. When the demon don is eating you, you will be with shimmering mind and deprived of good luck. Be cautious! When casting for sickness, something very*

20 The sentence would also allow for different readings, where *lha dpal skyabs dgra bla* would be just one name. But this seems less likely.

21 However, in his recent discussion, Toni Huber has shown that this figure is probably not seen as a local divinity, but as one residing in the sky (Huber 2020, vol. 1: 82–91).

22 Tib. text: *sgang ka nI ya bya la// //bcu ru nI phan po skyes// //ri skyi nI bdun gis bskor// //myi shor ni dam kor ltar// //sman dag nI dge'u cig ma// rngon pa nI gcig kyis skor// //bskor cing ni ji ru mchis// mo 'di nI sman rgod da chen gi 'i mo la bab ste// //myi khyod la yul gdon dang// //pho srid za 'am// ma legs pa dang// mchi bar 'ong ngo// //gdon 'di ltar za bas sems kyang khyugs phywa dang bros shing 'dug ste// // bag gyis shig// nad pa la btab na ngan rab ste mchi 'o// //phar dgra bya zhing rgol na bzang// chur dgra phya la btab na ngan kyis bag gyis shig// dgra rgno brugs la dgra bla rjed cig//.*

23 IOL J 0738 contains *spang ka ni ya byi na/* ('up on the meadow').

24 The nearly identical phrase appears in IOL J 0738 (1v21): *kye bcu ru nI 'phan po skyes*. The context makes clear that it is speaking about horns or antlers, and it probably refers to a wild ungulate, perhaps deer, as in the similar passage in IOL J 0738.

25 Again, it is almost identical to IOL J 0738 (3v37), which contains *ri khyi* (hunting dogs) instead of *tri skyi* in this text.

26 IOL J 0738 (3v37–38) reads *sman dag nI dngos cig ma*, which is rendered by Dotson as "The *sman* animal, she herself" (Dotson 2019b: 11). I am inclined to see these syllables as a reference to her name in this case.

27 Apparently the name of a female spirit belonging to the class of the *män* (*sman*) representing mostly wildlife.

28 Corr. *pho srid=pho sri.*

bad will approach. If dealing with an outside enemy, if you attack, it will be good. If cast for the luck of an enemy inside, it is very bad so be cautious. Being in the presence of an enemy approaching you, pay respect to ***drabla (dgra bla)****!*

This extract contains initial verses which closely resemble those of IOL J 0738 (3v37–38, cf. Dotson 2019b: 11). The *drabla* appear again here in a context which clearly suggests that they can overcome enemies when worshipped.

iv) PT 1047 [29]

When [the combination of knots] 'kangpar' (skang pard) falls, the 'bagnichi' (bag sni chi), [cords] are put down [stretched] to the right and left. If 'chabun' (phya bun) falls once, [the cords with knots] are adjusted and put down [stretched] to the right and left. If it is cast in the form of a powerful divination of a combination of knots [called] bag concerning the governance-luck of Pungse Zutse (Spung sad zu tse), and twenty diviners examine it, they would say that the combination of prognosis knots fell well, and he will rule for three generations similar to a king. But then his rule is indicated to be destroyed. It indicates that the great kula (sku bla) will not rejoice and as a consequence the yadü (ya bdud), tsendri (btsan dri), mayam (ma yams), si (sri) and other [demons] arrive, the vitality-fortune of the king and minister (zhang lon) will be extremely bad. When cast for leading an army and [the combination of knots called] rumö (ru mod) falls on the ground, it indicates ***drabla (dgra bla)*** *and that it fell well for the soldiers. If two 'chame' (pya myed) fall, it will be a sign of little harm.*

This last extract is exceptional in several respects. Dunhuang manuscript PT 1047 to which it belongs is closely related to the surviving *juthig* (*ju thig*) divination manuals. The particular combinations of knots are called *ryog/ryags* (*rgyag* in *juthig* texts), and in the present manuscript these are, for example, *skang pard*, *phya myed*, and *ru mod*.

This manuscript fragment is also exceptional in that it is structured in six parts. Unlike the dice divination texts, which often seem not to follow any clear order, it exhibits a specific structure. The separate parts deal with certain beings or classes of people, and a specific combination of knots cast is ascribed to them: (1) king, ministers – the combination of knots *skang pard*, (2) commoners – *ryu phar/pard*, (3) 'fierce spirits' and 'underground spirits' – *gnyan, klu*, deer and young bull – *ti/te pur*, (4) *yadü* and *tsendri* (*ya bdud, btshan dri*) demons – *ru sod*, (5) *gyöchenpo* (*gyod chen pho*) and *tabsi* (*tab sri*) demons – *sesbi/sbi nyon*, (6) girls and 'wild mares', *si* demons (*bud myed tang rta rgod ma, sri*) – *sbe slod*.

29 Tib. text: *skang pard la bag snI chI/ (19) bab na' g.yas g.yos su bzhag la/ phya bun gchig bab na'/ bcos te g.yas g.yos su/ (20) bzhag na'/ sbung sad zu tse'I srid pya'/ rtsal mo bag ryog stang la btab ste mo ba nyi shus/ (21) dpyad na' bzang zhes mchi ryog stang gyi mchid nas myI rabs gsum du ni rgyal pho dang/ (22) mtshungs phar srid 'to'/ de nas ni srid brlag pha ngo zhes mchI/ yong ni sku bla chen pho myi/ (23) dgyes phas/ ya bdud dang btsan dri dang ma yams dang srI las stsogs pha drangs pha'I ngo/ (24) ste rgyal pho dang zhang lon gyi srog phyar ngand rab/ dra ma drang pa la btab na'/ sa la ru mod/ (25) bab pha dgra bla ngo ste/ dra ma lan chig nI legs pha'I ngo/ sa la pya myed gnyis bab// (26) pha nI tsur yang chung zhig snad pa'I ngo/ /.*

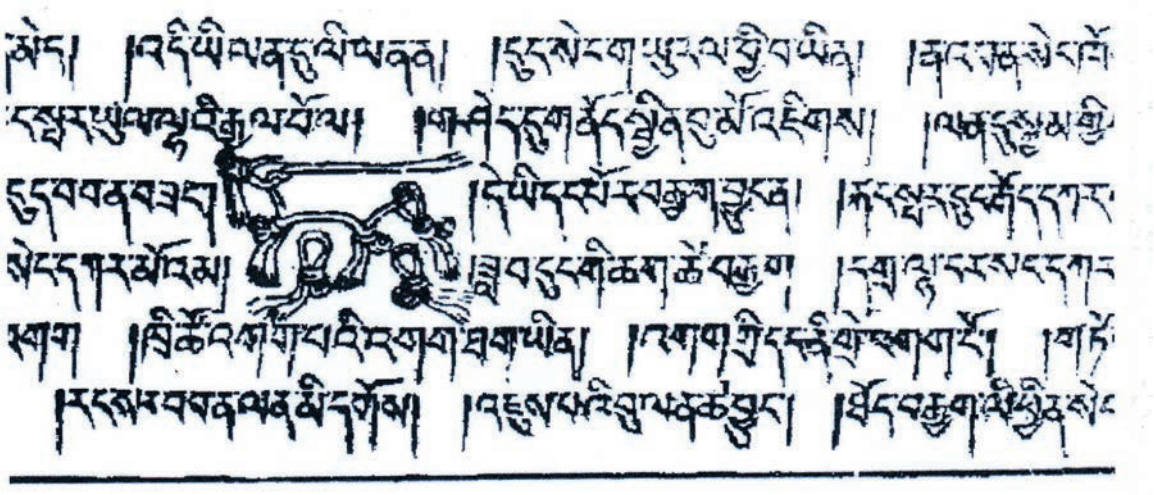


Fig. 1. Combination of knots called skang/rkang spar. 'Ju mi pham 2007a, Derge print: 240.

It is quite striking that the first part, which is dedicated to kings and ministers, contains several references to the Zhangzhung principality, as surviving *juthig* texts, written much later, connect the origins of this divination technique with Zhangzhung. The extract presented here names minister Pungse Zutse (sBung/sPung sad Zu tse),[30] but when considered carefully, Pungse Zutse's appearance might well indicate that it is the story of the defeat of Zhangzhung seen from the perspective of central Tibet. At the same time, the text seems to mention a certain Puwer (Phuwer),[31] which then turns out to be a principal divinity of *juthig* in the divination manuals of a later date.

For the purposes of the present study, it is important to note that the *drabla* are mentioned in the first part dedicated to kings and ministers. In this case, the *drabla* also feature in relation to the higher strata of Tibetan society – similar to PT 1043 where a royal prince appears in the context of the *drabla*.

Discussion

Retracing the context in which the *drabla* appear in the passages cited above is a haphazard matter. Though at this point it is realtively clear that the *drabla* are seen – up to the present day – as being connected with warfare. They could also aid people in securing higher social status and wealth. Two documents in which they appear deal with royal families, and thus a connection with the highest strata of the society is apparent. Besides the explicit functions named, it is worth adding some additional notes related to the features of the *drabla* which are not immediately straightforward from their mentions in these manuscripts.

The first concerns the relationship with other spirits and divinities termed *nyen* ('fierce spirits, *gnyan*). An example of, or an allusion to their connection, might be seen in the extract from PT 1051 (b) above, where *drabla* are paired with a certain divinity called Lhapel (*lha dpal*). Lhapel might reasonably stand for a high-ranked divinity connected with local

30 According to the Old Tibetan Chronicle (PT 1287), Pungse Zutse predicted victory over the Zhangzhung king, participated in a military expedition, and then became a governor of Zhangzhung.

31 The mention appears in PT 1047 (line 16) where the beings *phywa, lI sa rgya, mu sman* and probably *rgyal pu wer* (?) are mentioned together.

divinities, *yulsa* (*yul sa*).[32] The *drabla* then represent a principle of something opposite to 'homely' – the foreign, dangerous, wild. The pairing of Lhapel and *drabla* is symmetrically followed by ascribing them certain attributes. While Lhapel 'protects' (*bskyabs*), *drabla* is 'fierce' (*gnyan*).

Here we encounter the problem of how to interpret the expression 'fierce' (*gnyan*). These are known as the 'fierce spirits', who unlike the *yulsa* represent an undomesticated sphere of the wilderness. The question is whether this 'fierce' characteristic could be seen without reference to the *nyen* spirits, i.e., whether its meaning could be that the 'the *drabla* is fierce like *nyen* spirits.' The function of the *drabla* and the *nyen* could overlap and the *drabla* are thus characterised through reference to *nyen*. But they are nevertheless probably entities from different backgrounds.[33]

The second observation presented here could explain why later sources tend to link the 'fighting gods' *drabla* with an extremely broad list of spirits and divinities as evidenced, for example, in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's enumeration of them. As noted, PT 1043 and PT 1047 mention a royal family in connection with them. In the structured *juthig* divination manual PT 1047 the *drabla* appear in the section dealing with kings and ministers, and along with the *kula* (*sku bla*). This shows that understanding the background ideas related to the *drabla* could be indicated in part by another '*bla*' entity found in the Dunhuang documents – the *kula* – which have received considerably more attention from scholars.[34] Concerning the *kula*, Nathan Hill (2015) has argued and attempted to prove that they were seen as a single principle representing the emperor in heaven, not as a variety of particular mountain divinities.

Whatever the case, in addition to the general category of *lha* deities, the Dunhuang texts feature beings whose names include the syllable *bla*. These seem to be of very high rank and

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32 I am inclined to see some contrast between the pairs of divinities (1) *gnyan – sman* and (2) *lha dpal – yul sa*, which could be characterised by the opposites of 'wilderness' and 'homeliness.' The second (*sman* and *yul sa*) would be a representation of the first (*gnyan* and *lha dpal*), which are of higher status. From the brief note that '*sman* is the wealth of *gnyan*' (IOL J 0738, 1v83) one could deduce that *sman* could also be seen as a specific manifestation of *gnyan*. IOL J 0738 also mentions *sman*, who is at the same time *gnyan* (3v103): *sman bkra gnyan*. An expression in PT 1051 – *mu sman nI gnyan bzhugs pa* – could be interpreted in a similar way. *lHa dpal* could also represent some higher principle behind the *yul sa*, as could be assumed from the rare specification of *lha dpal*, where Ode Gungyal is explicitly mentioned. Yet, in general, these pairs representing 'wilderness' and 'homeliness' have parallels in *dgra bla* and *sku bla* and seem to be associated with them in the later sources. *dGra bla* tend to be identified with the *gnyan* and *sku bla* appears as a main *yul sa* ('local divinity' representing home).

33 While the dice divination manuals presented above tend to mix up various divinities and spirits of different backgrounds, it is at least plausible that the proto-*juthig* divination manual PT 1047 does so to a lesser degree. It contains a part dedicated to *nyen* and *lu*, but there is no mention of *kula* and *drabla* in it. The first section dealing with kings and ministers contains references both to *kula* and *drabla*, but not to the *gnyan*. This might well be an indication of the context, but perhaps also the specific local provenance of such a tradition connected with the *nyen*.

34 There are different opinions as to the significance of the *kula* to the cult of the emperor in Imperial Tibet. Given the contradiction embedded in the fact that the cult of the *kula* is repeatedly mentioned in the *Annals of A zha Principality*, but is missing from the *Old Tibetan Annals*, scholars have presented various opinions regarding how to conceive them. While Rolf Stein (2010) focussed on a possible foreign origin, Macdonald (1971) considered the *kula* to be mostly mountain divinities and also stressed their centrality to the Tibetan imperial cult. A contribution by Michael Walter (2009), however, was skeptical of a relationship with any cult of mountains.

somehow associated with the cult of the ruler. In addition to the *kula* and *drabla* mentioned above, this syllable also appears in the names of two beings closely associated with mythical Tibetan rulers: Yabla Dagdruk (Yab bla bdag drug) and Dela Gung-gyal (lDe bla gung rgyal).[35]

Even though the *drabla* are much scarcer in the Dunhuang documents, their occurrences indicate that their cult is related to the highest strata of the society, corroborating the association presented above. They are never specifically described as a particular divinity. This allows for the tentative conclusion that *drabla* may be seen as a single high principle (*bla*) connected with enmity and war that was complementary to the 'spiritual counterpart of the Tibetan emperor' (*sku bla*). With necessary simplification its meaning could thus be stated as 'supreme enmity' (*dgra bla*).

While the *kula* (*sku bla*) suddenly appear in later monastic Bon and Buddhist texts as the mysterious *gurlha* (*'gur/mgur lha*) deities (see Kvaerne 2021), the *drabla* experienced a similar transformation in Buddhist texts into deities of saṃsāra (*lha*). Such a high principle of enmity would certainly not have been acceptable from the Buddhist perspective as an important power of the world. As a high-standing entity incompatible with Buddhist values, *drabla* easily split into the numerous worldly 'fighting gods' (*dgra lha*), the enormous variety of which was described in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's study.

Juthig divination manuals

Later perceptions of *dgra bla* are characterised by a change in the spelling of their name. Various orthodox Buddhist traditions adopted the spelling *dgra lha*, ('enemy-god', i.e., 'fighting god'), which places the *dgra lha* among the hundreds of various 'gods' in an enormously populated Buddhist sphere of worldly divinities. The monastic tradition of Bon coined a quite surprisingly different spelling *sgra bla* ('sound-soul/supreme'), which does not have a single authoritative explanation, but its meaning is the subject of various popular accounts. Yet, the spelling used in the monastic Bon religion still contains a reference to the concept of some general power (*bla*) and not just marginal spirits associated with warfare.

In a previous article, I presented a myth which was associated with the *drabla* (*dgra bla*) ritual of capturing the soul (*bla*) of an enemy (*dgra*) and one can find more such examples (Berounský 2009).[36] This might be seen as a part of an intentional play on the meanings of *drabla* and the orthography used in monastic Bon sources (*sgra bla*). Nevertheless, the Dunhuang documents do not seem to use the expression *bla* in the sense of 'soul.'[37]

All extant spellings are pronounced as *drabla*. For the sake of clarity, this paper will adopt this phonetic form of reference. While rendering them as 'warrior divinities' or 'fighting

35 While the former is the mythical celestial ancestor of the first Tibetan emperor mentioned in PT 1286, the latter is a being associated with the ruling power of the mythical emperor Drigum Tsenpo (Dri gum btsan po). In the well-known passage of the Old Tibetan Chronicle (PT 1287) about leaving the dead body of this emperor on the earth after a duel, it is mentioned that this being was expelled into the womb of Mount Titse (Ti tse).

36 See, for example, the translated extract from the text on the 'artemisia-bird' in the last part of this paper. It again mentions capturing the 'souls' of enemies associated with *dgra bla*.

37 The only exception could be the extract from IOL J 0738 presented above, which mentions certain *trI mchun* along with the *dgra bla*. When read in the sense of *gri mtshun*, it might hypothetically mean 'soul of a person violently deceased.'

gods' (used also by Nebesky-Wojkowitz) would probably fit the context of the Buddhist scriptures, their role in the Dunhuang documents and divination manuals seems to go beyond such a narrow determination. In these cases, I would suggest the approximate translation of 'supreme enmity.'

Traces of the importance of *drabla* as a major general world force can be discerned from the classification of various divinatory techniques by the monastic Bon religion. This classification is clearly formulated in the influential 14th century compendium *Sutra of Immaculate Splendour* (*mDo dri med gzi brjid*), which describes four categories of divination. The title of the second category refers directly to *drabla*: "Clairvoyancy of *drabla* of the primordial knowledge" (*Ye mkhyen sgra bla'i mngon shes*).[38] It is said to be a category that includes rosary divination, mirror divination, and dice divination. This seems to confirm the high status of *drabla* and could be seen as an argument which supports the conclusion in the previous part dealing with the Dunhuang documents. If one accepts the Buddhist point of view, in which the role of the *drabla* is restricted solely to matters linked to warfare, this association with predictions would not make much sense.

Another surprise comes when looking into the *juthig* (*ju thig*) divination manuals, most extant examples of which are associated with the Bon religion.[39] All the *juthig* divination manuals consulted do not follow, in most occurrences, the orthography *sgra bla* coined by monastic Bon but rather they use the spelling *dgra bla* also found in the Dunhuang documents. The reasons for this anomaly are not clear. *Juthig* divination manuals appear to be based also on popular religious ideas from oral tradition, and hypothetically this could play a role. Or perhaps those who wrote these manuals chose this spelling consciously to mark a continuity going back as far as the Imperial period of Tibetan history.

Whatever the reason, *drabla* play an important role in the *juthig* divination manuals. Unfortunately, the existing manuscripts do not offer a clear picture of exactly what the role of *drabla* is in this very complex system of divination. Manifold references to them are scattered mostly in brief notes, which moreover are often metaphoric in their nature. An example of this is provided by the following extract, which deals with the eleventh position in the series of thirteen casts of the six ropes with four knots randomly tied on them.

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38 The first category is called *Juthig of the miraculous manifestation at the origin of the created world* (*Ye srid 'phrul gyi ju thig*), the third one *Dreams of the Lord of Ye realm of aspiration* (*Ye rje smon pa'i rmi lam*) and the fourth is *Prophetic words descended from the gods of primordial power* (*Ye dbang lha yi bka' bab*). For a translation of the respective parts see Smith 2021: 59–63.

39 For the purpose of this paper, the manuscripts contained in the 70th volume of the Bon Kanjur entitled *Ju thig* were consulted. They comprise three different texts. The first is entitled *Mo khog chen 'phrul gyi rgyal po bshad bya gzhung don mdel mig dang bcas pa bzhugs*, 138 fols., (hereafter *Mo khog*). It is organized into 65 chapters on 275 pages and contains several drawings of the main combinations of knots on the ropes. The second text is entitled *Phyag (=Phya) gshen thig (=theg) pa'i bon sgo las dpyad don sgyu ma gser 'bum (=bum) bzhugs pa'i dbu'o*, 64 fols. (hereafter *sGyu ma gser bum*). It does contain no drawings of the combinations of knots on the ropes and is divided into 67 chapters (127 pages). The third text in this volume is entitled *Mo bkra 'phrul gyi me long 'byung ba lnga'i khog rdung (=rtung?) zhes bya ba bzhugs* (hereafter *Mo bkra*). It has 28 chapters (62 pages) and contains drawings of the combinations of knots. In addition to these texts, a voluminous compendium by the well-known 19th-century scholar Ju Mipham entitled *Srid pa 'phrul gyi ju thig gi dpyad don snang gsal sgron me bzhugs* (956 pp.) has been consulted ('Ju mi pham 2007a). This last text reveals more details about the actual practice of divination as compared with the manual texts mentioned above.



Fig. 2.
Phuwer with divination cords in his right hand.
'Ju mi pham 2007a, Derge print: fol. 2b.

The eleventh position is obviously very important, and is called the 'vitality' (*srog*) of the divination ('Ju mi pham 2007a: 15–16):[40]

> *As for the eleventh [position] being the vitality of the divination: It is the superior dwelling of* ***drabla (dgra bla)****, it is the old hawk's residence at the sun, it is a place where speckled wings grow, it is a place where the young hawk plays, it is a place where a mother hawk receives gratitude from her son, it is a place to understand the meaning of unanswered questions, it is a place where the guard dog tucks in its tail, it is a place where women look from behind the door, it is a place where the vigour of illness is hidden, it is the superior fortress of male-divinities, it is the first path of drabla, it is the white mountain in the region of drabla, it is the place of the descent of the conch-shell khyung bird of male-divinities, it is a place where the conch-shell khyung bird stretches his wings, it is a place where Drama Kyacig (Dra ma skya gcig) departs,*[41] *it is a fortress' gate of mercury and lapis lazuli, it is the gathering place of Yablha Chedrug,*[42] *it is a place where the red lightening of drabla flashes, it is the counselling place of army leaders who hoist standards and remember important instructions, it is a place to decide whether people have won or lost, it is a place to hoist the standard of drabla, it is a place where male divinities blow the conch-shell [...]*

As can be seen, the 'vitality' of *juthig* divination when cast in a series of thirteen casts is characterised in a series of metaphoric images predominated by *drabla*. It points to a vital

40 The Tibetan text reads: *bcu gcig mo yi srog yin la// dgra bla'i gnas mal gong ma yin// khra rgan nyi ma 'de sa yin// khra mo'i gshog pa rkyong sa yin// khra phrug rtsed mo rtse sa yin// khra ma bus byin len sprad sa yin// don ga re 'di re lta sa yin// sgo khyi'i rnga yog byed sa yin// bud med sgo ltas byed sa yin// nad pa'i srog gi skungs sa yin// pho lha'i btsan mkhar gong ma yin// dgra bla'i rgyug lam dang po yin// dgra bla'i gling ri dkar po yin// pho lha dung khyung 'bab sa yin// dung khyung gshog pa rkyong sa yin// dra ma skya gcig chas sa yin// khro chu mu men mkhar sgo yin// yab lha mched drug 'du sa yin// dgra bla'i glog dmar 'gyur sa yin// dmag dpon dar 'dzin dag dang ni// gtso bo blo 'dzin gros ra yin// pham rgyal mi bo'i che (=phye) sa yin// dgra bla'i dar chen 'phyar sa yin// pho lhas dung chen 'bud sa yin//.*

41 It is likely that g.Ya spang skyes gcig is meant here.

42 Apparently, a heavenly ancestor figure better known as Yab bla bdal drug is meant here.



Fig. 3. Diagrams with mantras representing 'hearts' of three birds to be offered to Phuwer: the cuckoo, the crane and the bat. Depiction of the bat resembles flying squirrel. 'Ju mi pham 2007c, Derge print: fol. 19a.

role of *drabla* in divination, but at the same time explicit statements about their practical significance for divination are distinctly lacking. The place of drabla is shrouded in a haze of metaphors, images, and allusions to myths. This aspect points to a divination that does not work mechanically but intentionally leaves space for intuition.

A number of groups and categories of *drabla* are mentioned briefly in these texts, as illustrated in Ju Mipham's long list constituting an invocation of the gods and spirits involved in *juthig* divination ('Ju mi pham 2007b). But they will not be pursued here, since such a wide range of groups does not help to shed light on their function. Instead, we shall turn to the specific divinities considered to be *drabla* but designated by a different name.

The highest divinity worshipped in connection with the *juthig* divination is Phuwer (Pu wer/Phu wer). The name Puwer (Pu wer) seems to be mentioned already in the Dunhuang document PT 1047 discussed above. In this case, the context gives no indication that he should be considered the highest divinity of this divination technique, though he still figures in the section dealing with kings and ministers. It is also striking that this highest god of *juthig* divination, mentioned in triad with Kuchi Mangke (Ku spyi mang ke), and Gekhö (Ge khod), resembles a sort of 'idle god,' *deus otiosus*. Besides paying homage, hardly any detail about Puwer appears in the divination manuals themselves. In a text about ritual dedicated to him by Ju Mipham, he is presented as a man holding *juthig* ropes or a mirror.[43] During the ritual, the 'hearts' (i.e. heart-mantras) of three birds should be offered to him: that of a cuckoo, a white crane and a bat.[44] But there is another ritual text dedicated to him in the *New Collection of Bonpo Katen Texts*. It is believed to have been composed by a mythical translator of the language of the water spirits, Ludrub Yeshe Nyingpo (kLu grub ye shes snying po). In this case, Puwer is described as a *khyung* bird who stands against the underground spirits, the *lu* (*klu*).[45]

Yet Phuwer is not always clearly related to the divinities considered to be a subclass of the *drabla*. These are called *werma* (*wer ma*) and represent spirits of importance in the *juthig* divination. While Phuwer and *werma* both have the syllable '*wer*' in their names, there is no clear reference to their relation to one another.[46] Phuwer and the lords of *werma* are

43 *Phu wer phywa gshen rno mthong gi sgrub pa bzhugs so*, see 'Ju mi pham 2007c.

44 The bat is traditionally considered to be a bird in Tibet.

45 *Tshe bdag phu wer dkar po'i sgrub pa klu grub ye shes snying po'i dkrol (=pos bkrol ba)*, in *New Collection of Bonpo Katen Texts*, 229–20, 378–395. This seems to be rather illogical (*klu* and Phuwer being celebrated as sources of the *juthig* divination and simultaneously enemies) and could be taken as a sign that the Indic patterns modified the depiction of both Puwer and the *lu*.

46 The expression *wer ma* is explained in monastic Bon dictionaries as being of Zhangzhung origin and meaning 'king.'

sometimes associated with the mythical *garuḍa*-like eagle, *khyung*. But there are numerous other types of *werma* introduced as animal-headed beings riding their mounts. In the *juthig* texts these *werma* spirits are also linked to mythological narratives connected with dualistic cosmology. This cosmology speaks of the creation of a land of existence, light and gods, which is called Ye (Ye, 'origin', 'beginning'), often synonymous with Mon (sMon) meaning 'wish' or 'prayer', 'aspiration.' Its counterpart is the land called Ngam (Ngam), which is seen as a land of non-existence, darkness, and demons. These two lands are in conflict, and the battles between the Ye and Ngam realms are the recurring theme of the myths referenced in the *juthig* manuals. Although this requires more research, it seems likely that this belief was inspired by Manichaeism, as the two lands of light and darkness and the conflict between them also represent the basis of Manichaean cosmology. The myth of the creation of a world of existence and of non-existence as it appears in *Mo khog* (*Mo khog*: 49) reads:[47]

> *In the place of existence, in the 'divinatory inner section' of mother [realm] Ye, [its lord] Yeje Monpa pronounced a prayer. He delegated cha (phya), mu (dmu) and tsug (gtsug), the three, enhanced powers of the* ***drabla (dgra bla)****, generated the balance of the five elements, made rise to the illuminating sun. His aspiration was fulfilled. His deeds and merits were mightily accomplished.*
>
> *In the place of non-existence, in the 'divinatory inner section' of Ngam realm, the lord Ngamje Tsompo pronounced a prayer. The beings were dying, were deceived, the existent was destroyed by the non-existent, clarity was obscured by darkness. Ripening, the deeds were accomplished.*
>
> *In the 'divinatory inner section' of black beings with conch-shell earrings, the old father and mother of creation came into existence at the beginning of this eon. They pronounced a prayer. Then the later protectors, Naba and Öcam Selma came into existence. These two miraculously united and three marvellous sons appeared: a wise bat speaking human language, a conch-shell phyi ba (?) barking with a dog's voice, and a turquoise shugs pa (?) neighing with the voice of a horse.*[48] *These now exist on the border between existence and non-existence. They are shepherds along the border between the living and*

47 This passage appears in a section dealing with the 18 'inner bodies' of divination (*mo khog*) (*Mo khog*: 47–57). It mentions the divisions of 'white cow,' 'tortoise,' and *khyung* with little detail. The Tibetan text reads: *yod pa ma ye yi mo khog la// ye rje smon pa'i smon lam ni/ phya dmu gtsug gsum skos bzhi yi/ dbang thang dgra bla dar ba dang/ 'byung ba lnga yi gso bskyed dang/ gsal byed nyi ma shar ba dang/ smon lam mthu' ru phyin pa ste'u las dang bsod nams mthu'i grubs/ med sa ngam gyi mo khog la/ ngam rje rtsom po'i smon lam ni/ skye ba 'chi ba bslu ba dang/ yod pa med pas bshigs pa dang/ gsal ba mun pas sgribs pa rnams/ las kyi rnam par smin bas grubs/ skye rog dung rna'i mo khog la/ skal ba 'di yi thog ma ru/ srid pa'i pha ma rgan rgon srid/ kho bdag smon lam btab pa la/ phyi yi mgon du ni rna ba dang/ 'od lcam gsal ma bya ba bsrid/ de gnyis rdzu 'phrul bsdebs pa la/ ya mtshan can gyi bu gsum 'byung/ gor ba pha 'ong (=sgam po pha wang) mi skad smra ba dang/ dung gi phyi ba khyi skad zug pa dang/ g.yu yi shugs pa rta skad 'tsher ba gsum/ da lta yod med 'tshams su yod/ de gson gshin mtshams gyi rdzi'u yin/ yod med gnyis kyi kha 'dzin yin/ dgra zun bar gyi bshug ma yin/ dgra gzhi (=zhi) dur gsum kun la gces/ mo de gsum bsrung ba gal che'o// yod khams srid pa'i kha 'dzin ni/ ye bya wer ma'i khyung chen des/.*

48 These animals are clearly mistaken here. Texts on burial rituals mention 'three blocker brothers' who are a bat, a badger, and a monkey. It is likely that these three animals should be included here. *Phyi ba* means 'marmot' and *shug(s) pa* would mean 'juniper,' which makes little sense.

the dead. They oversee both existence and non-existence. They are brokers between enemies and friends. They are important for enmity, peace, and death rites. These three are important protectors of the divination.

As for the overseer of the sphere of existence from the creation of the world, this is the great khyung of werma, the bird of the Ye realm.

The description of the sphere between Ye and Ngam contains a rather strange reference to three animals serving as intermediaries between them. Even the names are not clear except for a wise bat that speaks human language. In the extract below, a white monkey is mentioned, which could be the second animal; the third one might hypothetically be a badger. This configuration of animals gives the impression that content was taken from other narratives that are not necessarily connected with the Ye and Ngam realms. The same text later describes the fortress of *werma* located at the border between the Ye and Ngam realms (*Mo khog*, fol. 55):[49]

Inside the divination sphere of heroic werma, there is a place where they dwell – the mercury fortress. The fortress was created on the border between Ye and Ngam. Six great wermas reside there. One should not mistake wermas for enemies or friends!

The existence of the country of Mon appears to the right. The one who has power there is King-Lord of Mon who rules there. The non-existence of the country of Ngam appears to the left. It is a place of triple black ancestors.[50] *The separated countries of Ye and Ngam must not fight with each other! When this occurs, one should not confuse adversaries with allies!*

What appears above in the sky is protection from the gods. In the uppermost place resides the conch-shell man, the protector of the fort. What appears below are those who are close to the bad states of existence – demons dre, sin, chur, the three. They provide the foundation stones of the fort. The face above and the feet below should not be reversed!

It is surrounded by six birds who have their nests on the sides of it, along and opposite them are the dens of six kinds of carnivorous animals. The gates are guarded by a white monkey with a golden head. The main minister is the wise bat. Next to it, the tiger and yak of drabla play.

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49 The Tibetan text reads: *dpa' chen wer ma'i mo khog la// wer ma bzhugs sa khro chu'i mkhar// mkhar bsrid pa'i yul ni ye ngam 'tshams// mkhar de na wer ma che drug bzhugs// wer ma dgra zun ma nor dgos// g.yas yod la bstan pa smon pa'i yul// dbang yang smon rje rgyal pos dbang// g.yon med la bstan pa ngam gyi yul// de nag po pha rnams gsum bzhugs// ye ngam yul bgos ma 'khrugs dgos// song ba phyi nag ma log dgos// steng gnam la bstan pa lha yi skyabs// rtse la mkhar mgon dung mi bzhugs// 'og pa la bstan pa ngan 'gro gan// 'dre srin byur gsum rming rdo byas// mkhar steng 'og kha zhabs ma 'gyur dgos// zur la 'dab chags drug tsam 'khor// log la gcanz (gcan gzan) drug gi tshangs (=tshang) yang bcas// spre'u dkar gser mgo sgo srung byad/ pha wang sgam po'i bka' blon byed/ drung na dgra bla'i stag g.yag rtse//.*

50 The sentence is odd, which might be due to containing scribal errors. It is not clear who the 'three black ancestors' (*nag po pha rnams gsum*) are. *bZhags* is amended to *bzhag*.

So far, most of the information on *werma* seems relatively coherent. There appears a divinity called Puwer, also mentioned in the Dunhuang document with the early *juthig* divination manual. In the much later but difficult-to-date *juthig* manuals, thousands of *werma* spirits are associated with him. They are also connected with a Manichaean-like dualistic cosmology, and by locating these *werma* on the border between the two opposite realms they represent the struggle, tension, and conflict between dark and light, existence and non-existence, demons and gods.

But other available sources give rise to certain doubts concerning the *werma*'s association with the dualistic cosmology of Ye and Ngam. The myths about Ye and Ngam are not restricted to *juthig* texts; they appear in a number of myths introducing most often rituals of non-Buddhist provenance. They are mentioned in the origin myth of the Bonpo ritual text entitled *Appearance of the Little Black-Headed Man* (*dBu nag mi'u 'dra chags*). Ye and Ngam are also alluded to in other myths, for example, myths of rituals which use the fox or badger for the purification of incest (Berounský 2019) and they are present in the funeral traditions of the *Muchö Tromdur* texts (*Mu cho'i* Khrom 'dur, Bellezza 2008: 436, 438). Yet none of these texts mentions *werma* in association with Ye and Ngam nor are such *werma* referenced in the Dunhuang manuscripts. The influential 14th-century compendium *Sutra of Immaculate Splendour* contains a rather detailed series of narrations on the origin of *juthig* divination (for reference see Karmay 1998b: 142–3; Smith 2019). In these sections the myths on the origin of divine sheep and the divine tree on the border between Ye and Ngam are revealed (*mDo dri med gzi brjid*, vol. 6: 433–450). Phuwer is mentioned there as a king of *drabla* along with 360 divinities of knots (*mdud lha*),[51] but there is not a single mention of *werma* or the *khyung* bird in these sections. Yet, they are mentioned in great detail in a different part of this scripture in which the classes of *drabla* (*sgra bla*) are discussed.[52] The silence about them in relation to *juthig* divination is somewhat startling. It may well be that this 14th-century text reflects a time before *wermas* were firmly anchored within *juthig* divination and its myths on the Ye and Ngam realms.

Besides the *werma*, which appear rather frequently, the *juthig* divination manuals contain relatively sporadic references to other subdivisions of *drabla* (*dgra bla*) and some divinities associated with them. These are named as *cangse* (*cangs se* or *cang seng*), *shug-gon* (*shug/bshug mgon*), and *chadang* (*bya rdang*, sometimes spelled *bya sdang*). Though all of them also figure in the *Sutra of Immaculate Splendour* (*mDo dri med gzi brjid*), it is not very clear what these divinities are. They mostly appear in lists of divinities without any details about their background, though they will be discussed in the light of the *leu* texts below.

At this point, a few notes will be dedicated to the 'fierce spirits' *nyen* (*gnyan*), who are mentioned rather frequently in the *juthig* divination manuals. Among the many references to them in the *juthig* texts, one can see in some cases how they overlap with the *drabla*. For example, certain *drabla* are called 'protectors of *nyen*' (*gnyan mgon dgra bla*, 'Ju mi pham 2007a: 462). But it could also be said that the *nyen* are considered to have fathered *cangse*, spirit related to the *drabla* (*Mo khog*: 151):[53]

51 *mDo dri med gzi brjid*, vol. 6: 434: *ye mkhyen sgra bla'i rgyal po kyel phu wer dkar po*.

52 For an English translation of a part of this text see Snellgrove 1967: 58–65. For the Tibetan original see *mDo dri med gzi brjid*, vol. 2: 422–425.

53 The Tibetan text reads: *'dis mes po yod khams rje bo yin// phyi mo snang khams rje mo yin/ pha de gnyan rje mi mgon yin/ ma de dmu sman dung lcam yin/ bu kho rang mgyogs byed cangs se yin/.*

> *The grandfather of this one is the Lord of the Sphere of Existence. Its grandmother is the Lady of the Sphere of Appearance. Its father is the Lord of Nyen – Protector of People. Its mother is Conch-Shell Lady Mumän. The son himself is Cangse, the Swift One.*[54]

A list of the divinities in a pebble divination manual also illustrates such a relationship. The pebble divination is seen as a related, but simplified technique compared to the much more complex *juthig* divination. In the list of the 'divinities section' (positions called *lha sa*), the first divinity mentioned is *drabla – khyung* bird. It is said that he is the ancestor of all *drabla* and the son of Nyenje Gong-ngon (gNyan rje gong sngon) and Drugyal Mänchig ('Brug rgyal sman gcig) (Smith 2021: 143). *Drabla* is again mentioned as first among the divinities of divination, but he is also son of a *nyen* father and a *män* mother.

The importance of the *nyen* can also be surmised from the narration on the origin of *juthig* divination itself. The *Mo khog* contains a story situated in the Zhangzhung principality, where the instructions for *juthig* divination are said to have been present in three languages: that of gods (*lha skad*), that of underground spirits *lu* (*klu skad*) and that of *nyen* (*gnyan skad*). It was translated into the 'human language' (*mi skad*) from these three previous languages by the divine sons Kuchi Mangke (Ku byi Mang ke), Nyen Bon Thangthang Trolba (gNyan bon Thang thang Khrol ba), and Ludrup Yeshe Nyingpo (kLu grub Ye shes sNying po).[55] On a mythical level the story reveals that the sources for the divination manual are traditionally connected with the *nyen* and the *lu*. That both *nyen* and *lu* spirits are involved in *juthig* divination was already clear in the earliest *juthig* divination manual from Dunhuang (PT 1047) where one section deals with the *nyen* and *lu*, who seem to be interrelated and represent a tradition separate from that of the *drabla*. It seems that this originally different strand then became blended with the tradition of the *drabla*. In the case of the *juthig* divination manuals, the *nyen* appear much more frequently than the *lu*, and their impact on the divination seems to be much stronger.

The very name of Nyen Bon Thangthang Trolba, the mythical translator of the language of the *nyen*, also indicates that the source of this tradition could be seen in the myths contained in the *Nyen collection* (*gNyan 'bum*). He frequently appears there as a priest summoned to deal ritually with the conflict between the *nyen* and the ancestors of the Dong (lDong) clan. This collection suggests a relation to the Dong clan, and several passages in the *juthig* divination manuals also associate the Dong clan with worship of the *nyen*, thus confirming that the *Nyen collection* is likely the direct inspiration for them.

The *Nyen collection* contains an important charter myth dealing with the origin of the Dong people. Its influence is attested by several versions surviving in Tibetan and also amongst Naxi manuscripts. It deals with the conflict between the ancestors of the Dong clan, who killed the son of the original *nyen*, son of a certain Old Nyen Dewa/Darba (gNyan rgan de ba/dar ba). The conflict between the *nyen* and the Dong clan is then ritually appeased by Nyen Bon Thangthang Trolba, and compensation for killing the *nyen* is eventually paid by the Dong clan (Berounský 2023).

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54 The Tibetan expression *mgyogs byed*, translated here as 'swift one', could also be a metaphorical expression for a horse. Nevertheless, the context of this name is unknown and thus the name is translated literally in this instance.

55 *Mo khog*: 10.



Fig. 4. Nyen Bon Thangthang Trolba.
Illuminated manuscript of Klu 'bum from Mustang.

In the following extract from the *juthig* manual by Ju Mipham, Old Nyen Dewa is seen as the father of the combination of knots called *kyam maze ngonmo camcam* (*skyam ma ze{d} sngon mo lcam lcam*). Old Nyen Dewa could be identified with a mountain god worshipped locally by a similar name (Old Nyen Darba). The mountain, whose summit consists of huge, cracked rocks, is located in the Thewo region of Amdo. It is not far geographically from another lord of the *nyen* called Nyenje Gong-ngon (gNyan rje gong sngon), who is also mentioned several times in the *juthig* divination manuals. This is also the divinity identified as the father of all the *drablas'* ancestors in the pebble divination manual (Smith 2021: 143). These two *nyen* spirits frequently figure in the *Nyen collection*, including a long text on the origin of the Dong clan ('Ju mi pham 2007a: 450–451):[56]

> *The main cord being the 'bag'*[57] *is above the three [lesser cords] and two 'trugu'*[58] *went 'kyam.'*[59] *This is a [combination of knots known as] 'kyam maze ngonmo camcam'*

56 The Tibetan text reads: *mo rta bag song gsum yar nas// phru gu gnyis de skyam du song// skyam ma ze sngon mo lcam lcam yin// nyi ma lho la dbang ba yin// ma zel bzang bshad ma mchis kyang// bcu gsum steng du 'di bab na// jag pa dpung chung wer ma yin// dbye shog 'byed pa'i wer ma yin// char ba drag po'i bla mdud yin// pha dung sha yin pas myur mgyog che// mchong khyi yin pas gya gyu skyen// mchod (mchong) khyi dung sha bsdebs pa'i bu/ jag phran byed pa'i wer ma yin// brag dmar zangs yag nang shed der// gnam gyi chu thig zil pa dang// brag gi brlan gyi sprul pa la// gser gyi bang bong ser po la// khro chu'i mgo la mu tig klad// sa bdag dung so pad ma'i rna// rin po che yi rgyal mtshan can// gnyan rgan de bar mtshan yang gsol// 'di brag gi thems su lo mang bzhugs// rlung nag 'tshubs mas dbu gsum bkyod// dbu skra se ba spyan gyis gzigs// rnyan (gnyan) rgan bsam pa'i yid ma bde// bdag ni rgas la bu yang med// da ni bu zhig btsal dgos bsam// bu zhig btsal pa ram med pas// gnam sman dung sha zhig tu brdzus// dung sha bud med bya bsam nas// lcags khyi sngon mo rol du khrid// ye ngam gnyis kyi mtshams su phyin// dung sha yu mo de dang 'phrad// dung sha lcags ri'i bar la brdas// ma dang sring mo'i bar du 'grim// ma dang sring mo zad kyis btang// ma zed bya ba'i gtan tshigs yin// rdzu 'phrul lan gcig bsdebs pa la// gnyan phrug chags nas ma de sbrum// sbrum ma bu khur bya ba'i gtan tshigs yin// skyam ma ze sbrum ma bu khur 'di// sems can phyi ba'i bla mdud yin// de yi skyam la brgyag so na// skyam ma ze g.yu yi chu mig yin// brtan ma bcu gnyis bla mdud yin//.*

57 *Bag* is a term for the long cord (*mo rta*, 'divination horse') which is not connected with any other rope.

58 *Phru gu*, lit. 'child,' is a term for the lesser cords which are outside the main cord (*mo rta*).

59 *sKyam* is a term for the two small cords connected to each other by two knots, one at each end. 'Ju mi pham 2007a: 23.



Fig. 5. Old Nyen Darba in Thewo.



Fig. 6. Old Nyen Darba on the mural of Lhason Monastery, Thewo.

(skyam ma ze{d} sngon mo lcam lcam). It has power over the southern direction of the sun. The interpretation of [the combination of knots] 'maze' is not very positive though. When it falls at the thirteenth position, it is a small gang of werma robbers. It is werma causing movement into separate parts. It is the main knot of a storm. Its father being the conch-shell deer [it indicates] very fast movement. Its mother being agate bitch [it indicates] artful crookedness. The sons produced from the mating of the agate bitch and conch-shell deer are the werma of minor robbery.

Inside the red boulder of sharp coral there is a treasure-haul of gold appearing from the drops of heavenly water and the humidity of the rock. [A being] with a mercury-head and a pearl on top of it has the conch-shell teeth of the lord of the earth and the ears of a lotus. He has a banner of precious stones, and his name is Old Nyen Dewa (gNyan rgan de ba). He resides within the rock for many years. Fierce storms tear his head into three. Rose bushes are his hair, and he watches from them with his eyes. His thoughts are not happy: 'I grew old, but still I do not have a child.' And he thought that now he must father a child. As he did not have a mother for fathering the child, he manifested as the conch-shell deer of the män (sman) of the sky. Thinking that the conch-shell deer would do for a girl, an iron bitch was brought for the play. They went to the border of the Ye and Ngam [realms], and there the conch-shell deer encountered a hind. He hastily ran after her up to the iron mountain [of the Ngam realm]; he was chasing the mother (ma) and sister until she became exhausted (ze). This is the source of the term 'maze' (mother exhausted). They miraculously united once. The mother conceived the nyen child and became pregnant. This is the source of the term 'pregnant one carrying child' (sbrum ma bu khur)[60] *This 'kyam maze druma bukhur' is the main knot of the marmot animal. When the 'kyam' [of this knot]*[61] *is [in the position of] 'so,'*[62] *it is 'kyam maze yuyi chu-mig' (skyam ma ze g.yu yi chu mig, kyam maze – turquoise spring). And it is the main knot of the twelve tenma goddesses.*

60 The name of a combination of knots.

61 See n. 18.

62 Tib. *so*. This term denotes a situation in which the main cord (*mo rta*) surrounds the body of the knots (*mo rta khog la 'jus pa la/ so zhes bya bar yongs su grags*, 'Ju mi pham 2007a: 23).



Fig. 7. Nyenje Gong Ngon as seen from Amchog.

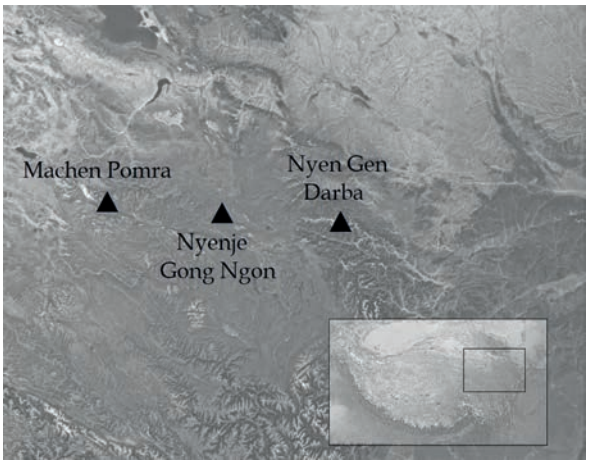


Fig. 8. Map showing locations of Mt. Nyen Gen Darba (Old Nyen Deba) and Mt. Nyenje Gong Ngon

This Old Nyen Dewa also figures in an undated myth about the origin of the Tibetans entitled *Appearance of the Little Black-Headed Man* (*dBu nag mi'u 'dra chags*, see Karmay 1998a: 271–272). There, he is seen as a *nyen* being who gave the original Tibetan clans their own *drabla* (the spelling *dgra bla* is used in the text) as a compensation for killing their common father named Tritho Chenpo (Khri tho chen po). In the passage quoted he is referred to as having a *nyen* wife, who is a daughter of Old Nyen Dewa. When he chased robbers who had stolen his two *dzomo* (female hybrid offspring of a yak-cow), his *nyen* wife changed into a frog and attempted to block his way. Becoming angry he cut her waist with his knife. Her father Old Nyen Dewa heard her screaming and killed the father of the six Tibetan clans, Tritho Chenpo, with his arrow. His sons then demanded compensation for the murder of their father. As a result, each of the ancestors of the Tibetan clans received *drabla* (*dgra bla*) listed as a dragon, a *khyung* bird, a yak, a tiger, a ram, and a dog.

Again, a strong bond between *drabla* and *nyen* is expressed in this myth, in which the *nyen* are owners of the *drabla*. This information is enough to raise the question of whether the tradition connected with the *nyen* (including the section from PT 1047 concerning the *nyen* and *lu* spirits) was related to the specific tradition of the Dong (lDong) clan from Eastern Tibet.

If this proves to be true, we can see how the *nyen,* stemming originally from a locally-based tradition of northeastern Tibet, mingles with the *drabla*. It might be supposed that some aspects ascribed to the *nyen* were seen to characterise the *drabla*. In some cases, the *drabla* are even mentioned as being property of the *nyen*.

In a large number of ritual texts *drabla* are customarily mentioned as *dgra bla gnyan po,* which could be translated as 'fierce *drabla*.' Normally, the expression *gnyan po* could be understood as a characteristic of the *drabla* and not necessarily indicative of a connection with the *nyen* spirits. But the evidence above demonstrates that the expression *gnyan po* might indicate the fierce nature of the *drabla* as well as a connection with the *nyen* spirits.

Leu (*le'u*) ritualists of Amdo

Old Nyen Dewa is a mountain located on the forested northeastern edge of the Tibetan Plateau, not far from another mountain called Nyenje Gong-ngon. Both feature in the *juthig*

divination texts and are also connected with the myths of the *Nyen collection* associated with the Tibetan Dong clan. The surrounding area is home to a specific ritual tradition called *leu* (*le'u*).

The term *leu* appears in the *juthig* divination manuals amongst the names of the individual positions within the series of thirteen casts of knot combinations. It concerns the ninth position known as *'A mountain of the region of the maternal uncle leu and paternal uncle bon'* (*le'u zhang po dang khu bo bon gyi gling ri*).[63] *Leu* apparently forms a pair with *bon* in this case, and it is thus understood to be a tradition separate from *bon* but complementary to it.

This section will introduce the nearly extinguished tradition known as *leu*. As it has been done more thoroughly elsewhere, only some brief, necessary information will be provided here.[64]

The term *leu* designates both the lay ritual tradition and the lay ritual specialists. Under this name, it is found mostly in the regions within Thewo (Tib. The bo, Ch. Diebu 迭部) county, Gansu province, China. Fragmentary knowledge about the recent history of this tradition at the end of the 18th century indicates that it was subject to censorship and persecution by the monastic Bon in the region, particularly because of rituals involving animal sacrifice. Yet, the periods of persecution were seemingly interspersed with periods when *leu* ritualists performed their rituals side by side with Bon monks.[65] A similar tradition also exists in the surrounding regions stretching from Cone (Co ne) to Zitsa Degu (gZi rtsa sde dgu) and from Dongthrom (lDong khrom) to Drugchu ('Brug chu). Since the Cultural Revolution in China, the tradition has become almost extinct despite some recent attempts to revive it.

Very little is known about the history of this ritual tradition. Several Bon sources from the 12th–14th century refer to certain *leu* divinities (*le'u lha*) and some mention a *leu* tradition or ritual (*le'u bon*). Other sources speak about ritual specialists termed leu, sometimes called 'owners of *leu* divinities' (*le'u lha'i bdag po*). These seem to be somehow related to the cult of 'enveloping divinities' (*'go ba'i lha*) and the worship of nyen (*gnyan*), lu (*klu*), and tö (*gtod*) spirits.[66] Certain sources allude to it as a tradition coming from the east,[67] but these texts are often embedded in a mythical setting and do not contain details.

In the last two decades, more than 100 volumes of facsimiles of the *leu* texts collected from private households in the area in and around Thewo county, Gansu province, have been published.[68] These texts, however, are largely unintelligible given their frequent phonetic rendering of words and their fragmented nature. It appears that the only scholar attempting to analyse this tradition is Ngawang Gyatso at Lanzhou University.

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63 See 'Ju mi pham 2007a: 14.

64 For general reference in English, see Ngawang Gyatso 2016. For his articles in Tibetan, see Ngag dbang rgya mtsho 2005 and 2016. What is only briefly mentioned here will soon be published in detail by the author. For information on *sel* rituals among the *leu* see Berounský 2020.

65 This information comes from an unpublished draft by Ngawang Gyatso entitled *Bon gyi le'u yig zhib 'jug* (*Research on Bon leu texts*) which the author generously made it available to me in 2017. It is based on interviews with local residents including dBal prug, lHa rgod and mGon po grub, surviving *leu* practitioners in the area.

66 *mKha' klong rab 'byams bskang ba'i 'phyong bzhugs pa'i dbu phyogs lags+'o*, Bon Kanjur, vol. 150: 19–73, 26.

67 *mDo rnam 'brel bar ti ka*, Chapter 30: Sangs po 'bum khris ston pa spyin drangs ba bstan pa.

68 See *mDo khams yul gyi bod yig gna' dpe phyogs bsdus mthong ba 'dzum bzhad*, 60 vols.; *gNa' rabs bon gyi dpe dkon bris ma*, 10 vols.; *mDo smad mda' tshang yul gyi gna' dpe phyogs bsdus mthong ba don ldan*, 30 vols. More manuscripts are currently in the process of being published.

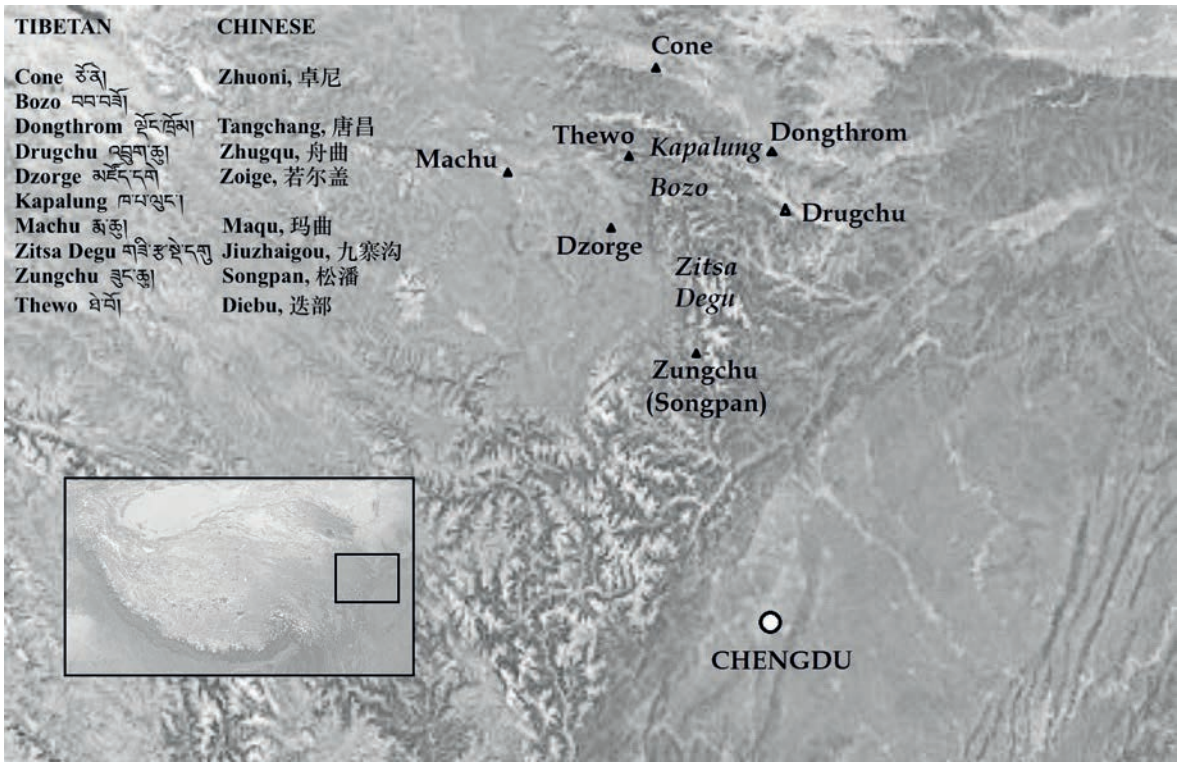


Fig. 9. Map showing area of distribution of *leu* rituals (by author).

I visited the region called Bozo (Bab bzo), which stretches across the valley southeast of Thewo, with him in 2017 and 2018. There we found only two surviving *leu* ritualists who had practised the rituals before the Cultural Revolution. One of them, Gendun (dGe 'dun), was 86 at the time of our visit, and the other, Walse (dBal gsas), was 95 years old. There was also a younger ritual specialist living in the region, Sherab Dragpa (Shes rab Grags pa), who is a physician and a former Bonpo monk; he was a disciple of Walse and still performs *leu* rituals to this day.

The *leu* tradition is strikingly permeated with the worship of the *nyen* spirits. This could reasonably be connected with the Dong clan and the myths of the ancestors of the Dong and the *nyen* as represented in the *Nyen collection*. But even without looking at the surviving *leu* texts, the *nyen* spirits are surprisingly significant for the societies living in these areas even nowadays, a situation that is hitherto unprecedented.[69]

Most of the mountains in the area are considered abodes of the *nyen*, and thus the general term used for a high mountain is '*nyen*-mountain' (*ri gnyan*). According to Sherab Dragpa, the youngest *leu* ritualist from Bozo, the *nyen* represent an area of higher elevation outside the extent of the habitat of people. This contrasts with the living space of the people represented by *yulsa* (*yul sa*), 'divinity of the living place.' The *nyen* are distinguished from *yulsa* by their fierce and self-willed nature, which make them difficult to appease. The old *leu* Gendun, one of the two *leu* ritualists from Bozo who remembers the time before the Cultural Revolution, burst into laughter when he recalled how Bonpo monks attempted to make the *nyen* protectors of their monasteries. He said that this shows their ignorance about the real nature of the *nyen*, who are naturally fierce, headstrong, and follow their own minds.

69 The following information was collected during research trips in 2017 and 2018 to the areas of Thewo, Phenchu, and Bozo.



Fig. 10. *Leu* ritualists with typical headgear from the strip of the bear's skin (*dom ra*) blowing horns of the takin.

Worship of the *nyen* is an activity of men, who address them through the propitiation ritual, mostly called *ngen* (*brngan*). This ritual takes place at the cairn of the mountain divinities called *labtse* (*la btsas*), although several such places are also known by names associated with birds (*bya bskyal, bya shing, bya bro*). When birds represent the *nyen* they are seen as messengers, and when speaking about *nyen,* people use the word 'bird' as a synonym. Surviving *leu* ritual texts frequently mention the use of a certain ritual offering called an 'artemisia-bird' (*mkhan bya*), which is an image of a bird made from the artemisia plant.[70]

The position of the *nyen* is juxtaposed with the worship of the underground spirits *lu* (*klu*), to which women make offerings through the *sang* (*bsang*) ritual. Customarily, women use a spindle during their worship of *lu,* in contrast with the arrows and spears used by men during propitiation of the *nyen*. According to my informants from various places, the rule in the past was that each household had several specific places where *lu* were worshipped by women. This tradition of specific female rituals is, however, disappearing. Such places of worship did not have a single, general name but were known simply as the 'tree of the *lu*' (*klu shing*), 'place of the *lu*' (*klu sa*) and others (*klu skyel, klu bro, etc.*). The importance of the *nyen* and the *lu* is also stressed by the fact that, according to Gendun, *leu* ritualists used to employ two main styles of intoning the texts during a ritual performance – the 'voice of the *nyen*' and the 'voice of the *lu*' (*gnyan skad, klu skad*), the former being the more common of the two.

Both *lu* and *nyen* were intimately bound with human society. It was customary for childless women to address their prayers to the *nyen* in exchange for granting them a child (*gnyan la bu slong ba*). When their child was born it received a name containing "*nyen*." This ex-

70 Again, this is very much in agreement with the text of the *Nyen collection*. For examples of bird offerings to the *nyen* see Berounský 2016.

plains why frequent names in the area are Child of Nyen (gNyan Phrug), One Achieved by Nyen (gNyan Grub), One Protected by Nyen (gNyan sKyab), One Released by Nyen (gNyan Thar), Pleasure of Nyen (gNyan dGa'), Virtue of Nyen (gNyan dGe), Nyen-Män (gNyan sMan), One Reared by Nyen (gNyan 'Tsho), etc. It was also customary to consider extraordinary men – typically brave and fierce people – as the human embodiment of *nyen*. Some people were believed to understand the language of the *nyen*.

Worship of *drabla* and *nyen* among the *leu* ritualists

Among the surviving *leu* texts there is a remarkable wealth of manuscripts dealing with *drabla*. But at the same time, very scarce information is available on how the rituals were performed. The tradition has almost died out, and among the few attempts to revive it even the ritualists themselves admit that their way to performance the rituals is simplified. It is done mechanically by simply chanting available texts.[71]

In the case of Thewo and the valleys of Bozo and Phenchu, where my information was collected, *drabla* worship is performed within the larger framework of worship of the *nyen*. It could be part of the annual celebration at that cairn of the mountain divinities, *labtse* (*la btsas*); it could also be requested by an individual to be performed in a home. According to an old *leu* ritualist from that region, elaborate and lengthy rituals dedicated to the *drabla* were customarily performed by the villagers of this region before setting off for a fight. It should be noted that in this turbulent area fighting occurred frequently – both between the villages and against the nominal ruler in Cone – before the Chinese invasion in 1950.

Among the extant texts that deal with *drabla* in a general way are a number of *Yak Horn Cycle* (*g.Yag ru dgra chos*) rituals. In some cases, it seems that they represent different editions of such texts known elsewhere in the treasure revelation (*gter ma*) of Khyung Gotsal.[72] There are also many texts within this category, which do not seem to be specific to the *leu* tradition and will remain outside the focus of the present contribution.[73]

The *leu* texts dealing with *shugon* (*shug mgon*) spirits in connection with *drabla* seem to be more closely bound to this particular tradition. In the *leu* texts, *shugon* spirits are identified with sheep, goats, yaks, cows, and birds. According to the living tradition, they are seen as 'the cattle of the *nyen*' spirits.

Two existing texts about them are known and available. The first one, entitled *dGra chos lug shug bzhugs s+ho*,[74] deals with sheep, goats, and birds; the second, entitled *sGra bla ba*

71 Sherab Dragpa, personal communication in July 2017 and August 2018.

72 These rituals entitled *g.Yag ru dgra chos* are contained in volume 186 of the *New Collection of Bonpo Katen Texts*. They were revealed as a treasure text by Ponse Khyung Gotsal (dPon gsas Khyung rGod rtsal, born 1175). For more information see Berounský 2009.

73 Nevertheless, one such text entitled *sGra bla ko kon* (corr. *go gon*, '*Dressing drabla* [*in armour*]') appears to be of special interest. This anonymous text consists of a dialogue between a certain Yeshen Wangdzog (Ye shes (=gshen) dBang rdzogs) and Nambon Sergo (gNam bon gSer mgo) and resembles the text entitled *Lofty praise of drabla granted by the Lord of the Secret* (*gSang ba'i bdag pos gnang ba'i dgra lha dpang stod*), also referred to by René Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1993: 336–338). This is a Bonpo parallel of it dealing in detail with the armour, weapons, and dwellings of the *drabla*. Yet the Bonpo case contains different background and different main characters. The setting is provided not by the conflict between the gods and *asuras*, as in the other text, but by the conflict between the realms of Ye and Ngam. However, no special reference to the *leu* tradition is found in the text itself. It seems probable that it is not restricted to this tradition and thus its provenance could be found elsewhere.

74 *gNa' rabs bon gyi dpe dkon bris ma*, vol. 8: 28–49.

shug dbu lags+ho, is dedicated to a cow.[75] The first text, which is more informative and less corrupted, confirms that the cult of the *shugon* appears within the framework of the propitiation of the *nyen*. The texts call these animals 'the cattle of the *nyen*' (*gnyan gyi phyug*, p. 41), and they typically contain a series of myths on the origin of sheep, goats, and domestic fowl (*bya pho, bya mo*). Animals and birds are envisioned in the wilderness at the time of the world's creation. These domestic animals are then offered to the *nyen* as their cattle. Through this act it is as if they are being returned to their original place, enhancing mainly the power of the *nyen*, but also that of the *lu* spirits. In the texts these animals are called *shug ma/bshug ma*, though it is not entirely clear what this term indicates. The same term also appears in the *juthig* texts, where it denotes the wise bat and probably the monkey and badger as 'brokers between enemies and friends' (*dgra zun bar gyi bshug ma*). It cannot be ruled out in the case of the *leu* texts that it is used to indicate a similar function of an intermediary. A characteristic passage dealing with the 'goat-*shug*' reads (*dGra chos lug shug bzhugs s+ho: 46*):[76]

> *You, goat of the nyen, will be dispatched,*
> *you, white goat of the nyen to be delivered,*
> *your right and left ears are made of crystal,*
> *your right and left eyes are made of the gzi stone,*
> *your body is formed by all kinds of colourful silk,*
> *the body is adorned by precious stones.*
> *You, goat of the nyen in your perfect farewell attire,*
> *be shug ma delivered to the nyen!*

As illustrated by this extract, the domestic animals are given back and 'transformed' into the originally wild ones belonging to the *nyen*. According to my sources,[77] this practice of offering used to be performed of releasing adorned domestic animals and offering them to the *nyen* used to be practiced. They are seen as powerful protection in their own right, but also as a means of enhancing the power of the *nyen* spirits, who are viewed as the main protective force against enemies amongst other things. This ritual clearly resembles the much better-known *tshe thar* ('life-release') practised in the Buddhist milieu.

The text on 'bird-*shug*' is also quite striking. In most associations with birds found in the numerous texts dealing with *drabla*-related spirits, the primary role is played by a mythical *khyung* bird resembling the Indic *garuḍa*. The aforementioned *leu* text dedicated to *shugon* spirits, quite surprisingly, contains not a single mention of the *khyung* bird and in fact discusses the less impressive hen and rooster.

The animals presented in the text as *shugon* spirits are believed to correspond to the animals representing the original Tibetan clans, according to Sherab Dragpa, the younger *leu*

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75 *gNa' rabs bon gyi dpe dkon bris ma*, vol. 9: 97–107.

76 *dGgra chos lug shug bzhugs s+ho*: 46: *ny+y+n (gnyan) ra khyod la stong (=btong) ra byed/ ny+y+n+y (gnyan gyi) ra thong kor (dkar po) khyod/ rna ba g.yas+o+n (g.yas g.yon) shel la byas/ spyin (spyan) mig+y+s+o+n (mig g.yas g.yon) gzi' la byas/ lus po dar sna dgu las byas/ lus la ri+o+n+'+i (rin po che'i) brgyan/ ny+y+n+i (gnyan gyi) ra thod chas rdzogs khyed/ ny+y+n (gnyan) la bsngos pa'i shug ma m+o+d (mdzod)/.*

77 Ngawang Gyatso, personal communication, summer 2017, 2018.

ritualist from the region of Bozo. As noted above, the anonymous text on the origin of the Tibetans entitled *Appearance of the Little Black-Headed Man* (*dBu nag mi'u 'dra chags*) relates that as compensation for killing their father (*stong*) Old Nyen Dewa gave the ancestors of the Tibetan clans six five animals, who were called *drabla* (*dgra bla*): the dragon, *khyung* bird, yak, tiger, ram, and dog (Karmay 1998a: 271–272). It implies that these animals were the property of the *nyen* spirits. Sherab Dragpa introduces the animals of the clans as their 'soul-cattle' (*bla zog*), and in an astrological work the 'soul-cattle' of the individual clans are mentioned as being the deer, yak, wild ass, goat, and sheep.[78] Again, according to the *leu* ritualist, they are the property of the *nyen* spirits. In addition, the surviving versions of the *Nyen collection* confirm that wild animals, including those mentioned above, are frequently seen as a representation of the *nyen* and their wealth. But notably they are not associated with *drabla* or the original Tibetan clans in the myths of the *Nyen collection*.

As opposed to the oral tradition, the *leu* texts on the *shugon* also contain no reference to the role of these protective animals called *shugon* as 'soul-cattle,' nor to the protective *drabla* of the Tibetan clans. It might well be the case that this local tradition inspired those composing texts on the *drabla* to associate them both with the original Tibetan clans and with the animals depicted in the corners of wind-horse flags (*rlung rta*): dragon, *garuḍa*, tiger, and lion.

One *leu* text is entirely dedicated to the worship of *cangse* (*cangs se*), another enigmatic form of *drabla* frequently mentioned in texts connected with the *shugon*.[79] This text again includes explicit mentions of *leu* ritualists and bears other signs of its provenance in the region where the *leu* tradition has spread. Entitled *C+se* (=*Cangs se*) *bshug ma dbu lags+ho*,[80] *cangse* appears as *shugma* in this title, making clear that *cangse* is related to *shugon*. Nevertheless, the appearance of *cangse* and how they could be related to *shugon* are not mentioned specifically in the text.

In terms of content, this text contains a series of three origin myths dealing with the appearance of *cangse* in primordial times. The second brief myth deals with an ancestor of heavenly *cha* (*phywa*) beings called Tagcha Alol (sTag cha 'Al 'ol) and the third short myth narrates the story of another *cha* being called Yabla Deldrug (Yab bla bDal drug), referring to the propitiation of *cangse* and their victory. The first myth is the longest one, and again, it is set in the conflict between the Ye and Ngam realms. *Cangse* is introduced as the one who killed the lord of Ngam, stole the 'souls' (*bsam blo*) of enemies, and provided miraculous armour and weapons to the 'conch-shell man' of the Ye realm. But interesting information is found in the parts putting forward the origin of *cangse*. It is stated that the ancestor of the original 'brother and sister' of *cangse* is the familiar Old Nyen Darwa/Dewa. The text, again, considers *cangse* to have been fathered by the *nyen* and thus related to the *nyen*.

When dealing with *drabla* in the context of *leu* rituals, one must not overlook the rituals known as *chadang* (*bya rdang*). They comprise an elaborate body of texts used for very complex and lengthy rituals. Such *chadang* are sporadically referred to in several older Bon

78 Sherab Dragpa referred to the astrological text *'Byung rtsis nyer mkho bum bzang* authored by Situ Panchen as a source on the *bla zog* animals of the individual clans.

79 Nebesky-Wojkowitz describes them as human riders on horses according to the Buddhist sources and considers them to be identical with *lam lha* (1993: 334).

80 *gNa' rabs bon gyi dpe dkon bris ma*, vol. 9: 7–18.

sources, including the *juthig* divination texts, the 12th-century 'treasure revelation' of the *Yak Horn Cycle* by Khyung Gotsal,[81] and the 14th-century *Sutra of Immaculate Splendor* (*mDo dri med gzi brjid*).[82] Some of the texts even consider the term to represent a distinctive class of *drabla* frequently called 'the protector *chadang*' (*mgon po bya rdang*). The widespread mention of such rituals, which usually appear in a list without any hint as to their meaning, can be taken as a proof of their existence from the 12th century (Khyung Gotsal's 'treasure revelation') onwards.

The term *chadang* itself can be understood as a 'bird-pole' or even a 'bird perch.' The ritual's performance centers around a construction consisting of horizontally layered poles to which weapons such as spears and arrows are added. These poles mainly serve the purpose of becoming perches for the invited birds. The uppermost position for the birds is usually described as being that of the mythical *garuḍa*-like *khyung*. Such constructions vary in their elaboration; the simplest ones consist of a single vertical pole with an additional horizontal pole. Paper depictions of birds are attached to them and the image of *khyung* is placed on top of the pole. A term less frequently used for *bya rdang* appears to be *bya mdos* ('bird thread-cross').

The texts for this ritual contain several interesting myths and refer to various classes of *drabla* mentioned above, including the *werma* and *cangse*. Yet the *shugon* seem to be missing in these texts. A set of *chadang* manuscripts consisting of eleven individual texts totaling 210 roughly 'middle format' Tibetan manuscript folios has been published (Ngag dbang rgya mtsho, Tshe ring thar, vol. 1 and 2).[83] But more such texts remain so far unpublished, and therefore they await in-depth study and comparison against one another.[84] For the purposes of this contribution, only the published versions will be taken into account. The eleven texts of the cycle (texts i-xi) and only short summaries of their content are given in Appendix 1. However, in-depth analysis of these texts and their many details are without doubt worthy of exploration in another context.

The available ritual texts on *chadang* contain a series of brief myths on the original propitiation of the *drabla* through the *chadang* ritual. These are sometimes very formal and brief, but in other cases they contain more detailed information. Some are localised and take place – once again – in the Ye and Ngam realms, but not exclusively. Ancestor figures of *cha* (*phywa*) divinities, such as Tagcha Alol (sTag cha 'Al 'ol) and Yabla Daldrug (Yab bla bDal drug) make an appearance in them. One myth deals with the realm of *mu* (*dmu*), the heavenly lord of *mu*, and adversary demons. Almost all manuscripts of the cycle contain frequent references to the *nyen*; again, some of them include the *lu* (*klu*), *sadak* (*sa bdag*), and *tö* (*gtod*) spirits. These four kinds of spirits are known from the Bon Kanjur version of the *Four collections* (*'Bum bzhi*), in which each collection is dedicated to one of these individual classes of spirits. This is compounded by references to the spirits *drabla*, *werma*, and *cangse*. Several myths even contain details about the construction of the original 'bird-poles,'

81 See n. 63.

82 See, for example, Snellgrove 1967: 53, 59, 65, 259, n. 19. He translates this term as 'bird-rack' and is uncertain about what this expression could mean.

83 These texts are also available at the *Kalpa Bön* website of Charles Ramble: kalpa-bon.com/texts/leu (accessed 23.04.2024).

84 Ngawang Gyatso of Lanzhou University has collected several sets of them.



Fig. 11. Simple 'bird-poles' (*bya rdang*) construction with birds depicted on the paper during the ritual at labtse (*la btsas*).

including a ritual on raising the columns of the construction, information on various weapons and armour to be assembled there, and myths about their origin. A rather bloody image appears in some myths which state that the heart of the demon-enemy pierced by either a spear, or his head, is placed on top of this construction.

Many such myths refer to animal sacrifices during the ritual, including the sacrifice of sheep, goats, horses, yaks, and birds (i.e., animals standing mostly for *shugon* spirits in the texts on them), but also a camel, pig, and dog. In some cases, the animals are merely listed, but several texts contain quite detailed descriptions of the animal to be sacrificed, such as this vivid description of an offering of yak (*gNa' rabs bon gyi dpe dkon bris ma*, vol. 1: 36):[85]

> *Lhabon Thokar said:*
> *'If you wish to kill your enemies,*
> *you should strive to reward the drabla with yak now.'*
> *Then, Yabla Daldrug drew a vermilion svastika on a white yak.*
> *He adorned its hair with fine textiles and silk,*
> *he tied sharp spearheads to its horns,*

85 The Tibetan text reads: *lho+on+d+r (lha bon thod dkar) zhal na re/ khyod kyi dgra bsad 'dod pa na/ ta rung sgrl (sgra bla) g.yag+is brngan mtshal skad/ de ni yabladl drugis dung g.yag dkar po a mtshal gis g.yrung bris/ spu la dar dang zab gis brgyan/ rwa la dbaly+i mdung rtse brgyus/ dpral bar stag+is dpa' mtshan btag/ srid pa'i bya rdang rten du brgyus/ lha dmag rnams la mnga' thang gsol/ g.yag ni khams pa'i 'gul du dgra byang btag/ sku la khrag dang dug+is bskus/ rnga ma la sdud sheng (=bdud shing) nag+o btags/ dphral (=dpral) bar dgra'i rla byang bris/ lha bon thodkr phyag du phul/ lha pon sku'i sprul pa las/ bsod pa'i las pa mtshon cha thogs/ bya rdang drung du 'ub gis bsdus/ yyag (g.yag) snying phyung srid pa'i bya rdang lha dmag brngan/ mgo bo (=mgon po) bya rdang dpa'i rtags/ rus pa bdudng btsan la phul/ sha'i las pa srin+o brngan/ [...].*



Fig. 12. Making the 'bird-poles.'

attached the tiger insignia of heroes to its forehead,
and in order to offer power to the divine fighters,
he made him the support of the 'bird-poles' from the creation of the world.

An image of the enemy (dgra byang) was attached to the yak's brownish neck,
its body was anointed with blood and poison,
a black demonic wood (bdud shing) was attached to its tail.
The image of the soul of the enemy (dgra'i rla byang) was drawn on his forehead,
[the yak] was offered to the hands of Lhabon Thokar.

Executioners miraculously manifested from the body of Lhabon,
they hoisted their weapons
and crowded at the 'bird-poles.'
They tore out the heart of the yak
and rewarded the divine fighters of the 'bird-pole,'
the protective 'bird-pole' was a sign of their heroism,
bones were offered to dü and tsen demons,
and the executioners – the sin demons – were rewarded with meat [...]

In the case of *chadang*, fortunately information exists on the actual steps of this ritual as it was known to the old *leu* ritualist Walse. He passed them on to Sherab Dragpa who recorded them as brief notes.[86] Despite the great overlap between the texts known by Walse and

86 Sherab Dragpa kindly shared these notes with me as a written text, which has not been published.

those published, they are not exactly the same in all cases. For a brief paraphrase of the text and the structure of the ritual, see Appendix 1 at the end of the paper.

The only information on the actual performance of the ritual of the 'bird-poles', the notes provided by the old *leu* ritualist Walse and written down by Sherab Dragpa, describe the divinities and spirits residing in the 'bird-poles' arranged in a mandala pattern. The main creature of the 'bird-poles' appears to be the divine *khyung* bird. He is named as the conch-shell *khyung* of male divinities (*pho lha'i dung khyung dkar po*). The birds surrounding him are the conch-shell vulture (*dung gi bya rgod thang dkar*), the copper eagle (*bse'i byin glag smug po*), the iron hawk (*lcags khra sngon po*), and the golden hawk (*gser khra ser po*). Then four generals are present, that of the gods (*lha*), *nyen* (*gnyan*), *lu* (*klu*), and *tö* (*gtod*). Further, four 'champions' (*gyad*) are invited to form the four cardinal points: the king of the male divinities, *drabla*, *werma*, and *cangse*. Next, four animals 'suppressing earth' (*sa gnan*) are mentioned: the iron oxen, the turquoise dragon, the iron yak, and the copper tiger. Then there are various groups of hawks. As last come the protectors of the four points of the compass: the conch-shell lion, the turquoise dragon, oxen and the *rma bya* bird. Then, thousands of *werma* are given in the long list, which is also present in some texts about 'bird-poles.'

When observing these texts and notes on 'bird-poles' at a general level, it is evident that in terms of content they exhibit several overlapping strata. Apparently, a layer of the cult of the *nyen* – so prominent in this region – is visible here. The *drabla* were probably originally a separate entity, but they are frequently presented as a form of *nyen*. This is complemented by the worship of the *werma*, who always stand separately from the *nyen*. Despite the fact that there is information on the *nyen* and *lu* spirits of the Ye realm standing against the Ngam realm, it would be reasonable to see them as representing an attempt to bring two, once diverse traditions together. The ways of doing so resemble those seen in the *juthig* divination manuals, but the ritual texts briefly introduced here appear to be much clearer in terms of their information on the *drabla*. It is interesting that the recorded memoirs of the *leu* ritualist Gendun note that he learnt both *juthig* divination and *chadang* rituals from an old ritualist from Thewo who died in 1990. This could imply – though more information would be needed to confirm this hypothesis – that the *juthig* divination (with the strong presence of various forms of *drabla*, but also *nyen*, in the surviving texts) and *chadang* rituals were seen among *leu* ritualists as complementary parts of a common tradition.

Returning to the birds appearing on the 'bird-poles' (*bya rdang*), in the few rituals recently witnessed, it is unanimously agreed that the 'bird' is most often represented by the *khyung* bird at the top of the 'bird-pole' construction. At the same time, birds are identified as prominent messengers of the *nyen* spirits to such an extent that in the colloquial language the expression 'bird' (*bya*) is a synonym for the *nyen*. Yet hardly any reference to the *khyung* appears in the old collection of myths about the *nyen* entitled the *Nyen collection* (*gNyan 'bum*).

Another *leu* text might bring some clarity to this issue. It is an unpublished text dedicated to the 'artemisia-bird' (*mkhan bya*), which is an offering to the *nyen* spirits (Appendix 2). This offering seems to be related somehow to the more numerous texts dedicated to 'bird-pole' rituals connected with the *drabla*. Though the 'artemisia-bird' ritual seems not to be performed any longer, it is clearly more closely connected with the *nyen* and represents a

typical element of their worship. According to Ngawang Gyatso, who observed the ritual of the 'artemisia-bird' a decade ago in Thewo, the difference lay in the fact that the 'artemisia-bird' was prepared by each male member of the community and 'bird-poles' are prepared by a ritual specialist. According to him, the construction of a 'bird-pole' is often complicated, whereas the 'artemisia bird' – a relatively small image representing a bird made from the artemisia plant[87] – was a sort of 'bird-pole' offered and prepared by an individual male member.

A text addressing the worship of the *nyen* through such an 'artemisia-bird' is found among the *leu* scriptures from Gyanyag (rGya nyag) village in Thewo. Entitled *Propitiation of the Nyen by the Artemisia-Bird* (*mKhan bya nyan brngon dbu bzhugs+ho* / corr. *mKhan bya gnyan brngan*), it is written on eight folios and contains five myths about the origin of the 'artemisia-bird' and the benefits of its ritual use. The text presents a series of myths on creation (*rabs*), as is rather common in the non-Buddhist ritual practice of Tibetans.

In the first myth (Appendix 2, fols. 2b–3b), following the creation of the world, the realm of gods, the Wishful realm of people (*smon*), and a demonic realm, Ngam, are created. The residences of beings represented by a pair of lakes and rocks are then listed. The 'artemisia-bird' then appears among the three offspring of the Black-headed man from the Wishful realm (sMon mi dbu nag) and the lady Chucam Gyalmo (Chu lcam rGyal mo) who resides in the lake. It is then stated that Chucam Gyalmo carried pollution (*btsog*) and the 'artemisia-bird' was almost poisoned by Ngam. The Wishful realm eliminated that poison through inter-clan killing (*dme*), a different kind of polluting act, and as a consequence all *lu* and *nyen* of the Wishful realm became polluted. The ritualist of the Wishful realm (sMon bon) then performs a divination. The oath-divination between gods and demons comes into existence and all is appeased by a white 'artemisia-bird.' The first myth is appended with a section that seems to be a fragment from a different story (Appendix 2, fol. 3b, line 5–fol. 4a, line 2), since it suddenly touches upon the *drabla*, which are related to the *nyen*:

> *The enemy-path of robbers is treated by the nyen,*
> *The riches and vitality of enemies are summoned along with the soul of enemies,*
> *In order to offer the life-essence of enemies their heart is ripped out,*
> *[…?]*
> *And hateful enemies fall inside the bag,*
> *The gods were treated by artemisia, juniper and 'gun, the three,*
> *The male-gods and drabla were propitiated by an artemisia-bird.*

The second myth (Appendix 2, fols. 3b–4b) is mostly incomprehensible, but it is introduced as a story about the origin of the propitiation of the *lu* through an 'artemisia-bird' (*yang mkhan bya klu bcod (=bcos) kar srid na […]*). It speaks about the origin of the White Lord of Lu (Klu mgon dkar po), stating that the Wishful realm of gods was almost defeated. Following an unclear section, the text states that the artemisia of the sky was created. It mentions that artemisia, juniper, and hellebore (*spro'=spra?*), the three, contain the essence of the triple-created world of *cha* (*phywa*) beings and were handed over to the ritualist (*bon*) of the

87 Ngawang Gyatso, personal communication, October 2018.

Wishful realm. The ritualist then makes a 'heart' from precious stones, blood and flesh of the heart from a certain *kho'* (possibly hellebore, *kho'=spro=spra*?), a brain from certain fragrant plants, and a 'soul' (*bla*) from juniper. It is by the soul-juniper that the local divinities (*yul sa*) and *mumen* (*mu sman*) of the Earth are fumigated. The thirteen *nyen* of the Wishful realm are then purified after eating flesh and blood – probably represented by a hellebore plant (*? sbra=spra*). The *lu* and *nyen* were then fumigated by the 'artemisia-bird,' and the myth concludes with a statement that this is how the 'artemisia-bird' came into existence.

The third myth (Appendix 2, fols. 4b–6a) introduces the land of Yabla Daldrug, the lord of *cha* (*phywa*) beings, who resides on the eighth level of the sky. It was threatened by the realm of Ngam, whose bird brings misfortune, and the land of *cha* filled with diseases and epidemics. The ritualist (*bon*) then performs a divination and says that the 'artemisia-bird' is needed. The myth then states that various plants were collected from the top of the white rock of *cha*, and that the feathers (of the 'artemisia-bird') were those of the *rma bya* bird.[88] The text then lists beings which are propitiated (*brngan*) by the 'artemisia-bird', starting with the *yulsa* Manyen Pomra (rMa gnyan po ra =rMa chen pom ra), the white and black families of *lu* spirits, the *män* spirit, Nyenzu Thökar (gNyan gzu thod dkar), and all the black and white families of *nyen*. In less clear sections of the text, various birds are mentioned in sequence and everything concludes with the phrase 'this is how the raising of the artemisia-bird came into existence.' Quite interestingly, a white crane is mentioned at the beginning of the list of birds, but it is written as *khyung khyung kar smas* (corr. *khrung khrung dkar mos*). This is not the only instance in the *leu* texts where the name of the crane – a bird frequently mentioned in the context of *nyen* worship – is written as *khyung* (mythical eagle or *garuḍa*). The wise bat is also mentioned in this part (*pha+ḍ+'ang rgos po = pha wang sgam po/rgod po*), as well as 'bird-poles' (*mgon po bya rdang*), the name of a ritual associated with warrior divinities, but in this case it seems to stand for a divinity itself.

The fourth myth (Appendix 2, fols. 6a–7b) introduces a story about the conflict between the realm of gods and the demonic sphere of Ngam. Enormous armies of gods and demons (*srin*) assemble at the border of the divine realm. The ritualist (sNal phrom bon) performs a divination and instructs the gods that the armies of the *nyen* should be gathered. Then various animals, precious stones, plants, fine textiles, and namely the thirteen birds of *nyen* are collected, and 360 'artemisia-birds' are offered to avert conflict in the country. The black demon *sin* (*srin*) is killed; his head is severed and buried in a pit. His heart is then torn out and made into the splendid food of the *nyen*.

The fifth, very brief myth (Appendix 2, fols. 7b–8a) introduces itself as a story about the creation of the 'artemisia-bird' and refers to the country of Dzaru Pangteng (rDza ru spang sten /=steng/), which might refer to several villages in Upper Thewo called Dzaru (rDza ru). An old man and the lady of creation reside there. Then, tiger and yak are used for a fumigation ritual, but there was no benefit from this. Two priests then suggest that the pollution of the *nyen*, apparently stemming from the use of tiger and yak, who are 'delegates of the created world' (*srid skod /skos/ stag g.yag*), for fumigation rituals, can be treated with the 'artemisia-bird.' Following that, the *nyen* are said to have expelled the robbers of the created world.

88 *sMa bya* (=*rma bya*) most often indicates a peacock in Buddhist texts, but in this case, it seems to designate an Indigenous bird from the region called *rma* and related to the rMa chen pom ra, rMa chu (Yellow river) etc.

The 'bird-pole' ritual texts focus on various *drabla* including the *werma* and *cangse* and refer several times to the *khyung* bird as a representation of the 'bird-poles' but not exclusively. A number of the ritual texts list various birds which appear without mentioning *khyung* at all. But at the same time the cult of the *drabla*, *werma*, etc., is permeated with references to the *nyen*.

All this stands somewhat in contrast to this text on the 'artemisia-bird,' which focuses mainly on the *nyen,* but also on the *lu* spirits. The first bird mentioned is the white crane, the bird of the *nyen*. Here, as in the third myth above, the name of the crane is written in a way that resembles *khyung* (*khyung khyung kar mas = khrung khrung dkar mo*). In the *leu* texts and in the *Nyen collection* (*gNyan 'bum*), the name of the crane is in fact substituted several times with *khyung*. This indicates a more general tendency to replace the crane as a bird of importance within the context of *nyen* worship with the *khyung* – a mythical eagle coined in the texts of the monastic Bon religion.

The *leu* text on the 'artemisia-bird' also represents a stratum of rituals related to the 'bird-poles' which are not blended with the worship of *werma*. That the *drabla* also appear here to a limited extent allows us to see more clearly the way in which the two probably originally separate subjects of worship – *drabla* and *nyen* – became intertwined with each other. Examples of this are found in the 'bird-pole' ritual texts as well as in the *juthig* divination manuals and to some degree also in parts of the *Sutra of Immaculate Splendor* and the *Yak Horn Cycle* of texts.

Another observation worth noting is that the myths strikingly describe the 'artemisia-bird' as a substitute for animals of real flesh and blood, specifically in the second and fifth myth of the text *Propitiation of the Nyen by the Artemisia-Bird*. The question naturally arises as to whether this symbolic sacrifice appeared under the influence or under pressure from monastic Bon. In a similar way, one could say that the animals representing the *shugon* spirits should be released, but the same animals are suggested as sacrifices to be offered to the 'bird-poles.' For the time being there is no way to accurately determine whether the influence of monastic Bon played a role in this development or not.

Concluding remarks

This contribution attempted to outline texts which could be taken as indicators for the development of ideas connected with the *drabla*. While the Dunhuang documents very likely mirror the idea of some higher principle (*bla*) connected with 'enmity' (*dgra*), they also represent a stage in the process of merging divinities and spirits of diverse and perhaps local backgrounds. This is most valid in the case of the dice divination texts and to a lesser degree for the more structured *juthig* divination manual PT 1047. *Drabla* and *nyen* are present there in separate sections, while in the dice divination manuals, a certain connectedness between the two of them can be observed.

While the Dunhuang documents provide no hint about the geographical background of the *nyen* divinities, the later texts of the *Nyen collection* and the *juthig* divination manuals see them as being connected with the tradition of the Dong (lDong) clan, originally in the northeastern part of the Tibetan Plateau. It could be supposed that already during the Imperial period (mid-7th–mid-9th century) groups of Dong people migrated into western

Tibet and other parts of the Tibetan Plateau. It is still an open question as to whether references to the *nyen* in the Dunhuang divination manuals derive from the tradition of the Dong people, or whether the association of the *nyen* with the Dong people is a result of some process of simplification.

The *juthig* divination manuals support the high status accorded to the *drabla*, who are apparently seen as a crucial element of the divination. But the *drabla* are suddenly split into various classes including the *werma*s, *cangse*, *shugon*, and *chadang* ('bird-poles'). Here, the *drabla* appear in the cosmological setting of a dualistic nature represented by the realms of existence and light called Ye, and of non-existence and darkness called Ngam. At the same time, the *drabla* partly merge with the *nyen*, who are sometimes seen as owners of the *drabla*, fathers of the *drabla*, etc. The omnipresent animal associated with them is the *khyung* bird, resembling the Indic *garuḍa* bird.

The last part dealt with the *leu* ritual texts from the Thewo, Bozo, and Phenchu regions of northeastern Tibet. These places were probably also part of the geographical setting of the myths contained in the *Nyen collection*. These *leu* texts bring to light new details on *shugon*, *cangse*, and *chadang*, which are otherwise mentioned largely without detail in the *juthig* divination manuals. The *shugon* and *cangse* are very closely associated with the *nyen*, the *shugon* being domestic animals offered back to the *nyen* to enhance their power to fight enemies. The *chadang* ritual texts seem to stand closely with the tradition of *juthig* divination, but they contain interesting details not found in the *juthig* divination manuals. Features common to both are the central position of the *werma*, the mythical bird *khyung*, the cosmological setting of Ye and Ngam, the inclusion of various classes of *drabla*, and the frequent presence of *nyen*. But when looking into the ritual texts dedicated to the 'artemisia-bird', it suddenly seems that inspiration comes from the cult of the *nyen* spirits, which is strongly associated with birds. The emblematic *khyung* bird referred to as being placed on the top of the 'bird-pole' construction turns out probably originally to have been a white crane, a bird of the *nyen*.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz presented the hitherto unknown and intricate forms of the fighting gods *drabla* in a surprising breadth during his time. He drew on information only from the texts of monastic Buddhism, including the monastic religion of Bon. In doing so, he focused on the many categories of *drabla* deities and their descriptions from texts compiled in the manner of Buddhist *sādhana*. In his time, he seemed just to illuminate the many forms of these deities as they figure across Buddhist sects.

In the present paper, the focus has not been primarily on other lists of different groups of *drabla* deities (though they do appear namely in the manuscripts of the *juthig* divination). Attention was paid to the occurrence of these 'fighting gods' in texts more distant from the core of the monastic tradition (unavailable during the lifetime of Nebesky-Wojkowitz) and fragments attesting to their changing roles over time and merging with deities with similar features. There are good reasons to believe that the changes resulted from oscillation between the pan-Tibetan non-Buddhist tradition and the various local cults. The latter were probably carried by oral tradition and as such may have been silenced forever.

APPENDIX 1

Short summaries of the eleven *chadang* texts (Tshering Thar and Ngawang Gyatso 2017: vols. 1–2).[89]

i *Burning the wooden image of the 'bird-poles'* (*Bya rdang shing mi me la bsrags pa'i dbu bzhugs s+ho*, vol. 1: 1–16):
The first myth deals with the origin of 'bird-poles' and the *cha* being Tagcha Alol, who used one against his demonic enemy, Kyareng Tragmig (sKya rengs 'phrag mig), who was stealing his goats. It contains detailed descriptions of 'bird-poles'; the *khyung* bird is mentioned in this context, and the hearts of bears and demons are offered at the 'bird-poles.' The second myth takes place in the realm of *mu* beings and relates events connected with the king Mula Zeng-gyal (dMu bla zeng rgyal). He uses 'bird-poles' against his enemies, who are demons surrounding the deer-headed Musin Bampa (dMu srin bam pa sha mgo). Its conclusion (p. 15) contains vivid descriptions of *drabla* emanating from the king of the *nyen*: a lion, a yak, a dragon, a monster with wings of swords, and hawks. They destroy the *sin* (*srin*) demons and the 'soul tree' (*bla shing*) of the demons is set ablaze.

ii *Opening the portals of the 'bird-poles'* (*Bya rdang sgo dbye' bzhugs s+ho*, vol. 1: 17–24):
This text contains only one myth dealing with the realms of Ye and Ngam. The lord of Ye is called the Black-headed Man of the Mon realm (sMon mi dbu nag) and he must repulse the invasion of Ngam into his dominion. The text continues with the ritual of opening the portals of the 'bird-poles' in the points of a compass. Besides beings with a human body and animal heads, some birds are associated with them. The *khyung* bird is not mentioned at all, but a hundred cranes, cuckoos, and *rma bya*.

iii *Great main text on the 'bird-poles'* (*Bya rdang gzhungs chen dbu bzhugs s+ho*, vol 1: 25–77):
This lengthy text contains eight myths on the origin of 'bird-poles.' In its opening parts it mentions the *khyung* bird, Mt. Meru (Ri rab lhun po), and the Lord of the gods (lHa'i

89 The performance of the ritual, as known to Walse, adds three texts dedicated to Machen Pomra in the middle of the ritual and a main text dealing with *werma*. All the published texts listed below are mentioned as being used in the ritual, with the exception of the texts on 'burning the wooden image' (text i), 'fortress' (text vi), and 'releasing' (text x). In the notes of Sherab Dragpa the texts are recited in the following sequence: 1) *Bya rdang spyan 'dren* (*Invitation to the divinities to the 'bird-poles'*), 2) *Bya rdang gzhi gting* (*Spreading the basis of the 'bird-poles'*, i.e. text ix), 3) *gSas rdo* (*Divine stone*, text xi), 4) *Yon bdag gsas rdo* (*Donors of divine stones*, this seems to be the concluding part of text xi), 5) *Bya rdang ka 'dzugs* (*Erecting the pillar of the 'bird-poles'*, text v.), 6) *Bya rdang rgyan bkod* (*Arranging the ornaments of the 'bird-poles'*, text viii), 7) *mThu chen Pong ra'i spyan 'dren* (*Invitation to mighty Machen Pomra*), 8) *Pong ra'i lha sgrub* (*Performance of the main ritual to Machen Pomra*), 9) *Pong ra'i brngan* (*Rewarding Machen Pomra*), 10) *Wer ma'i gzhung* (*Main ritual text on werma*), 11) *Bya rdang gzhung chen* (*Large main text on the 'bird-poles'*, text iii), 12) *Bya sdang rtsi gsol* (*Offering nectar to the 'bird-poles'*, text vii), 13) *'Phang* (corr. *pha wang*) *brngan* (*Rewarding the bat*, this text deals with the wise bat in order to ensure the efficacy of the ritual), 14) *Sgron ma* (*Lamps*, the offering of lamps to the *drabla* of the 'bird-poles'), 15) *Sgo srung* (*Protection of the entrance*, appointing the tiger, yak, dragon, and *khyung* to protect the cardinal directions), 16) *Bya rdang bsang 'bul* (*Offering of purification smoke to the 'bird-poles'*, text iv), 17) *Bya rdang yon 'bul* (*Offering gifts to the 'bird-pole'*, thanksgiving offering to the *drabla* of the 'bird-poles').

dbang po) – an epithet usually applied to the Hindu divinity Indra. It also lists the *sadag* (*sa bdag*), *lu* (*klu*), *nyen* (*gnyan*), and *tö* (*gtod*) spirits. The first myth contains a rather detailed description of the original 'bird-poles' associated with the heavenly ancestor Sangpo Bumthi (Sangs po 'Bum khri) and continues with myths associated with the ancestral figure of *cha* (*phywa*) beings, Yabla Deldrug (Yab bla bdal drug), and a description of animal offerings to 'bird-poles.' The second, very short myth takes place in the Demonic land of Gungthang (Srin yul gung thang) and associates it with *werma* spirits, but without mentioning the *khyung* bird. The third myth is also very brief and mentions *nyen* spirits and sacrifices of yak and sheep. The fourth myth again deals with the ancestor Sangpo Bumthi and a myth on the origination of various hawks (*bya khra*) from eggs appears among the details on the origin of 'bird-poles.' It continues with the ritual of establishing the *sä* stone (*gsas rdo*) and mentions *werma* spirits, again without any reference to *khyung*. The fifth myth is located in the Divine land of Gungthang (lHa yul Gung thang) and the main adversary of the gods appears to be a Divine demon with nine heads (lHa bdud mgo dgu). It mentions the *khyung* bird taming the demons there and animal sacrifice including those of camel (*rnga mong*), antelopes (*gla ba*), and monkeys (*spril=sprel*). It again mentions the *sadak, lu, nyen* and *tö* spirits. The sixth myth (p. 52) is situated in the land of *sin* demons (Srin yul gung thang) with its lord, possessing yak-demon (*srin g.yag*). It mentions the sacrifice of yaks, camels, dogs, goats, and pigs to the demons and animal offerings to the *nyen* – birds, sheep, goats, and yaks to the 'bird-poles.' The seventh myth (p. 57) takes place in the country of *cha* (Phya yul gung thang) with its lord Tagcha Alol, and is the same myth found in the first text dealing with demon Sinpo Kyareng Tragmig (written as Srin po skya ring 'phrag mig). The last, eighth myth (p. 69) deals with the king Thukar Yungdrung Gyalpo (Thugs dkar g.yung drung rgyal po) whose wife came from the *nyen* spirits. Their enemies, who killed their son, are demonic *tsen* (*btsan*) spirits and their lord is described as the King of *tsen* with four mouths and eight faces (bTsan rgyal kha bzhi gdong brgyad). The myth describes the 'bird-poles' and associates it with the crane – the bird of the *nyen* (*gnyan bya khrung khrung*) as well as *werma* spirits. The head of the slaughtered *tsen* adorns the top of the 'bird-poles', as does the heart of the *tsen* stuck on a spear.

iv *Offering of purification smoke to the 'bird-poles'*
(*Bya rdang bsang 'bul dbu bzhugs s+ho*, vol 1: 78–88):
This text only briefly narrates the origin of the world and the ancestors Nangba Ödän (sNang ba 'Od ldan) and Sangpo Bumthi (Sangs po 'Bum khri). It then once again mentions Mt. Meru and the *sadag, lu,* and *nyen* spirits, and a tree that grows on Mt. Meru and the *khyung* bird. The main purpose of this offering is to purify the divinities and prevent epidemics, hailstorms, famine, etc. The long list of divinities to be purified includes mainly *werma* spirits of various categories, but also Azha, Sumpa, and the 'three clans of Tibet.' *Nyen, lu,* and *tö* spirits figure rather prominently in the list as well.

v *Erecting the pillar of the 'bird-poles'* (*Bya rdang ka 'dzugs dbu bzhugs pa'o*, vol. 1: 89–94):
This text contains a myth on the origin of the wooden pillars of the 'bird-poles.' These appear in the points of a compass and are associated with various *sä* divinities such as Garsä Tsenpo (Gar gsas bTsan po). *Cangse* spirits are mentioned as well as are *sadak*, *lu*, *nyen*, and *tö* spirits.

vi *Defensive fortress of the 'bird-poles'*
(*Bya rdang srungs mkhar dbu bzhugs s+ho*, vol 1: 95–149):
This rather lengthy text contains several brief myths and a long list of names. It deals first with a 'defensive fortress' in the realm of existence and contains a long list of the names of various fortresses, weapons, divinities, and spirits, etc. It is perhaps the most eclectic of these *chadang* texts. It mentions even Shenrab Miwo and contains long lists of *werma* spirits, *nyen* spirits, *cangse*, etc. A white *khyung* bird is explicitly described as being placed on top of the 'bird-poles' (p. 130). Starting from page 129, it contains interesting myths about the origin of weapons and armour in which the *drabla* reside – helmet, shield, armour, spear, sprout of bamboo (arrow), flag (*dar*) – and several short myths on the origin of the bow. Ye and Ngam are mostly mentioned in these myths.

vii *Offering nectar to the 'bird-poles'* (*Bya rdang rtsi gsol dbu bzhugs s+ho*, vol. 2: 1–11):
This text contains long lists of beings to whom nectar is offered. It starts with a list of various hawks (*bya khra*) and mentions thirteen birds of the *nyen* spirits. Then it contains a long list of *werma* and also mentions the *khyung* bird being on top of the 'bird-pole.'

viii *Arranging ornaments on the 'bird-poles'*
(*Bya rdang rgyan bkod bzhugs s+ho*, vol. 2: 12–26):
This text consists mostly of lists of various items collected at the 'bird-poles.' These include artemisia, juniper, and rhododendron (*? sur dkar*) formed into the shape of a *khyung* bird, nine hawks, and thirteen white monkeys. The list also includes various textiles, but also arrows, etc.

ix *Spreading the basis of the 'bird-poles'*
(*Bya rdang gzhi btings dbu bzhugs s+ho*, vol. 2: 27–39):
This text also contains lists of items added to the 'bird-poles.' The opening narrates a series of formally similar brief myths on the original construction of 'bird-poles' and the spreading of their bases. It ends by listing various trees forming the 'divine stones' (*gsas rdo*) of the 'bird-poles' called 'the divine stones of the *nyen* of trees' (*shing gnyan gsas rdo*).

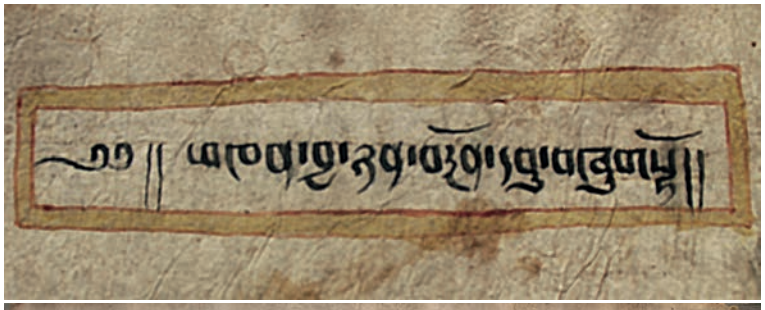
x *Releasing the 'bird-poles'* (*Bya rdang bkrol ba bzhugs so*, vol. 2: 39–48):
This is a ritual during which leather ropes (*'breng*) on the four sides of the 'bird-poles' are released and the armies of *drabla*, *nyen*, and *lu* are dispatched to fight enemies.

It is a rather poetical text with a myth at the beginning, again situated within the Ye and Ngam realms. Being harmed by Ngam, the Ye priests recommend erecting 'bird-poles' and offering a dog, goat, or pig to the demons. The priests then give instruction as to how to 'release the knots' of the ropes and dispatch the armies of *nyen* and *lu*.

xi *Planting the divine stone of the 'bird-poles'*
(*Bya rdang gsas rdo dbu bzhugs s+ho*, vol. 2: 49–61):
This partly damaged text contains a note at the beginning regarding the 'planting of the divine stone of *nyen*' (*'di ni gnyan gsas rdo btsug pa la*). It contains a brief myth about the origin of the world and the Ye realm of existence. The myth is then followed by a long list of various divine stones and the beings who planted them. Again, Shenrab Miwo is only briefly listed amongst other beings including *werma*, *nyen*, *lu*, *tö*, and many others. At the end, various divinities are again invited to provide support for the divine stone and serve as witnesses (*gzu dpang*) of the *to* (*gto*) ritual.

APPENDIX 2

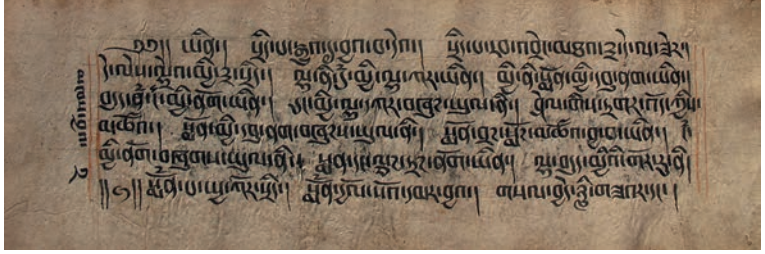
Facsimile of *Propitiation of the Nyen by the Artemisia-Bird* (*mKhan bya nyan brngon dbu bzhugs+ho* / corr. *mKhan bya gnyan brngan*). Photos: Courtesy of Ngawang Gyatso (Ngag dbang rGya mtsho), 2009.



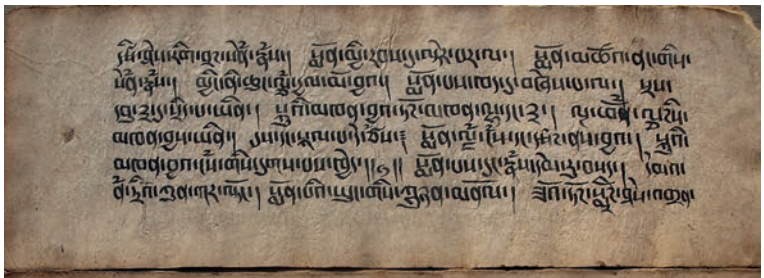
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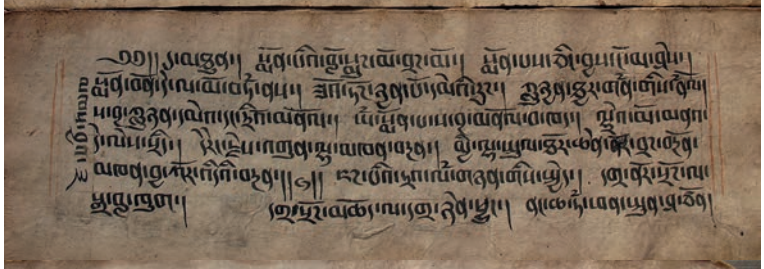
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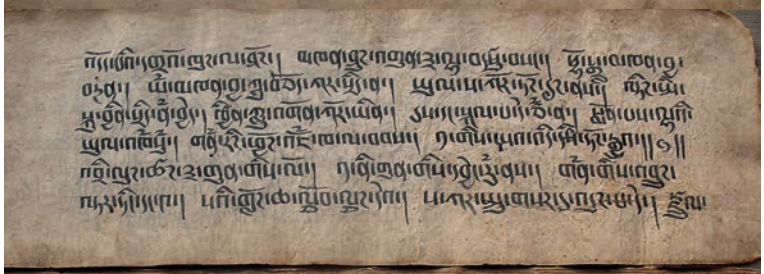
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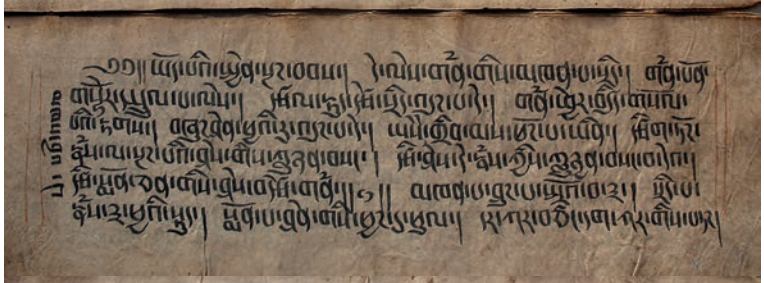
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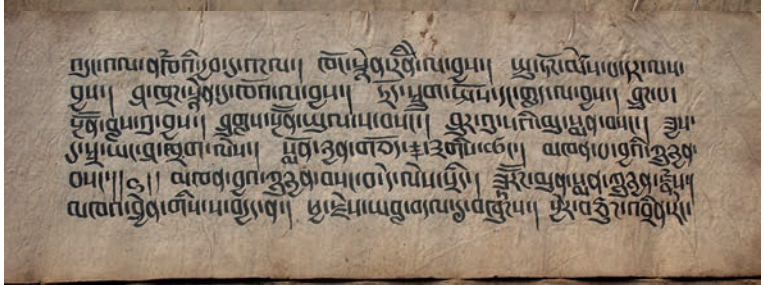
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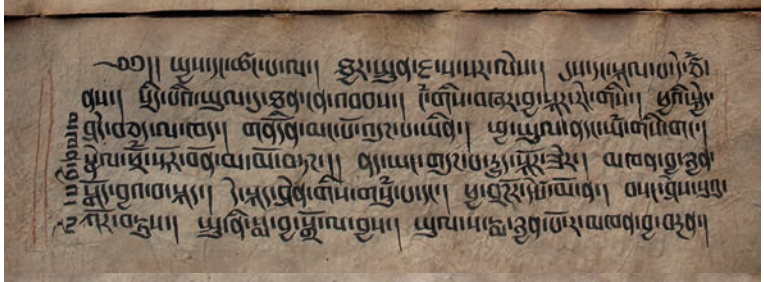
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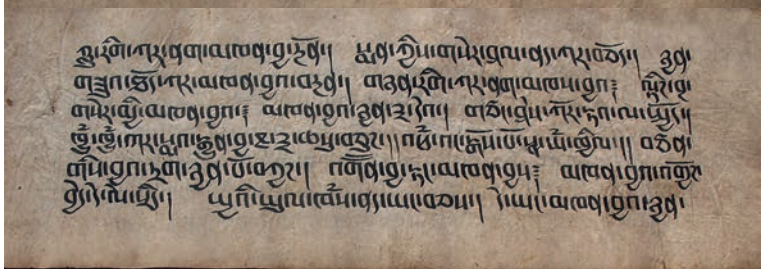
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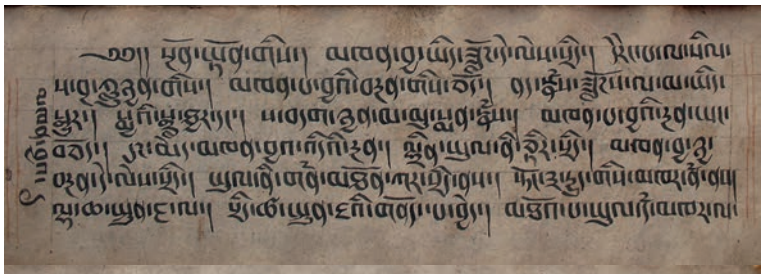
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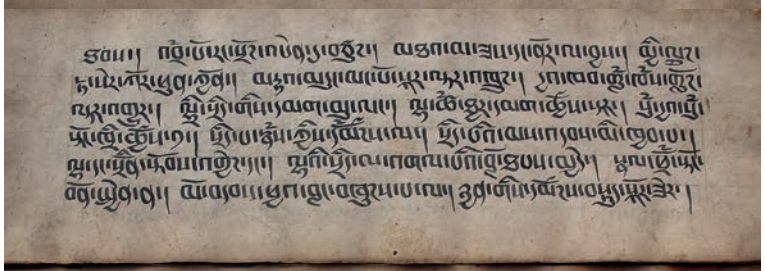
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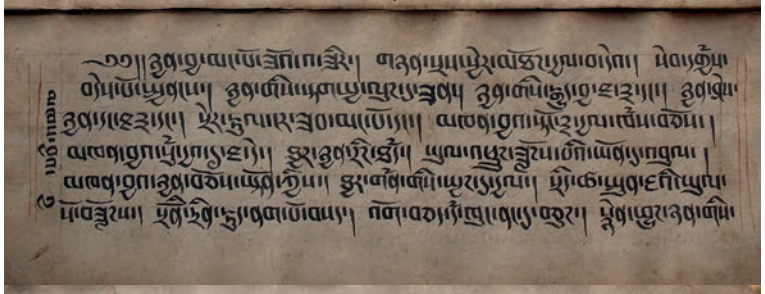
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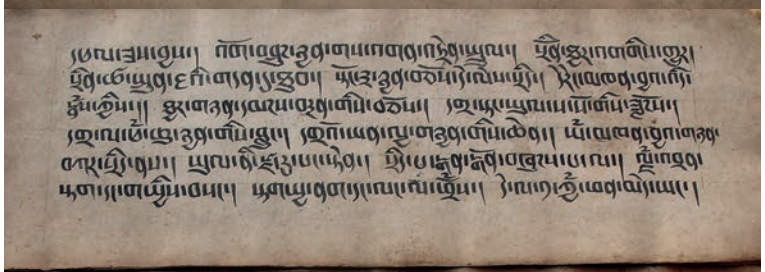
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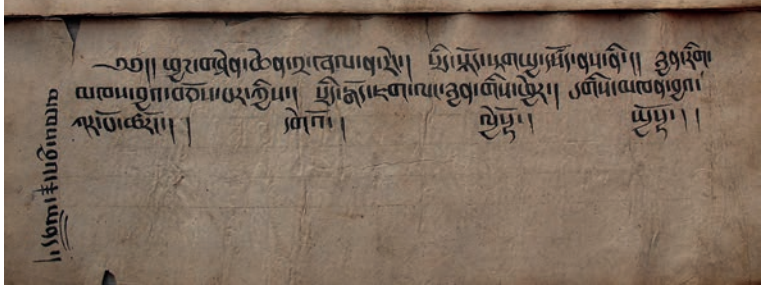
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PHOTO SOURCES

Fig. 4. Daniel Berounský, 2018, Lhasa.
Fig. 5–7. Daniel Berounský, 2017.
Fig. 8–9. Daniel Berounský.
Fig. 10–12. Aben, Nyi 'od, Kha pa lung region, 2018.

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4

EPILOG

NEBESKY-WOJKOWITZ AT THE HIMALAYAN HOTEL, KALIMPONG

Michael Oppitz[1]

> And at the intersection between place and time, at that moment that opens up just for a little while, to situate that single, right, unrepeatable possibility. The point where the straight line that runs from nowhere to nowhere makes – for one moment – contact with the circle.
>
> Olga Tokarczuk: *Flights*, 2017: 395

Kalimpong, an idyllic town on the southern slopes of the Eastern Himalayas, a gateway between India and Tibet, has seen several periods of political, economic, cultural, and educational transformation over the last 150 years. Before the Anglo-Bhutan War (1864–1865) the region around Kalimpong had been ruled successively by Sikkimese and Bhutanese kings, until the British East India Company assumed control and initiated the British colonial period in 1865. During this time Kalimpong was developed from a hamlet into a hill station, as an alternative to the Darjeeling model: Scottish missionaries built schools and welfare institutions, and trans-Himalayan trade over the Nathu La and Jelep La Passes flourished – with Kalimpong as the main outpost. With Indian independence in 1947 Darjeeling and Kalimpong became part of West Bengal. After the People's Liberation Army had defeated Tibetan troops in Kham, Tibet was incorporated into the People's Republic of China in 1951; and in 1959, at the outset of the Tibetan Uprising, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama took refuge in India. With him and during the preceding decade, thousands of Tibetans had emigrated or fled south over the Himalayan passes, many of them to Kalimpong. The complicated relations between India and China reached their peak in the India-China border conflict in 1962; by then trans-Himalayan commerce, travel and communication had diminished or come to a standstill. Since the 1980s the Darjeeling and Kalimpong region has been confronted with the autonomy movement "Gorkhaland," which flared up again in the 2010s, the aim of a fully autonomous administrative corpus for the Darjeeling hills still unaccomplished.

Due to historical circumstances, its geographical position, its charm and its natural beauty, Kalimpong had become – particularly during the 1940s and 1950s – a magnet for people

1 The article reproduces in its basic structure the content of a keynote lecture given by the author at the Weltmuseum Wien in November 2019.

of all kinds of background, nationality, occupation, leisure and class, mosaic of all walks of life: Indian merchants; Tibetan traders and muleteers with thousands of yaks and mules that transported goods over the passes back and forth; nobility from Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim; political exiles from China; remote branches of old European aristocracy; people of power, bygone and expectant; representatives of institutions and governments, official and secret; adventurers and mountaineers; missionaries and occultists; pilgrims and yogis; naturalists, artists and scholars – among the latter professional anthropologists, students of local languages, Tibetologists trying to get into Tibet or waiting for informants trying to get out. And not to forget spies or those suspected of being spies. In this respect, Pandit Nehru and Mao Zedong were of the same opinion. According to Mao Zedong: "There is a place in India called Kalimpong where they specialise in sabotaging Tibet. Nehru himself told the premier [Zhou Enlai], that this place is a centre of espionage, primarily American and British."[2] And Nehru crowned his suspicion by stating: "No doubt, a person with the ability to write fiction […] will find Kalimpong an interesting place for some [detective] novel of that type."[3] The British journalist James Cameron (1911–1985) summed up the characterization of Kalimpong as housing "[…] probably the most impressive collection of human eccentrics in Asia."[4] And those, who had not rented, built or bought their own home, found one in the Himalayan Hotel.

The Himalayan Hotel

The Himalayan Hotel (fig. 1) had been founded by David Macdonald (1873–1962), British trade agent at Yatung and Gyantse from 1909 to 1924. On account of his perfect mastery of the Tibetan language, he had served Younghusband as an interpreter during the military "expedition" in Tibet (1904); had assisted the Tibetologist Laurence A. Waddell as translator of texts for his books; and had helped Thupten Gyatso, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, to escape to Kalimpong when the Imperial Chinese Army marched on Lhasa in February 1910. He was the son of a Scottish tea planter and a Sikkimese woman. His own three daughters, whom he had with a Sherpani woman, had nicknamed their father a "Himalayan cocktail" for his mixed descent. From its foundation into the late 1960s the Himalayan Hotel was run by these "Three Fat Ladies:" Annie-la, Vera and Vicky.

As tempting as it may be to relate the colourful story of the Hotel's illustrious guests, I will pick out only a few, restricting myself to figures who played a role in Tibetan and Himalayan studies – and what was produced based on their stay. Two of these, who arrived together and stayed for several months, in adjoining rooms, were Joseph F. Rock (1884–1962) and René Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1923–1959). Rock's attention had been drawn to Nebesky-Wojkowitz two years earlier by a letter (dated 17 December 1948), in which the 25-year-old student informed the 64-year-old botanist and famous expert on Eastern Himalayan cultures, that he was writing a doctoral thesis on the Tibetan script, papermaking and block print, and enclosed a brochure he had written on Bon.[5] One year later, probably on Giuseppe Tucci's recommendation, Nebesky-Wojkowitz accompanied Rock from Rome to Nervi (Genoa) in

2 Shakya 1999: 158.
3 Nehru 1959: 18–19.
4 Cameron 1967: 204.
5 Taube 2009: 107–108.



Fig. 1. The Himalayan Hotel, Kalimpong.

Liguria, engaged as a secretary to type Rock's massive manuscript on the *Na-Khi Nāga Cult and Related Ceremonies*,[6] which Tucci had agreed to publish in his Serie Orientale Roma.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's engagement as secretary was confirmed in several letters written by Rock to Serge Elisséeff, the director of the Harvard Yenching Institute, which had awarded Rock a five-year fellowship: "[…] A Dr. Nebesky from Vienna is here with me, I am paying his expenses and a salary, and he is typing my manuscripts […]"[7] (15 January 1950); "[…] I have gone over the first half of the typewritten manuscript. It has been and is slow work, because of the many mistakes and omissions […] Mr. Nebesky, while not familiar with Na-Khi, did have a knowledge of Tibetan and was very much interested in the work. He has gone to Vienna and is now in London, studying under the auspices of the British Council […]"[8] (28 February 1950); "[…] as Dr. Nebesky, whom I had employed for two months to type my manuscript, is now in England, I will take the remaining part with me to London and shall have him type there."[9] (8 April 1950).

Five months later (21 September 1950) Rock (fig. 2) wrote his first letter from Kalimpong – again to Elisséeff – with Nebesky-Wojkowitz in tow, the secretary job renewed: "I have arrived here from Darjeeling two days ago and found quite a number of Na-Khi here, who have fled from Lijiang on account of the Reds. They all came to visit me, also a number of Tibetans I knew in Lijiang. With the help of these I intend to continue my work here, and to prepare the Na-Khi colloquial dictionary in conjunction with the classical language such as is used in their [pictographic] manuscripts."[10] For the next nine months the Kalimpong

6 Rock 1952.
7 Walravens 2002: 357–358.
8 Ibid.: 364.
9 Ibid.: 368–369.
10 Ibid.: 379–380.



Fig. 2. Joseph F. Rock with Raja Sonam Tobgye Dorji (1896–1953) and daughter Tashi Dorji near "Bhutan House," Kalimpong, 1950/51.

engagement continued: "I expect to be here until January next year, when I will return to the States, all depending on the world situation."[11] (1 June 1951). However, ten days later, Rock notes: "[…] owing to illness, I have decided to leave."[12] (11 June 1951). What was the reason for this sudden departure? There is another possible explanation from a contemporary witness. Monila De, social seismograph of that period, writes in her book *Unforgettable Kalimpong*:

> On a full moon night, Mr. Roc(k) invited Nebesky for a walk, not for a duel! As the moon climbed higher, so did Mr. Roc(k)'s temper. Without rhyme or reason, he started abusing Nebesky. His whole body shook with rage. His flabby body shook like jelly, his flushed face, as full as the moon, was red with rage. He walked on unsteady legs, shaking his fists in frenzy. Nebesky was sure the moon had affected him and turned him into a raging lunatic. He managed to coax and cajole Mr. Roc(k) back to the Hotel and into bed. The next morning, when Nebesky woke up, Mr. Roc(k) was gone.[13]

And she hints at a different cause for the furious separation: Lydia Harrer was staying at the Himalayan, waiting for her brother Heinrich, who had left Lhasa, accompanying the Fourteenth Dalai Lama on his secret flight to the border town of Yatung in March 1951. Then he had crossed the border to India, ending his seven years in Tibet.[14] Now, Lydia, a very beautiful young lady of 29, had become the swarm of all bachelors at the hotel bar. Everyone

11 Ibid.: 390–391.
12 Ibid.: 391.
13 De 2018: 201.
14 The book by that name came out a year later in 1952. See Harrer 1952.

was searching for her attention and favour. It seemed that Nebesky-Wojkowitz had scored, much to Rock's discontent. Being a lonesome bachelor with a special predilection for strong, good-looking males, as depicted in his Naxi photographs, his rare attempt to get closer to an exemplar of the fair sex had failed and his own secretary had betrayed him. Perhaps, it was this – envy, jealousy, disappointment. But what sounds like something out of a Hollywood movie, according to the latest findings, took place as early as the beginning of October 1950, and ultimately it was Rock's statement in March 1951 about Nebesky-Wojkowitz's new friends Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark (fig. 3), his wife Irina as well as George N. Roerich, in which he publicly accused them of communist espionage.[15] In the end, it may have been the resulting "negative environment" for Rock in Kalimpong that manifested itself in a deterioration of his health.

When Nebesky-Wojkowitz suddenly had no regular income after these disputes, some of the new friends had come to his rescue: Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, who lived nearby in a lavish villa that included stables and a wine cellar stocked with vintage French bottles. The Prince engaged Nebesky-Wojkowitz as his personal secretary with a fixed monthly salary. Nebesky-Wojkowitz had already left the Himalayan Hotel at this point and had moved into Monila's mother's guest house.[16] Prince Peter and Nebesky-Wojkowitz, both anthropologists with similar interests in Tibetan culture, got on well. Nebesky-Wojkowitz assisted Peter in his anthropometric survey, measuring thousands of Tibetans, and helped him with his interviews for Peter's main research on polyandry.

Prince Peter (1908–1980) descended from top European royalty: His father was Prince George of Greece, brother of King Constantine (and related in the paternal line to George V, Kaiser Wilhelm II and Tsar Nicholas II); his mother Marie Bonaparte, daughter of Roland Bonaparte (renowned for his accomplishments in geography, ethnography and photography) and great grand-niece of Napoleon I, played an important role in the promulgation of psychoanalysis: a patient, pupil translator and financial supporter of Freud, she wrote books on female sexuality and on psychoanalysis and anthropology.

With this background, it is comprehensible that Peter started his comparative study of polyandry from a psychoanalytical point of view, seeking to find the limits of the Oedipus complex. His study included fieldwork among the Sinhalese of Ceylon; the artisan castes of Kerala; the Todas of the Nilgiri hills; and Tibetans in Lahul, Ladakh and of Tibet Proper, the latter investigated from Kalimpong. It is significant, however, that his voluminous book *A Study of Polyandry* (1963),[17] the result of many years of literary and field research, was not, in the end, psychoanalytical in nature; it was instead an empirical study of historical, demographic, sociological, economic and personal reasons, put together, in order to explain region by region this particular form of matrimony.

Perhaps in gratitude to Peter's generous financial stand-in, Nebesky-Wojkowitz dedicated his magnum opus *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities*[18] to the Prince. And it is probably no coincidence that both authors' major

15 See Niebuhr 2022: 49.

16 Ibid.: 46–47.

17 See Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark 1963.

18 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956a.



Fig. 3. Father Jean-Marie Brahier, Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark and René Nebesky-Wojkowitz, Kalimpong, May 1951.

books came out in an identical format at the same publishing house, Mouton, standing like recognizable "brothers" (fig. 4) side by side on the bookshelf.

A third party of long-term residents in Kalimpong were the Roerichs. They occupied an architectural landmark, the Crookety House, where Tibetologist George N. Roerich (1902–1960), translator of *The Blue Annals*,[19] lived with his mother Helena and were visited regularly by his brother, the painter Svetoslav (1904–1993) and his wife, the film-actress Devika Rani, great-niece of Rabindranath Tagore. Mother Helena (1879–1955), was the great-granddaughter of Field Marshall Michail Kutusow, who had led Russian troops against Napoleon; she was also the niece of Modest Mussorgski. An author of several books on Yoga and Buddhism, Helena spent over 20 years with her family in the Kulu valley. After the death of her husband, the painter Nicholas Roerich (1874–1947), she moved to Kalimpong where she died in 1955. Nicholas, whose works still draws crowds of visitors to museums in New York, Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and Novosibirsk, had led an expedition in the company of his sons through Western Tibet, the Karakoram and Altai mountains to Mongolia (1925–1929), in search of Shambhala, which was one of the subjects of his paintings and writings.

As anthropologists and Tibet experts, Prince Peter, George N. Roerich and Nebesky-Wojkowitz were by professional ethos open to all levels of the societies they studied. Yet, they also liked to relax amongst their own aristocratic crowd. Rock, who sought the company of important people and members of the aristocracy himself, eyed this noblemen's trio with suspicion. Especially the wife of Peter, Princess Irina, who, as he discovered, had a middle-class background, was a target of his contempt. How could she, daughter of a man

19 Roerich 1949–1953.



Fig. 4. Book brothers on the shelf – Nebesky-Wojkowitz's *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* and Prince Peter's *A Study of Polyandry*.

who had been killed in the Russian Revolution, be overtly pro-Communist and fiercely anti-American? He detected similar resentments with Prince Peter and George N. Roerich. "[…] this is a great spectacle […]" Rock reported to Elisséeff (letter of March 25, 1951), "which one can see rarely in one lifetime, to see the American army retreating in tanks and being chased by Chinese on bicycles. I don't see why they should be allowed to stay here?"[20] As a matter of fact, the Prince and his wife were suspected by Indian Intelligence of working as spies; and – after six years of residence in Kalimpong – this led to the renewal of their residence permit being denied.

Popular and scientific writing

Regardless of how the relationship between Rock and Nebesky-Wojkowitz ended, if you place their writings side by side, one conspicuous similarity stands out: Both authors expressed themselves successively in two different, if not contrasting modes. One followed the habitual paths of the travelogue (the author in unexplored territory coping with dangerous or hilarious situations); the other delighted in the jargon of scientific prose. Both authors kept the two modes of expression strictly separate – the narrative form for the general reader and the scholarly report for the expert. This bisection reflected their own and their publishers' preconceived ideas about opposite readerships.

Rock had drawn a sharp line between popular travel accounts and highly specialised texts a quarter of a century before Nebesky-Wojkowitz followed in these footsteps. Rock's full dozen popular articles were written between 1922 and 1935 and almost exclusively published

20 Walravens 2002: 385.

by the National Geographic Magazine,[21] whose editors aptly called him "Our Man in China." The titles speak for themselves and set the tone: *Banishing the devil of disease among the Nashi: weird ceremonies performed by an aboriginal tribe in the heart of Yünnan Province, China* (Vol. XLVI, No. 5, 11/1924); *The land of the yellow lama: National Geographic Society explorer visits the strange kingdom of Muli, beyond the Likiang snow range of Yünnan Province, China* (Vol. XLVII, No. 4, 4/1925); *Experiences of a lone geographer: an American agricultural explorer makes his way through brigand-infested Central China en route to the Amne Machin range, Tibet* (Vol. XLVIII, No. 3, 9/1925); *Life among the lamas of Choni: describing the mystery plays and butter festival in the monastery of an almost unknown Tibetan principality in Kansu Province, China* (Vol. LIV, No. 5, 11/1928); *Seeking the mountains of mystery: an expedition on the China-Tibet frontier to the unexplored Amnyi Machen range, one of whose peaks rivals Everest* (Vol. LVII, No. 2, 2/1930); *Konka Risumgongba, holy mountain of the outlaws* (Vol. LX, No. 1, 7/1931); *Sungmas, the living oracles of the Tibetan church* (Vol. LXVIII, No. 4, 10/1935). Under such sensationalist catchwords Rock exposed his topics with unique documentary photographs, evoking visual impressions more vivid than words could convey.

In contrast to such exoticising and adventurous stories for myriads of hungry readers, Rock's scholarly studies in anthropology – all on the literature, ritual and cultural history of the Naxi – found their way into specialised publishing houses (Tucci's *Serie Orientale Roma;* and *Harvard University Press*) or partly obscure journals, such as *Journal of the West China Border Research Society; Bulletin de l'École Française de l'Extrême Orient; Monumenta Serica;* and *Studia Instituti Anthropos*. When he had nearly completed his long run through thick and impenetrable scholarly prose, Joseph F. Rock confessed in a letter to the secretary of Harvard's Yenching Institute, Miss Anne Gerloff (3 July 1952), that he planned to return once again to the popular form of story-telling, with a collection to be called *China That Was* – an assembly of all his funny adventures between 1920 and 1949, like one in which he and his escorts were forced by a gang of Ngolok bandits to hide in a mud-walled village, sitting out a siege in a room full of coffins, guarding his precious plant crates with a pistol in each hand.[22] Yet, these stories never made it between the covers of a book.

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's sketches that aimed at public taste were less sensationalist. Collected in the book *Where the Gods are Mountains* (German version: *Wo Berge Götter sind,* 1955),[23] he omitted the dangers threatening the life of the explorer. Instead, through friendly descriptions his stories challenged the imagination of the average city-dweller with promises such as: meeting the Sherpa and the Abominable Snowman; a night with a master of black magic; encounters with weather-makers, with oracle priests in full trance, with the last Tibetan bards; or a visit to a gruesome festival for the dreadful goddess Kali.

Compared to this Himalayan travel account – a pleasant read for the easy-chair – Nebesky-Wojkowitz's opus magnum, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet,* is of a very different calibre. An exhaustive and exhausting demonology – no introduction for the layman, no bridge to Tibetan religion as a whole, no unifying method of compilation (as Snellgrove, Richardson

21 National Geographic Society. 1888–. *The National Geographic Magazine*. Washington, DC: National Geographic Society.

22 Walravens 2002: 419.

23 Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956b, 1955.



Fig. 5. Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf in Konyak Naga village Wakching during the 'Oulingubu' festival, 1937.

and Wayman remarked unisono)[24] – the book leaves the general reader alone in an ocean of transliterated, yet often unexplained esoteric names. His unstinting use of Tibetan vocabulary may have passed as a proof for his meticulous research and mastery of the language, tools of the trade, but an invitation into the subject for outsiders it was not. An indispensable reference chunk it has remained all the same, yet a book to read it never became. This is also the conclusion of Stein's review, after several pages of detailed criticism, both linguistic and ethnographic: a welcome contribution to Tibetology for years to come.[25]

Splitting their pens for contrasting purposes also obviously had a financial side for both Rock and Nebesky-Wojkowitz. As neither was substantially supported by permanent income, they both had to seek money where it might be found. The travelogue was one such venue, collecting ethnographica and manuscripts (for subsequent sale) was another. From his correspondence with various institutions, such as the Smithsonian, The National Geographic Society, the Gray Herbarium and the Museum of Comparative Zoology (both at Harvard), and above all with Serge Elisséeff, director of the Harvard Yenching Institute, Rock emerges as a tough haggler, constantly demanding financial backing, bargaining down to the last penny whenever expenses were involved. Even for the transport of books and personal belongings, a move which happened quite frequently due to Rock's unsettling agility, he requested that his changing employers contribute. The peddling of 2,500 Naxi pictographic manuscripts which he had collected in the 1920s to a wealthy lady in the United States took several years and two hundred pages of negotiation between her, Mrs. Viktoria Harrison, her agent Kegan Paul in London and Rock himself.

24 Richardson 1957; Snellgrove 1958; Wayman 1957. See Bell, this volume.
25 Stein 1956b.

A third of their contemporaries who enjoyed success in the popular mode was Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf (fig. 5). In his younger days he may have been temporarily short of money as well, but in his case writing lightly was his natural way of expression, one that he never abandoned completely. His early books such as *The Naked Nagas/Die nackten Nagas. Dreizehn Monate unter Kopfjägern Indiens* (1939)[26] – of which a shortened field version was issued for front soldiers; and *Himalayan Barbary/Glückliche Barbaren* (1956)[27] were scripted with a smooth hand, just like his diaries, which showed no signs of correction and which in later years he lent to his students to study, as if they were ethnographic books. Moreover, for "the Fürer," as Evans-Pritchard (1902–1973) had nicknamed him, writing and talking was one and the same: an even, continuous flow.

The study of ritual specialists

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's huge compendium on the iconography and cult of protective deities and the practice of oracles ends with a short chapter on shamanism in Tibet – a detailed enumeration of parallels between Siberian material and characteristics found among Tibetan spirit specialists. His juxtapositions cover a long list of similarities: divine election, initiation process, invocation of spirits, trance techniques, handling of illness, concepts of the soul, ritual journeys, divination, use of scapegoats; accoutrements: armor, coats, felt and iron hats, five-lobed crowns, feathers, masks; paraphernalia: tambourines (*phyed rnga*) and drums (*rnga*), mirrors (*me long*), arrows (*mda' dar*), daggers (*phur bu*), swords (*gri*), thread crosses; cosmological ideas, symbolism of figurative numbers, world mountains and world trees. All these juxtapositions – striking as some parallels might be – seemed to confirm and expand the assumptions and conjectures made previously by Mircea Eliade and Helmut Hoffmann – of a phenomenological continuum.

However, there was a methodological problem involved in this. On the Tibetan side Nebesky-Wojkowitz placed a considerable variety of spirit experts, each with particular functions and background, into a single receptacle: *bonpo*, *lhapa*, *dpa' bo*, *bsnyen ju mo* as known from Tibet; and Lepcha *bongthing* and *mön* from Sikkim, as well as Limbu *yama* and *yamo* practicing around Kalimpong and in eastern Nepal. On the Siberian side he assembled data from a great variety of local societies into a second receptacle. And finally he merged both into a single cocktail, labelled as shamanistic. This had been already the inherent problem of his two predecessors, Eliade and Hoffmann; by putting rather different things on the platform of a common denominator, they reduced their comparative intentions to universal essentialism.

At the same time, Hoffmann's *Quellen zur Geschichte der tibetischen Bon-Religion*[28] was highly welcomed as evidence for Joseph F. Rock's conviction that the religious literature of the Naxi, as unearthed by him, was pure old Bon. In his introduction to his *Na-Khi Nāga Cult and Related Ceremonies*, Rock praised Hoffmann's historical discourse as proof that Naxi territory was one of the last surviving pouches of pre-Buddhist Bon literature and practice.[29] Hoffmann, in return, never mentioned Rock or the Naxi in any of his publica-

26 Fürer-Haimendorf 1939.
27 Fürer-Haimendorf 1956.
28 Hoffmann 1950.
29 Rock 1952.

tions, before or after. It is true that in Rock's long list of publications there are only two in which the word "shamanism" appeared in the title: *The birth and origin of Dto-mba Shi-lo, the founder of the Mo-so shamanism, according to Mo-so manuscripts*[30] and *Contributions to the shamanism of the Tibetan-Chinese borderland*[31] twenty-two years later. In neither of the two texts does the "magic word" play an expressed role: in the former it features twice, and in the latter only once.

In the earlier of the two texts, Rock introduces in historical, ethnographical and philological perspective the practice of the Naxi *dtô-mbà* ritualists, before he presents at length the mythological story of Dto-mba Shi-lo, the ancestor of all his successors. This text, as noted down in a mnemotechnical pictographic book, is regularly chanted during a *dtô-mbà* funeral. Rock offers a full translation of Shi-lo's origin myth, richly annotated with explanations of the pictographs.

The second of his publications with "shamanism" in the title, treats the other ritual specialists in Northern Yunnan: the Naxi *llû-bu* (*llü-bu*), a spirit medium, which Rock calls a "sorcerer" and "diviner," formerly recruited from a female line; then, the *ndà-bpà* (*ddaba*) of the Moso in the Yongning region, who is concerned with the ritual handling of peoples' life-cycle (such as birth, illness and death). Both *llü-bu* and *ddaba* never practice with books: they are keepers of an exclusively oral tradition. Third in line are the various classes of Tibetan *srung-ma*, guardian deities, who take possession of men or women to serve as their mouthpieces. These mediums act in trance as oracles, several of whom Rock observed in Yongning and Muli, both regions with a high share of Tibetans. And finally, Rock touches upon Nyingmapa spirit mediums, called *lha-pa*, also in the Tibetan communities of Muli and Yongning. Fitting his sour, self-referential style, Rock mentions in passing that in 1929 he had obtained several *lha-pa* manuscripts, one of which he gave to Stein in Paris and another to Nebesky-Wojkowitz in Vienna, adding that neither of them made any use of his gift.[32]

Quite a different approach was initiated, almost at the same time when Nebesky-Wojkowitz assembled material for his great book – also in Kalimpong. Alexander "Sandy" W. Macdonald (1923–2018) completed his first field work between 1958 and 1960 in the Kalimpong region (fig. 6) – after 12 years of seclusion in the library of the Musée Guimet in Paris ("However, do not take a library for the equivalent of a country," he would later say) – collecting texts on the "Tales of the Carcass" and recording oral accounts of a Tibetan bard from Kham. This was one part of his endeavours on location; with the other part he opened a new field of Himalayan research, studying extraterritorial Nepalese healers (*jhākri*) living in Muglān. His method: instead of feeding theoretical models, he noted down what individual local healers (among them Gobin Prasad Rasaili in Chowk Bazaar; Nurshing Chetri in Darjeeling; and Bhakta Bahadur Viçra Karman of Kalimpong) had to tell about their own initiations, their uncontrolled trances, their suffering and lonely hours in the jungle, their progressive mastery over their helping spirits and their healing seances.

The wholesale assumption that "All is Bon which is not Buddhist" was countered by Sandy with a demonstration of the multiple influences these *jhākri* incorporated into their practice: Lama and Bon, certainly yes, but also Hindu, Shivaite, even Daoist, collective Indige-

30 See first part of Rock' *Studies in Na-khi literature* (1937: 1).
31 Rock 1959.
32 Ibid.: 806.



Fig. 6. Two *jhākri* at Chowk Bazaar, Darjeeling. Gobind Prasad Rasaili and his pupil.

nous ideas, and – above all – the individual conceptions of the healers sitting in front of the anthropologist. He shifted his attention away from any "-isms," toward the visible spectacle of real seances, as perceived and communicated by those who performed them. Macdonald outlined the *jhākri* and his profession in clear and simple words: "[…] a person who falls into a trance, during which time voices speak through his person, thereby enabling him to diagnose illnesses and sometimes cure them, give advice for the future and clarify present events in terms of their relationship to the past. He is therefore both a privileged intermediary between spirits (who cause and cure illness) and men; between the past, present and future; between life and death, and most importantly between the individual and a certain social mythology. It seems to me that he may belong to any *jāt* and may take as a pupil a person from any other caste […]."[33]

Among his many followers, none was more original than his closest student, assistant and friend, Philippe Sagant (fig. 7), who carried on Sandy's individual approach among the Limbu of East Nepal. He wrote portraits unheard before: sketching a healer who missed parts of his own performance by oversleeping; one who lost his belief in what he was doing; and one whose séance turned out to be a failure. In a slow-motion description Sagant gives voice to a villager, who remembers – 18 years after the event – the precise moment when (in an eight-hour Limbu ritual) a pig was stabbed with a bamboo spear and a wooden wedge was inserted to stop the blood by a sacrificer in the only correct manner. In such scenes it dawns on us why Sagant chose Limbuan in far Eastern Nepal as his own research area: it was the spatial continuation of his teacher's field just beyond the border, namely Darjeeling

33 Macdonald 1976: 310.



Fig. 7. Philippe Sagant with Limbu friends in Libang 1967.

and Kalimpong; and the continuation of an attitude toward the objects of study. Re-reading his first book *Le paysan Limbu: Sa maison et ses champs*[34] with its moving 12-month calendar of a farmer, a long intellectual kinship lights up from Macdonald, via Stein to Marcel Granet (1884–1940), echoing the chants, dances, legends, and feasts of the great sinologist's rural folks of Ancient China.

Beside Sagant, this lineage could be expanded to include his former fellow student, Samten Karmay. In the 1970s both had attended the seminars taught by Sandy in Nanterre and by Stein at the Collège de France, before they decided in 1982 to embark on a collective experiment, partly autobiographical for Samten, partly ethnographical for Sagant – a work which was completed only 16 years later: the study of a local Tibetan society, the Sharwa, in an autonomous region of Amdo, the place where Samten had spent his childhood and youth, from his birth in 1936 to 1955; Sagant happened to be born in the same year as him. Samten then spent the next five years studying with his uncle Horwa Akhu, an Amdo master in Dzogchen meditation, and then in Drepung near Lhasa, before fleeing with his mother via Kyirong and Kathmandu to Kalimpong in 1959. It was there that he accepted an invitation from David Snellgrove to come to London, in the company of Sangye Tenzing, later abbot of the Bon Menri Monastery in Dolanji, India, and Pasang Khambadze Sherpa, Snellgrove's Himalayan travel escort. While in England (fig. 8), Samten worked on Bon manuscripts and helped Snellgrove with his *Four Lamas of Dolpo*,[35] before, at Stein's invitation, he settled in Paris and became – along with his wife Heather Stoddard – a French researcher, studying Dunhuang manuscripts and writing his trailblazing books on Tibetan religion. After their

34 Sagant 1976.

35 Snellgrove 1967.



Fig. 8. David Snellgrove, Sangye Tenzing Jongdong, Pasang Khambache, Tenzing Namdak, Samten Karmay and Tashi Lhakpa (front) in Snellgrove's house in London 1963.

mutual time spent in Kalimpong and London, Samten and Pasang Khambadze met again by chance in southern France, where Pasang had trained as a winemaker and distiller of spirits. He later established the first apple distillery in Mustang, supported by Hal Kuløy, the founder of Kailash and the Bibliotheca Himalayica. Their reunion was celebrated in Stein's Vaucluse retreat at Lacoste, just five minutes' walk from the chateau of the Marquis de Sade.

Field and desk (philology and ethnography)

A key figure for those who went to Kalimpong and adjacent areas in the 1950s to complete their apprenticeship in the field and who themselves – like Macdonald, Snellgrove and Nebesky-Wojkowitz – became key figures in Tibetan and Himalayan Studies, was a scholar whose original expertise lay further east in the languages of China and Japan. Rolf Alfred Stein (1911–1999), born in Schwetz, a small Pomerian town near Danzig (now Gdańsk in Poland), began his studies at the Seminar für Orientalische Sprachen in Berlin, emigrated to Paris in 1933 on account of his Jewish ancestry, abandoned his native tongue, became a French citizen and continued his Chinese studies under Pelliot, Maspero and Granet, taking courses on the "religions of illiterate societies" with Marcel Mauss. During the war he served first in the French Mountain Artillery in Indochina and then as a Chinese interpreter in the Action Commission for Postal Control in Hanoi, where he met his wife. I had the good fortune to make her acquaintance decades later in Stein's house in Meudon.

After the war, Stein (fig. 9) was dispatched to the French-Chinese Centre in Beijing (1946–1948), whence he undertook research trips to Inner Mongolia, to Kunming, Chengdu and the Sino-Tibetan border town of Tatsienlu (Dartsedo, now Kangding), where the brick-tea caravans to the Tibetan Plateau set out. Stein completed two research missions to

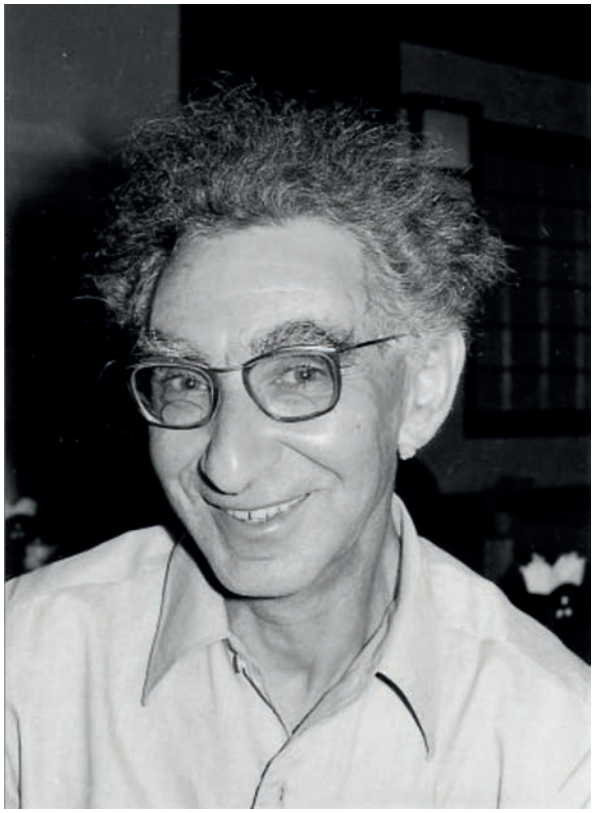


Fig. 9. Rolf Alfred Stein at the Collège de France, date unknown.

Kalimpong, in 1954 and 1960, to investigate Tibetan bards and the Gesar epos. Thus, he was able to add to his acute philological erudition in several Asian languages the experience of substantial direct observation made at various locations.

It was this rare combination of field experience and close-up philology that Macdonald would praise as the author's outstanding quality in his review of Stein's *Recherche sur le barde et l'épopée au Tibet*:[36] his meticulous comparison of text variants, teeming with a wide range of new ideas stemming from live observation; his collaboration with gifted representatives of the local society to depict their culture from their own point of view; writing texts of immense density, resulting from knowledge in different bordering fields; and supporting verbal descriptions with visual evidence from material culture.[37] To quote one example of the latter: Stein referred to the strange hat of the Tibetan bard (*sgrung*) with ears of a horse or a donkey on the sides. Gesar, incarnated by the bard, has a double in his horse; and both, horse and Gesar, are allied to Hayagrīva, a horse-headed anthropomorphic deity, occasionally identified with a form of Padmasambhava, whose triangular meditation hat can be seen as a stylization of the Gesar singer's hat. A circle of connections made comprehensible, as if it were the most obvious thing.

By emphasising Stein's textual qualities, one is tempted to suspect that Macdonald may have been picturing his own. And indeed, a kinship cannot be denied. Sandy had studied with Stein, from 1951 onward participating in his seminars on China and the bardic, oral tradition in Tibet. Between 1958 and 1960 he undertook his first long-term fieldwork in Kalimpong, where Stein had previously studied Tibetan oral traditions for six months in 1954 and made tape-recordings with the Tibetan bard Byang pa gsang bdar. Years before, this famous

36 Stein 1959.
37 Macdonald 1961.



Fig. 10. René Nebesky-Wojkowitz recording the Gesar epos, as chanted by the Tibetan bard Byang pa gsang bdar, Kalimpong.

singer had been engaged by the former regent from Reting, Jamphel Yeshe Gyaltshen, until he was assassinated in 1947 and the bard fled to Kalimpong. When Nebesky-Wojkowitz had settled there in 1951, he made his own Gesar recordings with Byang pa gsang bdar (fig. 10). If one places Stein's work of that period, his book *L'épopée tibétaine de Gesar dans sa version lamaïque de Ling*,[38] as published in 1956 in the Annales du Musée Guimet, side by side with Macdonald's *Matériaux pour l'étude de la littérature populaire tibétaine I,* published in 1967 in the same Annales du Musée Guimet,[39] one is struck not only by their almost identical make-up (fig. 11), but also by the fact that both books resemble each other in the radical decision to keep the author's own text very short compared to the bulk of a transcribed and translated original. This was an attitude shared by both authors: cultural history, preserved in original texts, should speak for itself. This same attitude comes to light in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's huge Tibetological manifesto *Oracles and Demons of Tibet* as well. The difference between his and Stein's philology is, however, that while Nebesky-Wojkowitz just worked through things, Stein's texts are animated by a progressive drive toward discovery.

Stein's working ethos and orientation toward his subject matter was not only a model for his successors, but his approach had also its own indisputable predecessor. Stein himself revealed who that was in his last major book, *Le monde en petit*,[40] the fruit of 50 years of work, its first published attempt dating back to 1942. In part One of that early prelude on the correspondences between microcosm (human body, the house, the village) and macrocosm (heaven, earth, metaphysical space) in the Far East, Stein described – still under the spell of his master's recent death; Granet had died in 1940 – in what ways he was influenced most by that great Sinologist with whom he had entertained a very close relationship for eight years. He listed the methodological points: an encyclopaedic scope and scale toward the spirit and style of one single civilization; no detail of this civilization can be understood on its own, it must be seen in its total context like a puzzle piece, held ready for a mosaic to be reconstructed; no interpretation from outside; instead: sharp definition of a theme with the

38 Stein 1956a.
39 Macdonald 1967.
40 Stein 1987.



Fig. 11. Two books, researched in Kalimpong, with similar make-up: Stein's study of the Gesar epos and Macdonald's collection of folk stories about corpses.

utmost verbal precision; never explain a myth or a legend by an imported theory; extreme care toward the translation of a text and the choice of words for the translation; critical use of existing dictionaries; attention to the historical meaning of words; literary talent.

The attachment to the heritage of Granet is manifest in Stein's own style of research, and is also apparent in his editorial efforts to preserve his master's unpublished and unfinished work on the ancient folklore of China, entitled *Le roi boit – la reine rit*.[41] Even incomplete, with most chapters just sketched out roughly or existing only in titles, notes and key words, the impression of an inspired masterpiece shakes the mind, just as foreshadowed in the title. "Le roi boit – la reine rit" is the most condensed formula for China's predominant literary technique throughout the centuries: syllabic parallelism. Granet, thinking as with a Chinese mind and writing in the best attire of the French language, qualified for Evans-Pritchard's dictum: what is needed most is a touch of genius in handling words.

Dance and music

Nebesky-Wojkowitz's third and final book *Tibetan Religious Dances: Tibetan Text and Annotated Translation of the 'Chams yig*[42] – announced already in 1963 – appeared posthumously in 1976, thanks to the joint efforts of Pieter Hendrik Pott, Director of the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde in Leiden and Fürer-Haimendorf, then Professor at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, who signed as editor and wrote a short preface. Nebesky-Wojkowitz had already worked under Pott's patronage during a prolonged residence in Leiden in 1953–1954, identifying Tibetan and Lepcha manuscripts, xylographs, and ritual objects in the museum's collection. *Tibetan Religious Dances* was based in part on eye-witness material Nebesky-Wojkowitz had collected on two field trips, one in 1952 and one in 1956, in part on sound and film recordings made by him and his closest accomplice in Kalimpong, Prince Peter, and in part on Tibetan choreographic texts. One of these texts, the *'chams yig*, transcribed and translated by Nebesky-Wojkowitz, became the major section

41 See Stein 1952.

42 Nebesky-Wojkowitz† and Fürer-Haimendorf 1976.

of the book. This principal part was preceded by an introduction, a discussion of the dances in different schools – Bon, Nyingmapa, Dzogchen, Sakyapa, Kagyupa and Gelugpa – and an analytical résumé. A long appendix by Walter Graf on the performance and notation of the dances concluded the book. Although Nebesky-Wojkowitz had not completed this work during his lifetime (he died in 1959 at the age of 36), the core of the book was hailed as an admirable trailblazer, rich in detail and wide in scope, highlighting the composition and sequences of the dances, the iconography of the divinities addressed or impersonated, the dance partners and their roles, the costumes and accessories, the choreography with explications of the dance movements, the instruments of the accompanying music, and the coordination of music and choreography.

In all this it was, like *Oracles and Demons of Tibet,* a pioneering accomplishment and, like that work, a painful read for the non-Tibetologist. Sharp criticism was voiced toward Graf's appended article, about which no one less than Mireille Helffer listed numerous mistakes and misunderstandings.[43] Her book on Tibetan music instruments, *Mchod-rol,*[44] later became the absolute standard in Himalayan ethno-musicology. One should recall that in the early 1960s she – in collaboration with Alexander W. Macdonald – had given impetus to musicological studies in the Himalaya by working with musicians and bards of the lower castes in Nepal. And a worthy successor to Nebesky-Wojkowitz's ritual dance studies was found in Richard "Rick" Kohn – the "Groucho Marx" of Tibetology – with his research on the Mani Rimdu Festival in Solu Khumbu and in Tibet. A 1,000-page dissertation *Mani Rimdu, Text and Tradition in a Tibetan Ritual,*[45] and its condensed version *Lord of the Dance,*[46] published posthumously in 2001, were the verbalized evidence of this succession. And visually, Rick considerably improved the poor impression left by the Pott's pitiful photographs in Nebesky-Wojkowitz's book by shooting a superb film on the Mani Rimdu with the cameraman Jörg Jeshel. This film was released in two versions: a 108-minute edition called *Lord of the Dance: Destroyer of Illusion* in English (in German: *Herr der Tänze. Zerstörer der Illusion*; and in French: *Le dieu de la dance*); and a second English-language luxury edition, 56 minutes long, narrated by Richard Gere – a guest with model Cindy Crawford at the Himalayan Hotel (in 1991). In addition, Kohn deposited at the Meridian Trust, London a wealth of archival material: 17 hours of one-inch video (workprints and out-takes) plus 50 hours of sound recordings.

In both Kohn's and Nebesky-Wojkowitz's treatment of the *'chams* dance a central role was played by a small anthropomorphic figure – the linga. The key to this was once again a publication by Rolf Alfred Stein: *Le liṅga des danses masquées lamaïques et la théorie des âmes.*[47] In this extremely dense essay Stein demonstrated that without a detailed study of the minor, but culminative figure the religious dances could hardly be understood. The linga, as Kohn pointed out, can appear in three different material guises: as a paper image (fig. 12), to be buried in the courtyard of the dance performance; as a long-limbed floppy cloth doll, grey and featureless, drawn on strings by skeleton dancers; and as a dough figure, fashioned of

43 Helffer 1978.
44 Helffer 1994.
45 Kohn 1988.
46 Kohn 2001.
47 Stein 1957.

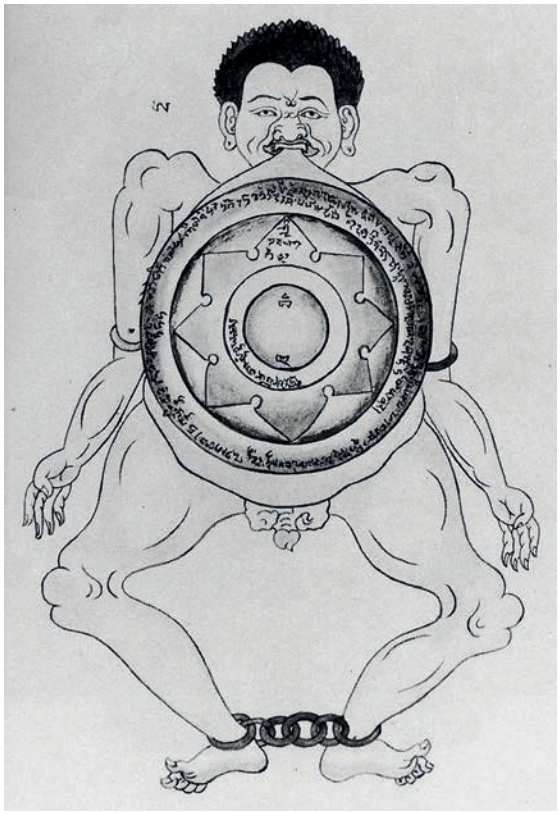


Fig. 12. Image of a linga on paper, collection Rolf Alfred Stein.

the same mixture used to make offering cakes.[48] This anthropomorphic figure of a gnome in chains is dismembered by the swords of ritual dancers, just like the paper linga is stabbed by a magical dagger or nail, a *phurbu*. *Phurbu* and linga form a pair, one implying the other; the linga is there to be destroyed by the *phurbu* in the peak act of the ritual dance, and the *phurbu*, as a powerful tool to liberate the human soul from evil, is embodied in the image of the linga. Liberation of the human soul is therefore the ultimate goal of the *'chams* dance performance.

In between

I will take the opportunity to conclude my aperçu on Kalimpong, its kairos in the glittering days of the 1950s, with some impressions from my first visit there, just a few years later, from the end of October to beginning of November 1965 – during the final days of my nine-month initiation to the Himalaya. In Kalimpong I stayed with the "Three Fat Ladies," Annie-la, Vera and Vicky, the daughters of David Macdonald, who still owned and ran the Himalayan Hotel. I felt immediately at home there in this cosy family atmosphere. They treated me like one of their relatives, and showed me their family album and their father's library, which contained many books on mountaineering and all that "Daddy" had written, among them *The Land of the Lama*,[49] *Twenty Years in Tibet*[50] and *Touring in Sikkim and Tibet*.[51]

48 Kohn 2001: 74–75.
49 Macdonald 1929.
50 Macdonald 1932.
51 Macdonald 1943.

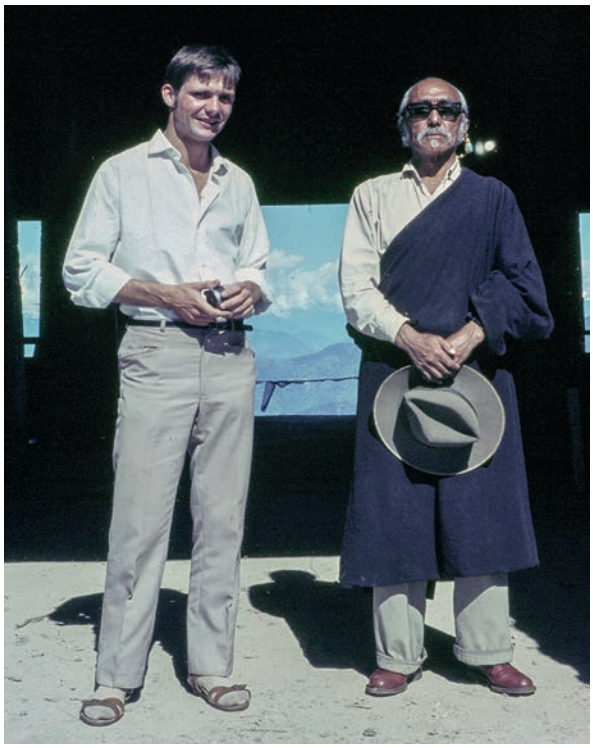


Fig. 13. The author together with Tsewang Namgyal Sherpa at Zangdok Palri Monastery, 30 September 1965.

It was from the Himalayan Hotel that I departed on my daily excursions. I visited the so-called "King of Kham," Shendup Themphul Lingtang at Madhar Nikunj; the merchants of Gembu Sherpa & Sons, who, according to their nameplate at Sherpa House, were importers of "Tibetan wool, musk, wild boar bristle, yaktails and furskins of all descriptions;" and Tsewang Namgyal Sherpa (fig. 13), born in Goli Gumpa/Solu of the Minyagpa subclan Gole. He had also become wealthy as a fur merchant, trading between Lhasa and India. Tsewang was still the official Gembu, the regional headman and tax supervisor of Solu, and related by marriage to my friend Tsepal Dorje of the Chakpa clan in Gora, a pilot and entrepreneur. In Kalimpong, Tsepal served as General Secretary to the Tsechu Offering Association and the Planning Committee for the construction of Zangdok Palri Monastery, its Main Building, the Institute of Tibetology, and the Library Hall on Rinking Pong Development Ground. The complex had been conceived in a vision by Dudjom Rinpoche, corresponding to the architecture of models in Kathog and Samye.

Through Tsewang Namgyal Sherpa I made the acquaintance of two others. One was Minling Trichen Rinpoche, the reincarnate lama of Mindroling Monastery, now lost in exile in Kalimpong, very disturbed and melancholic it seemed. The other person was Babu Gegen Tharchin (1890–1976), founder, editor and journalist of the Tibet Mirror (Melong), apparently the first Tibetan-language newspaper.[52] While he showed me his letterpress in his old printing space, he gave me a popular etymology of the word "Sikkim," composed, according to him, of the syllable "si," a kind of bamboo, and "kim" meaning house, "house of bamboo" – not a bad explanation, I thought, considering the universal use of bamboo in the Eastern Himalaya. At night I was invited to Tharchin's home, where his new Christian Scottish wife, after a communal prayer to the "Lord," served us a bowl of *thukpa*.

52 See Sawerthal in this volume.



Fig. 14. Dudjom Rinpoche in Kalimpong, November 1965.

A few days earlier, in Darjeeling, I had met another press man, L. Gyantun Rinpoche, editor of the Tibetan Freedom Press at Garden Pavilion, Gandhi Road. And in Ghoom Monastery, five kilometres outside Darjeeling, I ran into the American Pop Art poet, John Giorno, a true dharma bum, meditating on the face of Kanchenjunga. A few years later in New York, he invented a poetry telephone project called "Dial-A-Poem." You could ring a special number and hear a poem by an American beat poet. I met him again, many years later, at 222 Bowery in Manhattan, "The Bunker," a building, in which he and his old friend William Burroughs each owned a large loft. John Giorno died on October 11, 2019.

Yet the most consequential encounter I had in Kalimpong was with Dudjom Rinpoche (1904–1987) at Madhav Nikunj (fig. 14). His encyclopaedic history of the Nyingmapa School had just been published by Shiva Mani Pradhan Press[53] and I hoped that a few names, such as Nyang Nyima Öser and Tertön Ratna Lingpa, which figured in the Book of Bones (*rus yig*)[54] and in other manuscripts of Sherpa history, might be confirmed in Dudjom's sources and thus be dated by him. My expectations were more than fulfilled. He provided my rough skeleton of the early history of the Sherpa and their ancestral migration from Kham to Solu Khumbu with a solid grounding. In my youthful joy over Dudjom's vast knowledge, I invited his daughter, Chimey Wangmo to a Bollywood film epic at Kalimpong's only cinema.

Apart from Nyingma genealogies, we also touched on Hidden valleys (*beyul*) and on Shambhala. Dudjom mentioned a former disciple of his, Thulshik Lingpa (1916–1962), who had tried to open the path to a Sikkimese *beyul* called Demoshong. At some time in 1962, this crazy yogin had departed with some followers into an uninhabited valley near Kanchenjunga. His mission failed: He and some of his acolytes perished in an ava-

53 Dudjom Tulku Rinpoche 1964.
54 Oppitz 1968: 32–49; 1982.

lanche – or did they just not return? Dudjom asked with a smile. Concerning Shambhala, Dudjom told me a tale: When Tsang Nyön was meditating in a deserted place between Lhasa and Shigatse, two travellers passed his temporary hut. They asked him if he knew the way to Shambhala. Would they risk their lives to get there? Yes, they would. And Tsang Nyön drew the curtain behind him, and both travellers saw Shambhala in all its splendour, just in the distance. Would they really risk their lives to get there? Yes, said one, but the other one hesitated. Tsang Nyön drew the curtain a bit further: One of the pilgrims dropped dead on the spot, but perhaps his mind had directly reached the realm of Shambhala; the other one stayed alive, seeing nothing but an empty plain in front of the hut.

I was reminded of this, when I was confronted much later with another paradisiac place, the *beyul* Khempalung in the upper Arun river. The *mangpa*, ritual specialists of the Lohorung Rai, used to fly there – unreachable for laymen – during a ritual journey to collect on its meadows medicinal plants for the benefit of their clients. Below this high visionary place, there is a cave by the same name which pilgrims visited (and still do) to purify themselves. The interior of the Khempalung cave has various forks, only one of which leads back out to the open jungle, into release; the others to death.

After visiting Dudjom Rinpoche in Kalimpong, my Himalayan days soon came to an end. I visited some Buddhist places in India and at last I took the boat, the SS Marconi, from the Gate of India at Bombay through the Suez Canal to Genoa. I did not anticipate then that 12 years later I would be back in the Himalayan mountains, this time for seven years and in the next inspired cosmopolitan muddle, the Kathmandu valley – right in its centre, in a haunted Rana palace in Naxal. In the auratic landscape of the valley, half a generation after Kalimpong, a new crowd would meet and mix, fusing into another ephemeral, short-lived Himalayan tribe of its own.

PHOTO SOURCES

Fig. 1. Markus Viehbeck, 2013.
Fig. 2, 9. Rolf Alfred Stein (www.rolfastein.fr).
Fig. 3. Ethnographical Collections, National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen.
Fig. 4, 11. Jan Seifert, 2025.
Fig. 5. Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf, 1937, SOAS University of London, Archives and Special Collections (digital.soas.ac.uk).
Fig. 6. Alexander W. Macdonald. Oppitz 2013: 1037.
Fig. 7. photographer unknown. Gros and Schlemmer 2016: 173.
Fig. 8. Booz et al. 2021: 165.
Fig. 10. René Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1952, KHM-Museumsverband, Weltmuseum Wien, VF 31.361.
Fig. 12. Stein 1989.
Fig. 13–14. Michael Oppitz, 1965.

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René Nebesky-Wojkowitz standing in front of the Kanchenjunga mountain range above Pedong, West Bengal, India. Photo ~ René Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1959. Himalaya Archive Vienna. Gifted to CIRDIS by Wolfgang Lorenz.

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