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Archaeological Evidence for the Bon *Mdos rgyab* Ritual at Samdzong, Upper Mustang, Nepal

Mark Aldenderfer

Abstract: It is not common that archaeologists discover clear and unambiguous traces of historically known ritual practices in their excavations. One exception to this is the discovery of artifacts at the Samdzong site in Upper Mustang, Nepal, that may be part of the so-called Bon *Mdos rgyab* ritual. A set of artifacts — an iron tripod, copper vessels, and wooden and bamboo cups — recovered from Samdzong 5, which is dated to the late 5th C. CE, are strikingly similar to ethnographically described artifacts that are key components of this ritual. This manuscript explains the Bon *Mdos rgyab* ritual, describes the context at Samdzong 5 and the key artifacts, and reflects on the presence of Bon in Upper Mustang at this time.

Introduction

Although rituals, be they religious in nature or secular, form a part of daily life, they often leave few material traces of their practice. This poses a challenge to archaeologists who seek to understand how rituals, especially those tied to the exercise of power, maintain and sometimes transform the cultures of the past.¹ In cultures with a written historical record, rituals may be described in some detail, and in some cases these accounts can be used to interpret materials

1 See Aldenderfer 2010.

found in the archaeological record. Oral tradition recovered through ethnography may provide similar records of ritual practices. Although these records must be used with caution because the details of such practices often change as new traditions and concepts are added and others subtracted, they nevertheless may offer unique insights into the ritual life of the past.

Charles Ramble has published an ethnographic study of the Bon *Mdos rgyab* ritual as he observed it in the community of Lubra (Klu brag)², a small village in southern Mustang, Nepal. His research, along with archaeometric data obtained from some of the artifacts at Samdzong, provides the foundation for the argument presented in this manuscript.

Lubra and the *Mdos rgyab* ritual

The recorded history of Lubra goes back to the 11th C; archaeological data recovered by a series of projects in the Muktinath valley, which is found a short distance to the north in the Kali Gandaki drainage, suggest that southern Mustang was occupied at least as early as 1200 BCE.³ According to these historical records, the original inhabitants of Lubra were descended from a clan from the Tibetan Plateau. The documents that describe their origins indicate that they were likely to be Bonpos upon their arrival, and further, had lived well to the north of Lubra in a village called Bonkhor.⁴ As we shall see below, the likelihood of a historical presence of Bon practitioners in Upper Mustang is significant for and relevant to the claims made in this manuscript.

As described by Ramble, the *Mdos rgyab* ritual has both sacred and secular components. The sacred aspect of the ritual is a year-end exorcism of the demons and other baleful entities that plagued the community over the past year. In effect, it is meant to cleanse the community so that it will prosper in the coming year. The ceremony lasts up to 19 days, and over that time, rites and rituals are conducted in the temple of the monastery in the community. Dances and other activities are also performed. The culmination of the sacred event is the creation, then destruction, of the *mdos*, which is a complex construction of string, dough effigies that have been placed upon on a series of platforms, parchments, and other objects. The *mdos* is carried from the temple, hacked apart, then burned.⁵

The secular aspects of the ritual are primarily concerned with the rules and arrangements for feeding the participants as they perform its various activities. These are quite formulaic and specific quantities of different foods, their manner or preparation, and the details of

2 See Ramble 2000.

3 See Aldenderfer in press.

4 Ramble 2000: 291.

5 Ramble 2000: 302.

their presentation are important aspects of the ritual process. Two "stewards" (*spyi pa*) act as overseers for the duration of the ceremony. These stewards also held the role of village headman (*rgan pa*) and served for the preceding year as supervisors of communal activity, which generally includes dispute resolution, tax collection, and similar duties. These steward/headmen are replaced at the end of the *Mdos rgyab* ritual and new ones appointed.⁶

Among the many secular activities that surround the ritual, the one of greatest interest to this manuscript is the annual transfer of stewardship.⁷ Conducted at the end of the ceremony, the transfer acknowledges the outgoing stewards and consecrates those incoming. It takes place within the temple and includes strict protocols in seating, the offering and consumption of beer, and the singing of songs by both men and women.

Two kinds of traditionally prepared beer are consumed: *chang* (which is called *yang gyab* in this context) which is usually made from either barley or buckwheat, and is a yellowish color, and *tsemo*, a rice beer with a whitish color. Both kinds of beer are placed in large pans and the container for the *tsemo* sits upon an iron tripod that is wrapped with white wool or a white khata. A ceremonial wooden flask holds some of the *yang gyab*; beer is poured from this flask into a ladle, which is then used to pour the beer into four wooden bowls, one for each of the incoming and outgoing stewards. The *yang gyab* is consumed first, and the *tsemo*, also called *A-bse* (the name of a prominent Bon protector), is consumed as the final act of the ceremony. The transfer of authority to the new stewards is now complete.

Wooden or metal objects used in this setting are 1) pans or vessels to hold the *yang gyab*; 2) an iron tripod that supports the pan holding the *tsemo*; 3) a wooden flask; 4) a ladle; and 5) bowls used for drinking beer. Other, more perishable items used include 1) butter; and 2) white wool or a white fabric.

Samdzong and Samdzong 5

Samdzong is a mortuary site that consists of ten shaft tombs found in the façade of a cliff face on the east side of the Samdzong Khola at an elevation of ca. 4000 m (Fig. 1 and 2). The tombs were exposed by a seismic event that shook off the cliff face, thus exposing the chambers. This event collapsed the ceilings of the tombs and mixed their contents. Although we have been able to infer the basics of the treatment of the dead, the remains are jumbled and certainly moved from their original placements. Some artifacts were broken during the event as well. Despite these obstacles, we recovered the remains of at least 105 individuals and numerous artifacts

6 Ramble 2000: 303.

7 Ramble 2000: 311-314.

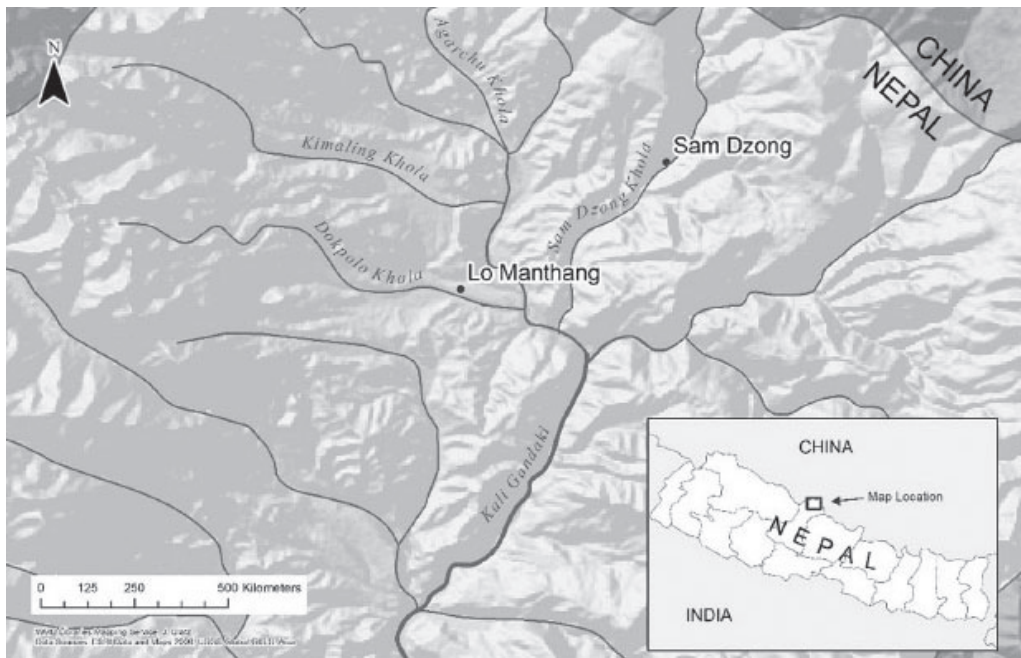


Fig. 1 General location of Samdzong in Upper Mustang (J. Glatz, Western Michigan University).



Fig. 2 The site of Samdzong. Numbers indicate the tomb complex (photo: M. Aldenderfer).

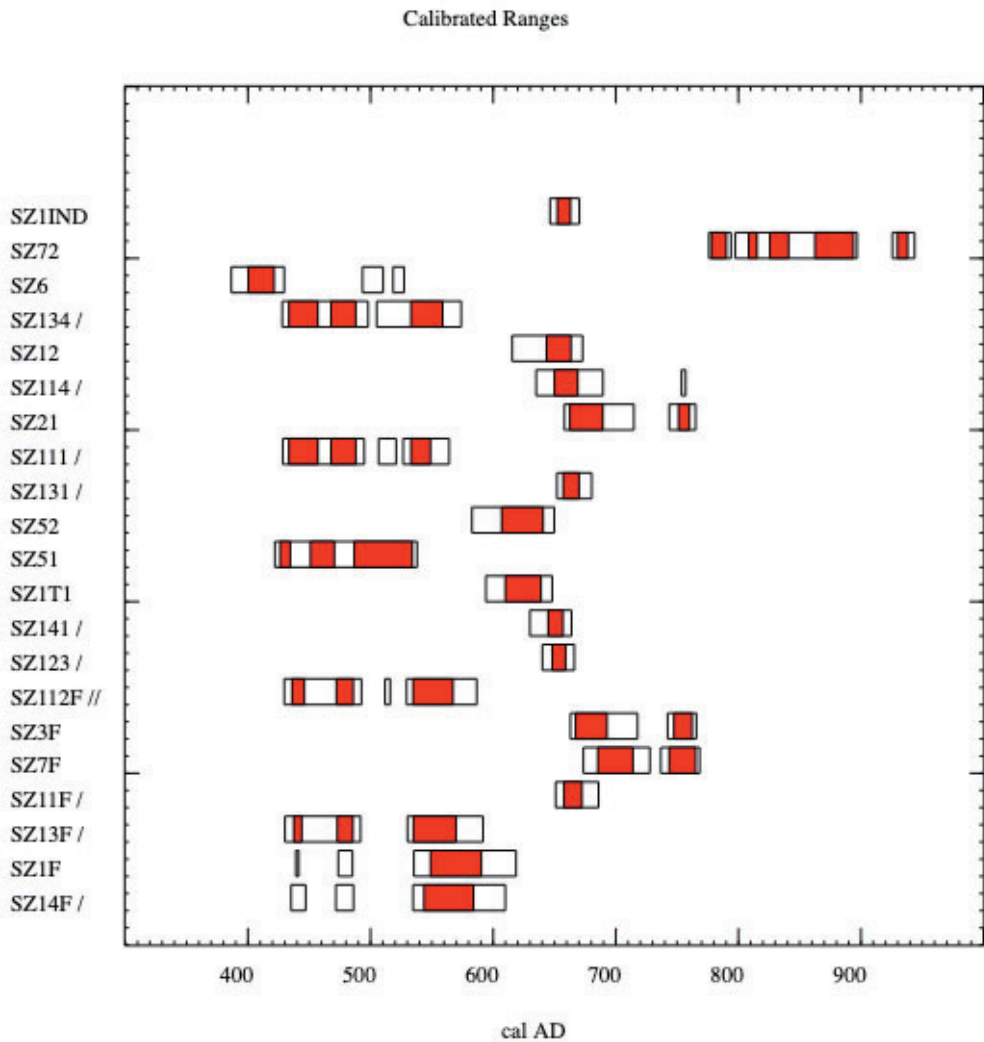


Fig. 3 Calibrated radiocarbon dates from Samdzong (<http://calib.org/calib/calib.html> accessed June 5, 2019).

including glass beads, fabrics, metals, wooden objects, and ceramics.⁸ A comprehensive program of radiocarbon dating, exclusively from the human and animal remains found within the tombs indicates that the site was occupied from 450-750 CE (Fig. 3); one of the tombs, Samdzong 7, dates after 800 CE, but reflects a very different mortuary treatment when compared to the other tombs.

⁸ Eng and Aldenderfer 2011, 2017.



Fig. 4 The archaeological context of Samdzong 5. Note the iron tripod (Photo: P. Athans).

Samdzong 5 is the tomb of greatest interest to this manuscript. This context was the most complex at the site; artifacts recovered from it include an almost-square wooden coffin that contained a single individual, a gold/silver mask, copper vessels, an iron tripod, wooden and bamboo cups, wooden trays, Chinese silks, a bronze mirror, and thousands of glass beads.⁹ The remains of horses, sheep/goat, and a large bovid (possibly a yak) were also discovered. The coffin contained the remains of a single adult individual of indeterminate sex. Radiocarbon dating of the remains returned an age of 1580 ± 20 RCYBP or cal CE 422-538 and a median probability of CE 483 (calibrated with Calib 7.11 <http://calib.org/calib/calib.html>). The contents of the tomb were disturbed by the collapse of the ceiling following the seismic event (Fig. 4). These findings

⁹ Gleba, M., Vanden Berghe and Aldenderfer 2016; Massa, Aldenderfer, and Martin-Torres 2019.



Fig. 5 Copper vessels recovered from Samdzong 5
a) ladle b) handle of ladle with remnants of iron c) small copper bowl d) large copper cauldron
(Photos: G. Massa).

suggest that the inhabitant of the coffin in Samdzong 5 was a local elite; the kin of this person were able to mobilize artifacts from many places in South, Central, and Western Asia.¹⁰

The metal, bamboo, and wooden artifacts from Samdzong 5

The copper vessels include a large cauldron, a smaller bowl, and a ladle (Fig. 5). The chemical composition of the large cauldron, including lead isotope analysis, as well as stylistic features of the artifact, suggest that it was produced in South Asia.¹¹ The other two objects are similar in composition, and likely have a South Asian origin as well. The ladle once had an iron handle,

¹⁰ Massa, Aldenderfer, and Martin-Torres 2019: 13.

¹¹ Massa, Aldenderfer, and Martin-Torres 2019: 3, 13.

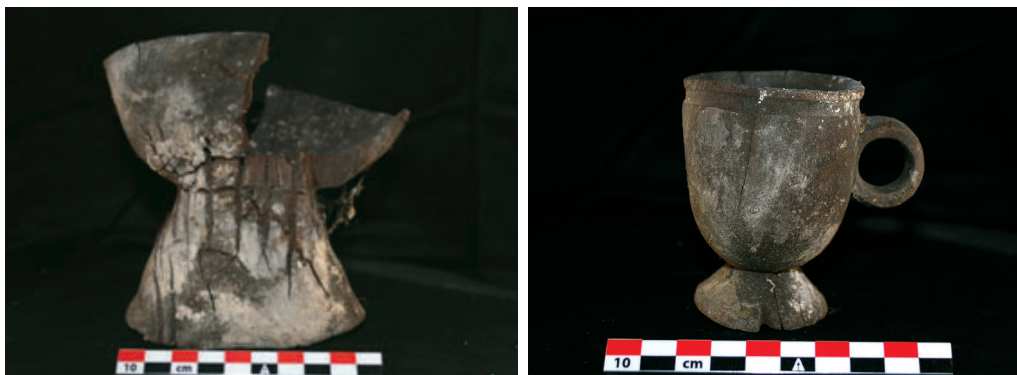


Fig. 6 Left: large wooden cup Right: small wooden cup (Photo: M. Aldenderfer).

remnants of which can still be observed. Finally, the iron tripod was highly corroded and missing part of one of its legs. Each of these artifacts were found near the wooden coffin.

Three cups were found in the tomb, one of bamboo and two of wood. The bamboo cup is cylindrical in form, has a single node of the bamboo plant as its base and a hollow internode. There is no handle or other attachment to the cup, which has been broken. The wooden cups appear to have been carved out of a single piece of a soft wood (Fig. 6). The largest of the two wooden cups has a large, ovoid bowl that is supported by an expanding, but hollow, stem. The bowl of the cup has been broken, and it has been warped by the pressure of the deposit. The base, however, is mostly intact but cracked longitudinally. The second cup is smaller, has a tapering cylinder that is supported by a small base. It has a circular ring-shaped handle. It is intact and in remarkably good condition.

Residue analysis of vessel contents

Although the collapse of the ceiling of the tomb introduced debris into some of the vessels, most were not affected. Some, such as the wooden cups, were trapped under the debris but were not filled with it. Some roof fall did enter the cauldron, but some of the slats of the wooden coffin prevented it from being filled with it. In any case, the debris was easily removed after excavation. Following routine cleaning, the interior surfaces of each vessel were inspected for deposits, encrustations, and signs of use. Any identified residues were carefully sampled and exported for analysis.

Macroscopic, microscopic, and chemical analyses were performed on these residues. Although these studies are only preliminary, their results are significant and critical for obtaining data on their use. These analyses, under the supervision of Christina Warinner of the

Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History¹² resulted in the following (Table 1).

Table 1. Preliminary findings from Samdzong funerary vessels

ID	Vessel	Macrobotanical	Metagenomics	Proteomics
SAM1	Large wooden cup	Amorphous residue, rice husks	-	Rice, wool
SAM3	Bamboo cup	Amorphous residue	-	Rice, wool
SAM4	Small copper bowl	Amorphous residue, bone	Wheat, barley, rice, millet (<i>Setaria italica</i>)	-
SAM5	Copper cauldron	Amorphous residue, plant fibers, bone	Wheat, barley, fermentation fungi	-
SAM6	Copper ladle	Amorphous residue	-	-

Residues were recovered from each of the vessels. The large wooden cup had rice husks and grain fragments present, and proteomics analysis (the study of proteins as expressed by an organism) identified both rice and wool proteins. The bamboo cup had both rice and wool proteins. Metagenomic analysis (the study of genetic material from environmental samples) identified the presence of other plants in the small copper bowl and the presence of fermentation fungi, including barley, in the copper cauldron. Given the archaeological context of these tombs and the fact they were sealed from environmental contamination until very recently, these results are likely to reflect the uses of these objects before they were placed within in the tomb context.

Although wheat and barley are known subsistence crops cultivated in the region,¹³ rice is a low-elevation domesticate and cannot be grown in the highlands of Upper Mustang. While the source of the rice cannot be identified with certainty, rice is not grown today in elevations above 3000m,¹⁴ so it is clear that it had to have been imported. The presence of rice husks supports this assertion.

Discussion

Although there are real differences between the assemblage of artifacts used in the transfer of authority ceremony in the *Mdos rgyab* ceremony in Lubra and the assemblage of artifacts found in Samdzong 5, there are enough points of contact to suggest that the artifacts at Samdzong

¹² Christina Warinner, personal communication, 2018.

¹³ Knorzer 2000.

¹⁴ Paudel 2013.

reflect aspects of it. Granted, the context is quite different: artifacts found in a mortuary facility versus a set of artifacts used, then stored, over the course of a year in a temple. But as was argued above, it is not necessary for these assemblages to be identical in content and setting to be suggestive that some form of transfer of authority of the *Mdos rgyab* ceremony may be reflected at Samdzong 5.

The most direct similarities are the iron tripod, the ladle, and the wool proteins. Rice grains and proteins are found in the wooden and bamboo cups. This suggests that the rice was consumed as a beverage, and not as a meal. Although the color of the beverage cannot be inferred from the proteins, it is quite likely that the beverage was similar to *tsemo*. In the copper cauldron, metagenomics reveals the presence of wheat and barley as well as fermentation fungi. The presence of these proteins suggests that it was used to serve or store the yellow beer, or *yang gyab*. Likewise, the presence of wool proteins in the cups suggests that wool was present and perhaps wrapped on or was near the iron tripod. The ladle was likely used to serve both beers, which were consumed in the bamboo and wooden cups.

Aside from the different contexts, there are other points of dissimilarity. In the modern ceremony, bowls are used, not cups, to drink the beer. At Samdzong, there is nothing that resembles the ceremonial flask used to offer the beer into the serving bowls. Although the small copper bowl has more genetic material present than just rice, the remains of these other plants may reflect earlier uses not related to the ceremony itself. The assemblage at Samdzong 5, then, is an imperfect reflection of the modern ceremony.

If these points of similarity are valid, they suggest that the ceremony has changed over time. At Samdzong 5, the entire collection of artifacts in the tomb indicates that a politically or socially prominent person was interred. This person may have been a local leader but of an unknown position. Upon death, not only were wealth objects placed in the tomb, such as the golden mask, but also the artifacts that symbolized authority, such as the ladle, iron tripod, and copper vessels. It is not possible to know if any type of ceremony, such as the consumption of the beers, was conducted in the tomb although given its small size, this is unlikely. It is also unknown (and unknowable) if the placement of these artifacts in the tomb represents a transfer of authority as it does in the modern performance or is instead a reflection of a status position. Despite all of these caveats, however, the assemblage in Samdzong 5 has a strong resemblance to the modern *Mdos rgyab* ceremony.

A deeper question remains to be answered: does the material recovered from Samdzong 5 reflect the practice of a Bon ceremony and thus the presence of Bon in Upper Mustang in the late 5th C? To answer this requires looking at other possible manifestations of Bon in the wider region. Gold masks similar to that found at Samdzong 5 (indeed, two other gold/silver masks were found in Samdzong tombs 1/4) are found in the western Himalayas at a series of mortuary

sites in western Tibet and northwestern India.¹⁵ The western Tibetan masks have a median age probability of 281 and 194 cal BCE; the northwestern Indian mask is said to date around 100 BCE, and similar masks are found throughout Central Asia and date from CE 100-500.

Not all of these masks are necessarily indicative of a Bon religious tradition, but Tong and Li¹⁶ in passing suggest that at least the western Tibetan masks may be of Bon origin. I have extended this suggestion and have argued on the basis of textual evidence developed by Samten Karmay¹⁷ that these masks are an important part of Bon mortuary practice.¹⁸ If this argument is valid, the presence of artifacts in Samdzong 5 similar to the modern Mdos rgyab ceremony supports this assertion. At a general level, then, we can say that a religious tradition with elements of Bon was in place in Upper Mustang at least by the 5th C.

Conclusions

The artifacts found in Samdzong 5, combined with careful archaeometric analysis, support an assertion that they reflect at least in part aspects of the modern Mdos rgyab ceremony, especially those activities related to the transfer of village authority and stewardship, as it is practiced in Lubra. These findings provide additional support to the hypothesis that elements of Bon religion were present in Upper Mustang at least by the 5th C.

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¹⁵ Aldenderfer 2013; Tong and Li 2015, 2016.

¹⁶ Tong and Li 2016: 90.

¹⁷ Samten Karmay 2019.

¹⁸ Aldenderfer 2016.

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Abstracts

尼泊尔上穆斯塘地区桑宗墓地所见苯教施垛仪轨的考古学证据

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在考古发掘中，发现确凿清晰的有关古代仪式方面的证据一向是很困难的。但也有例外，比如在尼泊尔穆斯塘北部地区发掘的古代墓葬，其中所出一系列遗物很可能属于所谓的苯教施垛（*Mdos rgyab*）仪式。公元5世纪晚期的桑宗5号墓中，我们发现了铁三脚架、铜容器及木杯和竹杯子，这一套器物与民族志描述的有关苯教施垛仪式中所用的道具惊人地相似。本文解释了何为苯教的施垛仪式，并且依据桑宗5号墓的墓葬背景和出土的人工制品，可认为至少在公元5世纪苯教已见于穆斯塘北部。

羊距骨：西藏最古老的博具和占卜工具的考古学和民族史初探

约翰·文森特·贝勒扎

（美国弗吉尼亚大学）

本文旨在通过考古学和民族史的证据，对藏族文化中流行的一种物件——“羊距骨”做综合性考察。首先提出了鉴别墓葬中那些具有文化意义羊距骨的标准，并比较了欧亚大陆其他地区同类实例。本文特别关注到一件西藏的红铜合金的羊距骨，这为讨论该类物品在高原古代文化中的意义提供了佐证。文本还讨论了羊距骨在藏族博具、占卜、计数及其他仪式、观念中的作用。最后，本文聚焦羊距骨的跨文化意义，尝试说明羊距骨能够帮助我们进一步理解史前晚期（约公元前 1200 年至公元 600 年）及历史时期欧亚大陆跨文化交流的一些面貌。

Re-examination of Materials about the Communications between Nepal and China in the Early Tang Dynasty

Wang Bangwei

(Peking University)

The Bod-Balpo Ancient Road has a long history, which can be traced back to the Paleolithic Age on the basis of archaeological discoveries. As for the history of the Bod-Balpo Ancient Road, we can distinguish three periods, namely, pre-, during, and post-Tang dynasty to the Qing dynasty. In the specific case of the Bod-Balpo Ancient Road, we need to consider the situation of East Asia, South Asia and even Central Asia at that time, the chronological order of the literary records and the recent archaeological discoveries. In the meantime, although many researchers have noticed and quoted the literary records on the Bod-Balpo Ancient Road, there are still some problems that require further studies. In addition, we also should pay attention to the relationship between the Buddhist monks and diplomatic envoys and merchants, they always traveled together at that time. In fact, the routes taken by Buddhist monks coincide with those taken by commerce.

在河西走廊和西藏发现的不空之影响

尤利·霍赫洛夫

(英国独立学者)

本文分析了莫高窟和榆林窟被认为是受到吐蕃影响的早期藏传佛教艺术遗存。与此观点相反，本文认为这些图像实际上是受到了南印度艺术的影响，尤其是泰米尔纳德帕拉瓦王国艺术的影响，这与 8 世纪上半叶来自帕拉瓦王国的著名佛教大师金刚智在中国的传法密切相关，更与不空 8 世纪中叶在河西的活动有关。这些图像属于金刚智所创造的一种独特艺术传统，他也是一位伟大的画家。吐蕃统治时期的艺术只是吐蕃占领河西以前已经存在的艺术和宗教传统的继续延续而已。不仅如此，吐蕃控制河西走廊使得吐蕃能够移植当时当地流行的宗教和艺术潮流。因此，吐蕃将佛教作为国教正是基于不空在唐代所提出的以佛法护国的模式，本文支持这一理论。

A Preliminary Survey on *Mthing shog* Manuscripts

Zhu Lishuang

(Center for Dunhuang Studies, Lanzhou University)

Mthing shog, translated as blue-black paper 蓝黑纸 in Tibetan-Chinese dictionaries, is a kind of colored paper that we find in Tibetan culture. Its production covers three steps: 1) several layers of papers are laminated with a wheat paste; 2) a specially made coloring material is applied to the surface of the paper; and 3) the paper is burnished with a *gzi* bead or a smooth piece of conch shell or other smooth and hard precious stones. The recipes and substances of making coloring materials for *mthing shog* vary. For instance, one formula uses black ink, which is made from soot (*sre nag*) or burnt resinous pine wood (*sgron shing*), which is mixed with yak and/or sheep brains; one formula uses a mixture consisting of black vitriol (*nag mtshur*), euphorbia (*thar nu*), borax (*tsa la*), wheat beer (*gro chang*), and myrobalan (*a ru ra*); one formula uses a solution made with ground white cowry shell (*'gron bu*), ground cardamom (*dzā ti*) and myrobalan juice; one formula uses indigo (*rams*).

Judging from literary sources and extant objects, the expression *mthing shog* derives from *shug bu mthing ga* of the Tibetan dynastic period. It is *mthing shog* that was used for writing royal edicts. Beginning from the 10th century, *mthing shog* is most often used to write Buddhist sutras. The most prized manuscripts frequently use gold ink or a combination of gold and silver ink. The main purpose of preparing *mthing shog* manuscripts is for devotional purposes. These are deposited in shrines and monasteries and prepared for the accumulation of merit; they are not intended for circulation.

Chinese scholars often term the black-blue paper of Tibetan cultural tradition as 瓷 / 磁青纸, "porcelain green paper," an indigo-dyed paper in Chinese culture. However, as mentioned above, there are many different materials that are used to make *mthing shog*. *Mthing shog* includes indigo-dyed paper, but they are not identical. The gold or/and silver manuscripts produced in China proper, especially those in the Ming and Qing courts, may be written on indigo-dyed paper or *mthing shog*. As for gold or/and silver manuscripts from the Tibetan cultural area, the situation is more complicated, and it seems that not all gold or/and silver texts are written on *mthing shog*.

An Interpretation of the Mural of Lce bstun Shes rab 'byung gnas in Zhwa lu Monastery

Jia Yuping

(Collage of Art and Design, Chengdu University)

This paper discusses the mural depicting Lce bstun Shes rab 'byung gnas (the 11th century founder of Zhwa lu) in the Sgo gsum ma lha khang of Zhwa lu monastery. The history of the monastery and the Lce clan from the 11th to the 14th century are fully presented through the images and inscriptions in a series of murals. Combining the literature on the genealogies of Zhwa lu and related Tibetan sources, this paper discusses some stories about Zhwa lu that were hitherto not well known. These include aspects of its religious background and its connections with the Indian subcontinent, as well as its contact with western Tibet during the period of the second diffusion of Buddhism. Its governance through a combination of politics and religion makes Zhwa lu one of the earliest monasteries that was under the control of a family-owned theocratic system.

On the Mural Painting of Buddha's life in the Corridor of the Assembly Hall on the First Floor of Zhwa lu Monastery

Meng Yu

(School of Chinese Classics, Renmin University of China)

The 101st mural painting in the corridor of the Assembly Hall on the first floor of Zhwa lu Monastery is concerned with the biography of the Buddha, from his birth to nirvana. Twenty significant scenes of the Buddha's life were chosen and depicted in this mural. This essay provides a detailed discussion of each scene and concludes that the 101st mural painting is based on the *Lalitavistara* and other sources. The life

of the Buddha is a popular subject in Buddhist art and literature. It can be found in many texts, besides the one in *Skyes rabs brgya ba*. In addition to texts, the illustrations of the Buddha's life can also be found in other parts of Tibet. This essay also briefly compares the stories of the Buddha's life in the *Skyes rabs brgya ba* and other literary sources in Tibetan, and its representation in Zhwa lu and other places. A conclusion is drawn that, prior to the sixteenth century, the textual and pictorial representations of Buddha's life in Tibet share obvious similarities.

桑噶地区赤洛纳特寺观音崇拜的艺术史证据

林瑞宾

(美国西北大学)

自 19 世纪以来,赤洛纳特寺(Triloknāth Mandir)就一直吸引着宗教史、人类学、艺术史和建筑各领域学者的兴趣。该寺位于喜马拉雅邦钱德拉巴嘎河谷的屯德村(藏语称“热帕”村),属于西喜马拉雅佛教文化圈。竹巴噶举派喇嘛达仓热巴(1574-1651 年)于 17 世纪时到过这里,在其所撰朝圣行纪中称该地为“乌茺那”,引起了图齐的关注。赤洛纳特寺诱人之处部分缘于以下现象,即现在该地居民将寺中的白色大理石造像视为湿婆神并加以供奉,而来自拉胡尔、桑噶及其他地区的佛教信徒则认为这是一尊佛教造像。近年来,一位佛教僧人和一位印度教祭司被委派至该寺以协助不同宗教的朝圣者。寺中另一独特之处是该寺建筑为通常见于北印度婆罗门教建筑的西柯罗高塔,寺内却供奉佛教雕塑,造像材质为白色大理石,在喜马拉雅地区佛教造像中极为罕见。关于该寺的很多问题都观点不一,如寺院的创建时间,这尊造像何时被安置在寺中,寺院建筑最初是否为印度教寺院而在后来容纳了一尊佛像,抑或建寺伊始就是佛教寺院?暂且遑顾上述众多未决之疑问,本文拟集中探讨这尊造像的图像问题,善趣观音(Sugatiśaṃdārsana Lokeśvara)及其与克什米尔的联系,相邻的桑噶地区的图像推测应系模仿今赤洛纳特寺白色大理石造像。大部分桑噶地区的造像所属时期均相对较晚,因此本研究对赤洛纳特寺白色大理石像的断代、以及此像何时取代了另一尊较早的灰色小石像诸问题也将提供一些依据。

Research on the Seals Granted by the Ming Dynasty to Tibet

Li Shuai

(Post-Doctor, Department of Archaeology, Sichuan University)

The types of seals granted by the Ming dynasty to Tibetan individuals include at least four types: religious — title seals, knighthood seals, official seals and stamp seals. The difference of these seals depends on the social status of the grantees. The type of seal and the motivation of granting them reflected the flexibility and diversity of Ming policies towards Tibet. The seals did not only function as political symbols, they also had practical functions in Tibet. They were used to announce local official statements, to handle local affairs, etc. Some of the seals continued to be in use until well into the Qing dynasty and thus form important evidence that their recipients maintained their political status and were able to influence the governance of Tibet.

Research on the Official Seals of the Chieftain (*Tusi*) in the Tibetan Region of Sichuan Province in the Qing Dynasty

Liu Sha

(Sichuan Museum)

Based on the literary sources, this article investigates seventeen seals of the chieftains (*tusi*, 土司) of the Tibetan region of Sichuan Province in the Qing Dynasty in terms of their nature, characteristics, origin, how they were awarded and how they functioned. This paper considers that the official seals used by the chieftains were mainly granted by the central government of the Qing Dynasty. According to the official seal system of the Qing court, the texture, shape, size, impression and inscription of these seals have special provisions. As political tokens, these official seals played a multifaceted role in local society aside from having practical functions. They were highly valued by the chieftains over generations. Through comparison, it was found that the official seals used by the chieftains in the Sichuan Tibetan areas were quite different from those that were in use in Central Tibet. This was no doubt owed to the differences in their administration. The study of the official seals of the chieftains serves to further explore the policies and characteristics of the Qing Dynasty's governance of the border areas.

The Imperial Kapala Drums of the Qianlong Emperor

Lin Huan

(The Palace Museum, Beijing)

This paper studies the *kapala* drums (*damaru*) that are found in collection of the Palace Museum. They belong to the Qianlong period of the Qing dynasty. The *damaru* drums were mainly made of human skull caps, ivory, jade or wood and are also called "hand drum" or "tambourine," and they belong to the inventory of musical instruments or ritual instruments. The drums in the Palace collection mostly came from the Tibetan areas in the form as tribute to the Qing court. Based on archival sources and extant objects, we know that the Qianlong Emperor had asked the court workshops partly to change these drums and also ordered the court workshops in Suzhou to imitate these with different materials. The extant drums show different influences from Tibetan, Han Chinese and Mongolian culture. They reflected the Qianlong Emperor's aesthetic taste. These drums were decorated with turquoise, coral, beeswax and tridacna, etc. and thus became luxury objects. However, the shape of the drums and their packaging were not overly modified, and maintained the simple nature of the artifact itself. These drums also demonstrate that under the "great unification" pattern, the mature handicraft skills of the border areas could be transplanted to the court (and even to Suzhou). These skills were quickly mastered and reached a very high standard.

Fa Wang Xin Sheng Zhuan — Stories of Qianlong Emperor's Incarnations

Li Ruoyu

(The Palace Museum, Beijing)

The Palace Museum collection, no. Zong 23584, contains a book that is titled *Fawang xinsheng zhuan* 法王新胜传. It was composed by the 6th Panchen Lama Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes (1738-1780) in 1780 when he visited Rehe for the celebration of the Qianlong Emperor's birthday. It contains eleven stories of the Qianlong Emperor's previous lives thereby creating a system of the emperor's reincarnations. In this system, the Qianlong Emperor's earlier incarnations included kings who protected Buddhism, siddhas and great gurus of the Bka' gdams pa and Dge lugs pa schools. This paper studies the date and background when this book was produced. It also includes translations of parts of the stories for the first time in the hope of achieving a better understanding of the history of this period and this kind of Tibetan text.

西藏的胎藏界曼荼罗传统及其彩砂曼荼罗制作

田中公明

(日本中村元东方研究所)

“两界曼荼罗”于9世纪初自唐传入日本，不仅构建了日本佛教造像的核心体系，并对整个日本文化产生了深远影响。在这两类曼荼罗中，与“金刚界曼荼罗”相关的遗存较为丰富，其原型出自印度，尼泊尔及西藏继承了印度的曼荼罗传统，并有大量文献记录和绘画保存至今。然而，留存下来的“胎藏界曼荼罗”相关文献却非常少，其原因在于基于《大日经》的密教体系在古印度很早就已衰亡。此外，《大日经》在吐蕃时期自印度传入西藏，迄今仍有一些胎藏界曼荼罗的实例得以留存，尽管这类遗存极为稀少。此前，本人曾于2001年在日本京都日本文化国际研究中心举行的一次国际学术讨论会，及2003年于牛津举行的第10届国际藏学会上，就西藏的胎藏界曼荼罗传统及相关遗存发表过演讲。但当时限于交通条件，我未能亲自考察位于安多的拉加寺、夏琼寺，这两座寺院至今仍几乎每年都要制作胎藏界曼荼罗的彩砂坛城；尽管1994-1996年间当我担任富山市瑜伽禅修博物馆的首席讲师时，藉馆内复原藏传佛教两界曼荼罗之机，就已经获得了一些源自拉卜楞寺、拉加寺的胎藏界曼荼罗资料。近年来，由于安多地区交通大为改善，使我这样的国外学者得以至上述寺院实地考察。本文主要在笔者于2014、2015年田野考察的基础上完成，拟通过对安多寺院中胎藏界曼荼罗彩砂坛城的制作进行初步介绍，并与唐密—东密传统的胎藏界曼荼罗相比较，进而概括总结其特点。

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