

Bringing Buddhism to Tibet

Beyond Boundaries

Religion, Region, Language and the State

Edited by
Michael Willis, Sam van Schaik
and Lewis Doney

Volume 10

Bringing Buddhism to Tibet

History and Narrative in the *Dba' bzhed* Manuscript

Edited by Lewis Doney

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Lewis Doney

Preface

Tibet has never been as closed off to the rest of the world as it exists in some westerners' imaginations. During the seventh century, Chinese ambassadors passed through a Central Tibet ruled by the Tibetan empire. In the eighth century, artisans from Nepal and China were present at court and helped establish Tibetan Buddhist material culture. In the south, the trade routes across the Himalayas continued to provide access to the Indian subcontinent after the fall of the empire and, in the western Himalayas, the Mnga' ris Kingdom traced its heritage back to central Tibet but also maintained strong ties to South Asia. With the second dissemination of Buddhism, more Tibetans travelled to Kashmir, Nepal, Bengal and the Gangetic Plain in search of Buddhist teachings and texts, writing of their peregrinations and advising future travelers of the dangers that they would face. The journeys of Indic masters to Tibet are also recorded, though more usually in the third person.

Yet, the question still remains, what is Tibet? The geographical extent of what constituted 'Tibet' (Bod/Bautai/Baitai/Tubbat/Fa/Tufan) during the imperial period (c. 600–850 CE) varied considerably as the Tibetan empire expanded and contracted at its various borders over time. Yet, through the prism of especially Buddhist historiography, a 'Tibet' emerged that was increasingly identified with the values of Indic Buddhism rather than military expansion. Works of historiography reflecting the influence of Buddhist literature and the cultural memory of the post-imperial Tibetans transformed the cosmopolitan Tibetan imperial world into a wild borderland contrasted with the Buddhist Indian subcontinent of the first millennium, through the biographies of its emperors who brought queens and religious masters to court from throughout their realms and beyond and thereby civilized the "land of snows." When the Mongol Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368) ruled over Tibet, the latter then gradually took on a new role as *guru* to the region's new imperial power. This rise in the status of Tibet on the world stage influenced even later accounts. For example, the lists of countries whose Buddhist masters played roles in converting imperial Tibet became longer, reflecting an expansion in certain Tibetans' geographical awareness in the interim. These histories raise certain questions: To what extent did such accounts draw on first-hand experiences of the places described, either as people saw them at the time of these works' compilation and/or during the imperial period itself? Is there anything in the depiction of the flow

of people between South Asia and Tibet that links the self-representation of the emperors to the later 'national' self-image of the Tibetans?

As Buddhism spread through Asia during the first millennium, its encounter with the lands and societies it entered was represented in a variety of unique ways. Narrations of "the coming of the *dharma*" (*chos 'byung*) had profound effects on each country's literature and, together with the influx of foreign narratives about South Asia itself into these countries, formed an integral part of their assimilation of Buddhism. The myths surrounding the Tibetan empire and its place in the spread of Buddhism in Asia steadily grew in length, variety, and influence from the post-imperial "time of fragments" (*sil bu'i dus*) through the politically charged fourteenth century to the more philologically critical milieu of the fifth Dalai Lama (1617–1682). However, Buddhist historians during this entire period rarely made explicit statements about their work. They seldom provided criteria defining different genres of historical text or any of the rules governing their choice of sources. It is therefore of central importance to analyse the adaptation and redaction of their narratives, if we ever hope to reveal Buddhist approaches to historiography in practice. This will also help us answer wider cultural questions of attributed authorship, literary genres, and the creation of traditionally authoritative Buddhist historical narratives. This book intends to do just this, and so contribute to ongoing debates about the religio-politically motivated reconstruction of history and narrative in Buddhist Asia, and its lasting effects on the national identities of those countries.

This edited volume brings together six scholars of Tibetan studies to examine one such history, the *Dbā' bzhed*.¹ The principal narrative of the *Dbā' bzhed* reflects an eleventh or twelfth-century view of the Tibetan imperial period and especially the acts on behalf of Buddhism that the eighth-century emperor (*btsan po*) Khri Srong lde btsan (as his name is spelled there), his subjects and invited religious masters performed in Tibet, China and India. The *Dbā' bzhed*'s full title is: "*Dbā' bzhed*, the royal narrative (*bka' mchid*) concerning how the Buddha's

¹ The manuscript containing this work is reproduced and translated in Pasang Wangdu and Hildegard Diemberger, *dbā' bzhed: The Royal Narrative Concerning the Bringing of the Buddha's Doctrine to Tibet* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000). This exemplar will be referred to in this book as DBA' 2000.

dharma arose in Tibet.”² This description encapsulates the main account given in the text, and perhaps indicates the antiquity of its core depiction of this period. The *Dbā’ bzhed* first surveys the reigns of four major Tibetan Buddhist emperors: the prehistoric Lha tho do re snyan btsan, during whose reign Buddhism is said to have appeared in Tibet; Srong btsan sgam po (d. 649), during whose reign the practice of the doctrine was introduced; Khri Srong lde btsan (742–c. 800), during whose reign the doctrine spread and prospered; and Khri Gtsug lde btsan (Ral pa can; d. 841), during whose reign the doctrine was thoroughly systematised.³ The biographies of these emperors divide the narrative into four parts, with Khri Srong lde btsan taking the lion’s share.

When the thirteen-year-old Khri Srong lde btsan takes over the governance of the empire (on folio 4r:6), the narrative shifts from the emperor to a small group of Tibetan ministers and their conspiracies against the *dharma*. The *Dbā’ bzhed*’s principal protagonist is the Buddhist minister Dbā’ Gsas snang (known to later tradition as Gsal snang), with a lesser but still important role played by Dbā’/’Ba’ Sang shi. Despite the rival ministers’ destruction of all that previous Buddhist kings had achieved and their interdiction against its future practice, Dbā’ Gsas snang goes in search of the *dharma* to India and Nepal where he worships at Buddhist pilgrimage and monastic sites (5v:1–2).

Dbā’ Gsas snang convinces the emperor to invite the Indian abbot Śāntarakṣita to Tibet. Śāntarakṣita in turn recommends the tantric master Padmasambhava to tame the land in order to build Bsam yas Monastery (*gtsug lag khang*). However, Khri Srong lde btsan grows suspicious of the *siddha*’s power and asks Padmasambhava to leave Tibet half-way through the narrative. The emperor instead appoints Dbā’ Gsas snang to “the highest religious authority (*chos kyi bla*) as head [at his] right side (*sa g.yas kyi tshugs dpon*).”⁴ For a while thereafter, though, Śāntarakṣita continues to play a more prominent role than Dbā’ Gsas snang, for instance in debate with the followers of the indigenous Bon religion of Tibet or digging out the site of Bsam yas with Khri Srong lde btsan (14v:1–15v:3).

When the abbot dies, Dbā’ Gsas snang is ordained as Ye shes dbang po and becomes the main moral goad of Khri Srong lde btsan. Ye shes dbang po recommends inviting the disciple of the now deceased Śāntarakṣita,

Kamalaśīla, to take the gradualist side in the famous Bsam yas Debate against proponents of the instantaneous path to enlightenment (19v:3). Khri Srong lde btsan finally chooses the gradual approach as the victor and spreads it throughout Tibet (24v:2–3). Towards the end of the *Dbā’ bzhed*, it states that his reign marked a high-point in the rise of Buddhism in Tibet:

Where the *dharma* did not get established during the reign of the five previous kings, *Lha sras* Khri Srong lde btsan, *Ācārya* Bodhisatva, Dbā’ Ye shes dbang po and ‘Ba’ Sang shi, these four, established the shrines of the triple gem.⁵

These protagonists are actively responsible for bringing Buddhism to Tibet, despite the manuscript’s title and opening lines framing the narrative as an arising of the *dharma* in a way that de-emphasises (human) agency. This should alert us to the multiple depictions existing with the same text. Providing the core narrative of this text in precis here gives the misleading impression that it is perhaps the homogenous work of a single author. However, the *Dbā’ bzhed* represents a collage of narratives that probably took on its recognisable shape around the eleventh century. Some Tibetans over the centuries may have read this text as a single work (just as it is translated as a single piece into English), but it was surely created through a process of compilation and annotation over a number of centuries. The text therefore contains numerous strata of narrative, which give differing impressions of the central protagonists of the narrative, the organisation of the court and religion’s role in Tibet (both Buddhist and non-Buddhist). In this way, the *Dbā’ bzhed* offers us a number of different snapshots of a vital evolving corpus of texts and quotations within Tibetan historiography focused on the eighth century, that shall be referred to in this volume as the *Testimony of Ba* tradition.⁶

⁵ DBA’ 2000, 25r:1–3: *sngon rgyal po gdung rabs lngar chos ma tshugs pa de lha sras khri srong lde btsan dang / a tsarya bo d+hi sa twa dang / dba’ ye shes dbang po dang / ‘ba’ sang shi bzhis dkon mchog gsum gyi rten btsugs*.

⁶ In this volume, ‘*Testimony*’ is used in preference to ‘*Testament*.’ ‘*Testament*’ (interchangeable with ‘will’) is already a prevalent and more fitting (though imperfect) translation for another set of terms in Tibetan historiography, *bka’ chems/ bka’ thang/ thang yig*, whereas ‘*testimony*’ more properly captures the meaning of *bzhed* as ‘witness of’ or history ‘according to’ the Dbā’ perspective. See also Leonard W.J. van der Kuijp, “Some Remarks on the Textual Transmission and Text of Bu ston Rin chen grub’s *Chos ‘byung*, a Chronicle of Buddhism in India and Tibet,” *Revue d’Etudes Tibétaines* 25 (2013): 146; Per K. Sørensen, “Preface: *dBa’/sBa bzhed*: The dBa’[s]/sBa [Clan] Testimony Including the Royal Edict (*bka’ gtsigs*) and the Royal Narrative (*bka’ mchid*) Concerning the bSam yas Vihāra,” in *dBa’ bzhed: The*

² DBA’ 2000, 1v:1–2r:1: // *dba’ bzhed bzugs so // sangs rgyas kyi chos bod khabs su ji tar ‘byung ba’i bka’ mchid kyi yi ge /*.

³ See DBA’ 2000, 1v:1–3, where the content of the narrative is outlined.

⁴ DBA’ 2000, 14r:6–7: *gsas snang ni snam phyi’i sa g.yas kyi tshugs dpon chos kyi blar bskos so //*.

Contributors to this book describe the earliest sources preceding the *Dbā' bzhed* history and the process of recension that created it and then altered it down the centuries. This process gave birth to the *Testimony of Ba* tradition on Khri Srong lde btsan and the spread of Buddhism in Tibet during his reign, the *Testimony of Ba*. The *Dbā' bzhed* is the oldest available full version of the tradition, and its core narrative probably dates to the eleventh or twelfth century. Yet, it contains earlier narratives perhaps dating back to the ninth century, as well as later additional elements and interlinear notes. A longer, redacted version of the same narrative first published in 1980 most likely dates to the twelfth century, but a condensed version of the same narrative published in 1961 represents a thirteenth or fourteenth-century redaction.

In Chapter 1, I describe how the modern study of the *Testimony of Ba* began in 1961 when a late version of the narrative was published by Rolf A. Stein (1911–1999). As more exemplars appeared, they influenced scholarly debates (in Tibetan and other languages) over Tibetan history and historiography, its language, society and religion. Chapter 1 then sketches out the relation between a few of the key witnesses to the *Testimony of Ba* tradition. This investigation helps to show the high place that the text holds in the Tibetan historical tradition, as well as some of the ways in which the narrative was perceived and used over time.

In Chapter 2, Michael Willis and the late Tsering Gonkatsang examine the codicology, palaeography and internal history of the *Dbā' bzhed* manuscript. Close study of the organisational structure and scribal peculiarities of the manuscript bring us closer to establishing the date of its compilation and the earliest history of the narrative. This is followed by copious notes on philologically intriguing aspects of the manuscript, its main text and annotations.

In Chapter 3, Sam van Schaik investigates the first evidence of the narrative, which comes from a fragment found in one of the Mogao caves near Dunhuang, Northwest China.⁷ This fragment dates between c. 800 to 900 CE, during or shortly after the time when the Tibetan empire controlled this area. The fragment may represent the nar-

rative in its formative state and a close examination of its palaeography, codicology and content deepens our understanding of how the *Testimony of Ba* evolved between the ninth and eleventh century.

In Chapter 4, Brandon Dotson engages in a close reading of lexical details within the *Testimony of Ba*. He shows the relationship between the title and the Dbā's clan's relation with the Tibetan emperor. Chapter 4 also discusses deliberately archaic phrases and terminology from the dynastic period, contained in the *Dbā' bzhed*. The identification of these archaisms reveals much about the sources of the narrative and the cultural context of those who compiled and edited it over the centuries.

In Chapter 5, Serena Biondo focuses in on the Bsam yas Debate between followers of the gradualist and instantaneous paths to enlightenment. The historical veracity of the account, its sources and influence on later religious and philosophical debates in Tibet has long been a topic of intense interest among scholars of Buddhist Studies. Chapter 5 uncovers some important quotations of other Buddhist works within the *Dbā' bzhed*, reinterprets its ending and reconsiders the identity of some of the major protagonists of the Bsam yas Debate.

In Chapter 6, I conclude Part One with a look at the depiction of Khri Srong lde btsan as a Buddhist king in the *Dbā' bzhed*. Earlier narratives present a glorified, divine image of this emperor and describe his reign as a 'golden age' of Buddhist practice, from which Tibetan ritual has since declined. In contrast, the *Dbā' bzhed* places the period of decline in the eighth century. Tantric masters such as Padmasambhava attempt to prevent its destruction. The emperor then hastens its demise by banishing Padmasambhava and causing a division in the Buddhist community. This depiction causes tensions in the portrayal of Buddhist kingship that later editors of the *Testimony of Ba* had to deal with if they wanted to keep representing the imperial period as a 'golden age.'

Finally, the book provides a facing-page transcription and translation of the *Dbā' bzhed* undertaken by Tsering Gonkatsang and Michael Willis and a very useful index to the text compiled by Serena Biondo. The manuscript presented here has 31 folios. The translated text runs to 16,670 words. Gonkatsang and Willis' transcription improves on a number of recent attempts in the sophistication of its philology and the clarity of the type-setting. Their translation also builds on that of Pasang Wangdu and Hildegard Diemberger in 2000, more thoroughly emphasising the main text and adding depth to the meaning based on our two scholars' long experience in Tibetology and Indology respectively. Having recourse to Pasang Wangdu and Diemberger's facsimile of the text and copious notes is still

Royal Narrative Concerning the Bringing of the Buddha's Doctrine to Tibet, ed. Pasang Wangdu and Hildegard Diemberger (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2000), ix; Wangdu and Diemberger, *Dbā' bzhed*, 9 and 91, n. 350.

⁷ None of the truly old texts discovered in the Dunhuang library cave date from after the early part of the eleventh century according to Yoshiro Imaeda, "The Provenance and Character of the Dunhuang Documents," *Memoirs of the Toyo Bunko* 66 (2008): 98.

advised. I hope that this volume will prove of use to students and scholars of Tibetan Studies, and also those in the wider academic world interested in the redaction of historiography and the place of literature in the Buddhisation of empire.

As readers make their way through this book, it will become clear that, at points, its contributors present different translations or interpretations of *Dbā' bzhed* narratives. I have neither sought to reduce these tensions, nor 'solve' these contradictions, since one of the main aims of this volume is to problematise the monolithic presentation of the *Dbā' bzhed* as a single work of some genius author that can be mined for their 'intent' in writing it at a single moment in history. Instead, these different readings show the *Dbā' bzhed* to be a rich and complex source of the wider *Testimony of Ba* tradition. The strata within both should be distinguished, as in an archaeological dig, to highlight the different layers of historiography, identity politics and religious perspective deposited by the various redactors over time. In the future, I hope that this will lead

to a relative chronology of the narratives surrounding the *Dbā' bzhed* history of the coming of the *dharma* or bringing of Buddhism to Tibet, and shed light on the changing cultural dynamics of the early second millennium that fed the soil of our extant exemplars of the *Testimony of Ba* and sowed the seed of its enduring popularity. In closing, I would like to heartily thank the contributors for their hard work, patience and many forms of help over the years beyond writing their individual contributions, and to Aaron Sanborn-Overby and Sabina Dabrowski at De Gruyter for seeing the book through the press. Most of the writing, editing and publication of this book was generously funded by the European Research Council and the Royal Asiatic Society as part of the project "Beyond Boundaries: Religion, Region, Language and the State" (ERC Synergy Project 609823 ASIA). Finally, this volume is dedicated to the memory of Tsering Dhundup Gonkatsang, who patiently guided the work at every step and gave keen attention to transcription and translation of the text, and whom we shall all miss.

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John Bray

In Memoriam: Tsering Dhundup Gonkatsang (1951–2018)

In the course of his life Tsering Dhundup Gonkatsang played many roles, but he found his vocation—above all else—as a teacher and a translator. Confident in his own skills, he never sought any particular academic prestige. Rather he found fulfillment in using his expertise to help others. This involved him in a wide variety of tasks, from deciphering complex historical texts to organising community events, making films, and translating human rights documents into Tibetan. His formal career culminated in his appointment as the first Instructor in Tibetan at the University of Oxford. Beyond his family, his greatest delight was in the success of his students.

Tsering was born in Da nga, Sharkhog, eastern Tibet in 1951, shortly after the Chinese Communist takeover of the region. His family were relatively prosperous, the kind of people who might be classified as class enemies. In the mid-1950s, fearing that their son might be at risk, his parents took him on what became an extended journey first to Ngawa, then to Dartsedo (Kanding), and eventually to Lhasa. At that point, his father got into trouble with the Chinese authorities, and was imprisoned. Together with his mother, uncle and aunt, Tsering travelled on to Kalimpong in north-east India where he went to his first school. They did not see or hear from his father for more than 20 years.

In India, Tsering and his relatives at first lived precariously, and in that respect their fortunes mirror those of many others in the Tibetan refugee community. From Kalimpong they moved to Simla. During the colder winter months, the adults earned a supplementary income selling sweaters in Calcutta (now Kolkata), and Tsering helped out during the school holidays. Later, his uncle and aunt were allocated a small plot of land in Bylakuppe, a Tibetan settlement in southern India, where they lived from the sale of maize and other crops, as well as wood gathered from the nearby forest.

Despite these hardships, Tsering was fortunate in being able to gain a good education as a boarder at the Central School for Tibetans at Happy Valley in Mussoorie, where he excelled both academically and at sport.

Everything that he achieved subsequently was grounded on this early training.

Tsering went on from Mussoorie to study English at Chandigarh University. After graduation, he was recruited into the Special Frontier Force, a Tibetan military unit within the Indian Army, based in Chakrata (now part of Uttarakhand). He completed his training, but there was a delay in the confirmation of his appointment as an officer following an Indian government policy review after the 1977 national elections. Rather than hang around waiting, Tsering decided to change course and become a teacher. He therefore studied for a B.Ed degree at the Central Institute of Education in Delhi. In 1979, he joined the SOS Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) school in Dharamsala, the north Indian town that serves as the headquarters of the Tibetan government-in-exile, and in due course rose to become headmaster.

Early in the 1980s, during the period when there was a brief hope of political liberalization in Tibet, Tsering's father was able to travel via Nepal to India. Despite not knowing either Hindi or English, he found his way to Calcutta and, having met a Tibetan monk at Howrah station, contacted the Tibetan community in search of his family. Tsering once told a moving story of how his father was reunited with his aunt. Thinking that a sudden unannounced meeting might be too much of a shock, his father waited outside her home while her relatives prepared her with a gradual build-up of hope and expectation. Their conversation started with the thought that it would be good to hear from Tsering's father after so many years. Then they discussed how wonderful it would be if he could come to India. And it would be even better if he could come to see her. The climax came when they announced that he was waiting just outside.

Tsering's father had hoped that his family might accompany him back to Tibet. His uncle went so far as to obtain the necessary identity papers from the Chinese embassy in Delhi, but they ultimately decided that they would return only when the Dalai Lama himself was able to do so. Meanwhile, Tsering continued his teaching career in Dharamsala.

It was in Dharamsala that Tsering first became interested in the challenges of translation. The immediate spur was a guidance document issued in Tibetan by Samdhong Rinpoche, who was then at the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Varanasi. Until then, exile Tibetan schools had focused on the teaching of English as a core

Acknowledgement: This piece was first published as John Bray, "Obituary | Tsering Dhundup Gonkatsang (1951–2018)," *HIMALAYA, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies* 38, no. 2 (2018): 122–24; available at: <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/himalaya/vol38/iss2/16>. It has been republished with minor modifications here by kind permission of the publishers and John Bray.

survival skill, often at the expense of the mother tongue. Samdhong Rinpoche now called on them to redress the balance in favour of Tibetan. Evidently, his concerns were justified because Tsering had to translate this guidance for his Tibetan colleagues who were, themselves, products of an English-language education. He sent his translation to Samdhong Rinpoche, whose warm endorsement encouraged him to take his own Tibetan language skills a step further.

In 1987 Tsering moved to the University of Glasgow in Scotland to study for a postgraduate degree in education, with a particular focus on mother-tongue teaching. He then moved to north London and set up a home there with his wife Dolker and their three children, Lhayum, Choeyang, and Tashi, who all joined him from Dharamsala. Dolker's constant support and their happy family life served as the foundation for everything else that Tsering did. He was immensely proud of his children, their partners, and two grandchildren, all of whom survive him.

From 1991 until 2001, Tsering worked at the International Community School in London, eventually becoming Head Teacher. Meanwhile, he was involved in a wide range of other activities. Already an accomplished teacher of English to non-native speakers, he now began to apply the same skills to the teaching of his own language. I was myself among a select group of friends who regularly visited his house in north London for private lessons. He also served as the General Secretary of the Tibetan Community in Britain (TCB) from 1994 to 1996, and for many years taught Tibetan to the TCB children. At the same time, he provided translation to and from Tibetan for a number of organisations, including Amnesty International, the Tibet Information Network (TIN), and the Trace Foundation in New York.

Once he had settled in London, Tsering was able to revisit Tibet. In 1997, he travelled to his home in Amdo, together with Dolker and Choeyang. In 2004, he and Dolker visited her home in Tinkye, southern Tibet. Finally, he was again able visit Amdo in 2007, a year before his father passed away.

In 2001, Tsering took up a position as Instructor in Tibetan at the University of Oxford; this was a new post, created in memory of the Tibetan scholar Michael Aris (1946–1999). Tsering's now well-honed talents as a teacher and a linguist meant that he was the perfect candidate. During his years in Oxford he was able to put all his varied skills and experience to the best possible use.

Tsering taught beginner and intermediate Tibetan, as well as working intensively with advanced students on the reading of specific texts. He typically spent two days a week in Oxford. Driving up from his home in London, he

would start early in the morning and stay late, surviving on orange juice when there was no time for meals. For his teaching materials Tsering drew on an eclectic range of sources including the adventures of Tintin, his own translation of the Twelve Days of Christmas (an English carol), as well as Tibetan-language Internet blogs and historical texts. He presented papers on Tibetan teaching materials at successive triennial conferences of the International Association for Tibetan Studies (IATS). The panel that he planned on this topic at the 15th IATS conference in Paris in 2019 will be dedicated to his memory.

Tsering's students remember him for his warmth, encouragement and sense of humour, often telling jokes that set the class into fits of laughter. At the same time, they marvelled at his linguistic versatility, whether they needed help with *dharma* texts, poetry, folk tales or historical records. Always unassuming, he was at the heart of the Oxford Tibetan studies community.

Tsering was equally generous in his collaboration with researchers beyond Oxford, and I was myself a beneficiary. Together we wrote three historical papers on Ladakh, and a fourth was in preparation at the time of his death. Other close colleagues included Michael Willis of the British Museum with whom he wrote three joint essays; they were working on a project on the advent of Buddhism into Tibet according to the *Chronicles of Dba'* at the time of his death. It is a great pleasure to see this book finished and in the hands of readers.

Tsering's other personal projects included the translation of an illustrated biography of the 14th Dalai Lama on behalf of the Domey (Amdo) Association in Dharamsala, and a book on the protector deity of Kirti monastery (in Ngawa, Eastern Tibet). At the same time, he was still fully involved in Tibetan community activities, serving as a trustee of the Tibet Foundation from 2009 to 2017, as well as Tibet Watch, a UK-based NGO monitoring Tibetan affairs, from 2008 to 2016. He provided translations for, among others, the US-based Radio Free Asia, and collaborated on the production of films and documentaries related to Tibet. In all of these activities, he rarely showed signs of fatigue. Tsering's daughter Choeyang shares part of the secret. For her father, there was no boundary between his formal work and the wide range of Tibet-related activities that brought him satisfaction and joy.

In April of this year I met Tsering at the British Library in London, and we chatted for two hours in the canteen. This would in any case have been a memorable occasion, since I now live in Singapore and we rarely had an opportunity to meet in person. Now the meeting has taken on an extra significance. Our conversation turned to his birthplace in eastern Tibet. Tsering then ran through the key

events of his life, retelling old stories, and sharing new ones, including some of the anecdotes related here. He had one more year to go before retirement from Oxford, and then he would have had plenty of other projects. The overwhelming impression was a sense of fulfilment and contentment.

Less than three weeks later, Tsering died after a car crash on his way to Oxford, having started early on a Friday morning to offer extra help to students before the start of his formal lessons. It was and remains hard to take in this news. He still had so much to contribute and—on

a personal note—there was still so much that I and others had wanted to ask him.

Tsering's legacy includes a range of articles and translations in print and scattered across the Internet. More than that, he will remain a continuing presence in the lives of the many people who knew him as a friend, colleague, and mentor. Between us, we will build on what we learnt from him, take it a step further, and share it with others. There can be no better way of honouring the best of friends and the most beloved of teachers.

Abbreviations

BDRC	Buddhist Digital Resource Center
BL	British Library
Bu ston	Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364)
DBA'	<i>Dba' bzhed</i> (for versions and editions see Bibliography)
IOL	India Office Library (on these sources see Bibliography)
MBNTH	<i>Mes dbon gsum nam thar</i> (for versions and editions see Bibliography)
MTN	<i>Me tog snying po</i> (for versions and editions see Bibliography)
Nyang ral	Nyang Ral pa can Nyi ma 'od zer (1124–1192)
Or.	Shelf mark used at the BL, 'Oriental' (on these sources see Bibliography)
Pelliot tibétain	Shelf mark used at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (on these sources see Bibliography)
RBA	<i>Rba bzhed</i> (for versions and editions see Bibliography)
SBA	<i>Sba bzhed</i> (for versions and editions see Bibliography)

Transliteration

Where the transliteration of Tibetan in the footnotes and appendices to this volume does not follow the standard modified Wylie system, it accords with the more rigorous codicological system adopted by editors of the Old Tibetan Documents Online portal (see under “Editorial Policy” at <https://otdo.aa-ken.jp/>). For instance, the reverse *gi gu* is transliterated with the upper case “I” and stacked letters that are not found in the Classical Tibetan orthography of indigenous words are transliterated with the “+” sign (e.g., *dhi* with a subscribed *ha* is *d+hi*), the sign marking the beginning of a folio, paragraph, etc. is transliterated with \$ and the *anusvāra* is transliterated with M (capital letter).

Tibetan terms and other foreign terms are given in italics. Exceptions are place names and personal names. These are spelled according to the orthography in the main text of the *Dba' bzhed* or other source being quoted, for example Bodhisatva (with one “t”; see also Chapter 2, footnote 9), disregarding any interlinear amendments or

additions. In proper nouns, the first letter is capitalised, as opposed to the root letter. Family names are capitalized alongside personal names, where both can be established, e.g. “Sba Gsas snang” for Gsas snang of the Sba family. Similarly, titles or honorific elements within names are also capitalized, e.g., Khri Srong lde btsan, where Khri is a royal title added to the name Srong lde btsan.

When quoting secondary sources, their authors’ spellings have been retained but their transliteration system has been brought into line with that of the volume. This means that hyphens and diacritics have been removed (e.g. *dañ-po* is converted to *dang po*) and names capitalised by their first letter rather than their root letter. The exception to this is in the case of bibliographic information, where accuracy may be required in order to find sources. Please consult the Bibliography for the abbreviations used for exemplars or the *Testimony of Ba* tradition in this volume.

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