Buddhist and Islamic Orders in Southern Asia

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In the summer of 1953, visitors gathered in the village of Rinchenpong in the eastern Himalayan kingdom of Sikkim to bid farewell to a local luminary. These visitors, who represented a variety of ethnic and religious groups in the state and came from different classes, including aristocrats and local villagers, were unified in their devotion to Risung Rinpoche (Ri gsung rin poche), a Buddhist teacher who had been based in an old retreat house at the top of Rinchenpong hill for almost three decades. They mourned a beloved teacher who had traveled throughout Sikkim to perform rituals commemorating life-cycle rites and to celebrate festivals, who had been called upon as an astrologer and healer, and who was known for his talents as a teacher. Even as his health failed when he reached his eighties, Risung Rinpoche would still travel wherever he was invited, carried on a palanquin on the shoulders of faithful patrons. Among those gathered at his funeral were many of the students who had studied with him in the jungles of Rinchenpong, a site rendered powerful through its status as a cremation ground that was considered haunted and appropriate only for the most dedicated tantrikas. After several days of rituals, Risung Rinpoche’s remains were interred in a distinctive stone reliquary in the jungle.

The outpouring of emotion over the loss of a meditation teacher based in a distant rural retreat center indicates the continued importance of Buddhism in Sikkimese culture at a time of striking change for the small state. Other monasteries remained important sites of cultural belonging and identity after the British departure from the subcontinent, as the local government negotiated new relationships with the new government of India and looked north to the
new People’s Republic of China with some concern. However, although Risung Rinpoche’s exalted position in Sikkim appears indicative of local forms of community and identity, his biographical narrative demonstrates the transregional histories characteristic of Sikkimese Buddhism. Risung Rinpoche was originally from the neighboring kingdom of Bhutan. And, although both Sikkim and Bhutan had been anxious about Christian missionaries entering and influencing their communities, Risung Rinpoche’s arrival in Sikkim had been celebrated and enthusiastically supported, just as his passing was deeply mourned.

Risung Rinpoche was one of many teachers crossing borders in the eastern Himalayas during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, engaging in broader networks of trans-Himalayan Buddhist connectivity cultivated through shared histories, trade links, and the emergence of innovative new lineages. These new lineages did not involve any radical breaks with preexisting traditions or the introduction of new social identities, as Christianity did. However, they introduced new sources of authority into the Himalayan kingdoms at a time when enormous change was already under way. This change was propelled by contact with the global commercial networks facilitated by the British Empire. This chapter will explore the complex motivations behind the introduction of a specific Vajrayāna Buddhist lineage into the kingdoms of Bhutan and Sikkim around the turn of the twentieth century. In doing so, it will draw attention to the fruitfulness of analyzing the geographic extension of Buddhist lineages and Buddhist orders in relation to individual life stories and smaller-scale analyses of institution building and patronage.

The lineage of the eastern Tibetan meditation teacher Tokden Shakya Shri (Rtogs ldan Śā skya Śrī, 1853–1919) presents a salient case study for understanding the processes through which lineages were and are transferred within the broader Tibetan and Himalayan Buddhist networks of practitioners and institutions. Shakya Shri spent his life on the peripheries of Tibet, in the eastern Sino-Tibetan borderlands of Kham (Khams) and later at the southeastern pilgrimage site of Tsari (Rtsa ri). He is not representative of figures usually studied as emblematic of lineage and authority in the Tibetan Buddhist world, as he was not an incarnation of a famous historical teacher (sprul sku) or the head of a vast monastic estate. These are the most commonly invoked institutional forms in Tibetan Buddhism. Instead he became known throughout the Himalayas through his personal reputation, developed through narratives that were spread by word of mouth along the Himalayan trade routes traveled by his students and later disseminated widely through the creation of a textual biography published by his children and students.2

In this chapter, I will focus on the other side of this narrative, outlining the motives of Shakya Shri’s students and patrons in the adoption and dissemination of his lineage. This approach highlights the complexities involved in the acceptance of new lineage transmissions in historically Buddhist areas of the Himalayas. These new lineage transmissions introduced new practices and
teachers into local pantheons but were rarely perceived as problematic because the modes of transmission, including textual forms and genres, ritual vocabulary, and cosmology, were seen as belonging to preexisting Buddhist traditions.

These Buddhist traditions are often labeled as “Tibetan,” as they are believed to have originated historically from Tibet, to share narrative traditions with Tibetan Buddhism, and to use Classical Tibetan as the language of their recorded canons. The organization of these traditions into what we might call “orders” is, however, complex in the Tibetan cultural world. In Tibet, the concepts of the monastic order (dge ’dun) and the teaching lineage (bla brgyud, lit., “the lineage of lamas/teachers”) are distinct. Monastic orders are maintained through ritual ordination ceremonies, ritual initiations (dbang) into liturgy and meditation practices, and shared behavioral expectations. In Tibet and the Himalayas, these orders are affiliated with teachers and landed institutions, such as monasteries. Teaching lineages, in contrast, are more intricate. Distinctive teaching lineages have their own texts and practices. They are often attached, but not confined, to several major traditions of Tibetan Buddhism—the Nyingma (Rnying ma), Kagyü (Bka’ brgyud), Sakya (Sa skya), Geluk (Dge’ lugs), and, more recently, the Jonang (Jo nang)—that have grouped together historical practitioners according to certain lineage ancestors. This chapter will explore the idea of lineages, distinguishing them from Himalayan monastic orders and thereby bringing into view more diverse forms of institutional formation and affiliation. Buddhism was not only based in monasteries in Tibet and the Himalayas. Other institutional forms included monastic schools, meditation retreat centers, and ritual centers or temples that included nonmonastic as well as monastic practitioners. The relationships between these forms can be understood as facilitating networks of practitioners in Buddhist exchange of knowledge, ritual, and friendship.

As well as detailing the transmission and acceptance of Buddhist lineages, I will also examine their distinctive elements and interactions in different parts of the Himalayas. Labeling local forms of Buddhism in the Himalayas as “Tibetan” does not capture the complexity of these traditions or their interrelationships on a regional level and incorrectly assumes that they all look to Tibet as their source of authority. Although acknowledging their Tibetan origins does help to differentiate them from other forms of Himalayan Buddhism, particularly the Newar form practiced in the Kathmandu Valley (which has its own distinctive history as well as some overlap with Tibetan traditions), it may veil the local agency involved in the creation of these traditions. Therefore, in addition to outlining the motives of local agents in the establishment of Shakya Shri’s lineage, this chapter critically considers the issue of terminology in light of the complex relationship networks that have influenced the reception and dissemination of Buddhism in different parts of the Himalayas.

I review concepts of “lineage” as distinct from “order” in the Tibetan-Himalayan Buddhist world as a starting point for examining the issue of the
reintroduction or revitalization of Buddhism in areas where it has previously been present. Here I consider local motives, such as participating in prophetic narratives and identity, securing patronage relationships and legitimacy, and revitalizing older traditions. I outline some of these local motives more fully through case studies of students and patrons of Shakya Shri from Bhutan and Sikkim. In particular, I look at the local conditions that allowed for Shakya Shri’s lineage to be accepted in specific locations at the turn of the twentieth century as well as the shared forms of cosmology that granted Shakya Shri cultural legitimacy in these areas. This interweaving of local needs and conditions with a shared sense of history allowed new lineages such as that of Shakya Shri to function and thrive in the Himalayas and, later, on a global stage as well. This study of the mobility and localization of Shayka Shri’s lineage will demonstrate the negotiability of authority within Buddhist and other communities as well as the need to consider both vernacular and cosmopolitan impulses in their expansion.

DEMARCATING AUTHORITY THROUGH ORDER AND LINEAGE

As we shall see, the terminology related to Tibetan and Himalayan orders and lineages reflects many geographic and institutional distinctions. Tibetan Buddhism is a prominent and visible Asian religion practiced on a global scale today. However, it is also commonly misrepresented as a singular, homogeneous tradition, in part owing to the visibility of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso (Bstan ‘dzin rgya mtsho) as a representative figure of authority for the Tibetan (and wider) Buddhist community. This misunderstanding is also partly the result of the geopolitics of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that saw the creation of a distinct state called Tibet on colonial maps, only to have it banished and subsumed within another entity called the People’s Republic of China in the mid-twentieth century. Yet, historically, what was considered to be “Tibet”—or, as it is known in central Tibetan dialect, Böd (Bod)—was variously interpreted and sometimes overtly contested.

To some scholars both within and outside of the Tibetan Buddhist scholastic tradition, Böd incorporates a wide area of Inner Asia, stretching into the Himalayas in South Asia and including the geographic reaches of the Tibetan plateau. What binds these people together has also been a point of negotiation. Some scholars argue for the importance of a shared Tibeto-Burman dialect; others identify staple food practices and the centrality of barley, or tsampa (rstaṃ pa). According to others, it is the practice of distinctive forms of Buddhism with shared historical narratives that distinguishes these communities as a Tibetan cultural world. Some critics argue, however, that historically Böd referenced only a small part of central Tibet until the seventeenth century, when communities throughout the plateau and the Himalayas were united by the Fifth Dalai Lama and his Mongol patrons into a new centralized state, the Galden Phodrang (Dga’ ldan pho brang).
All of the arguments above have their own problems, which are related to a central point: they all flatten and homogenize the diversity of cultural and political forms within this area. The last argument particularly ignores other crucial political changes in the seventeenth-century Himalayas, as new states also developed. Two of these states were the kingdoms of Bhutan and Sikkim. They had much in common in terms of their cultural narratives. The leaders that led their respective kingdoms in the seventeenth century were Tibetans who united local populations, some of whom were considered to be earlier immigrants from Tibet and others of whom were indigenous inhabitants. In both cases, these leaders used forms of Buddhism derived from the Tibetan plateau to create coherent state narratives.

They were not unique in choosing to do so. Since its inception in South Asia, Buddhism has been connected with politics, statecraft, and community identity. In the centuries following the Buddha’s death, this community became an organized corporate body of monastics regulated by a code of conduct, the Vinaya. The saṅgha were supported by the laity, for whom there were far less distinct rules but who asserted their role within Buddhist institutions through their ritual relationships with the saṅgha. Both lay and monastic Buddhists followed the path of the Buddha and could reach awakening/enlightenment. In early Buddhist India, only monastics, however, participated within institutionally marked and managed intergenerational student–teacher/preceptor relationships. Over time, in diverse parts of the Southern Asian Buddhist world, Buddhist communities developed a variety of approaches to the organization and administration of monastic ordinations and transmission, and a variety of local nomenclatures used to refer to student–teacher/preceptor lineages within the monastic sphere. In some cases, Buddhist communities chose to celebrate and record nonmonastic student-teacher lineages as well, particularly following the emergence of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna communities.7

The role of nonmonastic practitioners in the continuation of the Buddhist tradition—that is, the teachings of the Buddha and the communities that came after him—was therefore historically complex. Nonmonastic transmission lineages became distinct from monastic orders. Monks also took part in lineages organized around nonmonastics and thus held multiple affiliations, which can be understood as contributing to interacting networks. In this chapter, “lineage” will refer to practices and teachings transmitted from teacher to student, irrespective of monastic status, and will be treated as distinct from a monastic “order.” Recording and investigating teaching lineages—who transmitted which elements of religious instruction to whom—provides an alternative to usual saṅgha-centric narratives of Buddhist history. These teaching lineages became very important in the reception of Buddhism in Tibet, as a number of crucial early translators and teachers were not members of the saṅgha.8 Teaching lineages can supplement—or be encompassed by—the lineage ancestors claimed by any of the four major Tibetan Buddhist traditions mentioned.
earlier (Nyingma, Kagyü, Sakya, and Geluk). In addition, teaching lineages are also sometimes identified with particular meditation traditions, especially Dzokchen (Rdzogs chen, or The Great Perfection) and Mahāmudrā (Phyag chen, or The Great Seal). Teaching lineages associated with a meditation tradition are characterized by distinctive transmission practices: teacher-disciple connections are consolidated by swearing vows of loyalty (Skt. samaya; Tib. dam tshig) and require initiation through ritual (such as Skt. abhiṣeka; Tib. dbang). Thus, teaching lineages may be—but need not be—associated by their participants with one of the major Tibetan Buddhist traditions and/or one of the central meditation traditions. They also may or may not be tied to specific landed institutions, and so understanding them in a looser sense as networks, inhabited and disseminated by individual practitioners, can be a productive way to think about their relationships.

In the Tibetan Buddhist world, practitioners—lay and monastic—can belong to multiple teaching lineages at the same time. These lineages need not be traced to Sakyamuni Buddha. Instead, they may be traced to other buddhas, bodhisattvas, or members of the Buddhist pantheon. One striking, unique, and influential form of teaching lineage in the Tibetan Buddhist world is the terma (gtér ma) tradition, in which lineages are understood to derive from discovered texts or objects found by practitioners who are destined through karmic ties to identify them. These terma lineages are traced to the time of Guru Rinpoche (Skt. Padmasambhava), the Tantric sorcerer and Tibetan cultural hero who is believed to have helped introduce Buddhism to Tibet in the eighth century. Terma lineages include their own distinctive canons, featuring ritual instructions, invocation prayers to specific Tantric deities, meditation instructions, and other forms of yogic practice. The practitioners who discovered them were responsible for mastering these traditions in isolation before passing them on to students.

Tokden Shakya Shri’s lineage was made up of terma of this type. He studied with a number of renowned teachers based in eastern Tibet during his day and passed on the practices of these traditions. In addition, he had his own visionary experiences that led him to “reveal” new cycles of teachings that were held to have been hidden by the saint Guru Rinpoche during the period of the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet for discovery at a later time of need. He mastered these cycles during years of meditation and transmitted them to his students, who included both lay Buddhists and monastics. It was this relationship of transmission that consolidated such lineages, as opposed to participation in physical institutions or shared ritual practices. The students of the founder of a terma lineage, or a “treasure revealer” as they were called, would then go on to teach these traditions and establish temples, monasteries, and other institutional homes for them. Their itineraries were often explained through Guru Rinpoche–related narratives. Shakya Shri’s students often harked back to other related narratives in their activities, which were used as explanations for and justification of their promulgation of Shakya Shri’s lineage in certain places.
One idea that was particularly resonant was the narrative traditions of “Hidden Lands” (shas yul), sacred demarcated spaces that were believed to be efficacious sites for spiritual practice and safety during times of persecution. As with his terma, Hidden Lands were also waiting to be opened by treasure revealers who had karmic connections to Guru Rinpoche and who would rediscover these sealed spaces for Buddhist practitioners at a predestined future time.\textsuperscript{12}

The demarcation between the monastic order and the transmission lineage found in Tibetan Buddhism allowed for the participation of a diverse range of practitioners in areas where Tibetan-derived Buddhism spread, including these Hidden Lands. Some of the participants in these lineages were ordained monastics, but others were not. Some were ritual specialists, affiliated with monasteries; others were itinerant ritualists, supported by local communities. Still others were yogis, living for years in retreat, or regular laypeople, who had taken initiation while integrating rituals or prayers into their daily routines alongside agricultural or trade pursuits. Shakya Shri was known especially for his acceptance of a wide range of people within his teaching lineage and for his ability to teach different forms of practice to different individuals according to their needs. Though he was associated with the Drukpa Kagyü (‘Brug pa bka’ brgyud) tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, he held transmission lineages for both Dzokchen and Mahāmudrā meditation, and had studied with teachers from a variety of Tibetan Buddhist traditions. The social diversity and location of Shakya Shri’s teacher-student community reflected these differences. Tulku Urgyen Rinpoché, a twentieth-century teacher, described the impressions that his uncle Samten Gyatso (called Uncle Tersé below), a student of Shakya Shri, had of the community. Shakya Shri’s students did not live in a monastery but in a valley where his students modified the landscape in order to create living spaces near their teacher.

“Shakya Shri lived with about seven hundred disciples in Kyipuk,” Uncle Tersé told me. “His disciples had dug caves all around the two surrounding slopes, while others stayed in tiny tents made of either canvas or yak-felt. Shakya Shri himself lived on a meadow in the only house around, which was a simple structure of stamped mud with one large window.” . . . Even though so many disciples had gathered around him, Shakya Shri didn’t teach year round but only at particular times during summer and winter. . . .

Shakya Shri told some of his disciples, “You belong to the Mahāmudrā side of the valley,” while to others he said, “You belong to the Dzokchen side.” And so he divided them up in two groups and gave instructions in Mahāmudrā and Dzokchen in accordance with each follower’s disposition.\textsuperscript{13}

Communities such as Shakya Shri’s were not rare in the Tibetan Buddhist world, but their histories have been neglected. This is partly because of the
political prominence of the megamonasteries that were spread throughout central Tibet and retained large territories that supported their monastic communities. These megamonasteries were not only dominant in their localities, however. They were also part of larger networks that linked them to the political centers of Lhasa and Beijing, where their patrons were. Moreover, they were self-replicating, as monastic authorities could dispatch representatives to establish satellite monasteries in the borderlands of the Tibetan world. In time, the traffic between the megamonasteries and their satellites was not just unidirectional, as practitioners from these borderlands also traveled to the megamonasteries to study in the centers of spiritual education of their day. These institutions were therefore very diverse, as students from throughout Inner Asia, China, and the Himalayas using a wide range of languages also traveled to the megamonasteries to study and master their curricula. Some of the talented would become part of the monastic hierarchy; others returned home or traveled elsewhere to disseminate their lineages.

However, other, smaller communities had similar patterns of geographic extension and translocal linkages. Shakya Shri had students from throughout the Himalayas who traveled to study with him. The nature of transmission in these communities is not straightforward. The majority of these students came from areas with previous Buddhist connections to Tibet. They were not new converts to Buddhist traditions. Therefore, these networks of travel and transmission cannot be seen simply as the result of missionary activity emanating from the institutional and teaching center of Shakya Shri’s lineage. Instead, as Elisabeth Stutchbury, who studied the lineage of Shakya Shri in the western Himalayan region of Karzha in Lahul (in contemporary Himachal Pradesh, India), has argued, these cases indicate a more intricate process of cyclical renewal and rejuvenation for Buddhist communities. New teachers and lineages did not disturb the religious landscape of these places. Instead, their arrival and the transmission of their new lineages were seen to be part of a continuous, ongoing transmission. They were developed around historical connections between certain religious centers both within Tibet and in its borderland regions, which had been facilitated through trade networks throughout the Himalayas. Although it was based outside of large landed monastic establishments, Shakya Shri’s lineage was also disseminated through these networks. Its agents of transmission in Bhutan and Sikkim looked to older cultural narratives of connectivity as well as changes in the contemporary landscape to explain and support their travel and teaching.

LOCAL FACTORS IN THE TRANSMISSION OF TOKDEN SHAKYA SHRI’S LINEAGE

By the late nineteenth century, Bhutan and Sikkim had already shared a long history of interaction, conflict, and negotiation in the forging of the eastern
Himalayan political order. However, both kingdoms were also experiencing in very different ways the enormous change brought by European interest in the Himalayas, and their negotiations with colonial modernity had strikingly different outcomes. It is this diversity of experience as well as connection through networks of practitioners and historical narratives that make Bhutan and Sikkim generative sites for the exploration of lineage and network development.

The small kingdom of Sikkim had been significantly compromised by British incursion into the eastern Himalayas. It was originally consolidated as a state in the mid-seventeenth century. The kings of the Namgyal (Rnam rgyal) dynasty were challenged by incursions into their territories by Gorkhas and Bhutanese in the eighteenth century. British interest in the Himalayas grew during this time with the desire to discover new markets as well as to discover more accessible and profitable sources for tea. The East India Company was also interested in finding suitable locations for sanatoria that could provide British subjects in India respite from the heat of the plains. They found both in Darjeeling and after a diplomatic scuffle took over the area in 1835, though nominally continued to “rent” it from the king of Sikkim. After further incidents with rulers of Nepal and Tibet, the British inserted a political officer in Sikkim in 1889, theoretically to assist with international affairs and administration. In reality, this action led to the king and his ministers losing most of their authority until the early twentieth century. Political officers were distinct from the British Residents in Nepal established in 1802, as in Sikkim they had more direct power. This was therefore a time of great change, during which local historical forms of political power were compromised and undermined by colonial incursion.

The kingdom of Bhutan at this time was undergoing centralization after decades of rule by the Druk Desi (‘Brug sde srid), or prime ministers, who acted as regents in lieu of the Zhabdrung (Zhab drung), the incarnations of the seventeenth-century unifier of Bhutan, Ngawang Namgyal (Ngag dbang rnam rgyal, 1594–1651). After civil war in the 1870s, the leader of this movement for unification was the innovative and intelligent Ugyen Wangchuck (U rgyan dbang phyug, 1862–1926), the Pönlop (dpon slob, or minister) of Trongsa (Krong gsar). His astute leadership led him to become a crucial intermediary between the British and Tibetan governments but also ensured that Bhutan retained its sovereignty. In a move to consolidate centralized power and peace in the state, he was elected hereditary king of Bhutan in 1907.

Although the state religion of the Zhabdrung had been part of the Drukpa Kagyü Tibetan Buddhist tradition, Ugyen Wangchuck shifted affiliations in favor of the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. However, he was eclectic in his generous patronage of sacred site building, artworks, and printing projects. From at least the 1880s onwards, Ugyen Wangchuck became a generous supporter of Tokden Shakya Shri. This patronage relationship is demonstrated in the colophon of a text that appears in the Collected Works (Gsung ‘bum) of
Shakya Shri, which is dedicated to Ugyen Wangchuck the Trongsa Pönlop, “ruler among men.”

Why did the Ugyen Wangchuck choose to support this meditation teacher from Kham? Evidence from the period suggests that he originally learned about Shakya Shri while traveling in Tibet working as a mediator for the British. He heard about Shakya Shri’s abilities as a teacher and miracle worker, and decided to sponsor him along with a number of other lamas (religious teachers) in the eastern Tibetan region of Kham. He also sent a number of Bhutanese students to study in Kham. He saw this sponsorship of Buddhist practice as a means to consolidate peace and happiness in Bhutan. The reference to peace and happiness was in response to Bhutan’s unstable political situation in the nineteenth century, which Ugyen Wangchuck and his supporters were working to alleviate after a century of internal fighting. The idea of religious patronage as a tool able to unite communities in a peaceful way (thereby helping to create a strong state identity) was not new in the Buddhist world, but its use here is interesting given the political transformations under way in Bhutan.

One possible explanation for Ugyen Wangchuck’s patronage of Shakya Shri could have been his desire to support an alternate transmission lineage of the Drukpa Kagyü tradition in Bhutan, distinct from that of the earlier Zhabdrung ruler incarnation, who had developed his own lineage when he originally arrived in Bhutan in the seventeenth century. This lineage had been used to unite the country and create a strong state. Before the seventeenth century, there had been a number of waves in the transmission of Buddhist orders and lineages in Bhutan, and Bhutanese Buddhism had come to incorporate eclectic forms, including the Nyingma and Kagyü traditions. The Zhabdrung’s Drukpa Kagyü lineage was consolidated through the introduction of hegemonic forms of state ritual and religious institutions. Support of an alternate lineage was beneficial for Ugyen Wangchuck as he worked to unify the state at a time when he had received both local and British support to establish himself as the first king of Bhutan. The new monarchy was designed by Wangchuck to create stability and centrality, and to replace the Zhabdrung. However, although this motive may appear logical to us looking back from the present, the situation on the ground was more complicated. Transmission lineages could not be demarcated so easily. Ugyen Wangchuck continued to try to align himself with the Zhabdrung in the early twentieth century, thereby demonstrating a conciliatory and ecumenical attitude toward different Buddhist lineages. However, the Shakya Shri lineage was one he was especially interested, in perhaps as an alternative, to help downplay the political function the Zhabdrung had enjoyed.

Wangchuck’s effort to maintain peace with the Zhabdrung was demonstrated in his patronage of an important student of the Zhabdrung named Mönlam Rabzang (Smon lam rab bzang, 1878–1945). Their close relationship is demonstrated through the story of how Mönlam Rabzang originally went to study in Kham, which also provides clues to how Ugyen Wangchuck learned
about Shakya Shri. Ugyen Wangchuck’s wife, Rinchen Pémo (Rin chen pad mo), became gravely ill in 1896. In line with tradition, Ugyen Wangchuck spared no expense to treat her, bringing in doctors and also sponsoring large rituals. However, she did not recover, and she passed away in 1900. Ugyen Wangchuck decided to give offerings in her name to all the major sacred sites and monasteries of central Tibet and so sought out a trusted and capable emissary in the person of Mönlam Rabzang.

Originally from the Tsangkha (Mtshang kha) village of Tangsibi (Stang si bi) in the Mangde (Mang sde) valley, Mönlam Rabzang was recognized at a young age as an incarnation of an acclaimed yogi. He received a broad monastic education in many of the great monastic and religious institutions of the time in Trongsar, Wangdu Phodrang (Dbang ‘dus pho brang), and Punakha (Spun na kha), and with many of the great Bhutanese teachers, including the Fifth Zhabdrung Tuktrul Jikmé Chögyal (Zhabs drung thugs sprul ‘jigs med chos rgyal, 1862–1904). He became most well known as an artistic savant, skilled in painting, sculpture, and other arts. These talents brought him to the attention of Ugyen Wangchuck, who commissioned a number of works from him, which led to the development of a strong relationship between the two. Therefore, it is no surprise that, at a time of personal need, Ugyen Wangchuck selected Mönlam Rabzang to travel on his behalf to Lhasa. On arriving there, Mönlam Rabzang heard tales about a famous meditation teacher in Kham named Tokden Shakya Shri and, after asking permission from Ugyen Wangchuck, traveled to study with him instead of returning to Bhutan. Mönlam Rabzang stayed with Shakya Shri for several years and gained a reputation in the community as a master of Mahāmudrā. Shakya Shri eventually instructed him to return to Bhutan, where Mönlam Rabzang taught and continued to carry out his artistic projects in Tashigang.

Thus, Ugyen Wangchuck’s support of Shakya Shri was not simply a political effort to disseminate lineages of Buddhism alternative to those of the Zhabdrung. These efforts also reflected his personal relationships and beliefs. Sikkim also had a strong tradition of state Buddhism, dating from the seventeenth century. Such particular motivations and factors of local context help to explain the success of Shakya Shri’s lineage in Sikkim. There, unlike the Bhutanese Zhabdrung, the kings of the hereditary Namgyal dynasty did not derive their authority directly from religious status, but instead through the age-old method of patronizing Buddhist teachers and ritual specialists. This idealized patron-lama relationship (mchod yon) was an integral part of the narrative of the founding of the Sikkimese state, which, according to Sikkimese traditions, had taken place through a Tibetan terma revealor. Lhatsün Namkha Jikmé (Lha btsun nam mkha’ ‘jigs med, 1597–1653) had received visions leading him to Sikkim. Sikkimese traditions recall that he, along with two other visiting Tibetans, identified the first king, Phuntsok Namgyal (Phun tshogs rnam rgyal), based on a prophecy. State traditions were sponsored by the king and
disseminated through monastic institutions. The major monastic institution was the Pemayangtse Monastery (Pad ma yang rtse) located in Sikkim, which had lineage ties to the Nyingma institution of Mindroling (Smin sgrol gling) in central Tibet.30

These state traditions connected to Lhatsün’s *terma* lineage and the Tibetan Nyingma tradition had remained strong over the centuries that followed, the lamas serving as valued advisors to the kings. However, as British interest in Sikkim deepened, colonial authorities grew concerned about these relationships, particularly as the lamas were skeptical of British motivations. After a series of border skirmishes in the mid-nineteenth century, the government of India sent a political officer to oversee the affairs of the state in 1889, as mentioned earlier. The king—a minor at the time—was marginalized, as were the lamas, who were no longer given prominence in the state council. Their relationships with other monastic institutions in Tibet were also carefully monitored, and it became increasingly difficult for Pemayangtse lamas from Sikkim to travel to Tibet for study, as they had done in the past.31

This situation opened up the opportunity for alternative lineages and institutional forms of Buddhism to flourish in Sikkim. This was evidenced particularly by the popularity of local ritual specialists and meditators. From the 1890s to 1910s, a number of these meditators traveled to study with Shakya Shri, who was then residing in Kham.32 They originally learned of Shakya Shri through word of mouth, from traders and pilgrims who had heard of him in their travels elsewhere in the Buddhist world. The technologies of colonial modernity, particularly the train, revitalized pilgrimage networks, especially within India. Many Sikkimese Buddhists visited the Buddhist center of Bodh Gaya after its rediscovery and reinvigoration through the efforts of the Ceylonese Buddhist reformer Anagarika Dharmapala (1864–1933).33 The British apparently did not see these visits to India as problematic, as they brought the Sikkimese into the centers of British imperial power and introduced them to the idea of the British as benevolent patrons of Buddhist restoration. Pelling Ani Wangdzin (Pad gling a ni dbang ‘dzin, ca. 1870–1925), a female practitioner from West Sikkim, was one of these visitors and apparently took part in a state-sponsored pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya in the early 1910s. While there, she heard about Shakya Shri and decided to enrich her Tantric education by traveling to Kham and studying with him. It was only through participation in broader educational networks that she could have had this opportunity, as there were no state-sponsored nunneries or Buddhist educational institutions for women in Sikkim at the time. Some women studied with their male relatives where they could, but most were heavily involved in other agricultural and mercantile activities that occupied their time. Pelling Ani Wangdzin came from a wealthy family and had a supportive father who provided her with the financial means to pursue a religious vocation. When she returned from her time in Kham, her brothers and relatives became her patrons and built her a meditation hut above Pelling, where she taught yogic
traditions to dozens of students who represented the many Buddhist ethnic and cultural groups present in Sikkim, including Bhutias, Lepchas, Tamang, and Gurung.\textsuperscript{34} Students of Shakya Shri in Sikkim such as Pelling Ani Wangdzin indicate how this alternative transmission lineage provided opportunities for religious education for those outside of state monastic institutions that were being monitored by British authorities.

The cases of Mönlam Rabzang in Bhutan and Pelling Ani Wangdzin in Sikkim represent the very different local situations in these kingdoms that facilitated the spread of Shakya Shri’s lineage. In Bhutan, the tradition became part of broader state traditions that were in formation during the introduction of the new monarchy. Sikkim was also being fundamentally altered by interactions with colonial modernity, but a fragile royal state under pressure from British projects facilitated heterogeneity as opposed to the homogenization of state traditions.

\section*{Shared Legacies in Constructing the Buddhism of Tokden Shakya Shri}

Although local conditions are important considerations in the motives of patrons and practitioners in introducing new lineages into an area, regional affiliations and shared sense of identity were also influential. These regional affiliations are often glossed through labeling the Buddhism of Bhutan and Sikkim as “Tibetan-derived” or “closely-related” to Tibetan Buddhism.\textsuperscript{35} Looking more closely at the details of such affiliations, however, helps us to understand how and why local communities supported students of Shakya Shri. There are a number of factors that could strengthen or alternately undermine these affiliations, which included shared languages and print media. The shared use of Classical Tibetan for the production and dissemination of textual traditions was a key factor,\textsuperscript{36} especially in the case of this lineage, since the students of Shakya Shri were from geographically diverse areas that often spoke mutually unintelligible dialects of Tibetan or Tibetan-related languages. To overcome these differences, a shared written language was important. The Shakya Shri tradition contains a number of apocryphal stories of how students spontaneously overcame language differences and could innately understand teachers who spoke different dialects when meeting with them for the first time. Shakya Shri is said to have encountered the problem of language differences even in Kham, where the geographic extremities of the mountainous landscape had led to the development of very different dialects. Oral narratives recount his first meeting with Adzom Drukpa (A `dzom `brug pa, 1842–1924), one of his teachers, who later also studied with him as a student:

\begin{quote}
Upon merely meeting, guru and student felt their minds merge, becoming one. The guru Drukpa Rinpoché, being a nomad from Washül Tromtar
\end{quote}
[Wa shul trom tar], said in the dialect of that region, “To experience the true nature of great perfection, just rest straight out, just rest. I don’t suppose there’s anything else but that.” Shakya Shri understood what the guru was saying to him, that there was nothing to this enlightened intent other than resting naturally, without contrivance. Adzom Drukpa transferred to Shakya Shri the enlightened intent of dharmakāya, unbiased timeless awareness as the naked unity of awareness and emptiness. Distinguishing between his ordinary mind and pure awareness, Shakya Shri attained the realization of great perfection in a quantum leap, having been directly introduced to it in the immediacy of his own true nature.\(^{37}\)

This was an example of a “mind transmission,” a narrative trope used to explain how language differences were negotiated in these communities. It seems likely that students who traveled to Shakya Shri and stayed with him for longer periods of time were responsible for facilitating discussions by serving as translators. Students were then able to absorb the teachings and put them into their own local languages to facilitate the acceptance of these teachings by local communities.

Another important factor shaping the absorption of new lineages within historically Tibetan Buddhist areas was the existence of powerful historical affiliations that were linked to historical narratives about the shared Buddhist past. Particularly, this history was focused on the very earliest periods of Buddhist interaction with the landscapes of the eastern Himalayas and was specifically remembered through stories tied to the eighth-century saint Guru Rinpoche, who was held to have been integral to the introduction of Tantric Buddhism in Tibet. He remains a popular figure revered throughout different areas of the Himalayas for his magical prowess and for performing miracles that allowed Buddhism to be introduced to specific places.

Acknowledging these narratives as forms of continuity helps to explain the enthusiastic acceptance of lineages such as that of Shakya Shri. It also helps to avoid some of the problems noted by Elisabeth Stutchbury, who cautions scholars not to rely on missionizing discourse to explain the dissemination of Buddhism. Instead, it is useful to look for connections between new lineages and older cultural narratives.\(^{38}\) Stutchbury found that the Shakya Shri lineage was able to enter Kardang in the western Himalayas through established Drukpa Kagyü ties as well as through narrative traditions about Guru Rinpoche and other local saints. It is tempting to interpret the entrance of new lineages into the Himalayas in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as part of the many changes wrought by colonial modernity in the Himalayas. This was indeed part of their attraction. However, as Anne Blackburn has argued, it is important to consider how these lineages have retained markers of continuity with precolonial forms of Buddhism. They cannot simply be explained as modern, as they do not draw on “developmentalist discourse that approached social problems
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and their solution through a self-conscious reflection on [their] own era as one that required a compensatory imitation of new forms of political order, ritual and devotion, or education,” approaches explicitly presented as appropriate to “modern” times. Instead, such lineages were closely related to and thereby naturalized by earlier disseminations of Buddhist tradition and lineage, which paved the way for and legitimated new forms. Annabella Pitkin’s characterization of these shared values and narratives as an alternative form of Himalayan cosmopolitanism is also helpful here in considering the integral role of travel and how it facilitated a union of different local histories to create a shared vision of the Buddhist past for practitioners in traditions such as that of Shakya Shri.

Narratives related to Guru Rinpoche are found throughout the Himalayan borderlands. Guru Rinpoche was a key figure for the dissemination of Tantric Buddhism in Tibet and the Himalayas. Stories tell of his subjugation and taming of local spirits and their conversion to Buddhism. These tales can be read largely as an account of the spread of Buddhism as it came into contact with and subjugated local traditions. Guru Rinpoche was also central to the terma tradition described earlier, as he had hidden original texts to be discovered at later, appropriate times by predestined individuals. Shakya Shri enjoyed a special relationship with the guru as well, through his identity as one such terma revealer. These links with the guru also helped created itineraries for the dissemination of Shakya Shri’s lineage. Both Sikkim and Bhutan were considered part of the Hidden Land geographies. For example, all of Sikkim was traditionally known as the “Bayul Démojong” (Sbas yul ‘bras mo ljongs), the Hidden Land of Rice. Its opening took place over the visits of several treasure revealers, including Lhatsün Namkha Jikmé. Bhutan was also believed to be home to several Hidden Lands. Such narratives often helped practitioners to situate themselves and their followers within a sacred landscape possessed of a deep history when they left their teacher’s community and went out into the world to practice or teach.

An example of a more complex transregional connection facilitated by such a narrative is that of Risung Rinpoche Jikmé Kunzang Chöpel (Ri gsung rin po che ‘Jigs med kun bzang chos ‘phel, 187?–1953). Risung Rinpoche was a Bhutanese teacher who traveled from eastern Bhutan to study with Tokden Shakya Shri and eventually settled in West Sikkim, rather than returning to his homeland as many of his Bhutanese peers did. Risung Rinpoche was originally from the Sharchop ethnocultural community in eastern Bhutan. Little is known about how he traveled to Kham, but, after staying for a number of years in Shakya Shri’s community, he decided to move to Sikkim to continue his practice of Shakya Shri’s lineage. He chose Sikkim for its reputation as a Hidden Land and ended up living at Risung in the area of Rinchenpong in West Sikkim. West Sikkim had particularly powerful cultural resonance for a Bhutanese expatriate, as it was believed that Pêma Lingpa (Pad ma gling pa, 1450–1521), the great Bhutanese treasure revealer, had visited and practiced in the area.
A number of sites remain associated with Péma Lingpa in Sikkim, including the town of Pelling, which is said to be named after him, and Rinchenpong. Risung was situated in a flat area of forest that had been used as a cremation site and that was regarded as being especially efficacious for Tantric practice. Risung Rinpoche initially moved there in the early 1910s with his consort, a Sharchop woman known as Risung Sangyum, and her daughter. The local landlord, the Pönchung Thikidar, allowed him to live in a small temple that had already been built on the land, and Risung Rinpoche and his family became responsible for carrying out rituals for the Thikidar. Word soon spread of his ritual prowess, and he gained a number of aristocratic sponsors who invited him to different parts of Sikkim to carry out rituals related to a number of needs, including rituals for health and building consecration. Students also began to gather around him at Risung, living in simple tents and makeshift huts on the slopes below the temple. As with Pelling Ani Wangdzin’s community, these students represented a number of different ethnocultural groups from the eastern Himalayas, including Bhutias, Lepchas, Tamang, Gurung, and other Bhutanese, who traveled to Sikkim to study with Risung Rinpoche. They also represented a number of institutions, including both monastic orders and teaching lineages. Some were itinerant practitioners, traveling from teacher to teacher. Others were associated with local monastic institutions and came to travel with Risung Rinpoche as a kind of apprenticeship in the rituals and meditative traditions he taught. They were varied in their level of commitment as well. Whereas some students remained at Risung for years, others passed through for a few months. As Risung Rinpoche’s reputation grew, students increasingly came to stay just to gain an association with his name. They studied in a number of fields. Some of the students would travel with Risung Rinpoche, setting up their tents at patrons’ houses and assisting in rituals. As Risung Rinpoche got older and his health declined, they would carry him on a type of palanquin, assisted by local patrons who would come to meet him. Other students remained in the forests at Rinchenpong, meditating during the day and practicing the dance of Chöd (Gchod) and the yoga of the winds (rtsa rlung) at night, and would later be dispatched by their teacher to undertake intensive individual retreats. In addition to the narrative memory linking Risung Rinpoche’s Sikkim sites to a deep Bhutanese Buddhist past, retreat areas favored by his students were typically connected with stories about the activities of Guru Rinpoche and the early dissemination of forms of Tibetan Buddhism within Sikkim.

What allowed this Bhutanese expatriate teacher to become so renowned in this small kingdom, which had its own distinctive Buddhist traditions? A major factor was Risung Rinpoche’s association with both Dzokchen and Mahāmudrā meditation traditions. He was therefore accepted as a teacher who could bring together different networks. He was a Dzokchen master in the local Nyingma traditions as well as a teacher who could accept students with different needs and different order and lineage affiliations. His recognition of the shared history
of Guru Rinpoche was also key to this acceptance and demonstrated the shared regional affiliations held by the Shakya Shri lineage. His students went on to hold many different roles in the historical development of Buddhism in modern Sikkim. Linguistic or cultural differences between Risung Rinpoche and his lineage, and with his Sikkimese students were not seen as detrimental. This is even more striking in its specific historical context. By the early twentieth century, the demarcation of identity, especially along national lines, was becoming increasingly influential in the Himalayas, undermining historical forms of cosmopolitanism. However, the history of the Shakya Shri lineage in Sikkim reveals transregional manifestations of Buddhism that survived across revised state boundaries and that flourished despite a rise in new forms of nationalist discourse.

INTERPERSONAL NETWORKS AND THE COMPLEXITIES OF AFFILIATION IN THE DISSEMINATION OF SHAKYA SHRIS LINEAGE

The final factor that facilitated the dissemination of Shakya Shri’s lineage in Bhutan and Sikkim is very simple yet often overlooked: interpersonal relationships and the broader networks that arose out of them. These interpersonal connections were often consolidated through economic and political networks. Trade routes throughout the broader Himalayas were especially influential, as they allowed for a certain amount of mobility, as did the pilgrimage traditions discussed earlier. They allowed for people with otherwise diverse forms of affiliation to meet over shared interests and to disseminate information before text traditions were consolidated. In other words, patronage relationships were a key factor in the creation of opportunities for the expansion of lineages across the Himalayas and the development of transregional education within lineages like that of Shakya Shri.

Considering interpersonal interaction as a site for the dissemination of lineage also allows for some of the more intangible elements of dissemination to be taken into account. These could include perceptions of personal charisma and magnetism that lead students to study with teachers. Such qualities are present in the Shakya Shri lineage. The Bhutanese student Tenzin Gyatso (1883–1966) provides an example. Born in Paro (Spa gro), Tenzin Gyatso began his formal study of Buddhism at a young age, when he was dispatched to live with his uncle, who was an accomplished monk. He excelled in his studies, undertaking courses in many of the great educational institutions of Bhutan. During his studies, he had the opportunity to meet with Artsa Lama (A rtsa bla ma, dates unknown), who told him about his amazing teacher the meditator from Kham: Tokden Shakya Shri. Tenzin Gyatso’s hagiography states that, when Tenzin heard these tales, “the hair on his arms rose up.” His imagination inspired, he traveled to Kham with Artsa Lama under the patronage of Ugyen Wangchuck to study with Shakya Shri. This patronage again reinforces Ugyen Wangchuck’s
personal connection to the lineage, as well as his material contributions by sending students to study with Shakya Shri. Tenzin Gyatso eventually returned to Bhutan, where he became an important teacher within the country, serving as an attendant to his uncle, who rose to become the preeminent master of Bhutan, the Jé Khenpo (Rje mkhan po), and later an important teacher and practitioner in his own right.49

Artsa Lama also visited other communities in the Himalayas, including Karzha, where he was said to have been dispatched after Shakya Shri dreamed that he had students who were living there but whom he had not yet met.50 Artsa Lama’s invitation to Karzha students led to batches of students traveling to study with Shakya Shri, to the establishment of new religious institutions in the area, and, eventually, to the forging of personal relationships that contributed to the decision by one of the grandchildren of Shakya Shri to settle there in the 1950s.51

Another example of a Bhutanese student who came to study with Shakya Shri through Artsa Lama is that of Mémé Lama Sōnam Zangpo (Mes mes bla ma bsod nams bzang po, 1892–1982), a key figure in the Shakya Shri lineage due to his publication of Shakya Shri’s Collected Works in the 1970s (reprinted in 1998). His case is a powerful representation of Ugyen Wangchuck’s personal commitment to Shakya Shri and his sponsorship of students to study in eastern Tibet. It also demonstrates the entrance of print technology into the dissemination of lineage. Sources indicate that Sōnam Zangpo was related to Ugyen Wangchuck, with some even suggesting he was an illegitimate son. He was born in Kurtoe (Kur stod) into a family descended from Péma Lingpa and was a deeply religious youth, which led to his being recognized as the incarnation of two different lamas.52 When he was twelve, a number of members of his community decided to visit Shakya Shri in Kham. He was desperate to join them after hearing about Shakya Shri and feeling deeply inspired. He begged his mother, who at first refused but eventually gave in and went to see Ugyen Wangchuck to request support. Ugyen Wangchuck was moved by Sōnam Zangpo’s commitment to Buddhism at such a young age and offered to provide him with offerings for Shakya Shri and other provisions for the long journey to Kham.53 Sōnam Zangpo then set off to join his comrades and became the youngest of the Bhutanese students sent to Kham. He remained there for many years, eventually rising to become a leader of Shakya Shri’s community at Tsari. He returned to Bhutan in the 1930s, when he moved with an itinerant community of yogic practitioners between different sites associated with Guru Rinpoche and the religious history of Bhutan, staying nowhere for more than three years and developing a reputation for his service to villagers as well as to the royal family.54 His relationship with Ugyen Wangchuck as well as his mother’s commitment and connections not only facilitated his own education, but also played a crucial part in the development of Shakya Shri’s textual legacy far beyond the Himalayas.
There is a famous proverb in Tibetan: “Every lama has his own religious tradition and every valley its own dialect.” This saying is often used to demonstrate the diversity of language in Tibetan cultural areas of the plateau and the Himalayas. It also makes an important point about religion in these areas, as it addresses the remarkable diversity found throughout the region. This diversity manifests in a multitude of institutional, ritual, and practice lineages whose participants represent networks of multiple affiliations. It also raises important questions about the use of “Tibetan Buddhism” or even “Tibetan-derived Buddhism” as an analytic category. Acknowledging local agency and thinking about Tibetan or Himalayan Buddhisms on smaller scales is important for creating more representative histories for this area and for bringing to light the processes through which Buddhist lineages expanded and were localized in the wider Himalayan region.

Although framing histories of Himalayan Buddhism as part of the history of Tibetan Buddhism or Tibetan-derived Buddhism effaces much of the diversity, analysis from the perspective of technologies of transmission, such as lineages, orders, and networks, can help expand our gaze from the local contexts in the Himalayas to other spaces and religions. It is fruitful to examine specific small-scale technologies of transmission and the circulation of specific teaching lineages in the Himalayas as opposed to the more formal institutions of orders. This perspective includes diverse forms of practitioners beyond the monks formally associated with orders. Thinking about the different elements that frame participation in lineages across space and time, such as shared cultural narratives, interpersonal relationships, concepts of sacred space, and print technologies as well as distinctive meditative and ritual practices, helps to explain how new lineages are spread. These elements underpin affective affiliations and help to explain local-scale motives for the adoption of new lineages in areas where Buddhist traditions are already strong.

The eastern Himalayan kingdoms of Bhutan and Sikkim are both home to distinctive forms of Buddhism that share cultural forms with Tibet but have their own histories. The adoption of the lineage of Shakya Shri, embodied by the descendants of practitioners who studied in eastern Tibet with him and his disciples, is now found in a variety of religious institutional forms in different guises. Practices from this lineage are continued by scholars and members of monastic orders in large monasteries and Buddhist educational institutions in urban centers such as Thimphu and Gangtok. At the same time, lineage participants serve as patrons and supplicants at local temples throughout the countryside as wandering yogis and meditators, and even as young laypeople who adorn their cellphones and car windshields with sticker images of Shakya Shri and his students. Such varieties of connections demonstrate the ongoing adaptability of lineage in the Himalayas and its ability to meld different local and regional ideologies that hold together the orders and itineraries that create religious communities within and beyond national and regional boundaries.
NOTES

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1. In this chapter, Tibetan words will be transliterated according to the Tibetan and Himalayan Library system, followed by Wylie spelling in parentheses on their first appearance. In circumstances where individuals or authors are known widely by another spelling, however, their preferences will be retained.


3. Tibet’s indigenous religion, Bön, is also sometimes affiliated with this system of organization of lineages.

4. This flattening of Himalayan diversity is noted in Karma Phuntsho, The History of Bhutan (Noida: Random House, 2013), pp. xii–xiii, and can also be seen in general surveys related to Tibetan and Himalayan Buddhisms that often only include Tibet in the title, such as John Powers, Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 2007); and Geoffrey Samuel, Introducing Tibetan Buddhism (New York: Routledge, 2012). The latter does include discussion of diverse forms of Buddhism in Bhutan, Nepal, and Ladakh as well. The terminology used to classify forms of Buddhism has recently been a topic of critical inquiry in Theravāda studies and is represented in Peter Skilling and Jason Carbine, eds., How Theravada Is Theravada? Exploring Buddhist Identities (Chiang Mai: Silkworm Books, 2012).


6. An accessible overview of Tibetan history, in the broader sense of the word, can be found in van Schaik, Tibet: A History. A recent study that disputes centralized representations of Tibetan history is Yudru Tsomu, The Rise of Gönpo Namgyel in Kham: The Blind Warrior of Nyarong (Lanham, MD: Lexington, 2014).

7. See Ronald M. Davidson, Indian Esoteric Buddhism (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), for more on these communities and forms of affiliation.

8. The complex process of Buddhism’s entrance into Tibet is outlined in Ronald M. Davidson, Tibetan Renaissance: Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005).
9. For more on the historical development of the four schools and the Vinaya transmission, see Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*. Powers, *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*, and Samuel, *Introducing Tibetan Buddhism*, which also use the four-school system to explicate Tibetan Buddhism.


11. Popular Tibetan historical narratives about the guru state that he visited Tibet initially in the 760s at the invitation of King Trisong Detsen (r. 755–794). However, he does not appear as a major figure in historical documents from the period. For more on his historical status, see van Schaik, *Tibet: A History*, pp. 34–35; and Jacob Dalton, “The Early Development of the Padmasambhava Legend in Tibet: A Study of IOL Tib J 644 and Pelliot Tétain 307,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124.4 (2004): 759–772. For more on his development into a major cultural hero for Tibetans after the late twelfth century, see Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, p. 213.


21. Phuntsho outlines a number of these projects in his chapter on Ugyen Wangchuck: “The Emergence of Ugyen Wangchuck and End of Civil War,” in Phuntsho, *History of Bhutan*. 


29. Gyaltser, *Dran gtam zla ba’i bdud rtsi*.

30. Stutchbury, “Rediscovering Western Tibet.”


35. For examples, see Powers, *Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*, p. 27.


40. Pitkin, “Cosmopolitanism in the Himalayas.”

41. This is discussed in his biography and in Holmes-Tagchungdarpa’s Social Life of Tibetan Biography, chap. 4.

42. Thuthop Namgyal and Yeshe Drolma, The History of Sikim (Gangtok: Tsuklhexhang Trust, 1908 [2003]).


44. An alternate spelling of Risung is Risum (Ri gsum), literally meaning “three peaks,” which refers to the three peaks of the area.

45. My thanks to the contemporary descendants of the Pönchung Tikidhar and the Gyatso family for their reminiscences of Risung Rinpoche.

46. My thanks to two of this community’s few surviving members, HE Dorlop Chewang Rinzin Lama and Mellipa, for generously sharing their memories of Risung Rinpoche.

47. For more on nationalism and these changes, see Bhutia, “Evaluation on the Role of Buddhism,” and Phuntsok, History of Bhutan.


49. Ibid.

50. Stutchbury, “Rediscovering Western Tibet.”


52. Tashi, Nyi ma shar gyi phyogs las shar ba’i skar ma rnam gsum, p. 42.

53. Ibid., p. 49.

54. Nyöshul, Marvelous Garland of Rare Gems.