

PART III

SELECTED ORIGINS MYTHS AND RITUALS FROM THE DUNHUANG FUNERARY MANUSCRIPTS

The Origins Myth of the *Skyibs-lug* in Pt 1194

The Dunhuang manuscript Pt 1194 now consists of 74 lines of text in the scroll format (*shog-dril*; most other archaic funerary documents of Dunhuang are also scrolls). This document, however, is incomplete; an indeterminate part of its first portion is missing. The text is divided into three thematically interconnected etiologic myths (*rabs*), which pertain to the origins and use of the psychopomp sheep. The middle origins myth of Pt 1194 (lns. 37–55) describes the genesis of the vulture wing implement, which was used as the ‘respondent of death’ (*gshin-than*), a tool wielded in conjunction with the ovine funerary guide (see *supra*, p. 164 [fn. 281]). This mounted vulture wing appears to have aided and/or empowered the sheep in its passage through the obstacles of the postmortem realm. The third origins myth of Pt 1194 (lns. 56–74) recounts how the psychopomp sheep was enticed to serve humanity (see *supra*, p. 115 [fn. 129]). Many of the narrative elements in this final account are introduced in the first etiologic tale of the text.

I have already discussed how on a paleographic, grammatical and text format basis Dunhuang funerary documents such as Pt 1194 appear to predate the Gathang Bumpa documents of this study. As a point of departure on the road to further inquiry and analysis, I put forward that Pt 1194, as well as texts such as Pt 1134 and ITJ 731r, were composed between 750 and 900 CE. This hypothetical date places these manuscripts in the imperial period or within a half century of its demise (for further discussion on the age of the archaic funerary manuscripts of Dunhuang see, *supra*, pp. 177–181).⁴²⁵

⁴²⁵ Recently, my esteemed colleague Henk Blezer (2008; 2010), if I understand him correctly, in two cursory studies of archaic ritual traditions, holds that Tibetans were incapable of recording in their literature any collective memory that predates the 7th and 8th century CE. Blezer’s stance appears to be part of a wider trend in his work to overlook a demonstrable pre-imperial cultural existence. Blezer (2008: 424) suggests that the historical origins of the names of personalities in non-Buddhist Dunhuang ritual manuscripts might date to the 7th or 8th century CE, at the earliest, believing that this is ample time to account for the formation of the onomasticon. As for narrative events in the same Dunhuang sources, Blezer sees a 7th or 8th century CE basement as even less likely (*ibid.*). In line with his beliefs, Blezer adds that the Dunhuang manuscripts which mention Gshen-rab myi-bo probably date to the 9th or 10th century CE, but qualifies his position by stating that his is a “wild guess” (*ibid.*, 423, 424). It is curious therefore that in the same paper, Blezer suggests that the *pho-gshen thod-dkar* of Pt 1285 are “perhaps outlandish folks from Tokhar-i-stan (Tho kar?), those Yüeh-chih or Yuèzhi” (*ibid.*, 431). The ethnonym Yuezhi (*sic*) of course designates a people who lived on or adjacent to the Tibetan Plateau (before migrating west to Transoxiana) in the 2nd century BCE. In a temporally compressed view of the grammatical development of Old Tibetan and Classical Tibetan, Blezer insinuates that Eternal Bon materials are contemporaneous with the Dunhuang manuscripts by stating that collections belonging to the former like the *Klu ’bum* and *Dur mchog* (= ’Dur-chog) are “partly closely contemporary sources” (Blezer 2010: 30). This assertion is not borne out by a study of the grammatical and paleographic evidence. The *Klu ’bum*, while containing many archaisms, was first composed in what might be called a transitional or early form of the Classical Tibetan language, and can probably be dated in its initial form to the 10th century CE (codicological study is required to confirm this assertion). The ’Dur-chog

Although the three manuscripts spotlighted in this final part of the study all date to the same general time period, they exhibit contrasting calligraphic characteristics and are clearly the work of multiple scribes. The handwriting of Pt 1194 has a slightly more cursive quality than Pt 1134 or ITJ 731r. It appears to reveal the first glimmers of the *dbu-med* script. Hard-to-read letters, lines deviating somewhat from the horizontal, and numerous cross-outs give it the look of having been copied at a fairly rapid rate. Pt 1134 appears to have been inscribed by no less than two different penmen. Parts of the first third of the text were written in a very careful penmanship (see especially lns. 50–85). The remainder of the document exhibits freer style handwriting. The letters of this *dbu-can* document are consistently and evenly formed. Rather than the more common single *tsheg* (one dot) of other texts, most of the syllables within lines are separated by a double *tsheg* (two dots). The staid handwriting and use of the double *tsheg* may possibly signify that Pt 1134 was used in more formal ceremonial settings than certain other archaic funerary documents of Dunhuang. The first or ritual part of ITJ 731r was inscribed clearly and boldly, while latter parts of the same document were more hastily laid down (with a number of cross-outs) probably by another individual using a different writing instrument. The speedy copying of Dunhuang funerary manuscripts may possibly be related to a demand for multiple copies as a consequence of war.

The first origins myth of Pt 1194 lays the narrative groundwork for the entire text, introducing the psychopomp sheep and the ritualists that appointed it (lns. 1–37).⁴²⁶ The highly fragmentary nature of the first 16 lines of Pt 1194 precludes a complete translation of the extant myth. The smudging of the ink in places also compounds difficulties involved in obtaining an accurate reading. I have opted instead to paraphrase the text, remaining as close to its grammatical structure as possible. As the first part of the account is missing, it is not clear whether it is the author himself or the ritualists telling the story in the opening lines of the manuscript. However, this does not have much bearing on the contents of the account. How much of the story once preceded the current first line, I dare not speculate, except to say that it may have been quite substantial.

Discarding the first four lines of the text due to their severe fragmentation, this examination of the origins myth begins midstream with ln. 5. It is here that the three priests of the fable are introduced. The most celebrated of these is Gshen-rab myi-bo, the prototype or inspiration for Ston-pa gshen-rab, the legendary founder of Eternal Bon. Gshen-rab myi-bo and his activities are also chronicled in five other Old Tibetan Dunhuang funerary manuscripts and the *byol-rabs* text of Gathang Bumpa.⁴²⁷ Nevertheless, the funerary priest that is most cited in Pt 1194 is

genre (including the Mu-cho'i khrom-'dur), with its decidedly more modern verb morphology, case forms and vocabulary, began to be compiled at the end of the 10th century or in the 11th century CE. The Classical Tibetan signature of these Eternal Bon works is also reflected in the styles of calligraphy used to produce the various manuscripts. These are of types familiar to students of Eternal Bon literature. Furthermore, Blezer brands all non-Buddhist ritual traditions of the Dunhuang manuscripts and cognate materials in Eternal Bon works as “controversial” and “subaltern” (*ibid.*, 2010: 31, 32). Yet, he fails to provide even a superficial explanation as to what this vast body of cultural traditions (documented in no less than forty Dunhuang manuscripts, the Gathang Bumpa corpus and hundreds of Eternal Bon texts) is subordinate to or why it is disputable. For the sake of an accurate picture of the religious and cultural complexion of ancient Tibet, such sweeping characterizations should be eschewed.

⁴²⁶ A preliminary assessment of this origins myth is undertaken in Stein 1971, pp. 512–514.

⁴²⁷ The other Dunhuang texts are Pt 1068, Pt 1134, Pt 1136, Pt 1289, and ITJ 731r. For the most extensive treatment of these references, see Bellezza 2008; 2010a; Stein 1971; Stein 2010. Karmay (2009: 65) describes the *byol-rabs* text as a tale of conflict between humanity and the *klu* after a period of harmony, which necessitates the ritual intervention of *bon* priests. Viewed more inclusively, it is primarily concerned with demonstrating the legitimacy and efficacy of the *byol* ritual system of healing in a variety of narrative settings.

Dur-shen rma-da (C.T. = 'Dur-gshen rma-da), a figure that has great importance in many archaic funerary ritual works including other Dunhuang manuscripts, the Mu-cho'i khrom-'dur and *Klu 'bum nag po*.⁴²⁸ As we have seen, this legendary personality was the founder of a *rnal-dri* funeral (*supra*, p. 166). The third funerary priest is Sgal-gshen tho'u-yug, whose only mention in Pt 1194 comes in line 5 of the text. Rgal-gshen tho'u-yug (*sic*) is also recorded performing a funeral with Mu-co ldem-drug (*sic*) in *Klu 'bum nag po*.⁴²⁹

The three funerary priests of Pt 1194 are the initiators of the custom of the psychopomp sheep, antotypic benefactors of humankind. In this work, the bond between humanity and sheep is one of profound depth and importance. This compact reveals the existence of a culture and way of life in which pastoralism and sheep-herding were an essential component. In a more remote age, or later on as a subsidiary activity, wild sheep were actively hunted, as documented in the Upper Tibetan rock art record. The exaltation of animals and their vital role in the human sphere, beyond the purely economic, starkly sets apart the religion of the ancient Tibetans from the doctrinal position of Buddhism and Eternal Bon. In Lamaism, animals are seen as occupying a lesser rung of existence and of no direct consequence to the quest for spiritual liberation. In practice, animals to this day retain a prominent place in the rituals and myths of Tibetans, a state of affairs that can be traced back to Old Tibetan documents such as Pt 1194. The solemn pact between sheep and humanity is trenchantly depicted in the first origins myth of this text, in which the funerary priests save a slain sheep from demonic oblivion. Once they have diverted this hapless little sheep from following in the tracks of a *srin*, they appoint him to aid the dead in general. The priests have helped the sheep avoid misery at the hands of a dissembling she-demon and now he is to act as the archetypal psychopomp, illustrating the principle of reciprocity underlying many ancient Tibetan rituals.



Fig. 14. A thog-lcags featuring a ram's head surmounted by a large object resembling flaming jewels (4 cm in height). While this object may or may not be a skyibs-lug, it does depict a numinous or sacred form of the sheep. This talisman was worn for protection and good fortune. A ram's head upon which rest one or three mchod-rten is a well-known thog-lcags genre, but the type depicted here is far more unusual. It appears to date to the early historic period (650–1000 CE) or perhaps a little later. Private collection

As the ritual initiators, it is the three *gshen* who debut in Pt 1194 that may introduce the geographic setting of the story (Sman-thang thang bal-ma) and its *bête noire* (Ag-sa rgyal-pa). Through sorcery, this *srin* assumed the appearance of the mother of the sheep son. Under this false guise

⁴²⁸ For multiple references to this personality, consult Bellezza 2008; Stein 2010.

⁴²⁹ See Bellezza 2008, pp. 483, 487. This funerary priest of Pt 1194 is noted in Stein 2010 (Antiqua V), p. 257.

she offered him the choicest of drinks and foods. By virtue of being tainted by a demon (as the impersonator of the sheep mother, she is called Ma-dgo ['Baneful Mother' ?]), what she fed the sheep boy eventually killed him. The paraphrasing of the text begins below:

The fathers Gshen-rab myi-bo, Dur-shen rma-da⁴³⁰ and Sgal-gshen tho'u-yug spoke. It appears that they first mention a separation and someone on horseback, but the text is too fragmentary to know for certain. The location of the tale is a place called Sman-thang thang bal-ma. The *srin* Ag-sa rgyal-pa... in order to cause harm (*nyen-byang*) to the son of the sheep, this *srin* magically transformed (*rdzus*) itself into the boy's mother; [the boy] would be no more. This female brute (*dred-mo*) magically transformed itself; [the boy] would be no more. The *srin* transformed itself... It offered [the boy] mead (*sbrang-chang*) *khyal-khyil*,⁴³¹ the sparkling⁴³² mead... honey sweet (*dngar*)... [The boy] consumed much (*za-za*) of the honey sweetness.... [The boy] and Ma-dgo (the *srin* in disguise) had met... in a meadow. To the boy, Ma-dgo fed much (*gso-gso*) sweetness (mead) *byang byang* (?) and curd with molasses (*nyug-[chu]*) *pyang pying* (?) and the essence of the breast (milk) [sweetened] with honey. The boy was no more (he died).⁴³³

(ln. 5)... *pha gshen rab myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *bo dang dur* (C.T. = '*dur*') *shen* (C.T. = *gshen*) *rma da dang sgal gshen tho'u yug zhal na re* / {#} (6) {###} *zhon ni bu khyod kyi sman thang thang bal ma ni* /⁴³⁴ *srin Ag sa rgyal pa 'is* {#} (7) {###} *la nyen* (C.T. = *nyes*) *byang* (= *byed*) *du 'tshal te ma srin ru rdzus gyis myed do ma dred mo ni rdzus kyi* {ka} *myed do* {#} (8) {# *srin*} *rdzus kyi chab ma ru / sbrang chang khyal khyil du sbrang zi ma gong te* {nyul} *gyis sbrang rtsi dngar* (C.T. = *mngar*) (9) *la* {#} / *sbrang rtsi dngar* (C.T. = *mngar*) *za za na / {sbrang} pyug tshar te mchis na bu gso* {##} *nas spang {sbrang} {zi}* (10) {ma} *gong du ma dgo dang de ru mjal te / ma dgo 'is bu gso gso nas / dngar* (C.T. = *mngar*) *byang byang ni* {##} (11) {##} *gyi zho nyug* (C.T. = *snyug*) *pyang pying ni sbrang nu ma 'i rtsi / bu myed kyi go ni ma dgo mo spang snar g.yel* {go #} (12) {##} *'is bgyiste /*

The text now moves to the real mother of the poisoned sheep boy. She was named G.yang ngo-rtsa (White Sheep with Red Markings on the Face),⁴³⁵ the possession of Dga'-zen te chen-po, a primal human or god. In the third portion of Pt 1194 (ln. 68), we learn that Dga'-zen te'i chen-po (*sic*) is the patriarch of Dga'-yul (C.T. = Dga'-yul) *byang-rnams*, a boreal land closely associated with the afterlife. The mother went in search of her lost son but could not locate him. In words as true to the text as possible, this is related as follows:

Now, the [real] mother of this boy was G.yang ngo-rtsa, the property (*dkor*) of Dga'-zen te chen-po. The wolf (*spyang-khu-khu*) had been dispatched (*skyes*)... (apparently) by Ma-dgo to the meadow, so that it could eat the corpse of the sheep

⁴³⁰ That these two figures are found in the text (lns. 5, 16) is noted in Stein 2010 (Antiqua V), p. 257.

⁴³¹ This expression illustrates that the mead appeared as a swirling sheet of liquid, as if it had just been poured into a vessel for drinking. For reference to mead in a ritual for the god Phu-wer, see Bellezza 2005, pp. 356, 358.

⁴³² *Zi-ma*. This word appears to be closely related to the C.T. *zogs* (water spray).

⁴³³ From what remains legible in the remaining part of the grammatical line, it appears that Ma-dgo discarded the sheep boy's corpse in a meadow.

⁴³⁴ In this textual line three syllables have been crossed out by a horizontal stroke of the writing instrument. Any unneeded or mistaken inditement is not treated in the transliteration of the text.

⁴³⁵ Called a *dmār-rtsa* or *dmār-zhal*, this kind of sheep is still prized for ritual purposes by the '*brog-pa* of the Byang-thang. See Bellezza 2005, pp. 132, 164, 342 (n. 502).

boy. Here sunrays (*zer*) were shining through (*tong tong*) the turquoise mist.⁴³⁶ The sheep son was no more... Saying, 'I shall search for my son, the boy who is no more', G.yang-mo ngo-rtsa (*sic*) with her sons (?) The-zhon and Ne-zhon... roamed all over (*bskor bskor*) [but] the boy could not be had.⁴³⁷

(12)... *da dga' zen te chen po'i dkor ma g.yang ngo rtsa'i bu spyang khu khu 'a skyes* (C.T. = *bkyes*) *to'i {##}* (13) *ne {#} bu rlag ste zer tong tong g.yu bun pun zhing mchis ste / lug bu myed gyi ni bu ru te {#}* (14) *{##} bu myed bu ru bgyi 'tshalo gsung nas g.yang mo ngo rtsa ni bu the zhon ne zhon bsnam shing {#}* (15) *{##} bskor bskor na ni bu myi gda' / bldag bldag* (C.T. = *ldag ldag?*) *ni dbo cha gda' ste {##}* (16) *ni {#} zhing mchiso /*

The fathers (*pha*) Gshen-rab myi-bo and Dur-shen rma-da directly enter the narrative again. They announce that the slain sheep is to have a special function for the deceased, which will be explained more fully later in the text. Patiently yet forcefully, the priests demonstrate to the distraught G.yang ngo-rtsa that her son had fallen victim to the demon Ma-dgo. The two *dur-gshen* (C.T. = '*dur-gshen*') relate to the sheep mother how exactly this demon lured her son to his death. The events thus far described in the text are characterized as the 'old custom' (*rnying gi lugso*), because they are historical (as much as this myth can be) in nature. They deal with the death of the sheep in the distant past. This is differentiated from the 'new custom' / 'new religion' (*chos-gsar*), which pertains to the succedent appointment of the deceased sheep son in the service of humanity. The text affirms that this new way enjoyed the approbation of both the sheep son and his mother. The text is framed as follows:

The fathers Gshen-rab-rab myi-bo (*sic*) and Dur-shen rma-da spoke, 'You, G.yang ngo-rtsa, your son... the compensation (*skyin-ba*) of your son, the substitute (*tshab*) for the destroyed one.' [The priest's continued to speak]: 'Go calling out '*ba' 'ba*',⁴³⁸ [but] the dead do not return to the living. Above Sman-thang thang (*sic*), Ma-dgo-mo (*sic*) perceived of as the mother in an upward (respectful) [manner] (*var*) fed [your son]. Ma-dgo perceived of as the mother [and your son] went together (*breng*). For one year he had the provisions (*brgyags*) of honey and molasses (*nyag-nyug*).'⁴³⁹ Now, the new custom. That above (*khar*) is the old custom. Well ('*o-na*'), for the [deceased] son, that which is ridden (*zhon ne zhon*) is benefiting and meritorious. The boy who has no mother knows (*go*) like that. The mother who has no son also knows like that.'

(16)... *pha gshen rab myi bo dang dur shen rma da'i zhal {nas} g.yang ngo rtsa khyod {kyi}* (17) *bu {#} ni bu'i skyin ba rlag gi ni tsham (= tshab) 'o 'ba' 'ba' ni bos shing song shig gshin pyir* (C.T. = *phyir*) *du ma* (18) *gson 'gro mod ma sman thang thang bla ma'i go ma dgo mo yar gyis gsos te ma dgo breng* (C.T. = '*breng*') *ni* (19) *ma'i go mdzod chig / sbrang rtsi nyag nyug* (C.T. = *smyug*) *kyang lo'i ni brgyags lags mod / da chos gsar ma lagso khar* (C.T. = *kha la*) (20) *ba ni rnying gi lugso / 'o na bu te zhon ne zhon la phan ching bsod do / bu ma myed kyi go yang de ltar go ma bu* (21) *myed kyi go yang de ltar go /*

⁴³⁶ *G.yu-bun-pun*. The addition of *pun* to *g.yu-bun* appears to be an ornamental feature that may relay a quality or attribute of turquoise mist.

⁴³⁷ The next grammatical line in the text seems to show these sheep doing much licking (*bldag bldag*), as well as other actions, but it is highly fragmentary.

⁴³⁸ The sound of the bleating of a sheep, like the English onomatopoeic *baa baa*.

⁴³⁹ *Nyag* does not appear to add an additional layer of meaning to *nyug* (C.T. = *smyug*)-[*chu*].

In order to commence the ‘new’ religious tradition, the lineage of a particular human or of all humans in general had to be recited by officiants in the wake of the origins myth. This sequence of the text appears to have been chanted by priests in a concurrent funerary ritual rather than by the two archetypal priests of the *smrang*. It is also stated by these latter-day practitioners that while other god(s) were propitiated by a prototypic father and mother, it was the divinity Ma-dag dkar-po who was satisfied with what had been offered. It appears that this deity became the patron of the psychopomp sheep ritual. Like other Old Tibetan funerary rituals, divine allies play an instrumental but understated role in this performance. This strongly contrasts with Classical Tibetan works where the appearances and activities of various deities are described in much more detail. The overall impression this affords is that after 1000 CE, the funerary gods became far more objectified; the reification of what formerly had been a ubiquitous or pedestrian presence. As do priests in other archaic funerary texts, the officiants figuratively operate from above the sky (*gnam gang la*), the purest and most powerful of positions (see *supra*, p. 167). These priests intone the sacred speech (*gtam*), telling the tale of the sheep son, a cautionary lesson for the dead that they should not tarry on the passes and fords of the postmortem landscape. These words of the *dur-gshen* or *gshin-gshen* are designed to capture the attention of the deceased and to lead him or her to the funerary venue.

Next, the gifts of the sheep mother and even those of the imposter mother are declared. Along with the inherent sacerdotal power to persuade the dead, the priests entice them with the delicious food offerings of their mother, maternal aunt (*sru*) and maternal uncle (*zhang*).⁴⁴⁰ Among these offerings is sweetened yogurt, a food preparation first encountered in the prototypic funeral of an elderly woman (see *supra*, p. 171). As with matrilineal aspects in the dynasty of the first seven kings of the so-called Yar-lung dynasty (Khri-bdun) and the imperial political institution of the *zhang-blon* / *zhang-lon*, the relatives chosen in this funerary ritual elevate the standing accorded maternal relations in the early historic period, and by mythic extension, in prehistoric times as well. While quite a bit has been written on the ways in which maternal uncles aided their royal nephews in ascending the throne, Pt 1194 hints at an interrelated custom with far-reaching cultural ramifications. Nonetheless, from the scanty passage at hand little else can be said about this putative avuncular funerary tradition. The text unfolds as follows:

Today and tomorrow to pronounce the human lineage, the lineage (*cho*), to pronounce [the lineage] of the father of the dead and mother... For their activities, although the mother and father worshipped many times (*mchod mchod*) the *lha* for protection, the *lha* did not protect. They also worshipped and compensated (*skyin-ba*) Ma-dag dkar-po... who was pleased... Today (*du-mod*), above the sky, the fathers (the *gshen*) made the [sacred] speech, they made the speech of ancient times, that also was made as the speech... of protection. That the [sheep boy’s] corpse, yes, was below (*rmad*): The very kind (*drin drin*) mother (G.yang-mo ngo-rtsa) was calling out (*’bod*): ‘This sweetened yogurt, the sweets are here. My boy, do not pursue (*phrang*) the pass of the heights, do not set out (*chin*) to the ford in the bottomland. The honey and molasses of the mother are also here.’ The yogurt with molasses of Ma-dgo is also here; her *pye-mar* (butter and parched barley preparation) is here.

Next, the text communicates that the loving relatives of the current deceased are also here [at the funerary venue]:

⁴⁴⁰ For a similar evocation of the dead (*bla-’bod*) in the Mu-cho’i khrom-’dur, see Bellezza 2008, pp. 421, 422.

Boy, if you desire your mother, look at your mother. Younger brother (*mu*), if you desire your maternal aunt, look at your maternal aunt. Boy, if you desire your maternal uncle, look at your maternal uncle. The rain falling from above fills completely the reservoir (*rdzing*) below.⁴⁴¹

... *di ring sang lta na myi smo* (= *smos*) *pa yang cho las smoso / shi 'i pha dang ma smos bu* (22) *kyi pha mas lasu lha mchod mchod na mgosu* (C.T. = *mgon du*) *lha ma 'goste* (C.T. = *mgon te*) *ma dag dkar po gyang* (C.T. = *kyang*) *du bchado* (C.T. = *mchod do*) *skyin ba dar {#}* (23) *{mnyes}* *gyas ma 'tshabs {mdo}* *la du ni gnam rdib na dka ba ni ris ma rton {dkra dung}* *bud gshegs na {##}* (24) *sa {#}* *lond / du* (C.T. = *do*) *mod gnam gang la pha dang ni gtam bgyi mod gna' 'i gtham* (C.T. = *gtam*) *bgyis da'i srung du {#}* (25) *{#}* *gtam byas na gyang* (C.T. = *kyang*) *ro ni rmad* (C.T. = *smad*) *du gda' 'o // ma drin drin ni 'bod ching 'dugo / dngar* (C.T. = *mngar*) *zho dngar* (C.T. = *mngar*) *ni 'di na* (26) *yod do / bu mtho la ru yang ma phrang* (C.T. = *'brang*) *shig dma' rab du ni ma chin* (C.T. = *phyin*) *chig / ma sbrang rtsi nyag nyug* (C.T. = *snyug*) *kyang 'di na {yod}* (27) *do / ma dgo 'i zho gnyug* (C.T. = *snyug*) *mo yang 'dina* (= *'di na*) *yod do gda'pye* (C.T. = *phye*) *mar 'da' 'de yang 'di na yod do bu gnyen { 'o}* (28) *byams gyi sris don no bu ma 'dod ma la ltos shig nu sru 'dod ni sru la ltos shig / bu 'dod ni zhang la {ltos}* (29) *shig char yas bab sru gsolo rdzi* (= *rdzing*) *mas langs kyī skyabs gsol lo //*

The officiants, with the force of the psychopomp origins myth behind them, continue to call upon the dead to heed their words and instructions. Their elocution is characterized as the *bon* that protects (*bon dang srung*); *bon* here referring to the sacerdotal expertise and ritual methods possessed by the funerary priests. To attract the deceased to the funeral venue, the most emotive of strategies are used in the text. Pt 1194 portrays the acting priests as the surrogate father of the dead, while the sheep is his surrogate mother. The *gshen* admonish the dead not to be led astray or beguiled by the demons of the after-death realm. As in the case of the sheep son, it is these demons that caused his or her demise. This caveat is graphically rendered in the text. The text also makes it patently known that while the living and the dead abide in an existential equilibrium thanks to the funerary rite (*shid*), they are ineluctably separated from one another. The relatives in the world of the living have given the departed the choicest gifts but no more than that are they capable of doing.

The priests now invoke their archetype, Dur-shen gyi rma (*sic*), stating that it was he who had made the sheep the surrogate mother of the deceased. In such a role, the sheep carries the epithet *spo-ma nye-du*, as do the *do-ma* funerary ritual transport horses. This expression signifies that the sheep and *do-ma* are the surrogate relatives of the deceased in the form of livestock.⁴⁴² Furthermore, like the slain sheep boy, a sacrificial sheep in the concurrent funeral serves as compensation (*skyin-ba*) and the substitute (*tshab*) relative for the dead, he or she who is bereft of all living relations. In conclusion, the first origins myth of Pt 1194 relays that this male sheep was the wealth, property, endowment, good fortune, or benefaction (*long*) awarded by the mother sheep for use by the deceased, in a covenant seen as originating in a primal past (in the text the dead is tantamount to his name). The text conveys these portentous activities as follows:

⁴⁴¹ This *dpe* or example signifies that the relatives of the deceased sheep son are as beneficial as a full reservoir is to crops and other vegetation.

⁴⁴² *Spo-ma nye-du* means something to the effect of 'the mother that moves to a new residence (*spo-ma*) relations (*nye-du*)'. Jäschke (1881: 331) cites the word *spo-sa* as denoting a place newly occupied by shepherds, a term that appears to be lexically related to the O.T. *spo-ma*.

The [deceased] son and fathers (the *gshen*) were engaged in dialogue (*gtam bya mod*), the *bon* that protects: 'You son, the mother you imagine (*snyam*) is not your mother. You son, that mother is the magically transformed *srin-mo*, she is not [your mother]. That magically transformed female brute is not [your mother].' They said, 'The hand of that female is carrying the shuttle (*thag-zangs*), the long shuttle, with which she has broken (*gchag*) the son's legs.' They said, 'The hand of that female is carrying the *mthing gi nam* (?) with which she has plucked out (*bru*) the boy's eyes (*dmyig*). The living and dead are reconciled by the making of the *shid*. [Nevertheless], the living and dead cannot signal to see each other. Their intentions / thoughts (*dgongs*), day... and night, are irreconcilable.⁴⁴³ Also, the dead boy and living mother, these two, the living and the dead, cannot signal each other. The dead boy and the living mother, these two, are separated. They are not [together]. The mother has given you in accordance with the mother's desire and the maternal aunt has given you in accordance with the maternal aunt's desire. You sheep *spo-ma nye-du* of that very kind mother, father Dur-shen gyi rma saw it suitable to attest (*bzhag*) the testament (*chems*) clearly (*sil-don*) in your ear *drum* (?), that you act as the substitute mother of he who has no mother, [the substitute mother] of the uttered (*dbyung*) name of the dead. [Act as] the substitute [mother] of the dead, the compensation of the destroyed. You be the compensation of the dead, the benefaction (*long*) [of the mother]. You be the substitute of the destroyed, the benefaction [of the mother sheep].'

(29)... *bu chang* (C.T. = *yang*) *pha dang gtam bya mod bon dang* (30) *srung* {#} / *bu khyod ma yin snyam ste ma yin no bu khyod ma ni srin mor rdzus kyis myedo dred mor rdzus kyis* {myed} / (31) *do* / {ma'i} *lag na thag zangs* (C.T. = *gzangs*) *gzangs rings* (C.T. = *ring*) *khyer te bu rkang pa gchago* (C.T. = *bcag go*) *zer ro bu ma'i lag na mthing gi nam* {#} (32) *khyer te bu'i dmyig* (C.T. = *mig*) *bru 'is zer ro / gson gshin shed* (= *shid*) *rgyi* (= *bgyi*) *mthun no gson gshin brda myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *mjald* (C.T. = *mjal*) *to nying* (= *nyin*) *zhing* {#} (33) *gchig mtshan zhing dgongs myi mthun bu shi ba dang ma gson gnyis kyang gson gshin brda myi* {mjal} (34) *lo bu gshin dang ni ma gson gnyis bye 'is myed do ma 'dod ni ma'i go sru 'dod ni sru 'i go / ma drin* (35) *drin 'de* (= 'di) *re ga lug spo ma nyi* (= *nye*) *du khyod pha dur shen gyi rma 'is thugs rung du ni chems bzhag go snyan drum du ni* (36) *sil don to gyi ma myed kyi ma'i tshab mar bgyi 'o shi ba'i mying* (C.T. = *ming*) *nas dbyung* (C.T. = *phyung*) *shi 'i tshab ma rlag gi skyin ba* (37) *'o / shi'i skyin long* (C.T. = *longs*) *shig rlag tshab long* (C.T. = *longs*) *shig* /

⁴⁴³ This sentence conveys, for example, while the living are awake in the day and asleep at night, the dead are awake at night and asleep in the day. In other words, they belong to opposite worlds.

The Origins Myth of Lhe'u yang-ka' rje in Pt 1134

The fifth and final origins tale of Pt 1134 is concerned with the death and redemption of an ancestral figure known as Lhe'u yang-ka' rje (lns. 67–134).⁴⁴⁴ This tale is as long as the four origins tales that precede it combined. Lhe'u yang-ka' rje (in Eternal Bon, his name is rendered Lhe'u g.yang-dkar rje) is the prototypic *lhe'u* or 'little god', the son of the divine patriarch known as 'Gon-tsun phywa. As we have seen in the illuminated funerary manuscript, *lhe'u* is an epithet for the deceased, in recognition of his or her genealogical affinity with the celestial deities. Cultural justification for the use of this term in the illuminated funerary manuscript, therefore, is derived (directly or indirectly) from this account in Pt 1134, a text that predates it by as much as three centuries.

The fifth etiologic myth of Pt 1134 is occupied with the funerary horses known as *do-ma*, those animals that brave the topographic barriers of the postmortem world to deliver the dead to the doorstep of the afterlife.⁴⁴⁵ As noted, there are other major accounts featuring *do-ma* and their origins in the Dunhuang manuscripts. These include Pt 1136 (two origins tales), ITJ 731r (one ritual and one long origins tale), Pt 1060 (a number of interrelated tales), as well as the more minor etiologic myths in the other four narratives of Pt 1134. It is no mere accident that so much attention was lavished on the *do-ma* in the archaic funerary texts of Dunhuang, for this custom was seen as essential in delivering the dead to the otherworld. That there are no less than ten variant tales in Old Tibetan recounting the origins and use of the *do-ma* indicates that in the early historic period, the tradition of funerary transport horses was sufficiently ingrained and widespread to have engendered its own mythography. These tales vary in location, the priests and families involved, the causes of death, and in ritual methodology. The history and pedigree of the surviving *do-ma* foundation myths are highly obscure. Nevertheless, Pt 1060 affirms that each of the constituent regions of Upper Tibet and Central Tibet (and Drugu north of Tibet) had its own lineages of *do-ma*. Perhaps, therefore, the extant etiologic tales represent the cultural legacy of different geographic areas and social configurations. Even if this is not true for every origins myth, it appears to hold true for some. If so, this adds weight to the view that early historic-period funerary texts exemplify a fusion of pre-existing traditions.

The proponent of the fifth origins tale in Pt 1134 is the primordial father and *bon* priest 'Gon-tsun phywa. It is he who must cope with the loss of his son Lhe'u yang-ka' rje. This proves to be a long and difficult proposition, but eventually 'Gon-tsun phywa is able to appoint two *do-ma* along with the *skyibs-lug* sheep guide to carry the spirit of Lhe'u yang-ka' rje to the otherworld situated high in the sky. As the *do-ma*, these horses function to cross the rivers and passes of the postmortem geography on the journey to paradise.

⁴⁴⁴ This origins myth is reviewed in Stein 1971, pp. 494–497. Brief reference to this myth is found in Bellezza 2008, p. 384 (n. 93). Pt 1134 originally contained no less than five origins myths, the first of which is now incomplete. For the third and fourth origins myths of Pt 1134, see Bellezza 2008, pp. 510–513; for the fourth origins myth also see *supra*, p. 145 (fn. 220). For the second origins myth see *supra*, p. 168 (fn. 291). The second origins myth is also mentioned in Stein 2010 (Antiqua V), p. 264. For reference to other *do-ma* myths, see *supra*, p. 31 (fn. 48).

⁴⁴⁵ Interestingly, in contemporary eastern Nag-chu, *do-ma* denotes the horse used to carry a corpse or the stereotypic effigy of the dead (*byang-bu*) to the charnel grounds. The word *do-ma* is also employed by horsemen to signal displeasure when their charge is not heeding commands properly. Words that are probably etymologically related include 'do-ba (horse), and 'do-chung and 'do-chen (breeds of horses). Pt 1042 (ln. 15) confirms that yaks can serve as the *do-ma* as well. For the origins myth of a hybrid female yak that functioned as the *do-ma* for a young woman in Pt 1068, see Bellezza 2008, pp. 538–541.

From his name as well as from the events of the narrative, it can be deduced that 'Gon-tsun phywa (C.T. = Mgon-btsun phywa) was an archetypal protector of the dead who belonged to the Phywa / Phywa lineage of uranic gods. Based on an eschatological tradition elaborated upon in *Rnel dri 'dul ba'i thabs sogs*, the *tsun* / *btsun* component of his name might be seen as signifying the dead in their form as the noble occupants of the empyrean.

As do many other origins myths in the archaic funerary tradition, this Pt 1134 tale begins with the search for a wife by an ancient highborn male. In this story he is 'Gon-tsun phywa, the celestial figure who lived above the sky (*gnam*) and the heavens (*dgung*). These two terms for the firmament are synonyms, their juxtaposition one of many instances in the story of words used in parallel in iterative language. The subject of a sentence when deemed sufficiently important is repeated twice, adding substance and circumstance to the words spoken. Thus we find 'wife and mate', 'son and child' and so forth in the text. Predicates are often used in a similar way in the story; repetition of the action driving home the significance what is being described. This style of writing is more akin to verse than prose, yet it has the characteristics of both, combining the prosaic detail of the narrative with the metrical structure of poetry. This form of composition is probably best described as belonging to an epic style.

'Gon-tsun phywa married the lady Tang-nga bdud-mo tang. By contrast in Chapter III of *Rnel dri 'dul ba'i thabs sogs*, the wife of 'Gon-btsun phywa (*sic*) was Sten-za khri-'phang (see *supra*, p. 167). That in the fifth narrative of Pt 1134, his wife was the daughter of the lord of the *bdud* would prove problematic. Nature taking its course, a son was born to this couple, Lhe'u yang-ka' rje. This youth is depicted as a virtuous and capable individual. It appears that his mastery of horses led Lhe'u yang-ka' rje to engage in a race or contest with his maternal uncle. The text is clear that by doing so the youth was risking death, which is expressed through the stock archaic eschatological expression, 'above the water' (*chab-gang*). As a result, Lhe'u yang-ka' rje and his maternal uncle became deeply opposed to one another. The death of Lhe'u yang-ka' rje was at the hands of the *bdud* and *sri*, standard personified agents of violent death:

The origins myth of Lhe'u yang-ka' rje: In ancient times,⁴⁴⁶ in the sky above, high above the heavens, long ago when the deluge (*skyin-dang*) had not fallen,⁴⁴⁷ 'Gon-tsun phywa did not have a wife and mate, so he searched (*btsald*) for a wife and mate. He took the daughter of Bdud-rje btsan-tog skyold, Tang-nga bdud-mo tang, as his wife and mate. The son (*sras*) of their mating and seasonal activity, a boy (*bu-po*), was begotten (*byung*). The son (*sras-dral*) who was born (*bltam*) was bestowed a name (*mying*), a name (*mtsan*) was bestowed upon the son: Lhe'u yang-ka' rje (*sic*), the man of the power of the *lha* mighty one (*btsan*),⁴⁴⁸ the learned (*mkas*) and mighty man⁴⁴⁹ who rejected (*'tor*) bad [activities]. He completely controlled⁴⁵⁰ the swift [horse]. He risked (*sdos*) [provoking] his maternal uncle and [going] above the water. He risked (*bsdos*) [provoking] his maternal uncle *bdud* and [going] above the water. He and the *bdud* fought bitterly (*bslogs-mnard*). He was ravaged (*mnard*) by

⁴⁴⁶ This is followed by *kar ga la gzhe* (C.T. = *ye*) *dgu ga la*, words that seem to poetically reinforce the antiquity in which the story is set.

⁴⁴⁷ Perhaps *skyin-dang* is cited here as an allusion to an ancient flood, which is traditionally believed to have struck Tibet.

⁴⁴⁸ This is followed by *mags sgog tog*, which is of unclear signification.

⁴⁴⁹ This is preceded by the syllable *g.ya*, the meaning of which is ambiguous.

⁴⁵⁰ *Dkyus stsol* (= *rtisol*). The C.T. equivalent expression is *dkyus thag bcad pa*.

the maternal uncle *bdud*. Lhe'u yang-ka rje was penalized (*bcad*) by the *bdud* from the sky. From the earth rose up the *sri*. He died, he was no more.

(ln. 67) *lhe'u yang ka' rje'i rabso // gna' kar ga la gzhe dgu ga la //* (68) *skyin dang ma bab gyi ba snga na gnam gyi ya' bla na / dgung g'i ya stengs* (C.T. = *steng*) *na' / 'gon tsun phywa zhig khab dang /* (69) *dbyal ma mcis (= mchis) kab* (C.T. = *khab*) *dang dbyal btsald (btsal) pa / bdud rje btsan tog skyold gyi sras mo tang nga bdud mo tang* (70) *zhig kab* (C.T. = *khab*) *dang / dbyal du blangs te bshos tang* (C.T. = *dang*) */ nams / gyi sras / bu po ru / byung / sras dral du bltam* (C.T. = *bltams*) *bu'i mying* (C.T. = *ming*) (71) *btags / sras g'i mtsan* (C.T. = *mtshan*) *btags pa / lhe'u yang ka rje ni lha dbang*⁴⁵¹ *btsan myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *mags sgog tog ni* (72) *g.ya myi mkas* (C.T. = *mkhas*) *btsan ni 'ngan* (C.T. = *ngan*) *'tor* (C.T. = *dor*) *mkyogs* (C.T. = *mgyogs*) *ni dkyus stsol zhang dang chab gang sdos zhang* (73) *bdud dang chab gang bsdos bdud dang yang bslogs* (C.T. = *bslogs*) */ mnard ni zhang bdud g'is mnarde* *lhe'u yang* (74) *ka rje gnam las / ni bdud bcad* (C.T. = *chad*) *sa las ni sri langste grongs gyis / myed*

The father 'Gon-tsun pywa (*sic*) looked upon his son with much concern. Like doting fathers everywhere, the patriarch attempted to induce Lhe'u yang-ka rje to get up. Although he had some inkling that his son had perished, the father was still in a state of disbelief. 'Gon-tsun pywa offered his boy a castle, lands, servants, and livestock, but none of these had the intended effect of making him stir. The opulence of these offerings indicates that 'Gon-tsun pywa was an individual of noble rank, as are many other personalities in the old origins myths. Despite his blandishments, the unmistakable signs of death in Lhe'u yang-ka rje had set in and eventually 'Gon-tsun pywa had no choice but to acknowledge these:

On the morning of the next day, the next day,⁴⁵² the father and patriarch looked and saw, 'Gon-tsun pywa looked and saw that his boy was not standing, his son was not standing. He was no more. The father and patriarch said, 'Gon-tsun pywa said, 'how was his mind finished, how was his patrilineage 'old (finished?)? If you like (*bzhed*) a castle (*mkar*) in the heights to take (*bzhes*) to go (*bzhud*) there with, if you like a country in the bottomland to take to go there with, I shall make them.' But, the boy did not stand, the son did not stand. [The father said,] 'Otherwise, if you like, [take] ten mighty male servants (*khol-pa*) and livestock (*pyugs-bdag*) of many kinds?'⁴⁵³ [The father] made clear, 'Take many (*dags-bo*) valleys and many (*dgu*) lakes, and male and female sheep, if you like.' However, the boy did not rise, he was no more. Well, 'Gon-tsun pywa (*sic*) looked and saw that the eyes [of his son] were blue-colored.⁴⁵⁴ When he looked at his flesh it was as white as cloth (*dar*).

sang g'i nam nangs / dgung (75) *sangs / na' pa* (C.T. = *pha*) */ yab gyis bltas te gzis (= gzigs) / 'gon tsun pywas / bltas / te / gzigs pa na / bu / ma bzhengs sras* (76) *ma / bzhengs / gyis myed* (C.T. = *med*) *pha / yab g'i zhal nas 'gon tsun pywa'i zhal nas bu ci la thugs chad ci la* (77) *'brang 'old mto* (C.T. = *mtho*) *mkar* (C.T. = *mkhar*) *bzhed na bzhes te bzhud dma' yul bzhed na bzhes / te / bzhud ces bgyis na* (78) *bu ma / bzhengs sras / ma bzhengso 'o na / btsan / khol / pa / bcu dang pyugs* (C.T. = *phyugs*) *bdag* (C.T. = *dags*) */ sna dgu / bzhed / tam* (79) *lung dags bo mtso* (C.T. = *mtsho*) *dgu na ra lug mying srñg / bzhed / na bzhes shes bgyis gyang bu ma bzhengs* (80) *g'is*

⁴⁵¹ The scribe overlooked one stroke of the letter *b* in this word.

⁴⁵² This is the general import of *sang g'i nam nangs / dgung sangs*.

⁴⁵³ The interrogative *tam* is used here.

⁴⁵⁴ Eyes that have turned blue are a sign of death for Tibetans.

myed / 'o na 'gon btsun / pywas / bltas te gzigs / na spyang / bltas / na mtsang (C.T. = *mtshon*) / *bas sngo sha / bltas gyis* (81) *dar / bas dkar...*

'Gon-tsun pywa was a great *bon* in his own right and a divinity of the *gsas* class (as are many other archaic funerary deities). He chanted for three nights and conducted an evocation of his son's soul, but this had no effect. The author as narrator states in plain but edifying language that Lhe'u yang-ka rje was dead. What appears to have been the victorious horse of the maternal uncle, Bdud-rje btsan-tog skyold, was named Btsan-rgyal kha-ba. Still, no reason is tendered why the uncle directly or indirectly murdered his nephew. We might read into this account an ongoing rivalry between the maternal and paternal families of Lhe'u yang-ka rje. These tensions may have been exacerbated by a tribal fault line between the *mgon / lha* and *bdud*, but we do not really know. Perhaps the intrigues that led to the death of a not insignificant number of Spu-rgyal rulers while still relatively young are instructive here. In any event, the text focuses on the desperation of 'Gon-tsun pywa and his continuing efforts to try to resuscitate his son:

'Gon-tsun pywa as the learned *bon* and mighty *gsas*, picked up in his lap Lhe'u yang-ka rje, his son that was no more. For three nights he chanted (*bsgyer*)⁴⁵⁵ but even after that [his son] was dead, he was no more. He called out vigorously (*'o-'bos*) [to his son's] soul⁴⁵⁶ but even after that he was dead. His eyes were wide open but even after that he was dead, he was no more. The father and patriarch said, 'Gon-tsun pywa said, 'The swift Btsan-rgyal kha-ba completely prevailed (*dkyus rtsol-ba*) [in the race]. [My son] was imperiled (*bsdos*) by the maternal uncle and [going] over the water. He died from the maternal uncle *bdud*, the *bdud* who matched his stride (opposed him).⁴⁵⁷ How was the dead man revived (*sos*) or not revived through therapy (*gso*)? How was the split (*gam-ba*) rock (*gor*) joined (*'byord*) to be made whole (*sbyar*) or not joined?

'gon (C.T. = *mgon*) *tsun* (C.T. = *btsun*) / *pywa las / bon / bkhas* (C.T. = *mkhas*) *gsas drag myede bu lhe'u yang ka rje ni pang du blangs* (82) *te zhag gsum / du bsgyer gyang bu myi mtsag* (C.T. = *mtshags*) *snar gyang sladu / grongs / gis myed bla za 'o 'bos / gyang* (83) *sla du (= sladu) grongs spyang bye / 'ang / sladu grongs / gyis myed / pa yab gi zhal / nas / 'gon* (C.T. = *mgon*) *tsun* (C.T. = *btsun*) *pywa'i* (84) *zhal nas btsan rgyal kha ba mgyogs dkyus rtsol ba / zhang dang chab gang bsdos bdud /* (85) *dang bang*⁴⁵⁸ / *byal bslags gis / zhang / bdud gyis / bgrongs* (C.T. = *grongs*) / *na / myi shi ba 'di gso na sos* (C.T. = *gsos*) / *sam* (86) *myi sos* (C.T. = *gsos*) / *gor / gam ba 'di / sbyar na 'byord tam myi / 'byor ches /*

Mgon-tshun phywa' (*sic*) proceeded to obtain expert assistance from a funerary priest (*gshin-gshen*), who was a *bon* or ritual specialist in the *gto* (beneficial rites) and *dphyad* (diagnostic and therapeutic rites). This priest is called the son of the *lha* (*lha / i / bu*) and nephew of the *srin* (*srin gyi tsha*'), a reference to his uranic patriline and chthonic matriline. This is a genealogical articulation of the Tibetan mythologem of the progenerative heaven and earth. Despite their best efforts, neither father nor priest could resuscitate Lhe'u yang-ka rje. There was no alternative

⁴⁵⁵ This is followed by *gyang bu myi mtsag* (C.T. = *mtshags*) *snar*, the general import of which seems to be that the deceased was not disturbed or shaken during the chanting.

⁴⁵⁶ *Bla-za*. The addition of *za* seems to invest 'soul' with a honorific sense and/or more strongly objectifies it.

⁴⁵⁷ The 'matching of the stride' is the general import of *bang / byal bslags*, which is indicative of a fierce competition or rivalry.

⁴⁵⁸ Although not well written, this word is indeed *bang* (pace) as demonstrated in ln. 13 of Pt 1134.

left except for these two to conduct the funeral. A large burial ceremony (*mdad-shid*)⁴⁵⁹ was held and the *chab-gang* readied. The 'over the water' gifts were two horses: the elder brother (*phu*) Bgyogs (Swift One) and the younger brother (*nu*) Yid-mgyogs (Swift [As] Thought). It will be recalled that in the illuminated funerary manuscript the wild ass is said to be able to go anywhere as fast as it thinks it. These two horses were 'set in the ordered position' (*grar bchud*). What this regulation of the funerary horses consisted of in ritual terms is spelt out later the text. According to the final part of the narrative, as well as from indications in the *rta-gtad* text of the Mu-cho'i khrom-'dur, this mystic procedure coincided with the caparisoning and display of the equids:

At the edge of the sky, on the apex (?) of the heavens, the son was the son of the *lha*, the nephew was the nephew of the *srin*. He, the mighty *bon gshin-gshen*,⁴⁶⁰ was invited by Mgon-tshun phywa'. These two did the *gto* and did the *dphyad*. The therapy (*gso*) did not revive (*sos*) the dead one. The split stone was not joined together, so they conducted (*gtang*) a great *mdad-shid*. They made that which superimposes (*brtsig*) itself above the water. Now, the rapidly going (*gnyigs*) funerary ritual transport mounts (*chibs-do*) in unison were to be placed in the ordered position. The elder brother Bgyogs (Swift One), and the younger brother Yid-mgyogs (Swift As Thought) were placed in the ordered position.

gnam / gyi / pha mta' (C.T. = *mtha'*) / *dgung* (87) *gi / pa 'brum / na / bu ni lha / 'i / bu'* (C.T. = *bu*) / *tsha* (C.T. = *tsha*) *ni / srin gyi tsha'* (C.T. = *tsha*) / *bon gshin / gshen drag / chig / yod / na* / (88) *de gnyar (= gnyer) te'* (C.T. = *te*) / *mgon tshun phywa'* / *dang gnyis / gyis / gto bgyis / dphyad* (C.T. = *dpyad*) *bgyiste' / myi shi / ba* (89) *ni / gsor myi sos / gor gam / ba ni / myi 'byor gyis / mdad shid cher gtang* (C.T. = *btang*) *cha (= chab) gang cher brtsig ches* / (90) *bgyiste / da' chibs do / gnyigsu / grar (= gral) bchud* (C.T. = *chud*) / *na / phu dang bgyogs* (C.T. = *mggyogs*) / *tang* (C.T. = *dang*) / *nu yid mggyogs / grar (= gral)* (91) *bchud* (C.T. = *chud*) /

The text now diverges from the death of Lhe'u yang-ka'rje to recount the critical role played by a quartet of animals. These comprise a fish, otter, bird, and wolf, in that order. They were bound to a mutual oath to remain the best of friends. The instrument for oath-taking in the text is the *mtho* (C.T. = *tho*), a custom that survived until modern times. *Tho* (often a pile of stones) was erected by oath-takers as a register of their solemn act. By establishing a *tho*, the pledge between two parties is thought to have been witnessed by heaven and earth. However, in our story the two carnivores among the four allies broke their oath. The otter Sram-che dang-dngul was the first to renounce his pledge. In the text it is said that this is like a mother and child who drink poison (*ma bu dug tungs*). This vividly portrays the repulsion and censure that oath-breaking incited. Apparently, there was no greater transgression in ancient Tibetan society.⁴⁶¹ Forswearing his oath, the cunning carnivore Wa-che' sbyang-dom ate the fish Nya-ce yor-rmang. Discovering his remains, the bird Bya-che' lchogs-mo disposed of his piscine friend's corpse high in the heavens in a gesture of loyalty and respect:

⁴⁵⁹ Also '*das-shid*'. This term appears to denote funerals in which there is an entombment rite. For this term in *Klu bum nag po* and Pt 1042, see Haahr 1969, pp. 361, 362; Bellezza 2008, pp. 457, 486, 488. An abbreviated expression denoting the performance of a funeral occurs in the Old Tibetan Annals (*mdad-btang*) and in the Old Tibetan Chronicle (*mdad-gtong*).

⁴⁶⁰ *Bon gshin / gshen drag*. The import of these words in Pt 1134 was not ascertained by Stein (2010, Antiqua V: 254).

⁴⁶¹ For Old Tibetan terms associated with oaths, oath-taking between the *btsan-po* and nobles, oath-taking as a religious and political rite, and cross-cultural features of oaths in imperial-period Tibet, see Walter 2009, pp. 10–12, 24–27, 174–186, etc. On the social magnitude of oaths in the early historic period, also see Bellezza 2008, pp. 222, 223.

Now, at one time, in a place on the earth,⁴⁶² among the eight Drang-nga dbyen there were four big ones. They became bosom friends (*shag-rag*), who pledged an oath⁴⁶³ that was pledged on the *mtho*. Nya-ce yor-rmang, Sram-che dang-dngul,⁴⁶⁴ Bya-che' lchogs-mo,⁴⁶⁵ and Wa-che spyang-ldom,⁴⁶⁶ these four, were the bosom friends that pledged (*bchad*) the oath, which was pledged on the *mtho*. Sram-che' dang-dngul (*sic*) ate (renounced) the oath of the bosom friend (*shag-rag*).⁴⁶⁷ The mother and child drank poison. Wa-che' sbyang-ldom (*sic*) ate his oath of the bosom friend, [killing] Nya-che yor-mang (*sic*). He ate, yes, his flesh. He drank, yes, his blood. Bya-che lchogs-mo took away the corpse of Nya-che yor-mang on top of his flapping (*mdab-ma*) wings. [With his wings] he cleared away the clouds of the open expanse of the sky.⁴⁶⁸ He made off (*bor*) above the sky, he made off above the heavens. He cast out Wa-che spyang-ldom (*sic*) from inside the corpse of Nya-che yor-mang.⁴⁶⁹

da' (C.T. = *da*) *re shig re shig na / sa ma ba'i / tog* (C.T. = *dog*) / *na drang nga dbyen brgyad gyi nang na che bzhi zhig* (92) *shag rag bgyiste / mna' bchad* (C.T. = *bcad*) *mtho* (C.T. = *tho*) *bchad* (C.T. = *bcad*) / *nya ce yor rmang sram che dang dngul / bya che' lchogs /* (93) *mo wa che spyang ldom / dang bzhi'* (C.T. = *bzhi*) / *sha (= shag) rag / mna (= mna') mtho* (C.T. = *tho*) *bchad* (C.T. = *bcad*) *nas / sram che'* (C.T. = *che*) / *dang dngul gis /* (94) *shag rag / mna' / zos / ma bu dug 'tungste* (C.T. = *'thung ste*) / *nya che yor mang / wa che' / sbyang* (C.T. = *spyang*) / *ldom gis / shag* (95) *rag mna (= mna') zoste / nya che yor mang gi / sha la ni za / grag (= khrag) ni 'tung* (C.T. = *'thung*) *zhing mchis / bya che lchogs mos* (96) *nya che yor mang gi / ro'* (C.T. = *ro*) / *mdab* (C.T. = *'dab*) *ma' i / gshog tog* (C.T. = *thog*) *du / blangste / sphrind* (C.T. = *sprin*) *gyi go / bsald* (C.T. = *bsal*) / *gnam* (97) *gyi / mthongs phye ste / gnam gong yang du / bor dgung gong yang du bor / nya che yor mang gi* (98) *ro'* (C.T. = *ro*) / *nang nas / wa che spyang ldom / byung* (C.T. = *phyung*) *ste //*

Mgon-tshun phywa prepared the *chol-rol* of *bse* (white copper?) for the two horses. This appears to be a special type of corral in which horses were kept for *do-ma* ritual use.⁴⁷⁰ However, the two funerary ritual transport horses ran away. The text is not explicit here but it is assured by the storyline that they were spooked by the wolf Wa-che' spyang-dom. This sly creature must have been dropped by the bird Bya-che' lchogs-mo near where Swift One and Swift As Thought were pasturing. Consequently, the patriarch was forced to chase these errant horses over a high pass and valley bottom, yet he could not apprehend them. The gap between Mgon-tshun phywa and the animals was increasing as the two horses escaped through a narrow passageway:

⁴⁶² *Sa ma-ba'i tog* (C.T. = *sa-ma-dog*). Literally: 'not land, not earth', i.e., both of them.

⁴⁶³ *Mna'-bchad*. This expression has been largely replaced by *mna'-bskyal*.

⁴⁶⁴ Silver in the name of this otter refers to the white fur of its belly.

⁴⁶⁵ This great bird (*bya-che'*) appears to be a female swallow or lark (*lchogs-mo*, C.T. = *lcog-mo*).

⁴⁶⁶ This 'great fox' (*wa-che*) seems to have qualities of the wolf (C.T. = *spyang*) and black bear (C.T. = *dom*) as well.

⁴⁶⁷ The eating of oaths (*mna' zos*) is called *mna' za-ba* in Jäschke (1881: 312) and is defined as 'to swear falsely' or to 'commit perjury'.

⁴⁶⁸ A similar expression is found in 1194 (Ins. 49, 50), whereby an element of the funerary ritual wing hand-tool clears away the clouds: *gnam mthongs sprin gyi go seld* (= *sald*, C.T. = *bsal*). See Bellezza 2008, pp. 508, 510.

⁴⁶⁹ *Nya che yor mang gi ro'* (C.T. = *ro*) / *nang nas / wa che spyang ldom / byung* (C.T. = *phyung*) *ste //*. This reading suggests that the fish was gigantic and that the wolf ate it from the inside out. Perhaps instead this sentence should be understood as follows: The corpse of Nya-che yor-mang was removed from inside Wa-che spyang-ldom.

⁴⁷⁰ For the identification of the *chol-rol* / *cho-rol* as an enclosure in Pt 1134, Pt 1136 and *Klu 'bum nag po*, see Stein 2010 (Antiqua V), p. 263; Stein 1971, p. 495. While this gloss is the most plausible one, it is not certain (cf. Bellezza 2008: 527). There is also a possibility that this term denotes some type of ceremonial halter.

Mgon-phywa (*sic*) prepared (*'chos*) the *cho-rol*d of *bse* of the beloved *do-ma* Mgyogs and Yid-mgyogs in Smyangs-mtsherd⁴⁷¹ of the north. The mounts Mgyogs and Yid-mgyogs, these two, fled. Mgon-tshun phywa, in order to capture (*gzung*) [the horses], pursued (*bsnyags*) them but could not overtake them (*ma-slebs*). He did not catch (*zind*) them. [The horses] fled to the heights of the pass. He also pursued them there but could not overtake them. [The horses] fled to the ford in the bottomland. He also pursued them there but could not overtake them. He pursued them over a widening distance (*dbye che la*) but he could not catch them. [The horses] fled to the crossing of the narrow passageway (*'prang*) but [Mgon-tshun phywa] could not catch them.

mgon phywa'i do ma snying dgas / tang (C.T. = *dang*) *mgyogs* (99) / *yid mgyogs / gyi / bse 'i / cho rold / tang* (C.T. = *dang*) / *byang gi / smyangs mtsherd 'choste chibs tang* (C.T. = *dang*) *mgyogs* (100) / *yid mgyogs / gnyis bros te / song mgon tshun / phywas / bsnyags / na ni ma slebs / gzung du* (101) *ni / ma zind* (C.T. = *zin*) / *mtho la ru bros / gyang bsnyag du ma slebs / dma'rab tu bros / gyang bsnyag tu ma slebs /* (102) *dbye che la / bsnyags / gyang ma zind* (C.T. = *zin*) / *'prang* (C.T. = *'phrang*) *rub (= rab) tu bros / gyang ma zind* (C.T. = *zin*) /

His physical ability to outrun the horses sorely tested, Mgon-tshun phywa' changed tactics. He knew that Swift One and Swift As Thought had been drinking from a turquoise spring situated next to a boulder, so he laid a trap. The patriarch rigged up a hobble, and in order to get the horses to step into his fether, he sprinkled salt around it. His ingenuity, however, was insufficient. Although the two horses did indeed become tangled in the hobble, they managed to dislodge it from its anchorage and bolt. With the line of the hobble still attached to the horses, they took flight, first to a mountain and valley, and thence to a series of springs. In the text each of these six springs is characterized by an elemental metal or alloy. This selection of metals reflects the existence of a sophisticated technological order, one that first arose in Tibet in the second half of the first millennium BCE, as excavations of tombs in Gu-ge have revealed. The escape of the equids over mountains and valleys and past bodies of water is reminiscent of the passage through the postmortem realm they will eventually undertake. Their route recalls the one taken by the *dri-sha* in *Sha ru shul ston rabs*:

At one time, at the edge of the sky, on the apex (?) of the heavens, there was a boulder (*pha-bong*) of turquoise as large as a yak. Behind the boulder as big as a yak there was a spring of turquoise from which [the two horses] were drinking. There at the blue turquoise spring a hobble (*mang-lag*) of *bse* was arrayed (*'bres*) [by Mgon-tshun phywa']. He scattered (*gtor*) salt (*lan-tsha'*) on [the ground] from an egg vessel.⁴⁷² The elder brother Swift One and the younger brother Swift As Thought, these two, were drinking water from the turquoise spring. They were licking the salt (*ldag*) on [the ground] from the egg vessel.⁴⁷³ As [the two horses] went, they were impeded (*togs*) by the *mang-lag*. The elder brother Swift One and the younger brother Swift As Thought, these two, were bound together (*sbreld*), they were attached together over a long stretch (*rgyang*) by the binding [hobble]. They carried the *mang-lag* and off they went (*byer*). [Mgon-tshun phywa'] pursued them to the mountain and valley, these two, but he could not overtake them. At the spring of turquoise [he tried to]

⁴⁷¹ This is the name of a pastoral encampment (*mtsherd*, C.T. = *mtsher*).

⁴⁷² *Dgon* (= *sgong*)-*rtsig*. This appears to denote a vessel made from a hollowed out egg. In the oral tradition of Upper Tibet, it is said that such vessels once existed.

⁴⁷³ *Dgo-tsheg*. This is the same object as the *dgon-rtsig* above.

catch the *do-[ma]* [but] he could not catch the *do-[ma]*. At the spring of gold [he tried to] catch the *do-[ma]* [but] he could not catch the *do-[ma]*. At the spring of silver [he tried to] catch the *do-[ma]* [but] he could not catch the *do-[ma]*. At the spring of brass [he tried to] catch the *do-[ma]* [but] he could not catch the *do-[ma]*. At the spring of bell-metal [he tried to] catch the *do-[ma]* [but] he could not catch the *do-[ma]*.⁴⁷⁴ At the spring of iron [he tried to] catch the *do-[ma]* [but] he could not catch the *do-[ma]*. At the spring of copper [he tried to] catch the *do-[ma]* [but] he could not catch the *do-[ma]*.

re shig re shig na / gnam gyi / pa (C.T. = *pha*) (103) *mtha' / dgung gi / pha 'bram* (= 'brum) *na / g.yu'* (C.T. = *g.yu*) / *yi pha bong / g.yag tsam shig mchis / g.yu'i / pha bong g.yag / tsham* (C.T. = *tsam*) (104) *gyi / pha rold* (C.T. = *rol*) / *na / g.yu'i / chu / myig* (C.T. = *mig*) / *la / chu 'tung* (C.T. = *'thung*) *zhing mchis / g.yu'i chu myig* (C.T. = *mig*) *gi / dngo* (= *sngo*) *ru / bse 'i / mang* (105) *lag ni bres / lan tsha'* (C.T. = *tshwa*) / *dgon / rtsig / gang zhig ni / gtor te bzhag / pu* (C.T. = *phu*) *tang* (C.T. = *dang*) *mgyogs tang* (C.T. = *dang*) *nu yid* (106) *mgyogs / gnyis / g.yu'i / chu myig* (C.T. = *mig*) *tu / chu 'tung* (C.T. = *'thung*) *zhing / lan tsha* (C.T. = *tshwa*) *dgo tsheg / gang la / ldag ching / gshegs / pa la / bse* (107) *mang lag la togs* (C.T. = *thogs*) / *pu dang mgyogs / nu yid mgyogs / gnyis / sbrel* (C.T. = *sbrel*) / *rgyang sbrel tu sbrel* (C.T. = *sbrel*) / *nas / mang* (108) *lag / gyer* (C.T. = *khyer*) *te byer / ri lung gnyisu / bsnyags gyang ma slebs / g.yu'i chu myig* (C.T. = *mig*) *du do zind* (C.T. = *zin*) / *do ma zind* (C.T. = *zin*) (109) *gser gi chu myig* (C.T. = *mig*) *du do zind* (C.T. = *zin*) / *do ma zind* (C.T. = *zin*) / *dngul / gi chu myig* (C.T. = *mig*) / *tu do zind* (C.T. = *zin*) / *do ma zind* (C.T. = *zin*) / *ra gan gyi / chu* (110) *tu do zind* (C.T. = *zin*) *do ma zind* (C.T. = *zin*) / *khar ba'i / chu myig* (C.T. = *mig*) / *lhags* (C.T. = *lcags*) *gyi chu zangs / gyi chu tu / do zind* (C.T. = *zin*) *do ma zin* /

The horses continued to run away from 'Gon-tshun phywa. They arrived at the mountain of the Dmu, a faraway land that may have been conceived of as lying at the threshold of the heavens. A Dmu personality named Dmu-rje rgya'-bdun came to the aid of the patriarch. Cooperation or collaboration between the Dmu and Phywa is a common theme in Tibetan ritual and mythic literature. These two lineages shared kin relations, helping to explain their teamwork in primal and ancient settings. Dmu-rje rgya'-bdun lassoed the absconding horses and placed them in the *cho-rol*. 'Gon-tshun phywa took possession of the two *do-ma* and tearfully explained to them how he had lost his son. He implored the horses to help him and they pledged to act as the mystic mount for Lhe'u yang-ka rje. As the ones who can go above the water (*chab-gang*) and on the pass (*la ru*), the crossers of the ford, it is these horses that would deliver the deceased son to the far side of the river of the dead.⁴⁷⁵ A shallow ford (*yang-ba rab*) separated thralldom from bliss.

⁴⁷⁴ This sentence and the next two sentences describing springs of precious metals are abbreviated in the text in various ways.

⁴⁷⁵ In the archaic funerary tradition, the motif of traversing the postmortem obstacles of a river and a pass en route to the final ford is an extremely important one. It is also found in Pt 1068, Pt 1136, Pt 1194, and ITJ 731r. In 2008 and 2010a, I treat all of them except the Pt 1194 version of this motif, but omit reference to the 'pass of the dead'. This occurred because I failed to disambiguate the noun *la* from the postposition *ru*. I regret this oversight and will now rectify my earlier translations. In Pt 1068 (Ins. 113, 114), it reads: "You, also act as the beloved livestock [female hybrid yak] (*pyugs {spo}-ma nye-du*), the one who goes above the water [and] on the pass, the one who can cross (*spogs*) the shallow ford" (*pyugs* (C.T. = *phyugs*) {*spo*} *ma nye du khyed gyang chab gang laru* (C.T. = *la ru*) *mdzod cig yang ba rab du spogs* (C.T. = 'bog) 'shalo). Also in Pt 1068 (Ins. 122, 123), Dur-shen rma-da says, "From today onwards, you also be the female hybrid yak (*mdzo-mo*), the one who can go above the water [and] on the pass, the one who can cross the shallow ford" (*mdzo mo khyod gyang / di ring 'pan* (C.T. = 'phan) *chad na chab gang laru* (C.T. = *la ru*) *bgyi 'shal yang ba rab du spogs* (C.T. = 'bog) 'shal gyis). In Pt 1136 (Ins. 25, 26): "[Bal-bu], you are the *pyugs smo-ma* (mother

It was the final frontier on the route to salvation. The horses were unequivocal in their promise to the patriarch, saying that they will drink the great poison with their own lips (*dug chen mchus 'tungs*). This metaphor communicates not only the great sincerity of the horses but also reflects their awareness that the journey they will embark upon is a one-way trip from the land of the living to the land of the dead. That *do-ma* were indeed sacrificed is implied in the fourth origins myth of Pt 1134, where it is stated that the two horses who belonged to the patriarch Myi-rab 'grop ru-cho were put inside the *se* (the grave itself or a ritual element of the tomb).⁴⁷⁶

[The horses] fled to the mountain, they fled to the heights of the Dmu mountain. From the mountain summit (*ri-kha'*), Dmu-rje rgya'-bdun cried out (*khus-btab*). The horses were contained (*bkug*) in the great expanse of the Dmu and caught (*bzungs*) by the unseen⁴⁷⁷ lasso of the Dmu. They were bound⁴⁷⁸ by the binding wild yak cord (*sgrog*). [The horses] were put in⁴⁷⁹ the *cho-rol* of *bse* and kept (*bzhag*) there. With the bridle lead (*srab mda'*) held [in his hand], 'Gon-tshun phywa captured [the horses] and cried afar (loudly), he cried so [saying], 'My only son, the only one; the degenerated one, he died. His vital wind (*stug*) was destroyed. Elder brother Swift One, younger brother Swift As Thought, you two, can you go above the water [and] on the pass or not? Do you know how to cross the shallow ford or do you not [know] how to cross the shallow ford?' [The horses] forthrightly replied (*lan-chen*), 'We promise to drink the great poison with our lips.'

livestock?), the one who can go above the river and over the pass, the one who can cross the shallow ford" (*pyugs* (C.T. *phyugs*) *smo ma khyod kyis chab gang lar* (= *laru*) *bgyi 'tshal yang ba rab du spogs* (C.T. = 'bog) 'tshal). Also in Pt 1136 (ln. 29): "[The colt Bal-bu] went above the water, yes, on the pass [and] crossed the shallow ford" (*chab gang ni lar* (= *laru*) *biab yang 'ba'* (C.T. = *ba*) *rab du spagste* (= *spogste*) /). In Pt 1194 (lns. 59, 60): "*Spo-ma nye-du*, you also be the one who can go above the water and on the pass" (*spo ma nye du khyod kya* (= *kyang*) *chab gang la ru ni bgyi 'tshal lo*). For occurrences of the passage under review in the ritual performance of ITJ 731r, see *infra*, pp. 239–243. In the *smrang* narrative of the same text (lns. 99–101), the horse Khug-ron rmang-dar says, "You, man Rma-bu ldam-shad, would you like to go above the water [and] on the pass or not? Would you like to cross the shallow ford or not? If you want me to do (go) above the water [and] on the pass and cross the shallow ford, from today henceforth, yes, I will carry you for your one hundred-year or longer life (*bshos-tshe*)" (*myi rma bu ldam shad / khyod chab gang la ru bgyi 'am myi bgyi yang ba rab du sbog* (C.T. = 'bog) *gam myi sbog* (C.T. = 'bog) // *chab gang la ru bgyis la yang ba rab du sbogs* (C.T. = 'bog) *na // de ring sang lda na ni bshos tshe lo brgya la ni ring bkhuro* (C.T. = 'khur ro) /). Also in ITJ 731r (lns. 129, 130): "Today henceforth, you beloved livestock, the cherished *do-ma*, also act as that likeness and that {equivalence}* and go above the water, yes, on the pass, and cross the shallow ford" (*sang lda na phyugs spo ma nyedu do ma snying dgas khyed rmams khyang* (= *kyang*) *da de dang 'dra de dang {mtshungs} gyis / chab grang* (= *gang*) *ni la ru mdzod chig yang ba ni rab du sbogs shig* /).

* 'Dra dang {mtshungs}. The 'likeness' and 'equivalence' referred to here is a ritual concept connected to the *glud* or similar ritual systems, whereby the *do-ma* acts as the surrogate ally for the deceased.

⁴⁷⁶ See Bellezza 2008, p. 513. Commenting on Tibetan burials in Central Tibet and in northeastern Tibet, Tong (2008: 96, 97) observes that animals such as horses, cattle, yaks, sheep, and dogs, were either directly buried in tombs or deposited in sacrificial pits or trenches arrayed around grave mounds. Sometimes great numbers of animals were sacrificed such as is found at the Chawugang cemetery in Lha-rtse, where there are dozens of sacrificial horse pits (*ibid.*). In the *Sui Shu*, it reports that hundreds of horses could be ritually slain in funerals of the Tibetan Plateau (*ibid.*). The immolated horses of Tibetan burials may represent *do-ma* in some cases and ransom offerings in other depositional contexts. The Buddhist historian Nyang-ral (12th century CE) also notes that a sheep and a mare were slaughtered during a funerary ritual carried out by an ancient *bon-po* (Bellezza 2008: 235).

⁴⁷⁷ *Gsung*. This word signifies that the lasso was thrown from behind the horses. They would not have been able to see it until it was too late, thus it was 'secret'.

⁴⁷⁸ *Rdod* / *brdod*. This O.T. word is etymologically related to the C.T. *sdod*, the imperative for 'stay', in that both terms connote immobility.

⁴⁷⁹ *Bchug*, the O.T. form of the C.T. *bcug* but with a slightly different semantic field. Also see *supra*, p. 150 (fn. 232).

ri la (111) *bros te song dmu ri mtho la bros te song na / dmu rje rgya' / bdun gyis / ri kha'* (C.T. = *kha*) / *khus / btabste dmu* (112) *dbye che la / bkug dmu zhags / gsung gis / bzungste* (C.T. = *bzungste*) / *'brong gi / rdod sgrog gis brdod / bse'i / cho* (113) *rol du ni bchug ste bzhag na / 'gon tshun / phywas / srab mda' / nas ni / bzung ste / bshums mo rgyang* (114) *gis / bshumste / nga'i / bu chig / chig / 'pan* (C.T. = *'phan*) *te grongs / sdug (= stug) ste ni rla (= rlag) gis / myed / na / pu dang mgyogs* (115) / *tang* (C.T. = *dang*) *nu yid mgyogs gnyis / gyis / chab gang la ru bya 'am myi yang ba rab tu spogs* (C.T. = *'bog*) *sam* (116) *myi spogs* (C.T. = *'bog*) *shes / bgyis / lan chen / kha'is* (C.T. = *kha yis*) / *blangs / dug chen mchus 'tungs* (C.T. = *'thung*) /



Fig. 15. A copper alloy ornament of the thog-lcags class featuring a winged horse (4 cm x 3.7 cm), early historic period (650–1000 CE) or vestigial period (1000–1250 CE). This object appears to have interconnected three lines or accessories worn on the person or as a component part of horse tack or some other assemblage. In addition to having funerary associations, racing horses and those belonging to divine and heroic figures are often ascribed with the power of flight in Tibetan culture. Private collection

Mgon-tshun phywa accords many honors on Swift One and Swift As Thought, befitting the critical work to which they have been entrusted. They are given a castle to live in and are served the best foods and beverages. In preparation for their momentous passage, the horns (feather crest) of a bird (*bya-ru*) are tied on top of their heads. This ritual accoutrement signifies the mystic power of flight, a fundamental quality of the wondrous *do-ma*.⁴⁸⁰ The bird horns also recall the great funerary bird, the horned eagle (*khyung*) of Tibet (see *supra*, p. 69 [fn. 90]).

The actual burial rites and the construction of the tomb were done by a priest (*gshen-bon*) named Rgya-bon brim-tang (a professional title followed by a personal name). Like other great funerary practitioners in Pt 1134, the *rgya-bon* Brim-tang is a descendant of the uranic *lha* (patrilineage) and the telluric *srin* (matrilineage), a sign of his immense sanctity and skill. He is also characterized as the 'bon of humans' (*myi-bon*) and the 'bon of the gods' (*lha'i bon*), demonstrating that his abilities extend to two of the most vital ontological categories, for essentially he belongs to both. This priest built the *se* and *rgyal-tag brgyad*,⁴⁸¹ major elements of the tomb design. Rather than the tomb itself, the *se* and *rgyal-tag* seem to denote its spatial limits as expressed in ritual performance. That the *rgyal-tag* was suspended (*bre*) is not in accord with a rigid structure such as a tomb, reinforcing its associations with the funerary tent. Also, in the Mu-cho'i khrom-'dur, the *se* is an ensemble of

⁴⁸⁰ The ability of the *do-ma* to take to the air is highly developed in the *rta-gtad* text. See Bellezza 2008, pp. 452–459.

⁴⁸¹ For an analysis of the *rgyal-thag brgyad* (*sic*) in the funerary context, see *ibid.*, pp. 520 (n. 563). According to Haarh (1969: 141), in Tibetan conceptions of the tent as a microcosm of the universe, it has eight ribs demarcating the sky and it revolves around the eight-spoked wheel of the sky. In addition to delimiting the eight divisions of space, the *rgyal-thag brgyad* of the black yak hair tent (*sbra-nag*) is more prosaically the medial band (*rgyal-thag*) to which the eight major *chon* (poles, guy lines and stakes) are affixed.

ritual offerings that appears to have been set up at the gravesite or charnel ground. The text explains that the overarching *rgyal-tag* partitioned (*bsgos*) the *se*. As such, we can envision the quadrate *se* being divided into eight sections. The text also mentions *gshin-sde'u nyer-bu*, a mortuary structure that was built up (*brtshigs*). This can only be a type of *ste'u*, which must have been used in a manner consistent with its functions in the illuminated funerary manuscript. In ITJ 731r (ln. 125), it reads: “The *ste*, the *gshin-ste nyer-bu*, was made (*bchas*, C.T. = *bcas*)”. Other ritual funerary structures include the wild yak (hide) mattress,⁴⁸² four poles (?) and four bird sculptures (?):

The father Mgon-tshun pywa (*sic*) put (*bchugs*) them inside an iron castle, in a castle of nine pinnacles. They were fed⁴⁸³ green shoots (*lchang-pa*)⁴⁸⁴ of grain (*'bras*).⁴⁸⁵ They ate (*bsgams*) unroasted (*ngar-pye*) blue barleycorn (*sngomo*). They were served molasses. On top of their heads (*glad*) the horns of the bird were attached *'ong 'ong*.⁴⁸⁶ The mighty *gshen-bon*, the son of the *lha* and nephew of the *srin*, the *bon* of humans and the *bon* of *lha*, Rgya-bon brim-tang, suspended the eight *rgyal-tag* in the sky and established the square *se* on the earth. In concealment, the *se* partitioned (*bsgos*) by the *rgyal-[tag]* was established in the valley.⁴⁸⁷ The *gshin-sde'u nyer-bu* was erected. The northern wild yak (*kod-mo*) mattress (*brtan*) was arranged (*bkod*). Four wooden poles⁴⁸⁸ were erected (*btshugs*). The four *bya-dgyi* were raised (*spard*).⁴⁸⁹

pha mgon chun (= *tshun*) / *pywas* (C.T. = *phywas*) (117) {*khri*} *de mkar* (C.T. = *mkhar*) *lchags* (C.T. = *lcags*) / *mkar* (C.T. = *mkhar*) / *rtshe* (C.T. = *rtse*) *dgu'i* / *nang du bchugste* // *'bras* / *gyi* / *lchang* (C.T. = *lcang*) *pa la* / *sand* (C.T. = *bsan*) / *nas* / (118) *sngomo* (C.T. = *sngo mo*) *ngar pye* (C.T. = *phye*) / {*la*} *ni* / *bsgams* (C.T. = *'gams*) / *bu ram nyug* (C.T. = *smug*) *chu la ni* / *blud* / *glad la ru btags sna bya ru 'ong 'ong* / *bon* (119) *gshen drag* / *bu ni lha'i bu tsha ni srin gyi tsha'* (C.T. = *tsha*) / *myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *bon* / *lha'i bon* / *rgya bon brim tang gis* / *rgyal tag* (C.T. = *thag*) *brgyad* (120) / *ni* / *gnam las* / *bre se gru bzhi ni* / *sa la* / *bchas* (C.T. = *bcas*) / *bas la ni* / *rgyal* /

⁴⁸² That this is something put down as a kind of supporting mattress or carpet (*rtan*) is further indicated in Pt 1134 (ln. 56), where the wild yak (*khod-mo*) mattress is arranged (*bkod*) in conjunction with the erected (*pub*, C.T. = *phub*) tent of the mind (*thugs-sbra*). The *rtan* as a kind of ground-cloth is confirmed in Pt 1136 (ln. 19), where this wild yak hide object is called a *gdan* (carpet), something that is laid out (*bting*). For these references to the wild yak mattress, see Bellezza 2008, pp. 409 (n. 171), 513, 521.

⁴⁸³ *Sand* (C.T. = *bsan*). This word is commonly used in pastoral regions of Upper Tibet and Hor to refer to the feeding of livestock.

⁴⁸⁴ For mention of *lcang* / *ljang-pa* (*sic*) and *bu-ram myug-chu* (molasses) in archaic funerary myths, also see Stein 2010 (Antiqua V), p. 263.

⁴⁸⁵ Contrary to common definition, *'bras* in such contexts as archaic funerary rituals refers to grain generally and barleycorn more specifically, not rice.

⁴⁸⁶ *'Ong 'ong* appears to convey that these ‘horns’ stood erect.

⁴⁸⁷ Gurung (2011: 3–5) in an interesting paper on the parentage of Gshen-rab mi-bo from Eternal Bon sources examines lns. 119 and 120 of Pt 1134, in which he treats the *rgyal-tag* as being the protection cord of a class of deities known as *rgyal*, noting that this is one category of spirits in the *lha-srin sde-brgyad*. However, the *lha-srin sde-brgyad* is a system of classification that emerged in works from the later spread of Buddhism (*bstan-pa phyi-dar*) and is not found in Old Tibetan archaic ritual materials, nor are the *rgyal* spirits present in these Old Tibetan sources.

⁴⁸⁸ *Shing tang bzhi*. Also, see Pt 1134 (ln. 51): *shing tang bzhi*. A similar description of the building of a tomb in Pt 1068 (ln. 115) reads: *shing-gdang* (= *shing-gdung*?) *bzhi*, four wooden members (?). See Bellezza 2008, p. 541. Furthermore, the iron Khu-khu, the copper Pyo-pyo and Mgyogs (Swift One) in Pt 1134 (lns. 54–57), refers to three *do-ma* in their mystic flight to the afterlife and to the deposition of their corpses in the tomb. This latter ritual operation could only have taken place after the two horses had been sacrificed. That Khu-khu and Pyo-pyo are in fact *do-ma* in this text had escaped me. See *ibid.*, pp. 512, 513, 541; *supra*, p. 145 (fn. 220).

⁴⁸⁹ Also, *bya-dgyigs bzhi* (Pt 1068, ln. 116) and *bya kyi bzhi* (Pt 1134, ln. 51). See *ibid.*, pp. 512, 541.

bsgos / lung na ni / se bchaste' C.T.= bcas ste) / (121) gshin sde'u nyer bu ni brtshigs (C.T. = brtsigs) byang brtan (C.T. = rten) kod mo ni bkod / shing tang (C.T. = dang) bzhi' (C.T. = bzhi) / ni btshugs (C.T. = tshugs) / bya dgyi (122) bzhi ni spard (C.T. = spar) /

With the erection of bird horns on the *do-ma* and the setting up of the burial structures, the horses were prepared for their magic flight by taking up the regulated position (*gral*). It was then time for the final ritual ornamentation of the mane with cloth. The tails of the *do-ma* were allowed to hang freely. On the other hand, in the Mu-cho'i khrom-'dur, the tails of the *rta-gtad* are braided.⁴⁹⁰ This appears to bespeak differences in *do-ma* rituals that such a seminal cultural activity might have engendered in its various forms (geographic, socioeconomic, cultic, etc.). The text notes that the relatives (*gnyen*) of the deceased were on hand to see these ritual proceedings. The *bon* (consisting of ritual knowledge and activities) was recited, the soteriological instrument par excellence.⁴⁹¹

In other Old Tibetan contexts, *bon* is somewhat more narrowly defined as ritual traditions of curative or divinatory dimensions. Those who possessed these means were often referred to in general terms as *bon-po* (e.g., see Pt 1038, Pt 1068, Pt 1285). The word *bon* was of sufficient significance that it formed part of the proper name or title of ritual specialists in a variety of Dunhuang texts such as Pt 1136 (Smra-bon gyi zing-ba), Pt 1285 (e.g., Ltam-bon dmus-long, 'Ol-bon 'jang-tsa mon-yug), ITJ 734 (Pya-bon kyu-ra, Lha-bon 'prang-zu and G.yang-bon theg-leg.), Pt 1289 (Lho-bon 'ol-lcogs), and the Old Tibetan Annals (Lhas-bon). In these examples, the word *bon* is attached either to the region or primary occupational specialization of the personality: e.g., the *bon* of the 'Ol [country] or the *bon* of *pya* (C.T. = *phywa*, the foundation for good fortune).⁴⁹² As an element of the proper names of archetypal priests, *bon* was imbued with sacral and prestigious connotations. As we have seen in Pt 1134, this sacerdotal occupation was also called *gshen-bon* (this term is found in Pt 1136 and the Gathang Bumpa *byol-rabs* text as well), a composite of the two most popular classes of archaic ritualists. This alludes to their interdependent relationship.

As the *do-ma* requires a travel guide, Mgon-tshun phywa presented the *skyibs-lug*. He announced that this effectively marked the establishment of the custom, the prototype for subsequent generations of funerary priests, who either recited it from memory or read the words of this text. Perhaps many written copies of this *smrang* and other Old Tibetan origins myths once existed but there are no means for determining how widespread their circulation actually was. Our text states that the funerary rite (*bdur*) had a salutary effect on the living. This is in recognition that

⁴⁹⁰ Likewise, in the ritual horse burials of Pazyryk some of the tails were knotted. For a comparison of the *do-ma* tradition with archaeological evidence for cognate horse sacrifices among the Scytho-Siberians, see *ibid.*, 549–553.

⁴⁹¹ *Bon* as a term for the abstract and material aspects of archaic ritual tradition also occurs in Pt 239, Pt 1136 and ITJ 734. See Bellezza 2008, pp. 501, 529; 2010a, p. 51 (n. 65). The '*bon* of rehabilitation (*gso*)' in Pt 1134 likewise denotes a ritual tradition (see *supra*, p. 145 [fn. 220]). Also see the *lha* of *bon* in the *byol-rabs* text of the Gathang Bumpa collection (Bellezza 2010a: 78).

⁴⁹² In this work we are already acquainted with the *dur-bon* / '*dur-bon*, *dri-bon* / *gri-bon*, *rgod-bon*, and *dbal-bon*. For other types of funerary priests in Pt 1042 and the Mu-cho'i khrom-'dur (*phangs bon-po*, *sman bon-po*, *snyun bon-po*, *thar-bon*, *glu-bon*, *gto-bon*, and *sna-bon*), see Bellezza 2008, pp. 374, 375. For the priests of Pt 1042, also see Tucci 1980, p. 231 (although the functions Tucci assigns each type remain to be confirmed). In Pt 1043, a divination text, there are three types of *bon* specialists: *dre-bon* (C.T. = '*dre-bon*), *dgung-bon* and *sman-bon*.* In the *byol-rabs* text the following specialists are found: *bdud-bon*, *thar-bon*, *glud-bon*, and *dbal-bon* (Bellezza 2010a).

* I have observed that the *sman-bon* / *sman bon-po* may possibly denote priests specializing in the mystic refurbishment of the corpse. In light of the illuminated funerary manuscript, an alternative hypothesis is that this type of religious functionary may have been in charge of the funerals of females.

its practice is as crucial to the living as it is to the dead. Virtually all archaic funerary rituals are at pains to make this point. The text also mentions as an afterthought goats in great numbers that serve to recover the deceased. This is a reference to the *dri* animals, the sacrificial creatures that ransom those who died from unnatural causes. As we have seen in the Gathang Bumpa texts, *dri* livestock are given to the homicidal demons in exchange for the dead:

The swift ones were established in the forefront (*dngard*) of the ordered position as the beloved *do-ma*, the ones with white fur growing on the rump (*pon-kar skyes*) and the [white] belly ('*dab*). The older brother Swift One and the younger brother Swift As Thought, these two, were established in the forefront of the ordered position. Fine cloth (*dar*) was tied to their manes (*pum*). Their tails were allowed to hang freely (*slungs su bchug*). The relatives [of Lhe'u yang-ka' rje], yes, they that could see [the spectacle]. The *bon*, yes, that which was chanted (*bsgyerd*). Mgon-tshun phywa gifted (*gtad*) the *skyibs-lug mar-ba*.⁴⁹³ [He said], 'Now, today, hereafter,⁴⁹⁴ the *skyibs-lug mar-ba* shall be given. My degenerated son died. His vital wind was destroyed.' By the *bdur* of the expired one, the living were bedecked (*pras*) with the good speech (*mgur*). To find the lost man, thousands of goats of the livestock.

mgyogs / gral du dngard (C.T. = *ngar*) / *na / do ma snying dgas / pon* (C.T. = '*phong*) *kar* (C.T. = *dkar*) *skyes / 'dab phu dang mgyoggsu* (C.T. = *mgyogs su*) (123) / *nu yid mgyogs / gnyis / dral* (C.T. = *gral*) *du dngard / mgyogs / pum* (C.T. = *phum*) *ni dar gis / bchings* (C.T. = *bcings*) / *nga ma ni slungs* (124) *su bchug* (C.T. = *bcug*) / *gnyen gang gis / ni / blta'* (C.T. = *ltas*) / *bon gang gis / ni / bgyerd / mgon tshun / phywa'is / skyibs / lug* (125) *mar ba la / gtade // da di ring pa 'chadu* (C.T. = *ched du*) *skyibs / lug / mar ba la gta* (= *gtad*) *do / nga 'i / bu / 'pan* (C.T. = '*phan*) *te ni grongs / sdug* (= *stug*) (126) *ste ni rlag / na / grongs myi bdur na / gson / mgur pras* (C.T. = *spras*) / *rlag myi* (C.T. = *mi*) *btsal na / pyugi* (C.T. = *phyugs gi*) *ra stongs* (C.T. = *stong*) /

To conclude the story of the first *do-ma* ritual, Mgon-tshun phywa resumes speaking. He explained to the two valiant horses that they are to cross the heights that lie between them and the afterlife. The patriarch commands the *skyibs-lug* in a similar manner. It was to be the guide of the *do-ma* and the deceased son, the one that leads the way over the postmortem ford. The two *do-ma* and Lhe'u yang-ka' rje, these three entities, are said to be tantamount to the feathers of the 'black bird' (the crow). This is an obvious allusion to the mystic power of flight horses that carry the dead were thought to possess. The choice of the crow here seems to be made in cognizance of his hardy and versatile nature, just the kind of imagery called for given the taxing journey ahead. This reference sheds light on the presence of the crow in other archaic funerary rituals as well. Again, Mgon-tshun phywa called directly upon the *skyibs-lug*. He requested this sheep to conduct (*bgris*) the two *do-ma* and Lhe'u yang-ka' rje through the postmortem realm, which is likened to a foggy and misty enclosed space (*smug-rum na-bo*).

The patriarch then announces that the ancestral deities (*btsan-btshun*), who lived above the nine layers of the sky, will look after the deceased man and livestock. The inclusion of *btsan* in this archaic term seems to underline that the *mtshun* belong to the dead. Here, the *btsun* (the dead in a state of thanatological normalcy) and *mtshun* (the dead in the afterlife) are to all intents and purposes synonymous. It is the highest heaven that the 'father of the dead' stipulates will be the

⁴⁹³ *Mar-ba* is an epithet for the *skyibs-lug*. It seems to mean something to the effect of 'the precious one'. See Bellezza 2008, pp. 460, 502 (n. 490).

⁴⁹⁴ *Pa-'chadu*. The C.T. equivalent is *phyin-ched du*.

dwelling place of the expired human and animals. In this narrative it is located above the nine layers of the sky (*gnam rim-pha dgu*; also see second narrative of Pt 1134, *supra*, p. 168 [fn. 291]), but in two other Old Tibetan accounts there are thirteen layers of the sky (see *supra*, p. 176). The number of levels that compose the sky finds much resonance in other sets of objects and beings of the archaic and Eternal Bon traditions. In these traditions the numerals nine and thirteen carry the connotation of completeness in a cosmological or magical sense.

Although they will all reside in the celestial sphere, the heaven-bound wayfarers in Pt 1134 each have their own place. As on earth, animals and humans live with their own kind in the afterlife. To finish the origins tale of Lhe'u yang-ka rje, the text declaims that in ancient times he was benefited by the *do-ma*, as the story itself shows:

'Now, older brother, the Swift One, and younger brother Swift As Thought, you two, man and livestock, shall also traverse the pass of the heights. *Skyibs-lug mar-ba*, be the guide that crosses the ford in the bottomland with the man and livestock. *Skyibs-lug mar-ba*, be the guide. Now, today, hereafter, the elder brother Swift One, the younger brother Swift As Thought and Lhe'u yang-ka rje, you three, are the equivalent (*mtshungs*) of the feathers of the crow (*bya-ro-gu*). *Skyibs-lug mar-ba*, you are to conduct Lhe'u yang-kha rje' (*sic*), the elder brother Swift One and the younger brother Swift As Thought, these three, through the mists of the foggy confined space (*smug-rum*). Above the nine levels of the sky, the *btsan-btshun* are appointed to look upon you. Also, the man and livestock are appointed to stay there together. Also, like the deer and female yak who are separate and at a distance from one another (*logs la snar*), the associated man and livestock are separate and at a distance from one another.' In ancient times who was of benefit and merit? The beloved *do-ma* was of benefit and merit to Lhe'u yang-kha rje'.

da' (C.T. = *da*) / *pu* (C.T. = *phu*) (127) *dang mgyogs* / *tang* (C.T. = *dang*) / *nu yid mgyogs* / *gnyis* / *mtso la rkal* (C.T. = *rgal*) *gyang myi phyugs* / *mnyam* / *du* / *skyibs lug* (128) *mar bas* / *drongs shig* / *dma* (*dma'*) *rab 'bog gyang myi phyugs myi phyugs* / *mnyam* / *du skyibs lug mar* (129) *bas drong shig* / *da di ring pan* (= *pa*) *chadu* (C.T. = *ched du*) / *pu dang mgyogs* / *dang nu yid mgyogs* / *dang lhe'u yang ka rje* (130) *dang gsum* / *yang* / *bya rog gu'i* / *spu dang mtshungs* / *smug rum* / *na bo* (C.T. = *na bun*) *ro* / *skyibs lug* / *mar* / *bas* / (131) *bgris* (C.T. = *dkris*) / *na* / *lhe'u yang kha rje'* (C.T. = *rje*) / *pu* (C.T. = *phu*) *dang mgyogs* / *nu yid mgyogs* / *gsum yang* (132) */// gnam* / *rim pha* (C.T. = *pa*) *dgu'i* / *steng du btsan btshun* (C.T. = *mtshun*) *lta* / *dkos* (C.T. = *bskos*) / *na* / *bzhugs* / *gyang myi phyugs* / *mnyam* / *du* (133) *dkos* (C.T. = *bskos*) / *na bzhugs* / *sha bri* (C.T. = *'bri*) *ltar* / *logs* (C.T. = *log*) *la* / *snar gyang myi pyugs* (C.T. = *phyugs*) / *mnyam* / *du logs* (C.T. = *log*) / *la* / *snar* */// gna* (C.T. = *gna'*) (134) *su la pan* (C.T. = *phan*) *te bsod* / *na* / *lhe'u yang kha rje'* (C.T. = *rje*) / *la* / *do ma* / *snying dgas* / *pan* (C.T. = *phan*) *te bsod* *///*

With the completion of the origins myth featuring Lhe'u yang-ka rje, Pt 1134 moves to the concurrent consecration and deployment of the *do-ma*, a liturgy of great length and complexity (Ins. 134–297).⁴⁹⁵ This ritual performance occupies a little more than half of the Pt 1134 manuscript. Rather than Lhe'u yang-ka rje, its deceased is known by a generic appellation: Rma-bu mchin-rgyal. In this funeral the departed one is referred to as *myi-btshun* (C.T. = *mi-btsun*,

⁴⁹⁵ Translation of this extremely valuable material is still pending. The presence of vocabulary and activities with limited correspondence to Classical Tibetan funerary texts renders this endeavor very challenging. For translation of a passage in the Pt 1134 ritual (Ins. 190–195) that deals with priestly instructions to the *skyibs-lug*, see *ibid.*, pp. 502, 503.

lns. 224, 254, 255), whose death as a *dri* was associated with a miserable place and equated with a happy state when death as a *smān* occurred. Much of this extensive ritual is devoted to the sacerdotal management of the journey of the sheep and horses through the postmortem realm. Its fundamental elements are the same as above, the origins tales having set the substance and tone for it. The provisional place after death (*gshin-yul*) is called 'Brem-dang. This *do-ma* and *skyibs-lug* ritual commences with a set of instructions that are blown into the ear of the deceased. These are called the 'three words of speech' (*btams* (C.T. = *gtam*) *pa ngag-tshig sum* [C.T. = *gsum*]).

In order to entice the mystic transport animals to make the arduous journey they are first told: "On the joyous mountain, the mountain, are the herbs of the dead heaped high in the meadow. In the joyous country, the country, the river of the dead, the river is blue."⁴⁹⁶ This is the only occurrence I have encountered in the archaic funerary tradition of the use of the word *gshin* to describe phenomena directly connected to places characterized as joyous (*dga'*), a word reserved as an epithet for the afterlife. As we have seen, the *gshin-chu* / *gshin-chab* forms the border between the netherworld and the road to paradise. Therefore, I am of the opinion that this deliberate mixing of provisional phenomena (*gshin*) with the essentially permanent phenomenon of 'joyous' places is motivational in nature, as part of the initial thrust of the ritual. It appears to have been composed to get the *do-ma* and *skyibs-lug* moving in the right direction through the postmortem space. In these ritual proceedings, the afterlife is specifically known as *Dga'-yul byang-rnams* (indicating that it is a boreal land) and *Dga' dang skyid-pa'i yul* (Land of Joy and Happiness). This is the final resting place of the dead and their livestock companions.

⁴⁹⁶ Ln. 143: *ri dga' / ri / la / gshin / rtsi pang* (= *spang*) / *phung / yul dga' / yul / na / chu gshin chu ni snga*. For treatment of these lines, see also Stein 2010 (*Antiqua V*), p. 263; Stein 1971, p. 497.

The *Do-ma* Funerary Transport Horse Ritual in ITJ 731r

To complete this study of the archaic funerary rites of Tibet, we turn to the first part of ITJ 731r (lns. 1–38).⁴⁹⁷ This portion of the text constitutes another ritual for the *do-ma*, the funerary horses that transport the dead through the postmortem *gshin-yul*.⁴⁹⁸ Unlike its counterpart in Pt 1134, this ritual is in an abridged form. As concise as it may be, the ITJ 731r ritual performance contains unique material, significantly expanding our understanding of the consecration and dispatch of the *do-ma*. As with the *do-ma* ritual of Pt 1134, the special details presented in ITJ 731r make this a document of exceptional cultural historical value. The importance and scope of this work is enhanced by the much longer *do-ma* origins tale that follows the ritual.

Do-ma rituals in general comprised the last step of the archaic funerary rite. Already completed by this point in the observance were the major functions of 1) divining the cause of death, 2) summoning the deceased, 3) capturing and neutralizing the cause of death, and 4) transforming the dead into a thanatological state of normalcy. These other main components of the funerary rite have been examined at length in this book. The *do-ma* ritual, as the final measure of the funeral, was concerned with the accession of the deceased into the afterlife. Although various commemorative observances may have been held subsequently, the deployment of the *do-ma* coincided with burial and the postmundane voyage to paradise.

The first part of the ITJ 731r *do-ma* ritual is preoccupied with definitively separating the good fortune of the living from the misfortune of death. It was considered absolutely necessary that all facets of economic and psychological well-being were removed from the shadow of evil thought to descend on those who remained behind in this world after a death. It appears that in early historic-period Tibet, there was a real fear that the dead might carry off the various types of fortuity that make life tenable.⁴⁹⁹ In ITJ 731r, the special force seen as essential for successful living is called *byin*. In Classical Tibetan this term is often defined as ‘blessing’, ‘magnificence’ or ‘splendor’. While its Old Tibetan meaning subsumes all these glosses, the semantics of *byin* are bundled up in the notion of the vital essence or fundamental power in all the props of well-being.⁵⁰⁰ For lack of a suitable word in English, I have opted to translate *byin* in this context

⁴⁹⁷ The actual translation begins with ln. 2 of the document. The first line of the text is highly fragmentary but from what can be read, in structure and content it is not unlike ln. 2. I have worked from a facsimile of ITJ 731r, thus I cannot comment on how much of the text might have preceded what is now its first line, as based on a physical inspection of the paper. Nonetheless, from the opening of the extant text, it does not seem that much of the ritual is missing.

⁴⁹⁸ That this is a short form of the *do-ma* ritual, see the last words of the performance, *infra*, p. 243. A translation of this ITJ 731r ritual sequence was attempted by F. W. Thomas, a scholar who made great contributions to our understanding of imperial-period Tibet. For his translation of the text under scrutiny, see Thomas 1957 “Text, Translations and Notes” pp. 20–22, and for his transliteration, pp. 9–11. Published posthumously, Thomas viewed this ritual as an allegory of a golden age (*ibid.*, 8). Evidently, due to inadequate cultural and philological resources, Thomas’ translation is seriously flawed. Yet, it must be kept in mind that he was working on this material in a period before Eternal Bon texts and native Bon scholars were widely available for consultation.

⁴⁹⁹ As noted, the theme of defending the good fortune capability (*g.yang*) of objects and animals in this world is reflected in a passage from Pt 1042, a funerary ritual for individuals of high social rank. In that text, *sku-gshen* priests ensure that the *g.yang* of horses, sheep and yaks are retained in the world of the living. This same theme of protecting the good fortune of horses and other vital constructs of the living is found in the Eternal Bon funerary transport horse (*rta-gtad*) text. For the study of these references, see Bellezza 2008, pp. 454, 455, 457, 458. Also, see *supra*, p. 172.

⁵⁰⁰ It appears that the C.T. term *byin-po* (‘ordinary’, ‘most’, ‘all’) is derived from this all-embracing quality connoted by the O.T. *byin*.

simply as ‘benefaction’. In the ritual performance, all of those things with *byin* are cut away from their corresponding evil (*sdig*). The word *sdig* here does not denote ‘moral evil’ or ‘mental obscuration’ in a Lamaist sense. Its Old Tibetan usage does not convey an ethical dimension per se, rather it is the polar opposite of *byin*. Thus *sdig* can be defined as the force that brings infelicity to all things.

The *do-ma* ritual of ITJ 731r begins with the benefactions of limpid waters being meticulously cleaved from opposing evils. This appears to symbolize the total removal of noxious influences from the clients sponsoring the ritual or perhaps even for human society as a whole. This widely inclusive intent is reinforced in the text with its invoking the harborage of all manner of salutary energies. This sets the tone for the rest of the first part of the *do-ma* ritual. After focusing on the big picture, the text directs the ritual separation of the yaks, horses, sheep, and swine from negativities. The livestock so chosen possess special markings or qualities that make them suitable for ritual usage. Next, the benefactions of the deceased’s possessions (*dgor*) are isolated from negative forces, in order that his next of kin can continue to reap benefits from them. Also called upon is the protection of the water used in irrigation and the aromatic herbs used in fumigation of the fields. With the ritual immunization of the basic economic constructs of life (agrarian and pastoral) completed, the text moves to human beings themselves. In culmination of this process of indemnifying all positive qualities, the *g.yang* (good fortune capability) of long-life is singled out for ritual care:

The great benefactions of the three very pure (*dang-dang*) waters are sequestered (*dgaro*) upwards.⁵⁰¹ The evils are cut outside far away (*rgyang sdig ni pyi ru gchado*). The great benefactions of the {two} very pure *mkhar* (castle?) waters⁵⁰² and the third water are sequestered upwards. The evils are cut outside far away. The great benefactions of whatever is available (*{ga} thod-thod*) in beneficial (*sman*) benefactions⁵⁰³ are sequestered upwards. The evils are cut outside far away. The great benefactions of the white-faced⁵⁰⁴ female yaks are sequestered upwards. The evils are cut outside far away. The great benefactions of the sheep in the meadow (*spang*) are sequestered upwards. The evils are cut outside far away.⁵⁰⁵ The great benefactions of the horses in the pasture (*gsing*) are sequestered upwards. The evils are cut outside far away.⁵⁰⁶ These are followed by (*phyir*) the benefactions of the vermilion (red) goats and the benefactions of *cha* (?) sequestered upwards. The evils are cut outside far away.⁵⁰⁷ These are followed by the benefactions of the yaks and hybrid yaks⁵⁰⁸ sequestered upwards. The evils are cut outside far away.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰¹ *Yaru*. This denotes an auspicious direction, i.e., away from the taint of mortiferousness.

⁵⁰² This is followed by the word *na-'bum* (= *na-bun*, mist?).

⁵⁰³ This is followed by the word *pad-pad* (?).

⁵⁰⁴ This translation is allowable only if *{ga}-la* is read as the equivalent of *gwa-ba*.

⁵⁰⁵ This line and the preceding one are abbreviated in the text without notation. The following words are to be interpolated: *dgaro* (C.T. = *dgar ro*) / *rgyang sdig ni pyi* (C.T. = *phyi*) *ru gchado* (C.T. = *gcad do*). This is followed in the text by a much shorter and more problematic abbreviation: *byin nga ba phyi ru spyiso*. That this excerpt is shorthand for a fuller text is indicated by the letter *nga*, which functions in this text as does the *ga-sa nag-'khyog* symbol of Classical Tibetan, which denotes where a repetitive segment of text is to be interpolated in succeeding lines. The shorthand symbol *nga* is used in irregular ways in the text.

⁵⁰⁶ This sentence and the one preceding it are heavily abbreviated in the text without notation.

⁵⁰⁷ This sentence and the one preceding it are heavily abbreviated in the text with the notation *nga*.

⁵⁰⁸ *Snor* (C.T. = *nor*) *la mdzo* could also just refer to *mdzo* alone and can be translated as: ‘the wealth, the hybrid yaks.’

⁵⁰⁹ This sentence and the one preceding it are abbreviated in the text with the notation *nga*.

These are followed by the benefactions of the pigs in the shelter sequestered upwards. The evils are cut outside far away.⁵¹⁰ The great benefactions are sequestered upwards on the very top (*spyi*). The evils are cut outside far away. The great benefactions of the possessions of the honorable deceased (*rgyal-phung*), the essence (*bchud*) of his ruined (*ral-mo*) castle, and the waters and incense applied (*stigs*) to his sown fields are sequestered upwards. The evils are cut outside far away. The great benefactions of the wild yak⁵¹¹ [and] the lineages of the little (sweet) long-life (*tshe'u*) *g.yang* are sequestered upwards. The evils are cut outside far away.

(ln. r2) *dang dang* (C.T. = *dwangs dwangs*) *bchu* (C.T. = *chu*) *gsum gyi byin chen ni yaru* (C.T. = *yar-ru*) *dgaro* (C.T. = *dgar ro*) *rgyang sdig ni pyi* (C.T. = *phyi*) *ru gchado* (C.T. = *gcad do*) // *mkhar bchu* (C.T. = *chu*) {*gnyis*} (r3) *na 'bum da nga* (= *dang*) *dang* (C.T. = *dwangs dwangs*) *bchu* (C.T. = *chu*) *gsum gyi byin chen ni yar ru dgaro* / *rgyang sdig ni pyi* (C.T. = *phyi*) *ru gchado* (C.T. = *gcad do*) / {*ga*} (r4) *thod thod gyi byin sman pad pad gyi phyin* (= *byin*) *che ni yaru dgaro rgyang sdig ni phyi ru gchado* (C.T. = *gcad do*) // {*ga*} (r5) *la 'bri 'i byin che ba yaru dgaro rgyang stig* (C.T. = *sdig*) *pa byi* (C.T. = *phyi*) *ru gchado* (C.T. = *gcad do*) // *spang la lug gyi byin che* {*yar*} (r6) *gchado* (C.T. = *gcad do*) *byin nga ba phyi ru spyiso* // *gsing la rta'i byin* // *mtshal la ra 'i byin ra dang cha'i* (r7) *phyir byin nga rgyang stig pha*⁵¹² // *snor* (C.T. = *nor*) *la mdzo 'i phyir byin nga rgyang stig pha*⁵¹³ // *skyibs la* (r8) *phag gyi phyir byin che rgyang sting* (= *sdig*) *ba* // *byin che ni yaru spyi 'o* (+ *dgaro*) *rgyang stig sdig ni pyi* (C.T. = *phyi*) *ru* {*gchado*} (r9) *rgyal phung ba 'i dgor* (C.T. = *dkor*) *mkhar ral mo 'i bchud* (C.T. = *bcud*) // *zhing ta ba'i* (C.T. = *btab*) *rna* (C.T. = *sna*) *chab gsang* (C.T. = *bsang*) (r10) *gyi stigs* // *byin che ni yaru dgaro rgyang sdig ni pyi* (C.T. = *phyi*) *ru gchado* (C.T. = *gcad do*) // *'brong gyi kho nan* (r11) *g.yang gyi tshe'u rigs las byin che ni yaru dgaro* // *rgyang stig* (C.T. = *sdig*) *ni phyi ru gchado* (C.T. = *gcad do*) //

The second part of the *do-ma* ritual consists of services rendered by ritualists on behalf of the *do-ma* horses. From what has been written, the biggest challenge posed to the passage of *do-ma* to the otherworld was the spirits known as *g.yen*. As seen in *Rnel drī 'dul ba'i thabs sogs*, the *g.yen* are enjoined not to interfere in the transformation of the dead into *mtshun*. So strong is concern about the *g.yen*, they are an object of a standard injunction in that text. In ITJ 731r, the *g.yen* are propitiated so that they do not misguide the *do-ma*. The *g.yen* singled out for appeasement are the nine (all) *g.yen* of the stars (*skar ma g.yen dgu*). Those of the planets are also noted. They are offered a roasted barley preparation, bird feathers, a flag, nectar, an arrow point, sheep wool, and milk in particular formats that presumably were considered most efficacious.⁵¹⁴ Some of these offerings and the manner in which they are given are directly connected to Kha-le rdzang-stod (*sic*), a region in upper Gtsang province. This same location, Kha-la rtsang-stod (*sic*), plays a part in the Ja-4v frame of the illuminated manuscript, in the Mu-cho'i khrom-'dur and in *Rnel drī 'dul ba'i thabs sogs* (see *supra*, pp. 98, 99, 143, 147). In Pt 1060, Kha-la rtsang-stod (*sic*) is one of the thirteen countries in which the various lineages of *do-ma* originated. The origins myth that makes up the bulk of ITJ 731r is set in another antetypic land of the *do-ma*, Byang-ka

⁵¹⁰ This sentence and the one preceding it are abbreviated in the text without notation.

⁵¹¹ This is modified by the word *kho-nan*, a quality of the wild yak or a type of wild yak. This term is closely related in meaning to *kod-mo* / *kho-mo* / *khod-mo* (wild yak).

⁵¹² *Pha* appears to be an indicator for *pyi ru*.

⁵¹³ This word appears to be an indicator for *pyi ru*.

⁵¹⁴ In the Mu-cho'i khrom-'dur text explicating the funerary prescriptions (*thang-khrims*), the *g.yen* of the heavens (*gnam-g.yen*) are propitiated with birds, *bshos* (an offering cake), libations, and *mgon-cha* (various other ritual offerings), in order that they return to the sky and do not interfere with the funeral performance. See Bellezza 2008, pp. 395, 406.

snam-brgyad of the pastoral northern regions. As such, the geographic orientation of this text is the western portion of the Tibetan Plateau (uppermost portion of Gtsang and the Byang-thang).⁵¹⁵

The *do-ma* are cautioned not to consume the presents arrayed for the *g.yen*. They are warned that they should not stray or follow the stars and planets. The ritualists speaking through the words of the text specifically ask the stars and planets not to kill the deer. This deer can only be the *dri-sha*, the sacrificial prototypic guide of the dead in the postmortem world. We know from *Sha ru shul ston rabs* that the deer, like the *do-ma*, goes above the water (*chab-gang*), a sacred transporter of the dead over the river of the dead. What is not clear is the precise ritual relationship between the deer and horse in discharging their duties. There is no indication in the texts on how they might have been used in conjunction with one another at funerals. Also in this ritual segment there are three divine female offering figures. The first one cited is Drug-drug btshan-mo, who is directed to provide plowed fields to the stellar demons. This goddess or primal human is herself closely associated with the stars. Next there is the female sheep herder of the stars (*skar-ma lug-rdži-mo*), who makes an offering of woolen threads. The third figure is the female yak calf herder of the stars (*skar-ma be'u-rdži-mo*), who presents a full bucket of milk to the stellar demons.

In the second portion of the *do-ma* ritual, the subjugation of the *g.yen* of the stars and planets and the harm they cause is of vital regard. The great stress put on appeasing and subjugating the *g.yen* of the stars and planets in this text can be explained by the celestial alignment of the ancestral paradise. As the consciousness principle was being delivered to the world above by the *do-ma*, it was this host of spirits that could most block its progress. As implied in *Rnel dri 'dul ba'i thabs sogs*, these inmates of the heavenly bodies, suspended in the firmament as they are, were viewed as the final obstacle to salvation:

Furthermore,⁵¹⁶ today, for you the cherished (*snying-dgas*) *do-ma*, the livestock *spo-ma nye-dur*: The nine *g.yen* of the stars, the *g.yen*, for eating, lick the *bag*⁵¹⁷ of these bird feathers (*spu*) and erected (*zug*) flag (*ldar*) [ensemble].⁵¹⁸ The seven hundred and seventy thousand planets and stars in the sky consume the nectar (*zil*) and lick the *bag* of the {good} speaking (*smra-le*) *tho* [ensemble], which strikes the ground from the crossroads.⁵¹⁹ Also, in Kha-le rdzang-stod, you [have been given] that which is erected (*rdze-ma*), the red arrow point and spindle (*'pong*) of birth,⁵²⁰ do not kill (*ma-khums*) the deer. The star *g.yen* have been offered to (*'shal*) [in this manner]. Drug-drug btshan-mo, give (*dbog-chig*) the plowed (*rmos*) fields of the

⁵¹⁵ For the identification of Byang-ka snam-brgyad with the Byang-thang, see Bellezza 2010a, p. 69 (n. 148).

⁵¹⁶ *Da-chung*. For this conjectural reading, see *supra*, p. 165 (fn. 287).

⁵¹⁷ *Bag du ldag*. This expression is widely used in the dialects of Mnga'-ris. *Bag* is a parched barley meal (*rtsam-pa*) paste made with tea, yogurt or whatever else is at hand. This preparation is often licked, especially when the bowl containing it is nearly empty. Thus, the word *ldag* has come to signify the eating of *rtsam-pa* (or yogurt).

⁵¹⁸ It appears that the bird feathers and flag were erected on a pile of *bag*. This suite of offerings includes *phyi-g.yal* (?) of nine kinds (*cho-dgu*) and is modified by the word *mad* (?).

⁵¹⁹ *Mdo*. This word could refer to the confluence of rivers or valleys rather than roads per se. Stein 2010 (Antiqua III: 174) misconstrues ln. 14 of the text, stating that it refers to the *do-ma* eating among the seven hundred and seventy thousand stars. As seen in *Rnel dri 'dul ba'i thabs sogs*, the *tho* is one of the major ritual instruments for reconditioning the consciousness principle of the dead. The power of speech attributed to the *tho* in ITJ 731r indicates that it fulfilled a harrowing function for the deceased.

⁵²⁰ The 'arrow point' or 'little arrow' (*mde'u*) and the 'spindle of birth' (*'pong-skye*, C.T. = *'phong-skye*) refer to the ancient Tibetan custom of presenting an arrow at birth to a male and a spindle at birth to a female, as receptacles for their personal protective deities. For details in the funerary ritual context, see Bellezza 2008, pp. 428, 429.

star crossroads, in Kha-le rdzang-stod.⁵²¹ The star *g.yen* have been offered to [in this manner].⁵²² The many bunched (*yeng nge yeng*) sheep wool threads (*snal*) of the female sheep herder of the stars who takes care of sheep at the crossroads, in Kha-le rdzang-stod. The star *g.yen* have been offered to [in this manner]. The little milk bucket (*ze'u*) with white (milk) inside, [not] the shaky (*mgul*) empty milk bucket (*zo*) that is to be doubted (*dogs*) [as to whether it contains something] of the female yak calf herder who drives cattle at the crossroads, in Kha-le rdzang-stod. The star *g.yen* have been offered to [in this manner]. You livestock *spo-ma nye-du*, that is the *bag* for the nine *g.yen* of the stars, the nine *g.yen*, to eat. [Do-ma], do not consume the nectar and do not lick the *bag* that is for the seven hundred and seventy thousand planets and stars. Do not go together [with the *g.yen*] for protection. Now, to subjugate (*dbyung*) the nine lineages, the lineages [of *g.yen* and *gza*], the cutting of their punishments (*chad*) is effected; their various types of punishments are subjugated.

(r12) *da ring da chung du phyugs spo ma nyedu do ma snying dgas khyed la // skar ma g.yen dgu*
 'i (r13) *g.yen du ni za bag du ni ldag / pas phyi g.yal cho dgu ni spu ma mad ldar* (C.T. = *dar*) *zug*
 (C.T. = *bzug*) *na gnam* (r14) *la gza* (C.T. = *gza*) *skar bdun bum bdun khrī zīl du za bag du ldag*
 // *pas smra le {bzang}* (r15) *tho re mdo nas gzhi bdungs* (C.T. = *brdung*) *khyang* (C.T. = *kyang*)
kha le rdzang stodu mde'u rdze ma dmard (C.T. = *dmard*) *'pong* (C.T. = *'phong*) *skye* (r16) *sha*
ma khums // skar ma g.yen gyis 'tshald // drug drug btshan mo skar mdo na mo (r17) *zhing rmos*
khyang (C.T. = *kyang*) *kha le rdzang stodu dbog chig dngar ma gsol skar ma g.yen gyis 'tshal*
 (r18) // *skar ma lug rdzī mo mdo nas lug 'tshos kyang* (C.T. = *kyang*) *kha le rdzang stod du snal*
 {#} (r19) *yenge* (C.T. = *yeng nge*) *yeng skar ma g.yen gyis 'tshal // skar ma be'u rdzī mo mdo*
nas ba bdas gyi (r20) *kha la rdzang stodu zo stong mgul* (C.T. = *'gul*) *na dogs* (C.T. = *dwogs*)
ze'u nang ma dkar skar ma g.yen gyis (r21) *'tshald // skar ma g.yen dgu* 'i *g.yen du (dgu) ni za*
bag du ni lag (= ldag) gyis byugs (C.T. = *phyugs*) *spo ma* (r22) *nyedu khyen rnams la // gnam la*
gza (C.T. = *gza*) *skar bdun 'bum bdun khrī 'is // zīl du ni* (r23) *ma za shīs (= shīg) bag du ni ma*
ldag shīg skyabsu ni ma 'khrī shig // da rigs dgu rigs (r24) *nas da dbyungo* (C.T. = *phyung ngo*)
 // *chad dgu chad gyis da gchado // zhes bgyis la chad rigs nas byungo* (C.T. = *phyung ngo*) //

The third part of the *do-ma* ritual is focused on historical precedents. They are presented in brief, making their full import hard to discern. Firstly, there is the establishment of the human (deceased's) lineage. Only by having a genealogy, a prescribed place in the social and divine worlds, as symbolic as it might have been, could ritual intervention be successful on the deceased's behalf. A genealogical endowment is found in many origins myths attached to Tibetan archaic traditions. Each being, as well as each cultural emblem (ritual tools, arms, costumes, etc.), was assigned highly defined origins, which were proclaimed in the ritual context. It might be speculated that in other spheres of ancient life such as festivals, statecraft and war, similar declamations of ultimate sources were also made by bards, priests and others.

⁵²¹ As with the Indus, Brahmaputra and Sutlej headwaters in *Sha ru shul ston rabs*, the star crossroads (*skar-mdo*) appears to allude to a tradition in which the stars demarcated the landscape, as well as to topographic features serving as sightlines for stars. See *supra*, p. 208. Until modern times, the *'brog-pa* of Upper Tibet commonly used landforms to mark the sidereal passage of time. See Bellezza 1997, p. 201.

⁵²² This sentence also includes *dngar* (C.T. = *mngar*?) *ma gsol*, which seems to say that the stellar demons are not propitiated with sweets.

The next words of the text appear to invoke a competition between either humanity collectively or the dead specifically and the *smra* (a class of primordial humanoids). The series of herbivores noted may have aided these human players in their contest with the *smra*. However, the grammatical structure of this passage is questionable, rendering my reading less than ideal. Perhaps this passage is an allusion to mankind's victory in an epic cosmic battle, but we may never know. Be that as it may, the text moves on to pronounce the rise and execution of the great funerary lineage, which is divided into two main branches: *shid* (funerary rites) and *'brang* (burial procedures). This is followed by statements pertaining to cavorting with *btsan* and arriving before they do. These lines appear to be directed at the deceased but this is uncertain. To reflect this ambiguity, I employ the nominative case pronoun 'he'. Providing this voice is correct, it is an allusion to the need of the dead to remain free of demonic encumbrance if they are to reach paradise:

The paternal lineage (*cho*) of humans. To do (present) the paternal lineage. To establish the maternal lineage (*'brang*) of humans, yes, the maternal lineage.⁵²³ To compete (*mtho-btsams*) with the *smra*. Yo-ba: the antelope / gazelle with horns of countable furrows (*gnyer-[ma]*), the sheep (*g.yang*) and *phya-bo*:⁵²⁴ the *ba-men* (large cattle with much milk),⁵²⁵ the *rta-men* (donkeys?) with red foreheads. The *shid* lineage then appeared and the *'brang* lineage was explicated (*shor-ro*). Now, today and tomorrow, he does not compete (*'dran*) with the *btsan*. He arrives quickly [in the race] before [the *btsan*] do.⁵²⁶

(r25) *myi cho la ni cho bgyis myi 'brang la ni 'brang btshugs* (C.T. = *btsugs*) *smra yo ba la* (r26) *ni mtho btsams {dgo} ru chag* (C.T. = *chags*) *pa la ni gnyer bgrangs g.yang phya bo la ni rna {btas}* (r27) *ba men ni sgyid bcad rta men ni dpral dmar // shid rabs shig ni de nes* (C.T. = *nas*) (r28) *byung 'brang rabs ni de nis (= nas) shor / ro* (C.T. = *shod do*) *da di ring sang lta na btsan ni 'dran* (C.T. = *'gran*) *myi bad* (C.T. = *byed*)⁵²⁷ {*mgvogs*} (r29) *ni dkyus myi chol* (C.T. = *bcöl*)...

The text remains focused on the deceased, communicating that he is well and truly dead. A series of stark statements are employed to drive this bleak reality to the fore of his consciousness. The expired one has been reduced in wealth to the parched barley preparation customarily offered to the dead. Moreover, his death is as irrevocable as the exemplifying activities in the text. In this necrology, among the metaphors invoked are those of a broken egg and a chipped turquoise.⁵²⁸ Reflecting the martial nature of ancient Tibetan society, another way death was unmistakably communicated is through the imagery of dull weapons, an anathema to any proud warrior. If that is not enough, even the regular offerings of foodstuffs and beverages the departed once made to the deities can no longer be observed:

⁵²³ For the role of human lineages in various rituals of the Mu-cho'i khrom-'dur, see Bellezza 2008, pp. 396, 407, 419, 428.

⁵²⁴ The precise connection of the *phya-bo* (a kind of good luck sheep?) with the animals that follow is unclear. The words in question read: *la ni rna {btas}*.

⁵²⁵ This is followed by the words *ni sgyid bcad*, the meaning of which is uncertain.

⁵²⁶ This sentence is the general import of {*mgvogs*} *ni dkyus myi chol* (C.T. = *bcöl*).

⁵²⁷ Interestingly, this word is still pronounced as *bad* in the Hor-skad dialects of eastern Nag-chu.

⁵²⁸ With slight variation, these appear to be standard early historic-period necrologic devices of the funerary rite. For these metaphors in Pt 1134, see Bellezza 2008, pp. 383, 513; 2010a, pp. 36–38; *supra*, p. 145 (fn. 220). For the chipped turquoise metaphor in the *do-ma* origins tale of ITJ 731r, see *ibid.*, 2008, pp. 532, 537; 2010a, pp. 43, 44.

Furthermore, it has been shown that as his household wealth (*dud-phyugs*), the defective and deteriorated (*nyam-nyes*) bipedal man (*'greng myi-bu*) has [only] parched barley flour paste. It has been shown that all the sons (*dral-bu*) and daughters (*pra-mo*) tower over (*rngam*) the broken tree. It has been shown that if [something] is inserted (*drangs*) in a thicket (*dbyi-mo*) of rose (*se*) and barberry (*skyer*), all the rose and barberry sways (*g.yos-so*). [It has been shown] that if [something] is inserted in the *srol-kong* (?) of the lungs, all the passageways (*rtsa*) of the lungs quiver (*g.yoso*). The decayed one,⁵²⁹ yes, the lord is dead. The crane bird egg, yes, it is cracked (*rtol*). The good turquoise, yes, it is chipped (*grugs*). The hard sharp-edged weapons are dull: the lord, yes, of this clan, is dead. His prime offerings (*phud*) overhead [to the deities] have fallen away (*nyams*).⁵³⁰

'greng myi bu ni nyam nyes dud phyugs (C.T. = *phyug*) *pu ni yang bag* (r30) *tshal* (= *'tshal*) *lo* / *shing stong* (C.T. = *sdong*) *po gchig* (C.T. = *gcig*) *chag na dral bu pra mo* (C.T. = *dpra mo*) *gun* (C.T. = *kun*) *rngam* (C.T. = *rngams*) *'tshalo* (r31) *se skyer dbyi mo gcig drangs na / se skyer gun* (C.T. = *kun*) *g.yos so / glo'i srol kong gcig drangs* (r32) *na glo rtsa kun g.yoso dpan* (C.T. = *'phan*) *te ni rje grongs bya khrung khrung na sgong rtol* (C.T. = *rdol*) *to bzang ste ni* (r33) *g.yu grugs so / rno'i ni ngar yal rus kyi ni rje grongs glad gyi ni phud nyams /*

Facing the harsh fact of his own death, the deceased has no option left but to make the epic switchover to the otherworld. To get there he is dependent on the *do-ma*, his surrogate relative. It is the *do-ma* who is entrusted with carrying him over the waters of the dead. This existential overpass is not made where the water is deep or fast moving but at a wide ford, just as a living horseman negotiating a river would make a crossing. The fording of the river of the dead is phrased several different ways in this concluding part of the *do-ma* funeral, underscoring its exceptional importance to the ritual performance. The text also notes that the lord's (epithet for the deceased) 'ordered position' (*gral*) has been carefully established to the heights (*gral ni mtho gnyer tshal lo*). This ritualized regulation of his consciousness demonstrates that the deceased has been guided to the final and highest rung of his post-obit existence. He is now ready for ultimate liberation.

In the very last act of the ritual, the funerary priests pronounce that the 'lord of the mind' (*yid kyi rje*; apparently, the fully reconditioned consciousness principle of the deceased) comes to see a long rainbow (*gzha-ring*). This supernal spectacle exists at the marchland of the afterlife, the very last phenomenon that those in the world of the living can apprehend. Beyond that point no more evocations were required, for the deceased had slipped beyond, joining his ancestors in the parallel world of the dead. This is a world irreversibly cut off from the one inhabited by the living. In the archaic funerary tradition, this otherworld is styled the 'joyous land' (*rga-yul / dga'-yul, skyid-yul*), 'joyous mountain' (*dga'-ri*) or 'joyous dwelling-place' (*rga-brang*):

Now, today, the cherished (*snying-dgas*) *do-ma*, the livestock *spo-ma nye-du*, goes over the water and on the pass. He crosses (*sbog*) the shallow ford (*yang-ba rab*).

⁵²⁹ *Dpan*. This word is very closely related in meaning to the current verb form *'phan-pa* (deteriorated, broken). See Bellezza 2008, p. 530 (n. 624).

⁵³⁰ I first examined this line and those flanking it in Bellezza 2008, p. 530 (n. 624). Readers of both will notice several minor differences in tone. Also, in my earlier reading, I did not appreciate that *phud* (first and best offerings) referred directly to religious observances.

The ordered position of the lord, his ordered position, is fixed in the heights.⁵³¹ [The deceased] has gone above the water and on the pass. [The deceased] has crossed the shallow, yes, ford. The lord of the mind has now also encountered (*mjal-lo*) the long rainbow *dung-gsang* (?).

phyugs (r34) *spo ma nyedu / do ma snying dgas da di ring chab gang laru* (C.T. = *la ru*) *bgyi tshal / yang* (C.T. = *yangs*) *ba rab du sbog* (C.T. = 'bog) (r35) *tshal* (= 'tshal) *lo gral rje gral ni mtho gnyer tshal lo rtsi byang rtsi ni gda mnabs tshal* (r36) *lo chab gang la ru bgyi tshal* (C.T. = 'tshal) *lo yang* (C.T. = *yangs*) *ba ni rab du sbog* (C.T. = 'bog) *tshalo* (C.T. = 'tshal lo) / *gzha* (C.T. = *gzha'*) *ring dung gsang* (r37) *yid ki rje dang yang da mjal lo //*

The last grammatical line of the text furnishes a kind of colophon for the performance. In archaic funerary texts colophons are rare (and very welcome) additions. The author(s) in no uncertain language encourages the recitation (*smos*) and propagation (*gzhan nī lobs*) of this *do-ma* ritual. It is called the paternal lineage (*cho*) and chapter of the father (*pha'i le'u*), indicating that this ritual provision belongs to a legitimate priestly (*gshen / bon*) lineage. The author(s) also makes known that this is an abridged version of the ritual. In the words of the text: "This paternal lineage, the chapter of the father, is to be spoken. It is to teach to others. This was written as a minimum elaboration (*gal*) [of the ritual provisions set forth]."⁵³²

To conclude this study of the archaic funerary traditions of Tibet we turn to the extraordinary discovery of two lavishly painted wooden coffins from the Guolimu cemetery, in the Tsaidam Basin, Qinghai (A-mdo), in 2002. These paintings afford a graphic index of imperial-period Tibetan funerary practices and are directly comparable to the materials examined in this book. That is not to say, however, that the funerary rituals of this study are identical with those depicted on the coffins of Guolimu. There are likely to be variations among them, reflective of different geographic and cultural exigencies. Nevertheless, our texts and the coffin paintings from the Tsaidam basin share fundamental eschatological concepts and ritual actions.

The painted coffins were discovered in two wooden chambers and have been estimated (on stylistic grounds and by the types of grave goods) to date to the mid-8th century CE (corroboration using chronometric methodologies should be undertaken).⁵³³ These coffins of juniper wood have

⁵³¹ The next words of the text, *rtsi byang rtsi ni gda mnabs tshal lo*, appear to do with the enrobing of something (the *gda*?) in color or paint. Perhaps this refers to the application of pigments on the body of the corpse (cf. Bellezza 2008: 512), but at this final send-off stage of the funerary ritual this seems unlikely. In Pt 1134 (Ins. 31, 66), there is the O.T. spelling: *rtshi* (paint / coloring agent).

⁵³² *Cho smos pha'i le'u lagste gzhan nī lobs lagso 'dir ni gal chung zhig briso //* (Ins. 37, 38). It would be a great discovery if a longer more elaborate version of this *do-ma* ritual was to be found. One can only wonder how many Old Tibetan ritual texts may still be hidden away in Tibet.

⁵³³ Descriptive information on these coffins and burials is taken from Tong and Wertmann 2010, pp. 190–205; Tong 2008, pp. 153–175. For more data on the Tibetan funerary archaeology of Qinghai, see Tong 2008. These authors provide detailed and competent treatment of the subject and furnish graphic reconstructions of the painted coffins. The functional correspondences between the Tibetan archaic funerary traditions and painted coffins of Guolimu made by Tong and Wertmann are, generally speaking, sound. For their understanding of archaic funerary culture these authors rely on two Chinese language studies made by Chu Chunjie (1989). An English version of the same papers was published in 1991 (see Chu Junjie [*sic*]). It must be pointed out that Chu Chunjie's study is very heavily indebted to the work of Lalou 1953; Haahr 1969; Stein 1971. Chu Chunjie's treatment of the narratives and ritual procedures in Pt 1042 and Pt 1136, however, is marked by certain misconceptions (see Chu 1991). For example, Tong (2008: 158), in his reference to Chu's work, states that Pt 1136 (Ins. 20–29) speaks of the courage the *do-ma* is to have and the tomb-building that this horse is to carry out, when no such content is found in this narrative. For these lines of Pt 1136, see

an almost rectangular shape and rounded ends.⁵³⁴ The two coffins are made up of side, end and top panels (the bottom panels are now missing). On the basis of the costumes and face painting with a red pigment (vermilion or red ochre?) in the coffin paintings, Tibetan inscriptions (some of which have to do with *sri* subjugation rituals), as well as tomb morphology, these burials have been identified as being primarily affiliated to imperial-period Tibetan culture (the Chinese call it ‘Tubo’), which had assimilated the underlying Tuyuhun culture, and to which Tang cultural traits were amalgamated.

Tomb M1 contained the remains of a man and a woman. The coffin (plank No. 1) of this interment displays three different scenes: hunting on horseback, a caravan on the way to a banquet, and the banquet itself with a yurt and related activities such as love-making. Tong and Wertmann (*ibid.*) believe that these scenes depict the living world of pastoralism. However, given the placement of these paintings on a casket, it is much more likely that they represent an idealized portrayal of the otherworld. As we have seen, the afterlife in Tibetan archaic funerary traditions was conceived of as a place that paralleled the one of the living, in terms of its material and social structures. According to archaic conceptions, the dead must not be unduly attached to the living if they are to reach paradise. In the successful completion of a funeral, the separation of the living and the dead was viewed as essential and irrevocable. Therefore, there would be little sense in painting the enjoyments of the world of the living in a burial. The hunting of deer and the wild yak on plank No. 1 is of quarry most frequently recorded in Old Tibetan ritual narratives. Evidently, this favored activity of the Tibetan ruling classes was believed to take place in both the world of the living and the world of the dead. The tradition of hunting wild yaks and deer with long bows on horseback can be traced to the prehistoric rock art of Upper Tibet. The rock art record indicates that early hunting culture had economic as well as ritualistic components. The presence of a circular yurt on the same plank can be assigned to the Turco-Mongolian Tuyuhun cultural sphere.

Tomb M1 (coffin plank No. 2) is composed of six interrelated scenes: 1) guests bringing three or four heavily caparisoned horses (Tong and Wertmann 2010 liken this scene to the funerary ritual horses of Pt 1042); 2) a mourning scene centered on a tent with tearful women, a drummer and two large vessels (the tent is compared to the *ring-gur* and *thugs-gur* of Pt 1042, see *ibid.*; Tong 2008: 140, 141); 3) two mounted archers shooting at an almost fully effaced object (authors, *ibid.*, note that similar scenes are found on other coffin planks; they interpret it as the *bon* ritual slaying of the homicidal evil spirit); 4) offering of sacrificial cattle and a horse (likened in *ibid.* to the *bon* custom of psychopomp animals, ransom offerings and provisions for the dead); 5) a man mounted on an unadorned horse leading the deceased couple (likened in *ibid.* to the horse that carries the dead to paradise in Pt 1136); and 6) a banquet and love-making.

Scene No. 1 of tomb M1 (coffin plank No. 2) does indeed probably show the *do-ma*. The ornate decoration of these horses and their position at the bottom right-hand corner of the panel (as a fundamental ritual construct of the entire painting) indicate so much. Immediately above these three or four horses is the drummer in scene No. 2. This bare-headed drummer may be a funerary priest or sacerdotal assistant involved in removing any demonic taint that may have

Bellezza 2008, pp. 521, 522. On the floral patterns and fantastic animals embellishing the end panels of the wooden coffins and their affinities to Han and Tang art, see Tong and Wertmann (*ibid.*, 205–207).

⁵³⁴ According to Tong and Wertmann (2010: 211, after Hou 1993), only stone sarcophagi have been discovered in Central Tibet. Nevertheless, in western Tibet a wooden coffin was discovered in a burial in Mon-'tsher, which has been AMS dated to circa 300 CE. Other wooden coffins have also been unearthed in Mon-'tsher and Gu-ge. For a preliminary report, see Bellezza 2010b.

accompanied the deaths. In addition to banging his kettledrum, he may have chanted. Just to the left of the three horses in scene No. 1 is the tent of scene No. 2. Interestingly, this tent is shown as being less in height than the figures standing around it, as are the funerary ritual tents of the illuminated funerary manuscript. Likewise, the curvilinear ornamentation of the tent painted on the coffin gives the impression that its shell would have been made of a textile. Scene No. 2, while containing what appears to be mourning women, is better described as portraying the final valediction of dead through the *ring-gur* or *thug-gur* ritual activities. Scene No. 3 is situated directly above scene No. 2. Its bowmen recall the ritual use of the bow and arrow for slaying the demons of death in archaic funerary praxis. As for scene No. 4, the manner in which the cattle and horse are being driven with long sticks towards the funerary tent (in the opposite direction of the psychopomp rider and deceased in scene No. 5) indicates that these animals specifically functioned as *dri* livestock, those living creatures dispensed for the repurchase of the dead. It appears that the first horseman in scene No. 5 is a funerary priest figuratively leading the deceased couple (who are the only ones mounted on fully caparisoned horses, the *do-ma*) through the postmortem world to the afterlife. That the tomb M1 occupants were of a lofty social rank is reflected in their headgear, the tallest of any depicted on the plank of wood. It can be inferred from their costumes, the size of the tomb and all the pomp and circumstance of their portrayed funeral that this couple belonged to the nobility. The lead figure wears a robe, turban and boots.⁵³⁵ This guide holds in his right hand a five-sided object decorated with roundels mounted on a handle. This seems to be a *nam-kha* or thread-cross, an important ritual implement for housing and guiding the dead through the postmortem realm.⁵³⁶ In any case, this is a liberating tool of some kind. Behind this object trails a long, billowing cloth, which also appears to be attached to the helve grasped by the funerary priest. This can only be the white cloth (*dar-dkar*) that shows the way (*lam-ston*) to heaven or some closely related ritual object that bridges the postmortem realm.

Scene No. 5 is located immediately to the left of scene No. 3. The way in which the heaven-bound are trailed by the two mounted archers firing their bows in scene No. 3 does in itself suggest that these latter figures are shown destroying demonic obstacles blocking the path to heaven. The position of scene No. 6, on the extreme left side of the plank immediately following the ostensible guiding of the dead towards paradise, strongly suggests that it is a rendition of the idealized afterlife. The seated male and female figures flanking the tent are most plausibly the *mtshun* or deified ancestors of the deceased couple. Other people in the scene are perhaps more distant relatives and retainers. The deceased couple is obviously of high social status. Their ancestors are being waited upon solicitously by those who are preparing a feast. Several figures stand outside the tent. These may represent ministers or other close confidants of the noble couple. As does the world of the living, this afterlife has mountains and vegetation and all manner of human delights.⁵³⁷

⁵³⁵ On the turbans and dress of figures in the coffin paintings, see Tong and Wertmann 2010, pp. 207–209. It is noted that two main types of turbans are represented: a high turban with spiral pleat and a thick coiled turban. The former turban is of the type that King Srong-btsan sgam-po and other royal figures of the Tibetan imperium are commonly depicted wearing in Tibetan paintings and sculpture. The latter type of turban (red or white in color) continued to be used by certain Eternal Bon practitioners until the modern period and is still worn today in some fringe regions of the Tibetan Plateau.

⁵³⁶ In a Hei Zhi Pi funerary scroll of the Naxi, there is a depiction of the priest Dongba Shilo on horseback holding a flag and flat-bell. Following him is a white horse with a thread-cross (*naka*) mounted on a horse with saddle and stirrups. In this particular illustrated sequence of the scroll, Dongba Shilo is leading the soul of the deceased through the strife-torn realm of the titans. See *op. cit.* Brauen 2011, pp. 38, 39. Dongba Shilo is often equated with Ston-pa gshen-rab. On the thread-cross in Pt 1042 and the Mu-cho'i khrom-'dur, see *supra*, pp. 26 (fn. 41), 157 (fn. 259).

⁵³⁷ Tong (2008: 155, 160, 163) and Tong and Wertmann (2010: 2002) acknowledge that scene No. 6 portrays paradise, but they do not elaborate on this theme. In their work, no information on the original orientation of the coffins is given.

Similarly, the side planks of the coffin in tomb M2 of the Guolimu cemetery, with its hunting of deer, wild asses and a wild yak, as well as a banquet, a couple residing in a yurt, and love-making, may also be a representative of the idealized afterlife. If so, the dead were perceived as participating in the same kinds of activities they did whilst alive, just as is indicated in the archaic funerary texts. The painting on another plank from tomb M2 is highly damaged. From what is discernable, its scenes are largely analogous to those on the coffin of tomb M1.⁵³⁸

Tong (2008: 44) does report the orientation of two corpses in Tibetan-Tuyuhun burials of Qinghai; their heads face north and west. North and west are noted in the Tibetan archaic funerary tradition as the directions of the afterlife. It is therefore reasonable to assume that the end of the coffin ostensibly depicting paradise in tomb M1 of the Guolimu cemetery, faced either northwards or westwards.

⁵³⁸ Other painted coffin panels presumably from the same region are housed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York) and in private collections. For reference to these, including an art historical analysis, see Heller forthcoming.



Fig. 16. The six interrelated funerary scenes of coffin plank No. 2, Tomb M1, Guolimu. Drawing courtesy of Tong Tao

