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# Joseph Thsertan Gergan's Report on Nyarma, 1917

Founded most probably in 996 CE, the monastery of Nyarma<sup>1</sup> in Ladakh was seemingly one of the earliest and also one of the most important Buddhist monuments in historical Western Tibet at the time, on account of its function, size and the rank of its founders,<sup>2</sup> whom some Tibetan sources, such as *mNga' ris rgyal rabs* ("Royal Genealogies of Western Tibet") (Vitali 1996: 110, 148) and *Rin chen bzang po rnam thar 'bring po* ("Middle-length Biography of the Great Translator Rin chen bzang po"), record or allow the interpretation as the Royal Lama Ye shes 'od (947–1019/1024) and the Great Translator Rin chen bzang po (958–1055). Other sources, such as *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs* ("Royal Genealogy of the Solar Lineage") mention the ruler Khri bKra shis 'Od lde btsan, more commonly known als 'Od lde, as having founded a *gtsug lag khang* at Nyarma.<sup>3</sup>

The first published reference to Nyarma in a modern scientific

study was made by August Hermann Francke in his preface to H. Lee Shuttleworth's monograph on the Buddhist temple of Lalung in Spiti. There he names Joseph Gergan as the one who "discovered, copied and translated the biography of this famous lama". And he also says that "*Nar-ma* was discovered a few years ago by Joseph Gergan as a ruined site near *Khri-rtse*<sup>4</sup> in Ladakh." (Francke 1929: i).<sup>5</sup>

Joseph Gergan (1878–1946) was born into a family of Central Tibetan descent living in the Nubra valley of Ladakh and received the Tibetan name bSod nams Tshe brtan. He was baptised in 1890 by Moravian missionaries and took the name Joseph. He then stayed for fourteen years in Srinagar where he visited the Church Mission Society and learned English and Urdu (see Guyon Le Bouffy 2012: 20; Bass and Burroughs 2018: 19, 45). Upon his return to Leh, he became a teacher at the Moravian Mission School in Leh. By 1913, he is already mentioned as the headmaster of this school. In 1920 he was ordained as a minister of the Moravian Church. Gergan, who is referred to as a disciple and colleague of Francke's, must have known the Moravian missionary and scholar since at least around 1906. They collaborated not only in the translation of the Old Testament into Ladakhi (begun by Gergan in 1909) but also in the field of historical studies of Western Tibet (Walravens and Taube 1992: 198; Guyon Le Bouffy 2012: 21).

Over a long period of time, Gergan collected and copied a large number of historical texts, documents, treaties, song books and inscriptions. He did this mostly in the form of brief excursions or longer

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the text, the popular modern spelling Nyarma is used. In Tibetan sources, various spellings are found, such as Myar ma (*Rin chen bzang po rnam thar* 4, f.29b2), Nyar ma (*Nyang ral chos 'byung* B: 463.13; Tsering Drongshar and Jahoda, "The *Extended Biography of the Royal Lama Ye shes 'od* by Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan: The Tibetan text", this volume, p. 140; see also Gu ge Paṇ chen Grags pa rgyal mtshan 2011: 305 and Do rgya dBang drag rdo rje 2013: 22), Nya mar (*Nyang ral chos 'byung* A: 336.1.2) and Nyer ma (*gDung rabs zam 'phreng*, cited in Yo seb dge rgan 1976: 338.16).

<sup>2</sup> See also Jahoda, "On the foundation of the Nyarma *gtsug lag khang*, Ladakh", this volume, pp. 279ff.

<sup>3</sup> See Jahoda, "Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan's chapter on the history of mNga' ris in *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs*: Notes on the author and the content", this volume, p. 82, and Gu ge Tshe ring rgyal po, "Relating the history of mNga' ris as set down in writing in Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan's *Nyi ma'i rigs kyi rgyal rabs skye dgu'i cod paṇ nyi zla'i phreng mdzes*: The Tibetan text (with variant readings by Tsering Drongshar and Christian Jahoda)", this volume, p. 111.

<sup>4</sup> Also known as Thikse and Thiksay. Variant Tibetan spellings are Khriḡ rtse and Khriḡ se.

<sup>5</sup> See also the MS version among the Shuttleworth Papers, BL, p. 2.

field trips, at the beginning perhaps directly inspired or motivated by Francke, later also by H. Lee Shuttleworth. These trips seem to have been at least partly (co-)financed by Sir John Marshall, Director-General of Archaeology in India, on whose “strong recommendation” August Hermann Francke had already been employed in 1909/1910 to carry out an archeological survey of Kinnaur, Spiti and areas of Ladakh<sup>6</sup> in order to record the archaeological and artistic remains of the ancient Buddhist culture of these areas. Some of the materials and information collected were published by Gergan himself, such as an essay on the cult of the dead and funeral rites in Ladakh (Gergan 1940), a collection of Tibetan proverbs and sayings (Gergan 1942), and a work on the history of Ladakh which was published posthumously (dGergan 1976). Further material he collected has been published in recent decades, for example by Dieter Schuh (2008). Nevertheless, a considerable number of papers and documents seem to have remained unpublished or may have even been lost.

The report published here is held among the August Hermann Francke papers in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Manuscript Department. It is contained in a notebook entitled on the cover (see Fig. 1):

Nyarma temples  
Ladakh  
by Joseph Thse-brtan

The title may well have been written by Gergan while the small addition in line 2 on the cover stating “Lhasa Inschrift” is certainly in Francke’s handwriting.

The report is entirely handwritten, most probably by Gergan himself. It starts on the top of a right-hand page numbered 2—“Note: (near Khri-rtse) Nyarma, April 10<sup>th</sup> 1917”—and extends over 14 pages (all lined), the last two pages being dedicated to a to-scale survey of the main temple and not-to-scale sketch of other temples. Like the beginning, the ending on the last page of the narrative description is in the form of a report: “May be more temples of him [the Great Translator Rin chen bzang po] in Ladak than the above, Joseph Thsertan.” Joseph Thsertan can be clearly read and understood as a signature. The spelling is unusual and seems to reflect the writer’s individual preference for how to write his personal (Christian/Tibetan) name, in contrast to the rules of transliterating its spelling in Tibetan with which he was entirely familiar (as is manifest from the report).

<sup>6</sup> The route of his expedition did not lead him to Nyarma as the location (and perhaps also importance) of this site was not known at the time.

This report seems to be one of the earliest examples of this kind reports from Gergan’s pen until the late 1920s which were most probably produced deliberately for and sent to Francke (identical copies perhaps at the same time to Sir John Marshall).<sup>7</sup> From the early 1920s onward also H. Lee Shuttleworth was part of this “collaborative network” (see Jahoda 2007: 362–363).

### Annotated Edition

The text of the report given here has kept the spellings and formatting used by its writer. The only exception is first-line indentation of paragraphs for better readability. Uncertain and revised readings, also corrections appearing in the notebook, explanations and other comments have been added in footnotes. Minor additions, such as a missing apostrophe, have been added in square brackets. Unless absolutely necessary for understanding Gergan’s text the English has not been corrected. All pages of the original report in the notebook are reproduced individually in facsimile in order to enable future researchers to make full use of the visual and textual information without (having to) access the original hard copy. The format of the notebook is 14 x 17,7 cm. The first right-hand page is paginated 2 in the top right-hand corner but is otherwise blank (Fig. 2). The report starts at the top of the reverse side of page 1 (which is a left-hand page and has no pagination. The right-hand page opposite this is paginated 2. Therefore I tend to assume that the author/writer used a kind of system which is used in Tibetan-style loose-leaf books (*dpe cha*) where recto folios are numbered 1, 2, 3, etc. while the reverse side of the leaves is left unnumbered. This is also followed in the edition where recto pages are therefore identified as [1a], [2a], etc. while verso pages are referred to as [1b], [2b], etc. The editorial sequence of pages is numbered in Roman numerals, starting with I for the cover, II for the reverse of the cover etc.

The transliteration of Tibetan names and words in the footnotes follows the principles of the Wylie transliteration system, as described by Turrell Wylie (1959). Similar to the system used by the Library of Congress, diacritical marks are used for those letters representing an Indic language.

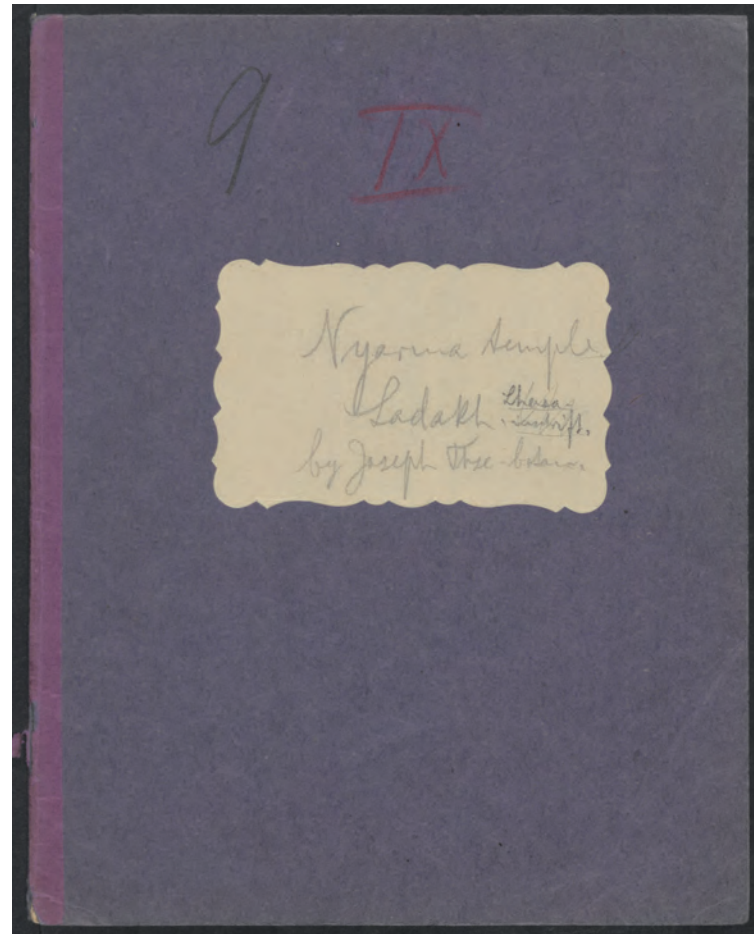
<sup>7</sup> The existence of further reports is evident from correspondence which the author was able to study briefly in the archive of the Archaeological Survey of India in Delhi in 2009.

## I. Cover (see Fig. 1)

Nyarma temples  
Ladakh. Lhasa  
Inschrift.  
By Joseph Thse-brtan<sup>8</sup>

II. Cover reverse (see Fig. 2, left)  
[without writing]

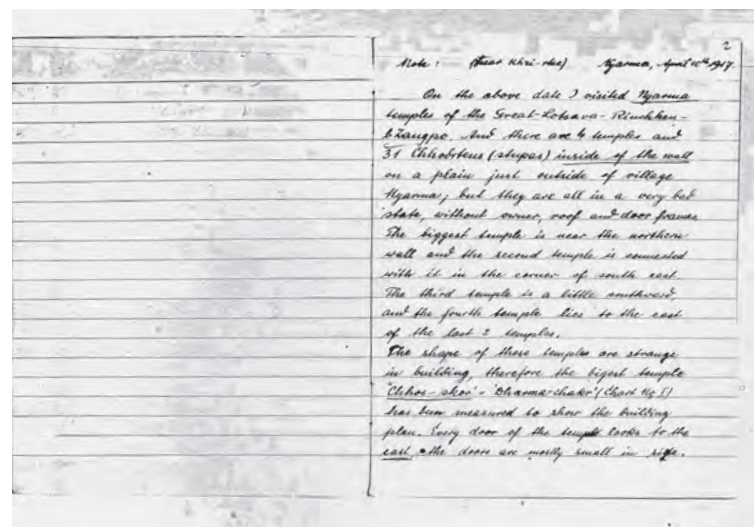
## III. Page [1a] (see Fig. 2, right)

1<sup>9</sup>IV. Page [1b] (see Fig. 3, left)  
[without writing]

1. Cover, front side, notebook,  
August Hermann Francke papers,  
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin  
Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

2. Cover, reverse side and page [1a],  
notebook, August Hermann Francke  
papers, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin  
Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

3. Page [1b] and Page [2a],  
notebook, August Hermann Francke  
papers, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin  
Preussischer Kulturbesitz.



<sup>8</sup> Tshé brtan. The spelling follows the transliteration of the letter æ (*tsha*) as *tsha*.

<sup>9</sup> Pagina, Arabic numeral, top right-hand corner.

2

Note: (near Khri-rtse) Nyarma, April 10<sup>th</sup> 1917.

On the above date I visited Nyarma temples of the Great-Lotsava-Rinchhen-bZangpo. And there are 4 temples and 31 Chhodrtens (stupas) inside of the wall on a plain just outside of village Nyarma; but they are all in a very bad state, without owner, roof and door frames. The biggest temple is near the northern wall and the second temple is connected with it in the corner of south east. The third temple is a little southward, and the fourth temple lies to the east of the last 2 temples.

The shape of these temples are strange in building, therefore the biggest temple "Chhos-skor" = "Dharma-chakr" (Chart No. 1)<sup>15</sup> has been measured to show the building plan. Every door of the temple looks to the east, the doors are mostly small in size.

4. Page [2a], notebook, August Hermann Francke papers, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

## V. Page [2a] (Fig. 4)

2<sup>10</sup>

Note: (near Khri-rtse) Nyarma, April 10<sup>th</sup> 1917

On the above date I visited Nyarma<sup>11</sup> temples of the Great-Lotsava-Rinchhen-bZangpo.<sup>12</sup> And there are 4 temples and 31 Chhodrtens<sup>13</sup> (stupas) inside of the wall on a plain just outside of village Nyarma; but they are all in a very bad state, without owner, roof and door frames. The biggest temple is near the northern wall and the second temple is connected with it in the corner of south east. The third temple is a little southward, and the fourth temple lies to the east of the last 2 temples.

The shape of these temples are strange in building, therefore the big[g]est temple "Chhos-skor"<sup>14</sup> = "Dharma-chakr" (Chart No. 1)<sup>15</sup> has been measured to show the building plan. Every door of the temple looks to the east,<sup>16</sup> the doors are mostly small in size.

<sup>10</sup> Pagina, Arabic numeral (see also page [3a] through [8a]).

<sup>11</sup> Formatted underlined (here as elsewhere) as in the notebook. Judging from the pencil used for underlining this may well have been made by the author/writer (in order to highlight certain words or phrases; often found in MS of this time as an indication what should be italicised in print). If not done by the author/writer the underlining could also have been made by the recipient of the report, August Hermann Francke.

<sup>12</sup> Great Translator (*lo tsā ba chen po*) Rin chen bzang po (958–1055). Gergan's spelling of the letter æ (*cha*) is *chha*.

<sup>13</sup> In Tibetan *mchod rten*.

<sup>14</sup> In Tibetan *chos skor* (also *chos 'khor*). Gergan gives this word as synonymous with *dharmacakra*, literally the "wheel of *dharmā*" representing the teachings of the Buddha. According to Gergan this name refers exclusively to the main temple and not to the whole sacred complex or religious area of temples and monuments. The designation as *chos skor* or *chos 'khor* (the latter occurs with regard to Nyarma already in *Nyang ral chos 'byung A* 336 and *Nyang ral chos 'byung B* 463) was "given to monasteries, where the translations of the 'words' and the commentaries, the revisions of the translations, the teachings and discussions on holy *dharmā* by Indian *panditas* and *siddhas*—who had arrived on invitation—took place during the later propagation of the doctrine. Such monasteries, for example, are mNga' ris mTho lding, Mar yul Al ci, and sPi ti Ta po monastery." (Shastri 1997: 336). This explanation of the word *chos 'khor* corresponds to that given in *Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo* (2002: 2115) with reference to the example of bSam yas as a place where the holy *dharmā* was spread and an excellent location where translators and *panditas* translated many Buddhist teachings or cycles of esoteric instructions. Gergan's description as *chos skor* seems to imply that this designation was used by local people to refer to the main temple.

<sup>15</sup> See Fig. 16 and Fig. 17.

<sup>16</sup> The underlining stresses the orientation of all doors (and also of the main axis) of the temple towards the east. This remark is also a testimony to Gergan's knowledgeable observations.

## VI. Page [2b] (Fig. 5)

The "Dharmachakra" temple has 4 rooms from east to west.<sup>17</sup> The inner one is quite a small room 12 F x 12 F, the walls of this room are now quite blank, some spots of colour only can be seen as a trace, but no more.<sup>18</sup> The Lamas said, that in this room was placed the "Rdorje-chhenmo" (Maha-vajr)<sup>19</sup> on the elevated throne of the west wall. But now the same idol is placed in the new second story of this room. The throne and behind & above is the clay ornaments in the old room can still be seen. By the Lamas of "Khri-rtse dGonpa" has been erected the above mentioned new temple after the Dugra [sic!] war,<sup>20</sup> in which one can see the "Rdorje-chhenmo" on a painted wooden pony.<sup>21</sup> Painted with gold Rdorjechhenmo's formerly green face, and she<sup>22</sup> holds an arrow & a mirror in this<sup>23</sup> hands, his size is no

<sup>17</sup> Gergan's word "room" relates to the Tibetan word *khang*. This inner room (or central shrine chamber) is usually designated as *dri gtsang khang*.

<sup>18</sup> See also the contributions by Hubert Feiglstorfer, "The architecture of the Buddhist temple complex of Nyarma", and Christiane Kalantari, "Note on the spatial iconography of the Nyarma *gtsug lag khang* in context", this volume.

<sup>19</sup> In Tibetan rDo rje chen mo. Gergan's rendering into Sanskrit as "Maha-vajr" and the male gender he uses in this report seem perhaps to imply that he saw and identified this protective deity as male.

<sup>20</sup> Read Dogra war(s). The war(s) mentioned seems to refer to the invasion of Ladakh by the Sikhs and their Dogra allies carried out by Rāja Gulab Singh's wazir, Zorawar Singh, in four waves from 1834 to 1839. The erection of the new temple by monks from Thikse (Khri rtse) monastery—who are still in charge of this temple today—must have taken place, according to the oral account, some time in the 1840s.

<sup>21</sup> From Gergan's description it is not entirely clear whether this clay statue was moved from its former location to the new one or whether a new statue was made and installed in the new temple. See Fig. 20 (and Fig. 27 in Kalantari, "Note on the spatial iconography of the Nyarma *gtsug lag khang* in context", this volume, p. 273) for a photo of the statue in place in 2009.

<sup>22</sup> "she" is added in small script (perhaps by a different hand) on top of (meant to replace) he.

<sup>23</sup> The word here seems to have been written "this" or "thes", perhaps an incomplete "these". The t is crossed out so that the corrected version most probably reads his (implying an intended reference to a male deity).

The "Dharmachakra" temple has 4 rooms from east to west. The inner one is quite a small room 12 F x 12 F, the walls of this room are now quite blank, some spots of colour only can be seen as a trace, but no more. The Lamas said, that in this room was placed the "Rdorje-chhenmo" (Maha-vajr) on the elevated throne of the west wall. But now the same idol is placed in the new second story of this room. The throne and behind & above is the clay ornaments in the old room can still be seen. By the Lamas of "Khri-rtse dGonpa" has been erected the above mentioned new temple after the Dugra war, in which one can see the "Rdorje-chhenmo" on a painted wooden pony. Painted with gold Rdorjechhenmo's formerly green face, and <sup>she</sup> he holds an arrow & a mirror in this hands, his size is no

3

more than a cubit. On the left of him there is a new Dzambala. And on the left of latter idol there are 3 jagged stones, one of which is smeared with butter. It looks similar to the Hindus' linga.

The second big room is 43 F. x 43 F. and height 14 feet. Inside there were 2 standing idols, one on each side of the door, nearly the same in size as the height of the wall. But at present left nothing only can be seen the back clay ornaments of them, both idols were fastened there by nails, as there are several holes in the wall. In the centre of the same room there is still a broken clay throne with lotus leaves and back wall. Perhaps on it was the biggest idol of the Nyarma temples. In both the corners of the west wall 2 standing idols, one in each

6. Page [3a], notebook, August Hermann Francke papers, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

## VII. Page [3a] (Fig. 6)

3

more than a cubit.<sup>24</sup> On the left of him there is a new Dzambala.<sup>25</sup> And on the left of latter idol there are 3 jagged stones, one of which is smeared with butter. It looks similar to the Hindus' linga.<sup>26</sup>

The second big room is 43 F. x 43 F. and height 14 feet.<sup>27</sup> Inside there were 2 standing idols, one on each side of the door, nearly the same in size as the height of the wall. But at present left nothing only can be seen the back clay ornaments of them, both idols were fastened there by nails, as there are several holes in the wall.<sup>28</sup> In the centre of the same room there is still a broken clay throne with lotus leaves and back wall.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps on it was the biggest idol of the Nyarma temples.<sup>30</sup> In both the corners of the west wall 2 standing idols, one in each

<sup>24</sup> In size, construction and general iconographic features (including the horse) this statue very much resembles the rDo rje chen mo statue in the temple of the protective deities (*srung ma khang*) at Khorchag in Purang (see Jahoda and Kalantari 2012: 118–119).

<sup>25</sup> Dzam bha la (Sanskrit Jambhala), the god of riches.

<sup>26</sup> Gergan's description seems to relate to religious items kept at the time of his visit on the new second story of the temple. In July 2009, there was no trace of any "jagged stone" in the rDo rje chen mo *lha khang* (as it was referred to). A few big *gtor ma* (ca. 30 cm high) had been placed in front of the glass case holding the statue. One of them was kept in a kind of wooden box or altar with a carved front opening. These *gtor ma* were decorated with butter. The stones described by Gergan in all likelihood may have been small *rdo ring* which had perhaps been removed since then or were not visible in 2009.

<sup>27</sup> These measurements correspond with those of the square *'du khang* taken by Feiglstorfer (see Feiglstorfer, "The architecture of the Buddhist temple complex of Nyarma", this volume, p. 240).

<sup>28</sup> The earlier existence of two clay sculptures mounted on the wall is also suggested by Feiglstorfer (*ibid.*: 239), who interprets the absence of pedestals as an indication that they were not standing. It is unclear whether Gergan's statement that there were two over-life-size standing images (around 4 m high) is based on local oral tradition or his conclusion from the archaeological evidence.

<sup>29</sup> See Fig. 22 in Feiglstorfer (*ibid.*: 240) and Figs. 19–21 in Kalantari ("Note on the spatial iconography of the Nyarma *gtsug lag khang* in context," this volume, p. 269) for photographs of the throne taken in 2006 and 2009.

<sup>30</sup> In his later work on the history of Ladakh, Gergan states, quoting from *gDung rabs zam 'phreng* (not available to me), that the Great Translator Rin chen bzang po built the Nyer ma *gtsug lag khang* in Mar yul, with Sangs rgyas Mar me mdzad (Buddha Dipamkara) as the main deity (dGe rgan 1976: 338). This information corresponds with that in the biography of the Royal Lama Ye shes 'od (see Tsering Drongshar and Jahoda, "The *Extended Biography of the Royal Lama Ye shes 'od* by Paṇḍita Grags pa rgyal mtshan: The Tibetan text", this volume, p. 140, and Jahoda, "On the foundation of the Nyarma *gtsug lag khang*, Ladakh", this volume, p. 284).

## VIII. Page [3b] (Fig. 7)

corner were placed. They were smaller in size than the above two standing idols, but fastened as they.<sup>31</sup>

In the third room, there is no trace of fresco or clay ornaments in anywhere.<sup>32</sup>

The fourth room (courtyard).<sup>33</sup> There is also no mark of fresco but quite blank, there are 2 small rooms, one to the north, and another to the south from the courtyard.<sup>34</sup> The gate of the courtyard has been measured 12 feet in breadth.<sup>35</sup>

There are four pilgrimage ways to go round it.<sup>36</sup> First way lead only round the inner temple. Second way leads round the second and the inner temples. The third leads round the temples, outer, middle and inner. The fourth way leads round from the outside of the above three temple rooms

<sup>31</sup> The photographs in 2006 (see Fig. 22 in Feiglstorfer, this volume, p. 240) show that at this time only the remains of an aureole in the corner on the north were extant. Gergan's description and use of past tense suggests that in 1917 the aureoles of both statues were still there but not the statues.

<sup>32</sup> The "third room" here (as in Gergan's drawing; see Fig. 16. and Fig. 17) seems to refer to the spaces to the south and north of the square *'du khang*. These spaces represent the circumambulation path (*skor lam*) and one (originally two) small temples (*lha khang*) attached to this (see the reconstruction of the ground plan based on the information provided by Gergan in Feiglstorfer, this volume, Figs. 13, 44, and 49, pp. 235, 251–252).

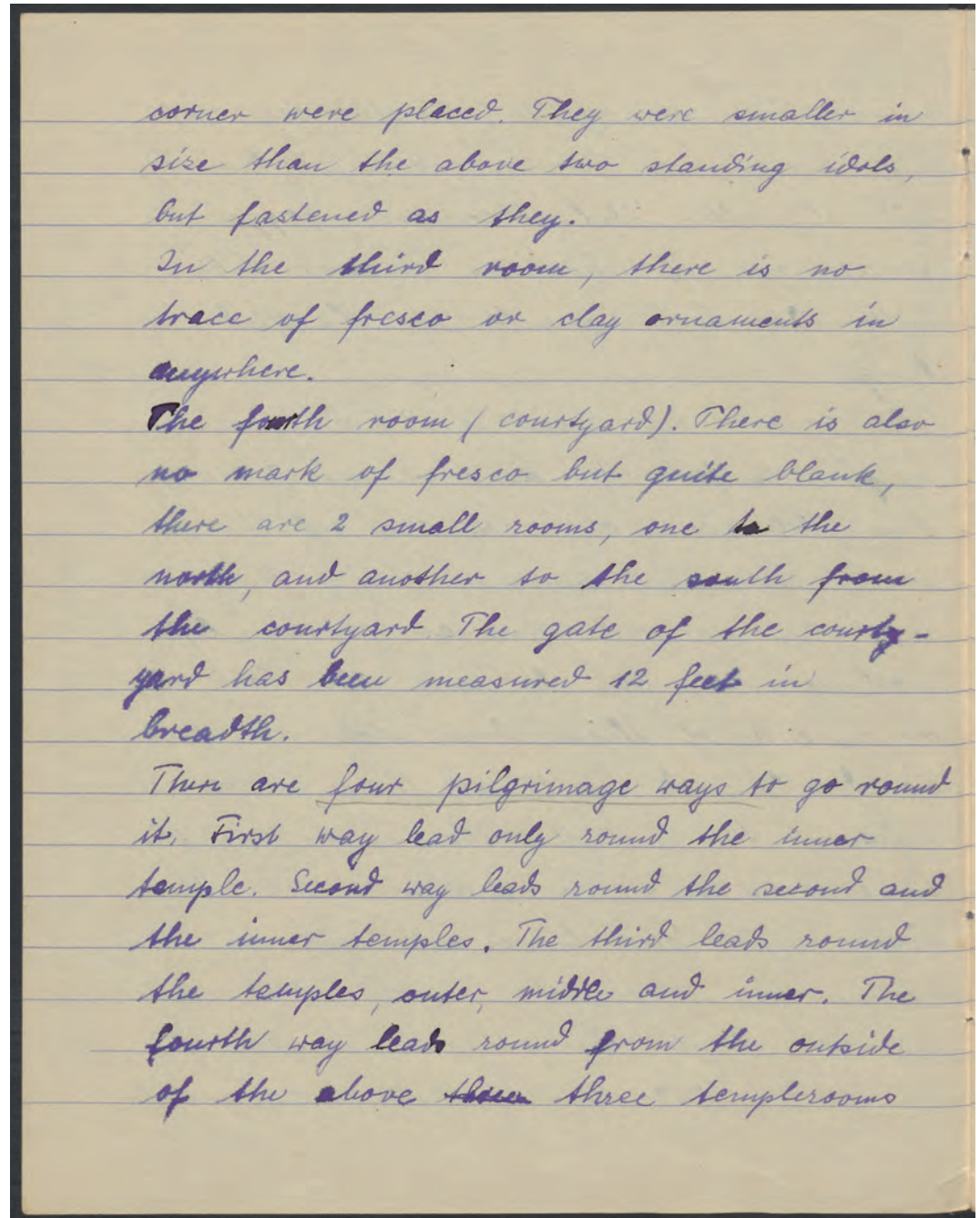
<sup>33</sup> The "fourth room" here refers here to the easternmost space (as in Gergan's drawing where it is described as "4<sup>th</sup> Hall or courtyard"; see Fig. 16. and Fig. 17).

<sup>34</sup> A reconstruction of the ground plan of these two small rooms (*lha khang*) to the south and north of the courtyard is contained in Feiglstorfer, this volume, Figs. 13, 44, and 49, pp. 235, 251–252).

<sup>35</sup> Gergan's drawing of the gate and the related caption (see Fig. 16 and Fig. 17) is not entirely clear. The information seems to imply that the wall on the east was fully closed (indicated by the uninterrupted line) but that an earlier opening or gate may have been visible or reconstructable (allowing him to take the measurement of twelve feet). The gate seems to be represented by two oblong rectangular spaces indicating perhaps his reconstruction of an earlier gate (walls or open door wings?).

<sup>36</sup> I conclude from Gergan's description and use of the present tense that the four "pilgrimage ways" (standing presumably for the Tibetan *skor lam*, literally circumambulation path) were used in popular ritual practice at the time of his visit or perhaps mentioned to him by local people as actual or recent practice. This is also suggested by the detailed information on these paths in relation to the built space. See the section on circumambulation paths in Feiglstorfer, this volume, in particular Fig. 52, p. 254, for a visual reconstruction of these paths based on Gergan's report.

In the recent past, due to the erection and closure of walls, it is not longer possible to walk along these circumambulation paths. Other paths, in particular the *gling skor*, the route leading around the wider village (including the monastic site), are still in use in Nyarma today (see, Feiglstorfer, this volume, Fig. 2, p. 227, and for more information, Feiglstorfer 2021).



7. Page [3b], notebook, August Hermann Francke papers, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

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through a narrow passing (breadth<sup>37</sup> of it 3 F x 4 feet), one in the north wall and another in the south wall. By cause of three different pilgrimage ways the temple is called "chhos-skor" or "Dharma chakr" (Alchi temple is also a "Dharmachakr").

II. The second temple is only a big room, in which has no marks of images, but the walls are quite strong as the others. The door looks to the east.

III. The third temple has southward from the second temple a little distance, in the centre of the room there is a broken chhodren. The door looks to the east.

IV. The fourth temple is very wonderful in shape, and it has several corners, then were placed 16 idols in it. The throne marks a lotus of clay witnessing to those 16 gods' images. The opposite room which

8. Page [4a], notebook, August Hermann Francke papers, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

IX. Page [4a] (Fig. 8)

4

through a narrow passing (breadth<sup>37</sup> of it 3 F x 4 feet), one in the north wall and another in the south wall. By cause of three different pilgrimage ways the temple is called "chhos-skor" or ["Dharma chakr" (Alchi temple is also a "Dharmachakr").<sup>38</sup>

II. The second temple is only a big room in which has no marks of images, but the walls are quite strong as the others. The door looks to the east.<sup>39</sup>

III. The third temple has southward from the second temple a little distance, in the centre of the room there is a broken chhodren.<sup>40</sup> The door looks to the east.<sup>41</sup>

IV. The fourth temple is very wonderful in shape, and it has several corners, there were placed 16 idols in it. The throne marks a<sup>42</sup> lotus of clay witnessing to those 16 gods' images. The opposite room which

<sup>37</sup> Read: breadth.

<sup>38</sup> In this instance Gergan's designation of the Nyarma *gtsug lag khang* as *chhos skor* reads like the rendering of an oral account perhaps given to him at Nyarma by local people. The practice of circumambulating this temple along a system of paths (*skor lam*) is also known from other early sites, such as Tabo in Spiti. It was perhaps connected to the original religious programme of these monuments but it cannot be excluded, however, that these forms of practice only developed at a later, more recent time. Obviously, Gergan's explanation of temples being designated as *chhos skor* "by cause of three different pilgrimage paths" does not agree with the system of four such paths extant at that time in Nyarma.

A system of circumambulation paths at Alchi has recently been identified and analysed by Feiglstorfer (2021). Also the designation *chhos skor* with regard to Alchi is still in use today. As stated by Lobsang Shastri, "according to some other people, the term *chos 'khor* also means the monasteries, the objects for prostration and offering for pilgrimage; they have considered the term *chos 'khor* a synonym of *gnas bskor* (pilgrimage). Although, this is doubtful we cannot deny this notion completely." (Shastri 1997: 335–336).

<sup>39</sup> The "second temple" (II) is identical with Temple II in the upper part of Fig. 18 (ground plans) and corresponds to Temple 2 of the site map in the lower part of Fig. 18. It is the temple to the south-east of the *gtsug lag khang* (corresponding to Temple II in Feiglstorfer, this volume, Fig. 5, p. 229).

<sup>40</sup> In Tibetan *mchod rten*.

<sup>41</sup> The "third temple" (III) corresponds to Temple IV in the upper part of Fig. 18 (ground plans) and Temple IV (or 3) of the site map in the lower part of Fig. 18. It is the temple further to the south of Temple II and corresponds to Temple IV in Feiglstorfer, this volume, Fig. 5, p. 229.

<sup>42</sup> An possible alternative reading for marks a may be "works &".



## X. Page [4b] (Fig. 9)

may be have frescoes in the time<sup>43</sup> of the founder, but it has been washed by rain, the sun has spoilt it, by its having roofless. The out door<sup>44</sup> looks to the east.<sup>45</sup>

V. On the back of the smaller temples there is a temple-chhodrten.<sup>46</sup> It looks an ordinary one, differentiated only by the small door, which also looks to the same direction as the other temples, inside it is a small temple 4 F x 8 ½ F. with frescoes.<sup>47</sup> There is also a sky light hole through the second story.<sup>48</sup> The frescoes are in a bad state, but better than the other temples.<sup>49</sup> The sun & rain has not been allowed to spoil it, but the children; most of the painted coats were scratched down by their hands or sticks.<sup>50</sup> On the east wall there are 26 "Grub-thobs,"<sup>51</sup> on the first line. On the second line can be seen only some

<sup>43</sup> Read: maybe had frescoes from the time.

<sup>44</sup> According to the ground plan of this temple given in the drawing in Fig. 18 and Fig. 19 the door referred to here as out(er) door is located on the eastern side of the temple, at the intersection of the two architectural spaces—a square one and a *maṅḍala*- or "several cornered"-shaped one (see also Feiglstorfer, this volume, Fig. 4 and Fig. 5, pp. 228–229).

<sup>45</sup> The "fourth temple" (IV) corresponds to Temple III in the upper part of Fig. 18 (ground plans) and Temple III (or 4) of the site map in the lower part of Fig. 18. It corresponds to Temple IIIa and IIIb in Feiglstorfer, this volume, Fig. 5, p. 229.

<sup>46</sup> In Tibetan *mchod rten*. The designation as a temple *mchod rten* is clearly related to a cycle of murals associated with a specific religious programme and ritual function.

The temple *mchod rten* (V) corresponds to V (described as "Temple chhodrten") of the site map in the lower part of Fig. 18. It corresponds to V (temple-*mchod rten*) in Feiglstorfer, this volume, Fig. 5, p. 229. See also Figs. 21–23.

<sup>47</sup> This *mchod rten* and its artistic remains were described and analysed by Panglung Rinpoche in an article on the remains of the Nyarma monastery in Ladakh (Panglung 1995 [19383]). His photographic documentation of the frescoes dating from the late 1970s or early 1908s and Christiane Kalantari's from 2009 provide comparative information on the remains of the architecture and paintings. See also Panglung 1995: plate IX.

<sup>48</sup> The "skylight" hole at the top of the *mchod rten*, noted as a sign of destruction by Panglung Rinpoche, must have occurred before Gergan's visit and has remained seemingly unchanged since then. The visit in 2009 revealed a corbelled roof construction similar to that of another *mchod rten* in the area between Thikse and Nyarma studied by Kozicz [2014]. See also Figs. 22–23.

<sup>49</sup> The overall state of preservation of the paintings does not seem to have deteriorated since Panglung Rinpoche's visit.

<sup>50</sup> After the word sticks and the beginning of the next sentence there is an empty space of ca. 4 cm in the notebook.

<sup>51</sup> In Tibetan *grub thob*, accomplished master, great yogin. According to Panglung Rinpoche, the figures depicted are (from left to right) Vajradhara (rDo rje 'chang), eight Mahāsiddhas, and seventeen monks facing one another. See also Fig. 24 for an overview of the east wall and Fig. 25 for a detail.

may be have frescoes in the time of the founder, but it has been washed by rain, & the sun has spoilt it, by its having roofless. The out door looks to the east.

V. On the back of the smaller temples there is a temple-chhodrten. It looks like an ordinary one, differentiated only by the small door, which also looks to the same direction as the other temples, inside it is a small temple 4 F x 8 ½ F. with frescoes. There is also a sky light hole through the second story. The frescoes are in a bad state, but better than the other temples. The sun & rain has not been allowed to spoil it, but the children; most of the painted coats were scratched down by ~~their~~ <sup>their</sup> hands or sticks. On the east wall there are 26 "Grub-thobs," on the first line. On the second line can be seen only some

parts of Yogies' cotton cloth (picture). There has been a couple of bigger images, but it is impossible to recognize them, because they are spoilt. In the bottom of this wall, there are the pictures of Rnam-sras (The of of wealth, Rnam-sras = son of dumb), and Six-handed-gonps, and no more on this wall.

On the south wall: There are 5 Lama races, Avalokiteshwara, Thhoepagmed (the Buddha as a god of life) & a Lama of a Brugpa sect (red caped), who holds phurpa (dagger) and a cap of skull, all are situated in the first line. In the second line, can be seen only some of the 80 "Grub-Thobs," some Lamas & slob-dPon-Klu-sgrub (Nagarjuna). "Tsongkapa" is the biggest image in this wall. In this small room there were the one thousand-Buddhas, as there are several small images of him still.

On the west wall, can be differentiated the

parts of Yogies' cotton cloth (picture).<sup>52</sup> There has been a couple of bigger images, but it is impossible to recognize them, because they are spoilt. In the bottom of this wall, there are the pictures of Rnam-sras<sup>53</sup> (The of<sup>54</sup> of wealth Rnam-sras = son of A[???]b),<sup>55</sup> and Six-handed-gonps,<sup>56</sup> and no more on this wall.<sup>57</sup> On the south wall: There are 5 Lama races, Avalokiteshwara, Thhsedpagmed<sup>58</sup> (the Buddha as a god of life) & a Lama of a Brugpa sect (red caped), who holds phurpa (d[a]gger) and a cup of skull, all are situated in the first line.<sup>59</sup> In the second line, can be seen only some the 80 "Grub-thobs," some Lamas & slob-dPon-Klu-sgrub (Nagarjuna). "Tsongkapa" is the biggest image in this wall. In this small room there were the one thousand-Buddhas, as there are several small images of him still.<sup>60</sup>

On the west wall, can be differentiated the

<sup>52</sup> I assume that Gergan is referring to the monks further down the line in the first row as the figures in the second row are clearly no yogins but deities (none of which are mentioned by him). Also none of the figures in the third row from top, showing images of teachers, among them according to Panglung (1995: 285) the Great Translator Rin chen bzang po, is mentioned by Gergan. Actually, plate IXb in Panglung 1995 as well as the photographs from 2009 show only seven teachers and a deity. See Fig. 24, Fig. 26 and Fig. 27.

<sup>53</sup> In Tibetan rNam sras (also rNam thos sras), Sanskrit Vaiśravaṇa.

<sup>54</sup> Read: god.

<sup>55</sup> Unclear. Read: Arumb?

<sup>56</sup> Read: Six-handed-gonpo (or -gonpos)? In Tibetan mGon po phyag drug pa, six-handed (*ṣaḍbhujā*) Mahākāla.

<sup>57</sup> Gergan and Panglung both speak only of two deities on the lower part of this wall, one on each side of the entrance. Panglung describes the flaming areoles on both sides and a sword on the proper left side, implying the depiction of two protective deities. However, the photographs from 2009 clearly show that two figures (one above the other) were painted on either side of the door, altogether four figures (see Fig. 24).

<sup>58</sup> The d is added below se.

<sup>59</sup> Obviously Gergan's description refers to eight figures painted in the top row of this wall. Based on the photographs from 2009, (from left to right) of the first three figures (to the left of the capital), the first two are wearing flat red caps (as also stated by Panglung 1995: 285). The headgear of the third one is not visible. Between the capitals there are two monks with pointed *paṇḍita*-type hats. These five figures of monks belonging to different schools seem to correspond to Gergan's description as "5 Lama races". The figures to the right of the second capital are sPyan ras gzigs (Avalokiteśvara) and Tshe dpag med (Amitāyus). The last figure on this side according to Panglung (1995: 285) possibly represents a form of Padmasambhava holding a *rdo rje* (*vajra*) and a scull-cup (see Fig. 28).

<sup>60</sup> Due to the poor state of preservation, the second line or row of paintings as well as the greater part of the lower sections on this wall it is difficult to identify the religious cycle(s) and figures depicted. Panglung (1995: 286) suggested Tsong kha pa, possibly also Sa skya Paṇḍita, as the main figure on this wall.

## XII. Page [5b] (Fig. 11)

clear images of Rdorje-chang" (Vajr-Pāni),<sup>61</sup> Tili, Naropa, Marpa & "Ras chhungpa",<sup>62</sup> and Manymed-aDzar,<sup>63</sup> Marme-mdzad,<sup>64</sup> on the bottom of his image are written these Tibetan small letters: [empty space of ca. 6 cm] = Many-med-adzar<sup>65</sup>-la-namo p[r]aise to the Many-med-adzar!!<sup>66</sup> Nearly all the coats are fallen down of the North wall, and now only can see three Lotsavas<sup>67</sup> & these Tibetan letters:

<sup>68</sup>=

Brangpa-Rdorje-pal-la-namo = Praise to the Dangpa-Dorje pal!!  
chhos-Baku- ..... bZangpo la namo = Praise to the Chhos-Baku-  
 ..... Zangpo!!<sup>69</sup>

Perhaps by seeing the above temple-Chhodrtin; the Buddhist has been taught to build their Kakanings<sup>70</sup>. Some Lamas say: "In ancient times these<sup>71</sup> was no temple in every house, as in these days. Therefore the death-ceremonies were performed in such

<sup>61</sup> rDo rje 'chang (Vajradhara, not Vajrapāni). This image to the left of the destroyed main figure (like three more below it of similar size) was clearly identifiable by Panglung (1995: 285, plate X) as well as in 2009 (see Fig. 29).

<sup>62</sup> Panglung (1995: 285) described the two figures below rDo rje 'chang as *siddhas* and the one at the bottom as a monk. It is probable although not entirely clear that Gergan's identification of "Tili" (Tilopa?, 988-1069), Nāropa (1016-1100), Marpa (Mar pa) (1012-1097) and Ras chung pa (1084-1161) is correct.

<sup>63</sup> ny in Manymed-aDzar is not entirely certain. As the immediately following "Marme-mdzad" is underlined; it seems that, as in the following sentence, this should be understood as the intended name (instead of "Manymed-aDzar").

<sup>64</sup> In Tibetan Mar me mdzad (Buddha Dīpaṃkara).

<sup>65</sup> Marme mdzad is added in small script above Many-med-aDzar.

<sup>66</sup> Gergan's description suggests that Mar me mdzad was on the same wall as the above-mentioned figures but in a different place. The question of whether the inscription (which seems to have disappeared) could have referred to the main figure, which was identified as Buddha Śākyamuni by Panglung (1995: 285) (see also Fig. 29), cannot be answered.

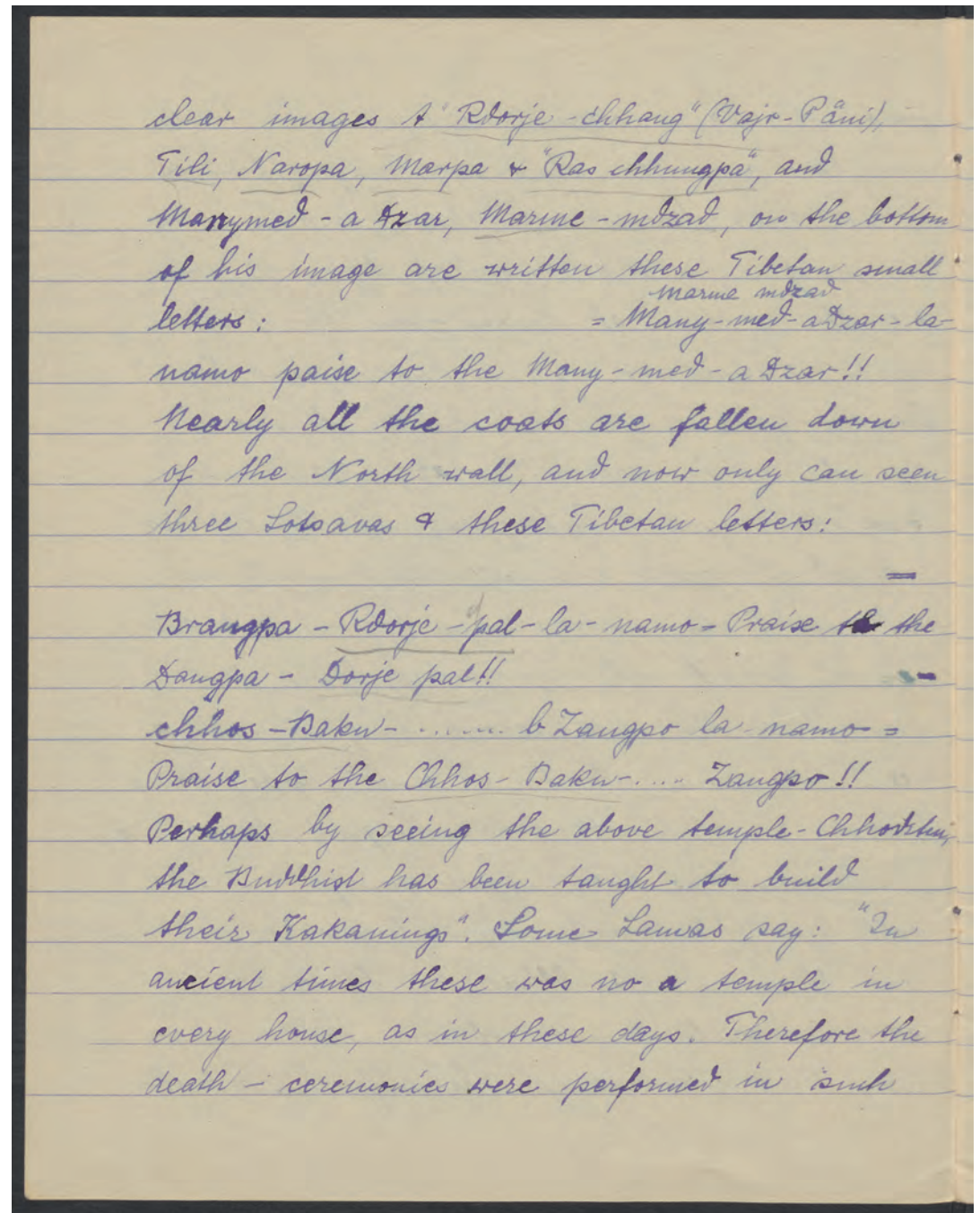
<sup>67</sup> In 2009, on the north wall were visible two figures in the upper left (western) corner and three figures in the upper right (eastern) corner. In the top centre the fragmentary remains of further two figures were visible (see also Fig. 30). Cf. Panglung (1995: 285): "Die Nordwand ist sehr stark beschädigt und Malereien sind nur noch in den Zwischenräumen der steinernen Deckenträger erhalten, nämlich links zwei Mönche mit flacher roter Mütze sowie in der Mitte, vermutlich, Rin chen bzañ po." The basis for the identification of Rin chen bzañ po is unclear.

<sup>68</sup> Empty space of full line before =.

<sup>69</sup> In 2009, these inscriptions were still there, and the photographs confirm Gergan's reading (see Fig. 31 and Fig. 32). They were obviously written by different hands and in different script. *Brang pa rDo rje [d]pal la na mo* seems to refer to the figure in the corner and may have been added only after a part of the painting had fallen down.

<sup>70</sup> Meaning unclear.

<sup>71</sup> Read: there.



11. Page [5b], notebook, August Hermann Francke papers, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

6

temples & Chhodrtens, for that purpose the doors are made very small, to hinder the corpses from fleeing, which rise & can walk for a few hours or days by the power of goblins, and such risen corpse (= Betal) cannot bend down to creep through such a door, as a true living person can.<sup>9</sup>

VI. All the 4 temples and 31 chhodrtens are protected by a wall, the greater part of it is fallen down but can see the foundation of it. There are several Lhabab-chhodrtens outside of the wall. In some of them one can find Thsathsas (clay images in which mixed the ashes of human bone) with Sanskrit or Tibetan letters on or in them, in which mostly written the Rten-a Brel-Snyingpo = <sup>Ye dharma</sup> essence of the connection between cause & effect.

Perhaps Lotsava Rinchen-bZangpo taught the western Tibetans to build

12. Page [6a], notebook, August  
Hermann Francke papers,  
Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin  
Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

XIII. Page [6a] (Fig. 12)

6

temples & Chhodrtens, for that purpose the doors are made very small, to hinder the corpses from fleeing, which rise & can walk for a few hours or days by the power of goblins, and such risen corpse (= Betal)<sup>72</sup> cannot bend down to creep through such a door, as a true living person can."

VI. All the 4 temples and 31 chhodrtens<sup>73</sup> are protected by a wall, the greater part of it is fallen down, but can see the foundation of it.<sup>74</sup> There are several Lhabab-chhodrtens<sup>75</sup> outside of the wall.<sup>76</sup> In some of them one can find Thsathsas<sup>77</sup> (clay images in which mixed the ashes of human bone) with Sanskrit or Tibetan letters on or in them, in which mostly written the Rten-aBrel-Snyingpo<sup>78</sup> = Ye dharma essence of the connection between cause & effect.<sup>79</sup> Perhaps Lotsava Rinchen-bZangpo<sup>80</sup> taught the western Tibetans to build

<sup>72</sup> Perhaps a popular expression of the Sanskrit *vetāla* designating a kind of demon or ghost, also revenant, in Śaiva and Buddhist belief systems. Such spirits may by belief possess a dead body and may use it as vehicle (see, for example, Dezsó 2010).

<sup>73</sup> In Tibetan *mchod rten*. According to dKa' chen Blo bzang bzod pa's biography of Rin chen bzang po (1976) altogether eight major and smaller temples were founded by Rin chen bzang po at Nyarma. This source says that at times there were more than a hundred bigger and smaller *mchod rten* (quoted after Panglung 1995: 283, n. 13).

<sup>74</sup> This enclosure wall (*lcags rī*), including its measurements, is also mentioned in dKa' chen Blo bzang bzod pa's biography of Rin chen bzang po (1976) (see Panglung 1995: 283, n. 13). In 2006 only fragmentary remains were still extant at the eastern and southern end of the site (see Feiglstorfer, this volume, p. 247).

<sup>75</sup> In Tibetan *lha bab* (also *babs*) *mchod rten*, commonly referred to as the Stūpa of the Descent from Heaven (more precisely, the realm of the gods), one of the Eight Stūpas representing the Eight Great Events in the Life of the Buddha.

<sup>76</sup> See Kozicz 2007 and 2014 for information on *mchod rten* outside the Nyarma enclosure wall or rather in the area between Thikse and Nyarma.

<sup>77</sup> In Tibetan *tsha tsha*.

<sup>78</sup> In Tibetan *rten 'brel snying po*, the Heart (literally essence) of Interdependent Origination, in Sanskrit *pratītyasamutpāda*. See Namgyal Lama 2013 for an overview on inscriptions on *tsha tsha*, and Jahoda 2019 for further contexts of such inscriptions in historical Western Tibet.

<sup>79</sup> The Sanskrit verse (*ye dharmā hetuprabhavā hetuṃ teṣāṃ tathāgaḥ hyavadat teṣāṃ ca yo nirodha ebaṃ vādī mahāramaṇaḥ*, "All things originate from causes of which the Tathāgatas [Buddhas] have taught the causes, and that which is the cessation of the causes is also proclaimed by the Great Sage") of this essential "Buddhist creed" is often also found written in Tibetan script on objects or paintings.

<sup>80</sup> Great Translator (*lo tsā ba chen po*) Rin chen bzang po (958–1055).

## XIV. Page [6b] (Fig. 13)

chhodrtens,<sup>81</sup> Thhsad-khangs,<sup>82</sup> and 108 wall chodrtens<sup>83</sup> as he seen the style of them in eastern & western India. He was zealous to build religious buildings and also in translation (one may see his translated list in bKa-gyur<sup>84</sup>). We can find such buildings in several part of western Tibet. In these days the most of Ladakies call his temples "The Mongol-Temples".<sup>85</sup> As most Tibetans have forgotten their kind reformers name.<sup>86</sup>

VII. By walking some hundred yards to the east from the "chos skor", there is the ruin "Ensa" (dBensa = hermitage)<sup>87</sup> on the top of a small hill, which is surrounded by 3 very small hermitages & 3 chhodrtens, in which are stored Thhsathhsas<sup>88</sup> with letters as told above. "Ensa" also has a protecting wall of 108 chhodrtens around it.<sup>89</sup> At present no one can build the 108 wall chhodrtens. People say, that

<sup>81</sup> In Tibetan *mchod rten*.

<sup>82</sup> This word also appears in Gergan's description of funeral rites in Ladakh. There the Tibetan transliteration is given as *t'shad khang* (Gergan 1940: 232), corresponding to *tshad khang* in our system of transliteration. *Tshad khang* are explained as "Tsatsaschrein", buildings where *tsha tsha* are placed (commonly referred to as *tsha khang*).

<sup>83</sup> By wall *mchod rten*, Gergan seems to be referring to a row of a hundred and eight *mchod rten* (*mchod rten brgya rtsa*) which are built next to each other so as to form a wall. Such rows are known to have existed at Tholing (see Vitali 1999: 101) and also at Tabo (where the remains were still visible in 1997).

<sup>84</sup> In Tibetan *bKa' gyur*, literally the "translated words" of the Buddha, the first part of the Tibetan Buddhist canon.

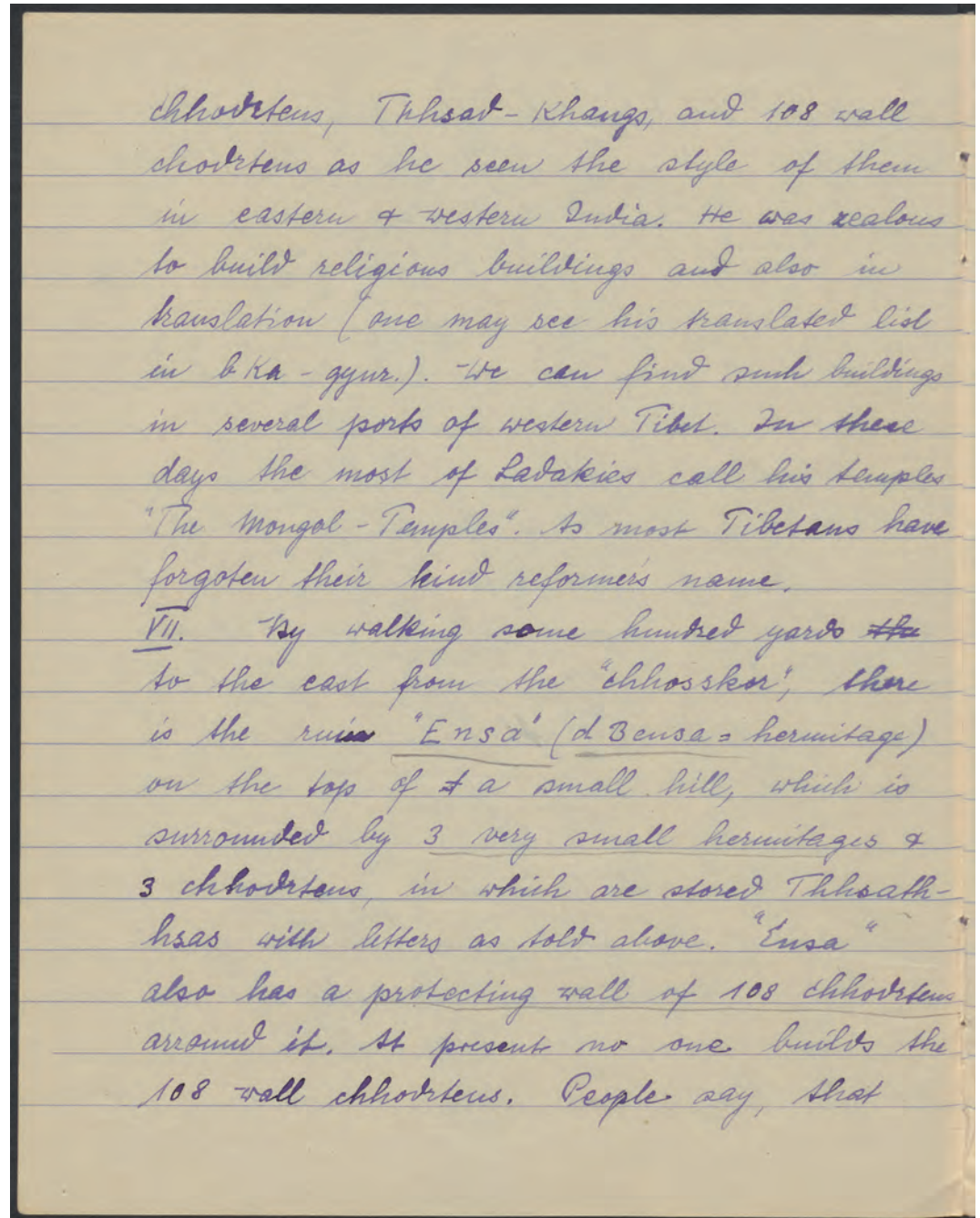
<sup>85</sup> The Tibetan word corresponding to this designation is not clear.

<sup>86</sup> At this time, Gergan's source for information on the Great Translator seems have been a version of an abbreviated biography (*rnam thar bsdus pa*) of Rin chen bzang po (as mentioned further below), local oral tradition in places where the Great Translator was credited with having been active and colophons in the *bKa' gyur* and *bsTan gyur* where he is listed as translator of 174 texts (see Rigzin 1984: 32-37).

<sup>87</sup> In Tibetan *dben sa* (hermitage).

<sup>88</sup> In Tibetan *tsha tsha*.

<sup>89</sup> The hermitage which was not mentioned by Panglung was studied in detail by Hubert Feiglstorfer in 2006. His description of this site agrees entirely with Gergan's from 1917 (see Feiglstorfer, this volume, pp. 232-233).



13. Page [6b], notebook, August Hermann Francke papers, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

7

There was a spring near "Ensa" in ancient times, which flows now in Nang village & they call it "Murtsemig."

Rinchhenbzangpo's temples of Ladak are always one story, without windows in the walls, most of his temples are deserted, because they are situated in the desert; they are mostly built with bricks.

VIII. bKra shis gang (Trashi-sgang) temples are in ruins, like the Kyilibug <sup>near Shel</sup> temple, Nyerchung temples and Garagrang temple. Another temple chhodrtan also has been made by him at Trashisgang, & it was painted both stories. But all images are in a bad state & cannot be recognized except 8 images of chhodrtens.

Several people say: The best preserved idols of Nyarma temples has been brought into the "Kongka - Lhakhang" at She, by the She people dancing and singing.

Fig. 14. Page [7a], notebook, August Hermann Francke papers, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

XV. Page [7a] (Fig. 14)

7

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Several people say: The best preserved idols of Nyarma temples has been brought into the "Kongka-Lhakhang" at She,<sup>94</sup> by the She people dancing and singing.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>90</sup> See the contributions by Devers, "An archaeological account of Nyarma and its surroundings" (this volume, pp. 202–203, 206, passim) and Feiglstorfer (this volume, pp. 234–235, passim) for an analysis of the bricks used at Nyarma.

<sup>91</sup> In Tibetan bKra shis gang.

<sup>92</sup> "near Shel" is added in small script above the word temple.

<sup>93</sup> These temples and *mchod rten* still need to be identified.

<sup>94</sup> In Tibetan Shel.

<sup>95</sup> The temple referred to was documented as far as possible in 2009 by Christiane Kalantari, in addition also by Bettina Zeisler and Wolfgang Heusgen, who provided their photographs to the author.

## XVI. Page [7b] (Fig. 15)

Still they remember that time at "Srubla"<sup>96</sup> (harvest Teast),<sup>97</sup> once in a year in the 7<sup>th</sup> month (August).

This Nyarma temple is one of his 4<sup>98</sup> big<sup>99</sup> temples (see his Biography). And the following ten temples are of his 108 smaller temples: -

1. Alchi chhoskor<sup>100</sup>
2. Temple of chiling Sumda<sup>101</sup>
3. " Mangrgyu.<sup>102</sup>
4. " Wamla (Wanla).<sup>103</sup>
5. " GYungdrung (yuru)?<sup>104</sup>
6. " Atitse (near yuru).<sup>105</sup>
7. " Mulbe - dPal-Idanrtse.<sup>106</sup>
8. " Tarchud Lhakhang (in Sabu)<sup>107</sup>
9. " Lhakhang - gSumrtsegs<sup>108</sup> at Leh (one is quite ruin.)
10. " Temple of Chhos-skor.<sup>109</sup> at Leh (ruin)

May be more temples of him in Ladakh than above. Joseph Thsertan.

<sup>96</sup> In Tibetan *srub lha*. The meaning of *srub lha* is an offering to local deities on the first day of fall harvest, which used to be performed in various places of Ladakh and Zangskar, such as at sKyur bu can and Karsha (Francke 1923: 30-31; Gutschow 1997: 44-45). In Shel this event assumed the character of a monastic festival (dNgos grub rnam rgyal 1979: 105-113; Brauen 1980: 125).

<sup>97</sup> Read: Feast.

<sup>98</sup> A 3 has been added in smaller script above the 4, written in a different hand.

<sup>99</sup> In smaller script above "is one of his 4 big", written by a different hand (most probably by Francke), "1) Kho-char, 2) Mtho-Idin, 3) Nyar-ma" has been added.

<sup>100</sup> In Tibetan *chos skor*.

<sup>101</sup> In Tibetan *Phyi gling gSum mda'*.

<sup>102</sup> In Tibetan *Mang rgyu*.

<sup>103</sup> In Tibetan *Wan la*. See Tropper 2007 for an edition of an historical inscription in the gSum brtsegs temple at Wanla, including a discussion of the question of Rin chen bzang po's foundation of this temple. While extant inscriptional and art-history evidence (dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century) does not support such claims, an earlier foundation cannot be entirely excluded (see *ibid.*: 108-109).

<sup>104</sup> Nowadays usually referred to as Lamayuru. In Tibetan, *Bla ma g.yung drung*. Yuru (g.Yu ru) is a popular spelling based upon the local pronunciation of g.Yung drung. At Lamayuru, not only the original foundation of the temple but also a few *mchod rten* are locally attributed to Rin chen bzang po (see also Luczanits 2014: 145).

<sup>105</sup> This site still needs to be identified.

<sup>106</sup> In Tibetan *Mul bhe dPal Idan rtse*.

<sup>107</sup> In Tibetan *Sa phud*. The temple still needs to be identified.

<sup>108</sup> In Tibetan *lHa khang gsum brtsegs*.

<sup>109</sup> In Tibetan *Chos skor*.

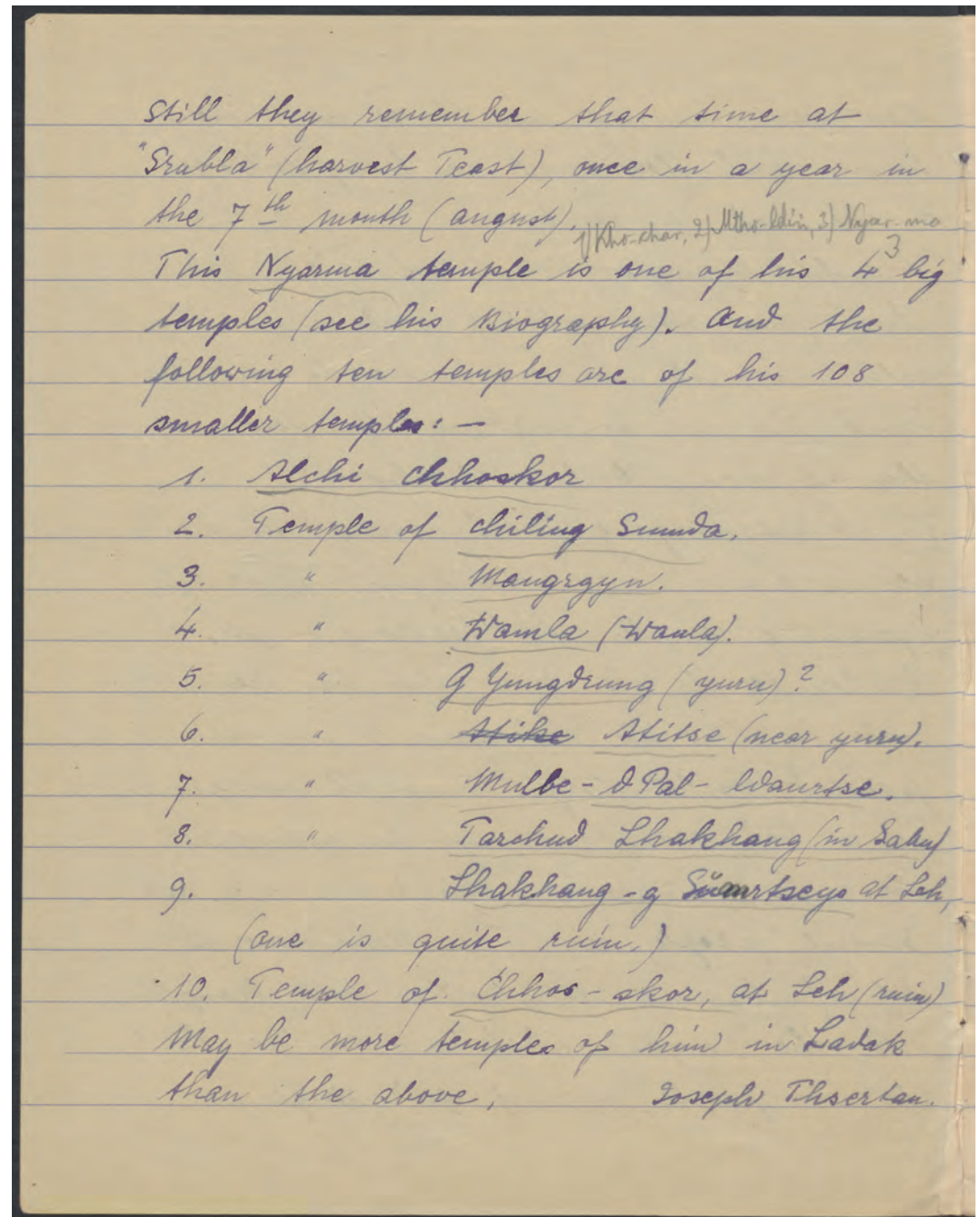
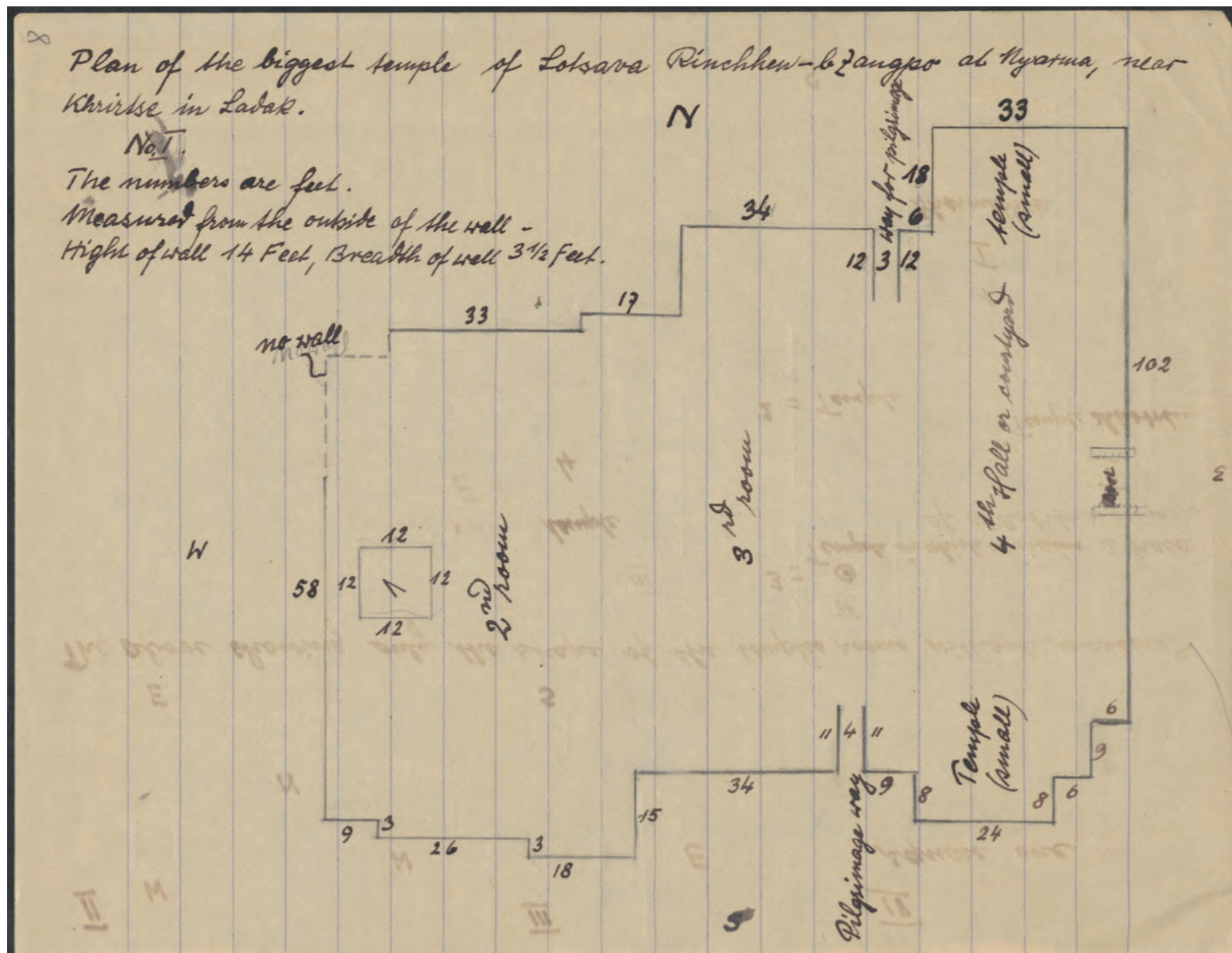


Fig. 15. Page [7b], notebook, August Hermann Francke papers, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

Fig. 16. Page [8a], notebook,  
August Hermann Francke  
papers, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin  
Preussischer Kulturbesitz.



XVII. Page [8a] (see Fig. 16)

Plan of the biggest temple of Lotsava Rinchen-bZangpo<sup>110</sup> at Nyarma, near Khirtse<sup>111</sup> in Ladak.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>110</sup> Read: *lo tsā ba Rin chen bzang po*.

<sup>111</sup> Read: Khri rtse (see also n. 4).

<sup>112</sup> Read: Ladakh (Tibetan: Bla dwags, also La dwags).

8

No. I.

The numbers are feet.

Measured from the outside of the wall –

H[e]ight of wall 14 Feet, Breadth of wall 3 ½ Feet.



8

Plan of the biggest temple of Lotsava Rinchen-bZangpo at Nyarma,  
near Khirtse in Ladak.

No. 1.

The numbers are feet.

Measured from the outside of the wall –

Hight of wall 14 Feet, Breadth of wall 3½ Feet.

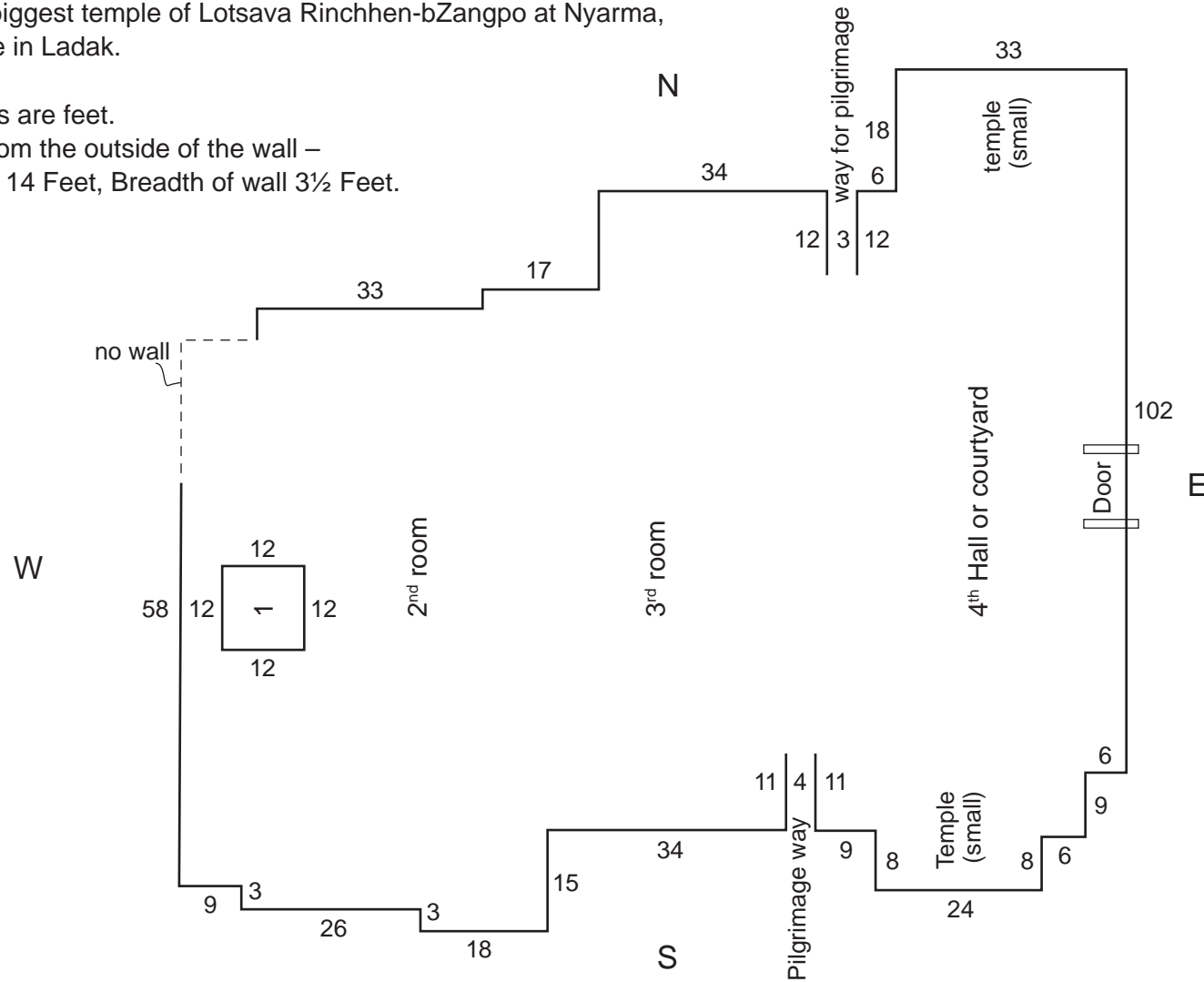
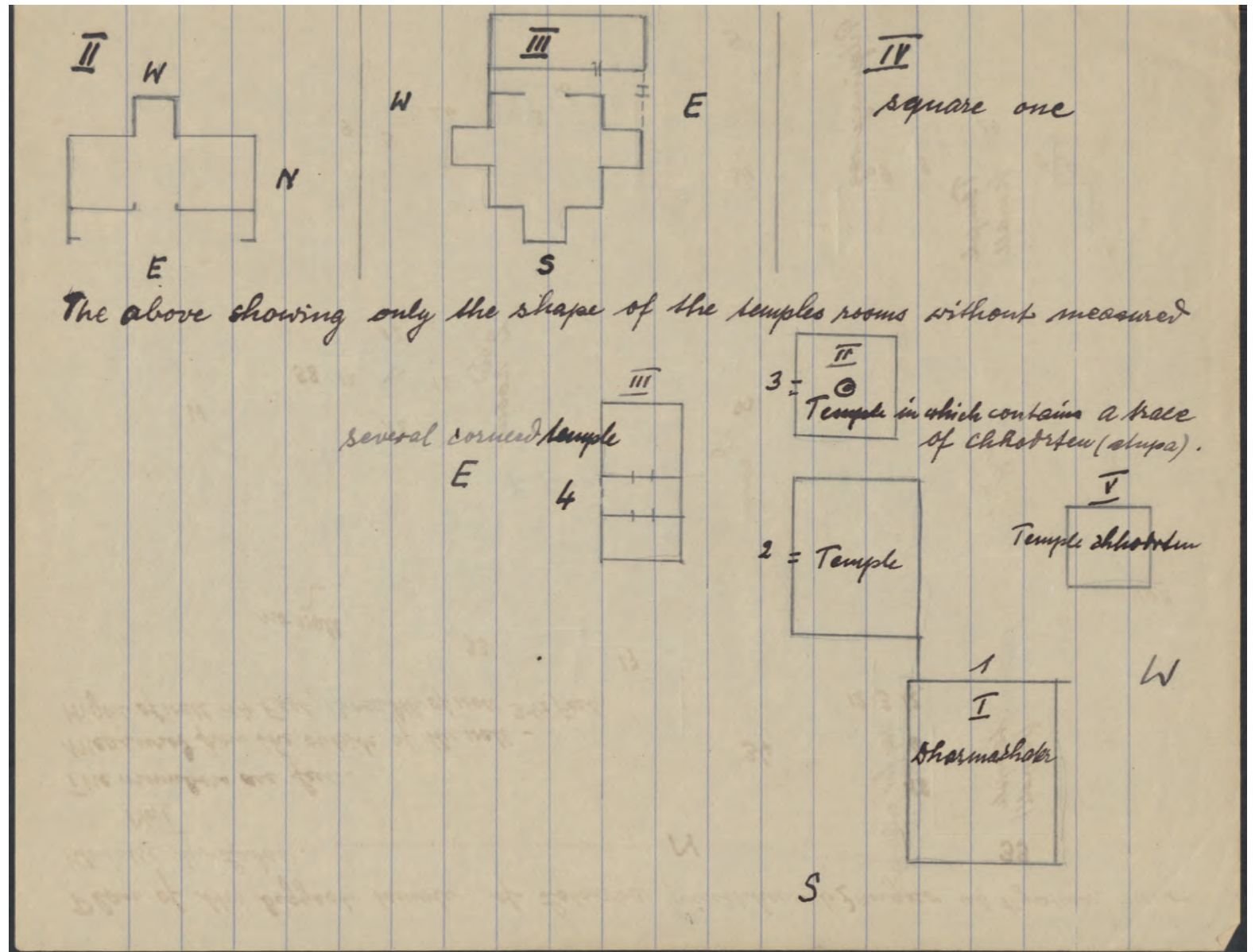


Fig. 17. Sketch of Temple I (based on original line drawings, numerals and explanations), page [8a], notebook, August Hermann Francke papers, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz.

Fig. 18. Page [8b], notebook,  
August Hermann Francke  
papers, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin  
Preussischer Kulturbesitz.



XVIII. Page [8b] (see Fig. 18)

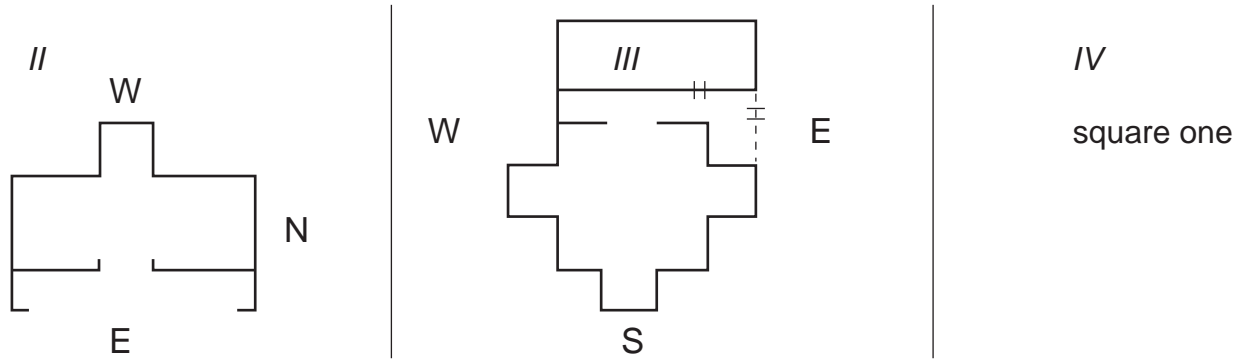


Fig. 19. Sketch of Temples II, III, IV and V (based on original line drawings, numerals and explanations), page [8b], notebook, August Hermann Francke papers, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz (drawing: Eva Kössner, 2019).

The above showing only the shape of the temples rooms without measured

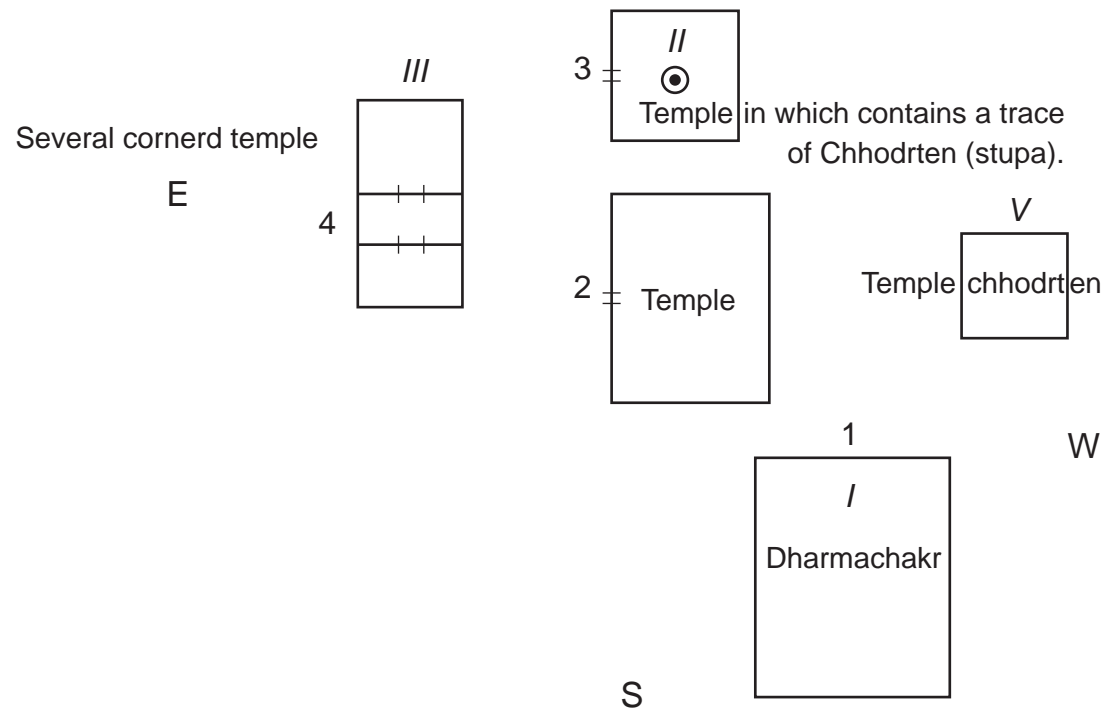




Fig. 20. rDo rje chen mo, rDo rje chen mo temple, Nyarma (C. Kalantari, 2009).

### Conclusion

In his preface to Shuttleworth's book *Lha-lun Temple, Spyi-ti. Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 39, Francke cited an "account of the Ñar-ma ruins" by Joseph Gergan where he (Gergan) produces another list of 10 temples built by the Great Translator Rin chen bzang po in Ladakh (Francke 1929: ii), in addition to many other temples in areas of Western Tibet (such as Guge, Purang, etc.) listed in his biography. This account of the Nyarma ruins by Gergan from which Francke quoted was never published. After his death in 1930, Francke's copy of this account—there may be other copies—was kept together with his papers and is accessible in the Berlin State Library – Prussian Cultural Heritage (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin Preussischer Kulturbesitz).

Gergan's motivation for visiting Nyarma and writing an account of it is not clear. From the fact that he wrote it in English (we have no indication of a Tibetan version), it can be assumed that, in addition to his fundamental interest in the history of Ladakh and its rich cultural traditions, it was most probably part of his collaboration with August Hermann Francke, as a background perhaps also the Archaeological Survey of India's interest in recording the archaeological and artistic

remains of the ancient Buddhist culture of this area. The latter may have had some influence on the form and accuracy of Gergan's account, in particular in the description of the whole site and the detailed measurements of the main temple. Gergan's account thus can also be seen as standing in the tradition and mode of operation established and used at the time by the Archaeological Survey of India and also by Francke whose *Antiquities of Indian Tibet, Part I* was published in 1914 and must have been known to Gergan.

Gergan's site map or plan (see Fig. 18) of what seems to have once constituted the core area of the monastic compound of Nyarma, and even more his measured plan of the main temple (*gtsug lag khang*) (Fig. 16), are striking examples of his accurate work in this regard. It took decades until similar work was done by Romi Khosla (1979) in Ladakh and other areas of the Western Himalaya and again much later by others.

Gergan's account and as well as his other works as a collector of oral traditions and written sources and authorship are among a few rare examples of scholarship that combines knowledge and methodological approaches from diverse settings, in his case the learning, ideas and socio-cultural practices of Ladakh, Tibet, India, and the 'West', in particular Western Europe. In terms of language this comprised the languages of Tibet, Ladakh and Northwestern India, such as Hindi and Urdu, and the religious traditions of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism and Islam.

Gergan's account is remarkable for various specific reasons. First of all, in that he provides an overview of the whole site and a description of the extant temples as he found them in 1917. In addition to what he describes as an eye-witness, his account also includes local oral traditions and recollections, in particular by monks, most probably from nearby Thikse/Khrig se monastery.

Based on his knowledge of sites and through the discovery of related textual sources, he was able to identify the Great Translator Rin chen bzang po as responsible for the construction of the main temple of Nyarma. While the exact basis for his list of ten further, smaller temples built by the Great Translator in Ladakh is not given and remains unclear, research in recent decades and years has shown that in their current state the temples on this list are among the earliest extant Buddhist temples in Ladakh. Whether they were originally founded by the Great Translator is still an open question for research that will occupy scholars in the future, with Gergan's list certainly providing a valuable orientation.

Of particular importance are his findings regarding the original main deity of the Nyarma main temple, Sangs rgyas Mar me mdzad / Buddha Dīpaṃkara, again through a combination of the result of this survey and subsequent textual studies (that were confirmed by

information in historiographical sources which have only become accessible in recent years).

His major findings may also include the relevance of the cult of rDo rje chen mo in this (as in other major early monastic foundations of historical Western Tibet where the Great Translator was (is said and mentioned to have been) active, such as for example Tabo, Tholing (mTho gling), and Khorchag ('Khor chags). The information presented by Gergan on the cult of rDo rje chen mo in Nyarma comprises various aspects, such as the basis of her cult in a local deity whose residence was related with a spring located near a hermitage (*dben sa*) associated by local oral tradition with Rin chen bzang po, the transfer of her cult from Nyarma to Shel (and the relationship to a particular festival) and the continuing presence of her cult in Nyarma. All this information, like nearly all of Gergan's report, was (re-)traced by the present author together with Christiane Kalantari in situ in 2009. This also holds true for his description of the so-called "temple-*mchod-rten*". His remarks on its state of preservation (obviously only minimally deteriorating between 1917 and 2009), construction and function are another example for the remarkable qualities of his account.

Finally, the system of four "pilgrimage ways" or circumambulation paths that he mentions leading around the *gtsug lag khang* is not only an essential historical observation (which together with his measured plan allowed Hubert Feiglstorfer—see his contribution in this volume, pp. 225–257—to reconstruct them) but one that represents a great potential in helping to "read" past and present ritual and popular practices in relation to the built space (and religious "decoration") and ultimately understanding the contemporary concept of the Buddhist monuments as well as later transformations.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> See the following contributions by Devers, Feiglstorfer and Kalantari in this volume for accounts and analyses of the site of Nyarma and its main temple from the perspectives of archaeology, architecture and art history respectively.

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### Appendix (Figs. 20–32)

Visual documentation of the *mchod rten* with painted decoration, Nyarma, made in 2005 and 2009.



Fig. 21. *mchod rten* with painted decoration (view from east), Nyarma (H. Feiglstorfer, 2005).

Fig. 22. *mchod rten* with painted decoration, corbelled roof construction, Nyarma (C. Kalantari, 2009).

Fig. 23. Ground plan and section A-A, *mchod rten* with painted decoration, Nyarma (drawing: H. Feiglstorfer, 2019).

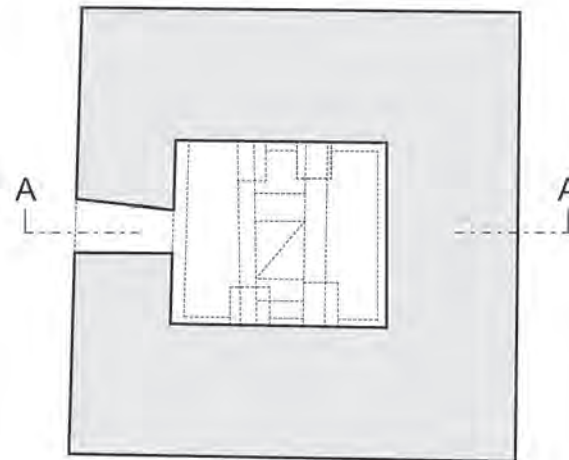
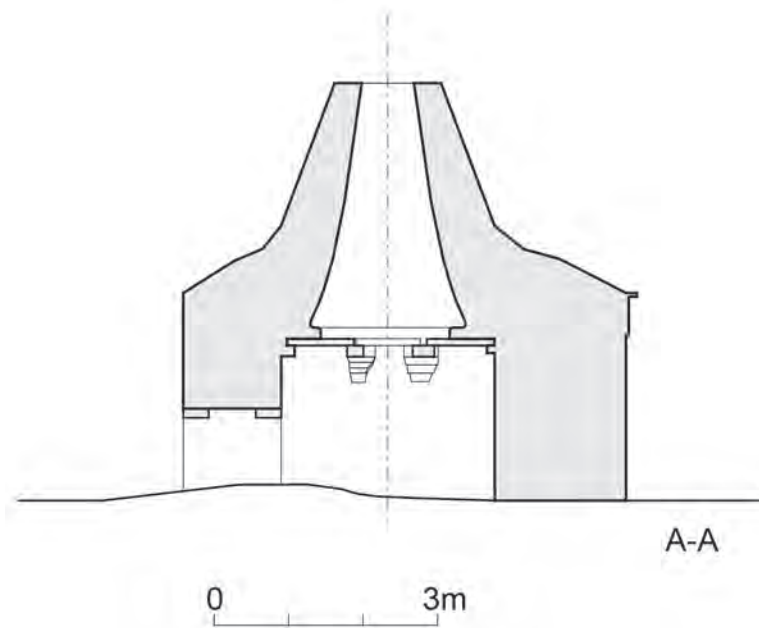




Fig. 24. *mchod rten* with painted decoration (overview east wall), Nyarma (C. Kalantari, 2009).





Fig. 25. rDo rje 'chang (Vajradhara) and siddhas (*mchod rten*) with painted decoration, east wall, top register, Nyarma (C. Kalantari, 2009).

Fig. 26. 'Jam dpal dbyangs (Mañjuśrī) and monks (*mchod rten*) with painted decoration, east wall, top registers, Nyarma (C. Kalantari, 2009).

Fig. 27. sPyan ras gzigs (Avalokiteśvara) (*mchod rten*) with painted decoration, east wall, top registers, Nyarma (C. Kalantari, 2009).





Fig. 28. *mchod rten* with painted decoration (overview south wall), Nyarma (C. Kalantari, 2009).



Fig. 29. *mchod rten* with painted decoration (overview west wall), Nyarma (C. Kalantari, 2009).



Fig. 30. *mchod rten* with painted decoration (overview north wall), Nyarma (C. Kalantari, 2009).



Fig. 31. Monks with inscriptions below (*mchod rten* with painted decoration (detail inscription, north wall), Nyarma (C. Kalantari, 2009).

Fig. 32. Detail of inscriptions (*mchod rten* with painted decoration, north wall), Nyarma (C. Kalantari, 2009).

