

THE VICTORY SONG OF PORONG¹

Charles Ramble

IN DEFENCE OF SONGS

Landscape offers a rich source of imagery for the expression of identity among Tibetan communities, however these communities may be construed – clans and more extended kinship groups, religious sects, and the population of a shared political territory are a few examples. Idioms of landscape regularly feature in many cultural media that have been studied to a greater or lesser extent by scholars. These include pilgrimage guides, visionary accounts, propitiatory rituals for place-gods, as well as ancient and modern painting.

One medium that is still poorly represented in the literature on sacred landscape is song. Topographical motifs abound in Tibetan songs. While these motifs are sometimes purely ornamental, landscape is ‘good to think’ insofar as it provides a cornucopia of analogies. In the material that will be examined below, for instance, we find comparisons between the red and blue hues of the iron-rich soil and, respectively, the red and blue robes of the monks and the young laymen who belong to the community; between the high snow mountain that dominates the landscape and the lord who once ruled over the corresponding territory, and so on. More often, however, the metaphor transcends such one-to-one similes, and the landscape features as a sort of three-dimensional screen onto which aspects of social organisation and local history are projected. Two widespread examples of this phenomenon may be cited: first, physical features of two adjacent hillsides or more distant mountains may be interpreted as scars from violent clashes between the two, the consequence of bad blood that itself stands for ancient enmity between individuals or groups that were geographically linked to these natural features; the second example is the lively competition between stories that explain indents and marks in rock in terms of the exploits of different saints, lamas and heroes according to the sectarian loyalties of the exegete.

This article is a brief introduction to a cycle of song and dance that occupies a place of singular importance among the people who are its curators. The cycle, which is sometimes

¹ I am deeply grateful for the generosity and hospitality extended to me by the people of Porong, especially Dawa Dargye, Khangkar Dondrup and Kyudog Dawa. Any errors of fact or interpretation are entirely my responsibility. I wish to thank Samten Karmay for his invaluable help with the interpretation of some particularly troublesome passages of Tibetan. The research on which this article is based was carried out in association with my colleague Hildegard Diemberger, in the course of a project based at the University of Vienna and generously supported by the Austrian Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung.

referred to as ‘the Song of Joy’ (*Dga’ gzhas*) but most commonly as ‘the Victory Song’ (*Rgyal gzhas*), is a complex affair that I hope to deal with elsewhere at the length it deserves. The music, the choreography, the costumes and other paraphernalia, and indeed the whole social context of the performances, comprise a fertile basis for research that extends naturally into various other domains of Tibetan Studies.

The only aspect of the cycle I shall deal with here is the text. Even this treatment is necessarily truncated, and I shall concentrate largely on the way in which the songs constitute a cultural form of mediation between the singers on the one hand and their landscape and territorial identity on the other.

PORONG AND ITS HISTORY

A few words may be said here by way of introduction to Porong (Spong rong),² the area with which we are primarily concerned. Porong is the name of what was, until the Chinese annexation of Tibet, a semi-autonomous principality that extended well beyond the confines of its modern referent, a single *xiang* located in Nyelam County, Shigatse Prefecture. The population is sparse, and herding is the main economic activity of the inhabitants. Most of the area is too high to support agriculture. ‘Old’ Porong comprised eight revenue-paying sectors (*tsho*), and had satellite territories in Kyirong.

The hereditary ruler of the area was the Jewön (*Rje dbon*), about whose lineage, named Burwa (‘Bur pa), we shall have more to say presently. The Jewön's main residence was located in a settlement called Drachen (Sbra chen, locally pronounced ‘Bachen’), literally ‘the Great Tent’, in Pallho (Dpal lho) *tsho*. The name of this site derives from the fact that his home was, literally, an enormous black tent. Several hundred people used to be able to sit comfortably inside this construction, and there were even normal-size tents pitched within the interior.

In common with the practice of many Tibetan rulers, the Jewön would shift his residence according to the seasons. In winter he would live mainly in Ngönga (Mngon dga’) - the site of a temple to the north of Mt. Tsibri (Rtsib ri) that was founded by one of the members of the Burwa clan. From Ngönga the Jewön would proceed on to Shekar (Shel dkar) - where there was an office of the Central Government - to pay the butter taxes of the area. In winter the Jewön would also pay a visit to the monastery of Pemo Chöding (Dpal mo chos sding), the main Bodongpa centre, located not far from Drachen.

The main literary source of information concerning the origin of the rulers of Porong - and therefore, incidentally, of Porong itself - is a work entitled *Chos ldan sa skyong* [*skyongs*]

² Names of places and people are presented in simplified, roughly phonetic form. Except in the case of well-known names (Lhasa, Shigatse etc.), the Tibetan orthography will be given at the first appearance.

'bur pa mi rje'i gdung rabs [rab] lo rgyus dri med baidurya'i 'phreng ba zhes bya ba; The Rosary of Stainless Azure: a History of the Lineage of the Burwa Lords, Religious Protectors of the Holy Land (18 fols, *dbu med* script). The text (the title of which will be referred to below for the sake of convenience as the *Azure Rosary*) was photographed in Nepal by Dr. Franz-Karl Ehrhard, who, with characteristic generosity, passed on to me a copy of the work. The colophon (fol. 18a) identifies the author as Rigdzin Chökyi Wangchuk (*Rig 'dzin Chos kyi dbang phyug*) and mentions his alias Mipham Chökyi Gyaltzen (*Mi pham Chos kyi rgyal mtshan*, 1775-1837). The work was completed at Drakar Taso (*Brag dkar rta so*) monastery in an Iron Dragon year (1820).

The first half of the text relates the origin of Porong's ruling family and describes how the territory came to crystallise out of a larger political entity, before, at last, finding an autonomous niche within the Tibetan state that emerged in the seventeenth century. The origin of the clan is certainly - at least in part - an apocryphal account, but it is particularly interesting for the way in which it establishes impeccable Buddhist *and* Tibetan credentials for the line.

The necessity for emphasising this pedigree may well be the following striking fact: that the clan was not originally from Tibet, but China, "the land blessed by the five-crowned [bodhisattva] Mañjuṣrī". In spite of this Chinese origin, the clan belonged to one of the six famous protoclanes of Tibet, the Dong (Ldong) - specifically, the "Yellow-Gold" branch of this group.

The biography lays a twofold claim to Buddhist respectability. The first, which relates to the circumstances surrounding the birth of the eponymous founder, provides an etymology for the name Burwa:

As a future leader of men, as if in rejection of the impurity associated with a natural birth, like the Buddha, the Lion of the Shakya tribe who, in a grove in Lumbini, was born between the ribs of his mother Maya without causing her any harm, he too came into the world by bursting forth from between the ribs of the mother who was carrying him. The name of the lineage also came to be known in the world as "Burst Forth" [*'bur pa*] (fols. 3a-3b).

The lineage continued "like an unbroken bridge" until one member moved westwards to settle in the land of "Lower Dokham, in Greater Tibet", as the governor of a large nomadic enclave. Several generations later, a branch of the family moved to Central Tibet where, for three generations, they were the governors of the small principality (*yul phran*) of Nam (Gnam), until they fell foul of a Bonpo magus who was inhabiting the upper part of the Nam Valley, and decided to move to Yarlung. In Yarlung, the Burwa lord was made the chief of a hundred households. The son of this individual, we are told, became a member of the *sad mi mi bdun*, Tibet's pilot project in monasticism in the eighth century.

The text shifts to a recognisably more historical phase with the migration of the Burwa, "several generations later", from Central Tibet to Southern Latö (La stod lho) - that is to say, the vicinity of Dingri. The reason for this move, we are told, is that the family entered the service of the Latö ruler, Situ Chökyi Rinchen (Si tu Chos kyi rin chen). The Burwa with whom we are concerned here had the title of *Gsol dpon* and the personal name of Hrithub (Sri thub), and was the chief of a team of eleven officials surrounding the ruler. The mention of Situ Chökyi Rinchen immediately identifies the period in question as the fourteenth century, since this well-known historical figure died in 1402. (For a general summary, see especially Wangdu and Diemberger 1996: 4-5.) The principality over which Situ Chökyi Rinchen ruled, Southern Latö, was one of the thirteen myriarchies (*khri khor*) constituting the territory governed by the Sakya-Mongol alliance from the fourteenth century (Petech 1990: 53). The capital had been located at Dingri, but was shifted by Dönyö Palzang (Don yod dpal bzang), the father of Situ Chökyi Rinchen to the more northerly site of Gyanor (Rgyal nor). Following the invasion of Southern Latö and the destruction of its capital by its northern neighbour (La stod byang), Situ Chökyi Rinchen was imprisoned but was later put in charge of Southern Latö in order to govern it on behalf of the North. Later on, however, his nephew, Amogha, secured from Thog Temur (the last of the Yüan emperors) the insignia that entitled his uncle to rule the southern province in his own right. Southern Latö continued to suffer periodic invasions from the north, and in the sixteenth century was a bone of contention between two powerful neighbours, Rinpung to the east and Gungthang to the southwest. From 1619/1620 these local disputes were submerged by the rise of the Tsang kings, who broke the power of both Rinpung and Gungthang, while Tsang in turn was eventually crushed in 1642 by the alliance of the Fifth Dalai Lama and the Mongol Gushri Khan.

To return to the fourteenth century: at that time, in Southern Latö, there were eighteen groups of pastoralists (*'brog sde bco brgyad*), of which the two most important were the Pong and the Rong (*spong 'brog rong 'brog*). Both of these fell under the jurisdiction of *Gsol dpon* Hrithub, and the united enclave came to be designated by the compound name Pong-Rong, nowadays pronounced 'Porong' (*Azure Rosary* fol. 4a).

As so often in prominent Tibetan families, one son in each generation of the Burwa clan occupied himself with political affairs while at least one other entered the clergy. To judge from the genealogy it seems that the holder of the position of Jewön was often the youngest brother.

Immediately after the unification of Tibet in 1642 the area was confiscated by the Fifth Dalai Lama and brought under the direct rule of Lhasa. To judge from both the *Azure Rosary* and from documents, dating from the early eighteenth century, that I have been able to examine, the confiscation was the result of a dispute between an uncle and a nephew in the ruling Burwa clan. It is not clearly stated, but nevertheless implied, that while the uncle was a supporter of the Dalai Lama, the nephew was backing Tsang. The matter was resolved in the following generation. The

new Jewön was apparently trusted by Lhasa – his elder brother had taken his vows in Drepung monastery from the Dalai Lama himself – and when he came of age the principality was returned to the Burwa family, together with all its subjects and religious and political institutions. The territorial boundaries of Porong were later reconfirmed in an edict issued in 1703 by the Sixth Dalai Lama (*Azure Rosary* fol. 9a).

The last male member of the Burwa lineage died in the 1950s, and the position of Jewön was occupied by a man of the Lhalhungpa family who married a Burwa woman. He was one of a large contingent who left Tibet in 1959 to settle abroad. The Porong exiles are now largely divided between Nepal and Switzerland, but maintain close connections with one another and with their compatriots in Tibet.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE VICTORY SONG

The Victory Song is the most important cultural performance for the Porong community in exile. It is becoming increasingly well known, and is now practically emblematic of this diaspora group, who perform it on occasions of major importance for exile Tibetans. The people of Porong in Tibet itself have recently resurrected the tradition, which fell into abeyance after 1959, as a means of bringing together representatives of the scattered settlements of the region for performances that would celebrate the unity of the community. However, as stated above, an analysis of the significance of the performance in its different milieux must await a fuller treatment of the subject.

Unusually for this kind of folkloric song-and-dance performance, there is an accompanying text (henceforth referred to as the *Manual*) that serves as a kind of commentary to the opus. The text was taken to Switzerland in the 1960s when its owner went to settle there; it was later copied out with many inaccuracies, but the original has since been lost and certain passages in the copy remain opaque. The aims of the *Manual* are: to establish the respectable credentials of the Victory Song as a didactic work authored by a well-known Buddhist teacher; to give directions as to how the performance is to be understood by the performers and the spectators; and to list the sequence of songs.

The *recto* side of the manual's first folio bears the simple title "The sequence of songs", while the *verso* elaborates on this with: "Contained here is the so-called Mirror that illuminates a series of thirteen different dance-performances known as the 'Song of Joy' or 'Song of Victory', composed by the Dharmarāja of Ngari" (*Mnga' ris [ri] chos rgyal chen pos mdzad pa'i dga' ba'i gzhas sam rgyal ba'i gzhas zhes bya ba rtsed sna [rtse rna] bcu gsum pa'i rim [rin] pa gsal ba'i*

me long zhes bya ba bzhugs so). The reference to the “Dharmarāja of Ngari” corresponds to a popular attribution of the authorship of these songs to Ngari Panchen Pema Wangyal (Mnga’ ris pa’ chen Padma dbang rgyal, 1487-1542), who was born in Lo Mönthang (Glo bo Smon thang, now part of Nepal) and, among other things, travelled to Purang in Western Tibet. Although the manual does not say so, the Victory Song conforms to the style of performance known as *Shon*. *Shon* still survive in parts of Western Tibet (including Lo and Purang, as well as Ladakh), and while it is conceivable that Ngari Panchen composed the cycle along the lines of what he knew from his childhood and his travels, there is nothing in either of the two biographies of which I am aware to indicate that he did so (*Mnga’ ris pa’ chen gyi rnam thar bsdu pa; Mnga’ ris pan che’ rnam thar*). We should not discount the possibility that the Victory Song is an indigenous folk creation of Porong, and that Ngari Panchen’s authorship is a pious fiction to lend respectability to a work that sometimes seems decidedly un-Buddhist in its violence.

Following some lines of ornate homage to Ngari Panchen, the text briefly describes the first member of Porong’s ruling lineage, who was born into

this great lineage, the celebrated Chongdung Mugpo (Chong gdung smug po), one of the six Precious Clans of the Tibetan Snowlands in the same way as our Teacher, the Unparalleled King of the Shakyas, by bursting forth from beneath the right side of his mother’s ribs without having to cause her harm. And because the birthplace from which he is said to have come was Poworong (Spo-bo-rong) in Kham he was known as the Great Dharmarāja, the Jewön of Porong, and his achievements were widespread.

...bdag cag gi [gis] ston pa mnyam med shakya’i rgyal po bzhin ma la skyon bgyid [gyis] ma dgos pa yum gyi rtsib ‘og g.yas nas ‘bur te ‘khrung [khrung] ba’i gdung chen gangs ljongs [ljong] kyi nor bu gdung drug gi ya gyal chong gdung smug por zhes yongs su grags pa sku’i khrung yul khams spo bo rong nas yin zhes chos rgyal chen po spo rong rje dbon zhes bya ba de nyid kyi [kyis] mdzad pa che cher spel [dpel] ba / (fol. 2a)

Thus while this account accords with the *Azure Rosary* in associating the family with the six Tibetan protoclanes and in dignifying the founder with a Buddha-like birth, it differs with respect to the details of the former and the etymology of the name Porong. The manual continues:

This remarkable tradition has continued, unbroken, down to the present day. Let us consider the end to which [these songs were composed], the appropriate style, and the qualities that inhere in them. Their purpose: they are to be sung at the birth of great ones who are holders of the doctrine (foremost among whom is our Supreme Protector himself), or when they ascend to their golden thrones or when we invite them to give teachings; when temples and other receptacles of the Body, Speech and Mind of the three Precious Ones are built; when sons are born into the line of great dharmarajas and so on; when the subjects receive public empowerments, as a heroic expression of the subjection of enemies from the four directions - in short, as an expression of felicitation following any propitious festivity.

The appropriate style: this should be the style of accomplished heroes and heroines.

As for the features it has: from an exoteric point of view, it exemplifies the bearing of heroes and heroines. From an internal perspective, it is completely suffused with the scriptures of the holy religion; and in its secret aspect, it should have the effect of rendering beings happy just as the teachings of the Buddha do. In short, the actions that are aimed at accomplishing these ends should have the high quality of ever-increasing blessings like a lake in summer, and be briefly expressed in the words of the old with the freshness of the young.

As for the sequence of the Song of Joy: first, there should be a propitious configuration of the planets and the stars; and when the dawn comes up the drum should be beaten three times. The first drumbeat signifies that those who are to sing and dance should eat a good breakfast. The second drumbeat is the sign that the singers and dancers should get properly dressed in their jewellery and robes. Third, the performers should all assemble, without exception, in a brightly-coloured group [and then proceed to the singing and dancing].

da lta bar du srol bzang ma nyams [nyam] tsam [rtsam] du yin khul / de'ang dgos pa gang gi phyir / tshul gang dang mthun / mtshan nyid gang dang ldan zhes na / dgos pa ni / (Z gong [gongs] sa skyabs mgon chen po mchog gis gtsos [rtsos])³ bstan 'dzin gyi skye bu chen po rnams sku bltams [gtam] pa dang / gser khrir mnga' gsol ba dang chos kyi 'khor lo skor ba'i phyir spyen 'dren pa dang / gtsug lag khang sogs dkon mchog gi [gis] bstan sku gsung [gsungs] thugs rten [bstan] bzhengs pa dang / chos rgyal chen po sogs sku'i gdung sras 'khrungs [khrungs] pa dang / rgyal srid la dbang bskur pa sogs dang / phyogs bzhi'i bstan dgra 'dul [tul] ba'i dpa' rtags sogs mdor na / bskal bzang dga' ston [don] thams cad kyi mjug ['jug] tu {bkra} shis pa brjod pa dang bcas dang / tshul ['tshul] gang dang mthun zhes na / rdzogs ldan gyi dpa' bo dang dpa' mo'i tshul sogs dang mtshan nyid gang dang ldan zhes na / phyi ltar du dpa' po dang dpa' [dpa] mo'i tshul / nang ltar du dmangs chos kyi tshig gi sgras yongs su khyab pa/ gsang ba ltar du / sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa sems can la bde skyid sogs mdor na dmigs [smis] yul rnams kyi mdzad 'phrin [sprin] dbyar mtsho [tshogs] bzhin gong [gongs] nas gong [gongs] du 'phel ba'i smon pa dang bcas kyi [kyis] yon tan tshang dgos pa sogs rgan ngag gzhon chags kyi mdor tsam [mbdor rtsam] zhus pa dang/ dga' ba'i glu gzhas kyi rim [rin] pa dngos [mngos] la / thog mar gza' skar legs 'dzom la / snga gro'i char / rnga brda' lan gsum / rnga brda' dang por gzhas mi khrom sa sogs zhal lag sogs legs par mchod bzhes pa'i brda' dang / rnga brda' 2 par gzhas mi khrom sogs rgyan gos sogs legs par spud [dpud] dgos pa'i brda' / gsum par gzhas mi khrom pa sogs ma tshang med par khra 'jig ges 'dzoms dgos pa... (fols. 2b-3a)

The *Manual*, as we have seen, describes the Victory Song as a set of thirteen performances. This core of thirteen is intercalated with a great many others during a full presentation (which may last for three days), so that the whole is said to comprise a total of 108. The community in Tibet subscribes to a core not of thirteen but of sixteen, by according mandatory status to three other songs. Although the latter are not actually cited in the *Manual*, they are in fact always included in performances even in the diaspora community, so the disagreement over whether there is a basic set of thirteen or sixteen is rather academic.

Some idea of the arbitrariness of the numbers involved in such song cycles may be gained from a recent Tibetan work on the popular traditions of Ngari. By way of an editorial introduction

³ The brackets in the text probably signify that the phrase was not present in the original manuscript.

to a chapter on *shon* – in which genre, as we have seen, the Victory Song may be categorised – the work states:

The *shon* art form appears to have its roots in the very ancient Zhangzhung period. Within the *shon* there have further emerged the ‘Twenty-five kinds of *Shon*’, the ‘Thirteen Extensive *Shon*’, the ‘Eighteen Kinds of *Shon*’ and various others. Some elderly performers of folk-arts say that, in the past, they would customarily sing and dance a set of twenty-odd *shon*.

The passage goes on to say that two separate sets of *shon* have survived in modern Guge, and one in Purang, but adds apologetically that “although the *shon* of Purang is reckoned to consist of eighteen songs, it was possible to record only some thirteen or so in their entirety”. As for Toling, “while it was customary in the past to dance a set of thirteen *shon*, there are few people who can recite even four”, and the version printed in the volume is accordingly acknowledged to be a composite of different traditions (*Zhang zhung srid pa’i gre ‘gyur* 201-2).⁴

To be on the safe side, I shall treat the sixteen-song version of the Porong’s Victory Song as constituting the basic set. With my colleagues Hildegard Diemberger and Franck Bernède I have made video and sound recordings of performances from both Tibet and Nepal. However, the main version of the text from which passages have been excerpted below was written out by Dawa, an extraordinarily talented and diligent man from the village of Kyudog in Porong. The following section will provide a brief introduction to each of the sixteen songs and present translated excerpts. The main aim, as stated earlier, is to analyse the spatial themes and imagery relating to landscape contained in the songs. What the text of the cycle effectively does is to situate the dancers in a horizontally and vertically defined space that is extended to the landscape, and ultimately confers a territorial identity on the group while linking it to the religious and political heritage of Tibet.

It should be understood that the text, as written down by Kyudog Dawa, is the transcript of an oral tradition and is not to be regarded as a definitive edition. Divergent memories over two generations have, understandably, produced differences in the versions that prevail in Tibet and in Kathmandu. A written version of some of the songs that was shown me by Dawa Dhargye in Kathmandu confirms this. However, no attempt will be made in this article to compare the two.

⁴ The relevant passage reads: *shon gyi sgyu rtsal de ni ches gna’ bo zhang zhung gi dus nas byung bar mngon / shon la yang shon sna nyi shu rtsa lnga dang dar shon bcu gsum / shon sna bco bryad sogs byung myong ‘dug cing da lta dmangs khrod sgyu rtsal pa rgan gras ‘gas kyang shon sna nyi shu rtsa grangs snga ma gtong srol dang ‘khrab srol ‘dug ces gsungs shing da lta gu ge’i rtsa ba’i shon sna mi ‘dra gnyis tsam dang spu hreng du khyab dar yod pa’i shon sna gcig bcas da res ‘dir bsdus yod cing mtho lding du dar srol yod pa’i shon sna bcu gsum sngar khrab srol yod kyang da lta de’i gras bzhi tsam ma gtogs bshad thub mkhan dkon pas bar ma gsang du dar ba’i shon khag gcig dang mnyam du bsdus nas bkod pa yin / spu hreng gyi shon der glu sna bco bryad yod par grangs kyang bcu gsum tsam las cha tshang ba ma thob rjes sor rtsad chod thub tshe ngos sbyor zhu rgyu bcas thugs ‘jags gnyang mkhyen /*

The transliteration of Tibetan songs poses special problems: an actual performance entails the elaboration of a basic text with largely meaningless or formulaic sounds, not to mention repetitions, and one is faced with the choice of attempting to represent the text as it is sung, or to transcribe only the metric verses. (A fuller treatment of the material should of course do both.) In the excerpts below I have for the most part reproduced Kyudog Dawa's script, which I regard as a happy compromise between the two. Dawa has omitted many redundancies, but has retained enough to convey the flavour of a performance. Take, for example, the first line of Song 6. While the verse itself actually consists of nothing more complex than straightforward nine-syllable pentameter, the intercalation of the meaningless *la* and the *shad* reproduce a caesura that is created by the music. The few spelling mistakes I noticed have been amended without advertisement, but it will be noted that a number of unorthodox forms are preserved: for example, the syllables *'bed* and *phed* in the third song are not mistakes but have been preferred by Dawa insofar as they represent the local pronunciation of *'byed* and *phyed*. Other dialectal expressions, such as *kab la* in Song 1 and *yed rang* in the sixteenth, have no standard orthography of which I am aware.

Song 1, 'The Four-pillared, Eight-beamed' (*ka bzhi gdung brgyad*). The songs were – and still are – traditionally performed in the open air, but the cycle itself is represented as an enclosed space: a four-pillared, eight-beamed house.

<i>kab la bzhis / gdung brgyad kyi nang na /</i>	Inside the four-pillared, eight-beamed,
<i>rgyal lu'i zhabs zon cig bzhas yod la /</i>	One of the prince's boots is kept;
<i>bdag la ma dgos /</i>	I don't need it,
<i>rtsa ba'i bla ma la 'bul lo /</i>	I shall offer it to my root lama

Song 2. 'The Description of the Door' (*sgo bshad*). The dancers approach the imaginary door to the house which they are – so to speak – about to enter, and conjure it into existence with these words:

<i>sgo mo che nang la phebs /</i>	Come through the great door!
<i>yar them ser po'i gser la byas yod /</i>	The lintel is made of yellow gold,
<i>sgo mo che nang la phebs /</i>	Come through the great door!
<i>mas them kham pa'i dngul la byas yod /</i>	The threshold is made of tawny silver,
<i>sgo mo che nang la phebs /</i>	Come through the great door!
<i>rib bzhi smug po'i mchong la byas yod /</i>	The fourfold frame is made of brown sardonyx,
<i>sgo mo che nang la phebs /</i>	Come through the great door!
<i>skyed pa dkar po'i dung la byas yod /</i>	The middle is made of white silver,
<i>sgo mo che nang la phebs /</i>	Come through the great door!

Song 3. The door must be opened, and this song takes the singers to the top of the snow-mountain from which they bring down the key. It may be possible to see in this song a parallel with the ritual song of the Rai, in the Eastern Himalaya, in which the shaman re-enacts the mythic event of travelling to the mountain tops to find and bring down to the lowlands the secret of divination (Ramble 1990: 28-31).

<i>ya gi gangs stod mthon po nas / lde mig g.yar po zhu rgyu yin / gzhas kyi sgo mo 'bed rgyu yin / gzhas kyi sgo mo phed tsa na / gzhas dpon mang la hrag pa yod /</i>	From the high snow-mountain up there We'll ask to borrow the key, We'll open the door to the songs, After opening the door to the songs The greatest singers will be here in force.
---	---

Song 4, 'The Dancing-ground' (*do sa*). The images of vertical and horizontal space are explicitly united here as coefficients in the consecration of the dancing-ground. The dances locate themselves with respect to the three-tiered world of gods, *btsan* and serpent-spirits, as well as the four cardinal directions. Far from being presented as abstractions, the latter are given substance through invocation of the natural features with which they are associated: in the east is the sunrise; to the south, below the high plateau, is the treeline, which in this region is characterised by birch; to the west lies the distant source of the Tsangpo River; and to the north are the great salt lakes.

<i>do la sa cig mi zhu / do la sa cig zhu la / steng phyogs lha yi phyogs la do la sa cig zhu la / lha rgyal dbang po brgya sbyin do la sa cig zhu /</i>	We shan't offer a dance ground, Yes, we'll offer a dance ground, Offer a dance ground to the gods on high, Offer a dance ground to Indra, the mighty king of the gods;
<i>do la sa cig mi zhu / do la sa cig zhu la / 'og phyogs klu yi phyogs la do la sa cig zhu la / klu rgyal gtsug na rin chen do la sa cig zhu /</i>	We shan't offer this dance-ground, Yes, we'll offer this dancing ground, Offer it to the serpent spirits below, Offer it to Tsugna Rinchen, king of the serpent-spirits,
<i>do la sa cig mi zhu / do la sa cig zhu la / bar phyogs btsan gyi phyogs la do la sa cig zhu la / btsan rgyal g.yu dmar brgya sbyin do la sa cig zhu /</i>	We shan't offer this dance-ground, Yes, we'll offer this dancing ground, Offer it to the <i>btsan</i> in the middle, Offer it to Yumar Gyajin, king of the <i>btsan</i> .
<i>zhabs bro</i>	<i>Fast movement A</i>
<i>shar gyi phyogs nas sgo gcig phed /</i>	Open a door to the east!

<i>om bzang ma ni padme hum</i> <i>dro 'jam nyi ma'i sgo cig phed /</i> <i>gling bzhi dros pa'i sgo cig 'phed /</i>	Om bzang ma ni padme hum (<i>rpt. after each line</i>) Open the door of the sun with its gentle warmth; Open the door to the warmth of the four continents;
<i>lho yhi phyogs nas sgo cig phed /</i> <i>shing chen stag pa'i sgo cig phed /</i> <i>shing sna 'dzoms pa'i sgo cig phed /</i>	Open a door to the south! Open a door to the great birch tree, Open the door to all kinds of trees;
<i>nub kyi phyogs nas sgo cig phed /</i> <i>chu chen kham pa'i sgo cig phed /</i> <i>chu sna 'dzoms pa'i sgo cig phed /</i>	Open the door to the west! Open the door to the great tawny river, Open the door to waters of all kinds;
<i>byang gi phyogs nas sgo cig phed /</i> <i>shel tshwa dkar mo'i sgo cig phed /</i> <i>bro mchog ldan pa'i sgo cig phed /</i>	Open the door to the north! Open the door onto the white crystal salt, Open the door onto everything that tastes good!
skyed 'jogs	<i>Fast movement B</i>
<i>da lo mo legs la song /</i> <i>bang nga gsar ba bgyab la yod /</i> <i>bang nga gsar pa'i steng la /</i> <i>nas kyi g.yung drung bris /</i> <i>g.yung drung 'gyur ba'i thog la /</i> <i>dar mtshon sne lnga btsugs /</i>	This year the harvest has been good, A new granary has been made; On top of the new granary We have drawn a swastika of barley, On top of the turning swastika We have raised a flag of the five colours.

Song 5. 'The Tea-offering' (*ja mchod*). A song about serving tea to the gods above, the serpent-spirits below and the *btsan* in the middle.

Song 6. 'The Chinese Bride' (*rgya bza*'). Songtsen Gampo's marriage to his Chinese bride is an episode that enjoys elaborate treatment in several Tibetan histories, and is even dramatised in the context of marriages in the Western Himalaya. The issue is whether the wily minister Gar (Mgar) can overcome the Chinese princess's reluctance to leave her native comfort for the hardships of her suitor's home. In this song the men – who take Gar's part – counter the women's objections by recasting the natural horrors of the Tibetan landscape as sacred beauty, and by proposing easy solutions to the barriers of the terrain:

<i>bu</i> <i>zla ba dang po'i tshes pa la / bco lnga'i nyin /</i> <i>rgya bza' bod la 'phebs la pa'i zhal bzhes</i> <i>gnang /</i>	<i>men</i> On the fifteenth day of the first month Chinese Princess, will you agree to come to Tibet?
<i>bu mo</i> <i>bod kyi yul ni sha za yi / srin po'i yul /</i> <i>gangs ri rang bzhin gcan gzan mche ba 'dra /</i> <i>de 'dra'i yul la bu mo dgongs pa zhu /</i>	<i>women</i> Tibet is a land of flesh-eating demons, Its natural mountains are like the fangs of wild beasts This daughter begs to be excused from going to such a land!

<p>bu <i>bod kyi yul ni dga' ldan gyi / lha yi yul / gangs ri rang bzhin mchod la rten / grub pa'i gnas / rgya bza' bod la phebs pa'i zhal bzhes gnang /</i></p>	<p><i>men</i> Tibet is the divine land of Tushita, Its natural mountains are the stupas Of which the place is made Chinese Princess, will you agree to come to Tibet?</p>
<p>bu mo <i>gtso re byas / la mo mi cig gsum la stong brgyad brgya yod la / / yang mi cig gsum stong dang brgyad brgya yod / /</i></p>	<p><i>women</i> The main thing is That there are three thousand eight hundred different passes, Yes, three thousand eight hundred different passes!</p>
<p>...bu <i>la mo lcags dra la la ni / ... zhed dgos med la / 'gros ldan rta pho brgya yi bsu ma yod la / / yang rta pho brgya yi bsu ma yod /</i></p>	<p><i>...men</i> As for the Cagdra Pass...you need not fear; You will have a reception of a hundred smoothly- trotting horses, Yes, a reception of one hundred horses!</p>
<p>bu mo <i>chu mo rgya chu rab med / gtso re byas / / chu sna mi cig gsum stong brgyad brgya yod / / yang mi cig gsum stong dang brgyad brgya yod / /</i></p>	<p><i>women</i> The main thing is, there are wide rivers with no fords, That there are three thousand eight hundred different rivers, Yes, three thousand eight hundred different rivers!</p>
<p>bu <i>chu mo rgya chu rab med ni / ... zhed dgos med la / gru shan rta mgo brgya yi bsu ma yod la / / yang gru shan brgya yi bsu ma yod /</i></p>	<p><i>men</i> As for the wide rivers without fords ...There is no need to fear: You will be received a hundred boats with horsehead prows, Yes, received by a hundred boats!</p>
<p>bu mo <i>thang 'di g.ye mo thang gi gtso re byas / thang sna mi cig sum stong brgyad brgya yod / / yang mi cig sum stong brgyad brgya yod /</i></p>	<p><i>women</i> The main thing is this plain, the Yemo Thang, There are three thousand eight hundred different plains, Yes, one thousand one thousand eight hundred different plains!</p>
<p>bu <i>thang 'di g.ye mo thang 'di ni / ...zhed dgos med la / shing rta 'khor lo brgya yi bsu ma yod / / yang shing rta brgya yi bsu ma yod /</i></p>	<p><i>men</i> As for that Yemo Thang, ...There is no need to fear: You will be received by a hundred wheeled carriages, Yes, received by a hundred carriages!</p>

Song 7. Here the dancers invoke, respectively, the vulture, the lion, the deer and the fish – animals that, in a common genre of Tibetan song – inhabit different levels of a stereotypical mountain. Insofar as it mimics the movements of these creatures, the dance may evoke performances such as the *shil* of the Rai shamans, who imitate the different birds and animals

they encounter in the course of an imaginary journey up a mountain (Ramble 1990: 31). The translation here is necessarily rather free.

<i>gsung gdangs 'di la /</i>	In this song
<i>rgod po'i shog sgros cig zhu /</i>	We do as the vulture, spreading its wing,
<i>yang la shog sgros legs mo cig zhu /</i>	Grandly spreading its wings;
<i>gsung gdangs 'di la /</i>	In this song
<i>seng ge'i 'gying stabs cig zhu /</i>	We do as the lion stretching,
<i>yang la 'gying stabs legs mo cig zhu /</i>	Stretching proudly;
<i>gsung gdangs 'di la /</i>	In this song
<i>nya mo'i 'khyug 'gros cig zhu /</i>	We do as the fish that flashes by;
<i>yang la 'khyug 'gros legs mo cig zhu /</i>	Brightly flashing by;
<i>gsung gdangs 'di la /</i>	In this song
<i>sha ba'i spus 'dzugs cig zhu /</i>	We do as the deer with its bristling fur,
<i>yang la spus 'dzugs legs mo cig zhu /</i>	With its glossy bristling fur.

Song 8. 'The Man in the Cotton Robe' (*ras pa*). This song is sung when the dancers are eating their mid-day meal, and are still seated on the ground. The text compares this position to that of Milarepa – the eponymous man in the cotton robe – who was very active in and around Porong.

Song 9. 'The Greeting-cloth', in which *kha btags* of different qualities "from China in the east" are offered to the familiar triad of the root-lama, "the lord who leads us" and the singers' parents. In the second part the song recounts a pilgrimage to Lhasa, where the narrator meets "the All-knowing Victor on his Golden Throne".

Song 10. 'The Teashop-keeper' (*ja khang ma*), in which the men visit a teashop, called 'The Four-pillared, Eight-beamed', run by the women. This is a song in praise of Tibetan tea, which combines tea-leaves from China, butter from "the low-lying meadows of Demo, the home of yak-cows", and salt from the Northern Plateau, "the home of square corrals and 'white-fortune ewes' (*g.yang dkar ma mo*)".

Song 11. 'The Triple Prostration' to the root-lama, to the lord and to one's parents. When the Victory Song was being performed specifically in honour of the Jewön – for example, on the occasion of the birth of a son in the lineage – the following verse was added to the song:

<i>tog ge dang ye re spong rong 'bur ba'i gdung</i>	A fine and exalted member of the Porong
<i>rgyud cig phebs byung /</i>	Burwa lineage has come,
<i>'jol le dang this be rma bya bzhin du bsu ba la</i>	Let us go to welcome him like sleek peacocks
<i>btang 'gro /</i>	with their pendant trains!

Song 12. ‘The Peacock has Come to India’ (*rma bya rgya gar la byon*). A somewhat obscure song that features the lands of India, Mongolia and Kongpo, and mentions certain ornamental items associated with each place.

Song 13. ‘The High Snow-mountain’ (*gangs stod mthon po*), in which the main section of the song invokes the different levels of a mountain from the top down (the high snows, crags etc.) and the animals associated with each level.

Song 14. ‘The Ornamental Quiver’ (*dong rgyan pa*), which takes as its main theme a subject that has already appeared in the refrains (not cited in the extracts above) and fast movements of some of the earlier songs: extravagant praise of certain items of clothing, jewelry and weaponry worn or carried by the dancers. The theme reaches its fullest expression in the final song.

Song 15. ‘The Lama’s Seat’ (*bla ma’i gdan sa*). A description of the residences of the lama and the lord (but not, in this case, the singers’ parents), and the auspicious things that are to be found there.

Song 16. ‘The Description of the Sword’ (*gri bshad*).

It is probably this last song from which the title of the whole cycle is derived. People who are disturbed by the offensiveness of many Tibetan ritual prescriptions point to scriptures, or failing these, supposedly homogenous oral commentaries to the effect that the spectacular instructions are not to be taken literally. In a similar vein, any nervousness provoked by the frankly martial character of this song may be dispelled by the assurance, contained in the *Manual*, that the superficial “manner of heroes and heroines” masks a secret, religious intent. Advocates of the Law of Parsimony may subscribe to a different hypothesis: that the ‘Description of the Sword’ is an old war-song, sung in celebration of bloody victory on the battlefield, and that all the others in the cycle are later accretions; while the opening pieces may have been devised with the express purpose of providing a structure to the overall performance, the remainder have probably been incorporated more-or-less at random from a local fund. In some case, perhaps, the fund may not have been entirely local: it is hardly conceivable, for example that the passage in Song 4 concerning the barley harvest should have originated among pastoralists.

<p>a pha'i phyogs 'o na legs so / 'o na legs so / sngon mo yi gri la gri bshad cig yod dam med la / gzhon pa tsho shod rgyu yod na bshad shog la / shod rgyu med na bshad pas pa'i phyogs snyon /</p>	<p><i>The fathers</i></p> <p>Have you the description of the sword from past times? Young men, if you have something to say, recite it; If you have nothing to say, listen to those who recite!</p>
<p>bu'i phyogs 'o na legs so / 'o na legs so / sngon mo yi gri la gri bshad cig los kyang yong la mkhas pa tsho zhu bas / zhu ba gsan mdzod /</p>	<p><i>The sons</i></p> <p>We do indeed know the description of the sword from past times. Those who know will tell you, Listen to those who recite!</p>
<p>'o na legs so / 'o na legs so / dpa' dam cha la ga 'dra cig zhu / ci 'dra cig zhu ba legs so yin nam la /</p>	<p><i>The fathers</i></p> <p>As for the sword, how is it named! What is it called?</p>
<p>snying gi sangs se sangs / snying la sangs po'i dgra bo 'dul rgyu yin /</p>	<p><i>Together</i></p> <p>The enemy, who is such a delight to our hearts, the enemy who delights us must be brought low!</p>
<p>'o na legs so / 'o na legs so / dpa' dam cha la mgon po yi drag gsum cig zhu ba lags min nam la /</p>	<p><i>The sons</i></p> <p>This sword, is it not called "Triple Ferocious Protector"?</p>
<p>snying gi sangs se sangs / snyings la sangs pa'i dgra bo 'dul rgyu yin /</p>	<p><i>Together</i></p> <p>The enemy, who is such a delight to our hearts, the enemy who delights us must be brought low!</p>

The refrain, 'The enemy who delights us must be brought low', seems at first sight to be incongruously considerate. Not so: as the performers explain, the 'delight' that the enemy inspires derives from the satisfaction of killing him.

After introducing the sword, the dialogue between the fathers and the sons goes on to name the various accoutrements of the weapon: the scabbard, the belt, items of harness and decoration, the pommel, and the scabbard's five rivets. In each case a comparison is drawn between the item invoked and some noble analogy, before the blade is unsheathed for the next phase of the dance. Let us pick up the text in the closing stages of the enumeration of the sword's components. As in the preceding excerpt, the questions are asked by the fathers and the answers given by the sons. The subsequent panegyric to the sword is sung by both together.

<i>gzer gsum yag la 'dra ma yod / 'dra ma yod la /</i>	Is there something to which three rivets might be compared?
<i>rgyal blon bka' gros grol ba 'dra / grol ba 'dra la /</i>	They are like a king and his ministers concluding their deliberations.
<i>gzer bzhi yag la 'dra ma yod / 'dra ma yod la /</i>	Is there something to which four rivets might be compared, be compared?
<i>mkhar dkar po zur bzhi lhongs pa 'dra / lhongs pa 'dra la /</i>	They are like the four-walled white palace, soaring on high, soaring on high.
<i>gzer lnga yag la 'dra ma yod / 'dra ma yod la /</i>	Is there something to which the five rivets might be compared, be compared?
<i>bu spun lnga mtshams mtha' bskor ba 'dra / skor ba 'dra la /</i>	They are like five brothers circling the edge, circling the edge,
<i>gri 'di dang gzhan pa 'dra sa med / 'dra sa med la /</i>	But there is nothing to which this sword might be compared!
<i>the'u rang mgar ba spun bdun brdungs / spun bdun brdungs /</i>	It was hammered out by the The'u rang, the Seven Blacksmith Brothers;
<i>ngar chu srin po'i khrag la byas /</i>	The water in which it was tempered was the blood of the demon,
<i>ngar tshwa do po brgya la byas / brgya la byas /</i>	And the salt to temper it filled a hundred sacks.
<i>gri sngon mo mtho gang bton tsa na / bton tsa na /</i>	If we draw the blue blade just one span,
<i>rno cung rno med mtho gang thon / mtho gang thon la /</i>	We can see whether it is sharp or dull – draw it another span, draw it a span!
<i>gri 'di nas mtho gang bton tsa na / bton tsa na /</i>	If we draw the blade just one span further than this,
<i>ngar cung ngar med mtho gang thon / mtho gang thon la /</i>	We can see whether it is finely-tempered or untempered – draw it another span, draw it a span!
<i>gri 'di nas mtho gang bton tsa na bton tsa na /</i>	If we draw the blade just one span further than this,
<i>sha gcod rus gcod mtho gang thon / mtho gang thon /</i>	It cuts through flesh, it cuts through bone – draw it another span, draw it a span!
<i>gri 'di nas mtho gang bton tsa na / bton tsa na /</i>	If we draw the blade just a span further than this
<i>sha za khrag 'thung mtho gang thon / mtho gang thon la /</i>	It will eat flesh and drink blood – draw it another span, draw it a span!
<i>gri bzangs te bton na 'bar ba 'dra / 'bar ba 'dra la /</i>	If we unsheath the blade completely it seems to blaze, seems to blaze;
<i>gzhon pa'i ab bsod me ru 'bar / me ru 'bar /</i>	The good fortune of the young men burns like fire, burns like fire;
<i>gri phred la dbyugs na bcad pa 'dra / bcad pa 'dra la /</i>	If we slash sideways with the blade, it is as if we cut, as if we cut,
<i>sdang dgra bo'i 'sked pa bcad pa 'dra / bcad pa 'dra la /</i>	It is as if we cut the waist of the hostile foe, cut his waist;
<i>gri sa la btsugs na stim pa 'dra la /</i>	If we plunge the sword into the earth, it is as if we spill,
<i>sdang dgra bo'i snying khrag stim pa 'dra / stim pa 'dra /</i>	It is as if we spill the heart-blood of the hostile foe!

In the next passage, which eulogises items of the dancers' paraphernalia, there are two features to which it is worth drawing attention: first, the fact that an explicit link is made between each item and the particular member of the social milieu with whom it is associated; and secondly, in the familiar triad of the lama, the lord and one's parents the usual order of the first two is reversed, and the mothers are omitted. This is explained by the fact that, in the belligerent ambience

generated by the naked swords, the lord must take precedence, while the women do not participate at all.

<i>'go 'dren dpon pos gnang la ba'i / dpa' dam mgon po drag gsum /</i>	The sword “Triple Ferocious Protector” given to us by the lord who leads us
<i>phyi yi dgra bo 'dul dus dgos pa chen po byas byung /</i>	Serves us well when we bring low the enemies from outside;
<i>rtsa ba'i bla ma'i gnang ba'i chos la dam chos pu ti /</i>	This volume of scriptures, given to us by our root lama
<i>phyi ma bar do gshog dus dgos pa chen po byas byung /</i>	Will serve us well when we come to traverse the <i>bar do</i> ;
<i>yab chen pa pha'i gnang ba'i / rgya gri skar ma smin drug /</i>	This knife, called “the Pleiades”, given to us by our great fathers,
<i>phyogs bzhi dgra go 'dul dus dgos pa chen po byung /</i>	Serves us well when we defeat the enemies from the four quarters.
<i>yum chen a mas gnang la ba'i / gos chen ser po'i phu shubs /</i>	This pocket of yellow silk given us by our great mothers
<i>nang gi gnyen 'khor skyong dus dgos pa chen po byung /</i>	Serves us well when we protect our kin;
<i>jo jo ming pos gnang ba'i / ba so'i sha krad dkar chung /</i>	This little white ivory thumb-ring given to us by our elder brothers,
<i>ba so'i sha krad dkar chung /</i>	This little ivory thumb-ring
<i>nyag phran mda' mo gtong dus / dgos pa chen po byung /</i>	Serves us well when we loose our arrows;
<i>tshe rogs bzang mo'i gnang ba'i / gsor gdub dam pa dgu dkris /</i>	This ninefold spiral ring given to us by our sweethearts,
<i>dam pa dgu dkris /</i>	This ninefold spiral
<i>gzhon gzhon mang po 'dzoms dus / dgos pa chen po byung /</i>	Serves us well when we gather, many young people together.

At this point in his transcript of the text, Dawa of Kyudog has inserted the following stage direction:

When this song and dance are concluded, the ‘enemy-flesh’ is cut up. When the enemy-flesh has been hacked up, in order to celebrate the defeat of the foe the swords are brandished skywards and the following song is sung as the performers move in a right-hand circle.

zhes glu bro mnyam gtong gi mtshams su / dgra sha gcod pa yin / dgra sha bcag tshar mtshams dgra thul ba'i dga' snang mtshon phyir gri dpa' dam gnam la gzengs shing g.yas skor dang bcas glu tshig 'di ltar /

The ‘enemy flesh’ refers to an important stage-prop: the carcass of a freshly-slaughtered goat that is chopped to pieces by the dancers. This coda to ‘the Description of the Sword’, which brings the Victory Song to a conclusion, presents a tableau of the society framed in its natural setting. In the preceding section, the performers established a link between the adornments of their individual persons and nodal members of their community; in this concluding passage, the main components

of the society are themselves projected onto the mandala of the environment in which they live. Mandala-representations of landscape are of course very common in Tibet, and they are usually achieved by ignoring the realities of an inconveniently asymmetric geography. In the present case, as it happens, the image conforms uncommonly well to the reality: from Drachen, where the singers would gather to perform the Victory Song, the imposing peak of Gangri Bonchen lies west-northwest; directly to the north is the red patch of hillside on which there stands the monastery of Pemo Chöding (with its red temple and monks); and the blue hills and the alpine meadows of Shishapangma lie, respectively, exactly to the east and south.

<i>a ba lags so snying gi sangs se sangs / snying la brnag pa'i dgra bo thul ni song / snying la brnag pa'i dgra bo thul ni song / 'o re cig dang lung pa'i nub phyogs nas / gangs ri gangs bon chen phye lcog phul ba 'dra la / gangs ri dkar po phye lcog phul ba min /</i>	The one who delights us, The enemy who pleases us has been brought low, The enemy whom we treasure has been subdued! To the west of the village Gangri Bonchen seems to be an offering of heaped flour; But the white snow-mountain is not an offering of heaped flour,
<i>'go 'dren dpon po khri la bzhugts pa 'dra la / x2</i>	It looks like the lord who leads us, seated on his throne.
<i>'o re cig dang lung pa'i byang phyogs nas / rdza ri dmar po ma^ˆdal phul ba 'dra la / x2</i>	To the north of the village The red ferrous hill looks like an offering of a mandala;
<i>rdza ri dmar po ma^ˆdal phul ba min / rab byung btsun pa chos gos bsnam pa 'dra la / x2</i>	But the red hill is not an offering of a mandala, It looks like a monk, wearing sacred robes.
<i>'o re cig dang lung pa'i shar phyogs na / g.ya' ri sngon po 'khor ba gsum skor 'dra la / x2</i>	To the east of the village The blue slate hills appear to surround us in three rings
<i>g.ya' ri sngon po 'khor ba gsum skor min / x2</i>	But the blue slate hill are not a circle of three rings,
<i>gzhon pa yed rang pho gos gon pa 'dra la /x2</i>	They are like us, the young men, dressed in men's robes.
<i>'o re cig dang lung pa'i lho phyogs na / spang ri ser po nyi ma shar ba 'dra la / x2 spang ri ser po nyi ma shar ba min / pha ma bzang po bu phrug 'dzoms pa 'dra la / x2</i>	To the south of the village The yellow upland meadows seem to be sunlit; But the yellow upland meadows are not sunlit, It seems to be the splendid fathers and mothers and their children who are gathered there.

Whatever the origins of the Victory Song may be – whether the pious composition of a single author, as local tradition has it, or the gradual and haphazard accumulation of diverse songs around a martial celebration, the final product is a powerful emblem of Porong itself. The significance of the cycle for the people can be understood insofar as Porong is, historically, a territorially-defined entity; the Victory Song is something akin to a condensed representation of the community in terms of the principality's landscape that can be 'unrolled' and revitalised in performance wherever the singers may be. For the community in Tibet, the victory Song links its

performers, via an obsolete principality, to the political and religious heritage of thirteen centuries; for those in exile it is above all, perhaps, the evocation of a lost homeland.

REFERENCES

Works in English

Ramble, C. 1990. 'Preliminary notes on the cultural dimension of conservation'. The Makalu-Barun Conservation Project Working Paper Publication Series, Report 10. Kathmandu: HMG Nepal and Woodlands Mountain Institute.

Wangdu, P. and H. Diemberger, 1996. *Shel dkar chos 'byung. History of the "White Crystal": Religion and Politics of Southern La stod*. Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften.

Works in Tibetan

'Azure Rosary'

Chos ldan sa skyongs 'bur pa mi rje'i gdung rabs lo rgyus dri med baidurya'i 'phreng ba zhes bya ba bzhugs so, by Rig 'dzin Chos kyi dbang phyug, a.k.a. Mi pham Chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1775-1837). Date: 14th rab byung, Iron Dragon year (1820). Photocopy of ms. in *dbu med*, 18 fols.

'Manual'

Mnga' ris [ri] chos rgyal chen pos mdzad pa'i dga' ba'i gzhas sam rgyal ba'i gzhas zhes bya ba rtсед sna [rtse rna] bcu gsum pa'i rim [rin] pa gsal ba'i me long zhes bya ba bzhugs so. Photocopy of ms. in *dbu med*, 17 fols. No date or author.

Mnga' ris pa' chen gyi rnam thar bsдus pa. In Gangs ri ba Chos dbyings rdo rje 1996, *Gangs can bod kyi nub ngos mnga' ris skor gsum gyi sngon byung lo rgyus 'chi med rnga sgra*. Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs pe skrun khang, pp. 281-84. Excerpted and condensed from the life of Mnga' ris pan chen Padma dbang rgyal contained in the *Rnying ma'i chos 'byung* of Bdud 'joms'jigs bral ye shes rdo rje (1904-1988). Full title: *Gangs ljongs rgyal bstan yongs rdzogs kyi phyi mo snga 'gyur rdo rje theg pa'i bstan pa rin po che ji ltar byung ba'i tshul dag cing gsal bar brjod pa lha dbang g.yul las rgyal ba'i rnga bo che'i sgra dbyangs*, 1962.

Mnga' ris pan chen rnam thar. In *Bka' ma mdo dbang gi bla ma brgyud pa'i rnam thar* by Padma 'phrin las, ed. T.W. Tashigang-pa. Leh: Smarntsis Shesrig Spendzod, vol. 37, 1972.

Zhang zhung srid pa'i gre 'gyur, 1995. *Mnga' ris sa khul rig gnas rgyang bsgrags brnyan 'phrin cus nas bsgrigs*. English title: *History and Ancient Songs of Shang Shung*. (Compiled by the Ngari Prefecture Cultural Broadcasting Office.)