

Report on PhD Thesis

by

Nima Hojer Lama (Nyima Woser Choekhortshang) entitled „The Genealogy of Ya-ngal Family of Dolpo (Critical Edition of the Text, Translation into English, Analyses of Abbreviations and Introduction to the Dolpo Dialect)“ [Genealogie rodu Ja-ngal z Dolpa (Kritická edice textu, překlad do angličtiny, analýza zkratek a úvod do dialektu Dolpa)], Charles University, Faculty of Arts, 2017.

Nyima Woser Choekhortshang's PhD thesis deals with a genealogy of a local family of royal priests from Dolpo, which is part of Nepal but which has traditionally been inhabited by people who belong to the sphere of the Tibetan civilization. The main target of the thesis is a critical edition of the text entitled briefly *Yan gal gdung rabs* dating from the nineteenth century, Dolpo, and its translation into English. This is the first translation to a Western language. The task necessitated considerable preparatory work: a comparison of several existing versions of the same text, their correction and interpretation. Moreover, translating of the Genealogy resulted in a study of abbreviations used in this particular text and in Tibetan texts in general. These abbreviations are only used in texts written in the *dbu-med* form of the Tibetan script (cursive), not in the *dbu-can* form. The thesis is based on the author's long-time research which started long time before the year 2005 when he published a new edition of the Genealogy of Ya-ngal family. Since Nyima Woser Choekhortshang was born in Dolpo and grew up in a Tibetan monastery in India, he is fluent in both the dialect of Dolpo (a sub-group of the Western branch of Central Tibetan) and in Central Tibetan (Lhasa Tibetan) which is used by many Tibetans as the standard language. The fact that he is a native from Dolpo is beneficial for the present study.

The thesis is well-organized: it consists of an introduction, three chapters, four appendices, and a bibliography. After a concise introduction to the topic, in Chapter 1 the author provides all necessary information on the Ya-ngal family, the Genealogy of this family, and on all existing manuscripts of the Genealogy. As a matter of fact, there are different versions of the text written in different periods and in different places (Dolpo, Lubra, Dolanji). These are marked as: YD-A, YD-B, YD-C, YD-D. Finally there is a fifth version, YD-E, which was edited by Nyima Woser Choekhortshang in 2005.

Chapter 2, the core of the thesis, is a translation of the entire text. The translation is based on the above-mentioned edition by Nyima Woser Choekhortshang from 2005. It clearly shows which parts are original and which were added later by an unknown commentator or by the author of the present thesis himself. The translation is complemented by numerous comments (appearing in notes) that provide for the reader additional information on different interpretations of a given expression, on the use of different expressions in different versions, and other necessary information. At the end of the chapter the author attached a genealogy tree of the Ya-ngal family.

Chapter 3 mainly describes writing abbreviations in the studied text. The chapter is divided into three parts. Since local words and expressions are employed in the text, the first part is an introduction to the local dialect spoken in Dolpo. This part is not only helpful to those who study various texts originating from Dolpo but it is also an interesting overview for the linguists who study Tibetan dialects. The following part discusses the main terms (*bskungs-yig*, *bsdus-yig*) and techniques of abbreviating (*ka-ta dkrug-yig*, *ang-yig*). The last part is a systematic classification of different types of abbreviations illustrated by numerous examples with reference to the page of occurrence of a given abbreviation in the YD-A version, which the author considers to be the original one.

Suggestions and questions:

1. In some cases, I suggest translating Tibetan words into English, for example: page 30/ 2nd paragraph, notes 84, 88, 90, 102, 103, 106.
2. Similarly, it would be useful to have the English translation of abbreviations in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.
3. It would be helpful if the thesis, or parts of it were reviewed by an English native speaker.
4. Why does YD-C have a smaller amount of folios (43) and pages (86) than YD-B (57 folios, 114 pages) which is an earlier version? Is it due to different handwritings or because of different amounts of abbreviations?
5. Chapter 2 is a translation of the whole text although the author states in note 82 that only the part dealing with the Ya-ngal family is translated.

As the first translation ever done of the Genealogy, the PhD thesis by Nyima Woser Choekhortshang is a great contribution to the history of the Bon religion and the history of Dolpo, as well as to the linguistics of the Tibetic languages and the Tibetan dialectology. The fact that for translating the text several existing versions were compared and corrected is also valuable. Moreover, his study of abbreviations is a useful work for other researchers studying Tibetan manuscript texts from the region of Dolpo and also from other Tibetan areas. Therefore, I strongly recommend the present thesis that it should be defended in public, and that it merits a pass.

Mgr. Zuzana Vokurková, PhD.

Faculty of Arts, Charles University

Prague, 8 June 2017