



École Pratique des Hautes Études

MASTER'S THESIS

Petr Jandáček

Call for Happiness and Splendour : A Bridal Ritual Consisting in Seven Minor Virtuous Parts
Bag ma la dge ba'i las phran bdun gyi cho ga bkra shis dpal skyed ces bya ba bzhugs so

As the candidate explains it and as the title shows it, this work focuses on a marriage ritual text written by a great 19th century *ris med* scholar Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas (1811-1899). As the author of the master thesis rightly notes, this text is very important since only two wedding Tibetan ritual texts are known. The importance of this text has already been pointed out by the translation given by two researchers T. Skorupski published "Tibetan Marriage Ritual" in 1986 (*Journal of Asian and African Studies*, n°31). One year later, K. Buffetrille published her own translation ("Un rituel de mariage tibétain", *L'Ethnographie*, 100-101, 1987, pp. 35-62) in French, being aware of the first translation only shortly before her own publication. The aim of Kong sprul, by writing this text for the wedding of the Prince of Sde dge in Khams, was to restore a tradition he considered to have been perverted by ignorant tantrists.

The work is divided in 3 parts: the first is dedicated to wedding and bridal rituals in Tibet the second one to the author of the text, the third one to the text itself. In the concluding remarks, the author raises several questions for future research.

The candidate is perfectly right to dedicate a part of his work to wedding and bridal rituals in Tibet. In fact, he extends his research to regions of Tibetan culture and language located in India and Nepal. This part could have been more detailed and above all, a strict distinction should have been made concerning the period and localisation of the sources. The conditions of wedding in Tibet, the rules that govern it were different according to the peirod, the group of people and the place we speak about. Tibetan weddings vary according to place and time.

Many changes have occurred between the Imperial and the modern time. Weddings in the Imperial times and among the nobles and court responded to demands not known among the common people. Marriage with cross cousins on both sides is prohibited in Tibet according to most of the sources. Nevertheless, some new research led to think that this type of wedding occurred in previous times and in a certain area, as was demonstrated by Childs and Qindmann (RET 2012: 44), but this is not possible to generalize. On the contrary, we know that Tibetan ethnic groups like for example Dol po ba, Gurungs, Tamangs, Thakali

have a preferential marriage with the matrilateral cross-cousin, the type of marriage they consider as the best one.

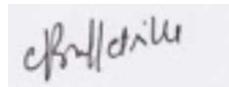
The candidate gives also a description of a marriage by arrangement, a form of marriage that existed generally in Tibet between persons with property. No mention is made of the mda' dar, an arrow decorated with ribbons of five colors white, yellow, green, red and blue. The presence of this arrow is regularly mentioned in the secondary sources.

The second part illuminates the personality of the author of the text, one of the greatest scholar of the 19th century.

But the main part of the Master thesis is the third one which gives the translation of the wedding ritual text. This text is a difficult one. The general meaning is present although the author has added a difficulty to his work: that of writing his MA Thesis in English.

It is of course regrettable that the candidate was not aware of the previous publications of this text. There are gaps in the bibliography (Prince Peter of Greece 1963, Pedro Carasco 1959; G. Smith [1970] 2001, pp 235-272; among others); also in the methodology. However, the work he has carried out can not be contested and for this he deserves to have his MA Thesis. I suggest to grade it "*very good*" (*chvalitebne*).

Paris, August 30, 2017



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