

Department of South and Central Asia

Supervisor`s report

Petr Jandáček, 2017, *“Call for Happiness and Splendour“ - a Bridal Ritual Consisting of 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)*. MA Thesis, Department of South and Central Asia, Faculty of Arts, Charles University, 71pp.

Candidate has chosen an interesting topic. The MA thesis deals primarily with the ritual text composed for the purpose of the wedding ceremony of the prince of Derge by Jamgon Kongtrul (Jam mgon Kong sprul Yon tan Rgya mtsho, 1813-1899). Given the fact that the wedding rituals lay mostly outside the domain of clerics in Tibet, only a few texts dedicated to such topic are available. A Tibetan text describing the wedding ritual is thus of a great value.

The work is clearly structured. It consists of a part dedicated to marriage in Tibet in general, to the Jamgon`s text in particular and to the context of the composition of the text. The main part then provides English translation of the Tibetan text, transcription and facsimile of the original text, which is concluded by remarks concerning the possible future research.

As for the first part dedicated to the wedding rituals in general, author briefly characterises the basic ideas surrounding marriage in Tibet. He draws to a large number of literature, but it seems that he is too much preoccupied with an effort to characterise Tibetan wedding in general. Tibetan societies are very diverse and thus such attempt deserves more careful consideration of local habits in different parts of the Tibetan Plateau in respect to the given locality and social status of the given people. There is also number of recent Tibetan texts dealing with the wedding rituals in Amdo, which are not taken into account by the author. The result is thus simplified attempt to characterise some elements of the wedding ritual in Tibet which fails to present a reliable and accurate picture. One lacks some general characteristics of the sources used for this part, since some of them are rather accidental reports from the field, some more nuanced anthropological accounts and some just summarise the known sources. An open confession that the sources used for this part cannot present the full picture of the wedding ceremonies in Tibet would be fair and more detailed references to the locality (i.e. not just broad region as Kham, Amdo, etc.) would also increase the value of this part.



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The next section focuses on author of the Tibetan text, Jamgon Kongtrul. It briefly characterises the life of this eminent scholar, but does not go beyond the general statements based on English translation of his hagiography. It would be perhaps interesting to learn at least some facts elucidating why namely this scholar wrote such rare text dealing with wedding ritual. Author does not seem to see any particular reason behind it and this is a weak point. Jamgon Kongtrul was born in a family of followers of Bon and he is a very well-known representative of a movement bridging the animosities between the various strands of doctrinal perspectives in Tibet. A brief outline of his life can add little to understand why he composed such text, it was definitely not just because he was ordered to do so, as it is suggested in the next chapter. The reason why other monks have never been asked to do so in the long-time period of many centuries is simply missing. The order to compose such a text presumes that he was a person who had a reputation of a specialist in such dealings.

As for the translation, the original Tibetan text is obviously very difficult. My personal fail as a supervisor is that I did not mention existing translations of the same Tibetan text to the author and the shame for this comes partly to myself. It would be proper to consult the existing translations in French and English, which would certainly help the quality of the MA thesis.

Peter Jandáček has been consulting his work with me regularly and I know him as a diligent student interested in the given field. There is a lot of effort behind his MA thesis and despite of number of shortcomings, the effort spent on it is visible. As for the grade, suggested is “very good” (chvalitebně).

Praha, 31. 8. 2017

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