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Charles University

Department of South and Central Asia

Supervisor's Report

Anna Sehnalová, *The Bonpo Mendrup (sMan sgrub) Ritual: Its Medicine, Texts, Traceable History, and Current Practice*. Ph.D. thesis, Department of South and Central Asia, Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague 2018, 389 pp.

I have known Anna Sehnalová from my position of a lecturer in Tibetan Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, since about ten years ago. I was in charge of preparing the Tibetan Studies programme at that time. She had just graduated from Hebrew Studies (Faculty of Arts, Charles University), and having a strong interest in Tibetan language and culture, she asked my permission to frequent the undergraduate classes of Tibetan language and lectures on related topics. Soon it became clear to me that her interest in things Tibetan and language skills were exceptional. The Tibetan Studies programme did not offer Master studies at that time. Thus after a few consultations with me, Anna decided to apply for graduate studies at Oxford, which I fully supported. She finished her graduate studies there obtaining an M.Phil. degree, and decided to pursue her post-graduate studies both at Oxford and Charles University. With delight I was observing her gradual mastering of both Lhasa and Amdo dialects of Tibetan.

Anna has been fulfilling her duties of Ph.D. candidate studiously since the very beginning of her studies in 2014. She quickly passed all exams required, was awarded grants from the Grant Agency of the Charles University (GAUK) and Faculty of Arts, participated in other three projects, engaged in fieldwork, gave papers at seven international conferences and published five articles, two articles are in print now.

Her work on dissertation started from the beginning of her studies in 2014. She already collected substantial material regarding the topic of the thesis at that time and kept adding new information every year through consultations with international scholars and native informants. Although we discussed her work continuously, more intense debate over the structure of the



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thesis and some details took place during the Spring 2018. I only hope that it contributed to the improvement of her thesis.

Regarding her PhD thesis, I would like to highlight few points. The value of her work I see mainly in diversity of approaches to the topic. It deals with the ritual under the focus from various angles: detailed description of the ritual performed in 2012, its socio-economic aspects, historical overview, detailed analysis of the recipe of the medicine, analysis of the main ritual text. Valuable seem to me namely the detailed parts dealing with production and recipe of the medicine including the parts dealing with the fermenting agent (Tib. *phabs gta*), and overview of the mentions of Mendrup ritual in the historical literature of the Bon religion. They bring substantial and new information.

Concluding, her activities during the postgraduate studies as well as the thesis presented prove sufficiently that Anna Sehnalová did not spent her time in vain. She is capable of independent and critical research in the field as well as with Tibetan textual sources in the innovative and original way. It is thus my pleasure to state that her thesis meets the standards required for PhD thesis and merits "pass."

Prague, 30th August 2018

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