



Department of South and Central Asia

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT

1. Studies

Nyima Woser Choekhortshang (Nima Hojer Lama) has been postgraduate student since 2009. He is native of Dolpo (Nepal) and had studied at the monastic academy of Menri monastery in India; the main seat of the exiled community of followers of Bon religion in India. He received his *geshe* degree there – the highest educational degree in the traditional Tibetan monasteries. He is rather well-known both to the community of tibetologists focusing on the Bon religion and to the followers of Bon religion themselves for his erudition and as editor-in-chief of *Bongo (Bon sgo)* - the only existing journal dedicating to Bon religion. His postgraduate studies in Prague were not an easy undertaking given the different environment and number of practical challenges he faced in Prague. Nevertheless, he passed all the required exams rather quickly between the years 2009-2013. He also worked on the core of the dissertation at that time – the translation of the *Genealogy of Ya-ngal* based on four different manuscripts. We were regularly meeting and his knowledge of the Tibetan cultural milieu impressed me highly. These meetings were very useful for both of us. While I tried to approach Nyima with some academic scepticism and critical distance in our discussions, he became a repository of number of new information for me. I frequently consulted with him the difficult parts of the Tibetan texts I was working on.

Since 2013 he became employed at our Department and taught Tibetan conversation classes, reading classes focusing on manuscripts written in “headless script“ (*dbu med*) and classes of “Tibetan Cultural Background.“ Later on, he became officially recognised as abbot of Namgyal monastery of Dolpo and received officially the title “*rinpoche*“ at the Menri monastery. He also started to frequent communities of Bon followers in Germany, Austria, Poland and Hungary with practical religious teachings. This and other obligations distracted him from the work on PhD thesis which did not progress at that time. It was



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only this year that he fully immersed himself into the work on the dissertation. The result of his effort and sleepless nights is mainly the third part of his PhD thesis.

Nyima Woser Choekhortshang has been regularly publishing (his publishing record in our University database contains 6 articles, but I am sure that he published more) as well as giving papers at conferences, namely those of International Association for Tibetan Studies and International Seminars of Young Tibetologists. He was also awarded prize for the best article published in the Tibetan journal Mutri Tsenpo (PRC). He became indispensable guide and friend for number of our students of Tibetan Studies and his presence in Prague have proven to be beneficial for us in number of respects.

2. PhD Thesis

The submitted PhD thesis deals primarily with the text of the *Genealogy of the Ya-ngal Family*. In its opening parts, it introduces reader to the area of Dolpo, its brief history and to the Ya-ngal family, which played important role in this part of the Tibetan-speaking world. These passages could perhaps deal more detailly with mythical priest Ya-ngal as appearing in the non-Buddhist Tibetan myths, with history of the Buddhist schools in Dolpo, etc. But it is understandable that the author focuses on the topics directly connected with the *Genealogy of Ya-ngal*. It then moves on to the discussion of the individual manuscripts available and the figure of the author of the manuscripts. These sections are valuable, since Nyima Woser Choekhortshang identifies the earliest manuscript out of the four available to him and establishes the life dates of the author of the text.

The second part of the dissertation brings translation of the earliest version of the manuscript. The translation is supplemented by rich comments in the footnotes, which contain also different readings of other existing manuscripts.

The third part deals with the language and it briefly introduces the hitherto undescribed Tibetan dialect of Dolpo. It then addresses the neglected topic of contracting words in



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manuscripts written namely by “headless” script (*dbu med*). This topic is firstly approached through the description of various methods of contracting, which is then supplemented by useful list of the contractions used in the *Genealogy*; these are presented both in alphabetical order and following their occurrences in the manuscript. These lists appear among the appendices along with the facsimile of the original text and its transcription.

Summing up, the dissertation is a result of much effort, knowledge and careful work. It meets the standards required for the PhD thesis and deserves a “pass.”

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