Pictures to Live By:
Uncovering an Iconography of the Tibetan Buddhist Monastic Code

by

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Two stylish young monks (Zanskar, Ladakh, India, July 2015)

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DEDICATION

For Al, who supported me through this project
from the very beginning to the very end.
Thank you for keeping me afloat.

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ABSTRACT

By 1920, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso (1876-1933), had survived an assassination plot, two foreign invasions, and prolonged exile. During the decades following his return, he sought to modernize and secure Tibet through various reforms, from changing the government's structure to improving the outdated military. Thubten Gyatso is remembered in Tibetan history, within both indigenous and Western sources, primarily for these efforts, as well as his political maneuvers between Chinese and European powers during the conflicts that led to his exiles and many of his failures. What has been largely overlooked, however, is how the Dalai Lama strived to safeguard his domain through temple renovation and institutional reform, drawing on models of Buddhist kingship and Tibetan traditions of state protection. Central to this political undertaking was the purification of the monastic community, which, I argue, he sought to accomplish by creating accessible, pictorial exegeses of the monastic code in a printed text that was transformed into murals at geomantically important sites. With this project, I offer a corrective to the prevailing image of Thubten Gyatso as an outlier among Dalai Lamas and Buddhist rulers, instead highlighting his religious actions in a period of political crisis. His artistic instruments of state protection had a secondary, perhaps unintended consequence, however; from a singular work of timely political importance, the Dalai Lama's illustrated text generated a series of artworks that together constitute a unique iconographic system for depicting monastic life.

The focus of this dissertation is this heretofore unexamined text, entitled *Moonlight Vanquishing the Darkness of Transgression*, and the murals it inspired, both within and beyond

Tibet and the reign of Thubten Gyatso. Composed around 1920, this illustrated text records his commentary on the Buddhist monastic code (*vinaya*) as the murals instantiate his visual interpretations in important sacred spaces. Part One contextualizes the composition of *Moonlight Vanquishing* and the creation of its first related murals within the turbulent reign of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. I look at how this text and its murals functioned as a critical nexus, where the purification of the monastic community and the renovation of temples potently combined. Part Two examines *Moonlight Vanquishing* as a visual commentary on the monastic code, considering how the Dalai Lama challenges traditional genres by incorporating canonical texts and hands-on knowledge into drawings that perform as scriptural annotations. I demonstrate how this pictorial commentary passes scholarly muster, while serving to make the often obscure, yet foundational rules of the *vinaya* more comprehensible to the monastic masses. *Moonlight Vanquishing* ultimately prioritizes images over text to make the Dalai Lama's interpretations of the monastic code more accessible and thus the purification of the entire monastic community more feasible. This is achieved not only by the content of the images, but also by the generic style in which they are rendered and the public spaces in which they are displayed. Part Three presents *Moonlight Vanquishing* as an instrument of visual transmission, analyzing it both as an instructional manual for monks and an artist's guidebook for murals.

INTRODUCTION

Across Buddhist monastic traditions, there is a robe obsession. Like most things, it begins with the Buddha. When he leaves the palace in his Great Departure, relinquishing the trappings and vestments of his royal life, Prince Siddhārtha first adopts the appearance of a religious mendicant before embarking on the austere journey to spiritual awakening. He trades his luxurious clothes, opulent jewelry, and long hair for a simple yellow robe and cropped locks. According to the version of this story contained within the Pāli *Nidānakathā*, upon the Bodhisattva's renunciation, the god Brahmā brings him three robes, a begging bowl, a razor, a mending needle, a girdle, and a water filter—the so-called eight requisites of a monk,[1] prefiguring the basic necessities possessed by the members of his future community of ordained followers. The Bodhisattva's renunciatory actions and his eventual abandonment of the extreme austerities performed by other mendicant communities in favor of his own Middle Way of more moderate ascetic practices serve as the model to which all monks aspire. The different monastic codes (*vinaya*) each seek to mold Buddhist monks in the image of the Buddha, legislating not only their behavior, but also their appearance, down to the type of stitches on their robes.

During ordination rituals, a new *bhikṣu* is asked whether he is able to abide by the four recourses of monastic life, encompassing the fundamentals of austere living: wearing robes made of rags from a rubbish pile; subsisting on food received as alms; residing at the foot of a tree; and using only cow's urine as medicine. Robes, therefore, do not merely symbolize the "going forth"

[1] N.A. Jayawickrama, *The Story of Gotama Buddha (Jātaka Nidāna)* (Oxford: Pali Text Society, 1990), 87.

of their wearer—that they have given up their attachments to material wealth as well as their individual identity and status, all woven into their lay attire—but the robes are also a form of practice. This is enshrined in the list of thirteen *dhūtaguṇas* or ascetic practices that are referred to in many Buddhist texts, but for which the *locus classicus* is the fifth-century *Visuddhimagga* of Buddhaghosa. Of the thirteen practices comprising this list, five are based on how a monk obtains his alms-food and six are determined by where he resides, but the first two refer to the types of robes a monk wears: the practice of the monk who wears refuse-rag robes and that of the monk who dons the triple robe.[2]

In the earliest days of the Buddha's teaching, his first followers needed only to hear "Come, monk!" and they were instantly ordained, magically dressed in robes, and miraculously shaven of hair and beard. The expectations for pure conduct and proper ascetic practice were presumed without requisite vows. These first disciples—these arhats—exemplified the ideals put forth in the four recourses of a monk; in fact, they originated them. Tradition holds it was only as more men and women from the general population joined the *saṅgha*, expanding beyond this initial group of noble ones, that rules and vows became necessary. The Buddha's first regulations for robes were that they should be made from fabric scraps found in the charnel grounds or other discarded rags from eighteen possible places. They had to be washed and dyed—sanitized of their impurities—before being stitched together, ultimately in a patchwork pattern that recalled the fields of Magadha.

The extent to which we can utilize the vinayas to gain entry into the reality of early Indian monastic communities is, of course, limited, especially without the triangulation of material culture to corroborate their contents. What we can know is how the monastic authors

[2] Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga (The Path of Perfection)*, 4th edition, trans. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (Kandy: Buddhist Publication Society, 2011), 55.

and redactors of the vinayas constructed an idealized monk within an idealized community, while navigating the immense challenges of institutionalization and lay relations. That this ideal was a rarity is apparent in the vinayas themselves, since they put forth models and then offer alternatives: within the *Cīvaravastu*, the section on robes in the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya, rags from the refuse pile are only one acceptable fabric for robes, which can also be stitched from seven other appropriate textiles, neither too fine nor too poor, and dyed with three kinds of materials. In the *Visuddhimagga*, for each ascetic practice Buddhaghosa names, he defines three grades of intensity for the practitioner: strict, medium, and mild. Only the most extreme of the strictest monks makes his robes with rags from the charnel grounds, whereas the medium monk uses other discarded textiles and the mild takes scraps given to him.

The different vinayas provide exceptions to these standards, reflecting the increasingly complex needs of the Buddhist *saṅgha* and its entanglements with the laity as the community of wandering mendicants grew, evolved, and spread across Asia over the centuries. Robes, however simple they may seem, occupy a major role within the different vinayas: robes are fundamentally practical, but they are also a foundational interface between lay donors and monks, a commodity and connector within the monastic community, and primary to the outward presentation of the Buddhist *saṅgha*. It is therefore unsurprising that of the 253 *pratimokṣa* vows within the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya, thirty-three are robe related. Everything about them is strictly dictated: the size and amount of fabric to be used; the types of textiles permitted; the colors and dyes that can be used; the logistics of apprehending robe fabric from rubbish piles and lay donors; how they are to be laundered and who can wash them; the methods and frequency with which they should be mended. Within these rules we find allusions to gender relations (a monk cannot give a nun a robe or have her launder his robes), communal concerns (a monk cannot keep extra cloth for himself), and donor issues (a monk cannot request a textile finer than the donor intended). So

important are the robes that if one strays too far from one of the three principal garments, it is a downfall requiring confession. And so essential are robes that there is a veritable robe-making season, during which monks can accept cloth to make new clothes.

Implicit in these primary rules and more explicit in the ten minor vows concerned with robes is that a monk's appearance—particularly the clothing he wears—are not only an embodiment of his discipline, but also integral to establishing the identity of the Buddhist community, and maintaining the respectability of the *saṅgha*.[3] A monk must carry himself with appropriate bodily comportment, and part of this is appearing dignified: his robes must be clean, proper, and definitively Buddhist. This might seem contradictory to the principles of non-attachment and egolessness that underscore the abandonment of worldly life for the spiritual path, but in practice, as a monk adopts a communal identity he becomes a representative of the *saṅgha* to the lay community upon which he relies. As Gregory Schopen notes, "Buddhist authors were as aware as we are that clothes are intimately linked with questions of identity." No matter what happened within the walls of the monastery, he continues, "in the 'outside' world you were what you wore."[4]

Two famous stories from the *Cīvaravastu* demonstrate how the vinaya authors and redactors viewed the practical importance of robes in establishing Buddhist identity. In the frame story explaining why patchwork robes should be sewn to resemble the sown fields of Magadha, the king of this region and major patron of the nascent Buddhist community, Bimbisāra, mistakes a non-Buddhist ascetic (an *Ājīvika*) for a Buddhist monk. He descends from his royal elephant to

[3] For more about robes and identity, as well as washing and dying, see Ann Heirman, "Washing and Dying Buddhist Monastic Robes," *Acia Orientalia Academiae Scientarium Hung* Vol. 67, No. 4 (2014): 467-488.
[4] Gregory Schopen, "Cross-Dressing with the Dead: Asceticism, Ambivalence, and Institutional Values in an Indian Monastic Code," in *The Buddhist Dead: Practices, Discourses, Representations*, ed. Bryan J. Cuevas and Jacqueline I. Stone (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 65-66.

pay homage and is stopped by a minister, but not before he is publicly embarrassed. As such, the king requests that the Buddha have his monks adopt distinctive robes so that this horrible mistake might be avoided in the future. In other stories recorded in the *Cīvaravastu* and several other vinayas, the Buddha prohibits his monks from wearing clothes (or not wearing any) and performing practices that are emblems or observances of heretics.[5] To echo Schopen once again, how a monk appears in public is inextricably connected to his religious and social identities, which can have major implications when it comes to lay support and communal reputation.

As Buddhist monasticism took root across Asia, the monk's robes persisted as an essential marker of identity, now regional and sectarian. The robes might have changed over time, geography, and climate, but they have always provided an essential link—physical, visual, symbolic—to the idealized past of the Buddha's original community, the model to be emulated as crystallized in vinaya texts. And thus the robe obsession has continued, manifesting in myriad ways that would have been perhaps unimaginable to the authors and redactors of the monastic codes. The Japanese *kesa*, or monk's mantle, is more textile art than humble garment: following the rule that all new fabric must be cut up and stitched together in a patchwork, these monastic robes are assemblages of luxurious silk brocades embroidered with symbolic images. In Burma, the way novices are supposed to wear their upper robe—covering one or both shoulders—when begging for alms became the center of a major dispute over monastic orthodoxy, causing a schism in the *saṅgha*. This "war of the robes" lasted for almost a century.[6] Tibetan *dob-dob*s (*ldab ldob*), sometimes called "punk monks," traditionally don an alternative version of standard

[5] Juan Wu, "The Cīvaravastu of the Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya and its Counterparts in Other Indian Buddhist Monastic Codes: A Comparative Survey," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* (2020) <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10781-020-09442-1>

[6] See Alexey Kirichenko, "The Making of the Culprit: Atula Hsayadaw Shin Yasa and the Politics of Monastic Reform in Eighteenth-Century Burma," *Journal of Burma Studies* Vol. 15, No. 2 (2011): 189-229; and Patrick Pranke, "'Bodawpaya's Madness': Monastic Accounts of King Bodawpaya's Conflict with the Burmese Saṅgha: Part One." *Journal of Burma Studies* Volume 12 (2008): 1-28.

monastic robes to broadcast their different status, to enable their physical training as temple security guards, and to allow for easy movement in case of a fight.[7]

The importance of robes took on a new meaning in 1920—2500 years after the Buddha ordained the first Indian monks and more than a millennium after the first Tibetan monks took their vows—when the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Thubten Gyatso (Ngag dbang blo bzang thub bstan rgya mtsho, 1876-1933), composed an illustrated commentary on the vinaya that reiterated, in words and pictures, the appropriate types and sizes of monastic robes, as prescribed by the Buddha. So important were the criteria of robe construction and the requirements of robe-wearing that it was believed that restoring proper robe regulations through reform could help protect Tibet from invading armies and prevent the Tibetan state from toppling.

* * *

The Thirteenth Dalai Lama has long been cast as an outlier. In many ways, this is because he was the first of the Dalai Lamas to engage foreign powers within the Asian colonial context. His four predecessors suffered early deaths, making regents the de facto rulers of Tibet for the better part of the nineteenth century—a period defined by the strengthening of the British Raj, and the jockeying for power and influence across the continent. Thubten Gyatso unwittingly found himself immersed in the Great Game, playing at European and imperial geopolitics for the first time. Of course, the Dalai Lamas, as heads of state and church, had long been engaged in a political relationship—variously defined as protectorate, suzerainty, patron-priest—with three dynasties of Chinese rulers, in addition to the occasional violent encounter with the Nepalese and the Sikhs. The incursions of the British into both the territory and the political affairs of Tibet

[7] See Melvyn C. Goldstein, "A Study of the 'ldab-ldob,'" *Central Asiatic Journal* Vol. 9, No. 2 (June 1964): 123-141.

during the reign of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, however, not only added another potential antagonist to the calculation, but it also forced Thubten Gyatso onto the world stage, as a politician and a pop-cultural enigma, subjected to the curious and critical observations of the entire Western World.

For centuries, Tibet had been largely closed off to Europeans, much to the frustration of travelers and diplomats alike. Then in 1904, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was driven by British invaders from his mountaintop Potala palace into his first exile, and when he arrived in Beijing in late September 1908, it was as if the god-king of Shangri-La had miraculously descended to earth. On August 2nd, the *New York Times* proclaimed the Living Buddha of Tibet, "magistrate of the most religious country in the world," had arrived in Peking: "Regarded with awe by the superstitious," it reported, "his actual presence in China has given rise to many ludicrous, irreverent incidents."[8] And when he fled into a second exile, this time escaping from the Chinese into the arms of his former invaders—the British—the world again watched. Unlike the pleasant disposition of the Panchen Lama, the *Manchester Guardian* reported on April 4, 1910, the Dalai Lama is "short and squat and there is nothing in his countenance to suggest the indwelling of a transcendent spirituality."[9] Despite the preoccupation in the press with Thubten Gyatso's supernatural being and the exotic pomp and personnel surrounding him, his tribulations of the first decade of the twentieth century revealed the Pope of Tibet to be quite human.

Within the Tibetan tradition, the Dalai Lama rules both religiously and politically (*chos srid*), the two aspects of his power, his training, and his authority exercised in balance. Within the realm of international geopolitics, however, the religious facet, his position as head lama and

[8] E.M. Paulson, "The Dalai Lama—The Living Buddha of Tibet," *The New York Times*, August 2, 1908. <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1908/08/02/106774818.html?pageNumber=38>
[9] "The Dalai Lama in Calcutta," *The Manchester Guardian*, Apr 4, 1910, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *The Guardian* and *The Observer*, 5.

bodhisattva-incarnate, was a novelty at best and a weakness at worst. During his life and since his death, Thubten Gyatso has been primarily judged as a secular politician, his attempts at political maneuvering and societal modernization analyzed and criticized within a modern, Western paradigm. What has subsequently emerged is a portrait of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama as a failed potentate and inept reformer, a portrait that largely ignores the other side of his role. Within this one-dimensional consideration of his reign, Thubten Gyatso has been misrepresented and misunderstood; he has therefore been characterized as an outlier because of this asymmetrical approach, which has focused on his position as the first Tibetan ruler to be immersed so fully in political projects in modern terms. In reality, however, his reign was not an aberration, but rather a typical one: in spite of the extraordinary circumstances in which he found himself entrenched and the experimental solutions he sought, Thubten Gyatso ultimately followed the traditional model of Buddhist kingship and fulfilled the conventional role of a Dalai Lama.

Thubten Gyatso did not write an autobiography, so his collected works and archive of correspondences offer our only glimpses into his heart and mind, his religious inclinations and political dealings. We are left with the conventional works of a high lama—commentaries and liturgies, monastic charters and renovation documents—as well as the writings of a political leader, which include official letters and decrees. The interpretation of these writings and the persona that has subsequently emerged has largely been left in the hands of others. About six years after his death in December 1933, Phurcog Thubten Jampal (Phur lcog thub bstan byams pa tshul khrims bstan 'dzin, b. 1907) completed the official biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, which naturally depicts him in extremely honorific terms—the many deeds of an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara in this world. It is a hagiography that is nonetheless inclusive of many of Thubten Gyatso's political activities, exiled peregrinations, and efforts toward

modernization. This work has been mostly inaccessible to a wider public due to the genre of sacred biography and the Tibetan language, which are barriers to comprehension for the majority of readers; even today, it still has not been translated into English. Another biography, published in 1945, became the principal source for information on the life and reign of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama: *Portrait of a Dalai Lama: The Life and Times of the Great Thirteenth* by the former officer of the British Raj, Sir Charles Bell (1870-1945). The impact of this book, moreover, positioned Bell as the driving force in constructing the image of Thubten Gyatso that privileged his role as politician and modernist. And so the evolving portrait of the Great Thirteenth (as well as his photographic portrait, as the case may be), originates with Bell.

This Englishman looms large in his version of the life of the Thirteenth—in truth, he seems to have exaggerated just how close and influential he was to Thubten Gyatso. As the Political Officer of Sikkim, Bell served as the Dalai Lama's primary handler and intermediary during his second exile in Darjeeling, seemingly acting as de facto advisor. About a decade later, in 1920, he traveled to Tibet and spent a year living among the Lhasa elite and consulting with the Dalai Lama as a special envoy. Based on his personal experiences with Thubten Gyatso in India and Tibet, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama* is part biography, part history, part ethnography, part travelogue—a hybrid genre than could only be produced by a former colonial officer. Bell writes, "Though I did not meet him face to face till he was thirty-four years old, I knew him far better than any other European did; indeed better than any Chinese or other Asiatic, except his own Tibetans and a few Mongols. I have therefore, however inadequately, written this biography." He goes on to explain, "My knowledge of him was derived mainly from numerous meetings and conversations. Usually he and I were alone in his room together. I therefore have to bring myself

frequently into the story."[10] And indeed, he does; Bell's opinions and biases are thinly veiled, and often explicit.

A reflection of Bell's own skills and interests, as well as his perceived role as advisor to Thubten Gyatso during a rather turbulent time in Tibetan government affairs, his biography focuses primarily on the political activities of the Dalai Lama. "It is necessary to write a great deal about politics in this life of the Dalai Lama, for he was developing into, and later on became, an absolute autocrat in both the religious and the secular administration of Tibet," Bell writes. "He was genuinely fond of political affairs, and having taken up and retained the secular government, in addition to the spiritual government of Tibet, he had to take every opportunity in studying them."[11] Overall, Bell is skeptical of the Dalai Lama's decisions to consolidate power, wresting it from the monastic elite and redistributing some to secular officials. His true feelings, however, come out in his chapter entitled "Opinions on His Rule." Bell claims, "The commonest criticism was that he should have confined himself to the purity of the spiritual rule, and appointed a Regent to hold the dirty reins of the worldly government."[12] The suggestion is that by taking up secular rule, the Dalai Lama's religious authority had become undermined, as if he was not fulfilling his duties as a Buddhist leader or governing as a Buddhist ruler as he sought to build the military, institute new taxes, and alter the composition of the government.

Although Bell's work includes much detail about the Buddhist culture of Tibet, he is unconcerned with the religious activities of the Dalai Lama, except to say that he was probably a better monk than politician. This narrative ignores the entirety of Thubten Gyatso's Buddhist actions at the time; he is only assessed as a political leader in modern terms, although Bell says it

[10] Charles Bell, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama: The Life and Times of the Great Thirteenth* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1987), 6.
[11] Ibid., 136.
[12] Ibid., 442.

would be unfair to compare him to an American or European ruler, "unless applied to the Europe of several hundred years ago, when it was still in the same stage of feudal development that Tibet is in at the present day."[13] He portrays the Dalai Lama as intelligent and inquisitive, but also fundamentally naive. To Bell, the religiosity of the Tibetan people and their leader is exotic, perhaps admirable, but it is also cause for them to be infantilized by the more civilized (and secular) powers of Asia. The message is that politics should be left to politicians, and the failure of the Dalai Lama to unite his people fully under his modern rule is what happens when a traditional theocrat tries to govern. Because the Dalai Lama was attempting to rule by incorporating Western standards, and his main biographer is judging his successes and failures by these criteria, this has become the predominant portrait of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, and the most prevalent mode of understanding his reign, even in modern scholarship. And we see how this ripples out from Bell, directly and indirectly.

The French philosopher Georges Bataille is the closest descendent of Bell, primarily because *Portrait* was the source for his case study on the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's rule and the "totalitarian monasticism" that impeded Thubten Gyatso's geopolitical success. "This book by Charles Bell is better than a biography or a history. It is not a composed work but a first-hand document, the disorganized chronicle of a witness involved in events, relating what happens to him as he goes along," Bataille writes. "This work is poorly done, but it is more lively and offers more than a formal study; it is a jumble, but no matter: We do not have a less systematic or more complete document on the civilization of Tibet."[14] First published in French in 1967, Bataille's *Accursed Share: Volume 1* utilizes Bell's documentation and assessment of Tibetan culture and the rule of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama to make his argument about the "accursed share," the

[13] Ibid., 444.
[14] Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: Volume 1* (New York: Zone Books, 1991), 94-5.

surplus of energy (in terms of human and material resources) that is cyclically expended on military and conquest, or on religion and other sumptuary outlets. Because Tibet has so long invested its excess energy (money, prestige, power, labor) to monasteries, when they were faced with invading armies, there was no military to defend the country.[15] Although the Dalai Lama's sovereignty was divine, it was powerless without an army—even "the most firmly established religious power is at the mercy of a real power based on armed force."[16]

Bataille focuses on the perceived political mistakes that left Tibet vulnerable to military invasion and the long history of prioritizing peaceful religion over military might that is a requisite for true sovereignty. He also emphasizes Thubten Gyatso's naiveté: "There was no tradition that could have guided him…But one would expect that such an education [as a monk] would be more apt to anesthetize than to arouse a feeling for the political necessities, especially in this part of the world that is inaccessible and deliberately closed to the world… [then he became] acquainted with the resources of advanced civilizations. Thus he ceased to be ignorant…More exactly, the religious and divine force that he constituted recognized its limits—and recognized that without a military force it could do nothing."[17] Religion is a vulnerability and religious power is essentially futile, which is why Bataille, echoing Bell, explains that the Dalai Lama had to abandon his spiritual authority in an attempt at secular rule, to protect his country and his constituents from further invasion. He also borrows the condescending tone of Bell, going so far as to emasculate the Tibetans—"Lamaism put everything into the contemplative life, the free play of the sensitive man in the world"[18]—to make his case for the superiority of modern, secular civilization, proven by the flailing attempts by a backwater ruler

[15] Ibid., 106.
[16] Ibid., 100.
[17] Ibid., 101.
[18] Ibid., 109.

to change his system. However problematic the lens through which Bell and Bataille examine the Dalai Lama might be, it formed the foundation for further studies framing Thubten Gyatso in purely political terms and established him as an outlier among Dalai Lamas—even Asian rulers—by alienating him in this paradigm.

There have been correctives to Bell and Bataille, whose work reeks of the colonial tropes that have justified the civilizing rule of Europeans over the ignorant natives. Also in 1967, a Tibetan voice finally entered the conversation on modern Tibetan history and the reign of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, adding a new and essential facet to the portrait of Thubten Gyatso. Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa's English-language volume, *Tibet: A Political History*, was the most comprehensive presentation of an indigenous view of Tibetan history in a western language. He expanded this work into a Tibetan-language history entitled, *One Hundred Thousand Moons: An Advanced Political History of Tibet*. The titles of his books express the political angle of his approach to Tibetan history. His is not a methodology born of academia, but rather inspired by his own lengthy experience in the governments of the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Dalai Lamas, both in Tibet and in exile. Beginning as a low-level treasury official at age twenty-three in 1930, Shakabpa was eventually appointed to lead the Tibet Trade Mission, "a delegation that traveled around the world with the objective of fortifying Tibet's international standing." His position was more about diplomacy than commerce, and by the late 1940s and early 1950s, in the face of increasing aggression from Communist China, Shakabpa was pressing claims of Tibet's independence and sovereignty abroad.[19]

As the situation with Mao began to boil over, Shakabpa became a principal diplomat in the service of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's government, acting as chief negotiator with the

[19] Derek F. Maher, "Translator's Preface," in *One Hundred Thousand Moons: An Advanced Political History of Tibet*, by Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2010), xii.

Chinese and ultimately laying the foundations for the government-in-exile ahead of Tenzin Gyatso's flight in 1959. During the early years of exile, he was instrumental in garnering international support, even presenting the Tibetan plight before the UN after the violent suppression of the Tibetan uprising by the Chinese troops. For Shakabpa, translator Derek Maher explains, "writing history was not a disinterested and merely academic enterprise; it was an expression of his deeply personal patriotism and a dimension of what he saw as his service to his people."[20] He was keenly aware of how the Chinese version of Sino-Tibetan history was wielded to justify their occupation of Tibet domestically and within the international community. Shakabpa, as an eyewitness and a historian, knew that Tibet had been forcibly incorporated into China under the threat of military annihilation and *One Hundred Thousand Moons* provides the historical evidence to prove it. "He wrote this book not as an objective neutral observer," Maher writes, "but as an engaged and motivated participant in the struggle for how Tibet will be depicted and understood in the international arena."[21] Although he offers a significant perspective on the history of Tibet, Shakabpa's agenda is clear, and the image of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama he presents is colored by this. And once again, because the author is interested explicitly in political history, Thubten Gyatso's religious activities as part of his reign are again cast aside in favor of his geopolitical endeavors, domestic policies, and modernizing reforms.

Over the last thirty years or so, Western scholars have produced a number of excellent works that position the Thirteenth Dalai Lama more accurately within the history of modern Tibet and the history of modern China. Melvyn Goldstein's *A History of Modern Tibet: 1913-1951*[22] mines the archive of official correspondence and policy of the Dalai Lama and his

[20] Ibid., xvii.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989).

government, as well as their exchanges with the governments of Qing China and the British Raj, painting a more nuanced picture of Thubten Gyatso's political affairs, both international and domestic. Gray Tuttle, in his *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*, truly rehabilitates the portrait of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama originating with Charles Bell; Thubten Gyatso was no naïf or ignorant backwater theocrat, but a shrewd nationalist who "had backed the wrong faction"[23] by relying on the Russians, and simply miscalculated the intentions of the British when help was needed to fend off the Chinese. In many ways, Tuttle restores the agency of the Dalai Lama as a floundering but proactive figure in foreign affairs. But above all, Tuttle characterizes Thubten Gyatso's domestic policies not as mere projects of modernization and the consolidation of autocratic power, but an attempt at establishing Tibet as a modern nation-state. "Here the catalogues of the advocates of Tibetan independence make easy the task of finding the outward signs of a modern nation-state," Tuttle explains, "although there are few signs that any real transformation of identity or consciousness (the hallmark of nationalism) took place."[24] The Thirteenth Dalai Lama thus could not unite the vast territory and diverse population of Tibet without a unifying, nationalist message to inspire the people (or an army to force them) to join together under a single ruler.

The archive documenting the political dealings of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, more accessible now than ever to contemporary scholars, allows for deeper investigations of the power dynamics at play during his rule. Yet, there still seems to be a proclivity toward his political rule more than his religious role, perhaps because of his attempt at a distinctly modern methodology, whether viewed as a reformer, a despot, or a nation-builder. Despite the rich archive reflecting

[23] Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 42.
[24] Ibid., 51.

the Dalai Lama's spiritual affairs, few scholars have focused on the Buddhist ritual activities he was employing parallel to his secular efforts. Although this is touched on in Tashi Tsering's essay on Thubten Gyatso in Martin Brauen's edited volume on the visual history of the Dalai Lamas,[25] Michael Akester's recent work on the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's renovation of the Jébumgang Temple in Lhasa is the first to explore the various methods of ritual Buddhist magic—border-taming geomancy, oracular prophecy, wrathful subjugation—that he engaged in, simultaneous to building his army, wresting political power from the *saṅgha*, and introducing a postal system. In *The Jébumgang Temple: Ritual Architecture and the Defense of the Modern Tibetan State*,[26] Akester highlights the revival and appropriation of these ancient rituals specifically wielded for the protection of the state and the deflection of invasion. His research is integral in establishing that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's religious and political roles were not divided along spiritual and secular lines—he was employing Buddhist instruments for the most fundamental of political purposes, just as a good Buddhist king and a typical Dalai Lama should. Although scholars have compartmentalized the two sides of Thubten Gyatso's authority, in reality he integrated them into a multifaceted program of reform for the benefit of state protection.

This dissertation seeks to offer a corrective to what has become the conventional portrait of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and the common approach to understanding his turbulent reign. While trying his hand at modern governance, he was also performing the rites and rituals of state protection Buddhism. Michael Akester employs the renovation of the Jébumgang and various related Nyingma ritual practices, all sponsored by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, to demonstrate Thubten Gyatso's brand of Buddhist magic. But these efforts were one small part of what I argue

[25] Tsering Shakya, "The Thirteenth Dalai Lama Thupten Gyatso," in *The Dalai Lamas: A Visual History*, ed. Martin Brauen (Chicago: Serindia Publications, Inc., 2005).
[26] Michael Akester, *The Jébumgung Temple: Ritual Architecture and the Defense of the Modern Tibetan State* (Schongau: Garuda Verlag, 2018).

was a larger program of not only temple renovation, but also monastic reformation to protect the nation, its borders and its government. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama's approach to Buddhist governance is thus exemplified by a short text entitled, *Moonlight Vanquishing the Darkness of Transgression* (hereafter *Moonlight Vanquishing*), which is buried in Volume Five of his collected works and overshadowed by his more important writings. In the extended title and the colophon, Thubten Gyatso describes this text as a commentary on Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra*, a condensed version of the Buddhist monastic code (*vinaya*). The Dalai Lama's commentary employs unprecedented illustrations as part of its commentarial apparatus—indeed, the text's abbreviated title is *'Dul ris*, meaning literally, "vinaya drawing." The author also states that he composed this work in connection with his sponsored renovation of Lhasa's Ramoche Temple, where the contents of the woodblock-printed *Moonlight Vanquishing* were reproduced with great precision in a large mural.

The Dalai Lama further characterizes his new text and mural as "beneficial to the restoration of the doctrine of the completely pure vinaya." His commentary on the vinaya, therefore, not only updates the monastic code for a modernizing monastic community (*saṅgha*), but additionally—and more importantly—it seeks to purify that community in order to preserve the nation of Tibet. Reforming or purifying the *saṅgha* is an action common to Buddhist kings, as an action that asserts his position as moral leader, but above all that serves as a means for protecting the state. When an impure *saṅgha*, in which monks are not keeping their vows, is supported by the king, the order of his realm is vulnerable. Thubten Gyatso amplifies the power of his monastic reformation by linking it to a renovation of Ramoche, a temple deeply connected to the myths of Buddhism's origins in Tibet and to the sacred geography that must be kept in balance for the borders to be protected. It has been a tradition of Dalai Lamas, particularly the Great Fifth, to restore the important geomantic temples—the so-called "border-taming

temples"—in order to protect the state. This text and the mural, as part of his political agenda, renovation projects, and religious reforms, are the nexus where the two poles of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's role meet: an arsenal that included Buddhist ritual magic and British artillery. And further, these efforts exemplify how Thubten Gyatso was no outlier in the history of Tibet, but rather a completely typical Dalai Lama and Buddhist ruler.

While the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's efforts to consolidate power and create a modern nation-state ultimately failed, his magic seemed to have worked, as Tibet was not invaded again during his reign. In an interesting twist of art historical fate, however, the true legacy of *Moonlight Vanquishing* is not the prevailing purity of the Tibetan Buddhist *saṅgha* and the subsequent impenetrability of Tibet's borders—the events of the 1950s proved that the magic was not enough. But over the next century, beyond Thubten Gyatso's urgent projects of renovation and reform for state protection, the murals multiplied in Central Tibet and the Western Himalayan region of Ladakh in India. From a singular work of timely political importance, his *'Dul ris* has developed into an important artistic guidebook and a series of artworks that together constitute a unique iconographic system for elucidating and teaching the rules of the vinaya.

Moonlight Vanquishing has received minimal scholarly attention, however. Elena De Rossi Filibeck identified and commented upon the text, together with one Ladakhi mural, in a short 2012 article,[27] but the *'Dul ris* has never been fully translated nor have the context of its creation and the structure of its contents been analyzed in depth. The related murals, furthermore, have neither been completely documented nor assessed collectively—indeed, a detail of the

[27] Elena De Rossi Filibeck, "From Text to Image: An Example from Lamayuru (Ladakh)." In *Tibetan Art Between Past and Present: Studies Dedicated to Luciano Petech*, ed. Elena De Rossi Filibeck (Pisa & Roma: Fabrizio Serra Editore, 2012), 117-34; see also her description of the architectural prescriptions in the *'Dul ris*: "Alcune illustrazioni riguardanti le regole d'architettura nei testi Tibetani del vinaya," in *Dimore umane, santuari divini: origini, sviluppo e diffusione dell'architettura tibetana*, eds. Paola Mortari Vergara and Gilles Béguin (Roma: Il bagatto, 1987), 99-110.

Potala mural is the only one of the Tibetan murals to be published, and in a Chinese-language book. Several of the Ladakhi murals, particularly the one at Sankar monastery in Leh, have been published since the 1970s. While Skorupski and Snellgrove include a photograph of the Sankar mural[28] in their seminal book, *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh: Volume 1, Central Ladakh*, the image is merely documentary—there is no discussion of the mural itself. Similarly, in *The World of Buddhism*, a detail of the mural at Sankar, as well as a couple pages from the nineteenth-century *'dul ris* of Ngawang Lobsang Tenpai Gyaltsen, are used as illustrations for Etienne Lamotte's chapter on the monastic code[29]; and Jose Cabezón and Penpa Dorjee employ a photograph of a mural at Sera monastery in South India to illustrate their appendix on ordination.[30] No scholar, however, has sought to investigate the origins of these murals in 1920s Central Tibet under the direction of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, nor the circumstances of their proliferation beginning in 1960s Ladakh under the influence the Bakula Rinpoche.

This dissertation is a project of discovery: revealing what this small text can tell us about the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's approach to Buddhist governance; unveiling how Thubten Gyatso drew upon conventional Tibetan literary and artistic genres to create a text powerful enough to purify the *saṅgha* for the benefit of the state; and ultimately uncovering the creation of an iconography of the Tibetan Buddhist monastic code, where there was none before. And in the process, we find that the heart of *Moonlight Vanquishing*—whether a visual commentary, an illustrated instructional manual, or an artist's guidebook—and its many related murals is the potent function of pictures to make these often obscure, yet foundational rules of the monastic

[28] David L Snellgrove and Tadeusz Skorupski. *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh*. Volumes1(Boulder, CO: Prajña Press, 1977), 111 fig. 107.
[29] Etienne Lamotte, "The Buddha, His Teachings and His Sangha," in The World of Buddhism, eds. Heinz Bechert and Richard Gombrich (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), 40 and 56.
[30] Jose Cabezón and Penpa Dorjee, Sera Monastery (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2019), 516.

code equally accessible to the elite and the every-monk, enabling the potential purification of the entirety of the monastic community.

* * *

This dissertation tells the story of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and his creation of an illustrated commentary on the monastic code and a related a mural, with purificatory powers to protect the state, in three parts. Part One contextualizes the composition of *Moonlight Vanquishing* within his turbulent reign, positioning it among the monastic reforms, temple renovations, and other ritual activities that together formed Thubten Gyatso's practice of state protection Buddhism. Chapter One presents examples from Buddhist and Tibetan history and literature that define the models of Buddhist kingship and Tibetan leadership the Dalai Lama not only looked to, but also sought to fulfill. Chief among the duties of these exemplars is temple construction and renovation, as well as maintaining a pure *saṅgha*. Chapter Two outlines the tempestuous events in the early part of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's reign, during which his power and the sovereignty of his state were repeatedly threatened by enemies, both foreign and domestic. Chapter Three examines the ways that Thubten Gyatso exercised the purification of the *saṅgha* and the renovation of temples as Buddhist technologies of statecraft, seeking to protect the borders of the state and his position within it. *Moonlight Vanquishing* and the murals at Ramoche and the Potala were integrally connected to these efforts, and exemplify the deliberate combining of political force and Buddhist magic that defines the Dalai Lama's governance.

Part Two examines *Moonlight Vanquishing* as a visual commentary on the monastic code. An otherwise conventional project for a Buddhist master, this work employs an innovative commentarial apparatus: illustrations, which not only illuminate the meaning of the text, but also allow its teachings to be transmitted through printed media and painted murals. Chapter Four considers Thubten Gyatso's *'Dul ris* within the genre of vinaya commentary and locates it within

the curriculum of vinaya study comprising traditional Tibetan Buddhist scholasticism. Chapter Five examines an illustrated text on the monastic code that predates the Dalai Lama's, serving as his model. He does not merely plagiarize but transforms the text into a text all his own; in this chapter I demonstrate how the Dalai Lama achieves this. Chapter Six focuses on the different ways the Dalai Lama constructs a visual commentary in his innovative text, incorporating canonical texts and hands-on knowledge into drawings that function not merely as illustrations, but scriptural annotations.

Part Three considers the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's *'Dul ris* as an instrument of visual transmission, utilizing both reproducible print media and public murals to express his interpretations of the monastic code. Chapter Seven considers *Moonlight Vanquishing* as an instructional manual (*dpe ris*) that prioritizes images over the text to make the Dalai Lama's interpretations more accessible and thus the purification of the entire *saṅgha* more feasible. And finally, Chapter Eight, treats the *'Dul ris* as an artist's manual, the circulation of which has enabled the multiplication of the murals across the Tibetan Buddhist world and into the present. This opens up the central question of whether or not the circulation of the text and the subsequent replication of its murals in fact constitute an iconography of the Tibetan Buddhist monastic code.

PART ONE

An Embodiment of Religious and Political Leadership: The Turbulent Times and Radical Reforms of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama

Hey! After I had gone away
Some nonsense-talking lamas
Said that Nechung, king of deeds,
Did not let me stay because I was too proud.
If he is a protector who purifies,
How could he permit those impure monks to stay,
Wandering all over, the known and unknown,
Selling tea, beer, and dried mutton?
Their lower robe hiked up, folded like palm leaves,
The worst carry weapons, knives, and clubs.
If they'd been expelled, it would be fine;
Between last year and this, there are more and more.
Because I lacked faith, pure as Venus,
Some say I was banished to far-off lands.
Why weren't impure beings banished
Like cows, female yaks, birds, and bugs?

~Gendun Chopel, writing about Labrang Monastery in 1926[31]

In October of 1906, Thubten Gyatso, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, arrived at Kumbum's Jampaling Monastery in Amdo, the northeast region of cultural Tibet. More than two years before, he had fled Lhasa to escape British troops under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Francis Younghusband. Mongolia, a Tibetan Buddhist refuge to the north, was his first home in exile. While he had been received by lay and ordained people of both high and low status with the pomp and worship befitting his status, Jetsun Dampa Hotoktu, the chief lama of Mongolia, was not pleased to be overshadowed. He was unhappy that the Mongolian people revered the

[31] Gendun Chopel, "Poem 31," trans. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. in *In the Forest of Faded Wisdom: 104 Poems by Gendun Chopel*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 65.

Dalai Lama more than him, apparently leading to a dispute over the height of their respective thrones.[32] Overcome with jealousy, "he smoked in the Dalai Lama's presence and failed to display the proper respect. Sometimes, he would take some of his young attendants and many hunting dogs around the Dalai Lama's residence, creating a tremendous clamor."[33] According to Sir Charles Bell, friend and biographer of Thubten Gyatso, "the Mongol Holiness habitually drank wine, and drank heavily; he smoked, even in the presence of the Dalai Lama, and he had married a wife, three heavy sins for a monk, especially one of the reformed [Geluk] sect. Indeed, a Russian who knew him told [Bell] that [the Jetsun Dampa] would frequently be drunk and incapable in public places."[34] So offensive was the Jetsun Dampa's behavior that the Dalai Lama and his entourage relocated to a different monastery, his anger toward the Mongolian lama causing him serious illness. Thubten Gyatso had to be begged not to criticize the disgraceful lama in a report to the Chinese emperor, a show of his own authority that would have brought shame upon the people of Mongolia.[35]

When he finally left Mongolia for Amdo, having been petitioned by his ministers to return to Tibet, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama must have been relieved to be exiting such a fraught situation and returning to friendlier domains. An agreement had been reached with the British in Lhasa, but Thubten Gyatso was nonetheless met by Chinese officials ordering him, on behalf of the Qing emperor, to remain at Jampaling Monastery in Kumbum.[36] In the midst of this political crisis in which the Dalai Lama was forced to reconsider his diplomatic strategy vis-à-vis China—

[32] Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 48.
[33] Tsepon Wangchuk Deden Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons: An Advanced Political History of Tibet*, trans. and ed. Derek F. Maher (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2010), 686.
[34] Charles Bell, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama: The Life and Times of the Great Thirteenth* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1987), 76.
[35] Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons,* 687.
[36] Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet,* 48.

the very government that had recently deposed him while exiled—Thubten Gyatso found himself confronting a different kind of trouble. Monastic discipline at Jampaling had become lax, causing the community to fall "into moral decay."[37] Corruption and misconduct had become pervasive across Tibetan monasteries: monks were breaking their vows by drinking, smoking, gambling, having sex, and even loansharking.[38]

Restoring discipline to the monastic order had been a priority for the Thirteenth Dalai Lama since he officially came to power in 1895 at the age of nineteen. On the occasion of the completion of his religious studies and his own full ordination as a monk, Thubten Gyatso issued a five-point decree, which stated that "the education and discipline of the monks of all schools…must be kept pure."[39] Now here, at the Kumbum monastery, marking the very birthplace of Tsong kha pa, famed founder of the Dalai Lama's Geluk sect and noted for his adherence to the monastic code, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had discovered a dire decline in discipline. While he could not assert his religious authority in Mongolia, the community at Jampaling was well within his domain, and so Thubten Gyatso set out to reform it, "insisting on enforcing strict monastic discipline, expelling particularly wayward monks and punishing many others."[40] He thus replaced the current abbot and several other leaders with a more conservative regime. The institutional changes he implemented were not readily accepted by the monks of Jampaling, but ultimately the Dalai Lama succeeded in purifying their community.[41]

Nearly seventy years later, the Tibetan historian Tsepon Shakabpa described the improved atmosphere at Kumbum's Jampaling Monastery to be the result of the Thirteenth Dalai

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[37] Gyalo Thondup and Anne F. Thurston, *The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong: The Untold Story of My Struggle for Tibet* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2015), 7.
[38] Ibid.
[39] Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons,* 635.
[40] Thondup and Thurston, *The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong,* 7.
[41] Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons,* 703.

Lama's "inexpressible kindness."[42] Considered within the context of his political predicament and the religious reforms he enacted before, during, and after his time in Amdo, however, Thubten Gyatso's actions at Jampaling are in fact less altruistic and more pragmatic. Purifying the monastic community, specifically in Kumbum and generally throughout Tibet, was both a reaction to and a defense against the foreign threats to Tibet and his position as its religious and political leader. By 1906, the Dalai Lama had already survived an assassination attempt, narrowly escaped a British military invasion, and endured more than two years of exile as a deposed leader. According to traditional notions of Buddhist kingship, there is a symbiotic relationship between a ruler and the monastic community, as the merit produced by patronage of the oath-keeping ordained assures order in society and the security of the ruler's position. And as a monk himself, the Dalai Lama knew the monastic code well. If the monastic recipients of offerings do not keep their vows, the donations do not produce the karmic fruits that benefit the donors, with particularly negative ramifications for the king and the state. At his two primary havens while a political refugee—Mongolia and Amdo—the Dalai Lama discovered a corrupt spiritual leader and a corrupted religious institution. He likely concluded that the state of the Tibetan Buddhist *saṅgha* was a cause of his plight and monastic reform was a key to its resolution.

But the years in Mongolia and Amdo were only the beginning of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's turbulent reign, as he was thrust, ill-prepared, into the imperialist game being played between China, Russia, and Britain. Over the next seven years, he would make alliances with the British and enemies with China, suffering another armed invasion and a second exile, this time to British India. These events exposed Tibet's geopolitical and defense weaknesses. When Thubten

[42] Ibid.

Gyatso finally returned to Lhasa for good in 1913, he embraced international diplomacy and modernization as tools to ensure Tibet's independence and to protect his position, amid both external and internal threats. As the Dalai Lama, his leadership was understood to be a union of two traditions (*lugs gnyis*)—the political (*srid*) and the spiritual (*chos*)—and thus his strategy for securing borders and sovereignty was naturally two pronged. In this chapter, I demonstrate how the unique circumstances of twentieth-century Tibet, moreover, necessitated a new approach where the political did not merely serve the religious, but functioned as its parallel, with the shared goal of protecting the spiritual and cultural integrity of Tibet.

Drawing on Buddhist models of kingship and Tibetan traditions of state protection, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama strove to secure his domain through extensive temple renovation and geomantic temple construction. Central to the religious facet of his political agenda of bringing peace and stability to Tibet was the purification of the monastic community, which he sought to achieve through broad-sweeping monastic reforms, as well as the composition and dissemination of an illustrated commentary on the monastic code entitled, *Moonlight Vanquishing the Darkness of Transgression*. The transformation of this text into a mural as part of the Dalai Lama's renovation of the imperial-era Ramoche Temple, moreover, united his programs of *saṅgha* purification and temple renovation in one potent project, one that was then replicated at the Potala Palace. These traditional methods rooted in ancient paradigms of Buddhist statecraft employed by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama complemented his reforms and development plans that had definitively secular aims. He implemented these in order to create a stable and secure Tibet that could participate more fully in international affairs, rather than becoming a pawn manipulated by other powers.

I begin in Chapter One by presenting the models of Buddhist kingship portrayed in Indian scriptures, royal advice texts, and Tibetan religious history that infuse the position of the Dalai Lama and his brand of state-protection Buddhism. I situate him within a long tradition of state protection activities by Buddhist rulers across Asia and especially within the Tibetan milieu. While he clearly looked to the imperial-period rituals of geomancy and demon-taming, I show how Thubten Gyatso shifted away from Nyingma-influenced practices toward more conventional methods that evoke those of his predecessors, especially the Great Fifth Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso (Ngag dbang blo bzang rgya mtsho, 1617-1682). To illuminate the political context that necessitated the composition of *Moonlight Vanquishin2g* and the creation of its related mural around 1920, in Chapter Two I outline the events in the turbulent reign of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, during which his power and the sovereignty of his state were repeatedly threatened by enemies, both beyond and within the borders of Tibet. Finally, in Chapter Three I consider how the purification of the *saṅgha* and the renovation of temples function as Buddhist technologies of statecraft, as part of the different programs that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama used to construct his vision of a modern Tibetan state and his autocratic rule over it.

CHAPTER ONE
Theories and Models of Buddhist Kingship

From its origins, Buddhism has had a complex, yet integral relationship to kingship, and by extension to politics and statecraft. After his birth, Prince Siddhārtha, the son of a king, was prophesied to become a world-conquering, universal monarch (*cakravartin*) if he was to live the life of householder. Instead he renounced his existence as a prince and his future as a king, fulfilling the other part of the prophecy: if he lived the life of a holy man, he would become a buddha. Although the Buddha abandoned wealth for a spiritual life grounded in non-attachment and asceticism, canonical sources portray royal figures as playing prominent roles in the development of the early Indian Buddhist monastic community. King Bimbisāra of Magadha was an important follower and the first royal supporter of the Buddha—even before his enlightenment. The monarch first encountered him when Prince Siddhārtha had just left home; even then, Bimbisāra saw something special in the recent renunciant and offered half of his kingdom to Siddhārtha, who graciously refused the temptation of great power and wealth. When he returned to Magadha as Buddha, Bimbisāra became a disciple and patron of the monastic community, presenting them their first monastery at Veṇuvana in the capital, Rājagṛha. This city, and its Vulture Peak, was the site of many of the Buddha's sermons attended by Bimbisāra and his courtiers, who became stream-enterers upon hearing their first teaching.

King Prasenajit of Kośala, moreover, is perhaps most famous for sponsoring the battle of miracles at his capital, Śrāvasti, during which the Buddha famously defeated the *tīrthikas*. So dedicated was he to patronizing and protecting the *saṅgha* that Prasenajit came to exemplify the

ideal king across the Buddhist world. These ancient Indian rulers of the sūtras shaped the paradigm for Buddhist notions of kingship—the model of a good king and the ideal relationship between king and *saṅgha*, all of which is founded on the reciprocal connection between the lay and monastic communities. Monks and nuns in early Buddhism were entirely reliant upon lay support for their basic needs, particularly food, which was received as alms offered to the ordained. To give to the *saṅgha* was, and continues to be, more karmically beneficial than other good works because the monastic community is considered to be a most potent "field of merit."[43] It is incumbent upon monks and nuns to remain effective sources of merit by keeping their vows, thus upholding the implicit promise to their donors that their offerings will bear good karmic fruits.

Merit was not the only thing monks and nuns could provide the laity in exchange for offerings, however: in addition to giving teachings on the dharma, which are of great spiritual benefit to supporters, Buddhist monastics possessed ritual technologies that offered worldly benefits as well. Chanting certain prayers could magically protect against danger or prolong life; and for kings, such apotropaic powers could preserve the state, prevent natural disasters, and protect against invaders, making Buddhist monks particularly desirable allies. And yet reciprocally, kings not only had the power to ensure the prosperity of the monastic community by supporting practice, but their just and peaceful rule could also provide the circumstances for the propagation and preservation of the dharma. A ruler, therefore, had to fulfill his moral and religious obligations by giving to the Buddhist community—whether feasts, robes, gold, or monasteries—in order to accrue the merit to maintain his realm and his rule, whereas the *saṅgha* had to remain pure in order to continue to receive support from the laity, especially royalty.

[43] See John Strong, *Buddhisms: An Introduction* (London: OneWorld Publications, 2015), Ch. 6.1.1-5.

This responsibility of a monarch to protect and promote the monastic community, and his right to purify it and purge it of degenerates and heretics, is exemplified by King Aśoka, who ruled much of the Indian subcontinent in the third century BCE. The trove of tales surrounding Aśoka depict him as embodying the ideals of Buddhist kingship, characterizing him as the supreme wheel-turning monarch, a *cakravartin*. Showing true devotion and extreme generosity, he legendarily built eighty-four thousand stūpas to enshrine the Buddha's relics and drained his royal coffers to support the *saṅgha* in the famous *pañcavārṣika* ceremony.[44] The stories recorded in texts such as the *Aśokāvadāna*, the *Mahāvaṃsa*, and his royal edicts inscribed on stone pillars agree, however, that he also purified the monastic community, expelling non-Buddhists who had allegedly infiltrated the *saṅgha* and created a schism by promoting heretical teachings.[45] The so-called "schism edicts" corroborate legends that Aśoka purged the monastic community of members who caused discord, exacting punishment more severe than prescribed by the monastic code, despite the place of schism-making as one of the five acts of immediate retribution.[46]

According to Pāli traditions, it was King Aśoka who also convened the Third Council at Pāṭaliputra to resolve another potential schism—this one within the Sthavira school of Buddhism, between the Vibhajyavāda and the Sarvāstivāda[47]—and to purge the *saṅgha* of those monks who were heretics or who had unorthodox views. Aśoka rules in favor of Vibhajyavāda orthodoxy, which he promotes by sending monks of this order to Sri Lanka and southeast Asia to establish new monastic communities which eventually gave rise to the Theravāda tradition; meanwhile the king ejected monks of the dissident school from the *saṅgha*. The venerable monk

[44] See Max Deeg, "Origins and Development of the Buddhist Pañcavārṣika-Part I: India and Central Asia," *Nagoya Studies in Indian Culture and Buddhism: Saṃbhāṣā* (July 1995): 67-90.
[45] Strong, *Buddhisms*, 169-70; M.B. Voyce, "The King's Enforcement of the Vinaya Pitaka: The Purification of the Saṅgha under Aśoka (c. BC 269-232)," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* Vol. 37, No. 1 (1985): 55-6.
[46] Voyce, "The King's Enforcement," 56.
[47] Strong, *Buddhisms*, 204.

Moggaliputta Tissa, then wrote a book refuting the Sarvāstivādins.[48] Regardless of what is historical fact or mythic fiction, the legends of King Aśoka circulated around the Buddhist world casting him as the archetypal Buddhist ruler with his building activities, along with the patronage (and purification) of the *saṅgha*, as tantamount to this ideal. So we find kings and emperors across Asia imitating the model of Aśoka and invoking the language of the *cakravartin* or the *dharmarājā*, the protectors of Buddhism and defenders of the *saṅgha*, in their edicts, titles, and panegyrics.

We find the ideal qualities of a Buddhist monarch and the perfectly balanced relationship between king and *saṅgha* not only embodied in the exemplary royal patrons of the Buddha and the legendary King Aśoka, as expressed across canonical sources including both Pāli and Mahāyāna sūtras,[49] but in verse treatises on ethics (*nītiśāstra*) intended for kings as well.[50] Nāgārjuna, the great Buddhist philosopher of the second century CE, wrote three *nīti* works, as well as two epistles addressed to kings that echo this corpus on Buddhist ethics. *Precious Garland (Ratnavālī)* is his poetic advice text for a monarch, likely his Śātavāhana patron Gautamīputra,[51] that explains proper conduct by laypeople, especially those with political power. Around the same time in northern India, Mātṛceṭa, one of the great Sanskrit poets of the Buddhist tradition, also wrote a poem counseling the great Buddhist king, Kāṇiṣka, ruler of the Kushans. Like *nīti* literature and Buddhist canonical works, these two poems to royal patrons name kingly

[48] Ibid., 170, 204,
[49] For example: from the Pāli canon, *Sutta on Beginnings (Agañña Sutta)* and *Sutta of the Lion's Roar (Cakkavatti Sīhnāda Sutta)*; and from the Mahāyāna canon, *Sūtra on the Revelations of the Bodhisattva Truth-teller (Satyakavyākaraṇa Sūtra)*, *Sūtra Establishing Recollection (Smṛtyupasthāna Sūtra)*, and *Sūtra of the Perfect Golden Light (Suvarṇaprabhāsottama Sūtra)*. Listed in Cabezón, "Appendix 1," 252-3.
[50] See Cabezón's "Appendix 1," in *The Just King: The Tibetan Buddhist Classic on Leading an Ethical Life*, Jamgön Mipham, trans. José Ignacio Cabezón (Boulder, CO: Snow Lion, 2017), 243-67.
[51] Jeffrey Hopkins, trans. and ed., *Nāgārjuna's Precious Garland*: *Buddhist Advice for Living and Liberation* (Ithaca, NY & Boulder, CO: Snow Lion Publications, 2007), 22, see note C. See also Joseph Walser, "Nagarjuna and the Ratnavali. New Ways to Date an Old Philosopher," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* Vol. 25, No. 1-2 (2002): 209-62.

virtues and vices that largely reflect Indian morals with a Buddhist tilt. The authors do not merely sketch out an abstract ideal, however; they prescribe real actions expected of their kings.

Several central themes emerge from these texts, resonating with the larger genre to which they belong. First and foremost, an ideal monarch lives virtuously and rules compassionately, studying and abiding by the Buddha's teachings. As such, a king lives and leads by example, and thus the quality of his behavior affects the nature of the society he governs: "If you abide by good works," Mātṛceṭa writes, "all the people, whose lives depend upon you, / will follow you / as a flock follows its leader,"[52] and vice versa. It is not enough that a monarch be virtuous himself, however, he must also, according to Mātṛceṭa, "See to it that everyone fulfills his own dharma, / and that all live according to the law."[53] A good ruler, therefore, has the responsibility to be righteous, and he has the right to ensure that his people are acting virtuously as well. The king's duty to the monastic community, moreover, involved supporting the *saṅgha* for the meritorious benefits it offers his subjects and for the ultimate benefit of preserving the dharma; in addition, he was obligated to ensure that the *saṅgha* was remaining a pure field of merit and intervening if it was not. According to traditional conceptions of kingship in India (*rājādharma*), as exemplified by King Aśoka, it was the responsibility of the ruler to compel his people to fulfill their respective duties and this meant enforcing the laws of various groups, including the vinaya of the Buddhist *saṅgha*.[54]

Due to a king's position as head of state, holder of vast wealth, and exemplar of Buddhist piety, it is his moral and religious imperative to be the chief merit-maker through his patronage

[52] Mātṛceṭa, *Letter to Kāṇiṣka (Kāṇiṣkalekha)*, trans. Michael Hahn, in *Norton Anthology of World Religions: Buddhism*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (New York & London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2015), 390. See also Mātṛceṭa, *Invitation to Enlightenment: Letter to the Great King Kaniṣka by Mātṛceṭa and Letter to a Disciple Candragomin*, trans. Michael Hahn (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1999).
[53] Mātṛceṭa, *Letter to Kāṇiṣka,* 390.
[54] Voyce, "The King's Enforcement," 38.

of Buddhism and protection of the dharma. Nāgārjuna and Mātṛceṭa, therefore, both emphasize such meritorious activities—especially major artistic and architectural commissions, the renovation and preservation of old temples, as well as the support of the monastic community—as central to royal policy. "You should respectfully and extensively construct / Images of Buddha, monuments (i.e. stūpas), and temples…You should sustain with all endeavor / The excellent doctrine and the communities / Of monastics."[55] In this view, building and maintaining the infrastructure of Buddhist practice is thus the financial obligation, the ethical responsibility, and the religious requirement specifically of a ruler, rather than any other lay person of means.

In nineteenth-century Tibet, nearly two thousand years after the authors of the Buddhist canon cast the kings Prasenajit, Bimbisāra, and Aśoka as the ideal Buddhist monarchs, and a millennium and a half after Nāgārjuna and Mātṛceṭa wrote poems to their royal patrons, the eastern Tibetan polymath Jamgön Mipham (1846-1912) composed a treatise on ethics for his king, Ngawang Jamphel Rinchen (1850-1920) of Dege. Drawing from the narratives works, scholastic treatises, and scriptures of the Mahāyāna Buddhist canon, as well as the indigenous *nitīśāstras* of Tibetan authors, Mipham's *Treatise on Ethics for Kings: An Ornament for Rulers* eruditely synthesizes the vast corpus of political and religious literature that preceded him, and contributes much to the genre of ethical treatises in Tibet.[56]

We do not know whether the Thirteenth Dalai Lama read Mipham's *Ornament for Rulers*, or any of the Geluk treatises that were written in response to the advent of the Ganden Phodrang government and the strengthened role of the Dalai Lama as both religious and political ruler. But, as José Cabezón comments, "Mipham's synthesis of the Buddhist sūtra literature provides us

[55] Nāgārjuna, *Precious Garland*, trans. Jeffrey Hopkins, in *Nāgārjuna's* Precious Garland: *Buddhist Advice for Living and Liberation*, ed. Jeffrey Hopkins (Ithaca, NY & Boulder, CO: Snow Lion Publications, 2007), 124-5, verses 231, 233.
[56] See Cabezón, "Appendix 1," especially pgs. 251-7, 263-7.

with an unparalleled description of kingship and statecraft in exoteric Mahāyāna Buddhism;"[57] and Mipham reports in his colophon to have "consulted the various *nitīśāstras* composed by Indian and Tibetan sages."[58] We can therefore understand *Ornament for Rulers* as representative of the ideas and ideals that circulated and took root in the minds of Tibetan rulers, including its most powerful, the Dalai Lama. The three scriptures Mipham directly comments upon, the several he explicitly cites—including the two poetic epistles by Nāgārjuna and Mātṛceṭa—and the many diverse texts that go unnamed but filter into his work osmotically, represent the foundational texts on kingship and political ethics that permeated Tibetan culture and helped to shape indigenous models of the ideal ruler up to the turn of the twentieth century.

As a slightly older contemporary of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, moreover, Mipham had access to a similar corpus of religious and secular literature as Thubten Gyatso; thus, their concepts of a perfect Buddhist ruler would be born of the same matrix or imaginary. Furthermore, although *Ornament for Rulers* was commissioned by the King of Dege, it is not addressed only to him, nor is it intended for monarchs alone. In Mipham's words, his treatise is for "Everyone down to the heads of cities and households— / even if they are not born into the aristocracy," and "Even those who live alone without companions."[59] The year that he wrote it, 1895, was also the year in which the Thirteenth Dalai Lama officially came to power; one cannot help but wonder, therefore, if Mipham composed *Ornament for Rulers* with him somehow in mind.

[57] Cabezón, "Appendix 1," 253.
[58] Jamgön Mipham, *Treatise on Ethics for Kings: An Ornament for Rulers*, trans. José Ignacio Cabezón, in *The Just King: The Tibetan Buddhist Classic on Leading an Ethical Life*, ed. José Ignacio Cabezón (Boulder, CO: Snow Lion, 2017), 240.
[59] Ibid., 232.

It is thus useful to examine a few key themes in Mipham's treatise that are especially salient to the model of Buddhist rule that explain and justify the actions undertaken by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama to combat threats to his position and his state. Summarizing the *Sūtra of the Perfect Golden Light (Suvarṇaprabhāsottama Sūtra)*, Mipham explains that kings are considered "sons of gods" because the world-protecting deities bless monarchs who protect their kingdom through destroying evil and upholding virtue. This section illuminates the interdependence between the ethical responsibilities of the king and the state of his kingdom, presented it as being determined by the support of the gods. When a ruler shirks his obligation to "stop the flourishing of sinners," the gods are unhappy and "cause horrible disasters: untimely wind and rain, / wars with opponents, manifold illnesses, / inauspicious astrological events, and so forth."[60] The ensuing fear and suffering extends beyond the human realm and begins to impact the gods and demi-gods, causing them to stop supporting the ruler: "they abandon that evil king and his kingdom quickly collapses."[61] When a monarch rules righteously, on the other hand, inciting sentient beings to do good, turning them away from evil, and suitably punishing evildoers, then "many exceedingly wonderful things occur in that kingdom, / which are the opposite of the problems mentioned earlier."[62] In order to prevent natural disasters, famine, invasion, and war, a king must therefore not only be good himself but also work to ensure that his subjects are virtuous. When terrible things do happen, it is a reflection of the moral state of affairs, and it is thus the responsibility of a good ruler to implement changes for the benefit of his people.

[60] Mipham, *Ornament for Rulers*, 84.
[61] Ibid., 85.
[62] Ibid., 86.

To protect the kingdom from misfortune, in the next chapters Mipham prescribes meritorious actions, religious practices, and ethical cultivation. "Rulers who wish to protect their own state," he advises, "must first protect themselves."[63] Methods for achieving this include protecting the body "through effective rituals / like the practices of making precious medicines and spells" and making merit, through which wishes are fulfilled and "all possible glory" is effortlessly achieved.[64] Merit is further increased through spiritual cultivation and the study of Buddhist scriptures,[65] in addition to ethical deeds. Rulers who, "even when they're powerful, / do not torment enemies, / bring stability to their kingdoms and unite all their lands / through the power of their merit."[66] Merit is thus key to protecting the person of the king and also the body of his kingdom. And so Mipham says, echoing Nāgārjuna, the king builds temples, "constructs images of the three jewels, / and establishes traditions of scholarship and practice…In that country, which is constant in merit making, / goodness and virtue increase in abundance."[67] Temple construction, image-making, and *saṅgha* support are, once again, not only central to the ethical responsibilities of a king, but also essential to the maintenance of happy and stable kingdom. It is not surprising, therefore, to find a donative inscription on the base of a fifteenth-century sculpture of the buddha Amitābha from Tibet which explains that a government minister commissioned the image so that all "frontier wars be averted and all beings attain buddhahood."[68]

Becoming a righteous king and maintaining a righteous kingdom, Mipham explains in subsequent chapters, is based on following and enforcing the ten virtues, which include not

[63] Ibid., 133.
[64] Ibid., 134.
[65] Ibid., 134-5.
[66] Ibid., 154.
[67] Ibid., 162.
[68] This gilt copper Amitābha is in the collection of the Freer|Sackler, S2014.20.

killing, stealing, or lying, and lastly, embracing the "right view" or the belief in the law of karma that is "the basis of the whole Dharma."[69] It is therefore the dual responsibility of the ruler to "encourage the worship of the three jewels"[70] and to hold violators of the moral code legally accountable,[71] balancing temporal and religious law. A monarch's authority over the monastic community is more complicated than his rule over the laity, however; Mipham notes that in the sūtras, if a king punishes followers of the Buddha, the kingdom's merit diminishes, causing destruction. But in this, the degenerate age, "there are many monks who are exceedingly unruly. / When they cannot be disciplined / through the *saṅgha* council's religious procedures, / then the king needs to do this."[72] Mipham validates the good king's right to assert his moral and legal authority over the monastic community when required, specifically binding "them to the law of the Dharma / so that the Buddha's teachings won't degenerate."[73]

Purifying the *saṅgha* was not only necessitated by the decline of the dharma, which has caused monks and nuns to be more susceptible to downfall than their ancient Indian forebears; it was also necessary to slow further degeneration. The religious and political ramifications of the relationship between king and *saṅgha* are made clear by Mipham: the monarch's obligatory support and protection of the monastic community produces the merit that sustains the stability of the kingdom, but if the *saṅgha* does not remain pure and the king does not intervene, then the kingdom is imperiled, offerings are impotent, and the dharma is further threatened. This logic underlies the actions undertaken by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama to reform the monastic

[69] Mipham, *Ornament for Rulers*, 180.
[70] Ibid., 182.
[71] Ibid., 183.
[72] Ibid., 192.
[73] Ibid., 193.

community during his reign, as he sought to rectify the political instability of the twentieth century and preserve the security of his state—and his position as its head.

Foundations and Methods of State-Protection Buddhism

Supporting the monastic community and building temples or stūpas is not always about merit, however; these activities can wield Buddhist ritual magic for state protection, with monks as the magicians. The sūtras are replete with stories of accomplished Buddhist monks displaying superhuman abilities (*siddhi*), such as flying. The Buddha, whose own miraculous displays figure prominently in the scriptures, criticized anyone who used these techniques to convert followers through spectacle rather than instruction, and forbade his followers from performing such actions. Rituals that could bring rain, longevity, and protection, as mentioned above, were commonly carried out by members of the *saṅgha* in exchange for offerings. Mahāyāna sutras, moreover, offered novel ritual technologies that were not only beneficial to the individual but were also capable of affecting the state. Kings and emperors took note, and many important relationships between rulers and Buddhist masters developed, bringing spiritual and worldly powers together. This was especially significant in the Chinese court, across many dynasties until the last, whose connection to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama is central to this project.

Amoghavajra (705-774) was a particularly significant and influential Buddhist monk with strong connections to the Chinese court during the Tang dynasty. A Central Asian émigré, Amoghavajra was primarily a translator of scriptures under imperial patronage. During the An Lushan Rebellion, when a general declared himself emperor of a rival dynasty, Amoghavajra came to the aid of the Tang ruler and performed a *homa* or oblation ritual invoking the wrathful guardian deity, Acala. Most importantly, he performed *abhiṣeka* for the emperor, Suzong, consecrating him as a *cakravartin* and validating his reign with Buddhist ritual magic. Following

Suzong's death, Amoghavajra became the abhiṣeka guru of his successor, Daizong, thus solidifying his place as Buddhist ritual master of the imperial court.[74] As such, he was "often called upon to control the weather and to nullify the effects of comets and unfavorable asterisms. He regularly prayed for the prolongation of the emperor's life and performed rites for the protection of the state and for the salvation of the imperial ancestors."[75]

Among Amoghavajra's many contributions to the Chinese Buddhist canon was his new recension of a fifth-century apocryphal Chinese scripture entitled, the *Prajñapāramitā Scripture for Humane Kings who Wish to Protect their States (Renwang huguo borobolomi jing).* In the text, sixteen kings of ancient India beseech the Buddha for guidance to advise them how to protect their kingdoms and constituents in the degenerate age of the dharma. They are told that if unfortunate events such as the seven calamities (comets, floods, bandits, invasion, etc.) occur, the king must "invite one hundred monks to chant the sūtra and he is to engage in an ostentatious display of worship of the scripture and the monks who expound it."[76] This would also involve setting up one hundred images of buddhas and bodhisattvas in a hall where the hundred monks would sit.

Promising to protect the state from invading armies and natural disasters, this ritual, called the "*Renwang* Assembly of One-Hundred Seats," was held in China, Japan, and Korea from the late sixth century onward.[77] Amoghavajra's recension of the *Scripture for Humane Kings* and the rituals prescribed therein were foundational to what has been termed "state-protection Buddhism" (Ch. *huguo fojiao*), which reflects the socio-political role Buddhism

[74] Charles D. Orzech, "Metaphor Translation, and the Construction of Kingship in the Scripture for Humane Kings and the Mahāmāyūrī Vidyārājñī Sūtra," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* Vol. 13 (2002): 72.
[75] Ibid., 73.
[76] Ibid., 65.
[77] "huguo fojiao," in *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. and Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 363.

played in East Asia to safeguard the state against both natural and man-made disasters. Although this precise ceremony was not practiced in Tibet, other rituals, especially those rooted in tantric systems, were performed for the longevity of rulers such as the Dalai Lamas, and for the protection of the state from invaders, calamities, and even hostile, trouble-making spirits. The construction of specially-empowered stūpas and geomantic temples was another essential instrument of state-protection Buddhism in Tibet and across Asia.

The power of sound and the act of recitation are fundamental to many Buddhist practices which utilize potent utterances known as mantras and *dharāṇīs*. Buddhist rituals of state protection also harness the power of written *dharāṇīs*—they are as potent in physical form as they are spoken aloud. In Mahāyāna Buddhist traditions, the words of sūtras are considered relics of the Buddha's speech and thus written or printed copies of scriptures are functionally equivalent to relics in the consecration of stūpas.[78] *Dharāṇīs* inscribed on paper or on the monument itself act as apotropaic talismans and similarly infuse stūpas with power. As we have seen, building stūpas, temples, and monasteries was considered to be critical to Buddhist kingship, as a method for making the vast amounts of merit required to support the stability and safety of a king's realm. The *Great Dharāṇī on Immaculately Pure Light (Wugou jingguang da tuoluoni jing)*, a text translated from Sanskrit into Chinese in 704, adds a different dimension to the political utility of stūpa construction: it explains that *dharāṇī*-empowered stūpas built by rulers can protect their countries.

While this work presents six *dharāṇīs* that are useful to both lay and ordained Buddhists, the text explains that when the first *dharāṇī* is copied thousands of times and strips of paper with

[78] See Gregory Schopen, "The Phrase 'sa pṛthivīpradeśaś caityabhūto bhavet' in the Vajracchedikā: Notes on the Cult of the Book in Mahāyāna," *Indo-Iranian Journal* Vol. 17, No. 3/4 (Nov/Dec 1975): 147-81; and Yael Bentor, "On the Indian Origins of the Tibetan Practice of Depositing Relics and Dhâraṇîs in Stûpas and Images," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* Vol. 115, No. 2 (April-June 1995): 248-261.

the *dharāṇī* are placed within a stūpa, the efficacious utterance invokes the power of the protector gods of Buddhism at the site of the structure.[79] "The place where the stūpa has been established will not be afflicted with any demons, goblins, or ghosts; nor wars, fires, floods, hails, famines, deaths, nightmares, or accidents. When a disaster happens in that country a sign will appear: the stūpa will exhibit a divine transformation and radiate a great flame or light will cause all those evils and inauspicious things to be destroyed completely."[80] Not only does this stūpa itself have the power to destroy enemy armies, but it also compels the protector gods to guard the whole country—the men, women, and domestic animals—from plague, tyranny, feuds, and acts against the dharma.[81] This passage promising peace, prosperity, and protection to the state that follows its ritual instructions contributed to the impact of this text across East Asia, and the consequent enshrining of its *dharāṇīs* in numerous stūpas by "monks, kings, aristocrats, and warlords in Silla Korea, Tang China, and Nara Japan during the eighth century,"[82] and beyond.

The widespread practice of building stūpas and temples to appease the gods and impel them to act in favor of a ruler's realm is rooted in Indian scriptural sources and connected to the Indian pantheon of worldly gods and demi-gods, such as the Four Guardian Kings, who were integrated into indigenous systems wherever Buddhism spread. As discussed above, the *Sūtra of the Perfect Golden Light,* commented upon by Mipham in nineteenth-century Tibet,[83] connects the stability or instability of a kingdom to the whether or not the gods who control worldly

[79] Richard D. McBride III, "Practical Buddhist Thaumaturgy: The *Great Dharāṇī on Immaculately Pure Light (Wugou jingguang da tuoluoni jing)* in Medieval Sinitic Buddhism," *Journal of Korean Religions* Vol. 2, No. 1 (March 2011): 41-2.
[80] *Great Dharāṇī on Immaculately Pure Light (Wugou jingguang da tuoluoni jing),* Taishō 1024, 19.718c-719a, trans. Richard D. McBride III, "Practical Buddhist Thaumaturgy: The *Great Dharāṇī on Immaculately Pure Light (Wugou jingguang da tuoluoni jing)* in Medieval Sinitic Buddhism," *Journal of Korean Religions* Vol. 2, No. 1 (March 2011): 42.
[81] Ibid.
[82] McBride, "Practical Buddhist Thaumaturgy," 61.
[83] Mipham, *Ornament for Rulers*, 84-5.

affairs are pleased. The *Great Dharāṇī on Immaculately Pure Light* clearly establishes that building stūpas filled with *dharāṇīs* is an effective pious act to compel divine protection. However, across Asia numerous other kinds of sacred monuments dedicated to Buddhist guardian deities were also erected to protect the state. The relationship between Buddhism and the royal courts of East Asia, and thus the utility of state-protection Buddhism, waxed and waned over the centuries; in Tibet, however, religion and politics remained tightly entwined, even as the Thirteenth Dalai Lama attempted to loosen them. Buddhist ritual was therefore fundamental to—even inseparable from—statecraft and state protection in Tibet, more profoundly and profusely than in the traditions of her eastern neighbors. The Tibetan model of the ideal ruler is, moreover, inherently Buddhist, his actions dedicated to and inspired by the dharma.

The Archetype of the Tibetan Religious King

In Tibet, indigenous notions of Buddhist kingship are shaped by the legends of the religious kings who introduced and established Buddhism in the seventh through ninth centuries. The models embodied by these early kings were propagated in traditional sources and persisted in the Tibetan popular imagination through the centuries, even into the reign of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. And temple-building activities are essential to these narratives of ideal rulers and the origins of Buddhism in Tibet. Rather than pleasing the gods of the Indian Buddhist pantheon, the construction of many of these sacred edifices was instead intended to repress the local deities of Tibet, who were angered by the introduction of a new rival religious tradition. The *Pillar Testament (Kha khol ma)*—a composite text attributed to the first religious king of the early imperial period, Songtsen Gampo (d. 649/50), but composed in the late eleventh to mid-twelfth century—recounts the well-known legend of this king's construction of the Rasa (aka Lhasa)

Trulnang (or Jokhang)[84] and the twelve other demoness-subduing temples. According to this text, Songtsen Gampo's temple-building projects were being hindered by local gods and demons, who destroyed overnight what workers had built during the day. From a series of geomantic consultations, the monarch's Chinese wife, Kongjo, ascertained that the root of the problem lay with the supine demoness whose body encompassed the country of Tibet, with her heart beneath Lhasa.[85] To prevent further obstacles to the establishment of Buddhism and its institutions in Tibet, moreover, the queen instructed the king to erect temples at specific points on the demoness's body. Three groups of four temples—the Horn (*ru ngon*), Border-taming (*mtha' 'dul*), and Frontier-taming (*yang 'dul*)[86]—were thus built to pin down the supine demoness's extremities, with the thirteenth, the Jokhang, placed on her heart.

Although this story is not a record of historical fact, it does serve to illuminate the period in which it was composed, echoing themes present in contemporaneous works. During this time, reinvigorating institutional Buddhism after two centuries of the fragmentation and decentralization of Buddhist patronage and practice involved many construction and renovation projects. A fascination with temple-building for demon suppression as integral to the foundation of Buddhism in Tibet is therefore projected back into the glorified past.[87] Indeed, we find this as a defining theme in the legends surrounding the religious kings. Famously, at the site of Tibet's first monastery, Samye, the second religious king, Trisong Detsen, was having problems similar

[84] This famous temple is most commonly known in English-language scholarship as the Jokhang, named for the sacred Jowo Buddha image that it contains. In Tibetan sources, however, it is most commonly referred to as the Rasa or Lhasa Tsuglagkhang, the Trulnang Tsuglagkhang, or some combination of all these names. Ultimately, they all refer to the same site in the center of Lhasa and on the heart of the demoness. I will use "Jokhang" except when quoting or discussing references in Tibetan sources.
[85] Jacob P. Dalton, *The Taming of the Demons: Violence and Liberation in Tibetan Buddhism* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2011), 112-3.
[86] See Map 11 in Karl E. Ryavec, *A Historical Atlas of Tibet* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 44-5.
[87] Dalton, *Taming of the Demons*, 112-3.

to those of his predecessor, as displeased local deities would destroy at night what was built during the day. Ultimately, the great tantric yogin Padmasambhava was summoned to quell the deities and to bind them by oath to protect rather than disrupt Buddhism. However, before the arrival of this Precious Guru, Śāntarakṣita, the Indian abbot brought to Tibet to establish the first monastic community at Samye, advised the king to build four stūpas, which, like ritual pegs, would suppress the trouble-making, evil spirits.[88] While there is some historical truth to the temple-building activities of these idealized kings of yore,[89] above all, their depictions in sources from the so-called second dispensation of Buddhism, beginning in the tenth century, provide a foundation for the archetypes of kingship that will be cited and reenacted by future rulers of Tibet, including the Great Fifth and Thirteenth Dalai Lamas.

The tantric Buddhist practices employed and propagated by Padmasambhava in the imperial era, and transmitted through treasures revealed in later periods, demonstrate the powerful promises of such rituals to subjugate demons and destroy enemies. Many of the tantric texts connected to Padmasambhava as well as those that were imported to Tibet from India during the first and second dispensations of Buddhism teach methods for the pacification of negative forces, the enhancement of positive forces, the coercion of living beings to do one's bidding, and the violent destruction of enemies.[90] These practices form the foundation of Tibetan state-protection Buddhism and particularly, what Bryan Cuevas calls "magical or ritual warcraft." These rites often involve invoking the power of wrathful deities, employing effigies

[88] Ibid., 118.
[89] Ibid., 247n9.
[90] Ibid., 30-33; Bryan J. Cuevas, "The Politics of Magical Warfare," in *Faith and Empire: Art and Politics in Tibetan Buddhism*, ed. Karl Debreczeny (New York: Rubin Museum of Art, 2019), 172.

personifying the enemy to be subjugated, and utilizing *torma* (offerings made of dough) as ritual weapons.[91]

From the rituals of demonic pacification performed during the imperial period to the ceremonies to repel invaders fulfilled during the reign of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, tantric ritual magic has long served in Tibet as a legitimate mode of political action during its many periods of conflict and war.[92] Stories of Tibet's masters of Buddhist ritual warcraft abound, across centuries and sects. During the turbulent period after the ninth-century collapse of the Tibet empire, Nup Sangye Yeshe (b. ca. 844) used the fearsome rites of Yamāntaka to defeat his anti-Buddhist rivals. Lama Shang Tsondru Drakpa (1123-1194), secured his position and influence in the Lhasa valley with the help of his militia and the powers of the wrathful deity Mahākāla.[93]

While violent struggles for political dominance between powerful families and their allied Buddhist institutions persisted in central Tibet for centuries, by the mid-thirteenth century a greater threat imperiled Tibet as a Buddhist polity: the Mongols. Thus was born the Tibetan Buddhist ritual traditions of *sog zlog*, literally "Mongol-repelling." These practices are rooted in ritual exorcisms, which drive away and protect against inimical spirits and negative forces that can cause harm to a person, or by extension, a community. "With the emergence of a shared Tibetan ethnic and cultural identity rooted in Tibet's imperial past," James Gentry explains, "foreign armies threatening Tibetan territories were often interpreted in terms analogous to demonic possession."[94] Rites to expel invading armies, or *mag dog* (*dmag zlog*) are therefore

[91] Cuevas, "The Politics of Magical Warfare," 172.
[92] Ibid., 188.
[93] Ibid., 174-5.
[94] James Gentry, "Representations of Efficacy: The Ritual Expulsion of Mongol Armies in the Consolidation and Expansion of the Tsang (Gtsang) Dynasty," in *Tibetan Ritual*, ed. José Ignacio Cabezón (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 131; See also Ra Yeshé Sengé, *The All-pervading Melodious Drumbeat: The Life of Ra Lotsawa*, trans. Bryan J. Cuevas (New York: Penguin Books, 2015).

akin to national exorcisms.[95] As Mongol leaders forged alliances with different Tibetan Buddhist lamas during the thirteenth through seventeenth centuries, the rites of Mongol repulsion often had a sectarian angle. The sixteenth-century Nyingma figure Sogdogpa Lodro Gyaltsen (1552-1624) is perhaps the most famous master of Buddhist ritual warcraft to defeat the Mongols, as expressed by his epithet "Sogdogpa," "Mongol-repeller."[96] He recorded in his *History of How the Mongols were Turned Back (Sog bzlog bgyis tshul gyi lo rgyus)* the long history of Tibetan masters using specialized rituals for defeating foreign armies, as well as his own successful expulsion of Mongol forces from Tibet after thirty-two years of ritual performances.[97]

Because of their unique position at the nexus of temporal and religious power, the Dalai Lamas famously employed Mongol military might, regional political alliances, and Buddhist magical warcraft to establish, secure, and maintain their position and that of the Geluk sect. Their enemies, meanwhile, utilized similar tactics to undermine and destroy them. The Third Dalai Lama was attacked in 1546 by a Drigung Kagyu hierarch, who deployed the ritual magic of the planetary deity Rāhu, but Geluk counter-magic prevented great harm from befalling the lama.[98] In 1611, the Fourth Dalai Lama together with the master of wrathful ritual Lampa Rapjampa and several others, targeted (unsuccessfully) his rival Kagyu hierarch, the Karmapa, with a series of rituals invoking the powerful fearsome protector Yama Dharmarāja and the battle goddess, Magzor Gyalmo, "Queen who Repels Armies."[99] Reaching the pinnacle of political power unseen since the imperial era, the Fifth Dalai Lama exercised military force and ritual warcraft extensively and with great success, bringing the vast territory of the Tibetan plateau under his

[95] Gentry, "Representations of Efficacy," 131.
[96] For more information about Sogdogpa, see James Gentry, *Power Objects in Tibetan Buddhism: The Life, Writings, and Legacy of Sokdokpa Lodrö Gyeltsen* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).
[97] Gentry, "Representations of Efficacy," 132.
[98] Cuevas, "The Politics of Magical Warfare," 180.
[99] Ibid., 182.

control and crushing his political and religious adversaries. He worked closely with the Nyingma advisor, Zur Choying Rangdrol (1604-1657), to secretly perform numerous violent rituals, including those dedicated to the Nyingma deity Yamāri and the Geluk protector Yama Dharmarāja.[100] Convinced of its efficacy, the Fifth Dalai Lama relied upon Nyingma magic and ritual warcraft to destroy his enemies and assist his allies,[101] thus establishing a critical precedent of Nyingma collaboration in Buddhist rituals of state protection that we will find emulated in the regency and early rule of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.

Before shifting our focus to the twentieth century and the reign of Thubten Gyatso, however, one more ruler who contributed to the Tibetan conception of an ideal king must be mentioned: Yeshe Ö (c. 959-1024), the monk-king of Guge in the western region of the Tibetan Plateau. If Songtsen Gampo and Trisong Detsen are celebrated as the paradigmatic temple-builders of the imperial period, then Yeshe Ö fulfills the role as the archetypal purifier of Buddhism and proponent of pure monasticism at the beginning of the second dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet. With the collapse of the Tibetan empire, Buddhist practice became decentralized. Contrary to the court-driven Buddhism, "grounded in the recitation of Mahāyāna sūtra literature and dedicated to the maintenance of a celibate clergy,"[102] that had dominated the previous centuries, Dalton explains, "the age of fragmentation witnessed a tantric conversion of Tibet at the popular and local levels."[103] Yeshe Ö, the Buddhist leader of a young kingdom,

[100] Ibid., 182-6.
[101] For more on the ritual warcraft of the Fifth Dalai Lama, see: Samten G. Karmay, *Secret Visions of the Fifth Dalai Lama: The Gold Manuscript in the Fournier Collection* (London: Serindia, 1998); and Samten G. Karmay, "The Rituals and their Origins in the Visionary Accounts of the Fifth Dalai Lama," in *The Arrow and the Spindle: Studies in History, Myths, Rituals, and Beliefs in Tibet, Vol. II* (Kathmandu: Mandala Publications, 2005).
[102] Dalton, *Taming of the Demons*, 65.
[103] Ronald M. Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance: Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 57.

sought to bring his constituents under his political authority by asserting control over the various form of local Buddhism that had arisen in the preceding years.

As an ordained monk and a descendant of the Tibetan royal line, Yeshe Ö was apparently repulsed by the corrupt practices inspired by new tantric systems that were infiltrating his realm. So vexed was he by these tantric inroads, that he sought to reform the system from the inside, through sponsored translation projects and teachings. His conservative attitude is perhaps his most famous feature, as it is repeated throughout Tibet's historic literature. Book IV of the *Blue Annals* begins by stating, "Tantric practices became defiled. Meditation was abandoned, and many coarse practices made their appearance, such as sexual practice, ritual killing (sbyor-sgrol), the gtad-ser [ritual to harm one's enemy], ser-ba (production of hailstorms), and others. This situation was noticed by the kings of [Guge],"[104] who reacted by inviting many Indian masters to their kingdom. In fact, the reason Yeshe Ö is said to have invited the great teacher Atiśa to Guge was not simply to establish Buddhist teachings, but because he needed a scholar who could remove the "moral faults" of those whose practices had deteriorated and whose monastic vows had been violated under the influence of tantric sex and violence.[105] In the *Ngari Gyalrab*, the royal lama is further described as the "chief architect of the spread of the teachings" within and outward from his kingdom, who "banned practitioners of whatever was heretical, such as liberation through sexual union, meditation on corpses, and in particular all practitioners of Bon,"[106] bringing all practice back to the true and righteous path.

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[104] 'Go lo tsa ba gzhon nu dpal, *The Blue Annals*, trans. George Roerich (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949-53), 204.
[105] Ibid., 245.
[106] Roberto Vitali, *The kingdoms of Gu-ge Pu-hrang: according to Mgna'-ris rgyal rabs by Gu-ge Mkhan-chen Ngag-dbang-grags pa* (Dharamsala, India: Tho.ling gtsug.lag.khang lo.gcig.stong 'khor.ba'i rjes.dran.mdzad sgo'i go.sgrig tshogs.chung, 1996), 112.

For Yeshe Ö, the ultimate solution was to return to the idyllic government of yore, uniting all under the umbrella of Buddhist law, with institutions of principled monasticism as the foundation.[107] Whereas later histories symbolically connect the rule and religion of Yeshe Ö to those of Songtsen Gampo, the royal lama is explicit in his 990 edict about the need to emulate the religious kings and restore their Buddhist culture. The decree is more of an open letter addressed to the non-monastic "tantrists in Central Tibet," asking them "to be solemn and to straighten up [their] views"[108] and criticizing them for claiming that they follow the Mahāyāna, though they are "indulging in the ten evil [actions] and taking on the mode of life of dogs and pigs."[109] Calling the early kings "bodhisattvas," Yeshe Ö praises them for ushering in the golden age of Buddhism in Tibet, during which false religion was prohibited, false views were straightened and good rebirths were opened for all.[110] The past is finally contrasted with the royal lama's present, in which heretical tantras, pretending to be Buddhist, have brought severe harm to Tibet. Yeshe Ö highlights sexual rites, rituals of the corpse, offerings of flesh, blood, and urine, and even human sacrifice.[111] "If these practices, like yours, bring about Buddhahood," he exclaims, "Then hunters, fishermen, butchers and prostitutes, would all surely have attained Enlightenment by now."[112] He thus urges these misguided practitioners to return to the Mahāyāna fold, by rejecting erroneous views and practicing what is correct and pure.[113]

Though granted greater significance and mythic prefiguration by later historians, Yeshe Ö's unswerving fight against the encroachment of non-institutional tantric practice as central to

[107] Dalton, *Taming of the Demons*, 101.
[108] Samten G. Karmay, "The Ordinance of lHa Bla-ma Ye-shes-'od," in *The Arrow and the Spindle: Studies in History, Myths, Rituals and Beliefs in Tibet, Vol. 1* (Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point, 1998), 9.
[109] Ibid., 9-10.
[110] Ibid., 10.
[111] Ibid., 11-12.
[112] Ibid., 12.
[113] Ibid.

his reign is well-documented in contemporaneous sources. His 990 edict is only his most famous and the final in series of proclamations that underscore his efforts. The *Ngari Gyalrab* recounts the king widely distributing "many copies of the text (yi.ge) of chos.khrims [religious laws] and rgyal.khrims [imperial laws]"[114] that were meant to combat the decline in virtue and correct practice within his kingdom.[115] Beginning in 986, the king issued his "Great Edict" (*Bka' shog chen mo*), which made Buddhism the state religion and ordered the subjects of Guge-Purang to adopt its teachings and ritual forms. Then in 988, Yeshe Ö's established a new legal system bringing together religious and worldly law, which was underscored by another subsequent pronouncement that emphasized the need to follow the legal model set forth by the early imperial kings.[116] Yeshe Ö's radical assumption of both religious and political power, with authority over both spiritual and worldly law, is echoed in the "two traditions (*lugs gnyis*)"—political and religious—rhetoric employed by the Fifth Dalai Lama and subsequent Dalai Lamas to describe the heart of their position.

In the period following the political fragmentation of the ninth and tenth centuries, there eventually arose a considerable nostalgia for the perceived golden age of the Tibetan Empire and a need to connect to the past. The political strength of the imperial-era Yarlung Kingdom, the wealth and piety of its leaders, and the religious accomplishments of the early Buddhist figures had all been eclipsed by the chaos and corruption of the empire's collapse. Thus emerged a new mythologized view of ancient Tibet expressed in compilations of the legends of the great figures of the imperial age. These mythic histories, the composition of which began in the eleventh and twelfth centuries and culminated in the fourteenth, constructed the archetypes of the religious

[114] Vitali, *The Kingdoms of Gu-ge Pu-hrang*, 109.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Dalton, *Taming of the Demons,* 103.

king, the spiritual teacher, and the demonic foe with a Buddhist slant. Emperors Songtsen Gampo, Trisong Detsen and Ralpachen became the Three Religious Kings (*chos rgyal*), each the earthly emanation of a bodhisattva; Padmasambhava and Śāntarakṣita were the bringers of Buddhism to the Tibetan Plateau; and Langdarma was the evil destroyer of the dharma.[117]

Yeshe Ö was further presented as the inheritor of this legacy and characterized as the same kind of bodhisattva-king who was suited to lead the second dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet. He fulfills the archetypal role of religious king—protector and propagator of Buddhist teachings, and prolific temple-builder—while also restoring the glory of Tibet's past through a purification of Buddhist practice. No longer mere mortals but buddhas and bodhisattvas acting for the good of the sentient beings of Tibet, these figures of the past not only served as models for the subsequent rulers, but they also provided an etiological reference point to which all future leaders, both political and religious, could connect. The Great Fifth Dalai Lama exploited these links to the past most adeptly, forever transforming the person and the position of the Dalai Lamas into embodiments of enlightened rule, inheritors of both temporal and religious power, and incarnations of the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. In the sixteenth century, the Fifth Dalai Lama, therefore, builds his Potala on the site of Songtsen Gampo's palace and names it after the sacred abode of Avalokitśvara. In the twentieth, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama renovates several of Songtsen Gampo's border-taming temples,[118] Trisong Detsen's Samye Monastery,[119] and the three stūpas of Nepal, just as Yeshe Ö had done.[120]

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[117] Matthew T. Kapstein, "Elaborating the Narratives of Tibetan Antiquity," in *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*, eds. Kurtis R. Schaeffer, Matthew T. Kapstein, and Gray Tuttle (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 301.
[118] Michael Akester, *The Jébumgung Temple: Ritual Architecture and the Defense of the Modern Tibetan State* (Schongau: Garuda Verlag, 2018), 55; Phur lcog, *Biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama*, 359-60, 398.
[119] Akester, *The Jébumgung Temple*, 29-31.
[120] Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 806; Phur lcog, *Biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama*, 306.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, when Thubten Gyatso formally took power as the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, he stepped into a role of both political and religious authority infused with the ethical responsibilities theorized by Buddhist philosophers and inspired by generations of Buddhist rulers across Asia, mythologized in Indian sūtras and, in his case, in Tibetan histories. Above, I have outlined the core principles, doctrines, and prescriptions underpinning Buddhist notions of righteous kingship. A ruler must rule justly and live virtuously, serving as an example for his subjects, whose behavior reflects his own. Since a stable and moral society is dependent on the person who leads it, the king is responsible also for enforcing religious and ethical law, even that of the monastic community. The *saṅgha*, to reiterate, is an essential, potent field of merit, the efficacy of which is contingent upon its purity. In order for the offerings, upon which they rely, to reciprocally benefit all patrons, monks and nuns must keep their vows. This is especially important for the royal merit-maker-in-chief, who is karmically obligated, by virtue of his privileged birth, to give much to the *saṅgha* and to the dharma—in the form of temples, monasteries, sculptures, and books—for the benefit of his kingdom and the preservation of the dharma. The result of such immense generosity is not only merit, but also the satisfaction of the gods, whose worldly powers can avert natural disasters and foreign invasions. Pleased by a righteous ruler and his enforcement of virtue, the gods protect a kingdom; calamities are thus a reflection of the moral failure.

These principles defining the ethical code of righteous Buddhist kings prescribe practices—particularly building and renovating sacred edifices, and supporting the monastic community—but, as I have also demonstrated, they prescribe the Buddhist ritual technologies that serve rulers and protect their states. In Tibet, moreover, I have described rituals of state protection that not only appease Buddhist gods, but also the building of geomantic temples and

tantric practice to subdue local gods who threaten the dharma. In the end, theories of Buddhist kingship assert that maintaining a safe, stable, and ethical society, based in moral behavior and efficacious ritual, is dependent upon the relationship between the king's power and the *saṅgha*'s purity, as the corruption of either can leave the state vulnerable to all manner of trouble. And "all manner of trouble" is perhaps a defining characteristic of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's reign, to which we turn in the next chapter. Having located Thubten Gyatso within this long history of Buddhist kingship and state-protection Buddhism, not only we can better understand his exercising of religious power during a period of constant political crisis, but we can also understand the necessity of shifting our focus away from his purely political (i.e. secular) activities.

CHAPTER TWO
The Regency and Early Reign of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama

By the time Thubten Gyatso came of age and was formally installed as the Thirteenth Dalai Lama at the age of nineteen in 1895, he had already beaten the odds. His previous four incarnations had all died prematurely—the Ninth Dalai Lama, Lungtok Gyatso (1805-1815), passing away just after his ninth birthday—and none had reigned long enough, with or without a regent, to fulfill any real political or religious role. As Maher notes, the early deaths of these four Dalai Lamas "denied the Tibetan people their most lively and potent symbol of Tibetan identity at a time when external pressures were threatening to tear Tibet apart. While the Qing, the Gurkhas, the British, and, more peripherally, the Russians, jockeyed for position in the great game of diplomacy, the Tibetan public continually had to suspend and then transfer their allegiance—and thereby their national aspirations—as their beloved boy leaders died one after another."[121] These political voids left open by the successive premature deaths of young Dalai Lamas were filled by other powerful Geluk hierarchs, some in the role of regents, but others, like the Panchen Lamas, who were not.[122]

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[121] Derek F. Maher, "The Ninth to the Twelfth Dalai Lamas: 1805-1875," in *The Dalai Lamas: A Visual History*, ed. Martin Brauen (Chicago: Serindia Publications, Inc., 2005), 135. A note on the counting of Panchen Lamas: In this dissertation, I refer to the Panchen Lamas using the system that counts the three lamas posthumously given the title, so that the current Panchen Lama (however controversial) is the Eleventh.

[122] The Panchen Lamas absorbed much of this power and were often treated by foreign powers as the leader of Tibet. When the East India Company sent a diplomatic mission led by George Bogle in 1774, he met the Sixth Panchen Lama at Tashi Lhunpo Monastery. And it was this incarnation of the Panchen Lama who traveled to Beijing to meet with the Qianlong Emperor. The international fame and influence of the Panchen Lamas was carried across incarnations, and likely contributed to a rivalry between the Ninth Panchen and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. For more information about the Sixth Panchen Lama see Patricia Berger, "Chapter 6: Resemblance and Recognition," in *Empire of Emptiness: Buddhist Art and Political Authority in Qing China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 167-97. For more on George Bogle see, Kate Teltscher, *The High Goad to China: George Bogle, the Panchen Lama and the first British expedition to Tibet* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006).

This Dalai Lama, however, had already survived childhood illness, including a case of smallpox when he was about six,[123] and had finally taken power after completing his religious training and taking his full religious vows. Still, a prophecy Thubten Gyatso received in a dream as a youth predicted he would face many difficulties: a black man appeared to him, foretelling that he would be forced to travel to Mongolia, China, and India, but he would also live longer than any other Dalai Lama. At the end of the nineteenth century, the greatest danger to the Dalai Lama and the state of Tibet seemed to be the British, whose enhanced presence across the southern Himalayan border was increasingly menacing. Over the next eighteen years, as threats both internal and external became manifold, the prophetic dream would become a reality and the Dalai Lama would be compelled to battle the crises of invasion, exile, and deposition by employing the two weapons he could wield: political and spiritual. Early in his reign, however, Thubten Gyatso was thrust into the center of both sectarian strife and international conflict.

Several important teachers of the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism figured prominently in the early years of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's rule and proved influential in his development as a Buddhist ruler. Although Nyingma inclinations among the Dalai Lamas, particularly the Fifth and the Sixth, are well-known, since the early eighteenth century, the institutional support for Nyingma monasteries and for patronage of rituals performed by Nyingma practitioners provided by the Dalai Lama's Ganden Phodrang government had declined. Ngawang Palden Chokyi Gyaltsen (1850-86), the Tenth Tatshak Rinpoche and the first regent to Thubten Gyatso, however, was an influential proponent of integrating Nyingma ritual into Geluk practices, even at the highest levels of the Ganden Phodrang government. He was a master of wrathful ritual, spending much of his regency "tirelessly absorbed in elaborate and

[123] Maher, "The Ninth to the Twelfth Dalai Lamas," 138.

specialized ceremonies and exorcisms for the elimination of demons (*dam sri*) threatening the life of the young Ta la'i bla ma [Dalai Lama] and the endurance of the Buddhist polity."[124] In 1883, for example, he performed a ritual (*gtor rgyag*) to appease the *kṣetrapāla*, protectors of the land, and to repel invaders. As Matthew Akester notes, while this and other rituals for national defense were not the exclusive purview of the Nyingma, that this ceremony was executed by a reigning regent in this period was exceptional.[125] Two years later, at the behest of the Gadong (*dga' gdong*) oracle, Tatshak Rinpoche performed another wrathful ritual for protecting the Dalai Lama, this one suppressing a particular class of insidious gods called *gongpo* (*'gong po*).

These kinds of tantric practices associated with the Nyingma sect are traditionally traced back to Padmasambhava, the great eighth-century, demon-taming yogin who was central to the first dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet. The cooperation between the regent and oracles, furthermore, emulated the relationship between this guru and Pehar, the local god he subdued at Samye. Pehar subsequently came to protect that site and possesses both the Samye and Nechung oracles in different aspects. Many of the oracular deities channeled through Tibet's main mediums, including the Nechung, the State Oracle of Tibet, are powerful, fearsome deities whom Padmasambhava defeated and bound by oath to protect Buddhism across Tibet and the Himalayas. While engaging with oracles is certainly not sectarian, these various practices and rituals connect back to the period to which the Nyingma sect traces its origins: the imperial era of the idealized religious kings and the activities of Padmasambhava. And when such ceremonies are performed at Samye, like the gongpo ritual undertaken by Tatshak Rinpoche, there is a channeling of both localized power and site-specific symbolism that invests the participants with a direct link to past.

[124] Akester, *The Jébumgang Temple*, 25.
[125] Ibid., 27.

Many Tibetan leaders undertook restorations and other building projects at Samye in the millennium since its momentous construction, tapping into the power of the symbolic reenactment of its origins; but in 1885 Tatshak Rinpoche led a different kind of renovation with the help of the Nechung and Samye oracles, whose prophecies advocated for the addition of a group of eight stūpas—in the cardinal and intermediate directions—outside of the main boundary wall that encloses the primary temples. These geomantic structures that fully surrounded the Samye complex, the structure of which is a maṇḍala, were built as part of a remarkable, state-sponsored ritual to protect Tibet and repel invaders.[126] Tatshak Rinpoche was already considered a particularly effective ritual specialist, having been credited with stopping the smallpox outbreak in the early 1880s and averting a military conflict with Nepal with his 1883 rite.[127] And his collaboration with Pehar, especially via the Nechung oracle, was believed to have held off numerous threats to Tibet's borders, mirroring the dynamic relationship between Padmasambhava and the protector deity.

The addition of the protective stūpas encircling the Samye temple complex coincided with the Tibetan government's assertion of geopolitical sovereignty following the so-called Chefoo Convention between China and India. According to this agreement—which was struck with neither the involvement nor the knowledge of Tibet—the Qing emperor granted the British permission to conduct an expedition overland from India to China through Tibet.[128] This event marked an escalation of tensions with the British along the border between Tibet and Sikkim,[129] a princely state of British India, and caused the Tibetan government to take immediate action: the National Assembly, denying China's authority to grant such authorization, "swore a unanimous

[126] Ibid., 29-31.
[127] Ibid., 29.
[128] Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History* (New York: Potala Publications, 1984), 198.
[129] Ibid., 196-8.

oath that they would not permit any foreigners into Tibetan territory without permission or visas from the Tibetan government."[130] As the secular government of Tibet enacted a firm border policy in reaction to the political pressure from its neighbors, it is clear that Tatshak Rinpoche responded to these menaces in his own way, utilizing oracular insight, geomantic temple-building, and apotropaic ritual—the instruments of Tibetan state-protection Buddhism.

Tatshak Rinpoche's sudden death at age thirty-seven in 1886, the year after he performed the risky *gongpo* suppression ceremony and ordered the construction of the new stūpas at Samye, weakened Tibet's supernatural protections, however. The Dalai Lama was ten. As tensions further intensified on the Sikkimese border, it was the Nechung oracle who called for the construction of a defensive outpost on the Lungtur ridge, just over the border into Sikkim, a British territory.[131] When the British learned about the new fortified checkpoint (and its twenty or so soldiers), they demanded that the Tibetans remove it before March 15, 1888, warning that they would otherwise be compelled to attack. Despite the efforts of the king of Sikkim to persuade the Tibetans to capitulate, they nonetheless remained at the outpost. Between March 15 and 21, at several locations along the border, the Tibetans were not only expelled, but in fact violently defeated, suffering heavy losses at the hands of the better-trained and well-equipped British troops.[132] What is commonly known as the Sikkim Expedition was in actuality a battle. This disastrous first encounter with a modern, Western army was a sign of Tibet's diminished ritual defenses and an indication of her inadequate military defenses.

Tatshak Rinpoche's successor, Ngawang Lobsang Trinlé Rabgye (1855-1899), the Ninth Demo Rinpoche, was another Geluk hierarch who, following his lineal forebears and regent

[130] Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 645.
[131] Akester, *The Jébumgang Temple*, 31.
[132] Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 199-200.

predecessor, was a supporter of Nyingma dharma, particularly as a patron of Nyingma treasure-revealers or *tertons* (*gter ston*).[133] Beginning in the seventeenth century, the eastern region of Kham, especially the Dege kingdom, developed into the center of institutional Nyingma with a landscape rich with treasures (*gter ma*) and their finders. In this period, the Fifth Dalai Lama received teachings from Nyingma gurus and Nyingma institutions, such as Mindrolling, received state support. During the intervening years, however, the influence of the Nyingma in central Tibet and its connection to the Dalai Lamas had greatly weakened. The relationship between Demo Rinpoche, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, the Nechung oracle, and two tertons of note—Sonam Gyalpo or Sogyal (1856-1926), otherwise known as Lerab Lingpa; and Khedrub Ngawang Lobzang Jigme Tenpai Gyaltsen (1848-1900), the Ninth Phakpa Lha (a Geluk lama) also known as Padma Lingpa—marked a revival of relations that emulated both the imperial-era cult of Buddhist royalty and the pinnacle of the Dalai Lamas' power in the Great Fifth.

This formidable alliance was well-equipped to confront the political challenges of the time through rituals of state protection, practices for the longevity of the young Dalai Lama, and temple construction for border defense, activities that were all central to the Nyingma role in the early reign of Thubten Gyatso. In 1890, for example, Terton Sogyal revealed a statue of Padmasambhava, referred to as "an image that is a wish-fulfilling gem and liberates upon seeing."[134] Shortly thereafter, the Nechung oracle prophesied that because the appearance of the sculpture was a harbinger of the Dalai Lama's longevity and Tibet's security, it must be brought from Dege to Lhasa. Terton Sogyal and the local governor acceded, and the extraordinary image

[133] Akester, *The Jébumgang Temple*, 31.
[134] "*sku tshab mthong grol yid bzhin nor bu*"

was installed in Lhasa's main temple in a ritual presided over by Demo Rinpoche and the Nechung medium.[135]

When Thubten Gyatso finally assumed power in late 1895, it was at behest of the Nechung oracle. With the British threat still looming at the Sikkimese border, the Dalai Lama felt it was best to let the more experienced leaders remain in charge of state affairs, despite the desires of the National Assembly. Thubten Gyatso requested that the Nechung oracle be consulted for guidance and he proclaimed it was time for the Dalai Lama to take his place as temporal and spiritual leader of Tibet.[136] During the ceremony in which he adopted the golden wheel, the insignia of the *cakravartin*, symbolizing his religious and temporal authority, the twenty-year-old Dalai Lama also issued a five-point decree. While the first item reflects his prioritization of Nyingma-inflected ritual for the security of Tibet's borders, the second alludes to the importance of maintaining a pure monastic community, signaling its utility for the same purpose.

As summarized by Shakabpa, the Dalai Lama's proclamation begins: "1. The tradition of making offerings at Rasa, Tadül, Yangdül, and Runön Tsuklakhangs and the Jokhang Tsuklakhang, must be restored."[137] This list includes the three groups of geomantic temples which, as described above, were constructed by King Songtsen Gampo to pin down the supine demoness, the Jokhang sitting upon her heart. Rasa, the ancient name for Lhasa, likely alludes to the larger Jokhang complex, commonly known as the Rasa Trulnang (*'phrul snang*; miraculous) Tsuglagkhang,[138] or perhaps to the sacred city's older temples, such as Ramoche. Reviving

[135] Akester, *The Jébumgang Temple*, 33.
[136] Tsering Shakya, "The Thirteenth Dalai Lama Thupten Gyatso," in *The Dalai Lamas: A Visual History*, ed. Martin Brauen (Chicago: Serindia Publications, Inc., 2005), 140.
[137] Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 635.
[138] See André Alexander, *The Temples of Lhasa: Tibetan Buddhist Architecture from the 7th to the 21st Centuries* (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2005), 30-33.

worship at these sites not only rekindles the ritual power of state protection rooted in these structures, it also reinforces the Dalai Lama's direct connection to the first religious king and Tibet's mythic past. As inheritor of the legacy of two regents who invested so much in the symbolic and ritual potency of geomantic temple construction and renovation in response to encroaching political threats, it is not surprising that the Dalai Lama would, as his first official action as ruler of Tibet, command that the power of these temples be restored.

In the second point of his decree, however, the Dalai Lama invokes a different element of Buddhist kingship, the purification of the *saṅgha*: "2. The education and discipline of the monks of all schools, as well as the observance of religious festivals by lay people, must be kept pure."[139] As discussed in the previous chapter, maintaining the purity of the ordained and the religiosity of the masses is a primary responsibility of a Buddhist ruler, and a means by which stability and peace is preserved in his kingdom. While in his first dictum the Dalai Lama firmly establishes himself as an explicitly Tibetan king, in his second he asserts himself as a Buddhist one. Underlying both points, moreover, is their importance to national defense—of all the possible rules to impose, Thubten Gyatso begins with traditional practices employed by Tibetan Buddhist rulers to protect their borders and their authority.

The nascent years of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's official rule largely followed the precedents of his two regents. This period of his reign is marked by temple construction and ritual activities based on treasures revealed by his Nyingma gurus, tertons Sogyal and Padma Lingpa, and prophecies delivered by the Nechung oracle. In 1894, Terton Sogyal made one of most important treasure revelations, a cycle of practices dedicated to the deity Vajrakīlaya entitled *Razor of the Innermost Essence (Yang snying spu gri)*. Discovered in the same hidden

[139] Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 635.

cave was a miraculous image of Padmasambhava grasping a vajra and a *kīla*, a ritual dagger important to these practices. Fifteen years earlier, a prophetic guidebook (*kha byang*) to the discovery of this *terma* had been revealed by a different terton, detailing the circumstances of the treasure's unveiling and its rightful place. Among the things foretold by this guide is the terma's principal custodian: one of two great men, the second of which is a master named Thubten, born in central Tibet during a fire mouse year, a clear reference to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. The guide goes on to explain that the revealed *kīla*, symbolizing the teachings of the treasure text, should be placed before the sacred Buddha image—the Jowo—in the Jokhang temple in Lhasa. Together, the revelation of the terma and its subsequent deposit in the Jokhang, and the guidebook's prophesies, would ensure the strength of the Geluk dharma, the longevity of all future Dalai Lamas, and a sixty-year lifespan for this Thubten. Further, it guarantees that the inimical spirits causing conflicts between the Geluk monasteries of Sera and Drepung and aiding the advance of foreign armies will be subdued, allowing peace to prevail in Tibet and the ruler's authority to be unopposed.[140]

A prophecy from the Nechung oracle and a summons from Demo Rinpoche that the terma scrolls be delivered to their rightful custodian, Thubten Gyatso, compelled Terton Sogyal to return with his treasures to Lhasa in summer 1896. Nechung urged the Dalai Lama, moreover, to perform the rituals dictated by *Razor of Innermost Essence* as a means of destroying threats to his life and to his rule.[141] That same summer, in their only recorded interaction, Terton Padma Lingpa presented to the Dalai Lama his recently revealed prophecy that foretold both of Thubten Gyatso's future exiles and, remarkably, identified the Dalai Lama as a treasure-revealer in his own right, alias Drakden Lingpa (Grags ldan gling pa), even predicting the circumstances of his

[140] Akester, *The Jébumgang Temple*, 39.
[141] Ibid.

future discoveries.[142] Terton Sogyal, however, continued to be the foremost Nyingma guru to the Dalai Lama, following the instructions of the Nechung oracle to perform many deeds and reveal terma for the preservation of the young ruler's life and the destruction of obstacles to peace. In 1897, the treasure-revealer found the prophesied "talismanic kīla of the dharma king" and on his way back to deliver it to the Dalai Lama, he again followed Nechung's prescriptions and received a number of treasures from the guardians of Dragsum Lake (Brag gsum mtsho).[143]

Among these was a prophecy entitled *Garland of the Sun's Rays (Nyi ma'i 'od phreng)*, which had originally been given to King Trisong Detsen by Padmasambhava at Samye, but was subsequently concealed. This terma described the means by which their future incarnations as the rulers and gurus of Tibet would ensure that demonic enemies of the dharma would be suppressed and righteousness would prevail. Alluding to Terton Sogyal, an emanation of Padmasambhava would appear in Kham and that of the king would appear in Central Tibet and be called Thubten. To repel invaders and establish the law, allowing the sun rays of happiness to long shine on Tibet, a series of geomantic temples were to be constructed, including shrines to Padmasambhava at each of the three royal temples of the religious kings. When Terton Sogyal presented these revelations to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, he quickly authorized construction, which began the following year.[144] This prophecy does more than symbolically link the Thirteenth Dalai Lama to the imperial past, it names him as the incarnation of Trisong Detsen and identifies him as the ruler who would restore the law of dharma and revive Tibet's former glory. Not only did these efficacious rituals and powerful ritual objects promise to protect the

[142] Ibid., 41.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid., 41-3.

Dalai Lama and preserve the state, but the narratives in which they are embedded supported national identity and national security through a shared nostalgia for the mythic past.

It is important to consider the significance of the revelation of this and other terma by Terton Sogyal—all of which are inherently connected to Kham in general and Nyarong in particular—for the cultivation of a sense of national unity between eastern and central Tibet in this period. The kingdoms and chiefdoms of Amdo and especially Kham were semi-autonomous vis-à-vis the political authority of the Dalai Lama and his Ganden Phodrang government. A little more than thirty years earlier (1863-5), the central Tibetan government had to send its army to Nyarong to stop its chief from continuing his expansionist campaign against his neighbors.[145] Although Tibet in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did not possess all of the elements of a discrete nation unified under a single government, the Dalai Lama viewed his authority as extending into the eastern regions and was ready to assert his power there if need be. Most importantly, he viewed Kham and Amdo—the location of so many important Tibetan Buddhist sites and the homeland of so many Tibetan-speaking peoples—as Tibetan; they were not Chinese. The Dalai Lama and the central Tibetan government, as well as the Qing emperor, were deeply invested in defining their territorial boundaries in the favor of their own interests. With both governments claiming parts of eastern Tibet, and conflicts arising as a result of border violations, identifying Kham as within the Dalai Lama's dominion would become central to rituals of state protection and diplomatic negotiations moving forward. The treasures and prophecies that emerged from Kham, therefore, established a concrete spiritual connection between the Dalai Lama and the east that supported a sense of unity necessary during this time.

[145] See Xiuyu Wang, "Lu Chuanlin's 'Great Game' in Nyarong: Moving Frontiers and Power Projection in Qing Tibet, 1865-1897," *The International History Review* Vol. 31, No. 3 (September 2009): 473-498.

Between 1896 and 1897, when these many prophecies were given and treasures revealed, the young Dalai Lama was faced with his first political crisis as Tibet's temporal leader. In 1896, the Chakla (Lcags la) chieftain, supported by Chinese troops from neighboring Sichuan, invaded and seized some of the territories belonging to the governor of Nyarong, in Kham. The Chinese army captured an extensive area of this eastern Tibetan region, including the kingdom of Dege, whose entire royal family was taken prisoner.[146] At this time, the Nechung oracle urged the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government not to involve the Chinese *ambans*, the notoriously untrustworthy imperial officials stationed in Lhasa as representatives of the emperor, in negotiations with the Chakla and Sichuan forces. In fact, Shākya Yarphel, the Nechung medium, submitted a petition directly to the Qing emperor for help in resolving the dispute without the ambans, which was accepted.[147] It is essential, therefore, to understand the Nechung oracle's prolific activities for state protection—performed in partnership with Terton Sogyal (whose own homeland of Kham was taken) and under the patronage of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama—within the context of and as a direct response to the Chakla invasion. Reacting to the violent violation of Tibet's eastern borders, the Nechung medium used both diplomatic and religious methods to ensure that conflict was pacified, the Dalai Lama was protected, and the boundaries were secured. Shākya Yarphel thus became an indispensable political advisor to Thubten Gyatso.

The accelerated construction of prophesied temples in the first few years of the Dalai Lama's reign ritually strengthened the geomantic defenses that had diminished with the death of his first regent, Tatsak Rinpoche. In addition to the temples ordered by the prophecies of Terton Sogyal, shrines to the "lords of the three lineages" (*rigs gsum mgon po*, Avalokiteśvara, Mañjuśrī, and Vajrapāṇi) were built in the intermediate directions around the central temple of

[146] Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 224.
[147] Akester, *The Jébumgang Temple*, 25.

Lhasa, as per a prophecy of the Nechung oracle. According to the biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, the oracle predicted that the construction of the four shrines (*lha khang*) would "drive back opposing armies (*dmag bzlog*) in the four directions of Lhasa."[148] In his comprehensive study of the Jébumgang Temple, Michael Akester explains that this building was also erected in this period as part of the "revival, if not appropriation of a long current of rNying ma pa prophecy and ritual tradition" for the ultimate goal of postponing "apocalyptic threats to the symbolic center of the Buddhist polity" and deflecting the threat of invasion.[149]

Preceding the lengthy account of the Jébumgang's construction in the biography's chapter dedicated to Thirteenth Dalai Lama's building projects, we further find that the author characterizes Thubten Gyatso and his team of tertons and oracles as emulating King Trisong Detsen and his gurus with their various activities: "In particular, just as in the past the abbott (Śāntarakṣita), the master (Padmasambhava), and the dharma king (Trisong Detsen),[150] having come together at Samye—the changeless spontaneous temple with three architectural styles—performed countless deeds [to benefit] the Buddha's teachings, so too, in this limited time, having the same kind of achievements and attributes, the victorious ruler (the Dalai Lama), endowed with skillful means and great compassion, together with Terton Padma Lingpa Hotoktu, Terton Sonam Gyalpo, and other great saints of the old and new schools, joined forces. Having done so, they followed prophecies that it was an opportune time and circumstance to open the threshold of virtuous, altruistic actions even wider to benefit the teachings and all beings."[151]

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[148] Phur bu lcog yongs 'dzin sprul sku thub bstan byams pa tshul khrims bstan 'dzin, *rGyal dbang sku phreng bcu gsum pa thub bstan rgya mtsho'i rnam thar*, Par gzhi dang po. Vol. 2, rGyal dbang sku phreng rim byon gyi mdzad rnam (Pe cin: Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dus deb khang, 2010) [BDRC bdr:MW1PD137888] <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW1PD137888>, 312.
[149] Akester, *The Jébumgang Temple*, 47.
[150] The term used to describe this trio is *mkhan slob chos*: *mkhan* is short for *mkhan po* meaning "abbot" or *upādhyāya*; *slob* is short for *slob dpon* meaning "master" or *ācārya*; and *chos* is short for *chos rgyal* meaning "dharma king" or *dharmarāja*.
[151] Phur lcog, *Biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama,* 296.

During this period of the Dalai Lama's rule, even from the retrospect of his biographer, the relationship between the Dalai Lama, his Nyingma gurus, and the Nechung oracle was a powerful force—the most promising since the seventeenth, if not the ninth century—for preserving the Buddhist state. Despite the foreign powers menacing Tibet's borders, the foundation of geomantic magic, prophetic promises, and mythical heritage underlying these state-sponsored construction projects seemed to be the Dalai Lama's best weapon for keeping invaders at bay. Soon, however, this strategy would radically change with a pair of cursed boots.

Exile, Conflict, and Diplomacy

When Thubten Gyatso turned twenty-four he started to have recurring and ominous dreams, which he dutifully recorded. He shared these dreams with Terton Sogyal, who interpreted them as indisputable signs of danger to the Dalai Lama's life—a fear confirmed by the Nechung oracle.[152] Although the Dalai Lama performed various rituals and virtuous deeds to avert this threat, the oracle explained again and again that "harmful designs were aimed at the Dalai Lama by malicious beings."[153] According to Tibetan astrology, the year 1900 was *kyek* (*skyeg*) or "obstructed," an unlucky year that arrived every thirteen. For the twenty-five-year-old Dalai Lama, the misfortunes were apparent, not only from the foreboding warnings of the Nechung but also from the persistent sickness and weakness that plagued him.[154] These symptoms worsened when he wore a particular pair of boots that had been given to him by Terton Sogyal. The Nechung oracle had pointed to these shoes as the source of harm to the Dalai Lama, and advised that the terton be subsequently questioned.

[152] Shakya, "The Thirteenth Dalai Lama," 142.
[153] Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 638.
[154] Shakya, "The Thirteenth Dalai Lama," 142.

According to one account, Demo Rinpoche had been subjected to the vengeful actions of his enemies since stepping down from the regency as the Dalai Lama stepped fully into his role. Angered and embittered, the ex-regent colluded with his brother, Norbu Tsering, to solicit the aid of an eastern Tibetan lama who was highly skilled in black magic, especially a practice centered on a deity to which Terton Sogyal also had connections. A powerful mantra together with the Dalai Lama's name and birth year were inscribed on an effigy of a human man and placed inside the sole of a beautiful new pair of boots. It was thought that if Terton Sogyal passed on the gift, his spiritual relationship to the black mantra's deity would amplify its power, causing the Dalai Lama's death,.[155] In another version of the story, however, the terton confessed that shoes had been given to him not by a monk from Nyarong in Kham, but by the chief cook of Tengyeling monastic estate, which belonged to Demo Rinpoche.[156] Terton Sogyal proclaimed his innocence in all accounts, admitting he had become suspicious of the boots when he developed a nose bleed after putting them on. When questioned, Demo Rinpoche confessed that he had ordered the black magic mantra in the boot, and had additionally buried more mantras in corners of the Potala Palace and at Samye, all in order to eliminate the Dalai Lama and restore his own power.[157]

The former regent and his collaborators were arrested and imprisoned for their involvement in this assassination plot, and the government confiscated the estates belonging to Tengyeling Monastery. After he died (or was perhaps murdered) under house arrest, it was further announced that no future incarnations of the Demo lineage would be recognized. Interestingly, only a few years later, the late Demo's next incarnation was identified as the nephew of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, who subsequently permitted the new candidate to be

[155] Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 42-3.
[156] Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 638.
[157] Shakya, "The Thirteenth Dalai Lama," 142.

recognized and the lineage to live on.[158] Because of his subsequent vilification, the story of this, the Ninth Demo Rinpoche, as well as his lineal predecessors, has largely been written out of Tibetan history, resulting in a dearth of information especially regarding his biography and the details of his contributions as a teacher and regent of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.[159] Terton Sogyal, on the other hand, despite being an accessory—albeit unwitting—to the crime, remained in the Dalai Lama's favor, and was even given a share of Demo Rinpoche's seized belongings, which he used to furnish new geomantic temples in Nyarong. Until his final departure from Lhasa in 1904, the terton gave teachings and empowerments to the Dalai Lama, and made several new treasure revelations. After the attempted assassination by Nyingma black magic, and the implication of a Nyingma-oriented cohort, the Dalai Lama's reliance upon Terton Sogyal and the Nechung oracle waned, and state-sponsored construction of geomantic temples all but ceased, according to Akester.[160]

As geopolitical tensions increasingly pressed the Tibetan state in the early years of the twentieth century, resulting in invasion, armed conflict, and the expulsion of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, there was a distinct shift away from Nyingma rituals of state protection and geomantic temple-building. While Thubten Gyatso did restore the Jokhang Temple, as well as the border-taming temples of Songtsen Gampo,[161] in the decades after his return from nine years of exile, none of these, nor his many major building projects of the 1920s, were motivated by the prophecies or rituals of the Dalai Lama's Nyingma gurus and the Nechung oracle.[162] Only one

[158] Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 43, n9.
[159] Akester, *The Jébumgang Temple*, 31.
[160] Ibid., 54n.57, 55.
[161] See Phur lcog, *Biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama,* 358-60; 401-2.
[162] Akester, *The Jébumgang Temple*, 54n.57; This story is also important as the setting for Pha bong kha pa's subsequent anti-Nyingma campaign, promotion of Dorje Shugden, and attempt to convert many monasteries in Kham to Geluk. For more information see Georges Dreyfus, "The Shuk-den Affair: History and Nature of a Quarrel," *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* Vol. 21, No. 2 (1998): 227-70.

new geomantic project inspired by oracular instruction, discussed below, occurred in the Dalai Lama's later years. As I will show, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama turned toward the more conventional practices of Tibetan Buddhist kingship centered on temple renovation and the purification of the *saṅgha*, as well as the methods of a modern ruler centered on military enhancement and diplomatic intervention. Exile proved to be a different form of revelation to the Dalai Lama, exposing the religious and political weaknesses that had left Tibet vulnerable and revealed the technologies of both traditional and twentieth-century statecraft that could strengthen his state and his stature.

Following the armed clashes between Tibetan and British forces on the Sikkimese border in 1888, the British and the Manchu amban in Lhasa signed a convention without consulting the Tibetan government. This agreement delineated the border between Tibet and Sikkim, the latter of which was officially recognized as a protectorate of the British. Although the majority of the convention's articles related to Tibet, none defined British or Chinese authority over Tibet. In 1893, trade regulations were added to the 1890 convention to outline terms of increasing commerce across the Tibet-Sikkim border, but once again the Tibetans were not party to these negotiations. Because the Tibetans were not signatories to any of these agreements and the ambans could not force them to abide by their terms, there was no way to enforce these policies without Tibet formally recognizing them.[163] The British frustration over these obstacles to free trade was further compounded by the ambiguity of the Qing emperor's authority over Tibet. Meanwhile, reports began trickling out of Tibet and rumors began circulating about the presence of Russian advisors in Tibet and the military support of the tsar. Britain's fear that Tibet had come under Russian influence was fueled further when Russian newspapers reported that

[163] Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 202-3.

Agwang Dorjiev (1854-1938), a Buryat Buddhist monk who was a close friend of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, had received an audience in summer 1901 with Tsar Nicholas III and Empress Alexandra.[164]

A native of the Lake Baikal region of Siberia and a subject of the Russian empire, Dorjiev had studied at Drepung's Gomang College. He was so highly regarded that he was assigned the honor of being a debate partner to the young Dalai Lama. Through their friendship, Thubten Gyatso came to know about Russia's expanding influence across Central Asia, and likewise, Dorjiev was privy to the details Tibet's ongoing struggles with the British.[165] The Buryat monk had traveled to France, and when he returned to Lhasa in 1898, his knowledge of European affairs made him an indispensable advisor to Thubten Gyatso.[166] In his own autobiography, Dorjiev explains that he came to Lhasa with the intention of offering some diplomatic assistance: "I thought, 'Because the Russians and British do not get along with each other, the Russians may be able to help Tibetans and keep Tibet from being swallowed by the British. If that is uncertain, still, it may be necessary to explain the Tibetan situation to the Russians.'"[167] He met with government officials in Lhasa and became their emissary to St. Petersburg and advocate for Tibet to the Tsar, who sent the Dalai Lama gifts and some Russian weapons.[168] As Shakabpa notes, because the Chinese and British had repeatedly excluded Tibet from political arrangements, and the British had continued to threaten Tibet's border, the Dalai Lama "was left with no alternative but to establish both public and secret relationship with

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[164] Shakya, "The Thirteenth Dalai Lama," 143.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 40.
[167] Agwang Dorjiev, *Dorjiev: Memoirs of Tibetan Diplomat*, trans. Thubten Jigme Norbu and Dan Martin, in *Sources of Tibetan Tradition*, ed. Kurtis R. Schaefer, Matthew T. Kapstein, and Gray Tuttle (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 729.
[168] Despite pushback from the Russian Orthodox elite, Dorjiev also convinced the Tsar to permit the construction of a Tibetan Buddhist temple in St. Petersburg.

Russia…in an effort to maintain Tibet's freedom and independence."[169] And there was no better intermediary than Dorjiev.

The friendship between the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and Dorjiev, and between Tibet and Russia was perceived differently—threatening, innocuous, essential—by the parties involved and those observing from outside. But for Dorjiev, his motivations might have been more complex than simply helping his friend and his holy land. Having received teachings from the Ninth Panchen Lama about the mythical kingdom of Shambhala and the prophecies related to its kings and constituents recorded in the *Kālacakara Tantra*, Dorjiev and others seem to have adopted the view that the relationship between Russia and Tibet was key to fulfilling the foretold creation of a Buddhist empire. The tantra predicts that in the future, the world will become so corrupted that the Twenty-fifth King of Shambhala will lead his armies out of the hidden realm and battle the forces of evil; from this Armageddon, an age of perfection will appear. The circumstances of late-nineteenth-century Asia would support the belief that such a messianic event might be on the horizon. In certain circles, it appears that the Kālacakra prophecy was projected onto Russia and its tsar, wherein Russia was the savior kingdom of North Shambhala, Tsar Nicholas was an emanation of the Tibetan Buddhist master, Tsong ka pa, who would soon initiate the process of establishing a Buddhist empire.[170] While belief in this prophecy might have motivated Dorjiev to convince the Thirteenth Dalai Lama to seek support from the tsar, Thubten Gyatso was certainly looking for a protector or a savior from the menacing forces at its borders. Whether it was the great battle against evil or just British military incursions, Tibet needed help and Dorjiev assured

[169] Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 653.
[170] John Snelling, *Buddhism in Russia: The Story of Aghvan Dorjiev, Lhasa's Emissary to the Tsar* (Dorset, UK: Element Book, 1993), 78-9.

Thubten Gyatso that the tsar had his back. Unfortunately, as Tuttle notes, the Dalai Lama "backed the wrong faction."[171]

In this era, the Great Game was being played across Asia by Russia and Britain, with China asserting its own imperial ambitions in the background. Tibet lay squarely in the center of these three powers, and the stability of the region teetered precariously upon their neutrality and independence.[172] "However, not only was there no mutual honesty during this period," Shakabpa aptly notes, "but there was [also] fear and suspicion."[173] Despite the fact that the Russians had no real interest in forging alliances with Tibet, the British were unnerved by their apparent relations. Having realized that the Chinese could not exert any real control over Tibet, Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, sought avenues to negotiate with the Tibetan government directly. When these efforts failed, further intensifying suspicions of Russian influence, Lord Curzon decided to send a mission to Tibet led by Colonel Francis Younghusband. What began as an attempt to compel the Tibetans into trade negotiations quickly devolved into a violent invasion by a foreign military, which killed more than a thousand Tibetan soldiers and pillaged numerous Tibetan monasteries.[174] And the Russian support the Dalai Lama had believed would arrive, never did.

Younghusband and his troops had set out from Sikkim in July of 1903 and a year later they were positioned on the banks of the Tsangpo River, a mere thirty-five miles from Lhasa. The Dalai Lama, who was in the middle of a three-year meditation retreat, received news that the British had crossed their Rubicon and on July 30, 1904, he decided to flee in the disguise of a wealthy Mongolian merchant. As the Dalai Lama traveled north toward Mongolia, from where

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[171] Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists*, 41.
[172] Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* is about British and Russian agents playing the Great Game, with a central character being the Tashi Lama (Panchen Lama).
[173] Ibid.
[174] See Clare E. Harris, *The Museum on the Roof of the World: Art, Politics, and the Representation of Tibet* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2012), Chapter Two.

he hoped to entreat Russia for help, affairs with the British and the Chinese progressed in his absence. On September 7, 1904, a month before he arrived in Ugra, Outer Mongolia, an agreement was reached between Colonel Younghusband and the Tibetans, represented by the Dalai Lama's chosen surrogate, the Ganden Tri Rinpoche (the head of the Geluk sect), and a group of monastic and governmental officials. The Manchu ambans were notably excluded. Under the terms of the Lhasa Convention of 1904, Tibet recognized British control over Sikkim and agreed to open trading posts in Tibet with British officials and troops stationed on site. Most importantly, however, the Convention cut off all of Tibet's foreign relations, eliminating all foreign involvement in Tibet's political affairs and forbidding foreign powers from claiming territory or development rights in Tibet.[175] Although this fostered an isolationist policy in Tibet, the Lhasa Convention did establish Tibet as a sovereign state and China as a foreign power without any right over Tibet. The Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906, signed by China and Britain without the knowledge of Tibet, compelled the Qing government to accept the Lhasa Convention, but it also reaffirmed China's suzerainty over Tibet.[176]

With Thirteenth Dalai Lama in exile in Mongolia, the Chinese government to officially deposed him as temporal ruler of Tibet, stripping him of his various formal titles. The departure of the British from central Tibet and the subsequent vacuum of power was an opportunity for the Chinese to reassert their territorial claims and political authority over Tibet. While Thubten Gyatso was in Ugra, dealing with the hostility and corruption of Jetsun Dampa Hotoktu, the chief lama of Mongolia, the Chinese had issued a decree in Batang, Kham that reduced the number of monks in monasteries and prohibited the acceptance of new monks for twenty years. They also granted land to a mission of French priests, which further roiled local communities. A monk-led

[175] Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 217-18.
[176] Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 46.

uprising resulted in the murder of the Chinese director of this program, along with two of the Catholic priests. In response, Sichuan military forces retook Batang and destroyed the monastery.[177] At this time, Zhao Erfeng was appointed commander over Kham, thus beginning his campaign of terror to consolidate power and pacify the region. He earned the nickname "Zhao the Butcher" for the many monastic officials he beheaded and the thousands of monks and lay people he killed for opposing his efforts to control Kham, especially the semi-autonomous kingdom of Dege.[178] The violent actions imposed and new policies implemented in Kham were prologue to the broader plan for bringing eastern and ultimately central Tibet under the direct control of the Qing government. As Kham was forced to pay Chinese taxes and follow Chinese law, in Lhasa the ambans were similarly seeking to Sinicize the government, military, and infrastructure.[179]

By 1905, Tibetan government officials had petitioned the Dalai Lama to return home to Tibet, and had requested that the Chinese emperor restore their leader's titles. When he reached the northeastern Tibetan region of Amdo en route to Lhasa, however, the Dalai Lama was met by Chinese officials instructing him to stay at Kumbum Monastery. This is where we found Thubten Gyatso confronting corrupted monks at the beginning of the previous chapter. From the perspective of the Chinese, delaying the Dalai Lama's journey back to Lhasa would allow more time for the Qing representatives to secure their authority in Tibet. The Dalai Lama, on the other hand, was interested in traveling to Beijing to meet with the emperor in order to discuss the violent suppression in Kham and the restoration of his political position in Tibet.[180] In his account of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's visit to the imperial court in Beijing, Charles Bell quotes

[177] Ibid.
[178] Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 718-9.
[179] Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 46-7.
[180] Ibid., 48-9.

the ruler explaining his rationale for going: "I went because the Great Fifth Dalai Lama and the Manchu Emperor had made an agreement to help each other in the way that a monk and a layperson help each other."[181] When he was finally formally invited to Beijing, after a year of waiting in Kumbum, the Dalai Lama expected the reception accorded his predecessor in 1653. Yet upon his arrival on September 28, 1908, rather than treating him with the presumed equality of the preceptor-patron relationship that had been established by Phakpa and Kubalai Khan, the Third Dalai Lama and Altan Khan, and the Fifth Dalai Lama and the Shunzhi Emperor, the Chinese instead received him as a deposed subordinate, requiring him to prostrate before the emperor. The meeting between the Dalai Lama and the Qing ruler was postponed until they compromised on a genuflection.

During his audience with both the Guangxu Emperor and his mother, the Empress Dowager, customary praises were exchanged, gifts given, and assurances that Tibet's political and religious status were offered.[182] No political agreements were reached, however, and Tibet's subordinate position and its dependence on the goodwill of China were repeatedly reinforced, as the Dalai Lama's attempts at cultivating international diplomatic connections in Beijing were thwarted. As if to add insult to injury, to his restored titles and honors was added, "Our Loyal and Submissive Vice-Regent."[183] Before Thubten Gyatso finally left Beijing, the emperor and the Empress Dowager died in quick succession. The Dalai Lama performed the blessings at their respective funerals and also attended the enthronement of the new emperor, who would be the last ruler of the Qing dynasty and the final emperor of China.[184] After stopping over once again at Kumbum Monastery, where he implemented ritual and administrative reforms, the Thirteenth

[181] Bell, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama*, 89.
[182] Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 697-8.
[183] Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 49.
[184] Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 698-9.

Dalai Lama finally returned to Lhasa from more than five years of forced exile and diplomatic travel on December 25, 1909.[185]

Whatever confidence the Dalai Lama had in the promises made by the Qing government about the security of his position and the sovereignty of Tibet was quickly dashed; news reached him before his arrival home that the Chinese had authorized the movement of military forces under Zhao Erfeng toward Lhasa. From the road, the Dalai Lama sent a letter to the British pleading for their diplomatic intervention to stop the Chinese troops from advancing and destroying the Tibetan religion. He also sent a letter to the Chinese government on behalf of "the oppressed Tibetans" that demanded they withdraw their armies, warning that the British had been notified of their actions and that the Chinese troops would otherwise be met with trouble.[186] Despite the ambans' assurance that the small group of soldiers were coming only to patrol the trade marts, a large unit arrived in Lhasa on February 12, 1910. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama once again made the decision to flee, this time to India, and China once again responded to his flight by deposing him.[187] Now, however, the Chinese government removed both his political and his religious powers, declaring publicly that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was no longer worthy of his status as an incarnation: "He has been guilty of treachery and has placed himself beyond the pale of Our Imperial favor. He is not fit to be a Reincarnation of Buddha. Let him, therefore be deprived of his titles and his position as Dalai Lama as punishment. Henceforth, no matter where he may go, no matter where he may reside, whether in Tibet or elsewhere, let him be treated as an ordinary individual."[188]

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[185] Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 223.
[186] Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 51-2.
[187] Ibid.
[188] Quoted in Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 53.

The Dalai Lama and his entourage were welcomed with great hospitality in India. During their stay in Sikkim and then Calcutta, Thubten Gyatso developed relationships with British officials, including his friend and biographer Charles Bell, and witnessed for the first time the progress of modern India.[189] He also went on pilgrimage to the major sites associated with the life of the Buddha, such as Bodhgayā, Lumbinī, and Sarnath.[190] The British, however, maintained a policy of neutrality toward Tibet, despite the Dalai Lama's repeated requests for military assistance. Meanwhile the situation in Tibet had deteriorated, as reports of violence and looting at the hands of Chinese soldiers reached the Dalai Lama. The Chinese soon realized they had overestimated their ability to replace the Dalai Lama, and had unintentionally brought him closer to their British rivals.[191] They even offered to restore Thubten Gyatso's religious power if he returned to Lhasa, but in a scathing letter he refused, unless new negotiations with British mediation were initiated. "I have lost confidence in China and in finding any solution in consultation with the Chinese," he wrote. Because of the inexcusable illegal actions and subsequent lies told by the Chinese, he continued, "it is not possible for China and Tibet to have the same relationship as before."[192] With this powerful statement rejecting any subordination to the Chinese, the Dalai Lama asserted his authority and Tibet's independence.

[189] According to Gendun Chopel, Bell grossly overstated his importance to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and his role in conducting foreign relations. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama's official biography contains no references of audiences given to Bell during his stay in Lhasa, although it does mention the 1924 visit of F.M. Bailey, the British political officer in Sikkim (Phur lcog, *Biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama,* 390). Bell's meetings with various aristocrats are mentioned, however, and there is a famous photograph of Bell with the Dalai Lama from his visit (c. 1920-21, collection of the India Office Library and Records, British Library). It was Tsarong Shapé who met with Bell in Sikkim and who acted as main lobbyist for British support of the Tibetan cause. For more information about the relationship between Bell and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, especially regarding the latter's biography of the former, see Donald S. Lopez, Jr. "Preface to the Twentieth Anniversary Edition," in *Prisoners of Shangri-la: Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 2018), ix-xx.
[190] Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 732.
[191] Shakya, "The Thirteenth Dalai Lama," 146.
[192] Quoted in Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History*, 236-7.

The fate of the Dalai Lama and Tibet, entwined as it was with China's, took a fortuitous turn, however, as the Qing dynasty fell in a nationalistic uprising during October 1911. The revolution in China caused chaos among the military troops stationed in Tibet and created an opportunity for the Tibetans to revolt against their occupiers. Chinese soldiers mutinied and deserted, the amban's residence was attacked and looted, and he was taken hostage. In eastern Tibet, Qing garrisons were slaughtered and Zhao Erfeng was killed in the ensuing melee. By early 1912, Lhasa had become a war zone, monasteries became battlefields, and monks became soldiers. In April, the makeshift Tibetan army had succeeded in their rebellion against the Chinese, and several thousand remaining Chinese troops were permitted to exit Tibet via India. When the Dalai Lama finally returned to Tibet in January 1913, his capital was without Chinese soldiers and officials for the first time since the eighteenth century.[193]

[193] Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 59.

CHAPTER THREE
Reforms, Restoration, and a Modern Renewal

The Thirteenth Dalai Lama began his renewed reign with a proclamation that severed ties with China—all relationships were "dissolved, like a clump of sand or like a rainbow in the sky"[194]—and set forth his vision for an independent and modern Tibetan state. While abroad, Thubten Gyatso had gained a deeper understanding of the world, especially the instruments of government and society that had positioned Tibet at a profound disadvantage to her neighbors. "On his return from India the Dalai Lama took a firmer control over Tibetan affairs," Charles Bell observed. "Meanwhile he had gained in knowledge and insight, and had become more wary through the bitter schooling of his double exile. He now knew not only what he could do with his own people, but also what he could not do with the nations across his mountain ranges."[195] Marking a nativist turn inward, the policies outlined by the Dalai Lama in his 1913 decree reflect his reliance on traditional methods for statecraft and his introduction of new reforms to bring Tibet into the twentieth century.

Importantly, the first two points of his proclamation mirror those of the five-point decree he issued upon assuming power in 1895. Highlighting the importance of preserving sacred spaces for the protection of Buddhism, the Dalai Lama decreed that all people "untiringly take responsibility for continuously offering worship at all monastic institutions and caring for them without distinctions, including the great sites—Rasa Trülnang and Gyetap Ramoché temples in

[194] Quoted in Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 760.
[195] Bell, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama*, 162.

Lhasa—and Tradruk [geomantic temple] and Samye, and the three monastic seats, Drepung, Sera, and Ganden monasteries."[196] Secondly, he addressed the abbots, teachers, and monks of the various Buddhist schools, instructing them to restore and enhance traditions and rituals that have declined. "There must be enhanced efforts exerted in teaching, learning, and meditating and in the protection and observance of precepts," he commands.[197] Evoking the powers of Tibetan Buddhist kingship, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama prioritizes the worship and maintenance of Tibet's most important sites—particularly the geomantic temples of the imperial era—and the preservation of Buddhism and Buddhist monasticism as a means of "serving and protecting the kind government." If all people engage in good conduct in both religious and secular affairs, he advises, "it is certain that the degree of happiness and virtue will increase for everyone in the country, oneself and others."[198] Echoing the words of Nāgārjuna and Mipham, the Dalai Lama employs the instruments of Tibetan state-protection Buddhism.

While it is logical that the other, secular regulations the Dalai Lama issued in this document would certainly serve and protect the government—fairness in taxation and law enforcement, bolstering military preparedness and border security, land rights and agricultural reforms—it is significant that the modern/secular and traditional/religious methods for state protection and stability are integrated in official policy. This approach would form the foundation of the remainder of Thubten Gyatso's reign, as well as the spark for much discontent that flares in the government and in the monasteries. Many saw the Dalai Lama's reforms not as the result of his political responsibilities, but as a dangerous movement toward Westernization. While the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had survived an assassination attempt, foreign invasion, forced

[196] Quoted in Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 760.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid., 762.

exile, and political deposition, his triumphant return to Lhasa and to power did not guarantee security—he continued to face both internal and external threats to his rule and the Tibetan state. The Ninth Panchen Lama and the monks loyal to him, as well as other monastic contingents, had proven to be untrustworthy by their involvement with and support of the Chinese during their occupation of central Tibet and the violent conflicts that succeeded. "Clearly," Goldstein states, "unswerving devotion to the Dalai Lama was not automatic."[199] While tensions at home simmered below the surface, the new Republic of China remained a persistent problem that necessitated both a diplomatic agreement and a modernized army.

The state of the Tibetan military in 1913 was pitiful, however. The roughly three thousand troops were ill-trained and under-equipped, and many were conscripted as corvée labor provided by landowners. Under the leadership of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, however, the recruitment system was reorganized to raise more troops and a retired Japanese officer was hired to train them. Eventually, new arms were purchased from the British, who were invested in resolving the ongoing hostilities between China and Tibet, and establishing a political arrangement that suited their own interests. The Chinese government relented under pressure from the British and in late 1913 agreed to meet with Tibetan representatives in Shimla, the summer capital of the British government in northern India. The ostensible purpose of these tripartite talks was to establish the border between Tibet and China, but Tibet's sovereignty and the Dalai Lama's political role vis-à-vis China were unavoidably part of the negotiations. Tibet asserted, "Tibet and China have never been under each other and will never associate with each other in the future. It is decided that Tibet is an independent State and that the precious Protector, the Dalai Lama, is the Ruler of Tibet, in all temporal as well as in spiritual affairs."[200] China, on

[199] Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 64.
[200] Quoted in Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 70.

the other hand, presented the long history of relations between China and Tibet, particularly the "many occasions on which the latter has received much needed and assistance from the former."[201] They further argued "that Tibet forms an integral part of the territory of the Republic of China, [and] that no attempts shall be made by Tibet or by Great Britain to interrupt the continuity of this territorial integrity."[202] The British, moreover, favored neither side completely, but were especially wary of overzealous Chinese imperialism to their north. Their position, therefore, was Tibet's "symbolic subordination to China, with extensive autonomy, under the watchful eye of Great Britain."[203]

These opposing parties finally came to a compromise agreement: the Shimla Convention of 1914. Tibet was to be divided into Inner (central & western) and Outer (eastern) Tibet, with limitations on Chinese control over and presence within the two regions of Tibet, as well as definitions of Tibetan political and religious autonomy firmly established. Tibet would thus be understood as forming part of China, and the Dalai Lama would be selected by the Tibetan government and formally recognized by the Chinese. In the end, although the three parties initialed the draft accord, the Chinese government refused to accept it, having rejected the agreed-upon borders that left territories of eastern Tibet outside their control.[204] Without a legitimate agreement, China posed an imminent threat to Tibet, especially when the beginning of World War I diverted Britain's attention to a more urgent crisis. In September 1915, the Dalai Lama's close confidant Tsarong Shapé was sent to Sikkim to ask Sir Charles Bell to intercede on Tibet's behalf with the British government, petitioning their help in convincing the Chinese to accept the Shimla Convention or at least remove their troops from the Tibetan border, and

[201] Ibid., 71.
[202] Ibid., 73.
[203] Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 74.
[204] Ibid., 74-5.

requesting British economic assistance and military supplies. The British government declined to act, however, offering only diplomatic aid should China agree to reopen negotiations.[205]

In 1916, Chinese forces began advancing into Kham and reclaiming territory. In the area of Riwoche they were defeated by Tibetan troops armed with British rifles. Within a year, the Tibetans had recaptured much of the region, and victory in this brief war was decidedly theirs. The British mediated a truce in 1918, but a meeting the following year failed once again to produce any agreement between China and Tibet. The need for a strong military that could defend the eastern border and protect central Tibet was now, more than ever, abundantly clear, and this required increasing the number of soldiers significantly. However, the existing recruitment strategies and tax system provided neither the manpower nor the revenue to build and sustain such an army. Under the guidance of the Dalai Lama and his new Revenue Investigation Office, new taxes on aristocratic and monastic estates, as well as several other reforms, were implemented to increase the income of the Tibetan government. These new taxes not only angered the wealthy and the religious elite, but they also intensified tensions between the military and the monastic community.[206]

At the beginning of the 1920s, relations with the British were good and the Chinese threat on the eastern border was contained, but power struggles between competing political factions in the Dalai Lama's government increasingly endangered his authority, and compelled him to strengthen the autocratic grip on his position. In 1921, the proposal to significantly increase the size of the Tibetan military was put before the National Assembly. The conservative aristocrats and monastic representatives opposed expanding the army and bolstering the military's political position, which would undermine traditional power structures and deteriorate traditional values,

[205] Ibid., 78-82.
[206] Ibid., 83-7.

as represented by the soldiers' adoption of Western-style haircuts and uniforms.[207] After a series of tense confrontations between uniformed military officers and government officials at the Assembly, the Dalai Lama was forced to demote two officers. He ultimately realized he could not rely on the military to support his position, but instead must remain vigilantly suspicious of army leaders' own pursuit of political power.[208]

The military was not the only group causing trouble for the Dalai Lama, however. In 1921, the monks of Drepung Monastery's Loseling College stormed his summer palace at Norbulingka to protest what they viewed as the extreme punishment of two of their managers who had attempted to reclaim a monastic estate by force. Loseling had a long record of anti-Dalai Lama and pro-Chinese activities—a few years earlier they had refused to fight the Chinese and gave refuge to the fleeing Manchu amban—and although the Dalai Lama was resolved to handle Loseling's threat of violence without bloodshed, he needed to make an example of them, ordering troops to surround Drepung, a monastery of some ten thousand monks. Without any external support, the monks had no choice but to concede. For the first time, the Dalai Lama was able to make a show of military might to peacefully assert his authority over volatile and rebellious monks.[209] Thubten Gyatso's monastic enemies were not restricted to Loseling, however, but occupied one of the highest positions of the Geluk. The Panchen Lama, the largest estate-holder in Tibet and one of its most powerful spiritual leaders, had refused to pay the special tax imposed on the great monasteries of Tibet to pay for military expansion, and the significant portion of war expenses from the conflicts with China and Britain that the Dalai Lama

[207] Ibid., 93-4.
[208] Ibid., 103-4.
[209] Ibid., 104-9.

had demanded he contribute. In an act of protest and tax evasion, the Panchen Lama secretly fled to Mongolia in 1923.[210]

The Loseling incident and the exile of the Panchen Lama both reflect a critical shift in the power dynamics of Tibet's central government, whereby the Dalai Lama, with the support of his military and his reforms, exerted his secular authority over the monastic communities, treasuries, and estates. "Himself a monk, he reduced the worldly power of the monks under him," Charles Bell notes. "And to that extent he increased the authority of lay officialdom."[211] Bell, who resided in Tibet from 1920-21 and in some capacity advised the Dalai Lama, observed the Tibetan leader working to consolidate his political power, ever wary of possible threats to it. Bell wrote that it was important to focus on politics in his biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama because, "he was developing into, and later on became, an absolute autocrat in both the religious and the secular administration of Tibet."[212] The Thirteenth Dalai Lama's ambitions extended beyond the government and the military, however, and efforts toward modernization that began in the years following his return in 1913 hit a fever pitch in the 1920s, causing rapid changes in Tibetan society.

The Dalai Lama introduced Tibet's first paper currency, established a Chinese-style postal system, and expanded the Tibetan telegraph network. Having realized the importance of foreign language study to diplomacy and foreign education for technological progress, he sent four boys abroad to study in England.[213] When they returned in the 1920s, the young men were instrumental in infrastructure and military projects, including bringing electricity to Lhasa. In

[210] Ibid., 110-13.
[211] Bell, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama*,191.
[212] Ibid., 136.
[213] Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 763-4.

1923, Tibet's first English grammar school opened in Gyantse.[214] The Thirteenth Dalai Lama also founded the Medical and Astrological Institute (Sman rtsi khang), a new medical school to improve education in traditional Tibetan medicine. Trained health professionals traveled to different localities to teach modern hygiene principles, distribute health pamphlets, and dispense vaccines imported from India.[215] Work on a hydroelectric plant began, a survey for mineral wealth was conducted, and a modern police force was created.[216] There was backlash at the pace and pervasiveness of westernization, however. This was expected in the policy oppositions of the conservative and religious elite, but also the Dalai Lama himself issued new reforms issued that regulated certain activities that were too western. He banned the import and consumption of tobacco, and forbade aristocrats from wearing western-style clothing, especially during official functions. To prevent envy among the people, the wealthy, moreover, were not permitted to parade their status in public—rich women, for example, were not to wear extravagant jewelry.[217]

In this era of major political, economic, military, and infrastructure developments, Tibet attempted to move toward becoming a modern state under the leadership of a modern ruler. But the secular tools Thubten Gyatso was cultivating—building up the army, altering the tax system, increasing the power of the central government—were only one side of his political project. The relative stability of the 1920s was further conducive to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's extensive program of temple-building and renovation, through which he sought to firmly establish himself as a Tibetan ruler and a Buddhist monarch, harnessing the symbolic prestige of the imperial kings and the ritual power of Buddhist kingship to both assert and protect his position—and his state. These many projects are recorded in Phurcog Thubten Jampal's official biography of the

[214] Ibid., 809.
[215] Ibid., 778-9.
[216] Goldstein, *History of Modern Tibet*, 121.
[217] Shakya, "The Thirteenth Dalai Lama," 149.

Thirteenth Dalai Lama and several are documented at length in three catalogues written by the Dalai Lama and included in his collected works.

In 1917, he commissioned a team to restore and reconsecrate the three stūpas of Nepal—at Svayambhūnāth, Boudhanāth, and Namo Buddha—emulating the tenth- and eleventh-century religious kings Yeshe Ö and Jangchub Ö of Western Tibet, and the other great rulers and lamas of Tibet who had undertaken the same work.[218] The year 1920 was particularly productive, with extensive, three-year renovations that included new mural programs begun at both the Jokhang and the Ramoche temples, as recorded in the respective catalogues of these projects.[219] At the Norbulingka, the summer estate of the Dalai Lamas, Thubten Gyatso built the larger Chansel Palace (Spyan bsal pho brang) in 1922 and the smaller Kalsang Dekyi Palace (Bskal bzang bde skyid) in 1926,[220] both of which were decorated with lavish murals. Although the Dalai Lama repaired many of the geomantic, border-taming temples,[221] only one construction project in this period of his reign was motivated by oracular prophecy: in 1922, the Ngawang Kalsang (1866-1936), the manager of Dungkar Monastery (Dung dkar), delivered a message from the fierce protector deity Dorje Shugden. It ordered that to reverse the rising of the "Lower Hor"[222]—an apparent threat to Tibet's borders—"the eastern and western stūpas of the central region that is the navel of Tibet should be restored immediately."[223] While the eastern stūpa was identified as

[218] Phur lcog, *Biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama,* 306-7.; Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 806.
[219] Thub bstan rgya mtso, "Lha ldan sprul pa'i gandho la chen por nyam gsos bgyis pa'i dkar chag smon tshig (phi)." In *gSung 'bum thub bstan rgya mtsho,* 5:667–90. v. 283-288a. New Delhi: International Academy Of Indian Culture, 1981–1982. [BDRC bdr:MW29228_47ACF0] <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW29228_47ACF0>; Thub bstan rgya mtsho, "Ra mo che gtsug lag khang rten dang brten par bcas pa nyams gsos bgyis pa'i dkar chag (mi)." In *gSung 'bum thub bstan rgya mtsho*, Vol. 5 (ca) (International Academy Of Indian Culture, 1981–1982), 691–708. Buddhist Digital Resource Center <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW29228_B00483>
[220] Wen-shing Chou, "Reimagining the Buddhist Universe: Pilgrimage and Cosmography in the Court of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (1876-1933)," *The Journal of Asia Studies* Vol. 73, No. 2 (May 2014): 423.
[221] Phur lcog, *Biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama,* 398.; Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 837.
[222] This might be a reference the (Outer) Mongolian revolution of 1921.
[223] Phur lcog, *Biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama,* 364.

the Golden Reliquary Stūpa of Tsongkhapa, which the Dalai Lama eventually refurbished, the western stūpa was recognized as the "Potala Palace itself."[224] This prophecy is thus connected to the renovations of 1923, during which the Eastern Sunlight Hall of the White Palace was furnished with a new series of murals,[225] and the main east entrance was repainted with new and renewed murals.[226]

In addition to restoring "all of the sources of the flames of Buddhism," the Thirteenth Dalai Lama followed the model of the great kings of Buddhism and the guidance of royal advice texts and "purified all traditional practices of all the monasteries without regard to which school they belonged to, including Sera, Drepung, and Ganden monasteries. He sent notices to each of these monasteries in turn."[227] The Dalai Lama had confronted monastic corruption and engaged in monastic reform during his exile; but when he returned to Tibet, the conflicts he faced and depravity he witnessed at the great monasteries of Lhasa left him determined, as Bell remarks, "to enforce a stricter standard among the members of this large and powerful body."[228] Not only did he radically limit the political power of the monasteries, but Thubten Gyatso also sought to exert his spiritual control over the discipline of the monastic community, which had apparently become lax.

In his official biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Phurcog Thubten Jampal records two waves of monastic purification targeting the three great monastic centers of greater Lhasa (*chos sde chen po gsum*). The first reforms, implemented in 1924, were necessary because, we are told, "monks were increasing more and more some bad and rotten [actions] according to the

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[224] Ibid., 365.
[225] Chou, "Reimagining the Buddhist Universe," 421.; Phur lcog, *Biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama,* 621.
[226] Phun tshogs Tshe brtan, et. al., *Budala gong bi hua yuan liu Pho brang po ta la'i ldebs bris ri mo'i 'byung kungs lo rgyus sal ba'i me long (A Mirror of the Murals in the Potala Palace)* (Beijing: Jiu zhou tu shu chu ban she, 2000), 259.
[227] Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 837.
[228] Bell, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama*, 224.

rules: propagating plants, flowers, and fruit trees; looking after horses, mules, she-yaks, yak-cows (*mdzo*); keeping dogs and cats; little attachment to cleanliness, and so on. This causes the great guardians to be offended." The Dalai Lama, therefore, "bestowed with great urgency a command for reform that they must keep their vows properly…Afterward, he repeatedly sent his personal *khenpo* attendant with the job to investigate the great feasts, the teachings, and the progress [of the monasteries], and so on."[229] Because these restrictions were maintained, moreover, "every upper and lower monastery of their respective monastic seats, which had been polluted with dog feces, dung, excrement, etc., was [now] completely clean of filth. And the herdsmen [monks] could study and contemplate without the distraction of worldly matters."[230] Not everyone was happy about Thubten Gyatso's reforms, however, his biographer notes, "As for some people [at these monasteries], because they were not able to do things according to their own desires, these tortuous circumstances appeared to be a judgment they attained or that befell them."[231]

While this example makes clear that for the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's purification of the Tibetan Buddhist *saṅgha* to succeed, he required not only the participation of the major Geluk monasteries and ostensibly their leadership, but also specially tasked investigators to ensure that the new rules were being followed and standard regulations of the vinaya were being upheld. It seems that the Dalai Lama also utilized *chayik* (*bca' yig*), or monastic charters, to institutionalize his reforms, either writing new ones or revising existing ones. *Cha yig* generally lay out the regulations of a given monastic community, either building on and clarifying rules of the vinaya, or presenting the vinaya rules in an accessible way. Because in Tibetan monastic curricula only

[229] Phur lcog, *Biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama,* 388.
[230] Ibid., 388-9.
[231] Ibid., 389.

commentaries and summaries of the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya, rather than the full canonical texts, were studied—and only by the small class of advanced, scholarly monks—the vast majority of monks knew little of the monastic code they were expected to follow. The local monastic guidelines laid out in a monastery's *cha yig*, and explained in oral instruction, regulated (and continue to regulate) monastic life to a far greater degree than the vinaya.[232] The *cha yig* was thus an essential instrument for *saṅgha* purification wielded by Thubten Gyatso. In his biography, the author explains, "It was appropriate to gradually bestow [new] monastic charters (*bca' yig*) which established in detail what to adopt and what to reject with regard to the right conduct of the vinaya rules for the high, low, and in-between ranks of the monastic communities belonging to the great centers of the dharma [i.e., the three major monasteries of greater Lhasa] that are themselves the highest foundation of the accumulation of merit for all beings."[233]

In 1925, for example, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama composed a lengthy *cha yig* (numbering two hundred sixty-seven folios) for Kumbum's Jampaling Monastery in Amdo,[234] where he had enacted his first large-scale purification project during his stays there in 1906 and 1909. Another institution rehabilitated by Thubten Gyatso was Dungkar Monastery, which was rebuilt and revitalized by its abbot at the time, Ngawang Kalsang, commonly known as Dromo Geshe after the monastery's village and the same figure who had delivered the prophecy of Dorje Shugden, Dungkar's resident oracle.[235] Because of its proximity to the Sikkimese border, the Dalai Lama

[232] Berthe Jansen, *The Monastery Rules: Buddhist Monastic Organization in Pre-Modern Tibet* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2018), 18. See this work for more information about the genre of *cha yig*.
[233] Phur lcog, *Biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama,* 434.
[234] Thub bstan rgya mtsho, "bCa' yig skor (chi)," in *gSung 'bum thub bstan rgya mtsho*, Vol. 4 v. 283-288a (New Delhi: International Academy Of Indian Culture, 1981–1982), 9-276. [BDRC bdr:MW29228_799607] <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW29228_799607>
[235] There is not a lot of information available on Dromo Geshe Ngawang Kalzang, aside from websites about him (http://www.domogesherinpoche.org) and connected to Dorje Shugden, the controversial deity who is apparently connected to the Dromo Geshe lineage. The most detailed European-language biographical information on Dromo Geshe was recorded by Lama Anagarika Govinda in his book *The Way of the White Clouds*. They met in Sikkim in 1931.

had stopped at Dromo in 1912 on his way back to Lhasa from exile in India. In 1929, he composed a short *cha yig* for Dungkar that focuses primarily on the rules of serving tea during rituals. However, this monastic charter not only illuminates the kinds of regulations the Thirteenth Dalai Lama sought to implement, but also offers, in his own words, the reasoning for instituting reforms there and the rationale for his larger program of purifying the Tibetan *saṅgha*. "For the enlightened ranks, who hold the rules and moral decisions and belong to the auspicious and spontaneously arising Dromo Dung(kar) Monastery, to continuously increase," he explains in his introduction, "in the beginning it is essential for the individual following the rules, whose character is good and mind is very diligent, to understand all the favorable conditions for abandoning the impediments which are explained in the vinaya."[236] The rules laid out in the *cha yig* are therefore meant to help create the best conditions for the monks to be able to fulfill their vows and avoid any downfalls.

Maintaining such a community of learned and enlightened monks is especially important, and perhaps difficult, in remote areas such as Dromo. In his colophon, the Dalai Lama explains, "In the hinterlands, because the stainless teachings of the Buddha are to be transmitted to faraway places, faultless moral choices that conform to Buddhism should occur [among the monastic community]. So now I say in conclusion, because reliance on the entire monastic community is the root of the waxing and waning of supreme learning and realization of the Buddha's teachings, may the disciplined [ones] who maintain the foundational written rules that establish the two laws (*khrims gnyis*), blossom and consequently benefit the doctrine and all

[236] Thub bstan rgya mtsho, "Pad dkar 'chang ba'i sku phreng bcu gsum pa ngag dbang blo bzang thub bstan rgya mtsho nas bstsal ba'i dgon pa'i bca' yig blang dor rnam gsal," in *Bod kyi lo rgyus yig tshags dang gzhung yig phyogs bsdus dwangs shel me long*, Par gzhi dang po (Pe cin: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1989) [BDRC bdr:MW22022_7ADAEF] <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW22022_7ADAEF>, 39.

beings."[237] The central role of the *saṅgha* in the spiritual lives and religious practices of Tibet—as the teachers of doctrine, recipients of offerings, and performers of ceremonies—requires that monks maintain their pure morality. This is quite typical, but reference to the "two laws" reflects the worldly and spiritual nature of the rules, and likewise, the temporal and religious effects of keeping those rules. The monastic community, therefore, is subject to the political and religious authority of the Dalai Lama, and their purity, moreover, affects not only the well-being of the doctrine and sentient beings, but also the state of the Buddhist polity.

At the end of the twelfth chapter his biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Phurcog Thubten Jampal summarizes the effects of Thubten Gyatso's 1931 reforms—which included forbidding monks from gambling, engaging in farm and construction work[238]—as well as the overall impact of his efforts to purify the Tibetan Buddhist *saṅgha*. "Because of the completely purified corrections that smelted, shaped, and burnished all the right conduct and practices of the sutras and mantras, which are performed as part of the foundational prātimokṣa, the root of the teachings, according to the meaning of the rules bestowed by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (Rgyal dbang gong rim), the life-vein of the precious teachings, which had become weakened like a sick man, was completely maintained by the actions through skillful means in the pure life stories (*rnam thar*) of all the disciplined and conscientious holders of religious discipline, who are knowledge-holders and monk-renunciants."[239] Through his reforms that rectified the behavior of the *saṅgha*, the Dalai Lama established a renewed community of monks who, now purified and disciplined, were once again the worthy keepers of the Buddha's teachings and sources of merit for all beings, thus restoring the strength of the dharma in Tibet.

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[237] Ibid., 42.
[238] Phur lcog, *Biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama,* 435-6.
[239] Ibid., 438-9.

The twelfth chapter of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's biography is dedicated to his many activities that benefitted the dharma and all beings: his monastic reforms, as well as his various restoration projects and his commissioning of a new printing of the Buddhist canon. The prologue articulates how these accomplishments are characterized according to tradition: "The twelfth chapter explains how the thousand blazing suns of [the Dalai Lama's] enlightened works—of both traditions, political and spiritual—gave rise to a widespread, new Golden Age of happiness and well-being in this land. Having considered that reliance upon the *saṅgha*, temples, and sacred objects had become the foundation of and are fundamental to the happiness and well-being of the dharma and sentient beings, he restored the Trulnang (Jokhang), the Divine Palaces of the Second Potala, etc.; corrected the teaching, practice, explanation, and studying of the monastic community; commissioned new printing blocks of the Precious Teachings of the Buddha (*bka' 'gyur*), and so on."[240] Drawing on the tropes of Buddhist kingship, here, the author hints at the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's motivation for performing these various deeds: by restoring ritual efficacy and structural integrity (physically for buildings and institutionally for the monastic community) to these centers of Tibetan religious life, practice, and knowledge, the dharma is preserved, all people are satisfied, bringing the dawn of a "Golden Age" of peace and stability in Tibet. It is clear that these traditional instruments of the Buddhist state remained not only relevant, but also critical to the role of the Dalai Lama, even as he sought to introduce a new modernity in Tibet.

In the two 1922 works that Thubten Gyatso composed to document the completion of his restoration projects at both the Lhasa Trulnang (the Jokhang) and Ramoche, he explains his motivations more explicitly, offering insight into the goals of his construction program more

[240] Phur lcog, *Biography of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama,* 290-1.

broadly. *A Pool of the Ocean of Milk ('O mtsho'i rdzing)*[241] and *The New Pearl Necklace (Mu tig do shal gsar)*[242] each record the founding stories and renovation histories of the Jokhang and Ramoche temples, respectively, in addition to the details of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's contributions: from the architectural elements repaired and deity images repainted, to the amount of grain and silver paid and the names of the master artists and gilders hired.[243] The opening invocation in *A Pool of the Ocean of Milk* extols the sacred site and pays homage to the Jokhang's founder, the first religious king of Tibet, Songtsen Gampo, using a play on his name to celebrate his qualities: "I praise with my mind, the great Dharma king—whose everlasting love [was born] from the strong intimacy of compassion, whose rule (*gtsan*) was strong through making the two laws [spiritual and political] righteous (*srong*), and who was very prudent (*sgam po*) and wise—together with his queens and his ministers. In order for the Magical Apparition Gandhola which was born from magical displays of many kinds of marvelous physical manifestations to not be harmed by the evil of invading armies or the four elements, may its oath-bound watchmen not be distracted. Having prepared the conditions for the restoration of the excellent Miraculous Temple, which is a source of merit and spirituality for the teachings and all beings, let us open the threshold of this sealed catalogue."[244]

Here, the Dalai Lama describes the king's attributes that he most admires, reflecting the mythic model that subsequent rulers of Tibet have sought to emulate. Particularly revealing is the ideal of balancing and mastering the two laws (*khrims gnyis*), which alludes to the two aspects of

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[241] Full title is "A catalogue of the restoration of the Great Emanated Gandhola of Lhasa, together with verses of admiration in a sequence that is beneficially arranged, entitled 'A Pool of the Ocean of Milk from which Arises a Hundred Thousand Manifestations of Faith.'"

[242] Full title is "A Catalogue of the Restoration of the Sanctuaries and Sacred Objects of the Ramoche Temple, entitled 'The New Pearl Necklace that is the Ornament of Inexhaustible Happiness and Benefit.'"

[243] Full translations of both texts by Michael Akester are available in the Appendix of André Alexander, *The Temples of Lhasa: Tibetan Buddhist Architecture from the 7th to the 21st Centuries* (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2005), 295-304.

[244] Thub bstan rgya mtsho, "Lha ldan sprul pa nyam gsos bgyis pa'i dkar chag," 1b-2a.

traditional rule—for both kings and Dalai Lamas—in Tibet: the spiritual and political. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama, as we have seen, successfully established connections to Songtsen Gampo and the imperial-era Golden Age through various construction and renovation projects, especially in the early years of his reign; because reforming secular and religious law was one of his greatest aspirations and challenges, it is not surprising that we see it highlighted in this context, as well as in other texts by and about the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. We further find Thubten Gyatso's praise of the Jokhang as beneficial to the dharma and all living beings as mirroring, and thus reinforcing, the language of other proclamations that ordered the structural and ritual restoration of important temples. The religious importance of the Jokhang Temple is the obvious reason why he needed to renovate it, but later in the catalogue the Dalai Lama describes the specific circumstances that warranted extensive repairs: "Because it had been many years since previous restorations were made, and in the meantime, those wishing to do evil, possessed by Māra, made their military encampments in the vicinity, and so on, the consecration of the outer structure and the objects within were violated in every way, and no matter what happened they were made very defective. Restoring the collection of auspicious conditions for faith and devotion or, as is authentically taught, restoring what is beneficial to the doctrine and all living beings, in general and in particular, was applied with altruistic and virtuous intentions."[245]

The Thirteenth Dalai Lama commissioned two renovations of the Jokhang, the first of which began in 1913, not long after the violent conflicts in Lhasa following the Chinese invasion, occupation, and final expulsion. Due to its central location in the capital and its symbolic significance, this most sacred temple was often the site of clashes. In a 1910 letter to

[245] Ibid., 8b.

the Manchu amban regarding the situation in Tibet, the Dalai Lama states he had received in exile reports that when the Chinese cavalry arrived in Lhasa, "regarding the Tibetan people as enemies, they fired countless shots at Lhasa's Tsuklakhang and my Potala Palace."[246] Shakabpa recounts, moreover, that two years later, during the chaotic aftermath of the Qing's fall, "special monk soldiers were assigned to protect the Potala Palace, Norbu Lingkha Palace, and Lhasa's Tsuklakhang."[247] As Lhasa became a battleground, the Chinese held areas south of Lhasa, while "the northern region, including the Tsuklakhang, were held by the Tibetan army. Doors, windows, and roofs were blocked by sandbags and fortifications of stone and earth were built."[248] Thubten Gyatso is clearly referencing these events in his renovation catalogue, emphasizing that it was not merely the structure of the temple nor the bodies of its sacred images that required repairs, but everything had to be purified and reconsecrated if the site was to regain its power as a source of merit and site of spiritual practice.

The New Pearl Necklace similarly contextualizes the renovation of the Ramoche Temple within the legend of its founding and the record of its renovations, but rather than relating its twentieth-century rehabilitation to the recent tumult, the Dalai Lama attributes it to institutional mismanagement. Although the monastic community of Gyutö (Rgyud stod), the Upper Tantric College, which was based there, was responsible for maintaining the rituals and buildings of the Ramoche, apparently they had not fulfilled their obligations for years, despite "abundant religious offerings and resources."[249] According to the catalogue, "The condition of the temple structure and contents had become so extremely old and dilapidated, that there was an

[246] Quoted in Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 730.
[247] Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 736.
[248] Ibid., 738.
[249] Thub bstan rgya mtsho, *Ra mo che nyams gsos bgyis pa'i dkar chag*, 4b.

investigation that went after the higher lamas and abbots."[250] With financial and spiritual misconduct of monastic leaders being the main cause for Ramoche's renovation, it is not surprising to find the following listed among the many new and renewed murals: "Inside the assembly hall, on the left of the main door…new drawings of the vinaya are arranged with inscriptions and verses of good wishes."[251] This mural seems to be not only a part of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's extensive program of temple renovation, but also an instrument of his project of purifying the *saṅgha*, generally across Tibet and specifically at Ramoche.

The colophon of *Moonlight Vanquishing the Darkness of Transgression*, the illustrated commentary on the monastic code composed by Thubten Gyatso around the same time as his Ramoche renovation and upon which its vinaya mural is based, gives further context to this project. First, the Dalai Lama is unambiguous about the purpose of the "newly occurring, unprecedented drawings," which are faithfully replicated in the mural: "By the power of [these drawings], may pure vinaya-holders, whose lives are in accordance with the law, become widespread throughout the entire world."[252] Purifying the *saṅgha* by correcting the behavior of the ordained is the goal. This is reinforced as the Dalai Lama explains the circumstances of the text's composition and its pictures' creation: "When the new paintings of the Ramoche Temple were being composed together with the connected inscriptions and verses of good wishes, this [book] too, together with practices that are beneficial to the restoration of the doctrine of the completely pure vinaya piṭaka were spoken by [Thubten Gyatso]."[253] The Ramoche renovation, the illustrated vinaya commentary, and the various reforms to purify the monastic community, by

[250] Ibid.
[251] Ibid., 5b.
[252] Thub bstan rgya mtsho, *Nye mkho'i dbyibs tshad phyag len mthong rgyun ltar dpe ris su bkod pa nyes ltung mun pa 'joms pa'i zla 'od (dzi).''* In *gSung 'bum thub bstan rgya mtsho,* Volume 5 (ca). New Delhi: International Academy Of Indian Culture, 1981–1982), v. 283-288a. [BDRC bdr:MW29228_A6316B] <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW29228_A6316B>, 9a.
[253] Ibid.

the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's own account, were understood as integrally connected to one another to achieving his larger goals. Although he does not explicitly relate his temple renovations and monastic reforms to rituals of state protection, as I have discussed at length, these activities are deeply rooted in traditions of Buddhist and Tibetan kingship that connect temple renovation and *saṅgha* purity to political stability. The Ramoche's vinaya mural, furthermore, represents an important instance where these conventional methods for bringing stability and security to the state come together in a single powerful image at one of Tibet's holiest sites, which had become an egregious example of monastic neglect and corruption.

During his 1923 renovation of the Potala, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had the same vinaya mural painted in the east entryway of its White Palace. Perhaps he wanted his new graphic interpretations of the vinaya's basic and often abstruse rules to be promulgated in a location of greater prestige and higher traffic than the Ramoche. Because this larger restoration project was apparently geomantic, motivated by the prophecy of Shugden, integrating images intended for purifying the monastic community could have bolstered the apotropaic potency of the renovation. Or perhaps this mural was part of his wider campaign of visual messaging that he extended with the new cosmologically-themed murals of the White Palace's Eastern Sunlight Hall, asserting his spiritual authority and temporal legitimacy.[254] Although we cannot know his precise motivations, those expressed in the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's biography and articulated in his own renovation catalogues, together with the responsibilities embedded in the long legacy of leadership he inherited, make clear that his renovation program—and especially the vinaya murals at the imperial-era Ramoche Temple and Great Fifth's Potala Palace—were meant to

[254] See Chou, "Reimagining the Buddhist Universe," 441.

harness the power of merit, ritual magic, and mythic symbolism to supplement other methods of state protection.

A Modern Buddhist Ruler

In his letter to the Chinese officer Lo Titai, written from exile in Darjeeling, Thubten Gyatso, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama explains, "From time immemorial religious kings have been known to embody both the religious and political leadership in this religious land of Tibet. Since this religious system is without equal, if our government were to be changed then it would cease to exist, as was the destruction of Buddhism in India. Given the importance of our religion, I will forebear any hardship."[255] The legends of Tibet's most important rulers—the great kings of the imperial age, the monk-monarchs of Western Tibet, the Dalai Lamas—frame temporal leadership in religious terms, defining their bodies as emanations of buddhas and bodhisattvas, and characterizing their reigns as beneficial to the Buddha's teachings and to all living beings. According to these models of Buddhist kingship, rooted in the literary archetypes of India and the indigenous narratives of Tibet, political power is meant to serve religion, a truth laid bare by the Dalai Lama in his epistle. There is no disentangling these dual roles; the result of sustaining a moral society, supporting the Buddhist community, and fulfilling spiritual responsibilities is political stability and national security. Even the more conventional political position of the Dalai Lamas as part of the preceptor-patron relationship with Chinese emperors, through multiple dynasties and across numerous rulers, is founded on their religious authority. The inextricable integration of Buddhism and government thus means, as the Dalai Lama forewarns, that a change in the political system would be disastrous to the religious system—and vice versa.

[255] Quoted in Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 730-1.

And yet, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama sought to carve out a new type of political leadership that was distinctly secular and ambitiously modern—a radical move in the Tibetan context. Rather than have his dual roles function together as a union of temporal and spiritual authority, he attempted to separate his religious position and activities as parallel to a secular political project that was not based in Buddhism, but in modernity. Having been betrayed by the Nyingma gurus whose rituals of state protection and construction of geomantic temples had kept him safe, but whose black magic had threatened his life, the Dalai Lama could no longer rely on these traditions for defending his borders and preserving his rule. When he witnessed the corruption and depravity at Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, and clashed with the political posturing of monastic leaders, the Dalai Lama, furthermore, knew this impurity of the *saṅgha* threatened stability and necessitated reform. Although these problems could have been tackled using conventional methods of Buddhist kingship, the successive waves of invasion, deposition, and exile revealed the limitations—and weaknesses—of Tibet's traditional culture and theocratic political system. During his two periods of exile, Thubten Gyatso not only learned of the many ways Tibet lagged behind her neighbors in technology and infrastructure, but he also become aware of his own geopolitical ignorance, diplomatic inexperience, and military unpreparedness.

When he finally returned to Tibet, it was with a new vision for his country and a new approach for his reign. As he fulfilled his duties as religious ruler, renovating temples and reforming the *saṅgha*, the Dalai Lama also altered the balance of governmental power in favor of the laity and implemented an extensive program of modernization and militarization. Unlike the changes to government the Chinese had threatened and the Dalai Lama had bemoaned in his letter—changes perceived as fundamentally dangerous to Tibetan Buddhism—Thubten Gyatso believed his twentieth-century embodiment of religious and political leadership could bring Tibet

forward and protect her national integrity, while creating conditions that would be beneficial to the religious and worldly lives of the Tibetan people. However, the Dalai Lama's naïveté and Tibet's conservative resistance, which had led to the disastrous invasions and exiles of the first half of his reign, ultimately caused the collapse of his projects of modernization and militarization in its second half. He had underestimated the strength of his foreign aggressors and overestimated the power of Tibetan religious cultural pride, and subsequently he underestimated the costs of rapid development and overestimated the extent of his own influence.

But for a brief moment, in the 1920s, there seemed to be a perfect mix of modern and traditional activities that brought happiness to all beings and the dharma, almost ushering in a new Golden Age to Tibet. The Dalai Lama had defeated the Chinese with his freshly-equipped and recently-increased army, bringing peace and stability, but the situation remained fragile. As a complement to his programs of militarization and modernization, Thubten Gyatso drew on Buddhist models of kingship and traditions of state protection to further secure his domain through temple renovation and institutional reform. Central to this political undertaking was the purification of the monastic community, which he sought to accomplish by creating accessible, inexpensive, and easily reproduceable pictorial explanations of the monastic code. While they were eventually transformed into a mural that was first an important part of his Ramoche restoration and then his Potala renovation, in the next chapter I demonstrate how these pictures were developed as careful, visual exegeses that integrate information drawn from canonical sources with knowledge acquired through practical monastic education. Amid his many experimental projects of the 1920s, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama also composed an illustrated commentary on the monastic code that challenges conventions through its introduction of a new visual apparatus to the genre of scriptural commentary.

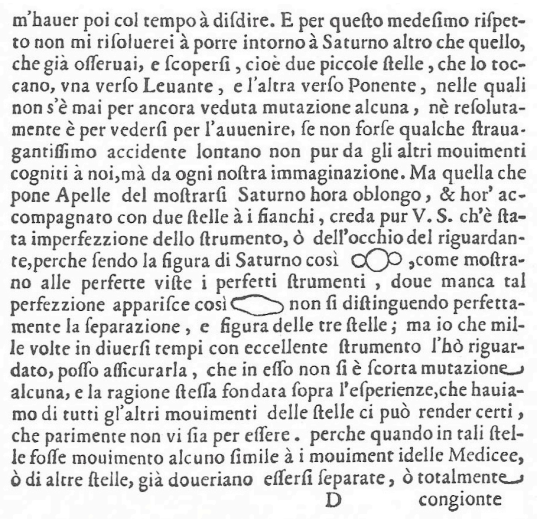
PART TWO
"Drawings & Figures to Protect what is Proper": The Thirteenth Dalai Lama's *'Dul ris* as a Visual Commentary

"In 1613, when Galileo published the first telescopic observations of Saturn, word and drawing were as one. The stunning images, never seen before, were just another sentence element.

Saturn, a drawing, a word, a noun.

The wonderful becomes familiar and the familiar wonderful."

~Edward R. Tufte, *Envisioning Information*


m'hauer poi col tempo à diſdire. E per queſto medeſimo riſpetto non mi riſoluerei à porre intorno à Saturno altro che quello, che già offeruai, e ſcoperſi, cioè due piccole ſtelle, che lo toccano, vna verſo Leuante, e l'altra verſo Ponente, nelle quali non s'è mai per ancora veduta mutazione alcuna, nè reſolutamente è per vederſi per l'auuenire, ſe non forſe qualche ſtrauagantiſſimo accidente lontano non pur da gli altri mouimenti cogniti à noi, mà da ogni noſtra immaginazione. Ma quella che pone Apelle del moſtrarſi Saturno hora oblongo, & hor' accompagnato con due ſtelle à i fianchi, creda pur V. S. ch'è ſtata imperfezzione dello ſtrumento, ò dell'occhio del riguardante, perche ſendo la figura di Saturno così ,come moſtrano alle perfette viſte i perfetti ſtrumenti, doue manca tal perfezzione appariſce così non ſi diſtinguendo perfettamente la ſeparazione, e figura delle tre ſtelle; ma io che mille volte in diuerſi tempi con eccellente ſtrumento l'hò riguardato, poſſo aſſicurarla, che in eſſo non ſi è ſcorta mutazione alcuna, e la ragione ſteſſa fondata ſopra l'eſperienze, che hauiamo di tutti gl'altri mouimenti delle ſtelle ci può render certi, che parimente non vi ſia per eſſere. perche quando in tali ſtelle foſſe mouimento alcuno ſimile à i mouiment idelle Medicee, ò di altre ſtelle, già doueriano eſſerſi ſeparate, ò totalmente congionte

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A trio of circles lined up on a horizontal axis, borders gently touching, the center form slightly larger than the adjoining two. A cloud shape, like an orb being stretched at its sides. Without note or disclaimer, explanation or caption, Galileo Galilei placed these two drawings amidst his written words describing the perfected vision of Saturn made manifest by his improved telescopic instrument. How could one possibly use terrestrial terms to explain that the pinhole of light in the night sky is, in fact, encircled by a ring? How could familiar, mundane words encapsulate wonderful, unimaginable images? Galileo's drawings filled an expressive void, eliciting understanding that words alone could not evokeAs Buddhism traveled from the Gangetic plains of India to the far-flung corners of Asia, embedded in the texts and images carried by devout and daring monk-missionaries were the cultural mores, geographical references, and social structures indigenous to their place of origin. Like stowaways, these

foreign allusions arrived among the doctrines and practices of this new tradition, equally requiring explanation and defying translation. In a past life, the Buddha was an elephant. In his last life, he renounced his family and joined a community of fellow renunciants. After his enlightenment, he taught in the Deer Park at Sarnath, nearby to Kashi. After his death, his cremated remains were entombed in eight stūpas. Elephants, renunciants, Kashi, stūpas—no less alien, no less unimaginable than Saturn's rings. The heavenly body floats beyond our planet, but India exists beyond our world. Both were rendered invisible by distance—physical and conceptual—and yet, like Saturn, the Buddha, the stūpa, the elephant were made understandable, tangible, real through visual representation.

Of course, it was not only the non-Indian recipients of Indian Buddhism for whom words were inaccessible, but the illiterate masses at its source as well. Before Buddhism first departed its homeland for points north and south, art served as essential visual aids to the promulgation of Buddhist stories and practices. Narrative artworks and monumental architecture gave way to images of buddhas and bodhisattvas, all nurturing both doctrinal understanding and devotional practice. The monastic code itself instructed builders of monasteries to not only paint protective figures like *yakṣa* near certain doorways, but also to draw the Wheel of Becoming (*bhavacakra*; *srid pai'i 'khor lo*), illustrating the realms of rebirth and the workings of samsara, outside the assembly hall where monks and devotees alike would gather.[256] With visual culture at the center of Buddhist life in India, one can thus imagine how indispensable the small sculptures,

[256] For more on prescriptions for "artwork" in the vinaya and the history of the *bhavacakra*, see: Geshe Sopa, "The Tibetan 'Wheel of Life': Iconography and Doxography," *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* Vol. 7, No. 1 (1984): 125-45; Gregory Schopen, "Art, Beauty, and the Business of Running a Buddhist Monastery," in *Buddhist Monks and Business Matters: Still More Papers on Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 19-44; and Eric Huntington, *Creating the Universe: Depictions of the Cosmos in Himalayan Buddhism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018).

illuminated manuscripts, and rolled-up paintings transported by Buddhist proselytizers were to elucidating the message they sought to convey to populations abroad.

While images acted as tools in the translation of ideas and the facilitation of practice, what about the founding of the monastic community and its governing rules? Born from centuries of navigating and negotiating the social and political world of ancient South Asia, the Buddhist codes of discipline (*vinaya*) abound with Indian-ness that is not merely cultural but even climatic. How does one go on the rainy season retreat in a place without monsoon? Essential to the establishment of Buddhism across Asia was the ordination of monks, but unlike other aspects of the tradition, neither a pervasive nor cohesive visual tradition existed to help the newly-ordained understand the vows they took, the rules they followed, and the quotidian necessities of their daily existence. While there are examples of pictorial presentations of worship[257] and illustrated manuals for constructing ritual altars,[258] few, if any, similar guides exist that depict the everyday logistics of monastic life, such as standard clothing, shoes, and housing.

In the introduction to his artist's guide to the vinaya, the nineteenth-century Tibetan luminary, Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Taye ('Jam mgon kon sprul blo gros mtha' yas; 1813-1899/1900) remarks, "In the beginning, the foundational drawings [of] a correct dwelling, a big and small temple (*gtsug lag khang*), three hermitages—big, medium, small—and a courtyard, did not come to the country of Tibet. Similarly, in terms of possessions (*yod pa*), in the root sūtra, [foundational drawings of] a personal temple together with personal necessities also [did not

[257] There are many sculptural portrayals of the worship of pipal tree (or the Bodhi Tree) and of stūpas from the railings at Sañchi and Bharhut (See, for example, Vidya Dehejia, "Aniconism and the Multivalence of Emblems," *Ars Orientalis* Vol. 21 (1991): 45-66)

[258] For more on dharani altar diagrams from Dunhuang see, for example, Michelle Wang, *Mandalas in the Making: The Visual Culture of Esoteric Buddhism at Dunhuang* (Boston: Brill, 2017); and Paul Copp, "Altar, Amulet, Icon Transformations in Dhāraṇī Amulet Culture, 740-980," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* Vol. 17, Studies in Chinese Art History / Études sur l'histoire de l'art chinois (2008): 239-264.

come].”[259] The result of such omissions is seemingly expressed in Jamgon Kongtrul’s work explaining the monastic code: “Nowadays, it is rare to find any of the teachings on discipline practiced as they were taught [by the Buddha]. However, it would be good and fitting if at the very least the monastic sites and monks’ quarters were to accord with the style described in the scriptures on discipline, since this style was taught by the Buddha himself.”[260]

Without pictorial guides to direct orthodox living, so much of Buddhist monastic life—from its beginnings to its present—has relied on commentarial explications and oral transmissions. Missionary-monks from India and those intrepid pilgrim-monks from across Asia who traveled to the Buddhist motherland passed on to new communities mundane knowledge of Indian monastic life along with ordination vows, in addition to other translated scriptures. The Chinese monk Yijing (635 - 713) spent some ten years studying at the famed Nālandā monastic university and several years in Śrībhoja on Sumatra. Of the utmost importance for this monk was not delivering the latest translations, however. Instead, before he even arrived back home, he composed *A Record of the Inner Law Sent Home from the South Seas (Nan-hai- ji-gui-nei-fa-zhuan,*Taisho No. 2125) for the explicit purpose of informing his fellow monks in China (or the Divine Land, as he calls it) of the “holy teachings and essential rules and regulations currently in effect”[261] in the monasteries of India and the islands of the South Seas.

At the beginning of his *Record*, Yijing explains that while there had been great efforts to study and follow the Indian vinayas in China, the fact of the matter is that these collections of

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[259] ’Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha’ yas, “’Dul ba mdo rtsa las ’byung ba’i ri mo’i bri yig tshangs pa’i pa tra.” in *rGya chen bka’ mdzod (dpal spungs par ma ’brug spa gro’i bskyar par ma)*, Volume 13 (pa) (Paro: Ngodup, 1975–1976), 1b5-6. <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW21808_FC6FE0>

[260] Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Taye, *The Treasury of Knowledge, Book Five: Buddhist Ethics*, trans. International Translation Committee (founded by V.V. Kalu Rinpoché) (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1998), 147.

[261] Śramana Yijing, *A Record of the Inner Law Sent Home from the South Seas* (*Nan-hai- ji-gui-nei-fa-zhuan*) (Buddhist Monastic Traditions of Southern Asia)*,* Taishō Volume 54 No. 2125, trans. Li Rongxi (Berkeley, CA: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2000), 17.

texts "are naturally verbose and have superfluous parts, and it requires a lifetime to read all the commentaries."[262] Furthermore, the method of studying the vinaya in Chinese monasteries was "as laborious as building a mountain."[263] The combination of the impenetrability of the vinaya itself with the confusing and incongruous education in and practices of monastic discipline, according to Yijing, resulted in "errors and mistakes [creeping] in during the course of transmission, so that the disciplinary rules have become discrepant."[264] Thus, his motivation was to directly—and hastily—communicate to his peers what he himself had witnessed, learned, and double-checked with his teachers, to be the correct and authentic manner of monastic living in India. With his *Record*, they could learn it quickly, clearly, and "without having to take the trouble to move even one foot,"[265] since he had done the necessary traveling.

With his guide to living Indian monasticism of the seventh century, Yijing sought to solve critical issues within the monastic community of his time and place, but these problems also plagued communities across Asia and over the history of Buddhism: what were the true orthodox standards of behavior for monks and nuns, and how should these technical rules—in all their Indian-ness—be interpreted and applied in different contexts? Before a complete recension of the Indian vinaya was translated into Chinese in the fifth century, piecemeal canonical and paracanonical texts circulated in East Asia, along with exemplary foreign monks. One such eminent figure was the influential Kashmiri translator Buddhayaśas (c. late 4th/early 5th century), who is said to have brought the entire Sarvāstivāda vinaya to China in his head, reciting the full text (among others) from memory. Although it might the stuff of Buddhist legend, this story is indicative of the irregular dissemination of Buddhist vinayas in China and the reliance on foreign

[262] Ibid., 15.
[263] Ibid., 16.
[264] Ibid., 17.
[265] Ibid., 18.

monks as couriers, translators, and role models. The result of such erratic and disparate transmission was, as T. Griffith Foulk explains, that "the leaders of Chinese monastic communities were often forced to improvise rules."[266] It is no surprise, moreover, that we find Yijing confessing in his *Record*, "I should say with a sigh that when I was in the Divine Land of China, I thought of myself as knowing the Vinaya well, and little imagined that after coming here to India, I should have found myself ignorant of the subject. Had I not come to the west, how could I have seen such correct rules and regulations?"[267]

As institutional Buddhism took root throughout Asia, communities looked to vinaya commentaries composed by foreign and indigenous teachers to explain, interpret, and ultimately adapt the corpus of discipline, born in India, to the current time and place of its application. The translation of technical terminology was only half the battle; in China, even after the discrepancies between recensions was resolved, many of the vinaya rules were neither comprehensible nor applicable culturally or geographically and were thus completely lost in translation.[268] The urgency of Yijing's *Recond* is clear. Similarly in Tibet, whose monastic system exemplifies large-scale and widespread institutionalized Buddhism, the large peripatetic *saṅgha* of the vinaya was an abstract ideal inaccessible and in many ways irrelevant. Transmission of the monastic code, therefore, was not only a project of linguistic translation from Sanskrit to Tibetan, as well as cultural and geographic adaptation from India to Tibet; it was also an ongoing transformation of the idealized tradition of early Indian monasticism[269] to the highly institutionalized monasticism of Tibet. Much of the vinaya is a reflection (or presents

[266] T. Griffith Foulk, "Daily Life in the Assembly," in *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 339.
[267] Yijing, *Record of the Inner Law,* 63.
[268] Foulk, "Daily Life in the Assembly," 340.
[269] For more about the reality of institutionalized Indian Buddhism, see Jonathan A. Silk, *Managing Monks: Administrators and Administrative Roles in Indian Buddhist Monasticism* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

itself as a reflection) of the issues, ideas, and ideals of the early Buddhist community, centered on the figure of the *bhikṣu*: the beggar-monk, whose robe is made of a patchwork of fabric scraps, who carries a bowl to collect alms for food, and whose staff has tinkling rings to alert householders of his approach.

While the concept of the *vihāra*, a monastery, is present in early sources, also pervasive is the idea of the hermitage in the woods—a place for meditative practice removed from the world. Tradition holds that originally there were no monasteries because there was no need: the monks were meant to wander, to beg, and to sleep at the root of trees. Only after lay followers complained that the sojourning monks were killing too many insects during monsoon was the rainy season retreat established, requiring the entire *saṅgha* to remain sedentary for three months of the year and thus necessitating monasteries. Archaeological and textual evidence suggests, however, that the earliest *vihāras* appeared in India in the first century CE; whether seasonal retreats or full-time institutions, this early conception and construction of a monastery evolved into large-scale centers of monastic education and philosophical production.

By the early twentieth-century, monasticism had reached its high point in Tibet. Massive monasteries, which owned lands and possessed great wealth, were inhabited by thousands of monks, only a fraction of whom were engaged in rigorous scholarship and practice; these institutions were nexuses of both religious and political power. In this physical setting, how could the vinaya's prescriptions for dwellings and hermitages be understood? And in this monastic culture, how could the prescriptions for the basic necessities of a *bhikṣu* be adapted to the needs of a small city of monks? When the words of the Buddha were translated, a new doctrinal language was created alongside the vocabulary of monastic discipline and quotidian existence. From this literary world, imbued with the culture and traditions of Indian monasticism,

the practical, yet orthodox, elements of ordained life were extracted and interpreted in written commentaries, and transmitted through demonstration, from one generation to the next. Rules rooted in the ancient and idealized were thus applied to a very different kind of community. Until the twentieth century, however, when the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso, composed *Moonlight Vanquishing the Darkness of Transgression* (hereafter *Moonlight Vanquishing*), it seems that no other author in Tibet brought together the explicatory power of images and the authoritative power of words to create a visual commentary illuminating the more opaque aspects of the Indian monastic code.

By employing a new, visual commentarial apparatus in this work, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama performed an expressive act and provided an explanatory tool akin to Galileo's illustrations of Saturn's rings—drawing foreign ideas in concrete and familiar terms. While monastic necessities may not be as wonderful as celestial bodies, some aspects of the vinaya can be equally confounding in their obscurity. The primary source for the Dalai Lama's work, also known as the *'Dul ris*, (literally, "discipline drawings"), is the *Vinayasūtra*, a seventh-century text by the Indian Buddhist master Guṇaprabha that is considered a condensation of the massive Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya. By distilling the corpus of monastic discipline to its essential elements, the *Vinayasūtra* cuts out the narratives that give context and meaning to each of the rules. The succinct aphorisms that remain may be easier to read and remember, but they are often more difficult to comprehend and implement. While other influential commentaries on the *Vinayasūtra* explain and adapt it to the temporal and cultural context of a community, the Dalai Lama's illustrated commentary makes the rules even clearer, rendering them in recognizable, unmistakable forms. Many of the drawings clarify quotations, but others, like Galileo's Saturn, are presented as illustrations that define the technical terms extracted from the root text—image

and text, object and term, are thus equated. The types of door locks and categories of shoes first translated from Sanskrit to Tibetan are now visually translated, transforming abstract Indian objects into recognizable Tibetan ones. The exotic is made familiar.

In Part Two, I argue that in his *'Dul ris* the Thirteenth Dalai Lama challenges conventional notions of commentary by engaging a new commentarial apparatus—illustration. Although he does not explicitly refer to the work as commentary, nor is it categorized as such within his collected works (*gsung 'bum*), I hope to demonstrate that the structure of the text and the function of the images in relation to the written content qualifies the *'Dul ris* as a rare, if not unique, illustrated commentary on the vinaya in general, and the *Vinayasūtra* more specifically. In Chapter Four, I begin by introducing the place of the monastic code and its commentaries within the traditional monastic curricula of Tibetan Buddhism, particularly at Geluk institutions. Having identified the foundational texts for studying monastic discipline in the Tibetan tradition, I locate the *'Dul ris* within this system, which shares the source texts he cites and quotes, and those to which he makes reference. I proceed by analyzing the *'Dul ris* within the conventions of commentarial literature, judging its functionality as part of this genre, to which I believe it belongs, based on the cataloging and structure of the text, as well as Thubten Gyatso's own statements on the sources, method, and purpose of his work. And I consider why his statement scholarly pedigree and assertion of scholarly rigor is especially important to his project.

In order to determine the interpretive contributions the Dalai Lama makes to the monastic code and the creative innovations he makes to the genre of commentary—in both word and image—I dedicate Chapter Five to the assessment of the many ways he alters, adapts, and improves the nineteenth-century *'dul ris* of the great teacher, Ngawang Lobsang Tenpai Gyaltsen (Ngag dbang blo bzang bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan; 1770-1845). I begin by determining how

Thubten Gyatso's changes to this illustrated text transform it into a work uniquely his own. I then go on to explain how those transformations ultimately invent a visual commentary, bringing together text and image in powerful new ways and integrating information from canonical sources and lived monasticism in sophisticated visual exegesis. Integral to understanding this creative and distinctive commentarial strategy of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama is the detailed evaluation of how the drawings relate to the written content, not merely as illustrations, but as the commentary itself. In Chapter Six, I identify four methods by which the pictures, often together with written commentary, explain a quotation or term from the root text and make it accessible to the contemporary moment and cultural context of the *'Dul ris*'s composition. I conclude by considering why visual commentary is especially effective, even essential, in transmitting this particular set of rules put forth in the *Vinayasūtra* to a monastic audience in twentieth-century Tibet.

CHAPTER FOUR
Unraveling the Strands of Commentary in *Moonlight Vanquishing*

Within the monasteries of the Geluk, the Dalai Lama's own tradition, the interpretation of Buddhism's great texts is at the center of scholastic training. Scriptural exegesis occurs within the parameters of the Geluk's prescribed methods and regulated practices[270]—namely, "the explanation of texts through commentary and the investigation of their meaning through dialectical debate."[271] Indian exegetical works (*śāstras*), the treatises that explain the canonical works understood to be records of the word of the Buddha—the sūtras, the vinaya, and the abhidharma—were also accepted as authoritative, comprising the Tangyur (Bstan 'gyur, "translation of the śāstras") in the Tibetan Buddhist canon. Across Tibetan Buddhist traditions, many of these canonical Indian commentaries thus became the subject of successive commentaries and sub-commentaries of their own, written over the centuries by Tibetan masters.[272]

Such a chain of explanations, composed of a series of commentaries, seeks to offer an increasingly detailed and clear impression of an authoritative root text spoken by the Buddha; but the content of these succeeding works is assumed to be contained within that of the original work, understood to be the authentic teachings of the Buddha.[273] Commentarial clarifications merely transmit the truths already expressed in the root text by the Buddha, reiterating or re-

[270] Georges B.J. Drefyus, *The Sound of Two Hands Clapping* (Los Angeles & Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 98.
[271] Ibid., 99.
[272] Joe Bransford Wilson, "Tibetan Commentaries on Indian Śāstras," in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, eds. José Ignacio Cabezón and Roger R. Jackson (Boulder, CO: Snow Lion, 1996), 127.
[273] Dreyfus, *Two Hands*, 108-9.

establishing the meaning that was somehow lost, suppressed, or otherwise invisible.[274] Within the Tibetan tradition, root texts are often metaphorically referred to as mines, oceans, treasures—deep, vast, precious things that are meant to be penetrated, mined, traversed, and discovered through commentary, "an act of recovery, an opening up of difficult and yet central writing."[275] The sectarian views and historical particularities embedded in the interpretations of a given commentator are further validated as authoritative extensions and elaborations of implicit and timeless Buddhist truth. Through increasingly clear explanations of a root text, the commentarial hierarchy—from Indian śāstras to Tibetan commentaries to monastic textbooks (*yig cha*)—thus constructs knowledge and establishes orthodoxy within a given school.[276]

While the creativity of a commentary cannot be in the subject matter, as it is restricted by the parameters of the specific root text and the larger tradition, the style of explication, as a reflection of time, place, and audience, is where the author's originality is apparent.[277] A commentary may help a reader to better understand a certain sūtra, but because that understanding is mediated through the interpretation of a commentator, it is colored by the goals and biases that affect the meaning he wished to convey. A commentary thus tells us more about its author and his tradition, as well as the context of its composition, than the original intention of the root text.[278] As such, different schools of Tibetan Buddhism privilege the Indian śāstras and Tibetan exegetical works that best support their doctrinal and philosophical foundations. This is most apparent in the core texts of the varied curricula taught in different monasteries and different sects.

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[274] José Ignacio Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language: A Study of Indo-Tibetan Scholasticism* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994), 76l.
[275] Dreyfus, *Two Hands*, 158.
[276] Ibid., 109.
[277] Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language*, 83.
[278] Jeffrey D. Schoening, "Sūtra Commentaries in Tibetan Translation," in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, eds. José Ignacio Cabezón and Roger R. Jackson (Boulder, CO: Snow Lion, 1996), 120.

When it comes to the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya, the massive corpus of discipline that is common across all traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, the diverse curricula of Tibet's monasteries share an important commonality: the canonical texts of the vinaya are not studied, but the focus is rather Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra*, and its Indian and Tibetan commentaries. "The main difference [between Tibetan curricular models] is not one of content," Dreyfus argues, "but one of pedagogy."[279] A "clear and common feature of Tibetan scholastic education," he explains, "is the de-emphasis on the reading of the sutras and the privileging of a systematic study of their content as summarized by the great Indian treatises."[280] How the main topics of Buddhist doctrine and discipline are taught might vary—for example, with regard to the inclusion of additional scriptural commentaries or the focus on debate—but not the substance of the teachings nor the centrality of śāstras, which offer systematic presentations of the words of the Buddha.

In this chapter, I focus on the constituent elements comprising vinaya study within the monastic curricula of the Gelukpa tradition; these are the texts the Thirteenth Dalai Lama would have known best, and therefore what he was most likely to cite and to explicate in his *'Dul ris*, his illustrated commentary on the *Vinayasūtra*. Identifying these foundational texts is essential to understanding how Thubten Gyatso constructs his commentary, abiding by tradition while introducing new innovations. It is important to note, however, that his work is not addressed to a single community, as one of his monastic charters (*bca' yig*) would be, but is ostensibly intended for the purification of Tibet's entire *saṅgha*. *Moonlight Vanquishing* thus could have been read and understood by a monk of any denomination, from any monastery; its related murals, moreover, were initially located at sites sacred to all Tibetans (Ramoche, Samye, and the Potala)

[279] Georges Dreyfus, "Where do Commentarial Schools come from? Reflections on the History of Tibetan Scholasticism," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* Vol. 28, No. 2 (2005): 281.
[280] Ibid., 284.

and ultimately at both Geluk and non-Geluk institutions in the western Himalayas. In other words, although his commentary reflects the scriptural preferences of Geluk scholastic training detailed below, Thubten Gyatso's intended audience, as well as his intended purpose for the text and its murals were fundamentally ecumenical.

It must be underscored, moreover, that no matter his motivations, the quotations and allusions in *Moonlight Vanquishing* only would have been identifiable, perhaps even understood, by those monks with an advanced level of training and ability, no matter their school. Across Tibet, the formal study of the code of monastic discipline takes place quite late in scholastic curricula, largely due to the fact that the vinaya itself states that any formal study must be reserved for monks with full ordination (*bhikṣu*; *dge slong*).[281] An important seventeenth-century monastic charter (*bca' yig*) belonging to Mindrölling Monastery offers a Nyingma parallel to the Geluk examples below: in outlining that institution's curriculum, the author of this text and the founder of this monastery, Terdak Lingpa (gTer bdag gling pa, 1646 - 1714), writes, "Regarding those [students] of the highest capacity, they should study a suitable amount of Vinaya, the Perfection of Wisdom teachings and so forth, and the philosophical vehicle's system."[282] In the past and the present, monks of all levels are obliged to keep their vows and to follow the localized rules of their home-monastery, but only the most advanced can learn the details, the explanations, and the origins of the codes they swore to follow.[283]

[281] José Ignacio Cabezón and Penpa Dorjee, *Sera Monastery* (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2019), 222n508; Berthe Jansen, *The Monastery Rules: Buddhist Monastic Organization in Pre-Modern Tibet* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), 18, 192n35.
[282] Translated in Dominique Townsend, "How to Constitute a Field of Merit: Structure and Flexibility in a Tibetan Buddhist Monastery's Curriculum," *Religions* Vol. 8, No. 174 (2017): 8.
[283] For more on contemporary *shedra* (*bshad grwa*) curricula, see Adam Pearcey, "The Curricula of Tibetan Buddhist Commentarial Schools (*bshad grwa*): Traditional Models and Some Recent Adaptations," *Contemporary Buddhism* Vol. 16, No. 2 (2015): 451-461.

At Geluk institutions, it is during the second phase of study following preliminary instruction that monks delve into the primary philosophical aspects of non-tantric, exoteric Buddhism, centered on five principal subjects that encapsulate all three divisions of the Buddhist canon: the perfection of wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*); Madhyamaka; epistemology and logic (*pramāṇa*); metaphysics (*abhidharma*); and monastic discipline (*vinaya*). As Cabezón and Dorjee explain, scholasticism of the type exemplified by the Geluk education system "is committed, first, to a project of understanding the self and the world rationally and in a complete fashion, which is to say in a way that nothing essential to the religious life is left out…only someone with this type of critical, comprehensive knowledge can hope to achieve enlightenment. The fives subjects were the way to this knowledge."[284] For such knowledge to be attained, moreover, the most important doctrines of exoteric Buddhism must be manageable and accessible. Geluk scholars therefore identified one Indian text epitomizing each of the five subjects to be the focus of their monastic curriculum: for perfection of wisdom, the *Abhisamayālamkara (Ornament of Realization)*, attributed to Maitreya, revealed to Asaṅga; for logic and epistemology, Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika (Commentary on Valid Cognition)*; for Madhyamaka, Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra (Introduction to the Middle Way)*; for abhidharma, Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* (*Treasury of Abhidharma*); and for monastic discipline, Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra* (*Aphorisms on Discipline*).[285]

Because Sanskrit texts in Tibetan translation are rendered in an invented "dharma language" that is disconnected from colloquial Tibetan, these works can be difficult to understand. Apart from the most advanced scholars, readers typically rely on Tibetan commentaries, which employ more accessible language to authoritatively explain and summarize

[284] Cabezón and Dorjee, *Sera Monastery*, 217.
[285] Dreyfus, *Two Hands*, 113.

Indian materials.[286] The first three śāstras, which are integral to Geluk scholarship, are thus studied in conjunction with Tibetan commentaries and distilled verse summaries (*sdom tshigs*) preferred by that sect, as well textbooks (*yig cha*) that the individual colleges of the three major monasteries produce, following the commentarial hierarchy. Within this curriculum, it is only after six to ten years of investigating this body of exoteric literature that monks finally turn to Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* and Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra* in their final four years.[287] Each of these works summarizes, systematizes, and, together with its autocommentary, explains two of the three literary corpuses comprising the traditional Buddhist canon: the abhidharma and the vinaya, respectively. While the prior deals with the technical details of cosmology, epistemology, as well as the path to liberation, all of which is encapsulated in the Buddhist worldview; the latter describes the intricacies of monastic discipline and the organization of the order of monks and nuns.

One would assume that the canonical vinaya or the *Vinayasūtra* would be studied early on in the education of a monk, especially a fully-ordained *bhikṣu* or *gelong*, who has taken all of the 253 *prātimokṣa* vows. Although the *Prātimokṣa Sūtra*, which contains these many rules, is recited during the bimonthly confession ritual (*poṣadha*; *gso sbyong*), only the *gelong* may participate in its recitation; this ceremony, however, is not predicated on the actual study of this scripture. As mentioned above, examination of the vinaya is explicitly reserved for the fully-ordained, so that novice monks may not even overhear the recitation of the *Prātimokṣa Sūtra*.[288] The vows taken by monks (and nuns) in Tibet and the organizing principles of monastic life are derived from the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya, but Tibetan monasticism does not conform exactly to

[286] Ibid., 157.
[287] Ibid., 114.
[288] Cabezón and Dorjee, *Sera Monastery*, 56-7.

the structures and strictures laid out in this corpus of discipline; nor do Tibetan monks and nuns rely directly on its contents. For those monks engaged in scholastic training, knowledge of the code of discipline is acquired through study of the *Vinayasūtra* as part of their monastery's curriculum; but because the vast majority of Tibetan monks of the past and present are not on this academic path, vows are only studied after ordination in summaries and textbooks.[289] As such, Berthe Jansen explains, "all their awareness of monastic regulations and guidance came through oral instruction and the monastic guidelines (*chayik*). Monastic life was thus directly regulated more by local monastic guidelines than by the Vinaya."[290] In their study of Sera Monastery, Cabezón and Dorjee characterize the Tibetan attitude toward the *prātimokṣa* discipline, particularly the lesser rules, as "somewhat lax" with strict adherence to all regulations being a praiseworthy ideal, but one nearly impossible to achieve. A monastery's own rules, transmitted orally or through its *chayik*, often took precedence in governing the daily lives and behavior of its resident monks.[291]

That the vinaya is studied exclusively through Guṇaprabha's seventh-century commentary and other exegetical works, and so late in the scholastic curriculum of the Geluk, furthermore, has to do not only with the diminished role of the code of monastic discipline in Tibetan Buddhist monasticism, but also with the nature of morality in the wider tradition. Furthermore, unlike other fields of study within Tibetan Buddhist scholasticism, monastic morality is discussed in practical rather than philosophical terms—moral precepts rather than moral concepts—because the nature of morality, that is, the specific karmic consequences of actions, is considered "thoroughly hidden (*shin tu lkog gyur*)" in Buddhist epistemology. This

[289] Dreyfus, *Two Hands*, 114.
[290] Jansen, *Monastery Rules*, 18.
[291] Cabezón and Dorjee, *Sera Monastery*, 47-8.

means it can be understood neither through direct experience nor rational investigation. Only the universal law of karma defines good and bad actions by the consequences they bear—that karma exists, therefore, can be confirmed by the direct perception and reasoning of its effects. However, the how and why karma exists—that is, the incontrovertible truth of cyclical existence—can only explained through the trusted words of the Buddha, whose own enlightenment is in part defined by his witnessing the rise and fall of lives due to karma. Karma is, essentially, because the Buddha said it is so. To understand karma, therefore, and by extension morality, one can only study the teachings of the Buddha in the vinaya and the exegesis of these texts by Buddhist masters.[292] But, as Dreyfus notes, "Though rules and regulations can be known only through the enlightened vision of a buddha, their study is not the main way to gain access to such vision."[293] In other words, it is the intensive philosophical analysis of exoteric and esoteric materials, which inform not only doctrinal understanding but meditative practices as well, by which one progresses on the path to buddhahood and increases the innate understanding of morality. The close examination of the vinaya, to which the same kind of analysis cannot be applied, is a less rigorous requisite that only serves to illuminate the ideal monastic and moral life monks aspire toward; while this supports practice, it does not a buddha make.

Although the Tibetan Buddhist predilection for Indian treatises is clearly reflected in the centrality of Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra*, studying monastic morality directly in the canonical texts of the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya would pose a challenge even to the most advanced student. While Yijing refers to both the verboseness and the lifetime of learning it takes to master understanding a similar corpus—"Even the most talented men can achieve their learning of the

[292] Ibid., 115.
[293] Ibid., 116.

Vinaya only when their mustaches have turned grey"[294]—modern Western scholars have similarly characterized the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya. "Its bulk, in fact, is impressive and one of its most immediately obvious characteristics,"[295] Schopen remarks. Not only is it large in terms of volume, but the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya is also a messy, eclectic accumulation—albeit an authoritative collection—of disciplinary rules, *jātakas*, *āvadanas*, and other tales, as well as sūtras that exist independently elsewhere. The Tibetans organized this mass into the "Four Divisions of the Vinaya": *Vinayavastu*, *Vinayavibhaṅga*, *Kṣudrakavastu*, and *Uttaragrantha*. In its seventeen chapters, the *Vinayavastu* generally discusses rules that govern communal behavior, whereas the *Vinayavibhaṅga* presents the origin stories for each of the 253 vows for monks given in the separate *Prātimokṣa Sūtra*, which is included among this corpus. The *Kṣudrakavastu* details the miscellanea of monastic life under eight headings and the *Uttaragrantha* contains eleven more texts in which the Buddha explains monastic life.[296]

Considered to be a condensed version of this massive corpus of monastic discipline,[297] the *Vinayasūtra* seems to have functioned as a more accessible primer on the monastic code.[298] Written by the seventh-century Indian master Guṇaprabha (Yon tan 'od) as a series of aphorisms (*sūtras*), possibly for their mnemonic function, this work became the most important vinaya text

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[294] Yijing, *Record of the Inner Law,* 15.
[295] Gregory Schopen, "Hierarchy and Housing in a Buddhist Monastic Code: A Translation of the Sanskrit Text of the Śayanāsanavastu of the Mūlasārvastivāda-vinaya (Part One)," *Buddhist Literature* Vol. 2 (2000): 92.
[296] For more on the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya see Alexander Csoma de Körös, *Analysis of the Dulva: A Portion of the Tibetan Work Entitled the Kah-gyur* (Calcutta: Asiatik Researches, 1836); and Introduction to "The Chapter on Going Forth" from The Chapters on Monastic Discipline (*Vinayavastu Pravrajyāvastu*), trans. Robert Miller and team (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha) (First Published 2018) <https://read.84000.co/translation/toh1-1.html> ; For more on vinaya law, see also the work of Shayne Clarke, such as *Family Matters in Indian Buddhist Monasticisms* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2013); and the work of Jens W. Borgland, such as "Undetermined Matters: On the Use of Lay Witnesses in Buddhist Monastic Procedural Law," *Buddhism, Law and Society* 2 (2018): 1-56.
[297] Paul K. Nietupski, "Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra* Corpus: Texts and Contexts," *Journal of the International Association of Tibetan Studies* No. 5 (December 2009): 8.
[298] Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr, eds., "Vinayasūtra," in *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013), 976.

across all major schools of Tibetan Buddhism, and thus was frequently remarked upon by preeminent teachers.[299] Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra* and his *Autocommentary (Vinayasūtravṛtti*),[300] as well as the commentaries on his work by the ninth-century Indian master Dharmamitra[301] (Chos kyi bshes gnyen) and the thirteenth-century Tibetan teacher Tsonawa Sherab Zangpo (Mtsho sna ba shes rab bzang po), are the primary sources for monastic regulation and moral education in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries.

These foundational texts are also the sources for the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's own vinaya commentary, which refers to them explicitly by name and in quotations, and implicitly in the visual and written content of *Moonlight Vanquishing the Darkness of Transgression*. Together, the first and final pages of the nine-folio *'Dul ris* provide essential information for understanding the nature of the text, the occasion of its composition, and the intention of its author; but the title page immediately offers a précis of the work's contents, alluding to the visual methodology of the text and introducing the handful of texts it engages: "This is the so-called 'Moonlight Vanquishing the Darkness of Transgression,' displayed in drawings, according to practical knowledge transmitted visually (*mthong rgyun*), along with the measurements and forms of the immediate necessities, and the demarcations given in the analysis of the fundamental precepts of the *prātimokṣa* training, which arise from The Four Divisions of Vinaya Scripture of the Inner

[299] Ibid.
[300] Gunaprabha. *'Dul ba'i mdo'i 'grel pa*, in *bsTan 'gyur* (sde dge), edited by Zhu chen tshul khrims rin chen, Volume 165 (Delhi: Delhi Karmapae Choedhey, Gyalwae Sungrab Partun Khang, 1982–1985), 4–689. [BDRC bdr:MW23703_4122] <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW23703_4122>
[301] Dharmamitra, *'Dul ba mdo'i rgya cher 'grel pa* (*Vinayasūtraṭikā)*, in *bsTan 'gyur (sde dge)*, ed. Zhu chen tshul khrims rin chen, trans. Cog ro klu'i rgyal mtshan, Volume 162 (Delhi: Delhi Karmapae Choedhey, Gyalwae Sungrab Partun Khang, 1982–1985), 4–781. [BDRC bdr:MW23703_4120] <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW23703_4120>

Treasury of the Teachings, the root sūtra and its annotations (*mdo rtsa mchan 'grel*), the *Ocean of Commentary* (*mtsho ṭik*), and others (f. 1a1-2)."[302]

The Dalai Lama's '*Dul ris* evaluates some of the "fundamental precepts of the *prātimokṣa* training"—that is, the code of conduct for monks (in this specific context, not including nuns)—which arise from the vinaya corpus, as well as three other specifically named works, and an unknown number of unnamed "others." The so-called "root sūtra and its annotations,"[303] can be interpreted as both a general term and a specific reference. More generally, it seems to refer to the *Vinayasūtra* as the root sutra and its *Autocommentary* or Guṇaprabha's own supplemental work, the *Vinayasūtravṛttyabhidhānasvavyākhyāna,* as the "annotations." Dharmamitra's *Vinayasūtraṭīkā* could also be counted as the latter.

This reference to the "root sūtra and its annotations (*mdo rtsa mchan 'grel*)" likely also points specifically to one of the two well-known and widely-studied commentaries on the *Vinayasūtra* written by Tsonawa Sherab Zangpo. This line-by-line commentary is entitled, "Seeing Accomplishes the Goal, Annotations on the Root Text *Vinayasūtra* (*'Dul ba mdo rtsa mchan 'grel mthong ba don 'grub*);"[304] Thubten Gyatso seems to use this phrase to not only encompass the Indian commentaries on the *Vinayasūtra*, but also to allude to this Tibetan work, using a nickname derived from the second part of its full title. He also refers to Tsonawa's second seminal commentary on the *Vinayasūtra* in the next phrase of the introduction: "*mtsho ṭik*," or

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[302] Thub bstan rgya mtsho, *Nye mkho'i dbyibs tshad phyag len mthong rgyun ltar dpe ris su bkod pa nyes ltung mun pa 'joms pa'i zla 'od (dzi).'' In gSung 'bum thub bstan rgya mtsho,* Volume 5 (ca) (New Delhi: International Academy Of Indian Culture, 1981–1982), v. 283-288a. <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW29228_A6316B>; SEE ALSO *Smad rgyud grwa tshang gi chos spyod rgyas pa*, Volume 11 Part 15 ('e) (Hunsur, Karnataka: Gyudmed Tantric College, 1982) [BDRC bdr:MW00EGS1016253] <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW00EGS1016253>

[303] **mchan 'grel** refers to line-by-line commentary in which the author draws a dotted line to a particular word or phrase in the root text and then explains what it means.

[304] Mtsho sna ba shes rab bzang po, *'Dul ba mdo rtsa mchan 'grel mthong ba don 'grub*, Two Volumes, (Lha sa: Ser gtsug nang bstan dpe rnying 'tshol bsdu phyogs sgrig khang, 2011). [BDRC bdr:MW1AC31] <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW1AC31>

Ocean of Commentary, is an abbreviation of the text's full name, "Ocean of Scripture and Elegant Sayings, Rays of the Sun to Explain the Root Text of the *Vinayasūtra*."[305]

In addition to these commentaries on the *Vinayasūtra* composed by famous Indian and Tibetan teachers, a commentary on the vinaya[306] composed by the First Dalai Lama, Gendun Drub (Dge 'dun grub pa, 1391-1474), is particularly important for the Geluk sect.[307] Unsurprisingly, therefore, this work is also referenced in the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's own vinaya commentary. While the First Dalai Lama's commentary—which is, in fact, specifically on the *Vinayasūtra*—is not named on the title page of *Moonlight Vanquishing*, the colophon slightly expands the first folio's list of texts, which hints at additional works encapsulated by "and others." In a recapitulation of the source-texts for Thubten Gyatso's project, the title page's line "*Ocean of Commentary* and others (*mtsho ṭika sogs)*" becomes "*Ocean of Commentary*, *Precious Garland*, and others (*mtsho ṭik rin phreng sogs*)" in the colophon. Based on the established prominence of the vinaya commentaries composed by the First Dalai Lama, the title *Precious Garland* (*Rin phreng*) is the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's specific reference, within his own commentary, to the ubiquitous text of his predecessor, which is known by the nickname *Precious Garland of Vinaya Commentary* (*'Dul ṭika rin chen phreng ba*).[308] The centrality of this commentary by Gendun Drub within the Geluk curriculum is thus reinforced and its place within the *'Dul ris* work affirmed.

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[305] Mtsho sna ba shes rab bzang po, *'Dul ba mdo rtsa'i rnam bshad nyi ma'i 'od zer legs bshad lung gi rgya mtsho*, Two Volumes. (Cazadero, CA: Ye shes sde'i chos 'khor 'phrul par khang, 2003). [BDRC bdr:W1KG3412] <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/W1KG3412>

[306] Dge 'dun grub pa, *'Dul ṭīk rin chen 'phreng ba* (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1999). <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW1KG17603>

[307] Dreyfus, *Two Hands,* 117.

[308] Translation of the full title: *Precious Garland of Good Explanations of the Essential Meaning of the Complete Excellent and Perfectly Spoken Dharma Vinaya* (*Legs par gsungs pa'i dam pa'i chos 'dul ba mtha' dag gi snying po'i don legs par bshad pa rin po che'i phreng ba*)

A Visual Commentary or Illustrated Text?

The Thirteenth Dalai Lama names and references the canonical and commentarial texts on the vinaya that are foundational to the Gelukpa in his introduction and colophon; he does not, however, identify his project as a commentary on the vinaya, the *Vinayasūtra*, or any of these other exegetical works. Instead, he speaks only of the display of drawings that emerge from the analysis of the contents of these texts. In order to define the *'Dul ris* as belonging to the genre of commentary within Tibetan Buddhist literature, it must first be judged by the conventional criteria that constitute this category. Several elements of the structure, style, vocabulary, and categorization employed must therefore be considered.

First of all, unlike most commentaries on a particular root text, the order of the drawings and text in *Moonlight Vanquishing* does not follow the organization of topics in the *Vinayasūtra* or any of the other exegetical works that Thubten Gyatso cites; instead, the contents of the *'Dul ris* are selected from various sections of the root text with no attention paid to its sequence. The Dalai Lama's work, moreover, neither adheres nor asserts adherence to any of the traditional styles of sub-commentarial writing identified by the fourteenth-century luminary Büton (Bu ston rin chen grub, 1290-1364): extensive commentaries (*rgya cher 'grel pa*), word commentaries (*tshig 'grel*) or commentaries of annotations (*mchan 'grel*), commentaries on difficult points (*dka' 'grel*), and commentaries on the main points of a text (*ngag don tsam gyi 'grel pa*), which includes general explanations (*spyi don*).[309]

An author's exegetical style is often apparent in the title of his work: Tsonawa's commentary is called a *mchan 'grel*, Dharmamitra's *rgya cher 'grel pa*, and Gendun Drub's *ṭika,* Sanskrit for "commentary." However, the Dalai Lama's text lacks any such identifier in its name,

[309] Wilson, "Tibetan Commentaries," 133-4.

in its nickname—*'Dul ris*—which highlights the drawings, or in its colophon, which explains the purpose of the author's project. Furthermore, nowhere in *Moonlight Vanquishing* do conventional terms used in sūtra commentaries to introduce an author's exposition appear: the purpose (*dgos pa*), the text (*rjod pa*), the subject matter (*rjod par bya ba*), the connection (*'brel pa*), and the purpose of the purpose (*dgos pa'i dgos pa*).[310] The commentarial style and structure employed in the *'Dul ris*, as I explain later in this chapter, is innovative in part because it mixes formats, brings together different sources, and utilizes both quotations and summaries: the Thirteenth Dalai Lama uses text and illustration to explain both full passages and single terms drawn from the *Vinayasūtra*; he paraphrases the commentary of the First Dalai Lama and quotes that of Dharmamitra; and he employs the ubiquitous dotted lines characteristic of line-by-line commentaries (*mchan 'grel*) to annotate the root text quotations with his visual explanations. The only category within Büton's taxonomy of commentaries to which the *'Dul ris* might belong is the rather nebulous group of works that "explicate the meaning of many scriptures;"[311] Śāntideva's *Śikṣāsamuccaya*, which cites ninety-seven texts,[312] is exemplary of this type.

The ambiguous genre of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's *Moonlight Vanquishing* seems to have also confounded the compilers of his collected works, where it appears in a volume together with seven other texts that primarily document his renovation projects. The first three works in this volume[313] are seemingly miscellaneous, including instructions for empowerment and *abhiṣeka* rituals, a collection of official letters, and directions for the consecration of stūpas, sculptures, and scriptures. The next three works, however, record accounts of Thubten Gyatso's

[310] Schoening, "Sūtra Commentaries," 117.
[311] Wilson, "Tibetan Commentaries," 133.
[312] See Charles Goodman, *The Training Anthology of Śāntideva: A Translation of the Śikṣā-samuccaya* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).
[313] It is volume five or ca (ཅ) in the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's *gsung 'bum*.

temple renovations—the Ramoche and Jokhang temples in Lhasa, as well as the Svayāmbhūnath stūpa in Nepal—in addition to his sponsorship of a new printing of Büton's collected works. The seventh text, moreover, describes the new *jātaka* murals painted during his renovation of the Ramoche. The place of the Dalai Lama's *'Dul ris* among these documentary works, all tinged with religious history, makes thematic and chronological sense: its composition is directly connected to the Ramoche's renovation, its contents became a mural painted alongside the *jātaka* images there, and its production reflects the same political and religious motivations of Thubten Gyatso expressed in the works chronicling his sponsored projects. Yet, his *'Dul ris* is more than a record of a renovation or a description of a commission; on its surface, *Moonlight Vanquishing* belongs in this volume, but the commentarial function and illustrated format of the text sets it apart as something distinctively different.

The Dalai Lama's *'Dul ris* thus defies the genre in which it is catalogued and challenges the genre of the texts it cites. So where does *Moonlight Vanquishing* belong? Although it lacks the conventional markers of a commentary, the illustrations in the *'Dul ris* function as visual commentary: they explain quotations, terms, and concepts from the *Vinayasūtra* in the same way annotations (with their dotted lines) elaborate meaning in typical written commentaries—by integrating information from relevant sources, both textual and experiential, with the commentator's own interpretations. The Dalai Lama plays on those traditional models defined in Büton's taxonomy, creating a hybrid of exegetical styles and introducing illustrations as a new commentarial tool.

The colophon, expanding upon the introduction given on the title page, locates *Moonlight Vanquishing* within the "many established traditions of elucidating drawings (f. 9a1)" that reflect the hands-on instruction of teachers and the information extrapolated through the evaluation of

the foundational precepts of the *prātimokṣa*—the 253 vows taken by fully-ordained monks that are listed in the *Prātimokṣa Sūtra* and explained in the *Vinayavibhaṅga*. Such pictures are produced, we are told, by observing masters and examining "well, through valid cognition and authentic threefold analysis, many authoritative scriptures, such as the canonical texts [of the vinaya], the root sūtra [the *Vinayasūtra*], commentaries, the *Ocean of Commentary, Precious Garland*, and so on (f. 9a2)."

Here, Thubten Gyatso asserts the scholastic rigor of his text—and displays his own scholastic training—by claiming to apply "valid means of knowledge (*tshad ma*)" and "threefold analysis (*dpyad gsum*)" to his exegesis of vinaya scriptures and the *Vinayasūtra*, and his readings of their commentaries. For Dharmakīrti, there are two valid means of knowledge: direct perception (*pratyakṣa*) and inference (*anumāṇa*). However, these Indian philosophers "did recognize that there was a whole class of propositions which could not be directly justified by means of these two *pramāṇas*, but demanded recourse to scriptures (*āgama*) or treatises (*śāstra*)."[314] And so they developed a system called "threefold analysis" to determine the validity of a given text on three levels—evident, hidden, and hidden hidden. In other words, through employing three kinds of investigations, a scripture is deemed trustworthy in terms of rationality, not merely Buddhist belief.[315] The Dalai Lama is therefore claiming here that when these foundational methods of Buddhist epistemology or knowledge production are applied to canonical and commentarial works on the monastic code, they not only support his written exegeses but they also generate his visual explanations—both of which are legitimized by the unimpeachable scholarly methods he employs.

[314] Tom J. F. Tillemans, *Scripture, Logic, Language: Essays on Dharmakīrti and his Tibetan Successors* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1999), 27.
[315] Ibid., 30, 41.

Furthermore, the "newly occurring, unprecedented drawings" of the *'Dul ris*, we are told, "illuminate well by straightforward reason and annotations" the aspects of monastic life detailed in the text; and thus, through these images, which are better than preceding ones, "we reach a definitive understanding (f. 9a4-5)." Through proper examination and analysis of teachings, transmitted through canonical texts and physical demonstrations, these pictures emerge, elucidating elements of the vinaya so well that complete comprehension of them is achieved and communicated. The end result, according to the author, is the "protection of what is proper" and the propagation of pure vinaya-holders by the power of these pictures, ultimately contributing to the "restoration of the doctrine of the completely pure vinaya piṭaka (f. 9a5-7)"

Returning to our initial discussion of the hierarchy of commentaries—the series of explanations studied in Tibetan Buddhist monastic curricula—commentarial texts are understood to disseminate the truths already expressed in their root text, reiterating or re-establishing its obscured meaning. The Dalai Lama clearly states, however, that it is the elucidating drawings of his *'Dul ris* that illuminate elements of the vinaya, and that correct previous illustrations, restoring the true meaning of the root text and protecting what is right and true in the realm of monastic discipline. These powerful pictures—not his textual exegeses—are therefore essential to Thubten Gyatso's larger project of purifying the Tibetan *saṅgha* and restoring it to the ideal community modelled in the texts of the vinaya, as a means of protecting the state. Filled with drawings that explicate, through evaluation and examination, in order to convey the definitive understanding of the vinaya and its chain of commentaries—to what other genre besides commentary could the illustrated *Moonlight Vanquishing* possibly belong?

That Thubten Gyatso's statement of his sources, methods, and purpose characterizes his unconventional text as fundamentally commentarial is not the only significant element in the

introduction and colophon, however; he also makes the important claim that the *'Dul ris* drawings integrate non-textual teachings into the illustrated interpretations of canonical texts. The Dalai Lama speaks of scriptures and commentaries as the sources for the drawings, but he also cites, as integral, the "practical knowledge transmitted visually (f. 1a2)" and "the hands-on instruction (f. 9a1)" of previous masters in the introduction and the colophon, respectively. His intended audience for *Moonlight Vanquishing* is, after all, the community of monks who have principally received their education on the rules and regulations of monastic life through vinaya summaries, the governing *chayik* of their home institutions, and, perhaps most importantly, the hands-on instruction of senior monks and teachers. With the intensive study of the *Vinayasūtra* and its commentaries reserved for such a late stage in the monastic curriculum and for so few of the monks comprising the larger monastic community, it seems especially effective that the familiar pedagogy of visual transmission be incorporated into a text explaining the works central to the vinaya curriculum to those monks who were not likely reading them, now or ever.

Thubten Gyasto describes the illustrations "as a mirror of the hands-on instruction of many previously appearing masters (f. 9a1)," utilizing the Sanskrit for "mirror," *ādarśa*, rather than translating the term into Tibetan (*me long*). Within many Buddhist texts, the mirror is a powerful metaphor for the perfectly clear mind, in which all is reflected, but nothing is contained because of the profound knowledge of emptiness.[316] Since we are dealing with the mundanities of monastic life and not the true nature of the mind and all phenomena, the philosophical connotations can be disregarded here, leaving behind the mirror-like qualities of clarity and purity. The implication is that the *'Dul ris* drawings are an uncontaminated reflection of the pure

[316] For more on the mirror metaphor in Buddhism see Alex Wayman, "The Mirror as a Pan-Buddhist Metaphor-Simile," *History of Religions* Vol. 13, No. 4 (May 1974): 251-269; and Yael Bentor, "On the Symbolism of the Mirror in Indo-Tibetan Consecration Rituals," *Journal of lndian Philosophy* Vol. 23 (1995): 57-71.

and authentic hands-on instruction of the masters: not only those of a given monastery or even the great teachers of Tibet, but also, if not especially—as the Sanskrit suggests—the Indian exemplars of monastic discipline. Portrayed in *Moonlight Vanquishing*, therefore, are the true tenets of the vinaya as practiced in India, as taught by Indian masters, and as they should be restored in Tibet, with the aid of the Dalai Lama's illustrated work. Yijing's mind-blowing experience of authentic Indian monasticism at its source is once again brought to mind as we consider the potency of conjuring the direct transmission of the disciplinary code from a real and pure monastic setting to the present.

The Thirteenth Dalai Lama could have performed the conventional exegetical exercise of composing a traditional commentary on the *Vinayasūtra*. As I have demonstrated, Thubten Gyatso claims to have completed much of the scholarly due diligence required to accomplish such an undertaking: he engages the most important vinaya-related scriptures, treatises, and commentaries in the Geluk scholastic tradition, and employs the necessary analytical tools to formulate his interpretations and explanations. This hypothetical work, however, would have been accessible only to the elite cadre of monks involved in advanced study. For the ambitious and urgent goal of purifying the entire *saṅgha* by restoring monastic discipline as defined by the vinaya, the Dalai Lama needed something as equally commanding as a commentary, but more universally understandable and more immediately applicable, something legible for the illiterate. And so we find that Thubten Gyatso not only elevates drawings above text as his primary exegetical contributions, but he also elevates practical knowledge transmitted visually to a level equal to that of scriptural knowledge acquired academically, with Indian actors and authors being the indubitable, and equally authoritative, sources.

In Part Three, I discuss how the *'Dul ris* participates in the process of visual transmission, particularly as an artist's guide for murals replicating the book's contents. However, this monastic practice by which teaching is achieved through demonstration and learning through observation and emulation, cannot be separated from the methodology behind the Dalai Lama's visual commentary on the monastic code. *Moonlight Vanquishing* incorporates knowledge acquired through visual transmission while disseminating knowledge using that same accessible and familiar pedagogy. By integrating practical education with textual exegesis, Thubten Gyatso creates visual explanations that convey elemental rules of the Indian vinaya that may have been lost in translation or discarded over time—like the requisite begging bowl[317]—in terms recognizable or relatable to his intended audience, which encompasses the entire *saṅgha*, both the lifelong novice and the fully ordained, both the scholarly elite and the ordinary monk. For those who are engaged in vinaya study, their scholastic training likely did not prepare them to envision what prohibited noisy shoes look like or how to construct an approved water filter. The visual translation of the basic necessities—lodging, robes, shoes, water filters, begging bowls, seats—and those fundamental behaviors of monastic life—staying close to your robe, awake while meditating, and attuned to the calendar—long disregarded or misunderstood, was therefore intended to be useful to all levels of monks. Rendered in images that are familiar, recognizably Tibetan, or at the very least, reasonably viable, the Dalai Lama's visual commentary makes the restoration of the pure vinaya seem possible. Although the world of *Moonlight Vanquishing* was likely not a reflection of the lived reality of twentieth-century Tibetan monks—after all, if it was, they arguably would not need this text—but through cultural translation and visual interpretation, the work does create a realistic ideal that could be plausibly achieved.

[317] Cabezón and Dorjee, *Sera Monastery*, 47.

If we consider commentary, at its most basic level, to be "an explanation of the meanings of the words of another, presumably more fundamental, text,"[318] then the *'Dul ris* unquestionably fulfills this purpose by engaging the most relevant materials, both textual and practical, and employing the most powerful commentarial tool—illustrations—for illuminating the subject at hand. If all commentaries, moreover, tell us about the commentator more than the original meaning of the root text commented upon, here, the Dalai Lama's interpretation is not so much sectarian as it is personal and historicized, reflecting the needs and the weaknesses of twentieth-century Tibetan Buddhist monasticism, which, from the perspective of Thubten Gyatso, had become lax in its discipline, causing the Tibetan state itself to become vulnerable to enemies, forth foreign and domestic, natural and supernatural. This was the situation that required him to create a visual commentary on the basics of the monastic code. Although the expository relationships between text and image—in terms of composition and content—that constitute the exegetical method contained in the *'Dul ris* are the unique invention of its author, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was clearly inspired by an earlier illustrated text and the possibilities it exhibited for drawings to elucidate the monastic code and purify the monastic community. So before we turn to an in-depth exploration of the visual commentary of *Moonlight Vanquishing*, we must first look at this other text that belongs to the "many established traditions of elucidating drawings"—the text that apparently contains the "illustrations of the vinaya written long ago," the meaning of which the Dalai Lama corrects in his work, thus reaching "a definitive understanding (f. 9a5)."

[318] Cabezón, *Buddhism and Language*, 79.

CHAPTER FIVE
Another *'Dul ris*: Adaptations and Improvements to an Earlier Work

The extraordinary work, which the Thirteenth Dalai Lama visually quotes and fundamentally adapts, was composed by Ngawang Lobzang Tenpai Gyaltsen (hereafter Ngawang Gyaltsen),[319] an important Geluk master who was recognized as the Chang lung (*lcang lung*) Pandita at age seven by the Third Changkya, Rolpai Dorje (Lcang skya rol pa'i rdo rje; 1717-1786). His primary seat, Changlung monastery (Lcang lung mgon), over which Ngawang Gyaltsen was granted temporal and spiritual control, is located in Xilin Hot City, Inner Mongolia, the region where he was born. According to the index (*dkar chag*) of his collected works,[320] produced at Changlung Gon's own printing house, Ngawang Gyaltsen studied with many of the great religious teachers and political figures of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, including: the Sixth Panchen Lama, Lobzang Palden Yeshe (Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes; 1737-1780); the Eighth Dalai Lama, Lobzang Jampel Gyatso (Blo bzang 'jam dpal rgya mtsho; 1758-1804); and the Sixty-first Ganden Tripa, Ngawang Tsultrim (Ngag dbang tshul khrims; 1721-1791) who was regent to the Eighth Dalai Lama and given the title Samati Pakshi (bsam gran mkhan po) by the Qianlong Emperor; and of course, Rolpai Dorje. Ngawang Gyaltsen's connections clearly extended beyond his homeland, as he sought teachings and teachers in

[319] BDRC Profile (BDRC Resource ID P290) <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/P290>; See also, Lokesh Chandra, *Materials for a History of Tibetan Literature (Part 2)* (New Delhi: 1963), 14-15.
[320] Reproduced in Lokesh Chandra, *Materials for a History of Tibetan Literature (Part 2)* (New Delhi: 1963), 16-30; biographic content begins page 20.

eastern and central Tibet, and was twice summoned to Beijing to perform long life rites for Qianlong.

The many diverse texts comprising his collected works (*gsung 'bum*) range from sacred biography to monastic *chayik*, from *sādhana* to guru *pūja*, demonstrating his erudition and his pedigree. The illustrated work appears to be something of an outlier among these more traditional texts, but its contents are especially reflective of Ngawang Gyaltsen's international connections, diverse interests, and scholarly achievements. Found in volume four (*nga*) of his *sungbum*, the work's title is also a description of the disparate contents assembled within: *The Scripts of India, China, Russia, Kaśmira, Nepal, Tibet, and Mongolia, and Many Different Categories of Drawings* (hereafter, *Many Scripts and Drawings*). Five distinctive chapters are combined within this work, apparent in the sudden shift in content and the short, descriptive labels in the left margin, next to the page numbers—no title pages demarcate the sections. The first chapter, as explained in the title, is an "abecedarium," which transcribes foreign alphabets and elaborate Tibetan scripts—each clearly labeled—into the standard Tibetan *u-chan* (*dbu can*) block print. Below each row of foreign letters is a line of corresponding *u-chan* letters or letter combinations. This chapter is labelled "letter (*yi ge*)" only in the left margin of the recto pages.

Because there is neither a prologue nor a colophon appended to this eclectic volume, Ngawang Gyaltsen's motivations and intentions for composing *Many Scripts and Drawings* can only be speculated. The abecedarium chapter, for example, certainly reflects the linguistic needs of a community like Changlung Gon, which sits at the crossroads of empires and cultures in the northern frontier of Tibetan Buddhism. Such a transliteration project might further demonstrate the influence of Rolpai Dorje, who, as a speaker himself of Mongolian, Tibetan, Manchu, and Chinese, invested widely in the creation of dictionaries and textual translations in these

languages. The Third Changkya was also integral to developing iconographic systems that were foundational to the Qianlong emperor's Buddhist art projects; these efforts might have made an impression on Ngawang Gyaltsen, whose inclusion of various categories of drawings in his eclectic text echoes the projects of one of his most important teachers.[321] The illustrations alluded to in its title comprise the four other texts assembled in Ngawang Gyaltsen's work. And they are seemingly arbitrary: two and a half folia labelled "Nā ro (*nA ro*)" depict thirty-six yogic postures associated with the teachings of Nāropa, an Indian *mahāsiddha* famous for his teachings centered on six advanced tantric practices; five folia described as "surgery illustrations (*dpyad dpe*)" are dedicated to drawings of various surgical tools and medical implements; and one and half folia called "horn instruments (*dung*)" display musical notations, apparently for ritual horns or trumpets.[322] Between the alphabets and the yogins, however, five and half folia are labeled *'dul ris* in the left-hand margin.

Ngawang Lobzang Tenpai Gyaltsen's so-called "discipline drawings" bear an uncanny resemblance to those of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, who relied heavily on this first *'dul ris* text for many of the drawings and scriptural selections he includes in *Moonlight Vanquishing*. There are several essential differences, however; in this chapter, I demonstrate that the Dalai Lama was looking at Ngawang Gyaltsen's work, but not wholly plagiarizing it. Thubten Gyatso instead adapts, edits, and expands both the visual and the written content of his predecessor's text, ultimately transforming it into a work that is not only his own, but that also establishes his unique visual exegetical style. Although it goes uncited, Ngawang Gyaltsen's *'dul ris* undoubtedly provided the basic conceptual and compositional structure for the Thirteenth Dalai

[321] Dominique Townsend, "The Third Changkya, Rolpai Dorje," *Treasury of Lives*, https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Chankya-Rolpai-Dorje/3141.
[322] A Peking xylograph of this text was reproduced in its entirety and its contents briefly described in the following book: Lokesh Chandra, *Indian Scripts in Tibetan* (New Delhi: Jayyed Press, 1982).

Lama's *'Dul ris.* The topics covered—robe separation while practicing near trees; dwellings, temples, and door locks; water filters and ritual vases; the ritual calendar; and shoes—as well as the order in which they are discussed, are nearly identical in both texts. Throughout *Moonlight Vanquishing*, moreover, there are instances in which the Dalai Lama copied certain illustrations and their related text from *Many Scripts and Drawings* with few, if any alterations—a kind of visual quotation of Ngawang Gyaltsen. We see this with the lion throne and the footstool (Fig. 2.1), which are almost indistinguishable in the two *'dul ris*; the assortment of door parts and bolts (Fig. 2.2), to which the Dalai Lama adds only a few extra types; and the assortment of water strainers (Fig. 2.3), the selection of which is only partially shared, but their common drawings are very similar. The source text for both *'dul ris* is the *Vīnayasūtra*, which is quoted in nearly all the captions, with the exception, for instance, of the hanging water filter, which the Dalai Lama identifies as belonging to "our own tradition (f. 6a)," that is, the Tibetan, not the Indian tradition.

In his adaptation of Ngawang Gyaltsen's *'dul ris*, however, the Dalai Lama made some important editorial decisions, rarely adopting elements without implementing his own changes, even in places where he most closely adheres to the earlier work. To the catalog of topics illustrated, for example, Thubten Gyatso adds three: methods for dispelling drowsiness, the permitted sizes and types of monastic robes, and a monk's requisite begging bowl and staff. He further includes four new door bolts and swaps out four of the strainers for different ones, inventing illustrations for the new terms he introduces; he also simplifies Ngawang Gyaltsen's *'dul ris*, choosing strainers that require less explanation and reducing almost all other text in this section to single word captions. For example, "This is an illustration of a 'square lion throne,' in Chinese language '*ye tsa*' (f. 18b)" becomes simply "lion throne (f. 5b)" in *Moonlight Vanquishing.* Additionally, Thubten Gyatso makes several major compositional innovations and

improvements—a topic covered at greater length in the next chapter—which include depicting larger temples across two adjacent folios (Fig. 2.25) and essentially uncoiling Ngawang Gyaltsen's circular calendar of the Lunar Year (Fig. 2.4), turning it into a rectangular chart (Fig. 2.5) that substantially enhances the legibility and intelligibility of its contents.

Whether subtly altering existing drawings or creating entirely new ones, simplifying written content or expanding entire sections, in his *'Dul ris* the Dalai Lama refines and develops what Ngawang Gyaltsen first established. The most radical and most transformative changes he makes to the original *'dul ris*, however, are those that strengthen the connections between text and image, turning *Moonlight Vanquishing* into something entirely new—a work that fundamentally surpasses *Many Scripts and Drawings* in its function and ambition. While this is achieved in many small ways—picture-by-picture, caption-by-caption, as the examples below demonstrate—it is the compositional integration of text and image on each folio that has the greatest overall impact. In *Many Scripts and Drawings*, most of the pictures are labelled with a single letter, in alphabetical order, with little or no accompanying text nearby. The related written content appears on later pages, where the text is divided into sections marked with the same letter as their matching images. In nearly all instances, the drawing and its associated text are separated by multiple folios, exacerbating the often-disjointed relationship between them; the physical divide further weakens their conceptual connection.

Thubten Gyatso's editorial choice to print the pictures adjacent to the text—their relationship rendered unambiguous by the short, dotted lines that connect them—positions the pictures as visual commentary, annotating the canonical quotations and explaining their written complements. This spatial proximity, reinforced by the dotted connectors and the pervasive references to the drawings or examples (*dpe*) in the text, constructs an intrinsic union, whereby

the meaning of the text is inseparable from the picture. We thus find that the illustrations in *Moonlight Vanquishing* more concretely elucidate the root text quotations and better support the additional written content, while frequently incorporating information drawn from other commentarial sources and Tibetan Buddhist monastic culture.

A handful of representative examples demonstrate some of the specific ways that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama engaged Ngawang Gyaltsen's *'dul ris*, improving and innovating upon it to transform this quirky work by a provincial lama into a powerful visual commentary with reformative and purificatory capabilities. Beginning with the original occurrences of a rule, first in the *Vinayavastu* (when possible) and then its distillation in the *Vinayasūtra*, we can see how these two authors negotiated their shared source material differently, with the Dalai Lama choosing a more comprehensive and coherent approach that enabled him to produce textual and visual exegeses, rather than another vinaya-related book with pictures.

Alterations and Additions

The opening section of both *'dul ris* texts focuses on avoiding the "abandonment of separation (*'bral spang*)"—that is, being without one of the three requisite dharma robes—when a monk is meditating in or under a tree and has hung his robe on a nearby branch or adjacent rock. To members of the highly institutionalized system of Tibetan Buddhist monasticism, this would seem like a strange series of rules with which to begin any guide to the monastic code, let alone an accessible commentary. If we consider these two *'dul ris* texts to be highlighting the fundamentals—whether implicitly in the case of Ngawang Gyaltsen or more explicitly for the Thirteenth Dalai Lama—it is essential to consider that for the early community of itinerant monks, the most basic site for rest and for practice was at the base of a tree.[323] This is reflected in

[323] Ṭhānissaro Bhikku, *The Buddhist Monastic Code II (The Khandhaka Rules Translated and Explained)* (Valley

the Mūlasarvāstivada ordination ritual practiced in Tibet, during which "the monk is required to affirm his willingness to subsist on the four requisites (*niśraya*): rags as robes, alms as food, dwelling under trees, and urine as medicine."[324] Furthermore, separation from one's robes—some of the few possessions permitted for both novices and the fully ordained—is a relatively serious offense that requires confession. While under a tree or within its branches might be an unlikely place for a Tibetan monk to find himself, the inclusion of these illustrations serves as a reminder of the authentic Indian origins of monastic vows and ascetic practices.

Both works contain ten illustrations, but Ngawang Gyaltsen's features only six related blocks of text (labelled *ka* through *cha*), while the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's has seven captions. The very first image (*ka*) in Ngawang Gyaltsen's work (Fig. 2.6) depicts two monks sitting on different branches of the same tree; the monk on the left sits on a thin branch with his robe hanging on a thin branch above him, while the monk on the right sits on a branch with his robe hanging on a thin branch below him. Underneath the righthand monk is written "root (*rtsa ba*)," referring to the thick branch growing from the tree's trunk,[325] which itself is labelled "root of the root (*rtsa ba'i rtsa*)" at the bottom of the picture. Following the ten illustrations of monks and trees is a page almost entirely filled with text divided by alphabetical markers corresponding to the letters labelling the drawings. The first section (*ka*) of Ngawang Gyaltsen's text reads:

> Regarding this [illustration]: it is an example of creating the abandonment of separation.[326] "Regarding the branches and thin branches that are not touching, they are distinct places." A monk sits on a thin branch. Regarding the dharma robe placed on a branch, this one is on the right and this other is on the left (f. 17a1-2).

Center, CA: Metta Forest Monastery, 2013), 53 or 55 (depending on version; first page Chapter 6: Lodging); See also Jamgon Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, 148, 157, 369n74, 406n303

[324] Cabezón and Dorjee, *Sera Monastery*, 39.

[325] This reading is confirmed by the third drawing on the same page, in which the *rtsa ba* is connected by a dotted line to a similar think branch growing from the central trunk of the tree.

[326] Here, *'bral spangs* is a misspelling; it should be *'bral spang*.

The text makes clear that the first drawing illustrates two examples of monks who, while sitting on branches of a tree, have placed their robes incorrectly on other branches, thus causing the abandonment of separation. Neither the picture nor the text, taken separately or together, is clear enough to make sense of the violation or the quotation, which is taken from the *Vinayasūtra*. Are both the monks sitting on thin branches? What is the difference between the robe on the right and the one on the left? Are they hanging on different branches, one normal and one thin? And what do the additional labels on the drawing mean?

In his *'Dul ris*, Thubten Gyatso employs the same quotation from the *Vinayasūtra* and borrows several elements from Ngawang Gyaltsen's text, all bolded here for clarity; but he reworks and expands the text to make it clearer and thus more useful:

> **A monk sits on a thin branch**, which does not touch another. **Regarding the dharma robe placed on a branch, this is on the right**. A monk sits on a branch and the dharma robe is placed on a thin branch; this is on the left. As for both, they **cause the abandonment of separation (*'bral spang*)**: **"Regarding the branches and thin branches that are not touching, they are distinct places."** (f. 1b)

The Dalai Lama not only elucidates Ngawang Gyaltsen's abstruse text, answering nearly all the questions above, but in the process, he also explains the quotation from the *Vinayasūtra*. We now know that the monks differ by the size of the branches on which they sit, and the robes differ by the size of the branches on which they hang. The key factor not explicitly addressed by Ngawang Gyaltsen is that the sitting branches and hanging branches do not touch. The Dalai Lama's text, however, makes clear that the "distinct places," which determine if one is separated from one's robe, depend on where one sits and where one's robe is hung. When a monk sits on a thin branch that does not touch another and he places his robe on a branch, he is at fault. And likewise, if a monk sits on a regular branch that presumably does not touch another, and he hangs his robe on a thin branch, he is also at fault.

The drawing in Thubten Gyatso's *'Dul ris* (Fig. 2.7), furthermore, subtly alters Ngawang Gyaltsen's illustration, making the normal and thin branches more clearly distinguished. There does seem to be a discrepancy between right and left in the drawing, however, as the righthand monk is clearly seated on a thicker branch than the figure on the left. Similar confusion appears in all four written parts of *Moonlight Vanquishing* that allude to the left and right in this section about monks, robes, and trees; such consistency implies that the error likely resulted from the reversal of the images and text during the printing process. Regardless of this minor mistake, the Dalai Lama's image does a better job at graphically explaining his elaborated text and the root text's quotation. For the next three pairs of drawings of sitting monks, their hanging robes, and the adjacent trees, this relationship between the two *'dul ris* persists: the Dalai Lama expands and improves upon Ngawang Gyaltsen's text, while utilizing the same *Vinayasūtra* quotations; and the drawings in *Moonlight Vanquishing* slightly tweak those in *Many Scripts and Drawings* for greater clarity, while eliminating the extraneous labels of "root" and "root of the root."

Thubten Gyatso uses Ngawang Gyaltsen's drawing only as a starting point here, transforming it into a visual explanation of the root text that, together with its complementary written explanation, maintains continuity in the subject of his exegesis and consistency in the structure of his commentarial style. As we will see, the Dalai Lama builds on Ngawang Gyaltsen's *'dul ris* in a similar way elsewhere in *Moonlight Vanquishing*.

Graphic Departures

While the Dalai Lama's alterations to Ngawang Gyaltsen's *'dul ris* in this first part on the abandonment of separation are primarily textual and his changes to the illustrations only subtle, the subsequent sections dedicated to monastic hermitages (*spong khang*, literally "house of renunciation") and temples (*gtsug lag khang*) exemplify his graphic departures from Ngawang

Gyaltsen's work. These drawings are indicative of the Dalai Lama's different visual interpretations of scripture and emblematic of his compositional and visual innovations. How these authors negotiate the inconsistencies in the source materials regarding the enumeration of dwellings that comprise a hermitage offers a clear example of how the Thirteenth Dalai Lama improves upon his predecessor's work, both in terms of textual interpretation and visual explanation.

The discussion of appropriate hermitages in the *Vinayavastu* occurs within the larger context of the monks asking the Buddha where they can meditate (*sgom par byed pa*) in certain situations. Because lodging is one of the four requisites for a monk, various vinaya texts detail the architectural and open spaces acceptable for individual monks and the entire monastic community to inhabit. The *Vinayavastu* contains a whole chapter, the *Śayanāsanavastu* (Chapter on Shelter), dedicated to this topic.[327] Furthermore, among the second most severe category of downfalls in the *prātimokṣa* rules—those "partially defeating acts" that require a ritual act of the *saṅgha* to restore the place of the offender within the community—are offenses involving the construction of an individual dwelling or monastery at an improper site, from inappropriate materials, or in the incorrect size.[328]

However, we find the rules for hermitages explained and illustrated in the two *'dul ris* texts within the first section of the *Vinayavastu*, the Chapter on Purification (*Poṣadhavastu*). There, some monks describe the unsafe circumstances in which they practice, where "thieves, demons, lions, tigers, leopards, and panthers wander around." The Buddha responds definitively that "meditation is not to be done in a temple."[329] They are not to meditate in vestibules or

[327] See Schopen, "Hierarchy and Housing in a Buddhist Monastic Code."
[328] Jamgon Kongtrul, *Buddhist Ethics*, 109-10; Cabezón and Dorjee, *Sera Monastery*, 43.
[329] *Vinayavastu*, volume ka, (Lha sa: Zhol bka' 'gyur par khang) [BDRC bdr:MW26071_0001] <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW26071_0001>, 185b2.

courtyards in other situations either. But as the Buddha goes into more and more detail, questioned by the faithless among the noble ones (*ma dad pa rnams 'phags pa dag*),[330] the Buddha commands that the areas in which they are practicing should be surrounded by a wall, a trench, or even an enclosure of pomegranate bushes. But when the monks ask again about the circumstances under which they can practice ascetic meditation (*rnal 'byor bsgom pa*), the Buddha orders that hermitages be built. However, the monks "did not know what sort of hermitages"[331] he meant. The Buddha further specifies that there are small hermitages and large hermitages: two dwellings (*gnas khang*) with a path established (*gtod pa*) in between constitute a small one, whereas a large hermitage is defined by ten or twelve buildings with a path established between them.[332] He then goes on to describe the different doors and door bolts—which we find later in both *'dul ris* texts—as well as windows and window screens that are permitted to be constructed on these hermitage dwellings.

In their sections describing and illustrating hermitages, Ngawang Gyaltsen and Thubten Gyatso both employ the same passage from the *Vinayasūtra* that condenses this section of the *Vinayavastu: "*Hermitages are to be built. Between two dwellings (*gnas khang*) there is a basic[333] path.[334] [And also between] five or six [dwellings]."[335] We can see immediately how Guṇaprabha extrapolated this description from the *Vinayavastu*, clarifying that the path of the large hermitage (although he does not specify sizes) divides the ten or twelve dwellings mentioned in the scripture into groups of five or six. A hermitage or a place for meditating, is

[330] This could also mean "the Noble ones [who arouse the faith in] the faithless" or "superior to the faithless."
[331] *Vinayavastu*, volume ka, 186a2.
[332] Ibid., 186a3-4.
[333] This word, *gdod,* appears in both 'dul ris texts and the commentarial sources, but its meaning is rather obscure, as "primordial" or "primitive" does not make much sense; however, in the Lhasa *Vinayavastu* the term is clearly *gtod* and even though this makes more sense it is still a confusing choice of words.
[334] This word for path, *srang*, is misspelled as *spang* in *Moonlight Vanquishing*. It appears as *srang* in the *Vinayasūtra* and *Many Scripts and Drawings*, and elsewhere.
[335] *Vinayasūtra*, 55b4.

thus defined by buildings or groups of buildings separated by a pathway, but both the *Vinayavastu* and its summary are remarkably vague—for example, what about a community with fewer buildings than ten and more than two?

Likely unsatisfied with these ambiguities, both Ngawang Gyaltsen and Thubten Gyatso unquestionably looked at Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtravṛttyabhidhānasvavyākhyāna* (*VSVA*) and Dharmamitra's *Vinayasūtraṭīkā* (*VST*) for additional information before composing their explanatory text and images. These commentaries elaborate on their sparse root text, clarifying a path's position between different numbers of dwellings, and defining the size of a hermitage by how many dwellings are built. For example, the *Vinayasūtraṭīkā* glosses the last line from the *Vinayasūtra* quotation above as follows: "There is to be a basic path between five dwellings built on one side and five dwellings built on the other side; moreover, there is to be a basic path between six dwellings built on one side and six dwellings built on the other side. Regarding these ten or twelve dwellings, this is the medium kind of hermitage."[336] In the two *'dul ris*, we find references to these sizes—adding "medium" to the *Vinayavastu* and the *Vinayasūtra*—in their text descriptions and we see the number of dwellings reflected in their drawings; but we also find the two authors attempting to reconcile discrepancies in the Indian commentaries.

Guṇaprabha and Dharmamitra define small hermitages in similar ways: there is to be a path between one dwelling built on one side and another dwelling built on the other side.[337] And both commentaries reiterate the *Vinayasūtra*'s instruction that there must be a path between two dwellings. In their graphic interpretations, both Ngawang Gyaltsen (Fig. 2.8) and the Dalai Lama (Fig. 2.9) clearly begin with a single dwelling that is separated by a path from one dwelling on one side, and the same thing repeated on the other side. The resulting column of three is the

[336] *VST*, volume yu, 96b1-2.
[337] *VSVA*, volume zu, 69b3-4; *VST*, volume yu 96a7.

endpoint for the Dalai Lama's illustration; Ngawang Gyaltsen, however, includes a parallel column of three dwellings that is separated from the first by a vertical path, indicating that a path must be present on any side where another dwelling is built. But then what number of dwellings constitutes a small hermitage, three or six? Do the six hermitages allude to the *Vinayasūtra*'s nebulous "five or six"?

Taken together, the Indian commentaries are confounding, and neither Ngawang Gyaltsen's text nor his drawings offer much clarification. His text labelled *ja,* which is connected to this group of six dwellings, reads only, "Hermitages are to be built (f. 20b4)." The adjacent group of ten dwellings (Fig. 2.10) is associated with the line *nya*, "This picture of 'Five or six'"—quoting the passage from the *Vinayasūtra*—"is a large hermitage (f. 20b5)." Drawing from the Indian commentaries, Ngawang Gyaltsen visually renders this hermitage as two columns of five dwellings separated by a vertical pathway down the middle, which seems to be what the Buddha intended. The next group of dwellings (Fig. 2.12), labelled *ta*, is composed of two columns of six, but is not called a "large hermitage" as one would assume; instead Ngawang Gyaltsen refers to this group of twelve as a "medium hermitage" (f. 20b5). Is this a numeric miscalculation or a scriptural misinterpretation? It appears that Ngawang Gyaltsen has not made a mistake, but is seeking to reconcile the differences in the two Indian commentaries: the *Vinayasūtravṛttyabhidhānasvavyākhyāna* defines hermitages with two groups of five or six, separated by a path, as large;[338] whereas the *Vinayasūtraṭīkā,* as seen in the quotation above, defines the same kind of hermitage as medium. Adding to the confusion, Dharmamitra does not describe a large hermitage at all, but offers another example of a medium hermitage, containing from four up to ten dwellings—"Nothing more than what is the appropriate amount,"[339] he

[338] *VSVA*, volume zu, 69b4-6.
[339] *VST,* volume yu, 96b2.

writes.

In *Moonlight Vanquishing*, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama deals with this same discrepancy in the Indian sources, but in a way that is different from and much clearer than Ngawang Gyaltsen's approach. The Dalai Lama's illustrations come in three groups (Figs. 2.9, 2.11, 2.13), which the general text for this section explains are drawings of the three hermitage sizes: large, medium, and small (f. 3a). As described above, the first group depicts a column of three dwellings comprising a small hermitage; while the grammar is slightly ambiguous, the accompanying text specifies that from one up to three dwellings constitutes a small hermitage. Nine dwellings comprise the second group, its corresponding text explaining that a medium hermitage has four to nine dwellings—a definition close to that of Dharmamitra. And finally, reflecting Guṇaprabha's commentary and the *Vinayavāstu* itself, the last group contains twelve dwellings, which, like groups of ten and eleven, establish a large hermitage according to the Dalai Lama's caption.

Although the Buddha's instructions are rather clear, albeit not comprehensive, the many interpretations of what constitutes hermitages of differing sizes is a case in point of how something simple can become convoluted across many layers of commentary. While both Ngawang Gyaltsen and Thubten Gyatso are looking at identical Indian sources, the latter manages to negotiate their inconsistencies more effectively, creating complementary written and visual explanations that integrate all relevant information comprehensibly and without contradiction. The Dalai Lama achieves this by altering Ngawang Gyaltsen's graphic interpretations to illustrate his own revised enumerations: the groups of dwellings are more clearly delineated and the buildings enlarged for greater legibility. Thubten Gyatso further defines the small, medium, and large hermitages in more explicit terms than any other source,

offering the precise number of dwellings possible for each category so there is no ambiguity when fulfilling the Buddha's original instructions.

Exegetical Corrections

Upon first glance, the section on shoes seems to be another instance of the Dalai Lama copying Ngawang Gyaltsen's drawings with minimal changes, except for written additions. A closer examination, however, reveals this section to be representative of the Dalai Lama's creative commentarial contributions, apparent in both his written and visual explanations. Fourteen pairs of shoes are presented in *Moonlight Vanquishing*, four of which are modeled by monks. Of these fourteen, only four are also depicted among the eight pairs in *Many Scripts and Drawings*; but they are the same only in name—that is, the technical names that are given in the quotations from the *Vinayasūtra*, drawing from the Chapter on Leather Use (*carmavastu*) in the *Vinayavastu*.

Although the textual citations are identical in the two *'dul ris* texts, none of their four illustrations match. For two, the pictures are at least similar: the drawings of "boots with laces (*lham sgro gu can*)" (Fig. 2.14) that are appropriate for wearing in icy climates differ only in the placement of the ties, on the back or on the front; and the "short boots (*lham yu chas*)" (Fig. 2.15), which cover half of the calf and are permitted if there is a wound on a monk's leg, are identical except for a border along the top. The other two illustrations, however, are very different: the drawings of a leather boot with a leather upper part (Fig. 2.16), which is permitted if there is a wound on the foot, vary in height and decoration; and the pictures of the so-called "shoes with an enclosure covering the tip and the heel" (Fig. 2.17) are the most disparate, rendered as two images by the Dalai Lama (Fig. 2.17A) and as only one very strange looking shoe by Ngawang Gyaltsen (Fig. 2.17B).

For the first three examples, these graphic divergences may reflect historical or regional differences in the shoe styles known to our two authors. But the latter two are undoubtedly the result of disparate interpretations of the root text and the inclusion (or exclusion) of information from the commentaries. This is especially apparent for the "[shoes] with an enclosed (*sbubs can*) heel and toe,"[340] (Fig. 2.17) as described in the *Vinayasūtra* and quoted in both *'dul ris*. Ngawang Gyaltsen's illustration of this quotation presents a single type of footwear with bizarre caps on both the heel and the toe, reflecting Guṇaprabha's imprecise grammar. When we look at the original text and subsequent Indian commentaries, as Thubten Gyatso clearly did, it is obvious that the Buddha permits a shoe with a covered heel, and another shoe with a covered toe, rather than a one shoe covered in both the front and back.

According to the *Carmavastu* section of the *Vinayavastu*, when the monks ascended Vulture Peak to hear the Buddha preach, "a wound occurred on the big toe of their foot. Having seen this, brahmins and householders asked them, 'What has caused this wound to occur on the big toe of your foot? Is it from when you ascend Vulture Peak? Can you not possess (*bcang ba*) a shoe with a hollow toe (*rtse mo sbu gu*)?' [They replied,] "The Bhagavan does not permit [such shoes].' At the time of this conversation, the monks asked the Bhagavan about this and he ordered, 'This being so, I permit it. Monks can wear shoes with a hollow toe.'"[341] And likewise, when the monks descended Vulture Peak, a wound occurred on the heel of their foot. After the locals question the monks again, they return to the Buddha and he also allows them to wear "shoes with a hollow heel (*rting pa sbu gu*)."[342] Guṇaprabha and Dharmamitra both further clarify the defining characteristics of this footwear—the hollow part—to mean an enclosure

[340] *Vinayasūtra,* 74b1
[341] *Vinayavastu*, volume kha, 6b1-4.
[342] Ibid., 6b7.

(*sbubs*) and these authors also make clear that these shoes can only be worn if a monk has skinned his toe or heel, mentioning specifically the dangerous treks up and down Vulture Peak that gave rise to this rule.[343]

The Dalai Lama not only correctly depicts two different shoes, but he also incorporates the context of the rule's origin—derived from the vinaya and other Indian commentaries—into both his written and visual interpretations of the *Vinayasūtra* quotation. These shoes, he explains, are for monks whose toes or heels are wounded from "having climbed" or "having descended from mountains (f. 6a)," expanding the permissible circumstances beyond Vulture Peak to apply to injuries obtained in a more general landscape—an adaptation that would clearly apply to the many Tibetan monks living in mountainous regions. The drawings also incorporate this topographical context as they portray the monks modelling the two types of shoes whilst trekking up and down a mountain. Ngawang Gyaltsen only gives the appropriate passage from the *Vinayasūtra* to describe this and each of the other shoes he illustrates, whereas for nearly all the shoes in his *'Dul ris* Thubten Gyatso offers additional information, drawn in part from the additional commentarial sources he consulted. He therefore expands this section with new examples, new drawings, and new written content, offering more comprehensive written and visual explanations of acceptable and unacceptable shoes for monks.

Anchoring an Unmoored Idea

I have shown, thus far, some of the different ways in which the Thirteenth Dalai Lama adapted and innovated upon the work of Ngawang Gyaltsen in the sections shared by the two *'dul ris*. Throughout, he improves upon Ngawang Gyaltsen's drawings and text, but he also frequently expands these sections to include original illustrations, different scriptural selections, and new

[343] *VST*, volume yu, 208b7-209a1; *VSVA*, volume zu,149b5-6.

commentary. Still, all these creative contributions by the Dalai Lama occurred within the thematic parameters set by Ngawang Gyaltsen in his *'dul ris*. *Moonlight Vanquishing*, however, features two long sections and one short section, as well as four individual drawings, that comprise entirely new additions to the overall structure established in *Many Scripts and Drawings*. Between his sections on dwellings and on temples, the Dalai Lama makes his first thematic departure, transforming one drawing in Ngawang Gyaltsen's *'dul ris* into a new subject for expansive artistic and commentarial exploration: methods for dispelling drowsiness during practice. At the end of folio 18 recto of *Many Scripts and Drawings*, following the illustrations of hermitages and the large building with a second story, there is a picture (Fig. 2.18A) of seven balls hanging from strings on a rack. The adjacent text reads, "This is an illustration of the following quotations: 'If you are sleepy, specialized balls (*gdos bu*) are to be fastened [onto you],' and so on, 'Hold a cord which is tied to that ball; it is to be cut (f. 18a).'"

Rather than replicating or even disregarding this arbitrary drawing and moving directly from his section on dwellings to the one on temples, Thubten Gyatso instead uses it as a creative springboard, generating six new illustrations of techniques for removing drowsiness, drawn directly from the Chapter on Purification (*Poṣadhavastu*) of the *Vinayavastu* and summaries from the *Vinayasūtra*. In the vinaya text, after the Buddha describes the doors and windows permitted in the dwellings that constitute small and large hermitages, he explains the different kinds of seats that the meditators inhabiting these dwellings are allowed to sit upon: circular or square, made of woven hemp or cotton patchwork, stuffed with wool or leaves, for example.[344] In a rather intuitive transition, the Buddha shifts from cushion regulations to recommendations for how to avoid drowsiness while meditating, apparently on these comfortable seats in a

[344] *Vinayavāstu,* volume ka, 187a3-7.

hermitage; now that the ideal location and environment for meditative practice is established, from overall building to individual seat, the Buddha moves on to rules that ensure focus, in addition to safety and comfort. The very first method offered by the Buddha is to tie soft balls onto the ears so that they hang down. If this does not work, he suggests that a rod is used to poke the meditator, ostensibly in the ear. If an injury ensues, you are to wrap the stick with cotton and very slowly insert the stick in the meditator's ear. If sleepiness still occurs, one is to throw a ball of yarn at the meditator. When monks threw the ball in a dark hole and lost it, the Buddha orders that a short rope or tether be fastened to the ball so that when it is tossed it can be retrieved. If drowsiness persists still, the Buddha recommends that you stare at a butter lamp in front of you or extend one or two legs.[345]

Unlike the drawing of Ngawang Gyaltsen, Thubten Gyatso's pictures depict monks employing these methods, not the instruments alone. The Dalai Lama's drawing that illustrates the same, rather abstruse *Vinayasūtra* quotation used in Ngawang Gyaltsen's *'dul ris* clarifies immensely the nature of this method: it shows a meditating monk with these special balls hanging from his ears, showing the reader how and where exactly they are to be attached. He further incorporates some details drawn from Dharmamitra, who says these balls, which can be made from wool and resemble sacks of water, are "to hang, having been attached to their own ears"[346] by a sleepy meditator, who is ostensibly kept alert by the weight of the dangling pieces or awakened by their movement as he dozes off. The Dalai Lama's picture (Fig. 2.19) perfectly portrays this method as described in the *Vinayasūtraṭīkā*: a monk sits in his meditation cell, hands folded on his crossed legs, with a ball hanging from each of his ears; a water pitcher and two balls or sacks hang from the ceiling, perhaps alluding the water vessels to which

[345] Ibid., 187b1-7.
[346] *VST*, volume yu, 98b1-2.

Dharmamitra draws a comparison. Thubten Gyatso thus performs a careful visual exegesis of the *Vinayasūtra* quotation by graphically interpreting the root text and integrating elements of its commentaries into the image.

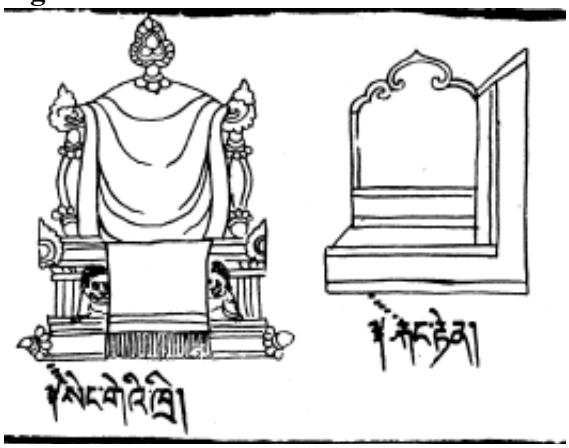
Implied but not explicit in the vinaya and the root text, but made clear in *Moonlight Vanquishing*, is the outdoor or indoor spaces where these practices could be performed, as well as the necessary participation of other monks to poke or toss. In the picture (Fig. 2.18B) featuring the specialized tethered ball, the Dalai Lama's *'Dul ris* depicts what he calls "the ball of string (*pho long*) method for removing drowsiness (f. 4a)" This drawing, which shows a monk holding the string's end while throwing the ball toward the head of his meditating colleague, breathes life into the root text quotation, "The ball of string is to be tossed (f. 4a)." These pictures exemplify the Dalai Lama's prioritization of accessible imagery to elucidate technical concepts. Abstract, scriptural descriptions of activities are visually translated into concrete drawings of the action in motion. Most importantly, here we find an instance in which the Dalai Lama rescues an unmoored idea, poorly explained and confusingly portrayed in *Many Scripts and Drawings,* by anchoring it to a much clearer written and visual explanation, and securing it to a larger scriptural context established by the addition of this whole section on similar techniques for dispelling drowsiness.

The many changes made to Ngawang Gyaltsen's work by the Dalai Lama, improving its visual and written contents, fulfills the intention he proclaims in his colophon, to correct "the meaning of the illustrations of the vinaya written long ago and the foundation of these kinds of drawings (f. 9a5)." The new sections and illustrations that he adds, moreover, truly demonstrate Thubten Gyatso's effort to create "newly occurring, unprecedented drawings" that appropriate and perfect Ngawang Gyaltsen's methodology. The Dalai Lama's more comprehensive blending

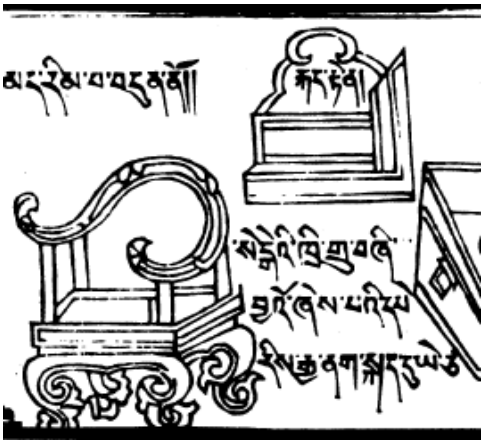
of information from various textual sources and practical education in his illustrations certainly sets his work apart from the *'dul ris* of Ngawang Gyaltsen, who seems to rely mostly on the *Vinayasūtra* and less on its Indian and Tibetan commentaries.

While a definitive element of Thubten Gyatso's careful visual exegeses is his synthesis of canonical commentaries with Tibetan cultural forms, the contribution of Ngawang Gyaltsen's basic graphic translations from the Indian *Vinayasūtra* monastic rules to recognizable Tibetan monastic life cannot be ignored, as it is a rare if not singular attempt at drawing some of the vinaya basics. *Many Scripts and Drawings* served as the starting point for *Moonlight Vanquishing*, outlining the thematic sections, suggesting specific canonical selections, and sketching many of the drawings. But taken as a whole, Ngawang Gyaltsen's project is only a foundation, a springboard, an inspiration for the Dalai Lama, who enhances its contents and structure—the graphic clarity, scriptural interpretation, and compositional coherence—to the degree that the original *'dul ris* is essentially created anew, allowing for a different kind of project to emerge. The result is a new commentarial style based on original visual interpretations of canonical texts that comprehensively and coherently expresses orthodoxy as communicated by the Buddha and contained within the hierarchy of commentaries.

Figure 2.1: Thrones

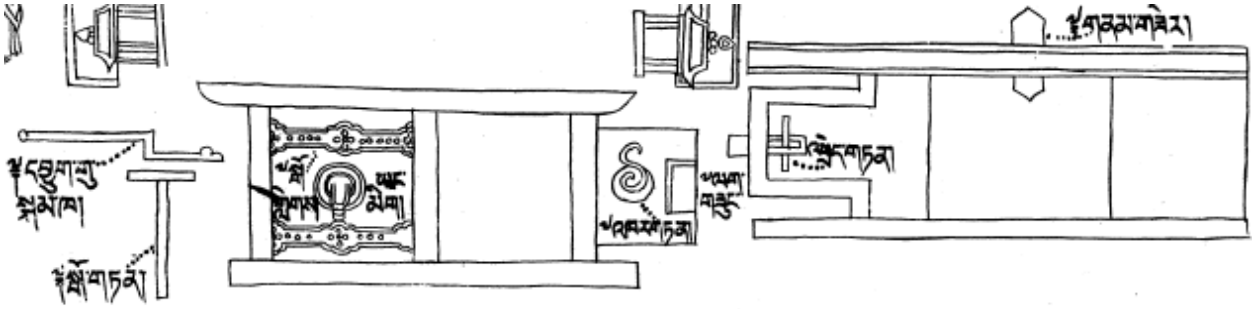


A (*Moonlight Vanquishing (MV)* 5b)



B (*Many Scripts and Drawings (MSD*) 18b)

Figure 2.2: Door parts



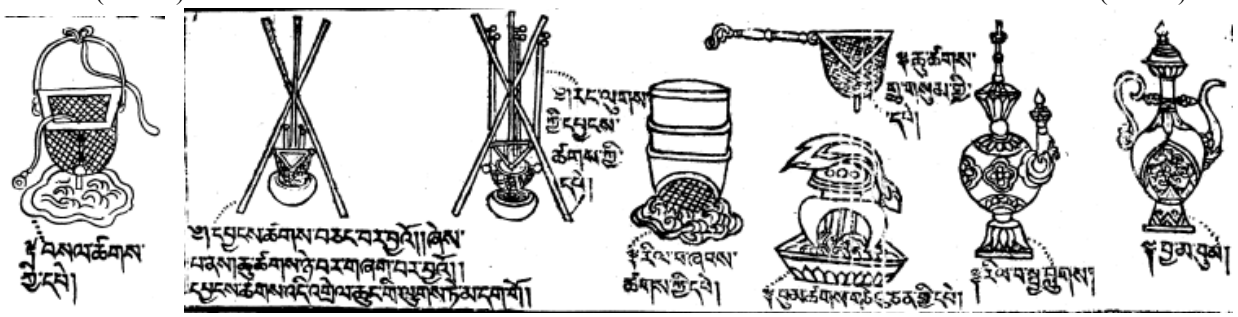
A (*MV* 5a)



B (*MSD* 18b)

Figure 2.3: Water filters

A (*MV* 5b) **xi** (*MV* 6a)

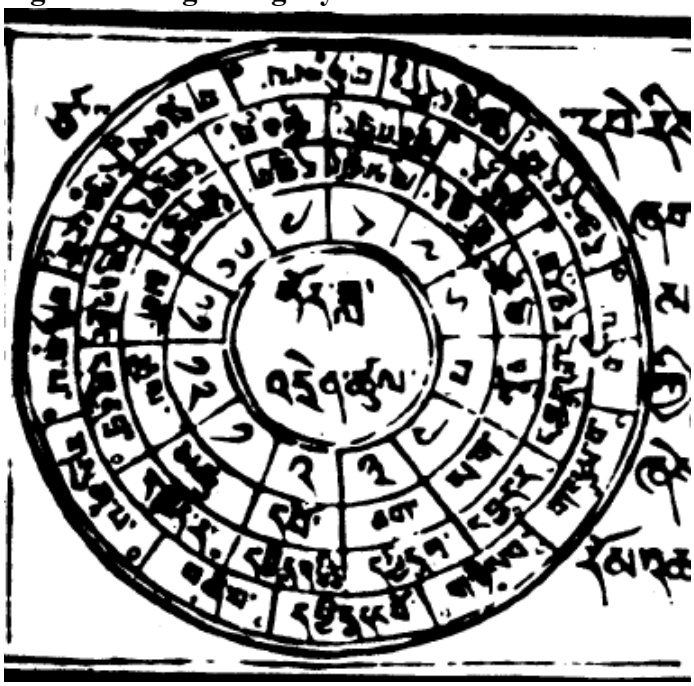


i **ii** **iii** **ix** **x** **xii** **xiii**



B (*MSD* 19a)

Figure 2.4: Ngawang Gyaltsen's circular calendar



(*MSD* 19b)

Figure 2.5: Thubten Gyatso's calendar chart



(*MV* 8b)

Figure 2.6: Ngawang Gyaltsen's downfall of separation



(*MSD* 16b)

Figure 2.7: Thubten Gyatso's downfall of separation



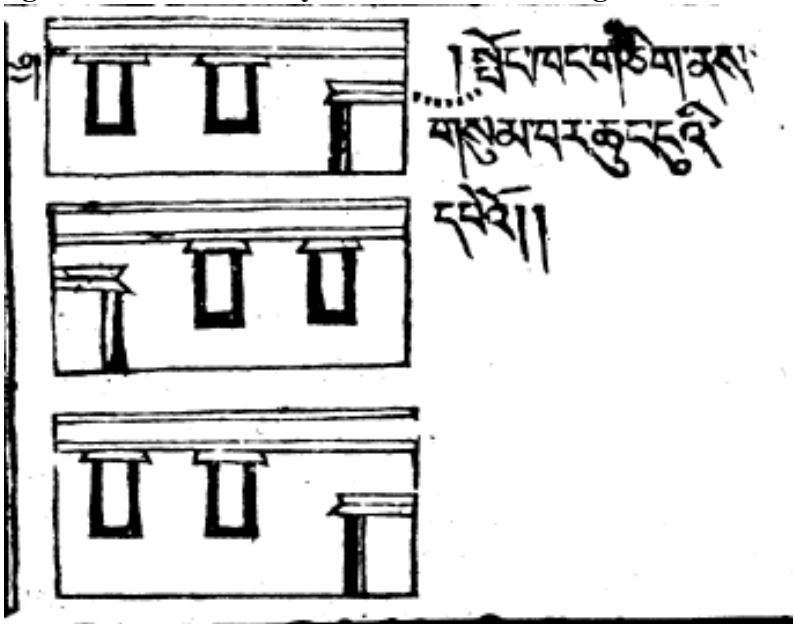
(*MV* 1b)

Figure 2.8: Ngawang Gyaltsen's small hermitage



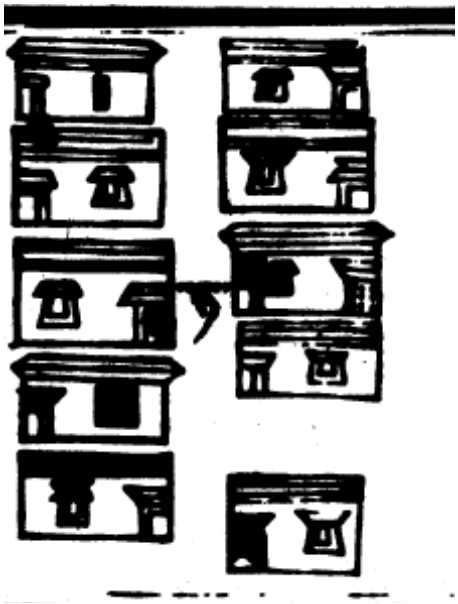
(*MSD* 18a)

Figure 2.9: Thubten Gyatso's small hermitage



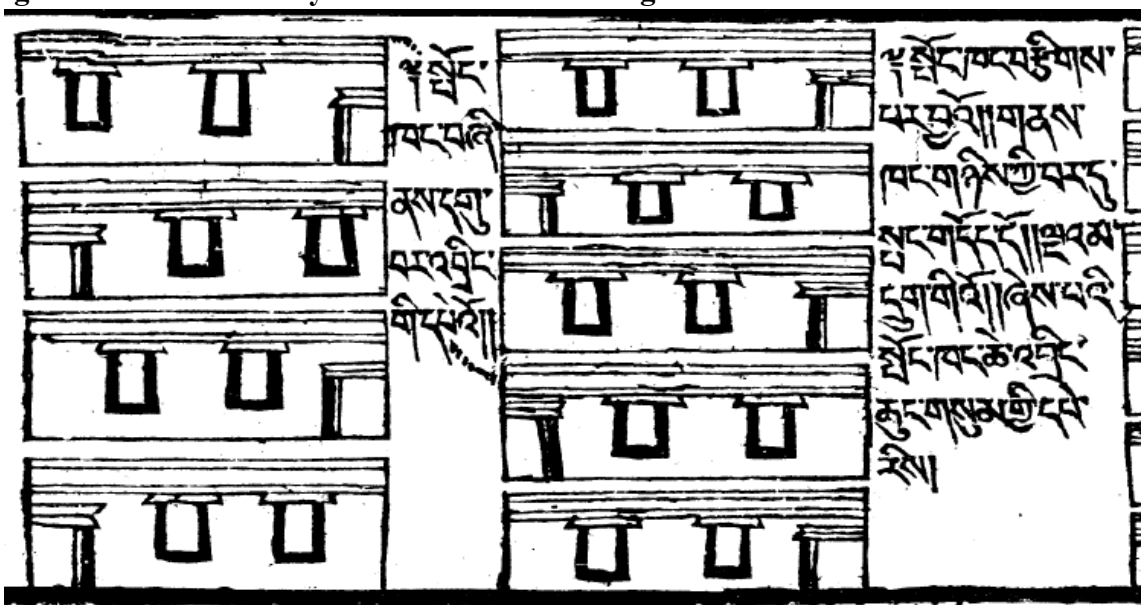
(*MV* 3a)

Figure 2.10: Ngawang Gyaltsen's large hermitage



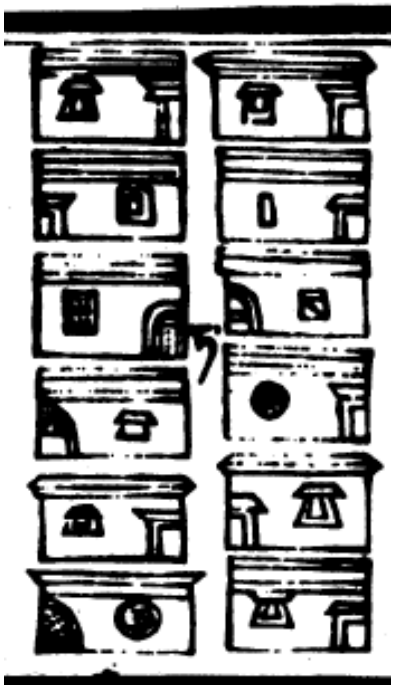
(*MSD* 18a)

Figure 2.11: Thubten Gyatso's medium hermitage



(*MV* 3a)

Figure 2.12: Ngawang Gyaltsen's medium hermitage



(*MSD* 18a)

Figure 2.13: Thubten Gyatso's large hermitage



(*MV* 3a)

Figure 2.14: Boots with laces



A (*MSD* 19b, #4)



B (*MV* 6b)

Figure 2.15: Short boots



A (*MSD* 19b, #8)



B (*MV* 6a)

Figure 2.16: Leather boots

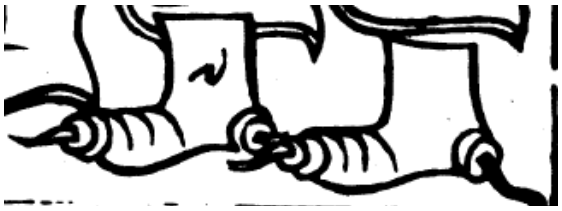


A (*MSD* 19b, #3)



B (*MV* 6a)

Figure 2.17: Shoes with enclosures on the heel and toe



A (*MSD* 19b, #7)



B (*MV* 6a)

Figure 2.18: Special balls of string to prevent sleepiness



A (*MSD* 18a)



B (*MV* 4a)

Figure 2.19: Balls to be hung from the ears to dispel drowsiness



(*MV* 3b)

CHAPTER SIX
A Typology of Visual Commentary

There are many general and specific ways in which the Dalai Lama transforms Ngawang Lobsang Tenpai Gyaltsen's *Many Scripts and Drawings* into a visual commentary of his own. Now, however, it is important to examine more closely the expository relationships Thubten Gyatso establishes between words and images in *Moonlight Vanquishing*. Such an evaluation is integral to comprehending the Dalai Lama's exegetical style, as it reveals the creative ways he generates images that integrate information from across sources and utilizes them to elucidate terms, quotes, and written commentary, including his own.

Rather than performing a piece-by-piece, linear survey of the *'Dul ris*, in this chapter I identify four types of visual commentary, defined by how words and images relate in this work, complementing each other and ultimately establishing as primary the exegetical role of the illustrations. Each pairing of a drawing and text can be categorized according to this typology. In the first group, the illustration is accompanied by a single term or a quotation, either of which are drawn directly from the *Vinayasūtra*. The second type is similar to the first, except that the Dalai Lama adds to the quotation a short sentence that is decidedly descriptive rather than interpretive. The image, in these two cases, functions as a graphic definition of the term or quotation, explaining what a thing or activity is based on, what the commentaries say and, above all, how it appears (or should appear) in the Tibetan context.

The written content is more substantial and more exegetical in the third category of visual commentary; it includes information drawn from Indian and Tibetan vinaya commentaries and

Tibetan monastic culture, as well as the interpretations of the author himself. Because the text is more comprehensive, the drawings are more directly reflective of the written content, while still performing fundamental commentarial functions: elucidating the concepts inadequately expressed by words, incorporating content from other sources, and explaining these elements of monastic life in terms applicable to the contemporary moment and recognizable within the cultural context of twentieth-century Tibet.

All three categories described thus far feature text directly connected to the *Vinayasūtra*—either a quotation or term extracted from this root text—but the final group does not. Instead, these parts of *Moonlight Vanquishing* feature summaries of information found in the commentaries together with Thubten Gyatso's own commentarial additions or those that he draws from thus far unidentified sources. In some instances, this kind of written content serves as the descriptive captions that complement the illustrations and their primary corresponding text. But in other occurrences, these pieces of written commentary, together with the related drawings, introduce ideas that do not appear in the *Vinayasūtra*, but which are essential to understanding aspects of monastic life as described in the commentaries or as manifest in Tibet. Concrete examples of these four categories will help to make this typology clearer.

Type One

Pairings of images and text from the *'Dul ris* that fit into the first category are the easiest to identify because the captions are composed of a single word or state simply, "This is an illustration of what is said," referring to a preceding quotation or term from the *Vinayasūtra*. We find this type of visual commentary applied to miscellaneous objects, such as the lion throne and footstool, as well as individual articles is certain sections, such as the water filters and the forbidden shoes. The part dedicated to various door bolts and other parts (Fig. 2.3A),

furthermore, provides a representative example of this kind of relationship between single term captions and individual illustrations. A t-shaped door bar (*sgo gtan*) and a zig-zagged wooden key (*dbyug gu skam kha*) are drawn adjacent to two kinds of doors, each of which is recognizable as such despite being extracted from a full architectural context. Short dotted lines connect the part of the door with the label, which is a word drawn directly from the *Vinayasūtra*. These terms appear in several places throughout the root text and its Indian commentaries, as related to both doors and windows. Rather than explaining the technical specifications of what these parts are or how they are used, Guṇaprabha and Dharmamitra state simply that the Buddha said they should be put in place. Occasionally, we are given more information—that the door handle is to be made of leather, wrapped in cloth,[347] or that the Buddha bestowed the words that there should be a door bolt, after the wind creeped in.[348]

Both these Indian authors seem to assume that their readers possess a certain familiarity with these terms, that they would know the difference between these various door bars, bolts, and handles, without much explication. When the *Vinayasūtra* and its Sanskrit commentaries were translated into Tibetan, the names of these parts were presumably rendered into the proper Tibetan technical vocabulary. The Dalai Lama, however, takes this a step further and visually translates these terms into the Tibetan architectural idiom, substantially improving the meager definitions presented in the root text, and definitively affirming their correct meanings in a Tibetan context. While they may not be familiar to an outside reader, twentieth-century Tibetan monks might have recognized by sight if not by name these keys, handles, and jambs prescribed by the Buddha, with which they interact in their daily lives. It raises the question, however, if a monk of any time or place, as opposed to a carpenter or builder, would know the name of all

[347] *VST*, volume yu, 96b5-6.
[348] *VSVA*, volume zu, 70a7.

these parts. These illustrations would thus not only be a visual translation from Sanskrit to Tibetan, but a graphic explanation of technical terms for non-specialists.

In his *'Dul ris*, Thubten Gyatso's captions of this type merely offer a word, whereas the image does the real exegetical work, graphically explaining what this object is, in terms of the structural context of a door and the architectural milieu of a Tibetan monastery. The Dalai Lama does with his drawings what words cannot: rather than using lengthy written commentary to describe these terms, depending on the unreliable, inconsistent imaginations of his readers, he instead employs visual commentary to more effectively and efficiently define key terms, bringing together scriptural and cultural knowledge into a single picture. He performs similar commentarial acts for the lion throne and foot stool (Fig. 2.1A), a selection of the shoes (Fig. 2.20), as well as his first drawing of a multi-story temple (Fig. 2.21). Thubten Gyatso also does the same for the small gong of a renunciant (Fig. 2.22i); although the root text quotation names both monk's staff and the small gong, in the caption he distinguishes the drawing as portraying latter, whereas the staff is presented later in the *'Dul ris*.

Whether illustrating a word or a quotation, these pictures illuminate an abstruse or even absent description from the *Vinayasūtra* that is not otherwise clarified in the commentaries or elaborated in the *Vinayavastu*. Through his visual explanations, Thubten Gyatso gives structural context to the root text's architectural prescriptions and cultural context to its footwear proscriptions, allowing correct buildings and appropriate accessories to be easily understood and potentially applied by his audience. How is a Tibetan monk to know exactly what the forbidden shoes that resemble a ram's horn look like? Thankfully, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama generously shows and tells (Fig. 2.20i), preventing a downfall due to ignorance.

Although the water strainers (Fig. 2.3A) fit into this first category as well, their illustrations visually defining the technical names of different filtration instruments, here the pictures do extra exegetical work as necessitated by the more extensive descriptions provided by the *Vinayasūtra* and its Indian commentaries. Guṇaprabha meticulously explains the construction of the hanging water strainer (Fig. 2.3Aii) in the root text, specifying, for example: the appropriate materials for the bowl under the filter (clay or copper), the place where the sieve attaches to the tripod (in holes on two of its sides), and the method for ensuring the water drips (hitting the filter with a wooden plank).[349] As for the vase strainer with a flageolet (Fig. 2.3Aix), we are told that it is not difficult to use,[350] but the structure of this complex device is rather difficult to explain: the pipes inside the cavity of the symmetrical vase are described by Guṇaprabha in the *Vinayasūtravṛttyabhidhānasvavyākhyāna* as "akin to the tubes that exist in the heart of a lotus."[351]

Whereas Guṇaprabha and Dharmamitra offer relatively scant details about permissible shoes, the design of a lion throne, and different door bolts, in the case of the water filters there is almost too much information to digest in a meaningful way, making it difficult to envision the various contraptions described. Understanding proper water sieves would be important, as such a tool is technically one of the essential possessions of any ordained monk because filtering water before drinking assures that it is free of any living being that might be inadvertently killed if not trapped and released.[352] The technical descriptions in the Indian commentaries would have been especially challenging for a Tibetan audience, who were not accustomed to these kinds of strainers; we know this because Thubten Gyatso also includes in this section a specifically

[349] *Vinayasūtra,* 38b2-5.
[350] Ibid. 38b5.
[351] *VSVA* 229b1.
[352] For more about the requirements of monks to filter their water, see Yijing*, A Record of the Inner Law*, 30-2, 54.

Tibetan water filter (Fig. 2.3Aiii), which is decidedly not drawn from the canonical Indian sources. The illustrations are thus visual interpretations that make sense of these convoluted descriptions better than any additional written commentary could; the pictures effectively incorporate all relevant information from the available sources in comprehensible graphic forms.

The Dalai Lama's individual drawings of water strainers encapsulate the many words of these lengthy descriptions, which are in turn distilled down to single terms. For the door parts, furniture, monk's gong staff, and shoes, on the other hand, his pictures fill in the blanks of the root text rather than synthesizing its excesses. For both groups in this category, moreover, it is the drawings that perform the commentarial labor, serving the readers by manifesting accurately, according to canonical texts and lived experience, these objects that would otherwise be left to their fallible imaginations. He thus offers an accessible orthodoxy—with options, in the case of the water filters—by depicting these objects in intelligible, if not familiar, forms. Confronted with the confusing words of the Buddha and the possibility of monastic transgressions, the illustrations of the *'Dul ris* provide its ordained readers with concrete and correct visual aids for some of the more confounding elements of the *Vinayasūtra*.

Type Two

The second category of visual commentary found in *Moonlight Vanquishing* is very similar to the first, except that Thubten Gyatso adds a sentence to his text that gives greater context to the subsequent root text quotation and the accompanying illustration. The section dedicated to methods for eliminating sleepiness is especially illustrative of this category. Each caption begins by specifying that the drawing depicts a particular method for removing drowsiness, followed by a quotation from the *Vinayasūtra* that explains the action of this technique. For example, the first caption (Fig. 2.23) reads: "Nevertheless, this is an illustration of the butter lamp method for

removing (*sangs thabs*) [drowsiness], when falling asleep. 'A butter lamp is to be placed in front [of you] (f. 3b).'" And the image shows a monk seated before a butter lamp on a small table. If not for this first sentence, however, we would not know that the quotation and the picture in the Dalai Lama's *'Dul ris* both refer to a specific practice for dealing with sleepiness; the short description restores the context of the excerpted quotation, reflecting the larger topic of this section in the *Vinayasūtra* and establishing a frame of reference for the illustration.

The other parts of the *'Dul ris* that can be categorized in the second grouping alongside the methods for dispelling drowsiness are also related to sleepiness. Found on the same folio (3b) in the Dalai Lama's work, adjacent to the butter lamp technique, is a what he calls "a drawing of a renunciant's walking path that is eighteen cubits long" (Fig. 2.22ii). This descriptive text, like the others in this category, introduces some context to the three lines from the *Vinayasūtra* he quotes, while also connecting excerpts brought together from two different parts of the root text—one that discusses the function of the walkway and the other that dictates its size. Following the list of techniques for removing sleepiness, Guṇaprabha states in the *Vinayasūtra*, "In order to not be confused, you are to tread having grasped onto a tube or a cord that is attached to it, which is put on something such as a rope."[353] Subsequently, he specifies, "In order for the dust on the two feet to not soil [the walking path], there should be a carpet on the flat ground in the middle."[354] Although it is unclear in the *Vinayasūtra*, we know from the *Vinayavastu* that this in fact describes another method for staying awake: "If you are still sleepy, the Bhagavan orders you to get up and walk around. When you walk, if you feel dazed"—ostensibly from being tired—"The Bhagavan says to hold onto a horizontal rope. If the continuum [of the rope] is broken by the hand, the Bhagavan orders that you hold onto a tube

[353] *Vinayasūtra*, 56a4.
[354] *Vinayasūtra*, 56b1.

that is attached [to the rope] by a string. If you walk with shoes on and a sound arises, the Bhagavan commands that shoes are not to be worn. If dust makes your feet unsuitable, the Bhagavan orders a carpet to be spread out on the ground."[355]

Although the *Vinayasūtra*'s puzzling description of a kind of guide rail and covered ground does not mention the term "walking path (*'chag sa*)," the Dalai Lama graphically translates the root text's explanation, with some help from the vinaya and the commentaries,[356] into an illustration that is more readily understandable than any written explication. In his drawing of a monk walking while grasping the cord handle, the mysterious tube on a rope described in the root text is clearly transformed into a guide rail on a path that is clear even without Thubten Gyatso's caption identifying it as a walking path for renunciants. The Dalai Lama's descriptive sentence together with his picture further contextualizes the image's third root text citation, which appears several folia after the others in the *Vinayasūtra*: "As for the renunciant's, it is eighteen."[357] Read in isolation this is a confounding statement, but related to the rest of the Dalai Lama's text and his drawing, we understand that it refers to a renunciant's walkway that is eighteen cubits long. The monk's bare feet, moreover, not only reflect the quoted passage, but refer to a line from the *Vinayasūtra* excised by the Dalai Lama: "It [the silence or the path or carpet?] is not to be broken by feet with shoes on."[358] Thubten Gyatso distills these confusing descriptions into concise written commentary, and comprehensive and understandable visual commentary, which work complementarily to convey what would be difficult to explain in words alone.

[355] *Vinayavastu*, volume ka, 188a1-4.
[356] *VST*, volume yu. 99a4-6; *VSVA*, volume zu, 72a4-5.
[357] *Vinayasūtra*, 59a5.
[358] *Vinayasūtra*, 56a7-56b1.

And while this pairing of text and image seems at first to be arbitrarily included on this folio of the *'Dul ris*, its compositional location is, in fact, another editorial decision by the Dalai Lama that constitutes a commentarial act. By positioning this coupling of written content and visual explanation adjacent to the methods for dispelling drowsiness, Thubten Gyatso subtly gives the walking path even greater context, further clarifying the meaning of the root text, echoing the explanations of the commentaries, and actually reflecting the contents of the *Vinayavastu.* The spatial relationship between these drawings thus can also be understood as a form of extended visual commentary employed in *Moonlight Vanquishing*. Although the choice to portray the recitation path (Fig. 2.24) several folios later might be due to its association with architectural spaces, the Dalai Lama connects it visually to the renunciant's walkway with the same carpet and tube-on-rope guide rail, repurposing his graphic exegesis to expand the interpretation of the recitation path as one that also features this contraption for help in the dark. It may be spatially removed from the other walkway in the composition of the *'Dul ris*, but the recitation path is nevertheless related to it through Thubten Gyatso's visual commentary on their shared section of the *Vinayasūtra*. We find a similar, extended visual commentary executed through spatial relationships with regards to the victory banner (Fig. 2.25iv). In the caption attached to this flag, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama includes both a quotation from the root text that describes types of victory banners and a summary of the First Dalai Lama's commentary, wherein he explains that a victory banner should be planted "in the ground of a temple or before a stūpa."[359] This additional text gives greater context to a victory banner's function, which is in turn illustrated by its location on the same folio as the large temple illustrations. Again, Thubten Gyatso's visual commentary works to collectively illuminate content beyond a single pairing,

[359] Dge 'dun grub pa, *'Dul ṭīk*, 624.

granting greater clarity and wider understanding across multiple images on the same or different folios.

Type Three

The most prevalent type of visual commentary employed in *Moonlight Vanquishing*, however, is the third category, in which the illustration and root text quotation are accompanied by more substantial written commentary that includes information drawn from the *Vinayasūtra* commentaries and the vinaya itself, as well as the interpretations of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. We find this type in the sections on hermitages, temples, shoes, and robes, but first in the part about the abandonment of separation, as caused by the placement of the dharma robe in a tree. In each of his captions, the Dalai Lama describes one or two scenarios involving a monk, his robe, and where he hangs it in a tree in relation to his own position, referencing specifically which drawing depicts what action —left or right. Following this written commentary is the quoted, and often abstruse, line from the *Vinayasūtra* that is explained by Thubten Gyatso's text and elucidated by the adjacent picture. As I previously demonstrated, the illustrations in this part of the *'Dul ris* very clearly correspond to the Dalai Lama's written exegesis; the entwining of written and visual commentary is exemplary of this type. Because the captions include additional information derived from the Indian and Tibetan commentaries as interpreted by Thubten Gyatso—content that in other categories is incorporated only in the illustrations—here the text and images share the exegetical work more evenly.

The written explanations given by the Dalai Lama in this section on monks, their robes, and trees, both summarize and interpret the descriptions presented by Guṇaprabha and Dharmamitra in their commentaries on the *Vinayasūtra*. Although Thubten Gyatso's own expositions are much clearer than what these commentators offer, the pictures further clarify

their encapsulated meaning and define their ambiguous terms. But when the Dalai Lama's exegesis of the root text and commentaries is still confounding, the drawing bears a greater exegetical burden to provide the reader with a clear illustration, for example, of how to avoid the abandonment of separation. On folio 2b of his *'Dul ris*, Thubten Gyatso portrays a monk meditating in what appears to be a grove of trees (Fig. 2.26) next to the following text: "When there is reciprocal contact between the branches and leaves of a thicket of trees, where there is one master (*bdag po gcig*), if other conditions do not arise which change the boundary between the monk and the dharma robe [that extends] up to earshot, then the abandonment of separation is not caused. 'As for the thicket of trees, whose branches and leaves touch, it is the same place.'" Although this seems to be one of the easier quotations to understand, the Dalai Lama's written exegesis complicates rather than clarifies its meaning by introducing the master analogy and the border of earshot. The Indian commentaries on this quotation do not contain these details, but instead discuss that the touching fruits and flowers of these trees also contribute to the definition of a single place.[360]

Thubten Gyatso's source is instead Tsonawa's *Ocean of Commentary*, in which he writes: "As for the trees—that is, a forest—although the roots are separate, it is a single place. If there is one master (*bdag po gcig*), from the center up to the limits of earshot is a single place. As for the beyond the limits of earshot, it is said to be separate."[361] The Dalai Lama perhaps assumes the reader is familiar with Tsonawa, because without the context provided by his work, it would be difficult to presume that the master in the grove is the monk, and his position determines the center of the range of calling distance and the boundary of the shared space where the robe can be hung. The Dalai Lama's unsuccessful attempt to utilize Tsonawa's text and to render it more

[360] *VST*, volume 'u, 202a; *VSVA*, volume zhu, 140a.
[361] Mtsho sna ba, *Mtsho ṭik*, 397b1-2.

intelligible ultimately elevates the importance of the drawing as central to explaining both the root text and his exegesis of it. For the few monks who would have read Tsonawa and for the rest who would not have, the illustration anchors the confusing written content in a recognizable reality, making the rule comprehensible despite the convoluted descriptions.

In his section on hermitages and temples, Thubten Gyatso further employs expanded text to elucidate the root text and complement his drawings. For the two-page temple complex with the circumambulating devotees (Fig. 2.25i), the Dalai Lama's initial written commentary synthesizes the rules for such a structure, as prescribed in the *Vinayasūtra* passage he subsequently quotes and in the Indian commentaries he implicitly references: "This is an illustration of a square temple that is built for the sake of accumulating merit for many people, with a four-sided courtyard, where at the center of one side there is a principal chapel, and on the other three sides there are three dwellings each (f. 4b-5a)." Although the details of this structure's layout presented by Thubten Gyatso summarize rather than interpret the canonical instructions, his inclusion in this text of the traditional merit-making motivation for building the temple carefully connects its construction to its consecration. This further reflects the succeeding *Vinayasūtra* quotation: "The monastery foreman (*lag gi bla*) should consecrate the temple, on the basis of having [people] coming and going."[362] While neither the monastery foreman nor a consecration ritual is explicitly depicted, the group of circumambulating people, whose status as lay or ordained is clearly indicated by their meticulously rendered clothing, alludes to the comings and goings of visitors for whose benefit the temple is built and consecrated. The drawing dramatically captures each detail of the Dalai Lama's description and the root text's

[362] *Vinayasūtra*, 93b2.

instructions for the building, in addition to the ritual action that would be recognizable to readers, infusing it with cultural familiarity.

Although the Dalai Lama's written commentary together with his selections from the *Vinayasūtra* offer a complete description of the temple as depicted in the drawing, the illustration expresses a more comprehensive exegesis of the concepts presented in the text: it provides a clear and accurate portrayal of orthodox temple architecture, manifest in the Tibetan style, together with depictions of indigenous religious life, rendering it unmistakable to the reader. With this picture, the Dalai Lama relocates the instructions rooted in ancient India to the cultural sphere of Tibet. His visual exegesis of the root text and commentaries necessarily incorporates forms and practices that are familiar, so that they can be recognized as correct, and ideally be emulated.

The extensive section on permissible shoes offers another, if not quintessential, example of the third type of visual commentary in *Moonlight Vanquishing.* Thubten Gyatso's written commentary introduces broader context and even the precise circumstances under which these different shoes came about or could be worn. He most frequently summarizes content from the *Vinayasūtra* and its commentaries, as we saw with the shoes permitted for monks with Vulture Peak injuries. Sometimes, however, the Dalai Lama alludes to a story not included in either, but perhaps buried in the frame stories of the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya or even undocumented local folk tales. One such mystifying explanation in the *'Dul ris* describes the purpose of the so-called "shoes that arise because of spittle water," which the Dalai Lama adapts from the *Vinayasūtraṭīkā*[363]: "This is an illustration of permitted shoes which come about because of [nāga] spittle water (*kha chu chu*), or which have a cover with an opening that removes [the

[363] *VST*, volume yu, 209a1-3.

spittle] through an opening on the tip of the upper part, so that most of the foot is covered, in order to eliminate the harm of grass made poisonous by the water of the spittle of a nāga (f. 7b)." No further information is given in the commentaries and we are left wondering whether there is a longer story in the vinaya[364] or in an Indian folk tale about how to know if grass has been poisoned and thus when to wear these specialized shoes (Fig. 2.27). Furthermore, is there a particular way to empty the shoe to ensure all spittle is removed?

Whereas the situation that necessitates the nāga spittle shoes seems to suggest a larger tradition or superstition, Thubten Gyatso directly alludes to specific stories in his written commentary. In the very first shoe description (Fig. 2.28i), he writes, "This is an illustration of the single-level shoes which are permitted due to Śroṇa (Gro bzhin skyes) (f. 6a)." In his explication of a pair of laced boots, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama states, "This is an illustration of boots with laces that cover from the bottom of the foot to the end of the knee, that are permitted, due to Ānanda, in places where water in a vessel freezes (f. 6b)." Nowhere in the Indian or Tibetan commentaries on the *Vinayasūtra* are Śroṇa or Ānanda mentioned by name in relation to monastic footwear. These references indicate that Thubten Gyatso went beyond Indian treatises right to the vinaya sources on shoes. According to the *Vinayavastu*, Śroṇa-Viṁśatikoṭi (Gro bzhin skyes bye ba nyi shu pa) was one of the Buddha's early disciples whose main practice was walking meditation along a special path at the Śītavana cemetery. So diligent was he in his meditative practice that his feet became severely blistered, soaking his walking path in blood. Having seen this, the Buddha permitted Śroṇa and subsequently all other monks to wear sandals with a single-layered sole, rather than requiring that they go barefoot.[365] The accompanying

[364] I could not find this shoe named in the *Vinayavastu* or the *Vinayavibhaṅga.*
[365] *Vinayavastu*, volume kha, 2b1-3b1; See also "Soṇa-Kolivīsa," *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, eds. Robert E. Buswell and Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 840.

drawing shows a monk in sandals with a thin base, as opposed to the following monk who models a similar sandal, but with a double-layered sole (Fig. 2.28ii), portraying the multi-level shoes later also permitted by the Buddha. This dramatic tale of Śroṇa-Viṁśatikoṭi's bleeding feet might be a memorable one for those who have read vinaya texts or perhaps it is the kind of story of extreme devotion told in textbooks or lecture halls, making it a pertinent reference. Still, it might have been a confusing allusion, however: a story from the *Divyāvadāna* (which originates in the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya) tells of another, more famous disciple called Śroṇa (second name Koṭikarṇa) who famously also gained permission from the Buddha to wear sandals, these ones lined with a single *palāśa* leaf.[366]

The connection to Ānanda and icy locales comes in the Dalai Lama's explication of a pair of permissible laced boots (Fig. 2.14B). While we find Guṇaprabha and Dharmamitra discuss this rule in their commentaries on the *Vinayasūtra*, qualifying that a place with ice is a "snowy place" and specifying that the same boots plus a hat are also appropriate for those recuperating from illness,[367] we have to read the *Vinayavāstu* to discover Ānanda's relation to this snow boot. During his journey to visit friends in Nepal, we are told, his hands and feet became cracked and "torn like a lotus petal."[368] Having seen these apparent cold-weather injuries on their comrade, the monks asked the Buddha to allow knee-high boots with laces, the same footwear of Ānanda's Nepalese friends. The Buddha therefore permits such buskins to be worn "in snowy countries (*yul kha ba can rnams*)."[369] For some of the ordained readers of the *'Dul ris*—at least those well-versed in the better-known stories of the vinaya—this allusion would likely evoke recognition of

[366] *Divine Stories:* Divyāvadāna*, Part 1*, trans. Andy Rotman (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2008), 66.
[367] In their commentaries, Guṇaprabha and Dharmamitra suggest that this rule along with other "forbidden faults (bcas pa'i kha na ma tho ba)" are subject to change when sickness is involved. (*VST*, volume yu, 209a4-6; *VSVA*, volume zu, 150a4-6)
[368] *Vinayavāstu*, volume kha, 7b5-6.
[369] Ibid., 7b7.

the tale of when Ānanda visited Nepal and got frostbite. Perhaps this rule was an especially important amendment to the vinaya, and a story that was most memorable and relatable to those inhabiting the Land of the Snows.

For the majority of these pairings of shoe and text, the images visually render the distinguishing details specified in the text—a boot or sandal; ankle-, calf-, or knee-high; having toe coverings or openings; with laces or without. The drawings of the shoes, whether modeled by monks or standing empty in pairs, also graphically translate the footwear into recognizable, distinctively Tibetan styles that could be potentially worn by the reader. In this section, the Dalai Lama's visual commentary involves the graphic interpretation of the canonical texts through the lens of Tibetan culture. Thubten Gyatso uses his written and visual commentary to generalize the conditions that necessitate these shoes so as to be accessible to Tibetan monks, whose daily lives likely involved wintry conditions or basic mountain climbing; and to target the cultural predilection to ornate felted boots. He thus adapts the canonical prescriptions to the reality of the time and place of his audience. Because shoes, like robes, in part comprise the basic necessities of monastic life, it would be essential for monks to know, without question, what constitutes orthodoxy—both in terms of when to wear them and what form they take—as the technical specifications are translated, culturally and climatically, from India to Tibet, and temporally into the twentieth century. The visual commentary on shoes may not represent the Dalai Lama's most sophisticated interpretations, but these exegeses are nonetheless practical and fundamental to understanding what exactly is allowed, so as to avoid transgressions. While so many elements of the Indian vinaya could be discarded as irrelevant in twentieth-century Tibet, shoes and robes, as indispensable requisites, were not only the most important to correct but also perhaps the easiest to rectify through reform, guided by pictures.

As for monks' robes, the *Vinayasūtra* lists thirteen different textiles, which the *Vinayasūtraṭīkā* calls, "the thirteen articles to be carried" and notes that they "are clothes conferred for consecration"[370] by the monk during his ordination ritual. Thubten Gyatso, in the caption connected to the summer robe (f. 8a), refers to them as the "thirteen necessities for livelihood (*'tsho ba'i yo byed bcu gsum*)." The first of these presented in the *'Dul ris* are the so-called "three dharma robes (*chos gos gsum*)": the formal upper patched robe (*snam sbyar*), the day-to-day upper robe (*bla gos*), and the lower patched robe (*mthang gos*), which are portrayed in *Moonlight Vanquishing* as stretched out and hanging from rings on a rod (Fig. 2.29). While these lengths of fabric are not drawn to scale, the pictures of suspended robes cleverly highlight the patches, which serve as a unit of measurement in the root text. Thubten Gyatso's written content related to each of these three robes combines direct quotations with summaries of the *Vinayasūtra* section that explain meticulously the prescribed sizes of these robes, the length and width of which are measured both in cubits and by the number of patches—how many rows and patches per row. For example, the day-to-day upper robe (Fig. 2.29ii) "has seven [rows of] patches and has two-and-a-half[371] tablets [per row] (f. 7a)." This obscure vocabulary is difficult to interpret—particularly the difference between patches (*snam phran*, meaning literally "small cloth") and tablets (*glegs bu*)—without the help of the Dalai Lama's drawings, which clearly show that the patches are the rows (narrow but long bits of cloth) and the tablets are the pieces of fabric comprising a patch.

For the lower patched robe (Fig. 29iii), the extra square of fabric on its right side seems to be inconsistent with the five by one and a half tablets specified in the text, but the Dalai Lama states the picture also reflects this quotation: "If it does not suffice in length for a taller body,

[370] *VST*, volume yu, 201b2.
[371] Apparently "half and three" does not mean 3 + 1/2 but rather 3 - 1/2, which is why the rows have 2 1/2 patches.

then however much it is insufficient, by that much mend the body [of the robe]."[372] The extra square clearly indicates an addition made to accommodate a taller monk. Thubten Gyatso skillfully distills the convoluted descriptions of these robes into clearer language in the written commentary of his captions, but his images ultimately translate the measurements into intelligible forms and interpret the additional specifications on sizing. The illustrations thus display unambiguously how the patches and tablets are enumerated and stitched together to make these garments, in various sizes, providing a visual commentary on the root text that elucidates the cryptic prescriptions for the most important of a monk's basic necessities. In fact, these three dharma robes are required for full ordination and are presented by the monk and blessed or consecrated by his preceptor during the ordination ritual. Without these three garments cut and sewn in the correct sizes—or without the fabric from which they can be properly made —a novice monk cannot actually become fully ordained;[373] the detail and clarity of the Dalai Lama's written and visual commentary therefore, not only reflects the significance of these robe regulations, but also better enables compliance for those novices who want to be ordained and rectification for those who are already *bhikṣus*.

The drawings of the other ten textiles (Fig. 2.30), however, do not offer the same illuminating details, likely because they are secondary to the three dharma robes. Here, the Dalai Lama's extensive written commentary does the primary exegetical work: the text explicates how and when the garments and accessories are to be worn or used, but the images of the so-called "articles" are barely distinguishable from each other. Across two folia (Fig. 2.30 A & B) these ten textiles, encompassing the various requisite underskirts, shawls for sweat and sickness, washcloths, a sitting mat, and the summer robe, are depicted as bunched up and hanging over a

[372] It does not appear that this actually a quotation, however.
[373] Cabezón and Dorjee, *Sera Monastery*, 38-9, 516.

rack. Although the two washcloths at the end of the long rack (Fig. 2.30A) and the sitting mat at the start of the short one (Fig. 2.30B) are differentiated by their sizes and rectangular shapes, the seven skirts, shawls, and summer robe are practically identical.

This reflects the fact that neither the *Vinayasūtra* nor its commentaries present the same details about the size and composition of these textiles as they do about the three patched robes. The Dalai Lama's written commentary, which focuses primarily on the textiles' functions rather than their appearance, with a few exceptions, responds to this dearth of physical descriptions. His text does not feature quotations and seems not to summarize the contents of any canonical works; his explanations of these ten articles thus originate from his own lived experience and general monastic knowledge, or from a textual source that is not easily identified. Thubten Gyatso chooses to focus his text on their functional distinctions—presumed or known—and thus portrays the diversity of garments by their number, while not fully illustrating the visible distinctions amongst the seven. This choice may be the result of a lack of information about the appearance of these textiles within the canon, or the absence of a tradition of these articles within Tibetan monasticism, or perhaps it is merely due to the limitations of printing medium in portraying subtle differences in fabrics. With the specifics of the crucial dharma robes already elucidated in great detail, however, Thubten Gyatso likely left the nuances of the ten other textiles to presumed common knowledge, with a certain amount of heterogeneity permissible for compliance to be achieved.

The drawings of draped skirts, shawls, and a summer robe, therefore, index their differences, whereas the written commentary details them. The sweat shawl (*rngul gzan*), third from the left on the long rack (Fig. 2.30A), for instance, is depicted almost indistinguishably from the others: as a gathered-up piece of cloth, with no suggestion of color or pattern, only folds

to indicate dimensionality. The Dalai Lama specifies in the caption, however, that it is "the garment that is to be worn on top during the day. And it is [worn] together with the upper robe every time. It is the shawl that protects the upper robe from becoming unacceptable from the dirt of sweat (f. 7b)." Whether the materiality of the textile is explained or solely its purpose, Thubten Gyatso's drawings have little connection to his written commentary in this section, performing only the most basic visual exegesis of the root text—that there are ten individual textile articles in addition to the essential dharma robes. Together, however, the Dalai Lama's written and visual commentary elaborate and elucidate the list of thirteen articles named in the *Vinayasūtra*, introducing to the canonical content the appropriate usages of the garments and textiles accessories, and the graphic representations of their variations.

Type Four

For the previous three categories of visual commentary employed by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in his *'Dul ris*, I have demonstrated how the illustrations work to explain terms and full quotations extracted from the *Vinayasūtra*, frequently strengthening the Dalai Lama's own written commentary, while graphically integrating the explications of other commentators and the knowledge of lived monasticism. Pairings of text and image belonging to the fourth and final category, however, feature no discernible, direct connections to the root text, only general and even tangential associations to topics covered in the *Vinayasūtra*. The written and visual content of this type is primarily adapted from vinaya texts, Indian and Tibetan commentaries, or the interpretations and knowledge of Thubten Gyatso alone, resulting in the introduction of new ideas that supplement the root text. *Moonlight Vanquishing*'s section on temples features several examples illustrating the vinaya- and commentary-based content, whereas the three basic

belongings of a monk, as well as the calendar chart, exemplify the content rooted in the Dalai Lama's interpretations.

At the beginning of the section on temples is a basic building that is constructed of three fundamental, modular components: a principal chapel with a dwelling on either side (Fig. 21). The Dalai Lama's text does not contain any explicit reference to the *Vinayasūtra*, but instead synthesizes its Indian commentaries, which instruct, in the context of explaining temples with courtyards, that a three-part building must have a principal chapel in the middle with two dwellings on its two sides.[374] This information actually comes from the Chapter on Shelter (*Śayanāsanavastu*) in the *Vinayavastu*, which the Dalai Lama undoubtedly examined in addition to Indian and Tibetan commentarial sources. In this section of the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya, we find the origin story of the *vihāra* or monastery. When the layman Kalyāṇabhadra wants to build a *vihāra* for the disciples of the Buddha, he requests specifications from the Teacher, who responds, "If you have one with three cells built, the Perfumed Chamber (*gandhakuṭī*; *dri gtsang khang*, that is the Buddha's cell) must be built in the middle, the two other cells on each side. It is the same for one with three sides and nine cells. In a four-sided one the Perfumed Chamber is in the middle of the far wall facing the entrance hall and there are two cells, one on each side of that entrance."[375] Following these architectural prescriptions that are given by the Buddha in the *Vinayavastu*, but not summarized exactly in the *Vinayasūtra*, Thubten Gyatso begins by introducing the most basic temple and the core principle that governs its construction and that of all temples. The Dalai Lama departs from the root text in this picture and its caption in order to establish a foundation that supports the proceeding quotations, and their written and visual exegeses.

[374] *VSVA*, volume zu, 248a2-3; *VST*, volume yu, 355b6-7.
[375] Translated in Schopen, "Hierarchy and Housing," 109.

On the following double-paged spread displaying large temple complexes (Fig. 2.25 i & ii), for the ancillary text Thubten Gyatso relies on this story from the *Śayanāsanavastu*, as well as the Indian commentaries and the First Dalai Lama's *Precious Garland of Vinaya Commentary*. We not only find a four-sided courtyard with the appropriate number of cells and location of the Perfumed Chamber, but we also find that the Dalai Lama labels the number of stories required of this main chapel as dictated by the *Vinayavastu*. When Kalyāṇabhadra did not know how many levels a Perfumed Chamber should be, the Buddha further specifies: "For monks a *vihāra* must be built with five levels, a Perfumed Chamber with seven levels, a summer room over the entrance with seven. But for nuns a *vihāra* must be built with three levels, a Perfumed Chamber with five, and a summer room over the entrance with five!"[376] With his caption, "This is an illustration of the seven-storied Perfumed Chamber (*dri gtsang khang*) of the father (f. 4b)" (Fig. 2.25i), the Thirteenth Dalai Lama clearly inserts an allusion to both the vinaya and to the First Dalai Lama's work, while applying the rule within the appropriate architectural context that is explicated both in the main written content and the drawing. In other words, with this and the other text and drawings in this section, Thubten Gyatso establishes the correct form of this temple structure by integrating instructions from multiple textual sources into the pictures and by adding supplemental captions that articulate these ideas that are excluded from the *Vinayasūtra* but are nonetheless essential to orthodox architecture. By adding these captions that connect to but do not cite directly the root text, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama enhances the accuracy and thoroughness of his written and verbal commentary, and therefore transmits the most authoritative and comprehensive expression of orthodoxy, inclusive of all important voices.

[376] Ibid.

Within this fourth category of visual commentary, there are also instances where the authoritative source and commentarial voice cannot readily be traced to one of the Indian or Tibetan works Thubten Gyatso references in his introduction and colophon. Whereas the courtyard with the three cooling conditions (Fig. 2.31ii) has no known reference in the *Vinayasūtra*, the concept of a courtyard as part of architectural prescriptions loosely connects this part of the *'Dul ris* to the root text. Similarly, the three basic possessions of a monk—a staff, begging bowl, and basic water filter—comprising the last drawings of *Moonlight Vanquishing* (Fig. 2.32), appear with some frequency in the *Vinayasūtra*, but their descriptions presented by the Dalai Lama do not. At least two sūtras are dedicated to the structure, symbolism, and protocols of monk's ringing staff (*'khar gsil*),[377] but Thubten Gyatso appears to have looked at another source for his text in this section. He explains the symbolism of the staff's many parts—the "eightfold path [is represented] by the octagonal top part (f. 8r)," for example—and the requisite materials, size, color and shape—"an egg split in half (f. 8r)—of the alms bowl. As for the water sieve, he states only that the picture illustrates one that is "well-known (f. 8r)."

This last statement may offer some indication as to where Thubten Gyatso's written and visual commentary about this pleasant courtyard and a monk's necessities originates: broader monastic education and practical experience, which would include knowledge that is outside the canon but within the larger tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. These implements—their symbolism and specifications—may have been well-known to the intended audience of the *'Dul ris*. A twentieth-century Tibetan monk likely never used a staff or a begging bowl, and perhaps not

[377] See "The Rite for the Protocols Associated with Carrying the Ringing Staff ('khar gsil 'chan ba'i kun spyod pa'i cho ga)," Toh 336, Dege Kangyur, vol. 72, folios 274a-275a, trans. Sarasvatī Translation Team (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha) < https://read.84000.co/translation/toh336.html>; "The Noble Sūtra on the Ringing Staff ('phags pa 'khar gsil gyi mdo)," Toh 335, Dege Kangyur, vol. 72, folios 271a-274a, trans. Sarasvatī Translation Team (84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha) <https://read.84000.co/translation/toh335.html>

even a water filter of this type, nor would he have sat in a courtyard with a cool pool of water. However, these would not be alien ideas or objects—like the three dharma robes, an alms bowl is a requirement of the ordination ritual performed in Tibet.[378] He would certainly recognize the depictions of the first staff and bowl from the paintings and sculptures of the Buddha and his arhat disciples, among others. The written commentary only adds practical information and symbolic meaning to the oft-portrayed accoutrement of idealized monks and monasteries.

The calendar (Fig. 2.5), moreover, performs the same commentarial act as so many of the Dalai Lama's drawings: it brings together in one clear graphic all the essential information from various relevant traditions and, presumably, textual sources. Although the Dalai Lama does not explicitly identify his sources in the chart or the accompanying written commentary, making no discernible reference to the *Vinayasūtra* or its commentaries, the chart's contents and the Dalai Lama's explanation of them allude to both indigenous and imported calendars. The text explains the reasons for each type of calendrical division whereas the chart shows precisely how the divisions work and, most importantly, how the calendars relate to one another. He not only presents the equivalences between the Mongolian and Tibetan lunar months, the four seasons, and Indian astrology, but he also aligns the vinaya's traditional three divisions of the year with the five divisions of the Tibetan retreat calendar. The Dalai Lama's chart seeks to make sense of the various systems of seasons, ritual cycles, and retreats that would impact monastic life and practice, using both written and visual commentary to display the array of disparate information in a manner that is both comprehensible and complete. He thus ends his *'Dul ris* with a tool for translating ritual time across traditions, ensuring that whatever system governs the daily lives of Tibetan monks remains in line with those established as correct.

[378] Cabezón and Dorjee, *Sera Monastery*, 38-9, 517-8.

This and the other three categories of visual commentary represent the innovative exegetical style employed by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in his *'Dul ris*, a methodology that he invented while transforming Ngawang Lobsang Tenpai Gyaltsen's *'dul ris* into a more comprehensive, intelligible, and thus functional text for a monastic audience. This typology demonstrates the different ways in which text and image work together to illuminate the meaning of terms, topics, and instructions from the *Vinayasūtra* deemed essential by their inclusion. As these various examples show, the drawings of the *'Dul ris* do not function merely as illustrations of the text, but perform the primary exegetical function of the commentary itself, integrating information from other canonical and commentarial sources as well as the monastic tradition of Tibet. *Moonlight Vanquishing* thus challenges how we understand the genre of commentary and the role of illustrations in manuscripts and xylographs in the Tibetan and other Buddhist literary canons.

Why visual commentary?

In Part Two, I have argued that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's *Moonlight Vanquishing the Darkness of Transgression* fundamentally constitutes a visual commentary. Through close examination and evaluation of the root text—the *Vinayasūtra*—and its chain of commentaries, both Indian and Tibetan, as well as the texts of the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya, the *'Dul ris* elucidates the *Vinayasūtra* in careful exegeses that are primarily visual rather than verbal. Thubten Gyatso does not refer to this work as a commentary, nor does this work fit neatly in the conventional commentarial genre of Tibetan Buddhist literature and the category of the Dalai Lama's collected work in which it is catalogued. However, the innovative methodology the author employs, as encapsulated in his stated sources and purpose, unquestionably characterizes *Moonlight Vanquishing* as a commentary, in form and function, if not name.

By comparing Thubten Gyatso's *'Dul ris* to the *'dul ris* in Ngawang Lobsang Tenpai Gyaltsen's *Many Scripts and Drawings*, we have also seen how the Dalai Lama used his predecessor's illustrated text as a foundation for building not only a new work, but also for developing a new commentarial strategy for explaining the vinaya that prioritizes illustrations. Thubten Gyatso altered the structure of Ngawang Gyaltsen's *'dul ris* to create clear expository relationships between text and image; but of all the Dalai Lama's improvements and innovations on *Many Scripts and Drawings*, the most radical is his integration of information drawn from other commentaries into his visual exegeses. He graphically quotes canonical sources while interpreting them through the lens of Tibetan Buddhist monasticism and culture. Among the expected scriptures and commentaries Thubten Gyatso cites in his introduction and colophon are non-textual teachings—the hands-on instruction of masters and the practical knowledge that is visually transmitted—which are central to monastic pedagogy but largely absent from the literary world of Tibetan Buddhism.

The inclusion of knowledge learned in a monastery through visual transmission, experiential education, and extra-canonical texts, alongside knowledge gained across scriptural sources, enables *Moonlight Vanquishing* to present a more comprehensive vision of orthodoxy than a traditional commentary, while utilizing a familiar and effective pedagogy centered on the visual. Thubten Gyatso concretely relocates vinaya prescriptions from the imagined ideal of classical India to a plausible reality of twentieth-century Tibet. The correct temple with a four-sided courtyard is thus rendered in a Tibetan architectural idiom, and the non-permissible, floral-decorated shoe is manifest as an ornate Tibetan felt boot. But why did the Thirteenth Dalai Lama choose to invent this exegetical methodology for this project on these rules from monastic code?

To get at the root cause of Thubten Gyatso's innovation, it is useful to go back to the beginning—that is, to Ngawang Gyaltsen's *'dul ris* and what he says about his illustrated text. While *Many Scripts and Drawings* has no introduction and the *'dul ris* section has only a brief colophon that extols its "marvelous illustrations"[379] as faultless, Ngawang Gyaltsen offers only a hint of his motivations in a long passage about the meaning of *pu shu*, a kind of rain barrel: "Here I'll say about this: although some famous people who greatly arise in the past and future practice the quietude of reciting the scriptures only, one cannot eliminate mistakes by solely [doing] this. Therefore, my birth becomes meaningful."[380] A term from the vinaya such as *pu shu*, he argues, can be translated or interpreted in many ways, but only by investigating its true usage—its practical and real-life manifestations—can one understand what it really means. Reading or reciting the monastic code is thus useless without comprehending how its rules and regulations exist off the page and outside the ideal of classical Indian monasticism. Ngawang Gyaltsen therefore finds purpose in his life because his illustrations supplement scripture, allowing readers to see the true usage of these terms.[381]

Although his work might not reach the threshold of commentary, here Ngawang Gyaltsen captures the essence of this genre: to reveal the truth of a text that has not yet been fully or correctly expressed. The goal is not to say something new; instead, the objective is to identify, elaborate, elucidate what the scripture already says, which has been otherwise obscured, lost, or ignored. While commentators have spilled much ink delving into the hidden meanings of many Mahāyāna sūtras, the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya as well as the *Vinayasūtra* present a different set of challenges for would-be commentators: they are not so much looking to unravel deeper and

[379] Ngawang Gyaltsen, *Many Scripts*, 21a3-4.
[380] Ibid., 20b2.
[381] Ibid., 20b2-4.

deeper levels of meaning, but instead to make the monastic code meaningful—comprehensible and thus applicable—to different communities across cultures and over time. It is about reconciling the true usage of these terms as the Buddha intended, with the practical usage of these terms as a Buddhist community can realistically employ them.

Within this commentarial context, in which, as Lopez states, "innovation is one of the great sins,"[382] we nonetheless find the Thirteenth Dalai Lama proclaiming that his work contains "newly occurring (*gsar du bzhad pa*), unprecedented (*sngon med*) drawings (f. 9a4)" that ultimately correct previous graphic interpretations. To preserve the fundamental authority of the root texts—that is, the authority of the word of the Buddha—commentators paradoxically must say something new that they claim has already been said.[383] And so while Tibetan authors did innovate, "they usually disguised their innovation"[384]—for the most part, anyway. Similar to the Dalai Lama, Desi Sangye Gyatso (sDe srid sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, 1653 - 1705) characterizes his illustrations of the seminal, twelfth-century medical work, the *Four Treatises*, and his *Blue Beryl*, a commentary on this root text, as "unprecedented (*sngon med*)."[385] While Thubten Gyatso states that his illustrated commentary is part of a tradition of elucidating drawings, only the most accurate and comprehensive among these, the Desi goes even further, stating that a tradition of making a manual like his simply does not exist. In her discussion of the Desi's self-proclaimed originality, Janet Gyatso notes the rarity of such assertions: "To speak of newness is not something to which Tibetan scholars regularly lay claim."[386] There is something distinctive

[382] Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *Elaborations on Emptiness: Uses of the* Heart Sūtra (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 240.
[383] Ibid., 240-1.
[384] Janet Gyatso, *Being Human in a Buddhist World: An Intellectual History of Medicine in Early Modern Tibet* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 45.
[385] sDe srid sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, *gSo rig sman gyi khog 'bugs*. Par gzhi dang po. 1 vols. (Lan kru'u: Kan Su'u Mi Rigs Dpe Skrun Khang, 1982) [BDRC bdr:MW8230] <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW8230>, 386; See also Gyatso, *Being Human*, 44.
[386] Gyatso, *Being Human*, 45.

shared between these works and their authors: their new and unprecedented contributions are pictures, which have the formerly untapped power to make their respective root texts more widely understandable by making them perceptible. The knowledge that these texts contain might not be original, but the medium through which it is transmitted certainly is. It is perhaps unsurprising, furthermore, that in 1923 the Thirteenth Dalai Lama underwrote a project to make a complete copy of the original, seventeenth-century set of the Desi's *Blue Beryl* paintings, suggesting that he might have been inspired by the pedagogical power of these images and encouraged by the Desi's proclaimed potential for the creation of unprecedented drawings.

The Thirteenth Dalai Lama's elevation of non-textual, practical knowledge acquired by hands-on instruction and visual transmission, and his centering of pictures as the primary exegetical tool, are an elaboration on Ngawang Gyaltsen's point and extension of Desi Sangye Gyatso's methodology. Superseding the intentions of a conventional vinaya commentary and these innovative illustrated works, Thubten Gyatso's motivation for composing *Moonlight Vanquishing* is more than merely elucidation: it is the "restoration of the doctrine of the completely pure vinaya (f. 9a)" and the propagation of pure vinaya-holders, as part of his larger project of state protection. To achieve this ambitious goal, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had to intervene in the practical and scholastic education, as well as in the everyday lives of Tibetan monks to reform their behaviors. *Moonlight Vanquishing* was only one side of Thubten Gyatso's approach, however. As discussed above, Tibetan Buddhist monastic communities have historically been primarily governed not by the vinaya but by the internal rules of individual monasteries, as passed down orally—and visually through demonstration—and as documented in their specific *chayik*. Furthermore, when the formal monastic code, as dictated by the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya, is studied, a variety of textbooks (*yig cha*) rather than the scriptural

corpus provide the basis for learning. These *yikcha* not only vary from tradition to tradition, but also monastery to monastery, and monastic college to monastic college. For instance, at Sera Monastery the effort to standardize the *yikcha* over the last several centuries has produced a set of textbooks that claim to "represent the true intent of Tsongkhapa and his two chief disciples."[387] There are nonetheless differences across its main colleges, each of which have allegiance to their own *yikcha*: the Mé College, for example, uses the textbooks of Khedrup Tenpa Dargyé and Drakpa Shedrup, whereas the Jé College employs the *yikcha* of Jetsun Chökyi Gyaltsen.[388]

When we consider the challenges the Thirteenth Dalai Lama faced as he sought to purify the entire Tibetan saṁgha, there is first the general impediment of widespread ignorance of the Indian monastic code built into the monastic curricula, which reserves study for so few members of the monastic community, and for so late in the scholar-monks' education. The other obstacle facing Thubten Gyatso was the pervasive heterogeneity of monastic orthodoxy as practiced across Tibet's myriad monasteries—as taught in their many different *yikcha* and *chayik*, and reinforced by their many masters through hands-on instruction. In this case, impurity was not necessarily the result of corruption, but instead of diversity. Thus, purifying the saṁgha entailed a multifaceted program of reform that could unify these disparate communities under a standardized—a universal—vision of monastic purity and correctness, rooted in the ideal monastic community of the Indian vinaya. Ultimately, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had a two-pronged approach that both dealt with diversity and aimed at unity. He worked on a case-by-case basis by composing *chayik* for specific monasteries: between 1908 and 1932, he wrote at least

[387] Cabezón and Dorjee, *Sera Monastery*, 221.
[388] Ibid. 221-2.

sixteen new monastic charters or "rulebooks" for different monasteries across Tibet.[389] His avenue for purification *en masse*, on the other hand, was the composition and circulation of *Moonlight Vanquishing*—an accessible, illustrated guide to the "immediate necessities" of monastic life, based on authoritative texts and developed with scholarly exactitude.

Echoing Ngawang Gyaltsen's argument for de-centering scripture, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama logically and effectively incorporates elements of lived monasticism into scriptural interpretations and uses visual monastic pedagogy to disseminate orthodoxy in clear and recognizable illustrations. This is his chosen method, but to bring the Tibetan *saṅgha* closer to the ideal community of the vinaya, the contents of his visual commentary had to reflect the basics that all monks would know or recognize, and therefore could easily correct: the requisites of monkhood, like robes, shoes, the renunciant's staff, the alms bowl, water filters, and basic shelter under a tree; the built environment of monastic life, such as dwellings, hermitages, temples, walkways, the locks outside and the furniture inside; the rules around basic contemplative practices, how to stay awake and how not to lose one's robe; and of course, the fundamental seasonal divisions that dictate the rhythms of monastic life.

For monks belonging to the highly institutionalized monastic communities of twentieth-century Tibet, the idealized Buddhist past to which the Thirteenth Dalai Lama compelled them to return was long an alien world conveyed in confounding aphoristic expressions with little explanation; even the commentaries, for those who read them, offered scant details about what these instructions mean and how they can be applied in the modern moment. These are monks who would never meditate in or under tree, who had never begged for alms, or seen a staff held

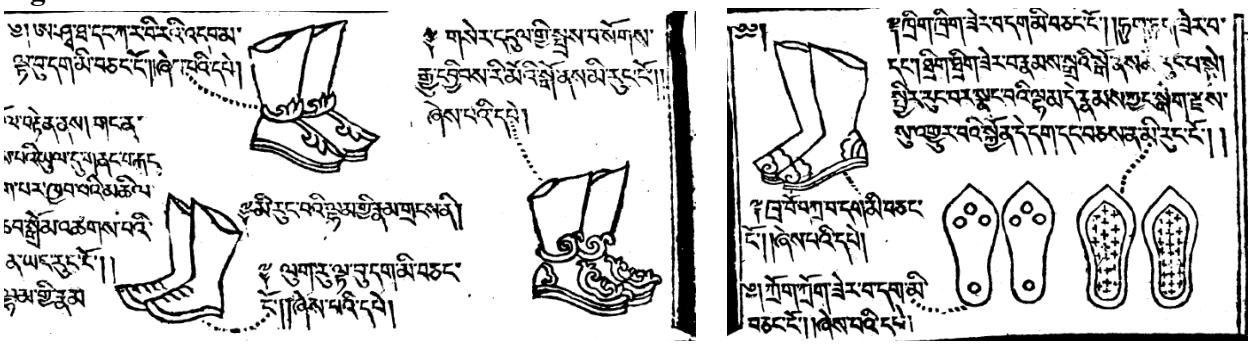
[389] Many of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's *chayik* are listed in Berthe Jansen's Tibetan sources in *The Monastery Rules*. Most of his *chayik* are also contained within *A Collection of Chayik (bca' yig phyogs bsgrigs)* (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 2001) (BDRC W21612).

by anyone except for Maudgalyāyana and Śāripūtra in paintings; they had never worn patched robes or used a water filter, and had only lived in a monastery with a population of several thousand—even the most basic rules and terms studied in the *Vinayasūtra* would be meaningless to them without visual aids to illuminate these canonical prescriptions, making them intelligible and accessible to a contemporary audience. Now that the Dalai Lama provided them with these accessible, clear, and indisputable pictures that they could viably, even easily, adopt into their quotidian lives in order to lives more closely to the Buddhist ideal, did they actually do it? Did *Moonlight Vanquishing* have the intended effect? Were new monasteries built and old ones renovated to meet the correct number of stories? Did monks alter their robes to the correct lengths and toss out their decorative or noisy shoes? Was this effort to translate these fundamental rules of the *pratimokṣa* and the communal rules of the Indian vinaya into comprehensible and familiar terms in fact successful?

The answer is likely no. And we will return to this question again in the next chapter when we consider the *'Dul ris* murals as the most public and practical medium for transmitting the Dalai Lama's visual commentary on the monastic code, but one in which the legibility and utility of the explications, both graphic and textual, is debatable. For now, however, perhaps the more important question is *could* this have worked? Did Thubten Gyatso's innovative visual commentary actually make these rules clear enough that it seemed feasible to emulate the Indian monasticism of yore, restoring the major and minor rules otherwise abandoned, and reviving a purer, more unified version of Tibetan monasticism? I would contend that *Moonlight Vanquishing* makes it possible for the imagined to become the real. So far removed from the time and place of the early Indian *saṅgha*—a world as foreign as the rings of Saturn—the Dalai Lama transforms its most fundamental elements into comprehensible forms, framing reform as

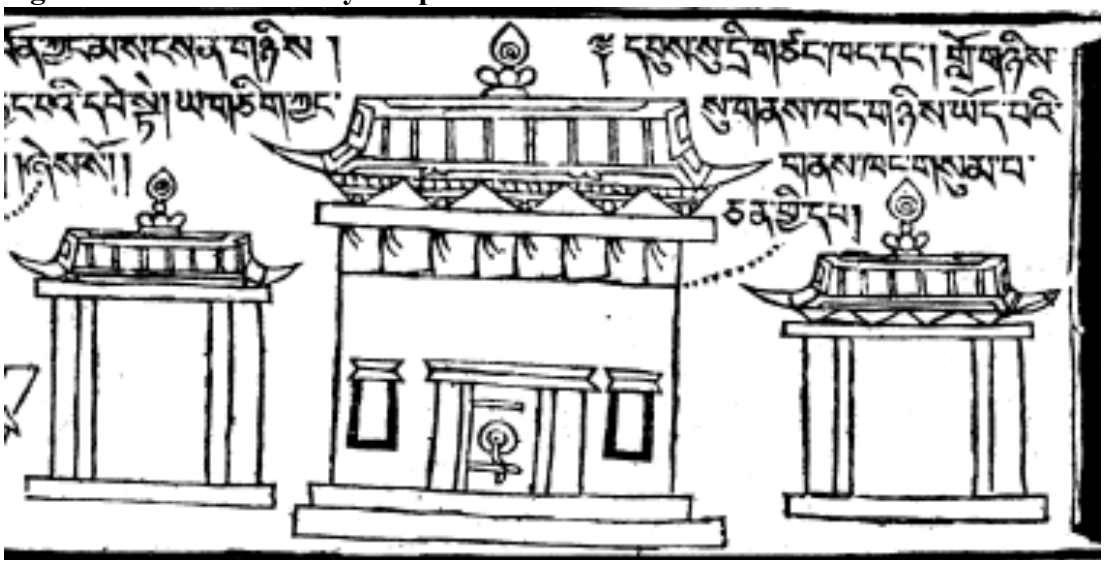
achievable. In short, he makes it look easy. The exotic not only becomes familiar, but also unambiguous and thus, achievable. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama's visual commentary was the most suitable methodology for his subject, his purpose, and his audience. And as we will see in the next chapter, visual transmission was the most effective method for spreading his graphic exegeses.

Figure 2.20: Assorted shoes



(*MV* 6b) **i** (*MV* 7a)

Figure 2.21: A multi-story temple



(*MV* 4a)

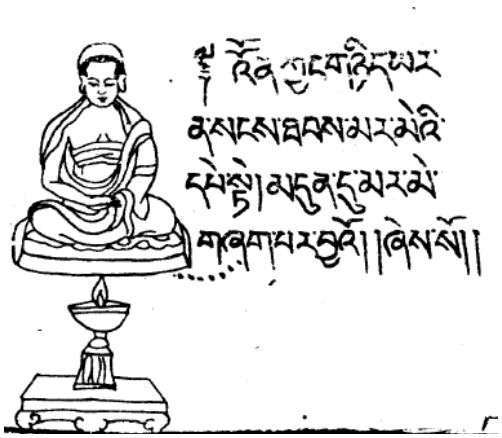
Figure 2.22: The small gong of a renunciant & a renunciant's walking path



(*MV* 3b)

i **ii**

Figure 2.23: The butter lamp method



(*MV* 3b)

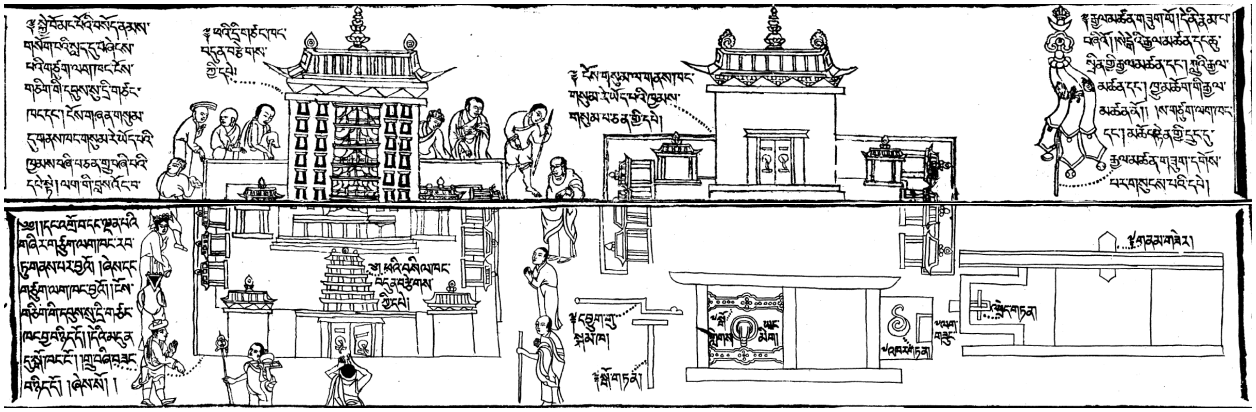
Figure 2.24: A recitation path



(*MV* 5b)

Figure 2.25: Two temple complexes with door parts & a victory banner

ii **iii** (*MV* 4b)



i **(Fig. 2A)** (*MV* 5a)

Figure 2.26: A monk & his robe in a thicket of trees



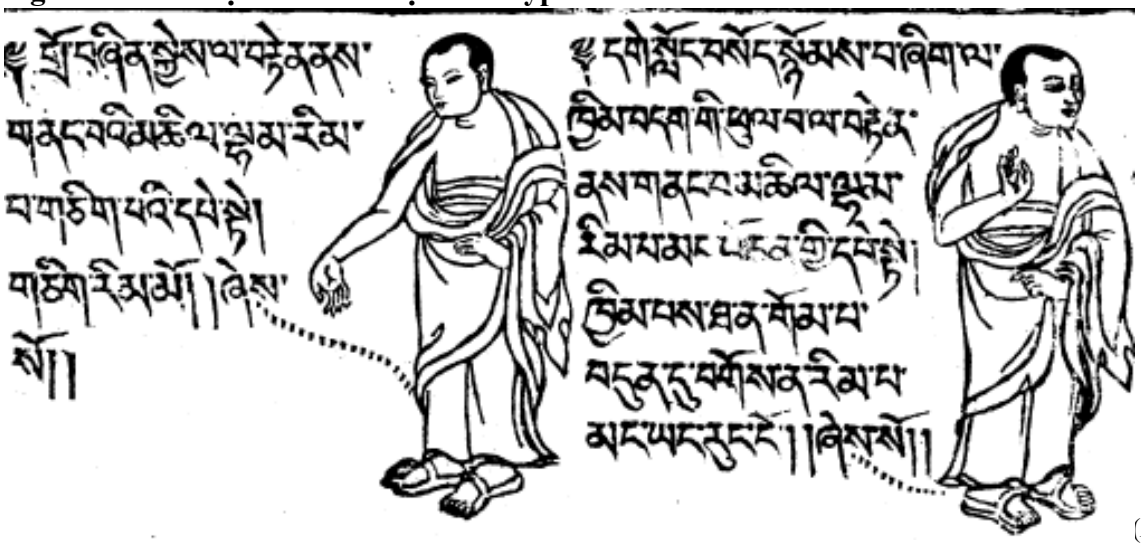
(*MV* 2b)

Figure 2.27: Nāga spittle shoes



(*MV* 6b)

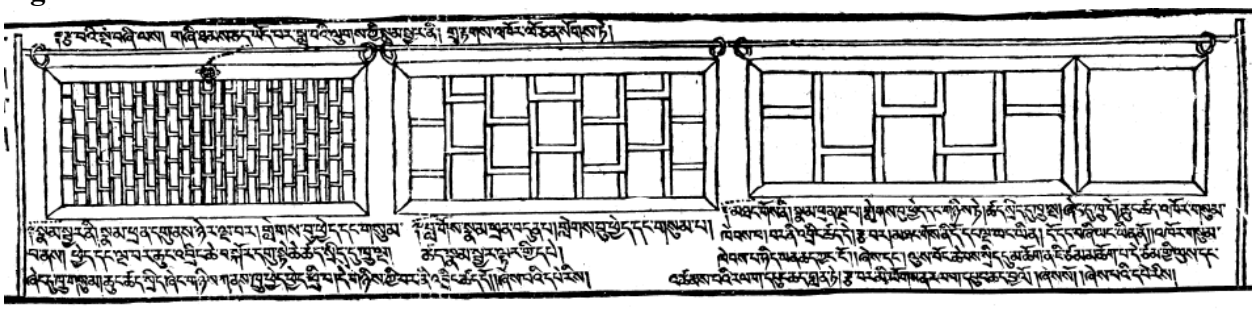
Figure 2.28: Śroṇa-Viṁśatikoṭi's two types of sandals



(*MV* 6a)

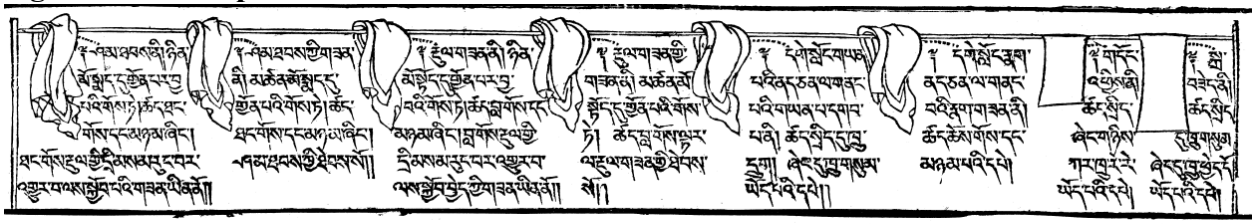
i **ii**

Figure 2.29: The three dharma robes



(*MV* 7a) **i** **ii** **iii**

Figure 2.30: Ten permitted monastic textiles

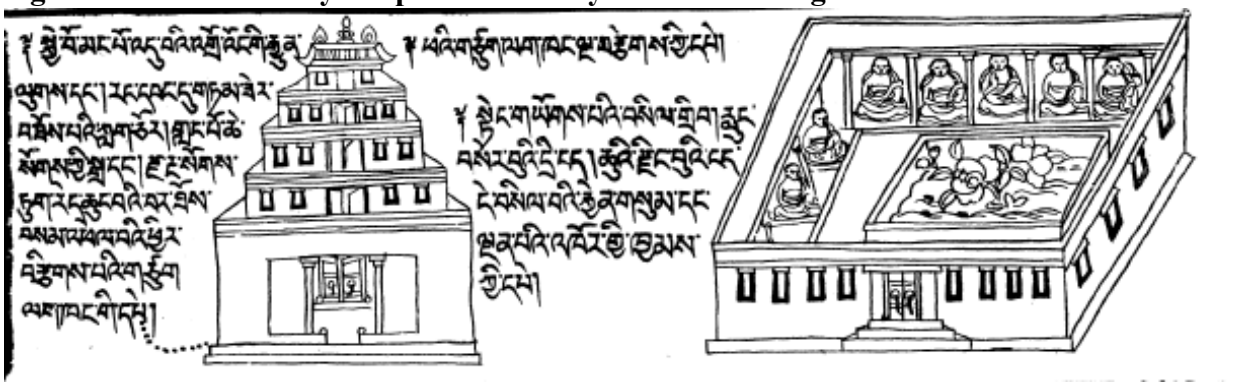


A (*MV* 7b)



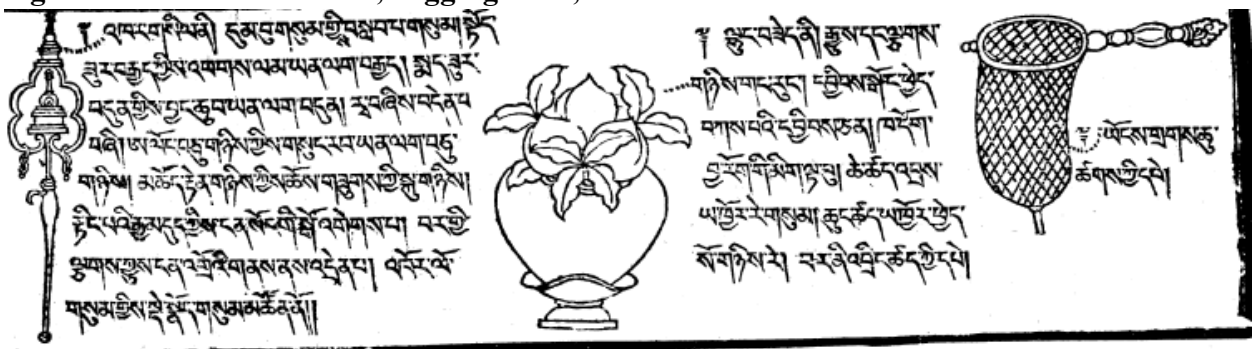
B (*MV* 8a)

Figure 2.31: A five-story temples & a courtyard with cooling conditions



(*MV* 5b) **i** **ii**

Figure 2.32: A monk's staff, begging bowl, & basic water filter



i **ii** **iii** (*MV* 8a)

PART THREE
A Mirror of Hands-on Instruction: The Visual Transmission of *Moonlight Vanquishing the Darkness of Transgression*

Phyang, like many villages in Ladakh, is nestled in a green valley off the main road to Leh, the regional capital. The small traditional farmhouses are dwarfed by the large monastery that sits aloft, having been built on a hilltop, its edifices expanding and evolving over the centuries. A sacred site for the Drigung Kagyu inhabitants of the area, this town is also a place of pilgrimage for historians of Buddhist and Himalayan art. The wrathful temple of the main monastery contains famous sixteenth-century murals of the protector Mahākāla, as well as tiger-skins and antique armaments that imbue the space with martial power. Down the road, a smaller, rather nondescript chapel known as the Guru Lhakhang opens its doors to reveal extraordinary and important fourteenth-century murals portraying all manner of tantric deities, both peaceful and fierce. Phyang is a living monument that continues to serve a local community and as such, it is a palimpsest of newer architectural and artistic layers superimposed and juxtaposed with the old. The main assembly hall, however, is almost stark in its crisp newness, the narrative vignettes of the Buddha's past lives painted in a bright palette on the walls, the ceiling decorated with mandalas in nearly-neon pigments. It is a lovely space but with little interest to art historians who treasure the cracks and patina that come with age. Having photographed the landmarks and perused the latest additions to the monastic complex, I believed I had seen all of Phyang, until October 2017 when I heard of the latest mural project—still in process—that featured the unmistakable images of monks, shoes, robes, and temples.

As I stepped into the entry porch of the new assembly hall, I was met with a freshly painted set of murals depicting the imagery that typically greets visitors and resident monks alike: the Four Guardian Kings, the Wheel of Existence, Mañjuśrī the bodhisattva of wisdom, Jambhala the god of wealth, and the stages of *śamatha* or Tranquility Meditation (*zhi gnas*) portrayed as a monk with an elephant and a monkey traveling up a winding path. I looked to the right of the main door, and there it was, on a wall all its own—the pictures from the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's *'Dul ris* painted on a light green, hilly backdrop, missing only the final details and the textual inscriptions connected to each object, place, or practice. I spoke to Chedrub Norbu, one of the three Bhutanese artists who had been invited to compose these new murals, having also completed the *jātaka* paintings inside the assembly hall several years before. While the other images the artists painted on the porch were quite conventional, I asked Chedrub Norbu why the vinaya mural was chosen to be part of this project. He said he had visited other temples in the area, including Spituk monastery, and was especially taken by the monastic code mural he had seen there. When he proposed including this composition in the new mural program, the abbot of Phyang monastery agreed it was an excellent choice and then contacted his counterpart at Lamayuru monastery, where another vinaya mural is painted outside the main assembly hall. It was this abbot who sent the Bhutanese artists the two *'dul ris* texts, by Ngawang Lobsang Tenpai Gyaltsen and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, to guide their work. Beginning with the first folio at the top, they painted their way through the pages and down the wall, transmitting Thubten Gyatso's visual interpretations of the fundamentals of the *prātimokṣa* vows in a new place, for a new community, and in a new artistic style, one for which these Bhutanese painters are known.

When the Thirteenth Dalai Lama composed *Moonlight Vanquishing the Darkness of Transgression* as an illustrated commentary on the *Vinayasūtra*, it was part of his larger project

of purifying the Tibetan monastic community for the protection and stability of the state, in response to geopolitical crisis and conflict. And yet, almost exactly one hundred years later, a Bhutanese artist found graphic interest in the murals it inspired, a modern abbot found relevance in its contents, and a new mural expanded a constellation of vinaya artworks into a different temporal and geographic context. What about this illustrated text and its related murals has caused its prevailing appeal over the last century?

In order to bring all monks to "a definitive understanding (f. 9a4-5)" of the fundamental precepts of the *prātimokṣa*, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama not only incorporated "the practical knowledge transmitted visually (f.1a2)" into his pictorial commentary, as demonstrated in the previous chapter; but he also strategically employed the monastic pedagogy of visual transmission—whereby teaching is achieved through demonstration, and learning through emulation—to effectively disseminate his correct explanations of the vinaya to the masses of monks, utilizing enduring art rather than ephemeral instruction. The predominance of the illustrations in the text and its subsequent transformation into a mural, moreover, illustrate a clear prioritization of the graphic over the written. As a mural, most frequently painted outside or just inside the doorways of a monastery's main assembly hall, Thubten Gyatso's interpretations of the vinaya were potently relocated from the page to the physical realm of visual transmission. The choices the Dalai Lama made in terms of the graphic style and design of *Moonlight Vanquishing* did not simply facilitate this visual transmission and the concomitant broad comprehensibility of the *'Dul ris* images. These decisions also enabled the easy reproduction of the printed text and its easy replication onto monastery walls across the Tibetan Buddhist world.

The contents of the Dalai Lama's *'Dul ris* function as "a mirror of hands-on instruction (f. 9a1)" because they reflect a monastic world that is recognizable, even relatable, to the average

Tibetan monk—a reality that he has experienced or one that he can easily imagine, even in twenty-first-century Phyang. To demonstrate how visual transmission functions in this context, I begin in Chapter Seven by examining the generic style employed in rendering the practices, environment, and accoutrement of monastic life. Similar to Tibetan medical drawings, I show how the pictures in *Moonlight Vanquishing* and its murals depict a kind of generic reality inhabited by the every-monk that is indistinct enough to be universal, but specific enough to be believable. By reproducing quotidian monastic life—through the idealizing lens of the Buddhist canon—in printed and painted pictures replete with realia and realistic exemplars, the Dalai Lama utilizes art to perpetuate the continuity of tradition that connects all Tibetan Buddhist monks back to the first members of the *saṅgha* and the vows they took 2500 years ago. What is monasticism but a harkening back, an echo reverberating from the past, an attempted replication or reenactment of origins? For the first time, therefore, the every-monk and his everyday world is a subject of artistic expression in Tibetan material culture. The style of the pictures, together with the graphic design of the *'Dul ris* xylograph, enriches the accessibility and comprehensibility of the work, which I argue transforms his visual commentary on the monastic code into an illustrated instructional manual (*dpe ris*) to its basics.

The replication of these murals contributes to the standardization of the Dalai Lama's interpretations of the monastic code, which I argue in Chapter Eight were propagated as a cohesive, orthodox system through the wide dissemination of *Moonlight Vanquishing* as an artist's manual. I further consider the pictures of the *'Dul ris* as establishing an iconography of the monastic code where there was none before. If the circulation of the xylograph and the reproduction of its related mural promoted the Dalai Lama's vinaya exegesis as a cohesive and standardized system, then do the drawings and murals constitute an iconographic system? The

style of the *'Dul ris* drawings and the compositional organization of the images in the book and in the various murals facilitate the visual transmission of the Dalai Lama's vinaya interpretations and thus further his goal of monastic purification; but while this graphic strategy may relate to existing traditions of medical drawings and instructional manuals, they are also indicative of an understanding and appreciation of the power of images that the Dalai Lama gained during his years exiled in India and employed later in his renovation projects. Exposed to a modernizing world filled with new technologies and mass-produced visual culture, Thubten Gyatso embraced photography as a potent medium for transmitting blessings in absentia. He was thus further inspired to employ easily reproduceable images—printed, circulated, painted, and imitated—for other purposes, both pedagogical and political.

CHAPTER SEVEN
Moonlight Vanquishing as a Manual for Visual Transmission

The Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya contains guidelines for the kind of art permitted and forbidden within the buildings comprising a monastery. The various *jātaka* and *āvadāna* stories included within this massive corpus have inspired artworks across Asia. The mundane rules and regulations of the monastic code, however, have never been common subjects in Buddhist art. As a result, a standardized system for elucidating and teaching the *prātimokṣa* vows and the other regulations contained within the *vinaya* never developed in Tibet or elsewhere in the Buddhist world. Lacking a larger tradition, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's illustrated *'Dul ris* and its series of murals elevate the quotidian life of average monks as the primary subject matter and center the generic every-monk as the protagonist for the first time in Tibetan visual culture. These printed and painted works therefore present an artistic genre previously undefined and an iconographic source-text hitherto unexplored in monastic literature. In order to understand how the circulation of this book and the replication of its murals ultimately generated a novel iconography of the Tibetan Buddhist monastic code, we must look at how it drew on existing forms and models, and investigate how it came to establish a tradition where there was not one before.

It is useful to begin by performing a kind of genealogy of these images, particularly the depiction of monks— the primary subject and audience of the Dalai Lama's pictures—to examine how the mode of representation chosen by the Dalai Lama facilitates the larger meaning and purpose of *Moonlight Vanquishing*. In Tibetan Buddhist art, we find the portrayal of human beings primarily in narrative paintings based on the stories of the lives (and past lives) of the

Buddha and other masters, and in the portraits of teachers and teaching lineages; often these genres are combined in a single composition wherein the main figure is surrounded by scenes from his life. But just as these stories, these hagiographies, reflect the idealized, sacred identity of their subjects, so too do the artistic depictions of Indian and Tibetan teachers embody the perfection implicit in spiritual accomplishment. With few exceptions, such as the eighteenth-century image of the Qianlong Emperor as Manjushri, the face of which was painted by the Italian Jesuit artist Giuseppe Castiglione,[390] "true portraiture" produced in a realist style from life so as to represent the subject as an individual versus a generic type was not widespread in Tibet until the twentieth century. The emergence of this new style was due in part to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's embrace of photography and invention of the photo-icon, which I discuss further below, as well as the new realist styles of Gendun Chopel and especially his friend Amdo Jampa, in the 1930s and 1940s.[391]

Indigenous qualifications for a correct portrait are rooted in whether the image can function as a consecrated support for the presence of the figure depicted, rendering it ritually efficacious. Because these lamas and lineage figures are understood to be awakened or considered to be emanations of buddhas and bodhisattvas, their portraits must meet the same compositional and iconographic criteria required of the images of deities. Seated symmetrically in a front-facing posture or a three-quarters pose of teaching, the main subject is distinguished by hieratic scale—he (and sometimes she) is larger than other figures—and in the central position. In the case of a monk, the attributes he holds, the gestures he makes, the hat or robes he wears,

[390] This painting is in the collection of the National Museum of Asian Art at the Smithsonian (F2000.4); for more information on its creation, and the other "realist" art produced by Jesuits in the Qianlong's court, see Patricia Berger, *Empire of Emptiness*: Buddhist Art and Political Authority in Qing China (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003).

[391] See Tsewang Tashi, "Twentieth Century Tibetan Painting," in *Tibetan Modernities: Notes from the Field on Cultural and Social Change,* eds. Robert Barnett and Ronald Schwartz (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2008), 251-66.

the deities and lineage figures that accompany him are among the iconographic features that form his identity and allow him to be identified. Because the actual appearance of so many Indian gurus and Tibetan teachers can only be imagined and must be idealized, they are depicted more as generic types or even caricatures differentiated by their accoutrement and actions rather than their individual faces. Idiosyncrasies nonetheless creep into these sacred portraits, the result of literary descriptions, secondhand hearsay, or the rare "from life" portrait.[392] We therefore find Marpa's flat-top hairstyle, Changkya Rolpai Dorje's goiter (Fig. 3.1),[393] the Fifth Dalai Lama's mustache,[394] and an occasional pair of big ears[395]—the distinctive traits that make an image feel more like a true portrait—integrated into the standard iconography of a figure as these unique features are reproduced in image after image, time after time.



Figure 3.1: Changkya Rolpai Dorje with a goiter protruding from his proper right jaw (Private collection; <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/31407>

As these main figures sit in an eternal meditative peace or gesture as if frozen mid-sentence, in various spaces surrounding them we often find monks populating scenes from the

[392] See Himalayan Art Resource, "Sculpture: Portraits Page," <https://www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setID=3966>
[393] See Himalayan Art Resource, "Changkya Rolpai Dorje" <https://www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setID=2283>; and Jean-Luc Estournel, "About the Portraits of Tibetan Masters," published February 28, 2021<https://www.asianart.com/articles/tibetan_masters/index.html>
[394] See Himalayan Art Resource, "Teacher: Dalai Lama V, Lobzang Gyatso Page" <https://www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setID=540>
[395] See *Unidentified Lama* (Mongolia, Dolonnor, Early 18th century; Gilt copper alloy; Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, S2017.55) <https://asia.si.edu/object/S2017.55/>



Figure 3.2: Chokyi Jugne, Eighth Situ Panchen, with thangka-painting attendants (Tibet, 18th-19th century; Ground mineral pigments on cloth; Rubin Museum of Art, C2002.27.5) <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/65136>

sanctified life of the teacher or the quotidian life of a Tibetan monastic. At the feet of the Eighth Situ Panchen, Chokyi Jugne, two monks paint on stretched canvasses as another pours tea for his teacher and a small group presents offerings (Fig. 3.2). While monks engaged in devotional activities can often be identified as a lama's closest disciples, more frequently generic, anonymous monks are painted as the performers of rituals, the painters of thangkas, or the scribes of texts. These scenes indicate the activities for which the main teacher is most famous, and establish honorific offerings in perpetuity. We find similar puja scenes featuring monks in various types of paintings, freezing these devotional acts dedicated to the subject for all eternity.[396] In the biographical vignettes surrounding the Fifth Dalai Lama, monks attend teachings, participate in processions, and perform pujas, breathing believability into these episodes like extras in movie scenes. Such monastic multitudes are also essential to the large-scale narrative mural programs depicting, for example, events from the life of the Buddha and from the history of Tibet, including those commissioned by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama at the Chensal Palace at the Norbulingka and at the Potala Palace as well. The

[396] See for example *Lakshachaitya* (Nepal, 16th century; Ground mineral pigments on cloth; Private Collection) <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/30550>

generic "every-monk" in the visual culture of Tibetan Buddhism is identified by his red, orange, and yellow monastic robes, his cropped haircut with apparent receded hairline, and the definitively monastic setting or activities (with requisite hats and implements) in which he is engaged. Sometimes, hierarchy is implied to the informed viewer by the specific costumes, the seating arrangements, and select few individuals processing on horseback, but mirroring the reality of institutional Buddhism in Tibet, the majority of these painted monks are undifferentiated members of the massive monastic community.

Pulled from the periphery, plucked from the anonymous masses, the monks in *Moonlight Vanquishing* are a rare example of the every-monk taking center stage; the average monks for whom they act as artistic stand-ins and whose everyday ritual lives they permanently portray are, after all, the primary audience for the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's illustrated text. In murals and thangkas these anonymous monk figures populate the lives of others—"their depiction is almost always in service of a religious didactic program, rather than for their own sake"[397]—but in the *'Dul ris* and its murals they and their quotidian lives are the focus. They are no longer supporting the narratives of hagiography or sacred history, nor are they performing religious rituals in perpetuity. Employed as a new kind of surrogate, these every-monks model the mundane acts of monastic life instead of highlighting the important acts of masters. The centering of average laypeople and their everyday lives as artistic subjects rather than narrative accessories is likewise unusual in the visual culture of Tibetan Buddhism. An important exception is medical drawings, particularly the *Blue Beryl* illustrations produced by Desi Sangye Gyatso in the 1690s. In her seminal study of this work and close examination of its drawings, Janet Gyatso makes several important observations that are salient to our understanding of the graphic design and visual

[397] Janet Gyatso, *Being Human in a Buddhist World: An Intellectual History of Medicine in Early Modern Tibet* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 48.

transmission of *Moonlight Vanquishing*, not only because of the similarities between these two genre-defying and -defining works, but also because the Dalai Lama was unquestionably familiar with and perhaps inspired by the Desi's work—Thubten Gyatso commissioned a new set of his medical paintings in 1926.

Central to Gyatso's argument is her identification of an essential departure of the *Blue Beryl* medical illustrations—and the *'Dul ris* drawings, as I will demonstrate—from the larger tradition of Tibetan art. The vast majority of Tibetan Buddhist paintings and sculptures portray specific figures, things, and scenes; and any ordinary laypeople or monastics, in spite of being depicted as unspecified, are nonetheless doing specific things at particular places, during specific events in the lives of particular individuals. The medical paintings, however, while "purporting to portray real people and activities and things, do not reference *actual* or *particular* real people, events, or objects."[398] Whereas, the everyday "extras" who populate Tibetan art primarily "contribute to the representation of real, actual events"[399] and people, the Desi's medical drawings and the Dalai Lama's *'Dul ris* present generic, ordinary people, things, and activities for a different purpose: to illustrate "the typical examples of the categories they represent."[400] Here we have the subtle but crucial difference between art that portrays something real and art that realistically portrays something. Generic illustration is essential to medical and other scientific or technical drawings, which must depict general types realistically enough to enable correct identification and use; too much specificity, on the other hand, would render an otherwise universal image useless in its particularity. The *Blue Beryl* illustrations, therefore, portray a

[398] Ibid., 50.
[399] Ibid., 51.
[400] Ibid.

diversity of individualized humans, yet each person is "just *some* man, *some* woman—not any particular one."[401]

In *Moonlight Vanquishing*, the Dalai Lama adopts the same realistic, yet generic style, drawing on the long tradition in Tibetan art of the every-monk, who is depicted realistically enough to be identified as an ordinary Tibetan monk, but not a real, living monk named Dorje who resided in Lhasa in 1920. Rather than a famous exemplar whose lauded accomplishments are likely out of reach, the every-monk can be recognized as a familiar archetype of normality and thus can be easily related to and by extension, emulated. Tibetan doctors could ostensibly use the *Blue Beryl* paintings to identify symptoms or medicinal plants and Tibetan monks could likewise employ the *'Dul ris* to reform their behavior because the drawings in both works reflect a reality recognizable to their readers. The every-monks are the generic models necessitated by the technical specificity of their actions and accoutrement—the realistic, albeit neutral bodies that can teach, through demonstration, the way to avoid the abandonment of separation and sleepiness during meditation. They are the every-monk stand-ins for the masters of the past and present, performing hands-on instruction that visually transmits what correct behavior and dress look like with a greater pedagogical efficacy than words alone. In the last chapter I argued that the drawings in *Moonlight Vanquishing* act as visual commentary, incorporating textual and practical knowledge of monastic discipline into clear graphic explanations accessible to advanced and average monks alike. The utilization of generic models and types, moreover, is the artistic mechanism by which the Dalai Lama achieves this accessibility and ultimately facilitates the visual transmission of his explications of the vinaya.

[401] Ibid.

The every-monk is not the only example of generic illustrations in the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's *'Dul ris*; all the pictures, however technically specific or complex, illustrate general types of architecture and objects, even where there is a tradition of artistic specificity. Like the generic monks, the buildings depicted in *Moonlight Vanquishing*—hermitages, temples, and monasteries—while rendered in a definitively Tibetan idiom, do not portray actual sites in the Tibetan Buddhist world. There are numerous examples of thangkas and murals that depict the holy places of Buddhism and important religious landmarks of Tibet in detailed cityscapes and narrative vignettes. Sacred sites can be depicted as relatively generic while representing the particular location of an important event. For example, the building where Queen Māyā has her famous dream of the white elephant is unremarkable, but we know by context it is the palace in Kapilavastu (Fig. 3.3); just as the every-monk extras perform specific actions at the service of particular religious didactic programs, so too can architectural spaces fulfill the same function as a scene's setting.



Figure 3.3: Queen Māyā dreams of a white elephant in her palace in the lower right corner (Tibet, 19th century; Ground mineral pigments on cloth; Rubin Museum of Art, C2002.30.3) <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/65196>

In other cases, representations of real places bear iconographic characteristics that make them unquestionably identifiable in historical scenes and cityscapes (Fig. 3.4): the mandalic layout of Samye, the monumental thangka wall at Tashi Lhunpo, path-divided campus of Sera



Figure 3.4: Lhasa cityscape with the Potala in the center (Mongolia, early 20th century; Mineral pigments on cloth; Rubin Museum of Art) <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/65848>

monastery, the circumambulatories around the Jokhang, and the iconic two-toned facade of the Potala Palace.[402] These portraits of place and the architectural stand-ins for famous sites are not what we find in the Dalai Lama's *'Dul ris*, however; the different types of buildings serve as the generic models for correct construction according to the criteria described in the vinaya. Like technical drawings in an instructional manual, these pictures present general types executed in a Tibetan style with the intention of easy comprehensibility and practical applicability.

The generic depiction of the monks and the monastic architecture is but one of many choices made by the Dalai Lama in terms of the content and the graphic design of *Moonlight Vanquishing*. As Gyatso notes, even the portrayal of general types reflects authorial decisions "in terms of what is deemed typical, how that is framed, and what is included and what is left out."[403] While the subject matter and scope of the *'Dul ris* limits the kind of sociological reading

[402] For examples of cityscape and temple paintings see: Himalayan Art Resource, "Subject: Site Locations - Mountains, Cityscapes & Temples <https://www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setID=1722&page=1>; Specifically Lhasa cityscape paintings see, Himalayan Art Resource, "Tibet: Lhasa, Cityscape Paintings Page," <https://www.himalayanart.org/search/set.cfm?setID=1400>; for examples of "portraits of place" within portrait of the First Dalai Lama see, *Dalai Lama I, Gendun Drub* (Tibet; Ground mineral pigments on cloth; Private collection) <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/31240>; and within the portrait of the Fifth Dalai Lama see: Dalai Lama V, *Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso* (Tibet, 18th century; Ground mineral pigments on cloth; Private collection) <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/2223>; and *Dalai Lama V, Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso* (Tibet, 18th century; Ground mineral pigments on cloth; Rubin Museum of Art) <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/65275>

[403] Gyatso, *Being Human*, 54.

that can be applied to Desi Sangye Gyatso's expansive medical paintings,[404] the Dalai Lama's drawings nonetheless reflect his biases and interpretations regarding what parts of the monastic code he deemed essential and how they are portrayed. In a previous chapter I discussed why Thubten Gytaso might have selected the basic rules elucidated in his visual commentary on the *Vinayasūtra*, but it is important to consider what he chose to include as typical and what he chose to exclude. Most apparent is the absence of nuns or any kind of building specific to a nunnery, despite the obvious fact that women comprise a contingent of the Tibetan Buddhist *saṅgha* and nunneries a facet of Tibet's Buddhist infrastructure. If the Thirteenth Dalai Lama wanted to purify the entire monastic community, inclusive of women, we would expect to find, at the very least, a *vihara* for nuns with the correct three stories—two less than the one for monks—or a reference to nuns in the context of dharma robes, for instance. The only women depicted in *Moonlight Vanquishing*, however, are two lay ladies circumambulating the large, two-paged temple, their gender identified by their dresses and hairstyles. Not only do women comprise a minority in the Tibetan *saṅgha*, but the *bhikṣuṇī* order was never established in Tibet,[405] making it impossible for them to achieve a status higher than novice. Their small population and low rank likely explain their exclusion by the Dalai Lama in this work and his wider reform efforts—on paper and in reality, monks are the typical monastics.

The every-monk employed in the *'Dul ris*, furthermore, is decidedly rank-less and many of the basic rules it contains, including those related to robes and water filters, are essential for both novices and the fully-ordained. This seems to demonstrate that the work and its murals are

[404] See Gyatso, *Being Human*, Ch. 1.
[405] Recently, some Tibetan nuns have received full ordination in the Mahasamgika tradition, specifically in Taiwan, and sought to introduce their bhiksuni lineage in Tibet, with limited acceptance. For more on the nun ordination controversies and challenges in Tibet see Susan Mrozik, "A Robed Revolution: The Contemporary Buddhist Nun's (*Bhikṣuṇī*) Movement," *Religion Compass* Vol. 3, No 3 (May 2009): 360-78; and Michelle Hannah, "Colliding Gender Imaginaries: Transnational Debates about Full Ordination for Tibetan Buddhist Nuns," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, Vol.18, No.4 (2012): 7-44.

intended for monks of all ranks, and would be relevant to most nuns. However, the accessibly generic every-monk, while bolstered by his realistic yet non-specific appearance, is undermined by the centrality of meditation-oriented topics in the Dalai Lama's work—specifically the methods for avoiding drowsiness during practice, the many architectural spaces meant for meditators, and the assumed asceticism of the monks in and under trees. Of course, these rules reify the Indian vinaya's model of the *bhikṣu*—a wandering ascetic who begs for his food and meditates for his practice—which is the archetype that Thubten Gyatso promotes and presents in Tibetan terms as an ideal attainable through reform. But given that many (if not most) [406]Tibetan monks do not engage in meditation, these rules in *Moonlight Vanquishing* exclude a significant segment of the Tibetan *saṅgha*. Whereas certain elements contained within the *'Dul ris* clearly would not have been commonplace in early twentieth-century Tibetan monasteries, the generic drawings create a recognizably realistic world that could be emulated, with the every-monk models as the teachers.

The pictures do not, however, reflect the true reality of Tibetan monasticism, which would naturally include many more novices and nuns; instead, they express the interpretive vision for a perfect *saṅgha* conceived by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and inspired by the canon. Perhaps the most dissonant imagery in *Moonlight Vanquishing* is not an absence of realistic representations of the Tibetan monastic community, but rather the inclusion of all the rules related to the abandonment of separation, which instruct monks on appropriate robe-hanging protocols when meditating and ostensibly dwelling in and under trees. Of course, in 1920s Tibet monasteries were the primary location of monastic practice, but the importance of trees to these

[406] For more about the meditative practices (or lack thereof) of monks in ancient India see Gregory Schopen, "On Incompetent Monks and Able Urbane Nuns in a Buddhist Monastic Code," *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, Volume 38 (2010):107–131.

rules is also irrelevant in a natural environment where trees large enough to sit in do not commonly grow. Because all Buddhist monks belong to the order first established by the Buddha and follow the rules he made, neither monkhood nor the monastic code is not meant to be locally specific. While prescriptions for shoes and hermitages can be translated into local idioms, rules like these are not as adaptable, and are therefore alienating in their alienness. Weakening the accessibility achieved by the generic drawings, the absence of nuns, the orientation toward more advanced practices, and the inclusion of impractical, imported content in *Moonlight Vanquishing* highlights the limits of the author's intended universality and reveals the implicit androcentrism, elitism, and foreignness that pervades the monastic world he seeks to create, or rather, re-create.

The Thirteenth Dalai Lama nevertheless expected his drawings to be used in a practical sense and he employs generic pictures explicitly to facilitate their easy and widespread utilization. As I have argued, Thubten Gyatso composed *Moonlight Vanquishing* to reform and purify the entire Tibetan Buddhist *saṅgha*, from novices to the scholastic elite. For this author, it was not his written commentary but his graphic illustrations that made his explanations of a root text more accessible and therefore functional for a wider audience and greater impact. It is therefore essential to consider the *'Dul ris* within the genre of illustrated instructional manuals and catalogues of objects and practices (*dpe ris*), which fundamentally employ drawings to enable readers to perform ritual actions or fulfill specialized roles largely through observation and emulation of the text's contents. The word *dpe* or *pé* (pronounced pay) means "model" or "example," connoting that a given illustration is an example or model of a general type, and together all these images represent a category of objects or things. A *péri* (pronounced "pay ree"), literally "drawn example" and thus "illustration," is thus a collection of drawings of

models, of examples, which generally means a catalogue or a manual that employs generic diagrams for instruction.

That *Moonlight Vanquishing* naturally fits within this genre of Tibetan literature because of the generic drawings of objects, structures, and actions it contains is only reinforced by the repeated use of the term "*dpe*" to describe the illustrations. In my translation, I have most often rendered *pé* as "illustration," which the Dalai Lama uses to explicitly connect the drawing to the text, and specifically to the selected quotation from the *Vinayasūtra*: "This is an illustration of the quotation…" It is also instructive, however, to consider *pé* as meaning "model" or "example" in the *'Dul ris,* implying that an image is not only an illustration or graphic interpretation, but the correct model of, for instance, a five-story temple or an example of the authorized water filter of a particular type, as put forth in the *Vinayasūtra* and as taught by the Buddha in the *vinaya*. The use of *pé* in this context firmly establishes the connection between the root text and the drawings, forging an equation between authoritative text and image that highlights the primacy of the visual over the textual. In the process, it establishes these drawings as the general types born of the Indian *vinaya* and manifest in Tibet, the models to be emulated and the examples to be acquired. In his colophon, the Dalai Lama refers to "the corrections to the illustrations (*dpe ris*) of the vinaya written long ago (f. 9a5)," alluding ostensibly to the earlier *'dul ris* of Ngawang Gyaltsen. Whether he means to characterize these preceding drawings as generic models or the entire work as a catalogue of diagrams, through this rectifying connection Thubten Gyatso also associates his own *'Dul ris* with this type of illustrated manual. These uses of *pé* and *péri* therefore categorize *Moonlight Vanquishing* as part of this genre of illustrated manuals, which is generally intended for a broader audience than would read a commentary on the *Vinayasūtra* and its related commentarial works by Indian and Tibetan authors.

Printed xylographs and hand-written manuscripts generally comprise the genre of *péri*, with a wide range of subject matter and varying amounts of textual context. Within Ngawang Gyatso's *Many Scripts and Drawings*, two of the chapters within that eclectic work clearly fall within this category: the section of yogic poses from the teachings of Nāropa and the part featuring illustrations of medical implements. Both are catalogues of general types: a generic yogin modeling specific poses and generalized examples of surgical tools. And while both have roots in other texts, they are without any real textual context; like the Desi's *Blue Beryl* paintings, Ngawang Gyatso's drawings cannot exist alone, but both serve as illustrated companion guides that make their root or source texts more easily and widely comprehensible. There are also *péri* that depict the effigies (*liṅga*; *mtshan*), maṇḍalas, or *torma* (*gtor ma*) offerings that are integral to various tantric rituals (Fig. 3.5).[407] Whether included within the text that describes their construction and their ritual function, or contained within supplemental volumes, these images serve as the models for the essential, material components of a given ceremony. As Bryan

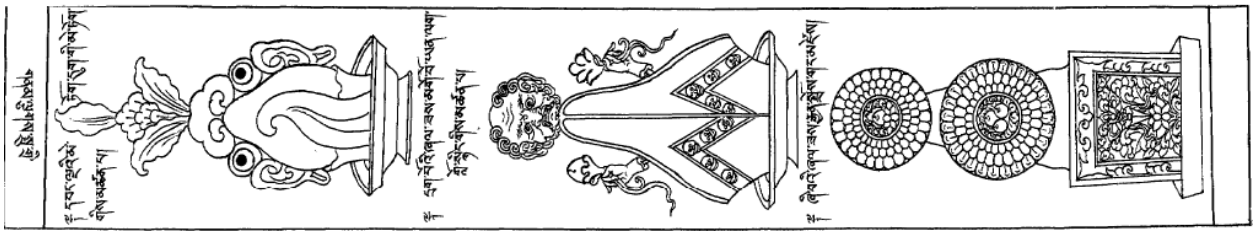


Figure 3.5: Folio from a péri illustrating and explaining the torma for a Dorje Phurba ritual (bDud 'joms 'jigs bral ye shes rdo rje, "Phur pa gnam lcags spu gri'i gtor dpe," in gSung 'bum 'jigs bral ye shes rdo rje, Volume 22 (za), 585–93 (Kalimpong: Dupjung lama, 1979–1985) <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW20869_92EFC5>)

[407] Example of *dpe ris* of mandalas connected to an Avalokiteshvara ritual see: Dri med kun dga'. "Thugs rje chen po ye shes 'od mchog gi rgyud pa'i kha byang dpe ris," in *Thugs rje chen po ye shes 'od mchog*, Volume 2, Section Za, 483-490 (Dalhousie, H.P.: Damchoe Sangpo, 1978) [MW1KG10137_F7F6C1] <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW1KG10137_F7F6C1>; Example of effigies within a ritual manual see: Brag dkar sngags rams pa blo bzang bstan pa rab rgyas, "Lingga'i dpe ris skor," in *gSung 'bum blo bzang bstan pa rab rgyas*, Vol.2 Ch. Ti, 333-344 (Rong Bo: Rong Bo Dgon Chen, 1990–1999) [BDRC bdr:MW28897_694689] <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW28897_694689>; Example of dpe ris illustrating and explaining the torma for a Dorje Phurba ritual see: bDud 'joms 'jigs bral ye shes rdo rje, "Phur pa gnam lcags spu gri'i gtor dpe," in *gSung 'bum 'jigs bral ye shes rdo rje*, Volume 22 (za), 585–93 (Kalimpong: Dupjung lama, 1979–1985) [MW20869_92EFC5] <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW20869_92EFC5>

Cuevas notes in his study of effigies, these images "are designed to be copied time and again for ritual purposes,"[408] their convenient inclusion within the text enabling precise and correct replication to ensure the success of the rite. If a ritual text lacks concrete or comprehensible directions for the creation of its visual components, then these *péri* provide the necessary instructions, transmitted visually. Torma-making, in particular, is an elemental part of so many ceremonies in the Tibetan Buddhist ritual calendar that require the participation of monks of all levels and learning; sculpting these barley dough offerings into the correct shapes, whether simple or ornate, is frequently taught through hands-on instruction and demonstration. Ritual *péri* such as these exemplify the connection between canonical texts, generic illustrations, visual transmission, and the hands-on instruction that forms the foundation of monastic education and so many facets of monastic life. Just as these ritual pictures are meant to be replicated exactly and the yogic postures are meant to be emulated precisely for their respective practices to work, so too must all the behaviors, buildings, and things in *Moonlight Vanquishing* for the *saṅgha* to be effectively purified.

Péri tend to be in book format, which is above all practical, especially if utilized in tandem with a root text, in the midst of ritual performance, or as a reference catalogue. But as Gyatso has demonstrated with Desi Sangye Gyatso's *Blue Beryl* paintings, *péri* not only comprise a literary genre but an artistic one as well. The Desi's medical drawings are not found in a volume meant to accompany his written *Blue Beryl*, but in a large set of thangka paintings. The murals of the Lukhang, the famous seventeenth-century "secret temple of the Dalai Lamas" built on an island in a pond behind the Potala Palace, feature generic yogins in various poses and

[408] Bryan J. Cuevas, "Illustrations of Human Effigies in Tibetan Ritual Texts: With Remarks on Specific Anatomical Figures and Their Possible Iconographic Source," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Third Series, Vol. 21, No. 1 (January 2011): 82.

meditative activities.[409] Because the presence of *péri* pictures in traditional artistic media is not without precedence, the every-monks modeling shoes, the generic examples of proper temples, and all the other instructive and technical illustrations contained within the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's printed *'Dul ris* are not out of place when painted on the walls of Ramoche and elsewhere. However, *Moonlight Vanquishing* in print and *Moonlight Vanquishing* on walls are definitively different. While the Dalai Lama employs the same graphic methodology of the instructional manuals and catalogues constituting the *péri* genre, the size of his intended audience and ambition of his purpose necessitated the wider circulation of the text and more extensive replication of the mural than did other examples of the genre. Because most *péri* are reserved for a specialized audience—such as advanced yogic practitioners or traditional doctors—or for specific rituals performed on particular occasions, there might be a need for their replication and circulation, but not with the frequency or scale and not in the permanent and prominent public medium where we find the Dalai Lama's *'Dul ris* reproduced.

By employing generic drawings with a technical specificity necessitated by canonical descriptions, Thubten Gyatso fosters the practical accessibility, broad comprehensibility, and pedagogical utility of *Moonlight Vanquishing*; in sum, the style of the pictures, in the text and as part of the murals, transforms his '*Dul ris* from a visual commentary into an illustrated instructional manual. The Dalai Lama's authorial innovation is apparent not only in his selection of topics—his written and visual interpretations, and the mode of representation—but also in *Moonlight Vanquishing*'s overall graphic design, which makes it a *péri* in both form and function. The organization and layout of the book, which has been replicated with relative

[409] See Jakob Winkler, "The rDzogs chen Murals of the Klu khang in Lhasa," in *Religion and Secular Culture in Tibet, Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the IATS (2000), Volume 2* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Ian A. Baker and Thomas Laird, *The Dalai Lama's Secret Temple: Tantric Wall Paintings from Tibet* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2000).

consistency onto monastic walls, naturally impacts its ease of use; rather than analyzing the relationship between text and image in terms of iconography, as one would do with a typical religious image, or in terms of visual commentary, as I presented in Part Two, it is instructive to examine how the pictures of the *'Dul ris* work in relation to each other, creating a practical guide to a selection of the monastic code's most basic rules.

As such, the principles of information design put forth by Edward Tufte are especially useful for understanding how and why this illustrated text works, and for assessing both its graphic successes and its failures. Although information design connotes the various charts and graphs created to present all manner of data—some more effectively than others—Tufte defines this concept more broadly as "the design strategies for enhancing the dimensionality and density of portrayals of information" that constitute the best ways in which we can "represent the rich visual world of experience and measurement" in two-dimensional space.[410] The exemplary maps, charts, and diagrams Tufte highlights, moreover, are not all born of the computer age, but range from Galileo's seventeenth-century illustrations of Saturn to a mid-twentieth-century transit map for Japan's Ise Shrine, from an eighteenth-century Portuguese guide to playing viola to a 1977 timeline of rock and roll. The implication is that good design can be—perhaps, *should* be—intuitive and organic, as epitomized by these works whose creators did not benefit from but instead laid the foundation for the lessons taught in graphic design courses today. Therefore, if we seek to analyze how well the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's *'Dul ris* communicates his interpretations of the vinaya for the monastic masses, the information design of his book and murals is an integral component of the overall success of his project. He might not be dealing with large data sets or statistical analysis, but the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya, the *Vinayasūtra*, and

[410] Edward Tufte, *Envisioning Information* (Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press, 1990), 9.

the related commentarial corpus, in addition to the "hands-on instruction of the masters" that Thubten Gyatso consulted and integrated into *Moonlight Vanquishing* nonetheless encompass an enormous amount of material that he sought to explain visually. "To envision information," Tufte explains, "is to work at the intersection of image, word, number, art."[411] And it is at this nexus that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama composed his *'Dul ris*.

To be clear, Tufte does not assume that diagrams, charts, maps, and illustrations should be able to exist without text or some kind of textual context, and he actually demonstrates many ways that words—captions, labels, descriptions, etc.—are an important element of information design. Here, I am evaluating the *'Dul ris* in terms of the visual strategies the Dalai Lama employs that strengthen the relationship between his pictures, especially as thematic groups, which has the overall effect of enhancing the visual transmission of the highlighted rules and his interpretation of them. As I have shown, the pictures do much in terms of exegesis and access—it is undoubtedly an image-centered work—and while the reader of the printed *'Dul ris* would likely be able to make use of the text, it is important to consider how the images might function on their own, because in the murals a significant amount of the explicatory text is physically inaccessible. If the Dalai Lama conceived of the mural and composed the text simultaneously, as his colophon seems to suggest, then it is possible he was contemplating not only how to use the drawings as visual explanations, but also how to structure and organize them in a way that bolsters the communication and enhances the clarity of his commentarial contents.

In Part 2, I discussed several important compositional improvements that the Thirteenth Dalai made to Ngawang Lobsang Tenpai Gyaltsen's original *'dul ris* in his *Many Scripts and Drawings*. The most important alteration for the purpose of creating a visual commentary is also

[411] Ibid.

the most significant change in terms of information design: bringing together the textual passages and illustrations onto a single page and in direct relationship to each other. This not only establishes the pictures as visual annotations, but it also radically enhances the functionality of *Moonlight Vanquishing* as a guidebook or manual. "Good design," Tufte asserts, "should take into account how, when, and where the information is used."[412] In the case of the *'Dul ris*, the "how" and "where" is largely dictated by the medium dispensing the information contained therein: is it a book that is engaged during intimate, individual study, or a mural that is contemplated during casual, public viewing? In analyzing design successes and failures, the book and the mural perform quite differently—in many cases one succeeds where the other fails. As a book, the integration of text and image eliminates the necessity of flipping back and forth across multiple folios to read about a given drawing. The size and height of the monastic walls bearing the *'Dul ris* mural unquestionably impede the legibility of the captions, but the connection between text and image would be all but severed if the text was separated, as in Ngawang Gyaltsen's work; the captions' proximity to the pictures is essential in the murals. In fact, the integration of text and image performed by the Dalai Lama not only serves to reinforce the commentarial and practical functions of the pictures, it also enables the translation of the complete *'Dul ris* from folio to edifice—it is at once a visual commentary, an illustrated manual (*péri*), and, as I will discuss further below, an artist's guide.

The long and narrow pages of a traditional Tibetan book (*dpe cha*) are compositionally constrictive, however; and the technology of Tibetan woodblock printing is restrictive regarding variations in line thickness and surface shading. The folios of *Moonlight Vanquishing* are therefore crowded, the text squeezed into the negative spaces, and the differentiations in details

[412] Edward Tufte, *Visual Explanations: Images and Quantities, Evidence and Narrative* (Cheshire, CT: Graphics Press, 1997), 115.

are often difficult to decipher, the forms sometimes blurred without color or shading to define them. Good high-density design is not determined by "how much information there is, but rather how effectively it is arranged," Tufte says. "Clutter and confusion are failures of design, not attributes of information."[413] The Dalai Lama made some design sacrifices when he built upon Ngawang Gyaltsen's *'dul ris* and integrated text and image. In the earlier text, the thematic sets of illustrations—monks and trees, buildings, water filters, the calendar and shoes—are presented as clear and cohesive groups that are not interrupted by awkward page breaks and unrelated images. Even so, the pages are packed, and although the main text captions are separated from their related drawings, supplemental text still fills most voids. Although the Dalai Lama's topics seem to follow the order of their appearance in the *Vinayasūtra*, the image groups overlap on certain pages in ways that might be incongruous to the casual reader. For instance, a meditating monk stretches out his legs next to the basic structure of a temple, and monks modeling shoes share a page with the water filters and pitchers in a kind of visual dissonance. The economy of space superseded the thematic divisions of *Moonlight Vanquishing*'s contents and the result negatively impacts the overall comprehensibility of the work and the graphic cohesion of its design. Many of the artists who transformed the *'Dul ris* into murals across Tibet and the Western Himalayas, however, exploited their liberation from the boundaries of the *pecha* page and arranged the thematic sets more logically, in terms of space and topic, within their mural compositions.

Tufte advocates for creating a visual hierarchy of information using layering, color, line, and the contrast of negative space because "when *everything*...is emphasized, *nothing* is emphasized."[414] In the printed *'Dul ris*, it is easy to see how the text and the drawingsgraphically

[413] Tufte, *Envisioning Information*, 50-1).
[414] Tufte, *Visual Explanations*, 74.

compete, affecting the legibility of both. Even the chart summarizing the various ways to divide the year—by months and seasons—that organizes the information into neat cells arranged in a grid of five rows and twelve columns could benefit greatly from alternating changes in color to distinguish the headers from the contents, and to define each row as a different system. Unfortunately, the calendar chart suffers the same graphic fault in the murals, but as the rest of the images are spread out over temple walls, with color adding to the individuating effect of space, the pictures and all their details can be perceived with much greater clarity, the captions receding—for better and for worse—into the background. The visual clutter caused by the lack of contrast in the book is mitigated, however, by the Dalai Lama's employment of parallel imagery. "Parallelism connects visual elements. Connections are built among images by position, orientation, overlap, synchronization, and similarities in content. Parallelism grows from a common viewpoint that relates like to like. Congruity of structure across multiple images gives the eye a context for assessing data variation. Parallelism is not simply a matter of design arrangements, for the perceiving mind itself actively works to detect and indeed to generate links, clusters, and matches among assorted visual elements."[415]



Figure 3.6: Monks and their robes in trees (Ramoche mural, detail)

[415] Ibid., 82.

This design strategy is most clearly utilized in the three folios focused on avoiding the "abandonment of separation," illustrated by monks and their robes variously positioned in and around trees. The similar shapes, sizes, and styles of the trees, as well as the repetition of a generic every-monk (or two) in each vignette, all within "direct spatial adjacency"[416] exploits the natural capacity of the reader or viewer to find the differences between the scenes instinctively. This is especially effective in the murals, such as those at Ramoche and Lamayuru (Fig. 3.6), where all the trees and monks with their robes are arranged in a single line, most frequently across the top of the composition. Despite the powerful use of parallelism to enforce visual comparison, the juxtapositions in this case present not merely difference but also distinctions between correct and incorrect positions and there is no graphic indicator of which is which. For those readers or viewers who cannot access the text—due to issues of literacy or physical distance—the pictures alone fail to inform comprehensively, despite the pedagogical possibilities of parallelism.

Visual parallelism is more successfully employed in the section dedicated to dwellings, hermitages, and temples. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama collates like with like, portraying the dwellings as identical structures in a sequence of groupings that build in number, culminating with a temple encircled by dwellings—all in the scope of one's eyespan, on a single folio or in one corner, like at Narthang (Fig. 3.7). "Parallelism



Figure 3.7: Parallel columns of dwellings in the Narthang mural (detail).

[416] Ibid., 80.

provides a coherent architecture for organizing and learning from images," Tufte asserts; and here, the repetition and arrangement of architectural forms exemplifies how the "structure of rhythms and relationships"[417] can so clearly and intuitively communicate a concept, almost independently of text. These scenes are less reliant on Thubten Gyatso's written explications and the root text quotations, as all the monastic buildings presented are permitted and they would ideally be recognizable as dormitories and temples, if not a hermitage per se. The recurrence of a form is a strong creator of parallel structure because it serves as a basic visual connector across multiple images; in *Moonlight Vanquishing*, the repeated every-monk, frequently under a tree, generates a "congruity of structure" in the pictures depicting methods for dispelling drowsiness. While the practices vary, the models essentially stay the same, so the reader's eye is drawn to the differences, highlighting the actions that are the main topic of this section. Four of the six monks sit beneath trees, which not only serve as a compositional tool to divide space, but also as another visual element that reinforces the parallel design and thus establishes a thematic set. Without the text, it is not very clear what these monks are doing, but visual markers repeated across the vignettes point to meditative practice: the cushioned seats, the contemplative hand gestures, and the standard cross-legged postures of the every-monks (with the exception of those stretching) contribute to the visual parallelism and further suggest the context for understanding what this group of pictures is teaching.

Pairs of monks modeling different shoes that are narratively related and structurally connected, as well as the display of the three dharma robes further demonstrate the efficacy of visual parallelism on a smaller scale. The monks are depicted so similarly and the differences between the shoes are so subtle that one is challenged to find what distinguishes them and

[417] Ibid., 103.

therefore determine what the text could be describing; but this nuance reflects the canonical origins of the shoes, and the drawings encapsulate this. Parallelism is similarly effective for the pictures of the robes, as they are hung up next to each other and stretched out perfectly to display their fundamental differences in the size of the patches, number of rows, and overall length. For the outsider, these might not graphically read as robes, but for the informed reader or viewer, whether novice or *bhikṣu*, the trio would likely signify the three most important textile garments for monks, even if the patchwork might not be immediately familiar because it is not a common attribute of Tibetan monastic robes. And finally, the two tripod water filters also function as a parallel pair. While visual parallelism works well in these small groupings to compel graphic comparison, underscoring both contrast and congruity, this method also serves to buttress the complex information synthesized in the pictures that includes measurements of the robes and the technical descriptions of shoe soles and enclosures, as well as filter construction. Each drawing encompasses a density of data individually, but when they are juxtaposed with the other pictures, the eye is drawn to the differences in details that define each shoe, each robe, and each water sieve, amplifying the information being visually expressed with greater clarity.

For the rest of the textile garments and shoes, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama applies a design strategy that takes visual parallelism to a different level: small multiples, which "help make fine distinctions and close comparisons among similar nouns,"[418] in this case, footwear and textiles. "Multiple images reveal repetition and change, pattern and surprise—the defining elements in the idea of information," according to Tufte. "Multiples create visual lists of objects and activities, nouns and verbs, helping viewers to analyze, compare, differentiate, decide."[419] The small scale of the repeated or similar forms allows for the full "scope of alternatives, a range of

[418] Ibid., 114.
[419] Ibid., 105.

options"[420] to be presented, comparisons among them enforced and connections reinforced, all within the span of one's eyespot. The effect of this method is further enhanced by a variety of organizational devices, such as grids, compartments, and narrative sequence. On the printed folios of *Moonlight Vanquishing*, the text often visually competes with the illustrations, but in the sections dedicated to shoes and textiles, the blocks of words carve out small niches in which the pictures sit. That there is equidistance between the drawings and balance to the composition further facilitates the movement of the eye and enables the consequent visual reasoning. On the folio about footwear, the reader's eye zigzags up and down, apprehending differences in height and decoration, although one must read the text to understand which shoes are permitted and under what circumstances.

The page dedicated to monastic textiles exemplifies the concept of "small multiples" but only the two rectangular wash cloths, as well as the seating mat on the following folio show any true variation; the other seven pieces are almost identically illustrated, their numbers indicating multiplicity in terms of quantity—emphasizing that there are thirteen—without showing their actual diversity graphically. Color and pattern are employed with great impact in the murals, however, as the differences are rendered visually, both reflecting and complementing the descriptive text. These patterns and colors might not represent



Figure 3.8: Multiple racks for monastic textiles (Likir mural, detail).

[420] Tufte, *Envisioning Information*, 68.

the reality of monastic garments, mats, and washcloths—the muralists often decorated them with gold patterns akin to Chinese brocade—but the artistic license employed does not eclipse the effort at graphic contrast. The drawn textiles hang equidistantly on racks, moreover, maintaining the rhythmic structure that supports the design power of small multiples both on and off the page, even when a mural features multiple racks (Likir, Fig. 3.8)) or larger robes (Samye). No longer contained within the boundaries of the page and the margins of the printed text, the sandals, shoes, and boots painted onto the monastery walls are somewhat less effective as "small multiples," however, because the looser composition does not enforce comparison in the same way, especially when the footwear is more dispersed in the mural as at Lamayuru. Although a visual list of shoes is undoubtedly presented, the ability of the viewer to apprehend differences and determine choices is diminished when they are no longer portrayed with compositional cohesion and within the immediate span of one's vision.

While visual parallelism and small multiples bring together like with like to highlight similarities and differences among related images and ideas, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama employs a final design strategy that brings together many graphic elements to tell a story, to give context, and to enhance the meaning of his drawings. Tufte calls such pictures "visual confections" which he explains as bringing together images "to display visual information, often inexpressible in words and often derived from words. Confection-makers cut, paste, construct, and manage miniature theaters of information—a cognitive art that serves to illustrate an argument, make a point, explain a task, show how something works, list possibilities, narrate a story."[421] Confections incorporate the visual lists into larger, imagined compositions, giving context to information that extends beyond the text from which this data is derived. The double-page

[421] Tufte, *Visual Explanations*, 138.

temples in the printed *'Dul ris* serve as such visual confections, the information they express and stories they tell pushing beyond the narrow constraints of a single folio. This section focuses on the guiding principles of temple construction, the specifications for the number of dwellings, courtyard walls, and building stories drawn from canonical sources. While there is brief mention of consecration for the benefit of visitors in the first caption, as discussed in Part Two, the illustration transcends the text to give it practical context and to bring it to life by adding a group of circumambulating monks and laypeople. Rather than a mere diagram of a proper temple, we are presented with a narrative moment at an institution enlivened by ritual activity and worshipping practitioners, who amplify the Tibetan cultural context signified by the architecture with their clothing, hats, and hairstyles. Although it is an imagined scene, it is not fantasy, but rather "transparent, straightforward, obvious, natural, ordinary, conventional—with no need for hesitation or questioning on the part of the reader."[422] This vignette depicting the most foundational act of worship—generic in its universality—would be immediately recognizable to any Tibetan monk, enriching the meaning of the text and enhancing its comprehensibility.

The adjacent picture of a temple with a three-sided courtyard is not contextualized by the images of door locks and jambs and the victory banner, but instead this building serves as their architectural context. By bringing these illustrations together in close compositional proximity, the reader is reminded of the functional location of these door parts and the all-important victory banner, which we are told must be planted at a temple. These visual confections are strong expressions of visual information because of the many elements they collage together, giving context that is intuitive through juxtaposition and through the presumed cultural knowledge of the intended audience. By "making visible what is textually invisible, obscure, or beyond

[422] Ibid., 125.

words"[423] these temple scenes demonstrate the inextricable relationship between informative text, recollected associations, and information design that allows these pictures to work so well as instruments of visual transmission.

If the power of visual confections resides in the juxtaposition of elements in imagined compositions, generating context and relationships that may not exist in the textual source, then we must also consider the *'Dul ris* murals as large-scale designs of this type. All of the pictures (or "image-events"[424] as Tufte calls them) are not only assembled into a single composition on a monastery wall or across adjacent edifices, but they are also integrated into a fabricated landscape. The blank background of *Moonlight Vanquishing*'s printed pages has the effect of abstracting the real objects, realistic every-monks, and generic Buddhist buildings, which float unanchored in undifferentiated space. This is ameliorated as the temples and hermitages are relocated to naturalistic settings, and the many monks under and in trees are rooted in painted grass. Rather than technical drawings of types or specimens, these many objects and actions now occupy a shared world that for the most part makes sense—visually and cognitively. The monks wearing shoes intended for feet injured on Vulture Peak, now climb mountains logically fixed on solid ground. In the process of transforming the *'Dul ris* from a book into a mural, the groupings that were defined by parallel and multiple designs, and demarcated by page breaks, are assembled into new relationships to other pictures, creating new connections that amplify meaning. The many different monastic buildings now form a complex, where nearby monks practice meditation near trees, like their Indian forefathers did. Another monk modeling footwear

[423] Ibid., 135.
[424] Ibid., 121.



Figure 3.10: A monk modeling shoes stands near a water filter (Detail, Lamayuru mural)

stands nearby to a tripod water filter, as if to use it (Fig. 3.9). The many textiles hang on a clothesline as if drying outside the dwellings of their monk owners.

Not all elements of these larger-scale visual confections are as harmonious, informative, or sensical, however; for the sake of legibility, the scale is not realistic, with a pair of boots being the same height as a monk, who stands as high as a hermitage dwelling. While so many of the images feel naturally anchored in the landscape, many like the thrones, vases, bowls, and shoes, appear strangely scattered or awkwardly erected in a patch of green grass. The almost comically large boots in the Drangkar mural appear as if they might serve as meditation huts (Fig. 3.10). And further, where some relationships are strengthened and new ones established that enhance meaning, the architectural constraints of a space or the artistic decisions of the painters sever some fundamental connections. The shoe models are separated from the rest of the shoes, the monks trying to avoid drowsiness are dispersed across the wall, the dwellings comprising a large hermitage are split, or assembled into a single confusing column, like at Lingshed.



Figure 3.9: The people-sized boots in the Drangkar mural (detail).

Together, these design strategies—visual parallelism, small multiples, and visual confections—employed by the Dalai Lama in *Moonlight Vanquishing* and their parallel application in the murals based on the printed text facilitate a kind of skimmability[425] and enable a mnemonic engagement. These graphic tools that bring together the images in meaningful relationships of comparison, change, and connection visually establish the thematic sets comprising a catalogue—a *péri*—of the monastic objects and actions (nouns and verbs, in Tufte's terms) at the heart of Thubten Gyatso's reforms. In his colophon, the Dalai Lama promises that these unprecedented pictures encompass the most important teachings transmitted by authoritative texts and Buddhist masters and thus have the power to propagate pure vinaya-holders; and his design supports this assertion of comprehensiveness, of completeness. Whether standing before the mural or holding the xylograph in your hand, everything a monk needs to know to purify his behavior is contained within this single book or presented in this single mural in easily understandable visual lists and parallel groupings that can be absorbed and analyzed in the span of one's vision. The multiples and parallels guide the eye, directing apprehension of visual information, while the visual confections create imagined scenes that illustrate the practical viability of the people, places, and things depicted. Ultimately, these design strategies aid not just in comprehension of information contained within these works, but also in their retention, as the rhythmic and realistic relationships function as instruments of memorization. "Confections give the mind an eye," Tufte states. "Confections make reading and seeing and thinking identical."[426] The murals, as confections containing the images and employing the designs printed in *Moonlight Vanquishing*, are the full realization of the Dalai Lama's project to

[425] Gyatso discusses the skimmability or scanability of Desi Sangye Gyatso's Blue Beryl paintings in *Being Human*, 67-8.
[426] Tufte, *Visual Explanations*, 151.

promote his vision for a reformed *saṅgha* through visual transmission, that combines reading, seeing, and thinking, to finally inspire changing.

CHAPTER 8
Reproduction, Circulation, and Iconography

In Tibetan history, the Ramoche Temple occupies a sacred position extending back to the introduction of Buddhism to the plateau by the foreign wives of the seventh-century Tibetan king, Songtsen Gampo. According to traditional accounts, it was constructed by the king to house the Jowo Buddha image that had been transported to Lhasa from China by his Chinese wife, Wen-cheng. Known in historical sources and in popular parlance as the Chinese Tiger (*rgya stag*) Ramoche, the temple has retained a connection to the Chinese queen, the Chinese builders who might have erected it, and the geomantic significance of the tiger in relation to other border-taming temples.[427] At some point, however, the Jowo, the most sacred image in Tibetan Buddhism, was swapped with the Buddha carried to Tibet by the king's other wife, Bhṛkuṭī of Nepal. Thus, the Jowo is now in the Lhasa Trulnang, more famously known as the Jokhang (House of the Jowo), and the other image resides in Ramoche. The Trulnang might be at the heart of Tibet's sacred geography—indeed, it sits on the heart of the supine demoness (*srin mo*) embodying Tibet—but Ramoche has always been the second sister, just a stone's throw away, on a side street radiating from the main circumambulatory that encircles the Jokhang. However peripheral, the Ramoche—the site, its image, and the lore surrounding it—is woven deeply into the fabric of Tibetan Buddhist mythology and sacred geography.

Over the centuries, the structure has been expanded, renovated, and restored by various rulers and lamas—including the Great Fifth and the Thirteenth Dalai Lamas—as part of merit-

[427] André Alexander, *The Temples of Lhasa: Tibetan Buddhist Architecture from the 7th to the 21st Centuries*, by André Alexander (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2005), 77.

making endeavors and the protective measures discussed in Part One. Ramoche was destroyed during the battles that ensued in Lhasa during the initial violent invasion and the suppression of the 1959 uprising, when it was shelled and caught fire. According to André Alexander, "The courtyard was [subsequently] used to incarcerate prisoners. During the Cultural Revolution, it was converted into a meeting room. In the early 1980s, it was still a shrine to Chairman Mao. After the Ramoché Jowo [Buddha image] was located in a scrap heap in Beijing, it was repaired and reinstalled in 1985."[428] Following the reconstruction of this holy site in 1986, the temple underwent a comprehensive renovation in 2013 with funding from the Chinese government that included a complete repainting of its interior. An article on the *China Daily* website from July 23 of that year features a photograph of an artist called Puntsog, from Lhundrub county, painting the *'Dul ris* mural, with the caption stating that he and his teacher spent eighteen months restoring the painting. Undoubtedly, the organizers of this recent renovation of Ramoche, which coincided with various revitalization projects in the area around the Barkhor encircling the Jokhang and encompassing Ramoche, looked at the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's account of his 1920s painting program, and the texts he composed to inform the original artists. Included in his collected works, in the same volume as *Moonlight Vanquishing*, is an artist's guide[429] to the *jātaka* murals that follow the vinaya painting as you walk clockwise around the assembly hall.

In his colophon to *Moonlight Vanquishing*, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama writes, "When the new paintings of the Ramoche Temple were being composed, together with the connected name inscriptions and verses of good wishes, this [book] too, as well as practices that are beneficial to the restoration of the doctrine of the completely pure vinaya pitaka, was spoken by Ngawang

[428] Ibid., 78.
[429] Thub bstan rgya mtsho, "Ra mo che'i gtsug lag khang gi ldeb bris skyes rab so bzhi pa'i zhal byang zur du bkol ba mthong ba don ldan (tshi)." In *gSung 'bum thub bstan rgya mtsho*, Vol. 5 (ca) (New Delhi: International Academy Of Indian Culture, 1981–1982), 733–82. <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW29228_C1AAA5>

Lobzang Thubten Gyatso (f.9a5-6)." It is clear, as I have shown, that the composition of his *'Dul ris* text was an integral part of the Thubten Gyatso's multifaceted project to reform and purify the *saṅgha*, that included the renovation of Imperial-era temples like Ramoche, as well as other institutional practices to restore the vinaya, such writing numerous *chayik* for various Tibetan Buddhist monasteries. And all of this contributed to the ritual activities for protecting the state and fortifying Tibet's borders against further foreign invasion. In addition to locating *Moonlight Vanquishing* within this larger effort, the Dalai Lama's statement at the text's conclusion also firmly establishes that the text was conceived in tandem with the production of new paintings at Ramoche. The 1922 account of the temple's renovation, entitled *The New Pearl Necklace that is the Ornament of Inexhaustible Happiness and Benefit* (hereafter *New Pearl Necklace*),[430] describes in detail the themes of these new murals in different parts of the sacred complex. "Inside the assembly hall, turning to the left of the main door," we are told, "new drawings (*dpe ris*) of the vinaya are arranged with name inscriptions and verses of good wishes (f.5b3-4)."[431] As I have previously stated, the *'Dul ris* mural at Ramoche is the critical link that connects the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's monastic reforms to his geomantic temple renovations, all of which were essential to achieving his larger goals of state protection. But the printed text itself, served a far more concrete and practical role in the restoration of Ramoche: it is the artist's manual that directed the mural's unprecedented creation.

By the time the *New Pearl Necklace* account was written, the renovation was complete—as attested to by the inventory of expenditures, including payments given to the various artisans

[430] This work is translated in full by Matthew Akester in *The Temples of Lhasa: Tibetan Buddhist Architecture from the 7th to the 21st Centuries*, by André Alexander (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2005), 301-4.
[431] Thub bstan rgya mtsho, "Ra mo che gtsug lag khang rten dang brten par bcas pa nyams gsos bgyis pa'i dkar chag (mi)." In *gSung 'bum thub bstan rgya mtsho*, Vol. 5 (ca) (International Academy Of Indian Culture, 1981–1982), 691–708. Buddhist Digital Resource Center <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW29228_B00483>

who worked on the project.[432] We can assume, therefore, that the *'Dul ris* and the *jātaka* guide were likely composed before the murals they inform were painted. This would be especially important for *Moonlight Vanquishing*; because the captions are so lengthy and literary, there is no practical reason why they would be written for the purpose of a mural and then transferred to the page. It is more logical, therefore, that the text preceded the mural and acted as a manual for the original painters, directing the illustrations and the words. Although we cannot rely on the extant Ramoche mural to give us clues as to whether it predated the book, we can look to another Tibetan mural for some insight.[433] The only known *'Dul ris* mural that definitively survives from the time of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama is the one located on the East Porch entrance of the Potala Palace, which was renovated by Thubten Gyatso in 1923, right after Ramoche was completed. Unfortunately, this is also the most inaccessible of all the murals due to its location at the point where (as of September 2017) tickets for the palace are checked, the timed tour hastily begins, and photography is no longer permitted. The inscriptions I personally observed when I visited the Potala in 2017 and those that can be seen in the sole known reproduction of this mural[434] do indicate, however, that their contents likely match the text of *Moonlight Vanquishing*. Given that this pair of murals—entirely new in the world of Tibetan art—were painted within two years of each other and under the patronage of the same person, it is highly probable that they resembled each other and incontrovertible that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's *Moonlight Vanquishing* functioned as an artist guide for both.

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[432] Ibid., f.7a-b.

[433] The true test would be to see if the error on the first folios that incorrectly identify left and right—ostensibly a mix up that did not account for the reversal that occurs with printing—was replicated in the murals. Unfortunately, this is impossible to determine based on the low-resolution image of the Potala mural that has been published. The current Ramoche inscriptions do, however, reproduce this mistake in the captions.

[434] Phun tshogs Tshe brtan, et. al., *Budala gong bi hua yuan liu Pho brang po ta la'i ldebs bris ri mo'i 'byung kungs lo rgyus sal ba'i me long (A Mirror of the Murals in the Potala Palace)* (Beijing: Jiu zhou tu shu chu ban she, 2000), 259.

But did Thubten Gyatso envision that his printed *'Dul ris*—already a visual commentary on the vinaya and a *péri* for the basics of the monastic code—could be transformed into a mural, the most public and practical mode of visual transmission? Does the book's graphic design, which employs strategies to enable visual transmission, give us clues that the Dalai Lama had grander plans for his "newly occurring" pictures? In other words, was *Moonlight Vanquishing* composed with the mural in mind, or was the mural an afterthought? While there is no explicit declaration of artistic intent beyond what Thubten Gyatso states in his colophon, there are a few graphic elements of the printed text that hint at its planned use as an artist's guide. As I mentioned above, the integration of text and image enables not only the annotative function of the images, but also unites the pictures and text into discrete vignettes that can be easily reproduced on a wall. Additionally, the undifferentiated textiles portrayed in small multiples might merely suggest multiplicity while not displaying it due to the limitations of the woodblock medium; however, these hanging robes, cloths, and mats can be viewed as something akin to preparatory drawings that are waiting to be painted with pigments, as if the Dalai Lama knew all along that they would eventually be given colorful identities. The images most suggestive of Thubten Gyatso's large-scale dreams for the drawings are perhaps the two-paged temples with three- or four-sided courtyards. While it is possible that these buildings could have been squeezed onto a single folio—Ngawang Gyaltsen depicts similar buildings on one page in his *'dul ris*—the architectural detail would be eliminated, the animating power of the circumambulating devotees sacrificed, and the drama of the scale diminished. Instead, this centerfold contributes to the mural a visually enticing centerpiece that could anchor the other images in an imagined landscape and enliven the whole confection with ritual activity.

We cannot know for sure whether the Thirteenth Dalai Lama intended for his *'Dul ris* to function as an artist's guide—or whether he conceived of it serving as a manual beyond his own projects—over the last century, but the printed *Moonlight Vanquishing* has nonetheless provided the blueprint for at least thirteen murals across Central Tibet and the Tibetan Buddhist areas of India's western Himalayas, as well as in exile monasteries in South India.[435] This is apparent not only because of the unmistakable pictures that are unique to this work, but also because the textual captions are almost always copied verbatim. And when there is a dedicatory inscription, it quotes *Moonlight Vanquishing*'s colophon; most of the time—at places like Shalu in Tibet and Spituk, Sankar, and Lamayuru in Ladakh—the concluding lines referencing the coinciding renovation of Ramoche and the authorship of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama are cut, but this line is retained at Ladakh's Likir monastery and Tibet's famed Samye. The murals are executed in different styles: Narthang, Samye (which has suffered much damage)[436], and Shalu[437] all have a more painterly quality, with lighter pigments, and special attention paid to the many trees' foliage and flowers. The new Ramoche mural, like the iteration at the Potala and the various Ladakhi murals, all share a more saturated palette and a certain flatness to the overall composition. Some of the murals are contained on a single or continuous edifice, whereas others expand across multiple walls, the artists negotiating corners, doors, and windows. Naturally, there are often slight interpretive differences among the murals, and between the painted and printed pictures, but there are also elements apparently lost in translation as the images were transferred from the

[435] While I have not visited these communities, José Cabezón documented this mural, located at Sera monastery's Mé College, in *Sera Monastery,* 516.
[436] Samye was completely leveled during the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76. It was rebuilt, however, in the mid-1980s, and there have been various government-sponsored renovations over the subsequent decades. Because there is no apparent date in the damaged inscription, it is unclear when exactly the *'Dul ris* murals were painted.
[437] Janet Gyatso reports seeing this mural in 1987 (*Being Human*, 417n96). The damaged inscription reports it was finished on either the 11th or 26th of the month in the female earth ox year, which could be either 1949 or 2009. The was a repair and reconstruction project that began in 2009, so it is possible that this mural, which Gyatso saw in 1987, was repainted during this renovation.

page: the circumambulators are absent at Shalu, the hermitage dwellings are miscounted at Lamayuru, and there is no calendar at Narthang.

At three of the Ladakhi monasteries—the two seats of the Bakula Rinpoche, Sankar and Spituk, as well as Lamayuru—we further find there are exceptional similarities in terms of style, color, and the artistic translation of the *'Dul ris* images. This can be explained by the common circle of influential local artists who worked on all three renovation projects that produced the vinaya murals. Around 1966, Tsering Wangdu (b. 1944) painted the *'Dul ris* onto rolls of cotton intended to be hung in the veranda above the main assembly hall of Sankar monastery.[438] This seems to be the very first of these murals in Ladakh; today the paintings are framed and displayed in the same building.[439] Interestingly, Tsering Wangdu was trained by Dewa Pasang (b. c.1922), an artist from Tashi Lhunpo and Narthang in Tibet who was brought to Ladakh by Lobsang Thubten Chognor, the Nineteenth Bakula Rinpoche (1918 - 2003).[440] This important local lama, who was a great statesman in post-Independence Ladakh, had close ties to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama: not only did Thubten Gyatso confirm Bakula Rinpoche's identification as a incarnate lama (*sprul sku*), but he also revealed the direction and place of his rebirth in Ladakh with a map.[441] Having traveled to Lhasa to pursue traditional monastic education, Bakula Rinpoche received his novice ordination from the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1932 and ultimately received his geshe degree at Drepung monastery.[442] It is possible, therefore, that Bakula Rinpoche was familiar with *Moonlight Vanquishing* and its murals, having lived in Lhasa for

[438] Erberto Lo Bue, "Lives and Works of Traditional Buddhist Artists in 20th Century Ladakh. A Preliminary Account," in *Ladakhi Histories: Local and Regional Perspectives*, ed. John Bray (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 2011), 367.
[439] These murals are documented in Snellgrove and Skorupski, as well as in Bechert and Gombrich
[440] Lo Bue, "20th Century Buddhist Artists," 365, 371.
[441] Nawang Tsering Shakspo, "The Role of Incarnate Lamas in Buddhist Tradition: A Brief Survey of Bakula Rinpoche's Previous Incarnations," *The Tibet Journal* Vol. 24, No. 3 (Autumn 1999): 44.
[442] Nawang Tsering Shakspo, "rGyalsras Bakula Rinpoche: A Political & Religious Leader of Ladakh," in *Recent Researches on the Himalaya*, ed. Prem Singh Jina (New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, 1997), 115.

many years, and that he chose the *'Dul ris* to be painted at his home monastery of Sankar as a kind of homage to his prestigious guru or as a transmission of monastic ideals directly from Lhasa. Or perhaps it was Dewa Pasang who introduced his student to *Moonlight Vanquishing* and the idea of murals based on this text, having seen it at Narthang or elsewhere in Central Tibet.

Regardless, in the mid-1970s, the porch of the main assembly hall at Sankar's sister institution, Spituk, was renovated with new murals, including the vinaya pictures, painted by the same Tsering Wangdu, together with a well-known painter, Yeshe Jamyang (b. 1932) and his frequent collaborator Ngawang Chopel, a Drepung-trained monk from Lingshed. And it was this latter pair, along with five other artists, who painted the murals within Lamayuru's assembly hall porch in 1976.[443] The collaborative work between these three painters seems to represent the origin of the first three *'Dul ris* murals in Ladakh, which likely inspired further iterations at Likir, at Lingshed in 1999, and at Phyang in 2017, where the Bhutanese artist in charge explicitly identified Spituk's murals as his model. Drangkar monastery, located in the Spiti Valley of Himachal Pradesh, is an interesting outlier, located far from central Ladakh, but with close religious and cultural ties to that area. The *'Dul ris* mural there is distinctively different than its Ladakhi counterparts, with an almost water-color palette, much-abbreviated captions, and neither a calendar nor an inscription. Still, it is unquestionably drawn from the Dalai Lama's *'Dul ris*, which might reflect the artistic influence of the prominent Ladakhi institutions—especially fellow Geluk monasteries like Spituk—or the transmission of *Moonlight Vanquishing* from other unknown sources.

The wide circulation of *Moonlight Vanquishing*, as a visual commentary turned artist's manual, and the subsequent replication and repetition of the *'Dul ris* murals has transformed

[443] Lo Bue, "20th Century Buddhist Artists," 358-9.

what began as a singular work of timely political importance into a standardized system for depicting, elucidating, and transmitting the basic rules of the monastic code in a new way and in a new medium. Do the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's unprecedented and assuredly "correct" drawings therefore constitute an iconography of the monastic code? Erwin Panofsky, the veritable father of art historical studies of iconography, defines this term as the scholarly enquiry into "the subject matter or meaning of works of art, as opposed to their form."[444] He outlines three strata of interpretation to aid the art historical examination with increasing levels of depth and to enable the art historian's multidimensional understanding of a work of art. First, there are the "pure" forms that carry primary or natural meaning—a shoe, a temple, a robe, a bowl—but once these so-called "pre-iconographic" forms are repeated as artistic motifs and combined in images, stories, and allegories, to which symbolic meaning is further attached, forms enter the domain of iconography.

Whereas identifying motifs is based on the conventional ways that forms are expressed in a given time and place, iconographic interpretation and analysis "presupposes, of course, much more than that familiarity with objects and events which we acquire by practical experience," Panofsky explains. "It presupposes a familiarity with specific themes or concepts as transmitted through literary sources, whether acquired by purposeful reading or by oral tradition."[445] This important distinction explains how a viewer might recognize a woman with a wheel as Saint Catherine or a man sitting under a tree as the Buddha—familiarity with specific themes or concepts through religious literature or oral traditions informs the specific recognition and understanding of these images. In the case of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's *'Dul ris*, one can first

[444] Erwin Panofsky, "Introductory," in *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1972), 3.
[445] Ibid., 11.

identify that a building is a Tibetan-style temple through practical experience, and then by analyzing the textual captions and scriptural origins of the image, one can understand that it is the correct structure described in the *Vinayasūtra* and the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya. And finally, there is "iconography in the deeper sense" whereby the larger context is considered to understand the artwork at hand: how the subject matter, the composition, the medium, and so on together reflect something about the artist, a theological movement, the society in which it was produced.[446] For *Moonlight Vanquishing* and its murals, this would mean synthesizing the context of the works' creation, the graphic design, the images chosen, the text consulted to give a clearer picture of the "intrinsic meaning," the quest for which relies upon the collaboration of the various humanistic disciplines—history, politics, religion, literature.[447]

Panofsky's approach is intended for the art historian who seeks to apprehend the meaning of an artwork through iconographic study, but what he does not quite account for is how the iconography is developed into a language that we can interpret, centuries later and a world apart. Tracing the origins and subsequent shifts in iconography is, of course, a different and essential realm of art historical inquiry. For example, a major question in Buddhist art history revolves around the origin of the Buddha image—specifically, why artists in two regions around the same time started to depict the Buddha in a human body, as opposed to the conventional symbolic representations of his presence, radically altering the iconography of Buddhist art forever. When we consider the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's *'Dul ris* as an iconography of the monastic code, there is no question as to whether or not we can apply Panofsky's principles of interpretation—much of this dissertation demonstrates the ways that his proposed strata can be applied to the printed and painted works. And of course, I have explained the origins of the first murals and the

[446] Ibid., 8.
[447] Ibid., 16.

influences on the text. But what factors transform a work from a singular piece into the source for a system of visual representation?

Integral to Panofsky's seminal explanations of these three strata of subject matter or meaning are shared systems of knowledge—cultural, religious, historical, and symbolic—all of which are historically contingent. He encourages his fellow art historians to "familiarize ourselves with what the authors of those representations had read or otherwise knew."[448] One must also consider what the intended audience (or different valences of viewers) had to know to understand a work, and how this might change over time as an artwork takes on new meanings in different temporal and cultural contexts. In other words, iconographic analysis is predicated on the common knowledge that allowed the image to be comprehensible to audiences of the past and likewise, to scholars of the present. What Panofsky does not explicitly state, but that is essential to the formation of an iconographic system, is the idea that there is a *visual* knowledge that must be shared by the artist and the audience. At a most basic level, there are the conventions of how fundamental forms are expressed, so that they are recognizable as such; but then there are the standard ways that stories, figures, places—all drawn from common literature, oral tales, and religious beliefs—are depicted in different places and at different times. The circulation of information goes hand-in-hand with the repetition of representations, and this is how shared knowledge becomes crystallized into artistic convention—how certain images ultimately become iconic. And therefore one can recognize Tashi Lhunpo by its towering white wall for hanging thangkas without having traveled to Shigatse and Changkya Rolpai Dorje by his goiter never having met him.

[448] Ibid., 12-3.

An iconographic system therefore develops when communal knowledge meets novel visual expression which, through circulation and repetition, becomes integrated into a shared artistic language that has the power to transmit meaning widely. An artist draws on a known text, a tale, an event for his subject matter, and based on his cultural or religious knowledge, as well as his own artistic training, he depicts a person, place, or event in a certain way, for a certain purpose or patron. But then something new is added; one day someone decided for the first time to carve the body of the Buddha into stone, rather than his footprints, the Bodhi Tree, or the Dharma Wheel. Theories abound as to why this happened, but the prevailing hypothesis points to the common depiction of rulers in bodily form on coins within this specific time and place. What is most important to consider is how a novel depiction becomes the common representation; when novelty originates in royal ateliers, with important artists, at major landmarks, a singular work of artistic experimentation, over time becomes the norm and the standard iconography, as the prominence and prestige of such workshops and sites leads to replication, imitation, and the circulation of new visual ideas.

And this is how the *'Dul ris* came to serve as an iconography of the vinaya within the modern visual culture of Tibetan Buddhism. A new mural, a new subject matter, a new way to depict monastic life and the monastic code, was created by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama during the 1920s at two of the most important holy sites in Tibetan Buddhism. Popularized over the next century by the influence and authority attached to Thubten Gyatso and propagated by the easy circulation of the printed *Moonlight Vanquishing* as an artist's manual, the *'Dul ris* murals established a standardized, cohesive system for portraying the rules of the vinaya where there was none before, crystallizing both the forms and the visual interpretations of the Dalai Lama contained therein. Stylistic differences in the execution of an iconography is to be expected, but

the general forms, which express the intrinsic meaning of the mural and the text, remain static. Although the deeper iconographic meaning has naturally shifted as the *'Dul ris* text and murals appear in contexts different than the projects of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, that these murals persist into the present speaks to the continued relevance, importance, and comprehensibility of this iconography to Tibetan Buddhist monastic communities. Even as the Dalai Lama composed *Moonlight Vanquishing* to facilitate his purification of the *saṅgha*—exploiting the illustrations as a commentarial tool and creating images to enable visual transmission—could he have foreseen its trajectory beyond his initial intentions? This cannot be known with any certainty. However, Thubten Gyatso's experiences in British India during his second exile likely exposed him to the power of images to transmit messages and meaning through replication and circulation. His exposure to the photography and chromolithography might have inspired him to adopt an easily reproducible medium and a visual methodology to bolster his efforts, years later, to preserve the state through reform and magic.

The Dalai Lama in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction

During his four years exiled in Mongolia and China, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's adamant opposition to being photographed was well-known and respected. In spite of his ceremonious arrivals at Wutaishan and Beijing, and the throngs of journalists and diplomats who sought to catch a glimpse if not an appointment with the mysterious "Pope of Tibet," he refused the camera. Foreign newspaper reports on his flight from the invading British and his precarious peregrinations between Mongolia and China, at the whim of foreign powers, featured colorful drawings or photo collages of stock images of Tibetan people, places, and things—including

images misidentified as the Dalai Lama himself (Fig. 3.11).[449] But not one publication published a genuine photograph of Thubten Gyatso—they could not because there was no photograph. At least two Westerners who met him during this time documented the Dalai Lama's staunch rejection of photography. The Russian adventurer Piotr Kozlov, who met Thubten Gyatso in Urga in 1905, was permitted to photograph his residence and retinue; but the images of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama that he ultimately presented to Tsar Nicholas II were not photos but two pencil drawings that the Tibetan leader allowed another Russian, N. Y. Kozhevnikov, to capture from life.[450] Several years later, the Finnish official, C. G. Mannerheim, who met Thubten Gyatso at Wutaishan in June 1908, wrote that his and all preceding requests for



Figure 3.11: A photograph from *a New York Times* article misidentifying a figure as the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. (August 2, 1908)

[449] See New York Times, July 19, 1908 and August 2, 1908; Martin Brauen, "Western Views of the Dalai Lamas," trans. Janice Becker, in *The Dalai Lamas: A Visual History*, ed. Martin Brauen (Chicago: Serindia Publications, 2005), 153; Associated Press Night Report, "LIKE AN EMPEROR: LAMA OF THIBET NOW NEAR PEKING;EXILED VICTIM OF BRITISH "DESECRATION" GREETED WITH HONORS;RETINUE UNKEMPT AND DEMORALIZED DURING YEARS OF WANDERING;POLITICAL MASTERY OF TERRITORY PRIZE CHINESE ARE SEEKING;NOTED MONASTERY, HOME OF GRAND LAMA OF THIBET," *Los Angeles Times (1886-1922),* Sep 29, 1908. ProQuest Historical Newspapers <https://proxy.lib.umich.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/historical-newspapers/like-emperor/docview/159217633/se-2?accountid=14667>

[450] See Brauen, "Western Views of the Dalai Lamas," 238; and Michael Henss, "From Tradition to 'Truth': Images of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama," *Orientations* Vol. 36, No. 6 (2005): 64-5. One of these drawings was featured in the *Washington Post's* article on the Dalai Lama's arrival in Beijing, November 29, 1908. Special Correspondence of The Washington Post, "THE GRAND LAMA OF TIBET VISITS CHINA AND IS RECEIVED WITH POMP," *The Washington Post (1877-1922),* Nov 29, 1908. ProQuest Historical Newspapers <https://proxy.lib.umich.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/historical-newspapers/grand-lama-tibet-visits-china-is-received-with/docview/144821247/se-2?accountid=14667.>

a photograph had been denied by the lama.[451] Less than two years later, however, when the Thirteenth Dalai Lama went into exile again, this time to India, his attitude toward photography shifted: he did not just permit pictures, but fully engaged with the medium, fusing it with traditional arts to invent a new type of Tibetan Buddhist portraiture. In the words of Clare Harris, the Dalai Lama "indigenized" the products of the colonial camera.[452] What inspired this change of heart that moved Thubten Gyatso to exploit photography, and by extension, the reproduceable image, for his own purposes?

When the Dalai Lama crossed the eastern mountain passes of the Himalayas into British India in early 1910, he arrived in Darjeeling, a place made familiar to him by its Tibetan Buddhist communities and made welcome to him by the local Sikkimese and British leaders. Fortuitously, this was also a place where photography thrived. Beginning in the 1870s, photography studios had proliferated in Darjeeling, meeting the demand of the British and European tourists—recuperating soldiers, summering officials, aspiring anthropologists—who desired documentation of the region's otherworldly mountainscapes as well as the exotic peoples who inhabited them. Accomplished photographers such as Thomas Paar produced postcards and *cartes de visite* for the tourists, but their studios also served local elites and dignitaries.[453] As the hub of Anglo-Tibetan interaction, Darjeeling was the location where Europeans could access and acquire Tibetaness, and likewise it was where many Tibetan and Himalayan people first encountered photography.

Numerous Sikkimese, Tibetan, Nepalese and Indian men and women hired these studio photographers to take their pictures; however, many of their portraits were anonymized, sold as

[451] Brauen, "Western Views," 238.
[452] Clare Harris, *Photography and Tibet* (London: Reaktion Books, 2016), 127.
[453] Ibid., 39-41.

curios, and published in popular media as part of Darjeeling's lucrative "visual economy" that profited the British photographers and consumers, rather than the local patrons. Clare Harris's seminal research traces how these images of local people became the stock photos and by extension the archetypes (and stereotypes) of Himalayan communities in general and Tibetan Buddhism in particular. Lamas featured prominently in the commercial photography for sale in Darjeeling and in the images that advertised this Himalayan haven as a tourist destination.[454] At a time when Tibet was largely inaccessible, yet tantalizingly close, Darjeeling could provide a surrogate or proxy experience: it was "a place where Tibetaness could be staged photographically for British consumption, while the land itself was closed to all but the audacious few."[455] In the nascent period of colonial photography, the consumers and creators of photographs of Tibet and its Himalayan spheres of influence were overwhelmingly foreigners; and the British in particular dominated this realm due to their access to the Tibetan plateau's southern portals and the Tibetan cultural areas within and just beyond the boundaries of the British Raj. Harris has offered a corrective to this narrative, however, "by considering the extent to which Tibetans themselves have been able to engage with the technology, either as subjects of it, or as agents in its manipulation." [456]And it is within this milieu that we can locate the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's interest in photography.

Sir Charles Bell, the Political Officer of Sikkim, was responsible for managing Thubten Gyatso's travel, care, and political activities while exiled in India. From the Dalai Lama's initial arrival in Darjeeling, Bell was integrated into the Tibetan leader's entourage and ultimately became an important member of his inner circle. Newspaper reports from early March 1910

[454] Ibid., 44-5.
[455] Ibid., 47.
[456] Ibid., 117.



Figure 3.12: The Thirteenth Dalai Lama (r), the Crown Prince of Sikkim (c), and Charles Bell (l) photographed at Hastings House, Calcutta in 1910 (Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

mention the Political Officer's visit to the Dalai Lama at his hotel.[457] A few weeks later, Thubten Gyatso, accompanied by his entourage of Tibetan officials, as well as Bell and the Crown Prince of Sikkim, Maharaj Kumar Sidkeong Tulku Namgyal, traveled to Calcutta to meet with the Viceroy Lord Minto on March 14. By the time the Thirteenth Dalai Lama arrived at his temporary residence—the famed Hastings House, named for its first resident and the first governor-general of Bengal—he had already gotten to know Charles Bell quite well. Perhaps it was the rapport they had already developed, or the fact that a camera was one of the first gifts Bell had given to the Dalai Lama when he arrived in Darjeeling,[458] but Thubten Gyatso's prohibition against photography was apparently rescinded quite quickly in Calcutta. He was photographed in several different arrangements at Hastings House: individually, alongside Bell and the Crown Prince of Sikkim (Fig. 3.12), and with the many members of his Tibetan entourage.

These official photographs, some of which appeared in the press,[459] were taken by the professional photographers Johnston and Hoffman. The European-style of these images,

[457] Special Correspondent, "THE DALAI LAMA: IN LIGHTER VEIN AFFAIRS AT LHASA SPECTATORS FIRED ON VISIT FROM POLITICAL AGENT PLIGHT NOT ADVISED RECEPTION AT THE HOTEL INDIA AND TIBET," *The Times of India (1861-2010),* Mar 05, 1910. ProQuest Historical Newspapers. <https://proxy.lib.umich.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/dalai-lama/docview/231250620/se-2?accountid=14667>

[458] Harris, *Photography and Tibet*, 130.

[459] See for example: "THE DALAI LAMA IN CALCUTTA," *The Manchester Guardian (1901-1959),* Apr 04,

however, do not meet the requirements of traditional Tibetan portraiture, as the Dalai Lama is presented neither in the position nor the appearance of prestige: he is seated in partial side view and he is not dressed in ceremonial garb; and when photographed with others, he is neither elevated nor centered. A different set of group and individual portraits of Thubten Gyatso from Calcutta dated to 1910 and attributed to Bell (although likely taken by his as sistant Rabden Lepcha[460]) were also made inside the Hastings House. These too are informal compared to the strict parameters of Tibetan portraiture; in one particular image the Dalai Lama stands with his hand resting on a finely upholstered chair (Fig. 3.12). When the Dalai Lama returned to Darjeeling, where he would spend most of the remaining two years or so of his exile, a different kind of portrait was created.



Figure 3.13: The Thirteenth Dalai Lama at Hastings House, Calcutta in 1910. (Courtesy of The Tibet Album, Pitt Rivers Museum)

According to Charles Bell's account, it was he who first photographed Thubten Gyatso "seated in the Tibetan style." Bell recounts, "After the Dalai Lama had been about five months in Darjeeling I took a photograph of him, seated on a throne Buddhawise, with crossed legs, and hands placed in the prescribed position; in fact, as he would sit in his own palace at Lhasa for

1910. ProQuest Historical Newspapers <https://proxy.lib.umich.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/historical-newspapers/dalai-lama-calcutta/docview/475050880/se-2?accountid=14667>; and "FORMER RULER OF TIBET, WHO FLED FROM CHINESE TO INDIA," *Detroit Free Press (1858-1922),* Apr 03, 1910. ProQuest Historical Newspapers <https://proxy.lib.umich.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/historical-newspapers/former-ruler-tibet-who-fled-chinese-india/docview/324990503/se-2?accountid=14667>

[460] Throughout her book *Photography and Tibet*, Clare Harris discusses the likelihood that Lepcha took most of the photographs attributed to Bell



Figure 3.14: Formal portrait of thirteenth Dalai Lama, taken by Charles Bell / Rabden Lepcha, September 1910, Darjeeling; frame by (chief) carpenter of Dalai Lama; painted by Tsotra Namgyal (Courtesy of Martin, "Object Lessons," 194)

blessing pilgrims and others."[461] Bell further reports that he gave the Dalai Lama "a large number of copies" of this photo, which the Tibetan leader distributed to monasteries and devotees alike. This photograph-cum-icon received the same worship given to images of Buddhas and deities; for years after, Bell claims, he saw the photo he had taken on altars and in shops across Tibet, Sikkim, and Darjeeling, "thousands of them receiving the adoration of the faithful."[462] The photograph's transformation into a religious image, however, was the result not only of Thubten Gyatso's own dissemination of the picture, but also his revolutionary Tibetanizing of the photographic medium: he had a Tibetan artist in his retinue hand-paint all the background details and the elaborate adornments and clothing he wore (Fig. 3.14). Bell himself later received several of these embellished, "coloured camera-portraits"[463] from the Dalai Lama, who signed each in his own handwriting.[464]

While the first photographs of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama might have been captured in Calcutta, it is clear that the first Tibetan photo-icon was created in Darjeeling at the Dalai Lama's

[461] Charles Bell, *Portrait of a Dalai Lama: The Life and Times of the Great Thirteenth* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1987), 129.
[462] Ibid., 130.
[463] Ibid.
[464] Another (unpainted) photograph taken from the same session but from an angle slightly to the subject's proper right, was framed and gifted to Charles Bell by Chensal Namgang (later Dasang Damdul Tsarong) in mid-August 1910. See Emma Martin, "Object Lessons in Tibetan: The Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Charles Bell, and Connoisseurial Networks in Darjeeling and Kalimpong, 1910-12," in *Transcultural Encounters in the Himalayan Borderlands: Kalimpong as a "Contact Zone,"* ed. Markus Viehbeck (Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Press, 2017), 193 n.24.

direction. The hand-colored camera-portrait of Thubten Gyatso that Bell references has long been assumed to be the photo-icon he included as the frontispiece in the first editions of *Portrait of a Dalai Lam*a, his chronicle of the experiences he had with the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in Darjeeling and in Lhasa. Many other photographs of the Dalai Lama in the Bell Collections held by various archives across the UK have also been credited to Bell, based in part on assumption and association. Charles Bell was in fact an amateur photographer of the communities, cultures, and landscapes of the Himalayas, but his authority and respectability overshadowed other possible creators of the images he collected, not the least of whom was his Sikkimese assistant, Rabden Lepcha.

Clare Harris's research on the studio photographers of Darjeeling corrects some of these attributions. Importantly, she asserts that the photograph comprising this most famous, and very first photo-icon was in actuality made by the best of Darjeeling's photographers, Thomas Paar, who was hired by the Dalai Lama, perhaps with the help and encouragement of Charles Bell. No material evidence survives to prove whether the "first photograph" Bell describes was actually another image for which he was more directly responsible.[465] Regardless, it is clear that once the Dalai Lama landed in the visual world of Darjeeling and entered the orbit of Charles Bell, he became powerfully aware of the possibilities of mass reproduced images for transmitting meaning to and sharing his presence with his followers. And in the process, he pioneered a novel medium for Tibetan portraiture, employing photography for his own purposes.

In Tibetan, the term used for photograph is *par* which means "reproduction," generally in the sense of printing; that no unique neologism was invented for this new visual technology is indicative of the Tibetan understanding of the photographic medium as replicating or imprinting

[465] Many thanks to Clare Harris, not only for her groundbreaking and essential research, but also for the generous clarifications and additional information she offered via personal email correspondence.

a visual image onto a page in a process analogous to using a carved woodblock to print the page of a book or the under-drawing of a thangka painting. The camera, therefore, has the power to capture the presence of a spiritual master, and to reproduce and transmit it in perfect one-to-one copies.[466] Incidentally, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was not the first prominent Tibetan lama to have a photographic portrait taken in Darjeeling. When the Ninth Panchen Lama visited Darjeeling in 1905 en route to Calcutta, he was photographed by the Englishman John Burlington Smith in his hotel, rather than the latter's studio. This portrait was published in the British press but was never circulated among Tibetan communities because it did not meet the compositional requisites of a sacred image—namely front-facing symmetry. Thubten Gyatso, however, was the first Tibetan Buddhist figure to truly embrace and exploit this powerful medium.

The Thirteenth Dalai Lama essentially invented the Tibetan photo-icon, according to Harris, converting the photographic portrait from a *par* to a *ten* (*rten*)—an image that can serve as the "support" for the presence of the being portrayed and is thus capable of receiving worship and reciprocally blessing worshippers. Unlike the formal images of prominent citizens and local lamas of Darjeeling who had sat for portraits (*par*) in the studios of Smith and Paar, Thubten Gyatso was photographed on a throne surrounded by Buddhist art and regalia, likely in the shrine room at one of his temporary residences-in-exile, Hillhouse. The image was then hand-painted by an artist, Tsotra Namgyal, in the Dalai Lama's retinue, who tinted nearly everything but the flesh—the sacred body—of the religious leader, "fusing the mimetic qualities of photography with the authenticating aesthetic of a Tibetan painter's pigments."[467] This colored photo-icon created in Darjeeling seems to have circulated widely—perhaps it is this image that Bell

[466] Harris, *Photography and Tibet*, 120.
[467] Ibid., 127.

encountered over and over—catalyzing a revolution in the realm of Tibetan devotional images that ripples into the present. Even today we find later colored photo-icons of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, his successor the Fourteenth, as well as other twentieth- and twenty-first-century lamas present in altar spaces across the Himalayas, as all manner of photographic portraits continue to perform as mimetic stand-ins for absent masters.

Thubten Gyatso's fascination with the camera was not limited to his position as subject, however; he also tried his hand as a photographer. Harris has discovered that Charles Bell's own private collection of photographs contain several attributed to the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and dated to 1912. The British official's own notes record that he had gifted a camera and six glass plates to the Tibetan leader in 1910, so it is possible that by this time the Dalai Lama had been experimenting behind the lens for several years in exile, though no results of these artistic endeavors survive.[468] In her work on the exchange of gifts between Bell and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, Emma Martin details how Bell received "object lessons" from the Tibetan leader and other officials in his exiled entourage, who sought to educate him about the sacred images and other Tibetan items they had been given to him. We can imagine that Bell gave the Dalai Lama photography lessons in return—a kind of visual transmission (*mthong rgyun*) or hands-on instruction in this modern technology as Bell reciprocally received a hands-on instruction in Tibetan art connoisseurship and even Tibetan clothing, among other things.[469]

"Visual transmission" and "hands-on instruction" defined so much of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's experience while exiled in India as he witnessed modern technology, infrastructure, and mass media. When he was exiled in Mongolia and China, Thubten Gyatso was largely staying in traditional religious settings—monasteries like Jampaling Monastery in Amdo and the Buddhist

[468] Ibid., 130.
[469] See Emma Martin, "Object Lessons."

sacred mountain, Wutaishan, in northwest China. In these locations and especially in Beijing, his freedom of travel and his ability to meet with diplomats, politicians, and the press were restricted by the imperial government. So while the Dalai Lama was received in Beijing with an impressive military parade—a show of modern military might—ahead of his meeting with the Emperor and Dowager Empress, there is no indication that he was able to explore and experience this twentieth-century Chinese city. India, on the other hand, was decidedly different. A story in *The Times of India* from March 4, 1910 reports that the day after he had held audiences with officials and the multitudes of devotees who sought his blessing at the Grand Hotel in Darjeeling, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, "arrayed as a monk and bare-headed, went through the bazaar."[470] Although his first residence at Hillside was more isolated, two years later Thubten Gyatso moved to Bhutan House in Kalimpong—a residence seemingly built for him by Bhutanese minister, Raja Ugyen Dorji (1855-1916)—where he once again became the center of devotional and political activity, as well as international exchange.[471] Whether wandering the bazaar in Darjeeling or chatting with foreign elites in Kalimpong, during his more than two years in the northeast corner of India, the Dalai Lama undoubtedly learned a lot and saw more—particularly the commercial photographs and photography studios that inspired his novel take on the medium.

Outside of this Himalayan realm, however, Thubten Gyatso had a wild ride into the twentieth century, abandoning his palanquin for railroad cars, trams, and even motorcars[472] as he traveled to and around Calcutta, and between the Buddhist pilgrimage sites in northern India and

[470] Special Correspondent, "THE DALAI LAMA: IN LIGHTER VEIN AFFAIRS (*Times of India*)."
[471] Martin, "Object Lessons," 196-7.
[472] Phur bu lcog yongs 'dzin sprul sku thub bstan byams pa tshul khrims bstan 'dzin, *rGyal dbang sku phreng bcu gsum pa thub bstan rgya mtsho'i rnam thar*. Par gzhi dang po. Vol. 2, rGyal dbang sku phreng rim byon gyi mdzad rnam (Pe cin: Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dus deb khang, 2010) [BDRC bdr:MW1PD137888] <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW1PD137888>, 153. While the Dalai Lama was visiting the pilgrimage sites of eastern India, he traveled by motorcar (*ha wa sga ril*) while his entourage traveled by horseback and bullock cart due to heat.

southern Nepal. Although he only spent a few weeks in Calcutta around his visit with the Viceroy in March 1910, Shakabpa records that the leader of the British Raj "invited the Dalai Lama to enjoy the sights of the city while he stayed in [the capital]." What a wonder this must have been—the marvels of colonial architecture like the High Court building and the magic of colonial infrastructure like the streetcar system.[473] While his was a definitively visual experience of this urban sphere, the modern print media that proliferated in this setting cannot be excluded from the Dalai Lama's presumed encounters. During his Darjeeling bazaar wanderings, he might have already seen some mass-produced images, but surely in Calcutta the Dalai Lama would have seen in newspapers, markets, and train stations commercial photography, illustrated advertisements, and mass-produced calendar art.

Since their advent in the nineteenth century, newspapers published in India carried images and advertising. The first advertising agency B. Datram and Company was established in 1905, followed by the India-Advertising in 1907 and the Calcutta Advertising Agency in 1909.[474] Such commercial images were not only printed in periodicals, but on advertising placards and consumer packaging. As chromolithography filled Indian marketplaces and homes with colorful ephemera, Christopher Pinney notes, "nineteenth-century India was increasingly pervaded by images. These were hand-made and mass-produced, local and exotic, religious and commercial."[475] Whether it was pictures of gods in domestic shrines or on the labels of domestic goods, mass-produced printed images filled the visual world of India through which the Thirteenth Dalai Lama traveled. Although Clare Harris makes the convincing argument that the

[473] See "Map of Calcutta Tramways [1910]," Harvard Map Collection , <https://id.lib.harvard.edu/curiosity/scanned-maps/44-990114911010203941>
[474] Lynne Ciochetto, "Advertising and Globalization in India," *Media Asia* Vol. 31, No. 3 (2004): 158.
[475] Christopher Pinney, *Photos of the Gods: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 17.

hand-coloring of his photographic portraits was fundamental to Thubten Gyatso's unique Tibetanization of the medium and his transformation of these images into sacred icons, I cannot help but think that the color-saturated chromolithographs he saw as he journeyed across eastern India influenced his decision to embellish these images.

When we consider the modernization projects that Thubten Gyatso introduced in the decades following his return to Tibet from exile, connections are easily drawn to the technology and infrastructure he witnessed abroad: a postal system, streetlights, telegraph lines, modern weaponry, and so on. In this same period, however, murals that he commissioned as part of his temple renovation program meaningfully reflect the milieu in which he was immersed for more than two years—the sea of imagery that could not only transmit presence in mimetic copies, but could also be reproduced and circulated to communicate messages, to sell ideas. Exposure to modern print media and photography, moreover, inspired the Dalai Lama to rethink Tibetan portraiture while in exile, and it further inspired the ways that he used images when he returned to Lhasa—how could it not?

In her study of two cosmological painting programs at Norbulingka and the Potala commissioned by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama between 1922 and 1928—coinciding with the vinaya murals at Ramoche and the Potala's East Porch—Wen-shing Chou argues that the unprecedented empirical modes of representation utilized in the depictions of Bodh Gaya and Wutaishan in particular "may be seen as a direct response to modernity's technologies and vocabularies of identity and place-making."[476] Under the auspices of Thubten Gyatso, the artists made radical departures from the conventional iconographies that govern how these places are typically painted in Tibet, marking a distinction between the portrayal of a timeless,

[476] Wen-shing Chou, "Reimagining the Buddhist Universe: Pilgrimage and Cosmography in the Court of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (1876-1933)," *The Journal of Asian Studies* Vol. 73, No. 2 (May 2014): 420.



Figure 3.15: The Mahabodhi Temple, by Bourne and Shepherd, 1880s, Elgin Collection: 'Spring Tours 1894-98' (The Collection of the British Library. <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/apac/photocoll/g/019pho0000015s1u00019000.html>)

incorruptible, divine site within the temporality of sacred history and a site that exists within this worldly time and place—a site that the Dalai Lama saw with his own eyes.

In the case of Bodh Gaya, the innovation is stylistic; rather than a schematic depiction that focuses on the moment of the Buddha's enlightenment within a structure only suggestive of the Mahabodhi Temple's architecture, the Dalai Lama's new murals instead feature complete Mahabodhi Temples drawn in perspective, with surrounding monuments that give spatial context and depth. Painted *en grisaille* or in a kind of grayscale, these Mahabodhi Temples "at times seems to imitate the light and shadows in a photograph"[477] and this is no accident—they mimic a famous photograph of the temple complex taken by Bourne and Shepherd in the 1880s (Fig. 3.15), not only in color but in also vantage point. It is no surprise, therefore, that Chou found this very photograph framed in the room adjacent to the location of this mural, revealing the probable inspiration for these "photographically derived" depictions. It appears then that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama acquired this photograph in India, following a long

[477] Ibid., 425.

legacy of pilgrims purchasing souvenir replicas of the Mahabodhi,[478] but this one in two dimensions rather than three. Chou argues that this unprecedented empirical mode of representing Bodh Gaya, inspired by photography, allowed the Dalai Lama to incorporate his own encounter with the site—evoking his personal experience of its actual, physical presence—into the larger mural program that portrays realms described only in scripture and accessed only in visualization.[479] Amid the vivid images of the mythic past and visionary experience, we find this too-real temple anchoring us in reality; it is little bit of Kansas surrounded by Oz.

These murals are evidence of the enduring impact of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's encounter with photography and his experiments with "indigenizing" the medium—manipulating the photo with paint and here, manipulating a painting with photographic realism. These are not instances of mere fusion, but calculated methods by which the Dalai Lama exploits the mimetic power of the photographic medium for his own purposes. But this was not the only quality possessed by photographs that the Dalai Lama sought to employ—it was the ability to mechanically reproduce, distribute, and circulate. It was this aspect of photography and of commercial art that Thubten Gyatso encountered and learned from in India, that inspired him to create an illustrated guide to the basic rules of the monastic code that could be replicated in print and in murals, and transmitted to all the monastic communities that required reform.

Reform through Seeing or Not Seeing

When I first encountered the *'Dul ris* murals in the monasteries of central Ladakh, I imagined a group of young monks standing in front of the pictures as their teacher points to the different sections and the individual scenes to explain what each illustrates, particularly the pictures up

[478] For more about mini Mahabodhi Temple souvenirs see: John Guy, "The Mahābodhi Temple: Pilgrim Souvenirs of Buddhist India," *The Burlington Magazine* Vol. 133, No. 1059 (June 1991): 356-367.
[479] Chou, "Reimagining the Buddhist Universe," 430.

high on the wall, where the captions cannot be read due to distance or the reflection of the gold paint. Based on the stated motivations of the text and the mural, as discussed at length throughout this dissertation, one would assume that the murals would be used for such teaching sessions, employing the monastic pedagogy of visual transmission to purify or to maintain the purity of the respective monastic communities where the murals are present. After all, the majority of the murals are painted outside the thresholds of the main assembly halls of their given monasteries—the doors through which all the monks of all ranks pass many times a day. And yet, there is no indication in the present that anyone pays any attention to these murals depicting the every-monk surrogates and familiar generic buildings in scenes of quotidian life that remain relatable. Even the original murals that we know the Dalai Lama himself directed at Ramoche and the Potala seem to be impractically located for *saṅgha* purification. I have suggested that Ramoche might have been chosen as the site for the first *'Dul ris* mural due to its monk-keepers' poor management; but this temple does not traditionally have a large community of monks, nor has the Potala regularly hosted enough average monks to make its Eastern Porch a logical place for a didactic mural.

In this chapter I have looked at the many ways that the style and design of *Moonlight Vanquishing* and the *'Dul ris* murals impacted the visual transmission of the Dalai Lama's interpretations of the basics of the monastic code, as described in the vinaya corpus, the *Vinayasūtra*, and the hands-on instruction of the masters. Some final question must be asked: Was this visual transmission actually received as intended? Was it ever intended? And how has the purpose of these murals shifted as their context changed from Tibet to Ladakh, and from the patronage of Thubten Gyatso to projects unrelated to him?

I have discussed how the textual commentary of *Moonlight Vanquishing*, transcribed in the murals' inscriptions, assumes an extensive knowledge of the monastic code by the viewers, which would irrefutably reduce its actual audience and eradicate any dreams of universal accessibility to achieve the goal of mass reform. However, the didactic function of the mural is further compromised, its role in visual transmission impeded, by the illegibility of the text, without which many of the pictures cannot be fully understood. We must ask therefore: Why would one commission a large-scale mural that could not be adequately viewed in its entirety, could not be understood by the majority of viewers? And why has this work nonetheless found relevance across time and place? There are numerous examples of Buddhist monuments that are adorned with narrative scenes and other images that one would expect to be intended for the illiterate masses. Visual inaccessibility, reductive or snapshot imagery, or compositional obscurity, however, actually preclude wide comprehensibility. The importance of these consecrated vignettes and holy figures is not necessarily about their individual meaning, but how their presence contributes to the overall sanctification and meaning of the site: together, these images create a maṇḍala, instantiate holy presence, or establish hagiography.[480] In other words, the images do not need to be seen for them to harness and express holiness. The effect is collective among the many artworks comprising a monument, and so individual pieces must be seen in connection to the whole, as a part of a larger iconographic program.

This is perhaps how we must understand the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's *'Dul ris* murals. I proposed in Part One that the *'Dul ris* mural was part of a powerful combination of apotropaic

[480] See Vidya Dehejia, "On Modes of Visual Narration in Early Buddhist Art," *The Art Bulletin* Vol. 72, No. 3 (September 1990): 374-392; Robert Brown, "Narrative as Icon: The Jātaka Stories in Ancient Indian and Southeast Asian Architecture," in *Sacred Biography in the Buddhist Traditions of South and Southeast Asia*, ed. Juliane Schober (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997), 64-109; and Rob Linrothe, "Talisman, Reliquary and Instrument of Enlightenment: The Alchi Sumtsek as a Mandalic Site," *Orientations* Vol. 30, No. 1 (1999): 22-29.

efforts to protect Tibet employed by the Dalai Lama—geomantic temple renovation and *saṅgha* purification integrated into one project. And there is evidence that the choice to paint the mural in the Eastern Porch of the Potala was a similar melding of magic; that renovation was also the product of divination or prophecy for the same ends. That the mural was *used* was not as important as whether the images were present. The statement in the colophon, "By the power of [these drawings], may pure vinaya-holders, whose lives are in accordance with the law, become widespread throughout the entire world" can therefore be interpreted not as a statement of intention for the didactic function of the pictures or the potential for these pictures to have the desired effect, but as a prayer or an asseveration of truth (*satyavacana*). Such statements abound in Buddhist literature, the potency rooted in the speaker's own purity of intention and the consequent inevitability that the pledge, however magical, will manifest—and of course it always does. Among the most famous *satyavacana* are those expressed by the monk-bodhisattva Dharmākara, who made a series of vows stating that if he achieved buddhahood, his pure buddhafield would have certain special qualities; this is how the Pure Land of Amitābha, the buddha who was Dharmākara, came to be. In *Moonlight Vanquishing*, the power of this efficacious invocation proclaiming the purificatory magic of the images is rooted in the authority of the Dalai Lama and the truth inherent in his statement of the illustrations' potency. If he himself was not a pure holder of the vinaya and an emanation of the bodhisattva of compassion, Avalokiteśvara, he could not speak the force of his drawings into existence and promise their certain effect. The mural is thus less a visual transmitter of teachings and more a visual instrument of foretelling its manifestation.

When we consider the vinaya murals as part of the typical iconographic programs that decorate the entryways to monastic assembly halls, whether in Tibet, Ladakh, or Spiti, many

possible interpretations arise. Traditional images of the Wheel of Existence and the Buddhist universe are reminders of the karmic rewards and punishments for our actions within saṃsāra; the *'Dul ris* pictures in this context are more than a guide to the vinaya rules, they remind the monks of the necessity of keeping their vows in order to remain fields of merit for the laity. Among these morality images, the vinaya murals emphasize that the purity of the monastic community is central to the karmic fate of the devoted and to the balance of their symbiotic relationship. In a way, the pure *saṅgha* are protectors of this sacred order, aligned with the Four Guardian kings. While the mural is prescriptive and educational alone, as part of this larger program, it offers a visual mnemonic of the moral obligations of the monks who pass by it every day, reminding them that even their shoes can result in karmic retribution.



Figure 3.16: *Śamatha* mural at Likir monastery, Ladakh, India.

Adjacent to the *'Dul ris* mural we often also find another mural depicting a generic monk, but this figure is not performing the mundane tasks or modelling the basic accoutrement of monastic life (Fig. 3.16). Instead, the every-monk, bearing an elephant gode and a lasso, traversing a winding path upward, first chasing then taming an elephant and a monkey. The journey of the every-monk, now cast as the generic

meditator, represents the development of his mental tranquility through the practice of *śamatha* or tranquility meditation, which is the most basic practice that cultivates the ability to focus the mind in concentration—a prerequisite for more advanced forms of meditative practice. While the every-meditator is the figure relatable to monastic viewers, the many other elements are deeply symbolic: the elephant represents the mind and the monkey distraction; both progressively turn from black to white, indicating the elimination of agitation and the purification of the mind, now completely tamed. The goad and lasso signify the clear understanding and mindful recollection. Each scene represents the one of the nine progressive stages of mental development, Robert Beer explains, "which are obtained through the six 'powers' of study, contemplation, memory, comprehension, diligence, and perfection."[481]

Just as the *'Dul ris* mural employs the every-monk to demonstrate the basics of monastic discipline, the *śamatha* mural employs the every-meditator to illustrate the steps of basic meditative practice. The pairing of these mnemonic murals, therefore, makes pedagogical sense as a kind of scaffolded teaching: at a fundamental level, proper discipline lays the foundation for proper practice. One mural even offers techniques for staying awake during the meditation represented in the other. Both these murals center the practices of average monks, utilizing a recognizable every-monk/meditator to connect their lessons most effectively with their target audience.

Once the quotidian lives of average monks were not merely portrayed, but elevated as artistic subjects in the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's drawings of the vinaya, there was no turning back. As the pictures spoke to generations of monks, the murals fit perfectly, naturally, into the visual world of Tibetan Buddhist monasticism. *Moonlight Vanquishing* and its murals came to

[481] Robert Beer, *The Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs* (Boston: Shambhala Press, 1999), 99.

establish an iconography of the monastic code because it worked, because the world it depicts continues to be recognizable to anyone who lives in a monastery. So even if the captions cannot be read or the murals are not used as lessons, they remain potent in their presence, absorbed through a kind of visual osmosis, a veritable purification through seeing. The pictures serve as a reminder of more perfect times, both in the past and in the future, with the familiar every-monks ready to show their compatriots how to do it correctly, should they happen to stop to look on their way to morning recitations.

APPENDIX I

Translation of *Moonlight Vanquishing the Darkness of Transgression*

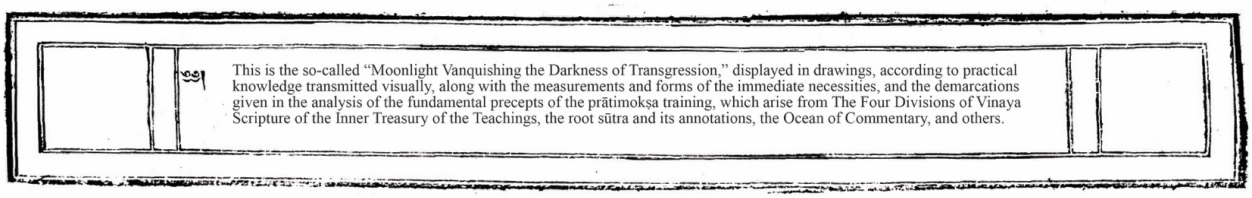


Figure I.1: Folio 1a

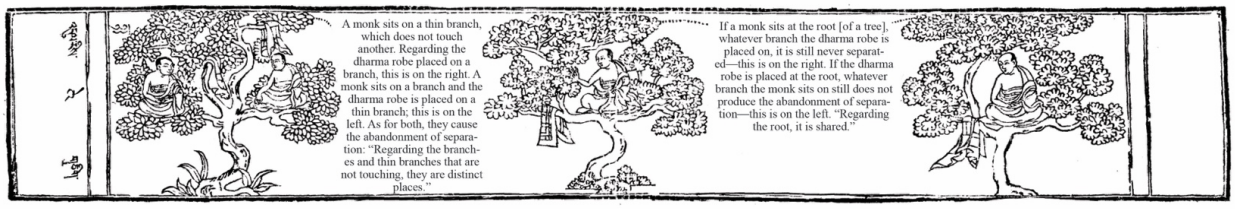


Figure I.2: Folio 1b



Figure I.3: Folio 2a

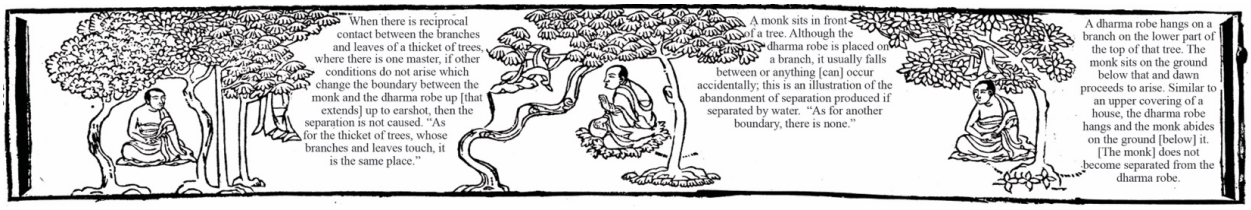


Figure I.4: Folio 2b

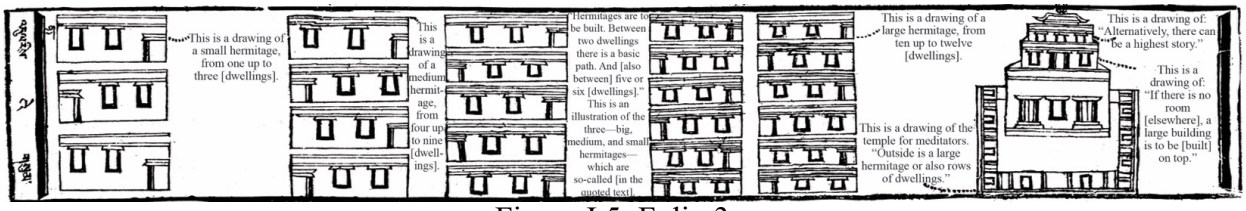


Figure I.5: Folio 3a

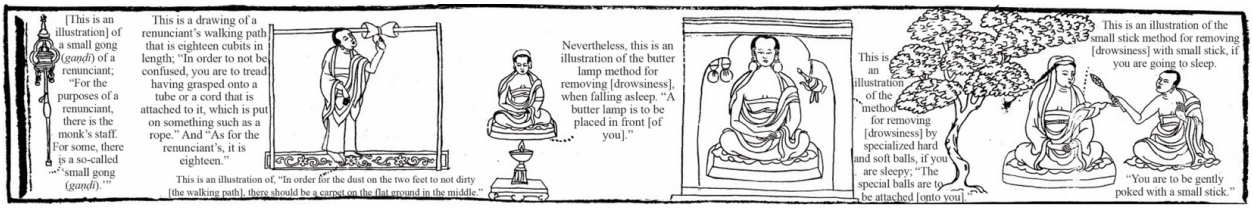


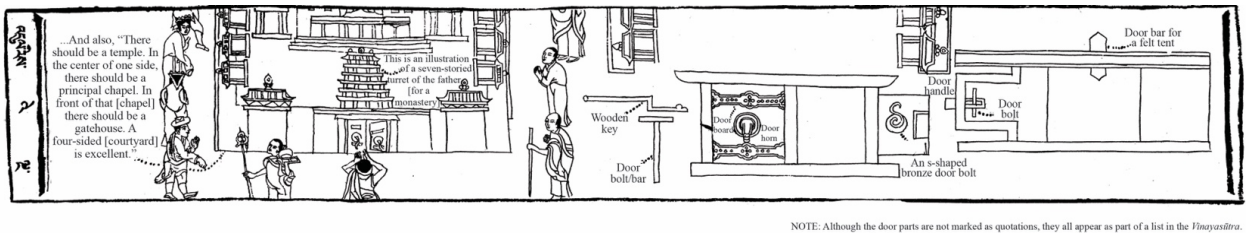
Figure I.6: Folio 3b



Figure I.7: Folio 4a



Figure I.8: Folio 4b



NOTE: Although the door parts are not marked as quotations, they all appear as part of a list in the *Vinayasūtra*.

Figure I.9: Folio 5a

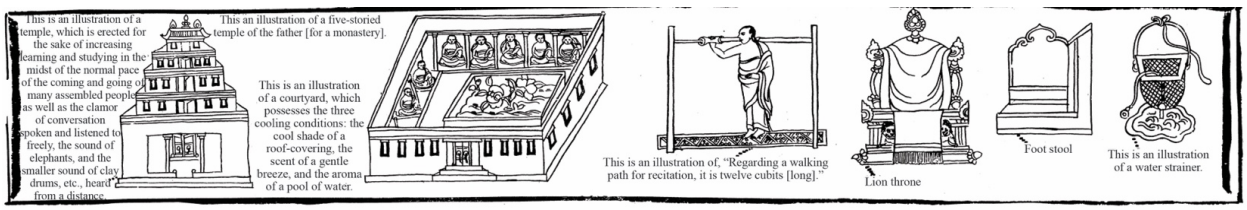


Figure I.10: Folio 5b

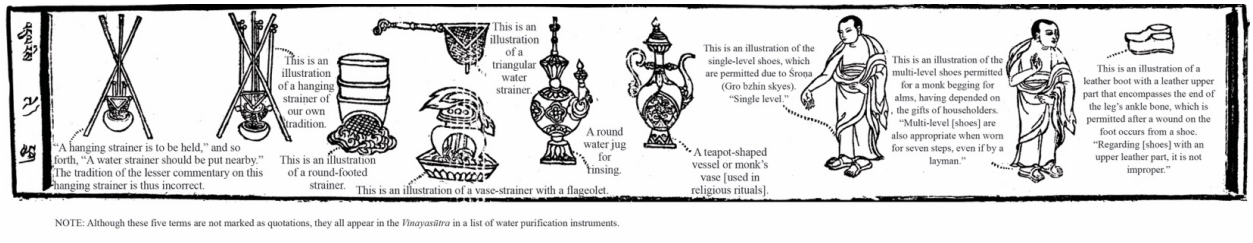


Figure I.11: Folio 6a

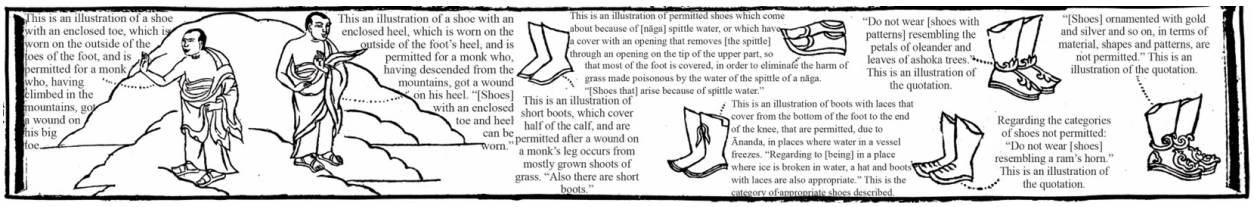


Figure I.12: Folio 6b

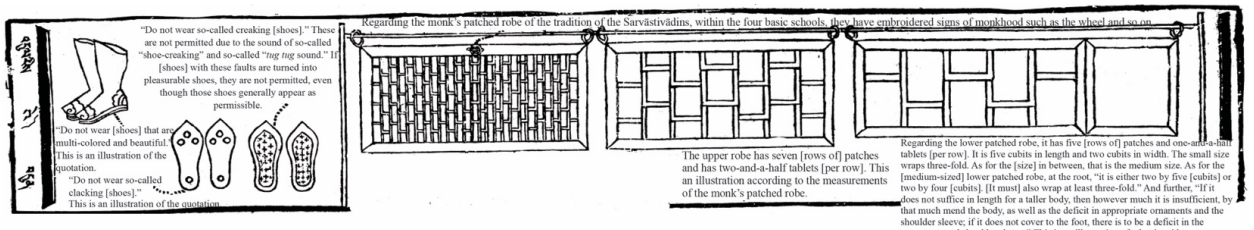


Figure I.13: Folio 7a

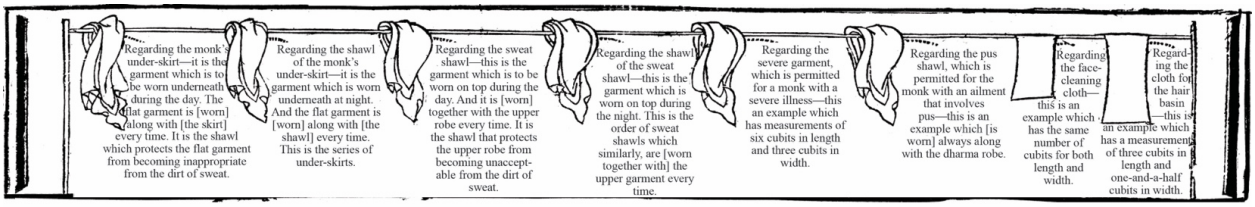


Figure I.14: Folio 7b

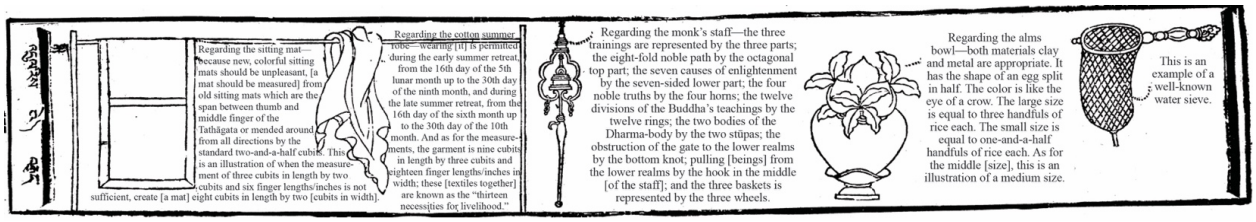


Figure I.15: Folio 8a

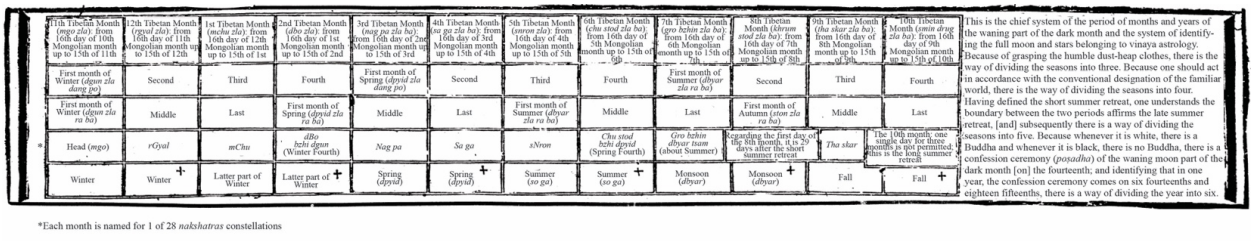


Figure I.16: Folio 8b

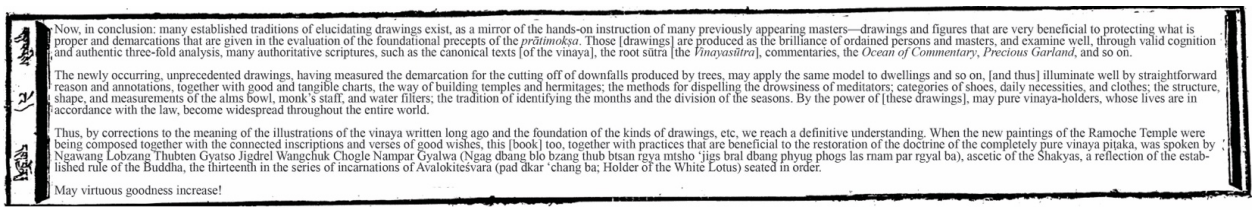


Figure I.17: Folio 9a

[TEXT ONLY]

Folio 1a

This is the so-called "Moonlight Vanquishing the Darkness of Transgression," displayed in drawings, according to practical knowledge transmitted visually, along with the measurements and forms of the immediate necessities, and the demarcations given in the analysis of the fundamental precepts of the *prātimokṣa* training, which arise from The Four Divisions of Vinaya Scripture of the Inner Treasury of the Teachings, the root sūtra and its annotations, the *Ocean of Commentary*, and others.

Folio 1b

1) A monk sits on a thin branch, which does not touch another. Regarding the dharma robe placed on a branch, this is on the right. A monk sits on a branch and the dharma robe is placed on a thin branch; this is on the left. As for both, they cause the abandonment of separation: "Regarding the branches and thin branches that are not touching, they are distinct places."

2) If a monk sits at the root [of a tree], whatever branch the dharma robe is placed on, it is still never separated—this is on the right. If the dharma robe is placed at the root, whatever branch the monk sits on still does not produce the abandonment of separation—this is on the left. "Regarding the root, it is shared."

Folio 2a

3) If a monk sits at the root of the root, whatever branch the dharma robe is placed on, it is still never separated—this is on the right. If the dharma robe is placed at the root of the root, whatever branch a monk sits on, it is still never separated—this is illustration on the left. "[lt is] also the root of the root."

4) If a dharma robe is placed within the vicinity of a rock connected to the root of the root, and so on, whatever branch the monk sits on, it is still never separated—this is on the right. If a monk sits within the vicinity of a rock connected to the root of the root, and so on, whatever branch the dharma robe rests on, it is still never separated—this is the illustration on the left. "[It is] also the root of the root and so forth."

Folio 2b

5) When there is reciprocal contact between the branches and leaves of a thicket of trees, where there is one master, if other conditions do not arise which change the boundary between the monk and the dharma robe up [that extends] up to earshot, then the abandonment of separation is not caused. "As for the thicket of trees, whose branches and leaves touch, it is the same place."

6) A monk sits in front of a tree. Although the dharma robe is placed on a branch, it usually falls between or anything [can] occur accidentally; this is an illustration of the abandonment of separation produced if separated by water. "As for another boundary, there is none."

7) A dharma robe hangs on a branch on the lower part of the top of that tree. The monk sits on the ground below that and dawn proceeds to arise. Similar to an upper covering of a house, the dharma robe hangs and the monk abides on the ground [below] it. [The monk] does not become separated from the dharma robe.

Folio 3a

8) This is a drawing of a small hermitage, from one up to three [dwellings].

9) This is a drawing of a medium hermitage, from four up to nine [dwellings].

10) "Hermitages are to be built. Between two dwellings there is a basic path. And [also between] five or six [dwellings]." This is an illustration of the three—big, medium, and small hermitages—which are so-called [in the quoted text].

11) This is a drawing of a large hermitage, from ten up to twelve [dwellings].

12) This is a drawing of the temple for meditators. “Outside is a large hermitage or also rows of dwellings.”

13) This is a drawing of: “Alternatively, there can be a highest story.”

14) This is a drawing of: “If there is no room [elsewhere], a large building is to be [built] on top.”

Folio 3b

15) [This is an illustration] of a small gong (*gaṇḍi*) of a renunciant; “For the purposes of a renunciant, there is the monk’s staff (*khakkhara*). For some, there is a so-called ‘small gong (*gaṇḍi*)’.”

16) This is a drawing of a renunciant’s walking path that is eighteen cubits in length; “In order to not be confused, you are to tread having grasped onto a tube or a cord that is attached to it, which is put on something such as a rope.” And “As for the renunciant’s, it is eighteen.”

17) This is an illustration of, “In order for the dust on the two feet to not dirty [the walking path], there should be a carpet on the flat ground in the middle.”

18) Nevertheless, this is an illustration of the butter lamp method for removing [drowsiness], when falling asleep. “A butter lamp is to be placed in front [of you].”

19) This is an illustration of the method for removing [drowsiness] by specialized hard and soft balls, if you are sleepy; “The special balls are to be attached [onto you].”

20) This is an illustration of the small stick method for removing [drowsiness] with small stick, if you are going to sleep. “You are to be gently poked with a small stick.”

Folio 4a

21) This is an illustration of the ball of string method for removing drowsiness; “The ball of string is to be tossed.”

22) This is an illustration of stretching out one of your two legs, if [drowsiness] was not removed by that [other method]; “Release a leg.”

23) This is an illustration of stretching out two legs, if nevertheless[drowsiness] was not removed; “Also [release the other] one of two legs.”

24) This is an illustration of a building with three outer [structures], where there are two dwellings on the two sides and a Perfumed Chamber (*gandhakuṭī; dri gtsang khang*) in the middle.

Folio 4b

25) This is an illustration of a square temple that is built for the sake of accumulating merit for many people, with a four[-sided] courtyard, where at the center of one side there is a principal chapel, and on the other three sides there are three dwellings each. "The monastery foreman should consecrate the temple, on the basis of having [people] coming and going." And also, "There should be a temple. In the center of one side, there should be a principal chapel. In front of that [chapel] there should be a gatehouse. A four-sided [courtyard] is excellent."

26) This is an illustration of the seven-storied Perfumed Chamber of the father [for a monastery].

27) This is an illustration of a three-sided courtyard, in which there are three dwellings each on the three sides.

28) "Plant a victory banner. Regarding that, there are four types [victory banners]: the Lion Banner, the Makara (water dragon) Banner, Naga Banner, and Bull Banner." This is the illustration of the saying that one must plant a victory banner in the ground of a temple and before a stūpa.

Folio 5a

29) This is an illustration of a seven-storied turret or "cooling pavilion" of the father [for a monastery].

30) Wooden key

31) Door bolt/bar

32) Door frame or board of door

33) Door horn

34) An s-shaped bronze door bolt

35) Door handle

36) Door bolt

37) Door bar for a felt tent

NOTE: Although the door parts are not marked as quotations, they all appear as part of a list in the *Vinayasūtra*.

Folio 5b

38) This is an illustration of a temple, which is erected for the sake of increasing learning and studying in the midst of the normal pace of coming and going of many assembled people, as

well as the clamor of conversation spoken and listened to freely, the sound of elephants, and the smaller sound of clay drums, etc., heard from a distance.

39) This an illustration of a five-storied temple of the father [for a monastery].

40) This is an illustration of a courtyard which possess the three cooling conditions: the cool shade of a roof-covering, the scent of a gentle breeze, and the aroma of a pool of water.

41) This is an illustration of, "Regarding a walking path for recitation, it is twelve cubits [long]."

42) Lion throne

43) Foot stool

44) This is an illustration of a water strainer.

NOTE: Although these last three (42-44) are not marked as quotations, these terms all appear in the *Vinayasūtra* as their own sentences, and in a list of water purification tools.

Folio 6a

45) "A hanging strainer is to be held," and so forth, "A water strainer should be put nearby." The tradition of the lesser commentary on this hanging strainer is thus incorrect.

46) This is an illustration of a hanging strainer of our own tradition.

47) This is an illustration of a round-footed strainer.

48) This is an illustration of a vase-strainer with a flageolet.

49) This is an illustration of a triangular water strainer.

50) A round water jug for rinsing.

51) A teapot-shaped vessel or monk's vase (used in religious rituals).

NOTE: Although these last five (47-51) are not marked as quotations, these terms all appear in the *Vinayasūtra* in a list of water purification tools.

52) This is an illustration of the single-level shoes which are permitted due to Gro bzhin skyes (Śroṇa). "Single level."

53) This is an illustration of the multi-level shoes permitted for a monk begging for alms, having depended on the gifts of householders. "Multi-level [shoes] are also appropriate when worn for seven steps, even if by a layman."

54) This is an illustration of a leather boot with a leather upper part that encompasses the end of the leg's ankle bone, which is permitted after a wound on the foot occurs from a shoe. "Regarding [shoes] with an upper leather part, it is not improper."

Folio 6b

55) This is an illustration of a shoe with an enclosed toe, which is worn on the outside of the toes of the foot, and is permitted for a monk who, having climbed in the mountains, got a wound on his big toe.

56) This an illustration of a shoe with an enclosed heel, which is worn on the outside of the foot's heel, and is permitted for a monk who, having descended from the mountains, got a wound on his heel. "[Shoes] with an enclosed toe and heel can be worn."

57) This is an illustration of short boots, which cover half of the calf, and are permitted after a wound on a monk's leg occurs from mostly grown shoots of grass. "Also there are short boots."

58) This is an illustration of permitted shoes which come about because of [nāga] spittle water (*kha chu chu*), or which have a cover with an opening that removes [the spittle] through an opening on the tip of the upper part, so that most of the foot is covered, in order to eliminate the harm of grass made poisonous by the water of the spittle of a nāga. "[Shoes that] arise because of spittle water."

59) This is an illustration of boots with laces that cover from the bottom of the foot to the end of the knee, that are permitted, due to Ānanda, in places where water in a vessel freezes. "Regarding to [being] in a place where ice is broken in water, a hat and boots with laces are also appropriate." This is the category of appropriate shoes described.

60) "Do not wear [shoes with patterns] resembling the petals of oleander and leaves of ashoka trees." This is an illustration of the quotation.

61) Regarding the categories of shoes not permitted: "Do not wear [shoes] resembling a ram's horn." This is an illustration of the quotation.

62) "[Shoes] ornamented with gold and silver and so on, in terms of material, shapes and patterns, are not permitted." This is an illustration of the quotation.

Folio 7a

63) "Do not wear [shoes] that are multi-colored and beautiful." This is an illustration of the quotation.

64) "Do not wear so-called clacking (*krog krog*) [shoes]." This is an illustration of the quotation.

65) "Do not wear so-called creaking (*khrig khrig*) [shoes]." These are not permitted due to the sound of so-called "shoe-creaking (*thrig thrig*)" and so-called "*tug tug* sound." If [shoes] with these faults are turned into pleasurable shoes, they are not permitted, even though those shoes generally appeared as permissible.

66) Regarding the monk's patched robe of the tradition of the Sarvāstivādins, within the four basic schools, they have embroidered signs of monkhood such as the wheel and so on.

67) Regarding the monk's patched robe: There are nine divisions of small, medium and large [robes]; there are from nine up to twenty-five [rows of] patches and from two-and-a-half up to four-and-a-half small squares/tablets [per row]. The large size is five cubits in length and three cubits in width; for the small size, reduce [the large size] by half in both length and breadth. As for that [size] in between the two, it is a medium size. This is an illustration of the quotation.

68) The upper robe has seven [rows of] patches and has two-and-a-half tablets [per row]. This an illustration according to the measurements of the monk's patched robe.

69) Regarding the lower patched robe, it has five [rows of] patches and one-and-a-half tablets [per row]. It is five cubits in length and two cubits in width. The small size wraps three-fold. As for the [size] in between, that is the medium size. As for the [medium-sized] lower patched robe, at the root, "it is either two by five [cubits] or two by four [cubits]. [It must] also wrap at least three-fold." And further, "If it does not suffice in length for a taller body, then however much it is insufficient, by that much mend the body, as well as the deficit in appropriate ornaments and the shoulder sleeve; if it does not cover to the foot, there is to be a deficit in the ornaments and shoulder sleeve." This is an illustration of what is said.

Folio 7b

70) Regarding the monk's under-skirt—it is the garment which is to be worn underneath during the day. The flat garment is [worn] along with [the skirt] every time. It is the shawl which protects the flat garment from becoming inappropriate from the dirt of sweat.

71) Regarding the shawl of the monk's under-skirt—it is the garment which is worn underneath at night. And the flat garment is [worn] along with [the shawl] every time. This is the series of under-skirts.

72) Regarding the sweat shawl—this is the garment which is to be worn on top during the day. And it is [worn] together with the upper robe every time. It is the shawl that protects the upper robe from becoming unacceptable from the dirt of sweat.

73) Regarding the shawl of the sweat shawl—this is the garment which is worn on top during the night. This is the order of sweat shawls which similarly, are [worn together with] the upper garment every time.

74) Regarding the severe garment, which is permitted for a monk with a severe illness—this an example which has measurements of six cubits in length and three cubits in width.

75) Regarding the pus shawl, which is permitted for the monk with an ailment that involves pus—this is an example which [is worn] always along with the dharma robe.

76) Regarding the face-cleaning cloth—this is an example which has the same number of cubits for both length and width.

77) Regarding the cloth for the hair basin—this is an example which has a measurement of three cubits in length and one-and-a-half cubits in width.

Folio 8a

78) Regarding the sitting mat—because new, colorful sitting mats should be unpleasant, [a mat should be measured] from old sitting mats which are the span between thumb and middle finger of the Tathāgata or mended around from all directions by the standard two-and-a-half cubits. This is an illustration of when the measurement of three cubits in length by two cubits and six finger lengths/inches is not sufficient, create [a mat] eight cubits in length by two [cubits in width].

79) Regarding the cotton summer robe—wearing [it] is permitted during the early summer retreat, from the 16th day of the 5th lunar month up to the 30th day of the ninth month, and during the late summer retreat, from the 16th day of the sixth month up to the 30th day of the 10th month. And as for the measurements, the garment is nine cubits in length by three cubits and eighteen finger lengths/inches in width; these [textiles together] are known as the "thirteen necessities for livelihood."

80) Regarding the monk's staff—the three trainings are represented by the three parts; the eight-fold noble path by the octagonal top part; the seven causes of enlightenment by the seven-sided lower part; the four noble truths by the four horns; the twelve divisions of the Buddha's teachings by the twelve rings; the two bodies of the Dharma-body by the two stūpas; the obstruction of the gate to the lower realms by the bottom knot; pulling [beings] from the lower realms by the hook in the middle [of the staff]; and the three baskets is represented by the three wheels.

81) Regarding the alms bowl—both materials clay and metal are appropriate. It has the shape of an egg split in half. The color is like the eye of a crow. The large size is equal to three handfuls of rice each. The small size is equal to one-and-a-half handfuls of rice each. As for the middle [size], this is an illustration of a medium size.

82) This is an example of a well-known water sieve.

Folio 8b

83) This is the chief system of the period of months and years of the waning part of the dark month and the system of identifying the full moon and stars belonging to vinaya astrology. Because of grasping the humble dust-heap clothes, there is the way of dividing the seasons into three. Because one should act in accordance with the conventional designation of the familiar world, there is the way of dividing the seasons into four. Having defined the short summer retreat, one understands the boundary between the two periods affirms the late summer retreat, [and] subsequently there is a way of dividing the seasons into five. Because whenever it is white, there is a Buddha and whenever it is black, there is no Buddha, there is a confession ceremony (*poṣadha*) of the waning moon part of the dark month [on] the fourteenth; and identifying that in one year, the confession ceremony comes on six fourteenths and eighteen fifteenths, there is a way of dividing the year into six.

Folio 9a

Now, in conclusion: many established traditions of elucidating drawings exist, as a mirror of the hands-on instruction of many previously appearing masters—drawings and figures that are very beneficial to protecting what is proper and demarcations that are given in the evaluation of the foundational precepts of the *prātimokṣa*. Those [drawings] are produced as the brilliance of ordained persons and masters, and examine well, through valid cognition and authentic three-fold analysis, many authoritative scriptures, such as the canonical texts [of the vinaya], the root sūtra [the *Vinayasūtra*], commentaries, the *Ocean of Commentary, Precious Garland*, and so on.

The newly occurring, unprecedented drawings, having measured the demarcation for the cutting off of downfalls produced by trees, may apply the same model to dwellings and so on, [and thus] illuminate well by straightforward reason and annotations, together with good and tangible charts, the way of building temples and hermitages; the methods for dispelling the drowsiness of meditators; categories of shoes, daily necessities, and clothes; the structure, shape, and measurements of the alms bowl, monk's staff, and water filters; the tradition of identifying the months and the division of the seasons. By the power of [these drawings], may pure vinaya-holders, whose lives are in accordance with the law, become widespread throughout the entire world.

Thus, by corrections to the meaning of the illustrations of the vinaya written long ago and the foundation of the kinds of drawings, etc, we reach a definitive understanding. When the new paintings of the Ramoche Temple were being composed together with the connected inscriptions and verses of good wishes, this [book] too, together with practices that are beneficial to the restoration of the doctrine of the completely pure vinaya piṭaka, was spoken by Ngawang Lobzang Thubten Gyatso Jigdrel Wangchuk Chogle Nampar Gyalwa (Ngag dbang blo bzang thub btsan rgya mtsho 'jigs bral dbang phyug phogs las rnam par rgyal ba), ascetic of the Shakyas, a reflection of the established rule of the Buddha, the thirteenth in the series of incarnations of Avalokiteśvara (*pad dkar 'chang ba*; Holder of the White Lotus) seated in order.

May virtuous goodness increase!

APPENDIX II

The *'Dul ris* Murals in Tibet and India

Ramoche Temple, c. 1920-2 (repainted 2013)
(Inside Main Assembly Hall)



Figure II.1: Ramoche Mural



Figure II.2: Detail of Ramoche Mural



Figure II.3: Detail of Ramoche Mural

All photos by R. Bloom (September 2017)

Potala Palace, c. 1922
(East Porch)



Figure II.4: Detail of Potala Mural

Courtesy of Phun tshogs Tshe brtan, et. al., *Budala gong bi hua yuan liu Pho brang po ta la'i ldebs bris ri mo'i 'byung kungs lo rgyus sal ba'i me long (A Mirror of the Murals in the Potala Palace)* (Beijing: Jiu zhou tu shu chu ban she, 2000), 259.

Samye, after 1960s
(Main Temple, Second Floor Courtyard)



Figure II.5: Samye Mural



Figure II.6: Detail of Samye Mural



Figure II.7: Detail of Samye Mural



Figure II.8: Detail of Samye Mural

All photos by R. Bloom (September 2017)

Shalu Monastery, possibly 2009
(Main Temple, Second Floor Courtyard)



Figure II.9: Shalu Mural, in context



Figure II.10: Shalu Mural



Figure II.11: Shalu Mural



Figure II.12: Detail Shalu Mural

All photos by R. Bloom (September 2017)

Narthang Monastery, after 1960s
(Outside Main Assembly Hall)



Figure II.13: Narthang Mural



Figure II.14: Detail of Narthang Mural



Figure II.15: Detail of Narthang Mural

All photos by R. Bloom (September 2017)

Sankar Monastery, c. 1966
(Now framed and hung in upper walls of Main Assembly Hall)



Figure II.16: Two Panels of Sankar Mural



Figure II.17: One Panel of Sankar Mural



Figure II.18: Two Panels of Sankar Mural

All photos by R. Bloom (October 2017)

Spituk Monastery, mid-1970s
(Outside Main Assembly Hall)



Figure II.19: Spituk Mural, central wall



Figure II.20: Spituk Mural, left wall



Figure II.21: Spituk Mural, right wall



Figure II.22: Detail of Spituk Mural

All photos R. Bloom (June 2013/August 2015)

Lamayuru Monastery, c. 1976
(Outside Main Assembly Hall)



Figure II.23: Lamayuru Mural



Figure II.24: Detail of Lamayuru Mural, central wall



Figure II.25: Detail of Lamayuru Mural, central wall



Figure II.26: Lamayuru Mural Detail

All photos R. Bloom (June 2013/August 2015)

Likir Monastery, c. 1970s
(Outside Main Assembly Hall)



Figure II.27: A Monk examines the Likir Mural



Figure II.28: Likir Mural, right wall



Figure II.29: Likir Mural, left wall

All photos R. Bloom (July 2015)

Lingshed Monastery, 1999
(Outside Main Assembly Hall)

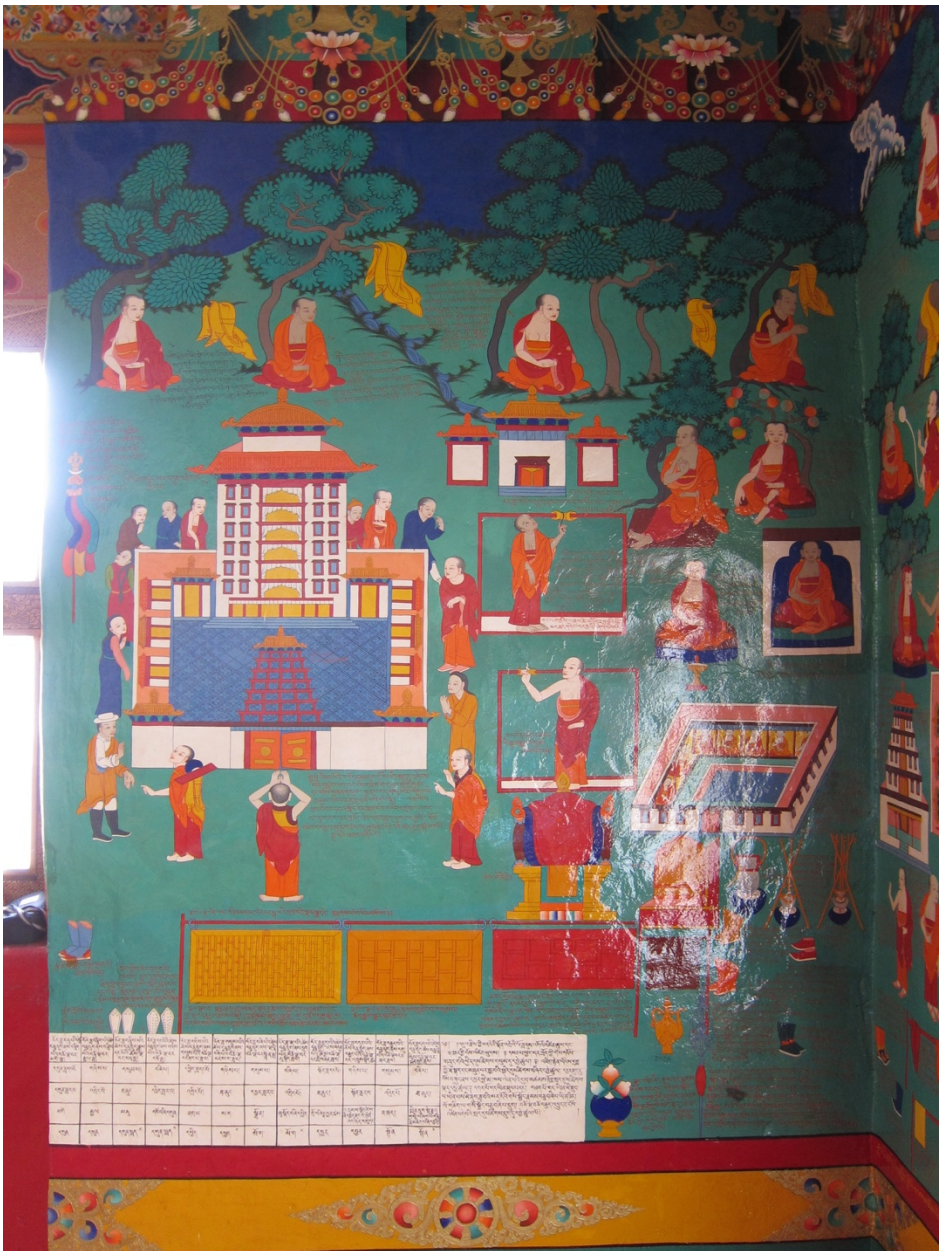


Figure II.30: Lingshed Mural, left wall



Figure II.31: Lingshed Mural, central wall



Figure II.32: Detail of Lingshed Mural

All photos R. Bloom (August 2015)

Drangkar Monastery, c. late 20th century
(Small Antechamber)



Figure II.33: Drangkar Mural, central wall



Figure II.34: Detail of Drangkar Mural



Figure II.35: Drangkar Mural, left wall



Figure II.36: Drangkar Mural, right wall

All photos R. Bloom (July 2014)

Phyang Monastery, 2017
(Outside New Assembly Hall)



Figure II.37: Phyang Mural, in progress



Figure II.38: Detail of Phyang Mural



Figure II.39: Bhutanese artist Chedrub Norbu in front of his nearly-complete *'Dul ris* mural (October 2017)

All photos by R. Bloom (October 2017)

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