

16th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies
Prague, 3rd July – 9th July 2022

Organisers:
Faculty of Arts of the Charles University
Oriental Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences



FACULTY OF ARTS
Charles University



Oriental
Institute
Czech Academy
of Sciences
1922–2022

The 16th Seminar of the IATS takes place under auspices
of the President of the Czech Academy of Sciences, the Rector of the Charles University
and the Mayor of the City of Prague.

The seminar is organised thanks to the financial support of the
Czech Academy of Sciences
and the City of Prague.



CHARLES
UNIVERSITY



Czech Academy
of Sciences



Book of Abstracts

16th Seminar of the
International Association for
Tibetan Studies

Prague, 3rd July – 9th July 2022

between 1950–1960, cultural and historical materials (wenshi ziliao) in which CCP cadres were interviewed about their early years working in Gyelthang, and photographs taken during the first decade of CCP rule in the area. These sources reveal that the CCP's goals in conducting ethnological research shifted significantly between 1950 and 1960 from prioritizing the researching of ethnic distinctions within the local population to the researching of class-based inequalities.

Tibetans in Gyelthang have long resided within a complex multi-ethnic zone marked by interactions between Na, Hui, Lisu, Primi, Nuosu, Bai, and other non-Han groups. In the very recent past, the ethnically Tibetan world did not directly interface with the ethnically Han world in Gyelthang. Although in the reports they compiled in 1950–1951, CCP cadres depicted Gyelthang as ethnically diverse, it is clear that they did not entirely understand the ethnic complexity of the region. In the early years of CCP rule in Gyelthang, the focus was on documenting the economic, political, and religious conditions in the region in order to assist the Yunnan Provincial government in devising efficacious United Front policies.

A detailed CCP fact-finding report compiled in 1960 reveals that merely one decade after the Party had confidently set aside its gradualist United Front policy of political persuasion in favor of a coercive policy of ethnic assimilation through socialist collectivization. Comparing the 1960 report with the reports written in 1950–1951 reveals that the Party's attitude toward control over the region transformed significantly. Up until 1956, the Party implemented a United Front policy of guaranteeing the economic and political participation of Gyelthang's Tibetan secular and religious leaders. However, when land reform was implemented in Gyelthang between 1957–1958, it eliminated the political and economic power of the monks and the wealthy secular leaders and made obsolete previously dominant orderings of the local social, economic, and political landscape. In the absence of land reform, CCP researchers moved away from investigating ethnic differences in the region and instead documented how land reform had eliminated what the CCP viewed as class-based inequalities in Gyelthang society. This paper contributes to the growing body of scholarship about CCP approaches to researching ethnicity along the Sino-Tibetan border. The goal of this case study is to nuance our understanding of how and why the Party prioritized researching class over ethnicity at the end of their first tumultuous decade of rule in southern Kham.

*Mortensen, Eric**

The Magical Causality of Poison Casting and Cancer among the Tibetan Buddhist Communities of Gyalthang

ericdmort@yahoo.com

Guilford College, United States of America

The insidious, often fatal contraction of poison, known as *du* (Tibetan དུ), is a socially sublimated magical practice involving the nurturing and casting of a force, typically into female family members as well as into visitors of the household. In southeastern Tibet, some Gyalthangpa Tibetans and their Lisu, Primi, and Mosuo neighbors wrestle with the reputation of being “*du* households.” The illness leave families feeling persecuted, cursed, and bitter with accusations of inflicting one's own nightmare on loved ones. In one household, a man related that he had “been bitten” three times, and that three children

had been afflicted with *du*, two of whom died. “People who have *du* are dangerous; their breath is poison.” Most commonly, infected people cast *du* into people. “They have to pass it on, and if there are no strangers available, it is passed to their children.” What are the roles of gender, power, wealth, fertility, resentment, jealousy, and silence in the construction of accusations that one is a caster of poison, particularly given the pattern of conspicuous wealth of accused families? Households with *du* are reputed to have images of amorphous *du* (dug lha) secreted on their altars, and visitors to communities known for *du* are warned not to eat in houses that are required to fly black prayer flags. But how, exactly, does *du* manifest? How is it “cast”? In what sense is the mechanism of *du* magical, and to what degree is the agency of the caster inhibited? Based on four extended ethnographic research trips conducted between 2016–2020 in the communities of Tangmei (in the Nyagara (in Geza), Drönggray (in Termarong), and Nyushu (in Dechen), this project examines the religious and folkloric patterns of *du* casting, ostracization, shame, secreted images of cancer, and its sympathetic reputed antidotes. Specifically, this project is based upon interviews conducted with *du* victims and *du* “casters” – interviews that were sometimes fraught. This paper draws from the work of Mueggler (2001), Yang (2004), Haimu (2004), Spiro (1996), and Da Col (2012), to assess comparative patterns of magic, *du*, and *gu* (Lisu, Mosuo) and their relation to and overlap with *du*. This project explores how *du* practices and beliefs in the region stretching from Myanmar into China, and throughout much of Tibet, might be comparatively understood.

*Moskaleva, Natalia**

Unraveling the “Liberation” Discourse in The Tibet Mirror in the 1950s

n.moskaleva@spbu.ru

Saint Petersburg State University, Russian Federation

The “liberation” of Tibet by the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the beginning of the 1950s defined the future of Tibet as official part of the People's Republic of China through the Seventeen-Point Agreement signed by Tibetan delegates in Beijing in 1951. In the words of M. Goldstein, “ushered a new chapter in Sino-Tibetan relations” and “ended the conflict over the Tibet Question.”[1] In the 1950s, some Tibetans began to challenge Chinese claims to Tibetan areas and continue debates over the future, and even past.

One of the forms of advocacy for Tibet's independence there is one that stands out for the time: the *Tibet Mirror* newspaper. The fight was picked with a pen being manifested in one of a few newspapers in the region in the Chinese language at the time. The pioneering media discourse on the issue of Tibet's future was initiated by Tharchin Babu (1890–1976), an Indian citizen of Tibetan ethnicity and the chief editor of The Tibet Mirror newspaper.

The “liberation” process differed in Tibetan areas, in some places first administrative and political developments introduced by the Chinese communist government had gone unnoticed until the late 1950s.[2] However, as early as 1950, Tharchin Babu already started agitating Tibetan readers by regularly reproducing his “liberation” discourse in the Tibet Mirror. Making generalizing statements about all of Tibet, he highlighted the hardest realities of Tibet's “liberation” by the PLA and attempted to address the emotional sentiments of his readership. Discursive publications on the “liberation” of Tibet appeared in The Tibet Mirror in a variety of forms: news with elements of

socio-economic impact analysis, articles on Tibetan history, terminological explanations, songs, and even edifying gtam dpe.

Tharchin constructed the narrative of "liberation" based on the belief that for centuries Tibet used to be an independent country. Claiming that the ultimate intentions of the PLA were not to liberate, but, on the contrary, to "bind" Tibet "with a rope," [3] the editor of *The Tibet Mirror* promulgated the idea of Tibet's liberation from the alien Chinese past. He created an idealistic image of Tibetan past as the golden age that was destroyed due to the PLA arrival.

Present paper aims to discuss selected publications from *The Tibet Mirror* in the terms of discourse analysis and review the constructed narrative of Tibet's "liberation" from the PLA as well as its counternarrative of Tibet in need of "liberation" from China.

[1] Goldstein M. *The Snow Lion and the Dragon. China, Tibet, and the Dalai Lama*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997. P.47.

[2] See de Heering X. Re-remembering the Day "Times Turned Around": The Arrival of Chinese Soldiers at Chukhama in 1958 // *Conflicting Memories: Tibetan History and Mao Retold. Essays and Primary Documents*. Ed. by R. Barnett, B. Weiner, and J. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2020. P.472.

[3] E.g., see *The Tibet Mirror* Vol.XVIII No.12 dated November 1, 1990. P.3.

Mushrif-Tripathy, Veena (1); Devers, Quentin (2); Dolma, Kacho (3)*
The Old Lady Spider cave, a unique funerary site from Ladakh

vmushrif@gmail.com

1: Deccan College Post Graduate and Research Institute, Pune, India
2: Université de Bordeaux, France

This paper is to introduce the on-going research on a rare funerary cave in Ladakh led by Veena Mushrif-Tripathy and Quentin Devers, with the assistance of Kacho Dolma and in collaboration with Kacho Mumtaz Khan and Tashi Ldawa (University of Ladakh). The cave, known as the Old Lady Spider cave, is located above the village of Yunglung at an elevation of roughly 4,000 m. It is one of the very few deep caves of Ladakh, consisting of several rooms interconnected by tunnels. Whereas the first room shelters Buddhist graves, from the second room onward the floor is covered with human skeletons. It is said that there once was a gigantic spider living there. She would wait for the search of people to feed on, and spit out their skeletons inside the cave. A local hunter came to know about this monster. He decided to go on a chase, and eventually he shot the magical bow, forever freeing the people from the wrath of the Old Lady Spider. In this paper, we will present the preliminary results gathered during the excavations conducted in 2021 in the first and second rooms of the cave.

NA, Tenzin*

OpenPecha and the .opf Format: Enabling semi-automated crowdsourcing of Tibetan etexts and annotations

10zin@esukhia.org

Esukhia, India

The .opf format is the format that was created for the OpenPecha project (<https://openpecha.org/>). Its aim is to act as an etext archive format that facilitates cross-disciplinary collaboration in curating and enriching etexts, providing a wide range of users with the exact format of any text they may need, while maintaining the integrity of the text and annotations, and simultaneously allowing for community improvements and additions.

Users who read texts interact with those texts in meaningful ways. They highlight passages, add notes in the margins, or create and curate lists of related content; yet none of these contributions make it back to the master copy. Participatory models of publishing, such as wikis and open encyclopaedia, have had very little impact thus far on the traditional publishing world—they have not really moved into the digital landscape. In this model, valuable and expert annotations are "frozen" in formats that try their best to act like print (even if they are, technically speaking, digital).

There have been some formats that work to leverage the benefits of being fully digital, such as HTML, HTML5, or Knora's standoff markup models—reliance on a final-version base text has always been an issue. That is, transferring annotations from version-to-version, or across edited versions of the "same text" or across space (across non-identical instances of the "same text") has always been problematic. The solution imagined in OpenPecha is the use of unique identifiers to map logical units of the base text, also known as "pecha". This allows the base text to remain accessible, editable, and annotatable concurrently by different sets of users, across time.

Here, I will show you how an .opf file looks like this:

[The content of this section is extremely faint and mostly illegible in the image.]

This presentation will take a closer look at the .opf format, how it works, and who