

A Newspaper for Tibet:
Babu Tharchin and the "Tibet Mirror"
(Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long, 1925-1963)
from Kalimpong

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Notes on Transliteration, Translation and Authorship

Transliteration

Concerning transliteration of Tibetan words, I follow the Wylie-transliteration scheme in general, and Françoise Robin's style of quoting Tibetan-language words, names and works in particular (see Robin 2010). Thus, I use lower-case characters in case of technical terms and quotes. In the case of Tibetan personal names (such as historical figures or scholars) and institutions I capitalize the first character, disregarding root consonants. Names of persons or institutions remain non-italicized, other terms or sentences are italicized. In the following, I specify particularities.

Technical Terms: I use the Wylie transliteration as described above (lowercase, italicized), but for more commonly used terms, I introduce for the readers' convenience a phonetic transliteration on its first occurrence (non-italicized) and give the Wylie-transliteration in brackets (such as Ganden Phodrang, pecha, ...). Technical terms in Sanskrit are given in lowercase and not italicized (e.g. karma, dharma, ...). The terms "Kangyur", "Tengyur" and terms which denote a divine being are given in capital letters (e.g. Buddha, Bodhisattva, ...).

Place names: Because many Tibetan place names are well established in the English language, they are given in phonetic transliteration close to the English pronunciation (Lhasa, Gyantse, ...). I use vowel mutation ö and ü. For the corresponding Wylie transliteration, see the place index in the end.

Proper names: As mentioned above, proper names are not italicized and their first letter is capitalized, disregarding any root consonants. If a name includes a mix of both Tibetan and Sanskrit, the transliteration is also mixed (e.g. Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan). Personal names of Tibetan authors who have widely published in English are given in their established English rendering (such as Tsering Shakya, Tashi Tsering, ...). Furthermore, Babu Tharchin is always spelled out in this form. If an author's name is provided in English in a

primary source and the proper Tibetan spelling remains unknown, the English rendering is given. Borderland personalities, whose mixed names are documented in English sources are given in their English rendering (e.g. Peter Thubten Rabgay, Father Gyen Tsering Sitling, ...). Concerning bibliographic contents, I present the Wyle transliteration of the author's name, if the respective work is written in Tibetan. If it was composed in or translated into English, the author's English rendering is given as presented in the publication. In the case of authors of Tibetan works, I do not separate the first and family names, because this fabricated division would cause confusion.

Work Titles: Titles of literary works are generally presented in italic. As mentioned above, titles of Tibetan works are given with a capitalized initial character, disregarding root consonants. If the respective title carries an additional English title, it is provided in brackets and italics. If the Tibetan work has no English title, a translation is provided in brackets and quotation marks. For Tibetan translations of Sanskrit originals, upon first occurrence their title is provided, followed by an English translation. The main object of the present study, the "Tibet Mirror" (*Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long*) is always referred to as Melong.

Miscellanea: I quote Melong-issues as "Volume-Issue-Page" (e.g. 2-5-1). In brackets, I provide the date in the format "month year" (e.g. January 1926). For when the Melong was published on a weekly basis, I also provide the day of publication (e.g. September 1, 1954). All year dates signify AD.

Translation

Even though I have been studying the Melong (and other Tibetan-language newspapers) for more than five years, at times I still find myself lost in unfamiliar linguistic complexities. A newspaper incorporates "universal content", and therefore the range of texts found in the Melong covers anything from news, religious texts, modern neologisms, Tibetan classics to tantric texts. At times, the composed texts operate at a peculiar juncture of classical and

colloquial Tibetan and of established phrases and new coinages. Many compositional structures represented in the Melong cannot be found in grammar books, but incorporate specificities practiced in the Kalimpong hills or possibly even initiated by Tharchin. Acquiring a sense for the language of the Melong therefore is of crucial importance. For that purpose, I studied articles together with Tibetan mother-tongue speakers, mainly with the Darjeeling-born Bsam gtan dkon mchog and O rgyan dkon mchog from Nyemo. I apologize that my translations sound clumsy at times, however I have aimed at transporting some of the Tibetan flavors into the English, unfortunately often losing the original elegance and lightness on the way. Thus, the translations do not do justice – not even the tip of a needle, as the Tibetans say – to the delicacies of the original language. Further note that all quotations from original German, French and Tibetan texts have been translated by myself if not otherwise noted.

Authorship in the Melong

Reflecting production practices at the editorial office of the Melong, printed texts in the Melong are not undersigned by an author, except in a few cases. As we will learn in Chapter 3, the Melong's main editor and driving force continuously was the person of Babu Tharchin. Sometimes he invited guest authors to contribute articles, and especially in later years, it is likely that he often left the composition of text to one of his coworkers. Unfortunately, none of this is documented and thus it may only be conjectured through stylistic discontinuities, which remains speculative. It should be kept in mind, that for most of the published texts in the Melong, it cannot be said with certainty that it was Tharchin who composed the item. Nevertheless, unless Tharchin was away from Kalimpong, it was himself who had the last say on what was or was not published in the Melong. Therefore, while actual authorship of texts may remain speculative at times, editorial control was always in the hands of Tharchin. In my formulations, I have attempted to remain sensitive to the possibility that one of Tharchin's coworkers had composed the item.

List of Abbreviations

ed. edition or editor
est. established
et al. *et alii*, and others
n.a.not available

Institution Names:

GoI Government of India
KMT Kuomintang
MTAC.. Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission
PLA..... People's Liberation Army
POS Political Officer of Sikkim
TAR Tibetan Autonomous Region
TLO..... Tibetan Liaison Office

Work or Press Titles:

HT *Himalayan Times*
KA *Kye lang ag bar*
LA *La dwags kyi ag bar*
LP *La dwags pho nya*
RW *Rang dbang gsar shog*
RWSK . *Rang dbang srung skyobs gsar shog*
TMP Tibet Mirror Press

Libraries and Archives:

AM Amnye Machen Institute, Dharamsala
BDRC Buddhist Digital Resource Center
CU..... Columbia University, New York
DTAB Digitized Tibetan Archives Material at Bonn University
MCHMoravian Church House, London
STABL..... Berlin State Library, Berlin
TC Tharchin Collection, at the C.V. Starr East Asian Library at Columbia University, New York
TCMM Tharpa Chöling Monastery Museum, Kalimpong
VIESAK South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies Library of the University of Vienna

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1 Introduction

When Babu Tharchin printed the first issue of his Tibetan-language newspaper, there was no standard term for "newspaper" in the Tibetan language. In October 1925, the Christian convert Tharchin had finally got a used duplicator machine to work, which he had received from his employer in Kalimpong, Dr. J.A. Graham of the Church of Scotland. At that time, the Scottish Mission had been proselytizing Lepchas, Nepalese, Tibetans, Bhutanese and Sikkimese people for about fifty years – basically everybody occupying the diverse Kalimpong hills in the Indo-Tibetan border region. In the first decade of the 20th century, the British colonial government had decided to forcefully open trade with Tibet, in the course of the so-called "Younghusband expedition" of 1903-1904, hundreds of Tibetans lost their lives. Subsequently, British officials joined the colorful Kalimpong and the town became one of the main centers of a thriving trade route between Lhasa and Calcutta. In Kalimpong and nearby Darjeeling, newspapers were published in various languages, catering to the British officials and those who had adopted the modern practice of newspaper reading. They circulated in English, Hindi, Bengali and Nepali. However the region lacked a Tibetan one until 1925.

The masthead of Tharchin's first issue featured the newspaper title in English (*The Tibetan Newspaper*) as well as in Hindi (*Bhoṭa māṣika samācāra-patra*, "The Monthly Tibetan Newspaper"). In Tibetan, there was not yet a proper term for "newspaper". Tharchin termed his newspaper *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long*, which translates into "A Mirror of News from Various Regions". In later issues, the title was often expanded by adding *dge'o* in the end, meaning "This is the Excellent Mirror of News from Various Regions". Sometimes, the title was annexed with ... *zhes bya ba zhugs so* ("This is called ...") or ... *zhes bya ba dge'o*, translating roughly into: "It is good that it is called 'The Mirror of News from Various Regions'." These additions represent typical styles of title-composition which had been prevalent in Tibetan literature for centuries: titles of Tibetan literary works are long, often extend over more than one line and consist of a subject and a verb which form a full sentence.

They are further figurative, with words obscuring the actual contents, and more poetic than practical, striving not for concise diction but opulence beyond factuality and succinctness.¹

The term *gsar 'gyur* was not new. In a canonical context, it is a term that refers to new translations of Buddhist literature from Indian-language sources, such as importantly Sanskrit. Tibetan literature is conceptualized mainly as Buddhist literature, based on texts brought to Tibet from India which were translated into Tibetan in two main waves: the early spread (*sngar dar*) from the seventh to the ninth century, and the later spread (*phyi dar*) from roughly the tenth century onwards. The practice of translation is thus an important ingredient in how authors who engage in the composition of Tibetan text conceptualize the very same. *gsar 'gyur* usually refers to the second mentioned wave. In this specific context, *gsar 'gyur* means "new translations".² In other contexts, it also refers to "what has occurred newly", i.e. "news". In fact, the combination of the two syllables *gsar* and *'gyur* carries both meanings: *gsar* means "new" and *'gyur* means "to become", "to occur", but also "to translate". One of the early subtitles of the paper transports this notion of a translational practice: "The good rendering of Indian, Chinese and other news (*gnas tshul*) into Tibetan."³ Ultimately, the Tibetan language remains ambiguous concerning the meaning of the term, thus *gsar 'gyur* may refer to both, a practice of translating as well as a practice of reporting on what has newly occurred.

Tharchin applied the term *gsar 'gyur* to a wider range of meanings than only referring to "news". In many cases, *gsar 'gyur* took on the meaning of "newspaper". Just as in English, when one refers to a news show on TV by saying "Have you seen the news?" this "news" refers to the news medium, i.e. the TV show, likewise the same is true in the case of Tharchin's usage of the term *gsar 'gyur*. Lacking other forms of mass media, *gsar 'gyur*, the

¹ On title composition in Tibetan literature, see Almogi 2005 or Sommerschuh 2008:272-273.

² For a discussion of *gsar 'gyur* as "new translations," see Meisezahl 1990:302 or Verhagen 2001:78-79. See also an illustration of the famous translator Rin chen zang po (958-1055) from a text produced in the first half of the 20th century, entitling him *gsar 'gyur lo tsA'i mchog gyur*, "outstanding translator of new translations" (<http://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Rinchen-Zangpo/10199>, accessed November 29, 2016).

³ Melong 2-11-1 ([October] 1927) and 2-12-1 ([November] 1927): *rgya dkar nag sogs kyi gnas tshul bod skad du phab pa dge*.

news, at times became the newspaper. Sometimes, the term even occurs in both meanings in the same sentence, as in this example of 1936: "Much incorrect oral news (*gsar 'gyur*) is discussed here and even written in some newspapers (*gsar 'gyur*)."⁴

In the title of Tharchin's newspaper, the news are specified through a genitive, *yul phyogs so so'i*, which I choose to translate as "of various regions". However, it could also be rendered into "of each and every region" or "of individual regions".⁵ The Tibetan *so so* transports the idea of a separate handling of different entities, in this case regions, which in sum are part of a total whole, in this case a global whole. In some translations, I have thus encountered the addition "of the World".⁶ The original term for "regions" is *yul phyogs*, a vague term for "area" or "region", composed of the two syllables *yul* (country) and *phyogs* (direction). This compound carries a spatial notion, making translations such as "News from Various Directions of the World" possible. Just as the case of *gsar 'gyur*, also the phrase *yul phyogs so so'i* transports a range of semantical notions impossible to grasp with one single English term. The newspaper was further labelled "a mirror" (*me long*) of this news of various regions. This reference to a newspaper as "a mirror" connects the newspaper to global practices of newspaper production: all over the world, including in Asian countries, newspapers were titled "Mirror", such as the *Daily Mirror* in Great Britain, *Der Spiegel* in Germany, *Le Miroir* in France, or the *Kyemon* ("The Mirror Daily") in Burma. At the same time, the title *me long* connected the newspaper to local literary and communicative practices. Entitling a literary work *me long* was in no ways new to Tibetan literature. A quick search in the BDRC (formerly TBRC) database presents 479 results for works featuring "*me long*" as part of their titles.⁷ Prominently, the 13th century standard work on poetics *Snyan ngag me long* ("The

⁴ Melong 8-5-5: '*di phyogs 'ber gtam gyi gsar 'gyur dag min mang tsam brjod cing gsar 'gyur khag tu'ang bris 'dug ste*.

⁵ See e.g. Tsering 1985:20: "Mirror on the News about Individual Countries."

⁶ See e.g. Fader 2002:260 and Engelhardt 2006:209 and 2012:183: "The Mirror of News from All Sides of the World," or Shakya 2004:17: "The Mirror of News from Various Parts of the World."

⁷ The search on tbrc.org was conducted on January 16, 2017. The list does not take into consideration possible duplicates. On the usage of the metaphor *me long* in titles of Tibetan works, see also Almogi 2005:41.

Mirror of Poetry") must be mentioned: it was translated from the Sanskrit work *Kāvyaḍarśa*, thus transmitting specific forms and styles from Sanskrit into Tibetan which remain prevalent in literary composition up until today. However, *me long* was not merely a common work title. It is also an object, a small bronze colored disc used in religious rituals. Shakya has pointed this out in the following:

The use in the title of 'me long' (mirror) is in itself a very clever device, the word 'mirror' being of enormous significance in Buddhist culture as an object associated with ritual offering. The mirror is also associated with magical properties and is used in divinations. [...] Therefore, Tharchin's choice of name for the paper reflected the indigenous mindset [...] I would suggest this was a deliberate strategy to penetrate the larger Tibetan world and to arouse the imaginations of the readers.⁸

Oracles would carry a big mirror on their chest when they go into trance. The mirror is then used as a medium to transmit statements, usually of prophetic nature, from superhuman deities to the human realm. When walking through Lhasa today, one can see mirrors tangling from the waistbands of people's dresses who use it as a talisman. Alas, for Tibetan speakers, a "Melong", even the *Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long*, aroused notions of poetry, divination, prophetic attributes and protection.

Below the lavish Tibetan title of the newspaper, and very different from what became known to Tibetan-language readers as *gsar 'gyur me long*, is found a plain description in English, succinctly and factually, speaking to those who knew English: *The Tibetan Newspaper*. From 1950 onwards, the paper was called *The Tibet Mirror*.⁹ Notably, the term "Tibet" featured prominently in its English title, while in the Tibetan title it was not featured at all. What in English was "the Mirror" was known in Tibetan as "Melong" (hereafter I refer to the newspaper as "Melong") and connected to both local traditions and global newspaper practices. Tharchin did not only position himself within a global newspaper practice by way

⁸ Shakya 2004:21-22.

⁹ Starting from Melong 19-1&2 (December 1950/January 1951).



Figure 1: The object Melong, a small bronze colored disc, used in religious rituals, \varnothing 4.5 cm, souvenir item from the Lhasa market.



Figure 2: The current Gnas chung oracle carrying a *me long* on his chest, as depicted in 2014.

of the title, from the very outset he also took up a global role model for his newspaper. Below the masthead, he explains on the cover of his first issue:

These days, in India, China and Europe, in big and small nations, everywhere newspapers (*kha bar ka ka si*) are printed in one's own language, and therefore news (*gnas tshul*) on what is happening every day in different regions, even if it happens far away, is received in one's own dwelling place. [A newspaper] has great benefit, as a door to [knowing] news (*gnas tshul*) about unpleasant times in different nations, the spread of knowledge, news (*gnas tshul*) on [where] epidemics, floods, famine, earthquakes and so on are happening as well as a door for subjects to tell rulers about their own situation, what is good and bad. So far, there is no such newspaper (*gsar 'gyur*) in the language of our snow land, therefore I thought: if there was one in our own language, wouldn't it cause benefit for our own Tibetan people and pride in the perception of [people speaking] other languages?¹⁰

Tharchin desired to start a newspaper in a global fashion. What I translate here by default as "newspaper" obscures the variety of Tibetan terms used in the passage. In the first instance, a Tibetan transliteration of the Urdu term for newspaper, *kha bar ka ka si*, is employed. Farther down, the term *gsar 'gyur* is used. In further editorial comments, terms like *gsar shog* (newspaper)¹¹, *gnas shog* (news-paper), *gsar gnas* (news-news), *tshag par* and its variant *tshags par* (newspaper, technical dimension) can be found.¹² The very first Tibetan newspaper in 1904 used the Urdu-term *ag bar*, but after some years of publication switched over to the Tibetan term *pho nya* (messenger).

I should stress here once again, that the media model Tharchin followed was a newspaper, not a magazine. I have discussed the differentiation between "newspaper" and "magazine" in my master thesis at length and have come to the conclusion that the Melong – "according to both contemporary and present definitions" may well be identified as a newspaper, even if it

¹⁰ Melong 1-1-1 (October 1925).

¹¹ Usually, *gsar shog* refers to the material dimension of a newspaper.

¹² In the Melong, *tshag par* or *tshags par* is always used in connection to type printing, i.e. movable letters. Zla ba tshe ring 2009a:82-83 has argued for an onomatopoeic etymology, as *tshags* resembling the sound when types hit paper.

incorporates some magazine-styled elements. This crossing-over of genres is a characteristic of early media practices, when genres have not been quite solidified just yet. Apart from the academic definition of what a newspaper is and was, Tharchin's own designation of the Melong as, in fact, a "newspaper", needs to be taken into particularly weighty consideration.¹³ In its Tibetan translation then, various terms for newspaper circulated, such as *gsar 'gyur*, *tshags par*, *gsar gnas*, *kha bar ka ka si*, *gsar shog*, *ag bar*. When Babu Tharchin started his newspaper, there was neither a fixed term for newspaper in the Tibetan language, nor was there an established tradition of making newspapers in Tibet.

The same is true for Tibet. Even what people nowadays may conceive of Tibet was an entity with unclear boundaries at that time: neither the explanation of a Tibetan nation based on *bod chol kha gsum*, i.e. the three regions Ütsang, Amdo and Kham, mainly followed in exile circles,¹⁴ nor the much smaller Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) in today's Chinese-ruled Tibet had taken root or had widely been depicted on maps. In the early 20th century, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (ruled 1895-1933) attempted to navigate a fragmented territory through the polarized politics of Chinese versus British pressure. Both demanded a modern understanding of nation states along fixed geographical boundaries: Simply spoken, the Chinese demanded "no borders" at all, because they saw Tibet as part of China, while the British called for strong borders in order to demarcate Tibet from China and India. Modern politics propagated through colonialism left no room for "overlapping zones, open zones, and locally governed territories", as McGranahan has described it, i.e. blurred boundaries in which not territoriality was the benchmark of nationhood, but rather "a broad set of connections combined with shifting center-periphery relationships of influence and allegiance."¹⁵ The

¹³ For details see Sawerthal 2011:20-26.

¹⁴ See e.g. McGranahan 2005:573, McGranahan 2003:286, or Jabb 2015:41-44.

¹⁵ McGranahan 2010:39-40. For a description of the centralized-local allegiances on the Tibetan plateau, see Samuel 1993:143-144: "[...] most Tibetans [...] lived in communities that were not under the day-to-day control of any strong centralized government, whether that of Lhasa, some other Tibetan regime, or the Chinese." Alternatively, Samuel proposes four types of communities prevalent on the plateau: centralized agricultural

premodern understanding of statehood prevalent in Tibet was increasingly pressured by foreign powers, and so, giving in to these demands and following British lead, the "Great Thirteenth" declared the independence of Tibet in 1913. However, this was neither accepted by Chinese Republicans (or later the Chinese Communists), nor fully and officially supported by the British Colonial Government (or later the Indian Government).

The Thirteenth Dalai Lama attempted the modernization of the Tibetan state, and accordingly supported Tharchin's newspaper financially and ideologically. His reforms consisted not of discarding but of expanding the governmental structures of the *dga' ldan pho brang* (hereafter referred to as Ganden Phodrang). Established by the Fifth Dalai Lama in the mid-17th century, this system of governance was based on the inseparability of religion and politics (*chos srid*) under the Dalai Lama's spiritual and political lead. The regions thought to have been governed by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama might have accepted his spiritual supremacy but not necessarily his political. Regions in the East (Kham) and in the North (Amdo) as well as localities in Central Tibet – regions that for the central government were part of Tibet – in fact did not necessarily see themselves in such a way and possibly did not participate in administrative structures in realpolitik.¹⁶ In 1933, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama passed away and power struggles erupted. Amidst this power vacuum, there was no quick answer to the question as to whether Tibet should follow a Chinese or a British (Western) path. By 1950, the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) created facts by marching into Tibet. Thus, when Babu Tharchin started his "Tibetan newspaper", there was no Tibetan term for newspaper and there were no agreed upon borders of Tibet that was accepted nationally or internationally.

In his role as the main editor for almost forty years (until 1963), Babu Tharchin gave form to the conceptualization of a "newspaper" through practice. He envisioned his newspaper as a participatory endeavor and as an integral part of Tibetan society, articulating who should

communities, remote agricultural communities, pastoral communities and urban communities (see Samuel 1993:115-138).

¹⁶ See here also Samuel 1993:145 for a critique on a "Lhasa-centered perspective" concerning Tibetan history.

participate in the project in what ways. He thus exhibited an imagined Tibetan community, bound together publicly and in written form by means of his newspaper. In effect, Tharchin made distinctions between those who belonged to this community and those who were alien to it. The newspaper introduced a variety of foreign modern concepts – even the idea of the newspaper itself – to a Tibetan readership, and in the course came up with new interpretations. Tharchin edited four, eight or twelve pages per issue, interacting with and reacting to his readers and their presumable or articulated wishes. In his participation in overarching power asymmetries on the ground, he was also influenced by missionary and later British financiers' needs and wishes. Tharchin employed different techniques to make the paper attractive to them by including or excluding contents he deemed relevant to them. He appropriated, utilized, recycled and selected news items he received through various channels. A detailed look at the readers and financiers reveals an utterly heterogeneous background: British officials, Christian missionaries, Tibetan aristocrats, Khampa merchants, Buddhist *bla ma* (hereafter referred to as "lama"), American spies and European Tibetologists – all were connected to the paper. Both its readership as well as its sponsors had diverse backgrounds, however in terms of a product it was: a newspaper for Tibet.

The following project thus examines the beginnings of a Tibetan-language newspaper history by analyzing the Melong in a socio-historical context. It investigates how the product newspaper spread globally from Europe and how it was adapted to a Tibetan context via intermediary stations such as China and India. The project investigates on one hand, how the global product newspaper was adapted for a Tibetan-speaking audience, analyzing transformation processes of the genre newspaper. On the other hand, it investigates transformation processes of the participating community, “Tibet”. Due to the state of available source material, it focuses on the imaginations of this Tibet within the contents of the newspaper and thus combines Benedict Anderson’s theses of “imagined communities” with a transcultural approach.

1.1 Theory and Methods

In the following, the combination of a transcultural approach with Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" (on which he first published in 1983, republished in 1991 and again in 2006) is explained. This approach questions a master narrative of bounded cultural entities by basing its investigations on the premise that activities like the writing, printing and reading of a newspaper are not byproducts of *one* cultural system, but rather they are part of processes of the construction and deconstruction of cultural boundaries. The study does not generally argue against the usage of cultural signifiers, such as a "Tibetan" newspaper, however, instead of asking "What is a Tibetan newspaper?" it asks "To what extent is the newspaper a means for the solidification of the idea of a bounded Tibetan community?" By doing so, it attempts a balanced approach which navigates the extremes of completely discarding boundaries or overemphasizing their existence.

Transcultural Approach. The transcultural approach here is understood as a method which probes into the nature of cultural boundaries.¹⁷ It is an approach currently being developed by scholars in order to do justice to complex dynamics at work in the coming-together of actors of diverse cultural backgrounds.¹⁸ Very generally spoken, the transcultural approach here is understood as dismissing the idea that there ever was an original, single, bounded culture. Very simplified spoken, the approach gained emphatic momentum during the 1990s, when a need was felt to counter prevalent overemphasis on cultural or national boundaries in theoretical conceptualizations of scholarly problems. It was countered by emphasizing *non*-boundaries, fluidity of social interaction and networks, in short: trans-cultural and trans-national dynamics. Bruno Latour's "actor network theory" must be named as particularly identity-forming for the paradigm, shifting away from an objective "outer"-perspective to a

¹⁷ As such, it can be seen as König and Rakow's fourth provided definition of what "transculturality" is, namely "a particular method of approach [...]. Methodologically, this definition encourages analysis of phenomena that question supposed boundaries" (see König and Rakow 2016:95).

¹⁸ A lot has been written on the development of the usage of the term and its shifting interpretations over time. As a starting point, see Juneja 2013 or König and Krakow 2016.

subjective "inner" one.¹⁹ This in turn gave way to the incorporation and embrace of ideas of postcolonial studies, which have demanded theoretical and methodological designs beyond Western- or Eurocentric understandings of our world.

I follow the media scholar Andreas Hepp in my understanding of "transculturality" who sheds light on the approach in relation to communication. Hepp sees it as an approach, which in retrospect came about through the entangled configuration of three distinct fields of discourses, namely a) a consequence of globalization, b) a postcolonial critique, and c) a methodological reflection on how to grasp the dynamics of points a) and b). In order to make my understanding clear, I start off from Hepp's explanation of Nederveen Pieterse's take on the term "culture". However, instead of his usage of the terms "territorial" as an antonym to "translocal", I use "conceptions of bounded culture" versus a transcultural stance.

[Conceptions of bounded cultures]²⁰ are inwardly directed and endogenous, focused on the organicity, authenticity and identity of culture. This amounts to a 'functional organism,' a national culture related to national societies. By contrast, [transcultural]²¹ conceptions are outwardly directed and exogenous, focused upon hybridity, translation and ongoing identification. Culture is here something that is processual and unfinished.²²

In the following, I attempt a reconciliatory path between these "two approaches", because I understand both as justified, however on different analytical levels: when we observe our world, especially through the source of a newspaper, it seems to be a place of bounded entities; and what we see when we look beyond these bounded entities is what manifests in a transcultural approach. This study attempts to demonstrate that Transcultural Studies incorporates imaginations of closed systems, in particular cultural boundaries, into the analysis. Hepp calls

¹⁹ See e.g. Bhabha 1994, Hepp 2004, Hepp et al. 2008, Latour 1993, Latour 2005, Pratt 1991, Welsch 1999 or Burke 2009.

²⁰ In the original: "Such territorial conceptions."

²¹ In the original: "translocal."

²² See Hepp 2015:12.

for an investigation of phenomena "within cultures that seem quite solid and stable"²³ and who poses the question relevant to this study: "How is transculturality inscribed in apparently national media representations [here: a newspaper] of communicative figurations?"²⁴ The category of a bounded cultural sphere is utilized by the investigated actors and solidified by means of a newspaper. Thus, in this understanding, the bounded cultural sphere is **not an analytical unit but a research object** imagined by the actors under investigation.

This is important both from a theoretical and from a practical perspective. From a theoretical perspective, allowing analytical room for empirical realities of the (no matter whether historical or current) actors under investigation, is particularly important within a scholarly paradigm (namely transculturality), which loudly proclaims with Latour: Follow the actors. From a practical perspective, when studying newspapers (no matter whether historical or current ones), it is almost impossible to discard the communitarization (Vergemeinschaftlichung) dynamics at work. Written media such as newspapers quite obviously serve as crystallization points for the communal imagination of bounded spheres, may they be cultural and/or national.

The idea of closed systems (such as national or cultural spheres) as being "imagined" by the partaking actors is in no way new or innovative. Famously, Benedict Anderson has brought forth his theory explaining modern nations as "imagined communities". It is for these reasons that I complement the transcultural approach with Anderson's "Imagined Communities".

Benedict Anderson's "Imagined Communities". Newspapers construct the idea of a community which is different from communities that do not receive a material form through writing. The newspaper facilitates the imagination of a community of strangers, people who mostly have never met each other. An invisible thread connects each and every issue of a newspaper, read privately by hundreds and out loud to thousands of people. This shared and mutual awareness allows for images of a bounded community to arise in the reader's and

²³ Hepp 2015:34.

²⁴ *ibid.*

producer's minds. All this Anderson described in his momentous work "Imagined Communities", first published in 1983. He probes into the "origin of nationalism" by examining how the decline of sacred communities gave way to primarily *political* communities, based on new communication channels and beyond divine supremacy. Among the key factors of this development was the rise of the vernacular through print-capitalism, one of its most influential products being the newspaper. Newspapers brought about connections between previously disconnected individuals. Elizabeth Eisenstein, author of the seminal work *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (1983/2005), succinctly summarizes Anderson's ideas in her presentation of the ways in which newspapers provided new forms of connecting people: local personal connections were overtaken by impersonal forms of communication. She writes: "[Anderson's] observation [on dispersed people] suggests how the shift in communications may have changed the sense of what it meant to participate in public affairs. The wide distribution of identical bits of information provided an impersonal link between people who were unknown to each other."²⁵ According to Anderson, this was important for laying the foundation for a national consciousness.

He describes the nation as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign."²⁶ Anderson stresses that imagining a nation is neither right nor wrong, as suggested by others.²⁷ Rather, Anderson writes: "Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined." Rather than being involved in the search for a "true" community, he is more interested in studying the ways by which communities are imagined and thus distinguished.²⁸ This kind of

²⁵ Eisenstein 2005[1983]:105.

²⁶ Anderson 2005:49.

²⁷ Anderson cites Ernest Gellner's understanding of nationalism (in "Thought and Change", London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1964) as postulating nationalism to be a false invention of something *else* which truly exists: Gellner "assimilates 'invention' to 'fabrication' and 'falsity', rather than to 'imagining' and 'creation.'" (Anderson 2005:49).

²⁸ For the details on Anderson's understanding of the happening of concrete events and the arising of imaginings, see his description of how the "French Revolution" or revolutions in South America became "concepts," "models" and "blueprints" (Anderson 2006[1983]:80-81).

analytical approach, namely the search for *shifts* in how communities are established rather than the search for *true origins* of a community, resonates loudly with a transcultural approach.

In Tibetan Studies – which this study is part of –, comparatively few scholars have referred to Anderson. An exception is a recent publication on Tibetan printing, which refers to Anderson and Eisenstein's theories.²⁹ Tuttle, too, acknowledges Anderson's observation: "As Benedict Anderson has argued in *Imagined Communities*, the primary modes of social organization prior to the existence of nation-states were the dynastic realm and the religious community."³⁰ Anderson is also briefly mentioned in Willock's work on "the secular" in the Melong's press house: "[...] Anderson suggested a vital link between increasing literacy and the development of 'vernacular languages-of-state' to arouse mass support for political change and to create 'an imagined community' – a necessary attribute for the rise of the ideal of the nation."³¹ Anderson's theory is indirectly paraphrased in McGranahan's explanation of the relative failure of the Melong: "Likewise, the calendrical time of production and the simultaneity of ritualized, yet anonymous reading so associated with print nationalism were not a part – or at least not a regularized part – of the *Tibet Mirror's* role in Tibetan society."³² He is also mentioned by Shakya: "Benedict Anderson sees newspapers as providing 'imagined linkage' for a community. Although such linkage already exists in shared language and established texts, a newspaper presents immediacy and addresses its readers with the present and the here-and-now."³³ Yet, despite these references, the authors provide no further details.

I have presented thus far, how Anderson's theory complements a transcultural approach, adjusting the approach's accuracy in describing research objects (such as Tibetan newspapers)

²⁹ See Diemberger et al. 2016.

³⁰ Tuttle 2005:3.

³¹ See Willock 2016:151.

³² McGranahan 2010:72.

³³ Shakya 2004:18.

under the analytical lens. In the following, I show how in turn also Anderson's theory – today more than 30 years old – benefits from the inputs of a transcultural approach.

Combining the Transcultural Approach with “Imagined Communities”. Anderson's focus on a shift from sacred to national communities and from sacred to vernacular print-language has been criticized for various reasons after his findings were published in 1983. These criticisms include issues of superficiality, eurocentrism and the lack of globalization mechanisms.³⁴ This study expands Anderson's theory by associating it with a transcultural approach, i.e. with globalization discourses and postcolonial critique, as described above as Hepp's points a) and b). The first, namely a) globalization discourses, concerns mechanisms of alterity, the second, namely b) postcolonial critique, concerns alternative styles.

My first point of departure from Anderson's original theory thus addresses the question of "imagined communities" in a global context, i.e. expanding "Imagined Communities" by the aforementioned point a) globalization discourses. Anderson focused more often on the *inner workings* of one imagined community and to a lesser degree on the imagined nation state as one category within a global world in which mechanisms of alteration to outsiders take place.

Robertson expresses this critique of Anderson:

The issue of alterity and most certainly the issue of relativization are almost ignored in *Imagined Communities*. Under conditions of rapid globalization, nation-states are steadily "squeezed" together, thus enhancing the need [...] to declare their identities through the accentuation and calibration of national memories, commemorations, rituals, and histories.³⁵

Anderson explicitly addresses questions of alterity only on rare occasions.³⁶ Yet, the Melong is one example which prominently showcases that "foreign" ideas are taken up and adapted to an existent imagination of social realities, importantly in delineation to "foreign" others. In my study, I draw attention to mechanisms of the establishment of an imagined community in

³⁴ Criticism is concisely summed up in e.g. Desai 2009 or Özkırımlı 2000.

³⁵ See Robertson 2011:1340.

³⁶ See e.g. Anderson 2006[1983]:17 or 30.

interaction with and in delineation to "the other" within a global framework. In other words, my first point of departure can thus be understood as the attempt to apprehend mechanisms of globalization not only as mechanisms of homogenization, but also as mechanisms of diversification, and increased delineation. To reiterate, this analytical extension of Anderson's theory resonates with my previous presentation of transculturality – following Hepp's suggestion – as a consequence of globalization.³⁷

My second point of departure of Anderson's theory resonates with Hepp's second interpretation of a transcultural approach, namely as a form of postcolonial critique. For this, the study takes up Anderson's understanding of the "style" by which communities are imagined, but expands it. To reiterate, Anderson stated: "Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined." Thus, he talks about "style" in practical terms and describes the nation to be imagined as limited, sovereign and as a community – who is imagined to participate with whom in which ways? I expand this by understanding "style" also literally: by which styles, forms or metaphors is a community imagined? What literary modes are taken up? Lakoff and Johnson have already demonstrated how metaphors can unravel underlying conceptualizations of our lives and thus have the potential of grasping alternative conceptualizations of realities beyond "Western" narratives.³⁸

As a convincing example, Fahmy redesigned Anderson's work in order to reveal how not only print media but also oral context plays a role in the imagination of a nation. Fahmy understands visuality as an instrument of colonial power and criticizes Anderson for neglecting oral cultures: "In Anderson's devocalized imagined communities, there is no place for the spoken word. Dismissing orality and direct social interactions ignores a critical component of the digestion and integration of news, rumors, gossip, and culture."³⁹ Due to the source situation, I focus not on the oral adaptations of readers but rather on adaptations of oral

³⁷ See Hepp 2014[2006]:22.

³⁸ Lakoff and Johnson 2003 [1980]. On cultural differences in metaphors, see in particular pages 13, 31 and 51.

³⁹ Fahmy 2012:14.

culture within the newspaper. In this way, I highlight the newspaper's role in casting oral practices of public exchange into written form.⁴⁰ In this way, the attention given to oral modes resonates with Hepp's understanding of transculturality as postcolonial critique.⁴¹ As a study with a transcultural approach, this study desires to give room to alternative styles which have the potential to unravel conceptions of the world beyond Eurocentric or Western-centric conceptualizations of our reality. The methodology of this study will repeatedly concentrate on stylistic means employed in the newspaper. It will demonstrate how they are taken up, appropriated, merged and transformed. In this way, Anderson's theory is enriched with the capacity to grasp imaginations of a community beyond Western-centric styles.

Concise Summary. Let me concisely summarize the methodological set-up of this study: Transculturality is here understood as a methodological approach which has come about through a configuration of discourses surrounding a) globalization mechanisms b) and postcolonial critique. As such, it is a handy tool in detecting the fluidity and relativeness, the constructivist nature of things, in particular boundaries, giving room to realities beyond Western-centric perspectives. For this study, the approach lacks the capacity to give adequate room to the imaginations of closed systems, though. The historical actors under the analytical lens of this study quite obviously believed in bounded spheres. In order to incorporate their realities into the study, an analytical add-on is needed. Benedict Anderson provides just that: a theory describing how nations are **imagined** as closed communities. His theory thus smoothly complements the transcultural approach, expanding its explanatory capacity.

Incidentally, to the same extent Anderson's theory expands the transcultural approach, the transcultural approach expands Anderson's theory, which itself is quite old. In the fields of globalization discourses and postcolonial critique it lacks substance and/or does not provide

⁴⁰ Here, I would like again to point to Quintman's inspirational work on traces of orality in printed texts (2014). Lama Jabb also shed light on modes of orality within contemporary Tibetan literature (2015).

⁴¹ See Hepp 2014[2006]:27-31.

explanation at all. Precisely these two fields have here been identified as the main defining features of a transcultural approach. Adding them to "Imagined Communities" fills these gaps. To exaggerate for the sake of clarity: studying Tibetan newspapers solely from an Anderson-point-of-view would generate results showing how Tibetan newspapers functioned as a crystallization point for a Tibetan nation. If a scholar of Transcultural Studies studied Tibetan newspapers, she would observe the fluid coming-together of diverging practices and symbols of a variety of cultural configurations, and how there never was a solid Tibetan community and thus a Tibetan newspaper in the first place. Or, she would poignantly show, how certain Tibetan communicative practices, positioned at the weaker ends of historical power asymmetries, in fact prominently shape the conceptualization of a newspaper.

As a matter of fact, all of the mentioned is true. We will see that the newspaper did function as a crystallization point for a Tibetan nation, which itself essentially does not stand up to analytical scrutiny, whilst at the same time, Tibetan communicative practices effected the re-invention of the literary product newspaper, imported from the West. And this, in a nutshell, is the advantage of a transcultural approach as understood here. It gives room for this ambiguity, for the option that all of the mentioned observations are true and – importantly – are true at the same time. And more than that: It demands for this ambiguity. For focusing solely on one of the mentioned aspects would at best produce a curtailed, at worst a distorted explanation of our world.

To return to the main point of departure: How is a global newspaper adapted for a Tibetan-speaking audience, i.e. local contexts? Based on Anderson's idea of newspapers as driving forces of nation state-building *as well as* the scholarly configuration of a transcultural approach, this study sheds light on the mechanisms of solidification of a "Tibetan imagined community", and Tibetan appropriations of a "newspaper". In this way, this study shows how a transcultural approach can be used in covering a mediahistorical topic in a border region.

1.2 Sources

The available source material for a study of the Melong specifically and Tibetan-language newspaper history in general is vast in terms of both primary and secondary sources. This study concentrates mainly on the former, and it is based on digital access to 302 out of (probably) 311 published issues of the Melong.⁴² Furthermore, seven original issues were given to me as a present.⁴³ The digital collection of Melong issues was – for the largest part – kindly provided to me by Paul Hackett (Columbia University), who collected the material in digital form from various institutions and individuals.⁴⁴ Since 2009, 206 issues have been published online by the C.V. Starr East Asian Library of Columbia University.⁴⁵ I have also collected and examined additional Tibetan-language newspapers, documents connected to print history in Tibetan language and other publications of the Tibet Mirror Press (hereafter referred to as TMP) in various archives and through various individuals.⁴⁶ Materials of the former editorial office, such as subscription lists, correspondences, bills and others, are mainly accessible through the Tharchin Collection (TC) of the C.V. Starr East Asian Library.⁴⁷ Further material is available at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala, India. A few items, such as former printing equipment, plaques, publications, correspondences and so on, can be found in Kalimpong, however in a rather poor condition.

⁴² For a list of existent issues, see Sawerthal 2011:131-143, appendix 1. Since 2011, I have found two additional issues (Melong 14-4, January 1946, and Melong 23-4, November 1955) stored at the Library of the Australian National University.

⁴³ They are Melong 17-1 (October 1948), 17-8 (May 1949), 17-9 (June 1949), 18-1 (October 1949), 20-2&3 (May/June 1952), 21-2 (May 1953) and 21-6 (September 1953).

⁴⁴ For a list of institutions and individuals, see Sawerthal 2011:15.

⁴⁵ See Melong online.

⁴⁶ These institutions and individuals include: Asiatic Society (Kolkata, India); Bavarian State Library (Munich, Germany); C.V. Starr Library of Columbia University (New York, USA); Cleveland Public Library (Cleveland, USA); Daniel Tharchin (Kalimpong, India); Dawa Tsering (Lhasa, Tibet); GRASSI Museum für Völkerkunde zu Leipzig (Leipzig, Germany); Herrnhut Archives (Herrnhut, Germany); Isrun Engelhardt (Bonn, Germany); Lhasa Public Library (Lhasa, Tibet); Library of the Australian National University (Canberra, Australia); Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (London, UK); Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (Dharamsala, India); Moravian Church House (London, UK); Namgyal Institute of Tibetology (Gangtok, India); National Archives of India (Kolkata, India); Robert Barnett (Columbia University, NY, USA); Sikkim State Archives (Gangtok, Sikkim); South Asian, Tibetan and Buddhist Studies Library of the University of Vienna (Vienna, Austria); State Library Berlin (Berlin, Germany); Tashi Tsering (Dharamsala, India); Tharpa Chöling Monastery Museum (Kalimpong, India); Tibet Museum (Lhasa, Tibet); University of Washington (Seattle, USA); Widener Library at Harvard University (Cambridge, USA).

⁴⁷ I wish to thank Luran Hartley for guiding me through the collection and supporting my research.

Source material concerning the Melong's reception among Tibetans is considerably more difficult to gather. I was able to meet a small number of contemporary witnesses, but most of them remember very little. The most important sources therefore are letters to the editors reproduced in the Melong or found among Tharchin's correspondence. There are barely any references to the Melong in contemporary Tibetan-language sources, and the newspaper is increasingly referred to by authors only in later years. Some of the younger journalists I interviewed in Dharamsala like to refer to Tharchin as the first Tibetan journalist, and the current Tibetan-language (exile) literature often refers to Tharchin and the Melong. Publications of the PRC hardly mention the Melong, since the newspaper developed into a fierce instrument against Communist rule in Tibet.

There are many Western sources that mention Tharchin, his TMP or the Melong explicitly. A tentative list of such publications comprises about 150 entries, stemming from Tharchin's multi-directional connections: newspaper reports, scholarly journals or field research reports mention Tharchin and his Melong, and Tibetologists who worked with books he published or who describe his press house. The popular and scholarly reception of the Melong is ongoing, with growing interest in the last decade perhaps due to increased accessibility by means of the digital availability through Columbia University. Various authors have worked with parts of the material (both the newspaper and material to be found at Columbia University and Dharamsala). For a review, see below in the section "Relevance of the Project and Current State of Research" (1.4).

1.3 Detailed Research Questions, Relevant Sources and Methods

In the following, I provide an overview of the guiding research questions (RQ) and the sources used in their answers. In general, the study is divided into three parts, namely production, product and participation. First, the production conditions of the newspaper are described as a heterogeneous environment characterized by constant border crossing.

Secondly, it follows a demonstration of the ways in which the newspaper contents suggest the opposite, i.e. bounded cultural spheres, the imagination of "Tibet" is solidified and a self is presented in delineation to "others". And finally, it will be examined how these ideal-typical imaginations of "Tibet" and the newspaper were received by the readership, with continuing effects beyond solely the reader's reactions. This leads back to the production-dimension, as these imaginations were not disconnected from the newspaper: the newspaper was produced in dependence on financial possibilities and the targeted readership. The leading research question thus deals with the interplay between the concepts of "Tibet" and "newspaper", and it is posed in two parts:

How does the (imagined) Tibetan community transform the newspaper?

How does the newspaper transform the (imagined) Tibetan community?

In the three parts production, product and participation this overarching research question is explored from various angles. Each part is further divided into two chapters. The first two chapters incorporate a detailed review of literature on Tibetan media history, newspaper history and previous studies on the Melong - i.e. the three topics which form the most relevant research subjects of the present study. The final chapter functions as conclusion and outlook.

The **first part**, consisting of chapters 2 and 3, deals with the **production** of the Melong. It investigates to what extent the Melong took up a special role in the history of news dissemination and newspapers in Tibetan language. In **Chapter 2**, the Melong is located within the larger framework of Tibetan-language communication history by presenting existent forms and practices of mediated news dissemination and by presenting a chronological history of newspapers in Tibetan language until 1963 (the last year of publication of the Melong). Tibetan-language newspapers, secondary literature and interviews serve as main sources.

Having started off "traditionally" by introducing Tibetan-language news dissemination and newspapers, in **Chapter 3** I break up a cultural and linguistical space conceived as bounded

by probing into the production background of the Melong. An examination of the Melong's financial history, its place of production (Kalimpong), its local media environment as well as its editor Babu Tharchin demonstrates that the newspaper's production cannot be characterized by distinct cultural entities or identities, but rather by constant cultural exchange. Main sources include documents from the editorial office, the newspaper itself, the editor's autobiography, and secondary sources.

Setting out from a world characterized by flows and networks, I will move on to the **second part**, which focuses on the Melong as a **product**. Even though its production was characterized by constant exchange, the product suggests a bounded entity "Tibet". The newspaper introduces various foreign contents and forms which are adapted and reinterpreted for a Tibetan readership, including the newspaper itself. The part is driven by the question how the newspaper (including its imagined community) is conceptualized by editor Tharchin and his coworkers. **Chapter 4** focuses on how the articulated conception of "newspaper" (including its imagined community) changed over the course of time. The chapter analyzes how the concept of a "newspaper" and the idea of a bounded "Tibet" is presented in editorial comments. This demonstrates what kind of actors were addressed to participate in the newspaper in which ways and how the foreign concept "newspaper" was adapted for this specific audience. It becomes apparent how the genre "newspaper" was reinvented by addressing this audience. Sources are editorial comments of the Melong,⁴⁸ whereas 164 texts were transcribed and fed into the data processing tool MAXQDA.

Chapter 5 explicitly addresses questions concerning alteration, showing how solidifications of the "self" arise through the interaction with a global "other". It examines how foreign concepts, transported through the newspaper, were adapted for an (imagined) Tibetan readership. Four case studies based on the general contents of the Melong highlight the

⁴⁸ Editorial comments are understood as self-reflexive texts in which the editor directly addresses his readers through the newspaper. The editor may request money and content or simply explain his reasons for producing the newspaper in the first place.

strategies for making foreign concepts understood. These are: religion (Christianity), knowledge production (discourses on the shape of the earth), world politics (coverage of the Second World War) and economics (advertisements). All the cases highlight, how protocols established in Tibetan-language communication significantly change the newspaper, as well.

Therefore, in place of a conclusion to chapters 4 and 5 (part 2), I analyze how foreign conceptions of time meet with existent ones and thus change the conceptualization of a newspaper. Sources for this part are the general content of the Melong.

The **third and final part** is concerned with **participation**. The final two chapters examine the reception of the ideal conceptualization of the newspaper and to what extent envisioned participation was successful. **Chapter 6** deals with the reactions to the Melong during the time of its publishing and its role in the memory of current journalists. What forms of participation and reactions were engendered by the Melong back then? How do the readers' reactions change over the course of time and how does the newspaper continue to shape imaginations of Tibet today? Main sources are subscription lists, letters to the editor, secondary literature, the editor's correspondences, newspapers and interviews.

In the last chapter, **Chapter 7**, I return to the exploration of the intervening potential of the Melong, concerning both the transformation of an imagined community and the newspaper itself. In concrete terms, I ask to what extent the Melong enhanced the formation of public communication in Tibetan language between previously unconnected individuals. On the other hand, I explore how Tibetan protocols of communication transformed what a newspaper can be. In short, how does the newspaper transform a "Tibetan" community? How does "Tibet" transform the genre newspaper? Sources are the Melong, other Tibetan-language newspapers and secondary literature.

1.4 Relevance of the Project and Current State of Research

Guided by the described interests, the following study caters to a variety of traditional academic disciplines. The thesis is located at the interface of media history, Tibetan Studies, and Cultural Studies.

Media History. The global spread of newspapers has been studied for many regions of the world, above all Europe and Northern America.⁴⁹ In an Asian context, various studies on publishing histories in India⁵⁰ and China⁵¹ illuminate the newspaper's global spread through colonialism, imperialism or missionary activities. Print media often were power instruments of the colonizers⁵² but at the same time also productive for the imagination of independent nations.⁵³ Media historians traditionally concentrate on regions in the Western hemisphere, and thus they have often failed to produce a detailed exploration of these mechanisms for other parts of the world. In general, "media histories" concentrate on the development of mass media in Europe and the United States, usually referring to the invention of Gutenberg's printing press as a starting point.⁵⁴ Recently, scholars have been working towards an expansion of the discipline through addressing presently underexposed regions as well as more methodological questions of how to engage in media research.⁵⁵ Bösch, for example, calls for an increased engagement with non-Western regions in order to counter ideas related to the issue of "homogenization": "To what extent did news agencies really facilitate a worldwide homogenization of news? It can be assumed that news were often newly selected and translated into the respective cultural contexts."⁵⁶

⁴⁹ See e.g. Allen 1930, Böning and Universität Bremen 2004, Bösch 2011, Keane 1998, Martin and Copeland 2003, Münster 1955, Schaffrath 2004, Welke and Wilke 2008.

⁵⁰ See e.g. Kaul 2006, Offredi 1971, Schneider N. 2005, Stark 2007.

⁵¹ See e.g. Mittler 2004, Wagner 2002 and Wagner 2007.

⁵² For details, see Stark 2007:226, Schneider N. 2005, Keane 1998:34.

⁵³ For details, see Anderson 2006[1983], Bösch 2011:9 and 97-99 or Nossek 2004.

⁵⁴ See e.g. Briggs and Burke 2005[2002], Gorman and McLean 2009, Wilke 2008, Stöber 2003. Chapman 2005, for example, takes newspapers during the French Revolution as her starting point.

⁵⁵ On attempts to "de-westernize" Media Studies, see e.g. Hallin and Mancini 2012, Park and Curran 2000, and Wang 2011.

⁵⁶ Bösch 2011:142, translated from the German. For further case studies countering ideas of "homogenization," see Löhr and Wenzlhuemer 2014.

Tibetan Studies. This thesis draws on Tibetan Studies by considering the case of one of Tibet's first newspapers, the Melong. To this day, no review of Tibetan media history has been written. While various Tibetologists have worked on Tibetan-language newspapers, the newspaper itself is rarely at the center of scholarly interest.⁵⁷ Literary scholars have studied texts published in newspapers,⁵⁸ but rarely asked questions such as "How is the newspaper connected to literary traditions?" Historians have attested the foundation of newspapers,⁵⁹ but they have not investigated the social transformations ensuing in its wake. Issues related to the construction and the imagination of Tibet have been widely discussed in connection to the Western reception of Tibet,⁶⁰ however to a lesser extent in connection to the inner imagination of this society,⁶¹ and even less so in connection to its relevant media. It has been only recently that scholars have started directly addressing the possible effects of the introduction of printing to Tibetan language,⁶² thus leading to newspapers slowly starting to receive attention. Except valuable early studies by Bray, Walravens and Engelhardt,⁶³ newspapers have for the longest time been put second place. Tsewang Topla of the College for Higher Tibetan Studies (Sarah, India) narrated at a groundbreaking Melong-conference in Paris in November 2016 that scholars with a Tibetan background generally consider newspapers as something unimportant,

⁵⁷ Exceptions are the works of Bai 1990, Bray 1988, Engelhardt 2011 and 2012, Römer and Erhard 2007, Erhard 2015, Schubert 1935, Tshe ring 2009, Walravens 2002 and 2010, Zhou 2010.

⁵⁸ See e.g. Hartley 2003, Lopez 2009 or Shakya 2004.

⁵⁹ See e.g. Bhum 2010, Latse Journal 2014-2015, Jagou 2010:168-169, Hackett 2008, Harris 2013, Schaedler 2007, Shakya 2000 [1999] and Shakya 2004, Tuttle 2005.

⁶⁰ See e.g. Brauen et al. 2000, or Dodin and Räther 2001.

⁶¹ In comparison to Buddhist religious studies, the study of a social context, social practices and imaginations of "Tibet" has been a relatively minor exploration ground in Western Tibetan studies. There is no space here to list all the important exceptions, however I would like to mention the works of Samuel (1993), Goldstein (e.g. 1971, 1968, 1973), Ekvall (e.g. 1960, 1964), French 1995, Tethong 2000 as well as the studies currently taking place at the University of Bonn.

⁶² Literature on printing culture has risen to a vast quantity, with rising interest in the cultural and social appropriations of texts, the materiality of books or the technology of paper and print. As demonstrated by a compilation on "Tibetan Printing" (Diemberger et al. 2016), scholars now ask questions such as "So, then, was the rise of Tibetan printing a big revolution or a small one?" (Barrett 2016:560). Already Nebesky-Wojkowitz gave a succinct summary of historical developments and technical fineries of print (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1949:67ff.). Schaeffer's study, *The Culture of the Book in Tibet*, placed cultural questions at center stage (Schaeffer 2009). Helman-Ważny's *The Archeology of the Tibetan Book* (2014) looks into the materiality of both manuscripts and printed books. Quintman's study on the cultural history of Milarepa's biography (Quintman 2014) and Ehrhard's studies on colophons of early printed texts (Ehrhard 2012a, 2012b and 2016) showcase the rich opportunities to exploit these sources for an understanding of the cultural and social appropriations of texts.

⁶³ See Bray 1988, Walravens 2002, or Engelhardt 2010.

to be thrown away. This very conference, entitled "The Tibet Mirror – A Tibetan Newspaper in Kalimpong: Current Researches and Perspectives", highlighted the diversity of possible approaches to a newspaper such as the Melong.⁶⁴ Studying the Melong gives unique opportunities to analyze: which actors of which communities were encouraged to participate? What are the transformation processes that may be traced over the course of a publication history of 40 years? Previous studies that have explicitly dealt with the Melong⁶⁵ barely investigated these dynamics, with the valuable exception of Willock's study on secularization dynamics,⁶⁶ or Holmes-Tagchungdarpa's study on religious discourses in the Melong.⁶⁷ The majority methodologically remains within the framework of one "Tibetan culture", thus dealing only insufficiently with cultural transformation and transfer processes of a Tibetan-language press which certainly developed through British and Chinese impulses.

Cultural Studies. Even though the last years have seen an increase in media historical studies with a focus on cultural transformations,⁶⁸ engagement with border-crossing processes remains a desideratum in media history.⁶⁹ I have initially addressed the Melong as part of my master thesis, where I have answered the basic questions of who, what, when and where.⁷⁰ The current project extends this analysis not only in terms of its sources but also through paying appropriate attention to the cultural transformation processes at work. An investigation of the production, product and reception of the Melong showcases that "cultures" are not bounded entities within national containers,⁷¹ but that they are rather actively shaped and solidified by the investigated actors. Kalimpong and the Melong provide a superb case for examining transcultural dynamics.

⁶⁴ The conference "The Tibet Mirror – A Tibetan Newspaper in Kalimpong: Current Researches and Perspectives" (November 17-18, 2016) was organized by Françoise Robin, Françoise Wang-Toutain and Rachel Guidoni. Proceedings are forthcoming.

⁶⁵ See e.g. Engelhardt 2011 and Engelhardt 2012, Engelhardt 2013, Fader 2002-2009, Mikhaylova 2015, Sawerthal 2011, Willock 2016.

⁶⁶ See Willock 2016.

⁶⁷ See Holmes-Tagchungdarpa 2013.

⁶⁸ See e.g. Finzsch and Lehmkuhl 2004, Wenzlhuemer 2010, Kaul 2006, Wagner 2007 or Mittler 2004.

⁶⁹ See e.g. Marzsolek and Robel 2014:6, Bösch 2011:19-20.

⁷⁰ See Sawerthal 2011.

⁷¹ For a discussion of the relationship between "cultural" and "national" entities, see Hepp 2014[2006]:31-37.

Part 1: Historical Context and Production Environment of the Melong

2 A History of Mediated Communication in Tibetan Language with a Focus on Print Media and Newspapers

In the vast lands of the Tibetan plateau, movement of people and transfer of information over long distances had always been common practice. Information was transferred from one point to another mainly orally. If it was transported in written form, then it travelled between individuals who were exclusive readers. Such exchange of information was on demand and not a regular undertaking. Texts which were put into writing on a larger scale in manuscript form, or on an even bigger scale later on via printing were predominantly of religious nature, their contents dealing not with current events but rather transcending notions of past, present and future. If at all, instead of novelty, antiquity was considered a virtue which increased a text's value.¹ The reception of such texts deviated in crucial aspects from the reception of newspapers. Thub bstan bsam 'phel, the former secretary of the Department of Information and International Relation of the Central Tibetan Administration, puts it like this: "[The traditional attitude towards news and information] was deferential and because of this deference, information and knowledge were enshrined on the altar and became remote, inaccessible, the object of unquestioning faith."² In contrast, in Europe the newspaper had developed into an idealized medium in the form of a "civic press", as Lundell calls it, a press for citizens to participate in public discourse. Lundell notes: "This ideal was not only successfully translated into practice; it was shaped and negotiated through that practice. The publishers of newspapers literally considered it their duty to publish letters to the paper, and its readers considered it their right to appear in print. [...] The newspaper, it was commonly

¹ See also Samphel 2003:169, who contrasts the activity of *gter ston* or "treasure revealers" with the modern practice of journalists: "In old Tibet when a Tibetan author wrote a masterpiece, his instinct was not to rush to the printers. He buried his work, in the hope that centuries later [somebody] would discover his work, its antiquity giving it a halo of wisdom, sacredness and a special spiritual significance [...]." See also Sawerthal 2011:37-8.

² Samphel 2003:169. See also Sawerthal 2011:37-38.

agreed, should not reflect or represent a public discourse, it should actually be one, in order to promote a better society."³

In my master thesis, I have already stressed that the practices surrounding the written word and the transfer of information in Tibetan-speaking areas in the early 20th century stood in stark contrast to those features commonly associated with the practice of newspaper making, such as public accessibility, periodicity or critical reading of contents. Thus, the intervening momentum of Tharchin's endeavor can hardly be overestimated: he regularly and publicly laid out news about current events in writing, which encompassed universal contents and assumed the critical reception of the public, in whatever way imagined.⁴ Texts in Tibet hardly ever served this function. Woodcut printing had been prevalent in Tibet for centuries, and this technology catered for a quick multiplication of existent contents but not for the quick production of new contents. Thus, I have previously argued that for various reasons, may they be technological, organizational or social, conditions did not cater for the development of a newspaper in Tibet.

However, I had also disregarded the fact that two of the major functions of a newspaper, i.e. the mediated exchange of information and the mediated commentary on information, had indeed already existed in elaborate modes for centuries. Naturally, newspaper editors would consciously or unconsciously pick up on these existent communicative patterns. Therefore, firstly I will survey the exchange and commentary of mediated information before and during the first appearances of newspapers in Tibet. Secondly, the Melong was not the only Tibetan-language newspaper published in the first half of the 20th century, and therefore I will also investigate the historical developments of newspapers within which the Melong is located, in order to assess its relevance from the perspective of media history.

³ Lundell 2011:11-12.

⁴ See also Schaffrath 2004:484: "[...The newspaper] is held as part of a public which informs, shapes opinions, entertains, criticizes, and controls the law- and rightful activities of a government, parliament, administration, jurisdiction, and other institutions in the public sphere." See also Sawerthal 2011:19.

2.1 Mediated Exchange and Commentary on Information

The following short history of mediated communication in Tibetan will shed light on shifts in communication brought about by the introduction of new media. Particular attention will be placed on the distinction between oral and written as well as private and public communication. "Private" and "public" are distinguished here in terms of the latter's transcendence of a concrete and specific receiver of information: when information is mediated "publicly", this public receiver of the information becomes unspecific – a public consists of a certain number of people who lose their concrete individuality by being imagined within a distinct group, even if it has blurred boundaries. The individual becomes anonymous, and the group carries weight as a new agent in social interaction. This public is served by "mass media", which Bösch defines as "technical media which facilitate indirect communication with an unknown, spatially dispersed audience."⁵ As mentioned in the introduction, media histories therefore usually refer to the invention of Gutenberg's printing press as the beginning of modern mass media, because the printing press for the first time facilitates the simultaneous coverage of unknown, dispersed people.⁶ This is different in the case of Tibetan-language "news studies" (*gsar 'gyur rig pa*). As the name suggests, the focus here is less on aspects of mass media and more on the communication of information (or news) and therefore studies set out much earlier.⁷ In an attempt to bridge these different scholarly traditions, in the following I introduce different modes of mediated information exchange and commentary on the Tibetan plateau, first excluding print. This will be followed by a brief description of the development of Tibetan-language printing and finally the emergence of Tibetan-language newspapers in the 20th century.

⁵ Bösch 2011:23, original in German.

⁶ See e.g. Bösch 2011, Wilke 2008 or Stöber 2003. Chapman 2005 starts with newspapers during the French Revolution.

⁷ See e.g. Rtse dbang et al. 1990, Rdo dkar bkra shis tshe ring 2006 and Shar ba thogs med 2004. The latter relies heavily on Rtse dbang et al. 1990, and therefore I give preference to Shar ba thogs med only if he deviates from Rtse dbang et al. 1990. I am grateful to Luran Hartley for pointing out Rtse dbang et al. to me.

2.1.1. Mediated Information Exchange

In his history of modern Tibet, Goldstein describes how, when the Thirteenth Dalai Lama passed away in 1933, "the drums on the Potala palace roof beat a sorrowful dirge, spreading the news of the Dalai Lama's death throughout Lhasa."⁸ The drum, a century-old medium, functions similar to the modern radio, as it spreads information orally and publicly. However, it lacks one important feature of modern mass media: its location is fixed and thus it remains immobile. Media which initially performed an applied practical function in a military context later survived in the form of rituals in state or monastic context.⁹ Before the Tibetan script was invented in the seventh century, information was transported orally, at times assisted by media for memory-stimulation: It is recorded that, during the Tang dynasty (618-906), messengers marked notches in wooden sticks (*shing khram*) or bound knots into strings in order to truthfully transmit messages. Such practices were also used to settle contracts, i.e. to make information permanent.¹⁰ Particular symbols were used either in private communication or for public display: in Tangut times, couriers would carry different symbols which signified their clan-affiliation or more specific tasks at hand. Nebesky-Wojkowitz reports, for example, that a golden arrow meant the courier was collecting warriors. Until recently, at least until the turn of the last century (1900), a courier would travel relevant areas in order to collect militia, carrying an arrow with a white cloth.¹¹ Whoever knew the code of such signs could communicate through them, or at times use the others' ignorance to one's advantage. During the guerilla wars against the Chinese PLA in the 1950s, for example, the wives of some

⁸ Goldstein 2007[1989]:146.

⁹ See also Gnyan phyug 1993:44.

¹⁰ See Shar ba thogs med 2004:33 and Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1949:1-2. In an interview, Spro tshigs chos grags, late vice president of PEN Tibetan Writers Abroad, explained how before the invention of script in Tibet, strings were used to carry information: three knots signified a very important, two knots a mildly important, and one knot a minor important message (April 17, 2014, Dharamsala).

¹¹ See Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1949:1-2.

fighter's signaled whether it was safe to return to the house: If PLA soldiers were around, they would only put out red clothes to dry, recounts one fighter.¹²

Script. Basically, script is likewise a specific code of signs, yet more complex. Script caters to the effective transport and storage of complex information. The Tibetan script is said to have been invented in the seventh century, coinciding with the consolidation of the first Tibetan empire, which stretched over vast areas of the Tibetan plateau. Legend has it that the famous dharma-king Srong btsan sgam po (probably died 649) sent his minister Thon mi saṃbhoṭa (seventh century, born in Nyemo) to India, in order to model a Tibetan script after existent Indic alphabets.¹³ Over time, two Tibetan script types came into mainstream usage: The *dbu can* ("with head"), and the *dbu med* ("without head"), or cursive. According to mainstream Tibetan historiography, the script's main purpose was to spread the Buddhist scriptures in Tibet. However much administrative purposes the invention would in fact cater for,¹⁴ the script established itself as the medium of the religious, expressed in the momentous project of translating Buddhist scriptures and associated literature from other languages, primarily Indian, into Tibetan. The transition from simple symbols to a standardized written alphabet was accompanied by the implementation of an elaborate literary tradition of Indic languages such as Sanskrit into Tibetan: stylistic formulas, metaphors, or whole poetic systems were imported. Importantly, Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan (1182-1251) translated Daṇḍin's *Kāvyaḍarśa* into Tibetan, which became known as the *Snyan ngag me long* and developed into a standard work for poetic compositions, taught in schools as *the* literary model up until today. Over centuries, Buddhists in Tibet aimed at correctly keeping and transmitting religious contents which had mainly come to the plateau from India and were thus preserved in Indic languages (Sanskrit was particularly important). Therefore, texts in Indic languages carried an authoritative air, and employing their stylistic means, even if

¹² As recounted by fighter Ngag dbang chen mo, cited in Dunham 2005[2004]:168-9.

¹³ For a historical account of the invention of the Tibetan script, see Van Schaik 2011.

¹⁴ For a short summary on the introduction of the Tibetan script, see Richardson and Snellgrove 2003:74-78.

reinvented in Tibetan language, brought legitimacy to a newly translated or even composed text. Gold has shown indications how in Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan's adaption of the *Kāvyaḍarśa* into Tibetan, "buddhicization" dynamics of the literary standard were at work.¹⁵ Of course, it is not the case, that Sanskrit-"originals" were perfectly copied and then used in unaltered fashion for centuries up until today. It is neither the case, that imported texts, therein contained styles, rhetorics, or contents would operate in a vacuum. On the contrary, there is no doubt that various multidimensional, multilateral, possibly diverging, complex and distinct adaption processes are and were at work at any moment in time. This is exactly the point, though: While these processes were at work, a conceptualization of Sanskrit-texts as true, original, and thus authoritative sources solidified; invoking its styles was sought after by people who wanted to engage in the Tibetan language in ways considered sophisticated. Surely, deviations from these standard models happened at all times, but were not celebrated as such. Even in modern Tibetan literary compositions of the 20th and 21st centuries, which in many aspects depart from Sanskrit-supremacy, various forms of the specific tibetanized *kāvya*-style live on.¹⁶

Apart from the primarily religious task of translating the sacred Buddhist scriptures from India, the administrative usage of the new script must likewise be seen as a sacred activity. Governance of the Tibetan empire increasingly came to signify the rule of a divine Buddhist king, a *dharmarājā* (hereafter referred to as "dharmaraja"), over his commoners. The kings of the Tibetan empire were considered of divine origin, and thus the script's usage for its administration thus of divine nature as well. Administration (or politics) and admiration (or religion) were in no way disconnected, but two dimensions of the same idea: on one hand, Buddhism was used as a tool to establish rule, on the other hand, rulers enabled the

¹⁵ See Gold 2007 and Kellner (forthcoming).

¹⁶ See e.g. Jabb 2015.

establishment of Buddhism; and the invention of script facilitated new forms of media in order to communicate this type of governance.

Stone Pillars. One important new medium is documented on the plateau at least for the eighth century, namely inscriptions on stone pillars (*rdo ring*).¹⁷ The pillars present some of the earliest extant usages of the Tibetan script, the earliest example dating to roughly 763 (the Lhasa Zhol pillar),¹⁸ and most of the early stone pillars were proclamations of oaths taken between the king and a second party, as Richardson has shown.¹⁹ They were tools for efficient governance and included information on a minister's best practices, the punishment of those disloyal to the divine king,²⁰ and thus a means of public deterrence, the settlement of privileges, or simply as border markers.²¹ They also give glimpses into the suppression of other religions. Many inscriptions included declarations, and thus stipulations, to follow Buddhism in the future. Their main function was to make such contents permanent, for which writing in stone in fact presents a most effective way.²² Everybody, no matter whether high or low, should know its contents. Some Tibetan scholars have argued, that because stone pillars usually proclaim news-content to an unspecific public, they can be counted as early forms of mass media, with the limitation of being spatially fixed. Shar ba thogs med calls them even preforms of newspapers. The categorization as mass media is plausible, as they are generally accessible and not locked away, and therefore accessible to everybody who knew how to read. At the same time, this is a problematic point: Who knew at the time how to read? Further

¹⁷ For some illustrations of the most important early stone pillars, see Richardson and Snellgrove 2003:37-38 and 91-92. Note that the practice of erecting stone pillars (without inscriptions) on the plateau dates back much farther, as shown by Aldenderfer and Yinong 2013:37-39.

¹⁸ The exact date of erection is not settled. Richardson proposes 764 (Richardson 1985:2); Li and Coblin "a bit after 763" (Li and Coblin 2013:124); Rtse dbang et al. 763 (Rtse dbang et al. 1990:88); Tuttle and Schaeffer "circa" 767 (Tuttle and Schaeffer 2013:xvi).

¹⁹ See in Richardson 1985:v.

²⁰ For occurrences of "royal assertions of supernatural descent" in the inscriptions, see Li and Coblin 2013:125.

²¹ On the occasion of the signing of a Tibetan-Chinese peace agreement in c.821, three stone pillars were erected (in Lhasa, at the Sino-Tibetan border and in Chang'an, then the capital of the Chinese empire). The Lhasa-pillar reads: "Gods and men all know it and bear witness so that it may never be changed; and an agreement has been engraved on this stone pillar to inform future ages and generations" (Shakabpa 2010:155). Also much later, in the 18th century after the Gurkha-invasion, borders were marked by stone pillars (see Shakabpa 2010:535).

²² See Richardson 1985:39: Next to the burial site of Khri song lde brtsan (755-c.797), a pillar was erected (800): "Of his meritorious achievement, praised by all, a record has been written on a stone pillar never to be destroyed."

investigations are needed on whom they were read to, or whether they were used in rituals, and so on.²³ It is known, though, that many of the pillars did not exist by themselves but were rather part of early publicity campaigns: simultaneously with the erection of the stone pillar in Samye, containing an oath to follow Buddhism (779), thirteen copies of the proclamation were "written on blue paper in gold ink, and they were announced throughout Tibet,"²⁴ writes Shakabpa.

Letter Writing. The new script demanded for educated people who could make sense of its letters and words. Such literary education increasingly took place in institutionalized religious centers of renunciation and learning, i.e. in monasteries. Monks were trained as scribes to produce manuscripts of Buddhist scriptures in tedious copying efforts. Ever since the invention of the Tibetan script, it was also used to write letters between dignitaries, to distribute orders, verdicts, tax information, and so on. Rtse dbang et al. present examples of paper scrolls (*shog dril*) from immediately after the script's invention, the mid-seventh century.²⁵ During this time, short pieces of information were carved on wooden boards, as shown by Takeuchi.²⁶ Letters written on paper and transported via a postal system (see below) are documented for the 13th century the latest, during the Sakya-Mongol rule. Rtse dbang et al. refer to them as "news-letters" (*gsar 'gyur 'phrin yig*), because they mainly contained information on what had newly happened – something essential to know for the effective administration of the empire.²⁷

²³ Shar ba thogs med argues that stone inscriptions were a special form of a newspaper (*tshags par*; one meaning of the Tibetan verb root *tshag* [often used instead of *tshags*] is "to carve"), because their contents were news (as opposed to old legends or stories), accessible to everybody, and during the respective time of establishment the most efficient way of distributing information to the widest possible audience (see Shar ba thogs med 2004:35-36). As tempting as this comparison may seem, stone pillars were not produced in a periodic way but were one-time-proclamations of a specific event, and thus they differ from newspapers in an important point.

²⁴ Shakabpa 2010:134.

²⁵ See Rtse dbang et al. 1990:65-81 and Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1949:67. According to Nebesky-Wojkowitz, paper was used in Tibet since the fourth century (Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1949:60); Helman-Wazny proposes that paper production in Tibet started around 650 (Helman-Wazny 2016:535).

²⁶ See Takeuchi 2003:43-54. See also Rtse dbang et al. 1990:81-86.

²⁷ See Rtse dbang et al. 1990:120-126.

Over the centuries, writing letters developed into a formulaic undertaking. Since the establishment of the Ganden Phodrang government in the 17th century, an elaborate and complex format for writing letters developed, hand in hand with the solidification of administrative hierarchies and connected practices of the new government. By the 18th century, letter writing guides (*yig bskur rnam bshag*) were compiled, i.e. letter collections showcasing "the rules governing the 'fine-grained' ways of expressing respect appropriate to the status of the addressee," as Schwieger wrote.²⁸ Letters mirrored the strict hierarchies of official Tibetan society, decorating the recipient's name with various titles and downgrading the writer to a submissive state. Stylistically, they picked up on *kāvya*-literature in its Tibetan adaption.²⁹ By the early 20th century, various letter writing guides were in circulation, including some published and compiled also by Babu Tharchin. Much of the style of the Melong's editorial comments is based on these formulaic letters (see Chapters 3 and 4).

Information Transport - Informal. While stone pillars were steady storage vessels of information, letters were transportable and thus utilized one advantage of script. Informal messengers, recruited from a network of relatives or acquaintances and who travel trade routes, had and still are a common ways of transporting information from one point to another. Apart from letters written on paper, messages were also delivered on wooden chalk boards known as *sam khra*. The message could easily be erased and the answer readily written on the same board. These were in use for personal, proximate letter exchange and particularly suitable for messages which should not be seen by anybody other than the true recipient.³⁰

Arrow letters (*mda' yig*) were established as a format for important official messages.

²⁸ Schwieger 2005:201-202. For a description of the letter format, see Schwieger 2005:160-168.

²⁹ For details on the history and format of letter writers, see Schneider H. 2005 and Schwieger 2005.

³⁰ See Schneider H. 2005:260 and Nebesky-Wojowitz 1949:77. Goldstein describes how, after the power struggles following the passing of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in 1933, the traders Spom mda' tshang and Sa 'du tshang, for example, sent a message to the former Dalai Lama's favourite Kun 'phel lags, urging him to take over the regency over Tibet (Goldstein 2007[1989]:168). When Pha bong kha bde chen snying po travelled to Jyekundo in 1937, in order to meet the Panchen Lama, overtly the two discussed religious topics, but simultaneously they held a second conversation via chalk boards on the delicate political topic of the Panchen Lama's return to Tibet (Goldstein 2007[1989]:289).

Messages were written in ink on a piece of textile which was attached to an arrow or wooden stick, originally sent by shooting the arrow.³¹ Another important communication network spanning the plateau was the thousands of monasteries. Dunham reports that the guerilla fighters intensively used this informal network during the 1950s: "Put simply, the trans-Tibetan network of religious enclaves was the pony express of the resistance movement. Using the six-thousand-plus monasteries scattered throughout Tibet like so many relay stations, the burgeoning resistance could gather reports of incidents [...]. Also lamas 'going on pilgrimages' [...] provided the perfect guise for spies on the move."³²

Information Transport - Official Post. A systematic, government-organized transportation system of goods and letters can be traced back to the Sakya-Mongol rule of the 13th and 14th centuries. In 1268, a census was organized in order to control taxation of the empire. In order to execute taxation, a militia and mail service were indispensable.³³ According to Petech, the established mail service functioned as a relay system connecting the various administrative units, comprised of 27 main postal stations (*sa tshigs*, hereafter referred to as "satsig") with smaller branches in between.³⁴ The satsig also marked the administrative district headquarters to which people living in that area had the duty to perform compulsory labor, transport goods or provide animals and lodging upon request of the ruling body. However, in the succeeding centuries of political fragmentation the system demised.³⁵ From 1642, after the renewed consolidation of Tibet under the Fifth Dalai Lama by help of the Manchus, the system was newly endorsed, again based on compulsory labor and provisions, and then referred to as '*u lag*'. In the first half of the 18th century, the Tibetan regent Pho lha nas

³¹ See Schneider H. 2005:160. A depiction may be found in Goldstein 2007[1989]:291, who reports that when the Panchen Lama was about to set out for his return journey to Central Tibet in 1937, threatening to bring along a large army of Chinese soldiers, he sent an arrow letter to the government in Lhasa, saying that he will now leave for Tibet.

³² Dunham 2005[2004]:147 and 149.

³³ See also Petech 2013a:234, who attests that effective administration was based on the four pillars "census, tribute, militia, and mail service."

³⁴ See Petech 2013a:236. According to Rtse dbang et al. 1990:120, the 27 satsig existed already by 1206, with four additional ones being established in Ngari in 1287.

³⁵ See Petech 2013a:236, describing that the Mongol garrison had to be used for transportation.

expensively renewed it, modelled on the Chinese mail system which had been extended from the Sino-Tibetan border trading hub Dartsedo (also Tatsienlu) to Lhasa in 1721. For a while, Pho lha nas held up an own postal system connecting Lhasa with the Western and Eastern parts, but soon the system turned out to be too expensive and the government had to return to the *'u lag* system, the Manchus running their own mail system again.³⁶ The system was in use until the 1950s, subject to changing efficiency according to varying degrees of assertiveness on behalf of the rulers. According to Goldstein, the government of the early 20th century was in command over hundreds of satsig spanning the country. Only few officials held permanent passes (*lam yig*), including the postmen and government messengers.³⁷

Building on these century-old modes of satsig, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama initiated efforts to transform it into a modern postal system in 1912. Up to this point, only governmental letters and goods were transported and private mail was delivered only against bribes.³⁸ The modern postal system should legalize this practice, so that – in accordance with global modes – anybody could send a letter based on the acquisition of stamps. In fact, both the British from the South and the Chinese from the East had already established postal stations reaching into Central Tibet by the first decade of the 20th century. When the British forced their presence into Gyantse in 1904, they established a permanent trade agency there and also opened a post office, connected to their world-wide postal system via Phari and Kalimpong to India. By 1910, also the Chinese Qing had established postal stations all the way to Lhasa.³⁹ When the Dalai Lama returned from his Indian exile in 1911-12, he got rid of the Chinese presence and established a Tibetan post system, based on the existent stations. The post office of Lhasa was established within Tengyeling monastery, another one in Gyantse, and further smaller

³⁶ On the postal administration under Po lha nas, see Petech 2013b:398-405, particularly pages 400 and 404.

³⁷ See Goldstein 1971b:19 and Goldstein 2007[1989]:4. For a further description, see also Goldstein 1971a:176.

³⁸ See McGovern 1924:432-433.

³⁹ See Li 2002[1999]:14 for numbers of letters sent during 1910-11 under Chinese control. Stations were at Gyantse, Shigatse, Phari and Yatung (Dromo) to the South, and in Chamdo and Gyamda to the East.

branches along the road to the East all the way to Chamdo via Gyamda.⁴⁰ McGovern reports that twelve post offices with various intermediary points had been opened by 1923, and he adds that "the outer provinces are still covered only by the old courier system."⁴¹ It seems that especially the route to Chamdo still relied exclusively on the system of *satsig*.⁴²

Tibetan stamps were printed in Lhasa at the Drapchi mint (*grwa bzhi glog 'krul khang* or since 1931 *grwa bzhi glog 'phrul las khung*) and sold at the post.⁴³ However, since Tibet was not part of the Global Postal Union, these stamps were invalid outside of the country. Outside connections were possible only via British presence in Gyantse or Chinese presence in the East, and this had the effect that letters had to be newly franked with, for example, British stamps at the Indian border. Harrer reports that a letter from Europe to Lhasa took 14 days to be delivered, and it took 20 when delivered from the United States. In the early 1920s, the trip from Gyantse to Lhasa still took about two and a half days.⁴⁴ The transportation of letters outside of Tibet was certainly complicated by the complexities entailed in the recognition of Tibet's status as an independent country, but even internally the system was not well-implemented. The new system did not eradicate the practice of taking bribes, and there were no fixed dates for the mail to go in or out. The runner's job was dangerous, so he carried spears and a bell as a defense against bandits and wild animals. In fact, in the early summer of 1939, two messengers were reported injured and killed, respectively.⁴⁵

The modern postal system was for everybody's usage in theory. In reality, however, it was mostly the government who used it. Ward describes how "the courier [...] jogs over the

⁴⁰ All information on the postal network in the 20th century is compiled from Li 2002[1999], Olsson 2010, McGovern 1924, Melong 13-7-7&8 (March 1945) and Melong 8-3&4-7 (April/May 1935). For a description of the post office in Gyamda in 1935 see Rhodes 1985. For a map of the postal network see Olsson 2010. Note that Melong 8-3&4-7 (April/May 1935) reported plans to establish post offices along the Sino-Tibetan border as well as an airmail delivery option to Lhasa - presumably by the KMT.

⁴¹ McGovern 1924:432-433.

⁴² Olsson reports that there was no runner to Chamdo. Melong 13-7-7&8 (March 1945) mentions the *rdzong gzhis rta shad*, i.e. mounted messengers under the order of the governmental local estate (*rdzong bzhis*), to Chamdo. For an explanation of *rdzong gzhis*, see Sangyay and Rigzin 1986.

⁴³ See Harrer 1952:118.

⁴⁴ See Harrer 1952:117.

⁴⁵ For descriptions or illustrations of runners, see Harrer 1952:118, Bell 1992[1924]:176, Marshall 2002:15 or Rhodes 1985. For the news report on the calamities, see Melong 10-7-3 (April/May 1939).

mountains, warning all whom it may concern that he is carrying Government mails - very few private letters are sent in Tibet."⁴⁶ While the efficiency of the postal system is reported by Bell in 1924 and Chapman in 1936,⁴⁷ Tharchin, for example, was very critical of it. In 1937, he suggested to pressure the Tibetan government to join the British postal service, criticizing that postmasters would take money for stamps but not actually stamp the letters; that stamps would fall off; that only letters of important people would be taken care of; and that the commoners could not make use of it.⁴⁸ In effect, the mail often continued to be sent through travelers, merchants or private messengers, as it had been done for centuries before.⁴⁹ The modern system simply imposed an extra layer on already existent forms of information exchange, with the long-established methods usually being more reliable than the newer ones.

Telegraphy. To the establishment of the postal system came the introduction of telegraphy, first with and then without wire. So far, the delivery of information had taken a substantial amount of time. With telegraphy, information could travel thousands of miles within hours, for example, from London to Calcutta.⁵⁰ The first telegraphic wire line into Tibet was established by the British in 1904. They connected their agency in Gyantse to the rest of their infrastructure in India via a single-wired iron line,⁵¹ and in 1923 they assisted the Tibetan government in extending it to Lhasa, despite resistance of Tibetan conservatives.⁵² Prone to interruption, however, it broke down every two to three weeks. In 1923, about five telegraphs per week were sent.⁵³ When India gained independence in 1947, all facilities were handed over to the Indian government, and in 1955 to the Chinese Communists.⁵⁴

⁴⁶ Cited in Rhodes 1985:24.

⁴⁷ See Bell 1992[1924]:178.

⁴⁸ See Melong 13-7-7&8 (March 1945) and a letter from Tharchin to Charles Bell, July 25, 1937, cited in Fader 2004:271.

⁴⁹ See also Olsson 2010:12.

⁵⁰ In 1930 a telegram sent from Calcutta reached Gyantse within a few hours (see Macdonald 1999[1930]:51).

⁵¹ See Nepean 1982.

⁵² See McGovern 1924:434. The line was then established by ways of the satsig-system (see King 1924:527-531).

⁵³ See McGovern 1924:434.

⁵⁴ According to Rgyal rtse nam rgyal dbang 'dus, the Chinese-Indian treaty was signed in 1954 (Gyaltse Namgyal Wangdue 2012:155). According to Li, facilities were handed over on April 1, 1955 (Li 2002[1999]:14). See also Richardson 1962:296.

Through the technology of the telegraph, Tibet was now connected to a global network of immediate information and thus, at least in theory, it was provided with instant news on what was happening in all the other parts of the world. Certainly, information from such foreign places had always reached the plateau via travelers, but the sheer speed at which information could now travel was new. Significantly, the telegraphic line, the postal system and traders crossing the Himalayas all passed through channels controlled by the British, either by the government or by private companies.⁵⁵ When such items of information reached Gyantse or Lhasa, they were not broadcast in any systematic way to a broader public, and so most information continued to reach the public by word of mouth.

Wireless. The implementation of wireless telegraphy, i.e. the technological foundation of radio programming, changed this. A telegraphic wire-line features two material ends, and both the sender as well as the receiver need to be present on either side and at a certain location in order to receive the transmitted information. At the receiving end of wireless communication, however, it was no longer necessary to be present at a specific geographical location – it sufficed to have a receiver and to be within the radius of transmittance. Thus, wireless technology provided the prerequisite for public broadcasting, i.e. the transmission of information to a certain number of listeners in dispersed locations. The first wireless devices entered Tibet through political channels and were used for public airing only later. In August 1934, a Kuomintang (KMT) mission under the lead of Huang Mu-sung reached Lhasa, with the official purpose of expressing condolence for the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (†1933). In effect, the Chinese took up the opportunity of the weakened Tibetan state to establish a permanent mission, bringing along a wireless set in order to communicate directly with Nanjing. The mission was later strikingly expelled in July 1949 through the removal of

⁵⁵ On the telegraphic system in (British) India, see e.g. Wenzlhuemer 2013 or Kaul 2006. According to Goldstein, the clandestine Tibet Improvement Party (Nub bod legs bcod skyid sdug) was picked up because Dgen 'dun chos 'phel sent secretly produced maps through the official British mail service (Goldstein 2007[1989]:453-454).

its wireless antenna, "so that no news of this could be sent to China,"⁵⁶ as Goldstein formulated. Up until 1934, this was the only wireless set in Tibet, and thus it is unsurprising that the British quickly follow suit. In 1936-1937, Basil Gould led a British mission to Lhasa, accompanied by Sergeant Dagg and Evan Yorke Nepaen, whose duty was to set up a wireless station.⁵⁷ The British mission also received no mandate for a permanent stay, but since the Tibetans had no volatile means for protest it remained in place until the facilities were officially handed over to India in 1947.⁵⁸ Reginald Fox, Henry Baker and Robert Ford took turns operating the station and training prospective Tibetan operators.

During this time, the Tibetan government became increasingly aware of the general importance of modern communication infrastructure. In early 1945, the American government presented three wireless sets upon request. The British followed up by granting an extra two wireless sets.⁵⁹ From the summer of 1948 onwards, Ford officially worked on the "Lhasa radio station",⁶⁰ however he was soon sent to Chamdo to report on the rapidly approaching PLA. Eventually, he was captured by the Communists⁶¹ and remained in prison until 1955. Fox held up the post in Lhasa but was forced to flee in late 1950. During the late 1950s, when the CIA supported the guerilla warfare in Tibet, education in wireless communication was one of the priority tasks to teach the Tibetans, and parachuting Tibetans held contact with CIA-agents in Kalimpong through such wireless sets.⁶²

From October 1941 until the end of the Second World War, Baker assisted the Political Officer of Sikkim (POS), Basil Gould, by operating a radio at the British Residency in Gangtok, Sikkim. His task was to keep contact with Lhasa and start a broadcasting station,

⁵⁶ On the Chinese mission, see Goldstein 2007[1989]:228-232, 245 and 614, and Melong 7-12-7 (September 1934, "Wireless in Lhasa").

⁵⁷ For details on the setup, see Nepean 1982 and Goldstein 2007[1989]:274 and 299.

⁵⁸ British nationalities continued to work as employees of the Tibetan government (see McKay 2009:169).

⁵⁹ See Goldstein 2007[1989]:419-420.

⁶⁰ Melong 16-6&7-6 (April/May 1948) and Goldstein 2007[1989]:622.

⁶¹ Reported in Melong 20-1-7 (April 1952) and HT March 25, 1951:3.

⁶² See e.g. Gyaltsé Namgyal Wangdue 2012:168 and Dunham 2005[2004]:201, 217-218.

however this plan never realized.⁶³ The maintenance of this broadcasting station must be seen in the context of similar propaganda measures by the British, such as their funding of the Melong (see Chapter 3). In fact, the idea to reopen this station was later taken up again in 1949 when Tharchin was involved in the project.⁶⁴

Radio Programming. Technically there is no difference between radio communication between two parties and radio programming. The technology used for political and military communication and intelligence gathering between two or more known exclusive partners is opened up to the public by broadcasting programs available to anybody with a receiver – an oral mass medium. Prior to the arrival of radio sets in Central Tibet, the KMT broadcasted through the Mongolian Tibetan Affairs Commission (MTAC, established 1928), a Tibetan-language program in Nanjing from 1932 onwards.⁶⁵ The Panchen Lama's office operated a radio station during the 1930s.⁶⁶ In Lhasa, the first Tibetan program went on air on January 30, 1950 when Ford of the British Mission broadcasted "Radio Lhasa" in Tibetan, English and Chinese.⁶⁷ On April 22, 1950, the Communist "Radio Peking" started broadcasting in Tibetan Lhasa-dialect as the first minority program of the Communist Party.⁶⁸ The Communist's first radio program from Tibetan speaking areas went on air in Xining in 1951, upon the initiative of Gsung rab rgya mtsho.⁶⁹ In Lhasa, some units of the PLA brought wired radio with them in 1953 and started broadcasting on October 1, 1953 (see below). Later on, this became known

⁶³ See letter from S.J.L. Oliver (Gangtok) to Henry Baker (Gangtok), November 8, 1945, quoted in Croston 2005:96.

⁶⁴ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok), November 24, 1949: "Subject 'Broadcasting in Tibetan Language.' Suggests: [...] 3) "Some years ago I had suggested Gangtok as the Broadcasting St., The reason being that officers who may be employed may not be able to bear the extreme climate of Delhi [...]. So, I now again suggest either Kalimpong or Gangtok [...]. Further, all announcement made on the air should be inserted in papers which will make a former impression upon those who hear. This advantage can be taken of [sic!] by having the announcement inserted in the Tibetan Newspaper of Kalimpong."

⁶⁵ See Tshe dga' 2004:111 and Rdo dkar bkra shis tshe ring 2006:10.

⁶⁶ See Enders 1942:254.

⁶⁷ See Melong 18-5-5 (February/March 1950), Shakya 2000[1999]:12 or Hartley 2003:89. HT November 19, 1950:3 shows that broadcasting still occurred after the arrival of the PLA.

⁶⁸ See Tshe dga' 2004:111 and Rdo dkar bkra shis tshe ring 2006:10. According to Goldstein, the speaker was Dge bshes shes rab rgya mtsho in Tibetan and Chinese, announcing the liberation of Tibet in late 1949 (Goldstein 2007[1989]:623).

⁶⁹ See Hartley 2003:89. For further regional radio programs, see Tshe dga' 2004:112.

"All Tibet Radio".⁷⁰ From 1953, a daily Christian program in Tibetan was broadcasted from the Philippines by the Christian Far Eastern Broadcasting Company.⁷¹

The radio could be an efficient medium in a place with high rates of illiteracy such as Tibet, however few people actually owned receivers. While Goldstein states that "many Tibetan government officials owned shortwave radios"⁷² by 1945, according to Ford the total number of radios owned by Tibetans was less than ten in 1950.⁷³ The American journalist Alan Winnington, who resided in Lhasa in 1955, wrote: "[A broadcasting station] would have little value at this time, because the few people who have wireless receivers are in any case those who can read the papers."⁷⁴ Once they had occupied Tibet, the Communists monitored radio reception, and the Melong posted in October 1953: "For everybody who owns a radio receiver: You can only keep it if you promise not to listen to news from America or Taiwan."⁷⁵

Foreign Newspapers. News was introduced to Tibet also via foreign newspapers. Winnington, for example, states that "a handful of people [...] had old copies of the Indian or English newspapers carried over the passes on yaks."⁷⁶ McGovern reports that the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had subscriptions to *The Statesman* and *The Englishman*, but that the subscriptions were discontinued because he was unable to actually read the English-language papers. In 1923, Bsod nams, the official in charge of the communication bureau in Lhasa, had subscribed to *The Bengali* and *Amrita Bazar Patrika* as a means of studying English.⁷⁷ The Fourteenth Dalai Lama was known to read the *Life* magazine,⁷⁸ and a few high officials had been subscribers to foreign newspaper in around 1950.⁷⁹

⁷⁰ In 1959, according to Tshe dga' (Tshe dga' 2004:112), and in 1956, according to Hartley and Shar ba thogs med (Hartley 2003:89, Shar ba thogs med 2004:58).

⁷¹ See Melong 21-8-1 (November 1953), 24-12-7 (April 1958), and HT January 1, 1956:11.

⁷² Goldstein 2007[1989]:611.

⁷³ Cited in Dunham 2005[2004]:60.

⁷⁴ Winnington 1957:193.

⁷⁵ Melong 21-7-3 (October 1953).

⁷⁶ Winnington 1957:190.

⁷⁷ See McGovern 1924:425. Bsod nams was a Sikkim-born Lepcha, who was educated in Kalimpong.

⁷⁸ See Laird 2006:386.

⁷⁹ See Goldstein 2007[1989]:611.

Public Loudspeakers. The Communists erected public loud speakers in Lhasa and other cities because only very few Tibetans owned radio receivers. In their function, they were similar to non-transportable stone pillars, however they had the advantage of reaching even the illiterate population. They also differ in the sense that their contents were impermanent and accessible only at a specific time. In 1955, Winnington reported on the speakers in the following way: "For the rest, the commonalty, and then only those inside the towns, the only means of getting the news is through the loudspeakers broadcasts in the streets."⁸⁰ The eleven speakers in town broadcasted a one-hour program three times a week at 11:00 a.m. The two announcers were the daughter of a nobleman and of a businessman, respectively. The broadcasted news was usually taken from what had already been printed in the Lhasa newspaper (see below, the section on Tibetan newspapers), but in the case of the loudspeakers, the language was kept simpler. Winnington comments on this situation as follows: "It is now commonplace to see crowds of Lhasans standing listening to a talk on pre-natal care, how to prevent epidemics and how to join the campaign to ban nuclear weapons."⁸¹

2.1.2 Mediated Commentary on Information

The available sources remain silent on the contents of the people's talk when they would stand and listen to the loudspeakers during the 1950s in Lhasa. One could refer to such crowds of people who stood around the speakers and probably commented on the broadcasted news as "occasional publics". Occasional publics would also include earlier forms of public, such as those who, decades or centuries earlier, would meet on markets and exchange and commented on news.⁸² Distinct forms of public commenting on news had especially developed in urban spaces such as Lhasa, the epicenter of the political power of the Ganden Phodrang. Insight

⁸⁰ Winnington 1957:193.

⁸¹ Winnington 1957:194.

⁸² For a discussion of Thum's "occasional publics" (okkassionelle Öffentlichkeiten), see Wilke 2008:11.

into these fleeting oral cultures is rare, however some of their forms are documented in what Goldstein refers to as "Lhasa Street Songs".⁸³

Lhasa Street Songs. Street songs were sung on the streets of Lhasa in reaction to political events. Thus, their contents were almost always political and "often with biting sarcasm and irony," as Goldstein writes.⁸⁴ They would "suddenly" appear from unknown origin, their creator thus remaining anonymous. These Lhasa Street Songs were a standardized and elaborate oral medium of public criticism, referred to by Goldstein as the oral "cartoon" of the markets, occupying a niche of overt criticism against what was normally expected to be met with utmost deference. In turning upside down the protocols catering to hierarchical structures, the songs presented a rare mode to circumvent them, "in an environment that did not permit public participation in political affairs and did not condone, leave alone encourage, overt criticism of either superiors or government decisions."⁸⁵ Street songs thus were a counterpoint to the deferential, hyper-polite modes of interaction between individuals who related to each other in highly formalized hierarchies.

The songs often derived from political enemies who would spread them through the masses. They would often spread initially from female water carriers, which is significant insofar as these women had already been attributed the social function of spreading news, since they would be the first to rise in the morning, meet at the river and exchange news.⁸⁶ This "privilege of fools" did not derive only from the practical anonymity of the composers but also from its attributed narrative of origin. According to some authors,⁸⁷ the songs were

⁸³ Note the discussion of Goldstein 1982 also in Sawerthal 2011:38-39.

⁸⁴ Goldstein 1982:56. See also Richardson 1984[1962]:25 and Bell 1992[1924]:206.

⁸⁵ Goldstein 1982:57 and 66.

⁸⁶ See e.g. Gnyan phyug 1993:38. See also Richardson: "There were no newspapers, cartoons, or broadsheets but the women whose daily task it was to carry water from the river to their masters' houses would, loudly and merrily, sing lampoons on the acts of their rulers. [...] By tradition the women enjoyed complete immunity [...]" (Richardson 1984[1962]:25). Bell comments: "It is one of the ways in which public opinion finds expression." (Bell 1992[1924]:206).

⁸⁷ See e.g. Bell 1992[1924]:163: "At the time of the Great Prayer in Lhasa verses appear suddenly in the minds of the women who draw water for the festival. It is believed that these are inspired by a goddess, who takes shape as one of them, and starts the verse on its round through the city. The verses are therefore prophetic. [...]"

believed to be human manifestations of divine scolding supposedly created by the female deity Dpal ldan lha mo who circulated such oracular verses amongst human as a way of rectifying socio-political imbalances. In fact, certain criticism was considered unsuitable within the human realm: commoners are not allowed to criticize officials of higher social status, never mind authorities of divine origin, such as the Dalai Lama. The divine, however, may voice such criticism, and it was precisely due to this belief in the divine origins of such songs that their singers or the female water carriers – in whom the deity was believed to manifest – went unpunished.⁸⁸

Wall Posters. Such songs presented an oral form of public commentary, however sometimes written versions of the songs would appear on walls. In fact, the practice of posting public written messages in Lhasa seems to have been in existence for a long time, according to some authors ever since the Yuan dynasty, but I have no means to verify this.⁸⁹ Posters were put up in order to publicly inform about decrees, new laws or other orders. In this respect, such posters were a practical tool in making things known to a public and, with that, also a way of utilizing the general public to give more weight to certain political decisions.⁹⁰ Apart from being a tool of rulers, posters sometimes appeared anonymously, criticizing the government or others in power. Richardson reports in this context that "knowledge of popular grievances published by these means usually had its effect."⁹¹

For it is one of the oracular verses, and it is their privilege to sing these. Thus does public opinion express itself in a city devoid of newspapers." See also Goldstein 1982:57-58.

⁸⁸ For examples of Lhasa Street Songs, see Goldstein 2007[1989]:895.

⁸⁹ See Rtse dbang et al. 1990:126-128. He calls them *rtisigs ldebs gsar 'gyur* (wall news), noting that this form of media never had a fixed term. Goldstein calls them *yig skyur* (Goldstein et al. 2001:995), differing from the term used in the Melong, *yig bsgyur* (Melong 23-4-5, November 1955), only in spelling.

⁹⁰ When the Thirteenth Dalai Lama fled to India in 1910, the Chinese deposed him of office. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama then wrote a letter to Lhasa, as reported in Goldstein 2007[1989]:57: "At Kalimpong, I come to know that the Manchu Emperor had already issued orders that I had been deposed from office. This was published in the Indian newspapers, and even in Lhasa, posters were put up announcing that I was now an ordinary person and that a new Dalai Lama would soon be chosen."

⁹¹ Richardson 1984[1962]:25. Goldstein 2007[1989]:349 attests that "these wall posters were an alternate type of public protest." In 1940, for example, at the height of the Rwa spreng Regent's power, posters with poems critical of him appeared in Lhasa (Goldstein 2007[1989]:359). In 1921, death threats were voiced against Charles Bell and the British physician R.S. Kennedy (Goldstein 2007[1989]:95).

The posters would often go hand in hand with the spread of oral songs, or vice versa.⁹² Public commentary on events, political happenings and information occurred predominantly in oral form. The literate audience of wall posters, for example, was conceivably small, and the spread of the contained information yet again relied on oral distribution. A more wide-spread public culture of writing in its various forms (newspapers, flyers, wall posters) that included public commentary is really introduced as late as the 1950s, as we will see below (particularly Chapter 6). Due to fortunate coincidences, some standardized forms of oral culture such as the "Lhasa Street Songs" are recorded and documented. Many other such forms must have been in place during different times, but due to the nature of this medium they have escaped the eyes of historians.

2.2 Printing in Tibetan Language

So far, we have looked at modes of mediated information exchange without the use of script, then we have seen how the emergence of a Tibetan script has affected the possibilities of information exchange and produced a corpus of diverse standardized modes of communication, permeated by Indic traditions of text composition. We have looked into the different layers of postal transportation systems in Tibet, and we have also discussed how some of the modern technologies introduced in the 20th century, such as telegraphy, have assisted the ever quicker and easier spread of information. Certain medial forms were used mainly for private correspondence; others were more fit for public broadcast. The written media discussed so far are found both in the private as well as in the public sector: letters were used for private communication, while stone pillars and wall posters were used for public communication, since their public positioning allowed their message to be received by a larger number of unspecific people. The major disadvantage of stone pillars and wall posters, however, was that despite the fact that they were displayed publicly, they were not

⁹² See Goldstein 1982:58.

transportable. Thus, they would reach only a strongly localized public, and anything beyond that again relied on oral propagation. The forms of transportable written texts in circulation that we have discussed so far, namely letters, arrow letters or chalk boards, were unique pieces or strongly limited copies and thus could only be spread individually. The invention of printing technology changed this situation dramatically: it provided the opportunity to address a dispersed group of however many people, i.e. a public, in written form.⁹³ The timeless permanence entailed by the use of script transcends the limiting nature of oral media, which only allow to simultaneously address a limited and specific group of people at one specific point in time.

Printing on paper of significant scope commenced in Tibet in the early 15th century, at a time *between* strong Tibetan empires, namely the Sakya-Mongol hegemony (13th to 14th century) and the Ganden Phodrang government (from the mid-17th century onwards). Initially, print technology was not used for worldly information exchange but rather as an extension of the handwritten production of religious, sacred texts referred to as *dpe cha* (hereafter referred to as "pecha"). The pecha is the standardized Tibetan book format, constituted of loose, longish sheets between stronger front and back covers. The general benefit of printing is the ability to reproduce quickly as many exact copies of an original as desired. Thus, different from the production of manuscripts, one is able to produce another exact copy almost instantly. This technology may be used in many advantageous ways, either soteriologically (the more copies, the more merit), in terms of governance (the more copies, the wider the ruling impact), or commercially (the more copies, the more profit). As we will see below, the first pair occurred in Tibet in quite interconnected ways, when the ruling power was extended through increased accumulation of merit. Significantly, in this respect, printing practices not solely entailed the printing of ink on paper, but other forms of embossing the same image onto a specific surface.

⁹³ See also Eisenstein 2005[1983]:221: "[...] there is no way of making fresh observations 'universal' and 'public' as long as they can be recorded only in manuscript form."

In 1926, Joseph Rock depicted a monk "printing" images of Buddhist deities onto water, overstepping a material and an immaterial world.



Figure 3: A monk "prints" images of deities on water by repeatedly raising and lowering a board in 1926.

The various available print technologies may be distinguished according to how long it takes to produce the first copy. The production of a woodblock, for example, takes significantly longer than the production of a lithographic master: in the first case, every letter needs to be tediously carved into wood, in the second, the contents are simply handwritten on the prepared surface. Woodblock printing was the prevalent printing method in traditional Tibet. In the following, I will trace some trends in the development of printing in Tibet and address possible reasons why woodblock printing satisfied people's needs up until the 20th century. For the periodization of Tibetan printing history, I follow Nourse's useful division into four

phases: "(1) Tibetan-language publishing under the sponsorship of non-Tibetan central Asians such as the Tanguts and the Mongols (12th–14th centuries); (2) the rise of central and western Tibetan printing (15th–16th centuries); (3) the continued spread of printing, including into Eastern Tibet and Mongolia, and the publication of canons (18th–19th centuries); and (4) the adoption of non-woodblock printing technologies (20th century)." ⁹⁴

Early Printing (12th–14th centuries). The invention of printing technology itself can be "directly associated with Buddhism and the need to reproduce religious texts," ⁹⁵ as Helman-Ważny has formulated. The first-ever printed text was a Buddhist text found in Korea and dated to 751, and the earliest extant book a woodblock-printed sutra from 868 found in Dunhuang. ⁹⁶ The first Tibetan work printed from woodblocks is a prayer booklet from Khara-Khoto dated to 1153. As so often, the invention entered the Tibetan cultural sphere through its exchange with foreign powers. During the Sakya-Mongol hegemony in Tibet, the Yuan court sponsored the printing of various Tibetan texts, and scattered printing projects are also known to have taken place in Central Tibet. ⁹⁷ Later, the Ming emperor took up the first major printing project in Beijing in 1410, namely the printing of the whole *bka' 'gyur* (hereafter referred to as Kangyur), the canon comprising the translated words of the Buddha. ⁹⁸ Woodblock printing eventually made its way into Central Tibet through collaborative projects of the Yuan and Ming emperors with Tibetan scholar-monks. Just how it actually became established in Central Tibet is not sufficiently studied, but we know that printing houses mushroomed in 15th century and "in the 16th century they were everywhere," ⁹⁹ according to Clemente.

Printing in Central Tibet (15th–16th centuries). Common thesis has it that rivalling ruler's houses on the fragmented plateau sparked printing projects as a means to showcase and

⁹⁴ Nourse 2016:424.

⁹⁵ Helman-Ważny 2014:116.

⁹⁶ See Helman-Ważny 2014:117 and Sawerthal 2011:28.

⁹⁷ See Schaeffer 2009:10-11, also in Helman-Ważny 2014:123.

⁹⁸ See Helman-Ważny 2014:123.

⁹⁹ Clemente 2016:403.

solidify power. Early woodblock printing projects were executed especially in the South-Western parts of Tibet, in Mangyul Gungthang in Tsang and Lhado in Lhoka, and even further South in the "hidden lands" (*sbas yul*) of the territory of modern Nepal, where resources such as wood and the Daphne plant for paper production were readily available.¹⁰⁰ Hence, throughout the 16th century, trade became increasingly professionalized through the growth of "individual workshops and a network of Buddhist artists and craftsmen", as Ehrhard has observed.¹⁰¹ Printing became increasingly established not only in the South-West but also in Central Tibet, where the Phag mo dru leaders drove various printing projects in support of the newly established Dge lugs school (hereafter referred to as "Gelug" or "Gelugpa"). Nourse opines that these publications were "probably one factor among many in the success of the Gelug school."¹⁰² Thus, printing in these early years must be seen as a means of establishing power by rivaling ruling families – on behalf of local rulers and also on behalf of the newly rising Gelug establishment and Bka' brgyud- or Rnying ma-followers.¹⁰³ The legitimacy to the throne is itself rooted in a Buddhist belief that spreading the dharma is part of this legitimacy. Clemente writes:

The historical period in which the printing technique spread in the country is particularly significant for the understanding of its success. After the collapse of the Yuan Dynasty (1280–1368), numerous Tibetan local noble families had emerged and were fighting to gain more power and territories. Like the kings of Mang yul Gung thang, the leaders of these families took advantage of the new technology to assert their political power by sponsoring religious schools, the foundation of printing houses as well as the production of Buddhist xylographs. They promoted several printing projects supervised by outstanding masters of the time, preserving and spreading

¹⁰⁰ See Ehrhard 2016 for detailed studies on xylographs from Mangyul Gungthang; Clemente 2016 for details on both Mangyul Gungthang and Lhado; Diemberger 2016 on printing in the *sbas yul*, and Sernesi 2016:334-337 for a detailed description of printing workshops in the region.

¹⁰¹ Ehrhard 2016:229. See also Ehrhard 2012a:168.

¹⁰² Nourse 2016:425-6.

¹⁰³ See Sharshon 2016:247. He also gives an example of a 15th-century printing colophon which straightforwardly defines "the main aims of the printing operation: beyond general merit making, the enhancement of the power and prestige of the ruler and the fulfilment of their legacy." (Sharshon 2016:257).

Buddha's teachings and also accumulating merits thanks to their virtuous deeds. This allowed them to be considered as *Dharmarājas*, 'Kings of the Dharma.'¹⁰⁴

Books were considered as objects of reverence more than as vessels of contents to critically read. Sharshon explains: "In Buddhism, especially but not exclusively in the Mahāyāna tradition, books are considered the supports of the speech of the Buddha and are worshipped as such."¹⁰⁵ 15th-century books from Mangyul Gungthang would often state in their colophons that "this particular form of book production is to produce an endless stream of merit and knowledge."¹⁰⁶ Importantly, it is observed that, contrarily to developments in Europe, "printing as technological innovation was adopted without it being celebrated as such; it was much more seen in continuity with the overall vision of the spread of the dharma."¹⁰⁷

Major Printing Projects (18th–19th centuries). By the middle of the 17th century, the Gelugpa, under the lead of the Fifth Dalai Lama and with the help of the Manchus, succeeded in solidifying their power over vast areas of Tibet. Many printing offensives accompanied this political development, and, from the second half of the 17th century onwards, increased Gelug power came with an increase in bans of unwanted book production. Religious practices aside, this shows just how much importance the government ascribed to books in general and to their role in the solidification of power. In fact, Nourse describes the Ganden Phodrang government as the "dominant central Tibetan publisher in the late seventeenth century."¹⁰⁸ Together with the verge of massive bans, massive printing projects were also executed. Different from the small-scale printing projects of earlier centuries, now whole sets of the Kangyur and *bstan 'gyur*, the translated commentarial literature (hereafter referred to as "Tengyur"), were brought to production: the Narthang Tengyur, for example, comprised about

¹⁰⁴ Clemente 2016:403.

¹⁰⁵ Sharshon 2016:238.

¹⁰⁶ Sharshon 2016:244.

¹⁰⁷ Sharshon 2016:269.

¹⁰⁸ Nourse 2016:429.

100,000 blocks, i.e. more than 200,000 printable pages,¹⁰⁹ while the Kangyur consisted of about 70,000 to 80,000 pages.¹¹⁰ Productivity was again spurred by rivalry between the Ganden Phodrang and the Eastern kingdom of Derge, and Po lha nas's Narthang Kangyur (1730–1732) can be seen as a reaction to the Kangyur and Tengyur printing at Derge.¹¹¹ Such major printing projects brought about workshops of skilled and trained printers and editors.¹¹² The Kangyur and Tengyur prints took years to produce in terms of carving the blocks and then finally printing them,¹¹³ but even the printing from existent blocks was a massive project: for a print of the Kangyur, 45 monks were said to work for three months, and a print of the Tengyur required up to six months, which amounts to the printing of about 200 pages a day.¹¹⁴ The details of when a printer was paid and employed or when monks were directed to printing remain unclear to me. Just as cases of building a stupa, a monastery or a chapel, also the printing of the collected Buddhist canon was an act of both showcasing power and gaining merit, and thus printing establishments were largely housed in monasteries.¹¹⁵

In 1923, Van Manen published a list of 22 printing units within monasteries in Lhasa alone, and there were seven press units within Drepung monastery alone.¹¹⁶ Thus, there must have been hundreds of smaller or bigger printing units all over Tibet, although only a small number of printing presses would have been privately owned.¹¹⁷ In 1929, the Tibetan government had established a government press at Zhol village, just below the Potala, and at least by the 20th

¹⁰⁹ See Schaeffer 2009:11.

¹¹⁰ See Cüppers 2010:124 and "Facts and Figures of Kangyur and Tengyur" of the 84,000-project: <http://84000.co/facts-and-figures-about-kangyur-and-tengyur/> (accessed November 30, 2016).

¹¹¹ See Schaeffer and Tuttle 2013:xxi.

¹¹² See Scherrer-Schaub 2016:166-167 and Nourse 2016:438. Just as Ehrhard had observed for the 16th century (Ehrhard 2012:168), Nourse describes how printing in Tashikyil became professionalized in the 18th century.

¹¹³ On the production of the Kangyur, see Helman-Wazny 2014:125-132, Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1949:67-73 and Cüppers 2010:115-128.

¹¹⁴ See Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1949:72. Note that this was significantly faster than the production of a handwritten version. Cüppers notes that the production of a hand-written Kangyur in the 17th century took 111 workers and 4,5 months (Cüppers 2010:123), i.e. almost three times as many people were involved.

¹¹⁵ In the 18th century, major printing establishments were found in Narthang (founded 1730), Derge (1729), Choni (1721), Kumbum (1827) or Labrang (1827); see Shakya 2004:49 and Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las 2002:1410-1411. Note that printing occurred in many of these places before. One of the earliest prints from Narthang was printed in the 13th century (see Schaeffer 2009:11).

¹¹⁶ See Van Manen 1923:472-4.

¹¹⁷ Yuthok and Surkhang owned private presses (see Van Manen 1923:472).

century, printing or wood carving had become a profession.¹¹⁸ Printers, carvers or scribes were often recruited from Nyemo,¹¹⁹ the same district Thon mi samḥoṭa was born in. Whether this was sheer coincidence or whether a narrative lineage had been established remains unclear. As Robin has shown, printers in Lhasa were organized within the Par pa'i skyid sdug, a type of printers' union. It was organized by the Ganden Phodrang and consisted of about 70 people, who were assigned jobs such as the printing of the Zhol-Kangyur and other religious texts, the printing of prayer flags for Lhasa, and the printing of Tibetan paper money at the Drapchi mint.¹²⁰ There were no book shops in Lhasa, but wandering book-sellers took up positions at the market or would make house calls.¹²¹

The printing of paper money was yet another modern feature the Thirteenth Dalai Lama introduced in the early 20th century, and Charles Bell consulted the Dalai Lama on the project during his Indian exile. The mode of its production and its form, though, was lined up according to existent modes of print production. Bank notes were first released in 1913, briefly after the reformation of the postal system. Just like any other printed matter, they were produced from woodblocks and at least since 1926 also mechanically from metal blocks. By 1932, all bank notes were produced from the newly established Tibetan government mint at Drapchi, and between 1926 and 1941 more than a million 50 Tam notes were produced. Various measures were taken against the constant problem of forgery, such as the necessary collaboration of eight different printing blocks in the production of the 50-Tam note.¹²²

¹¹⁸ The life of a printer in the 20th century, namely Chos kyi rgyal mtshan of Dingri (1897-1959) is described in No author 1956. Sernesi 2016:335 describes for the 15th and 16th century: "[T]he artisans were either administrative or military officials (*bcu dpon*, *brgya dpon*, *mgon po*, *drung yig*), or educated monastics (*dge slong*, *dge bshes*, *dge sbyong*). Therefore, apart from the artists, they do not seem to be professional figures all-year round, but individuals with other occupations employed for specific printing projects."

¹¹⁹ See Goldstein 2007[1989]:150. See Jest 1961 for a description of the demography of Nyemo, who states that, in the 1950s, about 300 people lived in Nyemo, of which 30 men (but no women) were block carvers.

¹²⁰ See Robin 2010. Note that when the printers were not occupied by government work, they could also take up private jobs.

¹²¹ On the books-sellers in Lhasa, see e.g. Sandberg 1894:174, Van Manen 1923:450, Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1949:76, Harrer 1952:221, Das 1988:59, Bell 1992[1924]:93 or Robin 2010:255.

¹²² For details, see Bertsch 1997:25 and 91; on forgery Bertsch 1997:22 and 87, where he reports of a forgery run by Nepalese in Calcutta. Kimura reports of one forger in Lhasa 1945 from Outer Mongolia, who also worked as

Non-Woodblock Printing Technologies (20th century). It needs to be stressed that, with the exception of the latest developments in connection with the mechanical printing of bank notes, no other printing technology than the manual woodblock print was used in Tibetan print establishments. Other forms of printing however, such as lithography or moveable type printing, were used by foreigners printing in Tibetan script. The first movable types were brought to Lhasa by Capuchin missionaries as early as 1741. They did not spark much impact in Lhasa, and were simply kept in boxes under a staircase in the Jokhang. An identical set was kept in Rome, where it was used to print the *Alphabetum Tibetanum* – the first book printed with Tibetan types.¹²³ In Europe, various new Tibetan types were cast over the centuries, for example in Paris, in Vienna, in St. Petersburg and in Berlin, in order to meet the needs for upcoming Oriental departments or simply because of the desire on behalf of printers to own a complete collection of world scripts.¹²⁴

Because transport into the Himalaya was difficult, the lithographic press was often the press of choice by foreigners. As already noted in my master thesis, Sarat Chandra Das had a lithographic press brought to Tashilhünpo monastery in 1881-1882. While the abbot curiously oversaw the inauguration of the press through the printing of a prayer, it had to be brought secretly because modern equipment was generally seen with suspicion.¹²⁵ Das had originally shown the Eighth Panchen Lama a copy of a book printed by the Moravians in Ladakh, who had had a lithographic press in Kyelang ever since 1857.¹²⁶ Also the Baptist Mission in Kolkata used type letters for printing publications in Tibetan script. In 1892, the Scandinavian Alliance Mission (later known as Free Church of Finland) opened a station in Ghoom, neighboring Darjeeling, and soon thereafter established the Scandinavian Alliance Tibetan

a tattoo artist in Lhasa (Kimura and Berry 1990:129). Taring reports how, in 1925, printing presses for the mint were bought from Calcutta, and two officials were sent there for training (Taring 1971[1970]:107).

¹²³ See e.g. Lenhart 1950, Bell 192[1924]:143, Helman-Wazny 2014 or Schaeffer 2009.

¹²⁴ See Schubert 1950:284-294, also cited in Sawerthal 2011:31-36.

¹²⁵ See Das 1969[1908-1909]:78-82 and 1988[1902]:105-113.

¹²⁶ See TC: "Story of Mission in Tibet," compiled by Tharchin et al., 1966.

Mission Press, a lithographic press, which had been resold again by 1911.¹²⁷ A book published by this press originally caught Tharchin's attention and sparked his wish to work in print (see Chapter 3).

Missionary Printing Initiatives. Many missionaries came to Kalimpong from working in the Sino-Tibetan borderlands, for example at the China Inland Mission centered in Kangding and Dartsedo. In his mission report for 1919-1920, Theo Sørensen reports that a type printing press was brought to Dartsedo called Tibetan Religious Literature Depot Press. In 1919-1920, 115,000 booklets were printed and distributed. The booklets compared Christianity and Buddhism on fundamental issues such as creation, the origin of man, sin, or salvation. Some school books were printed as well.¹²⁸ As will be discussed in detail below, in 1907 the Chinese Ambans had a lithographic press come to Lhasa from Calcutta, in order to print a newspaper there. In Gangtok, the British organized for a moveable-type printing press with Tibetan, English and Hindi types in 1913. In their appeal to the POS Charles Bell, the Sikkimese official of the king explained: "It is next to impossible for us to get at present our Tibetan scriptures printed when we are in need of such, as the Baptist Mission press flatly refused to print our Buddhist scriptures saying that they scrupulously refrain from printing any work of any other religion except Christianity."¹²⁹

Thus, type printing, lithography, or any other more efficient and productive printing method did not come into use in Tibet. In fact, often a "direct transfer from xylography to digital technologies" can be observed in the late 20th century, "which shows how successful this

¹²⁷ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Annie Perrie (*n.a.*), *no month, no day*, 1949. Cecil Polihill describes the press work in 1907: "To fill the gap made by his [first missionary Frederickson] death, Mr. and Mrs. Amundsen came round from China, and for two years put in valuable work, printing hundreds of Gospels and other portions of Scripture, hymns, a small history of India, and a Tibetan school primer, ro, besides giving valuable help in translating and revising the New Testament" (Polhill 1907:332).

¹²⁸ See TC: "Story of Mission in Tibet," compiled by Tharchin et al., 1966. At least two of Sørensen's booklets were reprinted by the TMP in the 1960s, namely "The Difference between Buddhist and Christian teaching concerning God, man, sin, creation and salvation" (1962) as well as "Tibetan Catechism" (1961), upon the commission of the World Mission Prayer League. See Appendix 2 for details on the publications.

¹²⁹ Sikkim State Archives: file 17, Maharaj Kumar Sikyong Tulku (Gangtok) to Charles Bell (POS, Gangtok), January 18, 1913. For the approval, see Sikkim State Archives: file 17, Charles Bell (POS, Gangtok) to Maharaj Kumar sikyong Tulku (Gangtok), March 27, 1913.

technique was in the country,"¹³⁰ observes Clemente. Apparently, a technology which in various ways facilitated the assemblage of content *and* the spread of information was not at all sought after. Woodblock printing enabled the quick multiplication of a written product, however its assemblage process took very long. Importantly, block prints did not oust manuscripts, and the two co-existed next to each other.¹³¹ The shift from manuscripts to block prints did have its impact though. Kragh, for example, has shown that a xylograph presented more well-organized textual units,¹³² and his observations resonate strongly with Eisenstein's observations on the shift from scribal to print cultures in Europe, especially concerning, for example, the reorganization of text and thus a substantially altered context for or mode of scholarly work.¹³³

At the same time, there are fundamental differences between the introduction of woodblock printing in Tibet and the introduction of a type press in Europe: the fact of text multiplication might be the same, but the time needed to produce the first copy was substantially different. I wish to stress again that manuscripts were never really superseded by woodblock printing, precisely because from a process-driven perspective it was not necessarily inferior to print. The process of producing text, i.e. the writing of every single letter, was considered important and valuable in itself, especially from a Mahāyāna-Buddhist perspective. As already described in my master thesis, the process of carving single letters into woodblocks was extremely arduous. The whole process of carving woodblocks was rather seen as a religious activity for the sake of the dharma, and merit was gained through carving, applying ink and printing on paper. This also meant that the more time one spent on printing, the more merit would be accumulated. Thus, the printing technique was not used first and foremost for the exchange of

¹³⁰ Clemente 2016:402.

¹³¹ See Ehrhard 2016:228, who shows that some printed works were first handwritten before they were carved into wood. For further details on the shift from manuscripts to xylographs, see Helman-Ważny 2014 and Ehrhard 2012a and 2012b.

¹³² Kragh 2013 compared a manuscript of Sgam po pa's collected works (*gsung 'bum*, 14th-15th century) to a 1520-block print version.

¹³³ Eisenstein asserts that printing triggered text reorganization both concerning the structure of one text as well as new intertextual forms of data collection, leading to new forms of scholarship (Eisenstein 2005[1983]:81-87).

worldly information. Instead, woodblock printing was a means of spreading the sacred words of the Buddhist canon or other religious literature, at times in interplay with being an instrument of establishing political power.

Apparently, there was thus no need for a medium which could quickly produce content and have it quickly spread in manifold ways. Even if administrative contents were supposed to be spread quickly, they usually were not spread in many copies, i.e. handwriting sufficed. And religious contents were at times supposed to be spread in many copies, however not necessarily quickly, i.e. woodblock printing sufficed. In fact, the production process of such sacred texts had a value of its own, and shortening this process cut away opportunities to accumulate religious merit. In this case, I agree with Clemente, who comments on the increase of printing patronage by rivaling noble families during the 15th and 16th century in the following way: "The fact that these enterprises did not aim at turning any profits might be one of the reasons why the impact of xylography on the Tibetan society has never been recognized as something revolutionary like the introduction of movable printing in Europe."¹³⁴ Clemente here points towards what Anderson has termed "print capitalism", identified as one of the key features of why newspapers prevailed in Europe, i.e. the wish to sell a newspaper, a written mass medium, to as many people as possible, who in theory and from a consumer-perspective stood on equal footing. In Tibet, however, the combination of these two newspaper features – manifold and quick production – did not meet a need.

¹³⁴ Clemente 2016:403.

2.3 History of Tibetan-Language Newspapers

Despite the above, today at least 18 newspapers are being published in the TAR, Amdo and Kham,¹³⁵ as well as substantially more magazines (around 250 different titles between the 1980s and 2012).¹³⁶ Furthermore, a variety of newspapers, magazines and journals are published in exile from Dharamsala, not to mention additional periodicals published by various diaspora groups worldwide. Still, Tibetan newspapers only look back at a 100-year history, and many newspaper features, which are based on developments unfolding in Europe and later North America over centuries, were quite suddenly introduced to the Himalayas.

When the first newspapers appeared in Central Europe, they were neither introduced by travelers or missionaries from abroad, nor were they advocated for by new political forces which functioned according to ideologies or political systems different from what was prevalent before. Instead, they were produced by agents who had been part of a communicative nexus that existed for a long time. Central European newspapers came about through an interlinkage of technological innovations (the printing press), religious upheaval (the reformation), organizational options (improvements in the postal system), a desire for profane news (wars, such as the Thirty Years' War) as well as commercial print-publishers (private presses). They developed out of the practice of letter-writing, in which the private exchange of information was gradually opened up to a more and more dispersed, unknown public.¹³⁷ The option of transferring the so far exclusively handwritten contents to a printed vessel facilitated the manifold spread of identical copies. The first newspaper thus appeared in Straßburg in 1605 ("Relationen"). Later on, the enlightenment movement provided for a further boost of the newspaper as the medium of an active public as well as, by the 19th century, as a more and more "national" product. In this way, reading a newspaper meant to participate in a communicative practice. It also meant to enter a group of imagined co-readers

¹³⁵ See Erhard 2015:162.

¹³⁶ I want to thank Franz-Xaver Erhard for letting me study his fantastic collection of Tibetan-language magazines published in the PRC.

¹³⁷ On Fugger-letters, see e.g. Wilke 2008:30.

who read the same contents at roughly the same time and thus were bound together by an invisible string, an imagined reading circle.¹³⁸ The contents become intellectual capital which can be shared with friends, family or on the markets, and maybe one met another person who read the same lines, substantiating this imagined circle. Driven by a language that bound all readers together, this imagined group of readers (as well as those who did not read the newspaper but should do so) became the seed of a blooming nation, a notion that seemed to go hand in hand almost naturally. This is succinctly summarized by Eisenstein: "[Anderson's] observation [on dispersed people] suggests how the shift in communications may have changed the sense of what it meant to participate in public affairs. The wide distribution of identical bits of information provided an impersonal link between people who were unknown to each other."¹³⁹

Tibet had always been in close contact with neighboring political entities, and the early 20th century was once again characterized by pressure from outside powers: invasions from both the British in the South and the Chinese in the East put the Central Tibetans in a situation where interest for worldly matters rose by outer force. Just like the many media inventions discussed so far (post, printing, radio, script), the newspaper too came to Tibet through exchange with foreigners. Even though "inner" or "outer" actors should not be strictly divided, since in fact these are fluid categories, the difference between the "invention" of the newspaper in Europe and its "introduction" to the Tibetan borderlands is still significant. The new medium was induced by people who considered themselves outsiders and were also perceived as such, either in terms of religion, culture or ethnicity. In case of the spread of the newspaper, this is true actually not only for the case of Tibet, but for many other countries around the globe as well. Various studies on press histories in India¹⁴⁰ and China¹⁴¹ make the newspaper's global spread through colonialism, imperialism and missionary activities

¹³⁸ See also Anderson's theory on Imagined Communities (2006[1983]) as described in the Introduction.

¹³⁹ Eisenstein 2005[1983]:105.

¹⁴⁰ See Introduction: See e.g. Kaul 2006, Offredi 1971, Schneider N. 2005 and Stark 2007.

¹⁴¹ See Introduction: See e.g. Mittler 2004, Wagner 2002 and 2007.

apparent in an Asian context. Just as in the case of India and China a few decades earlier, it was this interlinkage of factors that brought Tibetan-language newspapers to light.

Broadly speaking, there are two initial trajectories of Tibetan-language newspaper production: one impulse came from the Indo-Tibetan borderlands, where Christian missionaries commenced newspapers production in the early 20th century, and the other impulse came from Chinese political agents, first in Lhasa and later in Beijing and Nanjing. These two trajectories may again be divided into different strands: in the Indo-Tibetan borderlands, there is the Ladakhi tradition started by the Moravian Mission in 1904, which produced newspapers until the mid-1950s, while the other strand developed in the Eastern Himalayas with the Melong in 1925. Kalimpong and other active printing centers in the vicinity, such as Darjeeling or Gangtok, gained momentum with the influx of Tibetan refugees during the 1950s and particularly from 1959 onwards, when the Dalai Lama fled to exile in India. The first exile publications were published from Darjeeling, and with the shift of the exile government from the Eastern to the Western Himalayas, i.e. first to Mussoorie and then on to Dharamsala, the focus of newspaper printing shifted there as well.

On the Chinese side, there is the early project started by the Qing Ambans in Lhasa in 1907, around the same time as the Ladakh newspaper was initiated. The Ambans were forced to leave Lhasa in 1912,¹⁴² but the paper was continued in name by the newly established Kuomintang party in Beijing from 1913. This trajectory was closely connected to political power holders who geographically moved with political actors shifting from one center of power to another. When the KMT stabilized power with the new capital Nanjing in the late 1920s, this trajectory gained momentum in Nanjing and in Khams, where agents of the KMT attempted to establish "Xikang province" as one aspect of the overall project of conquering Tibetan-speaking areas. One of their methods of choice was the establishment of newspapers. In collaboration with the KMT, the offices of the exiled Panchen Lama in Xining and Nanjing

¹⁴² See Kolmaš 1994:65. Lian Yu left for India in July or August 1912.

initiated newspapers in the 1930s as well. The KMT continued various newspaper projects in the Sino-Tibetan borderlands during the 1940s, but due to the war-ridden times with less vigor than in the 1930s. Following their demise in mainland China and Chiang Kai-shek's flight to Taiwan in 1949, the Communists took over as the ruling body of China and hence as the main producers of Tibetan-language newspapers. They initiated various newspaper projects all over Tibetan-speaking areas in rapid succession.

In sum, the tradition of the Indo-Tibetan borderlands was initially shaped by their aspiration to proselytize and enlighten a Tibetan public in the tradition of Anglo-American or European newspapers with a liberal outlook, while the projects in China saw newspapers much more as a means to spread political ideologies and control public opinion. I have introduced some of the earlier newspapers already in my master thesis, and many of the following projects are not entirely new to scholarly debate.¹⁴³ In the following, I will present a more complete chronology of Tibetan-language newspaper projects, attempting to bring together various scholarship but also to point to some publications not discussed so far. Since I am able to work with Chinese sources only by help of Chinese-speaking colleagues,¹⁴⁴ I have to base my work either on the original sources from archives – in such fortunate cases where these are available – or on what has been published so far in those languages accessible to me.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Various scattered compilations of Tibetan newspapers have recently been published: Erhard gives an overview of some projects in 2015, using as his sources mainly Zla ba tshe ring (journalism teacher at Tibet University) and the scholarship produced on the Indo-Tibetan tradition of newspaper production (Erhard 2015). Yet, he focuses on the current status of newspapers and not the historical dimension. Zla ba tshe ring is based mainly on Zhou Decang's findings (Zhou 2010). Sgrol ma publishes on different magazines (*dus deb*) of Tibetan affairs, mentioning both Chinese and Tibetan publications from before 1951 (Sgrol ma 2009:60). In her work on Tibetan translations of republican ideologies during the 1930s, Jagou enlists some early Tibetan-language newspapers (Jagou 2010:168-9). Hartley provides valuable information on communist newspaper publishing in the 1950s, including a list of PRC-published newspapers and magazines between 1950 and 2002 (Hartley 2003:410-419). The Amnye Machen Institute in Dharamsala staged an exhibition on Tibetan newspapers on March 15-16, 1995, covered by Rang dbang gsar shog (RW April 17, 1995). The article enlists 22 newspaper projects, going back all the way to the first newspaper in Ladakh in 1904. Recently, a whole issue of the Latse Journal was dedicated to Tibetan magazines (Latse Journal 2014-2015), and particularly noteworthy here is Bhum's work on the history of Tibetan magazines (Bhum 2014-2015) which had been published also in 2010 (Bhum 2010). Shes rab rgya tsho published a list of early Tibetan-language newspapers online (Shes rab rgya mtsho 2007). I have described some projects in Sawerthal 2011:43-58.

¹⁴⁴ I wish to thank Peilin Chiu, Chun Xu and Emily Mae Graf for their patient support.

¹⁴⁵ Concerning Tibetan newspapers, I have used sources in Tibetan, English, German and French.

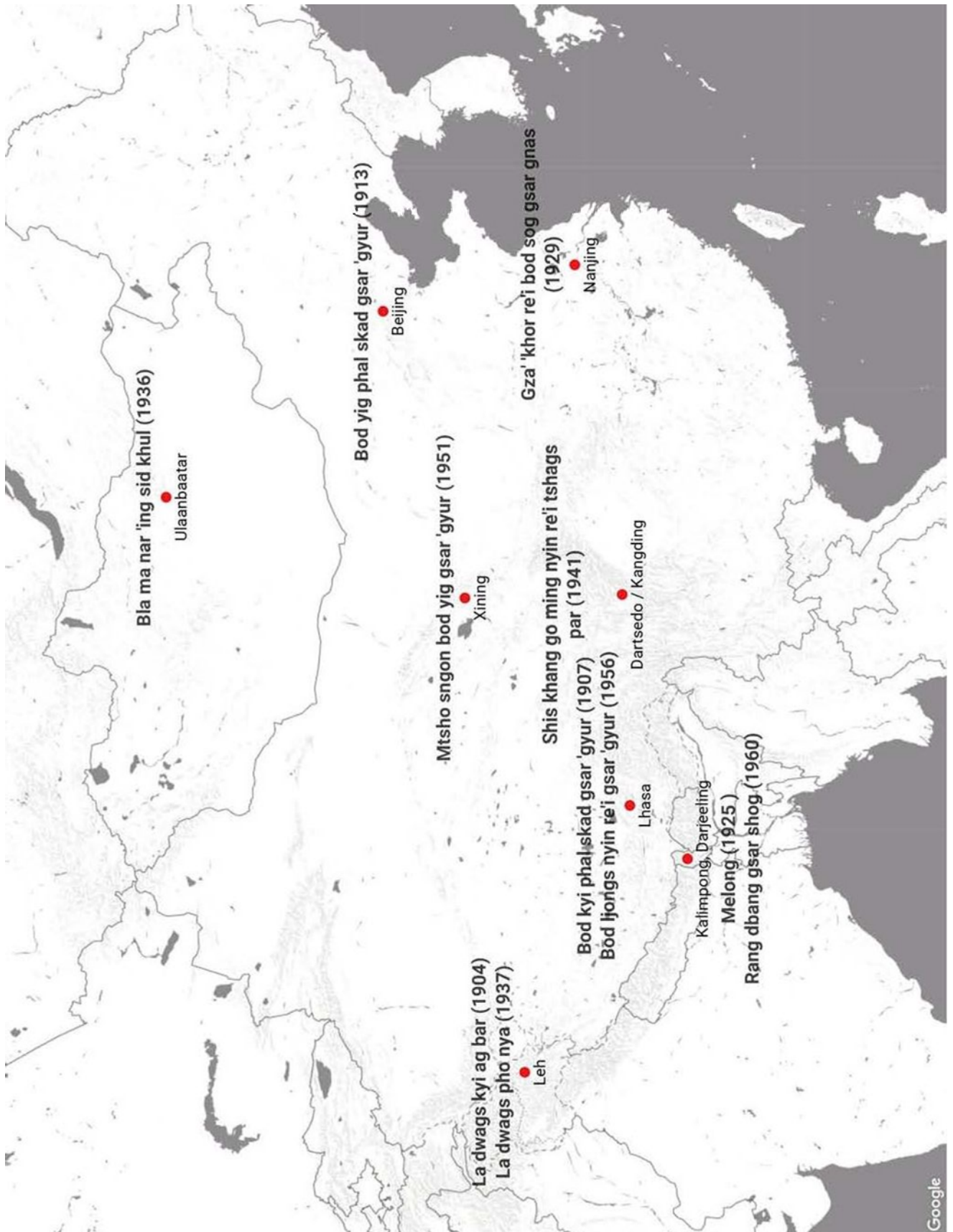


Figure 4: A selection of Tibetan newspaper projects. For a full list see Appendix 1.

In the process, I may also mention Chinese- or English-language projects targeted at people residing in Tibetan-speaking areas, in order to properly understand the newspaper's context. For the same reason, I will also refer to some journals, magazines or newsletters which do not actually fall under the classical definition of a newspaper.¹⁴⁶ In any case, given the hazardous nature of early developments, such generic categories are only of limited assistance in grasping the genesis of newspapers. I am convinced that more newspaper projects were initiated in the first half of the 20th century than so far discussed in scholarly circles, especially in the Sino-Tibetan borderlands, and only a thorough search in Chinese archives will bring them to light. Since this trajectory is not the main focus of the current thesis, such work will remain left for future studies.

The First Tibetan Newspapers. The first newspaper ever printed in Tibetan language was the *La dwags kyi ag bar* ("Ladakh Newspaper"), first published in January 1904 by the German Moravian (Herrnhuter) missionary station in Leh, Ladakh. Since printed media were an essential part to the functioning of the global Moravian community, it is no surprise that various mission stations worldwide started the production of newspapers in vernacular languages.¹⁴⁷ This monthly Tibetan publication has received a considerable amount of scholarly attention ever since the late 1980s.¹⁴⁸ Produced by the missionary August Hermann Francke, the newspaper was an attempt to desacralize the written word and introduce "modern knowledge" to Tibetan readers, of course with the underlying aim to spread the Christian religion amongst Tibetans. In this vein, Francke wrote in 1906: "The doctrine that you may earn religious merit by reading the holy Tibetan letters and the old classical language turned reading into a magic action and led people not to pay attention to the contents of their reading matter. [...] Those who read the paper do not have the option of earning religious merit."¹⁴⁹

The monthly was printed in a quantity of 60 to 150 copies, but because it was said to have

¹⁴⁶ I have discussed the differentiation between "newspaper" and "magazine" in Sawerthal 2011:20-26.

¹⁴⁷ On the internal Moravian journal "Nachrichten der Brüdergemeine," see Mettele 2009:113.

¹⁴⁸ This has been described by Bray 1988, Walravens 2002 and 2010 or Erhard and Römer 2007.

¹⁴⁹ Francke 1906, cited in Walravens 2002:36.

been read out loud by chieftains to whole villages, the single copies were likely to actually have more recipients.¹⁵⁰ The publication reached to destinations in the Western Himalayas and in Darjeeling District. When Francke moved from Leh to Kyelang in 1906, the newspaper was continued by Francke's colleagues who in March 1908 changed its title to *La dwags pho nya* ("Ladakh Messenger") and continued its publication until at least September 1910.¹⁵¹

Roughly at the same time, the first Tibetan newspaper was published in Lhasa under the title *Bod kyi phal skad gsar 'gyur* ("News in the Colloquial Language of Tibet"). The first issue was printed on April 5, 1907¹⁵² by the two Lhasa Ambans, Lian Yu and Zhang Yitang, who took as their model Chinese provincial newspapers which were driven by the flourishing press in China. Yu refers to this influence in his memorials: "Following the example of Sichuan Xun Newspaper and other official newspapers in different provinces, this newspaper intends to advocate patriotic actions, encouraging military spirit, and educating [sic!] common people."¹⁵³ In a letter to the Chinese emperor, Yu furthermore mentions political propaganda and the dispelling of superstitions as among the goals of the newspaper. Its contents encompassed news on Tibet, China, foreign countries as well as scientific news items, and the newspaper was published in Chinese and Tibetan. It was printed on a lithographic press (according to Bai) or mimeographed (according to Zheng), the device was in any case acquired from Kolkata. Each issue was printed in 300 to 400 copies, and its main readers were the elite leaders of Central Tibet. The newspaper was stopped when the Qing fell in 1911, however the specific date of its last issue remains unknown.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ See Francke 1906, cited in Walravens 2002:33. See also Walravens and Taube 1992:267 who state that 100 copies were distributed.

¹⁵¹ This is the last issue available at the Herrnhut Archives, which holds an almost complete run of 49 issues from the first issue of January 1904 until September 1910. July 1910 is stored at the GRASSI Museum in Leipzig.

¹⁵² By the summer of 1907, this information had spread globally, and it was reported by The Times (August 24, 1907) and The Straits Times (August 23, 1907:6).

¹⁵³ Zheng 2000:23.

¹⁵⁴ For further information on this newspaper, see Zla ba tshe ring 2009a, Zla ba tshe ring 2009b:42, Rtse dbang et al.1990:129, Zheng 2000, Bai 1990 or Zhou 2010. Zhou points out that Fang Hanqi described that Lian Yu printed a newspaper in Lhasa already from 1905 (Zhou 2010:36).

There is also some information which indicates that, during his stay in Beijing in 1908-1909, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama wished to start a newspaper in cooperation with the Chinese government, but I have been unable to follow this up any further.¹⁵⁵

Both the Ladakh newspaper as well as the Lhasa Amban's newspaper induced follow-up projects. Since the Indo-Tibetan borderland scene has been extensively described by various scholars, in the following I will confine myself to a summary of its main impulses and point to relevant scholarship, while I will give more space to the Sino-Tibetan borderland lineage because it has been less well-documented.

Indo-Tibetan (Until 1959). Upon the discontinuation of the *La dwags pho nya* (formerly *La dwags kyi ag bar*) in 1910, there are no further traces of the continuation of the Moravian newspaper project for the next 15 years. The German Herrnhuter missionaries were forced to leave British India due to the First World War, and missionaries of the British Moravian mission with headquarters in London were sent to the stations in Ladakh in their place. In 1925, missionary Walter Asboe came to Kyelang in Ladakh and revived the newspaper: He published the first issue of *Kye lang ag bar* ("Kyelang Newspaper") in September 1926, in close collaboration with one of the few local converts, Joseph Gergan,¹⁵⁶ a man described by Asboe in one of his earlier reports to London as an expert for Tibetan-language matters. Almost all issues are declared as being "edited and published by Rev. Walter Asboe", but many articles of the newspaper are in fact signed by Joseph Gergan. Judging from the signed articles, further authors were Seng ge rnam rgyal, Zla ba bde chen, and Zod pa. The newspaper was published monthly on a lithographic press with a circulation of 40 to 50 copies, but again it was probably consumed by considerably more people. The paper was distributed mainly in the surrounding districts, but, according to Asboe, it "has even reached the sacred

¹⁵⁵ For details, see Sawerthal 2011:57.

¹⁵⁶ For details on Joseph Gergan, see Guyon 2012. For the starting date of the newspaper see Asboe 1927:143.

city of Lhasa, having been taken there by mendicant monks and pilgrims."¹⁵⁷ Its aims were similar to those of the *La dwags kyi ag bar*, namely education and proselytization.¹⁵⁸ Trying to get Tibetans to pay, though, was like "trying to squeeze blood out of stone."¹⁵⁹ The newspaper was discontinued under the title *Kye lang ag bar* in 1935, when Asboe left for London, but Asboe later returned to Leh in 1936 and continued it under the former name *La dwags pho nya*. Its first issue appeared in January 1937 and its publication continued until Asboe left Ladakh in 1947. In 1952, it was again continued by the missionaries Pierre Vittoz and Eliyah Phuntsog until they left Ladakh in 1956 and 1959 respectively. Engelhardt points out that the *La dwags pho nya* was restarted in 1978, printed from the government press Srinagar¹⁶⁰ and referring back to the traditions of the *La dwags kyi ag bar* and *La dwags pho nya*.¹⁶¹

Thus, the Ladakh newspapers were not just an occasional undertaking, but they were a systematic missionary endeavor in the Western Himalayas which came about through the enthusiasm of missionaries such as August Hermann Francke and Walter Asboe. They managed to publish more than 200 newspaper issues with the help of important local assistants. The newspaper's value as historical material cannot be underrated, and so an in-depth study of it would be warranted in the context of future research.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁷ MCH: Letter Walter Asboe (Kyelang) to Bishop J.E. Zippel (Bristol) April 1, 1933.

¹⁵⁸ See MCH: Letter Walter Asboe (Kyelang) to Bishop J.E. Zippel (Bristol) April 1, 1933: "One of the literary activities of our Mission in dissipating the ignorance and superstition [...] is the monthly publication of a newspaper in Tibet. Its first and foremost purpose is to disseminate Gospel truths, and secondly, to educate the people in matters of hygiene and sanitation, and also to acquaint them with world affairs of which they know next to nothing."

¹⁵⁹ MCH: Letter Walter Asboe (Kyelang) to Connor (*n.a.*), April 5, 1932.

¹⁶⁰ See LTWA, LP, No.2, June 20, 1978:10-11. LTWA holds a few issues.

¹⁶¹ The Berlin State Library holds the almost full run of 92 issues of *Kye lang ag bar* from January 15, 1927 (Volume 1, No.3) to September 1935, and it has also made it digitally available. MCH stores one issue (May 1930). MCH also holds an almost complete run of 60 issues of the second *La dwags pho nya* from May 1937 to July 1942 (the issues of March and May 1938 are missing). I was unable to locate any issues from the 1950s. For a short summary of its content, see Walravens and Taube 1992:267. For further information, see MCH: Letter Walter Asboe (Kyelang) to Arthur Ward (London), September 3, 1925; MCH: Letter Walter Asboe (Kyelang) to Connor (*n.a.*), April 5, 1932; Walravens and Taube 1992:267; or The Straits Times, January 12, 1936:13.

¹⁶² Rigzin Choedon (Jawaharlal Nehru University) is currently preparing a PhD thesis on the *La dwags kyi ag bar*.

Tharchin grew up at the Herrnhuter station in Poo, Kinnaur, and thus one can assume that he was aware of the newspaper. The Ladakh newspaper definitely served as an obvious role model for the Melong. Newspapers in a variety of languages were readily available in Kalimpong, and they were either brought from the Indian plains or produced locally (see Chapter 3 for details). During this time, Kalimpong also developed more and more into a retreat for political expats and exiles. Within this socio-political milieu of the 1940s, the founding member of the Tibet Improvement Party (Nub bod legs bcod skyid sdug), Rab dga' spom mda' tsang, seems to have had plans for newspaper, and he received 14,000 rupees¹⁶³ – according to another source even 70,000 rupees¹⁶⁴ – from MTAC chief Tsung-lien Shen to buy a printing press, however this project apparently never manifested.

In the late 1920s, the Russian Roerich family, which had good connections to Kalimpong, set up a research institution in the Western Himalayas called *Urusvati*. Here, three issues of an academic journal on Tibetan issues in English were published between 1931 and 1933. The editor of this Journal of Urusvati Himalayan Research Institute of Roerich Museum was Nicholas' son George, who later settled in Kalimpong. No more than these three issues were ever published.¹⁶⁵

In Gangtok, then the capital of the Kingdom of Sikkim, there was with the Sikkim Durbar Press yet another printing establishment which published in Tibetan language. As discussed above, it was set up in 1913 in order to print Tibetan books, and from 1956 or 1957¹⁶⁶ it also published the *Sikkim Herald*, initially in English until a Tibetan version was started under the name *'Bras ljongs bya ma rta*, probably in 1965. Tshe dbang rta mgrin, chief editor of the

¹⁶³ See Letter Hugh Richardson to Basil Gould, April 10, 1946, cited in Goldstein 2007[1989]:456.

¹⁶⁴ See POS Hopkinson's "Report on Tibet August 1945 - August 1948," August 1, 1948: "Although he [Rab dga' spom mda' tshang] had Rs. 70.000/- at his disposal for the purpose, he did not succeed in his earnest desire of founding a Chinese-inspired Tibetan newspaper at Kalimpong." Cited from TC: E-mail John Bray to Herbert Fader, January 9, 2006, copy of document "Mss Eur D 998/39" stored at British Library (Oriental and India Office Collection). Also cited in McKay 2009:199.

¹⁶⁵ See Waldenfels 2011:402-408 and Sawerthal (forthcoming).

¹⁶⁶ See Basnett and Guha 2014:20 state the year 1956. In the Driver collection, there are issues from 1957 and 1958.

publication from 1976, reports that it was published in Nepali, English and Tibetan by the Information and Public Relations Department of the Government of Sikkim since 1965.¹⁶⁷ I had access to editions from the 1970s which held either two or four pages,¹⁶⁸ and the publication continued until June 2001.

Sino-Tibetan (Until 1959). The Lhasa Ambans, who had been editing the *Bod kyi phal skad gsar 'gyur*, were forced to leave Tibet after the Chinese Revolution ended the Qing-empire in 1912. The KMT, under the lead of Sun Yat-sen, succeeded in taking control over vast areas of China. They had recognized that mass media were an essential tool in the spread of political goals, one of which was the unification of the "five nationalities", namely the Han, Manchus, Hui, Mongols and the Tibetans. For this purpose, they established the Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Agency in April 1912, later named Mongolian and Tibetan Affairs Commission (MTAC). From the beginning, they published newspapers and newsletters on Tibetan affairs, showcasing the priority the new leadership gave to printed mass media in the conquest of Tibet. A Chinese-language newspaper on transportation between Mongolia and Tibet to China was established in December 1912, the *Jiao tong xun bao* ("The Transport Newsletter"), published every ten days.¹⁶⁹ Only a month later, in January 1913, they also started publishing a Tibetan-language newspaper from Beijing, with a title almost identical to the one used by the Lhasa Ambans, namely the *Bod yig phal skad kyi gsar 'gyur* ("Newspaper in Colloquial Tibetan").¹⁷⁰ This newspaper was published on a monthly basis and initially printed on a lithographic press. I was able to examine its second issue of February 1913,¹⁷¹ which is of horizontal format, in Chinese and in Tibetan, neatly handwritten in *dbu med* apart from the headlines in *dbu can*. Its contents are divided into six sections, namely law and order (*khrims*

¹⁶⁷ See Latse Journal 2014-2015:58-61.

¹⁶⁸ I want to thank Tshul khrims rgya mtsho (NIT) for sharing these issues with me and assisting me with further research.

¹⁶⁹ See Shes rab rgya mtsho 2007 and Sgrol ma 2009. According to Shes rab rgya mtsho, there is one issue stored at the library of the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences.

¹⁷⁰ The cover of the first issue is reproduced in Zhou 2010:165.

¹⁷¹ This issue is stored in the Bavarian State Library.

lugs dang bka' rgya'i bskor), recently held speeches (*gros 'das bshad pa'i bskor*), important news (*gal che ba'i gсар thos kyi bskor*), letters (*phar tshur gyi bskur yig bskor*), private issues (*bsger don gyi bskor*) and miscellaneous topics (*don sna tshogs bzung ba'i bskor*). The complete issue covers more than 195 pages. The classical newspaper format was only implemented in April 1915, following a relaunch which put the publication on hold between January and March 1915. Starting from April 1915, the Chinese section of the newspaper was printed on a type press, while the Tibetan section continued in lithograph. Furthermore, its title was changed to *Bod yig gсар 'gyur* ("Tibetan-Language Newspaper"),¹⁷² and its frequency was probably changed to a biweekly publication during this time as well. According to the text on a cover, it was given away free of charge. It remains unknown until when exactly the newspaper continued to be published.¹⁷³

Western missionaries were active in proselytization attempts and the production of newspapers in the Sino-Tibetan border regions as well. The catholic Paris Foreign Mission was particularly well established in Kham, with the trading town Dartsedo as their headquarters.¹⁷⁴ In 1925, they initiated a monthly newsletter entitled *Bod ljongs a lan gсар 'gyur*, and the same organization is reported to have published the monthly *Tshung kren gсар 'gyur* in Kangding from 1944 to 1948, which possibly was a Chinese language publication. Both publications were set to proselytize but also included pieces on world news and Tibetan history.¹⁷⁵ At the same time, the KMT was at the forefront of spreading xenophobic sentiments, not least through newspapers.

The MTAC-Newsletters from Nanjing. In 1928, the KMT managed to solidify their power over vast parts of China with Nanjing as their capital. Previously formulated agendas were put

¹⁷² A cover from July 1915 which features the new name is reproduced in Zhou 2010:167.

¹⁷³ 22 issues from between 1913 and 1915 are stored in the library of Central University for Nationalities in Beijing (Zla ba tshe ring 2009a:76) as well as one issue (July 1913) in the TAR Archives (*Bod rang skyong ljongs yig tshags las khungs*, Zla ba tshe ring 2009a:79). For further information, see Zla ba tshe ring 2009b and Zla ba tshe ring 2009a, Shes rab rgya mtsho 2007 or Zhou 2010.

¹⁷⁴ For further details on the Catholic missions in Kham, see Sørensen 1921.

¹⁷⁵ See Rtse dbang et al. 1990:132-133.

back at center stage, such as the conquest of Mongolia and Tibet. For these purposes, the MTAC was renewed under a new leadership in February 1928.¹⁷⁶ The KMT initially pursued soft methods in order to win the Tibetans' hearts, not least because this was a time when Great Britain was a substantial influence in Central Tibet. This charm offensive to counteract such British influence included cooperation with influential Tibetans,¹⁷⁷ the opening of a Tibetan school in Nanjing, the development of study circles on Kham and Tibet, intensive propaganda through radio programming in Tibetan as well as newspaper publishing. Chinese publications on Tibet would bring Tibet into public Chinese discourse,¹⁷⁸ and Tibetan-language publications would spread the objectives of KMT.

In the verge of this campaign, the MTAC started published the *Gza' 'khor re'i bod sog gsar gnas* ("Tibet-Mongolian Weekly Newsletter") in September 1929.¹⁷⁹ Over the course of the following years, the publication changed its name and frequency, but it continued being published with a few gaps until 1947 or 1948.¹⁸⁰ Unfortunately, scholarship has so far been unable to dispel the discrepancy concerning its dates and place of publishing. Initially published weekly, the publication changed its frequency first to ten days and later to bimonthly (possibly in September 1931). From April 1934 onwards, it was known as the *Bod sog zla re'i gsar gnas* ("Tibet-Mongolian Monthly Newsletter"), which ran from 1934 to 1940 and from 1942 to 1947. It was moved to Chongqing during the war years and then back again to Nanjing in 1945.¹⁸¹ Because I was able only to examine issues of the weekly paper published between 1929 and 1931 as well as one monthly newsletter (January 1942), I cannot currently verify the date when it switched in publication frequency. The weekly issues from

¹⁷⁶ On the founding of the new committee and its policies, see Spence 1993:278 and Coleman 2014:416.

¹⁷⁷ The Panchen Lama established offices in various cities between 1925 and 1930. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama agreed to establish a Tibet Bureau in Beijing and to set up offices in Nanjing, Beijing and Dartsedo in 1931 (see Goldstein 2007[1989]:219 and Coleman 2014:416).

¹⁷⁸ See also Coleman 2002:53. For some examples of newspapers in the 1930s, see Sgrol ma 2009.

¹⁷⁹ The earliest issue I could examine is issue 8, published on December 7, 1929. For its date, see e.g. Coleman 2014:416 or Sgrol ma 2009:63.

¹⁸⁰ See Jagou 2004:170-171, Zhou 2010:36 and Zla ba tshe ring 2009b:43.

¹⁸¹ For its dates and frequency, see Jagou 2010:170-171, Jagou 2004:357, Zhou 2010:36, Zla ba tshe ring 2009b:43-44, Shes rab rgya mtsho 2007 or Sgrol ma 2009:63.

1929 to 1931 which I have examined are bilingual publications in Tibetan and Chinese and include the Mongolian title on the cover. The edition of 1942 is a quadrilingual publication in Mongolian, Tibetan, Arabic and Chinese. The issues of the weekly edition were probably lithographed, however the Tibetan section of the monthly issue is typeset. The exact reach of its issues remains unclear. Tharchin and Tsag gser khang, an official of the Panchen Lama's office, were subscribers in Kalimpong. POS Colonel Weir, also based in Kalimpong, inspected the anti-British newspaper and censored parts, if necessary.¹⁸² Tharchin cited it extensively in the *Melong*.¹⁸³

One of the newspapers main editors was Skal bzang tshe ring, described as the "first Tibetan Kuomintang-member."¹⁸⁴ The KMT had been building up a network of Tibetans who fought for the propagation of their ideologies. Skal bzang tshe ring had gained acknowledgment from the KMT as a translator for the exiled Panchen Lama in 1926 and was recruited to the MTAC.¹⁸⁵ In 1927, he became the head of the Tibetan part of the commission and was made deputy director of the *Bod sog gсар gnas*.¹⁸⁶ One of his close collaborators and possible wife was Liu Manqing, who reached fame for her travels to Lhasa in 1929 and her audience with the Thirteenth Dalai Lama.¹⁸⁷ Incidentally, Tharchin interviewed her for the *Melong* when she was in Kalimpong – which, to my knowledge, became the first-ever interview printed in a Tibetan newspaper.¹⁸⁸ In 1929, Skal bzang tshe ring's friend Liu Jiaju (also known as Skal

¹⁸² See McGrahanhan 2003:281.

¹⁸³ I consulted the 15 extant issues at the LTWA. Tharchin refers to the publication also in a letter he sent to one of his former students on February 3, 1943, quoted in Fader 2004:279: "Another paper, a weekly, in the Mongolian, Chinese and Tibetan languages, used to be published in Nanking, sometime in 1935, 1936, 1937 by the Chinese; but that's also stopped since the War."

¹⁸⁴ Jagou 2009:9. Skal bzang tshe ring was born in Batang in 1917 and educated in one of the schools set up by Zhao Erfeng (see Coleman 2002). He was the brother of 'Ba' pa legs bshad and one of the main driving forces of the Batang revolt of 1932 (McGranahan 2010:85).

¹⁸⁵ On the ties between the Panchen Lama and Skal bzang tshe ring, see Tuttle 2005:149, Wenbin 2002:64 or Jagou 2009:10.

¹⁸⁶ See Coleman 2014:416, Tuttle 2005:148 and Jagou 2009:10.

¹⁸⁷ On Liu Manqing, see Jagou 2009. Coleman 2014:423 as well as *Melong* 5-2-3 (July 1930) write about her unclear relationship to Skal bzang tshe ring.

¹⁸⁸ See *Melong* 5-1-2&3 (June 1930).

bzang chos 'byor) from Batang edited the Tibetan section of the *Bod sog gsar gnas*,¹⁸⁹ and in 1932 he became the chief secretary of the Panchen Lama.¹⁹⁰ The newsletter's purpose was the propagation of KMT policies, and the opening issue of September 1929 stated:

To the North and the West of China dwell the people of Mongolia and Tibet. They have lived in the darkness for a long time. Are they not asleep? This newspaper, containing good news and written in Tibetan and Mongolian, will be like a big drum to awaken them and like the morning sun dispersing the mist.¹⁹¹

Various nationalist articles are found in the newsletter, including the first Tibetan translations of Sun Yat-sen's "Three Principles".¹⁹² The newsletter published Tibet-related news, and between the Tibetan and the Chinese section it often featured cartoons which defamed British policies or showcased Tibetan's "backwardness".¹⁹³ Another editorial goal was the implementation of Xikang province, which would roughly comprise the Tibetan region of Kham, a conflict-ridden border zone torn between Tibetan and Chinese influence. As Wenbin explains, "the establishment [of Xikang] could be used to counter the emergent nation-building project of central Tibetans, who were then also attempting to fix their boundaries with China by mounting a series of attacks in Kham to reclaim lost territory."¹⁹⁴ Skal bzang tshe ring was one of the main propagators of the creation of Xikang, and the inaugural newsletter called for its establishment.¹⁹⁵ Liu Jiaju wrote a couple of articles on Batang and Kham. Within this complex political environment in which alliances and loyalties frequently shifted, war lord Liu Wenhui eventually became governor of Xikang on January 1, 1939.¹⁹⁶

¹⁸⁹ See Tuttle 2005:150 and Wenbin 2002:72.

¹⁹⁰ See Coleman 2014: 467 and Tuttle 2005:150. Even though the Panchen Lama had died two years earlier in 1937, his office remained intact under his leadership until 1939. Gordon Enders, traveler and self-acclaimed counselor to the Panchen Lama, mentions Liu Jiaju in his books (see Enders 1936:215 and 296).

¹⁹¹ Spence 1993:278 quotes from "PRO:FO371/50/F8352/10 Reuters government summary of Tibet-Mongolian Weekly News, in Weir to Government of India, 16 November 1929." Also cited in Sawerthal 2011:56.

¹⁹² Jagou 2010:171. For translations of some political essays see Coleman 2014:449.

¹⁹³ One such cartoon is described by Colonel Weir, quoted in McGranahan 2003:281.

¹⁹⁴ Wenbin 2002. On the Xikang project and Skal bzang tshe ring's involvement, see also Epstein 2002 and Coleman 2014.

¹⁹⁵ See Coleman 2014:416.

¹⁹⁶ On Liu Wenhui, see Coleman 2014:414 and Wenbin 2002:68.

The Xikang Newspapers. The historical difficulties in establishing Xikang province explain the relative abundance of newspaper published during this time with "Xikang" as part of their title. Once again, a newspaper was here the preferred means to propagate a political idea. Most of the Xikang newspapers were published from Nanjing or Kangding. In May 1930, the *Xin xi kang yue kan* ("New Xikang Monthly") was published in Chinese, but it always also included articles in Tibetan.¹⁹⁷ From January 1936 until 1940, the *Shu sheng zhou bao* ("Shu sheng Weekly")¹⁹⁸ was published by the KMT army in Dingxiang county of Xikang province. This newspaper was mainly in Chinese, but it also published some Tibetan translations.¹⁹⁹ Rtse dbang et al. and Shar ba thogs med report on the *Khams kyi rgyal dmangs nyin re'i gsar 'gyur* ("Daily News of the People of Kham"), which was established in Dartsedo in 1936, but they do not specify whether it was in Tibetan or Chinese only.²⁰⁰ After Liu Wenhui gained governance of Xikang in 1939, the *Shis khang gsar 'gyur* ("Xikang News") was printed in Dartsedo from April 24, 1939.²⁰¹ Roughly two years later, on October 10, 1941, the *Shis khang go ming nyin re'i tshags par* ("Daily Newspaper of the Kuomintang in Xikang") was first published by the regional bureau of Xikang. Its Tibetan version was published weekly, with most articles being translated from the daily Chinese version. It was a major newspaper undertaking with up to 2,000 copies per issue and a spread to Amdo, Ütsang, Gansu and Yunnan. Contents encompassed the spread of policies and orders, news, general knowledge, Tibetan traditions, history and religion. It was discontinued in 1945.²⁰² A German publication of 1942 on newspapers of the world refers to this publication as "Volkszeitung" and describes:

So far, the newspaper founded by the Tibetan Babu Tharchin a couple of years ago and supported by the British was the first and only organ in Tibetan language. [...] The

¹⁹⁷ See Zhou 2010:36 and Shes rab rgya mtsho 2007.

¹⁹⁸ "Shu sheng" possibly refers to the first and last syllables of the Tang poem *Shu gu duan ren xing, bian qiu yi yan sheng*, which is about the sadness of Tang soldiers stationed at the border. I am grateful to Chun Xu for this suggestion.

¹⁹⁹ See Zhou 2010:37.

²⁰⁰ See Rtse dbang et al. 1990:132 and Shar ba thogs med 2004:42.

²⁰¹ See Zhou 2010:37.

²⁰² See Zhou 2010:37 and Zla ba tshe ring 2009b:44.

new daily is published by Liuwenhui, the Chinese governor of the province Xikang (under the Chongking-regime). Contrarily to the paper published in India, the new publication is said to be directed against British influence in Tibet, which Liuwenhui - so it is said - wants to replace by Chinese influence.²⁰³

During the same time and as far away as in Hongkong, another Tibetan-language newspaper was published, the *Ko ming nyin re'i tshags par* ("Kuomintang Daily Newspaper"). It was published from July 1939 to 1941 and from 1945 to 1949 and under the auspices of Tao Pai-chuan, an influential member of the KMT propaganda department who founded many news channels and newspapers.²⁰⁴ Its Chinese version was published daily, while the Tibetan edition was published on a weekly basis.²⁰⁵

The Panchen Lama's Newsletters. Another important actor concerning Tibetan-language periodicals was the Ninth Panchen Lama, Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma. He sought Chinese exile in 1923, following the eruption of a power struggle with the Thirteenth Dalai Lama over tax issues. The Panchen Lama left Central Tibet and sought support from the KMT, a connection established by Skal bzang tshe ring.²⁰⁶ It was a win-win situation for both parties: the KMT had been eager to cooperate with influential Tibetan opinion leaders, and for the Panchen Lama the cooperation promised support in his opposition to the Tibetan government.²⁰⁷ As an expression of this relationship and with the aim to tighten dependencies, the KMT conferred honorary titles upon the Panchen Lama which came both with privileges and obligations. In 1934, shortly after the death of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama was entitled "Emissary for the Propagation of Values on the Western Frontier" (*xi chui xuan hua shi*),²⁰⁸ a capacity in which he published at least two monthly newsletters.

²⁰³ D'Ester and Heide 1942:239, also quoted in Sawerthal 2011:56, original in German.

²⁰⁴ See <https://library.stanford.edu/collections/tao-pai-chuan-papers>, accessed November 30, 2016.

²⁰⁵ See Zhou 2010:37 and Zla ba tshe ring 2009a:44.

²⁰⁶ See Wenbin 2002:64.

²⁰⁷ On connections between the KMT and the Panchen Lama see Coleman 2014, Tuttle 2005:13, or Jagou 2004.

²⁰⁸ For a discussion of his title-conferment see Jagou 2002:85-102. On this specific title see also Tuttle 2005:13.

One was the *Xi chui xian hua shi gong shu yue kan* ("Monthly Review of the Emissary for the Propagation of Values on the Western Frontier"),²⁰⁹ which was published most likely from early 1935 until the Panchen Lama's death in 1937.²¹⁰ Its main editor was the Panchen Lama's secretary Liu Liaju, also editor of *Bod sog gsar gnas* of the MTAC. The review was published in Chinese, Tibetan and Mongolian and "echoed the politics of the Nanjing government," as Jagou formulates. The news as well as reports on the political and religious activities of the Panchen Lama were printed in Tibetan and Chinese.²¹¹ The Panchen Lama's office in Nanjing also published the *Xi zang ban chan zhu jing ban shi chu yue kan* ("Monthly Review of the Nanjing Office of the Panchen Lama of Tibet").²¹² It was started in June 1929 and continued until 1931,²¹³ and it was published only in Chinese. Starting from the seventh issue, "Xizang" was dropped in the title. Similar to the other review, it introduced KMT policies, Tibetan economics, culture and history. Both reviews were published amidst a variety of other propaganda-related activities, such as the dispatch of envoys to villages in Amdo and Kham, the printing of Tibetan-language books on borderland political issues²¹⁴ and the operation of a radio station.²¹⁵ At the same time, the first newspaper projects were started in Amdo. Zhou and Zla ba tshe ring mention the *Mtsho sngon gsar pa* ("New Qinghai"), published bilingually in Chinese and Tibetan by the regional administration from February 10, 1929 until April 1931. It covered topics such as Amdo culture, economy and politics.²¹⁶

In summary, the Sino-Tibetan tradition during 1930s can be divided into three main strands: Firstly, the MTAC, with Skal bzang tshe ring in the forefront, published newspapers or

²⁰⁹ See Jagou 2004:14, Tuttle 2005:191.

²¹⁰ Unfortunately, I have not seen any issues myself and different figures circulate concerning dates and place of publication. Jagou and Tuttle say it started in January 1935 (Jagou 2004:14, Jagou 1996:19, 2002:99, Tuttle 2005:191); Gordon Enders says in 1933 (Enders 1936:296). According to Zhou, again, the review was founded on May 7, 1935 (Zhou 2010:36-7). Concerning the place of publishing, Jagou indicates both Xining (Jagou 2004:14) and Xiangride (Jagou 2002:98). Enders says it was published from Nanjing, so does Zhou (2010:36-37). Sgrol ma 2009 writes that it was produced in Inner Mongolia.

²¹¹ See Jagou 2002:98-99.

²¹² See Jagou 2010:170 and Sgrol ma 2009.

²¹³ See Sgrol ma 2009:62.

²¹⁴ See Jagou 1996:20, cited also in Tuttle 2005:191.

²¹⁵ See Enders 1942:254.

²¹⁶ See Zhou 2010:36 and Zla ba tshe ring 2009b:44.

newsletters in Nanjing from 1929. Secondly and closely connected to this group, newspapers which propagated the establishment of Xikang were issued from localities within Xikang, but also from localities beyond, such as Nanjing and Hongkong. Thirdly, the Panchen Lama and his offices started two newsletters in 1935 in their capacity as a KMT propagator of "values in the West." In all these cases, Skal bzang tshe ring took up a key role in establishing contacts. In fact, the newspaper was one of KMT's favorite means for advocating ideologies ever since their rise in the years of 1910 to 1920. Apart from the missionary papers, newspapers emanated from central KMT policies, even if they were not actually published from Nanjing. During the 1940s, Liu Jiaju remained at the forefront of active propagators of the Tibetan issue, publishing books on Tibet and Kham²¹⁷ and joining a KMT supported study group in Chengdu. Between October 1946 and 1949, this group produced a monthly academic journal on Tibetan issues in Chinese, entitled the *Kang zang yan jiu yue kan* ("Xikang-Tibet Research Monthly"), with roughly 200 copies per issue.²¹⁸

Mongolia. An early Mongolian newspaper was printed in Tibetan script, which certainly is an expression of the important role of the Tibetan script in Mongolia. Disconnected from either of the trajectories mentioned so far, the *Bla ma nar 'ung sid khul* ("Journal of the Lamas") was printed in 1936. Monks of the Gandan monastery in Ulaanbaatar produced it in order to promote the values of the new socialist state. Today, only its first issue remains available.²¹⁹ Even though its main language was Mongolian, it was written in both Mongolian and Tibetan. One stated goal of this journal was to further the teaching of the Mongolian script, while the Tibetan script had been in use in Mongolia for centuries for the propagation of Buddhist texts. It possibly existed for one or two years, distributing 3,000 copies per issue.²²⁰

²¹⁷ See Coleman 2014:467.

²¹⁸ A facsimile of the journal has been published by Kolmaš 1983. For more background on the mentioned study group, see Tuttle 2005:207. I thank Tashi Tsering (AM) for pointing out this publication.

²¹⁹ Stored in a private archive in Ulaan Baatar, a facsimile is published by Grivelet 2001.

²²⁰ All information is from Grivelet's introduction to the publication (Grivelet 2001:ii-vi).

Communist Printing Initiatives. By 1949, the KMT had lost all their former strongholds to the rising Communists in China, and Chiang Kai-shek and his followers had to flee via India to Taiwan. In October 1949, Mao Zedong proclaimed the People's Republic of China. When the Communists took over, one of their priorities was to "liberate" Tibet, just as the KMT had pursued this in the decades before. Unlike the KMT however, the Communists had the military strength to deploy the PLA in order to create facts, and the dispatch of the PLA went hand in hand with the publishing of newspapers. Just as with KMT officials before, the spread of ideology was seen as an intrinsic part of the act of conquest, and thus Communist newspaper initiatives were initiated in the early 1950s, when the PLA arrived in Amdo, Kham and Central Tibet.

The first newspaper started by Communists was entitled *Mtsho sngon bod yig gsar 'gyur* ("The Amdo Tibetan-Language News"),²²¹ and it was first published from Xining, on January 16, 1951. The machine used for printing belonged to the leftover equipment of the KMT office in Nanjing, and a monk trained in woodblock printing was asked to make it work.²²² It is both the oldest running Communist newspaper in Tibetan and the oldest running Tibetan-language newspaper still published today from Xining. In 1951, it was published in Chinese and Tibetan, twice a week according to Kolmaš, or every ten days according to Hartley. Its editor was Gsung rab rgya mtsho, the same person who also initiated the radio program from Xining. It was spread in Qinghai, Central Tibet, Gansu and Sichuan. Schubert describes how students of Xining's University would go out to the grasslands in order to read and explain the news to illiterate nomads.²²³

In Lhasa, the first Tibetan-language newspaper led by the Communists was published on December 1, 1953, entitled *Gsar 'gyur 'dor bsdus* ("Condensed News"). This project initially developed within PLA troops: when the 18th army of the PLA marched onto Lhasa in 1951,

²²¹ On June 2, 1962, its title was changed to *Mtsho sngon bod rigs gsar 'gyur*, but from January 16, 1965 onwards this was again changed back to its original title (see Hartley 2003:83).

²²² See Hartley 2003:83.

²²³ For further information, see Kolmaš 1978:104, Zhou 2010:49, Hartley 2003:83-84 or Schubert 1957-58:59.

two smaller units mimeographed newspapers in Chinese on the way. Both units arrived in Lhasa shortly after each other, in October and December 1951 respectively, and merged their papers into the Chinese-language *Xin hua dian xun* ("Xinhua Telegraph") from January 1, 1952 within the compounds of the newly established Xinhua News Agency. On October 1, 1952, its title was changed to *Xin wen jian xun* ("Condensed News") and it continued to be published in Chinese. According to Zhou, starting from November 1952, a Tibetan version was launched. However, because the first issue of this *Gsar 'gyur mdor bsdus* ("Condensed News" or "Collected News") is archived at the LTWA, it can be said that the – then still monthly – Tibetan newspaper was first published on December 1, 1953.²²⁴ According to Hartley, this Tibetan-language newspaper was prepared in the Tibet Military Regional Editorial and Review Commission, founded in early 1952. The commission was headed by Tsha sprul ngag dbang blo bzang and comprised of important scholar-monks or members of the nobility, such as Dge bshes chos grags, Bde mo rin po che or Lcang lo can, and its masthead even included the Dalai Lama's seal and good wishes. The newspaper was mimeographed and its first issue printed in red ink. Tharchin stated in August 1954 that it was published every five days and that its contents were "nothing but their [Communist] propaganda."²²⁵

The *Gsar 'gyur mdor bsdus* was the precursor to the still existent and now daily *Bod ljongs nyin re'i gsar 'gyur* (later ... *tshags par*) ("Tibet Daily Newspaper"). During spring 1955, the year before it became a daily, the American journalist Alan Winnington visited its production

²²⁴ While not entirely impossible, it is unlikely that an earlier Tibetan version had been published. Note that various scholars give differing dates. Also note that both Zla ba tshe ring and Bkras sgron refer to the newspaper as *Bsdus gsal gsar 'gyur* (Zla ba tshe ring 2009a:80) and *Gsar 'gyur bsdus gsal* (Bkras sgron 1993[1981]:39) respectively, which probably derives from the fact that both authors used Chinese language sources. In Chinese, the name is consistently given as *Xin wen jian xun*. I am grateful to Luran Hartley for sharing the latter book with me.

²²⁵ TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to T. Wangdi (Calcutta), January 1, 1954. Issues are stored at LTWA. For further information, see Zla ba tshe ring 2001:61, Zla ba tshe ring 2009a:80, Zhou 2010:50 or Hartley 2003:85-86. I want to thank Nicole Willock for sharing her copies of the material.

compounds,²²⁶ which were situated behind the new post office. The paper was published three times a week with 3,000 copies. The initial plan was to publish daily, but this was impossible due to technical difficulties. Winnington reports that the first-ever printed newspaper in Tibet rolled off from flatbed cylinder presses on May 4, 1955. Apparently, this refers to the fact that it was published with types for the first time, since previously it was mimeographed and later lithographed. Type designers in Beijing had designed Tibetan letters and matrices, and the first Tibetan type setters and reporters were trained by the Chinese. Roughly twelve people worked for the paper, amongst them also one woman. They worked as before under the lead of Tsha sprul rin po che and mainly translated pieces from Xinhua News Agency. Readers in Lhasa and the provinces included the high and middle nobility as well as monks. It went out to about 400 monasteries, including all the way to Harbin.²²⁷

On April 22, 1956, the first daily edition was published under the new title *Bod ljongs nyin're'i gsar 'gyur*, and the team had risen to 150 employees. Following a Chinese tradition of having titles written by famous people, the lettering of the *Bod ljongs nyin re'i gsar 'gyur* was written by the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.²²⁸ After the Dalai Lama's escape, the handwriting of Rnam rgyal rdo rje was used, according to Hartley.²²⁹ Its title was changed to *Bod ljong nyin re'i tshags par* in 1965, and the new title was written by Nga phod ngag dbang 'jigs med. Starting from March 13, 1959, the subtitle read *Xi zang ri bao* ("Tibet Daily"), in the handwriting of the famous author Lu Xun. It continues to be published from Lhasa until today. The main editors at those time were more or less the same people as those that used to work for the *Gsar 'gyur mdor bsdus*: the two chief editors were Tsha sprul rin po che and Ka shod don grub, next to Dge bshes chos grags who continued his work, and a certain Rgya mtsho

²²⁶ As a communist, he was one of the few journalists allowed into Lhasa in the 1950s. He wrote a book about the ongoing modernization in Tibet, which includes a whole chapter dedicated to the "first Tibetan newspaper in Lhasa." Tharchin critically commented on the group of journalist in Melong 23-5-2 (February 1956).

²²⁷ See Winnington 1957:190-194.

²²⁸ See Zla ba tshe ring 2009a:80.

²²⁹ See Hartley 2003:87.

don grub as Tibetan writer.²³⁰ A Beijing publication of June 1959 shows people reading the newspaper in the Barkhor in Lhasa. As evident from this illustration, the newspaper was at times plastered on walls, just like the wall posters before. It should be noted however that, even today, very few people actually read the newspaper, so it is difficult to say how much attraction it produced in fact.

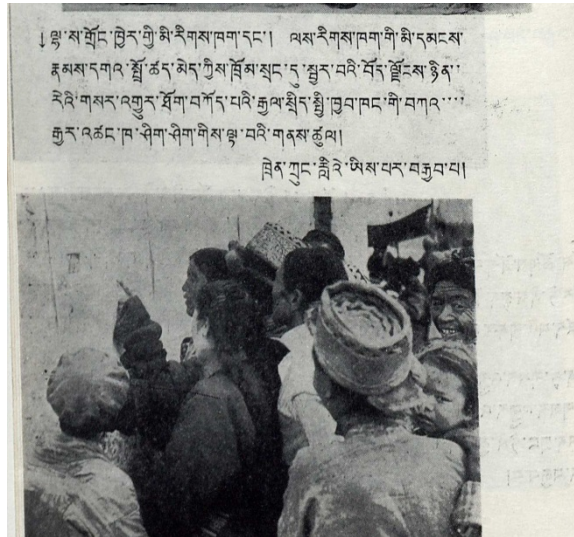


Figure 5: A Beijing publication of June 1959 shows people reading the newspaper in the Barkhor in Lhasa.

The professionalization of the Lhasa newspaper and the founding of the TAR in 1965 brought about a well-structured centralized mode of newspaper production all over the Tibetan-speaking areas. To this day, the information hierarchy flows from Beijing to Lhasa and then on to the regional newspapers. Such regional newspapers were founded already during the early 1950s, following the arrival of the PLA. In 1951, for example, a newspaper was started in Chamdo, most likely in the month of June.²³¹ The *Ming kyang tshags dpar* in Ngaba was initiated in 1953, and published daily. By 1959, its title was changed to *Ming kyang gsar 'gyur* ("Min River News"),²³² by 1981 to *Rnga ba tshags par* ("Ngaba Newspaper").²³³ The *Dkar mdzes lho rgyud tshags par* ("South Kardze Newspaper") is said to have been initiated in

²³⁰ See Zhou 2010:188. For further information, see Hartley 2003:87, Zla ba tshe ring 2009a:80, Zla ba tshe ring 2009b:45 and Kolmaš 1978:103.

²³¹ The Melong 19-3-12 (June 1951) reports the near completion of a communist newspaper office in Chamdo.

²³² See Kolmaš 1978:103-104.

²³³ See Hartley 2005:247.

1953 from Dartsedo, and it was retitled *Dkar mdzes tshags par* in 1954.²³⁴ A daily edition, the *Dkar mdzes nyin re'i gсар 'gyur* ("Daily Kardze Newspaper"), was probably established in late 1957.²³⁵ In either 1952 or 1954, the *Kan lho'i gсар 'gyur* ("Gannan News") was initiated from Labrang Tashikyil (Xiahe) in today's Gansu province. According to Zhou, it started on April 10, 1952 and was lithographed until January 1953 and then type pressed.²³⁶ Until January 1955, it was published as a bilingual version, then as two separate editions. According to Kolmaš, it started in 1954 and was published every five days in type letters.²³⁷ Concerning its reception, Schubert states in 1957-1958: "Hsia-ho has a well-built cultural house, which displays a variety of Tibetan-language books and magazines [...]. The cultural house was packed with reading Tibetans. Some of them eagerly discussed the respective articles with each other."²³⁸ Another newspaper, the *Rgyal rtse gсар 'gyur* ("Gyantse News"), was probably founded in 1953,²³⁹ and a Shigatse newspaper existed in 1955.²⁴⁰ Thus, local Tibetan-language newspapers mushroomed in all major towns, and usually they were published parallel to a Chinese edition.

Some of the projects mentioned above actually should be considered more as newsletters or reviews that were printed in low frequency. The news products mentioned did not appear by themselves but rather amidst a variety of other media products, such as journals, magazines or radio programs. Even more importantly, pictorials were published from the early 1950s onwards, which addressed the illiterate audience all over China. There was the nationwide *Mi ser brnyan dpar*, later known as *Mi dmangs brnyan par* ("People Pictorial"), which from 1951 onwards was published from Beijing in notable 6,000 copies,²⁴¹ the *Mi rigs bryan par*

²³⁴ See Zla ba tshe ring 2009b:44.

²³⁵ I am grateful to Robbie Barnett for sharing two issues of his private collection: October 30, 1959 and October 31, 1959, numbered as 697 and 698.

²³⁶ See Zhou 2010:174.

²³⁷ See Kolmaš 1978:103.

²³⁸ Schubert 1957-58:11, original in German.

²³⁹ Issue number 38 of the (weekly?) paper, published February 10, 1954, is preserved in the LTWA.

²⁴⁰ See Winnington 1957:192. The Melong, in 24-12-2 (April 1958), quotes a newspaper circulating in Shigatse.

²⁴¹ See the imprint of *Mi dmangs brnyan par*, February 1951, stored at VIESAK.

("Nationalities Pictorial") published from 1955 and the regional *Mtsho sngon brnyan par* ("Qinghai Pictorial") published from 1958.²⁴² These pictorials were part of major Communist initiatives to unite all of China. The first issue of the *Mi ser brnyan par*, for example, was simultaneously produced in six languages (Chinese, Russian, English, Mongolian, Tibetan and Uighur), and at other times, such as in August 1954, for example, it was even produced in twelve different languages.²⁴³

After 1959. During the 1950s, the Communists developed a network of newspapers all over the Tibetan-speaking areas. In the 1960s and the following decades, this network was subsequently extended. Initially, a cooperative approach between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Communist government during the 1950s provided opportunities for a peaceful cooperation, sealed by the Seventeen Point Agreement. However, the years of cooperation between the Tibetan government and the Chinese Communists soon turned out as an increasingly unbalanced relationship in which the Tibetans had little to say. When thousands of Tibetans staged protests in Lhasa in March 1959, the Dalai Lama fled Lhasa and sought asylum in India, followed by thousands of Tibetans. In Kham, and later in Central Tibet as well, networks of guerilla fighters resisted the Communists in Tibet. From 1956, this guerilla war was supported by the CIA through money, guns and training. With the Dalai Lama's flight to India, many of the soldiers also followed their leader and then found themselves unoccupied upon their arrival in exile. It was such a group of people who established the first Tibetan newspapers in exile.

The exile newspaper *Rang dbang gsar shog* ("Freedom Newspaper") was founded in March 1960 under the auspices and financial aid of Rgyal lo don 'grub, the Dalai Lama's elder brother, who also was the contact between the CIA and the Tibetan fighters. A few years later, in July 1963, Lha mo tshe ring, Rgyal lo don 'grub's secretary, led another weekly newspaper

²⁴² Columbia University's C.V. Starr Library holds the first issue, July 1958, a Chinese-Tibetan publication.

²⁴³ See the imprint of *Mi ser brnyan par*, August 1954, stored at VIesak. For further information on pictorials see Hartley 2005:233.

project from Darjeeling, with the title *Rang dbang srung skyobs gsar shog* ("Protect Freedom Newspaper"). This split may have derived from an argument between newly arrived Khampas in Darjeeling.²⁴⁴ According to the later editor of the *Rang dbang gsar shog*, Dgon po rdo rje, the *Rang dbang gsar shog* covered general news while the *Rang dbang srung skyobs gsar shog* focused on the guerilla fights which continued in Tibet and the border regions. The *Rang dbang gsar shog* was funded completely by Rgyal lo don 'grub and the *Rang dbang srung skyobs gsar shog* by Lha mo tshe ring. Still, Indian publication laws demanded an Indian editor, and in the case of *Rang dbang gsar shog* this task was taken up by Lha dbang dpal 'byor, an influential and wealthy Darjeeling citizen. In the beginning, about ten people worked for *Rang dbang gsar shog*, including its secretary Ye shes dar rgyas of the exiled Kashag. The first issue was mimeographed from Kalimpong, and it moved to Darjeeling later in 1961. A printing machine, a "Viktoria Polygraph", was bought through Kolkata from East-Germany. In 1961, the main editor Lha dbang dpal 'byor made way for the Indian citizen Bhag 'gro bla ma, a former high-ranking military official of India.²⁴⁵ In the case of the *Rang dbang srung skyobs gsar shog*, its registered Indian citizen editor was A mdo 'jigs med²⁴⁶ from Rebkong, and it was printed in Darjeeling on Ladenla Road. Its acting editor was 'Ba' chung mthu stobs mgon po from Kham, a former fighter of the Chu bzhi sgang drug.²⁴⁷ The *Rang dbang srung skyobs gsar shog*, more so than the *Rang dbang gsar shog*, was a way of providing jobs for those who had just come from fighting in Tibet, and thus all ten men who worked there were former fighters. They knew little about newspaper making and saw the newspaper more as a continuation of their military past.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁴ See 'Ju chen thub bstan 2014:91-92.

²⁴⁵ Interview with Dgon po rdo rje, former editor of RW, May 1, 2014, Darjeeling; see also Melong 27-10-2&3 (August 1961). For the history of RW see *Bod mi'i rang dbang* October 16, 1992; and Melong 26-10-3 (March 1960).

²⁴⁶ See RWSK July 31, 1963:16, stored at VIESAK.

²⁴⁷ Interview with Dgon po rdo rje, May 1, 2014, Darjeeling; and *Bod mi'i rang dbang* October 16, 1992.

²⁴⁸ Interview with Dgon po rdo rje, May 1, 2014. *Bod mi'i rang dbang* October 16, 1992 provides a detailed list on who worked for each of the publications.

When the Dalai Lama intervened in 1965, both publications were merged into the *Bod mi'i rang dbang* ("Tibetan People's Freedom"), which is still produced in Dharamsala today. The first joint issue was published on March 9, 1965, with about 100 printed copies in the beginning and about 900 at a later date. In this time, it was headed by former guerilla 'Ba' pa phyag mdzod bkra shis who oversaw a staff of about 20 people.²⁴⁹ The main purpose of the publication was to inform the new arrivals to India but also Tibetans inside Tibet. *Rang dbang gsar shog* was carried secretly into Tibet, in order to inform people about the activities of the Dalai Lama, activities of the Chinese as well as about friends and relatives in India. In this way, it provided a communicative connection for people suddenly separated. For a long time, the newspaper used to include a section on people who had newly arrived to India. In 1972 or 1973, funding was handed over to Dharamsala, and money then came from the Department of Information and International Relation of the exile Tibetan government instead from Rgyal lo don 'grub. This financing shift coincides with the full stop of the guerilla war in Mustang. For the longest time, the newspaper was produced from Darjeeling, but when it moved to Dharamsala in 1992 it was merged with the *Nar thang par khang*,²⁵⁰ and almost nobody from the original *Rang dbang gsar shog* staff moved to Dharamsala, as Dgon po rdo rje attests.

The guerillas continued fighting from Mustang and edited a newspaper called '*Go rtogs* ("Understanding"). Founded by Lha mo tshe ring, Jamyang Norbu recalls his work there in 1971: "My own contribution to the journal was picking up stories from the BBC World Service and sometimes doing a piece. The magazine was mimeographed [...]. The Gestetner machine would sit out in the blazing sun for an hour or two and when the rollers and works were nearly too hot to touch we would crank out the voice of the Resistance. The heat made

²⁴⁹ Interview with Dgon po rdo rje, May 1, 2014, and *Bod mi'i rang dbang* October 16, 1992.

²⁵⁰ See *Bod mi'i rang dbang* October 16, 1992.

the viscous ink flow nice and even and we got perfect results every time."²⁵¹ From this time onwards, many more newspapers and magazines emerged amongst exile communities.²⁵²

In January 1963, the defeated KMT initiated the publication of a Tibetan-language newspaper from Kolkata, the *Krung dbyang gsar 'gyur*, edited by Bstan pa lhun 'grub.²⁵³ According to Phun tshogs, caretaker of the fantastic museum connected to Tharpa Chöling Monastery in Kalimpong, very few people had an actual interest in the newspaper, but it was nevertheless spread to Kalimpong, Darjeeling, Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal.²⁵⁴ In 1959, the scholarly journal of the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, entitled *Bod kyi shes rig* and *Tibetology* in English, was founded with Tharchin as a founding member. Its first and second issues were printed through his press (see Chapter 3). Another magazine, the free pictorial *Yar rgyas gong 'phel* ("Progress"), was published by the Information Service of India in Gangtok, Sikkim, from 1961 and distributed in Gangtok and Kathmandu. According to Tashi Tsering, the *Yar rgyas gong 'phel* was an attempt to recreate the Communist *Mi rigs brnyan par*.²⁵⁵

To summarize the different newspaper trajectories, initiatives came either from Christian missionaries (Moravians, Herrnhut, Scottish) or from Chinese political forces (Qing imperialists, KMT nationalists, Communists), and were generally disconnected from each other. Then there are unique examples, such as the *Journal of the Lamas* in Mongolia, which showcases the elevated status of the Tibetan script in Mongolia. The Dalai Lama's flight to India with his followers meant an influx of newspapers and media in general. All the pre-1959 projects discussed can thus be seen either as part of the missionary proselytizing activities or

²⁵¹ Norbu 1999: *no page*. I am grateful to Tashi Tsering (AM) for showing me a blurred picture of one of the newspapers posted to a house wall in Mustang. In Tshong kha lha mo tshe ring 2008:76-78, few pictures of newspaper stuck on a house wall are depicted.

²⁵² For a list of post-1960 exile newspapers, see e.g. Blo bzang smon lam 2009, RW April 17, 1995, Bhum 2010 or Latse Journal 2014-2015.

²⁵³ See Melong 28-4-2 (April/May 1963). Tashi Tsering (AM) says there are rumors he was not a Tibetan, but a Chinese in Tibetan disguise.

²⁵⁴ Interview with Phun tshogs, current caretaker of the TCMM, May 10, 2014, Kalimpong. Issues are available digitally via the University of Washington.

²⁵⁵ For further information on the pictorial see Dge 'dun rab gsal 2014-15:26. I am grateful to Tashi Tsering (AM) for showing me the issues at Amnye Machen. Note that there was a magazine or newspaper with the same name published from Srinagar, probably in the late 1970s. One issue is stored at LTWA, but it is rotten.

as a means to spread propaganda for political institutions and ideologies. The newspapers and journals were mostly maintained by one specific institution (the mission, the KMT, the Communist government, the Sikkim Durbar, ...). It has to be acknowledged that papers such as the *Bod sog gsar gnas* were not exclusively propaganda leaflets of the KMT, but they were in fact produced with care and sensibility by Tibetan KMT agents, such as Skal bzang tshering, or the scholar-monks involved in the early Communist newspaper projects. The missionary papers by Asboe and Francke imported important ideas from the West, and in the process were merged with local interpretations. Thus, the projects mentioned above cannot simply be branded as one-dimensional propaganda. There were also other elements, such as commentary or cartoons, and a thorough study of the *Bod sog gsar gnas* in particular is likely to bring to light interesting insights into these issues. However, all of the mentioned publications were produced with a clear affiliation to the institutions that maintained them, and thus were limited in terms of transgressing their institutional demands. This was different in the case of the Melong. For various reasons which we will analyze in the next chapter, the Melong transcended missionary and political aims but saw a public value in publishing a newspaper.

3 The Melong's Production Environment

The Melong was not a project founded by one political or missionary institution but rather under the initiative of Babu Tharchin. Just what fascinated Tharchin about print is undocumented. But Tharchin was searching for employment when he received copies of books with the imprint "Printed by the Scandinavian Mission in Ghoom." He sent them a letter of application but was rejected because the press no longer existed. However, the mission offered him a job as Tibetan teacher, which Tharchin was glad to accept. In 1917, he was enticed away by the Scottish Mission in Kalimpong. Some day in 1925, he discovered an old broken mimeograph (a Roneo duplicator) and, still interested in printing, requested the head of the mission, Dr. John Graham, whether he could attempt to make use of it. With the consent and support of Dr. Graham, Tharchin managed to successfully operate the mimeograph and in this way he accomplished his wish to print a Tibetan-language newspaper on October 1, 1925.¹ In certain respects, the Melong was brought to light by this encounter of Babu Tharchin with Dr. John Graham. Tharchin's wish was to produce a newspaper for Tibet, and Graham supported this endeavor by providing the necessary infrastructure. Yet, Tharchin always was the main driving force behind the project. Rather than working to fulfil somebody else's plans of publishing a newspaper, he was successful in convincing and raising the support of different stakeholders who were interested in the newspaper for various reasons.

In more general respects, the Melong came to light through the complex entanglement of economic, political, and religious motives which pursued dissimilar ends. The following chapter demonstrates such entangled dimensions by bringing together various aspects involved in the Melong's production. Its place of production, Kalimpong, as well as the condensed biography of Babu Tharchin will be introduced briefly. Since both these aspects

¹ Regular publishing started from February 13, 1926, because Tharchin was required to register the publication with the British authorities according to the "Press and Registration of Books Act" (1867). A copy of the registration form, dated December 15, 1925, is stored in the TC.

have been widely discussed previously, their respective details may be found elsewhere.² Much less discussed, however, is Kalimpong's local newspaper landscape. Printing presses in Kalimpong and surroundings were thriving in these times, picking up on routines prevalent in West Bengal, with Calcutta being one of the hotspot of print culture in the 19th and early 20th century in India. This will be followed by the financial and technological history of the newspaper and a presentation of the connected print shop, referred to as TMP,³ including an overview of its other print products apart from the newspaper. In the course of this, it will become apparent how the Melong and the TMP catered to a variety of stakeholders involved in political schemes, missionary endeavors or trade. Different to previously discussed newspaper projects, though, it carried many characteristics of a commercial print enterprise, in the sense that it attempted to sell as many copies of newspapers and books to as many people as possible. This pursuit included a modern economic understanding of newspapers, namely as both a public and an economic good.

3.1 Kalimpong: Entanglements of Trade, Politics and Information

The fact that the Melong was produced in Kalimpong is not a coincidence for at least three reasons: First of all, Kalimpong was situated along an old trade route between India and Tibet, which resonates with historical developments in early 17th century Europe, where the first newspapers were similarly produced from places such as Straßburg, Mainz or Antwerpen, i.e. trading hubs where information was of crucial importance. Secondly, Kalimpong was located at the fringes of political entities such as the Ganden Phodrang government to the North, (British) India to the South, and the smaller surrounding kingdoms of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. This positioning offered the nascent enterprise freedom to develop in independent ways, i.e. in modes different from the established protocols of such centers. Thirdly, and as a

² For literature on Kalimpong, see for example Macdonald 1949, Harris 2013 or Hackett 2008 and 2012. For biographical information on Babu Tharchin, see particularly Fader 2002-2009.

³ Note that the name "Tibet Mirror Press" was only officially registered in 1946.

consequence of the two above conditions, Kalimpong was an information hub important to those working in trade as well as those involved in politics.

Trade and its Ramifications. Situated along a century-old trade route which connects the Indian plains to Central Tibet, Kalimpong was a convenient access point to Tibet for people on the Southern side of the Himalaya and an access point to the Indian plains for those on the Northern side. People en route from the kingdoms of Sikkim to the North, Bhutan to the East or Nepal to the West traversed this place of trade and exchange, including the local Lepcha population. Christian missionaries settled in Kalimpong already in the 19th century, in the hope to proselytize the local population and gain access to Tibet. The Scottish Mission arrived to Kalimpong in 1873-74 and built up a missionary station, including a school and a hospital. However, it was not until the British Raj decided to send an army to Gyantse in 1903-04 that Kalimpong rose to veritable fame. The Younghusband expedition violently forced the Tibetans to enter into formalized trade relations with Great Britain, thus gaining the long coveted dominance in Central Tibet over Russia and China. Through the control of trade and communications (see Chapter 2 for the latter), they connected Tibet to the global market. Many people and localities suffered under this forced opening in various ways, but its ramifications propelled a thrust to Kalimpong. The British were quick in establishing infrastructure along their route to Gyantse, where the trade agency was established. With its growing infrastructure, Kalimpong quickly became popular among colonial officials as a holiday hill station, and its increasing Western reception attracted even more people, both tourists who sought adventures as well as scholars who viewed Kalimpong as a gateway to Tibet. The initially forced cooperation between Tibet and Great Britain led to the emergence of Tibetan colonial officials. As trade traffic through Kalimpong increased, more bankers and moneymakers came to the town. Nepalese traders who traditionally crossed the Himalayas through Kyirong increasingly took the route through Kalimpong and opened shops there. When the Nepali king prosecuted Buddhist Newars during the 1930s, many fled to

Kalimpong, substantially increasing the Nepali population. Traffic of people and goods from Tibet drastically increased over the years, producing wealthy economic elites, most importantly wool traders from Kham and Central Tibet, such as the three largest ones, commonly referred to as *re spom sa gsum*: Sa 'du tshang, Spom mda' tshang and the Rwa sgreng Regent's labrang.⁴ In 1921, Kalimpong was not even recorded as a distinct town in the Census of India. It appeared for the first time in 1931, counting 8,776 inhabitants, and by 1941 it had grown by almost 40% to a population of almost 12,000 people, and to 16,677 in 1951. By 1961, Kalimpong had more than 25,000 inhabitants and was classified in the same category as Darjeeling.⁵ This thriving mix of people furnished the town with the market place atmosphere necessary to adopt modern ideas.

Political, Religious and Cultural groups. The big Tibetan trading companies had their branch offices in Kalimpong. It is almost impossible to distinguish between those active in trade and those active in politics: Rwa sgreng rin po che was the regent of Tibet from 1934-1941 while he also owned the largest Tibetan trading company. Kalimpong was host to the offices of various primarily political dignitaries, such as the Panchen Lama, Chinese representatives of both the KMT and later the Communists or the Bhutanese Queen, and the Central Tibetan Government established trade bureaus in Kalimpong.

Religious institutions such as the various Christian missions, Tibetan Buddhists (who followed Mahāyāna Buddhism), or Newar Buddhists (who mainly followed Theravāda) were all represented in Kalimpong. The influential Nepali trader Bhajuratna was the main donor of the Theravāda Buddhist temple "Dharmodaya Vihar", established in 1947,⁶ which was the first meeting house of the YMBA, the Young Men's Buddhist Association. The YMBA was founded in Kalimpong by John Ryan on May 6, 1950,⁷ and it soon had an elaborate circle of

⁴ See McGranahan 2002:104. For a history on the trade between Kalimpong and Tibet, see Harris 2013 and Harris 2017.

⁵ See Census of India 1921, 1931, 1941, 1951 and 1961.

⁶ See Kansakar Hilker 2005:63.

⁷ See Time, December 4, 1950 and Schaedler 2007:414-415.

supporters including Sangharakhshita, Marco Pallis, George Roerich, Nebesky-Wojkowitz and others.⁸ In 1946, the Tsechu Offering Association, Kalimpong (Ka sbug tshes bcu mchos pa'i mched grogs spyi tshogs) was established in Kalimpong. It was founded "for purely religious purposes",⁹ i.e. apparently with a felt need to distance itself from the political activities in Kalimpong. Cultural-political clubs, such as the General Lepcha Association¹⁰ or Nebula (Hill People's Social Union),¹¹ also formed at Kalimpong. Within this heterogeneous environment, various groups sought to underline a certain type of identity in striving for political representation.

Apart from the branch offices of official political and cultural institutions, the Central Tibetans saw in Kalimpong a welcome change of scene from the conservative politics of the Tibetan government in Lhasa. The nobility sent their children to Kalimpong for modern education which was not available in Lhasa, and during politically delicate times some families moved to Kalimpong altogether. Under the pretext of going on a pilgrimage to India, the families could thus withstand political intrigues. During the 1940s, increasing numbers of Tibetans were either tired of or officially prosecuted by Lhasa politics, especially under the turmoil of intrigues and the civil war between Rwa sgreng Regent and Stag brag Regent. Thus, Kalimpong hosted a variety of capable dissidents from Tibet, making it a center of political opposition and clandestine activities. The most well-known of such elements probably is the Tibet Improvement Party. It was founded by Rab dga' spom mda' tshang, the brother of the important trader, together with the political expats Kun 'phel lags and Lcang lo can. The intellectual Dge' 'dun chos 'phel was a member too.¹² The British had specific reasons for setting up their intelligence network with Kalimpong as one of its major hubs. The remoteness

⁸ See HT September 23, 1951:7-8, and TC: Announcement of second anniversary of the YMBA, May 11, 1952.

⁹ As written on the last page of "Concessional Fares in the eastern Railway of India," printed at TMP, 1956, stored at Tharpa Chöling Monastery Museum (TCMM).

¹⁰ Founded by Lepcha padre Gyen Tshering Sitling, who was also active in printing educational and Christian literature in Lepcha language (see Dattamajumdar 2014: *no page*).

¹¹ On the formation of Nebula, an organization comprising Nepalis, Tibetans and Lepchas, see Melong 8-2-2 (March 1935).

¹² For details on the Tibet Improvement Party, see Stoddard 1985:94-103 or Goldstein 2007[1989]:449-463.

of Kalimpong and Gangtok provided British officials with the possibility of extending their authorities beyond centralized British policies. At times, the "Tibet cadre", as McKay has coined, ran their own policies.¹³ By the early 1950s, Kalimpong had already established its reputation as a "nest of spies",¹⁴ since it had developed into a convenient place for gathering information about the events in Tibet. This issue became particularly pressing when the Chinese Communists invaded Central Tibet and started controlling information and trade there.

Beginning from the 1950s, more and more Tibetans escaped from Chinese rule to Kalimpong, and Rgyal lo don 'grub recalls that "all sorts of small organizations and committees were springing up."¹⁵ After a flood occurred in Southern Tibet in the summer of 1954, Don 'grub, Zhwa sgab pa and Blo bzang rgyal mtshan officially initiated the influential Tibetan Welfare Association (Bde don tshogs pa, according to Rgyal lo don 'grub). Its main activity was to campaign against Chinese rule in Tibet by publishing political pamphlets.¹⁶ Operating from Kalimpong, Rgyal lo don 'grub also became the contact man of a guerilla war in Tibet, from 1956 with the support of the CIA through finances, materials and training. When A lo chos mdzad, main leader of Mi dmangs tshogs 'du fled to Kalimpong from Tibet in 1956, he continued his activities there, for example printing the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's testament, working on the TMP and collaborating with Rgyal lo don 'grub.¹⁷ Shakya referred to Kalimpong in the late 1950s as "the main centre for Tibetan opposition".¹⁸ While individuals and organizations stood in clearly formulated hierarchies to one another in contexts such as Lhasa or Calcutta, once resettled to a new environment such as Kalimpong, such hierarchies

¹³ See McKay 2009:198-199.

¹⁴ The international press reported on spy activities in Kalimpong (see for example Time, December 4, 1950). The local HT also widely covered the topic of clandestine espionage (see HT November 18, 1951:6 "Espionage in Kalimpong;" December 16, 1951:4 "Spies;" June 1, 1952:2 "Hunting Ground of Foreign Spies;" September 27 1953:5 "Kalimpong - A Nest of Spies").

¹⁵ Thondup 2015:149.

¹⁶ For more information on the association, see Römer 2008:63, Thondup 2015:149-250 or Gyaltse Namgyal Wangdue 2012:155 and 161-162. For a report on and a picture of the first meeting at Spom mda' tshang's office, see Melong 22-5-1 (September 1, 1954) and 23-2-1 (January 12, 1955).

¹⁷ For further information on Mi dmangs tshogs 'du and A lo chos mdzad see Shakya 2000[1999]:145-147.

¹⁸ Shakya 2000[1999]:169.

were softened and open to renegotiation. Amidst the messy entanglement of stakeholders with diffuse powers, it was easier to create space for individual freedom, and the freedom granted by this intermediary state was used also by Tharchin's newspaper.

Information Hub. In the town of Kalimpong, information was of central importance both in terms of its collection and its spread, since it was part of multiple parallel and intertwined networks of information. Chapter 2 has already demonstrated that most of the structured information flows and international correspondences to and from Tibet passed through Kalimpong, and here mostly through British hands via post, telegraphy and radio. Furthermore, the longstanding trading and monastic networks of communication extended through Kalimpong as well. Information travelled with the traders and from monastery to monastery, and Tharchin used this advantageous position in specific ways. The traders required information to run their businesses, and the Melong regularly published the price of certain goods. Even if the traders already knew about such price ranges from their own information channels, they could still use the Melong as a written source for referring to certain prices. At times of strict government control, they could also look up legitimate traders.¹⁹ The newspaper fixed market fluctuations into written form, on a monthly basis. So far, the market was left to the imagination of a limited amount of communication partners, while now it found a new haptic form in the Melong's pages.

Also political activists demanded and produced information. British, Indians, Tibetans, Chinese, and later on Americans: all used Kalimpong as a trade center from where information was transported to political centers such as Lhasa, Calcutta, Delhi or Washington. It may be a historical coincidence, that upon the Melong's founding, Kalimpong gained increased geopolitical importance, thus providing it with the appropriate context it required to flourish or at least survive. But, it is no coincidence that the newspaper was closed down in 1963, just after the border between India and China closed, thus bringing trade to a halt.

¹⁹ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok), July 30, 1951.

Lived Diversity. The ethnical and cultural diversity brought about by the described political, economical and religious dynamics is not only observed today by analysts and historians, but set the pulse of Kalimpong already during its heydays. Kalimpongians actively reflected upon and at times proudly articulated the heterogeneity of the town. Articles with titles such as "Kalimpong, border Cosmopolis" appeared in the *Himalayan Times*.²⁰ Tharchin wrote in the Melong in July 1930:

Even though this Kalimpong is a small town, many different kinds of ethnicities (*mi rigs*) gather here. [...] Any type of ethnicity (*mi rigs*), [may it be] European, Indian, Chinese, Nepali, Bhutanese, Sikkimese, Tibetan, Mongolian and so on, passes through this place. [...]²¹

This lived diversity did not keep people from thinking in ethnical categories. More often than not, social closeness in fact produced a pronunciation of ethnical categories, as evident from the founding of various ethnically based clubs. For the issue of Tibetan New Year 1931, the trope of heterogeneity is woven into a poem which calls for a happy year for Kalimpong.

I give the summarized news of Kalimpong, which, auspiciously and prosperously, [is situated] at the border between India and Tibet and where all different kinds of people gather from every end of the world.

Also all people know different kinds of education.

This place of moderate climate is great.

There are Englishmen, Indians, Tibetans, Monpas, Nepalis and so on. Here one finds all different kinds of goods from every country, all kinds of grain, clothes, and valuables, whatever Indians or Tibetans need.

Many intelligent and knowledgeable experts dwell here, with great skills in all kinds of scripts and languages: English, Indian, Chinese, Nepali or Tibetan.

There are medical doctors for physical illnesses, and there is the beneficial true religion for mental illnesses.

There are schools where one can learn sciences, and there is everything exalted from India and Tibet.

²⁰ See HT January 14, 1951:3 and 5.

²¹ Melong 5-2-5 (July 1930): *ka sbug 'di grong khyer chung ngu zhig yin kyang /_mi rigs mi 'dra ba mang po 'du 'dzoms che bas/ [...] sa gnas 'dir yu rob pa dang /_rgya dkar nag bal 'brug 'bras 3/_bod sog sogs tshang ma'i mi rigs phebs bzhud mi gnang ba mi 'dug [...]*.

Even the true religion is here, spoken by God, unsurpassable, amazing and wondrous.
Whatever news of the world you want to [hear], there is also the amazing lithographic
press. [...] ²²

The poem praises Kalimpong as a cosmopolis and a center of exchange between different peoples, things and languages. It celebrates its resulting richness of commodities, both concerning material goods and immaterial knowledge and information. On one hand it uses categories designating specific cultural or ethnical groups, dividing its population along established cultural groups. On the other hand it employs ambiguous terminology. The poem mentions for example the "true religion" (*dam pa'i chos*) propagated by "God" (*dkon mchog*). Undoubtedly, this refers to Christianity, but Tibetan readers would most likely read *dam pa'i chos* and *dkon mchog* in a Buddhist context. In such ways, the Melong handled dynamics of both bridging and separating dissimilar worlds, as discussed in details in Chapters 4 and 5. Before we look into Tharchin's biography however, Kalimpong will first be discussed as a center of printing.

3.2 Printing Presses and Newspapers in Kalimpong

Politically part of India, Kalimpong was easily connected to the plains and Calcutta via a convenient rail service running to Siliguri. Calcutta was a hotspot of Indian print and newspaper culture and exerted a strong influence on Kalimpong in terms of its communicative modes. As previously mentioned, newspapers and print were imported to India through colonialism. The first newspaper in India (*The Bengal Gazette*) was produced from Calcutta in 1780, and the Baptist Mission Press ran in Calcutta ever since 1818 (and merged with the

²² Melong 5-9-1 (February 1931): [...] *ka sbug yul gyi gnas tshul mdor bsdus 'bul/_bkra shis g.yang chags rgya bod sa mtshams 'dir/_mi sna mi cig phyogs mtha' kun nas 'dzom/_mi rnams kun kyang yon tan sna tshogs mkhyen/_bsil grangs snyom pa'i yul 'di ngo mtshar che/_dbyin ji rgya bod mon dang bal po sogs/_yul lung kun nas rang rang tshong gi rigs/_'bru rigs kun dang gos dang rin po che/_rgya bod kun la ci mkho 'di na mchis/_dbyin ji rgya gar rgya nag gor bod kyi/_mchog tu mkhas pa'i shes rab blo gros can/_rtsal dang ldan pa mang po 'di na bzhugs/_lus kyi na tsha gso ba'i sman pa dang /_sems kyi nad la phan phyir dam pa'i chos/_rig pa'i gnas la sbyang ba'i bslab grwa ni/_rgya bod kun las khyad 'phags 'di na mchis/_ngo mtshar rmad byung bla med dkon mchog gi/_gsung rab dam pa'i chos kyang 'di na bzhugs/_dzam gling gnas tshul dang ni ci mkho yis/_phrul gyi rdo par ngo mtshar can yang bzhugs/[...].*

Serampore Press in 1837). Stark has recently shown how commercial publishing houses successfully expanded in Northern India during the 19th century, giving rise to commercial printer-publishers. The West Bengal printing and publishing activities of the 19th century came about through the interweaving of an elaborate intellectual tradition with colonial modes. The first Bengali newspaper was the *Gaumudi* ("Mirror"), first published by Ram Roy in 1819. By the end of the 19th century, the press had diversified into a strong anti-colonial press (often in Bengali), a press loyal to the British (often in English) and nuances in between.²³ The British pursued "control vs. encouragement", as Stark has formulated,²⁴ shutting down some newspapers and subsidizing others.

These activities radiated out into the Himalayan hills. By the early 20th century, a variety of presses had been brought to the Kalimpong hills and locals became interested in commercial printing opportunities. A few printing enterprises were founded in Kalimpong, with press managers usually in touch with Calcutta, from where they ordered supplies.²⁵

Mani Press. The Mani Press (earlier called "Mani Printing Works") was the largest printing press in Kalimpong and still exists today. It was established in 1928 by Parasmani Pradhan, who was a pioneer of vernacular Nepali print. Like Tharchin, he had come to Kalimpong through SUMI and his work as a Nepali teacher.²⁶ The press printed in English, Devanagari and Tibetan, utilizing both lithography and type printing. Various newspapers were published in Nepali and Hindi,²⁷ significantly, at least in 1930, a Nepali monthly newspaper called *Ādarśa*, i.e. "Mirror", was printed.²⁸ The annual magazine of the St. Andrews Colonial Home

²³ See Schneider N. 2005:4-12.

²⁴ Stark 2007:83.

²⁵ See TC: Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Guha Printing Press (Alipore, Calcutta), October 22, 1948. According to Daniel Tharchin, Tharchin later bought supplies from the Luthra Press in Calcutta (Interview with Daniel Tharchin, grand son of Babu Tharchin, May 12, 2014, Kalimpong).

²⁶ See Pradhan 1997. Before coming to Kalimpong, Pradhan had gained experience in printing by publishing the literature magazine Chandrika from 1917 from Kurseong.

²⁷ See Macdonald 1949:32-33.

²⁸ The publication is for example stored at the Center of Research Libraries (CRL), permanent record: <http://catalog.crl.edu/record=b1818515~S1>, accessed November 30 2016.

School, *The Deolian*, was printed here as well in 1,000 copies,²⁹ next to educational literature, such as books on Hindi grammar.³⁰ Various organizations in Kalimpong had their matters printed at the Mani Press,³¹ and later Tibetan publications included political literature on independence.³² In this respect, the TMP and the Mani Press stood in a competitive relationship to each other. Byams dpal skal ldan states that, even though the TMP was much smaller than the Mani Press, the TMP had the highest professional knowledge concerning Tibetan printing.³³ Tharchin would buy paper from the Mani press,³⁴ and in 1931 the Melong was even printed on their lithographic press. The Bhutanese prime minister, Jigme Dorje, used to print school books both on the TMP and the Mani Press.³⁵ During the 1950s, due to its higher cost efficiency, the Mani Press drew off jobs from the smaller TMP, and in 1959 the assistant to the POS decided to have the governmental bulletin printed at the Mani Press rather than the TMP.³⁶

Himalayan Printing Works. Founded by Suresh Chandra Jain (1911-1956), the Himalayan Printing Works printed in English, Hindi and Nepali. It published books and the English-language newspaper *Himalayan Times*. The weekly was started in 1947 and ran between 1,300 and 2,000 copies per issue. It mainly circulated in the district of Darjeeling.³⁷ Many Western scholars who roamed the Himalayas recruited as guest authors. Jain also ran the

²⁹ See Calcutta Gazette, December 24, 1936.

³⁰ See for example Sinclair, David (1932): "Simple Approach to Hindi Grammar," Kalimpong: Mani Printing Press, stored at LTWA.

³¹ The 1955-report of the aforementioned Charteris Hospital was printed there (stored within the TC).

³² In November 1959, they printed *Rang re bod rang btsan 'byung ched gra bsgrigs gnang rgyu'i bsam shog* ("Paper of Suggestions for the Preparation of Independence in our Tibet"), by the Rma khams thos bsam (Makham Study Group), a small booklet in modern format (stored at LTWA).

³³ Interview with Byams 'phel skal ldan, May 11, 2014, Kalimpong. He is the director of the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist Cultural Institute (*ITBCI*) School in Kalimpong. He was born in 1947 in Toelung, close to Lhasa, and came to Kalimpong in 1956.

³⁴ Documented for 1931 as well as for 1954. See TC: Tharchin's Diary, January 1, 1931: "Also on my way I went to Mani Press and bought 100 sheet of green paper for my book of Jachang Lhamo," and TC: Bill for paper to Mani Press, September 27, 1954.

³⁵ See Shakya 2004:55 and Norbu 1975:20.

³⁶ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to M. Ganju (Gangtok), October 24, 1959, and TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Apa Pant (POS, Gangtok), December 11, 1959.

³⁷ Personal communication with Sandip Jain, the editor's grandson. See also Sawerthal and Torri (forthcoming).

Himalayan Store from January 1947, which offered various stationary equipment and still exist today.³⁸

Ong Press (Kurseong). In 1948, Rev. Wery of the St. Alphonsus School in Kurseong ran the Ong Press.³⁹ In 1953, an English-language weekly called *Echo* was printed from the press, with one of Tharchin's close acquaintances, Twan Yang,⁴⁰ as its editor and "powerful financial magnates of Kurseong [...] behind the paper,"⁴¹ as reported by the *Himalayan Times*. A printing house by the name of "*dbang*" had already existed in Kalimpong in 1933, possessing a Tibetan type writer or type press,⁴² however the connection between the early establishment in Kalimpong and the latter one in Kurseong remains unclear.

Missionaries. Like *The Deolian* of St. Andrew's, other missions in Kalimpong published some kind of periodical, bulletin or journal. The Church of Scotland had their *Mission News*, the editor of which was the respective missionary in charge of the mission.

Lepcha Printing. Similar to the Scottish Mission's Tibetan-language works, Gyan Tsering Sitling, a Lepcha padre, was active in the propagation and production of Lepcha literature. This included school books, primers, dictionaries and also magazines.⁴³ One issue of a magazine called *The Young Lepcha* (March 1931) is stored in the TC. It consists of one single page and was lithographed at the TMP.

The Buddhist Stepping Stones. The YMBA, the Buddhist organization founded in Kalimpong, published a monthly magazine called *Stepping Stones*. It featured mainly Buddhist topics, but also news from Kalimpong, with Bhajuratna's son Gyan Jyoti as its treasurer.⁴⁴

³⁸ On its inauguration, see Melong 15-3-8 (January 1947).

³⁹ Tharchin tried to buy types from him (see TC: Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Rev. Wery (St. Alphonsus School, Kurseong), June 28, 1948). Note that I have also seen the spelling "Wong."

⁴⁰ On further information on Twan Yang, see Yang 1947.

⁴¹ HT April 19, 1953:5.

⁴² See Melong 7-3-1 (March 1933).

⁴³ Dattamajumdar 2014: *no page*, see table 9: "Number of Publications in Lepcha (from Kalimpong) across the Time Period."

⁴⁴ See Time, December 4, 1950, Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956:79, Kansakar Hilker 2005:158 and HT August 13, 1950:8.

Durpin Monastery. At Durpin monastery, a press unit produced Buddhist books and pecha. As recorded in a list of books donated by Tharchin to the LTWA in 1972, two texts on Madhyamaka philosophy were printed here.⁴⁵ In 1963, in cooperation with the TMP, the monastery published a Tibetan and an English version of a text on Padmasambhava, both in a modern format. The Tibetan version was printed by the monastery printing works, the English version by Tharchin.⁴⁶

In sum, during the first half of the 20th century, there were various printing establishments in Kalimpong, and newspapers were published at least in Nepali (*Ādarśa*), Lepcha (*The Young Lepcha*), English (*Himalayan Times*, *Echo*) and Tibetan (Melong). Christian missionaries and Buddhist organizations (YMBA) produced periodicals. If we recall Rab dga' spom mda' tshang's plans for a newspaper discussed in Chapter 2, political organizations also attempted to initiate newspapers. The TMP, which printed books, newspaper and office supplies, was not a unique undertaking. The Mani Press did the same for Nepali, and the Himalayan Printing Works for English. Each had their own share of the market, exchanging infrastructure and material but also competing with each other.

3.3 Babu Tharchin, the Information Broker

In 1931, Tharchin acted as the travel assistant to the American Henrietta Merrick on her trip to Gyantse. Tharchin also served as her translator during an audience with the monastic Khenchung (*mkhan chung*), the local Tibetan government official. Merrick recalls:

The conversation was being so long drawn out that I began to fear that I would reach the Tibetan's daily quota of from fifty to seventy cups of tea if Tharchin could not be induced to talk more rapidly. [...] there are established customs in Tibet, and reverence for authority requires a hidebound humility that tries one's patience.

Tharchin obviously enjoyed his role; but with all due respect for a necessary self deprecation in the presence of a superior he was overdoing it; his breath came in

⁴⁵ See Stock registrar 1972 of the NIT: Items Tharchin gave to the LTWA 1972, stored at NIT.

⁴⁶ It is stored at VIESAK.

humble gasps; words followed haltingly with long pauses between, and his eyes were rarely lifted higher than his folded hands. And so I protested.

'It is a manner that I assume,' he answered me.

'Then please do assume another one or we will be here all day.'⁴⁷

The colonial attitudes of the narrator put aside, this episode provides a glimpse into how Tharchin maneuvered between a variety of stakeholders of different cultural backgrounds and different modes of communication. What infuriated Merrick was what was least expected by the Khenchung. Tharchin was aware of this and thus established himself as a coveted man, a translator for travelers to Tibet, and as advisor for those coming from Tibet. Thus, he gained access to elite programs and events, such as the annual Cham dance of the Sikkim Durbar,⁴⁸ the reception on the occasion of the wedding of the Bhutanese princess,⁴⁹ or the reception of Jawaharlal Nehru as part of his visit to Kalimpong in 1952.⁵⁰ At the same time, he kept the door to his house at a low threshold. One of the key skills he required for his business was the ability to bridge worlds previously disconnected due to social or cultural barriers. Surrounded by traders who dealt with wool, yak skins, modern commodities or silk, Tharchin was in the trade of information.

Short Biography.⁵¹ Born in Khunu (Kinnaur) in 1890 into poor circumstances, Tharchin was brought up at the Moravian Mission in the town of Poo. As an adolescent, he attended preaching tours⁵² and worked different simple jobs. In 1912, he relocated to the Scandinavian Mission in Ghoom, and then moved on to Kalimpong in 1917, enticed away as a Tibetan teacher at the Scottish Mission (SUMI). In 1921, he accompanied David Macdonald, British trade agent, to Gyantse where he set up a private school. Later, he started working for Frank

⁴⁷ Merrick 1933:161-162.

⁴⁸ Interview with Daniel Tharchin, May 12, 2014, Kalimpong.

⁴⁹ See TC: Invitation card for cocktails at Bhutan House on September 21, 1951, *no date* [1951].

⁵⁰ See TC: Invitation card to meet Jawaharlal Nehru, April 29, 1952.

⁵¹ In addition to literature mentioned in footnote 2 of the present chapter, I used TC: Short Biography, TC: Story of Mission in Tibet, Tharchin et al., 1966, and the preface to the second edition of *Bod skad kyi sgrog dpe gnyis pa (Tibetan Second Book)*, 1953.

⁵² For details, see Fader 2002:153-298.

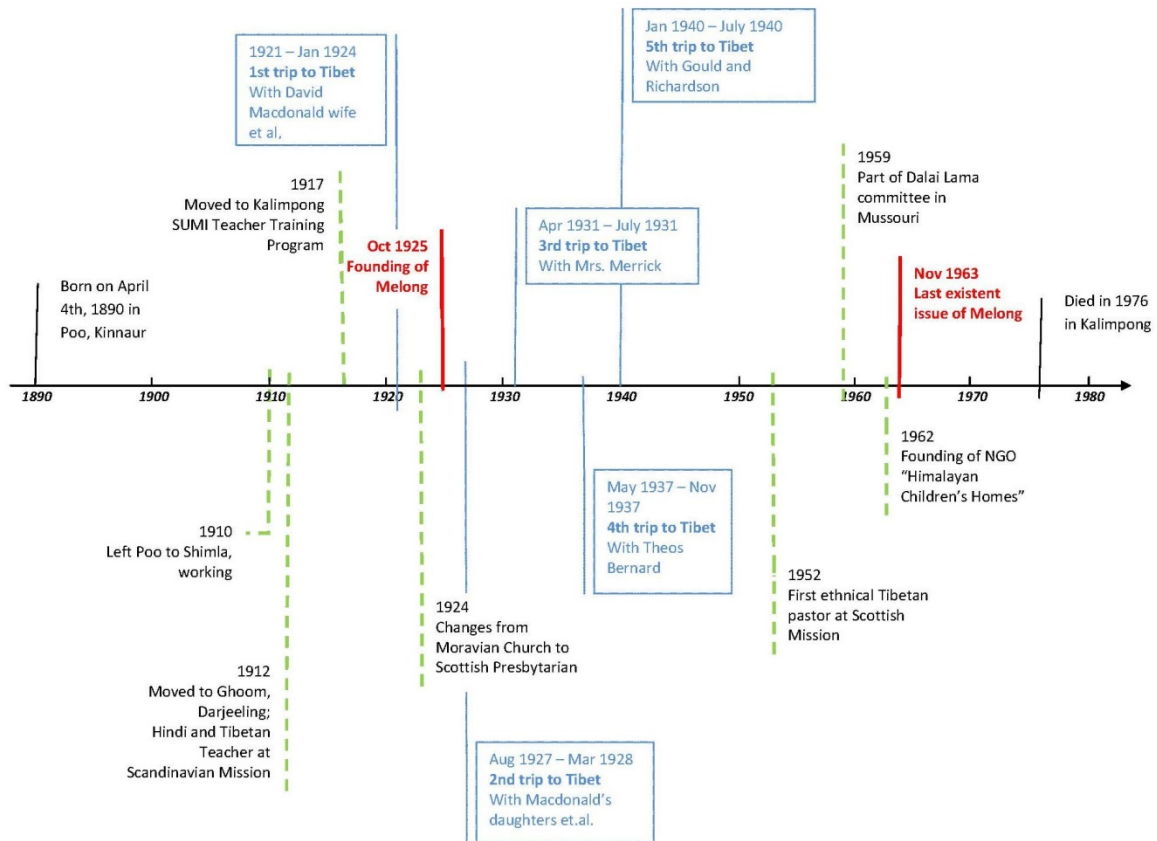


Figure 6: Timeline illustrating important events in Babu Tharchin's life.

Ludlow's English school until 1924.⁵³ Through this employment he established contact with various Tibetan noble families, and when he visited Lhasa for the first time in 1923, he was attended by elaborate circles of aristocrats and met his aristocratic wife-to-be, Karma bde can. He finally returned to his actual job in Kalimpong in 1924, before starting the Melong in 1925, which would become his lifetime project.

From August 1927 to March 1928, Tharchin accompanied Dr. Graham's daughters on their trip to Gyantse and Lhasa and acted as their local interpreter.⁵⁴ In the course of this, he was granted an audience with the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, who encouraged his newspaper work. He took another trip to Lhasa in the spring of 1931 with the traveler Henrietta Merrick, and again in 1937 with the American Theos Bernard.⁵⁵ On both trips he ran into problems with the

⁵³ The school was opened in 1923 but shut down in 1926 due to strong veto from the conservative fraction. For details on the school, see Rank 2003.

⁵⁴ See Fader 2004:287.

⁵⁵ For details on the trip with Merrick, see Merrick 1933, for Bernard see Hackett 2008 and 2012.

mission because of his extended stay away, which eventually resulted in his resignation from the mission in April 1931 (however, he reentered in September 1932).⁵⁶ Tharchin established himself as a useful contact for Westerners, be they spiritual seekers, travelers or colonial officials. His contacts also extended to high circles in Lhasa, the British Tibet Cadre and Tibetan political expats. His diary entry of January 2, 1931 demonstrates how local people would also come to see him and ask for work or advice.⁵⁷ In this way, the press house became an important meeting place in Kalimpong, resonating in this function with features prevalent in 15th and 16th century Europe, when the first private printing houses (and later newspapers) were founded. Eisenstein, for example, writes:

As the key figure around whom all arrangement revolved, the master printer himself bridged many worlds [...] he achieved a position of influence with fellow townsmen, his workshop became a veritable cultural center attracting local literati and celebrated foreigners, providing both a meeting place and message center for an expanding cosmopolitan Commonwealth of learning.⁵⁸

Likewise, Tharchin worked with Tibetologists, such as Jaques Bacot and later on Marco Pallis and Rene Nebesky-Wojkowitz, just as much as he accommodated Tibetan intellectuals, such as Dge bshes chos grags (1930) or Dge' 'dun chos 'phel (from 1937). Many of the visiting Tibetans worked for the newspaper, either composing texts or assisting the printing. Tharchin facilitated the exchange of thoughts and scholarly cooperation, such as in the case of Dge 'dun chos 'phel and George Roerich's translation of the Blue Annals (*Deb ther sngon po*).

Tharchin would further attend those occasions when the aforementioned political circles convened, which is documented through a letter to Charles Bell. He writes: "The Tibetan officials [Kun 'phel lags and Lcang lo can] do not doubt me and tell me everything. However, for the sake of the British government, I am bound to inform you and also the Political Officer,

⁵⁶ See TC: Rev. Knox (Kalimpong) to Cecil Polhill, September 19, 1932, and Fader 2004:340-346.

⁵⁷ See TC: Tharchin's Diary, January 2, 1930[1].

⁵⁸ Eisenstein 2005[1983]:28.

as I am a loyal subject of our government."⁵⁹ In fact, Tharchin sold information to British officials as early as 1928.⁶⁰ Importantly, in 1940, he accompanied the POS Basil Gould and Hugh Richardson (the British trade agent in Gyantse until February 1940) to Lhasa, in order to attend the enthronement ceremony of the then five-year old Fourteenth Dalai Lama. This trip brought his cooperation with the British to a new level. Tharchin intensified his contacts with the key personal of the British Tibet Cadre and its connected intelligence network, comprising of Eric Lambert, responsible for Tibetan affairs at the Central Intelligence Bureau of India, his assistant Lha Tsering, Basil Gould, Arthur Hopkinson, Hugh Richardson, Marco Pallis,⁶¹ George Patterson or David Snellgrove.⁶² Eric Lambert recounted to Herbert Fader in 1990 that "Tharchin, the editor of the Tibetan-language newspaper in Kalimpong, was my most useful source of information in Tibet."⁶³ In 1944, Tharchin sent information classified as "secret" to the POS,⁶⁴ and by 1946 Tharchin had become recipient of official information circulated between the trade agents in Gyantse and Yatung, the British Mission in Lhasa and the POS in Gangtok.⁶⁵ In 1948, Lha Tsering ordered Tharchin to collect information as well.⁶⁶ By the latest in 1949, Tharchin received a number for identification within the intelligence network, namely "ATS23".⁶⁷ This may be inferred from a letter by Bsod nams stobs rgyal ka dzi (IM, Lhasa) to Tharchin: "What you meant by A.T.S. 23. Is it to be written on every letter

⁵⁹ Letter Tharchin (Lhasa) to Charles Bell (Edgecumbe, UK), July 1, 1937 (cited in Fader 2009:332). For similar contents see also British Library (Mss Eur F80/5a.130): Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Charles Bell (Edgecumbe, UK), December 25, 1937.

⁶⁰ For example, he sent information to Arthur Hopkinson (then British Trade Agent in Gyantse), and in return received a reward of Rs.100 (Fader 2009:331). In 1937, he sent information to Charles Bell (see Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Charles Bell (Edgecumbe, UK), February 16, 1937, cited in Hackett 2008:579).

⁶¹ For Pallis' connection to the intelligence world, see for example Knaus 2012:146 and Thondup 2015:168.

⁶² Snellgrove worked in British radio intelligence, but he was unaware of Tharchin's involvement, as reported to Fader in TC: Letter David Snellgrove (Turin, Italy) to Herbert Fader (*no place*), September 25, 1994.

⁶³ TC: Eric Lambert (Dublin, Ireland) to Herbert Fader (*no place*), December 16, 1991. Lambert was in charge of Tibetan intelligence for the British government from 1942 to June 1947.

⁶⁴ See TC: Letter POS Residency (Gangtok) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), classified "secret," July 6, 1944: "Thanks for the information regarding the two Batang young men which you have submitted to the Political Officer in Sikkim. The POS has greatly appreciated this, but as the matter is of complicated nature, he prefers that you should not mix yourself any more in the matter."

⁶⁵ See TC: Memorandum Arthur Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok) to British Mission (Lhasa), March 12, 1946.

⁶⁶ See TC: Letter Lha Tsering (Shillong) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), February 15, 1948: "Request for information on a) Abdul Wahid, and b) Bhu Tobgay, brother of Pangdatshang."

⁶⁷ According to Fader, starting from 1943 or 1944 (Fader 2009:347).

corner or what? It is safer for me to pass the news through you. Please go through them and then put it anywhere its destination may be. I again say a great care should be taken so as not to expose these men in Tibet [... sic!]."⁶⁸ Upon Lambert's suggestion, Tharchin recruited Hisao Kimura (alias Zla ba bzang po)⁶⁹ for a mission into Eastern Tibet, in order to investigate whether or not the Chinese were preparing to invade Tibet. Kimura recalls:

Tarchin told me he wanted me to leave as soon as possible and immediately issued me with funds rather more, I thought, than he would have been able to afford to invest in a news story - particularly if this was the third attempt [two people Tharchin had sent disappeared on the way]. [...]

In January [1948] Tarchin paid me for the mission to eastern Tibet. Someone must have been happy with my information, for the payment came to so much more than I had expected [...].⁷⁰

Fader argues that Tharchin had both stationary as well as mobile informants who spanned the Tibetan plateau and that he especially used pilgrims information messengers.⁷¹ In a letter dated July 13, 1958 sent from London, Pallis admonished Tharchin to use the "special channels" arranged for them, in the context of a discussion of die acquisition for printing equipment: "Though this subject is in itself harmless [...] it is better to keep all that relates to the cost and running of the press from the eyes of unauthorised persons."⁷² In his response, Tharchin specified details of the equipment he intended to purchase and also provided a long report on political activities in Tibet. Importantly, he stated that he had been requested to interpret for the leaders of Mi dmangs tshogs 'du in case they went to Delhi in order to meet Nehru: "In case if I am able to go so and if you advise I may go to the British Ambasey and hand over some news. But please let me have your instruction by an ordenery mail stating 'please do distribut my books among the learned Khampas and Tibetan'. Then I shall

⁶⁸ TC: Letter Bsod nams stobs rgyal ka dzi (IM, Lhasa) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), April 22, 1949.

⁶⁹ See Kimura and Berry 1990:161; Hisao Kimura's number was ATS5.

⁷⁰ See Kimura and Berry 1990:156 and 187. See also Berry 1995:289, Kimura and Berry 1990:189.

⁷¹ See Fader 2009:343-345. See also letters of various sources containing political information, such as TC: Migma Dorje (Yatung) to Tharchin, August 8, 1949; TC: Report Wang Tsoo [added in handwriting], May 5, 1950; and TC: Report "Confidential", *anonymous, no date*: "These you may be able to use in your paper."

⁷² TC: Letter Marco Pallis (London) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), June 8, 1958.

understand that I shall go there and hand it over some news [sic!]."⁷³ Pallis and Tharchin continued to have a clandestine connection, but so far it remains unclear to what extent and under whose lead. According to Fader, Tharchin probably never stopped his intelligence gathering activities.⁷⁴ In 1963, as part of his request for Melong-funding to the POS, Tharchin stated: "As regards my loyal service, Your Honour might be aware that there is a large file in Your Honour's office which will relate all about my loyalty and works done for the government."⁷⁵

During most of these years, Tharchin was member of the Scottish Mission. As already mentioned, in 1931 he had left for about a year due to issues related to the press, and then again for a longer time in 1946. Having accrued serious debt, he returned as the first Tibetan pastor in 1952. In 1955, his wife passed away, and he was remarried with Margaret Vitant in 1956, a Finnish-German Christian. Ever since the late 1920s, Tharchin was actively involved in a project of translating the Bible into Tibetan. In the 1920s and 30s, he assisted David Macdonald, and in the early 1950s he was part of a Bible Translation committee in Kalimpong.⁷⁶ Just how established of an individual he had become in Kalimpong is demonstrated by his many affiliations: he was vice chairman of the Association of Frontier Journalists⁷⁷ and chairman of the Sherpa Association (Ka sbug so lo khum bu shar pa'i skyid sdug);⁷⁸ he was on the Charteris Hospital Advisory Board⁷⁹ and founding member of the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology (NIT) in Gangtok,⁸⁰ and later on he supported, for example the Dbus tsang skyid sdug (est. 1970) and the Youth Chu bzhi sgang drug.⁸¹

⁷³ TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Marco Pallis (London), July 13, 1958.

⁷⁴ See Fader 2009:415.

⁷⁵ TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Avatar Singh (POS, Gangtok), December 16, 1963.

⁷⁶ See TC: Copy of "British and Foreign Bible Society, Translations and Library Subcommittee Minutes," 1928-1960, stored at Cambridge University Library, given to Herbert Fader by John Bray. For details on the history of the translation of the bible, see Bray 1991.

⁷⁷ Formed on June 30, 1952 (see HT July 6, 1952:12).

⁷⁸ Founded on July 5, 1954 (see Melong 22-8-1&12, September 22, 1954).

⁷⁹ See TC: Chartaris Hospital Report, 1955.

⁸⁰ See Tashi 2008.

⁸¹ See RW March 19, 1976:5-6.

After the flight of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, he gained esteem among the fast-growing refugee community by extending immediate relief in form of food.⁸² In 1959, he was part of the Dalai Lama's committee for education in Missouri. Upon discontinuing the Melong, he intensified his activities in the field of education, printing school books and dictionaries which he partially gave away for free (see below). In 1962, together with his wife, he founded the Himalayan Children's Homes, an NGO which hosts orphans with the financial help of the Kindernothilfe. Tharchin passed away at the age of 86 on February 9, 1976.

The Information Broker. The press house established by Tharchin combined many different tasks at stake. In addition to the production of the newspaper, books and other print products, Tharchin also dealt with furs,⁸³ carpets, wool, antiquities⁸⁴ and other curiosa such as stamps.⁸⁵ Tharchin's main trade however was information, publicly through the newspaper and in clandestine ways through his intelligence activities. As also said by his grandson Daniel, Tharchin was not a journalist but an editor and publisher.⁸⁶ He used to listen to the radio almost all day⁸⁷ and was subscribed to various newspapers: The Chinese KMT-publication *Yin Du Ribao* ("Journal of India")⁸⁸, the *Gza' 'khor re'i bod sog gsar gnas*, the Panchen Lama's newsletter, the *Indian Statesman*, the *Amritsa Bazar Patrika*, the *Hindusthan Standard*⁸⁹ and the *Illustrated Weekly of India*⁹⁰ – to name just a few. In addition, he received news from traders and travelers coming from Tibet and China as well as from his espionage network. As a gatekeeper of information, he selected, negotiated and traded intelligence

⁸² Interview with Daniel Tharchin, May 12, 2014, Kalimpong.

⁸³ See TC: Letter Karma Tsering (clerk to the POS, Gangtok) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), March 8, 1949: He wanted to sell a lynx fur through Tharchin; and TC: Letter Bsod nams stobs rgyal ka dzi (IM, Lhasa) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), September 7, 1951: He sold four skins through Tharchin.

⁸⁴ See TC: Letter Jacques Marchais (NYC) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), October 1941(?): she wanted Tharchin to establish contact with abbots from monasteries inside Tibet to purchase arts and artefacts.

⁸⁵ See TC: Letter Loren Thompson (NJ) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), September 1950: He asked for Tibetan stamps; and TC: Financial report of the TMP, 1950-51: Tharchin stated he was dealing with carders, carpets, furs and cloths.

⁸⁶ Interview with Daniel Tharchin, May 12, 2014, Kalimpong.

⁸⁷ According to Daniel Tharchin, Tharchin had three to four transistor radios always playing next to his bed (Interview with Daniel Tharchin, May 12, 2014, Kalimpong).

⁸⁸ See TC: The *Yin Du Ribao* with Tharchin's address. Tharchin exchanged correspondences and news with its editor C.S. Liao (see TC: Letter C.S.Liao (Calcutta) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), *no date*).

⁸⁹ See TC: Annual subscription bill for *Hindusthan Standard* and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 1951.

⁹⁰ See TC: Bill for *Illustrated Weekly of India*, 1951.

between the news producers and the readership.⁹¹ He reassembled and brought together previously disconnected people as well as so far unassociated contents and systems of thoughts.

On the one hand, the press house was a concrete, local communicative center where people from various backgrounds met, exchanged and created ideas. Whoever came to Kalimpong made a point in seeing Tharchin who in turn made a point in accommodating the guest. However, the press house also functioned as a translocal communicative center; through relations to distant people and by help of media such as letters, telegraph and mass media. The below quote is from Eisenstein writing about early printers in Europe, however her characterization is equally fitting for Tharchin and his press house in Kalimpong.

Doubtless, the outlook of the successful merchant-publisher was related to his position as a capitalist entrepreneur in an era of shifting power centers and religious frontiers. But it was also related to the particular nature of the products he manufactured. Plantin's [a printer] merchandise set him apart from other businessmen and tradesmen. It brought men of letters and learning into his shop. It encouraged him to feel more at ease with strange scholars, bibliophiles, and literati than with neighbors or relatives in his native town. The prospering merchant-publisher had to know as much about books and intellectual trends as a cloth merchant did about dry goods and dress fashions; he needed to develop a connoisseur's expertise about type styles, book catalogues, and library sales. He often found it useful to master many languages, to handle variant texts, to investigate antiquities and old inscriptions along with new maps and calendars. In short, the very nature of his business provided the merchant-publisher with a broadly based liberal education. It also led toward a widened circle of acquaintances and included close contacts with foreigners. If emigrés were welcome in his workshop, this was rarely because of previous ties of blood or friendship and not always because foreign financing, new market outlets, patrons, or privileges were being sought. Foreign experts were also needed as editors, translators, correctors, and type designers.⁹²

⁹¹ See for example Nossek 2004. On the theory of "the gatekeeper," see Westerståhl and Folke 1994:71.

⁹² Eisenstein 2005[1983]:201-202.

Similarly, Tharchin combined in his role as a "merchant publisher", to borrow Eisenstein's term, commercial activities with the intellectual life style the former entails. In fact, the commercial activities equaled the intimate engagement with literary products in Tibetan language, the vivid intellectual exchange with people of diverse background and the combining of formerly unconnected people and thoughts: trading "news" in its broadest sense.

3.4 Financial and Technological History of the Tibet Mirror Press

While Tharchin targeted a primarily Tibetan readership, the Melong's production occurred through the coming together of diverse stakeholders: Tibetans, British and Sikkimese, Christians or Buddhists, all had a say or some interest in supporting the Melong. Originating from the Scottish Mission in 1925 and referred to as "Tibetan Press" by 1928, Tharchin's early vision was to develop a printing house with the newspaper as its main product, financed in largest part through the profits of sold copies of the newspaper and books. Because this strategy proved unsuccessful however, financial supporters were always essential to its survival. The Melong was supported by potent institutions until 1949, and even during the 1950s, when the private "Tibet Mirror Press" (est. 1946) had existed for a while already, the newspaper never managed to stand on solid economic ground. Before discussing its characteristics as an independent enterprise, its main patrons and the technical set up of the press will be introduced.

3.4.1 Patrons

The major financial supporters of the Melong were:

- 1) The Scottish Mission (1925-1931; 1932-1946),
- 2) The British Government of India (1942-1948),
- 3) The Government of India (1948-1949), and
- 4) The Tibetan Government (infrequent contributions)

The Scottish Mission: Foundation of the Melong. The Scottish Mission under Dr. Graham supported Tharchin's plans for publishing a Tibetan newspaper based on the mission's publishing tradition. However, the mission was also under pressure from the Foreign Mission Council to make the press profitable, and by 1934 several outside jobs, such as selling Tibetan Christmas cards, had succeeded at cutting expenses of the press work. Next to the Melong, Christian treatises were printed as well as Reverend Knox's project of flyers on the Life of Jesus. The annual report of 1934 stated that "funds were never sufficient to keep the printer in full time employment,"⁹³ and the press operated at loss between 1930 and 1943.⁹⁴ The mission repeatedly attempted to employ Tibetan Christians, as demonstrated by the preface to a Christian booklet:

This is printed on Tibetan paper and produced by Tibetan Christian labour and resources as far as possible. Every purchaser of a copy of this booklet does the following three things: assists the production and distribution of Christian literature for Tibet, assists to ease the financial burden of running the Tibetan Press, and assists in helping to keep Tibetan Christians in employment.⁹⁵

In 1936, Tharchin moved to the Mackenzie cottage on the basis of donations by the Mackenzie fund. The sale of Christmas cards and the compilation of *Scenes of Tibetan Life* went well.⁹⁶ From 1940 onwards, the mission discontinued its full support of the newspaper, since it had failed in its main aim of spreading the Christian gospel amongst Tibetans, next to financial reasons due incurred by Second World War.⁹⁷ The outbreak of the Second World War drastically minimized print. Never the less, an annual report in 1943 states that "the Press is busy mainly with outside work, e.g. printing books for the Chinese School, which brings in

⁹³ TC: Annual reports to the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1934, 1935, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1943.

⁹⁴ See TC: Answers by Rev. Scott to a questionnaire on the press works, April 13, 1943.

⁹⁵ See preface to the TMP publication *Scenes of Tibetan Life*, November 1935.

⁹⁶ See TC: Annual report to the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland, 1938; and preface to *Scenes of Tibetan Life*, November 1935.

⁹⁷ See Melong 11-1-1 (August 1942).

a goodly income."⁹⁸ When Tharchin returned from his trip to Lhasa in 1940, the publication was no longer resumed, but on this trip he had managed to gain new supporters in the persons of POS Basil Gould and Hugh Richardson. Following a publication gap of two years until 1942, the newspaper secured a second sponsor in the form of the British government.

The British Government of India. From August 1942, POS Basil Gould set up monthly subsidies for the Melong, according to Tharchin following a request by Government of India army authorities.⁹⁹ While the mission was in charge of paying the wages of the workers (including Tharchin), the British government took up the complete costs of ink and paper for 500 monthly issues and provided additional monthly remunerations to Tharchin. About 200 of the 500 issues were distributed "throughout District Darjeeling, in Sikkim, Bhutan, Kashmir, Leh, Ladakh, and the Simla Hill States."¹⁰⁰ The remaining 300 copies were given to the POS for free distribution in Tibet,¹⁰¹ using the official postal channels (for details on distribution and subscribers, see Chapter 6). Thus, distribution was outsourced to the Government of India. Tharchin was allowed to use photo blocks provided by the Information and Broadcasting Department, Publicity Office, Delhi¹⁰² which was reflected in the paper by elaborate war and propaganda pictures featured in many issues. Initially, the British in fact only provided for the production materials of the Melong.¹⁰³ However, by 1945, the POS also provided the salary of the staff of the press as well, thus virtually carrying the entire production costs minus income

⁹⁸ TC: Annual report to the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland, 1943.

⁹⁹ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Jawaharlal Nehru (Delhi), *no month, no day*, 1951: According to Tharchin, the army authorities of the Government of India had "made an inquiry" about the newspaper, and in May 1942 he "was summoned to Delhi with the Political Officer [Gould] for an interview with some high authorities there. I was asked then to restart the Tibetan paper at the government expenses."

¹⁰⁰ Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok), June 14, 1949 (cited in Fader 2009:171).

¹⁰¹ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to T. Wangdi (Deputy Minister of Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes and Excise, Ministry of West Bengal, Calcutta), July 8, 1954.

¹⁰² See TC: List of photo blocks (war images) given to Tharchin by The Information and Broadcasting Department, Publicity Office, Delhi, April 11, 1944.

¹⁰³ See TC: Letter Basil Gould (POS, Gangtok) through George Sherriff to Rev. Scott (Kalimpong), November 12, 1942: During the first three months of British support (August, September and October 1942), the total expenditure for the newspaper was roughly Rs.390 and income was Rs.250, leaving a debit balance of Rs.140, paid by the POS.

generated through local sales, subscriptions and outside work.¹⁰⁴ The generated income amounted to virtually nothing though. The total expenditures of the year 1945-1946, for example, amounted to Rs.3,728, of which Rs.42 were redeemed through subscriptions, Rs.12 through locally sold copies, and Rs.82 through outside work.¹⁰⁵ The major bulk of the production was thus financed by the POS. While the rest of the world fell into turmoil during the war years, the Melong was in a stable financial position.

The "Private" Tibet Mirror Press. Tharchin became increasingly enthusiastic about the British collaboration and started making plans with POS Hopkinson beyond the mission's affiliation. Subsequent troubles between the mission and Tharchin concerning ownership of the press are documented in printer declaration in the Melong's imprint of this time.¹⁰⁶ Tharchin eventually resigned from the mission in June 1946 and turned fully to British support. This is when the "Tibet Mirror Press", owned by Tharchin, was officially initiated. Tharchin remained at the mission's Mackenzie Cottage and continued to pay rent to the mission.¹⁰⁷ Instead of the mission's press, he at first used a lithographic press purchased in Darjeeling in 1934, and from 1947 he used one purchased for him by the British through the "cess fund" (see below). From July 1946 onwards, the POS gave Tharchin a monthly sum of Rs.200 at first, which later increased to Rs.250.¹⁰⁸ Additionally, the POS continued to provide for paper, ink, chemicals and so on.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ See TC: Financial statement of the press account, April 1945 to March 1946; and TC: Bill Rev. Mill (Scottish Mission, Kalimpong) to Arthur Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok) for February 1945, dated April 24, 1945; and TC: Bill Rev. Mill (Scottish Mission, Kalimpong) to Arthur Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok) for February 1946, March 6, 1946.

¹⁰⁵ See TC: Financial statement of the press account, April 1945 to March 1946. The expenditure for April 1945, for example, was composed of: staff Rs.239, postage and telegram Rs.6, contingency Rs.2-4-3, block-making and printing Rs.9, materials Rs.43-2 and stationary Rs.3-12. For further accounts, see TC: Bill Rev. Mill (Scottish Mission, Kalimpong) to Arthur Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok) for February 1945, dated April 24, 1945; and TC: Bill Rev. Mill (Scottish Mission, Kalimpong) to Arthur Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok) for February 1946, March 6, 1946.

¹⁰⁶ For details, see the appendix in Sawerthal 2011:131-141.

¹⁰⁷ See TC: Report on financial situation 1950-1951, Tharchin, undated [1951].

¹⁰⁸ In later reports, recounting the TMP history, Tharchin often stated how the British stopped subsidies in 1946, but from 1947 they resumed with Rs.200 per month (see for example TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Jawaharlal Nehru (Delhi), *no month, no day*, 1951). Documents show, though, that Tharchin continued to receive money after the split with the mission (see TC: Financial statement for April 1946 until March 1947; and TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Avatar Singh (POS, Gangtok), December 16, 1963, where Tharchin recounts

In short, until January 1947, the major bulk of finances for the newspaper came from the POS and not from subscriptions or similar sources. By February 1947 however, this had changed considerably. While the British were preparing their leave upon India's independence in 1947, the Tibet Cadre had established itself firmly in Tibetan politics. Overstepping their direct mandate, POS Hopkinson established a system of generating extra money in order to implement policies not supported by the Government of India. As McKay has shown, Eric Lambert, head of Intelligence for Tibet, for example, had suggested increasing contributions to monasteries in Tibet.¹¹⁰ Because the Government of India was not inclined to such funding, Hopkinson established a "syndicate for the procurement of cotton cloth [... and] sold it under license. The licenses to procure cloth under this system were allocated to Tibetans 'on account of ... [their] ... supposed political usefulness past and future'," stated Hopkinson in a report of 1945-48.¹¹¹ The allotted money went into the so-called "cess fund", which, according to Richardson was used "for keeping the Tibetans happy".¹¹²

Tharchin and his Melong were directly connected to this policy. The POS, with the Tibetan Liaison Office (TLO), made it mandatory for every Tibetan trader who applied for a permit for the import of cloth from Bombay to Tibet to buy an annual subscription of the Melong.¹¹³ In return, Tharchin was required to publish in the Melong notices concerning Tibetan trade as well as a list of traders who held the allocated licenses.¹¹⁴ This move provided the Melong with an unprecedented economic uplift. A financial statement shows that, while in January

correctly: "... till the end of war and even after several years, the government was kind to grant me a monthly subsidy by which I was able to continue the publication of my paper.") Therefore, a monthly subsidy of Rs.200, effective from April 1, 1947, was technically a reapplication (see Fader 2009:179 and TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Arthur Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok), June 18, 1947).

¹⁰⁹ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Avatar Singh (POS, Gangtok), December 16, 1963.

¹¹⁰ See McKay 2009:199.

¹¹¹ See Arthur Hopkinson's "Report on Tibet August 1945 - August 1948," August 1, 1948 (cited from TC: E-mail John Bray to Herbert Fader, January 9, 2006: copy of document "Mss Eur D 998/39" stored at British Library (Oriental and India Office Collection). Also cited in McKay 2009:199).

¹¹² Cited in McKay 1997:179.

¹¹³ See TC: Reapplication for trader subscription-system, Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok), April 14, 1951.

¹¹⁴ See TC: An English version for a "Notice" of the Tibetan Liaison Office (TLO, in Tibetan called *ka sbug ras cha'i las khungs*, acc. to Melong 15-10-8, August 1947).

1947 Rs.250 still came from the POS and Rs.43 through sold subscriptions, by March 1947 this had shifted to Rs.250 from the POS and Rs.1,983 through subscriptions.¹¹⁵ At its zenith, the newspaper had 1,200 subscribers (compared to the usual 200-500, see Chapter 6). The highest monthly income was achieved in March 1947 with Rs.1,983, making it likely the financially most successful month of the entire business history.¹¹⁶ This was the only time the Melong was in fact self-supported, even if through political intervention since it was fully embedded into cadre policies.¹¹⁷ Along with the policy of trader's subscriptions sanctioned by the POS, for some traders Tharchin organized to cater to parts of the distribution to Tibetan officials in Lhasa. Thus, 50 copies were distributed via Sa 'du tshang and 50 via Bhajuratna, two of the largest traders on the Indo-Tibetan trade route in 1947. The sale of single copies through the British Mission was difficult, since it was located at Dekyilingka, and thus quite far from the Lhasa city center and its main market, the Barkhor. Bhajuratna requested the British Mission for allowance to send the papers through the "special postal sanction" of the British Mission to Lhasa, which was approved by the POS in March 1947.¹¹⁸ So far, the Melong had either been brought up to Lhasa by the traders or through POS mail, but not through traders via POS mail. Once again, the Melong's distribution mode of this time resonates with the merging of politics, trade and information: the subscription system was part

¹¹⁵ See TC: Statement of Tibetan Newspaper, from April 1, 1946 to March 31, 1947.

¹¹⁶ Note that Fader 2009:181 (cited in Sawerthal 2011:86) mistakenly reads "1983" as subscriber numbers instead of monthly income.

¹¹⁷ This is also shown in a media questionnaire of the newspaper, where the POS and the Tibetan Liaison Officer are mentioned as "important personality attached to the paper" (see TC: Media Questionnaire, P. Dhondhup (TMP clerk), September 27, 1948).

¹¹⁸ See TC: Letter Gyan Jyoti (Kalimpong) to Arthur Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok), February 26, 1947: He explains that he takes care of the distribution of 50 copies for the Tibetan government for one year, but experiences difficulties, as the British postal parcel system has already been stopped. At the same time, Tharchin described experiencing troubles "as all his papers are being sent by post under your honour's special sanction up to Dhiki Lingka Lhasa. This place being too far from the city the subscribers feel great inconvenience in getting newspaper monthly and they request us to take agency and distribution through our offices at Pharijong and Lhasa [sic!]." Tharchin also urged the POS, as seen in TC: Draft-letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to POS (?), February, 1947: "I have posted 60 more copies of the Tibetan newspaper to your honour and I have already given 50 copies each to Messrs. Sandutshang + Bajuratna of Kalimpong. Messrs. Bhajuratna is willing to take the agency of the Tibetan newspaper in Lhasa + Pharijong on free basis. He will distribute the paper to the subscribers as well as to the Tibetan Government officials + traders in Lhasa and will try to collect the amount." The POS quickly approved (see TC: Letter Arthur Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), copied to Maniharsha Bhakuratna (Kalimpong) and the British Mission (Lhasa), March 1, 1947).

of an overarching economic policy which served to facilitate political strategies beyond the central mandate, and this was utilized by Tharchin to continue the newspaper. However, already a year later in early 1948, the subscription program was discontinued when the British cadres left the Himalayas.¹¹⁹

Later that same year, Hopkinson arranged for an interest-free loan to Tharchin for a type press and a new press house, as a last act of support from the British controlled Government of India. Rs.13,590 was given through the cess fund with the arrangement to return the amount within seven years in 14 semiannual instalments.¹²⁰ The press house was inaugurated in March 1948 in the presence of many important guests and "over a thousand Tibetans".¹²¹

The Independent Government of India. What seemed like a technological breakthrough at first, turned out to be quite a burden. Tharchin's main supporter in the person of Arthur Hopkinson left India in 1948 and handed over his work to the independent Government of India. Richardson, who stayed on in Lhasa as an employee of the Tibetan government, did not share Hopkinson's enthusiasm for the Melong and neither did the new POS Harish Dayal. India inherited the previous administrative structures, however their policy was less supportive of the Tibetan cause. In September 1949, Dayal politely terminated the subsidies with a piece of final advice to Tharchin: "It is obviously necessary for you to seek all possible means of making the press self-supporting, by undertaking whatever printing work you can get, by attracting advertisements and taking effective steps to realize your dues, and by efficient office management and proper accounting."¹²² Without any further support, Tharchin could no longer afford to pay back the instalments arranged with the Government of India,

¹¹⁹ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to TLO (Kalimpong), April 12, 1951.

¹²⁰ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Jawaharlal Nehru (Delhi), *no month, no day*, 1951: "In 1948, the Government of India through POS granted me a loan of 13590 Rs. to buy a proper press [...] The sum of money so advanced was paid from the cess fund collected from the Tibetan traders at Kalimpong by the Tibetan Liaison Officer through the Cloth Syndicate." See also Fader 2009:181f. For the first issue printed on the machine, see Melong 16-5 (March 1948). The instalment plan to pay back the loan is documented in TC: Letter TLO (Kalimpong) to Arthur Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok), "Tibetan Newspaper - New Press," February 11, 1948.

¹²¹ TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Avatar Singh (POS, Gangtok), December 16, 1963. See also coverage in Melong 16-5 (March 1948) and 17-1-1&2 (October 1948).

¹²² Letter Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), September 9, 1949 (cited in Fader 2009:211).

and the modern printing press consumed much more resources with expenses of about Rs.800 meeting an income of only Rs.400: "The fact is, owing to a limited number of circulation, the paper is not a paying concern. [...] I am already deeply engrossed in debt," writes Tharchin in 1951.¹²³ At the same time, he also did not own a sufficient number of types so that he could not even use the press as effectively as intended.

Tharchin asked Dayal to allow him a delay of payment in 1949, which was refused.¹²⁴ In 1951, he requested Nehru to have the press as a gift, however without reply.¹²⁵ He also repeatedly but unsuccessfully appealed to the POS for the reapplication of the trader's subscription to the Melong.¹²⁶ As laid down in a report of 1950-1951, Tharchin stated that he was in serious debt.¹²⁷ This led him to lend money from friends,¹²⁸ such as Marco Pallis¹²⁹ and Mr. Chang Shainshen.¹³⁰ Tharchin concluded in October 1949 that so far in Tibet, "the significance of the newspaper is not fully understood and it is not a major product on the market."¹³¹ For this reason, after the Silver-Jubilee-issue of January 1951, the Melong did not come out for almost

¹²³ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Jawaharlal Nehru (Delhi), *no month, no day*, 1951.

¹²⁴ See TC: Letter Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), September 5, 1949.

¹²⁵ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Jawaharlal Nehru (Delhi), *no month, no day*, 1951.

¹²⁶ The POS reapplied the license system in early 1951 and Tharchin wanted to be part of it as before (see TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok), April 12, 1951). Apparently, verbally the TLO had agreed to do so. But nobody subscribed to the Melong, only the TLO sent their lists for publication. Therefore, Tharchin approached the POS to intervene in the matter (see TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok), July 30, 1951), but nothing happened. Note that indeed, in October 1951 (Melong 19-7), trader's lists were printed.

¹²⁷ See TC: Fragment of a report, Tharchin, *no month, no day*, 1951. See also Letter Joseph Rock (Kalimpong) to Johannes Schubert (Leipzig), October 1950, where Rock reports that Tharchin is not in a good financial situation (Taube 2009:180).

¹²⁸ In a report he writes: "Regarding the payment of the press to the Government I beg to state that two instalments I was able to pay by a help or donation from a friend, the others almost I have paid from loans. I owe about Rs.8000/- and for 6000/- to whom I have to pay annually 720/- interest and the others I am not paying [sic!]." (see TC: Fragment of a report, Tharchin, *no month, no day*, 1951).

¹²⁹ On March 3, 1949, he received Rs.6,000 from Marco Pallis (see TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Marco Pallis (London), September 20, 1949) and, again in 1950, he received the sum of Rs.1,500 (see TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok), *no date* [summer 1950]). Pallis also bought a pony for Tharchin for 70 dollars (see TC: Letter Marco Pallis (London) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), September 13, 1956).

¹³⁰ He gave a private loan of Rs.5,500 (see TC: Receipt of loan, Tharchin, October 1, 1949). He was a resident of Tharpa Chöling monastery, and also appears with a high donation during the Gyantse flood of 1954 (see HT September 26, 1954). I do not know whether Tharchin ever had to return the money. He laid down a detailed payback plan (see TC: Receipt of loan, Tharchin, October 1, 1949), but no further documents relate to this issue.

¹³¹ Melong 18-1-8 (October 1949): [...] *deng bar bod du gсар shog gi gnad don di tsam rtogs min 'gro khungs che ba med stabs* [...].

half a year. Tharchin's funding was once again exhausted and he considered giving up the newspaper work altogether.¹³²

The Obscure 1950s. In 1952, Tharchin re-entered the mission as a Christian pastor.¹³³ The Melong was printed privately as before, but Tharchin had a more stable income. It is possible that his financial situation was one of the reasons for rejoining the Scottish Mission. In the early 1950s, the Chinese Communists offered monthly Rs.500 in exchange of favorable coverage, which Tharchin refused.¹³⁴ Around the same time, a new stakeholder in the form of the United States Government started to show interest in the Melong. The US pondered support for Tibet, especially during the months leading up to the Seventeen Point Agreement between China and Tibet in May 1951.¹³⁵ From April 1950, the American embassy in New Delhi and the American consulate in Calcutta were subscribed to the Melong and they had also asked for copies of all back issues.¹³⁶ A report of the US Department of State of May 24, 1951, labelled "secret", lists measures in order to assist the Tibet cause, including "assistance to Tharchin, the proprietor of the only Tibetan newspaper."¹³⁷ Whether this help was in fact extended directly or indirectly remains unknown. The CIA had made contact with Stag mtser rin po che thub bstan 'jig med nor bu, the Dalai Lama's eldest brother, from the early 1950s onwards. Rgyal lo don 'grub would set up CIA assistance to a Tibetan-lead guerilla fight. The latter took up post in Kalimpong in June 1952, and two years later Tharchin's Melong would become part of his political activities:

¹³² See Melong 19-3-12 (June 1951).

¹³³ On rejoining the mission, see TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Rev. Craig (Kalimpong), August 18, 1951.

¹³⁴ See Norbu 1975:20; TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Avatar Singh (POS, Gangtok), December 16, 1963, and TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok), January 23, 1952: "I heard that the Chinese in Kalimpong are not pleased with my paper, as they are talking that I am not writing in favour of the Chinese. Even, some of them requested me to change my policy and if I do so [they say] there may be good business for me."

¹³⁵ For details see Goldstein 2007[1989]:773-813.

¹³⁶ See TC: Letter Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), April 1, 1950. See also TC: Letter American consulate (Calcutta) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), [1952-53].

¹³⁷ Aandahl 1983:1685.

We [the Tibetan Welfare Association] persuaded Tharchin Babu, [...] to increase production to once a week, so Tibetans in India could receive regular news of what was happening inside Tibet.¹³⁸

Money must have been involved in what Rgyal lo don 'grub refers to as "persuaded". Tharchin had repeatedly articulated that he could not afford to increase the publication frequency.¹³⁹ In February 1953, Tharchin stated in a report to the government: "The press is still not able to self-support it [sic!]."¹⁴⁰ At this point he was still required to pay off his debts with the final installment for the press being due in September 1954. Unfortunately, it is not documented how Tharchin actually managed to reimburse the individual installments on time. When he announced the change to a weekly publication frequency, his editorial policy drastically switched to the theme of "regaining Tibetan independence".¹⁴¹ In the second weekly issue, he explained that he had been asked by his readers to increase the frequency of publication, concluding Tibetans have finally "understand the significance [of a newspaper]."¹⁴² The formation of the Flood Relief Committee and its activities was extensively reported. The aims of Rgyal lo don 'grub and Tharchin resonated, and whatever kind the connection might have been, the change to weekly publishing, the formation of the Welfare Association as well as the final loan- payment all coincided in September 1954. Only ten issues of the weekly edition were printed before the Melong was interrupted for eight months due to the passing away of Tharchin's wife in February 1955.¹⁴³ Monthly production was resumed with a free issue dedicated to Karma bde can in October 1955.

Financial documentation is unavailable for the later 1950s and early 1960s, therefore definitive statements about the finances of TMP during these time are impossible. Tharchin

¹³⁸ See Thondup 2015:149-150.

¹³⁹ Tharchin stated his wish to print weekly as early as September 1926 (Melong 1-9-4).

¹⁴⁰ TC: Registration of Newspaper, Tharchin to Subdivisional Officer Kalimpong, February 27, 1953.

¹⁴¹ See Melong 22-3-1 (July 1954).

¹⁴² Melong 22-6-15 (September 8, 1954): *sngon du bod rigs rnams kyis gсар 'gyur gyi gnad don de tsam mkhyen min rung / _deng mkhyen rtogs byung stabs [...]*.

¹⁴³ See Melong 23-2-16 (January 12, 1955): "Although on the head lines of this paper printed 12-/1/55, but a/c of ill health of family, the Editor regret that he could not bring out the paper till 31/1/55) [sic!]."

did not call for subscriptions often. According to Daniel Tharchin, Tharchin's second wife Margaret came up for most of the press work.¹⁴⁴ Between 1955 and 1960, Sikkim's bulletin of the POS was produced on the TMP, thus cross-financing the newspaper.¹⁴⁵ Marco Pallis was also involved in financing the TMP in connection with intelligence activities, at least in 1958 (see above). The Melong was not published between October 1961 and November 1962, "due to ill-health, as doctor advised me to stop all the works and take complete rest for a year."¹⁴⁶ Shortly before the Melong was discontinued, Tharchin started to print an English supplement which should address English speakers. The last available issue is of November 1963. A letter to the POS, dated December 13, 1963 and requesting further subsidies, demonstrates that Tharchin did not intend to stop the publication, but that he rather ran out of funding once again. In 1966, Tharchin specified three main reasons for the Melong's cessation: his ill health, lack of finances and competition by other newspapers.¹⁴⁷ The TMP remained active also after Tharchin's death. Daniel Tharchin recounts that the mainly Tibetan work was gradually superseded by more and more Nepali work, reflecting demographical changes. The TMP discontinued business in 1985 or 1986.

The Role of the Tibetan Government. So far, contributions made by the Tibetan government or its representatives have not yet been addressed. The Tibetan government and its leader, the Thirteenth and later the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, were subscribed to the Melong and regularly provided it with donations. Tharchin stressed continuously that he printed under the protection of the Thirteenth and later the Fourteenth Dalai Lama (see also Chapter 6).¹⁴⁸ As early as 1928, a copy of the Melong could be received in Lhasa through the telegraphic office (Bod

¹⁴⁴ Interview with Daniel Tharchin, May 12, 2014, Kalimpong.

¹⁴⁵ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Avatar Singh (POS, Gangtok), December 16, 1963: "During those years my small press was always busy, besides I had to arrange several extra staffs. Along with the publications of the government's bulletin my monthly small Tibetan news-paper was able to publish and send them to Tibet [sic!]."

¹⁴⁶ TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Avatar Singh (POS, Gangtok), December 16, 1963.

¹⁴⁷ See Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Office of Registrar of Newspapers for India, July 4, 1966 (cited in Fader 2009:23).

¹⁴⁸ See reprints of the Dalai Lama's and the government's letters to Tharchin in Melong 8-9-1 (December 1936), 10-12-7 (February 1940), 14-5&6-8 (February/March 1946), 16-5-1 (March 1948) and 19-1&2-6&7 (December 1950/January 1951).

gzhung tar khang).¹⁴⁹ From 1927 until 1932, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama sent Rs.20 per year to the project.¹⁵⁰ During the interregnum, the Tibetan government contributed to the Melong amounts of Rs.100 in 1937,¹⁵¹ Rs.100 in early 1940 (in order to produce a special issue on the enthronement ceremony of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama),¹⁵² and Rs.300 in May 1945.¹⁵³ In late 1949, before the Fourteenth Dalai Lama officially took up the political responsibilities, he sent a contribution of Rs.500 together with Stag brag Rinpoche.¹⁵⁴ He sent further Rs.300 again in 1951,¹⁵⁵ Rs.1,000 in 1957¹⁵⁶ and in 1976, a week before Tharchin passed away, he sent carpets and a sum of Rs.2,000 or 3,000.¹⁵⁷

While other institutions or governments used (or wanted to use) the paper systematically, the Tibetan government remained with occasional monetary support. I agree with Engelhardt that, in general, contributions by Tibetan governmental bodies to Tharchin were "modest."¹⁵⁸ On the one hand, this was due to the fact that its place of production was not Tibet. Snellgrove observed in December 1943: "The Tibetan Government, although always anxious to receive copies [of the Melong], refuses official and financial support, unless the paper is produced in Tibet itself."¹⁵⁹ On the other hand, fractions of the government wished to obstruct the paper, let alone support it.¹⁶⁰

¹⁴⁹ As reported in Melong 5-2-8 (July 1930) and 5-8-4 (January 1931).

¹⁵⁰ The first letter Tharchin had received from the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was reprinted in the Melong 19-1&2-4 (December 1950/January 1951), and also in 8-9-1 (December 1936). According to Tsering 1985:20 it is dated April 16, 1927. Fader says that Tharchin had received Rs.20 from the Thirteenth Dalai Lama already in early 1926 (Fader 2004:267), but the source of this statement is unknown to me.

¹⁵¹ See Letter Tharchin (Lhasa) to Charles Bell (Edgcombe, UK), July 1, 1937 (cited in Fader 2004:326 and Engelhardt 2011:250).

¹⁵² See Melong 11-1-1 (August 1942), parts of which are translated in Engelhardt 2011:250.

¹⁵³ See Engelhardt 2011:253 and Melong 13-9-1 (May/June 1945).

¹⁵⁴ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimong) to Fourteenth Dalai Lama and Taktra Rinpoche (Lhasa), December 2, 1949.

¹⁵⁵ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimong) to Doris Shelton Still (*n.a.*), February 19, 1951.

¹⁵⁶ See Fader 2009:477.

¹⁵⁷ According to Peter Rabgey (see TC: Interview with Peter Rabgey, by Herbert Fader, December 14, 1992).

¹⁵⁸ Engelhardt 2011:254.

¹⁵⁹ Snellgrove 2000:44, cited in Engelhardt 2011:253.

¹⁶⁰ See for example Melong 19-3-21 (June 1951).

3.4.2 (Technical) Infrastructure of the Press

Equipment. Closely connected to the financial supporters of the TMP is its technical setup. Printing devices were provided by the Scottish Mission, made available through help of the British Government or bought by Tharchin's own capital. As mentioned in my master thesis, the newspaper was printed on five different printing devices over the years, with (1), (2) and (5) being the three major technological production advances.¹⁶¹

1) A Roneo duplicator (October 1925 - August 1928)

This mimeograph was given to Tharchin by Dr. Graham of the Scottish Mission. It is a simple, easy-to-use copy machine, often utilized in contexts where mobility was important, such as military newspapers, diaspora media or clandestine pamphlets.

2) A lithographic press (August/September 1928 - July 1931, September 1932 - June 1946)

Provided by Dr. Graham as well, this larger and more complex machine was more efficient. It consisted of a lithographic hand-press of double-crown size. In order to learn its operation, Tharchin spent three weeks in Calcutta at the Caledonian Press.¹⁶² From the initial operation of this press, it was referred to as "Tibetan Press". It was used until Tharchin left the mission in 1946.



Figure 7: The Senefelder lithographic press, as represented in the Melong 4-10&11-1 (April 1930).

¹⁶¹ See also Sawerthal 2011:79.

¹⁶² See Fader 2004:336.

3) A different lithographic press ("Mani Press", August 1931 - May 1932)

When Tharchin left the mission the first time, he printed the Melong on this lithographic press for about a year, owned by Mani Press.

4) Two different lithographic presses (July (?) 1946 - February 1948)

Tharchin bought a lithographic hand press in 1934 in Darjeeling, which he used when he resigned from the mission in the summer of 1946. Tharchin declared his ownership at court under the title "Tibet Mirror Press". In the summer of 1947, he received a second lithographic press from the British Government of India through the cess fund (see above).¹⁶³

5) A treadle press with movable types (Mar 1948 - Nov 1963).

The treadle was organized by POS Hopkinson through the cess fund. Dpal ldan ye shes remembers that the press work was very hard, as every letter had to be set into the tray with tweezers. The composition of one newspaper issue took about three days. Byams dpal skal ldan reports that the composition of the newspaper was three or four times the price of the printing process itself.¹⁶⁴ Due to a lack of sufficient types, in comparison to the lithographic press the type press actually slowed down the production process of the newspaper.

Furthermore, in 1958, Tharchin purchased a flatbed press from Calcutta for roughly Rs.9,000 from his private funds.¹⁶⁵ Further equipment collected over the years includes a brass cutting machine, a perforating machine¹⁶⁶ and finally, by 1965, a typesetting machine.¹⁶⁷ Ever since the type press's establishment, Tharchin had had problems of not possessing sufficient types to make full usage of the press.¹⁶⁸ Therefore, many newspaper issues were published in a mixed format, with certain parts printed on the type press and others on the lithographic press.

¹⁶³ See Fader 2009:179 and TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Arthur Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok), June 1, 1947.

¹⁶⁴ Interview with Byams dpal skal ldan, May 11, 2015, in Kalimpong.

¹⁶⁵ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Apa Pant (POS, Gangtok), November 20, 1958

¹⁶⁶ See TC: Letter TLO (Kalimpong) to Arthur Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok), February 11, 1948.

¹⁶⁷ A type casting machine was collected in 1961 through S. Inaba from Otani University (Japan). As it was broken, Tharchin turned to the POS to use their matrices for type casting (see TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Yagasaki (*n.a.*), October 24, 1961, TC: Tharchin (Kalimpong) to M. Chhibber (First secretary to POS, Gangtok), February 20, 1962, and TC: Tharchin (Kalimpong) to T. Wylie (Seattle), March 26, 1965.

¹⁶⁸ See for example TC: Tharchin to T. Wangdi (Deputy Minister Scheduled Tribes) June 21, 1954.

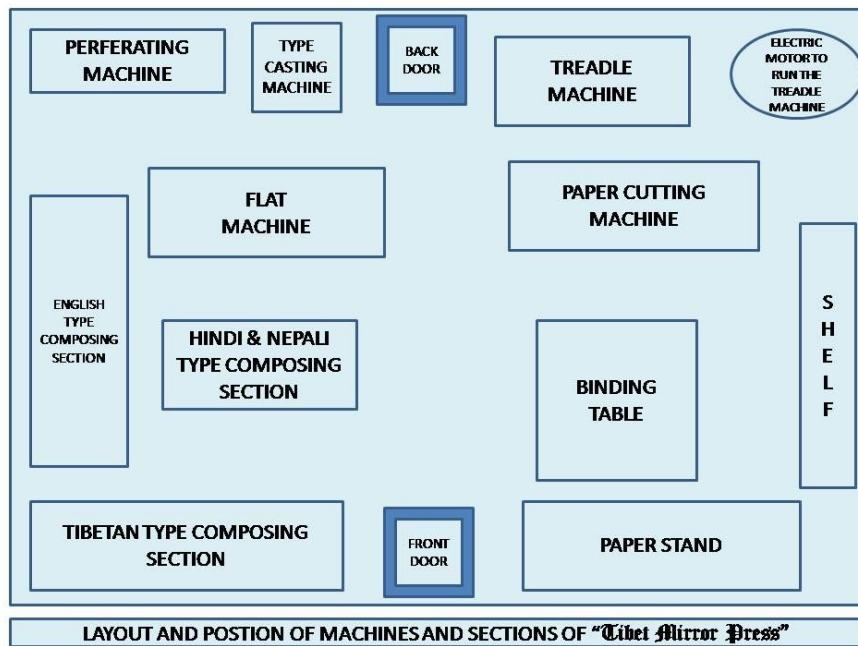


Figure 8: This is how Daniel Tharchin remembers the setup of TMP in later years. According to him, all of the machinery except the flat-bed press was stolen after the press shut down in the mid-1980s.

Next to modern technical equipment, wood blocks were produced at the TMP for the production of pecha, books and illustrations used in the newspaper. In 1959, Rgyal mtshan shar pa carved the blocks for the pecha print of *Khye'u pad+ma 'od 'bar gyi rnam thar* ("The Life of the Child Padma 'od-'bar"). Daniel Tharchin remembers him as carver for illustrations of the newspaper and Christian publications.

Workers. Originally, the Tibetan newspaper was started by Tharchin as a solo project. Even in the later years, according to former worker Dpal ldan ye shes (from between roughly 1955 and 1965), Tharchin did all the editing.¹⁶⁹ As evident from the annual mission reports, he seems to have done the job all by himself until the early 1930s, even though in May 1929 (4-2-4), he did advertise for a scribe to help him with the newspaper. In 1934, Bsod nams tshe dbang from Nyemo was employed as the newspaper scribe. For 13 years, he would write the master for the lithographic press, and when the type press was installed he switched to

¹⁶⁹ Interview with Drung yig Dpal ldan ye shes May 8, 2014, Gangtok. He used to be the State Astrologer of Sikkim, born on December 25, 1925 in Gangtok. When he was twelve, he went to the Tibetan Enchi Monastic School for eight years. He studied with Tsha sprul rin po che for one year and five months, and in 1947 he met Rig 'dzin dbang po in Lhasa.

arranging the letters of the letter press.¹⁷⁰ According to Rev. Scott, in 1943, the Tibetan Press had three fulltime workers, namely Tharchin, a writer (presumably Bsod nams tshe dbang) and a non-Christian artist. Possibly their salary was provided for by the British. At times, further part-time Christian helpers were employed.¹⁷¹

A detailed registrar of payment to workers between April 1948 and August 1950 allows glimpses into the setup of the workshop right after Tharchin had opened the TMP. In April 1948, eight workers were employed with a total of staff cost at Rs.355.¹⁷² The lists present a high fluctuation in employees at the TMP and quite a bit of financial restraint since wages decreased at times. In August and September 1950, Tharchin explained to the POS that he had not had regular staff at the press "for the last many months".¹⁷³ Notable workers mentioned on the lists included Bsod nams tshe dbang as Tibetan compositor (Rs.50) from September 1948 and Tharchin's brother-in-law, Rig 'dzin dbang po, as translator (Rs.50) who also drew cartoons and had some of his texts published.¹⁷⁴ A "Geshe-la", namely Dge bshes dbang rgyal, appears first as lithographic worker and then as writer. Peter Thubten Rapgey ("worker") became press manager in the 1970s.¹⁷⁵ In 1950, there was also a sweeper called Sukhlal who received Rs.2 per month and later Rs.4.¹⁷⁶

When the financial situation eased from 1955 onwards, the TMP grew again and Dpal ldan ye shes recalls that there were around ten workers. He was employed for Tibetan composition

¹⁷⁰ See Melong 26-12-9 (June/July 1960).

¹⁷¹ See TC: Rev. Scott to a questionnaire on the press works, April 13, 1943.

¹⁷² These were Bsod nams tshe dbang (Tibetan Compositor, Rs.50), S.M. Gurung (Foreman, Rs.85), Phenpa Ngodrup (Compositor, Rs.45), Purba Dhondhup (Office Clerk, Rs.50), Dhanbahadur Maile and Toongu (litho printer, each Rs.35), Lobsang (distributor, Rs.30) and Kesang (unclear job, Rs.25). Note that I transcribe the names of the workers as found in the lists, and not according to Wylie. Rig 'dzin dbang po and Bsod nams tshe dbang constitute an exception as their names repeatedly appear in the newspaper, as well.

¹⁷³ At that time, he had five people on staffs, four of which had been working there ever since the inauguration of the type press. These were Bsod nams tshe dbang as Tibetan compositor (Rs.60), Phurba Dhondhup as office clerk (Rs.50), Dhonbahadur (Rs.40) and Toongu (Rs.30). A fifth worker had been under probation for three months, namely Prabhushan (Rs.20). In total, Tharchin cut the costs of workers to Rs.200 (See TC: Addendum to a financial report for August-September 1950, Tharchin to POS office, *no date*).

¹⁷⁴ For details on Rig 'dzin dbang po, see Viehbeck (forthcoming).

¹⁷⁵ Further names mentioned include Kaloo (office person), Phuntsog (worker, then lithography worker), Agay Khang (worker), Onst Shiring (lithography worker), H.B. Lama, Aney Sangay (lithography worker) and Lobsang (see TC: Fader's copy of a detailed register of payments to the TMP staff, 1948-1950).

¹⁷⁶ See TC: Finance bills of 1950-51, Payment receipt, Sukhlal, January 11, 1951.

and proofreading (Rs.70). Rig 'dzin dbang po and Bsod nams tshe dbang continued to work there. Other workers included Purba Dhondup from Lhasa as Tibetan writer, an old and mentally disabled Chinese man as lithographic printer, three Tamangs and three Nepalis. According to Dpal ldan ye shes, they all earned Rs.40 or Rs.50. On June 13, 1960, after 26 years of working for Tharchin, Bsod nams tshe dbang switched to the newly founded Rang dbang gsar shog without giving notice to Tharchin. Dpal ldan ye shes then possibly took over as chief compositor. In 1967, Tharchin had a total of eleven workers.¹⁷⁷ Later, Peter Thubten Rabgay would take over as TMP manager and composer. According to Byams dpal skal ldan, he used to be a monk at Tharpa Chöling but eventually disrobed. Another former monk, trained in calligraphy, worked for the TMP – the same person who wrote down Shakapba's history of Tibet.¹⁷⁸ According to Daniel Tharchin, the Indian T. N. Mokhtan, a Tamang Buddhist who had converted to Christianity, worked at the TMP for a long time. Peter Thubten Rabgay recalls in an interview with Fader how Margaret thought that the staff of the TMP was underpaid and therefore sometimes distributed the workers secretly some tips.¹⁷⁹ Various other scholars or important political individuals took up temporary jobs at Tharchin's press upon their arrival in Kalimpong. The Japanese spy Hisao Kimura (alias Zla ba bzang po) had a job there in the late 1940s for a monthly wage of Rs.15,¹⁸⁰ and his friend Nishikawa was offered to work as a typesetter, as well.¹⁸¹ Dge bshes chos grags worked for Tharchin in the 1930s,¹⁸² and Dge' 'dun chos 'phel started in 1937. In the 1940s, Phun tshogs dbang rgyal and Ngag dbang skal bzang worked there for six months.¹⁸³ Dbang rgyal's younger brother, Skal bzang tshe ring, worked there in 1947.¹⁸⁴ Twan Yong produced illustrations. In 1943, the usual weekly working times were between 48 and 50 hours, and there were no holidays

¹⁷⁷ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to T. Wylie (Seattle), June 10, 1967.

¹⁷⁸ Interview with Byams dpal skal ldan, May 11, 2014, Kalimpong.

¹⁷⁹ See TC: Interview with Peter Rabgey, by Herbert Fader, December 14, 1992.

¹⁸⁰ See Berry 1995:265.

¹⁸¹ See Kimura and Berry 1990:184.

¹⁸² See Fader 2009:14.

¹⁸³ See Takla 1969:9.

¹⁸⁴ See Kimura and Berry 1990:185.

except on festivities such as Good Friday or Christmas.¹⁸⁵ Dpal ldan ye shes remembers working from 8 A.M to 5 P.M. with a lunch break of one hour.



Figure 9: Repeatedly, illustrations of the workers were printed in the Melong. The captions here detail: a) Bsod noms tshe dbang at work (Melong 19-1&2-23, December 1950/January 1951), b) lithographic machine workers Toongu and Maila at work (Melong 19-1&2-23, December 1950/January 1951), c) an illustrator (*lha bris*) and Bsod noms tshe dbang drawing maps (13-1-12, August/September 1944), and d) the almost finished newspaper (13-1-12, August/September 1944). The pictures can also be found in Melong 16-5-7 (March 1948).

Wrap up: The Value of the Melong. The British Government of India, the Scottish Mission, the Indian government and the Tibetan government all had their particular interests in nurturing the Melong, and their support was a way to have their interests promoted in Central Tibet. Tharchin utilized these interests whilst compromising some editorial freedom. The Scottish Mission, for example, saw in the Melong a welcome device to spread the Christian gospel to Tibet, a country otherwise closed to its missionaries. Tharchin evoked a Christian rhetoric towards Christian actors in his private correspondences;¹⁸⁶ however, to the best of my knowledge, in one case only did he indirectly articulate the aspiration to propagate Christian ideas within the pages of the Melong.¹⁸⁷ The British utilized the Melong to spread propaganda during the Second World War and the months leading up to Indian independence. They also used it to regulate trade according to their broader border-policies, which sometimes transgressed the official policies from Calcutta. In return for providing subsidies, the British

¹⁸⁵ See TC: Rev. Scott to a questionnaire on the press work, April 13, 1943.

¹⁸⁶ See for example TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Doris Shelton Still (*n.a.*), February 19, 1951: "I praise the Lord for His wonderful way and further I trust in Him. Please do remember in your prayers about my work and the press."

¹⁸⁷ See Melong 5-9-1 (February 1931): "[By way of the press], in this way, the true religion (*dam pa'i chos*) shall spread in this auspicious place and everywhere in the world [...]."(de ltar phun sum tshogs pa'i yul 'di dang / '_dzam gling rgyal khams kun tu dam pa'i chos/_dar nas [...]).

Government of India, through the office of the POS, expected Tharchin not to print any news or views adverse towards the British government. Tharchin acknowledged this by stating "the news and views of the Government of India will receive adequate space in my paper and [...] nothing adverse to their interests will be printed."¹⁸⁸ Upon August 1947, official posts established by the British were gradually appointed with Indian officials. In 1949, for example, POS Dayal demanded from Tharchin to "obtain confirmation from me of any reports on important matters affecting the Government of India" and Tharchin complied,¹⁸⁹ stressing also the loyal services he had been giving to the Government of India, stating that his newspaper has always tried to "cultivate and renew the friendly relationship between India and Tibet."¹⁹⁰ In 1963, he assured the POS: "though the press is a private press in my name yet its works were always done for the Government as well as for the Tibetans."¹⁹¹

The Tibetan government and its head, the Dalai Lama, saw in the Melong the opportunity to receive news in Tibetan language.¹⁹² Progressive proponents such as Tsha rong encouraged Tharchin to spread global news in Tibetan language through the newspaper, which Tharchin repeatedly stated openly as one of the paper's aims. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama's support of the Melong must be seen as part of his general endeavor to establish features of a modern nation state, such as a postal system or paper currency. He probably regarded the newspaper as a source of national pride and a means of accentuating a modern national entity. When, for example, the British government initiated their subsidies in 1942, this fact was not proclaimed in the Melong. Rather, the the Tibetan government was still mentioned as a main authority.

¹⁸⁸ Fader 2009:179 and TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Arthur Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok), June 1, 1947. In another instance, Tharchin complied in deleting certain items from the paper according to Hopkinson's wishes (see TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Arthur Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok), August 24, 1948).

¹⁸⁹ See TC: Letter Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), June 20, 1949, and TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok), June 25, 1949.

¹⁹⁰ TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Avatar Singh (POS, Gangtok), December 16, 1963; or TC: Fragment of answers to a governmental questionnaire on the press, Tharchin, *no date* [1950/1951].

¹⁹¹ TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Avatar Singh (POS, Gangtok), December 16, 1963.

¹⁹² See Laird 2006:290-291, quoting the Fourteenth Dalai Lama: "There was a Tibetan paper published in Kalimpong and that was the only source of news in Tibetan."

Later, in the 1950s, when the Kalimpong opposition had formed, Tibetan independence became the main goal of the newspaper.

In short, Tharchin maneuvered between various institutions and used different arguments according to respective addressees. He made editorial compromises to certain degrees but always kept within his own boundaries, such as when he refused to cooperate with the Chinese Communists. Rather than becoming an assistant to any of these institutions, he utilized them as assistants to uphold his newspaper project. From the early days, Tharchin strove to establish his newspaper independently through financing by subscriptions and advertisements.

3.4.3 The Tibet Mirror Press - a Commercial Print Shop?

Two Scottish missionaries consented to the fact that the newspaper and its connected press work was Tharchin's endeavor completely. In 1943, Rev. Scott wrote: "The real reason for having a Press in my opinion is that one man wanted it and that he was able to get a gift of two litho presses. I personally think it is not worth carrying on from the purely Missionary point of view [...]"¹⁹³ In 1945, Rev. Mill wrote to POS Hopkinson: "[...] I know that he [Tharchin] has great ideas about controlling a large Tibetan printing establishment, which incidentally the Mission has at present no reason to share with him [...]."

Initially, Tharchin's articulated goal was to gain economic independence. In accordance with classical media economics, his goal was to decrease the costs per issue for every reader and to increase the revenue of copy sales. The production of the first copy is the most expensive, and the more copies one sells the better. He communicated this economical mechanism to his readers, for example in the first year of publication, by describing the North-American newspaper market. There, newspapers and magazines were described as bulky and cheap,

¹⁹³ TC: Answers by Rev. Scott to a questionnaire on the press works, April 13, 1943.

because titles would have 10 million readers.¹⁹⁴ In February 1927, Tharchin also reported a project by Nepalis who managed to collect sufficient funds for publishing a newspaper. Likewise, the Tibetans should "unite" and do the same.¹⁹⁵ Similarly, he reported of Chinese merchants who fund a newspaper after the KMT had decided to cease their funding.¹⁹⁶ In such ways he attempted to encourage potential readers to sign up for subscription or send donations in order to "crowd-fund" the Melong. When Tharchin resigned from the Scottish Mission in 1931, he published the newspaper privately. In two of the privately printed issues (July and December 1931), he stated:

Previously, [the newspaper] was dependent on others and it was like a side job, therefore I could not focus on it. But from now on, it has become independent, and I plan to focus fully on the newspaper work. [...]¹⁹⁷

Right now, I don't have an own private machine. I have to ask another printing house for a favor. [...] Even though I don't have my own private machine now, soon I will get my independent machine.¹⁹⁸

Tharchin's wish to operate the newspaper independently from other institutions was also reflected in his repeated appeals to subscribe and in fact settle the subscription bills. ***Newspaper Sales, Subscription and Donations.*** The Melong targeted mainly Tibet, where it was available at respective places via post. Single copies were sold, but annual subscriptions were more cost-efficient. It was initially priced from Rs.0-1-6 (1.5 Annas) per issue or Rs.1-6-0 (Rs.1 and 6 Annas) per year, with later prices of Rs.1 per issue and Rs.10 per year. Subscription appeals started from the very first issue and continue into the late issues, decreasing over the years and especially during the 1950s. The payment morale of his

¹⁹⁴ See Melong 1-7-1 (July 1926).

¹⁹⁵ See Melong 2-2-4 (February 1927).

¹⁹⁶ See Melong 6-11-5 (November 1932).

¹⁹⁷ Melong 6-2-2 (July 1931): [...] '*di sngon gzhan dbang du song zhing gsar 'gyur 'di'ang zhor las tsam las rkang 'dzugs kyis byed ma thub kyang da nas bzung rang dbang du gyur cing gsar 'gyur gyis las la rkang 'dzugs bya rtsis lags na* [...].

¹⁹⁸ Melong 6-5-3 (December 1931): *gnas skabs rang dbang rang sger gyi 'phrul 'khor med gshis/ gzhan dag gi par khang du re dgos shing* [...] *gnas skabs rang sger 'phrul 'khor med rung ring min rang dbang 'phrul 'khor thob re* [...].

subscribers was strikingly low though. In April 1929, Tharchin admonished his readers that, out of 200 enlisted subscribers, only 36 had actually settled their bills. In March 1930, he reported his financial loss to be continuously significant.¹⁹⁹ In retrospect, he often noted that his readers did not settle bills or were unable to do so due to unreliable transport systems.²⁰⁰ Furthermore, the modern subscription system was alien to his readers, who usually were more familiar with printing projects executed through patronage and donations. The idea of "a subscriber" – or more literally addressed in Tharchin's editorial comments as "somebody who orders" (*bka' mngags gnanng mi*), signifying somebody who actively ordered the newspaper for the payment of the subscription rate – was pretty much unknown (for details see also Chapter 6). In fact, Tharchin interweaved old and new modes of financing, and thus subscription appeals to the newspaper often went hand in hand with a request for donations. This is reflected in the usage of the terms *gsol ras* (donation, gift), *zhal 'debs* (contribution, donation) or *methun rkyen* (provision, necessity to prosper) in such contexts.²⁰¹ In 1942, when Tharchin resumed the publication of the Melong after a two-year hiatus, he listed all the various sources from which he had received donations. He also thanked the Tibetan government explicitly for its donations and a support letter for collecting donations. In total, he received about Rs.300 from various sources.²⁰² The colophons of classical texts would also list the donations given in order to print a text, often referred to as *methun rkyen* (provision).²⁰³ Tharchin continued the common practice of numerating donors at the end of a text, in the

¹⁹⁹ See Melong 4-9-4 (March 1930).

²⁰⁰ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok), January 23, 1952: "I am getting letters from Tibetan public from Lhasa, Shigatse and Gyantse, they are not pleased with C[hinese].C[ommunists]. Some even wrote me that my paper is doing good help to the public and asked me to continue it and send in time. But they do not pay, first of all there is no proper communications to send their subscriptions [sic!]."

²⁰¹ In editorial comments of early issues, until the British started financing, mostly the terms *gsol ras* and *zhal 'debs* were used. The latter term was mainly used when listing donors. From the issue produced on the occasion of the enthronement ceremony of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama (1940), mostly *methun rkyen* is used, even though *gsol ras* also continues.

²⁰² See Melong 11-1-1 (August 1942).

²⁰³ See for example Larsson 2016:319: *par du sgrubs pa'i methun rkyen* ("donations which enable printing") appears in the early 16th-century biography of Gtsang smyon.

early issues of the newspaper.²⁰⁴ Tharchin explained the subscription process in terms of how to fill out the provided paper slips and send money via VPP (Value Payable Post), i.e. how to in fact become a subscriber in the modern sense.²⁰⁵ Commercial campaigns to increase subscription rates promised a free annual subscription to anybody who would enlist ten new subscribers,²⁰⁶ or a free Chinese torch and a copy of the TMP-published Letter Writer (*Yig bskur rnam bzhag*)²⁰⁷ – both aspects of commercialized newspaper businesses.

Advertisements. A newspaper business caters not only the readership market but also to the advertising market, by selling out the attention it can generate.²⁰⁸ Advertisements in the Melong reflect trends of a globalized market taking hold in Kalimpong (see Chapter 5 for details). The Melong featured advertisements from the second issue onwards, however there is a striking quasi lack of advertisements during the years of British support, as can be seen in the table. Only with the initiative of the Tibet Cadre in 1947, advertisements resumed with POS Hopkinson having one of the wool-license companies advertised in the Melong.²⁰⁹

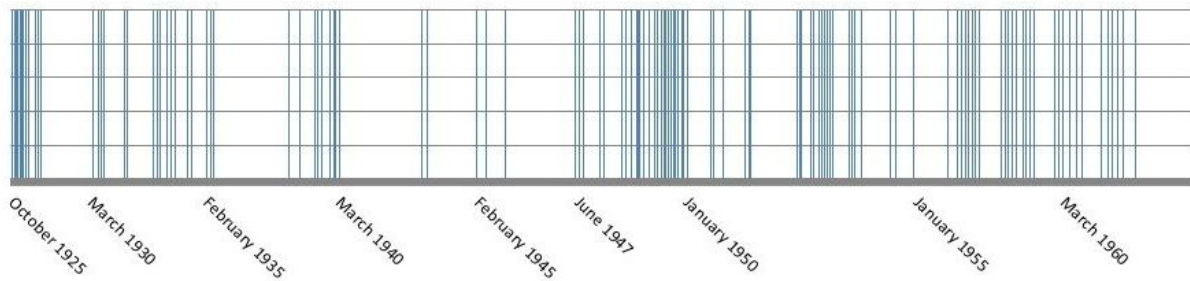


Figure 10: Distribution of advertisements in the Melong over time. Every line indicates one advertisement.

The option of taking the Melong as a platform to reach the Tibetan market was advertised for in Indian newspapers as well, such as the *Statesman* in 1948, which was followed up by a

²⁰⁴ See Melong 3-9-1 (December 1928) and 3-10-1 (January 1929).

²⁰⁵ See for example Melong 3-1&2-5 (May 1928) and 4-12-supplement (May 1930).

²⁰⁶ See Melong 5-2-7 (July 1930).

²⁰⁷ See Melong 6-7-8 (May 1932).

²⁰⁸ See for example Melong 3-8-4 (November 1928): Both readers and advertisers are addressed to send in contributions; readers for free, advertisers against payment.

²⁰⁹ See TC: Letter Arthur Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok) to TLO (Kalimpong), May 17, 1948: Raymond Woolen Mills in Bombay booked advertisements for three months.

company from Karachi.²¹⁰ The 1950s feature a moderate amount of advertisement, with about one advertisement every other issue.

The earliest advertising costs are undocumented. In 1950, one column cost Rs.100 and one page cost Rs.300 per year.²¹¹ In September 1954, a brochure informs that a yearly full page cost Rs.1,600, half a page Rs.810 and a quarter Rs.410.²¹² Despite a substantial amount of advertisements, the generated income could never pay off the total expenditures of the production. The case of advertisement shows prominently how the Melong was connected to commercial publishing activities worldwide and how the TMP strived – however unsuccessfully – to become an economic enterprise.

Cross-financing Through Other Print Products. The main project of the TMP was the newspaper,²¹³ however Tharchin also printed books, pecha and booklets for sale. As stated above, the Christian *Scenes of Tibetan Life* (1935) was explicitly published in order to cross-finance the rest of the press work. This was quite a revolutionary step in the Tibetan literary context, where pecha or any other print product had not yet been primarily produced for profitable reasons. As noted in the previous chapter, there were impermanent book sellers in Lhasa, and significantly, in 1947, Tsha rong suggested to Tharchin to open a "Tharchin's Shop" there.²¹⁴ The first TMP publication dates to May 1930, the *Rmi lam lha mo'i bstan bcos* ("Treatise of the Dream Goddess"). Some of these products were advertised in the Melong, usually on its final page. Many other such books, which have come to light in various archives, were never advertised in the Melong though. This is telling for the TMP business as a whole: which were the TMP publications and advertised publicly, and which were the works of outside jobs? In my research, I have collected 122 publications which shed light on a) the

²¹⁰ See Statesman of January, *no day*, 1947, [on other side: London, January 17, "British parliament reassembles" and NY, January 19, "Palestine Civil Strife regarded as War"]. For answer see TC: Letter Messman (Karachi) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), January 23, 1948.

²¹¹ See TC: Financial report of the TMP 1950-51.

²¹² The brochure can be found in the TC.

²¹³ Interview with Byams dpal skal Idan, May 11, 2015, in Kalimpong.

²¹⁴ See TC: Draft-letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to POS (?) (Gangtok), February 1947.

range of contents of printed matter, b) the mix of formats of printed matter and c) the development of prices – all of which will be discussed in the following.²¹⁵ Generally speaking, there are three types of publications concerning their relationships to the TMP: Firstly, there are those publications which were printed and published and sold at the TMP. Secondly, there are those publications which were published or commissioned by somebody else and only printed at the TMP. And thirdly, there are those publications which were neither published nor printed at the TMP, but only sold through the press house. Additionally, one may add that at least seven publications were authored by Tharchin, mostly school books or dictionaries. They constitute numbers 17, 27, 28, 36, 41, 83, and 93 of Appendix 2, which presents a detailed list of the collected publications.

Range of contents. The TMP-publications broadly cover the following subjects (the number of publications found in the respective area are given in brackets): Popular educational literature (such as *'bel gtam*, operas, parables, tales) (16), usually Buddhist in content and thus not entirely distinguishable from Buddhist literature (27), both classics (such as jātakas, or works by famous scholars) (7) and applied prayers (such as *gsol 'debs*, *smon lam*, or long-life prayers) (20), the latter are often commissioned works. Connected to Buddhist popular literature as well are moral works (such as *The Five Hygienic Paths* or a booklet on alcohol) (5). Many books on knowledge and learning (24) were disseminated, such as school books, some of which Tharchin composed himself, and dictionaries. Some of these were printed on the TMP, others were only advertised for. Another important aspect covers publications on practical matters (19), such as letter-writers (as discussed in Chapter 2), calendars, mathematical tables, maps, or geographical guidebooks. Political literature (6) was printed following the increase of refugees reaching Kalimpong. Christian literature (8) was published

²¹⁵ I have collected all printed matter of the TMP found in archives visited during the course of my research (see introduction). In addition, publications otherwise not known of are documented through regular advertisement lists in the Melong. Even if incomplete, the collected material gives a representative picture of the range of printed matters of the TMP.

particularly when the mission funded the press work. Magazines and journals (15) were also published. One text is a Bön text, and one is unidentifiable.

Those works advertised in the Melong from its early days fall mainly into the areas of popular, educational and practical literature. They were indeed partially Buddhist works, but considering the historical context of Buddhist publishing in Tibet, the sheer quantity of published popular and practical literature is striking. Furthermore, the majority of Buddhist literature was commissioned from the 1950s onwards. These publications were aimed at the taste of normal people, they were neither particularly fancy nor expensive. One of the early publications on practical matters was *Yig bskur rnam bzhag (The Modern Tibetan Letter Writer)* by Bka' drung nor nang, which was published in 1931. When Tharchin reprinted it in 1956, he added various letters from his own printing office as well as various texts on Tibetan history, such as law codes, a list of the Dalai Lamas and the regents, and so on.²¹⁶ The 1968-edition of his *Bod skad kyi sgrog dpe gnyis pa (Tibetan Second Book)* also includes a few chapters on letter-writing. Tharchin's skill in formularized letter-writing is significant in the light of what has been discussed in the previous chapter: the newspaper developed out of the practice of exchanging written letters between two distinct and mutually familiar parties into writing to a dispersed and unfamiliar group of people.

Along the same lines, Tharchin also published a calendar including the conversion between Western and Tibetan years and a booklet containing mathematical charts on how to calculate weights and quantities, presumably for use by traders. In 1936, he published a book on Tibetan arts and crafts, the *Rig pa bzo yi gnas kyi las tshogs phran tshig 'dod rgur sgyur ba spra phab 'od kyi snang brnyan (The Mirror of Tibetan Arts and Crafts)*. Importantly and as an absolute pioneer in the Tibetan context, he produced and published at least two maps: one map of Sikkim and Darjeeling District in 1929 and a fantastic, colored world map in 1940. He

²¹⁶ Also, Tharchin had a copy of Sarat Chandra Das' *Yig bskur rnam gzhag (Being a Collection of Letters: Both Official and Private, Illustrating the different Forms of Correspondence used in Tibet)*, including Tharchin's notes (stored at TC).

also sold a text on geography, the *'Dzam gling rgyas bshas (Geography: Explaining a few Simple Facts about Nature and the World for Tibetans)* (for details, see 5.3), and guide books, such as Annie Perry's *Kalimpong and the Sikkim Hills*. Scot Berry observes how "anyone on the pilgrimage from Lhasa to the holy places of India would pass through Kalimpong, and Tharchin made it a point to accommodate them by printing leaflets and guide maps to the sacred places."²¹⁷

From early on, Tharchin also advertised dictionaries and school books. The school books were bestsellers; the *Bod skad kyis sgrog dpe gnyis pa (Tibetan Second Book)*, for example, which he himself had compiled, was in its sixth edition by 1968. Tharchin intensely advertised Tibetan-English dictionaries, such as those by Charles Bell (1931), Kazi Zla ba bsam grub (1931), George Roerich (1933) and Basil Gould (1943) - the latter he had helped to compile.²¹⁸ Latest by 1932, he had published and sold a Hindi-Tibetan dictionary and later, in 1942, a work authored by himself, *Rgya bod skad gnyis shan sbyar kun phan me long (The Tibetan Hindi Selftaught)*, with later reprints. Already the first edition of *Yig bskur rnam bzhag (The Modern Tibetan Letter Writer)* included some phrases and words in both Hindi and Tibetan, for traders as he wrote. He had also compiled one major Tibetan-Tibetan dictionary, but never published it, although two volumes were published by the University of Washington. In 1965, he published his *English-Tibetan-Hindi Pocket Dictionary*.

By the early 1960s, the second editions of previously published moral fables, grammar books or the ever-useful language study books were advertised. After the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's flight to India, Tharchin was quick in publishing useful literature, such as *Dbyin skad rang sbyong thub pa'i thabs gsar dangs shel me long (The English Tibetan Self Taught)* for the newly arriving refugees, reprints of *Rgya bod skad gnyis shan sbyar kun phan me long (The Tibetan Hindi Selftaught)* and a *Dbu med kyis ka dpe dang po byis par dga' ba'i mgrin rgyan*

²¹⁷ Berry 1995:289.

²¹⁸ In 1953, a disagreement between Gould and Tharchin arose, because Tharchin reprinted the book without Gould's permission (see TC: Letter Basil Gould (Yarmouth, UK) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), May 22, 1953). The reprinted edition is kept at the National Library in Kolkata.

(*Tibetan Primer of Current Hand writing*).²¹⁹ The *English-Tibetan-Hindi Pocket Dictionary* had become so popular that it was illegally reprinted by a certain Bkra shis dpal 'byor in Delhi.²²⁰ Starting from the 1950s, the publishing of Tibetan-Buddhist works with a practical focus increased: In 1954, a compilation of texts on religious practice (*chos spyod*), aspirational prayers for rebirth in Sukhāvātī (*bde chen smon lam*) and a history of taking refuge (*skyabs 'gro'i lo rgyus*) was advertised, as well as later the prophecies of Dil mgo mkhyen brtse rin po che. After 1959, the TMP also published a few statements by the Dalai Lama. In 1962, it published an eye-witness account of the refugee Blo bzang byams pa and his suffering in Tibet, entitled *Dmyal khams nas mtho ris su (From Hell to Paradise)*.

The forms of literature not advertised in the Melong were mainly Christian literature, political pamphlets, commissioned magazines and commissioned pecha. Concerning the first, the TMP is generally described as having "put out a great deal of Christian literature for free distribution," as is stated in the preface to *Scenes of Tibetan Life*. Under the auspices of Rev. Knox, a series of leaflets was published on the life of Jesus. The only related advertisement found in the Melong is for a print of John's prophecies (1930), and no further advertised Christian literature is found in the 1940s and 1950s.

The commissioned publishing of Buddhist pecha flourished during the 1950s, probably due to the increased influx of Tibetans into the region. In 1956, when Buddha Jayanti was celebrated in India on the occasion of 2,500 years of Buddhist history, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama came to India together with a mass of pilgrims. In this context, the Tsechu Offering Association (see above) commissioned the printing of rail tables for the travelling Tibetans. Some of the pecha printed on his press, many upon commission, featured notes explaining that they were published specifically because the refugees lacked pecha. One interesting publication is the

²¹⁹ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to T. Wylie (Seattle), June 10, 1967: Tharchin distributed 1,000 copies of the *English-Tibetan-Hindi Pocket Dictionary*, 4,000 of *The Tibetan Hindi Selftaught* and 3,000 of the *Tibetan Primer of Current Hand writing* for free, financed by Doris Shelton Still.

²²⁰ See TC: Translation of the preface of the second edition of the *English-Tibetan-Hindi Pocket Dictionary*, translated by Phurbu Tsering, provided by Herbert Fader.

English-language and Western format *Celebration of the Rite of The Unity of the Three Jewels in Padmasambhava and Padmasambhava's Birthday* (1963), commissioned by Khams sprul rin po che of Chokorling monastery in Kalimpong. Chokorling monastery printed its Tibetan version in Western form, on its own press, but the TMP published the English version. In 1971, a sheet of proclamations for the monks of Tharpa Chöling was printed on the TMP. A lo chos mdzad's Mi dmangs tshogs 'du commissioned the testament of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and a statement of the Fourteenth in 1958, but these were advertised in Melong only by 1962. In 1960, a brochure of the Chu bzhi sgang drug, an organization of Tibetan guerrilla fighters, was printed on TMP, but never advertised. One larger order from the POS was the printing of both the Hindi and the Tibetan version of the inside matter of the governmental bulletin from 1955 to 1960,²²¹ which, as stated above, effectively cross-financed the newspaper. On these occasions, Tharchin also translated the contents into Tibetan.²²² The first and second issue of the scholarly magazine of the Namygyal Institute of Tibetology (NIT) established 1956 in Gangtok, called *Bod kyi shes rig* or *Tibetology* (Tibetan and English) was also printed on the TMP in November 1956. Back in 1931, Tharchin lithographed the Lepcha magazine *The Young Lepcha*. Possibly, trader's permits were also printed on his press.²²³ Only in very few cases it is known how many copies of the books were in fact printed. The *Ja chang lha mo'i bstan bcos* ("The Dispute between Tea and Chang") of 1931, for example, was printed in 600 copies,²²⁴ and the second edition of *Rgya bod skad gnyis shan sbyar kun phan me long* (*The Tibetan Hindi Selftaught*) in 1,000 copies.²²⁵ The *English-Tibetan-Hindi Pocket Dictionary* was printed at first in 2,000 copies²²⁶ and the reprinted again in 1,000 copies in 1967. *Rgya bod skad gnyis shan sbyar kun phan me long* (*The Tibetan Hindi Selftaught*) was

²²¹ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Avatar Singh (POS, Gangtok), December 16, 1963.

²²² See TC: Letter Mr. Ganju (Gangtok) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), May 12, 1959.

²²³ See TC: Certificate for Traders, Muleteers and Porters, trilingual in English, Hindi and Tibetan, *no date*.

²²⁴ See TC: Registration form of the publication to the Subdivisional Office Kalimpong, February 7, 1931.

²²⁵ See TC: Registration of the publication to the Subregistration Office Kalimpong, February 6, 1950.

²²⁶ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Doris Shelton Still (*n.a.*), June 17, 1955. See also TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Walter Ross (Arizona), *no date* [1965], which shows that 100 copies were given for free to Tibetan schools in exile.

published in 4,000 copies and the "Tibetan Primer of Current Handwriting" in 3,000 copies.²²⁷

During the 1950s and 1960s, some of the commissioned pecha were printed in 2,000 copies.²²⁸ Further information is unavailable, however my estimate for the circulation of books is between 500 and 2,000 printed copies.

Only a few scattered documents give glimpses on sale numbers and into how books were ordered. In 1944, Ka shod pa ordered three copies of Gould's *Tibetan Word Book*, one Hindi-Tibetan book, the *Gzugs kyi nyi ma'i rnam thar* and the *Yig bskur rnam gzhang*.²²⁹ In 1950, Loren Thompson from New Jersey ordered the *Tibetan Language Records*.²³⁰ In July 1951, the Lord Chamberlain of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama ordered a Tibetan Bible.²³¹ In February 1954, Stagtsang Raspa, the abbot of Hemis Monastery in Leh, ordered virtually the whole advertised list of books published.²³² In the same year, 1954, Pierre Vittoz of the Moravian Mission ordered the *Yig bskur rnam gzhang*.²³³ A school in Leh asked for a specimen copy of the *Dbu med kyi ka dpe dang po byis par dga' ba'i mgrin rgyan* (*Tibetan Primer of Current Hand Writing*) in 1954. In 1955, Tharchin sent 90 copies of the primer and one Tibetan grammar book to Rgyal sras rin po che.²³⁴ In 1957, somebody ordered the Tibetan calendar.²³⁵ The TMP not only sold books, but it also established itself as a place of enquiry if one needed to get a hold of any kind of text,²³⁶ and a precursor to a type of local copy shop. Byams dpal

²²⁷ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to T. Wylie (Seattle), June 10, 1967.

²²⁸ See the colophon of *Rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma nA ro mkha' spyod dbang mo'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga bde chen dga' ston zhes bya ba* (1961) and *Gso sbyong / dbyar gnas/ dgag dbye/ bslab bya'i sdom tshig/ thun drug sogs sdom pa gsum dang 'brel ba'i skor byang grol khang bzang 'dzeg pa'i them skas* (1962), both stored at TCMM.

²²⁹ See TC: Letter Ka shod pa (Lhasa) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), June 12, 1944.

²³⁰ See TC: Letter Loren Thompson (New Jersey) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), September 30, 1950.

²³¹ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Bible Society of India (Bangalore), July 17, 1951. For the advertisement in the Melong see Melong 19-1&2-25 (December 1950/January 1951).

²³² See TC: Letter Stagtsang Raspa (Leh) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), February 28, 1954. The sender's name is written according to the English language letterhead.

²³³ See TC: Letter Pierre Vittoz (Leh) to Tharchin, October 8, 1954.

²³⁴ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to HH Gyelsey Rinpoche of Ladakh, including book bill, April 14, 1955. The receiver's name is written according to the English language address.

²³⁵ See TC: Letter Kunjyo Tshering La (Kurseong) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), April 15, 1956. The sender's name is written according to the English language letterhead.

²³⁶ George Roerich enquired about various texts, for example the *Sde dge dpar ma skad gnyis shan sbyar* (see TC: George Roerich (Kullu Naggar) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), November 11, 1942). Joseph Rock and Johannes Schubert also used Tharchin as a source in order to get Tibetan texts (see Taube 2009).

skal ldan remembers the TMP as the most well-equipped press shop for Tibetan printing in Kalimpong.²³⁷ The Foreign Bureau of the Tibetan government, for example, had wireless forms, letter pads and envelopes printed at the TMP in 1950.²³⁸ According to Byams dpal skal ldan, the Tibetan Women's Association printed at the TMP and the Mani Press.

Price Development. With a few exceptions, Tibetan books were generally not a ready-made commodity, and they were rather printed upon commission because the production of books was such an enormous task. Leaving aside larger projects such as the printing of the Kangyur and Tengyur, even the cutting of woodblocks for a pecha of 20 or 50 pages takes a lot of time. Lithography accelerated and facilitated this process significantly, and thus Tharchin had the infrastructure to produce books quickly and inexpensively. The early printed books were all produced in Western style format, with attractive covers, and they were small, handy and, above all, cheap. A copy of the first printed book, the *Rmi lam lha mo'i bstan bcos*, for example, cost 5 annas, compared to 3 annas for the Melong at that time. The prices did not rise significantly, and, in fact, the price for the *Rmi lam lha mo'i bstan bcos* even decreased to 4 annas, and its second edition in February 1948 was sold for Rs.2 for as long as I was able to trace it (1963). Compared to the *Rmi lam lha mo'i bstan bcos*, the *Ja chang lha mo's bstan bcos* was a little more expensive in its first edition (8 annas), but then it was cheaper in its second (Rs.1). The most expensive advertised product was Roerich's dictionary (Rs.100), followed by Gould's language record (Rs.35). The most expensive of TMP's own publications was the world map for Rs.10 and the second edition of the *Yig bskur rnam gzhag* for Rs.10 (and later Rs.12). Both in the beginning and in the latter years, most books sold for around Rs.1 and often for even less. In an attempt to increase sales, Tharchin gave away special offers, such as one free book with the order of twelve others, free shipping for orders on all

²³⁷ See for example Melong 7-2-8 (February 1933): A boxed text offers to print Tibetan *dbu can* in big and small size, envelopes, accountant books, trademarks and so on.

²³⁸ Tharchin had to remind them twice to pay for it (see TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Foreign Bureau of the Tibetan Government (Lhasa), May 18, 1950, mentioning a previous letter sent on November 28, 1949.

advertised books, or the *Yig bskur rnam gzhas* was offered at half price for three months.²³⁹

All such strategies again underline the commercial outlook of the TMP.

In sum, Tharchin failed to establish the TMP and the Melong as a self-supporting enterprise.

The newspaper was a loss-making business. In April 1929, for example, it was Rs.420 in the red that year.²⁴⁰ In 1951, Tharchin referred to the same amount of loss, calculating monthly

expenditures of Rs.800 against a monthly income of Rs.400.²⁴¹ In 1930, Tharchin referred to

his high aspirations but difficult realities by calling the newspaper project *lag ring phu thung* or "a long arm with short sleeves".²⁴² This failure needs to be seen into perspective, however.

The Melong was just one of many newspapers worldwide which were – and often still are – economically unsustainable, yet they perform certain public functions and therefore are subsidized. In modern states, the newspaper is therefore often referred to as a "merit good",²⁴³ with information being seen as a public good whose equal distribution is worthy of subsidy.

3.4.4 Continuing Traditional Ways

Tharchin was influenced and driven by modern ways of newspaper making, in terms of both its financial setup and its production mode. Yet, his workshop also passed on a variety of earlier features of the print culture of recent decades or even centuries. Concerning the workers who were employed, his main assistant, Bsod nams tshe dbang, came from Nyemo, which had been a traditional place of scribes and carvers for centuries.²⁴⁴ In his editorials, Tharchin referred to himself as *do dam pa*, i.e. the manager of the print shop, and the same term was used in the early print shops of the 16th century.²⁴⁵

²³⁹ See Melong 6-2-8 (July 1931), 8-5-8 (July 1936) or 7-3-8 (March 1933) respectively.

²⁴⁰ See Melong 4-1-1 (April 1929).

²⁴¹ See a handwritten draft letter to Prime Minister Nehru, probably never sent (cited in Fader 2009:185).

²⁴² Melong 4-12-supplement (May 1930).

²⁴³ See Beck 2011:10 or Kiefer 2005:141.

²⁴⁴ See Robin 2010:243, Schaeffer 2009:117 or Goldstein 2007[1989]:150.

²⁴⁵ See Sernesi 2016:335.

Furthermore, modern ideas of commercial publishing blurred into established modes of commissioning of books. While some pecha were clearly produced and published by the TMP itself, their colophons continue stating that production was commissioned by certain individuals. The same principle is true for the distribution of the newspaper, with donations (*mthun rkyen* and *gsol ras*) blending into the modern idea of subscription. Also the practice of offering the first print of a text was continued: on the occasion of the opening of the new press house in 1948, the first prints (*par phud*) were dedicated to the Tibetan state, Earl Mountbatton and Jawaharlal Nehru.²⁴⁶ For centuries, texts printed in black and white were colored upon printing, and this practice of recoloring can be observed in the production of the Melong as well, for example in regard to the special issue produced for the enthronement ceremony of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama in 1940: Three of these special issues are kept in the LTWA, and all of them show a different type of post-coloring.²⁴⁷



Figure 11: Three copies of the special issue on the enthronement ceremony of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Melong 10-12-1 (February 1940), with different post-colouring.

²⁴⁶ See Melong 16-6&7-1 (April/May 1948).

²⁴⁷ This is Melong 10-12 (February 1940). See also Sernesi, who describes for the 16th century: "A fairly common practice in Tibet was to colour the woodcuts by hand, in order to enhance their aesthetic quality. Indeed, among the copies produced from a given set of blocks, the first samples (*par phud*) were destined to the main donors and sent as prestigious gifts to high officials and prelates, and therefore were further enriched when compared to later prints from the same blocks." (Sernesi 2016:339).

Thus, old modes of production were interwoven with new modes, and this is clearly evident in the products of the TMP. While Tharchin had five modern printing devices at his disposal (a mimeograph, lithography, and type setting-press), the old method of woodblock printing was still employed at times, for example for the cutting of illustrations. Both books in Western formats as well as pecha were produced, and sometimes the format would change from one edition to the next; for example, the first edition of the *Lha sa dran glu* (1936) was printed as a pecha, and the third edition (1965) in Western book format.

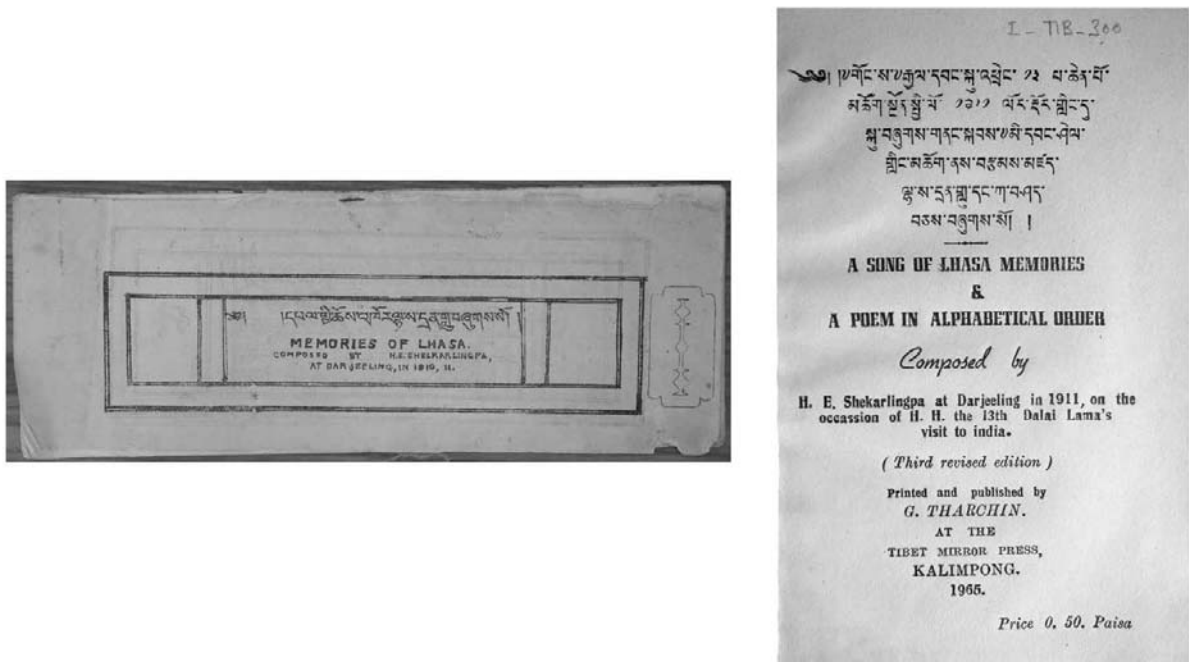


Figure 12: The first edition of the *Lha sa dran glu* (1936) is printed as a pecha, the third edition (1965) in Western book-format.

Within pecha production, there were different printing methods, such as woodblock (*Khye'u pad+ma 'od 'bar gyi rnam thar*, 1959), lithograph (*Lha sa dran glu*, 1936) or type print (*Lha chos dang mthun pa'i gtam pad ma'i tshal gyi zlos gar*, 1954). The Western book format too was sometimes lithographed and sometimes type printed. There is even an edition of the *Chu shing bstan bcos* in Western book format, but carved from woodblock. Unfortunately, I could not verify whether it was indeed produced at the TMP.



Figure 13: A block of the *Chu shing bstan chos* in Western format, in comparison to a pecha.

The same eclectic mix of formats is true for the production of the newspaper, where mimeography, lithography, type press but also woodblock printing were utilized. In an advertisement for the pecha-format *Drang srong gi bu mo* (1933), for example, a copy of a woodcut block of the work is featured in the Melong.



Figure 14: A woodblock-printed page of the *Drang srong gi bu mo* as advertisement in Melong 7-9-5 (October 1933).

Cartoons of the Melong often derived of foreign newspapers, but were reproduced in old fashion: via block prints.



Figure 15: A cartoon from the Taiwanese newspaper *China Post* (founded 1952) is reproduced via wood-block printing in the Melong 26-1-6 (June 1959).

The products of the TMP thus showcase the merging of modern and traditional formats: Workers traditionally trained in woodblock printing were relearned in type setting. On every level of production of the Melong, we can observe the meeting, exchange and entanglement of people from different cultural backgrounds: The place of Kalimpong with its host of press shops and newspapers in different languages, catering slightly different audiences but essentially engaged in the same work. Then also the workers of the press who came from different backgrounds, be it Tibetan, Nepali, Tamang, Sikkimese, Christian or Buddhists; and the same holds true for the financial patrons who demanded from Tharchin certain compromises concerning his "freedom of press", however Tharchin succeeded in managing and maneuvering these different interests. While these individuals and institutions made use of Tharchin and his newspaper as a medium for their respective religious or political propaganda, more importantly, Tharchin made use of them in his endeavor to establish a privately owned press house.

Conclusion to Part 1

1 Confluences and Convergences: Locating the Melong in Tibetan-language Media History

Different from most of the newspaper projects discussed in Chapter 2, the Melong existed over a longer period of nearly 40 years. Within the two major lines of historical development of newspapers (i.e. the Indo-Tibetan and the Sino-Tibetan), it takes up a special position because of connecting these trajectories on various levels, historically both horizontally and vertically. Some of the early newspaper projects knew of each other: When the Moravians produced the *La dwags kyi ag bar*, they reported in 1908 on the existence of the *Bod kyi phal skad gsar 'gyur* in Lhasa, but were unsure whether it was in fact true or not.¹ The Eighth Panchen Lama became interested in lithography through a Moravian press publication as far back as 1879.²

The Melong was used as a news source by the *Kye lang ag bar*, for example in December 1932.³ At least in 1944-45, Moravian missionary Walter Asboe received the Melong. The Melong, in turn, also used many of the discussed Tibetan newspapers as sources. Between 1929 and 1932, Tharchin cited extensively from the *Gza' 'khor re'i bod sog gsar gnas*, to which he had subscribed, and the issues stored at LTWA today were all donated by Tharchin in 1972.⁴ During her stay in Kalimpong in 1930, Liu Manqing, one of the coworkers of the *Bod sog gsar gnas*, was interviewed by Tharchin, which probably is the first-ever interview

¹ See LA, July 1908:1: "A Tibetan Newspaper. In some newspapers it is written, that in Lhasa a Tibetan newspaper has been printed. We wonder whether that is true or a lie. Why? Because it says, it is the first Tibetan newspaper. That is a lie - that is easy to know, because this newspaper has been printed for five years." (*bod ag bar /ag bar re'i nang na lha sar bod skad kyi ag bar zhig par la rgyab pa'i gnas tshul bris 'dug de ni bden min brdzun min sems so/ /ci'i phyir zhe na/ de ni bod skad kyi ag bar dang po yin ces bris 'dug de ni rdzun yin rtog par sla'o/ /ag 'di par brgyab nas lo lnga song ba'i phyir ro/*).

² See Das 1969[1908-1909]:89: "Next day worked [we] [sic!] some exercises with the Minister in simple division and multiplication from a small Tibetan arithmetic, printed and published by the Moravian Mission at Kylong [...]; after which we had a long talk on the printing system...."

³ See KA, December 1932:2: News on Tibet is undersigned with "Tharchin Editor." The corresponding article can be found in Melong 6-11-3 (November 1932).

⁴ See Stock registrar 1972 of the NIT, stored at NIT.

published in a Tibetan newspaper.⁵ Also the LTWA holdings of the Communist *Rgyal rtse gsar 'gyur* and *Gsar 'gyur mdor bsdus* were donated by Tharchin in 1972. Tharchin also commented on the establishment of new newspapers or journals in Tibetan language or on topics related to Tibet, such as the journal of NIT, *Tibetology*, and the *Urusvati* journal published by the Roerichs. When *Rang dbang gsar shog* was founded, Tharchin congratulated the official editor Lha dbang dpal 'byor, but he also critically questions why it had not been established earlier.⁶ He also wrote a rather taunting note when Lha dbang left *Rang dbang gsar shog*.⁷ The Melong also cited from Communist newspapers, such as the *Mtsho sngon gsar 'gyur*,⁸ and from the loudspeakers erected in Lhasa.⁹ The ways in which Tharchin transformed news according to his preferences are evident from one example of the *Bod ljongs nyin re'i gsar 'gyur* (1956): According to oral reports, the *Tibet Daily* had insulted monks in Tibet by calling them "pigs" (*phag pa* in Tibetan). The Melong rhetorically questions whether the person reporting this might have misunderstood the article when in fact it was stated that monks are "noble", *'phags pa* in Tibetan.¹⁰

The Melong grew out of the Mission and was fostered by it. Tharchin himself had grown up with the Moravians before moving to Kalimpong. People who had been working for the Melong were also the first ones to set up a newspaper in Lhasa, such as Dge bshes chos grags, who worked for the Melong in 1930 and was later on the staff of the *Bod ljongs nyin re'i gsar 'gyur*.¹¹ Phun tshogs dbang rgyal also had gained experience in Tharchin's workshop in the 1940s before working for the *Bod ljongs nyin re'i gsar 'gyur*. Its chief editor, Tsha sprul rin po che, cooperated with Tharchin on the revision of Gould's and Richardson's *Tibetan Word*

⁵ See Melong 5-1-2&3 (June 1930).

⁶ See Melong 26-10-3.

⁷ See Melong 27-10-2&3 (August 1961).

⁸ See for example Melong 22-12-8 (November 24, 1954).

⁹ See for example Melong 25-5-9 (September/October 1958).

¹⁰ See Melong 25-6-4 (November 1958).

¹¹ See Hartley 2003:85-86.

Book.¹² People who had worked for the Melong also switched over to the "exile" press: Bsod nams tshé dbang, who used to be the main compositor of the Melong, transferred to *Rang dbang gsar shog* in 1960.¹³ Thus, both in Tibet proper as well as in the exile community, people trained in the compounds of the TMP transmitted their knowledge and experience to the subsequent publication projects. The continuous lineage of newspapers in the Indo-Tibetan borderlands is striking in format. The missionary tradition of newspaper production had the clear and stated aim of proselytizing and re-evaluating the Tibetan script together with more educational aims. The newspapers founded by Chinese actors, such as the KMT and later on the Communists, pursued articulated political goals through educating the people in initially KMT and later Communist propaganda. Tharchin, though, attributed value to the newspaper itself as medium of an active public, thus the Melong was not the organ of one political or religious institution. Tharchin may have pursued political (modernization, anti-Communist) and perhaps religious (Christian) intentions at times, but certainly his aspirations went way beyond merely such instrumental pursuits.

2 Tharchin as a Commercial Publisher: The People as a New Authority

As we have seen, news dissemination obviously existed in Tibet and systematic news dissemination operated for administrative purposes in private communicative modes. The random gossiping and commenting on events (*gnas tshul*) occurred mainly in oral form or anonymously through posters, while texts in Tibetan language and script were composed by learned monks and scribes. Thus, the literary dimension of texts was a highly exclusive endeavor with the majority being produced by and for clerics. On the one hand, production was for study purposes, on the other hand, texts were ritual objects of reverence recited to wider audiences. In the latter case, such texts became part of a social practice that included a

¹² See the preface to Gould and Richardson 1943:xii and TC: Tharchin's Autobiography, where it is stated: "Sir Basil Gould arranged for this person [Ringang] and another Tibetan scholar, besides Tharchin, to check through his book." This most probably refers to Tsha sprul rin po che. I thank Isrun Engelhardt for pointing this out.

¹³ See Melong 26-12-9 (June/July 1960).



Figure 16: The development of Tibetan-language newspapers in the Indo-Tibetan border region between 1904 and the 1960s: a) *La dwags kyi ag bar*, January 1904, b) *Kye lang ag bar*, May 1930, c) *La dwags pho nya*, March 1939, d) Melong, March 1935 (Melong 8-2-1), e) Melong, May/June 1963 (Melong 28-5-1), and f) *Rang dbang gsar shog*, August 10, 1963.

much wider audience, with common people being included as silent partakers. They were a present but inactive segment, a passive category part of an imagined "whole society". They were not taken into account as active contributors, but as recipients in its most blatant form. The producers stood on top, with a heavenly mandate, and the silent "commoners" were expected to – if anything – repeat whatever was placed in front of them and not react in any critical way, especially not in written form; and if they did, then only via the indirection of a divine origin, such as in the case of the Lhasa Street Songs.

The social practice of texts was authoritative and its literary dimension exclusive. "People", in general, were neither expected to engage in the composition of texts nor in their commentary. They were not asked to actively take part in forming and producing these texts, which were considered as holy, sacred and of divine origin. Such supremacy of the religious was not only propagated by elite clerics, but it was deeply felt by everyday folk. The fact that news was put neither into writing nor into printed form points towards an underlying conviction that worldly affairs were unworthy for the practices of writing or printing. In fact, very few people actually had the education or resources necessary to do so. The handling of texts required extended training and education beyond basic literacy. Those who were allowed and able to produce such texts were learned monks and government officials, and neither of these two developed the need for a newspaper.

What sets the newspaper apart as a text in its literary and social dimension is that, from its very outset, it is conceptualized as participatory and inclusive. The newspaper is not only inclusive as a social practice, through reading and discussion, but inclusive in a literary sense and thus in the production process as well. On the one hand, the audience is prominently featured in those contents composed by the editor, because the news aims at being read by as many people as possible, which affects the way language is employed. On the other hand, Tharchin envisioned the readers of the Melong as active partakers of the project, not only as

readers who consume text but also as authors who produce text, and this more or less in disregard of their social status, as we will see in the following chapters.

The TMP carried many characteristics of a printing enterprise in a commercial sense, in that it was aimed at selling as many copies of newspapers and books to as many people as possible. The newspaper presents a written mass medium which catered to a dispersed group of people. For the newspaper maker who aspired to generate profits, the highest authority was not the a divine almighty such as Buddha, but the people, thus turning towards an economy aimed at individual consumers on an equal footing. This also meant targeting as many people as possible and beyond traditional social divides.

Of course, economic aspects were always part of the overall printing equation in Tibet. As Ehrhard has shown, individual printing workshops were initially setup in Gungthang and workers received wages, and not all were monks. Unfortunately, the specificities of print shops during various historical phases presents a desideratum in scholarship. But scholarship so far suggests they were not primarily commercial enterprises. The TMP published for all different kinds of people and institutions. At the TMP, Tharchin published for Chu bzhi sgang drug, the Sikkim government (POS), Tibetan lamas and Christian missionaries. While the Baptist Mission Press, back in 1913, turned down the Sikkimese Maharaja, saying they did not print Buddhist scriptures, Tharchin had no reservations of such kind.

At the same time, it needs to be stressed that the TMP was not exclusively a commercial enterprise, excluding idealistic goals. As Stark noted on the pioneering commercial printers in India, "the foremost pioneers in Indian commercial publishing were not just savvy businessmen. Rather, they were men deeply engaged in the intellectual and literary life of their times who shared its larger cultural, cognitive, and social concerns."¹⁴ In the August 1952-issue, Tharchin explicitly comments on rumors which insinuate the Melong to be financed by all sorts of different powers, the KMT, the Communists, the Tibetan government,

¹⁴ Stark 2007:1-2.

India, or the British. Tharchin denied the involvement of any of the mentioned, but rather stated: "In reality, whatever talk might be going on, until today nobody has given any help, that's for sure."¹⁵ Tharchin clarifies his editorial policy:

By nature I am somebody [who likes] news which are in favor of Tibet or news which benefit Tibet. But if in Tibet something is not good, I have printed that many times in the newspaper, as well. It is the custom system of a newspaper that one needs to print [in a] good [way] on good [things] and [in a] bad [way] on bad [things].¹⁶

Tharchin saw the newspaper as one important feature of "Tibet". At the same time, Tharchin acted at the convergence of intellectual and economic endeavors: In his case, and especially compared to previous Tibetan print shops, economic motivations moved to the forefront.

The idea that neither the Buddha nor another divine force acted as the last authority, but instead the common folk or the people as the individual consumers of a newspaper, certainly clashed with Tibetan forms of social imagination. The following two chapters will address the ways in which Tharchin and his coworkers negotiated this problem. So far, we have stated *that* the newspaper met distinct patterns of private and public communication exchange and commentary. The following will deal with *how* the Melong picked up on these, in order to make itself understood to the readers who were indeed expected to participate in this project.

¹⁵ Melong 20-5-2 (August 1952): [...] *don dam du skad cha 'dra ma 'dra ga re bshad na'ang da bar su gang gis rogs ram byed mkhan med nges brtan/*.

¹⁶ Melong 20-5-2 (August 1952): *bod la dga' ba'i gnas tshul dang phan pa'i gnas tshul rang bzhin gyis yin rung bod du yag po med pa yin na de yang gsar 'gyur du thengs mang po bkod zin/ [...] yag po la yag po ngan pa la ngan pa bkod dgos pa gsar 'gyur gyi lam lugs yin/*.

Part 2: The Content of the Melong

So far, we have looked at the general forms of media used for information exchange in Tibetan language with a focus on print media, and we have then examined the environment in which the Melong was produced. We have learned that the Melong was edited mainly by the cultural intermediary and information broker Babu Tharchin. Different political or missionary institutions contributed to the fuzzy logics of financing the newspaper, which stood in the tradition of merchant publishers, as flourishing in India and particular West Bengal at that time. The newspaper thus imported various aspects which were introduced by its heterogeneous producers. While it sometimes played with its role of bringing the world to Tibet, and sometimes underlined its heterogeneous readership, overall, it targeted a readership of "Tibetans" in "Tibet", as we will see below.

In my master thesis, I have introduced a systematic approach to the content of the Melong, in that I established a framework which allowed to assign all the contents of a sample year (1930-31) into distinct categories. In formulating these categories, I oriented myself along the divisions articulated by Tharchin and I also considered the contents of contemporaneous newspapers for the purpose of historical comparison. On this basis, I have broadly divided the contents of the Melong into the sections (1) news, (2) services, (3) opinions, (4) editorials and (5) advertisements. These were further divided into subsections and if needed into subsubsections. In the section "news", for example, I have distinguished home news, foreign news etc., and in the section "services", I have distinguished market prices, entertainment (riddles, stories, ...) etc.; in "opinions", I have included articles on religion; editorial contents were further distinguished into the imprint and editorial comments; and advertisements into third-party and house advertisement. One of the Melong's most striking features, namely the coverage of modern technological advances and scientific discoveries, was included as

"innovations" in the section "news".¹ Through this systematization, I could show how – contrary to common opinion – the "news" section of the Melong was less concerned with global events and in fact mostly featured news on Kalimpong, its surroundings and Tibet. Even the section "world news" mainly featured news on China and other Asian countries. I was able to demonstrate how virtually all illustrations accompanying the articles presented new technologies or formats (such as maps), thus underlining the Melong's aim to lead Tibetans into a modern world.

This type of analysis had various shortcomings. The division into separate content elements, for example, did not reflect the actual production processes at the TMP. The Melong's contents were composed mainly by one person on one desk and not in separate departments as currently done in modern newsrooms, and thus individual articles in fact frequently transgressed the categories I had artificially established. Furthermore, the quantitative analysis as a whole neglected transboundary processes. In reality, articles can often shift from reporting on foreign news to dwelling on the situation in Tibet, or from advertising a product to giving moral advice. In terms of its format, the Melong combined biblical quotes and Buddhist annals, news and prophecy, crossword puzzles and Tibetan proverbs, or European maps and Tibetan-Buddhist auspicious symbols. Choosing one category over the other exclusively (even if under the premise of consistent reasoning) leads to a distortion of the fuzzy and entangled nature of content production.

In the following, I will therefore shift the focus from describing separate content elements to describing how "foreign" elements were introduced to a Tibetan readership, both concerning the newspaper itself as well as the further ideas transported through it. As we will see, Tharchin and his coworkers took up the foreign newspaper-model not as a full-fledged, completed program, but more as an impulse to be re-embedded within dissimilar

¹ For details on the employed scheme of describing the content range of the Melong, see Sawerthal 2011:102-110 and 144-146.

communicative paradigms. In this way, the Melong firmed up the idea of "Tibet" by distinguishing between "our Tibet" (us) and "the others" (them), often meaning "other nations". By printing and widely distributing the newspaper, the editors gave form to the idea of a national Tibetan community and publicly solidified its imagination. The newspaper was addressed at a very specific *Tibetan* readership, which was envisioned in specific relationships to each other and which was invited to participate in the newspaper project in specific ways. Shakya underlines the significance of the Melong as "a new medium of cultural formation and construction of national identity", and asserts that "Tharchin's chief motive was to contribute to pan-Tibetan unity and the transformation of Tibet."² But these dynamics did not only concern the transformation of Tibet. Importantly, in order for the Tibetans to understand the new product, the Melong picked up on a variety of forms of social interaction and imaginations which were familiar to its readership, which eventually transformed the newspaper as a whole. The following chapters will investigate these transformations at work. Chapter 4 will describe how the new foreign product "newspaper" was introduced to a Tibetan-speaking readership and what kind of imagined Tibetan community was called to participate in which ways. This will be effected by an analysis of the section "editorial comments", which is mainly occupied with the inner workings of an imagined Tibetan newspaper community. Chapter 5 will then focus on the ways in which the conceptualization of the newspaper was established in interaction with and distinction to different foreign contents introduced by the newspaper in the fields of economics, scholarship, world politics and religion.

² Shakya 2004:22.

4 Conceptualizations of a Tibetan Newspaper

What is a newspaper? A definition by Otto Groth from 1930 holds up fairly stable and is often referred to until today. It identifies the four characteristics publicity, periodicity, universality and timeliness as the defining features of a newspaper. Thus, a newspaper is open to everybody, published regularly, and encompasses universal and timely contents. But for what audience is a newspaper published? With what kinds of goals? And through what types of means? Martin sees the newspaper both as "an evolving artifact of a social need to learn and distribute news", and as "spreading news to influence opinion or establish power, as well as to reinforce social values and condone the actions of government."¹ In their famous *Four Theories of the Press* (1956), the sociologists Siebert, Peterson and Schramm presented four types of media systems in which newspapers are formed (authoritarian, libertarian, communist and socially responsible). Utterly outdated today, scholars nevertheless still slave away by repeatedly coming up with new theories on various types of "media systems".² In its liberal and democratic form, the newspaper as practiced in many Western countries was a precursor of and gained momentum during the enlightenment and by the 19th century had developed into a medium which accelerated the evolution of nationalism. Today, many see newspapers as part of a civic press which propagates factuality and acts as checks and balances to those in power, like a "fourth pillar" of the state. On the contrary, in its totalitarian manifestation, a newspaper functions as a messenger of the government and as way to control public opinion. What was this situation like with the Melong? Was it any of the above? Was it different? Was it all of it?

In other words: What can a newspaper be? Tharchin generally followed a liberal model of newspaper making. In his first issue, Tharchin called the newspaper "a door (*sgo mo*) to

¹ Martin 2003:4-6.

² See Nordenstreng 1997, Hallin and Mancini 2012. For the original book see Siebert et al. 1956.

knowing." Lacking a newspaper "is like being a frog in the pond or being blind,"³ he wrote in 1931, or like "being in the dark or being blind" in 1932.⁴ In March 1938, the reading of a newspaper was equated to a blind person receiving new eye balls. This figuratively enlightening aspect of the medium featured just as prominently as its ideal of transmitting knowledge about worldly affairs and the pursuit to report what is happening in this world, here and now. The Melong propagated a concrete, mundane reality and the adherence to facts. In May 1943, relying on false news was said to be like "a blind man leading the blind."⁵ In June 1943, the Melong attacked Tibetans for not reading the newspaper and said: "[Some people] do not know the situation in other countries, needless to say they have no idea about the situation in their own country."⁶

Tharchin strongly believed in a participatory function of the newspaper, concerning both its consumption as well as the composition of its contents. News should be "laid out in front of everybody."⁷ From the first issue onwards, Tharchin regularly requested feedback and news items from his readers, and in the July/August 1933-issue he concretized the type of news he was looking for:

Please, by all means, read this!

[...] If you send [me] news items about what has happened in the places where you live, I will print it in this newspaper. The following types of news are printed in this newspaper: 1) prices of things to buy on the market, 2) about business, 3) about virtues, 4) about religion, 5) news about today's world, 6) about technology, 7) pleasant stories, 8) new verses and poems, 9) about medicine, 10) the situation of the commoners, 11) about shows, songs, dances, sports etc. If, out of the news items [mentioned] in the

³ Melong 6-3-6 (August 1931): *gsar 'gyur med na khron spal dang long ba 'dra'o/*.

⁴ Melong 6-11-5 (November 1932): *gsar 'gyur med na [...] mun pa'am ldong ba mu long lta bu red*.

⁵ Melong 11-10-12 (May 1943): [...] *long bas long khrid gnang ba dang gcig pa red/*. Especially during the war years, the need for reliable news was repeatedly addressed: see Melong 11-6-2 (January 1943), 11-10-12 (May 1943) and 12-5-6 (December 1943).

⁶ Melong 11-11-8&9 (June 1943): [...] *yul gzhan khag tu ji byung sogs phar bzhag/_rang yul du'ang ji byung ma rtogs shing /*.

⁷ See e.g. Melong 4-5-1 (August 1929): *kun gyi spyen lam du zhu chog pa*; or 5-2-8 (July 1930): *kun gyi spyen lam du 'bul zhu chog pa*.

above list, you have news items for print, please send a letter and I will print it for free.
Thank you very much!⁸

These were no rhetorical calls but rather concrete appeals for participation. The addressed people, in turn, were admonished to catch up with the modern world. Thus, the newspaper was described as an "eye which develops a country".⁹ The Melong aimed at connecting Tibet to a world made up of sovereign nation states, within a global framework. In 1932, Tharchin explained how, in large and powerful nations, newspapers were considered indispensable for the functioning of modern societies and nations. The Melong, so far rather unsuccessful, was supposed to simply and humbly "show other nations that there is a newspaper also in Tibetan language."¹⁰ In July 1943, the editor referred to the newspaper as a sign of not having to feel embarrassed in front of other nations on a global scale.¹¹ In this way, the Melong propagated a global framework of nation states and, by doing so, solidified the idea of Tibet as a "Tibetan nation".

In May/June 1945, the newspaper described itself as a tool to unite different segments of society: Like "a binocular" (*rgyang shel*) it allowed people to see each other although far apart; like "a big drum" (*rnga bo che*) it proclaimed what is wholesome and unwholesome; and like "a mirror" (*me long*) it reflected thoughts concerning the public cause, i.e. the newspaper in its role of outlining for of a newly connected public those problems which concern all of society.

⁸ Melong 7-7&8-3 (July/August 1933): *'dir ci nas kyang gzigs/ [...] mkhyen mchog gzhuks pa'i sa gnas phan tshun du ji bab kyi gnas tshul gsar pa gtong gnang mdzad tshes/ gnas shog 'di nang par bskrun zhu mus/ gnas shog 'di nang gsham gsal lta bu'i gsar 'gyur bar bskrun byed pa yin/ 1/khrom du nyo chas kyi skor/ 2 tshong gi skor/ 3 yon tan gyi skor/ 4 chos kyi skor/ 5 deng 'dzam gling gi gsar gnas/ 6 'phrur[1] 'khor lag shis kyi skor/ 7 sgrung snyan po/ 8 tshigs bcad gsar pa/ 9 sman rigs skor/ 10 'bangs ser gyi bde sdug/ 11 ltad mo rised 'jo glu gar rtsal sbyong la sogs pa'i gnas tshul bcas/ gong gsal rim tho gnas tshul nang nas par bskrun bya rgyu'i gnas tshul yod tshes phyag bris gtong gnang thugs rje che zhu rgyur rin med par bskrun zhu chog pa mkhyen mkhyen/* Further appeals to participate in the newspaper can be found in Melong 1-1-1 (October 1925), 1-9-4 (September 1926), 1-10-6 (October 1926), 2-1-supplement (January 1927), 3-8-4 (November 1928), 3-10-3 (January 1929), 4-5-1 (August 1929), 4-12-1 (May 1930), 5-2-8 (July 1930), 6-10-supplement (October 1932), 7-1-8 (January 1933), 7-7&8-3 (July/August 1933), 8-1-1 (February 1935), 8-6-8 (August 1936), 8-7-7 (September 1936), 11-6-12 (January 1943), 12-2-12 (September 1943), 12-9-12 (April 1944), 15-1-1 (November 1946), 17-6-2[4] (March 1949).

⁹ Melong 11-1-1 (August 1942): [...] *don du yul khams yar skyes kyi mig dang mtshungs pa [...]*.

¹⁰ Melong 6-11-5 (November 1932): *bod kyi skad du'ang gsar 'gyur zhig yod pa red ces rgyal khab bzhan du bstan pa'i phyir du'o/*

¹¹ See Melong 11-12-3 (July 1943).

The newspaper was also referred to as "a fetter" (*'ching ba*) binding together the clerus and the laity (*ser skya*) or the leaders and the subordinates (*dpon 'bangs*).¹²

Tharchin or his coworkers, such as Bsod nams tshe dbang, explained the functions of the newspaper in ways similar to those in the West, such as increasing knowledge, promoting factuality and public discourses, or propagating global nationalism. They thus explained the newspaper as an enlightening medium and a vehicle of nationalism. However, they also interweaved the mentioned features into different layers of understanding that were preexistent in a socio-political web and reflected in a literary culture as established in Tibetan language. What is a newspaper or what can it be in such a context? This chapter pursues such questions by going beyond established definitions of newspapers and explicitly addressing Tharchin's conceptualization of the Melong.

Editorial comments are taken as convenient access points for understanding the changing conceptualizations of the newspaper. They are found in almost every second issue, in the form of public letters from the editor to his readers. Editorial comments would feature requests for money and content or apologize for delays, and often they ran under the headline "personal requests" (*sger gi zhu ba, sger gi zhu gsol*) or "apologies" (*bzod du gsol*). Because in the case of the Melong most of the target readers were unfamiliar to the newspaper format, they would also feature longer explanations on reasons for producing this newspaper. Therefore, texts starting with the line "A newspaper is ..." (*gsar 'gyur zhes pa ni*) are particularly revealing.

This chapter analyzes 164 editorial comments, their length ranging from a few lines to three printed pages, in order to shed light on the transformations of "a Tibetan community" and the appropriations of "the newspaper" as propagated by the editors.¹³ Based on the production history described in the previous chapter, three distinct periods may be distinguished: (1) one period from 1925 to 1940, marked by funding of the Scottish Mission; (2) another period

¹² See Melong 13-9-1&8 (May/June 1945).

¹³ A listing of the analyzed text passages can be found in Appendix 3. It includes a number of regular articles which start off as news items but then turn to the question of the newspaper's role in it.

from 1940 to 1951, marked predominantly by British support; and (3) a final period from 1951 to 1963, marked by the Communist takeover in Tibet and the resulting politicization of the Melong. The first part of the chapter analyzes a) the solidification of a bounded, national imagination of Tibet and b) the changing of the inner workings of this addressed community. The second part then turns to the stylistic means and modes used to familiarize the newspaper to its readership. These sections address two different sides of the same coin, namely the conceptualization of the newspaper, including both its participating community and the medium, as articulated to the targeted readership.

4.1 Transformations of an Imagined Community

I have stressed at various points that a newspaper promotes the idea of a bounded socio-cultural entity (here "Tibet"), due to its potential of concurrently reaching out to previously unconnected people, linking them through the material paper and producing a sense of mutual belonging. Anderson has famously demonstrated how newspapers change the conceptions of the makeup of a community away from primarily religious communities to more political communities as manifested in the idea of the modern nation state. The process of exporting this idea of a nation state together with the desire to enter into such a global framework of nation states brought about the solidification of a Tibetan "nation" according to the templates of foreign powers. Imaginations about the social makeup, the political structure and other features of a Tibetan community were certainly not *introduced* through the newspaper, as Shakya writes: "Benedict Anderson sees newspapers as providing 'imagined linkage' for a community. Although such linkage already exists in shared language and established texts, a newspaper presents immediacy and addresses its readers with the present and the here-and-now."¹⁴

¹⁴ Shakya 2004:18.

Such links through "shared language and established texts" lie at the core of how Tharchin and his coworkers addressed their ideal readership in the editorial comments. Usually, when they articulated "all of Tibet", they formulated "all Tibetans, high and low" (e.g. *bod mi mchog dman tshang ma*, 12-7-7; or *bod ljongs skye 'gro mchog dman tshang ma*, 9-9-8), using the formula *mchog dman tshang ma* or one of its variants (instead of *mchog dman* sometimes *drag zhan*, or instead of *tshang ma* sometimes *kun* or *mtha' dag*).¹⁵ By doing so, they made evident their aims of producing the newspaper for every Tibetan. The phrase "all, high and low" is not only the Melong's distinct way of addressing "all Tibetans" but was in fact part of the established socio-political idiom of the Tibetan language. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama in particular, one of Tharchin's most important authoritative source, made use of this phrase in his texts and letters,¹⁶ and sources of administrative nature during earlier times of the Ganden Phodrang government confirm common usage of the rhetoric.¹⁷ When Tharchin picked up on this kind of rhetoric and its connected imaginings, he brought it "into the modern world as he saw it,"¹⁸ as Shakyas formulated it. Resonating with global and modern discourses, the "*tshang ma*" (in "all" Tibetans) became increasingly embedded in the context of the modern nation state, and the Melong as newspaper was seen as a tool to develop this nation.

¹⁵ See e.g. Melong 2-10-4 (*n.a.*), 9-9-8 (March 1938), 12-7-7 (February 1944), 12-9-12 (April 1944), 13-7-7&8 (March 1945), 13-9-1&8 (May/June 1945), 15-1-1 (November 1946), 15-6-7 (April 1947), 16-6&7-1 (April/May 1948), 17-1-1&2 (October 1948).

¹⁶ In the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's testament it is stated: "All, the high and the low, were content, enjoyed happiness and were carefree." (*mchog dman tshang mas dga' bder ci dgar longs spyod bag phebs su tshim pa 'dis [...]*). And also: "As all [of you] know, the clergy, the laity, the high and the low" (*lha sde mi sde mchog dman kun gyi blor rtogs gsal ltar*), (see Melong 15-4&5-1, February/March 1947).

¹⁷ See e.g. a decree of the Fifth Dalai Lama, addressed "in short, to everybody, high, low and middle" (*mdor na mchog dman bar ma mtha' dag la*) (Decree, Fifth Dalai Lama, 1679, in Richardson and Aris 1998:442).

¹⁸ Shakyas 2004:18.

4.1.1 Solidification of a National Tibet

From amongst the many editorial comments which describe the newspaper as a tool to develop Tibet,¹⁹ I quote once again from the first issue:

These days, in India, China and Europe, in big and small nations (*rgyal khab*), everywhere newspapers are printed in one's own language, and therefore news on what is happening every day in different regions (*yul so so*), even if it happens far away, is received in one's own dwelling place. [A newspaper] is of great benefit, as a door to [knowing] news about unpleasant times in different nations (*rgyal khab*), the spread of knowledge, news on [where] epidemics, floods, famine, earthquakes and so on are happening, as well as a door which allows the subjects to tell the rulers their own situation, what is good and what is bad. So far, there is no such newspaper in the language of our snow land (*gangs ljongs*), therefore I thought: if there was one in our own language, wouldn't it cause benefit for our own Tibetan people and pride in the perception of [people speaking] other languages?²⁰

The Tibetan term for "nation", *rgyal khab*, has the literal meaning of "palace of the king". In a figurative sense, it identifies the whole area ruled by a king, i.e. "a country", or alternatively the fact that it is ruled by the king, i.e. "dominion", or again the administrative structures connected to this dominion, i.e. "the state". In the 20th century, as seen in the above example, the term was employed for the modern nation state. In the Melong, we encounter the term in all its meanings mentioned above: *rgyal khab* as the place of a government (e.g. Lhasa), as a geographical country (e.g. Tibet, USA, Italy) and the fact of reigning over this region, or as the related administrative structures. In most instances, the term is employed in a similarly

¹⁹ See e.g. Melong 2-1-1 (January 1927), 6-2-2 (July 1931), 6-11-5 (November 1932), 10-11b-2 (December 1939), 11-1-1 (August 1942), 11-11-12 (July 1943), 12-9-12 (April 1944), 13-1-12 (August/September 1944), 13-9-1&8 (May/June 1945), 15-1-1 (November 1946), 16-1-1 (November 1947), 16-6&7-1 (April/May 1948), 17-6-2[4] (March 1949), 19-10-7b (January 1952), 20-5-2 (August 1952), 24-1-6&7 (January 1957).

²⁰ Melong 1-1-1 (October 1925): *deng dus rgya gar rgya nag phyi gling rgyal khab che chung gang sar rang rang so so'i skad du kha bar ka ka si par du bskrun nas/_yul so sor nyin re bzhin ji dang ji 'byung bzhin pa rnams kyi gnas tshul sa thag ring yang rang rang so so'i bzhugs gnas su gsan thub pa dang / rgyal khab so sor dus bde min gyi gnas tshul dang / tshong khe gun gyi gnas tshul dang /_rig pa shes rab kyi dar tshul dang /_nad rim chu rud mu ge sa g.yo sogs byung ba'i gnas tshul dang /_'bangs kyis rje la rang re'i bde sdug rnaMs snyan bsun du zhu thub pa'i sgo mo bcas phan thogs chen po bsgrub bzhin 'dug lags na/_da thug nged gangs ljongs kyi skad du 'di lta bu'i gsar 'gyur zhig med rkyen/_'di lta bu zhig rang re'i skad du 'byung na/_rang cag bod mi rnams la phan thogs pa'i rgyu dang /_skad rigs mi gcig pa rnams kyi mthong snang du spobs pa skyed pa'i rgyu zhig mi 'byung ngam snyam nas [...].*

ambiguous sense as the English "nation", which may stand for any of the four mentioned meanings.

Just as any other country, "Tibet" at times represented more an abstract idea of all the parts it consisted of rather than concrete administrative practicalities. Modern borders and the related national and international practices of mutual safeguarding were not always a prevalent concept of statehood. In 1924, Charles Bell reported a local border practice between Tibet and Bhutan: It was commonly accepted that all pine forest belonged to Tibet and all lower bamboo forest belonged to Bhutan: "A practical boundary, no doubt, in that it serves the agricultural and general needs of both countries [...]. But it is a boundary not easily recognized by Western people, who look for frontiers along high mountain ranges, which are easily defended and can be delineated on maps."²¹ As also quoted in the introduction, McGranahan has succinctly pointed out: "Pre-modern Tibet was not defined by lines drawn on a map or by the modern logic of seamless unity between territory and politics. Instead, Tibetan national community was determined through a broad set of connections combined with shifting center-periphery relationships of influence and allegiance."²² Accordingly, certain regions in Tibet were seen as subordinate to the central government *by* the central government, but they did not share this perspective themselves. In fact, they followed their own independent modes of governance or allegiances with other political actors. The Melong, in accordance with British policies and the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's efforts to assert Tibet as a modern nation state, increasingly followed the Central Tibetan's views on Tibet.

First Period, 1925 - 1940. In the initial period, the newspaper was introduced as an intrinsic practice of many large and powerful nations in the world, and therefore Tibet should attempt to publish one as well. The call for a Tibetan "nation" was not pronounced in itself. As evident from the above quote of the first issue, the term *rgyal khab* was employed only in

²¹ Bell 1992[1924]:6.

²² McGranahan 2010:40.

relation to foreign countries and not for Tibet. The newspaper's target regions were listed in October 1926 as "Tibet, Sikkim, Bhutan, Ladakh and Khunu",²³ transgressing ideas of a targeted "national Tibet" but targeting those countries and regions with Tibetan-speaking populations. In January 1927, the regions "Tibet, Sikkim, Bhutan and all Tibetan races"²⁴ were mentioned, and in July/August 1933 "India, Nepal, Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan".²⁵ During these early years of production, Tharchin described the newspaper mainly as a tool to "develop a nation", resonating with its function in other nations, but he did not specify any ideas of what the Tibetan nation would look like and rather left both its possible geographic expansion and administrative functioning unspecified.

Second Period, 1940 - 1951. This stance shifted in the second period. Come the 1940s, the newspaper was described as an essential tool of a national government. The newspaper was now conceptualized as part of a "national" Ganden Phodrang government in Lhasa, led by the Dalai Lama (or rather the regents during these years) and supported by British policy. For the first time, the term *rgyal khab* was now used in connection to Tibet. In the enthronement issue of August 1942, *rgyal khab* simply denoted "the (Lhasa) government".²⁶ In August/September 1944 and February/March 1950, it referred to the place, "Lhasa".²⁷ The Tibetan government as an administrative structure again appeared in June 1943 as *bod gzhung rgyal khab*, meaning "the Tibetan government",²⁸ but also in a more ambiguous context as in "the subjects of the Snowland government/nation" (*gangs can rgyal khab gyi rje 'bangs*).²⁹ In previous

²³ Melong 1-10-1b (October 1926): [...] *bod yul 'bras ljongs 'brug yul la dwags dang khu nur* [...].

²⁴ Melong 2-1-supplement (January 1927): [...] *bod 'bras 'brug gsum dang bod rigs kun la* [...].

²⁵ Melong 7-7&8-4 (July/August 1933): [...] *rgya gar/_bal yul/_bod/_'bras 'brug yul ljongs/* [...].

²⁶ See Melong 11-1-1 (August 1942): "The government [gave] the order to publish the newspaper on time." (*rgyal khab nas tshag par dus thog 'bul lam zhu dgos rgyu'i bka' rgya* [...]).

²⁷ See Melong 13-1-12 (August/September 1944): "When I could briefly go to Lhasa" (*rgyal khab tu 'khyug tsam bcar thub pa'i skabs*); and Melong 18-5-7 (February/March 1950): "[Ward Price and Sidney Smith have] the great wish to go to Lhasa." (*rgyal khab tu bcar 'dod chen po*).

²⁸ See Melong 11-11-12 (June 1943): "The great Tibetan government [...] gave [...] generous donations." (*bod gzhung rgyal khab chen po mchog nas [...] mthun rkyen mi dman pa [...] gnang* [...]). See also 13-9-1&8 (May/June 1945): "The great Tibetan government supports and compassionately cares for the Melong." (*bod gzhung rgyal khab chen po mchog nas yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long 'di la skyabs 'jug thugs brtse'i gzigs bskyangs nas*).

²⁹ See Melong 11-11-12 (June 1943).

instances, *rgyal khab* referred to the agency of a specific government in Lhasa, in that officials sent money to support the Melong. In this instance, the "subjects of the *rgyal khab*" could denote either the government in its administrative structure or the more abstract idea of "a nation". Generally, the newspaper was described as a tool for political leaders.³⁰ In 1944, the newspaper was described as functioning as a link between different administrative units, i.e. a tool of the central Tibetan government (*gzhung sa*) which publishes information such as verdicts, law changes, new appointments of officials and a census for the general public (*khrom dmangs mi ser*); and it also informed on economic developments, the weather, taxation rates and natural disasters. Such information was complemented by information sent by provincial leaders (*sa gnas dpon khag*) on whether laws were executed properly, all for the welfare of the subordinates (*chab 'bangs*).³¹ The newspaper was seen as a tool of the government and essential to the workings of the nation state. The issue of May/June 1945 states that the newspaper is as important to a nation as "agriculture for feeding a village".³² Not only the administrative issues but also geographical ideas on what parts were included in the envisioned nation "Tibet" were concretized during this time. The same article (May/June 1945) informs the regions into which the newspaper will spread, including "the 13 Tibetan myriarchies" (*bod khri skor bcu gsum*), Upper Ngari (*stod mgna' ri skor gsum*), Middle Ütsang (*bar dbus gtsang ru bzhi*) and Lower Kham (*smad mdo khams sgang drug*).³³ The "13 myriarchies" refer to lands in Central Tibet the Mongol leader Gushri Khan had bestowed upon the Fifth Dalai Lama in 1642, upon the foundation of the Ganden Phodrang

³⁰ See e.g. Melong 11-11-8&9 (June 1943): "The leaders of all nations, peaceful, violent, big, middle and small, care for the newspaper like for their own eyeballs." ([...] *rgyal khab kyi byed gtso zhi drag che 'bring chung gsum tshang mas gsar 'gyur la rang gi mig 'bras ltar gces 'dzin gnang mus pa* [...]).

³¹ See Melong 12-9-12 (April 1944).

³² Melong 13-9-1&8 (May/June 1945): [...] *so nam grong par ltos dpe bzhin* [...].

³³ Melong 13-9-1&8 (May/June 1945): [...] *gsar 'gyur 'di ko bod chos ldan rgyal khab chen po'i chab 'bangs stod mnga' ris skor gsum/_bar dbus gtsang ru bzhi/_smad mdo khams sgang drug bcas bod khri skor bcu gsum khul du gnas pa'i ser skya drag zhan tshang mar rgya khyab spel thabs* [...].

government.³⁴ The further description of Ngari, Ütsang and Kham can at least be traced to a letter bearing the seal of the Fifth Dalai Lama from 1679.³⁵ Also nowadays, especially in exile circles, these former administrative units are integral to standard explanations of what "Tibet" refers to geographically.³⁶ Significantly, the Melong's use of the *khri skor bcu gsum* and the tripartite of *stod*, *dbus* and *smad* picked up on references of the Ganden Phodrang. In this way, the Melong connected itself to dominant existent communal and national narratives, and amplified them. This amplification in turn solidified the respective concepts on one hand, but further developed them into forms as suitable in a modern newspaper.

Accordingly, the Melong propagated a theocratic, or more precisely "bodhisattvacratic" - to borrow Seyfort Ruegg's term³⁷ - setup of the Tibetan government, with the Dalai Lama holding both religious and political power over Tibet. This conceptual inseparability of politics and religion is expressed in Tibetan as *chos srid zung 'brel*, translated by Seyfort Ruegg as the "conjunction of 'religious law' (dharma) and government."³⁸ In May/June 1945, the Melong formulated "Tibet, the dharma nation" (*bod chos ldan rgyal khab*),³⁹ or in November 1946 "Tibet, the nation endowed with spiritual and temporal [order]" (*bod ljongs chos srid gnyis ldan gyi rgyal khab*).⁴⁰ As early as August/September 1944, a list of issues the newspaper propagated included *rgyal khrims chos khrims*,⁴¹ i.e. "the supreme rule of the Dharma (*chos khrims*) and the mundane rule of the king (*rgyal [po'i] khrims*)".⁴²

³⁴ See e.g. Powers and Templeman 2012:190 or Rahul 1962:265 and 284. Originally, the 13 myriarchies were handed over by the Mongol Kublai Khan to the rule of the Sakya-leaders in the 13th century. For a listing of the thirteen myriarchies, see Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las 2002:346.

³⁵ See DTAB: Letter from the Ganden Phodrang, 1679, addressed to "bye dbrag stod mnga' ris skor gsum, bar dbus gtsang ru bzhi, smad mdo khams sgang drug gi bla dpon ..." (DTAB, 1673_LTWA_891). See also a letter bearing a seal of the Fifth Dalai Lama, 1679, which mentions "skor gsum ru bzhi sgang drug ces bod chen po'i rgyal khams" (in Richardson and Aris 1998:444).

³⁶ See Jabb 2015:41-44.

³⁷ See Seyfort Ruegg 2004:11.

³⁸ Seyfort Ruegg 2004:9.

³⁹ See Melong 13-9-1&8 (May/June 1945).

⁴⁰ See Melong 15-1-1 (November 1946). I rely on Cüppers' translation of *chos srid zung 'brel* as "the relationship between the spiritual and temporal orders" (Cüppers 2004:8).

⁴¹ See Melong 13-1-12 (August/September 1944).

⁴² Seyfort Ruegg 2004:9.

During this time, in November 1946, "Tibetan independence" was articulated for the first time. A comment referred to the fact that wealthy and powerful nations had newspapers and how also small and weaker nations attempted to establish them. Also "independent Tibet, such a famous nation endowed with spiritual and temporal [order]", should have one.⁴³ In March 1949, a newspaper was described as educating "how to hold the independence of our own nation over a long time."⁴⁴ At the verge of India's independence in April 1947, it stated: "Everybody should take to heart the testament of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, as published in the last issue: the only sure reason for becoming a beautiful country in the world is if Tibet developed wealth itself and if it was happy itself, with others admiring it."⁴⁵ Thus, while ideas of a newspaper as a tool for the modern nation state were adopted from imperial powers, these ideas were developed towards the construction of an independent, strong Tibetan nation based on the inseparability of (Buddhist) religion and politics.

Third Period, 1951 - 1963. After the Communist takeover of Tibet in 1951, the Melong developed from propagating certain versions of "Tibet" to the inside into a political tool of defending a nation under threat from the outside. Editorial policy became the defense of Tibet's independence, as articulated in July 1954: "I celebrate the occasion that I serve as before to regain Tibetan independence."⁴⁶ The Melong positioned itself as a tool to contribute to the survival of a "nation", a nation the Melong had been serving and envisioning for the past thirty years. In January 1957, Tharchin sharpened this point: "Finally, when the benefit and significance of a newspaper has started to be understood in Tibet, its freedom is

⁴³ Melong 15-1-1 (November 1946): [...] *rang btsan bod ljongs chos srid gnyis ldan gyi rgyal khab grags can 'di lta ba* [...].

⁴⁴ Melong 17-6-2[4] (March 1949): [...] *rang ljongs rgyal khab rang btsan yun ring gnas thabs* [...].

⁴⁵ Melong 15-6-7 (April 1947): [...] *rgyal dbang bcu gsum pa chen po'i 'da' kha'i zhal chems chen mo snga zla'i gсар shog tu bkod zin pa bzhin kun gyis thugs la de bzhin du bcang nas bod 'di rang legs tshogs yar ldan rang skyid mi smon 'dzam gling na mdzes pa zhig nges par yong rgyu nyag gcig dang*. Note that I read *rang skyid mi smon* as *mi smon rang skyid*, as found in Goldstein et al. 2001:800.

⁴⁶ Melong 22-3-1 (July 1954): [...] *bod rang btsan bskyar du thob slad sngar bzhin zhabs 'degs zhu rgyu'i rten 'brel dga' ston zhu 'o/*.

obstructed and the [Buddhist] teachings are attacked."⁴⁷ In the face of a concrete outside enemy, the nation, the *rgyal khab*, was increasingly termed "the own nation" or "our nation",⁴⁸ using the possessive first person pronoun "our".

After the Dalai Lama's flight to India in March 1959, the Melong took up a more aggressive policy in the conceptualization of the newspaper. As expounded in Chapter 2, guerilla fighters founded the first exile newspapers in 1960. Reflecting the sudden influx of former soldiers who followed the Dalai Lama into exile, the Melong was suddenly framed within a rhetoric of war and a fighting . In December 1962, Tharchin stated that due to his age he could not fight in person, but that he instead took to the pen to "again rebel against the Communists through the newspaper."⁴⁹ In early 1963, the fight against communism was generally explained to be the main function of Tibetan newspapers, five of which had been established by then. "I welcome them! Why? Because these newspapers fight the Communists."⁵⁰ The last comment on how a newspaper is conceptualized (October 1963) said:

The strength of a newspaper is like a soldier. Each newspaper can compete with many hundreds of thousands of soldiers. Previously, there was only this very newspaper fighting the Communists in Tibetan language. Given [the fact that] now, together with four other newspapers, [in total] five newspapers are fighting the Communists, it is sure that soon many hundreds of thousands of Communist soldiers will be eliminated and then [the Communist army] will be completely destroyed.⁵¹

In summary, the newspaper was initially conceptualized as a tool for developing a nation by providing a public communication platform to bridge social and geographical boundaries.

⁴⁷ Melong 24-1-6&7 (January 1957): *bod du gsar 'gyur gyi phan pa dang de'i gnad 'gag mkhyen 'go tshugs mtshams su rang dbang la bar chad dang bstan par dge skyon nye bar [...]*.

⁴⁸ See Melong 17-6-2[4] (March 1949): *rang ljongs rgyal khab* and *rang ljongs chos ldan rgyal khab*; Melong 21-2-3&4 (May 1953): *rang gi rgyal khab*; and Melong 27-7-3 (April 1961): *rang ljongs*.

⁴⁹ Melong 27-12-10 (December 1962): [...] *smyu gu 'khur te gsar shog thog nas bskyar du gung phran la ngo rgol gyi dmag mi rgyab ka med du gyur rkyen/ [...]*.

⁵⁰ Melong 28-4-2 (April/May 1963): [...] *dga' bsu zhu gi yod/ _gang la zhus na gsar 'gyur 'di tsho gung bran tang la ngo rgol byed kyi yod pa red/*.

⁵¹ Melong 28-7-7 (October 1963): *gsar shog gi stobs shugs ni dmag mi dang mtshungs zhig pa red/ _gsar shog re res dmag mi 'bum phrag mang po'i kha gtad gcog thub pa red/ _sngon bod yig thog gung rgol gsar shog 'di las med rung / _da cha gsar shog gzhan dag bzhi bcas gsar shog lngas gong rgul byed bzhin par brten pas ring min gung dmag 'bum phrag mang po bor nas rtsa gtor gtong nges gtan red/*.

Then, it was conceptualized as a tool "of the nation" to facilitate communication between its different administrative units, a nation imagined according to frameworks defined by the Ganden Phodrang government in Lhasa. Finally, it was described as defending this community to the outside as part of the military wing of a nation. In all these cases, the newspaper envisioned the bounded Tibet and propagated a national Tibetan community.

4.1.2 Flattening of Social Hierarchies

The solidification of a Tibetan nation went hand in hand with a transformative process effecting the imagination of a social hierarchy. At the same time that we can observe a constant appeal to a "Tibetan whole", we also see a transformation in the imagination of the inner workings of this Tibetan "whole". The editors attempted different strategies in finding a successful mode of production by negotiating the wishes of its financiers and target readers. The editors furthermore reacted to overarching trends, instigated by both historical events and the movement of people through Kalimpong and Tharchin's own house. Within the described Tibetan "whole", various modes of classifying the addressed "whole" were at work: the newspaper was said to be of benefit to politicians (*chab srid byed gtso*), merchants (*tshong pa*) and subordinates (*mnga' 'bangs*),⁵² similarly differentiated as the religious and lay ruling elites (*gong bla dpon*), merchants (*tshong pa*) and farmers (*so nam pa*).⁵³ Thus, divisions were at work which were based on religious criteria such as the cleric and the laity (*ser skya*), socio-political criteria like the rulers and the ruled (*rje 'bangs* or *dpon 'bangs*), or a mix of different criteria. In the first issue, it is said the newspaper is beneficial to monks, merchants, aristocrats, sick people and fools.⁵⁴

Generally speaking, though, this Tibetan "whole" was conveyed as intrinsically hierarchical, best reflected in the aforementioned repeated address to "all Tibetans" as "all, high and low"

⁵² See Melong 9-9-8 (March 1938).

⁵³ See Melong 16-6&7-supplement (April/May 1948).

⁵⁴ See Melong 1-1-1 (October 1925).

(*mchog dman tshang ma*, *mchog dman kun* or *drag zhan tshang ma*) or as "high, middle and low" (*mchog dman bar*). As discussed, Tharchin picked up on existent social imaginings of Tibetan society as reflected in earlier textual sources.⁵⁵ The hierarchical conceptualization of society reflected hierarchical conceptions found in other fields of life such as cosmology, in conceptualizations of the human body or family relationships.⁵⁶ Tichardson describes this hierarchy as follows: "Society in Tibet was divided strictly into upper and lower classes, nobles and ordinary men, by clearly defined gradation in which everybody knew his proper place."⁵⁷ Such hierarchical imaginings had practical reflections, e.g. in the law codes of the Ganden Phodrang, which according to French divide Tibetan subjects into a high, middle and low class, with the effect that if a person from the lower stratum was killed the penalty fine was significantly lower than for a person of the higher stratum.⁵⁸ Similarly, landownership in central Tibet was organized in hierarchical terms as well. All land was in theory owned by the Dalai Lama as the head of state, in reality, however, it was aristocrats and monasteries who received land grants. In a simplified presentation of this process, these then leased it to peasant families (*khral pa*, actually "tax payer"), who had the right to use the land as long as they paid taxes. The peasants, again, also maintained people who cultivated the land, referred to as "small householders" (*dud chung*, literally "small smoke"). Both the peasants and the small householders were commonly referred to as *mi ser*.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ A letter by the Fifth Dalai Lama, 1661-62, addresses the "lamas and lay men, high, middle and low" (*ser skya mchog dman bar pa*, see DTAB, Document 958_LTWA_170). Another letter of the Fifth Dalai Lama, 1663-64, addresses "the high and the low, [...] who are under [my] authority" (*mnga'i 'og gi [...] drag zhan la*). In the 19th century, 'Ju Mi pham's *lugs kyi bstan bcos* (composed in 1895) gives instructions on how to rule a kingdom and states how "the high and the low" (*mtho dman*) of society will listen if one acts impartially. The wise should be placed into "high positions" (*phang mtho*) and people should give generously to "the low" (*dman la sbyin pa*, see English translation in Hartley 1997:75-78). The Thirteenth Dalai Lama addressed "the people, clerics and laity, high, low and middle" (*skyes bo ser skya drag zhan bar pa*) in his announcement of independence (1913).

⁵⁶ See French 1995:108-115.

⁵⁷ Richardson 1962:15.

⁵⁸ French 1995:114 provides a table presenting the three main sections in detail.

⁵⁹ For details concerning the socio-political hierarchy under the Ganden Phodrang, see e.g. Samuel 1993:115-133, Kapstein 2009[2006]:175-188, Richardson 1984[1962]:15-27, Goldstein 1971a, Rahul 1962, French 1995:46-49 and 108-120, Kolås 2003 or Childs 2003:427.

The Melong uses different terms in order to identify those segment of society which lived in certain degrees of dependency to a "higher" stratum: *mnga' 'bangs*, *chab(s) 'bangs*, *'bangs ser*, *'bangs* or *mi ser*. All these terms specify people who live in certain dependency to a higher-positioned person or persons, and they denoted a "lower" social segment of commoners. *Mgna' 'bangs*, *chab 'bangs* and *'bangs* are often found in contexts touching upon the relationship between the ruler and the ruled, while *'bangs ser* and *mi ser* denote this "lower segment" in contexts disconnected from their relationship to the ruler. *Mnga' 'bangs* and *chab 'bangs* sometimes denotes both "leaders and subjects"⁶⁰ but more often only the ruled, i.e. "the subordinates."⁶¹ *'Bangs* by itself denotes the subordinates, usually describing their relation to the rulers.⁶² *'Bangs ser*, a conflation of *'bangs* and *mi ser*, appears mostly by itself as "subjects",⁶³ once specified as "subjects of the government".⁶⁴ *Mi ser*, then, sometimes carries a sense of belonging, as in "somebody's subject", *rang gi mi ser* ("one's subjects")⁶⁵ and *rang 'og sde 'bangs mi ser* ("subjects under oneself").⁶⁶ However, it is also used for describing a general public (*khrom dmangs mi ser*).⁶⁷ The translation of this term has sparked fierce debate concerning the degree of dependency. As formulated by Samuel, doubtlessly there existed "inherited economic obligations to their estates – or, for that matter that estate owners had duties towards their *mi ser*."⁶⁸ But the propagation of *mi ser* as "serfs" by scholars such as Goldstein still prompts loud rebuttals. Independent of the status of *mi ser*, my focus rather is on the ways in which the Melong gave voice to a "lower" segment of society, summarized under terms as described above. I choose to translate the terms as "subordinates" while giving the original Tibetan in brackets. As we will see, the terminology used for this lower social

⁶⁰ See e.g. Melong 16-6&7-supplement (April/May 1948), and 13-7-7&8 (March 1945).

⁶¹ See e.g. Melong 21-2-3&4 (May 1953), 17-6-2[4] (March 1949), 13-9-1&8 (May/June 1945).

⁶² See e.g. Melong 17-6-2[4] (March 1949), 1-1-1 (October 1925), 15-6-7 (April 1947).

⁶³ See e.g. Melong 8-1-1 (February 1935), 7-7&8-3 (July/August 1933).

⁶⁴ See e.g. Melong 13-9-1&8 (May/June 1945).

⁶⁵ See Melong 20-5-2 (August 1952).

⁶⁶ See Melong 15-6-7 (April 1947).

⁶⁷ See Melong 12-9-12 (April 1944).

⁶⁸ Samuel 1993:117-118.

segment is a key to understanding the changing imaginings of the Tibetan community as manifested in the Melong.

First Period, 1925 - 1940. The first production period is characterized by the endeavor to set up a functioning newspaper business. Breaking with conventions surrounding the Tibetan script, Tharchin inclusively asked "all Tibetans" for their participation. In its first issue, the newspaper was not only described as a door to knowing but also as a door for subordinates (*'bangs*) to recount their difficulties to the leaders (*rje*).⁶⁹ The newspaper was thus positioned as a medium of communicating the issues of a lower segment of society to the higher positioned people. Tharchin took up the pre-formulated hierarchies that were put into practice, but he offered a new voice to the subordinates (*'bangs*). Likewise, in August 1931, the newspaper was defined as a medium for both leaders (*dpon*) and subordinates (*'bangs*) to facilitate knowledge about each other's situation.⁷⁰ In 1933, news on the situation of the subordinates (*'bangs ser*) was even listed as a distinct content element of the newspaper.⁷¹ As mentioned in Chapter 3, Tharchin attempted to explain to his readers modern newspaper economics via examples from the USA and from the Nepali borderlands, i.e. the fact that the more people united to purchase newspaper copies, the cheaper each copy would be for each buyer.⁷²

When people did not pick up on his appeals to contribute either financially or in terms of content, Tharchin increasingly turned to the elite segments of his envisioned readers. In 1937, the newspaper was described as an offering to high lamas (*bla dpon*), aristocrats (*sku drag*), great people (*mi chen*) and scholars (*mkhas pa*).⁷³ Tharchin directly addressed the mentioned elites: "High-positioned, far-sighted lamas who have loyalty for the country, what means are

⁶⁹ See Melong 1-1-1 (October 1925): [...]'*bangs kyis rje la rang re'i bde sdug rnams snyan bsun du zhu thub pa* [...].

⁷⁰ See Melong 6-3-6 (August 1931): *deng 'dzam gling rgyal khab yongs su gsar 'gyur kyis phan pa che zhing gsar 'gyur med par rgyal khab phan tshun gyi bka' mol tshong rigs/_dpon 'bangs bde sdug sogs rtogs dka'*.

⁷¹ See Melong 7-7&8-3 (July/August 1933).

⁷² See Melong 1-7-1 (July 1926) and 1-9-4 (September 1926) for the American case, and Melong 2-2-4 (February 1927) for the case on the Nepali newspaper.

⁷³ See Melong 9-1-1 (May 1937).

there and what is done to help me?"⁷⁴ Different from previous articles, where the subordinates were at least mentioned as one part of the inclusive newspaper project, here is addressed only the elite stratum of a Tibetan community. Around the same time, in March 1938, the newspaper was described as a rosary "which adorns the necks of elites."⁷⁵ In the same issue, the newspaper was described primarily as a medium for policy makers, but other segments of society are also allowed into the picture. A newspaper would assist the work of politicians (*byed gtso*) and thus bring benefit to "business men, the subordinates (*mnga' 'bangs*) and so on, all Tibetans, high and low."⁷⁶

Second Period, 1942 - 1951. In accordance with the intensified propagation of a Tibetan "nation" as explained in the previous section, the newspaper also intensified its policy of addressing elite segments of Tibet and propagated a framework of social hierarchy firmly rooted in the conceptualizations of the Ganden Phodrang. The aforementioned example of April 1944 describes the newspaper as facilitating the communication between different administrative units of the state (the central government and provincial governments) for the welfare of the subordinates (*chab 'bangs*).⁷⁷ In May/June 1945, Tibet was described as a family of leaders (*dpon*) and subordinates (*'bangs*), who stood in a relationship like parents (*pha ma*) and their children (*bu phrug*), built on mutual responsibility and respect. The leaders should not oppress the subordinates, and the subordinates should not revolt against the leaders. Both segments should respect the monks who in turn should pray and work tirelessly for the spread of the dharma.⁷⁸ Thus, the newspaper propagated conservative attitudes towards the functioning of Tibet, with the new aspect that the newspaper should be incorporated into this political sociology.

⁷⁴ Melong 9-1-1 (May 1937): *gong bzhugs bla dpon gzigs rgya can/ /yul gyi lar rgya dgongs pa rnams/ /thabs tshul ci drags gang drags kyis/ [...]*.

⁷⁵ Melong 9-9-1 (March 1938): [...] *che rgu'i mgul pa mdzes [...]*.

⁷⁶ Melong 9-9-8 (March 1938): [...] *tshong rigs/ mnga' 'bangs sogs bod ljongs skye 'gro mchog dman tshang mar [...]*.

⁷⁷ See Melong 12-9-12 (April 1944).

⁷⁸ See Melong 13-9-1&8 (May/June 1945).

At the same time, however, Tharchin also gave a voice to the lower social stratum. In the previous period, he had invited the lower segments to partake in the project. Here, during the 1940s, one can observe a gradual increase in attention given to the cause of the commoners, not only as rhetoric but by actually disclosing the issues of a lower social stratum, and the newspaper in fact communicated these problems to power holders in Lhasa. In March 1945, for example, an article featured the malfunctioning of the postal system, such as that postmen would only take care of the letters of important senders. Letters by general subordinates (*chab 'bangs mi spyi*) would arrive with delay or not at all. The Melong states as its task to be a messenger of the subordinates (*chabs 'bangs*), a mirror which reflects both the thoughts of the government as well as those of the subordinates, i.e. all, high and low (*gzhung 'bangs drag zhan tshang ma*).⁷⁹

In May/June 1945, the Melong published a long list of suggestions for improvements of Tibetan society. These general explanations also offer a rare glimpse into the problems of traders, travelers and the underprivileged in Tibet as well as into new modes of urban life-style. A newspaper could show the government how to lower taxes, establish a strong army, and how to establish schools for teaching mathematics and medicine. Newspapers furthermore could teach how society could take care of beggars and vagabonds and how to establish charitable institutions. It could teach how to protect pack animals and how to build urban infrastructure such as irrigation channels, parks and houses. Particularly graphic is a description of how proper toilets should be constructed instead of grandfathers and grandmothers "defecating and urinating in the middle of the streets like animals."⁸⁰ A newspaper was also considered to feature information on cooking nutritious food or properly doing accountancy. Tharchin's call to action was addressed towards the general public, who

⁷⁹ See Melong 13-7-7&8 (March 1945).

⁸⁰ Melong 13-9-1&8 (May/June 1945): [...] *pho mo so so'i btsog gcin gtong gnas gsang spyod gsar bzo nyams gsos thog ga sa ga la dud 'gro bzhin lam dkyil lam zur khag tu gtong mi chog pa'i phan gnod/*.

was supposed to follow his admonishments, as well as towards the Tibetan authorities, who should work for the benefit of common people and build up a modern nation state.⁸¹

In April 1947, an editorial comment touched upon the sensitive topic of Tibetans fleeing Tibet arriving in Kalimpong and its surroundings:

These days, there are roughly 4,000 Tibetans who roam around in uncontrolled ways⁸² as wanderers in Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Sikkim and so on. All of them have neither food nor work. Even though one cannot see how large their estates and fields were which they owned before, they most probably had them. I do not know the real cause of why they had to come here and be wanderers. In all Tibetan regions, upper and lower parts, there are probably more people similar to them. The leaders (*dpon*) have to give loving kindness to the subordinates (*'bangs*), the subjects (*sde 'bangs mi ser*) who are under them. [They have to be] like parents [to them] and the subordinates [have to give loving kindness] like children [to the leaders]. How great would that be!⁸³

The article admonished leaders to treat "their" subordinates (*rang 'og sde 'bangs mi ser*) well. Tharchin considered it as the duty of the newspaper to bring this criticism in front of the eyes of everybody. In this context, the global spread of the newspaper is mentioned again: the newspaper, so it was said, was not only published in "greater Tibet" (*bod chen po*) but also in China, America, Italy, English Burma, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Ladakh, Sikkim, Bhutan and so on. "Therefore, in my own deluded mind [I think]: I write this not as a secret. Everybody, high and low, can investigate it."⁸⁴ In addition, the article which criticized the malfunctioning of the postal system also stressed the newspaper's function as a public messenger: while people

⁸¹ See Melong 13-9-1&8 (May/June 1945).

⁸² Note that I read "*rob tsam cha*" as a colloquial variant of "*rob chags tsam*," as found in Goldstein et al. 2001:1049.

⁸³ Melong 15-6-7 (April 1947): [...] *deng sang rdor gling_ka sbug_'bras ljongs khul sogs su bod kyi mi rigs yul gyar kho na rob tsam cha bskor mi grangs 4000 tsam nges par yod 'dug pa 'di dag za las gnyis med sha stag_yin 'dug pas sngar 'di rnams la sa khang pha gzhis che chung la ma ltos pa re phal cher la yod gsha' kyang / de dag bzhag nas yul 'khyar yong dgos pa'i don gnad ci yin cha ma rtogs khar 'di dang 'dra ba bod kyi sa cha stod smad kun tu 'di las mang bar yod gsha' la rang 'og sde 'bangs mi ser la dpon pha ma dang/'_bangs bu phrug gi dpe bzhin byams skyongs gang zab re gnang na ci ma rung snyam pa dang /.*

⁸⁴ Melong 15-6-7 (April 1947): *kho bo'i rmong 'char du sbas gsang med par bkod pa la mchog dman kun gyis thugs zhib dang [...].*

had always discussed the problem, nobody "wants to [put] one's own salt into a public soup"⁸⁵ – a popular proverb which means as much as: private persons do not step forward and complain to the authorities. Here, the newspaper's function is to combine private voices into an unspecific public, and by supporting the criticism through public transparency, the editors bypass possible problems that may occur when a private person accuses high officials.

In this second period, the newspaper was positioned as a political tool to govern a nation, explaining the newspapers' practicability of connecting different segments of society: on one hand it could be used to communicate official notices between administrative units of the state, and on the other hand it could be used as a messenger of the socially lower stratum. In both cases, the newspaper's function was mainly negotiated in terms of its usefulness within a more or less uncontested, bounded entity.

Third Period, 1951 - 1963. In the final period, the newspaper's focus shifted to negotiations in face of outside intrusion. When the PLA marched into Eastern Tibet in October 1950 and into Lhasa in October 1951, the newspaper suddenly and briefly propagated a whole new tone. In the issue of June 1951, just after the Seventeen Point Agreement had been signed, the Melong exhibited a more totalitarian understanding of a newspaper by referring to it as "an iron fence" (*lcags ri*) and "an iron hook" (*lcags dkyus*). In this role it should control public opinion in order to prevent "the thoughts of the people be lost in opposing opinions" (*mi dmangs kyi sems gzhan phyogs mi shor ba*).⁸⁶ The newspaper was now suddenly presented as a tool to keep one's own people under control, not through loving kindness and respect such as in the case of parents and children, but by the brute force of fences and hooks.

This totalitarian understanding of the newspaper was not further propagated. What did continue, though, was the focus on the people, the *mi dmangs*. Significantly, earlier terms denoting the subordinate nature of the "common people" – such as *mnga' 'bangs*, *chab 'bangs*,

⁸⁵ Melong 13-7-7&8 (March 1945): [...] *spyi thug la sger tshwa'i dpe bzhin* [...].

⁸⁶ See Melong 19-3-12 (June 1951).

'*bangs ser*, '*bangs* or '*mi ser* – were no longer used.⁸⁷ The term now employed was '*mi dmangs*, a term free of any subordinate implications. Willock and Goldstein have pointed out the neologism in this, which renders the Chinese term *ren min* into Tibetan language. Willock describes how, in the early 1950s, newly formed translation teams organized by the Communists made conscious efforts to avoid the term '*bangs*.⁸⁸ Goldstein attests that it was the Communists who first introduced the term.⁸⁹ I share Willock's skepticism, since, in the case of the Melong, the term '*mi dmangs* can be traced to as early as August 1931.⁹⁰ The respective article deals with KMT activities, and thus it seems likely that – if the term did not exist previously – it was coined by the KMT, possibly in connection to the workings of the MTAC in Nanjing.

In the Melong, during this period, the elites rarely appear in the described readership community. As explained in the editorial comments, the office of the Melong was disappointed with the Tibetan leadership, both the clerics and the aristocrats. It strongly criticized the elite stratum for not caring for the nation and for not keeping up with the rest of the world. In August 1952, Tharchin listed several failures of the Lhasa leadership: disregarding the warnings in the Thirteenth Dalai Lama, deception through parties and games, the blending of leadership and business, lack of responsibility for intellectuals, lack of harmonious unification of different Tibetan clans (*nang tshang*), oppression and violence (*brdab gsig*) towards borderland subjects (*sa mtshams mi ser*), and finally:

Not taking responsibility for the Tibetan newspaper, even though I have encouraged [you to do so] again and again. It was not good to think that the newspaper would be of no good if it was distributed among all the people (*mi dmangs*) and to block it. Even if [you] now know the significance of a newspaper, it is too late, too late.⁹¹

⁸⁷ The last time any of the mentioned terms occurred was in October 1954 (Melong 22-8-15).

⁸⁸ See Willock 2012:173-179.

⁸⁹ See Goldstein 2007:317.

⁹⁰ See Melong 6-3-6 (August 1931).

⁹¹ Melong 20-5-2 (August 1952): [...] *bod yig gsar 'gyur du yang yang lcag bskul zhus par bdag sprod ma byas yag po ma red/_gsar 'gyur mi dmangs la khyab na yag po ma red bsams te bkag mkhan tsho yag po ma red/_da cha gsar 'gyur gyi phan gnod mkhyen rung phyi song phyi song /.*

Already by the year 1953, the newspaper was fully conceptualized as an instrument for the people. In May 1953, Bsod nams tshe dbang wrote about the newspaper as "the people's mouth" (*mi dmangs kyi kha*). It would praise leaders "who act in accordance with governmental thoughts", and it would expose those who only "act in accordance with their personal gains."⁹² Three issues later, in August 1953, the Melong published:

The newspaper is a mirror that reflects the opinions of the people (*mi dmangs*). Acting for the people's cause means one has to observe their opinions and act according to their wishes. This is all the nations' custom, but in Tibet it seems that no responsibility is taken for the people's opinion.⁹³

Thus, the newspaper had become solely a mouthpiece for the people (*mi dmangs*). The latter passage mentions no leaders, aristocrats or high lamas. This point is even strengthened in the next issue of September 1953:

A 'newspaper' is the mirror of the views of the people (*mi dmangs*). The tradition to publish the people's views in a newspaper is a common law in the world. Whoever hinders this is an enemy of the people.⁹⁴

Here, again, a Communist rhetoric is taken up: "an enemy of the people" is a Communist expression that Tharchin might have taken from Tibetan-language Communist newspapers in order to attack those passive Tibetan leaders who do not act in view of the increasing power of the Chinese Communists in Lhasa.

Thus, so far, we have observed a transformation of the Tibetan society imagined in the Melong from (1) initially picking up on the prevalent social structures but trying to include commoners as both financial and editorial contributors, to (2) increasingly turning to an elite stratum in face of the failure of the former, whilst disclosing social issues concerning

⁹² Melong 21-2-3&4 (May 1953): *gsar 'gyur zhes pa 'di 'dzam gling rgyal khab che phra tshang mar mi dmangs kyi kha yin pa ngos len gyis chab 'bangs bde sdug dang / gzhung bsam zhu mi bla dpon rnams la bstod pa dang / rang 'dod can rnams kyi skyon sogs 'don srol yod pa dang /*

⁹³ Melong 21-5-3 (August 1953): *gsar 'gyur zhes pa 'di mi dmangs kyi bsam blo 'char ba'i me long red/ mi dmangs kyi don byed mkhan yin na/ mi dmangs kyi bsam blor bltas nas mi dmangs kyi 'dod bstun byed dgos pa ni rgyal khab tshang ma'i lugs srol red/ 'on kyang bod du mi dmangs kyi bsam 'char la dag sprod med skad/ /*

⁹⁴ Melong 21-6-5 (September 1953): *gsar 'gyur zhes pa ni mi dmangs kyi bsam 'char me long red/ mi dmangs kyi bsam 'char gsar 'gyur du 'god srol 'dzam gling spyi khrims red/ de la bkag thabs byed mkhan mi dmangs kyi dgra bo red/*

commoners. In the face of yet again this relative failure it increasingly turned to (3) taking up oppositional policies and a total embracement of the cause of the "people". First and foremost, this transformation must be seen in the light of both political power shifts and changing financiers on the ground. First, the Scottish Mission required the project to run efficiently in economic terms. Then, the subsequent British funding went hand in hand with an implementation of their policies, which propagated an independent Tibet along the lines of the Ganden Phodrang understanding. Finally, a Communist influence from Tibet fostered the usage of the term *mi dmangs* together with the connected ideology.

I wish to stress that at none of these times Tharchin was actively forced to adopt any of these themes. Just as he would not have had to expose the problems of commoners during the 1940s, likewise, he would not have had to adopt socialist notions of a newspaper for the common people. He deliberately refrained from following up on the metaphors depicting the newspaper as a hook or fence and instead clarified a liberal outlook. It may have been due to overarching historical aspects that presented certain availabilities of imagining a community. Indeed, it was the editor's conscious choice to publish phrases like "The newspaper is the people's mouth" in the Melong. A hierarchically imagined social structure, prevalent in traditional Tibetan communication practice with its exclusive access to writing and print culture, stood in contradiction to the inclusivistic outlook of a newspaper on behalf of merchant publishers – whose pursuit with the newspaper was to cater to a public as large as possible. This did not necessarily prevent the implementation of the prevalent hierarchies, but it at least fostered the ongoing attention given to the "lower segments" of this society. As soon as options opened up, for instance when the Communists exemplified a newspaper "for the people" in Lhasa, the Melong embraced the very same rhetoric. In the end, the newspaper was addressed at and defined as for those people (*mi dmangs*).

4.2 Tibetization of the Newspaper

We have seen above how the newspaper has influenced the imaginations of a Tibetan community, both in its political nature and in its a social setup. In the following, we will investigate the influence of Tibetan-language communication modes on the newspaper. Its readership was not addressed as passive readers but rather asked to actively participate in the newspaper. Especially in its early period the Melong pronounced ideas of a participatory medium. In order to animate participation in its targeted Tibetan readership, the editors consciously and often unconsciously employed different strategies.

Public Letters. On a general level, the style of the editorial comments partially followed established protocols in the field of letter-writing, in resonance with the overall emergence of newspapers out of this literary practice. In Chapters 2 and 3, we have seen that the *yig bskur rnam gzhag* has defined the style of Tibetan letter-writing ever since at least the 18th century. Of course, Tharchin was familiar with the format, since he not only published Bka' drung nor nang's popular *Yig bskur rnam gzhag* but also edited and published his own letter-writing manual. In accordance with such style guides, Tharchin elevated the addressee with honorific or poetic attributes while humbling himself as the sender. In December 1931, for example, Tharchin wrote: "With great respect, I plant a petition in the ears of the wise readers of the newspaper," using the poetic *snyan* instead of the standard term for "ear" (*a mchog*). He finishes the line with "the request of the feeble-minded editor".⁹⁵ Longer addresses are also found, such as: "A heartfelt request from the humble Tibetan newspaper producer Khunu Tharchin, to those knowledgeable ones with flickering eyes, as they enjoy the unprecedented Tibetan newspaper Gsar 'gyur me long."⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Melong 6-5-3 (December 1931): *gsar 'gyur gzigs pa'i mkhyen mchog rnams kyi snyan lam du gus pa chen pos zhu gsol 'debs snying [...] blo dman par dpon gyi snyan zhu.*

⁹⁶ Melong 15-1-1 (November 1946): *sngon med bod yig gsar 'gyur me long la dgyes bzhin spyen ras g.yo ba'i mkhyen ldan rnams la gus chung bod yig gsar 'gyur byed po khu nu mthar phyin nas zhu gsol 'debs snying /.*

The Seven-Syllable Verse Line. Another format of the comments was the seven-syllable verse line, used by Tibetan translators to render Sanskrit *pāda*.⁹⁷ Davonport has described this seven-syllable verse format - often in four lines - as an "excellent mnemonic device".⁹⁸ This type of verse was a favorite of popular culture. Especially in the Melong's earlier production period, many editorial comments requesting money or other resources were composed in this format, which underlines the newspaper's low-threshold accessibility.⁹⁹ Some of the editorial comments in verse format transported auspicious characteristics and displayed transcendental dimensions of writing and printing, beyond many of the features commonly attributed to newspapers, such as factuality and engagement with the here and now. From the fifth volume, June 1930, the cover of each first issue of a new volume featured felicitations to the newspaper and its readers, often in verse form. In the sixth year of publication, the pieces opened with the Sanskrit term "swasti", often stated as an auspicious sign at the beginning of texts. The following text surrounded an illustration depicting the standard iconography of the "six symbols of longevity" (*tshe ring drug*): a man, a tree, a rock, a water, a bird and a deer.¹⁰⁰



Figure 17: The six symbols of longevity (*tshe ring drug*) on the cover of Melong 5-1-1 (June 1930).

⁹⁷ See e.g. Samuel 1996:363 or Evans-Wentz 1978[1935]:278-279.

⁹⁸ Davenport 2000:8. See also Footnote 129 of the present chapter.

⁹⁹ See e.g. Melong 1-7-1 (July 1926), 1-10-1 (October 1926), 5-1-1 (June 1930), 5-9-1 (February 1931), 9-1-1 (May 1937), 9-9-1 (March 1938), 16-5-2&3 (March 1948).

¹⁰⁰ See Beer 1999:95-99 for a detailed explanation of the *tshe ring drug*.

Thus, six years of publishing were equated to Tibetan indigenous symbolism of longevity. In a similar vein, some of the Tibetan New Year issues were adorned with poems and illustrations. In March 1938, for example, an ornate frame of the eight auspicious Buddhist symbols (*bkra shis rtags brgyad*)¹⁰¹ decorated the cover, which also features an opulent poem praising Tibet and its people.



Figure 18: The eight auspicious symbols (*bkra shis dar rgyas*) on the cover frame of Melong 9-9-1 (March 1938).

The use of the popular *tshe ring drug* and the *bkra shis dar rgyas* needs to be understood beyond a mere stylistic move to please readers. In this case, the newspaper carries more than factual contents. Calling on the *tshe ring drug*, printing and distributing their image, put them into practice; the *tshe ring drug* have the actual power to grant the newspaper and its readers longevity. Auspicious symbolism continues also to much later. In July 1954, for example, the cover featured a picture of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, accompanied by verses wishing for Tibet's freedom. The author "celebrates the auspicious occasion of serving [Tibet's freedom]".¹⁰² While such cover pages served to grant the newspaper longevity in the initial

¹⁰¹ See Beer 1999:171-186 for a detailed explanation of the eight auspicious symbols.

¹⁰² Melong 22-3-1 (July 1954): [...] *sngar bzhin zhabs 'degs zhu rgyu'i rten 'brel dga' ston zhu 'o/*.

period, in the later periods similar poems, pictures and ornate frames – in short, the material newspaper – served the wish for Tibet's independence.

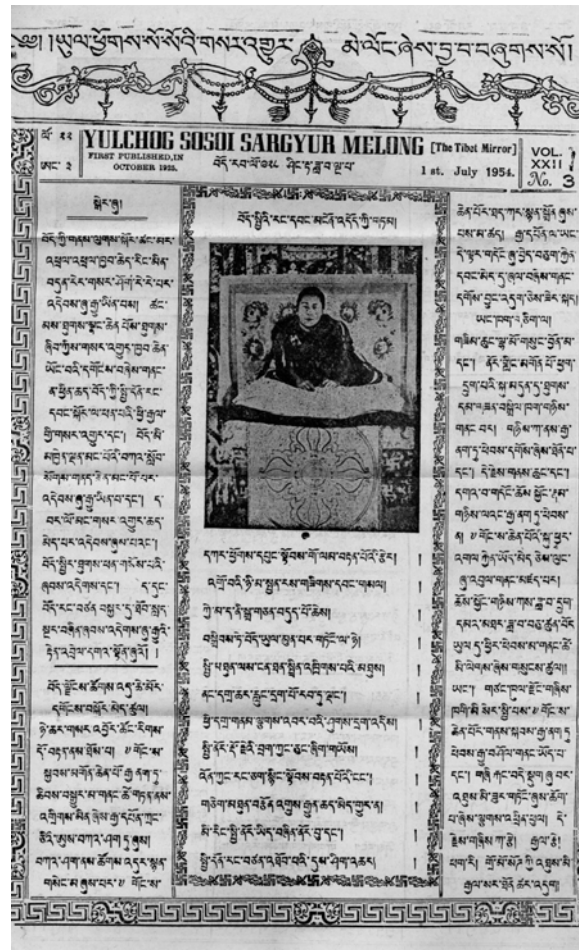


Figure 19: The Fourteenth Dalai Lama on the cover of Melong 22-3-1 (July 1954).

4.2.1 Connecting the Newspaper to Existent Communicative Practices

Both in the case of letters and in some of the auspicious verses, contents were transgressing established protocols, for example by inviting non-scholars and even subordinates to engage in scriptural culture. Just as we find propagations of new practices in the editorial comments, the editor attempted to adhere to existent forms and practices, some of which will be analyzed in the following. Particularly in the early years there were strong efforts to connect the newspaper to existent modes of communication on various levels.

Print Tradition. The cover of the first issue of volume four, April 1930, features an illustration of the lithographic Senefelder press in use at the TMP. The new technology was

then connected to the predominantly *religious* printing tradition. The cover story explained the history of this press and embedded it into a Tibetan-language printing history:

I hope that gradually this kind of printing press will also spread in the Land of Snow, and numberless [copies of] the Kangyur and Tengyur, of treatises on the sciences (*rig gnas*) and more will be printed. May numberless [copies of] the Melong newspaper, be published, which is currently printed on the lithographic press in Kalimpong. May [the newspaper] remain for a long time and achieve great things for the benefit of this and the next life. Good luck!¹⁰³

In this text passage, the Melong was set within the context of printing the most important works in Tibetan literature, the Kangyur and Tengyur. As expounded in Chapter 2, printing in Tibet was often seen as an opportunity to progress soteriologically, to accumulate merit. Furthermore, as already reported in my master thesis, the printing in red ink was considered to accumulate more merit than printing in black,¹⁰⁴ and the Melong employed this practice as well: on the occasion of the Tibetan New Year in 1933, its frame was printed in red ink.¹⁰⁵ As discussed in Chapter 2, books in a Tibetan Mahāyāna context predominantly presented objects of veneration and not necessarily objects for studies.¹⁰⁶ In a similar vein, an advertisement for Charles Bell's *Portrait of the Dalai Lama* presented the book as an object of veneration more than as a vessel of contents, by promoting the meritorious images of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama and other Tibetan dignitaries within the publication – it read: "In this [book] there are many kinds of merit-bringing pictures of the venerable great Dalai Lama and furthermore also some images of Tibetan kings, ministers, monks, laity and people of different Tibetan regions."¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Melong 4-10&11-1 (April 1930): [...] *rim gyis gangs ljongs su'ang 'phrul 'khor 'di 'dra dar khyab kyis bka' bstan rig gnas sogs kyī bstan bcos grangs 'das par bskrun 'byung smon 'dun dang da lta ka sbug rdo par du bskrun pa'i gsar gyur me long 'di yang grangs 'das khyab cing yun ring bar du 'tsho bzhin 'di phyi don 'grub par gyur cig/ bkris*. For the accompanying illustration, see Chapter 3, figure 8.

¹⁰⁴ See e.g. Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1949:74.

¹⁰⁵ See Melong 7-1-1 (July 1933).

¹⁰⁶ See Diemberger 2012 and Sharshon 2016.

¹⁰⁷ Melong 14-12-6 (October 1946): *de'i nang gong sa chen po mchog gi sku par mthong ba don ldan rnam mang gzhan yang bod kyī rgyal blon ser skya mi dmangs dang bod kyī yul ljongs so so'i sku par khag mang dang ldan pa [...]*.

Economic Traditions. The efforts to position the newspaper within the prevalent print tradition lead over also to the economic aspects of this environment. In several cases, Tharchin attempted to explain the value of the Melong to his target readers within economic logics which do not stress the accumulation of knowledge but rather the accumulation of wholesome karma. In the early production period, Tharchin repeatedly likened the Melong to "a small boy" (*bu chung*) which required the attention and care of by the greater Tibetan family. Tibetans should "ransom (*srog bslu*) the little boy." The practice of ransoming animals (also called *tshe thar*) was popular and common all over the Tibetan plateau, since it allowed individuals to accumulate wholesome karma by ransoming animals originally intended for human consumption. I have experienced in Nepal that these days this practice has developed in a way that, for example, birds are caught and put into cages *only* for the purpose of being ransomed.¹⁰⁸ Referring to this practice, the Melong published in January 1927:

Even if this kind of newspaper is still unreliable and has low esteem, [in my defense I have to say that] no one-year-old child is reliable. If [you] knowledgeable people care of this one-year-old by saving its life (*srog bslu*), the belittled one-year-old child will without doubt accomplish great things after a few years and bring benefit to Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan and to the whole Tibetan race.¹⁰⁹

In this way, the newspaper is stylized to a one-year old child, at the mercy of life, that requires care and support. The purchase of the newspaper was thus framed as an act of compassion to accumulate wholesome karma, not as a means to gain knowledge.

Concepts of Governance. When the Melong was used as a means to develop a nation, it sometimes explained modes of modern administrative governance. However, the Melong also referred to standards of good governance that had been prevalent in the Tibetan cultural sphere for centuries. In March 1938, the newspaper was referred to in the following way:

¹⁰⁸ For details on the history and current conceptions of the practice, see Holler 2002.

¹⁰⁹ Melong 2-1-supplement (January 1927): *da lta gs'r 'gy'r 'di bzhin khungs dag med cig snang chung ltar kyang /_lo gcig byis pas khungs dag smras mi shes/_mkhyen mchog rnams nas lo gcig byis'pa'i srog bslu gso skyong mdzad tshe/_lo shas rjes su snang chung lo gcig byis pas b'd 'br's 'brug gsum dang bod rigs kun la don chen sgrub cing thugs phan gso'ba'i rgy'r 'gyur bar gdon mi za/.*

If, just like everywhere else, we could spread [a newspaper] also in our Tibet, politicians could engage the wheel of four activities (*las bzhi 'khor lo*) [...].¹¹⁰

The *las bzhi 'khor lo* refer to a set of four activities which can be seen in two domains. On one side, it carries the notion of "spiritual governance" of the world, i.e. the four powers an accomplished Buddhist tantric yogin must master. On the other side, the *las bzhi 'khor lo* refer to the four skills leaders should have proficiency in when governing a country or kingdom: *zhi* (peace), *rgyas* (growth), *dbang* (power) and *drag* (wrathfulness). In the context of a tantric Buddhist practice, Snellgrove, quotes them as tranquilizing (*zhi*), prospering (*rgyas*), subduing (*dbang*) and destroying (*drag*).¹¹¹ In its more mundane dimension, Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las describes them as soft-tempered supervision (*zhi*), establishing prosperity (*rgyas*), collecting taxes (*dbang*) and waging war (*drag*).¹¹² The usage of these four terms and activities in the administration of the state is documented in sources all through the Ganden Phodrang.¹¹³ Tharchin resorts to the very same concept in the Melong, when, in 1947, he propagated a strong Tibetan nation lead by Buddhist principals:

In accordance with the conditions of the respective regions, [a newspaper] demonstrates which activities of the wheel of four activities are fit to be engaged when politically administering [a nation] with freedom and independence.¹¹⁴

The conflation of traditional concepts and the newspaper as a new product demonstrates the ways in which the newspaper was embedded within contexts perfectly familiar to its informed readers. The newspaper as a national medium, in its global spread, was said to help politicians govern a country, however not in radiacally new ways. The newspaper rather helped to

¹¹⁰ Melong 9-9-8: [...] *rang cag bod du'ang rgya cher dar spel thub zhig byung nachab srid kyi mdzad po mtha' dag du bstun las bzhi 'khor lor 'jug pa la* [...] *sniam*.

¹¹¹ See Snellgrove 1987:238.

¹¹² See Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las 2002:1954.

¹¹³ For an example of the usage in this administrative context, see an early collection of decrees issued by Ganden Phodrang officials (dated to the second half of the 17th century), in which the introductory verses introduce the collection for governing authorities "of the four activities of a great kingdom" (*rgyal khab chen po'i las bzhi yi*, in Cüppers 1997:190).

¹¹⁴ Melong 16-6&7-supplement (April/May 1948): *yul so sor dus bab dang bstun pa'i rang srung rang btsan gyis las bzhi'i 'phrin las las chab srid 'dzin skyong spel gsum gyi blang dor nyams len brjod don* [...].

improve prevalent systems of governance, which themselves come with a long history of conflating the realms of the religious and the political.

Debates. Modes of scholarship were similarly taken up and incorporated into the newspaper program. The newspaper offered a new platform for hosting scholarly debates. Previously, debates were a shared and systematized format of knowledge exchange, both, orally and in written form, respectively in the courtyards of monasteries and through religious texts or letter exchange of individual intellectual figures.¹¹⁵ The issue of April 1944 included a feature on how the newspaper enables intellectuals (*m khas pa*) of society to exchange divergent ideas, concerning both traditional and modern-scientific histories (*sngar gyi rgyal rabs bstan bcos* and *deng dus kyi shes rig btsug lag gsar pa'i lo rgyus*). Through the medium newspaper, scholars could settle debates (*rtsod lan dwo gs gcod*) and everybody thus involved could know about others' thoughts despite the spatial distances: "One can become friends over distance, by newly arranging the views, meditative practices and so on of those custom systems of various religions' regions and schools (*grub mtha'*)."¹¹⁶

Text Composition. Metaphors and figurative speech as found in various forms of Tibetan literature also frequently featured in the descriptions of a newspaper. In March 1945, an article praised the advantages of new means of information exchange such as the post, the telegraph and the telephone in the following way:

Even if [one] dwells far apart, one immediately [... receives messages] from places, thousands of *yojanas* away. [The new media] are like a Lotus [which opens its leaves when touched by] the moon [rays].¹¹⁷

Stylistically, the article equated the sender and addressee of new media with the moon and the lotus. The metaphoric derivation from Sanskrit literature, via the intermediary Tibetan poetic

¹¹⁵ For one influential debate in the recent history, between 'Ju mi pham and Dpa' ris rab gsal (19th century), see e.g. Viehbeck 2014, specifically pages 40-61 on a general introduction to debate as a genre.

¹¹⁶ Melong 12-9-12 (April 1944): [...] *yul so so'i lam lugs/_chos lugs so so'i grub mtha' dang /_de rnams kyi lta sgom sogs gsar bkod kyi thag ring mdza' ba bsgrub pa dang* [...].

¹¹⁷ Melong 13-7-7&8 (March 1945): *dengs shes rig gsar pa dar ba'i dus 'dir 'dzam gling rgyal khab che chung gang sar yig skyel dang glog 'phrin rlung 'phrin las khungs dar shugs che bas thag ring rgyang du gnas kyang phan tshun bsil zer can kyi ku mi ta bzhin dpar tshad stong phrag du ma'i sa nas* [...].

standard *Snyan ngag me long*, becomes particularly evident in the usage of the ancient Sanskrit measure *yojana*. The metaphor describes the almost instantaneous bridging of unbelievable distances, just like the moon rays and the lotus on earth. In order to explain the advantages of such modern media to the readers, the author referred to ancient metaphors to make them understood. In March 1938, for example, the newspaper was poetically described as "a rosary of news stories" (*gsar du 'gyur ba'i gtam gyi phreng*).¹¹⁸ The rosary is a prayer tool in Buddhist daily practice as well as a commonly referenced term in titles of Tibetan literary works. Just as the term "Melong" refers to an existent corpus of Tibetan-language works, the reference to *phreng (ba)* engages the newspaper production in a tradition of text composition Tibetan readers would be familiar with.

Tibetan literature upholds translation practices because its narrative of origin includes the translation of Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures, and thus canonical works customarily exhibit the title both in Sanskrit and Tibetan. In March 1938, Tharchin used the same device in beginning an editorial comment which described the newspaper:

A newspaper. In English it is called "newspaper", in Hindi "samācārpatra", in Tibetan *gsar du 'gyur ba'i gtam tshogs* – not only is it sought by most people of the great impartial nations with discernment and intellect, they also consider it a main thing of vital necessity [...].¹¹⁹

Genres. When Tharchin published calls for participation in the project, he sometimes specified what types of articles he aimed to receive. Thus, he asked for "news" (*gnas tshul*) in general, but also for the specific formats established in Tibetan literature both oral and written.¹²⁰ Commonly requested genres were, for example, *gnas yig* (pilgrimage guides or

¹¹⁸ See Melong 9-9-1 (March 1938).

¹¹⁹ Melong 9-9-8 (March 1938): *gsar 'gyur dbyin skad du ne'u se spe spar/_rgya gar skad du sa ma tsAra pa tra/_bod skad du gsar du 'gyur ba'i gtam tshogs zhes bya ba 'di nyid gzur gnas kyi rgyal khab chen po'i mi rigs rnam dpyod blo dang ldan pa phal mo ches dgos las kyang nying dgos kyi gtso bor byed pas [...]*.

¹²⁰ For lists, see Melong 3-8-4 (November 1928), 3-10-3 (January 1929), 4-5-1 (August 1929), 4-12-1 (May 1930), 5-2-8 (July 1930), 6-3-8 (August 1931), 7-1-8 (January 1933), 8-6-8 (August 1936), 8-7-7 (September 1936), 9-12-4 (May 1938), 15-3-8 (January 1947).

others) as well as *dri lan* (question and answers),¹²¹ which presented didactic dialogues on moral and later also political issues. In one such instances, this term is used in its honorific form (*zhu lan*) to describe a modern interview format.¹²² Very commonly, Tharchin requested *bslab bya*, something like "words of advices" in the broadest sense, shared in monastic settings, books or amongst teachers and students generally. In 1948, historical genres of Tibetan literature were requested, such as *rgyal rabs*, *chos 'byung*, *deb ther* and *lo rgyud*.¹²³ *Ka bshad*, alphabetical poems in which every line starts with the next letter of the Tibetan alphabet,¹²⁴ and *legs bshad* ("good explanations"), to which we will turn in further detail below, are also requested.¹²⁵

The Newspaper Boy. Already encountered in the embedding of the newspaper in the local economics of accumulating moral rather than monetary wealth, the idea of the newspaper as a small boy was expounded in further detail between August 1930 and May 1937. The above-mentioned verses which accompanied the *tshe ring drug*, for example, aspired for a long life of the newspaper boy (*gsar gtam bu chung*), who was described as having now reached his sixth year of life. The boy was further described as young and curious, and his hunger for news never satisfied.¹²⁶ The newspaper boy, almost as if writing a letter, spoke to the readers in first-person in January 1933: "Dear venerable readers, here is the situation of myself, the humble little child. [...]"¹²⁷ On the cover, the "newspaper boy" even smiles at his readers, notably in a frame in red ink.

¹²¹ See e.g. Melong 4-5-1 (August 1929) and Melong 5-2-8 (July 1930).

¹²² *Dri lan* on moral issues are found in Melong 2-7-2 (June 1927) and on political issues in 23-2-11 (January 1955) or 24-2-9&10 (May 1957). For the modern interview with the Tibetan-Chinese KMT worker Liu Manqing, see Melong 5-1-2&3 (June 1930).

¹²³ See Melong 16-6&7-supplement (April/May 1948).

¹²⁴ See e.g. Melong 3-4-1 (July 1928), 8-8-1 (October/November 1936), 8-10-1 (January 1937), 10-5-1 (February 1939), 12-9-12 (April 1944), 24-12-2 (April 1958), 26-12-11 (June/July 1960), 27-12-4 (December 1962).

¹²⁵ See Melong 8-10-2 (January 1937).

¹²⁶ See Melong 5-1-1 (June 1930).

¹²⁷ Melong 7-1-1 (January 1933): *gser snyan rin po cher/_gus chung byis pa bdag gi gnas tshul zhu rgyur/[...]*.



Figure 20: The "newspaper boy" as depicted on the cover of Melong 7-1-1 (January 1933).

In a wild conflation of many of the aspects discussed so far, the newspaper boy explained details of his life in a first-person seven-limb verse form, in the first issue of the ninth volume, in May 1937: about his origins, his parents and how he goes about collecting the news of the world:

Where do I, this chatty witty little boy, come from? I come from Kalimpong. What's my race? I am a Snowland-Tibetan. My father is farsighted and knows the news of all nations. My mother has extensive knowledge and understands the situation of all regions. Myself, because I am talkative and extroverted, I know whatever my parents say. This year, I turned nine, and my physical strength is still very weak. [...]

My father rushes to China and looks at the situation of this region. He looks at how business and profits are going over there. He looks at how good the year's harvest is, and whether there are wars or disquietudes. My mother rushes to India and looks at the situation in this region. How high is the profit of the business people? Is this year's harvest good or bad? She looks at whether there is war and the like or epidemics. My relative rushes to Europe, and he looks at the situation of this region. He watches the

amazing modern businessmen and watches how knowledge and wisdom increase there, and he checks whether there is a war or civil war.

When my parents return, they tell me all about the news they have seen. Then, I also put on clothes and rush to my own home country, Tibet. I present everything I have heard without any omission to the chief lamas, aristocrats, great people and scholars. My friends are of the race of newspapers. However, the ones of other nations have greater bodies and physical strength, and their clothes and garments are more handsome than mine.

Myself, the little boy Sargyur Melong, I cannot stand on my feet and am about to totter. My physical strength is so weak that it is as if I am about to fall, but, whatever my parents say, I report the messages, be they good or bad, with accuracy. High-positioned and farsighted chief lamas, who have loyalty for the country, if you can assist me by any means, [please do so]. I am not eloquent, but gradually, after some years, I will grow stronger and I think then I can surely be of great service.¹²⁸

Here, the newspaper is stylized into a little messenger boy, part of a bigger network of friends and family which extends all over the globe in the business of information exchange. The boy is Tibetan by ethnicity and delivers this service to his "own home country", where he reports all the news to the elites. Compared to his friends, i.e. the other newspapers of this world, he is weak and pathetic, and therefore he requests support from the elite segment of Tibet.

In this creative move, Tharchin embedded global understandings and forms of the newspaper into a local web of forms and meanings. New forms of knowledge exchange (the newspaper) were interwoven with local ambitions (for example, accumulating wholesome karma), and set in a mnemonic format. It has already been shown in general how the newspaper referenced

¹²⁸ Melong 9-1-1 (May 1937): /kha bde blo gsal bu chung nga / /'ong ba bka' blon spungs nas 'ongs/ /rigs ni gangs can bod kyi rigs/ /pha ni mthong rgya che ba ste/ /rgyal khab kun gyi gnas tshul shes/ /ma ni shes rgya che ba ste/ /yul phyogs kun gyi bde sdug shes/ /nga ni kha bde khog gsal bas/ /pha ma gnyis kas gang lab shes/ /da lo lo ngo dgu la bslebs/ /da dung gzugs stobs shin tu zhan/ /nged kyi pha ma'i khyim nang du / /las ka mi nyung las ka mang / /lo gcig zla ba bcu gnyis la/ /cung zad tsam yang sdod long med/ /pha ni rgya nag yul du rgyug/ yul phyogs de yi bde sdug blta/ /tshong dang khe spogs gang che blta/ /da lo ston thog lo bzang blta/ /dmag 'khrug nad tsha yod med blta/ /ma ni rgya gar yul du rgyug/ /yul phyogs de yi bde sdug dang / /tshong rigs khe sang gang che dang / /da lo ston thog legs nyes dang / /dmag sogs nad rims yod med blta/ /spun ni yo rub yul du rgyug/ /pha ma gnyis po tshur blebs nas/ /gnas tshul gang mthong nga la bshad/ /de nas nga yang gos gyon nas/ /rang gi pha yul bod du rgyugs/ /bla dpon sku drag mi chen dang / /mkhas pa rnams kyi sku mdun du/ /thos tshang chad lhag med par zhus/ /nga yi grogs po gsar 'gyur rigs/ /rgyal khab gghan na yod pa rnams/ /gzugs dang lus stobs nga las che/ /gos dang gyon pa nga las rdzig /.

prevalent forms and practices concerning print culture, in terms of economy, knowledge exchange or text composition, be it in the form of metaphors, titles or verse. In this way, the editors, even though engaging with distinctly foreign forms and content, managed to embed these into familiar local practices. To further investigate this crucial point, the last part of this chapter will demonstrate how the newspaper as a whole was re-interpreted through the form of an indigenous genre, namely the *legs bshad*.

4.2.2 A Case in Point: The *legs bshad*

Legs bshad translates into "good explanation" or "elegant saying" and is a standardized four-line verse form in seven syllables. Its definition commonly includes giving advice on "which wholesome deeds should be taken up and which unwholesome deeds should be discarded" (*dge sdig blang mdor*). The *legs bshad* derives from the Sanskrit "subhāṣita" model, presenting, in the words of Davenport, "a profound, down-to-earth, and practical guide to the art of living as a wise and good human being [...]" in political as well as religious terms. *Legs bshad* usually consist of an example (*dpe*) together with its meaning (*don*), being subordinate to the broader and thus blurry genre of "words of advice" (*bslab bya*). Davenport explains: "Its popularity is due not only to its subject matter, but also to its four-line heptasyllabic verse form, which is an excellent mnemonic device. In a time when most people were illiterate and books were rare, texts such as this became popular through their memorization and oral transmission, story-telling being an important leisure activity of ordinary people."¹²⁹ Such advice was added to increase comprehensibility of the text. Again, it was also added in other to increase respect towards the text. Davenport concludes: "When someone was judged to have expressed themselves eloquently, it was common in Tibet for it to be said that they must have studied the Sakya Legshe."

¹²⁹ Davenport 2000:8.

Instances of *legs bshad* in the Melong can be seen amongst the many seven-limbed verses which permeate almost all content sections. Even prior to the Melong's specific reference to the *legs bshad*, it was already positioned within a moralistic framework. In October 1926, for example, the cover featured the image of a double-face: When looked at correctly, it presented a smiling face, when turned upside down, a frowning one. The accompanying text said:

The smiling face on the good (*dkar*) side signifies reading the Tibetan newspaper.

The angry face on the bad (*nag*) side signifies not looking at the Mirror newspaper.¹³⁰

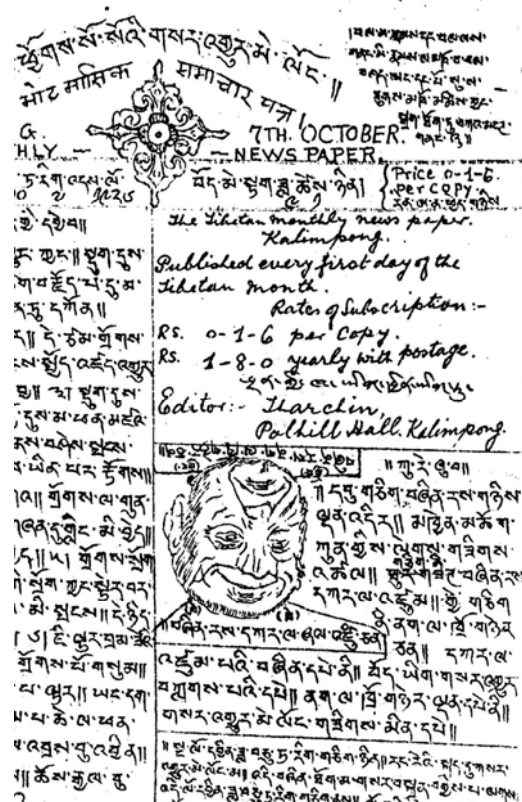


Figure 21: The double-face on the cover of Melong 1-10-1 (October 1926).

The Tibetans terms here for "good" and "bad" literally mean "white" and "black", carrying moral connotations of good/white versus bad/black deeds. Reading the newspaper was explained as a "good" deed and a sign of good conduct, employing the full range of Buddhist rhetorics and referring to karmic dynamics. This moral outlook continues being further

¹³⁰ Melong 1-10-1 (October 1926): [...] *dkar la 'dzum pa'i bzhin dpe ni/_bod yig gsar 'gyur bklags pa'i dpe/_nag la khro gnyer ldan dpe ni/_gsar 'gyur me long gzig min dpe/.*

propagated in time, which is illustrated through the application of *legs bshad*. Tharchin requested his readers to send him *legs bshad* in January 1937 and again in April 1938.¹³¹ In March 1938, Tharchin likened the production of the newspaper to the formulation of a *legs bshad* by stating: "I take up the responsibility [for newspaper production] with a good attitude [just like] the way a learned master is satisfied with formulating *legs bshad*."¹³² In the issue of August/September 1944, the newspaper was described as also including reports on which good deeds should be taken up and which bad deeds should be given up (*dge sdig blang dor*), i.e. the factual definition of *legs bshad*.¹³³ Finally, in November 1947, the Melong described the newspaper to be a *legs bshad*:

Because [through the newspaper] one can logically infer what is good and what is bad, what should be taken up and what should be given up, for example concerning the political administration, [the newspaper's] function clearly is to be an indispensable *legs bshad* for people of great, mediocre and small capacity.¹³⁴

Thus, the newspaper reflects the happiness and suffering of the different regions in the whole world. Those with intellect and reasoning can logically infer from the newspaper what is good and bad. The reference of the newspaper to the *legs bshad* genre occurred with increasing embedment in Buddhist rhetoric.

In the first issue ever printed on the TMP type press in March 1948, an elegant poem in seven- and nine-limbed verses described the ways in which a newspaper-*legs bshad* would speak to the different needs of people in Tibetan society. The whole poem is elegantly set within a Buddhist worldview and plays on various fundamental tenets of Tibetan Buddhist philosophy and cosmology:

Whatever aspect of view, perception or sight occur
depends on the karmic fruits of each and every being.

¹³¹ See Melong 8-10-2 (January 1937) and 9-10-12 (April 1938).

¹³² Melong 9-9-8 (March 1938): [...] *mkhas dbang legs bshad skyes kyis tshims pa'i ngang tshul bzang po bdag gir bzhes te* [...].

¹³³ See Melong 13-1-12 (August/September 1944).

¹³⁴ Melong 16-1-1 (November 1947): [...] *de'i don gsal legs nyes blang dor la rjes su dpag pas chab srid 'dzin skyong spel 3 gyis mtshon pas skyes bu che 'bring chung 3 la med du mi rung ba'i legs bshad cig yin cing /*.

If you put, for example, the entity "water" in front of the eyes of hungry ghosts, hell beings, gods, humans and so on, then [these different sentient beings], depending on their fruits of karma, perceive four [different] entities, even though water is only one. Likewise, there are many ways to see this world (*jig rten*). Thus, [in the] center of this world (*gling*) which appears as spherical, there are unlimited, diverse languages [in different] regions. The society in each of these [regions however] should not be encouraged to be seen as one. The *legs bshad* is called "mirror of news", and its reflection fully illuminates even the places where neither sun nor moon shine. This *legs bshad* should be embraced by all means.¹³⁵

First of all, on a general level, the author refers to four of the six realms conceptualized in Tibetan Buddhist cosmology. Depending on their accumulated karma, sentient beings are born either as a god, a semi-god, a human being, an animal, a hungry ghost or a hell being. Hungry ghosts perceive water as blood and puss, and hell beings perceive it as molten metal. Gods see water as nectar, while humans see it as water. Thus, "water" is one and the same entity, but it is experienced differently according to the laws of karma. Similarly, on our planet there are different kinds of people, languages, beings and individual perspectives, and it is the Melong which brings them all together and caters to their different kinds of needs. In the form of a *legs bshad*, it gives advice on what is wholesome and unwholesome and what relates to these needs. Then, the longings of different people are described at length. This enumeration of various social categories does not pick up on any specific list found in a

¹³⁵ Melong 16-5-2&3 (March 1948): *sems can so so'i las kyi 'bras bu las/ blta snang mthong phyogs ji snyed cig 'byung ste/_yi dwags dmyal ba lha mi la sogs pa'i/ mig gi mdun gnas chu yi ngo bo bzhin/ gal te chu de'i ngo bo gcig yin mod/_'on te rang rang las kyi 'bras bu las/ mthong byed ngo bo bzhi ru snang ba bzhin/_jig rten 'di yang sna tshogs mthong bar gyur/_de phyir gling 'di zlum bur snang ba'i dbus/_yul gru skad rigs mi gcig mtha' yas shing /_de dag so so'i yul mi'i bkod pa ni/_gcig tu brjod pa'i spobs pa ma mchis so/_gsar 'gyur me long zhes bya'i legs bshad kyis/_nyi zlas snang ba min pa'i yul du yang /_de yi gzugs [brnyan] kyis yongs su gsal bas na/_legs bshad 'di nyid ci nas gzung bar 'os/. I read gzugs as gzugs brnyan.*

specific type of work, but it still resonates with the general literary characters well-known through Tibetan and Sanskrit literary works, both orally and in writing.

Those who aim to achieve peace desire mainly the fame of [following] religion.

The king desires the fame of command, the queen desires adornments and youth.

The ministers desire good report, the commoners mainly desire control [of their] happiness.

The young desire the fame of beauty, the desirous desire prostitutes.

The householders desire the fame of wealth, the excellent ones desire *legs bshad*.

The sick desire the fame of doctors, the heroes desire battles.

The children desire games, the wise ones desire study.

The actors desire the fame of stories, the merchants desire cheap trade.

The barren woman desires a child, those who hope for nourishment desire delicious food.

The strong ones desire arts like archery, the diligent desire learning.

Those in combat desire arms, the farmers desire rainfall.

The old ones desire retreat, and all sentient beings desire happiness.¹³⁶

The poem then addresses the readers in terms of offering help to handle this "burden" of covering so many different needs:

Therefore, I took up this burden

and ever since twenty-three years have passed.

Still, for everyone's benefit,

I have cast away my wealth and established this very [newspaper].

If there are sentient beings who desire happiness and benefit,

just like the beams support and assist the pillar,

[please] help by putting one on the other.

not for one's own benefit but for the benefit of others.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Melong 16-5-2&3 (March 1948): *zhi bde thob par 'dod la chos kyi grags pa gtso bor 'dod/_rgyal po la ni srid kyi grags pa btsun mor rgyan dang lang tsho 'dod/_blon por ming tog chabs 'bangs rnams la bde skyid mnga' thang gtso bor 'dod/_gzhon nu la ni mdzes ma'i grags pa 'dod can la ni smad 'tshong 'dod/_khyim bdag la ni nor gyi grags pa dam pa la ni legs bshad 'dod/_nad pa rnams la 'tsho byed grags pa dpa' bo la ni 'thab 'dzings 'dod/_byis pa rnams la rtsed 'jo dang ni shes rab can la gtsug lag 'dod/_zlos gar mkhan la gtam rgyus grags pa don mthun la ni tshong khe 'dod/_mo gsham la ni byis pa dang ni lto 'dun can la zas zhim 'dod/_stobs ldan la ni sgyu rtsal dang ni brtson 'grus can la thos pa 'dod/_g.yul rgol la ni go mtshon dang ni zhing pa rnams la char chu 'dod/_rgan gon la ni dben pa dang ni yid can thams cad bde skyid 'dod/.*

¹³⁷ Melong 16-5-2&3 (March 1948): *de phyir kho bos 'di nyid 'khur blangs nas/_da bar mi lo nyer gsum tsam song shing/_da dung kun la phan pa'i ched du ni/_rang gi nor rdzas gtang ste 'di nyid gtsug/_phan bde 'dod pa'i*

As usual, the readers, i.e. the Tibetan people, are an essential part of the newspaper, and Tharchin appeals to the Buddhist virtue of acting for the benefit of others. Then, he turns to the topic of style:

If [the newspaper] is entangled in verse form,
the scholars are happy but the fools are mad.
If it is composed in colloquial language,
the scholars will be mad but the fools will love it.
Therefore, in order for the fools to like it,
I've made such kinds of verses.
The combination of all these completely clear words
Is a glorious treasure of letters which [transports] excellent meaning,
a well-done form which spreads happiness and love to the eyes and ears of the people.
Arisen from this, this is the amazing Mirror of News.¹³⁸

By employing the popular *legs bshad* format, Tharchin and his workers succeed in embedding the newspaper into various levels of Tibetan etiquettes, taking up a Tibetan Buddhist cosmology, propagating a Tibetan social order, referencing forms of Tibetan literature and bridging scholarship with the low-threshold accessibility to newspaper. *Legs bshad* was accepted as a popular genre both by the educated elite as well as the often illiterate public. Tharchin specified that he does not wish to write in elaborate language, but he wants everybody to understand the newspaper. We have observed how, over time, the wishes and needs of commoners become more pronounced, and also in this poem the same line is taken. Generally, from beginning to end of the Melong's publishing, different aspects of addressing the lower segments of society were pronounced, for example by incorporating everyday religious practices, such as *srog bslu* or the veneration of scriptural products, employing popular sayings or addressing the problems of commoners. The Melong also picked up on the

yid can mchis gyur na/ ka ba la ni gdung mas grogs phan bzhin/ gcig steng gnyis kyi phan grogs dag mdzad phyin/ ngos rang ma yin gzhan la phan par gyur/.

¹³⁸ Melong 16-5-2&3 (March 1948): *snyan tshigs dag gis bcings gyur na/ mkhas rnams dgyes kyang blun rnams khro/ grong tshig tu ni brjod na ni/ blun rnams dga' yang mkhas rnams khro/ de phyir blun rnams dga' ba'i ched/ kho bos tshigs bcad 'di nyid byas/ rnam par bkra ba'i ming tshig sbyor ba kun/ don bzang shis pa'i dpal gter ya [I read: yi] ge'i 'brus skye bo'i mig rnar dga' bde spel ba'i gzugs/ legs byas kyis 'dren gsar 'gyur me long mtshar/.*

usage of the term *mi dmangs*, since it resonated with the outlook of the newspaper's producers. Such attempts on behalf of Tharchin to gain as many subscribers as possible through the means of simple language and other modes of interaction familiar to Tibetans must be seen in the light of his position in Kalimpong as an information broker and merchant publisher with the aim to sell to as many people as possible. Also the seven-limbed verse so often employed in editorial comments comes with little surprise, since many issues were read out aloud to the illiterate. Such a format amplified the contents and their impact and thus took effect beyond any scriptural fixity.

Thus, by propagating common practices set amidst the framework of doing wholesome deeds, i.e. the accumulation of wholesome karma, the Melong attempted to place itself within common spiritual culture; and by employing the stylistic means of *snyan ngag* literature, the Melong attempted to enter learned circles and offer a platform to communicate philosophical debates. However, more importantly, it also attempted to gain respect and authority of the general public of commoners. In the form of a *legs bshad*, it had the authority to speak but was still understood by the common folk, operating at the verge of the written medium and crossing over to orality. Such a quest for a form of mass literature affected the newspaper. Editors took up ideas imported from a dominant West and incorporated a modern national framework and related public practices. However, in their understanding, the newspaper had become a product, which in many aspects did not only explain itself as propagating facts, but it had also become a device to demonstrate what is morally wholesome and unwholesome. Thus, taking into consideration the happenings in the whole world, Tharchin stylized the news from all over the globe into news which assisted in leading a morally sound life.

5 What's New? Embedding Foreign Concepts into Familiar Frameworks

The previous chapter discussed how Tharchin and his coworkers articulated the potential of a newspaper to their readers. The newspaper was introduced as a foreign product but conceptualized along familiar communication practices. Its conceptualization postulated a group of participants increasingly equated with a Tibetan nation. Within this group, may be observed changes in the imaginations of its social makeup. The following chapter leaves behind articulated conceptualization of the newspaper and turns instead to an analysis of the contents of imported discourses, to understand the newspaper as a vessel of cultural exchange. The Melong introduced to a Tibetan audience discourses prevalent in Western lifestyle and scholarship. In parallel to historical developments of newspapers, the Melong made public aspects of life whose interpretations so far had concerned an elite minority. Concerning the implementation of mass media, Böning states: "To [the great majority of people], political, economic or military happenings must have seemed like natural phenomena, emanating from strange, unknown powers, incalculable, inscrutable, and without the possibility of taking influence. All they felt were the consequences which affected their everyday-life."¹ Thus, newspapers fostered an increasing relatedness to the mundane world. Some contents of the Melong, such as drawings of airplanes, world maps, or portraits of world leaders, may seem surprising at first glance, and others even out of place, such as images of Jesus Christ. However, a more complex picture is revealed by probing into some of the related discourses. For example, when the Melong reports on the Second World War the authors delve into the topic of karma; when Christianity is presented, they focus on compassion; and when a car is advertised, they advise on how to lead a morally sound life. In this chapter, we will look into forms of appropriations of foreign contents in the fields of economy, scholarship, world politics and religion. These topics cover the main categories established in my MA thesis, and present aspects of life placed in front of a public through the newspaper.

¹ Böning 2008:287-288, also quoted in Sawerthal 2011:27, original in German.

5.1 Economics: Buying Wholesome Karma

It has been extensively demonstrated in Chapter 3 how, especially in the beginning years, Tharchin attempted to make the TMP and the Melong into a profitable business. This included advertisements as one of the financial tools. These advertisements are crucial in understanding Tibet's entry to a global market, with its stylistic modes of commercialism and exaggeration. Unlike information, advertisements aim at producing action in the form of a product purchase. They have to be convincing and comprehensible to the readers, otherwise there would be no point in printing them. For this reason, the adaptation mechanisms previously described are particularly potent in the case of advertisements.

The Melong did not fully differentiate between commissioned and uncommissioned content. Thus, advertisements were often admixed with editorial explanations, thereby producing media content not labelled clearly as either advertisement or editorial content. Promoted products were mainly commodities of modern life, such as cars, flashlights, candles, beauty products or watches. Despite the fact that advertising never figured prominently in the Melong's budget, advertisements were regularly published with a total of 126 illustrated advertisements. Their distribution over time can be seen in figure 9 in Chapter 3. The first appeared in February 1926 in the form of an advertisement of beauty products; other early items advertised a gramophone and a camera. There is a remarkable drop in numbers during the British funding period, and advertisements appeared regularly but infrequently during the 1950s. The following section will feature an analysis of 48 selected advertisements, consisting of an illustration and accompanying text, which blur the lines between editorial and commercial content.²

² The advertisements are found in Melong 1-2-1 (February 1926), 1-4-1 (April 1926), 1-6-1 (June 1926), 1-12-1 (December 1926), 2-1-3 (January 1927), 2-5-1 (May 2, 1927), 2-6-1 (May 31, 1926), 2-8-3 (July 1926), 4-6-4 (September 1929), 4-10&11-8 (April 1930), 5-2-4 (July 1930), 5-2-8 (July 1930), 5-4-4 (September 1930), 6-3-8 (August 1931), 6-4-8 (November 1931), 6-5-8 (December 1931), 6-7-8 (May 1932), 6-10-8 (October 1932), 6-11-8 (November 1932), 6-12-8 (December 1932), 7-3-8 (March 1933), 9-6-8 (October 1937), 10-5-8 (February 1939), 10-7-8 (April/May 1939), 10-10-8 (July 1939), 10-11a-8 (August 1939), 10-11b-4 (December 1939), 10-12-8 (February 1940), 12-5-3 (December 1943), 12-6-8 (January 1944), 13-11&12-20 (August/September 1945),

Global brands. Kalimpong was a trading hub which brought previously unknown modern commodities to Tibet.³ In this context, the Melong catered to an audience of business people and offered a platform to spread information on the availability of such commodities for Tibetans. With this step, the Melong effectively connected Tibet to the global market. Thus, an advertisement for an HMV gramophone, for example, which people read in London, could now also be found in the Melong.⁴

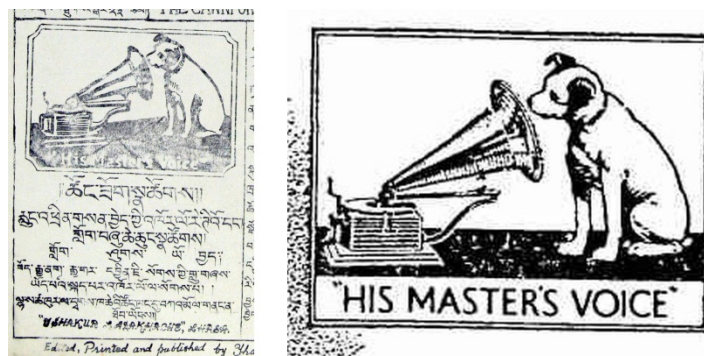


Figure 22: HMV advertisement in Melong 16-3-8 (January 1948) and in the Times, February 11, 1937.

Furthermore, in 1953, Phillips products were promoted as "world famous" (*'dzam gling yongs grags*),⁵ or, in January 1948, a radio was promoted as playing "the different languages of the world" (*'dzam gling skad rigs mi gcig pa*).⁶ With this were also transported modern values, such as efficiency, for example, in the case of "the amazing fountain pen" (*smyu gu ya mtshan can*) which "can write innumerable syllables in five minutes;"⁷ or advertisements for watches of Omega and Tissot, which start off with "Time is very precious."⁸ Space became less of an issue, due to the bridging of previously unbelievable distances by new media. A radio advertisement of February 1939 asked: "How great would it be to sit in your own living room and hear the whole world's sounding stories, market prices or news, wireless and through the

16-3-8 (January 1948), 16-4-8 (February 1948), 16-4-9, 16-6&7-8 (April/May 1948), 16-8-8 (May 1948), 16-9-8 (June 1948), 16-10-8 (July 1948), 16-11-12 (August 1948), 21-1-6 (April 1952), 21-5-8 (August 1952), 21-6-6 (September 1952), 21-7-11 (October 1952), 24-1-9 (January 1957), 24-4-6 (August 1957), 24-5-8 (September 1957) and 24-7&8-10 (November/December 1957).

³ For an analysis on changing economic dynamics and advertized goods in Kalimpong see Harris 2017.

⁴ See Melong 16-3-8 (January 1948) or 16-4-8 (February 1948).

⁵ Melong 21-5-8 (August 1953) and 21-6-6 (September 1953).

⁶ Melong 16-3-8 (January 1948).

⁷ Melong 5-4-4 (September 1930): [...] *skar ma lnga'i yun la yig 'bru grangs mang 'bri thub pa 'di* [...].

⁸ Melong 12-5-3 (December 1943) and 12-6-8 (January 1944): *dus tshod ni rin can yin no/*; and 13-11&12-20 (December 1943 and August/September 1945): *dus ni shin tu rin can yin/*.

air?"⁹ Further, the benefits of modern transportation were explained, such as that, in a car, the trip from Lhasa to Gyantse could be done in six hours, and Lhasa to Kolkata in three days.¹⁰

Terminology. Many of the promoted inventions were objects previously not in use in Tibet, and thus also without defined Tibetan terms. The initial advertisement for a radio set in September 1929, for example, carried the headline *lcags skud med par thag ring zhal rnam thar rba 'ja' sogs nyan thub pa'i 'phrul 'khor*, i.e. "a wireless machine which is able to make heard stories and so over long distances."¹¹ In some cases, the English and the Chinese terms were given as well, "in English 'Radio,' in Chinese 'Ushantan'."¹² In this context, different translations were initially coined for the same product. Such as when, in 1939, the radio set was referred to by the term *rlung lam skad 'dzin 'khor lo*, i.e. "a machine catching voice over air."¹³ From 1948, the term *rlung 'phrin gsan byed kyi 'khor lo* became more widely used, i.e. "a machine making heard messages over air."¹⁴ In 1953, its abridgment *rlung 'phrin*, "air message",¹⁵ was used, which is the term for "radio" in Tibetan until today. Furthermore, terms with highly specific meanings in one context were employed within new contexts, such as when buying binoculars was said to be like obtaining the power of the "eyes of wisdom" (*ye shes kyi mig*),¹⁶ i.e. the eyes of transcendent omniscience, which Buddha possesses.

Verses. Such adaptations went beyond purely terminological translation. In fact, the transportation of modern values was infused with aspects of Tibetan literary styles. For example, the advertisement for Tissot and Omega mentioned above was crafted into a seven-limb verse, unfortunately not reproduced in its English translation here:

⁹ Melong 10-5-8 (February 1939): *rang rang so so'i bzhugs gnas gzim chung du sku bzhugs gnang thog 'dzam gling yongs kyi zhal rnam thar 'ba' ja dang /_tshong gi thang gzhi gsar gnas sogs lcags skud med par rlung lam thog gsan par mnyes sam/*. Note that the translation for *zhal rnam thar 'ba' ja* is tentative. Following Jonathan Samuel's advice, I suggest *'ba' ja* to be a local usage of the Hindi "bajānā," which means "to ring," "chime" or "sound." See also Melong 2-5-1 (May 1927), where *rba 'ja'* is used in connection to the "well-sounding chime" (*sgra snyan rba 'ja' bcas par*) of a clock.

¹⁰ See Melong 6-2-8 (July 1931) and 6-3-2 (August 1931).

¹¹ Melong 4-6-4 (September 1929). See footnote 9 for a comment on *rba 'ja'*.

¹² Melong 10-5-8 (February 1939): [...] *dbyin skad du re Di o/_rgya nag skad du u shan tan zhes pa* [...].

¹³ Melong 10-5-8 (February 1939).

¹⁴ Melong 16-3-8 (January 1948).

¹⁵ See Melong 21-5-8 (August 1953) and 21-6-6 (September 1953).

¹⁶ See Melong 10-10-8 (July 1939), and for an explanation e.g. Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las 2002:1866.

Time is very precious.

Time does not wait for anybody.

Time that has passed never returns.

Therefore, do your work on time.

In order to know the time, you need a watch.

This watch should be exact.

There is no [watch] more exact than the one of the messenger of time, Omega and Tissot.¹⁷

While the advertisement's content stressed the importance of timeliness and propagates a sense of hectic so often attributed to modernity, its format is anything but new. However, not merely the format but also the content was adapted. For example, an advertisement for a flashlight in the form of a seven-limbed verse played on the connotations of "butter" in the Tibetan term for "lamp". The darkness in Tibet was commonly illuminated by butter lamps, *mar me* (or its honorific *zhugs mar*) i.e. "butter fire". *Mar me* or *zhugs mar* thus is the generic term for the English "lamp".

This amazing (butter) lamp burns alight without the use of any butter and without producing smoke. No matches are required, no wick is required, no vessel, and neither is oil. It does not go out through wetness. If you want to light it, it burns like twinkling eyes. When it is lit, its rays shine brightly, rivalling the full moon.

The electric torch is an example of electricity. Of the eight particles, it derives of the particle of fire. It is compounded (*'dus byas*), therefore it is correct to infer that it is a substance of the eight elements.¹⁸

Thus, a flashlight burns by itself, without requiring any of the components previously used in lamps. Such amazing – almost magical – traits were celebrated in a poetic language, as in "twinkling eyes" and "rivalling the full moon". The two finishing lines refer to a traditional understanding of the fabric of material things. For example, it is taught in Abhidharma

¹⁷ Melong 13-11&12-20 (August/September 1945): *dus ni shin tu rin can yin/ dus ni su la'ang sgug mi 'gyur/ /dus phyin nam yang log mi srid/ /de phyir las rnam dus su byos/ /dus tshod shes par chu tshod dgos/ /chu tshod de yang brtan pa dgos/ /dus gyi pho nya oM me g+ha'am/ /bkras bso gnyis las brtan pa med/.*

¹⁸ Melong 5-2-8 (July 1930): *mar med zhugs mar ya mtshan 'di/ du med 'od du 'bar ba la/ mu ze mi dgos sdong mi dgos/ snod kod mi dgos snum mi dgos/ rlon pas spang med spar dgos na/ mig 'dzum hrig hrig tsam du 'bar/ 'bar ba'i 'od ni bkra 'tsher 'tsher/ nya gang zla ba 'gran zla ste/ glog zhugs glog gi dper byas sam/ brgyad ldan me yi rdul las byung/ 'dus byas yin na rdul rdzas brgyad pa ldan pa khyab pa yod pa la dpyad/.*

literature that every substance is essentially composed of eight particles (*rdul*), with one being the predominating one.¹⁹ Here, the "electric lamp" is described as a compounded substance, just like all other material things, and electricity is said to consist predominantly of the particle "fire". Thus, traditional systems of explanation such as the Abhidharma were used to familiarize products previously not in use.

Moral Parables. Apart from short verses, whole stories were composed to embed products into formats the readers would be familiar with. In July 1930, for example, an advertisement for a car was modelled into a popular parable (*'bel gtam* or *dpe gtam*). Its guiding theme is the term '*khor lo*, literally "wheel", which carries the meaning "machine" in technological contexts, while in religious contexts '*khor ba* refers to *samsāra* or the world of cyclic existence of unenlightened beings:

The Motor Wheel (*mo Tor 'khor lo*)

In Tibetan *rang 'gro* [moving by itself] or *rlung 'gro* [moving [by] wind]

It costs between 3,000 and 6,000 [Rupees].

This is a condensed parable (*dpe gtam*) of the genesis of the car.

[In verse:] The vehicle (*shing rta*) called "motor", or "gārī"²⁰ in Hindi, does not exist in the Tibetan country, but we can translate it into *rang 'gro*, i.e. moving [by] itself. [The car] is of great benefit, because it does not torment sentient beings.²¹ Sentient beings such as the horse, the mule, the donkey and other can rest their mind and body.

[In prose:] Once upon a time, in Europe, there was a man who rested in the mind-stream of only thinking of the benefit of others. One day, he came along a path where he met a man with a horse, a mule, a donkey and an ox which carried extremely heavy loads. Thus, he said: "Are you unaware of the suffering of the horse, the donkey and so on? Where are you going? It is not right to have the animals carry such heavy loads." The donkey driver responded:

[In verse:] "We might not like to move, still we move. Sentient beings [such as] the horse and the donkey might be exhausted, yet we move. They might not be able to

¹⁹ The eight particles are: earth (*sa*), water (*chu*), fire (*me*), wind (*rlung*), form (*gzugs*), smell (*dri*), taste (*ro*), and touch (*reg bya*) (see e.g. Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las 2002:1156).

²⁰ Note that the Tibetan transcription actually reads hwA sgA ri.

²¹ One syllable of the line is illegible.

continue, they might even die, still we move on. Sentient beings move on until they reach liberation."

[In prose:] In short, the meaning of what he said is this: until you reach enlightenment, mundane work will not end. Upon understanding this profound meaning, the man went home. As he was thinking, he boiled water in a pot on the stove. The lid rose and the pot too moved back and forth, "dril dril." Thus, the man discovered how to make a wheel move by itself, through the power of water and fire. And so he built one.

[In verse:] Because time means that our lifespan is diminishing, [the car's benefits are that] a goal which takes one month [to reach] can be reached in a day, and a task which takes one year to complete can be completed in a month.

[In prose:] As it is said: if you thought it was correct to assume, that in *samsāra*, [mundane] work could be finished by the use of a wheel, you are incorrect. It is like this: Even though in this *samsāra* food never exhausts, you eat delicious food.

This was the parable about the car.²²

With this popular parable, the new commodity car was embedded in Buddhist philosophy and morals: while a car would not eliminate suffering completely, which is the outcome of complete enlightenment alone, it still would reduce the suffering of sentient beings and thus be meritorious on the path to enlightenment. Stylistically, as so often, the seven-syllable verse form is applied, and also the encounter of two people who engage in a dialogue was a common compositional style of moralistic stories. Another advertisement for a car from April/March 1939 repeatedly argues along Buddhist morals to remember that, at some point,

²² Melong 5-2-4 (July 1930): *mo Tor 'khor lo/ bod skad du rang 'gro'am rlung 'gro/ rin sgor 3000 nas 6000 mo Tor gi 'byung khungs dpe gtam mdor tsam/_mo Tor zhes pa'i shing rta ni/_rgya gar skad du hwa sgA ri zer/_bod kyi yul du med yin pas/_bsgyur na rang 'gro ba zhes 'thad/_sems can [illegible] kyis mnar med pas/_sems can kun la phan pa che/_sems can rta dre'u bor gu sogs sems dang lus kyi ngal gsos lags/_sngon dus na yo rob pa'i yul du gzhan don kho na'i blo rgyud la ldan pa'i mi zhig 'dug lags/_khong lam gyi khar skabs shig na phebs tshe/_lam du rta dang dre'u bong glang sogs la ha cang lci po do po dbya lag khal skal nas 'gro bzhin pa'i mi zhig dang thug pa las khyod rta bong sogs kyi sdug bsngal ma shes sam/_ga la 'gro ga ha cang do po cli po skal ba mi yong zhes smras pas/_bong gu ba lan 'debs pa la/_gro 'dug 'dod pa med kyang 'gro/_gro ba rta bong chad kyang 'gro/_gro ru mi thub shi yang 'gro/_gro ba thar pa thob par 'gro/_zhes smras pa'i don bsdus na sangs rgyas ma thob par du 'jig brten gyi las ka tshar rgyu med pa'i don zab tu rang nang du phebs te bsam blo gtang ba la lcags thab kyi steng du khog sder nang du chu khol kha khabs yar longs pa dang khog sder de nyid yang phar tshur dril dril tsam g.yos pas/_chu dang med gnyis kyi nus pas rang 'gro byed kyi 'khor lo bzo ba'i rig pa thob nas bzos pa'o/_tshe tshad mar phri'i dus yin phyir/_zla gcig lam ga nyin gcig sleb/_lo gcig las ka zla gcig tshar/_kha gcig na re/_'khor ba 'dir 'khor los las ka tshar rgyu yod par thal/_'dod pa'i phyir na ma khyab ste/_'khor ba 'dir bza' zas tshar rgyu med kyang /_bza' zhim po zas pa bzhin no/_mo Tor dpe gtam bsdus pa'o/. Note that my translation for 'khor ba 'dir bza' zas tshar rgyu med kyang /_bza' zhim po zas pa bzhin no remains tentative.*

"all animals have been our parents" (*'gro kun pha mar gyur pa*), and therefore the usage of a car was morally superior to the use of animals.²³ Thus, according to the logic of the advertisement, a car is a beneficial tool on the path to enlightenment.

Similar dynamics can be observed concerning the product categories of clocks and watches. Modern watches were a highly demanded product amongst wealthy Tibetans, since they were a sign of wealth, status and modern attitudes. An anecdote has it that the head of Rolex even visited Kalimpong in 1942, because he was so intrigued by the number of watches sold there.²⁴ The Melong also featured advertisements for a variety of luxury brand watches and clocks. We have seen above how an advertisement for Omega and Tissot has stressed the importance of timeliness and punctuality. In earlier instances, the modern chronometry with its division into hours, minutes and seconds was needed to be explained to the readers in the first place.²⁵ In this case as well, the modern product was deeply embedded into a moral framework. In March 1935, the Melong published a parable on a watch or clock (*chu tshod 'khor lo*) and the duration of human life in the form of a dialogue between an old man and a king. In it were explicitly taught such Buddhist concepts as altruism and the path to enlightenment.

A clock and a human life are the same. Just like time is steady and a clock steadily goes "tik tik", a human being who has received a human body on this earth should [steadily] do only wholesome deeds. The story goes like this: Once, when an old man was planting seeds on the field, he saw a king going for a stroll. [The king said:] "You seem like you are about to die any day now. Don't you know that you will not be able to eat the fruit of the seeds you are planting?" The old man replied: "I might be old, but it does not matter if I cannot eat the fruit. I plant these seeds for the benefit of others." Likewise, on this planet, everybody needs to plant seeds for the benefit of others. The rich need to help the poor. The young need to respect the old, and the old need to take good care of the young. If everybody acted like this, the world would be a

²³ See Melong 10-7-8 (April/May 1939).

²⁴ See Kansakar Hilker 2005:81, also cited in Sawerthal 2011:58.

²⁵ See e.g. Melong 4-10&11-8 (April 1930).

happy place. If not, the world would come under the control of the five poisons and become a place of unhappiness. If one does not treat a clock with oil and keep it clean, the clock would quickly break. Likewise, if in this life one does not do wholesome deeds and does not follow the dharma with body, speech and mind, obstructions will quickly occur, and, later on, Buddhahood will not be attained. Therefore, one should renounce all moral wrong-doings and vices and exert oneself in wholesome deeds.²⁶

In this embedding of the modern clock within a moral story, the meeting of two familiar literary figures demonstrate the importance of wholesome deeds by using the allegorical example of the seed. The clock as a modern product becomes a symbol to improve existent moral values envisioned along the lines of a Buddhist paradigm. In the previous chapter, we have already seen how a newspaper purchase was likened to the ransoming of animals marked for slaughter and thus an opportunity for the accumulation of wholesome karma. Just like the newspaper itself, also the modern products it advertised for were previously alien to the Tibetan consumers, yet deeply embedded within a local economy catering to soteriological ambitions.

5.2 Scholarship: The Shape of the World

Without a doubt, the Melong publicized modes of knowledge generation that had emerged in Europe and were propagated globally through colonialism and missionary activities. At the time the Melong was founded, in Europe the case between Galileo's scientific revolution and the medieval church had long been settled: not the immaterial, non-mechanical, imaginative

²⁶ Melong 8-2-6 (March 1935): *chu tshod 'khor lo dang mi'i tshe ni gcig pa red/ chu tshod 'khor lo'i Tiga Tiga zer ba de'i sa dus tshod bstan pa ltar mis kyang 'jig rten 'dir mi lus len nas las bzang kho na byed dgos/ dper na/ mi rgan zhig gis zhing la sa bon 'debs pa'i tshe rgyal po zhig skyo gseng la phebs skabs gzigs te/ khyod ni mi rgan sang 'chi gnangs 'chi ltar na/ sa bon btab pa'i 'bras bu za rgyu yong min zhes sam gsungs pa de'i len du mi rgan kyis/ kho bo rgas rkyen 'bras bu za rgyu ma 'byung na'ang khyad med/ kho bo ni gzhan gyi don du sa bon 'debs pa lags so zhus pa ltar/ sa gzhi 'dir tshang mas gzhan gyi don du sa bon 'debs dgos/ de'i don ni rang don kho nar ma yin gzhan don byed dgos/ phyug pas dbul po la rogs ram byed dgos/ chung ngus rgan par bkur sti dang / rgan pas chung ba rnams la byams skyong gnang dgos/ 'di ltar tshang mas bgyi na 'jig rten 'dir bde ba dang ldan/ de min pa ni dug lnga'i dbang du song bas bde ba dang mi ldan no/ chu tshod 'khor lo la snum dar gtsang ma ma bzhas na yun ma ring tsam du med par 'gro ba ltar rang re'i mi tshe 'di yang dge ba'i las dang lus ngag yid 3 gyis chos ltar ma byed na myur bar bar chad 'byung ba ma zad phyi ma'ang sangs rgyas par mi 'gyur ro/ de'i phyir sdug las nag las spongs la dge las dkar po'i las la 'bad par gyis/. The story is signed as authored by Nyi ma nor bu, a teacher in Darjeeling.*

and figurative world of spirits or oracles was now promoted, but rather knowledge systems such as geography and physics, the material and quantitative dimension of a modern scientific worldview. Reflected as well in colonial surveying projects, questions concerning the shape and position of the earth or the production of maps were at the center stage of modern education, which would lead to the shattering of the existing traditional cosmologies on many levels.

In a Tibetan context, the earth was considered a flat disc, and thus the issue was not about a heliocentric versus a geocentric world. According to Indo-Tibetan sources, at the central axis of the world is Mount Meru, surrounded by four continents, one of which is our world (*'dzam bu gling*). This explanation can be traced back to Vasubandhu's influential *Abhidharmakośa* (4th or 5th century). From India, this text and its ideas spread to Tibet, where it intermingled with local imaginations of sacred landscapes inhabited by non-human beings. Indo-Tibetan Buddhist cosmology includes also nonmaterial planes of existence, in general six realms of beings are said to share the world: gods, demi-gods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts and hell beings.

Many people in the Melong's times still believed this to be the proper version of the makeup of the world. As reported by various travelers, Tibetan factual geographical knowledge of our *'dzam bu gling* rarely went beyond its immediate surroundings. In 1924, Frank Ludlow, headmaster of the British school in Gyantse, wrote: "[Geography is] a subject in which I found not only my boys, but all Tibetans, amazingly ignorant. They knew little enough of their own country and except for China, Japan, Russia, India and England, had never heard of the existence of another. [...] When I produced maps and a globe I suddenly discovered that all Tibetans believe the World to be flat, and I began to wonder if Galileos [sic!] fate would be mine if I preached to the contrary!"²⁷ In a same vein, Winnington writes in 1955: "Even the question of whether the earth is flat or whether it moves round the sun is just as full of politics

²⁷ Cited in Rank 2003:37.

in present-day Tibet as it was in Galileo's Europe."²⁸ And Heinrich Harrer recounts an evening in Lhasa in 1948, when the Tibetans discussed with him and the Tibetologist Giuseppe Tucci whether the earth was flat or round.²⁹

Education under the primacy of Buddhist teachings took place in the monasteries and produced a small elite of scholarly monks. Buddhist scholarship comes with an inherent claim to universal truth, in which no distinction is made "between religious truths and scientific truths,"³⁰ as recently put by Wallace. The overwhelming majority of the population followed folk beliefs, which were denounced by missionaries as superstitious (*blun 'dad*). The advance of modern technologies brought about in the course of the industrial revolution as well as the paradigms of the enlightenment movement were exported to non-Western regions and confronted both the belief of common folk and the elite monastic education. Concerning the latter scholarly context, technological advances made the shape of the world visible and experiential. That also meant that the shape of the world was not only object of logical analysis but object of perception, which needed to be brought into accordance with authoritative scriptures. Concerning then the folk beliefs, the enlightenment movement was a motor of making knowledge accessible to all people, not only to an elite minority.

In this context, the newspaper has been described both as a medium of enlightenment and as a facilitator of enlightenment,³¹ since it brought modern knowledge systems to a mass audience. In this way, newspapers established a new relatedness to the mundane world by fostering "knowledge of and insight into the world", "revealing the world as a geographical space" through education on other places and countries and by the popularization of science.³² Missionaries around the globe were at the forefront of spreading such knowledge to the masses. According to Bosch, "the entire western missionary movement of the past three

²⁸ Winington 1957:194.

²⁹ See Harrer 2005:195-196.

³⁰ Wallace 2003:26.

³¹ See Böning 2008:294.

³² See Böning 2008:287-310, who describes the relationship between newspapers and the age of enlightenment.

centuries emerged from the matrix of the Enlightenment,³³ and, as Stanley has pointed out, it was particularly the protestant missions that were active in spreading scientific knowledge.³⁴ The missions in Tibetan border regions were closely connected to these developments. Francke, the editor of the *La dwags kiy ag bar*, for example, explained how modern contents were spread to destabilize superstitious beliefs and promote critical reading (see Chapter 2). Francke published on the round shape of the world in the *La dwags kiy ag bar*, and his successors in *La dwags pho nya* and *Kye lang ag bar*.³⁵ Starting from 1938, the *La dwags pho nya* reprinted Flora Beal Shelton's '*Dzam gling rgyas bshad*' ("World Geography"), originally published by the Baptist Mission in 1922. Flora Beal Shelton was the daughter of the American missionary Albert Shelton, who was killed in Eastern Tibet. The Moravians reprinted her text in a series of the *La dwags pho nya* under the name *Sa chen gsal ba'i me long*, a title taken from a Tibetan geography book authored by Heinrich August Jäschke (1817-1883).³⁶ Also missionary August William Heyde³⁷ and possibly others published educational books on geography there.³⁸ Shelton's text starts with the discovery of America, stressing that Columbus was convinced the world was round. Invariably, all missionary

³³ Bosch 1991, cited in Stanley 2013[2001]:4.

³⁴ See Stanley 2013[2001]:4.

³⁵ The first occurrence was an article on a lunar eclipse, explaining the phases and rotations of the moon around the '*jig rten ril bu* (round world). Further articles are in KA July 1927, KA August 1927, KA November 1927; Shelton's series can be found in nine parts in LP July 1938 - March 1939.

³⁶ See Jäschke, August Heinrich: *sa chen po'i gsal ba'i me long bzhugs so* [The clear Mirror of the Great World], additional note 1: "Geographiebuch von H.A. Jäschke" [i.e. Geography Book by H.A. Jäschke], additional note 2: "Sa-chen-poi-bsal-bai me-long, 'Der großen Erde klarer Spiegel.' Allgemeine Geographie - tibetisch - von H.A. Jäschke. Handschrift", pecha-format, in four notebooks (in Herrnhut archives).

Another of Jäschke's books on geography was: Jäschke, August Heinrich (no date): *e shya/_sa chen gyi gling lnga las a shya ji ltar bzhag pa'i bshad pa dang /_lo rgyus ni* [i.e. Asia: The Geography and History of Asia, One of the Five Continents]. Heft für den Schulunterricht [Notebook for School Teaching], printed in Kyelang on the printing press of the mission, modern format (Herrnhut Museum number 67661).

³⁷ See Heyde. A.W.J.: *srid kyi nang na yod pa'i sa gzhi dang nyi zla la sogs pa'i don zur tsam bshad pa*, additional note: "Abriß über die im Weltall befindlichen (Himmelskörper) Erde, Sonne, Mond usw." ["Treatise on the [Celestial Bodies of] Earth, Sun, Moon and Others in the Universe"], 20 pages, modern format, manuscript (in Herrnhut archives). Pages 12-15 contain a section on "*zla ba ni*," which is almost the same text as found in LA February 1907.

³⁸ See *No author (no date)*: *dkon mchog gi 'jig rten 'god pa bshad pa bzhugs so* [i.e. How God Created the World], "Traktat der Herrnhuter für ihre Evangelisationsreisen 'Aus der Bibel zusammengestellte und ins Tibetische übersetzte Geschichte, wie Gott die Welt erschuf.' [i.e. Treatise of the Moravians for their Proselytizing Travels: 'The Story from the Bible, Translated into Tibetan, on how God Created the World'], printed in Kyelang, on the printing press of the mission, modern format (Herrnhut Museum number 67662).

newspapers reported on Tibetan belief systems as wrong, "superstitious" (*blun dad*)³⁹ and something to refute. Such wrong views were countered by arguments of experimental insights, such as when a ship disappears at the horizon or when one returns to the same point when walking straight ahead.⁴⁰

The round shape of the world, its material topography and its position within a planetary system were also uncontested truths in the Melong. The Melong regularly published on the shape and position of the earth and thus amplified scientific advances. Since Tharchin grew up within the mission, he was familiar with ongoing discourses. Tharchin knew Shelton personally and her *'Dzam gling rgyas bshad* was advertised in the Melong from 1938 to June 1951.⁴¹ In 1940, the TMP published a large world map, adorned with national flags of different countries.



Figure 23: Fragment of a World Map printed at the TMP, 1940, postcolored.

³⁹ For an article explaining a solar eclipse, see KA August 1927.

⁴⁰ See e.g. LP July 1927.

⁴¹ Even though, in the Melong, the title of the book is only given as *'dzam gling rgyas bshad* (and could therefore refer to any book on "World Geography") it can be inferred from TC: Letter Tharchin to American Consulate (Calcutta), June 16, 1965, that it was Shelton's book: "[...] Thereafter, Mrs. Shelton compiled and brought out an illustrated world Geography [...]. When the book came out from the press in 1922, there was not much demand as the Tibetans did not know the value of these books in those days. In 1925, I started a monthly newspaper [... and] I used to write [sic!] the importance to know the World Geography and also about Mrs. A.L. Shelton's useful books as an advertisement. The press used to sell the books for 75 paise which was less than 1/4 of its cost. But there was not much demand. But after many years Tibetans began to know the value of the books and the price went up to Rs.4/- and later on it was sold even for Rs.6/- or more. But the book was out of print." The quoted prices more or less correspond with the prices given in the Melong's advertisements. For the related advertisements, see Melong 9-7&8-16 (January 1938), 9-9-8 (March 1938), 9-10-8 (April 1938), 9-11-8 (May 1938), 10-1-8 (June 1938), 10-3-8 (November 1938), 10-4-8 (December 1938), 10-5-8 (February 1939), 10-8-8 (June 1939), 11-1-8 (August 1942), 12-6-8 (January 1944), 12-8-12 (March 1944), 13-8-8 (April 1945), 16-4-6 (February 1948), 18-6-7 (April/May 1950), 19-1&2-24 (December 1950/January 1951) and 19-3-8 (June 1951).

The Melong also published numerous maps, a way of depicting the world previously unknown to a Tibetan readership. However, it not only published the mission's own work, but also resorted to texts by Tibetan authors. Previous the missionary's work, the Amdo-Tibetan scholar Bstan po no mon han published a *'Dzam gling rgyas bshad* in 1830,⁴² a text which resulted from the cooperation of the Bstan po and a Russian missionary. Tharchin got hold of the text,⁴³ which he had copied from a manuscript while he was in Lhasa in 1927,⁴⁴ and at least attempted to get it printed.⁴⁵ He reprinted parts of the work in a series in the Melong,⁴⁶ significantly however not its parts on the world's foreign regions but the one on Tibet. Thus, the Melong provided a platform to connect new knowledge systems to the debates, scholarship and formats established in Tibetan discourses.

The Shape of the World. Various articles in the Melong present solar eclipses, maps or explanations of the continents. All of them mentioned the round shape of the world, but they did not particularly argue for it. At the most, popular metaphors were used to familiarize knowledge which so far had not been commonly circulated. For example, in March 1932, an article stated: "The world is round like a pill (*ril bu*), and like wheel (*'khor lo*) it turns around its own [axis] in one day and one night."⁴⁷ The issue of August/September 1944 described the shape like "a ball or an orange" (*po lo lta bu'am shing 'bras tsha lo ma ba'i dbyibs bzhin*), turning around its own axis like a prayer wheel (*ma Ni'i 'khor lo*).⁴⁸ Thus, unfamiliar physical explanations of the world were drawn close to the commonly accepted metaphysical conceptions of the workings of the world. In the first example of March 1932, each corner of

⁴² For a comprehensive overview and translation of this text, see Yongdan 2011 or Wylie 1962.

⁴³ See Letter Joseph Rock to Johannes Schubert, November 3, 1950, in Taube 2009:183: "Tharchin has a whole bunch of books, amongst them the hDzam-gling rgyas-bshad, which once Sarat Ch. Das has translated in parts and which was printed in Journal Roy. As. Bengal, Vol. LVI, Part 1, No.1, 1887." (Original in German).

⁴⁴ See TC: Tharchin (Lhasa) to Graham (Kalimpong), December 6 1927: "The book or the old MSS which I am copying is not yet finished [...]. The MSS is very old; it is written by Mongolian great traveler. It is a world Geography. In it is mentioned about Our Lord's Crucifixion and His Resurrection."

⁴⁵ See Melong 3-1&2-4 (May 1928). Here, Tharchin specifically referred to the Bstan po's work and remarked that the important text is virtually unavailable in Tibet.

⁴⁶ See Melong 6-3 (August 1931) to 7-12 (September 1934) and 11-9-1 (April 1943).

⁴⁷ Melong 6-6-6 (March 1932): *'dzam gling ni ril bu lta bu zlum pa la 'khor lo lta bu nyin mtshan gcig la rang rgyas 'khor zhing [...]*.

⁴⁸ See Melong 13-1-10 (August/September 1944).

the illustrated round planet featured a line of the popular verse text *Shes rab sdong bu* (*Prajñādaṇḍa*, "Staff of Wisdom"), attributed to Nāgārjuna: "Upon happiness, there is suffering. Upon suffering, there is happiness. Human happiness and suffering revolve like a wheel."⁴⁹ The general Buddhist theorem of the cyclic nature of existence was related to the round shape of the world. In fact, the illustration of this article is derived from Shelton's *'Dzam gling rgyas bshad*, which pronounced the connection to the mission, as already pointed out by Engelhardt.

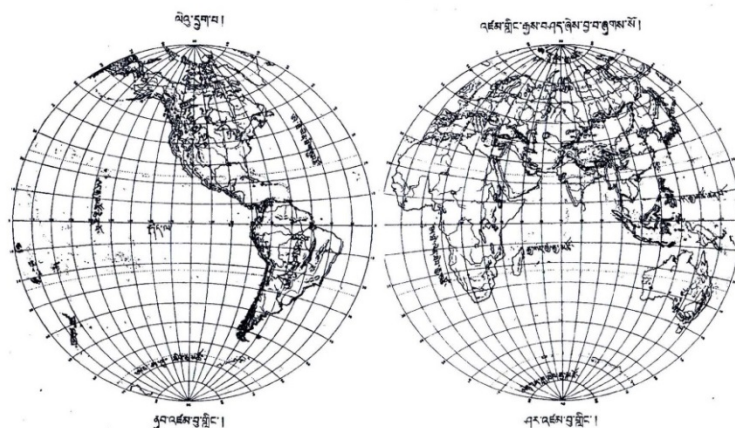
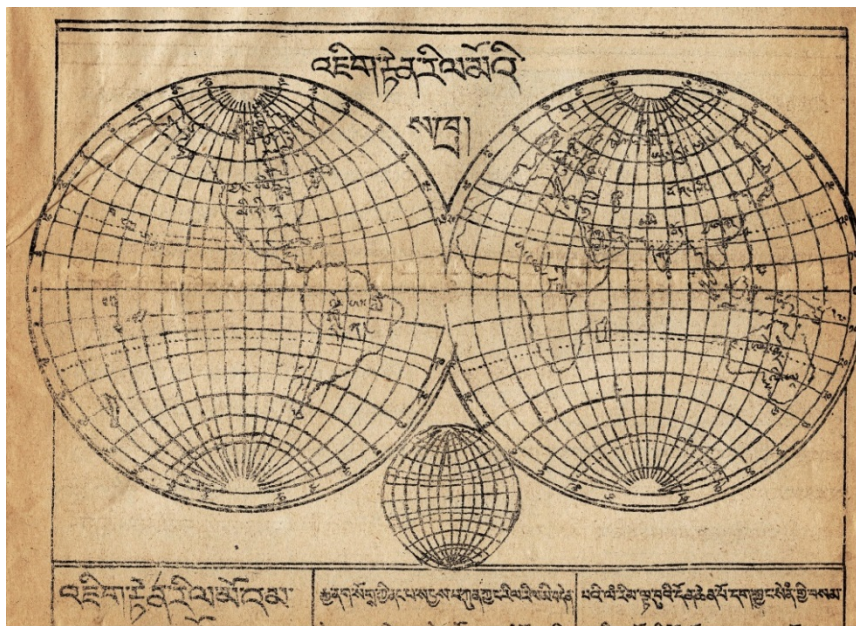


Figure 24: Illustration of the round world in Melong 10-1-11 (June 1938) and Shelton's *'Dzam gling rgyas bshas*.

⁴⁹ Melong 6-6-6 (March 1932): *bde ba'i rjes la sdug bsngal te/ sdug bsngal rjes la bde ba yin/ mi rnams kyi ni bde sdug dag/ 'khor lo bzhin du 'khor bar byed/*. This is verse 64 of *Shes rab sdong bu* (*Prajñādaṇḍa*, "Staff of Wisdom"), which is wrongly attributed to Nāgārjuna, according to Hahn. An English translation of the text is provided by Hahn 2009-2011.

As pointed out by Engelhardt, the same image is used in Dge' 'dun chos 'phel's famous article on the topic in June 1938.⁵⁰ I follow her lead by stressing that Dge' 'dun chos 'phel picked up a discourse which, fueled by the missions, had already developed through earlier Tibetan-language media. Dge' 'dun chos 'phel may however still be credited with an innovative move: while in the previous Melong articles, the round shape of the world was presented as a given fact, and the Ladakh newspapers featured arguments imported from the West, Choephel incorporated the debate into the scholarly context of Indo-Tibetan Buddhism not merely through stylistic means. He referred to Buddhist modes of argumentation to argue for the superiority of the Western model, being convinced of the modern take⁵¹ and demonstrating knowledge of Western methodology accrued from his intensive study of Shelton's *'Dzam gling rgyas bshad*.⁵² We also know that Dge' 'dun chos 'phel had debated with Tibetan scholars the essential dilemma they were faced with: their belief that the Buddha had taught the world to be flat, and that thus a round world could not be in accordance with Buddha's teachings. The solution of his travel companion, Rahul Sankrityayan, was to say that, in fact, the world turned round only after the Buddha had passed away.⁵³

Dge' 'dun chos 'phel choose a different approach. In the Melong, he resolved this dilemma by referring to the two levels of arguments concerning the Buddha's teachings: arguments of preliminary (*neyārtha*) and those of definite meaning (*nītārtha*). For students of lesser capacity, the Buddha sometimes taught things which were not correct in an ultimate sense, but somehow assisted the student to grasp important doctrinal aspects on a preliminary level.

⁵⁰ See Melong 10-1-11 (June 1938) and Engelhardt 2011:227. For a translation of the article, see e.g. Lopez 2008:58-59.

⁵¹ Reported by Dzongu Nagdo in Kirti Rinpoche 2013:29: In an argument with his teacher, Dge bshes shes rab rgya mtsho, he said: "I don't think the so-called 'four continents' and 'sub-continents exist' [sic!]. If that is what you tell others, you will eventually be disgraced." The argument is similarly recalled in Stoddard 1985:178.

⁵² A notebook was found amongst a collection possessed by Hor khang bsod nams dpal 'bar, which used to belong to Dge 'dun chos 'phel. It presents a perfect copy of Shelton's *'Dzam gling rgyas bshad* in Choephel's handwriting. I have not seen the originals, but the contents are described and translated into English in Schaedler 2007:391-401. As mentioned, parts of it appeared in *La dwags pho nya* as well. Whether Chophel also read the LP articles remains unknown.

⁵³ Sankrityayan reports about debating the shape of the earth with the Tibetan scholar Bsam blo dge bshes in 1936 or 1938 (see Kellner 2010 and Sankrityayan 1950:250 and 1957:710, as cited and translated into English in Schaedler 2007: 468 and 473-474).

Chos 'phel argued the round shape of the world was one of such instances.⁵⁴ Whether or not Tibetan scholars would agree, the debate was successfully connected to the discourse of Tibetan scholarship. The Melong, unlike the Ladakhi newspapers, presented a platform for public debates, engaging with pressing issues in established scholarship which were partly disconnected from Western concerns. Later authors would continue along this avenue; for example, the author of an article in August/September 1944 appealed to the Buddhist logicians of Tibet:

How great would it be, if the great knowledgeable experts of the dharma-land Tibet studied and looked well into the tenets established by reasoning, namely that the world is round; if they then eliminated all possible faults or flaws with [their] sword of reasoning and then demonstrated the form of the earth, just as it is!⁵⁵

Logical analysis, a subject firmly established in Tibetan monastic educational system, was called upon to correctly understand the makeup of the world. Arguments from Western traditions were neither authoritative nor convincing per se and often not in accordance with Buddhist teachings. The editors and authors of the Melong thus called on their own scholarly system to infer the correct shape of the world, in accordance with Buddhist teachings.

Surveying the World. For the longest time, both in Western and Tibetan scholarly systems, the shape of the earth was inferred through logical analysis. Technological advances accelerated by the industrial revolution in the West facilitated the ever quicker and more convenient surveying of the world. Through the invention of the zeppelin, planes or later satellites, topographical conditions could be seen and experienced from above. Planes enabled perspectives from a bird's eye view and thus also instigated new political and military opportunities. In these ways, the pursuit of knowledge was not merely limited to scientific curiosity but also functioned as a means of colonial control: surveying populations (census)

⁵⁴ For a translation and a detailed discussion of arguments employed, see Lopez 2008:58-63.

⁵⁵ Melong 13-1-10 (August/September 1944): *bod chos ldan zhing gi dge ba'i bshes gnyen mkhas mchog rnams nas 'dzam gling zlum po yin zhes tshad mas bstan pa'i grub mthar legs gzigs zhib 'jug thog nor 'khrul dge skyon ji yod tshad ma rig pa'i ral gris tshar bcad nas 'dzam gling gi gzo dbyibs ji ltar yin pa da ltar bstan par mdzad na ci ma legs/.*

and measuring terrain (topography), for example, were then and continue to be convenient methods of governance. In many instances, the Melong presented such advancements with fascination and awe and devoted space to modern developments by reporting on technological advancements such as plane flights in Tibet, Kalimpong and around the world.⁵⁶ During the Second World War, it published breathtaking images of weaponry provided by the British Government's Information and Broadcasting Department.

A total number of 184 maps were published. In general, maps aim at presenting an accurate model of the world. Political maps propagate national boundaries and sometimes bear witness to diverging understandings of national belonging.⁵⁷ Particularly numerous maps appeared in the Melong over the course of the Second World War, which may be traced to British distribution propagating their dominant colonial understanding of the division of the world.

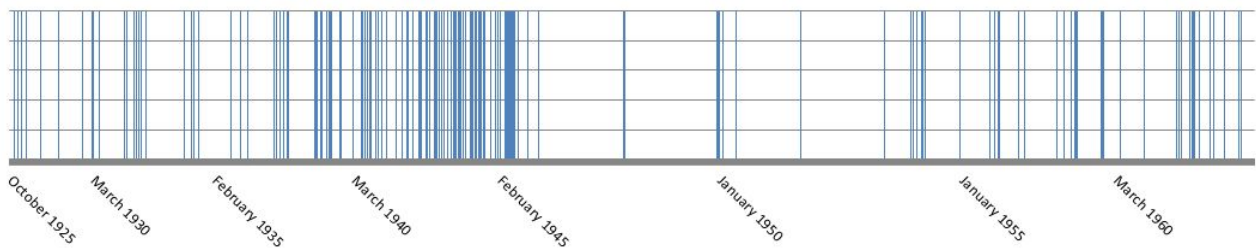


Figure 25: Distribution of maps in the Melong.

However, the format of maps also held oppositional capacities, as observed by Anderson: "[The map's] origins were reasonably innocent – the practice of the imperial states of colouring their colonies on maps with an imperial dye. [...] Dyed this way, each colony appeared like a detachable piece of a jigsaw puzzle. As this 'jigsaw' effect became normal, each 'piece' could be wholly detached from its geographic context. [...] Instantly recognizable,

⁵⁶ The Melong regularly published on airplane construction (6-2-8, July 1931; 9-9-7, March 1938), the zeppelin (5-6-4, November 1930; 5-12-3, May 1931; 9-2-7, June 1937; 11-2-7, September 1942), the first plane flight to Kalimpong (7-3-3, March 1933) or planes over Mount Everest (6-10-5, October 1932; 7-3-5, March 1933; 7-4-3, April 1933), and it provided general information on how many planes the different nations possessed (7-1-6, January 1933; 7-7&8-14, July/August 1933).

⁵⁷ For a discussion on the political capacities of maps, see Melong 25-7-3 (December 1958).

everywhere visible, the logo-map penetrated deep into the popular imagination, forming a powerful emblem for the anticolonial nationalisms being born."⁵⁸

Tibet was never colonized, however it did stand under strong British influence, politics and diplomacy as initiated through Charles Bell.⁵⁹ Bell wrote in 1931: "[...] It is in the interest of Britain [...] that Tibet should be strong, independent and free from outside interference, including interference from Britain herself."⁶⁰ Over the course of the Melong's publication periods, divergent understandings of Tibet's boundaries were circulated and these were reflected in the Melong's practice of publishing different maps of Tibet. There is no doubt that the Melong generally propagated nationalistic ideas of Tibet, but investigating the representation of Tibet on these maps makes evident also the uncertainties concerning the exact boundaries of this Tibetan nation. A total of 23 maps of Tibet were published,⁶¹ and Tibet was featured in twelve world maps. The earliest maps were copies of Sir Charles Bell's map of Tibet published in 1927,⁶² which propagated the British understanding of Tibet's boundaries and included the regions of Amdo and Kham.⁶³ Other maps reflected the boundaries drawn by Chinese agents (both KMT and later Communists), in which Tibet is depicted as a province of China and set apart from Amdo (or *mtsho sngon*) and Kham.⁶⁴ Two issues featured Bell's map in the 1950s, both came with the description *bod khri skor bcu gsum* ("the 13 Tibetan myriarchies"), encompassing *mnga' ris skor gsum* (Western Tibet), *dbus gtsang ru bzhi* (Central Tibet), *mdo smad* (Amdo) and *sgang drug* (Kham).⁶⁵ Thus, specific territorial concepts of Tibet as circulated and narrated over centuries, were literally mapped onto modern formats as propagated by specific political agents.

⁵⁸ Anderson 2006[1983]:174.

⁵⁹ See e.g. Martin 2012:169, or McGranahan 2003.

⁶⁰ Bell 1931:139.

⁶¹ Including maps showing Asia or only China, which include Tibet.

⁶² See Bell 1928: inside of back cover.

⁶³ Other maps that accord to the one of Bell can be found in Melong 4-7&8-8 (December 1929), 6-1-8 (June 1931), 7-4-8 (April 1933), 12-9-4 (April 1944), 18-2-4&5&7 (November 1949), 22-7-5 (September 15, 1954) and 22-8-2 (September 22, 1954).

⁶⁴ See Melong 4-10&11-8 (April 1930), 11-2-supplement 1&2 (September 1942), 12-8-11 (March 1944) and 26-4&5-7 (September/October 1959).

⁶⁵ See Melong 22-7-5 (September 15, 1954) and 22-8-2 (September 22, 1954).

The method of modern scholarship reached its limits concerning political relationships which were not based on the idea of modern nation states. In the Tibetan case, the map became a "logo" as described by Anderson only after the Communist takeover, the Dalai Lama's flight into exile and the Melong's discontinuation, at least in exile. The cover of the *Rang dbang srung skyobs gsar shog* (1963-1965) regularly featured a map of Tibet, namely in the form of Bell's version, plus an additional tip reaching deep into Yunnan. The same emblematic map also appeared on the cover of *Bod mi'i rtsa don* in 2006. In a contemporary publication, the August 2012-issue of *Shes bya* namely, again the emblem appears without the tip - the ambiguity of Tibet's boundaries remains unresolved.

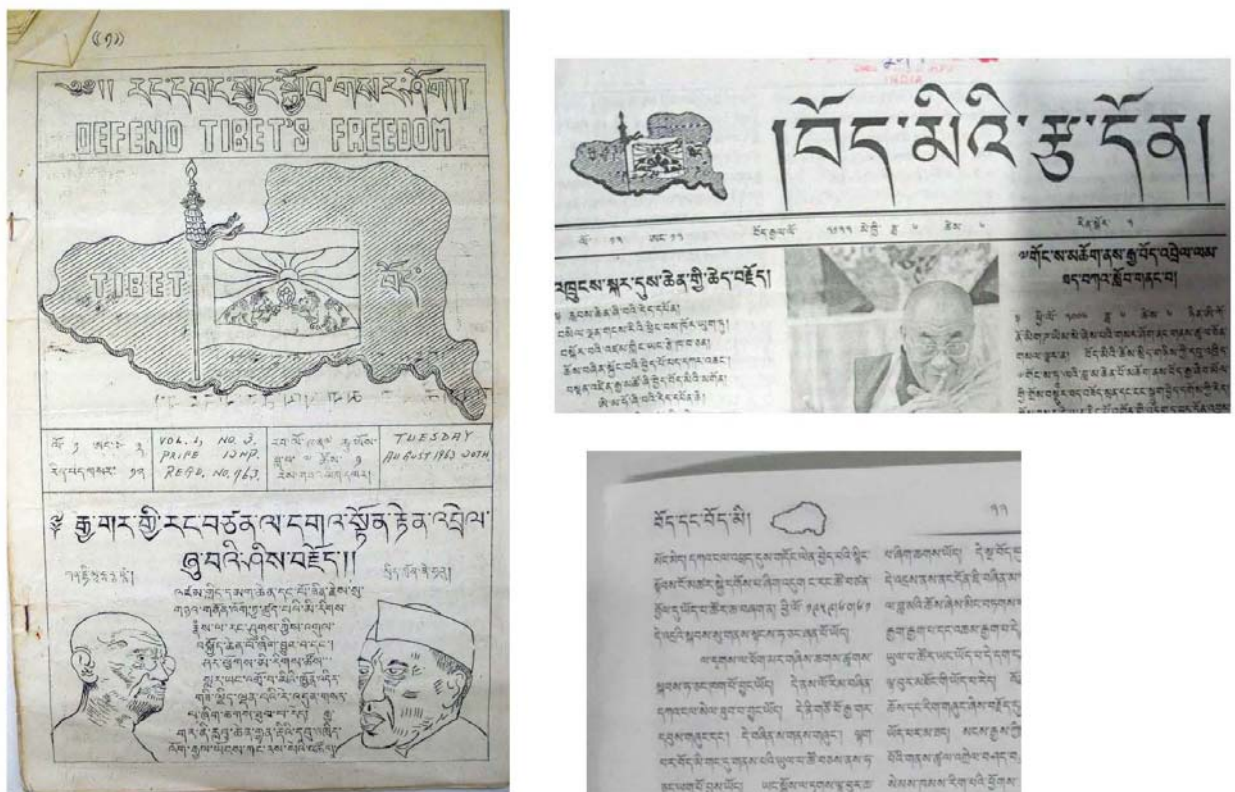


Figure 26: The same emblematic map of Tibet is found on the cover of *Rang dbang srung skyobs gsar shog* (August 20, 1963) and *Bod mi'i rtsa don* (August 23, 2006); a different version in *Shes bya* (August 2012:22).

Within the TAR, however, maps rarely circulated, probably since the Communist leadership was careful to prevent the promotion of nationalism of separate provinces. Despite the fact that, in the late 1950s, the Melong increasingly published nationalist symbols of a Tibetan

nation, such as the Tibetan flag or a portrait of the Dalai Lama, it never featured a map as an emblem. Thus, it may be assumed that the format was largely unknown and therefore did not appeal to the readership. In fact, in June 1931, a map was printed upside down, which goes to show that apparently even the producers were unfamiliar with this format.⁶⁶

While the Melong transported a fascination with modern technologies and formats in general, some of its articles were also infused with discourses of Tibetan cosmologies, Buddhist metaphysics or related rhetoric. For example, in October 1943, a four-page coverage of the war, with pictures of planes, ships and war weaponry, also included a poem which read:

The essence of diligence and wisdom (*brtson 'grus shes rab snying po*)

All the pith instructions (*man ngag*) [including] the vital essence of the Buddha[']s teachings] are present in Tibet, the [land of] the red-faced. [Yet] few are seen who put these into practice perfectly. Therefore, nobody's diligence (*brtson 'grus*), wisdom (*shes rab*) and zeal (*snying rus*) is inferior to those of the Tibetan people.

Even though the Westerners (*phyi gling*), the Chinese, the Russians and so on proclaim a heretic religion of the outsiders, they still perfect accomplishments and subdue the four elements: they dig into the earth, they fly into the sky, they cross the great ocean and so on – unbelievable virtue (*yon tan*) is seen. If one gathers diligence, wisdom and zeal, a flint stone [becomes] suppler than butter.⁶⁷

Thus, technological advances which control nature may be achieved through cultivating virtues (*yon tan*) such as wisdom, discipline and zeal. As if talking about the Bodhisattva's path to enlightenment, training in such strengths can empower humans to control nature almost magically, by "subduing the four elements" and making stones melt.

A similar way of framing technological innovation may be observed through an article on space travel from 1963, when the Melong reported on the competition between the USA and

⁶⁶ See Melong 6-1-3 (June 1931).

⁶⁷ Melong 12-3-9 (October 1943): *brtson 'grus shes rab snying po/ thub dbang srog bcud man ngag kun/ gdong dmar bod kyi yul na yod/ nyams len mtha' ru phyin pa ni/ mang po yod par ma mngon na/ brtson 'grus shes rab snying rus gsum/ bod kyi mi las chung ba med/ phyi gling me go u go sogs/ phyi rol mu steg chos brjod kyang / grub pa mtha' ru phyin nas kyang / 'byung ba bzhi la dbang bsgyur nas/ sa la 'dzul dang gnam la 'phur/ rgya mtsho chen po brgal ba sogs/ yon tan bsam gyis mi khyab mthong/ brtson 'grus shes rab snying rus gsum/ dzoms na lcags rdo mar las mnyen/*. The author is given as "a Tibetan Geshe" (*dge ba'i bshes gnyen zhig nas*).

Russia in manned space travel with the headline "flying rockets into the space of the round world" (*jig rten ril po'i mkha' dbyings go lar gog shugs kyi 'phur gru*). The news report was followed by a seven-limbed poem:

Between white America and red Russia,
there is a galloping competition about space.
Today, Russia seems to be the winner,
but we will see who will be victorious in the future.
These days, there are planes in the sky,
rockets in space,
trains and cars on the ground,
and ships and submarines in the water.
These amazing machines
[work] with diligence and effort
in the environment of the modern age,
how astounding!
If somebody would invent [a machine]
which could be equally diligent
for the benefit of the true religion
and for the benefit of this life and the next,
how great would that be!⁶⁸

On the one hand, the poem praised modern technologies and exhibited a fascination with the powers of cars, trains, ships and submarines, and, on the other hand, fear is expressed about religion being left behind. The efforts raised for the advancement of modern technology should also be employed concerning the practice of "true religion", thus morals were seen at least equally important to modern technology, if not even more important.

The Position of the Earth. The event of a solar eclipse was repeatedly referred to in order to explain the position of the earth within the solar system. Beyond this, the event was also used

⁶⁸ Melong 28-5-supplement 3 (May/June 1963): *a dkar u dmar gnyis kyi bar/ mkha' dbyings bang rgyugs 'gran mus red/ da lta u dmar rgyal cha yang /_phugs su su rgyal blta rgyu red/ deng skabs gnam la gnam gru dang /_mkha' dbyings gong mar glog gru dang /_sa la ril li mo Tora dang /_chu la gru gzings nya gru sogs/_steng 'og bar gsum rgyu bzhin pa'i/_ngo mtshar can gyi 'phrul 'khor gyis/_snod bcud nang gi rig gsar la/_'bad cing 'tshol gyin 'dug par mtshar/_don dam dam pa'i chos don la/_'di lta'i 'bad rtsol gnang bzhin du/_'di phyi gnyis bde'i rig pa la/_gsar 'tshol gnang na ci ma rung /.*

to denounce "indigenous beliefs" held by traditional Indian and Tibetan scholars who would explain that the demon Rahul eats the sun, swallows it and finally spits it out again. Modern scholars (*deng dus kyi mkhas pa*), on the contrary, explain the event correctly by referring to the moon which covers the sun. This is formulated, for example, in July/August 1944, next to a large model of the scientific explanation which accompanies the text. Its author appealed to the readers' sound reasoning when he demands to "investigate whether this is true or not."⁶⁹

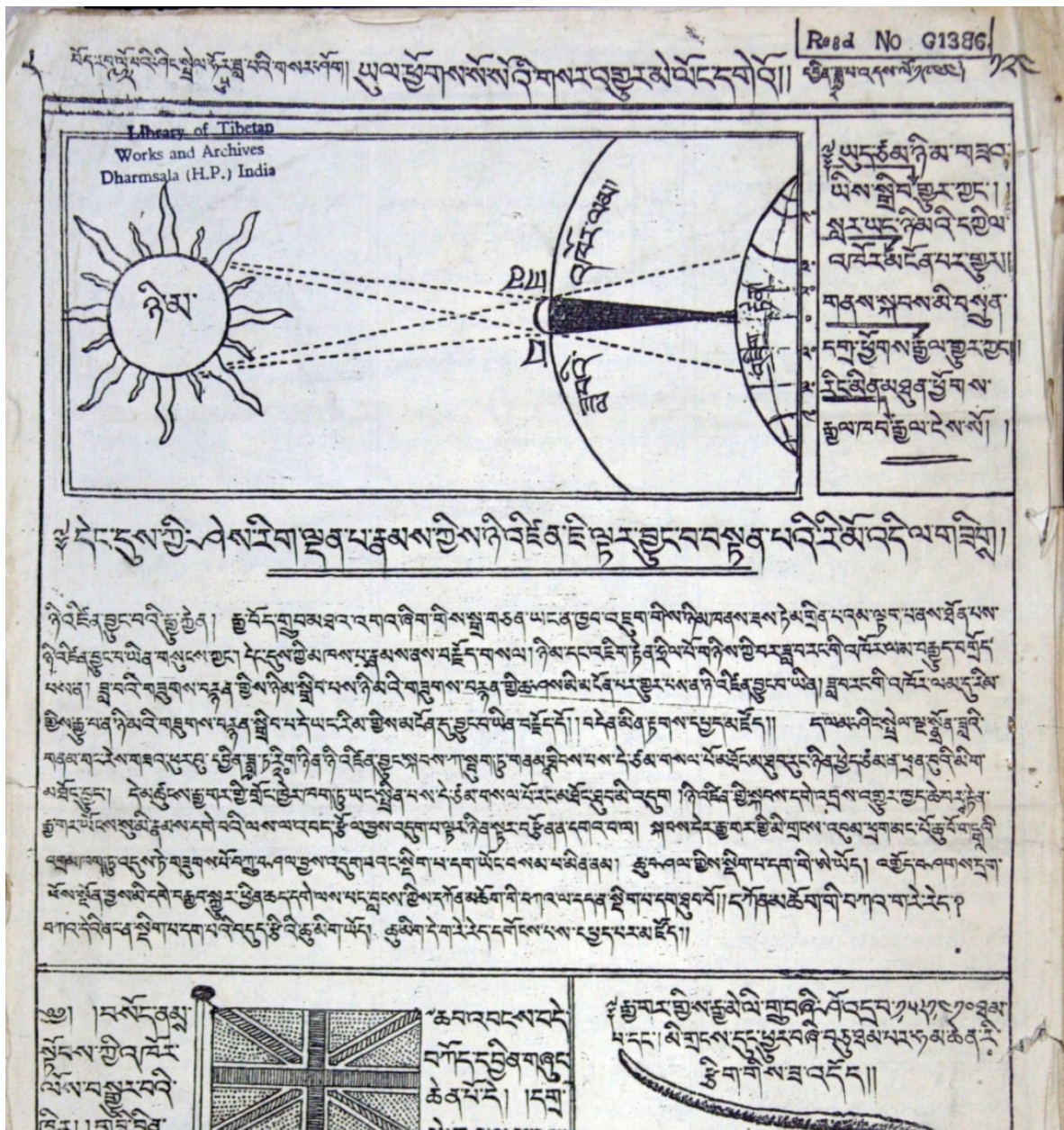


Figure 27: A depiction of the scientific explanation of a solar eclipse in Melong 12-12-8 (July/August 1944).

⁶⁹ Melong 12-12-8 (July/August 1944): *bden min rtags dpyad mdzod*.

In a similar vein, in July 1928, the Melong gave a description of the (correct) views of "foreign astronomers" (*phyi gling skar rtsis pa*),⁷⁰ and in 1954 the viewpoints of "modern intellectuals" (*deng dus kyi shes rig ldan pa*),⁷¹ and in April 1952 it stressed the general importance of "modern geography" (*deng dus kyi 'dzam gling rgyas bshad kyi rig gnas*). Also in these cases, modern scientific knowledge was contrasted with indigenous explanations involving Rahul the demon.⁷²

At least in one instance, the superiority of the modern model was also embedded within a context of morals. The issue of July/August 1944 explained how the event of eclipses was considered especially meritorious by the people, and thus they act in wholesome ways and even go to bathe in the Ganges river, believing that their sins will be washed away. The article's author scolded this as superstitious. Washing could not purify anybody's sins, they were rather purified by "regretting very much [what one has done] and therefore then discarding the unwholesome deeds that one has done and taking up wholesome deeds, thus trusting in the words of god (*dkon mchog*)."⁷³ Thus, alien concepts are used to eradicate superstitious beliefs, but they still reflect individual morals by, in this case, referring either to the Christian or Buddhist *dkon mchog*.

Thus, we have seen how Tharchin's newspaper picked up on many of the modern tools, such as maps, and a general fascination with new technologies or the spread of knowledge of the world's makeup. In this sense, the Melong was a modern newspaper which spread a mechanical and material understanding of the world's workings. However, it is equally important to note that, in many instances, the Melong also provided a platform which allowed these modern paradigms of materiality, rationality and scientific falsification to be newly embedded in ways perhaps unexpected or unaccepted even by modern scholars. Dge' 'dun

⁷⁰ See Melong 2-8-3 (July 1927).

⁷¹ See Melong 22-3-4 (July 1954).

⁷² See Melong 20-1-9 (April 1952).

⁷³ Melong 12-12-8 (July/August 1944): '*gyod bshags drag pos sngon byas mi dge brgyab skyur phyin chad dge las pang blangs kyis dkon mchog gi bka' la dad na sdig pa dag thub bo/*

chos 'phel, for example, through an appropriate style of argumentation managed to connect the debate on the shape of the earth to Buddhist scholarly discourses. In other instances, authors equated the rotation of the world to the Buddhist tenet of the changing nature of conditions and suggested sound moral behavior to not be confronted with the negative effects of unwholesome moral deeds. The ongoing fascination for technological advances was celebrated amidst a context of virtue (*yon tan*), which at least in its diction carries notions of morality, in the sense that the chosen terminology was usually employed in the context of spiritual pursuits, not technological advances. Finally, there were even calls to build a machine for more efficient spiritual pursuits.

5.3 Foreign News: The Second World War in Europe as Life Advice

In July/August 1944, next to the illustration of a solar eclipse, a nine-limbed poem made a general comparison between the makeup of the world and global news events:

Even if the sun is covered by the moon for a while, the disc (*dkyil 'khor*) of the sun will reappear soon. Even if these days the evil enemies are victorious, soon the allied nations will definitely win.⁷⁴

As already previously, worldly news was taken as an example to reflect on the metaphysical nature of things: the changing solar rhythms of the earth are used as a model to prophesize changes concerning war events in Europe. Just as the newspaper itself, also the foreign news section propagated a nationalistic framework of nation states in which Tibet should partake, in the form of nation states bridging the hierarchies between elite leaders and the commoners. Concurrently, such foreign news items also connected the alien contents to discourses and formats embedded in the mentioned theme of morality, thus making foreign news into a form of word of advice.

⁷⁴ Melong 12-12-8 (July/August 1944): *yud tsam nyi ma gza' yis sgrib gyur kyang / _slar yang nyi ma'i dkyil 'khor mngon par gyur/_gnas skags mi bsrn dgra phyogs rgyal gyur kyang / _ring min mthun phyogs rgyal khab rgyal nges so/.*

In the following, such entanglement of world news and the prevalent formats of Tibetan literature and morals will be investigated with reference mainly to examples of the coverage of the Second World War in Europe, in particular the person of Adolf Hitler.⁷⁵ It was discussed above how the newspaper in general was already presented as a medium for advice in its description as a *legs bshad*. Thus, it gave advice on how to lead a morally sound life in verse form, concerning both the spiritual and the mundane aspects of life. Similarly, also world news were adjusted in ways to connect its contents to the genre both in terms of style and interpretation. As a result, foreign news items were more easily comprehensible and also allowed for transportation of moral life models, often leaving interpretations open for individual conduct or political recommendation.

Moralistic Verses. In 1939, for example, at the verge of the Second World War, the Melong reported on the end of British appeasement politics towards Nazi Germany, which featured a cartoon with Hitler on a globe playing with fire and the British Lord Chamberlain approaching him with a gun. To the accompanying factual report, the author added one of Sa skya Paṇḍita's famous *legs bshad*:

Even the ones good by nature will get mad if you bully them constantly. Sandalwood is cool, but, if you rub it, it burns ablaze!⁷⁶



Figure 28: A cartoon illustrating the end of British appeasement politics towards Germany in Melong 10-11-1 (August 1939).

⁷⁵ Parts of the following section were published in Sawerthal 2016.

⁷⁶ Melong 10-11b-1 (December 1939): *rang bzhin bzang po rnams la yang / lrgyun du brnyas na khro bar byed / tsan dan bsil ba yin mod kyang / r[g]tsub par gyur na 'par bar byed*/. From Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Sa skya legs bshad*, chapter 6, verse 6.

The function of the *legs bshad* was to point readers towards specific interpretations. While the British were good like valuable sandalwood – an image derived from Sanskrit literature – they took to arms because of Hitler's aggravation. Beyond merely an explanation of world news, the article could be read as an advice on how to live a morally sound life. In a similar vein, a verse of the popular Tibetan life advice-work, the *chu shing bstan bcos* ("A Treatise on Water and Wood"),⁷⁷ was applied to the advancement of the Allies in Germany in October 1943:

Great deeds are accomplished step by step. Completion in not arrived at by proceeding impatiently. A great stream, though calm, covers large distances, but a wave, even if intense, does not grow large. Likewise, the Allied nations achieve [their deeds] step by step and are like a great river that calmly covers large distances. Hence, slowly and steadily, they will certainly defeat their opponents.⁷⁸

Thus, in this description, the Allies are likened to a steady stream, whereas Nazi Germany is just an ephemeral big wave that will be washed away. While the concrete example was taken from contemporary and mundane politics, the words of advice lift it to a timeless level by advising to tackle tasks calmly and steadily.

Political Advice. In other cases, the news was interpreted along the lines of its political relevance for Tibet. For example, in 1939, the Melong reported on the war in Abyssinia (modern-day Ethiopia), which had been invaded by Italian forces who forced the king to flee. Reflecting widespread international critique, the Melong accused the League of Nations for not even attempting to make the nations enforce international treaties. This criticism is communicated by referring to a verse from the Indo-Tibetan work *Shes rab sdong bu*:

The wind comes to assist a fire which is burning the forest. [However] when this [wind] destroys a butter lamp, the weak [butter lamp] lacks support.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ This work was composed by Gung thang dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me (1762 - 1823).

⁷⁸ Melong 12-3-10 (October 1943); Verse 11 of the *chu shing gi bstan bcos*: *bya ba chen po yun gyis bsgrubs/ ngang thung 'bad pas mthar mi phyin/ klung chen dal yang ring 'gro la/ rba rlabs drag kyang cher mi 'gro/ zhes pa ltar mthun phyogs rgyal khab rnams nas yun gyis bsgrubs pa dang / chu bo chen po dal gyis ring du 'gro ba dang mtshungs gshis/ dal yun dang bcas dgra sde rnams las rnam par rgyal bar 'gyur nges/*

⁷⁹ Melong 10-5-4 (February 1939): *nags sreg pa yi me la ni/ rlung gis grogs su 'gyur ba yin/ _de nyid mar me 'jig byed pas/ nyams chung ba la bshes yod min/*. This is verse 41 of *Shes rab sdong bu*.

Thus, the critique targets the strong and powerful nations which only come to assist other strong and powerful nations. When a small and weak nation, like a butter lamp, needs support, the powerful nations do not come to assistance, but, even to the contrary, they will wipe it out. The butter lamp is an important symbol in Tibetan Buddhism and constantly present in everyday religion. The author depicts Tibet like a butter lamp in the contemporary world, small, weak and under threat of extinction by powerful nations, just like Abyssinia. Upon providing explanation, the author adds a recommendation addressed to Tibet:

Looking at this, wouldn't it be good if also the weak nations would look for ways to become more powerful? In today's times, a 'powerful' nation means one which has as much military, weaponry machines and chemical weapons as possible.⁸⁰

Thus, the case of the foreign country Abyssinia was a hook to address an issue which essentially concerned domestic Tibetan politics and a way to admonish the Tibetan government to catch up with the rest of the world. On an individual level, such news could also be understood as advice to act generously and altruistically towards weaker people.

Socio-Political Advice. The same dynamics were at work in the presentation of Hitler's specific acts. In resonance with the social dynamics described in the previous chapter, the Melong was inclined to take side with a "lower" social stratum of its imagined Tibetan community also in the case of world news. For example, during the early 1930s, its authors still held enthusiastic views on Adolf Hitler, such as stated in an issue of 1933:

[Hitler] provides for the subordinates (*'bangs ser*) and assists and supports the poor. He always thinks about their suffering and takes up responsibility for them [...]. In this way, the German subordinates (*'bangs ser*) should be able to make progress, and their own country should be independent, happy and wealthy.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Melong 10-5-4 (February 1939): *der bltas rgyal khab stobs chung rnams nas kyang da lta nas stobs ldan yong ba'i thabs shes gnang na mi legs sam/ deng gi dus su stobs ldan zhes pa ni rgyal khab su la dmag dpung dang dmag gi mkho byed 'phrul 'khor dug rdzas gang mang yod pa de la stobs ldan zhes pa'o/*.

⁸¹ Melong 7-7&8-8 (July/August 1933): *khong gis 'bangs ser dbul zhing 'phongs pa rnams la grogs mgon gnang ste de dag gi sdug bsngal med par bya ba'i phyir dus rgyun du thugs bsam bzhes tu snying stobs dang [...] bzhin du 'jar mAn 'bangs ser yar ldan 'phel rgyas 'byung ba dang / rang yul rang btsan bde skyid stobs 'byor 'byung [...]*.

Thus, the advice "to bring happiness to the subordinates (*'bangs ser*) of one's own country" provides a moral model both for individual readers but also the government.⁸² In fact, Hitler was used to provide moral models on how individual people should treat each other as well as on how nation states should treat their "subordinates".

By the 1940s, however, the Melong too had turned to the perception of Hitler as a real threat, "a murderer of the happiness of the world" (*'dzam gling bde skyid kyi gshed ma*) and "the enemy of the Buddhist teaching" (*bstan bgra*).⁸³ In the Melong's coverage of the end of the Second World War and Hitler's suicide, the defeat of Nazi Germany was seen in light of a moral lesson on karma. A nine-limbed verse stated:

Even though the weak country of Abyssinia came under the power of the strong Mussolini, the Abyssinian king is [now] on the golden throne. Look at the corpse of the strong Mussolini! Even if [one] is put under the power of somebody else for some time, in the end the fruits of karma will ripen. Friends, look at this example, think about it and see how the infallible fruits of karma will soon return.⁸⁴

Also the fact of Hitler's suicide is placed into a moral lesson concerning arrogance or pride (*nga rgyal*):

For a while, the German governor general Hitler sent his troops out with great arrogance (*nga rgyal*) to overtake people in the whole world in the West, Europe and Asia. Thus, severe suffering (*mnar 'tshé*) has occurred in the world. However, thanks to the power of the truth of karma, far from [gaining] power over the world, he has destroyed his own country. [Its] independence and freedom has been sent into the wind.⁸⁵

⁸² Melong 7-7&8-8 (July/August 1933): [...] *rang yul 'bangs ser bde la 'god thabs [g]nang gi yod shag/*.

⁸³ Melong 10-12-10 (February 1940).

⁸⁴ Melong 13-8-9 (April 1945): *stobs chung rgyal phran e spi si ni yar/_stobs chen mo su li nis dbang byur kyang /_stobs chung rgyal po gser khri'i steng na bzhugs/_stobs ldan mo su li ni'i ro la ltos/_gnas skabs gzhan la dbang yod btang gyur kyang /_phugs su las 'bras smin pa'i dpe la ltos /'di la bsam blo gtong dang grogs po tsho/_las 'bras bslu med ring min 'khor la ltos/*.

⁸⁵ Melong 13-8-9 (April 1945): *gnas skabs 'jar spyi hi Te lar gyis nub gling yu rob dang shar gling e shi yA bcas 'dzam gling skye 'gro yongs la dbang 'dod nga rgyal chen po dang bcas dpung 'jug gis 'dzam gling du mnar 'tshé drag po byung rung /_las 'bras bden stobs mthus 'dzam gling dbang rgyu phar bzhag rang yul tshang ma phung /_rang dbang rang btisan rlung la bskur zin/*.

Here, Hitler was accused of possessing the arrogance (*nga rgyal*) of wanting to take over the whole world, and, in his attempts, he had produced severe suffering for others. This is in diametrical opposition to the Buddhist virtue of compassion, which dispels negative karma and accumulates positive karma. This analysis was then moved to a more general level; through the fact of Hitler's defeat, it was demonstrated that no people should have the arrogant desire to take over the world: "The arrogant who want power over the world should look at the ruin of the German governor general Hitler."⁸⁶ The verse can again be read either in individual terms as a criticism of the bad trait of arrogance or politically as an anti-imperialistic critique against not only Germany but anybody striving to rule the world.

Entanglement of Worldly and Spiritual Advice. Hitler's ruin was depicted in a cartoon on the following two pages. The first line reproduced illustrations previously printed in the Melong and presents a short retrospect on Hitler's rise and defeat. The second and third lines feature a cartoon on Hitler's ever-pending demise. Wherever Hitler went, he encountered the (British) sign for victory, "V", accompanied by the message "the Allies will win" (*mthun phyogs rgyal*). In the end, not able to withhold the obvious, he hung himself on a wooden V-sign.⁸⁷ While the cartoon clearly represented messages induced by the British, the accompanying verses however transported a different message:

The story of an old man: even if your stomach is full, it will be empty again. Look at how Hitler was defeated even though he had great success. Look at how the thorn bush which torments others, upon being established, torments oneself. Even if your own nation has defeated others and is sending troops, you will yourself be defeated [in the end]. Look at this example!⁸⁸

Thus, also the case of Hitler's defeat was used to critique imperialistic efforts on a political level, however, on an individual level, the case was used as an example which propagated

⁸⁶ Melong 13-8-9 (April 1945): *'dzam gling dbang 'dod nga rgyal chen po yis/_ 'jar spyi hi Te lar phung ba'i dpe ltos/*.

⁸⁷ See Melong 13-8-10&11 (April 1945).

⁸⁸ Melong 13-8-10&11 (April 1945): *hi Te lar rgyal kha che rung 'phams la ltos/_gzhan la zug pa'i tsher shing btsugs pa des/_rang nyid la ni zug par gyur la ltos/_rang rgyal gzhan 'pham dpung 'jug 'tsams byas kyang/_rang nyid 'pham par gyur pa'i dpe la ltos/*.

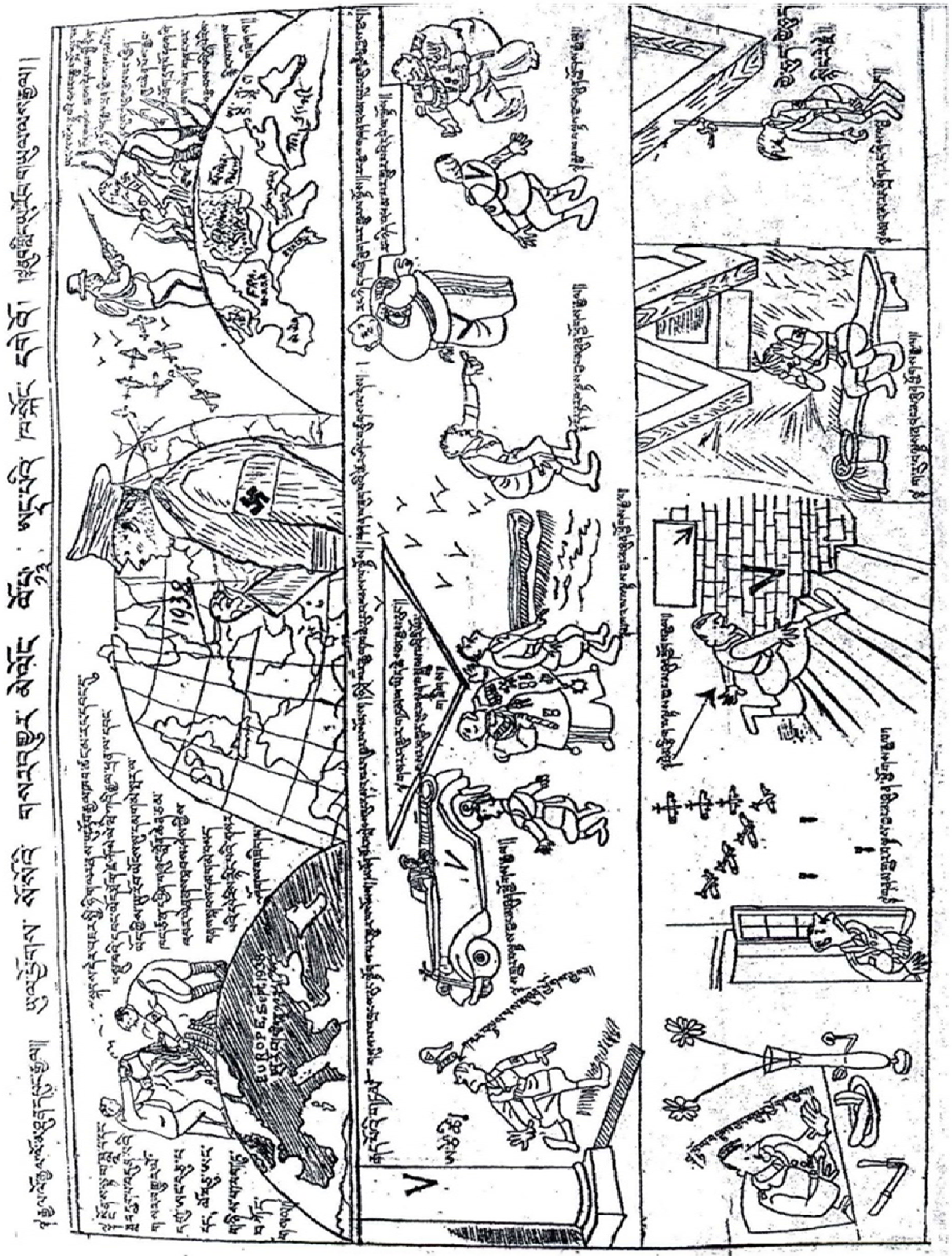


Figure 29: A cartoon depicting Hitler's demise, in Melong 13-8-10&11 (April/May 1945).

timeless wisdom. The verses were headlined "story of an old man", thus bestowing an ambience of educative authority. The main issues under critique were greed and inflicting harm upon others. With the examples of hunger and a thorn bush, the endless cycle of impermanence is stressed in its aspect of the inevitable retribution of one's wrongdoings. In fact, the Melong's report on the Nuremberg trials (November 1946) explicitly connected this criticism to the law of karma:

Hitler started sending troops to overtake the world. In the end, he took his own life, oh dear. Even though Göring was a great general war leader, he followed the leader (*ded dpon*) Hitler, oh dear. The ripening [of the karma] of placing [others] under one's power collapses back onto oneself. Look at this!⁸⁹

As opposed to the theme in the cartoon images, where the victory was celebrated as a triumph of the British or the Allies, the accompanying text contextualized the same event more generally as a victory of wholesome over unwholesome morality under the law of karma. The events surrounding Hitler and the Second World War were presented as a moral model, for the government to rethink its domestic and foreign politics and importantly also for the individual Tibetan readership to review its conduct. The news items modelled in such a way did not propagate *either* a global political message *or* an individual moral one, but they indeed rather incorporated both aspects. Thus, the traditionally inseparable religious and political order of the world (*chos srid zung 'brel*) is reflected in world news reports as two dimensions of the issue of wholesome morality.

Interlude: The Moral Newspaper

With each of the mentioned subjects, be it economics, scholarship, or world politics, we are drawn to the issue of morality, wholesome conduct and religion which are often rooted in Buddhist explanations of the world. This moralistic manifestation of a newspaper resonates

⁸⁹ Melong 15-1-3 (November 1946): *hiTa lAr 'dzam gling dbang ba'i dpung 'jug brtsams/_mtha' ma rang srog rang bcad kye ma hud/_go'i ring mkha' dmag spyi khyab chen po yang /_ded dpon hiTa lar rjes 'brangs kye ma hud/_gzhan la dbang yod byas pa'i rnam smin de/_rang nyid steng du bab pa 'di la ltos/.*

with the developments of successful and influential media products of the enlightenment movement in the 18th century in Europe, such as the "Moralische Wochenschrift" ("Moral Weekly") in Germany or the similar "Periodical Essay" in Britain. These were directed at a literate bourgeois public, and they thrived particularly in protestant regions in Germany.⁹⁰ According to Wilke, "their aim was to [...] educate a person in accordance with reason and religion towards becoming a useful member of human society,"⁹¹ and they mediated "precepts on virtues" according to Böning. Similar to some of the contents in the Melong, in the case of the moral weeklies as well "the news reports only seem like a starting point for further reflection and discussion."⁹² Böning even comments on how the editors took over the traditional role of clergymen: "[The authors of the moral weeklies] work as private individuals and under their own responsibility, accountable only to an anonymous audience and committed entirely to their own judgement and reason."⁹³

The roles of the Melong and Tharchin exhibit similar characteristics, whereas in the case of Tharchin, multiple roles converge in one person: on the one side he was the catechist, liable to the mission and God, and on the other side he was the editor, liable to his audience. As we have seen, the enlightening approaches echo loudly through Tharchin's understanding of the newspaper. In this sense, the Melong must be seen as part of a tradition of newspaper making whose enlightening dynamics can be traced at least to the Moral Weeklies of the 18th century. However – and this is the aspect I wish to stress here – the Melong did not simply copy and amplify these dynamics, but it also received and embedded them in the prevalent Tibetan media practices. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Tharchin had a wide range of possible interpretations of the newspaper at hand and, consciously or unconsciously, he chose particular aspects over others.

⁹⁰ On "Moralische Wochenschriften," see e.g. Wilke 2008:104-105; Böning 2008:301-305 or Ertler 2012.

⁹¹ Wilke 2008:104, original in German.

⁹² Böning 2008:302, original in German.

⁹³ Böning 2008:303, original in German.

Perhaps more importantly than in the context of past newspaper developments in Europe, the moralizing characteristics exhibited by the Melong must be understood as one of the features of the indigenization of the newspaper, i.e. the process of embedding the newspaper into the certain written literary formats and practices of communication in the Tibetan language. Particularly the Tibetan-language literature (in writing), which Tharchin was mainly exposed to, was by the majority produced under the primacy of soteriological pursuits, resulting in the dominant production of what could be called "religious" literature based on Buddhist paradigms. These of course included explanations of karmic dynamics which stress the virtue of altruism, in short, literature as a "vehicle for moral instructions."⁹⁴ As a Tibetan-language teacher, Tharchin was drawn to works of educative and instructive material, both in its reception and production, as we have seen in Chapter 3. Taking these preconditions into account, it is of no surprise that writing, print and communicative culture shaped by a rhetoric of Buddhist soteriological aims strongly resonates through all of the mentioned case studies in the Melong. To further substantiate this point, the following section will investigate contents related to Christianity and demonstrate that even reports on a foreign religion may principally propagate themes dominant in Indo-Tibetan Buddhist culture.

5.4 Religion: Christianity and Buddhism

As expounded in detail in Chapters 2 and 3, many Tibetan-language newspapers such as the Melong initially grew out of missionary activities, and, in fact, Tharchin himself was a devout Christian. Thus it is not surprising that the Melong carried Christian contents. As can be seen in the table, the majority of 88 articles analyzed were either published in the earlier or later period, before 1940 or from 1952 respectively. This is probably linked to the mission's funding activities related and later to Tharchin's readmission to the mission. In the period of British funding, only a small and insignificant number of Christian articles were published.

⁹⁴ Cabezón and Jackson 1996:18.

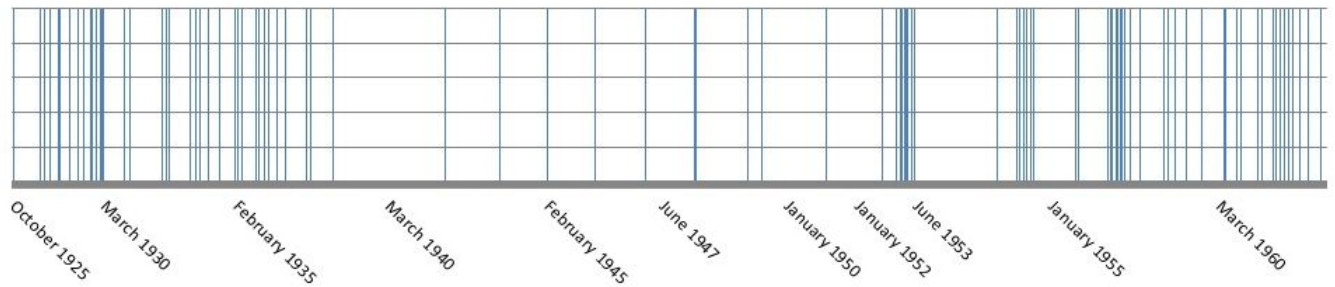


Figure 30: Distribution of Christian contents in the Melong.

Engelhardt has convincingly demonstrated that bible-passages without further comments increasingly appeared when not Tharchin but Rev. Knox acted as editor.⁹⁵ Out of the 88 analyzed articles, 27 were Christmas and Easter messages, reflecting the printing activities at the TMP. Greetings sometimes included explanations of the respective festivities, for example *ye shu'i khrung dkar* ("Jesus' birthday", i.e. Christmas). 49 articles were biblical quotations, some of them intermixed with world news. Two riddles also employed Christian themes.⁹⁶ Most of these biblical elements included the Tibetan translations of the New Testament Tharchin had been working on for most part of his life.

Translation Practices. Many of the biblical passages were published without further commentary, but translating already embeds foreign concepts into familiar language to a certain degree. Passages from the Bible were introduced as *mdo las*, a phrase usually reserved for the citations of authoritative sutras,⁹⁷ and the pope was referred to as *bla ma po pe*, "the pope lama", or *rtsa ba'i bla ma*, "the root lama."⁹⁸ John's Book of Revelations was translated as *lung bstan*, a term for the Tibetan literary genre of prophecies, which will be further explained below. "God" was translated as *dkon mchog* ("jewel"), a term also employed for the three jewels of Buddhism: Buddha, dharma and sangha. The resurrected Jesus was termed *'das log*, a class of beings in Tibetan folklore who passed the threshold of death but have

⁹⁵ See Engelhardt 2011:234-241.

⁹⁶ See Melong 9-3-8 (July 1937) and 9-4-8 (August 1937) for the Annunciation by Gabriel, and 10-1-15 (June 1938) and 10-2-8 (July/September 1938) for the Good Samaritan.

⁹⁷ Melong 10-2-8 (July/September 1938).

⁹⁸ Melong 20-2&3-10 (May/June 1952) and 28-4-supplement 4 (April/May 1963).

returned.⁹⁹ Bible passages were headlined *byams pa'i skor*, "on compassion",¹⁰⁰ and it was explained that one should give all three doors, body, speech and mind (*ngag yid lus*) to Jesus to reach "awakening" (*sangs rgyas*).¹⁰¹ Jesus would explain *chos*, the "dharma", and he would "turn the wheel of dharma" (*chos kyi 'khor lo bskor*), i.e. preach.¹⁰²

A certain ambiguity in terminology might have been deliberate. Some articles, for example, expressed gratitude to *dkon mchog* without any further specification, and they encouraged one to follow the "proper religion" (*dam pa'i chos*),¹⁰³ without specifying the details. Thus, they did not attempt to incorporate new morals, but rather they embedded "other" morals into prevalent schemes of moral evaluation, thus making understood that Christianity was an equal to Buddhism. While in earlier Moravian newspapers, Christianity was always presented as the better religion, the Melong introduced Christianity (*ye shu'i chos*) as an equal to Buddhism.¹⁰⁴

The Ten Commandments. One of such telling examples is a unique comparison of the ten Christian commandments with the ten unwholesome deeds (*mi dge ba bcu*) of Buddhism. This popular list of moral codes dates back centuries, and is commonly remembered to be first mentioned in the famous *Ma Ni bka' 'bum*, attributed to king Srong btsan sgam po (probably died 649). In reality, the text was probably compiled in the 12th century and can be counted as a *gter ma*-text.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, the enumeration of the ten unwholesome deeds is commonly referred to as the first Tibetan law code. In January 1929, the Melong featured a terse print of the two groups of ten next to each other.¹⁰⁶ Without further comment was juxtaposed a verse from the *Shes rab sdong bu*:

⁹⁹ See Melong 18-8-7 (July 1950).

¹⁰⁰ Melong 9-2-2 (June 1937) and 24-7&8-2 (November/December 1957).

¹⁰¹ Melong 18-8-3 (July 1950).

¹⁰² Melong 10-2-8 (July/September 1938).

¹⁰³ See e.g. Melong 2-7-2 (June 1927) and 5-9-1 (February 1931).

¹⁰⁴ See also Hackett 2012:392.

¹⁰⁵ See Kapstein 1992:80-82.

¹⁰⁶ Melong 3-10-1 (January 1929) says: "The ten virtuous deeds (*dge ba bcu*) of the Buddhists: 1. Not killing 2. Not taking what is not given. 3. Not engaging in sexual misconduct. 4. Not lying. 5. Not slandering. 6. Not speaking harsh words. 7. Not being covetous. 8. Not babbling nonsensical talk. 9. Not being malicious. 10. Not having the wrong view. The ten virtuous deeds (*dge ba bcu*) of the religion of the teacher Jesus: 1. God shall be honored as the only one and out of all as the supreme one. Do not depend on any kind of image or physical

Having studied the scriptures is useless if they are not put into practice. Carrying a lantern in the hand does not make a blind man see. From the *Shes rab sdong bu*.¹⁰⁷

Buddhist and Christian morals were juxtaposed with a call to put them into practice, testified by an authority in the Buddhist context. Without attempting to argue for the superiority of the Christian message, the words of the Buddhist canonical scriptures or authoritative masters level out both approaches as morally "correct", implicitly claiming that the main point was not the right religion but proper morals. The same equation was put forth again in 1935, at the end of a long article on a murder case in Kalimpong, and this time it came with a short commentary: "In essence", it said, "the Christian religion is about giving body, speech and mind (*lus ngag yid*) to God and not making any distinction between self and others."¹⁰⁸ Thus, the prevalent moral principles were underlined by the use of Buddhist idiom.

Mixing Christian and Buddhist Authoritative Literature. In some cases, bible quotes were used to interpret the situation of the world, which in turn was explained with Buddhist principles. In May 1933, Tharchin commented how global unemployment and sickness would prevail and the wealthy minority would continue to hoard their money, all due to arrogance (*nga rgyal*), one of the major obstruction on the Buddhist path to enlightenment. Tharchin quotes two Buddhist classical works, the *Shes rab sdong bu* and Śāntideva's *Spyod 'jug* (*Bodhicaryāvatāra*, "A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life"), to emphasize that what is done

figure. 2. Do not take a false (*rdzun*) oath with God as your testimony. 3. Put the seventh day, Sunday, as a regular task and practice it. 4. Respect parents. 5. Do not take a person's life. 6. Do not engage in sexual misconduct. 7. Do not steal. 8. Do not engage in laziness and do not lie. 9. Do not desire somebody else's wife. 10. Abandon the desire for somebody else's possessions." (*nang pa sangs rgyas pa rnams kyi dge ba bcu/1 srog mi bcod pa/2 ma byin par mi len pa/3 log g.yem mi byed pa/4 rdzun tshig mi smra ba/5 phra ma mi byed pa/6 tshig rtsub mi smra ba/7 brnab sems mi byed pa/8 ngag 'chal mi smra ba/9 gnon sems mi byed pa/10 log lta mi byed pa rnams so/ston pa ye shu'i chos logs kyi dge ba bcu ni/1 dkon mchog gcig por thams cad las mchog tu bkur ba/ 'dra'm gzugs dbyibs gang la'ang mi brten pa/2 dkon mchog dpang du bzhag nas rdzun gyi mna' mi skyel ba/3 nyin bdun la'am gza' nyi ma'i nyin dus rgyun gyi bgyi ba bzhag nas dge sbyor byed pa/4 pha ma la bkur gzo byed pa/5 mi'i srog mi bcid pa/6 log g.yem mi byed pa/7 rku 'phrog mi byed pa/8 bsnyom mi 'jug pa ram rdzun mi smra ba/9 gzhan gyi chung ma la brnab sems mi byed pa/10 gzhan gyi nor la brnab sems spong by rnam so/).*

¹⁰⁷ Melong 3-10-1 (January 1929): *gzhung lugs dag la sbyang shes kyang / nyams su len par mi byed na/ lag na sgron me yod na yang / long bas lam ni mthong mi 'gyur/ shes rab sdong bu las/*. This is verse 169 of *Shes rab sdong bu*.

¹⁰⁸ Melong 8-3&4-2 (April/May 1935): *bka' khriims bcu po'i snying po/ dkon mchog la lus ngag yid gsum phul nas cas par zung ba dang / gzhan la rang dang dbyer med lta bur gces par bzung dgos pa ni ma shi ka pa'i chos kyi snying po'o/*.

for the benefit of others is wholesome and what is done for one's own benefit is unwholesome.¹⁰⁹ Subsequently and in the same vein, he quotes from the bible, Matthew 7.12 and Luke 10.27, on the related topic of loving one's neighbor just like one's self.¹¹⁰ Tharchin demonstrated that the Christian religion was just as sound as the Buddhist religion, whilst propagating Buddhist meanings and values, such as that a world of suffering can only be overcome by an altruistic attitude. A similar example is found in September 1934, when the Melong commented on how only disunity and war prevailed between countries and the people. Desiring the happiness for others, was said to be like "the horn of a rabbit" (*ri bong rwa*),¹¹¹ a popular analogy in Buddhist reasoning to illustrate something nonexistent. Subsequently, Matthew 26:52 was quoted: "Put your sword back in its place. All those who draw the sword will die by the sword."¹¹² Thus interweaving quotations from the bible with quotes from Buddhist classical texts, the author presented a commentary on the state of the world which is propagated through Tibetan metaphors in a terminology established in Buddhist contexts.

Equating both religions. In order to interpret the world, Tharchin flexibly made use of both Christian and Buddhist textual sources. This equal treatment can be observed on a formal level as well. In April 1933, an illustration of Jesus on the cross illustrated the news on Easter, and an article explained Jesus' life. A month later, an image of the Buddha was placed exactly on the same position, and an article explains the Buddhist festival of Sa ga zla ba and the Buddha's life story.¹¹³ A comparison using the same images was found in July 1950, in which the Buddha as an ascetic was compared to Jesus suffering on the cross. The right side features an explanation of Sa ga zla ba, and the left side featured a description of Easter, including quotes from the bible which stress the need to love one's neighbor just like oneself (Luke

¹⁰⁹ The first quote is verse 212 of *Shes rab sdong bu*. The second is verse 129 of the eighth chapter of Śāntideva's *Spyod 'jug (Bodhicaryāvatāra, "A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life")*, translated e.g. by Wallace and Wallace 1997:105.

¹¹⁰ See Melong 7-5-1 (May 1933). This is a rare instance in which Tharchin is mentioned as author.

¹¹¹ Melong 7-12-1 (September 1934).

¹¹² Melong 7-12-1 (September 1934): *'khyod kyi ral gri rang gi shugs su chug cig_/_ral gri bton mkhan thams cas ral gris gsod par 'gyur ro/_zhes gsungs pa'i don ci yin rgyal khab kun gyis rtogs shog.*

¹¹³ See Melong 7-4-2 (April 1933) and Melong 7-5-6 (May 1933).

10:27 and Matthew 5:44). Importantly, the page header over both parts of the page bears a famous Buddhist precept as a meta-interpretation, which celebrated the virtues of altruism: "Happiness in the world comes from desiring happiness for others. Suffering in the world comes from desiring happiness for oneself."¹¹⁴ Just as in the case of the Ten Commandments, while Christian contents were certainly propagated, they were framed within familiar concepts – and in this case, a popular Buddhist quote on ways to attain spiritual liberation was taken for an interpretation of both religions according to a Buddhist authority.



Figure 31: Comparing Easter and Sa ga zla ba, in Melong 7-4-2 (April 1933), 7-5-6 (May 1933) and 18-8-7 (July 1950).

¹¹⁴ Melong 18-8-7 (July 1950): 'jig rten bde ba gzhän bde 'dod las byung / 'jig rten sdug bsngal rang bde 'dod la byung /. This is a variation of Sântideva, quoted in Melong 7-5-1 (May 1933) (see footnote 109).

Thus, such biblical quotations were articulated in terms that had been employed for centuries in Buddhist contexts. In general, especially those aspects of Christianity popular and important also in Buddhism received the most attention. Often, both religions would then be additionally validated through another layer of Buddhist authority or moral paradigms. The own prevalent and familiar themes were more at the forefront of most articles than new forms, styles or contents, which again may be associated with the necessary indigenization of the newspaper, in the sense that it was required to take up the prevalent communication practices of the Tibetan language; otherwise, the newspaper would not have been able to stand its grounds amongst its new consumers. Writing and printing in particular were predominantly produced under the primacy of soteriological pursuits, itself resting firmly on Buddhist principles, subsumed under an overarching and universally valid moral guideline, *chos* or dharma. Therefore, even foreign religions such as Christian ideas were suitable to solidify the prevalent ethics, at most adding an extra array of content.

In Place of a Conclusion to Part 2: Modern Times? The Newspaper as Prophecy

As we have seen in Chapters 4 and 5, the newspaper picked up on local economical practices and thus propagated the accumulation of not only knowledge but also wholesome karma. The newspaper itself was framed as propagating what is wholesome and what is unwholesome, in the form of a *legs bshad*, and adding to foreign news some words of advice according to Buddhist morals. Even in the case of Christian contents, Buddhist morals resonated loudly. Thus, the newspaper utilized the news as a model to evaluate the moral standards of current times, and the reports of present events demonstrated to its readers what is wholesome or unwholesome here and now.

As mentioned in the introduction, in many regions of the Tibetan cultural sphere, people believed in the existence of superhuman beings with in-depth understanding of karmic relationships and have come up with different modes of retrieving karmic knowledge of future effects of these superhuman beings. Some of them have been incorporated into the administration of the Ganden Phodrang government, such as the Gnas chung oracle, the Ganden Phodrang's state oracle. Numerous local shamans and others engaged in similar prophetic practices. Such oracles acted as mediums for messages from various classes of deities endowed with divinatory wisdom, and in their transmission of these messages from superhuman realms oracles often used a mirror (*me long*).

The Melong as a newspaper also featured traces of this practice, as evident in the category of *lung bstan*, "prophecies". In its most literal sense, *lung bstan* can mean "scriptural teaching",¹ as in "relying on a text".² But in many contexts, and especially in most dictionaries of modern Tibetan, *lung bstan* refers to a prophetic message from a clairvoyant person or being. The Monlam dictionary, for example, subsumes three dimensions succinctly, as referring to predictions into the future, divination practices and moral clarifications on what deeds produce

¹ See e.g. Rigzin 1986:268 on *lung gi bstan pa*.

² Goldstein for example explains, how *lung* refers to a practice of orally transmitting a text from a teacher to a student by reading the text together (see Goldstein et al. 2001:1077).

pleasant or unpleasant karmic ripenings.³ As stated by Mullard, *lung bstan* may not necessarily be the prophecy itself, but may also refer to the "direct and truthful renditions of [such a] prophecy."⁴ Prophecies can be transmitted to the human world through an oracle, or they are revealed by a "treasure revealer" (*gter ston*) in the context of a related prophetic literary genre known in Tibetan as *gter ma*. *Gter ma* or "treasures" are texts supposedly hidden in the past by Padmasambhava and revealed later by the treasure revealers. In such cases, treasure revealers claim that the contents of such texts derive from a more authoritative source,⁵ claiming not the treasure revealer as its author but, for example, Padmasambhava as the source of information. These treasure texts are often written in cryptic language and thus only few people may understand them.

Some but not all *lung bstan* give very concrete predictions on the future. Others describe a presently degenerate moral state in order to predict a gloomy future. Thus, also the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's testament may be seen as standing in the tradition of prophetic literature. Shortly before his passing in 1933, he made concrete predictions on what kinds of suffering would afflict Tibet in the future if Tibetans did not take action immediately. This prophecy also functioned as a warning, as revealed also by its publication of the TMP in 1958: *The political testament and warning by His Holiness the Thirteenth Dalai Lama to his people in 1932-33*. Its Tibetan title contains the expression *ma 'ong lung bstan*.⁶

In this sense, a prophecy underlines the need for moral revival. *Lung bstan* would often appear in "times of dire straits" and are understood as enumerations of bad omens, as Gayley has pointed out.⁷ They would often be structured along the cardinal directions, specifying the signs happening in the North, the South, the East and the West. Subsequently, relevant

³ See the Monlam Dictionary's entry on *lung bstan* (version 1.1., released April 20, 2013).

⁴ Mullard 2011:28.

⁵ See Gyatso 1996:159.

⁶ The text was reprinted at least twice in the Melong (see Melong 15-4&5-1, February/March 1947 and 19-5-3, August 1951). See also Engelhardt 2012:186.

⁷ Gayley 2003:5-6.

antidotes (*bzlog thabs*) are often given, suggesting specific rituals or moral behavior in general as to counteract bad omens. Within more esoteric literature, seals are often found at the end of the texts, and, in *gter ma* literature, the orthographical feature of *gter tshag* (མཚན་མོ་), according to Gayley, "informs the reader or onlooker immediately of the text's numinous origins and status as scriptures. Because these orthographic marks are so distinct, one need not actually read the text to understand its hallowed status. This is important to note in a cultural milieu where lay people did not have high literacy rates and may still have handled texts as objects of veneration."⁸ Thus, the *lung bstan* is a form of predicting the future, sometimes expressed through the enumeration of current bad omens in difficult times, and at times expressed through orthographical marks which signify a sacred status beyond its actual contents.

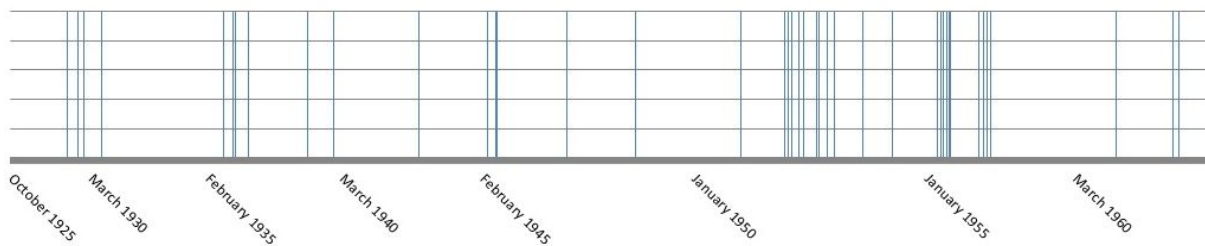


Figure 32: Distribution of *lung bstan* in the Melong.

The table shows that most *lung bstan* in the Melong appeared during the 1950s, when the situation in Tibet between the Chinese Communists and the Tibetans was increasingly exacerbating. Thus, the genre was employed according to its established usage in times of degeneration and suffering. Significantly, the *lung bstan* featured in the Melong were taken not only from Tibetan sources, with half of the 40 analyzed *lung bstan* in fact being Tibetan translation from the bible or fortune tellers of different countries.

The Melong repeatedly featured "the *lung bstan* of John", i.e. John's Revelations, in difficult times. Engelhardt has pointed out that its passage on the apocalypse was published at the verge of the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, under the headline "Signs of the End

⁸ Gayley 2003:6.

of the World" (*jig rten gyi mtha' ma'i ltas*), and complemented with the editorial comment: "When we look at the world today, it seems the above prophecies are becoming true."⁹ Other translations of John's Revelations were again published in 1953, in a series in 1955-56, in 1957 and in 1963,¹⁰ always under the headline *lung bstan* or *ma 'ong lung bstan*.

Foreign prophecies. In fact, the early *lung bstan* were all translations of prophecies by foreign prophets or fortune tellers (*lung bstan pa*) copied from foreign newspapers. For example, in October 1928, a Chinese prophecy (*rgya nag lung bstan*) of a fortune teller from Shanghai is recalled, stating there would be a civil war in China for 18 years. Now, since 18 years have since passed, the news item probed into whether it has actually manifested: unfortunately, no – there is still war going on.¹¹ In April 1929, the translation of a European astrologer's (*yu rob kyi rtsis pa*) grain prophecy foretells the fate of Persia, India and Afghanistan: a rail track will be built between Afghanistan and Russia, which will produce great benefit for both countries, while India will suffer from this partnership. The article ends with: "This is the news (*gnas tshul*) of the fortune teller (*lung bstan pa*)."¹² In July/Sept 1938, a *lung bstan* from Shanghai concerning the war between Japan and China was published. The article first informs about two previously prophesized events which have already become true, and then moves on to an explanation of what is currently prophesized. It ends by stating: "We will see whether or not the *lung bstan pa* is right."¹³

In 1945, a *lung bstan* is featured in the foreign news section, following the report on the inevitable defeat of Nazi Germany. The news' rhetoric reflects enumerations of bad omens, including "a rain of bombshells" (*sbom char*) and the destruction of rail tracks, and below it a "*lung bstan*" of Joseph Goebbels states:

⁹ Melong 10-10-1 (July 1939): *deng 'dzam gling gi gnas tshul la bltas na gong gsal lung bstan rnams 'grub mus so/*. See also Engelhardt 2011:221.

¹⁰ See Melong 21-3-6&7 (June 1953), 23-3-6 (October 1955), 23-4-6 (November 1955), 23-5-4 (February 1956), 23-6-8 (March 1956), 23-7-6 (April 1956), 24-6-1 (October 1957) and 28-4-8 (April/May 1963).

¹¹ See Melong 3-7-3 (October 1928).

¹² See Melong 4-1-4 (April 1929).

¹³ Melong 10-2-3 (July/September 1938): [...] *lung bstan bden min blta rgyu bcas/*.

Future Prophecy: The German Dr. Goebbels [said]: "The current great war is being decided, but there will be another world war in 1948 ." Such is the prophecy.¹⁴

Such employment of the *lung bstan* category first of all familiarized the foreign news item to its Tibetan readership, and then it also showcased that the reported news in the Melong was not thought up but in fact derived from authoritative sources above and beyond its authors or editors. In September 1952, a *lung bstan* by a pundit was reprinted from an Indian newspaper. It gave detailed information on the outbreak and duration of the Third World War in the very same year. The *lung bstan pa* explained the initiator of the war, its fighting forces and its winning and losing powers. It concluded with the allusion that many of the pundit's prophecies have already turned out to be true in the past, thus this present one would probably also manifest.¹⁵

Only three months later, in December 1952, another fortune teller from Tokyo is quoted with further details on the pending outbreak of the Third World War. The article gives detailed predictions on its initiators, its duration and its winners and losers. The credibility of the fortune teller is also underlined, since he had already correctly predicted Eisenhower to become president of the USA.¹⁶ The same issue also featured a Mongolian *lung bstan*.¹⁷ In another prophecy of August 1953, a woman from Portugal predicts the beginning of the Third World War. As previously, also in this case it was pointed out that many of her past prophecies have turned out to be true, and the article ends with "[that is] the news."¹⁸ Usually, foreign prophecies were included in the news section just like any other article translated from Indian or Nepali newspapers, the only difference being that in such divinatory cases the newspaper did not report on present or past events but instead on events in the future.

¹⁴ Melong 13-6-12 (February 1945): *ma 'ong lung bstan: 'jar man sgrag krar go sbal gyis da lam gyi dmag chen thag tshod rung slar yang phyi lo 1948pa'i nang 'dzam gling dmag 'phrug 'byung yong zhes lung bstan 'dugl*.

¹⁵ See Melong 20-6-7 (September 1952).

¹⁶ See Melong 20-9-4&5 (December 1952).

¹⁷ See Melong 20-9-5 (December 1952).

¹⁸ Melong 21-5-1 (August 1953): [...] *zhes pa'i gсар 'gyur/*.

Tibetan lung bstan. Thus, some prophetic pieces of the Melong derived from foreign news sources and translated into Tibetan, while other *lung bstan* were published with reference to more traditionally Tibetan contexts. For example, in October 1943, a prophecy by the protector deity Bya khri chen po proclaimed during the Yoghurt Festival at Sera monastery (*Se ra zho ston*) was published. It was originally offered to the new Dalai Lama and entailed cryptic contents which described omens observed in the North, East, South and West.¹⁹ In June 1951, a *lung bstan* by the protector deity Rdo rje'i shugs ldan was published,²⁰ and one by Padmasambhava a year later.²¹ In October 1953, a *lung bstan* by Padmasambhava's consort Ye shes mtsho rgyal was published, as transmitted by the treasure revealer Pad ma gling pa (1450-1521). This piece also included typographic and compositional specialties, such as the *gter tshegs*, an incipient mantra and closing seals.

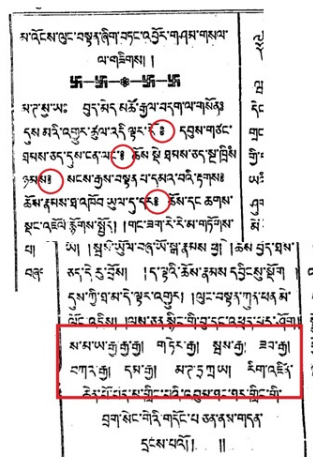


Figure 33: A *lung bstan* with the orthographical marker *gter tsheg* and closing seals in Melong 21-7-3 (October 1953).

Ye shes mtsho rgyal reveals how difficulties will arise in all of Ütsang, causing the degeneration of monastic seats and laws. It laments that the people's practice of the dharma is impure due to attachments and denial and that clerics exist only by name. Furthermore, Bodhisattvas are said to be rare like "stars during the day" (*nyin skar*), all beings, gods and demons, are estranged from each other, and seasonal changes no longer existed, causing bad

¹⁹ See Melong 12-3-1 (October 1943).
²⁰ See Melong 19-3-8 (June 1951).
²¹ See Melong 20-2&3-10 (May/June 1952).

crops; people suffer from leprosy, boys are sick, and girls are described as *gson 'dre*, i.e. ghostly beings that cause evil; fruits lose their nutrients, food goes foul, and religious institutions would disappear.²² This *lung bstan* explains natural occurrences and gives a description of the situation in all six realms of existence, not just the human realm.

As mentioned above, the appearance of *lung bstan* which describe such degenerate times increased in the Melong with the situation during the 1950s, often in the format of a *lung bstan* with a respective *bzlog thabs* or antidote. The degenerate conditions are ascribed to unwholesome moral conduct of people thus the readers are called to wholesome behavior. For example, a text as early as October 1928 stated:

These days, in all regions, there is a great danger of epidemics, famine and natural catastrophes. What reason for this could there be other than the spread of unwholesomeness? Therefore, it would be great if everybody exerted themselves in wholesome deeds. If not, times will get even worse. This is clear from various prophecies.²³

The difficult times are related to the unwholesome morals of human beings, and a *lung bstan* is referenced as a warning to reconsider their behavior. In October 1952, a prophecy describes how, these days, people no longer help each other and partners deceive the other, with the effect that "in the end, a rain of suffering will come down."²⁴ Natural occurrences were seen as bad omens, and material occurrences as manifestations of immaterial wrongdoings, at times also taking place in superhuman realms. Such natural signs were the focus of this example of September 1957:

Starting from the fire-dog year [1946-47], bad omens have risen. The sky has turned blood red, and the sun and moon were overshadowed. Brightly shining stars and little stars arose. The mountains and the waters were swirled by blizzards. Great water bodies, such as rivers, and water springs which were there before have dried out.

²² See Melong 21-7-3 (October 1953).

²³ Melong 3-7-4 (October 1928): *deng skabs yul phyogs gang du'ang nad mug chu rlung gi 'jig pa chen po byung gi 'dug pas rgyu rkyen ni mi dge ba 'phel ba las gzhan ci/_de'i phyir thams cad nas dge las la 'bad na legs so/_de min da dung dus ngan drag po yong rgyu yin pa lung bstan khag nas sal lo/.*

²⁴ Melong 20-7-7 (October 1952): [...] *mtha' sdug bsngal gyi char pa 'bebs [...]*.

Where there were no seasonal waters, they suddenly flooded. [Many regions] run into danger like earthquakes and mountain erosion. There are all kinds of insects, birds of prey and carnivorous animals, which are hostile to the food products and wealth in all regions, both nomads and farmers. There are many epidemic plagues, such as the pustule and others. It seems that the times described [in the *lung bstan*] have arrived.²⁵

Antidotes. Such descriptions of bad omens were often accompanied with *bzlog thabs*, "antidotes", to demonstrate that there is a way to prevent the degenerate conditions from ripening into an even worse future. In December 1953, the Melong published a prophecy received by two beggars from Avalokiteśvara. It described the terrible situation on earth which had come about through people's unwholesome conduct. The suggested "antidote" is the practice of *tshe thar*, another term for *srog glu*, the life-saving practice we have already encountered in Chapter 4. In this practice, one ransoms animals intended for human consumption. The text prescribes to additionally recite the six-syllable mantra of Avalokiteśvara "oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ."²⁶ Hence, the given prescriptions could be very specific. However, bringing in such antidotes was not restricted to indigenous texts. In October 1957, for example, John's "*lung bstan*", in the form of a translated passage on the apocalypse, is intermixed with a *bzlog thabs* from a Tibetan text, a *lung bstan* by Padmasambhava revealed by the Fifth Karmapa Bde bzhin gshegs pa, which includes the prescription to practice tantra.²⁷

News Source. Among the news sources available to the Melong also featured prophecies of deities which are retrieved through practices of consulting an oracle. In 1954, when the Dalai Lama was about to travel to Beijing to meet Mao Zedong, a discussion was sparked on

²⁵ Melong 24-5-3 (September 1957): *lung bstan shig las_me pho khyi nas 'go bzung ltas ngan lang /_nam mkha' khrag mdog nyi zla sgrib dang /_skar ma 'od chen skad phran mang po shar/_ri ngu chu ngu rlung dmar bu yug 'tshub/_chu chen che phran chu mig sngar yod skam/_sngar med dus kyi dug chu glo bur brdol/_sa g.yo ri nyil yul grong 'jig pa dang /_bu sbrang bya khyi bcan gzan sna tshogs dang /_'phrog zhing yul grong zas nor kun la sdang /_'brug bu la sogs gnyan nad mang /_zhes gsungs pa'i dus la bslebs 'dug go/.*

²⁶ See Melong 21-9-1 (December 1953).

²⁷ See Melong 24-6-2 (October 1957). The *lung bstan* can be found in the *kaM tshang yab sras kyi rnam thar dwangs gsal shel kyi me long* (BDRC W27303), within the section on the Fifth Karmapa (see Karma rgyal mtshan 1997:45-46).

whether he should in fact start his journey or rather stay in Tibet, and a related news report of July 1954 provides information on the respective prophecies of different oracles. Two statues were consulted in this issue, namely a female deity with prophetic powers in his residence and a six-armed Mahākāla at the Norbulingka, and both advised to take the journey to China. Additionally, the Gnas chung oracle and the protector deity of Dga' ba gdong were asked for prophecies, and both replied that "it is not good if the Dalai Lama does not return to Tibet between the end of the sixth month and the tenth month."²⁸ In response to the prophecy of the oracles, the advice of some officials of Tsang is quoted with a request that the Dalai Lama should not go to Beijing but send a representative instead. Thus, the voices of oracles and those of "real people" are placed side by side without distinction, reporting both as equally valid sources.

Functions. As suggested by previous examples, oracles were consulted during times of doubt and difficulty, and it has also already been demonstrated that *lung bstan* were sought out in challenging times. Furthermore, *lung bstan* were attributed with such authority that they were sometimes taken as actual proof of news. For example, in the summer of 1936, Tibet was seeking the Dalai Lama's reincarnation. One of the methods in this search consisted in travelling to lake Lhamolatso in the pursuit of retrieving related visions. The Melong reported on this search over three consecutive issues and published the complete "vision seen in the lake".²⁹ The first issue also explained the reasons for this report. Apparently, many rumors had spread about the Dalai Lama choosing not to reincarnate again, and therefore the Tibetan government had sent a copy of the visions from Lhamolatso to Tharchin, who explained: "To prove that these rumors are untrue, [...] they will be published here."³⁰ Thus, the written statement on the received visions and prophecies in the Melong functioned as a rebuttal of verbal rumors. Such authoritative aspects of prophecies are also highlighted in the example of

²⁸ Melong 22-3-1 (July 1954): *chos skyong gnyis kas zla ba drug dma' mthar zla ba bcu tshun bod yul du phyir phebs ma gnang tshe mi legs zhes gsungs tshul/*.

²⁹ See Melong 8-5-5 (July 1936), 8-6-5 (August 1936) and 8-7-4 (July/September 1936).

³⁰ Melong 8-5-5 (July 1936): *'ber gnam bden min ra khrod phyir [...] 'dir par 'debs zhugs so/*.

the cartoon on Hitler's demise which we have analyzed above. To reiterate, the first line reproduces old news to recall what had happened to Hitler, and the second and third line showcased Hitler's inevitable demise. In the very center of the illustration, we find the following statement:

If you do not believe in the [above] story (*gtam*) of the news, then look at the illustration which demonstrates how the news fulfils the prophecy (*lung bstan*).³¹

Thus, for those who may have doubted the news, the cartoon which plays on the pending and inevitable downfall of Hitler underlines its truth – the cartoon being referred to as *lung bstan* in Tibetan. Similarly, in November/December 1960, there was a reprint of an article originally published in July 1956, which describes the various cruelties happening in Tibet. Its elaborate poem is accompanied by an illustration, and following the reprint of both elements, it is stated:

A prophecy by an old man: Whoever did not believe in it, [can see how] now the honey in the mouth has become a razor. Look how now this has really been experienced.³²

In this case, the *lung bstan* underlines the truth of facts and thus must almost be seen as a form of words of advice. Just as in the case of "the story of an old man" encountered above, here too old people are attributed with the capacity of correctly interpreting bad signs.

Going Global. As we have seen, the employment of the indigenous format of prophecies was not restricted to only Tibetan sources and their respective individuals. In fact, half of them appear in connection to foreign *lung bstan pa*, such as Japanese, Portuguese or Chinese diviners. Tharchin also liked to quote prophecies from the bible. Particularly in times of a concrete danger to extinction of "self", Tharchin repeatedly turned to this genre, reiterating apocalyptic prophecies about the outbreak of the Third World War or the arrival of inflictions to Tibet. In one of the final issues, after Tharchin had also started publishing the English

³¹ Melong 13-8-10&11 (April 1945): *gsar 'gyur gtam la yid che ma byas rung gsar 'gyur lung bstan bsgrubs pa'i ri mor gzigs/*.

³² Melong 27-3-8 (November/December 1960): *mi rgan lung bstan bstan pa yin/_sus kyang yid ches ma bgyis par/_spu gri kha yi sbrang rtsir chags/_da lta mngon sum myong la ltos/*.

newsletter, one *lung bstan* of a particular protector deity is even translated into English under the headline "Oracle".³³ It deals with the future of Mao Zedong, and China and Tibet, but also proclaims predictions on future events in the four cardinal directions, with English speakers as its addressees. Thus, the local prophetic format of *lung bstan* is addressed at a global population, in effect turning around those flows so often conceived as predominantly going from West to East. In this context, the newspaper's local interpretations were exported to a global level, the newspaper even acting as a medium to transmit messages from the superhuman to the human realm, effectively taking up functions traditionally reserved for oracles.

We have seen above the various levels on which the Melong negotiated foreign contents amidst a context of Tibetan communicative practices. These included new religions, new modes of scholarship, news of the world and new forms of economic commercialism. In this sense, the newspaper was a vehicle of transporting modern values, embedding them to varying degrees into the prevalent worldview by ways of terminology and literary styles. While new words were coined in the appropriation process involved in news production, sets of stylistic devices with long traditions in Tibetan literature were also employed. Such stylistic devices transported the specific functions they had been attributed with; in the case of *lung bstan*, they underscore the truth of the respective news item. The Melong's abundant use of verse reflects its close proximity to oral speech and demonstrates its orientation towards widening the social spectrum of its readership. Words of advice, as reflected in the use of *bslab bya* and *legs bshad*, occur in political as well as in moral terms. On a conceptual level, the Western technological advances are propagated with fascination and modern knowledge is depicted as veritable, but many of these instances also showcase the importance of moral standards based on Buddhist premises, with the related aim of finding more efficient modes of producing wholesome deeds. Even Christianity transports the Buddhist morals of altruism,

³³ See Melong 28-3-4 (February/March 1963).

modern scholarship endangers Buddhist religion, world politics is taken as words of moral advice, and modern products are advertised as enhancing the accumulation of wholesome karma.

The newspaper nurtured increasing occupation with present conditions, here and now, however according to a Indo-Tibetan Buddhist worldview. Different layers of interpretation are merged or coexist due to an entangled understanding of the world. Despite the fact that the Melong's authors and editors often distinguish clearly between "Westerners" and "Tibetans" or "modern science" and "ancient science", the example of *lung bstan* showcases how certain aspects of the newspaper may only be explained through the entanglement, mixing and interaction of previously unconnected traditions.

Yet, the Melong's targeted Tibetan readership was clearly articulated as well. The consequences of the above entanglements included the imagination of Tibet as a modern nation which incorporated a wide array of phenomena and tools. While the newspaper was a means to represent reality and to communicate between its different actors, divine and worldly, elites and other classes, it not only imported modern knowledge systems, market processes and so to Tibet, but coincidentally it also transported prevalent forms of knowledge production, thus replicating and solidifying them. So far, it has remained unclear to what extent the different layers were in fact successful in their reception by the readers. Clearly, however, the *lung bstan* also had the important function of being able to attract the Tibetan readers' attention to participate in the newspaper. This is exemplified in an issue of early 1952, in which Tharchin published a *lung bstan* which described the degenerate situation in the world and promised *zlog thabs* in the following issue. The promised *zlog thabs* then turns out to be a text composed by a reader and sent as a letter to the editorial office. The next chapter will now further investigate such forms of the Melong's reception and demonstrate the various way its targeted audience reacted to the endeavors of Tharchin and his newspaper.

Part 3: Participation and Public Formations in the Melong

6 Participation: Reader Reactions Then and Now

As we have seen so far, Tharchin struggled to make his project accepted in Tibet. The newspaper was able to operate only due to its potent financial supporters, which were analyzed in Chapter 3. It has been demonstrated in Chapters 3 and 4, and to a lesser degree also in Chapter 5, that Tharchin conceptualized his newspaper as a participatory medium. To reiterate, this is true in two senses: From the first issue onwards, Tharchin stressed his ambitions to engage as many subscribers as possible, who should not only act as the fundament of a financially independent media enterprise but also become active contributors to the contents of the newspaper. As evident from Chapter 4, these target readers were thought as "all Tibetans", thus bridging social hierarchies but solidifying an imagination of a bounded Tibetan community, increasingly equated with a nation Tibet. In the early years of the newspaper, the Melong targeted areas which also included the various regions of the Himalayan borderlands, while later, during the late 1940s, it increasingly picked up on the theme of *khri skor bcu gsum*, equated with a Tibetan nation. When reference was made to readers in other countries, then this was often done in connection to increasing pressure on the people living in Tibet, thus connecting them to a global community yet delineating and solidifying Tibet within this world view.

The endeavor of finding engaged readers reflects newspaper ideals developed in Europe by the late 18th century, which are described by Lundell in the following words: "The publishers of newspapers literally considered it their duty to publish letters to the paper, and its readers considered it their right to appear in print. [...] The newspaper, it was commonly agreed, should not reflect or represent a public discourse, it should actually be one, in order to promote a better society."¹ In a similar way, Tharchin too strived to provide a platform for this kind of discourse, a newspaper shaped through interaction with readers. In order to be perceived by the target audience, Tharchin and his coworkers exhibited creative ways of

¹ Lundell 2011:11-12.

processing news. The readers' prominent place in the newspaper's contents does not only accord to Tharchin's articulated wishes but is also demonstrated by a study of four content themes, as we have seen in previous two chapters.

In fact, the process of content "production" cannot be entirely divided from its "reception" by the readers, because publishing is always connected to the participation of the audience in some form or another. Nevertheless, the newspaper introduced new dimensions of participation into the Tibetan literary realm, namely the active composition of texts by ordinary readers. The modes of this feature were shaped by existent cultural protocols of the addressed audience. The Melong offered this to audience to engage in content production, and thus offered all readers the possibility to become authors – and to what extent this capacity was put into practice is the research objective of this chapter.

The previous two chapters have shown how foreign elements were embedded within communicative practices established amongst Tibetan speakers. In the following, I shift the focus away from the production of the newspaper and the contents toward the documented modes of the participation of its recipients, both during its publication time and today. Three dimensions of participation will be dealt with in the following: first of all, the subscription system will be described and analyzed, in order to evaluate who and how many people had subscribed to the Melong; the second part analyzes 73 published letters to the editor, which shed light on how the readers participated in the Melong and how Tharchin selected contents in order to stimulate public debate; and the final part deals with the Melong's role in the memory of today's journalists in Tibetan-language media. It is based on documents produced upon Tharchin's death, interviews with Tibetan journalists in exile and scholarly articles published in Tibetan language.

From a methodological point of view, the reactions and adaptations by readers are much more difficult to assess than the production and the product. Since newspapers are ephemeral objects, reactions to them are seldom captured in writing. The analysis of the subscription

system is based on letters and subscription lists from the editorial office of the TMP, and thus offers an officially documented perspective on the readership. Questions on who read the Melong beyond those subscription lists, who perhaps had listened to somebody reading it out loud, or who perhaps received it but never actually read it lie beyond the possibilities offered by the sources. Furthermore, the lists themselves should be viewed critically and with caution. Most of them date from the British funding period and the following years, since the bureaucracy of the British government required regular documentation. In fact, many of the extant lists were prepared upon the request of POS Hopkinson, who had admonished Tharchin to tidy up the accounting.² Thus, many of the lists served the purpose of satisfying the financiers. It is unknown how Rgyal lo don 'grub's involvement, for example, affected distribution numbers from 1954 onwards, and Tharchin's wife is said to have financed the newspaper from the mid-1950s onwards, possibly together with Marco Pallis. This may be one explanation why there was no external need or desire even for documentation. The lists are collected in Appendix 4, divided into names (A) and distribution numbers (B).

Readers / Subscribers / Audience / Public. Before we turn to an analysis of the recipients and their likings, we need a working definition of "a recipient", since the people who received the Melong did so in various ways. Some of them had ordered the Melong, i.e. actually subscribed to it, others received it for free and may or may not have read it. Still others could not read at all and adopted its contents through it being read out aloud. As already discussed in Chapter 3, during the early publishing period, the modern subscription idea was propagated by calling out for *bka' mngags gnang mi*, i.e. "people who order". This choice of words lays bare the role envisioned by Tharchin, namely participants who proactively ordered the newspaper for regular payments. In reality, both the active ordering and the payment of a set subscription rate blurred into the passive reception of the newspaper and a (more traditional)

² See e.g. TC: Letter P.P. McClintock (TLO, Kalimpong) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), January 21, 1947, or TC: Letter Arthur Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok) to [P.P. McClintock] (TLO, Kalimpong), March 1, 1947.

donation mode. As will be seen below, many of the individuals who received the newspaper never ordered it but were reached out to by Tharchin due to their political or social status. The double role of a consumer of the newspaper in its economic sense and in an intellectual sense is reflected in the Tibetan term *gsar 'gyur gzigs pa'i mkhyen mchog*, often used in early years.³ The Tibetan verb *gzigs* is both a honorific form of "to purchase" (*nyo*) and "to look at" (*lta*), here in a sense of reading, and thus the phrase can mean "most learned readers of the newspaper" or "most learned purchasers of the newspaper".

Once the British had entered the scene, the term *gces 'dzin gnang ba* was often used, i.e. "holding dear", "taking care of" or "regarding as important".⁴ With this terminology, the editor shifted from "ordering" or "subscribing" to the more flexible connotation of regarding the newspaper as valuable in one form or another, which resonates more strongly with the traditional modes of donation or sponsorship of printing projects. This shift in terminology may reflect the failure of the mode of payment originally envisioned by Tharchin. *Gces 'dzin gnang ba* is also used in in June 1958, when readers are made the subject of the cover.



Figure 34: An illustration of people reading the Melong as found on the cover of Melong 25-2-1 (June 1958).

³ See Melong 4-12-supplement (May 1930), 6-5-3 (December 1931), 6-8-3 (September 1932), or 16-5-7 (March 1948).

⁴ See Melong 11-11-8&9 (June 1943), 11-11-12 (June 1943), 12-1-2 (August 1943), 19-1&2-28 (December 1950/January 1951), 21-2-2 (May 1953), 21-7-12 (October 1953), 22-6-15 (September 8, 1954), 25-5-1 (September/October 1958), 25-5- supplement 5 (September/October 1958).

The subtitle of the illustration reads: "Old and young, all care for the Tibetan newspaper."⁵ In this later issue, the readers are depicted as an all-encompassing public of however many anonymous readers unknown to Tharchin in person. When addressed in editorials, whether in terms of "ordering", "purchasing/reading" or "taking care of", the readers were in general addressed with the respectful *mkhyen ldan*, i.e. "somebody with intellect", or *mkhyen mchog*, i.e. "most learned".

6.1 Subscription System: Global Framework, Tibetan Audience

The available subscription lists read like a who's who of all the important people connected to Tibet, whether in terms of politics, economics, scholarship or religion. This includes people situated within Tibet, in Kalimpong, India and all around the world. The earliest available list dates from February or March 17, 1926 (see A1), the latest from 1952 or 1953 (see A9). The Thirteenth Dalai Lama received the Melong from 1926 onwards, and the Fourteenth Dalai Lama can be found on a list of 1943, when he was only eight years old. As evident from the lists, people who received the Melong were mainly Tibetan government officials or other influential Tibetans who lived in Lhasa, along the trade route or in Kalimpong. In other parts of India, receivers were people connected to the British administration or to Christian missions, and foreign subscribers included travelers, Tibetologists – in many cases those who had been to Kalimpong themselves – as well as libraries and embassies. As we will see below, the largest bulk of subscribers, however, were in fact people in Tibet.

Overview. In general, my estimate for the average circulation is between 200 and 500 copies. There were only 14 receivers in the beginning, however more than 1000 subscribers in the late 1940s. A registration sheet from around this time, dated September 27, 1948, has survived. It says (*italics* signifies it was filled in by Tharchin):

⁵ Melong 25-2-1 (June 1958): *rgan bzhon tshang mas bod yig gсар 'gyur la gces 'dzin gnang bzhin [...]*. The illustration is also published in Engelhardt 2012:205.

Audited Circulation: 1000

Subscribed Circulation: 600

Territorial Coverage: *all over Tibet, Darjeeling, Sikkim, Bhutan, Ladakh in Kashmir, Almora Simla Hills, China, America & Europe.*

[...]

Class of readers (please show by percentage)

Upper *Officials* 40 % Upper Middle *Traders* 45%

Middle *Lamas* 10% Lower *Laymen* 5%

Most of the readers are Buddhist, some Hindus.

[...]

Population of the town: *not sure as most of my paper goes to Tibet, but whole Tibet is said to be 30,00000 [sic!]*

Literacy of province: 60%

Circulation in the town/province of publication: *Darjeeling district + India about 200*
----- outside-----: 800

Average readers per copy: 15

Naturally, editors tend to exaggerate rather than underestimate numbers, but, in any case, this is the only surviving document of its kind which gives insights into the estimated class-division of readers: almost half were said to be "upper officials", another 45% traders, the rest "Lamas" and only 5% "laymen" in the category "lower". The high percentage of traders can be traced back to the forced subscription system which was active during this time. Tharchin estimated that every issue was read by 15 people. Even if this number was an overestimation, the readers of circulated issues were higher in number, especially in places where many people were illiterate and therefore depended on somebody who knew how to read the contents out loud. Tharchin estimated the literacy of Tibet to 60%, a number not easily consolidated by other sources. In a report of the Bible Society in 1956, it says "about 40% are now thought to be literate."⁶ In 1921, Theo Sörenson estimated that basic literacy must be

⁶ TC: Copy of "British and Foreign Bible Society, Translations and Library Subcommittee Minutes", 1928-1960, stored at Cambridge University Library, provided by John Bray to Herbert Fader.

rather high, but people "with a grammatical and complete knowledge of the classical language are very few indeed."⁷

Concerning the Melong's territorial spread, out of the mentioned 1000 copies, 200 were said to go to Darjeeling district and India. A few scattered copies went to China, America and Europe, and the rest of 800 copies went to Tibet. This corresponds to the information retrieved from editorial comments. Amongst all analyzed editorial comments, only in one issue Tibetans were directly addressed who did not live in Tibet. In 1943, in reaction to criticism Tharchin had received, he argued that the newspaper was actually targeted at Tibetan expats and businessmen.⁸ Only one issue touched upon the Melong's role as a diaspora medium, when, in a comparison of a newspaper produced in India for clandestine distribution in (then Japanese) Burma, Tharchin criticized those in Tibet who did not cherish the Melong (June/July 1944).⁹ At the same time, in many issues Tharchin made sure to underline that the newspaper was produced for Tibet, even if it was distributed globally. Thus, the main target audience was readers in Tibet, and mainly those in Lhasa.¹⁰

First Period. According to a short biographical note, Tharchin started off with 14 subscribers, which gradually grew to 200 people.¹¹ The names of these first 14 subscribers are not documented, however, the earliest fragment of a list from March 1926 for free copies demonstrates that the then 30 receivers derived from the network Tharchin had built up in Ladakh, Kinnaur (Poo), Sikkim, Simla, Calcutta, Kalimpong, Gartok, Yatung, Gyantse and Lhasa.¹² Receivers were officials of the British Raj, of the Tibetan government, members of Christian missions, the University of Calcutta, the previous boss Frank Ludlow (headmaster

⁷ Sörenson 1921: *no page*.

⁸ See Melong 11-11-3 (June 1943).

⁹ See Melong 12-11-6 (June/July 1944).

¹⁰ See Melong 5-2-8 (July 1930); 13-9-1&8 (May/June 1945) and 17-6-2[4] (March 1949).

¹¹ See TC: Fragment of an autobiography ("[illegible] biography of myself and my Tibetan newspaper"), Tharchin, late spring 1942.

¹² According to Fader, the first issue was sent for free to 50 people, including the Thirteenth Dalai Lama (Fader 2004:263-64).

of Gyantse school), the former student and influential aristocrat Lcang lo can khung¹³ or the progressive Tsarong Shape (see A1). In Tibet, the Melong was supported by those considered to be modernizers. Thus, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama was an active subscriber from 1927 onwards, and in an audience in December 1928 he encouraged Tharchin to continue the paper.¹⁴ Earlier in that same year, Tsha rong had subscribed to the Melong, sent words of encouragement and even promised to help in getting a printing press sponsored by the Tibetan Government.¹⁵ In general, Tharchin reported from Lhasa that the "Tibetan Officers are very keen to hear the different news. They are asking me to publish the Tibetan News weekly if possible, if not fortnightly."¹⁶

In January 1927, according to an editorial comment, the Melong was spread in Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan.¹⁷ Tharchin explained that only a few people had subscribed to the Melong so far, and that most of them had not paid their annual subscription bills. The same issue was raised again two years later, specifying that, even though there now were 200 subscribers, only 36 had paid their bills. Out of this group of 200, only 60 came from Tibet and most were in fact from Sikkim. Tharchin calculated: "If Sikkim was as big as Tibet, 10.000 [subscribers] would surely be seen."¹⁸ In March 1930, Tharchin apologized for irregular publication, stating that one of the reasons was that "this [newspaper] is not that beneficial for the Tibetans. Until now, from the first issue onwards, about four years have passed, but there are few subscribers so far [...]."¹⁹ The same problem was lamented in 1933, even though reader numbers in foreign countries were said to be rising, possibly reflecting Tharchin's increasing contacts with

¹³ Lcang lo can subscribed to the paper in March 1926 (see Melong 19-1&2-16, December 1950/January 1951 for a reprint of his letter).

¹⁴ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Lhasa) to John Graham (Kalimpong), September 29, 1927.

¹⁵ See Melong 19-1&2-10, December 1950/January 1951 for a reprint of his subscription letter (dated May 8, 1926) and TC: Letter Tharchin (Lhasa) to Graham, September 29, 1927.

¹⁶ TC: Letter Tharchin (Lhasa) to John Graham (Kalimpong), September 29, 1927.

¹⁷ See Melong 2-1-supplement (January 1927).

¹⁸ Melong 4-1-1 (April 1929): *gal srid 'bras ljongs bod dang mtshungs che na khri tsam nges par du 'gro ba mthong*.

¹⁹ Melong 4-9-4 (March 1930): *'dis bod rigs la phan pa zhig rang e yong / _'di bar du thog ma bskrun te lo 4 lhag song yang da bar mngags mi nyung zhing [...]*.

scholars and travelers from all over the world. The receiving countries were enlisted as China, America, Germany, England, France, India, Nepal, Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan.²⁰

Second Period. In 1942, the British took over the financial management of the production and distribution of 500 copies of the Melong. To recapulate, about 250 copies were distributed to Tibet through the POS, who forwarded it to the British Mission in Lhasa for local distribution. Additionally, further copies were sent through the Tibetan trade agent at Yatung to officials of the Tibetan government (at least in 1943) and through the British Mission to high dignitaries, such as aristocrats, clerics or former government officials. In October 1943, a total of 312 copies were distributed in Tibet by the British Mission, 26 of which were earmarked for the Tibetan government, 38 for high dignitaries and 250 were sent for miscellaneous distribution (see A2). Conclusively, between 150 and 200 copies were spread outside of Tibet. A detailed analysis of the 500 distributed issues is documented for the year 1945-46 (see B1):

- 250 to the British Mission in Lhasa,
- 8 to the British trade agent in Gyantse,
- 70 to Tibetan government officials,
- 10 to the POS,
- 7 to official bodies in Darjeeling District and India,
- 134 to Darjeeling District, Sikkim, Ladakh, Simla & Kullu, and
- 12 remained at the office.

In total, 491 copies were given away for free, and only nine were listed as "on payment". As already discussed in Chapter 3, virtually the whole establishment of the Melong newspaper was financed by the POS. During this time, no foreign subscriber is documented, and the largest bulk of the produced copies was distributed in Lhasa, mainly amongst government officials. With help of the British, Tharchin had thus extended the free distribution of what was originally 30-50 copies to all the relevant offices of the Tibetan administration as well as important Tibetan aristocrats and traders. In 1943, for example, we find listed the eight-year-

²⁰ See Melong 7-7&8-4 (July/August 1933).

old Dalai Lama, followed by the regent, the prime minister, the Bka' shag, the Dalai Lama's father, the foreign ministers and many others. Included are also non-governmental individuals who were key players in trade or religion and exercised substantial influence on politics, including Tsha rong, Sne'u shar (Liushar), Ka shod pa, Tsha sprul ngag dbang blo bzang, Kun bde gling dza sag, Bde mo rin po che at Bstan rgyas gling, Dge bshes chos grags or Gro mo dge bshes at Sera monastery, to just name a few. The Chinese officer received the Melong, just as the Nepali Officer and the Bhutanese Agent (see A2, A5, A6, A7).

Tharchin sent the Melong to influential people, transcending political fractions, networks and allegiances. Unfortunately, sources are scarce concerning the feedback of these individuals. During the 1940s, Tharchin naturally received encouragement from the Lhasa British Mission, whose letters implied that the Tibetan officials liked the newspaper and discussed its contents.²¹ Even if distribution occurred mainly through British channels, the Melong was read beyond immediate British radius, for example by monks of Drepung and Sera monastery. According to George Sherriff, people had also been watching films at the British Mission, which had made the printed war pictures more understandable to Tibetan readers.²²

Concerning the distribution outside of Tibet, a list dating from 1945 shows the following numbers: 41 copies went to Sikkim, 11 to Darjeeling District (except Kalimpong), 11 to Delhi and Calcutta, 3 to Assam, 24 to Simla, 32 to Ladakh and Kashmir, 1 to Kathmandu, 1 to Bodhgaya and 27 to Kalimpong and Pedong (see A3). Similar to the elite recipients in Lhasa, the Melong was here received by political dignitaries such as the Sikkimese king and people of his government, police departments in Darjeeling District or the office of the KMT in

²¹ See e.g. TC: Letter George Sheriff (BM, Lhasa) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), February 4, 1945: "Your newspaper continues to be a source of great interest to Tibetan officials. The other day when we had some twenty officials here, postal copies were distributed to them, and they all immediately opened them and discussed the contents."

²² See TC: Letter George Sherriff (BM, Lhasa) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), July 24, 1943: "The paper is appreciated by everyone I ask about it. I am afraid not many people pay the subscription. However I hope to get some more people to send you a VPP order before long. I saw copies both in Drepung and in Sera a few weeks ago, they caused a great deal of discussion. Now that so many people have seen War news cine films which we show here in Dekyilingka [location of BM in Lhasa], the pictures in your paper are understood better and more appreciated."

Calcutta. Furthermore, it was also received by Christian missionaries in Ladakh and scholars connected to Tibetan Studies, for example at Calcutta University, the Asiatic Society in Calcutta or Nicholas Roerich at Kullu Naggar.

Thus, during the 1940s, "subscribers" became non-paying receivers, conveniently receiving a newspaper sponsored through the British government. In the spring of 1947, out of 57 subscribers in Lhasa, only seven had paid for the Melong (see A5). Not only in Tibet, also at institutions in India, the paper was received for free. In April 1947, for example, Hopkinson was shocked to find out that the Asiatic Society was listed as a "bona fide" recipient.²³ Hopkinson wrote to the Tibet Liaison Office, commenting on a list prepared by Tharchin: "I am not sure just what a 'bona fide' subscriber is. The list includes the Asiatic Society of Bengal, who have been getting the paper since 1942 apparently, without [...] ever once having received a request for payment, and who now say they do not want the paper. Such should be described as 'mala fide' subscribers and no further copies should be sent."²⁴

Trader's subscription system. Hopkinson's initiative put the Melong on new ground. From 1947, all cotton cloth traders between India and Tibet were forcibly subscribed, and the newspaper fully embedded in the infrastructural modes of the POS (see also Chapter 3), in this way producing real subscribers. In February 28, 1947, Tharchin listed 40 new annual subscribers with a total worth of Rs.955-12-0. This included the 120 copies each of Bhajuratna, Sa 'du tshang and Gyanratna (Rs.725), and another 37 subscribers, incidentally mostly from Kham, who had established shops in Lhasa (see A4).²⁵ As evident from a financial statement for the year 1947, out of a total of 868 subscribers, 665 had paid as regular

²³ See TC: Letter Arther Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok) to Asiatic Society (Calcutta), March 1, 1947: "I find that free copies are lavished all round India to learned societies like our own. As the Tibetan Newspaper cannot go on existing on complimentary copies, I do hope that you will help. In becoming a subscriber you will be a fellow subscriber with the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Kashag."

²⁴ TC: Letter Arthur Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok) to A. Pash (TLO, Kalimpong), April 21, 1947.

²⁵ Also in the Melong, Tharchin printed lists of the registered traders. See Melong 15-2-4 (December 1946): 65 people; 15-3-6 (January 1947): 46 people; 15-4&5-16 (February/March 1947): 86 people; 15-6-2 (April 1947): 179 people; 15-8-8 (June 1947): 46 people; 15-9-9 (July 1947): 66 people; 15-10-8 (August 1947): 60 people; 15-11-4 (September 1947): 141 people; 15-12-8 (October 1947): 122 people; 16-1-3 (November 1947): 98 people; 16-2-5 (December 1947): 114 people; 16-4-9 (February 1948): 118 people listed.

subscribers, 154 extra copies were sold and only 35 copies were given away for free. The list details that most copies were disseminated in Lhasa, Shigatse and Yatung, against a much smaller number in Kalimpong, Sikkim or Simla (see B4). Similarly, in the year 1947-48, out of 707 total subscribers, 662 had paid and only 45 were given away for free. The major bulk went to Lhasa (305 copies), roughly 100 to Kalimpong and another 170 to Shigatse, Gyantse, Yatung and Pharijong. The rest went to further destinations in Northern India and Nepal and to "abroad". Also, until 1948, 30 copies were sent to the political officer of Assam.²⁶

Numbers Decline, Political Turn. When the forced subscription system for traders was stopped in early 1948, the copy numbers decreased drastically. In April 1948, the distribution to Lhasa through the POS came down to 141 copies, most of which were distributed through the Indian Mission in Lhasa, 56 copies going to Tibetan traders and 38 to the Tibetan government. 49 copies were given to Tharchin's agent Bhajuratna for further distribution. In February 1949, 49 still came through Bhajuratna to Lhasa, 31 to the Tibetan government in Lhasa through the Indian Mission and 5 to the Indian Mission. Further 39 copies were sent to Sikkim, 16 to Phari, 15 to Yatung and, curiously, 74 to "Ladakh Khache". Apparently, Tharchin had organized for distribution in Ladakh, but unfortunately the name of the distributor there is illegible.²⁷ In total, less than 300 copies were distributed (see B6). The past two years had been shaped by the adoption of former British posts by Indian officials, and Tharchin lost his greatest supporter with Hopkinson's departure. In May 1950, Hugh Richardson, who had remained in Lhasa as an employee of the Tibetan government, asked Tharchin not to send more than 20 copies for sale. Tharchin complied, adding 32 destined for the Tibetan government and 18 for individual addresses, including four for the Indian

²⁶ These copies never appeared on any lists. But when a new officer took over the post in late 1948, Tharchin wrote a letter to him stating: "The former POS used to subscribe 30 copies to distribute them to traders." (see TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to L. Sharma (PO of Sadiya, Assam), November 25, 1948).

²⁷ Later that year, Tharchin attempted to set up an agent in Ladakh, but the targeted person refused. See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Mr. Sirajudin (Ladakh), April 6, 1949.

Mission.²⁸ It turned out that Richardson sold only seven of these 20 copies.²⁹ Already in December 1949, Bhajuratna refused to take more than 15 copies.³⁰

Without British help, the Melong did not generate sufficient attention from its readers. When it was distributed for free, people would read it, but not many people were willing to pay for it. According to Bsod nams stobs rgyal ka dzi of the Indian Mission in Lhasa, this was in part due to Tharchin's editorial style. Different from Richardson, he sent concrete suggestions to Tharchin as how to make the paper more appealing:

Try to give [...] important news with thrilling headlines on the Front Page in Blockletters. For example in your latest paper, you ought to have placed the thrilling Headline of earthquake and the Tibet-British delegation meeting in Delhi in very big type in the front - to make it more interesting. [...] I am telling you this from psychological mind of mine. What will happen if you give only few important news on the size of papers used by the Hymalian Times. [...] Stop using unimportant pictures, long comments from books. Please give short important lines in the front-page, advertisements at the back page and social political matters on the interior leaves [sic!, underlining by Bsod nams stobs rgyal ka dzi].³¹

Tharchin did not implement Bsod nams stobs rgyal ka dzi's suggestions on a bigger scale, however he did include, two months after the letter, in the issue of November 1950, a headline *chu rud kyi 'jigs pa*, i.e. "Danger of a Flood".³² At the same time, the Melong had reached places far beyond its actual destination. In the summer of 1950, the Dalai Lama's older brother, Thub bstan nor bu, read it in Kumbum (Amdo), without Tharchin ever having sent it to him.³³ In a questionnaire of the Government of India on how the Melong is of help to India

²⁸ See TC: Letter Hugh Richardson (IM, Lhasa) to Tharchin, May 10, 1950 and TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Hugh Richardson (IM, Lhasa), June 7, 1950.

²⁹ See TC: Letter Hugh Richardson (IM, Lhasa) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), August 27, 1950: "Out of 20 copies of the July issue of your newspaper, only 7 copies have been sold. Rs.5/4/- is being sent to you money order and the remaining 13 copies are being returned by book post. As already advised, the price of annas 12 per copy is too high."

³⁰ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok), December 5, 1949.

³¹ TC: Letter Bsod nams stobs rgyal ka dzi (IM, Lhasa) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), September 24, 1950.

³² See Melong 18-12-2 (November 1950).

³³ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok), June 19, 1950.

(dated 1950 or 1951), Tharchin stated subscribers were found all over Asia, as far as Kokonor and Chongqing, "to which places the mode of communication is to transport on mule back."³⁴ In February 1951, twenty copies went for local sale through the IM in Lhasa, including three copies for the mission itself, and five further copies for the ministers.³⁵ Spen pa tshe ring of the Indian Mission reported to Tharchin in March 1951 that, despite the challenge, he had sold all 20 copies of the newspaper.³⁶ In early 1951, Tharchin briefly suspended the publication of the Melong, because he had less than 50 subscribers, according to Rock.³⁷ However, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, residing in Yatung from January 7, 1951 to July 21, 1951, had sent words of encouragement,³⁸ and Tharchin resumed the publication from June 1951. In this respect, Bsod nams stobs rgyal ka dzi stated in late 1951: "The Tibetans have not lost interest in your papers. I am sure that your present way of sending papers will be very favorable."³⁹ Tharchin did not manage to arrange for an agent in Lhasa, yet he sent 50 copies to the Foreign Office through the Tibetan trade agent at Yatung, and also "at Shigatse, Gyantshe, Phari and Yatung I send by post about 100 copies, half of it I am being paid."⁴⁰ As previously, the main problem continued to be receiving payment for the paper.

Third Period. As noted, when the Communists took over control in Central Tibet, they attempted to block the distribution of the Melong,⁴¹ and, in fact, later that year, in August 1952, the IM terminated its cooperation in distribution for political reasons.⁴² As early as 1949, the Melong had already had the reputation of being instigated by the Indian

³⁴ TC: Fragment of answers to a questionnaire on the Melong's benefit for India, Tharchin, [1950 or 1951].

³⁵ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to IM (Lhasa), February 27, 1951.

³⁶ See TC: Letter Spen pa tshe ring (IM, Lhasa) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), March 22, 1951.

³⁷ See Letter Joseph Rock (Kalimpong) to Johannes Schubert (Leipzig), May 5, 1951 (in Taube 2009:206).

³⁸ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Doris Shelton (*n.a.*), February 19, 1951: "Just two weeks ago I received a very nice letter from the Dalai Lama and he is very pleased with my newspaper."

³⁹ TC: Letter Bsod nams stobs rgyal ka dzi (IM, Lhasa) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), December 14, 1951.

⁴⁰ TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok), January 23, 1952.

⁴¹ In early 1952, Tharchin wrote to POS Dayal: "I am not sure how long time I can to send the paper to Tibet, perhaps the Chinese may stop going it in Tibet, unless I change my policy [sic!]." (TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok), January 23, 1952).

⁴² See TC: Letter Spen pa tshe ring (IM, Lhasa) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), August 7, 1952: "I hope you will realize that nowadays there are certain objections in distributing foreign newspapers in Lhasa and we therefore do not want to undertake distribution of your paper which might cause difficulties here. [...] please discontinue sending your papers for outsiders to us for distribution."

Government.⁴³ Also Bsod nams stobs rgyal ka dzi stated in 1951: "[...] But the Chinese are suspecting that we might be helping you with news etc. So it is better that they were returned to you this time. People came to know of your recent paper as the C. Office has[d] a copy brought by someone from Kalimpong. I got about 6 enquires if I have the paper. Most of them know what the paper contains. As you think, it is quite right. People are glad with you but the other party is not!!! [sic!]"⁴⁴ The mentioned issue covered the presentation of the Buddha's relics to the Dalai Lama in Yatung, a highly politicized event,⁴⁵ and even more problematic was Tharchin's reprint of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama's famous political testament prophesizing gloomy days in Tibet.⁴⁶

Agents who previously supported the distribution into Tibet now reversed their position and specifically asked not to send it. India neither fully supported the Tibetan independence movement nor the Communist takeover, but rather attempted not to take sides with either party of the conflict. During this time, the number of subscriptions from foreign countries was rising. Following the Communist takeover, the world took more and more interest in Tibet. While no foreign distribution is assessed for the year 1943 or 1945-46, by April 1947 the Melong could state that the newspaper goes to China, America, Italy, English Burma and Singhala.⁴⁷ Further, a statement dating to about 1947-48 shows six paying foreign subscribers and four without payment (see B3) and thirteen paying ones and one without payment in January 1948 (see B4). A fragment of a list of the early-1950s, probably 1951, shows six foreign subscribers, including Theodor Illion in Salzburg, Jacque Bacot in Paris, R.K. Spriggs and David Snellgrove of SOAS London, Arthur Hopkinson in England and Tshewang Yeshe

⁴³ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok), December 5, 1949: "I have heard from some sources that the Chinese are blaming that I have published the last will or instructions of the late Dalai Lama in my issue of February this year which made to think and plan the Tibet Govt. to turn out the Chinese from Lhasa. And also heard that I was instructed by the Indian Government to publish the said artical, though it is not true [sic!]."

⁴⁴ TC: Letter Bsod nams stobs rgyal ka dzi (IM, Lhasa) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), September 7, 1951.

⁴⁵ On its political implications, see e.g. Huber 2008:340-343.

⁴⁶ See Melong 19-5-3 (July/August 1951).

⁴⁷ See Melong15-6-7 (March 1948).

Pemba in London (see A8). By 1952-53, 29 foreigners had subscribed (see A9 and B7), and thus these foreigners became the largest group of addressees outside of Tibet. According to the list, in total, 132 copies were distributed outside of Lhasa. As foreign subscribers were listed: Johannes Schubert in Germany, Humphrey Clarke in London, Heinrich Harrer in Austria, Rev. Knox in Australia, Hisao Kimura in Japan,⁴⁸ Basil Gould in the UK, Arthur Hopkinson, Marco Pallis, David Snellgrove, Lha Tsering,⁴⁹ i.e. the usual suspects who continued along their interest after they had departed from Kalimpong.

Further subscribers beyond Tibet and India were Paul Jordan from the United States (1950),⁵⁰ Doris Shelton (June 1951),⁵¹ Turrell V. Wylie (November 1956)⁵² and Helmut Hoffmann in Munich (1954).⁵³ Starting from 1950, the American embassy in New Delhi subscribed to the newspaper,⁵⁴ and in 1952-53 the American consulate in Calcutta.⁵⁵ As discussed in Chapter 3, this coincided with the increasing interest from the US in Tibetan politics. In September 1952, Chiang Kai Shek in Taiwan received the Melong, as known through a letter registrar for the years 1950-53. Further subscriptions came from the editor of "Newsdom" in Hongkong (September 1952), and from Thub bstan nor bu and Dilowa Hutuktu who had both arrived in California. According to the same document, in September 1952, Stobs rgyal and Rab dga' spom mda' tshang received the Melong in Chamdo, and Dge bshes shes rab rgya mtsho in Xining.⁵⁶ The New York Public Library asked for a sample copy in December 1951.⁵⁷

⁴⁸ See TC: Hisao Kimura (*n.a.*) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), October 25, 1950.

⁴⁹ See Melong 19-1&2-11 (December 1950/January 1951).

⁵⁰ See TC: Fragment of a letter Paul A. Jordan (*n.a.*) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), *no date*.

⁵¹ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Doris Shelton (*n.a.*), June 17, 1951.

⁵² See TC: Letter Turrell Wylie (Rome) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), November 8, 1956.

⁵³ See TC: Letter Helmut Hoffmann (Munich) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), *no month* 15 1954.

⁵⁴ See TC: Letter Harish Dayal (POS, Gangtok) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), April 1, 1950; and TC:

⁵⁵ See TC: Letter American Consulate General (Calcutta) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), January 21, 1952.

⁵⁶ See TC: Letter registrar of the TMP for the years 1950-1953.

⁵⁷ See TC: Letter New York Public Library (NYC) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), December 6, 1951.

Feedback from foreign countries was consistently positive. In 1951, the Swiss printer Mr. Gygax complimented Tharchin on the jubilee issue.⁵⁸

In February 1953, the newspaper was registered as circulating 300-400 copies.⁵⁹ According to a letter to the POS and a brochure with advertisement prices of July 1954, the Melong was read in Sikkim, Bhutan, Assam, Almora, Garhwal, Himachal Pradesh and Kullu, i.e. along the whole Himalayan range.⁶⁰ For the coming years, no further lists on distribution and subscription are available. One blank list which is available from the 1950s parallels the just mentioned regions in its range of expected dissemination, adding foreign countries such as the USA, the UK, Europe, China and Japan (see B8).

In the early 1950s, not only had the Indian Mission given up distribution, but Tharchin was further unable to find any agents and the Chinese blocked the distribution of the Melong in Tibet in July 1954.⁶¹ Thus, Tharchin required reliable friends to secretly distributed the Melong into Tibet.⁶² In 1958, he reported to Marco Pallis that, even though the newspaper was banned by the Communists, "more demands are in coming from the mimang [Mi dmangs tshogs 'du] and I am [illegible] to send about 80 to 100 copies and it goes very far places to Eastern Tibet and Amdo and read by thousands of people and monks [sic!]."⁶³ Thus, the Melong had become a medium fought against by the Communists, effectively regarded along the same lines as the guerilla fighters in the Indo-Tibetan border regions. A Communist

⁵⁸ See TC: Letter A.F. Gygax (Bern) to Tharchin (Kalimpong), July 19, 1951: "I want to tell you, that I was deeply impressed to have for us the seldom paper from the "far east" and I can nothing do, as to send to you my best compliments for your work as editor and printer [sic!]."

⁵⁹ See TC: Letter Tharchin to Subdivisional Officer (Kalimpong), February 27, 1953.

⁶⁰ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to T. Wangdi (Deputy Minister of Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes and Excise, Ministry of West Bengal, Calcutta), July 8, 1954; and TC: Brochure on advertisement rates of the Melong, September 1954.

⁶¹ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to T. Wangdi (Deputy Minister of Scheduled Tribes and Backward Classes and Excise, Ministry of West Bengal, Calcutta), July 8, 1954.

⁶² See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Peter Gunther (Moody Literature Mission, Chicago) December 3, 1957: "The Chinese communists are trying their best to stop the paper going to Tibet but so far they have failed and the demand is more increasing. But I have to send them through reliable friend and it goes even in the monasteries and the monks are very pleased with my paper."

⁶³ TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Marco Pallis (London), July 13, 1958.

propaganda movie of summer or autumn 1958 features a few issues of the Melong.⁶⁴ The newspaper is not explicitly mentioned, but it is shown amongst footage of Tibetan resistance fighters who are accused by a narrator of not being properly punished by the Tibetan government. Around the same time, the Chinese government also had put pressure on the Indian government to extend a warning to Tharchin, which was more or less ignored by Tharchin.⁶⁵ In 1959, the secret form of distribution was completely stopped, however, as stated by Tharchin in 1961.⁶⁶ According to Nebesky-Wojkowitz, in the mid-1950s, around 150 copies were published. According to the former Tibetan worker Dpal ldan ye shes, between 1955 and 1963, about 100 copies were published.⁶⁷

In sum, while some Tibetans were interested in reading the paper, by and large they were unwilling to pay for it. Due to the British policy during the war years, they were in fact used to getting it for free. Tharchin stated in December 1963, just after the last issue had been published: "Gradually, all Tibetans began to understand the value of the newspaper. Since all the news published in the paper during the war became true, they used to state and say that my paper was a fortuneteller and they liked it very much, but they thought that they would receive it freely as it was during the war times. In this way, the paper was never self-supported without the help of the government [sic!]."⁶⁸ More than functioning as an extension of British border politics, Tharchin actually wanted to stimulate public discussion.

The reactions discussed so far are reactions expressed by acquaintances of Tharchin. However, he also received feedback from strangers. One example is a letter from February 1954, written by a certain Bsang rgyas nyi ma who criticizes the Christian contents of the paper and in the

⁶⁴ According to the opening credits, this video which compiles 1950s-footage is entitled *Mao Zedong yu Zhongguo* ("Mao Zedong and China"), and was compiled in 2002 by the Jiang xi wen hua yin xiang chu ban she (Jiangxi Cultural Audio-Video Press). It runs 43:21 minutes, and at 4:35 the cover of Melong issues 25-3&4 (July/August 1958) and 25-5 (September/October 1958) are shown. I am grateful to Robbie Barnett for pointing out this reference and sharing the video clip.

⁶⁵ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Avatar Singh (POS, Gangtok), December 16, 1963.

⁶⁶ See TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to [?], September 6, 1961.

⁶⁷ Interview with Drung yig Dpal ldan ye shes, May 8, 2014, Gangtok.

⁶⁸ TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Avatar Singh (POS, Gangtok), December 13, 1963.

books published by the TMP. He suggests using the abundantly available Indo-Tibetan literature instead, such as the Buddha's life stories (*jātaka*), Śāntideva's *Spyod 'jug* or Sa skya Paṇḍita's *Sa skya legs bshad*.⁶⁹ Interestingly, as we have already seen in the previous chapters, the latter two works had in fact been repeatedly quoted in the *Melong*, and at least the *jātakas* and the *Sa skya legs bshad* were later published by Tharchin. Apparently, Tharchin did not wish to publicly debate the criticism concerning the propagation of Christian content, as he did not reprint the letter in the *Melong*, however, as we will see in the next section, many others were published and thus made public.

6.2 Published Letters to the Editor: Politics, Praise, Forgery

Even though Tharchin and his coworkers requested their readers to contribute contents from the early years of the newspaper onwards, until the late 1940s, very few letters were actually published in the *Melong*, as can be seen in the chart. Overall, 73 such letters were identified; the first one was published in December 1936, eleven years after the *Melong* was founded.

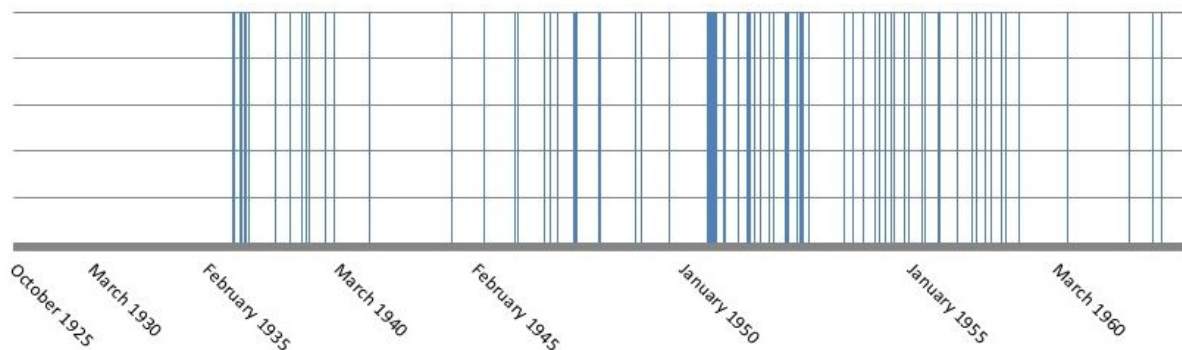


Figure 35: The distribution of letters to the editor in the *Melong*.

⁶⁹ See TC: Translation of a letter from Bsang rgyas nyi ma (Phari) to Tharchin, translation provided by Fader, February 20, 1954: "Especially in some of your composed text book there are Christian stories, and it is like [illegible]-artificial gold substituting gold and we do not need them in Tibet. If you have worked very hard to compose new books for the interest, Tibetan children then please do not send such books to us. For materials for religious and secular teachings to Tibetans please quote from Paksam Trishing (annals of Buddha), Zanglun, Chonjug, and Sakya Legshy etc. as they are far better and more suitable. I am sure that if you put my request in your newspaper and enquire general public of Tibet regarding choice, then it will clear up your enemy doubt. [...] All the vices and darkness of this world is being made clear by one ray of burning light. What senseless person would choose a small light stating that it is better than burning rays of the light of Lord Buddha [sic!]."

These letters were often published anonymously and usually under the headline "according to a letter which has arrived" (*brag yig 'byor gsal*) or "from a knowledgeable one" (*mkhyen ldan zhig nas*). Therefore, it is impossible to say to what extent the authors were from Tharchin's extended circle of acquaintances. Published letters could give legitimacy to the newspaper via letters of prominent readers as well as stimulate interaction between readers. Both these aspects were in support of instigating participation in the project: in the first case, sample letters by prominent individuals had the capacity to inspire other readers to partake in the project; and, in the second case, the publication of controversial subjects or opinions could stimulate answers by fellow readers and could kindle public discussion.

Reprints of the letters of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government demonstrate most clearly the function of such letters in legitimizing the newspaper. Such letters were reprinted on five occasions, not transcribed but in a true copy of the handwritten letter, including stamps and seal.⁷⁰ The 25-year jubilee issue is in great parts a collection of congratulatory letters of distinguished personalities of the political, economic or intellectual life in Tibet, Kalimpong and beyond. Next to the reprint of the letters of the Dalai Lama and the government, are to be found reprints of Khri byang rin po che's subscription (1946), Tsha rong's subscription (1926), a eulogy by Dge bshes shes rab rgya tsho or a letter by Chiang Kai Shek's bureau (1942). Political celebrities such as the Sikkimese king, the POS Harish Dayal, Dutt Majumdar from the Judicial Department in Calcutta, former British Trade Agent David Macdonald or the director of the Intelligence bureau in Kalimpong, Lha Tshe ring, sent letters of congratulation. Local media men such as Suresh Candra Jain (*Himalayan Times*) and Parasmani Pradhan (*Mani Press*) were represented, as well as Tharchin's local acquaintances Prince Peter, Marco Pallis and Rev. Scott of SUMI. Tibetan lamas from Ladakh, Bhutan and the USA wrote poetic pieces, and former students Lcang lo can congratulated. A letter by

⁷⁰ See Melong 8-9-1 (December 1936), 10-12-7 (July/September 1938), 14-5&6-1 (February/March 1946), 16-5-1 (March 1948), and 19-1&2-4&5&7 (December 1950/January 1951).

Bsod nams rab rgyas from Nanjing, "a friend never met" (*ma mthong grogs po*), was reprinted; he used to work for the KMT and then worked as Qinghai Communist representative.⁷¹ Tharchin's selection of letters for the jubilee issue underlined his geographically far-reaching contacts transgressing political affiliation on one hand, and on the other hand his contacts to high officials in Tibetan, Indian and Chinese administration as well. These letters did not transport any important information, but they functioned to increase the value of the newspaper.

At the same time, in theory everybody could have one's letter printed within the pages of the *Melong*. The same space which featured a letter by the Dalai Lama could be filled with a letter by an ordinary person in another issue, and in one instance even by an (alleged) *sger g.yog*, i.e. a private servant. In defense of this letter (for details see below), Bsod nams tshen dbang defined the newspaper's capacity for public letter exchange as one of its core characteristics. Within the general understanding of the newspaper as the "mouth of the people", the newspaper was seen as a tool for intelligent commoners (*mi dmangs shes ldan*) to send letters, which would then be displayed in the newspaper in order for everybody to know. He also added that anybody who disagreed with what was written could also send a letter in response and this would be published as well.⁷² The editors explicitly pointed to the option of anonymous publishing, nevertheless the letters which arrived at the press house were examined for credibility.⁷³ Letter senders were required to include their names, otherwise Tharchin had no way of checking for the source's reliability.⁷⁴ Thus, the *Melong* offered itself as a platform to anonymously exchange even uncomfortable news and opinions, transgressing

⁷¹ For reprints of letters see *Melong* 19-1&2 (December 1950/January 1951). See also the letter registrar of 1950-1953, which holds a list of letters requested for the jubilee issue (see TC: Letter registrar of the TMP for the years 1950-1953, January 10, 1951).

⁷² See *Melong* 21-2-3&4 (May 1953).

⁷³ Issues concerning reliability were first addressed in the editorial comments during the Second World War. See *Melong* 11-6-12 (January 1943), 11-10-12 (May 1943), 12-2-12 (September 1943), and 12-5-6 (December 1943).

⁷⁴ See e.g. *Melong* 17-6-2[4] (March 1949) and *Melong* 19-3-10 (June 1951).

social etiquettes by providing the option to all participants to actively contribute and even criticize in writing those who traditionally were beyond critique.

It took time for the people to recognize the Melong as a public platform to convey uncomfortable subjects to political decision makers. Especially during the 1950s, the Melong was used by people to communicate those opinions which deviated from official narratives, policies or established social etiquettes. The earliest letters simply utilized the Melong to reach out to as many people as possible without overstepping social boundaries. The earliest one appeared in the issue of December 1936, on the occasion of Gro mo dge bshes rin po che's passing away. His monastery asked Tharchin to distribute calls for donations for prayer ceremonies and for the construction of a tomb.⁷⁵ Similarly, consecutive early letters adhered to established protocols, as will be discussed below.

6.2.1 The Melong as a Platform of Critique and as a Political Platform

It was only from the 1940s onwards that the Melong was used as a platform to publicly expound social injustices of various kinds, a development which went hand in hand with movements observed also in editorial comments, such as increased attention to socially lower strata and to problems discussed by a common public. Most of these types of letters were published between 1946 and 1950, usually anonymously, and many exposed problems experienced in the borderlands. In August 1947, a writer stated that there were about 1,000 illegal vagabonds (*mi 'khyams*) from Tibet in India and that the Tibetan government missed out on taking up responsibility for these cases. The author greatly welcomed that the Indian state had recently deported many of them back to Tibet, for which he listed a number of reasons. Firstly, these vagabonds placed a bad reputation on Tibetans in general:

Formerly, Indian traders said about the Tibetan traders that they are from the dharma land Tibet, treated them like sages [good as] sandalwood and welcomed them in every

⁷⁵ See Melong 8-9-3 (December 1936).

shop. Nowadays, because there are so many vagabonds, they cannot differentiate who is a good person and who a bad one, and they treat every Tibetan as a bad person. Even though one is clearly of high class or a business man, unless they know you in person, they would not welcome you in their stores. They put all [of the Tibetans] into a low class. This is embarrassing and very disappointing.⁷⁶

Secondly, the Tibetan government would be well-advised to take care of these people, since the country has too small a population in any case. The author concludes: "If you have land but no people, it means that no merit or use is made in the empty land, so what is the difference to [simply] being no land at all?"⁷⁷ Thirdly, the deportees could be a source of income for the Tibetan government, by allotting them to various landowners, and the government could generate new taxes in return for food and clothing. Thus, the vagabonds would not feel the need to "wander to other countries and rob or plunder there."⁷⁸ The author was particularly annoyed with the bad reputation these vagabonds spread amongst foreigners:

The faces [of those wanderers] are ugly. Therefore, foreigners think: 'All [Tibetans] are like that.' They take pictures, make drawings and display them as shows in large markets, big shops and elsewhere, doing these humiliating things.⁷⁹

Thus, the letter writer called for proper control of borders, so that vagabonds "cannot get lost without a trace and cannot disgrace [us] in foreign countries."⁸⁰ This letter presented a rare voice countering the simplistic and derogatory depictions of Tibetans by Westerners, who were socialized in a colonial context and felt superior to the "backward" and exotic Tibetan others.

⁷⁶ Melong 15-10-4 (August 1947): *sngar yin na rgya gar pa'i tshong pas bod tshong rnams la chos ldan zhing gi mi red ces drang srong tshad ldan du brtisis nas tshong khang so sor dga' bas byed/deng skabs mi 'khyams mang rkyen bzang ngan dbye 'byed ma thub par bod mi yin phyin mi ngan kho nar rtsis te/_mi dag pho mo dang /_tshong pa yin ngos kyang shes na ma gtogs tshong khang gi nang du'ang yong mi 'jug pa dang /_mi'i mtha' gras su bzhang pa sogs ngo tsha ba dang blo 'pham pa'i gnas mang po 'dug par da cha zhib dpyod kyi dbu tshugs zin par brten/.*

⁷⁷ Melong 15-10-4 (August 1947): *sa rgya yod kyang mi med na sa stong las dge bed mi yong bas sa cha med pa dang khyad par ci yod/.*

⁷⁸ Melong 15-10-4 (August 1947): *[...] yul gzhan du 'khyams pa dang /_phrog bcom sogs byed don med cing /.*

⁷⁹ Melong 15-10-4 (August 1947): *mdor na su yis bltas kyang mig ngor shin tu mi mdzes pa mthong bas/_phyi rgyal mi rigs tshang mas de ltar ro snyam ste/_ha las nas par rgyab par'am/_ri mor bris te khroms tshogs che sa dang /_tshong khang chen po khag tu ltas mo ston ched du bzhang pa sogs dma' 'bebs dang /.*

⁸⁰ Melong 15-10-4&5 (August 1947): *bod kyi mi rtsa rtsa glag tu mi 'gro ba dang /_phyi'i rgyal khab tu zhabs 'dren la mi 'gro ba /.*

In the end, this letter sheds light on another underexposed issue, namely the trafficking of women between Tibet and India during the war, where about a thousand women from Ütsang were allegedly trafficked to India.

These girls were not treated like people, not even like animals. They were treated like commodities without consciousness. I do not know how to put the torture they have suffered into letters. [...] It is as if the suffering of the hells must have really arrived in the human's world. Some have become sick, some have committed suicide, some have escaped to somewhere else. Others, due to sickness, [...] have become ownerless and thus beggars and vagabonds. Out of those, there are probably also many who had been taken away from their parents' hands and found themselves in this situation of great despair. Therefore, it is very important to take good care of one's own subordinates!⁸¹

In sum, the anonymous letter writer called on the Tibetan government to take care of its people and control its borders for the safety of vulnerable citizens, such as women and commoners who did not belong to an estate. Tharchin added to the letter in order to stimulate public debate: "If there are further readers who have suggestions on how to increase the Tibetan population, I will print them here."⁸²

In 1949, somebody criticized the illicit trafficking of sheep between India and Tibet,⁸³ and in December 1952, Dar mdo rin po che warned of fake collectors for donations for a monastery in Bodhgaya.⁸⁴ In 1949, a letter criticized the Tibetan tradition of presenting gifts upon the arrival or departure of a guest. The author of this letters commented: "Apart from being a reason for annoyance, it has no meaning. If everybody would [follow] the new modernism of the big foreign nations, gave up the above described problem, would consider easy ways of meeting and put them into practice, then this would become a good sign of how everybody

⁸¹ Melong 15-10-4&5 (August 1947): *bu mo de dag la mi mi dgos dud 'gro'i 'du shes kyang ma bzhang par/_sems med dngos zog dang khyad med kyi sdug sbyongs btang tshul ni 'dir yi yi ger bkod mi shes pa lta bu lags / [...]* *dmyal ba'i sdug bsngal mi yul du mngon sum yong dgos byung stabs la la nad kyis btab/_la la lcebs dgos dang /_la la gzhan bros pa dang /_la la nad kyis rkyen pas [...]* *bdag med sprang 'khyams du gyur/_de rnams phal cher rang gi pha ma bzang po'i lag nas brkus pa yang mang po yod 'dug pas shin tu nyams nga ba'i gnas su mngon pas/_rang gi chab 'bangs la bdag sprod cis kyang mdzad gal cha ba dang /.*

⁸² Melong 15-10-5 (August 1947): *da dung mkhyen ldan khag nas bod ljongs mi rigs gong 'phel yong ba'i bsam 'char gtong tshe par 'debs chog pa/.*

⁸³ See Melong 18-1-2 (October 1949).

⁸⁴ See Melong 20-9-6 (December 1952).

travels in comfort and meets in happiness."⁸⁵ This letter received a strong rebuttal by another reader, which was published in the following issue. This writer defended the Tibetan tradition of gift-giving and stated that the foreign habit would only contribute to short-term personal gain but not the benefit of others. Also, if Tibetans would indeed pick up on such foreign traditions, not only would the Tibetan tradition decline, but also the foreign ones. In fact, the believe that everything foreign was amazing was denounced as being "like an ant growing wings", i.e. totally exaggerated.⁸⁶

Social Hierarchies. Tibet's encounter with practices of modernity was material for a debate between those content with the status quo versus those enthusiastic about new forms of communication. It was due to the newspaper *Melong*, that voices such as the critique of women trafficking or the borderland politics of the Tibetan government could be articulated in writing, i.e. manifested in material form and spread in various ways all over Central Tibet. Thus, these encounters touched upon the very texture of social interaction and also included debates on what kind of people were able or allowed to articulate what kind of issues. In 1953, an alleged *sger g.yog*, i.e. a private servant, sent a long, elaborate nine-limbed poem which attacked the aristocracy of Tibet, thus turning upside down the hierarchies of social interaction. The author referred to a Tibetan nation based on Buddhism, with the Buddhadharma as the highest authority, and described the aristocrats as greedy, defiant of the Buddha's teachings and insulting them as "old *māras*", i.e. demon-like beings, or "consuming demons" (*za 'dre*), worse than dogs. About his own "class", he stated: "How could we common humble people fall from the ground to the ground?"⁸⁷ Apparently, this letter instigated a substantial amount of public discussion, as commented by worker *Bsod nams tshe*

⁸⁵ *Melong* 17-4-3 (January 1949): *don med thugs bsun gyi rgyu las ma mchis pas/ deng skabs phyi'i rgyal khab chen po'i mo sgro ren lugs gsar ltar tshang mas gong gsal rnyog khra rnams spang nas mcal 'phral stabs bde gnang rgyu'i dgongs bzhes dang phyag bzhes gnang na tshang ma phebs bde zhing mjal spro ba'i dge mtshan zhig 'char bar 'gyur zhes [...]*.

⁸⁶ See *Melong* 17-5-7 (February 1949): [...] *srog chags grogs [grog] mar shog pa 'byung ba dang mtshungs [...]*. I read *grog* instead of *grogs*.

⁸⁷ *Melong* 20-10&11&12-2&3&4 (January-March 1953): *bdag cag mi dmangs nyams chung phal pa rnams/ sa nas sa ru lung rgyu ga la yong /*.

dbang two issues later. Some people did not believe that the letter was real, because servants would not have the kind of education (*yon tan*) needed to write such letters, in fact, a plausible doubt. However, Bsod nams tshe dbang defended the Melong's genuineness: "There is no use for a newspaper house to make up [stories]. We print letters which arrive, that's for sure. Still, there are many [more letters] which have not yet been printed."⁸⁸

Political Platform. While an increase in critical letters may be observed already during the late 1940s, the Melong as a platform to propagate political opinions which deviated from the Tibetan governmental policies picked up significantly only during and after the Chinese Communist takeover of Central Tibet. This went hand in hand with the formation of political opposition centered around Kalimpong (see also Chapter 3). Already the 1940s saw the formation of party-like organizations by Tibetans, however the Chinese overtake would instigate a rapid increase of organizations and networks active in the political processes of the times. A great number of these was set up to counter the Communists in Tibet, with which the Tibetan government cooperated until 1959. Some of the organizations supporting independence recruited armies to fight the Chinese Communists, most prominently the Chu bzhi sgang drug, while others sided with the Communists. The Melong, by reprinting statements, proclamations and the like, provided them with a platform to communicate with each other and with the people in Tibet.

A regularly published group was A lo chos mdzad's Mi dmangs tshogs 'du which advocated full independence, paralleling Tharchin's articulated goal for his newspaper. In March 1956, their rebuttal of the Seventeen Point Agreement was printed which effectively was an exclamation of a rebellion. It ends with "We, the people, rebut the agreement. And then, so that all the Buddhists in foreign places also understand this, I thank you for publishing and

⁸⁸ Melong 21-2-3&4 (May 1953): *gsar khang nas rang bzo byed dgos don med/_yi ge 'byor rigs par 'debs byed nges gtan/_da dung par 'debs ma byas pa mang po 'dug go/.*

distributing this."⁸⁹ Even though the Melong was a fierce advocate of Tibetan independence, one issue also published a letter by a pro-Communist group. In October 1953, a certain Gro mo stod phyi tshogs launched a personal attack on Tharchin:

Dear Tharchin Babu,

In your series of news [you write a lot about] the peaceful liberation of Tibet by the Communists. Concerning this, days of happiness arise for the Tibetan people. [...] Seven billion and four million Chinese Communists have been put under this system and, these days, it has become very famous in the world. On top of plentiful food and clothing, they export for profit to nearby India and others an abundance of food – you must have heard of this. Even more, there are many groups of people of other nations who say, 'We also want to have this good system.' Amongst those who think like you, there is only you. If a fox on a lonely plain wins, where is the benefit? So just shut up. The task for the Tibetan people, dharma and politics, is the task of the Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, so do not agitate. You are like a round stone that is used to build a wall. From now on, your mouth and hands are put into prison. [Given] by the Gro mo stod phyi tshogs on the 10th of the seventh month of the water-dragon year. If you do not print this in the newspaper, we clearly know your reaction.⁹⁰

Alas, Tharchin had no choice but to print it, so he did in an indirect way. He reprinted the letter word by word, letter by letter, expounding grammatical mistakes. Rather than commenting on the actual contents, he commented on the various spelling mistakes:

[...] In this short letter, there are tons of incorrect letters. After the ones knowledgeable in Tibetan language read it well, I request them to send in commentaries on it which I

⁸⁹ Melong 23-6-1 (March 1956): *phran mi dmangs rnam mna' tshig gi chod pa bzhin de nas phyi rgyal nang pa sangs rgyas pa sogs tshang mas go don rtogs slad 'di dag kyang par 'debs 'grems spel thugs rje che ba mkhyen mkhyen*. For further publications by the Mi dmangs tshogs 'du see e.g. 22-5-8&9 (September 1, 1954), or 22-7-5&12 (September 15, 1954).

⁹⁰ See Melong 21-7-5 (October 1953): *mthar phyin sba' sbu lags/ khyed nas gsar 'gyur rims pa'i nang krung go gung phran tang gi bod zhi ba'i bcing bkrol thogs bod mi dmangs la bde skyid kyi nyi ma shar yong bsam khyad rang snag sams yin nam btsan dbang rgyal ngan gzhan gyi nor zas rjes drang gi gnam nam gang ltar bsdugs po zhe cig rgyab 'dug rung lugs bzang ser dang 'dra ba 'di gang la phyin kyang rin thang mtho/ dpe na krung go gung phran tang gi rgya nag mi dung phyur bzhi dang byi ba bdun lhags tsam la lam srol 'di mgo 'og lus 'tshud kyi dangs 'dzam gling nang du grags pa che khar za gyon 'bal thogs khe nye rgya gar sogs la za bas rigs 'di tsam phon che tshong 'gyur byas pa khyed nas go yod shags/ da dung kyang rgyal khag gzhan rnam kyi mi dmangs nas 'ang lam lugs bzang po 'di 'dra nga 'tsho yang bya gi yin brjod pa'i 'tsho khag ga tsam 'dug khyed rang gi rtogs gsal rigs khyed rang gcig po wa thang stong la rgyal nas ci mi phan kha rag bsdod/ bod mi dmangs dang bstan srid kyi bya ba skyabs mgon rta le'i bla ma bstan 'dzin rgya mtsho chen po'i mdzad yongs rdo hril brtsig pa'i dkrug shing ma byas kha lag gnyis nas bzungs brtson la bcugs/ gro mo stod spyi 'tshogs nas chu sprul zla 7 tshes 10 la/ gsar shog nang bod de min yar len gsal byas/.*

will print. The Gro mo phyi tshogs should study its own language properly and then write a correct letter! Because there are many spelling mistakes in the current letter, [its] meaning is not always clear to me. For example, it states "*lugs bzang ser*;" does this mean "*lugs bzang ser po*" [i.e. yellow good customs] or "*lugs bzang ser ba*" [i.e. good customs are hailing down]? It states "*rjes drang*", which seems to mean "*drang po'i rjes su 'khro mkhan*" [i.e. somebody who follows the upright]. And what is the meaning of "*rta le*" [the syllable used to form the term "Dalai"]? From now on, if you send an incorrect letter like this, it is a disgrace of the knowledge of the Tibetan people! Stating that I have to print this incorrect letter in the Tibetan newspaper is just to expose one's own mistakes. [It is stated:] "There are seven billion and four *byi ba* Chinese people." "*Byi ba*" means "mouse", so are you saying that there are many mice in China? There are still many more annotations to be made, but the paper does not suffice [to write them all down].⁹¹

Thus, Tharchin elegantly ridiculed the authors without giving a reply. As previously, Tharchin requested the people to further engage with this topic by correcting the mistakes found in the letter. He also reprinted flyers distributed by the Communists in Lhasa, and, in one case, Tharchin reprinted a leaflet which claimed the Panchen Lama had asked the PLA to liberate Central Tibet and Lhasa. In a response two issues later, an enraged reader criticized the publishing of the "hair-raising" (*lus kyi spu yang zing nge ba*) leaflet, refuting the allegations line by line.⁹²

During the 1950s, apart from statements by political organizations, more and more letters were published which propagated anti-Chinese ideology and which were usually composed by anonymous individuals. Many of them did not only defame the Chinese Communists in Tibet, but the Tibetan aristocratic collaborators as well. A letter of August 1952, for example,

⁹¹ Melong 21-7-5 (October 1953): *yi ge thung thung di'i nang tshig ma dag pa ga tshod 'dug bod yig mkhyen ldan rnams nas legs gzigs gngang nas don 'brel bcas 'di gar gngang tsho par 'debs zhus chog /gro stod spyi tshogs nas rang gi skad yig yag po bslab nas yi ge dag po bris rogs gngang /_da lam yi ge de la dag bya med stabs de tsam don go thub ma byung /_dper na/ lugs bzang ser zhes pa lugs bzang ser po red dam/_ser ba red/_rjes drang zhes pa drang po'i rjes su 'gro mhkan yin pa 'dra_rte l'i zhes pa'i tshig don de ga re red /_slad phyin 'di 'dra'i yi ge ma dag pa btang na bod mi rigs kyi shes bya rig pa'i zhabs 'dren red/_'di 'dra'i yi ge ma dag pa gsar shog tu 'god dgos ces pa rang mtshang bstan pa las bzhan ci/_'rgya nag mi dung phyur bzhi dang bya ba bdun lhags tsam" _byi ba zhis pa'i tshig don rtsi rtsi 'dra/_rgya nag tu rtsi rtsi mang po yod don min nam/_da dung mchan rgyag rgyu mang po 'dug ste da lam shug gus ma ldang so/.*

⁹² See Melong 21-3-7 (June 1953) and Melong 21-5-2 (August 1953).

opened with an appeal to Tharchin to continue sending his newspaper, because "the Tibetan people, monks and laymen, are waiting thinking 'what is the advice which benefits Tibet and what is the fresh news about the situation of the world?'"⁹³ The author states that, while previously the Bodhisattvas, kings and ministers had worked endlessly for the benefit of Tibet, the "current great aristocrats, only for their own minor wealth", deliver the internal debates of the Tibetan government to the Chinese overnight. "In order to please the Chinese, they hand over [...] their wives, relatives and daughters." Thus, the aristocrats are "worse than all dogs and pigs" and hypocrites: "They say, 'I think only of the Dalai Lama and the government,' shed tears and fold their hands, while, in their minds, they think, 'What kind of important stories can I deliver at night?', the image of the faces of the Chinese leaders flickering in front of their eyes."⁹⁴ Then, in Buddhist rhetoric, the author continues:

Oh dear! I take refuge in those who, even though tempted to seduction by money and tea, cannot be seduced; in those who think only about the dharma, who remember only the teachings; in those who are unmistakable as to what kinds of virtue are to be taken up and what kinds of sin are to be discarded for the purpose of this and next life; to those who do not just state that they would act for the cause of the dharma and the lamas, but who have renounced their own life. [I take refuge] in those monks at the four great monastic seats and others.

I take refuge in those who do not listen to the words of the red Chinese who have military power; in those how cannot be cheated by the deceiving (*'jam bslus can*) aristocrats; in those who care in all ways for the weak; in those who may oppress the [bad] rulers; in those who have unchangeable faith; in those who have no hypocrisy for the cause of the government. [I take refuge] in those rare lions of men, the two regents.

⁹³ Melong 20-5-8 (August 1952): *bod kyi mi dmangs ser skya rnams nas bod la phan pa'i bslab bya dang / 'jig rten khams kyi bde sdug gnas tshul gsol pa ga re go yong bsam bsdad yod pas [...]*.

⁹⁴ Melong 20-5-8 (August 1952): *sngar gyi rgyal blon byang chub sems dpa' rnams nas chos dang / bstan pa/ mi ser gyi phyir sku srog blos btang / deng sang gi sku drag che khag rnams nas rang gi rgyu srod phan bu'i don du/ gzhung gi nang gtam tshang ma mtshan mo rgya dpon sar bskyel/ rgya dpon mgu phyir rang gi skyas dman dang / spun bu mo rnams dngos dang shugs kyi rtsis spyod gang thub byed/ kha nas rgyal ba rin po che dang / gzhung sa ma gtogs bsam rgyu med zer zhing mig mchi ma 'dzar 'dzar/ lag thal mo dud dud byed/ snying la do nub nang gtam gal chen po ga 'dra zhig bskyal rgyu yong ngam bsam te rgya dpon rnams kyi bzhin ras mig la 'khor 'khor byed/.*

I take refuge in those who, even though they are poor, do not follow money; in those who, even though they suffer from taxation and compulsory work, think "it is for the cause of dharma", and do not give up the Ganden Phodrang; in those who understand that behind a soft mouth there is poison and do not distortedly run after the Chinese. [I take refuge] in those rare people from Ü, Tsang and Kham.⁹⁵

In the same vein, the author also describes the suffering that has occurred for so many people who live in the Sino-Tibetan border regions:

Look how much harm has been done to some of the monasteries in Amdo and Kumbum and how much difficulties and suffering the people have endured. Some KMT-leaders have cheated the people. They [promised great things] under a great name but an empty cause, and they have kept [people] like a bird in a cage. The rest, in tens of thousands, have been killed. Look how many hundreds of thousands rich merchants in, of course, China, Siling, Sichuan and Yunnan have been robbed [of their possession] and have been killed. The old men and women have experienced the suffering of not having been provided food and service and therefore they have died. The middle-aged people have experienced the suffering of farm slavery, road building and transporting weapons for soldiers from here to there. The soldiers, on the outside, are being killed by the weapons of evil enemies; on the inside, they are dying of the weapon of doubt; and, in between, they are dying of hunger by being cut off from food. Everybody, children from the age of 13 until the age of 24 as well as old men and women, is suffering from military training. Look how they have really experienced hell. Inquire! Soon, very quickly, this will come to Tibet itself, that is for sure. Therefore:

Think, think, please think about the future.

Strive, strive, please strive for liberation.

Protect, protect, please protect the Dalai Lama.

Take care, take care, please take care of the politics of the Ganden Phodrang.

Unite, unite, please unite the thoughts [of the people in] Ü, Tsang and Kham.

⁹⁵ Melong 20-5-8 (August 1952): 'gyed dang ja tshul gyis bslus kyang bslu mi thub pa/_bsam rgyu chos dang dran rgyu bstan pa las me pa/_di dang phyi ma'i don la dge sdig gi blangs dor phyin ci ma logs pa/_chos dang bstan pa'i phyir kha tsam ma yin pa sku srog blos gtong nus pa'i gdan sa bzhi sogs dge 'dun rin po che rnam la skyabs su mchi'o/_dpung stobs btsan po'i rgya dmar gyi ngag la mi nyan pa/_jam bslus can sku drag gyis mgo bskor mi thub pa/_snyoms chung rnam mtha' mtha' nas skyong ba/_btsan po rnam kyi mgo bsnon byed pa/_dad pa la 'gyur ldog med pa/_gzhung don la ngo lkog med pa'i mi yi seng ge srid tshab rin po che rnam pa gnyis la skyabgs mchi'o/_rgyu med kyang dngul gyi rjes su mi 'gro ba/_khral dang 'u lag gis mnar yang chos kyi phyir yin bsam te dga' ldan pho brang blos mi mthong ba_kha 'jam po'i rgyab tu dug yod pa shes te rgya mi'i rjes su 'chal rgyugs mi byed pa'i dbus gtsang khams bcas pa'i mi ser rin po che rnam la skyabs su mchi'o/.

Be free, be free, please be free of outer enemies and inner traitors.⁹⁶

In narrating and commenting on mundane, current events, the author utilized a Buddhist idiom and religious framework to defame and criticize not only the negative behavior of both the KMT and the Communists, but also the unhuman, amoral behavior of the elite segments in Tibet and especially in Lhasa. The text is signed by a certain 'Phrin las kun khyab, who "takes refuge" in those who stay true to the Buddhist doctrine and appeals to all readers to do the same, to protect the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan nation. At the end, 'Phrin las requested to record "every traitor's name in the newspaper."⁹⁷ Thus, the new medium was utilized to call for the protection of the "old" status quo, namely a Buddhist nation in nationalistic guise under the Ganden Phodrang government.

Many letters during this time described the catastrophic conditions in Ütsang ever since the Communists have arrived there. To give one example, in 1958, a man living in Shigatse wrote a letter in reaction to false news a Communist newspaper had published. The letter is composed as an acrostic poem, using the letters of the Tibetan alphabet from the last *a* to the first *ka*, and then back from *ka* to *a* – an elegant format not reproduced in English. Here are extracts of the poem:

Oh dear! You Communist leaders,
do not bully so shockingly.
The capital of Tibet, which is on earth,
is heartlessly being sold.
Like goats and sheep put into a slaughterhouse,

⁹⁶ See Melong 20-5-8 (August 1952): *ltos shig_a mdo dang sku 'bum phyogs kyi dgon khag la nyam chag ji gyur/_mi ser la dka' sdug ji yod/_ko ming tang gi dpon rigs kha shas mi dmangs la mgo skor byed ming che don stong slong tsi [rlung sil]'i nang gi byi'u ltar nyar ba las/_de byings che chung khri phrag mang po bsad/_rgya nag phar zhog/_zi ling zi phron yul lan nang gi tshong rgis rgyu can 'bum phrag mang po'i rgyu 'phrog srog bkum pa bcas la ltos/_rgad po dang rgad mo rnams la lto g.yogs ma 'byor bas sdug shir 'gro ba/_bar mi rnams zhing g.yog dang lam bzo dang dmag mi'i go lag 'or 'dren gyi sdug bsngal myong /_dmag mi rmans phyi dgra ngan gyi mtshon chas bsad/_ nang dwogs pa'i mtshon chas bsad/_ bar ltog chad mu ger bsad/_phru gu lo 13 nas lo 24 man pho mo tshang ma dmag sbyong gi sdug bsngal bcas dmyal ba mngon sum du myong gi yod par ltos shig_dris shig_dus ring po min pa myur ba myur bar bod rang thog tu yong nges pa yin pas soms soms rjes yong soms/_'bad 'bad thar ba'i thabs la 'bad/_bsrung bsrung rgyal ba rin po che srungs/_skyong skyong dga' ldan pho brang gi chad srid skyongs/_bsgril bsgril dbus gtsang khams bcas bsam pa gcig tu sgril/_bsgral bsgral phyi'i dgra dang nang gi dam nyams sgröl/.*

⁹⁷ Melong 20-5-8 (August 1952): [...] *dam nyams kyi ming re re bzhin gnas thsul nang phul chog pa zhu/.*

[its people] are shockingly slaughtered – I am terrified!

Some blind aristocratic men and women
are busy in doing evil deeds and [then] boast of it.
They do not [even] realize how greedy they are,
and run like foxes after the Chinese Communists.

[...]

Parents and children are separated,
sons send their fathers to prison.
Those who have become old are put into pits
are even interrogated,
and in the end, only murdered.

The teachings of Tathāgata [experience]
what a fish [experiences when] pulled out on the [dry] ground.
The victorious teachings
are lost for tea, alcohol and money.

A newspaper, without any style, was distributed.
[It] only said selfish nonsense.
"There is nobody else but me!"
was widely proclaimed everywhere.
Not one word squared with one's actions,
and [even though] it pretended to teach the Tibetan alphabet,

[here, the Tibetan alphabet starts again from the beginning:]

it does not even know the first two letters [of the alphabet].
In that way, some beggar boys may seem eloquent,
[but in fact] know nothing.
They say, "We are patriots,"
but give their father's fields, cared for [for so long],
into the hands of a beggars who know nothing.

Those who give for selfish [reasons, such as to get] tea and alcohol,

hang at the tip of a hook, [like] a caught fish,
and say: "Thank you, Dalai Lama."

Oh, I am terrified by this inferior behavior!

[...]

Pretending to be a hero [they] say: "I do it!"

and attach suffering to their parents and the elderly.

You oxen-like beggar-children,

stop writing the incorrect newspaper!

[...]

[Act like] the brocade-like monstic community

who wears the three jewels on their head like a hat.

They are busy in practicing the dharma

and sincerely give rise to amazing faith.

[...]

Those flesh-eating demons, the Communists,

are the common enemies of [all] beings living on earth.

If you have not understood the meaning [of this poem],

please think about it again and again.

This was stated on January 23 [1958], in response to the random talk without any sources [printed] in a Tibetan newspaper by the Chinese Communists. [Here is] a short history of what I, Muneshasanadhras, have really seen with my own eyes. Thank you for printing it in the newspaper.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ See Melong 24-12-2 (April 1958): *a rtsis gung phran dpon 'go tsho/ ha las thub tshod ma gtong zhig/ sa steng bod kyi rgyal sa 'di/ sha tsha med pas 'tshong rgyu dang / ra lug bshas rar tshud pa ltar/ ya mtshan dmar gsod ya re nga/ 'a 'ur ngan byas ngo 'khyer thog za sems byas pa ma shes pa'i/ zha ra mi drag pho mo 'gas/ wa ltar rgya dmar rjes su rgyugs/ [...]* pha ma bu phrug kha 'phral thog/ pa pha btson 'jug bu tshas btang / na so rgas na dong du bcug da dung skad cha mang po 'dri/ tha ma dmar gsod kho na byed/ ta thA ga ta'i bstan pa la/ nya ma thang la bton pa ltar/ ja chang dngul gyis rgyal bstan brlag_ cha lugs med pa'i tshags par bkram/ ca co rang 'dod sha stag bshad/ nga rang ma gtogs med do zhes/ ga sa ga la rgyang sgrags btang / kha don gcig kyang ma mtshungs pa/ ka kha yi ge slob khag byas/ ka kha'ang ji bzhin mi shes pas/ kha lce bde mdog sprang phrug 'gas/ ga re yin min ma shes par/ nga tsho rgyal bces ring lugs zhes/ ca ga byas pa'i pha gzhis kyang / cha med sprang po'i lag tu sprad/ ja chang rang 'dod sprad chog de/ nya 'dzin lcags kyu'i rtse la bkon/ ta la'i bla ma'i sku drin brjod/ tha ma'i spyod pa ya re nga / [...] pa bo yin mdog ngas byas zhes/ pha ma rgan khog sdug la sbyar/ ba glang 'dra ba'i sbrang phrug tsho/ ma dag tshags par bkod rgyu zhogs/ [...] zha ltar mchog gsum gtsug tu 'khur/ za 'og lta bu'i dge 'dun sde/ 'a 'ur chos kyis las can rnams/ ya mtshan dad pa snying nas skye/ [...] sha za 'dra ba'i gung bran 'di/ sa steng skye 'gro'i spyi dgra yin/ ha go don rtogs ma byung na/ a tsis dgongs pa yang yang bzhes/ zhes pa spyi zla 1 tshes 23 nyin rgya dmar nas bod yig tshags par thog khungs med 'chal btam ji snyed mchis pa'i lan du mngon sum mig mthong gi lo rgyus phran bu phran mu ne shA sa na daha ras bris pa de nas tshags par thog 'god gnang thugs rje che ba zhu rgyur/ gzhis rtse nas gong gsal o los zla 2 tshes 1 la phul/.

This eloquent and strong piece in opposition to the Chinese Communists and their success in cooperating with some Tibetans bears testimony to the Melong's suitability as a platform to counter the propagation of "distorted" presentations of reality. Indeed, random readers took to pens in order to set facts straight via the public platform Melong. Thus, the Melong imported global functions attributed to a newspaper, such as being a new medium of communication between previously unconnected people, facilitating criticism of those in socially higher positions, or at least appealing to them to counter social injustices, as well as a platform to publish political statements and opinions.

However, as already observed throughout all the other content sections discussed so far, more often than not the existent forms and formats were replicated and solidified by engaging in the new product newspaper as well, and this concerns especially also the letters to the editor. Previously unknown modes of articulating critique and political commentary in writing were interwoven with local imaginations, formats and cosmologies. It was already encountered how readers composed their letters in familiar poetic styles or how they employed Indo-Tibetan Buddhist idiom and argumentation styles.

6.2.2 Praising the Melong, Moralizing the World

Especially in the Melong's early years, the letters contained praise of the newspaper and Tharchin, encouraging his work in verse form. These forms of eulogy must be seen within the tradition of songs of praise termed *stod bsngags*, *stod glu*, or *stod tshig*.⁹⁹ However, different from the genres encountered so far, such as *legs bshad* or *lung bstan*, the pages of the Melong never explicitly entitles these songs of praise as such. They present a literary form, both oral and written, of the polite appreciation of a deity, an esteemed political figure or in many cases also both. In a Mahāyāna ritual context, for example, Rheingans explains that "nearly every Tibetan lama with a literary bent composed songs in praise of gurus or deities (*bstod pa*)

⁹⁹ For details on the genre, see Hartley 2008, Rheingans 2015, or Skal dbang skyid et.al. 2011.

[...]."¹⁰⁰ The 20th century with its political developments saw an increased production of such poetic texts for figures not primarily connected to religious traditions. Thus, when the Communists entered Tibet, the Dalai Lama wrote a poem of praise to Mao Zedong, not as an act of spontaneous artistic inspiration but by way of etiquette, "contending that the composition of poetry was common practice in Tibetan culture," as Grunfeld formulates.¹⁰¹ Hartley describes Dge bshes shes rab rgya mtsho as "one of the earliest scholars to write such political praise poetry, marking a transition from religious eulogies."¹⁰² Thus, it is unsurprising that the Melong also replicates the usage of such poems as polite etiquette. The individuals treated in the work of Hartley seem to parallel those who composed eulogies to Tharchin. Two famous praises, printed in successive issues, came from Dge 'dun chos 'phel and Dge bshes shes rab rgya mtsho, who both resided in Kalimpong at that time. Dge 'dun chos 'phel plays on Tharchin's Christian affiliation in a nine-limbed acrostic poem.¹⁰³ Dge bshes shes rab rgya mtsho, writing in the same meter, opens his poem with a definition of dharma (*chos*) and then turns to praise "the one who is known to be from Khunu" for spreading the Melong.¹⁰⁴ In early 1947, four letters which praise Tharchin and his newspaper were printed collectively. Some of these were in prose and make use of poetic metaphors, such as referring to the newspaper as "a rosary of jewels of amazing stories" (*ngo mtshar gtam gyi nor bu'i phreng ba*) or a "beautiful melody" (*dbyangs snyan*).¹⁰⁵ One letter was composed in a nine-limbed verse:

I praise you, the expert who spreads treatises on worldly affairs and religion,
the Mirror of News, everywhere, inside and outside [Tibet].
This [newspaper] is an eyeball for [us] ignorant and blind.
By looking at the Ādarśa, whose name is appropriate,
the various situations [of people] are vividly known.

¹⁰⁰ Rheingans 2015:97.

¹⁰¹ Grunfeld 1996:116. For translations of parts of the poem see e.g. Grunfeld 1996:116-7 or Hartley 2008:15-16.

¹⁰² Hartley 2008:15.

¹⁰³ See Melong 8-10-1 (January 1937). For a translation, see Lopez 2009:109-111.

¹⁰⁴ See Melong 8-11-1&2 (February 1937), also reprinted in 19-1&2-18 (December 1950/January 1951).

¹⁰⁵ Melong 15-4&5-12 (February/March 1947).

Moreover, until you die, the pages of the Mirror of News shall make clear as they do now, what is positive and what is negative, at present, in the past and in the future. [...]¹⁰⁶

In August 1947, a short nine-limbed praise stated: "Rub your eyes and look well into the Tibetan Mirror of News of Kalimpong! It is easily of great advantage to us all, high and low. [...]"¹⁰⁷ A seven-limbed praise which is included in the 25-year jubilee issue said: "I praise Tharchin, the exalted wise man of Kalimpong, the one with great discipline and virtue (*yon tan*) who composes the Tibetan news[paper]." ¹⁰⁸ Most of the letters praised both Tharchin's sound morals as well as the Melong's moralistic potential, i.e. showing what is wholesome and unwholesome. Many letters received in the early years were poems on morality altogether, for example, a whole letter entitled *legs bshad* in March/April 1937 or eleven verses by Khu nu bla ma bstan 'dzin rgyal mtshan on the virtue of a sage (*mkhas pa'i yon tan*) in January 1938.¹⁰⁹

Morals and Nationalism. Similar to the situation observed in the news section, the commentary of readers was also drenched in a moralistic tone on the state of the world. The compositions criticized certain aspects of mundane conditions, calling for the proper implementation of the dharma and thus right conduct. They follow textual patterns as established in Tibetan writing culture, as may be observed in an early letter of a conservative cleric in November 1938. This is a rare example of coarse rebuttal of some of the modern developments which transformed lives and practices of Tibetans on the plateau through the encounter with modern business modes in India:

¹⁰⁶ Melong 15-4&5-12 (February/March 1947): *phyi nang bstan bcos gsar 'gyur me long sogs/_phyi nang kun la 'grem mkhas khyod nyid bsngags/_di ni mi shes long ba'i dmigs bu ste/_di ko ming don mtshungs pa'i a darsha/_di la spyang ras g.yo bas bde sdug rnams/_di dang 'di zhes lam lam gsal zhing rtogs/_da dung nyi zla'i bgrod pa ma zad par/_da lta bzhin du gsar 'gyur me long ngos/_da 'das ma 'ong legs nyes kun gsal zhing /_da de rkyen ngan rdul gyi ma gos shog/*. This poem is reprinted in 19-1&2 (December 1950/January 1951), where its author, the Ladakhi Ye shes bzod pa, is revealed.

¹⁰⁷ Melong 15-10-1 (August 1947): *ka sbug bod yig gsar 'gyur me long nang /_/kha mig phyis te legs par gzigs mdzod dang/_ga le byas nas thugs phan gso ba zhig/_nga tsho mchog dman kun la 'byung bar nges/*.

¹⁰⁸ Melong 19-1&2-23 (December 1950/January 1951): *gang la brtson 'grus yon tan yod/_gang gis bod yig gsar 'gyur brtsams/_bka' blon spung gi mkhas pa mchog_mthar phin de la bsngags par bgyi/*.

¹⁰⁹ See Melong 8-12-1 (March/April 1947) and 9-7&8-14 (January 1938).

Everybody, please listen, high and low, our dear followers of the Buddhist religion! First of all, in the Tibetan iron-horse year, in 1930, new cigarettes from India were offered in Kalimpong. The red package read "Thamakha Cigarette" and the front and back featured a swastika and the endless knot. In Tibetan *dbu can* script it said, 'The blend (*spos shing mnga' cha*)¹¹⁰ produced for Tibet.' Immediately, those knowledgeable and virtuous concerning the dharma prepared a note, saying that a package containing tobacco and the *dbu can* script used for cigarettes contradicts the Buddhist refuge, therefore we Buddhists will not buy this tobacco with Tibetan script. Right away, [people] stopped the buying it, and that is very good.

Secondly, additionally, some years ago, a soap with Tibetan *dbu can* was offered. The person who produced this is an enemy of the Buddhist teachings [...] Why? Soap is used for washing off dirt. For Buddhists, even one such letter gives rise to a Buddha's discernment, and therefore it is posited in a clean place. For example, when men and women wash [themselves], they place the soap at their genitals. This contradicts the Buddhist refuge and is only a way of going down an unwholesome path. Therefore, be aware of the prohibition that nobody, rich or poor, is allowed to buy or sell this soap!

Thirdly, since the wood-dragon year, some vulgar Tibetan businessmen have been thinking only about profits. They buy the corpse clothes of diseased Indians very cheap, old clothes of stained prostitutes and so on, and change their colors. Tibet is known as the flag which spreads the dharma while they spread these old, stained clothes everywhere in Tibet. They wave from the top of the mountains [as prayer flags] and are made into clothes for statues. Thus, these are not prayer flags which spread the dharma, they are dirty, stained clothes which destroy the dharma.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ My translation for *spos shing mnga' cha* is tentative, due to the fact that I could not identify *mnga' cha*.

¹¹¹ Melong 10-3-5&6 (November 1938): *rang cag nang pa sangs rgyas kyi rjes su 'dzin mkhan mchog dman thun mong gi snyan lam du zhu ba/_thog mar don tshan dang por/_dbyin rje'i 'das lo 1930 bod kyi lcags rta lo nang rgya gar nas tha ma kha se ge reTa zer ba'i shog sgam dmar po la steng 'og gnyis la rtags g.yung drung dang /_dpal be'u rgyab pa/_spos shing mnga' cha bod kyi phyir bzos ba'o zer zhing bod yig dbu can bris pa'i si ge reTa dpe gsar zhig ka sbug tu thon song /_de 'phral nang pa'i chos skor dge rtogs shis ldan rnams kyi dgongs bar tha ma kha'i snod shog sgam dang si ge reTa kho nar yi ge dbu can cod rkyen nang pa'i skyabs 'gro dang 'ga' lags na rang re nang chos mdzad pa thun mong nas bod yig yod pa'i tha ma kha de bzhin nyo 'then byed mi chog zer ba'i risa tshig lta bu zhig sbyar don/ /de ma thag nyo len gzhol bas rgyun chad phyin pas shin tu nas legs so/ don mtshan gnyis par/ da yang / lo shas song zhing yi rtsi zhig la bod yig dbun can rgyab te bton 'dug cing / de ltar bye^d pa po'i mi de sangs rgyas bstan par khrag byin ['byin] ru dgra mngon sum yin 'dug /gang la zer na/ yi rtsi zer ba ni btsog rigs 'khru byed yin pas na/ nang pa rnams kyi ni yig 'bri cig la'ang sangs rgyas kyi 'du shes skyes te gtsang sar gzhog pa na/_dper na pho mo gang dag 'khrus byed skabs yig 'bru rnams mtshan mar reg pas na/_nang pa'i skyabs 'gro dang 'gal zhing ngan song du 'gro ba'i lam las med lags na slan chad drag gzhan sus kyang yi rtsi de bzhin nyo tshong mi chog pa'i bkaq sdom ci nas yod pa mkhyen mkhyen/_/don mtshan gsum pa/_shong 'brug dmag dus nas bzung bod tshong tha mal pa 'ga' nas khe sang tshe 'di kho nar bsam te/_rgya gar pa shi pa'i ro gos dang /_smad tshong grib can sogs kyi gos rnying rnams la tshos mdog lnga*

The letter then enumerates the bad omens of current times, such as failed harvests, disrobing monks and poverty, saying: "Is this not due to the fact that Ḍākinīs, Dharmapālas, guardians and protector deities are met with stains?"¹¹² Thus, in this case, within a conservative framework of Buddhist morals and cosmology, the modern practices of the borderlands were dismissed due to their attributed nature of harming not only the people of Tibet but importantly also all the different kinds of exalted superhuman beings believed to dwell in the country.

Traces of Prophecies. In these ways, socio-politics, Buddhist morals and a transcendental cosmology were deeply entangled with each other. These textual compositions resonate with textures encountered in the genre of *lung bstan*, by displaying a current disadvantageous situation as warning sign for a dangerous future (i.e. relating present and future) and by relating current unwholesome political situations to improper morals (i.e. relating politics and religion). While many letters do not explicitly mention or refer to *lung bstan*, some, in fact, do, as an example of March 1943. In this case, someone by the name of Skal ldan zla ba bstan 'dzin urged for Buddhist morals by quoting a prophetic section from the Kangyur text *mkha' gro ma me lce 'bar ba'i rgyud* of the Nyingma tantra section. Due to the degeneration of human behavior, the semi-divine beings "*ma mo*"¹¹³ were said to have started a war, obvious from various bad omens appearing in the world (*jig brten*). The most important antidote (*bzlog thabs*) against the war of the *ma mo* is to renounce unwholesome acts and take up wholesome acts (*dge sdig spang blangs*). The mundane, socio-political conclusion was that ...

... generally all sentient beings, particularly, kings and ministers, teachers and students, lords and servants, sponsors and benefactors, parents and children, family and relatives, all brothers and friends, [should] take a vow to [act in ways of] not harming each other,

bsgyur bgyid bcug gis khe por nyos te bod bstan pa dar ba'i dar lcog zer zhing kha ba'i ljongs tshang mar grob can gyi gos rnying par dar par brgyab snye ri bo'i rtser 'phyar ba dang lha gos byed pa sogs de dag ni bstan pa dar ba'i dar lcog tu mi rtogs cing /_bstan pa bsnuvs pa'i btsog gos grib can du rtogs so/.

¹¹² Melong 10-3-5&6 (November 1938): *bod khams khyab bas mkha' gro chos skyong /_dam can srung ma sogs la grib 'phog pa'i rkyen las 'byung ngam snyam/.*

¹¹³ According to the Rangjung Yeshe dictionary, *ma mo* are considered "a class of semi-divine beings who sometimes act as protectors of the Dharma. [They are also...] sky-traveling preta-demon [or...] wrathful dakinis."

and help each other. If each and every one prays in the mornings and evenings to Padmasambhava with as much effort as possible, then [everything] will turn out happy and well.¹¹⁴

Further letters to the TMP office repeat this general compositional structure: The degenerated humankind is observed as living in bad conditions, and the antidote is said to be a morally sound life (Buddhist morals/religion), which includes a unification in harmony (socio-politics). This call for unity amongst all those who share this cosmological belief system in the early 1940s can be seen as a proto-nationalistic version of what would followed later, in the late 1940s and especially the 1950s, in the form the nationalistic appeals to fight for Tibet's independence. Many of the letters published during the 1950s describe the difficult times that had befallen Tibet,¹¹⁵ or they explicitly warn that Tibet will have disappeared in 50 or 60 years if nothing was done now.¹¹⁶ Such critique of the Communist takeover and the aristocrat's behavior went hand in hand with a general description of the degenerate conditions in Tibet. These letters often combined the same elements as in the 1940s, however in more pronounced ways than before: the antidote to the observed mundane degeneration is explained to be proper conduct, which includes unification in harmony, however, not in an abstract sense, but now as an independent and strong Tibetan nation.

Many of these letters were actually in no way provocative but rather adhered to mainstream opinion, while other ones voiced real critique towards the aristocrats' behavior by using the new feature presented by the newspaper while remaining embedded in familiar textual formats. The contents referred to a mundane now which transported nationalistic concepts of Tibet, while the format adhered to forms of textual compositions known from prophecies,

¹¹⁴ See Melong 11-8-1 (March 1943): *spyir skye bo kun/ khyad par rgyal po dang blon po/ slob dpon dang slob phrug/ dpon po dang g.yog po/ chos yon sbyin bdag/ pha ma bu tsha/ bza' tshang dang gnyen nye ba/ spun zla grogs po thams cad/ gcig gis gcig la gnod par mi bya bar dam tshig bsrungs la/ phan thog rogs ram byad dgos/ rang rang so sos snga dgong ma Ni badzra gu ru/ bsam pa lhun 'grub* [I read: *lhun grub*] *sogs gang shes la 'bad cing gsol ba btab na bde zhing skyid par 'gyur ro/*

¹¹⁵ See e.g. a ten-limbed poem in Melong 22-10-6 (November 10, 1954), an acrostic poem in Melong 22-5-13 (September 1, 1954) describing catastrophic conditions in Ütsang ever since the communists had arrived. For further examples, see Melong 22-3-3 (July 1954), 24-9&10-2 (January/February 1958), 25-7-4&5 (December 1958), 25-8-6 (January 1959), 26-12-11 (June/July 1960), or 28-6-6 (July/August 1963).

¹¹⁶ See Melong 21-5-2 (August 1953).

prophetic cosmologies or Buddhist philosophical tenets. The letter of 'Phrin las kun khyab reproduced above was published in reaction to a *lung bstan* printed in the preceding issue (see also Chapter 5), promising an antidote (*bzlog thabs*) in the following issue. The editor added in a box next to the letter (the *bzlog thabs*):

I remind [you] about the instructions (*bkod pa*) [given] in wall posters or letters, composed by the people as *zlog thabs* to the future prophecy I had printed in last month's issue; and I ask all the Tibetan people, rich and poor, great, middle and small, to put them into practice.¹¹⁷

Thus, particularly in interactions with the readers, familiar formats such as *lung bstan* were applied. *Lung bstan* feature prominently among the readers' modes of engagement with the newspaper, and therefore it was particularly important to Tharchin. In one of the letters of US Foreign Relations, classified "top secret", dated June 1951, George Patterson recounts how Tharchin had translated a letter sent to the TMP and published in the *Melong*. The author of the letter was anonymous, and the text was of prophetic nature: "Tharchin's obvious sincerity during the translation was indicative to me of the importance which Tibetans attach to oracular documents."¹¹⁸ Furthermore, as we have already seen in the first section of this chapter, Tharchin himself attributed some of the *Melong*'s success to its function of being a "fortuneteller".¹¹⁹

Yet, in overall, Tharchin's envisioned participation was not greatly successful. At times, the *Melong* became a relevant platform for upcoming political parties and for individuals wanting to release frustration over the unsatisfactory situation in Tibet. Tharchin attempted to stimulate participation by requesting "further comments" or "further corrections". In sum, I

¹¹⁷ *Melong* 20-5-8 (August 1952): *sngon zla'i gsar 'gyur nang ma 'ong lung bstan gyi zlog thabs su da lam mi dmans kyis sbyar ba'i yig bsgyur [skyur] dang sbrag yif 'byor gsal bkod pa khag tu gsal 'debs zhus pa la bod mi drag zhan che 'bring chung tsahng mas lag len gnang bar mdzod/*.

¹¹⁸ Letter George Patterson to Fraser Wilkins, First Secretary of American Embassy (New Delhi), June 14, 1951, classified "top secret," in Confidential U.S. State Department central files, China: People's Republic of China [1]: Internal affairs, 1950-1954, edited by Michael Davis, microfilm edition, document number 611.93B./6-1451 Despatch 3030. I am grateful to Isrun Engelhardt for sharing this document with me. The printed article can be found in *Melong* 19-3-6&7 (June 1951).

¹¹⁹ See above footnote 68 and TC: Letter Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Avatar Singh (POS, Gangtok), December 13, 1963.

have encountered only four examples of actual reactions amongst the readers: a) the example of two readers debating the Tibetan custom of presenting presents versus modern foreign modes, thus provoking a debate on modernism; b) the letter by the alleged *sger g.yog* which transgressed hierarchical traditions, thus provoking debate on social hierarchies; c) the reprint of the Communist leaflet, thus provoking debate on politics; and d) the call for *bzlog thabs* to a *lung bstan*. More often than not, however, nobody would reply. Particularly concerning the issues around freedom of speech, Tharchin mostly fell on deaf ears, and an impulse-cartoon, entitled '*byung 'gyur ri mo'i lung bstan*' ("future prophecy [in the form of a] drawing"), also did not trigger any reaction. In this later case, Tharchin even decided to fake a letter.

6.2.3 The Forged Letter

At least in one case, Tharchin forged a letter to the editor, as he later admitted in his autobiography.¹²⁰ In 1954, Tharchin had published an illustration of the three wise monkeys "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil" and had requested the readers to send in their interpretations of what it meant to them. However, when no reply arrived to the office, he decided to compose a reply himself, which he published as a letter by somebody else, under the headline "News on the three realized monkeys" (*spre'u rtogs ldan gsum gyi gnas tshul*).¹²¹



Figure 36: The appeal to send interpretations of an illustration featuring three monkeys, published in Melong 22-8-9 (September 22, 1954).

¹²⁰ See Shakya 2004:22.

¹²¹ For the call see Melong 22-8-9 (September 22, 1954), for the reply 22-11-5&12 (November 17, 1954).

In his interpretation, Tharchin "tibetanized" the globally circulating image. He pointed out, that, in general, the Tibetans are said to derive from monkeys and the image was therefore fitting. The three monkey symbolized the three parts of Tibet, Ü, Tsang and Kham, and likewise represented the Tibetan's situation in the past, present and future. More concretely, Tharchin interpreted the mute monkey as the Tibetan's inability to speak out in front of the UN, because the Communists had overtaken power of the Foreign Affairs Bureau. The deaf monkey would stand for the Tibetans' inability to hear news from outside, because the Communists had assumed power over the telegraph office. And finally, the blind monkey signified the Tibetan's inability to study the customs of foreign nation via the Melong, because the Communists had blocked the delivery of the Melong to Tibet.

In short, Tharchin had interpreted the monkeys along nationalistic lines, picking up on nationalistic symbols. According to Tharchin, the monkeys signified how the Communists were at the verge of blocking off the Tibetan nation from the rest of the world. The elegant nationalistic essay propagated modern nationhood based on an international dialogue via modern media (telegraph and newspapers) and diplomatic offices (Foreign Affairs Bureau). Thus, the importance of modern media, including the Melong, in connecting Tibet to the rest of world was put at center stage. Yet, the letter was not written by an alert reader nor by one of the scholars who had previously contributed to the Melong's public discourse; rather, it was written by Tharchin himself, who falsely declared it to be a letter received by him. The essay thus presents contents which Tharchin imagined to be discussed in the Melong, contents that Tharchin wished for but which failed to manifest.

In summary, letters to the editors which were published in the Melong fulfilled two functions: on one hand, they functioned as a tool to legitimize the Melong's existence, to gain value and authority, by showcasing congratulatory letters and alike sent to Tharchin's office. On the other hand, they functioned as a means to stimulate public debate, i.e. the participation of any reader in the content production of the newspaper, with the possible goal to even alter

circumstances that affected the greater "public". The power of the Melong lay in its capacity to bring together the most prominent and authoritative members of a community with unknown participants of low hierarchical status previously excluded from public culture in writing. Thus, the Dalai Lama, fixed with name and seal to legitimize the very existence of the medium, stood next to a totally anonymous reader, at times criticizing the very policies such an authoritative person might have pushed through, at the very least criticizing the modes of interaction within the "imagined community".

Due to this potential and the facilitation of cross-hierarchical communication in public, the newspaper broke open the hitherto existent interactional structures. At the same time, however, it did not neglect them altogether. On the contrary, the invoked participation was met with "poems of praise", strict formulaic structures of text composition, in elaborate form and only available to those fit in its composition. Thus, the introduction of new ideas was also characterized by the simultaneous adherence to prevalent modes, which flourished often to the same degree to which the innovative, or interrupting potential unfolded. Letters critiqued those who collaborated with the Chinese, the "enemies of the dharma", thus endangering not so much a modern nation Tibet, but Tibet as a vessel of Buddhism, a protector of the dharma. The preferred formats of the letters to the editor were not new: verses, poems or moralistic essays which underlined the newspapers capacity to teach proper morals. Requests which followed the publication of *lung bstan* would trigger a reaction, and, in fact, many of the letters published in the 1950s describe the difficult times that had befallen Tibet. While they might not make any articulated reference to *lung bstan*, they do continue to follow patterns observed in the usage of this device in the Melong and only make sense in descriptions of the world textures: the moral of individuals causes the degeneration of the whole world and manifests in material "bad omens". In this view, there are also specific antidotes to counteract such degeneration which are prescribed by Buddhist authorities.

The few examples that testify the proper use of unprecedented applications of the newspaper concern Tibetan border politics in the 1940s and harsh criticism against the "collaborator" aristocrats in the 1950s. Importantly and not surprisingly, these new forms of communicative interaction were met with resistance. The alleged poem of a servant (*sger g.yog*), for example, was criticized and doubted (possibly rightfully so) to the extent that the editors felt it necessary to comment on this within the pages of the newspaper. When an impulse-cartoon which played on the topic of public participation and freedom of speech was published, no replies were received. The irony that lies within this bears witness to the failure of the described potential of the newspaper, namely the actual and instant bridging of hierarchical boundaries, the connection of previously disconnected people, the assertion of a shared imagination of a Tibetan community. At least in this one instance, Tharchin had to produce such a letter himself, in an attempt to live up to his own expectations.

6.3 How are the Melong and Tharchin Remembered?

The newspaper format stores contents beyond the immediate present. Thus, participation in the Melong did not cease with the Melong's discontinuance or Tharchin's death. Anderson puts it like this: "The words of our seventeenth-century forebears are accessible to us in a way that to Villon his twelfth-century ancestors were not."¹²² Written text has the capacity to transgress space and time, it has impact beyond the times in which it was written. In various ways, people continue to engage with the Melong, for example, academics do so out of scholarly interest, Tibetan journalists reference it as a crystallization point of their own heritage and the historical narrative, or people in the TAR disregard Tharchin's Melong all together, as it counters politically wanted historical drafts. As discussed in Chapter 1, so far, more than 150 non-Tibetan language publications deal with Tharchin and the Melong in one way or another.

¹²² Anderson 2006[1983]:45.

6.3.1 Tharchin's Obituary

When Tharchin passed away in February 1976, *bod mi'i rang dbang* honored him with a long obituary, covering one and a half long pages and including a picture of the diseased under the headline: "The dear friend of the Tibetans, Tharchin of Kalimpong and Khunu has deceased." The obituary gives a biography of Tharchin, describing his childhood and youth. On the topic of the foundation of the Melong it is stated:

In 1925, when the first issue of the *gsar 'gyur me long* was printed by mimeography, all Tibetans, high and low, ridiculed it initially, but gradually [Tharchin] was able to print on a lithographic press and later a letter-press. Thus, over 40 years, until 1963, his private work became a service benefitting the Tibetan public [...]. He was able to meet the Thirteenth Dalai Lama twice, and the Farsighted One even subscribed to the newspaper. He gave him the order to disregard hardships and not stop the work, which is very beneficial for all Tibetans, high and low, in the future. The Fourteenth Dalai Lama also supported the newspaper and has praised him in a speech on the occasion of his visit to Kalimpong: 'He is a friend of Tibet.'

In the following, the "special deeds" fulfilled by Tharchin were enlisted: "the first Tibetan newspaper", his distribution of Tibetan textbooks, storybooks, language books and good sayings, his assistance of pilgrims and his assistance at Tharpa Chöling. "In short, he worked without any blemished intentions for the freedom of Tibetan culture, handicraft, clothing and language." He was further described as having campaigned for a transformation of Tibet; like a prophet, he had repeatedly warned that, if radical change was not implemented in Tibet, great dangers would arise for its politics.

The obituary stressed that all walks of life from different regions attended his funeral in the church in Kalimpong. In short: "The diseased has been of benefit to Tibet and the Tibetans for about 80 years. He had an open heart and great intentions, love and patriotism for Tibet and the Tibetans."¹²³ Today, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama still remembers the Melong as the only Tibetan source of information which he was eager to read and found the riddles particularly

¹²³ RW March 19, 1976:5-6.

enjoying.¹²⁴ Many letters of condolence are stored in the TC, arriving from various parts of the Himalayas. Even after his death, commemorations events were held in Kalimpong and commemoration plates were produced.¹²⁵ Here, just like in the obituary in *Rang dbang gsar shog*, Tharchin is never referred to as "Tibetan" but as a "friend of Tibet" or "a patriot".¹²⁶ Even though Tharchin included himself within the imagined Tibetan community, as evident from the editorials, in the past, many considered Tharchin not a Tibetan but a "friend of Tibet".

6.3.2 Tharchin and the Melong in Today's Memory

Tharchin's legacy continues to expand, especially in the exile community's growing media scene. While he is remembered as the "first Tibetan journalist" by some in Dharamsala and in exile, within Tibet and the TAR in particular he is almost never mentioned in the literature or spoken of by journalists. The obvious reason for this are the two polarized and diverging political understandings of the political status of Tibet.

In the Exile Community. In 2010, The Association of Tibetan Journalists (ATJ), based in Dharamsala, published a Handbook for Tibetan journalists, establishing guidelines on the practice of journalism. In its introduction, Tharchin and the Melong are honored as being the first Tibetan journalist and the first Tibetan newspaper respectively.

Generally speaking, in Tibetan history, the history of literature and translation is very wide and deep, and [...] has at present reached the highest level in this world. But a tradition of Tibetan journalism is not very long. In Tibet, Babu Tharchin first started this tradition with the spread of the newspaper "Tibet Mirror", which was distributed

¹²⁴ See Laird 2006: 290-91 and Fader 2002:ix: (Forword by the Dalai Lama).

¹²⁵ See TC: "Programme, On the occasion of his 88th birth Anniversary of the Late Rev. G. Tharchin on 18th April, 1978, in Kalimpong Town Hall," *no date*. See also TC: "Notice" for the Tibetan Church of Kalimpong-meeting of December 5, 1976, for which the discussion of a "Memorial Plate of Late Rev. G. Tharchin" is put on the agenda.

¹²⁶ The Fourteenth Dalai Lama called Tharchin on two occasions "a friend of Tibet." The letter of 1974 is cited in Tharchin's obituary published in RW March 19, 1976:5-6. The condolence letter is stored in TC: Telegram Office of the Dalai Lama (Dharamsala) to TMP, February 15, 1976. It says "[...] We have lost a great and sincere friend of Tibet and its people [...]."

from India. Even though the quality of the prints and the numbers of issues were not very high, it is needless to say that it had a great benefit on the society back then.¹²⁷

Similarly, in a subsequently published "Stylebook" for Tibetan journalists, fashioned after the globally renowned Associated Press Stylebook,¹²⁸ the Melong is reported to be "the first Tibetan-language newspaper."¹²⁹ Head of the project, Lhag pa skyid 'dzom, says: "All of us Tibetans know about Babu Tharchin as the 'first journalist'."¹³⁰ An earlier publication in 1997 by a precursor to the ATJ, the "Press Club of Tibet", did not mention Tharchin or the Melong.¹³¹ Nevertheless, the Melong was earlier attested. In 1995, Tashi Tsering and the Amnye Machen Institute organized an exhibition on Tibetan newspapers which was reported in *Rang dbang gsar shog*. 22 newspaper projects were enlisted, the Melong numbered third, following *La dwags kyi ag bar* and *Bod kyi phal skad gsar 'gyur*.¹³² An article from 2000 in *Tibetan Bulletin* on underground newspapers and magazines in the TAR, Amdo and Kham, starts off by referencing the Melong:

In 1950, when the Red Army invaded Tibet, no independent newspapers were published in the country. Only Yul-phyogs-so-so-sar-gyur-me-long, a weekly published in Kalimpong, India, provided news in the Tibetan language.¹³³

Further, the freelance journalist Lobsang Wangyal wrote a report on the "Tibet Mirror" in 2005, which was published on his website as "The Tibet Mirror: The First Tibetan Newspaper,

¹²⁷ Karma ye shes 2010:1: *spyir bod kyi lo rgyus nang rtsom dang 'gyur gyi lo rgyus ni shin tu nas rgya che ba dang gting zab yod pa ma zad/ 'dzam gling 'di'i nang rtsom dang 'gyur gyi lo rgyus tshad mitho'i gras su slebs kyi yod pa ni da lta nga tshos mihong chos su yod/ yin na'ang bod kyi gsar 'gyur brgyud lam gyi 'phel rim ni de tsam ring po min/ bod du rgya gar nas thon pa'i sba bu mihar phyin lags kyis 'don spel gnang ba'i gsar shog "bod kyi me long /" zhes pa de ni brgyud lam thog ma lta bu chags yod/ de'i dpar skrun grangs tshad dang khyab tshad kyang de tsam chen po min na'ang / skabs de'i spyi tshogs la phan rlabs chen po byung yod pa smos mi dgos/.*

¹²⁸ This book is annually published online by the Associated Press (see www.apstylebook.com, accessed April 12, 2017).

¹²⁹ Lhag pa skyid 'dzoms et al. 2013:2: *yongs grags su bod yig gsar shog thog ma de gsar 'gyur me long yin/.*

¹³⁰ Interview with Lhag pa skyid 'dzom, former head of the Association of Tibetan Journalists, Dharamsala, April 8, 2014.

¹³¹ See Press Club of Tibet 1999.

¹³² See RW April 17, 1995.

¹³³ *No author* 2000:22.

Now only a Memory." The Melong is said to be "truly" the first Tibetan newspaper, next to giving credit also to *La dwags kyi ag bar*.¹³⁴

Similarly, Stobs Idan tshe ring, former editor of *Tibetan Bulletin*, in a publication of the Department of Information and International Relations, CTA, in 1999 provides a general history of Tibetan-language media, starting with *La dwags kyi ag bar*, but he also goes on to say: "The first newspaper to make an impact on Tibetan thinking was Yulchog Sosoi Sargyur Melong (Tibet mirror)." He further assesses that the *La dwags kyi ag bar* "hardly rattled a Tibetan leaf. Conversely, Tibet Mirror was well read and appreciated."¹³⁵ Thubten Samphel, former director of the Department of Information and International Relations, CTA, states in a similar vein: "But the true origins of Tibet's print media lies in the birth of *Tibet Mirror*, a monthly Tibetan-language newspaper, started by Gergan Tharchin, or Tharchin Babu, as he is fondly remembered by the Tibetan emigre community of Kalimpong and Darjeeling."¹³⁶ As early as 1985, Bhuchung K. Tsering, then editor of the *Tibetan Bulletin*, wrote: "[Tharchin] could be said to be the father of Tibetan journalism having been the founder of the first-ever newspaper in Tibetan."¹³⁷

Thus, according to many influential personalities in the circle of exile journalist, the Melong initiated Tibetan-language journalism and is seen as the "first Tibetan newspaper" or Tharchin as the first journalist. Despite this, other narratives exist as well. According to the former editor of *Rang dbang gsar shog*, Dgon po rdo rje, the Melong was not a real Tibetan newspaper, because Tharchin was not a real Tibetan. Accordingly, in an article in *Rang dbang gsar shog*, which presents the history of Tibetan media, no mention is made of the Melong: "It is *Rang dbang* which first established the history of the spread of newspapers in the Tibetan

¹³⁴ See Wangyal 2005: *no page*.

¹³⁵ Topden 1999:13-14.

¹³⁶ Samphel 2007:172.

¹³⁷ Tsering 1985:20.

annals."¹³⁸ Also an article of 2009 on exile print media presents *Rang dbang gсар shog* as the first newspaper.¹³⁹ On August 3, 2011, Zam gdong rin po che talked about the importance of journalism at a press conference in Dharamsala, where he said:

When we first arrived in India in 1949, there was no journalist within Tibetan society. Tharchin Babu published a newspaper called Melong, but there was not one single Tibetan working there.¹⁴⁰

Thus, on one hand, Tharchin is celebrated as a pioneer, the Melong as a pioneering symbol of Tibetan literature, culture and the whole nation, while, on the other hand, some stress that Tharchin was not a true Tibetan in fact and the Melong could therefore not be counted as a true "Tibetan" newspaper. Ironically, according to this narrative, the Tibetan community and the nation Tibet as propagated in the Melong by Tharchin is imagined in ways that Tharchin himself would find no place in.

In the TAR, Amdo and Kham. Within scholarly discourses in the TAR, Amdo, Kham and in Chinese scholarship, the situation is different again. Here, in articles and monographs, the "first Tibetan newspaper" is attributed to the *Bod yig phal skad kyi gсар 'gyur*,¹⁴¹ fulfilling requirements of a historiography which presents Tibet as an intrinsic part of China. In many instances, it may be observed how the introduction of certain inventions in Tibet is traced back to a Chinese environment. The same mechanism is at work concerning Tibetan-language newspapers. Not many monographs on journalism have been published in Tibetan, not even mentioning those which include chapters on the history of the press. In fact, I am aware of only three, two of which do not mention the Melong at all.¹⁴² The one by Shar ba thogs med likewise attests the *Bod yig phal skad kyi gсар 'gyur* as the "first newspaper", but it also

¹³⁸ *Bod mi'i rang dbang* October 16, 1992:2: *de ni [rang dbang gсар shog] bod kyi rgyal rabs nang gсар shog bton pa'i lo rgyus dang po de chags yod/.*

¹³⁹ See Blo bzang smon lam 2009.

¹⁴⁰ Zam gdong rin po che 2011: *no page: nga tsho thog mar phyi lo 1949 lor rgya gar du slebs skabs bod pa'i spyi tshogs nang gсар 'god pa'i las ka byed mkhan gcig kyang med/_mthar phyin bha bus me long zhes pa'i gсар 'gyur zhig ston gyi yod/_de'i nang bod pa las ka byed mkhan gcig rang las mi 'dug/.*

¹⁴¹ See e.g. Bai 1990, Zheng 2000:23, Rdo dkar bkra shis tshe ring 2006:5, Shar ba thogs med 2004:44, Rste dbang et.al. 1990:129 or Zhou 2010:160.

¹⁴² Those are Rdo dkar bkra shis tshe ring 2006 and Rste dbang et al. 1990.

briefly mentions the Melong within a long history of Tibetan-language newspapers. Here, the Melong is referred to as *Bod ljongs tshags par kun gsal me long*, i.e. "Tibetan Newspaper [called] 'The Mirror which clarifies all'."¹⁴³ On a curious sidenote, it was pointed out by Robin that Tharchin's TMP was briefly mentioned in a semi-fictional novel by Lhag pa don grub on the life of muleteers (*Drel pa'i mi tshe*) of 1997.¹⁴⁴

Articles on journalism (*gsar 'gyur rig pa*) in scholarly and semi-scholarly Tibetan-language journals published in Tibetan areas of nowadays China are more abundant. A manual search of 13 relevant Tibetan-language journals published within the PRC between the early 1980s up until 2011 revealed 69 articles on newspapers, news, journalism and mass media.¹⁴⁵ Of those 69, 38 deal with print media specifically. Of these 38, 22 talk about newspapers, seven of which again present a development of newspapers in Tibetan language. Only two of these mention the Melong, and only one article discusses aspects of the Melong in detail. This is an article by Zla ba tshe ring (journalism teacher at Tibet University), who lists the Melong in his Tibetan press history. His source of information is an article of 2008 by Me lce on Dge 'dun chos 'phel's contributions to the Melong.¹⁴⁶

This article was previously published in the progressive magazine *Da lta ba* in August 2006, and to my knowledge it presents the one and only article in the mentioned journals which focusses on the Melong specifically.¹⁴⁷ Me lce refers to the Melong as "the first Tibetan newspaper" (*bod yig gsar shog thog ma*) and labels Chos 'phel as the first "media figure" (*gsar 'gyur mi sna*). According to Me lce, Dge 'dun chos 'phel became the first scholar who spread his (partially modern) views through the media: "Dge 'dun chos 'phel was the first

¹⁴³ See Shar ba thogs med 2004:43, who cites Goldstein 2007[1989] as his source.

¹⁴⁴ See Lhag pa don grub 1997:255. See Robin 2007:30.

¹⁴⁵ Again, a sincere thank you goes to Franz-Xaver Erhard, who granted me access to his archives in Lhasa. The 13 magazines and journals I have consulted there are: 1) *Bod ljongs zhib 'jug*, 2) *Rtser snyeg* - Climbing, 3) *Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig pa*, 4) Tibet University Journal, 5) Northwest University for Nationalities - *Mtsho sngon mi rigs slob grwa chen mo'i rig bzhung dus deb*, 6) *Gnyan po g.yu rtse'i dung sems kyi 'bod sgra*, 7) *Gser 'od*, 8) *Bla srog*, 9) *Da lta ba*, 10) China Tibetology - *Krung go bod rig pa*, 11) Blue Holy Nectar, 12) *Sbra nag*, and 13) *Bod ljongs sgyu rtsal zhib 'jug*.

¹⁴⁶ See Me lce 2008.

¹⁴⁷ See *Lta da ba*, August 20, 2006:9.

[Tibetan] who understood the significance of a newspaper and magazine and who first understood how the power of [freedom of] speech, brought through newspapers, is an impetus for development in a society."¹⁴⁸ In the end, the author uses the article to dwell upon what would have happened if the Tibetans would have properly supported the work of Chos 'phel or Tharchin:

What if Dge 'dun chos 'phel would not have gone back to Tibet, but stayed in India? What if he continued working on the Melong? What if we would not have driven him out of our world? What if we had helped him [financially] for producing a Melong in Lhasa? What if we had many farsighted Dge 'dun chos 'phel? What if... I always dissolve in these kinds of thoughts.¹⁴⁹

The author regrets the short-sightedness of his "fellow Tibetans" and interprets the Melong as a crystallization point of modern intellectualism incorporating the power of the press. Here, the Melong is interpreted as a medium of public discourse, essential to a democratic state and countering the Communist totalitarian understanding of media. The lack of support of the Melong during its publication period is identified as the main reason for Tibet's fall to Chinese rule: without a newspaper, the Tibetan state could not assert itself as a modern nation state, and therefore it was an easy target to overtake.

Summary: *The Melong's Reception.* The Melong's impact, both during its publication period and today is multi-dimensional. In terms of success as envisioned by Tharchin, it failed to live up to its ambitions. Few people read the paper, and those who did were unwilling to pay for it. The proposed communicative platform of exchange became a reality only during the 1950s. Political parties sent their statements to the Melong to have them published, and individuals sent in poems or prose to comment on the terrible situation in Tibet, defaming both

¹⁴⁸ *Lta da ba*, August 20, 2006:9: *khong nyid ni 'u cag gi gsar shog dus deb kyi rin thang thog mar rtogs mkhan dang / yang na gsar shog dus deb kyi mtshon pa'i smra brjod stobs shugs kyi spyi tshogs 'phel rgyas la skul 'ded kyi nus pa 'don gyi yod par yid ched byed mkhan thog ma yin par 'dod/.*

¹⁴⁹ *Lta da ba*, August 20, 2006:9: *gal te dge chos khong phyir bod yul du lof med par rgya gar nas "gsar 'gyur me long' gtso sgrub mdzad yod thse/ gal te 'u cag gis khong 'jig rten mi yul nas ma bskrad par khong la lha sa nas 'gsar 'gyur me long' lta bu'i gsar shog cig gsar du 'don pa'i mthun rkyen bskrun yod tshe/ gal te 'u cag la dge chos lta bu'i mig rgyang ring zhing mno bsam thongs pa'i shes yon can kha shas yod tshe/ gal te kho bo ni rgyun du 'di lta bu'i bsam gzhig gi klong du 'thim 'gro'i/.*

Communists and Tibetan aristocrats. The political discourse Tharchin sought to establish was a discourse of independence and united Tibetan-ness, establishing a modern nation through an engaged public. If this failed to realize, as in the example of the global emblem of the three monkeys, Tharchin would go as far as writing a letter himself to postulate an active public to his readers. The Melong was unsuccessful in establishing itself as a "regularized part" in Tibetan society, as McGranahan has formulated,¹⁵⁰ yet at the same time, it did lay a foundation, engaged in discourses on independence and continued its influence. Today people go back to read it in distinct ways. When Tharchin passed away, the legacy of him and the Melong was integrated into a national narrative, especially amongst exile journalist. Even this context has a multi-dimensional aspect, because while many remember him as the "first Tibetan journalist" and the Melong as "first Tibetan newspaper", others continue to stress that Tharchin is not a real Tibetan and the Melong therefore not "a real Tibetan newspaper." In the TAR, and other Tibetan areas within the PRC, the Melong was not just banned starting from the 1950, but continues to be banned from collective memory.

On a more abstract level, just as in other countries, the newspaper was an extension of a system based on nationalistic ideas. The Melong was supported by colonial holders of power, but acted multi-dimensionally, with its attention directed towards Tibet. Colonial or imperial powerholders encouraged the project, offered advice, stated criticism or attempted to block the Melong, as in the case of the Communists. Participation by its targeted Tibetan audience deviated from the propagated systems, especially in terms of form. In terms of content, nationalistic ideas were taken up and attention directed towards problems as discussed amongst a social segment of commoners. In its form, letter writers adhered to familiar forms of letter writing, poems, praise or compositions along prophetic texts. Even to a greater degree than in the previous chapters, the prominence of moral aspects grounded in Buddhist ethics in the letters of the newspaper's participants is here observed.

¹⁵⁰ See McGranahan 2010:72.

So far, we have gone at length through the Melong's production process, the contents propagated through the product as well as its readers' participation during its time of publication and beyond. In the next chapter the Melong's impact will be assessed on a larger scale and the main research questions succinctly addressed: How did Tibet change the genre "newspaper"? How did the newspaper change "Tibet"?

7 A Newspaper for Tibet: The Transformative Power of Cultural Configurations

The past chapters have analyzed numerous aspects concerning the production, the product and the reception of the Melong. Chapter 2 looked into forms of mediated communication and mass media established in Tibetan language, both in oral and written format. The first part addressed different forms of mass media, including modern technologies such as telegraphy and radio, and the ways in which these have entered the Tibetan plateau. Further, it shed light on specific cultural forms of information exchange, both privately and publicly, and how criticism was publicly expressed in urban centers such as Lhasa. The second part of Chapter 2, then, introduced print media in particular, with a special focus on newspapers, in order to understand the historical framework of the Melong's beginnings. Chapter 3 moved on to describe the production conditions in Kalimpong, Kalimpong as a trading hub and place of printing, together with the editor's biography, in order to understand the heterogeneous production environment of the Melong. It stressed how the Melong's production was characterized not by clearcut national or cultural categories, but rather by constant exchange between agents from diverse worlds. The chapter further highlighted the TMP's double role as both financially sponsored while simultaneously striving to become a self-sustaining enterprise. The following two chapters addressed, then, how the newspaper was conceptualized along Western interpretations of the newspaper, whilst transporting and solidifying many aspects of communicative patterns as established in Tibetan language. Chapter 6 demonstrated how the medium was received by its readers and to what extent and in which forms they engaged in the production of the newspaper. It has been observed, how the Melong was accepted amongst its readers only over time, and how it continues to be received in distinct ways amongst a community of Tibetans, and exile journalists in particular, today.

This final chapter will newly contextualize central elements the study has dealt with. As a synthesis of what has been show, it will point out possible directions of prospective studies.

So far, it has become obvious that the production of the Melong showcases how certain cultural configurations (re)form imported products in distinct ways. Importantly, communicative forms familiar to the readers appear to speak louder to them than those they are unfamiliar with, while not dismissing the capacity of the latter to nevertheless impact the community in distinct ways. The newspaper, mainly due to its unique economics, is required to address as many people as possible. At the same time, however, interpretations run along established communicative patterns, thus causing a transformation of the genre newspaper. Therefore, this final chapter will focus on the specificities of the Melong in an attempt to address these pressing questions: How did the newspaper change Tibet? How did Tibet change the newspaper?

Historical Context. Generally speaking, the Melong was part of the overarching efforts to establish a modern independent nation state "Tibet" under the lead of the Dalai Lama and with the support of the British government. Previous to 1911, the Thirteenth Dalai Lama had turned to China for support, but he soon realized that the developments there, namely the socialist revolution of 1911, left little room for the religious government he led himself. Only a few years previously, he had fled from British aggression first to Mongolia and then to Beijing. In the face of Chinese aggression, he approached the British for support. He received such support from people like Charles Bell, and through the establishment of a postal system, a paper currency and an army modelled after the modern British system, he solidified his power versus his various opponents. This cooperation between the two political actors, the "global empire" and the "remote retreat", worked out well for a while. An independent Tibetan state as a buffer between India and China was welcome and convenient to Great Britain, even if the British government officially propagated this view only reluctantly at times. This double standard was also due to the fact that the British Tibet cadre in the Himalayas had to some degree emancipated itself from central British Government policies,

and assisted independent aims of members of the Tibetan government, at times beyond their mandate given by the central Government of India.

In the face of continuous Chinese interests in Tibet, as propagated by the KMT, Tibet managed to stand its ground with potent British support. Other Tibetan fractions collaborated with the KMT and would have preferred Tibet's turning to the East, to refer to just one overarching political countertrend. There had always been fractions in Tibet, be it high lamas, or chieftains and rich merchants in Kham, who disagreed with or even disregarded the Ganden Phodrang government situated in Lhasa. The Panchen Lama took to exile in China and collaborated with the KMT. The Khampas sought assistance from the KMT to win ground against Central Tibetan forces, and some of them took up KMT ideology. The British, weakened through the Second World War, left India in 1947. In the face of India's diffuse politics towards Tibet, Tibet was an easy target for the Communist government which came to power in China in 1949. Lacking other options, the young Fourteenth Dalai Lama in Lhasa attempted to pursue collaboration with the Communists but, in the face of the increasingly unbalanced relationship, took to exile in 1959.

In a simplified presentation, we can speak of two rivaling poles in Tibetan politics throughout the first half of the 20th century: The Ganden Phodrang government under the lead of the Dalai Lama and backed by the British versus the alternatives backed by the Chinese, such as the initiatives in Kham and the activities of the Panchen Lama, to name just the most prominent ones. Both parties should not be conceptualized as exclusively local entities, since just as the Ganden Phodrang government had its supporters in Kham, the Khampas or the Panchen Lama also had their supporters in Lhasa, for example through merchants or monastic ties.

The point I wish to stress here is that the Melong must be conceptualized as part of an agenda supported by the British government: an independent Tibet under the lead of the Dalai Lama who represents the *chos srid* system of the Ganden Phodrang, i.e. the inseparability of religion

Drapchi mint. Apparently former members of the mint worked for *Rang dbang gsar shog* and that they had brought equipment – at least those blocks – with them, with the effect of positioning the newspaper in the overall government nexus.



Figure 38: The 100-Srang note was issued between 1939-49 and 1951-59, and machine printed from metal blocks at the Drapchi mint. The exact same printed frame is found on many issues of *Rang dbang gsar shog* and *Bod mi'i rang dbang*.

Thus, the Melong was a propagator of a particular narrative of a modern Tibetan nation, as developed, propagated and supported through the collaboration of actors of the Ganden Phodrang and British administrators, particularly Charles Bell. Especially the hierarchical religio-political ideas, such as the *chos srid*-system, were merged with the idea of a modern nation state based on fixed boundaries, modern telecommunication or methods of modern warfare. In short, the Melong adopted nationalistic ideas and juxtaposed them with the pre-existing narratives and practices of a Buddhist state, which was conceptualized as an independent state declared by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama back in 1913.

However, this does not mean that the Melong only amplified those policies advocated by the Tibetan or British governments. While it did publish numerous praises of the Tibetan and

British governments, it also savored its option of voicing critical tones. As discussed in Chapter 2, the various political or religious institutions active on the plateau and its fringes published their newspapers or newsletters in order to propagate certain opinions. The Melong absorbed many of these news items, for example reprinting many articles of the KMT-publication *Bod sog gsar gnas*, in particular during the early 1930s. It also published articles by Rab dga' spom mda' tshang or articles by Dge' 'dun chos 'phel who elaborately criticized the basic defects in Tibetan society, including its government. Later, also the voices of the Chu bzhi sgang drug and Mi dmangs tshogs 'du, i.e. groups which stood for more radical politics than those of the Tibetan government, found a space for public expression in the Melong. The location of the Melong's production was crucial in this respect: at the fringes of the centralized politics of either the Tibetan Ganden Phodrang or the (British) Government of India. Openly attacking the policies of the Ganden Phodrang government or reprinting articles from publications such as the *Bod sog gsar gnas* would have hardly been feasible in Lhasa, and the same is true for its anti-colonial contents which were in opposition to the British in India. Counter-narratives thus found their space in the Melong because it exhibited a multi-dimensional and multi-faced editorial policy, at times guided by financial policies and at other times deviating from them. Thus, different from the other print publications of the time, the Melong went beyond propagating one particular political message.

Amidst these entangled and multi-dimensional historical developments, editorial policies and cross-cultural encounters, we are still left to address the two pressing questions at stake: How did the introduction of the newspaper impact various conceptualizations of Tibet? And how did Tibetan-language communicative protocols impact on the newspaper?

7.1 Transformations of Tibet

Throughout the past chapters, we have observed how a newspaper brings into public space what formerly was communicated in private and how it transports into written form what was

formerly communicated orally. Also, its value did not mainly derive from an almighty divine god or sacred source, but rather from "the people", i.e. the newspaper drastically changed modes of accessibility of who is allowed to create contents and in what form. To a large extent, this authoritative change derives of an economic shift, bringing monetary motivation to the foreground. We have observed how these features unleash dynamics which affect modes of community building, nationalism and the flattening of hierarchies.

First Commercial Print Publisher. One outcome of this study is the observation of Tharchin's efforts to operate a media enterprise, thus managing an information and education business disseminated in print. The trade town Kalimpong provided a fitting environment to the nascent undertaking. Influenced by other printer and publishers in India, Bengal and Darjeeling/Kalimpong specifically, Tharchin had familiarized himself with modern economic trends and wished to establish for Tibet what successfully flourished also in Nepali, Bengali, Hindi and other languages. As stressed in the conclusion to Chapters 2 and 3, this entrepreneurial outlook should not be misunderstood as characterizing a "savvy business man", as already pointed out by Stark in connection to the pioneering print publishers in India. Instead, it was more the case that idealistic goals in the fields of politics or religion merged with commercial ambitions. The described commercialization of print caused a turnaround regarding the authoritative sources and target readers of such products. The newspaper as the center piece of the TMP press around which the enterprise revolved underlines this trend: through its declared aim of targeting as many people as possible, the newspaper instigated a pronouncement of the equal importance of each and every individual in his/her capacity of being a paying customer of the publication. Of course, prominent readers were sought after, but mainly in their capacity of attracting more readers and not in light of their capacity of a greater value per se.

Nationalism. The medium newspaper also instigates the import of nationalistic ideas, in the sense of a nation as an "imagined community". The newspaper brings people to a new

consciousness of each other as a bounded community. As previously discussed, the Melong often – but not exclusively – propagated British understandings of a new Tibetan nation. The Melong thus must be seen predominantly amidst a political modernization campaign instigated by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama in collaboration with British actors who propagated specific boundaries, military styles and modes of money transfer (bank notes) or communication (the postal system). One particularly graphic feature which characterizes the modern idea of a nation, is the Melong's repeated publishing of maps. Previously almost unknown and certainly not widely used in Tibetan media culture, the maps published in the Melong underline its usage as a medium of unprecedented contents and forms, here establishing and solidifying geographical boundaries on paper in black and white. Amongst the framework of a global "jigsaw puzzle" of nation states, as Anderson has put it, the exact demarcation of Tibet underwent shifting definitions in the Melong. Reflecting the diverging understandings of the definition of the modern Tibetan nation, the Melong in effect printed different versions of Tibet. Significantly, the most often depicted version was Charles Bell's map of Tibet, yet prevalent drawings of Tibet by the KMT or later the Communists, for example, were published in the Melong as well. Until today, exile depictions remain divided over Tibet's boundaries, and thus we can see how Bell's map depicted in the Melong as early as 1932 remains only one version out of many.

Flattening of Social Hierarchies. The Tibetan community created and connected by the Melong was imagined along homogenous lines. "All Tibetans" should take part in it. As much as this "one Tibet" was propagated, the imagination of the social stratification of this community changed over times. Turning towards a mass audience, a "public", facilitated giving attention to the lower segments of hierarchical imaginations, due to the fact that this lower segment makes up the largest part of potential paying customers. Even though the Melong incorporated and respected the prevalent hierarchies as well as continued to being mainly received and read by the elites, the commoners with their grievances were increasingly

made apparent to all the other readers. These common people, who so far seldom had found a voice in official documents or written culture, suddenly found an entry into a print and written culture traditionally reserved for those educated along specific religious lines. The newspaper offered the chance of becoming a printed author to anybody who knew Tibetan. As demonstrated in Chapter 4, this shift is most evident in the term used to denote the people of a lower segment of society. For the longest time, these were designated with *'bangs* ("subordinates") or similar terms, i.e. those terms which connote dependency on a higher social segment. Picking up socialist rhetoric as probably invented by the KMT and pushed for by the Communists, this segment is later on referred to as *mi dmangs* ("people"). It comes with little surprise, that the newspaper, in its capacity to let everybody speak, was met with resistance, as we have learned in chapters 3 and 6. Thus, members of the elite segment or of the government of Tibet apparently tried to block the newspaper from being spread in Tibet, and other readers criticized Tharchin's attempts to print opinions of *sger g.yog*, i.e. servants.

Tibetan Public. In general terms, the Melong created a connected Tibetan public through its ability to spread information simultaneously to many places on the Tibetan plateau and to a dispersed group of recipients. This concerns an individual level on the one hand, in the sense that people could feel connected to fellow readers by simultaneously reading the same pages, and on the other hand it concerns a communal level, through Tharchin's editorial activities of absorbing and reprinting other Tibetan-language publications and translations of foreign language publications into Tibetan. Thus, the Melong connected Tibet to a global network of information, but, in doing so, it also produced segregation into parallel spheres through language and accessibility. One such example is the simultaneous publication, in the HT and the Melong, of an article on the history of wool trade between India and Tibet.²

² The article "Note on the Tibet Wool Industry" was written by A.N. Odling and published in Tibetan in Melong 11-8-10&11 (March 1943), 15-12-7 (October 1947) and 23-10-4 (October 1956). It was printed in its English original in HT December 25, 1949:5.

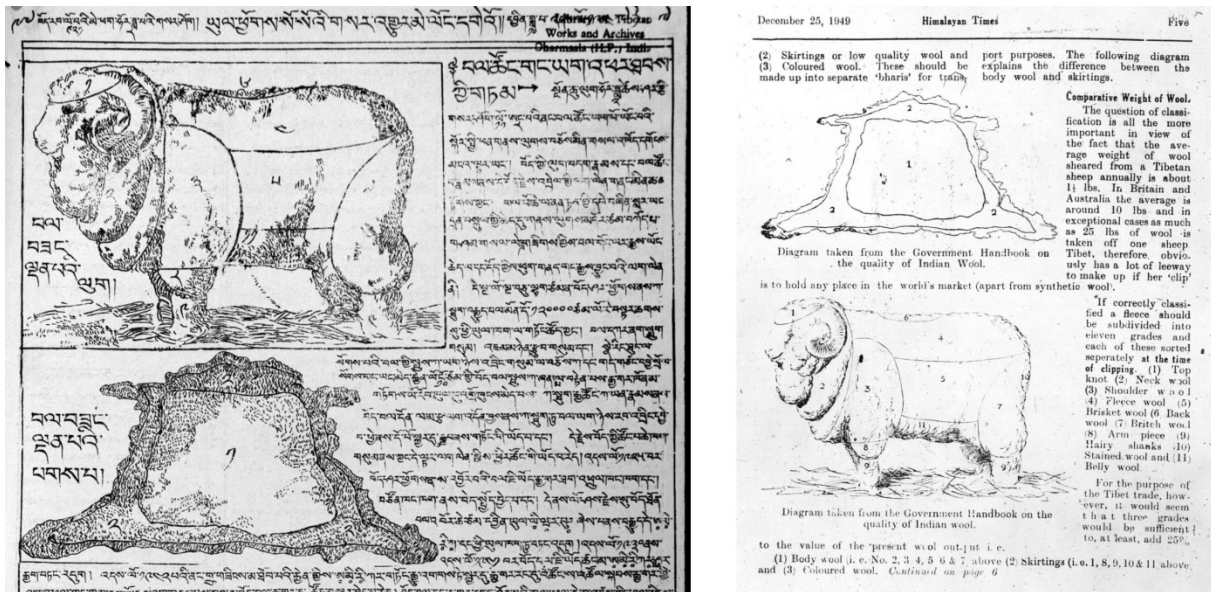


Figure 39: The exact same illustration in the Melong (15-12-7, October 1947) and the HT (December 25, 1949).

The Melong brought together contents found all over the "media scene" of the plateau. This established an unprecedented field of intermedial exchange and public display in Tibetan language. To mention just a few of such examples: early on, it reprinted many articles from the *Bod sog gsar gnas*.³ It used photo blocks from *Bkrung dbyang gsar 'gyur*.⁴ It commented on the founding of *Rang dbang gsar shog*.⁵ It reprinted news from *Mtsho sngon gsar 'gyur*⁶ and *Bod ljongs nyin re'i gsar 'gyur*,⁷ and it used loud speakers in Lhasa as news media.⁸ Sometimes, the sources were considerably twisted in adaptations in the Melong: a cartoon published in the *Bod sog gsar gnas* in 1930 portrayed the British as dogs, trying to "eat" Tibet, while the KMT protects it with a net.⁹ In its adaption in the Melong, published in 1937, the political message is turned around: the Chinese are depicted as trying to eat Tibet and British India as protecting it.¹⁰

³ They particularly often appear during the years 1930-1931. See e.g. Melong 5-2-3 (July 1930), 5-4-3 (September 1930), 5-5-3 (October 1930), 5-6-3 (November 1930), 5-7-3 (December 1930), 5-8-3 (January 1931), 5-9-3 (February 1931), 5-10-4 (March 1931), 5-11-3 (April 1931), 6-2-5 (July 1931), or 6-4-5 (November 1931).
⁴ See e.g. Melong 28-4-2 (April/May 1963).
⁵ See Melong 26-10-3 (March 1960).
⁶ See e.g. Melong 22-12-8 (November 1954).
⁷ See e.g. Melong 25-6-4 (November 1958).
⁸ See e.g. Melong 25-5-9 (September/October 1958).
⁹ See *Bod sog gsar gnas* No. 37, August 25, 1930:24.
¹⁰ See Melong 12-12-8 (July/August 1944).

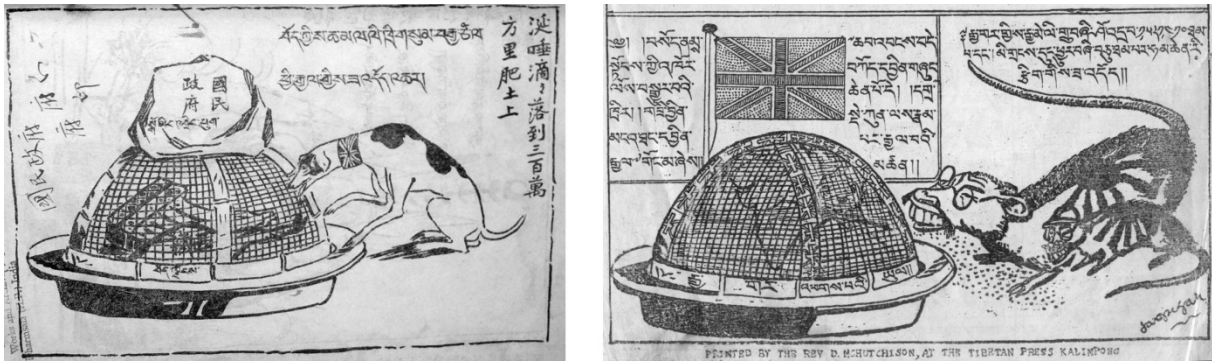


Figure 40: Using the same illustration with different political meanings in the *Bod sog gsar gnas* (left, August 25, 1930) and the *Melong* (right, 12-12-8, July/August 1944).

As discussed in Chapter 2, another news item published by the *Bod ljongs nyin re'i tshags par* (in 1958) denounced all monks as "pigs". The *Melong* reported on the item, but rhetorically asked whether perhaps the person who read the item mistakenly read *phag pa* (pig) instead of *'phags pa* (noble).¹¹ In one instance discussed in Chapter 6, one reader turned against the gossip and wrong "news" disseminated by a Communist paper in Shigatse.¹²

Political Public. The *Melong* not only reprinted news received through its various channels, but it also functioned as an amplifier of public notices. For example, during the 1940s, British trade policies were published, and, during the 1950s, aspiring political parties used the *Melong* to publish their ideas. Chapter 6 has demonstrated that, during the 1950s in the face of outside threat, the *Melong* increasingly turned into a platform for political actors to communicate with each other. During the 1950s, increasingly often the *Melong* also included public notices (*rtsa tshig*, *yig bsgyur*) or flyers originally distributed in Lhasa.¹³ By June 1959, the Dalai Lama's official press releases were published in the *Melong*.¹⁴ Also, the published letters to the editor typically concerned political topics, and a lot of counter-Communist "liberation songs" or alike can be found in these times.¹⁵ In the early period, Tharchin had

¹¹ See *Melong* 25-6-4 (November 1958).

¹² See *Melong* 24-12-2 (April 1958).

¹³ For a communist leaflet, see e.g. *Melong* 21-4-3 (July 1953), further leaflet in 23-3-7 (October 1955), 23-4-5 (November 1955), 24-12-6 (April 1958) or 25-9&10-3&4&5 (February/March 1959). For news from a *yig bsgyur*, see e.g. *Melong* 23-4-5 (November 1955).

¹⁴ See *Melong* 26-1-2&3 (June 1959).

¹⁵ See e.g. *Melong* 20-2&3-8 (May/June 1952), 20-4-6 (July 1952), 24-11-1 (March 1958), 28-1-6 (January 1963), or 28-2-2 (February 1963).

humanized the newspaper into "a little boy" which needed to be taken care of, ransomed and supported. By the 1950s he printed a text which humanized the pen, and thus transformed the act of writing into a political act assisting all sentient beings: In a threefold series between May/June 1952 until August 1952, he published the *Smyu gu rnam thar*, "a biography of the pen".¹⁶ The prose text is set in first person, and the pen explains his family background, origins and social function, just as done a few decades earlier by "the newspaper boy". The text starts:

I am a small thing called bamboo pen, [...]. My birth place is Kongpo. My father's name is thumb, my mother's name is index finger, my relatives' name is middle finger, my master's name is writer. My companion's name is paper, my friend's name is pen knife. The voice with which I tell my stories is called ink. My teacher's name is ruler, my teacher's friend is called whetstone. [...] Now I tell you the stages of how I work and serve the public welfare.¹⁷

The designation of the article as *rnam thar* is significant. *Rnam thar* are usually hagiographies concerning important religious figures, composed rarely by the person themselves but more often by one of their students. Thus, typically not written in the first person, all individual biographical acts are usually firmly set within the frame of the person's eventual enlightenment. In the case of the *Smyu gu rnam thar*, though, the prominent individual is "the pen", which speaks through the newspaper in first person. It serves the public in various ways, leaders and commoners alike:

I can show everything, may it be the drawings depicting visions of wise men, the orders of powerful leaders or the general situation of the people (*mi dmangs*). [...] I

¹⁶ See Melong 20-2&3-8 (May/June 1952), 20-4-3 (July 1952), and 20-5-3 (August 1952).

¹⁷ Melong 20-2&3-8 (May/June 1952): *nga ni smyug gu zhes pa'i dngos po chung ngu thig yin/ [...] nga skyes sa kong po nas yin/ _nga'i pha'i ming la mthe bong dang / _ma'i ming la mdzub mo dang / _spun gyi ming la gung mo zhes brjod kyi yod(_nga'i bdag po'i ming la yig mkhan dang / _nga'i zla grogs kyi ming la shog bu dang / _nga'i grogs po'i ming la ltab gri zhes brjod kyi yod/ _nga'i gtam smra ba'i nga la snag tsha zhes brjod kyi yod/ _nga'i dge rgan gyi ming la thog shing dang / _nga'i grogs po'i dge rgan la brdar rdo zhes brjod kyi yod/ [...] da ni nga'i bya ba dang spyi phan gyi ched du zhabs zhu ji shus kyi rim pa ni/*

serve in being able to do what is difficult, namely being of general benefit to all sentient beings.¹⁸

The turning to the *rnam thar* genre and its reinvention for a broad audience within a socio-political setting is both continuing and breaking communicative patterns. While the aim of "benefiting all sentient beings" copies spiritual altruistic strivings as articulated in hagiographic writings, the path to reach this goal is understood in socio-political terms, acting within a public domain.

In the same way the newspaper took up interpretations of the nation state for Tibet, it equally adopted to local circumstances. Chapter 5 has demonstrated how different foreign concepts such as modern economies, religion or scholarship were adapted to prevalent narratives, forms of communications and mentalities; and, in generally, similar dynamics are observed concerning the whole mode of production of the newspaper. Tharchin did in fact strive to operate a commercial, modern print house revolving around a newspaper. However, the modern subscription system, for example, based on "micropayments" of single individuals did not prevail amongst his readership. To some parts, this may have been due to infrastructural difficulties in the transport of money across longer distances. But, to a greater degree, the problem lay in the foreign modes of communicative transaction. Eventually, a system of patronage and donation prevailed. In order for readers to pay, Tharchin came with non-materialistic, religious arguments: the newspaper was humanized into a child which needed to be ransomed to achieve something great in the future and for the supporter to accumulate wholesome karma. Thus, his arguments invoked popular religious beliefs and practices. Similarly, the *Smyu gu rnam thar* humanized the pen and embedded the power of the written word amidst a religious framework, which leads us straight to the issue of the transformations of the newspaper.

¹⁸ Melong 20-5-3 (August 1952): *mkhas pa'i blo yi 'char sgo'i ri mo dang /_dbang chen dpon gyi bka' rgya dang /_mi dmangs spyi'i bde sdug tshang ma ngas ston thub/ [...] ngas ni skye bo thams cad la spyi phan de lta bu'i dka' thub kyis zhabs zhu bgyis rung /.*

7.2 Transformations of the Newspaper

The introduction of the newspaper to people who communicated in Tibetan language did not only bring about transformations to those addressed, but importantly it also changed the newspaper itself. Similar to the non-reification and processuality of "Tibet", the newspaper likewise constantly undergoes changes. The political systems in operation at the time of the Melong build on the conviction of a divine supremacy, thus leadership and its administrative modes were ultimately conceived as religious acts, and every task and every invention was born out of and into an ideal of sacred application. Script was described first and foremost in its capacity copying sacred scriptures, and the printing of books in its capacity of their multiplication. Thus, the line between the material and the immaterial worlds was blurred and constantly transgressed. As already discussed in Chapter 2, in 1926, Rock depicted a monk "printing" images of Buddhist deities onto water, and reading developed more along the lines of ritualistic practice than as a critical activity. A small segment of predominantly monastic intellectuals would discuss questions concerning the functioning of society and the acts of individuals from the perspective of soteriological concerns, i.e. what are the most advantageous social structures for everybody to reach spiritual awakening? At least in rhetoric, the communicative act was interwoven into these modes of argumentation.

When the Melong was founded and transported to Tibet, it was born into the conviction of the supremacy of the divine and the existence of deities, demons and hungry ghosts. Characteristics of the modern newspapers – such as factuality, economics, involvement in the world and exaggeration – were interwoven into communicative modes established amongst members of a specific communicative community, connected through a shared language and its related practices, formats, styles and protocols, in the Tibetan case predominantly rooted within a Buddhist view of the world. Even though Babu Tharchin was a Christian and not a Buddhist, he made use of established arguments and Buddhist formulas in catering to his Tibetan audience and in this way changed "the newspaper".

The Moral Newspaper. Chapters 4 and 5 have demonstrated how established protocols of communication entered the practice of a newspaper on various levels. As a Tibetan teacher, Tharchin knew well both about the oral and the written specialities of Tibetan literature. He stylized the newspaper into a *legs bshad*, i.e. a "Good Saying", morally prescribing his readers what is wholesome and what is unwholesome. In this way, the newspaper took up moral characteristics in presenting world news as a way of cultivating morally wholesome conduct by studying the conduct of others. This usage of the newspaper seamlessly continues prevalent applications of literature and thus did not demand a new mode of textual reception from its addressed audience. By connecting the newspaper to this type of moralizing literature, it was transformed into a form of life advice, from which one can learn how to live a morally wholesome life. The same is true for advertisements, and products were often advertised in terms of added soteriological value and not only mundane practicability. I have noted in Chapter 5 that "moral newspapers" are not a new phenomenon in media history per se, but the idea of putting into writing authoritative modes of conduct met fertile ground within the nexus of Tibetan media culture. Thus, the *legs bshad* was apparently found most suitable to reinterpret news items redacted for a Tibetan readership.

The Prophetic Newspaper. In a similar way, the newspaper's function of dealing with the mundane here and now was reinvented by referring to prevalent forms of media practice. In Tibet, oracles had played an important role in communicative culture concerning news, politics or socio-political agendas. The Melong, as "a mirror", already carries in its name the reference to this practice, as noted already in Chapter 1. Thus, it too was seen as a vessel to widely disseminate authoritative messages from supermundane beings into a mundane world, often in prophetic forms through the literary style of *lung bstan*. Within the framework of prescribing advice concerning morally wholesome or unwholesome behaviour, messages beyond human authorship picked up on modes of how to publicly articulate criticism while circumventing liability for possibly difficult messages. Tharchin used the Melong to articulate

and publish unpopular opinions concerning the grievances of the common folk. He also incorporated the tool of *lung bstan* to meet the tastes of his readership. Significantly, when the readers picked up on the use of the Melong as a platform to let loose personal or political grievances, they often would resort to textual compositions as found in the context of prophetic texts and these compositions would often even be entitled *lung bstan*.

This is significant in two respects. First of all, in this way the Melong used existent modes of public criticism, when, just as in the Lhasa Street Songs described in Chapter 2, difficult messages were presented within an oracular framework. The Lhasa Street Songs, as the "cartoon of the markets" (Goldstein), were attributed with divine origin, thus circumventing individual liability. This type of anonymous expression of critical opinion found continued use within the public pages of the Melong. The *lung bstan* guaranteed anonymous authorship, a feature the Melong could offer as well. Secondly, the *lung bstan* or the textual structure of prophetic texts were particularly often used by readers in order to formulate criticism, namely through a description of current difficult times. This type of textual composition was fervently picked up by readers during the 1950s, when the Melong finally found a certain degree of acceptance amongst a broader Tibetan public. Readers used the *lung bstan* or prophetic compositions to formulate criticism, as discussed in Chapter 6. Tharchin himself once stated in a letter how his newspaper was indeed seen as a "prophecy teller" and that the Tibetans therefore liked to read it. At least in one case, Tharchin (or a co-editor) utilized the form of a *lung bstan* with its antidote (*bzlog thabs*) to instigate public participation. Another issue featured a *lung bstan* which foresaw a gloomily devastating future, and its corresponding *bzlog thabs* was sent by a reader and printed in the following issue. Thus, the *lung bstan* bear witness to the endurance and success of local genres and thereby to the transformations at work concerning the newspaper itself. In this way, amongst others, the newspaper was transformed into a medium of not only describing the present but also for looking into the future.

Lhasa Street Songs Put into Writing. We have already discussed the way in which the Melong absorbed contents of other Tibetan-language news media and reprinted written notices of British institutions, the Tibetan government or other parties. However, the public connected by the Melong did not only include written texts. It is important to note that traces of orality feature prominently in the Melong. The Melong was broadly embedded within – or to be more precise, understood on the basis of – a nexus of mediated information grounded in prevalent printing techniques, letter writing and especially oral media culture. The lack of sources available on its reception most probably lies in the fact that reception predominantly occurred orally, and these oral formats are not documented in archives. What may nevertheless be observed is how Tharchin and his co-authors made use of spoken formats in order to make themselves more easily understood.

One such case in point is the incorporation of Lhasa Street Songs in the pages of the Melong. These combine both the oracular element of giving meaning to anonymous voices and the form of orality so important in the context of public culture. In the verge of the increasing politicization of the publication during the 1950s, the Melong included many Lhasa Street Songs amongst its publications. In this way, it did not only reaffirm its function as a prophetic medium but also exhibited a high sensibility for the oral genres used amongst Tibetan speakers, which in turn showcases its low-threshold accessibility, reaching out to as many people as possible. Furthermore, these were often sent to the editorial office in form of letters, thus their originally oral format being written down in order to have their message delivered to the Melong, which then had the capacity of transporting the contents of these critical, oracular and anonymous songs even farther.

In January 1952, for example, a letter was received and introduced by Tharchin as follows: "A letter has arrived, stating that recently the prices for commodities in Lhasa have risen drastically, and the people have great suffering and difficulties. Therefore, in Lhasa, the young girls who fetch water have composed a new song which was asked to be printed in the

newspaper." The reprinted song then goes on to attack the Communists' negative influence on market prices, and following the published song, the letter writer adds: "It were great if this song was continuously sung, and you could write it down also in the newspaper which is so beneficial to us humble people!"¹⁹ Similarly, in August 1951, a song was introduced by stating: "These days, this new song is sung in Lhasa: [...]"²⁰ The contents of such songs reflect efforts to create space for deviating opinions within the publication. In the early 1950s, the Melong reprinted a number of Communist songs of liberation, such as under the headline "A New Song of the People's Liberation" (*mi dmangs bcings bkrol gyi glu gzhas gsar pa*),²¹ and "Song of Liberation" (*bcing 'grol glu bzhas*)²² in November 1951, or "Song of the Chinese Liberation Army" (*rgya nag bcings bkrol dpung dmag gi gzhas*)²³ in March 1952. In the subsequent years, the majority of songs however then propagated liberation in the sense of a liberation from the Chinese, referred to in Tibetan with the term *rang dbang* ("freedom", actually: "own power") instead of the Communist rhetoric of *bcings 'grol* ("liberation", actually "releasing fetters"). The thus published songs were often called "Song of Freedom" (*rang dbang gi glu*).²⁴ We have already observed that a later issue featured the English "oracle" for *lung bstan*, and similarly, in February/March 1963, a Song of Freedom originally published in Tibetan was printed under the English headline "Current Song".²⁵

There is no space here to go into an in-depth analysis of the collection of these songs – which, however, would afford for future avenues of related research – but in this context their sheer number specifically underlines one point: the novel feature of a public political platform was

¹⁹ Melong 19-10-7 (January 1952): *bar lam bod du nyo chas sogs kyi rin gong ha cang 'phar zhing mi dmangs rnams dka' sdug chen po yod 'dug par brten lha sar chu len bu mo na gzhon rnams nas glu gzhas dpe gsar len gyi yod 'dug pa gsar 'gyur nang 'god rogs ces yi ge 'byor byung ba [...] zhes pa len mus ltar na nga 'tsho [sic!] nyams chung la phan ched gsar 'gyur la'ang 'god gnang thub tsho gang legs yang 'dug/*

²⁰ Melong 19-5-5 (August 1951): *deng lha sar gzhas gsar pa zhis len gyi yod 'dug pa 'di lta ste [...]*." For further examples see e.g. Melong 20-1-7 (April 1952), 20-2&3-8 (May/June 1952).

²¹ Melong 19-8-4 (November 1951).

²² Melong 19-8-5 (November 1951).

²³ Melong 19-12-7 (March 1952).

²⁴ See e.g. Melong 20-2&3-8 (May/June 1952), 20-4-6 (July 1952), 24-11-1 (March 1958), or 28-1-6 (January 1963).

²⁵ Melong 28-3-4 (February/March 1963).

often engaged in ways prevalent and familiar in Lhasa, namely in the form of critical songs. This type of adaption points towards the editors' desire for textual content compositions in familiar forms and their aim to instigate a further spread of the existent contents. Thus, readers who had read or heard the contents of the Melong were also more likely to further disseminate contents in familiar forms.

Traces of Orality. Various forms of oral speech, such as the Lhasa Street Songs and rhythmic verse forms as mnemonic devices, were embedded into all content pieces of the newspaper like the popular *gtam dpe*, the poetic *legs bshad*, other seven- and nine-limbed verse formats or complete poems and songs. This type of textualization of oral speech underlines two points. First, contents are recorded in script in the newspaper, while their oral circulation is deliberately encouraged. Thus, an extended distribution of contents via oral communication was an important part of the newspaper practice, which, in turn, also points towards the low-threshold accessibility of the newspaper as a whole. Secondly, the language put into writing on paper must be seen as a crystallization point of contents around which was clustered a variety of recipients, and thus not as an exclusive medium which could be read by some but not most. Reading culture was strongly anchored in the culture of oral communication, and also Fahmy has already demonstrated that the modern culture of reading in silence, with its attributed primacy of script, constitutes but one possible mode of reading.²⁶ Thus, traces of orality are powerfully inscribed into the silent world of the material newspaper. The Melong is a good example of how orality may play an important role in the production of newspaper contents as well as in their reception, for example, when editors readily resort to oral forms to make the contents understood. Even though the investigation of the Melong's reception has proven difficult precisely because of the ephemerality of oral sources, Chapter 6 has shown how many letters to the editor indeed had resembled songs of praise and that political comments often came in verse form.

²⁶ See Fahmy 2012:14.

Failure of Desired Participation. Tharchin had conceived of the newspaper as a participatory endeavor. Chapter 2 has demonstrated that the newspaper, not least due to its economic plan, in fact was an inclusive medium that offered virtually everyone the option of becoming a sponsor or an author. At least in the latter case, this went along with providing access to a literary and print culture formerly practiced exclusively amongst a circle of elites. Tharchin's efforts towards financial participation as discussed in Chapter 3, the articulated normative definition of a newspaper as discussed in Chapter 4, and familiar forms and formats for the purpose of recognition as discussed in Chapter 5 – all these bear further witness to the ideal conception of the Melong as a participatory medium. It may be observed, however, that for the longest time Tharchin's efforts remained without the desired success, since the newspaper a) never was financially self-sustaining, b) never achieved a high numbers of subscribers independently of the interferences of the British Government of India, and c) seldom received satisfying responses to its calls for public participation and discussion. In one case, treated in Chapter 6, Tharchin even had faked a letter to his editorial office, because nobody had replied to his call for participation in a discussion on the freedom of speech in the Tibetan community. Certain thresholds of success were – at least according to the editor's own wording – only met in the 1950s, in face of the Communist intruders into Tibet, when the Tibetan nation, conceptualized by the help of Tharchin through the means of a bounding newspaper, came under threat.

Tharchin himself had lamented that this success came "too late" – and yet, the Melong's success is a long and ongoing story. While its potential as a crystallization point for a modern Tibetan nation might not have become realized formally during the time of its publication, the Melong does continue to be absorbed in the memory of contemporary journalists working in Tibetan-language media. From the Melong a coexistence of various and divergent narratives emanate, concerning both the newspaper and Tibet: the "first Tibetan newspaper" of the "first Tibetan journalist" exists next to a "Tibetan-language newspaper" of somebody considered a

non-Tibetan. Thus, questions of belonging continue to flicker through the ongoing discourses connected to the Melong, the Tibetan-language "newspaper" for "Tibet", however divergent these two entities may be understood.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Tibetan-language Newspapers and Magazines – A Chronology

The following list provides information on 42 newspaper and/or magazine projects in Tibetan language, starting from the first Tibetan-language newspaper, until titles first published in the early 1970s.

Titles in addition to Tibetan titles after a comma signify a second title by the editors of the newspaper. Titles in bracket signify translations by myself. Grey entries were not seen by myself, but known through secondary sources.

	Title	Date of first Issue	Date of first issue seen myself	Frequency	Cessation or last known issue	Published in	Published by	Archive or Source	Comment
1	<i>La dwags kyi ag bar</i> ("Ladakh Newspaper") from March 1908: <i>La dwags pho nya</i> ("Ladakh Messenger")	January 1904	January 1904	monthly	September 1910	Leh (Ladakh)	German Moravian Mission (Herrhuter): August H. Francke	Herrnhut Archives (Herrnhut, Germany), Walravens 2010	
2	<i>Bod kyi phal skad gsar 'gyur</i> ("News in the Colloquial Language of Tibet")	April 5, 1907	July 1907 (no.21)	every ten days		Lhasa	Chinese Ambans Lian Yu and Zhang Yitang	Tibet Museum (Lhasa), Zheng 2000	
3	<i>Possible newspaper planned by the Thirteenth Dalai Lama</i>	1908	no original or copy seen				<i>Thirteenth Dalai Lama</i>	<i>The Straits Times</i> (May 26, 1909:8)	
4	<i>Bod yig phal skad kyi gsar 'gyur</i> ("Newspaper in Colloquial Tibetan"), from April 1915: <i>Bod yig gsar 'gyur</i> ("Tibetan-language Newspaper")	January 1913	January 1913	monthly; bi-weekly		Beijing	KMT	Zhou 2010:165, Bavarian State Library	
5	<i>Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long</i> ("Mirror of News from Various Regions")	October 1, 1925	October 1, 1925	monthly; weekly	November 1963	Kalimpong	Scottish Mission, TMP: Babu Tharchin	various	For further titles see Sawerthal 2011:17-19
6	<i>Bod ljongs a lan gsar 'gyur</i> (?)	1925	no original or copy seen	monthly		Dartsedo/Kangding	Paris Foreign Mission	Rtse dbang et al. 1990:131	Language not specified
7	<i>Kye lang ag bar</i> ("Kyelang Newspaper")	September 1926	May 1927 (no.7)	monthly	1935	Kyelang (Ladakh)	Moravian Missionaries: Walter Asboe and Joseph Gergan	Berlin State Library	
8	<i>Gza' 'khor re'i bod sog gsar gnas</i> ("Mongolian Tibetan Weekly Newsletter"), from April 1934: <i>Bod sog zla re'i gsar gnas</i> ("Mongolian Tibetan Monthly Newsletter")	September 1929	December 7, 1929 (no.8)	weekly; monthly	1947 or 1948	Nanjing; Chongqing	MTAC (KMT): Skal bzang tshe ring et al.	LTWA	Bilingual (Tibetan and Chinese), later quadrilingual (Tibetan, Mongolian, Arabic, Chinese)
9	<i>Mtsho sngon gsar pa</i> ("New Qinghai")	February 10, 1929	no original or copy seen		April 1931		KMT	Zhou 2010:36	Bilingual (Chinese and Tibetan)
10	<i>Shis khang gsar pa'i zla dus tshags par, Xin xi kang yue kan</i> ("New Xikang Monthly")	May 1930	no original or copy seen	monthly			KMT	Zhou 2010:36, Zla ba tshe ring 2009b:43	Chinese, including Tibetan articles
11	<i>Journal of Urusvati Himalayan Research Institute of Roerich Museum</i>	1931	1931	annually	1933	Kullu Naggar (India)	Urusvati Himalayan Research Institute of Roerich Museum: George Roerich	Waldenfels 2011:402-408	English
12	<i>Xichui xianhua shi gong shu yuekan</i> ("Monthly Review of the Emissary for the Propagation of Values on the Western Frontier")	1935	no original or copy seen	monthly	1937	Nanjing; Xining, Xiangride; or Inner Mongolia (?)	Panchen Lama's Office: Liu Jiaju	Jagou 2002:98-99, Jagou 2004:14, Jagou 1996:19, Enders 1936:296, Zhou 2010:36-37, Sgrol ma 2009:62	Trilingual (Tibetan, Mongolian, Chinese)
13	<i>Shu sheng zhou bao</i> ("Shusheng Weekly")	January 1936	no original or copy seen	weekly	1940	Dingxiang (Xikang)	KMT-army	Zhou 2010:37	Chinese, including Tibetan articles
14	<i>Bla ma nar 'ung sid khul, Lam a nar ung sedkül</i> ("Journal of the Lamas")	June 1936	June 1936	monthly		Ulaanbaatar	Monks of Gandan monastery	Grivelet 2001	In Mongolian language, but in Tibetan script; one article also in Tibetan language
15	<i>Khams kyi rgyal dmangs nyin re'i gsar 'gyur</i> ("Daily Newspaper of the People of Kham")	1936	no original or copy seen	daily		Dartsedo/Kangding	KMT	Rtse dbang et al. 1990:132	Language not specified
16	<i>La dwags pho nya</i> ("Ladakh Messenger")	January 1937	May 1937 (no.5)	monthly	late 1950s	Leh (Ladakh)	Moravian Mission: Walter Asboe, Pierre Vittoz, Eliyah Phuntsog	MCH	
17	<i>Shis khang gsar 'gyur</i> ("Xikang News")	April 24, 1939	not original or copy seen	weekly	December 1949	Dartsedo/Kangding	KMT	Zla ba tshe ring 2009b:44, Zhou 2010:37	Bilingual (Tibetan, Chinese)
18	<i>Ko ming nyin re'i tshags par</i> ("Kuomintang Daily Newspaper")	July 1939	not original or copy seen	Tibetan version: weekly	1949, with breaks	Hongkong	KMT: Tao Pai-chuan	Zla ba tshe ring 2009b:44, Zhou 2010:37	Bilingual (Tibetan, Chinese): Chinese version daily, Tibetan version weekly
19	<i>Shis khang go ming nyin re'i tshags par</i> ("Daily Newspaper of the Kuomintang in Xikang")	October 10, 1941	not original or copy seen	Tibetan version: weekly	1945	Dartsedo/Kangding	KMT	Zla ba tshe ring 2009b:44, D'Ester/Heide 1942:239	Bilingual (Tibetan, Chinese), Chinese version daily, Tibetan version weekly
20	<i>Tshung kren gsar 'gyur</i> (?)	1944	no original or copy seen	monthly	1948	Kangding/Dartsedo	Paris Foreign Mission	Rtse dbang et al. 1990:132	Language not specified

21	<i>Rab dga' spom mda' tsang's newspaper project</i>	Around 1945-1946	probably not realized			Kalimpong	<i>Rab dga' spom mda' tsang</i>	Goldstein 2007[1989]:456, OIOC "Mss Eur D 998/39" in McKay 2009:199	
22	<i>Mtsho sngon bod yig gsar 'gyur</i> ("The Amdo Tibetan-language News")	January 16, 1951	September 16, 1951 (no.26)	every ten days; daily	still running	Xining	Chinese Communist Government	VIESAK	
23	<i>Chamdo newspaper</i>	1951 (?)	no original or copy seen			Chamdo	Chinese Communist government	Melong 19-3-12 (June 1951)	
24	<i>Mi ser brnyan dpar</i> , later <i>Mi dmangs brnyan par</i> ("People Pictorial")	1951	February 1951 (no.2)	monthly		Beijing	Chinese Communist government	VIESAK	Published in six languages (Chinese, Russian, English, Mongolian, Tibetan and Uighur)
25	<i>Gsar 'gyur mdor bsdus</i> ("Condensed News")	December 1, 1953	December 1, 1953	every five days	1956	Lhasa	Chinese Communist Government	LTWA, CU	Precursor to <i>Bod ljongs nyin re'i gsar 'gyur</i> (see entry 32 of this table)
26	<i>Rgyal rtse gsar 'gyur</i> ("Gyantse News")	1953 (?)	February 10, 1954 (no. 38)		still running	Gyantse	Chinese Communist government	LTWA	
27	<i>Ming kyang tshags par</i> ("Min River Newspaper"), or <i>Ming kyang gsar 'gyur</i> , by 1981: <i>Rnga pa tshags par</i> ("Ngaba Newspaper")	1953	no original or copy seen	daily	still running	Ngaba	Chinese Communist government	Kolmaš 1978:104, Hartley 2005:247, Zla ba tshe ring 2009b:44	
28	<i>Dkar mdzes lho rgyud tshags par</i> ("South Kardze Newspaper"), from 1954: <i>Dkar mdzes tshags par</i> ("Kardze Newspaper"), from ca. 1957: <i>Dkar mdzes nyin re'i tshags par</i> ("Daily Kardze Newspaper")	1953	October 30, 1959 (no.697)		still running	Dartsedo/Kangding	Chinese Communist government	Zla ba tshe ring 2009b:44, private: Robbie Barnett	
29	<i>Kan lho'i gsar 'gyur</i> ("Gannan News")	1954	no original or copy seen	every five days; weekly	still running	Tashikyil/Xiahe	Chinese Communist government	Schubert 1957-58:11, Zhou 2010:174	Bilingual (Tibetan, Chinese) until 1954; on January 1, 1955, first Tibetan-only issue
30	<i>Mi rigs brnyan par</i> ("Nationalities Pictorial")	1955	no original or copy seen	monthly		Beijing	Chinese Communist government	Hartley 2005:233	
31	<i>A newspaper from Shigatse</i>	1955	no original or copy seen			Shigatse	Chinese Communist government	Winnington 1957:192	
32	<i>Bod ljongs nyin re'i gsar 'gyur</i> , from 1965 <i>Bod ljongs nyin re'i tshags par</i> ("Tibet Daily")	April 22, 1956	March 1, 1958 (no. 565)	daily	still running	Lhasa	Chinese Communist government	VIESAK, etc.	Emerged out of <i>Gsar 'gyur mdor bsdus</i> (see entry 25 of this table)
33	<i>Sikkim Herald</i> , <i>Bras ljongs bya ma rta</i>	1956 or 1957	1970s		2001	Gangtok (Sikkim)	Information and Public Relations Department of the Government of Sikkim	private: Tshul khri ms rgya mtsho (NIT)	At first only in English; Tibetan version from ca. 1965
34	<i>Mtsho sngon brnyan par</i> ("Qinghai Pictorial")	July 1958	July 1958			Xining	Chinese Communist government	CU	
35	<i>Bod kyi shes rig</i> , <i>Tibetology</i>	November 1959	November 1959			Gangtok (Sikkim)	Namgyal Institute of Tibetology	VIESAK, NIT, etc.	At first bilingual (Tibetan, English); from May 1964 called <i>Bulletin of Tibetology</i> , published only in English
36	<i>Rang dbang gsar shog</i> , <i>Freedom</i>	March 10, 1960	February 16, 1961 (no.38)	weekly	1965	Darjeeling	Tibet Freedom Press: Rgyal lo don 'grub, Lha dbang dpal 'byor, Bhag 'gro Lama et al.	VIESAK, LTWA, etc.	
37	<i>Yar rgyas gong 'phel</i> ("Progress")	1961	July 1971 (vol.10 no.3)	monthly		Gangtok (Sikkim)	Information Service of India	AM	
38	<i>Krung dbyang gsar 'gyur</i> , <i>Central Weekly News</i>	January 1963	July 21, 1963 (no.22)	weekly		Kolkata	KMT: Bstan pa lhun 'grub	University of Washington, VIESAK	
39	<i>Rang dbang srung skyobs gsar shog</i> , <i>Defend Tibet's Freedom</i>	July 31, 1963	July 31, 1963	every ten days	1965	Darjeeling	Rang dbang srung skyobs par khang: Lha mo tshe ring, A mdo 'jigs med, 'Ba' chung mthu stobs dgon po	VIESAK	
40	<i>Bod mi'i rang dbang</i> , <i>Tibetan Freedom</i>	March 9, 1965	March 9, 1965	daily; weekly	still running	Darjeeling; Dharamsala (India)	Bhag 'gro Lama, 'Ba' pa phyag mdzod bkra shis	VIESAK, LTWA,	Emerged out of <i>Rang dbang gsar shog</i> (see entry 36) and <i>Rang</i>

								CU, etc.	<i>dbang srung skyobs gsar shog</i> (see entry 39)
41	<i>Shes bya</i> ("Object of Knowledge")	October 1968	October 1968	monthly	still running	Dharamsala	The Editorial Board: Tenzin Geyche, Sonam Tobgyal, Tenzin Tethong	AM, etc.	
42	<i>'Go rtogs</i> ("Understanding")	Early 1970s (?)	illegible			Mustang (Nepal)	CIA-sponsored guerilla fighters in Mustang: Lha mo tshe ring et al.	Norbu 1999, Tshong kha Lha mo tshe ring 2008:76-78	

Appendix 2 Publications of the Tibet Mirror Press – A Chronology

The following list compiles titles related to the TMP: Provided titles were either a) published and printed at the TMP, b) only printed at the TMP, or c) only distributed through the TMP. The titles have been retrieved through two modes: Some were found in archives, libraries or in the possession of individuals, others were advertized for within the pages of the Melong. I could identify in total 129 of these house advertizements.

If not otherwise noted, the language of publication is Tibetan. If a title differs from the title of the first edition, I provide it in the list. I transcribed titles as they appear on the cover or the source, disregarding possible spelling mistakes. Luran Hartley provides useful commentary in her annotated list of holdings of the TC, which has been used for reference here at times. A question mark next to the provided data indicates that I am quite sure about the given information, but that the information is nevertheless not provided either in the publication, nor have I seen the edition myself. "Book" refers to the Western book-format, "pecha" to the Tibetan pecha-format.

	Title	Author / Source	Publisher	(First) Publishing	First advertised in Melong	Price	Editions	Archive or Source	Format: Printing method	Comment
1.	Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long.	Tharchin	TMP	1925				various	various	
2.	Sikkim & the Darjeeling District.		TMP (?)	December 16, 1929				LTWA	map	English.
3.	Rmi lam lha mo'i bstan bcos dge slong gzhon nu rab gsal gyi dri lan zhes bya ba bzhugs so.		TMP	1930	May 1930	0-5-0	1 st ed. 1930 2 nd ed. 1967	LTWA, CU AM	book: lithographed book: mimeographed (cover: type)	
4.	Byi la ma bu'i rtsod gdam bzhugs so. The dispute between a mother cat and her kitten. Byi la ma bu gnyis kyi rtsod gdam bzhugs so. The Dispute between a Mother Cat & Her Kitten.		TMP	1930	September 1930	0-2-0	1 st ed. 1930 2 nd ed. 1953 ¹	Schubert 1935:96 VIESAK	book book:type-set	
5.	Vajracchedika Sutra.	Sutra			July 1930	?		Melong 5-2-8 (July 1930)	pecha: manuscript	Only sales, not seen.
6.	Ma 'ongs lung bstan le'u nyer gnyis yod pa (John's Revelations in 22 chapters).	Bible	TMP	1930 (?)	July 1930	0-2-0		Melong 5-2-1 (July 1930)		not seen.
7.	The Young Lepcha.	Rev. Gyan Tshering Sitling (editor)	Rev. Gyan Tsering Sitling	March 1931		1-8-0		CU	magazine: 1 page, lithographed	Printed at the TMP.
8.	Ja chang lha mo'i bstan bcos bzhugs so. Ja chang lha mo'i rtsod gleng bstan bcos. The Dispute between Tea and Beer.	Khewang Bondrong ²	TMP	1931	April 1931	0-8-0	1 st ed. 1931 2 nd ed. 1967	STABI LTWA, VIESAK	book: lithographed book: mimeographed (cover: type-set)	
9.	Dka' drung nor rgyas nang pa mchog nas brtsams bar mdzad pa'i yig bskur rnam gzhag ³ bzhugs so/. The Modern Tibetan Letter Writer of Kadung Nornang of Lhasa. Dpal ldan sa skyong mi dbang bshad sgra ba chen po mchog dang /_mi rje bka' drung nor nang pa mchog nas brtsams mdzad yig bskur rnam gzhag [... dang ...] deb ther 'dod 'jo'i gter mdzod ces bya ba bzhugs so. Letter-Writers. [...] Short History of ancient kings, [etc. ...]. ⁴ <i>same as above</i>	Bka' drung nor nang, bshad sgra sde srid Bka' drung nor nang, bshad sgra sde srid, Tharchin	TMP	1931	April 1931	2-0-0 (hard cover) 1-12-0 (soft cover)	1 st ed. 1931 2 nd (?) ed. 1954 3 rd (?) ed. 1956	STABI, Schubert 1935:96-97 VIESAK AM	book: lithographed book: lithographed (last pages type-set, cover type-set) <i>same as above</i>	Includes a supplement of Hindi vocabulary targeted at traders. Includes letters from the TMP-publishing house and historical information (see full title in footnote 4).

¹ The cover says 1950, but the colophon 1953. Because the date in the colophon is more specific, I prefer the later date of publication.

² According to TC: Registry of the publication, Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Subdivisional Officer (Kalimpong), February 7, 1931.

³ Note the different spellings: *yig bskur rnam gzhag*, and *yig bskur rnam bzhag* in different editions and also in the ads in the Melong.

⁴ The full title is *Dpal ldan sa skyong mi dbang bshad sgra ba chen po mchog dang /_mi rje bka' drung nor nang pa mchog nas brtsams mdzad yig bskur rnam gzhag rgyas pa khag gnyis dang /_gzhan yang yig bskur thor bu sna tshogs/_bod kyi chos rgyal snga ba rnam dang gau shr khag gi gdung rabs/_rgyal dbang skur 'phreng rim byon dang /_srid skyong rim pa'i khri lo':shod drung las tshan yi rim pa dang /_rdzong gzhis khag gi ming tho/_lha sa nas smar khams phyin gyi lam tho dang tham deb/_khrims yig zhal lce bcu gsum dang khrims 'degs ang grangs/_ma+nya+dzu gong ma'i khri rabs/_rbras ljongs rgyal rabs bod sing gnyis dang gor bod gnyis kyi ching yig sogs mdor bsdus phyogs bsgrigs deb ther 'dod 'jo'i gter mdzod ces bya ba bzhugs so/. Letter-Writers. Yig-bskur rnam gzhag. By H.E. Kalon Shadra & Kadrung Nornang. and Various other collections of modern letter-writers. Short History of ancient kings, H.H. The Dalai Lamas & their Regents. The Thirteen Code laws by king Srongtsen Gampo, list of seals and their sizes as used by Dalai Lamas & Regents.*

	Dpal ldan mi rje bka' drung nor nang mchog nas brtsams mdzad mkhas rnams dgyes pa'i yig bskur rnam gzhag ces bya ba bzhugs so/. Tibetan Letter-Writer by Shri Kardung Norgye Nangpa	Bka' drung nor nang					4 th (?) ed. 1968	VIESAK	book: mimeographed (cover: type-set)	Includes only Bka' drung nor nang's work.
10.	Bod dbyin rgya gar skad 3 shan sbyar.				May 1932	7-0-0				Advertised for again in April 1945 and February 1948; I do not know what publication this refers to.
11.	Bod dbyin shan sbyar.				May 1932	6-0-0				I do not know what publication this refers to.
12.	Manual of Colloquial Tibetan.	Charles Bell	Baptist Mission Press (Calcutta)	1905	May 1932	9-0-0				Only sales.
13.	Dri med kun ldan rnam thar.		TMP (?)	1932	May 1932	1-8-0			type-set	
14.	Rtogs brjod dpag bsam 'khri shing.	Jātaka	TMP (?)	1932	May 1932	6-0-0			type-set	
15.	An English-Tibetan Dictionary: Containing a Vocabulary of Approximately Twenty Thousand Words with their Tibetan Equivalents.	KA dzi zla ba bsam grub	Baptist Mission Press (Calcutta)	1919	May 1932	15-0-0				Only sales.
16.	Bod yig gi ka dpe dang po dang byis pa rnams la phan pa'i dag yig go bde bstan pa bcas bzhugs so. Tibetan primer together with simple rules of correct spelling.	K. Waismaa	Scandinavian Alliance Mission (later Free Church of Finland), TMP	1911	October 1, 1932	0-3-0	6 th ed. 1962 7 th ed. 1970	VIESAK AM		Printed at the TMP at least from the 6 th ed. Before, advertised and sold separately. Only later, the two were converged into one publication.
17.	Bod yig gi ka dpe gnyis pa bzhugs so. Tibetan Second Book. Bod skad kyi sgrog dpe gnyis pa yon tan nyer 'phel zhes bya ba bzhugs so. The Tibetan Second Book.	Tharchin	Scandinavian Alliance Mission (Later Free Church of Finland) TMP TMP TMP	1917	October 1, 1932	0-8-0	1 st ed. 1917 2 nd ed. 1953 3 rd ed. 1962 4 th ed. 1968	VIESAK Preface 4th ed. Preface 4th ed. AM, VIESAK	book: type-set	Printed on the Baptist Mission Press.
18.	Khu nu'i zla tho.				October 31, 1932	--				A calendar from Khunu.
19.	Hin bod shan sbyar.				October 31, 1932	0-3-0				I do not know what publication this refers to.
20.	'Chi med mdzod rtsa 'brel.				October 31, 1932	5-0-0				This is probably the root text and commentary of the Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit dictionary "Amarakoṣa" by Amarasimha, published by the Asiatic Society in 1911.
21.	Tibetan-English Dictionary.	George Roerich, Dorje Lama Lobzang Mingyur	Urusvati Himalayan Research Institute of Roerich Museum (New York, Kullu Naggar)	1934	February 1933	100-0-0				Only sales.
22.	Byas pa dag yag dgu mtha' cha phran phul grangs spor grangs khal bsgril/_skar grangs srang bsgril dbus 'bun spor gcog legs bshad bcas.		TMP (?)		May 1933	0-6-0				This is a mathematical guide with multiplication tables, assisting calculation, probably produced for traders. Not seen myself.
23.	Drang srong gi bu mo gzugs kyi nyi ma'i rnam thar.		TMP	1933	October 1933	3-0-0		TBRC, Bacot 1957, TCMM	pecha: wood-block	

24.	Lus la nyer mkho skabs brgyad pa.	Mi pham 'jam dpal dgyes pa	TMP	1933	February/ March 1934	0-8-0		STABI, Schubert 1935:97	pecha: lithographed	
25.	Kun rdzob g.ya' sel me long gam ltas brtag me long.	Chags med rin po che (mkhas grub ra ga s.yas)	TMP	1934	September 1934	illegible		Schubert 1953:97, Karma Chagmed 1982		
26.	Rta la nyer mkho sman bcas dang rta'i bzang ngan brtag tshul ri mo dang bcas pa.		TMP	1934	September 1934	illegible		British Library		Not seen myself.
27.	Bod yig dbu med kyi ka dpe bzhugs so. The Tibetan Primer of current hand-writing. Dbu chen dbu med shan byar kyi ka dpe byis pa dga' ba'i mgrin rgyan zhes bya ba bzhugs so. The Tibetan Primer of Current Hand Writing. Dbu med kyi ka dpe dang po byis par dga' ba'i mgrin rgyan zhes bya ba bzhugs so/. Tibetan Primer of Current Hand writing. Tibbati bhāṣā pracalit hastlekh śikṣā.	Tharchin	TMP	1934 (?) ⁵	September 1934	0-4-0	1 st ed. 1934 3 rd ed. 1954 4 th (?) ed. 1960 5 th (?) ed. 1966 6 th ed. 1968	Schubert 1935:97 LTWA Preface 6 th ed. Preface 6 th ed. LTWA, AM, STABI	book book: mimeographed (cover: type) book: offset	Printed by M.E. Eapen at the Worli Press (Bombay)
28.	Scenes of Tibetan Life.	Tharchin, Rev. Knox	TMP	1935 or 1937 ⁶				National Library (Kolkata)	booklet: lithographed	English
29.	Rig pa bzo yi gnas kyi las tshogs phran tshig 'dod rgur sgyur ba spra phab 'od kyi snang brnyan ces bya ba bzhugs so/ khag dang po/. The Mirror of Tibetan Arts and Crafts. Part One.	De'u dmar dge bshes bstan 'dzin phun tshogs	TMP	1936	July 1936	0-4-0		Cleveland Public Library	pecha: lithographed	Only the first 8 pages are available.
30.	Dpal gyi chos 'khor lha sa dran glu bzhugs so. Memories of Lhasa. Composed by H.E. Shelkarlingpa, at Darjeeling in 1910,11. Gong sa rgyal dbang sku 'phreng 13 pa chen po mchog sngon spyi lo 1911 lor rdor gling du sku bzhugs gnang skabs mi dbang shel gling mchog nas brtsams mdzad lha sa dran glu dang ka bshad bcas bzhugs so. A Song of Lhasa Memories & A Poem in Alphabetical Order Composed by H.E. Shekarlingpa at Darjeeling in 1911, on the occasion of H.H. the 13 th Dalai Lama's visit to India.	Sa skyong mi dbang shel ka gling pa	TMP	1936	July 1936	0-4-0	1 st ed. 1936 3 rd ed. 1965	AM TCMM, VIESAK, AM	pecha: lithographed book: mimeographed	The text is also reprinted in a series from Melong 7-3-8 (March 1933) to 7-9-8 (October 1933).
31.	Sa stag lo'i bod dbyin zla pa'i gza' tshes gzigs bde'i shan sbyar.			1938	January 1938	0-8-0				A calendar presenting both the Tibetan and Western date.
32.	Chu shing bstan bcas brda don dang bcas. Legs bar bshad pa chu dang shing gi bstan bcas brda don dang bcas bzhugs	Gung thang dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me	TMP	1937-1938 (?)	January 1938	1-0-0	1 st ed. 1937 or 1938 (?) 2 nd ed. 1961 ⁷	VIESAK, TCMM	book	

⁵ According to the preface of the sixth edition it is 1933, but this is most probably inaccurate.

⁶ The introductory notes are dated November 1935, but the cover says July 1937.

⁷ Note that the colophon reads 1960, the cover 1961.

	so. JalavrKSam dvaSTAnta sunlti shAstram. Chhu Shing Gi Bstancho. A moral Lessons, Illustrated with Water, Trees & Plants.									
33.	Sa stag lo'i khu nu'i zla tho.		?		January 1938	0-12-0				Calendar from Khunu.
34.	'Dzam gling rgyas bshad. Geography: Containing a Few Facts about Nature and the World for Tibetans.	Flora B. Shelton, Skal bzang dbang 'dus	Baptist Mission Press (Calcutta)	1922	January 1938	2-0-0				Only sales.
35.	Sa sbrul/_bod dbyin zla tho shan sbyar/_'das lo 1929 [Tibetan-English-Calender for 1929-1930]		TMP	February 1 st , 1929				British Library (Mss Eur F80/76)	calender, lithographed: colored, with illustrations	The cover is similarly styled as the Melong and also reads "Yul phyogs so so'i gsar 'gyur me long, The Tibetan Newspaper".
36.	Sum cu pa'i brda 'grel yid 'phrog mu tig khri shing. Lung ston pa'i rtsa ba sum cu pa'i brda 'grel yid 'phrog mu tig 'khri shing zhes bya ba bzhugs so. The Tibetan Grammar, Part 1.	Tharchin	TMP	1938	December/ January 1938	1-0-0	1 st ed. 1938 2 nd ed. 1960	Preface 2 nd ed. AM	book, offset	Printed by M.E. Eapen, Worli Press (Bombay) (see also entry 90 of this table).
37.	Khu nu nas 'thon pa'i yos lo'i le'u tho.			1939	February 1939	1-0-0				Calendar from Khunu
38.	'Dzam gling yongs kyi sa bkra bod yig tu bsgyur ba.		TMP	1940	August 1942	10-0-0		LTWA	big map: printed black and white and post-colored	
39.	[20 illustrated Christian episodes of the New Testament]		Rev. Knox at the TMP	1940-1941 (?)					single sheets: one story and illustration per sheet, post-colored	The highest available number is 65, so there must have been at least 65 sheets printed. For details see addendum at the end of this table.
40.	Rgan byis gsum gyi 'bel gtam snang ba rab gsal. Rgan byis gsum gyi 'bel gtam snang ba rab gsal. 'A moral Advice of an old Women' to Two young women, Regarding Mortal Decay.	Lcang lo can gung Bsod nams rgyal po	TMP	1942	August 1942	0-5-0	1 st ed. 1942 2 nd ed. 1963	LTWA, VIESAK, AM, TCMM	book: mimeographed (cover: type-set)	
41.	Rgya bod skad gnyis shan sbyar kun phan me long. The Tibetan Hindi Selftaught. Rgya bod skad gnyis shan sbyar rgyas pa kun phan me long zhes bya ba bzhugs so. Hindī tibbatī bhāṣā kā svayam śikṣak. The Hindi Tibetan Self Taught.	Tharchin	TMP	1942	August 1942	1-8-0 3-0-0	1 st ed. 1942 ⁸ 2 nd ed. 1950 3 rd ed. 1955 4 th ed. 1960 5 th ed. 1963	LTWA Preface 5 th ed. Preface 5 th ed. AM TCMM	small booklet: lithographed (?) type-print book: offset, type-set book: offset, type-set	According to the preface, targeted at traders going to India. Printed by M.E. Eapen, Worli Press (Bombay). Printed by M.E. Eapen, Worli Press (Bombay).
42.	The Chinese Reader	Mr. F.M. Shen (principal of Chunghwa School, Kalimpong)	Mr. F.M. Shen (principal of Chunghwa School, Kalimpong)	1942-1943				British Library	small booklet: lithographed	Printed at the TMP. English and Chinese. Published for different school levels.

⁸ Note that the reprinted editions of 1960 and 1963 wrongly say the first edition was printed in 1938.

43.	The Tibetan Word Book, Tibetan Sentences (?), Tibetan Verbs (?).	Basil Gould, Hugh Richardson	Oxford University Press	1943	January 1944	25-0-0 (for all 3)				Only sales. The advertisement promotes "the POS [Gould]'s English-Tibetan dictionary; the extensive part [...] and the smaller part, in two volumes [...]." ⁹ Probably this refers to the three works by Gould and Richardson.
44.	Rje btsun thub bstan 'jam dpal ye shes rgyal mtshan dpal bzang po'i yang srid mchog spul rin po che 'khrul bral myur byon gsol 'debs bzhugs so.		Commissioned by Sera Je and Reting Labrang	circa 1947-1948				CU	pecha	Printed at the TMP. Lauran Hartley describes it as "Prayers for the speedy birth of the reincarnation of Jetsun 'Jam dpal ye shes rgyal mtshan [aka Rwa sgreng regent]."
45.	Tibetan Verb Roots (?) (<i>dbyin bod bya byed las gsum</i>).	Basil Gould, Hugh Richardson	TMP		December 1950/January 1951	3-0-0				The advertisement makes clear this refers to one of Gould's publications, but I am not sure about the exact publication. It possibly refers to the TMP's republishing of the "Tibetan Verbs" (1943) as "Tibetan Verb Roots."
46.	Nad rigs dang sman gyi skor dbyin bod shan sbyar.	Basil Gould, Hugh Richardson	Oxford University Press (?) TMP (1968)		December 1950/January 1951	3-0-0				According to Worldcat.org, this publication appears by 1968 as <i>Medical vocabulary = Sman dang nad la gtogs pa'i tshig dbyin bod shan sbyar nyer mkho bzhugs so</i> , published at the TMP.
47.	Tibetan Language Record etc.	Basil Gould, Hugh Richardson		1949	December 1950/January 1951	35-0-0		TCMM		
48.	The Bible, translated into Tibetan (<i>Dam pa'i gsung rab</i> and <i>Dam pa'i mdo</i>)	Bible	Bible Society of India, Bangalore		December 1950/January 1951	8-0-0		Melong 19-1&2-25 (December 1950/January 1951)		
49.	Kalimpong and the Sikkim Hills. A Guide & Handbook on Touring.	Annie Perrie	TMP	1949		2-0-0		CU	book: type-set	English.
50.	Bod skad bslab bya dang po. Bhoṭ varṇmālā kī pratham puṣṭhak.		Negi Sanggye Tenzin of Rarang, Rahul Sankrityayan	1949				CU	book: type-set	Printed at the TMP.
51.	The Lepcha First & Second Primer.		General Lepcha Association	1949					Taube 2009:184	
52.	Snyigs ma'i dus dang de yi 'jigs pa'i brda sprod dpe don bcas gsal bar bkral ba'l bstan bcos byams mgon myur 'bod ma zhes bya ba bzhugs so.	Marco Pallis	TMP	1950	December 1950/January 1951			CU, NIT	pecha: type-set	Hartley states: "Describes how Tibetan men and women should dress; how they should comport themselves. [...] This may be a translation of "Do Clothes make the man? The Significance of Human Attire" [...]. On the book's publishing, the Melong comments that in the last 900 years, there probably has not been a foreigner who composed a Tibetan book." ¹⁰
53.	Rgyal blon gyi bstan bcos zhes bya ba bzhugs so. Rājā Haśaṅgadeva aura	Translated from Tibetan into Hindi	TMP	1950	December 1950/January	0-8-0	1 st ed. 1950	CU		Bilingual: Tibetan and Hindi.

⁹ Melong 12-6-8: '*bras spyi blon chen [Gould] 's dbyin bod skad gnyis shan sbyar che ba [...] dang_chung ba rnam pa gnyis [...]*.

¹⁰ See Melong 19-1&2-23&24 (December 1950/January 1951).

	usakā bāla mantra kī kathā. The Story of King Hashang Deo and his Young Minister.	by Tharchin		1951			2 nd ed. 1967	VIESAK	book: mimeographed (cover: type-set)	
54.	Ddag cag gi ston pa mnyam med sha kyA thub pa'i nyan thos mchog gyur sha ri'i bu dang mau gola'i bu rnam gnyis kyi sku gdung ring bsrel byin can skor bshad pa mdor bsdus bzhugs so.		TMP	1951				NIT, TCMM	pecha: type-set	
55.	Gong sa skyabs mgon sku phreng bcu bzhi pa chen po mchog bstan 'gro'i don du zhabs zung srid mthar brtan pa'i gsol 'debs 'chi med bdud rtsi'i gru char 'bebs pa'i sprin chen zhes bya ba bzhugs so.	Blo gros rdo rje (monk at Tharpa Chöling monastery)	TMP	1951				TCMM	pecha: type-set	
56.	Dge slong ma dpal mo'i rnam thar dge legs kun 'byung. Ge slong ma dpal mo'i rnam thar nges 'byung rgyud la skye ba'i chos gtam zhes bya ba bzhugs so. The Biography of Kamala Bhikshuni, Princess of King Dharma Pal, an ancient King of Kashmir (India.)	Bla ma rab brtan	TMP	1953	September 1953	0-10-0	1 st ed. 1953 2 nd ed. 1963	Preface 2 nd ed. VIESAK	book: type-set	
57.	Lha chos dang mthun pa'i gtam pad ma'i tshal gyi zlos gar.	Bu bkra shis dge legs		1954	July 1954	2-0-0		NIT, TCMM	pecha: type-set	Printed at the TMP.
58.	Chos spyod mdor bsdus dang / mkhas grub ra ga a s+yas mdzad pa'i bde chen smon lam/_ skyabs 'gro'i lo rgyus bcas.	various		1954	September 1954	2-0-0		NIT	pecha: type-set	Printed at the TMP.
59.	The Aristocracy of Central Tibet. A Provisional List of the Names of the Noble Houses of Ü-Tsang. With two illustrations.	Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark	TMP	1954	October 1955	3-0-0		CU	book: type-set	English, but includes lists of Tibetan noble family names in both English and <i>dbu can</i> .
60.	[Leaflet on advertizing in the Melong].		TMP	1954				CU	leaflet: 4 pages, type-set	English.
61.	[An announcement of the] Tibetan Fellowship of India.		Tibetan Fellowship of India ¹¹	September 1955				CU	flyer: 1 page, type-set	English, printed in 100 copies.
62.	Gangs rin po che. Kailāś.		Information and Cultural Service of India, Gangtok, for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (GoI)	December 6, 1955				AM	magazine: type-set (colored cover, inside black and white)	Printed at the TMP, bilingual: Tibetan, Hindi.
63.	[no title; illustrations of various Buddhist sites in India]		Information and Cultural Service of India, Gangtok, for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (GoI)	February 26, 1956				TCMM	magazine: type-set (glossy cover, black and white)	Printed at the TMP, bilingual: Tibetan, Hindi.
64.	Rgya gar du ston pa mnyam med shAkya'i dbang po yongs su mya ngan las 'das nas lo ngo 2500 son pa'i dus bzang khyad 'phags kyi rten mdzad sgo. bhārat meṃ 2500 vāṃ buddh-jayantī-anuṣṭhān.		Information and Cultural Service of India, Gangtok, for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (GoI)	March 15, 1956				AM	magazine: type-set (colored cover, inside black and white)	Printed at the TMP, bilingual: Tibetan, Hindi.
65.	Rgya gar du ston pa mnyam med shAkya'i dbang po yongs su mya ngan las 'das nas lo ngo 2500 son pa'i dus		Information and Cultural Service of India, Gangtok, for the Ministry of	April 30, 1956				TCMM	magazine: type-set (glossy cover, black and white)	Printed at the TMP, bilingual: Tibetan, Hindi.

¹¹ According to HT January 29, 1956:8, the organization is "a group of National Christians and Missionaries undertaking Christian work among Tibetans."

	bzang khyad 'phags kyi rten mdzad sgo (ang 2 pa). Bhāratvarṣ meṃ 2500 vāṃ buddh-jayantī anuṣṭhān (dūsrā aṅk).		Information and Broadcasting (Gol)							
66.	MahAtmA gan dhi dam pa mchog gi 'khrungs skar rten 'brel. Mahātma gāndhī jayantī divas.		Information and Cultural Service of India, Gangtok, for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (Gol)	October 16, 1956				AM	magazine: type-set (colored cover, inside black and white)	Printed at the TMP, in 4000 copies, bilingual: Tibetan, Hindi.
67.	Rgya gar 'phags pa'i yul du nang pa'i mchod rten dang gnas mchog byin cag rnam kyi bshad pa mthong thos kun grol zhes bya ba bzhugs so.		Information and Cultural Service of India, Gangtok, for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (Gol)	1956				CU	only glossy cover extant; type-set	Printed at the TMP.
68.	Concessional fares in the Eastern Railway of India. On the Occasion of the 2500 th Buddha Jayanti, 1956, with standard routes. sangs rgyas kyi 'das lo 2500 dus chen skabs rgya gar shar phyogs re li'i gla cha chag bya dang 'brel lam phyogs sogs gsal po bstan pa.		Tsechu Offering Association, Kalimpong (Ka sbug tshes bcu mchos pa'i mched grogs spyi tshogs); extract of the Railway Board of India	1956				TCMM	leaflet: 4 pages	Printed at the TMP, bilingual: Tibetan, English.
69.	Rang dbang rang btsan gyi nyi ma. Svatantr ^a tā-divas.		Information and Cultural Service of India, Gangtok, for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (Gol)	August 15, 1957				AM	magazine: type-set (colored cover, inside black and white)	Printed at the TMP, in 5000 copies, bilingual: Tibetan, Hindi.
70.	'Bras rgyal mahA rA dza chen pos phyag gi pad mos bris gnang mdzad pa gangs ljongs kyi gzigs snang zhig dge'o. Himālayāñcal ko euṭā dṛṣya śrīmān sikkim mahārāj bāt citrit bhaeko euṭā tasvīr.		Information and Cultural Service of India, Gangtok, for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (Gol)	October 1957				AM, CU	magazine: type-set (colored cover, inside black and white)	Inside matter printed at the TMP, cover printed by Gossain & Co (Calcutta), bilingual: Tibetan, Hindi.
71.	Tha ma kha dang /_myos byed/_sgog btsong bcas pa'i nyes dmigs gsal bar ston pa bzhugs so.	Dge tshul ngag dbang bsTan pa	TMP	1957				NIT	pecha: type-set	
72.	Zhabs brtan gsol 'debs drang srong bden dbyangs zhes bya ba bzhugs so.	Dge tshul ngag dbang bstan pa	TMP	1957				TCMM	pecha: type-set	
73.	Chos kyi 'khor lo rab tu bskor ba'i mdo zhes bya ba bzhugs so.	Dge slong dkon mchog rgya mtsho	TMP	1957				CU	magazine: glossy cover	Same appearance as the publications of the Information and Cultural Service of India, Gangtok.
74.	MahAtmA gan dhi'i 'khrungs skar dus chen nyin 2-10-58. Mahātma gāndhī jayantī divas 2-10-58.		Information and Cultural Service of India, Gangtok, for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (Gol)	October 2, 1958				AM, CU	magazine: type-set, glossy (colored cover, inside black and white)	Inside matter printed at the TMP, bilingual: Tibetan, Hindi.
75.	Rgya gar srid blon chen po dpal ldan mi dbang 'jo har lal neh ru mchog la 'brug rgyal mchog gis 'brug spa gror nyin zhag drug ring sku mgron du gdan zhu gnang ste phyr log phebs skabs 'brug rgyal dpon 'khor sde 'bangs rnam kyi phebs bskyel zab rgyas zhus shing /_maha ra dza mchog dang /_mi dbang srid blon rnam gnyis phan tshun mjal dar 'bul res gnang skabs zhus pa'i sku par dge'o. Pradhān mantrī śrīmān javāharlāl		Information and Cultural Service of India, Gangtok, for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (Gol)	November 14, 1958				AM	magazine: type-set (glossy cover, black and white)	Printed at the TMP, bilingual: Tibetan, Hindi.

	nehrūjī bhūṭān ke chah din kī yātrā samāpt hone par śrīmān bhūṭān mahārāj mahoday tathā pāro dhyu ghāṭī ke bāsindom ne sasneh bidāi dī/ pradhān mantrī aur bhūṭān ke mahārājā mahoday paraspar paramparāgat safed reśmī khādā ādān pradān kar rahe haim.									
76.	Gong sa sgyabs mgon rgyal ba'i dbang bo sgu phreng bcu gsum pa chen po mchog gis bod rigs ser skya mi dmangs rnams la chu spre lo spyi lo 1932-33/ _gong sa sku phreng bcu bzhi pa chen po mchog gis shing lug lo spyi lo 1955 lor bstsal ba'i ma 'ongs lung bstan gyi zhal gdams bka' slob snying gi nor bu zhes bya ba bzhugs so. The Political Testament & Warning by HH the 13 th Dalai Lama to his people in 1932-33, & an advice by HH the 14 th Dalai Lama to his people in 1955.	Thirteenth and the Fouteenth Dalai Lama	A lo chos mdzad (Mi dmangs tshogs 'du)	1958	December 1962	0,50		VIESAK, AM	book: type-set	Printed at the TMP.
77.	Bod kyi gnas lugs skor dpal ldan mi dbang srid blon neh ru mchog gis gnang ba'i gsung gleng. Tibbatko sambandhmā śrīmān pradhān mantrī jyūka vaktavyaharu.		Information and Cultural Service of India, Gangtok, for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (GoI)	1959 March 23				AM, CU	magazine: type-set (colored cover, inside black and white)	Printed at the TMP, bilingual: Tibetan, Hindi.
78.	Nye sngon gong sa skyabs mgon chen po mchog nas mjal thengs bzhi pa'i tshogs par bka' slob spyi smin dgongs don bzhugs so.		TMP	November 17, 1959				AM, TCMM	leaflet: 4 pages, type-set	Printed at the TMP.
79.	Bod kyi shes rig. Tibetology. [the first and second issue]		Namgyal Institute of Tibetology	November 1959				VIESAK, AM, Reprint in Jo sras bkra shis tshe ring et al. 2011:227-284	magazine: type-set	Trilingual: English, Tibetan, Hindi.
80.	Dmigs gsal gyi gsar 'gyur mdor bsdu. viśeṣhānk.		Information and Cultural Service of India, Gangtok, for the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (GoI)	probably between 1955-1959				AM	magazine: type-set (colored cover, inside black and white)	Printed at the TMP, bilingual: Tibetan, Hindi.
81.	Khye'u pad+ma 'od 'bar gyi rnam thar bzhugs so.		TMP	1959	September/October 1959	5-0-0		TCMM	pecha: wood-block	According to the colophon, the block carver was Shar pa rgyal mtshan.
82.	Mkhyen rtse rin po che'i ma 'ong la lung bstan.		TMP (?)	1959 (?)	September/October 1959	1-0-0				
83.	Dbyin skad rang sbyong thub pa'i thabs gsar dwangs shel me long skabs dang po zhes bya ba bzhugs so. The English Tibetan Self Taught Part 1.	Tharchin	TMP	?			2 nd ed. 1960 3 rd ed. 1969	AM AM	book: type-set book: type-set	
84.	Bkra shis pa'i mdo bzhugs so.	Translated from Pali into Tibetan by Rig 'dzin dbang po	Commissioned by Sangharakshita (Dennis Lingwood)	1959				STABI	small book: type-set	Printed at the TMP. With an English introduction by Sangharakshita. Also printed in Melong 24-7&8-7 (November, December 1957).
85.	Bstan pa yongs rdzogs kyi mnga' bdag gong sa rgyal dbang yid bzhin nor bu	Fourteenth Dalai Lama	TMP	1959	December 1962	1,0		VIESAK	book: type-set	

	mchog gis nye sngon spyi lo 1959 zla drug pa'i tshes nyi shu nyin ma su rur gsar 'gyur 'god mi rmans kyis bka' 'dri zhu lan du gsung bshad gnang ba mngo ma'i 'dra shus bzhugs so. H.H. The Dalai Lama's Statement in Mussoorie on 20 th June 1959.									
86.	Bstan pa yongs kyi mnga' bdag gong sa yid bzhin nor bu mchog gis spyi lo 1959 pa'i spyi zla dgu pa'i tshes dgu nyin 'dzam gling pyi tshogs drung yig chen mor snyan zhu 'bul gnang mdzad pa dang /_ yang spyi zla 9 tshes 7 nyin rgya gar 'dzam gling las don khang gis dga' bsu tshogs 'dur gsung bshad gnang ba dang /_ yang spyi zla 11 tshes 17 nyin mjal theng bzhi pa'i tshogs par bka' slob ji gnang dang /_ yang 'dzam gling khrims zhib bod don zhib rtogs tshogs pa rnam kyi dri lan gnang ba'i 'dra shus ngo ma phyogs sgrig nor bu'i do shal zhes ba by zhugs so. H.H. The Dalai Lama's Appeal to the Secretary General, United Nations, New York on 9 th September 1959 and Speeches delivered at the reception given by the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi on 7 th September 1959 etc.	Fourteenth Dalai Lama	TMP	1959 (?)	December 1962	1,25		VIESAK	book: type-set	
87.	Sdig can rnam la dkon mchog gi thugs rje'i gnang sbyin mngon par gyur pa'i skor mdor tsam bshad pa bzhugs so. A brief description of God's grace to sinners.		Christian Prayer Fellowship for Tibetans; Tibetan Mission House, Kalimpong World Mission Prayer League; Tibetan Mission House, Kalimpong	? 1959				AM CU	book: type-set book: type-set	Printed at the TMP.
88.	Ma 'ongs rang btsan bod gzhung gsar pa 'dzug bskrun bya rgyu'i 'char gzhi dpag bsam ljon bzang zhes bya ba bzhugs so.		Dang blangs bstan srung dmag sgar (Chu bzhi sgang drug)	1959 or 1960				TCMM	small booklet: 12 pages, type-set	Printed at the TMP.
89.	Gong sa lnga pa chen po mchog gis mdzad pa'i lugs zung dang 'brel ba'i bslab bya mu thu li'i phreng ba zhes bya ba bzhugs so. Precepts on Religion and Politics Entitled 'Pearls Necklace'.	Fifth Dalai Lama	TMP	1960				TCMM, LTWA, VIESAK, CU, AM	book: type-set	
90.	Mthun pa spun bshi dbyin bod shan sbyar. The Story of the Four Harmonious Brethren. Translated from Tibetan into English.	Translator: Tharchin	TMP	1960	August/ September 1960	1-8-0		CU, AM	book: type-set	Bilingual: English, Tibetan.
91.	Bya sprel gyi gtam brgyud bzhugs so. The Story of Birds and Monkeys.		TMP	1960	October/ November 1960	1-0-0		VIESAK, LTWA	book: mimeographed	
92.	Bya chos rin chen 'phreng ba zhes bya ba bzhugs so. The Religion of Birds.	Satis Chandra Acharya Vidya Bhusan	TMP	1903 [TMP: 1960]	October/ November 1960	1-0-0	1 st ed. 1903 2 nd ed. 1960 (TMP)	CU,	book:	

								LTWA	mimeographed	
93.	Lung ston pa rtsa ba rtags kyi 'jug pa'i brda 'grel yid 'phrog mu tig 'khri shing zhes bya ba bzhugs so. The Tibetan Grammer Part II.	Tharchin	TMP	1960	January 1961	1-0-0	1 st ed. 1960	AM	book: offset	Printed by M.E. Eapon at the Worli Press (Bombay). According to the preface, this is the second part of the 1938-edition "Tibetan Grammar Part I", compiled by Tharchin. He had compiled it already in 1938, but did not have enough funds for printing. See also entry 35 of this table.
94.	Snyan ngag 'dod pa blo gsal gzhon nu rnams la nye bar mkho ba mngon brjod pad dkar 'phreng ba zhes bya ba bzhugs so. Shabdavidhya. A Collection of Synonyms.	Dpal khang lotsawa	TMP	1961	December 1962	1,5		VIESAK, AM	book: mimeographed (cover: type-set)	
95.	Ge sar rgyal pos phyi gling 'jar gyi rgyal khams btul pa'i srung dpe.		TMP	1961	December 1962	5,0		STABI, TCMM	pecha: in dbu-med	
96.	Lugs kyi bslab bya legs bar bshad pa'i gter zhes bya ba bzhugs so. Sunīti śāstram. A moral lessons in simple poetry.	Sa skya Paṇḍita and Bdud 'joms rin po che	TMP	1961	July/ August 1963			VIESAK, AM	book: mimeographed	
97.	Slob dpon klu sgrub dang rgyal bu bde byed bzang pos mjod pa'i ro dngos grub can gyi sgrung ngo mtshar rmad byung shes bya ba bzhugs so. The Story of corpse. vetāl kī kahānī.	Acharya Nagajun (Glu sgrub) and Kumar Shankar (Bde byed bzang po)	TMP	1961 (?)	December 1962		1 st ed. (?) 2 nd (?) ed. 1964	VIESAK, TBRC	book: mimeographed (?)	
98.	Rgyal ba bskal bzang rgya mtsho'i gsung rdo rje 'jigs byed dpa' bo gcig pa bdud las rnam rgyal gyi dkyil chog las bdag 'jug bya tshul rkyang pa nag 'gros zur du bkol ba bzhugs so.	Seventh Dalai Lama	Commissioned by 'Ba' lchang ra legs bshad	1961				TCMM	pecha: mimeo-or lithographed (cover: type-set)	Printed at the TMP.
99.	Rje btsun rdo rje rnal 'byor ma nA ro mkha' spyod dbang mo'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga bde chen dga' ston zhes bya ba bzhugs so.	Byams pa bstan 'dzin phrin las rgya mtsho [= Pha bong kha rin po che]		1961				TCMM	pecha: mimeographed	Printed at the TMP, in 2000 copies. According to the colophon, this is a ritual text, distributed on the occasion of Vajrayogini mandala festival.
100.	G.yung drung bon gyi bstan pa'i 'byung khungs nyung bsdu.	Bstan 'dzin rnam dag		1961				Sarnath ¹²		Not seen myself.
101.	Bden pa'i chos kyi dris lan zhes bya ba bzhugs so. Tibetan Catechism.	Rev. Theo Sörensen	World Misson Prayer League (Darjeeling)	1961			5 th ed. 1961 [= 1 st printed at the TMP]	AM, Private	book: type-set	Printed at the TMP.
102.	Gtso bo ye shu'i chos dang sangs rgyas kyi chos gnyis kyi byed brag 'byed pa'i bshad pa bzhugs so. The difference between Christian and Buddhist teaching concerning-God, Creation, Man, Sin and Salvation.	Rev. Theo Sörenson	The World Mission Prayer League (Kalimpong)	1962				TCMM	book: type-set	Printed at the TMP.
103.	Dmyal khams nas mtho ris su. Narak lok se svarg lok meṁ. From Hell to Paradise.	A zhang blo bzang byams pa	TMP	1962	January 1963	1,5		TCMM, VIESAK	book: mimeographed	
104.	Gso sbyong /_dbyar gnas/_dgag dbye/_bslab bya'i sdom tshig/_thun			1962				TCMM	pecha: mimeographed	Printed at the TMP, in 2000 copies.

¹² At Shantrakshita Library of the Central University of Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi.

	drug sogs sdom pa gsum dang 'brel ba'i skor byang grol khang bzang 'dzeg pa'i them skas bzhugs so.									
105.	Dpal rdo rje 'jigs byed lha bcu gsum ma'i bdag bskyed/_bum pa/_dbang chog smon shes dang bcas pa bzhugs so.		TMP	1963				TCMM	pecha: mimeo- or lithographed (?)	Printed at the TMP, in 3000 copies. It contains a sheet of advertisements for other TMP-books.
106.	Celebration of the Rite of The Unity of the Three Jewels in Padmasambhava and Padmasambhava's Birthday.		Khams sprul rin po che, Phalphuntsog Chokhorling Monastery	1963				VIESAK	book: type-set	English. The Tibetan version parallelly is printed at Palphuntsog Chokhorling monastery.
107.	Gtsang sbyar spyod pa'i lam lnga zhes bya ba bzhugs so. The five Hygienic Paths of Morality and Spirituality .	Rig 'dzin dbang po	TMP	1965				TCMM, VIESAK	book: mimeographed (cover: type-set)	
108.	Dge ldan bstan pa'i mdzes rgyan mtshungs med gro mo mchog sprul rin po che'i 'khrung rabs gsol 'debs ngo mtshar gser gyi phreng ba zhes bya ba gzhugs so.	Khri byang rin po che		1967				TCMM	pecha: mimeographed	
109.	Btsun mo e se thar gyi nram thar dang sgrung dpe sna tshogs phyogs btus byis pa'i dga' ston zhes bya ba bzhugs so. A Story Books for Tibetan Boys and Girls being Translations of Fairy Stories and Fables including the Story of Esther.	Translated from English by Doris Shelton, arranged in Tibetan by Kezang Wangdu of Batang		1922 [TMP: 1967]			1 st ed. 1922 (Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta) 2 nd ed. 1967	AM	book: type-set	According to TC: Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Doris Shelton (<i>no place</i>), July 14, 1964, printing had already started in 1964.
110.	Gro mo dung dkar dgon gyi srung ma btsan rgod nam mkha' sbar 'dzin gyi gsol mchod bzhugs so.	Khri byang rin po che		1970				TCMM	pecha: mimeo- or lithographed (?)	
111.	Bkra shis chen po'i mdo dang dmangs mdo bzhugs so.	Translated from Pali into Tibetan by Rig 'dzin dbang po	TMP	1970				TCMM	pecha: mimeographed	See nalso umber 82 of this table.
112.	Dam tshig rdo rje'i bsgom bzlas bzhugs so.		Ka sbug gyi ris med ser skya mi mang yongs rdzogs (The Kalimpong Association of the Ris med Movement)	1971				TCMM	pecha: mimeographed	Printed at the TMP, in 1000 copies.
113.	[A proclamation for monks at Tharpa Chöling about the schedule of the Tsongkhapa festival in December.]		Tharpa Chöling monastery	1971				TCMM	long sheet: type-set	Printed at the TMP.
114.	Byang chub sems dpa'i ltung ba bzhags pa/_sman bla bde gshegs brgyad kyi mtshan spyi shags/_gtso rgyal ma bcas bzhugs so.		TMP	monkey year (no element)				TCMM	pecha: mimeographed	
115.	Dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i bum pa dang mdun bskyed bzhugs so.	Dge slong blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan	TMP	no date				TCMM	pecha: mimeographed	
116.	Dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i bla brgyud gsol 'debs dang bdag bskyed ngag 'don bkra shis lhun po rgyud pa grwa tshang gi 'don rgyun rje thams cad mkhyen pas zhus dag mdzad pa bzhugs so.		TMP	no date				TCMM	pecha: mimeographed	
117.	Dpal 'khor lo sdom pa lU yi pa lugs kyi dbang gi brgyud 'debs dang mngon rtogs bzhugs so.		TMP	no date				TCMM	pecha: mimeographed	
118.	'Phags yul rdo rje gdan gyi bstod pa		TMP	no date				TCMM	pecha: type-set	

	dang 'dod smon zung du 'brel ba zla ba bdud rtsi'i lang tsho zhes bya ba bzhugs so.							(in red ink)		
119.	'Phags pa thugs rje chen po la bstod cing gsol ba 'debs pa phan bde'i char 'bebs zhes bya ba zhugs so.	ShAkya'i dge slong chos smra ba blo bzang bskal bzang rgya mtsho	Commissioned by Dge shes mkhyen rab, Chos mdzad phun tshogs	no date				TCMM	pecha: type-set	Printed at the TMP.
120.	Shes rab snying po dang rje tsong kha pa'i gsung blo sbyong snyan ngag sgra rgyan zhes bya ba bzhugs so.		Commissioned by Bkra shis rtse rdor and Ye shes sgron ma 'ba' pa legs bshad	no date				TCMM	pecha: mimeographed	
121.	[Three reading marks with bible quotes and an illustration]	Bible	Church of Scotland Mission, TMP	no date					type-set	The quotations of the three marks are: 1) Matthew 28.18,19 2) John 3.16, 17 3) John 14.6 & Matthew 5.15,16
122.	[A Christmas card showing the Tibetan national flag] gangs ljongs lugs zungs rgyal khab chen po'i rgyal rtags dam gi ru dar dpe'o.	Mr. & Mrs. Tharchin	TMP	no date, probably 1950s				CU	card: four pages, type-set	Bilingual: English, Tibetan.
	Addendum									
	[20 illustrated Christian stories from the New Testament]:		Rev.Knox at the TMP	1940-1941 (?)					black and white, some post-colored	All illustrated.

	<i>Title</i>	<i>sheet number</i>
a1	Gtso bo ye shu'i chos tshogs kyi lo rgyus rnam bzhugs so: dam pa'i thugs nyid phebs pa'i skor.	1
a2	Ston pa ye shu ma shi ka 'khrungs pa'i lo rgyus ni.	2
a3	Ston pa ye shu mchod khang du 'bul ba'i lo rgyus ni.	3
a4	Mi mkhas pa rnam ye shu mjal ba'i phyir 'gro pa'i lo rgyus.	4
a5	Gtso bo ye shu ma shi ka'i chos bden pa'i bshad pa zhes bya ba bzhugs so: sdig pa" skor.	4
a6	Ye shus ltas ya mtshan che ba mdzad pa mgo 'dzugs pa'i lo rgyus	11
a7	Ye shus ye ru sha lem gyi mchod khang gtsang ma mdzad pa'i lo rgyus.	12
a8	Ya hu dA pa'i dpon po zhig mtshan mo ye shu'i sku drung du bcar ba'i lo rgyus.	13
a9	Ston pa skyabs mgon ye shu'i mdzad pa ya mtshan rnam bzhugs so: lug rdzi bzang po'i lo rgyus bzhugs so.	36
a10	Sa mar ya pa snying rje can gyi lo rgyus bzhugs so.	37
a11	MAR tha dang med yam gnyis kyi lo rgyus bzhugs so.	38
a12	Mi phyug po dang dbul po'i lo rgyus bzhugs so.	41
a13	Gtso bo ye shu nye gnas yod pa'i khang mig tu byon pa'i skor.	43
a14	Gtso bo ye shus mdze pa bcu'i nad sos pa'i skor.	43
a15	Gtso bo ye shus rang gi nye gnas rnam kyi rkang pa bkrus pa'i skor.	44
a16	Gtso bo ye shu ye ru sha lem du phebs pa'i skor.	50 (?)
a17	Khyim bdag ngan pa rnam kyi gtam dpe.	51 (?)
a18	Skyabs mgon ye shu sdig can rnam kyi phyir dka' sdug myangs nas rim pas bzung ba'i lo rgyus.	59
a19	Gtso bo ye shus mtsho'i 'gram du nye gnas rnam la mngon par mdzad pa dang pe tro la las shig bcol ba'i lo rgyus.	64
a20	Gtso bo ye shu nam mkha' la 'phags pa'i lo rgyus.	65

Appendix 3 Editorial Comments – Studied Text Passages

The following list provides bibliographic information on the editorial comments which have been used for analysis. In total, 164 editorial comments were studied, 72 of the first production phase (1925-1940), 55 of the second production phase (1942-1951), and 37 of the third production phase (1951-1963).

Phase 1: 1925-1940

1-1-1
 1-2-1
 1-2-1b
 1-7-1
 1-8-4
 1-8-4b
 1-9-4
 1-10-1
 1-10-1b
 2-1-supplement
 2-2-4
 2-8-3
 2-10-4
 2-10-4b
 3-1&2-5
 3-1&2-8
 3-5&6-2
 3-5&6-7
 3-8-4
 3-9-1
 3-10-1
 3-10-3
 3-11-4
 4-1-1
 4-2-1
 4-2-4
 4-3-1
 4-5-1
 4-9-4
 4-10&11-1
 4-12-1
 4-12-supplement
 5-2-5
 5-2-7
 5-2-8
 5-5-4
 5-9-1
 5-11-4
 6-2-2
 6-3-6
 6-3-8
 6-4-8
 6-5-3
 6-7-8
 6-8-3
 6-10-supplement
 6-11-5
 7-1-8
 7-2-2
 7-3-1
 7-3-8
 7-4-8
 7-7&8-3
 7-7&8-4
 7-10-6
 8-1-1
 8-1-8

8-6-3
 8-6-8
 8-7-7
 8-9-2
 8-12-2
 9-1-1
 9-1-6
 9-2-3
 9-9-1
 9-9-8
 9-10-3
 9-12-4
 10-1-16
 10-5-7
 10-11b-2

Phase 2: 1942-1951

11-1-1
 11-3-8
 11-6-2
 11-6-12
 11-8-12
 11-10-6
 11-10-12
 11-11-3
 11-11-8&9
 11-11-12
 11-12-2
 11-12-3
 12-1-2
 12-2-12
 12-5-6
 12-7-2
 12-7-7
 12-9-12
 12-10-8
 12-11-6
 12-12-2
 13-1-12
 13-7-7&8
 13-8-2
 13-8-10&11
 13-9-1&8
 14-2-8
 14-5&6-16
 14-12-5
 14-12-6
 15-1-1
 15-3-8
 15-4&5-12
 15-6-7
 15-9-10
 15-11-3
 16-1-1
 16-3-3
 16-5-2&3
 16-5-7
 16-6&7-1

16-6&7-supplement
 16-11-4&5
 16-11-10
 17-1-1&2&7
 17-1-10
 17-2-2
 17-4-8
 17-5-12
 17-6-2[4]
 18-1-8
 18-5-7
 18-10-12
 18-11-6
 19-1&2-28

Phase 3: 1951-1963

19-3-12
 19-8-3
 19-10-7
 19-10-7b
 20-5-2
 20-9-8
 20-10&11&12-2&3&4
 21-2-2
 21-2-3&4
 21-5-3
 21-6-5
 21-7-12
 21-9-6
 22-3-1
 22-6-15
 22-8-9
 22-8-15
 22-11-5
 23-2-16
 23-3-7
 23-5-2
 24-1-6&7
 24-12-4
 24-12-6
 25-5-8
 25-5-supplement 2
 25-6-4
 25-12-8
 26-10-3
 26-10-supplement 4
 26-12-9
 27-7-3
 27-12-10
 28-4-2
 28-5-5
 28-5-supplement 2
 28-7-7

Appendix 4 Subscription Lists and Statements of Distribution

The lists provide transcriptions of original subscription lists and statements of distribution, found mainly in the TC. One document was found in the LTWA. I present the names as found in the lists, taking into consideration Herbert Fader's useful annotations. All lists are in English, therefore I stick to the English transcription of Tibetan names. Many lists are handwritten, and not all names could be deciphered. I copied mistakes as found in the original documents.

I divide the documents into

- A) Subscription Lists, providing names, and
- B) Statements of Distribution, providing numbers.

In total, 16 documents have been transcribed, and organized into nine subscription lists, and eight statements of distribution. One document was both used as a subscription list and a statement of distribution.

A) Subscription Lists

A1) Earliest available subscription list, "Free Copies", March (?) 17, 1926; handwritten; one page.

- 1-6. Reverend Peter, Leh
7. Doring Thaiji
8. Khenzur
9. POS Bailey
10. Rai Bahadur Norbu Dhondup
11. Readclerk [?] [Fader adds: Yeshey Isaacs]
12. Mr. Pemba 2ns Clerk [Fader adds: Rai Pemba Tsering]
13. University Calcutta
14. Karma Samten Paul
15. H.E. Tsarong Shape Lhasa
16. [illegible]
17. Lama Sonam Wangyal
18. Lama Tampa Chhering Chini, Simla
19. Kargyud Chotak Chini (Poo)
20. Head Lama A.S. Darjeeling
21. Gangtok School (Head Lama)
22. Gyantse Dzongpon
23. [Fader adds: Nasib] Ali, Hatgork [?]
24. Khenchung [Fader adds: Lobsang Jigme]
25. H. Chap Kushoo Gyanda [?]
26. Kyipup
27. Khung Changchen [Fader adds: Changlo chen Gung].
28. BTA Gartok (Simla)
29. HHDL care T.[ibetan]T.[rade] A.[agent] Yatung [Fader adds: i.e., c/o the Khenchung]
30. Headmaster Gyantse [Fader adds: Frank Ludlow]

A2) Subscription list, "Lists of newspaper sending direct", October 27, 1943; type-written; one page.

Through T.T. Yatung

1. H.H. The Dalai Lama.
2. The Regent of Tibet.
3. The Prime Minister.
4. Kasha.
5. Kalon Lama.
6. Bondrong Shape.
7. Yabshi Phunchang Shape.
8. Zurkhang Shape.
9. The New Yabshi (father of D.L.).
10. Labrang Changzo.
11. Tse chag Lekhung.
12. The Foriegn [sic!] Minister.
13. Drapchi Lekhung.
14. Tsikhang Lekhung.
15. Makchi Khang (C-in-C)
16. Sherpang Lekhung.
17. Sonam.
18. Tse Yigtsang Lekhung.
19. Nangtse Shar Lekhung.
20. Shol Lekhung.

21. Drepung Lachi.
 22. Sera Lachi.
 23. Gaden Lachi.
 24. Nyertsang Lekhung Lhasa.
 25. Chikhyab Chenpo.
 26. [handwritten next to the list]: Tsi nyertshang.
- [handwritten next to the list] 15. Thrizur, 16. Radeng.

Through B.T.M. Lhasa

1. Tsarong ex. Shape.
2. Tering Lachag.
3. Chodendandar Lachag and T.H.
4. Ramba Lachag.
5. Liushar Lachag.
6. Doring Thaiji.
7. Choktay ex Lachag.
8. Tsipon Kabshopa.
9. Samdrub Phodrang Thaiji.
10. Raga sha.
11. Jang ngopa (Ringang).
12. Tshatrul Rinpoche.
13. Kunzangtse.
14. Kundelind [sic!] Dzasa.
15. Demo Rinpoche, AT Tangyeling.
16. The ex Regent, Radreng.
17. Chiso Jedepa.
18. Kuntse kungyal Chizur.
19. Phale say kusung Dapon.
20. Lha Lui say.
21. Kadrung malampa.
22. Dromo geshe Rinpoche at sera monastery.
23. Ngaritshang Rinpoche (kyomolung).
24. Yuthok zimsha.
25. Rimshi Tsa serkhang.
26. Ex shape nangjungwa.
27. Tsipon Shagabpa.
28. Dra Say.
29. Dumpa Say.
30. The chinese officer in Lhasa.
31. Thrimson Zimshag.
32. Gesh Tandar Lharampa of sera monastery.
33. Geshe Chodrag.
34. Parkhug (?) ex Shape.
35. The officer of [illegible] is in Lhasa.

[handwritten]

36. [illegible] office
37. Tha[illegible]. T.T. ya[illegible]

[handwritten in right column]

Tethong Say
Kuzang Rupon
Drumba Say
Nini Kongpalu
Shongtho

26+38 = 64

250 + 62 = 312

A3) Subscription list (LTWA: document 793); undated [internal evidence: probably 1945-46]; handwritten; one large spread sheet; no headline.¹

[Right page, left upper corner]

149. -151 Political Officer in Sikkim, Gangtok, P.O.
152. H.H. The Maharaja of Sikkim, Gangtok, P.O.
153. Rai Bahadur Beruyak Athing, P.S. to the H.H. Maharaja of Sikkim, Gangtok, P.O.
154. Rai Sahib Rhinchok Athing, Official Steward of the Palace in Charge, Gangtok, P.O.
155. Rai Sahib Gyaltshan Kazi, Khangsar Villa, Gangtok, P.O.
156. Rai Sahib T. Wangdu, Gangtok, P.O.
157. Ganzong Athing, Lilly Cottage, Gangtok, P.O.
158. Enchey Kazi, Enchay House, Gangtok, P.O.
159. H.G. Baker Esq., Wireless Station, Gangtok, P.O.
160. Mr. Tashi La, Retired H.E., Gangtok, P.O.
161. Kazi Mingyur Tenpoa, Personal asst. to P.O., Gangtok, P.O.
162. Lachen Gomchen Rinpoche, c/o Post Master, P.O. Chungthung (Sikkim)
163. Mr. J. Thinlay, Lachen, Chungthang, P.O.
164. Mr. Palden, Mangan (Sikkim)
165. Pipon Karma Yugyal, Lachung, Chungthang, P.O.
166. The Rev. G. Friarservice [?], Tomi Manse, Shingtam P.O.
167. The Rev. C. Tshering, The Church, Gangtok, P.O.
168. C.D. Lama, Yangong House, Shingtam PO
169. Zampo Lama, v. Lingtam, Kewzing, P.O. (W. Sikkim)
170. Yangthang Kazi, Gangying, P.O. (W Sikkim)
171. Kazi L. Gyaltshen, Yangang House, Singtam, P.O.
178. [sic!] Song Jomo La, Song Estate, Singtam, P.O.
179. Post Master, Chungthang, P.O.
180. Zirtuk Bhutia, Rhinock, P.O.
181. Nagthang Zimpon, Rongli, P.O.
182. Numchi Kazi, Numchi, P.O.
183. Mr. H. Pingyuck, Gangtok, P.O.
183. [sic!] Mr. Dondhup, Head Lama, Gangtok, P.O.
184. Mr. Dhondug, Sureyer [?], P.O., Gangtok
185. Mr. Cholley Lama, Gangtok, P.O.
186. Mr. Rigzin Dorjee, Gangtok, P.O.
187. Mr. Rigzin Lama, Gangtok, P.O.
188. Kazi Tempa Rapgya, Gangtok, P.O.
189. Mr. Tensing Tshering, P.O., Gangtok
190. L.M. Tempa Esq., Inspector of Police, Shiliguri
191. W.D. Laden Esq, Building "N", Darjeeling
192. Atuk Tshering Esq. Inspector of Police, Darjeeling
193. K.S. Paul Esq., Head Lama, Ghum, P.O.
194. Sardar Bahadur, Migmar Tshering, D.S.P. Darjeeling
195. Mr. Nima Norboo, Tibetan Teacher, Darjeeling
196. M.C. Pradhan Esq., Magistrate, Darjeeling
196. [sic!] The Rev. Ferrie, Taylor House, Kurseong, P.O.
197. Mr. Tshewang, Inspector of Police, Darjeeling
198. The Rev. E.A. Olilla, Free Church of Finland, Ghum, P.O.
199. Sherab Lama, Darjeeling
200. Head Lama, Ghum Monastery, Ghum, P.O.
201. + 202, The Superintendent of Police, Darjeeling
203. The Superintendent Publicity Department, Bureau of Public Information Govt. of India, New Delhi
204. A.P. Greaves Esq., Publicity Office, 15, Rajpur Road, Delhi
205. NO 7396085 CPL Civil Anand Parbt Rohtak Road, Delhi

¹ Note that this document has been made digitally available amongst the Digitized Tibetan Archives Material at Bonn University, within the section "Tibetan Documents and Letters".

- 206.- 209 The Chinese Council General, Park Street, 30, Stephan House, Calcutta
207. D.J. Lao, Esq., Office of the Commissioner of the Republic of China, New Delhi
208. NO 8788, Hovilder Phunjo Lama, 131, I.B.G.H., Muradabad
209. The Secretary Asiatic Society of Bengal, Park Street, Calcutta
210. The Editor Chinese Journal of India, 75 Metcalf Street, Calcutta
[added] 533 LT.C. Norbhu Dekyekhangsar, Kalimpong

[Left page, left upper corner]

211. Lama L. Mingyur Dorjee, Tibetan Lecturer, University, Calcutta
212. Drabho Shangkarzonpon, c/o BIJ [?] B Pradhan, Newly Bhutan, Dimkuchi (Darong Assam)
213.-218: The Political Officer in Assam, Sadia (Assam)
214. A. Hughes Esq., c/o Magistrate's House, Howrha
219. Lama Tanzin Gyaltsan Rinpoche, Village Sunnam, Chini, P.O. (Simla Hills)
220. Lama Dupke Village Lid, Chini, P.O. (Simma)
221. LT. D.L. Snellgrove, c/o E.W.S.C., 12 Adv. B. P.O. (India [illegible])
222. Mr. Mohan Singh, Holly Lodge, Simla
223. Devichand (Urf[?]) (Poo), Chini, P.O. (Simla)
224. Negi Bhagat Ram, Sunnam, Chini, P.O. (Simla)
225. Mr. N. Ali, Kotgarh P.O. (Simla)
226. Lama S. Tharchin (Poo), c/o Post master, Chini, P.O. (Simla)
227. Buddhazor[?], Rarongpa, Chini, P.O. (Simla)
228. Lobzang Gyatsho, c/o Post master, Chini, P.O. (Simla)
229. H.H. The Maharaja of Rampor, Bushahr State, Rampor, P.O. (Simla)
230. H.H. The Maharaja of Kashmir, Shrinagar (Kashmir)
231. [sic!] Rev. A Westborg S.M.N.C., Gaurung, P.O. Haltugaon (Goalpara, Assam)
232. Himi Chhanzo, Himi Monastery, Leh, P.O. (Kashmir)
233. Mukshi Tshewang, Leh, P.O. (Kashmir)
234. Rev. W. Asboe, Missionary, Leh, P.O. (Kashmir)
235. Nono S. Wangyal Lonpo, Leh, P.O. (Kashmir)
236. Headlama of Pitaur[?] Monastery, Leh, P.O. (Kashmir)
237. Nono S. Wasilbakiniwas, Tehsil, Leh, P.O. (Kashmir)
237. [sic!] The Raja Sahib of Ladakh, Leh, P.O. (Kashmir)
238. The Missionary in Charge, Khalatse, P.O. (Kashmir)
239. Kachen Yeshedondup, Leh, P.O. (Kashmir)
240. Head Lama Likir Monastery, Leh, P.O. (Kashmir)
241. Chosphe, Mail Runner, Khalatse, P.O. (Kashmir)
242. Ganön Monastery, Leh, P.O. (Kashmir)
243. Schoolmaster, Keylang, P.O. (Kangra)
244. Prof. Roerich, Naggar Kullu, P.O. (Kangra)
245. Head Lama, Buddhist Temple, c/o P.M. Khadmandu (Nepal)
246. Lama Tobgye, Bhuddhist Temple, Buddhgaya
247. Rev. Zodpa Keylang, P.O. (Kangra)
248. Kazi Pemdorjee, Pedong, P.O.
249. Messrs Pangdatsang, Kalimpong
250.- 257 Rani Sahib, Bhutan Darbar
258. Radreng Labrang, Kalimpong
259. Messrs Sandutshang, Kalimpong
260. Dabar Amchö, Kalimpong
261. Mr. Lithang la, 10th Mile
262. A.P. Sherpa Esq, Sherpavilla Kalimpong
263. Mr. Machuchi, Kalimpong
264. Mr. Hsingchi, Kalimpong
265.-266 Mrs. Gay, Kalimpong
267. D. Macdonald Esq, Himalayan Hotel
268. The Rev. W.M.Scott, Kalimpong
269. The Rev. D.C. Hutchinson, Mission House
270. J. Purdei Esq. Jublee House, Homes
271. N. Avey Esq. Kalimpong

272. Mr. Jampo Ozer, Cottage House
273. Mr. Rap-ga la, Kalimpong
274. Y.F.Li Esq. Panorama, Kalimpong
275. Autari Lama, Pedong Monastery, Pedong, P.O.
276. Raja Anggun Jampa Prabal, Thak Mustan, Wootak, Ekso (100), Tsintse, Birahawa, P.O., Nawtanwa (Gorogpur)
277. Lama Gyanchnd [sic!], V. Sunam, Chini, P.O. (Simla)
278. Lhundup Dorjee Kazi, Chakung Kothi, P.O. Nayabazar (W. Sikkim)
279. Negi Kali Ram, Sanjauli, P.O. (simla)
280. MS Baghat Ram, 40 L.L. Merchant Shopkeeper, Kufri.P.O. (Simla)
281. Major G. Sheriff, Adit. P.O. Lhasa, Gyantse, P.O. (Tibet)
282. H.E. Recharadson, Addt. P.O. Lhasa, Gyantse, P.O.
282. - 531 To The Political Officer,
In Sikkim, British Mission, Lhasa, Gyantse, P.O. (Tibet)

A4) List of traders' subscription, "List of Tibetan Traders who subscribed the Tibetan Newspaper", February 28, 1947; type-written; one page.

The list includes information on how much money the respective trader has paid. In all cases except of numbers 33, 35, and 39 and 36 and 37 of the list, the sum is the annual subscription rate of Rs.6-4. The exceptions constitute the traders who had agreed to manage the Melong's distribution in Lhasa (see Chapters 3 and 6). In the following, I only provide details on payments in the mentioned exceptions.

1. Markham Sonam Dorjee, Banasho, Drikhung, Lhasa
2. Namgyal Tshering, Banasho, Drikhung, Lhasa
3. Sonamdondup, Donetshang, Banasho, Drikhung, Lhasa
4. Dromatshering, Darge Gonpa, Banasho, Sandu Nyingpa, Lhasa
5. Chhodrak, Andrutshang, Ramochhe, Lhasa
6. Chhondze Lodro Odser, Sakalo, Banasho, Changdongtshang
7. Markham Samchho, Thalbung gang, Bichanchi, Lhasa
8. Chhondzo Nima Tashi, Thalbung gang, Bichanchi, Lhasa
9. Markham Ajang, Thalbung gang, Bichanchi, Lhasa
10. Lotshering Thalbung gang, Bichanchi, Lhasa
11. Bu Tanzin, Markham, Kashag Lho, Lhasa
12. Markham Wangyal, Lubug, Jedeling, Lhasa
13. Markham Tempa Gyaltshen, Namgyal Khangsar, Lhasa
14. Markham Paden, Gyudme Jadam, Lhasa
15. Nyendrak, Markham, Pishinub, Lhasa
16. Markham Lobzang Tshering, Namgyal Khangsar, Lhasa
17. Markham Adrak, Namgyal Khangsar, Lhasa
18. Markham Gyaltshan Chhodrag, Tshonapara, Zakhang Thog
19. Markham Kalzang Tshering, Banasho, Tsarong Donyer
20. Gonkar Wangden, Sampasho, Lhasa
21. Yeshey Gyaltshen, Chhandzokhangsar, Gyabungang, Lhasa
22. Padma Samdrup, Jangsa Og, Lhasa
23. Lobzang Tempa, Thalbung Gang, Bichichan, Samdrupling
24. Nyepa Wangdu Tshering, Dongkar Monaster [sic!], Yatung
25. Paljor Dondup, Samdrup Phodrang Tshpon [sic!], Lhasa
26. Sonamdondrup, Thalbung Gang, Sharsamdrub Khangsar, Lhasa
27. Dorjee Gyaltshen, Tagtsa Tshang, Lubug Tashi Khangsar, Lhasa
28. Asug, Perongshar Ongdodshike, Lhasa
29. Kader, Banasho, Jangsanang, Lhasa

30. Markham Wangdu, Jangling, Lhasa
 31. Gyaltshen, Shugthrikhang, Lhasa
 32. Drayak Tashi Tshering, Gyabongang, Lhasa
 33. Messers, Bhajuratna Maniharshajoti, Kalimpong (300/-/-)
 34. Samtan Gyamtsho, TashiLhunpo Monastery, Gyakhamtshen, Shigatse
 35. Gyanratna Pusho Ratna, Manigyab, Lhasa (20 copies) (125 Rs.)
 36. Gyanharaka, Hangu Tshongkhang, Lhasa, to be delivered at Kalimpong (6 Rs.)
 37. Sant Bahadur, Zongra, Sertshong, Lhasa, to be delivered at Kalimpong (6 Rs.)
 38. Norphel, Thruluwa, Shigatse
 39. Messers, Sandutshang of Kalimpong (50 copies) @ Rs.6 / -300 /-
- During the month total 39 subscribers were enlisted. Total Rs.949-8-0

[handwritten addition]

40. Tshering Wangdu, Shigatse
- Total 40 subscribersTotal 955-12-0

A5) List specifying subscribers in Lhasa for spring 1947, "To the Tibetan Government", attached to a letter from A. Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok) to Mr. Pash (Tibet Liason Officer, Kalimpong), April 21, 1947; type-written; three pages.

[Tibetan Government]

1. H.H. The Dalai Lama.
2. H.H. The Regent.
3. H.E. The four Ministers of Tibetm Kasha. [sic!].
4. Kalon Lama Rampawa.
5. Lhalu Shape.
6. Zurkhang Shape.
7. Kabscho Shape.
9. [sic!] The Foreign Ministers.
- 10 Yigtshang Lekhung.
11. Labrang Chagdzo
12. Tse Changdzo.
13. Tsikhang Lekhung.
14. Sonam Lekhung.
15. Drapchi Lekhung.
16. Magchi Lekhung.
17. Sherpang Lekhung.
18. Shol Lekhung.
19. Nangtseshag Lekhung.
20. Tsenyertshang Lekhung.
21. Lhasa Nyartshang Lekhung.
22. Yabshi Sarpa.
23. Drepong Lachk. [sic]
24. Sera Lachi.
25. Gaden Lachi.
26. HH The Gaden Thri Rinpochhe.
27. Tse Namgyal Dratshang.
28. H.H. The Chikhyab Khenpo. [handwritten] - paid

[handwritten]

Note: In 1945-46, received Rs.300/- from Kasha as present, but since not received anything.

[Next page, apparently subscribers in Lhasa other than from the Tibetan government]

1. His Excelency [sic!] Tsharong Dzasa. - paid
2. Doring Theji.

3. Lhachag Tharing.
4. Yuthog Lhacham. - paid
5. Sambo Thaiji.
6. Ragasha Magchi.
7. Ex, Lhachag Chogtay.
8. Kadrung Marlampa.
9. Phunkhang ex Shape.
10. Lhachag Rampa.
11. Doomo Geshey Rinpoche.
12. Phala Dapon.
13. Trethong Rupon.
14. kundeling Labrang.
15. Kunzangtse Zimshag.
16. Tsipon Shagapa.
17. Tsiphon Lukhangpa.
18. Horkhang Say Kusho. - paid
19. Lhading Zimsha.
20. Key pup Kusho. Foreign Office.
21. Thongmed Say Kusho. Foreign Office.
22. Tshatrul Rinpoche.
23. Serje Khenpo Tendar.
- [crossed out] 24. Demo Rinpoche. Tangyeling. [handwritten] See [illegible].
25. Phogpon Boncho.
26. Khenjung Lhamenpa.
27. Dzasa Tendar.
28. Tshomoling Labrang.
29. Tshechogling Labrang.
30. Luishar Lhachag.
31. Kusho Tshewang La. Old Shugdupa Luishar.
32. Shol Tekhung Zimshag.
33. Serche Choje.
34. Nechung Choje.
35. Ngabod Zimsha.
36. Parkhang Zimsha.
37. Sherkarling Zimsha.
38. Shartse Rinpoche.
39. Jangtse Rinpoche.
40. Sholkhang Zimshag.
41. Dzasa Surkhang.
42. Zurkhang Dapon Kusho.
43. Dzasa[?] Ngawang Gyal shen.
44. Khencchen Tobowa.
45. Muru Dalama.
46. Bude Gomchhen Rinpoche.
47. Drud[?]pa Say Kusho. - paid
48. Telopa Rinpoche.
49. Dapon Pangdatshang. - paid
50. Rigzinwangpo.
51. Raisahib Dapon P. Tshering La. - paid
52. H.E. Richardson, Esqr. - paid
53. Ringang Kusho.
54. The Nepali Officer.
55. Tshering Dondup.
56. The Bhutani Agent.
57. Mogchog Rinpoche.

[handwritten]

Note: Out of the above 57 persons only six are paid.

A6) Subscription List, undated [internal evidence: 1947-1950, probably same time frame as A5]; neatly type-written in two columns; three pages; no headline.

1. H.H. The Dalai Lama, LHASA.
2. H.H. The Regent, LHASA.
3. H.E. The Prime Minister, LHASA.
4. H.E. The Four Ministers, Kasha, LHASA.
5. Kalon Lama Rampa, LHASA.
6. Sawang Zurkhang, LHASA.
7. Sawang Kabshopa, LHASA.
8. Sawang Lhalu Dochi, LHASA.
9. The Foreign Minister, LHASA.
10. Tse Yigtsang, LHASA.
11. Labrang Changzo, LHASA.
12. Tse Changzo, LHASA.
13. Tsikhang Lekhung, LHASA.
14. Sonam Lekhung , LHASA.
15. Dhapchi Lekhung, LHASA.
16. Magchi Lekhung , LHASA.
17. Sherpang Lekhung, LHASA.
18. Shol Lekhung, LHASA.
19. Nangtsetsha Lekhung, LHASA.
20. Tse Nyertshang, LHASA.
21. Lhasa Nyertshang, LHASA.
22. Yabshi Tagtsher, LHASA.
23. Drepong Lachi, LHASA.
24. Sera Lachi, LHASA.

[next page]

25. Gaden Lachi, LHASA.
26. H.H. The Gaden Thri Rinpoche, LHASA.
27. Tse Namgyal Dratshang, LHASA.
28. Dekchi Lekhung, Postmaster General, LHASA.
29. Dzasa Tsarong, LHASA.
30. Dzasa Yuthog, LHASA.
31. Doring Thaiji, LHASA.
32. Sampho Thaiji, LHASA.
33. Ragasha Magchi, LHASA.
34. Lhachag Tering, LHASA.
35. Talama Gowokhangshar, LHASA.
36. Bonsho Phogpon, LHASA.
37. Shadra Zimsha, LHASA.
38. Shelkarling Zimsha, LHASA.
39. Kusho Drolkar La, old Sandu House, LHASA.
40. Jangling Bula, LHASA.
41. Jola Tshewang Leushar, LHASA.
42. Gorkha Officer, LHASA.
43. Kundeling Dzasa, LHASA.
44. Thrijang Rinpoche [sic!], LHASA.
45. Mogchok Rinpoche [sic!], LHASA.
46. The Ex-Chikhyab Khanpo, LHASA.
47. The New Chikhyab Khanpo, LHASA.
48. Lhading Zimsha, LHASA.
49. Ngabod Zimsha, LHASA.
50. Shol Tekhang Zimsha, LHASA.

[next page]

51. Khenchung Lhamenpa Tangyeling, LHASA.
52. Demo Rionpochhe Tangyeling, LHASA.
53. Geshe Rigzin Losalling Drepong, LHASA.
54. Sandutshang Kushap Gyurmed La, LHASA.
55. H.E. Rechardson [sic!] Esq. C.B.E. Incharge Indian Mission, LHASA.
56. Rai Sahib Depon Pemba Tshering, I.M. LHASA.
57. The Medical Officer, I.M. LHASA.
58. Tshechhoglin Rinpochhe, LHASA.
59. Mr. Kyepup La, LHASA.
60. Tshatrul Rinpochhe, LHASA.
61. Tethong Zimsha, LHASA.
62. Phala Zimsha, LHASA.
63. Jangopa Say Kusho, LHASA.
64. Thangmay Say Kusho, LHASA.
65. Kadrung Marlampa, LHASA.
66. Nechung Chhoje Khenchung, LHASA.
67. Drumba Zimsha, LHASA.
68. Horkhang Zimsha, LHASA.
69. Yuthog Lhacham Kusho, LHASA.
70. Tsipon Shagabpa, LHASA.
71. The Chinese Office, Ketopa, LHASA.
72. The Chinese School Master, LHASA.
73. Radreng Dzasa, Shyide, LHASA.
74. Mrs. Pangdatshang, LHASA.

[end of third page]

A7) Subscription list, undated [internal evidence: 1950-1953]; type-written; one page; no headline.

The list is kept right after A6 in the stack. While it has a different size and layout, the typeletters are the same, and it is just as neatly done. It is a large folded spread sheet which presents subscribers in four columns. The list is not numbered. It holds 78 items in total.

Rai Sahib T. Wangdi. P.O. Yatung, Tibet.
Raibabadur Lhacham. P.O. Yatung, Tibet.
Indian Trade Agent. P.O. Yatung, Tibet.
Babu Injung La. P.O. Yatung, Tibet.
Chanzo Khenrab. Of Dungon Monastery. C/o Raisaheb T. Wangdi. P.O. Yatung, Tibet.
Shelngo La. Dingpon of Yatung. C/o Raisaheb T. Wangdi. P.O. Yatung, Tibet.
Mr. Basi Paygyel. C/o Mr. Migma Dorjee. P.O. Yatung, Tibet.
Gondu Kesang La. C/o Mr. Migma Dorjee. P.O. Yatung, Tibet.
Mr. Migma Dorjee. P.O. Yatung, Tibet.
Langthong Say Kusho. C/o Aunichok. P.O. Yatung, Tibet.
Tibetan Trade Agent. P.O. Yatung, Tibet.
Rimshi Sumdowa. Wool Customs Officer, P.O. Pharijong, Tibet.
Jasho Kusho. P.O. Pharijong, Tibet.
Drungyik Kunsang. Machuchis Agent. P.O. Pharijong, Tibet.
Nima Tshering. P.O. Phari Nangog, Tibet.
Jola Tshedor. Hungphel Tashi Khangsar. P.O. Pharijong, Tibet.
Pemba Dhondup. Dhondup Khangsar. P.O. Pharijong, Tibet.
Phari Lachi Jola. C/o M. Tshedor La. P.O. Pharijong, Tibet.
Sandu Tshang. P.O. Pharijong, Tibet.

[second column]

Pangda Tshang. P.O. Pharijong, Tibet.
Phari Belsho. P.O. Pharijong, Tibet.
Phari Zongpon Deleg Rabten. P.O. Pharijong, Tibet.
Kungo Remshi Lobzang. Tshewang. Custom Officer. P.O. Pharijong, Tibet.
Palden Gyeltshen. Tibetan Doctor. C/o Pangdatshang. P.O. Pharijong, Tibet.
(2) Copies. Tshedrung Lobsang Gelegs. C/o Rimshi lobsang Tshewang Custom House. P.O. Pharijong, Tibet
Indian Trade Agent. P.O. Gyantse. Tibet.
Tibetan Trade Agent. P.O. Gyantse. Tibet.
Tshongpon Kusho L/R. P.O. Gyantse. Tibet.
Keypup Say. P.O. Gyantse. Tibet.
Kyorlho Chanzo, P.O. Gyantse. Tibet.
Janal Kusho. P.O. Gyantse. Tibet.
Nishap Kusho. P.O. Gyantse. Tibet.
Palcho Khempo. P.O. Gyantse. Tibet.
Mr. Tshetan Wangdi. I.T.A. Office. P.O. Gyantse. Tibet.
Doring Thaiji Kungo. C/o Mr. T. Wangdi. P.O. Gyantse. Tibet.
Gyantse Zongpon. P. O. Gyantse. Tibet.
Lama Bakula Rimpoche. Leh P.O. Ladakh. Kashmir.
Gangon Monastery, Leh. P.O. Ladakh. Kashmir
Tagtshang Raspa Rinpoche, Hemis Monastery. Leh, P.O. Ladakh. Kashmir.
Kachen Yeshey Dhondup. School Master. Leh. P. O. Ladakh. Kashmir.
Nono Sonam Phuntshog. Leh. P.O. Ladakh. Kashmir.
The Missionary Incharge Moravian Mission Leh P.O. Ladakh. Kashmir.
Kalon Ringzin Sahib. Leh. P.O. Ladakh. Kashmir.
Nono Tashi Phuntshog. Kaza. P.O. Spiti. E. Punjab.
Sri Tshewang Gatang. Numbardar Kothi. Kaza. P.O. Spiti. E. Punjab.
Nono Tshewang Topgye. Wazir of Spiti, Kaza, P.O. Via Manali. E. Punjab.
Nono Tashi Phuntsog. P.O. Kaza. Spiti. E. Punjab.
Lama S. Dupke. Chini, P.O. Himachal Pradesh.
Numbardar Devichand Urf. Poo. P.O. Himalachal Pradesh.
Lama S. Tharchin. Poo, P.O. Himachal Pradesh.
Lama Tanzin Gyeltshen. Bushahr House. Simla. Himalachal Pradesh
Negi Ragudas. Poo. P.O. Himachal Pradesh.
Norbu Tanzin Lama. P.O. Kanam. Himalachal Pradesh.
Negi Narainjit. P.O. Kanam. Himalachal Pradesh.
Negi Bhagat Ram. Sugnam, P.O. Kanam. Himalachal Pradesh.
Gya Lama. Buddhist Temple. Kathmandu, Nepal.
Tshering Dorjie Lahula. C/o Hari Deo. Tailor Master. Kalu. P.O., E. Punjab.
Dr. Lokesh. Secretary, The International academy [sic!] of Indian Culture. Old Assembly Rest House. Nagpur.
Prof. Ringzin Lhundup Lama. Pali Institution. Nalanda.
T. Wangdi Esq. Hon, Deputy Minister. Writers Building. Calcutta.
Prof. Geshey Zangpo La. 1. Buddhist Temple Street. Calcutta. 12.
Missionary Incharge. Free Church of Finland [sic!]. Buxa Duar.
(2) Copies. Political Officer. P.O. Sadiya. Assam.
Tshering Dhondup Lama. Buddhist Temple Lumparing. Shillong. Assam.
Major Kathing. C/o Political Officer. Sela Sub Agency. P.O. Charduar. Assam.
Mr. Chu Tempa La. I. T. A. But Sela Subagency. Lokra p.o. Assam.
Political Officer. Abor Hills. Pasighat. p.o. Assam.
Mr. Jai Rajsingh. Garbiyang. p o Almora Assam.
K. Lama, Esq. Tibetan Agent. Sela Subagency. p.o. Lokra Assam.
Mr. Sang Tshering. Gaonbura Derang Zong. Sela Subagency. Lokra. p.o. Assam.
Rinchen Dhondup. Tibetan Interpreter. Tawang Lokra p.o. Assam.
Miss. Margerat Miller. 1620 Bluemont Street. Manhatton [sic!]. Kansas. U.S.A.
Theodor Illion. Post Box 59. Salzburg Bakupost. Austria.
Prof. Bacot. 31, Qui Anatole, Paris. France.

Mr. R K Spriggs. The school of areantal studies [sic!]. London University WCI U.K.
A.J. Hopkinson Esq Ambleside Wesmos[illegible] N.R., England.
Mr. Tshewang Yeshey pemba. 120 Regents park Road. London No 3 UK
Capt. D L Snellgrave [sic!]. The School of Oriental [sic!] Studies. University of London WCI. UK

A8) List, undated [internal evidence: early 1950s]; handwritten; one page; no headline.

The same list can be found in an incomplete attachment to a letter from Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Hugh Richardson (Lhasa), April 28, 1950; handwritten. This list only provides the first 14 recipients.

1. H.E. Richardson Esq. O.B. [illegible] P.S Officer in Charge Indian Mission Lhasa
2. Prof. V.V. Gorkhale, Indian Mission Lhasa
3. Raisahib Dapon Pemba Tshering, Indian Mission Lhasa.
4. Medical Officer c/o Indian Mission Lhasa
5. Kazi Sonam Tobgay, Indian Mission Lhasa
6. Doring Thaijee Doring House Lhasa, c/o Indian Mission Lhasa
7. Kundeling Dzasa, c/o I.M. Lhasa
8. Yapshi Tagtsher, c/o I.M. Lhasa
9. Tsharong Dzasa Lhasa
10. Pangdatshang Lhasa
11. Shatra Sey Lhasa
12. New Chikhyab Khenpo Lhasa
13. Ngaboo Zimshag Lhasa
14. Jhola Tsewang Leanshar Lhasa
15. Samdrup Phodang, Thaiji Kusho Lhasa
16. Kunzangtse C. in. C. Lhasa
17. New Jangchi Kusho C. in. C. Lhasa
18. The New Dhungyig Chenmo C. in. C. Lhasa

A9) List, undated [internal evidence: 1952-1953]; type-written; three pages; no headline.

The list is broken into thirteen different sections, which always restart counting. The sections are not further named, but bundled into different regions. I add the regions in square brackets below. The lists mention if more than one copy was sent. This information is provided after a comma. Compare also to list B7.

[Darjeeling District]

1. Mr. M.L. Thempa, D.S.P. Darjeeling
2. Captain Laden La, Building 'N', Darjeeling
3. Pemba Bhutia, Tibetan Curious, Mackenzie Rd., Darjeeling
4. Injung Sardar, Burdwan Rd., Kurseong, D.H. Rly
5. Superintendent of Police D.I.B., 2 copies
6. Mr. K. S. Paul, Ghum, P.O.
7. Mr. T. Wangdi, President of Bhutia Assn. Khamza[?] Building
8. Commissioner. Presidency Division, Jalpaiguri

[Punjab]

1. Tshering Doji, C/O, Hari Deo Tailor Master, Akharubazur, Kulu P.O., Punjab
2. Sri Tshewang Gatang, Numbardar Kothi, E.Punjab
3. Sri Negi Ragidas (Poo), Tehsil Chini, Rampur
4. Prof. V. V. Gokhale, Officer in Charge, Indian Mission Lhasa
5. Nono Tashi Phuntshog, P.O. Kaza Spiti, E.Punjab

6. Sri Laldi Prasad, Rewari, E.Punjab
7. Nono Tshewang Topgay, Kaza P.O. Via Manali, E.Punjab
8. J. Singh Garbial Esq., P.O. Garbriyang, U.P.

[Pharijong & Gyantse]

1. Kungo Khemchung, Pharijong, Tibet
2. Dunjik Kunsang, Pharijong, Tibet
3. Jasho Kungo, Pharijong, Tibet
4. Lakhamg Tshedor, Bombay Tashi Khagsar, Pharijong, Tibet
5. Sholkhang, Pharijongpon, Pharijong, Tibet
6. Tshong Jhempa Gyaltshen, Gyantshi, Tibet
7. Langdong Kusho, C/o Tshongpon Lineman, Gyantshi, Tibet
8. Kazi Tashi, Indian Trade Agent, Gyantshi, Tibet
9. Mr. Tshiten Wangdi, Indian Trade Agent, Gyantshi, Tibet
10. Doring Thaijee, C/o Mr. T. Wangdi, Gynatshi, Tibet
11. Khemchung Shosherlekhung, Pharijong, Tibet
12. Chojor Khangsar, Shaptodpa, C/o G. Khangsar, Pharijong, Tibet
13. Abutopgay, Doshar Nyingpa, Pharijong, Tibet
14. Pemba Thondup Pharlabrang, Pharijong, Tibet
15. Zurkhang Tshedor, Hongbe Tashikhagsar, Pharijong, Tibet
16. Seralachi Kushap, Pharijong, Tibet
17. Rinshi Sumdowa, Wool Customs [sic!] Officer, Pharijong, Tibet
18. Nima Tshering, Phari Nang Og, Pharijong, Tibet
19. Dr. Bo Kazi Raibahadur, Medical Officer, Gyantshe, Tibet
20. Tshongpon Kusho, Line Rider, Gyantshe, Tibet
21. Zhurkhang Khemchog, T. Trade Agent, Gyantshe, Tibet
22. Officer in Charge, Indian Trade Agent, Gyantshe, Tibet
23. Garu Shar Say Kusho, Pharijong, Tibet

[Himachal Pradesh]

1. Numbardar Deichand Urf. (Poo) Simla Hills
2. Lama Tenzung Gyaltshen, Chini, P.O., Simla Hills
3. Norbu Tenzin Lama, P.O., Kanam, Simla Hills
4. Narainjit, Village Kanam & P.O., Simla Hills
5. Gelong Bhatram Telingpa, Chini P.O., Simla Hills
6. Negi Kaliram Sanjanli, Chini P.O., Simla Hills
7. Prof. Lama S. Dupgye, Chini P.O., Simla Hills
8. Lama Gyanchand V. Sunam, Chini P.O., Simla Hills
9. Ramjeedas Rarang Negi, V.B. Middle School, Chini P.O.
10. Lama Sonam Tharchin, Chini P.O., Himachal Pradesh

[Ladakh]

1. Lachen Yishey Zudpa, Tibetan School Master, Leh, Kashmir
2. Taktshang Tulku Rimpoche, Himis Monastery, Leh, Kashmir
3. Bakula Rimpoche, Head of Buddhist in Kashmir, Kashmir
4. Kalon Rigzin Saheb, Leh P.O., Ladak

[Kalimpong]

1. Rani Saheb, Durbar House, Kalimpong
2. Messrs, Pangda Tshang, 10th Mile, Kalimpong
3. Radreng Labrang, 10th Mile, Kalimpong
4. Messrs, Sandu tshang, 11th Mile, Kalimpong
5. Prof. Roerich, The Crookety, Kalimpong
6. Mr. Shogappa, Kalimpong
7. Tan Sen Shey, Kalimpong
8. Mr. Gyami Tshering, Kalimpong
9. Mrs. Liang, Bindu Kothi, Kalimpong
10. Musho Drokala, C/O Sandu tshang, 11th Mile, Kalimpong

11. Mr. D. Macdonald, Himalayan Hotel, Kalimpong
12. H.R.H. Prince Peter, The Tashiding, Kalimpong
13. Mr. T. Serpa, Kalimpong
14. Khem Rinpoche Thargon, Kalimpong
15. Talama, Tirpai, Kalimpong
16. Principal W.M. Scott, S.U.M.I. , Kalimpong
17. Dr. A. Craig, Charteries Hospital, Kalimpong
18. Mr. J. Purdie, G. Homes, Kalimpong
19. Rev. Duncan, G. Homes, Kalimpong
20. Tethong Say Kusho, Kalimpong
21. Tethong Rinpoche, Kalimpong
22. MC. Pradhan Esq., Kalimpong
23. Mr J.K. Isaac, The Supply Office, Kalimpong
24. Phunkhang Sey, Kalimpong
25. Kodamull Jethmull, Kalimpong
26. The Editor, Himalayan Times, Kalimpong

[Calcutta]

1. Sri Krishnanadas Mukharjee, 24. Parganas, Calcutta
2. Prof. Geshey Zhampo La, C/O Mahabodhi Society of India
3. British Information Service, Office of the U.K. High Commissioners' in India, Calcutta
4. G. Gordon Cleaths Esq., 18 Camac St, Calcutta
5. The Administrative Officer, American Consul General, 5/1 Harrington St, Calcutta
6. Mr. Ataullah, 9 Circus Avenue, Calcutta
7. Mahabodhi Society of India, 4A Bankim Chatterjee St., Calcutta

[Nepal]

1. Mr. Ngawang Yonten, P.O. Okhaldunga, Bazar Purba No.3, Nepal. Via Sukhla Pokhori, Darjeeling
2. Tshering Tendi Lama, Okhaldunga Bazar, Purba No.3, Nepal, Via Sukhla Pokhori, Darjeeling
3. Mr. Jagatbhadur Dakwa, Lalitpur Nagbahal, Nepal

[Delhi]

1. Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broad casting, Old Secretariate Building, New Delhi
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5. Sri Ranjit Rai, 6 Awrangazeb Road, Delhi

[India Other]

1. The Editor, Dharamdutt, Sarnath
2. Dr. Lokesh Chandra, Old Assembly Rest House, Nagpur

[Foreign Countries]

1. Dr. Johance [sic!] Schubert, 6 Lambertrasse [sic!], 10tn. Leipzig, C.I. Germany
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5. For Washington Research Liason Office of International Broadcasting, U.S.A.
6. President Lous P. Gainsborough, The Login Corporation, San Francisco, U.S.A.
7. B. Swartz Esq., South Asia Sec., Library of Congress, Washington D.C., U.S.A.
8. Miss Henrita Gerwig, United Nation's World, 385 Mdison [sic!] Ave, New York City, U.S.A.
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11. Heini Harrer, Graz. Elisabethinergasse 21, Austria
12. Theodre Illion, Post Box 59, Sazburg Bahupost, Austria

13. Rev. R.B. Knox, C/o Miss Know, Pymble, New South Wales, Australia
14. Mr. Wisely E. Needhave, 462 Second Ave, West Haven 16, Conn. U.S.A.
15. Mr. Rigzin Wangpo, C/o Mr. K.J. Perera, Wasanta Kuda Buta, Angoda, Ceylon
16. Miss Chie Nakane, Japan
17. Hisao Kimura, Japan
18. Mr. Bunkyo Aoki, Japan
19. Tilowa Rinpoche, Authokthu, Page Schoo, John Hopkinson University, Beltmore , 18 Maryland, U.S.A.
20. Mr. C.C. Chamg, 14 Fiddler Lane, Leviton L.I.N.Y., U.S.A.
21. Arue Ekkblom, Kopmangatan 79, Harnosand, Sweden
22. Prof. Bacot, 31 Quai Anatole, Paris, France
23. Sir Basil Gould, Kt. C.M.G., C.I.E., Jubilee Villa, Yarmouth Isle, Whtie U.K., Westways
24. Mr. Tshewang Yishey Pemba, 120 Regents Park Road, London
25. A.J. Hopkinson Esq., Ballawray, Amble side, Westmost A.N.Q., England
26. Marco Pallis (Greatstone), Headrington Khin Lane, Oxford, England
27. Captiain D.L. Smellgrove, The School of Oriental Studies, University of London, W.C.I., U.K.
28. The Rev. W.R. Colley
29. Inner Asia Project, Far Eastern and Russian Institution, University of Washington, Scotland S.W.

[Yatung]

1. Raishahib T. Wangdi, Yatung
2. Raibahadurni Norbu Lhachen, Yatung
3. Indian Trade Agent, Yatung
4. Babu Injung La, Yatung
5. Changzo Khenrab La, C/o Raishahib T. Wangdi, Yatung
6. Mr. Migma Dorjee La, Yatung
7. Shelngo La, Dingpon of Yatung, C/o R.S.T. Wangdi
8. Basi Raggyel La, Yarphe School, C/o Mr. Migma Dorjee La
9. Tibetan Trade Agent, Yatung, Tibet

[Assam etc.]

1. Tsheton Samdup, Sadiya P.O., Assam
2. Mr. Chu Tampaola, A.J.A. N.E.F.T.A.T., P.O. Sadiya
3. Mr. Tshring Dhondup Lama, House No. 52, Jhalupara Cault, Shillong, Assam
4. Rev. Daired Westborg, Parkijuli Mission, P.O. Mendke, Kamrup Dist., Assam
5. Major Kathing, C/o. Political Officer, Sela Sub-Agency, P.O. Charduar, (Balipura Frontier Tract) Assam
6. Mr. T. Tshering, S.I.B., C/o Political Officer B.F.T., P.O. Lokra, Assam
7. Mr. Tashigang Dzongpon, C/o Mr. J.B. Pradhan, Kumarikatha

B) Distribution

B1) Table specifying distribution, "Statement showing the numbers of papers printed and circulated during 1945/46", *no day, no month* [1946]; handwritten; one page.

- I. Printed ----- 500 copies
- II. Circulated as follows:
- a) Free
1. To British Mission Lhasa----- 250 copies
 2. To British Trade Agent Gyantse---- 8
 3. To Tibetan Govt. + Officials----- 70
 4. To Political Officer Sikkim----- 10
 5. To Supdt. [?] Police----- 2
 6. To D[illegible] Com[illegible] Darjeeling-----3 [?]
 7. To Govt. of India----- 2

8. Darjeeling District	
Sikkim [illegible]	134
[illegible]	
Simla, Ladakh, Kulu-----	[Total] 479
9. Office Copies, [illegible] ----- 12	
b) On Payment -----	9
	9 - 500

[handwritten next to the table] 479+21 = 500

Note: Some of [illegible] free receivers have paid the subscription on later [illegible].

B2) Table specifying distribution, "Statement of Tibetan Newspaper. From 1st April, 1946 to 31st March, 1947", undated [1947]; typewritten; one page.

		EXPENDITURE	Expenditure
Political Officer Subscription	286-15-6 19	April, 1946	305
Political Officer Subscription	286-2 127	May, 1946	413-2
Political Officer Subscription	275-13 0	June, 1946	275-13
Political Officer Subscription Subscriptions	550 24 31	July, & August, 1946	454-6 69-9
Political Officer Subscription	200 25	September, 1946	272-4
Political Officer Subscription	250 14	October, 1946	293-1
Political Officer Subscription	250 68	November, 1946	316-13
Political Officer Subscription	250 12	December, 1946	247-8
Political Officer Subscription	250 33	Dec. & Jan., 1947	258-7
Political Officer Subscription	250 43-12 (415)	January, 1947	318-15-6
Subscriptions.	(837)	February, 1947	509-13
Political Officer Subscription	250 1983	March, 1947	490-11
Year ending 31st March, 1947	6732-10-6		Total Amount ending March 31st, 1947 Rs. 4226-4-6
From the Political Officer Subscription realized	Rs. 3098-14-6 Rs. 3633-12		1. Receipt from 1st April, 1946 to March 1947.....Rs. 6732-10-6 2. Expenditure for the same period..... Rs. 4226-4-6
Total amount	6732-10-6	Cash balance in hand	2506-6-0

NOTE: Paper, ink, chemicals, and wastages are not included, as paper and others were paid direct by The Political Officer in Sikkim.

B3) Table specifying distribution, "Statement showing the monthly distribution of Tibetan Newspaper, paid and for free", undated [Fader adds: 1947-1948]; handwritten; one page.

Place	Paid	Free
Lhasa	305	34
Shigatse	61	
Gyantse	31	
Pharjong	31	
Yatung	52	
Simla Hills	15	
Darjeeling	12	3
Kashmir	3	
Calcutta	5	1
Assam	17	
Nepal	3	
Kalimpong	45+50=95	
Sikkim	14+12+10=36	3
Foreign	6	4
TOTAL	662	45

whole total of paid and free 707.

[back side, handwritten]

662 (330 1/2)

Paid Subscriber 330/8

Local Sale 250/-

Govt Subsidy 200/-

[=] 780/8

60/-

[=] 740 [sic!]

B4) Table specifying distribution, "Statement of Distribution of the Tibetan Newspaper, Year Ending 31st December, 1947", January 5, 1948; type-written; one page.

	Extra subscriber	Paid subscriber	Free
Lhasa	49	348	32
Shigatse	x	68	x
Gyantse	x	41	x
Pharjong	19	19	x
Yatung	8	84	x
Calcutta, Bengal	x	7	x
Ladak, Kashmir	x	4	x
Simla Hills	x	15	x
Sikkim State	25	14	x
Nepal	x	4	x
Darjeeling	x	14	3
Kalimpong	53	47	x
Totals	154	665	35
France	x	1	x
America	x	2	x
China	x	4	x
United Kingdom	x	4	1
Germany	x	2	x
Totals	nil.	13	1

Extra paid copies..... 154
 Paid subscribers..... 665
 Free copies 35
 Foreign subscribers ... 13
 free..... 1
 Grand total, 868 copies

B5) Letter specifying distribution, from Dhondup for Editor Tharchin (Kalimpong) to Arthur Hopkinson (POS, Gangtok), April 20, 1948; type-written, one page, no headline.

Per today's mail I am sending a bundle of Tibetan newspaper containing 4 small packages addressed as follows for favour of forwarding them to Lhasa:

- 1) 56 Copies addressed to Tibetan traders C/o Indian Trade Mission Lhasa.
 - 2) 32 Copies addressed to Tib Govt Officials C/o Indian Trade Mission Lhasa.
 - 3) 49 Copies addressed to Messrs Bajuratana C/o Indian Trade Mission Lhasa.
 - 4) 4 Copies to Shigatse Traders C/o Askazi Neshi Para thorough Indraman Tshongkhang Chenpo.
- Total: 141 copies.

B6) List specifying distribution, February 24, 1949; handwritten; one page; no headline.

Sikkim	30[?]	copies. By post	to POS 27+3 = 30
Shamokarpo	49	one bundle C/o P.O.	
Phari	16	Chokta + lhag grub [illegible]	
Gyantse	10	[illegible]	
Lhasa T.Gov	31	copies C/o T.M.	
Ladakh Khache	74	address individually bundle [?] C/o [illegible]	
Indian Mission	5	by post	
Yatung	15	by foot. R.S. T. Wangdu + Mr. Dorjee	
Shigatse: Choden Tendar	8	By Post	
Shigatse: Asa Kazi	12	By Post	

10 Copies at Press Kept for Sell
 4 copies sold
 1 to [illegible] in shop [?]
 1 [illegible]

[total] 260
 [+] 1 Tsedrung
 [=] 261 [Note that the calculation is incorrect.]

Darjeeling by Post : 10
 Darjeeling for Sale: 20

Rani, 2
 P.R., 2
 Sad 1
 Lagpa 1
 G. Tshe.1
 D. Lham 1
 Lhatse 1
 [illegible] 1
 Roerich 1
 Rahula 1
 A.RS 1

PhuRinpoche 1
Sogpo 1
Dakchen [illegible] 1
[illegible, in *dbu med*] 1
[illegible, in *dbu med*]1
[illegible, in *dbu med*]1
Miss Ar[illegible] 1
Macdo 1
Buchung 1
[illegible] 1

B7) Subscription list specifying distribution, undated [internal evidence: 1952-1953]; type-written; three pages; no headline.

This document is the same as A9. In the following, only distribution numbers are presented.

[Darjeeling District – 8]
[Punjab – 8]
[Pharijong & Gyantse – 23]
[Himachal Pradesh – 10]
[Ladakh – 4]
[Kalimpong & District – 26]
[Calcutta – 7]
[Nepal – 3]
[Delhi – 5]
[India Other – 2]
[Foreign Countries – 29]
[Assam et al. – 7]

B8) Blank table specifying distribution, "Statement of Monthly Despatch. 'Yulchog Sosoi Sargyur Melong.' Registred. Nr. C. 1386", 1950s [probably early 1950s]; typewritten; one page.

The table is left blank, but it provides details on the expected range of distribution.

Tibet
Tibet Govt, Lhasa.
Indian Mission Lhasa, C/o. S.T. Kazi I.M. Lhasa.
Gyantse.
Shigatse.
Pharijong.
Yatung.

India
Government of India.
Sikkim.
Bhutan.
Nepal.
Darjeeling.
Kalimpong Local.
Kalimpong Local by hand delivery.
Assam.
W. Bengal.
Punjab.

Kashmir.
Himachal Pradesh.
Utter Pradesh.
Western Tibet.

Foreign

America.
United Kingdom.
Europe.
China.
Japan.

Place Index

Amdo	a mdo
Barkhor	bar skor
Batang	'ba' thang
Chamdo	chab mdo
Chokorling	chos 'khor gling
Choni	co ne
Dartsedo	dar rtse mdo
Dekyilingka	bde skyid gling kha
Derge	sde dge
Dingri	ding ri
Drapchi	grwa bzhi
Drepung	'bras spungs
Gyamda	rgya mda'
Gyantse	rgyal rtse
Jyekundo	skye dgu mdo
Kangding	dar do
Kham	khams
Kumbum	sku 'bum
Labrang Tashikyil	bla brang bkra shis 'khyil
Lhado	lha stod
Lhamolatso	lha mo lha mtso
Lhasa	lha sa
Lhoka	lho kha
Mangyul gungthang	mang yul gung thang
Narthang	snar thang
Ngaba	rnga ba
Ngari	mnga' ris
Norbulingka	nor bu gling kha
Nyemo	nye mo
Phari	phag ri
Rebkong	reb kong
Reting Labrang	rwa sgrenng bla brang
Samye	bsam yas
Sera Je	se ra byes
Tashilhünpo	bkra shis lhun po
Tengyeling	bstan rgyas gling
Tharpa Chöling	thar pa chos gling
Toelung	stod lung
Tsang	gtsang
Ü	dbus
Ütsang	dbus gtsang
Yatung (Dromo)	gro mo

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