Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie

Tibetan Troops Fighting the “Enemy of Buddhist Doctrine” (*bstan dgra*): The Invasions of the Gorkhas as Witnessed by Two Tibetan Masters of the Barawa (’Ba’ ra ba) Tradition

Marlene Erschbamer

Résumé

Au cours du XVIIIe siècle, le Sikkim et le Tibet furent menacés par les Gurkhas du Népal, qui étaient craints pour leur cruauté, en particulier par les populations vivant près de la frontière avec le Népal. Une première invasion des Gurkhas dans le sud-ouest du Tibet en 1788 résulta en épisodes de batailles, de désordre et de pillage qui prirent fin grâce à l’intervention de l’empereur mandchou Qianlong (r. 1735-96). Lorsque les Gurkhas envahirent de nouveau le Tibet en 1791, ils allèrent jusqu’au monastère de Tashilhunpo, avant d’être de nouveau vaincus avec l’aide des forces mandchoues. Ces attaques des Gurkhas ont été observées par deux maîtres de la tradition Barawa, Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso (1755-1831) et son disciple Rindz in Chöying Dorjé (1772-1838), et leurs réflexions sur la guerre ont été inclues dans leurs hagiographies respectives. L’objectif de cette étude est de présenter un point de vue resté jusqu’ici inexploré, à savoir celui des maîtres bouddhistes qui ont été témoins de ces invasions au Sikkim et au Tibet, et de montrer que l’analyse de leur témoignage personnel permet une nouvelle compréhension de ces événements.

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Erschbamer Marlene. Tibetan Troops Fighting the “Enemy of Buddhist Doctrine” (*bstan dgra*): The Invasions of the Gorkhas as Witnessed by Two Tibetan Masters of the Barawa (’Ba’ ra ba) Tradition. In: Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie, vol. 27, 2018. Le bouddhisme et l'armée au Tibet pendant la période du Ganden Phodrang (1642-1959) / Buddhism and the Millitary in Tibet during the Ganden Phodrang Period (1642-1959) pp. 121-137;

doi : https://doi.org/10.3406/asie.2018.1509

https://www.persee.fr/doc/asie_0766-1177_2018_num_27_1_1509

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Au cours du XVIIIe siècle, le Sikkim et le Tibet furent menacés par les Gurkhas du Népal, qui étaient craints pour leur cruauté, en particulier par les populations vivant près de la frontière avec le Népal. Une première invasion des Gurkhas dans le sud-ouest du Tibet en 1788 résulta en épisodes de batailles, de désordre et de pillage qui prirent fin grâce à l'intervention de l'empereur mandchou Qianlong (r. 1735-96). Lorsque les Gurkhas envahirent de nouveau le Tibet en 1791, ils allèrent jusqu'au monastère de Tashilhunpo, avant d'être de nouveau vaincus avec l'aide des forces mandchoues. Ces attaques des Gurkhas ont été observées par deux maîtres de la tradition Barawa, Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso (1755-1831) et son disciple Rindzin Chöying Dorjé (1772-1838), et leurs réflexions sur la guerre ont été inclues dans leurs hagiographies respectives. L'objectif de cette étude est de présenter un point de vue resté jusqu'ici inexploré, à savoir celui des maîtres bouddhistes qui ont été témoins de ces invasions au Sikkim et au Tibet, et de montrer que l'analyse de leur témoignage personnel permet une nouvelle compréhension de ces événements.

In 1788, the king of the Gorkhas sent an army to southwest Tibet to fight against Tibetan troops. The Tibetans were defeated and, consequently, the Gorkhas occupied Kyirong (Skyid grong) and Dzongkar (Rdzong dkar), plundered the region and caused a period of disorder for the Tibetans. Not far away from the battlefields in Kyirong, the Barawa Kagyü tradition ('Ba' ra ba bka' brgyud) had an important spiritual centre:[1] the monastery of Drapu Chöling (Grwa phu chos gling), which

* This article is published in a volume edited in the context of the "TibArmy" project, which has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement 677952). The content only reflects the author's view and the ERC is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

1. The Barawa Kagyü tradition is one of the many branches that are grouped together as Kagyüpa, and more precisely as Dakpo Lharjé (Dwags po Lha rje) traditions, which emerged from sub-branches of the Drukpa ('Brug pa) tradition. This in turn belongs to the so-called eight minor traditions (*chung brgyad*) of the Kagyü; for a chart that shows the most important divisions among the Dakpo Kagyü, along with those that finally led to the Barawa tradition, see Marlene Erschbamer, *The 'Ba'-ra-ba bKa'-brgyud-pa: Historical and Contemporary Studies* (Vienna: WSTB, 2017), 6.

was led by members of the Jamling family ('Jam [dpal bde chen] gling), whose residence was in Dra (Grwa).[2] The Barawa tradition derives its name from the place where its main seat is located, i.e. Baradrak ('Ba' ra brag) in the Shang (Shangs) Valley in central Tibet, where the founding father, Barawa Gyeltsen Pelzang ('Ba' ra ba Rgyal mtshan dpal bzang, 1310–91), was born. In 1527, the Barawa teachings reached Kyirong in southwest Tibet when Namkha Dorjé (Nam mkha' rdo rje, 1486–1553), a native of this region who had previously studied at Baradrak, returned to his birth place. Here he established a village monastery in the upper part of Dra, which became known as Drapu Tashi Chöling.[3]

This branch monastery held particularly close contact with another significant Barawa branch monastery, that of Kagyü Gönsar (Bka' brgyud dgon gsar) in Dromo (Gro mo), which belonged to the Buddhist kingdom of Sikkim[4] at the outbreak of the war but became part of Tibetan territory afterwards. Important masters from the monastery of Drapu Chöling regularly visited the monastery of Kagyü Gönsar

2. For further reading on the Jamling family in Kyirong, see Bkra shis tshe ring [Tashi Tsering Josayma, AMI], "Mnga' ris smad mang yul skyid grong gi sa'i cha'i char don brgyud dpal ldan stod 'brug bka' brgyud kyi srol 'dzin pa grwa phu bkra shis chos gling dgon pa'i bstan bdag 'jam dpal bde chen gling pa'am yong sgrags su skyid grong grwa bla ma'i gdung rabs rim byon gyi rnam thar sa bon ngo sprod phyogs bsdebs," *Gtam tshogs* 9, no. 2 (1989): 37–80; Erschbamer, *The 'Ba'-ra-ba bKa'-brgyud-pa*, 180–82; and Roberto Vitali, "Historical Material on Early sKyid-grong (Gathered from Local Documents and bKa'-brgyud-pa Sources)," in *The Pandita and the Siddha: Tibetan Studies in Honour of E. Gene Smith*, ed. Ramon N. Prats (Dharamshala: Amnye Machen Institute, 2007), 286–303.

3. See Franz-Karl Ehrhard, *Early Buddhist Block Prints from Mang-yul Gung-thang* (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2000), 65.

4. Sikkim is also known as the "hidden rice valley" (Sbas yul 'bras mo ljongs). According to legendary accounts, Padmasambhava visited Sikkim during the eighth century and regarded it as a paradisiacal place that would shelter Buddhist practitioners in times of turmoil. During the seventeenth century, when the Géluk tradition rose to political power and the Ganden Phodrang (Dga' ldan pho brang) government was established in Tibet, life changed for members of the Nyingma tradition, since the Géluk tradition tried to consolidate their religious authority, which resulted in the persecution of other traditions' members and in a ban of some of their famous writings. Then, Nyingma masters remembered the legendary prophecies of Padmasambhava, who was worshipped as second Buddha by them. Three Tibetan masters belonging to the Nyingma tradition set out on a journey to open the "hidden rice valley," a task they eventually completed, which resulted in the installation of the first Buddhist ruler (*chos rgyal*) of Sikkim. A frequently quoted source in this context is *The History of Sikkim*—an unpublished translation of *'Bras ljongs rgyal rabs*, written by Maharaja Thutob Namgyal and Maharani Yeshay Dolma in 1908—which gives the year 1642, the same year the Ganden Phodrang government was installed, for these events. But as shown by Mullard, this date has to be regarded in a most critical way and thus handled carefully, since it might have been used as legitimation of the Sikkimese kingdom to create a stronger connection to the Ganden Phodrang government; see Saul Mullard, "Brag dkar bkra shis sdings kyi sku 'bum: The Text, the Author, the Stupa and Its Importance in the Formation of Religious Politics in Sikkim," *Bulletin of Tibetology* 39, no. 1 (2003): 13–24; Mullard, "A History from the Hidden Land: Some Preliminary Remarks on a Seventeenth Century Sikkimese Chronicle," *Bulletin of Tibetology* 41, no. 1 (2005): 55–85; and Mullard, *Opening the Hidden Land: State Formation and the Construction of Sikkimese History* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

—and vice versa—to provide the members and followers of the Barawa tradition with teachings and empowerments.

Several Buddhist masters from the Barawa tradition witnessed the invasions of the Gorkhas in their home regions and described their experiences in their hagiographies (*rnam thar*). Hagiographies are usually written to give authority to a lineage's history, to inspire the reader on his or her spiritual path, and thus are predominantly religious sources, but this genre can also provide reliable—though fragmentary—information on local history and social circumstances. This can be observed for two Tibetan masters of the Barawa tradition, namely Rindzin Chöying Dorjé (Rig 'dzin Chos dbyings rdo rje, 1772–1838) from the monastery of Drapu Chöling and his teacher Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso (Ngag dbang Chos kyi rgya mtsho, 1755–1831) from the monastery of Kagyü Gönsar, whose hagiographies provide observations and descriptions of the invasions of the Gorkhas in Sikkim and Tibet.

Research on the invasions of the Gorkhas and the resulting battles has been mainly conducted using Chinese or British records[5] and only a few Tibetan and Sikkimese primary sources have been used to shed more light on these events.[6] However, two of the most detailed accounts of these wars, the studies by Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa and Li Ruohong, are based on the autobiography of Doring Tendzin Penjor (Rdo ring Bstan 'dzin dpal 'byor, b. 1760), a lay Tibetan Cabinet Minister of the Gazhi (Dga' bzhi) family who described in detail cultural, political and social aspects of Tibet during the eighteenth century.[7] So far, only two analyses of these

5. Lucette Boulnois, "Chinese Maps and Prints on the Tibet-Gorkha War of 1788–92," *Kailash: A Journal of Himalayan Studies* 15, nos. 1–2 (1989): 85–112; Erich Haenisch, *Dokumente aus dem Jahre 1788 zur Vorgeschichte des Gorkha-Krieges* (München: Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1959); Hugh E. Richardson, *Ch'ing Dynasty Inscriptions at Lhasa* (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1974), 27–38. For an analysis using Nepali sources, see Mahesh C. Regmi "An Official Nepali Account of the Nepal-China War," *Regmi Research Series* 2, no. 8 (1970): 177–88. For a detailed account on research on the Sino-Nepalese or Nepalese-Tibetan war, considering Chinese, British, Tibetan and Nepali sources, see Franz-Karl Ehrhard, "The Biography of sMan-bsgom Chos-rje Kun-dga' dpal-ldan (1735–1804) as a Source for the Sino-Nepalese War," in *Pramāṇakīrtiḥ: Papers Dedicated to Ernst Steinkellner on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, ed. Birgit Kellner et al. (Vienna: WSTB, 2007), 115–33; and Peter Schwieger, *The Dalai Lama and the Emperor of China: A Political History of the Tibetan Institution of Reincarnation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 275 n. 78.

6. For the Gorkhas in Sikkim, see Lal Bahadur Basnet, *Sikkim: A Short Political History* (Delhi: S. Chand, 1974), 22–27; Saul Mullard, "The Brag dkar pa Family and g.Yang thang rdzong: An Example of Internal Alliance in Sikkim," *Bulletin of Tibetology* 39, no. 2 (2003): 53–66; Mullard, "Sikkim and the Sino-Nepalese War of 1788–1792: A Communiqué from Bǎo tài to the Sikkimese Commander Yug Phyogs thub," *Revue d'études tibétaines* 29 (2014): 29–37; Saul Mullard and Hissey Wongchuk, *Royal Records: A Catalogue of the Sikkimese Palace Archive* (Andiast: International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies, 2010), 139–41; Herbert H. Risley, *The Gazetteers of Sikhim* (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2010 [1894]), 17–18; and Jash R. Subba, *History, Culture and Customs of Sikkim*. (New Delhi: Gyan, 2011 [2008]), 33–39.

7. Tsepon Wangchuk Deden Shakabpa, *Tibet: A Political History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); *Bod kyi srid don rgyal rabs* (Kalimpong: T. Tsepal Taikhang, 1976); *One Hundred Thousand Moons: An Advanced Political History of Tibet*, vol. 1, trans. Derek F. Maher (Leiden: Brill, 2010); and Li Ruohong, *A Tibetan Aristocratic Family in Eighteenth-Century Tibet: A Study*

conflicts were conducted using hagiographical texts: Elena De Rossi Filibeck used hagiographical sources from Géluk (Dge lugs) hierarchs together with the biography of the regent Nominhen Ngawang Tsültrim (*no min han* Ngag dbang tshul khrims, 1721–91), written by Kalön Dzasak Lama Jampa Topden (*bka' blon dza sag bla ma* Byams pa stobs ldan, office: 1791–1808?), in her Italian-language monograph on the Gorkha and the Sino-Nepalese war.[8] In addition, Franz-Karl Ehrhard used the hagiography of Men Gompa Künga Penden (Sman bsgom pa Kun dga' dpal ldan, 1735–1804) as a source for the Sino-Nepalese war.[9] Apart from this last article, which was linked to the Barawa master Rindzin Chöying Dorjé, no other research on descriptions of Barawa masters who lived in border regions and experienced these political occurrences first hand has been conducted.

This paper will focus on how these wars, and particularly their violent aspects, were viewed by two Barawa masters who lived close to the borders of Nepal, Tibet and Sikkim (Fig. 1). Since their monasteries, family homes and very lives were affected by the events of those years, they included some of their observations in their hagiographies. This may help historians and religious studies specialists to assess how Buddhist masters acted in time of war, as well as how they coped with its violent aspects and rationalised them, thus contributing to a more intimate understanding of the relationship between Buddhism and war.

Fig. 1: Map showing current country borders, demonstrating the proximity of the two Barawa monasteries, Drapu Chöling and Kagyü Gönsar, to the borders of Tibet, Nepal and Sikkim. Map created by author using country borders from CIA World DataBank II, vector tiles from Esri (WorldPhysical) and coordinates of monasteries and places from the author's own research.

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of Qing-Tibetan Contact (unpublished PhD thesis, Harvard University, 2002). The autobiography *Dga' bzhi ba'i mi rabs kyi byung ba brjod pa zol med gtam gyi rol mo* was written in 1806 and is available in a 1988 edition (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang).

8. Elena De Rossi Filibeck, *Testi Tibetani Riguardanti i Gorkha*, Atti della Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, anno 374, Memorie: Classe di Scienze morali, storiche e filologiche, ser. 8, vol. 21 (Rome: Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, 1977), 3–57.

9. Ehrhard, "The Biography of sMan-bsgom Chos-rje Kun-dga' dpal-ldan."

Rindzin Chöying Dorjé was a member of the Jamling family from Kyirong in Mangyül Gungtang (Mang yul gung thang). His main residence, the Barawa monastery of Drapu Chöling, stood close to the border with Nepal (Fig. 1). His autobiography, which comprises 177 folios, was edited and completed by his niece Jetsünma Nyima Chödrön (*rje btsun ma* Nyi ma chos sgron) in 1848.[10] The text includes descriptions of the political situation in Tibet during the years 1788–92, such as the already mentioned Gorkha invasions, the resulting battles around Kyirong and peace negotiations.[11] Additionally, it provides information on the Gorkha king and his army, which Rindzin Chöying Dorjé gained during a pilgrimage to Nepal in 1810,[12] news of the Anglo-Nepalese war that he heard in 1816[13] and comments on an epidemic in the Kathmandu Valley, as well as on newly constructed military roads that he noticed on a pilgrimage in 1817.[14] Besides these, the text gives details on the Barawa tradition in general and describes several journeys to distinct places in Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, and the Buddhist kingdom of Sikkim.

Rindzin Chöying Dorjé composed the hagiography of his teacher, Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso, in 1833. The latter was born in North Sikkim and was recognized as Kagyü Trülku (Bka' brgyud sprul sku), an incarnation lineage within the Barawa tradition that has existed since the seventeenth century. In addition to information on his incarnation lineage and journeys to places connected to the Barawa tradition, the text contains descriptions of the invasions of the Gorkhas in Sikkim and Tibet.[15]

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10. This autobiography was published on two occasions; see *Gser phreng/a = Bka' brgyud gser phreng chen mo*: *Biographies of Eminent Gurus in the Transmission Lineage of Teachings of the 'Ba'-ra dKar-brgyud-pa Sect* (Dehradun: Ngawang Gyaltsen and Ngawang Lungtok, 1970), vol. 4, 320–672; and *Gser phreng/b = Bod kyi lo rgyus rnam thar phyogs bsgrigs*: *A Collection of Religious-Historical Works and Biographies in dpe cha Format* (Xining: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2010), vol. 29, 321–673. For a shorter biography, see *Legs bshad nor bu'i gter mdzod* = 'Dzis gar mkhan chen Phrin las rdo rje, *Don brgyud dpal ldan 'brug pa'i mkhas grub bla ma rgya mtsho'i rnam thar legs bshad nor bu'i gter mdzod*: *Jewel Treasure of Elegant Writings: Biography of Saint-Scholars of the Drukpa Lineage* (Kathmandu: Khenpo Shedup Tenzin, 2013), 222–27. For information on Rindzin Chöying Dorjé in Western sources, see Franz-Karl Ehrhard, "The Lineage of the 'Ba'-ra-ba bKa'-brgyud-pa School as Depicted on a Thangka and in 'Golden Rosary' Texts," *Münchner Beiträge zur Völkerkunde* 13 (2009): 179–209, especially 201; Marlene Erschbamer, "Where the Roads from Tibet, India, and Bhutan Meet: The bKa' brgyud dgon gsar in the Chumbi Valley," *Zentralasiatische Studien* 45 (2016): 451–65, especially 456–57; and Erschbamer, *The 'Ba'-ra-ba bKa'-brgyud-pa*.

11. *Gser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 335.6–340.2, 355.4–364.1.

12. Ibid., 483.5–484.1.

13. Ibid., 510.3–511.1.

14. Ibid., 528.3–529.1.

15. *Gser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 204.5–206.2, 209.5–210.6. This hagiography was written by Rindzin Chöying Dorjé, the disciple of Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso, in the monastery of Kagyü Gönsar in Dromo and it was completed in Baradrak, the main seat of the Barawa tradition in the Shang Valley, in 1833. It was published as part of the "golden rosary" collection (*gser 'phreng*) of the Barawa tradition; see *Gser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 137–319; and *Gser phreng/b*, vol. 29, 137–319. For a summary, see *Legs bshad nor bu'i gter mdzod*, 218–21. For some notes in English, see Ehrhard, "The Lineage of the 'Ba'-ra-ba bKa'-brgyud-pa School," 200; Erschbamer, *The 'Ba'-ra-ba bKa'-brgyud-pa*, 153–62; and Marlene Erschbamer, "Wild and Lawless Area? Monastic Institutions in the Lachen Valley

Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso was enthroned at his lineage's main seat, the monastery of Kagyü Gönsar in Dromo, which was part of the Buddhist kingdom of Sikkim up until 1792. After the war with the Gorkhas, the frontiers of the Buddhist kingdom of Sikkim were newly drawn. Dromo was now annexed by the Qing (1644–1912) and became a part of Tibet.[16] As a result, his monastery, Kagyü Gönsar in Dromo, was incorporated into Tibetan territory from then onwards. However, Sikkimese taxpayers continued to support the monastery.[17]

To contextualise the descriptions that reflect a religious perspective, information on the invasions of the Gorkhas has been collected from three sources of the Barawa tradition: the hagiography of Orgyen Ngawang Yéshé (O rgyan Ngag dbang ye shes, 1700–1760),[18] composed in 1794, the hagiography of Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso, completed in 1833, and the autobiography of Rindzin Chöying Dorjé, realized in 1848. The two hagiographies were written by Rindzin Chöying Dorjé, and his autobiography was edited by his niece, Jetsünma Nyima, who most likely used the two hagiographies as sources; the information in each of these three sources is similar. To complete these accounts, supplemental information comes from a *Tibetan History of Mangyül Gungtang* and from two Sikkimese sources, *A Short History of Sikkim* and a *Political History of Sikkim*.[19]

Tibet's relationship with Nepal was founded on religious, economic and political concerns. From a religious point of view, the three *stūpa* in Nepal, namely

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(North Sikkim, India)," *Bulletin of Tibetology* 51, nos. 1–2 (forthcoming). Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso was recognised as Kagyü Trülku, an important incarnation lineage within the Barawa tradition, originating with Könchok Gyeltsen (Dkon mchog rgyal mtshan, 1601–87) and its main seat in the monastery of Kagyü Gönsar in Dromo. For further reading on the monastery of Kagyü Gönsar, see Marlene Erschbamer, "The Monastery bKa' brgyud dgon gsar in the Chumbi Valley: The 'Ba' ra ba bKa' brgyud pa School and Its Connection with Sikkim," *Bulletin of Tibetology* 50, nos. 1–2 (2014): 117–31; Erschbamer, "Where the Roads from Tibet, India, and Bhutan Meet"; and Erschbamer, *The 'Ba'-ra-ba bKa'-brgyud-pa*, 188–94.

16. Erschbamer, "The Monastery bKa' brgyud dgon gsar in the Chumbi Valley," 122; Mullard and Wongchuk, *Royal Records*, 85–86, 140–41.

17. Erschbamer, "The Monastery bKa' brgyud dgon gsar in the Chumbi Valley," 125.

18. Orgyen Ngawang Yéshé, member of the Jamling family, had his main seat in the monastery of Drapu Chöling in Kyirong. He also stayed as resident teacher at the main seat of the Barawa tradition, the monastery of Baradrak in the Shang Valley, and he visited the monastery of Kagyü Gönsar in Dromo to bestow the community with teachings. Additionally, he was involved with powerful political leaders such as the ruling prince, Polhané Sönam Topgyel (Pho lha nas Bsod nams stobs rgyal, 1689–1747), and he performed rituals for the government. For the complete hagiography of Orgyan Ngawang Yéshé, see *Gser phreng/a*, vol. 3, 379–646; and *Gser phreng/b*, vol. 28, 381–648; for a summary, see *Legs bshad nor bu'i gter mdzod*, 204–8; for information in English, see Ehrhard, "The Lineage of the 'Ba'-ra-ba bKa'-brgyud-pa School," 199; Erschbamer, "Where the Roads from Tibet, India, and Bhutan Meet," 454–56; and Erschbamer, *The 'Ba'-ra-ba bKa'-brgyud-pa*, 140.

19. *Lo rgyus* = Bstan 'dzin nor bu, *Mang yul gung thang gi rig gnas lo rgyus* (Lhasa: Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 2012); Skal bzang, *Sbas yul 'bras mo ljongs kyi lo rgyus mdor bsdus* (Gangtok: Ri mgul sprul sku'i par khang, 1995); and Mkhan po chos dbang, *Sbas yul 'bras mo ljongs kyi chos srid dang 'brel ba'i rgyal rabs lo rgyus bden don kun gsal me long* (Gangtok: Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, 2003).

Swayambhunath ('Phags pa shing kun), Boudhanāth (Bya rung kha shor) and Namobuddha (Stag mo lus sbyin), were prominent pilgrimage sites for Tibetans. Pilgrimages were—and still are—an important aspect of Tibetan culture.[20] The three *stūpa* in Nepal were regularly visited by Tibetan pilgrims, such as Rindzin Chöying Dorjé, who reported on offerings he sent and pilgrimages he made there,[21] and who financed renovation work at these sites.[22]

Concerning the economic relations between Tibet and Nepal, mutual trade was well established, with Nepal exporting incense and medicinal herbs to Tibet and importing salt from Tibet. In addition, Tibet depended on Nepal for the minting of its coins. When the Gorkhas gained control over the three Newar capitals of Kathmandu, Lalitapur (Patan) and Bhaktapur (Bhatgaon) between 1768 and 1769, the first accusations of debasement of such coins began to circulate. As a response, the Gorkhas started to insinuate that Tibetan salt was not as pure as it should have been, so that the relationship between the two powers became strained.[23] On one occasion, Cabinet Minister Sönam Wangyel (*bka' blon* Bsod nams dbang rgyal, 1756–88) treated the Newar traders in Tibet badly, thus worsening an already tense atmosphere.[24]

In politics, the relation between the two countries worsened on account of an inheritance dispute that originated in this same period. The Sixth Panchen Lama Lozang Penden Yéshé (Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes, 1738–80), who had been invited to China by the Qianlong Emperor (1711–99) and arrived in Peking in 1780, was presented with many valuable gifts. He passed away in the same year, and two of his brothers started a quarrel about those treasures. One of them was the Tenth Zhamarpa (Zhwa dmar pa, 1742–92), then the second most important hierarch of the Karma Kagyü tradition. He wanted a portion of those gifts, but the other

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20. The Tibetan word for pilgrimage (*gnas skor*) literally means "to circumambulate a site," and circumambulation played—and still plays—an important role in Tibetan Buddhism. In addition, one seeks virtue and tries to gain blessings; see Robert B. Ekvall, *Religious Observances in Tibet: Patterns and Function* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964); Peter Bishop, *The Myth of Shangri-La: Tibet, Travel Writing and the Western Creation of Sacred Landscape* (London: The Athlone Press, 1989); and Franz-Karl Ehrhard, *Buddhism in Tibet and the Himalayas: Texts and Traditions* (Kathmandu: Vajra Publications, 2013), 239–56.

21. *Gser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 374.5–6, 410.5–6, 475.4–481.5, 500.6–501.2, 527.2–530.3.

22. For further reading on these *stūpa*, see Ehrhard, *Buddhism in Tibet and the Himalayas*, 55–155; Tsering Palmo Gellek and Padma Dorje Maitland, eds., *Light of the Valley: Renewing the Sacred Art and Traditions of Swayambhu* (Cazadero, CA: Dharma Publishing, 2011); and Alexander von Rospatt, "The Sacred Origins of the Svayaṃbhūcaitya and the Nepal Valley: Foreign Speculation and Local Myth," *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre* 13 (2009): 33–89.

23. Ehrhard, "The Biography of sMan-bsgom Chos-rje Kun-dga' dpal-ldan"; A. S. Martinov, "The Sa-skya Episode in the Nepal Campaign of 1791–1792," in *Tibetan and Buddhist Studies: Commemorating the 200th Anniversary of the Birth of Alexander Csoma de Kőrös*, ed. Louis Ligeti (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1984), 153–58; and Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*.

24. As the Cabinet Minister Sönam Wangyel arrived at the trade centres near the border to Nepal to investigate the actual situation, he noticed that the custom duties on Newar goods were not paid. Subsequently, he violently restrained Newar traders; see Ehrhard, "The Biography of sMan-bsgom Chos-rje Kun-dga' dpal-ldan," 118; and Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 509.

brother, then the treasurer of Tashilhunpo (Bkra shis lhun po) Monastery, the seat of the Panchen Lama, brought the treasures to his monastery and regarded them as property of Tashilhunpo. Consequently, the Tenth Zhamarpa went to Nepal for reasons not yet determined, though surely connected with the quarrel over the inheritance.[25] Some sources depict the Tenth Zhamarpa as a black sheep and maintain that he sought asylum in Nepal to achieve retribution against his brother by persuading the Gorkha king to invade Tibet as far as Tashilhunpo.[26] Others say that at the start of the war he was already on a pilgrimage in Nepal, and he tried to mediate between the Gorkhas and Tibetans;[27] and yet others leave the question open.[28] The fact that the reasons for visiting Nepal remain unclear raises the question of whether the Zhamarpa was stylised as a black sheep *a posteriori*.

Rindzin Chöying Dorjé had connections with both the Panchen Lama and his brother, the Tenth Zhamarpa. He received the additional name Tséwang Dorjé Migyur Namkha (Tshe dbang rdo rje mi 'gyur nam mkha') from the Panchen Lama in the late 1770s.[29] In 1786, he met the Tenth Zhamarpa in Kyirong, where the latter gave empowerments to the public.[30]

During the same year, the practitioner and doctor Künga Penden (Kun dga' dpal ldan, 1735–1804), another native of Mangyül Gungtang related to the Barawa tradition, was sent to Nepal to cure the Tenth Zhamarpa from illness.[31] He was also connected to Rindzin Chöying Dorjé for distinct reasons. First, they both received Barawa teachings in the monastery of Drapu Chöling at an early age. Second, Künga Penden bestowed consecrations on Rindzin Chöying Dorjé and remained one of his teachers as long as he lived.[32]

Rindzin Chöying Dorjé was also connected to Tashilhunpo Monastery; he visited it for religious purposes from 1796 onwards and, during one occasion, he took the full vows of a monk in the presence of the Seventh Panchen Lama Lozang Penden Tenpé Nyima (Blo bzang dpal ldan bstan pa'i nyi ma, 1782–1853).[33] He was thus well connected with some of the most influential political and religious figures in South Central Tibet: the Panchen Lama and the Tenth Zhamarpa. These relationships should have influenced his view on the conflict and shaped his statements and reflections on the Tenth Zhamarpa. According to him, some bad people (*ngan khag*) defamed the Zhamarpa and considered that the whole conflict was his fault

25. Ehrhard, "The Biography of sMan-bsgom Chos-rje Kun-dga' dpal-ldan," 117–18; Martinov, "The Sa-skya Episode in the Nepal Campaign," 154–55; Schwieger, *The Dalai Lama and the Emperor of China*, 175; and Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 485.

26. Matthew T. Kapstein, *The Tibetans* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006); Schwieger, *The Dalai Lama and the Emperor of China*, 175; and Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 485.

27. Ehrhard, "The Biography of sMan-bsgom Chos-rje Kun-dga' dpal-ldan."

28. Li Ruohong, *A Tibetan Aristocratic Family in Eighteenth-Century Tibet*, 142–43.

29. *Gser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 328.2–3.

30. Ibid., 332.4–333.4.

31. Ehrhard, "The Biography of sMan-bsgom Chos-rje Kun-dga' dpal-ldan," 124–25.

32. *Gser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 327.1.

33. Ibid., 391.3, 432.5–6, 452.6–453.2, 468.2–3.

alone,[34] which could be a hint why the Zhamarpa was stylised as a black sheep and used as a scapegoat.

From his main seat of Kagyü Gönsar Monastery, Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso observed that Sikkim had been threatened by the Gorkhas several times. The Gorkhas had conquered parts of the Sikkimese kingdom to extend their territory and to forge an economic monopoly over Himalayan trade. As the Sikkimese had close relations with Tibet ever since the introduction of Buddhism by Tibetan masters in the seventeenth century, they asked the Tibetans for help. In 1775, representatives from Tibet, Nepal and Sikkim met at Walung (Wa lung) to discuss border settlements and, consequently, a treaty was signed. Soon afterwards, the Gorkhas invaded Ilam, which caused Sikkim to ask Tibet for mediation and, according to the treaty, Tibet demanded compensation, which however, the Gorkhas ignored.[35] These attacks are described in Sikkimese sources.

> Simha Pratap Shah, son of the Nepalese king Prithvi Narayan Shah, was enthroned as king on the golden throne between 1775 and 1779. Like a plan of evil strategy, an army of Gorkhas invaded Sikkim. During that time, the Tibetan army general (*mda' dpon*) Pétsel (Pad tshal) arrived together with a Tibetan army towards the boundary of Nepal and Tibet. At that time, the Gorkha invaders were defeated and destroyed by the Tibetan army.[36]

In 1784, the Sikkimese opened a trade route with Tibet via the Chumbi Valley, thus incurring the Gorkhas' displeasure, whose aim was to control Himalayan trade overall. Through this new trade route, the Tibetans were able to avoid Nepalese taxes.[37] The Gorkhas took this as an excuse to prepare an invasion of Tibet, as observed by the Barawa master Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso from his main seat. Should the Gorkhas invade Tibet via Sikkim and the Chumbi Valley, they would cross the regions affiliated with Kagyü Gönsar Monastery, located at a strategically

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34. Ibid., 357.5–358.1.

35. Ehrhard, "The Biography of sMan-bsgom Chos-rje Kun-dga' dpal-ldan," 118; Maharaja Thutob Namgyal, *The History of Sikkim*, 46–48; and Saul Mullard, "Repaying a 'Debt' with Land, Grain and Taxes: Yug Phyogs thub and His Service to Bhutan during the Sino-Nepalese War," *Bulletin of Tibetology* 45, no. 2–46, no. 1 (2009): 11–30.

36. *bal yul rgyal po pri tha wi nā rā yan sha'i sras senge pra tab sha* (Sinha Pratap Shah) *phyi lo* 1775–1779 *lor rgyal por gser khrim nga' gsol zhus / byas ngan gyi 'char gzhi ltar / gor kha'i dmag dpung zhig gis 'bras ljongs su btsan 'dzul byas kyang / de skabs bod nas mda' dpon pad tshal mchog bod kyi dmag dpung zhig dang lhan bal bod sa mtshams phyogs phebs pa dang dus mtshungs / gor kha'i btsan 'dzul bar nams bod dmag gis pham nyes chen po btang ste cham la phab par mdzad 'dug* (Mkhan po chos dbang, *Sbas yul 'bras mo ljongs kyi chos srid dang 'brel ba'i rgyal rabs lo rgyus bden don kun gsal me long*, 164).

37. Mullard, "The Brag dkar pa Family," 59–60; and Kumar Pradhan, *The Gorkha Conquests: The Process and Consequences of the Unification of Nepal, with Particular Reference to Eastern Nepal* (Calcutta: Oxford University Press, 1991), 130–31.

important point not far from Sharsingma (Shar gsing ma), a village better known as Yadong, where trade routes from Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan met.[38]

Both the Sikkimese and Tibetans feared the recurring threats and invasions of the Gorkhas.[39] This fear, along with the foregoing disputes with the Gorkhas, may have been an important factor in preparing for military recruitment (*dmag bskul*) in Tibet in 1787.[40] When the Gorkha army invaded Tibet in 1788, it was guided by attendants of the Tenth Zhamarpa, including Karma Chokjin (Karma Mchog sbyin), whose name was particularly emphasized among all others.[41] According to Rindzin Chöying Dorjé's own words: "At the dawn of 1788, an army was sent to attack Tibet by the 'enemy of Buddhist doctrine' (*bstan dgra*), the Gorkha king."[42]

In the *History of Mangyül Gungtang*, this attack is described as a sudden invasion. Seeing that the Tibetan side was not well prepared and the Gorkhas were stronger, a post rider was sent to Lhasa, presumably to ask for reinforcements.[43] In the meantime, the Gorkhas occupied and plundered the Tibetan border region of Kyirong. The above-mentioned Künga Penden, teacher of Rindzin Chöying Dorjé and doctor of the Tenth Zhamarpa, described the invasion as follows: ". . . the great army of the Gorkhas, like asuras in their fury, with the power of wrong prayers, got ready and proceeded to the realms of Tibet, the region of the north. They made many beings experience severe, inexhaustible suffering . . ."[44] According to Rindzin Chöying Dorjé, however, the soldiers plundered the place but his seat monastery, Drapu Chöling, was saved: "The soldiers arrived at the monastery [Drapu Chöling] but did not damage anything at all. [As they] discovered everything that was hidden on mountains such as Yudrak [G.yu brag], [they] carried away food and wealth."[45] The information that the monastery was not much damaged is also given in the above-mentioned short hagiography of Rindzin Chöying Dorjé, published by Khenpo Shedup Tenzin in 2013 in a biographical volume on famous Drukpa masters:

> [When I, Rindzin Chöying Dorjé,] was seventeen (according to Tibetan counting), in an earth monkey year (1788), [during] the time of battle between the Gorkhas and Tibetans:

38. *Ser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 205.1–206.5; and Erschbamer, "The Monastery bKa' brgyud dgon gsar in the Chumbi Valley."

39. Already in 1651, the political situation was not peaceful in Kyirong, a valley nestled on the border between Nepal and Tibet. Furthermore, the situation became increasingly critical until an army from Nepal invaded Tibet in 1661, which led to a small war between the two parties; see Franz-Karl Ehrhard, *Die Statue und der Tempel des Ārya Va-ti bzang-po* (Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 2004), 85; and Ehrhard, *Buddhism in Tibet and the Himalayas*, 139.

40. *Lo rgyus*, 244–45.

41. Ibid., 245.

42. *sa spre lo shar nas bstan dgra gor rgyal gyi dmag gi bod yul gangs can* [336] *chos kyi 'byung gnas la rgol ba* (*Ser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 335.6–336.1).

43. *Lo rgyus*, 245–46.

44. Ehrhard, "The Biography of sMan-bsgom Chos-rje Kun-dga' dpal-ldan," 125.

45. *dgon par dmag mi yong kyang gnod 'tshe gang yang ma byas g.yu brag sogs ri la sbas pa thams cad rnyed nas zas nor rnams khyer* (*Ser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 337.3–4).

> due to the power of blessings from the guardian deities, the monastery [Drapu Chöling] and the master [Rindzin Chöying Dorjé] were not harmed much.[46]

While many religious sites were damaged in Kyirong,[47] Rindzin Chöying Dorjé made sure to mention that his monastery was untouched by the "enemy of Buddhist doctrine" in other texts he wrote. For example, he also described these events in the hagiography of his great-uncle, the Barawa master Orgyen Ngawang Yéshé, which he had completed shortly after the Gorkha invasion of 1794.[48] Since his great-uncle had passed away in 1760, well before the invasions of the Gorkhas and the military conflicts that took place in his home region during 1788 and 1792, Rindzin Chöying Dorjé mentions the invasions—and particularly the fact that they did not inflict heavy damage on the monastery of Drapu Chöling—in the context of the powerful and lasting effect that the presence of his great-uncle had for the protection of the monastery. Over a quarter of a century after his death, the aura left by this revered religious figure lingered on: the presence of Orgyen Ngawang Yéshé was still perceived.[49]

In the meantime, Sikkim was once more threatened and invaded by the Gorkhas in 1788, the same year the Gorkhas invaded Tibet. The Buddhist king Tendzin Namgyel (Bstan 'dzin rnam rgyal, 1769–93) was a weak ruler who fled from the Gorkhas and, subsequently, stayed in Tibet until his death.[50] The above-mentioned Sikkimese book, *A Short History of Sikkim*, published by Kelzang (Skal bzang) in 1995, describes further Gorkha meddlings in Sikkim:

> In 1788, an army of the Gorkhas invaded again parts of the territory on the southern side of Sikkim by crossing Ilam (in Nepalese) on the boundary of Nepal and Sikkim. The Gorkha army controlled through the power of [their] troops all lower realms of Sikkim by three actions of violence.[51] After the invasion, which was of great ferocity from the army of the Gorkhas, the king Tendzin Namgyel [was urged] to leave the palace (i.e. Rapdentsé, Rab gdan rtse)—as it became an unbearable residence—and to hide wherever in the [Sikkimese] territory. The [question of] residence did not come to an end since some of his close ministers called for action and, accordingly, [they] were forced to urge support from the Tibetan government. As no mediation in the war between the Gorkhas and the Sikkimese took place, [the king] took refuge in Lhasa.[52]

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46. *bcu bdun sa spre lor gor bod dus zing skabs / lha srung gi byin mthus dgon pa dang rje nyid la gnod pa cher ma byung bar* (*Legs bshad nor bu'i gter mdzod*, 223).

47. Ehrhard, "The Biography of sMan-bsgom Chos-rje Kun-dga' dpal-ldan," 125, 130.

48. *Gser phreng/a*, vol. 3, 646.1–2.

49. Ibid., vol. 3, 617.3–619.6. For photographs of statues of important Barawa masters in Kyirong, see Fig. 2.

50. Tendzin Namgyel was the sixth Buddhist king (*chos rgyal*) of Sikkim, who ruled from 1780 to 1793; see Risley, *The Gazetteers of Sikhim*, 17–18; and Maharaja Thutob Namgyal, *The History of Sikkim*, 45–54.

51. Here, the three actions of violence are conquering (*bcom*), fighting (*rdung*) and plundering (*'phrog*).

52. *spyi lo* 1788 *lor slar yang gor dpung gis 'bras ljongs kyi lho rgyud sa khul khag tu btsan 'dzul mu mthud byas te / gor 'bras gnyis kyi sa mtshams i lam (bal bo'i skad) brgyud gor dmag gis bcom rdung 'phrog gsum gyis 'bras ljongs kyi sa smad yongs rdzogs dpung shed kyis dbang bsgyur byas pa red / gor dmag gi gdug rtsub che ba'i btsan 'dzul 'og rgyal po bstan 'dzin rnam rgyal pho brang nas bzhugs bzod*

Fig. 2: Namkha Dorjé (Nam mkha' rdo rje, 1486–1553), who brought the Barawa teachings to Kyirong (left); Orgyan Ngawang Yéshé (1700–1760), who is credited with the protection of Drapu Chöling Monastery during the invasions of the Gorkhas (middle); Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso (1755–1831), who observed the invasions of the Gorkhas from his main seat in Dromo (right); statues kept in the Barawa monastery of Papyuk (Spa phyug), Sikkim, 2014; photos by author.

These war developments led the Tibetan Cabinet Minister Yutok Tashi Döndrup (*bka' blon* G.yu thog Bkra shis don grub) to recruit soldiers as a form of taxation (*khral dmag*) in Ü-Tsang and, additionally, spiritual leaders (*bla dpon*) were asked for help and advice, although their reactions are not recorded. Soon afterwards, Qing forces arrived at Lhasa and proceeded to the battlefields to help the Tibetans fight back the Gorkha invaders.[53] Rindzin Chöying Dorjé gives the following description of these events in his autobiography:

> A huge army was sent from the Manchu from Yül Nyanam. In front of Shelkar (Shel dkar) a great time of disorder arose as the battle of Ü-Tsang was fought. After the Gorkhas

ma bde bar 'bras ljongs kyi sa khul gang sar gab yib byas te bzhugs pa ma zad / khong gi nang blon khag cig nas re skul zhus pa bzhin bod gzhung la rgyab rten mi bcol ka med byung ste / gor 'bras gnyis kyi dmag 'khrug 'dum 'grig ma byung bar lha sar nyen g.yol du bzhugs dgos byung 'dug (Skal bzang, *Sbas yul 'bras mo ljongs kyi lo rgyus mdor bsdus*, 21–2). According to Maharaja Thutob Namgyal, the king went to Tibet in 1790; see Maharaja Thutob Namgyal, *The History of Sikkim*, 49. During that time, Rapdentsé was the second Sikkimese capital after Yoksam (Yog bsam) but, as it lay close to the Nepalese border, it was considered an unsafe location and, therefore, the capital was shifted to Tumlang (Gtum langs) in the late eighteenth century.

53. *Lo rgyus*, 246–47.

> captured Kyirong, as well as the region of Dzongkha, [they] delivered great torture and oppression to all villages and monasteries.[54]

The arrival of the Qing forces marked a change in the war and, subsequently, peace negotiations started between the Gorkhas and the Tibetans. Rindzin Chöying Dorjé described in his autobiography that the Tibetan side was represented by the cabinet minister Doring Tendzin Penjor, who was accompanied by a representative from Tashilhunpo Monastery.[55] The two parties agreed that Tibet had to pay 300 *dotsé* (*rdo tshad*) to the Gorkhas annually, one third of the payment initially demanded.[56] In turn, the Gorkhas had to leave Kyirong.[57] When the time for the second annual payment arrived, the Tibetans tried to renegotiate the amount; in the end, they were anything but successful. Finally, Tibetan representatives were brought as hostages to Kathmandu.[58]

At the same time, the Manchu Amban Baotai (in Tibet from 26 September 1790 to 17 October 1791) wrote a letter to Sikkim in 1790–91, urging the Sikkimese to secure and to strengthen the border with Nepal, because he feared a Gorkha invasion of Tibet via Sikkim and the Chumbi Valley.[59] Because of the unresolved matter of payments, the Gorkhas once again invaded Tibet, via Kyirong, in 1791 and went as far as Tashilhunpo. As news of these developments arrived in Lhasa, Baotai informed the Qianlong Emperor, who then sent a huge army to fight back the invaders.[60] The Manchu army, headed by the two Manchu generals Fukang'an

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54. *dpung chen po yul gnya' nam nas thon ste las stod shel dkar kyi mdun du / dbus gtsang gi g.yul 'gyed pa'i bde gzar chen po byung ba dang / skyid grong / rdzong ga khul rnams kyang gorshas 'dzin bzung la rten yul dgon kun la sdug bsngal mnar sbyongs chen po gtong bar* (*Gser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 336.1–2).

55. Ibid., 339.6–340.1. In other sources, a representative from the monastery of Sakya (Sa skya) also accompanied Doring Tendzin Penjor (*Lo rgyus*, 248; Li Ruohong, *A Tibetan Aristocratic Family in Eighteenth-Century Tibet*, 144).

56. *Gser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 340.1–2; and Li Ruohong, *A Tibetan Aristocratic Family in Eighteenth-Century Tibet*, 145–47.

57. *Gser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 340.2; and Li Ruohong, *A Tibetan Aristocratic Family in Eighteenth-Century Tibet*, 151–55. For an account on the arrival of Doring Tendzin Penjor and his negotiations with the Gorkhas, see also *Lo rgyus*, 249–68. For further reading on the treaty, see Yuri Komatsubara, "A Study of the Treaty of the First Tibet-Gorkha War of 1789," in *Social Regulation: Case Studies from Tibetan History*, ed. Jeannine Bischoff and Saul Mullard (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 181–96.

58. Ehrhard, "The Biography of sMan-bsgom Chos-rje Kun-dga' dpal-ldan," 125–27; and Li Ruohong, *A Tibetan Aristocratic Family in Eighteenth-Century Tibet*, 151–55.

59. Mullard, "Sikkim and the Sino-Nepalese War," 29–37.

60. The number of soldiers engaged in the Gorkha wars is still under discussion and a subject to be researched. Primary sources state only that the Qianlong Emperor sent a huge army (*dmag gi dpung chen po*), without specifying the exact number. Therefore, this wording has been adopted (*Gser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 210.5, 357.1). However, estimates from other sources range from nine to seventy thousand soldiers that were involved in fighting the Gorkhas; see, for example, Charles Bell, *Tibet Past and Present* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2000 [1924]), 277; and Shakabpa, *One Hundred Thousand Moons*, 555.

(Fuk'anggan, d. 1796) and Hailancha (d. 1793), joined with other troops and together they arrived at the battlefields.[61]

The arrival of the Qing forces was also described by Rindzin Chöying Dorjé in the hagiography of Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso, wherein this episode was linked to a prophecy of the famous tantric master Padmasambhava. Legendary accounts claim he visited Tibet during the eighth century and became progressively more important from the second dissemination of Buddhism in the tenth century onwards, when a number of texts attributed to him were rediscovered.

> As stated in a prophecy of the Great Orgyen (Padmasambhava): "In a mouse year, a huge army will move from the East." In accordance with this [prophecy], a Manchu army [arrived] from China in the East [in 1792, a mouse year] and joined together everybody from Kham, Kongpo, Ngari, Gyarong, Mölgong as a huge army that was led by Gya Trung tang chenpo [The Great Chinese General Fu] and Hgya gung [The Duke Hai] who were sent on this mission by an order of the Qianlong Emperor.[62]

This account is described similarly in the autobiography of Rindzin Chöying Dorjé:

> Afterwards, in a bird year, huge [numbers of] military troops, from Ngari, Ü-Tsang, Kham, Kongpo, Soglong [i.e. Mongols], Gyarong headed by the Manchu generals He gung and Trung tang chenpo, who were appointed by an order of the Qianlong Emperor from the East, joined together and, in a great hurry, reached Kyirong.[63]

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61. In this context, the Qing forces consisted of Manchu, Chinese Green Standard and Mongol troops as well as troops from Gyarong (Rgya rong), Kham (Khams), Kongpo (Kong po), Ngari (Mnga' ris) and Ü-Tsang (*Gser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 210.3–5, 356.5–357.1; *Lo rgyus*, 278; Ehrhard, "The Biography of sMan-bsgom Chos-rje Kun-dga' dpal-ldan," 128).

62. *o rgyan chen po'i lung bstan du / byi ba'i lo la shar nas dmag chen g.yos / zhes gsung ba bzhin shar phyogs rgya nag 'jam dbyangs gong ma chen po'i bkas mngags pa'i rgya krung thang chen po / hya gung gnyis kyi mtshon pa'i rgya dmag dang / mol gong dang / rgya rong dang / dbus gtsang dang / mnga' ris dang / khams kong sogs thams cad dus gcig tu 'dus pa'i dmag gi dpung chen po* (*Gser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 210.3–5).

63. *de nas bya lo shar ba dang shar phyogs rgya nag gong ma chen po'i bkas bsngags pa'i dmag dpon skrung thang chen po dang / he gung gi gtsos rgya dmag dpon khag rgya tsam / rgya rong / sog long / khams kong / dbus gtsang / mnga' ris sogs thams cad skabs cig tu* [357] *'dus pa'i dmag gi dpung tshogs chen po yong kyi yod do zhes pa'i 'ur chen po dang bcas te skyid grong du slebs* (ibid., 356.5–357.1). In the account of Rindzin Chöying Dorjé, a bird year is mentioned for these occurrences, which would correspond to 1789, but that was obviously a spelling mistake and the bird year (*bya*) was mixed up with the correct mouse year (*byi*). As stated in other sources, the two Manchu generals were sent to Tibet by the Qianlong Emperor in 1792, i.e. a mouse year (ibid., 210.3; *Lo rgyus*, 277–78; Ehrhard, "The Biography of sMan-bsgom Chos-rje Kun-dga' dpal-ldan," 127–28; Li Ruohong, *A Tibetan Aristocratic Family in Eighteenth-Century Tibet*, 156). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the Tibetan spelling of the two Manchu generals Fukang'an (Fuk'anggan) and Hailancha vary slightly in each publication; their names are written Krung thang chen po (the Great General Fu) and Hya gung (the Duke Hai) in *Gser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 210.4; Skrung thang chen po and He gung in *Gser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 356.6; and Krung thang chen mo and Had gung in *Lo rgyus*, 278. The two generals are named Ho si khang thang and Hyagu in Ehrhard, "The Biography of sMan-bsgom Chos-rje Kun-dga' dpal-ldan," 128.

Rindzin Chöying Dorjé described these events similarly in the hagiography of his teacher and in his autobiography. Furthermore, he partially used the same wording in both texts but the descriptions in his autobiography are more detailed.[64] One reason for this could be the fact that the autobiography was compiled and edited by his niece, Jetsünma Nyima Chödrön, who probably used the hagiography of Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso, which was written by Rindzin Chöying Dorjé, as a source.

The autobiography of Rindzin Chöying Dorjé continues with a statement that the Gorkhas were defeated and a military camp of Tibetan and Qing forces was stationed in Kyirong. Rindzin Chöying Dorjé visited this camp for religious reasons, where he performed a longevity empowerment (*tshe dbang*), for which the leaders from Gyarong gave him donations.[65] One could speculate that the search for donors was one reason to visit the military camp shortly after the battles, and also to pray for the dead. He also met the Manchu Amban Helin (in Tibet from 22 March 1792 to 14 August 1794), who resided in that camp:

> Afterwards, [I, Rindzin Chöying Dorjé,] went through [the military camp] to meet the Manchu Amban (i.e. Helin) who [resided] amidst the huge Manchu military camp in Kyirong. [We] greeted in the Chinese manner (*rgya lugs*), spoke very pleasant words.[66]

The text goes on to describe the general conditions Rindzin Chöying Dorjé observed within the military camp. Overall, Rindzin Chöying Dorjé experienced in person the more violent and gruesome side of war, since he had the opportunity to see the battlefield soon after the combat had occurred. In his writing, he compared the battlefield to the frightening land of the *rākṣasa* in Lanka. These figures, who originate from Indian mythology, are demons said to drink blood and eat human flesh. He added that everybody in the camp, Buddhists and non-Buddhists, were frightened by "garlands of flesh and skin" that could be seen everywhere.[67] This probably refers to body parts and remains that could be seen strewn about, a consequence of the war and its violent actions. Both Rindzin Chöying Dorjé and the Tibetan Cabinet Minister Tendzin Penjor referred to this Indian myth and to the shocking conditions in Lanka.[68]

Further consequences of the war described in Rindzin Chöying Dorjé's autobiography included epidemics (*rims nad*), which struck the whole region. Subsequently, apart from the victims who had fallen to the war, many people and animals died and their decaying corpses lay in the streets, in the mountains and the valleys, which resulted in a rotten smell that was sensed everywhere; Rindzin Chöying

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64. For example, *Gser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 210.6, 356.4.

65. Ibid., 358.3.

66. *de nas skyid grong du rgya sog kyi dmag sgar chen po yod pa'i dbus su rgya am ban skrung thang chen po 'jal bar phyin dus rgya lugs kyi phyag phul bas shin tu mnyes pa'i bka' dang* (ibid., 358.1–2).

67. *sgar de'i phyi nang kun tu sha lpags gi 'phreng bas 'jigs shing skyi g.ya' ba srin yul lang ka su tri'i grong khyer lhag pa lta bu'i rgya dmag rnams* (ibid., 358.3–4). I greatly profited from comments by Amy Heller, who brought to my attention the fact that it is practically impossible to hang up garlands of flesh and skin.

68. Ehrhard, "The Biography of sMan-bsgom Chos-rje Kun-dga' dpal-ldan," 119–20.

Dorjé described this as a joyless experience:[69] "The survivors, stumbling on the corpses of the plague, had to walk supported by a walking stick."[70]

According to Rindzin Chöying Dorjé, people caught the smallpox infection (*'brum nad*).[71] Tibetans living close to the Nepal border thus had to handle the invasions of the fearsome Gorkhas—battles, lootings, devastation—as well as the outbreak of diseases. Rindzin Chöying Dorjé, worried about all these occurrences, composed a prayer devoted to the Three Precious Jewels.[72] As mentioned in other sources, people focused on the restoration and preservation of their religious heritage after the Qing forces had left Kyirong, since the war had reminded them of its very fragility.[73] Therefore, religious centres that had been destroyed were restored and literary works preserved. Additionally, as described by Rindzin Chöying Dorjé, people tried to purify themselves from the consequences of the war and, subsequently, many people, ordained ones and lay people, went on pilgrimage to sacred Buddhist sites in Nepal.[74]

In this way, Rindzin Chöying Dorjé illustrates the effects of war on the Buddhist community, such as the fear from Gorkha threats, the invasions and battles, the territories occupied first by the invading Gorkhas and then by the huge Qing army, the soldiers who plundered the region and finally the outbreak of epidemics. As shown above, people coped with the pain caused by the war through focusing on rebuilding their holy sites and going on pilgrimage, and thus cleansing everything. Rindzin Chöying Dorjé clearly followed the political occurrences and the warlike actions that took place near and around his main seat. In his autobiography, he not only provides his personal observances and his hopes and fears, but also supplemental information that he heard about these events.[75] The language he used leads to the conclusion that he was worried about all the suffering that the people had to bear. Furthermore, he had an antipathy towards the Gorkhas who were responsible for the conflicts and the resulting problems, and he noted that some bad people (*ngan*) defamed the Tenth Zhamarpa, with whom he had a good relationship. At the same time, these circumstances were used to portray his own monastery as a special place under special protection. About 500 soldiers reached his monastery but it was not harmed much, a circumstance he ascribed to the still perceived aura of his great-uncle.[76] Finally, by providing religious service for soldiers and their leaders in a military camp, he could collect donations. Since the whole region had

69. *Gser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 358.3–5.

70. *ma shi ba rnams kyang nad ngan gyi gdung nas khyar khyor mkhar ba la rten nas 'gro yis 'dug pas* (ibid., 358.5–6).

71. Ibid., 362.5.

72. Ibid., 359.1–362.4.

73. Ehrhard, "The Biography of sMan-bsgom Chos-rje Kun-dga' dpal-ldan," 130.

74. *Gser phreng/a*, vol. 4, 362.4–5.

75. He used the phrase "it was said" (*zhes*) for this supplemental information; for example, ibid., 356.1, 357.5.

76. Ibid., 362.4–5.

been plundered and destroyed—soldiers trampling through fields and carrying away whatever they found—donations must have been rare during that time.

Concluding Remarks

Traditionally, hagiographies are written to inspire the reader on his or her spiritual path and to give authority to a lineage's history by presenting spiritual accomplishments of a Buddhist master. Details of the wars, however, were included in the hagiographical accounts of the two Barawa masters, Rindzin Chöying Dorjé and Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso. Altogether, the descriptions of the Gorkha invasions, the arrival of Qing forces that joined the Tibetan army and the resulting war provide insight into the personal view of Buddhist masters on military affairs. In the eighteenth century, as foreseen by the tantric master Padmasambhava and as cited in the hagiography of the Barawa master Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso, Tibetan Buddhism was threatened by the Gorkhas, who arrived from the south. This resulted in a war that created disorder and suffering for the Tibetans, especially those living in or close to the border region in Kyirong. These events inspired the Barawa master Rindzin Chöying Dorjé to describe the invaders as demons, barbaric neighbours and enemies of Buddhist doctrine. Additionally, Rindzin Chöying Dorjé's autobiography provides further information, such as the reference to a smallpox epidemic that hit Kyirong and killed many people. From the perspective of Ngawang Chökyi Gyatso, the war brought changes to his main seat in Dromo. Since Sikkim's frontiers were moved, the monastery became a part of Tibetan territory.

Both Barawa masters were directly afflicted by the invasions of the Gorkhas and the resulting warlike actions, which in turn hindered them from fully devoting their attention to spiritual practice. They witnessed suffering, war and violence and, at the same time, they were attacked by forces regarded as enemies of the Buddhist doctrine. Yet they saw themselves in an ambivalent position: should military actions and violence be tolerated or even be supported, even though they bring about suffering? From a Buddhist viewpoint, violent actions were condemned but simultaneously condoned whenever the Buddhist doctrine was in danger of being eradicated by an enemy. To sum up, these Buddhist masters witnessed the war and, subsequently, reflected on these events from a personal and spiritual viewpoint in their hagiographies. Their descriptions give an insight into the way these events were perceived by religious figures who were well connected with some of the most influential political and spiritual individuals in South Central Tibet.