

Czaja/Hazod  
The Illuminating Mirror



# Contributions to Tibetan Studies

Edited by David P. Jackson and Franz-Karl Ehrhard

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DR. LUDWIG REICHERT VERLAG

# The Illuminating Mirror

Tibetan Studies in Honour of Per K. Sørensen  
on the Occasion of his 65<sup>th</sup> Birthday

Edited by  
Olaf Czaja and Guntram Hazod

WIESBADEN 2015  
DR. LUDWIG REICHERT VERLAG

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## Preface

On December 18, 2015 Per K. Sørensen is celebrating his 65th birthday. It is our great pleasure and honour to present a felicitation volume on the occasion of this event, bringing together contributions from numerous colleagues who in the past and the present were in close scholarly exchange with the honouree. The *Tabula Gratulatoria* supplements the number of colleagues who feel connected to this illuminating scholar and teacher. However, this list – we are certain – will continue to rise in the years to come, for the jubilarian's productivity and scientific outreach are unbroken. That's saying something about someone who is just as notorious for his energy, commitment and working speed, as at the same time for the high mastery of the Tibetology discipline in a rather unusual breadth.

His well-known enormous erudition in different genres of Tibetan literature (from medieval historiographical and religious texts to the many variants of oral literature, but also in philosophical literature and its Sanskrit basic texts) provides testimony of Sørensen's wide-ranging interests, something that is combined with his endeavour of following a rather holistic approach in his work. The inspirations emanating from Sørensen's workshop relate on the one hand to his teaching career as a professor of Central Asian Studies at the University of Leipzig (since 1995), on the other hand to the rich academic contacts that he maintains – the latter combined with a principal curiosity and openness for methodological additions to his own works, as it is expressed not least by his collaborations with representatives of anthropological, archaeological, art historical and other not merely text-oriented fields of Tibetan Studies.

But mostly it is he himself, who is contacted, either by colleagues who ask for assistance in the field of textual studies, where Sørensen, as we know, always proves a generous supporter, or from the part of academic institutions. Within the subject of Tibetan Studies there is probably hardly anyone who authored more expert assessments or *Gutachten* for research projects than Per Sørensen, by which means he not insignificantly also helped to shape the academic world of this discipline. His over 50 reviews (including book reviews) and numerous prefaces and introductory notes to book publications are impressive evidence of his demand awareness in this area.

"I am Danish", is an often heard saying by Per, with which he also likes to accentuate with a wink his for many people astonishing if not irritating manners that rather prefer bluntness and directness instead of diplomatic caution. But actually there are only few colleagues, who know more details about the person Per Sørensen, or about his origins and the career as a Tibetologist. How did one from the working class environment of Copenhagen come to this (at that time still) exotic subject of Tibetology? We thought, we will let him tell himself about that and about his other biographical stations, the specifics of his research interests as well as his general assessment of the discipline in regard to its possible future developments.

The respective interview was conducted at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (Institute for Advanced Study, Berlin, short Wiko) on the 6th of June in 2015, where Sørensen on several occasions stayed as a guest researcher in the framework of a Tibet Focus Group conducted by the

2014/15 Wiko Fellows Tsering Gyalpo, Guntram Hazod and Shen Weirong. In the case given, Per was in Berlin to attend a scientific presentation by Tsering Gyalpo at Wiko – the long-time Tibetan colleague, who tragically died a few weeks later. Tsering Gyalpo is also one of the contributors in this volume, whose paper in Tibetan we supplemented by some adjustments after his passing, such as an English abstract, some corrections and the captions for the photographs related to this contribution.

The Interview is followed by two appreciating essays (Anne Buchardi and Yonten Dargye) related to Per Sørensen's longstanding (Denmark supported) research project in Bhutan, and by the listing of the honouree's major publications. The main part of the book with 33 essays on a whole covers fairly wide-ranging historical and topical niches, simply in due line with Per's broad fields of interests. Yet, we refrained from a thematic division of this collective volume, and the essays simply follow the alphabetical order. We wish to thank the authors for their contributions and also for the good cooperation in connection with the editing procedure. Jan Seifert (Leipzig) thankfully took care of the image editing and the textual design. Likewise, our sincerely thanks go to Erland Kolding Nielsen, director of the Royal Library of Denmark, and the Austrian Academy of Sciences' Institute for Social Anthropology, Vienna, for the financial support in printing the present volume.

Finally, we hope that this volume will find its joyous acceptance by Per Sørensen in the form as it was intended, namely as the Festschrift for an exceptional leading representative of the Tibetan Studies community, and for a most inspiring and also generous colleague, and for a friend.

*Guntram Hazod*

Vienna, Institute for Social Anthropology, Austrian Academy of Sciences

*Olaf Czaja*

Leipzig, Institute of Indology and Central Asian Studies

# Tabula gratulatoria

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 ROBERTO VITALI  
 DORJI WANGCHUK  
 CAMERON WARNER  
 CARL YAMAMOTO



# The Voice of the Gods in Upper Tibet The Trance-induced Invocations and Songs of Praise of the Spirit-medium Phowo Srigyal<sup>1</sup>

*John Vincent Bellezza*

## I. Introduction

This paper is devoted to Phowo Srigyal (Pho bo srid rgyal), probably the most highly esteemed contemporary spirit-medium of Gnam ru (Dpal mgon County), in the eastern Changthang (Byang thang). This work presents a short biography of Phowo Srigyal and records the actual words spoken by him in trance. A kind, courteous and hospitable man, Phowo Srigyal was born in the Year of the Rabbit (1927). He has practiced as a spirit-medium since his youth in the early 1950s.

Phowo Srigyal readily acceded to being interviewed and to going into trance on three different occasions, fully cognisant of my intention to publish accounts of our meetings. I first met Phowo Srigyal in 2003 (October 31–November 2) and again in 2004 (May 20–22). That was a time when a number of research projects involving foreigners had been sanctioned by the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR) authorities. In that period, my fieldwork was sponsored by the Tibet Academy of Social Sciences (TASS) in Lhasa.<sup>2</sup>

My initial study of Phowo Srigyal included a biographical profile and a description of the structure of his trance ceremony.<sup>3</sup> The main focus of that paper was the fumigation ritual (*bsang*), one of the first parts of the proceedings, which is carried out to invoke and please the deities of the trance.

Phowo Srigyal's winter residence (*gzhi ma*) is on the west side of the Ja dkar gtsang po valley, not far from the township headquarters known as Man thang. He also spends time in a summer house that he shares with his son-in-law. It is located north of his winter residence, near the main bridge over the Ja dkar gtsang po. The interviews of 2003 were conducted at his winter house while those of 2004 were held at his summer residence.

During our time together Phowo Srigyal appeared remarkably fit for his age. I have not had contact with him since 2004, however, and do not know how he is still faring. Phowo Srigyal

---

1 The project to collect information about the spirit-mediums of Upper Tibet was enabled by a generous fellowship awarded by the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation (New York) and the Asian Cultural Council (New York), in 2003 and 2004. These esteemed organisations made monies available for the purchase of professional quality audio recording equipment, which was essential in the difficult conditions of Upper Tibet. The Rubin Foundation and the Asian Cultural Council subsequently supported the translation of the materials collected and more recently the writing of this paper.

2 The expeditions of 2003 (High Tibet Antiquities Expedition) and 2004 (High Tibet Welfare Expedition) were conducted as part of a joint agreement between the Tibetan Academy of Social Sciences and the University of Virginia.

3 See Bellezza 2011a; also see Bellezza 2009. For other studies of Upper Tibetan spirit-mediums, see Bellezza 1997; 2005; 2012; 2014a; Berglie 1976, 1978, 1980.

is an alert and intelligent man and along with his cooperative nature this made collecting information from him a pleasant and straightforward process. Phowo Srigyal married when he was around 29 years old; his wife is six years his junior. The couple have three girls and one boy, none of which practice spirit-mediumship. Phowo Srigyal is also a herder (*'brog pa*) and spends much time tending livestock.

Phowo Srigyal's father's clan is called Sba pha and his mother's clan is Rdong po. He worships a paternal clan god (*rus lha*) named Khams btsan, a *btsan* (class of aggressive red-colored spirits) that he believes originated in Khams. Reportedly, both his maternal and paternal lines have been in the area for numerous generations, but his clan god seems to indicate migration from the east of at least part of his family.

In the 1990s and 2000s, the local authorities tolerated Phowo Srigyal's mediumistic activities, as he is reputed to have helped many people in his home area. Phowo Srigyal reports going into trance dozens of times a year. Patients often come in vehicles in groups of two to four. There is no set fee schedule for his services and Phowo Srigyal treats the indigent free of charge. Those who can pay offer money or livestock.

## 2. Initiation as a spirit-medium

Phowo Srigyal's paternal uncle, Dpa' bo dbang 'dus, was a medium for Rta sgo lha btsan, a famous mountain god of the central Changthang. Through his paternal lineage, Rta sgo lha btsan is Phowo Srigyal's household protective god (*phugs lha*). Dpa' bo dbang 'dus died when Phowo Srigyal was in his early teens. It was not until reaching his early 20s that Phowo Srigyal first became possessed by spirits. As often happens to people so afflicted in Tibet, this caused psychological distress, heart pains and general body discomfort. Phowo Srigyal sought help from Gnam ru's most powerful spirit-medium of the time, Dpon skya mgon po dbang rgyal of Ring pa, a location less than a day away on horseback.<sup>4</sup> Dpon skya mgon po dbang rgyal cautioned him not to attempt to practice as a spirit-medium (*lhapa; lha pa / dpa' bo*) until all prerequisite conditions had been met. Learning the correct techniques for becoming a receptacle of the deities was imperative, lest harm come to Phowo Srigyal.

For several years, Dpon skya mgon po dbang rgyal helped Phowo Srigyal, and he carried out the 'opening the door of the subtle channels' (*rtsa sgo phye ba*) for him. This ritual procedure is designed to purify the subtle energy channels of the body and prepare them for entry of the consciousness of bona fide deities. It entails a battery of ablutions and bodily consecration. As part of opening the door of the subtle channels, the ring fingers of Phowo Srigyal were bound with cords to prevent the intrusion of evil spirits, which it is believed could cause havoc. Initially, the focus was on the ring finger of the left hand in order to regulate access to the subtle channels. Dpon skya mgon po dbang rgyal and Phowo Srigyal customarily went into trance together on the 1st, 8th and 15th of each lunar month. The young *lhapa* was made to describe the many visions that appeared in ritual mirrors of polished metal. Whilst in trance, the two men would offer libations (*gser skyems*) and incense (*bsangs*) to the deities.

4 For information on Dpon skya mgon po dbang rgyal and his son Dpon skya lha dbang, see Bellezza 2005: 110–141. As might be expected, the tradition of spirit-mediumship of the Dpon skya *lhapa* and Phowo Srigyal are similar.



The period of apprenticeship with Dpon skya mgon po dbang rgyal served to acquaint Phowo Srigyal with the deities and strengthen the concord between them, making the gods and goddesses reliable partners in service to the community. Dpon skya mgon po dbang rgyal cautioned Phowo Srigyal that a *lhapa* was to practice solely for the benefit of sentient beings. The great *lhapa* of Ring pa also explained to him the various healing techniques administered during the trance ceremony (*lha bzugs*).

Dpon skya mgon po dbang rgyal empowered Phowo Srigyal by allowing him to use his *rigs lnga* headdress and other ritual equipment. The senior *lhapa* also gave him many ceremonial implements. Unfortunately, these were confiscated by the authorities during the Chinese Cultural Revolution. Phowo Srigyal's initiation as a *lhapa* was completed at twenty-five years of age. At that time, the high lama Sa skya gong ma was visiting the region. His Eminence performed ablutions and a consecration for Phowo Srigyal, consummate ritual acts in his tutelage as a spirit-medium. Nevertheless, before he could begin practicing independently, Phowo Srigyal was directed to circumambulate Gnam mtsho, the largest lake in the Changthang. During this pilgrimage of several hundred miles, Phowo Srigyal visited sacred sites, made prostrations and touched his head to holy objects, etc.

### 3. The deities of the trance ceremony

All spirit-mediums of Upper Tibet depend on higher Buddhist deities to sanction and supervise the trance ceremony. The ordinary form of the celebrated 8th century CE Vajrayāna saint, Padma 'byung gnas (O rgyan rin po che), acts as Phowo Srigyal's 'back support' (*rgyab rten*), his chief protector and patron. The special patron of the trance proceedings is the fierce form of Padma 'byung gnas, Gu ru drag po. Phowo Srigyal reports that the pentad of Buddhas known as Rgyal ba rigs lnga prevent obstacles and disturbances from all directions, which could adversely affect the possession ceremony. The sky-treading goddesses of Vajrayāna Buddhism, the *mkha' 'gro*, act as benefactresses of his trance.

The three main deities that actually take possession of Phowo Srigyal are well known mountain gods of the eastern Changthang: Thang lha mi dkar rta dkar (God of the Plain White Man White Horse), Rkyang khra (Variegated Wild Ass) and Btsan rgod nam ra.<sup>5</sup> In addition to requisitioning the body of the *lhapa*, these figures oversee and regulate the trance ceremony. They function to dispatch allied spirits and discharge a protective role, helping to keep Phowo Srigyal safe and sound during the proceedings.

Thang lha mi dkar rta dkar hails from the highest peak of the Gnyan chen thang lha range. Phowo Srigyal characterises this god as peaceful (*zhi ba*), white in color and clad in yellow armor and helmet. Thang lha mi dkar rta dkar is said to wear white clothes because he treats the ailments of both people and livestock without distinction. According to Phowo Srigyal, this god holds a spear with a white ensign (*mdung dar*) in his right hand and a bell (*dril bu*) in the left hand. In addition to denoting the main figure, Thang lha mi dkar rta dkar refers to this god's circle of white spirits, which are also mounted on white horses. Phowo Srigyal affirms that Thang lha's consort, Lake Gnam mtsho, has a function in the trance ceremony but he is not clear about the specifics. Phowo Srigyal and his wife conceive of Thang lha and Gnam mtsho in the traditional fashion as the archetypal father and mother of the herding community (*'brog pa'i sde*).

5 For detailed lore about these three gods derived from both the oral and literary traditions of the region, see Bellezza 1997; 2005.

The god Rkyang khra resides on a hilltop in the middle of a vast plain in Gnam ru. Phowo Srigyal notes that he has both peaceful (*zhi ba*) and wrathful (*drag po*) forms. In his white or peaceful aspect he assumes the appearance of a *lama*. In his wrathful form he is a *btsan* spirit brandishing a spear with a red flag. Phowo Srigyal says that Btsan rgod nam ra is also a wrathful red-colored deity, holding a spear with a red flag in his right hand and a ritual dagger (*phur pa*) made of an iron-rich alloy (*khro*) in his left. This god inhabits a lofty black mountain in Bar tha. The descriptions of the three main gods of the trance provided by Phowo Srigyal are in line with iconographic lore found in Tibetan invocatory (*gsol kha*) and propitiatory (*bskang ba*) ritual literature.

In addition to the major possessing deities, spirit-mediums of Upper Tibet commonly rely on a pantheon of lesser spirits. These diverse remedial spirits come in both anthropomorphic and zoomorphic form. They are entrusted by the presiding deities of the trance with conducting various healing rites. Phowo Srigyal reports that his possessing deities, Rkyang khra and Btsan rgod nam ra, have three main remedial spirits. They are Ri spyang sngon khra (Blue Striped Mountain Wolf), Rgya stag khra bo (a male tiger) and Bya khyung (Horned Eagle Bird). Bya khyung is allegedly effective in removing hard to access disease-causing contamination. This ornithic spirit is also said to cure head diseases and mental disorders. Rgya stag khra bo cures diseases of the body cavity, while Ri spyang sngon khra treats blood diseases and some internal conditions.

The remedial spirits of Phowo Srigyal often treat diseases by sucking out perceived impurities from a patient's body. These defilements are generally known as *grib*. According to Phowo Srigyal, three widely occurring types of *grib* are 'defilement of the planets' (*gza' grib*), said to cause mental and mental conditions; 'defilement caused by very serious transgressions' (*dme grib*) implicated in mental and physical health disorders of various kinds; and 'blood defilement' (*khrag grib*), the cause of heart and circulatory diseases. This method of healing is known as 'cleansing through sucking' (*'jibs sbyangs*), and it is widely used by other spirit-mediums in Tibet and adjoining Himalayan regions. When performing cleansing through sucking, Phowo Srigyal employs a white offering scarf (*kha btags*), one end of which is placed in his mouth and the other end on the contamination-laden part of the patient's body.

Phowo Srigyal avers that the three or four Mi dkar rta dkar gods of Thang lha who possess him do not perform cleansing through sucking. They are rather peaceful spirits. Among this group is the 'god of sheep' (*lug lha*), whose main function is the protection and propagation of sheep. The god of sheep, as a paragon of prosperity and good fortune, is also instrumental in aiding human beings. As compensation for their assistance during the trance ceremony, the Mi dkar rta dkar gods are figuratively or literally presented with white sheep. Phowo Srigyal maintains that Thang lha's retinue of white spirits is crucial in propitiating the personal deities of patients, for it also belongs to these same categories of numinous beings. These objects of divine supplication are the protector of males (*pho lha*), the clan god (*rus lha*) who guards the life-force (*srog*), and the warrior protector of an individual's health and interests (*dgra lha*). Other members of the Thang lha mi dkar rta dkar group are the gods of wealth (*nor lha*) who appear in the guise of white yaks. The personal deities function much like the god of sheep.

Phowo Srigyal observes that the local territorial deity (*yul lha*), Btsan rgod gtor gtsug, plays no part in the trance ceremony. Nor do his two household protectors (*phugs lha*). The popular class of female water spirits called *klu mo* do however have a curative role, particularly for livestock. Phowo Srigyal states that the female water spirits work under the supervision of the Buddhist liberators Rje btsun Sgrol ma dkar mo and Rje btsun Sgrol ma sngon mo.

#### 4. The ritual objects and costume of the trance ceremony

As with other spirit-mediums of Upper Tibet, the two main ritual instruments of Phowo Srigyal are the drum (*rnga*) and flat bell (*gshang*). The drum he currently uses was given to him by a *lama* named Bsod pa, who came from Mkhar chung (sp?) in Khams. The drum Phowo Srigyal performed with before the Chinese Cultural Revolution had a drum-skin of a blue sheep on one side and the skin of goat on the other side, which he says imparted a particularly pleasing sound. His flat bell is also a post-Chinese Cultural Revolution acquisition and has an elaborate brocade streamer (*dar 'phan*) with a copper 'endless knot' (*dpal gyi be'u*) sewn onto it. The flat bell was bequeathed to him by the family of a spirit-medium named Lha pa dbang phyug. This *lhapa* from Ring pa also channeled Rkyang khra. Phowo Srigyal states that he died circa 2000 at around eighty-two years of age.

Another key ritual implement is the hourglass-shaped hand-drum with two heads (*da ma ru*). The one Phowo Srigyal plays is of recent manufacture and it has an elaborate brocade tail. He stresses that the drum, flat bell and *da ma ru* are essential for the proper execution of the trance ceremony.

As part of the trance ceremony Phowo Srigyal wears the peaked red brocade hat typical of spirit-mediums, which is known as the 'hat of the *btsan*' (*btsan zhwa*). On top of it is a plume consisting of a single peacock (*rma bya*) feather and the downy white feathers of the lammergeyer (*thang dkar*). Phowo Srigyal believes that lammergeyer feathers are a *rlung rta* (a good luck force borne on a celestial horse) attracting device and cleanse any contamination (*grib*) with which he may be infected. The headdress of five diadems he places over the hat of the *btsan* spirits is called a *rigs lnga*. His *rigs lnga* is an antique presented to him by the family of the late Lha pa dbang phyug. It has an eye painted on each of the two fan-like extensions known as 'wings' (*gshog pa*). These eyes are thought to guard against contamination caused by the planetary spirits (*gza*). The wings are made of cotton and are painted with colorful stripes, which Phowo Srigyal calls 'sky rainbow' (*nam mkha' 'ja' mtshon*). The cotton covering of the wings is supported by a wooden frame and slivers of bamboo. As part of his standard ritual costume, Phowo Srigyal wears a red brocade mantle (*stod khebs*) over his upper torso.

During the trance ceremony, Phowo Srigyal sometimes wields an old ritual dagger with a black streamer (*phur dar*) as an exorcist instrument. The symbol of Vajrayāna Buddhism par excellence, the ritual thunderbolt (*rdo rje*) is envisaged as a healing instrument that can cut through the toughest obstacles in a patient's life. Another important piece of ritual equipment is the draped arrow (*mda' dar*). According to Phowo Srigyal, the arrow draped in rainbow-colored and white cloths functions to remove diseases. It also acts as a long-life summoning (*tshe 'gugs*) and soul summoning (*bla 'gugs*) instrument. In the long-life and soul summoning rituals, the draped arrow is used to propitiate a patient's clan god, household protector and warrior spirit companions. During these rituals Phowo Srigyal repeatedly waves the arrow around the patient. Save for the drum, Phowo Srigyal's ritual gear is stored in pair of locally woven saddle bags.

A key ritual instrument for facilitating the possession state is the metal mirror (*me long*). Usually made of various copper alloys, it is believed to store and direct the consciousness of the deities that participate in the trance ceremony. Before the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Phowo Srigyal used three mirrors to effect the trance state, one for the deities of each level of the three-tiered universe (*srid pa'i gsum*): 1) heavens, 2) earth's surface, 3) the waters and below the earth. Now he only has two ritual mirrors. The mirror called 'outer world' (*phyi gling*) is for Thang lha and his circle of spirits and other important gods (*lha*), most of which reside in the upper or celestial

realm. His other mirror is a receptacle for the deities of the 'middle world' (*bar gling*) and 'inner world' (*nang gling*). The middle world mirror captures and reflects the consciousness of the divine inhabitants of the terrestrial dimension. These include red-colored gods such as Rkyang khra and Btsan rgod nam ra and their retinues. The inner world mirror embodies the consciousness of the sky-treading *mkha' gro* goddesses and the female water spirits (*klu mo*).

As do other spirit-mediums of Upper Tibet, Phowo Srigyal believes that at the moment of possession, the consciousness of the presiding deity strikes the ritual mirror before being relayed inside his body via the head and upper torso. During possession the lead deity resides in the central subtle energy channel (*dbu ma*) near his heart. The consciousness of the deity is simply called light rays (*'od zer*) by Phowo Srigyal. He envisions this light or consciousness as being rainbow-colored. Phowo Srigyal is uncertain where his own consciousness (*rnam shes*) goes for the duration of the possession state. Some Upper Tibetan spirit-mediums say it is stored in the ritual mirror for safekeeping, while others claim that it is conveyed to the heavenly realm of the gods. There is a universal belief among *lhapa* that the personal consciousness and a divine consciousness cannot inhabit the same individual simultaneously. Like a full vessel in which more liquid is poured, one displaces the other.

## 5. The remedial procedures of the trance ceremony

As noted, Phowo Srigyal holds that the healing of humans is effected through removal of contamination (*grib*) by the cleansing through sucking method. He also says that disorders are ameliorated through the propitiation of a patient's *phugs lha*, *pho lha* and *dgra lha*, using incense and water. In the case of livestock diseases, Phowo Srigyal resorts to fumigation with aromatic herbs and the sprinkling of barleycorn on animals.

Like other spirit-mediums of highland Tibet, Phowo Srigyal uses a variety of braided cords (*srung mdud*) for a wide range of apotropaic and curative purposes. While under the possession of the deities these cords are knotted and then blown and spat upon in order to empower them. It is believed that these actions transfer the blessings (*shyin brlabs*) of the possessing deity to the recipient of the knotted cord. Phowo Srigyal affirms that cords braided from white sheep's wool are useful in many diseases and for preventing obstacles (*bar chad*) and obstructions (*gegs*) in a patient's life. Knotted cords made of white and black sheep wool braided together are effective against arthritis (*grum bu*) and other types of bodily pains. Knotted cords of black sheep's wool prevent diseases of the planetary gods (primarily implicated in various mental and neurological conditions). Phowo Srigyal adds that knotted cords braided from black and/or white yak hair accomplish the same general purpose as the woolen ones. Cords made from hare's hair are used to prevent livestock epidemics. Knotted cords of brown bear hair are said to alleviate life threatening diseases in humans when other medical means have failed. Phowo Srigyal keeps a small supply of brown bear hair for such purposes.

Phowo Srigyal explains that downy feathers from the breast of an owl are beneficial in virtually all diseases, but they are especially effective in maladies caused by the class of demons called *'dre*. They are empowered during the trance by spitting and blowing upon them. The owl feathers are then waved around the patient. Small white feathers from the lammergeyer are thought to augment a patient's good luck energy (*rlung rta*) and abilities (*dbang thang*). Feather charms are empowered by blowing on them whilst under the influence of the deities.

Phowo Srigyal also dispels demons by throwing blessed barleycorn (*phyag nas*) or black sand heated in a cauldron (*slang nga*) on a patient. These things are spat upon to make them especially effective weapons against harmful forces. The action of blowing and spitting conveys the blessings and magical power of the deity. Phowo Srigyal states that hot black sand (*bye nag*) is especially efficacious in warding off diseases known as ‘dirty earth’ (*sa btsog*). It is believed that livestock contract this disease through the soil and pass it onto humans, particularly when animals are butchered. As a preventative measure black sand can be cast over an animal before it is slaughtered.

To halt a series of child deaths in a family thought to be caused by demon killers of children (*chung sri*) and killers of the charnel grounds (*dur sri*), Phowo Srigyal conducts the ‘cutting of the homicidal demons’ (*sri bcad*) ritual. The afflicted mother must prepare a cord made from nine black and nine white strands of yarn braided together. In the middle of this cord a single red string known as the ‘life-force thread’ (*srog skud*) is placed. This collection of cords is wrapped in black cloth and bound with a white offering scarf. During the trance ceremony, the afflicted woman holds one end of this ritual device and Phowo Srigyal the other end. He then ‘cuts’ through the middle of it with a lammergeyer feather. Subsequently, the ritual packet is opened. If all the black and white cords have been cut this is a positive sign, indicating that the homicidal demons have been defeated. In the unlikely event that the red string has been severed this is a very bad omen, requiring elaborate ritual and religious intervention.

## 6. An introduction to the trance ceremony

The first trance ceremony of Phowo Srigyal I observed was presided over by the mountain god Btsan rgod nam ra (November 1, 2003). The second ceremony was superintended by Thang sras mchor po, a son of Gnyan chen thang lha (May 20, 2004). The focus in this paper is on the third possession ceremony (May 21, 2004), the only one of the three to be fully recorded with audio equipment.<sup>6</sup>

The trance ceremony of May 21, 2004, can be divided into seven major parts:

1. Preliminary activities of setting up ritual equipment and donning ceremonial dress
2. Initial invocations (*gsol 'debs*) and fumigation ritual (*bsang*)
3. Proclamation of the lineages of deities (*lha rabs*) and entrusting activities to them (*'phrin bcol*) purportedly uttered by the presiding god of the trance
4. Oracular functions (*lung bstan*) of the presiding god of the trance
5. Summoning of good fortune (*g.yang 'gugs*) by the deities of the trance
6. Return of the deities to their abodes (*gshegs bskyod*)
7. Concluding activities of thanksgiving prayers and the stowing away of ritual gear

This paper presents the *lha rabs* and *'phrin bcol* of Phowo Srigyal. These two liturgical sequences made up about half of the 40-minute trance ceremony (excluding preliminary and concluding activities). The proceedings of the May 21st possession ceremony began at 8:55 AM. Its objective was to insure that the three-month long High Tibet Welfare Expedition (HTWE), which was

<sup>6</sup> The painstaking work of making transcriptions and translations of the materials collected was done in collaboration with G.yung drung bstan 'dzin of Steng chen.

still in its early stages at that time, would be successful. Although I suggested that someone else benefit from the trance proceedings, it was convened on my behalf. Traditionally, a request for such services is made by the interested party and is something not taken lightly.

The special altar for the trance ceremony was already set up from the transactions the night before. After dressing for the occasion, Phowo Srigyal began his pre-trance invocations and incense offerings (*bsang*). The *bsang* ritual was preceded by Buddhist refuge prayers (*skyabs 'gro*), aspirational prayers (*smon lam*) and other initial supplications (*gsol 'debs*). Along with the *bsang*, this part of the ceremony lasted a little over nine minutes.<sup>7</sup> The *bsang* is not merely an offering of fragrant substances but a method of purifying 'worldly' deities sullied through human activities. The intent of the *bsang* ritual is to attract the attention of a broad range of divinities, in order that they might aid the spirit-medium in his work. The deities do this either through direct participation in the trance ceremony or as observers of the proceedings. Those called upon include Buddhist tutelary gods (*yi dam*), Buddhist protectors (*chos skyong*), female sky-goers (*mkha' 'gro ma*), various mountain gods and lake goddesses, warrior gods (*dgra lha*), and a variety of elemental and personal spirits.<sup>8</sup>

The speech translated in this paper begins at the moment of deity possession, an event marked by Phowo Srigyal ejaculating the word *phaṭ!* *Phaṭ* is frequently used in Tibetan mantras of a decidedly more wrathful character. It conveys a sense of completion or finality. For Phowo Srigyal and other Upper Tibetan spirit-mediums, *phaṭ* heralds a clean break with their ordinary consciousness. As tradition would have it, at this point in time, Phowo Srigyal's body no longer contains his psyche or personality; it has become a receptacle for a divine consciousness working through his body, voice and senses.

Phowo Srigyal communicates mostly in the local pastoral dialect of western Gnam ru, which exhibits linguistic features of both the *hor skad* and *stod skad* dialects. Phowo Srigyal's ceremonial elocution is embellished with poetic verses, colorful allusions and religious imagery, adding to the charm and solemnity of the local dialect. The various recitations made allegedly under the influence of the deities are characterised by much vigor and spontaneity. The majority of Phowo Srigyal's trance speech is derived from ancient prosodic and ritual traditions, and it exhibits many old-fashioned grammatical and lexical traits.

One ancient feature of Phowo Srigyal's trance utterances is the prolific use of three syllables at the end of a line of verse to vividly convey the sound, movement or appearance of the object or personality spoken about. The use of trisyllabic indicators is already present in the Dunhuang manuscripts. The speech of Phowo Srigyal is also distinguished by quaint expressions. For example, men are denoted *A pho* (sometimes rendered as *A bo* in the local dialect) or *A pho skyes pa*, an honorific but picturesque term.

According to the G.yung drung Bon religion, spirit-mediumship is included among the four traditions of divination and oracular pronouncement situated in the first vehicle of teachings

7 As with Phowo Srigyal's liturgies in general, his *bsang* is characterised by a highly diverse selection of divinities. See Bellezza 2011a.

8 The *bsang* liturgy of May 21, 2004, was composed of 100 lines, in addition to 14 or 15 hard-to-understand lines, which were sung as the consciousness of Phowo Srigyal was supposedly being replaced by that of the possessing deity. Most of these supplementary lines end with the verb *mkhyen*, calling upon various deities to lend their attention and protection to the spirit-medium. Among those invoked are the god of males (*pho lha*), root lama (*rtsa ba'i bla ma*), highest limpid gods (*gsang lha gong ma*), god of the wind (*rlung lha*), Gu ru drag po, and caretakers or guides (*kha 'dzin*). Some of the lines include the lyrical expression *la ya*, which is without lexical value. It conveys a happy and reverent sense and is also found in Tibetan folksongs of the Changthang.



called *Phya gshen*.<sup>9</sup> The *Phya gshen* system is based primarily on two classes of deities, the *lha* and *dgra lha* / *dgra bla* (called *sgra bla* in G.yung drung Bon). Indeed, it is the *lha* and *dgra lha* that monopolise Phowo Srigyal's trance-induced liturgies.<sup>10</sup> *Dgra lha* are thought to accompany each male and to confer protection and success in practical endeavors (especially martial ones). Phowo Srigyal's utterances share much in common with G.yung drung Bon texts dedicated to the *sgra bla*. Some of this literature for the *sgra bla* is thought to date to early times. That contemporary *lhapa* like Phowo Srigyal rely on *dgra lha* for client healing, protection and augury seems to indicate that the historical origins attributed to spirit-mediumship in G.yung drung Bon are not without merit. It appears that the speech of the spirit-mediums and similar content in G.yung drung Bon texts concerning the *dgra lha* stem from archaic traditions modified to suit the practical demands of a Buddhist dominated religious environment. Despite Buddhist inroads, my study of Old Tibetan grammar and vocabulary suggests that trance-induced invocations for the *dgra lha* retain much of their original form.

Many of Phowo Srigyal's lines begin with idiosyncratic interjections that furnish little additional semantic value. Rather they enhance the import of his speech by affirming what is being said and by creating rhetorical pauses. The three interjections that Phowo Srigyal regularly pronounces are *nga*, *dma'* and *ya'*. They are often vocalised in such a way that they become almost indistinguishable from one another. These roughly homophonous words belong to the cant of many Upper Tibetan spirit-mediums, a peculiar feature of their speech. They also appear in verses from the Tibetan epic, *Gling Ge sar*, sung by bards of the Changthang. *Nga*, *dma'* or *ya'* can be translated something to the effect of 'ha!', 'oh, yes!', 'yes, indeed!', or 'aye, aye!'.

The high status of Rkyang khra is clearly signaled in the language of this formidable figure. It is full of the expression *A kho re*, which is used to call someone's attention. *A kho re* is a common means of solicitation equivalent to the English 'hey you!', and rendered in my translation as 'Listen!'. This familiar form is somewhat more polite than simply *kho re*, both of which occur in the vernacular of Khams and in Phowo Srigyal's speech. This expression is appropriate for a deity when speaking to mere mortal men.

## 7. The *lha rabs* of the trance ceremony

The articulation of the origins, names and appearances of the deities (*lha rabs*) occurs right after the fumigation ritual was completed and designates the beginning of the possession state. It is characterised by a variable lyrical structure. In the *lha rabs* the god speaking through Phowo Srigyal announces his presence, followed by the proclamation of his divine lineage and that of his circle of helping spirits. It is believed that the presiding god of the trance brings various as-

9 For a discussion of the *Phya gshen* ritual system see, Bellezza 2005: 344–354; Snellgrove 1967: 22–41.

10 The *dgra lha* are indigenous warrior spirits that have become amalgamated in varying degrees to Tibetan Buddhism. In zoomorphic form (tiger, lion, dragon and horned eagle), they occupy the four directions of the *rlung rta* / *klung rta* or so-called prayer flag. On *dgra bla* in the Dunhuang manuscripts, see Stein 2010 (Antiqua V): 267, 268; Bellezza 2005: 349. The *dgra bla* are noted in the Dunhuang divination manuscripts Pt. 1043, 1047, 1051, and ITJ 738. See also Bellezza 2014b: 171f. On the *dgra lha* more generally, consult Waddell 1993 [1895]: 375; de Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1993 [1956]; Stein 1972: 222f.; Karmay 1998. For *sgra bla* in G.yung drung Bon ritual tradition, see Snellgrove 1967; Gibson 1985; Norbu 1995; Clemente 1994; Bellezza 2005; 2008. On the relationship between the bards and *sgra lha*, see Stein 1959. For the cult of *dgra lha* in the liturgies of the spirit-mediums of Upper Tibet, see Bellezza 2005; 2011a: 6, 12.

sistant spirits along with him, which are dispatched to help achieve the therapeutic and oracular aims of the ceremony.

Under possession Phowo Srigyal sings the lines of the *lha rabs* quickly and forcefully. It is in this part of the trance ceremony that the presiding divinity announces his identity. In the transactions of May 21, 2004, the conducting god was the *btsan* Rkyang khra, a son of the great mountain god Thang lha. As chief of many types of lesser spirits, Rkyang khra is an ideal supervisor of supernatural subordinates and organiser of trance affairs. He directs the circle of helping spirits to carry out specific sanctifying, remedial, apotropaic and oracular functions on behalf of Phowo Srigyal's clients. Like a great military commander, Rkyang khra fields an army against an opposing force of demonic threats and obstacles to human health and happiness.

In the *lha rabs*, Rkyang khra directly addresses those in attendance, but he does not immediately reveal his identity. Instead, he describes himself and place of residence in cryptic language. The god challenges observers to tease out his identity by furnishing them with a long list of clues. This manner of speaking is closely aligned to the riddle format of yore known as *lde'u*.<sup>11</sup> Like the *lde'u*, the god Rkyang khra relies on figurative and symbolic language to convey his true identity. The first fully comprehensible line exhorts those in attendance to pay close attention to the words of the possessing god. Initially, the god calls himself by the epithet 'Handsome Body' (Gzugs mchor po), but this does not divulge much, because many different gods could be described in a like manner. His place of residence is then described, a magical tent in the midst of plains and mountains, a location in Gnam ru. Rkyang khra does not live there alone, for he informs his audience that he oversees a vast divine army of *lha*. Like humans, this god has warrior spirits (*dgra lha*) that serve him. Finally, after twenty-seven lines of speech Rkyang khra offers his name, dispelling any doubt as to his true identity.

Rkyang khra declares that he is one fathom (*'doms*) in height, the size of an ordinary man. Nevertheless, as befits a divine being, his reach is much greater than that. In acknowledgment of his role in the Buddhist pantheon, Rkyang khra states that he is called from the doorway of a monastery:

1. {###}<sup>12</sup>
2. {###}
3. Ha! That good man encircled by the male{Ge khong}:<sup>13</sup>
4. Listen! listen carefully to me with the ears on the top of your head!
5. Ha! listen! {#} the body of myself {#},
6. Ha! if you do not recognise myself, the *btsan*, like this,
7. Ha! listen! Handsome Body of that home country (*pha yul*) of Sdod le,<sup>14</sup>
8. Ha! listen! if you do not know the father's place far away,
9. Ha! listen! that country in which I, Handsome Btsan, reside,
10. Ha! listen! on the upper plain {of Ba ga thug} in the east,

11 For an introduction to the *lde'u* tradition, see Norbu 1995: 21–34.

12 There are intervals in the speech of Phowo Srigyal that remain partially or fully inaudible. These are designated in the translation as follows: One or more syllables or words inaudible in a line: {#}. An entire inaudible line: {###}. Words of uncertain readings are bracketed by: {}.

13 The translation of this line is uncertain because the signification of "Ge khong" is unclear. It appears to be the name of a deity or class of deities (*ge*).

14 Sdod le may be an actual toponym but a metaphorical meaning seems more likely.



11. Ha! On the lower plain {of Ba ga thug} in the east,
12. Ha! listen! on the eighteen great secret [paths] {of the precinct} in the east,
13. Ha! listen! on the pass (*la mgo*) of Adamantine Lotus Btsan (Btsan rdo rje padma),
14. Ha! listen! from an egg on the plain that is like a lotus,
15. Ha! listen! in the palace of the adamantine three mountain peaks,
16. Ha! listen! on the lotus headland *ser chen* flower,<sup>15</sup>
17. Ha! listen! there is the {father *lha*}, a self-arising {yellow} *btsan*.
18. Ha! listen! there is the self-erected rainbow lotus tent.<sup>16</sup>
19. Ha! there are {bright} flowers raining down profusely (*thib thib*).
20. Ha! listen! there is the great mass (*spungs se*) of moving and stationary *lha* protectors.
21. Ha! listen! that palace of Handsome Body's residence,
22. Ha! listen! that lotus headland *ser chen* flower,
23. Ha! listen! that sharp pointed (*rgod*) mountain peak encircled by a rainbow like the fashioned *gtor ma* offering of the *btsan* and *dgra lha*,
24. Ha! listen! is the palace of dwelling (*sdod le*) of Handsome Btsan.
25. Ha! listen! that borrowed body of myself, Handsome Body:
26. Ha! listen! if you don't know the body of myself, Handsome Btsan,
27. Ha! listen! it is the one called Rkyang khra, the eastern {jewel of} the world.
28. {Ha! listen! in the very daytime of today},<sup>17</sup>
29. Ha! listen! on the upper great secret [path] of {Bal bu} of the east,
30. Ha! listen! is the borrowed {body} of myself, Handsome One.
31. Ha! listen! there is a tent like a great ring (*A long*).
32. Ha! listen! there is a {shadow} like a clear mirror.<sup>18</sup>
33. Ha! {listen!} the body is one fathom [in height].<sup>19</sup>
34. Ha! listen! in the square door of the castle of the Tibetan monastery:
35. Ha! {listen!} Handsome Body, {by the long-distance body},<sup>20</sup> is the one called.
36. Ha! listen! I am the favorite *lha* of {#} Gdong go ra.<sup>21</sup>

1. {###}
2. {###}
3. *Nga pho* {*ge khong*} 'khor ba'i *A pho de* /
4. *Mgo ya* 'thod rna bas la *A kho re nyan gcig gyis* /<sup>22</sup>
5. *Nga* {#} *rang lus* {#} *A kho re* {#} *nas* /
6. *Nga btsan* {*di 'dra*} *rang ngo ma shes na* /

<sup>15</sup> This flower has yellow petals and a red corona.

<sup>16</sup> 'Rainbow' refers to the arched shape as well as the color of the tent (*gur khang*).

<sup>17</sup> This is the general import of the line, but the reading itself is uncertain.

<sup>18</sup> This line seems to refer to the god's consciousness in the mirror (*gling*) of the trance ceremony.

<sup>19</sup> This line appears to also mention the tent residence of the god Rkyang khra and the term *rgya bo* (a color?).

<sup>20</sup> *Rgyang lus*. This word probably refers to the manner in which the deity can extend itself over long distances to meet the call of spirit-mediums and the needs of petitioners.

<sup>21</sup> Gdong go ra (Go ra g.ya' dmar) is a well-known mountain spirit in Go ra township, Dpal mgon County (Bellezza 2005: 269).

<sup>22</sup> The equivalent of *A kho re* is placed at or near the beginning of English sentences to prevent the translations from becoming awkward or unwieldy.

7. *Nga gzugs mchor po sdod le'i A kho re pha yul de l*
8. *Nga rgyang ring po'i pha sa la A kho re ma shes na l*
9. *Nga btsan mchor po sdod gi la A kho re pha yul de l*
10. *Nga shar {ba ga thug gi} la A kho re thang stod na l*<sup>23</sup>
11. *Nga shar {ba ga thug gi} thang smad na l*
12. *Nga shar {ba ra'i} gsang chen la A kho re bco brgyad na l*
13. *Nga btsan rdo rje padma'i la A kho re la mgo zhig na l*
14. *Nga thang padma 'dra le'i la A kho re gong nga zhig nas l*
15. *Nga ri rtse gsum rdo rje'i la A kho re pho brang na l*
16. *Nga gdong padma ser chen la A kho re me tog na l*
17. *Nga btsan {ser po yab lha} la A kho re rang shar zhig yod l*
18. *Nga gzha' padma'i gur khang la A kho re rang phub yod l*
19. *Nga {gsal} me tog char pa thib thib yod l*
20. *Nga lha srung ma'i 'gro sdod la A kho re phungs se yod l*
21. *Nga gzugs mchor po sdod gi la A kho re pho brang de l*
22. *Nga gdong padma ser chen la A kho re me tog de l*
23. *Nga ri rtse rgod {#} gzha' 'char le l nga btsan dgra lha'i mchod gtor la A kho re bzhangs 'dra de l*<sup>24</sup>
24. *Nga btsan mchor po sdod le'i la A kho re pho brang red l*
25. *Nga gzugs mchor po'i rang lus la A kho re g.yar po de l*
26. *Nga btsan mchor po'i rang lus la A kho re ma shes na l*
27. *Nga shar {nor bu'i} 'dzam gling la A kho re rkyang khra zhig zlo l*
28. *{Nga dus de ring nyi ma'i la A kho re gong khra zhig na} l*
29. *Nga shar {bal bu'i} gsang chen la A kho re gong ma la l*
30. *Nga {gzugs} mchor po'i rang lus la A kho re g.yar po red l*
31. *Nga rgya A long 'dra le'i la A kho re gur zhig yod l*
32. *Nga gsal me long 'dra le'i la A kho re {grib} zhig yod l*
33. *Nga lus 'doms gang {rgya bo la A kho re gur zhig} yod l*
34. *Nga bod dgon pa'i mkhar sgo la A kho re gru bzhi la l*
35. *Nga gzugs mchor po {rgyang lus la A kho re} 'bod le de l*
36. *Nga gdong go ra'i {#} la A kho re gces lha zhig red l*

## 8. The *'phrin bcol* of the trance ceremony

Without interruption Phowo Srigyal's begins the interrelated liturgy for entrusting activities to the deities (*'phrin bcol*). This moving from one part of the trance ceremony to another is marked by a change in the style of chanting.

The first audible line in the *'phrin bcol* invokes India, the primary source of Buddhist teachings and divinities. Like humans, Rkyang khra has his own root lama, demonstrating that he operates under an oath of loyalty to the Buddha and his doctrine. The origins of these oaths are often

23 Although the ablative case-sign *nas* appears to be spoken by Phowo Srigyal, this should be read as the locative case-sign *na* here and in many other lines of the *lha rabs*.

24 To prevent the translations from becoming too cumbersome, the interjection *nga l dma' l ya'* is usually ignored when it opens a second or third line of Tibetan rendered into a single English sentence.

traced back to the 8th century CE Buddhist master Gu ru Rin po che. Mention of Buddhism in the *'phrin bcol* of Phowo Srigyal is limited but religiously significant, occurring in what is otherwise a largely archaic recitation.

As is customary in Buddhist tantric tradition, Rkyang khra requests the 'Great Mother' (Yum chen, the goddess of wisdom Prajñāpāramitā) and 'sky-treaders' (*mkha' 'gro*, female protectors of the tantric doctrine and its practitioners) to accompany and enthusiastically support him. Clearly, such Buddhist deities are viewed as being of higher rank than the presiding god of the trance and his circles of helping spirits. These Buddhist figures however are grafted onto a much more extensive pantheon of native spirits called upon in the *'phrin bcol*:

1. {###}
2. High above is like {#} the *lha* lineage in low<sup>25</sup> India {resides in the ocean}.
3. The root lama of myself, the elder brother resides here.
4. {###}
5. Great Mother mother and the sky-treaders reside here.
6. Mother sky-treaders, do not be of little magical power:
7. The father {Rol po'i} btsan rgod nam ra resides here.
8. {###}
9. Please be the helping friend of the son of the good father.
10. The {noble man (*A bo*)} is the divine mandala of the country of humans.<sup>26</sup>
11. {###}
12. Expand the males<sup>27</sup> of our {#} the square door of Buddhism {#}.<sup>28</sup>

1. {###}
2. {#} 'dra ba'i yar steng nas / dma' rgya gar lha rabs {mtsho la bzhugs} /
3. Pho rang rang rtsa ba'i bla ma bzhugs /
4. {###}
5. Yum chen ma dang mkha' 'gro bzhugs /
6. Ma mkha' 'gro mthu rtsal ma chung la /
7. Pha {rol po'i} btsan rgod nam ra bzhugs /
8. {###}
9. Pha bzang po'i bu la las rogs mdzod /
10. Lha dkyil 'khor mi yul {A bo} des /
11. {###}
12. {#} rang re'i stag shar rgyas pa na / dma' {#} chos sgo gru bzhi de /

The second section of the *'phrin bcol* begins the petitioning of the *dgra lha*, the warrior spirits. The imagery and motifs of Phowo Srigyal's verses are similar to those found in written texts.

25 *Dma'*. This word is a phonetic variant of the interjection *nga*, but here it appears to denote 'low' or 'bottom-land'.

26 Although it is not designated as such, perhaps this line is better understood using the genitive case: "The {noble man} of the divine mandala of the country of humans."

27 *Stag shar*. This old word denotes male heroes and warriors. For textual usages, see Bellezza 2005: 409; 2008: 241.

28 *Chos sgo gru bzhi*. This appears to be a metaphor for the Buddhist doctrine (Bstan pa), but the citing of portals is more common in the classification of G.yung drung Bon teachings.

The oral tradition, however, is replete with colloquialisms, the liberal use of interjections, a more fluid structure, and does not mention the *dgra lha* as the protectors of early clans and tribes in Tibet. The *dgra lha*, as Rkyang khra declares, belong to the white or virtuous side of existence (*dkar phyogs*). They are commended by describing their benefits to humanity. It also appears that the female spirits known as *smān* are invoked, as are their counterparts, the *lha*:

1. The protector that want you yourselves, ha! the *dgra lha* of the defenders of the virtuous side.<sup>29</sup>
2. I praise the exalted divinity of the heroic *dgra lha*.
3. Now, the eighty lineages of *lha* {#}.
4. Ha! the square door of the castle {#}.
5. {###}
6. It is said that whatever place you go it is auspicious.
7. In whatever country you reside your aims will be realised.
8. Ha! you utterly destroy {the diseases and suddenly occurring misfortune}.
9. Ha! the male, the noble man, the fine man, the protector worshipped by all the paternal generations, the *dgra lha* encircled by male [spirits].
10. The woman of *Sman chung* {#}.
11. {###}

1. *Pho rang rang dgos le'i srung ma de l dma' dkar phyogs skyong ba'i dgra lha de l*
2. *Dpa' dgra lha'i lha la ngo so bstod l*
3. *Da lha rabs brgyad cu'i {#} l*
4. *Dma' {#} mkhar sgo gru bzhi de l*
5. {###}
6. *Sa gar song sa la bkra shis zer l*
7. *Yul gar bsdad sa la don gcig 'grub l*
8. *Dma' {nad rigs glo bur} rdul la rlogs l*
9. *Dma' stag shar A bo skyes pa de l dma' pho rabs bsten pa'i srung ma de l dma' stag shar 'khor ba'i dgra lha de l*
10. *Sman chung bu mo'i {#} l*
11. {###}

Next in the *'phrin bcol* ritual a bevy of *dgra lha* and closely related spirits are importuned. The first of these is the sheep god (*lug lha*), who is associated with the renowned sacred mountain, Gnyan chen thang lha. The second god mentioned by Rkyang khra speaking through Phowo Srigyal is the god of yaks (*nor lha*), which is equated with Mgon po ber chen, a well-known Buddhist protector clad in a black cloak (*ber nag*). *Nor lha* can simply refer to any god of wealth, but in Upper Tibet and other herding communities of Tibet yaks are synonymous with wealth and prosperity. The god of goats called upon is also identified with Mgon po in the form of a titan (*A sur*).<sup>30</sup> Like other deities of livestock, the god of horses (*rta lha*) is a native figure. These

29 The word *pho* at the beginning of the first line does not fit in well grammatically. It may refer to those who are seeking the blessings of the gods.

30 This is Tibetanised Sanskrit for the class of spirits known as *la ma yin*.

deities assume special importance in pastoral Upper Tibet, for the health and welfare of the region's communities depend on yaks, sheep, goats and horses. They are thought to have much influence over the good fortune potentiality (*gyang*) of animals and humans alike.<sup>31</sup> Tibetans believe that without a sufficient measure of *gyang*, a person's health and material condition would inevitably decline. Thus livestock divinities are widely propitiated by herders, lay ritualists (*sngags pa*), spirit-mediums.

After the gods of livestock, Rkyang khra conjures various *dgra lha* and *gnyan* (a common class of terrestrial spirits in whose guise many *dgra lha* come). One of these *dgra lha* is named Gnyan stag dmar po, who is known to other Upper Tibetan spirit-mediums as well. Some *dgra lha* are apparently called singers (*glu pa*) and some are *wer ma*, another type of warrior spirit:

1. Ha! the *lug lha* of the white sheep (*gyang dkar lug*) is the world's Gnyan chen thang lha.
2. Ha! he is surrounded by a circle of hundreds of thousands and millions of *lha*.
3. Ha! today, I invoke<sup>32</sup> the only<sup>33</sup> *lha* {protectors}, the *nor lha* of the grunting yaks, the Buddhist protector Mgon po ber chen.
4. Ha! I praise the only Black Greatcoat Tsha ba rong<sup>34</sup> in the rear.
5. Ha! I praise the *nor lha* of the grunting yaks.
6. Ha! the *ra lha* of the goats (*tshed tshed ra*) is the *ra lha* {titan}Mgon po (Defender).
7. Ha! I invoke the {*zhung nag*},<sup>35</sup> the only Tsha ba rong.
8. Ha! [I invoke] with black yaks with the deep resonant sound (*sgra ldir*).
9. Ha! I invoke the only *lha* {#} /
10. Ha! the *rta lha* of horses (*'do ba rta*) is the *rta lha* Red Excellent Horse (Rta mchog dmar po).
11. Ha! he is the *lha* of the horses.
12. Ha! today, I invoke the *lha* of the horses.
13. The *dgra lha* of the sons (*skyes pa bu*) is Mighty Red Tiger (Gnyan stag dmar po) of the heroic *dgra lha*.
14. Ha! I invoke the hundred thousand and one million *gnyan* armies.
15. Ha! it is Dgra lha'i dar thul dkar po (White Silk Overcoat Warrior Spirit) of the *dgra lha*.
16. Ha! I invoke the hundred thousand territory protector {singers}.
17. [I invoke] the three *wer ma* of the heroic *dgra lha*, the three lineages of the heroic *dgra lha*.
18. I invoke the protectors of those born with the one-fathom body.

1. *Dma' gyang dkar lug gi lug lha de / dma' 'dzam gling gnyan chen thang lha red /*
2. *Dma' lha 'khor bye ba 'bum gis bskor /*
3. *Dma' de ring {srung ma'i} lha gcig bswo / dma' ngur mo nor gi nor lha de / dma' chos skyong mgon po ber chen de /*
4. *Rgyab ber nag tsha ba rong gcig bswo /*

<sup>31</sup> For oral and literary traditions surrounding the gods of livestock, consult Bellezza 2005; 2013.

<sup>32</sup> *Bswo*. Located at the end of a grammatical line this word functions as a verb, signifying to 'invoke', to 'praise' to 'propitiate', or to 'fulfill'.

<sup>33</sup> *Gcig*. This word connotes exclusivity or the superlative and is found in the Tibetan literary tradition as well.

<sup>34</sup> This is probably the proper name of a god.

<sup>35</sup> The meaning of this word, if intended, is unknown.

5. *Dma' ngur mo nor gi nor lha bswō* /
6. *Dma' tshed tshed ra yi ra lha de / dma' ra lha {A sur} mgon po red /*
7. *Dma' {zhung nag} tsha ba rong gcig bswō /*
8. *Dma' nor nag rang sgra ldir se /*
9. *Dma' {#} lha gcig bswō /*
10. *Dma' 'do ba rta yi rta lha de / dma' rta lha rta mchog dmar po red /*
11. *Dma' 'do ba rta yi rta lha red /*
12. *Dma' de ring 'do ba rta lha bswō /*
13. *Dpa' skyes pa bu yi dgra lha de / dma' dgra lha'i gnyan stag dmar po red /*
14. *Dma' gnyan dmag bye ba 'bum gcig bswō /*
15. *Dma' dgra lha'i dar thul dkar po red /*
16. *Dma' zhing skyong {glu pa} 'bum gcig bswō /*
17. *Dpa' dgra lha'i wer ma rnam gsum de / dma' dgra lha'i {gdung rabs} rnam gsum de /*
18. *Lus 'doms gang skyes pa'i srung ma bswō /*

Now, nearly ten minutes after the recitations of the *lha rabs* and *'phrin bcol* began, Phowo Sri-  
gyal stops speaking. He breaks into a long song composed of just one syllable uttered repeatedly:  
'e 'e 'e. This syllable frames the song's tripping tempo and lively melody. Without words, it is  
difficult to know what the possessing god has on his mind. It is as if Rkyang khra is express-  
ing his elation and raw vitality, as he sings a paean to the unfathomably large and mysterious  
supernatural world over which he rules. Afterwards the warrior spirits are called upon to protect  
those for whom the trance ceremony is conducted. This constitutes the actual entrusting of the  
*dgra lha* and other remedial spirits with the essential work expected of them by both the officiat-  
ing deities and human participants:

1. {###}
2. Ha! I invoke today at this very time.
3. *Bswō, bswō!*<sup>36</sup> I invoke the protectors who surround the excellent men.
4. Listen! you must watch over them wherever they might go.
5. Listen! you must protect them wherever they reside and stay.
6. Listen! those *dgra lha* protecting the sons themselves; I invoke the three mighty tiger  
brothers of the heroic *dgra lha*.
7. *Bswō, bswō!* Listen! I invoke Dar thul dkar po (White Silk Greatcoat) of the heroic *dgra*  
*lha*.
8. Listen! he is the god of the road (*lam lha*) who circles the males.
9. Listen! I invoke the *lha* protectors today at this very time.
10. *Bswō, bswō!* Listen! I invoke the Mighty Red Tiger of the *dgra lha*, who is the body god  
(*lus lha*) of the good men, the young men (*skyes dar ma*).
11. I invoke the protector who is worshipped by the excellent males.
12. Listen! be the good guide wherever they might go.
13. Listen! be the *dgra lha* {#} of the one-fathom long body.
14. *Bswō!* Be the good guide to the young men.
15. *Bswō, bswō!* Listen! the mother and father territory protectors (*zhing skyong*) of the heroic  
*dgra lha* are the back support of the good men males.

36 Used at the beginning of a line, *bswō* is an interjection calling upon and praising the deities.

16. Listen! they remove obstacles to long life and sudden misfortunes.
17. Listen! they defeat<sup>37</sup> the types of diseases and the harming *'byung po*.<sup>38</sup>
18. Listen! they defeat the blight and disease of sudden onset obstructions.
19. I invoke. Be the back support of those born with the one-fathom long body.

1. {###}
2. *Ya' dus de ring nyi ma'i gong khra nas bswa /*
3. *Bswa bswa skyes pho rab 'khor ba'i srung ma rnams bswa /*
4. *Sa gar songs sa la kha 'dzin dgos mod kho re /*
5. *Gzhis gar bsad sa la mgon skyobs dgos mod kho re /*
6. *Kho re bu rang rang skyobs pa'i dgra lha de kho re / dma' dgra lha'i gnyan stag spun gsum de bswa /*
7. *Bswa bswa dpa' dgra lha'i dar thul dkar po bswa da<sup>39</sup> kho re /*
8. *Stag shar par 'khor gi lam lha red mod kho re /*
9. *Dus de ring srung ma'i lha de bswa kho re /*
10. *Bswa bswa dpa' dgra lha'i gnyan stag dmar po de da kho re / skyes dar ma A bo'i lus lha red mod bswa ya' /*
11. *Skyes pho rab bsten pa'i srung ma red mod bswa ya' /*
12. *Sa gar song sa la kha 'dzin mdzod shog kho re /*
13. *Lus 'doms gang {#} dgra lha mdzod shog kho re /*
14. *Skyes dar ma'i bu la kha 'dzin mdzod shog bswa /*
15. *Bswa bswa dpa' dgra lha'i zhing skyong yab yum de kho re / stag shar pa A bo'i rgyab rten red mod kho re /*
16. *Tshe bar chad glo bur sel le red mod kho re /*
17. *Gnod 'byung po nad rigs btul le red mod kho re /*
18. *Kag glo bur nad gdon btul le red mod kho re /*
19. *Lus 'doms gang skyes pa'i rgyab rten mdzod shog bswa /*

The liturgy continues with the invocation of a lion, vulture and tiger, three of the best known zoomorphic forms of *dgra lha* (the fourth is a dragon):

1. *Bswa, bswa!* Listen! the sparkling snow mountain of sunrise; I praise the *dgra lha* with the likeness of the white lioness.
2. Listen! I invoke you white lioness with the very big (*bung se*) turquoise mane.
3. Listen! fulfill their wishes wherever they might go.
4. I invoke you, be the good guide in whatever country they stay.
5. *Bswa, bswa!* In the good white vulture nest, on the high red rock; I praise the protector who looks like a lammergeyer (*bya thang-dkar*).
6. Listen! your downy lammergeyer wings (*[shog] drug*) *ldir ri ri*.<sup>40</sup>
7. I invoke the flock of {flying} birds *khro lo lo*.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>37</sup> *Btul* (from the local dialect, not a past tense verb).

<sup>38</sup> A class of demons.

<sup>39</sup> *Bswa da* reinforces the summoning of the spirit.

<sup>40</sup> *Ldir ri ri* conveys that the wings are swooshing.

<sup>41</sup> *Khro lo lo* shows that the birds are screeching.

8. Be the *dgra lha* of the males wherever they might go.
9. *Bswo*! Ha! I invoke the tigress in the sparkling forest from Nepal.
10. Listen! I invoke the body *lha* who is like a good red tiger.
11. Listen! I invoke you good red tiger with the six points of convergence spiraling (*nyigs se*) [whorls].
12. Listen! you must be the good guide wherever they might go.
13. Listen! be the protector of the good man with the one-fathom long body.
1. *Bswo bswo gangs tse re nyi ma rang shar de da kho re / seng dkar mo 'dra le'i dgra lha bswo ya' kho re /*
2. *Seng dkar mo'i g.yu ral bungs se bswo kho re /*
3. *Sa gar song sa la bsams don sgrubs A kho re /*
4. *Yul gar bsad sa la kha 'dzin mdzod shog bswo /*
5. *Bswo bswo mtho brag dmar rgod tshang dkar yag la / bya thang dkar 'dra le'i srung ma bswo ya' /*
6. *Rgod thang dkar thul drug ldir ri ri da kho re /*
7. *Bya 'dab chags {'ur 'phur} khro lo lo bswo /*
8. *Sa gar song stag shar dgra lha mdzod shog bswo /*
9. *Bswo nags tse re stag mo bal yul nas da bswo ya' /*
10. *Stag dmar yag 'dra le'i lus lha bswo kho re /*
11. *Stag dmar yag 'dzom drug nyigs se bswo kho re /*
12. *Sa gar song sa la kha 'dzin dgos mod kho re /*
13. *Lus 'doms gang A bo'i srung ma mdzod shog kho re /*

The next sequence of Phowo Srigyal's *'phrin bcol* is dedicated to all the divine lineages of Tibet, in order that they may exalt the *dgra lha* of those in attendance at the trance ceremony. Although the ancient genealogical functions of the *dgra lha* are not openly acknowledged, it is clear that they are intimately connected to their human charges:

1. Listen! all the *lha* lineages that are worshipped by the black headed Tibetans, well, are surrounded by one hundred thousand great mother *mkha' 'gro*.
2. Well, listen! I praise the hundred thousand divisions of the *lha* lineage of Tibet.
3. Listen!, may there be auspiciousness without obstacles to their lives.
4. Listen! may their aims be realised without sudden misfortune to their bodies.
5. Well, listen! realise their wishes and fulfill their aspirations.
6. Listen!, may their heroic *dgra lha* have a high position.
7. Listen! may their *dgra lha* [always] encircle their one-fathom long body.
8. Listen! be the guide of the good men wherever they might go.
1. *Kho re bod dbu nag mchod pa'i lha rabs rnames da kho re / da yum chen mkha' 'gro 'bum gis bskor kho re /*
2. *Da rgya gar lha rabs 'bum sde bswo kho re /*
3. *Tshe bar chad med le'i bkra re shis A kho re /*
4. *Lus glo bur med le'i don re 'grub kho re /*
5. *Da bsam pa 'grub le'i re ba skongs kho re /*



6. *Dpa' dgra lha'i ngo so mtho le'i shog A kho re l*
7. *Lus 'doms gang dgra lha 'khor le'i shog kho re l*
8. *Sa gar song A bo'i kha 'dzin mdzod kho re l*

Phowo Srigyal now sings the three famous invocatory syllables *ki bswa bswa* and the syllable *'e* a number of times, as he, or rather the god Rkyang khra, communes with the spirits at his behest. Then the drumbeat becomes faster and there is a gap of around a minute without any speech. When Phowo Srigyal begins chanting again his words are inaudible. He is invoking another *dgra lha*, a horse riding spirit under the auspices of Buddhism, who is to act as the guardian of well-being and as the god of travel (*lam lha*):

1. {###}
2. {###}
3. {###}
4. {###}
5. {###}
6. He rides a dark brown horse mount.
7. He is mounted on a stallion of black silk.
8. Ha! {blue-gray} horse {#}.
9. {The gait of the black bear on the way *rongs se rong*}.<sup>42</sup>
10. {###}
11. Ha! {intoning the mantras} *khro lo lo*.<sup>43</sup>
12. The essential teaching of the Buddhist protector *sha ra ra*.<sup>44</sup>
13. Ha! *btsan* {#}.
14. He wears the armor and clothes of black iron on his body.
15. The {laminae} of black iron *si li li*.<sup>45</sup>
16. Black banner:{at his side the flying banner is fluttering}.
17. The black banner is waving *sha ra ra*<sup>46</sup> to the *lha* from afar.
18. The essential teachings of the Buddhist protector *sha ra ra*.
19. Let the losses of the three [types] of disease rebound on the enemy.
20. Envy, losses and epidemics, these three, the malefactors of disease and sudden onset misfortunes and the obstructions are not attached to [the good men].
21. {Seal} the disease of the three malefactors {#}.
22. Annihilate the malefactors and obstructers of the three diseases.
23. {#} {the omen of the enemy} cannot enter.
24. {#} do not prowl.
25. The blight and disease of the three malefactors are not attached to [the good men].
26. Envy, losses, epidemics, these three, {the root of the obstructers} and malefactors, are not attached to [the good men].
27. Ha! be the god of the road of the good men males wherever they might go.

<sup>42</sup> *Rongs se rong* describes a running motion, which probably pertains to a horse whose movement is bear-like.

<sup>43</sup> *Khro lo lo* conveys bell-like sound.

<sup>44</sup> *Sha ra ra* conveys a sense of this protector being steady and unchanging.

<sup>45</sup> *Si li li* depicts a jingling.

<sup>46</sup> *Sha ra ra* shows that the banner is flapping vigorously.

1. {###}
2. {###}
3. {###}
4. {###}
5. {###}
6. *Chibs su 'do ba bra nag bcibs /*
7. *Dar nag gyi rta pho 'og la bcibs /*
8. *Dma' 'do ba {sngo skya} {#} /*
9. *{Dom nag la rgyu 'gros rongs se rong /}*
10. {###}
11. *Dma' {sngags yig gi mgur ma} khro lo lo /*
12. *Chos skyong gi man ngag sha ra ra /*
13. *Dma' btsan {#} la /*
14. *Lcags nag po'i khrab gos lus la gon /*
15. *Lcags nag gyi khrab {skud} si li li /*
16. *Dar nag gyi {phur dar log la 'gyur} /*
17. *Lha dar nag gis rgyang g.yug sha ra ra /*
18. *Chos skyong gi man ngag sha ra ra /*
19. *Nad gsum gyi god kha dgra la sgyur /*
20. *Mi kha god kha rims kha gsum / nad glo bur gi gdon bgegs mi 'khor le /*
21. *Gdon gsum gi nad la {kha char} rgyobs /*
22. *Nad gsum gyi gdon bgegs chams la phobs /*
23. *{#} gyi {dgra than} mi zhugs le /*
24. *{#} mi 'grims le /*
25. *Gdon gsum gyi nad gdon mi 'khor le /*
26. *Mi kha god kha rims kha gsum / gdon {bgegs kyi rtsa ba} mi 'khor le /*
27. *Dma' stag shar gyi A bo skyes pa rnams / sa gar song skyes pa'i lam lha mdzod /*

The liturgy proceeds with invocations to five different triads of equestrian *dgra lha*, which are probably protectors of the four cardinal points and overhead direction. Each group of martial spirits is a different color (white, red, blue, yellow and black):

1. Ha! when they go to the side of the white place, the three white men and white horses of the *dgra lha*:
2. The racing of the white horses *ldir ri ri*.<sup>47</sup>
3. The sound of the nostrils of the swift horses (*mggyogs pa*) *ldir ri ri*.<sup>48</sup>
4. The white man like the rising conch [white] moon, come with the swinging (*ldems se*) golden door of the conch helmet.
5. The seven brother divine birds of white conch, come with the rustling vulture feathers of the white bird.
6. Ha! come as the *dgra lha* of males, the men.
7. Ha! eighty lineages of *lha*, be the good guide.

<sup>47</sup> *Ldir ri ri* conveys the beating of the hooves.

<sup>48</sup> Here *ldir ri ri* communicates a snorting sound.

8. Ha! when they go to {the corner of the red area}, the three red men and red horses of the *dgra lha*:
9. Come red horses chest held high (*rong nge*).
10. Come red men with your clarion singing from afar.
11. Come with your red flapping banners from afar.
12. Ha! {#}.
13. Be the *dgra lha* of the blazing sparks.
14. Ha! today, be the protectors of the men.
15. Ha! when they go to the corner of the blue area, the three blue men and blue horses:
16. The mane of your blue horses is {ornamented} with turquoise.
17. {#} of the blue turquoise *ldir ri ri*.
18. The blue men with the armor of turquoise.
19. The streamers on the crest of the turquoise helmets *rongs se rong*.<sup>49</sup>
20. The lacing (*go lung*) of the [laminar] armor *shigs se shig*.<sup>50</sup>
21. The golden door of the turquoise helmeted heads *rongs se rong*.
22. The singing speech of the Buddhist protectors *ldir ri ri*.<sup>51</sup>
23. The dancing of the Buddhist protectors *sha ra ra*.<sup>52</sup>
24. Ha! today, be the *dgra lha* of the men.
25. Be the good guide of these men.
26. Ha! today {at this very time}, when they go to the corner of the yellow area, three yellow men and yellow horses of the *dgra lha*:
27. {#} of the yellow horse.
28. The manes of the yellow horses {are hanging freely}.
29. Ha! the *klung rta* of the yellow men is higher than the middle of the sky.
30. Ha! the streamers on the crest of the yellow helmets *ldems se ldem*.<sup>53</sup>
31. Ha! come proudly (*rongs se*) with the golden cloth cloak (*lwa ba*).
32. Come with the jouncing (*shigs se*) yellow golden armor.
33. {###}
34. Ha! be the good guide of today's men [so that] the misfortunes of the three diseases are not attached to them.
35. You, defeat the malefactors of the three diseases.
36. {#} you, take care of the obstacles.
37. Ha! {today at this very time}, when they go to the corner of the black area, three black men and black horses of the *dgra lha*:
38. Come black horses {chest} held high.
39. Come with the thunderous speech of the black men.
40. Come with {the rising up golden door} of the black iron [helmet].
41. The sound of the wings of the black bird 'u ru ru'.<sup>54</sup>
42. Come proudly with the cloak of black silk.

49 *Rongs se rong* shows that the crest and streamers are rising high.

50 *Shigs se shig* depicts the movement of all the lacing.

51 *Ldir ri ri* conveys robust singing.

52 *Sha ra ra* conveys many vigorously dancing.

53 *Ldems se ldem* shows that the streamers are blowing from side to side.

54 'U ru ru portrays a thunderous sound.

1. *Dma' sa dkar gyi phyogs la 'gro dus mo l dgra lha'i mi dkar rta dkar gsum l*
2. *Rta dkar gyi rgyug 'gros ldir ri ri l*
3. *Mgyogs pa gyi sna sgra ldir ri ri l*
4. *Mi dkar dung zla shar 'dra de l dung rmog gyi {gser sgo} ldems se byon l<sup>55</sup>*
5. *Dung dkar po'i lha bya spun bdun de l bya dkar gyi rgod sgro ldir re byon l*
6. *Dma' stag shar skyes pa'i dgra lha byon l*
7. *Dma' lha rabs brgyad cus kha 'dzin mdzod l*
8. *Dma' {sa dmar gyi khug la} la 'gro dus mo l dgra lha'i mi dmar rta dmar gsum l*
9. *Rta dmar gyi dang kha rong nge byon l*
10. *Mi dmar gyi rgyang glu tse re byon l*
11. *Dar dmar la rgyang gyug lhab be byon l*
12. *Dma' {#}*
13. *Dgra lha me stag 'bar 'bar gyis l*
14. *Dma' de ring skyes pa'i srung ma mdzod l*
15. *Dma' sa sngon gyi khug la 'gro dus mo l dgra lha'i mi sngon rta sngon gsum l*
16. *Rta sngon gyi rngog ma g.yu yis {spud} l*
17. *G.yu sngon mo gyi {#} ldir ri ri l*
18. *Mi sngon de g.yu yi go khrab can l*
19. *G.yu rmog gyi dar 'phru rongs se rong l*
20. *G.yu khrab gyi go lung shigs se shig l*
21. *Mgo g.yu rmog gyi {gser sgo} rongs se rong l*
22. *Chos skyong gyi gsung glu ldir ri ri l*
23. *Chos skyong gyi bro ra<sup>56</sup> sha ra ra l*
24. *Dma' de ring skyes pa'i dgra lha mdzod l*
25. *Skyes pa 'di la kha 'dzin mdzod l*
26. *Dma' de ring nyi ma'i {gong khra la} l sa ser gyi khug la 'gro dus mo l dma' dgra lha'i mi ser rta ser gsum l*
27. *Rta ser gyi {#} l*
28. *Rta ser po'i rngog ma {wang nge zhog} l*
29. *Dma' mi ser gyi klung rta dgung las mtho l*
30. *Dma' ser rmog gyi dar 'phru ldems se ldem l*
31. *Dma' gser {gos} gyi lwa ba rongs se byon l*
32. *Gser khrab ser po shigs se byon l*
33. *{###}*
34. *Dma' de ring gyi mi la kha 'dzin mdzod l nad gsum gyi god kha mi 'khor le l*
35. *Nad gsum gyi gdon de khyed gis<sup>57</sup> thul l*
36. *{#} bar chad khyed gis gzigs l*
37. *Dma' {de ring gi nyi ma'i gong khra la} l dma' sa nag gyi khug la 'gro dus mo l dgra lha'i mi nag rta nag gsum l*
38. *Rta nag gi {dang kha} rong nge byon l*
39. *Mi nag gyi gsung sgra dir re byon l*

<sup>55</sup> This last word sounds like *song* but is employed like the verb *byon*, the word choice here and in like occurrences.

<sup>56</sup> The particle *ra* adds no extra meaning to the sentence.

<sup>57</sup> This is an old grammatical form; in modern usage: *kyis*.

40. *Lcags nag gyi {gser sgo rongs se} byon /*
41. *Bya nag kyi gshog sgra 'u ru ru /*
42. *Dar nag gyi lwa ba rongs se byon /*

The last portion of Phowo Srigyäl's *lha rabs* and *'phrin bcol* again resorts to avian imagery, before making a final request on behalf of the clients of the trance ceremony:

1. Ha! when {#} goes.
2. {###}
3. The wings of the bird *ldir ri ri*.
4. The black wing of the horned eagle *ldir ri ri*.
5. Today, be the good guide of the sons.
6. Ha! may it be auspicious for the body of the good men males wherever they might go.
7. May their aims be realised whatever place they reside.
8. Fulfill their wishes and realise their aims.
9. Ha! I invoke the three brother protectors of the *dgra lha*.
10. You are surrounded by the one hundred thousand great mother *mkha' 'gro*.
11. Eighty lineages of the *lha*, be the good guide.
12. {###}
13. *Phat!*

1. *Dma' {#} 'gro dus mo /*
2. {###}
3. *'Dab chags kyi gshog drug ldir ri ri /*
4. *Bya khyung nag gshog drug ldir ri ri /*
5. *De ring gyi bu la kha 'dzin mdzod /*
6. *Dma' stag shar gyi A bo'i lus po de / sa gar song sa la bkra re shis /*
7. *Yul gar bsdad sa la don re 'grub /*
8. *Bsam pa sgrubs la re ba skongs /*
9. *Dma' dgra lha'i srung ma spun gsum bswa /*
10. *Yum chen mkha' 'gro 'bum gis bskor /*
11. *Lha rabs brgyad cus {kha 'dzin} mdzod /*
12. {###}
13. *Phat!*

After the above verses of the *'phrin bcol* were completed, Phowo Srigyäl moved on to the next part of the trance ceremony without pause, where the god speaking through him, Rkyang khra, made sundry prophecies about those in attendance. This was followed by the summoning of the good fortune potentiality, another labor in which well-being and success were bestowed upon all concerned. Finally, once Rkyang khra and his circles of spirits had completed their mission to aid human beings, they returned to their various abodes, marking the end of Phowo Srigyäl's possession.



Fig. 1. Phowo Srigyal preparing for the trance ceremony, May 21, 2004 (Photo: Bellezza 2004).



Fig. 2. Phowo Srigyal in trance playing his drum and flat bell, May 21, 2004 (Photo: Bellezza 2004).



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