This Volume is dedicated
to the memory of
Erberto Lo Bue (1946-2022),
outstanding scholar of
Tibetan and Himalayan Art History
and sorely missed colleague.

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Traditions, Translations and Transitions in the Cultural History of Tibet, the Himalayas and Mongolia

edited by Donatella Rossi (editor in chief), Davor Antonucci, Michela Clemente, Davide Torri



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FOREWORD

It was a pleasure and an honour to organise the second seminar of the Italian Association of Tibetan, Himalayan, and Mongolian Studies (AISTHiM) at Sapienza University of Rome (July 7th-9th 2021) thanks to the generous support and funding from ISMEO – The International Association for Mediterranean and Oriental Studies which extends to the publication of this volume.

We would like to take this opportunity to once again express our gratefulness to the members of the scientific and operative committee, to the volunteers, and to the Marco Polo Building staff for helping us materialise one of the very first onsite and online academic events for the Department of Oriental Studies (DISO) after the outbreak of the pandemic.

The conference theme was Traditions, Translations and Transitions in the Cultural History of Tibet, the Himalayas and Mongolia.

Culture is about change. There are no cultural traditions which can survive without changing, adapting, and transitioning over time and across space. Traditions are constantly reinvented, creatively interrupted, or imaginatively reinvigorated. Finding themselves in a permanent state of transition to something new and to something different, 'traditions' and 'innovations' are historical and cultural processes far from opposite to each other. There is a growing consensus among scholars and researchers that they are, on the contrary, very interconnected. Through the establishment of corridors, correlations, and connections, this global phenomenon of interdependence of tradition/innovation can be examined as a process of cross-fertilising acts of 'translations' and 'transitions'. Not just linguistic translations or material transitions, but also the translatability of symbolic tools and images, the transferability of cultural capital and the fortunate trajectory of philosophical concepts and religious practices have begun receiving a great deal of attention.

However, despite the transcultural turn affecting many disciplines, not so much has been published on the cultural history of Tibet, the Himalayas, and

Mongolia. In these areas, the cultural transmissions from one person to another, the inheritance of a cultural memory from a group to another—across generations and across spatiality—is at stake for various reasons, which are linked to the historical and political conditions of the countries of these vast Asian area, the effects of globalisation on the social and economic conditions of the populations that inhabit it, and the linguistic and cultural hegemonies that risk to obliterate many languages, literatures, and art productions.

Since researchers on the transitional processes and insight into the cultural trajectories of Tibet, Mongolia, and the Himalayas are still few in number, there is a pressing need to develop more work on the shifting cultural, religious, artistic, and linguistic patterns of meaning, symbolism and 'tradition'.

We invited to the conference scholars of Tibetan, Himalayan, and Mongolian studies to try and fill this gap, by reflecting on the changes that have transformed the cultural traditions of these countries in the past as in the present.

Following the welcome speeches of Prof. Mario Casari – Deputy Director of DISO, Prof. Adriano Valerio Rossi – President of ISMEO, and Prof. Giacomella Orofino – President of AISTHiM, the seminar benefited from the contributions and lively debates of thirty-eight speakers, eighteen of which are featured in this volume.

There were seven major panel focused upon the topics of Masters and Lineages (three lectures); Theories and Praxes (six lectures); Texts and Translations (eight lectures); Environment (three lectures); Transitions and Interactions (six lectures); Art and Architecture (three lectures); Himalaya and Trans-Himalaya (nine lectures).

We decided to arrange this volume in alphabetical order without maintaining the original panel structure due to the substantially decreased number of delivered contributions vis-à-vis the actual number of participants to the conference, which, regrettably, was mostly owed to impediments linked to the pandemic and post-pandemic climate. Nevertheless, we trust that the articles presented here demonstrate and express the continuing liveliness of Tibetan, Himalayan, and Mongolian studies in Italy.

In his contribution titled Transitions in Gurung Shamanism(s) *Fabio Armand, drawing from ethnographic literature and data collected during his own fieldwork in Gurung villages of the Gorkha District (Nepal), focuses on shamanic initiations involving, alternatively, hereditary lines of transmission of knowledge and the engagement with a non-human source of power represented as a supernatural forest-shaman.*

Chiara Bellini, in her "I Hope for Nothing, I Fear Nothing, I Am Free". My Memory of Erberto Lo Bue (1946-2022)*, presents a touching account of her memory and an exclusive correspondence of the scholar to whom the*

Editors decided to dedicate the present Volume, and whose demise deeply moved Tibetanists (and not just them) who had the opportunity to meet Erberto and appreciate both his research creativity and rich humanity.

Kristin Blancke, in her In Search of Mi la's Collected Songs. Back to the Basics*, explores the body of literature dealing with the life and feats of the great Buddhist master Milarepa. Focusing on the diverse textual sources, she researches how the standard narrative was produced and refined between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, culminating with the tradition of gTsang smyon He ru ka and his circle of disciples.*

In this paper titled Wetlands in Mongolia. An Emerging Theme for an Anthropological Approach *Nadia Breda focuses her attention on a little-known topic: the wetlands in rural and nomadic areas of Mongolia. Wetlands represent areas that are very rich in biodiversity but that are also among the most threatened. The author shows the importance of wetlands in nomadic culture and the attempts to safeguard these areas.*

Michela Clemente, with A Preliminary Analysis of Title Frames in Bon po Manuscripts and Xylographs: Examples from the Tucci Tibetan Collection*, offers a captivating investigation on a hitherto neglected codicological element, that is to say, title frames, asserting the importance, within the broader framework of book culture, of a comprehensive scrutiny addressing all codicological elements for identification of provenance and dating as well as conservation purposes.*

Marlene Erschbamer in her Mother within the 'Ba' ra ba bKa' brgyud Tradition: Recollecting Mother and their Socio-Religious Roles in Tibetan Buddhism *provides readers with a fascinating study of some mothers associated with the 'Ba' ra ba, a still alive tradition founded during the fourteenth century and spread across Tibet and the Himalayas. By presenting excerpts from Tibetan, Sikkimese and Bhutanese hagiographies, the author offers a different perspective of these sources - devoted to Buddhist male masters - and investigates these texts in search for the socio-religious roles of mothers and the multifaceted aspects of motherhood within this Buddhist tradition.*

Elena De Rossi Filibeck in her contribution titled Tibet's Material Wealth in the 19th century Reflected in Offerings to Monasteries: the Case of Samye (bSam Yas)*, investigates the topic of Tibetan past material wealth through the* dkar chag *or guide books of monasteries and monuments, where lists of donations were recorded, presenting a partial translation of the dkar chag of bSam yas that was compiled in 1854.*

Flavio A. Geisshuesler, with his Framing the Sky of Skullward Leap: Meditation as a Contemplative System*, introduces the Tibetan practice of* thod rgal *(lit. skullward leap) which represents the zenithal practice for the*

rNying ma and the Bon traditions, arguing that "the tradition's fascination with the sky is fundamentally driven by a Tibetan ethos of vitality."

In his contribution Vision of the Sacred: Figure and Space. The Style of Woodcut Illustrations in 16th Century Xylographs Made in the Kingdom of Mang yul Gung thang. Introductory Notes*, Filippo Lunardo presents a study of the style of illustrations realised by artists mainly associated with the sMan ris painting school. By analysing peculiar features of woodcut illustrations, the author offers some insights into stylistic language and personal styles of artists involved in the production of Mang yul Gung thang xylographs*.

In his article, Notes on the Relationship between Bon Religion and Shamanism*, Francesco Maniscalco engages with the literature on the possible relations between Bon and shamanism (and Buddhism, too), taking into account several, if not all, of the voices who took part in the debate, and adding his own view to it.*

Chiara Mascarello dedicates her contribution – The Tibetan Mind Training (Blo sbyong): An Ancient Exercitium for our Contemporary Era – *to that fundamental Buddhist teaching, suggesting that future researchers should explore the "immunological efficacy" of the modern forms of such an exercise as an anthroprotective tool for fostering and safeguarding individual, collective, and ecological prosperity.*

Luigi Rogora devotes his article entitled The Bal yul rang byung mchod rten chen po'i lo rgyus by Si tu Paṇ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas (1700-1774). Summary and Notes on a Cultural Endeavor *to the eight chapters of this polymath's* Svayaṃbhūpurāṇa*'s translation, by offering a summary and highlighting the main details of its narrative. The author also provides an introduction on Si tu Paṇ chen's critical approach to the earlier geographical literature which, according to this master, was responsible for spreading false knowledge on Nepalese sacred sites.*

In her contribution, Consolidating the Practice of *Bodhicitta* in an Epoch of Historical and Religious Transitions. Notes on the *Byang chub bsgrub pa'i thabs tshigs su bcad pa sum brgya nyi shu pa'i sa bcad* Preserved in the *Bonpo* Collection of the G. Tucci Tibetan Fund*, Donatella Rossi entirely translates a text which appears to be a succinct taxonomy of acknowledged Mahāyāna tenets. She suggests that it might represent a sort of pedagogical outline, with relevant themes often singled out in the interlinear notes with the support of 'key words', to be used by mentors and instructors.*

Carmen Simioli in her Aphrodisiacs, Rejuvenating Recipes and Spell-binding Formulas preserved in the *Brang ti* Great Measure of Gold: The Case of Medicinal Herpetofauna and Their Long Enduring History in Tibe-

tan Medico-Alchemical Sources*, provided a well-documented overview on pre-modern Tibetan aphrodisiacs and rejuvenating therapies as found in the gSer bre chen mo, analysing ancient recipes and procedures that are considered to be in continuity with tradition.*

Francesco Tormen, in his Tibetan Dream Yoga and its Contributions to Science. Some Insights into the New Field of Contemplative Research*, explores this special praxis, contextualising the phenomenon of lucid dreaming within the philosophical and soteriological Buddhist framework and describes discoveries, applications, and its contributions to science, considering possible future developments that "cooperation between these two different epistemological universes" may generate.*

In his essay Far Away Drums. Some Notes on Affinities and Divergences Between Contemporary Examples of Shamanism in Nepal and Mongolia*, Davide Torri investigates some elements of shamanic practices observed during fieldwork in Nepal and Mongolia over the years and highlights similarities and differences, also taking into account some of the current socio-cultural dynamics in order to underline the role of shamans in both countries in contemporary times.*

Sabrina Tosi Cambini presents a reflection on some aspects of the nomadic life related to the landscape and enviroment in her Moving from East Europe to Mongolia: Lessons from "Nomads" Relational Perspective of the World in a Time of Change*, focusing her attentions on the challenge represented by neo-liberal economies and climate change for the nomads.*

Cristiana Turini with her article – Cultural Variety along the Last Offshoots of the Himalayan Plateau: Transmission and Transformation of the Naxi Dongba Culture Between Past and Present – *offers an insight into the modern status of the* Naxi Dongba *ritual life, showing how* Naxi *religious practices over time have undergone a process of impoverishment and simplification, also linked to the development of mass tourism, which threatens the intangible* Dongba *cultural heritage*.

We wish that this volume will be of interest to both academic and non-academic recipients and that it may represent a constructive input to international specialised debates in the relevant interdisciplinary fields.

Rome, October 2023

The Editorial Committee
Donatella Rossi (editor in chief)
Davor Antonucci (co-editor)
Michela Clemente (co-editor)
Davide Torri (co-editor)

APHRODISIACS, REJUVENATING RECIPES AND SPELLBINDING FORMULAS PRESERVED IN THE BRANG TI *GREAT MEASURE OF GOLD*: THE CASE OF MEDICINAL HERPETOFAUNA AND THEIR LONG ENDURING HISTORY IN TIBETAN MEDICO-ALCHEMICAL SOURCES[1]

Carmen Simioli

This paper examines premodern Tibetan aphrodisiacs and rejuvenating therapies as found in the *gSer bre chen mo*, an authoritative fourteenth century medical anthology principally compiled by Brang ti dPal ldan rgyal mtshan of the Sa skya medical school. This complex corpus appears to be the result of a meticulous work of redaction to preserve medical, alchemical and ritual practices of diverse cultural origins, culled from a variety of earlier medical and tantric sources in order to build a systematic and exhaustive compendium. An interesting example of how this heterogeneous knowledge has been inherited and rearranged is represented by a series of pharmacological formulas, which are said to be drawn from the *Tsa ra ka 'bum sde* (*Caraka's Collection in Hundred Thousand Verses*) and other not identifiable āyurvedic and tantric works. The key constituents of these recipes are animal-derived ingredients such as lizards, salamanders, snakes mixed with otter and cat meat, ram testicles, sparrow head and eggs, bezoars, crazy honey along with many other herbal and mineral substances purported to be endowed with wondrous healing virtues. The remedies are considered to be multipurpose as can be inferred from the wide variety of therapeutic applications. The analysis of the mentioned recipes and the related procedures, which moved across written works, will allow us to examine the authorial strategies to ensuring continuity with the tradition through an adaptive reuse of earlier sources and eventually evaluate the crucial role of the *gSer bre chen mo* in the transmission of these operative disciplines in the Tibetan context.

[1] I am grateful to the Khyentse foundation-USA that funded my research and the writing of this paper.

Introduction

The branch of Tibetan medicine known as "virility therapy" (*ro tsar bya ba, vājīkaraṇa*) subsumes those treatments and remedies aimed at curing sexual disorders (*ro tsa nyams pa*) such as azoospermia and anaphrodisia.[2]

As in the case of the āyurvedic counterpart,[3] virility therapies can be associated theoretically and practically to life prolonging and rejuvenating treatments (*bcud len, rasāyana*) since both are aimed at restoring and nurturing the "supreme radiance" (*mdangs mchog*, *oijas*), "the ultimate result of the reproductive fluids tissue" (*lus zungs bdun khu ba'i gyi mthar phyin pa*).[4] This radiance embodies a stratified concept onto which philosophical, medical and alchemical implications are grafted. Canonically, it is described as being either an innate quintessence (*dwangs ma/ dangs ma*) abiding in the heart and connected to human life-span and fortitude (*snying stobs*), or a subtle humidity that pervades every cell and determines a healthy and lustrous complexion, and which is alimented through the metabolic process and enhanced by virility therapies and other medicinal remedies.[5]

Similarly to what occurred in the history of Latin philosophical and alchemical researches that from the thirteenth century onwards came in the form of heated disquisitions on the *humido radicali* and the effectiveness of *retardanda*,[6] throughout centuries in Tibet a kaleidoscope of doctrines and practices revolved around this concept of radiance and the related expectations of longevity and youthfulness, leading to the elaboration of complex physiological models, in some cases juxtaposed with somatic theories of Buddhahood.[7]

The heterogeneity of these practices can also be observed in the light of their varied formulas and the intertextuality of their sources. In this re-

[2] Byams pa 'phrin las et al. 2006: 863: *ro tsa nyams pa ni 'khrig pa spyod mi nus pa dang khu ba nyams par 'gyur ba*.

[3] Wujastyk Dragmar 2016; 2017.

[4] Simioli 2013.

[5] *Lus kyi mtshan nyi bstan pa*, in *rGyud bzhi* (*Bod ljongs mi dmang dpe skrun khang ed.*), II, pp. 27/3-6: […] *lus zungs bdun khu ba'i mthar phin mdangs mchos ste // snying la gnas kyang lus kun khyab pa dang // tshe gnas gzi mdangs bkra dang ldan par byed // de dag 'bras bu rdzogs dus zas zos pa'i // dangs ma khu bar gyur zhag drug sde // ro tsa la sogs khu ba skyed // sman rnams phel cher zhag cig las byed 'gyur* ||.

[6] On these topics see Carusi 2014: 59-80 and Crisciani 2014: 81-98.

[7] I am referring here to the theories developed in the *Rdo rje lus kyi sbas bshad* (*Explanation of the Hidden Vajrabody*), composed by Yang dgon pa rGyal mtshan dpal (1213-1258). On this subject see Miller 2013. Very interesting are Tibetan interpretations of Vajraghaṇṭa's instructions on the *body maṇḍala* (*lus kyi dkyil 'khor*) in the Cakrasaṃvara system and its integration into the fifteenth century Zur medico-alchemical system (*zur lugs*). See Zur mkhar mNyam nyid rdo rje (1993) *Man ngag bye ba ring bsrel pod chung rab 'byams gsal ba'i sgron me*, pp. 753/16-781/10, and Simioli (forthcoming).

gard, the present study intends to shed some light on the history of some recipes that consist essentially in medicinal herpetofauna aimed at enhancing virility and prolonging life such as those described in the *Tsa ra ka 'bum sde* (*Caraka's Collection in Hundred Thousand Verses*) and other minor texts preserved in the *gSer bre chen mo*[8] (*Great Measure of Gold*), a medical anthology compiled for the most part by dPal ldan rgyal mtshan (fourteenth century), eminent physician of the Brang ti medical lineage.[9]

Before analysing the contents of these texts, I shall provide a brief conspectus of the literary antecedents and those writings roughly contemporary with this formulary, to better situate them in the broader context of medical and alchemical sources devoted to virility therapy. Eventually, I will touch upon the origin narratives and the image of medicine and alchemy that emerges from the *gSer bre chen mo*.

Aphrodisiacs prepared with reptile meats represent a rather stable tradition with a long enduring history in Tibetan medical and tantric medical–oriented literatures. They have been standardised in the *rGyud bzhi* (*Four Tantras*, twelfth–fourteenth century), the canon of Tibetan medicine, whose stratified structure reveals a plurality of sources that were drawn upon for its compilation.[10] What follows is a preliminary analysis of sources on this subject, here organised in a chronological order, which is aimed at finding out the possible connections with the recipes handed down in the *gSer bre chen mo* and those preserved in the *rGyud bzhi*.

Earlier traces of aphrodisiacs in Tibetan literature are to be found in the Dunhuang manuscript Pelliot Tibétain 1057, which enumerates "a method different from Chinese remedies to restore sexual potency" (*rgya'i sbyar rtsi dang mi mtshungs so*) and in which, animals reputed for their aphrodisiac powers and orchids resembling human genitals according to the prin-

[8] In this study I will be using two redactions of the *gSer bre chen mo*: *Brang ti lha rje rim brgyud kyi sman ngag gser bre chen mo* edited by the Bod rang skyon ljongs sman rtsis khang and published in 2005 by the Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, pp. 276/6-289/15, hereafter *gSer bre chen mo* (1); *Brang ti lha rje rim brgyud kyi sman ngag gser bre chen mo*, in *Gso rig tshang lo tsā ba She rabs rin chen sogs kyi brtams* published in 2004 by the mTsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, pp. 189/1-203/5, here after *gSer bre chen mo* (2).

[9] By the end of the thirteenth century, the Brang ti physicians were patronised by bDag nyid chen po bZang po dpal (1262-1324) and established a medical house at Sa skya monastery (*sa skya sman grong*). Byams pa 'phrin las 2000: 179/13-17. On bDag nyid chen po bZang po dpal see Petech 1990: 71-78.

[10] This medical collection is traditionally ascribed to g.Yu thog gsar ma Yon tan mgo po (1102-1126). However, as recent studies are probing (see Simioli 2016; McGrath 2017), the *textus receptus* was completed by drawing on a plurality of medical and tantric sources. On the cure of virility see *rGyud bzhi* (*lCag po ri bskyar phar ma*), III: Fols. 484v.1-487r.3 and *rGyud bzhi* (*Bod ljongs mi dmang dpe skrun khang ed.*) III: pp. 551/13-554/16.

ciple of sympathetic treatment were categorised as medicaments for treating of impotency and anaphrodisia. This recipe consists in a compound made of a male pigeon,[11] male hoopoe,[12] male sparrow[13] and toad-head lizard,[14] swan, the *orchid that enhances the sexual desire*[15] [*Gymnadenia orchidis* Lindl], broth prepared with deer tail bones[16] and dung, and donkey tail bones.[17]

Among the most influential and authoritative āyurvedic classics preserved in the Tibetan Buddhist Canon, which include sections devoted to virility therapy, we shall refer to: (1) Ravigupta's *Siddhasāra* (*sMan dpyad gces pa grub pa zhes bya ba le'u sum cu rtsa gcig pa*),[18] translated in Tibetan by Jinamitra and lo tswā ba Tsan dra around the ninth century; (2) the *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayasaṃhita* (*Yan lag brgyad pa'i snying po'i bsdus pa*)[19] by Vāgbhaṭa and its commentary *Padārthacandrikāprabhāsa-nāma-aṣṭāṅgahṛdayavivṛti* (*Yan lag brgyad pa'i snying po'i rnam par 'grel pa tshig gi don gyi zla zer*)[20] by Candranandana, which were translated in Tibetan by Janardhana and Rin chen bzang po at the beginning of the eleventh century; (3) the *Yogaśataka* (*sByor ba brgya ba*)[21] ascribed to the tantric Nāgārjuna and translated by Nyi ma rgyal mtshan bzang po, Jetakarṇa and Paṇḍita Buddhaśrījñāna in the thirteenth century.

[11] *Phug rong. Columba rupestris Pallas* or hill pigeon (dGa' bar do rje 1995: 367). Its meat is sweet while the post-digestive taste is hot, and it is considered effective to cure virility (*ro tsa skyed*), reinforce the immune system and increase the production of reproductive semen (*lus stobs skyed khu ba'phel*); its head and brain have the same taste and are considered effective in cases of sexual disorder because they can cure virility and enhance desire (*'dod myur*).

[12] *Phu shud. Upupa epops Linnaleus* (dGa' ba rdo rje 1995: 366-367). Its meat has been attributed specific beneficial potencies able to cure mental disorders (*smyo lgug, snying mi bde*) and disease carrier demons *nad gdon*; eggs and feathers can cure diverse kinds of poisons (*dug dang sbyar dug*), demonic influences and protect against defilements (*grib srung*).

[13] *mChil pa*. *Passers montanus L. Baker* or Eurasian sparrow (dGa' bar do rje 1995: 383-384).

[14] *sMrigs pa* [*rmigs pa*; *rmigs bu*]. Karma chos 'phel (Karma chos 'phel 1993: 690) identifies it with the gecko toad-head agama or *Phrynochephalus vlangalii* Strauch (Ch. 沙蛇). According to dGa' bar do rje (1995: 338-339), it could be identified with Mongolian racerunner lizard or *Eremias argus* Peters (Ch. 丽斑麻蜥). This reptile is described as being very similar to the Himalayan Rock Agama or *Paralaudakia Himalayana* Steindackner (*rtsangs pa*). According to comparative DNA analysis, it has been discovered that the *Laudakia* can be paraphyletic and that it includes *Phrynochephalus* species (Panov, Zykova 2016: 19).

[15] *rGyo 'dod ldum bu* or *dBang lag* (dGa' ba rdo rje 1995: 255).

[16] *Gla ba'i mjug rus.*

[17] PT 1057: fols. 8.15-9.6.

[18] See chapter 28 of the *Sman dpyad gces pa grub pa zhes bya ba le'u sum cu rtsa gcig pa*. See also Emmerick 1982.

[19] *sByor ba brgya pa dang yan lag brgyad pa'i snying po*, pp. 750/22-755/12.

[20] *Ro tsa gso ba*. In *Yan lag brgyad pa'i snying po'i rnam par 'grel pa tshig gi don gyi zla zer*, pp. 1996-2021.

[21] *rTa ltar byed pa'i rgyud bdun pa*. In *Sbyor ba brgya ba dang yan lag brgyad pa'i snying po'i bsdus pa sogs*, pp. 11/3-20.

None of these collections preserve any tonic, pill, electuary or unguent prepared with reptile derived substances but their main ingredients, except for few entries (goat testicles, powdered crab and unspecified meat broth) are essentially botanicals amalgamated with milk, ghee or butter, sugar or honey.

Although the *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayasaṃhita* was referential for the writing of the chapter on virility therapy, especially for the preliminary procedures (purification of patient's body through oil massages and mild purgation) and dietary prescriptions[22] to strengthen patient's emaciated body, the central section on aphrodisiacs was composed by relying on other texts as we can infer from the analysis of the following series of pith instructions of the *Man ngag rgyud*, the third book of the canonical *rGyud bzhi*, which testifies that the use of reptile meats to enhance virility became customary in Tibetan scholastic medicine.

The medicine is the king of meat the salamander [*Batrachuporus pinchonii* (David)][23], the best at strengthening the body and increasing the production of semen. The methods to compound the mentioned medicine consist in preparing it according to the *skyin gor*[24] method, the *cog krong*[25] compound, the *nine ingredients-medicine*, the *thirteen ingredients-compound* and the *five ingredients-compound*.

[22] *sByor ba brgyad pa dang yan lag brgyad pa'i snying po bsdus pa sogs*, pp. 750/22-751/2: […] *snum gyur sbyang byas pa // ni ru ha dang'jam rtsir bcas* ||; p. 751/1-3: *mar dang thi mar sbyar rtsi dang // sha khu 'o ma kha ra byas // 'o ma sha dang sha khu ba bza' // sbyor ba shes pas dang par gtong* || Compare these lines with *rGyud bzhi* (*Bod ljongs mi dmang dpe skrun khang* ed.), pp. 551/15–553/1: […]: *sngon'gro snum 'tsho*s *khrus kyis sbyang byas la // ni ru ha dang dang 'jam rtsir bcas la gtang // gzhi skams gso dang rlugs pa gcad // gso dang zas spyod la sman dpyad bzhi // za ni kha ra bu ram sbyang rtsi dang // sha khu 'o ma zhun mar 'os spris sogs // ro mngar mdog dkar yid du'ong ba la // rtobs 'phel nyams brtas byed pa gang yin bsten* […]||.

[23] *Da byid.* Also called *gangs sbal* or "snow frog" (see dGa' ba rdo rje 1995: 376-377). In Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's *Blue Beryl*, conforming to a common mistake, it is called the "*Karkaṭa* (crab) coming from the Snow Mountains" (*gangs las byung ba'i kar ka ṭa*). However, this is described as a dark mottled salamander (*da byid smug po*) with short neck and tail. He also offers a detailed description of male and female specimens, which are respectively distinguished by golden and turquoise-coloured ridges; they shall be also recognised by the presence of upward wrinkles on the tails, which are typical of male specimens, while the females have downward wrinkles on the tails, are very similar to frogs and are usually called "sylvan frog" (*nags sbal*) or "yellow salamander" (*da byid ser po*). *Bai du rya sngon po*, p. 1487/1-10.

[24] This is an encoded name for different types of lizards such as the salamander *Batrachuporus pinchonii* (David) (*da byid; gangs sbal*) or the previous mentioned Himalayan Rock Agama or *Paralaudakia Himalayana Steindackner* (*rtsang pa*). See fn. 14. See also. Byams pa 'phrin las et al. 2006: 700-701. On this identification see Blo bzang tshe ring 2018: 21.

[25] This means literally "raising up what is freely resting" (*cog* [*cog gzhag*] *krong* [*krong byed*]). It can be interpreted as a specific cure for erectile dysfunction.

The method to compound the *skyin gor* consists in mixing the five roots[26] and the three fruits, the dark mottled salamander, ram scrotum, field pennycress [*Thlapsi arvense* L.].[27] To the juice obtaining from a mixture of water and milk, add ammonium, cardamom, ginger, black pepper and sugar cane, and you will gain the strength of a horse.

The *cog krong* compound is made of the five herbs prepared as medicinal butter, to which are mixed the dark mottled salamander, nutmeg, white sesame and black sesame seeds, henbane [*Hyoscyamus niger*][28] and minor ingredients. In alternative, salamander and rock Agama meats are inserted into the stomach of a sparrow,[29] which shall be sewed up, cooked with butter and therefore dried and triturated finely to obtain a powder. Mixed with the previous ghee and molasses. The *nine- ingredients compound* is prepared with the mottled salamander, cat, otter and human [?] tails, calcite,[30] sulphur,[31] mineral pitch exudate[32] and henbane. All triturated and inserted into the stomach of a sparrow, sewed up with cotton thread and cooked with butter. The aforementioned powdered meats shall be mixed with clarified butter and molasses. The patient should intake one spoon of this compound at the dawn. Each and every substance strengthens the body, increases the natural heat of kidneys at the lower part of the back and cures the exhaustion of semen.

The *thirteen-ingredients medicine* consist of a compound prepared with the meats of both, the dark mottled and yellow specimens of salamander, rock Agama and otter, heads of chicken, pigeon, common sparrow and Tibetan sparrow, previously cooked with *rtsam pa*, henbane, a fish from the gTsang po river, *Indra's arm* orchid [*Gymnadenia orchidis* Lidl], asparagus, calcite and molasses. This medicine increases the production of semen to the point that [who intakes it] could have sexual intercourse with one-hundred women every night.

[26] *rtsa ba lnga*: *Polygonatum spp.* (*ra nye*), *Asparagus filicinus* Buch.-Ham ex Don (*nye shing*), *Angelica cyclocarpa* C. Norman (*lca ba*), *Mirabilis Himalayica* (Edgwe) Kunze (*ba spru*) and *Tribulus terrestris* L. (*gze ma*).

[27] *Bre ga* (dGa' bar do rje 1995: 254-55).

[28] *Thang phrom*. According to Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's *Blue Beryl* (c *po*, p. 1487/23), this is *thang phrom dkar po*. This plant of *Solanacae* family has been differently identified with both *Mandragora caulescens* C.B. Clarke and *Hyoscyamus niger*. The black one can be identified with the *Anisodus tanguticus* (*thang phrom nag*) and *Anisodus luridis Link ex. Spreng* (Dga' ba rdo rje 1995: 214-216; Boesi 2005-2006: 82).

[29] See footnote 13.

[30] *Cong zhi ma ning* or the neutral type of calcite (*Bai du rya sngon po,* p. 1488/5).

[31] According to Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (*Bai du rya sngon po*, p. 1488/5), this is the yellow type of sulphur (*mu zi ser po*).

[32] *Brag zhun*. According to Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho (*Bai du rya sngon po*, p. 1488/6), this is the variety derived from iron (*lcag brag zhun*).

The *five-ingredients compound* consists in reducing red calcite in fine powder mixed with cow milk, orchid, sparrow head, henbane, dark mottled and yellow salamanders, and molasses. It is offered with *chang* and eaten at dawn.[33]

Another relevant source on aphrodisiacs to be mentioned in this survey, which will be very useful for the purpose of identifying the possible literary and cultural provenience of these medicinal herpetofauna is the collection *Khu tshur 'bum* (*Hundred Thousand Fists* [*Grasping the Teachings*]) ascribed to sKyes bu sman lha also known as Bha ro phyag rdum, a physician who, according to the hagiographical tradition, arrived in Tibet during the eleventh century. This medical lineage, which is called Phyag sman, is connected to figures such as Zhang ston gzi brjid ba (eleventh century), to Che rje Zhang stong zhig po (thirteenth century?) and to Phyag sman Rin chen rgyal mtshan and Byams chen chos rje Shākya ye shes (1354-1419), who handed down this and other collections ascribed to sKyes bu sman lha.

Chapter forty-one is devoted to the methods to compound *rasāyana* remedies (*bcud len sbyor ba*).[34] Among its numerous recipes, there are few very interesting that contain information on the geographical provenience of this tradition, which is said to be Za hor,[35] and how to detoxify lizard and snake meats.

Za hor in in Tibetan historiographies has been located differently in easter Bengal or in an area near Uḍḍiyāna (O rgyan yul), the modern-day Swat valley in Pakistan. As Dan Martin has suggested,[36] Uḍḍiyāna in ancient pre-Mongol Tibetan sources seems to be related to the region known as the Roman Eastern Empire (Phrom), which could be identified with the geographical area including Kabul and even the Swat valley. Moreover, Bengal was part of the famous Periplus of the Eritrean Sea connecting the Mediterranean world to India.[37]

Here too, salamander meat is the key ingredient, along with toad-head lizard meat and sparrow meat and head.

According to this source, snake meat should be detoxified by roasting it on charcoal fire (*mdag thabs su sbyar*), peel it off and macerated the compound into vinegar.[38] Salamander is detoxified by pulverising it (*tres sam*), roasting on charcoal fire and being prepared as medicinal butter.[39]

[33] *rGyud bzhi* (*Bod ljongs mi dmang dpe skrun khang ed*), pp. 553/2-554/1. My translation.

[34] *'Bum khu tshur khu tshur 'bum be'u bum nag po*, Khro ru tshe rnams et al. 2006: 369-74.

[35] See *'Bum khu tshur, khu tshur'bum beu'bum nag*, pp. 370/14-18. On Zahor and its relation to Tibetan medicine, see also Van der Kujip 2010: 21-50.

[36] Martin 2011: 117-144.

[37] Wujastyk Dominik 2016: 1-18.

[38] *'Bum khu tshur khu tshur 'bum be'u bum nag po,* pp. 371/5-8.

[39] *'Bum khu tshur khu tshur 'bum be'u bum nag po,* pp. 372/12-22.

These methods show striking similarities with techniques we find in the medical works devoted to toxicology and in particular Andromache's theriac that were composed by Byzantine authors who lived in Alexandria and Constantinople from the sixth to the tenth century.[40]

Even though the global history of transmission of medical knowledge between the Mediterranean culture, India and China is beyond the scope of the present contribution, these similarities shall be taken in account in the light of future research on the intellectual and cultural connections among these medical systems.[41]

Texts and Materia Medica of Aphrodisiacs in the *Gser Bre Chen Mo*

Tsa ra ka'bum sde'i sha'i skyin gor chen mo[42]

The name Caraka (*tsa ra ka; spyod pa ba*) here is used according to the Buddhist norm, and therefore it shall be interpreted as a general term for non-Buddhist religious mendicants. In this anthology, indeed, it does not refer to the famous Indian physician, but it has a much wider significance being indicative of the whole traditions of ancient clairvoyant sages (*drang srong*), including āyurvedic authors and, by extension, the rasa-siddhas and vidyādharas, whose legacy reverberate through the numerous medical and alchemical works preserved in the *gSer bre chen mo*. This reference allows us to touch upon, even though tangentially, the historical narratives developed around the origin of medical knowledge as expressed in Tibetan medical historiography.[43] The *gSer bre chen mo* mirrors a complex image of medicine in which Buddhist and non-Buddhist traditions are integrated together through an adaptive reuse of models and sources in pursuing the establishment of the perfect magisterium of medical knowledge.

There are six therapeutic applications attributed to the medical compound prepared with lizard and salamander meats (*skyin gor*):

[40] I am referring in particular to the *De Remedis* composed by Theophanes Chrysobalantes (tenth century), who drawing on Oribasius and Aetius of Amidae, wrote about theriac and how to prepare viper meat according to different methods (how to cut the meat, cooking methods, medicinal butter, preparation of roasted and calcinated powders). Guardasole 2021: 156-159.

[41] See Touwaide, Appetiti 2013: 361-378.

[42] *gSer bre chen mo* (1), pp. 276/7-280/7; *gSer bre chen mo* (2), pp. 189/1-193/8.

[43] See *Khog dbug khyung chen lding ba*, in Kan su'u mi rigs dpe skrun khang ed. *Cha lag bco rgyad* (stod cha) 2009: 19/16-20/9.

a. Rejuvenating therapy (*rgan po gzhon par gtang*);

b. Bestowing a healthy complexion to emaciated patients (*rid pa tshon par gtong ba*);

c. Virility therapy to generate an offspring (*rnamg po bu tshol bar ro tsa sbyor ba*);

d. Curing cold diseases, oedemas, and renal failure causing bones disorder (*grang ba yul nas 'don mkhal nad tshigs pa lhung ba*);

e. A formula to develop the clear state of meditative absorption *samādhi* by eliminating torpor and mental fogginess (*bying rmug gnas su gzhom pa sgom chen tin 'dzin gsal ba'i sbyor ba*);

f. The method to cure erectile disfunction (*pho rtags las su rung bar sol bar bskyed pa*).

In this text, the *materia medica* is organised according to a hierarchical order reflected by the usage of a bureaucratic terminology. The key ingredients of the formulas are the "monarch-substances" (*sman gyi rgyal po*), which are the most effective against ageing and geriatric diseases, impotency and epidemics. They are assisted by the "minister-substances" (*blon po*), which have the same potencies but are less effective. The other substances are defined as "retinue" (*'khor ba*) or "servants" (*'bangs*) and they are aimed at counteracting and balancing any side effect of the main substances.

The following two groups of medicines are invariable in the formulas:

- The base to prepare the compounds (*gzhi sman*) or *tshang ra gsum* [*mtshang ra gsum*], which are the pelvic bones or loins (*dal mo*) of a three years old ram (*lug thong po*), two years old donkey (*bong thor tshang ra*), and otter (*sram*);
- Monarch substances called *"*the crazy kings of medicine" (*sman gyi rgyal po smyon pa*) and consist in the meats of salamander, rock Agama and toad-head lizard.
- The substances of the other groups vary according to the specific formula and the desired results.
- Among the minister-substances are enumerated different kinds of snakes (*Zaocys dhumnades* [Cantor];[44] *Elaphe carinata*[45]); pork and porcupine (*gzugs mo*) meats; loin of a snowcock [*Tetraogallus tibetanus*

[44] *sBrul* (dGa' bar do rje 1995: 382). According to Tibetan pharmacopoeias, its meat, bile, skin and fat are used to cure respectively poisons, wound and eye diseases, psoriasis and other skin disorders.

[45] *gSer sbrul* (*Ibid*.: 382). Its meat is used to cure communicable diseases (*gnyan nad*), enhances virility and boosts body weight.

Gould];[46] minerals and exudates such as bitumen, detoxified sulphur (*mu zi brtul ma*) and calcite.

• Among the servant-substances for the preparation of aphrodisiacs are listed the peeled off heads of red or light grey sparrows (namely Chinese and Tibetan sparrows), ram genitals and dried genitals of a man who died by sword (*skyes pa grir shi ba*), aconite (*sman chen*), chebulic myrobalan, cardamom, biles of different beings (*mkhris chen*),[47] salt ammoniac [*Ammonium chloride*[48]], halite rock salt [*Halitum*[49]] and black halite [*Halitum violaceum*[50]], the wind pipe or throat of a bearded vulture [*Gypaetus barbatus hemachalanus* (Hutton)][51] and bull Adam's apple are used to cure cold and renal disorders. Those used to improve the state of contemplation are portions of meat from arms and calves of a man dead for stabbing, heads of old sheep, meat of a wild sheep [*Pseudois nayaur* (Hodgson)][52] or Tibetan goa [*Procapra picticaudata* H.].[53]

The "vehicle medicines" (*sman rta*), which can increase or guide the potencies of medicines are sugar, molasses, honey but also wild honey,[54] milk, butter and ghee.

Variations of the previous recipes are to be found in the following minor texts and formulas.

Thig le skor drug gi rgyud (The Tantra of the Six-folded Essential Drop)[55]

This instructional teaching devoted to the preparation of a medicinal butter (*sman mar*) that strengthens the kidneys (*mkhal zungs gso ba*) and cures geriatric disorders (*rgas zungs gso*), is embedded into a Buddhist

[46] *Gong mo* (*Ibid.*: 362). Its meat is used to enhance virility and cure menstrual disorders, its dung is used to dispel demonic forces and to cure swellings; its tail feathers cure gynaecological pathologies.

[47] It could refer to human, fish, bear and bird of prey bile, which are usually addressed as *mkhris chen bzhi* (Byams pa 'phrin las et al. 2006: 82.

[48] *rGya tshwa* (*Ibid.*: 86).

[49] *lCe mnyang tshwa* (*Ibid.*: 87).

[50] *Kha ru tshwa* (*Ibid.*: 86).

[51] *Go bo'i gre ba* (*Ibid.*: 361-362).

[52] *gNa' ba* (*Ibid.*: 341).

[53] *dGo ba* (*Ibid.*: 336).

[54] *sBrang rgod*. It is unprocessed honey (*ma btul ba ba'i sbrang rtsi*). See Byams pa 'phrin las et al. 2006: 607.

[55] *gSer bre chen mo* (1), pp. 280/8-281/4; *gSer bre chen mo* (2) 193/8-18. In this second redaction, instead of *skor drug gi rgyud* there is *skor log gi rgyu* (lit. the cause of wrong turn of the essential drop).

framework, being presented as the practice of the "New Tantras of Tibet" (*bod kyi gsang sngags gsar ma*) and the tradition of those who achieved the long life of Indian vidyādharas (*yul rgya gar gi tshe'i dngos grub len par mdzad pa*).

The main root substance is Indian salamander meat (*rgya dkar gyi da byid; gangs sbal*), which is mixed with Tibetan sparrow meat (*bye'u nas zan; bya da byid*), domestic cat pelvic bones or loin (*zhun bu tshang ra*) and ram genitals.[56] They are mixed with the three myrobalan fruits in case of phlegmatic disorders, with the five roots[57] that strengthen the body, along with other minor ingredients (*kha tshar*).

mKhal ma la rlung (The Cure of Wind disorders affecting the Kidneys)[58]

This condition is a causative factor for the insurgence of strong pain at the lower back around the waist or rheumatic pain that should be cured with the juice of thorny caltrop [*Tribulus terrestris* L.], mixed with butter, Himalayan mandrake [*Mandragora chinghaiensis* K.],[59] crab, wild fennel [*Foeniculum vulgare* Mill],[60] dogbane [*Holarrhena antidysenterica* (L.) Wall ex. A. DC.],[61] leadwort and black halite.

bCud la gzhugs pa rtags ni (Symptoms of diseases affecting the essence)[62]

This condition can be identified with a low production of semen, which is of poor quality (*sa bon don med 'tshor*). The remedy is prepared with the salamander and Agama meats, sparrow and pigeon meats, sal ammoniac, sea salt, calcinated salt (*thal tshwa*), cinnabar (*mtshal*), long pepper [*Piper longum* L.][63] and ginger [*Zingiber officinale* Roscoe].[64]

[56] *gSer bre chen mo* (1), p. 280/15 and *gSer bre chen mo* (2), p. 193/7: *re thong gi rlig pa* [*ra tong gi rlig pa*].

[57] See footnote 27.

[58] *gSer bre chen mo* (1), pp. 280/19-281/4 and *gSer bre chen mo* (2), pp. 193/19-194/.

[59] *Kha shog pa* [*g.yung ba kha shog pa*] (see dGa' ba rdo rje 1995: 214-15). It cures communicable disease characterised by sores and carbuncles (*lhog pa*), intestinal parasites (*rgyu long gi srin bu*) and enhances virility.

[60] *La la phud* (*Ibid.*: 293). It increases metabolic heat and protects intestinal flora (*rgyu ma gzhugs pa'i srin bu la phen*).

[61] *Dug mo nyung ba* (*Ibid.*: 219-20).

[62] *gSer bre chen mo* (1), p. 281/5-13; *gSer bre chen mo* (2), pp. 194/4-12.

[63] *Pi pi ling* (dGa' ba rdo rje 1995: 137).

[64] *sGa skya* (*Ibid.*: 190-91).

mKhal ma grang babs (Cold diseases Affecting the Kidneys)[65]

In this case, these organs present some kind of swellings or abnormal masses (*skrangs*), not kidney stones (*rde'u med*), which cause painful urination and the appearance of an abnormal growth in the scrotum (*sgro ba skrangs*) and impotency. The remedy is prepared with salamander meat, crab, ram testicles, leadwort, long pepper and sea salt. It can be ingested in form of syrup, if it is mixed with molasses, or smeared as unguent (*sman mar*). It should be also associated to moxa therapy (*me btsa'*) that is practiced on the big toe where hair grow (*mthe bong spu skyes kyi gsang*).[66] Alternatively, the patient can intake a compound made of chebulic myrobalan, *Indra's arm* orchid, nutmeg, black halite, devil's dung [*Ferula assa-foedita* L.],[67] milk, *'bri* butter, calcite, crab, animal testicles, sparrow and pigeon meats, nutmeg, field pennycress, black salt and honey.

Sha Sbyor Rtsa Ba'i Rgyud Bdud Rtsi Ljong Shing Gi Man Ngag (The Tantra to Prepare the Meat Medicine, Pith Instruction of the Tree of Immortality)[68]

As in the previous case, this instruction is composed by diverse recipes but includes spells, apotropaic rituals and consecrations. The most significant formulas are analysed in the following sections.

It starts with the description of a medicine prepared with thirteenth ingredients, which is rather interesting because it provides us with encoded names of these substances:

- Salamander (*bcud rgyal da byid*)
- Calcite (*rdo'i da byid*)
- Fish (*chu'i da byid*)
- Sparrow (*gnam gyi da byid*)
- Chebulic myrobalan (*sman gyi da byid*)
- *Asparagus racemosus* Willd.(*ldum gyi da byid*)
- *Malva spp.* (*sngo'i da byid*)
- *Oroxylum indicum* (L.) Kurz. (*spos kyi da byid*)
- *Ferula assa-foetida* (*rtsi'i da byid*)

[65] *gSer bre chen mo* (1), pp. 281/13-282/5; *gSer bre chen mo* (2), pp. 194/13-195/3.

[66] Byams pa 'phrin las et al 2006: 344. Method used to cure the described abnormal masses, to cure the nerve blockages that regard the medulla oblongata (*ltag pa'i che ba rengs pa*).

[67] *Shin kun* (dGa' bar do rje 1995: 156-157).

[68] *gSer bre chen mo* (1), pp. 282/5-289/16; *gSer bre chen mo* (2), pp. 195/4-203/5.

- Sea salt (*tshwa'i da byid*)
- *Semercarpus Anacardium* L.f.[69] (*shing gi da byid*)
- Garlic (*rtsa'i da byid*)
- Field pennycress (*'bru'i da byid*)

sKyin skor yon tan (The Virtues of *skyin gor*) and *sMan mar da byid* (Medicinal Butter [Prepared with] Salamander Meat)[70]

These two sections are descriptive and provide secret names of substances. In the first section, there is a naturalistic picture of male and female specimens of salamander, which is identical to Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho's outline and to the description of the *Khu thur'bum*.[71] This element is indicative of a certain degree of intertextuality among these sources.

The benefits associated to the consumption of these reptile meats are long life, rejuvenation, sharp sense faculties, clear memory and physical strength (*dran gsal stobs skyes*), luminous complexion, growth of new teeth and black hair, getting rid of wrinkles, the guarantee of a progeny, the overcoming of abnormal growth of genital tissues and low production of semen (*'bras bus krangs dang sa bon zad pa*).

In the second instruction, there is a plethora of secondary names: the male specimens of salamander are "the lions sleeping on snow mountains" (*seng ge gangs dkar rtse na nyal*) while the females are those sleeping in profound blue lakes (*sngon mo'i rgya mtsho gting gu nyal*). Pigeons are "the feathered ones" (*'dab chags*), little Tibetan sparrows or the grain eaters (*nas zan bya'i bye'u*) are called "wheat pieces" (*gro cha*). The field pennycress is the thorny "plant salamander with fruits shaped like drums" (*sngo'i da byid sno rnga zugs 'dra'i 'bras bu*) and barley beer is the "fruit salamander" (*'bras bu da byid*).

Nad stobs dang sbyar ba (The Medical Compound to Overcome diseases)[72]

The unique mercury medicine can be found in this section and is followed by an apotropaic ritual according to which the practitioner, who shall recall mantras, visualises him/herself as a great scorpion devouring epi-

[69] *bSe shing* (dGa' ba rdo rje 1995: 120-121).
[70] *gSer bre chen mo* (1), pp. 285/2-286/16.
[71] See footnote 24. *'Bum khu tshur khu tshur 'bum be'u bum nag po*, pp. 371/9-14.
[72] *gSer bre chen mo* (1), pp. 286/20-287/6; *gSer bre chen mo* (2), pp. 199/15-200/2.

demics.[73] The recipe, which is prepared by mixing mercury, gold and sulphur, "goat poison" aconite [*Aconitum polyanthum; Aconitum refractum* (Finet & Gagnep.) Hand.-Mazz.],[74] black aconite [*Aconitum ferox* Wall; *Aconitum richardsonianum var. crispulum* W.T.Wang[75]], calamus root [*Acorus calamus* L.], the six excellent substances, chebulic myrobalan and guggul oleogum resin,[76] can cure epidemics characterised by diphtheria and carbuncles (*gag lhog*), cerebral and intestinal pathologies due to communicable diseases (*gze*r [*klad gzer; stod gzer; rgyu gzer*]).

Lastly, in the following is presented a magical spell to submit the beloved woman to one own will, and which is one of the many spellbinding associated to medical procedures and disseminated in these texts.

rDzas kyi dbang 'dud sbyor (Formula to Subjugate [Female Partners] by the means of Special Substances)[77]

A mixture of ginger, black pepper, long pepper, honey, turquoise, aromatic incense [*Lepisorus soulieanus* (Christ) Ching & S.K. Wu][78] should be smeared on one own's genitals before having any sexual intercourse and recite simultaneously special mantras in order to obtain the desired effect and steal women's souls. Alternatively, dog and human tongues aspersed with water mixed with honey, chicken meat, licorice and milk will increase sexual intercourses.

Conclusion

This preliminary study far from being exhaustive, is a starting point for a future in-depth examination of the *gSer bre chen mo* and its role in the codification of Tibetan pharmacological knowledge. However, the plurality of sources preserved in this medical anthology, reveals the image of Tibetan medical science in the fourteenth century as a complex discipline interrelated with alchemy and Buddhist rituals.

[73] [..] *rang sdig par bsam nas sngags' dren pa yin/ /steng gdon dang rims nad thams cad la'di las zab pa med do* ||.

[74] *Ra dug* (see dGa' bar do rje 1995: 243-246).

[75] *Bo nga nag po*. See the previous note.

[76] *Gu gul*. *Commiphora Mugul* (dGa' bar do rje 1995: 120); usually also identified as *Styrax benzoin* Dryad. This resin is used to cure infectious diseases, ulcers and diphtheria, leprosy and also those diseases classified as planetary diseases such as epilepsy.

[77] *gSer bre chen mo* (1), pp. 288/7-289/15.

[78] *gSer thig* [*brag spos*] (dGa' bar do rje 1995: 254).

As seen the medical uses of animal products and in particular of reptile and bird meats appear to be central in Tibetan virility therapy. The selected medical corpora have shown a certain degree of continuity of medical practices throughout centuries in Tibet. Whether at this stage of the research is not possible provide a punctual reconstruction of the borrowings from precise Indian, Chinese or Greco-Arab sources, the Tibetan pharmacopeia encapsulated and combined conceptions on the properties and virtues of substances that are to be found in other medical traditions, therefore reflecting the shared knowledge circulating across Eurasian cultures spanning centuries of historical development.

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