

Letter from the Editors

Andrew Quintman & Kurtis R. Schaeffer

The sixth issue of the *Journal of Tibetan Literature* (4.1) brings together contributions that span the breadth of Tibetan literary and cultural expression, from ninth-century Dunhuang manuscripts to contemporary Tibetan communities, from analysis of bilingual communications carved in stone to oral traditions in Tibet and exile communities. Each work challenges us to think more expansively about what constitutes Tibetan literature and how textual, oral, and material cultures intersect to create meaning across time and space.

This issue also includes JTL's first contribution dedicated to Mongolian topics, contributed by Sangseraima Ujeed. Ujeed's article reminds us that Tibetan Buddhism is both a pan-Asian and multilingual tradition. Mongolian authors have written about Buddhist topics in Mongolian, Tibetan, and Russian. JTL's publication partner, the Buddhist Digital Resource Center (BDRC), has [collaborated](#) with the Asian Legacy Library (formerly Asian Classics Input Project) to scan the entirety of the Tibetan collection at the National Library of Mongolia (NLM). This archive includes more than 30,000 volumes, which will eventually be preserved on the BDRC website. With this collection becoming readily available, we can expect more articles about Mongolian writers in the future.

Sam van Schaik's article, "The Goddess and the Great Perfection: Exploring Ekajati's role in Dzogchen," details the key place of the wrathful deity Ekajati in the Dzogchen tradition. Van Schaik walks us through Tibetan-language biographies of her as well as her possible origins, before presenting a study and complete translation of a manuscript from Dunhuang on a mandala consisting of Ekajati surrounded by a host of other female goddesses. Van Schaik argues that the ritual and philosophical content of this manuscript represents an important early systematization of ideas and practices involving Ekajati that would, in later centuries, develop in the context of the Seventeen Tantras of the Dzogchen tradition as well as the Heart Essence, or Nyingthik, tradition.

Sangseraima Ujeed's "The Refuge of the 'Enemy of the Dharma': Qalqa Čoytu Qongtaiji's Čayan Baišing Stele Inscription" examines an early Tibetan-Mongolian stele located some 140

miles west of Ulaanbaatar. Her original translation and analysis underscore how multilingual texts can contain dramatically different messages for their respective readers. The article also challenges some received narratives about the figure Čoytu Qongtaiji as an “enemy of the Dharma,” by highlighting his description as a devout patron of Buddhist monasticism.

Sonam Jamtsho’s contribution, “Sa-paṅ’s Hermeneutics: The Principles of Interpretation in his Three Major Works,” adopts a comparative approach to Sakya Paṅḍita’s interpretive methods by posing the question: How did this 13th-century Tibetan scholar articulate a hermeneutics across three different areas of Buddhist thought, namely epistemology, philology, and ethics, that is sufficiently adaptable to accommodate different goals, starting points, and audiences? To do this, Jamtsho surveys three important works in Sapaṅ’s corpus, the *Treasury of Reasoning* (*Tshad ma rigs gter*), *The Gateway to Learning* (*Mkhas pa ’jug pa’i sgo*), and *The Clear Differentiation of the Three Vows* (*Sdom gsum rab dbye*). Jamtsho argues that while each of these three works represents a distinctive approach to the interpretive challenge of working with traditions of thought derived from Indian classics, when taken together as the work of a single scholar they also represent a meta-approach to the exegesis of Indian Buddhist thought that is remarkably flexible and productive. Rather than trying to synthesize each domain—epistemology, philology, and ethics—under a single reductive rubric, Sapaṅ both allows each to retain its own hermeneutical tactics and shows that, according to Sapaṅ, this flexible interpretive strategy was also present in classical Indian Buddhist thought. Jamtsho’s approach thus helps us to approach the working methods and theories of such multifaceted writers as Sakya Paṅḍita in a way that begins to do justice to their total literary and philosophical output.

The collaborative contribution by Donyol Dondrup, Charlene Makley, and Paljor Tsering, entitled “The Afterlives of Oratory: Entextualizing Gungthang Rinpoche’s Speech About the Death of the 10th Panchen Lama,” bridges historical documentation, literary and cultural translation, and rhetorical analysis in their study of an extended speech given by the Sixth Gungtang lama of Labrang Tashikhyil Monastery. The piece demonstrates how oral performances can serve wide ranging and complex purposes through the practice of “condensed meanings” (*bsdus don*). The essay also calls attention to the “afterlives” of Gungtang Rinpoche’s words, through the circulation of cassette tapes, digitization, and WeChat, and to the ways that Tibetan oral literature continues to find new forms and audiences in the digital age. It concludes with a complete and annotated translation of Gungtang Rinpoche’s address.

In this issue, we speak with prominent Tibetan author and public intellectual Jamyang Norbu about his memories of stories and storytelling, his love of military history, the relationship between literature and political consciousness, his work as founding member of the Amnye

Machen Institute and as founder and director of the new High Asia Research Center, and his latest publication *Echoes from Forgotten Mountains: Tibet in War and Peace*.

The cover of Issue 4.1 is graced with recent work by artist Tsultrim Tenzin who, as he remarks in his Artist Statement, seeks through painting to “observe the world that feels true to me, blurring and blending between the weight of my Tibetan heritage and my Western upbringing.”

We hope you enjoy this issue of the *Journal of Tibetan Literature*.

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