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TAPPING THE BODY'S
NECTAR: GASTRONOMY
AND INCORPORATION IN
TIBETAN LITERATURE

This essay will present a set of thirteenth-century Tibetan texts that prescribe the consumption of human by-products—such as flesh, excrement, or urine—and consider several discursive contexts in which these prescriptions may be understood. The tantric command to consume human and animal by-products has been interpreted variously in secondary scholarship. My intention here is not to find out what the tantras really mean when they recommend that a practitioner eat human flesh, for instance, or whether anyone did in fact do so. Rather, in this article I will think about how a constellation of texts circulating at one moment in Tibetan history share a common language and about where else we may hear this language used. Although this is not primarily an article about methods of tantric interpretation or hermeneutics, I am proposing that we must notice how the discursive or “grammatical” structures of the tantras extend far beyond the boundaries of their own pages. Specifically, I will argue that Tibetan tantric prescriptions to consume human by-products are in an important way “medical” in their language and that this is particularly clear if we recognize that in Tibetan (and South Asian) contexts, “medicine” involves

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not only the healing of illness but also the enhancing of health, vitality, and power.

A set of products referred to as “the five nectars” (*bdud rtsi lnga*, Skt. *pañcāmṛta*) play a key role in many Indian and Tibetan tantric contemplative, ritual, alchemical, and yogic practices. Meant to be transformed through a ritual, yogic, and culinary alchemy into powerful purified substances, the five nectars are identified as human wastes or by-products: human feces, urine, “red *bodhicitta*” or (menstrual) blood, “white *bodhicitta*” or semen, and flesh or marrow (*dri chen*, *dri chu*, *byang sems dmar po* or *rak ta*, *byang sems dkar po*, *sha chen* or *rkang mar*). The five nectars are typically paired with the “five meats” (*sha lnga*, Skt. *pañcamāṃsa*), the flesh of cow, dog, horse, elephant, and human. The prescription of nectars and meats as imagined or actual food offerings for deities or as empowerment substances in tantric ritual is well known in secondary scholarship on Tibetan Buddhism, although there is little agreement on how these substances should in fact be identified.¹ Whether or not actual human by-products are used at all, however, nectar practices are basic to many serious followers of Tibetan Buddhism worldwide. A cup filled with nectar—here referring to a soupy mixture of various ingredients empowered by ritual “blessings” (*byin rlabs*)—is an important part of all tantric initiations, as well as the tantric feast offering ritual (*tshogs 'khor*). Reference to consumption of the five nectars and five meats is common in Highest Yoga Tantra (*Bla na med pa'i rgyud*, Skt. *Anuttarayoga tantra*) *sādhana* practices known as the “inner offering” (*nang mchod*). In one form of this type of ritual, for example, a “nectar pill” (*bdud rtsi ril bu*), created from a recipe of ingredients such as the five nectars and meats, may be dissolved in a skull cup filled with tea, alcohol, or urine. The mixture is cooked on a hearth fire, and from the steam of the boiled liquid the ritual's central deities are imagined to arise. They engage in a sexual encounter that produces a stream of powerful reproductive substances, or *bodhicitta*, which falls into the cup, and later the deities themselves also melt back into the cup. Consecrating and cooking the mixture thoroughly purifies the impure substances, and the empowered nectarous soup is then offered back to the deities. After an imagined cooking process, the purified nectar may also be “poured into” the student to confer empowerment. Variations on this sort of ritual are familiar to English-reading audiences, having been described by Beer, in the case of the Cakrasaṃvara tradition, by English, in the case of the Vajravārāhi *sādhana* practices that are part of

¹ A summary and analysis of academic perspectives on the identification of the nectars and meats may be found in Christian K. Wedemeyer, “Beef, Dog, and Other Mythologies: Connotative Semiotics in Mahayoga Tantra Ritual and Scripture,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 75, no. 2 (2007): 383–417.

the Cakrasaṃvara tradition, in a Vajrayoginī practice manual by Lobsang Tharchin, and elsewhere.²

In some tantric literature, however, there is another benefit attributed to consumption of human by-products: they are prescribed in recipes for compound preparations—pills, decoctions, edible charms, and the like—that treat illnesses of all sorts and that give one supernormal powers, or *siddhi*. Although secondary scholarship and publications oriented to practitioners have rarely focused on these more practical, or more immediately beneficial, uses of “nectar” (*bdud rtsi*), consecrated nectar is in fact a critical ingredient in recipes found across the spectrum of healing and occult technologies of religious and medical writing in Tibet. Some of these recipes have sources in the Indian Buddhist tantras and some have links to Chinese traditions, but Tibetans themselves developed a vast body of writing and practice of their own focused on such recipes and their implementation.

In this essay, I will suggest that the thirteenth-century flourishing of nectar-oriented writings in both medical and religious circles in Tibet shaped each of these traditions in important ways and that this period configured Tibetan nectar practices in ways that are markedly distinct from their manifestations in Indian Tantra. I will begin with discussion of a constellation of Buddhist texts on Accomplishing Medicine (*smān sgrub*), a practice at the core of the early Nectar Tantras corpus (*Bdud rtsi yon tan rgyud*), and then consider the thirteenth-century codification of nectar practice in the Nyingma (*Rnying ma*) tradition, which occurred simultaneously with the development of the tradition of the *Four Medical Tantras* (*Rgyud bzhi*), which became the dominant medical work of Central Tibet not long afterward. I will then examine several narrative, ritual, and cultural contexts in which we may find the language of consuming human by-products to be significant, moving beyond the realm of the Highest Yoga Tantra sādhanā practices in which they are typically contextualized, to consider their role in the intertwined languages of offering and generosity, eating and digestion, and alchemy and incorporation. To begin

² For an account of the *bali* and nectar tasting rituals in the Vajrayoginī tradition, see Elizabeth English, *Vajrayoginī, Her Visualizations, Rituals and Forms: A Study of the Cult of Vajrayoginī in India*, Studies in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2002), 206–20. For another description according to the Cakrasaṃvara tradition, see Robert Beer, *The Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs* (Boston and New York: Shambhala; distributed in the United States by Random House, 1999), 321–32. A contemporary practice manual is available as Tharchin Lobsang, *Sublime Path to Kechara Paradise: Vajrayoginī's Eleven Yogas of Generation Stage Practice as Revealed by Glorious Naropa* (Howell, NJ: Mahayana Sutra and Tantra Press, 1997). The *Samārodāya Tantra*, as another instance available in English, also describes the flow of nectar (*bdud rtsi*) internally in the course of contemplative and yogic exercises; see Shinichi Tsuda, “The Saṃvarodaya-Tantra: Selected Chapters” (thesis, Australian National University, 1974), 314–15.

with, however, my interest is in the fact that these substances, whatever they may be, are to be eaten; and to be more specific, I am curious about the use of the language of consumption, a discourse that I will call “gastronomic.” Most narrowly, the term “gastronomy” may refer to the art of cooking or to the art or science of “good eating”—I am not referring to this sense (although it is not entirely absent, as we will hear the *Caṇḍa-mahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, for example, proclaiming exuberantly that a diet of urine, reproductive fluids, and excrement “is the best, eaten by all Buddhas!”).³ In this article I follow a broader understanding of the term gastronomy as referring to a relationship between culture and food. The field of gastronomy may thus include issues such as the production and preparation of food and its conversion into complex “dishes,” the nature of recipes and cookbooks, food as communication, how culture delineates what counts as food and food taboos, how foods create identity, and so forth. By referring to a gastronomic discourse, I mean here to avoid the issue, for the moment, of whether human flesh, for instance, was actually or necessarily a component of these recipes, emphasizing instead the fact that whatever the substances really are, they are indeed called “human flesh,” and so forth, and they are said to be prepared for consumption. I will expand on the significance of this approach later in this article.

THE RECIPES OF VIMALAMITRA’S *EIGHT CHAPTERS ON NECTAR*

A gastronomic discourse of consuming human flesh and other body products, prepared following recipes targeted at achieving *siddhi* and other supernormal aims, is central to the Tibetan corpus of Nyingma tantras, many of which are said to be based on indigenous Tibetan writings and on transmissions that occurred during the first diffusion of Buddhism into Tibet, during the eighth to the ninth centuries. The discourse is also at the heart of the Accomplishing Medicine practice, which, among other things, outlines actual procedures for creating “nectar medicine” (*bdud rtsi sman*) and which is found most widely discussed and practiced in the Nyingma tradition.⁴ One of the earliest sources in Tibet for the Accomplishing Medicine practice is a collection known as the Nectar Tantras, or the Nectar Qualities (*Bdud rtsi yon tan*, Skt. *Vajrāmṛta*) Tantras. This large corpus, running over 600 folios in length in the Nyingma Collected Tantras of the Ancients canon (*Rnying ma rgyud ‘bum*), contains at least twelve

³ Christopher S. George, *The Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra, Chapters I–VIII: A Critical Edition and English Translation*, American Oriental Series (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1974), 64.

⁴ For more on the cross-sectarian adoption of Accomplishing Medicine and on the Nectar Tantras collection, see Frances Garrett, “The Alchemy of Accomplishing Medicine (*sman sgrub*): Situating the *Yuthok Heart Essence* (*G.yu thog snying thig*) in Literature and History,” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 37, no. 3 (2009): 207–30.

distinct texts (depending on the edition), addressing various contemplative, ritual, alchemical, and yogic practices, many of which are focused on the uses of the five nectars. One of its key works is the *Eight Chapters on Nectar* (*Bdud rtsi bam po brgyad*), part of which directly addresses the practice of Accomplishing Medicine.⁵

The Nectar Tantras collection is attributed to Vimalamitra, an Indian who is said to have spent many years in Tibet around the turn of the eighth to the ninth centuries and who is considered a central figure in the transmission and dissemination of Mahāyoga and early Great Perfection (*Rdzogs chen*) teachings in Tibet. As I discuss elsewhere, Vimalamitra's name is associated with the entire teaching cycle of the Nectar Qualities Tantras, which are based around the deity named Nectar Qualities, and which were eventually gathered as one of the Eight Means of Accomplishment (*sgrub pa bka' brgyad*).⁶ As tantras, the narrative of these teachings frames them as the speech of a Buddha, alternately referred to as Samantabhadra or the Nectar King, *Bdud rtsi rgyal po*. Although the texts of this cycle are traditionally given Indian and divine origins, some Tibetans, including Zhi ba 'od in the eleventh century, do argue that the *Eight Chapters on Nectar*, in particular, is itself an indigenously Tibetan text, albeit "composed in the guise of the word of the Buddha," as Zhi ba 'od puts it.⁷ Despite this controversy, the *Eight Chapters on Nectar* appears both in the Kangyur (*Bka' gyur*) and in the Collected Tantras of the Ancients, meaning that it was accepted as authoritatively Indian by the editors of these major collections. The Nectar Tantras are also authoritative sources for the medical traditions of Tibet.⁸

⁵ This eight-chaptered text can be found at "Thams cad bdud rtsi lnga'i rang bzhin dngos grub chen po nye ba'i snying po mchog gi lung bzhugs so," in *Rñin ma'i rgyud 'bum: A Collection of Treasured Tantras Translated during the Period of the First Propagation of Buddhism in Tibet*, reproduced from manuscripts preserved at Gtñi-skyes Dgon-pa-byañ monastery in Tibet under the direction of Dingo Khyentse Rimpoche (Thimbu, 1973–75), vol. 26 (1a), 147–200. Henceforth this will be referred to as the *Eight Chapters on Nectar* (*Bdud rtsi bam po brgyad*), although the title page of the work itself is as noted above. The *Eight Chapters on Nectar* is classified variously as an Anuyoga or Mahāyoga teaching: Sangs rgyas gling pa considers it an Anuyoga teaching, although the Gting skyes edition of the *Rnying ma rgyud 'bum* places it a Mahāyoga category. (The former observation has been made by Michael Walter, "The Role of Alchemy and Medicine in Indo-Tibetan Tantrism" [Indiana University, 1980], 143 and 204ff., 144.) For this article, I have consulted only the Gting skyes edition of this text; a comparative study of this edition with others elsewhere is in progress.

⁶ Garrett, "The Alchemy of Accomplishing Medicine."

⁷ Samten Karmay, "An Open Letter by Pho-brang Zhi-ba-'od," in *The Arrow and the Spindle: Studies in History, Myths, Rituals and Beliefs in Tibet*, ed. Samten Karmay (Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point, 1998), 33.

⁸ For example, De'u dmar bstan 'dzin phun tshogs (b. 1672) briefly summarizes a part of one of the Nectar Tantras, which he says was discovered by Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer (1124–92); De'u dmar calls this tantra the "Bdud rtsi 'od ldan gyi rgyud," which is likely the "Sangs rgyas thams cad kyi bdud rtsi ye shes 'od ldan gyis rgyud," in vol. 1a (vol. 26) of the Gting skyes edition of the *Rnying ma rgyud 'bum*, 583–619. De'u dmar bstan 'dzin phun tshogs,

The *Eight Chapters on Nectar*'s central practice involves the creation of nectar by consecrating a brew of fluids said to emerge from sexual union and various other ingredients. The sixth of the eight chapters contains explicit instructions on how to make nectar (*bdud rtsi sbyor ba*). Selecting and purifying a suitable place, the text says, the practitioner should make a maṇḍala; it should be covered with excrement and urine, with five human skulls placed at the cardinal points and in the center and lit with a lamp fueled by human fat. The practitioner should obtain the skull of a Brahmin and place it at the maṇḍala's center, filled with five "fragrant nectars" (that is, the five human by-products or products designated as their substitutes). To that mixture a number of fruit, plant, and mineral ingredients are to be added, as well as the five meats and the five substances that are extruded by the sense organs (the eyes, nose, ears, tongue, and heart). More ingredients are added to the concoction: grapes, wood-apple, mango, jackfruit, cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg, cloves, and so forth, plus the powder of ground-up gold, silver, copper, iron, and turquoise. As the practitioner stirs this brew, he (the text presupposes a male) chants mantras. "The excellent nectar mixed from these [ingredients] is certain to bestow the fruits of *siddhi*," the tantra asserts.⁹

Once the practitioner has mixed his brew of nectar, he should next take up the identity of a wrathful Heruka, he should be joined by a consort, and the pair should engage in sexual intercourse. At this point, the text promises, "You will achieve facility with the vastness [of Buddhahood] and its causal conditions, and you will arrive at the *samādhi* of the peaceful *dharma*kāya. You will become possessed of the eight worldly *siddhi* and attain the empowerment of ultimate truth."¹⁰ This ritual should be conducted while the female is menstruating, and the mixture of her blood and his semen is referred to as "the best *rasāyana* [*ra sa ya na'i gto bo*]."¹¹ Instructions for a contemplative exercise follow. When the blood and

"Gso ba rig pa'i chos 'byung nam thar rgya mtsho'i rba rlabs drang srong dgyes pa'i 'dzum phreng," in *Gso rig gces btus rin chen phreng ba bzugs so* (Zi ling: Mtsho sngon mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1993), 678. See the reference to Nyang ral's connection with this same text and comments on the text's enhancement by Ra mo shel sman at Skal bzang 'phrin las, *Bod kyi gso ba rig pa'i byung 'phel gyi lo rgyus gsal bar ston pa baidurya sngon po'i zhun thigs* (Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1997), 283. Connections between the medical tradition and Accomplishing Medicine as they are recorded in the biography of G.yu thog yon tan mgon po (1112–1203) are discussed in Garrett, "The Alchemy of Accomplishing Medicine."

⁹ "Di nams sbyar ba bdud rtsi'i mchog / dngos grub 'bras bu thob nges so," *Bdud rtsi bam po brgyad*, 180. The sixth chapter of the *Bdud rtsi bam po brgyad* is found at 178–84. This chapter has been translated in Walter, "The Role of Alchemy and Medicine," 168–77, although all translations here are my own.

¹⁰ "Yangs shing rgyu la goms pa dang / chos sku zhi ba'i ting 'dzin yong / yon tan brgyad dang ldan pa la / nges pa'i don dbang thob par bya," *Bdud rtsi bam po brgyad*, 181.

¹¹ Ibid., 182.

semen meet, at the five power places (*gnas lnga*) of the body (the crown of the head, the tongue, the heart, the navel, and the genitals) the practitioner should imagine five luminous seed syllables and five Buddhas radiating light. As the light rays contract, the practitioner should grab hold of these “five medicines” (*sman lnga*) for himself. The five nectars here are each associated with a Buddha and his seed syllable: Vairocana with excrement, Amitābha with *bodhicitta*, Amoghasiddhi with flesh, Ratnasambhava with blood, and Akṣobhya with urine.¹² The seed syllables then melt into five streams of the five nectars. Repeating this visualization many times, together with mantra recitation and hand gestures, the practitioner consecrates the nectar vessel at the center of the maṇḍala by resting his hand on its top. While the practice described in this text appears soteriologically oriented primarily, we should note that enhanced personal power in the form of *siddhi* is also obtained as a result of successful practice, and language describing the nectar preparation as “medicine” is prominently placed.

GU RU CHOS DBANG'S NECTAR RECIPES

According to Nyingma tradition, Vimalamitra shared these Nectar Tantras with Padmasambhava, who gave them to King Khri srong lde btsan, who hid them away.¹³ While the texts of the Collected Tantras of the Ancients cannot be dated precisely and the authorship of many of its texts is unclear, the teachings of the Eight Means of Accomplishment corpus, including the Nectar Tantras cycle, were made prominent several centuries later, when they are said to have been discovered as treasure (*gter ma*) between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Their two main revealers, Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer (1124–92) and Nyang ral's incarnate successor, Gu ru chos dbang (1212–70), are thus responsible for organizing and presenting coherently the teachings of the Nectar Qualities Tantras (which are themselves part of the Nyingma Collected Tantras of the Ancients) within the organizational format of the Eight Means of Accomplishment.

¹² These associations are common to other tantras; e.g., see a similar citation from Tsong kha pa in Alex Wayman, *The Buddhist Tantras: Light on Indo-Tibetan Esotericism* (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1973), 116.

¹³ David Germano's work (unpublished manuscript) on the early history of Great Perfection authors has been helpful here. The teachings of both Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava on these topics are addressed in Walter, “The Role of Alchemy and Medicine.” Also see Garrett, “The Alchemy of Accomplishing Medicine.” On Guru Chos dbang, see work by Janet Gyatso, including “The Logic of Legitimation in the Tibetan Treasure Tradition,” *History of Religions* 33, no. 2 (1993): 97–134, and “Guru Chos-dbang's gTer 'byung chen mo: An Early Survey of the Treasure Tradition and Its Strategies in Discussing Bon Treasure,” in *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Sixth International Association of Tibetan Studies Seminar*, ed. Per Kvaerne (Oslo: Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, 1994), 1:275–87.

In this context they are important architects of Tibetan practices of creating and using nectar. In the process of developing these teachings, each of these authors revealed, or wrote, a number of additional works specifically on the nectar-creating process of Accomplishing Medicine, as well as on the various uses of consecrated nectar.

Significantly, Nyang ral nyi ma 'od zer and Gu ru chos dbang lived during the same periods as two foundational figures in the Tibetan medical tradition. Nyang ral's lifespan parallels that of G.yu thog yon tan mgon po (1112–1203), editor/author of the *Four Medical Tantras* (*Rgyud bzhi*). Nyang ral's successor, Gu ru chos dbang, similarly mirrors G.yu thog's main student, Sum ston ye shes gzungs. Sum ston was redactor of a large portion of the *Yuthok Heart Essence Guru Sādhana* (*G.yu thog snying thig bla sgrub*), which is the core ritual manual for the medical tradition's practice of Accomplishing Medicine as it is performed still today.¹⁴ While there is no evidence that either pair of Treasure Revealer and medical figure was acquainted personally, we must nevertheless take critical note of the remarkable flourishing in Central Tibet of nectar-oriented writing that occurred during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, simultaneously in both medical and religious circles.

Two consecutive texts from Gu ru chos dbang's treasure revelation, the multivolume *Consummation of Eight Secret Means of Accomplishment* (*Bka' brgyad gsang ba yongs rdzogs*), illustrate the practical turn taken in this period of writing on nectar and its uses. In his *Accomplishing Nectar Medicine* (*Bdud rtsi sman bsgrub*), Gu ru chos dbang explains that a nectar elixir subdues the five afflictive poisons of desire, anger, delusion, pride, and envy and that it is also "a medicine for healing illness and death."¹⁵ The act of creating this nectar medicine requires a complex series of procedures. Gu ru chos dbang notes that practitioners must refer to other works for general instructions on how to complete aspects of the ritual such as confessions, ritual cake (*gtor ma*) offerings, blessings, or hand gestures, explaining that there are no special ways of doing these practices in the context of this particular ceremony. The text focuses instead on the tantric transformation of saṃsāric elements into medicinal therapies, such that, as the Gu ru chos dbang says, "afflictions and poisons will become medicine."¹⁶

¹⁴ The *Yuthok Heart Essence Guru Sādhana* is the core of the *Yuthok Heart Essence* (*G.yu thog snying thig*) anthology; this anthology is discussed in some detail in Garrett, "The Alchemy of Accomplishing Medicine."

¹⁵ "Dir yang dug lnga 'joms shing na ba 'chi gsos kyi sman du gyur pa'o," Gu ru chos kyi dbang phyug, "Zhi khro bka' brgyad las bdud rtsi sman bsgrub," in *Bka' brgyad gsang ba yongs rdzogs: A Complete Cycle of Rñin-Ma-Pa Practice Focusing upon the Ancient Eight Pronouncements of Gu-Ru Rin-Po-Che* (Paro: Ngodrup & Sherab Drimay, 1979), 3:278. This text is referred to simply as "Bdud rtsi sman bsgrub."

¹⁶ "Nyon mongs dug nams sman du 'gyur," *ibid.*, 3:302.

To effect this transformation, Gu ru chos dbang explains, the practitioner should first draw a maṇḍala and arrange on top of it the ritual ingredients, organized into sets of eight. In addition to the eight parts of a plant (root, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, bark, resin, fruit), this arrangement also includes the five nectars, each of which has eight kinds. Thus the first of the five, excrement, may include the excrement of an accomplished lama, the excrement of one who has been liberated from the five karmic results (*'bras bu lnga sgrol ba*), the excrement of one who has died naturally, the excrement of Kukurāja (*ku ku ra tsa*),¹⁷ the excrement of flower (i.e., honey), the excrement of various birds, the excrement of various fish, or the excrement of an elephant. The eight types of *bodhicitta*, the second of the five nectars, may include the perfected aspect of bone, which is teeth; the perfected aspect of the senses, which are eyeballs; the perfected aspect of sinew (*chu rgyus*), which are nails; perfected *bodhicitta*, which are bone drops (*rus thig*) and bone relics (*sha ri ram*); the bezoar (*go ro tsa na*) that naturally results from *bodhicitta*; and so forth.¹⁸ The eight types of flesh include flesh from the two hands, the two feet, the lungs, tongue, kidney, and anus. The eight kinds of blood include the blood of white dog, horse blood, buffalo blood, corpse blood, blood of the right nostril of a woman (*yum*), and vulture blood. The eight kinds of urine, finally, are the water of ocean froth, bitumen stone (*brag zhun rdo*) water, the water of calcite elixir (*bdud rtsi cong zhi*), the water of *bodhicitta* of the great Lentsa deity (*lan tsha lha chen*), the water of a woman (*yum*), the water of man's (*yab*) penis (*rdo rje*), the water of one who has been liberated from karmic results, and the water of a corpse's legs (*bam gyi rkang chu*). A long list of additional obscure ingredients follows this presentation, including beers, waters, and milks that are to be poured into skull cups; other ingredients are to be measured in eggshells and placed around the maṇḍala.

With the maṇḍala fully decorated by these substances, Gu ru chos dbang explains that a series of common ritual actions should be performed. Medicine Buddhas and other figures should be invited to the ceremony as the propitiator clears his or her own mind of conceptuality through a series of verse recitations, hand gestures, cymbal playing, incense burning, and pouring beer. The nectar offerings are then purified through visualization

¹⁷ Kukurāja may refer to a teacher of Marpa or simply to special excrement. The excrement of important religious masters is commonly held to be especially valuable and is said to be preserved over generations for use in ritual preparations. It may also refer to dog feces.

¹⁸ This entire list is obscure: "byang chub sems kyi rtsa ba brgyad ni / rus pa mthar phyin pa so / dbang po mthar phyin pa mig 'bras / chu rgyus mthar phyin pa sen mo / byang sems mthar phyin rus thig dang gdung sha ri ram / byang sems rgyu mthun go ro tsa na / rgyun lam gzhang pa / byang sems ro myang gsang rten 'bras bcas bsag," Gu ru chos kyi dbang phyug, "Bdud rtsi sman bsgrub," 280.

techniques and mantra recitation. Instructions are later given for a vase empowerment ritual: the officiant imagines the maṇḍala deities melting into the nectar in the vase, and he then pours the top portion of the nectar out of the vase into the beer cup. The vase is placed on the student's head, and the deities melt into the student's body from it, whereupon empowerment is conferred.

While the highlighting of numerous esoteric ingredients in this text and its explicit and repeated reference to nectar as medicine distinguish this work from the earlier *Eight Chapters on Nectar*, described above, both texts share the structure of a tantric sādhana. Immediately following *Accomplishing Nectar Medicine*, however, is quite a different sort of text. Gu ru chos dbang's *Accomplishing Medicine Applications* (*Sman bsgrub las tshogs*) offers a range of practically oriented recipes for the use of consecrated nectar to achieve various aims. He provides a general recipe for combining the five nectars into a concoction that may then be used as a base ingredient for more elaborate prescriptions: "Six liters [*bre*] of nectar [*bdud rtsi*, that is, excrement], a handful of human flesh, one palmful of blood, half of that of white *bodhicitta* bezoar [*go ro tsa na*], and however much urine is appropriate."¹⁹ Recommended sources for collecting these ingredients are provided: for example, the *bodhicitta* may be the brains of a sixteen-year-old child, the blood may come from your lama's consort, caretaker, or female student, and the urine may be taken from a young child born to your lama and his consort.²⁰ The sources for these substances are not the same as those presented in Gu ru chos dbang's *Accomplishing Nectar Medicine*, emphasizing the fact that the five nectars are defined differently for different purposes or in different contexts.

Following the general recipe above, Gu ru chos dbang offers a series of prescriptions for mixtures that cure illness or enhance personal health and power. Thus, if you mix the juice-like nectar with more than thirty additional ingredients, including turmeric, a tooth tip, bitumen, white aconite (*bong nga*), barberry bark, camphor, a young boy's bezoar, and various other medicinal substances, then this compound may be used to treat contagious diseases or poisons. Adding calcite (*cong zhi*), pitch (*brag zhun*), saffron, *bal bu* leaves, the three salts, pomegranate, and the flesh of a lammergeyer to a handful of nectar will clear up bladder disease. Heart disease may be treated with a mixture of a handful of nectar together with nutmeg, Khun tree (*shing khun*), molasses, and black aloe.²¹

¹⁹ "Sbyar tshad ni bdud rtsi bre drug la sha chen phul gang / ragta khyor gang / go ro tsa na byang sems dkar po de'i phyed / dri chu ci rigs sbyor 'phrod do," Gu ru chos kyi dbang phyug, "Sman sgrub las tshogs," in *Bka' brgyad gsañ ba yoñs rdzogs*, 3:307.

²⁰ Ibid. In the recipes of this text, *bdud rtsi* when not otherwise qualified appears to refer to excrement (of whatever type).

²¹ Ibid., 308.

Other recipes are given for the treatment of diseases of the lungs, kidneys, bile, leprosy, smallpox, eye disease, and more, some of them offering recommended dosages and times for ingesting the compounds. Some remedies address what even in biomedical terms we may identify as “medical” conditions, but many address spirit possession, a treatable “medical condition” in most Tibetan contexts. For example, “combine nectar in the measure of a sparrow-egg-full, sulphur, asafetida, musk, greens, ginger, salt, human fat, white mustard, and zinc. Mix them, and make a pill the size of a middling dung pellet of a deer. If you rely on it for 21 days, you will be free from *klu* [spirits], poison, and *gdon* [spirits].”²²

In addition to recipes aimed at the healing of illness there are prescriptions for enhancing one’s personal health or power. For example, “combine a full liter [*bre*] of good calcite, an eggful of bamboo pith, the *bodhicitta*-bezoar of a person, horse, dog, bird, and so forth, vajra-ruler testicle-gland, fat, marrow, ash-colored *dorje*, pitch—mix them well, [make] a white pill, and put it into a bowl or a skull-cup. If you take it, it will make your body ripen and become perfected.”²³ There are also recipes for enhancing personal power through increasing semen or wealth, controlling territory, and the powers of fast-walking and flying. Although most recipes here are aimed at the healing of illness, the collection is not organized as remedies might be in a medical text. Rather, the organizational scheme of ritual is used, with recipes for activities (*las sbyor*) that have peaceful, enhancing, controlling, or ferocious effects. Burning the nectar, for example, pouring it in a reliquary, or tossing it into a burnt offering (*sbyin sreg*) fire, will have ferocious and destructive results.

Finally, the last section of this text includes culinary instructions for sixteen different ways of processing nectar mixtures: nectar may be putrefied, toned down, enhanced, boiled, ground up, dried, pushed, powdered, in pill form, in ointment form, cooked with plants, or prepared as soup, beer, butter, porridge, or milk soup. Each recipe involves adding additional ingredients to the nectar and processing the mixture in a certain way. For example, “to make a nectar beer, [mix the nectar] with an equal portion of good powder. Boil it to well cooked, and make a paste. Add to it a fine fermenting agent, and by covering it for two or three days, it will rise up. Strain out the liquid gently, and it will be beer.”²⁴

²² “Bdud rtsi khra’i sgong nga gang gi tshad la / mu zi / shing kun / gla rtsi / tshal / lga / tshwa / tshil chen / yungs kar / ti tsha nams sbyar te / ril bu gla ba’i ril ma ‘bring po tsam byas te / zhag nyer gcig tu brten na klu dug gdon las thar ro,” *ibid.*, 3:313.

²³ “Cong zhi bzang po bre gang / cu gang sgo nga gang la / mi rta khyi bya la sogs pa’i byang sams go ro tsa na / mi dbang rdo rje rlig ‘bras chu ba / tshil bu rkang mar / thal kha rdo rje / brag zhun / nams legs par sbyar ba’i ril bu dkar yol lam thod par blugs te longs spyad na lus smin cing rdzogs par byed,” *ibid.*, 310.

²⁴ “Bdud rtsi chang du bya ba ni / phye bzang dang cha mnyam ste / tshos par btsos la chang bu bya / de la phab zhib mo btab la zhag gnyis gsum gnan pas langs pa dang / chu ‘jam bsings pas chang du ‘gyur,” *ibid.*, 316.

Although much of this text reads like a recipe book, it is clearly embedded in a larger framework of tantric practice. Like many tantric practices, Accomplishing Medicine has different levels, and its recipes and transformative operations are thus contextualized in a taxonomic scheme of Buddhist tantric activity. In *Accomplishing Medicine Applications*, Gu ru chos dbang explains that there are external, internal, and secret forms of practice. The external practice involves exercises such as creating beverages from excrement, the “three hots,”²⁵ old butter and milk, and then combining that liquid with solid ingredients for hot or cold illness, as appropriate to the yogin, to form pills that are taken daily for six months. The inner practice involves such activities as consuming a mixture made from the flesh of a seven-times-born Brahmin and the “ever-weeping bodhisattva” nectar (*bdud rtsi rtag tu ngu*), sulphur (*mu zi*), and the hind part of a brown frog. The secret practice involves sustaining a meditation on the view or achieving the deity together with a well-qualified consort (*phyag rgya ma*).²⁶ Gu ru chos dbang’s classification of Accomplishing Medicine into external, internal, and secret forms organizes a hierarchy that places the healing of illness at one extreme and the contemplative practice of deity yoga at the other. We should take note, however, of the presence of these aims along a single scale: healing illness, enhancing health and power, and achieving union with the deity are all enabled through the medium of nectar; to put it another way, they are all expressed in the language of nectar, a language that calls upon a particular vocabulary of ingredients and recipes and a particular grammar of enhancement and transformation. As I will discuss further below, this is a language that is used in other contexts and that is connected to realms of healing, alchemy, digestion, and incorporation.

G.YU THOG’S TEACHINGS ON THE USE OF HUMAN PRODUCTS

While Gu ru chos dbang was studying and compiling the Nectar Tantras and articulating their nectar recipes, the students of medical scholar G.yu thog yon tan mgon po were also refining their own teacher’s instructions, working to create and disseminate the *Four Medical Tantras*, the *Eighteen Additional Practices* (*Cha lag bco brgyad*), the *Yuthok Heart Essence Guru Sādhana*, and other works that represent both tradition and innovation in thirteenth-century Tibetan medical practice and theory. Like Gu ru chos dbang, G.yu thog’s teachings in both the *Guru Sādhana* and the *Four Medical Tantras* rely on an array of materia medica, including human body products, for recipes that heal illness and enhance personal health

²⁵ The “three hots” (*tsha ba gsum*) are black pepper (*pho ba ris*), long pepper (*pi pi ling*), and medicinal ginger (*sman lga*).

²⁶ Gu ru chos kyī dbang phyug, “Sman sgrub las tshogs,” 3:317.

and power. The *Guru Sādhana*, a collection that primarily consists of instructions for contemplative, yogic, and ritual practice, contains a long, practically oriented section on healing, because in its view illnesses constitute obstacles on the path to liberation.²⁷ Here too, we find a recipe collection in which human products feature prominently. A wind illness may be treated with a noodle soup made from human flesh,²⁸ or a decoction of human bones sprinkled with white garlic: “Cut white garlic into pieces and boil it down with a handful of water and a handful of milk. Leave the material that does not dissolve, and consume the liquid lukewarm.”²⁹

If we look at the more performative aspects of the *Yuthok Heart Essence Guru Sādhana*’s ritual practice, moreover, we see its contribution to another key aspect of Tibetan tantric gastronomy, one in which a divine host of ritual participants engage in feasting on human bodies. The iconography and lore of the dharmapālas or protectors (*srung ma*), a large class of Tibetan deities focused on the protection of Buddhism, portray these figures as cannibalistic in their savage otherness. These protectors play a critical role in the medical tradition’s practice of Accomplishing Medicine, as described in the *Yuthok Heart Essence Guru Sādhana* and as performed by physician-ritualists today. One of the chief protector deities for the medical tradition, for example, is Zhang blon Rdo rje bdud ‘dul, “Minister Demon-Taming Thunderbolt.” Like other deities, Rdo rje bdud ‘dul may take different forms: he is sometimes known as a medicine god (*sman gyi lha*), and he may appear as the Medicine Buddha’s attendant (*sman bla’i bka’ sdod*). He is also chief member of the group of nine protectors of the medical tradition (*bka’ sdod srung ma zhang blod dam can sde sgu*), and these nine are therefore also the protectors of the tradition’s Accomplishing Medicine practice. Paintings of each of them were hung around the central maṇḍala at the Accomplishing Medicine ceremonies I observed in Lhasa in 2001.³⁰ Each of the nine appears in wrathful form:

²⁷ Khams smyon dharma senge, ed., *G’yu thog sñin thig gi yig cha: The Collected Basic Texts and Ritual Works of the Medical Teachings Orally Passed from G’yu-thog Yon-tan-Mgon-po (Reproduced Photographically from Prints from the 1888 Lcags-Po-Ri Blocks by O-Rgyan Rnam-Rgyal)* (Leh, Ladakh: D. L. Tashigang, 1981), 199. The text in which these recipes appear, entitled “Bla sgrub kyi ‘byung ba lus ‘khrugs kyi gegs sel,” is part of the “root text” of the *Yuthok Heart Essence Guru Sādhana*. Although the tradition refers to this as the teaching of G.yu thog, this text is attributed to Zur mkhar mnyam nyid rdo rje (1439–75), a medical scholar who played an important role in the editorial revision and, in some cases, authorship of the *Yuthok Heart Essence* anthology. For more on this anthology, see Garrett, “The Alchemy of Accomplishing Medicine.”

²⁸ Khams smyon dharma senge, *G.yu thog snying thig*, 199.

²⁹ “Mi rus tshon po’i thang sgog skya bran pa btang / sgog skya dul gang gtubs la chu phul gang la ‘o ma phul gang du gdus / khu ba rang la ma thim tsam gyi tshig ma bzhang / khu ba dron mo btang,” *ibid.*, 200–201.

³⁰ Limited documentation, including video footage, of these ceremonies is available at the Tibetan and Himalayan Library, www.thlib.org. Further documentation and analysis of this event is in progress.

Rdo rje bdud 'dul himself wears a crown of skulls and a necklace of human heads, and he holds a skull cup filled with warm human hearts.³¹ Ekajāti, also an important protector for the Nyingma Great Perfection tradition, holds the warm heart of an enemy and is adorned with a human skin cloak and garlands of skulls and the bloody heads of children; she lives in cemeteries floating in a sea of blood and fat, her body covered with cremation ash.³² The body of Shan ti ro zan ma is coated with human fat and blood, and she too carries a skull cup of hearts.

In the practice of Accomplishing Medicine, selected ingredients are processed by means that are recognizably culinary, by mixing, boiling, or fermenting, for example, as discussed above, but they also must ultimately be empowered in the context of a sādhana during which the practitioner has taken on the guise of a deity. It is with this participatory consciousness that the practitioner-as-deity interacts intimately with the summoned assembly of Buddhas and protectors, such as Shan ti ro zan ma or Ekajāti, while consecrating the culinary preparation, thereby effecting its transformation into nectar. Thus, in the language that dominates Accomplishing Medicine as a performed ritual narrative, these protectors and their dietary dispositions are key participants of a ritual grammar in which humans are not only consumers of food, but consumed as food.

The medical tradition's gastronomic rhetoric of consuming humans is not articulated exclusively by such examples from the esoteric *Guru Sādhana*, however. Although today Tibetan medicine is often called "herbal," the compound medicinal prescriptions in medical texts recommend many ingredients that are not plants. Recipes for Tibetan medicinal compounds may include rocks and minerals, precious stones, and animal and human by-products. The twentieth chapter of the *Four Medical Tantras*' second book, the *Explanatory Tantra (Bshad rgyud)*, on the qualities (*nus pa*) of medicinal substances, offers numerous examples of the

³¹ For a summary of the nine, see René de Nebesky-Wojtkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet: The Cult and Iconography of the Tibetan Protective Deities* (New York: Gordon Press, 1976), 79–80; Gyurme Dorje and Fernand Meyer, eds., *Tibetan Medical Paintings: Illustrations to The "Blue Beryl" Treatise of Sangye Gyamtso (1653–1705)*, 2 vols. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1992), pl. 14. The nine protectors called upon in the Accomplishing Medicine rites are Zhang blon rdo rje bdud 'dul (also called Bka' srung zhang blon bdud rnams 'dul), Gnod sbyin chen po yang le ber, Khyab 'jug chen po rāhula, Srin po 'jigs byed, Srog bdag hab se, Dam can srog gi spu gri, Ekadzati, Mkha' 'gro tso mo lce spyang ma, and Shan ti ro zan bdud mo. Several of these protectors are especially important in the Nyingma pantheon as well as for the medical tradition. Closely associated with the group of nine medicine protectors are the "five kings" (*rgyal po sku lnga*), led by the protector Pe har; this group is also propitiated in the Accomplishing Medicine ceremonies as protectors of Buddhism and the medical tradition alike.

³² Nebesky-Wojtkowitz, *Oracles and Demons of Tibet*, 22–37; Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (Roma: Libreria dello Stato, 1949), 590–94.

benefits of consuming human waste products and body parts, and commentaries to this chapter make it clear that the tradition understood the names of these products literally, as substances actually taken from the human body.³³ Whether these ingredients are used today in medicinal compounds is highly doubtful, and how often they were used in the past cannot be determined; what I am pointing to here, however, is their significant presence in the *Four Medical Tantras* and its commentarial tradition. According to this body of literature, then, consumption of human feces, for example, treats tumors, poisoning, swellings, and demonic possession; the consumption of human excrement is also recommended as an antidote to the effects of aging.³⁴ Human urine protects one against contagious disease; an eight-year-old child's urine may be especially helpful for contagious diseases or spirit possession. Human fat helps cure wind diseases and reduce boils. Blood collected by means of bloodletting is used in various recipes, and uterine blood builds muscle tissue, treats leprosy, and is a remedy for ruptured blood vessels. Human flesh treats wind disorders, poisoning, and plagues. White and red *bodhicitta*, or reproductive fluids, can be used to treat seminal loss, menorrhagia, and wounds, and they also have rejuvenating qualities; secretions taken from the vagina during sexual intercourse may also be useful for treating wounds. Thus, in but a single chapter of the *Four Medical Tantras*, each of the tantric five nectars is considered beneficial for the treatment of illness.

Other human body parts are considered useful in this chapter on medicinal substances. Human brains can be used to treat swellings, and meconium from a newly born or stillborn infant can be helpful in treating poisoning. Breast milk can cure some kinds of poison, as well as diarrhea

³³ G.yu thog yon tan mgon po, *Bdud rtsi snying po yan lag brgyad pa gsang ba man ngag gi rgyud ces bya ba bzugs so* (Bod ljongs mi dmangs dpe skrun khang, 2000), 65–76. Commentaries to this chapter's section on medicines that come from animals, which include human products, may be found at Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, *Gso ba rig pa'i bstan bcos sman bla'i dgongs rgyan rgyud bzhi'i gsal byed bai durya sngon po'i malli ka zhes bya ba bzugs so*, 2 vols. (Dharamsala: Tibetan Medical & Astro Institute, 1994), 322–54. Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho discusses some acceptable substitutions for reproductive fluids at *Bai durya sngon po*, 340. Medical commentator Zur mkhar pa blo gros rgyal po has much less to say about this chapter than does Sangs rgyas rgya mtsho, interestingly; Zur mkhar pa blo gros rgyal po, *Rgyud bzhi'i 'grel pa mes po'i zhal lung*, 2 vols. (Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1989), 529.

³⁴ Additional uses of human products as methods of enhancing health and longevity are also found in the *Four Medical Tantras*' chapter on "alchemical" remedies for nourishing the aged (*rgas pa gso ba bcud len*), the eightieth chapter of the *Man ngag rgyud*, at G.yu thog yon tan mgon po, *Rgyud bzhi* (2000), 548–51. This chapter has been translated in R. E. Emmerick, "rGas-pa gso-ba," in *Indo-Tibetan Studies: Papers in Honour and Appreciation of Professor David L. Snellgrove's Contribution to Indo-Tibetan Studies*, ed. Tadeusz Skorupski, *Buddhica Britannica* (Tring, UK: Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1990), 92–99.

and vomiting.³⁵ Hip bone is helpful for muscular spasms, skull bone dries out serum, bones in general can help cure heart disease, aged human bone and the ashes of the human shoulder bone can prevent chronic fever, and the bones of a human being who has been killed by lightning and the skull of one who has died from dysentery may both be used to treat dysentery. The organ meat of a young girl may treat some types of poisoning. Smallpox scabs can be applied to active pustules. Even hair may be used: to treat eye disease, demonic possession, or hemorrhoids, try the fumes and ashes of burnt human hair. Some poisons may be treated with burnt hair taken from the nape of the neck; childbirth pains may be eased by hair from the crown of the head.

What is especially fascinating about the presence of these remedies in the *Four Medical Tantras* is that the use of human products for healing illness was apparently not common in Indian Āyurveda, the source of a large amount of Tibetan medical information, although it is well known in Chinese medicine.³⁶ While it is possible that this aspect of Tibetan medicine indicates connections with Chinese medicine—an interesting possibility that deserves further research—the flourishing of Accomplishing Medicine and its nectar practices and recipes during the period of the *Four Medical Tantras*' development, within the medical tradition but also beyond that, suggests that the Buddhist tantras, both Indian and indigenously Tibetan, may have had a stronger influence on Tibetan medical texts and their therapeutic prescriptions than we have previously acknowledged. This connection becomes increasingly clear as we broaden our awareness

³⁵ Although here I focus mainly on the rhetoric of using human products in medical prescriptions as a locus of connection between medical and tantric traditions, one might also consider the use of human products in medical traditions elsewhere in the world. On the use of breast milk in Chinese medicine, e.g., see Nathan Sivin and William C. Cooper, "Man as Medicine: Pharmacological and Ritual Aspects of Traditional Therapy Using Drugs Derived from the Human Body," in *Chinese Science: Explorations of an Ancient Tradition*, ed. Nathan Sivin and Shigeru Nakayama, M.I.T. East Asian Science (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973), 227–34; on the use of human hair, see *ibid.*, 217–18. On medical uses of human products in general in China, also see Key Ray Chong, *Cannibalism in China* (Wakefield, NH: Longwood Academic, 1990). Referred to by some as "medical cannibalism," the medicinal use of human products has also been documented in Europe since the first century. From the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries the use of human flesh, organs, blood, skull, marrow, and other parts of the body was widespread in Europe, where "mummy shops" sold human flesh carved from preserved human bodies, ideally those who had died violently. Human flesh was sold by reputable pharmaceutical companies in Germany as recently as the early twentieth century. See Shirley Lindenbaum, "Thinking about Cannibalism," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 33 (2004): 477–79.

³⁶ I am grateful to Kenneth Zysk for sharing his unpublished article, "The Use of Animals in the Sanskrit Traditions of Lovemaking, Conjugal Love, and Medicine," which indicates that human flesh is not used in classical Āyurvedic prescriptions. Excrement, semen, and blood were used in Āyurveda, but not human flesh or other body parts. Of course, aphrodisiac formulas in China and Europe alike have used excrement; see Miriam Hospodar, "Aphrodesian Foods: Bringing Heaven to Earth," *Gastronomica* 4, no. 4 (2004): 82–93.

of the scope of both medical and tantric writings. Whereas medical works focus largely on healing illness, their significant attention to prophylactic measures and the enhancement of health, longevity, and power should not be ignored; our inordinate focus on the former may simply be the result of our own sense of what “medicine” is. Similarly, while Tantric Buddhist works focus largely on the achievement of supermundane aims, their significant attention to the healing of illness and the enhancement of personal power should not be sidelined. As I will discuss further below, a gastronomy of human by-products in both medical and religious realms reveals a language of consumption and incorporation that is shared, and this commonality is an indication of the close interconnectedness of the two traditions.

GASTRONOMY, ALCHEMY, AND INCORPORATION

In an important article, “Beef, Dog, and Other Mythologies: Connotative Semiotics in Mahāyoga Tantra Ritual and Scripture,” Christian Wedemeyer characterizes secondary scholarship on tantric antinomianism as limited by an understanding of the language of tantric texts as “directly denotative natural language.” Within such an understanding, he argues convincingly, scholars have read the tantras either literally or figuratively, two approaches that are themselves undergirded by a “realist” project that can only ask whether the tantras “really meant what they said.” Wedemeyer explains further that “the fundamental terms of the debate have revolved exclusively around the question of what signified or signifieds correspond to the signifiers found in Tantric discourse. When it says ‘beef,’ for instance, does that mean (real) beef or something else? The questions which have guided research in this area have all been posed accordingly.”³⁷

Drawing from the field of semiotics, Wedemeyer suggests an alternative approach to the Buddhist tantric discourse of “transgression,” proposing that it works on a “higher-order semiological system” based on the signifying function of language, a system in which the identity of the actual signified may in fact be irrelevant. Signifying functions may be determined by examining how language operates in a given cultural context; that is, in the case of tantric transgressive commandments, the kinds of transgression signified “take their meanings from the cultural context within which they were deployed.”³⁸ Considering Buddhist tantras to operate in an Indian context defined by notions of brahmanical purity, Wedemeyer thus proposes that prescriptions to consume forbidden sorts of flesh, for example, should be understood not as being about forbidden

³⁷ Wedemeyer, “Beef, Dog, and Other Mythologies,” 10.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

flesh but, rather, as constituting “a grammar of purity and pollution.” What is important about the use of these substances, he argues, “is their signifying function, their ability to instantiate ritual pollution as a lived fact.”³⁹

Wedemeyer’s article is an insightful and valuable addition to scholarship on the Indian tantras, and in this article I am taking a similar approach by understanding tantric discourse to function in realms of signification beyond the denotative. However, I should like to suggest two adaptations to Wedemeyer’s approach. First, while I agree that it will be fruitful to examine how the nectar discourses “take their meanings from the cultural context” within which they operate, I believe that we must see this discourse to operate in multiple contexts. In the case of the Tibetan nectar teachings discussed above, there is a complex network of narrative associations, as well as a polyvalence of levels on which these associations are significant; interpreting a singular cultural context in which language operates is not a simple matter, if it is even a possibility at all. In this article, therefore, I describe several areas of thought and practice (several “cultures,” we might say) from which nectars take their significance during the period of Tibetan literature in question. Second, while I appreciate the ways in which Wedemeyer’s approach shifts our attention away from simplistic questions about whether Buddhists really eat human flesh, for example, I am not fully convinced by his conclusion that the identity of the actual substances involved in these tantric practices is irrelevant or arbitrary.⁴⁰ Discussions of the various substances used in nectar recipes or in healing prescriptions, such as those above, as well as expositions on the special powers of particular substances, as will be described below, suggest that the identity of the actual substances was in fact extremely important for Tibetans.

Christian Wedemeyer may be correct that in the case of the Indian tantra he examines, the use of certain forbidden meats as “that which is disgusting and polluting” for contemporaneous Indians, mainly signifies the “violation of ritual purity” in that Indian context. But there are other ways that human by-products and their consumption may be seen, even in Indian Buddhist esoteric and exoteric literature, and it should go without

³⁹ Ibid., 25.

⁴⁰ Ibid. Wedemeyer actually says that the question of whether the terms signify real objects, in a literal sense, is “close to irrelevant.” He follows this statement by saying that “what is important is their signifying function.” My point here is that this is not the only thing that is important and that many of the texts in question, in the Tibetan case, as well as contemporary Tibetan practitioners today, do in fact consider the presence of the actual substances to be very important, whether or not they are able to obtain them. Antonio Terrone has told me of Treasure Revealers in Kham who have asked him repeatedly to bring them the brains of a peacock, which they consider a critical ingredient for some of their pill recipes. They have never been able to include the substance in their pills, and yet they continue to worry about its absence (personal communication, 2009).

saying that Tibetan contexts are very different from Indian contexts. As Indian texts traveled across the Himalayas, which of the various models of consumption might have been best suited to Tibetan sensibilities? As we briefly survey some alternative Indian Buddhist contexts for the gastronomy of human by-products, we will consider how these may have informed the nectar teachings discussed above. While from one point of view the use of human flesh, for example, may be disgusting and polluting, from another perspective it may be considered the distilled quintessence of the body, refined by the purifying processes of digestion or by one's moral perfection. Regardless of the details of higher-order semiotics, Tibetans may have understood human body parts and substances to be "medicinal" and, therefore, effective for enhancing personal power, much as Europeans of the eighteenth century did.⁴¹

THE MAGICAL POWERS OF NECTAR: INDIAN PRECEDENTS AND TIBETAN ADAPTATIONS

We have seen that a gastronomic discourse of human by-products is shared by tantric and medical traditions in Tibet, their therapeutic and magical recipes calling for a cornucopia of common and rare ingredients. Recipes for nectarous compounds made from obscure, often human-derived, substances and marketed as effective for the achievement of supermundane and ordinary aims, were not a Tibetan invention, however, as they are part of a gastronomy extensively recorded in Indian tantras. The *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, for instance, recommends the use of some or all of the five nectars and meats, plus the use of other human waste products, in recipes aimed at perfecting or healing oneself. It teaches, for instance, of the speedy method of obtaining supernormal powers by eating the flesh of persons born seven times as a Brahmin; specifically, one should eat the concretion (Skt. *rocana*, a concretion or "bezoar" used often in medicine and found in organ meat) formed in the Brahmin's heart, whereupon one will instantly become able to fly, travel "tens of millions of leagues," gain omniscience, and obtain a divine body.⁴² The power of invisibility may be obtained by eating a pill consisting of skin from a hero's foot,

⁴¹ See n. 35.

⁴² David B. Gray, *The Cakrasamvara Tantra: The Discourse of Śrī Heruka (Śrīherukābhīdhāna): A Study and Annotated Translation*, ed. Thomas F. Yarnall, Treasury of the Buddhist Sciences (New York: American Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2007), 207. Also see David L. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors* (Boston: Shambhala, 2002), 161–63; David B. Gray, "Eating the Heart of the Brahmin: Representations of Alterity and the Formation of Identity in Tantric Buddhist Discourse," *History of Religions* 45, no. 1 (2005): 45–69; and Ben Bogin, "Making Brahmin's Flesh in Tibet: The Kyedun Ritual and the Relic Cult" (paper delivered at Buddhist Relics Redux Workshop, University of California, Berkeley, 2005).

blood, and several other ingredients.⁴³ Beyond the usual list of five nectars and meats, the *Cakrasaṃvara* also recommends eating one's own vomit, or making an ointment from a digested *kuṣṭa* root (extracted from the yogin's own feces), a fingernail, an intestinal worm, and one's own blood and semen—applying this compound to clothes or food of another will bring him or her under the yogin's control.⁴⁴ Alternatively, such control may be effected with a mixture of one's own vomit and hair together with some nimba wood, or with a compound of uterine blood, vomit, and hair. Human flesh and liquor offered thrice nightly 108 times will subjugate an entire region for six months.⁴⁵ The *Cakrasaṃvara* is not at all unusual in these recommendations: many tantras attest to the power of consuming human by-products to bestow supernatural or magical abilities. The *Guhyasamāja Tantra* links the eating of human flesh to attainment of the Buddha's body, speech, and mind; the eating of feces and urine with becoming a Vidyādhara; and the eating of horse flesh with becoming invisible.⁴⁶

The consumption of one's own bodily wastes and that of one's consort is repeatedly idealized as a part of yogic sex play in the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa*, an explanatory tantra for the *Guhyasamāja*: "With the tongue he should clean the holes of the nose and the corners of the eyes [of the consort]. And he should eat all the waste produced from between the [consort's] teeth."⁴⁷ Although the verses of this text dwell more conspicuously on sexual technique than on contemplative attainment, the tantra notes that "in this very lifetime the practitioner [of these techniques] gains the title of Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa."⁴⁸ More explicitly, the consumption of bodily wastes is praised as a technique of healing and immortality:

He should eat her vomit, and eat the feces! And he should drink the fluid of the vagina, and eat phlegm.

Just as when manure is applied, a tree becomes abundantly fruitful, so does a person have the true fruits of pleasure by eating unclean things.

Neither old age, sickness, nor death comes to that person. And he who honors the unclean, and who is properly disciplined, will succeed.⁴⁹

⁴³ Gray, *The Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, 210. Sakya Paṇḍita explains that these human and animal substances do not work this way automatically—they must be made powerful by a consecration that renders them ambrosial. Thus in this view it is not a power inherent to the human substance but rather one that is divinely imposed. Gray, *The Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, 301ff., 8.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 321.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 370–72.

⁴⁶ Cited in Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, 163.

⁴⁷ George, *The Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra, Chapters I–VIII*, 73.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 75.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 79.

Similarly, the *Vajramahābhairava Tantra* states plainly that the consumption of the five nectars is critical for achieving both mundane and supermundane aims: “There is no achievement without doing this.”⁵⁰ An incense of burning human flesh, blood, and excrement is required at the ritual feast. Human and animal flesh feature prominently in the burnt offering rites that aim malevolent effects at others (“If he wants an ordinary person to come into his power he mixes up human flesh with elephant flesh and semen and burns it 108 times”),⁵¹ or in those operations that promise supernatural results for the yogi (“One should fill a skull with human fat and boil this up. If one skims it and applies it to one’s eyes one will quickly obtain superhuman perception”).⁵² The *Mahākāla Tantra* centers around a teaching on the achievement of eight powers, called the powers of sword, ointment, pill, the slipper, medicine, mantras, mercury, and long life.⁵³ In this tantra’s sādhanā, the yogin, generating himself as the protector deity Mahākāla, engages in a series of contemplative exercises, mantra recitations, offerings, and so forth, during which he consumes the five nectars and five meats.⁵⁴ The work is a repository of numerous recipes, mantras, and other occult technologies for the achievement of mundane and extraordinary magical aims, such as rain production, exorcism or enemy control, seeing underground, flying, curing illness, enhancing health, or discovering buried treasure.

Indian Buddhist tantras thus prescribe the consumption of human by-products for a range of purposes and at different points in ritual processes, to feed oneself, one’s consort, or the deities, and as such, this tantric gastronomy extends across registers of Buddhist practice from mundane to supermundane. Some Highest Yoga Tantra works extol a diet of urine, reproductive fluids, and excrement: “This diet is the best, eaten by all Buddhas,” proclaims the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*.⁵⁵ A diet of urine and excrement will make one truly happy, concurs the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*.⁵⁶ The notion that eating flesh confers *siddhi* became widespread

⁵⁰ Bulcsu Siklós, *The Vajrabhairava Tantras: Tibetan and Mongolian Versions, English Translation and Annotations*, Buddhica Britannica (Tring, UK: Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1996), 41.

⁵¹ Ibid., 61.

⁵² Ibid., 55.

⁵³ This tantra has been studied and partially translated in William Stablein, “The Mahākālatantra: A Theory of Ritual Blessings and Tantric Medicine” (PhD thesis, Columbia University, 1976), 182.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 231.

⁵⁵ George, *The Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra, Chapters I–VIII*, 64. Meat and intoxicants are to be offered to the consort after creating the maṇḍala elsewhere in the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa*, and the consumption of both the male and female sexual fluids is recommended; see *ibid.*, 55, 57, 68, 74, 75.

⁵⁶ Cited in Peter Gäng, *Das Tantra der Verborgenen Vereinigung: Guhyasamāja-Tantra* (Munich 1988), 134.

among Tibetan traditions, appearing not only in tantras but also in biographies of yogic masters. The “crazy yogin” Tsang nyon heruka (1452–1507), to cite one of many examples, is said to have eaten rotting, maggoty brains taken from decapitated heads; those who joined him in this feast attained *siddhi*.⁵⁷

While in certain contexts the intention behind these prescriptions may indeed be to disgust, therein signifying a violation of ritual purity, from another perspective, the products comprising these prescriptions signify the thoroughly pervading and distinctly physical effects of moral perfection, such that the flesh of a yogi or a man born seven times as a Brahmin, for instance, is the distilled quintessence of the morally perfected body and, therefore, an especially powerful food substance for the rest of us. As Reiko Ohnuma has shown, this understanding of the relationship between moral perfection and physicality is in fact an exoteric Buddhist, and even pan-Indian, notion.

THE GIFT OF FOOD: HUMAN FLESH FOR THE GODS

A discourse on the value of consuming the flesh of a spiritually superior being is widespread in the South Asian world. In her *Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood: Giving Away the Body in Indian Buddhist Literature*, Reiko Ohnuma documents the theme across Indian Buddhist literature, beginning with tales of the Buddha’s past lives as a bodhisattva, many of which depict him giving his body as food for others. So common is this “gift-of-the-body” theme that Ohnuma considers it a discrete subgenre of Buddhist narrative literature.⁵⁸ In these stories the Buddha often has the form of an animal, and yet it is clear that the hare or the fish, for example, who donates his body to satisfy another’s hunger is really the bodhisattva himself. In some stories the bodhisattva is human, appearing as a king or prince who gives his body to alleviate others’ suffering. These are extreme acts of generosity and also teachings of the body’s impermanence and insignificance. In the *Nārāyaṇapariṣcchā* *sutra* the bodhisattva encourages others to think, “If any being needs anything for any reason whatsoever, I will give it, as long as it seems right. I will give my hands to whoever asks for my hands, my feet to whoever asks for my feet, my eyes to whoever asks for my eyes. I will abandon flesh, blood, bone marrow, major and minor limbs.” In the *Vajradhvaṇa* *sutra* he says, “If I should give to this supplicant the intestines, the liver, the heart, or the

⁵⁷ E. Gene Smith and Kurtis R. Schaeffer, *Among Tibetan Texts: History and Literature of the Himalayan Plateau*, Studies in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), 59.

⁵⁸ Reiko Ohnuma, *Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood: Giving Away the Body in Indian Buddhist Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 22.

lungs from my body, or if I should not give them—either way, my body is not permanent.”⁵⁹

As Ohnuma explains, giving his body as food is the bodhisattva’s ultimate act of generosity, fulfilling the perfection of giving (Skt. *dāna pāramitā*) with the most valuable gift of all. Following the Indian trope that religious practice physically purifies the body, the qualities of the bodhisattva’s flesh as food are linked to his high moral virtue: “through constant moral practice and cultivation of virtue, the bodhisattva gradually ‘seasons’ his flesh and transforms it into a magical elixir capable of saving all beings.”⁶⁰ Ohnuma’s work presents stories of encounters between demons and kings: kings offer their own flesh to demons while demons discuss the qualities of human flesh, extolling human meat that is “glistering flesh, freshly cut by the blade of a sword, abundant in quantity, warm and red in color.”⁶¹

Such stories were of course known to Tibetans, likely serving as a conceptual basis for a variation on Tibetan nectar practices in which one’s own body serves as food for the gods. In Lobsang Tharchin’s account of Vajrayoginī practice, for example, the practitioner, having taken the guise of a deity, rises above her material body and begins to destroy it with an ax. The flesh, bones, and blood of her own material body are fitted into a skull cup and then transformed into nectar—in other words, it is one’s own body that constitutes the nectar in this instance of the practice. The practitioner-as-deity then offers this nectar to the assembled guests of lamas, buddhas, bodhisattvas, sages, and sentient beings, her body serving to nourish an even larger party.⁶² The act of separating one’s mind and body and feeding the body to an assembly of guests is central to the Tibetan practice known as “casting out the body as food” (*phung po gzan bskyur*). This act is familiar as the heart of the Severance (Gcod) tradition, in which a practitioner visualizes chopping up her own body and offering it to assembled guests or demons.⁶³

⁵⁹ Ibid., 6. For a relevant and important discussion of the motif of feeding others with one’s own flesh in Chinese Buddhist art and narrative, see Winston Kyan, “The Body and the Family: Filial Piety and Buddhist Art in Late Medieval China” (PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 2006). I am grateful to Donald Harper for referring me to this work.

⁶⁰ Ohnuma, *Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood*, 228. On the theme of cultivating tasty bodhisattva flesh, also see Suzanne Mrozik, “Cooking Living Beings: The Transformative Effects of Encounters with Bodhisattva Bodies,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 32, no. 1 (2004), 175–94.

⁶¹ Ohnuma, *Head, Eyes, Flesh, and Blood*, 229.

⁶² Lobsang, *Sublime Path to Kechara Paradise*, 96–101.

⁶³ For more on the Gcod tradition, see the comprehensive work by Sarah Harding, *Machik’s Complete Explanation: Clarifying the Meaning of Chöd, a Complete Explanation of Casting out the Body as Food* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publication, 2003). ‘Jam mgon kong sprul (1813–1900) has written about visualization practices that involve offering the body to guests or demons during a feast ritual in ‘Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha’ yas, “Lus mchod sbyin gyi zin bris mdor bsdus kun dga’i skyed tshal,” in *Gdam ngag rin po che’i mdzod* (Paro: Bhutan: Lama Ngodrup and Shereb Drimay, 1979).

The understanding of the link between moral perfection and physicality certainly also contributed to Indian tantric and Tibetan notions of the special healing or magical value held by the material substances, or relics, of saints' bodies. Bringing to mind Indian models of the bodhisattva's flesh as food, Sa chen kun dga' snying po (1092–1158) argued that the man born seven times as a Brahmin is in fact a bodhisattva willing to give up his body, hence the great potency of this flesh.⁶⁴ Treasure-revealer Padma gling pa (1450–1521) affirms the figure of the seven-times-a-Brahmin as the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara himself, the bodhisattva donating his body again and again when called for in healing and occult recipes.⁶⁵

The offering of the human body and its products as food for the gods is therefore both a nontantric and tantric motif that spans the Buddhist world, temporally and geographically. If a sage is recognized as a spiritually superior being, or if one's own body is transformed by tantric practice into that of a deity, all the more precious do its gastronomic qualities become. From this perspective we cannot identify those bodily substances as signifying that which is disgusting and polluting, as Wedemeyer suggests, having limited his consideration of the nectars to an examination of their relationship with purity strictures in certain circles of Indian society. To the contrary, those bodily substances are among the purest and most powerful relics of perfection a Buddhist can discover.

We can look beyond stories of the bodhisattva's generosity, however, to find that an understanding of human by-products as purified distillations of religious practice or moral perfection is also supported by South Asian and Tibetan presentations of how food creates the body. According to Tibetan digestive physiology, which is itself based closely on an Āyurvedic model, the internal purification of consumed food and drink actually creates the bodily constituents and organs, which is to say, the physicality of the body itself. As food is digested, it is transformed in the stomach into nutrients (*dwangs*) and wastes (*snyigs*); wastes are excreted as urine and feces, and nutrients are metabolized to create the body's physical components. The processes of decomposing phlegm (*tshim byed bad kan*), digestive heat (*me drod*) and bile (*mkhris pa 'ju byed*), and fire-accompanying wind (*me dang mnyam pa'i rlung*) transform nutrients into blood, which is itself transformed into flesh, which becomes sequentially fat, bone tissue, and bone marrow. Marrow produces the male and female reproductive substances (*khu ba*, sometimes referred to as semen, but possessed by women as well as men). The digestive process culminates

⁶⁴ Cited in Gray, "Eating the Heart of the Brahmin," 65.

⁶⁵ Cited in Holly Gayley, "Soteriology of the Senses in Tibetan Buddhism," *Numen* 54 (2007): 459–99.

in this creation of reproductive substances, which are as a result the distilled and perfected essence of the body as created by consumed food.⁶⁶ Thus, when a practitioner consumes a nectar preparation, she is in a literal sense recreating her own body with that sublime nectar. Her own physical by-products, moreover, could be said to be constitutionally nectarous.

Discussed in the *Four Medical Tantras* and also a basic component of Āyurvedic medicine, which was known to many Tibetans in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, this digestive physiology would have been familiar to those who wrote on Accomplishing Medicine practices at that time. Although to my knowledge the physiological mechanics of digesting nectar preparations are not addressed in the Nectar Tantras or in the Accomplishing Medicine works by Gu ru chos dbang or G.yu thog yon tan mgon po's students, we should nevertheless consider whether digestive physiology might be a critical part of the gastronomy of nectar practices. Were this to be so, we could see in Accomplishing Medicine two parallel transformative processes: the ritual transformation of human by-products (or whatever substances are consumed under their name) into nectar in the course of a tantric sādha, on the one hand, and the physiological transformation of foods, such as nectar preparations, into the perfected essence of the body, the reproductive substance, in the course of digestion, on the other. The gastronomic discourse of the five nectars and meats could thus be seen in the context of the multilayered languages and technologies of digestive and alchemical creation and transformation.

CONCLUSION

In this essay, I have made a historical observation and a pair of related methodological arguments. Historically, I have pointed to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as a remarkably creative period of development for Nyingma and medical scholars alike, who shared at this time an enthusiasm for a language of nectar, a language of consuming human bodies, as a way of writing about personal enhancement. Using a particular vocabulary of ingredients and recipes and a particular grammar of incorporation and transformation, these writers used nectar discourses to describe technologies of healing illness, enhancing health and power, and achieving union

⁶⁶ On digestive physiology according to several Āyurvedic models, see Surendranath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, 5 vols. (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975), 325–39; Rahul Peter Das, *The Origin of the Life of a Human Being: Conception and the Female according to Ancient Indian Medical and Sexological Literature*, ed. Dominik Wujastyk and Kenneth Zysk, vol. 6, *Indian Medical Tradition* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2003), 108–221; and Francis Zimmermann, *The Jungle and the Aroma of Meats* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987). On the metabolic process of Tibetan medicine, see Frances Garrett, *Religion, Medicine and the Human Embryo in Tibet*, Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2008); and Thub bstan phun tshogs, *Gso bya lus kyi nram bshad* (Pe cin: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 1999), 68–69.

with a deity. Their nectar gastronomy is defined in exoteric and esoteric recipes, contemplative and performative exercises, and Mahāyānist notions of the link between moral perfection and embodiment and is tied to a digestive physiology in which the body is literally created by the purification of one's food. This extraordinary constellation of discursive contexts was crystallized in a single practice, that of Accomplishing Medicine, an important teaching throughout history for Tibetan Buddhists of all traditions and the central focus of the key esoteric practice cycle for the medical tradition, the *Yuthok Heart Essence* (*G.yu thog snying thig*). In sharing this practice, tantric and medical practitioners and scholars have together developed a language of transformation (healing, empowering, enlightening) through incorporation (consuming food, consuming the other, consuming the deity) and creation (taking a new birth, becoming pure, becoming the deity), a language which shaped each tradition indelibly.

This observation has been made possible by a pair of key methodological orientations. First, taking a broad view of the scope of both medical and tantric writings, and limiting ethnocentric presuppositions concerning what "medicine" is or what "religion" is, has allowed me to attend to the medical tradition's focus on enhancement of health, longevity, and power, not to mention its substantial writings on ritual and contemplative practices; we can similarly attend to the widespread occurrence of healing remedies in tantric works. A focus on nectar discourses across these (presumed) disciplinary boundaries makes obvious the shared nature of this language. Second, following Christian Wedemeyer's recommendation that we examine how tantric discourses operate within specific cultural contexts, I have examined several ways in which the consumption of human bodies or "nectars" may signify something other than the literal eating of human flesh. But I have been unwilling to disregard the fact that in all of these rites, eating does occur. The act of eating itself is significant, and the identity of what is eaten is also important. Tantric prescriptions to consume consecrated human flesh may signify engagement in practices of bodily purification or moral perfection. Or, especially when seen in conjunction with iconographic representations of nectar-practice protector deities, it may signify a type of "cannibal talk," to borrow Obeyesekere's phrase.⁶⁷ But the prescriptions and their practices

⁶⁷ See Gananath Obeyesekere, *Cannibal Talk: The Man-Eating Myth and Human Sacrifice in the South Seas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). By "cannibal talk" I do not refer to an external claim that Tibetans are cannibals, however, but rather to the practice of such a discourse within Tibet itself. Obeyesekere argues that the term "cannibalism" rightly applies only to a colonialist discourse, one spoken as power over that which is the ultimate "other"; he reserves the term "anthropophagy" for discussion of the practice itself (*ibid.*, 14). My point here is that we can see such a discourse operating within Tibet itself. External references to Tibetans as cannibals, on the other hand, have at least an 800-year-old

also do, in fact, involve consuming something, and just what that something is, is the subject of many hundreds of pages of writing in Tibetan literature, as well as a subject of concern for real Buddhist practitioners. It is for this reason that I see nectar discourses as a gastronomic discourse, for it is the command to eat, to incorporate an Other as food, that is at the heart of all of the practices described above.

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history, including “observations” of cannibalism in Tibetan regions by Friar John (c. 1180–1252), Marco Polo (1254–1324), William of Rubruck (c. 1220–93), della Penna (1680–1745), and more recently, Wright, Landor, Waddell, and a Chinese-made YouTube video entitled “Tibet—Cannibal Monks Reveal Their True Faces,” spawned by the riots of 2008. See Willem van Ruysbroeck, Peter Jackson, and David Morgan, *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck: His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253–1255* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1990), 158; Weirong Shen, “Magic, Power, Sorcery and Evil Spirit,” in *The Relationship between Religion and State (Chos srid zung ‘brel) in Traditional Tibet*, ed. Christopher Cuppers (Lumbini: Lumbini International Research Institute, 2004), 207; A. R. Wright, “Tibetan Drum and Trumpet,” *Folklore* 15, no. 3 (1904): 333–34; L. A. Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons, 1934), 527, 531; Arnold Henry Savage Landor, *In the Forbidden Land: An Account of a Journey into Tibet* (New York and London: Harper Brothers, 1909), 337; Marco Polo, Henry Yule, and Henri Cordier, *The Travels of Marco Polo: The Complete Yule-Cordier Edition*, 2 vols. (New York: Dover, 1993), 1:312, 301.