

*Notes towards a Native Tibetan Ethnology: An Introduction to and Annotated Translation of dMu dge bSam gtan's Essays on Dwags po (Baima Zangzu)*

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In 1964, during the celebrations of the 15th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), comrade Ni Su of the [Dwags po] Nationality was noticed by Chairman Mao. Chairman Mao asked her what national minority she belonged to, and because she was too moved to speak other people responded for her: "She is a Baima [i.e., Dwags po] Tibetan from Sichuan."... When the happy news got back to her hometown there was much rejoicing, but there appeared some doubt with respect to this ethnic moniker, because both the history which had been passed down to them by their ancestors and the current situation all revealed that they were not like the Tibetans [Zangzu] of Aba Prefecture, nor were they like the Qiang of Maowen (Fei, 1980: 2).

The Dwags po people are definitely Tibetans [Zangzu]! (dMu dge bSam gtan, 1980b: 64)

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

The articles that follow this introduction are not only important examples of the work of dMu dge bSam gtan,<sup>1</sup> a highly respected contemporary Tibetan scholar from Amdo, but also represent the ways in which historical, ethnological, and even Marxist-Leninist arguments are employed by native Tibetans in challenging official representations of their history and culture made by the Chinese state apparatus. dMu dge bSam gtan was born in 1914 in the eastern Tibetan region of dMu dge,<sup>2</sup> located in the present-day rNga ba<sup>3</sup> Tibetan-Qiang Autonomous Region of Sichuan Province. At the age of 12, he took his religious vows before the bDe tshang sprul sku Blo bzang bstan pa, whereupon he adopted the religious name of Blo bzang bsam gtan and entered the dMu dge bKra shis 'khor lo Monastery to begin his monastic training. He received instruction from such scholars as Phyogs glang, dKon mchog dge 'dun, and Chos dar, with whom he studied works on logic, and Blo bzang chos ldan dpal bzang po, who gave him many empowerments. From dMu dge he went to Bla brang bKra shis 'khyil Monastery in Gansu to receive further instruction, and in 1947 he was granted the dGe bshes degree.

After the Communist takeover of what is now rNga ba Prefecture, dMu dge bSam gtan served in several official Chinese government posts and—in addition to continuing his own writing and publishing in the fields of logic, history, poetry and medicine—also contributed greatly to such important academic works as the first edition of the massive Tibetan-Chinese dictionary published in Beijing in 1985.<sup>4</sup> He continued to teach and lecture periodically from the 1970s through the early 1990s, both within rNga ba Prefecture and at institutions such as Lhasa Hospital, the Central Nationalities' Institute (now University) in Beijing, the Bla brang Tibetan High School in Xiahe (Gansu), the Southwest Nationalities' Institute in Chengdu, and the Northwest Nationalities' Institute in Lanzhou. At the Southwest Nationalities' Institute (where I recently studied Tibetan), dMu dge

bSam gtan is widely remembered by his former students and colleagues for his lectures, and both his erudition and his outspokenness are somewhat legendary there. dMu dge bSam gtan passed away in 1993, leaving behind a large body of work and a multitude of former students who benefited from his instruction.<sup>5</sup>

The articles translated below address the controversy surrounding the so-called "Dwags po Tibetans," who are often referred to as the "Baima Zangzu" or "Baima Zangren" in Chinese publications. A population living mainly in present-day northern Sichuan Province, an area which has long been part of the ethnic borderland settled by a mixed population of Tibetans, Han Chinese, Hui (Chinese Muslims), Qiang and other ethnic groups, the Dwags po were classified as "Tibetan" or "Zangzu" during the official ethnic classification project of the 1950s, a classification which at least some members of the group have challenged in the intervening years.<sup>6</sup> They came under close academic scrutiny in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when a team of researchers from the Nationalities' Research Institute of the Chinese Academy for Social Sciences, the Sichuan Provincial Nationalities' Affairs Commission, Sichuan University, and the Sichuan Provincial Museum paid a research visit to the region. Following this research visit, the research team published reports that suggested the Dwags po were not Tibetan but rather constituted a unique ethnic group in and of themselves. A collection of essays on the controversy issued by the Sichuan Provincial Nationalities' Research Institute<sup>7</sup> in 1980 includes a copy of their initial research report (Sichuan Minzu Yanjiusuo, 1980: 119-151) and summarizes the early stages of the debate as follows:

The "Baima Tibetans"<sup>8</sup> are divided between Pingwu and Nanping Counties in Sichuan Province and Wen County in Gansu Province. Since [Communist] Liberation, they have reported many times that they are not Tibetan [Zangzu], and have asked to be reclassified. The Sichuan Provincial Nationalities' Affairs Commission has twice organized [research] teams to investigate [this issue] (once in 1978 and again in 1979), and has held two academic conferences [on the matter]. Famous historians such as Profs. Xu Zhongshu, Mou Yue, Zhao Weibang, and Deng Ziqin; Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Sichuan Province People's Consultative Conference Zhang Xiushu; and Vice-Secretary of the Pingwu County Party Committee and cadre [representative] of his own nationality [i.e., the Baima], Niu Wa believe that the "Baima Tibetans" are the descendants of the ancient "Di" nationality. The Tibetan scholar Mr. Sang Mudan [i.e., dMu dge bSam gtan] believes they are Tibetans. Prof. Ren Naiqiang believes they are the descendants of the ancient "Dangchang Qiang" nationality and attracting a lot of strong interest (SMY, 1980: preface [no page number given])... Other people also support [the idea] that they are yet another nationality. [With] each [participant] airing his own views [and] speaking without any inhibitions, the academic atmosphere [of the meetings] was very dynamic. Because the investigation and research of the "Baima Tibetans" is of relatively high academic value, the famous Chinese scholar Fei Xiaotong used the "Baima Tibetans" as a typical example in his essay "On the Question of the Classification of China's Nationalities," introducing [the case] both at home and abroad, and attracting a lot of strong interest. (SMY 1980: preface [no page number given]).

That Fei Xiaotong—godfather of Chinese ethnology and perhaps the most politically prominent social scientist in the PRC—should turn his eyes to the

question of the problematic classification of the Dwags po is perhaps indicative that this was no minor debate. Indeed, much more was at stake than simply the classification of the Dwags po: in the essay mentioned above, Fei also brings up the problematic identity of such other "Tibetans" as the "Zheng" and "Xia'erba" [Sherpa] of the Tibet Autonomous Region, the "Jiarong" [rGyal rong] of rNga ba and dKar mdzes Prefectures in Sichuan Province, and the "Pumi" Tibetans of Muli County in the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan Province (Fei Xiaotong, 1980: 1). In most cases members of these groups had themselves requested reclassification, but in the eyes of many Tibetans the official reopening of these cases represented yet another attack by the Chinese state on a Tibetan identity that had been severely fractured by the social and political upheavals of the previous 20 years.<sup>9</sup>

As dMu dge bSam gtan's articles attest, the claim that the Dwags po were not Tibetan was met with much disbelief on the part of Tibetan intellectuals, but he was one of the few to openly challenge the official arguments, and in doing so has provided us with a wealth of local historical and cultural information about Tibetan customs in the borderlands.<sup>10</sup> Through careful comparison of the customs of the Dwags po as related in the official reports with his own knowledge of the history (or at least historiography), language, and social and religious practices of other Tibetans living near the Dwags po, dMu dge bSam gtan carefully deconstructs the official argument using a classical Tibetan debating style wedded with dialectical-material analysis—truly a mark of a scholar well-versed in both the Tibetan and the modern Chinese systems.<sup>11</sup> His writings therefore represent not only an important contribution to a growing body of contemporary native Tibetan history and ethnology, but also a revealing example of the willingness of at least some Tibetan intellectuals working within the PRC to challenge the stories the Chinese state would tell about them. In their strategic deployment of both local knowledge and classic Marxist-informed social science arguments, the articles translated here reveal much about the ways in which Tibetan scholars of the modern period engage with and survive within the Chinese academic and political system.

The first article translated below was originally published in the Tibetan journal *sBrang char* (*Gentle Rain*) in 1981, and was recently re-issued in a collection of dMu dge bSam gtan's works published by the Sichuan Nationalities' Publishing House (dMu dge bSam gtan, 1993: 135-154). The arguments contained in the Tibetan version roughly parallel those of his two essays in Chinese published in the collection of essays on the Dwags po (dMu dge bSam gtan, 1980a, 1980b), but there are enough differences in both content and presentation that I feel a translation from the Tibetan is both warranted and appropriate. My reading of the Tibetan text has been informed by the Chinese articles, however, and where questionable points in the translation have occurred I have used the Chinese texts as a cross-reference—such instances will be noted in the footnotes.

The second article was also published first in *sBrang char* (1989 (2): 70-72), and was reprinted in the volume of dMu dge bSam gtan's collected essays mentioned above (1993: 154-58). The text was dictated by dMu dge bSam gtan in 1987 at sGo mang Monastery in rNga ba County, was transcribed by Shes rab ral gri, and appears to be a rather impatient response to the resurfacing of

questions about the identity of the Dwags po in the mid- to late-1980s.<sup>12</sup> In this article, the author adds additional documentation of ancient Tibetan customs as recorded in such classic works of Tibetan literature as the *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* (bSod nams rgyal mtshan, 1981) to his ethnological analysis of Dwags po culture, thereby enriching not only his argument and our understanding of Tibetan customs, but also our awareness of how such classic folk-historical texts are put to use by contemporary Tibetan intellectuals as they seek to craft an indigenous historical and ethnological narrative.<sup>13</sup>

My purpose in translating these articles and offering them to the readers of *The Tibet Journal* is not to present and analyze the entire controversy surrounding the Dwags po and its position in the contemporary debates about Tibetan identity within the PRC, for that is a full time research project in and of itself. Neither is it my wish or intention to settle the problematic question of the "true" identity of the Dwags po, for that is a task which should be left to the people whose lives it most directly affects. Instead, my goal is to make two important pieces of contemporary Tibetan scholarship accessible to a wider audience while simultaneously providing some insight into the complex social context in which Tibetan academics in the PRC operate. Only with an understanding of that context can we truly appreciate the skillful artistry Tibetans employ in crafting their lives and their stories under Chinese rule.

In preparing these translations, I received a great deal of assistance from Tibetan scholars at the Southwest Nationalities' Institute in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, PRC. I am particularly grateful to Tshe brtan skyabs, Thogs med and mChog ldan thar of the Tibetan Language Department for their help as I was initially working through the texts. Because none of them know English, however, our discussions of the original texts were conducted in Tibetan and Chinese, and the absence of a careful comparative reading of the translation by an English-speaking Tibetan has most likely led to some errors in translation and interpretation, for which I take full responsibility. I am also most grateful to Larry Epstein for providing detailed criticism and corrections as I prepared the translation and to Toni Huber for his editorial assistance and comments on this and earlier drafts. Grant support for the preparation of these translations was generously provided by the Blakemore Foundation, the Pacific Cultural Foundation and the Academy for Educational Development.

#### ANNOTATED TRANSLATION I: "ON THE QUESTION OF THE 'DWAGS PO' NATIONALITY"<sup>14</sup>

In what follows, I will set down a bit of Tibetan history according to what I have read and heard. When the Tibetan kings such as Srong btsan sgam po were consolidating control over the boundaries [of their empire], there were constant battles for several years between the Tibetan and Tang empires. Because of the struggle [that developed] after the Tibetan emperor dispatched several hundred thousand soldiers, the need arose for the Tang and the Tibetans to mediate with each other. At that time, areas presently located in Sichuan—such as the Chu dkar<sup>15</sup> River drainage (in the region of Nanping<sup>16</sup> and Pingwu),<sup>17</sup> the Chu nag drainage (both Chu nag and Khro chu),<sup>18</sup> and the Tsha ba Valley<sup>19</sup>—were occupied by the army of the Tibetan emperor. When they mediated, a monument

was erected between China and Tibet. Other than saying that the Chinese would live in China and the Tibetans would live in Tibet, it was determined that it was not acceptable for them to send soldiers against each other.

The Tibetan emperor issued a decree that the Tibetan army, not being permitted to return, must settle and remain as defense forces in the border region between China and Tibet. The soldiers that came from Dwags po and Kong po were made to settle around the "Chu dkar." They are the Dwags po of Pingwu and the Khon po of Nanping. The Dwags po are still called the "Dwags po" today, since the term Dwags po has not changed even a little bit. But the Khon po are today called the "Khon po," the term having changed a little bit. The soldiers from Shar ba in Western Tibet<sup>20</sup> settled along the Zung chu drainage ("Minjiang" in Chinese)<sup>21</sup> and are the Tibetans of Zung chu County<sup>22</sup> today. Since the term has also not changed, they are still called Shar ba<sup>23</sup> today.

A large number of soldiers who came from one of the four great lineages of Tibet, the sBra people, under the command of General "Kho phan" settled and remained along the rGyal mo rngul River. These people are also known as the Bswi people. It is stated in the *mDo smad chos 'byung* that the sBra people and the Bswi people are one and the same. The indigenous name for the region around the rGyal mo rngul River is "rGyal mo Tsha ba rong." When the order of the Tibetan emperor came down, they were written to "rGyal mo Tsha ba rong gi Kho phan," but later on this name was abbreviated as "Tsha kho," and then it became the name of the people and the region. Today both the place and all the people who live in Tsha rong are called "Tsha kho."

The three "Zangs dkar" settlements of pastoralists who live at the headwaters of the rGyal mo rngul River came from Zangs dkar in Western Tibet, so the name has not changed.

So, the people all the way from the Dwags po in the The bo and Pingwu area to those of the lCags la [Dar rtse mdo] region of Khams arrived during the era of Srong btsan sgam po and it is said that a group of additional people came during the eras of Khri srong<sup>24</sup> and Khri ral.<sup>25</sup>

It is said that the large number of Tibetans who came to the rMa chu [Yellow River] basin during the era of Srong btsan [sgam po] were soldiers from the lDong lineage. For that reason it says in the genealogies that:

Because the sBra occupied three hard-to-get-at places,

They are known as the "Really Brave sBra."<sup>26</sup>

Because the lDong occupied three high mountains,

They are known as the "High-Hatted lDong."<sup>27</sup>

As for these people, they came to this area long ago. And because they went to the borders of Tibet, in these areas the practices of the ancient Tibetan religion "Bon po" remained for a long time even though the Tibetan area of dBu became Buddhist. For example, places like Dwags po, Khon po, Upper Zung chu, a few parts of Chu nag, and some villages in Khr skyabs in rGyal rong were "Bon po" even up to the time of [Communist] Liberation. Most of the villages in places like rGyal rong Chu chen<sup>28</sup> became Buddhist during the era of the Manchu Ching<sup>29</sup> emperor Chen-lung.<sup>30</sup> Only about 10 years have passed since the region around 'Bar khams<sup>31</sup> became Buddhist.

It is [also] clear in the catalog of the Co ne<sup>32</sup> *bsTan 'gyur* that the Tibetans of upper and lower mDzod dge<sup>33</sup> and Co ne are the descendants of those who settled there after coming as the retinue of Minister dGa' Ye shes dar rgyas at the time of the Tibetan emperor Khri ral.

Bits and pieces of this information are contained in such sources as: *Bod kyi rus mdzod chen mo* [The Great Tibetan Genealogy], *Rus mdzod za 'og ma* [The Brocade Genealogy], *Rus mdzod thor bu* [Assorted Genealogies], *rGyal rong gi dpon cog rtse* [The Supreme Lords of rGyal rong], *So mang gi lo rgyus* [The History of So mang], *mGo log a skyong gi rus mdzod* [The Genealogy of A skyong of mGo log],<sup>34</sup> *Co ne dpon tshang gi rus mdzod* [The Genealogy of the Lords of Co ne] (in Chinese),<sup>35</sup> *gShen rab mi bo'i rnam thar* [The Biography of gShen rab mi bo], *Brag bya rgod dkar chag* [A Guide to Brag bya rgod], *bsTan 'gyur dkar chag nor bu'i phreng ba* [A Catalogue of the *bsTan 'gyur*: A Garland of Jewels], and *Deb ther rgya mtsho* [The Ocean Annals]. Since I presently neither have these books at hand nor have time to get them, I am unable to cite references for what I have previously seen.

So, the current claims of some that [the people of] rGyal rong and Dwags po, etc. are not Tibetan are but groundless nonsense. The Dwags po of the Pingwu region of Sichuan are located on the border of the rNga ba Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture and the Mianyang<sup>36</sup> Administrative District, and they belong to Pingwu County. However, they are neighbors to the Tibetans of Nanping, and their customs, habits, and religious system are all like those of the Tibetans of Nanping and Zung chu counties. Moreover, from ancient times there has been absolutely no question that they are reckoned as Tibetans. But lately, the baseless rumor has been spread that the Dwags po are not Tibetan but are the "Tis" Nationality.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, the group of Tibetans in Khams called the "Bod mi" has also been separated out, it being said that they are not Tibetan but are instead the "Bod mi" Nationality.<sup>38</sup> [And there are even those] who are diligently planning to make Muli [County] a non-Tibetan [County].<sup>39</sup>

In August, 1978, representatives of the Nationalities' Research Institute of the Chinese Academy for Social Sciences and the Sichuan Provincial Museum went together as an investigation team to the Dwags po region and carried out a little over a month of research.<sup>40</sup> Although their point of view was not unified, one research report has been widely distributed. Its content established the premise that the Dwags po are not Tibetan, and definitively determined that they were the "Tis" Nationality. But there is not a single word [to support] the premise that they are the "Tis" nationality. In fact the very grounds for saying that they are not Tibetan have become the grounds for saying that they are Tibetan according to the following explanations:

1. As for those that say that because the Dwags po language is not the same as the standard dialect of Gannan,<sup>41</sup> [the Dwags po] are not Tibetan, they can be refuted in this way:

Although the language of all of Tibet has one root, there have developed differences in pronunciation due to the large area of land and the great dispersion of settlements [in Tibet]. In some areas, such as rGyal rong, such changes of the old words as the tone of voice becoming deeper and heavier have taken place. In some dialects like those of dBus gtsang, old words have been replaced by new

words. In some dialects like mGo log Nya mtsho and in 'Dzam thang<sup>42</sup> Count there have been very great changes arising on their own. Although they are a Tibetan, due to changes which have made the dialects mutually dissimilar, there is some difficulty in mutual communication. Is this true? Look and see. Even within Xiahe<sup>43</sup> County in Gansu<sup>44</sup> this is the case: nomad speech [has retained the earlier clear tone of voice and great purity, while the speech of agricultural areas lacks the former clear intonation and has slight distinctions in high and low tone and in vowel length.

Thus, how is it possible to say that [Dwags po dialect] is not Tibetan because is not identical to the speech of some Tibetan settlements in Gannan? As for the statement that someone who does not know Tibetan "mastered the basic nature of spoken Tibetan" during a little more than a month, that is hard to imagine. There are many Tibetan dialects which are not identical to the standard dialect of Gannan, but although the Dwags po dialect contains many dissimilarities with Gannan dialect, it has more than a few similarities with the dialect of the Tibetans of Nanping and Zung chu—just look and see!

Those who say that the Dwags po people are not Tibetan since most of them do not know written Tibetan can be refuted as follows. In the greater part of the Tibetan region, there were no schools [for learning] the written language. Scarcely with the exception of a few lamas, monks and religious practitioners who possessed great knowledge of culture and literature, the other common people usually were illiterate and did not understand the meaning of the scriptures. The Dwags po region also being like this, with the exception of the studies of the "Bon po" and the "sNgags pa,"<sup>45</sup> other common people usually did not study. In most of the Tibetan region in the past, the uses of written Tibetan were few aside from its use in religious work; in the Dwags po region it was also thus. So ever according to what you say it is possible to say that the customs of the Dwags po people are the same as [those of] all Tibetans.

2. As for those that say that because the production belongs to the feudal system but there remain remnants of primitive society, [the Dwags po] are not Tibetan, [they can be refuted] as follows:

In the border areas inhabited primarily by Tibetans, the manner of production belongs to the feudal system of production but there also remain a few remnants of primitive society. For example, in areas such as dMu dge, rNga ba, and Zung chu, the primary method of exploitation by the local landlords and rich peasants was not [a system of] debt and interest, but was rather a wage-paying relationship, just as in Dwags po.

In addition to an on-going wage-paying/labor relationship, there were also such short-term labor relationships as spring labor (wages for spring plowing) and autumn labor (wages for autumn harvest), just like Dwags po.

Most of the cattle used for plowing [in Dwags po] are *mdzo*, [a cross between a cow and a yak]. When a household divides both fields and cattle are bestowed [on each new household], and [household] divisions due to marriage are also [handled] in the same way. Control over forests and pasturage is afforded to the entire settlement. In these ways (and also in the way in which permission to plow uncultivated land is handled) the other areas settled by Tibetans that were mentioned previously are just like the Dwags po [region].

Furthermore, at planting time in areas settled by Tibetans everyone unites together [to do the planting]. A few families work together, or two families exchange labor. Those with plowing cattle working together with those who lack them, and so on. Not only are all the Tibetan settlements in the borderlands (such as dMu dge, Shar khog<sup>46</sup> and Ta khog) like this, but you yourselves have said that Dwags po is also like this!

Not only Dwags po but also some of the [other] border regions settled by Tibetans have a very backward method of production, so there are many [groups of people] that have failed to reach a fully developed feudal system, for example the Tibetans around the borders of 'Dzam thang.

3. The claim that the system of conflict resolution [shows that] they are not Tibetan, can be refuted as follows:

In some places in Zung chu and in dMu dge and Chu nag, things are just like in Dwags po. Disputes are settled by well-spoken headmen and well-known elders, and [they have] the practice of payoffs, the so-called "gZu zan mgo rdung,"<sup>47</sup> and unwritten laws, etc. This is just like Dwags po—see if it is or is not so!

In areas settled by Tibetans, there exists every type of social system, from feudal society to systems of tribal alliances. For example, the [social] system of dBus gtsang and that of the far reaches of A mdo were dissimilar, and if we take Zung chu alone as an example, the system [employed] near the county seat is dissimilar to the system in places just a little way away from town.

4. With respect to the Dwags po's jewelry, food, architecture, etc., as for the claim that because they wear felt hats they are not Tibetan, [it can be refuted] as follows:

Felt hats are a pan-Tibetan custom: that this is a Tibetan style of dress is stated in the *Deb ther dkar po* and the *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan*, with respect to the image of the god rMa chen which is made with a felt hat.<sup>48</sup> Pastoralists wear cylindrical felt hats and farmers wear round felt hats with a band. Not only did those in dMu dge and Ta khog, etc. previously wear hats like the hats of the Dwags po, but the Dwags po of dBus also continue to wear felt hats like that. [Some people] claim that because they [i.e., the Dwags po] stick a feather in their hat they are not Tibetan, even though sticking a feather in one's hat is a Tibetan custom! Not only is the great scholar Padma[sambhava] drawn adorned with a feathered hat according to Tibetan tradition, but when drawing the figure of Gesar [he] is drawn with a feathered hat, and many feathers are put on images and the helmets of oracles. This is the Tibetans' own way of dressing! The ancient custom was for heroes to wear the feathers of vultures and for cowards to wear the feathers of crows. Even the Lama of dBus called Rig 'dzin rgod 'phru can [lit. "Rig 'dzin with vulture feathers"] is named for his hat. Thus it is not necessary to say that the wearing of felt hats and the sticking of feathers on your head is not a Tibetan custom.

It is said that because they wear clothes made of flax they are not Tibetan, but wearing clothes made of flax is a Tibetan way of dressing. In agricultural areas where flax is produced, people wear flaxen clothes, in areas where livestock are a bit more plentiful people wear woolen clothes, and in pastoral areas they wear clothes of felt and hides. The clothes worn by men in Dwags po are mostly plain while the women wear showier clothes and ornaments, and this is a pan-Tibetan

custom. Men have a large space inside the robe, and women wear braids joined together at the ends, wrap [themselves] with multicolored belts and cloth belts wear conch and cowry shell decorations,<sup>49</sup> and have wide sleeves. Not only this the same as in individual Tibetan areas in A mdo such as The bo and H gtsang, it is also the way of dressing in the Tibetan region of dBus. The custom of wrapping one's legs with cloth leggings is also a custom of Tibetans in isolated areas. Aside from the Dwags po of A mdo, [the Tibetans of] Chu nag, rGyal mo Tsha ba Valley and those of other isolated areas such as the Dwags po Kong po, and sPo bo in dBus also wrap [their legs with leggings]. Even putting oil on the hair is a Tibetan custom: thus pastoralists put butter on their hair and farmers put lard on their hair.

Eating things like oats, buckwheat, turnips, vegetables, and so forth is a widespread custom in Tibetan agricultural areas. One can understand this by looking at such Tibetan areas as lower Zung chu, Chu nag, and the rGyal mo rmg River. While it is indeed the case that in Tibetan pastoral areas they eat meat and in agricultural areas they eat less meat, it is a pan-Tibetan custom not to eat horse meat, donkey meat, or dog meat. In pastoral areas, due to the cold, they eat raw meat, [but] in agricultural areas like Dwags po they mostly do not eat raw meat. Liking or not liking butter and cheese is different among agriculturalists and pastoralists and all over Tibet. [Some say] that because they do not drink Shar [ba] tea<sup>50</sup> they are not Tibetan, but the Tibetans in Khams and dBus do not drink Shar [ba] tea either! [In terms of] mutual respect between old and young and mutual respect between men and women, Dwags po people are identical to other Tibetans. Such customs as sitting cross-legged, men cutting the meat, and women kneading the dough for noodles are also pan-Tibetan customs.

Houses are square and made of stone, and have a south-facing enclosed yard. They have a wooden ladder-like staircase. The livestock live downstairs and people live upstairs. These are Tibetan customs; just look at places like Zui chu, Chu nag, dMu dge, rNga ba, and mTsho sngon.<sup>51</sup>

Offerings are arranged on top of a cupboard and such things as porcelain bowls and brass platters are arranged in the cupboard. In the center of the household there is a metal brazier with three legs, and the head of the household sits at the head of the hearth or toward the north. There is a room for religious offerings on the top floor [of the house], and grass and straw are stored above that. At night except for the head of the household and old people, everyone sleeps around the hearth. The roof is covered by shingles. All of these things are Tibetan customs. It is like this even now in such places as The bo, Co ne, Zung chu, dMu dge. ~~With the exception of officials and rich people, no one has stools or tables—this is also like other Tibetans.~~

Dwags po's marriage and funeral customs are also like the rest of Tibet. For example, in dMu dge, Shar khog and some parts of mTsho sngon they practice cremation in the winter and earth or water burial in the summer. The reason for this, it is said, is that if one practices cremation in the summer, the local gods and earth deities will be made angry and the harvest will thus be damaged. Earth and water burial are practiced.

Dwags po's religion is also none other than the ancient religion of Tibet: Bon. Bon has two phases: the early diffusion of Bon and later diffusion of Bon. The

early diffusion of Bon had household tantric practitioners<sup>52</sup> while the later diffusion of Bon also has a monastically-based clergy.<sup>53</sup> In upper Dwags po they seem to have<sup>54</sup> a monastically-based clergy. When gathering in the Tibetan clerical monastery, they recite scriptures after donning clerical garments, but after the religious assembly they go to the village and do agricultural work. In this respect, the Shar ba,<sup>55</sup> etc. are like Dwags po. The history which discusses the emergence of many great Bon po scholars from this area is also elucidated in the monastic chronicles and chronologies of the Bon po monasteries of Shar khog.

It is said that because they make offerings to mountains, etc. [the Dwags po] are not Tibetan. But it is elucidated in O rgyan gling pa's *bKa' thang shel brag ma* that with respect to early Bon, not only were offerings made to the sun, moon and stars, but there were also offerings to the gods which resided in mountains, groves, etc. Renewing a *lab rtse*<sup>56</sup> on mountaintops and offering praise and incense at the *lab rtse* are also widespread practices all over Tibet, and are very similar to [the customs] in Dwags po. It is clear in the *bKa' thang* that the making of "red offerings"<sup>57</sup> was part of ancient Bon, and that long ago the making of red offerings did indeed take place in the second month. But after the spread of Buddhism, in areas where Buddhism spread, [the practice of] making red offerings was abolished. Householders converted to the performance of salutations and worship, doing circumambulations, and other such beneficial actions during the first month in conjunction with the Great Prayer Festival.<sup>58</sup> In Dwags po, however, since religion has only developed a little bit, they still make blood offerings in the second month and offerings to the gods on the 15th day of the fifth month according to Tibet's early tradition. It is like this not only in Dwags po, but also in such Tibetan places as Shar ba,<sup>59</sup> in some places in Khams, in dMu dge, and so forth. Some communities slaughter a cow on that day to make a blood offering. In the seventh month, before the harvest, it is an ancient custom to slaughter a cow, make offerings, and celebrate. Even after [Communist] Liberation, [they would] slaughter livestock prior to the harvest and celebrate on the grasslands for several days in places such as rNga ba and Bla brang. Even now in places like rNga ba after the harvest—somewhere around the tenth month—at the festival for the completion of the harvest, in accordance with the custom of making offerings to the gods, they also have such customs as going to celebrate on the mountains after slaughtering a domesticated sheep. Thus the system in Dwags po is identical to Tibetan custom. In having one or two festivals that overlap with Chinese customs, the Dwags po are not alone: this is also the case throughout Tibet and particularly in frontier Tibet in such places as Zung chu.

When purification is being performed for the household or personal deities<sup>60</sup> or when there is an ill person in the house, guests are not allowed to come in. But if it becomes necessary for them to come, in order to keep out evil spirits, ashes must be thrown. When there are sick people in the house, if relatives or household members come from far away, again ashes must be thrown before them. Such things are pan-Tibetan customs.

Without regard to political position, old people are revered. Hunters esteem their hounds. Household work is primarily performed by women. Women do the planting while men do the plowing, and so forth. Therefore it is not even

possible to contemplate that they are not Tibetan. Not only are these pan-Tibetan customs, but it is even stated clearly in the legal codes of Srong btsan [sgam] and Khri srong [lde btsan] that the brave, the noble and the virtuous will be revered and rewarded while the evil and the lowly will be punished; that other than doing housework and related tasks, women may not express their opinion about politics, and so forth. So even though Dwags po's customs are a little different, is it not the case that the customs of every area are a little bit different? According to this principle, Dwags po's customs are fundamentally Tibetan customs.

How is it possible to say that due to their gentle nature, [the Dwags po] are not Tibetan? The Tibetan people are by nature gentle, [so] they are just like the very gentle-natured Tibetan people! [And] as for song lyrics, because the local styles of Tibet each have their own special qualities, not only [are] the lyrics [different] but the intonation of the voice is also lighter or heavier depending on the region.

Not being called by a clan [or family] name and being called by a personal name is a custom throughout Tibet. But [the Dwags po] are just like those other Tibetans who have this custom, having been influenced by and assimilated the customs of other nationalities. [For example,] there are northern Chinese influences in the language and customs of the Tibetans of the northern Sino-Tibetan border. And there exist similar influences on the language and custom of those Tibetans who live in the south along the Sino-Tibetan border.<sup>61</sup>

Thus the very grounds for saying that [the Dwags po] are not Tibetan have become the grounds for saying that they are Tibetan. The Tibetan word "Bon po" used to describe the religious system, has a different pronunciation in each region of Tibet. For example, when pastoralists say "Bon po," it sounds a little like the Chinese word "ben po" so it is usually written that way in Chinese. But when they say "Bon po" in Nanping, Zung chu, Chu nag, and the agricultural areas of Khams, it is very close to the sound when one says "bei bu" in Chinese. On this basis, some who have investigated this have decided to say that the religious system [of the Dwags po] is not Bon po but is "Beibu!" If that is the case, then who is the teacher of such a religion as that? Who developed it? From where did it spread? And moreover, are not the Bon of Zung chu and Nanping followers of none other than that religion? According to what those [researchers] say, their pronunciation of Bon po as "bei bu" has a different origin than that of the speech of the nearby Dwags po. Now as for this method of research, what sort of dialectical materialism is this? Pretending to have totally mastered everything by means of a little more than a month of research, they sit there determined, sit there without even looking at or coming to know the customs and habits of those Tibetans who are so close to the Dwags po such as those of Nanping and Zung chu, and, after trotting out those customs and habits which are one and the same as those [of the Tibetans of Nanping and Zung chu], they sit there postulating that [the Dwags po] are not Tibetan!

Besides, reliable sources say that those researchers found in the Dwags po region a stele on whose face exists an inscription that is not Chinese, and a volume of writing in Tibetan script. There was not a single word [about this] mentioned in their report, however. If they were to trot out their photographs it would be invaluable to current historical research, but instead they sit there placidly i

their blind, ignorant way. One can even imagine that the words on that stele are probably ancient Tibetan.

In conclusion, according to the basic rules for the classification of a nationality according to the theory of dialectical materialism, if we analyze on the basis of the themes of the aforementioned research, in whatever respect—language, customs, traditions, means of production, social organization, etc.—the people of Dwags po have most [things] in common with the Tibetan nationality. Therefore there exist both the premise and the authoritative evidence [for stating that] the Dwags po are Tibetan and [there exists] absolutely no evidence that they are the “Tis” Nationality.

ANNOTATED TRANSLATION II: “A DISCUSSION OF [MY] VIEWS ON THE MATTER OF THE DWAGS PO NATIONALITY”

With regard to the matter of the Tibetans [living] within the present-day boundaries of Pingwu County who are known as “Dwags po,” I have written two analytical essays, [the first of] which has been published in Chinese in the journal of the Sichuan Nationalities' Research Institute and [the second of which has been published] in Tibetan in Qinghai's *sBrang char (Gentle Rain)* (1981, Vol.2). But because I have heard that this [question] is being investigated yet again, here I will once again express some of what I know.

Some people have published that [because] they wear feathers on their heads it proves that [the Dwags po] are not Tibetan, but wearing feathers on one's head is an ancient Tibetan custom. In the metal typeset edition of *rGyal rabs gsal [ba'i] me [long]* (bSod nams rgyal mtshan, 1981) on the second line of page 236, it states.

As the three—dGe 'byung of g.Yo, Rab gsal of gTsang, and Shākya mu ne of dMar—were meditating, dGe 'byung of g.Yo saw a monk change his clothes [to that of a lay-person], take bow and arrow in his hand, and—having fastened feathers to his head and with a dog close at hand—go off hunting.<sup>62</sup>

And in the *Klong chen Chos 'byung* it says that when Rab gsal of mDzad pa in gTsang, dGe 'byung of Bo dong in g.Yo and Shākya mu ne of sTod lung in dMar were meditating at Chu bo ri, they saw a monk. The monk was leading a dog, beating a tambourine and sticking feathers on his head. With his robes flapping back and forth, he prepared to shoot an animal. But since they saw him he did not shoot. The old monk looked at him and, based on what he saw, said “The monk is crazy.” The monk replied “Teachers, do not be mistaken—this monk is not crazy. The king has ordered [this] monk to leave the order.” This reply refers to Glang dar ma's order that monks must wear feathers on their heads as a symbol that they have left the order [on his command]. And in the accounts of Zhu ba 'od [sic] in the *Mi la'i mgur 'bum*, it says “having stuck two vulture feathers.” referring to the feathers worn on Zhu ba 'od's head.<sup>63</sup> Accordingly, it can be said that even 800 years ago the young people of Tibet wore feathers on their heads. Even though this custom gradually disappeared, in some places this custom is still evident.

Moreover, in the Gesar epic there are many songs about the way in which feathers are worn on the head. And on the wall to the right of the door in the gTsug lag khang [Jokhang] in Lhasa, there is a painting of physical exercises of

ancient times, in which there are feathers painted on the heads of the exerciser I have seen this myself. Later on in Tibet, up until [Communist] Liberation there existed the custom of wearing feathered hats on such occasions as military drills, festivals such as gTor rgyag, etc.<sup>64</sup> And aside from all this, in some Tibetan areas such as rGyal rong, on the occasions of gTor rgyag, etc. it was traditional for the drafted soldiers to wear armor on their bodies and feathered hats on their heads. For these reasons the wearing of feathers on the heads of the Dwags po people of Nanping, Pingwu, etc. is a genuine ancient Tibetan custom. This is a pure sign that the people of Dwags po are Tibetan.

As for their name, it is clearly stated in the *Early and Later Annals of the Tang*<sup>65</sup> that Tibetan soldiers were left in the Sino-Tibetan border regions. So, as for these [particular soldiers], since the vast majority of them were soldiers who came from the Dwags po region, Tibetans call them Dwags po, and Chinese people call them “Bai Ma”<sup>66</sup> or Pe ma Tibetans. Those characters represent the sound of the Tibetan word “Bod dmag” [i.e., Tibetan soldier] when it is pronounced [by those Tibetans]: in the pronunciation of the [Tibetan] dialects of the areas around Zung chu, Chu nag and Nanping, the pronunciation of “Bod” sounds like “pe” and the pronunciation of “dmag” sounds like “ma”. Even now in their pronunciation, “Bod dmag” is pronounced “pe ma,” which is the same as the sound of the [local] Chinese pronunciation of the characters “bai ma”.<sup>67</sup> For that reason, Chinese people call the “Pe ma Bod rigs” the “Baima Zangzu”.<sup>68</sup>

Their habits and customs are like those of the Tibetans called Shar ba in Zun chu and those of the Tibetans in my own native place called dMu dge. Additionally, their style of architecture, the way in which they make offerings to the gods, and their burial practices are similar. Women's fashions are identical to those of central Tibet. And their language is archaic Tibetan. As a result, it is well established that the Dwags po are Tibetan.

Their religion is mostly the early Tibetan religion Bon. In the pronunciation of their dialect, the word “Bon” sounds like “pe”. To suppose that for that reason their religion is a religion called “pe po'u” is rash.<sup>69</sup> The written language is none other than the Tibetan language. Tibetan is used in religious writings, contracts etc. They say that there is a stone monument [there marking] the earliest Sino-Tibetan border with both Chinese and Tibetan writing on its face. I have indeed seen this written in both the earlier and the later reports by those who conducted research prior to now. As for the customs of that region which were discussed on those occasions, one can only argue that [the Dwags po] are Tibetan. There is absolutely no basis for saying that they are the so-called “Tu' Tso”<sup>70</sup> Nationality.

Since I have already criticized those two reports, I will not repeat [myself] here. Prior to this there were no doubts about whether or not the Dwags po [were] Tibetan, but lately, since the notion that they are the so-called “Tu'e Tso Nationality” has been propagated, more and more people have been paying attention [to this issue]. But Tibetans living from Central Tibet all the way to those settlements on the A mdo border have always believed they [i.e. the Dwags po] were Tibetan. In particular, if you were to say to the vast majority of the common Tibetan people in their area that they are not Tibetan, they will get angry and say they are just like [other Tibetan] farmers. (Dictated by [dMu dge

bSam gtan rgya mtsho mi 'jigs dbyang can dga' ba'i blo gros in 1987 at sGo mang in Upper rNga ba, transcribed by Shes rab ral gri).

### Notes

1. Full name: dMu dge bSam gtan rgya mtsho mi 'jigs dbyangs can dga' ba. For romanized renderings of Tibetan personal and place names used in this text, I follow Wylie (1959).
2. Maoergai in Chinese. dMu dge is the contemporary Tibetan spelling referring to this area, and the version employed by dMu dge bSam gtan himself—an alternative Tibetan spelling of the same place is dMod dge. Throughout this introduction and translation, I will follow the convention of giving traditional Tibetan place names (where they exist) in the main text, supplemented by current Chinese administrative names (in both *pinyin* romanization and Chinese characters) in footnotes, since the latter are often the only place names available on recent maps of the Amdo region and have also come to be used widely by Tibetans in those regions. For areas in which the Tibetan name in current use is derived primarily from the Chinese place name, I will use the Chinese name in the text and provide the Tibetan variant in the footnotes. While this approach is complicated, I feel it is the appropriate one for a region as historically and politically complex as the area in question.
3. Aba in Chinese.
4. *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* [The Great Tibetan-Chinese Dictionary]. Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang (Nationalities Publishing House), 1985. This three volume dictionary was updated, reduced in size to two smaller volumes and re-published under the same title in December of 1993.
5. The information about dMu dge bSam gtan's life related here is taken from the introduction to his selected works (dMu dge bSam gtan, 1993: 1-14). For more detailed information about his life and work, see his autobiography in Tibetan (dMu dge bSam gtan, 1995).
6. The state ethnic classification project (Chin. *minzu shibie gongzuo*) was an integral part of PRC policy in minority areas in the 1950s. Based on a Stalinist theory of the composition of national groups, it sought to identify discrete ethnic populations based on four shared characteristics: a common language, a common territory, a common economy, and a common psychological outlook manifested in a common culture. The official classification of the many minority groups living on the Sino-Tibetan frontier was a notoriously complex aspect of this project, and the social, historical and political reasons which underlie the contestation of some classification decisions are similarly complex. For a discussion of the general aims of the project and its outcome among another "Tibetan" population, see Harrell (1996). For a discussion of the case of the Ersu, another group that has contested their classification as "Tibetan," see Peng (n.d.).
7. Sichuan Sheng Minzu Yanjiusuo.
8. Baima Zangren.
9. Indeed, I believe it is only in light of this unfortunate history that the actual controversy can be understood, for the actual number of "Tibetans" whose classification was being questioned was relatively small—around 10,000 for the Dwags po, for example (see SMY, 1980: 119-20). In looking at a map which shows the geographical relationship of the areas settled by many of these groups to dMu dge bSam gtan's home region of Zung chu County [Chin. Songpan Xian], however, it becomes apparent why he, in particular, might feel threatened by the reclassification project. The Tibetans of Zung chu County are surrounded on all but their north-west flank by groups who have to some degree or another challenged those who would claim they

- are Tibetan or closely related to Tibetans: the Baima Zangzu in Nanping and Pingwu Counties (and indeed even a few in Zung chu County itself); the Qiang in Zung chu, Maoxian and parts of Mianyang District; and the Jiarong (rGyal rong) Zangzu in Heishui and the southern parts of Hongyuan County. Add to this boiling pot of ethnic discontent the very cultural similarities that he finds between many of these problematic populations and the Tibetans of Zung chu (as well as their differences from the more stereotypical Tibetans of the grasslands) and it becomes easier to see why the reclassification of groups such as the Baima may have seemed like the tip of a rapidly advancing bureaucratic iceberg, one that ran the risk of sinking the official Tibetan classification of the residents of these and other areas. Note that the case of other problematic Tibetan groups such as the Sherpa was also addressed in official scholarly journals by concerned Tibetan scholars (e.g. bSod nams, 1983).
10. The controversy has died down somewhat since the Chinese government has not yet actually formally recognized the group as a separate nationality. Instead, the consensus seems to be to refer to this particular group of people as "Baima Zangzu" or "Baima Zangren," thus marking them as both Tibetan and not quite Tibetan (since they require an adjective to qualify their identity). Such a compromise remains a sensitive issue for Tibetans, however, especially those living in and coming from the borderlands. As long as qualifying adjectives can be added to the Tibetan classification based on local cultural variation, there exists the perceived danger that the qualifiers will eventually become more important than the root noun, thereby leading to ever greater factional- and fractionalization (both social and political) of the Tibetan population within the PRC.
  11. It is interesting to note that dMu dge bSam gtan himself reveals in one of his Chinese essays (but not in the Tibetan) that he has never been to the area in question—but then again, neither has Fei Xiaotong. As dMu dge bSam gtan (1980b: 64) puts it:

I have never been to the area where the Dwags po people live, but in looking at the materials supplied by the two reports [of the official research team] I have come to exactly the opposite conclusion: the Dwags po definitely are Tibetans! Is it not strange that [we can] arrive at exactly opposite conclusions based on exactly the same material? I believe this is because the investigation team lacked a thorough understanding of the customs, religion, history, etc. of Tibetans.

Confident in his knowledge of things Tibetan, dMu dge bSam gtan sees himself as the equal (if not the superior) of his Chinese counterparts and is not afraid to write in a style that lets them know it.

12. At the time of writing, I have not yet been able to locate any published sources from that particular time period that reflect the reopening of the issue, though later published sources seem to indicate that the question of the proper classification of the Dwags po is far from resolved. An article published in a collection of local historical materials in 1991 (Zeng, 1991:132-168) reflects such an attempt to reopen the issue, as does the recent publication of an expensive volume on the cultures of the "Di" (i.e. Dwags po) and Qiang peoples (Deng, 1996). This volume, full of glossy pictures reproduced with a quality rarely seen in Chinese publications, leaves the reader with the impression that the "Di" and Qiang are the descendants of China's legendary first rulers, the emperors Yan and Huang. The volume thus seems to directly challenge the official classification of the Dwags po as a Tibetan population. It should be noted that the general word among ethnologists in China is that the reclassification of the Dwags po as a separate *minzu* was blocked by the tenth Panchen Lama (see Harrell, 1996: 285-86 n.6), so it is possible that the issue may have resurfaced again in the wake of his death.



13. I am grateful to Toni Huber for discussing the importance of the *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* with me, and for allowing me to make use of his copies of both the Beijing edition of the Tibetan text (bSod nams rgyal mtshan, 1981) and the available English translations (Sørensen, 1994; Taylor & Yuthok, 1996) as I prepared the first draft of this article. For a brief discussion of the use of the *rGyal rabs gsal ba'i me long* in contemporary historical and social writings by Tibetans, see Huber 1996: 58-67.
14. Notes on the translation:
1. Where I have added words or phrases that do not appear in (but are implied by) the Tibetan original, they are indicated in [brackets].
  2. I have tried to reach a balance between a "literal" and a "literary" reading of the Tibetan original, and have therefore chosen to rework some sections that translate into awkward English when the Tibetan is adhered to too closely. I have, for example, frequently elected to break up long sentences and have inserted paragraph breaks in certain places. I have frequently relied on the structure of dMu dge bSam gtan's Chinese articles as a guide when making such editorial changes.
15. Chu dkar translates as "White River," currently rendered as the Baihe on Chinese maps.
16. Nanping County in Chinese, Lan phin in Tibetan. Note that the Tibetan spelling given here is derived from the pronunciation of the Chinese characters in Sichuan dialect, which often replaces the initial "n" with an "l".
17. Pingwu County in Chinese, Phin wu in Tibetan.
18. Both translatable as "Black River," but apparently referring to both the Heihe (in present-day Nanping County) and the Heishui (in present-day Heishui County) in Chinese.
19. Located in rGyal mo rong, or Jiarong in Chinese.
20. In present-day mNga' ris (Ali in Chinese), Western Tibet; *stod shar ba* in Tibetan.
21. The Chinese characters appear in the original text.
22. Songpan County in Chinese. The Tibetan name is sometimes spelled *Zong chu* (e.g. Karmay, 1994: 2) or *Zing chu*.
23. In the local dialect, the Tibetan name is most often pronounced [x'ar wa] and the people it refers to probably have very little, if any, historical connection to the people known as Sherpas today, in spite of what the title of Nagano's (1980) treatise on the local dialect seems to imply.
24. Khri srong lde btsan (b.755-d.797).
25. Khri ral pa can (b.815-d.841).
26. Tib. sBra dpal rtsal che ba.
27. Tib. lDong zhwa mgo mtho ba.
28. Jinchuan in Chinese.
29. Qing in Chinese.
30. Qianlong in Chinese (b.1736-d.1796). Note that the conversion of the peoples of rGyal rong from Bon to Buddhism (in most cases that of the dGe lugs pa) referred to here takes place in the context of the infamous Jinchuan Wars. For more on this historical period see Mansier (1990), Martin (1990), Karmay (1990) and Greatrex (1994).
31. Ma'erkang in Chinese.
32. Zhuoni in Chinese.
33. Ruo'ergai in Chinese.
34. The text from which this account is taken is named in the Chinese version of this essay (dMu dge bSam gtan, 1980a: 63) as *Zangzu Liu Zhong Xiaoren Zuxing Zongzu Quanji* for which no publication data is given.
35. The text named in the Chinese version of this essay (dMu dge bSam gtan, 1980a: 63) is Zhuoni Tusi Zupu for which no publication data is given.

36. Mianyang in Chinese, Men dbyang in Tibetan.
37. Dizu in Chinese.
38. This is apparently a reference to the "Pumi" Tibetans of Muli County, also mentioned by Fei Xiaotong in his essay on classification problems (Fei, 1980:1). Known as Prmi in their own language, they have been classified as "Zangzu" (usual glossed as Tibetan) within Sichuan Province due to their historical and political connection with Muli Monastery, but are classified as "Pumizu" in Yunnan. See Harrell (1996) for a more detailed discussion of the classification process and the controversy which surrounded (and surrounds) it. The Tibetan discussion of this controversy here is loaded with irony and makes the re-classification process look totally ridiculous. By choosing to gloss Prmi as "Bod mi" (i.e., the Tibetan term for "Tibetan people"), the author is clearly poking fun at the official position that would separate the Prmi from Tibetans. For additional examples of related classificatory controversies on the Sino-Tibetan Frontier, all connected to the pre-PRC practice of classifying non-Han peoples of the border regions as "Western Barbarians" see Pen (n.d.).
39. Lest the rather awkward translation here be read the wrong way, I wish to clarify that this is most likely a reference to official discussion of revoking or changing Muli County's status as a Tibetan Autonomous County within the Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture of Sichuan Province, and not a reference to the extermination or resettlement of a Tibetan population.
40. Since the credibility of the Chinese researchers is being challenged, it is perhaps worthwhile to translate here their own account of their activities in 1978 and 1979 as related in their research report (Sichuan Minzu Yanjiusuo, 1980: 150-51):
- 8/5/78: Formally organized the "Sichuan Province Nationalities' Affairs Commission's Nationality Classification Investigation Team," with members Zhou Xiyin (of the Second Department of the Sichuan Nationalities' Affairs Commission), Sun Hongkai (of the Ethnology Institute of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), Ran Guangrong (of the History Department of Sichuan University), and Wang Jiayou (of the Sichuan Provincial Museum).
- 8/8: Ma Bingxiang (Vice-Chairman of the Sichuan Provincial Nationalities' Affairs Commission) and Shang Li (Department Head of the Second Department of the Sichuan Nationalities' Affairs Commission) meet with the members of the investigation team.
- 8/11: Investigation team arrives in Pingwu County.
- 8/12: She Kaixing (Vice-Chairman of the Pingwu County Party Commission) and Yang Jianzhi (of the Standing Commission) introduce the situation of the county's national minorities and the requests of the cadres and masses to the investigation team.
- 8/13: Arrive in the parts of Pingwu settled by the "Baima Tibetans"—Baima and Muzuo Communes—to begin work.
- 8/14: Together with Wang Zuopin and Xuan Gen of Pingwu County, the members of
- 9/20: the investigation team carry out research in every brigade of Baima Commune and in those brigades of Muzuo Commune made up of national minorities, conduct 11 discussion meetings and individually interview over 40 members of the population (common people and officials). [List of those participating omitted]
- 9/21: Party Secretary Xing of the County Party Commission hears reports from the investigation team, and expresses their hope that the issue of the classification of the nationality will be resolved as soon as possible.

- 9/22: Li Guochao (Party Secretary of the Mianyang District) hears reports from the investigation team as they pass through Mianyang on their way back [to Chengdu].
- 7/27/79: Members of the investigation team Zhou Changyin, Sun Hongkai, and Ran Guangrong leave Chengdu to carry out an investigation in Songpan, Nanping and Wen County (in Gansu).
- 8/1: Na Mata (Vice-Chairman of the Songpan County Party Commission) gathers cadres together for a meeting to discuss their views on the "Baima Tibetans."
- 8/2: Went to Huanglong Commune to hold an investigative meeting. This Commune has eight households of "Baima Tibetans" [names omitted] who migrated from Baima in Pingwu in the late-Qing and early-Republican period.
- 8/4: Arrive in Nanping County, where Yan Shengxu (Secretary of the County Party Commission) holds a meeting to introduce the situation of the county's national minorities. Sun Yuebai (Vice-Chair of the County Revolutionary Commission) points out: all the cadres who come to work in Nanping have doubts about the classification of the people who live in Xiatang as Tibetan.
- 8/5: Yang Huying (Vice-Chair of the County Revolutionary Commission and a Baima Tibetan) chairs a discussion meeting with many "Baima Tibetans" and another one with many Tibetan cadres from Shangtang.
- 8/6: Carry out investigations in each brigade of the Wujiao and Majia Communes. Over
- 17: 30 local people are interviewed and/or participate in discussion meetings.
- 8/18: The Nanping County Party Commission hears the report of the investigation team.
- 8/19: Arrive in Wen County, Gansu Province.
- 8/20: Hold a discussion meeting in Tielou Commune with over ten people, including a
- 22: representative from the County Party Commission.
- 8/25: Return to Chengdu.
- 41. Gannan in Chinese, which is the name of the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in Gansu Province that includes Xiahe County and Bla brang bKra shis kyil Monastery. Written as Kan lho in Tibetan.
- 42. Rangtang in Chinese.
- 43. Xiahe in Chinese, location of Bla brang monastery. Sha hu is used by the author as a Tibetan equivalent for the name of the county, which is larger than the geographical area usually referred to by the more common Tibetan usage of the monastery name.
- 44. Gansu in Chinese, Kan su in Tibetan.
- 45. Literally tantrists, referring to hereditary household tantric practitioners.
- 46. Another term for Zung chu, usually used to refer to the area in the northern half of the county settled by Bonpos which used to be united under a system of village alliances prior to the Communist takeover. Additional information about life and customs in Shar khog can be found in Karmay (1993: 2-3; 1994: 116-119) and Karmay and Sagant (1987).
- 47. The exact nature of this practice of dispute settlement is unclear to me at this time, but it seems to refer to a type of rotating system of adjudication. As it was explained to me by Tshen brtan skyabs, each settlement in Shar khog used to have a wooden staff, which represented the authority to settle disputes. This staff was passed from clan to clan on an annual basis.
- 48. The reference in the *Deb ther dkar po* (dGe 'dun chos 'phel, 1988a: 49) is to rMa rgyal spom rwa of A mdo, who is said to wear a felt hat (*phying zhwa*). I have thus far been unable to locate a similar reference in the *Klu sgrub dgongs rgyan* (dGe 'dun chos 'phel, 1988b).
- 49. Tib. *dung dang 'gron bu*.

- 50. Tib. Shar ja. Prior to the communist takeover of Shar khog, the tea trade in eastern mdo was virtually monopolized by the Shar ba, who would purchase tea in large quantities from the authorized Chinese distributors in the Zung chu (Songpan county seat and then travel in large caravans to other parts of A mdo to sell it. In his Chinese article (dMu dge bSam gtan, 1980a: 60), the author uses the phrase "Songpan zhuancha" in the place where Shar ja is used in the Tibetan. For a detailed discussion of this trade route and its influence on the culture and economy of the mdo region, see Baimacuo [Padma 'tsho] (1994). A brief account in English can be found in Karmay (1994: 2-3).
- 51. Qinghai in Chinese, referring to the province.
- 52. Tib. *Khyim sngags*. Another term for *sngags pa*.
- 53. Tib. *Rab byung*.
- 54. Tib. "yod pa red." In Sharba dialect, the equivalent phrase used in colloquial speech is "yod rgyu red," and implies a sense of uncertainty or even doubt about the statement being made. In translating this phrase—which is not generally used elsewhere in these essays—I have used the phrase "seems to have," since I feel that here the author may perhaps be beginning to let his dGe lugs pa prejudices show, denigrating Bon po religious practices while at the same time utilizing them as evidence of a Ur- or pan-Tibetan identity. At the Southwest Nationalities' Institute, many of dMu dge bSam gtan's former students and colleagues remember his frequent and vociferous attacks on Bon, but some also believe that he began to soften his view later on in his life. This article perhaps best represents his earlier viewpoint, but in light of the strategic use to which Bonpo practices can be put in positing grounds for an ancient yet ongoing Tibetan identity (cf. Kvarne, 1993), it is possible to see how a negative assessment of Bon might gradually start to change.
- 55. Refers to the residents of Shar khog.
- 56. *Lab rtse* are ritual cairns usually built collectively by a settlement on a nearby mountain summit. For a discussion of the role of the annual *lab rtse* renewal ceremony in the construction of Tibetan identity, see Karmay (1993).
- 57. Tib. *mChod dmar*. A reference to the making of animal sacrifices or blood offerings which are referred to as "sha sheng ji si" in the Chinese version of this essay. (dMu dge bSam gtan, 1980a: 61).
- 58. Tib. *sMon lam chen mo*.
- 59. Here, another name for Shar khog.
- 60. Tib. *mChod lha*.
- 61. My reading of this passage (dMu dge bSam gtan, 1993: 151), which is difficult to understand in the Tibetan, has been substantially informed by the arguments in his first Chinese essay (dMu dge bSam gtan, 1980a: 62).
- 62. For two different English interpretations of the passage in the *rGyal rabs gsal ba me long* to which dMu dge bSam gtan is referring here, see Sørensen (1994: 43) and Taylor & Yuthok (1996: 263). Both translations of the passage can also be found in full in Huber (1996). In this and the other passages quoted from Tibetan texts that follow, I have occasionally employed readings based on other published versions of the text that are slightly different than the version recited by dMu dge bSam gtan. I have done so in the hope of making the translation more readable, and because what is at issue in this passage is the presence of feathers, not the relationship between relative clauses. Where I have made such substitutions or departed from dMu dge bSam gtan's text, I have indicated them in the footnotes and also provided a transliteration of the author's original. Note also that in his original text dMu dge bSam gtan's quotation is identical to that found in bSod nams rgyal mtsho (1981: 236), with two exceptions: the addition of a *shad* following the phrase "sha thabs brdzes (change his clothes)" and the spelling of "kyin 'dug pa" (bSod nams

- rgyal mtshan (1981: 236, line 5)) as "gyin 'dug pa." Both of these differences may have been due to editorial decisions.
63. Note that the spelling here should be Zhi ba 'od. The reference mentioned in the text can be found in Rus pa'i rgyan can (1981: 332, lines 12-13). Many thanks to Toni Huber for locating and directing me to this reference.
  64. *gTor rgyag* refers to the ritual practice of breaking apart *gtor ma* and casting the pieces as a type of magical weapon to destroy or subdue bad or obstructive spirit powers. The most famous use of this practice occurs during the annual Great Prayer Festival (*sMon lam chen mo*), when soldiers would traditionally dress up in old armor or uniforms, which included plumed hats or helmets. Thanks to Toni Huber for a detailed explanation of this practice. Excellent pictures of men thus attired can be found in Normanton (1988: front cover, 147-149).
  65. Tib. *Thang yig gsar rnying*. dMu dge bSam gtan is most likely referring here to the Tibetan digest of the Chinese historical annals of the Tang Dynasty, translated by Don grub rgyal and Khirin chen dbyin (1983), rather than the Chinese originals. Thanks again to Toni Huber for directing me to this reference.
  66. Baima in Chinese.
  67. In Sichuan Chinese dialect, the characters "bai ma" are pronounced "bei ma."
  68. I.e., Baima (or "White Horse") Tibetans, which represents quite a change from the postulated original "Tibetan Soldier Tibetans." For an additional discussion of the relationship between the Chinese term "Baima" and the Tibetan term "Bod dmag" as it relates to the Dwags po, see Tshogs gnyis rdo rje (1987).
  69. Here "pe po'u" represents a Tibetan transliteration of the Chinese characters (*bei bu*).
  70. The spelling the author employs here is different to his previous usage of "Tis" to refer to the proposed Chinese ethnonym for the Dwags po: As I have been unable to locate the more recent reports to which this article is addressed, I do not know whether he is referring to yet another change in the proposed Chinese name or if the Tibetan spelling has simply been changed to provide a closer approximation of the local pronunciation. Since this second article was transcribed rather than written by dMu dge bSam gtan himself, I assume the latter.

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## Appendix 1: Chinese Terms Used in the Text

Pinyin Romanization (In Alphabetical Order)	Chinese Character
Aba	阿坝
Ali	阿里
Baihe	白河
Baima Zangren	白马藏人
Baima Zangzu	白马藏族
Beibu	北布
Benpo	苯波
Dangchang Qiang	宕昌羌
Di	氏
Dizu	氏族
Gannan	甘南
Gansu	甘肃
Heihe	黑河
Heishui	黑水
Jiarong	嘉绒
Jinchuan	金川
Ma'erkang	马尔康
Mao'ergai	毛尔盖
Mianyang	绵阳
Minjiang	岷江
Muli	木里
Nanping	南平
Pingwu	平武
Pumi	普米
Pumizu	普米族
Qianlong	乾隆
Qing	青
Qinghai	青海