

Maki, Ariana (2017). A Visual Transmission: Bhutanese Art & Artists from the 17th-19th Centuries. In Dasho Karma Ura, Dorji Penjore & Chhimi Dem (Eds), *Mandala of 21st Century Perspectives: Proceedings of the International Conference on Tradition and Innovation in Vajrayana Buddhism* (pp. 102-121). Thimphu: Centre for Bhutan Studies.

A Visual Transmission: Bhutanese Art & Artists from the 17th-19th Centuries

Ariana Maki

For initiated viewers, the murals, thangkas, and sculptures visible in Vajrayana Buddhist temples and shrines illustrate key rituals, deities, and lineage masters that provide important supports to practice. Yet while these objects carry additional, deeper meanings that can only be understood by initiates, there are additional levels of meaning available when we take into account the artists and patrons who contributed to the creation of a particular piece, as well as the specific imagery selected for display. Drawing on recent research, this paper focuses on particular artists who created works for display and use in Bhutanese ritual environments, with special attention paid to objects created in the early post-Zhabdrung era. By highlighting select surviving works made by artists active in the early phase of post-unification Bhutan, my hope is to provide illumination as to how some Buddhist masters created inspiring works of art as well as conducting rituals and initiations, practicing meditation, and authoring texts.¹

¹ This paper is one facet of a larger, longer term research project undertaken in collaboration with the National Library and Archives of Bhutan that seeks to identify, examine and analyze those individual artists whose creations provide key touchstones to Bhutanese art history with the aim of tracing the ways Bhutanese art evolved to fit a new nation, and how resulting works employed Vajrayana Buddhist imagery to reflect a distinctly 'Bhutanese' identity and artistic style. The project, 'Historical Artists of Bhutan', builds upon valuable

This article takes as its point of departure one of the foremost artists in Bhutanese history: Tsang Khenchen Penden Gyatso (gtsang mkhan chen dpal ldan rgya mtsho; 1610-1684), who arrived in Bhutan in the second half of the 17th century (Figure 1). Tsang Khenchen—and the Bhutanese students he trained—constitutes a major foundation of what might be termed ‘Bhutanese art’ on a national scale, and this paper analyses the impacts of Tsang Khenchen and his atelier in highlighting important Vajrayana Buddhist rituals, practices, and lineage masters through their artistic output. After following the Tenth Karmapa Choying Dorje into exile in Bhutan ca. 1645, Tsang Khenchen stayed in the region at the behest of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, who was in the midst of consolidating the nascent nation. Tsang Khenchen settled in Paro, building his main center at Menchuna (sman chu nang). There, he took on many students, many of whom went on to significant renown and to train their own students using Tsang Khenchen’s style.

Tsang Khenchen’s arrival in the country from Tibet coincided with the last years of the life of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (1594–1651; hereafter, the Zhabdrung) (Figure 2), the Drukpa Kagyu Buddhist master who began the process of unification during what was, broadly speaking, a turbulent time in the history of the Himalayas. The Zhabdrung, and by extension the Drukpa Kagyu tradition itself, had been embroiled in a controversy over who was the legitimate incarnation of the master scholar-practitioner and fourth Drukchen (head of the Drukpa Kagyu lineage in Tibet), Pema Karpo (1527–92). At stake was control over the monastic seat at Ralung in Central Tibet and the far-flung lands which offered it tribute. By 1616, the conflict between the Zhabdrung and

initial contributions to Bhutanese art history by John Ardussi, Terese Tse Bartholomew, David Jackson, E. Gene Smith and Khenpo Phuntsok Tashi, and has amassed data on nearly fifty artists active between the 17th and 19th centuries. I would like to acknowledge and thank both the National Museum of Bhutan and the National Library and Archives of Bhutan for generously allowing me to study and benefit from learned scholars. In particular, Dr. Yonten Dargye, a direct collaborator on the project, has been an invaluable research partner and colleague. We also had the good fortune of having some time in the field with Lopen Kunzang Thinley, whose encyclopedic knowledge is both inspiring and humbling. Research support in various capacities has been extended by the Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation and an American Academy of Religion International Collaborative Research Grant. Special thanks are extended to Dr. John Ardussi, who first brought Menchuna to my attention, and to the late E. Gene Smith, for generously sharing his resources. All photographs are by the author unless otherwise stated.

Paksam Wangpo (1593–1641) had become increasingly contentious, and circumstances induced the Zhabdrung to head southward to the lands that would become Bhutan. Drawing upon a local Drukpa Kagyu network established early in the 13th century, the Zhabdrung was installed there as a religious and political leader. Shortly thereafter, in 1623, Zhabdrung went into a three-year retreat and emerged in 1626 to declare he was going to institute the two-fold system (*lugs gnyis*) across the region.



Figure 1: Tsang Khenchen Penden Gyatso (1610–84), with attendants Sangngak Gyatso (b. 17th century) on the viewer's right and Drakpa Gyatso (1646–1719) on the left. Menchuna Temple, mid 18th century. Mural painting, ground mineral pigment on plaster



Figure 2: Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel (1594–1651); Bhutan, late 17th century. Ground mineral pigment on cotton, 123 x 69 cm. Collection of the National Museum of Bhutan. (Image courtesy of Lobzang Norbu)

By 1629, Zhabdrung had overseen the construction of Simtokha Dzong, the first of many fortified structures that housed both secular and religious authorities for a particular region (Figure 3). A skilled artist himself, the Zhabdrung recognized that in order to fulfil the necessary ritual functions each *dzong* required *ten* (rten), or supports for practice, a need that triggered large numbers of commissions for murals, thangkas, sculptures and implements. These works overwhelmingly emphasized Drukpa Kagyu transmission lineages and practices, and their thematic unity resulted in a recognizable and unified visual language that reflected the sources of authority within the newly centralized state.

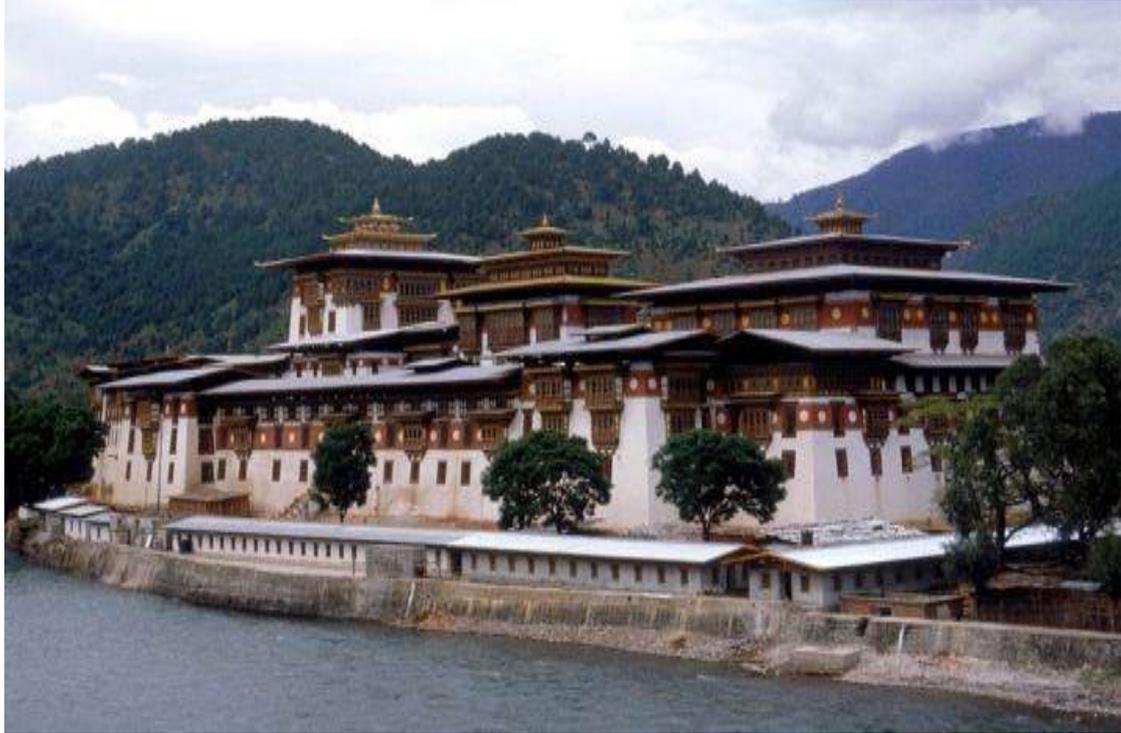


Figure 3: Punakha Dzong, founded 1637

At the same time, the political instability in Central Tibet was developing into civil war. In 1642, numerous Karma Kagyu practitioners fled Lhodrak in southern Tibet into Punakha, then under Drukpa Kagyu control, to escape persecution by the Gelukpas and the Mongols. Among them was Tsang Khenchen, whose younger brother had been killed by Mongol soldiers. While from the general Bhutanese perspective Tsang Khenchen might perhaps best be recognized as the author of an important biography of Zhabdrung², Tsang Khenchen was also a renowned artist who was very close to the 10th Karmapa Choying Dorje.³ On Tsang Khenchen's arrival in Punakha, the Zhabdrung

² Tsang Khenchen authored the Zhabdrung's namthar at his densa at MENCHUNA. It was his last written work before he died in 1684.

³ They travelled together as part of a group for many years leading up to the Tibetan civil war, and Tsang Khenchen is referred to in 10th Karmapa's biographies and elsewhere as the Rimdrawa Kuntu Zangpo, or attendant Samantabhadra. As Shigatse fell, Tsang Khenchen was giving the Tenth Karmapa teachings in Lhodrak that same year. Two years later, Tsang Khenchen and the Karmapa were able to escape their encampment just ahead of the Mongols' arrival. According to Tsang Khenchen's biography, Tsang Khenchen was traveling with the Tenth Karmapa between 1651-52, which was when the Zhabdrung passed away during his retreat. Tsang Khenchen, likely unaware of the Zhabdrung's passing, continued his travels, with his biography noting he received a painting from the Karmapa in 1654 and his making a stupa for two of the Karmapa's teeth in 1657. For more information on Tsang Khenchen's identification as Rimdrawa Kuntu Zangpo, and the life of the Tenth Karmapa see Irmgard Mengele, *Riding a Huge Wave of Karma: The Turbulent Life of the Tenth Karma-pa* (2012).

personally welcomed him, recounting to his guest that when Tsang Khenchen was six years old, his family had offered the Zhabdrung shelter for a week. The Zhabdrung interpreted their reconnection in Bhutan as an auspicious omen and encouraged him to remain as an abbot; however, Tsang Khenchen respectfully expressed a preference for teaching and retreats. Although Tsang Khenchen would return to Tibet⁴ he would also undertake multiple sojourns in Bhutan, even establishing a seat at Menchuna in Paro (Figure 4). There, his biography states, in addition to embroidery, woodworking and sculpting, Tsang Khenchen taught his students painting, described in his *Collected Works* as primarily in the Tsangri and Menri styles.⁵



Figure 4: Menchuna Temple, founded ca. 1656

The *Religious History of Bhutan* lists his students as the Gyatso Namdru, or the ‘Six Gyatsos’, as receiving the tradition; however, only one of these six individuals, Dragpa Gyamsto, is listed both there and in Tsang Khenchen’s *sungbum*.⁶ Each of the Gyatso Namdru listed in *Religious History* was an active

⁴ Tsang Khenchen’s biography is unclear as to when he first returned to Tibet, though it does mention he was back in the company of the 10th Karmapa by 1651.

⁵ Tsang Khenchen Penden Gyatso, 1976, volume 1, *passim*. See also Ardussi, “Gyalse Tenzin Rabgye (1638-1696), Artist Ruler of 17th-century Bhutan”, 90, and Smith, *Among Tibetan Texts*, 125-126.

⁶ The *Religious History of Bhutan (lho ‘brug chos ‘byung)* lists the six as: Dragpa Gyatso (1646-1719), aka Sangye Drakpa; Sangngag Gyatso (b. 17th c.); Thadrak Tulku Kunga Gyatso (b. 17th c.); Chokyi Gyatso (d.u.); Lodro Gyatso (d.u); Ngawang Gyatso (1759-

artist who created paintings, sculptures, embroideries, woodworking and/or ritual items, many of which survive to the present. If we trace subsequent generations of Tsang Khenchen's students, we find that the artistic lineage extends to some of the most important figures in the early phases of Bhutanese national governance and authority, including seven Je Khenpos⁷, the Tshamdrak Lama and the Komdrang Lama traditions, as well as the first Speech Incarnation of the Zhabdrung himself. The pervasiveness of Tsang Khenchen and his tradition amongst so many traditions speak to the roles that he, his texts, and his arts played in Bhutan's nation-building processes during the later 17th century, but also the embeddedness of the visual arts as a necessary quality of many respected masters.⁸

Two of Tsang Khenchen's foremost pupils were Drakpa Gyatso (1646–1719) (Figure 5) and Sangngak Gyatso (b. 17th century). Though both studied at Menchuna, each eventually founded seats near Paro. Drakpa Gyatso was born in Chirikhar in Paro, and moved to Menchuna to begin his studies with Tsang Khenchen at the age of 16. Like his teacher, Drakpa Gyatso became adept in several media, and was soon the preferred artist of the Fourth Druk Desi Tenzin Rabgye (1638–98), who was serving as the Zhabdrung's representative. At the time, it was a closely guarded secret that the Zhabdrung had passed away in 1651, and Tenzin Rabgye was spearheading multipronged cultural and political efforts to implement the late master's vision of a unified, sovereign nation.

1812). The *sungbum* provides Dragpa Gyatso (1646–1719), aka Sangye Dragpa; 3rd Je Khenpo Pekar Lhundrup (1640–99); Ngawang Drugyel (b. 17th c.); Tshamdrak Lama Ngawang Drukpa (1682–1748). It should be noted that there is likely an issue with Tshamdrak Lama Ngawang Drukpa being Tsang Khenchen's student as Tsang Khenchen passed away when Tshamdrak Lama Ngawang Drukpa was no more than two years old. It could be that the student was Ngawang Dorje, founder of Tshamdrak Densa, rather than Ngawang Drukpa. Ngawang Dorje also had connections with Tsang Khenchen's student Dragpa Gyatso. Additional research is required to definitively clarify the disconnect.

⁷ This high number of Je Khenpos in these early generations is of little surprise, as in order to qualify for the post of Je Khenpo candidates had to demonstrate artistic aptitude among other skills. The Venerable Udzin Kunzang Thinley also spoke to this in his conference presentation.

⁸ In addition to Tsang Khenchen's tradition, there are additional painting lineages addressed in the larger project, including that of Tulku Mipham Chopel.



Figure 5: Detail of Figure 1 showing Drakpa Gyatso (1646–1719)

Drakpa Gyatso ended up making remarkable contributions to this effort, as in 1692 he was given the commission to paint the famous cliff-side Taktsang Monastery in Paro, which was being extensively expanded and refurbished to emphasize Drukpa Kagyu imagery.⁹ Drakpa Gyatso was also responsible for the elaborately embroidered thongdrel (mthong grol) on display in 1680 when Tenzin Rabgye had his enthronement ceremony at Punakha Dzong before a crowd that included guests invited from as far away as Sakya Monastery in Tibet and Ladakh.¹⁰ These thongdrel displays, as well as the festivals and sacred dances that accompanied them, were annual performances organized and systematized by Tenzin Rabgye in part to help cultivate a sense of national identity and unity. However, not all of Drakpa Gyatso's artistic works were so public or so large-scale. One of the most remarkable pieces attributed to his hand is a large and detailed thangka of biographical scenes of the Kagyu yogi and poet Milarepa (ca. 1051–1135), the main figure in which Drakpa Gyatso is said to have painted with blood from his own nose (Figure 6).



Figure 6 Milarepa (ca. 1052–1135) surrounded by life scenes (detail). Bhutan, attributed to Drakpa Gyatso (1646–1719), ca. late 17th century. Ground mineral pigment on cotton, dimensions unknown. Girikha Temple

⁹ See Ardussi, “Gyalse Tenzin Rabgye and the Founding of Taktsang Lhakhang”, 38-39 and 54.

¹⁰ Ardussi, “Gyalse Tenzin Rabgye (1638-1696), Artist Ruler of 17th-century Bhutan”, 92.

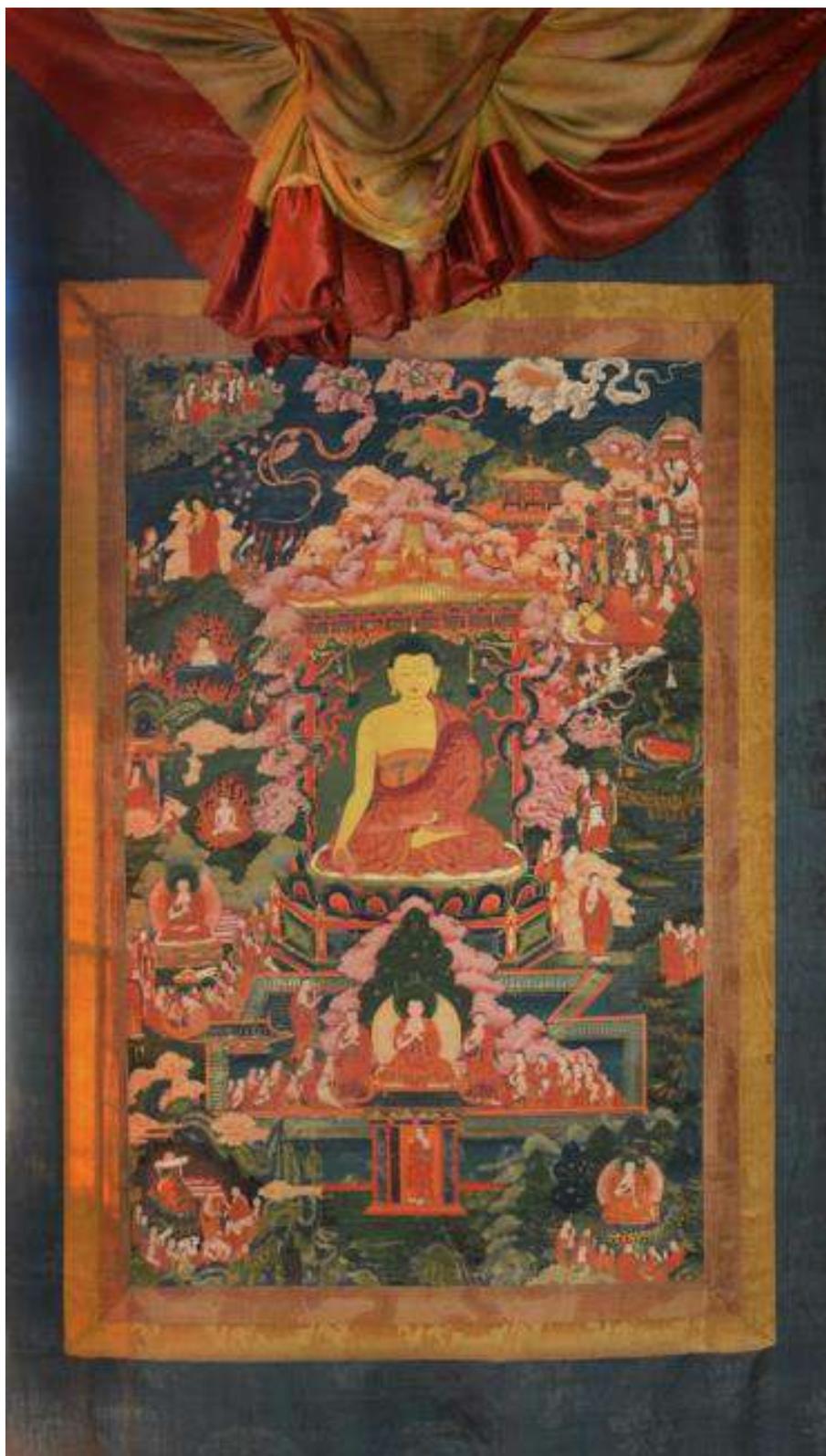


Figure 7: Enthroned Buddha surrounded by life scenes. Bhutan, attributed to Drakpa Gyatso (1646–1719), ca. late 17th century. Ground mineral pigment on cotton, 145 x 72 cm. Tsamdrak Temple

Additional works attributed to Drakpa Gyatso survive at Tsamdrak, a formerly Drigung Kagyu site associated with the first Tsamdrak Tulku Ngawang Drukpa (1682–1748), who followed a combination of Nyingma and Drukpa Kagyu practices and, at the behest of Tenzin Rabgye, studied sculpture in the tradition of Tsang Khenchen. Among Drakpa Gyatso's paintings at Tsamdrak is a set of thangkas showing scenes from the biography of the historical Buddha, Shakyamuni. One example from the set shows the Buddha enthroned beneath an unusual pavilion, around the slender columns of which are twisting dragons that clutch at the architectural supports and adornments (Figure 7). The overall composition illustrates the artist's dexterity with the Tsangri style, reflected in the billowing, pastel-coloured clouds, the shading conventions on the blue and green rock outcroppings, the generally asymmetrical composition, the solid deep blue sky and the numerous secondary figures, depicted in a variety of non-frontal poses.¹¹ Additional works attributed to Drakpa Gyatso found at Tsamdrak and elsewhere similarly tend strongly toward the Tsangri style, reinforcing the current theory that this style maintained a prominent place amongst the Drukpa Kagyu in Bhutan.

Whereas Drakpa Gyatso shifted seasonally between Chirikhar and his other seat at Jagar Jangchupling, Sangngag Gyatso founded his summer seat at Thadrak as per the instruction of Tsang Khenchen, who had dreamt of a dagger-shaped cliff that he envisioned as a manifestation of his tutelary deity, Dorje Phurbu (Skt. Vajrakilaya) (Figure 8).¹² Interpreting his dream as an omen, Tsang Khenchen instructed Sangngag to find the cliff and construct a temple on it so that the built structure would appear as the 'head' of the dagger; by extension, the inhabitants would be occupying the mind of the deity and receive the benefits thereof.

Dorje Phurbu is a rather ubiquitous figure in Vajrayana Buddhism, and in Bhutan, many Dorje Phurbu-related practices are traced to the tradition of the renowned Nyingma lineage tertön (treasure-revealer) and Bumthang native Pema Lingpa (1450–1521) and his revealed teaching *Lama Norbu Gyatso* (bla ma nor bu rgya mtsho) discovered in 1483 at Lhodrak Mendo in Tibet. Pema Lingpa's Dorje Phurbu cycle, along with other Nyingma teachings, was later incorporated into the state monastic curriculum systematized and instituted by the Fourth Druk Desi Tenzin Rabgye, probably with an eye to fostering unity between the Drukpa Kagyu powers seated in the west and the Nyingma, who held sway in parts of eastern and central Bhutan. It seems, however, based on evidence at Thadrak and other related sites, that Tsang Khenchen followed

¹¹ Jackson, *Place of Provenance*, 157–64.

¹² Thadra Gonpa was founded by Tsuglag Gyatso and Sangngags Gyatso, the latter of whom was considered to be the Thadra Tulku. Tsuglag Gyatso is not the same as the 3rd Pawo by the same name, who lived 1567–1630.

a distinctive Dorje Phurbu practice¹³, and according to the *Religious History of Bhutan*, the *Lhodruk Chöjung*, the master passed this specific tradition on to ‘Eight Phurba Naljorpas’, or ‘Eight Phurba Practitioners’, the identities of whom have yet to be definitively identified.



Figure 8: Thadrak Temple, founded 2nd half 17th century

Textually attested as one of Tsang Khenchen’s main meditation deities, the relative importance of Dorje Phurbu at Thadrak is reflected in the comparative scale of his depiction in the temple, which encompasses the innermost retinue figures as well as the animal-headed attendants inhabiting the mandala’s outer boundaries (Figure 9). This elaboration of the full ritual cycle stands in marked contrast to the imagery seen in the mural opposite, wherein numerous advanced meditation deities (*yi dam*)—including Dorje Jigje (Skt.

¹³ One iconographic shift seems to have taken place in the course of Tsang Khenchen’s dissemination: in the Pema Lingpa form of Dorje Phurbu, the yum embraces the yab with both legs, whereas in sites related to Tsang Khenchen and his lineage, the yum clearly has one leg extended to the ground. This distinction is related in the fourth volume of Tsang Khenchen’s *sungbum* (*rdo rje phur pa’i chos ’byung rgyud sde mang po’i gleng gzhi*), however, I have not yet conclusively determined whether this specific text is the definitive origin for the difference; also, there is a second candidate text written by Tsang Khenchen, a history of Dorje Phurbu practices (*rdo rje phu pa’i chos ’byung rgyud sde mang po’i gleng gzhi dang sbyar ba*), that also requires additional study.

Vajrabhairava), Kye Dorje (Skt. Hevajra), Sangwa Düpa Jampe Dorje (Skt. Guhyasamaja Manjuvajra) and Khorlo Dechok (Skt. Chakrasamvara)—are shown in extremely condensed form without any supporting retinue figures and interspersed in solitary and/or *yab-yum* forms amongst wealth deities, long life deities and depictions of the historical Buddha and lineage masters (Figure 10). Comparatively, the fuller composition of Dorje Phurbu clearly attests to an emphasis on and the importance of Dorje Phurbu at Thadrak, a pattern of emphasis that is repeated at numerous sites related to Tsang Khenchen and his followers.



Figure 9 Dorje Phurbu and retinue. Thadrak Temple, late 17th–early 18th century. Mural painting, ground mineral pigment on plaster (Image courtesy of Yeshe Lhendrup, NLAB).



Figure 10 Dorje Jigje surrounded by meditation deities, protectors and long life figures. Thadrak Temple, late 17th–early 18th century. Mural painting, ground mineral pigment on plaster (Image courtesy of Yeshe Lhendrup, NLAB).

The Tsang Khenchen-related Dorje Phurbu practice can be easily distinguished visually through a set of its subsidiary figures, specifically, red-faced, three-eyed males wearing warrior garb and whose lower bodies are constituted of three-sided daggers (Figure 11). Each figure wields a dagger in his right hand and a blood-filled skull bowl in his left. Thus far, these half-warrior, half-dagger figures remain unattested in Bhutan outside of Tsang Khenchen-related traditions, though additional research remains to be done. Further testimony to the association of Tsang Khenchen with Dorje Phurbu can be read in a

lengthy inscription at Thadrak that includes the statement that “Jamyang Penden Gyatso [Tsang Khenchen] gave the oral instructions [of Phurbu] in order to provide the power to overcome obstacles”. Clearly, the master felt that Dorje Phurbu-related practices were most efficacious in achieving this goal, evidenced by its comprehensive treatment within the temple. Further, Thadrak’s *gönkhang* houses a set of ritual daggers attributed to the hand of Sangngak Gyatso that are displayed during the temple’s *kuchoe*, an annual celebration of a past master that includes the performance of key rituals associated with the deceased. At Thadrak, the *kuchoe* rituals are conducted in honour of Tsang Khenchen and Sangngag Gyatso, and include practices of both Dorje Phurbu and Chenrezig (Skt. Avalokiteshvara)—specifically, a yellow form of Chenrezig Chagzhipa (Skt. Chaturbhujā Avalokiteshvara) that is part of a larger eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara practice unique to Tsang Khenchen as recounted in his *sadhanas* and as depicted in murals at a number of sites associated with the Tsang Khenchen lineage (Figures 12 and 13). Tsang Khenchen’s specific practice is iconographically distinguished by the presence of a small gem emerging from the lotus at Chenrezig’s shoulder.



Figure 11: Subsidiary figures, Dorje Phurbu cycle. Thadrak Temple, late 17th–early 18th century; Mural painting, ground mineral pigment on plaster (Image courtesy of Yeshe Lhendrup, NLAB)



Figure 12: Chenrezig Chagzhipa, Chirikhar Temple, late 17th–early 18th century.

Mural painting, ground mineral pigment on plaster.



Figure 13: Chenrezig Chagzhipa, Menchuna Temple, mid 18th century, Mural painting, ground mineral pigment on plaster.

The influence that Tsang Khenchen had on Bhutanese art is difficult to overstate. Tracing the earliest generations of his students, we find seven individuals who served as Je Khenpo, Bhutan's highest-ranking religious authority. As mentioned above, one of the Je Khenpos, Shakya Rinchen (1710–59), was considered to be the direct incarnation of Tsang Khenchen (Figure 14). Accordingly, Shakya Rinchen assumed control of Menchuna and commissioned new murals depicting himself, his former incarnation and the Zhabdrung, surrounded by forms of Chenrezig. As noted above, Tsang Khenchen's traditions continued through the Tsamdrak Tulku lineage, the Komdrang lamas, and the first Speech Incarnation of the Zhabdrung, Chokle

Namgyel, among others. It bears repeating that the extent to which Tsang Khenchen is intertwined with many of the foremost religious offices in Bhutan emphasizes his prominence and impact in the early phases of Drukpa Kagyu governance and authority, and reinforces the textually based assertion that mastery of the visual arts was considered a crucial skill for those assuming positions of religious leadership. Yet Tsang Khenchen is but one master artist-practitioner active during the often-turbulent years of Bhutan's early history, at which time the Drukpa Kagyu were consolidating their authority, repelling military actions by the Tibetan and Mongol armies, and seeking to engender unity within a new nation-state. Additional lineages are traced through the Newar sculptor Panchen Deva (b. 17th century), the sculptor Tulku Dzing (b. 17th century) and the Tibetan painter Lopen Mipam Chögyel (1543–1604), as well as through locally cultivated Bhutanese masters. While much work remains to be done, it is hoped that the material generated will foster an increased interest in and appreciation of the distinctive styles and personalities that have contributed to Bhutanese art history.¹⁴

As a concluding note, the roles of visual arts in creating sacred space, transmitting lineage and religious history, and offering support for practice are quite remarkable. Often, practitioners rely on texts and living masters for the understanding and undertaking of Vajrayana practices. And while both of these are obviously crucial and ought not be undermined, viewers might consider lending more attention to the visual and artistic legacies that past masters have left behind for us. Though an understanding of iconography, iconology, meaning and context, practitioners and scholars alike can cultivate a greater understanding of the many treasures Bhutanese art has to offer.

¹⁴ In addition to the 'Historical Artists of Bhutan' project, other current and recent initiatives include a multi-year conservation project undertaken by the Courtauld Institute, a current project focusing on Tashi Gomang (multi-doored portable shrines) being carried out under royal patronage, the National Library and Archives' Cultural Heritage of Bhutan project, the National Museum's ongoing symposia focusing on tangible cultural heritage, and a five-year cultural documentation project being carried out by the Shejun Agency and Loden Foundation in collaboration with the University of Virginia with support granted by the Arcadia Fund.



Figure 14 Ninth Je Khenpo Shakyar Rinchen (1710–59); Menchuna Temple, mid 18th century; Mural painting, ground mineral pigment on plaster.

Selected bibliography

- Ardussi, John. (2008) "Gyalse Tenzin Rabgye (1638-1696), Artist Ruler of 17th-century Bhutan" in *The Dragon's Gift: The Sacred Arts of Bhutan*, Terese Tse Bartholomew and John Johnston, Eds. Chicago: Serindia, pp. 88-99.
- . (2004) "Formation of the State of Bhutan ('Brug gzhung) in the 17th Century and Its Tibetan Antecedents", *Journal of Bhutan Studies*, vol. 11, issue 2: pp. 10-32.
- . (1999). "Gyalse Tenzin Rabgye and the Founding of Taktsang Lhakhang", *Journal of Bhutan Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1: pp. 36-63.
- . (1977). *Bhutan Before the British: A Historical Study*, PhD dissertation, Australian National University.
- Ardussi, John and Françoise Pommaret, eds., (2003). *Bhutan: Traditions and Changes*. PIATS 2003: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Tenth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Oxford, 2003. Vol. 10 of *Brill's Tibetan Studies Library*, Henk Blezer, Alex McKay and Charles Ramble, Eds. Leiden: Brill.
- Aris, Michael. (1979). *Bhutan: The Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom*. London: Aris & Phillips.
- Bartholomew, Terese Tse and John Johnston, Eds. (2008). *The Dragon's Gift: The Sacred Arts of Bhutan*, Chicago: Serindia.
- Gedun Rinchen (69th Je Khenpo) (2005). *Iho 'brug chos 'byung* (2nd edition). Thimphu: KMT Press.
- Jackson, David (2012). *The Place of Provenance: Regional Styles in Tibetan Painting*. New York: Rubin Museum of Art, pp. 157-64.
- . (2009). "Brug pa bKa' brgyud and Bhutanese Painting: A Preliminary Investigation", in *Written Treasures of Bhutan: Mirror of the Past and Bridge to The Future*, Thimphu: National Library and Archives of Bhutan, pp. 205-31.
- Khenpo Phuntshok Tashi (2003). *'brug gi bzo rigs bcu gsum gyi bzhad pa mkhas pa'i dga' ston*. Thimphu: Khenpo Phuntshok Tashi.
- Petech, Luciano (1972). "The Rulers of Bhutan ca. 1650-1750", *Oriens Extremus*, vol. 19, issue 1/2: pp. 203-13.
- Pommaret, Françoise (1997). "Stylistic and Historical Connections between Bhutan and Southern Tibet" in *Tibetan Art: Towards a Definition of Style*, Jane Casey Singer and Philip Denwood, Eds. London: Laurence King Publishing, pp. 210-217.
- Sangngag, Lam. (2005). *'brug gi smyos rabs yang gsal me long*. 4 vols. Thimphu, Bhutan: KMT Publishers.
- Smith, E. Gene (2001). *Among Tibetan Texts: History and Literature of the Himalayan Plateau*, Kurtis Schaeffer, Ed. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Tsang Khenchen Penden Gyatso. (1976). *'jam dbyangs dpal ldan rgya mtsho'i gsung 'bum*, 5 vols. Thimphu.