

The confluence of Tang and Cham Khar
Rivers where Pema Lingpa retrieved ter.

Longchen's Forests of Poetry and Rivers of Composition in Bhutan

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འཕྲི་ལྷ་ས་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་
པ་མེ་ཏྲ་ག་གི་སྐྱེད་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས།།

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Karma Ura

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༄༅། །བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འི་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཉླག་
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KARMA URA

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By Dasho Karma Ura
The Centre for Bhutan Studies and GNH Research
P.O. Box 1111
Thimphu, Bhutan
Fax: 975-2-321001
dasho.k.ura@gmail.com

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༥ སྤྱིར་སངས་རྒྱས་བསྟན་པའི་སྦྱིན་བདག་དང་ ཟུང་པར་དུ་ཀུན་མཆིན་གྲོང་
ཆེན་རབ་འབྱམས་ཀྱི་གསུང་རྩོམ་འདི་ནང་འཁོད་པའི་གཙུག་ལག་ཁང་དང་སྐྱབ་
གནས་སོགས་ཞིག་གསོ་དང་བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འེ་སྤྲས་ཡུལ་དུ་ སྤྲུལ་མེད་ཞལ་ཡས་
ཁང་བཞེངས་མཁན་

མི་དབང་རྒྱལ་ཡུམ་སྐྱབ་བགྲས་ཙམ་ཞེ་སྐལ་བཟང་ཆོས་སྦྱོན་དབང་
ཕུག་རིན་པོ་ཆེ་ལ་

བསྟན་འཕྲི་གང་ཡང་མེད་པར་སྐྱབ་སྐྱུར་གྱི་བྱ་བ་འདི་ཕུལ་ཕྱིན་མིན་ཀྱང་དད་པའི་
ཡིད་ཀྱི་མཆོད་པའོ།།

This translation, though imperfect, is dedicated-
offering to

***Her Majesty Royal Grandmother Ashi Kesang
Choeden Wangchuck***

A Promoter and Practioner of the Teachings, a
Gracious Benefactor of New Temples in Bumthang,
and of Temples and Hermitages mentioned in this
Poem by the Omniscient Longchenpa.





མི་དབང་འབྲུག་རྒྱལ་གསུམ་པ་ འཛིགས་མེད་དོ་རྩེ་དབང་ཕུག་མཆོག་དང་མི་དབང་རྒྱལ་ཡུམ་ ཨ་
ཞེ་སྐལ་བཟང་ཚེས་སྟོན་དབང་ཕུག་རྣམ་གཉིས་ལྷན་བཞུགས་གནང་བ།

His Majesty the Third King of Bhutan Jigme Dorji Wangchuck and Her
Majesty the Queen Ashi Kesang Choeden Wangchuck





༥ གྲུལ་བ་ཀུན་མཁྱེན་གྲོང་ཆེན་རབ་འབྱམས་ལ་ན་མོ། (༡༣༠༤-༡༣༤༣)



དཀར་ཆག

CONTENTS

Introduction	Part 1	12
Translation	Part 2	31
1.	སའི་ཆགས་ཚུལ། Landscape	33
2.	བུམ་ཐང་ཞེས་གྲགས་པའི་རྒྱ་མཚན། Etymology of 'Bumthang'	35
3.	རབ་སྐྱ་འམ་དེང་སང་རྒྱལ་དྲུག་རྒྱ། Rabna (Gyatsa in Chumey)	37
4.	ཐར་གླིང་གི་རི་རྒྱལ་དང་ཡུལ་རྩིས་མཚན་པ་དཔེར་བྲངས་བ། Mandala with Mt.Tharpaling at Centre	39
5.	སྐྱ་མང་སྡེ་ཅུ་ཉེ་བུམ་ཐང་སྡེ་བཞི། Four Lands of Bumthang (included Mangde then)	42
6.	ཤར་ཕྱོགས་རྟ་ཚུ། Tang (Tachu) in the East	45
7.	ཤར་ཕྱོགས་སུ་ལུ་ར། Ura in the South-East	47
8.	ལུ་མ་མཁར་ཚུ། Chamkharchu	52
9.	ལྷབ་ཕྱོགས་མང་སྡེ། Mangde (Tongsa) in the West	55
10.	བྱང་ཕྱོགས་མེ་རི། Meri (Choskhor) in the North	58
11.	བུམ་ཐང་གི་བསྟོད་པ། Admiration of Bumthang	65
12.	བུམ་ཐང་སྡེ་བཞིའི་ལྷེ་བ་ཐར་པ་གླིང་། Tharpaling as the Centre	69
13.	དབྱར་དུས་ཀྱི་ཐར་པ་གླིང་། Summer in Tharpaling	72
14.	སྟོན་དུས་ཀྱི་ཐར་པ་གླིང་། Autumn in Tharpaling	73
15.	དུམ་དུས་ཀྱི་ཐར་པ་གླིང་། Winter in Tharpaling	74
16.	དབྱིད་དུས་ཀྱི་ཐར་པ་གླིང་། Spring in Tharpaling	75
17.	ཐར་པ་གླིང་གི་སྐྱབ་གནས། Tharpaling Hermitage	76
18.	ཐར་པ་གླིང་དུ་ཀུན་མཁུན་གྲོང་ཆེན་བཞུགས་པའི་དགོས་པ། Reasons for Longchen's Stay	79
19.	བསྐྱོབ། Dedication of Merit	84
20.	བཅུ་མ་ལོ། Year of Composition	86



༄༅། །འབྲུག་མངའ་སྡེ་འཕེལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཉླ་
གི་སྒྲིད་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས།

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“The illuminating map¹ – titled as forest park of
flower garden - of Bumthang, the divine hidden
land² ” composed in 1355 by Longchen Ramjam
(1308-1363)³

Karma Ura

(Centre for Bhutan Studies and GNH Research)

¹ *dkod* is design or form or architecture. I have translated it as map - in poetry
- that introduces the reader to Bumthang through this poem.

² I have translated *yul* as land in preference over valley. *Lungpa* is translated as
valley whereas *grong* is translated as village.

³ This poem has been reprinted by Dharma Publishing in 2005. See pp. 456-
475, *dpal rgyal ba kun mkyhen klongchen rab 'byams kyi gsung thorbu'i
skor*. Dharma Publishing, 2005. USA: Dharma Chakra Press, Odiyan.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཏོག་གི་སྤྱོད་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

Introduction Part 1

དེ་འདྲའི་གནས་འདིར་པད་མའི་བྱིན་རྒྱབས་ལས། །

To such a holy place, due to the blessings of Pema

རྒྱལ་སྤུལ་ངོ་མེད་འོད་ཟེར་ལེགས་འོངས་ཏེ། །

(I), the Buddha's son, Drimed Yozer⁴ has come well

སྤྱོན་ལམ་ལུང་བསྟན་བཞིན་དུ་སྤྱབ་པའི་ཕྱིར། །

To practice according to prophecy and my own aspiration,

བསྟི་གནས་བཅས་ཏེ་བསམ་གཏན་སྦྱོར་པ་ལེགས། །

By being in this exalted holy place, practice of concentration
has gone well.

དེང་སང་དུས་ན་སྤྱི་བོ་མི་བསྐྱུན་པས། །

Because the contemporary people are uncultured

དབུས་གཙང་རྒྱལ་བའི་བསྟན་པ་ལུང་ཏུ་ཉེ། །

Teachings of Buddhism in Yus and Tsang are close to decline.

མཐའ་དམག་འབྱུང་པོས་ཡུལ་གྱི་དབུས་དབྱུགས་པས། །

As the frontier invasion and evil spirits have disturbed the land
of Yus

⁴ Drimed Yozer is Longchen's name before the epithet Longchen Ramjam was offered to him by Gongma Tai Situ and Nedung Dragpa Gyeltshen. See folio p. 23 of the autobiography of Pema Lingpa, *Bumthang Padma glingpa'i rnam thar yodzer kunmzes nor bu'i phrengba*.

འདི་འདྲའི་གནས་སུ་བྱང་ཆུབ་སྒྲུབ་པར་རིགས། 1

Only in this type of holy land,⁵ enlightenment is likely to be pursued.

The above lines are from the last part of the magnificent poem giving reasons for Longchen's stay in Bhutan, in particular Tharpaling. He had come to Bhutan for a number of reasons he cites in the poem, such as blessings of Pema Jungney, a prophecy and a miraculous vision to go to Bumthang he came across in monkey year⁶ when he 'witnessed' Guru Rinpoche in white colour with five dakinis, and his own aspiration to practice at this holy and empowered site. Longchen fled from the rising military menace Tibet faced from the Mongols. The poem reminds us that his journey to Bumthang was occasioned by a declining state of practice in Tibet, and spread of barbarity, due to Mongol invasion of Tibet.

In the concluding lines of the poem dedicating its merit (bsngoba), any merit produced by his composition is offered to all beings so that it will help them to cross the samsaric-ocean of their conditioned existence. It is a usual disclaimer in Buddhist tradition although Longchen makes even this statement appealingly refreshing. At the same time, Longchen is fulfilled with his spiritual achievement at Tharpaling, the main reason cited for his being there.

Yet Longchen is not one who is sedated by spiritual achievement. Rather, he had felt overwhelmed by creative, aesthetic energy and the power of nature of Bumthang coursing through him to pour out

⁵ Longchen means Bhutan, particularly Bumthang.

⁶ See p. 191. Glag blachos 'grub dang chosgrags bzangpos brtams. 1993. *Kun mkhyen rgyalpa klongchen rab 'byams kyi rnamthar bzugs. si khron mi rigs dpes krunkhang*. Longchen was renovating the temple of Zha Pema Wangchen when he had this vision.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འཁྲུག་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་རྟོག་གི་སྒྲིབ་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྲ་བ།

poetry. The spiritual ecology of Tharpaling is amply described in the poem. In itself, the rugged temperate forest landscape of Tharpaling is charming and nurturing. For Longchen it was imbued with qualities of spiritual deliverance instead of only a sensuous thrill. The thrall of nature at Tharpaling drives Longchen to spontaneous poetry. This is clear when he says

As the prodigious mind is swamped by forest of poetry,
River of composition descends sweetly in this holy site.

The poem was written in 1355 corresponding to female wood sheep year in Tharpaling. 1355 is just eight years before Longchen passed away above Samye in Tibet. He was not far from the end of his life while he was in Bhutan. His stay in Bhutan was one of the greatest blessings for the people of Bhutan. While his truly prodigious mind was swamped by the forests of poetry, the ease with which the rivers of composition descended sweetly has left so much information on Bumthang of that period that does not exist anywhere else. The poem is a speck of his vast heritage of philosophy and literature that have enriched seekers of enlightenment path.

For the lay people in Bhutan, even if Longchen's exceptional clarity of dzogchen concepts cannot be accessed without long studies, they strive to listen for months whenever high lamas engage in transmission and empowerment of various major works of Longchen such as mdzodbudun, ngalgsoskorgsum, snyingthigyabzhi. In such reading and explanations carried out in big open winter camps, usually in the warmth of subtropical Bhutan, ordinary adults, and sometimes children, sit through imbibing a little more profound view, sharing in

the phenomenology of Longchen. So the name of Longchen is heard by Bhutanese kids long before any meaning of what it stands for is cognized. Like other children of Bumthang district, my own childhood experience included being in the next door village of Shingkar or visiting Tharpaling, and coming to hear about him. There was an aura of Longchen's presence in the village temple of Shingkar, as one of the teaching-residences he founded and well maintained in the custody of his descendants. My own beginning of understanding the world of Longchenpa's thoughts started when I was wonder struck by the mysterious readings by a lone priest of Longchen's short but profound work, Chosdbyingsrinpoche'imdzod, sitting beside a dead body of a relative. This text and the bardothosgrol are often read to the dead by a lone reader, while a much larger funerary rites performed in group by priests goes on in a separate room or temple.

Importance of the Poem

Longchen's prolific works have been considered literary, poetic and philosophical masterpieces at the same time. In this dazzling poem, Longchen left a profile of Bumthang describing its geography and climate, people and their villages, livestock and crops, rulers and palaces, inhabitant's appearance and character, place names and their etymology, peace and prosperity, temples and holy lands, trade and handicraft. It was written at the behest of his Bhutanese disciples, patrons and lay followers who are not named in the poem. There is just a line in the poem where Longchen hopes that the poem will please his faithful followers. Longchen's poem is not a tactful and diplomatic appreciation of his hosts; his rapturous liking for the place and people are inherent in the poem. At one point he says that it

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤུངས་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཉླ་གི་སྤྱིད་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

rivals central Tibet, Yus, then perhaps the pinnacle of culture and civilization of the Himalayas. He questions gently the name Mon by which Bhutan was known those days because Mon in his mind has a slightly deprecating tone. A contrasting and condescending view of Mon Bumthang is given by the authors of Kuenkhen Longchen's short biography. The short biography in which a few sentences of adverse perception of Bumthang is found in 'Glag blachos 'grub dang chosgrags bzangpos brtams. 1993. Kunmkhyen Drimed yodzer gyi rnamthar mthongba don ldan bzhugs so. In that biography, a line describes Mon Bumthang erroneously as the place where the voice of dharma has not been sounded.⁷ In Longchen's poem on Bumthang, he describes in attractive religious and civilizational terms. The discrepancy is explained by the lack of direct experience of those authors who wrote the short biography of Longchen about Bhutan. They were disciples of Longchen but had not been to Bhutan and had also not read this poem when they wrote his short biography. In Longchen's own words, Bumthang is a virtuous land pleasing for intelligent people.

མོན་ཡུལ་བུམ་ཐང་དགེ་བའི་གནས་མཆོག་འདི། ༡

This exalted holy land of Monyul Bumthang

མོན་རྒྱ་བཏགས་ཀྱང་བོད་ཡུལ་དབུས་དང་མཚུངས། ༡

Though it is called Mon, it is equal to Yus of Tibet

⁷ The biography is included also in Glag blachos 'grub dang chosgrags bzangpos brtams. 1993. *Kun mkhyen rgylaba klongchen rab'byams kyi rnamthar bzhugs*. sikhron mi rigs dpeskrunkhang

སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་མིན་ཡང་ཡུལ་འདྲི་བྱེ་བྲག་སྟེ། །

Though it is not a hidden land, it is a hidden land of particular kind⁸

དེ་ཕྱིར་མཁས་རྣམས་དགའ་བ་བསྐྱེད་པར་རིག། །

Therefore, it can generate happiness among the scholars.

ཐོགས་ཀྱི་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་རིན་ཆེན་སྟོ་རྣམས་ཀྱང་། །

Even the doors to the precious hidden land of the region⁹

རིང་པོར་མི་ཐོགས་སྤྱར་དུ་འབྱེད་འགྱུར་ལ། །

Will not be closed for long, and will be soon unlocked.

In the centuries immediately following Longchen, Bhutan became, as Longchen envisioned, a rich field for the activities of many tertons (treasure revealers) bringing out new and rejuvenating teachings and relics to life, while Nyingma, especially Nyingthig (Heart Essence) order got eclipsed in Tibet. By the time Longchen came to Bumthang, great tertons like Nyangrel Nima Yoser (1124-1192), Guru Choewang (1212-1270), Terton Sherab Membar (1267-1326?), and Phajo Drukgom Zhigpo (1179-1246) had lived in the country. Others giants like Thangtong Gyalpo (1385–1464?), Ratna Lingpa (1403-1478), Pema Lingpa (1450-1521) were to live here after Longchen.

⁸ It seems quite clear that the concept of Bhutan, in particular Bumthang, as hidden land had not yet caught on during Longchen's time. It gathered its reputation afterwards.

⁹ Bumthang was known to Longchen as a hidden treasure land. Here he is expressing his expectation that the doors to this land will be opened soon as turmoil of Mongol invasion is eminent in Tibet. In fact, the march of tertons and other religious figures into Bhutan after Longchen's times proved this to be true.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་རྟོག་གི་སྤྱིད་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྲ་བ།

Longchen himself was a great tertön. His biography describes many treasures he obtained in the course of his journeys around Tibet. Some of these holy artefacts such as cymbals, Tara statue and vajrakila are part of the religious heirloom of the temple of Samtenling Choje in Bumthang. One of the main reasons for writing this introduction is to bring to light why these artefacts happen to be preserved by successive families. It is primarily because the ancestral line of the families goes back to Longchen himself, from his son – the only biological line - born in Bumthang in Bhutan while he was here.

The second reason for me for writing this introduction is to emphasise that the poem is the longest, and perhaps the oldest, surviving text about Bumthang. In fact it may be contended that it is the longest and oldest text specifically on Bumthang dating to that period. There are many textual sources referring to earlier period but they were written later. Here in the poem we find the first reference to Tharpaling as Medicinal Land (sman ljongs) which came to be applied to the whole country as Medicinal Land of the Dragon (sman lgongs 'brug rgyalkhab).

ནགས་ཚལ་སྤྲན་ཤིང་མེ་རྟོག་ཚུགས་དང་། །

Forest, medicine trees, flower, and water are pure,

ནེའུ་གསིང་སྤྲན་ལྗོངས་དུ་མས་རབ་བརྒྱན་ཞིང་། །

And alpine meadows and herbal landscapes embellish it.

དགོན་པའི་ས་གཞི་དག་ཀྱང་རབ་དུ་མཛེས། །

The place of hermitage is extraordinarily beautiful.

Also here in this poem occur some of the most poignant lines, with minor variation, sung in the universally well-known Labey, the song and dance ending all songs and dances in Bhutan.

ས་རྒྱམས་འདབ་བརྒྱད་པད་མ་ལྔ་བུ་ལ། །

The land is shaped like a lotus with eight petals.¹⁰

གཞམ་ཡང་འཁོར་ལོ་ཕྱིབས་སྟོང་བཀོད་པ་བཞིན། །

The sky is shaped like a wheel with thousand spokes.

Longchen's Direct Descendants in Bhutan

Longchen is held as a celibate practitioner in most of the Buddhist world. Not so in Bhutan. His bone lineage (gdung brgyud) survives, cementing his thriving teaching lineage (chos brygud). There are families who trace back their ancestry to Longchen himself, through his son – the only biological line - born in Bumthang in Bhutan. This has been the understanding in Bhutan down the centuries, and was a fact that was not questioned, let alone refuted, by anybody in the country. Yet there is no genealogical table and documents in this case as for almost all other high families, besides the oral knowledge that the line is unbroken. In recent times, however, there

¹⁰ This and the next line are popular starting lines in Lebey, the song which concludes all songs in celebratory events. However, very few know that those lines can be traced to Longchen. I have translated the Lebey. See Karma Ura, *The Hero with a Thousand Eyes*. 1995.

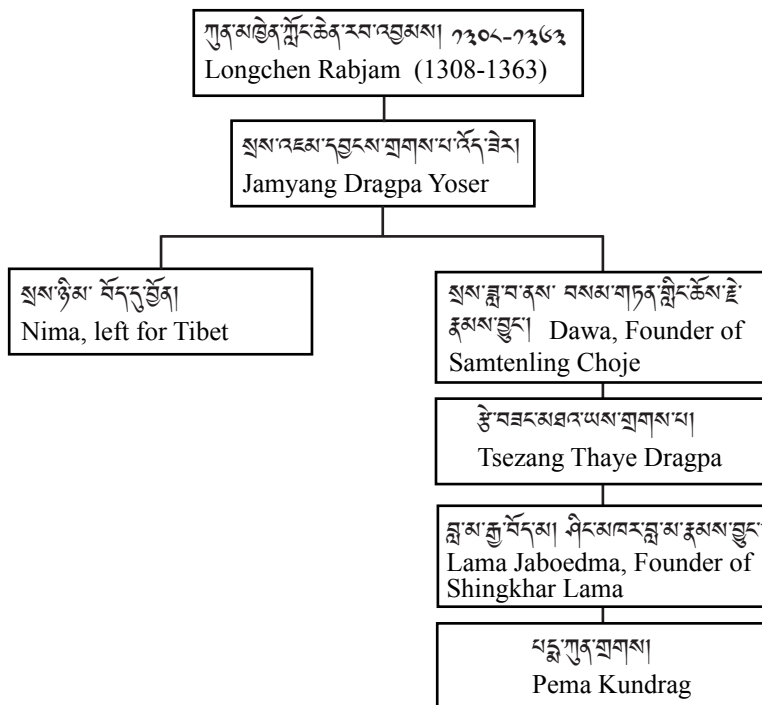
has been an interest in researching and documenting the genealogical aspects of some of the key descendants of Longchen which exists as two religious nobility families of Samtenling Choje and Shingkhar Lama, both in Bumthang district. Due to poor sense of preservation of old documents, neither of these families have a clear genealogical account of every generation since Longchen. What they have done well, however, is preserving relics belonging to Longchen, his son and their grandsons, who founded the households which continue today. Not surprisingly, both the recent researches into these two families background have been carried out by members of these two families. In his article “Oral Construction of Exile Life and Times of Kunkhyen Longchen Ramjam in Bumthang”,¹¹ Dorji Penjore, who is married into the extended family of Samtenling Choje, has researched into the oral accounts that survive in Bhutan about Longchen. He has unearthed a great deal of information about the founding and growth of the Samtenling Choje family around the holdings of precious relics, land, cattle and servants while being the centre of religious practice allied with Longchen Nyingthig in the valley over which they held pastoral sway as well. The other prominent descendant family of Longchen is that of Shingkhar Lama household. It was founded by a grandson of Longchen who moved to Shingkhar from Samtenling. Dasho Shingkhar Lama Kunzang Wangchuck (1928-2014) has written a succinct unpublished article in

¹¹ Dorji Penjore. 2005. *Oral Construction of Exile Life and Times of Kunkhyen Longchen Ramjam in Bumthang* in Journal of Bhutan Studies, Winter 2005 Volume 13. Thimphu: Centre for Bhutan Studies, pp. 60-73. See also Stewart Mackenzie Jampa. 2013. *The Life of Longchenpa, The Omniscient Dharma King of Vast Expanse*. Boston and London: Snow Lion. Stewart has a chapter on Longchen’s life in Bhutan based on Dorji Penjore’s article.

dzongkha on the unbroken male line of his family going back to that grandson of Longchen, hailing from Samtenling Choje family, until a few generations ago. However, in the case of Shingkar Lama there was no male issue several generations ago and bone lineage ceased with Lama Dechen. A groom for his daughter, Jigme Lhamo, was sought from Somtrang Choje for Shinkhar lama lineage to continue. Dasho Shingkar Lama Kunzang Wangchuck further sources a vital argument to the biography of Drudul Laythro Lingpa. According to the autobiography of Tertön Laythro Lingpa, he met the Lama Jabod and Jabod's son Pema Kundrag at Shingkar Lama's house when he visited Bhutan. Lama Jabod introduced himself to Tertön Laythro Lingpa as direct descendant of Longchen.¹² The key point is that Letro Lingpa met with Pema Lingpa. Although it is difficult to ascertain the exact period when Letro Lingpa lived, he was a younger contemporary of Pema Lingpa. The summary of genealogy given here is sourced from Dorji Penjore, Dasho Shingkar Lama Kunzang Wangchuck, and autobiography of Letro Lingpa. Readers are referred to their respective works for more information.

¹² See p. 318-319. Tertön Letro Lingpa. *Rig 'dzin chenpo gter bton las 'phro gling pai dus gsum gyi skye brgyud dang rnam par tharpa che long tsam zhig bkod pa me tog 'phreng mdzad zhes bya ba bzhugs so*. Gonpo Tseten, Palace Monastery, Gangtok, Sikkim.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤུངས་ལྷ་མོ་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཏྲག་གི་སྤྱི་ཚེས་ཚེས་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།



The genealogical chart shown above summarises the information on the origin of the two religious nobility family. According to oral accounts, Longchen's consort was a lady named Ani Kyidpala, herself a disciple of Longchen from Chungsekha in Shaa valley in Western Bhutan. A daughter was born to them in 1351, followed by son Jamyang Drakpa Yoser in 1356. The dates of their births are estimated by Dorji Penjore. When Longchen returned to Tibet leaving behind his consort and two children, Dasho Shingkhar Lama noted that Longchen's chief disciple at Tharpaling monastery was made responsible for the education of his son, Jamyang Dragpa Yoser (1356-1409?). It can be speculated that this chief disciple was either

Lopon Pelbar or his brother Lopon Sangay Kunga who was made the abbot of Tharpaling by Longchen. In oral account, it is believed that Longchen gave pith teachings to his chief disciple whom he asked to pledge that the same would be transmitted to his son, Jamyang Drakpa Yoser. Jamyang Drakpa Yoser had two sons, Nima and Dawa. Nima left for Tibet. Dawa founded Samtenling Choje. But Dawa had, it seems, several children. I am inclined to speculate that some of the relics possessed in Samtenling temple were intentionally left for his son Jamyang Drakpa Yoser who in turn left it for Dawa. One of Dawa's grandchildren, namely Lama Jabloed founded a household at Shingkhar, where Longchen had lived for a while before he came to Tharpaling.

Lama Jabloed (also known as Jabloedma) was sent by his father, who might have had other sons, to establish Shingkhar temple and became the ancestor of present Shingkhar Lama's family. Had Jabloed been the only son, he would have succeeded his father as the Choje of Samtenling. The main reason for sending Jabloedma to Shingkhar Dechenling, according to Dasho Shingkhar Lama, was that Longchen had stayed considerably long in Shingkhar and the Goenkhang (deity temple) of Drangsong Rahula, the protector deity of Longchen, was extremely potent one in Shingkhar. Shingkhar literally means Forest Palace, but Longchen named the spot he occupied as Dechenling. It was also named at the same time by Longchen as Lhundrup Rinchen Jungney though Shingkhar Dechenling is more popular.

The connection between Shingkhar Lama's family and Longchen through Tsezang Thaye Drakpa would have been lost if it was not for a patriarch lama with atypical name of Lama Jabloedma of Shingkhar. Jabloedma must have been probably the grandson

can be found in the ZaKhang of Shingkhar temple. The temple itself had been built centering on the walls of throne measuring 5.5 square feet and 1.7 feet in height, as measured by Dorji Penjore. The throne was discovered during the renovation of the temple in 1990s by the community of Shingkhar village. On the wall throne was an unusually long iron cross resembling a vajra. The wall throne and the iron vajra were the key sanctification of the site on which the temple had been built more than 600 years ago, but the items that made the temple's foundation sacred had been forgotten over time.

Moreover, the main public ceremony of the Shingkhar village, known as Shingkhar Rabney (literally Consecration of Shingkhar Temple) incorporates a performance of yak – a yak dance. The account of the yak dance is unusual, and is connected to Longchen's journey to Bhutan. Longchen had entered Bhutan from eastern part of Bhutan, specifically Kurtoe. The yak which he was riding died when he reached Kunzangling in eastern Bhutan, but the skull of this yak with the horns intact was brought to Shingkhar. During the main public festive ceremony of Shingkhar village in olden days the skull of the yak that Longchen rode was used instead of a wooden mask.

Like Shingkhar temple, Samtenling temple, which belongs to Samtenling Choje, has among others, the land offered to Longchen in lower Tongsa in Baleng and in the Mon villages of Shengleng and Wangleng as well as Pangjong and Nagjong in Chumey villages. The pastureland in Mon areas in Tongsa in the land title of Samtenling Choje was originally offered to Longchen during his teaching tour of Mon villages. More importantly, Samtenling Choje and his family members own several personal religious items of Longchen such as skull hand drum, cymbal, vajrakila, statues and his seal. A print of

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཏྲག་གི་སྒྲིབ་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

Longchen's personal seal is shown below. At one stage, Samtenling Choje also owned the revered tooth relic¹³ of Longchen which has now become that main religious object in the main Tharpaling temple dedicated to Longchen.

Longchen's seal is now in the hand of a member of Samtenling Choje family:



བསམ་གཏན་གླིང་ཚོས་ཇེ་འོ་སྤུལ་ཚང་དུ་ཡོད་པའི་ཀུན་མཁྱེན་གློང་ཚེན་རབ་འབྱམས་ཀྱི་ཐེན་པ།

¹³ On tooth relic of Longchen, see unpublished article by Skora, Kerry Martin. 2009. Embodied Presence of a Fourteenth-Century Tibetan Buddhist Saint in the Sacred Landscape of Bhutan.

Bumthang: A Paradise Transplanted

སྔན་གྱི་རྒྱལ་སློན་མཆོག་རྣམས་བྱོན་པའི་ཡུལ། །

A land visited by great ancient kings and ministers.

ངོ་མཚར་གཞུག་ལག་ཁང་རྣམས་བཞུགས་པའི་ཡུལ། །

A land where many amazing temples dwell.

མཁས་གྲུབ་དུ་མ་བརྒྱད་པར་བྱོན་པའི་ཡུལ། །

A land of the descendants of numerous scholars and yogins.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་ཡི་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་བཀོད་པ་གསོན། །

Listen to me about the map of Bumthang, the divine hidden land.¹⁴

དབུས་དང་ཕྱོགས་བཞི་ཡངས་པའི་རང་བཞིན་ཡུལ། །

A land naturally spacious at its centre and four directions.

ཀུན་ནས་རྒྱུ་པ་བུམ་པའི་འཁོར་ལོ་དང་། །

Like a wheel of vase that is round on all sides

པད་མ་ཁ་བྱེ་ལྷ་བྱུང་མཛེས་པ་ལ། །

Or beautiful like a lotus in full bloom.

The land is unlike a people's land - but a paradise transplanted.

རི་རྣམས་ཉམས་དགའ་སྔོ་ཞིང་སྤྱུམ་པ་ལ། །

Hills are delightful, shiny green as if smeared with oil.

¹⁴ *Yul* is translated by others as valley. Land is more appropriate here. *Lung* shall be translated as valley. *Grong* is translated as village.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཏོག་གི་སྒྱེད་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

རྩ་མོ་དཀར་གསལ་གངས་རིའི་ཕྱང་ཚོགས་ཅན། །

The rows of mountain peaks, which are white and clear

མཐོ་ཁྱད་མཉམ་ཞིང་ཕྱོགས་རྣམས་འཁོར་བ་ནི། །

And are of uniform height, stand in all directions,

རིན་ཆེན་ར་བས་ཀླན་ནས་བསྐྱོར་བ་བཞིན། །

As though a fence of jewels girdles all around.

ལུང་རྣམས་ཐང་ཡངས་མེ་ཏོག་འབྲས་མང་ལ། །

Valleys have spacious plain, with many kinds of flowers and fruits.

གྲོང་རྣམས་ཡིད་འོང་པད་མ་མང་པོས་གང། །

Villages are charming, filled with beautiful ladies.¹⁵

ཕྱོགས་རྣམས་མདངས་གསལ་དཔལ་གྱིས་མཛེས་པ་ནི། །

All vistas¹⁶ are lustrously clear, and gloriously beautiful.

ལྷ་རྣམས་ཡུལ་ལ་འབྲན་པ་ལགས་སམ་སྟུམ། །

Gods might possibly vie for this land.

When the main body of Longchen's poem is read, it is an invaluable guide to the district of Bumthang which then included Tongsa. In fact, Longchen's poem is the only reference that gives this information about Tongsa being a part of Bumthang in ancient time. It is also

¹⁵ Longchen uses *padmo* in plural, literally lotuses. I assume he means ladies of Bumthang are as gorgeous as lotus flowers.

¹⁶ *Phyogs* is direction, but it can be understood also as vistas in this context.

the only reference from early period which give us the etymology of various gewogs and places in the district besides being rich in information about various other aspects of life at that time.

The very first lines of the poem starts by appreciating the glory of this place called Bumthang because of it being inhabited by historic kings and ministers; being populated by wondrous temples; being the place of the descendants of great scholars and yogis; and being captivating and haunting with its physical beauty. While he described Bumthang as outstanding in all these respects, it was also a divine hidden land that only the fortunate had the chance to inhabit and experience.

Overall, Longchen likens the sacred landscape of Bumthang to a lotus in full bloom with the central peaks of Tharpaling resembling Mt. Meru, the centre of the Buddhist cosmology or mandala. In each cardinal point is a gewog. Tachu in the east, Meri in the north, Ura in the south-east, and Tongsa in the west. Tharpaling is at the centre. The land around Tharpaling is analogized with eight-petalled lotus flower. In the middle of the blossom is the mountain bosom of Tharpaling, which is further symbolized as Maitreya King. Main historical interest of the poem lies in Longchen's observation of life in four gewogs, each nesting in a wide valley. Another astonishing aspect of the poem is Longchen's attention to the nature including rivers and streams. Shape, colour, sound and even velocity of rivers are given as much importance in Longchen's mind as people, history, farming and crafts.

For admirers and followers of Longchen, there are eight familiar places where Longchen lived while he was in Bhutan, which was then known as Monyul. Among them, Tharpaling, literally the Place

བུ་མ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཉྑལ་གི་སྤྱིད་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

of Liberation, was where he lived perhaps the longest in Bhutan. It is noted in his short biography¹⁷ that Longchen named this hermitage Tharpaling though the poem takes it as given. His biography further says Longchen started a monastery in Tharpaling and appointed the brother of Lupon Pelbar, Lupon Sangay Kunga as the head of the monastery.

Tharpaling has become a legendary centre of reflections and learning on his works in the Himalayas. Longchen was drawn to Tharpaling in particular and Bumthang in general because of its prior, hallowed associations with Ugyen Padma Jungney. Many seekers of enlightenment were in Tharpaling before Longchen, as he admits in the poem. Tharpaling's attractive geographical features including its terrain, colour, water, air, and vegetation exert their own power over its residents, along with spirituality of the place. Longchen describes the bounties of forest fruits and herbal medicines found in Tharpaling's alpine meadows to suggest the vitality and well-being of anybody living in its warm and sunny lap even in winter. The poem shows the holiness of Tharpaling and indeed Bumthang as a whole in combination with their qualities of ecological wonders appealing to the senses and satisfying human needs. Intersection between ecology and spirituality runs deep in the poem as it deed in Longchen.

¹⁷ See p. 122.

Translation¹⁸ Part 2

ཞོ་སྤྱི་སྒྲི་སྒྲི།

མཆོད་བརྗོད། Offering Statement

ངོ་མཚར་ཆེད་དུ་བྱུང་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་ལ་ཕྱག་འཆའ་ལོ།

I prostrate to all the wondrous and the marvelous.

རྣམ་ཡི་མཆོག་དང་ཁྲ་དང་གཞོད་སྒྲིན་དང་། །

Great gods and nagas¹⁹ and yaksha²⁰ spirits, and

བླ་སྒྲོང་གྲུབ་པ་རིག་སྤྲུགས་འཆང་རྣམས་ཀྱི། །

Accomplished sages who possess non-conceptual awareness
and mantra-knowledge:

ཐོར་ཚུགས་གཡོ་བས་གང་གི་ཞབས་བཏུད་པ། །

Those with tilted crown-knot of hair, I bow at their feet.

¹⁸ I thank Dorji Gyeltshen for finding out information that led to identification of Rabna and Meri (spelt wrongly as Morey in the original version). Specific references on the source clarifying Rabna and Meri are given later in the relevant footnotes.

¹⁹ Nagas are a category of powerful non-human beings, deities. In Hinduism, from where the concept of nagas arose, they are not associated with snakes. In Bhutan, nagas or *klu* have become commonly associated with water bodies and rocks as their abodes.

²⁰ A *yaksha* is a Sanskrit word. In Hinduism, *yakshas* are neither gods nor human. They are in between in the degree of miraculous power they have. They are typically less handsome than gods.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་ཡི་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཏོག་གི་སྒྲིང་མོས་ཚེལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

རང་བྱུང་པ་དམ་དད་བརྒྱའི་གཙུག་གིས་མཆོད། 1

And make offering to the self-arisen Pema²¹, the pinnacle of reverence of hundreds of devotees.

སྤྱོན་གྱི་རྒྱལ་སྤྱོན་མཆོག་རྣམས་བྱོན་པའི་ཡུལ། 1

A land visited by great ancient kings and ministers.

ངོ་མཚར་གཙུག་ལག་ཁང་རྣམས་བཞུགས་པའི་ཡུལ། 1

A land where many amazing temples dwell.

མཁས་སླབ་དུ་མ་བརྒྱད་པར་བྱོན་པའི་ཡུལ། 1

A land of the descendants of numerous scholars and yogins.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་ཡི་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་བཀོད་པ་གསལ། 1

Listen to me about the map of Bumthang, the divine hidden land.²²



མཁས་སླབ་དུ་མ་བརྒྱད་པར་བྱོན་པའི་ཡུལ་གྱི་རྒྱུང་རིས་གསལ་བ།

²¹ Pema is Pema Jungney reverently addressed as Guru Rinpoche. This poem has repeated reference to Guru Rinpoche as Pema Gyalpo, the Lotus Born or simply Pema.

²² *Yul* is translated by others as valley. Land is more appropriate here. *Lung* shall be translated as valley. *Grong* is translated as village.

སའི་ཆགས་ཚུལ། Landscape

དབུས་དང་ཕྱགས་བཞི་ཡངས་པའི་རང་བཞིན་ཡུལ། །

A land naturally spacious at its centre and four directions.

ཀུན་ནས་ལྷུང་པ་བུམ་པའི་འཁོར་ལོ་དང་། །

Like a wheel of vase that is round on all sides

པད་མ་ཁ་བྱེ་ལྷ་བྱར་མཛེས་པ་ལ། །

Or beautiful like a lotus in full bloom.

མི་ཡུལ་མི་འདྲ་ལྷ་ཡུལ་འཕྲོས་པ་བཞིན། །

The land is unlike a people's land - but a paradise transplanted.

རི་རྒྱམས་ཉམས་དགའ་སྲོ་ཞིང་སྤྱུང་པ་ལ། །

Hills are delightful, shiny green as if smeared with oil.

རྩ་མོ་དཀར་གསལ་གངས་རིའི་ཤེང་ཚོགས་ཅན། །

The rows of mountain peaks, which are white and clear

མཐོ་བྱད་མཉམ་ཞིང་ཕྱགས་རྒྱམས་འཁོར་བ་ནི། །

And are of uniform height, stand in all directions,

རིན་ཆེན་རབས་ཀུན་ནས་བསྐོར་བ་བཞིན། །

As though a fence of jewels girdles all around.

ལུང་རྒྱམས་ཐང་ཡངས་མེ་ཏྲོག་འབྲས་མང་ལ། །

Valleys have spacious plain, with many kinds of flowers and fruits.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྗེ་སྤུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཉླ་གི་སྒྲིབ་མོས་ཚེལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

གྲོང་རྒྱུས་ཡིད་འོང་པ་དམ་མང་པོས་གང་། །

Villages are charming, filled with beautiful ladies.²³

ཕྱོགས་རྒྱུས་མདངས་གསལ་དཔལ་གྱིས་མཛེས་པ་ནི། །

All vistas²⁴ are lustrously clear, and gloriously beautiful.

ལྷ་རྒྱུས་ཡུལ་ལ་འབྲན་པ་ལགས་སམ་སྟུམ། །

Gods might possibly vie for this land.



ལྷ་རྒྱུས་ཐང་ཡངས་མེ་ཉླ་འབྲས་མང་གསལ་བ།

²³ Longchen uses *padmo* in plural, literally lotuses. I assume he means ladies of Bumthang are as gorgeous as lotus flowers.

²⁴ *Phyogs* is direction, but it can be understood also as vistas in this context.

བུམ་ཐང་ཞེས་གྲགས་པའི་རྒྱུ་མཚན། Etymology of ‘Bumthang’

ཡུལ་འདི་བུམ་པའི་ཐང་ཞེས་གྲགས་པ་ཡང་། །

As for this land being called Bumthang, the Plain of the Vase,²⁵

རབ་སྒྲའི་དབུས་རི་བུམ་པ་ལྷ་བྱའི་འདབས། །

It was founded around the central hill, resembling a vase, near Rabna.²⁶

བྱང་ཕྱོག་ཐང་ལ་ཐོག་མར་ཡུལ་བཏབ་པས། །

As the earliest village was founded on the plain directly to its north,²⁷

²⁵ Bumpai Thang, literally a vast plain below a mountain that is shaped like a vase. Longchen makes the mountain of Tharpaling the central axis around which Bumthang villages and gewogs are founded. The direction of the old gewogs of Bumthang including Mangde is determined from Tharpaling as the reference point.

²⁶ Rabna is mentioned repeatedly in the poem. It is an extinct name but Rabna was an old name for Chumey villages especially the village of Gyatsa. Rabna was the name of the settlement along the Chumey valley at the time of Longchen. Lami Goenpa Dasho Phuntsho Wangdi notes in his history that Rabna was Gyatsa village in olden days. See Dasho Phuntsho Wangdi, *Chos srid kyi rabs zhes bya ba bzugs so*, pp. 143. Written in wood dragon year (1964). “*de bzhin du rabsnang lung zhes deng sang rgyartsa lung pa ‘de nyid kyi mtshon.*” This cited phrase is found in folio p. 43. This book was reprinted by the National Library of Bhutan. This sentence can be found on p. 63 of the National Library edition.

²⁷ We do not know which village this line refers. It has to be directly north of Tharpaling. Perhaps there was big settlement around Kurje and Jampa Lhakhang. This big and dense village might have been surrounded by smaller ones stretching over the plain of Kurje, Wangdecholing, Nangsephai,

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་ཁྱེ་སྤྱོད་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཏྲག་གི་སྒྲིབ་མོས་ཚེལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

ཉེ་བའི་སྤྱོད་ཡུལ་དེ་སྤྲད་བཏགས་སོ་གྱེ། 1

Nearness in space and sound²⁸ led it to be called thus
(Bumthang), Kye!

འདི་ཡི་རང་བཞིན་ཀླན་ནས་མཛེས་པ་ལ། 1

Hence, its intrinsic nature is the most beautiful of all.

ཕྱོགས་གྱི་ཡུལ་སྤྲན་མང་པོས་བསྐོར་བ་ནི། 1

It is surrounded in all directions by many hamlets,²⁹

ལྷན་པོ་གསེར་རི་མང་པོས་བརྒྱན་པ་ལ། 1

And adorned by many majestic golden mountains,³⁰

སྤྱིང་བཞི་སྤྱིང་སྤྲན་མང་པོས་བསྐོར་བ་བཞིན། 1

As the four continents are encircled by many smaller continents.³¹

Chamkhar, and so forth. Settlements change over time and there must have been a dense village encircled by smaller ones in Longchen's time. There might also have been villages below Kurje where a monastic complex is being built at the command of His Majesty the King. Similarly, Dawathang might have been populated by villages for the encirclement to be complete.

²⁸ Longchen is playful here. *Nye ba'i sgrais* proximity to sound of Bumthang as well as physical nearness of the ancient village to the hill shaped like vase.

²⁹ The existence of dense population and settlements in the Choskhor valley is noted also in another book. Documenting oral account, the author (I forgot which book I read had it but it certainly did) noted that the Bumthang valley was filled by Indian population like stars at night until the time of Lang Darma. They were pushed out according to him during the invasion of Lang Darma's forces.

³⁰ I have translated lhunpo as majestic when it qualifies a mountain. Gigantic or enormous are other possible words for lhunpo. There must have been a big cluster of houses in front of Kurje during Longchen's time with many smaller ones surrounding it as the space was big enough to allow.

³¹ Longchen is using the analogy of Buddhist mandala cosmology where Mt.

རབ་སྐྱེ་འམ་དེང་སང་ཚུ་སྐྱེད་ཀྱི་རྒྱ་ཙ།
Rabna (Gyatsa in Chumey)

དེ་ལྟ་འི་ཡུལ་དབུས་ཡངས་པ་འི་ལྗེ་བ་ལ། །

At the centre³² of that spacious main land,

རབ་སྐྱེ་འི་ལུང་པ་ཀུན་ནས་མཛེས་པ་ནི། །

The village of Rabna is most charming of all,

པད་སྡོང་ཅི་ན་བྱམས་པ་བཞུགས་པ་འདྲ། །

Because of the mountain³³ which is like Maitreya seated on a lotus flower.

དྲུངས་པ་འི་ཚུ་གླུང་དག་ཀྱང་ཤར་དུ་འབབ། །

Several purifying rivers flow towards the East.³⁴

ལུང་བཟང་སློལ་ནི་པད་མའི་རྩ་བ་ལ། །

The village that has good customs is at the base of the lotus.³⁵

Meru stands surrounded by four various major and several minor continents. Bumthang is compared to this classic mandala. The mountain of Tharpaling is compared implicitly to Mt. Meru.

³² The centre of Bumthang is here considered to be Gyatsa and villages of Chumey. Chumey is now the western endpoint of Bumthang. In Longchen's time, Mangde, which is further west, was considered part of Bumthang. So Rabna (Gyatsa in Chumey) could be considered as centre of Bumthang.

³³ The mountain is Tharpaling, which is compared to Maitreya sitting on a lotus flower.

³⁴ The rivulets flowing to the east refer to streams feeding into the main river of Chumey valley. Longchen uses rivers or rivulets (*chu klung dag*) in plural.

³⁵ This line is difficult to understand as it could mean different things. *Lung bzang* could mean virtuous teachings or transmission. It could also mean

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་མོ་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཉྒ་གི་སྒྱེད་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྲ་བ།

ཕྱོ་མོ་བང་རིམ་འདབ་སྟོང་རྒྱས་འདྲའི་སྟེང་། །

On the summit of series of terraces of thousands of luxuriant petals,



རབ་སྒྲའི་ལུང་པ་ཀུན་ནས་མཛེས་པ་ནི་ དེང་དུས་བུམ་ཐང་རྒྱ་ཕྱར་གྲགས།

venerated customs. It could equally mean tradition of a good village. *Srol* is tradition as in *sngarsrol*. The best I can make of this line is that the wonderful villages are located around the base of landscape shaped like a lotus on which Tharpaling mountain looks like Maitreya. But Longchen refers to a specific village, and taken in this sense, it raises question about the location of such a village. Could he be referring to the village of Gyatsa in Chumey or a village near Kurjey in Choskhor. Either is possible. If we visualize the landscape of Kurjey and its surrounding, like a lotus flower, the root of lotus can be imagined as being the flat river bank. The last possible interpretation is that there was a big village near the temple called Pema Lhakhang, earlier known as Droenma Lhakhang. This temple is considered very old and is located between Kurjey and Jampa Lhakhang.



བབུ་ རོན་ཐར་པ་སྤྱིང་ངམ་ཚོས་རྩེ་བྲག།

ཐར་པ་སྤྱིང་གི་རི་རྒྱལ་དང་ཡུལ་རྣམས་མཐུལ་དཔེར་སྤངས་བ།
Mandala with Mt. Tharpaling at the Centre

བྱང་རི་བྱམས་པ་རྒྱལ་པོ་གདན་བཞུགས་ལ། །

Sits the northern mountain, the Maitreya King,³⁶

ཐར་པ་སྤྱིང་གིས་ཉེ་བར་མཛེས་པ་ལགས། །

That is adorned by Tharpaling, which is nearby.

³⁶ Longchen is comparing the shape of the Tharpaling Mountain as a whole to Maitreya King sitting on the lotus blossom. The foothills of the mountains are compared to petals of a lotus flower.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཉླ་གི་སྦྱིད་མོས་ཚེལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

ས་རྒྱམས་འདབ་བརྒྱད་པ་དམ་ལྷ་བྱ་ལ།

The land is shaped like a lotus with eight petals.³⁷

གནམ་ཡང་འཁོར་ལོ་ཕྱི་བས་སྟོང་བཀོད་པ་བཞིན།

The sky is shaped like a wheel with thousand spokes.

མདངས་བཀྲ་ཉི་ཟླའི་འོད་ཀྱང་རྒྱུད་རིང་ལ།

The radiant rays of sun and moon shine far away

ཕྱོགས་གྱི་རི་དང་ཡུལ་རྒྱམས་འདུད་པ་བཞིན།

On the region's mountains and land that pay homage.³⁸

ས་མཁན་རིན་ཆེན་དམ་པས་བསྐྱབས་པའི་གཞི།

As the land³⁹ praised by the precious, noble person who has attained enlightened level⁴⁰

རྒྱལ་བའི་ས་སྤེ་བཀྲ་ཤིས་ཕུན་ཚོགས་ཤོག།

May it prosper and flourish, being the land of the victorious.⁴¹

³⁷ This and the next line are popular starting lines in Lebey, the song which concludes all songs in celebratory events. However, very few know that those lines can be traced to Longchen. I have translated the Lebey. See Karma Ura, *The Hero with a Thousand Eyes*. 1995.

³⁸ The mountain and valleys are imagined to be saluting the sun and moon.

³⁹ Longchen is referring to Tharpaling.

⁴⁰ As praised by the precious, noble Sakya abbot. This is another but radically different possible translation. It is not known which Sakya abbot this line refers, if at all. However, I think 'sa mkhan' refers to the individuals who have attained one of the ten hierarchy of ground level of 'sa bcu'.

⁴¹ Victorious here refer to bodhisattvas who have overcome an afflictive mental state.

གྲུབ་རི་རིན་ཆེན་འབྲུང་བའི་བསྐྱེ་གནས་ཏེ། །

This mountain is the key sacred centre of precious attainment,

རང་འབྲུང་པད་མ་རྒྱལ་པོའི་མགོན་དང་བཅས། །

Along with the hermitage⁴² of self arisen Pema Gyalpo.



མཁའ་འགྲུལ་ནས་བཏབ་པའི་བབ་མཆོག་ཐར་པ་སྤྱིང་གི་རྒྱུང་རིས་གསལ་བ།

⁴² Longchen is referring to Chodrak (or Chojedrak in full) cave which was the hermitage of Guru Rinpoche. The cave is part of Chodrak Lhakhang complex. In the 12th century, Gyalwa Loreypa (also known as Dawa Drakpa), a disciple of Tsangpa Jarey, was one of the first adepts to meditate in Chodrak cave. See Je Gedun Rinchen. *dpal lden 'brugpa'i gdulzhing lhophyogs nags mo'i ljongs kyi chos 'byung blo gsar rnaba'i rgyan ces bya ba bzhugs so*. KMT: Thimphu, p.190.

སྐར་མང་སྡེ་རྩིས་ཏེ་བུམ་ཐང་སྡེ་བཞི།

Four Lands of Bumthang (included Mangde then)

འདི་ཡིས་ཕྱོགས་བཞི་པད་མ་འདབ་མ་ལ། །

On the lotus petals in the four directions from it,⁴³

ཡུལ་ཁམས་བཞི་དང་གཞུང་རྒྱུ་འབབ་པའི་རྩྭ་ལ། །

There are four lands with a main river each flowing by.⁴⁴

སོ་སོའི་ཡ་མཚན་དུ་མས་བརྒྱན་པ་ནི། །

Enhanced by a variety of other wonders

སྔན་མེད་སྤྱུ་མའི་ཕྱིད་མཚོ་བཀོད་པ་བཞིན། །

Like the magically designed sporting lake, that never existed before

རང་བཞིན་བུམ་ཐང་སྡེ་བཞིར་གྲགས་པ་ནི། །

Naturally,⁴⁵ the names of Bumthang's four parts are:

⁴³ Longchen now gives geographical coordinates of four ancient parts of Bumthang, with reference to Tharpaling as its centre.

⁴⁴ This refers to the four parts of Bumthang in ancient time: Rabna, Meri, Tachu and Mangde each with a main river. Chumey was known as Rabna and Choskhor was known as Meri. But a place near Choskhor near Zhabjethang was called Murulung. In his *Chosrid kyi rabs zhes byaba bzungso*. Lami Goenpa Dasho Phuntsho Wangdi noted a place called Morulung in his book written in 1964. He thought that Morulung was upper part of Choskhor. See footnote on Meri for further explanation.

⁴⁵ I have translated *rang bzhin* as naturally. Longchen might be implying that the choice of Bumthang as the name for the place was logical from its topography.

རབ་སྐྱ་མེ་རི་རྩ་རྒྱུ་མང་སྤྲེའི་ཡུལ། 146

The lands of Rabna, Meri,⁴⁷ Tachu⁴⁸ and Mangde.⁴⁹

46 གསུང་རྩོམ་མ་དཔེར་ རབ་སྐྱ་མེ་རི་རྩ་རྒྱུ་མང་སྤྲེའི་ཡུལ། །ཞེས་འཁོད་པ་འདི་ཉིད་དབུ་མེད་ཡི་གེ་དང་
ཡིག་རྒྱུ་རྣམས་ནས་འདྲ་ཤུས་སྐྱབས་ལོར་སྤྲོད་པར་མཛད་ན། བུམ་ཐང་ལུང་པར་གྲགས་པའི་མིང་ལ་བརྟགས་
སྐྱབས་ རབ་སྐྱ་མེ་རི་རྩ་རྒྱུ་མང་སྤྲེའི་ཡུལ། །ཞེས་ཡིན་པ་ཞིབ་འཛོལ་བརྟགས་དབྱེད་དང་མཐུན་པར་འདིར་
མེ་རི་འདི་ཉིད་གསུང་བརྒྱུགས་ནང་ཕྱོགས་བཞི་མཚམས་ཀྱི་ཡུལ་གྲོང་རྣམས་འགྲེལ་བཤད་གནང་སྐྱབས་
བྱང་ཕྱོགས་མེ་རིའི་ལུང་པ་ཞེས་གསལ་པོར་འཁོད་ཡོད་པ་དང་ དེ་བཞིན་དུ་སྤྲོད་རྒྱུ་ཟེར་བ་ཡང་ནོར་ནས་བྲིས་
པར་མཛད་ན། དེང་སང་ སྤྲོད་རྒྱུ་འོག་ཟེར་བ་དེ་ གསུང་རྩོམ་དངོས་གཞིའི་ཚིག་སྒྲུ་གཞན་དུ་ ཤར་ཕྱོག་རྩ་
རྒྱུའི་ལུང་པ་ཞེས་བཀོད་ནས་འདུག ཇི་ལྟར་དབྱེད་ཀྱང་མེ་རི་དང་རྩ་རྒྱུ་ཡིན་པར་གདོན་མི་ཟ།

47 In the original *choskskad* version, it is 'More' and 'sTengchu'. Both of these words seem certainly to be a typographical mistake. I have changed them to Meri and Tachu. In other places in the poem, Meri and rTachu are mentioned clearly. Meri and rTachu also are consistent with geographical direction and the source of information, primarily Dasho Phuntsho Wangdi's book. In Longchen's time the whole valley of Choskhor seems to have been called Meri. Dasho Phuntsho Wangdi's *Chosrid kyi rabs zhes byaba bzungso*, written in wood dragon year, back page ff. 43 provides evidence that Meri was a place in Choskhor Toed (upper Choskhor) and it was particularly associated with Zhabjethang. The only problem with Dasho Phuntsho Wangdi's proposition is that he called it Morulung. Dasho Phuntsho Wangdi's book mentions Morulung instead of Meri. But this difference is minor. What he calls Murolung is certainly Meri of Longchen when wider context is understood. On folio back page 43., Dasho Phuntsho Wangdi's says that somewhere above Kurjey, "bye brag yul de yiphumkha'dro 'Iblhagatabunas babs pas moru lung zhe 'diyiphunagur 'Isrinpo 'ga'byedzhonubrtulba 'Irjes dang...dengsangzhabrjesthang du grags". From this passage, one can understand that the place where Guru subdued a cannibal named Gajay Zhonu was at Zhabjethang. Furthermore, we can clearly understand that Morulung is associated with Zhabjethang area.

48 *sTengchu* seems to be a typo-mistake. Longchen later describes today's Tang as Tachu (rTachu).

49 Longchen uses *mangsde* (many kinds) as spelling. Gradually, this spelling has changed to *mang 'dus* (many controlled) but it does not actually make sense. In *Lho' chos 'byung 'phro 'thuds 'jam mgonsmonmtha'I 'phrengba* (p.117 KMT edition 2004) by 10th Je Penchen Tenzin Chogyal (1701-1767),

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷོ་ཕྱོད་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཉྒ་གི་སྤྱི་མཐོན་ཚེས་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

བཞི་པོ་སྤྱི་ནས་ཡོད་ཕྱིར་སྤེ་བཞི་ལ། །

As there were originally four parts, it was a quartate

ཁྱུ་ར་ཕྱི་ནས་བོད་ཀྱིས་བཏགས་པར་འདོད། །

It is speculated that Ura was later designated by the Tibetans.⁵⁰



ཕྱི་ནས་བོད་པས་བཏགས་པའི་ཤར་རྫོ་ཁྱུ་ར་འེ་ཡུལ།

the spelling had changed to *mang 'dus*.

Longchen notes that Bumthang had four parts and one of them was Mangde valley which is now more commonly called Tongsa.

⁵⁰ Longchen describes the Ura people as descendants of Tibetans.



ཆོས་ཀྱི་གཏེར་མཚན་དུ་མ་ཡོད་པའི་སྤང་རིམ་ཅན།

ཤར་ཕྱོགས་རྩ་ཚུ། Tang (Tachu) in the East

དེ་ནས་ཤར་ཕྱོགས་རྩ་ཚུའི་ལུང་པ་ནི། །

As for the easterly valley of Tachu,⁵¹

རིན་ཆེན་གིང་རྩའི་དབྱིབས་ལྷུང་མཛེས་པ་ལ། །

It is charming, shaped like a jewel horse-chariot.

ཡུལ་རྣམས་དར་ཞིང་མི་རྣམས་བདེ་སྤྱིད་འཕེལ། །

Its villages are prosperous and people peaceful and happy.

རིན་ཆེན་ཚུ་བོ་ཤར་ནས་རུབ་ཏུ་འབབ། །

Jewel-like river flows from the East to the West.

⁵¹ Now it is often written as Tang chu, the river of Tang. Note that in the old spelling, it is *rTa*. So it is Horse River.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཏོག་གི་སྤྱོད་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

ཡུལ་འདིའི་ཐུན་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་སྒོ་ཡོད་ལ། །

The valley's ridge has a door to a hidden land.

བར་ན་དཔལ་ཐུག་བྲག་ལ་ཞབས་རྗེས་དང་། །

In the middle, there is Pelphug cliff with a footprint, and

མདའ་ན་ཆོས་ཀྱི་གཏེར་མཆོན་དུ་མ་ཡོད། །

In the valley floor are many hidden religious treasures.

དེང་སང་རིམ་ཅན་ཞེས་བྲག་པ་ཡིན། །

Nowadays, it is known as Rimochen.

སྤྲན་ཤིང་མེ་ཏོག་འབྲས་བུའི་ཆོག་མཐུན་མང་ལ། །

There are numerous medicine trees, flowers and fruits

ཡུལ་ཁམས་ཡངས་ཤིང་ལོ་ཐོག་སྒྲ་དགུ་འབྱུངས། །

The valley is spacious, nine cereal-crops grow.⁵²

ཕྱོགས་ཀྱི་ཆོང་བོང་དག་ཀྱང་བྲངས་མང་ལ། །

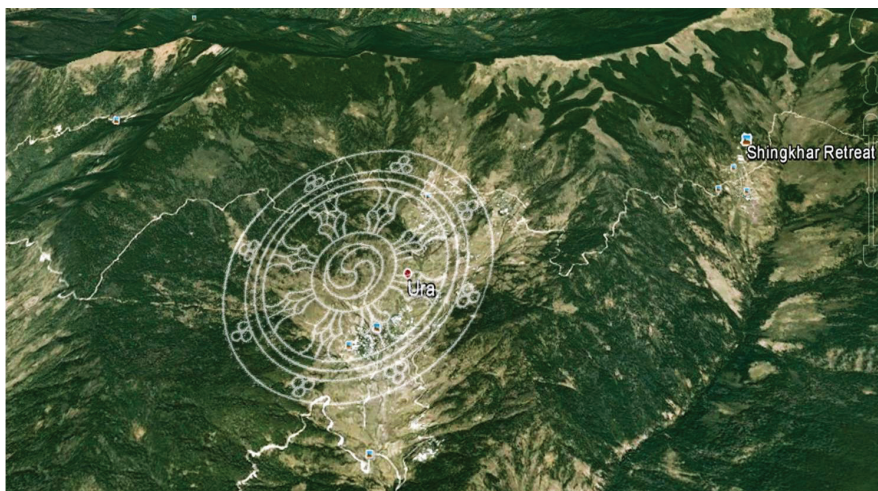
The locale⁵³ has many merchandise textiles.

ཡུལ་ལྷ་འོ་མཆོག་ཀྱང་གཞན་ལས་འཕགས་པ་ལགས། །

The esteemed valley-gods are superior to others.

⁵² Longchen includes all nine cereals as being grown in Tachu. Millet, maize and rice have not been grown in Tachu, from all accounts. Was Longchen just saying so to pay tribute to the productivity of land in Tachu? If not, further research is needed to corroborate cultivation of forgotten crops that might have been grown under a warmer climate. It is however unlikely.

⁵³ Longchen often uses phyogs for a particular place. Region would be another word for *phyogs*.



འཁོར་ལོའི་དབྱིབས་ལྗང་རྒྱུ་པའི་ཁྱ་རའི་ལུང་།

ཤར་ལྗོ་ཕྱོགས་སུ་ཁྱ་ར། Ura in the South-East

ཤར་ལྗོ་རིན་ཆེན་ཁྱ་རའི་ལུང་པ་ནི། །

The south-eastern jewel of a valley, Ura,

འཁོར་ལོའི་དབྱིབས་ལྗང་རྒྱུ་ཞིང་མཛེས་པ་ལ། །

Is shaped circular, like a wheel, and is stunning.

གྲོང་རྒྱུས་དར་ཞིང་ཡུལ་འཁོར་གྱིན་ཏུ་མང། །

Settlements have proliferated,⁵⁴ villages have thrived.

⁵⁴ Ruins of houses scattered on slopes in the pine forest on the eastern side of Ura village can be found today. These structural vestiges seem to be that of houses and walls of what must have been gardens. The locations are known as Zheran, Krongsar and Yoleng. It seems that in Longchen's time, the valley did not have one huddled cluster of houses as they do today. Longchen observed that the valley had many hamlets, probably on the east facing slope as the ruins attest. This would have been conducive to livestock, primarily

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཉེག་གི་སྒྲིད་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

འཛིན་ཆེན་ཚུ་བོ་ལྟོ་ནུབ་དལ་གྱིས་འབབ། །

A jewel-like river flows gradually in south-west direction.⁵⁵

འདི་ཡི་ཕུ་ལ་དངོས་གྲུབ་གནས་ཡོད་ལ། །

On its mountain top is a sacred site of accomplishment.⁵⁶

བར་གྱི་ཕྱོགས་མཚམས་དགོན་པའི་གནས་ཀྱིས་བསྐྱར། །

Its middle parts are surrounded by sacred hermitages.

མདའ་ན་རབ་འཛིགས་བདུད་མཚོ་མེར་བ་ལས། །

Down in the valley-floor is an extremely fearsome, flaming demon-lake

དག་པོའི་སྒྲ་སྒྲ་སྒྲ་ཆོག་མ་འབྱུང་བ་ཡིད། །

From where ferocious sounds of all kind issue.⁵⁷

yaks, rearing that Longchen stressed as flourishing. The ruins of a village in Zheran had always been held in oral accounts to be the birth place of famed Khando Sonam Pelden who was the mother of the first king of Ura, a dung. Khando Sonam Peden gave birth the heavenly son of Lha Ode Gungyal in the early history of Bhutan, according to Gelong Ngawang's (Bende Wangendra) *rJe 'bangs kyi rigs rus 'byung khungs gsalbai' sgron me* written in male earth monkey year (1668).

⁵⁵ Chewang Darjay, 88, of Ura thinks that this line might refer to the medicinal stream of Rinchengang Manchu. It had a reputation as a healing stream. It is most plausible that it refers to the main river, not to Rinchengang Manchu.

⁵⁶ This particular holy place where someone found either common or extraordinary accomplishment (*mchog dang mthun mong gyi dngos grup*) could not be identified. It could be referring to Somrangdrag or caves found above Zheran, which could have been retreats. Chewang Darjay of Ura thought that it could refer to the caves above Thongphai, called Kyilkhor Ney.

⁵⁷ The whirlpool at the base of waterfall in Dudthang to the south of Ura village is the *blamtsho* of Dudthang Neypo Thinley Taktzen, the guardian deity of Ura village. Longchen lived for a considerable time in Shingkhari, two hours walk up from Ura village.

ཕྱ་རྒྱལ་ས་བཅུད་ཆེ་ཀླད་འགོས་གཞན་ལས་འཕེལ། །

Cattle thrive more than elsewhere;⁵⁸ grasses are nutritious.⁵⁹

ཤིང་རྒྱལ་ས་འབྲས་བཟང་ནགས་ཚལ་སྤུན་སྤུམ་ཚོགས། །

Forests are rich; trees have wholesome fruits.⁶⁰

སྤྲུལ་རྒྱལ་ས་མཐུ་ཆེན་གྱི་རིགས་ཉུང་ལ། །

Herbs are potent; types of diseases are few.

ཡུལ་རྒྱལ་ས་ཉམས་དག་ཡོན་ཏན་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད། །

Joyful are the villages that have immeasurable qualities.

ཡུལ་འདི་བོད་ཡུལ་དབུས་དང་འདྲ་བ་སྟེ། །

This land is akin to the land of central Tibet,

བསིལ་བྱོད་མཉམ་ལ་སྟོན་དུས་ལན་གཅིག་འབྱུང་། །

Where cropping takes place once;⁶¹ and temperature is agreeable,

ཆོས་རྒྱལ་རྗེ་ཡི་གདུང་རབས་བཞུགས་པ་དང་། །

Where the Lord, Dharma King's noble descendants exist,⁶²

⁵⁸ Keeping cattle was equally important in this region until the 1970s. Most of the mountains had lush grazing land in summer.

⁵⁹ That grasses of alpine region produce more butter of a given quantity of milk than fodder from tropical region is well known among herdman. In fact they have detailed knowledge when butter quantity would increase by how much when a cattle herd moves.

⁶⁰ These fruits might refer to what are known as kramkram and tong tong in Ura dialect; strawberries and berries.

⁶¹ Autumn (*ston dus*) comes once means that in this high altitude valley, there is single cropping.

⁶² It cannot be ascertained which line of Dharma King Longchen means. It could perhaps be one of the kings from the long line of Ura Dung. The manuscript on Ura Dung was borrowed sometimes in 1950s and taken to eastern Bhutan. It could not be traced since then.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་རྟོག་གི་སྤྱོད་མོས་ཚེལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

གཙང་མའི་བོད་རྒྱམས་གནས་པས་བྱེད་པར་འཕགས། 1

And is special because Tibetans from Tsang-ma⁶³ live.

ལྷོ་ཕྱོགས་ལུང་སྒོལ་རབ་རྟུ་བཟང་པོ་ལ།

Splendid is this southern region and its village customs.



མདའ་ན་རབ་འཛིགས་
བདུད་མཚོ་མེར་བ་ལར།
ཁྱ་རའི་གནས་པོ་ཐྱིན་ལས་
སྟག་བཙན་བཞུགས།

⁶³ It is unclear whether this refers to people who migrated from Tsang region or those who are descendants of Lhasa Tsangma. Chewang Darjay of Ura recalled that his grand-uncle Lopen Wangchen narrating an oral history of the people of Ura. Lopen Wangchen told him that people of Ura's ancestors came with Lhasa Tsangma. Similar oral stories applied to people of Jarey, a place a day away from Ura, like the Jarey Zhalgno.



ཤར་ལྗོངས་རིན་ཆེན་ཞུ་རའི་ཡུལ།



རྩ་རྒྱུ་ལས་བཅུད་ཆེ་ཀང་འགྲོམ་གཞན་ལས་འཕེལ།



བུངས་གཙང་གངས་ཟིའི་མགལ་ནས་འོངས་པའི་རྒྱ།

ལྷམ་མཁར་རྒྱ། Chamkharchu

བུངས་ཐང་ཡུལ་གྱི་གཞུང་རྒྱུ་འབབ་པ་ནི། ༡

The descent of the main river of Bumthang⁶⁴

ཐོག་མར་ལྷོ་ར་འབབ་དེ་ནས་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ལྷོ་ ༡

First descends southward and then toward the south-west.

གཞུང་འཁྲུང་དང་འབྲེས་ཏེ་སོང་བ་ལས། ༡

After it merges with the water of Ganges,⁶⁵

⁶⁴ This refers to Chamkharchu, the main river of Bumthang. The other rivers are tributaries of Chamkharchu.

⁶⁵ As a matter of fact, it is a tributary of Brahmaputra which merges with Ganges

བ་ཚ་ཅན་གྱི་རྒྱ་མཚོ་ཆེན་པོར་འབབ། །

It flows into the salty and vast ocean.

ཡང་ཡང་གངས་འི་མགུལ་ནས་འོངས་པའི་རྒྱ། །

From the heads of mountains the water comes yang-yang,

ཆེལ་ཆེལ་སྒྲབས་ཀྱིས་གཉེར་བའི་རྒྱན་བབས་པ། །

Perrenially it descends in wrinkled waves, rippling chill-chill

ལྷུང་ལྷུང་ཆབ་སྒྲ་སྒྲན་པའི་སྒྲ་ལེན་ཅིང་། །

Singing sweetly, the cool spraying⁶⁶ sound of lhung-lhung

འདིང་འདིང་ཞེས་སྒྲོགས་ལྟོ་ཕྱོགས་སྒྲོགས་ལ་གཟིགས། །

Watch, as it stretches towards south droning dengdeng.

བརྒྱད་ལྡན་རྒྱ་འབབ་ཅིན་ཆེན་རྒྱ་བོ་ཡང་། །

The flow of jewel-like river that has eight qualities,

དད་བརྒྱའི་བྲ་སྒྲབས་གཡོ་བས་རབ་བརྒྱུད་དེ། །

Travels in swerving waves, driven by hundreds of faithfuls,

དོ་ཨྲེ་གདན་སོགས་འཕགས་པའི་ཡུལ་རྣམས་སུ། །

To Bodh Gaya and other holy places,

ཡོན་ཆབ་འབུལ་ཕྱིར་ཆས་པ་ཡིན་ནམ་སྒྲུལ། །

To make offerings of water, it flows, I wonder.

before the combined river empties into Bay of Bengal.

⁶⁶ Longchen is evoking the imagery of *chab*, saffron water kept in vase on an altar, which is sprinkled to rinse all impurities during any offering ceremony.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤུང་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཏྲག་གི་སྒྱེད་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

དངས་པའི་རྩ་གཙང་ལྷ་འཕྲེང་འཛིན་པ་ནི། །

Pure and unpolluted water, yet holding bubbles of froths,

འིན་ཆེན་བེདྲར་བཞུ་བའི་ཁུ་བའམ། །

Is like the melted form of gem ‘baidur,’⁶⁷ into liquid;

ཨ་ནུ་ཆེལ་དང་སྟོན་ཀའི་ནམ་མཁའ་བཞིན། །

Or the colour of summer sky and lapis lazuli,

ཡང་ན་གཡུ་ཐག་ལེགས་པར་བརྒྱངས་པ་འདྲ། །

Or like a well stretched string of emeralds.

འདི་ནི་གངས་དང་སྤྲོན་རྩིའི་སྤྱིང་རྣམས་དང་། །

Descending from the depths of mountains and of perfumed
medicinal herbs

སྤྲོན་ཤིང་མེ་ཏྲག་ཅན་ནས་ལེགས་འབབ་པའི། །

Flowing gracefully from flowery medicinal-trees.

འཕྲུང་དང་ཁུས་བྱས་ཡོན་ཏན་དཔག་ཏུ་མེད། །

Its qualities are immeasurable, if it is drunk or bathed in.

རྩེ་གསལ་གཞན་ལས་མཆོག་ཏུ་འཕགས་པ་ལགས། །

The banks of river are pleasingly exclusive.

⁶⁷ I have not been able to identify what baidur, a precious stone, is in English. I have been told its colour is similar to lapis.



Village in Tongsa

རུབ་ཕྱོགས་མང་ལྗེ། Mangde (Tongsa) in the West

རུབ་ཕྱོགས་མང་ལྗེའི་ཡུལ་ཁམས་བཟང་པོ་ནི། །

The good, Westerly region of Mangde,

ཡིད་འོང་གཞུ་ཡི་དབྱིབས་ལྗར་མཛེས་པ་ལ། །

Is shaped lovely like a handsome bow.⁶⁸

གྲོང་རྒྱམས་ལྷུང་ཞིང་ཕྱོགས་ཀྱི་སྤྱོ་བོ་འདུ། །

Its villages attract quickly people from all around.

⁶⁸ We can visualize the villages stretching from Tshangkha and Tangsibi till Kela in the shape of bow. The Mangde River curves below these villages.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཉླ་གི་སྦྱིད་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

ཐུ་བོའི་རྒྱན་ཡང་ཉུབ་ནས་ཤར་ལྷོར་འབབ། །

Its river takes a west to east-southerly course.

འདི་ཡི་ཕུ་ན་ནགས་རིའི་ཚོགས་མང་ཞིང་། །

Its upper sides have many kinds of mountain-forests.

བར་དུ་འབྱུ་མང་སྤྲན་ཤིང་ལོ་འབྲས་འཕེལ། །

In the middle are profuse growth of grains, healing trees,⁶⁹ harvests and fruits.

མདའ་ན་འབྲས་དང་ཁྲེ་དང་ཡོན་ལ་སོགས། །

In the valley-floor are rice and millet and amaranthus⁷⁰ and so forth.

འབྲུ་སྤྱ་མང་ལ་ཇ་ཤིང་བཟང་པོ་སྤྱ། །

There are many varieties of grains; and good tea plants⁷¹ grow.

སྤྲང་དང་བཅོད་དང་ཡ་མཚན་ལ་སོགས་པ། །

⁶⁹ A famous indigenous doctor, the late Duntsho Singye Namgyel told me in early 1990s that forests near Langthel, Jangdung, Phrumzur and Nabji Korphu are the most productive of tropical herbal medicines. He told me that 50 varieties of herbal medicines could be found on the slope of Jow Durshingphu. During my visit in the winter of 2011, the village of Langthel was supplying about five varieties of medicinal roots to the Indigenous Hospital in Thimphu.

⁷⁰ I have provisionally translated yon as a variety of amaranthus. It needs to be verified further.

⁷¹ The fact that tea plants were grown in Tongsa in the 14th century comes as an unexpected fact. Growing tea plants is a new practice in Bhutan.

There are honey⁷² and rubia and other fantastic plants,⁷³

ཚོང་ཐོང་གུངས་མང་དར་དང་རས་བལ་སོགས། །

And numerous textiles merchandise including silk, cotton⁷⁴
and wool.

ཤིང་དང་ས་ལས་འབྱུངས་པའི་བཟའ་བ་ཡང་། །

Edibles, got from fruit trees and soil, exists, and

རོ་མཚོག་བརྒྱད་ལྷན་ཀར་དམར་ལྷན་པ་དང་། །

Are colourful while having eight gustory tastes.

བྱ་རམ་ཤིང་དང་ཁ་བས་རྒྱུ་པ་མང་། །

Sugar canes⁷⁵ and other variety of edibles are large:

མང་སྒྲིའི་ཡུལ་ཞེས་མིང་དོན་མཐུན་པར་གྲགས། །

Meaning and name of the place, Mangde⁷⁶ corresponds.

⁷² By the time I came to know of livelihood practices in Tongsa in the 1970s, collecting honey was not a major household activity. However, there are many rock faces in Tongsa valley marking its landscape. Rock bees live throughout the year, being tropically warm. Honey collection would have evolved as a regular way of fulfilling nutritional and medicinal requirements. The Monpa people of Tongsa used to collect honey for food. One of their earliest oral stories is of Guru Rinpoche prohibiting them from collecting honey by destroying honey-combs.

⁷³ There is a possibility that yatshan is a food plant or a useful plant.

⁷⁴ Neither endi-silk nor cotton was being grown by 1960s. It is not known when their cultivation ceased. However, a little to the south, in Kheng cotton and endi-silk were being grown in the 1970s. Dasho Keiji Nishioka and Sasukae Nakao noted this in their book, *Flowers of Bhutan* published in 1984 by Asahi Shimbun.

⁷⁵ Sugar cane was grown extensively for export to Tibet until 1940s, the reign of second King of Bhutan.

⁷⁶ Mangde literally means many kinds.



Choskhor Lhakhang

བྱང་ཕྱོགས་མེ་རི། Meri (Choskhor) in the North

བྱང་ཕྱོགས་མེ་རིའི་ལུང་པ་བཟང་པོ་ནི། །

The fine northern settlement of Meri,⁷⁷

དཔག་བསམ་ལྗོན་ཤིང་རྒྱས་པ་ལྟ་བུ་ལ། །

Is like the lush Wish-Granting Tree.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ In iconographic paintings, each wrathful deity is surrounded in a flame border known as *me ri*, literally mountain of fire. Longchen is evoking this imagery. At the same time, the villages of Choskhor were actually called Meri villages (*lungpa*) because Guru Rinpoche transformed himself into a fierce dark red and flaming body to subdue haughty spirits at Shugdrak. Because of the flames around Guru, the villages where he manifested thus was called in general Meri although it happened in Shugdrak cave.

⁷⁸ This is the mythical tree whose fruit laden top grows in the highest of the six realms and grants every wish the residents there have.



The Maitreya temple



གཡོན་ཕྱོགས་ལས་ལྷ་ཁང་དང་པ་ རྒྱལ་ཡུམ་ཨ་ཞེ་ཕུན་ཚེགས་ཚས་སྟོན་དབང་ཕྱག་མཆོག་གིས་ཅུ་བ་ལས་ཞིག་གསོ་གནང་
 མི་སྐྱེ་མེས་ལྷ་ཁང་། དེ་ཁར་མཐུན་དེ་ མི་དབང་འབྲུག་རྒྱལ་ལྷ་པ་མཆོག་གི་བཞེངས་གནང་མི་ཤེལ་གིང་དཀར་པོའི་གནས་ཁང་།
 བར་ན་ལྷ་ཁང་གཉིས་པ་ གོང་ས་ཨ་རྒྱན་དབང་ཕྱག་མཆོག་གིས་བཞེངས་གནང་མི་གུ་རུ་ལྷ་ཁང་། ལྷ་ཁང་གསུམ་པ་དེ་ མི་དབང་
 རྒྱལ་ཡུམ་ཨ་ཞེ་སྐལ་བཟང་ཚས་སྟོན་དབང་ཕྱག་མཆོག་གིས་བཞེངས་གནང་མི་དཔལ་ཆེན་ལྷ་ཁང་དགོ།



The Tara temple, known nowadays as Pema Lhakhang

སྤྱིན་པོ་བཏུལ་བའི་རྩོད་པའི་མཆོག་ལ། །

There is a rock⁸⁰ where he subdued a cannibal.⁸¹

བར་ན་ཐང་ཡངས་ཆུ་བོའི་ཤར་ཕྱོགས་ལ། །

In the middle to the east of the river over a spacious plain

བསམ་ཡས་མེ་བཙའ་ཆོས་འཁོར་ལྷ་ཁང་དང་། །

Is Choskhor Lhakhang, that is 'directly opposite'⁸² to Samye.

⁸⁰ Taking cue from the direction given by Longchen, the rock on which the cannibal was tamed is the one at Dawathang. It is still visited by pilgrims. There is another rock with similar association with Guru Rinpoche at Zhabjethang near the river. It is said fancifully that the cannibal cooked human beings there until Guru tamed him.

⁸¹ *Srinpo* is translated often as demon. I have opted for a less often used translation, cannibal.

⁸² The concept of *me rtsa* is fascinating. Founders of important temples across vast distance speculated how they are cartographically related. If a tunnel is drilled from Choskhor to Samye, it is said that they can be connected because

བུ་མ་ཐང་ལྷ་མོ་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཉྑལ་གི་སྦྱིད་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

ཁུབ་ན་བྲམས་པ་སྦྲེལ་མའི་ལྷ་ཁང་གཉིས། །

In the West, there are two lhakhangs: of Maitreya and of Tara,⁸³

ལྷ་ས་ཁུ་ཤང་དེ་ཡི་ལྷ་ཁང་བཞེངས། །

Built like Lhakhang of Yu Shang Do⁸⁴ at Lhasa.

དེ་དང་ཉེ་བའི་བྱང་མིའི་བྲག་ལྷགས་ལ། །

Near them, on a cliff on the northern mountain,

རང་འབྱུང་པད་མ་རྒྱལ་པོའི་སྤྱི་རྩིས་ཡོད། །

There is the self-emergent Pema Gyalpo's body print.⁸⁵

དེ་ནི་ལན་གཅིག་མཐོང་བ་ཙམ་གྱིས་ཀྱང་། །

Even if it is beheld just for once,

they are on a straight line. Thus Choskhor Lhakhang is *me rtsa* of Samye. This is truism when a straight line is drawn between two points. A third point is needed to prove that they lie on a straight line.

⁸³ The temple of Tara or Droenma Lhakhang is identified today as Pema Lhakhang which is located between Kurje and Jampa Lhakhang. On folio p.44 of Dasho Phuntsho Wangdi's *Chos rid kyi rabs zhes byaba bzugs so*, written in wood dragon year, clarifies that this Tara Lhakhang had deteriorated. It was restored by Paro Tertön Drimed Lhunpo. The last renovation was carried out under the patronage of HM the Queen Ashi Phuntsho Choden. Dasho Phuntsho Wangdi noted in his book that Tara (Droenma) Lhakhang came to be known as Pema Lhakhang after Tertön Drimed Lhunpo reconstructed it.

⁸⁴ Yu Shang Do is a temple built in Lhasa by Tri Ralpachen, in the 9th century, according to Tibetan dictionary, Bod rGyaTsigmZod. The importance of mentioning this temple here is difficult to know. The best sense I can make is that Yu Shang Do and Samye in Tibet are similar in importance to Jampa Lhakhang and Dolma Lhakhang in Bhutan.

⁸⁵ The body print was made on a tiny cave that is now the centre of the altar of the temple of Kurje.



རང་འབྱུང་པད་མ་རྒྱལ་པོའི་སྐྱེ་མེས་ཡོད། །ཟེར་གསུངས་མི་ གུ་རུ་རིན་པོ་ཆེའི་སྐྱེ་བཞུན་ ཅོ་རྒྱན་རྩོམ་གྱི་ལྷན།

ངན་སོང་སྒོ་བཅད་མཐོ་རིས་ཐར་ལམ་བགྲོད། །

The door to lower realms is shut; we take the path of liberation
towards heavens.

མདའ་ན་སྔོན་གྱི་རྒྱལ་པོའི་ཡུལ་མཁར་དང་། །

In the valley's floor, there is an ancient King's village and a palace,⁸⁶

⁸⁶ This most probably refers to the palace of Sindhuraja at Chakhar. I feel inclined towards the existence of Sindhuraja's palace during Longchen's time as he mentions with particular emphasis a King's village and palace. The other possibility is the palace of Kikha Rathoed. I visited what I suspected

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཉླ་གི་སྤྱོད་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

སྤོན་པོའི་གྲོང་ཡོད་རྒྱལ་སྤོན་ས་ཞེས་བྲགས། །

And there is a village of ministers called the place of Gyal Lyon.

འདི་ཡི་མི་རྒྱལ་ས་མཆོག་ཏུ་རིགས་བཟང་ལ། །

The people of this place are of exceptional noble race.

གཟུགས་ཀྱང་གཞན་ལས་མཆོག་ཏུ་འཕགས་པ་ལགས། །

Their physique is also superior to others.



གསུང་རྩོམ་ནང་། མདའ་ན་ཕྱོད་གྱི་རྒྱལ་པོའི་ཡུལ་མཁར་དང་། །སྤོན་པོའི་གྲོང་ཡོད་རྒྱལ་སྤོན་ས་ཞེས་བྲགས།།
(རྒྱལ་པོ་བྱེད་ཁ་ར་ཐོད་གྱི་མཁར་ཤུལ།)

Kikha Rathoed's palace foundation, measuring 42 inches, in June 2012. Both Sindhuraja and Kikha Rathoed were associated with the coming of Guru Rinpoche to Bumthang. But the likelihood that Longchen was referring to Kikha Rathoed's palace is slightly less because Kikha Rathoed's palace is part of Gyal Lyon Khar. Longchen categorically separates Gyal-lyonkhar from an ancient King's palace and village.



མི་དབང་རྒྱལ་ཡུམ་སྐུ་བཟེས་ཨ་ཞེ་སྐལ་བཟང་ཚས་སྒྲོན་དབང་ཕུག་མཚོག་གིས་བུམ་ཐང་སྐུ་རྗེས་ལུ་བཞེངས་གནང་
བའི་བྱིན་ཅན་གྱི་ཟངས་མདོག་དཔལ་རི།

Zangdog Palri of Kurje entered with unrivalled relics which was built
by Her Majesty Royal Grandmother Ashi Kesang Choeden Wangchuck
in 2008

བུམ་ཐང་གི་བསྟོད་པ། Admiration of Bumthang

བུམ་ཐང་རིན་ཆེན་ལྷ་ཡི་སྤངས་ཡུལ་གྱི། ༡

The mountains of precious Bumthang, the hidden land of gods,

རི་རྒྱམས་ལྷུན་སྒྲུག་ས་རལ་གྲོག་པོ་མེད། ༡

Are gigantic, yet gorges do not split the terrain.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཉླ་གི་སྒྲིབ་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

ཡུལ་རྣམས་ཉམས་དག་འཁྱོན་དུས་འཁོར་མར་འབྱུང་། །

The villages are peaceful and draw people in summer.

མི་རྣམས་སྦྱོད་བཟང་སྤྱོན་གྱི་ཁྲིམས་ལ་གནས། །

Its people have moral behavior, abiding by its ancient laws.

ཡིད་འོང་གོང་རྣམས་འཕྱོང་ཁ་ཕྱེད་ཕིབས་ཅན། །

These pretty villages have roofs with half japhibs.⁸⁷

སྦྱག་མའི་སྤྲ་ཁང་དག་ཀྱང་གངས་མང་ལ། །

There are also numerous huts made of bamboo mats.⁸⁸

མཁར་དང་ཁང་བཟང་ཤིང་གི་རྒྱ་ཕིབས་ཅན། །

The palace and mansion have wooden cupolas.

རྒྱང་ནས་ལྷ་ཡི་ཁང་བཟང་མཐོང་བ་འདྲ། །

From far, they look like imposing houses of gods.

འདི་ནི་མི་རྣམས་རང་བཞིན་དགེ་བ་སྟེ། །

Here, the people are naturally virtuous.

རི་དྲགས་མི་རྩོན་ལས་སྤོང་ཚུམ་པོ་མེད། །

There is no threat of wild life and no robbers on roads.

⁸⁷ Longchen's eyes are drawn by the two-tiered roofs in Bumthang. It provides attic space that can be used for drying and storage. Chongkha is name of a village in Lhodrak but it is also a word used occasionally to denote corner or edge.

⁸⁸ The existence of large number of bamboo huts again supports the fact that the valley of Choskhor had a large population during and after Sindhu Raja's dynastic period, made possible by productive land.

ཀུན་པོ་ཉུང་ཞིང་གཞན་གཞོན་འཆོ་བ་ཆུང་། །

Thieves are few, and fear of harm by others less.

ངང་གིས་རྒྱད་འཇམ་འགྲོགས་ན་བདེ་བ་ལགས། །

Character is gentle and befriending is easy.

ཡུལ་འདིའི་མི་རྣམས་བརྟེས་སུ་མི་རུང་སྟེ། །

The people of this land should not be derided.

ཁ་ཅིག་དཔའ་བོ་མཁའ་འགྲོའི་རིགས་ཡིན་ལ། །

One source says that they are race of daka and dakini.

ལ་ལ་ཕྱིན་ལས་གཉན་ས་གཞོན་ལ་མཁས། །

Some are experts in enlightened activities of suppressing evil spirits.

ཕལ་རྣམས་མཚན་དུ་ངོ་མཚར་ཆེ་བ་ལགས། །

Most of them are extraordinary and amazing.

འདི་ན་ལྷགས་བཟང་གྲོ་བྱར་ལྷགས་ལ་བྱམས། །

Here, morality is not just adventitious, people exude loving kindness.

གང་དུ་འགྲོ་ཡང་ལམ་རྒྱགས་མི་དགོས་ལ། །

Wherever one goes, there is no need to carry travel-provision,

ཉེ་དུ་འཁྱིམ་ལས་ལྷག་པའི་སྤྱ་ལེན་དང་། །

More than any welcome by the houses of ones relatives, they invite

བྱ་དག་འཆེབས་བསྐྱལ་པ་བཟང་པོ་བཞིན། །

With their happy acts, as in an age of good fortune.

ཡུལ་འདིའི་རང་བཞིན་ཞིབ་མོར་བསམ་པ་ན། །

If one reflects on the nature of this land:

དབུས་གཙང་དག་པའི་ཞིང་ལས་ལྷག་པ་བཞིན། །

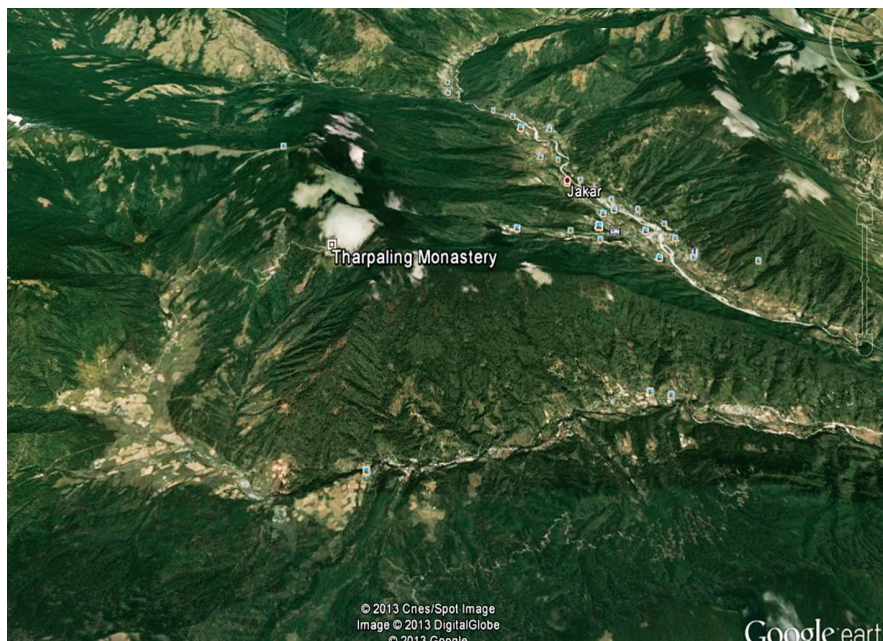
It is better than the ideal paradise of Yus and Tsang.

འཆོ་བ་མེད་པས་དམ་ཚིས་སྤྱབ་པའི་གནས། །

As it is free from fear, it is a blessed place for dharma practice,

ཡུལ་ཁམས་གཞན་ལས་བྱད་པར་འཕགས་སོ་གྲེ། །

Kye! It is particularly superior to other lands.



Tharpaling- the majestic mountain



View from Tharpaling

བུམ་ཐང་སྤེ་བཞིའི་ལྷོ་བ་ཐང་པ་སྤྱིང་། Tharpaling as the Centre

དེ་འདྲའི་ཡུལ་ད་བུམ་པད་མའི་ལྷོ་བ་ལ། །

In such a lotus land, at its centre:

རབ་སྤྱིའི་རི་རྒྱལ་ཀུན་ནས་མཛེས་པ་ནི། །

The old mountain king, which is beautiful in all aspects, near Rabna,⁸⁹

⁸⁹ It was already noted (above) that Rabna was an extinct name for Gyatsa in Chumey. This information is found in Lama Goenpa Dasho Phuntsho Wangdi's book on history of Bhutan.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཉོག་གི་སྒྲིབ་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

འཁོར་ལོས་སྒྱུར་རྒྱལ་ཀུན་ནས་བསྐྱོར་བ་བཞིན། །

Like the wheel turning monarch, circumbulated by all,

ཕྱོགས་གྱི་རི་རྣམས་དེ་ལ་འཁོར་བར་འདུད། །

Other mountains of all directions bow to it as its retinue.

རིན་ཆེན་འཛིན་མའི་ལྷན་པོ་ཆེན་པོ་ཡང་། །

The majestic high mountain that holds gems,

སྤྱ་ཚྭ་གས་བཀོད་པའི་འོད་ཟེར་སྟོང་འཕྲོ་ཞིང་། །

Shine forth in thousands rays, in various forms,

སྒྲུབ་པའི་བསྐྱེད་གནས་བཟང་པོས་བརྒྱན་པ་ནི། །

And adorns the apex centre of practice,

ཤར་རི་ལག་ན་པད་མ་བཞུགས་གནས་བཞིན། །

As though the seat of Pema⁹⁰ is on the palm of the Eastern mountain.

⁹⁰ In the original, the word is Pemo, not Pema. It is difficult to understand what feminine word Pemo means in this context. Pemo might have been a typomistake. Most likely it is Pema for Guru Pema Jungney.



ཤར་ལྷོ་ཁྱ་རའི་གཙུག་ལག་ཁང་དུ་བཞུགས་པའི་དོ་མཚར་ཨོ་ཁྱེན་གྱི་འུ་

དབྱར་དུས་ཀྱི་ཐར་པ་སྒྲིང་། Summer in Tharpaling

དབྱར་དུས་ཨ་ནཱ་རྩིལ་གྱི་ས་འཛིན་ལ། །

In summer, the sapphire king (sun) holds steady

མོར་བུ་ཉི་མཱའི་འོད་ཀྱི་མདངས་འཛེར་བ། །

The gem-like sun and moon's light brightens

སྤྱན་མེད་ལྷ་ཡི་རིན་ཆེན་ལྷན་པོ་ཡང་། །

The precious, majestic mountain of the gods that did not exist
before,

ཕྱོགས་འདིར་འཕོས་ན་དེ་དང་མཚུངས་པ་སྟུམ། །

Were it transplanted here, it would be the same.

ཞི་བའི་སྤྱོད་ཚོགས་བཟང་པོ་དེ་དག་ཀྱང་། །

The tranquil mass of clouds too,

རབ་བཟང་དད་པའི་སྒྲོག་ཕྱེད་གར་བྱེད་ཅིང་། །

With the utmost reverence, dance in lightning,

སྟོན་པའི་འབྲུག་སྒྲ་བབ་མོར་སྒྲོགས་པ་ནི། །

And resounds with melodies of the dragon's thunder

གནས་ཀྱི་ཡོན་ཏན་བསྐྱེད་པར་བྱས་པ་བཞིན། །

As though praising the qualities of the sacred land.

སྟོན་དུས་ཀྱི་ཐར་པ་སྒྲིང་། Autumn in Tharpaling

སྟོན་དུས་མདངས་བཟང་མཛེས་པའི་རི་ངོགས་ལ། །

In summer, on the brightly coloured slopes of the mountain

སྒྲན་ཤིང་མེ་ཏྲག་འབྲས་བུའི་ཚྲིགས་སྒྲིན་པ། །

Medicinal tree, flowers, and fruits ripen.

ལྷ་ཡི་སྤྱད་ཚལ་དར་བ་འཕེས་པ་བཞིན། །

As if God's grove has been transplanted and flourishes,

ཀླན་ནས་མཛེས་པའི་རང་བཞིན་འདི་ལ་གཟིགས། །

Behold this, the most beautiful by its very nature.



བབ་ཅེ་རོན་ཐར་པ་སྒྲིང་དུ་སྒྲན་ཤིང་མེ་ཏྲག་འབྲས་བུའི་ཚྲིགས་རྣམས་སྒྲིན་པའི་ཁོར་ཡུག།

དགུན་དུས་ཀྱི་ཐར་པ་སྒྲིང་། Winter in Tharpaling

དགུན་དུས་ལྷན་པོ་གངས་རིའི་ཚོད་པན་ཅན། །

In winter, the crown of the majestic mountain

ཁ་བའི་གོས་དཀར་བཟང་པོས་གཡོགས་པ་ནི། །

Is covered in a white cloth of snow.

ཤེལ་རིའོད་ཀྱི་བྱ་བས་མཛེས་པ་འཇ། །

It is beautiful with radiance, like a crystal mountain,

ཀྱ་མུད་ཚལ་དུ་སྟོན་ཟླ་ཤར་བ་བཞིན། །

Or like summer moon shining on a cluster of water lilies.

རེས་འགའ་ཤིང་རྣམས་དུང་གི་ལྗོན་པ་ལ། །

Sometimes the trees are sheathed in conch-whiteness

པད་མ་དཀར་པོའི་མེ་ཏྲག་རྒྱས་པ་བཞིན། །

As though white lotuses have blossomed.

ས་གཞི་རིན་ཆེན་དུལ་གྱིས་ཡོགས་འདྲ་ལ། །

The surface of precious land is covered in silver

རབ་དཀར་ངང་པ་མང་པོ་ལྷགས་པ་བཞིན། །

As though flocks of pure white have landed over it.

དཔྱིད་དུས་ཀྱི་ཐར་པ་གླིང་། Spring in Tharpaling

དཔྱིད་དུས་ས་མཚོག་ཡོན་ཏན་མང་པོའི་རི། །

In spring, the mountains of this great land has many qualities

རྒྱུ་ཡང་ལྷན་སྒྲགས་ནགས་ཚེལ་བས་གཡོགས། །

All over, it is covered by very dense forest.

ཅི་ཤིང་སྒྲན་དང་མེ་ཏྲོག་ཁ་འབྱས་ཤིང་། །

As the new shoots of medicinal trees and flowers opens

དྲི་ཞིམ་སྒྲོས་དང་ལྷན་པས་ཕྱོགས་ཀྱན་བྱབ། །

The aroma of sweet smells pervades all directions.

འདི་ནི་སྔོན་མེད་རིན་ཆེན་ལྷན་པོ་ཞིག །

In the past, such precious majestic mountain did not exist

གྲུབ་པའི་གནས་འདི་གསལ་བས་མཛོས་ལས་སམ། །

This sacred place is splendid and beautiful

རྣམ་པར་འཕྲུལ་ལ་ཡོན་ཏན་བསམ་མི་བྱབ། །

With many inconceivable transformations and qualities

སྒྲ་ཚོགས་བཞོད་པའི་འོད་ཟེར་འགྲེད་ལ་ལྷོས། །

Look at its forms, diverse in rays of light.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཏྲག་གི་སྤྱོད་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

ཐར་པ་སྤྱིང་གི་སྤྲུབ་གནས། Tharpaling Hermitage

དེ་འདྲའི་ལྷན་པོ་རིན་ཆེན་མཆོག་ཚོགས་ཅན། །

On the majestic and jewel mountains

བྱམས་པ་གདན་བཞུགས་འདྲ་བའི་བྱགས་ཀ་ལ། །

At the bosom of what seems like a sitting Maitreya

ཐར་པ་སྤྱིང་གི་སྤྲུབ་གནས་མཛེས་པ་ནི། །

The beautiful hermitage of Tharpaling

དཔལ་རི་པད་མ་འོད་གྱི་གཞལ་ཡས་བཞིན། །

The glorious mountain, like the mansion of Pelri Pema Yoe,⁹¹

འདི་ནི་རི་རྒྱལ་རབ་ཏུ་ལྷན་མཐོ་ལ། །

This king of mountain is exceptionally high.

ནགས་ཚལ་སྤྲན་ཤིང་མེ་ཏྲག་ཆུ་གཙང་དང་། །

Forest, medicine trees, flower, and water are pure,

ནེ་ཅུ་གསིང་སྤྲན་ལྗོངས་དུ་མས་རབ་བརྒྱན་ཞིང་། །

And alpine meadows and herbal landscapes embellish it.

དགོན་པའི་ས་གཞི་དག་ཀྱང་རབ་ཏུ་མཛེས། །

The place of hermitage is extraordinarily beautiful.

ས་དང་གནས་ཡང་ཉི་འོད་རྒྱན་རིང་ལ། །

The sunlight stays long on earth and sky.

⁹¹ The enlightened abode of Guru Rinpoche.

དབྱར་བསིལ་དགུན་རྩོད་དུས་བཞི་བསིལ་རྩོད་མཉམ། །

Summers are cool, winters are warm;⁹² with moderate four seasons

ཕུང་ཤིང་བཟང་ངང་གིས་སྤྱོད་སྦྱིང་འདོད། །

Fondness for the place grows, as wood and water is wholesome.

གྲོང་ལས་རྒྱུ་རིང་དབེན་པའི་ནགས་ཁྲོད་ལགས། །

Away from the village, the forest is secluded.

འདི་ན་རང་བཞིན་འཆོ་བ་མེད་པ་དང་། །

Over here one is free from fear,

མཐུན་ཁྱེན་སྒྲུབ་སྒྲུབ་བསམ་གཏན་ངང་གིས་འཕེལ། །

Easy to find a living, concentration naturally improves

བཅུད་ལེན་རྩལ་ཀྱང་རྣམ་པ་གངས་མང་ལ། །

There are numerous substances from which essence can be consumed.

ཤིང་རྟོག་སྤྱོད་མང་པོའི་ཁ་བས་ལྷན། །

The trees have many relishing edible fruits

མཐོང་བས་ཆགས་ཤིང་བསྟེན་པས་ཡིད་སྤོལ། །

That are attractive to behold and satisfying to eat.

⁹² Monks and gomchens who stay in Tharpaling have experienced warm winters compared to other places in Bumthang. They say that temperature during the 11th and 12th lunar months are comparatively warm in Tharpaling due to a combination of three factors: (1) there is no wind, (2) there is no fog unlike other places in Bumthang in winter, and (3) the duration of sunshine is very long, as Longchen noted.

ངང་གིས་ཚེས་འཕེལ་སེམས་གཙང་རིག་པ་འཛིན། །

Virtue grow, the mind attains clarity and awareness

སྐུན་དུ་ཡིད་དགའ་དག་པའི་ཞིང་ཁམས་བཞིན། །

As in pure land heaven, it is always a happy place.

ཞི་བ་རབ་བཟང་ཐར་པའི་གླིང་མཆོག་ལགས། །

The marvelous Tharpaling where there is great tranquility,

འདི་ནི་སྔོན་ཆོ་རང་བྱུང་པད་མ་ཡིས། །

In an ancient period, the self-emergent Pema,

ལུང་བསྐྱུན་ཟབ་གཏེར་བྱིན་རྒྱབས་འབྱོར་པས་བརྒྱན། །

Bedecked it with wealth of his blessings, transmission of teachings and profound ter.⁹³

མཁའ་འགོ་དམ་ཅན་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་ཚོགས་འདུ་བ། །

(The place is) swarming with oceans of dakinis and oath bound deities;

བར་ཆད་མེད་ཅིང་དངོས་གྲུབ་ཉི་བ་ལགས། །

Being free from obstacle, one is on the verge of accomplishments.

⁹³ Hidden treasures.

ཐར་པ་སྒྲིང་དུ་ཀུན་མཁྱེན་གྲོང་ཆེན་བཞུགས་པའི་དགོས་པ།

Reasons for Longchen's Stay

དེ་འདྲའི་གནས་འདིར་པད་མའི་བྱིན་རྒྱབས་ལས། །

To such a holy place, due to the blessings of Pema

རྒྱལ་སྐུའི་སྤྲེའོད་ཟེར་ལེགས་འོངས་ཏེ། །

(I), the Buddha's son, Drimed Yozer⁹⁴ has come well

སྒྲོན་ལམ་ལུང་བསྟན་བཞིན་དུ་སྦྱབ་པའི་བྱིར། །

To practice according to prophecy and my own aspiration,

བསྟོན་གནས་བཅས་ཏེ་བསམ་གཏན་སྒྲོམ་པ་ལེགས། །

By being in this exalted holy place, practicing concentration
has gone well.

དེང་སང་དུས་ན་སྒྱེ་བོ་མི་བསྐྱུན་པས། །

Because the contemporary people are uncultured

དབུས་གཙང་རྒྱལ་བའི་བསྟན་པ་ཅུབ་ཏུ་ཉེ། །

Teachings of Buddhism in Yus and Tsang are close to decline.

མཐའ་དམག་འབྱུང་པོས་ཡུལ་གྱི་དབུས་དྲུགས་པས། །

As the frontier invasion and evil spirits have disturbed the land
of Yus

⁹⁴ Drimed Yozer is Longchen's name before the epithet Longchen Ramjam was offered to him by Gongma Tai Situ and Nedung Dragpa Gyeltshen. See folio p.23 of the autobiography of Pema Lingpa, *Bumthang Padma glingpa 'i nmanthar yodzer kun mzas nor bu 'i phrengba*.

བུམ་ཅང་ལྷ་འདྲེ་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཏོག་གི་སྒྲིབ་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

འདི་འདྲའི་གནས་སུ་བྱང་ཆུབ་སྒྲུབ་པར་རིགས། 1

Only in this type of holy land,⁹⁵ enlightenment is likely to be pursued.

ཕྱགས་ཀྱི་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་རིན་ཆེན་སྒོ་རྣམས་ཀྱང་། 1

Even the doors to the precious hidden land of the region⁹⁶

རིང་པོར་མི་ཐོགས་སྤྱར་དུ་འབྱེད་འགྱུར་ལ། 1

Will not be closed for long, and will be soon unlocked

སོག་པོའི་མཐའ་དམག་རྣམས་ཀྱང་འབྱུང་དུ་ཉི། 1

As the Mongol frontier invasion comes near.

འདི་འདྲའི་རྒྱ་མཚན་བསམ་ཞིང་སྒྲོ་བ་འཕེལ། 1

Thinking of such causes, sorrow increases.

དེ་བས་དད་ལྷན་ཐར་པ་འདོད་རྣམས་ཀྱིས། 1

Instead those faithful who desire liberation

རང་གི་ཡུལ་ལ་ཞེན་པ་རབ་སྤངས་ལ། 1

Should certainly forsake attachment to ones villages

ཆོ་གང་ཟབ་མོའི་དེ་ཉིད་བསྒྲུབ་པའི་བྱིར། 1

To practice the profound teachings for the whole life

⁹⁵ Longchen means Bhutan, particularly Bumthang.

⁹⁶ Bumthang was known to Longchen as a hidden treasure land. Here he is expressing his expectation that the doors to this land will be opened soon as turmoil of Mongol invasion is eminent in Tibet. In fact, the march of tertons and other religious figures into Bhutan after Longchen's times proved this to be true.

ཕྱགས་ཀྱི་སྤྱོད་ལྷ་ལ་བཟོད་པའི་རྒྱལ་ལ་བབ། །

Time had come to flee to this hidden land of the region.

སྤྱོད་ལྷ་ལ་དང་ལྷ་ལ་འདྲ་ཐམས་ཅད་ན། །

In the hidden lands and such similar lands

ལས་མཐུན་དག་གི་བ་ཅན་རྣམས་གནས་པ་དང་། །

Those who have positive karma, the virtuous, live

མཁའ་འགོ་དམ་ཅན་རྒྱ་མཚོས་ལེགས་སྦྱོང་པས། །

Well protected by the ocean of dakinis and the oath bound
deities

འཆོ་བ་མེད་ཅིང་ཆོས་དང་མཐུན་པ་ལགས། །

Being free from fear, harmony with dharma prevails.

མོན་ལྷ་ལ་བུམ་ཐང་དག་གི་བའི་གནས་མཚོག་འདི། །

This exalted holy land of Monyul Bumthang

མོན་རྒྱ་བཏགས་ཀྱང་བོད་ལྷ་ལ་དབུས་དང་མཚུངས། །

Though it is called Mon, it is equal to Yus of Tibet

སྤྱོད་ལྷ་ལ་མིན་ཡང་ལྷ་ལ་འདྲའི་བྱེ་བྲག་སྟེ། །

Though it is not a hidden land, it is a hidden land of particular
kind⁹⁷

⁹⁷ It seems quite clear that the concept of Bhutan, in particular Bumthang, as hidden land had not yet caught on during Longchen's time. It gathered its reputation afterwards.

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཉླ་གི་སྤྱིད་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

དེ་ཕྱིར་མཁས་རྣམས་དགའ་བ་བསྐྱེད་པར་རིག།

Therefore, happiness among the scholars should grow.

ཡུལ་འདིར་བགོད་ནས་ཐར་པ་སྤྱབ་པ་གང་།

By fleeing to this land, whosoever achieves liberation,

དཔག་མེད་བསྐལ་བ་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་རྩལ་སྤྱིད་ནས།

From the oceanic period of immeasurable particles,⁹⁸

ལས་དང་སྦྲོན་ལམ་མཚོག་ཏུ་དག་པས་ན།

Their karma and aspirations were effectively cleansed

ཆོ་འདིས་སྲིད་པའི་རྒྱ་མཚོ་བཀྲལ་བ་ལ།

By crossing the oceans of conditioned existence.

གནས་འདིར་རང་བྱུང་པད་མས་སྤྱབས་མཛད་པས།

Protected in this sacred land by self risen Pema,

འཆོ་བ་མེད་ཅིན་དམ་ཚོས་འཕེལ་བ་ཆེ།

Without any fear, Dharma has progressed.

མཁའ་འགོ་རྣམས་དང་སྐལ་པ་མཐུན་པས་ན།

My fortune has been equal to that of dakinis,

ཨོ་རྒྱན་ལ་སོགས་དག་པའི་གནས་མཚོག་བཞིན།

As in the pure land of Ugyen,

⁹⁸ This is just a way of saying that opportunity for liberation is so rare because it happens after countless eons.

ཚུལ་འདི་བུམ་ཐང་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་སྟེ། །

Such is the character of the land of Bumthang.

དད་ལྷན་ཐར་པ་འདོད་རྣམས་བསྐྱུལ་བ་དང་། །

Due to the appeal of those faithful who desire enlightenment

ཕྱགས་ཀྱི་སྐྱེ་བོ་རྣམས་ལ་བསྐྱག་པ་དང་། །

And as explained to the people of the land,

སློ་གསལ་རྣམས་ལ་མགིན་པའི་རྒྱན་དུ་འབུལ། །

(This poem) is submitted to the refined as ornaments of their voice.



མོན་ཡུལ་བུམ་ཐང་དགེ་བའི་གནས་མཆོག་གི་རྒྱུ་རིས་གསལ་བ།

བུམ་ཐང་ལྷ་འོ་སྤྲུལ་ཡུལ་གྱི་བཀོད་པ་གསལ་བར་བྱེད་པ་མེ་ཉོག་གི་སྦྱིད་མོས་ཚལ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ།

བསྐྲུབ། Dedication of Merit

དགེ་བ་འདི་ཡིས་བདག་དང་འགྲོ་བ་ཀུན། །

By this virtue may I and all migrators,

སྤྱིད་པའི་རྒྱ་མཚོ་མ་ལུས་རབ་བརྒྱལ་ནས། །

Without exception, by going across the ocean of conditioned existence,

ཞི་བ་རབ་བཟང་ཐར་པའི་སྦྱིད་ཚལ་དུ། །

Towards the enlightened grove of perfect peace

སྐྱུ་གསུམ་ལྷན་གྱུ་བ་ཚས་ཀྱི་རྒྱལ་པོར་ཤོག །

May we become the dharma kaya in whom three kayas are spontaneously realized.

དེང་ནས་བདག་སློ་སྤྱིད་ལ་རབ་སྦྱོར་བས། །

Henceforth, by our mind becoming most rueful at the conditioned existence

ཆོ་འདིའི་རྣམ་གཡེང་འདུ་འཛི་ཀུན་སྤངས་ཏེ། །

By giving up idleness and all concerns of this life

ནགས་ཚལ་ཞི་བ་ཚས་ཀྱི་དགོན་པའི་གནས། །

In the dharma hermitage in tranquility of forest

ཐར་པའི་སྤྱིད་དུ་སྐྱུ་བ་པ་འཕེལ་བར་ཤོག །

May spiritual achievement flourish at Tharpaling.

སྒོ་གྲོས་ལྷན་པོ་སྒྲན་ངག་ནགས་འབྲིགས་ཤིང་། །

As the prodigious mind is swamped by forest of poetry

སྒྲིབ་སྒྲུབ་ཆུ་ལྷང་ལེགས་པར་འབབ་པའི་གནས། །

River of composition descends sweetly in this holy site.

མངོན་བརྗོད་པད་མའི་ཚལ་གྲིས་བྲག་བ་འདིས། །

May the language structure made brilliant by the lotus-garden

དད་ལྷན་སྒྲུབ་པོའི་ཚོགས་རྣམས་དགའ་བར་མཛོད། །

Make all the assembly of faithful people pleased.



འབྲས་བཟང་ནགས་ཚལ་ཕྱན་སྲུང་ཚོགས་པའི་ས་གཞི་བཟང་པོ།

བཙུམས་པའི་ལོ། Year of Composition

བདེ་བར་གཤེགས་པའི་གསུང་རབ་ལ་མང་དུ་ཐོས་པའི་ཞོར་གྱིས་ལྷུག་ཅིང་། སྙན་དངགས་
དང་། སྒྲིབ་སྒྲུབ་དང་། །མདོན་བརྗོད་ཀྱི་གནས་ལ་མཁས་པ་ཐེག་པ་མཆོག་གི་རྣལ་འབྱོར་
པ་ རི་མེད་འོད་ཟེར་གྱིས་ཤིང་མོ་ལྷུག་གི་ལོ་ལ་ བུམ་ཐང་ཐར་པའི་གླིང་དུ་ལེགས་པར་སྒྱུར་བ་
ཚོགས་སོ།། །།མདྲ་ལོ།།

Drimed Yozer, the learned great Mahayana Yogi of the Mahayana, who was enriched by the wealth of extensive reading of the scriptures of the Tathagathas, and who was erudite at poetry, composition and grammar, completed this elegantly at Tharpaling in Bumthang in female wood sheep year, corresponding to 1355. Good Fortune!

