



# HISTORIES OF TIBET

Essays in Honor of

LEONARD W. J. VAN DER KUIJP

Edited by Kurtis R. Schaeffer,  
Jue Liang, and William A. McGrath

## Newar Merchants in Tibet: Observations on Frontiers of Trade and Buddhist Culture<sup>1</sup>

Todd Lewis

THE YOUNGHUSBAND INVASION of Tibet (December 1903–September 1904) and the ensuing Anglo-Tibetan Treaty of 1904 had ripple effects across the Himalayan region. It changed the geography of the trade and human migration networks that linked South Asia to Central Tibet, opening up a new route for trade and later agreements to establish mail/telegraph communication lines from British India to Central Tibetan cities. Scholars of Tibetan history have noted a variety of major effects this had on Tibetan society, political leaders, and Buddhist institutions, as new

1. Most of the information on Newar merchants who lived and worked in Tibet was gathered from oral histories collected from 1980 to 1982. All of these men were from Kathmandu, and all became friends: Donam Dorje Namgyal, Tej Ratna Tuladhar, Buddha Jiv Tuladhar, Sapta Bir Singh (“Cik Sau”), and Pratyek Man Tuladhar. I owe them and their descendants profound thanks for generously sharing their stories, photos, and records with me. The last was most significant for several reasons: Pratyek Man was the great-grandson of the great Lhasa trader “Dhamma Sau”; he was an inveterate collector of artifacts such as photos, negatives, letters, souvenirs from the business, and especially postage stamps. Present in the closing down of the Newar trading houses in the late 1950s, Pratyek Man rescued items being discarded by other Newar traders in their hasty clearing out from the Bakhor bazaar in Lhasa. In the early 1980s, I helped his son Sidhartha get hundreds of copy negatives made on acetate made from the large glass negatives, storing the latter so they were not fire hazards; some of these are found in this article. I do regret not being able to focus much more fully on these remarkable merchants, including some of the greatest Kathmandu families as well as the Dhakwa families native to Patan. Other ethnic groups from Nepal—Sherpas, Thakalis, and Mustangis from the Gandaki Valley—also traded in small numbers in Tibet. By now, all of these merchants have passed away. As I was a doctoral student and new to Nepal in 1979, my first priority was to study contemporary Newar Buddhism among the Urāy merchants of Kathmandu, and this I did. But it was often the case that research inquiries among this exceptional community led to my stumbling into extraordinary “side caverns” of great interest and historical significance, such as records of the Lhasa traders; the art masterworks in every medium possessed by affluent families, including thousand-year-old painted Sanskrit texts; and the modern literary or devotional writings by Urāy authors such as Chittadhar Hridaya, the greatest modern Newar poet. I did translate his masterpiece on the life of the Buddha, *Sugata Saurabha*, with Subarna Man Tuladhar (Lewis and



visitors and media brought in awareness of the world beyond the Tibetan plateau.<sup>2</sup> New possibilities and problems quickly emerged; merchants venturing north seeking new moneymaking opportunities were joined by adventurers in search of magic, mystery, and spiritual insight, and by pioneering scholars from India, Europe, China, and Japan, our academic predecessors, who crossed into Tibet through this new frontier gateway in search of art and texts.

For Newar merchants of the Kathmandu Valley, this newly opened route through the Sikkim mid-montane region enabled them to shift to a more favorable blueprint for organizing the centuries-old trade that flowed between their home region and Tibet's major cities.<sup>3</sup> Now goods made in South Asia (and more distant points) could be shipped to Calcutta, sent by land (train or lorry) to Darjeeling, then conveyed by horse/mule caravans and porters up onto the Tibetan plateau through the Chumbi Valley, Sikkim;<sup>4</sup> in eighteen to twenty days, goods could reach their shops in the major Tibetan cities, where individual and institutional customers would then purchase them. This new route cut the transit time and its cost greatly for Newar merchants by alleviating the need to bring goods up into the Kathmandu Valley; although they now had to pay taxes on goods imported from Tibet into British territory, a cost they didn't have when importing goods directly to Kathmandu, the net savings were well worth it. Most ordered much less from their wholesaler suppliers in Patna, as Calcutta (with its seaport) became the new and better supply hub. Trade no longer had to move through Kathmandu to begin the long-established one-month horse/porter trek to Lhasa moving north from Kathmandu either through mountain passes to Nyalam (northeast) or to Kyirong (north), followed by a long eastern leg to Shigatse, Gyantse, and Lhasa.

These old routes to the Tibetan plateau date back at least a millennium (and likely much earlier), as Newars for centuries exported metal tools, utensils, and

Tuladhar 2019). It is still possible that Newar families who are descendants of these traders have preserved photos, letters, diaries, and other materials and that well-sourced studies can be made from them. Several books published in Nepal (Lall 2001; Tuladhar 2004; Hilker 2005) as well as the Facebook group Lhasa Newar: Nepalese Traders on the Silk Road, created in 2016, are promising signs of cultural preservation. <https://www.facebook.com/Lhasanewar/>.

2. Goldstein 1989.

3. Newar trading houses are known to have been established in the major cities: Lhasa, Shigatse, Gyantse, and Tsetang/Samyé. Many had offices in the border-crossing towns Nyalan/Kuti and Kiyong.

4. Bell 1924a estimated that half of the trade with Tibet through British India shifted to the Sikkim route, with merchants through Kashmir and Assam equal in accounting for the other half. Occasional caravans still left from Kathmandu on the old routes.

luxury goods made in India and Nepal and brought back wool, musk, salt, yak tails, silver, and gold. Especially important was the Newar export of artisan labor, a long-standing tie that contributed greatly to the development of Buddhist material culture in Tibet. This connection was a major source of income that added greatly to the aggregate wealth in the Kathmandu Valley. It was primarily patronage by Tibet's growing number of monastic schools in the "second introduction" of Buddhism from South Asia that benefitted the Newar artisans who traveled to the highlands, sometimes staying for long periods,<sup>5</sup> to complete major projects.

The scant studies to date on these projects<sup>6</sup> note that Newar masters (in architecture, painting, metalwork) brought crews from Nepal that built stūpas and major monasteries; they also created statues, metalwork decorations, and paintings for them. The Newar artistic diaspora spanned across the Tibetan plateau, at times extending beyond Tibet as far as Mongolia and even Beijing during the Yuan dynasty. Only recently have accounts of Tibetan art fully acknowledged the major role that Newar artists played in every medium of religious art that developed in Tibet.<sup>7</sup>

Newar projects in Tibet were at times so large in scale that artisan groups back in the Kathmandu Valley worked exclusively on filling orders of commonly needed monastery elements, which were then transported in caravans into Tibet. Newar metalworkers (working in repoussé and lost wax casting), especially those in Patan, were renowned for their craft<sup>8</sup> and in high demand

5. Stein 1972. While the older history of foreign resident artisans in the major Tibetan cities remains little documented, Abbé Huc, a missionary visitor to Lhasa, observed how by the middle of the nineteenth century a colony of Newar artisans had settled in Lhasa and had come to dominate in the metalworking there: "Only Newar metal workers are found in Lhasa: smiths, braziers, tin-men, plumbers, goldsmiths, silversmiths" (Bista 1978, 192). These gold workers, most from the Shākya caste, have always had steady employment in Nepal making religious images and ornaments for families, the latter especially for marriages. See, e.g., Riley-Smith 1989 and Slusser et al. 1999.

6. These records, as well as accounts of Tibetans visiting the Kathmandu Valley, can contribute greatly to understanding this cross-cultural connection and Nepal's history.

7. The contributions of Roberto Vitali 1990; David Jackson 2010; and Eberto Lo Bue 1985, 1988, and 1990, have signaled the need for this changing assessment, a scholarly perspective that was perhaps related to the marginalization of Newar traditions in the study of South Asian Buddhism.

8. As Sylvain Lévi once noted, quoting the missionary visitor to Lhasa Abbé Huc (1813–60): "Among the *Peboun* (one Tibetan name for Newars), one meets very distinguished metal workers. They manufacture vases in gold and silver for the benefit of the monasteries and ornaments of all kinds which would certainly not dishonor European artists" (Lévi 1905–8, vol. 2, 108). A recent major book has been devoted to this metalwork (Furger 2017). Patan

across the Himalayas; records show that Nepal's weavers and blacksmiths also supplied this market. The Newar kings, and their Shah successors (1768), profited greatly from taxes on this trade and so protected it.<sup>9</sup>

Of course it was on these same trails that Tibetan pilgrims and scholars came south to the Kathmandu Valley to acquire Sanskrit texts, receive initiations in esoteric teachings, and earn merit from pilgrimage. Some Tibetan masters likewise gave teachings and initiations to Kathmandu Valley residents. The history of these exchanges, though vitally important to understanding Buddhist history in the region and the Kathmandu Valley as well, has not yet been explored in depth.<sup>10</sup>



After peace returned following the Younghusband invasion, Newar merchants were quick to take advantage of the new circumstances. Already benefitting from their duty-free status and extraterritorial rights according to the Nepal-Tibet Treaty of 1856, more Nepali merchants with capital had begun trading there. Most of these Lhasa family trading houses now moved their main offices to Calcutta. As word spread of these new circumstances—that is, the lessened “friction of distance” involved in going to and from Tibet—the post-1905 period saw a steadily increasing number of additional Newars<sup>11</sup> living in Tibet. Relatives were also recruited to staff new offices that were located to oversee shipments and final sales, from Calcutta to Darjeeling, then in cities

artisans now attract international clients seeking images for temples and Buddhist supply businesses located across the globe. Some Patan artists are now major patrons sponsoring the revitalization of Newar Buddhism.

9. Rana Chandra Shamshere by treaty had a permanent Nepal ambassador stationed in Lhasa after 1856. This representative, appointed by the Nepal government, was designated the *vakil*; typically he was a high-caste Hindu civil servant tasked with advocating for the interests of the Newar merchants with the Tibetan government. He would also solve internal disputes among the Nepalis (Regmi 1971, 25). Other major cities had *adda*, “branch offices,” where the *thakali* (“representative head”) worked on instructions from the Lhasa *vakil* and, ultimately, Kathmandu. Over time, the most important *adda* was in Gyantse (Mishra 1989).

10. Lewis and Jamsal 1988. Several publications that begin to define the terms of analysis and articulate their importance are found in Lewis 1989 and 1996.

11. In 1904 one estimate of the number of Nepalese living in Lhasa at the time of the Younghusband expedition was eight hundred. The same source had two hundred Kashmiri/Ladakhi, fifty Mongols, and fifty Bhutanese (Waddell 1987, 345). Tucci 1987 estimates three thousand Nepalese in Lhasa.

across Tibet. Some additional branch shops were opened in new cities; as Newars extended this classic example of ethnic diaspora, trade expanded.<sup>12</sup>

The Newars were also aided in this business reconfiguration by the new postal and telegraph systems the British Indian government established, linking Lhasa to points along the trade routes, all the way to Calcutta. The Anglo-Tibetan Treaty allowed for British representatives with small troop garrisons to be located in major towns along this route through the Chumbi Valley and as far as Gyantse; while this made the route fairly secure, it was still true that brigands were an occasional problem in the isolated stretches of the trail, where robberies and murders were periodic.<sup>13</sup> For this reason, it was necessary to have a member of the business, and sometimes armed guards, accompany the caravans when they moved north or south.

The Newar merchant families that had been operating in Tibet for generations had the advantage over Hindu *sauji* since they spoke Tibetan; their long-standing Tibetan allies and partners also facilitated their adapting to the rising volume of business (especially in the main highland cities) after 1905. Some merchants had decades-long connections with traders from Kham who regularly visited their shops; lacking any similar institutions in their own region, the Kham traders would “bank” their money with the Newar trading houses, earning from 6 to 12 percent interest while providing additional capital for the merchants. Several Newars who accepted these deposits reported that many Khampas saw the Newars as fellow outsiders in Lhasa and therefore more trustworthy than the resident Tibetans.

Numerous Newar houses pursued a wool-cloth business that for decades was entirely based in Tibet: buyers would travel across the rural areas to collect the natural woolen cloth, *namba*, that was commonly woven by village and nomad women; these Newar enterprises would dye the wool in one of

12. Curtin 1984.

13. One oral account recorded this incident from sometime in the 1930s: “Ratna Man Singh Tuladhar was attacked by a gang of people while travelling back from Lhasa in the jungle, robbed, [and] thrown in a jute bag. A team of three Newar merchants, while travelling back, discovered the bag [and noticed] light movement. When they opened the bag they discovered Ratna Man Singh. Luckily one of the three knew minor [first aid] treatment and tried his best to save him. The three took turns carrying this injured body by foot . . . walking [back] for two days . . . [they] came across a Tibetan monastery. They handed over the body to the monks and the three returned [on the trail] back to Kathmandu. Ratna Man Singh returned to Kathmandu after he recovered. . . . (<http://www.dharmaheera.com/all-stories>, accessed September 6, 2021, with minor editing for clarity).

six colors back in the cities, where it would then be sold in shops, both to Tibetans as well as for export.<sup>14</sup>

Middleman trade in Tibet was, at times, a difficult and dangerous occupation. The transport entailed high costs and risky overland routes;<sup>15</sup> after 1800, political events in Tibet, conflicts with the Shah state of Nepal,<sup>16</sup> and local resentment for prosperous non-Tibetans led to periodic boycotts and riots that roiled the market.<sup>17</sup> Several episodes of looting of Newar stores seriously hurt some of the affected stores.<sup>18</sup> During the annual twenty-four-day Mön-lam Chenpo festival, the custom, begun by the Fifth Dalai Lama, was to turn over civil and criminal administration to two monks, called *shengo*, who commanded a corps of *dabdab*, “warrior monks.”<sup>19</sup> This was the one Tibetan festival that the Lhasa shopkeepers disliked; despite the Thirteenth Dalai Lama’s attempted reform of the excesses of the *shengo*, there was no escaping the

14. The profit in this business was usually four times what was paid to the Tibetan village weavers. *Namba* trading was difficult, but for some Newar families entering the Tibet market it was a starting point to accumulate capital and expand their business.

15. Two of the five Newar families I studied had members die on the trade routes, one from illness in remote Phari above Sikkim, the other after falling off a horse five miles on the trail out of Lhasa. Narrowly averted disasters—from bandits, landslides, panicking horses, sudden illness—are common in Newar merchant lore. Dealing with danger was a common challenge for diaspora traders.

16. Modern Nepal was created by the Shahs of Gorkha in 1769, and the new aggressive state fought two wars with China-Tibet in 1788–92 and 1855–56. The latter war, won by Nepal, through treaty established tax-free residence for its citizens in Tibet, as well as their not being subject to Tibetan laws; Nepalese law governed residents in Tibet, and was administered by a government appointee, the *vakil*, who resided in Lhasa.

17. Charles Bell, reflecting the views filtered through the Lhasa diplomatic corps in the first decades of the twentieth century, reports Tibetan “jealousy and dislike” of resident Nepali due to incidents of their not respecting Tibetan customs (e.g., smoking near the Jokhang, fishing in and eating fish from the Lhasa River, unfairly cornering the yak dung market that was used for home heating!). It is hard to scale the frequency of such actions or the magnitude of these opinions among the resident Tibetan population at large. Clearly, while conflicts did occur (as seen in the next note), the businesses had many loyal customers, and Newar accounts of their working in Tibet did not center on constant troubles. See Bell 1924a, especially chapter 25.

18. According to Prem Upreti, there were violent incidents against Newar merchants in Lhasa in 1854, 1862, and 1871. In 1883, “all 84 Newar shops in Lhasa were looted” (1980, 97–98). Again in 1911–12, “rioters killed five Nepalese and burned thirty-eight shops” (132). The Tibeto-Nepal conflict of 1928–30 was another time of disorder in the Bakhor (Mishra 1989).

19. An apt alternative translation was offered by Georges Dreyfus at an NEH Institute event directed by the author and Leonard van der Kuip in 2003.

*dabdabs*’ unimpeded power to impose temporary and often arbitrary laws and punish anyone for breaking them, sometimes violently. Despite Lhasa being inundated by tens of thousands of pilgrims (and therefore customers) for this festival, Newar merchants often closed their shops.<sup>20</sup>



Fig. 1. Two *dabdabs*, “warrior monks,” pose with a friend in a Newar photo studio for a portrait (ca. 1935). The latter shows off a revolver, while the monks’ hands hold snuff and snuff bottles. Their large keys dangle from their waist belts. Photo used with permission from collection of Sidhartha Man Tuladhar.

As the twentieth century continued, the Newars were joined by a growing number of competitors in Lhasa and other cities: Indians, Kashmiri Muslims, and Chinese trading houses added to the economy’s complexity.<sup>21</sup> Family fortunes could be lost in other ways besides competition, such as the men getting caught up in drinking, opium, gambling, or liaisons with Tibetan women

20. Bell 1924b, 96. When I showed former Lhasa traders photographs showing the *dabdab*, the typical reaction was to recoil upon seeing them and use the Newar word *hārān* (“wild”) to describe them. The large keys characteristically worn on their belts were also swung as weapons to control crowds.

21. Chinese merchants after the fall of imperial China were free to set up shops that specialized in tea; Yunnan Chinese moved to Gangtok to enter into the wool trade (Bose 2013). For an account of opium trade in the Tibetan communities of Sichuan during this period, see Yudru Tsomu in this volume.



(prostitution or marriage). In addition to tales of downward mobility, there are stories of individuals starting out as servants in a trading house but eventually rising to become towering successes.<sup>22</sup> Most families with Lhasa trade businesses monitored the performance of their Tibetan enterprises, made strategic choices, and took action to remove family members who were not managing the work well. Family histories include memories of not being treated well by relatives for whom the person worked.<sup>23</sup>

The Newar trading houses that thrived most were those that adopted careful, modern business practices and cultivated good relations with Tibetan officials and customers. The Newar merchants brought all kinds of products available in Calcutta to sell in Tibet,<sup>24</sup> and many still shipped the usual items traditionally traded in Tibet from the Kathmandu Valley to sell to Central Tibet's local and international buyers.<sup>25</sup> They also sent caravans back to India and Nepal with raw wool, musk, borax, rock salt, and yak tails<sup>26</sup> for sale to Indian and international buyers. By 1949 the scope of middlemen trading in

22. It is common to hear rags-to-riches and riches-to-rags narratives used as examples of one's karma taking a sudden opposite turn.

23. Newars today, including the descendants of some of the most successful Lhasa traders, point to how the great wealth that families garnered had a common negative cost: in many of these families, the division of wealth and inheritance led to bitter disputes, some of them dividing families for decades.

24. From the records of one of the largest Newar houses: imports of turquoise from Iran, amber and luxury fabrics from Germany, coral from Italy, silk brocades from Benares, woolen goods from England, cultured pearls from Japan, and silk cloth from China and Japan. A few brought conch shells from India, as these were prized for use in Tibetan rituals and could be sold for their weight in gold; one trader noted that Tibetans felt that these shells retained the spirit of the storm inside them (Lévi 1905–8, n184). There was a large Chinese wholesaler centered in Calcutta, Quangling Yung, that supplied hundreds of goods, including carpets, that Newars bought wholesale for sale in Tibet.

25. Household goods made from copper and brass; raw and beaten rice; art objects in metal, stone, and wood; opium and other medicinal herbs; cooking spices; woven goods, sugar, and tobacco. Some merchant families had shops in the Kathmandu market, where they sold Tibetan goods and had trade connections with Tibetans residing in Kuti and Kiyrong who came in the winter to Kathmandu: "Moti Kaji [Kansakar], managed their shop at home [in Kel Tol], where he sold clothes to Tibetans from Kiyrong and the border areas who came to Kathmandu during the winter, who brought with them goats, sheep and blankets for sale in Kathmandu. For several months, these people were lodged in the ground floor of their home" (<http://www.dharmaheera.com/all-stories>, accessed September 6, 2021).

26. Yak tails, called *chauri*, have been used as ritual tools for centuries throughout South Asia to fan images in temples and homes.

Tibet had become so great that, according to one German visitor, "There is nothing one cannot buy, or at least order, in the Lhasa market."<sup>27</sup>

One extraordinarily lucrative Newar business was exchanging raw gold for currency or allowing customers to use gold to pay for the shop's goods. Nomads and many others would bring in gold nuggets or gold flakes that were still found in surprising abundance in streams and other localities across the Tibetan plateau. Newars who lived in Tibet recalled the common incident of being handed fist-size nuggets by customers and sometimes spending entire days doing nothing but gold exchange; they had to learn to recognize gold's purity, and a few frankly reported how easy it was to swindle the "country Tibetans," especially Khampas and indigenous peoples of the lower Tsangpo Valley,<sup>28</sup> who were "far too trusting." This raw gold was also taken back to the Kathmandu Valley.<sup>29</sup>

The Newars who became the most prosperous were those who secured individual contracts from the Tibetan government to have the exclusive, duty-free right to supply imported gems, motorcycles, automobiles, and other luxury items. Several Newar businesses had contracts to import special gold and silver plates used to mint money, a very profitable enterprise indeed. Major monasteries also contracted with businesses for supplying items needed for Buddhist sanctuaries and devotional practices. This is a modern Tibetan example of an ancient and universal phenomenon across the Buddhist world linking merchants and trade to monastery building and merit-making.<sup>30</sup>

Newars were quick to set up, even before the Younghusband invasion, some of the first photo studios in Tibet, where Tibetans who visited the major cities could pose for photographs shot on large-format cameras that used large glass negatives. The records of Tibetan life that these photographer entrepreneurs captured are now invaluable sociohistorical documents. The panoply of pilgrims visiting the Lhasa photo studios, for example, included aristocrats, commoners, and country folk, the clothing and jewelry reflecting the various regional material cultures of Tibet. Monks dropped in to pose as well, sometimes with family, resulting in remarkable portraits of the *dabdab* ("punk

27. One list of exotics included "Bing Crosby records, Elizabeth Arden perfumes, German clocks, Japanese watches, Australian butter . . ."

28. One merchant recalled tribal people, who "were jungli," wearing bear fur and yak skins showing up periodically.

29. Newar merchant lore includes tales of porters coming from Tibet with their packs filled with little else beside a Lhasa's *Sau's* ("Merchant's") gold. Importing gold back for sale in Nepal was highly lucrative but also very risky.

30. Ray 1986; Liu 1988; Sen 2003.

monks”) and of friends holding out their prized possessions, such as snuff containers, oversized keys, and even handguns! Some Newar photo-shop entrepreneurs also made and sold a variety of large composite photo prints featuring important religious figures that could be placed on Tibetan family altars.



Fig. 2. A group of young women pose in a Newar photo studio in front of a painted background (ca. 1935). Photo used with permission from collection of Sidhartha Man Tuladhar.

Venturing into India and then going up to the major cities of Tibet attracted young men from upper-caste Buddhist families, primarily the Urāy of Kathmandu and the Dhakwa of Patan. A few other Newar castes were noted in these regions as well, such as Shākya metal artisans and, in the 1940s, Shrestha and Manandhar importers and a Jyāpu who worked as a “handyman.” Most of the Newar houses employed their own workers from the valley to serve as servants and salesmen; these workers outnumbered the business owners and were usually paid a salary. “Going off to Tibet” was a course of action open to young Newars with connections; it attracted a variety of individuals, from the ambitious to the desperate—young men in trouble with the law or escaping marriage or bad luck in the local family business.

Some Tibet traders were notable for their adventurousness. The photographs they took of their own lives in Tibet show them posing on horses and motorcycles, crossing the Tsangpo River in yak skin or wooden boats, wearing

Tibetan clothes, or just venturing out on picnics to see the sights. At times they took tourist-style photos of Tibetan festivals, processions, or historical events.<sup>31</sup>

A few of the Newar photographs from Lhasa show the Tibetan women that some merchants married, a practice that eased the loneliness of staying in Tibet for many years but could complicate or often poison family relations with kin back in the valley.<sup>32</sup> The prevalence of Newar men fathering children with Tibetan women is indicated by the number of male offspring known as *khacara* (“half-breeds”), a number that grew to be over a thousand by 1910.<sup>33</sup> Any males having a Nepalese father or grandfather could claim Nepali citizenship. Being legally recognized as such gave them special status, though female children had no such right and were deemed “Tibetan.” As guaranteed by the Tibet-Nepal Treaty of 1856, *khacara* had full tax-exempt privileges as well as extraterritorial legal rights. Some were known for abusing this status and flouting authority; Tibetan officials regularly complained about *khacara* (“high-handedness”).<sup>34</sup>



Most Newars in Tibet practiced Buddhism and participated in the devotional life that mingled with trade, as the interplay of both was integral to old Lhasa’s cityscape, where the innermost route circumambulating the central temple, the Jokhang, is also the city’s main market, the Bakhor. Here is where most Newar trading houses, or *kothi*, had their Lhasa headquarters, in stone buildings with shops on the ground floor and living quarters behind and above. Tibetans and foreign visitors after 1904 provide vivid impressions of the Newar merchants residing in Lhasa. They are recalled wearing *topi* hats (still distinctive of modern Nepal male attire) and wool shawls over their shoulders, in a manner still

31. One family has photographs of the Chinese army arriving in Tibet in 1950.

32. Poor Tibetan families with beautiful daughters or a widowed or divorced young daughter sought marriage alliances that they hoped would benefit their family’s prospects. Some observers estimated that “most” Newars had Tibetan wives. The male children of these marriages, according to Tibetan law, could not inherit their Newar father’s estates unless they resided in Nepal. Only if a man returned to Nepal (as many did after 1959) could he claim a share of his Newar father’s estate, alongside his Newar half brothers and sisters. This requirement led to many intra-family disputes. My article on a popular Buddhist merchant didactic story in the Kathmandu Valley relates its popularity to this contextual factor (Lewis 1993b). Recent studies of this enduring community in Kathmandu are found in Mishra 2003 and Ellingsen 2017.

33. Mishra 2003.

34. Upreti 1980, 146. These provisions for Nepali citizens in Tibet ended with the Sino-Nepali Treaty of 1958.

seen during cold months in the Kathmandu Valley. Observers also note that unlike the Tibetans, Newars could be recognized by *tika* dots on their foreheads that reflected their daily devotions. Their shops were very tidy, which some observers contrasted with the dirty shops of other groups. Multiple observers record that the Newars seemed happy and had a “jovial” nature and a special fondness for singing.

Although in some respects they competed with one another, Newar merchants in Tibet still joined together to form *guthi* (“endowed committees”) to perform rituals, sing devotional songs, and lend money internally.<sup>35</sup> A Lhasa *guthi* with five divisions united all Newars for a variety of collective religious rituals; each had a leader (*pāla*) who changed yearly. The *guthi* provided support to any family experiencing a death, with each division expected to send as many of its section members as possible to help with funeral arrangements and other needs. This association also organized the observance of Newar Buddhism’s holy month, Guṃlā, in Lhasa.<sup>36</sup> Throughout this late summer month (July–August), merchants display religious paintings and light butter lamps in their shops, and they make visits to temples around the city to present offerings. Every morning during Guṃlā, ten or more Newars formed a procession to the Jokhang as part of the traditional music ensemble (*Guṃlā bājan*), just as done by Newar Buddhists in the Kathmandu Valley: a leader keeping time with small cymbals, the dominant sound a chorus of drummers playing the same beat using over-the-shoulder drums, accompanied by a few playing larger cymbals.<sup>37</sup> As in Nepal, too, on a day during Guṃlā called “Pañca Dāna” they made merit-earning offerings to Tibetan monks.

Nepal’s main national holidays, Dassain and Tihar (Newari: Mohani and Saunti), were also celebrated. The latter was observed in homes, with the Newar New Year’s ritual that strengthens the body, *Mhaḥ Pūjā*, routinely done. But Mohani was observed in public and centered on the *vakil*’s residence. For it, the Buddhists formed a group that went around the outer circumambulatory route of the city, then back into their Bakhor neighborhood. At the *vakil*’s home, the *guthi* heads (*pāla*) would form a line and “sacrifice” long radishes with a demon face painted on them to the goddess Durgā.<sup>38</sup>

35. Bista 1978, 195. See Toffin 1975 for the definitive study of the Newar tradition that still relies on these institutions (Skt. *goṣṭhi*) known to have existed in ancient India.

36. For a summary of this tradition in Kathmandu, see Lewis 1993c.

37. One merchant recalled an unplanned encounter between the *Guṃlā bājan* and the young Fourteenth Dalai Lama, who is said to have enjoyed the music and praised the Newars for their devotion.

38. This is in the style of the non-animal “sacrifices” done by most Newar Buddhists on

Another public expression of Newar tradition was the festival of Bhimsen (Newari: Bhiṃ Dyah). In the Newar bazaar shops of the valley, Bhimsen is honored daily as the protector of merchants and their businesses, whose image in the shop receives an incense offering before opening. Most Newars in Lhasa followed this practice. But in Lhasa, a larger celebration focusing on Bhimsen came around every twelve years: supported by several *guthi*, the Lhasa traders sponsored one man from the Kathmandu Valley to come up from Kathmandu to act as a *pūjāri* for this deity. After doing a ritual inside the large Bhimsen temple in Kathmandu, this man (not a professional priest) set out with a large trunk of flower *prasād* on the nearly one-month trek. Once at Lhasa’s western gateway, he was welcomed by representatives from the Newar community and the *vakil*, then escorted to a house where he would stay almost a month. On the auspicious day, the resident Newars formed a musical procession and set up a Bhimsen image attended by the visiting ritualist in an open space in the Bakhor. All the Newars (and many others) would come to make offerings, with the *dakṣiṇa* (honorarium) to the *pūjāri* amounting to many tens of thousands of rupees. The *sauji* also pooled funds to make the emissary a silver crown with the name Bhimsen on it (that he wore during the festival) and a set of heavy gold earrings (to honor his completing the mission), both as an additional form of payment. In 1942 one Tuladhar merchant traveled with the Bhimsen entourage and gave a detailed oral account of these events.<sup>39</sup> By the time the ad hoc priest returned to Nepal, he had accumulated tens of thousands of rupees in donations.



Some Newars living in Tibet were known for their strong Buddhist devotion. They routinely did full prostrations outside temples and before holy teachers, including the Dalai Lama; they regularly gave donations to monks, circumambulated the Jokhang temple, and turned hand-held prayer wheels in their leisure time. Many wore rosaries for regular meditation practice, having taken teachings from Tibetan lamas. In the 1940s and 1950s, there was a Newar *vajrācārya* priest residing in Lhasa; many of the merchants utilized him to

Vijayāṣṭami or Durgā Pūjā day in Kathmandu, where a pumpkin with a demon face painted on it is hacked up by clan leaders.

39. That year, amid the offerings on the main day, Tej Ratna Tuladhar described how the *pūjāri* suddenly acted as if possessed by Bhimsen. This keen and skeptical observer bluntly added: “Watching this man, I not believing. No god coming.”



have rituals performed in Tibetan monastery temples and for their in-home ceremonies.

There were also a number of Newar men in Tibet who were known to have “gone native” in their devotional practices, and at least one merchant, Laxmi Bir Singh Kansakar, was so engaged with Tibetan Buddhism that he acquired the nickname Lama Sau. Some Newars in Lhasa even took vows and became Tibetan monks, adopting the monastic life in different *gompas*.<sup>40</sup> One famous Newar lama among them, whose Newar name was Jñāna Man Singh Tuladhar of Naradevi Tol, returned to Nepal and in 1954 established a *gompa* at Svayambhū. Other members of its founding sangha were also Newars: three Tulādhar, two Shākya, and one Shrestha<sup>41</sup> Jñāna Man was the resident teacher at Maitri Gompa (Sumati Maitri Śāsana Vihāra), located as of this writing just below the upper parking lot on Svayambhū hill. He had acquired such a following that a commercial photographer with a shop in Kathmandu sold photographic prints of him for local, mostly Newar, devotees.

Both before and increasingly after the Younghusband invasion, the Newar merchants in Tibet brought their profits home, and in several dozen cases at least, these represented small fortunes. The most successful used these funds to invest in land, expand houses, and start family enterprises in Nepal, increasingly so when the country opened to the outside world after the restoration of the Shah monarchy in 1951. Since they had a head start in learning modern economic practices and had “seen the world” and gained experience in running business enterprises, most have flourished, several becoming among the wealthiest men in Nepal today.



Like householders throughout the history of Buddhism, the Newar Lhasa merchants also invested in merit-making, providing the funds to build new or restore old stūpas and monasteries back in the Kathmandu Valley. Svayambhū

40. Bista 1978, 41, mentions knowing a Newar man who had been living for over twenty-one years in Drepang Monastery. Harrer 1976, 205, notes that “many Nepalis” were ordained monks, most of whom resided with other Newars in the large Lhasa monasteries (as did Tibetans from different regions), and that the Newars “were regarded as very apt pupils.” A few Lhasa merchants had been so happy living in Tibet that upon returning to Nepal after 1959, they were unsettled in Kathmandu and longed to return to Lhasa.

41. The name of the monastery is Śri Sumati Maitri Śāsana Mahāvihāra, referred to colloquially as Maitri Gompa. This *gompa* was consecrated in 1954. The other founding monks were Devakul Singh Tuladhar, Mahācandra Śākya, Nhuge Śākya, Keśa Ratna Tulādhar, Jñānendra Śreṣṭha, and Gajānanda Śākya.



Fig. 3. Jñāna Man Singh Tuladhar of Naradevi Tol, a Newar merchant who was ordained as a Tibetan monk in Tibet and became abbot of the Tibetan-styled Maitri Gompa on Svayambhū. Photo used with permission from collection of K. T. Tuladhar; Dagu Baha in Kathmandu.

and Bauddha were beneficiaries of Newar merchant largesse.<sup>42</sup> Many Lhasa mercantile families also sponsored special iterations of the two greatest Newar Buddhist donative festivals, Pañca Dāna<sup>43</sup> and Samyak.<sup>44</sup> For both, individual

42. See von Rospatt 2009 and 2018; Decler 1998.

43. This big event is usually held during the holy month of Guṃlā.

44. This is certainly a cultural survival of the old Indic and Central Asian Buddhist *Pañcavārsika*. A *gutbi* in Patan organizes its Samyak every five years; the Kathmandu



sponsors must invite the Kathmandu Valley's entire Newar sangha to receive food and other donations. In the former festival, the sponsor must offer as a gift a house and lands to one monastic; in the latter, basic rice and other offerings to each and every monastic must be made, along with a feast. On the second day, any woman wanting to come for a feast must be fed. In addition to these donations, the Samyak sponsor must make a large moveable image of a standing Dīpaṅkara Buddha, a metal stūpa, and other items used in processions through the old city. The sponsor must also invite all the previous Samyak sponsors to join in three days of processions to the royal palace, to a field at the eastern foot of Svayambhū hill where the donations are bestowed for two days, and then back to their homes. It is no exaggeration to attribute the rich array of religious monuments in the Kathmandu Valley, and the vibrant cultural practices of Newar Buddhist communities, to the great profits derived from the Tibetan trade. Many of the remarkable array of monasteries, rest houses, *caityas*, and temples in Newar towns were created thanks to the strong religious sentiments of Lhasa merchant families.

Not only did most Newar merchants contribute to their own traditions, but some were also deeply impacted by Tibetan Buddhist traditions and teachers. They brought this devotion back to Nepal with them and found new outlets to continue some of these beloved Tibetan spiritual practices. Dating back to at least the nineteenth century, Newar patronage supported the living costs of prominent lamas coming on pilgrimage to Nepal. Some merchants provided funds to build Tibetan monasteries in the Kathmandu Valley; others added Tibetan prayer wheels to Newar monasteries (*bāhā*).

In the late 1920s several Newars were ordained as novices in the Tibetan Nyingma tradition after traveling to Kiyrong. They did so after their spiritual inclinations had been stirred by two lamas who had visited the Kathmandu Valley, and their travel expenses were supported by Lhasa trading families. Upon returning to Nepal, these Newar monks wearing Tibetan robes drew patrons and special attention when they went through the Kathmandu streets on traditional alms rounds and then gave Dharma talks. This brought them to the attention of the Rana government, which expelled them from Nepal. The group eventually became monks in the Theravāda tradition, which led to the introduction of the Theravāda modernist movement in the post-Rana period.

A few Lhasa traders have served as "cultural middlemen," advocating for, and often organizing, special events so that Newar kin and friends can practice

Samyak *guthi* holds its event only every twelve years. New sponsors can devote their donations and organize the event at any time. It is noteworthy that there have been very few new Samyak sponsors since the closing of the Lhasa trade.

Tibetan-style rituals (*homa*, healing, *nyungné* fasting retreats,<sup>45</sup> and meditation) and earn merit by donating to lamas and their *gompas*. Three generations after the last of the Newar traders returned to Kathmandu, many of these Tibetan merchant families continue their custom of calling resident lamas to do Tibetan Buddhist rituals in their homes.<sup>46</sup>

Historically in Newar-Tibetan relations, the pattern of frontier communities being incorporated into greater Tibet can be discerned in Nepal. Among Newars venturing to Tibet, there were several who "crossed over" to take ordination as monks. One early and famous example was an Urāy who took the name of Dharmalok and traveled to Tibet; but he later had a change of heart, and upon his return to Nepal he embraced the reformist Theravāda movement, becoming a monk.

Another kind of Newar connection to Tibetan tradition also built on this trans-regional Newar-Tibetan history: the practice of identifying Tibetan reincarnate lamas among Newar children in the Kathmandu Valley. At least two such cases have been recorded in the last four decades; one that I knew of in 1980 was found in a *kbacara* family.<sup>47</sup>

It has long been my view that the cultural history of the Kathmandu Valley, and its Buddhist traditions, cannot be complete, or accurate, without incorporating the records of Tibetan visitors and the work of Tibetan teachers who at various points made a significant impact on local Newar traditions.<sup>48</sup>

45. Also popular among other Tibetan groups across Nepal. See Wangchen Rinpoche 2009.

46. A few wealthy families shifted their loyalty, and Tibet-derived fortunes, to support the valley's Theravāda movement (Levine and Gellner 2007).

47. The child was taken to Dharamsala and confirmed in 1981, after which I lost touch with his family. My interview with his father indicated that the boy had been identified as a *trülku* associated with Ganden, who was given the ordination name of Jikmé Tenpa Wangchuk and was destined to be educated in the rebuilt monastery in Karnataka, in India. After a new inquiry for this article, I received this response from Jangchup Choeden, Executive Director, Geluk International Foundation: "This young *trülku* has grown up and graduated as a *geshe* from the monastery and lately he has been spending most of his time in Taiwan giving Dharma teachings. I am informed his father passed away several years back. . . . The *trülku* is now known as Serkong Khentrel and I wish you good luck finding more information on him" (September 1, 2021).

48. These were summarized in an article (Lewis 1989) and in edited volumes (Lewis 1993a, Lewis 1995). Since then, additional *trülku* identifications in Newar families have come to light as well as ties (still unstudied) between the *vajracāryas* of Kathmandu's Tache Bāhā and the Karmapa lineage. I recall with gratitude that Gene Smith encouraged the pursuit of this subject. He was attentive to Tibetan monks who visited the Kathmandu Valley and pointed this out in his introductions to the Tibetan texts he published.



Fig. 4. Donam Tsering (a descendent of a Newar merchant man and a Tibetan mother) with his son right after he was recognized as a *trülku* in 1980. Photo by Todd Lewis.

My first meeting with Leonard van der Kuijp, then also a young scholar of Buddhism, occurred when he heard that in the course of my research on the Newars of Kathmandu, I had formed friendships with prominent families with ties to Tibet. In 1981 we were both working on the frontier of Himalayan Buddhist studies, where one could make exciting discoveries about cultures still largely unknown in the West. He was looking for information about one lama and had heard that a family in Asan Tol knew him. And it was indeed true, upon inquiry, that his quest was for one very important family, the descendants of the aforementioned Dhamma Sau. After a few inquiries, Dhamma Sau's great-grandson met Leonard and shared what he knew about this lama, a *trülku* they called "Tuton Rinpoché." I had even once gone to meet this lama with Pratyek Man's family at his monastery behind Svayambhū to get blessings, and on other occasions I watched him do prognostication rituals and observed his performing a Tibetan-style *homa* ritual in Asan Tol to appease the ghost of a troubled Newar teenager who had died from suicide.

Helping Leonard make this connection was the beginning of a personal and professional friendship that has flourished for over forty years. Leonard's interest in this hitherto little-explored link between Newars and Tibetans alerted me that this cultural connection between Newars and Tibetans should be

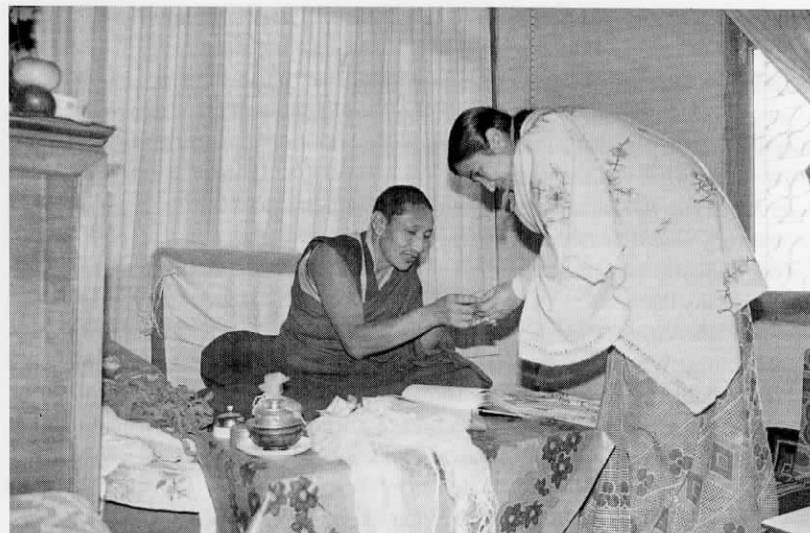


Fig. 5. A Newar woman devotee makes a donation to the Tibetan monk they knew as "Tuton Rinpoché" during a visit to his monastery in 1980. Photo by Todd Lewis.

explored further. This first meeting with Leonard also led me to see how Buddhist institutions must be imagined with permeable ethnic boundaries. Our meeting at the start of our careers laid the foundation for an academic friendship and, once Leonard moved to Harvard, our codirecting six NEH Institutes for K-12 teachers and higher education faculty on the cultures, arts, and religions of the Himalayan region.<sup>49</sup> Here we did some of the finest teaching of our careers. I came to see what a blessing it was for these teachers and his graduate students to have Leonard van der Kuijp as a mentor.

49. A website from one program that we curated as a scholarly resource can be found at: [https://college.holycross.edu/projects/buddhists\\_traditions/](https://college.holycross.edu/projects/buddhists_traditions/).



## References

- Bell, Charles. 1924a. *Tibet: Past and Present*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- . 1924b. "A Year in Lhasa." *The Geographical Journal* 72.2: 89–101.
- Bista, Dor. 1978. "Nepalis in Tibet." In *Himalayan Anthropology*, edited by James Fisher, 187–204. The Hague: Mouton.
- Bose, Arpita. 2013. "Kolkata's Early Chinese Community and Their Economic Contributions." *South Asia Research* 33.2: 163–76.
- Curtin, Philip. 1984. *Cross Cultural Trade in World History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Decleer, Hubert. 1998. "Two Topics from the *Svayambhu Purana*: Who was Dharmashri-mitra? Who was Shantikara Acharya?" Paper presented at the Conference on the Buddhist Heritage of Nepal Mandala.
- Ellingsen, Winfried. 2017. "The Khacchara of Kathmandu—Mobility, Situatedness and Ethnic Identification." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 43.3 (March): 513–27.
- Furger, Alex R. 2017. *The Gilded Buddha: The Traditional Art of the Newar Metal Casters in Nepal*. Basel: Librum.
- Gellner, David N., and Declan Quigley, eds. 1995. *Contested Hierarchies: A Collaborative Ethnography of Caste among the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Goldstein, Melvyn C. 1989. *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913–1952*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Harrer, Heinrich. 1976. *Seven Years in Tibet*. London: Hart Davis.
- Hilker, D. S. Kansakar. 2005. *Syamukapu: The Lhasa Newars of Kalimpong and Kathmandu*. Kathmandu: Vajra Publications.
- Jackson, David P. 2010. *The Nepalese Legacy in Tibetan Painting*. New York: Rubin Museum.
- Lall, Kesar. 2001. *The Newar Merchants in Lhasa*. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.
- Lévi, Sylvain. 1905–8. *Le Nepal: Étude historique d'un royaume Hindou*. 3 vols. Paris: Ernest Leroux.
- Levine, Sarah, and David Gellner. 2007. *Rebuilding Buddhism: The Theravada Movement in Twentieth-Century Nepal*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lewis, Todd T. 1989. "Newars and Tibetans in the Kathmandu Valley: Ethnic Boundaries and Religious History." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 38: 31–57.
- . 1993a. "Himalayan Frontier Trade: Newar Diaspora Merchants and Buddhism." In *Anthropology of Tibet and the Himalayas*, edited by Charles Ramble and Martin Brauen, 130–45. Zurich: Volkerkundemuseum.
- . 1993b. "Newar-Tibetan Trade and the Domestication of the *Simbalasārthabāhu Avadāna*." *History of Religions* 33.2: 135–60.
- . 1993c. "Contributions to the Study of Popular Buddhism: The Newar Buddhist Festival of *Gumlā Dharma*." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 16: 7–52.
- . 1995. "Buddhist Merchants in Kathmandu: The Asan Tol Market and *Urāy* Social Organization." In *Contested Hierarchies: A Collaborative Ethnography of Caste among the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley, Nepal*, edited by David Gellner and Declan Quigley, 38–79. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 1996. "A Chronology of Newar-Tibetan Relations in the Kathmandu Valley." In *Change and Continuity: Studies in the Nepalese Culture of the Kathmandu Valley*, edited by Siegfried Lienhard, 149–66. Torino: Edizioni Dell'orso.
- Lewis, Todd T., and Lozang Jamspal. 1998. "Newars and Tibetans in the Kathmandu Valley: Three New Translations from Tibetan Sources." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 36: 187–211.
- Lewis, Todd T., and Subarna Man Tuladhar. 2019. *The Epic of the Buddha: His Life and Teachings by Chittadhar Hridaya*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala.
- Liu, Xinru. 1988. *Ancient India and Ancient China*. Bombay: Oxford University Press.
- Lo Bue, Erberto. 1985 and 1986. "The Newar Artists of the Nepal Valley: A Historical Account of Their Activities in Neighboring Areas with Particular Reference to Tibet." I and II. *Oriental Art* 21: 262–77, and 22: 409–20.
- . 1988. "Cultural Exchange and Social Interaction between Tibetans and Newars from the Seventh to the Twentieth Century." *International Folklore Review* 6: 86–114.
- . 1990. "Iconographic Sources and Iconometric Literature in Tibetan and Himalayan Art." In *Indo-Tibetan Studies: Papers in Honour and Appreciation of Professor David L. Snellgrove's Contribution to Indo-Tibetan Studies*, edited by Tadeusz Skorupski, 171–97. Tring, UK: The Institute of Buddhist Studies.
- Mishra, Tirtha P. 1989. "Nepalese Thakali at Gyantse (1905–1938)." *Ancient Nepal* 114: 9–17.
- . 2003. "Nepalese in Tibet: A Case Study of Nepalese Half-Breeds (1856–1956)." *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* 30: 1–16.
- Pal, Pratapaditya. 1991. *Art of the Himalayas: Treasures from Nepal and Tibet*. New York: Hudson Hills Press.
- Ray, Himanshu P. 1986. *Monastery and Guild*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Regmi, Chandra Mahesh. 1971. *A Study of Nepali Economic History 1768–1846*. New Delhi: Manjusri Publishing House.
- Riley-Smith, Tristram. 1998. "Image, Status and Association: Aspects of Identity among Newar Gods and Men." *Kailash* 15.3–4: 223–42.
- Slusser, Mary, Nutan Sharma, and James Giambrone. 1999. "Metamorphosis: Sheet Metal to Sacred Image in Nepal." *Artibus Asiae* 58.3–4: 215–52.
- Stein, Rolf A. 1972. *Tibetan Civilization*. Translated by J. E. Stapleton Driver. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Toffin, Gerard. 1975. "Études sur les Newars de la Vallée Kathmandou: *Guthi*, Funerailles et Castes." *L'Ethnographie* 2: 206–25.
- Tucci, Giuseppe. 1987 [1956]. *To Lhasa and Beyond: A Diary of the 1948 Expedition*. Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications.
- Tuladhar, Kamal. 2004. *Caravan to Lhasa: Newar Merchants of Kathmandu in Traditional Tibet*. Kathmandu: Nepal Printing House.

- Upreti, Prem R. 1980. *Nepal-Tibet Relations, 1850-1930*. Kathmandu: Puja Nara.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1996. "Treaties between Nepal and Her Neighbors: A Historical Perspective." *Tribhuvan University Journal* 19.1: 15-24.
- Vitali, Roberto. 1990. *Early Temples of Central Tibet*. London: Serindia.
- von Rospatt, Alexander. 2009. "Sacred Origins of the *Svayambhucitya* and the Nepal Valley: Foreign Speculation and Local Myth." *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre* 13: 33-39.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 2018. "The Collective Sponsorship of the Renovations of the *Svayambhucitya* in the Later Malla Era, and Its Documentation in Historical Records." In *Studies in Historical Documents from Nepal and India*, edited by S. Cubelic, A. Michaels, and A. Zotter, 163-91. Heidelberg: Heidelberg University Publishing.
- Waddell, L. Austine. 1987 [1905]. *Lhasa and Its Mysteries*. New York: Dover.
- Wangchen Rinpoche. 2009. *Buddhist Fasting Practice: The Nyungne Method of Thousand-Armed Chenrezig*. Boston: Shambhala.



Ishihama Yumiko is a professor in the School of Education at Waseda University. Her research primarily concerns the history of Qing-Tibet relations and of the age of the Fifth Dalai Lama. Her recent publications include *The Resurgence of "Buddhist Government": Tibetan-Mongolian Relations in the Modern World* (2019) and *The Early 20th Century Resurgence of the Tibetan Buddhist World* (edited with Alex McKay, 2021).

David P. Jackson received his PhD from the Department of Asian Languages and Literature at the University of Washington in 1985. He served for fourteen years as professor of Tibetan Studies at Hamburg University and is the author of several books and articles on Tibetan painting, including *Tibetan Thangka Painting: Method and Materials* (1984) and *A History of Tibetan Painting* (1996). He visited Tibet twice and the Himalayas a number of times, also living and working in both India and Japan for several years. He participated in a mural preservation project in Lhasa organized by Professor Knud Larsen in Norway. He was for ten years curator at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York, dedicated primarily to Himalayan pictorial art, producing a series of six catalogs including *The Nepalese Legacy in Tibetan Painting* (2010), *The Place of Provenance* (2012), and *A Revolutionary Artist of Tibet* (2016). His main biographical studies are *A Saint in Seattle* (2003) and *Lama of Lamas* (2020). He lives in the Pacific Northwest.

Matthew T. Kapstein is emeritus professor of Tibetan studies at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris, and former Numata Visiting Professor of Buddhist Studies at the University of Chicago. His recent publications include *The Many Faces of King Gesar*, coedited with Charles Ramble. A major work on Tibetan codicology and paleography, *Tibetan Manuscripts and Early Printed Books*, in two volumes, is to be published shortly by Cornell University Press.

Christina Kilby is associate professor of religion at James Madison University. She earned her master's degree from Harvard Divinity School, where she had the pleasure of attending Leonard van der Kuijp's classes, and her doctoral degree in religious studies from the University of Virginia. She has published several articles on Tibetan epistolary literature. Her current work focuses on Buddhism and migration.

Todd Lewis is the Distinguished Professor of Arts and Humanities and a professor of religion at the College of the Holy Cross. His primary research since 1979 has been on Newar Buddhism in the Kathmandu Valley and the social history of Buddhism. Lewis has authored many articles on the Buddhist traditions of Nepal and the book *Popular Buddhist Texts from Nepal: Narratives*

and *Rituals of Newar Buddhism* (2000). Recent books include the coedited *Teaching Buddhism: New Insights on Understanding and Presenting the Traditions* (2016), *Buddhists: Understanding Buddhism through the Lives of Practitioners* (2014), and the coauthored textbook *World Religions Today* (seventh edition, 2021). His translation *Sugata Saurabha: An Epic Poem from Nepal on the Life of the Buddha by Chittadhar Hridaya* (2010) received awards from the Khyentse Foundation and the Numata Foundation as the best book on Buddhism in 2011. His most recent publication, with Jinah Kim, is *Dharma and Puṇya: Buddhist Ritual Art of Nepal* (2019).

Jue Liang is assistant professor in the Department of Religion at Denison University. She received her PhD in religious studies from the University of Virginia in 2020. Her dissertation, “Conceiving the Mother of Tibet: The Life, Lives, and Afterlife of the Buddhist Saint Yeshe Tsogyel,” examines the literary tradition surrounding the matron saint of Tibet, Yeshe Tsogyel, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. She first met Leonard in 2010 in his literary Tibetan seminar at Renmin University of China in Beijing. Since then he has been a constant source of inspiration and wisdom, with his endless curiosity about everything that Tibetan texts have to offer.

Rory Lindsay is assistant professor in the Department for the Study of Religion at the University of Toronto and an editor at 84000: Translating the Words of the Buddha. He completed his PhD under Leonard’s inimitable tutelage from 2009 to 2018.

Cuilan Liu is assistant professor of religious studies at the University of Pittsburgh. She received her PhD from Harvard University in 2014, where she made the documentary film *Young Jigme*, screened at the 2015 International Jean Rouch Film Festival in Paris. Her research focuses on the legal interaction between Buddhism and the state in China, Tibet, and India. Her publications have appeared in the *History of Religions*, the *Journal of Chinese Religions*, the *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, the *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, and the *Journal of Indian Philosophy*.

Zhouyang Ma is a PhD candidate in Inner Asian and Altaic studies at Harvard University. His current project aims to delineate the history of the rise of Tibetan Buddhism in the Tangut Xia state (1038–1127) with a focus on Gsang phu ne’u thog scholasticism. Much of his side interest in Tibetan linguistics was inspired by the course “Sa skya Paṇḍita’s Linguistics” taught by Professor van der Kuijp in spring 2019 and by working as a teaching fellow for his class-