House of birds: A historical ethnography of a Tibetan buddhist nunnery in Nepal
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The Chayik of Tashi Gomba

Translation Dr P.C. Verhagen

The praise of the [holy] place of Bkra-shis 'Chi-med-dga'-tshal [i.e. "Heavenly Garden of Deathless Good Fortune"; name of the monastery] is contained [herein].

I pay homage to the guru[s?] of the Root-lineage that fulfills the hopes of those who have been tamed by the results of the threefold [turning of] the wheel of the Dharma, [whose] powers of merit and wisdom are immeasurable [even] for the gods, [who] move[s?] in all regions, [like] branches of [positive] activity of four types.

I pray for welfare in all aspects [established] by the Holder of the Lotus [Sanskrit Padmapani, i.e. the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara], the unique medicine to cure the fever of suffering in the domain of living beings, [namely] through a drop of immortality-nectar of [his] blessing, who has reached perfection in [all] aspects, [like?] a jewel of the night [?; i.e. moon?] of compassion.

[mantra: a [?] -ho; untranslatable.]

Treasure of great wisdom which is omniscience with regard to Samsara and Nirvana, established through the force of the merit of ... [?]

and the grace of the root-gods that know no deceit, marvellous is Bkra-shis 'Chi-med-dga'-tshal.

When one sees it, it is pleasing to the mind [and?] ... ... ...

when one stays there, it is pleasant and becomes a blessing to the heart; showing [itself] as a spectacle to the eye in various regions [? aspects?], a great wonder is Bkra-shis 'Chi-med-dga'-tshal.

The mountain behind is high, the mountain in front is gradually sloping, the region's characteristics as excellent as [those of] the residence of a king, praised as a place where the virtues of understanding grow, outstanding is Bkra-shis 'Chi-med-dga'-tshal.

Green meadows, flat like the palm of the hand, in the midst of excellent trees set together [like a] string of turquoise [... ?] the sweet songs of various birds pleasing to the ear, a joy to every soul is Bkra-shis 'Chi-med-dga'-tshal.

The dots mean that at this spot the fresco is damaged and thus the text was illegible.
The top [lit. head] of the mountain is a place for those who have achieved excellent Enlightenment, the watersstreams of [their] accomplishments in meditation growing and overflowing, the house [?] of their prayers stretching out wide like an excellent tree, rich in blessings is Bkra-shis 'Chi-med-dga'-tshal.

In the middle [of the mountain] on the rockface [there are] miraculous imprints of hands, [and] at the foot [of the mountain] imprints of feet, which have made a wonderous place; clear marks of a region of great blessing, particularly noble is Bkra-shis 'Chi-med-dga'-tshal.

In the middle the immeasurable [i.e. incomparable?] house of the god of compassion, which is indistinguishable from the southern mountain Potala [i.e. the residence of Avalokitesvara], if one makes a pilgrimage to it one acquires a wonderous nectar for the eye, truly magnificent is Bkra-shis 'Chi-med-dga'-tshal.

To the right the great [prayer-]wheel of the Dharma of the six-syllable [mantra; i.e. Om mani-padme hum], spinning by itself, without being turned, rich in blessing, [here] one acquires the antidote to every sinful misdeed one is associated with, [a place] worth of veneration is Bkra-shis 'Chi-med-dga'-tshal.

To the left streams gently flowing from the beautiful springs, in summertime clear and cool, in winter mild and warm, with the bell[s?] of the Dharma wheel, the mind ... on Dharma ... [?], a truly pure joy is Bkra-shis 'Chi-med-dga'-tshal.

In front there is a great prayer flag for the wholly pure gods, at the time of raising [the flag] one comes face to face with [or: one sees] the form[s?] of the god[s] on top of the house [i.e. temple]; auspicious signs [emend rten-'byung > rten-'brel] most exalted of all, perfect is Bkra-shis 'Chi-med-dga'-tshal.

If one looks inside, ... ... ... [?] statues of a thousand different gods, and one thousand and [twenty] eight [depictions, statues of] Amithaba are there, a great collection of the beneficient is Bkra-shis 'Chi-med-dga'-tshal.

From the wall-paintings [displaying?] all pleasant appearances of the gods one achieves the direct experience of a drop of wonderous nectar, what sign of blessing can be higher than that? Carrying the mark of e-ma[-bo?] is Bkra-shis 'Chi-med-dga'-tshal.

In general [?] the virtue resulting from the accumulation of 14,000 [i.e. innumerable?] offerings, such as Rnam-dkar-dga'-ba [?], is similar to the ... [?] good resulting from the performance of a single kind [of offering] in this place; an extensive karmic result will be seen and will come to full fruition [as a result of this].
When one merely sees, hears, thinks of, touches, or ... [this place],
the seed of Enlightenment will be sown in the mind;
the more so for those who practice veneration and make offerings [in this place],
[such as] prostrating and circumambulating, [acts] that cleanse mental obscurations, [involving] the paying of respect and [the development of] realization.

Well, for those who have a propensity for the Dharma [on account of] previous steps [i.e. deeds] [this place] is the most important/principal [lit. mother] as it is endowed with wisdom and virtue, but for those who listen and pay attention to the noise of non-Dharma, the unfortunate who hold incorrect views, [this place] holds no attraction.

If we perform to the best of our abilities, acts of service, retreats, practices of virtue [?] etc., for the three Jewels, at the instigation of the gods, in this place, we may acquire a state of good fortune, and we may acquire joy of mind as an ornament of the heart.

Moreover, may, in the domains where the virtues of myself and the others grow, for this new monastic community, constituting a new turning of the wheel of the Buddha's Dharma, endowed with the three 'foundations' the basis of the doctrine, [and] the community of monks, the prayers for the good, pointed in all directions, be fulfilled.

May those whose minds have reached perfection in total clarity by this virtue, attain the good fortune of being born and ... [?] in the Paradise [lit. garden of joy] of the lotus of great bliss in the sphere of the highest Immortal gods of limitness shining light.

Thus [ends this] praise of the [holy] place [of Bkra-shis 'Chi-med-dga'-tshal], [which came about] through the admonition by the wind of the spiritual faith in [this] garden [?] where complete taming of the mind [was attained] by me, Shes-rab Rdo-rje. May [by] the virtue [resulting from this praise] of [i.e.: which is like] a subtle fragrance spreading, happiness increase for all places and their inhabitants.

May the goals all be swiftly realized.

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2 I.e. "the three things that symbolize the Buddha's body, speech and mind: statue, scriptures, stupa" (Goldstein 1975:488).
3 Words in bold type constitute puns on the name of the monastery.