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Next stop, Nirvana. When Tibetan pilgrims turn into leisure seekers

Prochain arrêt, Nirvana. Quand les pèlerins tibétains deviennent demandeurs d'amusements

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Lucia Galli

Introduction

> As for me, I am the one known by the affectionate name of Dzamyag and the dharma name of Ngawang Dargye, the one continuously disturbed by mental afflictions. I was born at the centre of the region called Rabshi, considered to be a part of the Ga [district of Yushu], Kham. Up to the age of forty-nine, I went through success and failure, happiness and sadness, sometimes with and sometimes without the disposition and capacities [to dedicate myself] to the dharma; had I to write all [the things that happened to me] it would be [endless] like ripples of water. As for [these events], some raise compassion, some inspire renunciation, some fall into the [category] of wrongdoings, and others are humorous, but, since there are too many of them, they will not be the focus of my writing. When I was forty-nine, due to a series of circumstances, I wandered through the three provinces of Tibet, alone, without a lord [to protect me], relying on [the support of my] co-regionals; I shall therefore write a little about the circumambulations [I made] and visits [I paid] to extraordinary places and the Three Supports [symbols of the Buddha's body, speech, and mind], so as to keep [them] in my mind.
> (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, pp. 11-12, my translation)[1]

1 The passage above is the only biographical information Khatag Dzamyag (Kha stag 'Dzam yag), the author of the text at the core of present paper, provides about the years preceding the events that led to the compilation of his journal. In this extremely abridged version of the first forty-eight years of his life, the author provides crucial details about himself – elements that deeply contributed to my understanding of his figure, becoming the key to my interpretation of Dzamyag's personality.

2 In his seminal essay, Georges Gusdorf boldly claims that "the genre of autobiography seems limited in time and in space: it has not always existed nor does it exist

everywhere [...] One would say that it expresses a concern peculiar to Western man [...] the concern, which seems so natural to us, to turn back on one's own past, to recollect one's life in order to narrate it [...]" (Gusdorf 1980, pp. 28-29), a statement the veracity of which had already been questioned by Janet Gyatso (1998, pp. 101-102). As is well-known, the Tibetan literary canon presents a wide array of life writing, including the autobiographical type, of which Dzamyag's "journal" (Tib. *nyin deb*) is but one example. Albeit not an autobiography in the strict sense, the text is an autodiegetic narration of past events, retrospectively recollected in a diary format. The author himself identifies the desire to preserve the memory of past events as the main motivation for his writing, in blunt defiance of Gusdorf's assertion.

3 As for any autobiographical narrative with claims to factuality, the distinction in the journal between factual and fictional is somewhat unclear. The retrospective process of narrativisation of facts, together with the reconstruction of the past in the light of the present, allows for fictional elements to partially infringe on the outspoken authorial declaration of factuality, without nonetheless compromising the inherent truth of the facts themselves. Modern literary scholars have recognised the profoundly hybrid status of life writing – suspended as it is between the poles of fact and fiction[2], a feature confirmed by Dzamyag's journal as well. The work is in fact the narration of a journey that is both spiritual and physical – the evolution of its author's inner self matching his outer activities, whether they be ritual pilgrimages or trade ventures. The latter represent the factual element around which the narrative is structured; by reflecting on the journal as a form of social history, distinct from its literary manifestation as autobiographical narrative, it is possible to isolate socio-economic and cultural factors linked to the development of a strong and influential trading class, mainly composed of Eastern Tibetan families, and the political weight the latter came to assume in 20th-century Tibet. Furthermore, the information contained in the work in question offers precious insights into the development of new pilgrimage rituals and routes to the holy sites of India and the emergence of what could be understood as a proto-form of "spiritual tourism".

4 This paper deals extensively with pilgrimage and ritual activities – which clearly represent the core of Dzamyag's narrative – and it does so by merging an economic and a literary approach. In broaching the topic of pilgrimage, it is impossible not to engage in a literary analysis of the journal, for no textual utterance is created in a vacuum, but is inscribed in webs of cultural, social, political, and literary significance; to understand a text means therefore to be aware of the social conceptions and cultural codes pertaining to the context it is produced in. Whereas the socio-economic approach allows a discussion of religion as an independent variable vis-à-vis economy, the understanding of the journal as a narrative text connected to others sheds light on the sense-making and sense-giving processes at work during a pilgrimage to sacred places. The pilgrimages and ritual activities carried out by Dzamyag within the Tibetan Plateau are patently different – in their form and aim – from those performed at the sacred sites of India. Whereas the first are exemplary of the kind of power wielded by religious communities on account of the amount of money generated by pilgrimages as well as of the different intentions and expectations driving the devotees, the latter offer a glimpse of the development of new kinds of pilgrimage rituals, as well as of the emergence of a form of spiritual tourism. Exoticism enters the narrative, turning the journal/ledger into a real travelogue. In the present contribution, by limiting the *locus* of investigation to the "holy land" of India, I will veer the discourse towards the

process of the Tibetan reinvention of India as a "sacred Buddhist terrain of pilgrimage" (Huber 2008, p. 32). Dzamyag's travel notes testify to the existence, as late as the mid-1940s, of a distinctive pilgrimage circuit, developed under the influence of modern forms of Buddhist revival, the circulation and diffusion of which increased noticeably in the first half of the 20th century. The author himself was not immune to the fascination that "the land of the noble ones" (Tib. *'phags pa'i yul*) held in the Tibetan imaginary; on the contrary, exoticism deeply influenced the way he experienced his pilgrimage. Paradoxically, it is in the places most connected to the life of the Buddha that Dzamyag's spirituality feels the least engaged. The inquiring mind that brought him to take a firm stance on the significance and meaning of pilgrimage activities to certain sacred sites of the Tibetan Plateau gives way to a more subdued and passive acceptance of the intrinsic value of the places he visits in South Asia. It is during his stay in northern India that his journal really assumes the features of a travelogue, and from time to time the author himself seems to slip out of character, assuming the *ante litteram* features of a modern tourist.

Pilgrimages in India

5 Dzamyag paid religious visits to India on three different occasions. It is no coincidence that those trips fell within the 1944-1952 period, a time of his life characterised by material needs, that instilled in him an overpowering desire to cleanse his bodily defilements and sins in order to better his social and financial conditions. The major role played by trade in Dzamyag's choice of sacred places to visit made them "accidental" pilgrimages, often collateral to his main occupation, i.e. business dealings. Whereas the subordination, so to speak, of ritual activities to business commitments is hardly surprising, especially considering the general overlapping of trade and pilgrimage networks in premodern Tibet, Dzamyag's constant dismissal of economic ventures and obligations, often described as unavoidable nuisances, sets a pattern of self-representation that is repeated throughout his journal. The narrative nature of the work allows the author to reshape himself, reinterpreting his actions through his own intentions, thus extrapolating them from the pragmatic context they are embedded in. In doing so, Dzamyag is able to portray his presence in Lhasa, or any other religiously significant place for that matter, as the outcome of a pious desire to expiate and cleanse his defilements rather than the fortuitous outcome of a business trip.

6 The same model is at work in his description of two of the three pilgrimages he embarked on between the end of the Wood Bird Year (February 1946) and the beginning of the Iron Tiger Year (February 1950). Despite being defined as "pilgrimages" (Tib. *gnas skor*), only the second of the three Indian journeys qualifies as such; both the first and the third of his Indian travels appear in fact to have been the result of a series of unplanned circumstances mainly motivated by economic reasons. Before delving deeper into Dzamyag's journeys, I will discuss, albeit briefly, the phenomenon of Tibetan pilgrimage to India to provide some basic background.

7 Prostrations, circumambulations, and offerings performed by Tibetan Buddhists are part of what Toni Huber defines as the "ritual ensemble" of the pilgrimage activity, "additional rites amplify[ing] the ascetic dimensions of a pilgrimage in various ways, helping the pilgrim to maximize the experience of sacred sites and sacra that are worshipped individually" (Huber 2008, pp. 310-311). As any other human performance,

pilgrimages are subject to change and innovations; rituals are constantly negotiated, adopted, and discarded, even more so in areas of active cultural and religious interactions, as was the case at the ancient Indian Buddhist holy sites after they had been rediscovered and had become accessible in the late 19th to early 20th centuries.

8 The Tibetan acquisition and appropriation of non-Tibetan Buddhist ritual traditions, e.g. offering of lamps[3] and worship of the Buddha's stone footprints, at Bodh Gayā has already been discussed elsewhere (Huber 2008, pp. 311-312) and need not to be repeated here. Similar examples of ritual adaptation can be found in the journal regarding the performance of a ritual bathing in the sacred pool of the Mahābodhi temple. Even though in the context of Tibetan pilgrimage the language describing the cleansing of the defilements invokes an imagery of water[4], "most Tibetans rarely (if ever) bathe as pilgrims" (Huber 1999, p. 17), since the performance of the practice entails for them a notion of inner, rather than outer, purification.

9 Notwithstanding the inherent Tibetan reluctance to full body immersions, the exposure to the ubiquitous Indian practice of ritual bathing in water – be they rivers, lakes or tanks – gradually influenced the attitude of those pilgrims who, in increasing number, travelled to India between the 1920s and 1950s. Particularly telling in this regard is a passage from Dzamyag's journal concerning the bathing pool at the Mahābodhi complex at the time of the first of his recorded pilgrimages.

> I thought [it would have been] a good thing [to go] inside the pool [that was] south [of the Bodhi Tree] where the arhats used to bathe. I went in to bathe and when I was about to die because I did not know how to swim, some Indian pilgrims were so kind as to pull me out of the water. (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, p. 54, my translation)[5]

10 Dzamyag's dangerous attempt at imitating the ritual behaviour exhibited by the non-Tibetan pilgrims visiting Vajrāsana is representative of the changes Tibetan pilgrimage rituals underwent following the programme of colonial archaeological discovery conducted throughout the Indian subcontinent during the later 19th and early 20th centuries. For the first time since the 13th century, "all the early Indian Buddhist holy sites that had laid neglected, ruined, and in many cases completely buried for many hundreds of years [...] were systematically rediscovered, excavated, mapped, restored, and preserved" (Huber 2008, pp. 252-253), and thus offered to the eyes and devotion of Asian and Western Buddhists alike.

11 In their choice of destinations and means of travel, Dzamyag and his companions conformed to the most common trends among Tibetan pilgrims in the mid-1940s, whose itineraries almost invariably included Bodh Gayā and Sārnāth – two of the four major sites[6] connected to the life of Gautama Buddha – the nearby spots linked to the narrative of Buddha's life, as well as Śītavana (Tib. *dur khrod bsil ba'i tshal*)[7], the meditation cave of Śabara[8], and Vaiśālī.

12 The fame of Vaiśālī was largely due to its inclusion in the scheme of eight sacred sites which rose to the status of new orthodoxy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As Janice Leoshko (2003, p. 68) aptly remarks, the ancient scheme of eight "biographical" sites came "to define sacred Buddhist geography in the 20th century". The first artistic and textual descriptions of the eight scenes of the Buddha's life dated to the last major era of Indian Buddhism, the Pāla period (8th-12th centuries), and the textual sources were translated and preserved in various extant Chinese and Tibetan versions. Whereas each scene was connected to a specific place and stūpa, the cult of these eight sites and their corresponding commemorative monuments "were never treated *in practice* by

earlier Buddhists as a group or network of eight distinctly related places of pilgrimage" (Huber 2008, p. 28), a statement particularly true for Tibetans, whose approach to the representations of "the stūpas at the eight great places" (Skt. *aṣṭamahāsthānacaitya*; Tib. *gnas chen po brgyad kyi mchod rten*) had been commemorative in function up to the late 19th century. In the early 20th century, the convergence of speculations and interpretations by both Western scholars, especially art historians[9], and modern Buddhist revivalists[10] determined the emergence of a pilgrimage cult based around the eight Indian Buddhist sites as they were depicted in Pāla sculptures and texts, a reinterpretation of the eight great places that deeply affected the modern scholarly perception of the significance that the cult of these places had in Tibetan Buddhism. During the first half of the 20th century, the Tibetan understanding and practices related to India were challenged and transformed; the discovery of ancient Buddhist sites and the diffusion of Buddhist modernism based on monumental archaeology and European Orientalist studies drastically modified the Tibetan vision of India as a "holy land" (Huber 2008, p. 252). The authenticity of many of the uniquely Tibetan sacred places[11] identified between the 13th and the late 19th centuries suddenly became questionable, whereas early Buddhist sites[12] having no prior historical mentioning in relation to the Tibetan pilgrimage circuit attained a scientifically approved authority. In the first half of the 20th century changes affected the Tibetan pilgrims' choices of destination and itineraries, as well as their mode of transportation. Buddhist modernists actively promoted the use of new forms of transport in order to encourage and facilitate pan-Buddhist pilgrimage to the revived sites of the Middle Ganges region. The Indian railway system, servicing most of the excavated and restored Buddhist places from the first decades of the 20th century, and the establishment of modern and functional rest houses at the major pilgrimage sites, were some of the most revolutionary initiatives undertaken by the Indian representatives of the Buddhist revival movement (Huber 2008, pp. 303-304). The Maha Bodhi Society[13], in particular, targeted the tourist end of the travel spectrum, launching a publication campaign; journal articles, pamphlets, guides, and even a photographic album were released throughout the 1930s and 1940s. With the opening of the Indo-Tibetan border in the early 20th century and the possibility of travelling in relative safety and comfort, a pilgrimage to India came to represent for a wide range of Tibetans a chance to personally experience modernity. Dzamyag himself – an educated and wealthy member of the "elite commoners" (Travers 2013, p. 144) – was not immune to the fascination of the rapid changes brought by technological progress. The attention of the trader, focused on the performance of rituals and offerings during his travels to the sacred sites of Central Tibet, is apparently led astray by the endless distractions that leisure time offered him in India. Almost imperceptibly, a tourist agenda begins to appear in the narrative, thus adding a new layer of complexity to the multifaceted identity of Dzamyag – trader, pilgrim, and now tourist – while the journal finally assumes, albeit only for a few pages, the features of a real travelogue, as the following paragraphs will show.

First pilgrimage to India, 1946

13 The first of Dzamyag's visits to the sacred sites of Indian Buddhism spanned a few weeks between the 12th month of the Wood Bird Year (February 1946) and the 1st month of the Fire Dog Year (March 1946) (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, pp. 53-55). The trader, at

the time in Kalimpong for business, records, rather offhandedly, a casual encounter with two Khampa pilgrims[14] and his impromptu decision to join them in a pilgrimage to the holy places of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, p. 53). Dzamyag and his companions set off to Calcutta via Siliguri, and from there to Bodh Gayā and Sārnāth; due to its brief duration and its choice of destinations, centred on two of the main sites of Indian Buddhism, namely Bodh Gayā and Sārnāth, the pilgrimage does not diverge from itineraries common among early 20th-century Tibetan pilgrims, and its value for the present discussion is limited to its combination of commerce and religious visits, in accordance with what appears to be Dzamyag's general modus operandi up to the late 1940s and early 1950s.

Second pilgrimage to India, 1949

14 The second of Dzamyag's recorded pilgrimages started on the 30th of the 11th month of the Earth Mouse Year (January 28, 1949)[15] and spanned a twenty-day period, ending on the 20th day of the 1st month of the Earth Ox Year (March 19, 1949). As previously mentioned, the 1949 visit to the holy sites of India and Nepal appears to have been almost exclusively motivated by religious intentions[16] and, as such, provides a valuable first-hand account of the development of new pilgrimage-related rituals at the sites of the Buddha, as well as a reflection on the progressive merging of pilgrimage and tourism, a process initiated in the late 19th century by the colonial phenomenon of monumental archaeology and the "musealisation" of the restored ancient sites, that culminated with the advertising efforts of the Buddhist modernists in the 1930s and 1940s (Huber 2008, pp. 255, 305). In the following pages I will investigate two different aspects characterising the 1949 itinerary, as recorded in Dzamyag's journal: on the one hand, the emergence of what could be defined, for lack of a better term, as a form of spiritual tourism, and, on the other, the preservation of pilgrimage practices at sites in northwest India[17] dating back to the late 19th century and carried out by pilgrims from the high plateau – in particular Khampas.

15 The Tibetan presence in the Middle Ganges region – virtually non-existent prior to the dramatic events following the Younghusband Expedition (1904) – increased noticeably during the 1920s, reaching a critical mass by the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s. Tibetan pilgrims' itineraries began to conform to specific trends, mainly based on destinations of choice, modes of transportation, and seasonal movements[18]; pilgrimages undertaken in India between the 1930s and 1940s by representatives of different sections of Tibetan society, despite being profoundly personal and individual experiences, show remarkable similarities linked to the development and affirmation of specific patterns. Those itineraries[19] almost invariably included visits to Bodh Gayā and Sārnāth, and to large cities of India, such as Vārānasī and Calcutta. The latter, often incorporated within the pilgrimage route for economic and touristic reasons, represented, together with Kalimpong, a perfect point of entry for the hundreds of pilgrims who flocked to India during the cool season. The presence of large Tibetan enclaves eased the pilgrims' encounter with the foreign land, ensuring support and facilitating the creation of groups of fellow countrymen[20].

16 From the 1790s, when they were first enforced, up to the 1910s, the century-long Qing restrictions on travel to India and Nepal virtually stopped the influx of Tibetans to India, a situation that affected the status of Tibetan Buddhism in Calcutta as well.

Pilgrims who travelled to Bengal in the early 20th century appear to have been unaware of the existence of a "unique, hybrid Tibetan Buddhist-Gosain[21] temple" (Huber 2008, p. 215) in the Howrah district of Greater Calcutta. Built in 1776, the complex[22] was the outcome of the 3rd Panchen Lama's (Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes, 1738-1780)[23] desire to revive the 11th to 13th century period of active Tibetan Buddhist connections with India. The Panchen Lama's efforts were representative of a new Tibetan understanding of India as a land of Buddhism, a process that led to the reinterpretation of Hindu holy sites as testimonies of the survival of Indian Buddhism. The hierarch's enthusiasm for the current status of Buddhism in India had been largely fuelled by Tāranātha's writings[24] as well as his own interpretation of the information carried by the Gosains who regularly visited his seat of Tashilhünpo. The Bhoṭ Bagan, entrusted to Pūraṇ Giri (1745-1795)[25] and his lineage descendants, functioned as both a temple and a rest house for pilgrims hailing from the high plateau and the surrounding Himalayan regions for about thirty years during the late 18th and the early 19th centuries. The death of Pūraṇ Giri's immediate disciple, Daljit Giri (d. 1836)[26], and the closure of the Indo-Tibetan borders by the Qing, effectively cut off the presence of Tibetan pilgrims to the Bhoṭ Bagan, thus marking its removal from Tibetan knowledge of India throughout the 19th and 20th centuries (Huber 2008, p. 225).

17 Robert Orsi's (2005, p. 167) provocative remarks regarding the "religious messiness" of sacred spaces appears particularly fitting within a discourse on the Tibetan perception of India as a "holy land". At the time of Dzamyag's visits to Bengal, no memory remained of the Bhoṭ Bagan, replaced, as it were, by new holy sites, originally and unambiguously Hindu. Particularly popular among them was the Kālīghāṭ, the Kālī temple on the Hoogly riverbanks. The trader's journal recounts two visits, in 1946 and 1949, paid to the sacred image of *ka [li ka] ta'i dpal ldan lha mo* (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, p. 53)[27]. The identification of the Tibetan deity Palden Lhamo (dPal ldan lha mo) with the Indian goddess Kālī has been treated in detail elsewhere[28], and I will therefore restrict my observations to the case in question. It is clear from Dzamyag's notes that he and his travel companions equated the image hosted in the Kālīghāṭ to a form of Palden Lhamo, an extremely popular dharma protector; to her the trader offered flowers, incense, butter lamps, and silver maṇḍalas (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, pp. 53, 142). It appears from the journal that the Kālī temple was an active site of Tibetan Buddhist pilgrimage in the mid-20th century, at least for those pilgrims familiar with the local terrain[29].

18 While travelling through the Middle Ganges region, Dzamyag and his companion Rinchen Dorje (Rin chen rdo rje) did conform – rather unsurprisingly – to some of the common trends of 20th-century Tibetan pilgrimage, thus joining the ranks of Buddhist devotees who flocked to Bodh Gayā by the hundreds to engage in traditional ritual activities, such as prostrations, circumambulations, prayers, and offerings of incense and butter lamps. By the late 1940s, the "spiritual magnetism" of the restored locations of the Middle Ganges region had partially eclipsed the importance held in the Tibetan imaginary by traditionally unique sites of Tibetan Buddhism in north-western and eastern areas of India. Albeit still featuring in the 1930s and early 1940s itineraries of Tibetan pilgrims, places such as the "Lotus Lake" (Tib. mTsho Padma) at Rewalsar in the Punjab Hills or Hājo in Assam had lost most of their spiritual magnetism by the end of the 1940s (Huber 2008, p. 307).

19 In the case of the itinerary recorded in the journal and dated to 1949, the partial conformity to general trends in travel and choice of destination appears to have been limited to a few of the most famous locations in the Middle Ganges area. After the invariable visits to the sites that had become the major focus of the Buddhist revivalist movements and the restorations brought about by the Government of India[30], Dzamyag and Rinchen Dorje's journey deviates from mainstream and pan-Buddhist pilgrimage routes. Their itinerary extended beyond West Bengal, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh to incorporate unique Tibetan sacred sites identified during the 19th century in the aftermath of a series of political crises[31], displacements, and migrations that led to the opening of new frontiers in the region of Punjab, a territory eventually to be re-imagined and incorporated into the ever-changing map of the terrain of the Buddha in India (Huber 2008, p. 222).

20 The inclusion of traditional and unique Tibetan sites located in the Punjab conforms to a pilgrimage trend in vogue during the 1930s and early 1940s, especially among Buddhist and Bonpo followers of the non-sectarian (*rimé*, Tib. *ris med*) approach. Scholarship[32] on contemporary accounts of pilgrimages to India's north-western regions has not so far taken into consideration the non-sectarian inclination of their compilers as a possible motivating factor behind their choice of destination. I would therefore like to briefly dwell on two of those accounts, namely Sangye Zangpo's (Sangs rgyas bzang po, b. 1894) and Khyungtrül Jigme Namkhe Dorje's (Khyung sprul 'Jigs med nam mkha'i rdo rje, 1897-1955), as examined by Franz-Karl Ehrhard (2003), and Per Kværne (1998) and Brenda Li (2008) respectively, and compare them to the narrative provided in Dzamyag's journal. It is my understanding, in fact, that the inclusion of sites connected with the legend of Padmasambhava, a figure occupying a "primary place over Buddha Śākyamuni in a whole range of rituals and narratives in Tibetan religion" (Huber 2008, p. 238), may be interpreted in the light of the influence on Eastern Tibetans in general, and Dzamyag and Rinchen Dorje in particular, by religious non-sectarianism. During his pilgrimages to the eastern and central provinces of Tibet, the trader visited establishments belonging to different traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, actively seeking empowerments from masters of various sects. Sangye Zangpo and Khyungtrül Rinpoche were both contemporaries of Dzamyag and shared with him a strong non-sectarian identity. The process of re-invigorating and strengthening traditionally Buddhist non-sectarian thought and practice, initiated in the mid-19th century by spiritual masters gravitating around the Derge court, unfolded up to 1950s and beyond, still influencing modern developments in Tibetan Buddhism (McDougal 2016, p. 26).

21 The peak of the non-sectarian "movement", with its revival of minority lineages and philosophical views, occurred concurrently with a great renaissance of the Nyingma tradition that took place mainly in Kham at the hands of scholars and masters[33], many of whom were later involved in similar universalistic programmes. The 19th century saw a burst of new scholarship and *terma* (Tib. *gter ma*) revelation[34], as well as the compilation, classification, and reproduction of the extant Nyingma literature (Karma Phuntsho 2005, p. 50). The revivification of the Nyingma coincided with the opening of new frontiers for Tibetan reinvention and religious colonisation. In the 19th century, the controversy[35] over the geographic identification of Zahor, a holy place connected with the narrative of Padmasambhava's life, was resolved by the Nyingma in favour of Maṇḍi, a district in the lower hills of present-day Himachal Pradesh. A small lake,

Rewalsar, was identified with the "Lotus Lake" created by Padmasambhava, the mythical spot where the master was born and survived a trial by fire (Snellgrove 1957, p. 173)[36].

22 In view of what has been said so far, it is easy to fully appreciate the attraction wielded by Rewalsar on the aforementioned Sangye Zangpo[37], an early 20th-century Khampa Nyingmapa, whose spiritual career was deeply influenced by the Nyingma master Zhenpen Chökyi Nangwa (gZhan phan chos kyi snang ba, 1871-1927)[38], one of the most significant figures of the non-sectarian revivalism in Eastern Tibet[39]. From 1916 up to 1927, Sangye Zangpo studied under Zhenga and other Nyingma masters, attending teachings held at the establishments of Dzogchen (rDzogs chen)[40], Shechen (Zhe chen)[41], and Zurmang[42].

23 After the death of Zhenga, Sangye Zangpo embarked on a series of pilgrimages which led him from Kham to Central Tibet, and from there, on different occasions, to India. In 1935, he visited the historical sites connected with the life of Gautama Buddha, notably Rājgir, Sārnāth, Kuśinagar, and Lumbinī, thereafter moving on to Maṇḍi and Rewalsar (Ehrhard 2003, p. 103). By the mid-19th century the association of the "Lotus Lake" with Padmasambhava and his consort Mandāravā was completed, and the presence of Tibetan beggar-pilgrims living in the area at that time was recorded in at least one Tibetan account (Havnevik 1999, pp. 141-153).

24 Dzamyag and Rinchen Dorje followed the same route travelled by Sangye Zangpo only fourteen years previously, reaching a town he introduces as "the present-day [district] capital called Maṇḍi, the prior capital of the kingdom of Zahor"[43]. From there, they moved to Rewalsar, and, in describing the lake and its surroundings, the trader adheres to the popular narrative promoted by the Nyingma hagiographies (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, pp. 147-148). In his notes, the trader points out the presence of a small Tibetan temple, the pitiful state of which had been a topic of discussion among the Buddhist community in the previous decade. The relevance of the site as a pilgrimage venue for Tibetan Buddhists had not in fact escaped the attention of Indian Buddhist modernists who, in the early 1930s, signalled the need to restore and revive what in their eyes appeared as a neglected and possibly endangered ancient Buddhist site. Their appeal was taken up by a Sinhalese Buddhist, P. P. Siriwardhana, who actively sponsored the restoration of the shrine (Huber 2008, pp. 307-308); at the time of his visit in 1949, Dzamyag was impressed by the silk banners with printed dhāraṇīs and mantras surrounding the lake (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, p. 148).

25 In addition to Rewalsar, several other sites scattered throughout the north-western region of India were popularly identified by Tibetans with Padmasambhava's lake. One of these was the sacred tank of the Golden Temple in the city of Amritsar, the heartland of Sikhism (Huber 2008, p. 242); interestingly, Amritsar became – albeit for different reasons – a pilgrimage destination for Buddhists and Bonpos alike. Khyungtrül Rinpoche, a representative of the new wave of non-sectarian Bonpos[44], visited the Punjab region a few years prior to Dzamyag[45], while making a series of journeys combining pilgrimage and missionary activities (Kværne 1998, p. 73). The itineraries he followed during his visits to the sacred sites of India and Nepal are remarkably similar to the one travelled almost two decades later by Dzamyag and Rinchen Dorje, which is not surprising since Khyungtrül, just like Sangye Zangpo, was Dzamyag's contemporary and shared with him a strong non-sectarian identity.

26 Khyungtrül Rinpoche was born into a family of the Amdo Gagya (A mdo Ga rgya) aristocratic lineage in Khyungpo[46], Kham; the whole of his spiritual life was inspired by the non-sectarian "movement", and in accordance with its non-sectarian and unbiased approach he made no distinctions between Bonpo and Buddhist teachings (Alay 2011, p. 205)[47]. In promoting their non-sectarian views, in fact, Khyentse and Kongtrül incorporated certain Bon rituals, thus following a trend long established within the Nyingma tradition – especially in Kham. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the figure of Padmasambhava became the common denominator among Bon and non-sectarian Buddhism, especially Nyingma and Kagyü. The religious attraction exerted on the Bonpos by sites such as Rewalsar and Amritsar was mainly due to their perception of Padmasambhava as a "universal teacher", who could even take the form of Bon teachers (Martin 2001, p. 138)[48]. As Kværne (1998, p. 78) remarks, Khyungtrül provides a rather "brief and matter-of-fact description" of the Golden Temple of Amritsar, which he inaccurately refers to as "Guru Nanak's Palace" (*gu ru Na nig gi pho brang*). Quite different in its lyricism and imaginative composition is the account[49] of another Bonpo pilgrim from Khyungpo, a certain Kyangtsün Sherab Namgyel (rKyang btsun Shes rab rnam rgyal); in describing the complex[50], he conflated "the essence of the sect [i.e. Sikhism]" with "the sphere of the supreme Bon", presenting the Golden Temple as "a citadel for the life-force of the eternal [Bon] tantras" (Ramble 1995, p.: 110; 2014, p. 186)[51]. Contrary to his Bonpo contemporary, Dzamyag correctly identifies the Golden Temple as the most sacred shrine of Sikhism[52], albeit adhering to the narrative that sees the place as a reliquary for sacred objects connected to Padmasambhava and his consort Mandāravā.

> We visited some ornaments [kept] in a shrine [and] said to be, according to the tradition, the body ornaments of princess Mandāravā, and, in [another] shrine [we saw] the ritual objects said to be those of Guru Rinpoche. (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, p. 146, my translation)[53]

27 When it comes to the itinerary travelled by Dzamyag and Rinchen Dorje during the second of the recorded pilgrimages in India, it is not its conformity with the trends in vogue at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s that deserves scholarly attention, but rather its divergence from them. The choice of sites connected to the legend of Padmasambhava, and, therefore, to the Nyingma map of the holy land, may be interpreted as a reaffirmation of the non-sectarian identity of the two pilgrims – a universalistic attitude shared by many Khampas, Buddhists and Bonpos alike, from the mid-19th century up to the present day.

Pilgrimage as an experience of tourism

28 The study and conceptualisation of complex phenomena like travel and tourism require a multidisciplinary approach and the combination of different research methods. Before the 1970s, studies of the relationship between religion, pilgrimage, and tourism commonly considered them as separate subjects not apt to be interrelated or compared, despite the fact that the development of tourism cannot be understood without taking into consideration religion and the practice of pilgrimage. As Noga Collins-Kreiner and Jay Gatrell (2006, p. 33) argue, "it is impossible to understand the development of […] tourism without studying religion and understanding the pilgrimage phenomenon".

29 Research on pilgrimage has recently shifted towards post-modernism, thus adopting approaches that challenge existing theories and reject clear-cut divisions typical of a scholarship that perceived pilgrimage as uniquely motivated by religious elements. The post-modernist tends to place the individual experiences at the forefront, emphasising the subjective over the objective (Collins-Kreiner 2010, pp. 441-442); moreover, the attempt made to "classify tourists as pilgrims in the context of heritage and root-seeking tours" (Collins-Kreiner 2010, p. 445) offers a valuable starting point to our discussion on the Tibetan perception of India and its sacred sites at the time of Dzamyag's travels.

30 The revitalisation, or better, the reinvention, of Buddhism in modern India might not have happened were it not for the visual presence of material remains of ancient Buddhist sites, still extant and visible despite Buddhism's decline and peripheralisation during the early medieval period (7th-13th centuries) and the vandalism inflicted by time and colonial archaeologists. These remains provided the anchors for the Buddhist revival, on which the propagandistic activities of modern pan-Buddhist movements, such as the Maha Bodhi Society, were hinged. Starting from the late 19th century, the ancient sites of Buddhism in India were restored and opened to the devotion of pilgrims hailing from all over Asia. Anthropological studies have long established the presence of a strong extra-religious dimension to the pilgrimage phenomenon: the intertwining of trade, pilgrimage, and politics has been subject of many studies, of which the present paper is but an example. The acknowledgment in the scholarship of the blurred and poorly classified ties between pilgrimage and tourism led to a post-modern approach rejecting the "rigid dichotomies between pilgrimage and tourism or pilgrims and tourist" (Badone & Roseman 2004, p. 2). Far from being conceptual opposites, pilgrimage and tourism often blend in what is generally referred to as "spiritual tourism"; the multiple and changing motivations of travellers make their interests and activities oscillate – either consciously or subconsciously – from tourism to pilgrimage and vice versa (Collins-Kreiner 2010, p. 443).

31 The religious agenda, strongly pushed forward throughout Dzamyag's narrative, is only one of the reasons motivating his "pilgrimages" – the destinations of choice being often dictated by economics, logistics, and sheer convenience. The peculiarity of the 1949 journey to India lies in its being a "real" pilgrimage, devoid of any business of relevance and, as such, free from the time and movement restrictions imposed by trade schedules. The freedom enjoyed by Dzamyag and Rinchen Dorje provides them with leisure time, a key feature of tourism; the journey is as important as the destination, the trains, boats, and motorcars – wonders of modernity – not simply means to reach the sacred sites, but something to be thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated. Concurrently though, streets and railways too, to use Zygmunt Bauman's words, "may prove to be obstacles rather than help, traps rather than thorough-fares. They may misguide, divert from the straight path, lead astray" (Bauman 1996, p. 20).

> [From Lumbinī] we headed back to Nautanwā, reaching the village at midnight. From there, we moved back to Gorakhpur [and] we [ended up] doing three trips instead of one. Due to the inexperience of our interpreter, not only had we to [suffer] some physical hardships and pay double train fare, but we passed through a station called Balrāmpur, going a bit too far north. Since in the village of Śrāvastī there were blessed ruins, such as that of the place where the Buddha gave food to the helpless [in] the Jetavana grove, I told the interpreter that in no way would I not visit [the town]. [But] the latter confused the two names, Balrāmpur and Gorakhpur, and we ended up going up and then down, missing Śrāvastī; we

> [i.e. Dzamyag and Rinchen Dorje] considered the fact of not being able to visit this holy place [i.e. Śrāvastī] as a sign of former bad karma and we prayed, feeling regretful. (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, p. 150, my translation)[54]

32 Albeit rather exceptional within the context of the journal – Dzamyag's journey is in fact remarkably free of serious complications – the incident reported above confirms the importance played by the Indian railway service in the modern pilgrimage industry created and fostered by the Maha Bodhi Society. Tibetan pilgrims rapidly adapted to the rail system, taking advantage of the comfort and the convenience rail travel added to the pilgrimage experience. Virtually no Tibetan visiting India for the first time had ever seen a train, and railways had a high curiosity value among the pilgrims from the high plateau (Huber 2008, pp. 307-308)[55].

33 Already in the mid-1920s, Khyungtrül Rinpoche made ample use of the rail service during the first of his travels in the subcontinent; his accounts contain detailed annotations of the fares paid as well as the exact times of departures and arrivals. The advantages of the modern railway system did not escape the practical mind of the Bonpo pilgrim, even though he thought nothing of Western technology and scientific progress. To borrow Kværne's words (1998, p. 71), "Khyung-sprul was not, it seems [...] eager to assimilate the knowledge and ways of thought of the outside world. Spiritually and intellectually he remained inside the traditional Tibetan world". Contrary to Khyungtrül's attitude, Dzamyag was utterly fascinated by modernity; the sections on his travels in India are filled with descriptions of trains, stations, boats, and motorcars. His amazement at the speed and technology was shared by another self-proclaimed pilgrim from Tibet, Gendün Chöpel (dGe 'dun chos 'phel), one of most controversial figures of modern Tibet. Many pages have been written on his iconoclastic stance and ironic humour, and I will therefore refrain from providing unnecessary biographical minutiae[56]. The aspect of main interest to the present discussion lies in Gendün Chöpel's activities as promoter of India as a "holy land" among the Tibetan readership. As is well known, the Amdo scholar authored the first systematic guide-book to sacred sites of India in the Tibetan language; even though other travel accounts had been composed by early 20th-century Tibetan pilgrims, Gendün Chöpel's "Guide-book for Travel to the Holy Places of India" (*rGya gar gyi gnas chen khag la 'grod pa'i lam yig*) – henceforth referred to as "Guide to India" – was unique in its synthetic and critical approach to Indian Buddhist sites and their historical location, its functional lists of modern means of transportation, and its inclusion of some of the first examples of modern Tibetan cartography drawn by the author himself (Huber 2000, p. 19). Gendün Chöpel started working on the composition of the Guide to India during his first pilgrimage in 1934-1935; the draft was reviewed following further travels in 1937, and finally published in 1939. The author extended the latter in 1945-1946, a version that was first printed in 1950, and which became the base for the later reprints and edited versions (Huber 2000, p. 13).

34 At the time of the first draft – in the mid-1930s – Gendün Chöpel was personally involved with the activities of the Maha Bodhi Society. The figure of Anagārika Dharmapāla deeply influenced the perception of the Amdowa scholar, who, in his writings, presents capsule biographies of the pan-Buddhist leader, introducing him to his Tibetan readership as a "great soul" (Skt. *mahātman*), who was striving for the sake of all Buddhists. As rightly pointed out by Huber (2000, p. 17), "the possibility should be seriously considered that the Maha Bodhi Society itself, or one of its active members,

actually requested Gedun Chöphel to compose the Guide to India for its missionary publications program”.

35 In spite of its author’s claim of providing an entirely accurate and new description of the sacred geography of the holy land, “Guide to India” is not devoid of shortcomings. Gendün Chöpel’s extreme confidence in presenting the material hides inconsistencies and anomalies due to the scholar’s idiosyncratic interpretations of Buddhist historical geography, fantastic stories, and outright mistakes[57]. These shortcomings notwithstanding, “Guide to India” has continued to be circulated and used by Tibetan pilgrims up to the present day; even if chronological reasons exclude the possibility that Dzamyag’s journeys were based on Gendün Chöpel’s “Guide to India”, it is undeniable that the cultural milieu that facilitated the creation of such a guide-book was the same that allowed pilgrims from the plateau to have access to railway maps and guesthouse locations. The sacred sites of early Indian Buddhism turned, by the end of the 1930s, into touristic places of attractions, thanks to the publicity efforts of the Maha Bodhi Society and other Buddhist modernists. Kalimpong, the conduit for much of the political, economic, and religious traffic of the first half of the 20th century, became an important operative base. Dorje Tharchin (rDo rje mthar phyin, 1890-1976), publisher of *The Tibet Mirror*, was known to give assistance to Tibetan pilgrims en route to the Middle Ganges regions, printing leaflets and maps and allowing them to stay at his warehouse (Huber 2000, pp. 18-19). Dzamyag never mentions in his notes either Dorje Tharchin or Gendün Chöpel, but he was certainly not alone in his ventures. On the contrary, he could rely on local people, almost certainly prior acquaintances, who provided him and his partners with help and support.

36 Whereas Khyungtrül Rinpoche, Gendün Chöpel, Sangye Zanpo, and Kyangtsün Sherab Namgyel travelled through India on very limited means, Dzamyag and his dharma companion did not spare money. As a matter of fact, the trader is very precise in providing the total amount of his expenditures for two of his pilgrimages[58]; he was not, despite his assertions to the contrary, an “average” pilgrim. His financial means, although more modest than those he would claim after 1952, were such as to allow him to hire interpreters, take trains and motorcars, and, more generally, to reduce the discomforts of the journey to a minimum.

37 It has been said that leisure is one of the features of tourism, and certainly attending shows and local attractions qualifies as a hedonic experience; interestingly, the strict attitude showed by the trader during his “pilgrimages” in Central Tibet softens during his stay in the subcontinent. Dzamyag “the pilgrim” turns into Dzamyag “the tourist”, whose enjoyment of the present and its distractions is not tainted by guilt.

> We stayed for the night in the outskirts of a village [on the river banks] of the Lohit River; there we got distracted for a while by illusionists, bear dances, and other entertainments. (Kha stag ’Dzam yag 1997, pp. 188-189, my translation)[59]

38 The event described above occurred during the third, and last, of Dzamyag’s recorded pilgrimages to India, a journey that led the trader to Hājo in Assam, one of the sites that were traditionally unique to Tibetan Buddhism in north-eastern areas of India, as we shall see in the following section.

Third pilgrimage to India, 1949-1950

39 The third of the recorded pilgrimages ideally marks the end of a cycle; very much like the first journey, it appeared to have been the outcome of an impromptu decision. No rituals nor preparations were made in advance; at the time of setting off, on the 9th day of the 11th month of the Earth Ox Year (December 28, 1949), the trader was already in Kalimpong, where he had been for some time, buying goods to be sent to Tibet via Gyantse. Seemingly he joined a pair of his Khampa friends – his usual travel companion Rinchen Dorje and a certain Lo Trinle (Blo [bzang] ʼphrin las)[60] – in what appears to have been a business trip. The three men hired an interpreter and headed eastwards via Siliguri; from there, they took a train to the banks of the Lohit river, and after a two-day boat trip they finally reached a place that Dzamyag identifies in his journal as Kuśinagar (Tib. rTswa mchog grong), in alignment with uniquely Tibetan traditions concerning the rediscovery of the site of the Buddha's death and "liberation from karmic rebirth" (Skt. *parinirvāṇa*) at Hājo, Assam (Kha stag ʼDzam yag 1997, p. 188).

40 The Kuśinagar that became one of the most popular Indian destinations for Tibetan Buddhist pilgrims from the 16th century up to the first decades of the 20th century was located more than 500 km from the actual site of ancient Kuśinagar in the Middle Ganges region. No historical records account for a Tibetan frequentation of the site during the period of direct contact with India up to the 13th century; already at the time of Xuanzang's (玄奘, 602-664) visit, in the 7th century, the complex was allegedly desolated and in ruins (Huber 2008, p. 128).

41 The original location of Kuśinagar in Māthākuwar was identified with some degree of certainty in 1875-1876 by colonial archaeologists and reconfirmed by the discovery of further inscriptions in the first decade of the 20th century. Whereas the actual site of ancient Kuśinagar never attracted Tibetan pilgrims, the Tibetan Kuśinagar "rediscovered" in Assam through visionary revelations in the late 16th and early 17th centuries began a process of shifting terrain that culminated with the creation of "the Tibetan replica of the holy land in Assam" (Huber 2008, p. 127). The identification of ancient sites of Indian Buddhism in western Assam – a region the Tibetan Vajrayāna narratives present as the location of powerful Tantric cult sites – imbued the area with a Buddhist invented history and culture. During the late 16th to early 17th centuries, the Tibetan readership was particular exposed to the writings of the historian Tāranātha (1575-1634), who, in identifying Assam with Kāmarūpa[61], presented the region as both an ancient Buddhist site and a centre for the activities of Vajrayāna siddhas. The superimposition of the entire sacred geography of the original Buddhist Magadha on Assam created a convenient replica of the holy land, in which the most important sites had been transposed and compressed to fit in the local topography, a facsimile that a visiting pilgrim could tour in a day or two (Huber 2008, pp. 131-137).

42 By the late 17th and early 18th centuries Hājo had evolved into a fully Tibetanised place, the area ritually marked and reinterpreted, local cultural and physical features thoroughly re-inscribed and appropriated by the Tibetans (Huber 2008, p. 142). Pilgrims from the plateau, especially Khampas, visited the sites, some of them at the same time engaging in trade or labour in the local Assamese markets. The fame of Hājo/Kuśinagar among the Khampas resisted the discovery of the actual ancient site in the Middle Ganges region (Huber 2008, p. 139); Assam remained a popular destination among Eastern Tibetans up to the 20th century, as Dzamyag's account proves. By that

time, Tibetan pilgrims had already been warned that the identification of Hājo as the site of Buddha's death and liberation from karmic rebirth had been an unfortunate mistake, and guidebooks were written in the mid-20th century[62] to address the issue. Dzamyag was certainly aware of the correct location of ancient Kuśinagar, since he visited the site during the second of his recorded pilgrimages, and rightly identifies it as the place of Buddha's liberation from karmic rebirth (Kha stag ʼDzam yag 1997, p. 149). Nevertheless, the spiritual magnetism wielded by Hājo on Khampa pilgrims continued unaffected during the modern period of Buddhist revival in India, and as late as the mid-1940s pilgrims from Eastern Tibet used to complete their pilgrimage of the holy land by heading directly to Assam (Huber 2008, p. 154).

43 From Hājo, Dzamyag and his companions moved to Guwahati (Tib. Gho ha ti), where they visited the Śaivaite complex of the Umānanda temple; according to the trader's notes, the small shrine, located on the homonymous island, was built on the ruins of one of Ānanda's meditation centres. The author continues to report what appears to be a fictional reconstruction of a Buddhist history of the place by conflating Tibetan and local elements. The island is described as the residence of the Bodhisattva Ape (Tib. *spreʼu byang chub sems dpaʼ*), a mythical monkey, which was the object of the pilgrims' visit. To the best of my knowledge, there is no additional evidence supporting the identification of the Umānanda temple as either a place sacred to both Buddhists and non-Buddhists or the abode of a Bodhisattva Ape; the translation of the passage concerning the island and the legend of the Bodhisattva Ape must therefore suffice as testimony to the existence of such a narrative.

> In the morning, after buying from the market pure offering candles and fruits to offer to the Bodhisattva Ape, we took again a small boat and paid the fares. We went to the river island, at the centre of which, [among] various kinds of rocks, hills, grass, and trees there was a place where the close disciple [of the Buddha] Ānanda used to stay. Nowadays, on the ruins of the destroyed shrine, another temple has been built, [sacred to] all kinds of [religious] traditions, Buddhist and non-Buddhist alike. Since in the past it used to be Ānanda's meditation centre, we did prostrations, circumambulations, and offered prayers, incense, and butter lamps. Once upon a time, at the base of a *bodhi* tree, there were two monkeys – a white one and a black one – which were one thousand years old, but the old white one had died. The one thousand-year-old black monkey with white eye-lashes had climbed to the top of the tree and we offered [it] a fruit, but, since it did not climb down, after handing over the fruit and the other offerings to the caretaker, we prayed, before going back to Guwahati on board a small boat. (Kha stag ʼDzam yag 1997, p. 188, my translation)[63]

44 The third of the recorded pilgrimages, concluded on the 2nd month of the Iron Tiger Year (March-April 1950), was characterised by a peculiar choice of destinations. As described above, Dzamyag and his companions limited their travelling to the north-eastern regions of India, visiting obsolete Tibetan sacred places[64] and clearly distancing themselves from the pan-Buddhist "mainstream" pilgrimage itineraries.

Closing the circle

45 Dzamyag returned to Central Tibet in the Iron Tiger Year (1950). He would set foot in India nine years later, no longer as a pilgrim but as an asylum seeker, fleeing the PLA troops. He died in Buxal, West Bengal in 1961; his story is marked by a double estrangement, from his "ancestral land" (Tib. *pha yul*) first and his country later. The

last of his Indian pilgrimages occurred a few years before his appointment as "chief-merchant" (Tib. *gtsong dpon*) for the Sakya establishment of Ngor Ewam Chöden (Ngor E wam chos ldan), an event that radically changed his approach to life.

46 Between 1944 and 1951, Dzamyag's spiritual quest had a distinctive "mundane" aspect. The nature of his pilgrimage was mainly coincidental to trade ventures, his focus being on the performance of rituals with the intent of cleansing his karma, thus improving his social and financial situation. On the contrary, during the 1952-1959 period, Dzamyag's religious life assumed a "soteriological" character. Less and less involved in business transactions, the trader, who by 1947 had taken residence in Shigatse, mostly exerted himself in ritual activities at the monastic establishments of Tashilhünpo and Ngor Ewam Chöden.

47 Transitional between these two different phases of Dzamyag's life, the journeys to India have a liminal character, marking a shift of locus and perspective. Like any autobiographical narrative, the journal too presents different personas – the figure of its author changing according to the mask he decides to don, simultaneously poor beggar, pious hermit, clever trader, wealthy sponsor, and curious tourist.

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NOTES

1. 2 *nyon mongs pas rgyun du myos pa'i gces ming 'dzam yag dang chos ming ngag dbang dar rgyas sogs thogs pa'i rang nyid ni | mdo khams sga yi phyogs su brtsi ba'i rab shis zhes pa'i yul de'i dbus su skye ba blangs nas | lo ngo zhe dgu bar 'byor rgud song ba dang | bde sdug blo kha chos la phyogs ma phyogs chu yi gnyer ma lta bu yod cing bri na | la la ni snying rje skye | la la ni nges 'byung skye | la la ni mtshang la phog | la la ni dgod bro ba sogs mang po yod pas bri bya min | de nas rang lo zhe dgu'i lo la stes dbang stabs kyis | bod chol kha gsum gyi sa'i char | mgo [*mgon] bdag med pa gcig pu yul grogs la bsten nas 'khyams pas | gnas khyad par can dang rten gsum rnams bskor zhing | zhal mjal ba yid la 'jags pa'i ched du dbu tsam 'bri bar bya.*
2. The sheer amount of scholarship on the topic prevents a complete list. To track the evolution of the discourse on the centrality of the fact/fiction dichotomy in life writing within Western academia, see, among others, Nadel 1986; Abbot 1988; Kadar 1992; Cohn 1999; Boldrini 2012; Brockmeier 2013; Boldrini & Novak 2017.
3. The offering of lamps, a feature of Buddhist ritual life in Tibet, appears not to have been an activity performed by the early Tibetan pilgrims to Bodh Gayā, since no mention of it is found in the accounts from the 12th to the 19th centuries (Huber 2008, p. 311).
4. The sins are often said to have been "washed off" (Tib. *'khrus*).
5. *lhor dgra bcom rnams sku 'khrus gsol sa'i rdzing bu nang du nga rang dag snang byas te khrus la zhugs pas | chu rkyal ma shes rkyen 'chi la nyer skabs | rgya gar pa rnams kyis chu nas bton par bka' drin che byung.*

6. In the post-Gupta era of Indian Buddhism (500-750 CE) a network of eight sites based upon a narrative of the Buddha's life story appeared to have gained wider circulation. According to the scheme, to the main four biographical events that were assumed to have taken place at Lumbinī (Buddha's birth), Bodh Gayā (Buddha's awakening), Ṛṣipatana/Sārnāth (Buddha's first teaching), and Kuśinagara (Buddha's liberation from karmic rebirth), four secondary events were added, which were believed to have occurred at Śrāvastī, Rājagṛha, Vaiśālī, and Sāṃkāśya (Huber 2008, p. 22).

7. The "Cool Grove" was one of the Indian Tantric "charnel grounds" (Skt. *śmaśāna*) mostly visited by early Tibetan pilgrims. Despite being considered by Tibetans as a celebrated place of Buddhist Tantric practice since the 11th century, Śītavana was neither one of the "eight charnel grounds" (Skt. *aṣṭa śmaśāna*) listed in the corpus of the Buddhist Yoginītantras and their commentaries nor a holy place in the sacred geography of India (Skt. *pīṭha*) (Huber 2008, p. 97); apparently, the site enjoyed a separate cult (Tucci 1949, vol. 2, p. 542).

8. One of the eighty-four mahāsiddhas, a student of Nāgārjuna and teacher of Maitrīpa, considered by the Tibetans a forefather of the Kagyü lineage.

9. Particularly influential in validating the historical accuracy of a pilgrimage circuit based on the eight sites of Buddha's life were John Marshall (1876-1958), the first scholar to specifically link the set of eight sites depicted on a series of sculptured Pāla stone stelae with eight geographical sites, and Alfred Foucher (1865-1952), who explicitly connected the practice and economy of ancient Buddhist pilgrimage to the eight sites that he and Marshall had identified and grouped (Huber 2008, pp. 29-30). For first-hand accounts, see Marshall 1907 and Foucher 1917.

10. Buddhist Modernism or Modern Buddhism gathers, to quote David McMahan (2008, p. 6), "forms of Buddhism that have emerged out of an engagement with the dominant cultural and intellectual forces of modernity". In being a revival movement, it reinterprets Buddhism as a "rational way of thought" by emphasising reason, meditation, and the rediscovery of canonical texts (Bechert, 1966 in McMahan 2008, p. 7).

11. The demise of Buddhism in India in the 13th century and the consequent disruption of Tibetan pilgrimages in the Middle Ganges region up to the mid-18th century promoted a conceptual shifting of the "holy land" to the northwest and the northeast of the Indian subcontinent, areas easily accessible from the plateau. This recreation of "replicas" of the "holy land" was at the basis of the Tibetan "rediscovery" of Kuśinagar – the site linked to the Buddha's attainment of the liberation from karmic rebirth – at Hājo in Assam, more than 500 km to the east of the original site, located at Māthākuwar in Uttar Pradesh. By bringing back to light long lost ancient sites, among which was the original Kuśinagar, the programme of monumental archaeology financed by the British Rāj in the late 19th century caused the loss of interest in those areas of north-western and north-eastern India where Tibetans had established their unique Buddhist sites (see Huber 2008, pp. 125-165).

12. These sites, rediscovered and restored by the colonial scholars of Buddhism between the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, were mainly unknown to Tibetans, being rarely mentioned in Tibetan Buddhist sources. They included Sāñcī, Kauśāmbī, Takṣaśilā, Ajaṇṭā, Ellorā, and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa (Huber 2008, p. 328).

13. An institution founded in 1891 by the Sinhalese Don David Hēvāvitarana (1864-1933), better known as Anagārika Dharmapāla. The Maha Bodhi Society contributed greatly towards generating interest in Buddhism within and outside the Indian subcontinent. Similar modernist movements were created in Bengal in 1891 by Kripasharan (the Bauddha Dharmankur Sabha) and in South India in 1980 by Paṇḍit Iyothee Thass (the Sakya Buddhist Society, also known as the South Indian Buddhist Association) (Singh 2010, p. 195).

14. Hailing respectively from Chamdo and Trehor (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, p. 53).

15. The actual preparations – logistical as well as ritual – began a few weeks before. In a note dated the 13th of the 11th month of the Earth Mouse Year (January 11, 1949), Dzamyag and Rinchen Dorje visited the majority of the religious objects housed at Tashilhünpo, offering up to 12 sang (Tib. *srang*) and 5 sho (Tib. *zho*) to ensure the removal of any obstacles that might impede their quest (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, p. 142).

16. The only reference to business activities regards a brief visit to the market and textile factories of Vārānasī (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, p. 145; Ramble 2014, pp. 187-188).

17. I am here referring to those areas in Punjab, e.g. Rewalsar, Maṇḍī, Amritsar, where projects of re-imagination and religious colonisation determined the instalment of "unique Tibetan Buddhist sites" (Huber 2008, p. 307).

18. The Buddhist pilgrimage season for most of non-Indian visitors, including Tibetans, fell during the cool season (November to February) (Huber 2008, p. 295).

19. The following is a chronological list of itineraries comparing the destinations of choice of Tibetan pilgrims, Buddhists and Bonpos, in the first half of the 20th century; the sites visited are presented after the pilgrim's name (when known) and the date in which the journey took place. Khyungtrül Jigme Namkhe Dorje (Khyung sprul 'Jigs med nam mkha'i rdo rje), 1930: Rampur, Rewalsar, Śimlā, Kālkā, Ambhālā, Sahāranpur, Haridvār, Murādābād, Lucknow, Vārānasī, Bodh Gayā, Gayā, Vārānasī, Allāhābād, Kaunpur, Āgrā, Delhi, Amritsar, Maṇḍī, and Rewalsar (Kværne 1998, pp. 77-78); Sangye Zangpo (Sangs rgyas bzang po), 1933: Bodh Gayā and Nepal, and 1934: Rājgir, Sārnāth, Kuśinagar, Rewalsar, Nepal (Ehrhard 2003, pp. 102-103); Kyangtsün Sherab Namgyel (rKyang btsun Shes rab rnam rgyal), 1940s: Gorakhpur, Sārnāth, Vārānasī, Lucknow, Haridvār, Dehrādūn, Amritsar, Kāngra, Maṇḍī, Delhi, Bodh Gayā, Raxaul, and Nepal (Ramble 1995, pp. 109-112); Gönpo Tashi Andrugtsang (mGon po bKra shis A 'brug tshang), 1942: Amritsar, Vārānasī, Bodh Gayā, Nālandā (Andrutshang 1973, p. 10); Pema Gyatso (Padma rgya mtsho),1945: Vārānasī, Bodh Gayā, Guwahati, Kalimpong (Siiger 1951, p. 9). The above sources are by no means exhaustive, although I consider them to be representative of the trends of the time. On the reasons behind Tibetan pilgrimages to non-Buddhist Indian sites, e.g. Lucknow, Haridvār, etc. (see Huber 2008, pp. 205-207).

20. It was the casual encounter with two fellow Khampas that prompted the first of Dzamyag's recorded pilgrimages; similarly, on the 30th of the 11th month of the Earth Mouse Year (January 28, 1949), Dzamyag and Rinchen Dorje travelled from Kalimpong to Calcutta with a group of Khampa pilgrims from the region of Gyalthang (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, p. 142).

21. Gosain is a generic term indicating a large and complex Indian mendicant movement developed during the 18th century. Its representatives, often called in Tibetan sources *atsara* (a phonetic rendering of the Sanskrit *ācārya*, meaning "religious preceptor/scholar"), were mostly mendicant pilgrim-traders who travelled extensively in Central Tibet during the period. The court of the 3rd Panchen Lama in particular attracted flocks of Gosains, due to his role as sponsor and patron (Huber 2008, pp. 196-197). For more information on the presence of Gosain in Tibet, and especially at Tashilhünpo, see Markham 1879, pp. 124-125, and Clarke 1998, p. 64.

22. The whole Tibetan complex, comprising the temple, a garden, and several residences, became known the Bhoṭ Bagan ("Tibetan Garden"), while the actual temple building was referred to as either the Bhoṭ Mandir ("Tibetan temple") or the Bhoṭ Maṭh ("Tibetan monastery") (Huber 2008, p. 222).

23. I am following here the Ganden Phodrang system of counting the Panchen Lamas. The Tashilhünpo system designs Lobsang Palden Yeshe (Blo bzang dpal ldan ye shes) as the sixth incumbent in the Panchen lineage.

24. The Jonangpa scholar Tāranātha Künga Nyingpo (Tāranātha Kun dga' snying po, 1575-1634) was instrumental in shaping Tibetan knowledge of the sacred geography of India from the late 16th up to the end of the 19th centuries. His traditional historical and historiographical accounts of Indian Buddhism and Tantric Siddha traditions in the subcontinent had been deeply

influenced by his interaction with the master Buddhaguptanātha, a widely travelled Indian representative of the Nāth Siddha tradition. Tāranātha's authority with regard to matters concerning Buddhist development in India went unquestioned among the Tibetan readership, and many non-Buddhist sites listed in his works were uncritically accepted and incorporated in later works on India (Huber 2008, pp. 205-206). For an English translation of Tāranātha's "History of Buddhism in India" (*rGya gar chos 'byung*), see Lama Chimpa & Chattopadhyaya 1970.

25. Pūraṇ Giri was the most trusted and talented of the Panchen's Gosain agents. His diplomatic and organisational skills proved to be essential in mediating the complex intercultural dialogue between the different world of 1770s Bengal and Tashilhünpo (Huber 2008, p. 220). Words of appreciation for his efforts were expressed by the 3rd Panchen Lama himself in a "passport" (Tib. *lam yig*) dated 1774, in which the Gosain was granted a life-allowance (Das 1915, app. 3, pp. 4, 43).

26. It appears that from the mid-19th century onwards the ritual life of the site gradually moved towards a combination of general Hinduism and the particular form of Śaivism performed by Pūraṇ Giri and his followers, who belonged the Giri or Mountain sect of the Daśanāmi order (Huber 2008. p. 223), established by Śaṅkara in the 9th century (Sullivan 1997, p. 65).

27. Often simply referred to as *ka [li ka] ta'i lha mo* (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, p. 142).

28. On the figure of Kālī in Tibetan Buddhism, see Loseries-Leick (1996); for a detailed study of Palden Lhamo, see Nebesky-Wojkowitz (1956, pp. 22-37).

29. It is clear from the narrative that Dzamyag was no stranger to Calcutta. The commercial networks set up by Tibetan trading firms included branches in Kalimpong and Calcutta (Spengen 2000, pp. 140-141). If Dzamyag was, as it seems, an agent of the Sadutsang (Sa 'du tshang), his familiarity with the city could be easily ascribable to previous business trips he undertook for the firm.

30. Bodh Gayā (and sites connected to the legend of the Buddha located nearby), Vaiśālī, Gṛdhrakūṭaparvata (Tib. Bya rgod phung po ri), Vārāṇasī, and Sārnāth (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, pp. 142-145). On the reinvention of Buddhism and Buddhist sites in modern India, see Singh (2010).

31. In the aftermath of the 1792 Gorkha-Tibetan war, the Qing introduced a series of administrative reforms aimed at controlling Tibetan relations with neighbouring countries through the closure of borders. From 1793 to 1904, potential new waves of Tibetan pilgrims to India, Nepal, Kashmir, and Ladakh were completely thwarted. On the Gorkha war period, see Richardson (1974, pp. 27-28).

32. See Ramble 1995, 2014; Kværne 1998; Ehrhard 2003; Li 2008.

33. The leading scholars of the Nyingma renaissance were Peltrül Orgyen Jikmé Chökyi Wangpo (dPal sprul O rgyan 'Jigs med chos kyi dbang po, 1808-1887), Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Taye ('Jam mgon Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas, 1813-1899), Getse Gyurme Tsewang Chokdrup (dGe rtse 'Gyur med tshe dbang mchog grub, 1761-1829), Gyelse Zhenpen Taye (rGyal sras gZhan phan mtha' yas, 1800-1855), Khenchen Pema Dorje (mKhan chen Padma rdo rje, 19th century), Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo ('Jam dbyangs mKhyen brtse dbang po, 1820-1892), Jamgön Mipham Gyatso ('Jam mgon Mi pham rgya mtsho, 1846-1912), and the "treasure-revealer" (Tib. *gter ston*) Chokgyur Lingpa (mChog gyur gling pa, 1829-1870) (Karma Phuntsho 2005, p. 50).

34. The term *terma* (Tib. *gter ma*), or "hidden treasure", refers to esoteric Buddhist and Bon scriptures and relics allegedly hidden by various adepts, most prominently Padmasambhava, for future discovery and diffusion. Interestingly, a biography of Padmasambhava as a Bonpo sage by Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, together with several other Bon, or semi-Bon, ritual texts were included in "Treasury of Precious Termas" (Rin chen gter mdzod chen mo), the gargantuan collection of "hidden treasure (teachings)" gathered and, in the case of certain ritual and explanatory texts, authored by Kongtrül Lodrö Taye, himself a Bonpo prior to his conversion to Buddhism (Martin 2001, pp. 136-137).

35. Whereas various Tibetan historians belonging to the Kagyü, Sakya, and Geluk, i.e. the "new" (Tib. *gsar ma*) traditions, agreed in locating Zahor somewhere in Bengal, starting from the 14th century, the popular hagiographies of Padmasambhava compiled by the Nyingma placed Zahor in the northwest of India, closer to Uḍḍiyāna, the alleged birthplace of Padmasambhava. The relocation of Zahor occurred smoothly in the texts but failed to find recognition on the ground. Tibetans who travelled westwards, such as Götsangpa Gönpo Dorje (rGod tshang pa mGon po rdo rje, 1189-1258), Orgyenpa Rinchenpel (U rgyan pa Rin chen dpal, 1229?- 1309), Taktsang Repa Ngawang Gyatso (sTag tshan ras pa Ngag dbang rgya mtsho, 1574-1651), identified no region named Zahor (Huber 2008, pp. 239-240). See also Tucci (1949) and Li (2011).

36. According to the Tibetan hagiographies, Zahor was the site where Padmasambhava was set on fire by the local king as a punishment for having seduced his daughter, the nun-princess Mandāravā; the master came out unscathed from the pyre, transforming the burning ground into a lake and arising from a lotus at its centre.

37. The writings of Sangye Zangpo are part of the Tucci Tibetan Fund and I could not personally obtain access to them. I am here therefore relying on Ehrhard's study (2003).

38. Better known by the nickname Zhenga (gZhan dga').

39. In addition to his studies on the Nyingma teachings, he received the full commentaries, empowerments, and esoteric instructions of the Sakya teaching system of "The Path and the Fruit" (Tib. *lam 'bras*) by Jamgön Loter Wangpo ('Jam mgon blo gter dbang po, 1847-1914).

40. One of the six primary, or "mother", monasteries of the Nyingma tradition. Founded in 1685 by Drubwang Pema Rigdzin (Grub dbang Padma rig 'dzin, 1625-1697) under the patronage of Chögyel Sangye Tenpa (Chos rgyal Sangs rgyas stan pa 1638?-1710), Dzogchen Monastery is an early example of the ecumenical approach adopted in the 17th century by the royal house of Derge, which indifferently sponsored Kagyü and Nyingma establishments.

41. One of the six primary, or "mother", monasteries of the Nyingma tradition. Located in Derge, it was originally a "meditation centre" (Tib. *sgrub sde*) founded by Terchen Nyima Drakpa (gTer chen Nyi ma grags pa, 1647-1710) in 1692.

42. A monastery located in Nangchen and founded in 1483. It belongs to the Zurmang Kagyü tradition; the flux of devotees and masters from one establishment to the other, regardless of their sectarian affiliation, is testimony to the rapid embracement of the "impartial" view of the non-sectarian movement by leading figures of the Nyingma and Sarma schools, as well as Bon.

43. *sngar za hor rgyal sar deng sang maṇ ḍi rgyal sa zhes* (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, p. 147).

44. His encounter in 1948 with the 16th Karma pa is only but one of the examples of Khyungtrül Rinpoche's ecumenical attitude. As Kværne (1998, p. 80) aptly points out, "Bon and Buddhism seem to have been equally valid in his view".

45. The main source for the life of Khyungtrül is contained in his biography, written by his disciple Palden Tsültrim (dPal ldan tshul khrims, 1902-1973) in the 1930s. Although the text is not, strictly speaking, an autobiography, the narrative is often in the first person, possibly due to its being largely based either on Khyungtrül's notes or on the master's direct dictation (Kværne 1998, p. 72; Li 2008, p. 3). Khyungtrül Rinpoche travelled to India on three occasions; during the first of his stays, from 1922 to 1925, he visited Rewalsar/mTsho Padma (Kværne 1998, pp. 71, 76; Li 2008, p. 27). The visit to Amritsar occurred in the earlier months of the second of his journeys (1930-1935) (Kværne 1998, p. 78).

46. The area of Khyungpo spanned over present-day Chamdo and Nagchu prefectures. On the Khyungpo clan, see Sørensen 1994, p. 179, n. 508.

47. Khyungtrül received the vows of full ordination (Tib. *drang srong*) in the Bon po scholastic tradition of Menri Monastery in Tsang in 1919; in 1924, he joined a community of Buddhist practitioners of the "Great Perfection" (Tib. *rdzogs chen*) led by Eta Radza Pema Dewe Gyalpo (Eta Ra dza Padma bDe ba'i rgyal po, 1873-1933), from whom he received the Buddhist name Jigme

Namkhe Dorje ('Jigs med nam mkha'i rdo rje). Eventually, he became known as Khyungtrül Jigme Namkhe Dorje, or, more simply, Khyungtrül (Alay 2011, p. 205).

48. This view accommodates the existence of the so-called "Father Drenpa and his two sons" (Tib. *dran pa yab sras gsum*) scheme, formed by the 8th-century Bonpo master Drenpa Namkha (Dran pa nam mkha') and his twin sons Yungdrung Tongdröl (gYung drung mthong grol), who is believed to be identical to Padmasambhava, and Tsewang Ringdzin (Tshe dbang rig 'dzin) (Karmay 2005, p. 19). The triad became especially important to the "New Bon" (Tib. *bon gsar ma*) movement, the origin of which can be dated back to the mid-14th century. The expression *bon gsar ma* started to be used in the 18th century to indicate the activities of Sangye Lingpa (Sangs rgyas gling pa, 1705-1735) aimed at creating a system based on an entirely new set of revealed works. From that time onwards, the movement gained popularity in the eastern areas of Kham (Martin 2001, p. 138, n. 41; Achard 2013, p. 83).

49. The work in question is titled *A Concise Guide-book and a Crystal Clear, Flawless Catalogue of the Holy Places of India* (*rGya [gar] gnas gyis [*kyi] dkar chags dri med dwangs shel dang lam yig mdor bsdus*) (see Ramble 1995, pp. 108-112).

50. The author calls Amritsar "Gyakhar Bachö (rGya mkhar ba chod), [also] known as Ambar (A 'bar)", thus identifying the holy city of the Sikhs with the palace built by Milü Samlek (Mi lus bsam legs) (Ramble 1995, p. 109).

51. Due to the similarities in the appearance of the Sikhs (especially in their wearing turbans and beards) and the descriptions of ancient Bonpos, Kyangtsün Sherab Namgyel identified Amritsar with Gyakhar Bachö (see note 50). The author describes the turbans as "bird horns" (*bya ru*) – a distinguishing feature of the eighteen kings of Zhangzhung and early Bonpo priests (Ramble 1995, p. 110).

52. Amritsar is described as "the capital [and] holy place blessed by the noble man called Guru Nanak, the teacher of the religious tradition of Sikhism" (*si kha'i chos lugs kyi ston pa gu ru nā nak zhes skyes bu des byin gyis brlabs pa'i gnas mchog rgyal sa*) (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, p. 145). For a full translation and discussion of the passage, see Ramble 2014, p. 188.

53. *lha khang gcig gi nang du lha lcam man da ra'i sku rgyan red zer srol can rgyan chas dang | yang lha khang zhig la o rgyan rin po che'i nyer spyod yin zer ba rnams kyang mjal.*

54. *na'u tan wa slar yang log pas nam dgung slebs | de nas kyang gho rag pur bar rang log byas | lam gcig la lam gsum brgyud dgos byung ba de ni | skad sgyur ma mkhas pa'i dbang gis | lus kyi dka' tshegs dang re li'i gla 'phar ma bcas sprod dgos byung ba ma zad de'i yar tsam la bal rām pur zhes | Ti san zhig brgyud nas | mnyan yod kyi grong khyer rgyal bu rgyal byed kyi tshal | khyim bdag mgon med zas sbyin gyi kun dga' ra ba sogs zhig shul gnas byin can yod pas ma mjal thabs med yin zhes skad sgyur la smras kyang | khong pas bal rām pur dang gho rag pur gnyis ming go nor gyis mnyan yod zur nas yar shog dang mar shog bcas song kyang sngon las dbang gis mnyan yod kyi gnas ma mjal bas rang re rnams yid pham bo gyur kyang yid smon byas.*

55. Dzamyag himself was utterly amazed by the technology of the Indian rail transport, his wonder at the speed and power of trains, boats, and motorcars nicely summed up in a poem marking the end of the first pilgrimage to India (1946), expressing in verse his appreciation of the rapidity of these "marvellous machines" (Tib. *'phrul 'khor ngo mtshar can*) that could cover in a day the distance a man walked in a month (Kha stag 'Dzam yag 1997, pp. 57-58).

56. On the figure of Gendün Chöpel, see, among others, Karmay 1980; Stoddard 1985a, 1985b, 1988; Lopez 1995, 2006; Mengele 1999.

57. See, for instance, the replacement of the name of Vaiśālī with that of Nālandā in his listing of the eight great stūpas (Huber 2000, p. 111, note 3).

58. Not surprisingly, Dzamyag records only the amount of money spent during the last two pilgrimages (1949 and 1949-1950). From his account, it emerges that the trader faced some financial hurdles in the first years following his departure from Kham in 1944. At the time of the 1946 pilgrimage to the subcontinent, his means ought to have been rather limited and possibly

not worthy, at least in the author's eyes, to be registered. In the late 1940s, Dzamyag's wealth rapidly increased; at the end of the second of his pilgrimages he had spent more than 40 Tibetan dotse (Tib. *rdo tshad*), that is to say more than 2 000 silver sang (Kha stag ʼDzam yag 1997, p. 156). The third pilgrimage, shorter than the previous one, cost him 11 Tibetan dotse, the equivalent of 550 silver sang (Kha stag ʼDzam yag 1997, p. 189).

59. *chu bo lo hi ta'i grong 'gram zhag gcig bsdad | der mig 'phrul mkhan dang dom gyi rtsed mo bcas la cung zad g.yeng.*

60. Dzamyag defines Rinchen Dorje and Lo Trinle as "fellow pilgrims" (Tib. *gnas rogs*) (Kha stag ʼDzam yag 1997, p. 187).

61. One of the twenty-four "great sacred places" (Skt. *mahāpīṭha*) mentioned in Tantric texts. The Tibetans first obtained knowledge of the "sacred places" (Skt. *pīṭha*; Tib. *gnas*) through the Yoginītantras, such as the Saṃvaratantra corpus; the latter present them as having a dual nature, being both external cult sites of specialised pilgrimage and internal sites within the yogin's body engaged in meditational practice. Tibetan interpreters understood the arrangement of the twenty-four sacred places as given in the Saṃvaratantra as actual geographical locations, thus identifying the Indian subcontinent with the adamantine body (Skt. *vajrakāya*) (Huber 2008, pp. 86-92). On the non-Buddhist origins of the *pīṭha* system, see Sanderson 1994.

62. In his "Guide to India", Gendün Chöpel provides the pilgrims with clear instructions on how to reach Māthākuwar (Huber 2000, pp. 43, 61).

63. *nangs pa tshong 'dus nas mchod pa 'bul rgyur yang la gtsang ma dang spre'u byang chub sems dpa' la 'bul rgyu shing thog nyos nas | slar yang gru chung de la gla brngan sprad de song chu bo de'i gling bar brag dang ri 'bur la rtsi shing sna tshogs skyes pa'i dbus su nye gnas kun dga' bo bzhugs pa'i gnas | deng sang lha khang nyam chag song ba'i shul la | lha khang zhig gsar bzhengs 'dug pa de phyi nang gi lugs yin cha ma chod [*cho] kyang | sngon kun dga' bo bzhugs pa'i sgrub gnas yin pas phyag bskor dang smon lam spos mar me yis mchod | sngon dus ljon shing de'i khron na spre'u dkar nag zung lo stong lon pa zhig yod kyang sprel rgan dkar po grongs tshar 'dug | spre'u nag po rdzi ma dkar po can bgrang bya lo stong lon pa zhig shing gi rtse la yod pa de la shing thog gi mchod pa byas kyang 'ong ba mi 'dug pas shing thog dang bza' bca' rnams dkar gnyer gyi phyag tu bzhag nas gsol ba smon lam gyi ngang nas gru chung la zhugs nas gho ha Ti la phyin.*

64. In addition to Hājo and the Umānanda temple, Dzamyag and his companions visited the shrine dedicated to the 13th Dalai Lama's protective deities at Darjeeling (Kha stag ʼDzam yag 1997, p. 189).

ABSTRACTS

This paper discusses the emergence of a modern pilgrimage industry in India as depicted in the autobiographical accounts of Khatag Dzamyag, a 20th-century Khampa trader. The propagandistic activities of modern pan-Buddhist societies, together with the re-opening of ancient sites of Indian Buddhism, contributed to revitalising the concept of India as a "holy land" among Tibetan pilgrims, for most of whom a journey to the Middle Ganges region represented the first encounter with modernity; trains, motorcars, and boats were wonders to be thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated. Leisure appears to be a crucial component in the development of forms of spiritual tourism; the 19th and 20th centuries marked, in their own way, a "leisure revolution" in global terms. Following Dzamyag's narrative, I will elucidate how new forms of "spiritual tourism", created and fostered by pan-Buddhist movements like the Maha Bodhi Society,

contributed to transforming the experience of pilgrimage into a growing commercialisation of leisure, especially for the representatives of the highest strata of Tibetan society, who had the necessary resources to finance their leisure activities.

Cet article traite de l’émergence d’une industrie du pèlerinage moderne en Inde, telle qu’elle est décrite dans les récits autobiographiques de Khatag Dzamyag, un marchand Khampa du XXe siècle. Les activités de propagande des sociétés pan-bouddhistes modernes, ainsi que la réouverture des sites anciens de l’Inde bouddhiste, ont contribué à revitaliser le concept de l’Inde en tant que « terre sainte » parmi les pèlerins tibétains. Pour la plupart, un voyage dans la région de la plaine indo-gangétique représentait une première rencontre avec la modernité ; trains, voitures automobiles et bateaux exerçaient sur eux une fascination particulière et étaient très appréciés. En outre, les loisirs semblent être une composante cruciale du développement d’une forme de tourisme spirituel; les XIXe et XXe siècles ont marqué, à leur manière, une « révolution du loisir » à l’échelle mondiale. Faisant suite au récit de Dzamyag, je vais montrer comment les nouvelles formes du « tourisme spirituel », créées et encouragées par des mouvements pan-bouddhistes tels que la Maha Bodhi Society, ont contribué à transformer l’expérience du pèlerinage en une commercialisation croissante des loisirs, en particulier pour les représentants des strates les plus élevées de la société tibétaine qui disposaient des ressources nécessaires pour financer leurs activités récréatives.

INDEX

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