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Locating the Copper-Colored Mountain: Buddhist Cosmology, Himalayan Geography, and Maps of Imagined Worlds

Benjamin Bogin

This article explores various ways in which Tibetan authors have attempted to locate the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain (Tib. *zangs mdog dpal ri*), considered to be the present abode of Padmasambhava, the tantric guru famous for establishing Buddhism in Tibet in the eighth century. Literary sources ranging from the twelfth through the nineteenth century are considered as examples of the cultural work of place-making. Their authors are shown to draw upon multiple frameworks to map the Copper-Colored Mountain as a sacred site. Using a list of place-names associated with the mountain that are found in the closing chapters of Nyangrel Nyima Oser's seminal biography of Padmasambhava—The Copper Palace (Tib. *zangs gling ma*)—as a starting point, four different systems of spatial ordering are identified and explored. These are: 1) the traditional cosmology found in the

Abhidharma, 2) the tales of demon-inhabited islands found in *jātaka* and *avadāna* stories, 3) the sacred geography of the tantras with their networks of sacred sites corresponding to different parts of the body, and 4) the empirical models of modern geography that started to influence Tibetan conceptions of space in the eighteenth century.

Keywords: Buddhism, cosmology, geography, literature, Tibet, Sri Lanka.

Introduction

The Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain (Tib. *zangs mdog dpal ri*) will not be found on any maps of the Himalayan range. Unlike the famous peaks worshipped by climbers (such as Everest) or pilgrims (such as Kailash), the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain is a place imagined to exist far from the Himalayas. The mountain is revered as the distant abode of the most prominent figure in Himalayan Buddhism—Padmasambhava, also known as Guru Rinpoche or ‘the second buddha’ (*sangs rgyas gnyis pa*). The legends of Padmasambhava’s enlightened activities across the Himalayan region culminate in his successful conversion of eighth-century Tibet into a Buddhist kingdom and close with his departure for an island to the southwest. He is said to have similarly transformed the demonic inhabitants of the island into followers of the Buddha’s teachings and to have taken up residence in the ‘Palace of Lotus Light’ (*pho brang padma ’od*) at the summit of the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain.

As an enlightened being, Padmasambhava is considered to still be living on this mountain and practices focused on the aspiration to travel there and encounter him face-to-face are popular forms of religious devotion throughout the Himalayas. There are dozens of accounts of individuals who have traveled to the Copper-Colored Mountain in visionary journeys, some providing quite detailed itineraries.¹ The destinations on these routes include places that modern scholars would categorize in distinct realms of cosmography, visionary landscape, and geography. The seamless layering of these different ways of mapping space provides an excellent opportunity for exploring Himalayan Buddhist geographies and the cultural place-making practices revealed in various attempts to locate the Copper-Colored Mountain. Numerous and complex systems of spatial ordering and definition converge at the Copper-Colored Mountain and identifying and isolating the various strands that are woven together at this site reveals a great deal about Tibetan religious space.

A natural starting point for an investigation of the Copper-Colored Mountain’s location is the literary representation of Padmasambhava’s departure from Tibet. In the most famous version of Padmasambhava’s life story, the *Copper Palace* (*zangs gling ma*)² attributed to the twelfth-century treasure-revealer Nyangrel Nyima Oser, the final chapters are organized around this departure scene. Various groups of disciples plead with the guru to stay and beg for final instructions. It is in the verses of these dialogues that we find some of the earliest references to the Copper-Colored

Mountain. At a few points, Padmasambhava’s destination is clearly defined as Cāmaradvīpa (*rnga yab gling*).³ Elsewhere, the distant island is referred to as Lañkā (*langka*).⁴ In the final chapter, we read of the despair felt by the king and his subjects after “Master Padma had departed for the land of Oḍḍiyāna” (*O rgyan*). Apart from these three distinct place-names, many of the pleas offered by disciples begging for Padmasambhava to remain in Tibet begin with the phrase, “Master, as you intend to leave for India (*rgya gar*)...”⁵ Although the *Copper Palace* does not make any attempt to sort out the relationship between the different names associated with Padmasambhava’s destination, the list itself provides a concise index of the multiple geographies in which the mountain is located. Examining the contexts from which each of these four place names—Cāmaradvīpa, Lañkā, Oḍḍiyāna, and India—derive meaning, this article will approach each site not as a static location to be marked with GPS coordinates, but rather as four different ways of conceptualizing the mountain’s location. The Copper-Colored mountain is simultaneously located on an island called Cāmaradvīpa (‘Chowrie Island’), on a demon-inhabited island called Lañkā, in the vicinity of a region called Oḍḍiyāna, and in the geographic domain of India, or perhaps most generically, in ‘the southwest.’

Each of these places has its own history and imbues the imagined world of the Copper-Colored Mountain with particular features. Cāmaradvīpa, for example, is one of the intermediate continents (Skt. *antaradvīpa*) detailed in the authoritative Indian treatises on Buddhist cosmology. The demon-inhabited island of Lañkā is well-known to Tibetans from the Indian tales of seafaring merchants that found their way into collections of *jātaka* and *avadāna* stories. The land of Oḍḍiyāna has a long history of associations with tantric conceptions of sacred geography as well as being revered as the birthplace of Padmasambhava. Finally, the sense that the mountain is located within the region designated as India came to be influential in the mapping efforts of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Tibetans who had encountered modern geography and cartography. Just as in the closing chapters of the *Copper Palace*, these different ways of mapping the Copper-Colored Mountain continue to intersect and overlap in countless ways. Though I will explore each of these worlds in turn, their separation from one another is merely heuristic and any attempt to truly map the terrain of the Copper-Colored Mountain must account for the creative ways in which these multiple layers are integrated.

Approached from a certain perspective, the seemingly incoherent jumble of place names might seem to betray a cultural confusion regarding the imagined world of

Padmasambhava's abode. Instead, I will suggest that there is much to be gained by considering these articulations as examples of place-making, a cultural practice defined by Keith Basso as one that "involves multiple acts of remembering and imagining which inform each other in complex ways" (Basso 1996: 5). These four place-worlds that I have identified are constituted by these acts of remembering and imagining and themselves provide the materials from which each new memory and representation of the Copper-Colored Mountain is forged. In order to begin to appreciate the place of this imagined world within Tibetan culture, we must first familiarize ourselves with the multiple maps that Tibetans across time have used to find it.

Cāmaradvīpa in Abhidharma Cosmology

The Buddhist conception of the universe that was adopted by the rulers of Tibet's imperial period was so thoroughly integrated into every aspect of Tibetan culture that traces of pre-Buddhist cosmology are difficult to uncover. It seems that the early Tibetans divided the world into a tripartite scheme of a heavenly plane inhabited by divine beings, our earthly realm of humans and animals, and an underworld populated by various ghosts and spirits.⁶ Elements of this ordering of the universe may still be found in certain ritual practices.⁷ However, the world the Copper-Colored Mountain is imagined within is a world defined by Indian Buddhist cosmology. In the twenty-first century, when prominent Tibetan Buddhist figures such as the Fourteenth Dalai Lama have abandoned the particulars of traditional cosmology and suggested that modern Buddhists might replace these errors with scientifically accurate pictures of the universe,⁸ it may be difficult to appreciate the importance that these descriptions of the world held in the past. We need look no further than the construction of the Samye monastic complex (the critical moment in the legend of Padmasambhava's establishment of Buddhism in Tibet) for concrete evidence of this fact. The entire complex is a replica of the world as described in the canonical sources of Buddhism, best known in Tibet through the *Abhidharmakośa*, an influential treatise by the fourth century Indian scholar, Vasubandhu.

The *Abhidharmakośa* was translated into Tibetan around the year 800 CE by a pandit from Kashmir named Jinamitra and the famed Tibetan translator, Peltsek (*dpal brtsegs*) (Mejor 1991: 21). The root verses of the text were traditionally studied along with Vasubandhu's auto-commentary (*Bhāṣya*) and several Sanskrit commentaries by other Indian scholars were translated into Tibetan and included in the canonical collection of *Translated Treatises* (*bstan 'gyur*). The third chapter of the *Kośa*, the 'Explana-

tion of the World' (Skt. *lokanirdeśa*) describes the nature and layout of the universe. The 102 verses of the chapter cover a broad range of topics, including the temporal cycle of the various stages in the universe's repeated creation and destruction, the workings of dependent-origination, questions surrounding the intermediate period between death and rebirth into the various realms of existence, the nature of beings in the various realms, and the foundational doctrines of *dharma*-theory and momentariness.

Here, we are concerned with the section in the very center of the chapter (verses 45-74) devoted to an explanation of what is called the 'container world' (Skt. *bhājanaloka*, Tib. *snod pa'i 'jig rten*) because it is the environment that 'contains' all of the various kinds of beings. There are billions of such worlds in the universe but they each follow the same basic blueprint. At the very center of the world there is a large square mountain called Mount Meru. Seven rings of gold mountains divided by seven seas surround this mountain. The ocean outside the last ring of mountains reaches an iron ring at the outer perimeter and within this vast ocean there is a large continent in each of the four cardinal directions. The color of the sky and sea in each of these continents is determined by the color of the mountain-face in that direction: crystal in the west, gold in the north, silver in the east, and lapis in the south (Pruden 1988: 453). Our world, with its blue sky and blue ocean reflecting light from the lapis lazuli southern face of Mount Meru, is called Jambudvīpa. Each continent is flanked by two smaller continents known as 'intermediate continents' (Skt. *antaradvīpa*). For Jambudvīpa, these are Cāmaradvīpa (Chowrie Island, Tib. *rnga yab gling*) to the west and Avaracāmaradvīpa (Other Chowrie Island, *rnga yab gzhan gling*) to the east. Cāmaradvīpa is one of the most frequently cited place-names in the literature of the Copper-Colored Mountain and provides the simplest answer to the question of where the mountain is located. However, the descriptions of the intermediate continents in the *Abhidharmakośa* and related texts are exceptionally brief and focus on the shape and size of each island with scant attention paid to the inhabitants or characteristics of each continent.

The paucity of detail in Abhidharma presentations of the four continents and eight intermediate continents might lead to the presumption that the name functioned as a sort of blank slate that lent the demon-inhabited island of the Tibetan imagination the authority of canonical cosmology. The familiar descriptions of the Copper-Colored Mountain as inhabited by *rākṣasas* might then be considered to result from a Tibetan conflation of Cāmaradvīpa with the *rākṣasa*-inhabited islands found in Indian narrative literature.

While such a conflation may be a part of the cultural construction of Cāmaradvīpa, it took place long before Tibetans became involved in the project. In Vasubandhu's auto-commentary to the *Abhidharmakośa*, the explanation of the verse that names the eight intermediate continents (verse 56) reads:

These continents are designated by the name of their inhabitants. Dehas and Videhas are located on both sides of Pūrvavideha; Kurus and Kauravas on the sides of Uttarakuru; Cāmaras and Avaracāmaras on the sides of Jambudvīpa; and Śāṭhas and Uttaramantrins on the sides of Godāniya. All of these continents are inhabited by human beings. Nevertheless, according to one opinion, one of them is reserved for Rākṣasas.⁹

In his seminal translation of the *Abhidharmakośa* from the seventh-century Chinese translation of Xuanzang, Louis de la Vallée-Poussin identified the intermediate continent in question by translating, “Toutefois, d’après une opinion, l’un d’eux [à savior le Cāmara] est réservé aux Rākṣasas” (De la Vallée-Poussin 1923: 147). A footnote to this passage provides the source of this identification: a collection of *Abhidharma* texts that predate Vasubandhu—again, translated by Xuanzang—known to scholars as the *Mahāvibhāṣā (Taishō edition No. 1545). In this text we read, “There is an opinion that seven continents are inhabited by human beings; only the Cāmara continent is the home of rākṣasas.”¹⁰ It is unclear whether Vasubandhu's silence regarding the name of the sole rākṣasa-inhabited intermediate continent signifies a tradition so widespread that it need not be mentioned or a reluctance to voice an opinion on a question debated by various interpreters of the *Abhidharma*. Whatever the reason for leaving the rākṣasa-inhabited land unnamed, most of his later commentators provide Cāmaradvīpa as a gloss on Vasubandhu's ‘one of them.’¹¹

Although the *Abhidharma* sources confirm that Cāmaradvīpa has been associated with rākṣasas from very early on, they mention this only in passing and shed little light on how such an island might have been understood in Indian Buddhist culture. For information on this aspect of the tradition, we will need to turn to another body of sources, the stories of rākṣasa-inhabited islands encountered by seafaring merchants in Indian narrative literature.

Tales of Demon Islands

Although the collections of stories known as *avadānas* never attained the canonical imprimatur that cemented the importance of texts like the *Abhidharmakośa*, their significance to Tibetan conceptions of the world beyond its

borders should not be underestimated. Beyond the many stories that were eventually translated or retold in Tibetan versions, they collectively form an imagined world from which characters, plots, place-names, and motifs made their way into a variety of Tibetan literary contexts. One of the most well-documented of these motifs is that of a merchant traveling overseas for trade or in search of treasure. It is not difficult to imagine the appeal that these tales of ocean voyages to exotic islands held for audiences in the Himalayan Plateau, very few of whom would meet a single person in their entire life who had ever seen an ocean. In fact, the Tibetan word for ocean—*gyatso* (*rgya mtsho*)—reveals in both its literal meaning of ‘vast lake’ and its usage—often applied indiscriminately to any large body of water—a lack of oceanographic discernment. In this sense, stories of seafaring merchants are compelling adventure tales and potent analogies for journeys into the unknown, with a cultural cache not unlike that frequently mined in Hollywood westerns or tales of space exploration.

Of course, stories of islands inhabited by dangerous women are found in many different literary traditions. *The Odyssey* is perhaps the most obvious example with its veritable archipelago of islands inhabited by seductive and terrifying women of various kinds. The Tibetan conception of a distant land inhabited by rākṣasīs seems to be clearly connected with images derived from Indian Buddhist literature. Although the motif is found in numerous examples, the demon island is best known from the story of Siṃhala the merchant.¹² Versions of this tale are known across Asia and were included in major works of Tibetan religious and historical literature such as the *Mani Kambum* (*Ma ṅi bka' 'bum*) and the *Clear Mirror Illuminating Royal Genealogies* (*rgyal rab gsal ba'i me long*).¹³ Among the many Buddhist versions (often found in *jātaka* and *avadāna* collections), the most influential in Tibet are those found in the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* and the *Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha*. These versions emphasize the role of Avalokiteśvara as the savior in the story as opposed to the versions that depict the hero as a previous birth of Śākyamuni.

In all versions of the tale, the protagonist is the leader of a group of merchants who have set out across the ocean in search of treasure. The party is shipwrecked at a place called Tāmradvīpa—Copper Isle. This island is inhabited by rākṣasīs and many versions identify them as the creators of the tempest that caused the merchant vessel to crash on their shores. The rākṣasīs appear in the forms of beautiful young women and entreat the shipwrecked merchants to stay with them. The merchants become so immersed in the pleasures offered to them by their devilishly alluring hostesses that they marry them and have children and

generally forget about the lives left behind on the other side of the ocean. Siṃhala is instructed by a voice in a lamp (attributed to Avalokiteśvara) that the beguiling beauties are actually *rākṣasīs* and is led to a prison where he encounters survivors of an earlier shipwreck who explain that they were enjoying the same lives of pleasure until they were locked in this prison from whence they are devoured by the ferocious man-eating *rākṣasīs* they had previously dwelled with in domestic bliss. Siṃhala discreetly alerts the rest of the men to the situation and an enormous magical flying horse (also identified as Avalokiteśvara) appears to escort them all safely home to Jambudvīpa. The horse instructs the men that they must not look back at the shore once they are flying away. The *rākṣasīs* disguised as beautiful women run down the beach carrying the men's babies in their arms and waving their clothes, imploring them to stay. Despite the warnings from the magical horse, the men look back and are immediately thrown through the air, falling into the sea or being devoured by *rākṣasīs* before they even hit the water. Siṃhala is the sole survivor, the only one who heeded the horse's warning, and upon his safe return home, the horse imparts an important lesson regarding karmic consequences that becomes the pedagogic hook for the story.

Naomi Appleton has traced the relationships between various versions of this tale in Pali and Sanskrit and Todd Lewis has translated and interpreted a Newar version of the story. Appleton sees a shifting emphasis from the Pali versions that identify the magical horse as a previous life of Śākyamuni to Sanskrit versions where the horse is identified with Avalokiteśvara. She also examines the political and historical concerns demonstrated by retellings in Śrī Laṅkā and the misogynistic messages found in accounts that present the story's moral as the recognition that 'all women are *rākṣasīs*.' Lewis describes the social and cultural contexts of Newar trade with Tibet as determining the frame in which the story was told in the Kathmandu Valley. Here, the *rākṣasī*-inhabited foreign land is not an island off the Indian coast but the high altitude world across the Himalayas. In this context, the story was a warning to Newar men against the dangers of the Tibetan women they would encounter on their trade routes. The work of these scholars demonstrates the adaptability of the tale and the multiple meanings that are variously illuminated and emphasized in different contexts. A full exploration of the Tibetan life of this story would lead us too far afield, but there are some basic observations that we might make regarding the versions of the story most directly connected to the Copper-Colored Mountain tradition.

The Tibetan version of the story found in the *Mani Kambum* is most closely related with the version in the *Kāraṇḍavyūha*.¹⁴ It is worth noting that one of the three figures credited with compiling the *Mani Kambum* is Nyangrel Nyima Oser, the twelfth-century treasure-revealer who played such an important role in the development of the Padmasambhava cult. His familiarity with the Siṃhala narrative from the *Kāraṇḍavyūha* may have played a role in the depiction of Padmasambhava's next destination as a distant *rākṣasa*-inhabited island. For example, in the *Copper Palace*, Padmasambhava explains that he must leave Tibet in order to protect human society from the "*rākṣasas* who are about to overflow from their land, Laṅkāpuri, and devour all of the humans in Jambudvīpa."¹⁵ Beyond naming the island as Laṅkā, Padmasambhava's departure from Tibet almost seems to be justified in terms of completing the unfinished business of the Siṃhala narrative. We may never be able to definitively identify the role of Nyangrel's own hand in connecting the tradition of Siṃhala's shipwreck on a demon isle with the representation of Padmasambhava's post-Tibetan abode. Despite this lack of clarity concerning an individual author or link, there is no doubt that the two islands occupy a similar space in the Tibetan literary imagination. Given this connection, we might reflect upon ways in which the Siṃhala story provides another layer in the topography of Padmasambhava's destination. Although there is no way to be certain that the mountain's copper color derives from the Copper Isle (Skt, *tāmradvīpa*, Tib. *zangs gling*) of the Siṃhala story, the possibility cannot be ignored. Similarly, although the demonic inhabitants of the island where Padmasambhava journeys are not described as exclusively female (as are those of the Siṃhala story), they are described as belonging to the same exact class of non-human malefactors: the *rākṣāsas* (Tib. *srin po*).

Though there are superficial similarities in the descriptions of Siṃhala's Copper Isle and Padmasambhava's Copper-Colored Mountain, when we consider the broader context of each story, striking differences between the significance of each island emerge. In particular, unlike Siṃhala's island, Padmasambhava's destination is completely transformed by his arrival and he remains there even to the present day. In Tibetan versions of the Siṃhala story,¹⁶ Copper Isle is the geographic instantiation of dangerously seductive illusions. The merchants' senses are dulled by the pleasures they experience with the disguised demonesses. They have no sense that they have been tricked into captivity and that the temporary pleasure will give way to the torments of being imprisoned and eaten alive by their captors. The hero of the story is the only one

who manages to fully escape, never looking back to the shores of the evil island. The story ends with the magical horse (an emanation of Avalokiteśvara) delivering a teaching on the four noble truths and flying away. Siṃhala then narrates the story to the bereaved families of the men lost at sea and everyone develops the spirit of renunciation born from disgust with samsara. In this story, the Copper Isle is a faraway place inhabited by seductive and deceitful demonic beings that serves as a kind of magnifying lens for worldly life itself, making the dangers of attachment to appearances and the negative consequences of living in delusion impossible to ignore. Siṃhala leaves the island riding on a magical horse just as Siddhārtha left his palace riding on a magical horse. Each had come to see his life of pleasure as a prison and sought to cut the bonds keeping him there by fleeing unnoticed. In both stories, the fugitive experiences a great temptation to take a final look back as he departs. In the case of Siddhārtha, the prince resists the nearly overwhelming urge to hold his infant son once more before departing but recognizing that to do so would render him incapable of following through on his great renunciation, averts his gaze and leaves.¹⁷ In Siṃhala's story, his escape is a direct result of his ability to resist this temptation and to keep his gaze steadily fixed on returning home.

Part of the power associated with the location derives from the stark contrast between these earlier stories of escapes from the island and Padmasambhava's decision to take up residence there after leaving Tibet. While Siṃhala is lauded for his heroic flight from the island and his restraint in overcoming the temptation to look back, Padmasambhava sets his sights on the island and cannot be dissuaded from traveling there to conquer the demons and take up residence. As demonstrated by the many prayers of aspiration (*smon lam*) for rebirth at the Copper-Colored Mountain, Padmasambhava's transformation of the island made it a destination where Tibetans set their gaze in the hopes of gaining rebirth there after death.¹⁸ In some sense, we might understand the island of the Siṃhala story as samsara under a microscope, a magnified and intensified embodiment of desire and delusion. The story serves to warn readers against the dangers of being lured in by appearances and portrays a hero who turns his back on lust and attachment by riding away without looking back. In the Padmasambhava story, the hero sets off (again, in some versions, on a horse) in order to directly engage with the appearances of this island of magnified hyper-samsara and his violent subjugation of the demon-king effects a transformation that renders the island a paradise.

Oḍḍiyāna and Tantric Geographies

In the history of the Copper-Colored Mountain, the act that establishes the island as a Buddhist sacred site is Padmasambhava's violent 'liberation' of the *rākṣasa*-demon king Skull-Garland Power (*thod phreng rtsal*). This tale of the subjugation of a demonic king as instrumental in the creation of sacred space is a theme well-known in tantric literature. Padmasambhava's conquest of Skull-Garland Power conforms to a model found in many of the central narratives of Tibet's assimilation of Buddhism as well as in Indian purāṇic and tantric sources. The story of Songtsen Gampo's construction of thirteen temples at geomantically potent locations is a widely-known example of the way in which the subjugation of a demon may be effected through the establishment of a network of sacred sites. In this case, the temples were constructed at locations corresponding to parts of the body of an enormous supine *rākṣasi*-demoness and transformed the hostile Tibetan landscape into a realm ready to welcome Buddhist culture.¹⁹ Beyond this particular example from Tibetan historiography, we might glimpse something of the broader Indian background informing the spatial significance of demon-taming. The sacred geography of tantric literature and practice is inextricably tied to stories of battle between a buddha and a demon. The names of the adversaries sometimes shift but the cosmic drama and the resultant network of sacred sites established in its wake seems to maintain a certain structural consistency.

Numerous scholars have studied various versions of this myth and the connections between them.²⁰ The story begins in the distant past, during the aeon of the buddha Akṣobhya. At that time, the future Rudra was a prince who, along with one of his servants, had become the disciple of a monk. When the prince and his servant disagree about the monk's teachings, the prince angrily banishes his servant from the land. Full of pride, he explains the disagreement to his monk teacher who points out that the servant's understanding had in fact been correct. Outraged, the prince exiles the monk teacher as well and stubbornly pursues a course of harmful actions based upon his perverse understanding of the teachings: living in charnel grounds wearing clothes of human skin, consuming human flesh, and indulging in orgiastic rituals. This downward spiral continues through hundreds of lifetimes in various hell realms and as various kinds of demons until he eventually takes birth on the island of Laṅkā.²¹ There, he is born to a prostitute who dies during childbirth and is left for dead in the charnel ground where he survives by eating his mother's flesh before moving on to devour the other decaying corpses. He grows in power and strength and

gains dominion over all of the evil beings inhabiting the charnel ground. Eventually, he takes over the whole island, usurping Rāvaṇa's throne and establishing a dystopian kingdom of violence and horror. The buddhas of the ten directions assemble to discuss the proper way to deal with the growing power of such an evil being and decide that he must be subdued through the four actions of tantric ritual: pacification, enhancement, coercion, and violence. Emanations of the buddhas engage with Rudra and his retinue in each of these modes, culminating in a final battle between Mahābhairava-Heruka and Rudra in which the latter is defeated by the fierce buddha who stabs him in the heart with a trident, swallows him whole, excretes him, accepts his pledge to protect the Buddhist teachings and liberates him fully before reconstituting him in a purified form as a protector of the teachings.

The Copper-Colored Mountain is connected to this myth in numerous ways. Most directly, Padmasambhava's liberative killing of the demon king Skull-Garland Power is a re-enactment of the subjugation of Rudra. This association seems to be recognized in the many sources that identify the island where the mountain is located as Laṅkā. The myth provides a framework for locating the Copper-Colored Mountain in other ways as well. In the version of the Rudra myth that is found in the *Cakrasamvara Tantra*, the evil being to be subdued is named Bhairava and his retinue includes maleficent demons and deities of various kinds who established themselves at networks of eight locations in the heavens, eight locations on earth, and eight locations underground. After buddha Vajradhara emanated as Cakrasamvara and subjugated Bhairava and his entire retinue, these twenty-four locations were transformed into a network of tantric sacred sites called *pīṭhas*. Scholars have tended to read these tales as Buddhist anti-Śaiva polemic, as analogs for tantric practices of the subtle body, or as idealized models of pilgrimage networks that were replicated and localized at sacred sites in Tibet. Within this network of twenty-four sacred sites, the Copper-Colored Mountain is most frequently associated with the land of Oḍḍiyāna.²²

Some descriptions of the Copper-Colored Mountain explain that the mountain itself has the shape of a heart (*rtsi ta'i dbyibs can*) because it is in fact located at the place where Rudra's heart fell after he was dismembered. This notion that the *pīṭhas* are located at the spots where the various body parts of the dismembered demon fell to the earth might be traced back to Vedic understandings of the Puruṣa and later purāṇic and tantric elaborations of the relationship between sacrifice and creation. In the most extensive Nyingma versions of the Rudra-taming myth, he

is not dismembered in this way, but elements of this earlier tradition seem to be incorporated (Dalton 2011: 113-118). The correlation between the shape of the mountain and the body part that is said to have landed at the site is further extended in traditions that map the *pīṭhas* on to the human body. Here, the Copper-Colored Mountain is said to reside at one's heart.

The land of Oḍḍiyāna carries special significance for Tibetan Buddhists for a number of interconnected reasons. The region is perhaps associated above all else with the figure of Padmasambhava who is considered to have been born there from a lotus-flower in the center of the Lake Dhanakośa. In fact, the association between Padmasambhava and Oḍḍiyāna is so strong that he is frequently referred to in later Tibetan literature as the 'Precious Master from Oḍḍiyāna' (*O rgyan rin po che*) or the 'Great One from Oḍḍiyāna' (*O rgyan chen po*). The conception of the mountain as located in or adjacent to Oḍḍiyāna follows a certain narrative logic whereby Padmasambhava's life story comes full circle from the place of his miraculous birth to the scene of his final abode. However, Oḍḍiyāna's long association with the world of tantra has a history independent of the Padmasambhava corpus. As Ronald Davidson described in his study of the 'frontier zones' to the northwest of India, "The aura Oḍḍiyāna obtained, as the esoteric canon itself, really passed through three stages: the early collection of spells evident from the sixth century forward, the development of the Indrabhūti myth in the eighth century, and the extensive mythologization of Oḍḍiyāna in the *yogini* tantras beginning in the ninth century" (Davidson 2002: 160-161). It is this final stage that bears the most evident influence upon Tibetan conceptions of Oḍḍiyāna as a source of tantric teachings, as one of the single most important *pīṭha* in the various systems of tantric sacred geography, and as the haunt of the *dākiṇīs*.

Many of the tantric systems included their own maps of *pīṭhas* that sought to establish correspondences between the sacred sites of the Indian religious world with the internal *maṇḍala* of the tantric yogin. The *pīṭhas* are enumerated in different ways but the most condensed list—the four great sites (Skt. *caturmahāpīṭha*)—nearly always includes Oḍḍiyāna and often affords it a place of prominence as the site corresponding to the yogin's head. In the more extensive versions, Oḍḍiyāna is one of the few very consistent toponyms in the lists and maintains a position of importance. For example, in the *Cakrasamvara*'s set of twenty-four *pīṭhas* that became so influential in Tibetan conceptions of sacred geography, Oḍḍiyāna corresponds to the yogin's right ear. Oḍḍiyāna also comes

to be considered the primary sacred site associated with Cakrasamvara and his consort, Vajrayoginī. Toni Huber has explored the ways in which the power associated with distant Oḍḍiyāna came to be transposed into the local Tibetan landscape at the site of Tsari. The sacred mountain of Tsari is frequently compared to the Pure Crystal Stūpa where Cakrasamvara and Vajrayoginī reside in Oḍḍiyāna (Huber 1999: 53). In many *sādhana* texts devoted to *dākinīs*, the *maṇḍala* palace of the visualized *dākinīs* is often located in Oḍḍiyāna. These associations are very apparent in the Copper-Colored Mountain literature where Oḍḍiyāna is associated with *dākinīs* above all else. The accounts of visionary journeys discussed in Chapter Four frequently include Oḍḍiyāna as a stop on the itinerary and interactions with *dākinīs* are always the focus of these stops.

Of course, we have records of a very different kind of travel to Oḍḍiyāna as well: in 1940, Giuseppe Tucci published *Travels of Tibetan Pilgrims in the Swat Valley*. At the time, there was a robust debate among scholars regarding the actual geographical location of the region with some arguing for Orissa or Bengal and others for South India. Recent analysis of inscriptional evidence from early archaeological excavations has tilted the scales of scholarly opinion to the side advocated by Tucci back in 1940 and locates Oḍḍiyāna in the Swat Valley of what is now Pakistan. Drubtob Orgyenpa (1230–1293) and Taksang Repa (1574–1651) composed the travel accounts that Tucci published. Each traveled all the way from Tibet to the Swat Valley in part to look for the *pīṭha* so closely associated with the origins of tantra. I will not discuss these travelers' itineraries (or the related 'Itineraries to Shambhala') in the present article but mention them in passing as a point of transition from the realm of tantric sacred sites to the very different kinds of maps considered by Tibetan authors who endeavored to clarify the jumble of toponyms, cosmologies, and pilgrimage networks that we have introduced so far and to integrate these modes of spatial organization with geographical knowledge.

Glimpses of a Shifting Geography

In his renowned history of Buddhism in Tibet, *The Scholar's Feast* (*Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*), Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa (1504–1566) briefly discusses the Copper-Colored Mountain and its location at the end of his summary of Padmasambhava's life.

For the benefit of non-human beings, [Padmasambhava] went in person to Cāmaradvīpa and will abide there for as long as a kalpa in order to subdue the *rākṣasas*. In one corrupt chronicle (*thang yig*), it is written that this demonic land is in the narrow part (*yu ba*) of the shoulder-blade

shaped Jambudvīpa. This appears to be an adulteration because that *rākṣasa* land is the intermediate continent to the west of Jambudvīpa. It is there that the Master manifested as the *rākṣasa* king. If he had not subdued [the *rākṣasas*], Jambudvīpa would have been conquered, overrun by the magical emanations of the *rākṣasas*. This is made very clear if you look at Guru Chöwang's *Black Hat Dream* (*rmang lam zhva nag ma*).²³ Furthermore, even if the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain is located in Jambudvīpa, in the *Sutra on the Application of Mindfulness* (*mdo dran pa nyer bzhag*)²⁴ it is explained to be a place five-hundred leagues from the Snowlands (*gangs can*) where there are various accomplished mantrins. It is clear that there is also a manifestation of [the Guru's] body there (*Mkhas pa'i dga' ston*: 601).

This passage reveals the historian's concern with sorting through some of the different descriptions of the mountain's location and attempting to square them with his scholarly knowledge of the world described in Abhidharma cosmology and texts on Indian sacred geography.

The complaint that Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa levels against a particular earlier version of Padmasambhava's life is that the text locates Cāmaradvīpa on a part of Jambudvīpa. This contradicts canonical sources that clearly distinguish between the two. Although Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa does not name the source that he criticizes as geographically incoherent, we may identify it as Nyangrel's *Copper Palace*. This text announces Padmasambhava's intention to leave Tibet with the lines: "Next, Master Padmakara turned his attention toward the *rākṣasas* living on Laṅkāpuri, the Land of *Rākṣasas*, which is like the narrow part of the shoulder-blade[-shaped] Jambudvīpa and lies near the country of Oḍḍiyāna."²⁵ By referring to the *Copper Palace* only as an unnamed "corrupt chronicle," Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa points the finger of blame at the redactors who seem to have introduced corruptions to the text during its centuries of transmission rather than question the authenticity or authority of Nyangrel's text itself. The passage locating the Copper-Colored Mountain on Jambudvīpa itself does seem to be incongruous with the universal identification of the mountain's home as Cāmaradvīpa (an identification upheld elsewhere in the *Copper Palace*). Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa's consideration of this issue in his sixteenth-century history stands out as an example of an attempt to critically examine the available sources and define the location of the Copper-Colored Mountain with greater precision. For Pawo, the ultimate authority resides within canonical texts and he does not seem to be concerned with the relationship between Buddhist cosmography and the physical geography of India or Tibet.

There have been numerous other authors throughout the history of this tradition who have attempted to locate the Copper-Colored Mountain not only in cosmographic terms but also according to the physical geography of their world.²⁶ Just as the region of Oḍḍiyāna was understood by certain Tibetan travelers to be located in the Swat Valley, many have identified the island where the mountain is located as Śrī Laṅkā (formerly Ceylon). In the chronicles recounting Padmasambhava's life and the accounts of visionary journeys to his Copper-Colored Mountain, the island is referred to as Laṅkā with as much frequency as it is identified as Cāmaradvīpa. As we have seen, the demon-inhabited island of the story of Siṃha and the intermediate continent to the west of Jambudvīpa are places found in very different ways of mapping the world. As we know from the Abhidharma commentaries discussed earlier, Cāmaradvīpa, like the island that Siṃha visited, was considered to be the abode of *rākṣasa* demons. As for the identification of the Copper Isle (*tāmradvīpa*) that Siṃha visited with Sri Lanka, this is an area where we have a much longer history of documented associations from beyond Tibet.

The long history of trans-Himalayan travel and commerce serves as an important warning against presenting the story of Tibetan geographic knowledge as a slow process of progress from isolation and ignorance into illumination through expanded contact with the world beyond its borders. In fact, the entire history of Tibetan conceptions of space—from the earliest tripartite universe shared with many other cultural groups in Central Asia through the Buddhist cosmologies with roots in Indian traditions—is a story of engagements with multiple maps of the universe through complex processes of borrowing, adaptation, assimilation, and re-creation. We lack sufficient evidence for examining the relationship between early pre-Buddhist Tibetan notions of the world and those of other Central Asian societies. The radical changes brought about by the adoption of the Abhidharma-based cosmology during the seventh to ninth century imperial period are so deeply ingrained in the foundations of Tibetan religion that it is difficult to truly discern the processes by which this foreign map of the universe came to be accepted. Beginning in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, we see Tibetan authors engage with another powerful model for structuring our understanding of space: the scientific discipline of geography rooted in the empiricism of the European Enlightenment. It is important to note that Tibetans of earlier periods also valued empirical knowledge. Accounts of travels to Buddhist India were prized not only for the often heroic accounts of religious seekers, but also for the insights they provided into the geography of a land

idealized as the original source of the Buddhist teachings. The shift that we will trace through the geographical writings of Jigmé Lingpa (*'jigs med gling pa*, 1729/30–1798) and Tsenpo Nomonhan (*btsan po no mon han*, 1789–1838) must thus be understood as the gradual adoption of a new language for describing the world and not (as some of these authors themselves may have seen it) a story of the march of progress lifting the veils of tradition and superstition with the illuminating tools of rationalism and empiricism that Tibet previously lacked.

Jigmé Lingpa is best known as one of the most prominent treasure-revealers (*gter ston*) of the Nyingma tradition. His *Quintessence of the Vast Expanse* (*klong chen snying thig*) cycle of revelations grew in popularity throughout the nineteenth-century and has become one of the most widely practiced traditions in Tibetan Buddhism. He is also the author of one of the most widely known prayers for rebirth at the Copper-Colored Mountain, the “Secret Path to the Glorious Mountain” (*dpal ri'i gsang lam*). Within the *Collected Works* of Jigmé Lingpa, there is an eclectic collection called “The Ocean of Vehicles: Miscellaneous Discourses” that covers topics ranging from astrology and poetry to pilgrimage sites, the natural world, and the *Collected Tantras of the Ancients*. The third text within this collection is devoted to the geography of India. Jigmé Lingpa based his description of India primarily on the accounts he heard from his disciple, Jangchup Gyeltsen (*byang chub rgyal mtshan*, 1750–1825), a Bhutanese monk and government official who had spent three years in residence in Calcutta and traveled quite extensively in India. Michael Aris (1995) published a transliteration and translation of the discourse and provides a helpful introduction to the historical context of contact between Tibet, Bhutan, and British India during the late eighteenth century.

Jigmé Lingpa does not mention the Copper-Colored Mountain or Cāmaradvīpa and his brief section on Śrī Laṅkā focuses on pearls and cinnamon and makes no mention of *rākṣasa* demons. The *rākṣasa*, however, do appear in another section of the text concerned with maritime commerce. Jigmé Lingpa describes the process by which trade is conducted between the inhabitants of Jambudvīpa and the island-dwelling *rākṣasa*. The account is somewhat elliptical but suggests an arrangement whereby the terms of trade are agreed upon through the exchange of written messages and the actual transaction involves the merchants leaving the goods on the shore and firing guns as a signal when they have returned to the safety of their ship. At this point, the *rākṣasa* collect the goods and leave whatever had been agreed upon in exchange

to be collected by the merchants after the *rākṣasa* have returned to their village. Aris notes similarities between this description and accounts of the Nicobar Islands found in the writings of Albīrūnī (973–1048)²⁷ and Marco Polo (c. 1254–1324).²⁸ After describing this method of commerce, Jigmé Lingpa notes that similar practices are employed for trade with *shang shang*, a class of beings whose bodies are birdlike from the waist down but human from the waist up.

These details demonstrate something of the nature of Jigmé Lingpa's discourse and its seamless transitions from discussions of British ship-building techniques and maritime travel to demons and creatures who are half-bird and half-human. In this context, Jigmé Lingpa then makes a comment that connects these remote islands with Padmasambhava and the Copper-Colored Mountain:

Again, these barbarians know nothing of the Buddha. They know nothing of the Dharma. So when in ancient times King Rāma (*Ra-ma-ṇa*) killed the king of the *rākṣasa* [Rāvana] and installed his younger brother [Bharatha] as king, besides just offering protection [from] *rākṣasa* to [the people of] Jambudvīpa, they did not realize that [Rāvana possessed] the characteristics of the *rākṣasa* Tötrenṅtsel.²⁹

In these few lines, Jigmé Lingpa identifies the previously unnamed island of the *rākṣasa* as the island renowned in Indian myth as the realm of the demon king Rāvana and the scene of one of the most important narratives in the Indian epics, Rāma's defeat of Rāvana. In Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa*, Rāvana is the King of Laṅkā and the story that Jigmé Lingpa alludes to is clearly located there. It remains to be seen whether or not Jigmé Lingpa realized that the Laṅkā of this story had long been identified with Sri Lanka (Ceylon in his time) but he gives no indication of a connection between these two. Instead, he identifies Rāma's antagonist—the *rākṣasa* king Rāvana—with the figure Padmasambhava defeated upon his arrival at the Copper-Colored Mountain—the *rākṣasa* king Tötrenṅtsel. As with much in this discourse, Jigmé Lingpa does not seem concerned with the questions that might arise from this identification. The discordance between the coronation of Rāma's younger brother in one story and Padmasambhava's assumption of the throne (and body) of Tötrenṅtsel in the other is not addressed. The entire text has a conversational tone³⁰ and Jigmé Lingpa's suggestion here seems to be made speculatively and in a spirit of curiosity or playfulness rather than in an attempt to assert and defend a proposition. Jigmé Lingpa is also quick to acknowledge that the principal source for his account is conversational itself, the discussions that he held with his cosmopolitan disciple from Bhutan.

The next Tibetan geographical text that I would like to consider is based on very different sources and is written in a very different style. The *Extensive Exposition on the World* (*'dzam gling rgyas bshad*),³¹ composed by the Fourth Tsenpo Nomonhan, Jampel Chökyi Tenzin Trinlé (1789–1838) in 1830,³² is widely regarded to be one of the pioneering works in Tibetan geographical knowledge. Tsenpo Nomonhan was an important reincarnate lama born in Amdo and raised within the Geluk monastic system. In about 1814 he moved to Beijing to take up his post as one of the 'seal-holding lamas' of the Qing. Beyond his mastery of Tibetan, Mongolian, and Chinese, he seems to have studied French and Russian as well. During his years in Beijing and his frequent travels through Tibet and Mongolia, Tsenpo Nomonhan sought out foreigners and eagerly studied European works on cosmology, astronomy, and geography. Losang Yongdan has identified many of the Russian, Polish, and German diplomats, missionaries, soldiers, and travelers who Tsenpo Nomonhan developed relationships with. The *Extensive Exposition on the World* was the first Tibetan account of the world beyond Asia and combines an impressive amount of detail with the kinds of confusion and speculative imagining that one might expect of a first attempt at describing the world.

Tsenpo Nomonhan maintains the Abhidharma model of a world-system as organized into four distinct continents surrounding Mount Meru. However, he attempts to integrate this model with the knowledge gained from his European informants and their 'world atlases' by finding correspondences between the continents of traditional cosmology and those of modern geography. The Eurasian landmass was identified with Jambudvīpa, the southern continent. Africa is identified as the western continent of Godaniya, North America with the northern continent of Kuru, and Australia with the eastern continent of Videha.

As in Jigmé Lingpa's discourse, there is no direct mention of the Copper-Colored Mountain within Tsenpo Nomonhan's *Extensive Exposition*. However, in his description of Africa we again encounter a discussion of one of the place names most commonly associated with the location of the Copper-Colored Mountain:

In the southern part of the continent, there is a country called Guinea (*ke spe ni ya*), which is huge. The country is divided into right, left, and lower [parts]. There people are dark as black clouds. They do not even cover their genitals. According to the world atlas, the people ride horses and camels and travel to other lands. Wherever they go, they eat the people and animals. After finishing eating ev-

everything, they travel again to other lands. Even internally, powerful people kill less powerful people and then use the victims' heads to build walls and stages. Also, I personally heard these things from a Russian general Me hā lū pa re sa he phu [Mehaluparé sahib?], so I think this land might be Cāmara and to the north might be Aparacāmara.³³

It is important to note that the two intermediate continents noted here are the two associated with Jambudvīpa in Abhidharma cosmology, whereas Africa is identified with Godaniya in Tsenpo Nomonhan's geography. We may surmise that the author was compelled to make this identification—contradicting his own system—by his recognition that the features of the described land corresponded with features attributed to Cāmaradvīpa. This association provides further evidence for the widespread connection between Cāmaradvīpa and *rākṣasa* in Tibetan Buddhist culture. The description of the inhabitants of Guinea as uncivilized savages who violently conquer and devour their weaker neighbors provides a particularly striking example of the demonizing discourses of colonialism.

Indeed, the accusations of anthropophagy and the sense of imminent danger of possible invasion echo the descriptions of *rākṣasa* that Padmasambhava provided in his justifications for leaving Tibet. The language is eerily similar but the words seem very different to a modern reader when they are applied to the nineteenth-century inhabitants of West Africa rather than the presumably mythological inhabitants of an island to the southwest of Tibet in the eighth century. Though the ways in which similar discourses were deployed at various moments in Himalayan history lies far beyond the scope of this article, this example reminds us that characterizations of foreigners as demonic or inhuman are often tied up with political histories of violence and conquest. Here, we will simply point out that this first published suggestion that Cāmaradvīpa might be identified in the 'new geography' of the world beyond Asia is based not upon considerations of directions measured by physical coordinates but on a rudimentary form of cultural geography that defines places by the customs and behaviors of the inhabitants. Tsenpo Nomonhan made a greater effort to collect and analyze information about the world beyond Tibet than the sort of informal investigation that we saw in Jigmé Lingpa's account of India. He studied the materials available to him in early nineteenth-century Beijing and attempted to integrate those with the cosmological and geographic knowledge from his monastic education and his own observations. If nothing else, the fact that the

tales of savage cannibalistic tribes in Guinea reminded him of Cāmaradvīpa indicates how strongly the intermediate continent was associated with the *rākṣasa*.

Interconnected Worlds

At the beginning of this article, I introduced four different frameworks within which the Copper-Colored Mountain has been situated. By examining the histories of each of these place-worlds, I have hoped to excavate some of the fundamental aspects of the tradition that remain vital despite being often buried deep beneath the surface. The diverse cosmologies and stories from various times and places in Buddhist history and the maps drawn from tantric myth and modern geography are tools at the disposal of the participants in the Copper-Colored Mountain tradition. They are tools wielded by those who recollect and recreate Padmasambhava's home continuously. Though I have attempted to separate these strands of the tradition in order to see each one more clearly, the exercise is an artificial one, as any careful investigation of one thread reveals that it is already interwoven with the others. The Copper-Colored Mountain's status as a realm that is simultaneously present within our world and somehow located in a realm beyond makes it an ideal location for reflecting on the cultural practices of place-making. In the terms of modern physical geography, the Copper-Colored Mountain must be located on one specific island and all other attempts to map it may be understood as distortions rooted in archaic myth and cosmography. However, for the Tibetan authors who engaged in locating the Copper-Colored Mountain over the centuries, the only authentic method for ascertaining the true location is through visionary travel. All other methods, including modern physical geography, are helpful but ultimately insufficient ways to map a place beyond the limitations of ordinary perception.

The textual archaeology carried out here is intended to provide an orientation that will allow for a more sophisticated appreciation of the place-making activities of Tibetan authors who described the Copper-Colored Mountain. The accounts of visionary journeys to the mountain found primarily in the biographies of 'treasure revealers' and meditation instructions that include descriptions of the mountain in the context of guru yoga practices focused on Padmasambhava draw directly from the sources described in this article. At the same time, each engagement with earlier strata of the tradition locates the Copper-Colored Mountain in a new map that incorporates the spatial conceptions available to the author. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the globalization

of Tibetan Buddhism has led to Tibetan Buddhist lamas locating the Copper-Colored Mountain in sites as far-flung as Ayers Rock in Australia and the Grand Canyon in the southwestern United States. Even these more recent attempts to geographically locate the mountain beyond the Himalayan sphere are guided by the stories and maps found in the chronicles of Padmasambhava, in the cosmological systems of the Abhidharma, and in the tantric correspondences between networks of sacred geography and subtle anatomy. All of these perspectives on the mountain are simultaneously tools to be used for interpreting the meaning and significance of the mountain and tools to be used for constructing the mountain again for a new audience.

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Endnotes

1. See Bogin (2013) for a study Mchog gyur gling pa's visionary journey to the mountain.
2. See Hirshberg (2012) for a cogent argument for translating *Zangs gling* as *Copper Palace* rather than the more commonly used *Copper Temple* or more literal *Copper Isle*. See also Doney (2011) on the textual history of different recensions. Here, for convenience, I will cite the 1987 Tibetan paperback edition and the corresponding pages in Erik Pema Kunsang's 1993 translation.
3. Nyang (1987: 147 & 199) and Kunsang (1993: 152 & 208).
4. Nyang (1987: 142 & 146) and Kunsang (1993: 148 & 151).
5. See, for example, Nyang (1987: 148, 151, 152, 154) and Kunsang (1993: 155, 158, 160, 163).
6. See, for example, Belleza (2005) and Karmay (2000).
7. See, for example, the prayer translated in Kohn (1997).
8. See Dalai Lama (2005) and Lopez (2008: 39–72 & 105–152).
9. AKBh 3.56 p.163.15–16.
10. AMVŚ T. 1545 172 p.868a3–4: 有。七洲是人所住。遮末羅洲唯羅刹娑居。 I am grateful to Collett Cox for locating and translating this passage.
11. The only exception to this is Yaśomitra's commentary (seventh to eighth centuries), the *Spuṭārthā Abhidharmakośavyākhyā*, which explains the phrase as referring to “one or the other, Cāmara or Avaracāmara” (AKV p.326.7–8: cāmarāvaracāmarayor anyatarah). None of the Tibetan commentaries on the Kośa seem to pick up on this question.
12. See Appleton (2006), Burnouf (2010 [1844]: 236–237), Lewis (1995, 2000) and Lienhard (1985).

13. For a translation of the version from the *Rgyal rab gsal ba'i me long*, see Sørensen (1994: 117–124).
14. See Sørensen (1994: 513).
15. Nyang Nyi ma 'od zer, 146: *srin yul langka pū ri nas srin po kha 'phyur bas... dzambu'i gling gi mi rnams za bar byed pas*.
16. It is important to note that other versions of the tale do include Siṃhala's eventual conquest of the *rāksasis* and his conquest of the island. For analysis of some of these accounts, see Appleton (2006). In these cases, the island formerly known as Tāmradvīpa is renamed Siṃhaladvīpa (Sri Lanka). This connection is explored in one of the only scholarly publications on the Copper-Colored Mountain to date wherein the author connects the mountain with Mount Malaya, Siṃhaladvīpa, and Tāmradvīpa in order to demonstrate that this is the island identified on Ptolemy's map of the ancient world as Taprobane. See Kaschewsky (1983).
17. This well-known version of Siddhārtha's 'great departure' is one among many, including a biographical tradition in which the child Rāhula has not yet been born and is actually conceived just before the prince's departure. See Strong (1997) and Ohnuma (2012: 139–146).
18. I will address these prayers for rebirth at the Copper-Colored Mountain in a future publication.
19. See Aris (1980), Gyatso (1987), and Mills (2007) on interpretations of this tale.
20. For some studies of the myth, see Iyanaga (1985), MacDonald (1990), Davidson (1991, 1995), Kapstein (1992), Stein (1995), and Mayer (1998). Dalton (2011) provides a complete annotated translation of the version most important for the Nyingmapa figures central to the Copper-Colored Mountain tradition, the ninth-century tantra known as the *Compendium of Intentions Sutra* (*Dgongs pa 'dus pa'i mdo*). My summary of the myth is based upon this work.
21. Lañkā has long been considered an abode of demons ruled over by the demon king Rāvaṇa. The island is perhaps best known from the episodes in the *Rāmāyana* where Rāvaṇa abducts Sita and keeps her as a hostage in Lañkā where he intends to force her to become his bride. Rāma eventually conquers Rāvaṇa and his army of demons and returns to rule Ayodhyā with Sita as his queen.
22. On Oḍḍiyāna, see Chandra (1980), Davidson (2002), Kvaerne (1998), Martin (2009), and Tucci (1940).
23. I have not yet been able to identify this text in the extant writings of Guru Chōwang.
24. 'phags pa dam pa'i chos dran pa nye bar gzhag pa / (Arya saddharmānusmṛtyupasthāna.) [Tr] aṭītacandra., [Tr] Abhyākara Gupta., [Tr] subhūticandra., [Tr] vidyākaraśānti., [Tr] śākyarakṣita., [Tr] śāntākara Gupta., [Tr] tshul khri ms rgyal mtshan / [P. No.] 0953, mdo sna tshogs, 'u 87b8-lu 251a3 (vol.37, p.119) [D. No.] 0287, mdo sde, ya 82a1-sha 229b7. [N] za 118a8-465ult.
25. Adapted from Kunsang (1993) where the translator writes "like the axe handle of the Jambu continent" and explains in a footnote (221, n. 52) that "The Jambu continent is said to have the shape of the head of an axe." If the continent is shaped like the head of the axe, I am not sure what it means to say that the Copper-Colored Mountain is located at the handle. Thus, I read *sog pa* as 'shoulder blade' rather than 'axe' in this context. See also Pruden (531, n. 384): "The form of a carriage, see *Dīgha*, ii. 235" and Pruden (455): "Such is the shape of the continents, and such is the shape of the faces of the persons who reside in them."
26. References to geographical place-markers are a common feature of the itineraries of visionary journeys to the Copper-Colored Mountain found in the biographies of treasure-revealers such as Ratna gling pa, Padma gling pa, Mdo mkhyen brtse ye shes rdo rje, Mchog gyur bde chen gling pa, Bdud 'joms gling pa, and others.
27. Aris (1995: 77), "In Albīrūni's account of India written in c. 1030 the Nicobar Islands appear to be referred to as *Langa*, from the Arabic form *Langabālus*. We read there that after merchants have arrived on the islands: 'The wares are deposited on the shore on leather sheets, each of which is marked with the name of its owner, Thereupon the merchants retire to their ships. On the following day they find the sheets covered with cloves [coconuts?] by way of payment, little or much, as the natives happen to own. The people with whom this trade is carried on are demons according to some, savage men according to others' Sachau (1910, i, p. 309)."
28. Aris (1995: 76–77), "Henri Cordier, commenting on Marco Polo's account of the Nicobar Islands (Necuveran), noted that these islands "are generally known by the Chinese under the name of *Rākchas* or Demons who devour men, from the belief that their inhabitants were anthropophagi ... Sometimes they traded with *Lin-yih* [Champa], but then at night; in day-time they covered their faces." (Yule and Cordier (1903, ii, p.308)).
29. Translation adapted from Aris (1995: 53). In the recent edition of Jigmé Lingpa's *Collected Works* published in China, this passage is found in vol. 7, pg. 55: "lar mtha' khob pa rnams ni sangs rgyas mi shes/ chos mi shes pa yin pas/ sngon rgyal po ra ma ṅas srin po'i rgyal po bsad/ khong gi nu bo rgyal po la bskos nas 'dzam bu'i gling du srin po bsrung bcug pa tsam las raksha thod phreng rtsal gyi mtshan nyid mi shes."

30. The Tibetan word in the title translated by Aris as 'discourse' (*gtam*) is more commonly used in the sense of 'talk' or 'conversation.'
31. On the 'Dzam gling rgyas bshad, see Das (1887), Yongdan (2011), Wylie (1959, 1962 & 1970).
32. I have adopted the dating of 1830 for the text following the evidence presented in Yongdan (2011: 92–93).
33. Btsan po No mon han (1981 [1830], 262). As quoted and translated in Yongdan (2011: 106–107).

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