

RESEARCH NOTE

HIS HOLINESS THE 13TH DALAI LAMA AND BHUTAN HOUSE IN KALIMPONG

*Her Majesty The Queen Mother of Bhutan,
Ashi Kesang Choden Wangchuck*

His Holiness the Great 13th Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobzang Thubten Gyamtso stayed in the newly built Bhutan House in Kalimpong for three months in 1912 as the guest of my grandfather *Raja Ugyen Dorji*¹ and his sister *Ayi Thubten Wongmo*.²

His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama was most kind loving and generous to my grandfather and my grand-aunt, and before he returned to Tibet from Bhutan House, he gave them his beautiful great gilded carved wooden alter and two smaller gilded carved wooden alters filled with the most precious and sacred gilded statues, each of which he placed on his head and prayed deeply over them before placing them on the alter himself.

His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama also left many other treasures, religious brocade robes and many personal robes to my grandfather and grand-aunt.

From Lhasa, His Holiness send to them a large exquisite gilded bronze statue of himself to keep on his throne in the temple (*lhakhang*) in Bhutan House where he stayed.

His Holiness named the temple *Dechen Gatsal*, 'The Happy Garden of Great Bliss'.

His Holiness named the newly built Bhutan House *Mingyur Ngonpar Gawai Phodrang*, 'he Palace of Unchanging Supreme Joy'.

My grand-aunt gave some silver to His Holiness and asked him to have a silver statue of the Thousand-armed and Thousand-eyed Avalokiteshvara (*Chenrezi Chatong Chentong*) made for her in Lhasa. His Holiness had a beautiful silver *Chenrezi* made for my grand-aunt which is the main central image on the alter in the temple in Bhutan House.

After *Raja* Ugyen Dorji passed away on 22nd June 1916 my grand-aunt *Ayi* Thubten Wangmo who was herself ailing at the time, visited Lhasa in the year of the Fire Snake (1918), and had audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. She performed rites for *Raja* Ugyen Dorji in Lhasa, making tens of thousands of offerings in all the temples at the Potala and in Lhasa, and made large offerings, served tea and donated cash to the monks of the three large seats of learning (Sera, Drepung and Ganden) as well as to all other monasteries of various sects for the welfare of the state and the spread of the *Dharma*. At that time His Holiness the Great 13th Dalai Lama bestowed great loving, kindness and high honour upon my grand-aunt *Ayi* Thubten Wangmo, allowing her to be carried in her *dandy*³ right up to the door of His Holiness's Kalzang Phodrang Palace in Norbu Lingka in Lhasa.

His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama gave to our family a decree (*kashog*) written on yellow silk and sealed with His Holiness's great seal.

In the *kashog* His Holiness expresses his gratitude to my grandfather and grand-aunt for their help and hospitality to His Holiness and his entourage during the time His Holiness was residing in Darjeeling (1910-1912), and for working for the state and well-being of Tibet and her people.

Thereafter, on His Holiness's way back to Tibet, gratitude is also expressed for inviting His Holiness to their home, and extending excellent hospitality for several months in the newly built *Mingyur Ngonpar Gawai Phodrang* Palace, 'The Palace of Unchanging Supreme Joy' at Kalimpong.

His Holiness expressed thanks to them for their matchless virtuous deeds.

His Holiness writes in the *kashog* that in future Sonam Tobgye, son of *Raja* Ugyen Dorji will be the next zimpon⁴ of Bhutan in succession to his father. His Holiness awarded *Zimpon* Sonam Tobgye honouring status of nobility and appointed him 4th rank officer (Deputy Minister), and along with presents of promotion, Sonam Tobgye received the title or citation 'eminent and wise' and the square seal with red stamp.⁵

His Holiness ends the *kashog* with his prayers and blessings for those who honour this order at present and in the future.

His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama's *kashog* was issued in the later part of the 12th month of the Fire Snake Year (1918) from the Kalzang Phodrang Palace at the court of the Secular and Religious Seat at Norbulingka where the *Dharma* victory banner of both teachings and practices of the Three Disciplines is flying high to uphold the Doctrine.

A translation of the *kashog* is presented in Appendix I, and a transliteration of the same by Prof. Per K. Sørensen in Appendix II.

Notes

¹ Ugyen Dorji received the title of *raja* around 1910.

² *Ayi*, lit., 'mother', is a honorific term for a lady.

³ *Dandy*, a chair attached to one or two staffs, and carried by four or more men.

⁴ *Zimpon*, Lord Chamberlain.

⁵ The original reads *ching sbi lig zhes pa'I cho lo*, i.e. the title or citation (*cho lo* > Mongolian *èolā*) and *ching sbi lig* (> Mongolian *èing bilig*), meaning 'eminent and wise' (Prof. Per K. S rensen, personal communication).

Appendix I

Translation of the *kashog* presented by His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama to *Raja* Ugyen Dorji and his sister *Ayi* Thubten Wangmo:

[Title]

The decree of the one called Ocean Lama [i.e. Dalai Lama], the immutable Vajradhara [Thunderbolt-Holder], the All-knowing One, the sovereign Ruler of the entire [realm of] the Teaching of Buddha, covering all times and places, the Lord of the three worlds, the Sovereign [i.e. Jinendra] reigning [upon the] injunction of the Buddha stemming from the Noble Country [i.e. India].

[Text]

"This decree is dispatched to all people who enjoy the blazing light of the sun with their head facing towards the sky and in particular, all high and low ranking chiefs, including headmen, elders and general public of the provinces of U and Tsang [Central Tibet] under the administration of the great Government (of Tibet) and also the people of Bhutan [IHo 'Brug].

Raja Ugen Dorji, Zimpon, [residing at] Bhutan House ['brug nang] [in] Kalimpong [ka sbug] and his sister *Ayi* Thubten Wangmo extended their help and hospitality to me [the 13th Dalai Lama] and my entourage while we were residing in Darjeeling, working for the state and well-being of Tibet and her people. Thereafter, on our way back to Tibet, they had again invited us and extended excellent hospitality as earlier for several months in the new built palace Mingyur Ngonpar

Gawai Phodrang ['Palace of Unchangeable Perfect Joy'] at Kalimpong for which I express my thanks to them for their matchless virtuous deeds.

Before her passing away, *Ayi* Thubten Wangmo arrived here in Lhasa in the Fire Snake Year [1918] and called on me. She made offerings surpassing myriads in number in all the temples at the Potala and in Lhasa. They also made large offerings, served tea and donated cash to the monks of the three large seats of learning – Sera, Drepung and Ganden – as well as to all other monasteries of various sects for several times for the welfare of the state and spread of the Doctrine for which there is no reason for anyone to be jealous and competition in the same.

In the future, Sonam Tobgye, son of Raja Ugen Dorji, will be the next Zimpon of Bhutan in succession of his father. I hereby award Zimpon Sonam Tobgye honorary status of nobility and appoint him 4th rank officer of the Government (Deputy Minister) along with the citation 'eminent and wise' and the square seal with red stamp. All the above mentioned people should honour this and extend all services without any question. My prayers and blessings for those who honour this order at present and in future.

Issued on later part of the 12th month of the Fire Snake Year [1918] from the Kalzang Phodrang Palace at the court of secular and religious seat at Norbulingka where the victorious banner of *Dharma*, both teachings and practices of the Three Disciplines is flying high to uphold the Doctrine.”

Transliteration of the decree
By Prof. Per K. Sørensen

[Title]

'Phags pa'i yul nas sangs rgyas kyi bka' lung rgyal dbang 'jig rten gsum mgon dus kun sa steng gi kun khyab rgyal bstan yongs la mnga' dbang bsgyur pa thams cad mkhyen pa 'gyur med rdo rje 'chang rgya mtsho'i bla mar 'bod pa'i gtam



[Seal of 13th Dalai Lama]

[Text of decree:]

rab 'bar nyin mo'i snang bar longs su spyod pa'i skye rgu spyi bo gnam bstan yod do chog dang bye brag dbus gtsang / lho 'brug gi sa'i char 'khod pa'i gnam bskos gzhung sa chen po'i mnga' zhabs su gtogs pa'i rdzong gzhis sne mo ba / spyir btang dmigs bsal gyi dpon 'go che chung / rgan bcu dmangs sogs drag zhan mtha' dag la springs pa / ka sbug 'brug nang gzim ra dza ogyan rdo rje dang / spun a yi thub bstan dbang mo de nyid nas ngos ston 'khor 'phags yul du ljongs bstan 'gro'i bde thabs khra tshugs 'du 'god bgyid sgor rdor gling du bskyod sdod ring dang / de rjes ka sbug tu mi 'gyur mngon par dga' ba'i pho brang gsar bskrun dang 'brel ba'i lta bskyod tshur lam zla shas gdan 'dren bkur bsti zhabs tog sogs bsod nams rnam par dkar ba gsum gyi lhag bsam dad 'dun che ba zhus rjes che zhing / da lam me sbrul lo a yi thub bstan dbang mo'ang 'das khar lha 'byor thog 'di ga'i mjal phyag dang 'brel lha ldan rtse shod rten khag la mchod sprin khri ra

brgal ba dang / gdan sa chen po gsum gyis mtshon ris med
'dus sde mchis so cog la bsnyen bkur mang 'gyed yang yang
snga phyir du zab rgyas bstar ba bcas gang sa nas bstan pa
chab srid kyi lar rgyar dad 'dun lhag bsam snying zhen brtsi
su che bar bzos sgo mi dman pa dgos nges ma zad / gzhan
'gran yong don med cing / slad kyang pha shul bu 'dzin slad
la 'tsho skyong gang ci 'brug nang gzim bu 'di nyid kyi skabs
su babs par brten 'brug nang gzim ka sbug ra dza ogyan rdo
rje de nyid kyi bu 'brug nang gzim bsod nams stobs rgyal 'di
par gzhung zhabs mi drag rim bzhi spyi 'gro'i go gnas dang /
gdan thob gsol ras thog ching sbi lig zhes pa'i cho lo dang /
tham ka gru skor / rtags dam dmar po bcas kyi gzengs bstod
bgyis pa yin gshis 'di pas 'gro 'dug bgyi pa yin lugs su spyod
par khyod gong 'khod tshang mas lung dang mthun pa'i phan
char gang 'gro las / gnod 'gal log par 'gro rigs gtan nas ma
byed / tshul bzhin sgrub pa rnam la 'phral yun kun tu dge
ba'i skyabs 'jug kyang bgyis pa yin / zhes go bar bya ba'i yi ge
me mo sbrul lo'i rgyal zla'i dmar phyogs kyi gral tshes dge bar
bslab gsum rnam par dkar ba bshad sgrub chos kyi rgyal
mtshan mngon par sgrenge shing / lugs gnyis nyin mor
spyod pa'i dge mtshan mchog tu bzhad pa'i mdun sa nor
gling bde skyid kun dga' 'khyil pa'i bskal bzang pho brang
nas bris /



[Seal]