

# Khri Srong lde brtsan and Padmasambhava's Travels through His Land.

## Transcript

### Robert Mayer

So, welcome everyone. This is the fifth talk in the second series of our Padmasambhava Udyan and Tibet seminar. We've had a really excellent programme this Michaelmas term, details of which can be found on our website. But this is our last talk until Hilary term when we have Brandon Dotson on the 4th of February. All of our talks are published as video podcasts, freely available from our website, from Apple Podcasts, from the Oxford University podcast page and from other sites too. So please try not to interrupt during the recording. However, the discussion periods after the talks will not be podcast and are open to the entire audience. So please feel free to express yourselves and ask questions then. Today we are delighted to welcome Professor Lewis Doni, who's widely recognised as one of the leading scholars on Vadma Sambhava. Lewis gained most of his education in the UK, but has spent much of his academic career in Europe. He completed his BA in Religious Studies at the University of Lancaster and then went on to complete a PhD from SOAS at the University of London in 2011. Following that, he had positions at the LMU in Munich, at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, and in the well-known Religious Studies faculty in Bochum in Germany. He's currently Professor of Tibetan Studies at the Rheinische Friedrich Wilhelm Universitet in Bonn. Lewis has worked on early Tibetan life writing, empire and religion, and on Tibetan relations with South Asia and the impact on social and labour dependencies within Sino-Tibetan communities around Dunhuang. Lewis has also studied later Southern Tibetan Buddhist historiography and ritual and their relations to cultural identities and ecologies in the Himalayas. His publications include a very well-known monograph entitled the Zanglingma, the first Padmasambhava biography, published by the International Institute for Tibetan and Buddhist Studies in 2014. He's also produced an edited volume, Bringing Buddhism to Tibet, History and Narrative in the Waje Manuscript, published by De Greta in 2021, and a monograph co-authored with Brandon Dotson, Producing Buddhist Sutras in 9th Century Tibet, the Sutra of Limitless Life, and its Dunhuang copies kept at the British Library. As well as that, of course, he's published a great number of very interesting and important articles. So Lewis, many thanks for taking the time to speak to us today, and over to you.

## Lewis Doney

Okay, thank you very much. That was very kind. Welcome, everybody. I'm going to share my screen. Okay, so you should be able to see the full screen. Is that right? Great. Super. So, yeah, today I'm going to be giving a little bit of background on the Emperor, who is much connected in the histories and biographies of Padmasambhava with the great master as inviting him to Tibet and as one of his tantric disciples. I'll look a little bit at the early sources on the emperor, Chui Song Detsen. And then look at a few descriptions of Padmasambhava's coming to Tibet from three different perspectives and what kind of light that sheds, especially on the kind of religious substrata of the land through which Padmasambhava travelled. So, as we'll be seeing, Relationships between Teresa and Getsen, who lived in the late 8th century, and Pamasambhava are unclear due to lack of sources from the earliest period, but much is made of him in the late tradition. So I'll focus on these representations. A Buddhist of the end of the Dharma, included in the Washi, from the 11th or 12th century. An indigenous Buno account of around the same time, perhaps a little later, in which Padmasabhava is also depicted, but in a different way. And they see the period of decline as being in part to be on the Buddhism to Padmasabhava. And then, thirdly, we'll look later at the European missionary, who travelled to Tibet in the early 18th century, whose narrative echoes some of the earlier accounts, seemingly independently, in different interesting ways. So, whereas these depictions are often separated in scholarship, I'm beginning to try to think about them comparatively and narratologically and see how these different narratives can be trained and thought about in terms of power and how these affect the depiction of the relationship between Teresa and Padma Sambaba. So, a little background: the Tibetan Empire, from around 600 to around the CE, began in the Yarlung Valley, and the family Yarlung spread out from there through connections with other Tibetan groups. and then with ethnicities in the 7th century. The head of this society was a temple, which could be rendered as emperor. And this was the very pinnacle of society, the one based upon which time and space is measured in certain contexts within the empire. but it's also a primus into Paris type of rulership. So the other great families of the area also are very important and key to the expansion of the empire, and they are rewarded for their loyalty and for helping to make the empire great. Due to this, in the 7th and 9th century, 7th and 9th century, There was an expansion from the Tibetan world out into non-Tibetan speaking areas, taking Tibetan with it, then later administrative culture, and also mythology and ideas of kinship. And lastly, Buddhism, when Buddhism was introduced into the Tibetan Empire. There was a cosmopolitan centre, not a capital, for this is a kind of mobile court that would go around the loyal ministers' homes. But it was also a sense of centre and periphery. So the outskirts, the edges and borders of the empire, were seen as important sources of wealth, but not given the same kind of status as those from the centre. And as Kazushi Iwao has shown, this may have been responsible in some ways for the fall of the

empire. But this empire fall was depicted in very different ways later on in the narratives that looked back on this period as a Buddhist rather than a military mighty golden age. What the religion or the religions of this period are is still being investigated. So the kind of binary between Buddhism and Bern that turns up in a lot of later narratives It's quite indicative of what we see in the earliest sources. There do seem to be some kind of folk religious traditions that survive, especially in the peripheries, and indications of so-called royal religion. So ideas of mythology about the emperors, about their place in the world, about how they came to be, and their relation with the subjects of Greater Tibet. Now, I'll look a little bit about these in this talk and how they get transformed in the later period in different ways, depending on the perspective of Buddhism, Pun, and also those coming from outside of Tibet. Now, it all changed with the introduction of Buddhism as a state religion. As Christina Scherer-Shalb has suggested, this wasn't the state religion. There wasn't a sense of exclusivity, and possibly these folk religions and royal religious practices continued. So this is a sense of the empire, and also giving some indications of where some of these sources for the history and especially the self-representation of the emperors comes from. So these blue dots are the stone and rock inscriptions. The orange are bronze, including bell inscriptions that date from the Buddhist period. Down in the centre, here around the Yalong Valley is where we get most of this inscriptional evidence, because again, this was very much the centre. So, focusing in then on the late 8th century, Trisong Detsen was born in 742. We know this from the old Tibetan annals. When he was born, he was known as Song Detsen. And the title tree was bestowed on him when he was enthroned around 755. And then he lived till around 800. His death dates, as described by Brandon Dodson, are unclear, but he seems to have lived until the end of that century. He ruled at its height. And the map that I showed you, the grey area of the Tibetan Empire is as it was during his reign. He even got so far east as to Sak Chang'an, nowadays Xi'an, in 763 and put a puppet emperor on the throne for a while. So this was a powerful Central Asian empire. Surrounding it were a number of different states, kingdoms, other empires that had, in one way or another, had some connection with Buddhism. And so it seemed sensible or logical that Theresong Detsen, inspired by this and also by the already existing heritage, especially in the centre of Buddhism, at the court of the Yalong, invited an Indian abbot, Shantarakshita, to be his spiritual preceptor, or he calls it a spiritual friend, his Giwe Shinyan, Kalani Mitra. And he produces a number of edicts that proclaim support for Buddhism. The earliest evidence that we have don't suggest anything of a relationship that he may have had with Padmasambhava, but the kind of areas in which Padmasambhava, as we shall see, was working, do seem to be those that were under his control. So it may be possible. And as I said, the beginnings of Buddhism as an established religion in Tibet didn't end the pre-existing rights and traditions of the Empire. So, one of the themes of this lecture, apart from Theresa and his possible relation with is the idea of what could be considered the non-Buddhist, but also non-Bunpo religious elements existing. at this time. Now, the caveat that should be made at

the outset is that there are no pre-Buddhist texts. So in Tibetan, because the earliest examples of Tibetan texts, we have, for example, the Lijiang inscription and some date from around the period of when Buddhism had already entered into Tibet. So it's always a difficult issue to try and say what could be outside of the sphere of Buddhist influence. And so I prefer to talk about kind of non-Buddhist rather than previous elements in terms of at least what we can tell from the evidence. So there are documents from the borders of the empire, Dunhuang, which we'll come on to, But it's difficult to know how indicative these elements are of central Tibet at the time. And we have a later conflation, beginning with the evidence from the texts from about the late 10th century, early 11th century, of a conflation between the religious traditions and a so-called Bun religion. Now, recent studies have done a lot to try and unpack some of these issues in terms of terminology, rituals, and also historiography. And I would point towards Daniel Brunsky's work and also the work of Tony Huber, who have both in different ways tried to go back towards the imperial period and see what the ritual was like. Also, Joanna Bielek has been doing work in this direction too recently. So, with Truesong Deadsen's version of Buddhism, we get the construction of Samye Monastery, perhaps not the first temple or monastery, but one of the earliest and very powerful in terms of symbology, built within the heart of the Yalong dynasty, where the tombs of the emperors are. This is really putting the mark of Buddhism in the landscape of Tibet. And then to the side of the entrance of Samye, We then get the Samye inscription, which is one of these edicts in which Tru Stetson says that he will support Buddhism from here on in. This is the Samye pillar. Helga Ubach has suggested that this may not be the original, but it seems to reflect the original orthography and text. So, what does it say? Here, Teresa says that the seats of the triple gem, the Buddha Dharma and Sangha, established in the temples of Rasa and Dragma and other places, and the practice of the Buddha Dharma, the Sangi Gicha, shall never be rejected and never be destroyed. Everyone, sovereign father, son, and noble ministers, swore solemn oaths and made pledges, invoking his witnesses the gods, the Hla, of this world and beyond this world, and also all non-human spirits. A detailed text of the proclamation exists separately. So we see here very much a statement in favour of Buddhism, suggesting that already these temples of Rasa and Draghma this is Samye existed and that the Buddha Dharma was already had some heritage in Tibet, but stating that it will never be rejected and never be destroyed. So this means not only will this emperor vow to complete the patronage of the site, but also he is swearing that his sons and also the ministers, which include the great families, will do so also. And they have sworn oaths to this effect. Now then, here we bring in the deities of the area. These include Buddhist deities, the deities beyond this world, Also the deities within the Buddhist cosmology of this world, the protected deities and others, but also non-human spirits. And we know from other evidence, the deities or spirits who are responsible for these oathing ceremonies. So these are the kind of meta-humans or non-human spiritual actors who are also part of the landscape, surrounding Samye, the Tibetan Empire as a whole, and protecting not

only the empire, but now protecting Buddhism. And there's an administrative element to this as well. A detailed text exists. separately, which is also to be promulgated around the Tibetan Empire. So the monks and other Buddhists in the center seem to have been responsible not only for spreading Buddhism, but also for spreading administrative texts. And so with the language, with the laws, with the other texts, Buddhism started to spread. and responsible for this spread were not only the human actors, but also the meta-human agents. The first edict has another copy, which we know from... and especially the Cape Gantern. And it says, again, on this topic of other deities, invoking as witnesses to the oath, thus made, all the Buddhas of the 10 directions, all of the holy law, all the community of the enlightened, the self-perfected Buddhas, the disciples, whatever order of gods there are in heaven and earth, the personal gods, the kula of Tibet, all the nine gods and the nagas, the demons and the spirits, let it be made known that this edict is unalterable. So here we are in this kind of, in this relationship of the oathing ritual that takes as its witnesses every deity in the Buddhist cosmology, but also the local deities. We see a shift here from the four directions of imperial edicts to the 10 directions of the Buddha, but the deities of the empire are still found a place within some of these religious texts. So as Rolf Stein has suggested, these religious traditions, what he calls the unnamed religion, continued after the adoption of Buddhism. He says, when in the second edict, a longer version of this edict known as the Kanchi or the authoritative explanation, the king, having become an adult, decided to propagate Buddhism anew, fears were expressed by certain people. Some said that Buddhism was not the ancient religion of Tibet. The rites of Buddhism, perhaps, Chuga, were not in accord with the cult of the Kula. Nothing was good. And he notes, by ancient religion, he designates here the indigenous religion. The latter has, of course, continued to exist and to enjoy a similar role under the Buddhist kings. In the first edict that we just saw, the Kula are cited as witnesses of the royal oath, in relation to the minor Buddhist divinities. So here we have a complex interrelation between Buddhism and non-Buddhist religions, with some sense that when Buddhism was established, there may have been some fears or some resistance among certain groups within Tibet of Buddhism. But there are others who were supportive, And under the empire, Buddhism flourished and even flourished after the end of the empire. So moving on to this, our thoughts for representations of Theresong Detsen and imperial Buddhism and other religions comes from this great treasure trove of texts from cave 17. in the Mogao cave complex of Dunhuang, marked here on the map, which from the mid to late 8th century, during the reign of Theresa Getsen, fell under the rule of the Tibetans until about the end of the imperial period. So this is a great source for the everyday life of subjects under the Tibetan empire. Also, the kind of administrative texts that were spread from the center out to the edge. And lastly, religious traditions that were continuing under the empire. So on Theresan Deathsand specifically, we have the Old Tibetan Chronicle, which follows the kind of indigenous eulogy form found on the imperial Dorin or the stone inscription. It largely talks about

relations between emperors and their ministers and the history of the empire going back into the mythic past. But right at the end, it does talk about Buddhism when it eulogizes Theresang Deten. And it eulogizes him both as an emperor, following the older tradition of the royal religion, but also as a bodhisattva. Then there's evidence of what kind of religious traditions Teresong Detsen was supportive of, including Chinese Chan, known in Japan as Zen, which later on is de-emphasised in terms of the imperial patronage. Then there is Indic Mahayana Buddhism connected with Pure Land, Sukavati, also the very famous Bhadracharya Pranidhana prayer. And these have narratives about how this tradition came into Tibet and was supported by which is very positive about him and his relationship with spiritual masters, especially his spiritual preceptor, Shantarakshita. Then there's the early descriptions of connections between the Empire and Tantric Buddhism and connections between Theresong Detsen and the mythic King Tsa. that is also linked to Tibet in the Manjushri Mula Kalpa version of IOL Tib J380. I should just mention, for those who are not familiar with the Dunhuang Corpus, IOL Tib J are the documents that are now kept in the British Library, and Pelio Tibetan are those that are now kept in the Bibliotheque National de France in Paris. So lastly, more is made of the Indic royal connections of the emperors, repainting them in the mode of Buddhist kings, following back to the tradition of Emperor Ashoka. Also in the latter of these texts, IOL Tip J 4663, the local deities are incorporated into the tradition and find their place within the cosmology, though in a somewhat inferior position to the great deities of Buddhism. Lastly, from Dunhuang, we see the beginnings of a narrative that stigmatizes the imperial non-Buddhist religion and these traditions under a reified term. So sometimes they're called the little religion, sometimes they're called the black religion, and even towards the end they do seem to be called pun. So for example, one text suggests that those who are attached to the little religion propitiate the deities in the sky, And even if a single good thing occurs, they say that they don't need the excellence religion, i.e. Buddhism. The path of joy is like opening a door. One feels liberated. The little religion offers no sustenance and is useless. It is like being ill and drinking medicine that has no benefit. You will fall into the land of suffering. There is no other expert. You have to do it yourself. So the move here from the kind of well-being religion of Tibet towards Buddhism being ultimately responsible for well-being and also for liberation is happening here. And so this is one of these trajectories that continues on. So we see a greater emphasis on the religious and particularly Buddhist aspect of Teresa and Deadsen, and a more of a criticisms of the other religious practices that were happening during the empire. And then lastly, we add to the mix Padmasambhava. The Dunhuang descriptions of Padmasabava seem to be the earliest that we have. We have some evidence that Cathy Cantwell and Romare have discussed and was also mentioned in Dorje's talk last week, especially the Menga Awe Chengua. cautiously attribute to Padmasambhava in some sense. Then there are descriptions of him in other contexts, and Rob and Kathy have also looked at the depiction of a certain Pema Gyalpo, the Lotus King, who is a great tantric master in this

context. Then there is Peleo-Tibetan 307, which is about taming local deities, the Tenma goddesses, where Padmasamava is responsible for this taming and begins to exhibit one of the main traits that he has throughout his later depictions, which is as the arch tamer of the land for the benefit of Buddhism. And Jacob Dalton has looked at this text and also revisited IOL 644, another text, which describes Padmasambhava as a lupon, a master, and as a perfect tantric practitioner. And even as a second Buddha, Sangi Nipa, which is a quite early depiction and something that returns in later texts when the Padmasambhava is described in even more apotheosized terms and connected much more with ultimate enlightenment. But we can see already in these texts that the mythographic framework, the superhuman abilities of Padmasambhava exist. So we do not have any way particularly to get back to a kind of human depiction of Padmasambhava. And the textual tradition that we have suggests that we shouldn't in any way be looking for one. That within the tradition, we always have a somewhat deified Padmasambhava. Then lastly, we have... Paleo-Tibetan 44, which puts this master between Yang Li Shi in Nepal and India, travelling to Nalanda Monastery to collect Vajrakilaya texts. Matthew Kapstein and then Robin Cathy have worked on this narrative. But in none of these do we see an explicit connection with the Emperor Theresa Deton. This connection does turn up in a history that seems to date from about the 11th to 12th century. The testimony of Ba, the Bashe or Washe, that has been worked on by a number of scholars, starting with Ross Sta, and including Tibetans, and Europeans. And more recently, a version or a part of a narrative that is also included in the testimony was found in the Dunhuang Corpus by Saman Sky, who spoke earlier in this series, and Kazushi Iwa, who I mentioned earlier. So we can date elements of this narrative relatively early. But as I've stated in a book that I edited on this, the text itself does seem to be a composite element made-up of numerous strata. So there is some caution to be had in reading its context. and the way that Padmasambhava and his relationship with Teresan Detsan are depicted there. To give a sense of the kind of narrative elements in the Washi, which the manuscript of which dates maybe to the kind of 14th or 15th century, but the text may be to the 11th or 12th. We start from the earlier emperors who had a relationship with Buddhism, but little or nothing on the emperors who didn't, leading up to Teresong Getsen, who is the main focus of the narrative. Like the old Tibetan chronicle, the emperor is also in relation with his ministers, and one of them Selnan of the Ba clan, who is, his name is spelled Senan in this text, is a Buddhist and is sent to India to invite the abbot Shantarakshita. So this takes up quite a lot of the narrative. Then we have a description of Shantarakshita himself recommending the invitation of Padmasambhava. And Padmasambhava is in this text for a short while, but doesn't stay for long due to the calumny of ministers who are antithetical to Buddhism. He is sent away before the construction of Samyu. So this is a narrative which doesn't continue on into later histories. But something about the way that Padmasambhava is there for a kind of a portion of the text, but doesn't play a role in it, has suggested to some, including Michael Willis in the book that I edited, that

Padmasambhava's narrative here may be interpolated and may be a sign of his rising importance. within Tibet, that it was felt necessary to include him in a history that may not have originally included him. So then the narrative carries on with Shantarakshita, Srinang and Theresang Detsen constructing Samiya Monastery, going into debate with non-Buddhists, and then eventually the famous debate between the Madhyamaka and the Cham, or the Gradual and the Southern schools, which takes up quite a lot of the text, before the text concludes with certain endings. So, returning to Theresa and Detsen, he seems to be more in the mould of Ashoka, and in this text. And there are certain elements which implicitly appear to reflect certain elements of the descriptions of Buddhist kingship that come from the Ashoka Vedana or from Sri Lankan Bhamsa traditions on the great emperor. Certain elements such as his pre-incarnation along with Bhasenang, his conversion and teaching by Shantarakshita, the non-violent edict that he writes, though he is never this Chandra Shoka of the Shoka Vadana, the pilgrimage, which he doesn't perform, but is performed perhaps as proxy by Barcelona, and then the invitation of statuary, and the construction of monasteries and stupas. Then finally, this Samye debate and suggestions at his death of a pooria, or certain doubts that he has not done enough for the promulgation of Buddhism. This seems to be similar to the Ashoka Vadana, but it also, strangely and in contrast to the Dunhuang documents, suggests a kind of change in status to the emperor who now has certain tendencies, certain mundane characteristics, which makes him not the great Bodhisattva king of earlier representations. So this first shift, I've argued elsewhere, is in turn is related to the importance of these religious masters, Shantarakshita and Padmasambhava, who are non-Tibetans invited from the kind of heartlands of Buddhism in South Asia to Tibet in order to try and tame the land and spread Buddhism amongst the wild inhabitants who are difficult to tame. Shantarakshita, first of all, is the abbot of Nalanda and the son of the king of Sahor, acts as a preceptor and spiritual superior to the emperor. He is also asked to leave the Tiben court for his own safety, but these show his position as great status, and when he returns, he is in a spiritual superior position to the emperor. Shortly, this is shown in a kind of rupture of the type of narrative which we saw in edicts, which is this authoritative explanation, kamchi. The subtitle of the washi is a kamchi. And here, this depiction, which focuses very much on Theresa's dead set in a very positive light, first of all gives a bit of backstory through the eyes of Shantarakshita. When he arrives, he talks to the minister Barcelon, who acts as a proxy of the emperor, saying, innumerable lives previously. You were my main disciple, generating the thoughts of enlightenment. And you were named, you were named Yesi Wangpo, which is what Barcelon's ordination name turns out to be. He then asked the Emperor, Teresang Detan, Did you forget that while adorning and guarding our temple at the time of the doctrine of Buddha Ersang, Kashyapa, we prayed together that the Dharma might be established in Tibet? So here we see the sense of pre-ordination, predetermination that Shantarakshita is aware of, but the Emperor Theresang Detsen, as a more mundane figure, is not party to. He doesn't have that kind

of sight. Now, this is in terms of wisdom. Then, in terms of power, Shantarakshita recommends Theresang Detsen invite Padmasambhava by comparing him favorably to the Buddha in terms of his mantric abilities. It says, once upon a time, when the Bhagavan was dwelling in the world, there was no one among all the gods and the naga of the Indian subcontinent, Jambudvipa, who was not bound by the order of the Buddha. However, in this land of Tibet, gods and nagas have escaped from control and seem to have prevented the emperor from practicing the holy doctrine. At present, nobody in Jambudvipa possesses greater powers in the use of mantra than the master from Udiyana named Padmasambhava. So here, Padmasambhava is in a preeminent position to act his arch tame, to tame the land, something that not even Shantarashita could do. And so he is invited. When he arrives, he extends the life of the emperor by means of a vase of longevity ritual. But the emperor, under the advice of his anti-Buddhist ministers, grows suspicious and asks him to return to his homeland. But this, leaving Tibet halfway through, actually raises the status of Padmasambhava in comparison to the mundane emperor. As Padmasambhava believes, he says, I thought that the land of Tibet, in the land of Tibet, the doctrine could be established very firmly, that the whole country of Tibet could be led to virtue, and that it could become a prosperous and happy land. However, the emperor, being narrow-minded and greatly jealous, suspected that I might cease his political power. I do not even desire the political power of the Chakravatin. So how could I long for the political power of such a king? So here, Pamasambhava is acting to tame the land of Tibet and its local deities who are wild, but once tamed, will act as positive protectors of the Dharma. But the emperor is jealous and narrow-minded. And compared to a Chakravartin, the great wheel-turning king such as Ashoka, he falls far short. Not only that, but Padmasambhava states that because he has been asked to leave Tibet before it is probably tamed, there will be a decline in the Dharma. So this is another theme that we see that comes up in a number of different texts over time, that due to his mundane status, his lack of wisdom, Theresang Detsen is responsible for the decline of the Dharma. And it's actually in the Samye debate that the first elements of this decline seem to come about. The debate, as depicted in the Bashe, seems to reflect what has talked about in terms of the end of the Dharma tradition. A king fearing the karmic consequences of his bloody military campaign will turn to his Buddhist preceptor for his vice. Anxious to gain merit, the king will follow the advice, inviting all the Buddhist monks in the uninhabited world to a great religious feast. But by bringing together monks from many separate lineages, the king will inadvertently create conflict in the sangha. On the occasion of a great religious assembly, this conflict escalates into open warfare, resulting in the death of the last remaining arhat. The monks will in turn or kill each other, leaving not a single one of their number alive. And with that, the history of the Buddhist religion on earth comes to an end, leaving the good king to mourn the result of his well-intentioned action. Now, as a history of the coming of Buddhism to Tibet, this element cannot be completely followed. This is no end of the Dharma

tradition, but it has elements of this which seek, in turn, raised the status of Padmasambhava as one who prophesied this decline, just as Shantarakshita was one who was wise to see the predestination of Buddhism in Tibet. So, in later traditions, in the Sang Limba, which is the first full-length biography of Padmasambhava, and then in later works of biography and also incorporated into Tibetan histories. We see this narrative where Theresong Dedson is a very positive figure, but in some ways he is also clouded by his worldly status and needs Padmasambhava to act as his moral goad. and also to then become his tantric master and to bestow on him the texts that will ultimately be the cause of his enlightenment. So this is quite a shift from the imperial narratives, but generally still quite positive for Theresong Detsen and for Param Zambara. Moving now to another tradition, the indigenous religion of Bern. The growth of the Yungzhong Bern traditions in the 10th and 11th century happened in dialogue with Buddhism. So their histories share certain elements with the Buddhist ones, just as the Buddhist ones seem to have been influenced by other narrative traditions going on in Tibet itself. So they are mirror images of each other. And they tell the story of the empire, also as a religious narrative, rather than a kind of tale of military or of secular relations between emperors and ministers. But for them, ultimately, the age of decline happened during the reign of Theresa Detsen because of the invitation of Padmasambhava and Shantarakshita. So here, there is a shift in views and similar story arcs are then given a quite different moral interpretation. So, the persecution of Bern under Truesong Detsen is seen as responsible for the decline of Bern that will then be rejuvenated later on in the post-imperial period. And it should be noted that this is an early depiction of the imperial period. Later histories are more accommodating, and Pavasamava finds a place, perhaps from the 14th century onwards, as the son of Jempa Namka, the main hero of some of these histories, and also as a fully enlightened being later on. So, this is a kind of a snapshot of a certain Time, just as the was. So, one particular history, the spread and decline of the Pern religion, the also known as the is has been studied. very recently in the masterful work of Pierre Kwerner and Dan Martin, Dremper's proclamation, which has been a long time in coming. It's a grand narrative that starts with the beginning of time, with the geography of the world, but then hones in on the Tibetan period and the travas of Bun during this period. The hero of the narrative during the reign of Theresa Ndetsan is not Padmasambhava or Barcelona, but the Bhum Bhum Master Jempa Namka. And Padmasambhava enters the narrative when this hero dreams of him and Shantarakshita they will come to Tibet and destroy the dominion of Pun. So, in a similar way to Padmasambhava, he has clairvoyant abilities and can see this, which indeed does come to pass. So, other elements of the Mira narrative is that Theresam Detsen invites Santarakshita and Padmasambhava due to their previous aspirational prayers, as is stated in the Washi. But these are given an ulterior motive, fulfilling promises to the kings of India and China to conquer the king of Tibet by spreading Buddhism there in a future life. So here there is a kind of a demonic work at play, and Buddhism is seen not as the great liberator of Tibet, but as part of its downfall.

And the Tibetan Empire is very much tied in with the well-being of Pun. So when Pun is flourishing, the empire flourishes. And when Buddhism is in the ascendancy, then Pun and the empire suffer. So during his early rule, and the country knows only Pun, and it's a prosperous kingdom due to this practice. And his Bonpo ministers are loyal to him, and his priests do the necessary work of taming the land. The non-Buddhist deities here include lower deities, spirits of the earth and of the sky, that also in the Bunpo cosmology need to be tamed. So it's not that the Bun are identified with this imperial non-Buddhist religion, though certain rituals they have connect with that. They also have a kind of enlightenment-based religion at this time that finds a place for those spirits once properly tamed. So when Buddhism comes in, this upsets the natural order and upsets the land. And the Bonpo ministers, who are seen here not as kind of columnus or evil, but as caring for the well-being of the state, resist the introduction, including the uncle of Theresa Detsen, who here is named Nanam Mashang Trompakyu, who states that Buddhism may be okay for South Asia, but it does not fit with the Tibetan tradition. He says that a bird that adopts the way of the fish drowns and dies. A fish that adopts the way of a bird dies of thirst. Eventually, this leads to ask Shantarakshita and to leave, just as in the, but this doesn't reflect well on the masters, but in fact on the bumpers who have managed to resist their influence. It doesn't reflect particularly well on either. But the Bonpo priests are able to tame the land spirits, the Dege, the Damla Dop, and peace returns for a while. This isn't to last, though, and the masters return and then cause the decline of the Dharma. They convert the king through promises of longevity, just as in the Washi. And through his karmic bonds with them, he agrees. And despite the protests of the subjects who are all on the side of Bun, they spread Buddhism and the very land rises up. So it says, the protected deities being angered, the Yalong River flowed upwards. The lustre of the Lord's soul turquoise was impaired. His soul lake dried up from the very bottom. In the viral dominions, many types of infectious diseases and tumults arising, the entire realm of Tibet was unhappy, and the sovereign authority of the state diminished like the point of a needle. In the torrent of the Yalong River flowing upwards, many acharya, teachers, meaning the Buddhist masters, servants of Padmasambhava, were carried away by the water. And although the king requested Padmasambhava to bring down the water of the Yalang River, it was not brought down. So here it seems that Padmasambhava is included in this narrative as part of the decline of the Dharma. He cannot be ignored, just as in the Vashe, he has a place. But he is portrayed negatively, and his power is ultimately inferior to that of the hero of the narrative, Jempa Namkar. So, to conclude, looking from the outside, just like to talk a little bit about another description of Theresong Detsen and his relationship with Parmasan Baba. From the Missionary Ippolito Desideri. So he travelled to Tibet, lived in Lhasa from 1716 to 1721, learned Tibetan, and was quite kind of positively inclined towards Tibetans, but not towards the religion. But he wrote a detailed account of the religion in which Padmasambhava comes up and is focused on through one of his major biographies, the Pimakatang tradition. He says he

wishes to give a rather detailed account of what the Tibetans believe about their printable idol, i.e. Padmasabhava, and an idea of the style of the book in which I found these stories. So he seems not to have looked into the Bunpo accounts, but Similarly to Bonpo accounts, perhaps there is a narrative that is Buddhist being told in his account, but the moral that he draws is quite different and more antagonistic towards Padmasambhama. The difference, though, is that he also denies the power of the spirits and the role of taming the land in this process, which is something that both the Bunpo and the Buddhist accounts find important. So he is also quite favourably inclined to Theresa and Daetsen and tells the story of his conversion to Buddhism towards a kind of European audience, but also following some of the narratives of Tibetan Buddhism. Since time immemorial, there had been no sort of religion in the kingdom of Tibet. The inheritance were like brute beasts, undisciplined, ignorant, rightless, without laws and disobedient to the kings who tried to rule them. When Urgen was at Dorje Den, Bodh Gaya, the king of Tibet was a man of great intelligence and sagacity, large-hearted and liberal, in short, possessed of all the qualities which make a good ruler. Hearing that temples existed in other kingdoms, where a power greater than any existing on Earth was worshipped, he was seized with a desire to introduce such laws into Tibet and to found a religion. So here, He follows a certain idea of the Buddhist historiography that there was no good religion in Tibet before the kings, and that Tibetans were difficult to tame. And he understands the impetus of Theresa Detsen, but following the kind of ideas of perhaps kind of European or Near East kingship, without going really deeply into the connection of the emperor with the land or with his military imperial status. So, for Padmasambhava, then he follows a narrative which sees Tresong Detsen as good-intentioned, but duped by Padmasambhama, perhaps in a similar way to elements of the Bonpo account. He says, A short-sighted and inexperienced man feels a pain in his hand, but does not perceive that the red and fragrant rose which he is tempted to pick is armed with thorns. Thus, the hearts of the unhappy king and the unfortunate Tibetans were pierced by the horrible deeds of the infamous magicians. but they failed to understand that the master, Pema Sambhava, was the one to fear, and that under the color of religion and the fragrance of prayers, temples and sacrifices, lay hid error and malefic thorns. So from his perspective, from the perspective of a Christian missionary, he is of an accord with Buddhist historiography, that religion was necessary to pacify Tibet, but he goes in a different direction, one perhaps more towards the early Bunpo historiography and seeing that heretical Buddhism was the wrong choice for Chui Sangdensen. This portrayal, bringing peace, passivity and decline to Tibet, It can then be traced in the scholarship of later Europeans and others on Tibet going up to indeed the 21st century. So to conclude, these accounts are from very different traditions, different times. They allude to different narratives. They're formed within different cosmologies, but they do share certain formal qualities that I think are worth comparing in the future. For example, their shared basis in the tradition of depicting one's own religion as superior to those of others, and this having an impact on the poetics of the

world creation that the Buddhists, the Punpas, and the Jesuits created, and the moral conclusions that they draw from similar narrative arcs. These narratives exert asymmetrical power on the other religion. So within the Buddhist narratives, they tend to criticize and then to demonize the non-Buddhist religions under the reified term of pun. And as a strategy of existence and survival, perhaps, the Bunpo historians of the early period do a similar thing in the dynamic of depiction of Buddhism. And they see their own tradition in contrast as inherently pure. And this is something that seems to be behind the narratives of Desideri also. Lastly, such hegemonic narratives can be reinforced, but they can also be re-envisioned. They can be questioned, forgotten over time, and the later traditions of these narratives are much more complex. But I think I hope to have shown the potential for looking at Padmasambhava in Tibet his relationship with the land and with the Emperor Chu Seng Detsen, that can act as a mirror to the shifting dynamics of power that were exerted on Tibet and within it. So with that, I'll say thank you and I welcome any comments or questions.