

Title: Tibetan Religious Guidebook (gnas yig): Studies on an Endangered Literary Genre on the Selected Examples

The Tibetan guidebook genre explores the religious landscape and its natural environment, contributing significantly to shaping Tibetan culture on a large scale. It traces its origins to Buddhism and its importance in the daily life of Tibetans, particularly through the activities of the Buddhist Masters such as Padmasambhava from the 8th century and Tsongkhapa, who are the most prominent religious figures in the Tibetan guidebooks, connecting the Tibetans across the provinces i.e. Central Tibet, Kham and Amdo (currently Tibet Autonomous Region, Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan).

In my research, I will analyze 3 religious guidebooks from the 3 regions of Tibet, Central Tibet, Kham and Amdo:

1. Central Tibet: *Dbus gtsan gi gnas rten rags rim gyi mts'an byan mdor bsdus dad pa'I sa bon zes by aba bzugs so* by 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po

2. Kham: *Bsgrub brgyud karma kam tsang gi gnas chen gdan sa chen po gnas yig legs pa gcig bzhugs so*, by the 6th Shamar Mipham Chos kyi 'dbang phyug

3. Amdo: *Rgyal mo rong gi gnas chen dmu rdo* by Sangs rgyas gling pa (bon po gter ston)

The authors belong to different religions and institutions since 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po and the 6th Shamar Mipham Chos kyi 'dbang phyug are Buddhists from the rNying ma and bKa' brgyud traditions while Sangs rgyas gling pa is a Bon po Master (pre-Buddhist religion).

I will base my research on manuscripts and block prints available in the Buddhist Digital Resource Centre (<https://www.bdrc.io/>). The structural elements of the guidebooks such as forms, layout and style including common literary forms like poetry, prose and mixed forms will be identified and compared as well as descriptions of holy persons. Also, I will explore how the perception of those sacred places differs in different regions and among diverse religious institutions.

In sacred places in Tibet, the worshippers imagine the important religious persons in the places they visit. They need to learn about them to perform their rituals correctly. Nowadays religious practices in Tibet are banned and institutions are destroyed or they can not function properly. However, both practices and institutions are continuing in exile. Today, even though many Tibetans live far from Tibet, yet they can worship sacred places of Tibet in their religious practices. Therefore, such guidebooks, if not destroyed, have also a practical value for modern Tibetans.

So far, such a comparative study on the gnas yig literary genre has not been undertaken. It should be done to understand and preserve the unique Tibetan literary and cultural heritage. It serves not only the Tibetans but contributes to the World literature and cultural heritage.