



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

The Emergence of a Myth : In search of the origins of the life story of Shenrab Miwo, the founder of Bon

Gurung, K.N.

Citation

Gurung, K. N. (2011, May 31). *The Emergence of a Myth : In search of the origins of the life story of Shenrab Miwo, the founder of Bon*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/17677>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/17677>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

THE EMERGENCE OF A MYTH

IN SEARCH OF THE ORIGINS OF THE LIFE STORY
OF SHENRAB MIWO, THE FOUNDER OF BON

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van
de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof.mr. P.F. van der Heijden,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op dinsdag, 31 mei 2011

klokke 16.15 uur

door

Kalsang Norbu Gurung
geboren te Jomsom
in 1973

Promotiecommissie:

promotor: Prof.dr. A.M. Lubotsky

copromotor: Dr. H.W.A. Blezer

overige leden: Dr. D.P. Martin (Hebrew University, Jerusalem)

Prof.dr. J.A. Silk

Prof.dr. P.C. Bisschop

Prof.dr. B.C.A. Walraven

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM	vii
INTRODUCTION	1
ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH	1
RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	3
SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY	4
OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS.....	6
CHAPTER ONE: THE FOUNDER OF BON SHENRAB MIWO	9
BON AND YUNGDRUNG BON	9
THREE PERSPECTIVES ON BON	10
Helmut Hoffmann's 'old Bon' and 'systematised Bon'	11
Samten Karmay's original Bon and Yungdrung Bon	12
Rolf Stein's organized Bon as the Bon religion	13
THE FOUNDER OF BON SHENRAB MIWO	14
Previous Studies on Shenrab Miwo	15
Dates of Shenrab Miwo's Life	19
References to <i>gshen rab myi bo</i> in Dunhuang Documents	25
WHY SHENRAB MIWO, THE FOUNDER?	27
CHAPTER TWO: THE <i>MDO 'DUS</i>	31
INTRODUCTION	31
THE SHORT ACCOUNT, <i>MDO 'DUS</i>	32
THE COLOPHON OF THE <i>MDO 'DUS</i>	34
DISCOVERY OF THE <i>MDO 'DUS</i>	36
THE FIRST SŪTRA, <i>'BYUNG KHUNGS MDO</i>	42
REFERENCES TO THE <i>MDO 'DUS</i>	46
TWO CARETAKERS OR THREE ĀCĀRYAS	47
CONCLUSION	49
CHAPTER THREE: BUDDHIST LEGENDARY SOURCES	53
CHAPTER FOUR: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE LIFE OF SHENRAB MIWO AND ŚĀKYAMUNI BUDDHA	59
INTRODUCTION	59
THE EARLY LIFE	60
Descent from Heaven	60

Parents' Dreams and Visions	64
A Miraculous Birth	66
Education and Visit to Other Continent	73
THE ASCETIC LIFE	75
The Four Sights and Departure	75
Becoming Monk	78
Practicing Austerity	81
Māra's Magical Tricks	83
THE LATER LIFE	89
Achievement, Witness and Rejection	89
THE EPISODE OF FIVE TIGERS	92
CONCLUSION	95
CHAPTER FIVE: SHENRAB MIWO AND THE FOUR KINGS, SIX WIVES, TEN CHILDREN	99
INTRODUCTION	99
THE FIRST KING, AND HIS FIRST WIFE AND THREE CHILDREN	100
Episode One: Appointing Yikyi Khyeuchung as the Official Priest	100
Episode Two: Accusation Made By the Queen	102
Episode Three: The Master Defending His Innocence	103
Episode Four: Justice for the Victim and a Resolution	103
Parallel Story in Padmasambhava Literature	104
Similar Motifs in the <i>mDo 'dus</i> and the <i>bTsun mo bka' thang</i>	105
Source of the Motifs	107
Marriage and the Birth of Children	108
THE SECOND KING, HIS SECOND WIFE AND THREE CHILDREN	109
Episode One: Ransoming Ritual	109
Episode Two: Death, Death and More Deaths	111
Causes of the Illness and Killings	112
Marriage and the Birth of Children	113
THE THIRD KING, THIRD WIFE AND ONE SON	114
The Story of Kongtse in the <i>mDo 'dus</i>	116
Shenrab and Kongtse	120
THE FOURTH KING, HIS FOURTH WIFE AND ONE MORE SON	121
TWO MORE MARRIAGES AND TWO MORE SONS	123
CONCLUSION	126

CHAPTER SIX: SHENRAB'S ANCESTORS AND OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS	129
INTRODUCTION	129
FATHER GYALBÖN THÖKAR, <i>BON PO</i> OF MEN AND GODS	129
References to mi bon lha bon rgyal bon.....	131
References to <i>thod dkar</i>	136
MOTHER GYALZHEMA, MOTHER OF MEN AND GODS	139
The Family Background of Yöchi Gyalzhema	141
ANCESTOR OF <i>DMU</i> FAMILY	145
NINE BROTHERS OR NINE WAYS	148
CONCLUSION	151
CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION AND EPILOGUE	153
FIRST GROUP OF SOURCES, <i>RGYA CHER ROL PA</i> AND OTHER BUDDHIST LEGENDS	155
SECOND GROUP OF SOURCES	156
POSSIBLE ORIGIN OF THE NAMES	160
EPILOGUE	161
APPENDICES	165
1. Comparative Table of the Eight Buddhas and the Nine Bon Tonpas	165
2. Three Different Lists of Thirty-Three <i>bonpos</i>	167
3. Tibetan Bon Texts	169
3.1. Transliteration of the excerpts from the <i>mDo 'dus</i>	169
3.2. Selected passage from the <i>mDo 'dus</i> and the <i>gZer mig</i>	260
3.3. Transliteration of the excerpts from other Bon historical sources	269
4. Transcription of Names	271
BIBLIOGRAPHY	279
SAMENVATTING	291
CURRICULUM VITAE	297

