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

Kalsang Norbu Gurung

STELLINGEN

1. It is not possible to determine the date of the account of Shenrab Miwo in the *mDo 'dus* without discussing closely related texts (see page 36 of this dissertation on a discussion of the four sūtras).
2. The life account of Shenrab Miwo is largely influenced by the Buddha legends. Bonpos, however, consider this account to be a real description of his life, mostly due to lack of knowledge or interest regarding its origins.
3. While composing the life account of Shenrab Miwo, Bonpos adopted stories from various sources in order to incorporate Buddhist teachings, astrological knowledge and old Tibetan rituals, and also in order to relate the account to a historical place in Tibet.
4. The philosophy and religious system of Bon are rooted in Indian Buddhist ideology, and Bon thus holds similar ground to the other Tibetan Buddhist sects.
5. Bon is not the indigenous religion of Tibet, but an indigenized religion of Tibet.

6. In spite of the fact that many of the early Bon writings unmistakably are Tibetan adaptations or translations of Buddhist sources from Sanskrit, Pali, Chinese, etc., Bonpos deny any connection with these sources, whereas Buddhist authors often accuse Bonpos of plagiarism. Both attitudes are biased towards their own tradition.
7. The name 'Bon' should not be used as a catch-all term for all those traditions of Tibetan cultural regions that look older than Tibetan Buddhism.
8. A better way to classify the religions of Tibet is to distinguish between 'native religions' (Tib. *gzhis chos*) and 'transformed religions' (Tib. *bsgyur chos*), rather than between Bon and Buddhism.
9. Although Tibetans knew the Indian system of four castes from translated Buddhist texts, they did not adopt it culturally. Therefore, any Tibetan text employing this system must have originated from an Indic source.
10. There is no common ground between freedom of inquiry required in an academic environment and the obedience to the monastic code of discipline. One has to cease to follow one or the other, because it is not possible to pursue these two paths simultaneously.
11. The cult of the Book might some day be replaced by the cult of the Digital media, because Digital Media also preserve important spiritual knowledge.
12. Writing a Ph.D.-dissertation in an isolated and closed room is the best way to complete it, the circumstances are comparable to gaining control over one's mind by engaging in solitary meditation retreat.