DMU RDO: A POWERFUL HERO AND MOUNTAIN DEITY

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ABSTRACT

Dmu rdo (Rgyas bzang dialect: m3 dū) accounts were frequently heard in Rgyas bzang (Jizong) Village, Kha mdo (Shuizi) Township, Rong brag (Danba) County, Dkar mdzes (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, PR China in 2010. An account of a pilgrimage to Dmu rdo in 1993 is given, along with a Dmu rdo story in the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) and in English translation.

KEY WORDS

Danba, Dmu rdo, heroes, Murdo, Rong brag, Rgyas bzang
INTRODUCTION

Rgyas bzang (Jizong) Village, Kha mdo (Shuizi) Township, Rong brag (Danba) County, Dkar mdzes (Ganzi) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, PR China is home to fifty-five households (forty-nine Tibetan households; six Han Chinese\(^1\) households) and has a total population of 250. Villagers cultivate barley, potatoes, wheat, peas, prickly ash (Sichuan pepper), apples, English walnuts, pears, and corn. Rgyas bzang villagers and residents of nearby Khriims ri (Changna) and La rgyab (Najiao) villages speak nearly the same distinctive Tibetan dialect.

G.yung 'brug (b. 1985) provides an account of a pilgrimage he and his parents made to Dmu rdo\(^2\) in 1993 when he was eight years old. A Dmu rdo story is also presented in the International Phonetic Alphabet and in English translation.

Coincidently, G.yung 'brug was at Dmu rdo Mountain at the time Samten Karmay (b. 1936) visited Gyalrong (Rgyal rong), who later wrote 'The Cult of Mount Murdo in Gyalrong' (1996).\(^3\) Karmay does not, however, give an

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\(^1\) The families officially classified as Han have lived in the village for two or three generations. They speak the local language fluently (and at home), engage in the same religious activities as locals classified as Tibetan, have both Chinese and Tibetan names, and marry both those classified as Han and Tibetan.

\(^2\) We were told about a collection of Dmu rdo stories (presented in Chinese and Tibetan languages) published by the Sichuan Nationalities Culture Press in Chengdu. However, we were unable to locate a copy of this book or further verify its existence.

\(^3\) An earlier, very short, imaginative travel account of a visit to Dmu rdo was written by Edgar (1924:28-29):
account of Dmu rdo's origins. He notes:

The use of the term 'birthday' (khrungs skar)\(^4\) for the celebration of the mountain is unusual. It is not mentioned in the guide of the Sangye lingpa [Sangs rgyas gling pa]. In my opinion, it is a reflection of the folktales in which people tell that such-and-such a mountain is born, married, has children and goes through adventures and conflicts.

The similarities between A myes sgo Idong (based on the summary account given in Prins 2007:203-204) and Dmu rdo (as given in this paper) are striking – both boys have insatiable appetites and for this reason are abandoned in the forest. Later, a parent returns to the forest to find the hero and persuades him to return to his home to defeat a demon. When the hero agrees and returns he demands a huge meal, which he is provided, and defeats the demon. It should be noted, however, that G.yung 'brug found no one in Rgyas bzang Village who had heard of A myes sgo Idong.

\(^4\) Rgyas bzang residents use the honorific tce ri to refer to the birthday of Dmu rdo, reincarnation lamas, and the Buddha. The term tce dge (skyes skar) is used to refer to an ordinary person's birthday.
LITERATURE REVIEW

Dmu rdo\(^5\) Mountain is the abode of Dmu rdo, arguably the chief mountain deity in the Rgyal rong area, as attested to by a number of oral and written accounts. Dmu rdo Mountain is also known as G.yung drung ri bo dbus rtse, Sku lha dbang phyug ri bo, and Rig 'dzin mkha' 'gro ma'i 'dus gnas (Karmay 1996:1; Sang rgyas gling pa 2005:375).

Liu (2009), Xu (2009), and Lin (2008) all relate brief, mythical accounts of the deity's successes in battle, which, they agree, gave rise to the eminence and supremacy of Dmu rdo in the region. In contrast, Karmay (1996:10) explains the historicity of the creation of Mount Dmu rdo as a gnas ri 'holy mountain' that required prophecy and appearance of gter ston 'textual treasure revealers' to uncover concealed books and objects, a circumambulation route, identification of traces of early dwellers along the circumambulation path, and a designated date for circumambulation.

Karmay (1996:13) states that despite the recognition of Dmu rdo as a 'pure' gnas ri in a guide of Dmu rdo Mountain by Sangs rgyas gling pa, contemporary Rgyal rong people revere Dmu rdo as both a gnas ri and the abode of a yul lha 'local deity', as is the case with A myes rma chen.\(^6\) Dmu rdo is venerated to purify one's bad deeds in previous rebirths and meanwhile, as a yul lha. Dmu rdo is also

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\(^5\) IPA (International Phonetic Alphabetic) symbols are used to record certain of the Rgyas bzang Tibetan dialect, Wylie for transcriptions of literary Tibetan, and pinyin for Chinese terms. The term 'Shar dkyil rgyal mo dmu rdo' is used by Rgyas bzang villagers when praying to this mountain deity. Local people are unable to explain how the prefix shar dkyil rgyal mo 'middle east queen' relates to Dmu rdo.

\(^6\) Located in Mgo log (Guoluo) Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture in southeastern Qinghai Province, A myes Rma chen/ Rma rgyal spom ra ranks fourth among the nine creator-deities (srid pa chags pa'i lha dgu) of Tibet.
locals consulted for mundane affairs.

Locals circumambulate the mountain and conduct offering rituals to celebrate the 'khrungs skar 'birthday' of Dmu rdo on the tenth day of the Horse Month and particularly in the Horse Year. Karmay states (1996:14) that Dran pa nam mkha'7 was born in a Horse Year8 and visited Dmu rdo Mountain, as is the case with Mount Ti se.9 The Horse Year is considered the best year for circumambulating both mountains. Likewise, according to Karmay, in the Rnying ma tradition, because Padmasambhava was born in the Year of the Monkey, Rnying ma adherents celebrate rituals on the tenth day of a month, or in the Monkey Month, and particularly in the Monkey Year. The same pattern was followed in both cases. Karmay thus suggests that locals mistook the birthday of Dran pa nam mkha' for that of Dmu rdo.

Kar+ma rgyal mtshan (2005) includes a short prayer dedicated to Dmu rdo by Bai ro tsa na,10 The Merits from Circumambulating Dmu rdo Mountain by Sang rgyas gling pa, and a guide to Dmu rdo Mountain by Byang chub rdo rje (in three parts). The section entitled Introduction of Merits from Circumambulating Dmu rdo Mountain states that merit earned from continual circumambulation of the mountain in

7 A renowned master of the Bon tradition; one of Padmasambhava's twenty-five disciples; the Master of Bai ro tsa na (Vairocana).
8 A Tibetan calendar that features a cycle of twelve years and twelve months in a year, each (month or year) named for one of twelve animals—mouse, bull, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig.
9 Located in western Tibet, it is also known as Mount Kailash/ Gangs rin po che.
10 Vairocana. See Schaeffer (2000) for a detailed treatment of this important Tibetan translator who lived during the reign of King Trisong Detsen (Khri srong Ide'u btsan, 755-797) and was an important disciple of Padmasambhava.
a non-Horse Month or non-Horse Year is equivalent to reciting the Six Sacred Syllables 700 million times; a single circumambulation in the Horse Month of a year is the equivalent of reciting the Six Sacred Syllables 1.2 billion times; and a single circumambulation in the Horse Month of the Year of the Horse equals holding a Stong mchod 'Thousand-fold Offering Ritual' and reciting the Six Sacred Syllables 1.3 billion times.

Btsan lha ngag dbang et al. (2003) includes the accounts outlined above in Kar+ma rgyal mtshan (2005). The exception is that Btsan lha ngag dbang et al. (2003) provides an introduction of the major temple at the foot of Dmu rdo Mountain. The sketchy introduction suggests that a thousand circumambulations of Dmu rdo Mountain in one's lifetime is best and that 113 times is the minimum.

According to a consultant cited by Xu (2009:14), Dmu rdo Mountain should be circumambulated at least three times in one's lifetime—the first time to bring blessings to one's father, the second time for one's mother, and the third time for one's self.

Liu's examination of Tibetan pilgrimage in Danba (2009:55) states that Rgyal rong or Rgyal mo tsha ba rong is named after Dmu rdo/ Shar rgyal mo Mountain, its surrounding geographical shape, and the Rgyal mo rngul chu, the major river in the Rgyal rong area. Liu (2009:56) also describes three different circuits around Dmu rdo Mountain. The shortest route runs around Dmu rdo Temple and its immediate vicinity, the second goes only to the summit, and the third is all the way along the foot of Dmu rdo Mountain without ascending the mountain.

Liu's study of folk narratives of Dmu rdo Mountain and fertility and its role in worship (2009:41-42) mentions the issue of Dmu rdo's gender. He points out that few scholars think the deity is female, as suggested by the full name (Shar rgyal mo dmu rdo)—the majority, including Rgyal rong people, agree that the deity is male.

Karmay (2005:322) asserts that mountains are understood as the abodes of male deities while nearby lakes
are seen as that of their goddess consorts. However, there are certain examples of female deities residing in mountains, such as A ma Sman btsun and A ma Zo/ Zor dgu in eastern Amdo and Rdzong A ye De'u in western Khams, challenging the notion that all mountains are male deities.

PILGRIMAGE TO MOUNT DMU RDO

Many boys beg their parents for candy, new clothes, and toys, but Rgyas bzang children want to grow up quickly, so they can visit Dmu rdo Mountain to see the hero featured in stories told by village elders. When children are naughty, parents say "Don't be naughty, or we won't take you to Dmu rdo Mountain." Villagers believe seven year old boys should circumambulate Dmu rdo Mountain on the tenth day of the seventh lunar month–Dmu rdo's birthday. Dmu rdo gives power that makes boys brave, honest, and good men. Evil avoids you once you visit Dmu rdo Mountain.

On Dmu rdo's birthday, my parents, eighteen other villagers, and I made a pilgrimage to Dmu rdo Mountain. We left home at seven a.m. Father dressed me in an unusual way—I had a red cloth band around my head which was about three centimeters wide and thirty centimeters long. Though the weather was already hot, I wore a winter robe, and a Tibetan knife with a pair of ivory chopsticks encased in the sheath hung from my sash. Tibetan boots made me hotter. I found other boys dressed like me when my parents and I met the other pilgrims at the village entrance just before we all set off together.

We reached Dmu rdo Temple, situated at the foot of the mountain, at about noon. I wondered why we were walking to Dmu rdo Temple when many cars passed by. Father held my hand tightly because he was worried the cars might hit me. Villagers never rode. Father said that if we rode, it had no meaning because we should walk when on pilgrimages. The Buddha and the mountain deity would think we were not sincere and would not grant our wishes if
we rode—the more hardship the more merit. Those in cars were city dwellers and Chinese. People who lived in the mountains walked to Dmu rdo Temple and then climbed Dmu rdo Mountain.

Countless people were around Dmu rdo Temple. It was my first time to see so many people. I ran toward the crowd but Father caught me and said that some children had gotten lost in this festival in the last three years and he didn't want to lose his son. Our group wanted to prostrate to the Dmu rdo image but we couldn't move forward because of the crowd. Finally we gave up, because our destination was still far away. Father and two men from our group hung *rlung rta* 'prayer flags'\(^{11}\) on the *la btsas* by Dmu rdo Temple.

Our group continued on and when we passed a village, an old man offered us tea and candy when he learned we were going to Dmu rdo Mountain. He gave Father a bag of wheat flour and asked him to offer it to Dmu rdo. There were two groups on pilgrimage to Dmu rdo Mountain in front of us and another group was not far behind.

We met about 200 people who had visited Dmu rdo Mountain and were returning home. Father told me that about 600 people visit Dmu rdo Mountain every year. There is another route to Dmu rdo Mountain for Bon believers. We could not see them except from the top of Dmu rdo Mountain. I then realized why some of our group members

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\(^{11}\) This term may refer to square pieces of paper about six centimeters square (size varies) imprinted with a horse in the center bearing a wish-fulfilling gem and a tiger, lion, garuda, and dragon in the four corners in various Tibetan areas. However, in the local context relevant to this paper, *rlung rta* refers to pieces of white, green, and red cloth (about twenty centimeters long and twelve centimeters wide) that feature images from wood blocks of a horse in the center bearing a wish-fulfilling gem. Scriptures are featured around the horse.
had disappeared.

It was already dark when our group reached Nor pu phug, the halfway point to Dmu rdo Mountain. There are several large caves, each about one hundred square meters in area. These caves are considered Bai ro tsa na's meditation places. According to local accounts, he came to Rgyal mo tsha ba rong for about sixteen years to meditate and spent much of this time in the vicinity of Dmu rdo Mountain.

We luckily found a vacant cave. Father told us to rest there and then he and another man went to fetch water from a mountain spring. The women made beds with our cloth bags and clothes. We had brought butter tea, rtsam pa, bread, pork, and wheat liquor. We had a nice meal. I wore my winter robe when it was time to sleep. Boys slept at the front of the cave with the men. There were no blankets for us. We boys made a big fire, sat around it, and then went to sleep.

The next day we reached grassland with many stupas along both sides of the road. Father said Bai ro tsa na made 108 stupas there in one night. We scattered auspicious wheat seeds to the stupas as an offering. After we passed the stupas, Father and elders prostrated to a la btsas where many people were burning bsang, circumambulating, and hanging wind horses on the prayer flags.

Our group chanted Skyabs 'gro:

Bla ma la skyabs su mchi’o
Sangs rgyas la skyabs su mchi’o

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12 The seeds are taken from a box on the third floor of the home, where grain is stored, and put in a small cloth bag, and then referred to as 'auspicious seed'.

13 Literally 'taking refuge' (in the lama, Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha), a short scripture chanted before reciting Buddhist prayers or longer scriptures.
Chos la skyabs su mchi’o
Dge ’dun la skyabs su mchi’o

and asked the boys to prostrate to Dmu rdo Mountain. We followed, chanting, prostrating, and praying to Dmu rdo La btsas as we passed along a narrow rocky path to Dmu rdo. I was told bad people would fall into the valley as they walked along this path.

Father handed me auspicious wheat seeds, which I scattered to Dmu rdo La btsas. Money, clothes, candy, and wind horses were inside the la btsas. Mothers gave boys kha btags\(^{14}\) to offer Dmu rdo La btsas. I offered mine and prayed that I would have power in the future.

More than a hundred people were circumambulating Dmu rdo La btsas. From atop Dmu rdo Mountain, we saw a lake changing from green to blue to green near Dmu rdo La btsas. Those who circumambulate the lake once will remain human in their next life.

Several nomad families lived near the lake. It was my first time to see yaks.

One of our group members felt dizzy and we thus did not visit the lake but returned home. On the way back, we visited a stupa that had sprung up in a place where Dmu rdo had rested. I tried to understand Dmu rdo’s magic power but I failed, because my little brain couldn’t figure it out.

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By 2010, I had visited Dmu rdo Temple five times on Dmu rdo’s birthday. My most recent visit was on the seventh day of the first lunar month in 2009, when I went with my younger brother. We left home at about eight a.m. and walked to Shuizi Township Town, which we reached at about nine-thirty a.m. We then hired a taxi to Dmu rdo Temple for fifteen RMB (one way).

We reached the temple at around ten a.m. My

\(^{14}\) Tibetan ceremonial scarf.
younger brother offered bsang at the la btsas by the temple, and hung wind horses by the temple. There were a few people circumambulating the temple.

A monk was chanting beside the la btsas as people offered bsang. Visitors asked the monk to give them srung mdud\textsuperscript{15} and asked such questions as: "Where should I go to earn money?" "When can my son get a job?" "What's the best time to hold a wedding?" The monk used his thumb to quickly move beads on this prayer-bead string, closed his eyes, and gave an answer a couple of minutes later. Once satisfied with the monk's response, they put money in a box by the monk. My younger brother and I asked the monk for about twenty srung mdud for our family and relatives, put a total of ten RMB in his box, and thanked him when he gave them to us.

We left Dmu rdo Temple in a taxi after an hour of circumambulating and prostrating to the Dmu rdo image. On the way back to the township town, I asked my younger brother what he had prayed for. He said he had asked Dmu rdo for power, and to help him pass exams to get a government job (which he later got). I feel Dmu rdo really does have power to encourage people to do what they want.

\textsuperscript{15} A srung mdud is a red or yellow string about thirty centimeters long. A lama, monk, or sgom pa (yogin, meditator, ascetic) uses a conifer twig to flick holy water on such strings and blows on the strings while chanting. Such strings are believed to bring good luck and prevent sickness, and are worn around the neck.
THE STORY

Background

When a person's honesty is in question, e.g., regarding the truthfulness of something that was said or if there is suspicion of theft, the person being questioned might say, "If I am lying (If I stole something), I swear I'll go to Dmu rdo Mountain La btsas a hundred times." This statement has such power that the person is generally believed. The efficacy of visiting Dmu rdo Mountain Lab btsas a hundred times is seen as equivalent to visiting Lha sa a hundred times.

I learnt this story (below) from my paternal grandmother, A rtse (1940-1993). I liked to listen to elders tell stories when I was a child. When villagers finished dinner, they visited homes with good storytellers. Children particularly liked to listen to stories at night, and dared not go outside to the toilet when elders told ghost stories. People sat around the ḡdba bṭṭ16 and listened to the storyteller, who sat on a cow or sheep skin with a bottle of liquor near the head of the ḡdba bṭṭ. Before the story began, the storyteller offered three offerings of liquor. If the storyteller was female, she held prayer beads and counted the beads while telling the stories. If a man told stories, he held a tobacco pipe. When he told the climactic part, he frequently stopped and smoked, heightening interest in his story, causing children to

16 The ḡdba bṭṭ is one of three hearthstones that has the shape of an upside-down capital J with the hook facing up and turning to the left (inside). This stone is the kə te 'upper place' ḡdba bṭṭ. The other two stones are called kə ṇḍzu 'lower place'. The hearth (including all three stones) is also called ḡdba bṭṭ. A pot is placed at the convergence of the three ḡdba bṭṭ. The ḡdba kə is a small shelf on the upper part of the stone, just before it turns to the left. The ḡdba kə is about two and a half centimeters long and about three centimeters wide. Food is placed here for the deities.
impatiently ask him what happened next.

Several people often came to my home to listen to stories with candy for Grandmother. We offered tea to the audience when Grandmother finished. Listeners commented by criticizing story characters and drank liquor. However, when television came to the village in the early twenty-first century, people lost interest in storytelling.

**DMU RDO'S BIRTH AND POWER**

Several centuries ago, under the deities' protection, all was well in the mystical, auspicious place known as Rgyal Motsa ba rong, where the teachings of the Buddha were strictly observed by local Tibetans. Many old stone towers were multi-angled. Some had four, others had eight, and still others had thirteen faces. This famous place of local kings and heroes was also known as a 'flower of the Earth'.

One day, a Tibetan woman went into the forest to cut firewood. That day, feeling more tired than usual, she lay down on a bright green rock under a towering tree. She fell asleep and dreamed of a dark sky full of black clouds from which emerged a dragon that glanced at her. Filled with fear, she awakened. And thus it was that she later gave birth to a son who was called Dmu rdo.

When Dmu rdo grew up, his mother could not satisfy his voracious appetite. His appetite was larger than that of eight people. His mother then sent him to a primeval forest on Dmu rdo Mountain where he gained great power. Thanks to the deities' teachings, he became a man who was immensely strong and very clever. Hunters in the forest saw him run faster than the wild animals he was hunting; some said he could run as fast as the wind.

One day, the villagers were threatened by ghosts and demons. Consequently, the tribal chief sent boys and girls every day for the demons and ghosts to eat. All the local people felt they were in terrible danger and began to discuss Dmu rdo's supernatural abilities. Certain villagers
finally suggested to the tribal chief that they ask Dmu rdo to deal with the demons and ghosts.

The chief then asked Dmu rdo's mother to invite her son back to the village.

Dmu rdo's mother brought eighteen pig's ears, ten pig's legs, eight pig's tails, and rtsam pa to the forest. Standing on the bright green rock where she had given birth to her son, she called, "Dmu rdo!" 17

There was no reply. All she could see were piles of animal bones. Then she sang the song she had sung to Dmu rdo when he was a little child before she sent him to the forest. Suddenly, a man flew to her from a mountain peak and acknowledged her as his mother. She wept while embracing him and related everything that had happened in the village.

Dmu rdo said she should tell the chief to prepare plenty of food for his arrival and added that he would visit the village three days later. His mother returned to the village and, three days later, Dmu rdo appeared atop the highest stone tower in the village. He shouted three times and the clouds in the sky vanished. He then flew into the chief's home, ate the food that they had prepared, and told the villagers that they shouldn't fear the demons and ghosts.

After he finished eating, he gathered his bow and arrows and flew to the demons and ghosts. He fought with Bru mo byid bdun, the leader of the ghosts, for one whole night before he finally killed her. The other ghosts then fled.

Thereafter, the village resumed its normal life. Villagers were grateful to Dmu rdo and sincerely wanted him to live in the village with them, but he had to return to Dmu rdo Mountain. However, Dmu rdo agreed to spend the New Year holidays with the villagers each year. From then

17 Daniel Berounský comments: "Dmu are heavenly beings represented by the dragon and rdo is the stone/rock in the story."
on, every day before the New Year, villagers painted the outside of their houses with white soil to signal that it was time for Dmu rdo to visit. This is why every household in the Rgyal mo tsha ba rong area whitewashes the outside of their houses with paint made from a special white soil.

THE TEXT IN IPA

m3 du

1χæ rïŋ χæ rïŋ dza la naŋ tø ge ka tšæ la do dza moŋ tšʰa wa ronŋ de ṭda di ṭdu di tsoever sa tšʰanŋ sə
2poŋ mbu ge tšʰonŋ do no sa tčʰau zi zao ta tsaŋ sə
3poŋ ji sa tčʰo pə mbu ge tčʰonŋ tʰao so kʰa nɔŋ mɔŋ ji sə la kʰa zə də zə dzah tɛə səŋ
4dzei budoŋ pa wo tce sɛ ge sa tčʰo je tšʰə sə
5ta ri sœŋ ne de ndzaŋ linŋ dəŋ ge mba due je sə la ja
6niæ tʉ dza la pə pə məŋ de dzi də la χə ciŋ tça ȵəŋ tšʰanŋ sə
7de niæ la də də ge χæ la doŋ me tso tšʰə sə
8mə de ce la zi zao saŋ tšʰa sə təe mə də je du de dzi diŋ ce tšʰanŋ sə
9ji tʉ mə ɾə ɾiŋ mə məŋ tšu la mə ləŋ te təi məŋ tšʰanŋ sə
10mə ləŋ ləŋ nə də ndzu di təi də tšə ne sə ləŋ tso tšʰanŋ sə 11ngə də mə la nəŋ nə ndəŋ pue təə ɾə tšʰanŋ sə
12pə məŋ də təə la məŋ pa sa tšʰanŋ sə
13də ge gu dzaọ də pə ɾə tʃʰə gi de təi tʃʰə tšʰanŋ sə
14tʃʰə gi la də mə du de tʃʰanŋ sə
15mə du jəə dza ɾəŋ də sə mi gə so də tʰəe nəŋ kʰuc ge ma gəə gə su me tčʰo tšʰanŋ sə
16mə du gə sa tʰəe dəŋ məŋ ndə dza ge sa tʰəe dəŋ sou tšʰanŋ sə
17mə da gi ma gəə na tʰao sə mə tšʰanŋ sə
18tʰəe nəŋ də mə du də tχæ la ma gəə məŋ məŋ tʃʰə so də da

•87•
tsʰʰo donŋ ge la ce tʰʰaŋ sə
19naŋ to tʰʰaŋ rɨ daŋ ge ka tsaŋ la
20ma daŋ ge naŋ to ga tsa ce tsa mə qa tʰʰe tʰʰaŋ sə
21la xa čo cong dza ge na tʰʰu tēu ge ma du
22nja tɛa dza laŋ', tson bo la da niši donŋ saŋ go gə nə je tʰʰaŋ sə
23tʰʰe liŋ da tson bæ ge saŋ man la pe re tʰʰəŋ' gi donŋ pe man
 tʰʰaŋ' go tə maŋ sə
24tʰʰe liŋ ji bo ruh' tɛu zo zau tsa tʰʰaŋ sə
25tæ mə da go tɛo ntsə tʰʰo tɛŋ sə la fa tʰʰaŋ sə
26tson bæ ge tæ liŋ mə du gi ma gæ la zo sa nga re so tsaŋ sə
27ma du gi ma gæ ge tsa mbo pʰʰe na tɛo tɛŋ dza pʰʰ koŋ
tɛo donŋ pʰʰe ndza dza kʰʰo la la xa nga tʰʰaŋ sə
28ma du gi ma gæ ge da hæ la mə du kʰʰo so gi tu doŋ nišiŋ
me de la mpo tʰʰaŋ sə
29go tonŋ sə la mpo la mon tso roh' siŋ to lue tʰʰe məh' mo
tʰʰaŋ sə
30tʰʰə rə bo tc monŋ monŋ jah' tʰʰaŋ sə
31tʰʰe liŋ ma gæ ge lae lae je tʰʰaŋ sə
32ma du gi ma gæ tʰʰu tʰʰu siŋ məh' la lae ma tc ku siŋ tc
mpʰʰai la bo tʰʰang sə
33tʰʰe liŋ ma gæ go mə da la ja tʰʰaŋ sə tson bo nonŋ tse ndzo ra
cə la la sə
34tʰʰe liŋ mə da ge ma gæ la sa sen sə tʰʰaŋ
35tson bæ la sa do tʰʰe tæ lan tɛa bo ja la tʰʰa tæ na na ma saŋ
lon tson lon bo jon ma se tʰʰaŋ sə
36na ma saŋ gi ku dzau nc mə du gi tson bo lon kʰʰa tin hau
gə tʰʰaŋ sə
37go ki lae saŋ tonŋ siŋ do nan nan ki tsa ne lan nga tʰʰaŋ sə
38tʰʰe liŋ tson bæ re ki tʰʰaŋ lon nga tʰʰaŋ sə
39tʰʰaŋ bæ ko ntsə tæ lan te tɛi jo tɛəŋ sə
40se so tʰʰe siŋ tc nco kʰʰo la nga tʰʰaŋ ntsə monŋ gæ da tc sa
la ce tʰʰaŋ sə
41kʰʰa ho ru tɛa do lan tse nga tɛəŋ sə
42tʰʰe liŋ tson bə tc hæ ki donŋ tɛən ntsə tc təŋ sə

•88•
CONCLUSION

Rgyas bzang villagers believe that three brothers became mountain deities, known locally as Tsa ri spun gsum. They reside in Tsa ri Mountain. Five to six hours is required to walk to the top of this mountain from the village. G.yung 'brug has never heard individual names for the three brothers used. Rather, the term Tsa ri spun gsum is used to signify a collective mountain deity.

Tsa ri spun gsum is sacrificed to and help is requested at such times as when there is drought, sickness, livestock are stolen or missing, and before examinations (in the hope Tsa ri spun gsum will help the students score higher on important exams). Tsa ri spun gsum is also asked to punish people who harm a family, e.g., steal a family's livestock.  

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18 A butter lamp is offered on a large stone in the village where a goat is killed and offered to Tsa ri spun gsum on the thirteenth day of the seventh lunar month. The base of this stone—the largest in the village—is about six meters long, stands about eight or nine meters tall, and is about two meters thick. The top of the stone has been chiseled into a circle with a diameter of about one and a half meters. The family seeking redress ascends a path adjacent to the stone,
Elders in a home who feel they are neglected may warn other family members that "Tsa ri spun gsum has eyes," suggesting that the mountain deity will punish them.

In contrast to Tsa ri spun gsum's personal and interventionist roles, Dmu rdo is a cultural-national hero, as indicated in the account below told by G.yung 'brug, based on what he has heard from Rgyas bzang villagers. The story reflects a strong sense of pride in local history (such accounts are passed down orally from one generation to another) and in distinctive local features, i.e., the stone watchtowers and Dmu rdo:

During the time of the Qing Dynasty (1644 to 1912), over an eight year period, the Qing soldiers fought the Tibetan forces, but only suffered defeat. Many more Qing soldiers were sent and the Qing was close to victory. At this point, the Tibetan soldiers offered bsan to Dmu rdo, and asked him for help. The sky then suddenly grew dark and Dmu rdo appeared on a black horse, took out soldiers from his robe pouch, scattered them on the battlefield, and the Qing army was soon defeated.

The Qing could not breach the strong stone watchtowers of the Rgyal rong resistance. They then took some local Rgyal rong villagers to Beijing where the villagers explained how the local resistance fighters got food and water. Armed with this information, the Qing forces poisoned water supplies that flowed to the watchtowers. Soldiers drank the poisoned water, died, and the Qing soldiers were then able to conquer the Rgyal rong area.
Mount Dmu rdo. Photo taken by Dkar bzang nyi ma in 2001 in Spro snang Village, Spro snang Township, Rong brag County.
REFERENCES


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NON-ENGLISH TERMS

?  
?dza bṭ thearthstone (Literary Tibetan ཕ་པོ་ thab rdo)
?dza k♂ place on the upper hearthstone for offering food to
  the Hearth Deity

A
A ma Sman btsun འབྲག་པའི་བློ་
A ma Zo/ Zor dgu འབྲག་པའི་བློ་
A mdo འབྲག་
A myes sgot Idong འབྲག་པའི་བློ་
A rtse འབྲག་ (1940-1993), G.yung 'brug's paternal
  grandmother
A ye De'u འབྲག་

B
Badi བི་, a township in Rong brag County; Brag sten རྟག་
  བློ་
Bai ro tsa na བི་རོ་
Bawang བི་
Beijing 北京
Bla ma la skyabs su mchi'o བྲ་ལ་ཤྲི་བས་མྱིིུ་
Brag sten རྟག་
Bru mo byid bdun རྟག་པྱིད་
bsang རྟག་
bstan ma རྟག་
Byang chub rdo rje རྟག་ཆུབ་རོ་རྡེ་
C
Changna 长纳
Chengdu 成都
Chos la skyabs su mehi’o *kla-skyabs-su-mehi’o*

D
Danba 丹巴; Rong brag 罗布
Dge 'dun la skyabs su mehi’o  *gro-dun-skyabs-su-mehi’o*
Dkar bzang nyi ma  *dkar-bzang-nyi-ma*
Dkar mdzes  *dkar-mdzes*
Dmu rdo (m3 du, Murdo)  *dmu-rdo*
Moerduo 墨尔多
Dpa' dbang  *dpag-lugs*
Bawang 巴旺
Dran pa nam mkha’  *bras-pa-nam-mkha’*

G
G.yung 'brug  *gungs-brug*
G.yung drung ri bo dbus rtse  *gungs-drung-ri-bo-dbus-rtse*
Ganzi 甘孜
Gar stong  *gar-stong*
gnas ri  *gnas-ri*

H
Han 汉

J
Jizong 吉宗

K
ko ndzu lower place
ko te upper place
kha btags  *kha-btags*
Kha mdo  *kha-mdo*
Khams  *khams*
Khrims ri  *khrims-*

96
'khrungs skar བུད་མཁས་
L

la btsas བོད་བོར
La rgyab བོད་བོར
N
Najiao 纳交
Nor pu phug རོ་ཕུ་ཕུག
Q
Qing 清
R
Rgyal mo tsha ba rong རྒྱལ་མོ་ཐུན་མཐོང་
Rgyal rong (Gyalrong) རྒྱལ་རོང་
Rgyas bzang རྒྱས་བཞང་
Rig 'dzin mkha' 'gro ma'i 'dus gnas རིག་འཛིན་མཁས་འགྲོ་མ་འདེ་
rlung rta རུང་རི་
RMB renminbi 人民币
Rong brag རོང་ཕྲང་; Danba 丹巴
rtsam pa རྩོམ་པ།
S
Sangs rgyas la skyabs su mchi'o སངས་རྒྱས་ལ་སྙིམས་བུ་མོ་
Sangye lingpa (Sangs rgyas gling pa སངས་རྒྱས་མིང་པ།) 
sgom pa སྤོ་མོ་པ་ (meditator)
Shaanxi 陕西
Shuizi 水子
Sichuan Nationalities Culture Press (Sichuan minzu wenhua chubanshe 四川民族文化出版社)
Sichuan 四川

•97•
Sku lha dbang phyug ri bo སྐུ་ལྷ་དབང་ཕྲുག་བྲི་བོ།
Skyabs 'gro ལྷའོང་བོ་།
Spro snang ལྷོང་བོ་།
Srid pa chags pa'i lha dgu སྨིན་པ་ཆགས་པའི་ལྷ་དགུ། (the nine creator-gods)

T

têe dže (skyes skar སྲྭེ་ཟླེ་) Rgyas bzung residents use têe dže to refer to an ordinary person's birthday
têe ri'o Rgyas bzung residents use têe ri'o to refer to the birthday of Dmu rdo, reincarnation lamas, and the Buddha

Ti se བོཊོ
Trisong Detsen (Khri srong lde btsan མཁྲིས་རྒྱུན་ལྡེ་བཞིན་) Tsa ri spun gsum ཐུ་རི་སྐྱོང་གསུམ།
ts'hon nto (srung mdud ཕྲུང་མདུད་) སྐྱོང་བོན་